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IAF duo zips across in microlite to spread goodwill

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HINDON: The Chief of Air Staff, Fali H Major flagged off the Indian Air Force's *Around the World Expedition* led by Wg Cdr Rahul Monga and Wg Cdr Anil Kumar at 8 am on Friday morning at the Hindon air force base.

The beautiful-looking toy, the Microlight aircraft - ML-105 - CTSW with a Rotax engine, slowly taxied off the runway before taking off into the clear skies for its first stop at Allahabad.

"I wish the boys good weather, fair winds and happy landing," the Chief of Air Staff, said.

Major drew some of the greatest explorers and adventurers like Charles Lindberg, Ernest Shackleton, Tenzing Norgay and Bachendri Pal during his speech and said that if his boys successfully complete the expedition they too will be headed towards that direction where all the great explorers once flew.

"There can't be a better way of spreading goodwill than this *Around The World Expedition* where our boys fly through 18 countries, 80 destinations and covering 41,000 kilometres under 80 days and attempting to create a world record and breaking the existing world record of 99 days," he went on to add.

The Air Chief said, "Though the boys will have some fun flying around the globe they will face some tough conditions during their journey. Weather is going to be key and I know my boys in blue will endure."

The families of both pilots had arrived at the base an hour earlier before the flag-off to wish them luck.

Rahul and Anil kept their poise while they were busy explaining the aircraft specs to the media. Despite running against time, they took time out to speak to the press and offer sound bytes.

As this report is filed, the aircraft had been airborne for an hour and 50 minutes and was approaching Kanpur en route to Allahabad.

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