

समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

दैनिक सामयिक अभिज्ञता सेवा
A daily Current Awareness Service

Vol. 42 No. 234 28 October 2017



रक्षा विज्ञान पुस्तकालय
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For a splash



Vikram ready to set sail

Vikram, the first of a series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), was launched on Friday. The long-range ship was built by Larsen and Toubro.

What are OPVs?

OPVs are long-range surface ships capable of coastal and offshore patrolling, policing maritime zones, control & surveillance, anti-smuggling & anti-piracy operations with limited wartime roles.

Order: 6 similar OPVs have been ordered by the Indian Coast Guard with the same builder

Cost: ₹1,432 cr. The total order value to design and build seven OPVs

Timeline | March 2015 - March 2018

The contract was signed on March 2015 and the target delivery of the first OPV was set at 36 months - March 2018 - and subsequent vessels at intervals of 6 months.

Induction | April 2018 'Vikram' is likely to be inducted into the Indian Coast Guard in April 2018 after completion of extensive trials

About 60% components of the ship were sourced from domestic suppliers

Helipad: The ship will have Integral Twin Engine Helicopter which will enhance its operational, surveillance, search and rescue capabilities

Gun: The ship is fitted with one 30 mm automatic gun with Fire Control System (FCS) and two 12.7 mm guns with FCS

Draught: 3.6 m It is the distance between the surface of the water and the lowest point of the vessel

Displacement tonnage:

2,140 tonnes

It is the weight of the ship, measured indirectly by measuring the water displaced by the hull of the ship up to the waterline

Range: 5,000 NM It is the distance that can be covered by the ship without stopping for refuelling

Speed: 26 knots

It is the measurement of speed at sea. One knot is 1.852 km/hr

Width: 15 m | **Length** 97 m



Sat, 28 Oct, 2017

L&T scouts for 'launchpads' in Gujarat, T.N., for missile plant

Firm to take a call based on incentives offered by the States

Larsen & Toubro Ltd., is eyeing Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Gujarat for its ₹500 crore missile and missile systems plant, said a senior executive.

“We are looking at Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and even Gujarat,” said Jayant D. Patil, member of the board and whole time director (Defence Business). The location would be finalised based on the incentives offered by these state governments, he added.

The missile and missile systems plant is being formed in a joint venture with MBDA, a French company. The new joint venture company, L&T MBDA Missile Systems Ltd., will have an equity stake of 51:49.

Besides, L&T, in partnership with South Korean firm Hanwha, would be setting up a battle tank plant at Hazira in Gujarat. This will cost more than ₹500 crore. The project is going ahead as per schedule, Mr. Patil said.

Wind tunnel facility

On construction of a ₹250-crore wind tunnel facility for DRDO, he said: “Earlier, we had constructed a wind tunnel for ISRO and this is a repeat order. We have done half of it. The remaining portion will be completed in about 18 months.”

According to Mr. Patil, L&T has an order book of ₹2,300 crore to ₹2,400 crore, including an export order of \$100 million from Vietnam, for delivery of high speed interceptor boats.

भारत के पनडुब्बी निर्माण में मदद देने को तैयार फ्रांस

नागपुर : भारत के साथ राफेल युद्धक विमान बेचने का समझौता करने के बाद फ्रांस की नजर भारत के पनडुब्बी निर्माण पर भी है। इस बारे में फ्रांस की रक्षा मंत्री (मिनिस्टर फॉर आर्मड फोर्सस) प्लोरेंस पार्ले ने रक्षा मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण से बात भी की है। इस बात का खुलासा स्वयं पार्ले ने यहां एक संवाददाता सम्मेलन में किया।

माना जा रहा है कि इस महीने जब फ्रांस के राष्ट्रपति इमानुएल मैकरोन भारत आएंगे तो उनकी तरफ से इस बारे में विधिवत प्रस्ताव किया जाएगा। सनद रहे कि भारत आने वाले एक दशक में दर्जनों पनडुब्बियों को खरीदना चाहता है। ऐसे में अमेरिका के साथ ही फ्रांस की कंपनियों की नजर भी इस खरीद पर है।

पार्ले ने बताया कि उनकी भारतीय रक्षा मंत्री के साथ आतंकवाद के साथ भारत के आस पास के समुद्री इलाके में शांति और सैन्य सहयोग पर वार्ता हुई है। उन्होंने आतंकवाद के मुद्दे पर भारतीय हितों की पूरी रक्षा करने की बात कही है। साथ ही कहा है कि भारत को अपने समुद्री इलाके में काफी चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। फ्रांस और भारत के नौ सेनाओं के बीच पहले से ही सैन्य अभ्यास चल रहा है। दोनो देश इसे विस्तार करने को लेकर गंभीर है। सनद रहे कि चीन के बढ़ते वर्चस्व की वजह से हिंद और प्रशांत महासागर क्षेत्र में अमेरिक व पश्चिमी देशों की रुचि बढ़ती जा रही है।



India, France agree to ramp up military cooperation

Def Ministers Meet, Decide To Go Together On Maritime Security

India and France have decided to further crank up military-to-military ties, including joint combat exercises, as well as enhance cooperation in maritime security and counter-terrorism towards expanding their bilateral strategic partnership.

