

'God of the Seas'



The Indian Navy's LRMRASW force

Named by the US Navy, as *Poseidon* ('God of the Seas' as per Greek mythology) the Boeing P-8 was selected by the Government of India to fulfill the Navy's long range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft (LRMRASW) requirement. The Indian Navy had for several years till then been operating large, Russian-origin Tupolev Tu-142M (NATO *Bear-Foxtrot*) and Ilyushin Il-38SD Sea Dragons in this role but clearly with mounting serviceability issues, their urgent replacement was sought. The 'acceptance of necessity' (AON) was accorded by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in September 2005 and requests for proposal were issued in December 2005 to a number of OEMs. Responses were received from five companies in April 2006 and thereafter evaluated by a technical evaluation committee. Both the Boeing P-8 (based on the commercial Boeing 737 airliner) and EADS-CASA derivative of the

Airbus A319 airliner were down selected and the Boeing variant finally chosen in December 2006.

As per the official statement "the Government of India has selected Boeing IDS to provide eight P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft to the Indian Navy. The P-8I is a variant of the P-8A Poseidon that Boeing is developing for the US Navy and India is the first international customer for the P-8. Boeing will deliver the first P-8I within 48 months of the contract signing, the remaining seven by 2015".

The President of Boeing Integrated Defence Systems (IDS) reinforced that decision: "This aircraft will provide outstanding capabilities tailored to India's unique maritime-patrol requirements.... the aircraft will bring the Indian Navy advanced technology that is unmatched in maritime reconnaissance aircraft, and the reach and capability it needs to defend India's maritime

interests." The P-8I was described as being "a true multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) that features greater flexibility and a broader range of capabilities than aircraft currently in service...can operate effectively over land or water while performing anti-submarine warfare missions; search and rescue; maritime interdiction; long-range intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance".

Following detailed and comprehensive negotiations, on 1 January 2009 the Government of India formalised the contract for eight Boeing P-8I aircraft with the Company as also approved infrastructural augmentation at their intended base, INS *Rajali*, at Arakonam in Tamilnadu. Indian Naval teams were thereafter seconded to Boeing facilities at Seattle on the north western Pacific coast of the United States for contract management, even as the Navy selected personnel, both pilots and observers for operational conversion training.