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# Defence panel meets to talk time bound execution

## Is India Reviving a \$500 Million Anti-Tank Guided Missile Deal With Israel?

*India will still buy Israeli ATGMs as a “stop gap” measure within the next three years, according to a source.*

*By Franz-Stefan Gady*

The Indian Army is expected to place an order for Israeli-made anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) as a “stop gap” measure before India’s Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) can come up with an indigenous ATGM of its own within the next three years, a source familiar with the matter told *Bloomberg News* last month. The procurement proposal is at an advanced stage; however, it has so far not been approved by the Indian government, the source said. A spokesperson from Israeli defence contractor Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd. confirmed that talks are ongoing, although there also have been Indian media reports that the deal has been cancelled for good.



The Indian government scrapped a \$500 million deal with Rafael for 321 Spike ATGM systems and 8,356 missiles in favor of an indigenous ATGM system currently under development by DRDO in December 2017. The Indian Ministry of Defense had originally selected the Spike ATGM over the U.S.-made FGM-148 Javelin ATGM system in October 2014. Nonetheless, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during state visit to India in January 2018, announced that the deal was “back on track.” The Indian

government has not commented publicly on the Israeli prime minister’s announcement until now, nor has it confirmed ongoing negotiations over the acquisition of Spike ATGM systems. The defence ministry can expect strong opposition to any government-to-government deal from the DRDO largely due to indigenization concerns, according to an Indian Army source in January: “There is stiff resistance from the DRDO. If the government places an order for ATGMs from abroad, it can be accused of promoting foreign suppliers at the cost of the DRDO.”

Nevertheless, the recent news does not come as a surprise to Indian defense analysts. As I reported earlier this year, the Indian Army claims that it lacks 68,000 ATGMs of various types and around 850 launchers and is 60 percent short of its authorized holdings. Furthermore, its existing stockpile largely consists of obsolete second-generation Milan-2T and Konkurs anti-tank missiles. “The Indian Army is looking for stopgap measures to quickly address this capability gap by inducting new ATGM systems as quickly as possible,” I wrote in January. “The service is reportedly pushing for a fast-track procurement of 2,500 third-generation shoulder-fired ATGMs and 96 launchers through a government-government contract.” While DRDO has been working on a shoulder-fired third-generation ATGM, has promised to deliver the ATGM for trials by the end of 2018. Following the successful completion of trials, the ATGM would go in for mass production by 2021. However, the Indian Army does not believe that the indigenous weapon system can be delivered on time or meet the service’s requirements.

DRDO has also been working on another the third-generation ATGM, the so-called Nag, fired from the Nag Missile Carrier (NAMICA), an Indian license-produced variant of the Soviet-era BMP-II armored infantry fighting vehicle. Again, the Army has not been impressed with the weapon system’s performance to date. Additionally, the Indian Army has repeatedly voiced its concern that indigenous ATGM systems will be more expensive in the long-run to operate by the service. (The Spike ATGM is known for its low life cycle

cost and simple but reliable operation.) As I wrote in *The Diplomat Magazine* in January, the ATGM capability gap is likely to persist in the Indian Army at least until 2022.

Fri, 08 June, 2018

## DAC approves procurement of radars, air cushion vehicles

### The radars have capability to detect high speed targets

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on Thursday approved procurement of high powered radars for the Indian Air Force and air cushion vehicles for the Army and the Coast Guard together worth over ₹5,500 crore. The 12 high power radars will be procured indigenously under the 'Buy (Indian) IDDM' category.



“The radars will provide long range medium and high altitude radar cover with the capability to detect and track high speed targets following parabolic trajectories. Technologically superior, the radars will have the capability to scan 360 degrees without mechanical rotation of Antenna and will operate on 24x7 basis with minimal maintenance requirement,” the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

In the other deal, air cushion vehicles (ACVs) to be procured from an Indian shipyard will enable travel at very high speeds over shallow water, sand banks, mud flats and swamps which are non-navigable by boats and small crafts due to draught restrictions or uncharted depths. The DAC meeting, chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, was scheduled to discuss the broad contours of the Navy's ambitious project to build six advanced submarines under the multi-billion P-75 (I) programme. But, it was not known whether there was any decision on it during the meeting.

Fri, 08 June, 2018

## Rafale audit only after deal: CAG

### PROCEDURE Government auditor says it will begin inspection after 'full execution' of pact

NEW DELHI: The government's auditor, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), will audit the government's procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets from France for \$8.7 billion, as it does all other deals, but only after the “deal is fully executed and the payments are completed,” according to a senior CAG official who asked not to be identified.



