

समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

दैनिक सामयिक अभिज्ञता सेवा
A Daily Current Awareness Service

Vol. 45 No. 53 14-16 March 2020



रक्षा विज्ञान पुस्तकालय
Defence Science Library
रक्षा वैज्ञानिक सूचना एवं प्रलेखन केन्द्र
Defence Scientific Information & Documentation Centre
मैटकॉफ हाऊस, दिल्ली - 110 054
Metcalf House, Delhi - 110 054

Army set to place order for 118 Arjun Mark 1-As, the most potent tank in its inventory

The Mark 1-A, developed by DRDO, features 14 major improvements sought by the Army, including better firepower and new transmission systems

By Snehesh Alex Philip

New Delhi: After numerous delays and extensive trials, the Indian Army is set to finally place an order for 118 indigenously manufactured Arjun Mark 1-A ‘Hunter Killers’, which will have all-weather capability and better fire power and stability than the Arjun main battle tank (MBT).

Army sources told ThePrint that the Mark 1-A, which weighs 68 tonnes and features a 120mm main gun, has cleared all tests, and that cost negotiations with its developer, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), are complete. The sources added that the Army has pushed the file to place the order, which will be done “soon”.



The move comes as a big boost for the Chennai-based Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (CVRDE), a DRDO lab.

The major improvements

“The tank comes with 14 major improvements that the Army has sought, which will make it the most potent and self-protective tank in the Army’s inventory,” V. Balamurugan, director of the CVRDE, told ThePrint.

Balamurugan said the first tank will be rolled out from the factory within 30 months of the order of intent (the technical term used for the order) being placed.

He explained that four upgrades were made to the firepower of the tank, besides other developments, including new transmission systems.

The Mark 1-A includes an improved gunner’s main sight, integrated with automatic target tracking. This would enable the tank crew to track moving targets automatically, and engage them even when Arjun is on the move.

The Arjun Mk-1A’s gun is controlled by a computerised integrated fire control system, giving the tank a high first round kill capability. The gun’s day-and-night stabilised sights, coupled with automatic target tracker, guarantee accurate engagement even in dynamic conditions, a senior DRDO official told ThePrint.

Other than the conventional fin stabilised armour piercing discarding sabot and high explosive squash head ammunition, the Mark 1-A comes with thermo baric and penetration-cum-blast ammunition.

The Arjun saga

The Arjun MBT project was initiated in the mid-1970s, but the first two regiments of the tank were inducted into the Army starting 2004. Even then, they have never been used to their optimal capability because of a variety of reasons — including excess weight, issues with certain parts, and availability of spare parts.

The Arjun MBT had performed better than Russian T-90s during a desert trial conducted by the Army in 2010. However, reliability and availability weighed on the Army’s mind. The force argued

that weight of the MBT, 62.5 tonnes, was a handicap as it meant that Arjun was too heavy for roads, bridges and canals along the Pakistan border.

The Army, in 2010, proposed an improved version of the tank, which would be called the Mark II, and was to have over 80 improvements, including 15 major ones.

However, this also meant that weight would increase further.

Cannon-launched guided missiles

In 2012, the DRDO offered the Arjun for trials with all the major enhancements, except one — a cannon-launched guided missile (CLGM).

The Army had insisted on having that capability, since other tanks like the T-90 also had it.

The DRDO roped in the Israelis and sourced the Lahat CLGM, which could conclusively hit targets between two and five kilometres away. The trials validated the CLGM's laser designator.

However, the Army wanted a missile that could hit targets as close as close as 1.2 km, Balamurugan said.

He added that the Israelis took about a year to decide on producing it, but by then, the DRDO had decided to go in for an indigenous CLGM.

Talks between the DRDO and the Army continued until March 2018, and it was finally agreed that the next batch of Arjuns, to be called Mark 1-A, would be supplied without the missile firing capability.

"The process for building that (CLGM) is already on, and could actually be integrated on the Mark 1-A as they start rolling out," Balamurugan said.

As far as weight is concerned, he said that though the Mark 1-A weighs more, it has been designed in such a way that pressure exerted at specific points is much lower.

<https://theprint.in/defence/army-set-to-place-order-for-118-arjun-mark-1-as-the-most-potent-tank-in-its-inventory/380869/>



Sun, 15 March 2020

DRDO's research centre to be moved to NIL building soon

Kolkata: The dedicated research centre of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) set up in collaboration with Jadavpur University (JU) will soon be moved to the National Instruments Ltd (NIL) building just opposite to gate number 4 of the university.

The centre's main purpose is to tap talent from the university in the defence sector. Christened as Jagadish Chandra Bose Centre for Advanced Technology (JCBCAT) the centre started functioning from a small space inside the campus of the varsity only a few months back. The university is hopeful that if everything goes according to plan, the shift from the campus to the renovated NIL building will take another three to four months time.

The three-storeyed building is now being renovated and a part of this building will be dedicated to JCBCAT. "40 per cent of the developed space will be used by DRDO and the rest 60 per cent will remain with us," said Chiranjib Bhattacharjee, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the varsity.

NIL was a central public sector enterprise under the administrative control of the Department of Heavy Industry. As it became sick, its assets, liabilities and manpower were transferred to JU on

January 1, 2009, under the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) sanctioned revival scheme.

JU had taken NIL from the Department of Heavy Industry on a 297 years lease and then it was sub leased to DRDO. "The latter is now renovating the building for an advanced Centre there," a JU official said.

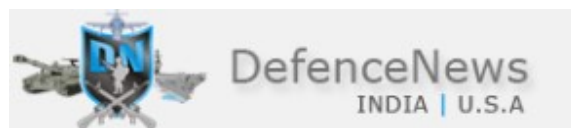
According to sources in the university, 20 projects will be taken up at the Centre related to three broad research verticals; Unmanned Robotics, Direct Energy and Cyber Security.

"The JCBCAT's mandate is to work in the three verticals and all the output should be useful to the defence sector. Work has already begun in four to five projects, with 100 research scholars involved," a source in the university said.

Presently the Centre has six scientists including its director G G Dutta, four technical officers and two administrative staff members.

The JU researchers have earlier helped in DRDO's missile programme with some crucial components being developed there.

