

The Hindu, 1 August 2004

Arun Prakash named New Navy Chief
(Vinay Kumar)

NEW DELHI, JULY 31. The new Naval Chief, Admiral Arun Prakash, today said that his main priority would be to augment the present force levels and go in for the acquisition of more modern warships, including nuclear submarines. Admiral Prakash, who has the distinction of being a Naval fighter pilot donning the Indian Air Force uniform in the 1971 war to win the 'Vir Chakra', said the force levels in the Navy were dwindling and there was an urgent need to arrest this. He emphasised the importance of network centric warfare and work in this direction would be done by interlinking long range missiles, radars and sensors on the naval warships through satellite and info-tech to deliver a lethal punch. A graduate of the National Defence Academy, Khadagwasla, in June 1964, he specialised in aviation, and qualified as a pilot on the Sea Hawk jet fighter in 1968. He has served afloat in command of the missile boat INS Chatak, the frigates INS Beas and INS Vindhyagiri, and the aircraft carrier INS Viraat. He is the recipient of the Vishist Seva Medal, the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal for distinguished services.

The Hindu, 1 August 2004

Navy to hold JCM

VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 31. A meeting of the Joint Consultative Machinery (JCM), the highest forum of Navy, will be held here on August 10 to discuss the pending demands of the civilian employees.

The Tribune, 2 August 2004

INHS 'Asvini' connected by air, F sea & land (UNI)

Mumbai, August 1: Indian Naval Hospital Ship (INHS), Asvini, the naval command hospital at Colaba in South Mumbai, has become the first hospital in the world to be connected by air, sea and land. Announcing this Surgeon Vice Admiral V.K. Singh, the Director-General, Medical Services (Navy) today said in the next six months all naval

hospitals would be connected as part of an ambitious project to connect all hospitals of the armed forces in the country.

Webindia123.com, 2 August 2004

Indian Navy completes its trilogy with INS Tabar (ANI)

The third Russian-made stealth warship INS Tabar was inducted into the Indian Navy on Saturday, thereby completing the trilogy of missile-capable frigates for the force. In line with INS Talwar and INS Trishul, the latest warship with its strategic shape and special paint coating allows it to dodge enemy radars, giving it the stealth edge. Launched at St. Petersburg, the ship covered a distance of 18,000 nautical miles, touching ports in South America and South Africa before reaching Mumbai. Officials welcomed the ship saying it will give the Indian Navy an edge over its rivals. When fully loaded, INS Tabar has a displacement of 3850 tonnes. Its weapon suite includes the potent vertically launched Klub-N missile and the Shitil missile system. It has a top, world class design. It is equipped with a lot of weapons and sensors and is in the league of top ships in the world. The ship is capable to fight in all kind of situations. It is a very good ship, vice admiral Madanjit Singh said. The one billion dollars contract for acquiring the three stealth warships was signed between India and Russia in 1997.

NewKerala.com, 3 August 2004

Strait security will enhance India's regional power status (IANS)

New Delhi, Aug 2: A collective request to India by Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia to provide maritime security to the pirate-infested Malacca Strait - through which a quarter of the world trade passes - is seen as a recognition of the country's growing stature as a regional power and its strategic strength. It is also a reflection of the perception in the Southeast Asian region of India as a friendly nation, because Malaysia and Indonesia had, just days before, rejected a US offer for joint patrolling of the Malacca Strait. New Delhi has positively responded to the request, with External Affairs

Minister K. Natwar Singh, who was in Jakarta to attend the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in early July, saying it was in India's interest to ensure that the Strait remained a crime-free sea-lane.

The Hindu, 5 August 2004

Indo-US naval forces to conduct exercise in Sept.-Oct.

Mumbai, Aug. 4 (PTI): Signifying a growing relationship between India and the US, the navies of the two countries will hold their annual 'Malabar' exercise around September-October this year. "It reflects the positive relations between the naval forces of the world's two biggest democracies," Commander Stewen Mallow, the Captain of USS Cushing, the American destroyer that is docking off the coast of Mumbai said here today. The exercise is a part of the normal routine and signifies the growing relations between the two navies, he said adding that the destroyer was on its routine visits to various ports.

