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रक्षा विज्ञान पुस्तकालय
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Reliance Defence issues clarification about Rafale deal

The editorial had stated that Reliance Defence's "track record in the field was too new to inspire confidence".

New Delhi: In response to the editorial "Rafale deal: Govt has questions to answer" published in this newspaper on November 25, Reliance Defence has sought to suggest that it does possess expertise in the area of producing for the defence forces. In a clarification, the company noted that in 2011, Reliance Naval and Engineering Ltd, based in Pipavav, Gujarat, was awarded a contract for five Indian Navy warships through a competitive process and that last year it had also won a contract for 14 Fast Patrol Vessels and Training Ships through competitive bidding.

It also said Reliance Infra, with 100 per cent stake in Reliance Defence, was a registered vendor with the Ordnance Factory Board and the Defence Research and Development Organisation, and that it recently won a contract for the fabrication of hull and turret for the Arjun tank, through competitive bidding against major Indian defence companies.

It did not, however, cite any contracts on combat aircraft manufacture. The editorial had stated that Reliance Defence's "track record in the field was too new to inspire confidence".

The company noted that in his personal capacity Mr Anil Ambani "had never made any statement", and that a statement issued by the company "had NEVER mentioned that there was no need for the CCS to clear the Rafale deal". Instead, Reliance Defence clarified that the government policy issued on June 24, 2016 allows for 49 per cent FDI in the defence sector under the automatic route, without any prior approval. "Therefore, no approvals from the Union Cabinet or CCS were required for the formation of a joint venture company between Dassault Aviation of France and Reliance Defence Ltd for the execution of an offset obligation against the Rafale deal," it said.

The Reliance Defence statement has sought to highlight the fact that foreign participation in the defence sector "has been in vogue since 2001" and there had been multiple changes since then and many joint ventures had been formed between Indian companies and their foreign partners.

The editorial did not suggest that foreign participation in the defence sector was a novelty in the Rafale case, and focused only on the rule introduced in June 2016. The editorial stated: "The question is: was the rule for Dassault to have a new Indian private sector partner introduced to specifically benefit Reliance Defence Ltd?" The company's statement has called this question "absolutely baseless".

MAIL TODAY

Arms and the nation

By Kanwal Sibal

A Major goal of our foreign policy is to safeguard our security. We are not members of any military alliance, which means that we have to essentially rely on ourselves to deal with day-to-day threats to our security. This requires us to be as self-reliant as possible for our defence needs. So long as we are dependent on foreign defence suppliers we cannot have full elbow room to conduct an independent foreign policy, despite success in developing our strategic capabilities on our own.

That we are one of the world's largest arms importers shows how we have mismanaged vital aspects of our defence preparedness. Russia has been our biggest defence partner and has contributed in significant ways

to make us more secure, but we have not been able to leverage that relationship to build a genuine domestic defence manufacturing base, one going beyond license manufacturing. The almost \$15 billion (₹6.7 thousand crore) worth of arms we have bought from the US in the last few years has given us tools to defend ourselves better against threats to our security, but this has created another external dependency.

Partner

That we have been declared a major defence partner by the US should ideally mean that we will be assisted to develop an indigenous defence manufacturing base and not merely have easier access to high quality American arms on a par with US allies. So far, it does not appear that Trump's remark, that India and the US as the world's largest democracies should also have the strongest militaries, means anything more than expectations that India will buy more US weapons. We have had a long-standing defence relationship with major European countries such as France, UK and Germany, but this has not resulted in the establishment of our own capacity to produce the weapons we need.

Technology transfer remains a big hurdle, not to mention our own inadequate industrial capacity and R&D as well as lack of skilled manpower. We ourselves are to blame for this highly unsatisfactory state of affairs. Leaving aside the failure of policy all these years to develop an indigenous defence manufacturing base, even our policies to procure defence equipment from abroad have been in shambles. The many scandals associated with defence acquisitions in the past continue to cast a shadow on new contracts that we enter into. Since we are one of the largest market in the world for arms, competition among defence equipment suppliers is intense and all means, fair or foul, are used either to win contracts or deny them to rivals.

Controversies are generated around contracts by alleging irregularities in processing them and often the political class is used to channel such accusations which, however motivated they may appear to be, compel the bureaucrats and their political superiors to repeatedly review them, if only to protect themselves from investigations later on for complicity in some form when governments change. It is already well known how acquisitions of needed equipment have been inordinately delayed because of these infirmities in our defence procurement system.

Controversy

All this is relevant to the controversy being generated around the Rafale deal, which is unfortunate for many reasons. Our Air Force has been clamouring for urgent action to address the issue of its depleting squadron strength which could no longer be ignored. Dassault had won the tender for 126 combat aircraft, outcompeting international rivals on both technology and price counts, but the contract could not be concluded despite prolonged negotiations.

