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Sun, 11 Dec, 2016

India to get Rafale fighter jets in 3-year time: IAF chief

Arup Raha said the fighter jets, capable of carrying nuclear weapons and equipped with latest missiles, will tremendously increase the force's capability.

India will get the first tranche of Rafale fighter jets from France in the next three years, Indian Air Force chief Arup Raha said on Saturday. "Rafale contract caters for delivery time between 36 months to about 66 months if I am not wrong. So within three years time we will have the first few aircraft delivered to us and within five and a half years we will have two full squadron of aircraft in operation," Raha said at a function in Kolkata.

Arup Raha said the fighter jets, capable of carrying nuclear weapons and equipped with latest missiles, will tremendously increase the force's capability. When asked about the depleting strength of jets, he said besides Rafale, India is going to produce Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas in large numbers.

"The effort is on to increase production lines. The more the number of aircraft we produce, the faster we ramp up the capacity to close the gap created by obsolete and old aircraft," Raha said. IAF has put on display one such obsolete MiG-27 fighter aircraft in front of the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata. The installation was inaugurated by the Air Chief Marshal. He also said the government is also thinking of procuring another fighter aircraft to fill up the gaps faster.

On the Indo-Russian fifth generation fighter aircraft (FGFA), Raha said they are already working with Russia on research and development. "The project is already negotiated. Preliminary design on our part is over and if this R&D negotiations are over and we sign the contract then we should have these aircraft in another 5-6 years," Raha said.

THE ASIAN AGE

Sun, 11 Dec, 2016

IAF ex-chief sent to CBI custody for 4 days

Ex-IAF chief SP Tyagi blames then PMO in AgustaWestland case

New Delhi: Former Air Force chief S.P. Tyagi was remanded to four days CBI custody by a Delhi court on Saturday in connection with Rs 3,600 crore Agusta Westland chopper deal after the investigating agency said he was needed to be quizzed to unearth a very large conspiracy having international ramifications.

The court also sent his cousin Sanjeev Tyagi alias Julie and advocate Gautam Khaitan, also accused in the case, to a CBI custody till December 14.

Metropolitan magistrate Sujit Saurabh remanded the accused to the CBI custody, saying their custodial interrogation was required for a fair probe. During the proceedings, the CBI had sought 10-day custody, arguing that it was a huge conspiracy having international ramifications. The counsel appearing for the accused, however, opposed the CBI's plea, saying the FIR was registered over three years ago, and there was no fresh ground for the arrests now.

Senior advocate N. Hariharan, who appeared for the former IAF chief, claimed that the decision to procure 12 VVIP choppers from AgustaWestland was a "collective" one and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was also a part of it. "It was a collective decision and not his (Tyagi's) individual one. It was a collective decision of which PMO was also a part," he said.

The CBI alleged that Mr Khaitan was the "brain" behind how the bribe money reached India and several companies, through which the money travelled came into existence. While seeking their custodial

interrogation, the CBI said the accused were required to be confronted and their assistance was needed to collect evidence and details of the bribe amount paid by AgustaWestland through different back channels abroad. The agency argued said they were required to be interrogated and confronted with each other and the incriminating evidences. It also alleged that Mr Tyagi had abused his official position, and when he was the Air Chief Marshal, he had made huge investments in land and other (properties) and he had not disclosed the source of his income. It also said the involvement of several others in the entire conspiracy cannot be ruled out.

THE ASIAN AGE

Sun, 11 Dec, 2016

Arup Raha says Tyagi's arrest a blot on IAF reputation

It is very unfortunate that such an episode has taken place, says Arup Raha.

Kolkata: Breaking his silence, outgoing Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha on Saturday described the arrest of former IAF chief Air chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as very unfortunate.

According to him, the former IAF chief has dented the image of the force.

He said, "It is very unfortunate that such an episode has taken place. It does dent our reputation as a professional force but we believe in the rule of law. I am sure every Indian citizen believes in the rule of law. The due process is on. Whatever is the final verdict, we will go by that. The matter is sub judice. Therefore, I would not like to say anything more."

Air Chief Marshal Raha was talking to the media on Saturday evening at the Kolkata Airport where he inaugurated the installation of a MiG-27 fighter aircraft, which has been put on display. He started his one-day whirlwind tour to West Bengal after coming from Shillong where he chaired the commanders conference of the Eastern Air Command. The IAF chief visited Sainik School in Purulia and Gun & Shell factory at Cossipore, Kolkata.

