

SELF RELIANCE IS 'FREEDOM FROM CONTROLS AND DENIALS'

DRDO pavilion setup with “Self-reliance” as the theme was visited by the Hon’ble Raksha Mantri, Shri AK Antony, who earlier in the day, inaugurated the four day exhibition on 29 March 2012 at Pragati maidan. At DRDO pavilion, he took keen interest in various DRDO products and interacted with DRDO scientists and encouraged them. Other prominent dignitaries to the DRDO Pavilion included hon’ble Raksha Rajya Mantri, Dr. MM Pallam Raju and hon’ble Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Shri Satpalji Maharaj.

An important part of DRDO participation in the event was the DRDO press conference held on 31 March 2012 during the DefExpo 2012. The press conference was addressed by Dr Vijay Kumar Saraswat, Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri, Secretary, Deptt of Defence R&D and DG DRDO.

“Self reliance is freedom from controls and denials” stated Dr Saraswat during his opening remarks. He elaborated that self-reliance didn’t mean that everything have to be indigenous. Dr Saraswat informed that the production value of DRDO developed items was close to Rs One Lakh Forty Thousand Crores and the figure will go up substantially as many items are in advanced stages of acceptance.

Answering questions seeking details of Agni 5 long range surface to surface ballistic missile, he said “Agni 5 ka launch mid April main hoga, Iski range 5000 km se jyada hogi. Yah ek ballistic missile hai. Iska subse achchha feature yeh hai ki Isme composite motors hain jo sabse achchhi hoti hain”. (Agni 5 will be launched in mid April, its range is over 5000 km. It has composite motors which are considered the best). He also informed that A5 has highly accurate inertial navigation system and has built-in redundancies in its control systems that make it highly reliable. Comparing Agni 5 with missiles of this range available with other countries, he stated that India was far ahead of other countries, with few exceptions like US, “we are quite close to them” (referring to DRDO technology vs their technology in this area. This is because the missiles available with most such countries are very old).

When questioned on DRDO’s efforts in building technologies for securing our space based assets, Dr Saraswat stated, “We are giving major emphasis on space security. We are putting our efforts in building capabilities for ensuring that we can protect against an incoming missile (i.e. coming towards our satellite)”, He informed that technologies are being built to protect our satellites from attempts to cause damage, both, electronically and physically. For the later, the capability to destroy hostile missile in space had been demonstrated by the successful ‘ballistic missile defence program’. “We are also having anti-satellite capability in terms of technologies that we have developed in ‘ballistic missile defence’ system” mentioned Dr Saraswat. “Engagement of a satellite is a much easier task as compared to the task of engaging a ballistic missile because of the fact that trajectories, timings and altitudes of the satellites are very well defined. What you need is the capability to reach those altitudes and those velocities. After the launch of Agni 4, we have built those capabilities. After the launch of ballistic missile defence, we have the kill vehicles that can take the payload to within few meters of the target. This gives us great advantage”, he stated. He also elaborated ‘Launch (of satellite) on Demand’, as another kind of capability that DRDO was working on, that will provide support to our armed forces (e.g. communication, navigation and guidance) in case access to our regular satellites is denied. “This capability will be based

on Agni 4 and Agni 5 missiles and give us capability to launch mini- and micro- satellites within few hours of demand”.

When questioned about Arihant, the indigenous nuclear powered submarine, he said, “Arihant is in advanced stage of integration and I am sure within few months, we will see its operation”. On a question related to progress of K-15 program, he mentioned about recent successful trials and informed that the missile was getting ready for final phase of induction.

Dispelling any concern about the performance of MBT Arjun, he said, “Arjun tank has performed very well. There is no ambiguity as far as performance is concerned. In comparative trials with T-90, Arjun tank came out with much better performance. He further stated that maintenance infrastructure in the Army (for the Arjun tank regiments already inducted in army) was getting consolidated, once the consolidation was completed, problem, if any, related to availability of spares from the factory to the units, will also get resolved.

On a question about LCA Tejas, he said, “Tejas (program) is in good shape. all the observations made by the Air force during IOC trials have been attended to”. On “LCA Navy”, he informed that its taxi runs have been completed it was about to enter the flight trial phase. Since it has to operate from the deck of the ship, the Naval version incorporates many new features as compared to the air force version.

Replying to a question on DRDO’s experience with Tatra vehicles, Dr Saraswat stated “Our choice of vehicles is purely based upon what vehicles have been inducted in the armed forces, so that they don’t have to have a separate inventory and maintenance infrastructure”. “We have used them extensively during the past over twenty years on all kind of terrains and we would say that it is one of the very good vehicles already inducted by the armed forces.”

Series of meetings were held at DRDO pavilion with high level delegations from leading countries of the world, and resulted in fruitful discussions. The discussions will further enhance DRDO’s collaboration with global leaders in the areas of advanced technologies.

Another highlight was the launch of two of DRDO technologies that are among twenty six such technologies developed for defence applications and released for commercialization exploitation under the DRDO-FICCI ATAC (Accelerated Technology Assessment and Commercialization) program. The Explosive Detection Kit (EDK), and The Swine Flu diagnostic kit were launched by Dr Saraswat during a Launch Function on Saturday 31 March 2012. The Explosive Detection Kit (EDK), developed by Pune based High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, can quickly detect and identify even traces of explosives. The handy kit is ideally suited to be carried and used everywhere. The Swine Flu diagnostic kit, developed by Defence Research and Development Establishment, Gwalior, can detect H1N1 virus within an hour. The kit does not need sophisticated instruments and can even be used in villages where electricity is not available.