

Govt approves ₹46K cr for guns, missiles & copters

Focus on Make in India, indigenous tech; aim to boost Naval power

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 25

Just 10 days before the crucial the 2+2 India-US strategic dialogue on security, the defence ministry on Saturday approved procurement of weaponry amounting to a whopping ₹46,000 crore. The ministry's decision would pave the way for private Indian firms to start negotiations with global arms manufacturers, including those from the US, to seek technology transfers to set up domestic production infrastructure.

The highlight of decisions taken by the defence acquisition council (DAC), chaired by defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman, is the go-ahead to acquire 111 utility helicopters for the Indian Navy at a cost of over ₹21,000 crore.

"This is the first project under the MoD's prestigious strategic partnership (SP) model that aims at providing significant fillip to the government's 'Make in India' programme," the ministry said.

The utility helicopters will be used in attack missions as well as for search

and rescue and surveillance operations.

The DAC also granted approval for procurement of 150 indigenously-designed and developed 155 mm advanced towed artillery gun systems for the Indian Army at an approximate cost of ₹3,364.78 crore. These guns have been designed and developed by the state-run Defence Research and Development Organi-

sation (DRDO). To enhance the capability of the Navy, approval has also been granted for procurement of 24 anti-submarine warfare capable multi-role helicopters that are an integral part of frontline warships, like aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates and corvettes.

The decision comes at a time when US firm Lockheed Martin is looking forward to

■ Turn to Page 4

Govt approves ₹46cr for guns, missiles, copters

■ Continued from Page 1
negotiations to sell its MH-60R multi-role anti-submarine warfare helicopters to the Indian Navy. The proposal may come up when defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman and foreign minister Sushma Swaraj hold talks with their American counterparts secretary of defense James Mattis and secretary of state Michael Pompeo, in Delhi on September 6.

The defence ministry also approved procurement of 14 vertically-launched short range missile systems for enhancing naval ships' defence against missile attacks. Of these, 10 systems will be developed indigenously. In May last year, the defence ministry had finalised the strategic partnership model

under which select private firms are to be roped in to build submarines, fighter jets, choppers and armoured fighting vehicles/main battle tanks in India in partnership with foreign entities. The policy envisages establishment of long-term strategic partnerships between Indian defence majors and global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) for technology transfer and domestic manufacture.