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Global Radars Tender for LCA Fleet Shortly

By Manu Pubby

International Competition: Expression of interest for a new-age radars AESA (active electronically scanned array) floated for 83 Light Combat Aircraft Mk 1A; American, Israeli and European firms to participate

India is set to initiate a major international competition to acquire new age radars for its indigenous combat planes in the coming weeks, the winner of which is likely to gain a strong foothold for future domestic projects.



Sources have told ET that an expression of interest for a new set of AESA (Active Electronically Scanned Array) for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk 1A is set to be floated shortly, with top global aviation firms expected to participate. The government had recently cleared an order for 83 of the LCA Mk 1A jets.

The competition would be the largest international contract for AESA radars that are the heart of modern combat jets. These new radars give much more range and engagement potential to fighters, enabling them to engage targets from a distance without getting detected. AESA radars can track and direct weapons to multiple air and ground targets simultaneously. With India working on an indigenous next generation plane under the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), it is likely that the winning company will have a much larger order book, with the potential number going upwards of 200.

The first Indian Air Force aircraft with AESA radars will be the Jaguar fighter that is being upgraded to the DARIN 3

version. The first Jaguar with the new radar is expected to fly in January. The contract to equip 58 Jaguars with AESA radars had gone to Israel's ELTA, making it the frontrunner for the LCA Mk 1A project as well.

There could, however, also be surprise entries into the Indian competition from the US, with Raytheon, which manufactures the AESA radar for the FA 18 Super Hornet and the F 16 also showing interest. While in the past, US firms had limited options to offer to New Delhi, with India now gaining Major Defence Partner status, transfer of sensitive technology and licences have been made easier. The integration of an AESA radar was a key parameter for the Air Force to clear the order for 83 LCA Mk 1A fighters, after years of blocking the indigenous fighter on concerns that it would not be combat worthy. The AESA will give the LCA an edge over similar fighter operating in the region that are equipped with conventional radars.

The LCA project took a minor hit earlier this month when Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba announced that the naval version of the fighter is not suitable for aircraft carrier operations, necessitating an international competition for a new range of combat aircraft.

THE ASIAN AGE

Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

India makes the top 5 in defence budgets: reports

The US remained way ahead of the world with a budget of \$622 billion, followed by China at \$191.7 billion.

London: India is among the world's top five defense spenders with its military budget at \$50.7 billion, overtaking Saudi Arabia and Russia, according to a new report released on Monday.

The US, China and the UK remain the top three defense spenders while India has the fourth largest military budget, followed by Saudi Arabia and Russia, according to the '2016 Jane's Defense Budgets Report', released by research firm IHS Markit.

India spent \$50.7 billion in 2016 on defense, up from \$46.6 billion in 2015. The report said that India is set to overtake Britain with the third-largest defense budget by 2018 as a result of its modernization drive.

The US remained way ahead of the world with a budget of \$622 billion, followed by China at \$191.7 billion while the UK spent \$53.8 billion on defense in 2016, Saudi Arabia \$48.68 billion and Russia \$48.44 billion.

After three years of budgetary constraints, the definitive UK-based defense magazine forecasts that Indian spending will rise from \$38 billion in 2010 to \$64 billion in 2020.

"Procurement spending has been constrained in India over the last three years as personnel costs have increased. However, what we expect to see from 2017 onwards is a military focused on modernization. India needs new equipment to fulfill its modernization drive. Over the next three years, India will re-emerge as a key growth market for defense suppliers," said Craig Caffrey, Principal Analyst for Asia-Pacific at 'IHS Janes'.

The worldwide outlook shows that global defense spending rose by 1% to \$1.6 trillion in 2016, against 0.6% in 2015. This rise has been attributed largely to strategic threats posed by Russia and the Islamic State terror group in the Middle East.

"Defense spending returned to a healthy rate of growth in 2016, kicking off what we expect to be a decade of stronger global defense spending," said Fenella McGerty, Principal Analyst at 'IHS Janes'.

By 2020, China is forecast to be spending more than the whole of western Europe on defense and by 2025, more than all the states in the Asia-Pacific region combined.



Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

19 days left for Army Chief Dalbir Singh's retirement, successor yet to be named

General Dalbir Singh's appointment was announced 80 days prior to his predecessor General Bikram Singh's retirement on July 31, 2014.

There are only 19 days to go for the retirement of Army Chief General Dalbir Singh, but his successor is yet to be announced. Usually the new Army chief is announced 60 days before the incumbent retires.

