DEFENCE & SECURITY REVIEW

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CONTENT

ARMS DYNAMIC AND INDIA: NOT A DUBIOUS DISTINCTION ANYMORE

DEBA R MOHANTY

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (hereafter, SIPRI), considered a comprehensive source of data on global military expenditure and arms transfers, in a recent press release (April 25 2022), cited India as the world's top five military spenders in 2021. India has surpassed UK and Russia and been ranked third in the list, spending USD 76.6 billion in 2021. It has been on the list of 'top five global military equipment importers' for the last two decades or more, while its total annual military expenditure has figured in the list for the first time. At a time when India is striving hard to reduce its import dependency, thus coming out of the embarrassing 'weapons merchants'

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paradise' tag and aspiring to become a global arms exports hub, its major hard power indicators like military budget, as reflected by SIPRI, would obviously come under closer scrutiny by major powers as well as others. Influential constituents within the developed world, adhering to 'guns vs. butter' narratives, will yet again be at the forefront in accusing India of spending too much on the military while neglecting human development efforts. Among others, books like India's Ad Hoc Arsenal: Direction or Drift in Defence Policy by Chris Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1994) and Arming Without Aiming: India's Military Modernization by Stephen P Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press; 2012) typify western thinking on Indian hard power.

As per SIPRI estimates, global military spending has defied pandemic logic and witnessed a 0.7 per cent increase over the previous year. Trends for the last four decades suggest that it had reached USD 1.26 trillion at current prices in 1987, when the Cold War had reached its apex. It went down to USD 762 billion in 1996 (the impact of the end of the Cold War was visible then) and started rising again to reach the Cold War high in 2007. An upward movement in global military expenditure has continued since then. The increase, pandemic notwithstanding, has been moderate since 2015. It may see an unprecedented increase in coming times as the war in Ukraine continues and touch USD 3 trillion in the next six to seven years. If current instabilities in various parts of the world start worsening further, even a substantial increase would be considered the 'new normal. Countries like the US, Russia, China and even countries from Europe would drive this increase in the near future. It is not only undesirable but also worrisome, to say the least.

Military efforts – resources allocations, equipment sales and purchases, R&D expenses, etc. – by states have shown great contrasts and inequalities, at least ever since the modern state structure came into being after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Inequalities in hard power existed before as well. It sharpened during the Cold War period as both superpower blocs – the US and the then USSR – were engaged in an arms race that came to a halt in the late 1980s when a series of events unfolded that brought down the Iron Curtains and ended the Cold War. It was then argued that military efforts by states would decrease and result in what is referred to as a 'peace dividend'. It happened during the period 1989 and 1997 when the so-called peace dividend resulted in drastic cuts in military expenditure by major states. Interestingly, the drastic cuts by Western powers had resulted in a massive consolidation of arms industries, which in turn resulted in a cyclical upsurge in arms exports again since the late 1990s. It may further be argued that global military expenditure did not rise after 9/11 but had started much before, thus demolishing the peace dividend narrative. The spending spree showed some signs of stagnancy during and after the global financial crisis in the late 2000s, but it was short-lived once again primarily because major arms producers did precious little to reduce their arms production efforts. Instead, they went full throttle in expanding their supplies to willing buyers. The famous often cited farewell speech of former US President Dwight Eisenhower on January 17 1961, emphasized the power of conscious global citizenry as the only solution to check the 'undue influence of the military-industrial complex' (MIC – the term was coined by Malcolm Moos, who had written Eisenhower's farewell speech), has even lost its colloquial meaning now. The world does not appear to show any sign of deceleration in arms production and trade.

