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Prospina trials to be held at Jaisalmer firing range

Jodhpur: Prospina missile earlier known as Nag is all set for trials at the Chandan Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer. While the much delayed the Gen-3 Fire and Forget Anti-Tank Guided Missile had successful night trials at a range of four km earlier last year, the infra-red seekers had a problem in differentiating the target from the surroundings in hot desert conditions during the day time.

As per the official sources, the missile is now being tested for a reduced range of 3-3.2km during the day time from the earlier target of 4km for both day and night.

Officials shared that the trials for this much awaited missile shall be conducted in the second week of June for testing the performance of Prospina with improved Imaging Infra Red Seekers (which guide the missile to its target after launch) for extreme hot weather in June.

Nag a baby of Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) of DRDO was earlier a part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme of the DRDO launched in 1980s.

Success evaded DRDO for a long time in case of Project Nag, now renamed and launched as Prospina taking this missile out of the cluster of missiles under Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme of (IGMDP) of India. A couple of months after the past user trials failed, the government had to give its nod for procuring second generation 10,000 Russian Konkurs-M, Anti Tank Guided Missiles for Indian Army's infantry formations.

Prospina successfully hit the target four kilometers away during a night trial at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Bikaner last year validating the enhanced range of its Imaging Infra Red seeker.

However, subsequently the DRDO officials revealed that the missile would now be tested and handed over to Army with a reduced range of 3.2 km or so especially during the peak day hours in the first phase.

The missile saw roadblocks since its earlier Imaging Infra Red Seekers were not able to differentiate between the target and surroundings in hot desert temperatures with both reaching the same temperature.

Highly sensitive detectors have been placed on missile tip for sensing heat or infra red signals in three different thermal scenarios including that of a thermal differential within the target, between the target and the background and surrounding temperature variation.

Prospina shall be mounted and transported on a Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicle. Grand plans as per the officials are underway to confer this all weather missile with an unmatched competence of detecting and hitting the targets with a very Low Thermal Contrast vis a vis surroundings to the tune of a mere 0.2 degree Celsius.

This job of developing High Resolution Imaging Infra Red seekers as per the demand projected by the Indian Army was entrusted to Research Centre Imarat (RCI), a Hyderabad based DRDO lab.

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Trial of indigenous assault rifle to begin from June 12

By Chethan Kumar

Bengaluru: The Army is set to begin on June 12 the first round of user trials of the indigenously developed 'shoot-to-kill' assault rifles, developed to replace the ageing and glitch-prone INSAS, even as it is on the lookout for other options globally.

The search for an assault rifle began in 2010 and continues till date despite firms like Colt and Sig Sauer from the US, Israel's IWI, Italian Beretta and Ceska from the Czech Republic making offers in response to two tenders floated in the years that followed.

The new indigenous rifle (7.62mm x 51mm) has been developed in six months at the Rifle Factory Ishapore (RFI), West Bengal, in association with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and is in line with the Army's staff quality requirements (SQRs).

"Until about a year-and-a-half ago, the Army wanted a 5.56mm category of rifles, the same class as the INSAS. However, with changing threat perceptions and increasing terrorism and other factors, the doctrine has changed and they now require a 'shoot-to-kill' weapon, something that can kill and not just incapacitate enemies as earlier," Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) chairman SC Bajpai told TOI . "We have already completed internal tests and have invited the PMT (Project Management Team) for user trials."

Bajpai said former defence minister Manohar Parrikar had, in September 2016, set a challenge for developing a rifle that can meet the new requirements within six months. "...Work on the drawing board began in October and we had 10 rifles ready by May. Now their PMT (project management team) will come on June 12," he said. The 4kg rifle - lighter than the 4.15-kg INSAS - has all the capabilities the Army had specified in its 'Request for Information' issued to potential global suppliers.