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India's BrahMos cruise missile flies farther, faster than others

The name is derived from India's Brahmaputra and Russia's Moskva rivers

By Anil Bhat

In 1998, India signed an agreement with Russia to design, develop, manufacture and market BrahMos, a supersonic cruise missile system jointly developed by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPOM, launchable from land, aircraft, ships and submarines. BrahMos is a modification of Soviet-era anti-ship missiles (Oniks, Yakont) developed by the Reutov Design Bureau in the late 1980s. The name is derived from India's Brahmaputra and Russia's Moskva rivers. The first test launch was conducted on June 12, 2001, at the Chandipur range in Odisha, India, and subsequently, the production of missiles began at enterprises in both countries.

Development of these cruise missiles is a natural progression for India, in seeking to develop various platforms for its military arsenal, either on its own or with a partner — but nevertheless, in India, and thus it became the first Make in India venture. BrahMos is technically a ramjet-powered supersonic cruise missile with a solid propellant booster that can be launched from land-based canisters, submarines, ships and now aircraft. Travelling at speeds of Mach 2.8 to 3.0, it is the world's fastest cruise missile, about three-and-a-half times faster than the American subsonic Harpoon cruise missile. Since its maiden successful test firing conducted on June 12, 2001, BrahMos has undergone a record number of over 70 flight tests to date from land, sea, sub-sea and air platforms, thereby validating its multifarious capability to completely annihilate high-value ground and sea-based targets with ultimate speed, pin-point accuracy and devastating firepower in all weather conditions by day and night. One of its special features is its ability to fly extremely close to the ground to avoid missile defence systems. In fact, during the terminal phase, the missile can fly as low as 10 m to the ground. In the final phase, the missile relies on an active radar seeker or inertial guidance.



While the Indian Army deployed the land-attack BrahMos (LACM) variant since 2007, the Indian Navy inducted the versatile weapon in both surface to air and anti-ship configurations onboard its frontline surface warfare platforms since 2005. The Indian Air Force (IAF) has also raised a land-attack BrahMos squadron and successfully test-fired the advanced air-launched version of the weapon (ALCM) for the very first time from its frontline Sukhoi-30MKI strike fighter against a sea-surface target on November 22, 2017, thereby creating history and making India the first and only country in the world to complete the “supersonic cruise missile triad”. In this test, the IAF successfully fired the BrahMos-A in an anti-shiping configuration off the eastern coast in the Bay of Bengal. The launch was smooth; it fell for about 100 to 150 m, ignited and followed the desired trajectory, before directly hitting the target ship. This only succeeded with dedicated support from the Indian Navy, by way of ensuring availability of the targets and a large number of monitoring ships to ensure data collection and range safety clearance.

BrahMos Aerospace became the first defence entity in the world to integrate and flight test the heaviest air-borne weapon onto a super-maneuvrable fighter platform. In 2019, the missile underwent a number of successful test firings from land, sea and air platforms. The IAF conducted a second successful test firing of the advanced BrahMos air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) on May 22, 2019 against a land target in the Andaman & Nicobar Island region.

In July 2019, CEO, BrahMos Aerospace, Sudhir Kumar Mishra, announced, “India has successfully test-fired a vertical deep dive version of BrahMos, the world’s fastest supersonic cruise missile, that can now change the dynamics of conventional warfare... The upgraded version of the missile with enhanced range of up to 500 km is also ready... We can take on any ship at sea up to 300 to 400 km (far) and after some time, may be longer; we can take on land targets up to hundreds of kilometers and with the test that we have conducted some time back (from Sukhoi 30), ranges up to thousands of kilometers. He also informed that (a) it is possible to increase the range of this missile because India is a part of the elite Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), (b) for the Army, Navy and Air Force, it has become a weapon of choice and (c) the steep 90-degree version has become an ultimate aircraft carrier killer.

The BrahMos anti-ship version was launched successfully in November 2019 from an Indian Navy platform. On December 17, 2019, BrahMos-A was tested yet again from the Su-30 fighter in “user configuration” against a ship target and successfully met all mission objectives. In December 2019, two successful major tests of the missile — one from a Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter aircraft against a sea target, and another fired from a land-based mobile launcher against an unidentified target. On January 20, 2020, the IAF commissioned the “Tigersharks” squadron of Su-30MKI fighters armed with the deadly BrahMos air-launched missile at the Thanjavur air base in Tamil Nadu. This will be a vital asset to keep a “strategic eye” over the Indian Ocean region and enhance India’s protection and deterrent capability.

Sharing an important design/production aspect with this author, BrahMos Aerospace general manager and marketing director Praveen Pathak said, “The air-launched variant had to be made 500 kg lighter than the land/naval variants. One of the major challenges DRDO scientists had to overcome was the optimisation of transfer-alignment inertial sensors. Thankfully, the experience of the IAF flight test crew and the dedicated and synergetic efforts of the IAF, DRDO and HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) ensured that the integration was smooth. Altogether, it has proven India’s ability to undertake such complex integrations on its own.”

Reportedly, three BrahMos missile regiments raised so far have been deployed in the western sector to counter threats from Pakistan and in the second phase of military expansion along the China front, the government reportedly gave the go-ahead for deployment of BrahMos cruise missiles in Arunachal Pradesh. The fourth regiment of cruise missiles, with a 290-km range, will improve India’s military reach into the Tibet Autonomous Region and counter China’s elaborate missile deployment along the Sino-Indian Line of Actual Control.

Emerging as a top product in the international cruise missile market, the demand for this powerful weapon is growing with several countries across continents expressing strong interest in acquiring the missile for their militaries. Speaking at the IMDEX Asia 2019 exhibition held on May 2019, Commodore S.K. Iyer, chief general manager for HR at BrahMos Aerospace, said the first missile export contract awaited a government-to-government approval. “A number of Southeast Asian countries are ready to buy our missiles... It will be our first export and we have received increasing interests in the missiles from Gulf countries,” he said. BrahMos Aerospace is eyeing more successes for the joint venture in 2020, especially in getting a go-ahead from the government for exporting the missile to friendly, responsible nations. The Indian defence sector sees good opportunities for exports to the Southeast Asian and the Gulf countries where slower economic growth rates have put budgetary pressure on acquiring viable, cost-effective and reliable solutions.

There is a plan for the not too distant future to develop a hypersonic variant of the BrahMos missile which will travel at speeds faster than Mach 5.0.

