

Dawn, 1 March 2007

Big rise in Indian defence budget

NEW DELHI, Feb 28: Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Wednesday announced a 6.8 trillion rupee federal budget for fiscal 2007-08 (April-March) with defence allocation taking up 14 per cent of the total outlay, which itself is 2.4 per cent of the GDP. Mr Chidambaram said 43 per cent of the proposed defence expenditure was earmarked for equipment purchase. Any other additional requirement for the security of the nation will be provided, he told a cheering Lok Sabha, which buried its noisy differences to hear the speech with rapt attention. The actual quantum of the increase in the defence outlay can be seen in two ways in percentage terms over last year's allocation. While defence spending would go up to Rs960 billion from the previous year's budgeted allocation of Rs890 billion, the documents reveal that what was actually spent was just Rs860 billion. Therefore, in real terms, the increase in the current budget is 11.6 per cent or Rs100 billion. Defence Minister A. K. Antony welcomed Mr Chidambaram's statement. With this commitment by the finance minister, we are satisfied, he told a TV channel.

The Statesman, 2 March 2007

MIG-21 crashes, pilot dies

KURSEONG/SILIGURI, March 1: An MIG-21 fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed near Norbong Tea Estate in Kurseong sub-division around 1.05 pm today, killing the pilot, SS Pandey, on the spot. According to the Air Force sources, the MIG-21 aircraft took off from the air force station, Bagdogra, around 12.50 pm today, with Pandey on the pilot's seat. Pandey was on a training mission and heading towards Darjeeling hills when the mishap occurred, sources, said. Fifteen minutes after its departure from Bagdogra, the MIG-21 crashed opposite to the factory of Norbong Tea Estate in Kurseong, some 30 km from Siliguri, they said.

CNN IBN, 2 March 2007

Air Chief admits flaws in MiG-21

New Delhi: It was a record which was perhaps too good to be true. The Indian Air Force on Thursday suffered its first MiG-21 crash in a year near Darjeeling. The pilot, Squadron Leader Pandey, was killed in the mishap, which has marred what could have been the first crashless year for the MiG-21 in four decades. And for the first time, the outgoing Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi, has admitted limits to improving the safety record of the MiG-21. He acknowledged design flaws in this ageing fighter as the limiting factor, but at the same time he sought to play down the problem.

The Statesman, 3 March 2007

Probe into MiG-21 crash begins

SILIGURI, March 2: A four-member expert team of the Indian Air Force, headed by Air Commodore P Ramu from Hindane air base in Uttar Pradesh, reached Bagdogra today to probe Thursday's MiG-21 crash in Kurseong sub-division in which the pilot died on the spot. The team comprises technical, medical and flying experts, Air Force sources said. The team, during their stay here, would look into various aspects that led to the MiG-21 crash. The findings of the team would be submitted to the Air Force Headquarters, Delhi,

sources told The Statesman. On the other hand, bereaved family members of the pilot, Squadron Leader SS Pandey, who hailed from Bihar, landed at the Bagdogra airport this afternoon.

CNN-IBN, 6 March 2007

Prez to review IAF's air skills

Chandigarh: The Indian Air Force (IAF) is celebrating its 75 years or its platinum jubilee on Wednesday (March 7), which means that the might of the Indian Air Force will be on full display. It will be a historic occasion for the IAF, and who better than the Supreme Commander of Armed Forces to review it. The President will be there to sample what the IAF has to offer. The Presidential review is an opportunity for the Air Force to honour the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, says Air Officer Commanding Western Air Command, Air Marshal P S Ahluwalia. The event is significant as the Air Force is also keen on upgrading technology.

CNN-IBN, 6 March 2007

More Indian troops to be sent to Congo

New Delhi: India's involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations which began in 1950 seems to be getting deeper. On Monday it was announced that the 9 Recce and Observation Flight of the Army Aviation Corps are to be deployed in Congo as part of the UN Peace Keeping Force. Eastern Command GOC-in-C Lt Gen K S Jamwal, while addressing the troops said that the Corps had contributed significantly over the past 18 months to the UN Congo Mission. He added that the Flight inducted in Congo earlier had earned the professional respect and admiration of the international peace keeping community. "9 Recce and Observation Flight have an excellent operational record. The Flight has a proud and outstanding record during operations, having contributed most significantly in the war effort in 1971," news agency PTI quoted Jamwal as saying.

