

Indian AF Buys Spyder Air-Defense Missiles

By vivek raghuvanshi
Published: 2 Sep 12:39 EDT (16:39 GMT)

NEW DELHI - Israeli company Rafael has been awarded a \$260 million contract by the Indian Air Force for 18 Spyder Low Level Quick Reaction Missiles (LLQRM). The contract was inked Sept. 1, a senior Indian Defence Ministry official said.

Rafael was shortlisted to supply the missiles against France's MBDA early last year. However, the contract was delayed, mainly due to opposition from India's leftist parties, Defence Ministry sources said.

The deliveries of the Spyder missiles will begin in 2½ years and be completed within four, the ministry official said.

The contract will not include any mandatory defense offsets, the official said.

The Israeli-developed Spyder system is based on Rafael's Python 5 passive infrared and Derby active radar-guided air-to-air missiles, with an effective range of 15 kilometers. The system uses an Elta search radar, an Indian Air Force official said. The system is built as a quick-reaction surface-to-air missile defense system against aircraft, UAVs, and even precision-guided missiles, according to the makers.

The request for proposals was sent in mid-2005 to France, Israel, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

India began looking to foreign firms after the Trishul LLQRM system developed by its state-owned Defence Research and Development Organization was rejected by the Army, Navy and Air Force.