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Affendi second person from Royal Malaysian Air Force to helm armed forces



General Tan Sri Affendi Buang

By Adrian David (/authors/adrian-david)
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GENERAL Tan Sri Affendi Buang is scheduled to become the armed forces chief on Thursday.

The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) chief is slated to succeed General Tan Sri Zulkifli Zainal Abidin as the 21st armed forces chief at a handover ceremony at the Sungai Besi army camp here.

Affendi, a true blue fighter pilot, confirmed to the *New Straits Times* his appointment, but declined further comment.

Zulkifli, 61, is retiring after an extended service from June 20 last year.

Affendi is married to Tengku Puteri Teja Pahang, Tengku Muhaini Sultan Ahmad Shah, the younger sister to Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah.

The king, who graduated as a second-lieutenant from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Britain in 1980, is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

Affendi, who will turn 58 on Aug 21, is only the second RMAF chief to helm the armed forces, after General (Rtd) Tan Sri Azizan Ariffin, who served from Sept 1, 2009 to June 14, 2011.

Affendi, who became RMAF chief on Dec 21, 2016, is the first fighter pilot to become the armed forces chief, a post traditionally assumed by army chiefs.

In April 2005, the then Royal Malaysian Navy chief Admiral (Rtd) Tan Sri Mohammad Anwar Mohammad Nor broke with tradition to become the armed forces chief.

Affendi hails from Kuching, Sarawak, and began his military career in 1980 after completing his Form Five at the Royal Military College in Sungai Besi here.

After earning his "wings" in 1982, Affendi flew the McDonnell Douglas A-4 Skyhawk fighter bomber, where he safely ejected on one occasion during training.

In 1994, he was among the pioneer batch selected to fly the newly-acquired Russian MiG-29N air superiority fighters.

Affendi founded the MiG-29N's "Smokey Bandits" tactical aerobatics team and later led the team during his tenure as the No. 17/19 Squadron's commanding officer.

The NST has learnt that RMAF deputy chief Lieutenant-General Datuk Seri Ackbal Abdul Samad will succeed Affendi as the 19th air force chief.

Ackbal, also a fighter pilot trained on the MiG-29N, is expected to be promoted to a "four-star" general.

His position is expected to be taken by another fighter pilot, RMAF education and training commander Lieutenant-General Datuk Mohd Asghar Khan Goriman Khan, who has flown the Russian jet, Sukhoi Su-30MKM Flanker.

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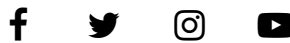
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