

“Prioritising Critical Requirements”



Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria in his office at Vayu Bhawan (photo PRO Air Force)

Air Chief's interview on 18 May 2020

In midst of the Covid 19 pandemic, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, Chief of the Air Staff IAF interviewed with select Indian media, both print and electronic on 18 May 2020. Not surprisingly the first questions were focused on the IAF's status during the pandemic, and as to how the Service was affected operationally.

As reported by Sushant Singh of the *Indian Express*, the CAS stated that the IAF's operational capability has not been degraded at all. "Air defence alert has continued unabated while our transport and helicopter fleets have been working throughout the lockdown period to handle Covid-related tasks, support to state administration and government agencies, as well as air maintenance tasks to support the Army in forward areas. Training and operational methodology was reviewed to ensure segregation of combat crew and preservation of resources.

Our plans were initiated proactively catering to force preservation through

travel protocols, mandatory quarantine for vulnerable categories and minimising exposure. We took precautions and preventive measures as early as in February, such as preparing isolation and quarantine centres. By March, we had established quarantine facilities in nine locations across India with a capacity of 1,650 personnel.

Crisis Management Centres were established at all levels and a corona helpline for IAF personnel has been functional since beginning of March. The IAF remains fully engaged in the collective national effort and has been continuously shouldering tasks as part of *Mission Lifeline Udaan* and *Op Sanjeevani*".



IAF C-130J Super Hercules