

## **Su-30 squadron to be inducted at Thanjavur on Jan 20**

Thiruvananthapuram: The induction ceremony of a Su-30 MKI squadron in the southern skies will take place in the presence of Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu on January 20, said a top Air Force official here on Wednesday.

The range of this will be in the Indian ocean region up to Suez Canal.

The development and integration of the weapon with aircraft was the result of the dedicated and synergetic efforts of the Indian Air Force (IAF), DRDO, BAPL and HAL, and will hugely enhance the operational capability of the force.

Air Marshal Amit Tiwari, AVSM VMA Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Air Command said to the media here that the newly resurrected 222 Squadron will be operationalised with BrahMos equipped Sukhoi-30 air superiority fighters with twin engine.

"The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) which is a central maritime spread, bordering three continents, has an important role to play in regional peace, security and prosperity. The IAF is an intrinsically strategic force and is all set to extend the reach into the vast IOR," said Tiwari and added that the need for such surveillance was the need of the hour.

"The Thiruvananthapuram Air Force airbase will play a crucial role in this. Expansion plans here are on the anvil and additional land is being acquired, next to the present base. We expect to complete the expansion in around four year's time," added Air Marshal Tiwari.

The 222 Squadron, also known as "Tigersharks" was raised at Air Force Station, Ambala on September 15, 1969 with Sukhoi Su-7 aircraft.

In July 1971, the Squadron moved to Air Force Station Halwara and took part in the 1971 war with Pakistan.

The squadron was recognised for its heroic efforts during the war and was awarded one Mahavir Chakra, three Vir Chakras, three Vayu Sena Medals and two Mention-in Dispatches.

In December 1985, the "Tigersharks" became the first Squadron in the IAF equipped with Mig-27 Aircraft.

The Squadron was number plated in 2011.

The "Tigersharks", equipped with formidable, state-of-the-art air superiority fighter aircraft, which are armed with 2.5 ton air launched Brahmos missile of 300 Kms range, have the capability to strike from large stand-off ranges on any target at sea or on land with pin-point accuracy by day or night and in all weather conditions.

The capability of the missile coupled with superlative performance of the Su-30 MKI is all set to change the paradigm of maritime surveillance, security and strike in the region.

Air Marshal Tiwari welcomed the appointment of the Chief of Defence Staff and termed it as a good move.

*(Disclaimer: This story has not been edited by Outlook staff and is auto-generated from news agency feeds. Source: IANS)*

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