

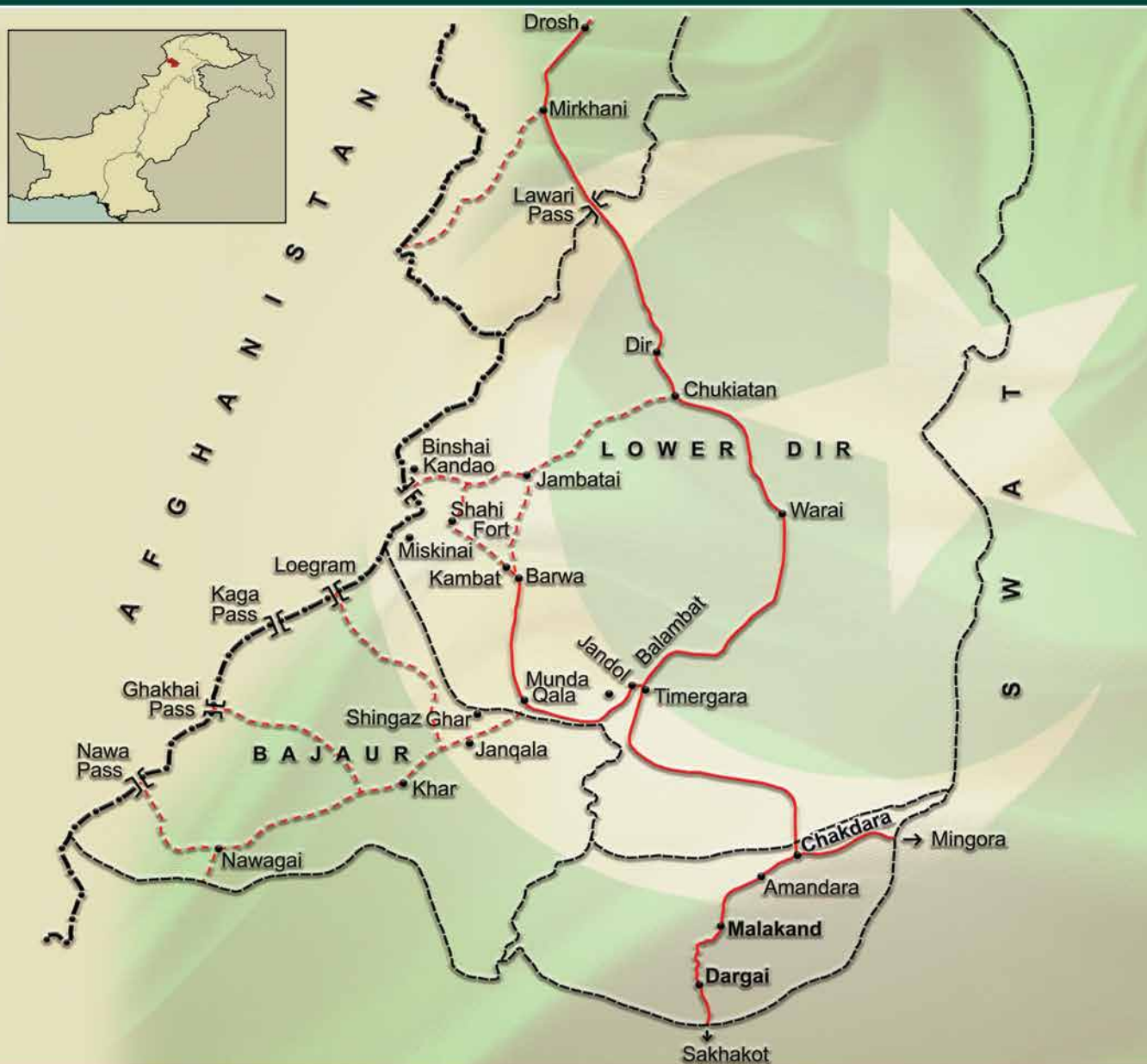


Magazine of the  
Army Institute of Military History  
Pakistan



# Bugle & Trumpet

Winter  
2024



**OPERATION RAPIET**  
Dir Bajaur Operation 1960–61





### **Bugle & Trumpet**

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## **THE ARMY INSTITUTE OF MILITARY HISTORY**

Pakistan's military history stretches far back into antiquity, to our sturdy ancestors along the mighty Indus, who tilled the land and defended themselves against multiple waves of invaders. Our soldiers today are descended from those warriors of antiquity, while structurally, the Pakistan Army is directly descended from the grand old regiments of the British Indian Army, some of which predate Pakistan by nearly two hundred years. It has a rich and proud history extending both sides of Partition (1947)—always defending Pakistan.

