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Interceptor missile flight tested

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) flight tested a high speed interceptor missile from a defence facility off Odisha coast on Tuesday

Bhubaneswar: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) flight tested a high speed interceptor missile from a defence facility off Odisha coast on Tuesday. Defence sources said the indigenously developed missile capable of destroying enemy weapons at high altitude was fired against an electronic target in salvo mode from the Abdul Kalam Island at about 11.10 am.

In an automated operation, the Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) interceptor missile, which was kept fully ready, took-off once the computer system gave the necessary command for lift-off. The interceptor guided by high accuracy inertial navigation system and supported by a redundant micro navigation system moved towards the estimated point of the interception. The heat shield ejected after the missile crossed atmosphere and with the help of infrared seeker, the system moved for interception. “The missile had a smooth take off from the launching complex-IV of the test facility. After a good cross over, it went off. Since an electronic target was used for the test instead of an actual target, the crossover validated the trial,” said a defence official.

The DRDO has developed both high and low altitude anti-ballistic missiles in a bid to provide two-layered aerial protection to major cities and vital installations. While the PDV interceptor missile can destroy incoming enemy weapon systems in exo-atmospheric region, the Advanced Defence interceptor missile has the capability to kill incoming missiles in endo-atmospheric region.

The test assumes significance as India plans to deploy a two-tiered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system once the interceptors are inducted in the armed forces.

India is the fourth nation to have developed a robust BMD system after the US, Israel and Russia. It was fourth test of the two-staged solid fuelled PDV which can destroy incoming missiles of 5,000 km range. While the interceptor missile was first tested on April 27 2014, the second trial was conducted on February 11, 2017. On September 23, the third test was conducted during night.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2019/feb/13/interceptor-missile-flight-tested-1938253.html>

THE ASIAN AGE

Thu, 14 Feb 2019

Indian Navy flexes its maritime muscle with new acquisitions

The Naval Chief elaborated on important acquisitions of various vessels and aircraft

By Anil Bhat

The Indian Navy’s website defines its four roles — military, diplomatic, constabulary and benign. Its military role involves: Deterrence against war or intervention; decisive military victory in case of war; security of India’s territorial integrity, citizens and off-shore assets from sea-borne threats; influence affairs on land; safeguard India’s mercantile marine and maritime trade and safeguard India’s national interests and maritime security.



The Indian Navy's third Scorpene-class submarine Karanj is pulled into the Arabian Sea after its launch ceremony at the Mazagon Dock Shipyard in Mumbai. (Photo: AP)

Given India's vital geo-strategic location in the Indian Ocean region and the threat from two adversarial neighbours, it is amazing as to how the post-Independence government remained "sea-blind" till its fourth war in 1971, the third waged against it by Pakistan.

Presenting a well detailed overall view of the Indian Navy during his pre-Navy Day (December 4, 2018) interaction with the media, the Navy Chief, Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, shared significant inputs about the Navy's current and future acquisitions.

He began by referring to the Navy's successful completion of the first deterrence patrol of the nuclear-powered and ballistic missile-armed INS Arihant, in 2018, marking India's operationalisation of the third and the most survivable segment of the nuclear triad.

The Naval Chief elaborated on important acquisitions of various vessels and aircraft.

While five vessels were inducted in the Navy during 2018, there are currently 36 ships and submarines presently under construction in Indian shipyards. These include the aircraft carrier, Vikrant, P-15B class destroyers, P17A class stealth frigates, P28 ASW corvettes, offshore patrol vessels and Scorpene class submarines. In addition, the government's approval has also been accorded for 56 ships and six submarines.

The Indigenous Aircraft Carrier, presently in its third and final phase of construction at Kochi, is scheduled for sea trials to commence in mid 2020, with all stakeholders working closely to achieve the delivery timelines. The induction of Vikrant will provide a significant fillip to the Navy's blue water capability, increasing the reach and impact of carrier-borne strike forces, both as a means of deterrence as well as during combat operations.

