



Federation of Indian Pilots



# FIP JOURNAL

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## Message From the President

A quick glance at the cockpit of a modern airliner will put to rest any doubt on the ability of electronics to simplify and secure the act of flying. However, the real revolution on the flight deck is yet to come and it will bring with it an explosion in the number of aerial vehicles.

Around the world, there are thousands of engineers gathered around models of small VTOL aircrafts. These models are both physical and mathematical. While some engineers battle with the laws of physics, the others work with algorithms that would fly these cars autonomously or perhaps semi-autonomously. The venture capitalists who back these engineers are betting that small self flying VTOLs could one day be as popular as cars.

It may well be 20 years or more before airliners become truly autonomous. In the interim we will have a whole deluge of semi-autonomous/autonomous flying vehicles. These promise to do everything from delivering packages to transporting individuals. While there maybe precedent globally, this would be a completely new phase for the Indian skies. While some rules such as no-flyzones may be easy to implement, others such as mandatory registration might be difficult; especially when you look at the latest trends of miniaturization in battery and motor technology.

There are plenty of home built drones across the world that fly at over 20,000 feet. What would happen if one of these was to suddenly cross your flight path? What are the methods for conflict resolution? What would be the company SOP, to detect, avoid, and report such a vehicle? Would it mean curtailing controlled rest periods as 2 sets of eyes would be better than one?

Before we as a society can realize the dream of whizzing through the air in a flying car, we would need to imbibe the self discipline and rigor of our aviators. Any attempt to introduce such technology without elevating the public discourse, would lead to chaos and an immeasurable deterioration of safety. There are numerous instances of drones shutting down operations at major international airports. So far we have been able to avoid a major disruption; what will happen once our luck runs out?

The word pilot may take various uses as technology levels change. But it will always signify the person who is responsible for getting the aircraft from its origin to destination in a safe and predictable manner; flying it by hand if necessary.

Happy Landings!

**Capt Vivek Nair**  
(President)