Taken together, Pakistan's military history and the overlapping history of Pakistan Army, form a substantial part of our nation's history. Add to this the need for our officers and men to be well-versed in general military history—a matter very close to their hearts—and one can see the case for a single organisation to handle these subjects taken together.

The then COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa is credited with approving a proposal to establish the Army Institute of Military History (AIMH) on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017—the day we were officially born. It has been set up as a semi-autonomous research body with a broad outreach both within the civilian and military domains.

Located in Rawalpindi and close to the Army Museum and the Army Central Library, the institute is mandated to archive, record, research, teach and promote military history, along with allied subjects such as physical history (in all its dimensions), battle honours, regimental lineages, customs of the service,

matters of dress and accoutrements, and so on. The institute also serves as a forum for veterans, academia, subject matter experts and concerned civil society members, to gather and air their learned views on subjects of interest to the Army. AIMH also encompasses outreach to academia and students.

With a Military History Wing, Physical History Wing and Special Studies Wing, the institute is a centre for military historical affairs; a melting pot for serving and retired officers, and civilians, to meet and exchange views. Our forte remains military history, with research directors assigned to regularly visit the Army's schools of instruction, and the nation's universities, as visiting faculty and guest speakers. Military history buffs will also find themselves welcome in our lounges.

### **BUGLE & TRUMPET (B&T)**

As a publication with the love of military history at its core, Bugle & Trumpet aims at providing readers with a diverse cross-section of articles and narrations that showcase different aspects of military history. It attempts to do so in a readable manner. It tells the stories of unsung heroes and living legends, and celebrates individual acts of courage. The magazine attempts to stimulate intellectual probity and fosters a fondness for this all-important, yet oft-neglected subject.

By means of its interactive nature, whereby readers may freely contribute their anecdotes, personal experiences, photographs and musings, *B&T* aims at becoming a publication which is anticipated; a place which every military history enthusiast in Pakistan might call home.

The views expressed in *B&T* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of AIMH. All content is the intellectual property of AIMH and may be reproduced or quoted, while citing the original author and AIMH. A courtesy copy of reprints or reviews would be appreciated by AIMH. Readers are invited to contribute for the *B&T*. Original articles related to military history, upto 2500 words in font size 12 (Times New Roman) with double line spacing, on A-4 size paper, alongwith relevant details like photographs, maps or sketches, may be sent both in hard and soft form to the editor. Endnotes (*Chicago Style*) and a brief biographic note of the author, including passport size photograph, are required. Contributors will be paid a remuneration. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject contributions.



## From The Editor's Desk

Dear readers,

Bugle & Trumpet (Winter 2024) is presented to our readers. We feel happy to have the 12<sup>th</sup> issue with a collection of articles on military history, ranging from the Mughal and colonial eras, up to the Indo-Pak wars, and our own Army.

The cover story examines OPERATION RAPIER—a decisive Pakistani military campaign conducted in Dir and Bajaur regions to counter an Afghan incursion, and reinforce the country's sovereignty. It outlines the geopolitical context of the Durand Line dispute, highlighting attempts to destabilise Pakistan by exploiting tribal dynamics. The operation reflects Pakistan's combined diplomatic, political and military measures to establish state authority in these erstwhile tribal areas. It also underscores the importance of leadership, intelligence and public support in achieving operational success.

*The First Battle of Panipat (1526)* explores how this battle proved to be a defining moment in South Asian history, marking the foundation of the Mughal Empire. It highlights Babur's strategic brilliance and tactical innovations, including the use of artillery and mobile cavalry, which outmanoeuvred the larger forces of Ibrahim Lodi. It draws parallels between historical and modern warfare, emphasising, the importance of training, leadership and adaptability in military success.

*The Battle for Milestone-5* focuses on Chawinda, which witnessed one of the largest tank battles since World War II. It highlights Pakistan's defence against India's OPERATION NEPAL, which aimed to cut off the Grand Trunk Road and isolate key cities. The narrative emphasises the determination and resistance of Pakistani forces, particularly 6 Armoured Division, in halting Indian advances, and inflicting heavy casualties.

The profound impact of the *Agartala Conspiracy Case* of 1967 is evidenced as a turning point in the political landscape of Pakistan, ultimately leading to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. It examines the roots of Bengali nationalism, beginning with grievances over political and economic marginalisation, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's rise as a central figure, advocating autonomy through his *Six-Point Formula*. The article highlights the Indian role in supporting Bengali separatism, Mujib's secret meetings in Agartala, and the involvement of military and political conspirators in planning secession.