General Dalbir Singh's appointment was announced 80 days prior to his predecessor General Bikram Singh's retirement on July 31, 2014. General Bikram Singh's name was announced in March 2012, 90 days before he

assumed office as Army chief on June 1, 2012. General V K Singh was announced as the next Army chief in January 2010, more than two months prior to assuming office in April 2010.

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has publicly stated that the file for appointment of the new Army chief is with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The name is announced after the selection by the PMO is formally approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). Defence Ministry sources told The Indian Express that it is not a matter of public discourse.

Barring one instance in 1983, when Lt General S K Sinha was overlooked for the post despite being the seniormost, India has followed the principle of seniority in selecting the Army chief. As per seniority, Lt General Praveen Bakshi, who heads Kolkata-headquartered Eastern Command, should succeed General Dalbir Singh on January 1, 2017. The delay in making the announcement has led to speculation that Lt General Bakshi may be overlooked by the ACC this time.

This speculation is based on three factors. When the post of Army vice-chief fell vacant in September, Lt General Bakshi was expected to move into that role to allow his smooth transition to the post of Army chief. But Lt General Bipin Rawat, junior to Lt General Bakshi, was moved from Southern Command in Pune as the vice-chief. Another factor was Parrikar's public pronouncements that seniority should not be the only criterion for making senior military appointments. Parrikar, however, never said this explicitly with reference to the post of Army chief.

Within the Army, many have referred to the fact that Lt General Bakshi is an armoured corps officer. While armoured corps is a fighting arm like infantry, it will be after nearly two decades that an armoured corps officer could take the post dominated by the infantry in recent past.

There is also speculation that Lt General Bakshi could be promoted to the post of Chief of Defence Staff or Permanent Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee. Parrikar had told The Indian Express last month that the decision to appoint a CDS is political and would only be taken after he has studied the Shekatkar committee report. The committee, formed to study defence spending and combat readiness, submitted its report to Parrikar in October.

The incoming Army chief usually requires a certain period to take over from the outgoing chief. With the outgoing chief busy in the last fortnight of his stint with ceremonial send-offs, the delay in appointment would leave very little time for the incoming general to understand all the issues. The Defence Ministry refused to comment on the subject.



Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

Direct entry for NCC girls as Air Force pilots in offing

TAKING WING

Among the Services, the IAF has maximum women officers who fly transport aircraft and helicopters

1,584 women officers
in the Indian Air Force

1,512 in the Army | **453** in the Navy

The Air Force is opening its doors to female NCC C-Certificate holders for direct entry as commissioned officers in the flying branch. The benefit is at present available only to male cadets.

“A related policy has already been cleared by the Air Headquarters and is expected to be implemented within next few months,” a senior officer said. “We hope the policy comes into effect when the forthcoming induction cycle begins.”

This would be a big advantage for cadets aspiring to be Air Force pilots. The IAF has a large number of women pilots who fly transport aircraft and helicopters. On an experimental basis, the IAF inducted three women pilots in the fighter stream this year. The IAF has 1,584 women officers, followed by 1,512 in the Army and 453 in the Navy. Unlike the other two services, the

number of women officers joining the IAF has shown a consistent rise over the past three years, with the

intake being 144, 155 and 223 for 2013, 2014 and 2015. The IAF's direct entry scheme allows NCC Air Wing C-Certificate holders, who fulfil the stipulated age and education criteria, to bypass the written entrance examination and appear directly for interview before the Services Selection Board (SSB). The cadets have to apply through their respective air squadrons and the Directorate General, NCC.

Apart from basic military and adventure training, the NCC also imparts flying training to cadets and a formal syllabus is prescribed for them. They have to pass written and practical examination to obtain the C-Certificate over a three-year period. The Army and the Navy also have separate entry schemes and reservation of seats in training academies for C-Certificate holders.



Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

Weapon with silencer used in attack on Nagrota army camp

They (Pakistan) made few strikes, after which since the last 11 days no ceasefire violation has been reported on the border. Manohar Parrikar, Defence minister, on peace along the Indo-Pak border and Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir

Srinagar: Terrorists, who stormed the army camp at Nagrota in Jammu region on November 29, used a silencer-fitted weapon to kill a sentry before gaining entry into the premises, a tactic adopted by 'fidayeen' (suicide attackers) for the first time in the troubled state.

After sneaking into the camp from the rear side, which had thick vegetation that provided natural cover of elephant grass, one of the terrorists fired at the sentry using a silencer-fitted weapon, official sources said.

As someone noticed the fall of the sentry, panic gripped the army camp, which houses an artillery unit having presence of families of soldiers. Soon firing erupted.