If the recent ideational expressions by top Indian leaderships are of any indication, India of late has shown overt intent to increase its hard power attributes – a trend that started in the early 2000s and has only grown in qualitative and quantitative aspects. India's full-scale military modernization gained momentum after the Kargil conflict in 1999, coupled with a wide range of reforms in the military sector, and has shown no sign of deceleration in the last two decades. However, a closer look at India's military efforts would denote two pointers – a) sudden upsurge in military spending has been more of a 'arsenal replenishment' than real growth in military capacities, and b) reforms in the military-industrial sector have seen more 'disruptive' in contours and processes as large procurement budgets were executed in a much slower pace than otherwise warranted. These two factors, along with India's inabilities to balance the revenue (salaries, administrative expenses, etc.) and capital (equipment purchases) expenditures, have resulted in a situation that has further propelled the western narrative of 'arming without aiming' or 'ad-hoc arsenal' build up. India still spends much less than what US or China spend, its military expenditure to GDP ratio of less than 2 percent is much less in comparison to all big and aspiring powers taken together. Real expenditure in both constant and current prices is much lower than what has been projected by SIPRI and others, as argued long ago by noted scholar G Balachandran in his seminal piece in Conventional Arms Transfers (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses; 1995). Most publications emanating from India on hard power attributes procure their data from sources like SIPRI, which invariably leads to erroneous assumptions. Narratives aside, one may ponder how India's almost stagnant military expenditure for the last half a decade has still been able to meet its security challenges in real (long military stand-off with China) and subjective realms while engaged in a multi-year military modernization programme.

There appears to be a symbolic transition for India from being one of the 'top five military equipment spenders (importer)' to the 'top five military spenders' in the world. While the former is addressed through various initiatives like Make in India, self-reliance in defence, strategic partnerships, and more resources for domestic manufacturers, the latter tag symbolically or otherwise has announced its arrival on the global stage.

The author is Editor, Defence and Security Review (DSR). Views are personal.

