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Process to induct nuclear capable Agni-V in India's Strategic Forces Command begins

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Nuclear-capable Agni-V has been cleared for induction by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Trials of the 5000 plus km range missile will be held before the monsoon. A successful induction of Agni-V will bring the likes of China, North Korea in a striking distance from India. The process to induct the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) into India's strategic forces command (SFC) was kicked off recently.

According to a report in Times of India, "several systems and subsystems" associated with the system are "being handed over" to the Agni-V unit within the SFC. "The second pre-induction trial of Agni-V is slated to



take place soon (the first one was on January 18 this year, after four developmental trials since April 2012). If successful like the earlier tests, the Agni-V unit with its missiles can be shifted to a strategic base," a source was quoted as saying by Times of India. According to the report, "till SSBNs with nuclear missiles over 3,500-km range are inducted, the Agni missiles and nuclear glide bombs delivered by fighters will remain the mainstay of India's deterrence posture." The induction process, which coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Pokhran test, will get China and Pakistan, India's prime adversaries within its reach. While India follows a No First Use (NFU)

policy regarding nuclear weapons, the induction of Agni-V will boost India's capabilities strengthening its second-strike capabilities against adversaries and adding firepower to the nuclear triad- meaning the ability to launch nuclear weapons from land, sea, and air.

MAIL TODAY

Tue, 15 May, 2018

ANC tri-service command seeks more muscle in terms of more troops, fighter aircraft

Country's first tri-service command in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands wants that more teeth in terms of more troops and fighter aircraft should be provided to it to carry out its operations and tackle the emerging threats more effectively in future. The requirement was projected by the tri-services command headed by Vice Admiral Bimal K Verma in a presentation made to defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and other top brass of the defence ministry recently in South Block. The tri-services command wanted that they be provided more assets such as combat aircraft and manpower to make the command more self-reliant and stronger in terms of dealing with threats and other requirements on its own, government sources told MAIL TODAY.

The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is the first triservices command in the country where officers and men from all three services work under the leadership of a three-star officer from the Navy. In the presentation, the ANC demanded that the Air Force should provide more assets to it in form of fighter aircraft

which could be stationed at an air base in the Andamans, the sources said. To improve the effectiveness and strength of the Andaman Command which is India's eastern-most front in the Bay of Bengal and overlooking the Indian Ocean, the Air Force has plans of deploying its fighter squadron detachments at a new base in Kamorta islands. However, it is learnt that the Air Force would only be sending temporary detachments at the base but it would not be possible for it to deploy the planes permanently in the territory. A new airfield is planned to be set up in the Kamorta Island which would be capable of operating fighter planes whenever required by the service. The Army also has over 1,000 troops which carry out amphibious operations role in the Island territory which has 527 small and big islands of which the majority are uninhabited.

The Army troops are stationed there under the 108 amphibious brigade which is trained for landing on sea shores to launch attacks inside enemy territory. The Navy also maintains a small number of warships including amphibious vessels which can carry Army troops for operations. During the presentation, the Andaman Command also showcased a case for providing it more powers to deal with the tri-services set up and further improving the integration of the troops under a single command. In the recent times, the government has been thinking about moving towards theatre command structure to deal with the security threat around the country. As per reports, the theatre commands would see the country divided into geographical units with single Commanders.

Business Standard

Tue, 15 May, 2018

HAL offers 40 more Sukhois at one-third of Rafale's cost

Rationalising the proposal for 40 additional Su-30s, Raju said they were needed to carry the BrahMos air-launched cruise missile (ALCM)

With the Sukhoi-30MKI fighter — the backbone of the air force fleet — nearing the end of its production run, its manufacturer, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), is taking up a case to build 40 more. If the defence ministry accepts HAL's proposal, the inventory of the Russian fighter would be enhanced from the planned 272 to 312. With HAL offering to price the additional Su-30s at just Rs 4.25 billion, the fighter will be barely one-third the cost of the Rafale. According to a Business Standard analysis, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is paying Rs 11.25 billion per Rafale, excluding the price of weapons and logistics.

