

The Times of India, 1 July 2007

IAF to buy all 126 aircraft from one company

EW DELHI: Putting aside rumours of multi-vendor acquisition, the Indian Air Force (IAF) says it will acquire its 126 Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MRCA) from a single manufacturer. Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal F.H. Major said in an interview to a defence magazine: "The world's single biggest fighter jet order jet will go to one supplier. "It doesn't make any sense to go to two or three sellers just to keep different countries happy." He said there was no proposal at the moment to increase the order to 200 aircraft but "a review after induction, based on cost-benefit analysis, is of course possible in future". The Air Chief said although the process of issuing tenders had taken time, "all possible issues" are being verified in advance. "The first squadron of 18 new jets will be inducted within five years (by 2012)," he said. Senior officers of the defence ministry also indicated the same time period, pointing out that the new acquisition procedures under the Defence Procurement Policy (DPP) 2006 would facilitate time-bound technical evaluation by the IAF followed by financial clearance by the ministry.

Economic Times, 2 July 2007

Gripen offers tech transfer for combat aircraft

NEW DELHI: Even as the government is finalising ground rules for acquisition of 126 multi-role combat aircraft at a cost of \$10 billion, Swedish company Gripen has indicated that it was willing to provide full transfer of technology and offer integration of its aircraft with all weapon systems available across the world. The move comes at a time when the government is expected to come out with a request for proposal (RFP) for the mega deal. American, French and Russian companies are also in the race for supplying multi-role combat aircraft to Indian Air Force. Gripen International has indicated to the Indian authorities that its product would be cheaper than other comparable aircraft in terms of life cycle cost or cost of acquisition plus operations.

The Hindu, 12 July 2007

US delivers first two F-16s to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, July 12 (AP): The United States has delivered two F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan and will hand over another 24 shortly, the US Embassy said. Pakistan received the two planes Tuesday at a ceremony at an air base in the western city of Sargodha attended by US Ambassador, Anne Patterson, and senior Pakistani and US air force officials. The 26 aircraft, provided by the US Air Force, will join 34 F-16s already in Pakistan's armory, the statement said Wednesday. They are separate from an order for 18 new F-16 signed last September. The delivery "symbolizes the US intent to remain engaged with Pakistan over the long term, just as we do with any other important ally and friend," Patterson said at the ceremony.

The Hindu, 14 July 2007

Hawk jets get IAF's interim acceptance

New Delhi: Ahead of its debut appearance at the Royal International Air Tattoo, the Indian Air Force has given interim acceptance of the first six Hawk jet trainers made by the BAE Systems. Three of these are now being used to train IAF instructor pilots at Warton in Britain under a programme run by the BAE Systems and the Royal Air Force

(RAF). The training will be extended to include Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) test pilots this month. This is part of the aircrew training package that has seen 50 IAF pilots trained on the RAF's older Hawk jets based at the Valley base in Wales, according to official sources here.

The Hindu, 14 July 2007

Sukhois prove their mettle in Indo-UK wargame

Waddington (UK), July 13 (PTI): India's frontline Sukhoi-30 MKI warplanes today had the opportunity to prove their mettle against the new generation of fighters as they crossed swords with Britain's Eurofighter Typhoons in a wargame here. The Sukhois took on Royal Air Force Tornados and Typhoons in intricate simulated beyond visual range combat over the skies here to ring down the curtains on the second bilateral Indo-UK air exercise. Typhoons are among the newest fighters to be developed and have just entered squadron service with the Royal Air Force. The simulated combat began with low-level exercises and touched a crescendo in a highly complex conceivable scenario -- a six versus six aerial combat involving four Sukhois, four Tornados, two Typhoons and two GR9 Sea-Harriers.

Times of India, 16 July 2007

Pact for Mirage 2000 upgrade

BORDEAUX (FRANCE): With the Indian government set to ask for proposals to upgrade its fleet of Mirage 2000 fighters, French defence and aerospace company Thales will soon enter into a pact with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) to jointly bid for the project, top officials said here. Thales has also committed itself to a 30 percent offsets clause for the upgrade, unlike some purchases in the past like Russia's Sukhoi-30s and MI-17 choppers in which upgrades were taken as part of the original deal, the officials added.

The Hindu, 16 July 2007

Effort to trace missing Chhattisgarh chopper fails

Raipur, July. 15 (PTI): The joint effort of the Indian Air Force and Madhya Pradesh Government to trace a missing helicopter of the Chhattisgarh Government carrying four persons on board today failed to yield any result and the operation was called off due to bad weather. Two helicopters - one each of the Air Force and Madhya Pradesh government - which were pressed into service failed to trace the chopper that went missing over a naxal stronghold, D S Mishra, a senior pilot of the Chhattisgarh Government, told PTI. The Raipur-bound Eurocopter EC-135 with four persons on board - pilots A S Sidhu and Vikram Savekar, engineer Amitabh Soni and technician Manish Badania - went missing half an hour after taking off from Bhopal airport at 11.50 am yesterday. He said that at around 1.30 pm yesterday the copter was seen over Lanji-Urveli area of Madhya Pradesh's Balaghat district, a Naxal-infested region.

