



# AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopters: The Army's "Tank Killers"

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**Background:** For decades, the Indian Air Force (IAF) operated all attack helicopters. However, following the 1999 Kargil War and evolving theater commands, the Indian Army pushed for its own "integral air support." In 2020, India signed a deal with the US for six Apaches for the Army. The delivery completion of the 451 Army Aviation Squadron in Jodhpur marks the Army's transition into a more lethal, independent force.

**Basics & Specs:** The AH-64E is the most advanced variant of the Apache. It is an "all-weather" helicopter equipped with:

- Longbow Fire Control Radar: Can track up to 128 targets and engage 16 simultaneously.
- Armament: Hellfire missiles, Stinger missiles, and a 30mm M230 chain gun.
- Network Centricity: It can share real-time data with ground troops and drones.

**Significance for UPSC:**

- **Tactical Independence:** It provides Close Air Support (CAS) for the Strike Corps in the desert sectors of the Western front.
- **Jointness:** It reflects India's shift toward Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) where air and land assets operate under a single commander.
- **Indo-US Ties:** Highlights the "Major Defense Partner" status and the shift from Russian to Western platforms.