

# समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

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## Govt revamps DRDO: Key body reconstituted, to set agenda

*The reconstituted DSTMC is a high-profile body that will chart the future of DRDO laboratories in synergy with the science and technology department*

*By Shishir Gupta*

The Narendra Modi government has taken its first steps towards restructuring and revamping the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) by reviving the defunct DRDO Science and Technology Management Council (DSTMC) under the chairmanship of principal Scientific Advisor K Vijay Raghavan and doubling the financial powers of the secretary, DRDO, to Rs 150 crore.

According to a July 3 notification accessed by Hindustan Times, the reconstituted DSTMC is a high-profile body that will chart the future of DRDO laboratories in synergy with the science and technology department.

The other members of DSTMC are secretary, DRDO; chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO); chairman, Atomic Energy Commission; and secretaries of the department of science and technology, and department of earth sciences.

Instead of retired officers as in the past, chairmen of defence public sector undertakings like Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Bharat Electronics Ltd, BEML Ltd and Mishra Dhatu Nigam Ltd are members, along with the directors of Indian Institutes of Technologies at Delhi, Kharagpur, Madras and Bombay.

This high-power Council will do a review of the functioning of all 42 laboratories of the DRDO and existing science and technology laboratories so that there is no overlap of work and synergy between the defence, space, atomic energy and educational institutions involved in high-end research. The Council will also decide on research and development priorities in the defence sector. This means it will be this council that will set the agenda for the DRDO to engage in top end technologies or functional day-to-day technologies.

The Council's recommendations will be sent to the defence ministry.

The Council will also look into personnel management of 7,500 scientists in the DRDO laboratories and explore the idea of lateral induction of talent for a limited period from IITs and other Indian institutions. The total strength of DRDO is 30,000 personnel with even secretary, DRDO, having limited financial powers. This has now changed.

According to another notification, the powers of the secretary, DRDO have been enhanced for sanctioning projects and competitive procurement to Rs 150 crore from the existing Rs 75 crore. The financial powers of director general (DRDO) have been enhanced from Rs 25 crore to Rs 75 crore. Financial powers of directors of laboratories have been enhanced from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. In single tender cases, the powers of secretary, DRDO, have been enhanced to 75 crore, DG (DRDO) to Rs 37.5 crore and lab directors to Rs 2.5 crore. The powers of DG for sanctioning research and development projects at universities and the indigenous defence industry have been enhanced to Rs 5 crore. The powers in case of post contract management and maintenance support have been delegated to DG (DRDO) on par with the armed forces.

"The setting up of the Council and the empowerment of DRDO secretary are all designed to boost indigenization and promote domestic industry to build high-end platforms in order to reduce global reliance for military hardware," said a senior defence ministry official.

## Govt plans to cash in on Defence Real Estate

By *Subhomoy Bhattacharjee*

In a marked shift in the way land belonging to the defence ministry is used, it has been decided that transactions in defence lands will be treated as capital receipts. Also, in order to cash in on the value of the real estate held by the defence ministry in metros and big towns, shops located on its land will be made to pay rents at market rates from now on.

Both the finance and defence ministries have approved these proposals, which are part of a report filed by a committee set up by the ministry of defence to examine the utilisation of its land bank. Headed by former finance secretary Sumit Bose, the committee was also meant to find ways of bringing order to the land banks in and around the cantonments and monetise them wherever possible.

Once introduced, the measures will rationalise the usage of land by the defence ministry, which, according to its own estimates, holds 1.75 million acres across the country. Of this, approximately 9 per cent is situated within the 62 notified cantonments and the rest is located outside these cantonments, as per data with the Directorate General, Defence Estates, a body under the defence ministry. For security reasons, the location of a large part of this land bank is not made public.

Also Read: Defence Ministry approves military purchases worth over Rs 55 billion there are no uniform rules on land utilisation by the defence ministry units. And more than one report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pointed to the “unsatisfactory management of defence estates”.

In an audit report issued in 2013, the CAG noted that there was misuse of defence land by either local military authorities or unauthorised occupation of land when the lease on them had long expired. These drawbacks, the report went on to say, had been highlighted in previous audit reports too, but the problem has not been solved.

