

SUBMARINE PLAN MOVES FORWARD AFTER DELAYS

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

Maritime security: Karanj, a Scorpene class submarine, is set afloat during its launch in Mumbai on January 31. APAP

The Navy's mega-deal for procuring six advanced conventional submarines under Project-75I and processed through the Strategic Partnership (SP) model is moving forward after being held up due to policy clarity. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has initiated the process to finalise specific guidelines for the project, estimated to cost over Rs. 60,000 crore.

"A meeting is planned with MoD in mid-September to finalise aspects relevant to submarine specific guidelines for SP model. Specific aspects requiring concurrence of foreign OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) are enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs," the MoD said in a long communication issued to the OEMs in the end of August.

The communication details the desired project outcomes under broad heads like creation of industrial eco-system, the range and scope of technology transfer, indigenisation content, indigenisation of the pressure hull steel, research and development and skilling roadmaps which have detailed enclosures.

Compliance is key

The foreign OEMs have been asked to indicate compliance for each para and sub-para listed and also for all the enclosures along with their observations and remarks and submit their responses by September 11.

"The meetings with MoD are likely to be scheduled in the week commencing September 17. Firm dates and timings will be promulgated at short notice," the communication reads.

Four foreign OEMs have responded to the Navy's Request for Information issued last year. However, further progress got held up as clarity was required on some aspects of the SP model. The contenders are Naval Group of France, Rosoboronexport Rubin Design Bureau of Russia, ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems of Germany and Saab group of Sweden.

From the Indian private sector only two companies, Larsen and Toubro and Reliance Defence, have shipyards and hence eligible to participate in the tender. Mazagon Dock Ltd, a defence public sector undertaking and the only Indian shipyard with experience of manufacturing submarines, is also expected to be considered.

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