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Navy's war games on 'tactical pause'

Tropex is the biggest war games that the Navy conducts and it involves the participation of the Army and Air Force as well

By Manu Pubby

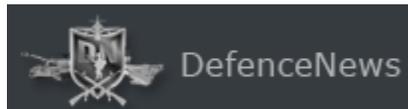
Indian Navy has put its war games, Theatre-Level Operational Readiness Exercise (Tropex), on “tactical pause” for the time being. It is assessing the results obtained from the first phase of the largest naval exercise, which involved all maritime stakeholders including the coastal authorities.

Tropex was to be conducted from January-end to early March, with the participation of over 70 warships and combat aircraft. However, there has been little official word on the exercise since the first phase that happened in late January. ET has learnt that at least some scheduled events have either been delayed or put off for now.

While there was speculation that the exercise was called off in the Pulwama aftermath, officials said that Tropex, which happens on both the eastern and western coasts, would begin after a “tactical pause.” Government sources insisted that the exercise will be happen as per schedule and the second phase will commence soon. Sources explained that during routine “tactical pause”, all participating warships are spread on the high seas and go silent for a few days before regrouping for the final phase of a simulated naval battle. All operational ships, submarines and aircraft participate in this exercise.

Tropex is the biggest war games that the Navy conducts and it involves the participation of the Army and Air Force as well. The purpose is to test integrated tri-services capabilities. Tropex is expected to provide realistic assessment of the strengths and weakness of the coastal defence and has been conducted to evaluate changes made since 26/11.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/navys-war-games-on-tactical-pause/articleshow/68162668.cms>



Sun, 24 Feb 2019

Tata Aerospace & Defence, Airbus await contract to manufacture 56 aircraft

By Ajai Shukla

Bengaluru: An unusual sight in Bengaluru, the Portuguese Air Force Airbus C295 transporter shuddered as the pilot revved its twin turboprops to maximum. As he released the brakes, the plane shot forward, accelerating down the runway almost like a fighter, lifting off in just 700 metres and climbing rapidly to mission altitude. On board the aircraft, which was displayed at Aero India 2019, Business Standard was shown its multiple mission capability – the ability to transport 71 people, lift 7.25 tonnes of cargo or monitor the sea for 11 hours non-stop, using sophisticated radar and infra-red scanners.

Descending in tight turns to the Indian Air Force (IAF) base at Yelahanka, the C295 rolled to a stop just 350 metres after touching down.

This is the medium transport aircraft Tata Aerospace & Defence (Tata A&D) is slated to build in India, as part of the Ministry of Defence’s (MoD’s) intention to develop a private sector rival to

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL). At the on-going Aero India 2019 show, both Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and IAF boss, Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, singled out the C295 for mention as one of the transformative projects in the pipeline.

Yet, paradoxically, there is only glacial movement towards awarding a contract. Six years after issuing a tender and five years since Airbus submitted a bid to build the C295 in partnership with Tata A&D, the cost negotiation committee (CNC) is only now finalizing its report. With the cabinet required to okay the approximately Rs 12,000 crore contract, the looming elections and a cash crunch stand in the way of an early clearance.

Other hurdles stand in the way of this procurement of 56 aircraft to replace the IAF's venerable HS-748 Avros. First amongst them is HAL's initiative to extend the life of the Avro, by replacing its old Rolls-Royce Dart engines and modernizing its cockpit and avionics. HAL chief, R Madhavan told Business Standard last month: "Only one-third of the Avro's structural life of 100,000 hours has been used. With a new engine, the Avro can remain in service for a long time."

To create a prototype, HAL is spending Rs 50 crore to upgrade its own Avro aircraft, with new engines and a glass cockpit.

Another dilemma is the offer – made by Ukraine to Dhanoa during Aero India 2019 – of the new Antonov -132, an aircraft in the same class as the C295, which the Ukrainian firm has developed in partnership with Saudi Arabia Military Industries (SAMI).

The Antonov-132 on display at Aero India 2019

Antonov did not respond to the Avro-replacement tender because it was facing a crisis with the Russian annexation of the Crimea, but repeatedly asked for a bidding extension. With Ukraine now resuming the upgrade of the IAF's An-32 fleet, it could exercise some leverage.

The third hurdle is the difficult terms of the Avro-replacement RFP. Of the 56 aircraft, Airbus is required to supply the first 16 C295s in flyaway condition from its plant in Sevilla, Spain. That is to be followed by eight C295s built by Tata from semi-knocked down (SKD) kits; and then another eight from completely-knocked down (CKD) kits. Then, Tata A&D must build the remaining 24 in India, indigenizing the sourcing of assemblies and sub-assemblies. Given the large number of aircraft being supplied fully built and in kits, meeting the 50 per cent indigenization requirement will be a challenge.

Airbus, however, is confident of meeting the indigenization requirements. Its senior executives anticipate India will order more C295s for its military and central armed police forces (CAPFs), which, after Pulwama, have already spoken about moving a larger share of troopers by air.