DASSAULT AVIATION The NDA government's procurement of Rafale jets from France has been questioned by the Congress, which claims the pact is more expensive than a deal struck during the UPA regime.

After several media reports surfaced earlier this week about an ongoing CAG audit of the deal, defence ministry officials said they were not aware of such a development and added that deals usually come up for an audit after a contract is fully executed. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government's G2G (government to government) deal to acquire the Rafale aircraft has become controversial with the Congress party claiming it is more expensive than a deal struck during the UPA regime. The government's response is that the two deals aren't comparable, and that the older one had terms which would have meant it wouldn't have gone through. The Indian Rafales are equipped with latest weapons and tailored for Indian needs.

Meanwhile, Sitharaman, in response to a question on the \$8.7 billion deal, told reporters earlier this week: "I am assuring you in the company of all the senior officials that yes there is no scandal in Rafale. We are very clear on that part." Sitharaman was highlighting the defence ministry's achievements in the first four years of the NDA government at a press conference. A second CAG official said that any major spending of the government automatically comes under the auditor's radar and the Rafale will not be an exception.

"It is routine for us. But as it is a major spending, we might do it on a priority, but only after the payments are made and the deal is executed," the official added on condition of anonymity. CAG audits most government deals and the fact that a deal will be audited doesn't necessarily mean there are problems with it.

In her press conference, the defence minister accused the Opposition of launching "motivated attacks" against the government and making "false price comparisons." She said comparing a price for Rafales that was never paid (by the previous UPA regime) with what had been arrived at by the NDA government was a "nonstarter." The opposition party has asked the government to reveal the purchase price of each aircraft but the Centre has said details cannot be disclosed as there is a clause on "classified information" in the inter-governmental agreement.

## Business Standard

*Fri, 08 June, 2018*

### **Indian Navy Ships arrive in Guam for Malabar 2018**

The Indian Navy ships of the Eastern Fleet on Thursday arrived at Guam to participate in the 22nd edition of Exercise Malabar to be held off the coast of Guam in the Philippine Sea from June 7 to June 16. The three ships - Sahyadri, Shakti, and Kamorta - of the Eastern Fleet are under the command of Rear Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Flag Officer Commanding, Eastern Fleet and are currently on an overseas deployment to South East Asia and the Western Pacific region. The scope of the Malabar-18 includes professional interactions during the Harbour Phase in Guam from June 7 to June 10. The Sea Phase will be held from June 11 to June 16, which includes a diverse range of activities at sea including Aircraft Carrier operations, Air Defence, Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Surface Warfare, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), joint manoeuvres and tactical procedures.

Exercise Malabar, which started as a bilateral exercise between the United States Navy and the Indian Navy in 1992, has evolved over the years with the participation of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) from 2007. Over the last 26 years, this Maritime Exercise has grown in scope and complexity and aims at increasing the level of mutual understanding, interoperability and sharing of the best practices between the three navies. The Indian Navy will be represented by the two indigenously designed and built ships, the multi-purpose stealth frigate INS Sahyadri and Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette, INS Kamorta as also by Fleet Tanker INS Shakti and Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft P8I. The United States Navy forces will include the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan with its air wing; two Ticonderoga class cruisers, USS Antietam and USS Chancellorsville; two Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, USS Benfold and USS Mustin; a Los Angeles-class attack submarine and one Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft P8A.

The JMSDF would be represented by a Hyuga class helicopter carrier JS Ise with integral helicopters; Takanami class destroyer JS Suzunami; Akizuki class destroyer JS Fuyuzuki, Japanese Maritime Patrol Aircraft, P1, and a submarine. Exercise Malabar 2017 was held in July last year on the Eastern Sea Board of



India, off Chennai and Visakhapatnam. It is for the first time that the exercise is being conducted off Guam, a major United States Naval Base in the Western Pacific.

## Chopper shortage blunts Indian Navy edge in war game

Indian warships have reached the Pacific island of Guam for the first naval exercises here that will focus on hunting submarines and operating jointly with the US and Japanese forces. The Indian ships lack a critical asset – a naval multirole helicopter – that will limit their ability to track American nuclear-powered submarine and a Japanese conventional submarine that are part of the war games.

The Indian Navy has been trying to procure these helicopters, which enable warships to locate and take down enemy submarines beyond the limited radius of onboard sensors, for years without success. The last attempt in 2005 ended in failure with the Navy now looking



to get the advanced MH 60 ‘Romeo’ choppers from the US in direct government purchase. Till that is done, Indian warships like the INS Kamorta – a specialised antisubmarine corvette in Guam - will be limited in their ability to hunt submarines in the Indian Ocean Region. And that is a major gap in a vital region due to the increasing presence of Chinese submarines operating near Indian waters under the garb of antipiracy patrols. A senior Indian Naval officer told ET the Indian ships will only be operating Chetak choppers for utility missions but will rely on its P81 – a fixed wing maritime aircraft – for long range antisubmarine missions during the exercise.

