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SNAPSHOTS

**Honda Aircraft Company
Expands HondaJet
Sales to India**

P4



HONDA AIRCRAFT APPOINTS ARROW AIRCRAFT SALES & CHARTERS. SEEN HERE ARE ROHIT KAPUR OF ARROW AIRCRAFT (LEFT) AND SIMON ROADS OF HONDAJET (RIGHT) SIGNING THE AGREEMENT.



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THE INAUGURATION OF WINGS INDIA 2018 BY TELANGANA IT AND INDUSTRIES MINISTER K.T. RAMA RAO. R.N. CHOUBEY, SECRETARY, MOCA, USHA PADHEE, JOINT SECRETARY, MOCA, SANDIP SOMANY SR. VP, FICCI AND B.S. BHULLAR, DIRECTOR GENERAL, DGCA, ARE ALSO SEEN IN THE PICTURE.

WINGS INDIA 2018 TAKES OFF

By **ROHIT SRIVASTAVA**

Amidst the political twist and turn, Wings India 2018, the flagship event of the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), was inaugurated by the K.T. Rama Rao, Minister for Industry, Commerce and IT, Government of Telangana, at the Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad.

The biennial event, organised by FICCI jointly with MoCA and Airport Authority of India (AAI), will witness the global industry leaders discussing policy issues and business aspects of the civil aviation sector. The theme of the four-day biennial event this year is 'India-Global Aviation Hub'.

Delivering his inaugural speech, Rama Rao complimented the former Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapati Raju and his entire team at the Ministry of Civil Aviation for their exemplary work in expanding the reach of the aviation industry in the country. He congratulated them for implementation of the UDAN (*Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik*)-Regional connectivity Scheme (RCS) which has brought the unserved and underserved areas under the ambit of civil aviation.

"They have done a stellar work... and I hope the civil aviation industry continues to grow," he said.

Gajapati Raju resigned from his post before commencement of the event.

Talking about the growth of the aerospace industry in Telangana, the Minister said that it is the most vibrant hub of this industry in India and hosts large number of global firms in aerospace and aviation sector.

He informed that the Warangal airport is being made functional under RCS.

Talking about the leadership position of his state in the sector specific skill in the aviation and aerospace sector, he requested MoCA to open a regional centre of the National Aviation University in the state.

Speaking further Rama Rao added that Telangana has the most competitive incentive offer for setting up aviation industry in the country and is establishing fourth aerospace park. At present, state has three aerospace park out of which two have been designated as the aerospace special economic zone. State government envisaged to make Telangana as skilled manpower provider to this industry, not only in India, but for the world.



TELANGANA IT AND INDUSTRIES MINISTER K.T. RAMA RAO ADDRESSING THE DELEGATES AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF WINGS INDIA 2018

One of the major focus areas of the Wings India 2018 is UDAN-RCS, which was launched as part of the National Civil Aviation Policy 2016, which envisions enhancing regional connectivity through a market-based mechanism in which airlines bid for seat subsidies.

This is first-of-its-kind scheme globally to create affordable yet economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes so that flying becomes affordable to the common man even in small towns.

Speaking at the event, Rajiv Nayan Choubey, Secretary, MoCA, discussed how UDAN is changing the contours of the civil aviation industry in India and the new policy initiatives that will make the sector more vibrant. He anticipates India becoming the world's biggest aviation market in coming years if the fuel prices remains low. At present country is witnessing around 20 per cent year on year growth in this sector, he said.

Calling the subsidy being given under the RCS as a "significant political step", Choubey said that oil prices needed to remain soft, below \$80 a barrel for the sector to grow at a CAGR of 15 per cent for the next 20 years. RCS will help industry grow at 15 per cent for next two decades. "This will require doubling of airport capacity every five years." Choubey said that the Government was committed to connecting the cities and towns to increase regional connectivity in the country.

Talking further he said that the ministry wants to be ahead of the growth curve and the Expression of Interest for the disinvestment of the Air India and Pawan Hans will be sent out in next couple of weeks. Highlighting a major concern of the sector, he said that VAT on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) was among the highest in the world and if state government reduce it this will help in reducing the ticket prices and state will not lose much revenue also.

Later addressing the press, Choubey informed that the state governments are very enthusiastic about the UDAN and they are holding discussion with the airlines for increasing air traffic in their states. Highlighting some of the key challenges in the sector, he discussed the need for better air navigation and traffic management and matching infrastructure with growth.

Discussing the new developments in RCS scheme, the Secretary informed that the Government of Assam has proposed to give a support of ₹100 crore per year for three years for international flights originating from Assam. He did not see any need for central support if state government takes any such initiatives and said that UDAN is a template for such scheme.

