

A Second Chance



From Vayudoot to UDAN, 25 Years on

One of Vayudoot's first Dornier 228s ...

When the first bold moves were made to introduce regional air connectivity in India over a quarter century back, the then Government logically relied on the professional background and experience of DGCA, Indian Airlines and Air India to ensure that the special entity formed for the purpose (eventually *Vayudoot*) would be suitably managed. Unfortunately, there was some indifference or even prejudice amongst these organisation, mostly owing to gross ignorance of realities. It is therefore appropriate to review the lessons learnt which will impact on the success – or otherwise – of the latest efforts to promote regional air connectivity in India, alias UDAN.

The *raison-de-etre* of India's first true third level or commuter airline, Vayudoot was not really appreciated 25 years back, thus its inevitable financial losses which became the main reason for its untimely closure. Laying the blame on the logically selected regional airliner and all the other arguments



... and an ATR-72 of Alliance Air (Air India)

voiced in respect of the airline or its Dornier 228 fleet, were peripheral and used only to camouflage what was gross mismanagement.

To understand the situation vis-a-vis Vayudoot and its Dornier regional airliners, it is necessary to go back in time to the years before this third-level airline was formed

and the Dornier 228 aircraft selected by an experts' committee appointed by the Government of India. It is also true that every time an aircraft from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited is manufactured, then that specific aircraft becomes the target of general criticism, and this too was the fate