

Aero India 2005



The sixth Bangalore air show opened at the Yelahanka Air Force Station on 9 February 2005. Although this year's air show is the biggest so far, one can't shrug off that overwhelming sense of déjà vu. If you've seen one air show, you've seen them all.

Indeed, the major attraction for most of us at NAL was to see SARAS – looking dazzling with a new coat of paint – actually flying at the air show. At the (first) 1993 air show, a full-scale SARAS-DUET mock-up was displayed inside one of the pavilions, and many of wondered if it would ever fly like all those other planes outside. Well, it flew today! The HANSA VT-HBL flew too; but then HANSA aircraft have flown at all the six Bangalore air shows.



Walking around the air show it was satisfying to note how Bangalore's air show keeps getting bigger. There are now five exhibition halls, over 350 exhibitors and over 30 countries represented. The Yelahanka air show now has a decidedly international flavour.

It's still not completely clear how this air show will translate into hard core business connections; but we're certainly seeing a lot of interactions and things do appear to be progressing well beyond the 'exchanging business cards' stage.

Professor Roddam Narasimha has been talking of an impending aerospace boom for many years now. Every new air show seems to confirm what he's been saying. And yet one is not sure if the predicted boom will happen naturally or will need (as Prof Narasimha believes) a correctly orchestrated sequence of intervening actions from the government.

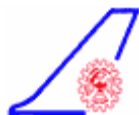
Another puzzle -- that my colleague Dr Satish Chandra, who is perhaps India's best expert on civil aviation markets, talked about – is that military aviation seems to still dominate the agenda. "You have no idea how big the civil market is poised to become worldwide this decade", he told me.

At another level, partly due to growing media coverage, there are signs that the air show is becoming a very "happening" place for the 'Page 3 crowd'; it has suddenly become important to be photographed with the valiant Surya Kiran pilots, be able to distinguish the Mirage from the Jaguar, and talk animatedly of the prowess of the "Su-30". This too is not necessarily a bad thing.

Srinivas Bhogle



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Flight Displays at Aero India 2005

"In clear blue skies, the flying machines create a tremendous impression"



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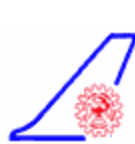
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SARAS at Aero India 2005

"SARAS flew gracefully"



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NAL stall at Aero India 2005

"The NAL stall was very impressive .."



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"Striking display by the Surya Kirans"



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