

MoD signs ₹5,083 cr helicopter, missile deals with HAL, Russia

MARTAND MISHRA

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The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Tuesday signed contracts worth ₹5,083 crore for Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III and Shtil vertical launch surface-to-air missiles for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the Indian Navy.

The contracts include the procurement of six ALH Mk-III helicopters in the maritime role from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Shtil vertical launch surface-to-air missiles from Russia's state-owned JSC Rosoboronexport. "The induction will significantly enhance the ICG's capability to fulfil its duties of ensuring the safety and protection of artificial islands, offshore installations, fishermen and the marine environment," the ministry said in a statement.

Maritime readiness

Designed and manufactured indigenously, the ALH Mk-III is a twin-engine, multi-role helicopter used for maritime operations. It is equipped with advanced surveillance radar, electro-optical sensors and modern communication systems. The helicopter can undertake search and rescue, medical evacuation, coastal patrol, special forces support and offshore asset protection.

Its ability to operate from ships and remote coastal bases makes it a force multiplier for the ICG, particularly in patrolling India's vast Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Shtil missile system is a shipborne, vertically launched air-defence

IAF's medium transport aircraft acquisition proposal gathers pace

The Ministry of Defence's (MOD's) Defence Procurement Board (DPB) on Tuesday recommended moving ahead with the proposal to procure 60 medium transport aircraft (MTA) for the Indian Air Force (IAF), a defence source told *Business Standard*.

The programme — with Airbus, Lockheed Martin and Embraer in contention — now awaits approval from the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) and the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). Upon finalisation of the deal, 12 aircraft will be acquired in fly-away condition, while the remaining 48 will be manufactured domestically. Falling in the 18–30 tonne load-carrying capacity category, the MTA is intended to replace both the IAF's ageing Russian-origin AN-32 and IL-76 transport aircraft fleet.

The IAF issued a Request for Information (RFI) in December 2022 for up to 80 MTAs. Responses were received from Airbus for the A-400M, Lockheed Martin for the C-130, and Embraer for the C-390.

BHASWAR KUMAR

weapon designed to counter aerial threats, including aircraft, helicopters and anti-ship missiles. Integrated with advanced fire-control radars, it provides medium-range protection and forms part of the Navy's layered air-defence shield for frontline vessels operating in high-threat environments.

The latest contracts come against the backdrop of earlier approvals by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) last month, aimed at modernising the Coast Guard's fleet and surveillance capabilities. The MoD also signed a separate ₹2,312 crore contract with HAL for eight Dornier 228 aircraft for the ICG under the Buy (Indian) category.

The Dornier 228 is a light transport and maritime patrol aircraft known for its short take-off and landing capability, making it ideal for operations from coastal airstrips. The Dornier 228 is a light transport and maritime patrol aircraft known for its short takeoff and landing capability, making it ideal for operations from coastal airstrips.

Additionally, the DAC cleared the Acceptance of Necessity — the formal procurement approval — for advanced Electro-Optical/Infra-Red (EO/IR) systems for the Dornier fleet, aimed at enhancing night-time surveillance and improving detection capability in adverse weather conditions.