

Homegrown Tejas fighter jets put on the Pak border for vigil

AFTER a gap of over 30 years, the Indian Air Force (IAF) would be deploying a homemade combat aircraft along the Pakistan border in an offensive role during the forthcoming pan-India war games 'Exercise Gaganshakti' starting from April 8. The last homegrown planes, which had seen operational action, were the HF-24 Maruts — 147 of which were produced by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited in the 1960s and were decommissioned from the Air Force in 1985. During the war games, the Air Force would be deploying the lanes along the Pakistan border in air defence roles to prepare against any aerial offensive, government sources toldMAILTODAY.

This is the first time that after getting inducted into the Air Force formally, the LCA Tejas plane is

taking part in an operational role in one of the biggest war games being held by the service, they said. The planes are likely to be deployed in the western and south-western sector of the Air Force during the exercise between the forward bases. India has several forward bases on the Pakistan border — Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir— to defend any attack from the Pakistan side, the sources said. The Tejas planes have been inducted into the 45 Squadron of the IAF in the Initial



Operational Clearance (IOC) configuration and are being readied for carrying out operational roles in the near future. The participation of the Tejas in operational role will be a big boost to the Make in India programme, and will be big landmark for the indigenous aircraft development project, which is now entering an important phase of getting operational, an IAF official said.

The LCA project, approved in 1983, has been marred by delays due to the sanction regime of the United States in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and delays on part of laboratories of the DRDO. However, the programme received a major push from the defence ministry as recently the defence minister-led defence acquisition council (DAC) cleared the `48,000 crore project to procure 83 LCA Mk1A from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, and the tender in this regard was issued in the last week of December to the public sector firm.

The Gaganshakti exercise is a pan- India war game conducted by the Air Force across its operational commands where the response of the force is checked to the threats faced by it on different fronts. During this exercise, several hundred combat planes— including the Su-30MKI, Mirage- 2000, Jaguars and MiG 29s— would take part and hundreds of missions would be flown with impeccable planning and execution, which would be more of technology demonstrators but the IAF was more interested in having the LCA Mark 2, which would be a more capable and upgraded version of the indigenous plane in the making for the last over two decades.

The HAL would first deliver the Mark 1 aircraft to the IAF and then would produce the Mark 1A in the interim till the time it is ready with the Mark 2 version. The project would give a strong push to the indigenous fighter aircraft industry as this would be the first major bulk production order for the plane. The Air Force is also looking to induct more than 200 LCA Mk-2 planes which would be totally different from the LCA Mark-1 and LCA Mark1A planes and would be in the league of the Mirage-2000s and MiG 29s serving in the force presently. tion, they said. The exercise will be based on a scenario that included rapid deployment across

the country at all operational Air Force bases. Meanwhile, defence experts feel that the decision to procure the LCA will reduce the dependence on imports.

The IAF has already placed orders for 20 LCA Mark 1 air-craft, which would be more of technology demonstrators but the IAF was more interested in having the LCA Mark 2, which would be a more capable and upgraded version of the indigenous plane in the making for the last over two decades. The HAL would first deliver the Mark 1 aircraft to the IAF and then would produce the Mark 1A in the interim till the time it is ready with the Mark 2 version.

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Avalanches, landslides to increase in Kashmir, says DRDO study

By Hirra Azmat

Srinagar, Mar 30: The frequency of avalanches and landslides would increase due to warming of Himalayas, says a study of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The study is authored by HS Negi, Neha Kanda, MS Shekhar and Ashwagosha Ganju from Snow and Avalanche Studies Establishment (SASE), a laboratory under DRDO.

The recent study warned that rising trends in liquid precipitation over snowfall “can have a negative influence on Himalayan glaciers”.

“It will increase the frequency of hazards like avalanches and landslides during late winters,” the study reads.

Citing high rainfall and less snowfall for the flood threat in Kashmir in April 2017, the study analyzed that the increase in liquid precipitation over seasonal snow in winter has “induced enhanced melting and resulted in flood like situation”.

The effect on Kashmir will be catastrophic as the precipitation patterns are said to change. According to the report by the Department of Ecology, Environment & Remote Sensing (EERS), the Kashmir is likely to witness 50 percent increase in precipitation by 2030 due to “climatic change” across the globe. “All seasons in the Himalayan regions indicate an increase in rainfall, with monsoon months of June, July, August, and September showing the maximum increase in the rainfall. The winter rain in the month of January and February are also projected to increase whereas minimum increase is indicated in October, November and December,” reads the report.

The report further says that the number of rainy days in the Himalayan region in 2030s may increase by 5-10 days on an average, with an increase by more than 15 days in the eastern part of the Jammu and Kashmir region.

An official of EERS said, “The current glacial extents are out of balance with current climatic conditions indicating that glaciers will continue to shrink in the future even without further temperature increase.” He said, “The rate of recession of glaciers is varying which is being attributed to winter precipitation climate warming and anthropogenic elements.”

Head of Earth Sciences Department, Kashmir University, Professor Shakil Romshoo, said that Kashmir has been experiencing a decline in snowfall and rise in annual rainfall. Romshoo said, “Global warming has drastically affected the climate patterns in the valley.”

“The temperature has increased as compared to the last two decades, which has resulted in a lesser quantity of snowfall,” he added.

Romshoo warned, “These extremes in climate pattern can heighten the risk of flood, and cause economic and social disruptions in the Valley.”

<https://www.kashmirmonitor.in/Details/145918/avalanches-landslides-to-increase-in-kashmir-says-drdo-study>