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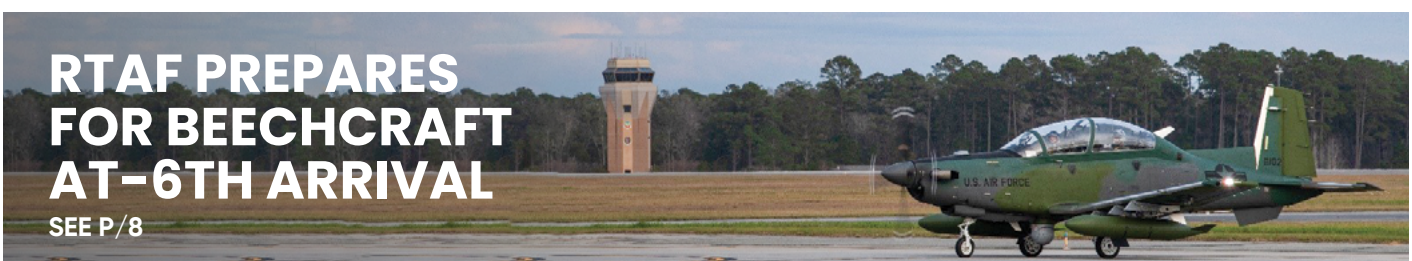


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# THAILAND, USA BOOST DEFENCE TIES WITH LANDMARK INFORMATION EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

In a major boost to the defence cooperation between Thailand and the USA, both nations recently inked an information exchange agreement during a virtual ceremony. The agreement, titled "Remote Sensing for Base Perimeter Defence," is the first International Armaments Cooperation collaboration between the U.S. Department of Defence and Thai Ministry of Defence.

Lt. Gen. Somkiat Sampan, Defence Science and Technology Department director-general from the Thai Ministry of Defence and Kelli L. Seybolt, Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, were signatories to the agreement, which will result in deeper collaboration on defence technologies between both nations. Lt. Gen. Sampan said: "Our relationship and our cooperation in the past ... made this [information exchange agreement] possible."

"This important step forward is just the latest manifestation of our deep and enduring relationship," Seybolt said. "United by our shared commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, Thailand is our oldest friend and ally in Asia, and our close cooperation reflects a friendship of nearly two centuries." The agreement will allow both the USA and Thailand to advance the theory and testing needed for



Thai Ministry of Defence Lt. Gen. Somkiat Sampan, Defence Science and Technology Department director-general and Kelli L. Seybolt, Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, pictured during the signing of an information exchange agreement Titled "Remote Sensing for Base Perimeter Defense."

Image courtesy US DoD, video screenshot by Lynette Whitesell.

systems that can sense, detect, and classify installation threats. Commercial Off-The-Shelf (COTS) Prototypes from both nations will be tested, and feedback shared. There are now inexpensive, field-deployable technologies that have the potential to defend installations using automated remote sensing.

Thailand first proposed the topic for the agreement and it was found that it overlapped with current research activities and interests of the U.S. Air Force.

Exploratory discussions were first held at the Royal Thai Air Force Academy with representation from the U.S. Air Force Institute of Technology, the U.S. Air Force Academy, Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs, and the Joint United States Military Advisory Group Thailand in November 2019.

"It is a thrill to expand the scope of our security cooperation with Thailand," Seybolt concluded. "And it is our sincere hope that this is only the start of a robust series of cooperative activities in next-generation defense technologies."

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The U.S. State Department had last year approved a request from the Government of Thailand to buy 300 Javelin FGM-148 Missiles and 50 Javelin CLUs at an estimated cost of US\$83.5 million. The Javelin Weapon System will replace the obsolete 106mm Recoilless Rifles that the Royal Thai Army (RTA) acquired as part of the Military Assistance Programme (MAP) from the Vietnam era. The proposed sale will allow the RTA to modernize their light anti-tank capability and maintain its current force posture, as well as enhance interoperability with the U.S. during operations and training exercises. According to RTA officials, the missiles will improve Thailand's capability to meet current and future threats by improving its long-term defense capacity to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Javelin was developed and produced for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps by the Javelin Joint Venture between Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. While the latter is responsible for

the Javelin CLU, missile guidance electronic unit, system software and system engineering management, Lockheed Martin is responsible for the missile seeker, engineering and assembly.

The Javelin is a single man-portable fire-and-forget medium-range antitank weapon system designed to defeat all known and projected threat armor. The missile automatically guides itself to the target after launch, allowing the gunner to take cover and avoid counterfire. Soldiers or Marines can reposition immediately after firing, or reload to engage another threat.