I hope that our readers find this issue worth reading. Please be open in communicating about further quality enhancement of the magazine. We will give due weightage to the valuable suggestions of our readers, in future editions.

Happy reading!

Muhammad Khalil





## In This Issue

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# First Battle of Panipat–Babur’s Genius and Ingenuity

*Brigadier Ghulam Jilani, SI(M) retired*

Zahir ud din Muhammad Babur and Ibrahim Lodi fought for the throne of India at Panipat on 21 April 1526. This encounter led to Mughal dominance over the better part of India, for the next two hundred and fifty years.



*Diorama of the first battle of Panipat (1526 C.E.) in the museum in Naubat Khana* (Source: paradigmshift.com.pk)

## Why was the Battle Fought at Panipat?

- Panipat was 50 miles (80 kilometres) north of Delhi.<sup>1</sup> It was situated on a wide open plain, which made it appropriate for large scale manoeuvres and cavalry movement.<sup>2</sup>
- Panipat was sufficiently away from the capital Delhi, so as to keep it out of the conflict zone, to maintain administrative stability.<sup>3</sup> Yet its proximity to the capital facilitated swift transportation of weapons,

military forces, and essential supplies to the battlefield, ensuring a well-equipped army.

- Its strategic location in the proximity of Yamuna River<sup>4</sup> made logistic support easier.
- North India in the medieval era was split into several minor kingdoms that were incessantly striving for dominance over each other. Panipat was at the intersection of several noteworthy kingdoms, including Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur.<sup>5</sup> Its political importance was an important factor in the decision to use it as the battleground.<sup>6</sup>
- Panipat was away from other kingdoms’ political hotspots, its isolated location made it less susceptible to political pressures.<sup>7</sup>

## Motivation of Babur to Attack through the Punjab

- Babur wanted to capture the Punjab to follow in his ancestor Taimur’s footsteps.<sup>8</sup>
- Some historical records suggest that Babur’s eyes were on the riches of the Punjab, to meet the expenses of his army and administration.<sup>9</sup> Kabul failed to fill his coffers to realise his ambitions.

1 Manish siq, “First Battle of Panipat History, Army, Details and Result,” Study IQ, May 27th, 2024, accessed on December 4, 2024, <https://www.studyiq.com/articles/first-battle-of-panipat/>.

2 Haniya Ali, “The First Battle of Panipat,” Paradigm Shift, August 28, 2023, accessed on December 10, 2024, <https://www.paradigmshift.com.pk/first-battle-of-panipat/>.

3 “Panipat: The Epicenter of Historic Battles Shaping North India,” IASPOINT, July 1, 2023, accessed on November 16, 2024, <https://iaspoint.com/panipat-the-epicenter-of-historic-battles-shaping-north-india/>.

4 “Panipat: The Epicenter of Historic Battles Shaping North India”.

5 Ali, “The First Battle of Panipat”.

6 Ali, “The First Battle of Panipat”.

7 Ali, “The First Battle of Panipat”.

8 Behind the History of Zahir ud din Muhammad Babur/ End of Lodi’s Dynasty by Muhammad Faisal behind the History of Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur | End of (behist.com).

9 “First Battle of Panipat, 1526 - History, Its Causes & Aftermath,” Testbook. Sep 14, 2023, accessed on November 7, 2024, <https://testbook.com/ias-preparation/first-battle-of-panipat-1526>.

- c. Political conditions of North West India suited Babur's foray into India.<sup>10</sup>
- d. Babur was apprehensive about easy access of Uzbeks to attack Kabul. He considered India a good sanctuary, and a suitable base to deal with Uzbeks.<sup>11</sup>

## Antecedents of Babur

Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur, founder of the Mughal dynasty in India, was born on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1483.<sup>12</sup> His father was Turkish and mother was Mongol; his people came to be called *Moghul*, from the Arabic word for Mongol.<sup>13</sup> Babur's dynasty is titled Mughal or Mongol, but it should in fact be thought of as Turkish, which language they spoke.<sup>14</sup>



Zahir ud din Muhammad Babur  
(Source: pinterest.com)

Babur in 1494, at the age of eleven, found himself suddenly the king of the province of Farghana by right of inheritance in the sixth generation of Taimur<sup>15</sup> (founder of the Timurid Empire 1370–1405, ruled from Russia to India, and from the Mediterranean Sea to Mongolia).<sup>16</sup> Though Babur's father's kingdom was reduced only to Farghana, from the lineage of Taimur, he always asserted his right to Taimur's possessions, thus he continued his

quest to recover Samarkand. *Kingship knows no kinship*, therefore his uncles and cousins fought him for the precious throne of his ancestry, and forced him to abdicate twice.<sup>17</sup> Conditions shaped up in a manner that it became difficult for him either to hold on to Farghana, or to take Samarkand. Young Babur thus quit the family seat, and moved south in 1504 to capture Kabul instead. Babur was a daredevil, ready to seek avenues to satiate his desire for a much larger space to administer. The mountain chiefship of Kabul was not fit for the ambitious Babur. It was on this scene that Babur appeared in 1517.<sup>18</sup>



