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Centre fast-tracks `Make in India' infantry combat vehicle project

By Rajat Pandit

2,610 FICVs to Be Produced For Army At Cost Of Rs 60k Cr

INDIGENOUS PRODUCTION PANGS

A) Largest Arms Importer

- > India remains world's largest arms importer. 65% of requirements met from abroad due to poor domestic defence-industrial base
- > Overall defence budget (2016-17) is Rs 3.4 lakh crore. But only Rs 78,587 crore under capital head for modernisation
- > MoD says 94 capital procure-

B) Some Major Desi Projects

1 LIGHT UTILITY HELICOPTERS

- > Rs 6,680 crore project to manufacture 200 Kamov-226T choppers (1st 60 from Russia and rest in India over 9 years)
- > Inter-governmental agreement inked in December 2015
- > Shareholders agreement for JV between Hindustan Aeronautics & Russian Rostec State Corporation inked in Oct. Project yet to kick off
- > Armed forces urgently need 484 light choppers to replace obsolete Cheetah/Chetak fleets

2 CONVENTIONAL SUBMARINES


- > Rs 60,000 crore Project-75-India for construction of six stealth subs granted "acceptance of necessity" in Nov 2007
- > But tender yet to be issued. Defence/private shipyard & foreign collaborator not selected
- > Will take minimum 8 years for 1st submarine to roll out after contract inked
- > Navy has just 13 old diesel-electric subs. Six Scorpene subs being built at Mazagon Docks for Rs 23,652 crore will come in 2017-2021

3 MEDIUM TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

- > Case pending since 2011. MoD approved Tata-Airbus project in May 2015, under which first 16 C-295 planes to come from abroad, rest 40 to be made in the country in eight years
- > Project stuck. Field trials, technical approvals & commercial negotiations required before contract can be inked

4 FIGHTER PRODUCTION

- > MoD wants 2nd fighter production line in India after indigenous Tejas light combat aircraft
- > US has pushed its F/A-18s & F-16s. Sweden has proposed Gripen-E jets
- > Offers at discussion stage. Will take a long time for actual production to launch
- > IAF needs 42 fighter squadrons (each with 16-18 jets) but down to just 33. Will get 100 "improved" Tejas Mark-1A in 2020-2026




Tata-Airbus

But no major "Make in India" project yet to take off

ment contracts worth **Rs 82,980 crore** inked with Indian vendors in last **three fiscals**

> But **Rs 59,000 crore** deal for 36 French Rafale fighters in September has no Make in India component. MoD says 50% offsets will help domestic industry

₹ 11,929 crore project for manufacture of **56 planes** by Tata-Airbus consortium to replace IAF's aging Avro fleet



Tejas (LCA)

The Union defence ministry is finally fasttracking the long-pending mega `Make in India' project to produce at least 2,610 future infantry combat vehicles (FICVs) for the Army at an estimated cost of about Rs 60,000 crore. MoD sources said two of the five private contenders in the fray , apart from the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), "will soon be selected" to design and build prototypes for the FICVs.

The government will fund 80% of the development cost, which could be around Rs 3,000-4,000 crore. "The best prototype will then be selected for mass production. The ministry's integrated project management team (IPMT) is in the final stage of evaluating the EoI (expression of interest) responses submitted by the OFB and five private vendors," said a source.

The private contenders are L&T, Mahindra, Pipavav Defence & Offshore Engineering and two consortiums of Tata Motors-Bharat Forge and Tata Power SED-Titagarh Wagons.

Basically armoured personnel carriers designed to swiftly transport infantry soldiers into the battlefield behind tanks, the FICVs are meant to gradually replace the old Russian-origin BMP-II infantry combat vehicles in the Army . Though not as deadly and well-protected as main-battle tanks, the

amphibious troop carriers will have their own anti-tank missiles, cannons and machine guns.

The 1.3-million strong Army , incidentally , has 63 armoured regiments of T-90S, T-72 and Arjun tanks, backed by 44 Mechanised Infantry units with their BMPs, for swift multiple ground offensives into enemy territory .

But the FICV project has so far failed to take off due to glitches and controversies since it was first accorded “acceptance of necessity“ under the `Make (Hi-Tech)' category in October 2009.