Using an arched top-attack profile, Javelin climbs above its target for improved visibility and then strikes where the armor is weakest. To fire, the gunner places a cursor over the selected target. The Javelin command launch unit then sends a lock-on-before-launch signal to the missile. With its soft launch design, Javelin can be safely fired from inside buildings or bunkers.



## ASELSAN AIMS FOR MORE PARTNERSHIPS IN APAC

Turkish defence giant Aselsan is looking at increasing its presence in the Asia Pacific region by contributing in a sustainable manner toward the safety and security of the region. "The main perspective towards Asia & Pacific is to be the strategic partner by creating technical solution packages in line with the instructions of its users to present tailor-made solutions depending on the threat type," according to a company spokesman. Aselsan has already successfully completed various projects in several countries in the region with its air defence solutions, tactical communication systems, electro-optical

solutions, weapon systems, professional communication systems, radar and electronic warfare solutions, and underwater security solutions.

The company has been displaying its products in various shows in the region. At the ongoing Defence & Security, Aselsan is focussing on its advanced Remote Controlled Weapon Stations (RCWS) domain. The RCWS is currently in use with the armies and navies in 21 different countries worldwide, the spokesman said. "As of today, over 4000 stations have been successfully deployed to the 35 different land and naval platforms globally. Being field proven,

these weapon stations are in service of armies, security forces, coast guards, and navies integrated on wide variety of the platforms ranging from armoured personnel carriers to main battle tanks, from fast patrol boats to corvettes and frigates."

Automatic cannons, automatic grenade launchers, machine guns ranging from 7,62mm to 35mm calibers as well as anti-tank guided missiles are being used in SARP, SARP-DUAL, NEFER, and SERDAR for the land platforms. STAMP, STOP, and SMASH are being used for the naval platforms. The standard set of features for the RCWS family covers stabilization, automatic target tracking, ballistic computation, night and day precise surveillance capabilities, maintaining the effective utilization of the weapon's firepower, and providing first-round hit to the target. These weapon stations are able to operate under all types of weather and sea conditions and provide maximum safety for the operators by enabling them to run the full operation under armor, the company spokesman noted.

## THAILAND, INDIA GROW DEFENCE TIES

India and Thailand have agreed to enhance cooperation on defence and security matters, including cyber-security. Both countries have decided to increase joint training and exercises in defence and security. The armies of India and Thailand have prepared a roadmap to boost engagement, especially to enhance cooperation in training and carrying out joint drills. The roadmap was finalised at the fourth Army staff talks held at the city of Ayutthaya in Thailand recently.

The three-member Indian Army delegation was led by Major General Anil K Kashid, Additional Director General of International Cooperation of the Army. The Thai team was headed by Major General Thongchai Rodyoi from the Royal Thai Army. The deliberations also focused on enhancing training programmes and a roadmap was prepared for defence cooperation. Meanwhile, Royal Thai Army is set



to complete purchase of 600 Tata military trucks. Recently, Thailand had lauded India's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative by announcing the purchase of 600 ATA LPTA military trucks. The LPTA 715 4X4 is used for carrying troops. It is a relatively low maintenance vehicle which can transport at least 12 people in the rear.

Powered by Cummins 6BTAA 5.9-20 engine, the beast generates 145 bhp at 2500 rpm. It is also capable of providing 500 Nm peak torque at

1500 rpm. Equipped with a 6-speed transmission panel, the truck can achieve up to 100 km/h speed. With a ground clearance of 300 mm, this makes it an ideal carrier in various terrains. The maximum fuel tank capacity is set at 200L.

Tata LPTA military trucks have also been used by the Indian Army since 2015. Available in 4x4, 6x6, 8x8, 10x10 and 12x12 configuration, these trucks have also been deployed in conflict zones of Africa for use by the UN peacekeeping forces.

## THAILAND FIRST FOREIGN NATION TO RECEIVE M1129 STRYKER MORTAR CARRYING VEHICLES



The Royal Thai Army (RTA) is set to receive M1129 Stryker mortar carrying vehicles from the USA in the near future. Thailand will be the first foreign nation to receive these Stryker systems. The U.S. Army is sharing this technology and weaponry for the first time.

"The Royal Thai Army chose to invest in the proven capability of the Stryker family of vehicles based on their proven combat effectiveness," said Maj. Curt Belohlavek, the battalion executive officer for 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army. "The Stryker family of vehicles

simultaneously provides a new capability within the RTA and improves its interoperability with the U.S. Army." This year's Cobra Gold exercises held in Thailand, kick started the process of introducing the Strykers to the RTA with a series of training exercises and field missions at Fort Bhumibol, preparing them to officially receive the vehicles at a future date. "The RTA has not currently fielded the M1129 Stryker Mortar Carrying Vehicle yet," said Belohlavek, "but it is scheduled to start receiving them in the near future."

