

The Indian Express, 2 December 2005

Tejas PV II test fired from Bangalore

Bangalore, December 1: The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Prototype Vehicle (PV-II), soared into the skies over Bangalore this morning, taking the indigenously developed fighter a step closer to an initial operational clearance that will enable its production for induction into the armed forces. The fourth aircraft to join the test phase, the PV-II, is much lighter than the Test Demonstrator I, II and PV-I trio, and has advanced software technology. The bright yellow aircraft, flown by Wg Cdr Vikram Singh, took off at 10.10 am and landed 26 minutes later at the HAL airport here.

The Tribune, 14 December 2005

MiG crashes in Assam, pilot safe (PTI)

Guwahati, December 13: In the fourth crash of the MiG fighter aircraft series this year, an IAF MiG-21 today went down near the Tezpur airbase in Assam but the pilot managed to eject safely. Squadron Leader S Bansal, who was piloting the aircraft, managed to eject safely. A court of inquiry had been ordered in this regard.

The Indian Express, 17 December 2005

IAF to showcase Mirage capabilities to PM in Gwalior (Shiv Aroor)

New Delhi, Dec 16: The IAF has dismissed it as speculation, but PM Manmohan Singh's scheduled visit to the elite fighter base in Gwalior tomorrow, his first to an operational air combat station after he took office last year, is to witness a 40-minute display of what is by and large the IAF's aircraft of preference for an upcoming contract worth over \$5 billion—the Mirage-2000. In Gwalior tomorrow to attend a cultural awards event organised by the Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan Memorial Trust, the PM has been invited by IAF chief Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi to watch the two elite 1 and 7 Squadrons showcase the force's mascot fighters in a flypast and static display. Manmohan will also witness a demonstration by the Air Warriors Drill Team and a combat para-drop display by a team from Agra. Though not part of the Vijay Diwas celebrations around the country, the IAF has acknowledged that its Mirages played a defining role in the Kargil war when they were forward deployed from Gwalior for pin-point bombing missions of enemy positions at high altitudes.

Hindustan Times, 17 December 2005

India, Russia to develop jet version of BrahMos (PTI)

Bangalore, December 16, 2005: India and Russia have pumped in \$50 million to develop an aircraft version of supersonic cruise missile BrahMos, according to a top official of the joint venture.

"Development for the aircraft version is a new (initiative) ... Which was not originally contemplated. Towards that we have added \$50 million in the company as investment from both India and Russia," CEO and MD of BrahMos Aerospace A Sivathanu Pillai said in Bangalore on Friday. Pillai said the Indian Air Force (IAF) would integrate the missile with Sukhoi-30 fighters. "We have now completed the feasibility study for integrating the BrahMos with Sukhoi-30 for Air Force. They have accepted the report and now we are in the process of making certain changes in the missile which will suit its integration with the Sukhoi... And 2007 is the target date for flying in the aircraft," he said.

The Hindu, 18 December 2005

Manmohan witnesses air manoeuvres

Gwalior: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday witnessed thrilling air manoeuvres by Sukhoi-30 fighter aircraft besides air-to-air re-fuelling and pseudo-war displaying prowess of the Air Force. Aircraft, including MiGs, Jaguars, Sukhois and Mirages, took off from the Maharajpura airbase here to enthral the audience comprising Dr. Singh, his wife, Gursharan Kaur, Madhya Pradesh Governor Balram Jakhar and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan. Two Mirage-2000s and a Sukhoi-30 displayed protecting airbase while keeping an eye over enemy's spying fighter aircraft as part of anti-war mission. A proxy war was showcased by an Interceptor aircraft. Newly purchased IL-78 tankers' aerobatics show of air-to-air re-fuelling of fighter aircraft enchanted the audience.

The Pioneer, 20 December 2005

Canberra aircraft crashes; pilot, navigator killed

An Indian Air Force Canberra aircraft crashed five kilometers from the Agra Air force base on Monday afternoon killing the pilot and navigator were killed. However, there was no civilian casualty and the authorities were assessing the damage to crops caused by the crash. A court of enquiry was initiated to find out the cause of the mishap. The Canberra reconnaissance aircraft flown by Squadron Leader Sanjeev Beri and navigated by Squadron Leader Anurag Sharma took off from the Agra airbase at 12.55 pm on a routine flying mission, an IAF spokesman said here on Monday. The plane last contacted the control tower at about 1.51 pm before getting ready for landing but crashed at about 2.00 pm, the spokesman said.

