

Mahindra Aerospace & NAL in partnership for 5-seater civil aircraft, NM 5 project.

The first prototype of the 5-seater civil aircraft, NM5, may be ready to take to the skies in December 2009. Jointly developed by NAL and Mahindra Aerospace Pvt Ltd. over the last 18 months, the NM5 is a multi-role, multi-mission aircraft.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation is expected to certify the aircraft by December next year. A model of the NM5 is on display at the Aero India show. "The NM5 has been entirely designed and developed by NAL and Mahindra Aerospace. The internal model has already been tested at the IISc's wind tunnel road facility. The aircraft is expected to be priced between Rs 1.2 crore and Rs 1.4 crore," project manager, NM5, at the NAL, Satish Rohidekar said.

The engine, propeller and certified seats of the aircraft will be imported as will the raw material like aluminium alloy sheets and hardware such as, nuts, bolts, washers and rivets, he explained. The NM5 can be used as a trainer, for transporting cargo, medical evacuation, tourism, VIP travel and for training pilots. "We hope to market the NM5 in international markets and have already received a very positive response for it," said Dr Karthik Krishnamurthy, chief technology officer, Mahindra Aerospace.

"Although there are 449 airports and airstrips in India, most airlines use only 65 airports, which means there is still a huge market to be tapped in the civil aviation sector," Dr A.R. Upadhy, director, NAL said.

The Dr Atre Specialist Committee and the Dr Chidambaram Committee are looking into the project.

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