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India will get Israeli Barak 8 missiles in Rs 4,100 crore deal

India is Israel's largest buyer of military hardware over the last few years.

New Delhi: In a significant move to boost its naval firepower, India will buy an additional Rs 4,100-crore worth of Barak 8 missiles and missile defence systems from Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), the Israeli company announced on Sunday.

The missiles will be fitted on four Indian Navy ships. The state-owned Bharat Electronics Limited will carry out the contract under the "Make in India" policy.

PM Narendra Modi is expected to visit Israel in July which will also mark the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin had visited India in November 2016 during which both sides had decided to "broadbase" their already close defence partnership.

India is also Israel's largest buyer of military hardware over the last few years. This includes, besides missiles, various weapons systems and unmanned aerial vehicles. India was the world's biggest buyer of weapons from 2012 to 2016, accounting for 13% of the global total.

The long range surface-to-air missiles (LRSAM) Barak can track and shoot down incoming subsonic and supersonic missiles, fighter aircraft, maritime patrolling aircraft, helicopters and sea skimming missiles and other airborne objects up to a range of 80 km.

Last week, India successfully tested the Barak LRSAM which was fired after the advanced phased-array radar onboard a Indian Navy ship identified an air-borne threat. The target was successfully neutralised demonstrating the system's operational capabilities.

Joseph Weiss, IAI president and CEO, said, "The new contract adds to other deals signed in the last decade by IAI with India's defence forces."

Boaz Levi, IAI executive vice president and general manager of Systems, Missiles & Space Group, said, "We take pride in the great results of the trial conducted last week, which reestablishes the system's reliability, quality and its advanced technological capabilities."

पंजाब केसरी

चार हमलावर एलपीडी पोत के निर्माण को हरी झंडी

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा): नौसैनिक की ताकत बढ़ाने की दिशा में एक अहम कदम बढ़ाते हुए रक्षा मंत्रालय ने लैंडिंग प्लेटफॉर्म डॉक्स (एलपीडी) नाम के चार ऐसे हमलावर पोतों के निर्माण की सैद्धांतिक मंजूरी दे दी जो जल और जमीन दोनों पर परिचालित किए जा सकते हैं। इन पोतों का निर्माण 20,000 करोड़ रुपये से भी ज्यादा की लागत से निजी क्षेत्र में

किया जाएगा। यह ऐसी सबसे बड़ी नौसैनिक परियोजना होगी जिसमें निजी क्षेत्र को शामिल किया गया है। एलपीडी निर्माणाधीन विमानवाहक पोत आईएनएस विक्रान्त के बाद भारत में बनाए जाने वाले सबसे बड़े पोत होंगे। सूत्रों ने बताया कि रक्षा मंत्रालय की सर्वोच्च नीति निर्माता इकाई रक्षा खरीद परिषद (डीएसी) ने लंबे समय से लंबित इस परियोजना को मंजूरी

दे दी। डीएसी की बैठक की अध्यक्षता रक्षा मंत्री अरुण जेटली ने की। इससे पहले, मंत्रालय ने संकेत दिया था कि दो एलपीडी का निर्माण हिंदुस्तान शिपयार्ड लिमिटेड, विशाखापत्तनम में होगा जबकि दो अन्य के निर्माण के लिए चुनिंदा निजी कंपनियों को अनुबंध दिए जाएंगे। इस महत्वपूर्ण परियोजना के लिए पहले तीन निजी कंपनियां-रिलायंस डिफेंस एंड

इंजीनियरिंग लिमिटेड (आरडीईएल), लासन एंड टूब्रो (एल एंड टी) और एबीजी शिपयार्ड-रेस में थीं, लेकिन खराब वित्तीय स्थिति होने के कारण एबीजी को इसके अयोग्य करार दे दिया गया। सूत्रों ने बताया कि आरडीईएल और एल एंड टी को अगले हफ्ते कहा जाएगा कि वे चार एलपीडी के लिए ताजा वाणिज्यिक बोली पेश करें।

Defence deals await private firms

By Dinakar Peri

The contracts totalling Rs. 1.5 lakh crore will be taken up under the new strategic partnership model

The Union government will unveil mega defence deals estimated at over Rs. 1.5 lakh crore involving the private sector under the strategic partnership model to build a domestic defence manufacturing base in key areas such as submarines and fighter aircraft.

