

Hindustan Times, 3 January 2007

Indian Navy to commission new warship

INS Shardul, the newest Indian Navy warship equipped with latest electronic warfare systems, will be commissioned into service on Thursday at the Karwar naval base in coastal Karnataka by Defence Minister AK Antony. The auxiliary warship, built by Garden Reach Ship builders and Engineers Ltd, Kolkata, is capable of carrying 11 armoured tanks, 10 army vehicles and about 500 troop, helicopters, two rocket launchers, two anti-aircraft guns and shoulder launcher surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), besides the crew. According to naval sources, Shardul, named after an amphibious animal, stands for the Royal Bengal Tiger, symbolising agility, strength and valour, the characteristic features of an amphibious operation. It will be based at Karwar, about 500 km from Bangalore. "The warship is equipped with the latest advanced electronic warfare systems and automatic power management system. As the third landing ship tank of the Navy, Shardul is the first of a new class, capable of transporting various kinds of combat equipment," a naval spokesman said in Bangalore.

The Hindu, 4 January 2007

Police to seek help of Indian Navy

RAMANATHAPURAM: The police will seek the help of Indian Navy for the safe disposal of a large number of live rocket shells, which were reportedly found off the coast of Rameswaram by fishermen. According to information available with the State and Central intelligence agencies operating from Rameswaram and Ramanathapuram, fishermen of Rameswaram netted more than 50 live rocket shells in the Indian waters during the last 15 days. Instead of handing them over to the security agencies, the fishermen threw away the rockets fearing "harassment" in the name of investigation. However, the fishermen are worried that their lives would be in danger if the rockets go off.

New Indian Express, 4 January 2007

Indian Navy to commission new warship

BANGALORE: INS Shardul, the newest Indian Navy warship equipped with latest electronic warfare systems, will be commissioned into service on Thursday at the Karwar naval base in coastal Karnataka by Defence Minister A K Antony. The auxiliary warship, built by Garden Reach Ship builders and Engineers Ltd, Kolkata, is capable of carrying 11 armoured tanks, 10 army vehicles and about 500 troop, helicopters, two rocket launchers, two anti-aircraft guns and shoulder launcher surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), besides the crew. According to naval sources, Shardul, named after an amphibious animal, stands for the Royal Bengal Tiger, symbolising agility, strength and valour, the characteristic features of an amphibious operation. It will be based at Karwar, about 500km from here.

Times of India, 4 January 2007

US warship 'Trenton' to join Indian fleet

WASHINGTON: Nearly two centuries after Bombay's famed Wadia family built HMS Minden " the ship on which the American national anthem Star Spangled Banner was written" history will sail a full circle later this month. The US Navy is all set to hand over

Seattle-built USS Trenton, an amphibious transport warship, to the Indian Navy. It will be the first American-made vessel to join India's growing blue water fleet. A crew of more than 300 Indian Navy personnel is already training in Norfolk, Virginia, to take charge of Trenton in a formal ceremony on January 17, when the ship will be officially decommissioned from the US Navy. It will then set sail for India, where it is likely to be inducted into the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam.

The Hindu, 5 January 2007

INS Shardul dedicated

KARWAR: Defence Minister A.K. Antony on Thursday dedicated INS Shardul, a landing warship, to the nation at an event at the Karwar Naval Base, INS Kadamba, here. This Landing Ship Tank (Large), or LST(L), which is the third of its kind to be commissioned into the Navy, has the primary role of transporting troops, vehicles and armaments for amphibious operations. The Minister said the amphibious operation capability of the Navy was being augmented in order to safeguard the maritime interests of the country. He said a Platform Landing Dock (PLD), a large amphibious vessel to be named Jalashwa, would be inducted by mid-2008. The process of acquisition of the ship from the United States was on. Two more warships of the LST (S) type would be inducted by December 2007. This would enhance the Navy's ability to conduct operational manoeuvres and assault operations from the sea.