The Hindu, 8 March 2007

IAF to become model force for rest of world by 2025: Kalam

Chandigarh, March 8. (PTI): The Indian Air Force on Wednesday gave an awesome display of its power before President A P J Abdul Kalam who visualised that it would become a "model airforce" for the rest of the world by 2025. "By the year 2025, the IAF will be a model air force for the rest of the world to emulate, endowed with the very best of technology in the world, alert and agile strategic planning capability and, above all, the most professional and dedicated air warriors," he said during his address at the Presidential review of the IAF fleet here. The Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces visualised the IAF of 2025 to be based on scientific and technological competence in development of communication satellites, high precision resource mapping satellites, missile systems, unmanned supersonic aerial vehicles and electronics and communication systems.

The Times of India, 8 March 2007

IAF's Canberra bomber makes final flight

CHANDIGARH: At 50, it is no match for the fifth generation aircraft that the country's air defence is looking forward to. And on Wednesday, the Canberra bomber made a

gentle, graceful exit from the Indian Air Force (IAF) with a loop figure of '8' over the Chandigarh air force station. The occasion for the last display flight of the once dreaded bomber was no less important - being held during the presidential fleet review of the IAF and that too in the 75th year (platinum jubilee year) of the force. A select crowd, led by President A P J Abdul Kalam, applauded as the Canberra flew just 300 feet above them and slowly moved out in the horizon - marking the end of half a century of service to the IAF.

The Hindu, 8 March 2007

Kalam gives flight to his vision for IAF

CHANDIGARH: President Abdul Kalam on Wednesday unveiled his vision to make the Indian Air Force "a model for the rest of the world to emulate" by 2025. Speaking after the Presidential Fleet Review coinciding with the platinum jubilee of the IAF at the Air Force Station here, Mr. Kalam said that he visualized the IAF of 2025 to be based on India's scientific and technological competence in the development of communication satellites, high precision resource mapping satellites, missile systems, unmanned supersonic aerial vehicles and electronics and communication systems.

The Times of India, 9 March 2007

Quietly, India-Israel ties growing

NEW DELHI: Defence minister A K Antony is still shy of visiting Israel due to domestic political sensitivities, which even forced his predecessor Pranab Mukherjee to call off his scheduled visit to the Jewish state in June 2006. But the largely covert strategic cooperation between India and Israel is going full steam ahead. Following in the footsteps of IAF chief Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi, defence secretary Shekhar Dutt and DRDO chief M Natarajan, among others, Army chief General J J Singh is now in Israel in yet another indicator of the wide-ranging defence ties between the two nations.

Indian Express, 9 March 2007

Pension to widow: HC notice to Centre, Chief of Air Staff

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has issued notices to the Union of India, Chief of Air Staff and others on a writ petition involving a question 'whether the widow of an airman who dies due to heart attack at duty station during off duty hours is entitled for the grant of Special Family Pension'. The Division Bench comprising Justice Ashutosh Mohunta and Justice R S Madan issued the notices. After struggling for justice for about 17 years, PM Annama, wife of late Master Warrant Officer EM Mathai of the IAF, had challenged the rejection of her Special Family Pension claim in the HC. The writ petition was filed through the Legal Aid Cell of the All India Ex-servicemen Welfare Association, Chandigarh.

The Hindu, 11 March 2007

Air Chief Tyagi arrives in Port Blair

Air Chief Marshal Shashindra Pal Tyagi, the Chief of Air Staff, accompanied by Vandana Tyagi, president of the Air Force Wives Welfare Association, arrived here today on a visit to the Andaman and Nicobar islands. They were received by Air Marshal P P Rajkumar, the Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command, and Indira Raj

Kumar, president of the Defence Welfare Wives Association. On arrival, the Air Chief Marshal was presented with the Inter Services Guard of Honour at an impressive ceremony held at Naval Air Station 'INS Utkrosh'.

CNN-IBN, 12 March 2007

MiG-29 facelift: India inks major deal

New Delhi: The Indian Air Force has inked a major deal to upgrade its 78 MiG-29 fighters. Under the \$800-million deal signed with a consortium of Russia's state-owned Rosboronexport and United Aircraft Corporation, the IAF's fleet of three squadrons of MiG-29 air superiority jets will get their service life extended from 25 to 40 years.