The sources said night illuminators were fired to locate the terrorists who had by then entered an adjacent two-storey building where families of soldiers were staying.

Anticipating a hostage-like situation, the army troops with the help of para-commandos rescued the women and children first before launching a final onslaught on the terrorists.

Drones were pressed into the service which helped the snipers eliminate the terrorists inside the camp, the sources said.

Seven army personnel, including two officers, were killed in the attack by the three terrorists, who were also eliminated in the counteroffensive which lasted nearly four hours.

Seeking to joining the dots related to the attack, multiple security agencies have indicated that three attackers had infiltrated into India from across the international border at Hiranagar in Kathua district of Jammu region.

The security agencies had recovered an iCom wireless set near a tree in Hirnagar that matched the frequency of the sets carried by the militants, sources said.

The case is now being probed by National Investigation Agency (NIA).

THE ASIAN AGE

Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

INS Betwa's tumble: Where does the fault lie?

INS Betwa is a product of GRSE Kolkata and not that of Mazagon Dock.

It took almost 11 years for India's Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers to build the Brahmaputra-class (Project 16A) full-load (displacement 4,521-tonne) frigate INS Betwa, which was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 7, 2004. Thereafter, it took more than 12 years for the same ship to tumble (or "tilt-sink")

in a Mumbai dry dock, killing and wounding sailors. Nothing perhaps could be more demoralising for naval personnel. I was witness to the commissioning of INS Betwa with fanfare at GRSE, Kolkata. But it is time for course-correction, rather than bickering past follies, failures and mistakes. The Indian Navy belongs to the nation and not to a handful of people. Indians have every right to analyse and give suggestions.

Let us first understand the genealogy of the “fallen” frigate INS Betwa. India’s first indigenous 2,952-tonne (British Leander class) frigate Nilgiri in late 1960s was succeeded by modified design thereof (4,277 tonne) three Godavari-class frigates with 72 per cent indigenous content.

All three Godavari-class frigates, commissioned between 1983 and 1988, were products of Mazagon Dock Ltd, Mumbai. And INS Betwa, being the successor of the Godavari-class, was one of the three Brahmaputra-class frigates with 86 per cent indigenous component.

Thus, its boilers and turbines are from Bhopal, radars made by Bharat Electronics and fire control systems, sonars, combat data system are also of Indian origin. Nevertheless, all three frigates witnessed time and cost overruns before being commissioned which, in turn, did affect the desired level of operational preparedness. The delay was also a result of post-USSR collapse, resulting in chaos in the combat ship-building enterprise of India. One referred to INS Betwa’s genealogy to appreciate how difficult and painstaking India’s naval asset indigenisation has been. Further, one needs to appreciate that no country, however friendly it may appear to be, is unlikely to give the latest and the best of naval technology to a developing naval state like India, notwithstanding the sole exception of former USSR’s sustained contribution to the development of the Indian fleet in the past. Today, no (Western) developed nation is likely to replicate the Indo-Soviet naval cooperation from 1960s to 1990s.

The reason being the indigenisation of the Indian Navy is a direct challenge to the established naval technology of the Western world order, thereby resulting in potential loss of employment, economics and engineering edge for the export market. Hence, any help or assistance therefrom can never be either selfless or unconditional. That is understandable. On their part, it has to enter into the Indian machine, market, military and money. In the memorable words of US President Barack Obama, “to pry open the Indian market”. Now let us come back to the plight of INS Betwa in the Mumbai dry dock. The sinking of INS Betwa is serious as it occurred in a dry dock. Fighting ships sinking in the sea or getting damaged in choppy waters or taking torpedoes and missiles in war are understandable. But sinking in a dry dock during refit and refurbishing is not acceptable. Brave words like “INS Betwa will be salvaged as per original deadline of 2018” are music to the ears, but before that there is lot to put things into the right perspective. It has to be remembered that INS Betwa is a product of GRSE Kolkata and not that of Mazagon Dock. Hence, doing normal refurbishing a 3,850-tonne frigate in normal times would be entirely different from complete “redoing” a badly mauled machine in an unprecedented mishap with major damage to its vital electronics and other sophisticated machinery.

It may also emerge as equivalent to a virtual new construction — the economics of which may not be commensurate with its restoration cost. Hence, to make highly optimistic statement pertaining to the damaged ship’s restoration and redeployment by 2018 is good for morale but a bit premature before getting detailed reports from/of the competent authority on the damaged boat. Also, the Brahmaputra-class frigate is no longer in production, as Beas, the last of the class, was commissioned way back in July 11, 2005. In fact, GRSE Kolkata no longer produces any deep seagoing frigate on date as gleaned from Jane’s Fighting Ships 2016-2017. It is now producing only displacement tonne 3,150 full load Kamorta-class multipurpose corvettes, designed to operate in Indian offshore waters.