“It should possibly be cleared in the next few weeks, likely within the month,” a senior official told The Hindu on Sunday.

The Defence Acquisition Council approved the framework of the model on Saturday. The policy will now go to the Finance Ministry and then to the Cabinet Committee on Security for final approval, which is expected to be a formality as the Prime Minister’s Office has already been briefed on the issue.

The new model, which is a chapter under the Defence Procurement Procedure, has four segments — submarines, single-engine fighter aircraft, helicopters and armoured carriers/main battle tanks — and specifically intends to open up defence manufacturing to the private sector.

“These big companies will be the lead integrators. The contract will be spread across the Indian industry at various levels. The current model plans to build an ancillary network which works far more efficiently,” the official said.

This, he said, will indigenise the sub-systems and components and after a couple of cycles “everything should be built here”.

Pointing out that the other aspect of the policy is the export potential, the official said, “We will then get into a supply chain with the global original equipment manufacturers.”

Projects lined up

Projects already lined up under the four segments have been held up because of a delay in formulating the policy. The Ministry is gearing up to quickly roll them out once the policy is in place.

Of the four deals, submarines and helicopters are for the Navy. The single-engine fighter is for the Indian Air Force and armoured vehicle for the Army.

The deal for six submarines under Project-75I is expected to cost around Rs. 50,000 crore, the one for 100-plus fighter aircraft is estimated at Rs. 60,000 crore and the Future Infantry Combat Vehicle (FICV) programme is estimated at Rs. 50,000 crore.

Expression of Interest (EoI) will be issued to Indian companies for each of the projects, officials said. A pool of capable companies will be selected based on technical and financial evaluation and they would then tie up with a foreign OEM which will be short-listed concurrently.

Indian bidders

According to officials, for the submarines, the likely contenders are Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and Reliance Defence and Engineering Ltd., which have their own shipyards and the public sector Mazagon Docks Ltd., which is building the French Scorpene submarines.

For the fighter and helicopter segments, the likely bidders are Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. and Mahindra, both of which have a footprint in the aviation sector.

In the armoured segment, the FICV programme under way will be taken up under the SP model. L&T, Mahindra and Tata Motors are leading the race, for which bids have already been submitted.

Explain Gorshkov cost: CIC

Navy asked to disclose reasons for accepting price escalation by Russia

The Central Information Commission has asked the Indian Navy to disclose the reasons for India agreeing to cost escalation by Russia for purchase of refurbished aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov .

The deal for purchasing the now 30-year-old warship rechristened INS Vikramaditya was signed in 2004 by the then NDA government for \$974 million which was increased to the final price of \$2.35 billion in 2010.

The commission has also directed the the Navy disclose the “net final cost” incurred on the modifications, renovation and remodelling done on the ship, besides dates of payments made by India.

The Navy had earlier told the Commission that the information was to be provided by the Defence Ministry, which claimed the relevant files were with the naval headquarters and that they have been asked to disclose the details.

Information Commissioner Amitava Bhattacharyya directed the Navy to disclose the file notings, correspondence, and documents related to the acceptance of cost revisions sought by the Russians.

Mr. Bhattacharyya noted that the Navy was trying to put the onus of disclosure on the Defence Ministry whereas the Ministry made it clear that the reply was to be furnished by the force.

The Commission has ordered the disclosure to be made as it found “larger public interest” was involved. The Ministry and the Navy had withheld the information on the grounds of national security.

Mr. Bhattacharyya also directed the Navy to disclose reasons why India chose to opt for a refurbished warship instead of buying a new one.

The RTI application was filed by activist Subhash Agrawal who had demanded a range of information on the acquisition of the 44,500-tonne aircraft carrier.

