

HAL's Light Utility Helicopter ready

By Kestur Vasuki

Unperturbed by the tremors within and outside Indian desi military aviation company Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is ready with its three ton class Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) and eagerly waiting for the orders from its clients Indian Defence forces.

A senior executive on the condition anonymity told The Pioneer that the company is wholly depending on Indian Defence forces for the orders on LUH. He said “ We are confident that Indian Defence forces will certainly buy this three ton class very agile LUH to replace its ageing choppers like Cheetah and Chetak. We are surely depending on more orders for Tejas and LUH from the Defence Ministry. This is a make in India product and will be produced in Tumukur factory near Bengaluru.”

He said the LUH would be used for Reconnaissance & Surveillance, reconnaissance, Aerial Photography, Airborne Forward Air Controller, Casualty Evacuation and to provide assistance in emergency to civil authorities etc.,

Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) indigenously built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited is 3-ton class helicopter with 4 Bladed Composite Main Rotor System, Main Rotor Blade Folding, 4 Bladed Tail Rotor System, Single Engine with dual channel automatic fuel control (FADEC) with additional backup control, Night Flying Capability, Glass Cockpit with Smart Cockpit Display Systems (SCDS), Skid Landing Gear, Fuselage to accommodate 2 pilots in side by side configuration and 6 passengers and Crashworthy Crew Seats.

According to available information thr Indian Army and Indian Air Force together are operating about 400 Cheetah (France Design Alouette III helicopter) and Chetak (France Design LAMA helicopter) helicopters supplied by HAL (Licence produced at HAL, Bengaluru) starting from 1960s. These helicopter fleet have served the country for nearly four decades, need to be replaced in a phased manner with a more efficient and state-of- the- art technology based helicopter.

It is in this backdrop, the Indian Army and Indian Air Force finalised the requirement of a Reconnaissance and Surveillance Helicopter (to replace Cheetah and Chetak helicopter) and issued a GSQR in the year 2008. The total projected quantity required by Armed Forces is 384 helicopters, of which, 197 helicopters are earmarked for direct global purchase and remaining 187 helicopters are classified under make category, to be indigenously manufactured by HAL based on Design and Development of Light Utility Helicopter (LUH).

The GOI accorded approval to HAL, in February 2009 to go-ahead with design and development of Light Utility Helicopter. The time given to HAL was 6 years, including a buffer of one year to accommodate delays in Design and Development.

“We have done everything possible to meet the expectations of the Indian armed forces matching with global standards. LUH is being designed to provide excellent performance at high altitude operations.

These features make LUH to stand out in comparison to other contemporary helicopter in its class. The USP of LUH designed by HAL is its capability to hover at 6 km altitude (Hover performance) with considerable payload”, he added.

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2019/india/hal---s-light-utility-helicopter-ready.html>