

# समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

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## MoD 'nominates' DRDO for building e-warfare systems

*By Ajai Shukla*

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Monday announced it had approved the purchase of Rs 3,300 crore of indigenously designed and developed military equipment.

The private sector is up in arms. Despite repeated Ministry of Defence (MoD) assurances that private firms would be allowed to compete for defence contracts on equal terms with the public sector — which includes the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), eight defence public sector units (DPSUs) and 41 ordnance factories — the DAC has ‘nominated’ the DRDO for designing and developing an indigenous lightweight electronic warfare system for mountains (hereafter, Mountain EW system).

The Mountain EW system “would be designed and developed by DRDO and manufactured by design-cum-production partner from the Indian (private) industry,” announced the MoD.

This denial of a design and development role to the private industry comes even as a private firm, Tata Power (Strategic Engineering Division, or SED), is building two far more complex integrated Mountain EW systems, a global tender it won in 2013 for Rs 926 crore. An amended order was placed in July, which is on track to be delivered in 24 months.

Meanwhile, a public sector partnership between DRDO and Bharat Electronics is floundering in developing two similar systems, for which they were ‘nominated’ by the MoD at twice the price bid by Tata Power (SED).

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (Ficci) has strongly protested this sidelining of private firms. In a letter addressed directly to Rajnath Singh on October 10, Ficci wrote: “It is understood that serious considerations are being given to nominate (the Mountain EW system tenders) to DRDO/DPSUs, disregarding the private sector having equal, if not better, capability and skill sets in EW technologies,” wrote Ficci.

“Ficci would request your personal intervention to advise that all the EW programme requests for proposals, or tenders, like all other capital acquisition programmes, as issued on competitive tendering basis,” the letter said.

Invoking Tata Power (SED)’s strong, two-decade-old track record in developing EW systems, Ficci wrote: “Private sector companies were involved in developing the critical command and control software and platform engineering for the integrated EW system Samyukta (in the 1990s). This was even acknowledged by Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, then DRDO chief”.

The MoD cites ‘security concerns’ to place orders for EW systems with the DRDO/DPSUs. This has been strongly protested by the private sector, which cites its own stringent security protocols.

“Any security concerns raised to justify DPSU/PSU nomination be discouraged as all ‘A category’ licensed private Indian vendors are covered under the same security guidelines issued by the MoD, as are DPSUs,” wrote Ficci.

Business Standard has reviewed Ficci’s letter to the defence minister.

EW systems are a crucial military force multiplier. They are built around a powerful receiver that picks up, records, and analyses enemy (or militant/terrorist) transmissions to obtain valuable intelligence. Its integrated direction finder establishes the precise location of the enemy transmitter.

That location can then be attacked, using aircraft or ground forces. Alternatively, at a crucial stage of battle, the enemy's transmissions can be disrupted with high-power jammers, throwing his plan into disarray. Good EW systems allow an army to dominate the electromagnetic spectrum.

The Mountain EW system that the DAC cleared on Monday is a lightweight system that can be physically carried to remote locations, or heli-lifted onto high mountains. It is particularly useful in counter-militancy operations.



Wed, 30 Oct 2019

## **LCA Tejas: Did it serve the purpose, can it replace ageing MiGs?**

*By Vikas SV*

New Delhi: If all had worked according to plan, then IAF's depleting squadron strength would not have been so severe a problem as it now appears. MiG-21 and MiG-27 are the oldest fighters in the Indian Air Force (IAF)'s fleet. These were inducted way back in the 1960s and are set to retire by 2022.

LCA Tejas was to replace these. Tejas Fighter should have replaced Mig-21 fleet by now. Before the induction of the Su-30 MKI aircraft, Mig-21 was the frontline fighter with the Mig-29. LCA Tejas was to be the Third Line of fighter for India.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is staring at a massive problem of depleting fleet size. The IAF should ideally have a strength of 42 combat squadrons but currently, its fleet has shrunk to around 30-32 squadrons and many MiG fighters are set to retire in the next 5 years.

Tejas was supposed to have played a key role in IAF's scheme things. It was thought that India's requirement for single engine fighters could be met with LCA Tejas. But due to multiple problems encountered during Tejas's development and HAL's failure to meet the delivery deadlines, IAF was forced to look at other foreign aircrafts.

Some 120-odd MiG-21s continue to be in service. These will be retired in phases till 2021-2022. The IAF will phase out nine squadrons of the MiG-21 and 2 MiG-27 over the next 5 years. Two squadrons of Rafale fighters, two of the LCA Tejas and two more Sukhoi-30MKI are to be added by then, making the number of 28 squadrons by 2022, a report published in The Tribune said.

