

newsx The Sunday Guardian INDIAN DEFENCE & AEROSPACE SUMMIT

CONTINUED FROM P14

Another area where the Navy chief sought private partnership was the maintenance of repair of warships that have the lifespan of at least 30 years which goes up to 50 years in case of an aircraft carrier. "According to estimates, 90% of ship repairs in India are done by the Indian vendors. India has a great potential of becoming the regional ship repair hub," Admiral Singh said.

The two chiefs also emphasised on indigenisation of key components and developing niche capability and technol-

industry can contribute towards the development of the armed forces," Fraser said.

Interacting in a round table conference, India's Army chief General Bipin Rawat and Admiral Tim Fraser, the UK's Vice Chief of Defence Staff spoke on different topics, including defence cooperation between India and the UK. Rawat said India should be given a larger role in global decision-making.

"India should be given a bigger role in making decisions at the global level. The time has now come to make decisions. India is one of the largest contributors to UN



Lt. Gen. M.M. Narvane, Vice Chief, Indian Army, at the summit.



DG K. Natarajan, Indian Coast Guard chief at the summit.

ogy in the Defence sector. Admiral Singh said unmanned solutions like robotics would play a crucial role in the future warfare. "The private players must learn to convert commercial solutions into military products and this is how the defence sector can contribute to the government's dream of becoming the \$5 trillion economy," he said.

LEARNT A LOT FROM INDIAN ARMED FORCES: FRASER

Admiral Tim Fraser, UK's Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, spoke about modernisation of the armed forces and bilateral cooperation between the Indian and the British armed forces.

"Working with the Indian armed forces closely during the United Nation's peace keeping mission in South Sudan, we have worked closely in many aspects and have learnt a lot from them and we can take this experience forward in all our future cooperation," Admiral Tim Fraser said.

He further said that with the changing times, the armed forces also needs to change and that armed forces will need to collaborate with the industry to enable more intelligence and advanced technology and modernisation.

"We need to collaborate with enterprises from outside the Defence segment who could have more advanced or modernised technology and this way, the

peace keeping and we have always participated as and when we have been asked to," he said.

Commenting on terrorism, Fraser said that there was no common solution to how to combat terrorism as every nation has its own definition of terrorism. "What all nations must come and do is to participate in information and intelligence sharing at both bilateral and multi-lateral level as it will act a key aspect to deter terrorism," he said.

Agreeing with Tim Fraser, General Rawat said that sharing of information and intelligence is necessary at the international level. "The scope of bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation between India and UK has a lot of scope," he said.

On the issue of bilateral cooperation between India and UK, General Rawat said, "India inherited the UK's system of armed forces. The UK has moved forward. It is time for us to move in that direction and as rightly done by the UK, we need a joint structure which the UK already has in place," he said.

Rawat said that India needs to learn the new non-contact technological warfare from the UK. "The UK has recently acquired new technological advancements in cyber warfare and there is scope for a bilateral cooperation. We should develop strategic partnership in defence cooperation," he said. He added that India and UK can also share technology related to

'MAKE-IN-INDIA' IN DEFENCE SECTOR WILL HELP REALISE PM'S \$5 TRILLION ECONOMY DREAM



(L-R) Caption Simon Bateman of Australia, Col. Assaf Mahler of Israel, Captain Daniel Fillion of USA, Col. Ludovic Dumont of France, and Brigadier Gavin Thompson of UK with Ashish Singh of NewsX at the Defence Attaches' roundtable.

Air Force and Navy.

'NEED TO FOCUS ON R&D IN DEFENCE SECTOR'

Speaking at a panel discussion on modernization and development opportunities in defence production, Lieutenant General (retired) Subrata Saha, while moderating on the topic, said the government needs to focus more on research and development in the defence sector as only 0.09% of the total GDP of India is contributed to this field whereas the US spends 0.41 of its GDP on the same.

"The government needs to do a detailed mapping of the defence sector and focus more on Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured products. It also needs to develop strategic partnership and provide financial autonomy to the three service headquarters," he said.

Lieutenant General S.S. Hasabnis said that the demands of the armed forces should be duly advertised in the open market and internet so that new people can approach us and show their interest in defence production as this way even foreign players would be able to approach us with the most advanced technology.

Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) G. Ashok Kumar said that indigenous defence production should be the key goal of the armed forces. "Today we have 130 ships that are made in India and absolutely indigenously developed and as we speak, 48 more are in making, of which four are submarines. There is a huge scope for start ups in the defence sector as ship building involves a huge technological system and startups can help us in this," he said.

