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...in about 10 days, has suggested...

'As the prime custodian of the legacy of aviation in India, the IAF has responsibility not only to push the envelop but also to promote aero-sport activity in the country,' the air chief, Air Chief Marshal Homi Major, said as he flagged off the flight from the Hindon air base adjacent to the national capital.

'This would also help inculcate air-mindedness in our people,' he said of the venture being undertaken by Wing Commander R. Monga and Wing Commander Anil Kumar as part of the IAF's ongoing platinum jubilee celebrations.

The expedition, being undertaken in a German 'CSTW Advance' microlight aircraft, would attempt to set a new world record for the fastest time in circumnavigating the globe in a 300-500 kg plane.

Striking a nostalgic note, Major said: 'I wish I could take the place of the expedition's crew for what they are setting out to accomplish has all the ingredients of a great adventure - challenge, excitement hint of danger, unpredictability of nature, foreign lands and an unfamiliar route.'



According to an IAF spokesman, the expedition would require 'great fortitude. It will be a true test of both men and machine. There will be challenges of extremes of weather, change of time zones, flying through different countries and interacting with various agencies all across the world.

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'The crew would be totally independent, even for undertaking scheduled servicing. In addition to highlighting the capability of IAF in undertaking such an expedition, it also embodies the true sprit of adventurous aviation,' the spokesman added.

The flight will wind its way through Myanmar, Thailand, China, Russia, Canada, Alaska, Greenland, the European Union countries, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Oman before returnir

The Aero Club of India that represents the Federation Aeronautique International (FAI), the governing body for aer approved the route.

Speaking about the challenges ahead, Monga said: 'We are keen on getting on with the expedition. I am proud to country and the Indian Air Force in such an event.

'Me and my entire team have put in a lot of effort planning the expedition, and now it's time to live it. With god's gr wishes of the entire country we will be successful,' he added.

The microlight has an empty weight of 300 kg, a range of 1,400 km and a ceiling of 14,000 feet.

It has a glass cockpit, an electronic flight instrumentation system (EFIS), an internal GPS, a satellite tracker and a radio equipped with an emergency parachute recovery system.



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