Airbus also cites the reactivation of advanced landing grounds (ALGs) in the border areas, which would create a requirement of rugged aircraft like the C295 to operate off them, including for the UDAN programme. The Airbus-Tata bid is currently being processed as a single-vendor procurement, for which MoD sanction has been obtained. In 2013, tenders had been sent out to US firms Boeing and Lockheed Martin, Antonov; Swedish company Saab; Ilyushin of Russia; and Italian company, Alenia Aeromacchi, besides Airbus Defence & Space. However, for various reasons, such as not having an aircraft with the specifications that the IAF wanted, only Airbus responded.

While the IAF already operates a large fleet of AN-32s (which are being upgraded), the ageing IL-76 and new C-130J Super Hercules and C-17 Globemaster IIIs, there is a need for more utility and transport aircraft, not just for tactical use but also for disaster relief and emergencies.

There is also an awareness of a shortfall in military airlift capability with the falling through of the Indo-Russian project to jointly developing and build a new "Multi-role Transport Aircraft (MTA)."

Airbus and Tata executives anticipate employing about 2,500 workers on the C295 line and 8,000 more in Tier-1, Tier-2 and Tier-3 suppliers.

<http://www.defencenews.in/article/Tata-Aerospace-and-Defence,-Airbus-await-contract-to-manufacture-56-aircraft-583282>

Mighty space programme

*Every passing week, our space programme cracks another milestone.
Interstellar achievements make us proud*

On March 21, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch the PSLV-C45 mission that will release 30 payloads into three different orbits. If this launch is successful, as it should be, India's space programme will have yet another feather in its cap, much to the chagrin of some other more economically developed nations and, notably, our former coloniser, the United Kingdom, some of whose newspapers cannot bear the fact that their rocket programme is limited to some amateur hobbyists. India's space mission is by far and away this nation's most significant scientific achievement with a remarkable ability to keep costs down. In fact, the success of the space programme makes one wonder how India has failed so spectacularly in so many other home-grown research and development endeavours such as developing a fighter jet.



As the private sector starts involving itself more in the research and development space, it should take lessons from ISRO's success. All of it has come thanks to the abilities of Indian-trained engineers and scientists. One should also look at the remarkable gender diversity in ISRO's corps of rocket engineers. Not only should private companies spend a bit of effort in attracting women to such male-dominated fields but the success of India's women rocketeers should be used by the Government to spur more women to sign up for scientific fields. A greater gender diversity in science can lead to remarkable innovation and success as has been demonstrated by ISRO. The space agency's success is also evidence of what can be achieved when there is a clear vision and policy plan spanning decades and administrations with minimal political interference.

Once upon a time, India's space programme was a laughing stock as our rockets kept on blowing up and we needed to subcontract satellite launches to Russia, the US and Europe. But our scientists persevered till we had some amazing successes such as sending probes to the Moon and Mars. Now we will be sending an Indian into the orbit on an Indian rocket. In fact, India is progressing on manned launches while many other nations are scaling back their space programmes. For example, the US currently does not have a manned programme although we could all learn lessons from America's innovative involvement of the private sector with Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezo's Blue Origin. Onward and upward we are moving.

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2019/columnists/mighty-space-programme.html>

Russian embassy to train students here for space missions

REPRESENTATIONAL PIC



The Russian embassy also shared its vision on providing industrial training to Indian students in aviation sector.

By **Mail Today Bureau**
in New Delhi

THE Russian Embassy on Monday shared its vision to provide industrial training to Indian students in aviation sector.

In a bid to boost ties with India, the Russian Embassy announced that it will train the Indian students to participate in space missions.

Addressing the media, the Rector of Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI), Mikhail Pogosyan said, "MAI is engaged in all major partnership projects. Since the foundation of MAI, more than 1,60,000 professionals have been graduated. More than 70 per cent of MAI graduates work for industry-based corporations. MAI holds the record among universities in the number of graduates who have become space and test pilots. There are 23 pilot-cosmonaut who have spent more than 15 years performing space missions".

The Rector shared that as many as 65 spacewalks have been carried out since the inception of the Moscow Aviation Institute.

He further said, "India represents a great potential in terms of development of relations over the joint scientific research projects.

Over the past few years, the number of students from India has been increased by three times. There are several English-speaking programs at MAI. As part of the project for the export of Russian engineering education, we believe that this trend is a positive result and confirms the correctness of the selected direction of activity. In a view of the large potential, we are ready to invest and enhance their presence in the Indian market."

Since the foundation of MAI, more than 1,60,000 professionals have been graduated.

— MIKHAIL POGOSYAN,
RECTOR OF MAI

The Rector shared that as many as 65 spacewalks have been carried out since the inception of MAI

Pogosyan, who is also the former Director of Sukhoi and United Aircraft Corporation said, "Given the current status of industrial cooperation in the field of military aviation and rocket building, and at the same time looking into the future, we are sure that the need for India in the preparation and improvement of the qualifications of national frames will increase."

Talking about the scientific activities at the Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI), Pogoyan said, "We are emphasizing that our educational institution is not just the leading aerospace university of Russia. It has the official status of the National Research University. The MAI has the appropriate material base and human potential in the face of known scientists and researchers. MAI has progressive and sometimes unique competences in the widest areas of activity related to the development and production of aircraft."

MAI cooperates with leading Russian and foreign industry-based corporations such as COMAC, ENAC, Safran, BrahMos Aerospace, HAL, PJSC "United Aircraft Corporation", Roscosmos and Rostec.