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Get ready to watch the maiden flight of LCA's naval variant this July - Details under Current Affairs

READER'S RESPONSE

The editorial team invites your views, suggestions, to the News about Members Column and contributions to the e-news.

Scientists struggle with IJT, Saras; but LCA is a ray of hope

The crash of the Intermediate Jet Trainer (IJT) has brought to light the complex situation the Indian aerospace community finds itself in. How is it that Indian aero-scientists and the IAF have been able to develop a highly complex aircraft and trainer in the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) to Initial Operational Clearance, without a single crash, but are struggling to develop an intermediate version of a military aircraft trainer, the IJT, and the first indigenous civil aircraft, Saras? The IJT crash and NAL's indigenous Saras crash in March 2009, which killed three pilots, pose a serious challenge to the aerospace community in building an indigenous intermediate military trainer aircraft on the one hand, and an indigenous civil aircraft, on the other. In between, LCA has emerged as a beacon of hope.

Source: *Times of India*

Get ready to watch the maiden flight of LCA's naval variant this July

The maiden flight of the naval variant of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) will take to the skies in July, exactly a year after it rolled out from the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL's) Aircraft Research and Design Centre hangar in Bangalore. "We would be conducting the first flight of the LCA Naval Prototype-1 (NP1) - a trainer aircraft — in July. The aircraft is currently undergoing a series of ground tests, and preparations are on for the flight certification which is mandatory before the first flight," said Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief controller R&D (Aeronautics and Service Interaction), Dr Prahlada. He said all agencies involved in the programme, like the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), HAL and the certifying agencies including Center for Military Airworthiness & Certification (CEMILAC) and Director General of Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA), are extremely cautious about ensuring that the first flight is carried out without any hassles. "Being the first flight of the LCA naval programme we are extremely careful. We want to ensure that everything is put in place before the first flight and that the programme is as successful as the Indian Air Force (IAF) version which has had no accidents since it started flight tests on January 4, 2001," he said.

Source: *DNA*

Civil Aviation Sector is a Victim of Myopic Policy Outlook

The centenary celebration of civil aviation in India has hit a major air pocket and the ministry continues to be in news for all the wrong reasons. First, there was an abrupt change at the top. Mr Praful Patel, who headed the ministry for more than six years, was replaced by Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Mr Vayalar Ravi. Possibly with an eye on the Kerala elections, Mr Ravi was given 'additional charge', forcing one to think if it was ever meant to be an additional charge. The second controversy is that of fake licenses pilots obtaining flying licenses on forged mark sheets and flying clubs logging non flown hours for commercial licenses. The third is the seemingly rightful defiance of the airlines to accept the newly notified Ground Handling Policy at the six metros for which the Federation of Indian Airlines moved the Supreme Court with an appeal justifying their claim for self-handling. The

last, of course, is the ever-sinking national carrier, Air India, where the pilots are on a massive strike.

Source: *Indian Express*

Pawan Hans to start academy in 6 months

Pune is set to get a helicopter training centre with Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited (PHHL) announcing their first chopper training academy in the city. The MoU signed in February and the training institute is likely to be fully operational in another six months and will have Maintenance Repair Operations unit and related activities. On April 11, Pawan Hans got the Mini Ratna status. "We are on the fast track to come up with this centre," said Pawan Hans Chairman and Managing Director RK Tyagi. He said that they would help not only Pawan Hans helicopters but also other operators and look at training personnel once the institute comes up. The upcoming academy finds a key mention in the ministry of civil aviation's five-year strategic plan (2010-15) and has been positioned as one of the important centres along with the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udaan Academy and the National Institute of Aviation Management and Research for rolling out world class human resource for the aviation industry.

Source: *Indian Express*

DGCA Mulls Exam Reforms For Pilots

To put the Indian skies in safer hands, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation ((DGCA) is set to reform the examination system for pilots by making it online, even as a fake pilot licence scam rocked the aviation sector in the last few weeks. "Examination reforms for pilots are very much on the anvil. We are planning to introduce online examinations soon," Director General, DGCA Mr E K Bharat Bhushan told reporters here on the sidelines of an industry conference. This new system is likely to be in place during July-August this year. Since the current syllabus for commercial pilot license is not well structured, the DGCA is also studying the possibility of publishing a detailed question bank.