The delegation-level meeting led by defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her French counterpart Florence Parly, who is here in the run-up to President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India in December, on Friday also agreed to “strongly support” projects for defence manufacturing under the “Make in India” initiative as well as promote defence technology and R&D cooperation.

In an exclusive interview with TOI on Thursday, Parly had said France would take “into account your country's legitimate interest of having ‘Make in India’ components” if India decides to go in for another 36 Rafale fighters, after the first 36 jets are delivered to IAF by 2022 under the Rs 59,000 crore deal inked in September last year.

French Naval Group DCNS, of course, is also among the four contenders for Project-75 (India), under which six advanced stealth submarines are to be built in India through collaboration between a foreign ship-builder and an Indian shipyard for an estimated Rs 70,000 crore. The French armament company is already involved in the construction of six Scorpene submarines at Mazagon Docks in Mumbai under the over Rs 23,000 crore Project-75.

At the meeting on Friday , the two sides agreed on a range of measures to expand military-to-military ties, which includes enhancing the scope of their joint exercises, in particular the “Varuna“ naval exercise scheduled for early 2018. “Both countries will also actively explore additional measures to facilitate operational level interactions between their respective armed forces,“ said an official.

Reiterating their “strong intention“ to further expand bilateral cooperation on counterterrorism, the two sides also recognised the growing significance of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific and the need for greater maritime domain awareness. “The two countries will further expand informationsharing arrangements building upon the `Technical Arrangement on Exchange of White Shipping Information', which was inked earlier this year,“ said the official.



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FRENCH GUEST

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with her French counterpart Florence Parly in Delhi Friday. Parly, here on a two-day visit, held talks with Sitharaman to further boost security ties between India and France, with a focus on co-development of military platforms and maritime cooperation. *Praveen Jain*

Reliance-Dassault JV for Defence MFG to Bring in Highest Ever FDI to India

In a move to bring in the largest ever foreign direct investment (FDI) in the defence manufacturing sector in India, French defence major Dassault Aviation will invest over 100 million euros in a joint venture with Reliance Aerostructure Ltd to manufacture aircraft components in related to the proposed purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets from France, according to the joint statement made by both the companies on Friday.

Putting the Orange City Nagpur on the world aviation map in this venture, Eric Trappier, Chairman of Dassault Aviation and Anil Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Group laid the foundation stone for the Dassault Reliance Aerospace Park (DRAL) manufacturing facility at the Dhirubhai Ambani Aerospace Park in Mihan SEZ near the Nagpur airport.

The foundation stone was laid in the presence of Florence Parly, Minister of Armed Forces of French Republic, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, Ambassador of France to India Alexandre Ziegler, and over 200 dignitaries from Maharashtra and city administration.

"The Reliance-Dassault partnership will bring high levels of technology transfer and make India a major supplier in the global aviation supply chain," Ambani said. Dassault and Reliance will fully support Make in India and Skill India missions and enhance India's pursuit of self-sufficiency in the aerospace sector, he added.

Ambani also thanked Gadkari and Fadnavis for their "strong and consistent support" for the project. "First we thought of Bengaluru, then Hyderabad. Then Eric (Dassault Chairman Eric Trappier) suggested we go to Gujarat," Ambani said during the foundation laying ceremony. "But I said I want to go to Nagpur. Gadkariji first suggested the idea of (having the project at) Nagpur. He said he will banish me from India if I took the project elsewhere," Ambani said in a lighter vein.

"The CM (Fadnavis) said everything I need will be done for the project at Mihan," he said adding that "I don't think there's a better example in ease of doing business. Thank you, Gadkariji for twisting my arm and making me come to Nagpur." During the presentation, French Defence Minister Florence Parly said that her country shares concerns over the threat of terrorism confronting both the countries and India is the natural partner of France in Asia. Parly who held discussions in Delhi earlier on Friday with her Indian counterpart Nirmala Sitharaman.

"During my talks (with Sitharaman), we shared views on threat of terrorism confronting India, France and Europe and ways to combat it," Parly said in a media briefing after laying the foundation. "We also shared views on situation in the Indian Ocean region," she said.

"Dassault Reliance Aerospace will manufacture several components of the offset obligation connected to the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets from France, signed between the two Governments in September 2016," Ambani said. It will manufacture components for the Legacy Falcon 2000 series of civil jets manufactured by Dassault Aviation and will become part of its global supply chain.

