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DRDO developing mine clearance system

India's Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) is developing a Trawl system for the clearance of mines in the battlefield, the Indian Ministry of Defence announced on 15 September.

The Trawl system, which has been designed to meet the operational requirements of Indian Army, will be used to breach land mines and create a safe lane for vehicles through a minefield in a combat zone.

The equipment consists of Trawl roller, track width mine plough and electro-magnetic device. The Trawl system is capable of breaching a variety of land mines including passive and active influence mines.

Blast trials of the system have been successfully completed, demonstrating the survivability of the equipment when subjected to a successive series of direct blasts.

The prototype is now in the final stages of development, and is expected to be ready for user evaluation trials by the Indian Army shortly.



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DRDO to share food tech with entrepreneurs

Panaji: The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) is set to transfer various technologies — initially developed for the armed forces — to small entrepreneurs during a two-day conclave beginning Thursday.

The defence food research laboratory (DFRL), Mysore, that has developed an array of food products and has transferred over 500 technologies to more than 300 entrepreneurs, will showcase 142 food products and processing technologies comprising ready-to-eat foods, instant foods and mixes, ready-to-drink beverages, ready-to-reconstitute beverages, and mixes ready for commercialization. The technologies on offer range from Rs 25,000 to Rs 2.5 lakh. Financial institutions will offer funding schemes, said Goa State Industries Association president Rajkumar Kamat.



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Food processing industry to get technological boost

Panaji: Goa's nascent food processing industry could be heading for a technology boost with latest technologies in preservation and packaging coming in from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), New Delhi.

Life science cluster, DRDO Dr Shashi Bala Singh on Tuesday said, "The organisation is targeting for about 100 technology transfer to Goan units for processing of local agricultural produce such as cashew, coconut, jackfruit, etc."

“A team of scientists from DRDO- Defence Food Research Laboratory (DFRL) will be available for meetings with local entrepreneurs to explore the possibility in establishing food processing industry in Goa,” added Singh.

The technologies will be showcased at the two-day industry conclave on food technology taking place in September 21 to September 22 organised by the Goa Small Industries Association (GSIA) and directorate of industries, trade and commerce (DITC) in collaboration with the DRDO.

Speaking to media, the president of GSIA Raj Kumar Kamat said, “Goan entrepreneurs will be exposed to world class technology in food products that they can assimilate and commercialise.”

He also said that, entrepreneurs will be provided with the full package such as technology together with finance. The finance is expected to come from government schemes for the food processing industry as well as loans from the EDC.

While the DRDO is known for its core competencies in various areas of military technology, its life sciences department is involved with developing technology for the armed forces.

The technology development is by the DFRL and it is cost effective as the fees charged by the laboratory are ranging between Rs 20,000 and Rs 2.5 lakh.

About 142 processing technologies have been developed by the DFRL so far in categories such as ready-to-eat foods, energy bars, biscuits, instant food mixes, etc. Companies that are selling food products using defence technology include prominent players in the food industry such as, MTR, ITC, Kohinoor Basmati, Paper Boat, etc.

The conclave at Mandovi Hotel will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar.

Kamat further said that, technology provided by the DRDO has already been exploited commercially and Goan units must not be left behind in using the latest know-how.

The press briefing was attended by former president GSIA Atul Naik, officiating director DRDO-Mysore Dr G K Sharma and the director DIITM, DRDO Dr Mayank Dwedi.

The transfer of food technology from DFRL to industry is through Directorate of Industry Interface and Technology Management department of DRDO, New Delhi. To obtain the technology the unit owner has to pay the transfer fee and royalty but is free to sell products commercially or to the defence sector.



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Rolls-Royce bets big on gas turbine engine technology with DRDO

By Nayanima Basu

Plans to introduce Trent 700 jet engines

British jet engine-maker Rolls-Royce is betting big on developing gas turbine technology in India in collaboration with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It also planning to introduce the Trent 700 jet engines to India.

