

Interview with IAF's No. 17 Squadron



Photo by Alex van Noije

VAYU: *The “Golden Arrows” have returned to the skies after a long gap – what did it mean to the IAF to see the squadron revived?*

The resurrection of 17 Squadron “The Golden Arrows” is a significant event for the Indian Air Force (IAF). It enhances the IAF’s air power capabilities, strengthens air defence, and provides operational flexibility. The re-formation of the squadron is a morale booster for IAF personnel and symbolises the IAF’s commitment to defending India’s skies and upholding its sovereignty. It also serves as a deterrent to potential adversaries, contributing to regional stability and security. The resurrection of 17 Squadron is part of the IAF’s ongoing efforts to build capacity and modernise its fleet, including upgrading existing aircraft and acquiring new ones. This development demonstrates India’s commitment to maintaining a strong and capable air force, essential for ensuring regional stability and security. The resurrection of 17 Squadron “The Golden Arrows” is a testament to the IAF’s proud history and tradition of excellence.

VAYU: *Looking back at the 1971 war, how did the squadron’s actions shape its legacy before the Rafale era?*

Reflecting on the 1971 war and the subsequent journey, which has been marked by the introduction of high performance aircraft, sophisticated weapon systems, and cutting edge avionics, as well as the development of highly

efficient tactics, it is clear that the Squadron’s legacy has been shaped by its experiences. The missions undertaken in 1999 and 2001 have also played a significant role in forming the traditions that continue to thrive to this day.

VAYU: *How did the transition from earlier aircraft to the Rafale reshape your operational doctrine?*

The transition from earlier aircraft to the Rafale significantly reshaped our operational doctrine by introducing a new era of situational awareness, network centric warfare and adaptive tactics. The Rafale’s advanced sensors and avionics allowed for a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the battlefield. Furthermore, the Rafale’s advanced capabilities and versatility enabled us to develop more flexible and adaptive



Photo: The Vayu Team