Fielding the 112th Stryker Regiment is

spearheading the ongoing development and modernization of the RTA by introducing new armored vehicles that significantly upgrade its combat capability and operational reach. Given its importance as one of the model regiments to modernize the RTA, the 112th is one of the premier organizations within the RTA. The M1129 Stryker mortar system is an infantry carrier vehicle and considered as a descendant of the Swiss Mowag Piranha III, accommodating a 120mm mortar system that fires a suite of mortar ammunition and first employed in 2005.

# THAILAND DEVELOPING LITHIUM-ION BATTERY PACKS AND CHARGERS FOR DEFENCE APPLICATIONS

Defence equipment today is crammed with electronic equipment which usually consist of highly sophisticated electronic circuits and rely on batteries as a power source. As a result the development of indigenous battery packs and battery chargers for security applications is of vital importance as otherwise security agencies need to purchase and import such equipment from abroad at high prices. Thailand has been working on development of lithium-ion battery packs and chargers under a joint research programme between the National Energy Technology Center (SSC), the National Electronics and Computer Center (SAI), and the Technology Center for National Security and Commercial Applications. Following the completion of over two years

batteries can be used continuously for 24 hours without charging and can be charged quickly in 3-4 hours. It features three times higher capacity efficiency as compared to the batteries earlier in use and have passed safety tests at the cellular level and at the pack level.

Work on developing these indigenous lithium ion battery pack and chargers began in 2017 with a grant from the Office of the Science Promotion Board to the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) and the Royal Thai Army Military Research and Development Office (NSTDA). The research team undertook the research and development of prototypes and transferred the technology for producing prototype battery packs to private



of field trials in 2021, the Oscar Holding Company Limited delivered the battery packs produced by the company to the 31st Artillery Battalion, 1st Artillery Regiment of the Royal Thai Army. The indigenously developed

companies in Thailand. The technology for indigenous battery packs and battery chargers has now transitioned to industrial production and use, with the research results being transferred to Oscar Holding Company Limited.

## COLT EYEING M16 TO M4/M5 UPGRADE OPPORTUNITIES IN THAILAND



Colt a long-term supplier of small arms to the Thai armed forces is eyeing various opportunities related to the sales of pistols and rifles. Colt is showcasing a wide array of revolvers, 1911 pistols and rifles in 5.56, 7.62 and 9mm calibers at the ongoing show, with a focus on the firm's enhanced M5 and M7. The small arms manufacturer already supplies weapons to all three wings of the Thai armed forces. Colt also has a large presence in the commercial Thai market for 1911's. "Colt is committed to supporting its existing customer with replacement and spare parts for the maintenance of existing product. We are also actively engaged in promoting upgrade capabilities such as converting an M16 to an M4 or M5," a company spokesperson told Daily News on the eve of the show.

Colt has been supporting the RTAF on the upgrade of its old M16s to the M4. Colt's Manufacturing Company LLC is now a member of the COLGT CZ Group. Colt CZ Group (Colt CZ), together with its subsidiaries, is one of the leading producers of firearms for military and law enforcement, personal defense, hunting, sport shooting, and other commercial use. Colt CZ subsidiaries include Colt's Manufacturing Company, Česká zbrojovka, Colt Canada Corporation, CZ-USA, 4M Systems, and CZ Export Praha. Colt CZ also owns a minority stake in Spuhr i Dalby, a Swedish manufacturer of optical mounting solutions for firearms. Colt CZ markets and sells its products mainly under the Colt, CZ (Česká zbrojovka), Colt Canada, CZ-USA, Dan Wesson, and 4M Systems brands.



## SAAB GRIPEN AND ERIEYE AEW&C A WINNING COMBINATION FOR THAILAND

The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) is unique amongst air forces in the region to have fully operationalised a complete integrated air defence system featuring Saab Gripen fighters, Saab 340 Erieye airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft and other sensors and surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems, which are all integrated with a secure national datalink system that connects assets in the air, on land and at sea. This makes the RTAF more than just a customer operating an advanced fighter type but the owner of an advanced air defence network that is unique not only in the region but also beyond. The RTAF's Gripens are operated by 701 Sqn, part of Wing 7 at Surat Thani, a strategic base in Thailand's south.

Thailand is one of Saab's most significant global customers and company officials are confident of future market prospects. "Saab is able to offer high-end military equipment and technologies at a competitive price with a long-term commitment for maintenance and support," said a company official, who added that there will be a greater requirement for Thailand for Transfer of Technology (ToT) in **DEFENCE & SECURITY 2022**

the future, whenever military equipment is procured with increase in the level of local sourcing. "We are able to meet the requirements from nations that desire a greater sovereign capability due to Sweden's non-aligned status," the official emphasised. Saab's presence in Thailand started in the mid-eighties, with the supply of key equipment such as Carl-Gustaf infantry weapons, Giraffe radars and RBS70 missile systems to the Thai military.