Talking on the airport expansion, he said that AAI, with capital expenditure plan of ₹18,000 crore for four years, is working on expansion of a dozen brown field airports and two green field airports, one each at Delhi and Mumbai.

On the requirement of additional pilots due to massive expansion of fleets, he said that India would be requiring around eight to ten thousand pilots in next half decade and we are working on it vigorously. India has around 900 aircraft on order.

Replying to a query on regulation for unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), B.S. Bhullar, Director General, DGCA, during the press conference, said that hopefully in next couple of month government will be able to come out with it. Speaking on regulation for seaplanes, Bhullar said that for non-scheduled flights no regulation is required but for scheduled flights, government in next couple of months, will notify it.

Talking to *SP's ShowNews* on Indian Air Force's support for UDAN, Secretary, on the side lines of press meet said that they are very supportive and there no issue between us. We understand each other's need," he said.

During the event, a White Paper and Exhibitors Directory were unveiled and two e-portals on air cargo were launched.

The four-day event will witness the presence of 125 exhibitors and 35 CEOs. Wings India 2018 will also see representation from 10 countries, namely USA, Japan, UK, Russia, Singapore, France, Germany, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Italy and Iran. Besides, 15 aircraft by ATR, Honda, Trujet, Gulfstream, Boeing, Embraer, Dassault, Club one Air, Aeroteck, Zoom Air, Air India, NAL and others will be on static display. Besides the conference and exhibition, Roundtables on Tourism, Cargo and Logistics and Skills and G2B and B2B meetings are scheduled. More than 300 B2B meetings are scheduled during the course of the event. •

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Joint Secretary at Civil Aviation Ministry Usha Padhee Buoy Up BAOA BizAvIndia 2018 Conference

From in-principal approval to in-flight Wi-Fi to 'official commitment' on charter jet issues of the general aviation sector, the Joint Secretary gave a hopeful promise



(LEFT) ROHIT KAPUR, PRESIDENT, BAOA, DELIVERING THE WELCOME ADDRESS AND SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE BIZAVINDIA 2018 CONFERENCE;
 (RIGHT) USHA PADHEE, JOINT SECRETARY, MOCA; G.K. CHAUKIYAL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RCS), AAI; GROUP CAPTAIN R.K. BALI (RETD), MANAGING DIRECTOR, BAOA
 AND RAJIV NAYAN CHOUBEY, SECRETARY, MOCA, AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF BIZAVINDIA 2018 CONFERENCE.

By **ARPITA KALA**

The BAOA BizAvIndia 2018 conference held on Wednesday may just have been a sneak-preview of the good things to come for the business aviation sector this year. While panel discussions with veterans in the field such as BAOA President Rohit Kapur, Pulak Sen, Founder, MRO Association of India, Kapil Kaul, CEO, CAPA and many others discussed a few burning issues in the sector, Joint Secretary at Civil Aviation Ministry Usha Padhee stole the show with her refreshing pep talk.

IT'S RAINING APPROVALS

Terming her presence as an antidote to 'gender bias on the dais', she said, "Many things have to be put into place (in business aviation sector), which can be addressed in our round table conference this week with the operators that will be moderated by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). So, you can discuss all your grievances." She also said that a task force has been formed to take up issues related to general aviation, and efforts would be made to address both policy and regulatory related issues. Padhee admitted that the regulatory changes in the private aviation sector take time saying, "Of course they are slow (DGCA) but there are reasons behind it mainly the lack of confidence-building measures." Lack of infrastructure, perception issues about private jet operators, over-regulations and the safety as well feasibility of single engine crafts were also discussed.

BAOA President Rohit Kapur also echoed the same thoughts at the event. He said, "Regulators all over the world are not really agile. So, what's really lacking it's domain expertise."

Padhee also gave an 'official commitment' to address charter issues in the next two to three months signaling interest of the tourism department in the subject too. As for the burning question of the day – the status of in-flight Wi-Fi, the minister said, "The aviation ministry being the party of interest has spoken in favour of this issue. So far, the in-principal approval is done. Now, it's just a matter of time."

ISSUES OF THE MOMENT

The conference titled – Emerging Opportunities for Air Connectivity in India: Navigating the Future of Business and General Aviation, also set the stage for the unveiling of Deloitte BAOA report about the

"Of course they are slow (DGCA) but there are reasons behind it mainly the lack of confidence-building measures," Usha Padhee, Joint Secretary, MoCA

impact of GST. The BAOA President also stressed that it's imperative to understand the consequences of GST. In an earlier interview with SP's, Kapur had said, "We still need to iron out a lot of issues on GST, so we are also preparing a report to take to the GST council." He also discussed creating an infrastructure for general aviation to create ease of ownership as well as operation.

