

MiG-21 a thing of the past for Tezpur IAF



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GUWAHATI: The magnificent MiG 21 aircraft will fly no longer from the Indian Air Force Station at Tezpur. The Air Force station on Thursday conducted a farewell ceremony to mark the occasion.

According to official statement, it was on February 27, 1986 that the first MiG 21(FL) , also known as MiG-21(T-77), landed at Tezpur Air base, thus marking the beginning of the supersonic era.

Since then, the Air Force station at Tezpur has been a home to this aircraft, and over a period of time, has become synonymous with MiG-21(T-77).

MiG-21 stands for 'Mikoyan' and 'Gurevich', the two Russians who designed this fighter aircraft. It is a frontline all-weather "Interceptor" powered by a turbojet engine.

The aircraft is equipped with missiles, guns, sophisticated flight instruments and radio aids of the bygone era permitting it employment both by day and by night.

On December 15, 1986, the MiG Operational Flying Training Unit (MOFTU) was thus born at Air Force Station, Tezpur. In 2003, MOFTU,

because of its huge size, was bifurcated into two independent units, 'Alpha' and 'Bravo', or aggressors and bravehearts, for administrative efficiency.

Over the last four years, both these squadrons did a splendid job of imparting quality training to budding pilots. However, last year, Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) and MOFTU 'Bravo' were relocated from Tezpur to other bases in the Eastern Air Command.

Now in September, MOFTU 'alpha' will also get relocated to another base within the command. With this, Tezpur Air base will fade into history as the cradle of young fighter pilots and bastion of type 77 operations.

The programme will include various ceremonial activities to be conducted by the Air Warriors, KV school children, cultural groups from Tezpur and the Army unit of 4 Corps. This will be followed by a goodbye flypast by the MiG 21(T-77) aircraft.

The function will be coordinated by Air Commodore AG Patil, Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station, Tezpur, and will be presided over by the Air Marshal PK Barbora, VM, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command. Lieutenant General BS Jaiswal, AVSM, VSM, General Officer Commanding 4 Corps and other civil dignitaries will be the guests of honour.

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