Thus, things certainly do not look as simple as it is being projected. Bringing foreign experts and professionals and equipment (as Mazagon Dock reportedly does not have the suitable wherewithal to put in place the tilted 3,850 tonne frigate) are all going to cost a fortune to the state exchequer.

Also, Mazagon Dock is now into bigger league. After having completed the Godavari-class frigate in 1988, it has gone heavier and higher, first having manufactured the 6,808-tonne full load displacement destroyer INS Delhi in November 1997.

Although INS Delhi took 10 years to be commissioned, the subsequent 7,292-tonne full load displacement destroyers INS Kolkata, INS Kochi and INS Chennai, too, took between 10 and 11 years to be operational. And that is an unacceptable time and cost overrun if India wants to be in league with the Chinese Navy.

In this scenario, it would be interesting to see and challenging to undertake the fate and future of INS Betwa in light of recent experience of Mazagon Dock's manufacturing of three 6,299-tonne full load displacement Shivalik-class frigates. Each of the three boats took a minimum of eight years and nine months.

One simply wishes to point out the facts with a sense of urgency. When new ships are taking long to commission, one wonders as to how much time, effort and money will be required to first make a tilted ship stand on its feet, repair, refit, refurbish and put her back to the sea?

Lastly, I wonder why so many recent mishaps are occurring in the Indian fleet? What has gone wrong? Are these really accidents? Or, is there something more than which meets the eye? Is someone compromising India's national security from within?

Business Standard

Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

Will India remain a key defence ally for the US?

While ties between the two countries improved under Manohar Parrikar and Ashton Carter, India must keep a keen eye on how things take shape under Donald Trump

A senior American official describes a recent meeting between US Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter and India's Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, who have already met seven times since the latter was appointed in November 2014. Despite their relentless efforts to invigorate the US-India defence partnership, lamented Carter, there was always more to be done. He concluded by likening this to Zeno's Paradox. "There was an uncomfortable silence in the room. We shuffled our feet and tried to look like we knew the first thing about Zeno's Paradox," says the US official.

"Then, to relief all around, Parrikar broke the silence with the comment that Zeno's Paradox was indeed a good description. The Indian Institute of Technology graduate explained that the ancient Greek had postulated, in his Dichotomy Paradox, that a destination could never be reached because, one had first to reach the half-way mark; at which point half the journey still remained. When one covered half of that, half still remained. In this manner, there would always be half of some distance remaining to be covered, howsoever small. Thus, the journey could never be completed.

Such was the peculiar bond between Carter, a technocrat and academic; and Parrikar, an engineer and politician, who both were convinced that a close defence relationship was vital for both Washington and New Delhi. Over the last two years, they have set course pragmatically, steering over speed bumps and obstacles, to achieve a number of successes that testify to the solidity of the relationship. Amongst them are the "Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship", signed in 2015; and a long postponed "Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement" (LEMOA) signed this year.

In addition, Carter and Parrikar have solidified an entire edifice of discussion bodies, providing forums in which Washington and New Delhi's bureaucracies negotiated the new relationship. Some of these, like the apex Defence Policy Group and the Military Cooperation Group, predated the current ministers. Stellar progress But the real driver of the relationship was the newly-created Defence Technology and Trade Initiative, which explored co-development programmes that had the potential to really build trust and overcome decades of suspicion between the two new partners. Also created by Carter in the Pentagon was an India Rapid Reaction Cell that processed India-related issues on priority.

With Carter due to demit office in late-January, all this hung in the balance. The India policy was an initiative of the Obama administration, and there was no certainty that it would be followed up by President-elect Donald Trump and his chosen defence secretary, General James Mattis.

Even before Trump won the election, questions were being asked about whether Hillary Clinton would accord New Delhi the priority that Obama's administration had done. Obama's successor, or another president down the line, could easily have reversed course, walking away from the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative, shutting down the India Rapid Reaction Cell and abandoning the idea that India was a special partner, vital to Washington's interests in Indo-Asia-Pacific.

This uncertainty was removed with the passage of the National Defence Authorization Act of 2017 (NDAA 2017), in which Section 1292 is headed "Enhancing Defence and Security Cooperation with India". Over the last fortnight, NDAA passed the House of Representatives (375-34) and the Senate (92-7). When Obama signs NDAA 2017 into law this week, the US-India partnership will be enshrined in US legislation, binding every succeeding administration, whatever its inclinations, to treat India as a "major defence partner".

