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Metcalf House, Delhi - 110 054

Defence ministry to adopt new procurement policy

The ministry will also identify other defence equipment where the policy can be applied.

Shaurya Karanbir Gurung

New Delhi: The defence ministry will be adopting a new procurement policy that will define the level of indigenous content for defence equipment and give higher preference to local vendors in contracts and to start with, it has identified military textiles such as bulletproof jackets, boots and high altitude clothing for this purpose.

The ministry will also identify other defence equipment where the policy can be applied. The matter stems from an order issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in June 2017 on 'Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India)'. A meeting was recently held on the policy in Mumbai. Comprising of senior officers from the army, it focused on notifying indigenous content in the supply of technical textiles by Indian vendors. This means that the defence ministry and the army with other stakeholders will define the quantity of indigenisation in textile-based items such as bulletproof jackets, bulletproof patkas (similar to helmets), super high altitude clothing, boots and sleeping bags. A similar meeting was held by Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra in December.

According to the order, the minimum local content for an item should be 50%. While officials explained that quantum of indigenous content has not been fixed, the order adds that a ministry can prescribe a higher or lower percentage of it for a particular product.

"The nodal ministry may annually review the local content requirements with a view to increasing them, subject to availability of sufficient local competition with adequate quality," the order said.

Another important part of the order is that the purchase preference for a product will be given to local suppliers. An official explained that in the procurement of an item where there is an adequate vendor base and if its value is Rs 50 lakh or less, then only local suppliers are eligible.

In cases where the procurement value is more than Rs 50 lakh, if the L1 (lowest bidder) is a local supplier, the contract for the full quantity will be awarded to it. However, if the L1 is a foreign vendor, then only 50% of the order quantity will be awarded to it.

"Thereafter, the lowest bidder among the local suppliers, will be invited to match the L1 price for the remaining 50%. This will, however, be subject to the local supplier's quoted price falling within the margin of the purchase preference," explained an official.

If the lowest eligible local supplier fails to match the L1 price, then the next higher local supplier within the margin of the purchase preference will be invited to match the L1 price for the remaining quantity.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/defence-ministry-to-adopt-new-procurement-policy/articleshow/69260391.cms>

Fri, 10 May 2019

US, Japan, India and Philippines challenge Beijing in South China Sea with joint show of Force

Naval exercises come amid tense trade negotiations between China and Washington

By Jon Sharman

A US warship joined vessels from Japan, India and the Philippines in a new show of force in the contested South China Sea.

The strategically important waterway is claimed almost in its entirety by China but this is hotly disputed by Beijing's neighbours.

The US guided missile destroyer William P Lawrence conducted drills with the Japanese aircraft carrier Izumo, two Indian naval ships and a Philippine patrol vessel in the waterway claimed by China, the US Navy said on Thursday.

While similar exercises have been held in the area in the past, the combined display by four countries represented a fresh challenge to Beijing as Donald Trump threatened to hike tariffs on \$200bn-worth (£154bn) of Chinese goods, amid talks aimed at ending the countries' trade war.

"Professional engagements with our allies, partners and friends in the region are opportunities to build upon our existing, strong relationships," Commander Andrew Klug, the captain of the *Lawrence*, said in a statement.

The Independent has contacted China's foreign ministry for comment.

During the week of joint drills, which ended on Wednesday, two other US warships sailed near islands in the region claimed by China on Monday, prompting a protest from Beijing, which said the action infringed its sovereignty.

The US Navy claimed it conducted such freedom of navigation operations in international waters around the world, even in seas its allies say are theirs, without political considerations.

Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam all have competing claims to parts of the South China Sea. The US, Japan and India do not have any territorial claims there.

In a previous challenge to China in Asian waters, the *Lawrence* and another US destroyer sailed through the Taiwan Strait in April. The body of water separates Taiwan, which Beijing views as a rogue province, from the Chinese mainland.

(Additional reporting by Reuters)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/south-china-sea-military-us-navy-japan-philippines-trump-trade-war-a8906516.html>

Question mark on Chinese Navy long-range deployment capacity: Top defence sources

The last time a Chinese nuclear submarine came close to the Indian waters was in August 2018, but it returned to its territory from the Sunda Straits

New Delhi: Since September 2017, no Chinese nuclear or conventional submarine has entered the Indian Ocean Region, raising a question mark on the ability of the People's Liberation Army's Navy to deploy its underwater warships far away from its mainland.