### **This is how it is looking right now for IAF.....**

LCA Tejas was to be the Third Line of Fighter for India. At present, the problem is that the production speed of Tejas is just too slow. Given this, India will have to look to buy fighters from foreign manufacturers. There are also AMCA Programme/ HAL Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) of India and MWF/Medium Weight Fighter Programmes that many opine have not yielded desired results.

The development of Kaveri Engine has also not gone as per plans. According to initial plans, it was the Kaveri Engine which was to be fitted in Tejas, but as of now Tejas has an imported GE engine.

India manufactures helicopters, drones and HAL has quality manufacturing lines to make quality fighters. If Tejas production gets underway in full swing, it would create an aviation ecosystem in the country which may pave way to design and production of much more sophisticated aircrafts.

In the nutshell, Tejas was supposed to have served as the first major step by India towards manufacturing of fighters. As far as meeting the requirements of the IAF is concerned, HAL has been given green signal to start manufacturing of Tejas Mk1 under Final Operational Clearance (FOC)

configuration. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) has ordered 40 Tejas LCA Mark-I with HAL. 20 Tejas LCA in initial operational configuration - 16 fighters and four trainers - have been produced so far (this was as of January this year).

The weaponised version of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas equipped with capabilities of mid-air refuelling, AESA radar, electronic warfare suites and a variety of other features is likely to be inducted into the Indian Air Force by this year-end.

#### **Indian Air Force's Squadron strength (as per information in public domain):**

According to the information available in the public domain, the IAF currently has around eleven squadrons of the Su-30MKI, three each of the MiG-29 and Mirage 2000, six of the Jaguar and six of the MiG-21. The MiG-27 and the MiG-21 are one of the oldest in the IAF inventory. The MiG-21 and MiG-27 squadrons have been in decline and the MiG-23 has been phased out completely. The IAF will phase out nine squadrons of the MiG-21 and 2 MiG-27 over the next 5 years.

Two of the LCA Tejas and two more Sukhoi-30MKI are likely to be added in the coming years .

IAF will get the MiG-29 fighters upgraded to the latest standards by Russia, and get them at virtually throwaway prices, reportedly Rs 200 crore per piece. They will augment the 62 MiG-29 fighters that are in the IAF's fleet which are also being upgraded to give them an all-weather multi-role capability.

In fact, there are reportedly 15 more such aircraft. IAF is in advance talks with Russia for an urgent procurement of MiG 29 fighters that can be delivered at relatively short notice. The plan to acquire 21 additional aircraft to make a new squadron of MiG 29 jets that were first purchased in the 1980s has been discussed in detail last month and is expected to cost the Indian exchequer less than Rs 6,000 crore. The MiG 29s, if procured, will cost significantly lesser than the Rafale fighter jets.

<https://www.oneindia.com/india/lca-tejas-did-it-serve-the-purpose-can-it-replace-ageing-mig-2968966.html>



*Wed, 30 Oct 2019*

## **Indian Army to get first batch of US-made heavy caliber Sig Sauer assault rifles by December 2019**

The United States (US)-made heavy-calibre Sig Sauer assault rifles are set to boost the combat lethality of Indian troops. The first batch of these rifles will be given to them this December. As per the deal signed in February by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) with US arms major Sig Sauer, 72,400 rifles will be purchased at Rs 700 crore.

These assault rifles will suit the army's operational tactic of 'shoot to kill' instead of incapacitation. These weapons may give an upper hand to troops in insurgency-hit areas. Troops are at present dependent on the INSAS rifles and have to wait for indigenous mass production of AK-203 rifles of Russian origin.



Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said last week, by the end of the year the first batch of the Sig Sauer rifles would arrive in a dismantled state and would be provided to troops after being assembled in the country.

The INSAS, designed by the Defence Research & Development Organization (DRDO) and produced by the state-run Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), was inducted into the army in 1994. But

armed forces have not found the weapon reliable in terms of combat lethality, weight and sighting system.

"There has been an urgent need for long-range rifles for troops deployed on borders or insurgency-hit areas. With the INSAS rifle, there have been issues like stoppages and unreliability. The INSAS rifles' plastic magazine is not steady and is prone to cracking. Troops in insurgency-hit areas don't prefer the INSAS. A soldier's confidence and reliability in the weapon system is of paramount importance," former Northern Army Commander Lt Gen (rtd) Deependra Singh Hooda told IANS.

On the other hand, the Ordnance Factory Project Korwa in Amethi district of UP, one of the 41 state-run arms production units, will manufacture the AK-203 rifles under a joint venture, Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited, between the OFB and Russian firms in February. Around 7.5 lakh AK-203 rifles will be produced under the contract.

