

The Hindu, 2 February 2006

Naval pilot flies Tejas (PTI)

Bangalore: A naval pilot successfully flew the light combat aircraft Tejas here on Wednesday. The flight lasted around 30 minutes.

The Indian Express, 2 February 2006

Navy still keen on early warning aircraft (Shiv Aroor)

New Delhi, February 1: The Navy's effort to purchase American E-2C Hawkeye carrier-based early warning aircraft collapsed recently for technical reasons, but so strong is the force's need for such a capability that it has decided to compromise and explore operating the aircraft from shore-based airfields. Northrop-Grumman, makers of Hawkeye, gave Naval HQ a detailed full-day presentation on the craft in the third week of December and is expected to meet naval vice-chief Vice-Admiral V Bharathan over the next two days for a second level of detail update. Normally used off aircraft carriers, the Hawkeye needs a steam catapult for take-off and is unsuitable for the Admiral Gorshkov which only has a ski-jump. The December presentation shows that the US firm has proposed the sale of 10 platforms, with a pair each based at Goa, Visakhapatnam, Kochi and Porbandar and two in reserve.

The Hindu, 3 February 2006

Navy to hold Presidential Fleet Review (R.K. Radhakrishnan)

Chennai: For the first time since its inception, the Indian Navy will hold a Presidential Fleet Review (PFR) on the Eastern Seaboard, at the Eastern Naval Headquarters, Visakhapatnam. The Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, will review the fleet on February 12 and present the Presidential colours to the Eastern Fleet on February 13. The Eastern Command is home to the country's submarine arm. The President inspects the fleet once during his tenure. The review is a long-standing tradition followed by all major navies of the world. A flotilla of ships from the western command has already been rehearsing for the event and a full rehearsal was held on January 30, top officials said. Hectic preparations are on for the ceremonial event. The Naval Chief has already carried out an inspection and has expressed his satisfaction over the arrangements. Ships of the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and the Merchant marine about 55 in all will form part of the PFR apart from 45 aircraft and smaller vessels, according to the Indian Navy website.

The Indian Express, 3 February 2006

PM may skip fleet review, again (Shiv Aroor)

New Delhi, February 2: It's third time unlucky for the Navy with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. After circumstances compelled him to turn down two previous invitations for traditional Navy displays last year, his office has now told the Naval HQ that he is unlikely to make it to the President's Fleet Review (PFR) in Vishakapatnam on February 12 because of preoccupations here. With French President Jacque Chirac visiting on February 19-21 and US President George W Bush's arrival in early March, it is imperative that the PM be in New Delhi, officials say. "These are protocol issues and are out of our hands. I guess it has just been bad timing more than once, but I am sure we will have the pleasure of hosting him soon," a senior Naval officer told The Indian Express. PFRs provide a consolidated look at the entire spread of Naval operations and force. This month's PFR is the first on the Eastern seaboard and the ninth since Independence; the previous eight were all held in Mumbai. Unlike in Mumbai, whose shallow waters have always forced the Navy to hold the fleet review far out at sea, the deep coastal waters at Vishakapatnam will allow the display to be much nearer shore for the expected 100,000 general spectators. This will also be the first time the PFR will have a full-fledged firepower display involving guns and missiles fired from some of 60 warships, 12 submarines and 40 aircraft participating.

The Hindu, 4 February 2006

Navy's operational prowess thrills many

Visakhapatnam: An "enemy oil installation" was blasted by the Marine Commandoes (Marcos) in a

lightning attack raising a huge ball of fire and sending a thick column of smoke billowing into the air. Soon three groups of commandos landed on the beach in their speed boats and after using a rocket launch and exchanging fire with an "enemy position," gained possession of the beach. A large number of people gathered near the Ramakrishna beach witnessed this and many other facets of Indian Navy's operational prowess as the Navy men completed another day of rehearsal in a meticulous manner. Earlier, the Sagar Pawan team thrilled people with aerobatics flying in different formations and crossing each other within a short distance at a high speed. Skydivers were all most perfect in landing at the designated spots while children of Navy men rendered a couple of songs with perfection to the accompaniment of the Navy Band which later rehearsed the Beating the Retreat. A few thousands of people have been watching everyday for the last few days the various exercises being performed for the February 12 President's Fleet Review (PFR). But Saturday evening is going to be much more interesting as it is the final rehearsal for the Operational Prowess Demonstration (OPD) to be held in afternoon.

