

# ₹4,276-cr indigenous weapons get MoD nod

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The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), the defence ministry's apex equipment procurement body, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, accorded a green signal on Tuesday for initiating the procurement of three indigenous weapons platforms for ₹4,276 crore.

The accord of Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) by the DAC is the first step of the acquisition process and establishes that the military has an urgent need for the equipment that is being cleared. The three acquisitions that were given AoNs on Tuesday include two weapons systems for the Indian Army and one for the Indian Navy.

All three acquisitions have been categorised as Buy (Indian — Indian Designed, Developed and Manufactured), or Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category. This is the highest priority procurement under the Defence Acquisition Procedure of 2020 (DAC-2020).

The first AoN was accorded for acquisition of HELINA anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs), launchers and associated support equipment. This ATGM, designed by the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) will provide a potent anti-tank capability to the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).

The ALH, designed by Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL), is already equipped with a cannon, rocket launchers, and electronic warfare systems. The HELINA missile, which can destroy enemy tanks at ranges out to seven kilometres, completes the weaponisation of the ALH.

"Its induction will strengthen the offensive capability of the Indian Army," stated the ministry. The DAC also accorded AoN for procurement of the DRDO's very short range air defence



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(VSHORAD) infrared homing missile system, which is being designed and developed by the DRDO. This can shoot down enemy aircraft at ranges out to seven kilometres.

"In view of the recent developments along the Northern borders there is a need to focus on effective air defence (AD) weapon systems, which are man portable and can be deployed quickly in rugged terrain and maritime domain," stated the defence ministry.

The third weapons system that the DAC approved for procurement was the BrahMos launcher and fire control system (FCS) for the Navy's three Shivalik-class frigates and six Next Generation Missile Vessels (NGMVs).

The induction of BrahMos missiles will provide these ships with an enhanced capability for carrying out maritime strike operations, interdicting targets on land and destroying enemy's warships and merchant vessels. The NGMVs are robust, 1,500-tonne vessels, whose Indo-Russian BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles can reach targets 295-kilometres away. Making them hard to detect will be in-built stealth features, such as low radar, infrared, acoustic, and magnetic signatures.