

## More Akash systems for Army

*By Dinakar Peri*

### *Defence Acquisition Council bats for indigenously developed missiles*

The Defence Ministry has decided to cancel the Army's global contest for Short Range Surface to Air Missile (SR-SAM) systems and instead procure two additional regiments of the indigenously developed Akash missile systems. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Arun Jaitley two weeks ago. The Army is expected to begin inducting the systems by December 2018. "The DAC has cancelled the global buy of two regiments of SR-SAM. The case continued for 5-6 years and trials of certain equipment were conducted. The DAC has now decided to go in with additional Akash systems," a defence source said on Monday.

The Army has a requirement for four regiments of SR-SAMs. It had earlier ordered two Akash regiments and formally began inducting them in May 2015. Two more regiments were meant to be procured by a global tender for which competition was under way between 3-4 global firms.

Of the Akash systems, the first regiment has been inducted and operational and induction of the second regiment will be completed in the next 2-3 months. On the new regiments, the source added, "Lot of improvements have taken place in the vehicles and systems since the initial development. The new system will be operationally more compact and mobile."