

India, U.S. in talks for C-17 deal

The consolidated cost of the aircraft is around \$366.2 million.

India is in talks with the U.S. for buying another Boeing C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft to be added to its fleet of 10.

Since induction in 2013, the aircraft has become the mainstay of India's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.

On June 26, the State Department notified Congress of a possible sale, approving it under the Foreign Military Sales programme. "The validity of the Letter of Acceptance for the sale expires in mid-October and India has to conclude the deal before that or ask the U.S. for an extension," an official said.

The aircraft, along with associated equipment, technical support and warranty, is estimated to cost \$366.2 million.

"The aircraft will be handed over within a month of the contract having been signed after some routine checks and maintenance. The handover will be done in the U.S. itself, and it will be flown to India by Indian pilots," Pratyush Kumar, president, Boeing India, told *The Hindu*.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) gave its approval for the purchase in December last.

Big push

"The proposed sale will improve India's capability to meet the current and future strategic airlift requirements ... India lies in a region prone to natural disasters and will use the additional capability [aircraft] for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief," the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), which manages the Foreign Military Sales programme, said in a statement in June.

In 2011, India purchased 10 C-17s under the Foreign Military Sales programme worth \$4.1 billion, which had a follow-on clause for six more aircraft. However, the delay in decision-making in the Defence Ministry meant the IAF missed out on the opportunity. The last C-17 aircraft left Boeing's Long Beach plant in California in 2015.

While the C-17 assembly line was shut down, Boeing made 10 additional aircraft without any order and offered them to all existing customers, including India. New Delhi's silence meant nine pieces were picked by the existing users and one is left with Boeing.

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