123Bharath.com, 5 August 2004

U.S warship docks in India (ANI)

Mumbai, Aug. 4 : U.S warship "USS Cushing" docked in Mumbai today on a friendly visit. During the three-day visit, the 382 crew members would interact with their Indian counterparts. "I think it's important from a ship's perspective, the ships we work with. The U.S ships the Indian Navy works with is important when we do exercises to increase our inter-operability skills, whether it be communications in certain warfare," Steven. A.Mucklow, the ship's commanding officer, said. A highly versatile multi-mission destroyer, the USS Cushing is capable of operating independently or in the company of amphibious or carrier task forces. Equipped to handle a variety of tasks, the ship's primary specialities are Under Sea Warfare (USW) and Strike Warfare (STW). Its Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) is also amongst the world's latest and the best.

The Financial Express, 6 August 2004

Now, Italian Co To Build Aircraft Carrier For Navy (Huma Siddiqui)

NEW DELHI, AUG 5: After Russians, it is the turn of Italians to take part in the design and construction of an aircraft carrier for the Indian Navy. The unlisted Italian company Fincantieri SpA has been selected from among four companies for a Rs 1700-crore contract. Recently two contracts were signed between Cochin shipyard and Fincantieri SpA, though final details are still being worked out by the two, sources said. The contracts relate to design and assistance during the construction of a new aircraft carrier, the Air Defence Ship, for the Navy.

Newindpress.com, 9 August 2004

Navy puts its men out at sea, on computers

VISAKHAPATNAM: At the Maritime Warfare College overlooking the Naval Dockyard here, the Navy puts its officers into war mode by using simulated war-gaming software developed by a Spanish company. Staging the theatre out at sea is a very costly and uneconomical exercise which cuts into routine training. "Here we play war by giving two teams a task and judge their response," a senior Naval officer told this website's newspaper. As the battle unfolds, every move of the opposing armadas is watched by a team of five controllers led by a director who can see on their console what the teams are doing. The controllers can also listen in on radio frequencies while the forces of the same fleet, locked in different cubicles, discuss their moves. The entire game is recorded to enable participants to learn from mistakes and approve new strategies. "While officers hotly contest that they did the right thing at the right time, the recording will bring out the truth," an officer said.

The Hindustan Times, 9 August 2004

Who did this man die fighting? (Vishal Thapar)

New Delhi, August 9: An upright naval commander refuses to approve a faulty weapons system in Russia. He and his commissioning team are flown back to

India. Six months later he is killed in a mysterious hit-and-run case. A year after his death, the commander gets a gallantry award. People, especially those in the navy, are drawing the obvious conclusion: that an arms mafia had him killed. This is the story of Commander Nawaz Ahmed. As the commissioning officer of the Russian-built Krivak-III class frigate, christened INS Talwar, he realised during acceptance trials in 2002 that a key on-board weapon system the Shtil-1 surface-to-air missile was malfunctioning. The Talwar was to be the first of the three stealth frigates inducted into the navy at an aggregate cost of \$1 billion. But Ahmed resisted allurements and intimidation in insisting that the Shtil snag first be rectified. With penalty clauses for delays specified in the contract, the stakes for the sellers were high. They pressed for acceptance of the ship and promised to rectify the problem post-delivery. But on Ahmed's advice, the navy refused to take delivery of the warship till the ability of Shtil-I to hit airborne targets was demonstrated. The 180-strong commissioning crew was flown back. This set the delivery schedule back by over a year. Six months after returning to New Delhi, the commander was killed near Chanakyapuri. He was on his regular morning jog when a speeding water tanker hit him near the Italian Embassy at Satya Marg on June 19, 2003. But the general belief in the navy is that Ahmed was killed by an arms mafia.