While the US Congress was (as the voting pattern indicates) solidly behind the India legislation, it would have been tempting fate to introduce it as a standalone "USIndia Partnership Bill". Most small bills introduced in the US Congress disappear without a trace into what is essentially a legislative black hole that has time only for the really big things — and sometimes not even for those. So, like many other strongly supported legislations, the US-India legislation was made to piggy-back on the NDAA 2017, which must be passed each year since it allocates funding for the American defence forces.

This was the method followed to legislate the US-Israel defence partnership, which has ensured that Israel remains the pre-eminent military power in West Asia. In 2008, a similar amendment, the Naval Vessel Transfer Act, contained the clause that binds Washington to ensuring that Israel enjoys a "qualitative military edge" over every potential adversary.

Effectively, the bill enjoins the US secretaries of defence and state to recognise India as a "major defence partner of the US". It mandates the appointment of an official to pursue the Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship, a 10-year agreement signed in 2015, which lays down an elaborate agenda for the partnership.

Official sources in Washington and New Delhi are whispering about a new big-ticket project about to be announced under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative

Going forward New Delhi will be carefully watching who the Trump administration appoints; the official's seniority and influence would be an indicator of how important the new president considers the US-India relationship.

The India section also enshrines the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative and the India Rapid Reaction Cell into US law. This means the continuation of the US-India development projects that were taken up under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative last year: joint development of the Indian Navy's next-generation aircraft carrier, INS Vishal, and the crucial high-temperature "hot section" of an experimental jet engine.

Official sources in Washington and New Delhi are whispering about a new big-ticket project about to be announced under the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative. There is speculation this might involve building a jet fighter in India.

The passage of the legislation was not without drama. In summer, the House of Representatives had passed NDAA 2017, along with an "India amendment" introduced by Representative George Holding. But, due to infighting in the Senate over a barely connected matter, the India amendment was left out of NDAA 2017.

Eventually, the House-Senate conference that met to reconcile the two versions of the NDAA 2017, agreed to include the India amendment in the final version. This is a measure of India's influence on Capitol Hill and a stark reversal from the days when most legislations relating to South Asia were directed at providing Pakistan exceptions from sanctions over its clandestine nuclear project, its trampling of democracy through military coups, and its support to terrorist groups.

India saves \$69m in US aircraft deal

The Defence Ministry has been able to make a valuable saving of almost \$69 million (₹470 crore) in the deal for acquiring six C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft from the US. The savings have come, courtesy the procedures involved in government to government deals between India and America. India had signed the ₹4,000 crore deal for the second batch of six C-130J Super Hercules from the US at the end of 2013 through the American Foreign Military Sales route under which the planes are to be provided by the US Air Force to the Indian Air Force. “We saved \$69 million (Rs. 470 crore) due to the tendering process done by the American government for supplying the planes to us in the C-130J Super Hercules,” senior Defence Ministry sources told MAIL TODAY here. As per the procedures, after India finalises defence deals with the US for military hardware, the American government issues tenders to their vendors for acquiring different set of equipment for the platform. “In the deal for second batch of C-130Js, the American government followed the tendering process and was able to save \$69 million for the six planes,” they said. India and the US deal in military equipment through two routes.

■ India made a saving of ₹470 crore in C-130J Super Hercules plane deal with US

■ India had signed deal for six of these planes for IAF in 2013 for ₹4,000 crore

■ Planes to be based in Panagarh in West Bengal

■ Money saved to be utilised

OVERSEAS SAVINGS

for making future payments for defence deals with US

■ ₹2 billion lying in US government treasury for Indian defence deals

The most common route is FMS through which Indian government procures directly from the US government while in the second route known as the Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) route, the Indian forces can procure directly from private American defence firms. The sources said the savings can be utilised by India in making payments for future defence deals between India and US. India recently signed a

deal for the 145 Ultra Light Howitzers with the US for equipping its Army's Corps of Artillery which has been deprived of a new gun for almost three decades. The IAF already has a fleet of six similar planes which are deployed at the Hindon air base here and the force uses it for carrying out special operations including landing on inhospitable air strips in the Ladakh area. The first batch of six aircraft from the US was acquired at a cost of around ₹5,500 crore.