Map: Babur's invasion route

(Source: medium.com)

## Lead up to the Final Showdown

Babur's third failure to recover the capital of his forefather Taimur, convinced him that the true road to empire leads to the plains of India, through the mountain passes. India was for him as it was for the British East India Company, two hundred years later.<sup>19</sup>

10 "First Battle of Panipat, 1526 - History, Its Causes & Aftermath".

11 First Battle of Panipat, 1526 - History, Its Causes & Aftermath".

12 Kallie Szczepanski Biography of Babur, Founder of the Mughal Empire, thoughtco.com.

13 Paul K. Davis, *100 Decisive Battles: From Ancient Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 181.

14 Percival Spear and Romila Thapar, *A history of India- Volume 2*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1958), 21.

15 Stanely Lane-poole, *Medieval India under Mohammadan Rule AD 712-1764* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1903), 197.

16 Kallie Szczepanski, "Biography of Tamerlane, 14th Conqueror of Asia," thought co, last updated on July 21, 2019, accessed on September 3, 2024, <https://www.thoughtco.com/timur-or-tamerlane-195675>.

17 Kallie Szczepanski, "Overview of the First Battle of Panipat," Thought co, Last updated on August 09, 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-first-battle-of-panipat-195785#:~:text=His%20father%20died%20in%201494%2C%20and%20the%2011-year-old,for%20the%20throne%2C%20forcing%20him%20to%20abdicate%20twice>.

18 Spear, *A history of India*, 21.

19 Spear, *A history of India*, 22.



Muslim rulers had been administering India for the last three centuries, and Islam had an authoritative presence in northern India. The Afghan Lodi dynasty had been ruling the Delhi Sultanate since 1451. Ibrahim Lodi, a great warrior but an indiscreet ruler, was the reigning king of the Sultanate from 1517.<sup>20</sup>

Ibrahim was challenged by a number of relatives, but the first to contact Babur was



Sultan Ibrahim Lodi  
(Source: pinterest.com)

Ibrahim’s uncle, Alam Khan Ala-al-din, who traveled to Kabul in quest for military assistance, to seize the throne. Soon thereafter, Alam Khan’s nephew, Daulat Khan, the governor of Punjab, also visited Kabul to plead for Babur’s help

to overthrow Ibrahim.<sup>21</sup>

Babur led troops into the Punjab in 1524, ostensibly to support one or the other of the two supplicants, but possibly just to touch the nerve, to understand what would happen.<sup>22</sup> Babur’s incursions into the territory in Punjab induced him to believe that the Lodi regime in Delhi had some internal incongruities, and that it could be overpowered. Until 1524, his aim was only to expand his rule to the Punjab, mainly to fulfil his ancestor Timur’s legacy, since it was part of his empire.<sup>23</sup>

Babur set out for the final invasion in 1525.<sup>24</sup> The only difference between this and many similar medieval incursions, was that the doer this time was a genius. Babur took a cue from his two initial ventures into the Punjab.<sup>25</sup>

Leading up to the ultimate face-off, his troops were not well equipped, but he made sure



Nasir al-Din Muhammad Humayun  
(Source: pwnlyias.com)

that this shortcoming was made up through new tactics executed by his splendidly trained troops. To further reinforce his army, his eldest son Humayun brought a contingent from Badakhshan, and the trustiest general Khawaja Kalan led troops from Ghazni.<sup>26</sup>

The decisive battle was fought on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1526 at Panipat.

## Opposing Forces at Panipat

Babur had the strength of loyalty of his army, trained cavalry on the wings which could manoeuvre skillfully, and new artillery pieces from Ottomen Turkey, commanded by a Turkish officer.<sup>27</sup>

## Composition of Babur’s Mughal forces

- Between 13,000 and 15,000 men, mostly horse cavalry.<sup>28</sup>
- His secret weapon was 20 to 24 pieces of field artillery, a relatively recent innovation in warfare.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>20</sup> “Lodi dynasty,” Mughal Empire, Delhi Sultanate & Afghan Rule, Britannica, last updated on December 4, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Davis, *100 Decisive Battles: From Ancient Times to the Present*, 182.

<sup>22</sup> Davis, *100 Decisive Battles: From Ancient Times to the Present*, 182.

