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Major policy push to make submarines in India

By Ajai Shukla

Steered by Defence Minister, new norms to rope in domestic private firms as partners

The missing link in a number of crucial defence procurements, especially the much-delayed Project 75I (referred to as 75-India) to build six conventional submarines for the Navy, is close to being resolved.

According to sources, the “strategic partner” policy has been finalised. It is currently before the defence secretary for approval, after which it will be cleared by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, who has made it a personal mission. The file would go to the finance ministry before final clearance by the Cabinet.

The “strategic partner” policy spells out guidelines for nominating private Indian defence firms as partners of choice for building submarines, warships, fighter aircraft, helicopters, tanks, etc. Foreign vendors selling India these platforms would be required to transfer technology to the designated Indian “strategic partner”, which would manufacture the platform in India, and support it through its service life.

The “strategic partner” policy was to be a part of the Defence Procurement Policy of 2016 (DPP-2016). But reservations within the ministry over the method of identifying partner companies forced the issuance of DPP-2016 with a missing Chapter 6. Now, Chapter 6 — the “strategic partner” policy — is close to being cleared.

Nobody is more pleased about this than the Navy. The Project 75I remained held up for the want of a strategic partner. The ministry has favoured a proposal to build four Project 75I submarines at Mazagon Dock, Mumbai (MDL), and the remaining two through the designated “strategic partner”.

Recently, Vice Admiral GS Pabby, the Navy’s warship construction and acquisition chief, indicated that Project 75I could soon be globally tendered. He revealed the delay in the “strategic partner” policy arose from “complications that needed to be sorted out”, but were now almost resolved.

The biggest hurdle was a covenant that the ministry needed to provide each strategic partner, stipulating that the partner would automatically benefit from follow-on orders and other benefits. Such a requirement had been spelt out in the V K Aatre recommendations for identifying strategic partners. However, ministry bureaucrats were less willing. Defence industry insiders believe the first two major contracts that the promulgation of the “strategic partner” policy would unleash are: A light fighter production line, and Project 75I.

Pabby confirmed that the six Project 75I vessels would incorporate indigenous AIP, based on advanced “fuel cell technology”, developed by the Defence R&D Organisation (DRDO). A submarine equipped with AIP can remain underwater for longer periods, making it difficult for the enemy to detect it.

In contrast, submarines propelled by traditional diesel-electric systems (like all of India’s submarine fleet, including the Scorpenes currently being built) require to surface periodically — usually every 48-72 hours — to recharge batteries. A surfaced submarine is vulnerable to detection by the enemy. The DRDO’s AIP system is being produced by an industrial partner, Larsen & Toubro. That would provide L&T a significant advantage when the ministry selects a strategic partner for submarine building.

Project 75I is regarded as crucial for the Navy’s operational credibility. Its submarine fleet is down to just 13 vessels, against the 24 regarded as essential. Six Scorpene submarines being built at MDL are running late, but should all be in service by the end of this decade. The Navy had kept open an option for DCNS — the Scorpene’s French vendor — to provide AIP for the last two Scorpene vessels. However, Pabby ruled out AIP for those. Separately, Pabby declined to comment on media reports that India’s first nuclear ballistic missile submarine, INS Arihant, had been commissioned into Navy in August. However, he stated: “There will soon be an opportunity to talk about it”. The Arihant has no naval operational role. It operates under the Strategic Forces Command, lurking underwater for months at a stretch, ready to fire nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles at any enemy that ventured to launch a “first strike” against India.

Indo-Russian chopper deal half-baked

By Ajit K Dubey

IN GOA, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the deal for buying 200 Kamov- 226T helicopters, which would be critical for maintaining the Indian Army positions in the Siachen Glacier. It was believed that the first major Make in India deal would help in ending the long wait of the two forces for light helicopters to replace their fleet of Cheetah and Chetak helicopters. But even now there are several points including price which can cause further delays and cost overrun. “It is being stated that the deal would cost around US\$ one billion but the fact is that the two sides are far from reaching any agreement on the price of the helicopters. In fact, the Russian side has not even talked about the price of the deal,” senior Defence Ministry sources told MAIL TODAY here. Determination of the price for the deal would prove to be a difficult issue as India would get 60 choppers off the shelf from Russian Helicopters while the remaining 140 will have to be built in India at a facility to be jointly developed by both state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and the Russian Helicopters



. “The cost of the choppers to be brought directly from Russia would be much less than that of the machines manufactured in India which would also include the charges for transfer of technology and cost of setting up a new facility,” they said. Price has been a critical issue in defence deals involving Russia as several deals such as the under-development Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft and Multirole Transport Aircraft projects have been stuck because

of the sudden and exorbitant cost hikes by Moscow. The biggest example of India suffering due to price hike was the INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier project which was to cost US\$ 900 million at the time of signing in 2004, but was delivered in 2014 after an additional cost of US\$ 1.2 billion in 2014. Ministry sources said the quick decision to get new choppers for the forces was the need of the hour for the forces but the Indian side will have to be careful while dealing with the Russians in terms of pricing. Sources revealed that there is also confusion about the business model of the project as the government wants the project to involve a big private sector player and the cost of the programme would go up further as the Made in India component in the helicopter is increased over the years. It was believed that the production of the choppers would take place at HAL’s facility in Karnataka but now the production unit for Kamovs may have to be set up at a new site.