The previous EoI, issued in May 2010, was cancelled by the MoD after major faults were found in the evaluation process in December 2012. The MoD hopes similar mistakes with the fresh EoI, which was issued in July last year, will not be repeated. But while the IPMT has sought repeated clarifications from the contenders, it has not visited and inspected their manufacturing facilities for an on-ground assessment till now. The EoI lays down the contenders will be assessed on four major counts: commercial, technical capability , availability of critical technologies and technical specifications of the FICVs they propose to build. The sheer size of the “lucrative“ FICV project has even seen some countries hard-sell their infantry combat vehicles to India.

The US, for instance, has showcased its Stryker armoured vehicles during the joint `Yudh Abhyas' exercises. But the government is pushing the `Make in India' project for the Army.



Mon, 12 Dec, 2016

U.S. arms technologies come closer

With Major Defence Partner status, India will be offered simplified licensing requirements

With U.S. designating India as a Major Defence Partner (MDP), licensing regulations to acquire sensitive military technologies, such as those that go into the F-16 and F-18 fighter jets, will be simplified.

An official said on Friday that the designation “institutionalises” the cooperation achieved so far between the two countries.

This is a unique designation conferred on India, outside the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) countries and U.S. treaty allies such as Australia and Japan.

Legal framework

Earlier this week, the U.S. Congress passed the National Defence Authorisation Act to enhance defence and security cooperation with India. Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and U.S. Defence Secretary Ashton Carter agreed on the provisions of the designation in New Delhi on Thursday. President Barack Obama has to sign the Bill into a law.

This comes at a time when India is considering proposals for a new fighter aircraft to be built under the “Make in India” initiative, in significant numbers, with technology transfer. U.S. aerospace majors Boeing and Lockheed have submitted proposals to build their F-18 and F-16 fighter jets. Saab of Sweden has done so for Gripen. “The MDP eases [the process of] licensing for military and dual-use items. It streamlines the process and reduces India’s licensing requirements,” another official said.

A senior official of the Pentagon, with experience in defence acquisition and technology, will be designated to expedite matters for India. However, the status will not help circumvent multilateral control regimes.

Officials said the designation was envisaged as a way to bring India on the same level as the U.S. treaty allies, in the absence of a formal treaty between the two countries. Officials have expressed confidence that the progress achieved under initiatives such as the Defence Technology Trade Initiative (DTTI) and the India Rapid Reaction Cell (IRRC) in the Pentagon would continue in the next U.S. administration as it is now enshrined in the U.S. law. India and the U.S. are expected to announce a major new project under the DTTI. An official said it would be announced by year-end.

Binding friendship

Major defence partner status for New Delhi marks the institutionalisation of India-US defence cooperation.

How times change. During the 1971 war for the liberation of Bangladesh, the US had cast its lot firmly against India, when it even chose to send its Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal to threaten India. Thirty-five years later, the same US want to have the same fleet to sail alongside Indian naval ships. If there was any doubt about the shift, one need not look further than the announcement last week, when visiting US defence secretary, Ash Carter and defence minister, Manohar Parrikar, announced the finalisation of the “Major Defense Partner” status bestowed upon India by the US. This follows the signing of the defence logistics agreement between the two countries earlier this year, and caps what have been two momentous years of defence partnership between India and the US.

Although it had been first mooted two years ago, the two sides were keen on formalising the “Major Defense Partner” status after the US presidential election results came in last month. The Obama administration and Modi government have displayed an unexpected level of bonhomie in the past 31 months – five president-prime minister meetings, three bilateral summits, 45 working groups, 100 new initiatives, and seven defence secretary-defence minister meetings. Carter is a known Indophile and his personal chemistry with Parrikar has put defence at the centre of India-US relations. With the incoming Trump administration being an unknown quantity, the Obama administration and New Delhi were concerned about these personalised initiatives being put on the back burner. They have now ensured that bilateral defence cooperation is institutionalised and enshrined in American law. The India amendment, as part of the 2017 American defence budget, has been passed by the US Senate and signed by President Obama.