Source: *Indian Express*

ISRO happy with satellite performance

ISRO has expressed its satisfaction with the performance of all the three satellites launched on board the PSLV C16 on April 20. A press release from ISRO said that the three satellites Resourcesat 2, Youthsat and XSat were placed in the targeted orbits with high precision. "With the precise injection of the Resourcesat 2, about 20 kg of the fuel allocated for the probable dispersions in injection could be saved. This would help in enhancing the operational life of the satellite," the release stated. The health checks on all the three imaging cameras aboard the Resourcesat have been completed and operation of the imaging cameras is scheduled to commence on April 28. The first imaging pass on April 28 is expected to cover about 3,000 km stretch of Indian landmass from Joshi mutt in Uttarakhand to Kannur in Kerala.

Source: *Deccan Herald*

PSLV rocket puts 3 satellites into orbit

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) reaffirmed the country's remote sensing capabilities when its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C-16 soared towards the heavens to place in orbit Resourcesat-2 and two other satellites from the space port. In a perfect take-off, the 44.4 metres tall PSLV-C16 with a liftoff mass of 1,404 kg roared skywards at 10:12 am from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) here, simultaneously lifting the space body's morale. After nearly 18 minutes of a smooth trajectory in its 17th consecutively successful flight, the PSLV-C16 with three satellites on board, neatly spun them into the desired 822-km Polar Sun Synchronous Orbit. The payloads were ISRO's 1,206 kg weighing latest remote sensing satellite, RESOURCESAT-2 and two auxiliary ones, the 92 kg Indo-Russian YOUTHSAT and the Singapore-made XSAT weighing 106 kg. An unusually large number of people had flocked to the spaceport since early hours to witness the rocket launch. Heralding its success even before the event, a group of ISRO staffers and their family held aloft the national flag from atop a nearby building, as they anxiously saw PSLV-C16 go up majestically spewing reddish-orange fumes.

Source: *Deccan Herald*

Want to go to space? Contact IAM

India's ambitious Human Space Flight mission might be a good five years away. But at the Indian Air Force's Institute of Aerospace Medicine (IAM) preparations are already underway to screen and select astronauts for the mission. The Bangalore-based IAM, which is the hub of aerospace medicine activity in India, has already started upgrading its laboratories at the institute apart from conducting research activities for the country's maiden Human Space Flight mission which is expected to take place in 2015-16. "Being the only institute in the country which has been carrying out extensive aerospace medicine activities in the country IAM has a vast knowledge about the effect of space on humans. Being a critical mission due to the involvement of the human element we are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that the selection and training of the prospective astronauts is carried out by putting in place the best practices," said the Commandant of IAM Air Commodore Giles Gomez.

Source: *DNA*

Design flaw behind GSLV crash

Design deficiency in the shroud (cover) at the bottom of the cryogenic stage has been identified as the primary factor in the crash of Isro's Geo-Synchronous Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F06) flight on December 25, 2010, over the Bay of Bengal. A report on this has been submitted to the department of space. The cover at the bottom of the cryogenic stage could not withstand load and pressure distribution that built up as the flight took off and caused the "pulling out" of the connectors between the onboard computer in the equipment bay and four strap-ons on the first stage, aborting a signal to the strap-ons, ultimately leading to altitude dip and crash, failure analysis committee chairman and former ISRO chairman DR G Madhavan Nair told *The Times of India*. "There is a need for correction in the design of the shroud. The shroud at the bottom of the cryogenic stage did not fulfil all service conditions during

the flight, as a result of which the connectors linked to the shroud snapped. The connectors were linked to the shroud."

Source: *Times of India*

Govt should develop aviation infrastructure in hinterlands

As efforts are on to develop non-metro airports, a top global aviation expert has said the government should take the lead in developing aviation infrastructure in Tier-II and Tier-III cities with the private sector pitching in to provide commercial support. "One way to mitigate the risk (of private investment in non-metro airports) is that the government provides basic infrastructure like airfields and terminal buildings. It is only then that private sector can come in to provide for commercial activities," Angela Gittens, Director General of the Airports Council International (ACI), told PTI. "You should not expect private parties to come up and invest in such areas. There should be a balanced approach," said the head of the global airports' body with 586 operators as its members. She said the government should play a role in growing these hinterland markets by providing land, runways, taxiways and other basic infrastructure.

