GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
DEFENCE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1955
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06th December, 2024

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY HUB IN DEFENCE SECTOR

1955. SHRI ANANTA NAYAK:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to develop the country into a research and technology hub in defence sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has taken an initiative 'Dare to Dream' to attract new generation through research and start-ups;

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken by the Government in this regard;

(e) whether the Government has earmarked/sanctioned/released any fund for the said initiative; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF STATE   (SHRI SANJAY SETH)
IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. Government has taken various initiatives to develop India into a research and technology hub. Some of them are as follows: -

(i)   Technology Development Fund (TDF) Scheme: Technology Development Fund Scheme is a flagship program of MoD (Ministry of Defence) executed by DRDO under Make in India initiative. The Government has approved TDF Scheme to encourage industries especially MSMEs and Startups to develop various Defence technologies. The scheme aligns with the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' by bringing new industries in the fold of design and manufacturing of defense technology. Funding of up to Rs. 50 Cr. per project is provided to the industry as Grant-in-Aid.

(ii)   DRDO Industry Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE): DRDO has established, DRDO Industry Academia Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) across the country at IISc Bangalore, various IITs and Central/State Universities to encourage directed research for developing new technologies for Defence and Security in identified areas. State-of-the-Art lab/research facilities and infrastructure for attracting researchers and scholars are established at these Centres of excellence. Through these DIA-CoEs, DRDO will have effective collaboration with start-ups/ industry which will further help in product development.

(iii)   Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework was launched by the Government with the aim to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace Sector by engaging Industries including MSMEs, startups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia to promote self-reliance. Further, a scheme for scaling up iDEX has been launched in May 2021 with a budgetary support of Rs. 498.80 crore for the next five years i.e. from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The Scheme aims at providing financial support to nearly 300 Start-ups/ MSMEs/ individual innovators and 20 partner incubators under the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) framework.

So far, a total of 79 Projects of costing INR Rs. 334.02 Cr. has been sanctioned to various industries under the TDF scheme for development of Defence technologies and DRDO has established 15 DIA-CoEs across the country. 264 projects of cost approximately Rs. 930 Crores are sanctioned so far, under the Grants-in-Aid scheme of DRDO.

(c) to (f): Yes, Sir. DRDO has been launching Pan India Dare to Dream Innovation Contest every year since 2019 to bring together innovators, entrepreneurs, individuals above 18 years and start-ups (recognized by DPIIT and with Indian founders) for innovative ideas in the field of Defence and Aerospace. Through this contest, DRDO invites innovative ideas and best ideas are selected and awarded.

Four versions of Dare to Dream Contest have already been successfully conducted. Dare to Dream (D2D) 5.0 has been launched by the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri on 18 October, 2024 and presently going on. A fixed amount in each category is provided as cash prize to the winners of this contest. A total of Rs. 543 lakh has been released to the winners of four editions of Dare to Dream Contest as cash prize money. The selected individual/ company are getting benefitted as DRDO supports them to realize awarded ideas into Prototype through TDF scheme.

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