The ship was originally commissioned by the erstwhile USSR on December 20, 1987 and was decommissioned in 1996. After being inducted into the Navy as Vikramaditya , the ship is now a floating 284-metre airfield. It is a 20-storey steel megastructure from the keel to the highest point. The ship can carry over 30 aircraft. With 22 decks and a capacity to house 1,600 personnel, the warship can sustain itself at sea for 45 days up to 13,000 km.



3 jawans among 7 killed in Nowgam encounter

Srinagar: Four militants and three soldiers were killed in an operation in Nowgam sector in North Kashmir, the army said on Sunday.

A Srinagar-based army spokesperson said, “Total four terrorists killed. Three soldiers attained martyrdom.”

He added that four weapons and other warlike stores were recovered and sanitisation operations were on.

The operation had begun on Saturday after militants tried to infiltrate along the Line of Control (LoC).

Hindustan Times had reported that by Saturday night two soldiers and two militants were killed in the gunbattle.

“JKOps Two terrorists attempting infiltration in Naogam Sect, Kashmir eliminated. Two soldiers martyred in ongoing op @adgpi,” Indian Army’s Northern Command tweeted on Saturday.

This has come a day after defence minister Arun Jaitley met with the senior commanders and troops at a forward post along the LoC, where he reviewed the security situation.

He said that Indian Armed Forces were fully prepared to deal with the militants coming from across the Valley.

“Our troops and our Army are fully ready to check any form of infiltration. Under no cost will India’s territorial sovereignty be allowed to be infringed,” Jaitley said Earlier on Saturday morning, militants had managed to flee after security forces challenged them in Badi Behak area of Handwara. The militants managed to slip after a brief encounter. A search operation was launched.

THE ASIAN AGE

Mon, 22 May, 2017

No ‘cake’ for fat Indian Air Force men

Obese men to be ruled out of promotions, coveted posts

New Delhi: In combat mode against the bulge, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is mulling a policy that will rule out its obese airmen from promotions and career enhancement programmes, being considered for ceremonial events and coveted foreign postings like in the United Nations peace-keeping missions, defence attaches and air attaches in Indian diplomatic missions abroad, besides many training opportunities and other courses and short visits.

The obesity aspect and the overall fitness issue of IAF personnel figured prominently during the IAF commanders’ conference held in New Delhi from April 19 to 21.

“The IAF is strongly emphasising on obesity management. On finalisation, obese IAF personnel cannot be commanding units, cannot be put on ceremonial duties or go on overseas assignments and be considered for promotions,” sources familiar with the development told The Asian Age.

The IAF spokesperson declined to offer any comment on the issue.

Defined as accumulation of excess body fat, the obesity factor would be considered in the periodic medical check-ups that the IAF men have to undergo. Anyone found with a body mass index (BMI) count of over 30 would be considered obese while a count of 25-30 would be considered overweight.

The IAF is following the footsteps of the Army which issued a special order in March, detailing similar steps against its obese personnel.

While men from the Army, Navy and IAF are expected to have better health indices as compared to the normal population on account of their younger age and healthy lifestyles which includes a strict fitness and diet regimen, a 2011 study published in the journal of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) found a high prevalence overweight and obesity (29.9%) among Indian militarymen.

A 2011 study by Defence Institute of Physiology & Allied Sciences (DIPAS) of 3,927 male personnel from the IAF divided into three age groups, 20-25, 26-30 and 31-35 years, had found gradual increase in mean BMI as the age of the population increased.

While the percentage of the IAF personnel having normal BMI grade was found to be 71.3%, the percentage of overweight population was found to be 25.7%.

