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Fighter Aircraft Tejas Set For Final Induction: Defence Research Body

"LCA Tejas and Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&CS) are on final induction after going through all the tests," said DRDO Chairman G Satheesh Reddy in a radio interview.

BENGALURU:

The indigenously developed and built Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas is on final induction after going through all the tests, said a top official on Monday.

"LCA Tejas and Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&CS) are on final induction after going through all the tests," said DRDO Chairman G Satheesh Reddy in a radio interview.

Celebrating the "DRDO Day", Mr Reddy told state-run All India Radio (AIR) that the state-run Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was set up 60 years ago in 1958 with 10 labs to enhance research work in the defence sector.

"Though the country is self-reliant in missiles, radars, Sonars, torpedoes and other systems, the DRDO has been working over the years to develop state-of-the-art weapon system for the armed forces," said Reddy.

Designed and developed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and built by the state-run defence aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), Tejas is a supersonic fourth generation fighter for induction in the Indian Air Force (IAF) fleet and its variant in the Indian Navy.

Pending Final Operational Clearance (FOC) for its weaponised version, the IAF formed the first Tejas unit - No. 45 Squadron IAF "Flying Daggers" -- on July 1, 2016 with two aircraft.

The DRDO is building six next generation AEW&CS on the Airbus platform to enhance surveillance and detection with longer range and complete view for the IAF.

The platform will have 300-km-long range and 360-degree angle of coverage as against 200-km range and 240-degree angle of the AEW&CS the DRDO built on the Brazilian Embraer-145 modified jet for the IAF in the past.

Over the years, the state-run organisation grew multi-directionally in terms of subject disciplines, number of laboratories, achievements and stature.

"Presently, over 50 labs are engaged in developing defence technologies covering aeronautics, armaments, electronics, combat vehicles, engineering systems, instrumentation, missiles, advanced computing and simulation," said DRDO in its web site.

With about 5,000 scientists and 25,000 supporting staff, the behemoth has executed major projects to develop missiles, armaments, LCAs, radars and electronic warfare systems.

Defence spend up in absolute terms, down percentage-wise

Giving numbers in Parliament on budgetary spending, the Ministry of Defence has admitted that the defence expenditure, as per percentage of the central government expenditure, has fallen, although it has gone up in absolute terms.

The defence expenditure, including pension, is budgeted at Rs 3,80,690 crore for the current fiscal. This is 17.16 per cent of the Central Government expenditure for the year. There has been a drop over the last year's figure when defence consumed 19.11 per cent of all expenses and was budgeted at Rs 3,77,542 crore. In other words, the government added in rupee-terms for this year's budget, but the ratio vis-à-vis total expenditure is down by 2 per cent.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha yesterday, Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhambre said "projections made by the Services are forwarded to the Ministry of Finance. Based on the overall resource position, funds are allocated".

The MoD also informed that Capital Expenditure—meant for new projects—had gone up in absolute terms over the past few years.

Year	Defence Expenditure*	Total Central Govt expenditure (Actuals)	Def. Exp % of CGE
2014-15	2,85,103.95	16,63,673	17.13
2015-16	2,94,054.93	17,90,783	16.42
2016-17	3,77,542.01	19,75,194	19.11
2017-18	3,80,690.97	22,17,750	17.16

(₹ IN CRORES) *INCLUDING DEFENCE PENSION

Defence Capital expenditure is maintained around 34 per cent of the total allocations under the Defence Services estimates, which are Rs 2,79,305 crore (this figures is minus the pensions) for the current fiscal.

The allocated Capital budget has been fully utilised since 2016-17, reversing the previous trend, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

Ordnance Factory Board gets new Chairman and DGOF

Kolkata: Saurabh Kumar took over as Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) and chairman, Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), from P K Shrivastava in Kolkata on Monday. An MTech from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, Kumar is an expert in the manufacture of ordnance and was on deputation to the Ministry of Defence as Director of Planning and Coordination between 2002 and 2009. During this period, he was involved in drafting the Indian offset policy for defence purchases and the 'Make' procedure in the Defence Procurement Procedure of 2003-04, which incorporated the recommendations of the Arun Singh Committee.

"The DGOF was also instrumental in piloting the proposals and obtaining the approval of the government for setting up two new greenfield ordnance factories at Nalanda in Bihar and Korwa in Uttar Pradesh. As general manager of the engine factory at Avadi (2012-13), he was involved in operationalising the project and initiating an indigenization programme that culminated in the handing over of fully indigenous engines

of T-90 'Bhishma' and T-72 'Ajeya' tanks to the defence minister in July 2018. The DGOF's tenure saw the establishment of the vendor base that led to this achievement. There was a dramatic increase in production of new engines by 30% during his tenure," a senior OFB official said.

As GM of Ordnance Factory Ambajhari, near Nagpur in Maharashtra, Kumar spearheaded the modernization programme that included induction of robotic forging technology, new generation CNC machines and predictive maintenance which not only increased productivity and quality but also led to the successful production of 'Pinaka' rockets. Before taking over as DGOF and chairman, OFB, Kumar was a member of the Board looking after the ammunition and explosive group of factories.



Wed, 02 Jan 2019

Indian, Chinese troops hold border meetings in Ladakh

To celebrate New Year, Indian and Chinese armies held two ceremonial border personnel meetings (BPMs) at Chushul-Moldo and Daulat Beg Oldi-TWD meeting points in eastern Ladakh.