Source: *Economic Times*

New DGCA rules may hike demand for pilots

India's aviation sector could face shortages of pilots and higher air fares once the country's civil aviation regulator goes ahead with new rules aimed at reducing daily flying hours for pilots. There could be renewed demand for expatriate pilots. India's civil aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), recently announced new rules governing duty time for pilots. According to DGCA director general, EK Bharat Bhushan, his office has sought the opinion of airlines and other stakeholders on the new rules and will also await approval from the civil aviation ministry. The ministry has formed a committee headed by the secretary (aviation), which is expected to soon issue notification in this regard. Secretary (aviation), SNK Zaidi, did mention at a news conference last week that the new rules were likely to be implemented by June.

Source: *domain-b.com*

DRDO laboratory's new facility inaugurated

Dr Vijay K. Saraswat, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, inaugurated the J.C. Bose Microwave Tube Facility at the Microwave Tube Research and Development Centre. The centre is a constituent laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and carries out frontline research on microwave tubes for defence applications of radars and electronic warfare systems. It is co-located at BEL, Bangalore, for synergistic

research and development, and productionisation, said a release from DRDO. The J.C. Bose facility is an integrated microwave tube development unit that houses state-of-the-art precision fabrication . . . machineries, high-voltage test facilities, environment test facilities, high-power microwave generation and diagnostics facilities.

Source: *Hindu*

New ISRO facility to test satellites

A new nitrogen-based acoustic test facility for satellites has been inaugurated at ISRO's ISITE testing complex in Bangalore, according to a release from National Aerospace Laboratories. A large number of qualifying tests on satellites can be now done under one roof at ISITE, it said. NAL was chosen in 2007 to design, build, operate and maintain the new facility, the ninth such in the world. The CSIR lab also hosted ISRO's older test facility at its second campus in Bangalore. The ISITE Acoustic Test Facility at Kundanahalli is also close to the ISRO Satellite Centre which builds spacecraft. The ISRO Chairman, Dr K. Radhakrishnan, inaugurated the facility. The release said satellites are launched at very high velocity.

Source: *Hindu Business Line*

ISRO to set up several new critical facilities

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is enhancing its capabilities by setting up more than half a dozen critical facilities across its installations, even as it is targeting to nearly double its transponder capacity over the next one-and-a-half years. However, ISRO chairman Dr K.

Radhakrishnan, who announced setting up of the facilities at a press conference here, declined to provide details of the investments.

They include a hypersonic wind tunnel to study re-entry and a plasma wind tunnel to study the behaviour of materials at high speed, which would be set up at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Trivandrum.

A thrust chamber testing facility for high-thrust cryogenic engines will be set up at Mahendragiri, and a new mission control centre to look at multiple mission preparations simultaneously will come up at Sriharikota.

A national database for emergency management and a multi-mission earth observation centre for satellites will be set up at Hyderabad, besides an advanced research and development centre for spacecrafts to come up on 530 acres in the Science City at Chitradurga.

New chairman for Antrix

Antrix, the marketing arm of ISRO, which was in news over the allotment of the orbit slot in the S band to Devas Multimedia, will get a new chairman and managing director within a month.

Meanwhile, Dr. Radhakrishnan said the first batch of 150 students from the Space Institute in Trivandrum will pass out in June/July and will join the ISRO shortly.

Source: *THE HINDU*

Kaveri engine completes tests in Russia

The India-made aircraft engine Kaveri has successfully completed its first phase of testing at a Russian centre, in a step towards its operationalisation on the indigenous fighter jets. The engine, integrated on a Russian IL-76 transporter at the Gromov Flight Research Institute in Russia, completed its 11 trials of over 20 hours till April, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) said. "Kaveri engine was integrated with IL-76 aircraft, which is a well established flying test bed for engines. Eleven flight tests for about 20 hours duration have been completed till April," the DRDO said. Kaveri was one of four engines on the flying test bed platform. It was flight tested for up to 12 km maximum altitude and a maximum forward speed of 0.7 Mach (0.7 seven times the speed of sound) and engine performance under different operating conditions. "With this, the first phase of Kaveri engine flying test bed trials completed successfully," a DRDO statement said.

