



President confers Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) to squadron Leader Ramesh Verma Flying (Pilot)

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On 11 Jul 16, Sqn Ldr Ramesh Verma was authorised for a battle inoculation mission, by Dark Night. While carrying out the attack profile, the front canopy of the aircraft burst with a loud bang. Sqn Ldr Verma was hit by large pieces of canopy Perspex with great force on his neck, resulting in deep wounds and injury to his right shoulder. The severe wind blast also caused his head to hit the canopy combing, almost rendering him unconscious. Sqn Ldr Verma was quick to regain control of the aircraft using his instincts. His vision had become hazy due to the strong blast of wind and possible fine powder from the bursting canopy fragments, in his eye. There was also no communication possible either with his rear seat WSO (who was not a pilot), or with any ground agency. The aircraft was very close to Bareilly town and an ejection would have resulted in catastrophic damage on ground.

Despite a bleeding wound, pain and stiffness in his right shoulder, he lowered his seat, selected the dark visor down and initiated recovery keeping clear of populated area. Lowering of the dark visor was essential to protect his eyes, though it considerably reduced visibility on a dark night. Large pieces of the canopy had also fallen inside the cockpit and could have interfered with the flying controls and the ejection seat. Abandoning the crippled aircraft would have resulted in extensive damage on ground and the loss of a very expensive aircraft. He displayed courage of an exceptional order in deciding to brave the strong air blast inside the cockpit, very hazy vision and grave injuries to his shoulder and arm while recovering the aircraft in a dark night. The courage, resolve, and professional skill displayed by the officer were of the highest order.

Squadron Leader Ramesh Verma has been awarded **Vayu Sena Medal for Gallantry.**

AB/MKR

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