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

<http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/040220/indias-brahmos-cruise-missile-flies-farther-faster-than-others.html>

HAL plans to outsource 35% of LCA manufacturing to private sector

The leading aeronautical firm is in line to bag a contract to manufacture 83 of the LCA Mk 1A fighters — to be equipped with advanced radars, sensors and indigenous weaponry — and is doubling its annual production capacity to meet the requirement

By Manu Pubby

New Delhi: Gearing up for its biggest order yet under the Make in India initiative, state owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) plans to outsource a significant part of the estimated Rs 38,000 crore contract to the private sector.

The leading aeronautical firm is in line to bag a contract to manufacture 83 of the LCA Mk 1A fighters — to be equipped with advanced radars, sensors and indigenous weaponry — and is doubling its annual production capacity to meet the requirement.

HAL Chairman R Madhavan told ET that the first of the upgraded fighters can be delivered within three years of the order being placed and a significant amount of manufacturing will go to private sector companies such as Larsen and Toubro, Dynamatics, VEM Technologies and Alpha Design “We have planned that four vendors will supply major parts of the fuselage for the fighters. With regard to the manufacturing part, we plan to outsource almost 35% to the private sector,” said Madhavan.

Several other Indian vendors will also be involved in the project, he said.

HAL has put in place the infrastructure to double its capacity to produce 16 of the fighter jets every year and has a contingency plan to increase it further if the need arises. “The second (production) line has been set up. With two lines we can manage 16 a year and if really required we can put up a third line as well,” said Madhavan.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/hal-plans-to-outsource-35-of-lca-manufacturing-to-private-sector/articleshow/73922517.cms>



Why India's Army hates its homemade Arjun Tank

What a mess

By Kyle Mizokami

- ***Key point: The Arjun was supposed to be a wonderful new weapon. However, it ended up being poorly made, over budget, and greatly delayed***

In the mid-1970s, India began development on a totally new, advanced main battle tank that would satisfy the needs of the country's Armored Corps. An impressive combination of firepower, armor protection and mobility, the tank was to be India's first indigenously produced tank—and one of the best in the world. The service date for the tank, known as Arjun, was confidently set for 1985.

Instead, the Arjun suffered a tortuously long development period spanning two centuries. The final result, introduced into the army twenty-six years later than originally planned, is a mess of a tank that not even the Indian Army wants.

The Indian Army's Armored Corps has been in existence for seventy-four years, tracing its roots to the Second World War, and has fought in every one of India's wars with neighbor and rival Pakistan. The Corps has across has sixty-three armored regiments (the equivalent of battalions), spread across eight armored and mechanized divisions and another seven armored and mechanized brigades.



The decision to produce an indigenous Indian tank was made in 1972, shortly after the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. In 1974, the state-run Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was tasked with developing the tank. It was to be a forty-ton vehicle, armed with a 105-millimeter gun. It would be small enough to be strategically mobile, capable of being shuttled on internal lines (roads and railroads) to vital sectors along the long border with Pakistan.

DRDO decided to make the tank, called Arjun, a mostly Indian design. The Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment, part of DRDO, was to design the hull, armor, turret, gun and running gear. The main gun and engine would be imported. Unfortunately, India's defense-industrial base was nowhere near capable of creating such a vehicle. As if that weren't enough of an obstacle, India's world-famous bureaucracy and red-tape machine was another enemy to progress.

Today, the Arjun Mk 1 is a sixty-two-ton tank, complete with a 120-millimeter gun, advanced composite armor, a 1,400-horsepower turbocharged engine, and advanced fire control and thermal sights. Although the tank's specifications are impressive, the actual product leaves a lot to be desired.

By 2009, thirty-five years after it was originally conceived, Arjun was "ready" for production. Despite shortcomings revealed in testing, the Indian Army was forced to buy 124 Arjuns—enough to equip just two armored regiments—to keep state tank production facilities open. By mid-2015, two years after the purchase was complete, nearly 75 percent of the Arjun force was inoperable due to technical problems.

Arjun's armored protection evolved significantly over thirty-five years. The tank is fitted with Kanchan armor, a locally designed composite blend that is allegedly similar to British Chobham armor. Kanchan is rumored to be capable of shrugging off point-blank shots from the 125-millimeter gun of Indian T-72 tanks. Arjun is so well protected that its weight ballooned from the original forty-ton specification to sixty-two tons.

This increase in protection came at a cost—decreased tactical and operational mobility. As originally specified, a forty-ton tank with a 1,400-horsepower engine would have an impressive 35-to-1 horsepower-to-weight ratio. Unfortunately, Arjun's weight ballooned from forty to sixty-two tons, with no corresponding increase in engine power. DRDO finally settled on a German-made MTU 1,400-horsepower water-cooled diesel engine, complemented with an Indian supercharger. Arjun's horsepower-to-weight ratio sank to a mediocre 22.5 to 1. The vehicle's weight also means it cannot be used in Punjab and the northern deserts of India in India's "Cold Start" offensive strategy against Pakistan.

The Arjun's development period was so long that major design decisions became completely obsolete. The 105-millimeter gun, perfectly adequate in the 1970s when stacked up against the NATO-standard 105-millimeter L7 gun (the M68 in U.S. Army service), and the 115-millimeter gun of the Soviet T-62 tank, were obsolete by the early 1990s.

In the end, the Arjun ended up with a 120-millimeter rifled barrel gun, capable of firing High Explosive, Armor-Piercing Discarding Sabot rounds, High Explosive Anti-Tank rounds and, perhaps not unusually for a former British colony, High Explosive, Squash Head rounds. DRDO conducted test firings of the Israeli-made LAHAT long-range antitank missile, which offered a high probability of kill against armored vehicles out to six thousand meters, but the round was dropped in 2014. DRDO claims it will develop an indigenous equivalent.

How did Arjun, which took decades to develop, end up being such a disappointment? The tank took so long to develop that technologies not even invented when Arjun was first proposed had to be added to the tank. GPS navigation, laser warning receivers, non-explosive-reactive armor and other innovations were merely research papers in 1974, but by the early 2000s were must-have inventions that added to the tank's complexity, weight and cost.

The inability of DRDO to put its foot down and admit that it could not build the tank on time and on schedule doomed the tank. India's state of the military art was such that a new tank would out of necessity face a prolonged development time. The more the tank project dragged on, the more the tank needed to be redesigned to incorporate new technologies. The tank was trapped for decades in a development death spiral, and the end product is correspondingly mediocre.