Modernisation of the submarine arm is also well underway. The second Scorpene class submarine Khanderi has completed her major trials and is expected to be ready for commissioning shortly. The third and fourth submarines of this project, namely, Karanj and Vela are also undergoing various stages of pre-induction trials. On the naval aviation front, a long standing critical shortfall in the naval helicopter fleet has been finally addressed with the accord of AoN for 111 utility helicopters in August 2018 and issue of LOR (letter of request) for 24 multi role helicopters in November 2018.

The year end of 2018 marked the Navy acquiring another significant capability, placing it in a select league of navies capable of providing submarine search and rescue in the Indian Ocean Region. While the first Deep

Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) system was operationalised at Mumbai in December 2018, the second DSRV system will be operationalised at Visakhapatnam by March 2019.

During 2018, there was a positive upswing towards contract conclusion in major shipbuilding projects, the salient ones being for procurement of two diving support vessels with M/s HSL, Vizag, two follow-on ships of 1135.6 Project to be constructed at Russia and four survey vessels (large) with M/s GRSE, Kolkata. During this financial year, contract conclusion of 1135.6 (ex-GSL) and ASW-Shallow Water Craft are expected and hopes are high that in the coming months, projects related to LPDs, fleet support ships and mine counter measure vessels will also move forward.

For infrastructure growth, Phase IIA of Project Seabird at Karwar is progressing well. A full-fledged naval dockyard and associated infrastructure to accommodate more ships, submarines and yard-craft is being undertaken during this phase.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands' infrastructure development includes a naval air station at Shibpur, to provide enhanced connectivity to the Northern Andaman Group of Islands as also to increase surveillance capability in the region.

In January 2019, the government sanctioned three new naval air squadrons to be set up in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Besides this, the government has also sanctioned manpower towards manning additional aircraft in the existing Dornier Surveillance Squadrons in Kerala and the Andaman Islands. The contract for procurement of 12 Dornier aircraft was signed with HAL (Kanpur) on December 29, 2016 with delivery commencing on January 2019. This is a substantial contract for the indigenous HAL-built Maritime Surveillance version of the new Dornier 228 aircraft, fitted with improved state of the art sensors and equipment which includes a glass cockpit, Advanced Surveillance Radar, ELINT, Optical sensors and networking features. The aircraft would enhance the Maritime Domain Awareness of the Indian Navy through round the clock sensor-based surveillance and provide targeting data in areas of operation to ward off terror and other threats from sea. This addition would further strengthen the Indian Navy's efforts at the coastal security of India's vast coastline of over seven thousand km.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), in a recent landmark decision approved indigenous construction of six submarines for the Indian Navy at a cost of over `40,000 crore. This is the second project under the Defence Ministry's ambitious Strategic Partnership (SP) model that aims at providing a significant boost to the government's "Make in India" programme. The SP model envisages indigenous manufacturing of major defence platforms by an Indian strategic partner, who will collaborate with a foreign OEM to set up production facilities in the country. The model has a long term vision of promoting India as a manufacturing hub for defence equipment through transfer of niche technologies and higher indigenous content thereby enhancing self-sufficiency for meeting the future requirements of the Armed Forces. This approval is the second such project following indigenous production of 111 Naval Utility Helicopters that was approved in August 2018. Construction of six submarines under Project 75(I) will provide a major boost to the existing submarine design and manufacturing ecosystem in India through transfer of design and equipment technology as well as the necessary skills.

As per the Indian Navy's maritime capability and its perspective plans, the current strength of 150 ships/submarines and 250 aircraft is aimed to be increased to 200 ships/submarines and 500 aircraft.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) also acquired/contracted a large number of ships and shore assets over the past year.

On October 24, 2018, a new 3,000-ton displacement state of the art training ship, the ICGS Varuna, was launched at the shipyard of Reliance Naval & Engineering, located at the Port of Pipavav, Gujarat. The training ship has the primary role of imparting sea training to officer cadets. The 105 m long vessel with a capacity of accommodating 242 personnel is powered by twin diesel engines of 10,400 KW and can move at a speed of 20 knots.

