

# INDUCTION OF INDIGENOUSLY BUILT LIGHT COMBAT HELICOPTER MARKS A NEW CHAPTER: AIR CHIEF

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Defence related developments

Lethal weapon: A water cannon salute being given to 'Prachand' in Jodhpur on Monday. PTI-

Induction of the indigenously designed and developed Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) adds unique capability to the combat potential of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and marks a new chapter, said Air Chief Marshal (ACM) V. R. Chaudhari on Monday as the twin-engine helicopter was formally inducted into the 143 Helicopter Unit 'Dhanush' at the Jodhpur Air Force Station.

"The induction of LCH underlines the fact that just as the country trusts the IAF, the IAF equally trusts the indigenous equipment," said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who presided over the induction ceremony.

Stating that the LCH met the requirements of modern warfare and necessary quality parameters under varied conditions of operations, Mr. Singh said it fully met the requirements of both the Army and the Air Force.

The Army had formally received its first LCH in Bengaluru last week.

## High altitudes

The twin-engine LCH, designed and developed by HAL, is a 5-8 tonne class dedicated combat helicopter. It was conceptualised after the 1999 Kargil conflict when the need for such a dedicated platform capable of operating in high altitudes was felt. It is the only attack helicopter in the world which can land and take-off at an altitude of 5,000 m (16,400 ft) with considerable load of weapons and fuel significantly augmenting the firepower of the IAF and the Army in high altitude areas.

The helicopter has a combat radius of 500 km and go up to a service ceiling of 21,000 feet which makes it ideal to operate at high altitude areas of the Siachen glacier.

Speaking at the event, C.B. Ananthkrishnan, Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL), said four LCH had been delivered to the IAF and four more would be delivered within this financial year.

The contract for 10 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopters was signed between the IAF and the HAL on March 30 and the 143 Helicopter Unit 'Dhanush' which is operating the LCH was raised on June 1.

## Extensive testing

The first prototype of the helicopter took first flight on March 29, 2010, and has since undergone extensive testing and evaluation. The LCH is armed with 20 mm nose gun, 70 mm rockets, anti-tank guided missile 'Dhruvastra' and air-to-air missile 'Mistral-2' of MBDA which has a maximum interception range of 6.5 km.

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