

Deal for 48 Mi-17 choppers by year-end

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Russia and India are holding negotiations for the supply of 48 Russian Mi-17 military transport helicopters with Moscow hoping to seal the deal by the year-end, a top Russian official has said.

Russian arms supplier Rosoboronexport's CEO Alexander Mikheev said India has more than 300 helicopters belonging to the Mi-8 and Mi-17 family, which are deployed in troop and arms transport, fire support, convoy escort, patrol, and search-and-rescue missions. He said India knows their specifications well.

Mikheev said Russia and India are holding talks with a view to sign a contract for 48 (Mi-17V-5) helicopters and the techno-commercial negotiations are set to commence.

"We hope that we will reach an agreement before the end of this year," he said on the sidelines of Russia's premier air show MAKS 2017.

Last year, Russia had handed over to India the final batch of three Mi-17V-5 military transport helicopters under a previously signed contract with Rosoboronexport, a company of the Rostec State Corporation, that entailed a total of 151 units of the Mi-17V-5 helicopter, produced by the Kazan Helicopter Plant. Designed to transport cargo inside the cabin and on an external sling, the Mi-17V-5 is considered to be one of the world's most advanced military transport helicopters. — PTI