The meetings were organised on the invitation of the People's Liberation Army, China.

The Indian delegation was led by Maj Gen Sanjiv Rai and Col SS Lamba and the Chinese delegation by Senior Col Liu Hou Jie and Col Song Zhang Li. Giving details, a Northern Command spokesman said the ceremonial meetings commenced with the delegation members saluting the national flags. "This was followed by the ceremonial address comprising of exchange of greetings, wishes and vote of thanks. The address reflected the mutual desire of maintaining and improving relations at functional level at the border," he said.

Thereafter, a programme showcasing Chinese culture and traditions was organised, the spokesman added.

The ceremonial BPMs were held in the backdrop of successful conduct of exercise at Chengdu in China wherein troops of both the countries interacted, participated in joint exercises and shared experiences. The spokesman said both the delegations interacted in a free, congenial and cordial environment. "The delegations parted amid feeling of friendship and commitment towards enhancing the existing cordial relations and maintaining peace along the border. Both sides also sought to build on the mutual feeling to maintain peace and tranquillity along the border," he said.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/indian-chinese-troops-hold-border-meetings-in-ladakh/707314.html>



Wed, 02 Jan 2019

ISRO's new station in Bhutan to counter China's Tibet facility

India is setting up a satellite tracking and data reception centre in the Himalayan state of Bhutan that will also strategically serve to counter a similar Chinese facility in the region. The Indian Space Research Organisation's ground station in Bhutan is likely to double up as "a strategic asset" for the country, given its location between India and China, people aware of the matter told ET.

China has established an advanced satellite tracking centre and astronomical observatory at Ngari in Tibet Autonomous Region, about 125 km away from the Line of Actual Control, which serves as the de-facto

border between India and China. The facility in Tibet is so advanced that apart from tracking Indian satellites, it can also “blind” them, the people said. Although ISRO’s ground station in Bhutan is intended to help the Himalayan state take advantage of the South Asia Satellite, it is also India’s way of counterbalancing the Chinese station in Tibet.

This strategy is significant in the backdrop of the Doklam crisis, when the Chinese tried to construct a road at a tri-junction between India, Bhutan and China. Bhutan stood firmly with India during the 72-day face-off between the Indian army and the Chinese People’s Liberation Army at Doklam in western Bhutan in June-August, 2017. At the PM-level talks here last Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said construction of the ISRO ground station in Bhutan would be completed soon.

“Space science is the new dimension of our cooperation (with Bhutan),” he said in a statement after meeting new Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering. “With the completion of this project, Bhutan will get help in tasks such as weather information, tele-medicine and disaster relief in the far-flung areas of the country.” ISRO launched the South Asia Satellite on May 5, 2017. Modi had in 2014 mooted the idea of a satellite for members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation so that India could share the benefits of advances in space technology with its South Asian neighbours. India also pledged Rs 4,500 crore as assistance to Bhutan to support the Himalayan state’s 12th five-year plan for development.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Wed, 02 Jan 2019

NASA probe believed to have passed distant space rock on landmark mission

The body is farther from Earth than any other that has had such a close encounter with a NASA probe, scientists believe

A NASA explorer is believed to have reached the solar system’s outermost region early Tuesday morning, flying close to a space rock 20 miles long and billions of miles from Earth on a mission to gather clues about the creation of the solar system.

The body is farther from Earth than any other that has had such a close encounter with a NASA probe, scientists believe.

The New Horizons probe was slated to reach the “third zone” in the uncharted heart of the Kuiper Belt at 12:33 a.m. Eastern. Scientists will not have confirmation of its successful arrival until the probe communicates its whereabouts through NASA’s Deep Space Network at 10:28 a.m. Eastern, about 10 hours later.

Once it enters the peripheral layer of the belt, containing icy bodies and leftover fragments from the solar system’s creation, the probe will get its first close-up glance of Ultima Thule, a cool mass shaped like a giant peanut, using seven on-board instruments.

Scientists had not discovered Ultima Thule when the probe was launched, according to NASA, making the mission unique in that respect. In 2014, astronomers found Thule using the Hubble Space Telescope and selected it for New Horizon’s extended mission in 2015.

“Anything’s possible out there in this very unknown region,” John Spencer, deputy project scientist for New Horizons, told reporters on Monday at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Maryland.

Launched in January 2006, New Horizons embarked on a 4 billion mile journey toward the solar system’s frigid edge to study the dwarf planet Pluto and its five moons.

During a 2015 fly-by, the probe found Pluto to be slightly larger than previously thought. In March, it revealed that methane-rich dunes were on the icy dwarf planet’s surface.

After trekking 1 billion miles beyond Pluto into the Kuiper Belt, New Horizons will now seek clues about the formation of the solar system and its planets.

As the probe flies 2,200 miles (3,500 km) above Thule's surface, scientists hope it will detect the chemical composition of its atmosphere and terrain in what NASA says will be the closest observation of a body so remote.

"We are straining the capabilities of this spacecraft, and by tomorrow we'll know how we did," New Horizons principal investigator Alan Stern said during the news conference at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Maryland. "There are no second chances for New Horizons."

While the mission marks the farthest close-encounter of an object within our solar system, NASA's Voyager 1 and 2, a pair of deep space probes launched in 1977, have reached greater distances on a mission to survey extra solar bodies. Both probes are still operational.