

IAF ready at all times: Air Chief

'Rafale aircraft, S-400 missile systems will further enhance our capabilities'

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NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force is "ever prepared" to meet any contingencies and the recent largest-ever pan-India exercise Gagan Shakti 2018 showcased the "operational capability and readiness of the IAF", Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa said here on Monday.

During the exercise, more than 11,000 sorties were flown, which include 9,000 by fighter aircraft. Over 1,400 officers and 14,000 men were deployed. Focussed efforts enabled us to maintain a very high dispatch rate of combat assets and combat support systems," he said addressing the force at the Hindon Air Force



The Sarang team performing manoeuvres during the Air Force Day parade near New Delhi on Monday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

Station on the occasion of the 86th Air Force Day.

The exercise was conducted to practise real-time coordination, deployment of forces, and employment of

air power in a realistic short and intense battle scenario.

Detailing the force modernisation being undertaken, Air Chief Marshal Dhanoa said: "The acquisition of 36

Rafale aircraft, the S-400 missile systems, Apache attack helicopters and Chinook heavy-lift helicopters will further enhance our capability."

Impressive parade

To commemorate the anniversary, the IAF put up an impressive air parade. The Dakota-DC3 aircraft, which played a vital role in the 1947-48 India-Pakistan war, made its maiden fly past, after it was refurbished and presented to the IAF by Rajeev Chandrasekhar, MP, early this year. The IAF's Surya Kiran Aerobatics Team, comprising nine Hawk 132 aircraft, and the Sarang Helicopter Display Team, performed manoeuvres.