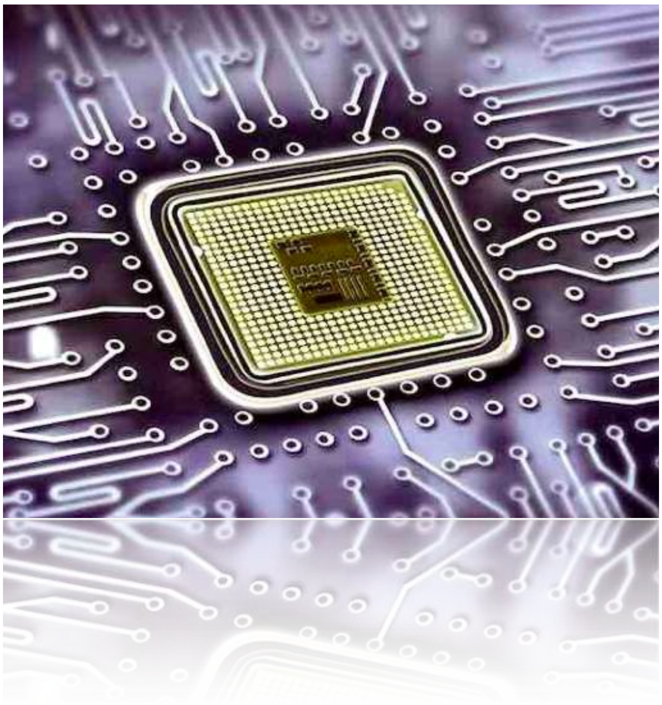
BRIEF: No. 1

NATIONAL SECURITY

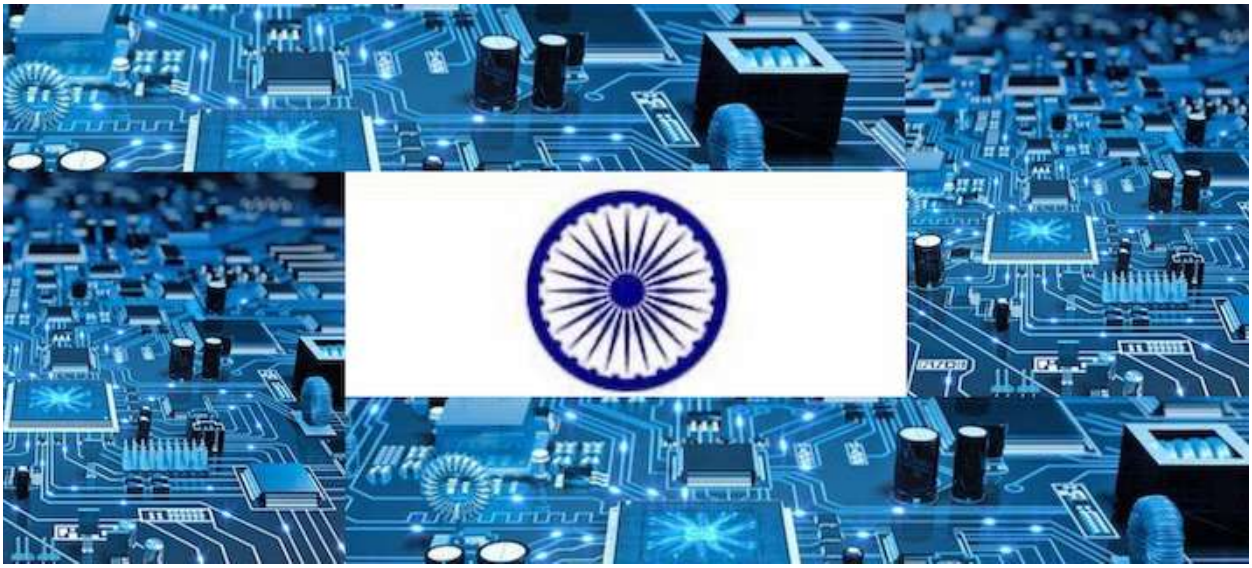
India's Tryst with Semiconductor Manufacturing

DEBA R MOHANTY

India has stated its intent to be a major player in semiconductor manufacturing in the near future. It is scrambling its material and financial resources, wooing investors and strategic partners from abroad, sprucing up domestic engineering and allied resources, encouraging industry-academia joint efforts and striving to create a determined political will to succeed in this niche field. Needless to say, the semiconductor manufacturing universe is capital intensive with a long gestation period, critically dependent on high technology engineering design and availability of strategic minerals, a reasonable pool of talents and most importantly, a clearly defined roadmap.



India's past record in attempting semiconductor manufacturing and becoming a hub in one of the top high-tech domains has been a mixed bag. Almost coinciding with the US attempts during the late 1950s and early 1960s, India had shown its interest in the design and development of semiconductors when DRDO established the Solid State Physics Laboratory (SSPL) in 1962 to pursue fundamental and applied research in this emerging field. An interesting similarity between US and Indian attempts, among many others, was that DRDO had an embedded thrust on the military. At the same time, the US Strategic Air Command was the first market for microchip manufacturers. However, major differences in approaches toward achieving lead in this field of technology were many: a) US went beyond its exclusive military domain to encourage scientific innovation and even did not mind bringing in school dropouts, scattered geniuses along with mainstream scientific institutions, India witnessed a gradual insular thinking that encouraged only a few marked institutions like DRDO; b) the American industry was not only full involved in key scientific projects – civilian, military and dual-use – but more importantly funded generously by the Pentagon, armed forces as well as generous philanthropists, while Indian attempts were exclusively made under the government control; c) the American industry-academia-government ecosystem had already gone beyond mere partnerships to embedded symbiotic relations, while the same was almost non-existent in India; and last but not the least, d) global politics during the Cold War period was also instrumental in increasing the technology and manufacturing gaps between the US and emerging countries like Japan, Israel, South Korea, Taiwan and others, while India lagged behind.



Walter Isaacson's The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution (London: Simon & Schuster; 2014) is a good starting point to understand a country's strategic desires in high technology fields and how these are pursued. Unlike the US, where the evolution was consistent, Indian efforts suffered from non- or least involvement of the private sector and academia, imprudent financing, R&D exclusivity and even occasional conspiratorial glitches. Attempts by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to become systems integrators fell through due to a variety of reasons. At the same time, a devastating fire at Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL) in 1989 dashed all hopes that remained for India to be a global hub. The incident, in the absence of concrete evidence, still produces sabotage and conspiracy theories of different kinds to date.

The last three years have seen a sudden surge in India's semiconductor manufacturing activities. At the policy level, the unveiling of the national semiconductor manufacturing roadmap was unveiled in December 2021 with the intent to provide major support for at least four (two semiconductor and two display fabs) companies. An INR 76,000 crore financial assistance has been announced under the evolving Production Linked Schemes (PLI) related to this field. With a 20 year target to become a USD 400 billion manufacturing ecosystem, which may account for around 20 percent of the global manufacturing value by 2040. A designed linked scheme (DLI) for the semiconductor industry has already been announced as well. Government-owned entities like DRDO, ISRO and others are now wooing talents from outside their organizations and tying up with engineering and scientific institutes for joint project developments on different aspects of design and development. The government has already identified at least 20 number of startups for handholding as part of the larger implementation exercise.

