

Tue, 23 July 2019

India's Nag ATGM ready for series production, says MoD

India's Ministry of Defence (MoD) announced on 19 July that the locally developed Nag (Snake) anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) is ready to enter series production after the Indian Army (IA) successfully completed summer user trials with the 'third-generation' fire-and-forget weapon.

"Completion of summer user trials will now pave the way for production and induction of the missile system into the army," said the MoD in a statement from the Indian government's Press Information Bureau (PIB), adding that New Delhi had already granted 'acceptance of necessity' in April 2018 to fast-track the procurement of the ATGM.

The trials were conducted between 7 and 18 July in firing ranges at Pokhran in the northwestern Indian state of Rajasthan, and included six "missions" that were conducted "under extreme temperature conditions", said the MoD. All of the tested missiles met the mission objectives, "including minimum range, maximum range, in direct attack as well as top attack modes, and achieved a direct hit onto the target", it added.

The MoD also released video footage showing that the tested missiles were launched from the tracked Nag Missile Carrier (NAMICA) vehicle, which is capable of carrying up to six Nag ATGMs.

Developed by the state-owned Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) the Nag ATGM, which also cleared winter user trials in February 2019, has been developed to engage "highly fortified enemy tanks in all weather conditions with day-and-night capabilities and with a minimum range of 500 metres and maximum range of four kilometres", according to the MoD.

The Nag missile system, which uses a locally developed, high-resolution imaging infrared seeker in 'lock-on-before-launch mode', has been under development since the 1980s by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) – part of the DRDO – to meet the operational requirements of the IA for both a vehicle- and a helicopter-launched anti-tank weapon system. BDL is expected to series-produce the Nag.

<https://janes.ih.com/Janes/Display/1881186>



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Back together after half a century

By P.A Narayani

Madurai: "I am so grateful to have studied under M. Maria Louis, who motivated me to achieve great heights," said A. Sivathanu Pillai, former Managing Director, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Chief of BrahMos Aerospace, as students from the 1969-batch of Thiagarajar College of Engineering got together after 50 years, here on Saturday.

Fifty students from the 1969 batch, who were accompanied by their spouses and children, had a rush of nostalgia when they met one another. They reminisced about their college days and shared the best times of their college life.

Mr. Sivathanu Pillai recalled that it was his participation as a student in the Indian Science Congress held in Madurai, which motivated him to join the Indian Space Research Organisation.

“As a student, I was thrilled when Vikram Sarabhai and Sir C.V. Raman congratulated me for the model that I exhibited,” he said.

It took more than six months for the team to trace down the address of the college mates. “Except for a very few batchmates in Madurai, all of us did not meet for the last 50 years. We are thrilled to meet our friends after so long a time,” said R. Venkatasamy, former Superintending Engineer of the State government, who is one of the organising members of the meet.

The batchmates said that they had to look at their name tags which carried photos of themselves during the college days to recognise one another. “Even though our physical appearances have changed, our friendship remains the same,” said N. Sivasubramanian, a veteran ISRO scientist.

Vish Visvabharathy, an illustrious alumnus of the college, came down to the city from Chicago for the meet. “I am here to recall our college days which acted as a springboard to achieve goals,” he said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Madurai/back-together-after-half-a-century/article28632322.ece>

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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Naravane next Vice-Chief of Army, may succeed Rawat

New Delhi: In top-level appointments in the Army, Eastern Command chief Lt-General Manoj Mukund Naravane has been named as the next vice chief of the 13-lakh strong force, in an indication that he is likely to succeed General Bipin Rawat when he retires on December 31.

The other top appointments include Lt-Gen Anil Chauhan as the new chief of the Eastern Command, while Lt-Gens A S Kler, I S Ghuman and R P Singh will head the South-Western, Central and Western Commands respectively.

But it's the posting of Lt-Gen Naravane, who will replace Lt-Gen Devraj Anbu on August 31, which has evoked the maximum interest. After Lt-Gen Naravane, the second in line for the Army chief's post is the present chief of Northern Command, Lt-Gen Ranbir Singh, who was the director-general of military operations during the “surgical strikes” against insurgent camps in Myanmar in June 2015 and terror launch pads in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir in September 2016.

“With Lt-Gen Naravane coming as the vice chief, it will now be highly unusual if Lt-Gen Ranbir Singh is appointed over him in the Army headquarters later this year. A superseded Lt-Gen can continue as the head of a command outside Delhi, but will find it difficult to serve under someone junior in the Army headquarters,” said a senior officer.

Last year, Lt-Gen Ranbir Singh was appointed the head of an operational command, the Northern Command, before Lt-Gen Naravane, who was then heading the Army Training Command. But Lt-Gen Naravane was later appointed as the Eastern Command chief in October 2018.

All calculations, of course, will go haywire if the government decides to create the long-pending post of a fourth four-star general, after the Army, Navy and IAF chiefs, in the shape of a permanent chairman of the chiefs of staff committee to handle tri-Service issues in planning, budgeting, procurements, training and logistics.

Though earlier governments almost always followed the seniority principle to anoint a new military chief, the NDA government first appointed Gen Rawat as the new Army chief in December 2016 by superseding two Lt-Generals (Praveen Bakshi and P M Hariz) senior to him. Then, earlier this year,