“As a gas turbine engine company, naturally we are in constant discussion with DRDO on possible opportunities for technical collaboration in gas turbine technology. The UK government stands fully behind in transferring gas turbine technology to India. It is where we see our long-term future with regard to technology collaborations. We look forward to generating intellectual property in creating gas turbine technology in India,” Glenn Kelly, Vice President Customer Business – Defence, Rolls-Royce India, told *BusinessLine*.

Kelly said gas turbine engine technology is going to be separately categorised under the Strategic Partnership Policy. Hence, the company is “closely” watching how the policy evolves.

During his visit to India in April, UK Defence Minister Michael Fallon had stated collaboration in new technologies such as gas turbine engines will further strengthen defence ties between India and the UK.

The company is also planning to bring in the new Trent 700 jet engines that power the Airbus A330 tanker aircraft.

“We are planning to bring into India the new Trent 700 engines which will come with the A330 AWACS programme. But for that the Indian Air Force has to first place the order,” Kelly said.

Airbus orders

India is planning to place orders worth ₹20,000 crore with Airbus to buy six A330 aircraft to mount the indigenously-built Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS).

The Westminster-based firm is also closely tracking the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project, the home-grown fifth generation fighter aircraft.

“Just like all the engine houses, we are closely tracking the AMCA opportunity. This is now at the RFI stage. We naturally hope the RFP will be issued soon. The Indian Air Force wants these indigenous aircraft and it will be their decision on the engine solution whether it is off-the-shelf or indigenous. The RFP will answer these questions,” he added.

Presently, more than 750 Rolls-Royce engines are in operation with the Indian armed forces. Jaguar is powered by Adour Mk811 engines since 1981, Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT) is powered by Adour Mk871 that trains India’s future pilots. Additionally, the AE 3007 powers Embraer jets on VVIP and surveillance missions and AE 2100 powers the C-130J Hercules.

Sitharaman's daily meetings with service chiefs give momentum to stalled defence projects

By Ajit Kumar Dubey

Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman's strategy of meeting the three service chiefs every day has helped her ministry and the armed forces to take decisions to push stalled projects and proposals.

Highlights

- *Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been meeting the three service chiefs every day.*
- *The meetings have helped lend momentum to stalled defence projects.*
- *Sitharama has also decided that the acquisition council will meet every fortnight.*

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's daily meetings with the three service chiefs and defence secretary have started yielding results as they have started taking decisions to push the stalled projects and proposals of the armed forces.

Recently, in one of the meetings, the army raised the issue of its tender for procuring around 4,450 Light Machine Guns getting retracted as it was found to be a single vendor case, where Israeli firm IWI was the only company found fit during the trials.

Defence ministry procurement procedures discourage acquisition in cases where only one firm is in the fray for offering product.

After the tender was scrapped, the army put across in the meeting that the lack of these machine guns was hampering its operational preparedness, sources told Mail Today.

To offer a solution to the force, the DRDO has offered to provide LMG developed by it on its own for the army, which has apprehensions that its procurement may get delayed.

However, the defence minister and the army asked the DRDO to provide the indigenously developed LMG within 30 days for extensive trials before it could be inducted officially.

The mega "buy and make" procurement plan involved an initial direct purchase of around 4,400 LMGs from a foreign armament company, followed by a tie-up with the Ordnance Factory Board with transfer of technology for large-scale indigenous production. The entire project would have cost an estimated Rs 13,000 crore.

The project had come under the scanner during former defence minister Manohar Parrikar's tenure who was assessing as to how could the acquisition process become a single vendor case after a large number of companies initially showed interest.

"If we keep moving at this pace and quick decisions can be taken by the services and the bureaucracy, this would definitely help in speeding up the processes and resolve long pending issues," a senior military officer told Mail Today.

The initiative to hold a meeting everyday was taken by Sitharaman soon after she took over and the services are either represented by their chiefs and in case they are not there, their Vice Chiefs attend the meeting.

There were apprehensions earlier that how could the daily meetings with the services would help in speeding up the work, but the services headquarters are quite positive about it now.

Every day, the three service chiefs meet the defence minister in her office where they take up one issue faced by the respective services and the then discussion is followed up with the administration finding solutions or the reason for slowing down of the proposals.

The minister has also decided to hold meetings of the Defence Acquisition Council, the highest decision making body on defence procurement, every fortnight.