With the Indian government's announcement spree at breakneck speed in recent times, response to the call for self-reliance in semiconductor manufacturing also appears promising. Three types of investment proposals in design engineering, fabrication manufacturing and systems integration have been noticed. The first category includes government scientific and engineering institutions led by DRDO, IITs (Bombay, Madras,) and IISC (Bengaluru) and private companies like TCS, Tata Elxsi and others are leading the initiative, while the second category, focused on manufacturing and fab plants, has already received the expression of interest from Vedanta- Foxconn JV, IGSS ventures, ISMC and others (Intel, Micron, Cadence and Global Foundries contemplating investments as well); the third category includes companies and JVs from the second category with Indian conglomerates like Tata and Sons, Adani as partners and a few others are yet to unveil their full roadmaps. A ten-year futuristic semiconductor landscape could see about half a dozen systems integrators and prime manufacturers, who in turn could search and absorb smaller companies into their folds for competition at the apex. Emerging companies like Adroit IC, Ineda Systems, Infinium Technologies, Masamb and others could reach the next levels, with some of them being merged or acquired by big companies. It is interesting to note that some engineering and fabrication intensive companies are also backed by big financial investment firms like ISMC. Even major companies like Foxconn have financial investors like Sterlite. Foreign JV partners would play a critical role, but their strategic intents could be under watch as they evolve in the Indian conditions. Innovations and systems improvements could only be visible once the chaotic industrial and scientific landscape settles down in the next few years.

Pandemic, war, trade wars, nationalism, and uncertain security scenarios have seriously prompted countries like India to pursue self-reliance in all activities. Even established players in the field of high technology like the US are fast abandoning their global footprints and coming back to domestic manufacturing capacity development. President Joe Biden's recent call to the Americans to boost domestic manufacturers in the semiconductor and other high tech fields like 3-D printing serves as a case in point. At the same time, similar insular programmes have been noticed in countries like China, Russia and others. In USD billion terms, China is the frontrunner in investment (150b), followed by South Korea (65b), the EU (35b), India (10b) and Japan (6.8b) in respective semiconductor industries. In a fast restrictive, and inward-looking scenario, India's options for JV partners from established players from Israel, South Korea, and Taiwan could produce better dividends. Still, wooing big established companies from the US or Europe makes sense.

As Isaacson reminds us: you need a large yet definitive roadmap led by the government, a willing national scientific and industrial entities in line with the government thinking, willingness to pour in requisite resources, and national persistence are essential elements to create and nurture a field that is no more confined to military needs alone but ubiquitously spread across all sectors. Geeks, nerds, and school dropout geniuses would sprout automatically once the field of activity showed promise. It all needs political will and the need to join the dots by the collective Indian leadership.

The author is Editor, Defence and Security Review. Views are personal.