"The Indian Navy is the first to get indigenous surveillance system, guns and as well as radar system manufactured in India," he said. Speaking on how the Air Force can achieve its true potential, Air Marshal Sandeep Singh said that the Indian defence industry cannot start, sustain and thrive without an internal demand. "We are fully committed to it (making demand for manufacturers). In times to come, we would also be enhancing our exports. In the last 5-6 years, we have made the Make in India process simpler; it is going to become more friendly for small-scale industries in the coming days. The aerospace industry players need to be ready to take some risk as it requires capital and the gestation process is long. Our security scenario is changing very fast so that the timeliness of what we want is important, the industry players need to keep time line in mind," he said.

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FRANCE READY TO CONTRIBUTE TO MOD-

ERNISING INDIAN FORCES: LENAIN

Addressing the session on "Indo-French Strategic Partnership", French Ambassador A.M.B. Emmanuel Lenain said his country is ready to contribute to modernising the Indian forces. "You are well aware of France's long-standing adherence to 'Make in India' as a policy. It is an effort that we will continue to amplify and our proposals, particularly for armaments, will always bear this mark. As such, France is ready to contribute to India's priority of modernising its forces."

"More generally, we are very keen on expanding our partnership in research and innovation. How we tackle the technological challenges today will decide how tomorrow's world will shape up. This is even truer with the digital transformation our societies have embarked on. The partnership for critical digital infrastructure between ATOS and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing is an example to emulate," he said and called for "pooling of our expertise to provide state-of-the-art technology for tomorrow".

"It is often easier, and more reassuring, to simply react. However, we will effectively promote our vision only if we take initiatives, if we proactively propose solutions, if we work to secure a compromise when necessary. France believes in being bold. As evidenced by President Macron's invitation to India to the G7 Summit in Biarritz, last August, France wishes to be the partner of the emerging global India," the French Ambassador pointed out.

RUSSIAN ENVOY REMINDS TIME-TESTED INDO-RUSSIAN FRIENDSHIP

In his address, the Deputy Chief Mission of Russian Embassy Roman Babushkin said the special and privileged strategic partnership between India and Russia is a testimony of the advanced level of bilateral relations. "It is unique, confiding and mutually beneficial by nature, encompassing all possible areas of cooperation. This relationship is based on similar civilisational values, time-tested friendship, mutual understanding, trust, common interests and proximity of approaches to the fundamental issues of development and economic progress," he said.

He said India-Russia ties have successfully coped with the turbulent realities of the contemporary world. "They have never been and will not be susceptible to outside influence. Development of the entire gamut of India-Russia relations is a foreign policy priority for both the countries," he said, adding "that explains why our leaders,

who also enjoy strong personal chemistry, meet each other several times per year - for annual bilateral summits as well as on the sidelines of major international events such as G20, BRICS, SCO, EAS etc".

Talking about future opportunities, Babushkin said: "Next year, we expect many high-level opportunities to further expand our cooperation. In 2020, Russia will host more than 120 events during the Russian presidency in BRICS and numerous meetings as the chair-country in the SCO. Along with traditional annual bilateral summit with India, we are looking forward to welcoming PM Modi to attend the celebrations on 9 May (next year) in Moscow's Red Square dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War with fascist Germany, which was the major contribution to the end of the World War II."

'INDIA NEEDS TO UNSHACKLE THE HOLD OF BUREAUCRACY'

The message coming out of the roundtable session, "India's Strategic Partnerships and Defence Acquisition", at the Indian Defence & Aerospace Summit was that the Modi government's "Make-in-India" move is a step in the right direction, but for the Defence sector to flourish, India has to unshackle the hold of its bureaucracy and further push the ease of doing business in the country. The session, moderated by Ashish Singh, Editor-Strategic Affairs at NewsX, was attended by Brig Gavin Thompson from the UK, Col Ludovic Dumont from France, Capt Daniel Fillion from the US, Col Assaf Mahler from Israel, and Capt Simon Bateman from Australia.

"Businessmen will go where they would find easy to do business. India, for that matter, has certain clear advantages over others. Foremost being easy access to cheap labour in India," said Brig Thompson, adding that ease of doing business would help. "Ease of doing business in India isn't very good despite considerable improvements shown by the country in the last few years." Col Dumont agreed as he said, "Ease of doing business is the key." Capt Bateman, however, believed that the change would happen with time. "India has to be patient. It is reforming and it's very important. But the process would take a long time, just like turning a ship," he said with a smile.

On India being the second largest arms importer, the esteemed panelists believed that India needed to have "strategic patience" and "is doing the right thing". "No country is completely self-reliant in the defence sector. You can't make everything

yourself," said Capt Fillion.

According to Col Mahler, this is the era of partnership, especially in the defence sector. He, however, added that there "is no one single solution to strategic partnerships. It's a process that takes time... It may have an organised structure but the process also needs to be flexible to decide on a case-to-case basis."

Capt Fillon said that two-way business is already in currency and would further increase. "We have to make it three-way or even multi-way. American industry is very much interested in doing business in India." He then said something that gladdened the audience to no end. "We want India to succeed and modernise. After all, we share common interests and even values."

