

समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

दैनिक सामयिक अभिज्ञता सेवा
A daily Current Awareness Service

Vol. 42 No. 140 22 July 2017



रक्षा विज्ञान पुस्तकालय
Defence Science Library
रक्षा वैज्ञानिक सूचना एवं प्रलेखन केन्द्र
Defence Scientific Information & Documentation Centre
मैटकॉफ हाऊस, दिल्ली 110054
Metcalf House, Delhi- 110054

No Improvement in Availability of Ammunition in Army: CAG

By Shaurya Gurung

Availability of 55% types of ammunition is also below minimum acceptable risk level, says CAG report

Highlighting the continuing shortage of ammunition in the army, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pointed out that there has been no significant improvement in the availability of War Wastage Reserve (WWR) ammunition. WWR, needed to fight a full-scale war, is still at a critical level, especially for the army's tanks and artillery.

WWR is the reserve of ammunition for meeting the requirements of 40 days of intense war or a full-scale war. In relation, the army plans its ammunition expenditure for these 40 days.

The developments came to light in a CAG report on the Army and ordnance factories, which was tabled in Parliament on Friday.

In addition, the CAG report also states that the availability of 55% types of ammunitions was below the Minimum Acceptable Risk Level (MARL). MARL is the requirement of ammunition for 20 days. It is considered as the "minimum inescapable requirement" to be maintained at all times to meet operational preparedness.

The CAG also said that 40% of ammunitions were at a critical level, having stock of less than 10 days. This means that there is also shortage of ammunition to fight even a short intense war, which usually lasts for 10 to 15 days.

"We observed no significant improvement in the availability of ammunition (September 2016). Out of a total of 152 types of ammunition, the stock of 121 types of ammunition (80 per cent) was below the authorization level of 40 days (I) (WWR). Further, availability of 55 per cent types of ammunitions was below MARL, to be maintained for operational preparedness. Forty per cent types of ammunitions were in critical level having stock of less than 10 days," the report said.

"Availability of high calibre ammunitions relating to Armoured Fighting Vehicles (Tanks) and Artillery are in more alarming state," it added.

Having such critical deficiencies means that it will be difficult for the army to, if the need arises, fight against two countries at the same time.

The report highlighting such deficiencies is a follow up audit of the ammunition management in the army, which was conducted in January this year.

The audit covers the period from April 2013 to September 2016. Before this audit, CAG had conducted a "Performance Audit" on the same matter for the period starting from 2008 to 2013.

According to the follow up audit, up to September 2016, only 20% met the authorisation level of the WWR. In comparison, up to March 2013, only 10% of the WWR was met.

In relation to this development, the CAG highlighted, "Though there appears slight improvement in availability of WWR stock, scrutiny of category wise details of ammunition revealed that the WWR level had increased mainly on account of increase in the stock of explosive and demolition items. But majority of high calibre ammunition relating to AFV and Artillery ammunition meant for sustaining superior fire power were under critical level."

Shortage of Fuzes

The report also states that there is excessive shortage of fuzes, which is the "brain of the artillery ammunition". A fuze is fitted to the shell just before firing. "In the absence of fuze, 83 per cent of high calibre

ammunition for tanks and artillery presently held with the army were not in a state to be used in operation," said the report.

Tardy Progress in Procurement

In July 2013, the Centre approved an Ammunition Road Map to build up the stock level up to 50%, meaning up to the MARL, by March 2015. The balance deficiency was to be met by March 2019.

However, the CAG report stated, "We noticed that no case of procurement (of ammunition) had culminated into contract despite sanction under the Ammunition Road Map by the Ministry in 2013.



Sat, 22 July, 2017

Shocking lapses, crew fatigue led to Navy submarine accidents: CAG

New Delhi: Shocking lapses led to two of the worst Indian naval accidents involving submarines in which 20 personnel lost their lives, reveals the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) latest report.