DRDO is busy at work designing Arjun Mk II, which will allegedly contain many improvements over the original Mk I. The Indian Army for its part is adamant it wants no part of the Mk II until prototypes perform satisfactorily, and would much rather buy an overseas tank. The army, for now prefers the Russian T-90 tank and may express interest in the brand new T-14 Armata tank. Russian state media has reported that India is interested in the Armata as the basis of a new, localized tank. Whether that's true remains to be seen.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/why-indias-army-hates-its-homemade-arjun-tank-119911>



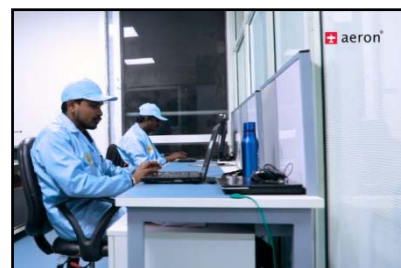
Tue, 04 Feb 2020

Defence tech manufacturer Aeron Systems develops navigation systems for fighter jets

Aerospace and defence technology manufacturer, Aeron Systems has developed cutting-edge navigation systems for fighter aircraft. The Company, recently, received the CEMILAC certification for its product, the AHRS (Attitude and Heading Reference System) used for the navigation of fighter jets from DRDO. The CEMILAC (Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification) is a regulatory body under DRDO, mandated with the responsibility of Airworthiness certification of airborne stores, military aircraft, Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), Aero-engines, Air launched weapons.

Aeron Systems will showcase the AHRS system and launch its latest high accuracy Fibre-Optic Gyro based Inertial Navigation System during Defexpo 2020, biennial mega defence exhibition taking place in Lucknow from 4 to 9 February.

In a statement issued by the Company said that the indigenously built AHRS system can replace an imported system. The development has not just reduced the cost significantly but also ensured that future repair and maintenance can be done faster during entire life cycle of the aircraft.



The AHRS is safety critical system operating onboard fighter aircraft. It needs to function with unerring precision under the most trying environments, withstanding highest possible stress, temperatures, and vibrations.

“The announcement is significant because this AHRS is the first indigenously designed and developed AHRS system by a private company in India, for fighter aircraft which has received CEMILAC certification. With this development Aeron has entered the realm of high-end Aerospace

systems and reduced our country's dependence on imported inertial navigation systems for existing and future aircraft," said Ashvani Shukla, CEO of Aeron Systems.

As an IDDM-SME company in operation for over 11 years, Aeron has demonstrated the capability by successfully supplying its Inertial Navigation Systems and AHRS systems for various defence projects, attaining a respectable position in this domain. It has been closely working with various DRDO labs and defence PSUs, has given its indigenous solutions for the range of defence applications.

On reaching this important milestone, Abhijeet Bokil, MD & CTO of Aeron Systems said, "Aeron's Octantis AHRS system is capable of being deployed on any aircraft, fighter or commercial and offers highest reliability using redundant sensors technology. In fact, there are very few companies in the world offering airborne qualified AHRS systems and Aeron has joined that club now."

<https://bharatshakti.in/defence-tech-manufacturer-aeron-systems-develops-navigation-systems-for-fighter-jets/>

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, 04 Feb 2020

Call on Amethi rifle project likely today

The order to manufacture a record 670,000 Kalashnikov AK 203 rifles for the Indian Army has been discussed for more than a year but the formal order has yet to be placed owing to delays in submission of technical and commercial bids

By Manu Pubby

New Delhi: The long-delayed assault rifles factory in Amethi is likely to get a final push on Tuesday at a critical meeting, where the Indo-Russian joint venture chosen in a government-to-government deal is expected to firm up its commercial offer which would result in start of production this year.

The order to manufacture a record 670,000 Kalashnikov AK 203 rifles for the Indian Army has been discussed for more than a year but the formal order has yet to be placed owing to delays in submission of technical and commercial bids.

As reported by ET, the technical gates for the deal were crossed in October last year and the next step is submission of a firm commercial offer that would have to be cleared by the government. While the factory at the politically sensitive Amethi was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March last year, it has yet to commence work on producing the much-needed assault rifles.

Amethi, an erstwhile Nehru-Gandhi family bastion, is represented in Parliament by the BJP's Smriti Z Irani, who defeated the then Congress president Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha election last year.

The first board meeting of the joint venture, scheduled for Tuesday, can formally take the process forward by firming up the offer price for the rifles, said people aware of the matter. If things go as per plan, formal production could begin by May and the first Indian made rifle could be ready for induction by the end of this year, they said.

For domestic production to start this year, formal orders have to be placed on the JV. The project is being treated as a priority but given the tight budgetary situation, commercial negotiations are the most critical factor. The rifles will be made under a joint pact between Kalashnikov and the Ordnance Factory Board.



The joint project is a high priority one for both nations, with Prime Minister Modi and President Vladimir Putin known to have taken a personal initiative to take it ahead at the earliest. The JV to produce Kalashnikov rifles has been described as the “fastest ever” created by Russia for a defence project.

The Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited joint venture will produce AK 203 assault rifles, with the number likely to increase to at least 750,000 later as requirements of other forces are added to the order.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/call-on-amethi-rifle-project-likely-today/articleshow/73922983.cms>



Tue, 04 Feb 2020

IAF operates An-32 transport aircraft from Himalayan airfield using blended biofuel

By Rahul Bedi

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force (IAF) has for the first time successfully operated an Antonov An-32 ‘Cline’ transport aircraft from the Himalayan city of Leh using blended aviation biofuel.

The IAF said in a 31 January statement that during the 31 January flight from Leh’s 3,255 m-high Kushok Bakula Rimpoche airport both of the aircraft’s engines used aviation turbine fuel (ATF) blended with 10% of indigenously developed biofuel.

“The successful flight demonstrated the IAF’s capabilities to absorb new technology while sponsoring indigenization,” added the service.

In May 2019 the IAF had formally received certification to operate its An-32s using aviation fuel blended with Jatropha oil in a bid to reduce consumption of the costly ATF as a part of the governments ‘Made in India’ initiative aimed at reducing imports.

https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/FG_2691736-JDW



Tue, 04 Feb 2020

Indian Coast Guard commissions coastal interception craft

By Ridzwan Rahmat

Singapore: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has commissioned another 28 m coastal interception craft.

The unnamed vessel, which bears the pennant number C-448, was commissioned on 29 January at New Mangalore in the western Indian state of Karnataka.

The vessel is equipped with water jet propulsion driven by two Caterpillar 3516C diesel engines, and can attain a maximum speed of 45 kt with a standard range of 500 n miles at 25 kt.

It can accommodate a crew of 15 including two officers, and has been equipped with a machine gun mount in the forward section.

The C-448 is expected to take on constabulary and maritime patrol duties with the ICG's Coast Guard District 3 when it is fully operationalised.

https://janes.ih.com/Janes/Display/FG_2691380-JNI



Tue, 04 Feb 2020

India's low defence budget for FY 2020/21 to hit military modernisation

By Rahul Bedi

New Delhi: India's federal government has announced an INR4.71 trillion (USD65.9 billion) defence budget for fiscal year 2020/21 (FY 2020/21), which represents a 5.18% increase of INR225.58 billion compared to the allocation for the previous fiscal year.

