RUSSIA'S FIRST UPGRADED IL-76MDM MILITARY AIRLIFTER TOOK TO THE SKIES

News / Manufacturer

The first upgraded Ilyushin Il-76MDM (NATO reporting name: Candid) military and transport aircraft has performed its first flight at the airfield of the Gromov Flight Research Institute near Moscow, a TASS correspondent reports from the scene.

After the successful flight, the test pilots from the Ilyushin Aviation Company who operated the aircraft were greeted by Ilyushin CEO Sergei Velmozhkin.

"This is a new upgrade of the Il-76MD aircraft in service with Russia’s Aerospace Force. The new aircraft has a lot of new equipment, a new navigation complex, new systems to improve its transportation and combat flight characteristics in its missions to carry troops and military hardware," Ilyushin test pilot Nikolai Kuimov said.

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The aircraft’s nose-based electro-optical sight system allows observing landing areas and any facilities both in the infrared and the optical bands. Also, the Il-76MDM aircraft is equipped with a satellite navigation system that meets all the requirements and rules for flights along Russian and foreign air routes that both exist and will appear in future.

"This is a good aircraft. It flies excellently and shows all the best the Il-76 plane incorporates," Kuimov said.

The Ilyushin Aviation Company is currently working on two projects for Russia’s Aerospace Force. In particular, it is upgrading in-service Il-76 aircraft and Il-78 (Midas) refueling tankers and manufacturing modernized versions of these planes.

The first Il-76 aircraft arrived for its upgrade in 2014. Its upgrade was expected to complete in December 2015.

A new defensive suite mounted on the upgraded Il-76MDM aircraft will defend it from all hostile weapon systems, chief designer of the Il-76 aircraft Andrei Yurasov said.

"The defensive suite will defend the upgraded Il-76MDM aircraft from all hostile weapon systems," the chief designer said. According to him, the aircraft’s defensive suite includes infrared decoys and other systems.

The upgrade aimed to extend the service life of serial-produced Il-76 combat aircraft that are currently accomplishing various tasks in Russia and beyond its borders, Yurasov said.

"This work was aimed at replacing parts and items that are no longer produced in Russia rather than improving the aircraft’s flight characteristics considerably," the chief designer said.

This work has been done and the aircraft with new equipment can accomplish more complex combat and transportation tasks. "The new aircraft has better pilotage and radio communications characteristics," Yurasov said.

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