Hindustan Times, 5 January 2007

Indian Navy acquiring first American built warship

Over 300 sailors from the Indian Navy are getting ready to take home USS Trenton, an amphibious transport warship, the first American-made vessel to join India's growing blue water fleet. This first ever transfer of the US Navy ship to the Indian Navy is viewed as a significant event in the evolving Indo-US relationship with free and open access to sea considered an important and critical challenge by both navies. Formally called a Landing Platform Dock (LPD), the 17,000-tonne Austin-class ship will be handed over to India at a ceremony Jan 17 at the Naval Base, Norfolk, Virginia, where Indian sailors have been training with the Trenton crew since early November.

The Hindu, 7 January 2007

Navy to have 2 aircraft carriers from next year

ABOARD INS VIRAAAT: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sureesh Mehta on Friday said the Navy would "always have" two aircraft carriers from next year when Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov, to be renamed INS Vikramaditya, joined the fleet. India is the only naval power in Asia possessing an aircraft carrier INS Viraat. By the time it was decommissioned after seven years, an indigenously built carrier would be ready and Vikramaditya would be in service, he pointed out. The production line, thereafter, would be kept ready and the Navy, at all times, would have these potent force projection ships. The Navy always wanted three aircraft carriers.

The Hindu, 7 January 2007

Govt to cut navy's dependence on foreign suppliers

Somewhere in the Arabian Sea, Jan 6. (PTI): The Government will modernise the

country's state-run shipyards to reduce the navy's dependence on foreign suppliers as far as possible, Defence Minister A K Antony said on Friday. The navy's ships, submarines, aircraft and on-shore centres will also be linked through a satellite-based network to prepare the force for the challenges of modern maritime warfare, he said. "Indigenisation is a major thrust area for the Indian Navy. This will not be possible without modernisation of shipyards. We need to reduce our dependence on foreign suppliers to the extent possible," he told navy personnel on board India's sole aircraft carrier INS Viraat after spending over 17 hours on it as part of his maiden "day at sea". "Network-centric operations are a key result area and will be one of the main engines of the transformation that we want to bring about in maritime warfare," Antony said. "Under this ambitious plan, all our ships, submarines, aircraft and shore operations centres will be linked through information technology, using a satellite backbone." said.

The Hindu, 7 January 2007

Modernisation to enhance Navy's fighting prowess

ABOARD INS VIRAAAT: Defence Minister A.K. Antony on Friday said the modernisation of the Navy "in the recent past" was aimed at not only enhancing its war fighting capabilities but also its evolving into a "powerful instrument of state policy" during peacetime. "In tandem with the Ministry of External Affairs, we have been making attempts to reach out to our Indian Ocean neighbourhood and beyond. Our effort has been to build bridges of friendship as well as lasting relationships," he told over 1,500 sailors assembled on India's sole aircraft carrier sailing in the Arabian Sea.

The Hindu, 7 January 2007

Navy wants more Barak missiles

When Pakistan bought the Harpoon anti-ship missile in the mid-nineties that could target Indian ships from 150 km away, the Indian navy chose the Israeli Barak air defence missile. But the Barak missile deal is at the centre of a controversy after the CBI chargesheeted former defence minister George Fernandes. The CBI accused Fernandes of buying the Barak instead of the indigenously produced Trishul. In the middle is the navy, which is desperate that its air defence requirements do not become hostage to the controversy. A K Antony was shown a live fire exercise of the Barak missile. The defence minister seemed happy with the display. "It was the most thrilling day of my life. It was amazing," said Antony. DRDO's Trishul air defence missile has not even had a successful test flight yet.