Military officers and Ministry of Defence (MoD) officials said the budget increase, which was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 1 February, includes INR1.33 trillion for military pensions, leaving just INR3.38 trillion for all three services.

This corresponds to around 1.5% of India's GDP and continues the multi-year trend of steadily reduced military spending for the country.

According to the Indian government's Press Information Bureau (PIB), the defence budget accounted for 15.49% of the federal government's total expenditure for the upcoming fiscal year.

Meanwhile, senior service officers told *Jane's* on 3 February that the nominal hike in the defence budget for FY 2020/21 will be "neutralised" by rising inflation and the progressively declining value of the rupee, leaving 'little or no resources' for India's continually postponed military modernisation.

"The government simply does not have enough money it can commit to military spending, irrespective of the services' demands," said Amit Cowshish, a former MoD financial adviser. As a consequence, the country's defence modernisation continues to remain "a mirage", he told *Jane's*.

The budget apportions INR2.18 trillion to the military's revenue expenditure that includes salaries – over 70% – and operating expenses. This is almost twice the INR1.18 trillion allocated to capital spending for modernisation and upgrades.

Of the latter, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has been allocated 38 % or INR432.82 billion, which is INR15.87 billion less than the INR448.69 it received in FY 2019/20, leaving barely enough money to pay for previously acquired platforms and other materiel.

"The IAF has long been aiming to acquire combat aircraft to make up for its fast depleting fighter squadrons, transport aircraft, aerial refuellers and assorted missile systems, but all of these plans will need to be put on hold," said military analyst Air Marshal V K Bhatia (retd).

The Indian Navy (IN) has been allocated INR266.88 billion for capital acquisitions, despite lobbying for a far larger outlay as it has embarked on the ambitious procurement of six diesel-electric submarines, 111 naval utility helicopters as well as several warships and transport vessels.

The Indian Army (IA) will receive INR 323.92 billion, but senior IA officers have already stated that this amount is "insufficient" to pay for the howitzers, main battle tanks, helicopters and air-defence systems the service requires to maintain operational efficiency in a turbulent neighbourhood.

That said, the government-run Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which is India's main weapons development agency, is to receive INR105.32 billion as its capital outlay and INR87.94 billion as its revenue budget.

The only appreciable rise in defence spending in FY 2020/21 has been in military pensions, which rose by almost 14% to INR1.33 trillion. This comes after an even larger 16% increase in FY 2019/20 over the previous year's allocation.

https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/FG_2691854-JDW

Business Standard

Tue, 04 Feb 2020

Budget 2020: In a first, defence gets more for pension, less for salaries

Army planners are increasingly worried about this drain on funds that could otherwise go towards equipment modernisation

By Ajai Shukla

New Delhi: For the first time ever, the defence budget for 2020-21 allocates more money towards pensions for retired Army soldiers than for salaries for soldiers still in the standing Army.

WHO GETS HOW MUCH												(Figures in ₹)	
	2018-19 (Actual)				2019-20 (RE)				2020-21 (BE)				
	Total Budget	Share (%)	Capital Budget	Share (%)	Total Budget	Share (%)	Capital Budget	Share (%)	Total Budget	Share (%)	Capital Budget	Share (%)	
Army	256,365	66.8	29,561	33	277,113	65.2	32,023	30.5	297,056	66.7	34,692	32	
Navy	52,684	13.7	23,770	26.5	60,882	14.3	28,756	27.3	61,889	13.8	29,188	27.5	
IAF	74,563	19.5	36,481	40.5	86,812	20.5	44,869	42.2	86,558	19.5	43,282	40.5	
Total	383,612		89,812		424,807		105,648		445,503		107,162		

Source: Budget

Scrutiny of the defence budget reveals that Rs 111,294 crore has been allocated for Army salaries, including civilian employees. The Rs 113,278-crore allocated for Army pensions surpasses that.

There are slightly under 1.3 million soldiers serving in the Army, including officers. Meanwhile, 2.06 million individuals, including Army widows, are drawing pensions, according to the defence ministry, in answer to a parliamentary question in November 2016.

The pension budget has steadily risen since the grant of One Rank, One Pension (OROP) in 2015-16. That year, it was Rs 60,000 crore for the entire military. For 2020-21, it will stand at Rs 1.33 trillion.

Army planners are increasingly worried about this drain on funds that could otherwise go towards equipment modernisation.

However, there is no going back from the political commitment for granting OROP, which the Bharatiya Janata Party gave in the run-up to the 2014 general elections.

The Navy and the Indian Air Force (IAF), too, are facing this problem, but not to the extent the manpower-heavy Army does. The Navy's salary allocations stand at Rs 13,059 crore for the coming year, while its pension liability is Rs 7,234 crore.

IAF salaries for next year are projected to be Rs 17,939 crore, while its pension allocations stand at Rs 13,313 crore.

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, who was the Army chief until he was elevated on New Year, had grappled with this problem while heading the Army. He initiated four studies that aimed primarily at reducing the Army's salary and pension bill.

While the recommendations have not yet been implemented, pensions are sought to be reduced through measures like recruiting soldiers for shorter tenures and discharging them from service before they qualify to earn a lifelong pension.

The Budget highlights another key area that would require the CDS' focus: the need to prioritise between the Army, Navy, and IAF.

Disaggregation of the budget reveals a pattern of fund allocation that has continued over the years, with each service getting a standard share, instead of allocations being made according to operational priorities identified each year by the higher defence planners.

Stretching back for several years, the Army has been allocated a standard two-third of the services' budget, while the Navy gets 13-14 per cent and the IAF about 20 per cent.

Analysis reveals that the services' capital budget is also allocated pro forma, with the Army getting a standard one-third, the IAF a little over 40 per cent, while the Navy gets the remaining 26-28 per cent.

With each service strongly lobbying for a larger share, the defence ministry tends to avoid controversy by sticking to an existing pattern, rather than evaluating operational needs and spending priorities, which can then govern the allocation of funds.

It remains to be seen whether the appointment of a CDS changes this pattern.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/budget-2020-in-a-first-defence-gets-more-for-pension-less-for-salaries-120020301777_1.html

Business Standard

Tue, 04 Feb 2020

Defence spending in austere times

By Ajai Shukla

When Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while delivering her budget speech, shared no details of how much she was allocating to defence, the writing was on the wall: there was going to be only a token rise. This apprehension proved valid when the numbers appeared and it emerged the government had raised defence spending by an unusually low 5 per cent – insufficient to cater for even inflation. The government has made it clear it prioritises spending on education, healthcare and creating national infrastructure, as a result of which the share of the military in the Centre's overall allocations has steadily fallen from 17.4 per cent in 2018-19; to 16.6 per cent in 2019-20 to 15.5 per cent in 2020-21.

WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT

(₹ crore)

Budget year	Salary (X)	Pension (Y)	Manpower costs (X+Y = Z)	Non-salary revenue (A)	Capital budget (B)	Total non-manpower (A+B = C)	Service budget Z + C	Ratio spent on personnel	Ratio spent on equipment
ARMY*									
2018-19 (A)	103,006	86,377	189,383	37,421	29,561	66,982	256,365	74.0%	11.5%
2019-20 (RE)	105,561	98,955	204,516	40,574	32,023	72,597	277,113	74.0%	11.5%
2020-21 (BE)	111,294	113,278	224,572	37,792	34,692	72,484	297,056	75.0%	11.5%
NAVY**									
2018-19 (A)	11,048	5,607	16,655	12,259	23,770	36,029	52,684	31.0%	45.5%
2019-20 (RE)	12,332	6,863	19,195	12,931	28,756	41,687	60,882	31.5%	46.5%
2020-21 (BE)	13,059	7,234	20,293	12,408	29,188	41,596	61,889	32.0%	47.0%
AIR FORCE									
2018-19 (A)	15,770	9,791	25,561	12,521	36,481	49,002	74,563	34.0%	49.0%
2019-20 (RE)	16,916	11,991	28,907	13,036	44,869	57,905	86,812	33.5%	51.5%
2020-21 (BE)	17,939	13,313	31,252	12,024	43,282	55,306	86,558	36.0%	50.0%

*Includes Border Roads, J&K Light Infantry, Rashtriya Rifles and Border Roads Organisation; **Includes budget for Coast Guard
Source: Budget documents

It is hard to argue for greater defence spending when the country's children are stunted from malnutrition, deprived of medical facilities, its youth barely educated and inadequately skilled for remunerative employment. Given that, it should be self-evident that lacking the economic resources to be a dominant military power, we cannot keep waving the flag of unbridled nationalism. It is folly to hubristically compare ourselves to China, talk down to Pakistan, inflame the internal situation in Kashmir and sow divisions within our society, thus weakening ourselves from within. Instead, once clear about what we can afford to spend on defence, we must tailor our external affairs and internal politics accordingly. Meanwhile, since defence remains the government's largest expenditure head, we must diligently debate and explore every avenue to get most bang for the buck.

A key element of this is the urgent need for military manpower reform. The most striking figure in last Saturday's budget was that, unprecedentedly, more money was allocated for army pensions (Rs 113,278 crore) than for army salaries (Rs 111,294 crore). Incredibly, the government will spend less on its present soldiers and more on those (including myself!) who have gone home. This is not to argue for the neglect of veterans who – as self-described nationalists would trumpet – have “given their best years to the motherland” and now need our support. Rather, it is a moment to remind ourselves that giving all those years to the nation has been a loss to the economy (in productive employment), as well as to the military (in pension liability incurred). With national service (“the draft”) seen as undesirable in India, partly to avoid a militarised population, many expert committees have concluded that the answer lies in switching to a “short service” system, where soldiers join for 3-7 year tenures and then retire without pension to join the labour force. However, vested interests have ensured this never comes about.

Typically, successive governments have dealt with the bloated pension bill by pretending it is somehow separate from the defence budget. The defence ministry, in its official statement after the budget, stated: “Rs 337,553 crore has been allocated for defence (except defence pensions).” While literally correct, this semantic separation reflects an unwillingness to understand and internalise that the pension budget is, and always will be, shaped by the manpower policies created and followed by serving generals. The new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) must focus on this, having already set a few manpower reforms in motion during his tenure as army chief.

Manpower reforms must also include the outsourcing of every possible logistical and maintenance function to civilians, given that civilian manpower costs are far lower. Plugging the military into civilian logistical infrastructure also provides a boost to local economies around military bases, gives citizens a real stake in the military, and generates employment opportunities for retired servicemen who get re-employed by the commercial logistical enterprises that service the military. In the United Kingdom, for example, most Royal Air Force aircraft are maintained and repaired by ex-RAF personnel on contract.

Another urgent budget-related priority must involve the coherent distribution of funds between the three services. An analysis reveals that, year-after-year, each of the three services – the army, navy and air force – continue getting broadly the same share of the defence budget, and they continue spending it the same way, regardless of changes in their role, technology or environment. Each year, the army gets about two-third of the entire defence pie and it spends almost three-quarters of it on salaries and pensions, leaving a little over ten per cent for capital procurement (of modern weaponry), with the remaining going on running expenses. The navy and air force, being less manpower-intensive, can devote about half their overall allocation on new weaponry.

The problem is that this distribution is not done on the basis of calculated priorities, where the generals, admirals and air marshals sit down together and decide what operational capabilities they need to create, and how. Such a process is not easy. While all would agree on the need to be ready to launch cross border strikes on terror camps, there is sharp disagreement on how best to do it: Through IAF fighters, or surface to surface missiles? Or should army Special Forces be created to do the job? If air strikes are the agreed priority, additional funding must be made available for the purchase of fighters and missiles. If it is to be Special Forces, the army must be facilitated in raising a Special Forces Command, with the necessary wherewithal. In reality, however, what happens is that the services prepare their financial projections on the basis of what they were allocated the previous year. The defence ministry cuts that down by an average of 30-35 per cent. The finance ministry then pares that down further before making the allocation. And the outcome is that, each year, each service is allocated a little more than it was in the previous year, but with roughly the same inter-se proportion.

Finally, given the understandable limitations on how much money the government can allocate to “non-productive” expenditure on defence, there is a dire need for out-of-the-box thinking on creative ways to fund defence modernisation. Actually procuring the modern equipment listed in the military’s wish list – the 15-year Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP) – will require the government to cough up about Rs 13 lakh crore over and above what can be expected from the defence capital budget, at current growth rates. A step has been taken towards this by mandating the 15th Finance Commission to consider new funding mechanisms for defence and internal security. Under consideration are options that include floating long-term defence bonds, selling part of the military’s vast land bank (next to the railways, it is the country’s largest land holder) and even levying a defence cess on income tax – something that would be hard to sell even in these nationalistic times. At any rate, the need for unorthodox solutions to critical problems has been recognised and is to be encouraged.