BRIEF: No.2

External Relations

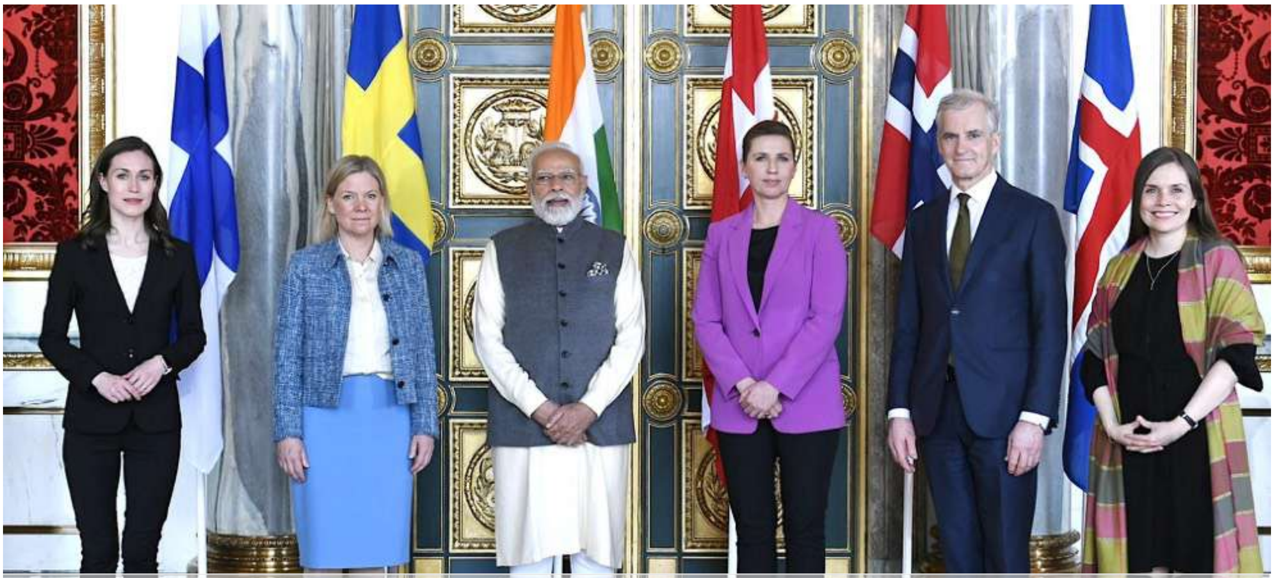
LOCATING EUROPE IN INDIA'S STRATEGIC CALCULUS

DEBA R MOHANTY

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on a three day trip to Europe from 2 to May 4 2022, met leaders from Germany, Denmark and France and participated in the Second Nordic Summit (the First Summit was held in 2018 in Stockholm). The visit comes when the global leaderships are trying individually and collectively to find solutions to the war in Ukraine, existent and threatening issues like climate change, increased protectionism, a further rise of religious fundamentalism, widespread economic distress, and pandemic impacts. India, on its part, has been trying to fathom global issues of concern, respond to challenges, look for economic opportunities and establish its credentials as a formidable leader on the world stage. Prime Minister Modi's visits to multiple capitals, strengthening bilateral relations, dealing with both sub-continental Nordic countries and larger continental Europe and most importantly, projecting India's growing stature and building relationships at bilateral and multilateral levels connote India's evolving yet visible strategic intents.

India's engagement with the larger world in the last few years denotes varied developments. In the first NDA tenure from 2014 to 2019, Prime Minister Modi made 92 trips to 57 countries. By May 2022, Modi's foreign visits totalled 119 visits to 63 countries, including the latest three-nation visit to Europe. Subjective analytics of trips made by Modi to different destinations and their cumulative ideational and value-laden implications appear to have far outweighed the criticisms made by the opposition parties from time to time. A more objective-led assessment would suggest three underlined strategic intents: a) India's carefully crafted global outreach in search of its location in world affairs; b) conscious efforts toward establishing its leadership position in southern Asia; and c) vigorously advancing economic and trade interests. A year or less into the second Modi term, India was confronted with a dual challenge of resisting military aggression from China in the Line of Actual Control in the long Himalayan regions as well as facing multiple challenges arising out of a pandemic that has affected all countries. Both challenges remain dominant, while a third in the form of the recent ongoing war in Ukraine has posed multiple challenges for Indian leadership.

Given the Indian domestic situation that entailed growing challenges across fields spanning from health and family welfare to the national economy, Indian leadership has strived to build more national resilience and crawl amid all difficulties. External situations also entailed constant and vigilant India Indian actions in and around the neighbourhood region and necessitated an active role beyond South Asia. Consider these: a) India's active role in different crises like in Sri Lanka, food security or medical assistance has been pursued with pragmatism; b) its active role has been



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway & Sweden ahead of Second India-Nordic Summit in Copenhagen. (Twitter/MEAIndia, May 04, 2022)

sought by major powers for the diffusion of the situation in Ukraine; c) its evolving role in bilateral and multilateral relations are becoming more and more intense; d) its relations with select countries like UAE, Australia and a few others connote varying degrees of strategic nuances; e) its vociferous avowal on neutrality on conflict situations and articulation of its voice at the high table are getting more apparent day by day; f) its abilities to withstand military threats from bigger power like China shows its resilient hard power and political determination; and last but not least, g) it's overall at shredding the image shibboleth – moving away from an ideological prison to embrace and be a part of hard power dynamic – all taken together and coupled with domestic strengths do suggest a new India. In this larger landscape, Europe's location in Indian strategic calculus must be examined.