On the important issue of the Modi government's decision to create the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), the panelists thought it was a "good move" but India needed to be pragmatic and patient. "Yes, it's a good move but India must be patient. It must give 5-10 years to get things in place. The forces of resistance and status quo will have to be tackled effectively," observed Brig Thompson. Capt Fillon concurred when he said, "India is ready but it has to have a realistic time-frame. It's a two-generational plan. We must understand that it's not just about army, navy and air force, but also about the bureaucracy that needs to be handled."

DEFENCE CAN BE A POTENTIAL AVENUE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH: NARAVANE

Stating that defence can be a potential avenue for economic growth of country, Lt Gen M.M. Naravane, Vice-Chief of Indian Army said that towards a \$5 trillion economy, we need transformation such as attitudinal change and economic activity. He also stressed the need for strong defensive posture, reforms of the defence industrial base, leverage potential of "Make in India" initiative, impetus to Defence Industrial Corridors and to incorporate scope of exports.

Speaking on "Make in India", he said that we need to focus on integration of initiatives, harmonise efforts, match global standards and set goals to achieve financial turnover. He also said that Indian Army is committed to the indigenization and welcomed any suggestion to make the whole process of involving industries in defense manufacturing faster.

DG DRDO, Dr S. Guruprasad spoke about DRDO technology clusters such as Naval systems & materials, micro-electronic devices and computational systems, life sciences, electronic and communication system, missile and strategic systems, arma-

ment and combat engineering systems and aeronautical systems. Talking about stakeholders, he discussed how DRDO is working with different stakeholders such as forces (users), Ministry of Defence, academia, think tanks and various private industries. He also highlighted milestone achievements of DRDO which include fighter jets, war tanks and missiles. He also said how the indigenous production of these technologies has been challenging for India under very planned technology denial.

DG K. Natarajan, Indian Coast Guard Chief, started with how Indian Coast Guard have been promoting indigenous industry since 1987 when ICG inducted first indigenous Dornier. He also stated how ICG is increasing its exponential efforts and said ICG is now world's 4th

ening to see start-ups in the Defence industry and praised their work in this field. He also said that participation of a large numbers of start-ups is a good sign. He said that though DRDO is a front-ranking organisation in developing technology, the Ministry of Defence is also looking at the industry in this regard.

Kumar also said that today, the industry is coming to take up more challenging tasks without any assistance from the government. Thus, the relationship between the two which was earlier that of a buyer and supplier has now changed to collaborator and partner. He also said that now the industry can approach forces with their proposals and forces can take their call on it. For Kumar, this is very relevant, especially in new



Dr S. Guruprasad, DG DRDO, at the summit.



A delegate asking a question at the summit.

largest Coast Guard. Talking about Make in India, he started with ancient India when, according to many historians, India was known for its expertise in building industry.

He also discussed ICG's projects with the Indian shipyards such as interceptor boats built by ABG shipyard, L&T shipbuilding, Bharti Defence Ltd; special role Vessels built by ABG shipyard; off-shore patrol vessels built by L&T shipbuilding; 14 FPV & training ship under construction by Reliance Naval and Engineering Ltd.

Talking about the advantages of "Make in India", he said that it will help in maintaining operational preparedness, will keep economy in procurement, will help in better post contract management and upgradation of equipment and systems. However, he also highlighted the gaps in indigenization and expectation of ICG from industry in his talk.

'EXPORT IMPORTANT FOR VIBRANT DEFENCE INDUSTRY'

Ashok Kumar, Defence Secretary said that for a vibrant defence industry, looking at domestic demand is not enough. He said that export is an important component of a vibrant defence industry. According to Kumar, Indian defence exports are in application in at least dozens of countries. He also said that India is increasing the line of credit to promote domestic product overseas.

He also said that it is heart-

technology areas. He said that innovations of industry must be integrated to relevant platforms and defence PSUs have an important role to play in this regard. He concluded by saying that it is at a crucial time that the partnership between the industry and DRDO is unfolding.

INDIA-ISRAEL PARTNERSHIP BASED ON VALUES

The Ambassador of Israel to India, Dr Ron Malka, said the "natural allies"—India and Israel—must come together to fight bigger challenges like food and water scarcity and cyber attack for larger global peace and harmony. Speaking at the summit, Malka said India and Israel have the potential of developing niche technology and innovations to get rid of water and food scarcity apart from countering the common threat of terrorism.

Citing a personal experience from the water scarcity in the entire Middle East nearly 40 years ago, Malka said Israel has been successful in new innovations to achieve water security and now it is in a position to meet the water requirements of neighbouring countries. He said that the India-Israel partnership was based on the values and the vision the two countries share with each other.

(With inputs from Abhinandan Misra, Dibyendu Mondal, Navtan Kumar, Pratyush Deep Kotoky, Rakesh Ranjan and Utpal Kumar)