<sup>23</sup> Behind the History of Zahir ud din Muhammad Babur/ End of Lodi’s Dynasty by Muhammad Faisal behind the History of Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur | End of (behist.com).

<sup>24</sup> Poole, *Medieval India under Mohammadan Rule AD712-1764*, 200.

<sup>25</sup> Spear, *A history of India*, 22.

<sup>26</sup> Poole, *Medieval India under Mohammadan Rule AD712-1764*, 200.

<sup>27</sup> Spear, *A history of India*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> Szczepanski, “Overview of the First Battle of Panipat”.

<sup>29</sup> Szczepanski, “Overview of the First Battle of Panipat”.



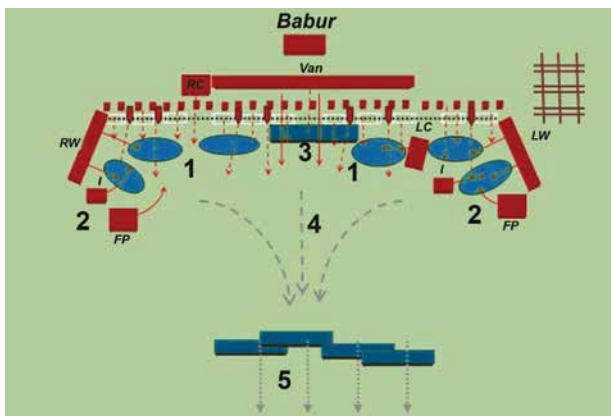
### Composition of Ibrahim Lodi's forces

- An enormous multitude of 100,000 men.<sup>30</sup>
- Lodi's core weapon of domination was his 1,000 trained war elephants.<sup>31</sup>
- Ibrahim Lodi lacked any field artillery.

### Babur's Superior Tactics

Babur employed two innovative tactical moves, which were until then unfamiliar to Ibrahim Lodi's army, which reversed the situation of the battle.

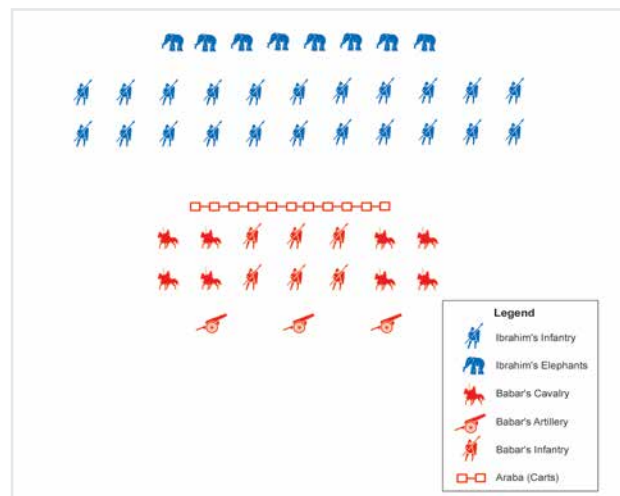
- The first was *tulughma*, which meant dividing a smaller force into forward left, rear left, forward right, rear right, and centre divisions. The highly mobile flanking force would cut and run to encircle the bigger enemy force, driving them towards the centre, where Babur had arrayed his cannons.<sup>32</sup>



Application of *tulughma* in 1<sup>st</sup> battle of Panipat 1526  
(Source: medium.com)

- The second tactical novelty was Babur's use of carts, called *araba*. His artillery guns were secured behind carts which were lined up and tied together with leather ropes, to prevent the enemy from breaking in to attack the artillerymen. This tactic was borrowed from the Ottoman Turks.<sup>33</sup>

- The cannons placed behind the *araba* were adequately protected, and therefore could fire without any fear of being hit.



Use of *araba* in 1<sup>st</sup> battle of Panipat 1526 (Source: AIMH)

### Ibrahim Lodi's Design of Battle

Lodi's Army had rested its plan on its ability to overwhelm opposing force, with a larger force, and the awe created by his elephants.

### Conduct of the Battle

- Babur found himself confronted with a huge assembly of men and elephants. The cautious Sultan Ibrahim waited to commence any action, to ascertain the enemy's strength and weaknesses. Babur, evidently, was attracted to the idea of invasion, but was in no hurry to initiate the offensive. In the meantime, he further integrated his new tactical innovations with cohesive training of his men.
- Babur contrived an improvised redoubt by holding together seven hundred gun carts, connected together with twisted bull hides, to break a cavalry charge, and by arranging hurdles or shields between

30 Tony Bunting and Michael Kerrigan, "Battles of Panipat," Britannica, accessed on September 14, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Battles-of-Panipat>.

