Samtel, DARE develop multi-functional displays for Su-30 fighters

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Samtel Display Systems has become the first Indian company to indigenise multi-functional displays (MFDs) for the Sukhoi Su-30 combat jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and has received clearance for their flight testing, it was announced here Monday.

The MFDs have been jointly developed and manufactured with the Defence Avionics Research Establishment (DARE), an arm of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

They will now be flight-tested by the Regional Centre for Military Airworthiness (RCMA) at Nashik in Maharashtra, following which the IAF will put them through flight trials.

RCMA looks after the military airworthiness aspects of all products supplied to IAF. It is an arm of state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) that is manufacturing the Su-30 under licence.

The MFD is a device that puts all aircraft systems, monitoring and flight planning functions at the pilot's fingertips. It paints a composite view of the aircraft's environment, providing the pilot with all necessary information to make safe decisions during every phase of flight.

Engine performance and situational data such as location, terrain, traffic, weather and airport information are all digitally depicted and can be quickly interpreted at a glance on a large-format display.

Initially, the Samtel-DARE MFDs were subject to extensive ground tests on a Su-30 integration rig. The tests were conducted during both daylight hours and in the night to evaluate the display characteristics of the MFD under varying light conditions.

Four test sorties were undertaken at an altitude of approximately 40,000 ft with the indigenous MFD for its evaluation, 'and no failure was observed', a company statement said, adding: 'Samtel will implement minor improvements suggested by the flight crew.'

Commenting on the landmark achievement, Samtel group chairman and managing director Satish Kaura said, 'The flight testing of the indigenous MFDs underscores Samtel's commitment to produce high quality, high performance avionics equipment and systems for our customers both in the Indian and international arena.

'It reinforces our endeavours to develop and provide indigenous technology developed to meet Export market and defence offset requirements by overseas clients,' Kaura added.

Samtel Display Systems has a joint venture with HAL to produce indigenous next-generation MFDs, HUDs (head up displays) and HMD (helmet mounted displays) for HAL star programmes like the Su-30, the Tejas

light combat aircraft (LCA) and the intermediate jet trainer (IJT).

Along with this, Samtel has also entered a JV with French electronics major Thales to work towards the indigenous development, production, sale and maintenance of helmet mounted sight and amp; displays (HMSDs) and other avionics for the Indian market.

Samtel Display Systems (SDS) is a key player in manufacturing high-technology equipment for avionics, military and professional applications in the international arena.

SDS is a part of the Samtel group, India's largest integrated manufacturer of a wide range of displays for television, avionics, industrial, medical and professional applications, TV glass, components for displays, machinery and engineering services.

The group employs 6,000 people in nine world-class factories and has an annual turnover of Rs.12 billion ($300 million).

DARE initially started as a project laboratory for DRDO's Advanced Systems Integration and Evaluation Organisation (ASIEO) that was established in 1986 to enhance the operational capabilities of the IAF through modern technologies.

Over the last decade, DARE has made rapid progress in the areas of airborne electronic warfare, airborne processors and testing and evaluation of electronic warfare systems.

It has implemented concepts in concurrent engineering in partnership with Indian industry to achieve shorter design-to-induction time frames and seamless transfer of technology.

DARE has two major wings - the electronic warfare (EW) wing and the mission avionics wing (MAW).

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