"Apart from INSAS rifles, the army also has AK-47s at its disposal. The 7.62x39 mm AK-203 rifles produced in India will no doubt boost the 'make in India' initiative and give more teeth to troops. But as a matter of urgency, the Sig Sauer rifles will be a big boost for troops in frontline areas," a senior army officer told IANS.

*(This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text. Only the headline has been changed.)*

<https://swarajyamag.com/insta/indian-army-to-get-first-batch-of-us-made-heavy-caliber-sig-sauer-assault-rifles-by-december-this-year>

## THE ASIAN AGE

Wed, 30 Oct 2019

### Courage helps overcome hurdles: Bikram Singh

*General Bikram Singh threw light upon "post-traumatic stress disorder."*

*By Akshaya Kumar Sahoo*

Bhubaneswar: The first-ever edition of TEDxXUB, a special TED talk programme, was conducted by IlluminatiX, the media and public relations cell of Xavier University-Bhubaneswar (XUB), on Monday evening.

The theme for the TED talk was 'Mind and Matter'.

The theme brought focus on how the internal and external factors blend to shape one's life. While 'mind' focuses on all the internal struggles, battles, and confrontation; 'matter' talks about all the external factors and the environment that human beings live in.

The event, among others, was graced by the presence of eminent speakers namely General Bikram Singh, retired Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and General Officer Commander-in-Chief of the Army's Eastern Command, Ms Bhavya Arora, mental health professional and trainer, Ms Dimple Parmar, founder and CEO of Love Heals Cancer and ZenOnco.io and Dr Amrit Pattojoshi, consultant neuro-psychiatrist at The Healing Touch.

General Bikram Singh threw light upon "post-traumatic stress disorder." He compared people's lives with a battlefield and urged the audience to build courage and have faith in overcoming all hurdles with a never to give up attitude.

Ms Bhavya Arora shared her ideas on "navigating conflict inside to build peace on the outside" and shared her liking for interacting with people that gave her a reason for becoming a therapist. She spoke about how she started experimenting with work, people around her and social work to learn more about analyzing human behaviour and providing simple solutions. She also emphasised on three steps to solve the conflicts with each other and within through observation, reflection and awareness.

Ms Dimple Parmar spoke on rewilding the human body through the power of love. She spoke about how the world that is rushing towards medical advancement sometimes also needs a helping hand in the form of hope and support.

<https://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/301019/courage-helps-overcome-hurdles-bikram-singh.html>



*Wed, 30 Oct 2019*

## **How India's aircraft carriers tell the story of its diplomatic history**

While India operates one aircraft carrier at the moment, New Delhi is planning to operate at least three such ships, provided it will have the funds. The construction of such a large machine is a strategic choice not only in pure military terms, however. For a country like India, which needs foreign technology, it is also a political statement. It is not only about whom the carrier could be used against, but whom to cooperate with to procure the needed systems – and whom to leave out from cooperation.

Here I argue that India's five aircraft carriers – the past, present and future ones – may turn out to represent four stages in New Delhi's evolving foreign policy. This will, therefore, not be a text on technology, but on how choices in importing foreign technologies are intertwined with diplomacy. To be sure, each of the ships is at a completely different stage now: the first two ones were already decommissioned, the third, still operating, has been guarding India's waters for the past years, but the fourth is under construction, and the fifth is only being planned. So how do these aircraft carriers carry the air of political and diplomatic change?

INS Viraat and INS Vikrant (R11). Both of these carriers were British ships, the construction of which had started way back during the Second World War. While Vikrant had been purchased by New Delhi as a yet incomplete ship, Viraat was sold to India only after it served London's purposes for decades. Both carriers are pieces of history now as both had been acquired long ago: INS Vikrant was commissioned to the Indian service in 1961 and Viraat in 1987.

Both years, interestingly, belong to an era of the Indo-Soviet friendship and yet the only aircraft carriers New Delhi commanded at the time were British-made. It is a symbolic reminder of how technology-starved India was acquiring some Western technology and resources even in the midst of the Cold War (when New Delhi was clearly closer to Moscow than to the West). The part played here by the United Kingdom in the Indian civil nuclear program serves as yet another reminder.

INS Vikramaditya. Purchased from Russia, this old, Soviet-era aircraft carrier could have as well sunk a lot of Indo-Russian bonhomie. It was reconstructed and modernized by Russians as per Indian expectations, but its delivery was hugely delayed (it was ordered in 2004 and eventually commissioned in 2013). As the Indian side was unhappy with the price demanded by the seller, it took years of negotiations to find a middle ground. India still could have felt it lost a lot of money on this old machine while Russia lost part of its reputation in New Delhi.

