

The Tribune, 1 March 2005

### **MoD asked to clear stand on Air Marshal**

New Delhi, February 28: The Supreme Court today expressed surprise over the changing stand of the Defence Ministry on Air Marshal Harish Masand's promotion case, saying that the government should make its stand firmly clear. "What is this, an eyewash, if he is guilty he cannot get it (promotion), if not, he will get it," a Bench of Mr Justice Y.K. Sabharwal and Mr Justice P.P. Naolekar told Solicitor-General (SG) G.E. Vahanvati. The SG said Air Marshal Masand, who had retired in January last year, would be taken back but not given any assignment. He would be "out" of the IAF, Mr Vahanvati said, adding that he would, however, get all financial benefits. On the previous hearing, Mr Vahanvati had said the IAF had decided to back him on a "supernumerary" post after the matter was discussed with IAF chief S.P. Tyagi and Defence Secretary. Today the SG told the court that the promotion board had found certain irregularities allegedly committed by him with regard to his birth certificate in 1999. "This has been pointed by a member of the board and the government feels strongly about it," he said. Air Marshal Masand had produced a birth certificate in 2002, while it was established in 1999 that it had been destroyed in a fire in Quetta in Pakistan, before his family had migrated to India during Partition, the court was informed. The court directed the SG to seek clear instructions from the government in this regard. "There was an attempt to keep him out, mislead the (Delhi) high court. You should examine the issue as we cannot allow the entire force to be maligned merely because of some officers," the court said.

The Times of India, 6 March 2005

### **IAF evaluating four jets**

BANGALORE: The Indian Air Force (IAF) is evaluating four different fighters to replace its ageing MiG fleet, its chief, Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi said here on Saturday. "We have just started the procedure by placing a request for information (RFI) with four major aircraft manufacturers. As a lot of evaluation and study needs to be done, it will be a long time before we conclude which aircraft to buy," Tyagi said on the sidelines of a conference at the HAL Management Academy here. The IAF, which estimates it would require 126 fighters of the MiG family, has sought information on the F-16, the Mirage 2000-5, the MiG 29-M2 and the JAS-39 Gripen. Referring to the delay in the development of the indigenous Kaveri engine for the home grown Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA), Tyagi said it would be incorrect to say the project was a failure due to some glitches at the development stage.

The Hindu, 6 March 2005

### **'Fighter China' not a worry: Tyagi**

BANGALORE, MARCH 5 : The Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi, today downplayed the challenge posed by the multi-role combat fighter aircraft being developed by China and Pakistan. "I don't think we are worried. If they are producing an aircraft, so are we," he told presspersons here. Dubbed "Fighter China (FC-1)," the single-engine supersonic plane has been codenamed "Super 7." Powered by an RD-93 engine developed under licence from Russia, FC-1 is reportedly being developed at a faster pace than the LCA. Air Chief Marshal Tyagi said "worry" was not a word he liked to use. "Obviously you keep track of the happenings all over the world. The Government then reacts accordingly," he observed, at the end of a two-day visit to Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) units here.

The Hindu, 9 March 2005

### **MiG crashes**

JAIPUR, MARCH 8: A MiG 21 fighter jet crashed today soon after it took off from the Naal Airbase in Bikaner. The pilot was killed and seven persons on the ground were injured.

The News, 9 March 2005

### **PAF to induct first squadron of JF-17 jets next year** (Hanif Khalid)

ISLAMABAD: The first squadron of ultramodern fighter planes, JF-17 Thunder, would be inducted in the Pakistan Air Force fleet in the middle of next year. This squadron will consist of six supersonic warplanes being jointly built by Pakistan and China. Engineers and technicians from both the countries have started building five prototype fighter planes. The prototype project is likely to be completed within a couple of months. A highly placed source has confirmed that the PAF would induct 150 JF-17 fighters in phases. These planes would be equipped with latest avionics, most of which are being jointly developed by the two countries. These would be inducted in the PAF to replace Chinese origin warplanes, A-5 and F-7, which are completing their stated life. It is learnt that the China Air Force would induct more than 500 JF-17 fighter planes during coming years. The project was conceived during the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif's first regime in the early 90s. The first test flight of the supersonic jet was successfully conducted in September 2003 in China. It is learnt that the production cost of this medium technology fighter would be significantly less than the international market price of such state-of-the-art planes.