The Russian-built submarine INS Sindhurakshak sank after an explosion killing 18 sailors in August 2013, and two officers died in a fire on INS Sindhuratna the following year, an accident that triggered then navy chief Admiral DK Joshi's resignation.

Citing the findings of a naval inquiry, the CAG report said the operational deployment of INS Sindhurakshak was not justified. "Submarine authorities concerned did not properly assess the crew fatigue, besides, the submarine was holding ammunition nearing life expiry," the report quoted the naval Board of Inquiry (BoI) findings. The submarine was disposed of in June 2017 and its final resting point is 3,000 metres under the Arabian Sea.

The report said the navy's BoI also brought out that complete 'Work Up' (mandatory drills) was not conducted.

"The 'Work Up' was completed within one week instead of prescribed two weeks." The submarine costing ~404 crore was commissioned in December 1999.

"The trials and calibration of Navigational aids and sensors should be completed prior to deployment of a submarine for 'Work Up' with any consorts. However, the Sea Acceptance Trials of two critical equipment were not completed even at the time of its preparation for operational deployment," the report noted in a chapter on naval accidents during the last 10 years.

The CAG said 38 warships were involved in mishaps during 2007-16 and the navy had no framework to deal with safety issues.

The report said a navy BoI, reconvened in February 2014, "inferred leakage of oxygen from a torpedo as a primary initiator of the incident."

"The laid down Ships Operating Standards (SHOPS) for the submarine had not achieved the requisite Harbour and operational evolutions," the report said.

On the INS Sindhuratna accident, the CAG said that the navy BoI found, "There was inadequate holding of ISP-60 set, necessary for safety of personnel during damage/fire control."

The report said smoke and fire detectors were not installed in all compartments of the submarine and there were two fire incidents within two hours.

"Even though the indicator buoy had partial defects which were brought to the notice of Commodore Commanding Submarines (West)...yet the submarine was put to sea with these defects..." The buoy is a communication equipment that indicates a submarine in distress at a recoverable depth.

“Present Indian Navy Safety Organisation is ad hoc in nature formed without approval from the competent authority. This needs to be institutionalised with proper sanction from the Government,” the CAG recommended.



Sat, 22 July, 2017

Fake Chinese spares sold to Army for Bofors guns

CBI registers case against Delhi-based company

China-made parts camouflaged as ‘Made in Germany’ have found their way to the production line of indigenised Bofors guns used by the Army, prompting the CBI to file a case against a Delhi-based company.

Besides Sidh Sales Syndicate, the CBI registered a case against unidentified officials of the Gun Carriage Factory (GCF), Jabalpur, under criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery for supplying fake and cheap China-made spares passing off as Made in Germany for Dhanush guns, the FIR alleged. Dhanush is the indigenised version of the Bofors artillery guns which performed exceedingly well during the Kargil conflict in 1999.

The CBI alleged that the supplier entered into criminal conspiracy with the unidentified GCF officials to supply duplicate spare parts (bearings) used in the manufacture of Dhanush guns. “Unknown officials of GCF accepted the Chinese manufactured ‘Wire Race Roller Bearings’ supplied by Sidh Sales Syndicate embossed as ‘CRB—Made in Germany’,” the CBI said in the FIR.

Crucial component

The agency said production and performance of the Dhanush gun was extremely crucial for India’s defence preparedness and “wire race roller bearing” was its vital component.

A tender was floated for the procurement of four such bearings. The order was given to Sidh Sales Syndicate in 2013, the FIR said. The order was increased to six bearings, which the company supplied, with ‘certificates in origin’ showing that the bearings were procured from CRB Antriebstechnik, Germany.

Information received by the CBI shows that the German firm does not manufacture these parts. It showed that Sidh Sales Syndicate got them manufactured by Sino United Industries (Luyang) Ltd., Henan, China.



Sat, 22 July, 2017

South Korea urges North to respond to military talks offer

South Korea urged the North today to break its silence on an offer of military talks aimed at easing simmering tensions over the hermit state’s nuclear ambitions. Seoul had proposed to hold rare inter-Korea talks this week at the border truce village of Panmunjom to ease hostilities after a series of missile tests this year. “It is an urgent task to reduce tension between two Koreas... to achieve peace and stability of the Korean peninsula,” defense ministry spokesman Moon Sang-Kyun said.