The Financial Express, 12 August 2004

No Reopening Of Scorpene Deal: Navy Chief

NEW DELHI, AUG 11: The multi-million dollar Scorpene submarine deal with France, negotiated by the previous government, will be sealed shortly without much changes in the terms. Indian Navy was seeking the launch of a dedicated satellite for networking its fleet, therefore there is no move to reopen the negotiations, said the new chief of Navy on Wednesday. In his first formal interaction with the media after taking over as 20th chief of the naval staff,

Admiral Arun Prakash said, certain clarifications had been sought from the French warship builders DCN International. He emphasised that the Scorpene deal had been negotiated, scrutinised by watchdog agencies as well as by the Cabinet and was awaiting nod from the Cabinet Committee on Security.

Newindpress.com, 12 August 2004

In the Navy, V stands for tradition

NEW DELHI: Indian Navy's new baby may be expected four years later, but senior officers are already thinking up a name for it. Aircraft carrier 'Admiral Gorshkov' will have a new name when it sails into the Indian seas in 2008, and it will begin with the alphabet 'V'. They were Vikram, Vikramaditya and Vajra. "Vikram was ruled out as the Coast Guard has a ship by that name. So it could be either of the other two, or even another name starting with 'V'," disclosed an officer. But why only 'V'? The country's first aircraft carrier was 'INS Vikraant', and the second was 'INS Viraat'. "So to maintain the tradition. And after all, V also stands for Victory," he added. Interestingly, this will be the third name for aircraft carrier Gorshkov. It was originally called 'Baku' by Russians when it was commissioned in 1987 following extensive sea trials. It was later renamed 'Admiral Gorshkov' to honour the Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union – Sergei Georgievich Gorshkov.

NewKerala.com, 12 August 2004

India for joint naval patrols with Indonesia, Malaysia (IANS)

New Delhi, Aug 11: India has signed an agreement with Indonesia for conducting joint naval patrols in regional waters and a similar pact with Malaysia is on the anvil, naval officials said here Wednesday. Admiral Arun Prakash, addressing his first news conference after assuming office last month, said his force had a diplomatic role and could be a "powerful instrument of foreign policy" if the government decided to use it in this manner. Naval officials said several nations in the region were keen on

enhancing cooperation with the Indian Navy, which is being seen as a major player in guarding sea-lanes and curbing piracy and other crimes in regional waters.

NewKerala.com, 14 August 2004

Australian battleship to visit Mumbai (IANS)

New Delhi, Aug 13: Reflecting a change in perception, Australia, which has in the past viewed with suspicion the growth of India's naval capability, is sending a battleship to Mumbai on a friendly visit. The navy frigate, HMAS Stuart, will visit Mumbai from Aug 14-18 "marking the continuing growth in the defence relationship between Australia and India", the Australian high commission here said in a statement. Said Australian High Commissioner to India Penny Wensley: "The arrival of HMAS Stuart demonstrates Australia's continuing commitment to maintaining a naval presence in the Indian Ocean that is in line with both Australia's and India's maritime security interests." HMAS Stuart is a long-range escort capable of air defence, surface and undersea warfare, surveillance, reconnaissance and interdiction.

The Times of India, 16 August 2004

Karwar base to be completed by '05 (Rajat Pandit)

NEW DELHI: The futuristic naval base on the western coast to house India's frontline warships, including aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov, and project power in the entire Indian Ocean region will finally become operational soon. Phase-I of "Project Seabird", the massive project to establish the dedicated naval base at Karwar in Karnataka, is now on schedule for completion by end-2005. The cost apart, the Navy is clearly excited about the Karwar base since it will go a long way towards meeting its strategic needs as a three-dimensional "blue-water force" capable of tackling threats far away from Indian shores. "The Karwar base will initially house 10 warships and 10 yardcrafts. It will be able to handle the huge 44,570-tonne Admiral Gorshkov, when it is inducted in 2008," said

a senior officer. The Navy plans to progressively shift its Western Naval Command at Mumbai, which controls the country's "sword arm" in the potent western fleet, to Karwar as facilities start becoming operational there.