Equipped with weapon systems, it is capable of policing India's maritime zones as well as for search and rescue missions. The ship also has a twin-engine helicopter for undertaking maritime reconnaissance.

Varuna, a first-of-its-kind next generation training ship has been entirely designed by the Design Bureau of Reliance Naval & Engineering. Confirmatory model tests for the design were performed at the Vienna Test

Basin, Austria and vetted by internationally acclaimed experts. The vessel will join the Coast Guard fleet in May 2019 after extensive tests and trials.

During the launch ceremony, RNEL chief executive officer, Debashis Bir, addressing the gathering, disclosed that RNEL is currently constructing 20 ships of three different categories for the defence services. These projects include five naval offshore patrol vessels (for the Indian Navy) and 14 fast patrol vessels, apart from the training ship launched (for ICG). Of this, six vessels are expected to be delivered in 2019.

Seven ship acquisition contracts for 51 ships/boats were signed during the last four years. ICG's present fleet strength is 139. The XIII Plan (Coast Guard Definitive Action Plan 2017-22) caters for acquisition of 47 commissioned surface platforms. The acquisition is being appropriately planned in a phased manner to enable capacity building with focus on consolidation.

ICG, the smallest armed force under the Defence Ministry, its jurisdiction of India's coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone involves patrolling the distance between the shore and 12 to 200 nautical miles. Beginning with 74 vessels, the ICG's fleet has grown to 162, including four advance offshore patrolling vessels, three fast patrolling vessels, two hovercraft and one harbour craft. Its air wing has increased from 44 aircraft in 2008 to 58 aircraft. It is expected to acquire 50 new vessels and around 40 aircraft in the next four years.

(The writer, a retired Army officer, is a defence and security analyst based in New Delhi)

<http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/140219/indian-navy-flexes-its-maritime-muscle-with-new-acquisitions.html>



Thu, 14 Feb 2019

CAG says removal of 'sovereign guarantees' only helped Dassault

By Ajay Banerjee

New Delhi: The CAG report on the Rafale deal stops short of questioning the government on how sovereign guarantee clause was waived to become a 'letter of comfort' from France. The report narrates the facts, but does not give a verdict.

The Dassault Aviation in its 2007 bid had included 15 per cent bank guarantee against advance payments, 5 per cent each for 'performance guarantee and warranty'.

A bank guarantee gets directly and automatically invoked in case of breach of contract by the seller. In the 2015 offer, the French company did not furnish any financial and performance bank guarantees.

Since about 60 per cent of advance payment (Rs 35,000 crore) were to be made to the French company, the Ministry of Law and Justice advised that a government/sovereign guarantee should be requested in view of the value of the proposed procurement. However, the government of France and company neither agreed to furnish the bank guarantees nor government/sovereign guarantee. Instead, it provided a 'letter of comfort' signed by the French Prime Minister in lieu of a bank guarantee.

The company was to provide bank guarantee against the 15 per cent of the advance payment (Rs5,200 crore) made by the ministry to the vendor which would be outstanding for three years till the deliveries of equivalent amount are made by the company.

The bank charges, which the vendor would have to pay to hold this guarantee, work out to be a few million euros. The bank rate for such holding charges is 1.25 per cent per annum. The offer of 2007 included 'performance guarantee and warranty', valuing 10 per cent of the total value of the contract, which was to be held till the completion of deliveries five-and-half years. The bank charges for this work out to another few million euros. The cost of the bank charges should "have been passed on to ministry... Audit noted that this was actually a saving for Dassault when compared to its previous offer of 2007".

