



The Phasing out ceremony of MI 8 “PRATAP” helicopters held Formal adieu to the Multi-role helicopter fleet of the IAF

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The MI-8 also known as the “PRATAP” phasing out ceremony was today held at the Air Force Station, Yelahanka in Bengaluru. The ceremony was attended by veterans headed by Air Chief Marshall (Retd) Fali Homi Major PVSM, AVSM, SC, VM, ADC. He flew the last MI-8 mission along with CO 112HU. Air Marshal SRK Nair PVSM, AVSM, VSM, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Training Command, IAF was the chief guest on the occasion. Air Marshal Jasjit Singh Kler, VM, Commandant NDA, the senior most MI-8 helicopter was also present on the occasion.

112HU is the alma mater of HeliLift. The unit has the record of passing out 119 pilot courses, 89 Flt Eng courses and 57 Flt gunner courses. MI-8 also called PRATAP has been the backbone of medium lift combat capability of Indian Air Force and was ideal platform for graduation of MLH aircrew.

The MI-8 helicopter arrived in India in the year 1971 at Bombay and were formally inducted in the Indian Air Force helicopter inventory in the year 1972. Between 1971 and 1988, Indian Air Force inducted 107 MI-8 helicopters, rechristened as the “PRATAP”. MI-8's served for 45 years after their induction and is currently being phased out.

The MI-8, PRATAP was inducted in ten operational helicopter units and it operated in several major IAF operations including Operation Meghdoot in the Siachen Glacier and Operation Pawan in Sri Lanka. The helicopter also operated extensively in Humanitarian and Disaster Relief operations across the length and breadth of the country. The MI-8 has also been associated with VIP/VVIP flying for over decades. MI-8 through its glorious service career, did not just establish itself as a mainstay of the helicopter operations but also left an indelible mark on the future by providing the Indian Air Force with a lineage of professional helicopter aircrew. 112 Helicopter Unit based here at the Air Force Station, Yelahanka, is the last unit to operate this formidable platform

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