भारत-रूस दोस्ती में नया जोश भरने की राह में हैं कई दिक्कतें

ठीक 10 दिन बाद प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और रूसी राष्ट्रपति व्लादिमीर पुतिन के बीच बहुप्रतीक्षित शिखर वार्ता होनी है। लेकिन, इस वार्ता से पहले भारत को अपने इस बेहद पुराने मित्र राष्ट्र की तरफ से कुछ चिंताजनक संकेत मिल रहे हैं। वन बेल्ट-वन रोड परियोजना में चीन का बढ़ चढ़कर साथ देना, राष्ट्रपति पुतिन की चीन के राष्ट्रपति शी चिनफिंग और पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री नवाज शरीफ के साथ गुपचुप मुलाकात और भारत को अत्याधुनिक सैन्य साजो समान से जुड़ी तकनीक हस्तांतरण को लेकर बना संशय कुछ ऐसे तथ्य हैं जिनकी परछाई वार्ता पर पड़नी तय है। ऐसे में जानकार मान रहे हैं कि दोनों नेताओं को दशकों पुरानी मित्रता में नए रंग भरने में खास कूटनीतिक निपुणता दिखानी होगी।

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी सेंट पीटर्सबर्ग इकॉनोमिक फोरम की बैठक में हिस्सा लेने रूस पहुंच रहे हैं। वहां उनकी राष्ट्रपति पुतिन के साथ व्यापार, रक्षा व वैश्विक कूटनीति पर द्विपक्षीय वार्ता प्रस्तावित

है। इसके एक दिन बाद दोनों नेताओं की फोरम की बैठक में भी मुलाकात होगी। दोनों पक्ष इस शिखर बैठक की तैयारियों में पिछले छह महीनों से लगे हैं। इसकी तैयारियों से जुड़ी अंतिम बैठक इस महीने की 10 तारीख को नई दिल्ली में हुई थी जिसमें भारतीय दल की अगुआई विदेश मंत्री सुषमा स्वराज ने की तो रूस की टीम उप प्रधानमंत्री दिमित्री मेगोजीन की अगुआई में थी। बैठक में आणविक ऊर्जा से लेकर मुक्त व्यापार संधि, फिल्म प्रोडक्शन, अंतरिक्ष सहयोग से लेकर गैस पाइपलाइन प्रोजेक्ट पर बातचीत हुई है। इस बातचीत से जुड़े अधिकारी मानते हैं कि रक्षा में तकनीक हस्तांतरण और परमाणु सहयोग जैसे अहम क्षेत्रों में सहयोग की राह में कई मतभेद सामने आए हैं।

दरअसल, मोदी और पुतिन के बीच पहली शिखर द्विपक्षीय वार्ता दिसंबर 2014 में हुई थी और तब दोनों नेताओं ने अगले एक दशक की रणनीतिक साझेदारी 'दुजबा-दोस्ती' का रोडमैप

बनाया था। हालांकि पिछले 29 महीनों में रोडमैप को लेकर प्रगति की रफ्तार बहुत धीमी है। उसके बाद भारत रूस के बीच दो बार और शिखर वार्ता हुई है, लेकिन जमीनी तौर पर परियोजनाओं को उतारने को लेकर प्रगति नहीं दिख पाई। मसलन, भारत ने नाभिकीय ऊर्जा विस्तार कार्यक्रम के तहत 25 रूसी नाभिकीय रिएक्टरों के लिए दरवाजे खोलने का एलान किया, लेकिन एनएसजी मसले पर रूस की तरफ से पूरा समर्थन नहीं मिल पाने की वजह से इस बारे में प्रगति सुस्त होने की खबरें हैं। इसी तरह दोनों देशों के बीच अत्याधुनिक युद्धक विमान बनाने को लेकर भी सहमति बनी थी, लेकिन कीमत और तकनीक हस्तांतरण को लेकर दोनों देशों के बीच मतभेद सुलझते नहीं दिख रहे। इसी तरह, हाइड्रोकार्बन क्षेत्र में रूस भारतीय कंपनियों को ज्यादा हिस्सेदारी देने की बात तो लगातार कर रहा है, लेकिन वहां भी अंतिम फैसला अभी होना है।

THE  HINDU

Mon, 22 May, 2017

Navy rescues Maldivian landing craft

The Indian Navy rescued a Maldivian landing craft 120 nautical miles east of Male on Saturday evening.

A Dornier aircraft of the Navy spotted the landing craft Maria 3 floating 60 nautical miles from its last known position and informed the INS Kirch, which was 50 nautical miles away.

