

DRDO missiles lock target



The BVRAAM missile being launched by a Su-30MKI.

TWO missiles indigenously designed and developed by the DRDO passed key performance parameters bringing the country close to self-sufficiency in two critical areas of air-to-air and anti-tank missiles.

Between September 16 and 19, the DRDO conducted five successful test firings of its Astra Beyond Visual Range air to air missile (BVRAAM) off the coast of Chandipur, Odisha to complete its user trial phase.

The trials of the missile, which has a range of over 100 km, conducted from an IAF Su-30MKI against Banshee target aircraft simulating possible scenarios, were successful and the missile carried out a direct hit on the target at maximum range.

An anti-tank missile was tested in Kurnool

Earlier, on September 11, the DRDO carried out a successful test firing of its unnamed Man-Portable Anti-tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. The missile was launched from a portable tripod launcher, hit a target mimicking a tank, destroying it with precision. The indigenous missile has been developed by the DRDO in partnership with Bharat Dynamics Ltd had a total weight of 14 kg. The missile will be ready for induction by next year.

Rajnath Singh is on a roll

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By Sandeep Unnithan

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh began his term with a visit to Siachen base camp quickly dispelling notions of him being a Union minister confined to South Block. This month, Singh is going the extra mile.

On September 19, Rajnath Singh visited Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) and donned a g-suit and Ray Ban aviators to ride in a Light Combat Aircraft Tejas. On September 28, he will visit Mumbai for his first interaction with the Mumbai-based Western Naval Command.

He will be present at the launch of the 'Nilgiri', leadship of the Project 17A class frigate at the Mazagon Docks Ltd, commission the second Scorpene class submarine Khanderi and inaugurate a gigantic dry dock capable of taking in the Navy's 44,500 tonne aircraft carrier the INS Vikramaditya, in the naval dockyard at Mumbai.

Singh then jets off to Goa where he will board the INS Vikramaditya for a 'day at sea' with the Western Fleet. On his return, he visits the Shore Based Test Facility, a mock aircraft carrier deck at the INS Hansa airbase, Dabolim, where the LCA's naval variant is being trialled.

Rajnath Singh was keen for his day at sea with the Western Fleet soon after he took over, but was advised against it because of rough seas during the monsoons.

A fresh round of tensions with Pakistan began in August when the fleet was forward deployed and still remains on high alert. Rajnath Singh is walking the government's defence indigenisation talk.

On September 17, he set a target for defence indigenisation drive - a \$26 billion indigenous defence industry by 2025 and to reduce imports. But the defence industry cannot prosper without firm orders from its only client, the ministry of defence (MoD).

PSU aircraft maker HAL is struggling for a Rs 45,000 crore lifeline - an order for 83 additional LCA Mark-1A fighter jets, advanced versions of the 18 LCA Mark-1s currently in service with the IAF. HAL too has experienced a trust deficit in recent years - its executives point out how Nirmala Sitharaman did not visit HAL in the 20 months that she was defence minister.

The contract was stuck over the past two years over pricing issues with the IAF. Both the Naval and Air Force variants of Tejas have struggled with technological issues but to meet the forces' expectations. But with the defence minister showing up in the cockpit, the contract looks set to go through.

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