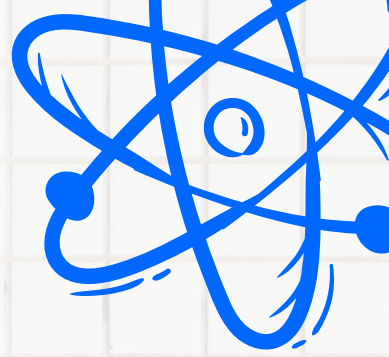


Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21



The MiG-21 is a Soviet-designed supersonic fighter jet developed by the Mikoyan-Gurevich Design Bureau. It holds the distinction of being the first successful Soviet aircraft to combine both fighter and interceptor characteristics.



Key facts:

- **Design and Features:** The MiG-21 is a light weight fighter known for its distinctive delta wings and circular nose intake. It was designed for agility at supersonic speeds and could reach Mach 2 with a relatively low-powered afterburning turbojet. Its delta wings and short fuselage made it highly maneuverable, allowing pilots to change directions quickly.
- **Operational History:** The MiG-21 is one of the most widely produced and longest-serving fighter jets in aviation history. It has been operated by numerous countries worldwide, including the Soviet Air Forces (historically), Russian Air Force, Indian Air Force, and Bulgarian Air Force.
- **Combat Record:** The MiG-21 has a notable combat record, participating in several conflicts, including the Vietnam War and the India-Pakistan wars. In the 1971 India-Pakistan war, the MiG-21FL played a significant role in ground attack missions, earning the moniker "runway buster". Notably, an Indian MiG-21 Bison, an upgraded variant, achieved a notable kill against a Pakistani F-16 in a 2019 aerial encounter.
- **Indian Air Force (IAF) Context:** The MiG-21 played a crucial role in strengthening the IAF, becoming India's first supersonic jet when it was inducted in 1963. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) produced a large number of MiG-21s under license, making it the backbone of the IAF's combat fleet for several decades. The MiG-21 was involved in the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pakistan Wars, the 1999 Kargil War, and the 2019 Balakot air strikes.

Retirement :

The Indian Air Force is in the process of phasing out its MiG-21 fleet, with the final squadrons expected to be retired by September 2025. The aircraft's long service life, combined with a history of accidents and the challenges of sourcing spare parts after the Soviet Union ceased production in 1985, have led to its eventual retirement. The MiG-21 is being replaced by more modern aircraft like the Tejas Mk1A.