31 Battles of Panipat | Summary | Britannica.

32 Szczepanski, "Overview of the First Battle of Panipat".

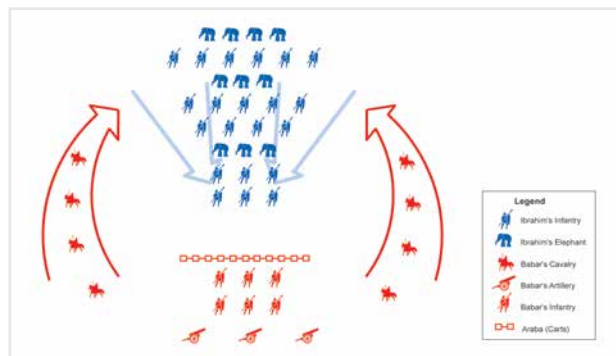
33 Szczepanski, "Overview of the First Battle of Panipat".





each pair to protect matchlockmen.<sup>34</sup> He secured his flanks with ditches and *abatis* (a line of felled trees with their branches sharpened, tangled together, and facing toward the enemy),<sup>35</sup> while he placed his cannons in the centre. In the centre, there were breastworks (fortifications made of piled material—logs and stones etc—built up to breast height)<sup>36</sup> for his matchlockmen to rest their guns, and fire. This method was used by the Ottomans during the *Battle of Chaldiran*.<sup>37</sup>

archers, channelising it on a narrow front in the centre. At that point, the gunners opened up artillery from behind the cover of *araba*.



Attack of Babur's Army

(Source: AIMH)

- c. On the night of 20<sup>th</sup> April, a surprise move was attempted by Babur. It failed owing to confusion of the troops in the darkness. Sultan Ibrahim was elated by the ease with which this attack had been driven back, and brought his army out at dawn on 21<sup>st</sup> April, in battle array. Babur drew up his army behind its improvised fortress, in battle order, as soon as he understood the enemy's movement.
- d. Behind the cover of *araba* and string of hides to defend his canons and matchlocks, Babur had left sufficient space, through which 100 or 150 men could charge abreast.
- e. To give practical application to *tulughma*, Babur placed his mounted archers, who could stand up on their stirrups at full gallop and fire arrows with amazing rapidity, to be on the wings of his two flanks.<sup>38</sup> This rapid swoop in the enemy's rear had an incredible outcome.
- f. Babur enveloped Lodi's army from both flanks with his fast moving cavalry and

- g. Cannons were used to great effect; the elephants had never heard such a loud and dreadful noise before. The panic-struck elephants turned back, ran through their own lines, and charged onto their own troops, crushing scores of soldiers underfoot.<sup>39</sup>
- h. The encounter dragged on towards midday. By then, Lodi's soldiers, after setbacks, defected to Babur's side in droves.<sup>40</sup> Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's death during the battle resulted in the eventual defeat of his army.

## Factors Contributed to the Defeat of a Bigger and Stronger Force

- a. The *tulughma* and the *araba* were two pioneering ideas of Babur, which largely set the stage of victory in the battle.
- b. Babur expertly used a lethal combination of defensive-offense, to create disruption in the enemy's ranks through use of his

34 Poole, *Medieval India under Mohammadan Rule AD712-1764*, 200.

35 "A Glossary of Fortification Terms," American Battlefield Trust, last updated on October 17, 2023, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/glossary-fortification-terms>.

36 "A Glossary of Fortification Terms".

37 "First Battle of Panipat," accessed on October 1, 2024, [https://gscepublications.com/gk/91614094-05c1-4fac-b047-8a4edc3479a7\\_GKMaterial.pdf](https://gscepublications.com/gk/91614094-05c1-4fac-b047-8a4edc3479a7_GKMaterial.pdf).

38 tulughma strategy - [www.toppr.com/ask/question/the-mughal-emperor-who-introduced-the-military-strategy](http://www.toppr.com/ask/question/the-mughal-emperor-who-introduced-the-military-strategy).

39 Szczepanski, "Overview of the First Battle of Panipat".

40 Szczepanski, "Overview of the First Battle of Panipat".



cavalry, to channelise Lodi's army in the centre of the strong defence created around his guns.

- c. And finally, the use of guns helped Babur claim victory in the battle. The sound produced by the canons frightened the war elephants of Lodi, which turned them against their own infantry.

## Aftermath of the Battle

According to the *Baburnama*, Emperor Babur's autobiography, the Mughals killed 15,000 to 16,000 of Lodi's soldiers. Other local accounts put the total losses at closer to 40,000 or 50,000. Babur lost around 4,000 of his men in the battle. There is no record of the fate of the elephants.<sup>41</sup>

The First Battle of Panipat laid the foundation of the Mughal dynasty in India. The empire was consolidated and witnessed its pinnacle during the reign of Akbar the Great. The Mughal Empire continued its rule, from absolute to just nominal, till the War of Independence in 1857, following which the British Raj formally took over India.

