



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017
(Online)

India to Boost Target Detection Capability of Its Warships with Advanced Sonars

The deal for supplying nine active towed array sonar (ATAS) systems for Indian warships is most likely to be bagged by a foreign vendor, as a similar system being developed by India's state-owned Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) is still not ready.

New Delhi (Sputnik) — India has started the process of equipping its warships with active towed array sonar (ATAS) systems, which are essential for detecting enemy submarines. The Defense Acquisition Council (DAC) under the chairmanship of Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has cleared a proposal for the procurement of nine ATAS systems. Presently, Indian warships are using bow-mounted sonar or hull mounted sonar systems, which are considered less effective.

"The DAC approved a \$70 million proposal to procure nine active towed array sonar systems for frontline warships. This will help in submarine detection capabilities," an official who wished to remain anonymous told Sputnik.

The financial approval for the purchase of the ATAS systems comes at a time when most of India's warships, including anti-submarine warfare capable corvettes, frigates and destroyers, lack offensive capabilities in the absence of such sonar systems. The recently commissioned INS Kiltan and two other corvettes — the INS Kamorta that was delivered in July 2014 and the INS Kadmat that was delivered in November 2015 — do not have their primary weapons and sensors to detect, locate, track and classify all types of sub-surface targets like torpedoes, mines, and submarines.

"The active towed array sonar [system] is vital for the Indian Navy, as most of the warships do not possess capabilities to detect submarines in the Arabian Sea, where the warm, shallow waters confound conventional hull-mounted sonars," a senior navy official told Sputnik.

The ATAS system is towed behind a submarine or ship on a cable that extends deep below the surface and has no trouble in detecting sonar waves, as in the case of conventional sonar systems due to the difference in temperature at the surface and deep below the surface where submarines usually lurk.

As the presence of Chinese submarines in India's backyard will certainly increase in the coming years, it is crucial for the Indian Navy to equip all its warships with effective sonar systems. Most of India's warships are not equipped with the ATAS system, as the country had stalled the import of these devices in the mid-1990s after the state-owned DRDO promised to provide similar systems locally manufactured. However, as the DRDO has failed to develop the system even after 20 years, the Indian government in 2014 decided to take the import route.

DRDO announces Robotics and Unmanned Systems Exposition

Apart from the award and recognition, the competition also holds an opportunity for the engineering students to showcase their work on a national platform and win an opportunity to work with DRDO on their future projects.

Research and Development Establishment (Engineers) (R&DE(E)), Pune under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has recently announced DRDO Robotics and Unmanned Systems Exposition (DRUSE), as a part of their diamond jubilee celebrations.

The event has been planned with different theme-based technological challenges to facilitate participation from different categories of engineering talent. Some of the proposed themes include mountain climbing robot, mobility in snow-bound areas, casualty evacuation, surveillance of a ship, self-concealing unmanned ground vehicle (UGV), underwater survey system, robotic assistive device for disabled persons and so on. The invitation for proposals are to begin from October 14 and the last date for submission of proposals is December 15.

Apart from the award and recognition, the competition also holds an opportunity for the engineering students to showcase their work on a national platform and win an opportunity to work with DRDO on their future projects.

R&DE(E) will initially conduct the zonal level competitions at six zonal centres including Bengaluru, Pune, Tezpur, Jodhpur, New Delhi and Kolkata between March 24 and April 15, 2018 to facilitate wide participation from engineering student community across the country.

Thereafter, the qualified teams from the zonal centres will compete in the national-level competition to be organised by R&DE(E), Pune at DRDO Headquarters in New Delhi.

R&DE(E), Pune is a DRDO lab engaged in developing state-of-the-art defence systems. The objective of the exposition DRUSE is to ignite young minds of the engineering student community across the nation, in providing innovative and disruptive solutions to some of the challenging operational requirements and needs of Indian Armed Forces. It is designed to serve as an open platform to popularise and synergize the young national talent in the areas of robotics for conceptualisation, design and development of unmanned systems for defence applications.