INS Vikramaditya is surely a symbol of a transition period in the 1990s and early 2000s: a time when New Delhi-Moscow relations went from a special, ideology-backed partnership to disenchanted and pragmatic cooperation. It is also, even more accurately, a symbol of what went wrong. The has-been power of Russia no longer causes so much awe in India and its technology is no longer so advanced and attractive (barring a few important sectors, however, of which the S-400 is the best example). The quarrel about pricing demonstrated how the once-special relationship is now as down-to-earth as relations between states are usually bound to be.

## **INS Vikrant**

Currently under construction, Vikrant is to be India's first indigenous aircraft carrier. It symbolically represents New Delhi's current international standing – which many commentators would like to call 'strategic autonomy.' New Delhi would like to retain what it can and it wants from its cooperation with Russia, but it also means to enhance its growing relationship with the United States. This ship will similarly represent a mixture of imports (from various sources) and India's own work. Some of its major solutions will be following the design of INS Vikramaditya: the launch system will be of the same type (STOVAR, which is a ski-jump launch system) and some of the systems will be provided by a Russian company (Rosoboronexport). The aviation complex was designed by another Russian firm (Nevskoye Design Bureau). However, the ship is to be propelled by U.S.-made turbines to be provided by General Electric, just like the Washington-New Delhi relationship currently propels India in other directions as well.

## **INS Vishaal**

The ship is in the project phase as of now and thus there is no telling how it might be built. Vishaal is to be India's second indigenous aircraft carrier, but will not follow the same model as Vikrant. Its launch system is to be CATOVAR (Catapult Assisted Take-Off But Arrested Recovery) or, more precisely, its new generation: EMALS (Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System). Such a system is being developed by the Americans and thus India would have to team up with them; so far, an Indo-American working group has been formed for that purpose. A change to a different launch system will probably affect the type of machines used on it as well. Vikramaditya uses the STOVAR system and Vikrant is designed for the same, and the primary embarked aircraft of the former carrier is the Russian MiG-29K. If Vishaal is fit with EMALS, it will make it more in tune with Western-made machines, and capable of working with heavier planes, such as the American E-2 Hawkeye.

If we assume it is constructed the way it is conceived now, the carrier may represent the future stage of India's diplomacy, a one which is now nascent (and desired in New Delhi). In that phase, India will remain unaligned to any of the global superpowers, but will be cooperating with the United States more than with any other.

<http://www.defencenews.in/article/How-India%e2%80%99s-Aircraft-Carriers-Tell-the-Story-of-Its-Diplomatic-History-747709>



*Wed, 30 Oct 2019*

## **IAF's trusted fighter MiG-29: Past, present and future**

India was the first international customer of the MiG-29. The Indian Air Force (IAF) placed an order for more than 66 MiG-29s in 1980 while the aircraft was still in its initial development phase. Since its induction into the IAF in 1985, the aircraft has undergone a series of modifications with the addition of new avionics, sub-systems, turbofan engines and radars. Russian made MiG-29 fighter has been with the Indian Air Force (IAF) for over three decades and is still considered a formidable fighter.

Compared to MiG-21 and MiG-27, the MiG-29's operational record is good. MiG-29 was developed by the Mikoyan design bureau, Russia as an air superiority fighter during the 1970s.

Though designed for combat, MiG-29s have been served as multi-role fighters capable of performing a number of different operations.

## **MiG-29 : Past**

MiG is effectively 33 years old and still remain an effective weapons platform to this day. Indian review of the MIG-29 does show that the jet structures is still sound and worthwhile the upgrades it needs to performance for another 10-15 years.

India was the first international customer of the MiG-29. The Indian Air Force (IAF) placed an order for more than 66 MiG-29s in 1980 while the aircraft was still in its initial development phase. Since its induction into the IAF in 1985, the aircraft has undergone a series of modifications with the addition of new avionics, sub-systems, turbofan engines and radars.

MiG-29s were used extensively during the 1999 Kargil War in Kashmir by the Indian Air Force to provide fighter escort for Mirage 2000s attacking targets with laser-guided bombs.

The Indian Air Force purchased 78 MiG-29 fighters since the 1980s and the fleet currently totals over 60 aircraft, as per reports. Three squadrons operate the MiG-29. In 2009, the Indian Air Force began an upgrade of its MiG-29 fleet to equip it with new electronics, radar and the capability to fire air-to-ground weapons.