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/kolkata/drdo-research-centre-to-be-moved-to-nil-building-soon-405381?infinitescroll=1>



Sun, 15 March 2020

Insufficient manpower in DRDO for research: Parl Panel

By: The Siasat Daily

New Delhi: Manpower in Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is “grossly insufficient” for carrying out committed research and development projects, pointed the standing committee report on Demands for Grants for DRDO.

Further, the report also flagged that in the last five years, a total 131 scientists have left DRDO on personal grounds.

The report states that since 2001, DRDO has been managing with same authorization in spite of more than six fold increase in budget outlay.

Presently, authorized strength of scientists in DRDO is 7,353 while existing strength is 7,068. The percentage of scientists in DRDO is 30 percent of total strength of DRDO.

The Committee noted that “the current manpower is grossly insufficient for committed research and development projects”.

In 2010, Manpower Planning Board (MPB) had recommended for increasing manpower by 4966. Ministry of Finance recommended 1316 posts.

However, the case is pending with the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

After a lapse of 10 years since MPB recommended sanctioning of posts in 2010, there had been no addition in sanctioned strength.

The panel urged that Ministry of Defence to make efforts to cadre review and revision of sanctioning of strength of scientists in DRDO, commensurate with increased number of projects and work.

Also, the case of 436 posts already approved by the Ministry of Finance in phase I and pending with CCS should be expedited, the report stated.

Also, few financial incentives to arrest the brain drain of scientists from DRDO have also been withdrawn.

The panel also found that provision of two additional increments for the scientists to stop brain drain has been withdrawn by DRDO.

Special pay of Rs 2000 (5th Central Pay Commission) and Rs 4000 (6th Central Pay Commission) granted to scientists has been discontinued in 7th Central Pay Commission as part of list of allowances recommended for abolition.

<https://www.defencenews.in/article/Insufficient-manpower-in-DRDO-for-research-Parl-Panel-809723>



Sat, 14 March 2020

Armed forces need more funds for weapons: Parl panel

New Delhi: With Pakistan and China ramping up their military prowess, the armed forces need more funds to procure state of the art weapons but the budget for 2020-21 has provided 35 per cent less than the projected demand. Noting this fact, the Standing Committee on Defence has said “it is a considerable shortage and said such situation is not conducive for modern day warfare.”

Sharing this concern in its report tabled in Parliament on Friday, the parliamentary panel said shortage in capital outlay will affect acquisition of latest weaponry, aircraft, ships tanks and capital intensive projects land, building and other infrastructure.

“The Committee feel and desire that to develop and acquire the most modern state of the art fighting platforms, which can match Northern and Western neighbours, the requisite allocation is very essential,” the report said.

Observing that since 2015-16, none of the Services have got the matching allocation as per the projection, the report on Demands for Grants for capital outlay of defence services for 2020-21, the parliamentary panel said in modern war possession of capital intensive weapons are “pre requisite for not only tilting the result in our favour but also having a credible deterrence capabilities.”

The total capital allocation for the next fiscal as reflected in the budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February one stands at 1,13,734 crores. However, the projection by the armed forces was Rs 1,75,702.06 crores which amounts to a shortage of Rs 61,968.06 crores.

Examining the allocation Service wise, the Standing Committee said the gap which was there in 2015-2016 for the Army Rs 4,596 crores has increased to Rs 17,911.22 crores in 2020-21 (from 14 per cent to 36 per cent).

In the case of the Navy, the difference between projection and allocation was Rs 1,264.89 crores in 2014-15, which has increased to Rs 18,580 crores in the next fiscal (five per cent to 41 per cent) and for the Air Force, the gap which was Rs 12,505.21 crores in 2015-16 has increased to Rs 22,925.38 crores in 2020-21 (27 per cent to 35 per cent).

Stressing the point that the Navy’s fighting capabilities depend on the high value platforms like aircraft carrier, submarines, destroyers and frigates, the panel said the allocation for the Navy (percentage) wise has seen the “sharpest decline.”

In its remarks over the low capital fund, the Committee also said it was surprised over the fact that during the year 2019-2020, the shortfall in the projection to allocated amount was Rs 67, 541.76 crores. However, the defence ministry is convinced with additional allocation of “meagre” Rs 7,000 crores, the report said.

In this backdrop, the committee, therefore in “unequivocal” terms recommend that all-out efforts be done to give first and foremost priority to the preparedness of the defence forces. It should also be ensured that critical requirements of the Services do not suffer due to want of funds, the panel said.

The issue of burgeoning pension bill also came under the panel’s scrutiny as the pension budget has increased approximately 3.5 times since the last decade. The pension provision for 2020-21 is Rs 1,33, 825 crores which is Rs 16, 014.56 crores more than 2019-20.

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/india/armed-forces-need-more-funds-for-weapons--parl-panel.html>



Mon, 16 March 2020

Fund allocation for forces less than projected, says MPs’ panel

New Delhi: Three separate reports in Parliament have pointed out that the money being allocated to the armed forces and DRDO is much less than what is being projected.

The Standing Committee on Defence, headed by BJP MP Jai Oram, has said during the financial year 2020-21, the proposed allocation of DRDO is Rs 23,457 crore and the actual allocation is Rs 19,327 crore, having a shortfall of Rs 4,130 crore.

“With regard to the Budgetary requirements, the DRDO stated that keeping aside mandatory expenses for strategic schemes, pay and allowances, the amount left for research and development activities is meagre,” the report said.

The reports presented on Friday spoke about shortfall of crores of rupees for the armed forces over what was projected for new weapons, equipment and operational needs.

The committee report dealt with the demand for grants for the financial year 2020-21, beginning April 1.

The Budgetary projection of Army under revenue head has a shortfall of Rs 19,442 crore over the projected Rs 1,65,228 crore.

The MoD has submitted that pay and allowances are unqualified estimation, therefore, Budget under this head should be unqualified. The total Budgetary projection of Army (both capital and revenue) was Rs 2,15,601 crore and the allocation is short by Rs 37,353 crore.

What the report says...

