

# INDIA LOOKS TO BUY ISRAELI MISSILES

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

An earlier deal was cancelled in January, just ahead of the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to India.

A deal to procure the Spike anti-tank guided missiles from Israel through the government-to-government route has been brought before the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) for approval. However, some validation trials have to be held before the deal is signed.

“Validation trials of the infrared seeker (IR) are to be held. Once the DAC accords approval, the trials will be performed during the summer,” a defence source said.

## Not up to the mark

The deal will feature on the agenda of the DAC which is scheduled to meet early this week. The deal is for 170 launchers, 4,500 missiles and 15 simulators.

Another defence source said the missile did not perform as desired in the previous trials during peak summer temperatures in the desert, and hence the need to validate its performance.

The earlier deal was cancelled in January after protracted negotiations, just ahead of the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to India.

It was decided that the requirement could be met through the indigenous man-portable missile being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

## Off the shelf

However, as the Army is faced with a huge shortage of anti-tank guided missiles and the indigenous system missed development deadlines, it was decided that a smaller number will be procured off the shelf through the government-to-government route.

The earlier \$500-million deal for Spike missiles was accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) by the DAC in 2009 and was approved in October 2014, but contract negotiations dragged on over cost and technology transfer. The deal was for 8,000-plus missiles and 300-plus launchers, along with technology transfer to build them in India.

Spike is a third-generation, fire-and-forget, man-portable missile manufactured by Israel's Rafael.

In all, nearly 40,000 missiles are required to equip the Army's 382 infantry battalions and 44 mechanised regiments.

The indigenous low-weight missile was successfully flight-tested twice by the DRDO from the Ahmednagar test range last week.

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