“Major Defense Partner” is based on the concept of the US treating India as its closest ally and partner for the purpose of technology transfer. The two sides are looking for certain big defence development projects to take off, as it eases US licensing requirements for India, particularly from the US commerce department on dual-use items. New Delhi must realise that the new status does not provide a blanket exception nor circumvent multilateral export control regimes. In fact, the status hopes that India will become part of all the four export control regimes at the earliest. While the US side has clarified its position to the US Senate and the Congress, the Indian side has not made any of the details public. With Parliament in session, a statement from the defence minister, clarifying the status will be in order to place things in context.

THE ASIAN AGE

Wrap-up: Blast from the past


Ex-IAF chief Tyagi arrested in AgustaWestland case.

In a sudden and first of its kind action, the CBI on Friday arrested former Air Force Chief S.P. Tyagi, his cousin Sanjeev, and a lawyer in the sensational Rs 450 crore bribery case in the procurement of 12 VVIP helicopters from UK-based AgustaWestland during the UPA-II government. More about it:

What is Tyagi accused of

The CBI alleged that in 2005, Tyagi had agreed to change the long-held stand of the Indian Air Force that minimum operational ceiling of the VVIP helicopters should be 6,000 metres. Tyagi allegedly influenced the decision to reduce it to 4,500 metres which brought AgustaWestland into the running for the deal when its choppers were not even qualified for submission of bids,

THE CASE IN NUTSHELL



A DELHI COURT HAS SENT FORMER AIR FORCE CHIEF S.P. TYAGI TO POLICE CUSTODY FOR FOUR DAYS. HERE IS A QUICK RECAP OF THE SCAM:

- ₹3,600cr** The worth of the AgustaWestland VVIP choppers deal
- ₹4,50cr** The amount allegedly paid as bribe
- 12** The number of AW-101 VVIP choppers IAF was to procure

WHO ALL HAVE BEEN ARRESTED SO FAR?
S.P. Tyagi,
 His cousin **Sanjiv alias Julie Tyagi**
 Lawyer **Gautam Khaitan**

TIMELINE

- 2005** : The year when the deal took place
- 2007** : The year when S P Tyagi retired as IAF chief
- 2014** : The year when India had scrapped the contract with Finmeccanica's British subsidiary AgustaWestland

What is Tyagi's refrain?

Air Chief Marshal Tyagi had said the change of specification, was a collective decision in which senior officers of Indian Air Force, SPG and other departments were involved.

What is CBI's argument

The CBI had claimed that Chandigarh-based lawyer Gautam Khaitan, accepted having taken money from European middlemen Guido Haschke and Carlo Gerosa but insisted it was not kickbacks to influence the deal.

Tyagi, 71, who retired in 2007, was called for questioning at the CBI Headquarters along with his cousin and lawyer Gautam Khaitan, who were taken into custody after nearly four hours of grilling.

First of its kind arrest

These are the first arrests in the case by the CBI which came three years after it registered an FIR in 2013 to probe the allegations in the aftermath of the details of the scam emerging in Italy where the prosecutors levelled allegations of corruption in the deal against the chief of Finmeccanica, the parent company of AgustaWestland.

The fallout of the scam

On January 1, 2014, India scrapped the contract with Finmeccanica's British subsidiary AgustaWestland for supplying 12 AW-101 VVIP choppers to the IAF over alleged breach of contractual obligations and an Italian court mentioned about payment of kickbacks of Rs 450 crore by it for securing the deal.

First conviction in italian court

On April 7, an Italian court had convicted two top executives of defence major Finmeccanica (AgustaWestland is its subsidiary) for paying kickbacks in the deal.

Current status of the deal

India received three of the helicopters and stopped delivery of the remaining nine. Defense ministry said the agreement was terminated because an integrity pact was breached by AW.

Politics continues

Attacking the Congress over the scam, BJP asked its vice-president Rahul Gandhi to disclose as to which politician in the UPA government received bribe in the controversial deal. "It has been established that commission was paid in the deal. Rahul Gandhi speaks on all matters under the sun. He should now make it clear who in the UPA government received the bribe," BJP national secretary Shrikant Sharma said.

