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Pinaka rockets test fired

Bhubaneswar: Two rounds of Pinaka rockets were test fired from the range of Proof and Experimental Establishment (PXE), a test facility of DRDO located at Chandipur off Odisha coast, on Monday.

The tests were conducted from a multi-barrel rocket launcher for the second time in last three days. Earlier, two rounds of the rockets were successfully test fired from the same range on Saturday. Defence sources said the tests were conducted in a bid to incorporate a new 'guidance system' in the rocket system which had successfully demonstrated its capability during Kargil war by neutralising enemy positions on mountain tops. "Since then, several improvements have been made in Pinaka rocket system and its Mark-II version also has been developed with enhanced strike range," said a defence official and added that the new guidance system, once incorporated, would make the system more lethal.

Pinaka is the first indigenous rocket system successfully designed, developed and produced by the ARDE with the help of private industries. The system's capability to incorporate several types of warheads makes it deadly for the enemy as it can even destroy their solid structures and bunkers.

The Asian Age
24 May, 2016

Turbulence: How we almost lost Tejas

By B R Srikanth

The fighter jet spent decades just on paper. And its makers were once threatened with imprisonment.

On May 17, a group of Indian Air Force's finest were gathered around in a room buzzing with radio transmissions and lined with consoles. There was nervousness in the air and frowns on faces. Their day in Bengaluru had started according to plan. India would witness the performance of the Tejas fighter jet, their boss, Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha, would be flying in it for the first time, he would take over controls halfway into the 30-minute flight and the jet itself would be flown by ace pilot Group Captain Madhav Rangachari.

But as Group Captain Rangachari fired up the engines of the twin-seat trainer version, Air Chief Marshal Raha, from the rear seat threw up a surprise. He told the pilot he would take over completely — take off, check the jet's agility, throw it into dives, pick a 'target' and then return to Bengaluru's HAL airport. And as the group of stunned IAF officers in command & control stared into monitors, their boss shot off in the direction of Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu, 90 kilometres away, picked a dam as the 'ground target', simulated a strike, tossed the jet around with one of the moves generating a body-crushing 5Gs and then headed back to Bengaluru for a smooth landing.

The Air Chief Marshal was flying after 17 years and in command & control many were looking around for chairs to sit. Because besides the relief, there was much joy. For those who had worked on the plane, this day was once a waking dream.

Tejas, and its May 17 flight, is the result of over 30 years of work and through those three decades, the plane's engineers endured unending taunts and even threats of imprisonment.

Dr V.S. Arunachalam, a former scientific adviser to the defence minister and chief of DRDO remembers the day they almost lost the plane.

“At one meeting in 1991, chaired by then Defence Minister Sharad Pawar, MP Suresh Kalmadi, said we should be sent behind bars because he had found large-scale misappropriation of funds. But Ratan Tata, who was invited to the meeting along with other industrialists had a contrary opinion. Tata told the minister that we had chosen the best technology and if for some reason the government wished to scrap the project, the Tata Group would take over and make the aircraft themselves. Pawar then decided to support us as many others had agreed with Tata,” he says.

India’s Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme (christened ‘Tejas’ by former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee later) began when Indira Gandhi was furious with the Soviets for playing truant while supplying spares for fighter aircraft. Soon, the challenge to make a jet for ourselves, fell on the shoulders of Dr Arunachalam and just about 300 others. They would face much of the bureaucratic hell Indian innovation was during its earliest years.

His successor, the late Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam too, faced problems while steering the project. A major blow came in 1998 — after India’s nuclear tests in Pokhran. Two companies — Lockheed Martin and General Electric — who had agreed to provide expertise to the LCA project pulled their engineers out after a US technology embargo. Their ejection turned the clock back by four years for the project.

The plane first flew on January 4, 2001. “One of the early jokes was that LCA stood for ‘Last chance for Arunachalam’. And when I took over (as Chief of DRDO), they said it was Last Chance for Aatre. Today, critics are all quiet,” says Dr Vasudev Aatre, who headed DRDO when ‘Tejas’ made that first flight 15 years ago. Also, for Air Marshal Philip Rajkumar (Retd), who served as a formidable bridge between IAF and DRDO, and later as project director, the fact that Tejas clocked close to 3,000 hours without a single snag is a formidable achievement. He now wants more of these planes inducted as soon as possible. He joins Air Chief Marshal Raha and many others who believe the Tejas has become, an asset.

And to think we almost lost the plane to mountains of paperwork and Suresh Kalmadi’s accounting.

Defence Aviation Post
24 May, 2016

MoD Finalises Structure of Five Sub-Groups for Strategic Partners for Defence Manufacturing

By Anupama Airy

India’s defence minister Manohar Parrikar has cleared composition of the five sub-groups constituted for focused discussions on the strategic partnership model for selected platforms in the defence sector.