“The ship’s forward ramp collapsed, so it was unable to propel. A joint boarding party was sent... to provide assistance. All crew members are safe. The Maldivian National Defence Force has been informed,” a Navy spokesperson said on Sunday.

Maria 3 was travelling from K Thulusdhoo to L Gan with a six-member crew on Thursday when it went adrift.

THE  HINDU

Mon, 22 May, 2017

North Korea fires mid-range missile

U.S. says it will continue to apply economic, diplomatic pressure on Pyongyang

North Korea fired a medium-range missile on Sunday, U.S. and South Korean officials said, the latest ballistics test by a country speeding up its development of nuclear weapons and missiles. The rocket was fired from an area near the North Korean county of Pukchang, in South Phyongan Province, and flew eastward

about 500 km, said South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff. The U.S. Pacific Command said it tracked the missile before it landed in the sea. White House officials travelling in Saudi Arabia with President Donald Trump said the system that was tested, which was last launched in February, had a shorter range than the missiles fired in North Korea's most recent tests.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said both economic and diplomatic pressure would continue to be applied to North Korea. "Hopefully they will get the message that the path of continuing their nuclear arms program is not a pathway to security or certainly prosperity. The ongoing testing is disappointing, disturbing and we ask that they cease that," he said.

South Korea's new President, Moon Jae-in, held a National Security Council meeting to discuss the launch, which came hours after he named his new Foreign Minister nominee and top advisers for security and foreign policy. He did not make a public statement.

'Challenge to the world'

An official from South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff also said the missile appeared to be similar in range and apogee to the mid-range missile that North Korea test-fired in February. The missile launched on Sunday reached a maximum altitude of 560 km, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, citing office rules. In Tokyo, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called the launch a "challenge to the world", and vowed to bring up the issue as the "main agenda" of this week's G-7 summit in Italy.



Mon, 22 May, 2017

NASA names bacterium in space after Kalam

Los Angeles: In great news for India, scientists at Nasa have named an organism discovered by them after the popular APJ Abdul Kalam. To date, the new organism — a form of a bacteria — has been found only on the International Space Station (ISS).

Researchers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), the foremost lab of Nasa for work on interplanetary travel, discovered the bacteria on the filters of the ISS and named it Solibacillus kalamii to honour the late President, who was a famous aerospace scientist.

Kalam underwent his early training at Nasa in 1963 before he set up India's first rocket-launching facility in a small fishing village of Kerala.

"The name of the bacterium is Solibacillus kalamii, the species name is after Dr Abdul Kalam, and genus name is Solibacillus, which is a spore-forming bacteria," said Kasthuri Venkateswaran, senior research scientist, Biotechnology and Planetary Protection Group at JPL.

The filter on which the new bug was found remained on board the ISS for 40 months.



Mon, 22 May, 2017

Indian rocket US once 'grounded' will put ISRO-NASA satellite in space

By Surendra Singh

In 1992, the US under President George Bush had slapped sanctions on Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) and prevented Russia from sharing cryogenic engine technology with the Indian space agency so as to check India from making missiles. Two decades later, US space agency Nasa has joined hands with Isro to co-develop the world's most expensive earth imaging satellite that will cost the two countries over \$1.5 billion.

The irony is GSLV , which is likely to place this Nasa-Isro Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite into orbit in 2021, is the same rocket for whose cryogenic engine the US put sanctions on India.

Leaving the past behind, Isro and Nasa are busy building the 2,200kg NISAR satellite, which will provide a detailed view of the earth by using advanced radar imaging. It is being designed to observe and take measurements of some of the planet's complex processes, including ecosystem disturbances, ice-sheet collapse and natural hazards. Nasa became interested in Isro when the Indian space agency in April 2012 launched the country's first indigenous radar imaging satellite (Risat-1), some called it a spy satellite, which enabled imaging of the earth's surface during day and night under all weather conditions. The negotiations went on for two years but the formal agreement for NISAR satellite happened when Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a declaration with former US President Barack Obama during his visit to the US in 2014. The objective behind the collaboration was to use the satellite for the "benefit of humanity" as the mapping data from this satellite will be available for all.