Newstodaynet.com, 16 August 2004

Grappling with threats to coastal security
Chennai, Aug 15: Coastal security problems including that of dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, port security, oil pollution and interagency cooperation and support for managing, responding and mitigating an emergency situation within a port were discussed at a 12-day seminar on Coast Guard Maritime Crisis Management that ended on Friday. The seminar was organised by the US Coast Guard Mobile Training and Education Team with the Team Leader Lieutenant Travis Collier (Coast Guard) distributing certificate of participation to the men from the Indian Coast Guard, Navy and Chennai Port Trust. The delegates discussed a gamut of issues pertaining to coastal security problems. In order to enhance port's security, a detailed study of vulnerability and risk in Chennai port was carried out and remedial measures were suggested to the Port Trust.

The Financial Express, 17 August 2004

Second Naval Exercise With Oman Next Year (Huma Siddiqui)

NEW DELHI, AUG 16: India and Oman will hold their second naval exercise early next year. The exercise follows talks held in May this year between the two countries to enhance defence co-operation, a senior naval officer told. Out of the seven Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) nations, Oman is the only country which collaborates with India on naval exercises. It is believed that Saudi Arabia, because of the high presence of American component in its navy, is not in a position to hold such exercises with India. The navies of other nations are comparatively small, and not yet in a position to hold exercises, said a source.

The Hindu, 17 August 2004

Viraat to be operational within 90 days: Navy (UNI)

Mumbai, Aug 16: INS Viraat, India's lone aircraft carrier and which is undergoing a re-fit programme at present, will be operational in the next 90 days, Defence Ministry officials said here today. The aircraft carrier was shifted to the Cochin Shipyard Ltd where she was dry-docked and repairs were carried out early this year. Last month, the carrier arrived in Mumbai after the refit, for the rest of the repairs are being carried out at Naval Dockyard. "After the essential re-fit in Mumbai, she is expected to be operational in the next two to three months," the officials here said. In 2000, the aircraft carrier underwent a major mid-life upgrade programme in Cochin and Mumbai and was one of the star attractions at the International Fleet Review held in this port city in February 2001, where more than 70 warships participated. 'INS Viraat' is part of the Western Fleet which comes under the operational control of Western Naval Command (WNC), the sword arm of the Indian Navy. Currently, the blue-water three-dimensional Indian Navy has only one carrier, INS Viraat.

NewKerala.com, 18 August 2004

Navy is India's sword and shield at sea (IANS)

Mumbai, Aug 17: The Indian Navy is the country's "sword and shield" at sea, playing a vital role in protecting maritime boundaries and preventing smuggling and piracy, the navy chief said here Tuesday. Admiral Arun Prakash, who was visiting the Western Naval Command here for the first time since assuming office last month, said: "Indian Navy personnel have to be alert to enemies both from outside and inside the country." Addressing the officers and men of the command, Prakash said: "The naval soldier is like a 'sword and shield' of the country at sea.

Ministry of Defence Press Releases, 21 August 2004

Vice Admiral Arun Kumar Singh is the New DG Coast Guard

August 20, 2004: Vice Admiral Arun Kumar Singh today took over as Director General Coast Guard. A product of the National Defence Academy, Vice Admiral Singh is the senior most submariner in the Indian Navy. Vice Admiral Singh has commanded submarines, ships and submarine squadrons (including command of the first Kilo class Submarine Squadron in 1988) and the Submarine Base INS Virbahu during his career. He has also served in Sri Lanka during Ops Pawan (1988). He has served in different capacity as Director of Tactics and Director of Submarine Operations at Naval Headquarters. As Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Submarine) he authored the 30 year Submarine Construction Plan and was responsible for modernisation of submarine force, including induction of submarine launched missiles.

