

Nuclear India moves closer to missile defence shield

AFP, New Delhi

India announced Friday a final successful test of the surface-to-air Akash missile before starting mass production under an ambitious plan to build a national missile defence shield.

The missile blasted off from the Chandipur-on-Sea testing site, 200 kilometres (125 miles) northeast of Orissa state capital Bhubaneswar and hit an unmanned flying target, defence ministry spokesman Sitanshu Karti told AFP.

"The Akash missile has successfully hit the bull's eye for the fifth time in a row in the past 10 days and the last trial successfully took place today," he said.

The 700-kilogram (1,540-pound) Akash, meaning "sky" in Hindi, can track 100 targets simultaneously with onboard radar, move at 600 metres (yards) a sec-

ond and deliver a 55-kilogram warhead across 27 kilometres (17 miles) in 50 seconds.

The missile system has been configured to be part of a futuristic network centric operation, the defence ministry said in a separate statement.

Akash will join forces with a radar-based interceptor missile project, which is planned to be ready within three years and provide the national missile defence shield, missile scientists say.

New Delhi government officials report that the Indian-made interceptor missiles have performed better than Patriot air-defence batteries manufactured by US defence group Raytheon.

Friday's final Akash test came a week after India announced plans to increase its nuclear prowess with a ballistic missile capable of hitting targets up to 6,000 kilometres (3,800 miles) away.

Modi-led BJP wins Gujarat polls

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday stormed back to power in the western state of Gujarat and its senior leader Narendra Modi is poised to return as Chief Minister for the third time after the party won the elections to the state legislature.

The Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 117 seats in the 182-member state legislature, leaving the Congress Party -- which runs the federal government -- trailing with just 59 seats, the commission said on its official website.

Another six seats were picked up by small parties or independent candidates.

The election was held on December 11 and 16.

In the last elections, BJP had

won 127 seats in the 182-strong state assembly while Congress bagged 51 seats. Even before results were officially announced, BJP workers began celebrations at the party's office in Ahmedabad.

BJP spokesperson Ravishankar Prasad said "the victory is the victory of entire BJP of which Modi is the Man of the Match. We are proud of his performance."

Congress conceded defeat when its spokesman Abhishek Singhvi said "I congratulate Narendra Modi for a remarkable victory. I don't grieve him the victory but the win does not take away the blot of communal riots on him or invalidate all that happened during the riots in 2002 under his Chief Ministership."

Senior BJP leader Arun Jaitley, who is credited with the crafting of BJP's election strategy in Gujarat elections, said Modi has secured a "respectful mandate" and that it is a rare election where a party has won on the plank of "good governance and development."

The victory in Gujarat polls is a major shot in the arm of 55-year-old Modi who single-handedly led the BJP campaign fighting anti-incumbency, a united opposition and a revolt to his leadership within a section of his own party.

The campaign for the election was marked by a sharp war of words between Modi and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi who, along with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, had undertaken extensive electioneering in Gujarat.

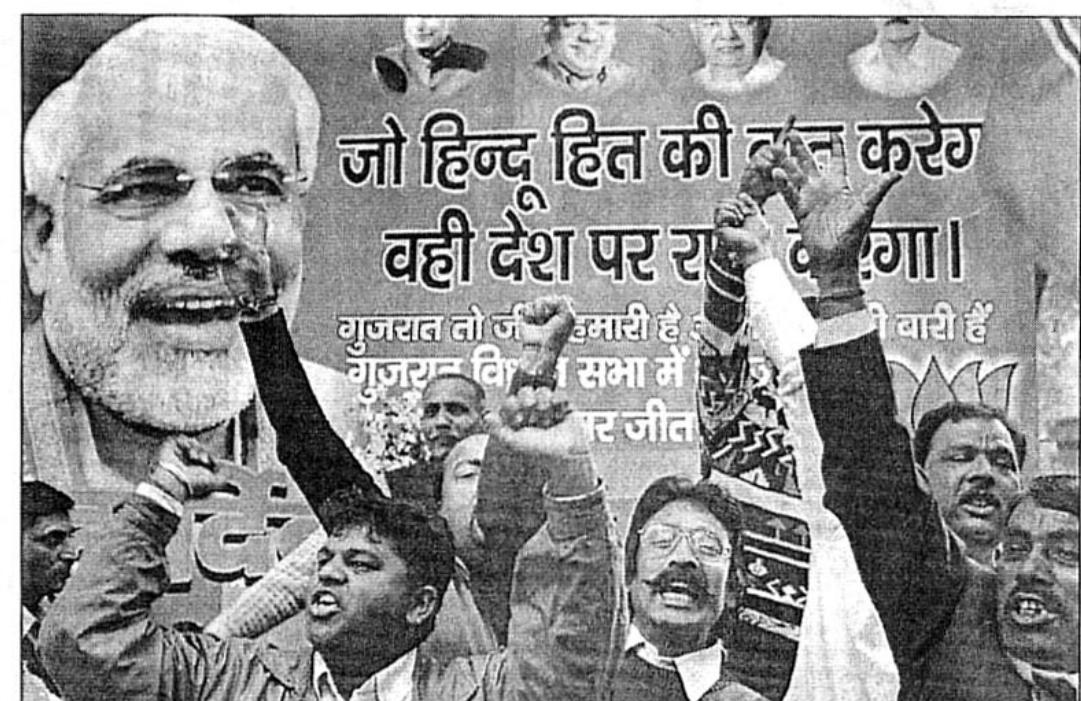


PHOTO: AFP
Indian opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) activists celebrate, in front of a billboard with a portrait of Gujarat state Chief Minister Narendra Modi, their party's victory in elections of the western Indian state of Gujarat, at the party headquarters in New Delhi yesterday.

