

# HAL inks pact setting up footprint in Malaysia to export weaponry

## Aerospace giant preparing for likely success in exporting Indian Tejas Mark 1A fighter

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With Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) having fielded the Tejas Mark 1A fighter in a Malaysian tender for 18 fighter lead-in trainers (FLITs), the company is preparing for what would be the first success in exporting the Indian fighter.

On Thursday, the Bengaluru-headquartered aerospace giant announced that it had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with its representative in Kuala Lumpur, called Forte Drus, for tapping new opportunities in exporting weaponry to Malaysia.

“The office in Malaysia will help HAL in tapping the new business opportunities for Fighter Lead-in Trainer (FLIT), LCA (Light Combat Aircraft) and other requirements of Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) like Sukhoi-30 MKM and Hawk upgrades,” said HAL.

“HAL had submitted a proposal to Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), Malaysia, during October 2021 for supply of 18 FLIT LCAs against a global



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tender issued by RMAF. The final winner of the tender is expected to be declared soon by Malaysian authorities. LCA Tejas stands a fair chance of selection in the bid as it meets all the parameters sought by RMAF,” said a HAL media release on Thursday.

In addition to offering the Tejas LCA in Kuala Lumpur’s global tender for 18 advanced jet trainers, HAL sees business opportunities in Malaysia for maintenance and upgrade of their Sukhoi-30MKM and Hawk trainer fleets.

“Further, being one of the largest producers of Russian origin Sukhoi-30 aircraft, HAL has capabilities to extend the required support for RMAF’s Sukhoi-30MKM fleet, which is facing

low serviceability issues due to ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis,” said HAL.

HAL has also offered to support the RMAF for upgrading their Hawk fleet. Other HAL platforms like HTT-40 basic trainer, Dornier-228 light maritime reconnaissance aircraft, Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) have the potential to be inducted by RMAF in the future, said HAL.

Considering these factors, HAL’s office in Kuala Lumpur plans to take up market promotion of the company’s products and services in Malaysia, and across the Southeast Asian region.

“It will reinforce commitment of India in supporting the Malaysian

Defence Forces and industry for sustainable aerospace and defence landscape in Malaysia,” said HAL.

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According to the Malaysian news media, the other contestants in the fray are: Pakistani-Chinese JF-17 Thunder, Russia’s MiG-35, China’s Catic, Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) FA-50, Turkey Aerospace Industries (TAI) Hürjet, and Italy’s Leonardo with the M-346.

Aerospace industry analysts say that price will be an important issue for the RMAF, which is expecting to pay in the region of \$900 million for 18 fighters, or \$50 million per fighter. It is understood that HAL is offering the Tejas at that price.

The Korean fighter is understood to be slightly more expensive than the Tejas and the Russian MiG-35 far more so. Meanwhile, the Chinese are believed to have slashed the price of the JF-17 by about 30 per cent, a loss it will bear in order to capture the market.