The Hindu, 22 August 2004

Navy one up in war games (Sandeep Dikshit)

NEW DELHI, AUG. 21. As the Indian Navy starts preparing for the next round of joint exercises with the U.S. Navy, comes the news that its detection unit was more successful in war games conducted at the previous 'Malabar' series of exercises off the western coast. The Indian Navy team spotted the noiseless American nuclear submarine more often than the visiting team during anti-submarine warfare exercises. "We are more familiar with the waters here whether it is in terms of composition (muddy) or the variations in depth," said an official downplaying the better showing by the Indian team. Senior officials are not sure at this stage if the Americans will again bring a nuclear submarine. But they agree that frequent exercises with western navies have made them more combat-ready and helped sort out friction on the high seas caused by the presence of a large number of warships from the 'coalition against terror' nations since October 2001.

Outlook.com, 22 August 2004

Bang of A Smoking Gun (Rajesh Ramachandran)

Barak missile deal proves that the questionable "single supplier formula" was employed to push the procurement of this Israeli missile system. No competitive bid was invited or even considered despite there being at least ten other options. There was no war or heightened threat perception to warrant rushing to a single vendor. Worse, it was a deal that was stuck for five years and processed by two governments and finally approved by the Atal Behari Vajpayee cabinet in October 2000. The Barak procurement flouted critical norms and provisions of the 'Defence Procurement Procedures 1992'. So blatant were the violations that even officials in the defence ministry endorsing the deal had to note that several procedures were bypassed. While pushing the Barak deal, the defence ministry did not follow the basic procedure of first determining what the end user, the navy, required. Instead, it first saw the trials and tailored the naval staff qualitative requirements (NSQR) to suit the manufacturer's technical specifications. There were lapses in the technical evaluation and the manner in which the ministry approved it.

Hindustan Times, 23 August 2004

Navy, tour operators fight over flight restrictions in Goa (PTI)

Panaji, August 22: Days after the Navy imposed restrictions on flights into Dabolim airport in order to carry out naval training exercises, following instructions from its high command in Delhi, the issue took a serious enough turn, for the Goa Governor S C Jamir to personally intervene in the matter. Jamir requested Navy Chief Arun Prakash to maintain the status quo at Dabolim airport and while the Navy has agreed for the time being, an uneasy stalemate prevails between the two parties right now. Goa's travel and tour operators are protesting that the order which imposes restrictions on flight operations between 8.30 am and 1 pm from Monday to Friday and 4.30 pm to 9.30 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, will affect the large number of charter flights that come in during the

October-march season from foreign countries.

The Statesman, 23 August 2004

The price we pay to keep the guns blazing
(Srinjoy Chowdhury)

New Delhi, Aug. 22: The figures tell the story. For a dozen years, the armed forces have been paying higher and higher prices to firms of former Soviet countries to keep their major weapons systems in running order. A recent effort by the Navy shows how inflated the prices are and how the same equipment can be bought fairly cheaply. India's weapons systems are mostly of former Soviet origin. In recent years, prices have gone through the roof. For one component, the Navy paid just above \$200 in 2001. Months later, the Russians hiked the price by three times. A year later, a Ukrainian firm charged nearly \$3,000. One reason why the prices are shooting up is India cannot directly negotiate with original equipment manufacturers but have to go through state agencies, a defence official pointed out. Recently, when the same spares were necessary, the Navy floated a tender. The bids were opened in July and the quotations, another official said, were favourable compared with what state corporations of former Soviet nations were asking for. One such firm's quotation for the same product that was going at nearly \$3,000 was less than \$100. The firm was getting it from the same ex-Soviet OEM with a certificate of origin, a warranty for one or two years and another certificate to say the spare is eminently usable. Delhi is aware of the price-hike. A silver lining is the willingness of many firms to set up joint ventures in India to manufacture these unglamorous but necessary items which could range from pumps and compressors to crank-shafts and bolts. There is also the exports market. Many countries like Vietnam, Egypt, Syria and Cuba have Russian-made equipment and they too are in need of the same kind of spares.