The Hindu, 7 January 2007

Navy expects early funds for project

KARWAR: With Defence Minister A.K. Antony taking keen interest in the modernisation plans of the armed forces, the Navy is hoping that the Government would soon approve funding for phase II of the Karwar naval base project. Called "Operation Seabird," the integrated naval base is set to evolve into the fourth command headquarters of the Navy and the only one that would not be sharing space with commercial ships. "We hope the Cabinet Committee on Security would take up the issue of releasing funds for the next phase by March," said a senior naval officer on the occasion of commissioning of the first warship to be based here. On completion, the Rs. 35,000-crore

naval base will be one of the biggest in the world but funding has been a problem ever since the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, laid the foundation stone in 1986.

Hindustan Times, 8 January 2007

Frozen by China

China's naval expansion plan is a reminder that as 2007 unfolds, India will find that, despite high growth figures, it has to fight for space in Asia and the world. For one thing, the economy's bull run may fizzle out. For another, China's ambitious defence White Paper hard on the heels of its African initiatives warns of a relentless advance to what - shades of the Middle Kingdom! - Hu Jintao calls his country's "historical mission." Victor Bulmer-Thomas, outgoing director of Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs, says China is more likely to emerge as a megapower by 2020 than India.

Hindustan Times, 9 January 2007

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The Statesman, 15 January 2007

India fails the Arakanese

This is a long, complicated and ultimately rather frightening story. It began in the Andamans in 1998 but has travelled far since. The matters involved are so sensitive that for all these years I could not be sure if it would help or hurt to make it public. But the lives of 34 young men hang in the balance and their only hope are a fair trial and an informed public. In 1998, a group of so-called arms smugglers were captured on the Andamans in a major operation involving the Indian Navy. Some may recall this as Operation Leech. I happened to be on the islands at the time, and it soon became clear that all was not as it seemed. In 2000, when I returned to the islands, I got a chance to interview two of the prisoners, who were being held under house arrest. Here is their story:

Times of India, 16 January 2007

Sri Lanka arrests 10 Indian fishermen

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's navy has arrested 10 Indian fishermen who had strayed into the island's territorial waters, the defence ministry said on Monday. It said the navy stopped a fibre glass dingy with 10 on board off the seas of Talaimannar on Sunday evening. "The crew on board had stated that they were from South India," the ministry said in a statement. "The boat which had two out board motors was also detained by the navy."

People's Daily, 16 January 2007

Pakistan, India launch joint survey on water boundaries

Pakistan and Indian officials Monday launched a joint survey to determine marshlands boundary, according to the private GEO TV. Hydrographers and surveyors from the two sides are taking part in a joint survey to resolve the dispute about the Sir Creek is a 96-km-long strip of water disputed between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch marshlands. The officials of the two sides in technical talks held last month decided to launch a joint survey of the disputed area from Jan. 15, 2007. The creek, which opens up into the Arabian Sea, divides the Kutch region of the Indian state of Gujarat with the Sindh province of Pakistan. On his visit to Pakistan, Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukerjee confirmed Saturday that the officials concerned have been directed to expedite their work.

Hindustan Times, 17 January 2007

Navy to take charge of USS Trenton

The US Navy will hand over USS Trenton, an amphibious transport warship, to the Indian Navy at Norfolk, Virginia on Wednesday. The Rs 215-crore warship, which will be India's second-largest vessel after aircraft carrier INS Viraat, comes with a fleet of six Seaking utility helicopters, which cost Rs 175 crore. A crew of more than 300 Indian Navy personnel has been training in Norfolk since August last to take charge of Trenton.

The Times of India, 18 January 2007

US carrier now Navy's, will be called 'Jalashva'

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA: Within hours of the tsunami that struck the subcontinent's eastern flank last year, the Indian Navy commandeered and dispatched nearly a fourth of its fleet for relief and rescue. Thirty-eight ships, big and small, raced to help the tens of thousands in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. But when the ships reached there, they found piers and jettys wrecked. Although the Navy overcame myriad obstacles to bring off a stupendous relief act, one which was universally hailed, "It was also a moment when we felt an acute need for an amphibious landing ship," said a commander. That gaping hole in the Indian armada was filled to a large extent on Wednesday when the Indian Navy took charge of USS Trenton, a massive amphibious loading dock, in an elegant handing over ceremony at the Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia.