22 Myanmar people killed in boat accident

AFP, Bangkok

At least 22 people from Myanmar, including four boys and seven women, have died after a boat capsized off a small island near the maritime border with Thailand, Thai police said Sunday.

The bodies were discovered floating at sea Saturday off Thailand's Ranong province, 570km south of Bangkok, police said.

Thai police Colonel Teerawat Rattanachai said none of the victims, whose bodies are thought to have floated from the Myanmar side of the border, had any identification, and that others may have been on board the boat when it sank.

Two dozen killed in Afghan violence

AFP, Ghazni

Around two dozen people, including several civilians, were killed in the latest spate of Taliban-linked violence across Afghanistan, authorities said Sunday.

Three civilians, one a woman, were killed when a bomb hit their vehicle in the eastern province of Khost, a troubled region near the Pakistani border, provincial police spokesman Mohammad Yaqobi said.

Two other civilians were wounded by the same bomb, which

he said was detonated remotely like many others used in Taliban attacks on security forces.

The Taliban on Saturday shot dead seven men, two of them truck drivers for a Western security firm, who had been kidnapped in the past week, police and a rebel spokesman said.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said the men -- three policemen, two soldiers and the drivers -- were killed after attempting to escape "from our jail".

Ghazni province police chief Khan Mohammad Mujahid told AFP that three bodies had been recovered.

In their biggest hostage-taking, the Taliban captured 23 South Korean nationals in July in the same province. They killed two of the group of Christian aid workers before releasing the remainder.

The defence ministry said troops killed 10 rebels in the southern province of Kandahar on Friday. Several other militants and four soldiers were wounded, it said.

Indian police cane girls protesting teacher's killing

AFP, New Delhi

Police on Saturday beat schoolgirls with batons in a northern Indian town after the students squatted on a highway to protest the killing of their headmaster, reports said.

The girls, who were caned and dragged by their hair by police in Ferozabad town, were between six and 13 years old, the Press Trust of India reported.

Television stations reported at least three girls fainted after the assault by riot police on some 100 girls, in Ferozabad, a hub of India's glassware industry.

US recovers some faith in Musharraf

AFP, Washington

To be sure, top officials say, Musharraf has reversed course since he imposed emergency rule November 3, which prompted both a review of US aid to Pakistan and a broader debate on his status as ally in the war on terror.

However, they insist, he must pass further tests on the way to and during parliamentary elections he has set for January 8.

"He has been a good ally in the war on terror... (but) it was not a good decision to impose a state of emergency," Secretary of State

Condoleezza Rice told AFP in an exclusive interview last week on Pakistan and other topics.

"He's lifted the state of emergency. He's taken off the (army) uniform. And now I hope that he is going to oversee the return of Pakistan to a civilian-led democratic state," she said.

"They need to have free and fair elections," Rice said, adding that the test does not begin the day of elections but "when opposition can gather" and all media can air views freely.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Police Headquarters
Dhaka

Invitation for International Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the manufacturers/suppliers/local agents in their pad for the purchase of the following items for DMP Telephone Exchange Modernisation.

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. Agency	Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
3. Procuring entity name	Inspector General, Bangladesh Police.
4. Procuring entity code	Not used at present.
5. Invitation for	DMP Telephone Exchange Modernisation.
6. Invitation for tender reference No.	E&T/EO/47-2007/12(2007-2008).
7. Date	13 December 2007.

KEY INFORMATION

8. Procurement method	Open tendering method.
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FUNDING INFORMATION

9. Budget & source of fund	Police revenue budget.
10. Development partners (if applicable)	Not applicable.

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

11. Project/programme code (if applicable)	Not applicable.
12. Project/programme name (if applicable)	Not applicable.
13. Tender package No.	E&T/EO/12(2007-2008).
14. Tender package name	Not applicable.
15. Tender publication date	
16. Tender selling date	18.12.2007 to 03.02.2008.
17. Tender closing date and time	04.02.2008 at 12.00 noon.
18. Tender opening date and time	04.02.2008 at 12.30pm.
19. Name & address of the office(s)	Police Headquarters Phonix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000.
Selling tender document (principal)	Room No. 220 (1 st Floor) & Room No. 343 (2 nd Floor), Police Headquarters, Dhaka-1000. DC (Supply), DMP, Dhaka. AIG (Telecom), Rajarbagh, Dhaka.

Receiving tender document	Room No. 220 (1 st Floor), Police Headquarters, Dhaka-1000.
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Opening tender document	Operation Conference Room (1 st Floor), Police Headquarters, Dhaka-1000.
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20. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	Operation Conference Room (1 st Floor), Police Headquarters, Dhaka at 10.30am on 05.01.2008.
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21. Eligibility of tenderer	(i) Current year trade licence, (ii) Up-to-date Income Tax clearance certificate, (iii) Ten digit VAT registration certificate and (iv) Other documents described in tender document.
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22. Brief description of goods or works	Shown at Serial No. 24.
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23. Price of tender document (BDT)	Shown at Serial No. 24.
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24. Lot	Identification of lot	Quantity	Price of tender document (BDT)	Tender security amount in (BDT)	Completion time
Lot-A	DMP Telephone Exchange Modernisation	1 Pcs	2000.00	10,00,000.00	120 days from the date of work order

25. Validity of tender and tender security	30 June 2008 and 60 (sixty) days respectively from the date of opening of tender.
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26. Name of the official inviting tender	Nur Mohammad.
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27. Designation of the official inviting tender	Inspector General, Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
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PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

28. Address of official inviting the tender	Police Headquarters (1 st Floor), Fulbaria, Dhaka.
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29. Contact details of official inviting the tender	Tel: 88 02 9564779, Fax: 88 02 9563358 E-mail: aige_t@police.gov.bd
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