Currently , the Ahmedabad-based Space Application Centre (SAC) is flighttesting the "mini version" of the radar satellite over the city skies. The "mini radar" developed by SAC has been fixed on a Beechcraft Super King B 200 -owned by Isro -for the flight-testing primarily to 'understand weather and geo graphical conditions'.

SAC director Tapan Misra said, "We are testing the radar by taking images from about 8km above the sea level. The same area will be further studied by scientists from the ground level to understand the radar's accuracy level."

He added, "For ground level data analysis, we are roping in NGOs, academic institutes, government departments and people with scientific expertise. This process of aerial data analysis will continue in Gujarat for three months until the crop season ends. We plan to conduct the same aerial-cumground exercise for three years in 39 places of the country , including over the Himalayan glaciers, Ganga, Sundarbans, Rann of Kutch, Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka, to study the geological changes in forests, vegetation, rivers and glaciers."

"The data gathered from the mini radar will be helpful when we will launch the NISAR satellite, most probably in 2021. The work on the main satellite is simultaneously going on," the SAC director said.

"The three basic functions of the satellite will be mapping the land mass, Arctic and Antarctica regions; analysis of seismic activities of the earth crust that will help in predicting earthquakes and tsunamis and analysis of drastic movement in glaciers and the rate at which these glaciers melt. The satellite, once put into its sun-synchronous dawn to dusk orbit, will map the entire world in 12 days," he added.

THE ASIAN AGE

Mon, 22 May, 2017

New Zealand space launch has nation reaching for the stars

California-based firm got approval to test-launch its Electron rocket from a remote NZ peninsula

New Zealand has never had a space program but could soon be launching commercial rockets more often than the United States.

That's if the plans of California-based company Rocket Lab work out.

Founded by New Zealander Peter Beck, the company was last week given official approval to conduct three test launches from a remote peninsula in the South Pacific nation. Rocket Lab is planning the first launch of its Electron rocket sometime from Monday, depending on conditions.

"So far, it's only superpowers that have gone into space," said Simon Bridges, New Zealand's economic development minister. "For us to do it, and be in the first couple of handfuls of countries in the world, is pretty impressive."

Rocket Lab sees an emerging market in delivering lots of small devices, some not much bigger than a smartphone, into low Earth orbit. The satellites would be used for everything from monitoring crops to providing internet service.

The company hopes to begin commercial launches later this year and eventually launch one rocket every week. It plans to keep costs low by using lightweight, disposable rockets with 3D-printed engines.

It's a different plan than some other space companies like Elon Musk's SpaceX, which uses larger rockets to carry bigger payloads.

The venture has left New Zealand officials excited and struggling to keep up. Politicians are rushing through new space laws and the government has set up a boutique space agency, which employs 10 people.

Bridges said that if Rocket Lab is successful, it could change people's perception of New Zealand from a place full of farms and nice scenery to a technologically savvy nation on the rise.

He said the space industry could soon bring in hundreds of millions of dollars each year and rival industries like wine and kiwifruit. He envisions spinoff companies and many high-paying jobs, much of it built on the back of Rocket Lab.

The company's Electron rocket is unusual in many respects. It carries only a small payload of about 150 kilograms (331 pounds). It's made from carbon fiber and uses an electric engine. Rocket Lab says each launch will cost just \$5 million, a tiny fraction of a typical rocket launch.

Unlike SpaceX, which aims to build a rocket that's fully reusable, Rocket Lab's rockets are disposable. Beck said they are light and use relatively little fuel. Customers who have signed up so far include NASA and Moon Express.

"Space has always held a fascination for me," said Beck. "Not enough people go out on nice starry night and look up."

Both Beck and Bridges are careful to temper expectations for the test launch, which is scheduled to take place within a 10-day window. They say there could be delays and things could go wrong.

Rocket Lab, which is privately held, has received about \$150 million in venture capital funding, including an undisclosed amount from Bessemer Venture Partners in Silicon Valley.