

New Kerala News, 2 August 2007

Russia, India may sign military transport plane deal

Moscow, Aug 1: Russia and India may sign an agreement this month or the next on the joint development of a multi-role transport aircraft (MTA), a Russian aircraft manufacturer said Wednesday. "During recent talks in India, we reached a preliminary understanding that an intergovernmental agreement on the development of a new Russian-Indian medium military transport aircraft would be signed either in August, during the MAKS-2007 air show near Moscow, or in September," an Irkut Corporation spokesman said.

Times of India, 2 August 2007

IAF plans war doctrine to expand 'strategic reach'

NEW DELHI: The IAF is formulating a new war doctrine in tune with its objective to transform the force into a true aerospace power with "potent strategic reach" spreading from the Persian Gulf right up to Malacca Strait. A "select" team of officers, led by IAF chief Air Chief Marshal Fali Homi Major, had already prepared a "first draft" of this new airpower doctrine. "It will undergo a few revisions before it is finalised," said a source. "The SOPs (standard operating procedures) and 'flying orders' for the entire IAF will follow from the new doctrine, which will also dwell upon the application of military power," he added.

Economic Times, 3 August 2007

Govt aims to ease air space management snarls

NEW DELHI: India's civil aviation ministry has initiated talks with the defence establishment to ease restrictions on the use of air space to accommodate growing civilian traffic. And it has projected a two-fold increase in the fleet size of carriers over the next five years. With military concerns being a sensitive issue and airspace management a pressing need, talks are on to work out a plan for the flexible use of India's air space, said Airports Authority of India (AAI) chairman K. Ramalingam.

The Statesman, 3 August 2007

Gorshkov delivery to be delayed

Moscow, Aug. 2: The delivery of refurbished Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov to the Indian Navy as part of a \$1.5 billion deal would be delayed by at least three years with escalating costs being blamed as the primary factor. The chief of Severodvinsk-based Sevmash shipyard upgrading Gorshkov has been dismissed or, as some sources say, has resigned due to slippage in schedule. The delivery could take place not in 2008 as planned but in 2011, financial daily Vedomosti reported today.

Reuters, 3 August 2007

Russia delays India aircraft carrier by 3 yrs - Ifax

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's main military shipyard is at least three years behind schedule on a \$1.5 billion contract to modernise an aircraft carrier sold to India in 2004, Interfax news agency reported on Wednesday. Under the contract, Sevmash shipyard in the Arctic port of Severomorsk was due by 2008 to upgrade and re-equip the ship built in 1987 to combine the power of a missile cruiser and capabilities of an aircraft carrier.

The Statesman, 4 August 2007

Barrackpore IAF base may be upgraded

KOLKATA, Aug. 3: The Indian Air Force plans to upgrade its Barrackpore airbase and will seek clearance for the move from the Centre, Air Marshal PK Barbora, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Air Command. Upgrading of Barrackpore is being thought of. We are thinking of keeping some helicopters there for a time being AOC-in-C told reporters after meeting the CM, Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee at Writers' Buildings. The Barrackpore air station is being presently used for ground training of staff. Defence sources said a massive extension of the airbase's runway would be required to enable it to be used by fighter jets. The helicopters proposed to be stationed here were likely to be Mi-17s, the officers said.

Reuters India, 9 August 2007

China in mind, India to boost eastern air power

KOLKATA, India (Reuters) - India will embark on a major effort soon to boost air power on the eastern front, a top military commander said on Wednesday, adding new fighter jets among others, in an apparent move to guard against China. The plans include moving two squadrons or 36 state-of-the-art Russian-built Sukhoi-30 aircraft to an air base in the east, adding advanced helicopters, strengthening runways and upgrading other air force facilities.

New Indian Express, 17 August 2007

LASM to be inducted into arsenal by 2009

VISAKHAPATNAM: The Indian Armed Forces would have Land Attack Supersonic Missiles (LASM) inducted in their arsenal by 2009. These missiles, possessed by a few other countries in the world, would enhance the combat capabilities of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force, said DRDO Chief Controller (R&D) A Sivathanu Pillai. Addressing a press conference at Naval Science and Technological Laboratory here on Thursday, Pillai said the LASM have already been tested for the Army and Navy and they are pending integration with the Air Force.

The Hindu, 17 August 2007

Weaponised version of Dhruv makes maiden flight

BANGALORE: Despite minor hiccups, the State-owned aviation major Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is racing ahead with Dhruv, its Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) project, the domestic market for which has crossed the 250 aircraft mark. The weaponised version of Dhruv made its maiden flight at the company's Helicopter Division here on Thursday. So did the first ALH driven by a higher-powered Shakti engine, designed and developed jointly by HAL and Turbomeca. The weaponised version, according to HAL Chairman Ashok Baweja, will be delivered to the armed forces in mid-2009. The whole of next year will be used for trials. The provisional certification was expected in January-February, he told presspersons here.