The Times of India, 18 January 2007

Looking seaward

China's new Defence White Paper to integrate border and coastal defence into a unified, and effective system marks a shift away from a historical position "surrender of sea power" adopted in the 15th century in the wake of Admiral Cheng Ho's voyages of expansion. This redressal of a 400-year-old strategic decision has important implications for India that should not be overlooked amidst this second round of Hindi-Chini euphoria.

The Times of India, 19 January 2007

Made-for-India MiG-29 test flight next week

NEW DELHI: Just before President Vladimir Putin comes visiting India next week, Russia plans to conduct the "inaugural flight" of the aircraft carrier-borne MiG-29 fighter

jets being produced for India. Through the sonic boom generated by the MiG-29, Russia intends to send a strong message that it's keen to retain the edge over other countries in supplying military hardware and software to India despite deep inroads being made by Israel, France and now increasingly, the US. India, after all, intends to spend a whopping \$30 billion on weapon imports during the 11th Plan (2007-2012) period. By notching up defence deals worth over \$20 billion between 1998 and 2005, India has already emerged as the largest arms importer in the developing world. As part of the \$1.6 billion (Rs 6,900 crore) deal signed with Russia in January 2004, the Indian Navy will get 16 MiG-29s along with the 44,570-tonne Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier, now rechristened INS Vikramaditya. While 12 of these fighters will be the single-seat 'K' variants, the other four will be twin-seater 'KUB' trainer versions.

People's Daily, 21 January 2007

Russia, India to hold two joint military exercises in 2007

Russia and India will hold joint military exercises in April and September this year, a senior Russian defense official said on Saturday. Air, navy and ground troops will join anti-terrorist trainings in Russia's territory, Anatoly Mazurkevich, head of the international military cooperation department of the Russian Defense Ministry, was quoted by the Itar-Tass news agency as saying.

The New Nation, 22 January 2007

Myanmar : Next target area for India's counter insurgency moves

The Indian security personnel may step up military crack down against the armed cadres of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the operation in eastern Assam (now known as Asom) and Arunachal Pradesh bordering Myanmar (also known as Burma) might yield preliminary result, but the absolute outcome, New Delhi believes, can be expected only after the bases of ULFA militants in northern Myanmar are destroyed.

Indian Express, 23 January 2007

First MiG 29 K for Indian Navy takes off

Moscow, January 22: The first fighter aircraft designed and developed in Russia after the break-up of the Soviet Union " the Mig 29 K/KUB for the Indian Navy" took off on its inaugural flight at the Zhukovskiy test centre here on Monday. The first flight version of the ship borne fighters, on order from the Indian Navy for its carrier INS Vikramaditya, took off on a cold winter morning with the tell-tale black smoke but dispelled all doubts after a flawless 20-minute test flight. India will receive the first serially produced aircraft in June this year as part of the 16 fighter jets deal. While the deal provides that an extra 30 aircraft can be procured later, MiG expressed its willingness to supply as many fighters as India wants on the eve of the test flight. "The deal is for 16 aircraft but we can give any quantity required by India," Director of the "Mikoyan Design Bureau" Vladimir Barkovskiy said.

Indian Express, 24 January 2007

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inaugural flight at the Zhukovskiy test centre here on Monday. The first flight version of the ship borne fighters, on order from the Indian Navy for its carrier INS Vikramaditya, took off on a cold winter morning with the tell-tale black smoke but dispelled all doubts after a flawless 20-minute test flight.