The Indian Express, 7 February 2006

India, Israel tie up on next-gen Barak missiles (Shiv Aroor)

New Delhi, February 6: In an indisputable sign that Indo-Israeli defence ties have matured, the governments of both countries have signed their first-ever joint weapons development contract to design and produce the Barak-II next-generation air defence missiles for warships. After 17 months of complex inter-government negotiations, the deal was concluded on January 27 but kept under wraps for "political reasons", sources said. The Barak-II will be jointly developed by the Israeli Aircraft Industries (IAI), the Barak programme's secondary integrator Rafael and by the Hyderabad-based Defence Research & Development Laboratories (DRDL), with the two countries splitting the approximately \$330 million kick-start investment. DRDO sources told The Indian Express, "It will be based on the original Barak, but we will work together for longer range, a more refined seeker, a long-range target-tracking system, better downlinking capabilities and possibly a new propulsion system and payload capacity." In a phased manner, the Barak-I and the Barak-II missiles will replace the ageing Russian OSA-M and Volna RZ-31 missiles still in operation on most Indian warships. Navy sources pointed to the inherent advantage of the Barak family's digital systems over the analog computers that guide the Russian missiles. The Navy has expressed its satisfaction with the Barak-I's performance and has given its full support for the next variant. Israeli efficiency is also a factor as compared to the traditional delays of dealing with the Russians. The joint-development offer was first made by Israel when Navy chief Admiral Arun Prakash visited Tel Aviv in July 2004.

The Telegraph, 11 February 2006

Reagan landing before Bush: Indian and US navies to stage drill on V-Day (Sujan Dutta)

New Delhi, Feb. 10: The Indian and US navies have set up a Valentine's Day tryst with aircraft carriers. The USS Ronald Reagan, named after a predecessor of US President George W. Bush who is scheduled to visit in early March, will be teaming up with the INS Viraat off the coast of Sri Lanka on February 14. The USS Ronald Reagan is steaming in from Singapore at the head of a carrier strike group that is forward deployed in the US's 'global war on terrorism'. The rendezvous for the passage exercise - or Pas Ex - was set up in quicktime because the Reagan and the Viraat were scheduled to be in the vicinity of Sri Lanka around the same time, US embassy sources in New Delhi said. The Viraat will be steaming southwards from Visakhapatnam en route to its homeport in Mumbai. Normally it would take months of planning for a drill even an elementary one between two carrier battlegroups. The Indian Navy exercised with a US carrier group led by the USS Nimitz off the coast of Goa only in September last year. Those manoeuvres took a year's planning.

The Indian Express, 13 February 2006

Kalam endorses Navy's new Eastward incline (Shiv Aroor)

Visakapatnam, February 12: Endorsement for the Navy's new and multifaceted code to look to the East, and not obsess about the Arabian Sea, came in today from the highest office in the country. President A P J Abdul Kalam, who observed the first-ever fleet review on the Eastern seaboard here, passionately

commended the Navy's affirmation that the road to becoming a regional power would have to begin with engaging East and South East Asia. "Nearly 40 per cent of the world's population lives in our region. The economic growth of the region depends on the heavy transportation in the Indian Ocean, particularly the Malacca Strait. The Navy has an increasing role to provide the support necessary for carrying out these operations," Kalam said in his address to the Navy today, after he inspected a fleet review that included over 40 ships and 20 Naval aircraft. Widely held to be the principal ideologue of the Navy's decision to engage with countries in the Indian Ocean Region Navy chief Admiral Arun Prakash said, "The economic resurgence of our country depends on maritime peace. We are now poised to take our place as a regional power." The Navy recently re-stated its interest a larger role in the security of the Malacca Strait, which, in itself, will be only the beginning of larger security responsibilities in the region. The new strategic perspective is not merely doctrinal. The numbers already speak volumes for how the Navy is reinforcing its position in the Bay of Bengal and southwards. Of the 21 warships currently being built for the Navy, more than half are to be based out of Visakhapatnam. While the six soon-to-be-readied Scorpene submarines will be based out of Karwar near Goa, they will find docking and maintenance facilities at Vishakhapatnam where they will spend much of their time deployed.

