VAYU Interview with

Alain Garcia, Vice President, India Business Development, Boeing Defense, Space & Security and Global Services

VAYU: Boeing currently supports the Indian Navy with a fleet of 12 P-8Is. What makes the platform suitable to support the Indian Navy's objectives in the Indo-Pacific region?

A. The P-8s Indian variant, referred to as P-8I, is an aircraft designed for long-range anti-submarine warfare (ASW), anti-surface warfare (ASuW), and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. The P-8 delivers highest levels of quality, reliability and operability. A true multi-mission aircraft, it is defined by a unique combination of state-of-the-art sensors, proven weapons systems, and a globally recognised platform. Notably, the Indian Navy was the first international customer for the P-8 and today operates the largest non-US fleet. In fact, on 19 December, it will be a decade since the first P-8I was delivered to the Indian Navy – a significant milestone in our growing relationship with the navy.

Since the induction of the P-8I in the Indian Navy, Boeing has been supporting the fleet to ensure high rates of mission readiness. With its 12 P-8Is, the Indian Navy is rapidly increasing its capability to seal and protect its vast coastline – while also playing a greater role in regional maritime security. In addition to unmatched maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare capabilities, the P-8I has been deployed to assist during disaster relief and humanitarian missions. The patrol aircraft is an integral part of the Indian Navy's fleet and has surpassed 35,000 flight hours since it was inducted in 2013. We believe that the Indian Navy may have a requirement for more P-8Is as also more Harpoons and we stand ready to support them.

A formidable part of the Indian Navy's fleet, the P-8 is a proven system with more than 140 aircraft in service that have executed more than 400,000 mishap free flight-hours around the globe. Along with the Indian Navy, the P-8 family includes the US Navy, the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force and Royal Norwegian Air Force. Militaries that have selected the P-8 include the Royal New Zealand Air Force, Republic of Korea Navy and German Navy. The P-8's performance and reliability delivers confidence in an uncertain world—in any condition, anywhere, anytime.

The P-8 combines the most advanced weapon system in the world with the cost advantages of the most operated commercial airliner on the planet. The P-8 shares 86% commonality with the commercial 737NG, providing enormous supply chain economies of scale in production and support. Boeing's expertise in commercial fleet management and derivative aircraft sustainment also provides customers with greater availability at a lower operational cost. The P-8 is engineered for 25 years/25,000 hours in the harshest maritime flight regimes, including extended operations in icing environments.

VAYU: What are the advantages of using the 737 as a platform for P-8?

A. The platform has a reliability of greater than 99% and a world-wide base of support, parts and training. Based on the Next Generation 737-800, the P-8 leverages the commonality of the platform, roughly 86%, to reduce support and training costs over the life of the aircraft as well as utilise the world-wide availability of parts. Even before delivery, the P-8 benefits from the fact that it is a modified 737. Built using the same in-line production processes as the commercial 737s, the P-8 has benefitted from those production line efficiencies, which have largely contributed to an overall 30% cost savings and 50% reduction in production time. That translates into savings for P-8 customers and has also resulted in Boeing's ability to deliver P-8s on or ahead of schedule.

VAYU: Are there any Indian suppliers contributing to the P-8I programme?

A. For both the P-8I and P-8A, we work with a number of Indian companies, including Avantel, Dynamatic Technologies, Hindustan Aeronautics, Bharat Electronics, Electronics Corporation of India, Rossell Techsys, Fokker Elmo Sasmos, and TATA Advanced Materials. They provide a variety of items such as structures, wiring harnesses, composites and electronics.

VAYU: Boeing is also offering the carrier fighter F/A-18 Super Hornet Block III to the Indian Navy. What are the advantages the platform offers which cater to the requirements specific to the Indian Navy?

A. The F/A-18 Super Hornet Block III is specifically designed, from its inception, for carrier operations. One of the main benefits of this is that the aircraft has the ability to fold its wings, allowing for better utilisation of deck space on the aircraft carrier. Boeing has conducted thorough study and analysis that optimises the number of Super Hornets that can fit aboard INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant, as well as optimises the cyclic operations from those carriers leading to