

# Open to Any Investigation in Rafale Deal: Dassault



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INTERVIEW  
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CEO says co's relationship with Ambanis dates back to 2012, no corruption in deal; India got 9% rebate on UPA price, ₹850 cr investment in Reliance JV

**ET** INTERVIEW

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**Paris:** Dassault Aviation CEO Eric Trappier said his company was open to investigation of the Rafale deal with India and denied that any corruption was involved. The company's relationship with Ambanis went back to 2012, predating the current deal, he said in his first interview on the matter since the controversy broke. He added that business with Anil Ambani's Reliance Group would amount to ₹850 crore, not ₹30,000 crore as is being alleged.

**(Francois) Hollande has clarified by saying that the two partners (Dassault and Reliance Group) found themselves on their own**

"We stick to the laws of France and laws of India and the law of the contract," Trappier told ET in an interview. "We are totally against corruption. If there is any investigation in France or India, we are not only open to the investigation, it is our duty (to respond). We

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will prove there is no corruption." Trappier rejected the contention that the Indian side had nudged him to give the offsets to the Reliance Group and said that Dassault had already signed deals with 30 companies over the deal. He also said that the controversial statement by former French president Francois Hollande, about being forced to give the offset deal to Reliance Group, had been clarified.

"Mr Hollande has himself clarified it by saying that the two partners found themselves on their own. So, he has clarified as there was maybe a misunderstanding in his first declaration. We found Reliance in 2011-12," Trappier said.

"So, this was not at the time of Hollande and not at the time of your current PM. It has been a long time since we are discussing with Reliance. I want to be clear that Dassault is a partner as the Ambanis are a very respectable family."

The Dassault CEO also said India had got a better deal for the 36 jets as compared to what it would have paid for the 18 that were being bought earlier as part of the 126 aircraft that were being negotiated by the previous government.

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# ‘Number Inaccurate’

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“Compared to the same price, India brought down the cost by 9%. Where is the confusion?” he said, adding that Reliance Defence will get only Rs 850 crore worth of offsets. On the allegation of offsets worth Rs 30,000 crore going to the Reliance Defence joint venture with Dassault, Trappier said that number was inaccurate.

“The capital investment in the joint venture is Rs 70 crore. The JV is 51% with Reliance, so we have invested 49% of Rs 70 crore,” he said. “We will step by step increase the capital in the JV following the job we have to do. Our plan is to upgrade this figure to Rs 850 crore. So, my investment in this Rs 850 crore will over five years be 49% of this number, which is about Rs 425 crore. It has nothing to do with the big figures I have been hearing.”

He said the company had been in discussions with the “Ambani family” since 2012, referring to an agreement it inked with the Mukesh Ambani group to discharge offsets as part of the earlier deal for 126 jets.