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Lockheed Martin Gets Slice Of India's Defense Pie

Marietta: (IANS) In just about a year the Indian Air Force (IAF) will begin receiving the first of six C-130J Super Hercules airlifters it has purchased for \$1 billion, the aircraft signaling a paradigm shift in the manner in which the armed forces train for specialized operations.

For the first time, the IAF will be able to conduct precision low-level flying operations, airdrops and landings in blackout conditions as the aircraft will be equipped with an infrared detection set (IDS).

And, to ensure 80 percent availability of the aircraft at any given time, its manufacturer Lockheed Martin has offered a long-term maintenance contract to the IAF on the lines of the ones it has with the US Air Force and the air forces of Australia, Britain and Canada.

The six aircraft for the IAF are currently on the production line in a cavernous building the size of 76 football fields with the first one due to roll out in December.

"That is when the IAF will get first look at the aircraft. After flight tests and other trials, the aircraft will be handed over in the first quarter of 2011," Jack Crisler, director of the C-130J program, told a group of visiting Indian journalists, adding that the sixth aircraft was scheduled for

delivery by the end of 2011.

The C-130J primarily performs the tactical portion of an airlift mission. The aircraft is capable of operating from rough, dirt strips and is the prime transport for air dropping troops and equipment into hostile areas.

The flexible design of the Super Hercules enables it to be configured for many different missions, allowing for one aircraft to perform the role of many. Much of the special mission equipment added to the Super Hercules is removable, allowing the aircraft to quickly switch between roles.

To this end, the six C-130Js will primarily be deployed for the operations of the Indian Army's Special Forces, even as the IAF mulls the purchase of another six aircraft, some of them configured as midair refuellers.

As for the maintenance contract, Abhay Paranjape, Lockheed Martin's India director for the C-130J program, said: "On our part, we have made the offer, promising 80 percent of aircraft availability at any given time."

"We are awaiting the IAF's response," he added.

Should this come through, it will be first time the IAF will have outsourced aircraft maintenance.



Obama, Manmohan Discuss Headley, AfPak, Terrorism & Iran

Washington: India pressed the US for access to David Coleman Headley, a key plotter of the Mumbai attacks, and flagged off its key concerns on terrorism emanating from Pakistan when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Sunday met President Barack Obama.

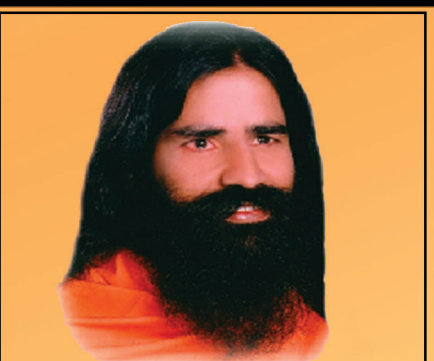
The delegation-level talks were held in Blair House, the presidential guest house across the street from White House and lasted 45 minutes. Manmohan Singh and Obama sat at the centre of Garden Room, flanked by their respective delegations. The eight-member Indian delegation included National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon, Foreign Secretary Nirupama

Rao, India's ambassador to the US Meera Shankar and senior officials of the external affairs ministry.

The 11-member US delegation included Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and senior officials.

Meeting ahead of the 47-nation Nuclear Security Summit, Singh and Obama also discussed how to secure nuclear material around the world so that it does not fall into the hands of terrorists. Manmohan Singh is understood to have sought Obama's nod for direct access to Headley, who is currently in the US custody.

Obama, on his part, enlisted India's support for a renewed US-led drive to impose fresh sanctions against Iran, suspected of developing nuclear weapons.



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