

VAYU Interview with Surendra Ahuja,

Managing Director, Boeing Defence India

VAYU: *How do you see the defence sector growing in India in 2021?*

We remain confident in the long term growth of India's defence sector. The pandemic created some challenges in the short term, not just in India, but around the world. India has very important security and defence modernisation requirements and it has a dynamic ecosystem of growing companies and technical talent. I think our sector showed remarkable resilience and as we come out of the slowdown, defence modernisation imperatives will be driven with efficiency in capital budget utilisation and delivering more value by OEMs. Boeing is committed to delivering on its commitments and will continue to do so.

Today we are honoured to support India in its operations of 11 C-17s, 22 AH-64 Apaches (with six more on order), 15 CH-47 Chinooks and 10 P-8Is (with two more on order). We're engaged with our defence customers for the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft and the Indian Navy's Carrier-Borne Fighter programme.

We are seeing the growth in the localisation of lifecycle MRO services along with it, with an emphasis of "for India, from India" via our investments in our Indian workforce and local partners, we support the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy to provide exceptional operational capability and readiness in support of their needs to protect the world's largest democracy.

VAYU: *Boeing is also offering the F-15 EX in addition to Super Hornet for Indian Air Force's MRFA programme. What capabilities does the F-15 EX jets bring to the table?*

In early 2021, Boeing received a marketing license approval from the US Government to offer the F-15EX to India. The F-15EX offers a future-ready, multi-role solution to the Indian Air Force that has superior deterrent and air supremacy capabilities relative to the competition.

The F-15EX is the latest and most advanced version of combat-proven, multi-role, all-weather day/night F-15 aircraft family. USAF recently signed an indefinite-



delivery/indefinite-quantity contract with Boeing for 144 aircraft and the numbers could be even higher than 200. The \$5B investment by USAF and international customers has made the iconic platform even more 'future-ready' by integrating leading edge technologies, networks, weapons and sensors to meet the adversaries of today and tomorrow. The F-15EX can carry large payload and offers unmatched performance in the form of range, speed and altitude. The F-15 is the only aircraft that has 104 kills to its name in air to air combat.

VAYU: *What is the progress on the Apache programme? Do you anticipate more numbers?*

The Indian Air Force today has 22 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters. Early last year, the Ministry of Defence signed the contract for the acquisition of an additional six Apaches for the Indian Army.

Our Tata Boeing Aerospace Ltd. joint venture in Hyderabad continues to be a critical source of Apache manufacturing not only for the Indian Army but for customers worldwide, including the US Army. The six Apaches for the Indian Army will be built at the state-of-the-art TBAL manufacturing facility right here in India. We continue to be committed to providing the most advanced capability to India's defence forces. We do believe that India has requirements for more Apache attack helicopters and we stand ready to support them.