Europe's individual and cumulative positions on India portray a mixed picture. In terms of bilateral economic engagements, countries like France and Germany score over others, although the full potential of India-EU business relations is yet to realize their full potential. In terms of markets, although India offers a sizeable scope vis-à-vis China, it has not fully been factored into as an ideal business destination by the European countries. However, some of the established European companies have had a presence in India for several decades. On global issues of concern, Europe and India do not appear to be on the same page again. Differences of opinion on the recent war in Ukraine serve as a case in point – while European countries are more worried about Russian aggressive behaviour and have initiated punitive sanctions, India's stance has actually puzzled many countries in Europe. Ideational as well as ideological considerations have been considered major factors in India-Europe relations for most of the last half-century. India's relations with select European countries like France or Germany in the fields of defence, aerospace and industrial collaborations have been robust, while an intense continental level relationship appears missing. Modi's visit has set the goals for a broader engagement with the EU in general and specific countries in particular.

Modi's intensely packed visit to Europe entails the following: a) deeper engagements with major powers like Germany and France; b) finding newer ways to deepen partnerships with Nordic countries; c) conveying the Indian position on critical international issues, including the war in Ukraine, climate change and green energy; and last but not least, d) wooing European investors as well as Indian diaspora contributions. Beneath the surface, however, pragmatic and business relations remained the core of India's interests. As India has been inviting financial and technological giants to select Indian manufacturing sectors (like defence, aerospace, high technology, cyber security, alternate energy, etc.), participation from European companies could take the India-Europe relations to newer heights in the future. India could benefit much from the participation of Nordic industries in India's marine and allied industries, including advanced food processing industries. It could similarly benefit much from engagement with Germany and French, and other major countries (in addition to heavy engineering, defence and aerospace) in alternate energy technologies, cyber and space technologies, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and IT-enabled services.

Trust, mutual benefits and intense complementarities define the degree of any bilateral or multilateral relations. India's attempts at wooing select countries, sub-regions and continental Europe in a multi-layered framework connote one primary intent. If the meeting of minds is overtly ambivalent, sub-surface complementarities

can dilute divergences to a large extent. It is the latter that symbolizes Modi's visit to Europe.

The author is Editor, Defence and Security Review. Views are personal.

DSR NEWS DIGEST

APRIL 2022

[Compiled by SSPC Research Team]

APRIL 01: 'EAM JAISHANKAR HOLDS TALKS WITH VISITING RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. The high-level talks took place in the backdrop of indications that India could buy greater volumes of discounted Russian oil. Both sides were keen on having a ruble-rupee arrangement for bilateral trade. In his opening remarks at the talks, Jaishankar, referring to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, said India favours resolving differences and disputes through dialogue and diplomacy. "India, as you are aware, has always been in favour of resolving differences and disputes through dialogue and diplomacy, Jaishankar said. On his part, Lavrov said the ties between India and Russia were "very sustainable" during many "difficult times" in the past and that he did not have the slightest of doubts about continued cooperation. (Financial Express)

APRIL 01: 'INDIA SHOULDN'T EXPECT RUSSIA TO HELP IF CHINA VIOLATES LAC, US WARNS'

The US cautioned that there will be consequences for countries actively attempting to "circumvent or backfill" American sanctions against Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine and said it would not like to see a "rapid" acceleration in India's import of energy and other commodities from Russia. Visiting US Deputy National Security Adviser Daleep Singh, referring to the "no limits" partnership between Moscow and Beijing, said India should not expect Russia to come to its defence in case China violates the Line of Actual Control (LAC). After holding a series of meetings with Indian interlocutors including Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, he also said that the US would not like to see any country engaging in financial transactions with the Russian central bank. (Economic Times)

APRIL 04: 'INDIA, AND AUSTRALIA HAVE ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE INDO-PACIFIC: O'FARRELL'