Economic Times, 12 March 2007

India to upgrade MiG-29 jets to boost fighter fleet

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force has inked a major deal to upgrade its 78 MiG-29 fighters as part of urgent measures to compensate for a rapid depletion of its fighter fleet. Under the \$800-million deal, signed recently with a consortium of Russia's state-owned Rosboronexport and United Aircraft Corporation, the IAF's fleet of three squadrons of MiG-29 air superiority jets will get their service life extended from 25 to 40 years. The IAF, which is currently phasing out older MiG-21 and MiG-23 jets, has seen its squadron strength plunging to an all-time low of 29 squadrons, as against its sanctioned strength of 45 squadrons.

New Indian Express, 13 March 2007

IAF to induct Sukhoi, fighter aircraft

T'PURAM: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi said here on Monday that the Indian Air Force would soon acquire 40 Sukhoi and 126 fighter aircraft. The Air Chief Marshal told reporters that a contract would be signed with Sukhoi soon and negotiations were on for acquiring the fighter aircraft. Indigenous Light Combat Aircraft would be inducted into the force by 2009-'10. Other than these, 80 new helicopters, three air-borne warning and control systems and 66 new hawks (advanced jet trainers) from the UK would also be acquired soon as part of expansion of its assets, Tyagi said.

The Hindu, 14 March 2007

More precision raids in Sri Lanka

At least eight Tamil Tiger cadre were killed in air raids on "identified targets" by the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) in the Batticaloa district on Tuesday. A Defence Ministry statement said the precision raids continued on an identified LTTE gathering in the un-cleared patches in Narakamulla General area at 10.15a.m. The air sorties followed information of a heavy build up of terrorist activities, said air force spokesperson, Group Captain Ajantha De Silva.

India Defence, 14 March 2007

Air Force Chief Reminds Govt. of MRCA Commitments

Indian Air Force would acquire 126 new fighter aircraft and 40 additional Sukhoi-30 in 2007 to augment its fleet, Chief of Air Staff S P Tyagi said on Monday. Negotiations for the purchase of fighter aircraft were on and the best bidder would get the contract, he told

reporters during his visit to Southern Air Command headquarters on Monday.

The Hindu, 15 March 2007

Hawks' delivery by middle of year: Tyagi

Thiruvananthapuram, March 12: The Indian Air Force (IAF) will receive the first batch of the British-made Advanced Jet Trainers, Hawks, by the middle of this year, Chief of the Air Staff, S. P. Tyagi, said here today. At a press conference here, the Air Chief Marshall said the IAF has ordered 66 Hawks, out of which 24 will be directly supplied by the British company. The rest will be assembled at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) facility in Bangalore. The IAF is 'about to sign' a contract for 40 more Russian-made Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter aircraft, he said.

Gulf Times, 15 March 2007

Air Force all set to acquire AWACS

India's Southern Air Command would be developed in tune with the country's robust economic growth, according to Chief of the Air Staff S P Tyagi. Sullur and Thanjavur bases under Southern Air Command would be expanded soon and Sullur would be developed to make it as Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) base. 'Indian Air Force (IAF) is playing a major role in protecting the country's interests outside its borders and Southern Air Command would be in the forefront in achieving this task,' he told reporters here.

Hindustan Times, 16 March 2007

IAF aircraft on alert to evacuate personnel in J&K

The Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft based in Chandigarh have been put on alert to move at short notice to evacuate defence personnel and civilians stranded in the valley and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir due to heavy snowfall. Senior IAF officers informed that the Srinagar airfield was still blocked due to heavy snowfall and that the moment it was swept clear of the accumulated snow, the Chandigarh-based 12 Wing will swing into action and dispatch the aircraft to airlift personnel.

The Times of India, 17 March 2007

Chopper with French skiers goes missing

SRINAGAR: A private helicopter carrying three French skiers went missing on the mountains near the famous Sonamarg tourist resort in north Kashmir on Friday after losing contact with the air traffic control here. Authorities here said the chopper carrying a group of 'heli-skiers' left Srinagar early on Friday for Gund on the Srinagar-Kargil highway.

Reuters, 17 March 2007

Helicopter with 3 foreign skiers missing in Kashmir

SRINAGAR (Reuters) - A helicopter carrying three foreign skiers went missing on Friday in the Himalayan region of Kashmir, an official said. "The helicopter was on way to Sonamarg area with three foreign skiers. We alerted the Indian Air Force after it went missing," Farooq Ahmad Shah, director of Kashmir's tourism department, told Reuters. "We are trying to establish the identity of the foreigners."