The RTAF's Gripen, Erieye AEW system and tactical data links afford it with a network centric air defence capability. The Royal Thai Navy's (RTN) Frigate HTMS Naresuan was the first to be linked to the Gripen fighters, and this capability now extends to the RTN's other warships and aircraft carriers. Strategic locations like Don Muang air base are also connected with radar stations across the nation. Saab has played a key role in assisting the RTAF in developing this sovereign national defence capability, which it developed, supplied and continues to support. A key aspect of this air defence network is the RTAF's Gripen fleet, which is now entering its 11th year of operations.

**An important upgrade to RTAF Gripens is the implementation of the latest MS20 capability upgrade, which was delivered in 2022. The MS20 upgrade further enhances Gripen's operational capabilities by adding new radar and EW modes, enhanced navigation and safety features, several hardware and software changes to improve performance and avoid obsolescence and the ability to integrate new weapons options for air-to-air and air-to-ground missions.**

The RTAF acquired its Gripen fleet under the 'Peace Suvarnabhumi' contract which came into effect in 2008 and was split into two parts; six Gripens were delivered in 2011 followed by a further six in 2013. The RTAF's first Erieye AEW&C arrived in December 2010. The RTAF's Gripen fleet has demonstrated high availability rates since induction and the squadron is renowned for delivering 100 per cent operational availability whenever required. 701 Sqn celebrated the milestone of 10,000 Gripen flight hours in 2018.



# RTAF PREPARES FOR BEECHCRAFT AT-6TH ARRIVAL

The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) which is the international launch customer for Textron Aviation Defence's Beechcraft AT-6TH is preparing for the entry of service of the new aircraft in 2024. The RTAF will commence training of the new aircraft's maintenance crew in Thailand from 2023 with the assistance of Textron Aviation Defence. RTAF pilots are slated to commence training on the new type in Wichita in 2024.

The RTAF entered into a US\$143 million contract with Textron Aviation Defence in November 2021 for eight Beechcraft AT-6 Wolverine aircraft (designated as the Beechcraft AT-6TH in Thailand), ground support equipment, spare parts, training and other equipment. The aircraft will be inducted to support the RTAF's 41st Wing light attack operations at Chiang Mai Air Base. The turboprop light attack aircraft will replace the RTAF's existing fleet of ageing Czech built Aero Vodochody L-39 Albatros jet trainers and light attack aircraft. The Beechcraft AT-6TH was

purpose-built for light attack, counter-insurgency and Countering Violent Extremist Organizations (C-VEO) mission capability featuring low risk, high performance and low cost. It can undertake a broad array of missions in support of its border security and its anti-smuggling, counter-narcotics and anti-human trafficking operations.

In July, Textron Aviation Defence today announced that the United States Air Force (USAF) had accorded military type certification (MTC) for the AT-6E Wolverine paving the way for continued global sales of the light attack aircraft.

The USAF was the launch customer for the AT-6, awarding a contract in 2020 for two AT-6E Wolverines. The aircraft empowers operators with Next Gen ISR, the industry's best loitering precision strike capability, the ability to maintain pressure on targets, and reliable networked battlespace communications and video. The AT-6 Wolverine employs an unmatched range of weapons and

features the combat-proven A-10C, F-16 and MC-12 mission systems. The aircraft has also demonstrated light attack capabilities and full compatibility with U.S. and NATO Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) systems. The Beechcraft AT-6TH also capitalizes on the proven supply chain and affordability of 85 percent parts commonality with the Beechcraft T-6 Texan II.

The Beechcraft AT-6TH is the second RTAF procurement contracted in support of S-Curve 11, which is an initiative of the Thai Government aimed at pioneering development of the Thai domestic defence industry, cultivate diversity and support involvement across foreign and Thai companies. The RTAF inked a contract for supply of 12 Beechcraft T-6TH Texan II turboprop trainer aircraft in 2020.





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## RTAF AND PLAAF TRAIN TOGETHER IN EX FALCON STRIKE 2022

The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) and the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) recently participated in Exercise Falcon Strike 2022, which was held at Wing 23, Udon Thani Province. This was the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the air exercises, which were first held in 2015. The PLAAF sent J-10C/S, JH-7 A/All and KJ-500 aircraft to take part in the exercises.

RTAF Spokesperson, Air Vice Marshal Prapas Sonjaidee, said both air force trained together to develop tactical air operations capabilities as well as mixed air operations. The RTAF utilised its Saab Gripen 39 C/D fighter jets, Dassault Alpha Jet advanced jet trainers and Saab 340 airborne surveillance aircraft to participate in the training.