The Modi government had to make the difficult choice of scrapping the contract altogether — at the cost of our strategic partnership with France — and ignoring the distress of the Air Force or meet its urgent requirements partially by purchasing only 36 aircraft off the shelf on condition that the overall terms would be improved and delivery would be accelerated, for which an intergovernmental agreement was signed.

These facts are on public record. If purchases from the US under governmental agreements have avoided controversies over possibly inflated costs, etc, the Rafale contract under a similar agreement with France should preclude any such controversy too.

Private

The involvement of the private sector in fulfilling some aspects of the Rafale contract is consistent with the Modi government's declared policy of involving the private sector in defence manufacturing as part of the Make in India programme. Broadening the base of defence manufacturing in the country will require reducing the already overloaded public sector units and increasing the participation of the Indian private sector, which is why foreign defence firms are being asked to build partnerships with them.

Lockheed Martin and Boeing have tied up with Indian private firms and so has Airbus to demonstrate their commitment to the Make in India programme. Dassault's tie up with an Indian company is within this policy framework too.

Opposition parties should therefore avoid generating controversies over defence procurement where facts do not justify this, and consider the adverse impact of such politicking on our relations with our strategic partners. The French have been forced to counter the allegations being made as it affects the country's reputation, besides unnecessarily affecting potential follow-on orders.

It is also against national security and the commercial interests of foreign companies as well to reveal the details of defence contracts beyond a point. Our political actors should be cautious in wanting to make electoral capital out of sensitive defence issues.

दैनिक जागरण

Tue, 28 Nov, 2017

भारत और रूस ने आतंकरोधी समझौते पर किए दस्तखत

मॉस्को, प्रेटर : भारत व रूस ने आतंकरोधी समझौते पर दस्तखत कर दिए हैं। गृह मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह व रूसी के आंतरिक सुरक्षा मंत्री व्लादिमिर कॉलोकोत्सेव की मौजूदगी में यह समझौता परवान चढ़ा।

दोनों देशों में संयुक्त बयान में कहा कि आतंकवाद न तो अच्छा होता है और न ही बुरा। यह केवल आतंकवाद होता है और इससे लड़ने की हर मुमकिन कोशिश होनी चाहिए। दोनों देशों के बीच तय हुआ कि आतंकवाद से लड़ने के लिए सूचनाओं के आदान प्रदान के साथ पुलिस बलों को प्रशिक्षण देने का काम तेजी से किया जाएगा। रूस व भारत ने खुशी जताई कि

मिला साथ

- सुरक्षा बलों के प्रशिक्षण का काम अब होगा तेज
- अक्टूबर 1993 में हुई संधि की जगह लेगा नया करार

70 सालों से दोनों देशों के संबंध नित नई इबारत लिख रहे हैं। दोनों ने आशा जताई कि दोनों देश भविष्य में एक दूसरे के साथ मजबूती से खड़े रहेंगे। इस दौरान दोनों ने नारकोटिक्स की तस्करी से पैदा होने वाले खतरों पर भी मंथन किया। भारत के रूस में राजदूत पंकज सरन व रूस के

उप आंतरिक सुरक्षा मंत्री इगोर जुबॉव ने समझौते पर दस्तखत किए। गृह मंत्रालय की तरफ से बताया गया कि दोनों देशों के बीच जो सहमति बनी है उसके बाद आतंकवाद पर करारा प्रहार किया जा सकेगा। अब नई तकनीकों के सहारे खुफिया बल को इस दिशा में लगाया जा सकता है तो सूचनाओं के आदान प्रदान के जरिये आतंकियों की कमर तोड़ी जा सकती है। राजनाथ सिंह का रूस दौरा सितंबर 2016 में प्रस्तावित था, लेकिन 18 सितंबर को जम्मू-कश्मीर के उड़ी में सैन्य मुख्यालय पर हुए आतंकी हमले के चलते दौरा रद्द कर दिया गया था।

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, 28 Nov, 2017

South Korea Warns North Not to Repeat Armistice Violation

Panmunjom: North Korea violated an armistice agreement with South Korea this month when North Korean soldiers shot and wounded a North Korean soldier as he defected across their border and it must not do so again, South Korea's defence minister said on Monday.

The defector, a North Korean soldier identified only by his surname, Oh, was critically wounded but has been recovering in hospital in South Korea.

