

# Indian Navy bids farewell to UH-3H helicopter



Indian Navy bid farewell to the UH-3H helicopter after 17 years of glorious service during a de-induction ceremony held at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam on 28 June 2024. The event was presided by Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command. Veteran officers and sailors of the UH3H squadron graced the event with families reminiscing the yeoman service of the helicopter. The UH-3H helicopter will be replaced by Sea King 42C helicopter at INAS 350, to continue and deliver operational power and capability.

The de-induction ceremony of the UH-3H helicopter marks the end of a remarkable era that introduced innovative capabilities in Special Operations and Search and Rescue (SAR) missions. The operational role of the

UH-3H in the constantly evolving and dynamic maritime environment will remain forever etched in the history of Indian Naval Aviation.

Brought to Indian shores in 2007 along with INS Jalashwa, the UH-3H helicopter was inducted into INAS 350 christened 'Saaras' on 24 March 2009 at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam. This versatile helicopter played a crucial role in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, security of offshore installations and special operations. Its advanced Search and Rescue (SAR) capabilities and logistical support were vital during natural disasters, often making the difference between despair and relief, and saving countless lives. The mighty 'Saaras' adorns the squadron crest embodying the motto "Strength, Valour and Perseverance." The helicopter diligently upheld its commitment, maintaining a vigilant watch, ensuring the security of our nation's maritime boundaries with unwavering dedication.

As it comes to the end of service life, one UH-3H will be permanently displayed at a prominent location in 'City of Destiny', Visakhapatnam, inspiring future generations. The Chief of Staff, ENC handed over a commemorative plaque to the State Government. The plaque was received by Mr. K. Mayur Ashok, IAS, Joint Collector, Visakhapatnam to mark the transfer of aircraft. ➡



**Text and photos: Indian Navy**