# EMBRAER EYEING NEW MARKETS FOR C-390 MILLENNIUM AND KC-390

Brazilian aerospace leader, Embraer is showcasing its defence and security products and solutions at the ongoing Defence & Security exhibition. Company officials remain confident of market prospects in the region for products like the C-390 Millennium multi-mission transport aircraft and the A-29 Super Tucano light attack and training aircraft. Embraer's Defence & Security products and solutions are present in more than 60 countries, and in addition to its aircraft platforms, these include broader solutions for air, land, sea, space and cyber domains. Embraer is now focussing on export sales of the C-390 Millennium new generation multi-role military transport aircraft and its air-to-air refueling configuration which is known as the KC-390. Embraer entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the recently concluded Farnborough Airshow with BAE Systems to promote the

C-390 for Middle East markets including Saudi Arabia. In addition to orders for the KC-390 from the Hungarian Defence Force and the Portuguese Armed Forces, the Netherlands Ministry of Defence announced in June, that it would procure five C-390s to replace its C-130 fleet. The aircraft delivered to Portugal and Hungary will be configured to perform Air-Air Refueling and be fully NATO compatible, not only in terms of hardware but also in terms of avionics and communications. Most recently, in June, the Netherlands Ministry of Defence announced the selection of a fleet of five C-390 Millennium aircraft, highlighting the performance and operational output of the aircraft, to succeed their current fleet of C-130 Hercules. The Portuguese Air Force (FAP) has five KC-390s on order and deliveries are to start in 2023, while Hungary which has two KC-390s is slated to receive the

aircraft in 2023-24. The Hungarian Defence Force fleet will be the first in the world to feature an Intensive Care Unit configuration, an essential feature for performing humanitarian missions.

Embraer delivered the first KC-390 to the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) in 2019. The FAB's current fleet of five KC-390s are all fully operational and the entire fleet has now exceeded 5,000 flight hours in operation with a mission completion rate of 97 per cent, demonstrating outstanding availability and productivity in its category. Company officials are also keen to highlight the KC-390's utility for humanitarian relief missions, with the type extensively used in operations to transport equipment and medical supplies, ranging from liquid oxygen to vehicles across Brazil at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The C-390/KC-390 are produced at Embraer's Gavião Peixoto factory, in Brazil's São Paulo state.





# NAVIES ARE INVESTING HEAVILY IN UNMANNED SOLUTIONS FOR MARITIME MISSIONS

Unmanned aircraft coupled with powerful satellite communication have taken maritime awareness to the next level. Unmanned systems are becoming an increasingly essential part of the world's fleets as modern navies seek new ways to complete dangerous tasks. To enable this, besides the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France and the Middle East, leading navies in the Asia-Pacific region are investing heavily on unmanned solutions for maritime missions.

## Ocean Guardians

The platforms chosen, range from Boeing Insitu-made ScanEagle, Northrop Grumman MQ-4C Triton to Israel's Elbit Systems' the Hermes 900 MALE UAV and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)- made Harop systems. Recently, Hermes 900 Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) successfully completed a series of flight demonstrations for the U.K. Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The demonstration was run by the MCA and were designed to test the capabilities of using a UAS to enhance Search and Rescue (SaR) capabilities. In the recent demonstration, the Hermes 900 equipped with search and rescue specific radar, an Automatic Identification System (AIS), EO/IR payload, an Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and full satellite communications, was deployed on a range

of missions that simulated shore-line rescues, water rescues in dangerous air space and long-distance ship rescues which crossed international air space lines. With a wingspan of 15m, the 1.2 ton, Hermes 900 is already deployed with more than a dozen advanced customers around the globe providing search, rescue and reconnaissance capabilities.

Elbit Systems offers extended life-saving capabilities with its recently launched Hermes 900 Maritime Patrol configuration with inflated life-rafts for detection, identification and saving the lives of survivors at sea. It was revealed that this configuration was delivered to an undisclosed customer in South-East Asia. Interactively controlled from mobile land-based mission systems, fixed operation rooms or own force ships, Hermes 900 provides multi-sensor data and live video in real time to mission operators and ship crews at sea.

Hermes 900 UAS can operate stand alone or can be integrated into an overall setup of aircraft, ships, shore or offshore based sensors, and maritime control centers and HQ. Hermes 900 can perform versatile missions such as EEZ monitoring & control, coastal protection, surveillance & protection of vital assets (such as oil rigs), anti-piracy operations, environmental monitoring, search & rescue operations as well as participation in Naval warfare (ASuW), Sea-Shore operations, and more, a company official informed.