An inter-government agreement means that the selling government (in this case France) procures the items from their vendors on behalf of the buying government, using the same procedure, terms and conditions which it uses for its own procurements. As a result, the buying government receives the same benefits and protection as the vendor gives to its own government. The cost of such procurements are considered to be lower because the equipment is already in use by the selling government and much of the cost of R&D and other fixed costs would have been recovered by the vendor.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/cag-says-removal-of-sovereign-guarantees-only-helped-dassault/728464.html>

TIMESNOWNEWS.COM

Thu, 14 Feb 2019

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on missile pact crisis

The future of the INF treaty -- and what steps NATO will take to bolster its defence against new Russian medium-range missiles -- are top of the agenda for the defence ministers' two-day meeting

New Delhi: Amid controversy that government waived-off guarantees and anti-corruption clauses for Rafale fighter aircraft deal with France, Air Marshal V.R. Chaudhari, Deputy Chief of Air Staff, said on Tuesday that there is no sovereign guarantee and integrity pact signed with Russians for S-400 missile defence system.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced Wednesday that he will hold talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov this week, as part of efforts to save a key arms control treaty that is on the point of collapse. The pair will meet at the Munich Security Conference, which starts on Friday, as NATO tries to persuade Moscow to abandon a new missile system the alliance says breaches the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

The US began the process of exiting the treaty earlier this month in response to Moscow's deployment of the 9M729 missile, prompting Russia to announce its own withdrawal. "I expect to meet minister Lavrov in Munich, and I think it is important to have dialogue with Russia especially when we face so many difficult issues as we face today," Stoltenberg said as he arrived for a meeting of NATO defence ministers.

The US withdrawal will only take effect in August, giving a six-month window to save the treaty, but few expect this to happen and Stoltenberg said NATO was already planning for a "future without the INF treaty and with more missiles". The future of the INF treaty -- and what steps NATO will take to bolster its defence against new Russian medium-range missiles -- are top of the agenda for the defence ministers' two-day meeting.

The collapse of the 1987 treaty, which banned ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometres, has sparked fears of a new arms race in Europe. But Stoltenberg said NATO had no intention of deploying "new nuclear land-based weapons systems in Europe".

"Then of course we have a wide range of other options, conventional and other options, but I will not speculate on them now," Stoltenberg said. Moscow denies the missile breaches the terms of the INF treaty and has made various counter-allegations against the US.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet leader who signed the INF treaty with then US president Ronald Reagan, launched a stinging attack on Washington over its exit from the pact on Wednesday.

He accused the US of abandoning the agreement "to free itself of any constraints in the arms sphere (and) gain absolute military superiority", in a column published by the Russian newspaper Vedomosti.

<https://www.timesnownews.com/international/article/nato-secretary-general-jens-stoltenberg-to-meet-russian-foreign-minister-sergei-lavrov-on-missile-pact-crisis/365267>

3 राफेल लड़ाकू विमान भारत में हुए लैंड



बेंगलुरु, (पंजाब केसरी) : मोदी सरकार और विपक्ष में राफेल विमान सौदों के लेकर तमाम आरोप-प्रत्यारोप के बीच फ्रांस के वायुसेना के तीन राफेल फाइटर प्लेन भारत पहुंच चुका है। बेंगलुरु में एयरो इंडिया शो में भाग लेने के लिए तीन राफेल लड़ाकू विमान भारत में लैंड कर चुके हैं।

हालांकि, इसमें से सिर्फ दो ही उड़ान भरेंगे, वहीं तीसरा डिस्पले के लिए होगा। साफ कर दें कि यह फ्रांस के वायुसेना का राफेल है, न कि भारत सरकार ने जो सौदा किया है। दरअसल, फ्रांस से ये दो राफेल विमान ऐसे वक्त में भारत आया है, जब देश में यह मसला गरमाया हुआ है। हालांकि, राज्यसभा में कैग की रिपोर्ट पेश होने से बैकफुट पर रही मोदी सरकार को कांग्रेस पर हमलावर होने का मौका मिल गया। एयरफोर्स के डिप्टी चीफ एयरमार्शल विवेक चौधरी समेत कई टॉप वायुसेना के अधिकारी इस शो के दौरान प्लेन से उड़ान भरेंगे।

बेंगलुरु में
एयरो शो में
लेंगे हिस्सा