

Joint Russia-India BrahMos 2 missile to be ready by 2017

The first prototype of the hypersonic BrahMos 2 cruise missile being jointly developed by Russia and India will be ready for flight testing in 2017. Russia and India have recently agreed to develop hypersonic BrahMos 2 missile capable of flying at speeds of Mach 5-Mach 7. Sivathanu Pillai, chief executive officer of the Russian-Indian joint venture Brahmos Aerospace, said the new missile will be made in three variants ground-launched, airborne, and sea-launched. He said the new missiles will be supplied only to India and Russia, without exports to third countries. Established in 1998, BrahMos Aerospace Ltd, a Russian-Indian joint venture, currently manufactures BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles based on the Russian-designed NPO Mashinostroyeniye 3M55 Yakhont (SS-N-26). The BrahMos missile has a range of 290 km and can carry a conventional warhead of up to 300 kg. It can effectively engage targets from an altitude as low as 10 metres and has a top speed of Mach 2.8, which is about three times faster than the US-made subsonic Tomahawk cruise missile. The flight tests of the airborne version will be completed by the end of 2012. The Indian Air Force is planning to arm 40 Su-30MKI Flanker-H fighters with BrahMos missiles.

Suspects must be searched before gazetted officer, rules SC

Suspects in drugs or narcotics smuggling cases have a right to be frisked for the contraband in the presence of a gazetted officer to ensure transparency in the investigation, the Supreme Court has ruled. Interpreting Section 50 of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, a bench of justices Aftab Alam and Ranjana Prakash Desai said failure to follow the procedure would cause a definite prejudice to the accused. "A careful perusal of Section 50 indicates that when any authorised officer is about to search any person under the provisions of Sections 41, 42 or 43 of the NDPS Act, if such person (accused) requires (demands), he (officer) has to take him, without unnecessary delay, to the nearest gazetted officer of any of the departments mentioned in Section 42 or to the nearest magistrate. The apex court gave the ruling while acquitting three persons convicted and sentenced to six months RI by a sessions court in Andhra Pradesh for sale of ganja (cannabis). They were arrested by a police team headed by Circle Inspector Koteswara Rao, who claimed that they had seized ganja from their possession.

Vikramaditya trial from next month

Fighter jets will land and take off for the first time from aircraft carrier Gorshkov rechristened INS Vikramaditya from July as part of aviation facility trials of the ship scheduled to join the Indian Navy in December. Sea trials of the ship have already started and aviation facility trials considered to be the most critical trial of an aircraft carrier to test all aspects of flying will see Russian pilots deploying MIG-29Ks and MIG-35s for the purpose. The carrier worth over 2.3 billion dollars will have two squadrons (one squadron has 18 to 20 jets) of MIG 29Ks when it arrives in India in 2013. Russians will check navigation, radars and landing facilities at the warship in presence of the Indian team. Indian pilots will start flying from the carrier after the ship is handed over after all mandatory checks sometime in October 2012. However, a team of Indian pilots is already in Russia to oversee flying operations by their Russian counterparts. Indian Navy is already flying MIG-29Ks from its shore base in Goa.

Give info on Justice Bhandari, MEA told

The Central Information Commission has directed the Ministry of External Affairs to disclose records related to nomination of Supreme Court judge Justice Dalveer Bhandari to International Court of Justice. The Commission also directed the External Affairs Ministry to transfer some questions of the application filed by activist Subhash Agrawal to the Indian Chapter of Permanent Council of Arbitration with the instructions to provide information to the appellant. He had sought to know from the Ministry if it sought approval of the Prime Minister to nominate one of its officials to the council which nominates candidate for ICJ and whether such an approval was given. The External Affairs Ministry had refused to disclose the information saying it attracts exemption clauses of the RTI which allow withholding the information related to strategic interests of the country besides it would also affect canvassing for the Indian candidate.

Hyderabad firm hopes new range of UBiSlate tablets will be Aakash-II

VMC Systems Ltd, the lone supplier of low-cost tablet PC Aakash, to U.K.-based DataWind, is gearing up to launch the upgraded version of the tablet in the coming months. The Hyderabad-based firm, is hopeful that its new range of the UBiSlate tablets will become the much-awaited upgraded Aakash-II. UBiSlate smartphone/tablets incorporate HD video co-processors for high-quality multimedia experience and core graphics accelerator for faster application support. DataWind, which could not stick to the May 31 deadline for the launch of the upgraded version of the low-cost tablet, placed orders for one lakh units of the UBiSlate tablets with the VMC Systems Ltd. Though the orders were for DataWind's retail market requirement, the UBiSlate has several features similar to those expected from the Aakash II.

Russia stops missile systems to Syria

Russia has suspended its contract with Syria for the supply of deadly anti-aircraft missile systems. The delivery of S-300 long range missile systems has been halted "on orders from the higher up". According to an annual report of an S-300 factory that was accidentally published online, the factory has a \$105-million contract to supply three S-300 batteries to Syria in 2012-early 2013. By refusing to supply Russia's most potent air defence systems to Syria, the Kremlin demonstrated its restraint to the West, which has been accusing Moscow of indiscriminate arming of the regime of President Bashar al-Assad. The expert does not think the S-300 would have been a game changer for Syria. Russian analysts said Moscow would continue to provide Syrian with defensive weapons.

China's astronaut trio returns to Earth

China's first woman cosmonaut and two of her colleagues returned to Earth after successfully accomplishing the country's first-ever manual space docking during a two-week mission, giving a boost to Beijing's efforts to build a space station by 2020. The spacecraft Shenzhou-9 carrying the three astronauts landed at the designated spot at Inner Mongolia region. The landing, which was shown live on the television was a bit bumpy as the module turned upside down as it hit the ground. Ground stations declared that the landing was successful. The first Chinese woman astronaut Liu Yang, and her two male colleagues mission commander Jing Haipeng and Liu Wang were safe.

