

International Maritime Defence Show 2021, Russia

As a fellow Vayu subscriber, if I were to bring up Russia, I can confidently say at this very moment you are conjuring up thoughts of freezing temperatures, vodka and the Cold War. As such it's only logical that I address these three thoughts, and my perception of the same, through the course of this article.



St Petersburg in all its Tsarist splendour

First, a little bit of context. Earlier this year, amidst all the pandemic-related doom and gloom, I was asked to represent Vayu at IMDS (International Maritime Defence Show) 2021 at St Petersburg, Russia. The show, held in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Defence, Rosoboronexport JSC and Federal Service for Military-

Technical Cooperation, is an exposition held every two years at St Petersburg. Akin to what Aero India and Defexpo are to us, IMDS showcases naval armament, maritime assets and technology. Of particular note, and something I found personally amusing was the interest garnered by the Brahmos Stand in this edition of the show.

Temperature

Landing up armed with the best cold weather gear the average Bangalorian can muster, I was subject to scorching temperatures that would make the average Delhiite look back fondly upon the scorching North Indian summer, so much for thoughts of emulating a frozen Napoleon.

Vodka

As any of the thousands of other engineers floating aimlessly throughout India can attest, I too have my fair share of drinking stories. Maybe it was the environment, or perhaps the relief of finally being out of the house after a year of lockdowns, but Russian vodka truly is worth its weight in gold!

The Cold War

This thought is something I want to handle differently. Having had grown up on a steady diet of Tom Clancy novels and videos games like Jane's 688i Hunter/Killer, my perception of the Cold War and of Russian/Soviet submarines are musings that I think are worth delving into.

As one of the companies bidding for the Indian Navy's Project 75I tender, Russia's United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC) and the Rubin Design Bureau, were keen to show me, and by extension Vayu, what sets them apart. With a portfolio boasting of designs like the Foxtrot (Independent India's first submarine), Delta series of SSBN's and the INS Vikramditya dwarfing Typhoon class, the Rubin Design Bureau hardly needs some random correspondent from India singing their praises.

What is Project 75I? It is a project, cleared by the Nirmala Sitharaman-headed Defence Acquisition Council in June 2021, to build 6 conventional submarines under the Make in India scheme. These submarines, with advanced sensors and Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) are intended