Australia and India have accepted a shared responsibility to ensure a peaceful and inclusive Indo-Pacific where the rights of all states are respected regardless of their size, Australian High Commissioner Barry O'Farrell said on May 3 2022. The envoy also said that the invasion of Ukraine will have implications for regional security. "Current events in Europe remind us of the profound strategic challenges and disruption the world is facing. The order that has supported peace and prosperity over decades is being challenged," he said. "And there's no doubt the implications of the invasion of Ukraine will reverberate in our region for some time," O'Farrell added. (PTI/ The Print)

APRIL 06: 'HAL TIES UP WITH ISRAEL AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES TO CONVERT CIVIL AIRCRAFT TO MULTI-MISSION TANKER TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT DEFENCE'

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has entered into an MoU with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) to convert Civil (Passenger) aircraft to Multi-Mission Tanker Transport (MMTT) aircraft in India. Under the pact, HAL will convert pre-owned Civil (Passenger) aircraft into air refuelling aircraft with cargo and transport capabilities, the Bengaluru-headquartered company said on April 5 2022. The move will provide India's defense ecosystem with new capabilities and cost-effective solutions in the market. The statement said that the MoU will facilitate HAL and IAI's decades-long expertise in developing, manufacturing, and producing leading defence platforms. The scope of MoU also covers "passenger to freighter aircraft" conversion along with MMTT conversions. (PTI/News18.com)

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) & Israel Aerospace Industries sign MoU to convert Civil (Passenger) aircraft to Multi Mission Tanker Transport, in India (ANI Twitter, April 06, 2022)

APRIL 08: 'GOVERNMENT RESERVES 25% DEFENCE PROCUREMENT BUDGET FOR DOMESTIC PRIVATE INDUSTRY'

As part of its efforts to encourage the private sector to take part in defence production, the Indian Ministry of Defence has earmarked 25% of the domestic capital acquisition budget or ₹21,149 crores for the sector, the ministry said in a statement on April 7 2022. This comes two months after India set aside 68% of the capital procurement budget for the entire domestic industry during 2022-23 to promote self-reliance in the defence sector. This translated into an amount of ₹ 84,597.89 crores. India allocated ₹5.25 lakh crore for military spending in this year's budget, including a total capital budget of ₹1.52 lakh crore for the modernization of the armed forces. India set aside ₹70,221 crore — 64% of the military's capital budget — for domestic defence procurement last year, compared to ₹ 51,000 crores, or 58% of the capital budget, in 2020-21. (Hinudstan Times)

APRIL 08: 'HELICOPTERS, ARTILLERY, LOITERING MUNITION ON NEW 'NO IMPORT' LIST'

Helicopters, light tanks, loitering munition and a range of missiles and ammunition are on the latest 'no import' list promulgated by the Indian defence ministry, with timelines declared over the next five years to procure them from Indian sources completely. Releasing the list on April 7 2022, defence minister Rajnath Singh said dependence on foreign suppliers leaves India vulnerable and called upon the private industry to deliver on the requirements of the armed forces, pointing out that now a total of 310 major items were on the import ban list. "Earlier, defence equipment such as tanks and helicopters were mainly mechanical. It was not possible to control them. But newer defence systems and platforms are electronic and software (Economic Times)

APRIL 11: 'ANTI-TANK GUIDED MISSILE 'HELINA' SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT-TESTED .'

An Anti-Tank Guided Missile' HELINA' was successfully launched from an indigenously-developed helicopter at high-altitude ranges on April 10 2022, informed the officials from the Indian Ministry of Defence. The flight trials were conducted from an Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and the missile was fired successfully engaging a simulated tank target. The missile is one of the most advanced Anti-Tank weapons in the world and was guided by an Infrared Imaging Seeker (IIR) operating in the Lock on Before Launch mode. The flight test was jointly conducted by the teams of scientists of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Army and Indian Air Force, as part of the user validation trials. (MOD/Press Information Bureau)

APRIL 12: 'US HAS NOT YET MADE DETERMINATION ON POTENTIAL SANCTIONS OR WAIVERS TO INDIA UNDER CATSAA LAW: ANTONY BLINKEN'

