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Make In India: Defence Production Put in the Fast Lane

By Anupama Airy

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is spearheading a process that will put in place a new system to push defence manufacturing under the 'Make in India' initiative of the government. Faster approvals on issuance of industrial licences needed to start production, as also cutting short bureaucratic delays are in the works, senior Defence Ministry officials said. Elaborating on this, officials said that licences would be considered as "deemed approved" if security clearance from the Home Ministry is not received in a "reasonable" amount of time. This move follows a recent meeting between Sitharaman and representatives from the Indian defence industry, where concerns were raised over long-pending requests for security clearances to set up small and medium level defence related manufacturing projects. A proposal is being contemplated under which if a licence remains pending for two months, or any decided period after its due date for approval has passed, will be considered as "deemed approved" in certain cases. Details of the modus operandi of this new mechanism will be announced soon, officials said.

Alongside, another measure being undertaken by the Defence Ministry to push defence manufacturing is to draw up a master list of defence technologies developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) that can be commercialised by sharing it with government or private sector companies for manufacturing and exports.

"Some of the technologies developed by DRDO have already been given to private sector and equipment are being manufactured and also exported. We will work with DRDO to make a list of items which can be commercialised," the official said.

The Defence Ministry will also discuss tax concessions with the Finance Ministry for domestic manufacturers as in the case of foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers, officials said. India has been looking at expanding its defence manufacturing base under the Make in India programme, and small and medium scale industries have been identified as a special component under it.

As already reported first, Sitharaman in her first interaction with the private defence companies on Saturday had assured that a decision on the three big-ticket Make in India projects – the Futuristic Infantry Combat Vehicle (FICV), Tactical Communication System (TCS) and Battlefield Management System (BMS) will be taken up by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in the next two months (by 31 December 2017). The three programmes have been stuck for many months for placement of development contracts. A timely decision on these programmes is a major milestone in India's quest for self-reliance in defence and is seen as a significant step in setting up a contemporary defence industrial base in the country.

Delays spanning over seven years in initiating this programme has been a major concern amongst a large section of the Indian industry as also many global technology providers who have forged partnerships and entered into MoUs for developing or providing critical technologies for this programme.

Therefore, the foremost suggestion from the Indian industry to boost the sector was to compress the procurement decision timelines in order to align or even better the stipulated timelines. Even for Make in India II projects, the Defence Minister has asked the industry to draw up a list of 10-12 projects, which will then be looked into by a committee of MoD to be constituted. Getting Make in India programmes under way is a sure way to indigenisation and for kicking off a series of design and development programmes. In spite of great intentions, since 2010, expressions of interest have been issued only for three programmes (TCS, BMS and FICV); and as on date progress on development phase orders is yet to happen. As many as 25 Indian and foreign defence companies including Larsen and Toubro, Bharat Forge, Mahindra and Mahindra, Adani, Tata

Motors, Ashok Leyland, Dynamatic Technologies Ltd and others, besides Boeing, Airbus, BAE, Rolls Royce attended the Saturday meeting with Sitharaman.



Tue, 31 Nov, 2017
(Online)

Rank-parity back on MoD table, 'in detail'

In an important development, the matter of the rank-parity is being looked into in 'great detail' by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), including the vital letter sent by the Prime Minister's Office in December 2008. The letter mentioned setting up a high-powered committee to sort out parity issues.

Top sources have confirmed that 'no false equivalence' will be allowed. The rank-parity issue was highlighted by The Tribune in a three-part series recently.

A three-member committee headed by an Additional Secretary-rank officer had been tasked to study rank-equivalence norms between the armed forces and the civilians employed in the Armed Forces Headquarters, called the AFHQ cadre.

The forces had lodged a serious protest, questioning the veracity of claims in the report and the documents relied upon. Sources said the MoD was looking into all angles of the rank-parity issue. Discussions are happening in the ministry and in no situation will the ministry stand to benefit or side with any one of the two sides — the forces and the AFHQ cadre of civilians. "The idea is not to benefit one side at the cost of the other, whichever that is," sources said.

Meanwhile, the MoD, in a bid to promote domestic defence manufacturing, is mulling on formulating a method under which obtaining security clearance from the Home Ministry, if delayed, will be "deemed to be approved". After a recent meeting between Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and representatives from the industry, the defence ministry is now discussing measures to help private sector industries get a final clearance, in case their request has been pending for a long time.