IRDA slaps Rs.1.47 cr fine on HDFC Life

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), has imposed a hefty fine of Rs.1.47 crore on HDFC Life Insurance for violation of various regulatory provisions. "A penalty of this nature is a regulatory necessity to impress upon management of any insurance company that regulatory prescriptions have to be complied with at all times and failure to do so will entail appropriate regulatory action," the order signed by IRDA Chairman J. Hari Narayan said. The maximum penalty of Rs.1.05 crore was imposed in a case of death claim under home loan protection policies. The claim was denied in a case where death occurred within 90 days from the date of commencement of the policy despite the IRDA advising the insurer to delete this exclusion clause.

Bharti Airtel, Idea plan to shift data traffic to Wi-Fi

Indian mobile phone companies such as Bharti Airtel, Idea Cellular and others are looking to shift a part of their data services to Wi-Fi hotspots, freeing up scarce 2G and 3G airwaves for mobile telephony. Mobile phone companies are building Wi-Fi hotspots to accommodate growing mobile broadband data usage among consumers. Bharti Airtel has already set up more than 1,000 hot spots in top three cities across India where data consumption is very high, apportioning a greater proportion of its licensed spectrum for handling voice traffic. A hotspot is any location that offers wireless internet access. A person carrying a Wi-Fi-enabled smartphone can access internet from a hotspot.

Now, 'musical buddy' robot

A musical companion developed by researchers recommends songs, dances to the beat and keeps the music pumping based on listener feedback. The smartphone-enabled, one-foot-tall robot, called Shimi, is billed as an interactive "musical buddy." "Shimi is designed to change the way that people enjoy and think about their music," Professor Gil Weinberg, director of Georgia Tech's Center for Music Technology and the robot's creator, said. Shimi is essentially a docking station with a "brain" powered by an Android phone. Once docked, the robot gains the sensing and musical generation capabilities of the user's mobile device. In other words, if there's an "app for that," Shimi is ready. For instance, by using the phone's camera and face-detecting software, the bot can follow a listener around the room and position its "ears," or speakers, for optimal sound. Another recognition feature is based on rhythm and tempo. If the user taps or claps a beat, Shimi analyzes it, scans the phone's musical library and immediately plays the song that best matches the suggestion. Once the music starts, Shimi dances to the rhythm.

Suzuki, Honda go for Splendor's share

The 6-million-unit-a-year executive commuter segment, dominated now by Hero's Splendor. Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) and Suzuki Motorcycles India (SMI) have decided to steal Splendor's show but have completely different strategies in place. Honda's Dream Yuga and Suzuki's Hayate have been launched with a view to capturing the executive market. However, Suzuki has positioned Hayate as the most affordable bike in the segment while Dream Yuga is the most expensive. Honda says the strategy is to charge a premium for what it calls the 'best in class' performance. The brand ambassadors signed on also show the competition - Akshay Kumar and Salman Khan respectively.

Cairn UK to sell 3.5% in Cairn India for \$370m

Cairn Energy of UK, till recently the promoters of Cairn India, is selling 6.7 crore shares of the company, for about Rs 2,100 crore (\$370 million). The stake sale, through accelerated book building process and at a price of between Rs 307.5 and Rs 317 per share, is being handled by Citigroup's securities arm in India. Till December 2011, Cairn Energy was the main promoter of Cairn India when it sold a majority stake in the oil exploration company to Anil Agarwal-controlled Vedanta group in a deal worth about \$6.5 billion. Vedanta had picked up another 15% stake in Cairn India from Malaysian energy giant Petronas, which was an initial strategic investor in the company.

General Motors says no to Cadillac brand for India

India may be on the radar of global luxury carmakers, but General Motors has said it has no immediate plans to roll out its Cadillac premium cars in the market. The company, that sells cars under the Chevrolet brand, says that it is still not considering any plan for the Cadillac in India. "The Cadillac is a key brand for General Motors globally" GM India President Lowell Paddock told. GM currently is to grow the company's sales under the Chevrolet brand.

Nokia launches dual-SIM Asha 302, 202 phones

Nokia has launched two mobile handsets having new features. Nokia Asha 302 and 202 dual-SIM are designed to offer a richer consumer experience with the best access to music services, internet, social networks and greater functionalities at affordable prices.

Farah retains title

Britain's Mo Farah became the first man to defend his European 5,000 metres title in Helsinki at the opening day of the 2012 athletics championships. The London Olympic hope and reigning world 5,000m champion comfortably took gold for the second successive European championships in a time of 13min 29.91sec. The 29-year-old beat home Germany's Arne Gabius and Polat Kemboi Arikan of Turkey. Farah, who is also the defending European 10,000m champion. At the bell signalling the last lap Farah pulled away to win by almost two seconds in what was his last 5000m appearance before the Olympics.

MS Dhoni, Mary Kom world's 16th, 38th most marketable athletes

Team India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and five-time world champion boxer MC Mary Kom have been rated as the 16th and 38th most marketable athletes in the world by a monthly British magazine that reports on the business and financial aspects of sport. SportsPro has ranked athletes from across the world on the basis of their marketing potential over the next three years and after considering factors like age, home market, charisma, crossover appeal and value for money. Mary Kom, who is the lone Indian female boxer to qualify for the London Olympics, is the only athlete from the country other than Dhoni to feature in the list that has been topped by Brazilian football sensation Neymar. The list also includes some of the world's best athletes such as Lionel Messi (3), Usain Bolt (4), Cristiano Ronaldo (5), Rory McIlroy (2), Maria Sharapova, Novak Djokovic, Lewis Hamilton and many more.