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780 defence items in 3rd negative imports list of sub-systems

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NEW DELHI: The defence ministry has approved another list that progressively bans imports of 780 sub-systems — components or ‘line replacement units (LRUs)’ of weapon systems and platforms — which are being manufactured by defence PSUs, from December 2023 to December 2028.

The new notification approved by defence minister Rajnath Singh is in continuation of the first two such lists, which contained 458 items, announced in December 2021 and March 2022.

“The fresh list, which specifies the timelines beyond which the strategically-important 780 items will be procured only from the domestic industry, is another step in the continuous pursuit of self-reliance in defence manufacturing and to minimise imports by defence PSUs,” a

senior MoD official said on Sunday.

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Many of the LRUs identified are for Russian-origin hardware like T-90S main-battle tanks, Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets, AN-32 transport aircraft and Konkurs-M anti-tank guided missiles, manufactured under licence by defence PSUs. It also includes components of indigenous platforms like Tejas light combat aircraft, Arjun main-battle tanks and Dhruv advanced light

helicopters.

The new list comes at a time when the US-led western countries have slapped wide-ranging sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. India is faced with the challenge of maintaining high operational military readiness because almost 70% of its defence hardware and software is of Soviet or Russian-origin, which require a regular supply of spares as well as maintenance, as was earlier reported by TOI.

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The official said the indigenisation of the 780 items will be taken up under the 'Make in India' category. "The category aims to

achieve self-reliance by involving greater participation of the Indian industry. Projects involving design and development of equipment, systems, major platforms or upgrades thereof by the industry can be taken up under this category,” he said.

“The indigenous development of these LRUs/sub-systems/components will bolster the economy and reduce the import dependence of the defence PSUs,” he added.

These three lists are different from the three “positive indigenisation” or negative arms lists notified in 2020, 2021 and 2022 that progressively ban 310 bigger weapon systems and platforms.