Embraer deal: DRDO-Air Force panel members under lens

A joint committee of Air Force and Defence Research and Development Organisation officials that had short-listed Embraer for procurement of three aircraft has come under the Central Bureau of Investigation scanner in connection with bribery allegations in the \$208-million deal.

The DRDO signed the deal in July 2008 to buy three fully modified aircraft from Embraer to be used in a project to build indigenous airborne early warning and control systems for the Air Force.

The Defence Ministry, on whose reference the CBI has initiated an investigation, says a joint committee set up by the Air Force and the DRDO had short-listed Embraer after evaluating several options. The procurement was made from the Brazilian company allegedly on a single-vendor basis.

The CBI has registered the case against the U.K.-based NRI defence consultant Vipin Khanna, Embraer, the Singapore-based Interdev Pte Ltd., and unknown government officials for an alleged pay-off of \$5.76 million in 2009 to help the company bag the contract.

It is alleged that even before the DRDO floated the tender, Mr. Khanna had provided some of the related documents to the company. The CBI says the 87-year-old middleman had used the commission to influence some DRDO and Defence Ministry officials.

On Friday, the agency searched the premises of Mr. Khanna in his presence. A lookout circular has been issued against him to ensure that he does not fly out of the country.

Mr. Khanna had earlier come under the CBI scrutiny in a gun deal with a South African company named Denel. But the agency did not file a charge sheet in the case due to lack of prosecutable evidence.

पंजाब केसरी

Sun, 23 Oct, 2016

पाकिस्तान के नए सेना प्रमुख की घोषणा शीघ्र

इस्लामाबाद, (भाषा): पाकिस्तान सरकार एक सप्ताह या 10 दिन के अंदर यह घोषणा कर देगी कि निवर्तमान सेना प्रमुख जनरल राहील शरीफ की जगह कौन लेगा। एक वरिष्ठ मंत्री ने बताया कि नवंबर अंत तक राहील शरीफ सेवानिवृत्त होने वाले हैं।

पाकिस्तान समाचार एजेंसी ने वरिष्ठ मंत्री तारिक फजल चौधरी के हवाले से बताया, “सरकार ने अब तक इस बारे में (कौन नया सेना प्रमुख होगा) फैसला नहीं किया है लेकिन हफ्ता या 10 दिन में वह उनके नाम की घोषणा कर दी जाएगी।” जनरल राहील शरीफ ने

कई महीने पहले यह घोषणा की थी कि अपने पूर्ववर्ती जनरल अशफाक परवेज कयानी की तरह उन्हें दूसरा कार्यकाल नहीं चाहिए।

घरेलू और बाहरी सुरक्षा चुनौतियों के बीच पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री नवाज शरीफ की सरकार पर जनरल राहील शरीफ के उत्तराधिकारी के नाम को लेकर अनिश्चितता खत्म करने का दबाव है। पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री किसी भी वरिष्ठ लेफ्टिनेंट जनरल को सेना प्रमुख के तौर पर चुन सकते हैं और वह अधिकारियों की वरिष्ठता का अनुकरण करने के लिए बाध्य नहीं हैं।

‘Mars probe exploded on impact’

London: European Space Agency’s Mars lander may have exploded on impact with the red planet, scientists suggest after preliminary analysis of new images taken by a NASA probe. ESA’s ExoMars Schiaparelli entered the Martian atmosphere on October 19 for its 6-minute descent to the surface, but contact was lost shortly before expected touchdown. Data recorded by its mothership, the Trace Gas Orbiter, are being analysed to understand what happened during the descent sequence, ESA said. Nasa’s Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) identified new markings on the surface of the Red Planet that are believed to be related to Schiaparelli entry, descent and landing technology demonstrator module. The low-resolution CTX camera on-board the MRO took pictures of the expected touchdown site in Meridiani Planum on October 20 as part of a planned imaging campaign. The image has a resolution of 6 metres per pixel and shows two new features on the surface when compared to an image ExoMars Schiaparelli entered the Martian atmosphere on October 19 for its 6-minute descent to the surface, but contact was lost shortly before expected touchdown from the same camera taken in May this year. One of the features is bright and can be associated with the 12 metre diameter parachute used in the second stage of Schiaparelli’s descent, after the initial heat shield entry.

The parachute and the associated back shield were released from Schiaparelli prior to the final phase, during which its nine thrusters should have slowed it to a standstill just above the surface. The other new feature is a fuzzy dark patch roughly 15x40 metres in size and about 1 km north of the parachute. This is interpreted as arising from the impact of the Schiaparelli module itself following a much longer free fall than planned, after the thrusters were switched off prematurely.