## **Mig-29: Present**

Along with Mig-29, Mig-21 was the frontline fighter of IAF till the induction of the Su-30 MKI aircraft. Tejas Fighter should have replaced Mig-21 fleet, and Sukoi along with upgraded MiG-29 were to serve as frontline fighters.

According to the information available in the public domain, the IAF currently has around eleven squadrons of the Su-30MKI, three each of the MiG-29 and Mirage 2000, six of the Jaguar and six of the MiG-21.

Tough MiG planes have given a lot of problems to IAF, the complaints are least with MiG-29. Some 120-odd MiG-21s continue to be in service. These will be retired in phases till 2021-2022. The IAF will phase out nine squadrons of the MiG-21 and 2 MiG-27 over the next 5 years. Two squadrons of Rafale fighters, two of the LCA Tejas and two more Sukhoi-30MKI are to be added by then, making the number of 28 squadrons by 2022, a report published in The Tribune said.

The MiG-27 and the MiG-21 are one of the the oldest in the IAF inventory. The MiG-21 and MiG-27 squadrons have been in decline and the MiG-23 has been phased out completely. The IAF will phase out nine squadrons of the MiG-21 and 2 MiG-27 over the next 5 years.

## **MiG-29 : Future**

IAF will get the MiG-29 fighters upgraded to the latest standards by Russia, and get them at virtually throwaway prices, reportedly Rs 200 crore per piece. They will augment the 62 MiG-29 fighters that are in the IAF's fleet which are also being upgraded to give them an all-weather multi-role capability.

Indian Air Force (IAF) is reportedly pushing a proposal for acquiring 33 new combat aircraft including 21 MiG-29s and 12 Sukhoi 30s. The Indian Air Force was reportedly looking for an "emergency shipment" of 21 MiG-29 fighters from Russia to make up for falling squadron strength.

IAF is said to be in advance talks with Russia for an urgent procurement of MiG 29 fighters that can be delivered at a relatively short notice. The plan to acquire 21 additional aircraft to make a new squadron of MiG 29 has been discussed in detail and is expected to cost the Indian exchequer less than Rs 6,000 crore. Some reports claim that a MiG-29 bought from Russian stocks would cost three times below what Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) charges for a freshly assembled Sukhoi Su-30MKI and five times below the reported cost for a Rafale.

<http://www.defencenews.in/article/IAFs-trusted-fighter-MiG-29-Past,-Present-and-Future-747688>



# Meet the F-21: India's New Super Fighter (Or Just an Old F-16?)

*An improvement or just the F-16 repackaged?*

*By David Axe*

- ***Key point: The F-21 has some upgrades but is based on the existing F-16. As such, it might not win India's contract***

Lockheed Martin is developing a new variant of its iconic F-16 single-engine fighter in order to compete in India's 2019 tender for 110 new warplanes.

But don't count on the American firm's "F-21" to win the contract.

According to journalist Angad Singh, the likely winner is French company Dassault's Rafale twin-engine fighter.

Singh explains his rationale in the May 2019 issue of Combat Aircraft magazine. India previously ordered 36 Rafales as part of an earlier fighter tender. "With 36 aircraft already on order and the infrastructure in place for an additional 36, a case could certainly be made that training, basing and sustainment costs for additional aircraft would not be an impossible burden."

Other candidates for the Indian tender are the Saab Gripen from Sweden, the European Eurofighter Typhoon, the MiG-35 from Russia and the Boeing Super Hornet from the United States. Whichever fighter New Delhi selects, it needs the new jets *now*, according to Singh.

"The government-approved strength of the Indian Air Force, given the country's well-publicized security scenario and the possibility of a 'two-front' threat of combined Pakistani and Chinese air action to the west and northeast, is 42 fighter squadrons," Singh writes.

"There is little clarity on how this exact number was arrived at, but nonetheless, the IAF hasn't come close to this strength for two decades, and has never approached anything near a force entirely equipped with modern aircraft."

In 2019 the Indian air force maintains just 30 fighters squadrons. The units operate, among other plane types, 244 1960s-vintage MiG-21s and 84 MiG-27s that are only slightly younger. The MiG-21s, in particular, are accident-prone. Since the first of 874 MiG-21s entered Indian service in 1963, around 490 have crashed, killing around 200 pilots.

But the MiG-21s remain active. On Feb. 26, 2019 Indian planes crossed the line of control at India's border with Pakistan and bombed what New Delhi described as a terrorist training camp near Balakot.

Several days of aerial fighting followed the bombing raid. On Feb. 27, 2019, Pakistani F-16s and other planes crossed the line of control to attack Indian forces, New Delhi claimed. Indian MiG-21s and other fighters intercepted the Pakistanis and shot down one plane, according to the Indian government.

