

Thu, 24 May, 2018

Developing Indigenous Systems Is ITR's Focus: Binaya Kumar Das

Bhubaneswar: The Integrated Test Range (ITR), the premier DRDO laboratory at Chandipur in Balasore district has been awarded the prestigious Silicon Trophy for the year 2016 as the best Technological laboratory of DRDO besides the “Agni Award for Excellence in Self Reliance” for the year 2017.

ITR Director Binaya Kumar Das received the awards from Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during the DRDO award ceremony on Monday.

Speaking to OTV, Das said, “The journey that ITR has made since its establishment in 1982 is our greatest reward. Scientists do not work for awards. For me, the best award is what I have been able to contribute and achieve for my country.”

“DRDO confers awards for high quality research works. ITR was selected as the best laboratory of DRDO among all the laboratories. Our target has been to free India from foreign imports. Way back in 1982, we used to import systems from abroad. Subsequently the focus was on self reliance and developing in-house systems. At ITR, our aim has been to develop indigenous systems,” he shared.

<http://odishatv.in/odisha/developing-indigenous-systems-is-itrs-focus-binaya-kumar-das-297663>



Thu, 24 May, 2018

Maldives a challenge, says Navy Chief

Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba on Wednesday termed Maldives a “challenge” as the island nation grew closer to China during its domestic political crisis over the last few months.

“Maldives is a challenge at the moment. The present government is inclined towards China,” said Admiral Lanba while speaking at the Vivekananda International Foundation on the Navy’s changing role in the current security environment.

On February 5, 2018, the current President of Maldives, Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom Yameen declared emergency after refusing the Supreme Court order to release some political prisoners which plunged the country into a political crisis.

While former Maldivian President Mohammed Nasheed repeatedly called India to intervene militarily, President Yameen grew closer to China which caused discomfort in New Delhi. Talking of the Quad consisting of India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., Admiral Lanba ruled out any military angle to it.

“We are not going down the route,” he stated. He cautioned that India is the only country among the Quad which has a land border with China and questioned if anyone would come to assist in case of a conflict. Admiral Lanba also acknowledged the rapid progress made by China in advancing its aircraft carrier programme.

Thu, 24 May, 2018

World War II-Era spitfire to take wing again

By Vijay Mohan

Close on the heels of a vintage DC-3 Dakota transport aircraft taking wing after undergoing an exhaustive restoration process in the UK, the Indian Air Force has firmed up plans for undertaking a similar exercise on a World War-II era Spitfire fighter plane.

The Supermarine Spitfire, one of the most widely produced Allied warplanes during the world war, remained with the Air Force for about 16 years from February 1944 to January 1960. Various versions of this aircraft were operated by 15 squadrons and units, and saw action during the defence of the Kashmir valley in 1947.

In April this year, a restored Dakota, an iconic transport aircraft of its time, joined the 'Vintage Flight' based at Palam. It bears Tail No. VP 905, the same as the first Indian Dakota to transport troops of 1 Sikh to defend Srinagar from Pakistani raiders in 1947.

The Spitfire's restoration work, to be done by an external agency, is an exhaustive process involving complete stripping down of the aircraft and cleaning, refurbishing and carrying out non-destructive testing or all components to be retained to ensure structural integrity, sources said.

The engine and avionics would be overhauled while fuel lines, seals, gaskets, rubber accessories, wing struts, rivet joints, electrical wiring, tyres and tubes would be replaced. The final assembly of the aircraft will be done in Delhi and then it will require airworthiness certification by aviation regulators.

Bearing Tail No NH-631, the Mark-VIII version had arrived in India in February 1945 and after seeing service first with the British Royal Air Force and then with different Indian squadrons and the Maintenance Command, it was scrapped in 1950. According to aviation historians, it was recovered by Air Cmde Harjinder Singh, the first Indian "Hawai Sepoy", and flown to Ambala.

The aircraft was moved to the IAF museum in 1967 and was flown on ceremonial occasions, the last such flight being the Air Force Day parade in 1989. Thereafter, it made a few appearances on ground, being towed before the saluting dais. NH-631 has a sister aircraft that was among a lot sold as scrap by the Indian government, but is now flying in the US wearing British colours. In February 2003, a near-intact Spitfire that had crashed in May 1947 was recovered from a river bed near the Ambala airbase during digging work. The airframe was reconstructed and it has been on static display at the base.