- The Standing Committee on Defence, headed by BJP MP Jai Oram, has said during the financial year 2020-21, the proposed allocation of DRDO is Rs23,457 crore and actual allocation is Rs19,327 crore — a shortfall of Rs4,130 crore
- The total Budgetary projection of Army (both capital and revenue) was Rs2,15,601 crore and the allocation is short by Rs37,353 crore
- The Budgetary projection for IAF under revenue and capital head was Rs1,10,111 crore but the actual allocation is Rs73,244.57 crore — a shortfall of Rs36,866 crore

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/fund-allocation-for-forces-less-than-projected-says-mps-panel-56076>

House panel for defence raps govt for gap in budget projection, allocation

In the report tabled in Parliament on Friday, the committee said it has recommended creation of such a fund earlier as well and mentioned that while Defence Ministry is in favour of such a fund

By Krishn Kaushik & Sushant Singh

The Lok Sabha's Standing Committee on Defence has come down heavily on the government for the 35 per cent gap in capital outlay for the services compared to the projected demand at a time when China is becoming a major presence in Indian Ocean Region, and both China and Pakistan remain threats.

The standing committee has again recommended a non-lapsable fund for defence modernisation even as the 15th Finance Commission is looking into creating a non-lapsable fund for defence and internal security. In the report tabled in Parliament on Friday, the committee said it has recommended creation of such a fund earlier as well and mentioned that while Defence Ministry is in favour of such a fund, the Finance Ministry had rejected the proposal and wanted the current system of annual authorisation of [budget](#) from Parliament.

The committee has recommended that the Defence Ministry "take up the matter at higher levels" for creation of such a fund "so that procurement can be done unhampered without pursuing for funds to receive at supplementary or additional grants stages".

The committee has noted in its reports on Demand for Grants for 2020- 2021 that there "is a considerable shortage" and said "such situation is not conducive for preparation of country to modern day warfare..."

The report emphasises that the 35 per cent shortfall between demand projection and the allocation of the budget "would affect acquisition of latest weaponry, aircraft, ships, tanks and capital intensive projects including land, building and other infrastructure".

The total capital allocation as provided in the budget this year is Rs 1,13,734 crore, when the projection provided by the armed forces was Rs 1,75, 702.06 crore.

The committee has also expressed concern over the burgeoning pension bill of the defence forces which in the last decade has increased over 3.5 times — from Rs 37,336 crore in 2010-2011 to Rs 1,33,825 crore in this budget. The share of pension in the total defence budget has shot up by 50 per cent in the same period. "The issue of burgeoning Defence pension liabilities unanimously emerged as one of the biggest challenges as the pension budget has increased approximately 3.5 times since the last decade," the report noted.

In his deposition before the standing committee, the Defence Secretary had acknowledged that the increase in pensions "is the biggest challenge in some ways because as was shown in the graph, our pension budget has increased 4-5 times in the last 10 years and everything else dwarfs in comparison".

"...the reasons for increase of pension are many. One of them is increase in longevity of people, increase manpower over the years for various new platforms that we continue to inculcate, revision of pension scales from time to time, etc. This is a liability today, which is a committed liability as it happens. ... The Ministry is very consciously aware of this," the Defence Secretary was quoted to have told the committee in the report.

There are a total of 32,35,730 crore defence pensioners and approximately 55,000 defence pensioners are added each year.

Among the major challenges posed by the defence budget, the ministry had highlighted “Increasing Pension Liabilities”, “Share of pensions in Defence Budget has gone up by over 50%,” and “Percentage of Capital Expenditure has been reducing continually”.

“Considering such apathy towards allocation in Capital Acquisition fund, the Committee are wary of the fact that without sufficient allocation for Committed Liabilities, there would be difficulty in matching deadlines in the payments towards already committed purchases. Similarly, if there is no budget available for New Schemes, there would be no procurement for latest weaponry and modernization would take a back seat,” the committee observed.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/lok-sabha-defence-ministry-budget-allocation-6313329/>

दैनिक जागरण

Sat, 14 March 2020

सशस्त्र बलों को हथियारों के लिए और धन की जरूरत: संसदीय समिति

नई दिल्ली, आइएनएस: एक संसदीय स्थायी समिति ने कहा है कि सशस्त्र बलों को अत्याधुनिक हथियारों की खरीद के लिए और ज्यादा धन की जरूरत है। लेकिन 2020-21 के बजट में मांग के मुकाबले 35 फीसद कम धनराशि आवंटित की गई है।

समिति की यह रिपोर्ट शुक्रवार को राज्यसभा के पटल पर रखी गई। समिति का कहना है कि धन की काफी कमी है और ऐसे हालात आधुनिक समय के युद्ध में हतोत्साहित करने वाले हैं। पूंजी की कमी से नए हथियारों, विमानों, युद्धपोतों और टैंकों की खरीद पर असर पड़ने के साथ ही भू, इमारत और अन्य बुनियादी ढांचे जैसी पूंजीगत परियोजनाओं पर भी असर पड़ेगा।

रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, समिति को लगता है और वह चाहती है कि सबसे अत्याधुनिक युद्धक प्रणालियां विकसित और खरीदी जाएं जो उत्तरी और पश्चिमी पड़ोसियों के मुताबिक हों। इसके लिए समुचित आवंटन बेहद जरूरी है। यह सब ऐसे समय हो रहा है जब पाकिस्तान और चीन अपनी सैन्य शक्ति को लगातार बढ़ा रहे हैं। समिति ने कहा कि 2015-16 से सेना के किसी भी अंग को उसकी मांग के अनुसार धन आवंटन नहीं किया गया। समिति का मानना है कि आधुनिक युद्ध में अत्याधुनिक हथियारों का होना न सिर्फ युद्ध को अपने पक्ष में करने के लिए जरूरी है बल्कि ये विश्वसनीय प्रतिरोधक क्षमता भी प्रदान करते हैं।

समिति के मुताबिक, अगले वित्त वर्ष के लिए एक फरवरी को पेश किए गए बजट में कुल पूंजी आवंटन 1,13,734 करोड़ रुपये है। लेकिन सशस्त्र बलों ने 1,75,702.06 करोड़ रुपये की मांग की थी जो 61,968.06 करोड़ रुपये कम है। रक्षा बजट के आवंटन को मंजूरी देने से पहले रक्षा मंत्रालय को वित्त मंत्रालय के समक्ष अपनी बात रखनी चाहिए और उन्हें पूंजीगत कार्यों की अहमियत बतानी चाहिए जो राजस्व और पूंजी के मद में 60:40 के अनुपात को बरकरार रखने के लिए किए जाते हैं।

Indian Army, Air Force and Navy must work out a joint media policy for information warfare

To excel in the information warfare, India's defence forces need to see the media as a force multiplier, and not as a necessary evil

By Snehesh Alex Philip

Information is the new oil, and the Indian Army has realised this, albeit a little too late. The Army is finally in the process of changing its 15-year-old media policy. In the age of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Tik Tok, the Army has to find new ways to stay nimble and on top of the information cycle.

