

Germany, Spain in race for ₹40K crore Indian sub deal

BLOOMBERG

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Two European defense manufacturing giants are seeking to win a ₹40,000 crore (\$4.8 billion) order to build submarines in India as the Centre looks to strengthen its navy to counter China's expanding naval presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Government officials are currently evaluating competing bids to build six of the vessels in India, senior officials aware of the developments said, asking not to be named because discussions are private. One bid is from Germany's Thyssenkrupp AG along with Mumbai-based Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, with the other was submitted by Spain's Navantia in partnership with private shipyard Larsen & Toubro, the people said.

The Navy will go for the best and largest transfer of technology that is being offered, the people said. When announcing the tender in July, the Ministry of Defense said it expected substantial technology transfer to Indian shipyards apart from providing the submarines with air independent propulsion — a technology that helps conventional vessels stay underwater for longer.

India is looking for a reliable alternative for military hardware as supplies from Russia, the country's biggest source of weapons, is mired in a protracted war in Ukraine and faces sanctions from the US and its allies. India, which is part of the so-called Quad grouping that includes Japan, US and Australia, is also projecting itself as a manufacturing hub and pushing for technology transfers to build complex defense platforms such as fighter aircraft and submarines. The Ministry of Defence, Larsen & Toubro, and MDL did not respond to requests for comment. Thyssenkrupp confirmed the bid and referred to a June 7 statement while Navantia didn't respond to emails.



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Boeing starts building Apache attack choppers for Army

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Defence major Boeing on Wednesday said it had started producing AH-64E Apache attack helicopters in Mesa, Arizona, in an encouraging sign for Indian Army's mechanised strike formations.

Boeing will deliver six AH-64E Apache helicopters to the Indian Army for ₹4,168 crore. All six of these Apaches are to be delivered by 2024.

Since independence in 1947, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has insisted on retaining control of combat aviation assets, especially attack helicopters, which

the air marshals have kept under their control. Even as the Army began operating light utility helicopters and established its own Army Aviation Corps, the IAF retained control of medium and heavy lift helicopters (Mi-17 and Mi-26) and attack helicopters (Mi-35).

The IAF's control over the helicopter fleet was underscored in September 2015, when \$3 billion worth of helicopters — 22 Boeing AH-64E Apache attack helicopters and 15 CH-47F Chinook heavy lift choppers — were handed over to the IAF, overruling the Army's arguments that attack helicopters, which

are an integral part of ground battle, should be flown by army aviation pilots. The IAF intends to use its 22 Apaches for "air defence operations".

This involves taking out enemy radars and command and control centres. Meanwhile, the Army's Apaches would be employed for destroying enemy tanks and armoured vehicles on the mechanised battlefield.

As a part of transferring production of defence equipment from the US to India, Boeing and the Tata group have formed a joint venture called Tata Boeing Aerospace Limited (TBAL).