The Tribune, 10 March 2005

### **Air chief defends MiG**

New Delhi, March 9: Spurred by the criticism over the latest crash of a MiG-21 fighter aircraft yesterday, the Indian Air Force (IAF) today came out in defence of the aircraft saying that no efforts were being spared including the induction of flight simulators to overcome the ageing factor of its mainstay fighters. Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi said that all efforts were being made to ensure a better safety record for the MiG-21s. This, he said, was visible from the less number of accidents, which the aircraft had seen over the last year. Pointing out that the number of accidents involving the MiG 21 had decreased over the years, he said, "We have over 40 years' experience in the field and there is nothing lacking in our efforts. Still we do not have a magic wand for a universal solution," he said.

The Tribune, 13 March 2005

#### **IAF to get AJTs from 2007**

Kolkata, March 12: The Indian Air Force (IAF) will start getting its advance jet trainers (AJT) from 2007 and has also placed an order for 20 light combat aircraft (LCA). Stating this here today, Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi said the advance jet trainers were expected to arrive from 2007. "Besides, there is a requirement for 126 multi-role combat aircraft. And for this, the request for information has been sent to US-based company Lockheed, which manufactures F-16 aircraft, a Russian company that manufactures MiG-29, a French company manufacturing Mirage, a Swedish company manufacturing Gripen, besides a Belgium company," he said. "It's a matter of \$ 2 billion and for that evaluation of the information is on," he told reporters. Talking about UK-made Hawk aircraft, he said initially 24 such aircraft would arrive, four each in six months and later 42 would follow, which would be assembled here. Air Marshal Tyagi said to the existing three LCA, they had placed an order for 20 such aircraft.

The Hindu, 13 March 2005

#### **Another panel set up on MiG crashes**

MUMBAI, MARCH 12: The Defence Ministry has constituted another experts committee to recommend measures to check the increasing number of MiG-21 crashes. Talking to reporters after delivering a lecture here this evening, the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, expressed concern over the crashes of the old fleet of aircraft in the Indian Air Force. On March 8, an officer was killed when a MiG crashed at Bikaner. An earlier committee had suggested measures to reduce the accidents, but that had not happened, he lamented and added another panel had been appointed.

The Hindu, 13 March 2005

#### **Air Chief to lead exercise in Andamans**

KOLKATA, MARCH 12: Come April Jaguars and Sukhoi aircraft will once again circle the skies of the tsunami-struck Andaman and Nicobar Islands signalling the return of normality, says the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi. At a press conference here today, the Air Chief Marshal said the routine manoeuvring exercise in April would signal the complete restoration of its strategic installations in the tsunami-ravaged islands. He himself would lead the exercise.

The Hindu, 15 March 2005

#### **Willing to re-induct officer, IAF tells court**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 14: After nearly two years of wait, the Indian Air Force today conveyed its willingness before the Supreme Court to promote Air Vice-Marshal Harish Masand as Air Marshal and take him back with "full honour." This could be done only after the Union Cabinet approval, Solicitor-General, G. E. Vahanvati, said before a Bench, comprising Justice Y. K. Sabharwal and Justice P. P. Naolekar. The latest decision is a climbdown by the IAF which had said during the last hearing that it was willing to take Vice-Marshal Masand back in a supernumerary post without the rank and work.

The Tribune, 15 March 2005

#### **Aerospace Command a necessity: new Air Chief: IAF to get MKI SU 30 aircraft next week** (Gulshan Luthra and Air Marshal (retd) Ashok Goel)

FACING tough challenges of modernisation and new warfare concepts, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is looking for space-based assets to overcome the 21st century threats, and steadily making up for the depleting strength of its ageing aircraft by inducting advanced mission avionics and precision guided munitions (PGMs) as force multipliers. There is no formal decision yet on setting up the Aerospace Command, but it is important for the IAF to go higher to ensure effective control over the Indian airspace, particularly when satellites and other high-altitude assets would play a dominant role in any future war. In an interaction with these writers on different occasions, the new Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi, agreed that the Aerospace Command "is a necessity" and a "natural progression" for the IAF. Future wars would be fought with real-time information integration and information dominance. Command of low and high altitudes, including space, would have to be managed by the Air Force.