The previous policy of 2005 was formulated before the boom of TV channels, and hence, does not take into account how to really use the electronic and digital media space. It's shocking that all current policies are officer-driven and ad hoc.

It is time the Indian military has a joint media and information warfare policy. The Services cannot and should not be allowed to work in silos, thinking that digging their head into the sand is the best way to fight the information warfare.

IAF and Navy are no different

It is not just the Army. The Indian Air Force's (IAF) media policy dates back to 2011. Anyone who covers the defence beat or is associated with the defence set up knows that the IAF is a tough nut to crack when it comes to information or interaction with officers or visit to airbases.

What is sad is that many senior IAF officers reading this will actually feel proud about the fact that they are the most opaque among the three Services.

This is foolhardy because information always has the ability to flow out even if slowly and in an incomplete way.

The Navy, the fastest to really take advantage of social media, is the better of the three wings when it comes to media policy. An analysis of media, be it newspapers, TV or digital, will show that Navy gets much more attention than its larger sister Services — Army, which is easily 10 times bigger and the IAF, which is about three times bigger.

How social media can be used effectively for information warfare can be seen in two tweets by the Indian Navy on 17 April 2018.

The tweets by the Indian Navy sent out a very subtle but powerful message to the Chinese PLA Navy: You are being watched in the Indian Ocean region.

However, the recent espionage scandal that rocked the Navy has forced it to take drastic measures. This clearly shows that the force had not taken into account earlier the true dynamics of social media while formulating its overall policy.

The Balakot tragedy

While every force will claim that they have a robust media policy, the fact remains that the biggest and most successful operation ever carried out by the Indian military in the 21st century — 2019 Balakot strikes — also exposed the chinks in India's ability to tackle the information warfare from Pakistan.

Pakistan was able to create doubt in the minds of many about India's success of the Balakot strikes even before India woke up.

Two days after the Balakot strike, a joint press conference was held by the three Services. Rather than holding it in a formal manner, when the whole world was watching, the presser was held in a haphazard way on the lawns of the South Block. The event established again the need for a new media policy.

At times it is also laughable. Sample this: In many briefings, a camera is allowed but not mobile phones or dictaphones. Believe it or not, annual press conferences of the Service Chiefs are not allowed to be broadcast live. While reporters can tweet the information out and channels can break the news on TV, the press conference cannot be shown live.

Need for joint doctrine

The Narendra Modi government has appointed a Chief of Defence Staff whose primary job is to break down the silos that the armed forces work and operate in. He should work towards breaking down the information warfare silos.

He should also focus on bringing in cohesion in the media policy of the armed forces and it should not matter which officer is in the chair.

Defence forces across the world like the US, UK and French, have adopted a common policy which is dynamic in nature. The Indian Services should do the same.

What can be done

Media and information warfare should be made a compulsory course for all from the junior level itself. They should be constantly updated.

It is also important to set up concerted and dynamic information warfare cells in each of the Services, which work in tandem with each other. They should be able to launch full-fledged information warfare, rather than merely countering claims of the other side.

It would be a good idea to see how Pakistan military's propaganda wing, ISPR, functions. While one can ignore the lies and devious methods used by the ISPR to fool their own public with disinformation, a lesson or two can be learnt about how they operate against India.

The Indian military has always shied away from the Western media treating them with suspicion while Pakistan has adopted them. While this is slowly changing in India, it needs to be codified rather than making it an ad hoc practice.

Each Service has a Public Relations Officer (PRO) who reports to the defence ministry. Services also has a separate department that controls information and publicity. This dual office is at times helpful but can become extremely difficult when egos come into play. PROs of all three Services should actually come under the ambit of the CDS or the Department of Military Affairs.

Another important step that needs to be taken is to see the media as a force multiplier and not as a necessary evil. The Commanding Officers should be empowered enough to speak on their own to the media on an operation or issue facing them rather than await clearances from higher-ups.

It is important to give both senior and junior officers with regular media exposure. Moreover, the red tape around permission to visit bases or interaction should be cut down so that the information flow is constant.

Lack of information is what causes the maximum problems for the defence forces as well as the media.

<https://theprint.in/opinion/brahmastra/indian-army-air-force-navy-must-work-out-a-joint-media-policy-for-information-warfare/380161/>



Sun, 15 March 2020

Two major Russian arms deals likely next week, weaponry worth \$15 bn in Moscow pipeline

By Ajai Shukla

New Delhi: On Wednesday, the ministry of defence (MoD) will clear the purchase of one, and possibly two, Russian weapons systems, taking orders in the Moscow pipeline to above \$15 billion and underlining Russia's status as India's premier arms supplier.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) – the MoD's apex procurement body, headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh – is poised to clear the purchase of the 9K338 Igla-S missile system for a sum of \$1.3 billion.

India will buy 800 launchers and 5,175 Igla-S missiles, which fall in the so-called "Very Short Range Air Defence System" (VSHORADS) category.

The VSHORADS procurement has been mired in controversy. The Igla-S is a 16-year-old missile system, first built in 2004, which the Russian military replaced in 2014 with the newer, far more capable, 9K333 Verba missile.

After the MoD announced in November 2018 that it had chosen the Igla-S over the other two VSHORADS on offer – Swedish firm Saab's RBS-70; and the Mistral, offered by European consortium, MBDA – Saab shot off four letters of protest to the MoD alleging foul play in testing.

However, internal MoD evaluators ruled that testing had followed procedure. In a reply to Saab that Business Standard has reviewed, the MoD wrote the "case has progressed as per provisions of Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) with level playing field to all the participating vendors."

Apparently, the MoD feels the Igla-S met India's needs and Rosoboronexport's price of under \$1.47 billion makes it a value proposition compared to Saab's tag of \$2.6 billion and MBDA's offer of \$3.68 billion.

Russian industry sources say that, when the Indian tender was floated in 2010, they had only the Igla-S to offer since the Verba was not ready. In 2014, when the Russian military introduced the fourth-generation Verba, Rosoboronexport offered to replace the Igla-S with the new missile. But the MoD said the DPP did not permit this change.

Consequently, the Indian military will get an obsolescent VSHORADS that will be almost two decades old by the time it enters service, and almost fifty years old at the end of its service life cycle.

