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Sukhoi-30 jet's wreckage found near Assam-Arunachal border

Guwahati: The wreckage of the Sukhoi-30 jet that went missing with two pilots was located on Friday on the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border after a three-day search operation.

“Bad weather in the area is hampering the operation. The fate of the two pilots is not known yet,” said defence spokesperson Lt Col Sombit Ghosh. He told HT that the wreckage has been located near the coordinates, about 60 km north of Tezpur town in north-central Assam, where the last contact with the fighter aircraft was made.

Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force on Friday ordered a court of inquiry into the accident.

“A court of inquiry has been ordered to investigate the cause of the accident,” IAF spokesperson Wing Commander Anupam Banerjee said here Tezpur is one of the three IAF air bases in the country that host the Sukhois.

The Su-30 jet took off from the IAF Tezpur air base, located about 172 km from the IndiaChina border in Arunachal Pradesh around 9.30 am on a routine training mission on May 23.

The aircraft was on a routine training mission as part of a twoaircraft formation.

It lost radar and radio contact with the controlling station around 11.10 am near Arunachal Pradesh's Doulasang area, an area adjoining China, 60 km north of Tezpur.

“Search for flight data recorder and missing crew will be pursued by the ground parties after they reach the crash site,” Banerjee said.

Last year, a Sukhoi-30MKI crashed near Nagaon town of Assam during a routine sortie. While the two pilots ejected safely, some locals suffered splinter injuries from the crash.



Pak hikes def budget by 7% amid tense ties with India

Islamabad: Pakistan proposed to hike its defence budget by nearly seven per cent to Rs 920 billion on Friday amid growing tension with India along the Line of Control.

“We have increased the defence budget to Rs 920 billion (from Rs 860 billion),” finance minister Ishaq Dar said as he presented the federal budget for 2017-18 fiscal in the National Assembly.

Dar also announced a 10% increase of “special allowance” to the armed forces for their contribution in defeating militants throughout operation ‘Zarb-e-Azb’ launched three years ago.

Pakistan’s proposed increase in the defence outlay and for its armed forces came as tension with India soared over a host of contentious issues.

Last year, Pakistan recorded a 5.28% GDP*/ growth — the highest in 10 years and the volume of its economy crossed \$300 billion. The total estimated outlay of the budget presented on Friday will be 4.75 trillion rupees, according to minister Dar. The government proposed a 6% GDP growth for 2017-18 fiscal and the development expenditure for next year will be 1.001 trillion rupees, Dar said. It was the fifth and last budget of the Pakistan Muslims League-Nawaz government which came to power in May 2013.

Sat, 27 May, 2017

Fly anywhere in the world in 3 hrs?

US Military Eyes Hypersonic Leap With Aircraft-Like Space Shuttle

The US military is going to launch a secretive, special experimental plane that works like a rocket.

Boeing's XS-1 (Experimental Spaceplane), which the company dubs 'Phantom Express', got a green light this week by the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA. The XS-1 is designed to quickly lift satellites as heavy as 3,000 pounds (approx. 1,360kg) into orbit for \$5 million or less, launching from the ground, deploying a small upper-stage module, and then landing like a traditional airplane — the key to reuse and lower operating expense.

“Phantom Express is designed to disrupt and transform the satellite launch process as we know it today, creating a new, on-demand space-launch capability that can be achieved more affordably and with less risk,” said Darryl Davis, president of Boeing's experimental Phantom Works division.

The Phantom Express will be powered with an Aerojet Rocketdyne Holdings Inc. AR-22 engine, a newer version of the main engine trio that served on Nasa's Space Shuttle. Boeing will design and build the aircraft through 2019, including 10 engine ground firings over 10 days, followed by 12-15 flight tests in 2020.

Beyond the military's desire for a spaceplane, such a craft would likely carry immense appeal to commercial firms, many of which are planning to launch constellations of small satellites.

The XS-1 is also envisioned as a means to further work on advanced airframe designs capable of hypersonic flight, generally five to 10 times above Mach 1, the speed of sound at sea level (approximately 1,200kmph). Beyond a quick pop into space, a craft with hypersonic speed offers a new capability — it will be deployable anywhere in the world in three hours.