MAIL TODAY

Thu, 24 May, 2018

Defence ministry rejects proposal to cede Indian coast guard to MHA

By Ajit Kumar Dubey

Against the backdrop of a committee of top police officials suggesting that the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) be brought under the home ministry, senior government officials said the proposal from the North Block has already been once rejected by the defence ministry which controls the coastal security agency.

"The home ministry had sent a letter to the defence ministry in 2016 demanding the Coast Guard be brought under it rather than being under the defence ministry, for better coordination with the marine and coastal police of state governments but the defence ministry had plainly rejected the proposal at that time," a senior government official told Mail Today.

The defence ministry at that that time had suggested that as the fourth armed force of the country, the coast guard was engaged in several other operations, including the protection and guarding of Exclusive Economic Zone, preventing the use of sea route by terrorists to carry terror attacks, searching and boarding of suspected vessels in sea and pollution control operations in and around the country's sea boundaries.

The defence ministry had also cited the need for a better coordination between the Navy and the Coast Guard under it for coastal security as a reason for not accepting the proposal from the home ministry. Sources said as the fourth armed force, the Coast Guard has been performing diplomatic roles for the country as it engages with global coast guards and plays an important role in defence ties with countries such as Japan and South Korea.

The force has also been playing an important role in checking the use of sea for smuggling of narcotics and use of sea route by terrorists on the Pakistan border as it recently caught a haul of drugs worth over `3,500 crore off the Gujarat coast and prevented a suspected terror boat from entering Indian waters.

Reports suggested that the home ministry is examining a report it got from the panel of directors general of police (DGPs) last year advocating reform in maritime security.

The paramilitary forces under the home ministry are headed by the Indian Police Service officers who join the force only as senior officers over which there is a lot of unease within the cadre officers as they stagnate at middle ranks due to lack of promotional opportunities.

Business Standard

Thu, 24 May, 2018

After Rafale splurge, a sensible Jaguar upgrade

By Ajai Shukla

The Indian Air Force (IAF), after being criticised for spending \$9.2 billion on 36 Rafale fighter aircraft, is closing in on a far more prudent deal — the rejuvenation of 80 ageing Jaguar fighters into highly capable, multi-role, combat aircraft for a mere \$1.5 billion or so.

This long-delayed project, which was resurrected last month, involves replacing the Jaguar's underpowered engines. Separately, the uprated fighter will get state-of-the-art avionics for striking ground targets more accurately, hitting maritime targets far out at sea, and winning aerial dogfights with enemy fighters.

For a decade, the Jaguar upgrade proposal has remained stalled on the issue of cost. Honeywell was made responsible for "re-engining" the Jaguar, and the US firm quoted an unacceptable \$2.5-3 billion for taking full responsibility for installing its new F-125IN engines in 80 Jaguars.

But now, breaking that logjam, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has been nominated the lead integrator, while Honeywell has stepped back to the more restricted role of engine supplier. HAL will buy F-125IN engines from Honeywell and install them in the Jaguars, replacing the current Rolls-Royce Adour 811 engines.

Hitting air pockets

- Of the 145 Jaguars that HAL built for the IAF, only 119 are currently flying, comprising six IAF squadrons of about 20 fighters each
- IAF pilots joke that the Jaguar's current engines are so underpowered that the fighter only gets airborne because the earth is round
- HAL chief, T Suvarna Raju, claims his company can do the job more easily, and cheaply, than Honeywell, having built more than 145 Jaguars under license over the years. "Installing the F-125IN requires 10-12 relatively minor modifications. HAL can handle this easily," he said.

"The earlier tender stands withdrawn. In its place, HAL will take a quote from Honeywell for its engines and, after adding its own expenses, submit a 'total project cost'. Based on that figure, the defence ministry will sanction the project. The contract will now be between the IAF and HAL," said Raju.

The HAL chief says there will be no time-consuming competitive tendering, since Honeywell is the only vendor. Rolls-Royce has declined to participate, since they do not have an engine that meets the IAF's specifications for the Jaguar.

Honeywell will require 36 months for the F-125IN engines to start rolling off the production line, but HAL wants to go ahead with engine integration, using two engines that Honeywell had built earlier when it was to have the lead role.

Raju says he recently travelled to Honeywell's facility in Phoenix, Arizona, to "ensure that we benefit from several years of work they have already done on integrating the F-125IN onto the Jaguar. We need to cut down on time and expense, and avoid re-inventing the wheel," he points out.