The new lot of six planes will be located at Panagarh in West Bengal, which would be headquarters of the proposed Mountain Strike Corps of the army along the China border. The aircraft is capable of airdropping commandos and material in darkness due to its night-vision imaging. It can prove very handy in wartime due to its ability for special air operations and transport of material and supplies. The four-engine planes with Rolls Royce engines has the technology and configuration to perform low-level precision landing. India and the US have done defence deals worth over \$15 billion (₹1,011 crore) in the last decade after military trade was opened with America. American equipment including C-17 Globemaster heavylift aircraft and Apache attack and Chinook heavylift choppers have either been inducted or would be flying in service in next few years.

THE ASIAN AGE

India-US ties: Going to a whole new level?

“Major defence partner” and “major non-Nato ally” are the same in practical terms.

Although of uncertain value, India-US relations took a mammoth stride last week when the US Senate cleared a bill which characterises India as a “major defence partner”, a description which President Barack Obama already conferred on this country during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington in June. On that

visit, Mr Modi had waxed eloquent about the need to “overcome the hesitations of history”, in the process making his disavowal known of the history of India-US ties, which was rooted in India’s pronounced hesitation to accept any country’s hegemony.

Mr Modi also laid out his agenda for ties with America. He can now be said to have delivered. The joint statement signed when US secretary of state John Kerry was here in August had noted that robust defence ties were the “bedrock” of bilateral strategic and commercial ties. In this context, it made a reference to the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (Lemoa), a “foundational” defence agreement that defence minister Manohar Parrikar and US defence secretary Ashton Carter had just signed, and the title of “major defence partner” that President Obama envisaged.

America has entertained major security arrangements with several countries around the planet after World War II, the most important being Nato with the West Europeans. In other geographical theatres, the association was typically categorised as “major non-Nato ally”. The list includes Pakistan, a long-time US client state and servitor of its interests in the region, which is now seeking to spread its eggs to the Chinese basket.

As for the spheres of defence and security, India has thus reached parity with Pakistan in pursuit of US favours. “Major defence partner” and “major non-Nato ally” are the same in practical terms.

It’s all about sharing defence technologies, co-production of armaments and dovetailing defence plans with the US approach through coordination in military logistics, and in strategic and satellite communications and sensors. Lemoa is in the bag, although our Air Force and Navy weren’t quite enthusiastic about it. Soon enough, CISMOA and BECA, that will complete the garland of “foundational” agreements for defence ties with the US to prosper, may be expected to be finalised. Next we could even have American military advisers in North Block!

Deep-going defence relations with America are likely to impact our foreign and commercial relations with the US — and the rest of the world — to a defining degree. We already share a common view on China through the joint “vision” on the Asia-Pacific. There are two imponderables, though — the impact of all this on traditional friends like Russia and Iran; and whether President-elect Donald Trump, after taking over, will be as internationalist as his predecessors and care too much for inter-penetrative defence relations.



Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

India, Indonesia to step up defence, counter-terrorism ties

New Delhi: India and Indonesia have decided to step up their defence and counter-terrorism ties after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Monday.

Modi said India and Indonesia share the values of pluralism as he welcomed President Widodo on a state visit to the country.

“As the world’s most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia stands for democracy, diversity, pluralism and social harmony. These are also our values,” Modi said. A great deal of focus at the meeting was on security issues and setting out a road to boost defence ties.

The two countries urged for implementation of the UN resolution designating terrorist entities and individuals, in an apparent reference to China blocking India’s move to get Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar designated as a global terrorist by the world body.

The two leaders also asked all countries to work towards eliminating terrorist-safe havens, infrastructure and stopping cross-border terrorism.

The Prime Minister said both sides agreed that early implementation of IndiaASEAN Free Trade Agreement in Services and Investment and finalisation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership would be important steps to further boost trade ties.

Regarding defence and security ties, the two leaders gave a directive for early convening of the defence ministers' dialogue and the joint defence cooperation committee (JDCC) meetings to review and upgrade the existing 'Agreement on Cooperative Activities in the Fields of Defence' to a substantive bilateral defence cooperation agreement.

A separate joint statement on maritime cooperation, outlining the agenda of bilateral engagement in the area, was also issued after the meeting.

THE ASIAN AGE

Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

China says no change in stand on NSG, Azhar issues

China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Geng Shuang on Monday said that Beijing's position remains unchanged on both issues.

Beijing: India's diplomatic efforts to get China's backing for NSG membership bid and getting JeM chief Masood Azhar designated as terrorist by the UN seems to be making no headway with Beijing on Monday saying its stand on the two key issues "remains unchanged".

"As for India's application for Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and listing issue pursuant to resolution of 1267 (to list Masood as terrorist), China's position remains unchanged," China's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Geng Shuang told a media briefing.

