

The Asian Age, 8 February 2005

**Navy moots own think tank**

NEW DELHI: New Delhi's strategic community is in for an expansion. The latest entry into the brain game has been made by the Navy, which is backing the setting up of India's first ever maritime think tank. National Maritime Foundation will be inaugurated by defence minister Pranab Mukherjee on February 15. Though it is tipped to be an autonomous body, the foundation has been fully backed by the Indian Navy. The officials however said that Navy will support it only in the early stages. The think tank includes retired naval officers who will pool intellectual talent and undertake study to spread maritime awareness. The new group has been formed as the country's maritime interests are expanding and the Navy is playing a greater role in meeting the security challenges. The NMF has been registered under the registration of socialite act of 1860 and it will have an independent governing council consisting of trustees drawn from various organisations associated with the maritime activities of the country. The new organisation is being set up at a time when the naval officers hold country two most important posts. While the chief of staff committee is naval chief admiral Arun Prakash, vice-admiral Raman Puri heads the integrated defence staff. The Navy also played a leading role in the recently concluded operation in the tsunami-affected areas.

The Tribune, 10 February 2005

**Navy all set to acquire Orion P3-Cs** (Sridhar K. Chari)

Bangalore, February 9: India is looking to procure eight to 12 units of the Orion P3-C, the maritime surveillance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft made by the US company Lockheed Martin, and a team with representatives from the company, the US Navy and the US government, will be in New Delhi next week for "price and availability" talks. Mr Jim Kingsley, Business Development Director of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, acknowledged that the aircraft to be supplied to the Indian Navy will be from US armed forces surplus, but would be "re-winged." The mission systems would be upgraded and along with airframe modernisation, the craft is to have a service life of 20 to 30 years. "All negotiations on price and other aspects will be taken up next week," he said. An aircraft with configuration similar to what the Indian Navy has asked for is now currently at Aero India here. The US Navy craft was doing duty off Japan.

The Hindu, 11 February 2005

**Navy eyeing U.S. airborne early warning aircraft** (Rasheed Kappan)

BANGALORE, FEB. 10: Keen on acquiring six all-weather Hawkeye E-2C Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft, the Navy has invited next week the United States defence firm Northrop Grumman, aircraft manufacturer, for initial aircraft carrier compatibility assessment. The Navy is looking at equipping the carrier Gorshkov (INS Vikramaditya) with the E-2C. The U.S. Government has issued Grumman the licence to open technical discussions with the Navy for sale of the aircraft. The U.S. has also provided the necessary "price and availability" document to go ahead with the talks, a top company official told The Hindu.

The Hindu, 12 February 2005

**U.K. keen on more collaboration in naval sector** (Sandeep Dikshit)

BANGALORE, FEB. 11: The British Minister for Defence Procurement, Lord Bach, today said that his country has become a marginal player in the modernisation and expansion of the Indian Navy and the Army. "This is just criticism. The Army is not our strong point and we would like to see more collaboration in the naval sector," he told The Hindu at the ongoing Aero India 2005 here. While the British Aerospace Systems (BAe) has bagged a major order for supplying advanced jet trainer (AJT) aircraft to the Indian Air Force (IAF), Rolls Royce is the only company actively striking collaborations with the Navy. Lord Bach said that he would be talking to Indian Ministers about prospects for more collaborative work spread across the three services.

The Tribune, 16 February 2005

**Talks on copter replacement today** (Sridhar K. Chari)

Bangalore, February 15: The Navy is seeking a replacement for its ageing fleet of Sea King anti-submarine warfare helicopters and talks will take place tomorrow in New Delhi with US company Lockheed Martin for the acquisition of its MH-60R helicopter. The company had received a Request for Information (RFI) for 16 Airborne Early Warning (AEW) and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) aircraft from the Navy, forwarded to them by the US government, and the offer being made was for the MH-60R "Romeo" multi-mission helicopter being developed for the US Navy, Micheal Middleton, in charge of the US Navy requirement for the company, told The Tribune during Aero India 2005 here last week. The response on "price and availability" information had been given to India towards the end of January and further negotiations will be held during the Delhi meeting.

The Times of India, 18 February 2005

**Navy to hand over attack craft to Seychelles**

NEW DELHI: As a part of its policy to enhance maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), India will hand over a fast attack craft, INS Tarmugli, to Seychelles next week.

The Hindu, 19 February, 2005

**Naval fighter delivery on schedule: MiG chief** (Sandeep Dikshit)

NEW DELHI, FEB. 18: A year after the contract for the naval version of MiG-29 fighters was signed, the chief of the Russian Aircraft Corporation MiG (RAC MiG), Alexey Fedorov, has dispelled notions that their delivery would be delayed. "The delivery of the aircraft to the customer will start in 2007. Work on contract fulfilment is being carried out in compliance with the schedule," he told The Hindu. The change in government had led to speculation that the delivery of the fighters would be

delayed causing slippages in the commissioning of the aircraft-carrier, Admiral Gorshkov (to be named INS Vikramaditya). This would have had serious implications for India's defence preparedness on the high seas as the country's sole aircraft-carrier is at the end of its service life and the Navy would like to decommission it as soon as the Russian carrier enters its docks.

The Hindu, 28 February 2005

**India, France begin naval exercise off Kochi port**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 27: The Navy today began a joint exercise with its French counterparts off the Kochi port today. Named "Varuna 2005/1", it will focus on mine counter measures and include the deployment of underwater combined explosive ordnance disposal teams comprising divers from both the navies, according to an official news release. The two navies planned this exercise following the recent developments in the Gulf that demonstrated the relative ease with which mine warfare can be waged at sea and consequently the threat it imposed to merchant shipping. Varuna is the first mine warfare exercise being conducted by the two nations. The harbour phase of the exercise includes training and professional discussions. The French Navy personnel will also visit the Indian Navy's training establishments at Kochi. Apart from this, the crew of the visiting ships will take part in various sports and social activities. The Varuna series of exercises provides opportunity for both the navies to interact professionally in various spheres of maritime warfare. Twelve exercises have been conducted since 1998. The last was held off Goa in April 2004 and focused on countering air and submarine attacks. The Varuna series has grown in scope and complexity over the years and has helped foster closer relations, mutual understanding and goodwill between the two navies.