Finding innovative ways of managing defence budget

By Harsha Kakar

The defence budget has been announced. It is not what the armed forces demanded, nor will it ever be. There is a modest increase of 9% from the previous year, of which 10% is for capital and 4% for revenue. The national pie remains limited, demand for its share continues rising. The nation, apart from allocating funds for national security, must also cater for development, social reforms and upliftment of its population. The more educated and technologically aware the population, the better will be the recruitment base for the armed forces. Development and national security are linked. Late President Abdul Kalam had stated in his address to passing out cadets at the Indian Military Academy in Dec 2006, 'National security is born out of two important components. One is economic growth and prosperity; second is the capability to defend the nation against all types of threats.' He added, 'You should remember that the national development and national security have to go together.' Hence, the government needs to balance the budget to meet multiple demands. Simultaneously, threats to the nation are on the rise. On one hand is a belligerent China expanding its footprints in the region, while on the other is Pakistan, which continues supporting terrorist groups operating on Indian soil. India therefore cannot afford to lower its guard nor can it ignore enhancing capacities and capabilities to meet growing threats.

While armed forces personnel, who lay down their life for the nation, deserve the best equipment available globally, they simultaneously, need to re-evaluate their expenditure pattern and evolve measures to cut down revenue expenditure to enhance availability of funds for capital procurements. Two years ago, the army vice chief, General Sarath Chand, had stated that the budget left no funds even for carry forward liabilities, yet the army by recalibrating its priorities, managed to build its ammunition reserves which had remained deficient for years. This gave them the ability to meet emerging threats and respond to Pak aggressively while remaining prepared for escalation. The budget last year was equally low, yet during the year the armed forces had major inductions including the P81 Poseidon multi-mission maritime aircraft, Chinooks and Apaches helicopters, K9 Vajra and M777 guns. The army placed orders 77,000 Sig Sauer rifles and will place similar orders the coming year.

The agreement for manufacture, with transfer of technology, of AK 203 rifles from Russia is on the cards. The induction of the S400 missile system and 83 LCA are on schedule. Evidently, these procurements were beyond budget allocations, implying that in case defence requirements were paramount, the government did create funds.

The armed forces also need to understand the government's constraints and amend their planning and expenditure pattern accordingly.

Enhancement of infrastructure in border areas including roads, bridges and airports contribute towards development of the region, not requirements of armed forces alone, hence should be largely financed from central funds, instead of the army budget. During the past three years, adopting this model, the army's share of investment in this arena has been just 33% of the overall expenditure and should reduce further.

The next major internal reform is reducing pay and pension bills which continue growing exponentially. The salary share of the budget has grown from 92,000 crores in 2013-14 to 142,000 crores in 2019-20. Similarly, pensions have doubled from 60,000 crores in 2013-14 to 120,000 crores.

This needs deliberation as such an increase in coming years would make sustaining current force levels difficult.

Options to reduce this expenditure include reducing the size of existing forces by implementing joint organizations and establishments as also downsizing. At the same time, extending service tenure of army Jawans upto ages of 45-50 must be contemplated. There are options available depending on arm/ service conditions and these must be pursued. The ancient concept of maintaining a young army should be partially re-evaluated. Few cases of unfit officers and men in the Kargil war should not be considered as the rule. Alternatively, an option of transferring retiring personnel from the army to central police forces be evaluated.

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) should become a fulcrum for managing a shrinking defence budget. He should be responsible for joint procurements based on emerging threats, creating joint structures to reduce manpower while closing institutions which are redundant in a joint environment. Basic equipment and transport should be common to all services and be locally produced. This would reduce logistic holdings and repair facilities. The creation of joint logistics infrastructure could lead to immense savings in every sphere.

To enhance ammunition reserves and overcome shortfalls in capacities the army was compelled to reduce its planned revenue expenditure including construction of Married Accommodation Projects (MAP). For almost three years, MAP projects and other construction had ground to a halt while funds were diverted. There would always be demands on the revenue budget, while aspirations of soldiers would continue rising.

Alternate means of exchanging surplus defence land in lieu of constructed amenities, not sale, must be considered, freeing this expenditure from a limited budget. The army has successfully implemented a test model, termed as the New Moti Bagh model in Delhi. Here surplus land was exchanged for five thousand married soldiers and officers' flats, presently under construction. This can be replicated in multiple cities, where the armed forces hold land in penny packets.

The armed forces must push for induction of made in India equipment. This will, apart from saving valuable foreign exchange, enhance job opportunities in the country. In the initial stage it should insist on indigenous manufacture of ammunition and clothing.

It should be accepted that days of elaborate budgets are over as the nation seeks overall development alongside national security. The armed forces need to reorient their expenditure pattern catering to lower availability of funds. Experience has indicated that where essential, funds have flowed. Finally, the defence budget should not be considered as a percentage of GDP but as a percentage of government expenditure. This has always remained around 15-17% and would continue.

The Indian **EXPRESS**

Tue, 04 Feb 2020

India able to disrupt, deter activities of terror groups, patrons: Rajnath Singh

Rajnath Singh announced the creation of 10 new defence wings so that 10 more

Defence Attaches (DAs) could be appointed to further strengthen India's defence diplomacy

New Delhi: Addressing the Defence Attaches of various countries here, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that terrorism and violence related to terror have posed serious challenges to the international security environment and the inter-play between state and proxy non-state actors has further increased the threat.

In a reference to Pakistan, Singh said the continued presence of terrorist infrastructure and state support to terrorists in the neighbouring country has tested India's patience, but as a responsible and powerful nation, India had displayed that it was able to disrupt and deter the activities of terrorist groups and their patrons.

"We need to be more focused to secure our interests. We have adopted pro-active measures to promote peace and stability in the region as well as to increase defence and security cooperation with the Indian Ocean rim countries so as to create a stable maritime environment," Singh said, referring to the situation in the Indian Ocean and in the Indo-Pacific region.

Speaking about the DefExpo, the largest defence expo in India which will begin in Lucknow on February 5, Singh said that with the "establishment of two industrial corridors in the states of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, it is expected that this will increase defence manufacturing and exports". He said there is a "lot of scope" for the Defence Attaches to "work and attract FDI in these corridors".

The minister said that India has also offered several defence Line of Credits (LOC) to friendly countries to allow Indian defence exports and increase their presence in the global market.

