

the Hindu, 2 April 2006

AF to complement Indian Navy in exercise with French force

the Hindu, 3 April 2006 IAF to complement Indian Navy in exercise with French force On board INS Viraat, April 1 (PTI): For the first time, Indian Air Force (IAF) would complement the Navy in its exercises during the ongoing Indo-French joint naval exercise off Goa coast. "IAF will mount a strike against our forces in the sea which will be like any other enemy strike from land which will give experience of defending ourselves during the exercises," Rear Admiral Anup Singh, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet told media persons on board INS Viraat. Both the navies would mix together and make two different forces during the exercises -- eighth in the Varuna series -- which began on March 7 and culminate on April 7. "This is also for the first time that aircraft carriers of both the navies -- INS Viraat (Indian navy) and nuclear powered carrier Charles De Gaulle (French Navy) -- are participating in such exercises," Singh informed. Last year, during Indo-French naval exercises off-Djibouti coast, Indian Army's contingent was taken along with the Indian Navy, Singh said. The ongoing exercises has Indian side represented by aircraft carrier INS Viraat with 12 Sea King and Chetak helicopters, the guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai, the guided missile frigates INS Gomati and INS Betwa, the fleet replenishment tanker INS Aditya and stealth SSK submarine INS Shankul with maritime aircraft Dornier and TU 14 operating from ashore, officials informed.

the Tribune, 22 April 2006

India to station MiG-29 fighter-bombers at Tajikistan base (Rahul Bedi)

New Delhi, April 21: India's first overseas military facility in Tajikistan is expected to become operational by the year-end as part of New Delhi's thrust into oil-rich Central Asia to meet its growing energy needs. The Indian Air Force (IAF) is to deploy a fleet of MiG-29 fighter-bombers at the airbase at Aini, 15 km from the Tajikistan capital Dushanbe. India's quasi-military Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is currently constructing three hangars at Aini, two of which will accommodate the 12 aircraft the IAF will deploy for varying periods, official sources said. The Tajikistan Air Force, whose personnel the IAF is training under an April 2002 defence cooperation agreement, will utilise the third hangar. For this purpose the IAF also plans to station trainer aircraft at Aini. The IAF is also helping its Tajik counterpart to retrofit its Soviet-era fighters while Indian civilian and military personnel are teaching the Tajik servicemen English. The Indian defence Ministry declined to comment on the Tajik base. However, defence planners said the base would provide New Delhi with a "longer strategic reach" in Central Asia and help it secure badly needed oil contracts.

the Times of India, 24 April 2006

Home fly with us, IAF to tell IITians (Rajat Pandit)

New Delhi: In the first-ever such initiative to tap top brains, the IAF will now host as many as 57 IIT students for a two-month summer training stint in a bid to motivate them to become 'air-warriors'. Being a technology-intensive force with frontline fighter jets, radars and missiles, the IAF wants bright youngsters to join its engineering ranks. And what better talent can it expect than the globally-recognized IITians, who constitute one of the biggest Indian exports to the US? The IAF, in fact, even wants to attract IITians to join it as pilots. The idea is that with fighter jets getting more and more advanced, pilots should have more technical knowledge than merely having the skills to fly the sophisticated machines. "This special summer training drive from May 15 is being conducted as a step forward in our efforts to attract better quality talent from premier institutes," said Wing Commander Ashim Kapoor. The 57 pre-final year IIT engineering students will be attached to IAF's Base Repair Depots (BRDs) in Kanpur, Chandigarh, Nashik, Delhi and Pune, among others, with the force footing their entire travel, boarding and lodging expenses. The IITians, from streams ranging from electrical and mechanical to aerospace and computer engineering, will gain an insight into how the IAF maintains repairs and upgrades different systems.

the Indian Express, 25 April 2006

AF looking to create sub-cadre for weapons systems operators

New Delhi, April 24: In what is believed to make it a far more efficient fighting force, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is mulling a separate sub-cadre of weapon systems operators along the lines of similar specialized cadres in the USAF and RAF. A proposal in this regard is one of the chief subjects of discussion at the IAF commanders' conference that began today. The creation of such a sub-cadre would mean that a quantum of IAF personnel be dedicated to aerial target acquisition and weapon deployment. This would allow pilots to focus solely on flying missions, rather than perform the dual role of actual combat and flying. "Weapons operators, who do not necessarily need to be pilots, will fly in twin-engine fighters with combat pilots and perform all offensive functions, thereby leaving the pilot to focus only on flying," sources at Air Headquarters said. Holding that national security interests could not be allowed to be put in jeopardy, IAF

oday ruled out allowing fighter and transport pilots to leave the force for more lucrative jobs with private airlines.

he Pioneer, 28 April 2006

Dassault set to bag IAF's \$6 billion 'Rafale' deal (Rahul Datta)

Rafale: The French jet has entered the race for bagging the six billion dollar deal for 126 medium multi-role fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force and is keen to supply the frontline jet to IAF. Dassault: The French aviation giant, which manufactures the Mirage fighter jets and currently in use in the IAF, is ready to meet all the specifications of the IAF in case of getting the contract for its latest product Rafale. The company now awaits the request for proposal (RFP) from the IAF. The IAF has shortlisted six planes for the proposed deal and they include F16 (Lockheed Martin), F18 (Boeing), two other US companies, Grippen (Sweden), Mig 29 (Russia), Rafale and Eurofighter (UK). Dassault has made presentations to the Ministry of Defence of India and President Jacques Chirac also made a pitch for the plane during his recent visit to Delhi. In fact, top officials of Dassault were part of the business delegation accompanying Mr Chirac, Yves Robins, vice president (international relations, defence) Dassault told a group of visiting Indian newsmen in Paris.

he Hindu, 29 April 2006

IAF shows interest in Saras civilian aircraft

Bangalore: The Indian Air Force has shown keen interest in Saras, the country's first civilian aircraft designed and developed by the National Aerospace Laboratories here. NAL director A.R. Upadhyaya told presspersons on the sidelines of a seminar on aluminium in aerospace on Friday that the second prototype of the 14-seater aircraft was ready. Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. will manufacture the aircraft. "The IAF has shown interest after seeing the performance of Saras, and HAL is having discussions with HAL on production details. By October a clear picture would emerge," Mr. Upadhyaya said. The second prototype has been fitted with a high performance engine and its weight has been considerably reduced, he said.