The last time a Chinese nuclear submarine came close to the Indian waters was in August 2018, but it returned to its territory from the Sunda Straits. The submarine rescue vessel accompanying it did come to Colombo but returned from there, defence sources said here.

Before the last deployment in 2017, every three months the Chinese would alternatively send their conventional and nuclear submarines to the Indian Ocean Region and they would either go to Djibouti or Pakistan Navy base in Karachi, sources said.

The Chinese had started sending their submarines to the Indian Ocean Region since December 2013 which would cross all over from their eastern seaboard through southeast Asia before crossing the Malacca Straits and enter the Indian Ocean. They have had problems with the maintenance of their vessels in the past also and it seems that this is also impacting their long-range deployment strategy, the sources said.

The Chinese Navy has been sending its warships to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea for deployment in the Gulf of Aden in the name of anti-piracy patrols but experts have questioned their deployment for acting against pirates who use very basic boats and equipment for hijacking merchant ships.

Sources said India has been scanning its areas of interest and have been detecting and tracking Chinese underwater fleet including its nuclear boats.

China has been in an expansion mode for its Navy in the last many years as it wants to develop long legs in the sea for protecting its sea trade and also project power through its flotilla.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/question-mark-on-chinese-navy-long-range-deployment-capacity-top-defence-sources/articleshow/69249728.cms>



US tests missile on same day as North Korea's

Seoul: The US Air Force has tested a missile on the same day that North Korea is suspected of having launched two short-range missiles.

The Air Force says it launched a Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missile on Thursday from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

It says the launch was part of regularly scheduled tests of ICBMs to ensure they are ready for potential combat. It said the test was unrelated to any world events. It was the second such test in a little over a week. The Air Force normally does four or five such tests each year.

The ICBM test launches are planned months in advance.

The Air Force moved a Minuteman 3 missile from a launch silo controlled by the 90th Missile Wing at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming to the launch site at Vandenberg.

North Korea's launch was its second in five days and a possible warning that nuclear disarmament talks with Washington could be in danger. South Korea's military says North Korea has fired two suspected short-range missiles. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff earlier said North Korea fired at least one projectile from its western province on Thursday afternoon. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said later that the North fired what appeared to be two short-range missiles. It says they flew 420 kilometers (260 miles) and 270 kilometers (167 miles), respectively.

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2019/world/us-tests-missile-on-same-day-as-north-korea---s.html>

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Fri, 10 May 2019

NASA spacecraft to collide with moon asteroid in 2022

NASA is planning to launch a spacecraft aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that is expected to hit a moonlet in the binary asteroid system Didymos in September 2022

New York: On Monday, the US space organisation NASA gave details about hitting a small moonlet target in a double asteroid system with its spacecraft in 2022 in its first mission to demonstrate a planetary defence technique- Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART).

NASA is planning to launch a spacecraft aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that is expected to hit a moonlet in the binary asteroid system Didymos in September 2022.

The space organisation on Monday said that the DART is scheduled to be launched in mid-2021. The DART will intercept the moonlet target by using solar electric propulsion when the asteroid would be within 11 million kilometres of Earth.

NASA said that the asteroid poses no threat to Earth, news agency *IANS* reported.

NASA researchers had been making efforts to observe the binary asteroid system from Earth since 2015. An international campaign coordinated by Cristina Thomas of Northern Arizona University is now making important observations regarding the state of Didymos before DART reaches it.

NASA said, "Current observations will help researchers to better understand the extent of the impact made when DART slams into its target, Didymos B, in September 2022."

Andy Rivkin, a co-lead of the investigating team told the news agency, "The Didymos system is too small and too far to be seen as anything more than a point of light, but we can get the data we need by measuring the brightness of that point of light, which changes as Didymos A rotates and Didymos B orbits."

<https://www.timesnownews.com/international/article/nasa-spacecraft-to-collide-with-moon-asteroid-in/415607>