

Prachand: The Roar of the Flying Tiger



On 28 March 2025 in a landmark deal boosting self-reliance, Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed two contracts with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for 156 (90 for Indian Army Aviation Corps, 66 for Indian Air Force) Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) Prachand plus associated equipment at a cost of over Rs. 62,700 Cr (US\$ 7.2 billion) excluding taxes. The contracts were signed soon after the deal got final sanction from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). The helicopters will be manufactured in HAL's Bengaluru and Tumukuru plant in Karnataka. Deliveries will start from the 3rd year of inking the contract and will be followed by delivery of 30 helicopters per year, completing the contract within the next 5 years. The formal induction of LCH to the Indian Air Force (IAF) occurred in 3 October 2022 in 143 Helicopter Unit at Jodhpur Air Force Station (AFS) and officially named Prachand by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Designed and developed for seamless airborne operations in support of ground troops at high altitudes and holding the distinction of the first attack helicopter to land on Siachen (having repeatedly landed at several high altitude helipads, some of which being as high as 13,600 ft to 15,800 ft), the maiden flight of Hindustan

Aeronautics Limited Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) took place on 29 March 2010 marking successful culmination of three years of design and development efforts by Rotary Wing Research & Design Centre (RWRDC) of the Helicopter Complex and appropriately named 'Tiger Bird' perhaps inspired from exceptional high agility and the design painted on the prototype. Projected to meet the requirements of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army plus significant export potential, the LCH is being developed as a dedicated attack helicopter derived from the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv and to be fitted with weapons and special mission systems and having a crashworthy wheel landing gear.