The Tribune, 15 March 2005

#### **IAF women cadets' charges being probed**

New Delhi, March 14: The Indian Air Force (IAF) today said an inquiry was being conducted following the charges levelled by three cadets at its academy near Hyderabad that a senior instructor had sought sexual favours from them for giving fitness certificates to help their commissioning in the force. "Allegations have been made and we are looking into the matter," a senior IAF official said here. The three cadets, Preeti Behl, Sarabjit Jas and Anshu Singh, were from the accounts branch in the faculty of ground duties. They had been suspended and asked to pack up from the Academy in Dindigul. They were scheduled to be commissioned later this month.

The Indian Express, 15 March 2005

#### **IAF goes slow on HAL tip to upgrade Chetak fleet** (SHIV AROOR)

NEW DELHI, MARCH 14: Hindstan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has asked the IAF to consider upgrading its entire fleet of over 300 Chetak helicopters to the Chetan variant. But Air Headquarters has decided to wait until January 2006 till the refurbished chopper has completed a cycle of high-altitude tests in Leh. Highly placed sources looking into acquisition at Air HQ told Express that the IAF was not fully convinced that the upgradation would make the Chetak reliably capable of missions at Siachen and Kargil. In the documentation HAL sent to IAF recommending the upgradation in February, it has pre-empted these concerns with comprehensive figures indicating the Chetan is well ahead of the Chetak on all parameters, but Air HQ has decided to play cautious. Tight-lipped on what specifically the IAF was concerned about, the Air HQ official said: "There are some concerns on how the new engine, weight reduction and equipment on the upgraded Chetak have not been met with

suitable changes to the airframe. These are routine issues which should get cleared by the flight tests."

The Times of India, 16 March 2005

**IAF 'curious', not keen on F-16s** (JOSY JOSEPH)

NEW DELHI: Even as speculation builds on India's interest in the F-16C, sources in Indian Air Force say it is very unlikely that the American fighters would ever form the fighter backbone of India's military capability. While air force sources speak of a high level of "curiosity" over F-16 fighters, there is clear indication that the media hype over the possible acquisition may be misplaced. The curiosity factor can be explained in the fact that the Pakistan Air Force has the same fighters: in fact, the IAF is believed to have sought information on the F-16C Block 52, the same model that Pakistan may end up getting in the immediate future. However, there remains scepticism in IAF over acquiring the American fighter because of several factors. A senior IAF officer termed the building speculation over F-16s as "mere red herrings". He said the entire process for acquisition of 126 multi-role fighters has just begun and "it is a long, long way away".

The Tribune, 17 March 2005

**IAF to get SU-30s on March 21**

Nasik, March 16: Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) would hand over the first batch of Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter planes to the IAF on March 21. Chief of air Staff Air Marshal S.P. Tyagi would receive the advanced fighters from Hal Chairman, a HAL press note said here.

The Times of India, 19 March 2005

**IAF pushing for 40 fighter squadrons: Air Chief**

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force is now pushing for at least 40 combat fighter squadrons, along with more force-multipliers like mid-air refuellers and UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), to bolster the country's firepower. Airpower will be the predominant factor in wars of tomorrow. Warfare patterns have changed, with airpower becoming more and more decisive with every new war," said Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi, in an exclusive interview with The Times of India on Friday. "So if the Indian Air Force (IAF) is going to be the main actor in future wars, we will need numbers and better quality of machines. Numbers will give us the flexibility to operate on different fronts," he added. IAF at present has only 32-33 fighter squadrons (each on an average has 18 jets), a majority of them made up of aging MiG variants. These include the MiG-21, MiG-23 and the MiG-27. It plans to make up the "numbers" through several steps. The first is the progressive induction of 190 Sukhoi-30 MKIs, now being manufactured by the Bangalore-based Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).

The Times of India, 21 March 2005

**Plan for aerospace command ready: Tyagi**

NEW DELHI: The IAF has completed the preliminary spadework for the country's first-ever Aerospace Command and is now all set to approach the government with its concept for integrating air and space-based systems. "After an exhaustive in-house debate, we have got a plan ready for the Aerospace Command. The next step for us is to go to the government and seek its views," Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi, told Times of India. "There are many complexities involved with several players like Indian Space Research Organisation, Defence Research and Development Organisation and even private operators in the space arena. Moreover, space has international dimensions to it. So, I am not visualising the formation of this command in a hurry," he added.