Source: *News One*

China succeeds in its largest unmanned helicopter's first flight

An unmanned helicopter, the largest of its kind in China, successfully completed its first flight in Weifang City of east China's Shandong Province. The medium-sized unmanned

helicopter, with a maximum takeoff weight of 757 kg, departed from the flight-test centre of Wefang Tianxiang Aerospace Industry Co.Ltd in the morning and hovered for ten minutes, performing a few maneuvers before finishing with a stable landing. The helicopter, model number "V750", has a load capacity of over 80 kg. It can fly a maximum speed of 161 km per hour with a cruising duration of over four hours. The aircraft can be controlled by humans within a distance of over 150 km or automatically fly following input by its programs. Further, it could be used in surveillance, search and rescue, and scientific exploration in both military and civilian purposes, said Mr Cheng Shenzong, Chairman of the Wefang Tianxiang Aerospace Industry Co.Ltd.

Source: *news.xinhuanet.com*

ISRO's new supercomp is India's fastest

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has built a supercomputer, which is India's fastest supercomputer in terms of theoretical peak performance of 220 TeraFlops (220 Trillion Floating Point Operations per second). The supercomputing facility named Dr Satish Dhawan Supercomputing Facility is located at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram. The new Graphic

Processing Unit (GPU) based supercomputer named 'SAGA-220' (Supercomputer for Aerospace with GPU Architecture-220 TeraFlops) is being used by space scientists to solve complex aerospace problems. The SAGA-220 was inaugurated by Dr K Radhakrishnan, chairman, ISRO, at VSSC.

Source: *Times of India*

India eyes solar-powered UAVs

After launching development of stealth UCAVs (Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles), India is now also looking at designing solar-powered spy drones which can cruise in the sky for several days at a time. The High-Altitude, Long Endurance (HALE) solar powered UAV will not just reduce Indian military's carbon footprint but more importantly provide a cost-effective and flexible 24X7 ISTAR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) platform akin to "a pseudo satellite" orbiting closer to the ground. "Yes, Army and IAF have asked us to develop the solar powered HALE UAV. Initial work is in progress for such a drone which can undertake a 15-day continuous flight over 30,000-feet," DRDO's chief controller R&D (aeronautics) Dr Prahlada told TOI.

Source: *Times of India*

ISRO plans joint moon mission with NASA

Another dimension to the "moon mission" may open up as Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning a joint mission with United States' National Aeronautics Space Administration's (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) to collect samples from the moon. "This (project) is in the planning phase, alongside India's lunar mission programme activities centered around 'Chandrayaan II,'" ISRO Chairman Dr K Radhakrishnan told a news conference here after the successful launch of PSLV-C16 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, 100 km North of Chennai. NASA is planning to execute this mission in the year 2016, while the ISRO will provide the "communicating orbiter" of the project, besides chipping in with a few scientific instruments, he said. That will be called the "Moon rise Mission." Stating that the Rs 462-crore "Chandrayaan II" project activities were progressing well, Dr Radhakrishnan said as of now it is planned for 2013-14. It will be launched on board "Geo synchronous

Satellite Launch Vehicle"(GSLV). The mission orbiter and rover are the Indian components to this joint programme with Russia, he noted.

Source: *Deccan Herald*

IAF fighters to have on board oxygen generation system

Indian Air Force (IAF) fighters would soon be equipped with special gadgets for production of oxygen while in the air that will enable them to be airborne for longer period and carry extra payload, marking India's entry into an elite club of forces. Developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the On Board Oxygen Generation System (OBOGS) produces oxygen inside the aircraft, allowing the pilots to fly without the help of heavy oxygen cylinders they carry for high altitudes and long duration sorties. "Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has started the ground integration process of OBOGS in the Technology Demonstrator (TD) version of the LCAMark-II. After LCA it will be integrated in all the frontline aircraft of the IAF," Mr W Selvamurthy, Chief Controller, Life Science, DRDO, told PTI. LCA Mark-II is expected to join the IAF by 2015. DRDO has approved Larsen and Toubro (L&T) as the industrial partner in further development of the technology and its production. So far only three countries- United States, Russia and France- have successfully integrated the OBOGS technology in its air force.