RCS TRICKLE-DOWN

Executive Director (RCS), Airport Authority of India (AAI), G.K. Chaukiyal was also a part of the panel and shed light on non-scheduled air operators (NSOP) in UDAN scheme. "NSOPs have been participating in both rounds of (UDAN) biddings. In the first round, 84 routes were awarded and in the second round, the NSOPs including helicopters have 30 per cent to 40 per cent of the routes," he said, adding that 56 airports, 31 helipads as well as 275 parking bays are expected to come up too which would benefit general aviation sector too. He also pointed out that Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Defence have come forward to share their assets, which will greatly help in boosting infrastructure for admission growth. He also pointed out that "60 Indian Air Force airports have been notified in UDAN II."

The four-day long Wings India 2018, which is being organised by the Union Ministry, AAI and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, kickstarted on Thursday at the Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad. The theme of the event is 'India – Global Aviation Hub' with a major focus on regional connectivity. •

Honda Aircraft Company Expands HondaJet Sales to India

Arrow Aircraft Sales and Charters Pvt Ltd appointed as HondaJet India

Honda Aircraft Company announced today that it has expanded sales of the HondaJet to India with the appointment of Arrow Aircraft Sales & Charters Pvt Ltd as an authorised sales representative based in New Delhi, India. Honda Aircraft made the announcement at Begumpet Airport during Wings India, where the HondaJet is making its first-ever appearance.

"We are confident that the addition of Arrow Aircraft as an authorized sales representative will allow for the HondaJet to be successful in the fast-growing business aviation market of India. We are looking forward to their strong sales and promotion of the most advanced light jet in the market," said Honda Aircraft President and CEO Michimasa Fujino.

Rohit Kapur, Managing Director of Arrow Aircraft Sales and Charters added, "We are excited to be appointed as HondaJet India. The business aviation market continues to grow in our area and the HondaJet's performance and features are a true game changer. We are looking forward to providing our customers with a dedicated sales team for the fastest, most comfortable and efficient business jet in its category."

Honda Aircraft has established a worldwide dealer and authorised sales network to provide unsurpassed service and support for HondaJet customers. The HondaJet authorised network spans territories in North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia. The HondaJet is an advanced light jet which incorporates many technological innovations in aeronautical design and it was the most delivered jet in its category in 2017. •



HONDA AIRCRAFT APPOINTS ARROW AIRCRAFT SALES & CHARTERS. SEEN HERE ARE ROHIT KAPUR OF ARROW AIRCRAFT (LEFT) AND SIMON ROADS OF HONDAJET (RIGHT) SIGNING THE AGREEMENT.

Helicopters are the New Buzz Word

RCS, tourism industry and single engines, helicopters to get a major fillip soon

By **ARPITA KALA**

While many aviation industry experts lament the untapped potential of helicopters in the country, the situation seems to be on a mend. At a recent event on the sidelines of Wings India 2018 in Hyderabad, the government and private officials from the industry came together to discuss the future of the choppers in a moderated panel discussion.

OF RCS AND ROTORS

Helicopters were added to the illustrious list of participants during the second round of bidding in aviation ministry's ambitious Regional Connectivity Scheme, UDAN. Speaking about the same, G.K. Chaukiyal, Executive Director, AAI said that the choppers have been immensely useful in connecting remote hilly areas. He said, "Since UDAN II biddings, helicopters have covered almost 75 per cent of the Himalayas. They have a huge potential." He also added that in spite of the success, the government will have to take a decision on the inter or intra-city role of the helicopters.

Harshvardhan Sharma of Himalayan Heli services echoed the same sentiments saying, "Once regional connectivity is in place, we can look at remote areas then." Sharma also suggested the possibility of venturing into drones.

SINGLE ENGINE PHOBIA

Regulatory bodies have often been accused of har-



"UDAN may give a little boost but the industry needs to be opened up more because right now the helicopter industry is moderated and regulated just like commercial airlines,"

Rohit Kapur, President, BAOA

bouring an aversion to single engine operations and the general aviation operators at the event voiced these concerns. In an earlier interview with SP's, Kanika Tekriwal, Co-founder of JetSetGo, had put in plainly, "India is a phobic nation when it comes to single engine helicopters." Joint Secretary, MoCA, Usha Padhee responded to the same by inviting feedback regarding the safety of the model. She said, "Single engine operations are a sensitive issue. We have not been able to commence operations because it's been coming to our notice that it isn't allowed nowhere in the world. If you know of any successful model regarding the same, please do bring it top our notice."

