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FACT FILE

Manufactured by: Lockheed Martin

Workhorse: 4,500 fighters delivered to 28 customers, including Pak air force

Length: 15.03 m

Height: 5.09 m

Wingspan: 10 m

Top speed: 1,500 mph

India status: Failed to make it to final round

Latest variant: F-16V (Viper)



LOCKHEED SHOWS INTEREST IN BUILDING F-16s IN INDIA

Rahul Singh

rahul.singh@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: PM Narendra Modi's Make in India plan appears to be generating a buzz in the US, with Bethesda-based aerospace major Lockheed Martin indicating interest in building its iconic F-16 fighter plane in the country.

Top sources said during a meeting with Modi in New York on Thursday, Lockheed Martin CEO Marillyn Hewson discussed the possibility of building the fighter planes in India.

The single-engine F-16 took part in India's multi-billion dollar tender to buy modern warplanes, but the US firm was knocked out of the competition in early stages.

After the Modi-Hewson meeting, ministry of external affairs spokesman Vikas Swarup, tweeted, "Cleared for takeoff. Marillyn Hewson, Chairman of @LockheedMartin discusses aerospace industry w/ PM @narendramodi."

Lockheed Martin has delivered more than 4,500 fighters to 28 international customers, including the Pakistan Air Force.

The US firm has introduced several upgraded variants of the fighter that has been around for more than 40 years. New F-16 variants come packed with enhancements such as active electronically scanned array radars, improved situational awareness for pilots, better avionics and sensors and increased payload to keep pace with rapidly evolving military requirements.

India finally scrapped the contract to buy 126 fighter jets and is currently negotiating with France to buy 36 Rafale fighters under a government-to-government sale.

To meet the Indian Air Force's requirements, the possibilities being explored by New Delhi include going in for large-scale manufacturing of the locally-produced light combat aircraft or building a fighter with foreign collaboration in India.