Newsletter July 2026

ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT WILL REMAIN A MIRAGE UNTIL INDIA PROTECTS ITS NATIONAL STRATEGIC ASSETS

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Quick Summary

This Newsletter takes a cue from what our **CMD asserted during the recently concluded Defence Forces First Conclave by Republic Defence on 18 Jul 2026.** The matter requires attention of the Govt if we are to protect the foundations on which stands the edifice of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

What is a truly Indian product?

Let's begin with this very basic question – **what is a truly Indian product?** Is it the one that is manufactured in our country? Is it the one whose technology and know-how is brought in India by a foreign entity and manufactured here with Indian work force? Or worse, is it the one that is fraudulently claimed by an Indian player as its own by putting a 'Made in India' stamp on something that has been got here from the back door?

A truly Indian product is none of the above. It is the one which is **'designed, developed and manufactured'** in India. An activity that not only demands **crores of investment in R&D,** but also, **years and decades in realising a product** all the way from concept formulation to a mission-ready system. A product wherein we not only 'own' the technology end-to-end, but also, have the know-how and the authorization for its upgrade as would be demanded by future operational requirements.

The next question?

Who can create truly Indian Products? One is the **DRDO, DPSUs and Central Research Organisations (CROs)** who enjoy assured adequacy of Govt funds to pour into the R&D process and timelines for development that are open to time and cost revisions. Second are the **ones who thrive on Govt-Funded R&D** and develop products 'as told' - a la 'No-Risk' venture! Product developed? Fine. Not developed – no issue, ask for more funding or quit unscathed!

The third and the most vulnerable are the **defence enterprises that dare to spend their own capital to carry out R&D** for a product whose orders at the point of entry actually do not exist. Spend crores in R&D effort to develop products that are 'world class' both by quality and cost and offer it to defence forces for procurement. 100% risk is of the entrepreneur. Product succeeds? Well and good; Product fails? Every penny spent is SUNK! That is the type of risk such entrepreneurs take. **Let's call them Privately Self-Funded Indigenous R&D (PSFIR) Companies.**

The real value of a Privately Self-Funded Indigenous R&D (PSFIR) Company

In the words of our CMD when a private Indian company, without a government grant, without DRDO support, and without a taxpayer safety net, invests its own funds to design, develop, and prove a defence system from first principles, **it makes the highest possible contribution to Atmanirbhar Bharat. It demonstrates not merely capability but conviction - the one quality that no procurement process can manufacture.**

These companies cannot be equated with others that either thrive on Govt-Funding or the ones who 'get the product' having spent nothing in time and cost to 'develop' it and then 'game-play' to stand in the same line as PSFIR Companies and intend to beat them on costs.

Enforce Equality where it belongs

In fact a **PSFIR player is no different than the DRDO/DPSU/CRO** except that he takes much greater risks by upfront spending his own capital for a product which he 'foresees' as the requirement of Armed Forces sometime into the future.

Give PSFIR Companies their due

At the onset, a **PSFIR Company must find its definition in DAP 2026** as an Indian company who in respect of a specific defence product has conceptualised, designed, developed, and proven the product in India entirely from private capital, including promoter funds, internal accruals, or private debt or equity finance.

Chapter V of the DAP 2026 which deals with the procedure for Acquisition of systems designed and developed by DRDO/DPSU/CRO must also include **acquisition and induction of systems designed and developed by PSFIR Companies.**

Another issue is non-recognition. In that if DRDO/DPSU/CRO has developed a product using Govt Funds and a PSFIR does the same using own capital reaching required technological Readiness Level (TRL-7), **the current process assumes development has not yet occurred and requires the PSFIR player to initiate development under government institutional auspices all over again.** This anomaly is wasteful and must be corrected.

Then there is **Single Vendor Case (SVC) enigma.** When DRDO/DPSU/CRO develops a product all by itself, these are not treated as SVC but when a PSFIR does it, it is SVC. This distinction must go. A PSFIR vendor has spent fortunes in developing world class products which nobody in the private sector has done so. Is he really SVC?

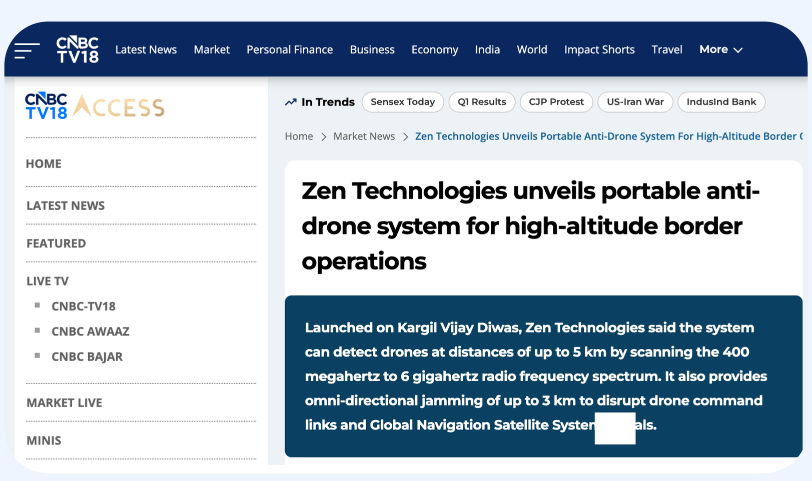
As CMD has stated, If a **PSFIR company is allowed to decay and finally die** at the hand of an indifferent procurement system it will not only be a **body-blow to the very spirit of promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat,** it will be a biggest compelling disincentive to a future player to risk his capital in pursuit of making our country self-reliant in defence.

PSFIR companies are extraordinarily few. They are national strategic assets. Unlike permanent Govt institutions, they are fragile and commercially vulnerable entities. The system must therefore protect them not as competitors in a market, but as assets of national strategic significance

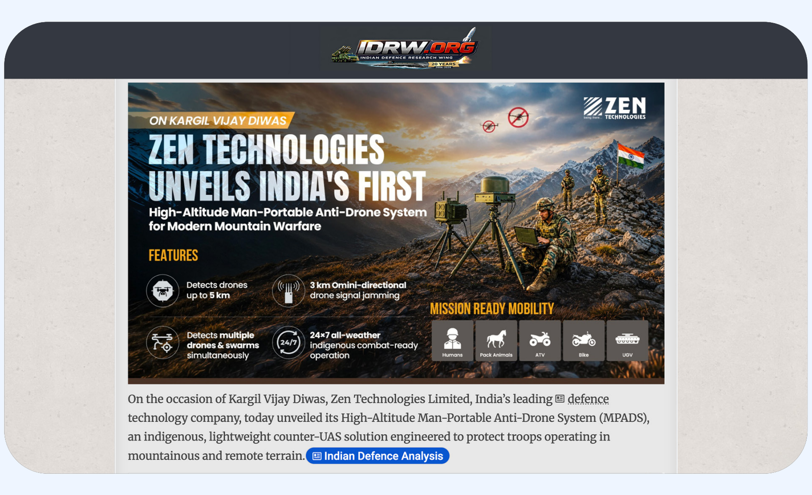
Failing to do this will tantamount to **destroying the very foundations of Atmanirbhar Bharat.**

Zen in News

Zen Technologies unveils portable anti-drone system for high-altitude border operations *(CNBC TV 18)*



Zen Technologies Unveils India's First High-Altitude Man-Portable Anti-Drone System for Modern Mountain Warfare *(IDRW.ORG)*



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