His assertion that China's stand remains unchanged on both NSG and Azhar issues was made while answering a question on Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar's remarks at an India—China think tank forum in New Delhi last week when he said China should not give a political colour to New Delhi's efforts to access civilian nuclear technology.

Jaishankar had also expressed dismay over the two countries not being able to come together on the issue of "fundamentalist terrorism" at critical international forums, a reference to China blocking India's bid to get Azhar banned by the UN.

China's second 'technical hold' on Azhar's banning in UN is due to expire at the end of this month and the two countries are in talks on both the NSG and Azhar issues.

Officials here are not clear about the complex process of the UN 1267 committee where China, a veto-wielding member, has blocked India's application twice already, while the rest of the members supported it.

On Jaishankar's remarks that China should respect each other's legitimate aspirations, Geng said as major developing countries it is natural that two countries need not see eye to eye on every issue.

"Thanks to the concerted efforts of China and India the strategic cooperation between the two sides have made all round progress," he said.

"The two sides have been moving toward establishing a more closely knit strategic partnership for cooperation. As two major developing countries it is only natural for us to not see eye to eye on all issues, but the mainstream of the bilateral relationship is cooperation and the two of us are staying in communication on relevant issues," he said.

The Chinese side is looking to work together with the Indian side to expand bilateral mutual beneficial cooperation and manage differences based on consensus reached by leaders of both countries, he said.

On the US Congress clearing the decks for India to become a Major Defence Partner of America, Geng gave a guarded reaction saying that both America and India are important countries.

"We welcome normal state to state relationship between different countries. We hope that the bilateral relationship and cooperation will be conducive to regional peace and development," he said.

Compromise on one-China policy will strain ties, Beijing tells Trump

Kelly to lead Homeland Security

- Donald Trump on Monday formally announced Retired General John Kelly, a 45-year military veteran, as his choice to lead the Department Of Homeland Security. Trump's transition team said in a statement that Kelly would “spearhead the urgent mission of stopping illegal immigration and securing our borders” as well as streamline the Transportation Security Administration and improve ties between US intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Tillerson gets praise from Kremlin

- Moscow: The Kremlin on Monday praised Rex Tillerson, front-runner to be US President-elect Donald Trump's pick for Secretary of State, as highly professional. The appointment would add another figure in Trump's cabinet with close ties to Russia. “As part of his duties as head of one of the biggest oil companies, he had contacts with our representatives,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, said. “He carries out his duties in a highly professional way.”

China today warned US President-elect Donald Trump that bilateral ties will be damaged if he “compromised” with 'one-China policy' by giving weightage to Taiwan, the strongest public condemnation by Beijing against his criticism of America's long-standing policy towards the self-governing island.

“Adherence to one-China principle is the political bedrock of the China-US relations. If it is compromised or disrupted, the sound and steady growth of China-US relationship as well as bilateral cooperation in major field would be out of question,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang told a media briefing here while reacting to Trump's comments.

“Chinese side has noted the relevant report and seriously concerned about that,” Geng said. China's comments came a day after Trump in a television interview questioned the relevance of continuing the 'One-China' policy if Beijing refuses to make any concessions on trade.

The US since 1979 has respected China's stance on Taiwan, which it sees as a breakaway province. But Trump said without concessions from China, he did not see why it should continue.

Replying to a spate of questions over Trump's comments, the first such by US leader on Taiwan in recent years, Geng said, “I want to stress that Taiwan question has a bearing on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and it is related to China's core interests.”

But despite stern reaction with strong words, China has not lodged any diplomatic protest unlike few days back when Trump riled Beijing by holding telephone talk with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, which was an unprecedented move as no US leader has done it so far.

Geng said China wants that the new US administration and its leadership fully recognise the sensitivity of the Taiwan question, stick to one-china policy as well as principles established by the three joint communiques between China and US and properly deal with the Taiwan related questions in a prudent manner so as not to disrupt or damage over all interests of the bilateral relationship.

The Chinese protest reportedly infuriated Trump further as last night he came out with even sterner comments hinting that he may alter US' decades old adherence to One-China policy by having low key back channel relationship with Taiwan.

He also said China was not cooperating with the US on its handling of its currency, on North Korea, or on tensions in the South China Sea.

