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Title: Need to strengthen the Indian Air Force with additional manpower and new generation fighter aircrafts. .

SHRI SURESH KALMADI (PUNE) : Sir, We have not only to look into our internal security arrangements especially in view of terrorists threats but also to look at our Defence system and strengthen it.

In order to bring an improvement in the air defence system, I have a few suggestions. Sir, there is lack of replacements which is depleting the strength of fighter squadrons of our Air Force. Our Squadron strength should be 39 which presently stands depleted to 32 squadrons. The IAF procurement system also needs to be simplified to avoid delays.

We need more aircraft to meet shortage which may affect IAF capability for widescale operations during war. Here I refer to LCA programme which is running behind schedule. In my opinion, more than third of our operational strength consists of obsolete MIG-21. Other aircraft like Mirage-2000 are due for upgradation. There is an urgent need to acquire 126 Medium Multi Role Combat Aircrafts.

About radars, we have not purchased new versions during last 17 years and our air defence system is based on 1976 model, as per latest CAG report.

**\*Treated as laid on the Table.**