The Times of India, 18 March 2007

F-16 fighter best suited for IAF: US official

NEW DELHI: The US has made a strong pitch for the F-16 fighter for an Indian Air Force (IAF) order for 126 multi-role combat aircraft (MRCA) as it is best suited for interoperability between the air forces of the two countries in the fight against global terrorism, a top official in the American administration says. "I am not here to sell aeroplanes, but I can tell you that the F-16 is the best there is as we attempt interoperability between our air forces in the global fight against terror," Bruce S. Lemkin, US deputy under secretary of the air force, told a select media gathering here.

CNN-IBN, 19 March 2007

IAF turns music teacher for Afghans

New Delhi: Of late, the Indian Air Force has been showing its airtime might in the Bangalore air show and the President's Fleet Review. And now, in its platinum jubilee year, the IAF will also show off its prowess in the performing arts. In a news that comes as music for many ears, the IAF's Air Warrior Symphony Orchestra (ASWO) will teach military tunes and Hindustani compositions to Afghanistan's armed forces.

Associated Press of Pakistan, 20 March 2007

Mig-23 aircraft on way out from Indian Air force

The Mig-23s after serving the Indian Air force for 24 years are on their way out as aircraft belonging to 224 Squadron taking to the sky for one last time on Tuesday next, it was officially said. The flights of the aircraft will take place at the frontline Air Force Station Jamnagar under the South Western Air Command marking the end of an era with the IAF. While 223 squadron was switched over to the MiG-29 ASF in May 89, only 224 squadron continued operating this aircraft till date.

The Hindu, 21 March 2007

Common aircraft crucial in joint exercises: U.S. official

A senior U.S. official has linked the efficacy of joint exercises with the Indian Air Force (IAF) to the commonality of equipment. He feels cooperation between the two air forces will deepen if both flew the same fighter aircraft the F-16. "We are training together, operating together and flying together. So if we have to face a common enemy we can fight together. The airplane is at the centrepiece of the relationship between the air forces and the means to achieve capability. If we fly the same plane, it becomes so much easier to develop tactics and doctrine," said Bruce Lemkin, Deputy Under Secretary, United States Air Force (USAF).

Business Standard, 23 March 2007

Air chief for strengthening country's defence

Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi said economic progress of the nation was incomplete without strengthening national defence. He was addressing a ceremony organised to bid adieu to Mig-23 fighter aircraft held on Tuesday at the Air Force Station (AFS) at Jamnagar. The phasing-out ceremony of the fighter aircraft concluded here under the South Western Air Command (SWAC), with Flight Commander M K Singh, presenting the final documents of the Mig-23 fighter aircraft to Tyagi.

Pravda, 25 March 2007

Russia and India to increase production of BrahMos PJ-10 supersonic cruise missiles

Indian-Russian Joint Venture "Brahmos Aerospace" plans to increase the production of the supersonic cruise missiles PJ-10 by 300 percents within 2 years, according to the executive director of the company Sivathanu Pillai. The plans are explained first of all by the increased demand from the Indian MoD. In the past half a year Brahmos has regained the status of one of the most often mentioned subject in the military news reels, at least in the context of cruise missiles.

CNN-IBN News, 28 March 2007

Lanka air strike threat to India too

Tuesday's attack on an army camp in Batticaloa used the tried and trusted suicide bomber. He tried to crash an explosives laden tractor into the camp, didn't quite succeed and blew himself up along with seven others. Many were injured in the incident. But Monday's LTTE air strike continues to worry Colombo. An inquiry is underway into how the rebel aircraft were never detected.

Business Standard, 28 March 2007

India worried at LTTE`s air prowess

A day after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) marked the official debut of the Tamil Eelam Air Force (TAF) by attacking an air base in Sri Lanka, Indian security agencies appeared worried about a non-state air power in its vicinity. The TAF's existence has not been a secret but its use has taken everyone by surprise. Sources in Indian security agencies said the fact that the LTTE could avoid radar detection to reach Colombo, attack an air base and return safely was a matter of concern for India.

Daily News, Sri Lanka, 30 March 2007

India must help Lanka to crush terrorism - Former Indian Air Chief

INDIA: Former Indian Air Force Chief, Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy said the Government of India must support the Sri Lankan Government to weed out terrorism and no terrorist group should be allowed to blackmail a democracy such as Sri Lanka. Speaking to the Daily News in New Delhi, he said: No terrorist group should be allowed to blackmail a democracy. It is not acceptable. India can help. We must support the Government of Sri Lanka. There is no doubt about that. We have to fight it totally. India must be committed. We have to weed out terrorism and the Governments of Sri Lanka and India must work together.