



**Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force addressing at closing ceremony of PAF Triennial Command level Air Exercise Saffron Bandit at an operational Air Base. (20-06-2013)**



**JF-17 Thunder after participating in Exercise Saffron Bandit at an operational Air Base of Pakistan Air Force. (20-06-2013)**



JF-17 Thunder taking off during Exercise Saffron Bandit at an operational Air Base of Pakistan Air Force. (20-06-2013)



JF-17 Thunder taking off during Exercise Saffron Bandit at an operational Air Base of Pakistan Air Force. (20-06-2013)

**OUR REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT DEMANDS AN EVER VIGILANT ROLE  
FOR PAF : AIR CHIEF**

**ISLAMABAD 20 JUNE, 2013:-** “Our regional environment demands an ever vigilant role for PAF. Presently, in the face of security challenges, our preparedness and response has to be precise and expeditious. It is through the rigorous training imparted by exercises like Saffron Bandit that we look forward to maintain the cutting edge of the PAF”, said the Air Chief at the closing ceremony of PAF Triennial Command level Air Exercise Saffron Bandit at an operational Air Base today.

Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, was the chief guest on the occasion. While addressing the combat crew, the Air Chief said, “We are a peace-loving nation; but fully prepared to defend the integrity and solidarity of our motherland”. While accentuating the nature of the aerial warfare the Air Chief emphasized, “Combat training in the PAF is maintained at the highest pedestal of realism and responsiveness to meet the contemporary challenges. You must utilize the experiences gained in the best possible manner. While our quest to modernize PAF continues, we must remember that our generation will have to work even harder and offer greater sacrifices than the earlier ones”. The Air Chief further said, “The nature of aerial warfare continues to rise in complexity under a time compressed environment, and PAF being a professional outfit is totally focused on it. As the nation pins high hopes in Pak Fazaia, and we must never let it down”.

The eight months long Exercise Saffron Bandit commenced in October, 2012 and is conducted in PAF since 1994. This time, the environment was unique where modern capabilities of PAF were operating under one umbrella for the first time. Pak Army Aviation and Army Air Defence were also deployed for undertaking the exercise. The prime objective of the exercise is to excel in the air combat capability with focus on Air Power employment in any future conflict.

The hallmark of the exercise was the participation of JF-17 Thunders in the concluding cycle of exercise Saffron Bandit for the first time. The combat crew from various operational squadrons comprising F-7PGs, Mirages, F-16s and JF-17 Thunders participated in the Air Exercise. JF-17 Thunders operated in multiple configurations alongside other PAF platforms in various combat / support roles which encompassed all spheres of aerial warfare in near war like environments.