



Kamov-226T : Utility Helicopters

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Why in News

The Indian Army is going to approach the Defence Ministry for a waiver to take the **Kamov-226T (Ka-226T) utility helicopters with Russia.**

- In **2015, India and Russia** concluded an **Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** for **200 Ka-226T helicopters** estimated to cost over USD 1 billion.
- The **Kamov-226T** is meant to **replace** the ageing and obsolete **Cheetah and Chetak** fleets of the Indian Army and the Air Force.

Key Points

- **About Kamov-226T helicopter:**



- **Design:** The Ka-226T is a design of Russia's famed Kamov design bureau.
 - **Assembling:** A joint venture **India Russia Helicopters Limited (IRHL)** has been set up between **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** and **Russian Helicopters (RH)** which will assemble the helicopters in India.
 - **Payload Capacity:**

It is a **light helicopter**, with a **maximum take-off weight of over 3.5 tonnes** and can carry a **payload of up to 1 tonne**.
 - **Special Features:**
 - The Ka-226T uses **coaxial rotors**, that is, it has two sets of rotors mounted one on top of the other and **typically no tail rotor**.
 - **Coaxial rotors** give a helicopter **improvements in lift and payload capacity over conventional choppers**.
 - This is especially **advantageous in high-altitude environments** where an aircraft's performance at take-off tends to diminish due to the lower air density.
 - The **Ka-226T** also has a unique, **detachable 'mission' compartment instead of a conventional cabin**.

This allows the helicopter to be adapted for different roles such as **surveillance and cargo delivery**.
- **Issues with the Old Fleet of Helicopters:**

About **75%** of the Army's fleet of **Cheetah and Chetak** helicopters is over **30 years old**. Some of them are about **50 years old** and they need **urgent replacements**.

Operational capability has been impacted due to **deficiencies and non-availability of replacement**.
 - **Requirement of Helicopters in Indian Army:** There is a requirement of around 400 such helicopters in the army.

Source: TH