

Light plane Saras to be fast-tracked

The government will fast-track the revived light transport plane Saras towards production and begin the feasibility study for a 70-seater regional transport aircraft RTA-70, Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan said here on Wednesday.

The improved 19-seater would be first produced for the Indian Air Force by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. The IAF has offered to buy 15 of them.

A civil variant would be later manufactured by a private partner at 75% cost of similar imported small planes.

Saras would be a good fit for regional travel under the subsidised UDAN scheme, the Minister said. "Its successful development will be one of the game changers in the history of civil aviation in India," he told a news conference.

Dr. Vardhan said the National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) has also begun a feasibility study for the ambitious 70-seater regional transport aircraft RTA-70.

It would be in a tie-up with a foreign manufacturer. In the morning, the modified PT1N version flew for 20 minutes at the HAL airport and was witnessed by the Minister, CSIR Director-General Girish Sahnii and NAL Director Jitendra Jadhav and the developer team.

Grounded in 2009

Saras had been grounded in 2009 after an earlier prototype crashed and killed three crew members near Bengaluru.

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com