The U.S. government reportedly counted Pakistan's F-16s after the battle and concluded that none was missing, casting doubt on New Delhi's claim.

Islamabad stated its forces shot down two Indian MiG-21s, but New Delhi copped to losing just one jet. Pakistani forces captured the MiG-21 pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, and held him for two days before handing him over to Indian officials.

Now New Delhi wants to spend around \$18 billion acquiring 110 new fighters to replace the old MiGs. The new planes would fly alongside European-designed Jaguars, French Mirage 2000s and

Rafales, Russian MiG-29s and Su-30s and India's own indigenous Tejas fighter in what Lockheed described as "the world's largest fighter aircraft ecosystem."

For the purposes of Lockheed's marketing campaign, the F-21 is a new fighter, although it shares many of its major features with the F-16V the company has sold to Bahrain, Greece, Slovakia, South Korea and Taiwan. Lockheed can build new F-16Vs or upgrade older F-16s to the V-standard.

Still, renaming the F-16V isn't only semantic. An F-16V or F-21 is a radically different warplane compared to the F-16A that first flew in 1978. The F-16A is a nimble, eight-ton fighter with an unsophisticated radar and short-range weapons. The F-16V weighs 10 tons, boasts a cutting-edge radar and other sensors and carries a wide array of long-range weaponry, all at the cost of maneuverability.

Lockheed initially implied India could follow an acquisition of F-21s with a separate purchase of the company's F-35 stealth fighters.

"The F-21 has common components and learning from Lockheed Martin's fifth-generation F-22 and F-35 and will share a common supply chain on a variety of components," Lockheed stated on its website on the morning of Feb. 20, 2019.

A few hours later, that claim disappeared from the site. Despite Lockheed's stealth tease, the French Rafale might be the frontrunner in the Indian fighter contest.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/meet-f-21-indias-new-super-fighter-or-just-old-f-16-91856>

WWW.ECONOMICTIMES.COM  
**THE ECONOMIC TIMES**

Wed, 30 Oct 2019

## **Ahead of Rajnath Singh's Russia visit, Defence Ministry moves to implement pact to make spares**

*An agreement to jointly manufacture spares in India was signed in September and ministry has now drafted guidelines to implement it, with the first step being identifying spares that will be required for at least 5 years by the military*

*By Manu Pubby*

New Delhi: Ahead of defence minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Moscow, the ministry has been working to implement an agreement to manufacture spares and equipment for Russian origin equipment in India and plans to identify items and encourage JV s for production.

An agreement to jointly manufacture spares in India was signed in September and the ministry has now drafted guidelines to implement it, with the first step being identifying spares that will be required for at least five years by the military. While the Russian and Indian governments will coordinate the effort, eyebrows have been raised over the nomination of industry body SIDM (Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers) that has been tasked with measuring the "competence" of the industry and identifying specific companies that would be allowed to take part in the initiative.

The Indian government does not intend to interfere in the creation of joint ventures between Russian equipment manufacturers and the Indian industry but plans to maintain a database.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/ahead-of-rajnath-singhs-russia-visit-defence-ministry-moves-to-implement-pact-to-make-spare/articleshow/71813603.cms?from=mdr>

## **To push make in India, large industry delegation to accompany Defence Minister to Russia**

In a bid to push 'Make in India', a large industry delegation would be travelling with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in the first week of November to Russia, which is the biggest supplier of defence equipment to India.

The visit scheduled to start from November 5 is coming at a time when the two countries are pushing for tie-ups and partnership between Indian and Russian companies for the production of spares and equipment for the Indian forces.

"The Defence Minister is visiting Russia for the India Russia Intergovernmental Commission for Military and Technical Commission with his Russian counterpart where the two sides will discuss the entire gamut of defence and technology ties between them and ways to further expanding this cooperation," Defence officials said here.

The high level delegation scheduled to go there have the who's who of the defence bureaucracy including Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar, DRDO Chief G Satheesh Reddy, Secretary (Defence Production) Subhash Chandra and DG Acquisition Apoorva Chandra along with Joint Secretary Sanjay Jaju who is playing a key role in pushing Make in India in defence sector.

The defence industry representatives travelling with the Defence Ministry include top public and private sector companies including Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bharat Dynamics Limited, Larsen and Toubro.

The new private sector entrants into the defence sector include Adani Industries.

India and Russia have had over five decades of defence partnership. Major Indian defence hardware including tanks, nuclear submarines and fighter aircraft are of Russian origin.

Despite India diversifying its equipment, the two countries are still engaged in defence trade of more than five billion dollars every year, including the S-400 air defence missile system and SU-30 MKI fighter aircraft.