Furthermore, since the 2010 tender did not specify any "Make in India" stipulations, production of the Igla-S will take place mostly in Russia.

VSHORADS are the ground forces' last defence against attack from enemy ground strike aircraft. At the apex level, the IAF is responsible for air defence, which it does by bombing enemy airfields to prevent combat aircraft from even taking off. Those that do manage to enter our airspace are engaged with the IAF's fighters and missiles. However, some enemy aircraft still sneak through to attack ground troops, who protect themselves with VSHORADS.

The MoD is also racing against time to bring before the DAC the long-delayed proposal to build 197 Kamov-226T helicopters for an estimated \$2 billion. This is being touted as a "Make in India" initiative, with the choppers being built by a joint venture (JV), Indo-Russian Helicopters Ltd (IRHL).

The biggest stakeholder in the JV is Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) with a 50.5 per cent stake, while Russian Helicopters has a 49.5 per cent stake.

However, there will be only limited indigenisation. The inter-governmental agreement (IGA) between New Delhi and Moscow permits Russian Helicopters to deliver the first 60 helicopters in flyaway condition. The next 40 helicopters would be shipped as kits from Russia to be assembled in India. Only after that would indigenisation pick up momentum over the last 97 choppers.

The VSHORADS and Kamov-226T contracts will supplement the on-going purchase from Russia of S-400 air defence systems (\$5.43 billion), AK-203 rifles (\$1 billion), Krivak III frigates (\$2 billion), BrahMos anti-ship missiles (\$2.6 billion) and a supplementary order for 18 more Sukhoi-30MKI fighters (\$1.15 billion).

This will take the value of on-going arms imports from Russia to \$15 billion – far more than any other country, including the US.

Washington, however, has created a lever to discourage Indian weapons imports from Moscow. A recent US law – Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) – requires the US government to sanction countries that engage in “significant transactions” with Russian, Iranian and North Korean entities. The US president has the power to grant India a waiver from CAATSA. However, without large arms purchases from the US, there is no certainty that that Donald Trump would grant a waiver.

<https://idrw.org/two-major-russian-arms-deals-likely-next-week-weaponry-worth-15-bn-in-moscow-pipeline/>



Mon, 16 March 2020

Decoding the path to a memorable victory in Kargil war

By Ch. Sushil Rao

Secunderabad: If there were those at the forefront in the Kargil war driving out the enemy, there was an unseen and unheard of army in the background facilitating every move and manoeuvre. The backroom boys had the task of deciphering secret messages that were being exchanged by the enemy and pass on the decoded messages that helped in making strategies for the war.

After having served 37 years in the Indian Army and retired, Lt Col Parvathesam can only say how greatly satisfying his job was – of encoding and decoding messages as a cryptographer and then a cypher officer.

Operating from Delhi during the Kargil war, the challenge was to do a quick job and clear a pile of messages. For demonstrating excellence in that, he was also given an award by the vice chief of the Indian Army.

As an 11-year-old, Parvathesam, who hails from Polavaram in Andhra Pradesh, had heard of the Chinese aggression and war. He decided he would join the Indian Army. Having joined as a radio operator in the army in 1970, he served at the border area near Punjab and subsequently got selected as cryptographer. The job meant monitoring suspicious calls and decoding secret messages. “This was something I enjoyed doing,” he recollected.

Thanks to a friend who guided him, he took the necessary examination, got selected as a cypher officer and was trained at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. His job took him to Bhutan where he spent two-and-half years with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) as a cypher officer as well as an administrator.

The then-King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, even visited the headquarters where he was posted in Bhutan. “The stay in Bhutan was memorable. We used to build roads for the people, provide medical care and had good interaction with the locals,” he recollected.

There is more than one reason for Parvathesam for choosing to join the army. Since his childhood he was a sports person and he knew being in the army would give him the opportunity to engage in sports and enjoy his spirit of adventure. “Someone also told me that it is only in the army that one does not demand, give or take bribes. For this reason too I was attracted,” he said. His father, a forest guard, was open to his son joining the army though it took some time for his mother to understand his decision.

“I have had a fulfilling life in the army. That is the best place to be,” Lt Col Parvathesam, who retired in 2008 said. He may have retired from the army but continues his sports activities as he goes to RSI in Secunderabad from his home at Yapral to play. “Happy to be winning even now,” he says with a sense of pride.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/decoding-the-path-to-a-memorable-victory-in-kargil-war/articleshow/74643242.cms>

Telangana Today

Mon, 16 March 2020

HAL, NAL join for Saras MKII aircraft

Aircraft is intended to be sold to the Indian defence forces, civil aviation sector and foreign customers

Hyderabad: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with CSIR- National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) for design, development, production and maintenance of Saras MKII aircraft. The MoU has been exchanged between the companies at Wings.

The aircraft is intended to be sold to the Indian defence forces, civil aviation sector and foreign customers. The indigenously developed 19-seat aircraft will cater to the needs of Indian Air Force and also the regional connectivity services among the tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

HAL chairman and managing director R Madhavan told *Telangana Today*, “The design and manufacturing of systems and landing gears will happen at HAL Kanpur. The first customer for the aircraft will be Indian Air Force but we also see opportunities in the civil aviation space. The aircraft will take about 2-3 years for development. After the testing and approvals are over, we will get into the production mode.”

“In addition to India, we see good market in South East Asia. The aircraft will use most advanced technology that will make it easy for pilot to handle and fly. Civil aviation will be a large market. We will also supply to defence forces of friendly nations,” he added.

HAL also signed a MoU with Blue Ray Aviation under which two HAL Do-228 aircraft will be used by the latter for air connectivity, charter services or air ambulance service. The Transport Aircraft Division (TAD) of HAL in Kanpur has been producing the aircraft.

<https://telanganatoday.com/hal-nal-join-for-saras-mkii-aircraft>



Sun, 15 March 2020

India will get delivery of Rafale jets by end of May, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh today clarified that India would get delivery of Rafale fighter jets from France by the end of May this year.

His assertion comes in the wake of reports in a section of media that Coronavirus scare may hit the delivery schedule of four Rafale jets which were expected in May this year. The four Rafale jets will be inducted in the Indian Air Force at its station in Ambala.