## Loitering Strike

Similarly, IAI recently signed deals to provide loitering munitions systems to Asian countries worth over US\$100 million. The deals include the sale of the Naval version of the Harop system. The Maritime Harop system provides an operational solution for a range of vessels, from offshore vessels to fighting frigates in the naval theater. In a complex naval theater, the Harop system gives mission commanders in a fleet of ships the capability to independently and organically collect intelligence, assess targets and strike.

The intelligence gathered by the Harop is directly integrated in the vessel's control room and allows for quick, accurate and lethal decision-making. Use of the Harop on naval platforms is an operational alternative and complementary element to using sea-sea missiles, with a wide range of uses and with optimal cost-efficiency for the navy. The maritime and land combat-proven Harop provides an operational solution for a range of low and high-intensity conflict scenarios and for anti-terrorism activity. The Harop is equipped with day/night cameras and has the ability to search, find and attack with maximum precision both static and moving targets, on land or at sea and at a long-range. A strike can take place from any direction and at any angle of attack.

# MBDA LOOKS TO GROW PRESENCE IN THAILAND



European missile major MBDA is looking at new opportunities to support the Thai armed forces for their national defence needs. The company has been supporting the Royal Thai Armed Forces for more than thirty years and is ready to offer its latest missile systems for the future. "MBDA maintains a continuous and tight relationship with its Thai customers, and we are able to propose state-of-the-art weapon systems for the future project requirements of the Royal Thai Armed Forces," a company spokesperson told Daily News over email. More recently MBDA

has provided to the Royal Thai Army with a medium-long range ground-based air defence (GBAD) capability based on the Vertical Launch MICA (VL MICA) system. The new GBAD capability was introduced into service in 2019.

A typical VL MICA unit is based on a vehicle-mounted shelter-protected Tactical Operations Centre (TOC) also known as the Platoon Command Post (PCP). The TOC is capable of carrying out all Command, Control and Coordination functions, including real-time engagement, mission planning, system monitoring and

connection with the higher level of command. The TOC remotely controls a tri-dimensional radar mounted on a separate vehicle and three to six vertical launcher units also mounted on vehicles. The missile has an interception range of up to 20 km. MBDA's Mistral missile has been ensuring the anti-air protection of the flagship of the Royal Thai Navy, the aircraft carrier HTMS *Chakri Naruebet* for more than 20 years. The company started its relationship with Thailand with supply of the first generation of the Exocet anti-ship missile.

## RMAF RECEIVES FIRST UPGRADED CN-235

The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) recently took delivery of the first of three CN-235 military transport aircraft converted to a maritime patrol platform from the U.S. Navy. The delivery of the first aircraft took place just three-and-a-half years after the U.S. signed a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) to begin increasing the capability and interoperability of U.S. and Malaysian forces. Work on the two remaining CN-235 aircraft and multiple ground stations continues and is slated for completion later this year.

The effort was facilitated by the U.S. Navy's Building Partner Capacity program, aligned with the U.S. government's Maritime Security Initiative, which is intended to assist the Malaysian government

in increasing maritime security and maritime domain awareness within the Malaysian Exclusive Economic Zone. "Building Partner Capacity programmes represent the highest level of return on engagement to the United States," said Ron Weinberger, director, Security Cooperation Office at the Naval Air Systems Command. "The Malaysian CN-235 programme will be a significant force multiplier to an indigenous Malaysian ISR capability and will directly support joint Malaysian and U.S. efforts to ensure global security in the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility."

The upgrade includes a maritime surveillance mission suite, maritime

surveillance radar, an electro-optical infrared turret, line-of-sight datalink and a roll-on/roll-off mission system operator station. Compatible mobile and fixed ground stations are also being delivered to increase the RMAF's ISR capability.

The CN-235 is a medium-range twin-engine transport aircraft originally manufactured by Indonesian aerospace company *Perseroan Terbatas Dirgantara Indonesia* and *Construcciones Aeronáuticas SA* of Spain. The project's CN-235s were flown to Indonesia for completion and testing in Sept. 2020 amid COVID-19 restrictions and first flight took place in Oct. 2021.



## SK GROUP HIGHLIGHTS SMALL ARMS SOLUTIONS, OPTICAL SIGHTS



Israeli firm SK Group is presenting its latest offerings in small arms solutions, optical sights, and 'through-wall-imaging' systems, at the ongoing Defence & Security exhibition. SK Group Companies are comprised of Israel Weapon Industries (IWI), which has been a world-leading producer of small arms for over 85 years, Meprolight, a leading international electro-optics company, has been developing, manufacturing

and marketing systems for armed forces, law enforcement agencies and civilian markets, since 1990 and Camero-Tech a pioneer and leader in the design and manufacturing of radar-based imaging systems, which was founded in 2004.

