

Defence ministry clears decks for ₹217 billion chopper buy

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New Delhi, 30 July

The defence ministry on Monday announced it had approved 'implementation guidelines for the strategic partnership model'.

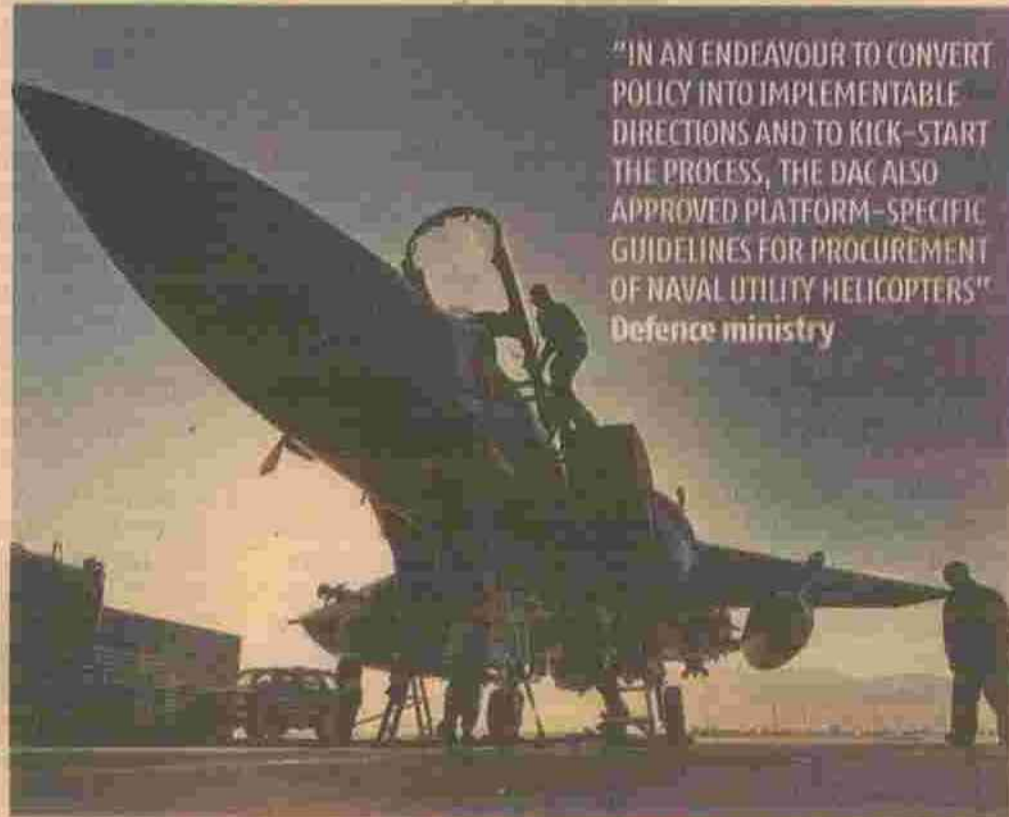
The 'strategic partner' (SP) model of defence procurement, which was promulgated in outline in May 2017, provides a policy framework for Indian firms to manufacture specified defence platforms in India based on technology transferred by a selected foreign vendor.

The SP policy initially aims at building four categories of weaponry — fighters, helicopters, submarines, and armoured vehicles.

But while the policy framework had been drawn up, and retrospectively included as a chapter in the Defence Procurement Procedure of 2016 (DPP 2016), there was a need for separate selection criteria for each of the four equipment categories.

"In an endeavour to convert policy into implementable directions and to kick-start the process, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) also approved platform-specific guidelines for procurement of naval utility helicopters," said a defence ministry release on Monday.

That clears the decks for initiating the ₹217.38 billion procure-



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Defence ministry

ment of 111 helicopters for the navy.

"The amplifying guidelines lay emphasis on incentivisation of transfer of niche technology and higher indigenous content. Global majors who in collaboration with Indian partners are ready to make India a regional/global manufacturing hub for the platform will also be incentivised," said the defence ministry release.

"All procurements under the

SP model would be executed by specially constituted empowered project committees to provide focused attention and ensure timely execution," stated the ministry.

In the SP pipeline are 110 medium fighters for the air force, 123 naval multi-role helicopters, 111 naval utility helicopters, and six conventional submarines under Project 75-I.

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Business Standard, Delhi

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The DAC also accorded approval on

Monday for buying eight fast patrol vessels for the Coast Guard under the 'Buy Indian – Indian Designed Developed and Manufactured' category for approximately ₹8 billion. "These vessels will be indigenously designed and manufactured and would strengthen maritime security by undertaking day/night patrolling and policing of (India's maritime zones)," said the defence ministry.