

Fluttering, not soaring!



International Exhibition & Conference on Civil Aviation



WINGS INDIA 2018

March 8-10, 2018
Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, India

Sangeeta Saxena (Aviation & Defence Universe) in her ‘On-the Spot’ report, writes:

It is the first afternoon at *Wings India 2018* and the feel at the Old Airport Begumpet is dull and desolate. After attending the previous versions of *India Aviation* for so many years, which although small but expectancy and vibrancy in the air was always good and the participation reasonable; this year the new avatar reiterates a thought that it is high time the Ministry of Civil Aviation clubbed this with *Aero India* and concentrated on making their presence at that show better rather than having a dismal show and take some credit for it. And an airshow with no flying display is the ultimate anti-climax.

Then unfortunately the inaugural got trampled by politics of the nation when the Minister for Civil Aviation Ashok Gajapati Raju resigned, with TDP pulling out support from the BJP government. With the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Jayant Sinha also not present, the inauguration ceremony was lack lustre despite the Secretary for Civil Aviation RN Choubey taking the lead and steering the discussions knowledgeably well. The only excitement palpable was the local media going crazy with the presence of

the charismatic KT Ramarao the Cabinet Minister for IT E&C, MAUD, Industries & Commerce, Mines & Geology, Public Enterprises and NRI Affairs who was the last minute “surprise Chief Guest” owing to developments in Delhi.

Some international industry did show up and the presence of aircraft manufacturers like Boeing, ATR, Embraer, Honda Jet, SAAB, Dassault Aviation, Gulfstream and Airbus along with the engine makers including Rolls Royce, Pratt & Whitney, GE actually saved the organisers of some major embarrassment. The bleak presence of airlines in the exhibition area (though their CE’s would have been there at the CEOs Forum) added further bleakness to the event. In a buyer-seller platform the buyer actually seemed missing! The General Aviation industry seemed to be the only saving grace as the parked aircraft were nearly all from this industry segment and many customers seemed to be keeping their sales teams busy.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Pawan Hans Limited, Air India, Club One Air, National Aerospace Laboratory (NAL), Deccan Charters, Maini Global Aerospace and a few more Indian public and

private companies were there, displaying their products. Flying Training Schools seemed to be the only majority institutions and surprisingly all discussions at the show were centred around pilot training and skills development. Good theoretically but how much is incorporated practically has yet to be seen.

Then, there was the CEO’s Forum which held discussions behind closed doors and so no announcements and pondered points were sent to the media for disbursement. It is very nice to follow the West and have closed door forums but one should also learn to hold post forum media briefings on the forum discussions as per major shows of the world. The event managers have to be more decent instead yelling “anyone not having an invitation get out of the room”. They sure need some lessons in inter-personal skills.

So overall, Wings India’s wings seemed to flutter and not soar. It is hoped that both FICCI and the MOCA get a message and improve upon a lot of aspects and fill a lot of missing gaps at a- planning stage, if they want *Wings India* to follow *India Aviation’s* example.