THE BIG IF

Coming from a helicopter background (he served as a helicopter pilot in the Indian Army), BAOA President Rohit Kapur spoke about the slow growth in the field. He said, "UDAN may give a little boost but the industry needs to be opened up more because right now the helicopter industry is moderated and regulated just like commercial airlines." And that seems like a valid concern since a study by the association hinted at a similar situation. According to a BAOA report in 2011, the Indian helicopter fleet was predicted to almost triple to 800 in a few years from the then 300. However, the number still remains a dismal 270 since then. Looking at their stellar performance in the RCS operations and the upcoming construction of 31 helipads as well as 275 parking bays under UDAN, that may soon change. •

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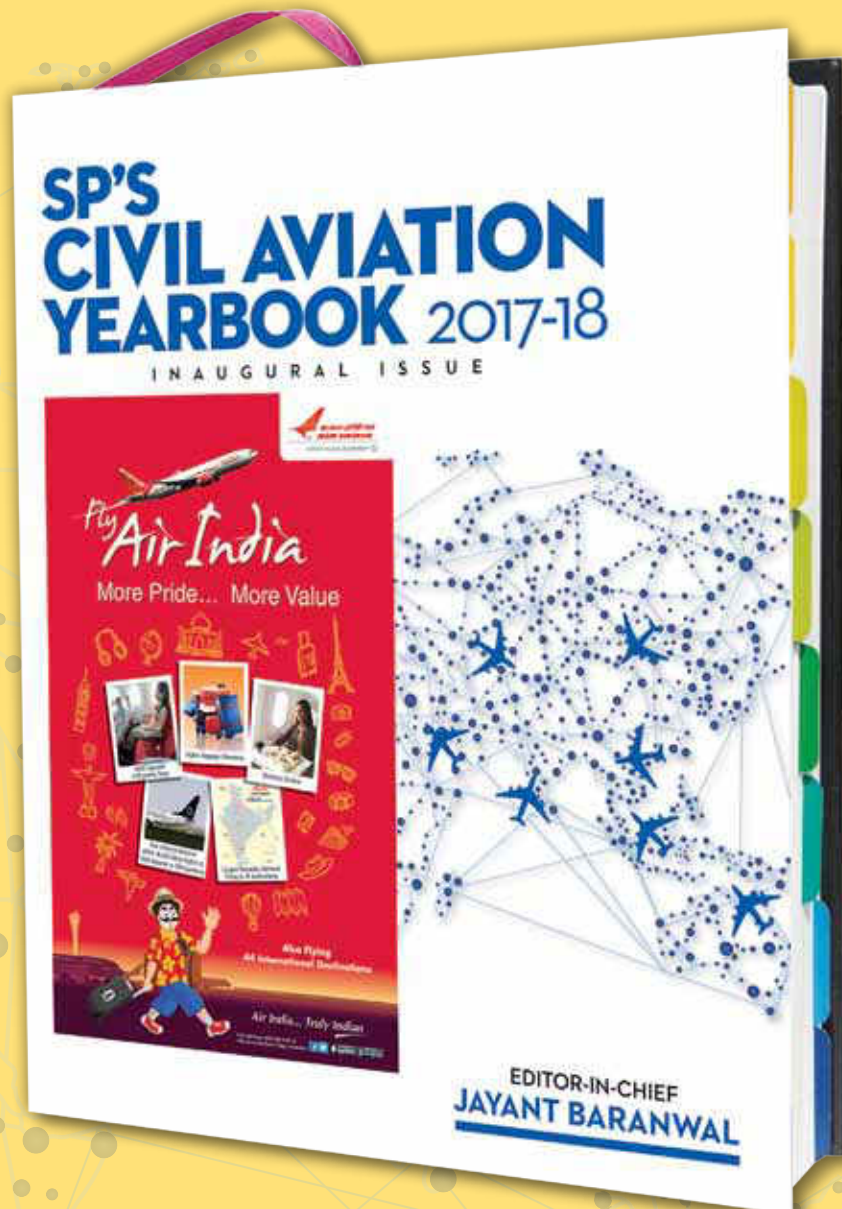
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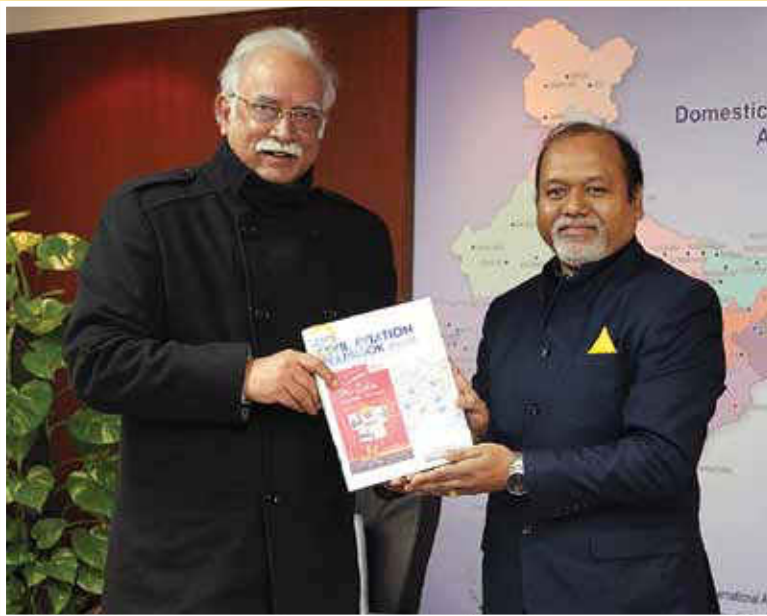
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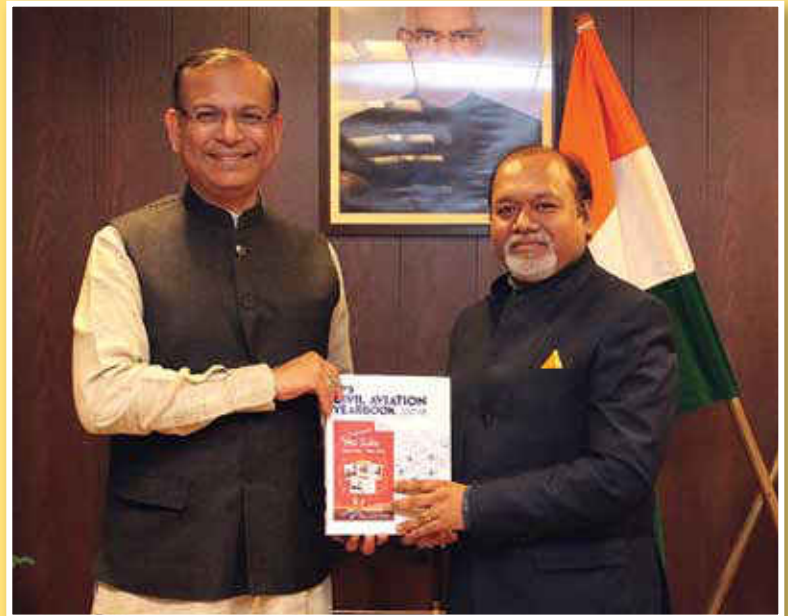


