



Indian Air Force at 90



Air Marshal (Retd) Nirdosh V Tyagi talks about How IAF transitioned into a formidable force

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is the fourth largest air force in the world today, the top three being US, Russia and China. It is bigger than the air forces of the UK and France. Though short of its sanctioned strength, it is a modern and strategic force with internationally recognised credentials. It has been a transformational journey in the last 75 years for the youngest of the three services of our Armed Forces.

At the time of independence, India had inherited the Royal Indian Air Force (RIAF) with six fighter squadrons equipped with Tempest and Spitfire aircraft, one squadron of C-47 Dakota transport aircraft and one Air Observation flight. RIAF dropped 'Royal' to become IAF only in 1950, when India became a republic. This fledgling force was still trying to absorb the impact of division of resources between the two nations, when it was pressed into operations. Intrusion of insurgent forces into Kashmir from Pakistan called for a quick response. Troops were airlifted on 27 October 1947 from Palam to Srinagar and the Indian army went into action to save Kashmir. This airlift was remarkable because operations were successfully executed without losing time in detailed preparations. Within days, fighters were engaged in strafing the raiders

