

# Open to helping India on Tejas aircraft: Lockheed Aeronautics

Ready to shift F-16 production to India

## **PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

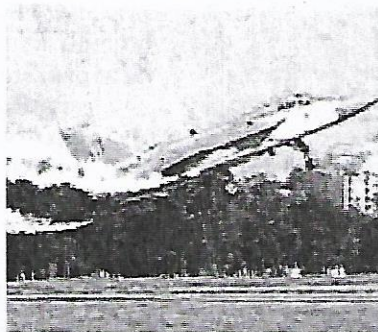
Washington, November 30

America's top fighter jet manufacturer, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, has said it is willing to help India in the production of the indigenously-designed light combat aircraft Tejas.

Currently, the state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd produces around eight Tejas annually.

The Defence Ministry wants to increase the number to 18 planes per year.

"Lockheed Martin has a strong record of successful international industrial partnerships, many of which happen to be directly related to the F-16," said Vivek Lall,



Defence Ministry wants 18 Tejas aircraft produced per year PTI

Vice-President, Strategy and Business Development, Lockheed Aeronautics.

"The F-16 is a proven force multiplier that would certainly complement the Tejas," Lall said.

## **Shifting the base**

He said the production of F-16 in India, as proposed by Lockheed, will not only put the country at the epicentre

of a \$165-billion fighter aircraft sustainment market but also the world's largest fighter aircraft ecosystem.

Lockheed, which has proposed to shift its entire F-16 manufacturing base to India, subject to it getting a major order from the Indian armed forces, pointed out that currently there are production opportunities for more than 400 such fighter jets globally.

"Those relationships and the technology sharing they facilitate can spawn new ideas and innovation in India for decades to come. This is about far more than an F-16 production line. It's about building trust, strategic partnerships and new ideas to unleash the potential of India's own innovators," he said.