But wherever he went, he made his assertions clear when asked about the former IAF chief's arrest in the VVIP chopper scam. In Purulia, he observed that the arrest adversely affected the reputation of the IAF while expressing his faith in the judicial system. He said, "I can rest assure you, the IAF and the Armed forces will continue to serve the nation to best of its abilities and if anything is wrong, we will correct it quickly."

On the Rafale deal, he said, "Its delivery time caters from 36 months to around 66 months. So within next three years, the first few aircrafts will be delivered to us. In the next five years, two full squadrons of Rafale aircrafts will be made operational in the IAF. It is an extremely capable aircraft and will tremendously enhance our operational capabilities."

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Sun, 11 Dec, 2016

China takes Tibet route to Nepal mkt, may hit Indian biz

By Saibal Dasgupta

The first major consignment of goods worth \$2.8 million has left the Chinese border for Nepalese capital Kathmandu. This is the biggest goods movement between the two countries since 2005 when China built what it calls the Friendship Highway to link towns on either side across difficult mountain terrain observers said.

The move, involving transporting goods of daily use, electronic and electrical appliances, is expected to severely hit Indian businesses that have had unfettered access to the Nepali market for decades. Dozens of trucks set off from the Tibetan border port of Gyirong for Kathmandu, 860km away, Xinhua reported.

China has since early this year encouraged Kathmandu to reduce its dependence on India for supply of goods and services related to energy and telecom. Nepal signed an agreement with China on movement and exchange of containers a week ago. Last month, Nepal Telecom struck a deal to use Chinese telecom infrastructure and facilities. The flow of goods from China will encourage Nepal to accept the Chinese offer for rail connectivity, observers said. Nepal PM Prachanda encourages this as he wants to persuade President Xi to visit Nepal. Such a visit will enhance his image, Pramod Jaiswal, senior fellow with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies told TOI. China also wants Prachanda to continue in the post. His rival Sher Bahadur Deuba recently attended a meeting where the PM of the Tibetan government in exile was present. China would not have liked this, Jaiswal said.

The consignment of shoes, clothes, hats, furniture, kitchen utilities, appliances and building material has already covered a 5,200-km-long train journey from the south Chinese province of Guangdong to the Tibetan city of Xigeze before they were loaded onto trucks, Xinhua reported. In the normal course, the cost of transporting goods over 6,000km would jack up the prices but China is subsidising the cost to ensure the pricing is competitive with products from India, observers said.



Sun, 11 Dec, 2016

Tibet card to corner China

The plan

- *Government sources say India is planning to rake up the Tibet issue more frequently and openly in international forums*
- *Tibet is a sensitive issue for China and it remains extremely wary when countries like the United States or India bring it up*
- *Sources stress the Modi government, unlike the previous governments, wants to take a more proactive stand on Tibet*

Indian and Chinese academicians came together in the national capital, over the course of the last two days, to discuss the various facets of the bilateral relationship.

The India-China Think Tanks forum saw discussions on various issues but the maximum buzz was created when Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar subtly pointed out India's desire to join the NSG and the issue of JeM chief Masood Azhar.

While India has defended its policy stating that it needs to keep up the attempts to get into the elite group, an equally important fact has been ignored. And that is China and its open reluctance to change its position with regards to India's entry into the NSG.

Government sources say India is planning to rake up the Tibet issue more frequently and openly in international forums in an attempt to push China in a corner. Despite its public posturing, Tibet is a sensitive issue for China and it remains extremely wary when countries like the United States or India bring it up. Sources indicate that the Modi government, unlike the previous governments, wants to take a more proactive stand on Tibet. The move will in all certainty upset China.

The other point that the Foreign Secretary raised was the 'technical holds' that China keeps putting on to avoid Azhar from getting designated as a terrorist in the UN. While India raised the spectre of terrorism and how both India and China need to cooperate in international organisations to fight 'fundamentalist terrorism', again what begs attention is the fact that for China, its relationship with Pakistan is vital. India's oft repeated assertions of an entry into the NSG and the designation of Azhar as a terrorist to China and the global community does little to help India's case in either case.

Israel readies for 'super-tech' stealth fighters

Israel on Monday will receive its first F-35 stealth fighter jets, hailed as technological marvels whose helmets alone cost more than most people's homes but criticised for their price and initial flaws.

Built by US aerospace giant Lockheed Martin, the first two planes' arrival in Israel is being welcomed as a major event for the country's military as it seeks to maintain dominance in the turbulent Middle East.