Indian Express, 24 January 2007

Submarine launch is next BrahMos frontier

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 23 : Work has begun on a variant of the Indo-Russian BrahMos missile system that would, in the next few years, make India the only country with a submarine-launched supersonic cruise missile capability. BrahMos, a joint venture between DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya, has asked the Navy to spare one of its Russian-made Kilo-class submarines as a test platform for the new missile. The request is likely to be shortly addressed. The missile is concurrently being configured for Russia's Amur-class submarines, boats that will compete for a second-line of submarine construction at Mazagon Docks parallel to the French Scorpene line.

RIA Novosti, Russia, 25 January 2007

India buys cutting-edge Russian warplanes

MOSCOW. (RIA Novosti military commentator Viktor Litovkin) - On January 22, Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov arrived in Bangalore on his seventh visit to India. That same day, high-level managers from the MiG Russian Aircraft Corporation demonstrated the multi-purpose Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-29KUB Fulcrum carrier-based fighter to Indian military experts at the Gromov Flight Research Institute in the town of Zhukovsky, outside Moscow. This warplane, now undergoing flight tests, was developed especially for the Indian navy's aircraft carrier "Vikramaditya," formerly called the "Admiral Gorshkov," which was sold to India several years ago and is currently being upgraded at the Sevmash machine-building plant in Severodvinsk. In all, the Indian navy is to receive 16 carrier-based fighters, including 12 single-seat MiG-29K warplanes and four two-seat MiG-29KUB fighter-trainers. Moreover, Russia would produce another 30 MiG-29K/MiG-29KUB aircraft if New Delhi confirms this order.

Zee News, 26 January 2007

Navy's new MiG-29K to have superior capability to SU-30 MKI

Moscow, Jan 25: Indian Navy would take the delivery of the first of its 16 top of the shelf carrier borne MiG-29k, the most powerful fighter jets in the region, in June. "The first of the mig-29k fighters would be handed over to the Navy here in June," said top officials of the RAC-MiG corporation asserting that the fighter in its capability would surpass the Indian Air Force's SU-30MKI. Not only this, the RAC-MiG is offering IAF the same 4 plus generation capability for upgrading the existing 64 MiG-29s. The deal estimated to be worth more than USD 400 million is on top of the agenda during President Vladimir Putin's visit to India.

The Hindu, 29 January 2007

"Work on nuke deterrence for Navy underway"

New Delhi, Jan. 28 (PTI): Noting that India's strategic forces already possessed land and aircraft-based nuclear deterrence capabilities, a former Navy chief has said work on such an option for the naval forces has already begun. "India's Nuclear Doctrine clearly envisages a deterrent in the form of a triad with land-based, aircraft-borne and submarine-launched legs. Of these, we possess only the first two at the moment," Admiral (Retd) Arun Prakash said in an article in the forthcoming issue of Indian Defence Review. Maintaining that the "only platform" which could achieve deterrence was the nuclear-propelled, ballistic-missile-armed submarines (SSBNs), he said to complete the triad of the strategic forces, "we must have a small number of SSBNs." "Development work is reported to be underway, and when this platform becomes operationally available, we will need suitable areas in the distant reaches of the Indian Ocean from where it can be safely deployed to pose deterrence to our adversaries," the erstwhile Navy chief said in an article entitled 'A Vision for Maritime India: 2020'.

Business Standard, 30 January 2007

India ready to fire BrahMos missile from submarine

India is almost ready with its undersea launch version of the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile and wants the Navy to help in preliminary test trials by the end of the year. The Navy's help is being sought as the DRDO lacks a platform to undertake tests of the submarine-launched Brahmos missile. The Indian Navy's present fleet of just upgraded Kilo class submarines do not have the capability to testfire such missiles which will put India among the few countries who have the capability to launch underwater supersonic missiles. The Indian Navy's present fleet of just upgraded Kilo class submarines do not have the capability to testfire such missiles, BrahMos Aerospace CEO A Sivathanu Pillai said. "We are in talks with the Navy to loan one of their expanded Kilo-class or some other submarine to undertake the tests," he said.