“We urge the North again to respond to our talks proposal,” he said. The military talks, if realised, would have marked the first official inter-Korea talks since December 2015. The North has also remained silent on another offer made by the South’s Red Cross to meet on August 1 and discuss potential reunions for families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War. Millions of families were separated by the conflict that sealed the division of the peninsula. Many died without getting a chance to see or hear from their relatives on the other side of the border, across which all civilian contacts are banned. Monday’s twin proposals are the first concrete steps towards rapprochement with the North since South Korea elected dovish President Moon Jae-In in May.

Moon has advocated dialogue with the nuclear-armed North to bring it to negotiating table and vowed to play a bigger active role in global efforts to tame the unpredictable regime. His conservative predecessor Park

Geun-Hye had refused to engage in substantive dialogue with Pyongyang unless it made a firm commitment to denuclearisation. But Pyongyang has staged a series of missile launches in violation of UN resolutions in recent months -- including its first ICBM test on July 4 that triggered global alarm and a push by US President Donald Trump to impose harsher UN sanctions.



Sat, 22 July, 2017

Armstrong's moon bag fetches \$1.8 mn

The long-lost bag used by NASA astronaut Neil Armstrong to collect the first-ever moon samples has been sold for a whopping \$ 1,812,500 at an auction in the US. The bag, auctioned on the occasion of the 48th anniversary of mankind's first moon landing, was expected to fetch \$ 2-4 million. It still contains traces of the moon dust, Sotheby's said. During the Apollo 11 mission in 1969, Armstrong collected nearly 500 grammes of material finer than one centimetre, as well as 12 rock fragments larger than a centimetre from five different locations on the lunar surface in the region known as the Sea of Tranquility.

Given the then unknown nature of lunar material, the decontamination bag was used to minimise any potential harm the samples might pose to the Command Module and planet Earth. Nearly all of the equipment from that historic mission is housed in the US National Collections at the Smithsonian; however a recent court ruling has allowed this to be the only such artefact in private hands. The true history of the bag went unknown for decades until just a year ago. It was offered three separate times in 2014 by a small auction house on behalf of the US Marshall's service, garnering not a single bid. It was re-listed in 2015, where it was sold for \$ 995.

Scientific tests at NASA revealed the dust in the bag to be moon dust, specifically from the Apollo 11 landing site, and the part number printed inside of the bag matched up to that of the "Contingency Lunar Sample Return Decontamination Bag" listed in the Apollo 11 Stowage list. The historic price was the culmination of a week-long exhibition that captured the attention of thousands. Overall, auction house Sotheby's first Space Exploration sale totalled \$ 3.8 million with 87.3 per cent of items sold.

"Reflecting the enduring and universal fascination with space, the \$ 1.8 million achieved for the Apollo 11 lunar sample bag and strong prices for objects related to other missions were driven by over 500 participants from dozens of countries with many buyers new to Sotheby's," said Cassandra Hatton, Vice President and Senior Specialist of Sotheby's Books and Manuscripts Department in New York. In addition to the Apollo 11 lunar bag, early space photography by noteworthy astronomers and NASA innovations obtained substantial prices while American painter Chesley Bonestell's artistic interpretations of space flew high above expectations. In particular, "Stone Architecture on Mars, Demonstrating Mars' two-thirds less gravity than Earth's" sold for \$ 125,000, over twelve times its high estimate.

Materials from the Soviet space missions drew bids online and on the telephone while a Snoopy Astronaut Doll, Mascot of the Apollo 10 LM Crew, was sold for \$ 27,500.

One of the final lots of the sale also found significant interest in the auction room this afternoon. The Flown Apollo 13 Flight Plan, with handwritten notations by all three crew members following the onboard explosion, was sold to an online bidder for \$ 275,000.