This is for the first time that a business jet will be manufactured in India, a Dassault Reliance Aerospace official said. "These first steps are expected to be achieved in the coming years, leading to the possible setting up of the final assembly of Rafale and Falcon aircraft in India," the official said. It will be home to Dassault Reliance Aerospace Ltd—the 51:49 joint venture of Reliance Aerostructure and Dassault Aviation.

Reliance Group will set up assembly lines and manufacturing facilities of fixed wing aircraft aerostructure for commercial transport aircraft and helicopters for both defence and commercial use. The park will also house ancillary and component manufacturing units to support after-sales requirements. The official also added, "The Dassault Reliance Aerospace facility will train skilled workers in aviation assembly and

integration, and lead to major employment generation in Nagpur and surrounding areas, the official added. It will also attract and house an organic ecosystem of over 200 MSMEs to secure the component and avionics manufacturing needs of Rafale and Falcon jets.”

Dassault Aviation Chairman, however Eric Trappier said the firm is firmly committed to implementing Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Make in India programme. “This development gives the 65 year-long strong association of Dassault Aviation in India a new momentum and the will of future manufacturing developments,” he said.

The Dhirubhai Ambani Aerospace Park, spread over 289 acres, will be the largest greenfield aerospace park in India with a capital investment of over Rs 6,500 crore. It is being developed in two phases. Phase one production is expected to start next year. In 2016, India signed a 7.9 billion euros (\$8.8 billion contract for purchasing 36 Rafale fighter jets in fly-away condition which incorporated a 50 per cent offset clause, mandating that 50 per cent of the deal value would be invested in the Indian defence ecosystem.

While the first lot of the Rafale jets from France are expected to be delivered by September 2019, the remaining will be delivered after another 30 months (around March 2022). As part of the mandatory offsets under this deal, France will invest 30 per cent of the total deal cost in India's military aeronautics related research programmes and another 20 per cent towards the local production of Rafale components.



Sat, 28 Oct, 2017

Status quo at Doklam face-off site, clarifies MEA

Amid reports citing satellite imagery to show that Chinese troops were still present in the Doklam region, the government on Friday reiterated that there was no fresh activity at the Sino-Indian face-off site and that the “alleged Chinese build up” was “well within China”.

“The status quo prevails in the area and any suggestion to the contrary is incorrect and mischievous,” said MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar.

“I would like to reiterate that there is no new development at the face-off site and its vicinity since the August 28 disengagement,” he added.

Troops of India and China were locked in a 73-day-long stand off in Doklam since June 16 after the Indian side stopped the building of a road in the disputed area by the Chinese Army . Unlike Bhutan and China, India is not party to the Doklam territorial dispute but it was forced to block Chinese road construction on the Doklam plateau because of security concerns.

For India, the main issue remains construction of road by the Chinese towards the south and so far, officials said, there is nothing to suggest that Beijing has restarted work on that road. The MEA on August 28 had announced that both sides were disengaging from the face-off site.

A retired military intelligence official had earlier claimed in a media report, which was based on satellite images of the area on September 6, that despite the August 28 disengagement, the situation had not normalised because of a Chinese troop build-up not far away from the face-off site.

Be prepared for war, Xi tells army

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping has begun his second five-year term ordering the country's 2.3 million-strong military, the world's largest, to be absolutely loyal to the ruling Communist Party and intensify its combat readiness by focussing on how to win wars.

The once-in-five-years Congress of the Communist Party endorsed Xi's leadership of the party, the military and the presidency this week and approved his ideology to be written into its Constitution, elevating him on par with modern China's founder Chairman Mao Zedong and his successor Deng Xiaoping.

Xi, 64, began his second tenure yesterday by holding a meeting of top military officials, regarded as a main source of power base.

Xi, who heads the powerful Central Military Commission (CMC) the overall high command of Chinese military, is the only civilian leader in the body which is otherwise packed with top most officials of the armed forces.

The new CMC line-up which was unveiled on Wednesday will be led by a group of seven, down from the 11 members who headed its operations before.

Earlier reports said Xi, who consolidated his power in the last five years with a massive anticorruption campaign in which over a million officials were punished wanted to shrink the Standing Committee of the party to five from seven. But apparently, he did not succeed as other groups in the party headed by former leaders pressed for status quo to include their nominees in the highest-ranking body bringing it a semblance of balance in power equations.

In the last night's meeting of top military officials, some high-ranking officials were conspicuously absent, Hong-Kong based South China Morning Post reported. It appeared from the state-run CCTV report that two top generals, the former chief of general staff General Fang Fenghui and director of the political work department, General Zhang Yang were absent.

Both Fang and Zhang were CMC members in Xi's first term, but they were left off the list of PLA delegates to this month's party Congress.

Earlier the two Generals were taken away on the same day last month as part of a corruption investigation, the Post report said. Meeting top military officials, he ordered them to be absolutely loyal to the party, to focus on how to win in wars, to pioneer reforms and innovation, to scientifically manage commanding a unit, to lead troops in accordance with the strictest standards and to take the forefront in complying with laws and regulations.