

Cabinet clears biggest ever **Rs 62,000 cr** deal for buying **156 Light Combat Helicopters**



NEW DELHI, Mar 28 (ANI)

THE CABINET Committee on Security on Friday gave its nod for the biggest ever deal to buy 156 Light Combat Helicopters worth over Rs 62,000 crore for the Indian Army and Air Force from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

This would be the biggest order for the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited so far, and the choppers would be built at their plants in Bengaluru and Tumkur in Karnataka.

The 156 choppers would be divided between the Indian Army (90) and the Indian Air Force for operations along the China and Pakistan borders and would be a major step towards creating jobs and expanding the aerospace ecosystem within the country," defence sources told ANI. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) received the tender for 156 Light
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Putin suggests putting Ukraine under UN-sponsored external governance

■ Says, Zelenskyy lacks legitimacy to sign a peace deal as his term has expired last year

MOSCOW, Mar 28 (AP)

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin proposed on Friday to put Ukraine under external governance under the UN aegis as part of efforts to reach a peaceful settlement, a blustery statement that reflected the Kremlin leader's determination to achieve his war goals.

Speaking to the crew of a Russian nuclear submarine in televised remarks broadcast ear-

ly on Friday, Putin reaffirmed his claim that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whose term expired last year, lacks the legitimacy to sign a peace deal.

Under Ukraine's constitution it is illegal for the country to hold national elections while the country is under martial law.

Putin claimed that any agreement that is signed with the current Ukrainian Government could be challenged by its successors and said, new elections could be held under external governance.

"Under the auspices of the United Nations, with the United States, even with European countries, and, of course, with our partners and friends, we could



discuss the possibility of introduction of temporary governance in Ukraine," Putin said, adding that it would allow the country to "hold democratic elections, to bring to power a viable government that enjoys the trust of the people, and then begin

negotiations with them on a peace treaty."

He added that such external governance is just "one of the options", but didn't elaborate.

Putin's remarks came hours after the conclusion of a summit hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron that considered plans to deploy troops to Ukraine to cement an eventual peace deal.

Putin has also stated that the Kremlin stands for a peaceful resolution of the Ukraine conflict on the condition that its root causes are removed, describing the conflict as complex and demanding a "careful approach."

"We are for resolving all these

issues by peaceful means. Yet with removing the original causes that triggered the current situation," Putin said.

Putin further stated that Moscow is ready to work on the Ukrainian settlement with Europe as well but will not make any mistakes in excessively trusting the West, local media reported.

"We are also ready to work with Europe, it is just that they are acting inconsistently, constantly trying to fool us. But it's ok, we have gotten used to it already. I hope we will make no mistakes based on excessive trust in our so-called partners," Russian State-run news agency TASS reported on Friday, quoting Putin as saying,

India can't change fanatic mindset of Pak: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI, Mar 28 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, speaking in Lok Sabha on Friday, highlighted incidents involving attack on minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Minister said New Delhi is tracking "very closely" the treatment of minorities in Pakistan and making its position "well known", but the country cannot change the "fanatical and bigoted mindset" of a neighbour.

Replying to a supplementary query during the Question Hour, Jaishankar pointed to 10 incidents involving attacks on Hindus in Pakistan in February.

Seven of these incidents related to abduction and forced conversion, two other cases related to abduction, and one in which



there was "police action" against students celebrating Holi, he said. He informed the House that there were also three cases related to atrocities against members of the Sikh community. In one case, a Sikh family was attacked; in another case, a Sikh family was threatened for reopening an old Gurdwara, and yet another case involved the

abduction and conversion of a girl from the Sikh community, the Minister said. He added that two other cases involved members of the Ahmediya community, and another case in which a Christian person of unstable mind was charged with blasphemy.

Jaishankar said India takes up such cases at the international level also. "Like in Pakistan, we track the welfare and well-being of minorities in Bangladesh as well ... In 2024, we had 2,400 incidents relating to attacks on minorities and in 2025, 72 incidents ... I have taken it up with my counterpart there. The Foreign Secretary also took it up when he visited Bangladesh. This continues to be a matter of concern for our Government," Jaishankar said.

Army successfully tests FPV drone with anti-tank munition

NEW DELHI, Mar 28 (ANI)

IN A first-of-its-kind project, the Indian Army's Fleur-De-Lis Brigade successfully tested a First Person View (FPV) drone equipped with an impact-based, kamikaze-role anti-tank munition. The test was carried out in the general area of Pathankot in Punjab.

The Fleur-De-Lis Brigade has achieved a milestone in tactical drone warfare by successfully developing, testing, and validating an FPV drone equipped with an impact-based, kamikaze-role anti-tank munition--the first-of-its-kind project in the Indian Army.

This FPV drone is developed in collaboration with DRDO's



Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), Chandigarh.

This initiative, launched in August 2024, has undergone extensive research, development, and trials to enhance the capabilities of low-cost, high-impact aerial strike systems.

The FPV drone was entirely assembled in-house at the Rising Star Drone Battle School, which

has fabricated over 100 drones within the formation as of March 2025. This self-reliant approach ensured complete control over build quality, component integration, and real-time modifications as per TBRL directives.

It also optimized structural integrity, weight distribution, and flight dynamics, making the drone highly manoeuvrable and efficient for operational deployment.

To enhance operator safety, a dual-safety mechanism has been incorporated into the payload system. This prevents accidental detonation during transport, handling, and flight, significantly increasing reliability and minimizing risks for pilots and personnel handling the drone.

7.7 earthquake in Myanmar, Thailand claims 154 lives, hundreds injured, many missing

BANGKOK, Mar 28 (AP)

A POWERFUL earthquake rocked Myanmar and neighbouring Thailand on Friday, destroying buildings, a bridge and a dam. At least 144 people were killed in Myanmar, where photos and video from two hard-hit cities showed extensive damage. At least 10 died in the Thai capital, where a high-rise under construction collapsed.

The full extent of death, injury and destruction was not immediately clear — particularly in Myanmar, one of the world's poorest countries. It is embroiled in a civil war, and information is tightly controlled.

"The death toll and injuries are expected to rise," the head of Myanmar's military Government, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said as he



Rescuers work at the site of a high-rise building under construction that collapsed after a 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Bangkok, Thailand on Friday. (AP/PTI)

announced on television that at least 144 people were killed and 730 others were injured in his country.

In Thailand, Bangkok city authorities said 10 people were killed, 16 injured and 101 missing from three construction sites, including the high-rise.

The 7.7 magnitude quake struck at midday, with an epicentre near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. Aftershocks followed, one of them measuring a strong 6.4 magnitude.

Photos from Myanmar's capital, Naypyidaw, showed rescue crews pulling victims from the rubble of multiple buildings used to house civil servants.

Myanmar's Government said blood was in high demand in the hardest-hit areas. In a country where prior governments sometimes have been slow to

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Tremors felt in parts of India

KOLKATA/IMPHAL/SHILONG, Mar 28 (PTI)

MILD tremors were felt in Kolkata, Imphal and Meghalaya's East Garo Hills district on Friday after a powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck Thai capital Bangkok.

Tremors were reported from Kolkata and its adjoining areas. However, according to official sources, there were no reports of damage to property or loss of life in the city due to the tremor.

In Manipur, the tremors caused panic among residents of Thangal Bazar in

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