



# 'Flying Daggers' Fly Again

## Resurrection of No.45 Squadron, Indian Air Force

As Indian tradition has it, and before No.45 Squadron, the 'Flying Daggers' was officially resurrected in the Indian Air Force, there was a multi-religious ceremony at HAL's airfield in Bangalore when a Pandit, Granthi, Maulvi and Priest chanted prayers for the success of this unit and its new fighter aircraft type inducted by the IAF. Thus, on 1 July 2016, No.45 Squadron officially returned to the IAF's order-of-battle, albeit still in nascent stage with only a handful of ADA-designed, HAL-built Tejas Mk.1 light combat aircraft in its inventory. These were Series Production (SP) 1 and 2, which have followed the production of seventeen earlier LCAs built since the programme began in late 1983. Of these, two had been 'Technology Demonstrators', five were 'Prototype Vehicles', eight 'Limited Series Production' LCAs while two were 'Naval Prototypes'.

The first Commanding Officer of No.45 Squadron in its new *avataar* is Gp Capt Madhav Rangachari, an experimental test pilot but also having considerable operational experience on the Mirage 2000 and MiG-21 variants. It is interesting that the last fighter type that No.45 Squadron operationally flew some 14 years earlier was

the MiG-21bis with which it was equipped before being number plated in 2002.

Going back six decades, the first fighter type which equipped No.45 Squadron on raising at Palam on 20 November 1959 was the Vampire FB Mk.52 twin-boomed fighter-bomber and the rapidity with which it was 'operationalised' under the

command of Sqn Ldr MS Grewal was demonstrated when within two months of raising, its entire strength of sixteen Vampires flew in four boxes of four aircraft each over Rajpath during Republic Day on 26 January 1960. No.45 Squadron continued to be based at Palam and also provided an aerial escort to President



Multi-faith prayers for the Squadron