

# VAYU Interview with SURENDRA AHUJA

## Managing Director, Boeing Defence India

**VAYU:** *How can the services business be a significant driver of defence growth in India?*

Today, India operates 11 C-17s, 22 AH-64 Apaches (with six more on order), 15 CH-47 Chinooks, 12 P-8Is, 3 VVIP aircraft (737 airframe) and two Head of State aircraft (777 airframe), all Boeing platforms. Ensuring mission-readiness for our customers and providing them seamless services and support on our platforms is an imperative for Boeing. If we start with a quick look at the last five years, Boeing has accelerated growth in India with a razor-sharp focus on the key areas of:

- Customer engagement: meeting the Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force's (IAF) modernisation and mission-readiness needs
- Services growth: localisation of our services, and the value Boeing Defence India, our local establishment in India, is able to provide through the lifecycle of platforms offered
- Supplier expansion: building an indigenous and robust supplier-partner network with a focus on Aatmanirbhar Bharat

Hence, we had setup Boeing Defence India (BDI) with an aim to provide holistic lifecycle solutions for defence customers in India. Cost-effective solutions, timely support, and flawless execution are critical elements of BDI's commitment to the market and our customers. Boeing's integrated logistics support is already enabling the highest levels of fleet-readiness. We are seeing growth in our services business and, with it, growth in the value Boeing creates through product lifecycle support and training. From performance-based logistics contracting and integrated fleet support to maintenance, modifications and repairs, Boeing provides a broad spectrum of innovative products and services across platforms which directly support and enhance capabilities while reducing total cost of ownership for our customers globally. Boeing's investments in services infrastructure, building local capabilities, workforce training and partnerships in India are aimed at ensuring the Indian armed



forces successfully complete their missions, operate their assets at peak condition and do so affordably.

In 2021, we launched the Boeing India Repair Development and Sustainment (BIRDS) Hub. BIRDS is an initiative to bring together ecosystem partners to shape India as a strategic destination for aerospace engineering, maintenance, repair and sustainment services. This is a one-of-its-kind initiative that seeks to provide customers with best-in-class solutions, efficient turnaround times, and optimal economical value, all available in-country. Under this programme, we have by now signed strategic partnerships with leading indigenous players like Horizon Aerospace, Air Works, and AI Engineering Services Limited (AIESL). An important aspect of the hub is training programmes to increase skilled manpower by developing sub-tier suppliers and medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) to build high quality MRO capabilities in India. Our programmes have skilled close to 4,000 frontline aerospace manufacturing workers and aircraft maintenance engineers.

**VAYU:** *What are the services support packages being offered to the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy to support the mission readiness of the C-17, P-8I, Apache and Chinook fleet?*

We are working with the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Navy (IN) to provide operational capability and

readiness for the P-8Is, the C-17s, the Head of State aircraft and Chinooks and Apaches. We support the Indian Air Force C-17 fleet under the Globemaster Integrated Support Programme (GISP) that maintains high mission capability rates by providing them access to an extensive support network for parts availability and economies of scale. Boeing provides comprehensive C-17 Globemaster III training solutions for aircrews and loadmasters with advanced simulation, courseware and computer-based training. C-17 operators can practice the complete range of tasks required for tactical military airlift operations and humanitarian missions, along with mission rehearsal of all scenarios including emergency procedures. Boeing's in-country C-17 training center has completed thousands of training hours for aircrews and loadmasters.

Boeing offers long-term Performance Based Logistics (PBL) solutions for the platforms, namely, P-8I, Apache and Chinook, with a promise to provide the armed forces the same level of availability we are currently provide on the C-17 fleet through our GISP programme. Boeing also offers training as a service on simulators on these platforms, just as we do today for the C-17 platform. PBL strategies have a proven track record of transforming the legacy transactional support between Boeing and its customers, to solutions that increase aircraft availability, resolves Aircraft On-Ground (AOG) situations, and reduces the life-cycle cost of operating defence aircraft. A PBL contract guarantees engineering, technical and material support for our customers at any hour and any operating location. Essentially, it ensures the relevant parts, available at the required location and at the right time. PBLs translate to higher aircraft availability through better utilisation of inventory and the requirement for fewer spare parts. Specifically for India, a PBL strategy will help resolve operational issues and enable further growth of Aatmanirbhar Bharat in strengthening India's national defence industry.