## Take Away Points with their Application in the Current Environment

### • Leadership

It is by discipline that an army is welded into a fighting system; it is by leadership that it is led to victory.<sup>42</sup> Babur provided transformational leadership to his troops. Much like Khalid bin al Waleed in the battle of Yarmuk, he led a smaller army to victory only because of his novel ideas and offensive spirit. He did not get overawed by the enemy's superiority in numbers and elephants, as an extraordinary weapon of war. He thought ahead of his enemy, by

devising new strategies and unique weapon systems to defeat a much larger force, on its home ground. A leader's true potential, skills and ability to take decisions comes to the fore only in times of crisis, and against heavier odds. Babur proved himself an extraordinary leader.

Officers of Pakistan Army today are facing the most formidable challenge to their leadership when they confront an enemy which is moving in the shadows. Normally junior leaders get into a reactive mode in their effort to distinguish friend from foe, and this defies initiative. The miscreants are aware of the organisation, method and training employed by Pakistan Army, thus the *khawarij* come out with new techniques to inflict damage. It is very important that young officers who are in the vanguard and leading troops, confront this challenge through new and fresh ideas, with an offensive spirit. This needs out-of-the-box solutions, forward planning and initiative, with the ability to strike at the weakness of the enemy. This necessitates leadership traits like never before. A leader of today must be able to think *three sixty degrees*.

### • Training to Achieve Competence

A new manoeuvre or strategy cannot be implemented in earnest, unless it is mounted on diligent training of the soldiers who have to execute it. Babur came with a plan to launch an offensive, but he waited for Lodi to initiate his move. During this time he did not just wait, but trained his troops to hone their skills, and finally his best trained men on the flanks fired their arrows, standing in the stirrups of their horses. Skillful use of canons also achieved requisite effects.

41 Szczepanski, "Overview of the First Battle of Panipat".

42 Serve to Lead( An Anthology) compiled by The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst p8.



Pakistan Army realised in 2008, that in its War against Terror, specialised training would be required. This specialised training regime, when employed during the execution phase of OPERATIONS RAH-E-RAAST and RAH-E-NIJAT, delivered needed results.

Conventional ‘peace-time’ training needs to be remoulded in response to *khawarij* tactics of fourth generation warfare.

Training of tactical skills at initial stages in PMA and SI&T, need to be reset to derive a more offensive and forward looking approach, to get out of reactive mode.

It will be good to train GCs and young officers to give unique solutions to the problems, based on an offensive mindset, meticulous planning and reasoning, during outdoor exercises. The idea is that GCs and officers should understand the concepts of deployment in different scenarios, their application, and have the ability solve issues they might be facing in odd situations. Mistakes made during training, earlier in the career, will become necessary sources of learning in the future.

## • Never Underestimate Your Enemy

Babur had formed his troops for an offensive, but did not initiate it till Ibrahim Lodi’s force formed up and came out to fight. In a critical turn of events, a surprise move of Babur on the night of 20<sup>th</sup> April was easily repulsed, either due to confusion, or failure of the troops to identify the correct objective. This event drew Ibrahim Lodi’s forces out in an expression of euphoria, that *the enemy could be easily handed a defeat*, owing largely to their own strength. This was a miscalculation prompted by underestimation of the enemy, based on a small weakness.

An easy victory in the Rann of Kutch in April/May 1965 triggered a collective over confidence in the political hierarchy and Foreign Office of Pakistan. They did not correctly assess the readiness of the Indian government to take the war across the international border, while planning OPERATIONS GIBRALTAR and GRAND SLAM. This resulted in an all-out attack on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September.

In World War 2 the Germans lost the war against the USSR, that they felt sure to win. The faulty estimate resulted from an incorrect assumption about the low fighting quality of the Soviet soldier, and misleading perception about their own military prowess. German euphoria overtook them, and they thought that nobody could stop them in a war on land.<sup>43</sup>

## • Surprise

According to Klaus Knorr and Patrick Morgan, throughout history, belligerents had been able to achieve surprise on the battlefield by *introducing new tactics*, adopting *bold strategies*, employing *deception*, and developing *exceptional troop discipline*.<sup>44</sup> Babur had been able to surprise the enemy by demonstrating all these means.

