

Hindustan Aeronautics Selects Domestic Partner to Develop AESA Radar for UH-M Helicopter

By Atul Chandra

Indian state-owned airframer [Hindustan Aeronautics Limited \(HAL\)](#) has awarded a domestic firm a design and development contract for an Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar for its upcoming Utility Helicopter–Maritime (UH-M) platform.

[Centum Electronics Limited](#) announced in February that the program will be executed in two phases. The company received an INR 78 million (approximately US\$8.6 million) contract from HAL for Phase 1 of the project, which involves the design and development of an AESA radar system that can detect, classify, and track multiple maritime targets. The design and development program is to be completed in 2028.

Following the successful completion of Phase 1, HAL is expected to contract with Centum for series production of AESA radars over a period of five years from 2029-2034. This contract is expected to be worth INR five billion (approximately US\$55 million).

HAL is developing the UH-M to meet a longstanding Navy requirement for maritime utility helicopters to replace its obsolete Cheetah (SA-315B Alouette III) helicopters, which were produced under license by HAL. Approximately 40 Cheetah helicopters are thought to be currently operational.

HAL is slated to make the maiden flight of the first UH-M prototype this year. Certification followed by series

production is expected to commence between 2028 and 2030. In addition to the domestically developed maritime AESA radar, the UH-M will feature EO/IR sensors, EW sensors and a countermeasures dispensing system. The AESA radar under development will replace the current mechanically scanned surveillance radar on Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mk-III (MR).

In a Request for Information (RFI) issued in August 2025, the Indian Ministry of Defence is eyeing the procurement of 76 Naval Utility Helicopters (NUH). Fifty-one of these helicopters will go to the Navy, while 25 will be delivered to the Indian Coast Guard. In addition to undertaking transportation, cargo carrying, medical evacuation, search and rescue, and reconnaissance missions, the NUH will also be used for low-intensity maritime operations.

ALH Mk III (MR) helicopters currently operational with the Navy and Coast Guard feature several additional systems over Indian Army and Indian Air Force variants. These include a nose-mounted surveillance radar, IFF Mk XII and ATC transponder with ADS-B Out, a V/UHF Communication System, Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance (TCAS-I), SAR homing system, Automatic Deployable Emergency Locator Transmitter (ADELT), radio altimeter, Integrated Architecture Display System (IADS), Automatic Identification System (AIS), pressure refueling system, EO pod and a pintle-mounted 12.7 mm gun.