

8 YEARS AFTER, SARAS SET TO TAKE OFF AGAIN

CSIR-NAL

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Eight years after India's first multi-purpose civilian aircraft SARAS crashed on the outskirts of the city, a prototype of the aircraft is once again ready to fly.

The National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), which is involved in the development of the SARAS programme, has developed a modified prototype SARAS PT1N of the aircraft.

“NAL has completed more than 15 engine ground runs of SARAS PT1N aircraft. We had some technical issues but now we have overcome those and the aircraft has been moved to ASTE (Aircraft Systems and Training Establishment) for carrying out Low Speed Taxi Trials (LSTT) and High Speed Taxi Trials (HSTT). The process is expected to be completed



The aircraft will have a range of 1200 km and speed 500 kmph

by end of June and SARAS PT1N flight is expected in early July if all goes well,” NAL, director, Jitendra J Jadhav said.

The SARAS PT1N after modification has additional features like new nacelle design, stall warning system, larger rudder power, high power engine and improved flight control systems as compared to SARAS prototype 2 that crashed in Seshagiri halli near Bidadi in the outskirts of Bengaluru on March 6, 2009.

An incorrect relight procedure carried out during a test flight resulted in the tragic death of two pilots-Wing Commander Praveen K and Wing Commander Dipesh Shah and a Flight Test Engineer Squadron Leader Ilayaraja.

Jadhav said that the flight-testing and evaluation of existing SARAS PT1N aircraft will provide essential information towards arriving at aircraft configuration towards realisation of new 14/19 seater aircraft which will be the enhancement of SARAS design.

He said that the developmental flights of SARAS PT1N will lead to evaluation of performance and handling characteristics of the aircraft to fine tune the design modifications.

The key features of 14/19 seater aircraft include: Short Takeoff and Landing (STOL), all weather and high altitude operation, weight & drag reduction, operation from short and unpaved runways, all composite, glass cockpit, advanced avionics and flight control system, and low operating cost.

The aircraft has multiple applications for Military Transportation, Air ambulance, Maritime Patrolling, Border surveillance, Commutation for regional connectivity and Special Missions.

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