

# Rs 1,752 cr

## MoD signs deal with Kanpur firm for stabilised remote control guns

NEW DELHI, Feb 14 (PTI)

THE Ministry of Defence on Wednesday signed a Rs 1,752.13-crore contract with a Kanpur-based firm for manufacturing and supply of 463 indigenously built 12.7 mm stabilised remote control guns for the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard, officials said.

This acquisition will provide further boost to the vision of "Aatmanirbharta in Defence", the ministry of defence said in a statement.

"This contract will also open up a large avenue in defence manufacturing for over 125 Indian vendors and Defence PSUs for over a period of five

Defence deals through Govt e-marketplace

### cross Rs 1 lakh crore mark

■ Delhi Bureau  
NEW DELHI, Feb 14

THE orders placed by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal has surpassed a whopping Rs 1 lakh crore reflecting the increasing transparency and efficiency in executing defence deals, the Commerce Ministry said on Wednesday. Of this total amount, transactions worth around Rs 45,800 crore have been awarded in the current financial year. From procurement of general store items like eggs to missile systems and critical defence acquisitions, GeM has helped MoD execute more than 5.47 lakh orders.

"The Defence Ministry is the first Central Government entity to cross this staggering figure, exemplifying its resolute commitment towards optimising public spending in the Defence sector. This milestone underscores the effort and commitment of the Ministry of Defence to embrace the change and set out as a key propeller of PM Narendra Modi's vision of a self-reliant India," said GeM CEO P K Singh.

years," it added.

The ministry signed the contract with Advanced Weapon Equipment India Limited (AWEIL), Kanpur for "manufacturing and supply of a total of 463 indigenously manufactured 12.7 mm stabilised remote control guns (SRCG) for the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard at a total cost of Rs 1,752.13 crore, with indigenous content (IC) of more than 85 pc," it said. These guns will enhance the capability of the Navy and the Coast Guard to accurately engage small targets that pose a threat to ships in an asymmetric environment, both by day and night, the Ministry said.

# UPA spiked MS panel advice on MSP, said it would distort mkt

## Had Told Parliament Such A Regime Could Be Counterproductive

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Manmohan Singh gov't had turned down Swaminathan Committee's recommendation for minimum support price that was at least 50% higher than the weighted average cost of production, arguing that it would distort the market.

"A mechanical linkage between MSP and cost of production may be counterproductive in some cases," K V Thomas, who was minister of state for agriculture and food, had said in response to a Parliament question in 2010 posed by BJP's Prakash Javadekar. Thomas had said gov't was of the view that the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices recommended MSP based on "objective criteria and considering a variety of factors".

On Tuesday, Congress functionaries, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge and MP Rahul Gandhi, had said they would bring a law guaranteeing



Congress is now saying it would guarantee MSP, if voted to office

MSP in case they were voted to office. Rahul said his party "decides for the country and not for politics", while questioning criticism over the promise to give legal guarantee on MSP. He also sought to counter claims that the Swaminathan Committee report was not implemented by Congress, saying UPA had implemented 175 of the 201 recommendations.

Based on the recommendations of the committee, set up by UPA, farmers are de-

manding implementation of the C2+50 formula — which is a comprehensive cost including imputed cost of capital and the rent on the land owned by farmers — for 23 crops covered by MSP.

Centre has, however, said the issue needs to be dealt with in detail before it can commit to meet the demand.

Govt officials have argued that a legislation offering a guarantee was not feasible as the value of agricultural produce in the country

## Rahul slams gov't stand on MSP

Rahul Gandhi criticised on Wed gov't's warnings that MSP guarantee would bankrupt the country, arguing that only farmers issues raise such concerns while concessions to industrialists are ignored.

"Modi, his propaganda machinery and friendly media are the enemies of the poor and farmers," the Congress functionary claimed. TNN

during FY20 was pegged at Rs 40 lakh crore, while the market value of 24 crops that are part of the MSP regime (including Fair and Remunerative Price for sugarcane) was estimated at Rs 10 lakh crore, slightly higher than the Centre's capital expenditure for the current financial year.

