

DEFENCE MINISTRY SIGNS RS. 2,971 CR. MISSILE DEAL

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Defence related developments

Officials of Defence Ministry and BDL during the signing of contract for ASTRA missiles procurement, in New Delhi. PTIPTI

The Defence Ministry on Tuesday signed a contract with defence public sector undertaking Bharat Dynamics Ltd. (BDL) for supply of the indigenously developed Astra Mk-I Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missiles and associated equipment for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Navy at a cost of Rs. 2,971 Crore.

The missile, for which successful trials have already been undertaken by the IAF, is fully integrated on the Su-30 MK-I fighter aircraft and will be integrated with other fighter aircraft in a phased manner, including the Light Combat Aircraft, the statement said.

Astra has a range of over 100 km with modern guidance and navigation techniques and has midcourse guidance and RF seeker-based terminal guidance to achieve target destruction with pin point accuracy, the DRDO had stated earlier.

In July 2020, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had approved the purchase of 248 Astra-MK1 missiles, of which 200 are meant for the IAF and 48 for the Navy.

Air to Air missile with BVR capability provides large stand off ranges to fighter aircraft which can neutralise the adversary aircraft without exposing itself to adversary air defence measures, thereby gaining and sustaining superiority of the air space. A more sophisticated Astra-Mk2 is under development by DRDO and once it is inducted will free up dependency on imports in the BVR segment.

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