The Hindu, 24 August 2004

Navy inducts new tug

KOCHI, AUG. 23. The Southern Naval Command here today enhanced its capability to handle bigger ships with ease by inducting a new tug named Balshil. The 25-tonne bollard-pull swivelable rudder propulsion (SRP) tug, built at TEBMA Shipyard, Chennai, was inducted into the Navy at a simple ceremony held at the Naval Base here today. Naval authorities said that Balshil was the 100th vessel built by TEBMA in 18 years. The 28-metre-long tug is capable of doing speeds up to 12 knots, and has already proved its sea-keeping qualities, braving rough seas during its maiden voyage from Chennai. Manned by a crew of 12, the tug is expected to increase the capability of the Naval Ship Repair Yard here in berthing bigger vessels of the Indian Navy.

The Times of India, 25 August 2004

Boost Navy, IAF force levels

NEW DELHI: Noting that both IAF and Navy were facing depletion in force levels, the parliamentary standing committee on defence has asked the government to take urgent corrective steps in the interest of national security. The committee asked the defence ministry to make "serious and sincere efforts" to equip the armed forces with military satellites with high-resolution cameras to keep "a watch on the activities in the border regions". It also asked the government to take steps towards setting up an Aerospace Command to ensure India was strategically prepared to "counter any threat" that may emanate from space.

The Times of India, 28 August 2004

India's air defence ship to roll out by 2011

NEW DELHI: India's ambitious but much-delayed plan to build its own air defence ship (ADS), a smaller version of an aircraft carrier, is now expected to roll out by 2011. The work on the 37,500 metric ton ADS at the Cochin Shipyard had been stalled for quite some time now because of non-availability of the right kind of imported steel. "Due to the progress achieved in the field of indigenous development of the required quality steel, the same is now being

procured indigenously," said defence minister Pranab Mukherjee on Thursday. The government has signed two contracts with Italian firm M/s Fincantieri, for undertaking design, installation and commissioning of the propulsion system at "a negotiated cost" of 22 million Euros. The other contract, worth six million Euros, is for "consultancy in detailed engineering and documentation", said Mukherjee. Ministry officials clarified that the contracts were signed on May 15. The Navy wants faster movement on the ADS project since its aircraft carrier, INS Viraat, will be up for retirement by 2010.

The Indian Express, 29 August 2004

In the dock & at sea (Pranab Dhal Samanta)

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 28: They wanted hospitality but insisted on keeping their names to themselves. India, however, said there should be no secrets between friends. This little disagreement on matters of security and protocol has cast a shadow over Malabar, the Indo-US joint naval exercise scheduled for next month. In some ways, the reception given to the two US navy ships that made routine visits to Mumbai recently should alert both countries that they need to sort some issues out to ensure, well, smooth sailing.

The big issue is whether the US will tell its hosts just who it's bringing to the party. It refused to do this on August 3 when USS Cushing, a Spruance-class guided missile destroyer deployed with the Japan-based Pacific Command called at Mumbai. Citing security considerations, the ship refused to divulge the names of the 380 personnel on board. India, on the other hand, insisted on getting the list as the US sailors did not have visas. As a result, the ship was not extended docking facility and was kept in the anchorage area till August 6. To further complicate the issue, the Americans wanted two of their crew to be allowed to disembark so that they could take a flight back to the US. Eventually, the US Consulate had to intercede on behalf of the two sailors.

Immigration authorities, however, refused to budge on the issue of allowing the ship to enter Mumbai harbour until the names of the crew were handed over. The ship spent three days in the anchorage area before turning back.

Once the disagreement in procedures had come into the frame, the Western Naval Command was prepared with its response when USS Mary Sears, an oceanographic military survey ship with a crew of 55, sent in a request two weeks ago to dock in Mumbai on August 25. The Indian Navy said it couldn't allow this unless names were handed over. As a result, the ship sailed by without stopping in Mumbai.

Now New Delhi and Washington are trying to resolve their differences ahead of Malabar, the joint naval exercise between the two countries in late September. "We are looking forward to Malabar and have been preparing for it. And we hope that these issues are resolved before that," said the embassy spokesperson