

Light Combat Helicopters (LCH)

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In news- Recently, the Cabinet Committee of Security has approved procurement of 15 Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Limited Series Production.

About Light Combat Helicopters (LCH)-

- Light Combat Helicopter Limited Series Production (LSP) **is an indigenously designed, developed and manufactured state of the art modern combat helicopter containing approx. 45% indigenous content** by value which will progressively increase to more than 55% for SP Version.
- **The genesis of the LCH lies in the Kargil conflict of 1999** when the absence of an attack helicopter which could operate in ultra-high altitude areas was felt acutely by the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- **It was in 2006 that the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) announced its intention to develop a LCH** which could operate in the harsh desert conditions as well as the high altitude areas of Ladakh including the Siachen Glacier.
- **The first ground run of the first prototype of the LCH took place in February 2010** and other proto type were conducted in 2011, 2014, and 2015.
- It was **in January 2019 that HAL gave the go ahead for the operational deployment of the helicopter** after all systems had been fully integrated and checked for performance.
- According to HAL, the **LCH has the maximum possible commonality with Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).**
- The attack helicopter **has a pilot and co-pilot sitting in tandem position (one behind the other).**

- The helicopter has **several stealth features and has armour protection, night attack capability** and crash worthy landing gear to give it better survivability.
- It is powered by **two Shakti engines and has a maximum take off weight of 5,800 kg.**
- With a **maximum speed of 268 km per hour it has a range of 550 km** and an operational ceiling of 6.5 kms.
- **Armed with air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles**, LCH also has a 20 mm gun and 70 mm rockets.
- With a **full glass cockpit, the LCH has an Electronic Warfare suite** and helmet mounted display for the flying crew.
- This helicopter is equipped with requisite agility, maneuverability, extended range, high altitude performance and around-the-clock.
- It is also **is equipped with-**
 - All-weather combat capability to perform roles of Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR).
 - Destruction of Enemy Air Defence (DEAD).
 - Counter Insurgency (CI) operations, against slow moving aircraft and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPAs).
 - High altitude bunker busting operations.
 - Counter Insurgency operations in jungle and urban environments and support to ground forces.
- The LCH is **well suited for anti-tank roles** wherein it can fly low and fast to attack enemy armour columns and destroy them.
- It is **also suitable for scout roles** wherein it can fly ahead of advancing columns of the Army and detect enemy presence.
- **It is also suitable for air defence roles and destruction of enemy air defence assets.**
- It can also be used in urban warfare missions and **combat search and rescue operations.**