भारत और इस्राइल अब अंतरिक्ष क्षेत्र में बनाएंगे रिश्ते

नयी दिल्ली, (भाषा) : शत्रुतापूर्ण पड़ोस के माहौल में रहकर बड़ी-बड़ी समस्याओं से उबर चुके भारत और इस्राइल अब आतंकवाद के प्रकोप से निपटने के लिए और अंतरिक्ष क्षेत्र के असैन्य अनुप्रयोगों के लिए अंतरिक्ष संबंधी प्रौद्योगिकी के संयुक्त अन्वेषण के लिए आपस में हाथ मिला रहे हैं।

इस्राइल और भारत दोनों ही अंतरिक्ष प्रौद्योगिकी के क्षेत्र में काफी मजबूत हैं। दोनों ने ही अपनी सीमाओं को अपने पड़ोसियों से सुरक्षित बनाने के लिए बड़ी रकम खर्च की है।

इस्राइल स्पेस एजेंसी :आईएसए: और भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (इसरो) के प्रमुखों ने इस उच्च प्रौद्योगिकी क्षेत्र में सहयोग का खाका तैयार करने के लिए इस सप्ताह बेंगलूरु में मुलाकात की। यदि सब चीजें योजना के अनुरूप चलती हैं तो वर्ष 2017 की शुरुआत में श्रीहरिकोटा से दो इस्राइली नैनो-सेटेलाइट प्रक्षेपित किए जाएंगे।

आईएसए के महानिदेशक एवी ब्लासबर्जर ने इस बात की पुष्टि की कि जिन प्रमुख क्षेत्रों में सहयोग की संभावनाएं तलाशी जा रही हैं, उनमें से एक क्षेत्र 'सूक्ष्म तरंगों की मदद से रिमोट सेंसिंग' का है।

निश्चित तौर पर यह एक ऐसी प्रौद्योगिकी है, जिसमें रडारसैट नामक कुछ 'विशेष पक्षी' (उपग्रह) तैनात किए जाते हैं। इनमें दिन और रात के समय के निरीक्षण की क्षमता तो है ही, साथ ही साथ ये बादलों से घिरे आसमानों को भी भेदकर देख सकते हैं। इससे दुश्मनों का छिपना मुश्किल हो जाएगा।

आम तौर पर इस परिष्कृत प्रौद्योगिकी को अकसर 'जासूसी उपग्रह' कहा जाता है क्योंकि ये किसी भी मौसम में हर पल दुश्मन पर नजर रखते हैं। यह बात किसी से छिपी नहीं है कि प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और उनके इस्राइली समकक्ष बेंजामिन नेतन्याहू के साझा प्रशंसक हैं और दोनों ही एक-दूसरे की शासन शैली का सम्मान करते हैं।

ब्लासबर्जर ने कहा कि "दोनों देशों के बीच माहौल बहुत अच्छा है और संयुक्त परियोजनाओं एवं संयुक्त अंतरिक्ष अभियानों के लिए बड़ी संभावना हो सकती है।"

इस्राइल के पास कुछ उत्कृष्ट रडार इमेजिंग प्रौद्योगिकी है और वर्ष 2008 में भारत ने इस्राइल की ओर से टेकएसएआर नामक उपग्रह प्रक्षेपित किया था। 295 किलोग्राम वजन वाले उपग्रह को श्रीहरिकोटा से भारत के ध्रुवीय उपग्रह प्रक्षेपण यान :पीएसएलवी: की मदद से सफलतापूर्वक प्रक्षेपित किया गया था।

इस्राइल के पास ऐसा कोई स्वदेशी रॉकेट नहीं था, जो इस तरह के उपग्रह को प्रक्षेपित कर सकता। ऐसे में भारत का पूर्वोन्मुख रॉकेट पोर्ट इसके उड़ानपथ के उपयुक्त था।

खबरों की मानें तो, इस उपग्रह ने इस्राइल को उसके शत्रु पड़ोसियों की सैन्य क्षमताओं का पता लगाने में मदद की। इसे अपनी तरह के सबसे आधुनिक उपग्रहों में से एक माना जाता था।