Singh announced the creation of 10 new defence wings so that 10 more Defence Attaches (DAs) could be appointed to further strengthen India's defence diplomacy.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-able-to-disrupt-deter-activities-of-terror-groups-patrons-rajnath-singh-6249628/>

दैनिक जागरण

Tue, 04 Feb 2020

दस और देशों में नियुक्त होंगे डिफेंस अटैची : राजनाथ

नई दिल्ली, आइएनएस: रक्षा मंत्रालय ने देश की प्रतिरक्षा कूटनीति को और धारदार बनाने के लिए दुनिया के दस और देशों में डिफेंस अटैची नियुक्त करने की घोषणा की है। रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह ने बताया कि भारत जैसे विशाल देश के लिए मात्र कुछ देशों से ही रक्षा सहयोग सीमित रखना उचित नहीं है।

तीसरे डिफेंस अटैची सम्मेलन को संबोधित करते हुए रक्षा मंत्री ने कहा कि हम लोगों को अन्य देशों के साथ रक्षा सहयोग बढ़ाने के लिए निरंतर प्रयास करना चाहिए। सरकार अपने डिफेंस अटैची के जरिये संबंधित देशों में रक्षा निर्यात बढ़ाने की नई योजना लागू की है। इस योजना के तहत 34 देशों को रक्षा निर्यात बढ़ाने के लिए फंड की व्यवस्था की है।



राजनाथ सिंह • फाइल फोटो

रक्षा मंत्री ने उम्मीद जताई कि डिफेंस अटैची इस राशि का बुद्धिमत्ता पूर्ण तरीके से इस्तेमाल करेंगे।

उन्होंने कहा, भारत के निजी क्षेत्र के रक्षा प्रतिष्ठानों ने सिंगापुर, वियतनाम व ओमान जैसे देशों में कार्यालय खोलकर अपने संपर्क अधिकारी नियुक्त किए हैं। तमिलनाडु और उत्तर प्रदेश में स्थापित होने जा रहे डिफेंस कॉरिडोर से हम लोगों का रक्षा उत्पादन काफी बढ़ जाएगा।

India to have 10 more defence attaches in 10 countries

The Defence PSUs have also opened offices for their liaison officers in different countries like Vietnam, Singapore, Myanmar and Oman. An Export Promotion and Investor Cell has been set up under the Department of Defence Production to facilitate Indian companies' efforts for exports

By Shaurya Karanbir Gurung

New Delhi: To promote defence exports and expand its defence diplomacy, India is planning to have 10 more defence attaches to 10 different countries, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced on Monday.

Singh explained that India cannot restrict its defence cooperation to a few countries. He thereafter announced the creation of 10 new defence wings so that 10 more defence attaches could be appointed. "This will further strengthen India's defence diplomacy," he said, addressing the third Defence Attaches conference here.

Singh said that the DAs should use a new fund to promote defence exports. The government introduced a new scheme to promote defence exports through DAs to their respective countries. Under this scheme, funds have been allocated for export promotion to 34 countries.

The Defence PSUs have also opened offices for their liaison officers in different countries like Vietnam, Singapore, Myanmar and Oman. An Export Promotion and Investor Cell has been set up under the Department of Defence Production to facilitate Indian companies' efforts for exports.

Following his sortie in the indigenous Tejas Light Combat Aircraft in Bangalore last year, Singh had boosted the fighter's export potential. He had said that several South Asian countries have shown interest in the Tejas. There have also been reports of countries showing interest in the Brahmos missile as well.

Singh also appreciated the efforts made by the DAs for increasing the participation of the various defense official delegations and industry in the Defense Expo 2020 to be held in Lucknow, which will be the largest DefExpo ever.

On the DefExpo 2020, Singh said, "With the establishment of two industrial corridors in the states of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, it is expected that this will increase defence manufacturing and exports. There is a lot of scope for DAs to work and attract FDI in these corridors. India has also offered several defence Line of Credits (LOC) to friendly countries to allow Indian defence exports and increase their presence in the global market."

Meanwhile, Singh also said that the continued presence of terrorist infrastructure and state support to terrorists in the neighbouring country have tested India's patience, in a clear reference to Pakistan. "However, as a responsible and powerful nation, India had displayed that it was able to disrupt and deter the activities of terrorist groups and their patrons," he said, adding that India would continue to do so.

Speaking on the threats in the Indian Ocean he said, "We need to be more focused to secure our interests. We have adopted proactive measures to promote peace and stability in the region as well as to increase defence and security cooperation with the Indian ocean rim countries so as to create a stable maritime environment."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-to-have-10-more-defence-attaches-in-10-countries/articleshow/73911645.cms>

डिफेंस एक्सपो लखनऊ में इजरायल एयरोस्पेस और एचएएल के बीच होगा बमवर्षक ड्रोन का करार

मूर्तरूप लेगी मोदी और नेतन्याहू की दोस्ती की सैगात

निशांत यादव • लखनऊ

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और इजरायली पीएम बेंजामिन नेतन्याहू की दोस्ती को लखनऊ में और मजबूती मिलेगी। प्रधानमंत्री बनने के बाद नरेंद्र मोदी की पहली इजरायल यात्रा पर जिन बमवर्षक ड्रोन को भारत को देने की डील हुई थी, उसे डिफेंस एक्सपो के दौरान मूर्त रूप दिया जाएगा। भारत के साथ मिलकर बमवर्षक ड्रोन बनाने की पार्टनरशिप डील एक्सपो में होगी। हिंदुस्तान एयरोनाटिक्स लिमिटेड (एचएएल) मेक इन इंडिया तकनीक से एडवांस्ड मानवरहित कंबैट एरियल व्हीकल्स (यूसीएवी) ड्रोन बनाएगा। सोमवार को इजरायल एयरोस्पेस इंडस्ट्रीज (आइएआइ) और एचएएल अधिकारियों के बीच तकनीक को लेकर मंथन भी हुआ।

भारत को ऐसे करीब 100 ड्रोन की जरूरत है। तीनों सेनाओं की जरूरत



लखनऊ में होने वाले डिफेंस एक्सपो के लिए तैयारियों के क्रम में सोमवार को सेना के पैराट्रूपर्स ने हेलिकॉप्टर से कूदने और रस्सी से उतरने का अभ्यास किया • बृदेश चंदेल

के अनुसार हथियारों को इन ड्रोन में लगाया जाएगा। वहीं रक्षामंत्री राजनाथ सिंह पांच फरवरी से शुरू हो रहे डिफेंस एक्सपो की कमान संभालने के लिए मंगलवार शाम लखनऊ आएंगे। शाम को वह इंदिरा गांधी प्रतिष्ठान में एक्सपो की कर्टेन रेजर सेरेमनी में भाग लेंगे।

