

CHIEFS OF INDIAN, FRENCH AIR FORCES JOIN ONGOING GARUDA-VII AIR EXERCISE

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Joint efforts: IAF chief V.R. Chaudhari with the Chief General of the French Air Force, Stéphane Mille, in Jodhpur on Tuesday. PTIPTI

The chiefs of Indian and French Air Forces on Tuesday joined the Air Exercise Garuda-VII in Jodhpur.

While Indian Air Force (IAF) chief Air Chief Marshal (ACM) V.R. Chaudhari flew a sortie on an IAF Rafale fighter, French Air and Space Force (FASF) Chief General Stéphane Mille flew on an IAF Su-30 MK-I fighter. "Both [Chiefs] participated in the exercise as part of a combined training mission which was flown from Air Force Station Jodhpur," the IAF said in a statement.

"Ex Garuda-VII is also the first occasion for the light combat aircraft (LCA) Tejas and the recently inducted light combat helicopter (LCH) Prachand to participate in any international exercise," it stated.

Speaking to the media after the sortie, ACM Chaudhari said that the Air Exercise Garuda provided a unique opportunity for both Air Forces to learn and imbibe each other's best practices during operations while also highlighted the growing interoperability between the two Air Forces. The bilateral air exercise has been ongoing since 2003.

The exercise, which is due to culminate on November 12, includes four Rafale fighters and one A-330 multi-role tanker transport aircraft from the French side.

Apart from the LCA and LCH, the IAF contingent consists of Su-30 MK-I, Rafale and Jaguar fighter aircraft, as well as Mi-17 helicopters.

The IAF contingent also includes combat enabling assets such as flight refuelling aircraft, early warning aircraft, and Garud Special Forces, the statement added.

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