

India clears procurement of 5,000 anti-tank guided missiles from France

The purchase of 5,000 French-made anti-tank guided missiles was approved by the Acquisition Council on January 31

By Franz-Stefan Gady

The Indian Defense Acquisition Council, the Ministry of Defense's (MoD) principal procurement body chaired by Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, approved the procurement of 5,000 French-made second-generation MILAN anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) on January 31.

The total value of the defense deal is estimated at over \$167 million. The MoD did not announce when the new ATGM systems are expected to be introduced into service.

India's Bharat Dynamics has license-built tens of thousands of MILAN ATGMs of different variants since the 1970s, and will manufacture the latest batch of missiles. The man portable MILAN 2T is capable of firing a 115 millimeter tandem high-explosive anti-tank warhead at armored targets at a distance of up to 2,000 meters. The 2T version, first introduced into service in the early 1990s, is reportedly able to penetrate reactive armor defenses.

As I reported previously, the Indian Army claims that it lacks 68,000 ATGMs of various types and around 850 launchers. 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. Following extensive user trials, the Army selected the third-generation Israeli Spike ATGM over the FGM-148 Javelin ATGM in October.

The Spike ATGM is a third-generation fire-and-forget weapon system with a tandem-charge HEAT warhead, with the long-range variant of the missile capable of hitting targets at a distance of up to 4 kilometers. The Spike ATGM can be fired in 'top attack' mode in lofted trajectory hitting its target from above.

Notably, the Indian government scrapped a \$500 million deal with Israeli defense contractor Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. for 321 Spike ATGM systems and 8,356 missiles in favor of an indigenously designed and developed man portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) currently under development by India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) in December 2017.

A final decision over the procurement of the Spike, however, is still pending. The Indian Army is expected to conduct validation trials of the Spike ATGM this summer in India's western Rajasthan desert region. Meanwhile, DRDO has successfully test fired the MPATGM at the Ahmednagar test range in the western Indian state of Maharashtra in September 2018.

The MPATGM is a third-generation ATGM which has been under development by DRDO in partnership with Indian defense contractor VEM Technologies Ltd. since 2015. It reportedly has an engagement range of about 2.5 kilometers. DRDO has promised the Indian Army to hand over the first MPATGM prototype by the end of 2018 for user trials, but no announcement has been made to date. Mass production of the missile is expected to begin in 2021, but may be delayed.

The Indian Army remains deeply skeptical of MPATGM capabilities and does not believe that it will be meet its operational requirements.

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/india-clears-procurement-of-5000-anti-tank-guided-missiles-from-france/>

DRDO DRDL release 67.53 crores

Roshan Doula: The Central government sanctioned Rs 67.53 crore last month for the rehabilitation of Roshan Doula residents. It may be noted that the Central government had released Rs 14 crore for rehabilitation in 2014 but works could not begin as the funds were not sufficient. There is a mixed response among the residents to rehabilitation. 10 per cent of them are unwilling to relocate as the land prices have shot up several notches in the last few years.

The Central government on the other hand insists that they be relocated as the area falls between two Defence establishments and there could be a security issue. The revenue department states that the sum is not sufficient to get new houses and rehabilitation. The Defence establishment has been sending proposals on shifting the colony and rehabilitation of the residents since year 2000. Settlement Labourers who migrated from Mahbubnagar and Rangareddy districts arranged huts in the area and worked in construction sites in 1981.

A few of them even purchased land from a landlord Sama Bal Reddy for Rs 5 per sq yard. At present, nearly 600 families are residing, out of which 200 are tenants for the last 20 years. Those staying by paying low rentals are reluctant to leave. 28-year battle.

The residents of Roshan Doula have been fighting for better drainage facilities, drinking water, sanitation and have even boycotted elections. For years they undertook protests in various forms such as boycotting elections, laying siege of government offices and agitation in front of Collector's Office.

Demanding either rehabilitation or basic facilities, they warned to boycott GHMC elections in 2016. Their protest made the public representatives along with revenue officials to give assurance in addressing the issue. As the problem was not addressed as promised by them, the colony residents registered their protest at both the RDO office and the Collector office. The government came to their rescue and sanctioned funds to construct drainage and roads on temporary basis till the rehabilitation process was over. Simultaneously the colony people got the basic facilities.

Former Malkajgiri MP and Medchal legislator Chamakura Malla Reddy who noticed the hardship of the colony residents, along with local corporator Ramavath Padma Srinu Naik and some of the colony residents went to New Delhi thrice.

He met the then defence minister Arun Jaitley and present defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman and explained the plight of the colony residents. Then the Centre sanctioned Rs 81.53 crore including Rs 14 crore that was already released in 2014. At the end of the day the directors of the DRDL and DRDO handed over the release letter of Rs 67.53 crore to the local corporator Padma Naik and the colony people recently.

<https://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Telangana/2019-02-07/DRDO-DRDL-release-6753-crores-/489556>