बाद में भारत ने भी इस्राइल से ऐसा ही एक उपग्रह खरीदा था और इसे आरआईसैट-2 नाम दिया था। वर्ष 2009 में, इस 300 किलोग्राम के उपग्रह को पीएसएलवी की मदद से अंतरिक्ष में प्रक्षेपित किया गया था। बताया जाता है कि यह 10 सेमी जितनी छोटी वस्तुओं का भी पता लगा सकता है।

भारत 400 किलोमीटर की ऊंचाई पर स्थित कक्षा में मौजूद इस उपग्रह का इस्तेमाल सीमापार पाकिस्तान में बने शिविरों में चल रही गतिविधियों पर नजर रखने के लिए करता है ताकि आतंकियों की घुसपैठ की कोशिशों को नाकाम किया जा सके। विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि आरआईसैट-2 से मिली तस्वीरों ने भारत को इस साल नियंत्रण रेखा पर 'सर्जिकल हमले' करने में काफी मदद की। इस अभियान के जरिए भारतीय सेना ने पाक अधिकृत कश्मीर में बने कई आतंकी ठिकाने नष्ट कर दिए थे। दोनों देशों ने निश्चित तौर पर इन विशेष सूक्ष्मतरंगी छायांकन उपग्रहों की मदद से अपनी सीमाएं सुरक्षित कर ली हैं।

ब्लासबर्जर ने पहली बार यह पुष्टि की है कि भारत द्वारा इस्राइली उपग्रह 'टेकएसएआर' प्रक्षेपित किए जाने में और उसका समरूप आरआईसैट-2 खरीदे जाने में "दोनों देशों की अंतरिक्ष एजेंसियां सीधे तौर पर शामिल नहीं थीं।" ब्लासबर्जर ने कहा कि आईएसए और इसरो दोनों ही असैन्य कार्यक्रमों को बढ़ावा देने वाले क्षेत्र में काम करती हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि यदि भारत अनुरोध करता है तो "इस्राइल को आरआईसैट-2 की तरह के और अधिक टोही उपग्रह उसे :भारत को: देकर खुशी होगी।" लेकिन सबसे अहम यह है कि दोनों देशों ने अब एक विशेष कार्य समूह का गठन किया है, जो यह अन्वेषण कर सकता है कि 'सूक्ष्मतरंगीय छायांकन' किस तरह से दोनों देशों के लिए मददगार साबित हो सकता है और इसे कैसे बढ़ाया जा सकता है। भारत ने अब अपना विशेष रडार इमेजिंग उपग्रह आरआईसैट-1 विकसित करके प्रक्षेपित किया है। इस बात पर गौर किया जाना चाहिए कि रडार उपग्रह बाढ़ और कृषि संबंधी गतिविधियों का पता लगाने में बेहद मददगार हैं। ब्लासबर्जर ने कहा, "इस्राइल के पास सटीकता वाले कैमरे बनाने और अंतरिक्षीय उपकरणों के आकार को निम्नतम करने की विशेष क्षमताएं हैं।" वहीं दूसरी ओर उन्हें लगता है कि भारत के पास उच्च स्तर पर विकसित रॉकेट हैं, जो भारी उपग्रहों को अंतरिक्ष में स्थापित कर सकते हैं। आधुनिक अंतरिक्ष प्रौद्योगिकी वाले इन देशों की ये 'पूरक क्षमताएं' दोनों देशों के लिए लाभदायक हो सकती हैं।

दोनों अंतरिक्ष एजेंसियों के प्रमुख ऐसे संयुक्त दल बनाने पर भी सहमत हुए, जो अंतरिक्ष क्षेत्र में संभावनाएं तलाशने वाले इन दोनों देशों के बीच 'इलेक्ट्रिकल प्रणोदन, रिमोट सेंसिंग और संचार' जैसे प्रमुख क्षेत्रों में एक सेतु बना सकते हैं। वेंगलूरु में इसरो की कुछ इकाइयों का दौरा करने वाले ब्लासबर्जर का मानना है कि "एकसाथ मिलकर काम करने से भविष्य में और अधिक काम होगा।" ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि धरती पर शत्रुतापूर्ण पड़ोसियों से घिरे होने के कारण भारत और इस्राइल अपने भविष्य को सुरक्षित करने के लिए अंतरिक्ष में हाथ मिलाने के लिए मजबूर हो रहे हैं।