US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter is to attend the arrival along with his Israeli counterpart Avigdor Lieberman at the Nevatim air base in the country's south. ô PTI



Japan goes fishing for floating space junk

There is an estimated one hundred million pieces of space junk floating around our planet. Now a new vessel is on its way to put a stop to this - a space junk collector made with the help of a fishnet company. A rocket bound for the International Space Station carrying the vessel blasted off from the southern island of Tanegashima at around 10:30 pm local time (13:30 GMT).

Since the Soviet-launched Sputnik satellite in 1957, decades of space exploration has produced a hazardous belt of orbiting debris. Scientists at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are now experimenting with a tether to pull junk out of orbit around Earth. This will clear up tonnes of space clutter including cast-off equipment from old satellites and pieces of rocket. The vessel uses a so-called electrodynamic tether, which is made from thin wires of stainless steel and aluminium. One end of the strip will be attached to debris big enough to damage working equipment. The electricity generated by the tether as it swings through the Earth's magnetic field is expected to have a slowing effect on the space junk.

This should, scientists say, pull it into a lower and lower orbit. Eventually the detritus will enter the Earth's atmosphere, burning up harmlessly long before it has a chance to crash to the planet's surface. JAXA worked on the project with Japanese fishnet manufacturer Nitto Seimo to develop the cord. The tether uses our fishnet plaiting technology, but it was really tough to intertwine the very thin materials, company engineer Katsuya Suzuki told AFP.



MIT scientist will fire jet engine to fight smog

In winter, Delhi's air quality deteriorates drastically because of a temperature inversion, which traps pollutants close to the ground. During an inversion, the air temperature near the ground becomes less than above, up to a certain height. Now, imagine a technology to fight this meteorological phenomenon.

A team led by Moshe Alamaro, a scientist from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and Iyyanki V Muralikrishna, a former professor of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, is pursuing an idea that could help disrupt the winter inversion layer. This group of scientists plans to pilot a project under which decommissioned jet engines will be placed close to a power plant. The turbojets and turboprop engines will be directed upwards to form powerful updrafts and disrupt the winter inversion. The energy from these jets is enough to penetrate through the inversion layer and dissipate the energy trapped below the inversion layer, believe the experts involved in the project. This will ensure that emissions from the power plant are trapped

and brought above the inversion layer, they believe. The scientists were inspired by a similar experiment with turbojets in the Baltic region about 45 years ago. A technical paper by the team shows that a single jet engine can address the smog generated by a 1,000MW coal power plant.

“The added emissions due to the jet operation are roughly 0.1% of the emissions from the power plant. Furthermore, the jet engines do not operate continuously. They will work only during foggy conditions, which could last for 30-50 days a year. Therefore, the emissions due to the jet engines are negligible in comparison to the emissions generated by the power plant,” Alamaro told TOI.

The team is planning to hold a workshop, in collaboration with an IIT. “We prefer Delhi. Let's see how things shape up. We also prefer to pilot the experiment near a power plant close to the capital, which is badly affected by smog,” said Muralikrishna. He did not comment on the cost of the experiment but said it would depend on how much fuel was used.

“Nearly 60% of India's total power generation is fuelled by coal, which amounts to 1,86,242 MW. The country is expected to add 124 gigawatts of coal-fired electricity by 2020. Coal power production in India is linked to millions of cases of asthma and respiratory ailments. About 10,000 children under the age of five were fatal victims in 2012 alone,” a technical paper prepared by the team states. The team is in talks with a firm to pilot the project at one of its power stations.

Activists campaigning against the air pollution menace were not willing to comment on this proposal.

पंजाब केसरी

Sun, 11 Dec, 2016

सांतोस को शांति का नोबेल पुरस्कार



ओस्लो, (रायटर): कोलंबिया के राष्ट्रपति जुआन मैनुअल सांतोस को वर्ष 2016 के नोबेल शांति पुरस्कार से नवाजा गया। नार्वे की राजधानी ओस्लो के सिटी हॉल में आयोजित नोबेल पुरस्कार समारोह में श्री सांतोस को स्वर्ण पदक और पुरस्कार राशि के तौर पर 870,000 डॉलर प्रदान किये गये। श्री सांतोस को यह पुरस्कार कोलंबिया में विद्रोहियों के साथ शांति स्थापित करने के लिए दिया गया है। कोलंबिया में पिछले महीने सरकार और विद्रोही संगठनों के बीच शांति समझौते कराने में उनकी ओर से निभाई गई अहम भूमिका की नोबेल समिति ने प्रशंसा की। गौरतलब है कि कोलंबिया में पिछले 52 वर्षों से जारी संघर्ष में दो लाख से अधिक लोगों की मौत हुई है।