Replying to questions from Rajat Sharma in the show 'Aap Ki Adalat', the Defence Minister said: "Rafale jets May ke ant mein aa rahi hai. Jahaan khabar karni ho, karaa den". (Rafale jets are coming by May end. You can use this as news)

Rajnath Singh revealed how he told the pilot taking him in a Rafale jet in France last year to fly at supersonic speed. "I asked the pilot, at what speed are you flying? He replied, at 850-900 km per hour. I asked, can you fly at supersonic speed? He replied, Yes Sir. I told him, Don't worry, go ahead at supersonic speed. The pilot replied: I am proud of you, Sir."

Asked why he wrote 'Om' on the first Rafale fighter jet that was delivered to India, Singh replied: "Om is a symbol of our culture. I may be anywhere on Earth, but I will never ignore Indian culture."

When Rajat Sharma pointed out that terrorists were back in Balakot, Pakistan for training, the Defence Minister replied: "Please wait. (Prateeksha kariye). I can say only this much that if there is any attack on our security and sovereignty, our armed forces have the capability to give a befitting reply."

On Pakistan continuing its efforts to send weapons and terrorists to India, Rajnath Singh replied: "They do make efforts from their end, and we stop them too. We take counter measures.

<https://www.defenceaviationpost.com/2020/03/india-will-get-delivery-of-rafale-jets-by-end-of-may-defence-minister-rajnath-singh/>



Mon, 16 March 2020

Faced with cash crunch, Indian Navy to house new aircraft carrier at private shipyard

The Navy Vice Chief told the standing committee on defence about the decision during a meeting on Sunday

By Manjeet Singh Negi

New Delhi: Facing a shortage of modernisation funds to create new bases and projects, the Indian Navy is now going to deploy its frontline futuristic aircraft carrier INS Vikrant at a private shipyard in Chennai as its planned base in Vishakhapatnam is not yet ready.

"The case for leasing of the 260 m berth at L&T Shipyard, Kattupalli for a period of eight years (2022-2030) for interim berthing of IAC 1 on the East Coast has been taken up with Defence Ministry. The total financial implications for leasing the berth along with 'ready to use' infrastructure are Rs

30.48 crores per year in addition to Rs 48 crores as refundable deposit. The case is being progressed for early approval of the Defence Ministry," the Navy Vice Chief told the standing committee on defence.

The warship had to be deployed at the new submarine and warship base called INS Varsha at Vishakhapatnam but the process has been slow and not moving at the desired pace due to which the navy will have to lease a private shipyard's berth.

India has a plan of possessing at least two aircraft carriers at any point of time, looking after the eastern and western seaboard to monitor the vast exclusive economic zone and maritime boundaries. The Standing Committee also discussed the declining share of the Indian navy in the defence budget and observed that navy's fighting capabilities depend not only on high-value platforms like aircraft carriers, submarines, destroyers and frigates but also on the allocation of the capital budget for the navy (percentage) wise has the sharpest decline.

"We recommend the Ministry not to make any cut while allocating budget for Capital Head for any of the services in the demands to be made in the coming years," the committee said in its report.

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/faced-with-cash-crunch-indian-navy-to-house-new-aircraft-carrier-at-private-shipyard-1655812-2020-03-15>

BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | ESTABLISHED 1858 | NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2020 | PAGES 02 | CAPITAL | SUBSCRIPTION PRICE ₹1,200 WITH GST OR ₹1,050 WITHOUT GST
THE TIMES OF INDIA

Mon, 16 March 2020

Defence PSUs sound alarm over lack of orders & underutilisation of production facilities

By Rajat Pandit

New Delhi: The government may tout its "Make in India" policy in defence production, while also setting an ambitious arms export target of \$5 billion in the next five years, but defence public sector undertakings and shipyards have sounded the alarm over the lack of confirmed orders and under-utilization of their production capacities.

At least six of the nine entities (five DPSUs and four shipyards) under the defence ministry, which are often justifiably criticised for huge cost and time slippages as well as shoddy production quality, have warned that the bulk of their production facilities and manpower are set to become idle over the next couple of years if they do not get firm orders soon.

The armed forces, of course, have themselves been hit by woefully-inadequate modernization funds, leaving huge operational gaps on several fronts ranging from submarines, artillery guns and minesweepers to fighter jets, light utility helicopters and night-fighting capabilities.

Leading the pack is Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, which makes several types of aircraft from Russian-origin Sukhoi-30MKI fighters under licence to the indigenous Tejas jets and Dhruv advanced light helicopters. Despite an existing order book of Rs 59,832 crore, HAL says it has no new orders beyond 2021-22.

The MoD says orders for 83 Tejas Mark-1A jets (for about Rs 39,000 crore), 12 Sukhoi-30MKIs and 15 light combat helicopters are in the pipeline for HAL. But HAL has told the parliamentary standing committee on defence that its "established production capacities will not be fully loaded even with these orders". All this will adversely impact the country's defence manufacturing ecosystem and its private sector partners, including MSMEs.

Similarly, Bharat Dynamics Ltd, with no order executable beyond 2020-21, wants the proposed orders for Akash surface-to-air missiles, Astra air-to-air missiles, and Milan-2T, Konkurs-M and Nag

anti-tank guided missiles to be expedited. The two new Akash regiments for Army, for instance, will alone cost Rs 9,133 crore.

Mazagon Docks, in turn, says its extensive submarine-building infrastructure will become idle after it delivers the remaining four of the six French-origin Scorpene submarines (over Rs 23,000 crore) by 2022. MDL, in fact, contends it can immediately undertake construction of four major warships and seven more submarines.

The submarine refit facilities at Hindustan Shipyard Ltd (HSL) are already idle after it upgraded the Russian-origin INS Sindhuvir, which India plans to hand over to Myanmar, in January. “HSL wants the refit and upgrade of all Russian-origin warships and submarines but the Navy is sending Kilo-class submarines to Russia,” said an official.

Goa Shipyard, on its part, has been hit by the huge delay in finalization of the project to build 12 Mine Counter-Measure Vessels (MCMVs), which was first proposed way back in 2005, at a cost of around Rs 32,000 crore.

The Navy has now cut its requirement to eight MCMVs, while MoD has also put on hold the proposed construction of five fleet support ships for Rs 9,000 crore at GSL, with the help of Anadolu Shipyard (Istanbul), after bilateral diplomatic problems with Turkey.

