

# Lockheed Martin, Tata look to make F-16 wings in India

## US Def Major Brings 24 Of Its Suppliers To Talk With 70 SMEs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** Lockheed Martin on Tuesday said that with its partnership with Tata Advanced Systems it is looking at wing production for 200 F-16 fighter jets out of India in the next 4-5 years. The NYSE-listed aerospace and defence major said that India has till date produced 150 cabin sections for the S-92 helicopters and 130 tail sections for the C130 cargo aircraft (of which 12 sections were for India and 88 for export).

"We are looking at moving our entire F-16 manufacturing base to India, where a sizable number of components are produced," said Randall L Howard, head of F-16 business development, Lockheed Martin. Lockheed Martin on Tuesday brought in 24 of its tier-1 suppliers to interact with 70 SMEs in India for collaboration on producing components. "These SMEs



**AIMING HIGH:** The companies are looking to manufacture wings for 200 F-16 fighter jets out of India in the next 4-5 years

have already got expertise in the field, being suppliers to the Indian aerospace and space research industry," said Howard.

"With this meet, Indian SMEs can explore opportunities and share knowledge with global suppliers in the F-16 fighter aircraft manufacturing ecosystem. The potential F-16 India project, as a single source globally, will be

strategic for India. And we are looking forward to participating in the selection process for the fighter programme of the Indian Air Force," said Sukaran Singh, CEO, Tata Advanced Systems.

Currently, F-16 industry partners include GE, Eaton, Terma, Honeywell, Fokker, Israeli Aerospace Industries, Elbit, UTC and Moog.

Lockheed Martin and Ta-

ta have announced that the two companies will jointly produce the F-16 Block 70 in India if the aircraft is selected by the IAF. Lockheed said that till date about 4,600 F-16s have been bought by 28 of their global customers.

In India, the company said it is also working on providing technical education and guidance for STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) for girl students in universities.

"We have partnered with centres of excellence in India. And we are keen that the students we work with will later become a talent pool we can hire from, as we are constantly looking at hiring more women in engineering roles. We are also looking at hiring women pilots from India to test our fighter planes," said John R Losinger, who is in charge of integrated fighter group communications at Lockheed.