The incident comes at a time of heightened tension between North Korea and the international community over its nuclear weapons programme, but the North has not publicly responded to the defection at the sensitive border. South Korean Minister of Defence Song Young-moo issued his warning to the North while on a visit to the border where he commended South Korean soldiers at a Joint Security Area (JSA), in the so-called Truce Village of Panmunjom, in the demilitarised zone, for rescuing the defector. Reuters

THE ASIAN AGE

Tue, 28 Nov, 2017

Russia sends water robot for sub hunt

Bahía Blanca (Argentina), Nov. 27: 11 days after Argentina's missing San Juan submarine went silent following an explosion, a 14-nation search has failed to find the vessel

at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. For more than a week, aircraft from Argentina, Britain and the US have crisscrossed the South Atlantic. A Russian Antonov plane has arrived with an underwater robot that can scour the ocean at a depth of 1,000 m, adding to the arsenal of recovery tools. — AFP

THE ASIAN AGE

Tue, 28 Nov, 2017

Nasa to measure space debris around ISS

Washington: Nasa is set to launch a sensor that will measure space debris around the International Space Station (ISS), which could help reduce the risk to human life.

The one square meter Space Debris Sensor (SDS) will travel on a SpaceX cargo mission on December 4 and will be mounted on the exterior of the station. The sensor uses dual-layer thin films, an acoustic sensor system, a resistive grid sensor system and a sensed backstop to provide near-real-time impact detection and recording, the US space agency said.

Research from this investigation could help lower the risk to human life and critical hardware by orbital debris.

US-based aerospace company SpaceX will launch its *Dragon* spacecraft into orbit for its 13th commercial resupply mission.



▶ The one square metre Space Debris Sensor (SDS) will travel on a SpaceX cargo mission on December 4 and will be mounted on the exterior of the station

▶ The research could help lower the risk to human life and critical hardware by orbital debris

The spacecraft will lift into orbit atop the Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in the US carrying crew supplies, equipment and scientific research to crew members living and working aboard the station.

Another investigation will attempt to pull fibre optic wire from ZBLAN, a heavy metal fluoride glass commonly used to make fibre optic glass.

When ZBLAN is solidified on Earth, its atomic structure tends to form into crystals.

Research indicates that ZBLAN fibre pulled in

microgravity may not crystallise as much, giving it better optical qualities than the silica used in most fibre optic wire.

Results from this investigation could lead to the production of higher-quality fibre optic products both in space and on Earth.

According to Nasa, one more research to be sent to the ISS is the Rodent Research-6 (RR-6) investigation. It will examine a drug compound and drug delivery system designed to combat muscular breakdown in space or other times of disuse. — PTI

TRAI'S net neutrality proposals today

Recommendations likely to impact the future of apps that provide calling and messaging services

Telecom regulator Trai plans to issue the much-awaited recommendations on Net neutrality tomorrow which is likely to impact the future of apps that provide calling and messaging services. The consultation paper on the subject floated in January this year majorly focused on network speed so that telecom operators do not use it to give preference or prevent access to any website or service like voice calls which requires decent net speed. "We will be bringing out Net neutrality recommendations tomorrow.

You will find answers regarding OTT (over the-top), VoIP (Internet based calls)...," Trai Chairman RS Sharma told reporters on the sidelines of an open house discussion on in-flight connectivity (IFC) for providing phone call and data services. On the issue of Net neutrality, Telecom operators have demanded that same rules should be applied on entities providing similar services. According to them, OTT players like Skype, Whatsapp and Viber provide calling and messaging services much like telecom operators and hence there should be level playing field between them.

Trai's consultation paper on Net-neutrality was sought by the Department of Telecom (DoT) following the suggestion of a High Level Committee which proposed regulation of domestic calls on Internet based apps by putting them at par with services offered by telecom operators. That move came under immediate attack from various industry bodies and the civil society. Supporters of Net neutrality back the principle that the entire Internet traffic should be available to everyone on equal terms without any discrimination based on business considerations of service providers. In February last year, Trai addressed a part of Net- neutrality which was under its jurisdiction. It barred platforms like Facebook's Internet.Org and Airtel Zero which allowed free access to select websites to check 'gate-keeping' in cyber space.

The Trai's recommendations tomorrow will come at a time when there is a debate raging over Net neutrality globally. The US regulator, Federal Communications Commission, has said recently that it plans to roll back the "Net neutrality" rules the were adopted in America in 2015. On the issue of in-flight connectivity, Sharma said the recommendations on IFC will be issued within 10 days.

"We have done consultation with the stakeholders (on IFC). Now, that process is complete today. Hopefully in a week or 10 days' time we will be able to give our recommendations. Lawful interception will have to be made available. We will discuss what technology will have to be used. We will take call for providing in flight connectivity," Sharma said. Representatives of satellite companies and telecom operators demanded light regulation on companies providing IFC service.

Most of the players were of the view that mobile service should be allowed on flights and Internet service should be started on priority basis. Reliance Jio representative said that communication in flights should not be restricted to satellite only but air- toground technologies should also be allowed. Under the air-to-ground technology, Jio said that equipment from a tower will look up in the sky and provide connectivity.

Most of the satellite companies have favoured setting up of a gateway in India for providing IFC to address the government's security concerns. Trai will send recommendations to the DoT which will take final call on the policy framework.