

# समाचार पत्रों से चयित अंश Newspapers Clippings

दैनिक सामयिक अभिज्ञता सेवा  
A daily Current Awareness Service

Vol. 42 No. 198 19 September 2017



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## DRDO successfully tests air-to-air missile Astra

*All the sub-systems performed accurately, meeting the mission parameters and objectives*

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted the final development flight trials of ‘Astra’– Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) over the Bay of Bengal, off the coast of Chandipur, Odisha, earlier this week.

A total of seven trials were conducted against the Pilotless Target Aircraft (PTA), including engagement of target at very long range, engagement of high manoeuvring target at medium range and multiple launches of missiles in salvo to engage multiple targets. It has been developed by DRDL, Hyderabad, with avionics, including the critical RF Seeker developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI).

All the sub-systems performed accurately, meeting all the mission parameters and objectives.

Two missiles were also launched in the combat configuration with warhead and the targets were neutralised, said an official press release on Friday night. This effort for building a state-of-the-art BVRAAM by DRDO, together with the Indian Air Force (IAF) has completed the development phase of the weapon system successfully. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) too has played a role in modifying the aircraft for weapon integration while more than 50 public and private industries have contributed in building the Astra weapon system.

S. Venugopal, programme director, led the launch operations and flight trials along with the teams from multiple organisations. Director general, Missiles and Strategic Systems, G. Satheesh Reddy said the technologies developed under the programme will be the building blocks for development of more variants of air-to-air and surface-to-air missiles. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman congratulated DRDO, IAF Air Force, Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) and industries for the successful trials of ASRTA Missile.

The Chairman of DRDO and Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D) S. Christopher too congratulated the ‘Team Astra’ for developing and flight testing such a formidable class of weapon system.

## ‘China can use Nepal-Tibet link for military purposes’

*New Strategy: India is likely to be ‘irritated’ by the development, reports state media*

Beijing: A new strategic highway in Tibet will link the region to Nepal and can be used for military purposes, state media reported on Monday, adding the road can help open up South Asia to China.

Experts said the 25-metre wide highway can be used by armoured vehicles and serve as a runway for military aircraft.

India is likely to be “irritated” by the development, state media reported.

“The Tibet highway between Xigaze airport and Xigaze city centre officially opened to the public on Friday, a short section linking the national highway to the Nepal border which experts said will enable China to forge a route into South Asia in both economic and defence terms,” the Global Times tabloid said in a report.

The 40.4-km highway will shorten the journey between the dual-use civil and military airport and Tibet’s second-largest city from an hour to 30 minutes.

The highway is expected to be linked to the China-Nepal railway in future, experts said.

“As part of G318, the highway connects the border town of Zhangmu with Lhasa, the capital city of southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region. It can link with the future cross-border Sino-Nepali railway,” said Zhao Gancheng, director of the Centre for Asia-Pacific Studies at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies.

The report added: “The SinoNepali railway was part of a deal struck by Nepal deputy Prime Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara when he visited China in early September. The railway includes two lines: one connecting three of Nepal’s most important cities and two crossing the border between China and Nepal.”

Zhao said the railway line which was part of the deal, passes through the Chinese border town of Zhangmu and connects with routes in Nepal and it will be the first rail link from China to enter South Asia.

Zhao told the newspaper: “Although the railway connection between China and Nepal is intended to boost regional development and not for military purposes, the move will still probably irritate India. India is always disgusted when neighbouring countries attempt to get closer to China.”

Mahara said earlier this month that Nepal is fully committed to pushing forward cooperation with China under the Belt and Road Initiative. He was in China for a six-day official visit earlier this month.

“We have already signed the memorandum of understanding on participating in the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China,” Mahara told official Xinhua news agency.



*Tue, 19 Sept, 2017*

## **US closer to designating Pak terrorist state**

*By Chidanand Rajghatta*

*Islamabad Readies Tit-For-Tat Measures, May Block Access for Nato Supplies To Afghanistan*

Pakistan has indicated it might go for broke against the US with ties between the two countries reaching a new low. Enraged at being called out by President Trump for nurturing terror groups, Islamabad is believed to have devised a “three-option toughest diplomatic policy“, including an extreme case scenario where it will block access for US and Nato supplies to land-locked Afghanistan.

Actions prior to this will include, according to media, limiting diplomatic ties with US and reducing mutual cooperation on terrorism-related issues and non-cooperation in US strategy for Afghanistan. Pakistan has also warned that it would not buy any more F-16 jets from the US, and would lean towards China. Small problem for Pakistan: Washington is not about to blink.

After giving Pakistan a taste of the kind of financial vulnerability it is under by banning operations in the US of Habib Bank, the country's leading financial institution, for regulatory violations, the Trump administration has indicated it has more weapons up its sleeve. Among them: Stripping Pakistan of the status of a non-Nato ally, cutting off all aid, imposing travel ban on suspected ISI personnel in the US operating undercover, and finally , formal designation of Pakistan as a terrorist state.

Withdrawal of non-Nato ally status and designating it a terrorist state would limit weapons sales and probably affect billions of dollars in IMF and World Bank loans, along with access to global finance, the Financial Times has reported.