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Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha receiving a copy of **SP's Civil Aviation Yearbook** from Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of SP Guide Publications Jayant Baranwal.

TESTIMONIALS

"Finally it has arrived."

— **P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Union Minister of Civil Aviation**

"It's a Handy Book."

— **Jayant Sinha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation**

I am in receipt of the SP Guide Publications' Inaugural Issue of Civil Aviation Year Book 2017-18. The diagonal flip-through assured me of the quality of the publication and the assurance to be a resourceful reading. Thanks for sending me a copy of the Issue.

— **S. Raheja, Member (Planning), Airports Authority of India**

The yearbook is excellent. Kudos to you and your team!

We finally have a world class yearbook on our cherished civil aviation sector... The role of the media is key in shaping public policy, highlighting success stories and pointing out areas of improvement. We appreciate the marvelous job done by SP Publications over decades.

We wish you the very best!

— **Amber Dubey, Partner and Head, Aerospace and Defense, KPMG in India**

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HondaJet: Milestones and Timeline



1997: Michimasa Fujino first sketches out the design for the HondaJet.

2000: In October 2000, Honda R&D Americas establishes a research facility at the Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTIA) in Greensboro, North Carolina, for the purpose of researching, fabricating, and flight testing the HondaJet.



2001: Patent obtained for HondaJet unique Over-The-Wing Engine Mount configuration.

2003: HondaJet takes its first test flight on December 3, 2003. Days later, Honda makes a public announcement of this achievement.



2005: HondaJet makes its public world debut on July 28, 2005, at EAA AirVenture 2005 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

2006: Honda announces July 25, 2006, at EAA AirVenture 2006 in Oshkosh, Wis., that it will commercialise the HondaJet.