Besides building two F-125 engines, Honeywell also bought a Jaguar airframe from the UK. It remains to be seen whether the US firm will cooperate with HAL for mutual benefit, or demand financial compensation for the work it did earlier.

The first indicator, say defence ministry sources, will be the terms that Honeywell demands for supplying two engines to HAL – sale, rent, lease or gratis.

Of the 145 Jaguars that HAL built for the IAF, only 119 are currently flying, comprising six IAF squadrons of about 20 fighters each. Since 39 of these would complete their airframe lives by 2025-30, the IAF considers it uneconomical to re-engine these. That leaves 80 Jaguars, whose service lives would be extended to 2035-40 with new engines.

With each of those fighters requiring two engines, and an additional maintenance reserve of 40 engines, HAL would require 200 F-125IN engines from Honeywell. Aerospace industry experts estimate a price of \$5-6 million per engine, which would place Honeywell's bill at a little over a billion dollars. The remaining cost would be incurred in integrating the engines onto the fleet.

With engine supply starting only three years from the contract date, substantial numbers of re-engined Jaguars would probably materialise only after five years, i.e. around 2024. IAF pilots joke that the Jaguar's current engines are so underpowered that the fighter only gets airborne because the earth is round – and its curvature makes the ground drop away beneath the moving aircraft. With the Rolls-Royce Adour 811 engines output (25 kiloNewtons of dry thrust and 37.5 kN with afterburners) being replaced by the F-125IN (27.7 kN of dry thrust and 43.8kN with afterburners), Jaguar pilots believe they would have the last laugh.

Thu, 24 May, 2018

Indian-American Scientist Anita Sengupta is the brain behind NASA's latest project

NASA Cold Atom Laboratory (CAL) is now heading to the International Space Station (ISS) study what happen when atoms get really cold. The main brain behind this project is Indian American Scientist Anita Sengupta from 2012 to 2017 she managed and led the development of the laboratory, a laser-cooling quantum physics facility for the ISS.

Thu, 24 May, 2018

Uncertainty in Def Min over key appointments

By Manu Pubby

There is uncertainty in the defence ministry over several top-level appointments, with orders still awaited on key posts to be vacated by the end of this month. The Vice-Chief of Army Staff, the head of the Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Master General of Ordnance (MGO) are yet to be announced as the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has still not taken a call on the proposed names. Army Vice-Chief Lt Gen Sarath Chand is retiring by the end of this month. The officer was widely expected to be replaced by Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Devraj Anbu, but with just a week to go, official orders have not been issued yet. Former Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) Lt Gen Ranbir Singh — the Army's most visible face during the two surgical strikes in Myanmar and Pakistan occupied Kashmir — is expected to move to Udhampur to lead the critical Northern Command that is engaged in both the hinterland and on the borders. While the norm is to announce these appointments in advance to enable smooth handing and taking over of the command, orders are still awaited at the Army HQ. Also in question is whether Lt Gen Mukund Naravane, who heads the training command at Shimla, will be moved to an operational command. The officer is next in line for the post of Army chief after Gen Bipin Rawat retires next year.

The post of the Master General of Ordnance (MGO), who is in charge of major procurements including ammunition, clothing and special equipment for soldiers, has also been vacant since early May. While Major General BV Rao is officiating as MGO, a replacement is not expected till September, when the next officer chosen for the

post is relieved of a previous charge. A tussle is also on in DRDO, with current chief Selvin Christopher set to retire by May-end. He is already on a year's extension beyond the prescribed age and is believed to be gunning for another extension.

While a final decision on it is yet to be taken, two scientists — G Satheesh eddy, scientific advisor to the defence minister; and Sudhir Mishra, head of BrahMos Aerospace — are in the fray Also in question is whether Lt Gen Mukund Naravane, who heads the training command at Shimla, will be moved to an operational command Army Vice Chief Lt Gen Sarath Chand is retiring by the end of this month to replace Selvin Christopher. As the deadline approaches, it seems, the government is still negotiating, with key stakeholders yet to reach an understanding on some of the critical proposals.

Sail to glory



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets the Indian Navy's six-member all-women crew of INSV-Tarini, who circumnavigated the globe in over eight months, in New Delhi, on Wednesday. Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba is also seen. The crew members arrived in Goa on Monday after completing their tour. **PH**