Pakistan partisans in the US have long argued the country was “too big to fail“ and applying too much pressure on it would push it into China's arms. But, the US appears to have reckoned that the country is already firmly in the Chinese camp, and Beijing can do little to stave off a financial meltdown if Washington

decides to put the squeeze on a country whose elites have greater affinity for London and New York than for Beijing.

Talk of a western visa ban terrifies Pakistani military and political elites such as Gen Musharraf and Nawaz Sharif, who owns prime property and camp out in the west whenever things get too hot at home.

Pakistan bravado in threatening to cut off US access to Afghanistan comes ahead of a possible meeting of its new PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi with vice president Mike Pence in New York on sidelines of the UN General Assembly. President Trump appears to have little time or patience with a country whose proliferation activities are being recalled again following North Korea's aggravations in the nuclear and ballistic missile sphere.

Even the state department, whose bureaucrats have long advocated a cautious line on Pakistan fearing its collapse and a "loose nukes" scenario, appear to have fallen in line with the White House's get-tough policy stemming from Islamabad's perfidy regarding using terrorism as a policy instrument. "Some who recall being beguiled by late nights spent with military and civilian leaders over Johnnie Walker Blue Label -the expensive whisky beloved by Pakistan's elite in the dry country -say even forceful private conversations regularly disappoint," the FT noted in a report, quoting James Dobbins, special envoy in 2013-14 saying, "It's very difficult to deal with an interlocutor who says he agrees with you but actually doesn't."

On Pakistani television, some talking heads and anchors are now discussing the imminent collapse of the country's economy if US puts the squeeze. Pakistanis are also stunned that many reports now rank Bangladesh ahead of it in several economic metrics, including exports and foreign exchange reserves. But the country's hardline nationalists and fantasists believe China, and perhaps even Russia, will come to its rescue.



*Tue, 19 Sept, 2017*

## **US flies bombers over Korean skies**

The US has flown stealth fighters and advanced bombers over the Korean peninsula as a show of force in the wake of North Korea's latest nuclear and missile tests. Four F-35B stealth fighters and two B-1B bombers participated in the live-fire exercise to 'demonstrate the deterrence capability of the US-South Korea alliance against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats', South Korea's defence ministry said. They were the first flights since the North conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test on September 3 before launching a missile over Japan last Friday and inflaming tensions in the region.

North Korea, meanwhile, said the latest round of UN sanctions imposed upon it represent 'the most vicious, unethical and inhumane act of hostility' and are an attempt to 'physically exterminate the people' living in the Stalinist autocracy. The US jets flew alongside four South Korean F-15K jet fighters as part of 'routine' training, the statement said, adding that the allies would continue such exercises to 'improve their joint operation capabilities against contingencies'. Today's flyovers charted a course across the Korean Peninsula and practised attacks by releasing live weapons at a firing range in South Korea, the U.S. Pacific Command said in a statement. The U.S. warplanes also conducted formation training with Japanese fighter jets over waters near the southern island of Kyushu, according to the Pacific Command.

The previous such flights were on August 31, when aircraft from the two nations practiced a precision bombing mission with live shells. North Korea said the more sanctions the United States and its allies impose on it, the faster it will move to complete its nuclear plans. The reclusive US flies bombers over Korean skies nation's official KCNA news agency said today the U.N. Security Council sanctions represent 'the most vicious, unethical and inhumane act of hostility to physically exterminate the people of the DPRK, let alone its system and government'. The U.N. Security Council unanimously passed a U.S.-drafted resolution a week ago mandating tougher new sanctions against Pyongyang that included banning textile imports and capping.

The US is increasing pressure on the North, with its ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley warning that Pyongyang would be ‘destroyed’ if it refused to end its ‘reckless’ weapons drive. The subject is set to dominate US President Donald Trump’s address to the UN General Assembly and his meetings with South Korean and Japanese leaders this week. Tensions flared again when Kim Jong-Un’s regime tested what it termed a hydrogen bomb many times more powerful than its previous device. The North also fired a ballistic missile over Japan and into the Pacific on Friday, responding to new UN sanctions over its atomic test with what appeared to be its longest-ever missile flight. *Daily Mai*



*Tue, 19 Sept, 2017*

## **China, Russia hold drills near N Korea**

Beijing: China and Russia began naval drills near North Korea on Monday amid continuing tensions over the isolated state’s nuclear ambitions and ahead of a United Nations General Assembly meeting this week, where North Korea is likely to loom large.

The official Xinhua news agency said the joint exercises will take place between Peter the Great Bay, just outside of the Russian far eastern port of Vladivostok, not far from the Russia-North Korea border, and into the southern part of the Sea of Okhotsk, to the north of Japan.

The drills are the second part of China-Russian naval exercises this year, the first part of which took place in the Baltic in July. The report did not directly link the drills to current tensions over North Korea.

Both China and Russia have repeatedly called for a peaceful solution and talks to resolve the issue. The international community must remain united and enforce sanctions against North Korea after its repeated launch of ballistic missiles, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in an editorial in the New York Times.