Honda Aircraft Company is established in August 2006 with the responsibility for Honda's overall airframe business strategy and the further development, sales promotion and production of the innovative HondaJet.

Honda Aircraft Company begins HondaJet sales at the National Business Aviation Association's Convention and Exhibition (NBAA) in Orlando, Florida, on October 17, 2006. The company announces the HondaJet will be powered by the GE Honda HF120 turbofan engine.

2007: Honda Aircraft Company announces February 9, 2007, that its world headquarters, R&D centre and production facility will be located at the Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTIA) in Greensboro, North Carolina. Honda Aircraft Company

breaks ground on June 27, 2007, for a new world headquarters, R&D center and production facility.



2008: In May, Honda Aircraft moves into its new world headquarters at the Piedmont Triad International Airport. The complex spans 68,000 square feet. In December 2008, Honda Aircraft Company completes construction of a new, 1,87,000-square-foot R&D center located on the company's campus at PTIA.

2010: On December 20, 2010, Honda reaches a significant milestone in its aerospace programme by achieving first flight of the first FAA-conforming HondaJet.



2011: The first FAA-conforming HondaJet achieves a maximum speed of 425 KTAS at 30,000 feet and Mach 0.72 above 30,000 feet in flight testing on March 11, 2011. This achievement surpasses Honda's performance commitment to customers of 420 KTAS for the production aircraft.



On April 27, 2011, the first FAA-conforming HondaJet achieves its maximum operating altitude of 43,000 feet. The aircraft's maximum climb rate of 3,990 feet per minute is also confirmed.

2012: On September 27, 2012, Honda Aircraft breaks ground on a new Customer Service Facility at its world headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina. The facility is scheduled to open in 2013. This expansion will bring the company's total campus footprint to more than 6,00,000 square feet and more than 130 acres.

In the second half of 2012, Honda

Aircraft begins HondaJet production.



2013: On October 17, 2013, Honda Aircraft Company's new customer service facility opens.

On December 20, 2013, the Federal Aviation Administration issues Type Inspection Authorization for the HondaJet.

Honda Aircraft Company's customer service facility receives FAA Part 145 repair station certification.



2014: The first production HondaJet achieved its initial flight on June 27, 2014.



2015: HondaJet flight simulator arrives at Honda Aircraft Company in February.



The HondaJet receives provisional type certification from the United States Federal Aviation Administration on March 27, 2015.

The HondaJet receives final type certification from the United States Federal Aviation Administration on December 8, 2015.

Honda Aircraft Company delivers the first HondaJet on December 23, 2015, just two weeks after receiving US Federal Aviation Administration type certification.

2016: On March 4, 2016, the HondaJet receives type certification from

the Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Mexico.



Honda Aircraft delivers the first HondaJet in Europe.

The HondaJet receives type certification from the European Aviation Safety Agency on May 23, 2016.

Honda Aircraft Company receives a Production Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration.

HondaJet sets two speed records in its class over two recognized courses from Teterboro, New Jersey to Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Boston, Massachusetts to Palm Beach, Florida.

2017: Honda Aircraft Company announces HondaJet sales in Southeast Asia through Thailand based dealer.

Honda Aircraft Company formally announces China dealer at Guangzhou providing sales, service support to China, Hong Kong and Macau.



HondaJet customers embark on 80 day around the world tour.

HondaJet awarded Type Certification in Canada and Brazil.

The HondaJet set various speed records in its class during 2017; Miami, Florida to Panama City, Panama; Greensboro, North Carolina to Dallas, Texas; Dallas, Texas to Phoenix, Arizona; Pensacola, Florida to Greensboro, North Carolina; and Keflavik, Iceland to Lisbon, Portugal.

2018: HondaJet China Holds Opening Ceremony at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport on January 26, 2018.



French air taxi service provider Wijet commits to upgrading its business jet fleet with the HondaJet on February 8, 2018. •



Propelling Indian Aerospace Industry

National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) is a constituent of the autonomous Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and is the leading institution in the country for aircraft development programmes like two seater *ab-initio* trainer aircraft Hansa, fourteen seat multi-role transport aircraft SARAS, and five seat general civil aviation aircraft CNM-5 the country's first public private partnership with Mahindra Aerospace Pvt Ltd (MAPL).

Jitendra J. Jadhav, has served the ADA for 17 years and is currently the Director, CSIR-NAL. In an interview with **Neetu Dhulia** of *SP's ShowNews*, Jadhav speaks about CSIR-NAL road map for civil aircraft development programmes. Excerpts from the interview:

Neetu Dhulia (Dhulia): How do you see the flight test of SARAS aircraft?