Economic Times, 17 July 2007

How will IAF acquire its multi-role jets?

NEW DELHI: The Indian defence ministry has dropped the life-cycle cost calculation for its coming tender for the 126 new Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MRCA) as there will be

too many "imponderables" over the rather long life of these jets extending up to around 2050. According to a report in the coming issue of India Strategic defence magazine, an advance copy of which has been made available to the media, a new Verifiable Cost Model (VCM) has been adopted, according to which the new aircraft should last either over a period of 40 years or an actual flying time of 6,000 hours, "whichever is earlier".

Associated Press of Pakistan, 17 July 2007

Joint Indo-UK air exercise ends

LONDON, July 16 (APP): The first ever combined United Kingdom -Indian air exercise to take place in the UK has drawn to a close after the fortnight-long training package. Exercise Indra Dhanush, which took place at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire, Central England, followed on from a training exercise between the Royal Air Force and Indian Air Force (IAF) in India in 2006. According to a Ministry of Defence announcement, the two-part exercise, is the first time that the two countries have worked together in more than 40 years.

RIA Novosti, 20 July 2007

India to deploy aircraft in Tajikistan, seeks strategic base

NEW DELHI, July 17 (RIA Novosti) - India is preparing to deploy a squadron of Mi-17 Hip multi purpose helicopters, as well as some Kiran trainer aircraft, at the Ayni airbase in Tajikistan, The Times of India said Tuesday. The paper quoted military sources as saying this is a prelude to "a larger strategic imprint" in the region, which India sees as crucial to its growing energy needs. The "eventual aim" is to station MiG-29 Fulcrum fighter aircraft at the airbase. Previously, India has denied media reports that it was going to use an airfield near the republic's capital of Dushanbe. India took part in the renovation and upgrading of the airport, which was used during the military campaign in Afghanistan, under a three-way agreement with Tajikistan and Russia, at a cost of \$25 million. "It may be just a military outpost at the moment but will develop into a full-fledged base in the future," the paper quoted a source as saying. "India wants a military presence in the area to keep tabs on any anti-Indian activity in the terrorism-infested Pakistan-Afghanistan region."

People's Daily, 20 July 2007

Tajikistan denies holding air base talks with India

Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Khamrokhon Zarifi said Wednesday that his country has not signed any pact or held any negotiations with India on the deployment of the Indian air force base in Tajikistan. The Times of India reported earlier that the Indian Defense Ministry planned to deploy Mi-17 helicopters and training aircraft at the Aini airfield in Tajikistan and turn the site into an Indian air force base. According to reports from Dushanbe, Zarifi was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying that Tajik-Indian cooperation only covered the development of the Aini infrastructure by Indian engineers, and was not related to the deployment of a military base. The Aini airfield is located 15 km west of Tajikistan's capital, Dushanbe.

The Hindu, 21 July 2007

Brinda Karat raises gender bias in Air Force

NEW DELHI: Describing the Indian Air Force (IAF) policy of employing women only in support service, with no combat role, as "unfair and unjust," Communist Party of India (Marxist) Polit Bureau member Brinda Karat has asked Defence Minister A.K. Antony to check discrimination on the grounds of gender. All Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers are employed in support services having no combat role in their day-to-day work. No woman officer is employed to fly fighter aircraft, Ms. Karat said in a letter addressed to Mr. Antony.

The Hindu, 22 July 2007

US offers next generation F-35 fighters to India

New Delhi, July 22 (PTI): In a major move, the United States has sent feelers that it is now ready for transfer of hi-technology weaponry to India, including its 5th generation Joint Strike Fighter F-35. Though Pentagon has offered New Delhi participation in its missile shield, top of the shelf 4th generation F-16 and F-18/A fighters, weapon locating radars and its new brand of long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft, it has so far kept the F-35 under wraps.

Hindustan Times, 23 July 2007

India to shop for more combat aircraft

India is likely to substantially increase its demand for multi-role combat aircraft (MRCAs) from 126 to 180-190, but the higher numbers would be for the Navy. The Government had earlier wanted the MRCAs for the Indian Air Force (IAF). The requests are to be issued to France's Rafale, the US' F-16 and F/A 18, Russia's MiG-35, Sweden's JAS-39 Gripen and the Eurofighter Typhoon, senior IAF officials confirmed.

Hindustan Times, 24 July 2007

'200 Indian Air Force pilots desperate to quit'

A BBC investigation has revealed that at least 200 Indian Air Force (IAF) pilots have indicated they want to leave the service, but they are not being allowed to quit. The IAF said in response that premature retirement cases were decided only after proper scrutiny. A BBC statement based on the report quoted the unnamed pilots as saying that poor working and living conditions and the difficulty of living away from their families had prompted their decisions. But they say that the IAF was not allowing them to quit.

Economic Times, 30 July 2007

EADS gets FIPB nod to procure SSI components

NEW DELHI: Aeronautics giant EADS is strengthening its business in India to take on rivals from other countries such as the US. The European consortium, which already has a major presence in the Indian market through Airbus and Eurocopter, has obtained clearance from the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) to source goods and components from India. These components, some of which would be sourced from small scale units, would be then supplied in the international market as well as India.