

## **NAL to revive SARAS, two other civil passenger aircraft**

Working on prototype for five-seater with Mahindra Aerospace

With the regional connectivity policy in place, CSIR's lab, National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), has revived its three civil passenger aeroplane projects — the 14-seater SARAS, the five-seater CNM-5 and the 70-seater Regional Transport Aircraft (RTA-70).



File photo of indigenously developed SARAS civil passenger aircraft

“CSIR has given the go-ahead for carrying out flight testing and evaluation of SARAS PT1N aircraft,” Union Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan announced at the Aero India 2017.

“Shortly, we will be starting the flight tests with the ASTE (Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment) team and engine ground tests are initiated. This study will take a year and will provide essential information towards arriving at aircraft configuration for the subsequent weight optimised build and pave the way forward towards arriving at an aircraft which will be suitable to meet the IAF requirement through the Limited Series Production (LSP) phase.”

As for the CNM-5 five-seat general civil aviation aircraft, Vardhan said: “CSIR-NAL is working out a roadmap for the manufacture and

developmental flight testing of five-seat multi-role CNM-5 prototype aircraft leading to FAR 23 certifications in partnership with Mahindra Aerospace.”

“It is being designed to be an affordable, easy-to-operate and easy-to-maintain light aircraft that can be customised to suit a variety of operational needs. This programme aims to boost manufacturing of small civil aircraft in the country. The CNM-5 has potential applications in air taxi, tourism, cargo, and executive transport in the country,” he added.

Talking about RTA, Vardhan said: “Studies have been carried out regarding developing an RTA.” The feasibility study has indicated demand for about 250-300 aircraft over 20 years in India.

### **Funding needs**

NAL Director Jitendra J Jadhav, replying to a question on funding, said: “About 400-500 crore is required for the two prototypes of SARAS. The design will be officially finalised and approved by the end of this year and by next yearend it should be flying.”

CSIR-NAL's developmental work over the years in both strategic and civil sector have resulted in spin-off technologies that have significantly contributed to the non-aerospace sector, said Girish Sahni, Secretary, DSIR, and DG, CSIR. “In order to encourage SMEs and MSMEs, technologies for Make in India developed by CSIR were released at the Aero India 2017 as a compendium of ‘Technologies for Industries’,” he added.