Source: *IBNLive*

India quietly begins combat drone project

India is quietly going ahead with an ambitious programme to develop its own stealth UCAVs (Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles) or 'smart' drones capable of firing missiles and bombs at enemy targets with precision. Talking about the secretive AURA (Autonomous Unmanned Research Aircraft) programme for the first time, Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) told that the aim is to develop the UCAVs for IAF in seven to eight years. "With Rs 50 crore as seed money, a full-fledged project team with 15-18 scientists has already begun work on the UCAV's preliminary design and technology. With on-board mission computers, data links, fire control radars, identification of friend or foe, and traffic collision avoidance systems, they will be highly intelligent drones," DRDO's chief controller R&D (aeronautics) Dr Prahlada said.

Source: *Times of India*

State to Set up \$2-B Aerospace Industrial Park

The State is planning to set up its maiden aerospace industrial park with a projected investment of \$ 2 billion, the commissioner for industrial development, Dr Raj Kumar Khatri said. The aerospace park, spread over 900 acres with an inclusive special economic zone (SEZ) of 252 acres, is expected to be operational in the next three to four months, next to Devanahalli International airport. Mr Khatri said the state government is in the final stages of land acquisition and the allotment to the various companies will happen in the next three months. Already over 46 companies, including Hindustan

Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Wipro and BEML, have evinced interest in setting up their operations worth Rs 5,000 crore in the aerospace park.

Source: *Economic Times*

U.S. asked India for more data on fighter setback

India has agreed to provide the United States with more information about its decision last week to drop two U.S. defense companies from an \$11 billion fighter competition, a top U.S. official said. Assistant Secretary of State Mr Andrew Shapiro reiterated the U.S. government's deep

disappointment about India's decision, but he said Washington was still pursuing other defense sales with India that could strengthen ties between the two countries. "Going forward, it's important to recognize that we have a number of sales either in the pipeline or to be considered that will enable us to continue to build the defense trade relationship," Shapiro told a group of business executives who are advising the State Department on export control reforms.

Source: Reuters

India shortlists 2 fighters in mega deal

The wait is finally over. India has selected two European fighter planes for financial negotiations in the \$ 10.4 billion deal, rejecting four others including two US fighters on technical grounds. "Rafale and Euro fighter Typhoon have been short listed, based on technical evaluation. They have been requested to extend their financial bids for another year. The official letters to the vendors are being dispatched," defence ministry officials told Deccan Herald. This would be India's biggest defence deal in which the country plans to purchase 126 medium multi-role combat aircraft (MMRCA). Over the next two decades, the MMRCA would be one of the main stay fighters for the Indian Air Force. Though the bid was for 126 fighters, India in all probability will purchase over 200 fighters. Additional fighters will be purchased after evaluating the performance of the first lot in which 18 will be manufactured winning bidder while the rest would be produced at the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd in Bangalore.

Source: Deccan Herald

Air India to add 125 aircraft by 2015; looks at introducing more flights on domestic routes this year

The state owned national carrier Air India is expected to add 125 aircraft to its current fleet of 120 by end of 2015. Deloitte Consulting India Pvt Ltd has chalked out a turnaround plan for the airline. As per their turnaround strategy, Air India will look at ways to optimise revenue profit by introducing new routes for the domestic and international market, add capacity on the existing routes, as well as focus on expanding their fleet size. Informing about the development Mr K D Row, Executive Director Sales & Marketing "India Region, Air India said, "We have worked on a turnaround plan in a way to optimise the profits for the airline and the same has been approved by the management team at Air India which will be effective soon. As per the company's expansion plan is concerned, we have already invested more than Rs 35,000 crore to buy the new aircraft from Airbus and Boeing."

Source: Travel Biz Monitor

'Cash in on 100% FDI in Seaplane Ops'

Aiming for an operation of 100 seaplanes in the country over the next 10 years, India on Friday asked the foreign operators to avail the 100 percent foreign direct investment in seaplanes. "Our target is to see operation of 100 seaplanes in India," Civil Aviation Secretary Mr Dt Nasim Zaidi said while addressing a seminar on seaplanes organised by Civil Aviation Ministry and Pawan Hans Helicopter Limited 1 here. Citing global studies that estimate the international, market for seaplanes over the next decade is 1,000 units, Mr Zaidi said: "I think 10 per cent of that must come to India. That is

our target." In January this year Pawan Hans began the seaplane operation in Andaman and Nicobar Islands to give an impetus to tourism infrastructure. The operation is on a 50:50 loss/profit sharing basis between PHHL and the Andaman and Nicobar administration. The service connects Port Blair with Havelock and subsequently other islands in North Andaman.