The MoD has also asked the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to prepare a list of defence technologies it has developed and has not been given to any government or private sector for manufacturing. "Some technologies have already been given to private sector. We will work with DRDO to make a list of items which can be commercialised," said a source.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

Navy to get 111 sub-hunting copters

By Ajay Banerjee

Rs 21,78-crore project

- *Of the 111 copters, termed the Naval Utility Helicopters, 16 will be taken in a flyaway condition and remaining 96 will be built under the 'Make in India' initiative*
- *A Rs 21,738-crore project has been cleared under the strategic partnership model, meaning the foreign firm bidding for the contract will have an Indian firm as its partner*

In a significant move aimed at stopping a free-run of Chinese submarines in the Indian Ocean, the Defence Acquisition Council, the top decision-making body of the Ministry of Defence, today okayed the acquisition of 111 submarine-hunting helicopters for the Navy.

These copters will be equipped with specialised radars, sensors and torpedoes to track and hunt submarines. In naval parlance, it's called anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities. Such a helicopter carries sea-dunking sonars for detecting a submarine and is considered potent to hit underwater submarines. The over-flying copter itself cannot be targeted by a submarine.

The Rs 21,738-crore project was cleared under the strategic partnership model, meaning the foreign company bidding for the contract will have an Indian company as its partner. The DAC today accorded what is technically termed as an "acceptance of necessity".

Of the 111 copters, termed the Naval Utility Helicopters (NUH), 16 will be taken in a flyaway condition and remaining 96 will be built under the "Make in India" initiative.

The Navy, in its global request for information (RFI)—seen as first step towards procuring the equipment—made it clear that it wants copters with lightweight anti-submarine torpedo along with radar and sensor package required for target detection of submarines. These copters will be based on decks of sea-going ships and will be capable of carrying out routine operations like search and rescue, medical evacuation, communication.

Currently, the Navy uses the Sea King Mk42B and the Kamov-28 copters in an ASW role. Both are of the 1980s vintage design and are now being upgraded. There are about 20 such copters.

Marine helicopters are rugged-ized versions of helicopters used by land or air forces. Sea salinity necessitates a different paint coating while equipment, avionics and radars are totally different.

In June this year, the US Department of Defence had, in its report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2017", said: "These submarine patrols demonstrate the PLAN's emerging capability both to protect China's SLOCs (sea lanes of communication) and to increase China's power projection into the Indian Ocean." China has been expanding its access to logistics in the Indian Ocean.

Two months ago, Beijing opened a military base in Djibouti on the North-Eastern coast of Africa and is slated to establish additional hubs over the next decade.

Last year, China signed a pact with Pakistan for the sale of eight submarines. The first four will be built in China, with the remaining four in Pakistan. Eleven Indian private sector companies, including Tata, Adani, Bharat Forge, have proposed to form joint ventures with foreign companies like Airbus, Bell Helicopters.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

Indigenous test rig for aircraft head-up display units developed

By Vijay Mohan

How it helps

- *Head-up display is an electro-optical device fixed on top of the cockpit's instrument panel that superimposes vital flight parameters on the pilot's vision of the outside world*
- *It gives him requisite information such as air speed, altitude, weapon status, rate of turn and angle of attack and without having him to peer down inside the cockpit, enabling him to fly with his 'head up'*

An indigenous test rig for head-up display (HUD) units of aircraft has been developed by the Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIO) here that will replace imported equipment in use at present, thereby leading to significant cost saving.

The test rig will be produced commercially by the public sector undertaking Bharat Electronics Limited that is already manufacturing HUDs for various fighter and training aircraft in Indian inventory.

All IAF and Navy fighters and advanced trainers as well as the C-17 transport aircraft are equipped with HUDs. A project to develop a HUD system for helicopters is also on the drawing boards.

The test rig is part of an end-to-end solution that will help in evaluating different functionalities of HUDs and similar systems at the intermediate and operator level at airbases as well as at depot level, maintenance level and at manufacturing agencies. According to CSIO scientists, the rig is an important import substitute which will help in reducing the overall time taken as well as the costs incurred to test new HUDs.

Besides being an exhaustive testing and evaluation platform for HUDs and identifying faults up to the component level, the test rig can also be used for testing and calibrating other equipment such as gun sights, bore sighting tools for laser ranger and marked target seekers.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

In A First, Army to Build Foot Overbridges at Mumbai Stations

Mumbai: Just over a month after a stampede at the Elphinstone Road station killed 23 people, the BJP-led government enlisted the Indian Army's help to build a foot overbridge (FOB) at the location.

Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman, railways minister Piyush Goyal and Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis visited the station on Tuesday morning before announcing that the army would also build FOBs at Currey Road and Ambivli stations. The prefabricated structures will be built within three months to ease pressure on commuters.

This is the first time the defence ministry will help with civil work in the city. The bridges will be a temporary solution paid for by the railways, even as it undertakes widening and other upgradation work in the area. The Opposition, however, attacked the government over the decision.

Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh took to Twitter to say the army was being summoned to build an FOB in Mumbai, one of the biggest cities, when the country was facing threats from both China and Pakistan. Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's son Aaditya said, "I won't comment on whether army should or not do this work. But Elphinstone FOB is with railways. BMC has never been asked by Railways to do it." The Central Railways, in a series of tweets, defended the move, pointing to other examples of army assistance for civil work.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

Three-Day Meet of Top Cops in Dec to Discuss Cyber Terrorism

Cyber terrorism and the impact of social media on the society will be discussed in detail by top police officers at a three-day conference that will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in early December.

Police officers of the rank of DGP and IGP from all states and central police organisations will deliberate on cyber terrorism, the impact of social media on the society, cross border terrorism, radicalisation of youths

besides a host of other issues during the meet to be held at the BSF academy in Tekanpur, Madhya Pradesh, from December 1-3.

While the prime minister is expected to speak on new-age crime like cyber terrorism and radicalisation of youths, Home Minister Rajnath Singh will give an assessment on the internal security situation and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval will talk about cross border terrorism, a home ministry official said.

About 250 senior police officers are expected to attend the conclave which will discuss issues such as the security situation in the major combat theatres of Jammu & Kashmir, Left Wing Extremism (LWE) and the Northeast.

Issues of curbing black money and narcotics in the wake of demonetisation were also expected to be on the agenda, the official said.

The implementation and activation of decisions taken during the last few conferences will also be reviewed during the meeting.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

In a 1st, Indian team heads for Israel for combat drill

India on Tuesday dispatched a C-130J 'Super Hercules' aircraft, along with a 45-member contingent, including Garud commandos, to Israel to take part in the topnotch multilateral 'Blue Flag-17' exercise from November 2 to 16.

This is the first time India has sent a contingent to participate in a military exercise in Israel. The exercise will also include other countries like the US, France, Germany, Italy, Greece and Poland.

"Blue Flag is a biannual multilateral exercise which aims to strengthen military cooperation among the participating nations. The exercise, being held at Uvda Air Force Base, will provide a platform for sharing of knowledge, combat experience and in improving operational capability of the participating nations," an officer said.

"This is the first time the Indian Air Force is operating with the Israeli Air Force in a multilateral exercise setting," he added.

Top Israeli army officer visits J&K

Israel's Chief of Ground Forces Command, Major General Yacov (Kobi) Barak met the Indian Army's Northern Command Lieutenant General D Anbu in Udhampur district on Tuesday. This is the first time a top Israeli commander has visited the Northern Command. "The visiting dignitary called on Lt Gen D Anbu... the delegation expressed full satisfaction in further pursuing enhanced cooperation between both countries," an Army spokesperson said.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

China tests spy drones in 'death zone'

China has successfully tested high-altitude bat-sized spy drones that could help it dominate "near space" and use it for military intelligence purposes, a media report said today. Near space, which begins at 20 km above sea level, has until now been regarded a "death zone" for drones due to thin air and extremely low

temperature. At this altitude, thin air makes it hard to generate lift for a drone while low temperature means electronic components like batteries are prone to fail.

A new type of indigenously built drone that is undergoing testing appears to have overcome such difficulties, marking a step towards China's aim of exploiting near space. — PTI



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

Pak trying to acquire helicopters from US

Islamabad: Pakistan is trying to acquire an unspecified number of helicopters from the US for antinarcotics operations after returning nine Huey II helicopters it had acquired in 2002, a newspaper reported.

Islamabad returned five of the nine helicopters, which it received almost 15 years ago for operations in Balochistan and the tribal areas, on Monday. The interior ministry, which was using the aircraft, returned four helicopters on October 15, the Dawn newspaper quoted diplomatic sources as saying.

Pakistan received a total of 12 aircraft – the nine helicopters and three fixed-wing Cessna airplanes – from the US for the antinarcotics operations under a renewable agreement. After the expiry of the agreement, Pakistan had the option to return the aircraft or buy them.

Though the US urged Pakistan to “nationalise” the helicopters after the agreement expired, the interior ministry decided to return them. The ministry, however, purchased the three Cessna airplanes, the report said.

The US has made “redirection” arrangements – for selling the helicopters to a third party – and Pakistan cannot buy them. Instead, Pakistan will have to negotiate a fresh deal. The area covered by the anti-narcotics operations is also used by militants for carrying out operations along the Afghanistan border.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

Supreme leader limiting ballistic missile range'

Iran's supreme leader has restricted the range of ballistic missiles manufactured in the country to 2,000 kilometres, the head of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard said today, which limits their reach to only regional Mideast targets. The comments by General Mohammad Ali Jafari to reporters mark the first acknowledgement that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has imposed limits on the country's ballistic missile programme. It also appears to be an effort by Iranian authorities to contrast its program, which they often describe as for defensive purposes, against those of countries like North Korea, which now uses its arsenal to threaten the United States.