The Indian Express, 20 December 2005

'UAVs for help in disasters next big idea in aviation'

Bangalore, December 19: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) for civilian applications is the next big thing in the aviation world. Many countries are putting together rules and regulations before they can be actually used for reconnaissance and monitoring in times of calamities. "Nations with design and manufacturing capability for UAVs are developing design standards. It will take three to five years before they pave way for the operation of UAVs for civilian use," Jaya Ambali, principal propulsion engineer who works at the Manufacturing, Certification and New Technologies office of the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority (ACASA) told The Indian Express. "Disaster monitoring, earthquakes, floods, fire-fighting, communication and commercial surveys like power line inspection especially in inhospitable terrains are the areas of interest," he said. A UAV can observe from a higher altitude than a helicopter, is faster off the ground and can send real-time video images.

The Hindu, 21 December 2005

Tejas maiden flight likely in June

Bangalore: The maiden flight of the first production variant of the indigenously-developed supersonic Light Combat Aircraft, Tejas, will take place in June next year. The aircraft will be one of the eight being made under the limited series production (LSP) ordered by the Indian Air Force. According to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) Bangalore Complex Managing Director A.K. Saxena, the maiden flight would follow the third prototype of Tejas. The production of the first Tejas under limited series production is at an advanced stage and ahead of schedule, Mr. Saxena said on the sidelines of a session on 'Corporate social responsibility and global compact to improve competitiveness.' He said the LSP is based on the development of the second prototype of Tejas. The flight trials of this aircraft are satisfactory, he said.

The Indian Express, 24 December 2005

18-day Indo-Singapore air exercise from Jan 3

Kolkata, December 23: The American F-16s will be back at Kalaikunda Air Force base in West Midnapore district, about 200 km from Kolkata, for the second time in less than two months. It's time for yet another joint air exercise, this time between India and Singapore. The Singapore Air Force will be bringing in eight F-16s and 130 personnel for the exercise at Kalaikunda. The exercise, to begin from January 3, will continue for 18 days, according to Wg Cdr R K Das, the official spokesman for the Ministry of Defence in Kolkata. The defence officials said that such exercises are aimed at "fostering and developing" better relations with friendly foreign countries through fruitful interaction in operational, technical and administrative practices". The Indian Air Force has already increased the level of cooperation with Air Forces of friendly countries like USA, France, South Africa, UK, China and Russia, the officials claimed. The infrastructure at the Air Force station at Kalaikunda has been upgraded to host such bilateral exercise with foreign Air Forces, the defence official said. Singapore has a versatile Air Force and operates modern aircraft and weapon system, it was stated.

The Indian Express, 24 December 2005

DRDO 'arresters' for safe landings (Shiv Aroor)

New Delhi, December 23: Good news comes flying from the DRDO for the IAF, which spends lakhs on repair of aircraft damaged by overshoot landings or aborted take-offs every year. It will be able to deploy its largest, most expensive fighter, Sukhoi-30, at any base during emergency without fear of damage with DRDO-made Arrestor Landing Systems, which can stop a 40-tonne jet speeding at 160 knots. The US Air Force refusal to bank on the old Indian systems installed at Kalaikunda and using their own highlighted the importance of arrestor system to the IAF, whose bases have Arrestor Barrier Systems (ABS) only for 20.4 ton fighters, viz. Mirage, MiGs and Jaguars. The system, basically a large elasto-metal net installed at end of runway, restrains a fighter during overshoot landing or hydraulic brake failure during aborted take-off. After recent clearance by the Centre for Military Airworthiness & Certification, the Headquarters is replacing the old systems with the new ones, which will save huge money besides ensuring pilot safety, say sources. While the barrier is always raised during take-off, it is also done while landing if asked for by the pilot. When the aircraft speeds into the system, vertical and horizontal metal chords, using a suspension system, brake the jet to a smooth halt.

The Hindu, 28 December 2005

IAF jet crashes on outskirts of Bangalore, no casualties

Bangalore: An Indian Air Force jet trainer Kiran Mark-I crashed near Rajarajeswarinagar, off the highway to Mysore around 11.05 a.m. on Tuesday. The two pilots ejected safely just before it crashed on vacant land in Pattanagere. The aircraft burst into flames after it crashed and pieces of the wreckage were strewn around. A large crowd gathered to look at the wreckage. The single jet engine aircraft went through all normal checks before being cleared for take-off. The IAF Training Command will decide on appointing a court of inquiry committee, consisting of officers from HAL, NAL and IAF to look into the cause of accident.