

Centre seals ₹62,700 crore deals with HAL for 156 LCHs

Also signs pact with US contractor for leasing of flight-refuelling aircraft

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New Delhi, 28 March

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Friday signed two contracts with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) for supplying 156 Prachand light combat helicopters (LCHs), along with training and associated equipment, at a cost of ₹62,700 crore, excluding taxes.

The first contract with the Bengaluru-headquartered public-sector aerospace and defence company is for 66 LCHs for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the second for 90 for the Indian Army.

“The supply of these helicopters shall commence from the third year (2027-28) and will be spread over the next five years. The contracts will enhance the combat capability of the armed forces at high altitudes,” an MoD release said, adding that the LCH was India’s first indigenously designed and developed combat helicopter and was capable of operating at altitudes of more than 5,000 metres.

“This helicopter has a large number of components designed and manufactured in India, and it is planned to achieve an overall indigenous content of over 65 per cent during the execution of this procurement. This will involve over 250 domestic companies, mostly micro, small and medium enterprises, and will generate over 8,500 direct and indirect jobs.”

The LCH contracts were signed shortly after the Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, granted approval to them.

On the same day, the MoD also signed a contract with United States-based military contractor Metrea Management for the wet lease of one flight-refuelling aircraft (FRA) to provide air-to-air refuelling training to pilots of the IAF and Indian Navy.



LCH is the first indigenous multi-role combat helicopter designed and manufactured by HAL

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FIREPOWER BOOST

■ The value of contracts awarded by the MoD in 2024-25 has crossed ₹2.09 trn

■ Friday's contracts cover 66 LCH for IAF and 90 for Army

■ LCH is India's first indigenous combat helicopter, capable of operating at altitudes over 5,000 metres

Metrea will provide the KC-135 FRA within six months, making it the first refuelling aircraft to be wet leased by the IAF. With the signing of these three contracts, the value of contracts awarded by the MoD in 2024-25 has crossed ₹2.09 trillion (₹2,09,050 crore) — the highest ever and double the previous record set in 2023-24.

Of the 193 contracts in the financial year, 177 (92 per cent) have been awarded to domestic industry, with a value of ₹1.69 trillion (₹1,68,922 crore), accounting for 81 per cent of the value.

The latest LCH order is in addition to the 15 limited series production helicop-

ters earlier contracted from HAL — 10 for the IAF and five for the Army — at a cost of ₹4,264 crore.

The LCH is the first indigenous multi-role combat helicopter designed and manufactured by HAL. It is equipped for both ground attack and aerial combat, with modern stealth features, armour protection, and night attack capability. Its advanced navigation system, a nose-mounted gun for close combat, and air-to-air missiles make it suited for contemporary battlefields. The helicopter is capable of operating in high-altitude terrain and executing precision strikes on high-altitude targets.