

Def Min to open up core tech, testing

‘Creating a model for PPP and ease of doing business’

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The next level of reforms under the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme will include promoting indigenous development and production of core technologies in public-private partnership mode and liberalising testing and certification of products, which have so far been a government preserve.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is set to give a big R&D push in core technologies. To begin with, the Ministry will create an enabling ecosystem to develop engines for maritime and airborne platforms through partnerships between defence PSUs and indigenous private players, said top MoD sources.

High-capacity engines

As of now, India manufactures marine diesel engines with a

power output of a maximum of 3 megawatts, but the MoD seeks to create an R&D collaboration to scale it up to 6-10 megawatts to make the country self-reliant, informed government sources. Goa Shipyard, a government ship-building company, has tied up with Rolls Royce to manufacture advanced MTU series 8,000 engines that can give output of up to 10 megawatts to power offshore patrol vessels. After the MoD's new model for Atmanirbhar II comes out, the government will focus on developing engines entirely through PPP mode.

The other area, said an MoD official, of making India self-reliant in the Defence sector is to manufacture multi-role helicopters in the league of Boeing-made Apaches, which the US Army, Indian Air Force and others are flying. It is learnt that the ministry would like the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to tie-up with a domestic private firm



The Defence Ministry will involve private sector in manufacturing multi-role helicopters in the league of Boeing-made Apaches, which the US Army, Indian Air Force and others are flying

for the development of a complete set of choppers. HAL has already managed to develop a certain level of capability that is reflected in the manufacturing of advanced light helicopters used by the IAF. The IAF helicopter fleet is spread over Chinooks, Apaches, Mi-17s, and Dhruvs, which are made by HAL.

Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar confirmed to *Business-Line*: “We are creating a model to encourage major R&D pro-

jects in collaboration with the private sector and allow participation of industry in testing and certification for ease of doing business.” Kumar said.

Global benchmarks

Ministry sources said the government is trying to make testing infrastructure, which is now the domain of the government, available to the private sector. To incentivise it, the Ministry is likely to propose a 75 per cent investment

subsidy to set up testing labs. Over six labs would come up, three each in the defence corridors of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

This is also to bring global standards in this aspect, some of which are not available in the country. For instance, said Ministry sources, the Ministry intends to allow Airbus' international benchmark of certification for C-295 transport aircraft. Airbus has signed with Tata Advance Systems Limited to manufacture 56 C-295 in the country.

The move is expected to address concerns over India not investing in core technologies under the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme, which will reduce dependence on foreign vendors and empower the sector to upgrade in-country capabilities for producing next-generation platforms. During the Galwan stand off with Chinese troops, India realised the need to invest in strategic armaments to make the country self-reliant.