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National

`Samyukta' presented to the Army

By Our Special Correspondent

The President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, presenting a model of ``Samyukta'', part of an electronic warfare system, to the Army chief, General N.C. Vij, at the Defence Electronics Research Laboratory in Hyderabad on Monday. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, looks on. — Photo: Mohammed Yousuf

HYDERABAD, JAN. 19. In a landmark event aimed at strengthening the country's defence security, the first block of `Samyukta,' an indigenous, state-of-the-art Integrated Electronic Warfare (IEW) system was presented by the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, to the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. N.C. Vij, in the presence of the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, here on Monday.

With this technological accomplishment in the electronic field, India has joined a select band of nations which possess this kind of world class system.

Hailing as a "fantastic job" the combined effort of the defence scientists, Army personnel, public sector units and private industry in developing the system which incidentally was sanctioned when Mr. Kalam was the Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, the President said "India has got the capability to design, develop and produce integrated electronic warfare system to meet the mission requirement. This system is uniquely configured for the frequencies from High Frequency to Millimetre wave for reconnaissance, direction finding and position fixing, listing, prioritising and jamming of adversaries' emissions."

Mr. Kalam handed over the first block of 26 vehicles to Gen. Vij. `Samyuktha' is a joint venture undertaken by the Defence Electronics Research Laboratory (DLRL) in a consortium approach with other agencies. It is mounted on ground mobile vehicles and covers HF to Millimetre wave frequencies range. The Coverage of the electronic spectrum of frequencies is done in two segments — communication segment and non-communication segment — which are finally integrated with the master control centre (MCC) through appropriate transmission stations.

It is capable of handling both ground-based and airborne threats. It has the capability to intercept, detect, search, identify and locate complex communication and radar signals. It monitors and analyses communication and radar activity across Forward Edge of the Battle Area (FEBA) and many other sophisticated features. Once deployed, the system has operational frontal coverage of 150/70 km.

Mr. Kalam also praised the team effort displayed in realising the system in a relatively short time, in spite of many denials. Now that the basic building blocks were indigenously available, user driven multiple systems could be evolved, he added. With India graduating in the development of electronic warfare systems, he said the time had come to take major decisions so that we could maintain our competence level and ensure provision of contemporary future systems to the armed forces. In this direction, he suggested that the Defence Research and Development Organisation consider conceptualisation of future systems with flexible architecture which are networked across the services.

The other suggestions include the need to create a world-class high quality infrastructure at Hyderabad by BEL to meet the ever increasing requirements of the services for the EW systems; DRDO and EW production agency should visualise the futuristic EW scenario through comprehensive simulation studies and work on demonstrable systems for user evaluation, specification modification and deployment, need to create a dedicated EW Quality Assurance agency and ensure meticulous software maintenance.

In view of our "Doctrine of no first use," he said that it was essential to study how synchronised action between EW systems of the Army (Samyukta), Naval EW (Sangraha) and Air Force EW (Tempest) could prevent the entry of warheads in our territory.

Stating that future technologies for national security would be required to be developed and deployed in the areas of strategic electronics, strategic aeronautics and strategic astronautics, he said that almost each and every strategic technology would be dual purpose in that they served concurrently the needs of economic development of the nation.

Mr. Fernandes described the EW system as a weapon which would be useful not only during war but at peace time too. He said the guns had fallen silent on India's borders with both Pakistan and China.

He expressed the wish that the situation should remain like this forever. While there was peace on the one hand, there was the problem of insurgency on the other and stressed the need for remaining alert always. He also said that such sophisticated systems should be exported to friendly countries.

The Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, V.K. Aatre, talking to reporters earlier, termed it as major milestone. He said that it was the largest electronics project of the DRDO.

Only a few other countries possessed such a sophisticated system. "It implies how we can dominate the electromagnetic spectrum during a battle."

He explained how it helped in jamming the enemy's communication and other systems and provided an upper hand.

He said that each system of `Samyuktha' would consist of 145 vehicles of five blocks — three communication and two non-communication segments.

The entire system would be ready for deployment by the end of 2005. He declined to divulge the number of systems required by the Army.

Replying to another question, he said that the Agni-3 missile would be launched by this year-end.

The DLRL was designing and developing the EW systems for the Army and Navy and Defence Avionics Research Establishment (DARE) for the Air Force.

Expressing his happiness over the Army acquiring the sophisticated system, Gen. Vij described it as a dream come true for the Army.