BEL, BEML and MIDHANI. “Continuity in orders is essential to sustain production growth of DPSUs...Orders in pipeline need to be expedited for optimum use of their construction, building capacities and manpower,” said the parliamentary committee.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/defence-psus-sound-alarm-over-lack-of-orders-under-utilisation-of-production-facilities/articleshow/74641725.cms>



Mon, 16 March 2020

Neighbourhood challenge

Irrespective of India's Look East and Act East policy, bilateral relations between New Delhi and Naypyidaw have been stalled because of China's dominance

By Ashok Mehta

Following an infructuous spell of looking east, India's Act East Policy (AEP) is hobbled by snags in connectivity, continuing insurgencies, agitations, blockades and extortion in the North-east and replication of some of these very problems, especially insurgencies and snarls, in decision-making in Myanmar, the launchpad and fulcrum of AEP. Last month, the visit of Myanmar President, U Win Myint, to India reminded us of AEP anew.

The open-door policy is intended to usher in development in the North-east, which could in turn facilitate the closure of insurgencies. For the Look East Policy to work, it was necessary to press the “pause” button on democracy and, instead, support the ruling military junta. Reversion to democracy, albeit partial, has been achieved as I discovered last month in Yangon through a joint civil military leadership, with the Army having the last word.

At the core of AEP is connectivity — by road, rail, sea, inland waterways and air. The strategic geography in the North-east channelises this outreach through the narrow and sensitive Siliguri corridor, the vulnerable chicken's neck of the region. Choices for bypassing the Siliguri constriction were to transit through Bangladesh and/or use the sea route to reach insurgency-free Mizoram on the Myanmar border — from Kolkata to Sittwe Port in Myanmar and upto Mizoram.

Earlier, Bangladesh had rejected Indian requests to connect Myanmar through the Port of Chittagong upto Agartala and thence to the Myanmar border. What is being operationalised now is the

costly and delayed Kaladan multi-modal access from Sittwe to Myanmar/Mizoram through Rakhine and Chin States, currently beset with insurgencies by the Arakam Army. Therefore, instead of working this project south-north, it has been reversed, starting from Mizoram to Sittwe, which will have a 1,000 km special economic zone (SEZ) and a gas land pipeline from its gasfields to Gaya in Bihar. A number of roads to and through Myanmar to the east are under construction and completion, thus enhancing the AEP connectivity grid.

Unique to Myanmar is the civil-Army joint leadership arrangement under an Army-dictated constitution of 2011, which ensures that 25 per cent of the elected seats in Parliament is reserved for the Army. As the Constitution forbids Myanmar's popular leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of the National League of Democracy (NLD) from holding office, she is a State Councillor in the improvised system, which allows her the number three position in the State hierarchy after the President and Vice President; whereas the "C" in C Senior General Aung Hlaing, who calls the shots, is at number five. The Constitution reserves the posts of defence, home and border affairs Ministers for the Army.

The NLD wants to change the Constitution, which requires an unachievable two-thirds majority in Parliament. Last week, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi unsuccessfully tried to pass the Constitutional amendment. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is in his second term, which will end in April 2021, and efforts are on to accommodate him as the Vice President. This may introduce a modicum of civilian control over the military. While the Army is popular in the countryside, it is disliked by the urban elite. It disapproves of the overwhelming Chinese presence and meddling in Myanmar's internal affairs. But others don't mind them as they have the money to invest and develop the country.

Another historical challenge facing Myanmar is its myriad insurgencies, which like the cluster on the Indian side, is a hurdle for AEP. At the time of independence, many States in the erstwhile Burma had sought self-determination and separation but the Panglong Agreement of 1947 promised to settle Centre-State relations even as the Communists and Karens favoured independence. Today, there are more than two dozen active and dormant insurgencies, the active ones in border States like Shan, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine. The world's most complex but elaborate peace process is in Myanmar and it consists of unilateral, bilateral and a nationwide cease fire agreements, prone to violations and formal and informal dialogues backed by the international community, prominently by China.

The year 2019 was bad for the peace process. The 21st century Panglong Union Peace Conference with 10 nation-wide ceasefire signatories and the high-level Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting could not be held, though the Union Peace Dialogue took place in July. Both the failed meetings are likely to be held after the national elections later this year, which the Lady — reference to NLD leader Daw Suu Kyi — is expected to win but with a reduced majority. For various reasons, her popularity has waned but there is no alternative leader.

Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Myanmar this January and signed 33 agreements, of which the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (like the economic corridors with Pakistan and Nepal) was the centre piece. All three strategic corridors seek access to markets but two have an eye on warm waters of the Indian Ocean. Surpassing India's port potential at Sittwe is Kyakpyu, the deep-water port coupled with SEZ and ultimately road, rail, oil and gas pipelines radiating through Myanmar north of China's Yunnan province. China's footprint is enormous: There are hordes of Chinese in the north. Though the controversial \$3.6 billion hydel dam at Myitsone has been put on hold, bilateral trade stands at \$17 billion and China holds 40 per cent of Myanmar's foreign debt of \$5 billion. Xi signed separate agreements with the Senior General and State Councillor while hailing the new blueprint for comprehensive strategic cooperation and the new 2+2 strategic dialogue, Myanmar's first with any country.

India, though with good intentions and now sizeable civil and defence cooperation, is no match for China's deep pockets and outreach to play the role of a regional equaliser. Still, its impressive infrastructure and capacity-building programmes have been appreciated. Japan will team up in

improving quality and quick delivery of projects. While the two million, mostly Indian Tamil, diaspora is no asset, the Buddhism connect has not been tested even as Indian tourists are thronging Myanmar. India has transferred a Russian kilo-class diesel-electric attack submarine and may soon sell Brahmos missiles against the \$1.5 billion line of credit, of which \$300 million is left. Border trade — within 16 km — is a paltry \$25 million, though overall trade is around \$2.5 billion, far below potential.

The flowering of bilateral relations is stalled in part by the complexity of joint leadership and the unstoppable rise of China. While Beijing has cast a string of pearls along India's periphery, it has placed in Myanmar, an arrestor wire system of an aircraft carrier to blunt the take-off of AEP towards Asean, where China is also the dominant influencer. Myanmar's full transition to democracy depends on progress in ethnic reconciliation and resolving civil-military tensions through Constitutional reform. Till then, AEP will remain constrained.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander IPKF South, Sri Lanka and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff.)