India and Russia have recently signed a deal for joint manufacturing of AK-203 assault rifles at the Ordnance Factory Board in Amethi.

<http://www.defencenews.in/article/To-push-make-in-India,-large-industry-delegation-to-accompany-Defence-Minister-to-Russia-747703>

## **India, China talks on boundary issue likely to be held in next 3 months**

The 22nd meeting of the Special Representatives (SR) of India and China on the boundary issue is expected to happen either around the end of the year or in January 2020, with New Delhi not exactly enthused by Beijing's so-called early harvest proposals, which pertain only to Sikkim where the Indian Army dominates the border. The early harvest proposals were submitted by China to India in August

this year, with Beijing claiming that these would lead to early resolution of the vexed boundary issue. Early harvest proposals are those which the country believes can be easily closed.

South Block officials who asked not to be named said that even though dates for the talks between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and State Councillor Wang Yi for the SR dialogue are being mutually discussed, the boundary dispute is far away from resolution. They admitted that there is little hope that the 22nd round will move things substantially forward. The main reason for this, according to Indian officials and army brass who spoke on condition of anonymity, is because China continues to use the unresolved border issue as a pressure point to destabilise India.

According to the officials, the only place where China has proposed an early resolution is Sikkim – where the Indian Army dominates the Chumbi Valley with the Bhutanese Army on the other side. According to a former Indian Army chief, an Eastern Army commander, and a former III Corps commander, the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) contests its Indian counterpart in the Finger Area of north Sikkim and the India-China-Bhutan Trijunction Area near Batang La. At both places, the Indian Army holds dominating heights with a 20km clear observation channel of the Tibetan plateau and at Doka La, south of Nathu La, leading to Dolam or Doklam plateau. The Chinese claim on the trijunction is Gyemochen, further south of Batang La and at the start of Jhampheri ridge.

China watchers in the Indian Army say that due to its vulnerability in Chumbi Valley, PLA has built a road cutting into the western part of Bhutan. In the Finger Area, the Guru Dongmar lake is under Indian control. This is the place where Guru Nanak is said to have stabbed the frozen lake with his stick. To date, a 9x9 sq ft part of the lake remains ice-free even during peak winter.

The officials also said there is unlikely to be a formalisation of coordinated patrolling with the Chinese PLA on Fish Tail I and II in the easternmost part of Arunachal Pradesh. "How can we formalise any patrolling that leads to further strengthening of Chinese dominance in the area. Fish Tail I and II are Indian territory and there is no reason to allow the PLA to come in?" one of the officials added.

India and China have a 3,488-km long unresolved border with 13 mutually agreed disputed points and other sensitive points. China is strengthening its border defences, and India finally replaced mule trains with truck convoys to replenish Indian Army positions at Daulet Beg Oldi near the Karakoram pass. India has also been working on alternative route if the DBO road is cut off, through Saser La, Saser Brangsa, Murgo, and Gapshan. Work on this route is proceeding at pace, the officials said.

<http://www.defencenews.in/article/India,-China-talks-on-boundary-issue-likely-to-be-held-in-next-3-months-747701>



*Wed, 30 Oct 2019*

## **‘China may deploy Aircraft Carrier in Indian ocean’: US Navy Commander**

The US Pacific Fleet Commander on Tuesday said there has been no reduction in Beijing's assertiveness in the disputed South China Sea, a vital trade route in the global supply chain, and it continues to bully other nations in the strategic region.

Admiral John Aquilino, who is in India, met Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh and other senior defence officials. He said he and Singh discussed ways to enhance cooperation and increase information-sharing and better integration between the two navies.

“The US and India have common values. We understand that the ability to operate in accordance with international laws and maritime environment only allows both of us to prosper as well as the rest of the nations in the area,” he said in an interaction with reporters.

The chief of the Hawaii-based Pacific fleet said China’s military buildup in the disputed waters of the SCS threatens several countries, many of whom are American allies.

The dispute in the SCS is between China and several others over the control of the Spratly Islands. Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei have staked their claim over the islands.

“I have seen continued bullying of nations in the region. I have seen islands or rocks turned into man-made islands and militarised despite the conversations about those being for defensive purpose,” Admiral Aquilino said in response to a question on whether he has seen any reduction in China muscling in the region.

“They challenge and threaten all the nations in the region — our allies, partners and friends. But none of those capabilities have been removed from those islands. So I would say there has been no reduction, and only an increase in pressure from China across the region to achieve their objectives.” China has militarised some of the reefs, inviting criticism from the claimants and also from countries like the US which have been advocating freedom of navigation in the region.

