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SUBJ 'Flying Saucer' Financial Problems Viewed

Full Text Superzone of Message

- 1 //((Article by IZVESTIYA writer Viktor Litovkin: "'Flying Saucers' Made in Saratov"))
 - 2 ((Text)) ((begin bold)) The device you see in the photo is called a highly economical flying apparatus of the Ekip firm, but simply put it is a "flying saucer." It is made at the Saratov Aircraft Plant.((end bold))
 - 3 Ekip president Anatoliy Savitskiy told me that the "saucer's" general designer is Lev Shchukin, and it is based on the surface effect combined with the "air cushion" effect. Because of this the apparatus is capable of shipping cargo equal to practically half its own weight while the cargo giant Mriya can lift only a third its own weight into the air. The "saucer" was created several years ago, but because of a lack of money it has not yet taken its place in the ranks.
 - 4 To be sure, last summer an experimental model of the "saucer" with a diameter of 2.5 meters flew over the plant airfield, but the actual apparatus, even if controlled by radio in the test flight, was to have been sent up this fall. But for the same reason--a shortage of finances--its departure from the shop has been postponed until spring.
 - 5 In addition to its unique cargo capacities, the "saucer" can move at an altitude of 8-10 km over a distance of 8,500 km with a speed of 650-700 km per hour. It does not need airfields. It can take off and land on snow, water, swamps, and hard ground. And its proportional fuel expenditure is considerably less than that of an airplane. The vehicle does not go into a tailspin. This makes its flight safer and makes it possible to use pilots who do not have very high qualifications.
 - 6 The director of the Saratov plant, Aleksandr Yermishin, thinks that the "saucer" has a great future. One wonders how, after the landslide conversion when all the best specialists began to leave, it managed to retain them, promising to include in the plant program the unique flying apparatus of the Ekip firm.
 - 7 Anatoliy Savitskiy told me that the 120-tonne "saucer" with a diameter of 25 meters will cost approximately \$70 million. Many foreign firms have expressed a desire to participate in its creation. But Russia still has priority in making this fantastic dream come true. (endall) [REDACTED]
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