Procuring this value of produce from a budget of Rs 45 lakh cr (for 2024-25) would mean that there would be very little money left to pursue other development & social goals.

# Shehbaz Sharif likely to become next Pak PM

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE, Feb 14  
(PTI)

SHEHBAZ Sharif, the younger brother of former premier Nawaz Sharif, is expected to become Pakistan's next Prime Minister as a post-poll alliance of leading political parties led by them struck a deal to form a coalition Government after last week's elections produced a split mandate.

The surprise move means the party of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan will not be in power, despite independent candidates backed by his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) winning the maximum number of seats in Parliament in the February 8 elections marred by allegations of rigging.

Pakistan Muslim League-



Nawaz (PML-N) on Tuesday night nominated 72-year-old Shehbaz as the prime ministerial candidate instead of the party supremo and three-time former premier Nawaz Sharif. The 74-year-old veteran politician, who was seeking a record fourth term as Prime Minister, returned to Pakistan in October last year after ending a self-imposed exile in the UK.

Earlier, Shehbaz along with Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan

Peoples Party, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) met at the residence of Shujaat Hussain of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) for a consultative meeting and agreed on Government formation.

"Today we have united to tell the nation that we all accept the split mandate. I am thankful to Zardari and Bilawal (Bhutto) that they decided for their party to vote for the PML-N," he said.

PML-N Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that party supremo Nawaz Sharif has nominated the party president and his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif for the post of the country's Prime Minister.

# Indonesian defence chief claims victory in presidential election

JAKARTA (Indonesia), Feb 14 (AP)

DEFENCE Minister Prabowo Subianto, an ex-general linked to past human rights atrocities, claimed victory in Indonesia's presidential election on Wednesday based on unofficial tallies.

The 72-year-old candidate, who was once banned by the United States from entering for two decades due to his human rights record, told thousands of supporters in a sports stadium in the capital, Jakarta, that the victory, according to an early, unofficial "quick count," was "the victory of all Indonesians." There was no declaration by electoral officials and the two former provincial governors who also contested the election in the world's third-largest democracy have not conceded defeat.

Subianto was an army general during the brutal period of the Suharto dictatorship that ended just over 25 years ago. He served as a special forces commander in a unit linked to torture and disappearances, allegations that he vehemently denies. According to the unofficial tallies conducted by Indonesian polling agencies, Subianto



Indonesian presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto casts his ballot at a polling station during the election in Bojong Koneng, Indonesia, on Wednesday. (AP/PTI)

had between 57 per cent and 59 per cent of votes, with more than 80 per cent of the vote counted in polling places sampled.

The quick counts are based on the actual vote count at a sample of polling stations across Indonesia. The laborious official count may not be finished for up to a month, but quick counts have provided an accurate picture of the results of all four presidential elections held in Indonesia since it began direct voting in 2004.

# Kisans: North-South Divide

Why do Punjab farmers protest while their southern cousins don't? Answer lies in differing aspirations

Narendar Pani



As farmers' protests return to Delhi it is not certain protesters and policy makers are talking about the same thing. Policy makers—cutting across governments—see demands of farmers in purely economic terms and lean towards letting market decide prices to be paid to them.

For farmers, their demands are expression of the severe challenges they face from multiple transformations they've experienced. With governments, and several experts, choosing to throw economic textbooks at a drowning community calling for help, there is a distinct possibility of India's food security being compromised.

Farmers' protests must be seen in the context of at least three major transformations.

**To better income** | First is declining share of agriculture in GDP. In line with worldwide development process, earnings from non-agricultural sectors have been growing much more rapidly than agricultural income.

Productivity of land in India is not comparable to the best in the world, but even if that gap were bridged agricultural income would not be anywhere near rapidly growing sectors like infotech. With these differences reflected in consumption patterns, farmers aspire for comparable incomes.

**For raised aspirations** | Response to these aspirations is determined by production patterns generated in an older transformation, Green Revolution. As is now widely known, irrigated areas benefited much more from Green Revolution than dry land areas. This created a clear divide between regions with high levels of irrigation providing high productivity and regions left behind.