जवानों को दवा और राशन पहुंचाएगा यह ड्रोन
एचएएल ऐसा ड्रोन तैयार कर रहा है जो सियाचिन व ग्लेशियर जैसी ऊंचाई वाले अग्रिम क्षेत्रों में तेजात जवानों को दवा व राशन सहित जरूरी सामान पहुंचा सके। इस ड्रोन के सेंसर, भार क्षमता व डाटा लिंक के लिए इंडियन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी सहित कई संस्थानों का सहयोग लिया जा रहा है। इसे ऊंचाई वाले क्षेत्रों में 40 किलोग्राम वजन तक का सामान पहुंचाने के लिए डिजाइन किया गया है।

20 एमओयू और 20 हजार करोड़ पर नजर
राज्य ब्यूरो, लखनऊ : उत्तर प्रदेश को अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर के डिफेंस इंडिया एक्सपो की मेजबानी का बड़ा इनाम मिल सकता है। दुनियाभर से रक्षा उत्पादन से जुड़ी कंपनियों के प्रतिनिधि और विशेषज्ञ भारत में संभावनाएं तलाशने आ रहे हैं, जिसके लिए उग्र अपना शोकेस सजाकर तैयार है। औद्योगिक नीति में बदलाव सहित अब तक की गई तैयारियों के आधार पर योगी सरकार की नजर बीस हजार करोड़ रुपये के निवेश पर है। पांच से नौ फरवरी तक चलने वाले डिफेंस एक्सपो में 857 भारतीय, जबकि 172 विदेशी कंपनियां शामिल हो रही हैं। पांच, छह और सात फरवरी की तिथियों में कुल 12 सेमिनार अभी प्रस्तावित हैं।

THE TIMES OF INDIA

CAG flags lack of rations, gear for soldiers in Siachen, Ladakh

New Delhi: There are huge shortages and grossly inadequate reserves of specialised winter clothing, snow goggles, multi-purpose boots and other equipment for Army troops deployed in high-altitude areas like Siachen, Ladakh and Doklam, with the soldiers also not getting proper rations sanctioned for the requisite calorific intake, says the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

The defence ministry, on its part, told CAG that the deficiencies in the high-altitude clothing and equipment were in the Army HQs reserves, "which will be made up in due course of time" despite budgetary constraints, but they "did not exist" at the level of troops deployed in the field.

An Army officer, in turn, said, "The CAG audit covers the period from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Things have improved since then. By and large, there is no dearth of clothing and equipment for soldiers deployed in areas like Siachen, where posts are located at heights ranging from 16,000 to 22,000-feet.

" With it taking around Rs 1 lakh to clothe a single soldier for the forbidding Siachen heights, the Army is also trying to "upgrade as well as indigenise" specialised extreme winter clothing and gear, the bulk of which is imported as of now, said the officer.

But the CAG report, tabled in Parliament, said there are 24% to 100% deficiencies in the authorised holdings for different items in the Army HQs reserves, which must be always maintained for any exigency.

Soldiers, for instance, had to make do with recycled multi-purpose boots, which protect feet at temperatures up to minus 55 degree Celsius, because they were not available from November 2015 to September 2016. Similarly, the stock level of allterrain goggles was “critically low” , ranging from just 5.6% to 16.1% against the authorised levels.

On the ration front, the audit watchdog said special scales of ration are authorised for the troops to meet their daily energy requirements. “But sanctioning costly substitutes in lieu of basic items on same cost resulted in reduced quantity of calorie intake, ranging between 48% to 82.75%, of the troops. Provision of rations at reduced scales with lesser calorific value would have impact on the health and fitness of troops posted at high-altitude areas” it said.

Asking the MoD to take strong action against those responsible for lapses, the CAG said: “Delayed procurements and delayed receipt of contracted items led to an acute shortage of essential clothing and equipment and timely issue of the same to troops. Sub-standard items like face-masks, jackets and sleeping bags were procured of old specifications, which deprived the troops from the benefits of using improved products.”

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/cag-flags-lack-of-rations-gear-for-soldiers-in-siachen-ladakh/articleshow/73916549.cms>



Tue, 04 Feb 2020

Operation Vanilla brings island closer

By Suhasini Haider

India's flood relief mission to Madagascar will be followed up this week with the island's Defence Minister Rakotonirina Leon Jean Richard visiting Lucknow and Delhi from Tuesday — the first such high-level trip since Delhi incorporated the island off the coast of Africa into the “Indian Ocean Region (IOR)”.

Mr. Richard is expected to discuss implementing a memorandum of understanding on defence cooperation signed during President Ramnath Kovind's visit to Antananarivo in March 2018. The Minister will travel first to Luc-

know to attend the Defexpo, and later attend the India-Africa Defence Ministers' conference in Delhi, and hold a bilateral meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday.

Strategic capability

Mr. Richard will discuss the devastation in Madagascar due to flooding after a cyclone and heavy rain in the island's north-west left at least 31 dead and affected nearly 1,00,000 people.

Last week, the Indian Navy conducted “Operation Vanilla”, with

INS Airavat delivering relief material such as food, clothing, medicines and water. Officials said the humanitarian gesture by New Delhi also showcased India's strategic capabilities in the furthest islands of the IOR.

“INS Airavat

Delivers relief supplies to cyclone-hit Madagascar. SAGAR Policy at work — India as an early responder,” External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar tweeted about the operation on Sunday, referring to India's policy of “Security and Growth for All in the Region

(SAGAR)" for IOR islands.

The SAGAR concept was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2015, during his visit to Mauritius and other Indian

Ocean islands. At the time, Madagascar, Comoros and the French island of Reunion were a part of the East and South Africa Division at the External Affairs Ministry.

Reworked approach

However, recently the Ministry decided to include the three islands as part of the IOR (Indian Ocean Region) desk along with Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Mauritius and the Seychelles. In a December 16 circular on the decision, it said the incorporation of the "Vanilla islands" as they are called, reflected "the growing strategic importance of the Indian Ocean



Timely help: Indian envoy Abhay Kumar, second from left, with Prime Minister Christian Lois Ntsay in Madagascar.

Islands within the framework of Indo-Pacific".

Last October, Minister of

State for External Affairs V. Muralidharan travelled to the Reunion islands and met the leaders of all the "Vanilla islands" as well.

The inclusion of the region in the IOR signals the government's increasing level of comfort with the "Indo-Pacific" concept that describes the entire neighbourhood

from the coast of Africa to the U.S. west coast.

In one of many changes effected last week to the Ministry's organisational structure, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla decided to club the entire Indian Ocean Region and the Southern and Indo-Pacific Divisions under one Additional Secretary (Indo-Pacific).

According to officials, the specific outcomes from Mr. Richard's visit are still being finalised, but that the effort would be to offer Madagascar strategic cooperation similar to what is currently shared with other IOR countries.

The Indian Navy undertakes Joint EEZ patrols with Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius, which have all joined India's coastal radar chain network.