Source: Indian Express

Boeing plans \$300 mn investment in Indian defence industry

US aerospace major Boeing has submitted a \$300-million plan for investment in the Indian defence industry as "offsets" for the four additional P8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft that India intends to buy for its navy, says a senior company official. The four P8Is are a follow-on order from India, which has already signed a contract with the US for eight P8I platforms in maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare roles in January 2009 at a cost of \$2.1 billion or Rs.10,000 crore. Under the offsets (proportion of the order value to be invested in the domestic industry of the buyer) clause in the contract, Boeing will have to plough back in the Indian defence industry. 30 percent of the \$1 billion (Rs.4,500 crore) that these four aircraft would cost.

Source: Economic Times

AI to hive off MRO business this year

Air India (AI) will spin off its Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) division into a separate company in the current financial year, coinciding with the centenary year of civil aviation in the country. Mr Arvind Jadhav, chairman and managing director of the airline, said, "This is a very appropriate time (for the MRO hive-off). AI has a world-class testing laboratory, which is not marketed well. Once our MRO is hived off as a separate company, it will have the capabilities to service 300 aircraft every year." AI kicked off celebrations marking the centenary year of Indian civil aviation on February 18, which will go on till February 18 of 2012. It was on that day in 1911 that the first commercial plane flew in India between Allahabad and Naini. India is the ninth largest civil aviation market in the world.

Source: Financial Express

GMR in talks to set up engine MRO hub at Hyderabad

GMR Group, which manages Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here, is in talks with major aircraft engine manufacturers to set up engine MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) facilities, sources said. MAS GMR Aerospace Engineering Company Pvt Ltd, a Group company which is set to inaugurate an airframe MRO unit in GMR Hyderabad Aviation SEZ

Limited in July, near the airport, now wants aircraft engine manufacturers to set up their shops here, making Hyderabad an integrated hub for aerospace industry. "The Group is in talks with various aircraft engine manufacturers like Pratt & Whitney, CFM International, GE and Rolls-Royce to set up an engine MRO that can also supply spare engines to aircrafts when they are grounded for repair," sources close to the development told PTI.

Source: *Hindu Business Line*

Defence offset policy to be changed

With the government seeking revised offset proposals from the six contenders for the Medium Multi-role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) deal by April 15, 2011, a comprehensive defence offset policy is in the offing and is likely to be released early next month. "The new policy will seek to do away with any ambiguity currently there," say defence ministry sources. The detailed policy is expected to concretise the opening of the civil aviation and internal security in more certain terms, so that there will be no room for confusion, added sources. The defence offsets policy is likely to bring

in \$10 billion during the 11th Five-Year Plan period (2007-11).

Source: *Financial Express*

DRDO to create special fund for industry

In a bid to give a boost to domestic industry in developing key products indigenously, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has decided to create a micro fund, according to its Director General, Dr V.K. Saraswat. Though a specific corpus has not been created, the objective of the fund was to provide financial support to the industry in key areas to indigenously develop systems that meet the demands of the DRDO in the development of a range of large projects, he told Business Line. He identified Midhani, the defence PSU, which produces special materials as one company where the DRDO was providing funds. Similarly, an exercise would be done to identify SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) and private sector companies to provide financial support.

Source: *Hindu Business Line*

Pune students bag awards at aero design contest in US

Two engineering students from the Vishwakarma Institute of Technology (VIT) bagged awards at the Society of Automotive Engineers' (SAE) International's prestigious 'Aero Design West 2011' competition held in Texas, US, recently. Mr Varun Garg , who is a third-year mechanical engineering student, and Mr Prasha Sarwate , a final-year chemical engineering student, combined their efforts to design a remote-controlled micro aircraft that withstood almost all evaluation parameters at the contest, co-organised and hosted by military aircraft manufacturer Lockheed Martin. The team won the first prize in operational availability and third prize each in the micro category and for lifting of highest payload. University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, US and Poznan Institute of Technology, Poland, bagged the overall first and second positions, respectively.

Source: *Economic Times*

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