The US has not yet made any decision on potential sanctions or waivers to India under CATSAA law for its purchase of the S-400 missile defence system from Russia, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said. The US administration is required under its domestic law, Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) to impose sanctions on any country that has significant transactions with Iran, North Korea or Russia. CAATSA is a tough US law that authorizes the administration to impose sanctions on countries that purchase major defence hardware from Russia in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its alleged meddling in the 2016 US presidential elections. (PTI/The Week)

APRIL 12: 'US JABS CHINA AS IT BACKS INDIA AS 'DEFENCE INDUSTRY LEADER IN INDO-PACIFIC'

The United States "supports India as a defence industry leader in the Indo-Pacific and a net provider of security in the region," US secretary of defense Lloyd J. Austin said after the two countries held the crucial 2+2 ministerial dialogue on April 11 2022. "We all understand the challenges that we're facing. The People's Republic of China is seeking to refashion the region in the international system more broadly in ways it serves its interests," he said. "I am pleased that we have identified new opportunities to extend the operational reach of our militaries. And to coordinate more closely on the expanse of the Indo-pacific. Last year, the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group conducted the first-ever combined anti-submarine warfare and air exercise with the Indian Navy and Air Force, and we're looking more to this sort of cooperation," he stressed. (Hindustan Times)

APRIL 15: 'AFTER TIBETOLOGY, ARMY CRANKING UP MANDARIN AMID LADAKH CONFRONTATION'

The Indian Army is cranking up its expertise on Mandarin and `advanced sector specializations' on China, which comes after additional forces and firepower were `rebalanced' to the northern borders since the military confrontation erupted in eastern Ladakh almost two years ago. After presentations were made to General M M Naravane recently, the 12-lakh strong Army is working to increase basic and advanced levels of Chinese language training for its soldiers within the force as well as in civilian universities and institutions across the country. With China yet to show any signs of de-escalation in eastern Ladakh, the Army commanders' conference to be chaired by Gen Naravane from April 18 to 22 will also review the operational situation, infrastructure build-up and capability development all along the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control (LAC).(Times of India)

APRIL 22: 'UK, INDIA PROMISE PARTNERSHIP ON NEW FIGHTER JET TECHNOLOGY'

Britain and India will strengthen their defense and security ties, including partnering on development of combat jet technology, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced during a trip to New Delhi on April 21 2022. Johnson said the two countries would seek closer defense procurement "to meet threats across land, sea and air, space and cyber, including partnering on new fighter jet technology [and] maritime technologies to detect and respond to threats in the oceans." The reference to a fighter technology partnership likely relates to British efforts to bring India onboard its sixth-generation Tempest Future Combat Air System program. The program, launched by the British in 2018, has been the subject of talks with India for some time as part of a broader push to attract international partners into development of a combat jet with an in-service date of around the middle of the next decade. (Defense News)

APRIL 22: 'MAKE IN INDIA IAF'S FOCUS FOR NEXT MEGA FIGHTER DEAL'

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APRIL 29: 'FROM WHITE ELEPHANT TO ROARING TIGER, DEFENCE PSUS MAKE PROFITS, ACHIEVE TURNOVER OF RS 8,400 CRORE'

Six months after they were formed, six of the seven new Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) have registered provisional profits and achieved a turnover of Rs 8,400 crore, indicating the beginning of the transformation of an erstwhile institution which was plagued with complaints of poor quality products and unionization. The seven DPSUs were formed on October 1, 2021 and carved out of the erstwhile 246-year-old Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). As per a statement issued by the Ministry of Defence on April 28 2022, except Yantra India Limited (YIL), the other six companies — Munitions India Limited (MIL); Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVANI); Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWE India);

Troop Comforts Limited (TCL); India Optel Limited (IOL) and Gliders India Limited (GIL) — have all reported provisional profits. As per the provisional figures for the past six months, MIL, AVNL and IOL have registered profits worth Rs 28 crore, Rs 33.09 crore and Rs 60.44 crore, respectively. The profits for AWEIL, GIL and TCL were Rs 4.84 crore, Rs 1.32 crore and Rs 26 crore, as per the figures. (News18.com/ Press Information Bureau)

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