

HAL to receive 45,000 crore orders for 83 LCA fighters

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New Delhi: In a major boost for the indigenous defence manufacturing capability, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is expected to place orders worth around 45,000 crore with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to acquire 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas fighters.

The IAF had issued a tender for 83 LCAs about two years ago and the project was stuck over the pricing issue as the government and the Air Force felt that the price offered by the HAL was slightly higher.

"The cost committee of the Defence Ministry has determined the cost of the 83 LCA Mark 1A aircraft around ₹45,000 crore and the Indian Air Force is now expected to place orders for these planes in the next few weeks," senior defence sources told ANI.



The LCAs have been designed and developed completely by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Earlier this year, DRDO Chief G Satheesh Reddy had presented the Final Operational Clearance (IOC) certificate for the LCA to the IAF and the Defence Ministry at the Aero-India.

Sources said it would be the first-of-its-kind order for any Indian firm and would give major boost for the indigenous defence industry. More than 65 per cent funds of the ₹45,000 crore order would remain within the country and help in creating jobs in both private and public sectors.

The Acceptance of Necessity given by the Defence Ministry over two years ago was ₹50,000 crore but the price determined by the ministry's cost committee was reduced to around ₹45,000 crore.

The first LCA Mark 1A aircraft is likely to be produced by 2023 once the HAL is done with the supply of the initial 40 planes in the Initial Operational Clearance and Final Operational Clearance standards which have already taken part and proven themselves in the IAF operational exercises such as the Exercise Gagan Shakti.

LCA Mark 1A is the advanced version of Tejas aircraft.

As per the requirements presented by the IAF, the first LCA Mark 1A plane would be supplied in 36 months from the signing of the contract. The new LCA Mark 1A plane will have advanced avionics and radars than the initial 40 LCAs being supplied to the Air Force.

The HAL has so far supplied 16 LCAs to the service which has based them at Sullur in Tamil Nadu under 45 Squadron.

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