"SK Group companies are committed to the protection of ground forces in combat on today's battlefield," said Ronen Hamudot, SK Group Executive VP Marketing and Sales. "Our range of solutions includes: IWI's 7.62X51mm Ace Sniper S.A Rifle, which enables fast and accurate engagement of multiple threats at long ranges; thermal sights developed by Meprolight for day and night combat, including the recently-launched hybrid TIGON which combines thermal & red dot technology for both day and night applications; and Camero's unique Xaver through-the-wall imaging systems, which enable detection through structures and walls from a

distance of over of 50 meters. The group's solutions are operationally proven and are in use by diverse IDF units."

IWI is showcasing its Negev series of light machine guns; the recently-launched ACE sniper rifle and the ARAD multi-caliber assault rifle, in addition to the company's new version of the GAL VPS system, a riot control protective suit, which reduces trauma inflicted on operators by up to 90 percent. Meprolight is showcasing its recently introduced Mepro TIGON hybrid sight which integrates the advantages of standard "red-dot" optics featuring transparent see-through window for optimal day use with those of uncooled thermal imaging technology enabling efficient operation in low-visibility and complete darkness conditions. Camero-Tech's latest offering of through-the-wall imaging systems, the Xaver XL40 and XL80, which are portable units that enable operators to detect life and static structures from distances of 50 and 100 meters are also being displayed.



### PARAMOUNT GROUP UNVEILS UPDATED MARAUDER MARK 2 ARMoured VEHICLE

South Africa based Paramount Group recently revealed the updated Marauder 'Mark 2' armoured vehicle with introduction of a universal hull, interchangeable dashboard modules and steering wheel components. These latest enhancements will enable the Marauder to be manufactured in either Left or Right-Hand Drive configurations, from the same

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hull and component sets on the same production line. The Mark 2 features great strides in ergonomics, comfort and functionality and these improvements in the Marauder's operator interfaces will increase usability when operating in rugged conditions. At the same time, they will help in reducing driver and crew fatigue, making the platform more comfortable and user-friendly, keeping troops safe and battle ready.

Deon Grobler, CEO of Paramount Land Systems said: "The Marauder is one of world's most iconic and toughest armoured vehicles, often described as best suited for an apocalyptic environment. We are very proud of its well-deserved reputation and our latest advancements present significant benefits to its performance, crew capability and the customer."

Grobler stated that Paramount Group has now increased its own rate of production for these vehicles. "We can now manufacture vehicles for stock purposes as opposed to manufacturing based on customer orders, delivering faster solutions for those partners with urgent demands, whether they are operating right or

left-hand drive vehicles," he said.

The Marauder Mark 2 offers class leading mine and ballistic protection for its crew of two in the front cockpit, and up to eight fully equipped soldiers in the rear. It can be airlifted in a C-130 or CH-47 Chinook with little preparation. The armoured vehicle can achieve a burst speed of 110 km/hr and it can remain fully operational in extreme conditions from -20 to +50 Degrees Celsius. Day/Night vision devices and extra sensors can also be fitted to provide 24/7 operability. The 'Mark 2' upgrades unlock the ability to convert Left-hand Drive versions of the Marauder to Right-Hand Drive (and vice versa), in under two hours' time, should operational needs (such as peacekeeping deployments in foreign countries) require.

The Marauder armoured vehicle was first launched at the International Defence Exhibition and Conference (IDEX) in Abu Dhabi in February 2007 and since then Paramount Group has since supplied Marauders to countries including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique and Singapore.

## MILKOR EYES SE ASIA MARKET



South African based defence group, Milkor is showcasing a wide range of weapon systems at the ongoing show as it seeks to make inroads in the market for defence equipment in the region. The South African firm already has a presence in India and the Middle East. Milkor has over 40 years of experience in the defence industry and today offers a large portfolio of weapons systems. Having supplied their weapons to more than 60 countries worldwide, Milkor's weapons platform has already proven its capability in the field.

### Milkor 380 UAS

The company has also emerged as a contender in the unmanned aerospace sector, with multiple platforms being introduced since its expansion in 2016. The Milkor 380, company's newest unmanned platform has been in development since 2018 and in August, the company announced that flight test results were expected to commence towards the end of the year. Ghaazim Rylands, Chief Executive Officer of Milkor Integrated

Systems, said, 'the conglomerates' platform design authority, has expressed their continuous evaluation of critical safety systems, operational data, platform architecture, and structural improvements to produce a system that is unlike any other system currently being offered.'

