

INDIA-MADE LIGHT COMBAT HELICOPTERS (LCH)



Issue

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has approved the procurement of 15 indigenously developed Light Combat Helicopters (LCH).

Background

The price is worth Rs 3,887 cr and other infrastructure is worth Rs 377 cr. The committee was chaired by the Prime Minister.

Details

- The idea of LCH was conceptualised during the Kargil War in 1999 when India felt the need to have attack helicopters that can operate in harsh conditions.
- The existing Russian-made inventory had to be modified to operate at such high altitude. The army even lost a MI-17 helicopter during the operation.

Development of indigenous helicopter

The indigenous LCH was announced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), which was equipped to operate in the harsh desert conditions as well as the high altitude areas of Ladakh.

Testing

- Ground-run of first prototype of the LCH took place in February 2010. The flight test of the second prototype took place in 2011.

- Third prototype with integrated weapon platforms and sensors was tested in 2014. Cold weather and hot weather tests were also done subsequently.
- The helicopters were cleared for operational deployment in 2019 after checking for full performance.

Features of LCH

- The helicopter operates with pilot and co-pilot sitting in tandem position (one behind the other).
- It has armour protection, night attack capability and crash worthy landing gear apart from stealth protection.
- It has weight of 5,800 kg with a maximum speed of 268 km per hour. The range is 550 km and has an operational ceiling of 6.5 kms.
- The LCH is armed with air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles. Electronic Warfare suite and helmet mounted display for the flying crew are some other features.

Operation

- It can be deployed in anti-tank operation to fly low and fast to attack enemy armour columns.
- They can be used for scouting role, to fly ahead and detect enemy presence. LCH can also be used for destruction of enemy air defence assets.
- LCH can be deployed for urban warfare missions and combat search and rescue operations.

NOTES

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