

India is a vital partner for mutual expansion: John Rose

Sir John Rose

Over the past 12 months, India and Rolls-Royce have celebrated two significant anniversaries. The Indian Air Force has served the Indian nation for 75 years, with



Rolls-Royce powering the front line aircraft throughout that period.

It is also 75 years since the dawn of India's civil aviation sector when again it was a Rolls-Royce engine which powered the first aircraft.

I first drew attention to these milestones last September when a group of our most senior managers held their annual conference in Bangalore. This month, we have gone one step further by bringing the Rolls-Royce main board to India for the first time, as well as our international advisory board, a group of highly distinguished international advisors. This has not, however, been a time for looking back.

The reason why our two boards have come to India is to experience for themselves the vibrancy of modern India as it becomes a new powerhouse of the global economy. New economies, new global alliances and new products and services are vitally important. But I believe the recent anniversaries also demonstrate the role of continuity.

Continuous development of technology plays a vital role in today's global markets and global alliances.

It enables countries, economies and companies to achieve new successes, while maintaining a solid foundation of proven experience. In the BRIC countries — Brazil, Russia, India and China — as in Rolls-Royce, there is already a strong commitment to high value-added manufacturing which is rightly seen as a key ingredient in the development of a successful economy. Hindustan Aeronautics, which has had a strong relationship with Rolls-Royce for over 50



years, is a good example of the importance of these continuing relationships.

Our collaboration began with the assembly of engines under licence but it has now progressed to component manufacturing for the world's most successful large turbofan engine, the Trent.

The introduction of the first Hawk advanced jet trainers into the Indian Air Force is, perhaps, one of the best examples of the continuous development of technology.

Although it is 30 years since the IAF introduced the Adour engine into service with its Jaguar strike aircraft, the Adour — which HAL is building for the trainers — illustrates how technological advances are being fed into new aircraft and engine programmes. The Adour engine today may retain the same name, but it is almost a new engine incorporating technology developed under our most advanced programmes.

However, it also retains a good deal of commonality in terms of engine architecture, manufacture and maintenance, with obvious benefits for the local operator and manufacturer. Evolution is also the story of the Trent, for which HAL produces rolled rings. The engine first entered service in 1995 but has grown into a family powering six different Boeing and Airbus air-

craft.

Each development benefits from a continuing technology acquisition programme that incorporates advances from our own engineers but also those working in research institutes and universities around the world. Links with academia are one of the foundations of the engineering strength of Rolls-Royce and our commitment to education and training underpins all our activities. We are, therefore, delighted to be working with the Tata group and BP to support the Dr Manmohan Singh Scholarship programme. The scholarships will enable academically-outstanding Indian students to pursue studies at St John's College, Cambridge for MPhil and PhD degrees in a variety of subjects, including those that focus on science and technology. This will also help identify and develop some of India's future thinkers and leaders. India has a huge pool of english-speaking, highly educated and technically proficient engineers. Working with our Bangalore-based company and with quality engineering and software technologies, we are addressing the demand for greater engineering capacity across all our programmes by taking advantage of the capability that exists in India to develop high quality, affordable engineering solutions.

The UK and India have en-

joyed a long and strong relationship, but despite the quintessential Britishness of our name, it would be wrong to assume that Rolls-Royce is solely a UK company. We come to India as an international company sharing best practices to drive future development programmes.

Of course we still have around 60% of our employees in UK, but we are now building complete aero engines in Germany and US, and we recently celebrated the groundbreaking for a new large engine facility in Singapore. Many of our businesses are now managed from outside UK, primarily from the US for energy and helicopters, and Scandinavia and China for marine. Over time, the centre of gravity of the company is shifting. Companies operating in global markets have global choices, whether about investment or expansion. Our new manufacturing facilities in Singapore and the US are good examples of our increasingly global nature and the new opportunities which are open to us. To take just one example of this trend, our investment in a new repair and overhaul marine facility in Navi Mumbai demonstrates that we not only regard India as an important market but as a vital partner for mutual expansion.

Clearly political alignments will also play their part but industry — and manufacturers in particular — have to be able to make choices that make sense in terms of the future of their business. That is why it is important that our board members see and feel the reality of India today where, despite the real issues of population growth, poverty, rural development and infrastructure, incredible progress is being made at a rapid pace. Inward investment is flowing and, with foreign acquisitions mounting, only last week Tata Motors announced it is acquiring Jaguar and Land Rover from Ford. India is seizing the attention of the world. Rolls-Royce is proud to be a part of that success story.

The writer is Chief Executive, Rolls-Royce.