

CITATION

NAO SENA MEDAL (GALLANTRY) **LIEUTENANT COMMANDER BHASKAR RAJVANSHI (08159-T)**



Lieutenant Commander Bhaskar Rajvanshi (08159-T), Staff Pilot of 321 Shikra ALH Flight, displayed exemplary professionalism and courage as the Captain of Aircraft by precisely recovering helicopter from an unprecedented emergency of control failure. This was the first ever documented instance of safe recovery from collective control failure emergency in the entire ALH fleet across all services, On 08 Mar 23, IN 709, ALH MK III (MR) helicopter was disembarking from the aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant to Mumbai with three personnel onboard. Flying at altitude 500 ft above mean sea level, the pilot suddenly encountered a catastrophic control failure, wherein the aircraft suffered uncommanded loss of collective power, rapid descent without any warning or failure indication in Cockpit. With no collective control available, the situation was likely to turn into a fatal disaster. However, the pilot did not surrender to the given circumstances, displaying tremendous courage and extraordinary piloting skills, he manoeuvred the helicopter with limited control available to effect an extraordinary ditching at sea. The pilot ensured that the helicopter ditched clear of merchant and fishing traffic and thereby avoided loss of civil property and lives. Even after effecting safe touchdown over the sea surface, the helicopter remained extremely vulnerable to unbalanced aerodynamic forces that could lead to toppling and sure loss of machine and lives. The pilot observed utmost discipline, maintained composure and guided his crew to safety by swift deployment of emergency floatation gear and safety equipment. The singular act of bravery, grit and presence of mind in the face of danger has upheld IN's ethos. The pilot with his limited flying experience ensured safe recovery of the helicopter and aircrew in an extremely challenging scenario. The recovery of aircraft has enabled the services to undertake accurate investigation of the failure towards putting remedial measures in place for the entire ALH Fleet. Lt Cdr Bhaskar Rajvanshi (08159-T) is strongly recommended for the award of Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) for displaying unparalleled courage and bravery in the face of an unprecedented circumstance.