About his phone call with Tsai, Trump said it was not up to Beijing to decide whether he should take a call from Taiwan's leader. — PTI

Now, Trump targets Lockheed Martin's F-35 fighter jet costs

US President-elect Donald Trump took aim at another major defense contractor on Monday, saying the cost of Lockheed Martin's F-35 fighter jet program was too high. "The F-35 program and cost is out of control. Billions of dollars can and will be saved on military (and other) purchases after January 20th," Trump said on Twitter.

The aerospace giant's shares dropped 2.6 percent in premarket trade after Trump's tweet. A week before Trump won the Nov. 8 presidential election, the U.S. Defense Department and Lockheed Martin concluded negotiations on their ninth contract for F-35 fighter jets after 14 months of negotiations on the deal of more than \$6.1 billion, the Pentagon said.

Trump campaigned on a promise to cut waste in federal government. Last week, he also used Twitter to target Boeing Co for its "out of control" costs on a new fleet of Air Force One planes, urging the federal government to "Cancel order!" Reuters



Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

Check Cyber Crime

As India goes digital fast, its vulnerabilities also grow at a worrying pace

The hacking of the social media accounts of Rahul Gandhi, Vijay Mallya, Barkha Dutt and Ravish Kumar within just a few days draws attention to larger cyber vulnerability in India. With demonetisation pushing Indians to adopt e-platforms at great pace, this vulnerability is also growing fast. Government must show that it takes cybercrimes as seriously as digitising India, which means not just passing tough laws but also implementing them strictly. Pursue and punish the criminals whether it is the hacking of a Twitter account or digital fraud of a few hundred rupees. Don't be complacent about the `minor' infractions because that will embolden `major' security breaches.

This October as many as 3.2 million Indian debit cards were reported to have been compromised in a big breach of financial data. Even as that investigation continues, demonetisation has sent e-banking and e-wallets on the up and up with inadequate digital literacy to cope with this shift. When even long-time email users still keep clicking away at links from unknown and dangerous sources, it's certain that many of the small vendors signing up for Paytm or FreeCharge or MobiKwik today don't really know how to safeguard themselves against data fraud. Government has to do a bigger and better job of educating them about how to stay safe in this brave new world.

These are attractive conditions for cyber criminals. The country's nodal agency to deal with cyber security threats CERT-In has warned that at present micro ATMs and point of sale terminals are particularly vulnerable to hackers. All this is on top of pre-existing laxity in basic safeguards like strong unique passwords, being careful about using public WiFi and securing home WiFi, encrypting important data, and downloading only authorised software.

Besides how demonetisation has now put digital and e-transactions on steroids, the security of the enormous amount of citizen information collected by government is a worry. Huge databases like Aadhaar must be kept hugely safe. Yet the right to privacy still hasn't been enacted into a distinct law. In the long run expanding and securing the country's digital infrastructure should deliver smarter e-governance and a better business

environment. But the only way India will get there is if it's tough on cybercrimes and steadfast in building digital literacy.



Tue, 13 Dec, 2016

Alpha Design, ISRO join hands

Venture to assemble IRNSS

The company had recently signed a multi-million dollar contract with Elbit Systems for manufacturing of 600 VHF communication devices for exports and later for large scale manufacture to cater to the requirements of the Armoured Corps.

Bengaluru: Alpha Design Technologies (ADTL), a leading manufacturer and technological services provider in India's defence and paramilitary markets, has announced the signing of a contract with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), India's space agency, for assembly, integration and testing of IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System).

The Bengaluru-based company is widely known for its capabilities in delivering advanced defence electronics and aero structures, as well as R&D and manufacturing.

In the next two years, with the help of ISRO, the company will be investing in creating, an ultra-modern satellite manufacturing, assembly, integration, testing and qualification facilities, with a view to independently supply four to five satellites to ISRO.

At present, the company is selecting 70 employees which include engineers, diploma holders and ITI qualified, for them to be trained at ISRO for nine months. During the training at ISRO, the Alpha Design Technologies team would be assisted in on-job learning followed by actual assembly, integration and testing.

Speaking to DH, Colonel H S Shankar, Chairman and Managing Director, Alpha Design Technologies, said, "As part of the contract, initially, our teams would get minimum ISRO supervision and later would independently be making complete satellites. We will be investing Rs 100-150 crore in the next two years in setting up a facility close to ISRO. With our foray into space, we have proved that sky is not the limit in moving towards 'Make in India' and ensuring its success."

"Looking at the future prospective engagements with ISRO, the company is expecting to add another 330 engineers, diploma holders and ITI qualified personnel to be part of Alpha Group," he said.

With the signing of the contract with ISRO, the company with turnover of Rs 402 crore for 2015-16, is expecting to increase by Rs 200 -250 crore in coming two years.