

SKY HIGH

GREAT INITIATIVES IN CIVIL AVIATION AND DEFENCE IN INDIA- WHAT NEXT NOW

The Indian civil aviation sector, one of the fastest growing sectors, is poised to witness massive progress



Dr RK Tyagi

India is one of those progressing countries in the world who have converted the Covid-19 challenges into great opportunities and laid solid foundations for tomorrow's India as a world leader (Vishwa Guru) and an established Aatm Nirbhar Bharat leading the pioneering work in Science,

Technology, Innovations, industry and education. During the last one year, apart from other areas, great initiatives have also been taken in military and civil aviation in India.

The Indian civil aviation sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world and is poised to become the third largest domestic aviation market (domestic and international traffic) in the world by the year 2024. During the Covid-19 period, the ministry of civil





aviation, state governments, regulators and industry have worked together to bring the situation to under control and gain normalcy. The domestic flights restarted on 25th of May 2020. On the international front, the Vande Bharat mission launched on 7th May 2020 evacuated more than 18 lakh Indian from all over the world, making it largest human evacuation effort of human history.

Under another flagship program UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) around 1000 routes are now proposed to be operationed by year 2024 to connect the regional and remote

airports. The number of PPP airports is likely to increase to twenty four by the year 2024 (five in the year 2014).

To cater to expected traffic growth, the fleet size of Indian carriers (700 plus today) is expected to double by the year 2024. Thanks to recent policy announcement by MoCA, India will now emerge as a leading global hub for Aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO). In another significant achievement, Aircraft leasing and financial rules are being implemented to facilitate the financial lease for hiring aircrafts to be provided by Indian companies also.



The Indian Civil Aviation sector: On growth trajectory

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In 2020, the ministry of civil aviation, state governments, regulators and industry have worked together to bring the situation to under control and gain normalcy.

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On the Defence side, Indian Military came out with a list of 101 items now reserved exclusively for Indian companies. Revised Defence Acquisition Policy (DAP-2020) and draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) have been issued. In a further boost to self-reliance in defence aviation technologies and ecosystem in the country, an order for 83 LCAs, costing Rs 45,696 cr. was placed on Hindustan Aeronautics limited (HAL) who along with 500 plus Indian companies/MSMEs will play the role of lead system integrator providing life cycle support of more than 40 years on this platform. Under Strategic Partnership (SP) model, fighter aircrafts and naval helicopters will be made in India, with complete technical know-why transferred along with life cycle optimised operational cost.

World over, the research trends are that technology is developed on Defence platforms and later on extended on civil platforms. Having developed and established technologies in military aviation domain, now it is time for India to leverage these military aviation technologies in civil

aviation assets. Aerospace manufacturing can play a very significant role for Indian growth by way of technology development, industry 4.0 and an employment potential of one million plus.

The first step towards synergy in civil and military space would be, the creation of a central policy making agency. A few years back, as 36th president of Aeronautical Society of India. I had proposed the formation of National Aeronautics Commission/National

aerospace and aeronautical board (NAAB) to be chaired by hon'ble PM with Secretary CA/DP as its coordinating secretary. Such a board/Commission will have eminent scientists/technocrats of India who will lay standards for R&D, technology, training acquisition, application, skill development and employment in Aerospace sector in India.

National Aviation University (NAU) needs to be strengthened to create a leading ecosystem in the country to coordinate & impart skills to one million plus youngsters in next one decade. The Number of aviation universities in a country indicate its technological superiority and priority. For example, Russia alone has seven National aviation Universities addressing all the components of aviation industry - engines, avionics, hydraulics, structures and sub assembly etc.

DGCA and CEMILAC, as certification agencies in civil and military space now need to be strengthened and unified. They need a suitable technology upgrade in areas like Drones, Anti drones, loitering missions, hypersonic system and



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satellites. As a first step, suitable technology/regulation advisory group of experts/technology leaders be created for both these technology and regulatory bodies.

It is time now for India to have its own designed and developed civil aircraft. For next ten years, we are importing two civilian aircraft per week into India (1,000 aircraft expected induction in next 10 years). This cannot go on indefinitely. India as a Aatmnirbhar country has now to take a lead on this. Few years back, As chairman, HAL we had already submitted a development plan of Regional Transport civil aircraft in India in association with National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) in India nicknamed as IRTA (Indian Regional Transport Aircraft). It envisaged an estimate of USD 2 B with a time frame of seven years. It is high time now that this ambitious technology leapfrog is taken out of drawing boards and given the wings to fly.

In past decade various technology initiatives/project of national R&D agencies ran into significant time and



cost overruns. We must establish national enabling group of experts to help effective implementation of crucial projects like LCA, AMCA & LCA MK-2 etc. in military domain and implementation of MRO, aircraft development and aircraft leasing initiative in civil space as an enabling supplement to the effort of execution agencies in the government.

To conclude, let the year 2021 be remembered as a year of transformation in the Indian aviation

history where-in the policy initiatives by Government of India lead to higher synergy among the military and civil aviation. The decade starting with the year 2021 truly belongs to India in terms of technological supremacy and industrial strength. Let us take a few more steps as discussed above quickly for higher synergy and growth among military and civil Aviation in India.

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