The Tribune, 14 February 2006

Kalam undertakes sortie under sea (R. Suryamurthy)

Visakhapatnam, February 13: President A P J Abdul Kalam today created maritime history when he undertook an undersea sortie in INS Sindhurakshak, a kilo class submarine. He is the country's first head of the state to undertake such a journey. 'Navy is a three-dimensional force. It is for the first time that I am seeing the silent force with tremendous capability. It can give a tough combat to our enemies', was the impromptu response from Kalam, as he emerged from the Russian- origin submarine, after the memorable journey undersea for three and a half hours. When asked to respond as a scientist about the underwater submarine, he said, 'We need systems with a long range and endurance'. The submarine went 20 nautical miles in the Bay of Bengal at a depth of 40 metres for the missile man Kalam to witness the various functions of the silent killer in the sea. The submarine, which usually accommodates 60 crew members, carried eight additional passengers, including Kalam and members of his entourage. Eastern Naval Command Commanding-in-Chief Vice-Admiral Suresh Mehta accompanied the President on the trip.

The Tribune, 14 February 2006

SC for ex-Naval experts' panel to examine Clemenceau

New Delhi, February 13: Taking serious view of the 'media trial' regarding controversial French warship Clemenceau waiting to enter Indian waters for breaking and burial at Alang off the Gujarat coast, the Supreme Court today sought to appoint a committee of ex-Naval experts by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to find out if it was carrying any hazardous toxic material. Expressing concern over the publication of the report of the Court appointed Monitoring Committee (MC) in media even before it was placed on record, other 'one sided' articles on the issue and demonstrations being held when the matter was sub-judice, a Bench of Mr Justice Arijit Pasayat and Mr Justice S H Kapadia directed Additional Solicitor General Gopal Subramaniam to submit the names of four to five former navy experts by February 17 for the panel. The court said if the ministry thought it proper that an expert from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) would be better equipped to examine the ship, he could be included in the committee, in which the Naval experts could preferably be from Mazgaon Dock and Kochi Shipyard having experience in ship building and breaking.

The Tribune, 16 February 2006

Navy revamp on full throttle (Shiv Kumar)

Mumbai, February 15: With the UPA government at the helm, the Indian Navy's expansion plans are on full throttle. According to sources here, the Indian Navy will have more than 21 new warships, including a spanking new aircraft carrier in the coming years. With the order books of all defence yards full, the

government has allowed the subcontracting of naval and Coast Guard vessels to the private sector. ABG Shipyard, Bharati Shipyard Ltd, Larsen & Toubro Ltd are all supplying the defence forces in a big way. Under the ongoing modernisation programme, the Indian Navy will have a new 37,500-tonne aircraft carrier being built at Cochin Shipyard Ltd. This effort will see Steel Authority of India Ltd emerge as a major defence supplier. Mazagon Dock Ltd (MDL) at Mumbai is among the defence establishments experiencing a major transformation. After years of keeping their skills honed on scrap and old models, the veteran ship builders here have begun to work on three 3,800-tonne Type-17 stealth frigates of the Shivalik class, three 6,800-tonne Delhi-class Type-15A class and six Type-75/Scorpene submarines. Under a programme pushed ahead by naval chief Admiral Arun Prakash, the MDL will commission the first Type-17 INS Shivalik by 2008 if not earlier. The MDL has also roped in the private sector Larsen and Toubro, which is already working on the super secret ATV nuclear submarine project, sources say. The company is also in the race to build Scorpene Type-75 submarines at its plant in Hazira. The company has already begun recruiting retired defence personnel in preparation for a larger share of defence contracts, according to observers.