HAL Chairman T Suvarna Raju said: "We will offer a very competitive price. Since 2010, we have been



delivering the Su-30 at Rs 4.25 billion. We can deliver another three squadrons at that same price." So, the IAF will pay Rs 170 billion for 40 additional Su-30s. However, that would involve buying the fighters in ready-to-assemble kits from Russia and putting them together in Nashik. "HAL has already absorbed the technology for building and supporting the Su-30s. Now, the aim is to build those three new squadrons as quickly, and as cheaply, as possible," said Raju. Rationalising the proposal for 40 additional Su-30s, Raju said they were needed to carry the BrahMos air-launched cruise missile (ALCM). "We are required to modify 40-odd Su-30s to carry the BrahMos ALCM. Instead of upgrading

older fighters, with a shorter residual lifespan, it would be better to build three more squadrons of Sukhois with the capability to carry BrahMos missiles," said Raju. The air-launched version of the BrahMos has been downsized to 8 metres and 2,560 kgs. Even so, mounting it on a Su-30 requires reinforcing the aircraft's

underbelly and installing a heavy-duty mounting station. After years of development, the BrahMos was successfully test-fired from a Su-30 in November.

Ministry sources indicate a proposal to build more Su-30s would be considered positively, given the shortfall of IAF fighter squadrons. HAL is currently building the last 23 Su-30s of the 272 it was mandated to build. The IAF's first 50 Su-30s were built in Russia.

Even as HAL Nashik builds the last Su-30s on order, HAL and Sukhoi have negotiated the upgrade of the Sukhoi fleet. HAL officials said they wanted to be the lead agency, but Sukhoi has indicated it wanted a 50 per cent share in this lucrative contract to upgrade the fighter's avionics, including radar, glass cockpit displays, electronic warfare systems, warning systems and jammers. "The IAF has already frozen its upgrade requirements. We are now waiting for the commercial proposal from Russia," said Raju. HAL estimates an avionics upgrade for the Su-30 would cost upwards of Rs 1 billion per aircraft, placing the cost of upgrading 312 fighters at Rs 312 billion. Officials said the upgrade would have two distinct parts. In Phase I, Sukhoi would take over some IAF Su-30s and use them as prototypes to install and certify new-generation avionics and weapons upgrades. HAL would install those upgrades in the entire fleet. Phase II, which would involve India-specific enhancements, would be designed and developed by HAL and also incorporated on to the fighter by HAL.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, 15 May, 2018

Sonam Wangchuk's solar-heated mud huts find a taker in Army

The Army has shown interest in pre-fabricated solar heated mud huts which engineer-turned-innovator Sonam Wangchuk has developed. The huts are eco-friendly and would not require massive heating during winters in Ladakh, Wangchuk's home, which is one of the coldest mountain deserts in the world. Wangchuk, on whose life the character Amir Khan played in 'Three Idiots' was based, said that a prototype has been successfully built and the Army was interested in at least 10, 000 such structures. Talking on the sidelines of a J&K government function in Srinagar on Monday, Wangchu said he plans to set up a plant in Ladakh.

"Solar passive structures are not new. However, these are movable, prefabricated and can be assembled on the spot and give solutions to meet the Army's shelter requirements. The cost of heating will be zero. Even if the temperature outside is minus 20 degrees Celsius, it will be 20 degrees Celsius inside the hut, without any heating. This is going to get rid of all the pollution caused by the massive amounts of oil the Army consumes to keep the jawans warm," Wangchuk told ET. "We are doing several more prototypes. It will be scaled up. I don't think the Army has formulated a policy, but they have shown keen interest and are paying for the prototypes," he said. Army would pay Wangchuk for construction of all prototypes. The plant in Ladakh will be under the Alternative Mountain University, which Wangchuk is in the process of establishing. "Materials will be fabricated in the plant for a whole year and assembled on the spot in summer when the weather is fine. One hut will take just two weeks to be set up," he said. The Chinese too have made inquiries about such structures, said Wangchuk. "This can be used in Tibet and different parts of central Asia. We have to wake up to challenges of climate changes," he said.

Poll was most expensive ever: Survey

The just-concluded Karnataka Assembly elections were the “most expensive ever” Assembly polls in the country in terms of money spent by political parties and their candidates, according to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary development research and facilitative think-tank. It described the electoral exercise as a “money guzzler.”

According to the organisation, the money spent by various parties and their candidates in Karnataka was in the range of Rs 9,500-10,500 crore — more than twice of what was spent in the 2013 Assembly polls. “This does not involve the costs of the PM’s campaign,” the survey claimed. It said Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, in that order, had been the highest poll-time spenders in the country. “... at this rate, the 2019 LS poll expenditure estimate will be Rs 50,000 -60,000 crore against Rs 30,000 crore spent in 2014,” explained N Bhaskara Rao of the CMS. In the Karnataka polls this time, the share of each candidate’s expenditure was 75 per cent of the total poll cost. “In the case of the LS polls in 2019, each candidate’s share is expected to be 55-60% and parties’ expenditure will increase to 29-305,” it said. — PTI