The Indian Express, 22 March 2005

**Girija meets Pranab on IAF women cadets 'harassment'** (AASHA KHOSA)

NEW DELHI, MARCH 21: National Commission for Women Chairperson Girija Vyas today met Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, asking for his intervention in the case of alleged sexual harassment of three women cadets at the Air Force Academy in Dindigul, Hyderabad. Vyas told The Indian Express that the minister had promised her that he would insist on the Air Force authorities completing their inquiry into charges levelled by the women cadets at the academy. The cadets claim they had been found misfit for being inducted into the Air Force by their instructor only because they had refused to give him sexual favours, December last. Vyas said "two of the women had met her today for over two hours after which she met the Defence Minister." Sources said Vyas is trying to "bring about a negotiated settlement between the girls and IAF authorities."

The Hindu, 22 March 2005

**HAL plans to build light combat copter, trainer aircraft**

NASHIK, MARCH 21: Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) plans to develop two new aircraft, a light combat helicopter for anti-armour role and a twin-engine trainer aircraft to fit between the Advanced Jet Trainer, Hawk and the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Tejas. While the light combat helicopter would be a derivative of the Advanced Light Helicopter, Dhruv, and its weaponisation, the twin-engine trainer would result out of the Intermediate Jet Trainer (IJT) - both designed and developed by the state-owned HAL. The proposed trainer would be more advanced than the Hawk. The Indian Air Force is acquiring 66 Hawks - 24 from Britain and 42 built by HAL at home. About 170 test flights of the IJT have been completed and the HAL expects its certification in two years. The induction of both the aircraft, if approved by the IAF, could take place in eight to nine years with the technology demonstrator taking off in just over three years, said the HAL chairman, A.K. Baweja.

The Times of India, 22 March 2005

**IAF receives first lot of upgraded Sukhoi-30s**

OJHAR: The private sector will now play a key role in the manufacture of the hi-tech Sukhoi-30 fighter at the Hindustan

Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the company's chairman A K Baweja announced on Monday. Baweja was addressing mediapersons after a ceremony where two technologically-upgraded Sukhois were delivered to the IAF. He said that in the future, 30 per cent of the work involved in making the fighter jets will be assigned to private industries. "It will provide a good opportunity for these industries to get involved in the field of aerospace and simultaneously generate employment," Baweja said. The Sukhoi 30 is a twin-engined, multi role fighter which can be simultaneously operated as an interceptor, bomber and trainer. It is equipped with all-weather day and night flying capabilities and can carry eight tones of weapons, including air-to-air, air-to-surface missiles and mid course guided aerial bombs and rockets. It can fly upto 3,000 kms without refuelling. The aircraft is fitted with indigenously developed equipment like mission and radar computers, radar warning and a communication systems.

The Daily Times, 23 March 2005

#### **US made no promises on F-16s: Crocker**

LAHORE: United States Ambassador to Pakistan Ryan C Crocker said on Tuesday that the US had discussed the provision of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan and India but made no agreement with either country. Crocker was talking to reporters after visiting the NetSol IT Village. Asked whether the US would provide F-16s to Pakistan and India in return for shelving Iran-India gas pipeline plan, the US ambassador said: "There has been no such understanding at all with either country. We certainly discussed Pakistan's defence needs but there are no promises." About the Iran-India gas pipeline, Mr Crocker said it was a question about US policy and law with respect to economic activities for the benefit of the infrastructure in Iran, particularly in the petroleum sector. "We have discussed those concerns here in Pakistan and in India," said the US ambassador.

The Daily Times, 23 March 2005

#### **US made no promises on F-16s: Crocker**

LAHORE: United States Ambassador to Pakistan Ryan C Crocker said on Tuesday that the US had discussed the provision of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan and India but made no agreement with either country. Crocker was talking to reporters after visiting the NetSol IT Village. Asked whether the US would provide F-16s to Pakistan and India in return for shelving Iran-India gas pipeline plan, the US ambassador said: "There has been no such understanding at all with either country. We certainly discussed Pakistan's defence needs but there are no promises." About the Iran-India gas pipeline, Mr Crocker said it was a question about US policy and law with respect to economic activities for the benefit of the infrastructure in Iran, particularly in the petroleum sector. "We have discussed those concerns here in Pakistan and in India," said the US ambassador.