The Hindu, 17 February 2006

Three services to have BrahMos missiles (Arunkumar Bhatt)

Mumbai: While the Navy has started inducting multi-role, supersonic cruise missile, BrahMos, in a big way, the Army and the Air Force are poised to follow suit to be able to 'destabilise' critical targets with pinpoint accuracy. "Army is very keen to have the missile and we are working on the 'land to land' version of it for the Army," said Dr. A. Sivathanu Pillai, chief controller of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Dr. Pillai is also the managing director of BrahMos Aerospace, an Indo-Russian joint venture that designed and developed the world's only supersonic cruise missile and is now engaged in its production and marketing. He was here to ceremoniously receive the first airframe section of BrahMos from the Chairman of Godrej and Boyce Mfg. Company, J.N. Godrej. About 20 Indian and seven Russian companies are making critical systems for the missile. He said that the missile was undergoing critical tests to meet the Army's specific requirements to be able to take on different types of targets. The army version would have features like position updating, terrain-hugging, homing image analysis and higher degree of data processing. The Army is raising a special BrahMos Regiment of three batteries comprising a mobile launcher, mobile and fixed command centres besides other supporting facilities.

The Hindu, 18 February 2006

Japanese Naval chief visits Southern Naval Command

Kochi: A four-member delegation led by Admiral Takashi Saito, Chief of Staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Forces, arrived at the Southern Naval Command here on Friday afternoon. This is the first time that the chief of the Japanese Navy is visiting the naval establishment here. Admiral Saito was accompanied by his wife Chizuko Saito. Addressing mediapersons at INS Garuda, the naval air station here, Admiral Saito said that India was progressing fast on the economic front. Just like Japan, India too was having renewed focus on protecting its maritime interests. "Both the countries are focusing on how best to ensure safety at sea. A major objective of the visit is to promote good relations between the two navies. Another aim of my visit is to get to know India better and see the huge country with one's eyes.

The Indian Express, 18 February 2006

N-submarine project finally moves ahead (Shiv Aroor)

Vizag/New Delhi, Feb 17: With some progress finally made on the compact reactors that will ultimately power the country's indigenous nuclear submarines, the advanced technology vessel (ATV) project facility at Visakhapatnam is being expanded for crucial tests scheduled for later this year. Speaking off the record, a government source in Visakhapatnam told The Indian Express, "Efforts to miniaturise the pressurised heavy water reactors that will power the submarines have made some progress, though lot of work is left. The nuclear establishment has conveyed to us that some preliminary tests could be carried out shortly." He only indicated specific movement on the ATV's dynamometer and drive turbine this

year. Unlike the highly concealed nature of the project itself, it is no secret that Russia is a key partner. However, after functioning under a somewhat unofficial advisory role, sources said Moscow has proposed the possibility of signing an advanced systems pact. The Navy is keen to lease two Russian Akula-class nuclear submarines in the interim both as an operational platform and as a testing ground for certain indigenous technologies developed under the ATV project.

The Indian Express, 23 February 2006

Navy draws up new plans to beef up air safety

New Delhi, February 22: Plagued by a dismal year for Naval air safety and with crew shortages only making things worse -Naval Headquarters has implemented a new list of directives to make up for the shortfall in flying personnel and to beef up flight safety routines. The Navy lost four aircraft and nine personnel in 2005. Considering that crew shortfall had been identified as a principal factor in overall flight safety, Naval Headquarters (HQ) is currently preparing a detailed plan to facilitate greater inductions of aircrew. But, for the meantime, a slew of temporary measures have been put to work at all Naval air stations. The measures include an increase in the seniority of squadron commanding officers (COs) to allow a higher number of aircrew in active flying, and a simultaneous increase in the average seniority of aircrew in all squadrons coupled with longer tenures.

The Hindu, 28 February 2006

Naval exercises with Singapore from today

Visakhapatnam: A joint Naval exercises between Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy, SIMBEX-06, will be held off Visakhapatnam from Tuesday to March 9. Three ships of Republic of Singapore Navy RSS Victory, RSS Vengeance and RSS Dauntless will arrive in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday, according to a spokesman of the Navy here. The RSS Victory and RSS Vengeance are missile corvettes commanded by Lt.Col. Lee Kien Tian and Major Lee Wing Foo respectively, he said. RSS Dauntless is an anti-submarine patrol vessel commanded by Major Khoo Eng Lye.