नवभारत टाइम्स

....इसलिए गायब हो जाते हैं जहाज

बरमूडा ट्रायंगल का रहस्य सुलझाने का वैज्ञानिकों ने दावा किया है। वैज्ञानिकों ने कहा है कि बरमूडा ट्रायंगल अटलांटिक महासागर में 5 लाख स्क्वियर किलोमीटर का हिस्सा है। पिछले 100 साल में 75 एरोप्लेन और 100 से ज्यादा छोटे-बड़े जहाज इसका शिकार हो चुके हैं। वहीं 1000 से ज्यादा लोगों की मौत हो चुकी है। दरअसल, यहां 6 एंगल वाले (हेक्सागोनल) बादल हवा में बम विस्फोट की मौजूदगी के बराबर शक्ति रखते हैं। इनके साथ 170 मील प्रति घंटे (करीब 273 किमी प्रति घंटे) की रफ्तार से हवाएं चलती हैं। साइंस चैनल 'वॉट ऑन अर्थ' पर प्रसारित रिपोर्ट में दावा किया गया है कि अजीब तरह के बादलों की मौजूदगी के चलते ही हवाई जहाज और पानी के जहाजों के गायब होने की घटनाएं बरमूडा ट्रायंगल के आसपास देखने को मिलती हैं। ये बादल देखने में बेहद अजीब होते हैं। एक बादल का दायरा कम से कम 45 फीट होता है। ये बादल और हवाएं मिलकर जब किसी जहाज या एरोप्लेन से टकराते हैं तो उन्हें खींचकर समुद्र के तल में ले जाते हैं।

कहां है बरमूडा ट्रायंगल?

गौरतलब है कि बरमूडा ट्रायंगल का खतरनाक इलाका अटलांटिक महासागर में है। यह फ्लोरिडा के मियामी, बरमूडा आईलैंड और प्योर्टो रिको के सैन जुआन के बीच है। इन तीनों जगहों को सीधी लाइन से आपस में मिला दिया जाए तो एक ट्रायंगल बनता है। इस इलाके से रोजाना कई जहाज निकलते हैं। वहीं हेक्सागोनल बादल के चलते हर साल औसतन 4 प्लेन और 20 जहाज यहां से गायब होते हैं।

हवा में ब्लास्ट की ताकत

मीडिया रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, वैज्ञानिकों ने दावा किया है कि हवाएं बड़े-बड़े बादलों का निर्माण करती हैं। ये बादल विस्फोट की तरह समुद्र से टकराते हैं, जो सुनामी से भी ऊंची लहरें पैदा करते हैं। ये लहरें आपस में टकराकर और ज्यादा ऊर्जा पैदा करती हैं। कोलोराडो स्टेट यूनिवर्सिटी के मेट्रोलॉजिस्ट रैंडी कैरवेनी के मुताबिक, यह बादल 'एयर बम' बनाते हैं या हवा में बम ब्लास्ट जैसी ताकत पैदा करते हैं। बरमूडा आईलैंड के दक्षिणी हिस्से में ये बादल बनते हैं और फिर 20 से 55 मील तक का सफर तय करते हैं।

India needs data breach disclosure law

Did you get a message from your bank in the last one month, asking you to change the PIN? If yes, it's time for you to start seeking some answers from your bank. If you have noticed, last week a major data breach related to debit cards in India came to light. According to a report — and it is still not covering the full extent of breach because no one outside the banking system knows what is going on — information related to as many as 32 lakh debit cards belonging to Indian banks is out there in the hands of cyber criminals. And yet, neither banks nor the government have shown any willingness to make public disclosure of the breach. All that the banks have done is send a message to people saying they should change the PIN. Why the PIN needs to be changed? What really happened? Are customers at some serious risk from cyber criminals? Was the information related to their cards leaked? None of these questions have been answered. The reason is simple: In India, banks — or for that matter any organisation or company that deals in private data — have no obligation to report data breaches or hacking incidents. The Indian consumers don't have the same sort of cyber protection and right to transparency that people get in countries like the US, Australia or in the European Union states. For example Yahoo suffered a data breach in 2014.

The company recently figured out that its data was stolen. Accordingly, it informed Yahoo users who suffered the breach. Interestingly, data breaches happen in India all the time but no one really knows who is at fault or what sort of cyber security practices banks and organisations follow here. Most incidents don't even come to light. We don't know how details of 32 lakh ATM cards leaked in this instances.

We don't know if the breach was at the RBI or some private bank that is part of the network. We don't know if it was Hitachi's systems that leaked information or if it happened due to some issue at Master Card or Visa. The companies that suffer data breaches obviously want to keep it a secret. But the government should be pro-consumers and pro transparency.

It ought to bring in a law that mandates public disclosure of data breaches. Sure, banks won't like it. But keeping it all secret in the case of data breach means missing out on the chance to improve the state of cyber security. And for a country that Dreams of Digital India, this is very dangerous.