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## FIRST GRIPEN FLIGHT WITH HELMET MOUNTED DISPLAY

The integration of a helmet mounted display, to further enhance the combat capability of the SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS Gripen fourth-generation swing-role fighter has passed a significant milestone, with a successful series of test flights in Linköping, Sweden, using a 'Guardian' helmet-mounted display system (HMD).

Flown by test pilot Magnus Olsson, the compatibility of the 'Guardian' display with Gripen's advanced avionics and cockpit was verified, ahead of a programme to fully integrate the system for export launch customer South Africa, which has a requirement for 28 aircraft.

The system is also being optimised for use with the IRIS-T advanced short range air-to-air missile which is being adopted as the standard air-to-air combat weapon for Swedish Air Force Gripen fighters.

'Guardian' is produced by Pilkington Optronics, in partnership with Cumulus (a division of Denel) and Kentron of South Africa. It provides Gripen aircrew with flight reference data, weapons information and a weapons aiming capability through the pilot's visor, without the need to look down at cockpit instrumentation or forward through the head-up display. Weapons aiming, using this system whatever the pilot's viewing angle of the target.

This benefit is retained no matter where the pilot is looking and provides a 'look and shoot' capability. It allows optimum use of Gripen's fully integrated digital information system and precision engagement weapons, including advanced short-range air-to-air missiles, during combat missions.

Close range combat performance is further enhanced by Gripen's advanced aerodynamic configuration, employing delta wing and canard foreplanes. This gives excellent performance in close combat situations and ensures optimum agility and high turn-rates at all speeds and altitudes, even when heavily armed.

Integration of the 'Guardian' HMD forms part of a fully-funded ongoing technology insertion programme that will ensure Gripen continues to be at the forefront of combat aircraft technology for decades to come.

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Each Gripen fighter has the built-in ability to absorb future developments with ease. The aircraft's five MIL-STD 1553 databuses are currently used to just 50 per cent of capacity, offering unrivalled growth potential for customers.

Unlike integration programs for older in-service competitors, future systems upgrades for Gripen will be software-based, cost effective and relatively straightforward as they do not require the fleet to be grounded for lengthy periods of time while work is carried out.

SAAB-BAE SYSTEMS and their partners continue to study further technology growth for Gripen. This includes the introduction of multi-mode active electronically scanned array radar, cockpit adaptation for use with night vision goggles, infra-red search and track and the TARAS next-generation communication system among others.

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**Notes to editors:**

Gripen, the world's first in-service fourth-generation swing-role fighter, is manufactured, marketed and supported internationally by a joint venture company in which Saab of Sweden and the United Kingdom's BAE SYSTEMS have equal shares.

Designed to meet all known and perceived 21st century defense threats Gripen is the only fighter in service today with ease of maintenance and low operational costs designed-in. It is no ordinary fighter, combining high performance and outstanding manoeuvrability with a fully integrated digital information system, precision engagement weapons and reconnaissance capabilities for the future air war.

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Photographs of the Gripen helmet mounted display are available from [www.gripen.se](http://www.gripen.se)