

VAYU visits Airbus Helicopters at Marignane, France



“AS565 MBe Panther is the perfect candidate for the Indian Navy’s NUH programme” !

In early December 2017, select Indian media were invited to Airbus Helicopter’ facilities in Marignane, France for a two-day interactive session with senior company executives on the latest developments in their company as well as a status update of their plans for India’s helicopter requirements. As a bonus, they interacted with Mexican Navy’s Admiral Jose Maria Garcia Macedo and team who were being handed, in person, keys to their 10th and final AS565 MBe helicopter (*see lead image*).

The theme of the tour can be summarised as being on the AS565 MBe helicopter and its attributes.

The AS565 MBe, also known as the Panther, is the state-of-the-art multi-role helicopter that was designed for a multitude of naval and coast guard missions such as

maritime surveillance, search and rescue, casualty evacuation, offshore patrolling and counter-terrorism. It exudes a sleek appearance from nose to tail and the cockpit allows for excellent visibility through the glazed forward fuselage and the modern avionics include an automatic flight control and flight management system. The AS565 MBe combines new and proven technologies to offer “more value to operators,” and is equipped with two Safran Arriel 2N engines, which enhance its performance in hot & high conditions. It also boasts a new main gearbox, a latest-generation tail rotor and a 4-axis autopilot that reduces crew workload and makes the most demanding missions easier to perform. The main cabin can be rapidly reconfigured to conduct various roles and the Panther can be armed with several different kind of

munitions and armaments, depending on the mission.

The helicopter performs a wide variety of roles. In its anti-surface unit warfare role, the AS565 MBe is highly effective in warfare missions, including over-the-horizon targeting for ships with long-range anti-ship missiles. By acting as the ship’s principal weapon system it can search, classify, shadow and strike with precision with stable hovering capabilities. In its anti-submarine warfare avatar, with an endurance of four hours and its capability to carry up to two torpedoes / Depth Charges, the AS565 MBe significantly multiplies a surface ship’s ability to conduct Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) missions. It has a radius of action of up to 130 nm with one torpedo and up to a 110 nm with two torpedoes. For search and rescue (SAR) it has a radius of action of 110 nm, including