In Green Revolution regions, raised aspirations generate a demand for greater returns from agriculture. In regions that Green Revolution left behind, aspirations are sought to be realised outside agriculture. Farmer protests are thus largely led by Green Revolution regions while other regions have thrown in the towel.

**Global warming** | Punjab's leading role in these protests can be traced to a third transformation: global impact of climate change. Global warming is expected to reduce frost in large areas of northern hemisphere thereby increasing potential for agriculture. A Government of Canada website speaks of opportunities to grow

warmer weather crops taking advantage of longer growing seasons and fewer extreme cold events.

This has, arguably, contributed to Canada becoming more open to immigration of farming communities. Farmers of Punjab, having demonstrated their agricultural prowess in Green Revolution, are an obvious target group. Their aspirations are influenced by what their friends and relatives earn in Canada.

**Markets no answer** | Economists would have the market decide the response to cumulative effects of the three transformations. While this approach is academically appealing, especially when fortified with mathematical models, it does not take great insight to identify its extreme risks.

The market could take agricultural production in a

felt. Existence of production cycles can lead to spurts in prices of foodgrains. The frequency of these spurts could increase if the per capita net production of food does not grow rapidly. And there are some signs that the per capita net production of wheat could be tapering off.

**For free food** | To expect governments to stick religiously to market logic on issues like food prices is clearly unrealistic. In a political economy which has place for distribution of free food to 800 million people, no government can be expected to ignore sharp spurts in food prices.

Much to the chagrin of market-friendly economists, governments periodically curb exports as a response to spurts in prices. This meets short-term requirements of a polity that cannot afford food shocks, but only serves to further alienate farmers.



Images are for representational purposes

**Incentivise farming** | With a free hand for the market being outside the realm of practical politics, the only way forward is to focus on long-term food security.

Since it is difficult to see any government going back on the current norm of free food for 800 million people, there is value in being realistic and treating this as policy goal. Target of an agricultural policy must then be to supply this food as well as ensure that basic food for the rest of the population is reasonably priced.

This goal would prioritise production of sufficient food, ideally from most productive lands. Farmers who achieve high levels of productivity and quality would be entitled to higher prices and possibly other support.

direction far away from food security. In agriculturally less developed regions, growth in food output would be further constrained as the market demands workers move from agriculture to more lucrative opportunities.

**Migration no solution** | In agriculturally advanced regions, international migration, especially to countries like Canada where migration-enabling networks already exist, becomes even more attractive.

Negative effects of this movement out of agriculture on food production would be further enhanced if government follows advice of economists and encourages farmers to move to more lucrative non-food crops.

**Think food security** | Impact of these trends on food security may not seem particularly significant when seen in terms of average availability of food, but there are some complexities that can make their presence

**Fix sick farms** | At the same time government could encourage setting up farm management cooperatives that would manage, for a fee and without having any rights to the land, large numbers of farms that are currently less productive. These farms would benefit from economies of scale and their owners would have the option of seeking non-farm work. Government could even help smoothen the process of movement out of agriculture.

**Look out for farmers** | Task of ensuring long-term food security while protecting interests of individual farmers is by no means an easy one. But it is important to recognise the way forward rather than simply sitting in judgment over farmers who are facing the risks, and opportunities, of multiple transformations.

The writer is dean of social sciences, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

# Havildar gets Vishisht Seva Medal for Multipurpose Octocopter



NEW DELHI, Feb 14 (ANI)

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu has awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal to Havildar Varinder Singh of the Sikh Regiment in the Indian Army for his development of a 'Multipurpose Octocopter', an official said.

The 'Multipurpose Octocopter' developed by Singh is a versatile drone capable of not only conducting surveillance operations but also performing tasks such as grenade dropping, aerial target engagement with weapons like the AK-47, and logistics operations. "This is also a weapon drone, with the help of a four-hand grenade MGM rifle, will prove to be a boon for the Indian Army," Singh said.