

India ready to transfer crucial anti-tank missile technology to private industry

Bengaluru: In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's privatisation in defence sector policy, India is now ready to transfer crucial technology of its third generation anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) 'Nag' + to private industry.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has already kick-started initial activities relating to Transfer of Technology (ToT) for both 'Nag' and 'Nag Missile Carrier (Namica)', but public sector units like Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) are not completely out of the race yet.

A senior DRDO official confirmed to TOI that the agency is preparing documents for the ToT. "The thought process is there and we are working on the nuances," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Nag, with a range of about four kilometres, is an all-weather "fire-and-forget" ATGM, while Namica is equipped with retractable armoured launchers. It contains launchers and a guidance package, including thermal imager for target locking.

On whether the industry has the capability to build a complete missile system, the official said that right now the Indian industry is yet to display full capabilities. "But we have had proposals that have come in, and we are discussing various options," the official said.

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Industry Proposals

The Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM), however, argues that the industry will be able to successfully produce missiles so long as there is commitment from the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Industries like Baba Kalyani Group, Mahindra, Reliance and L&T have already submitted proposals to the ministry based on an earlier expression of interest (EoI) and request for information (RFI) for the Arjun tank (BMP-II). However, nothing has moved forward so far, and the industry is now cautiously hopeful.

Col HS Shankar (ret'd), an executive member of SIDM said: "We have the capability and had expressed interest as part of earlier RFIs and EoIs as you know. The DGMF (Directorate General of Mechanised Forces) and the Army for upgradation of BMP-II (Arjun) earlier had included that industry must produce up-to-date state-of-the-art ground-to-ground missiles. But none of the proposals had got the desired response."



2 TBRL scientists honoured at DRDO directors' meet

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The Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) Young Scientist Award for the year 2017 has been conferred upon Amit Kumar Rai from the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), while the Best Performance Award went to Balwinder Singh, a technical officer at the TBRL.

Rai was awarded for his contribution in the design and operationalisation of drop test facility for insensitive munitions compliance and also for improvement in the design of the baffle range for reducing the

cost and enhancing the safety of practice firing ranges. Balwinder has been commended for his efforts in the use of flash X-ray techniques for design and development of warheads.

The awards were presented to the recipients by DRDO Secretary and DRDO Chairman S Christopher during the two-day Annual DRDO Directors' Conclave that concluded at the TBRL ranges in Ramgarh near here on Saturday.



Amit Kumar Rai (left) being honoured with the Young Scientist Award by DRDO Chairman Dr S Christopher at Ramgarh, near Chandigarh, on Saturday. Tribune photo

Over 115 top officials of the DRDO, including directors general of various clusters, directors of DRDO laboratories, corporate directors at the DRDO headquarters and financial advisors, attended the conclave to deliberate on techno-managerial issues and lay down objectives for the coming year.

Various issues concerning DRDO were taken up in 12 sessions each, followed by a panel discussion. Prominent topics included DRDO's commercial arm, quality standardisation, image building, leadership development, transfer of technologies and human resource development. During the proceedings, it was brought out that over the past two years, the DRDO had transferred over 200 technologies to the industry and defence public sector undertakings, earning about Rs 170 crore.

A special session on DRDO@60 to take stock of the activities and events organised by young scientists to increase the visibility and wider outreach of the organisation, was also held.

During the conclave, Dr Christopher stressed upon the need of innovative mechanisms for better coordination between the laboratories, cluster heads and corporate headquarters. Stating that research and development by the DRDO scientist is generating a lot of knowledge and technologies, he asked laboratory directors to be cautious while transferring technologies to the industry to ensure that intellectual property rights are protected and retained with the DRDO. He also underlined the need to strengthen the project review mechanism to avoid delays.