

## Vayu Shakti 2019

# Prelude to the 'Real Thing'

## 16 February 2019 : Exercise at Pokhran

**E**xercise Vayu Shakti 2019 was conducted by the Indian Air Force at the Pokhran ranges near Jaisalmer on 16 February 2019. It was a day and night exercise, conducted in two phases to showcase operational prowess of the IAF with various simulated targets to demonstrate the lethality and effectiveness of the IAF. A range of munitions were employed as appropriate to meet operational requirements and destruction of targets with precision and cost-effectiveness.

Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa flew in directly to the range in a C-130J Super Hercules, also demonstrating this tactical transport's unique STOL attributes, and was received by Air Marshal HS Arora AOC-in-C, South Western Air Command. Soon followed was release of a Coffee Table book titled '1971 Indo-Pak War : An Aerial Account'.

As precursor to the Fire Power Display itself, three Mi-17 helicopters flying the national flag and the IAF ensign flew past the grandstand, followed immediately by a Jaguar recon aircraft at low level taking images of the grandstand followed by the supersonic run by a MiG-29 fighter leaving a loud sonic boom in its wake.



*The event was attended by Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, Chief of the Air Staff, General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff and a large number of diplomats and senior officers of the Army, Navy and the Indian Air Force*



*Mirage 2000 releases a stick of iron bombs over the Pokhran range the 'real thing' involved SPICE 2000 pgms fired by Mirage 2000s in earnest (see accompanying article)*