

# The MiG Operational Flying Training Unit (MOFTU)



*Line up of MiG-21FLs at MOFTU*

**Air Commodore Parvez Khokhar, who commanded the MOFTU at Tezpur from August 1990, writes about this unique unit which at its peak, had the largest number of MiG-21s on establishment. The MiGs of MOFTU flew the highest number of sorties year after year, imparting Stage III flying training to IAF fighter pilots for over two decades.**

The long delay in procurement of an Advanced Jet Trainer and geriatric vintage of the Hawker Hunter, that served as a great lead-in fighter after being taken off the frontline, little option with the IAF, but to call upon the MiG-21FL (Type 77) to take on this role that it was never meant for. Thus at the end of 1986, the MiG Operational Training Unit was created with the aircraft hauled over by Nos. 47 and 28 Squadrons, which were converted to the MiG-29. The 'Mecca' of all MiG-21 pilots, Tezpur in Assam, was selected to become base for the MOFTU. Sqn Ldr N Thomas, a seasoned MiG-21 pilot and test pilot, first put this unit together, and was followed by Gp Capt Prabhakar, who initiated the training and worked out a viable syllabi, to encompass both the advanced training and the applied stage, rolling the training into a single composite one. His successor, Gp Capt KP Sreekanth then got the flying into a more streamlined training mode and when Gp Capt Parvez Khokhar, took over the reins in August 1990, he found all the assets in place. Still, a great amount of confusion prevailed because

of poor serviceability and different types of the two-seat trainers on strength of the unit.



*MiG-21U*