

# MOD SIGNS OVER RS 2,900 CRORE CONTRACT WITH BDL FOR PROCUREMENT OF ASTRA MK I BEYOND VISUAL RANGE AIR TO AIR MISSILE SYSTEM & ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT FOR INDIAN AIR FORCE & INDIAN NAVY

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

In a major boost to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', Ministry of Defence, on May 31, 2022, signed a contract with Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) for supply of ASTRA MK-I Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Air to Air Missile (AAM) and associated equipment for the Indian Air Force & Indian Navy at a cost of Rs 2,971 crore under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category.

Till now, the technology to manufacture missile of this class indigenously was not available. ASTRA MK-I BVR AAM has been Indigenously Designed & Developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) based on the Staff Requirements issued by the Indian Air Force (IAF) catering for Beyond Visual Range as well as Close Combat Engagement reducing the dependency on foreign sources. Air to Air missile with BVR capability provides large Stand Off Ranges to own fighter aircraft which can neutralise the adversary aircraft without exposing itself to adversary Air Defence measures, thereby gaining & sustaining superiority of the Air Space. This missile is technologically and economically superior to many such imported missile systems.

ASTRA MK-I missile and all associated systems for its launch, ground handling & testing has been developed by DRDO in coordination with the IAF. The missile, for which successful trials have already been undertaken by the IAF, is fully integrated on the Su 30 MK-I fighter aircraft & will be integrated with other fighter aircraft in a phased manner, including the Light Combat Aircraft (Tejas). The Indian Navy will integrate the missile on the MiG 29K fighter aircraft.

The Transfer of Technology from DRDO to BDL for production of ASTRA MK-I missile and all associated systems has been completed and production at BDL is in progress. This project will act as a catalyst for development of Infrastructure and Testing facilities at BDL. It will also create opportunities for several MSMEs in aerospace technology for a period of at least 25 years. The project essentially embodies the spirit of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and will help facilitate realising the country's journey towards self-reliance in Air to Air Missiles.

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