Tribune, 22 August 2007

IAF man jailed for passing on secrets

A court here today sentenced a suspended corporal of the IAF to rigorous imprisonment for five years for possessing and passing official documents to Pakistan High Commission officials five years ago. Special judge Virender Kumar Goel held suspended corporal Hariom Sharma, 36, guilty of committing the crime under Sections 3 and 9 of the Official Secrets Act and Section 120-B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and also fined him Rs 7,500.

Indian Express, 27 August 2007

India's Sukhois turn it on in UK skies, turn off radars

London, August 26: IAF pilots participating in the UK-Indian exercise Indra Dhanush last month switched off the radars on their Sukhois to prevent secret radio frequencies from being picked up by Western military intelligence.

CNN IBN News, 28 August 2007

Govt flies past the law to buy transport planes

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force owns 24 Ilyushin-76 aircraft, a transport plane made by the Russian government owned Ilyushin Aviation Complex (IAC). India has signed contracts worth Rs 256 crore with IAC for the overhaul and life extension of 14 Ilyushins. But a rival Russian firm, Aviazapchast, acknowledged by the Air Force as a competent service provider, has written to the Defence Ministry saying it could have saved the Indian Government Rs 41 crore, on the same contract. In June 2005, the Defence Ministry asked Russian and former Soviet countries to send proposals for the overhaul and life extension of 6 IL-76 aircraft.

Indian Express, 29 August 2007

Rs. 42,000 Crore deal: Global tenders go out for 126 fighters for IAF

With the IAF fighter strength dipping to a record low it's down to 32 operational squadrons the Ministry of Defence on Tuesday issued India's largest ever global tender for 126 medium multi-role combat aircraft at an estimated cost of Rs 42,000 crore.

Hindustan Times, 29 August 2007

Eye in the sky

Better late than never, seems to be the watchword at South Block as the government finally issued the long-delayed global tender for providing the Indian Air Force (IAF) with a new fleet of 126 lightweight fighters last Tuesday. The document reportedly outlines requirements in areas like technology transfer, licensed manufacturing and through-life support arrangements for the Multi-role Combat Aircraft that will replace the ageing MiG-21 interceptors. The government has been sitting on the IAF's request for these aircraft for an inordinately long while now. Former Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi even wrote to then defence minister Pranab Mukherjee warning that if corrective measures were not taken immediately, India would lose its air superiority over Pakistan.

Tribune, 30 August 2007

Jet Deal: Antony promises total transparency

New Delhi, August 29 Union defence minister A.K. Antony has promised total

transparency in the biggest global tender floated by the Indian Air Force for 126 combat jets and dismissed suggestions of a secret deal linking the IAF order to the Indo-US nuclear deal.

The Tribune, 31 August 2007

Antony promises total transparency

Union defence minister A.K. Antony has promised total transparency in the biggest global tender floated by the Indian Air Force for 126 combat jets and dismissed suggestions of a secret deal linking the IAF order to the Indo-US nuclear deal. Antony assured that every effort would be made to get the best bargain from the manufacturer who bags the contract. There will be total transparency. We have a transparent procurement policy and this will be strictly adhered to the minister told mediapersons here last night on the sidelines of a function to felicitate two IAF pilots who created a world record by circumnavigating the globe in 80 days in a microlight aircraft. Antony categorically said that the proposed 123 Agreement operationalising the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal had nothing to do with the 126 combat aircraft for the IAF to replace its ageing fleet. Nobody can influence us. We want the best equipment at the minimum cost.

Hindustan Times, 31 August 2007

Indian Air Force floats global tender for 126 fighters

The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Tuesday floated a global tender for 126 combat jets worth \$10 billion in the country's biggest ever defence deal, but it could be six years before the first planes start arriving. Eighteen of the medium multi-role combat aircraft (MMRCA) will be purchased in flyaway condition and the remaining 108 manufactured in the country under a transfer of technology (TOT) agreement with the chosen supplier. The aircraft are envisaged to have a lifecycle of 40 years from the time of delivery. The 211-page request for proposal (RFP) has been sent to the manufacturers of six aircraft: the US F-16 and F-18 Super Hornet, the Swedish Gripen, the French Rafale, the Russian MiG-35 and a European consortium's Eurofighter.

Indian Express, 31 August 2007

On a wing and a plan

The race in the arms market has just speeded up for the procurement of the next fighter for the Indian air force in what has been called the mother of all deals to buy 126 multi-role combat aircraft. This procurement is important not just for the purchase of a new aircraft. It would be a defining point in our techno-economic development if we leverage the opportunity properly. Our defence modernisation has been stymied for nearly two decades. The direct effect of this has been the rapid drop in the combat force level of the air force from 39 squadrons in 2001 to around 31 now the number is likely to go down to around 27 in the next few years in spite of the HAL made Su-30 fighters joining the force.