The range of 2,000 kilometres, or 1,240 miles, encompasses much of the Middle East, including Israel and American military bases in the region. That's caused concern for the U.S. and its allies, even as Iran's ballistic missile program was not included as part of the 2015 nuclear deal that Tehran struck with world powers. Speaking on the sidelines of a conference in Tehran, Jafari told journalists that the capability of Iran's ballistic missiles is “enough for now.” The Guard runs Iran's missile programme. “Today, the range of our missiles, as the policies of the Iran's supreme leader dictate, are limited to 2,000 kilometres, even though we are capable of increasing this range,” he said.

“Americans, their forces and their interests are situated within a 2,000-kilometre radius around us and we are able to respond to any possible desperate attack by them.” However, Jafari said he didn't believe there would be any war between Iran and the US. “They know that if they begin a war between Iran and the United

States, they will definitely be the main losers and their victory will by no means be guaranteed,” he said. “Therefore, they won't start a war.”



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

Russia fires cruise missiles on IS targets

A Russian submarine launched three Kalibr cruise missiles from the Mediterranean Sea at facilities of the Islamic State terrorist group in the eastern Syrian province of Deir el-Zour, the Russian Defence Ministry said Tuesday. The missiles destroyed command posts, a fortified area with a number of militants and armoured vehicles, as well as a large arsenal of weapons and ammunition of the IS near the settlement of Abu Kamal, a ministry statement said, Xinhua reported.

The destruction of all the targets was confirmed by objective control data, it said. In the last two months, the Veliky Novgorod submarine has conducted four launches with high-precision Kalibr cruise missiles against the terrorists from 350 to 700 km range, the ministry said.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

Talks with China to help normalise ties: Seoul

South Korea and China will push to normalise their ties badly strained over the deployment of a contentious US missile defence system in the South, both countries announced today, with Seoul saying their leaders are set to hold summit talks next week. South Korea allowed the United States to install the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence system on its soil this year, triggering angry rhetoric and economic retaliation from China which views THAAD's powerful radar as a threat to its own security.

South Korea and the United States have repeatedly said the system is only aimed at defending against North Korea's advancing nuclear threats, rather than peering into Chinese territory. Today, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said there was recently diplomatic communication between the two countries, during which they agreed to put bilateral exchange and cooperation back on a normal track soon and boost cooperation for a peaceful, diplomatic resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

The ministry statement said Beijing reaffirmed its opposition to THAAD and asked South Korea to handle “relevant issues appropriately” while South Korea reiterated the system doesn't target China. It said military officials of the two countries will discuss Chinese worries about the THAAD system. Seoul's presidential office announced separately that President Moon Jae-in and Chinese President Xi Jinping will hold summit talks next week on the sidelines of an annual regional forum in Vietnam. It would be their second one-on-one meeting since Moon's inauguration in May. China's Foreign Ministry in its own statement did not mention a summit. In that statement, Beijing repeated its objection to the anti-missile system but it indicated an interest in improving ties. It said both sides attached great importance to their relationship and were willing to push forward on developing a cooperative partnership.

Lu Chao, a Korea expert at Liaoning Social Sciences Academy, said the Xi-Moon summit could set the stage for more hi-level talks, including by military officials. Today's announcements by the two countries came after Xi consolidated his already considerable power at a twice-a-decade Communist Party congress that concluded last week. Efforts have been recently made to improve ties, with neither country expected to gain

much from a protracted standoff over the THAAD issue. Many analysts say China appeared to use its THAAD opposition to bolster its regional clout but that such a stance could push South Korea closer to the US and Japan for a potential anti-Beijing trilateral alliance.



Wed, 01 Nov, 2017

'200 died in N Korea's N-site tunnel collapse'

More than 200 people are feared to have died when a tunnel caved in at North Korea's nuclear test site after its latest detonation, a Japanese news report said on Tuesday . A tunnel collapsed at Punggye-ri in early September, days after North Korea conducted its sixth and largest underground nuclear test on September 3, TV Asahi said, quoting unnamed North Korean sources.

Some 100 workers were involved in an initial collapse. Another cave-in occurred during rescue operations, leaving at least 200 people feared dead in total, the Japanese broadcaster said. The accident was triggered by the test, TV Asahi added.

Experts have warned that the underground tests could cause the mountain to collapse and leak radiation into the atmosphere near China's border. The latest test -the sixth at the site since 2006 -triggered landslides in the detonation area and beyond, according to satellite pictures taken the day after. Japan assessed the yield from the test of what the North said was a hydrogen bomb at 120 kilotons.

It is very unusual for North Korea to acknowledge any major accident, especially anything that involves its nuclear programme.