“We would have wanted a naval multi-role helicopter for such missions, but that is missing from the inventory. Hopefully we get it soon,” the officer said. The Navy requires at least 123 of the Naval Multi Role Helicopters (NMRH) and had released a global request for information in August 2017. This, however, has not progressed as fast as the Navy would have liked, leading to the consideration of the US offer for a direct government sale of the Romeo. The NMRH are required to replace the Sea King fleet and the Navy has named it as one of its most critical needs at several top government presentations. It will now get real time experience of the Romeos during the exercise

Over the next two weeks in Guam –the theatre for an intense WW2 battle in 1944 when US forces stormed in to take it back from Japan– the three naval forces will carry out a variety of drills. Ranging from interception of vessels at sea to anti surface operations and air defence missions, these drills will be the ‘most complex’ war games carried out as part of the Malabar series that began 26 years ago, top Indian Navy officers said. This is also the first wargame being carried out after the US renamed its Hawaii-based command as the Indo Pacific Command – a clear indication of the growing importance it attaches to an Indian role in the region. From the US side, the Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier as well as Los Angeles class nuclear attack submarine will take part while the Japanese self defence forces will be represented by their largest warship, the JDS Ise helicopter carrier as well as Soryu class submarine.

## **China hosts summit with Russia, Iran as nuclear deal wobbles**

Iran, China and Russia may seek ways to salvage the nuclear deal ditched by Donald Trump when their leaders meet this weekend at a summit on the Chinese coast. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a regional security bloc led by China and Russia, is set to hold its 18th annual gathering in the city of Qingdao on Saturday and Sunday. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani is attending this year — just the second time an Iranian leader has participated. It comes after US President Trump controversially pulled Washington out of a 2015 international pact with Iran that placed limits on its nuclear programme in return for easing economic sanctions.

China is Iran's top trade partner and one of the biggest buyers of its oil, but those who oppose the US abandonment of the deal risk huge fines for busting the tough American measures. Rouhani is taking part because "Iran is currently evaluating the signatories of the nuclear deal to see to what extent they'll be able to effectively maintain it even after the US's withdrawal", said Gao Shangtao, an expert on Middle East relations at Beijing Foreign Affairs College.

"To put it bluntly, if Tehran feels assured that China and Russia can withstand the pressure of US sanctions and continue to do business with Iran, then Tehran will seek to retain the deal -- otherwise, it's meaningless," he said. Chinese businesses are expected to step up activities in Iran to fill the void left by the exit of US companies and the possible withdrawal of European rivals who fear punitive US measures. Hua Liming, a former Chinese ambassador to Iran, told the Global Times newspaper on Tuesday: "Unlike the US, China will not break its promise and will ensure that China-Iran relations won't be affected." Iran announced on Tuesday that it plans to boost uranium enrichment capacity with new centrifuges within the 2015 deal's limits, prompting Beijing to urge all parties to "continue to sustain and implement" the agreement. The SCO bloc includes four ex-Soviet Central Asian republics and two new members, Pakistan and India — whose President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, respectively, will be present this weekend.

Iran is currently an observer member of the SCO, though it has long sought full membership. "Iran needs more diplomatic support from the East — not only China, but also Central Asia — in order to strengthen its position and better contend with the US," said Xu Tiebing, international relations professor at the Communication University of China. But most Chinese analysts "are not too eager to see Iran accepted as a formal member state" due to its perceived political instability, he added. Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet Rouhani on the sidelines of the summit, but the nuclear deal is not on the formal SCO agenda. Major SCO topics will include improving trade ties -- in part by pushing forward China's Belt and Road global infrastructure project -- and strengthening cooperation on drug trafficking, cybersecurity and counter-terrorism.

Despite mistrust between China and Russia, "outside circumstances -- specifically US foreign policy -- have pushed them closer to each other", said Tugrul Keskin, director of the Center for Global Governance at Shanghai University. Xu agreed, noting US policy under Trump has been the driver of the SCO's growing profile, becoming "a kind of glue" keeping together SCO member countries who have disparate and often conflicting agendas. Russian President Vladimir Putin told Chinese state broadcaster CGTN that though the SCO began as a "low-profile organisation" that sought merely to "solve border issues" between China, Russia and former Soviet countries, it is now evolving into a larger global force. "Our objective was quite small, but as we worked together on these small issues, we found similarities between us," he said. "We realised that together we could achieve something bigger, grander."