The Milkor 380 unmanned aerial system features five hardpoints - two on each wing and one at the centre of the fuselage, with the ability to carry larger systems if needed. Rylands highlights the development of its state-of-the-art ground control station (GCS), featuring the latest technology for its operators. "The GCS is sophisticated yet simple and comfortable for long endurance missions. The team used input from experienced UAV pilots to create an environment where operators can truly focus on their objective, without unnecessary distractions". According to Milkor's published platform specifications, the system has a maximum endurance of 35 hours, a maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of 1300 kg, and an external payload capacity of 210 kg.

The Milkor 380 uses a relayed line of sight (RLOS) communication network, significantly increasing its operational range. In addition, the platform offers optional satellite communications (SATCOM), extending the operational range even further.

### Milkor SuperSix MRGL

Milkor has been steadily developing and expanding their arsenal of weapons, which includes their flagship the SuperSix MRGL, single shot grenade launcher the Stopper Convertible, the Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) and MAR (Multi shot anti-riot). The SuperSix has the capability to fire 40mm less lethal, Low and Medium Velocity NATO ammunition in quick succession. With the effective range of lethal ammunition ranging from 30m to 800m (ammunition dependant) the SuperSix enables the operator to have a strategic advantage in various scenarios. The ability to use 40mm High Explosive Dual purpose (HEDP) ammo allows soldiers to engage a variety of targets ranging from soft-skinned targets to anti-personnel applications.

Milkor's assault rifle rail mounted grenade launcher is an Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) which can be mounted onto MIR STD 1913 picatinny rails, however Milkor does also offer mounting to various other gun platforms, most notably the AK family. At just 1.1kg, the UBGL is one of the lightest under barrel grenade launchers on the market. The UBGL has a unique swing open loading and re-cocking method, which increases reliability, but this design also moves the centre of gravity (COG) more towards the centre of the rifle, increasing the stability and ease of operation.



## RTAF TRAINS IN JAPAN

The Royal Thai Air Force's 601st Squadron which operates the C-130 Hercules, visited Japan recently and

along with the French Air Force (Armee de L'air) undertook their own multilateral trainings. The visits took place between 10-13 August. Both Thailand and France are part of the United Nations and Yokota Air Base is one of seven U.S. bases designated for joint United Nations Command - Rear use.



## U.S TO EXPAND DEFENCE TIES WITH BRUNEI

The United States and Brunei are seeking ways to expand defence cooperation amid rising geopolitical tension in East Asia. Recently Brunei's King Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah held talks with United States Indo-Pacific Commander Admiral John C. Aquilino at Istana Nurul Iman, where the latter expressed "unwavering support" of the Brunei-US security partnership towards a "free and open Indo-Pacific region".

Aquilino heads the United States' largest combatant command and has been a stern critic of China's actions throughout the Indo-Pacific, including its intercepts of US and allied aircraft.

Brunei's defence ministry said both sides affirmed the "long-standing and close defence relationship" between Brunei and the US, which "continues to grow and strengthen over the years through extensive

bilateral engagements".

The armed forces of both countries participate in a number of training programs and joint exercises, such as the annual CARAT exercise, as well as multilateral cooperation including Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT), Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), Chief of Defence Conference (CHOD) as well as through the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) framework.

## BAE SYSTEMS TARGETING THAI DEFENCE OPPORTUNITIES

BAE Systems is showcasing its Offshore Patrol Vessels built in Thailand in addition to other systems at the ongoing Defence & Security exhibition. The Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is operating the HTMS Krabi and HTMS Prachuap Khiri Khan which are Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) built by the Bangkok Dock Company under licence using a BAE Systems OPV design. With neighbouring countries all facing similar challenges but recognising specific requirements may

differ, the BAE Systems OPV design has proven that it can provide a flexible capability to meet varying operational demands and is an ideal candidate to support a national shipbuilding agenda and directly enhance the local economy.

Thailand can modify the design of its own ships to install combat systems compatible with its wider fleet, use locally sourced materials and reduce in-service support costs during the more than 30-year life of the ship. "Customer requirements vary for good reasons and that's why we always intended the OPV to be reconfigurable in many different directions and offer a number of capability options. This could involve anything from enhancing the flight deck, adding to the weapons suite

or enabling the integration of locally developed systems," said Ali Ahmad, Director for Thailand and Malaysia at BAE Systems.

According to a company official, "the M777 is the perfect solution to equip the Royal Thai Army with a state-of-art howitzer and replace the M198." BAE Systems has also supplied a number of naval gun systems which are in service with the RTN including the Mk45, as well as Bofors 40mm and 57mm systems. BAE Systems is also proposing its Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) a natural potential replacement for the Amphibious Armoured Vehicles (AAV) in service with the Royal Thai Marine Corps. These ACVs are now in full rate production for the U.S. Marine Corps.



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