The Hindu, 26 March 2005

#### **U.S. companies can bid for Indian aircraft purchase (Amit Baruah)**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 25: The United States today informed India that American companies can bid for the sale of 126 multi-role combat aircraft to India on a day Washington decided to transfer F-16 aircraft to Pakistan. The External Affairs Ministry spokesman said tonight that the U.S. was also considering civilian nuclear energy and nuclear safety cooperation to India. "The decision by the U.S. Administration to move forward on nuclear energy cooperation is welcome and reflects an understanding of India's growing energy needs," he said. Also, the U.S. had proposed a joint working group on space cooperation with India. "This is a promising development and opens up a new and promising era for high technology space cooperation," he said.

The Hindu, 28 March 2005

#### **Indian troops proved their prowess during joint exercises (Sandeep Dikshit)**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 27: The United States' offer of licence for producing F-16s and the more sophisticated F-18s has overwhelmed the strategic-affairs community here. But the Indian armed forces' interaction with the foreign forces of developed countries has shown that factors such as the ability of the man behind the controls, the battle planning and the familiarity with the terrain, matter more than the sophistication of the equipment. During the 10-day mock battles over Gwalior last year, the Indian Air Force (IAF) comprehensively defeated the U.S. Air Force (USAF). Taking to the skies together after three decades, the mock battles saw the IAF Sukhoi-30s ``defeat" the F-15 C fighters by a big margin. The world fighter pilot community woke up to the ``prowess" of IAF pilots after several international journals revealed the ``poor showing" by U.S. F-15 C fighters during ``dissimilar air combat training" with IAF's Sukhoi-30 MK. This led to serving U.S.A.F. officers admitting that the U.S. seemed to have lost the edge in training.

Indian Express, 29 March 2005

#### **US has made an offer**

India should take a serious look at the US offer to supply 126 multi-role combat aircraft to India. After all, this will only extend India's choices. If two US companies - Lockheed Martin with its F-16 and Boeing with its F-18 - join the bidding, the Indian Air Force could expect other companies already in the fray to come up with even more attractive terms. If the proposal from either Lockheed or Boeing turns out to be the best in the competition, in terms of price, reliability, and technology transfer, India would have every reason to buy a major weapons platform from the US for the first time. This talk of the US offer fuelling a fresh arms race on the subcontinent also does not quite make sense. The very fact that New Delhi and Islamabad might be buying weapons from the US seems to make a lot of people in the subcontinent uneasy. But stranger things have happened. For more than a decade, Russia has been selling similar fighter aircraft to both India and China. That hasn't led to an arms race between New Delhi and Beijing. There are only three major centres of advanced arms production - the US, Europe and Russia. As a result, India, Pakistan and China would want to leverage the best possible deals with these sources for their inevitable defence modernisation. India would be unwise to refuse the American offer and reduce its choices.

The Hindu, 30 March 2005

**India plans to buy Mirage fighters**

NEW DELHI, MARCH 29: Within days of the United States making offer to sell warplanes, India today announced a number of defence acquisitions and upgrading worth Rs. 3,820 crores and decided to hold negotiations for purchase of 12 French-made Mirage 2005 fighters from Qatar. The Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, also cleared the induction of nine off-shore patrol vessels for the Navy, the purchase of one C-303 submarine-fired torpedo decoy system from Italy and the upgrading of 14 aircraft carrier-based British-made Sea Harriers planes.

The Hindu, 31 March 2005

**India may insist on co-production of F-16s** (K. Venugopal)

PORT LOUIS, MARCH 30: The National Security Adviser, M.K. Narayanan, said today that India may ask for a co-production deal should the issue of buying the U.S.-built F-16 or F-18 fighter aircraft come up. Mr. Narayanan, who is accompanying the Prime Minister on his four-day visit to Mauritius, explained that India would insist on a co-production deal because the country wished to ensure the transfer of technology and reliability of supplies. Co-production would involve the U.S. arranging for some of the components of the fighter aircraft to be produced in India.