

## Indian Air Force carries out Vayushakti 2019 at Pokhran



On Saturday, the Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out a mega air exercise drill Vayushakti 2019 at Pokhran in Rajasthan - showcasing almost all of its fighter jets to demonstrate its power, just two days after the Pulwama attack.

The Vayushakti 2019 showcased 140 fighter jets and attack helicopters including the indigenously-developed platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas and Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) sailing over the skies of Pokhran on Saturday. Other aircrafts seen during the event included the Su-30s, Mirage 2000s, Jaguars, Mig-21 Bison, Mig-27, Mig-29, IL78, Hercules, AN-32; and IAF had deployed the upgraded MiG-29 fighter jet in an air-to-ground role for the first time.

The Indian Air Force demonstrated its firepower with efficacy of the Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile hitting the defined targets through day and night - with ALH and the Akash deployed for the first time in a military exercise. The Griffin Laser Guided Bomb (LGB) laser-guided bomb system was also induced, with an add-on kit used to retrofit gravity bombs, converting them to deadly laser-guided smart ammunition. When the Griffin was fired on predefined target during the event and it blasted at pinpoint accuracy of about 5 metres.

The mega demonstration of Indian Air Force's capabilities at a site nearby the Pakistan border, just two days after the terror attack in Pulwama was a symbolic representation of India's readiness to avenge with an appropriate response - as mentioned by India's political leadership. Although IAF had planned for the Vayushakti 2019 drill months earlier, and Air Chief Marshal B S Dhanoa did not either mention Pakistan or the Pulwama attack - it does demonstrate the force's capability to hit targets with "pinpoint accuracy" and carry out missions at short notice; perfectly timed with what India needs post Pulwama.