In test checks of just six cases spread across Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata and Pune, the CAG report estimated a loss of Rs 8.30 billion to the government because the defence ministry had delayed renewing the lease with the parties concerned. This did not include the Adarsh housing case in Mumbai.

However, the defence ministry is not the largest owner of land bank among government departments. That honour goes to the ministry of railways. But the numbers vary. Data gleaned from the government land information system is often at variance with the annual reports of the respective departments of the ministries.’

For example, at 723,919 acres, the railway ministry’s land bank falls short of the land data from the records of the Directorate General, Defence Estates. Again, the land holdings of the ministries of coal, power and heavy industries among others, are reckoned to be larger than that belonging to defence.

As per the latest budget data, the asset register of all land held by the government of India is at Rs 3.52 trillion. The lack of consistency of data on these land parcels reveals the risk government runs in administering them. The Bose committee said that defence land is particularly vulnerable to encroachment as large chunks of it are located in and around cities. A Parliament reply given by defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier this year also acknowledged the scale of the problem.

The minister’s reply stated that currently, more than 10,000 acres of defence land have been encroached upon. As the audit reports show, even those under the effective control of the ministry are not well managed. In its recommendations, the Bose committee says that no land parcels should be sold or leased before the decisions are vetted at a centralised level. Plus, the proceeds should not become the income of the cantonments, but should enter the

Consolidated Fund of India as capital receipts. The management of the Fund vests with the finance ministry. By ensuring that the money is treated as capital receipts, Parliament will see to it that the money does not disappear in the general revenue stream, and instead, is used to build military assets.

This will also cut down chances of corruption in the use of land parcels by unmonitored entities. The committee has also suggested that once the purpose for which a land parcel was given out is over, the local military authorities should hand it out to other parties. Currently, there is no way to track the loss to the government from such transfers. A public interest litigation was filed in the Supreme Court in 2014 by an NGO, asking the Court to give directions to the government to stamp out such practices. In addition, the committee has advised against leasing out shops to private parties in cantonments at concessional rates. Citing the example of Delhi, it has shown that this is a revenue loss for the cantonment and also gives an unfair advantage to those who get the lease at subsidised prices.

In fact, it has gone on to suggest that all renewals of lease of shops and establishment on defence land should be at market rates from now. This will of course have a knock-on effect on the real estate sector as the prices of shops in several upscale markets that are built on defence land across the country will likely shoot up. In both Delhi and Mumbai some of the prime shopping centres are built on defence land. The audit reports show that the committee's report and recommendations are based on strong evidence.

Delay in the renewal of lease benefits private parties while the government loses out. For example, in Kolkata, the Royal Calcutta Turf Club has occupied 153.41 acres of prime land in the heart of the city, but the lease for it was not renewed for six years from 2007 to 2013. The delay cost the exchequer Rs 8.14 billion.

#### **Key proposals**

- No land parcels should be sold or leased before the decisions are vetted at a centralised level.
- The proceeds should not become the income of the cantonments, but should enter the Consolidated.
- Fund of India as capital receipts.
- All renewals of lease of shops and establishment on defence land should be at market rates.
- From a report filed by a panel set up by the defence ministry to examine the utilisation of its land bank.

# चाबहार बंदरगाह पर अमेरिका से नरमी की उम्मीद में भारत

ईरान के साथ भारत के रिश्तों पर विस्तृत वार्ता के लिए जल्द आएगा अमेरिकी दल

जयप्रकाश रंजन • नई दिल्ली

ईरान के साथ भारत के रिश्तों पर व्यापक चर्चा के लिए अमेरिका का एक प्रतिनिधि मंडल जल्द ही दिल्ली पहुंचने वाला है। इस चर्चा से पहले ही भारत ने संकेत दे दिया है कि वह ईरान के साथ तेल खरीद में बड़ी कटौती को तैयार है। इसी के साथ सरकार की कोशिश है कि चाबहार बंदरगाह के मुद्दे पर अमेरिका का रुख नरम रखा जा सके। अमेरिका को यह समझाने का प्रयास किया जाएगा कि यह बंदरगाह उसकी अफगान नीति और एशिया में लंबी अवधि की रणनीतिक जरूरत को देखते हुए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के निर्देश पर प्रतिनिधि मंडल उन सभी देशों की यात्रा करने वाला है जो ईरान के साथ कारोबारी या अन्य रिश्ते रखते हैं और जिन पर अमेरिकी प्रतिबंध से असर पड़ने के आसार हैं।

पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय के सूत्रों का कहना है कि उन्होंने ईरान की जगह दूसरे देशों से तेल खरीदने पर बातचीत शुरू कर दी है। सऊदी अरब और इराक ने भारत को आश्वासन दिया है कि वे उसके तेल की मांग को पूरा करने को तैयार हैं। इन



## भारत से होने वाले निर्यात पर भी होगा असर

अमेरिका की तरफ से ईरान के साथ हर तरह के कारोबार पर प्रतिबंध लगने से सिर्फ भारत के तेल आयात पर ही नहीं बल्कि ईरान को भारतीय निर्यात पर भी असर होगा। अमेरिकी सरकार की तरफ से घोषणा की गई है कि एक महीने के भीतर ईरान के साथ सोना, ऑटोमोबाइल, लौह अयस्क आदि के अंतरराष्ट्रीय कारोबार पर प्रतिबंध लग जाएगा। जबकि कच्चे तेल के कारोबार के लिए तीन महीने का समय दिया गया है। सरकार के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, ईरान भारत से बड़े पैमाने पर लौह अयस्क आदि खरीदता है। वर्ष 2017-18 में ईरान ने भारत से 13.8 करोड़ डॉलर का स्टील खरीदा था। इस वर्ष के पहले दो महीनों में 80 लाख डॉलर का आयात ईरान ने किया है। इसी तरह से भारतीय वाहनों की मांग भी हाल के वर्षों में ईरान में बढ़ी है। पिछले वर्ष भारत ने ईरान को 4.32 करोड़ डॉलर के वाहन बेचे थे, जो इस वर्ष अभी तक 20 लाख डॉलर के हैं। जाहिर है कि अमेरिका के प्रतिबंध के बाद अगर ईरान से तेल खरीदना भारत के लिए मुश्किल हो जाएगा, तो भारतीय निर्यातकों के लिए ईरान का बाजार भी बंद हो जाएगा।

देशों के अलावा नाइजीरिया, कुवैत भी भारत के लिए अन्य विकल्प हो सकते हैं। अमेरिका भी एक संभावित तेल विक्रेता देश हो सकता है, लेकिन यह देखना

होगा कि अमेरिकी तेल की कीमत क्या खी जाती है। भारत ने पिछले वर्ष पहली बार अमेरिका से तेल की खरीद की थी। पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय के सूत्रों का कहना है

कि अमेरिका से तेल खरीदने की रणनीति हमारी पहले से थी क्योंकि इससे ओपेक देशों पर हमारी निर्भरता कम होगी। साथ ही अमेरिका के साथ व्यापार घाटे को पाटने में भी मदद मिलेगी, जिसे मौजूदा ट्रंप प्रशासन एक बड़ा मुद्दा बना रहा है। हालांकि बहुत कुछ कीमत पर भी तय होगा। जहाँ तक चाबहार बंदरगाह का मुद्दा है तो इस पर अमेरिका के पूर्व विदेश मंत्री रेक्स टिलरसन का रवैया काफी सकारात्मक रहा था। जब अक्टूबर, 2017 में वे भारत की यात्रा पर आए थे तब विदेश मंत्री सुष्मा स्वराज की उनसे इस बारे में विस्तार से बात हुई थी। भारत की तरफ से बताया गया था कि अफगानिस्तान की आर्थिक स्थिति को मजबूत करने और वहाँ आम जनता को आतंकवाद व हिंसा से दूर करने में चाबहार पोर्ट एक अहम परियोजना साबित हो सकती है। टिलरसन ने भारतीय पक्ष को समझने के भी संकेत दिए थे। लेकिन उसके बाद अमेरिका की तरफ से चाबहार पर कोई भी प्रतिक्रिया नहीं आई है। अमेरिकी सरकार ने हाल ही में यह जरूर कहा है कि वह ईरान के साथ कारोबार पर लागू प्रतिबंध में किसी भी तरह की छूट देने के पक्ष में नहीं है।