

# **Akash Vs SPYDER of Israel: UAE will be the first country in the Gulf to get Made in India Akash**

*By Humma Siddiqui*

At the recently concluded visit by a high-level defence delegation from UAE, 'Made in India' Akash surface-to-air missile system (SAM) was high on the agenda.

Sources confirmed to FE Online that the delegation led by UAE Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi Al Falacy is keen on buying this missile which has been indigenously made by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

If the missile which is totally indigenously is being produced by defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), has an interception range of 25-km, is exported to UAE, it will be the first time ever that India would have exported a system like this to a Gulf country.

The missile meant to keep fighter aircraft, helicopters and drones from attacking critical installations is comparable to the SPYDER (Surface-to-air PYTHON and DERBY) Missile of Israel. The SPYDER is a short and medium range mobile air defence system developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems with assistance from Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

India's Akash is packed with a battery that can track and attack several targets simultaneously; the missile can carry a warhead of 60 kgs and can hit the target up to 30 Kms.

The SPYDER is a low-level, quick reaction missile expected to neutralise hostile targets up to 15 km away and at heights between 20 and 9,000 metres.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has already inducted the SPYDER Missile along with the homemade Akash surface-to-air missile (SAM) with a range of 25 km as part of a strategic planning for a double layer approach to defend critical assets and locations in the country.

The Israeli Missile can provide air defence for fixed assets and for point and area defence for mobile forces in combat areas fitted on either Tata Trucks or Scania P-series truck, or a Dongfeng truck.

However, the Akash Missile can be launched from static or mobile platforms and can handle multi-target and destroy manoeuvring targets such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), fighter aircraft, cruise missiles and missiles launched from helicopters. The system also defends vulnerable areas in all weather conditions against medium-range air targets being attacked from low, medium and high altitudes.

India has made certain changes in its Defence Export Policy which would enable it to export different platforms to friendly nations.

As reported by FE Online earlier, the UAE government is possibly looking at the DRDO-developed Astra 70-kilometer range air-to-air missile too to be fitted on the Mirage fighter planes that it is operating.

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