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/columnists/neighbourhood-challenge.html>

moderndiplomacy

Sat, 14 March 2020

India-US defence deal 2020: Security implications for Pakistan

By Sher Bano

During recent Trump's visit to India, both the countries signed US 3 billion dollars defence deal involving various sophisticated weapons. The deal consists of the sale of six Boeing AH-64E Apache Guardian attack helicopters for the Indian Army and 24 Sikorsky MH-60R Sea Hawk multi-role helicopters for the Indian Navy. Pakistan has already shown concerns that this deal would result in further destabilizing the already volatile region. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry's Spokeswoman Aisha Farooqui stated that "the sale of such sophisticated weapons to India will disturb the strategic balance in South Asia with security implications for Pakistan and the region." She also stated that the region could not afford an arms race or conflict and urged the international community to prevent the destabilization of the region.

Since 2007 India's defence cooperation with the US has reached US 17 billion dollars as it aims to modernize its military to achieve its ultimate goal of becoming the global power. With the recent purchase of the sophisticated weapons, India is increasing its sphere of influence in the region which is quite alarming for its neighboring countries specifically Pakistan. The defence agreement between them clearly marks close collaboration in military, conventional and non-conventional weapons which may pose serious repercussion on geo-strategic scenarios of South Asia. US being the major power is supporting India to play a larger role of the regional policeman and fulfill its long term hegemonic designs to dominate the smaller states with the help of its military strength. Hence this defence cooperation has accelerated India's dream of becoming the global power.

Moreover India's obsession of buying the most sophisticated weapons is a serious concern for Pakistan as it is likely to create conventional asymmetry in the region. The recent deal consist of weapons which Pakistan doesn't have right now, hence it will disturb the conventional balance between the two states. Maritime security cooperation between India and the US is nothing but an attempt to secure the maritime domain which can cause serious maritime conflict between India and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean and international seas as well. The Apache attack helicopters are equipped with the hellfire missiles, night vision capabilities, 70 mm rockets and an automatic gun,

which makes it the most lethal machine in the world. The Apache would add greater firepower and agility to the Indian ground forces for any quick and intense operations against Pakistan.

This Indo-US deal has the potential to undermine the Pakistan's strategy of minimum credible deterrence. Hence this cooperation can have disastrous effects on the stability of the region by tilting the strategic balance between in favor of India. Pakistan should convey to the US at the highest level, its security concerns caused by the latest Indo-US defence deal. We must emphasize upon the destabilizing consequences for South Asia caused by the open ended supply of highly advanced weapons to India, creating conventional asymmetry in the region.

Pakistan being the smaller state with a fragile economy cannot afford to indulge in an all-out arms race. However, Pakistan also should not remain oblivious to growing Indo-US cooperation as it can have strong security implications. Enhanced capacity building of Indian armed forces can threaten the deterrent value of Pakistan's nuclear and conventional weapons. Hence a combination of expedient foreign policy along with credible conventional and nuclear deterrent could meet the desired national interest. In order to counter the conventional imbalance Pakistan has to rely on the indigenous weapon production, superior strategy and training. Pakistan needs to build anti-weapons and long-range air defense system to detect any aerial threats and reduce the pace of the Indian mechanized forces. Moreover with these capabilities Pakistan can tackle with any advantage of Indian military in the conventional domain. Pakistan should build stronger ties with China while remaining strategically relevant to the US. Pakistan must revive its economy in order to counter the negative impact of the Indo-US strategic convergence.

It cannot be reiterated enough that the Indo-US defence deal raises strong security implication for Pakistan as it further increases the conventional asymmetry between the two states which will ultimately threaten the strategic stability of South Asia. Hence Pakistan needs to improve its overall conventional capabilities in order to fill the gaps and maintain the conventional balance.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/14/india-us-defence-deal-2020-security-implications-for-pakistan/>



Sun, 15 March 2020

Operation Vanilla: Indian Navy carries the largest humanitarian aid to Madagascar

India's envoy to Madagascar Abhay Kumar while handing over the aid stated that the rice brought on board a warship, was the fastest way the relief could be delivered in the Indian Ocean

By Huma Siddiqui

INS Shardul which had sailed out from Kochi carrying 600 tonnes of rice has entered the entered Port Antsirananana, Madagascar and the humanitarian aid sent from India has been handed over to the authorities. At a ceremony the Indian side was represented by the Ambassador of India to Madagascar, Abhay Kumar and the ship's Commanding Officer, Cdr Abhishek Pathak. And the 600 tonnes was handed over to Madagascar's Foreign Minister, Dr Tehindrazanarivelo Djacoba in the presence of high ranking officials from that country's Defence forces and other organizations.

India's envoy to Madagascar Abhay Kumar while handing over the aid stated that the rice brought on board a warship, was the fastest way the relief could be delivered in the Indian Ocean.

Describing India as a true friend, the foreign minister of Madagascar wished the ties between the two countries to reach newer heights and he also thanked the government and the Indian Navy.

The Indian rice is expected to be distributed to the affected people who were affected by Cyclone Diane which had hit the southern African island nation in January this year.

India was the first country to send in immediate relief material onboard INS Airavat, a large amphibious ship which was on a mission-based deployment near Seychelles was diverted on January 30 to provide relief.

The 600 tonne rice aid on board a warship, according to the Indian Navy is the largest humanitarian aid so far from India to Madagascar.

According to the Indian Navy “For the quick relief first time ever it was loaded and transported and unloaded in record time.”



More about INS Shardul

The warship is 125 meters long and has a displacement of 5600 tonnes.

Also, on board, there are 320 officers and sailor.

After completion of its humanitarian mission, the ship is expected to leave Port Antsiranana of Madagascar on March 14.

The humanitarian aid to the cyclone hit nation is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of ‘Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR).

According to reports nearly 92,000 people in the island nation have been affected, also there has been a loss of lives.

India’s navy has earned a tag of the First Responder and has always been the first to provide immediate relief assistance to those affected in situations nearer home.

Importance of Madagascar

This country is also a member of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

Also, it is a member of the African Union (AU).

It is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) too.

What is Vanilla Islands?

It is a grouping of six island nations which are located in the south-west Indian Ocean.

All these nations joined hands together in 2010 to boost tourism.

The six islands include — Mayotte, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion and Madagascar.

They get the name ‘Vanilla’ as the main item of export is Vanilla pods.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/operation-vanilla-indian-navy-carries-the-largest-humanitarian-aid-to-madagascar/1897872/>