Selection of strategic partners for long term partnership between the ministry of defence and private sector Industry is seen as the most forward looking and bold initiative of the current leadership especially in the backdrop of the fact that India’s defence sector has continued to remain import dominated over the past many decades and since independence. DefenceAviationPost.com has exclusive details on the composition of these sub-groups.

MoD Finalises Structure of Five Sub-Groups For Strategic Partners For Defence Manufacturing



First Sub Group (Armoured Fighting Vehicles):
Chaired by Col (Retd) H S Shankar, Chairman, FICCI Defence sub-committee on Indian Defence SME

Second Sub Group (Aircrafts and Helicopters):
Chaired by Sukaran Singh, Co-Chairman of CII National Committee on Defence

Third Sub Group (Platforms including Submarines and their major systems):
Chaired by Jayant Damodar Patil, Chairman FICCI Defence Committee

Fourth Sub Group (Ammunition including smart ammunition):
Chaired by Neeraj Gupta, MD, MKU Pvt Ltd

Fifth Sub Group (Macro process management):
Chaired by Rajinder Bhatia, Co-chairman, CII national Defence Sub-committee on Land Systems

The first sub-group for Armoured Fighting Vehicles will be chaired by Col (Retd) H S Shankar, Chairman, FICCI Defence sub-committee on Indian Defence SME and will have representatives from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and two star rank officers from the Armoured Division of the Army Headquarters. This sub-group I, that will focus its discussions on platforms including Armoured Fighting Vehicles and their major systems, will also have Lt Gen A V Subramanian (Retd) as a representative of the Dr V K Aatre Task Force. Ravin Kulshreshta, Director (P&C), Department of Defence Production (DDP) will be the facilitator of this sub-group.

Sukaran Singh, Co-Chairman of CII National Committee on Defence will chair the second sub-group, constituted for discussions on platforms including Aircrafts and Helicopters (fighter, transport and their major systems). This group will also have participation from DRDO and two star rank officers from Air Head Quarters. Former Chairman Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), N R Mohanty will represent the Dr V K Aatre Task Force in this Sub-group-II that will be facilitated by R R Thakur, Officer on Special Duty, Defence Offset Management Wing (DOMW), DDP.

Sub-group-III that will focus on platforms including Submarines and their major systems will be chaired by Jayant Damodar Patil, Chairman FICCI Defence Committee and will comprise of representatives from DRDO and two star rank officers from the Naval Head Quarters. Rear Admiral Pritam Lal (Retd), who was member of the Dharendra Singh committee of experts will also be a member of this Sub-group-III on submarines.

Ammunition including smart ammunition will be the focus area for Sub-group-IV that will be chaired by Neeraj Gupta, MD, MKU Pvt Ltd and nominee of industry association, ASSOCHAM. As in other sub-groups, this sub-group will have DRDO representatives and two star rank officers from the Army HQs. This sub-group will be facilitated by Wing Commander Vani Mishra, PO (Systems).

Sub-group V will look into macro process management of issues related to eco-system, technical competence, financial evaluation, weightage to existing infrastructure,

commitment of partner for life cycle support and other regulatory matters. This sub-group will be chaired by Rajinder Bhatia, Co-chairman, CII national Defence Sub-committee on Land Systems and will also comprise of DRDO representatives. This sub-group will have two star rank officers from the service Headquarters (Army, Navy or Airforce). Kaushik Dutta, Director, Thought Arbitrage Research Institute and Dr Ashish Bhattacharya, Prof and Head, School of corporate governance and public policy, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (Ministry of Corporate Affairs) will be the two representatives of the Dr V K Aatre Task Force in this sub-group that will be facilitated by Praveen Kumar, Director (Acquisitions).

Sources said that the Chairman of each of the five Sub-Groups have been asked to expeditiously complete the discussions on their relevant topics and be ready with their respective presentations within 10 days (latest by June 3rd, 2016).

It may be recalled that Defence Minister Parrikar had held a consultative meeting with the industry associations on April 25 on the issue of strategic partners for defence sector from private sector. This meeting was held to get views of the industry on selection criteria before formulating the policy on selection of strategic partners for defence manufacturing.

“After 10 days, in the first week of June, the five sub-groups will make recommendations to the Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar in another consultative committee meeting,” sources said.

The task force under former DRDO chief Dr V.K. Aatre, appointed for the specific purpose, has come out with detailed framework and criteria for selection of Strategic partnership among Private sector.

The industry consultation meetings being spearheaded by Parrikar is aimed at creating a trust based model for few select, technologically complex and large long duration programs without compromising on the transparency and probity needed in the entire Defence acquisition process.