Jitendra J. Jadhav (Jadhav): Saras was successfully test flown for the second time on February 21, 2018. Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for S&T, and VP CSIR along with DG, CSIR witnessed the second flight and highly appreciative of effort put in by the entire team of NAL, ASTE, DGAQA, CEMILAC and HAL in reviving the project after nearly nine years.

Around 18 more flights will take place in the next three to four months before the design for improved version of Saras (Mk2) is finalised. The improved version has considerable drag/weight reduction with unique features like high cruise speed, lower fuel consumption, short landing and take-off distance, low cabin noise, operable from high and hot airfield, with pressurised cabin, operable from semi prepared airfield and low acquisition and maintenance cost.

Dhulia: When will SARAS be ready for operational clearance? Why did it take so many years?

Jadhav: The SARAS will be ready for operational clearance in the next two to three years. As you may be aware that after the unfortunate accident during test flight in 2009, complete stoppage of manufacturing activities pertaining to SARAS aircraft till completion of accident investigation of the PT2, and migration of CSIR-NAL to the new CAR-21 Regulation under Subpart-G to proceed with aircraft manufacturing activity. Other reasons were, realigning of



CSIR-NAL to regulatory process and procedures of Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC) and Directorate General of Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA). Further, the modifications towards conversion of PT1 aircraft to PT1N far exceeded the originally anticipated effort.

Dhulia: Tell us about the last two tests of SARAS?

Jadhav: The team was instrumental in analyzing and studying the failures and incorporate nine major modifications in Saras PT1N aircraft. Changes like installing new engines, an improved flight control system, increased ruder area, indigenously developed stall warning system and more such changes were made over the years. These efforts have resulted in two successful flights and we have received positive feedback on the performance of the aircraft.

SARAS PT1N completed the second test-flight.

Dhulia: Why NAL believes SARAS will be 25 per cent cost effective than other comparable aircraft?

Jadhav: With more than 70 per cent indigenous content in the SARAS aircraft the cost will be definitely 20 to 25 per cent cheaper than any imported aircraft in the same category as indigenous systems will be serviced, including spares within the country. Further, the aircraft currently available in the international market are of 1970's technology, such as Beechcraft 1900D, Dornier-228, Embraer EMB 110, they have higher fuel consumption, lower speeds, unpressurised cabin, high operating cost and are unsuitable for operations from hot and high-altitude airfields.

Dhulia: When we can expect 19 seater SARAS to fly?

Jadhav: Subject to approval of 19 seater aircraft development project from the government, we can expect that the test flight may happen in three years from sanction.

Dhulia: Tell us about the contribution of the private sector in the SARAS project?

Jadhav: The production version of the SARAS will be certified initially for military use and subsequently for civilian usage. Indian Air Force will induct the first 15 aircraft. HAL has been identified as the production agency for the military version of Saras. •

Air India Makes a Mark at Wings India 2018

Air India made its presence felt at Wings India 2018, the sixth edition of the popular civil aviation Exhibition & Conference in India held at the Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad from March 8, 2018.

Air India's history has been synonymous with that of civil aviation in India and its presence was the centre of attraction at this landmark event as it has been in the same air show in the past.

The event, held under the aegis of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, has been providing an unmatched platform for the aviation players all over the world to debate on diverse topics relating to policy and regulatory regime, emerging challenges and opportunities, international best practices etc and lay down the roadmap for seamless and sustainable growth of civil aviation in India. It also provides immense networking opportunities with the presence of



key policy makers, senior Government officials, global experts and corporate leaders, potential customers/business partners to tap the emerging investment opportunities in Indian civil aviation market.

Wings India 2018 was launched by the Minister of Telangana K.T. Rama Rao, Secretary Civil Aviation R.N. Choubey, DGCA B.S. Bhullar, Joint Secretary Ministry of Civil Aviation Usha Padhee and other dignitaries by lighting the ceremonial lamp. The theme of this year's event is Regional Connectivity -UDAN. Incidentally, Alliance Air, Air India's wholly owned subsidiary, had operated the first flight under UDAN which was flagged off by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Air India pavilion stole the show with attractive display highlighting the airline's initiatives and achievements. Dignitaries, including Ramarao and Choubey, also appreciated the Air India pavilion. •



'India is One of Our Key Markets': Adel Ali, Group CEO, Air Arabia

One of the leading low cost carriers of Middle East, Air Arabia, if allowed, would like to go to new destinations in India

By **ROHIT SRIVASTAVA**

Calling India one of its key markets, Air Arabia, Sharjah based low-cost carrier (LCC), expressed confidence in the growing Indian aviation market. Speaking to reporters Adel Abdullah Al.Ali, Group CEO, Air Arabia, on March 5, said, "We serve around 21 flights a week into Delhi and Jaipur from Sharjah. We see a positive growth in the market here. The economy is good. The relation between India and UAE seems to be growing from strength to strength. Over all its been an excellent progress. We remain very confident for this particular market."

