

# On Home Turf



## HAL at Aero India 2019

*Pair of HAL light utility helicopters (LUH) on the flight line as ALH Mk.IV (Rudra) of Army Aviation gets airborne.*

Unlike the past, this (12<sup>th</sup>) edition of Aero India was under new 'Management', with the Defence Exhibitions Organisation (DEO) having been unceremoniously ousted (writing was on the wall at DefExpo 2018). Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), with their Corporate Office and several complexes in Bangalore, were given the 'honour' of organising this Show which was inaugurated on 20 February and continued

till the last (public) day, 24 February. Even though Air Force Station Yelahanka is not HAL 'territory', it operates a score or more HAL-built aircraft, essentially the Dornier 228 which imparts multi-engine conversion training to every future transport pilot of the Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard.

Aero India 2019 certainly provided an opportunity for HAL not only to showcase its range of products and services but also

became a platform for the Chairman to stand up against the barrage of criticism it has had to face over the past year, much of it unreasonable and unfair (see *Vayu* Issue I/2019: *In Defence of HAL*).

HAL Chairman R Madhavan came out strongly that HAL was the only Company in India capable of manufacturing the 110/114 MMRCAs, as and when the orders are placed. He continued that HAL was not interested in 'offsets' but in 'actual manufacturing'. HAL's Bangalore Complex is steadily producing Tejas LCAs, and by end-March 2019, would have delivered the 16<sup>th</sup> (and last) LCA Mk.I (IOC standard).

With issue of FOC certification, production of the next standard aircraft will have begun with deliveries to the Air Force from late 2019 onwards. HAL will also be responsible for production of 83 LCA Mk.IAs which will then keep its Bangalore factories busy for many years, and will hopefully continue activity with the Mk.II from the second half of the 2020s. And of course, when the futuristic AMCA goes into production.



*HAL Chairman R Madhavan with image of Dassault Rafale aircraft*