“Their increased military built up threatens the nations and partners in the area...threatens an open and free Indo-Pacific and that’s why I say they haven’t decreased,” the US commander added.

He said India and the US will continue to work for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Replying to a question on the possibility of a Chinese aircraft carrier battle group operating in the Indian ocean, he said this also reflects Beijing’s intent that it wants to operate in a much broader area.

“I would expect to see continued deployments and I would expect to see a carrier deployment. None of that should surprise anyone,” he said.

On increasing footprints of the Chinese submarines in the Indian Ocean, he said this would only expand in coming years. Admiral Aquilino said the US and India have operated aircraft carrier for a long period of time and they are viewed positively.

On China developing anti-ship missiles and fifth-generation aircraft, he said the increased weaponisation is a threat to all “free and like-minded” nations.

“There is no doubt that those weapons are designed to continue to threaten the nations that they may have disputes with and it increases the fact that the area is contested and it will be continued to be contested,” he said.

India, the US and Japan have been participating in naval drill. Australia has shown interest in joining it. When asked whether Australia would be a part of it, he said it was on India to decide that. “If India were to determine that they would like to invite Australia or anyone else to Malabar we would be supportive of that but Malabar is India’s exercise,” he said. Replying to a question on joint patrolling in the South China Sea, he said the US Navy is always interested to execute joint patrols. “At any point when our ships are in the vicinity my hope is that can quickly integrate based on our interoperability so come together very quickly and operate anywhere, anytime our partners choose,” he said. On China building bases in the Indian Ocean, he said many have been categorised as economic initiatives but have “absolute military intent” which have resulted in “predatory economics” that ultimately challenges the nation’s sovereignty.

Asked whether the navies of India and the US are looking at multilateral mechanisms involving other partners, he said there was no such plan.

“But if that were proposed by my Indian counterparts I would welcome it and we would figure out how to go ahead and do it,” he said. The forces of India and the US are participating in a tri-services exercise next month.

<http://www.defencenews.in/article/%e2%80%98China-may-deploy-Aircraft-Carrier-in-Indian-ocean%e2%80%99-US-Navy-Commander-747698>

## **Expansionist China poses threat to countries in Indo-Pacific: US**

An aggressive and expansionist China poses a clear and present danger to other countries in the Indo-Pacific region, warned a top American military officer on Tuesday, even as he said the US would welcome any move by India to conduct joint naval patrolling or expand the Malabar combat exercise to include Australia as well.

“It is clear the Chinese Navy’s intent is to operate in a much broader area, which includes the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). I would expect to see a Chinese aircraft carrier deployment in the IOR with time. None of that should surprise anyone,” said visiting US Pacific Fleet commander Admiral John Christopher Aquilino, after meeting Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh and other top Indian defence officials here.

“The US and India both agree on a free, open and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. Admiral Singh and I discussed mechanisms and ways in which we can better integrate maritime operations to ensure the sea space is not prohibited by imaginary lines drawn (by someone like China),” he added.

Pointing to China’s rapid modernization of its war-fighting capabilities and “increased weaponization”, which range from long-range nuclear ballistic missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles to submarines and aircraft carriers, Admiral Aquilino said it was clearly a “threat to all free and like-minded nations” in the South China Sea (SCS) as well as the larger Indo-Pacific. “There is no doubt these weapons are designed to threaten nations that it may have disputes with,” he said.

India, of course, is also wary of China’s growing naval footprint in the IOR, which has witnessed regular forays by Chinese warships and submarines. China is now also looking to establish additional logistics facilities in the IOR after setting up its first overseas military base at Djibouti on the Horn of Africa in August 2017.

But India so far remains opposed to the any militarization of the “Quad” with the US, Japan and Australia, even though it agreed to upgrade it to the foreign minister-level, with the first meeting taking place in New York last month. Similarly, it has not agreed to include Australia in the tri-lateral Malabar wargames with the US and Japan.

Admiral Aquilino, on his part, said the US would be “supportive” if India decided to invite Australia or “any other like-minded nation” to the Malabar in the quest for ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. “Similarly, we are always interested in executing joint patrols with any of our partners,” he added.

In the SCS, the US remains strongly opposed to China’s ongoing land reclamation and muscle-flexing that has led to tensions with countries like Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and others.

“What I have seen is the continued bullying of nations by China in the region. I have seen rocks being turned into man-made islands in the SCS and their militarization, which challenges and threatens all the nations in the region,” said Admiral Aquilino.

<http://www.defencenews.in/article/Expansionist-China-poses-threat-to-countries-in-Indo-Pacific-US-747706>