"When started in 2005, our objective was to make sure that we serve as many as airport possible to make the life of the people much easier, to get them to get home quicker and faster. I think we have managed to achieve that and we hope that we will continue to progress on that," he said.

Talking about expansion of Air Arabia in India, Ali said that if allowed, Air Arabia will be ready to fly to any airport in India. He expressed hope that the ever improving bilateral relation between UAE and India is going to benefit the two economies, especially the aviation sector.

The leading LCC of Middle East and North Africa, Air Arabia started its India operation in 2005 and now operates over 112 weekly flights from its hub in Sarjah to 13 cities in India. Currently, it flies to Jaipur, Kochi, Nagpur, Coimbatore, Thiruvananthapuram, Goa, Kozhikode, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Chennai.

Expressing his confidence in Indian market, Ali said, "It's been an excellent progress in last few years. We remain very confident that this particular market will grow."

"India is a very competitive market. It has moved from the era of sort of being very controlled market with prices being very high to a very competitive market. Indian low cost carriers are good and competitive."

On the Air Arabia's market share in India, Ali said, "Our market share in India continues to be very small. We still do not exceed double digit."

Talking on the fleet expansion, he informed that Air Arabia is expecting to receive three more aircraft this year. In 2019, the airline is receiving six Airbus A321neo aircraft which will open new markets, Ali said. These aircraft will be used on the high demand routes like East Europe, East Africa and China. At later stage the airline also intent

to fly into South East Asia.

Air Arabia fleet consists of 50 new Airbus A320 aircraft offering Air Arabia passengers the best economy configuration in the market with a 32" seat pitch.

Responding to query on expansion of fleet he said, "We are hoping that probably by end of this year, we will have to put orders for more aircraft and we are talking to both Boeing and Airbus."

Air Arabia is looking at narrow body aircraft like Boeing's 737 MAX, A320/321s and Bombardier's C series. Air Arabia operates from five different hubs conveniently located in UAE (two), Egypt, Morocco and Jordan.

Discussing the airline's performance in 2017, Ali said that Air Arabia made 30 per cent year on year profit of \$180 million. Every year, since its commencement of operation in 2003, airline has recorded profit.

More than 8.5 million passengers flew with Air Arabia in 2017 and the average seat load factor – or passengers carried as a percentage of available seats – in 2017 stood at an impressive 79 per cent. In 2017, Air Arabia added 21 new routes to its global five operating hubs in the UAE, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan. The carrier took delivery of four new aircraft. •

Indian MROs: Problem or Paradise?

Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation R.N. Choubey says it's the latter

By **ARPITA KALA**

Maintenance and Repair Operations (MRO) within the country are a major concern for many aviation operators. As Anurag Srivastava, CEO, Bird-Execujet said during the BizAV India 2018 conference, "Nobody likes to send their jets outside for maintenance." And, Pradeep Panicker, Deputy CEO, GMR Hyderabad International Airport, seems to echo his sentiments. He says, "The MRO industry is being killed in India. As we speak, an airline has ₹1.5 thousand crore worth of maintenance to be done and has to resort going to MROs abroad."

SEEING THE GLASS HALF FULL

However, on Day 1 of the ongoing Wings India 2018, Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation R.N. Choubey seemed to be hopeful about the MRO situation. While addressing the media, he said, "There's absolutely no problem. We have enough capacity in MROs today to make it flourish even more. Actually till now, the MRO capacity was under utilised in our country. So, luckily the capacity is not a problem anymore." He also said that the situation of aircraft seeking maintenance abroad is purely the operator's decision since the prices will affect consumers too. "At the end of the day, the airline must decide where they can



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"Nobody likes to send their jets outside for maintenance,"
Anurag Srivastava, CEO,
Bird-Execujet

get the cheapest services. Please remember if the MRO service is expensive, the cost will also have to be borne by you and me as air passengers."

TAXATION-RELAXATION

Although, according to the minister, airlines may have to decide on whether to avail MRO services within or outside the country, he did acknowledge the taxation troubles. He said, "Taxation matters are really important and in several cases we have obtained taxation-relaxation from the Ministry of Finance. Still, there are elements of taxation that are making it difficult for the domestic MROs and those matters are being pursued." •



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