- He introduced *new tactics* of *tulughma* and *araba*, which were hitherto unknown to Lodi’s force.
- His *troops’ discipline* was exceptional. His archers could stand in their stirrups at full gallop and fire arrows with amazing rapidity.
- His *bold strategy* of attacking from the flanks with his cavalry, compelled Lodi’s

<sup>43</sup> Klaus Knorr and Patrick Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise- Incentives and Opportunities* (UK: Routledge, 1982), 2.

<sup>44</sup> Knorr and Morgan, *Strategic Military Surprise Incentives and Opportunities*, 39.



forces to come on a narrow front against its well deployed and defended artillery pieces.

- d. The sound of the cannons was new and terrifying to the elephants, *that were shocked*, and their reverse movement destroyed their own forces.

Similarly bold strategy, forward planning and excellent troops' discipline, can also set the tone to counter surprise.

#### • **Artillery as a Strategic Weapon**

Babur's guns proved decisive in battle, as they could operate freely, because Ibrahim lacked any field artillery. The sound of the cannons frightened Ibrahim's war elephants, causing them to trample their own men. The Battle of Panipat marks the start of the gunpowder age and the end of the age of elephants, as the prime weapon of Indian warfare.<sup>45</sup>

Artillery guns and rockets were also a decisive weapon at the Battle of Plassey, 4<sup>th</sup> Anglo-Mysore War, and artillery guns were a valuable weapon of war for the British Indian Army. The British never trusted local gunners or sepoys to be employed in artillery regiments of the British Indian Army, in the aftermath of the War of Independence in 1857. Gunners now hold the strategic arsenal of the Pakistan Army.

#### **About the author**



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### **Disaffection within the State and Armies is a Clarion Call for Disaster**

In most wars that have been fought in the Sub-continent in the last many centuries, disloyalty within the armies and state, by obsessive power hungry traitors, brought huge damage to the state and army. Treason and treachery of Ibrahim Lodi's estranged relatives and appointees, led to Babur being invited to invade India. In the Battle of Plassey, Mir Jaffar, a general of Siraj ud Daula, betrayed his army, which triggered the loss of the entire state to the East India Company. In 1971 Mukti Bahini's role in the dismemberment of Pakistan was central. This historical tradition and obsessive love for power in our part of the world, at the cost of the state and its interests, must never be overlooked. The state must always remain alert to such tendencies. There can be no tolerance for such tendencies.

### **Speed and Mobility**

Military history is replete with examples wherein, with speed and mobility, a smaller force had been able to overcome a bigger force. Khalid bin Waleed achieved his objectives based on this principle of war from Uhud to Yarmuk. The German Army's offensive through Ardennes in 1940 surprised the French, owing to speed and mobility. Babur carried out his manoeuvres with exceptional speed and mobility of his cavalry, to channelise the opposing force on a narrow front, against his strength of deployed guns, which ultimately became a major weakness of Lodi's Army.

<sup>45</sup> Ali, "The First Battle of Panipat".

# OPERATION RAPIER

## Dir Bajaur Operation 1960-61

*Brigadier Imran Haider Jaffri, SI(M) retired*

### Background

Pakistan's north western border with Afghanistan extends for 1640 miles, with the south western end at the border with Iran, and the north eastern at the border with China. It carries a pre-partition legacy of being the British Indian border with Afghanistan (Durand Line), under a mutual agreement between the Afghan ruler and the British Crown.<sup>1</sup> With the demise of British suzerainty in the Sub-continent, the sovereignty of the dominion was transferred to Pakistan under the legal principle of "*res transit cum suo oneri*".<sup>2</sup>

There is much similarity between the past and present, in the problems faced by the British in India on their north western frontier, and those faced by Pakistan after independence.<sup>3</sup> The context still stays relevant, as Pakistan has been busy in fighting the War on Terror on its western border since 2003. Afghanistan has been allegedly sponsoring and harbouring such elements.

This transition from Britain to Pakistan

was always resented by Afghanistan, who refused to recognise the Durand Line as the international border. Despite it being the international border, the legacy of remembering it as Durand Line continued for many years.



Map-1: Durand Line (Source: balochistanvoices.com)

In 1948, Haji Mirza Ali Khan, a.k.a *Faqir of Ipi*<sup>4</sup>, took control of North Waziristan's Datta Khel area and declared the establishment of an independent *Pashtunistan*, forming ties with regional leaders including the Afghan leader Daoud Khan, and others.<sup>5</sup> Pakistan did not recognise the legality of any such government.<sup>6</sup> The genie was brought out of the bottle with the Afghan King's anti-Pakistan

- 1 The Durand Line Agreement was signed between British India and Afghanistan's ruler Amir Abdur Rehman, on November 12, 1893, primarily as a move initiated by Britain to secure its north western borders from Russian intervention. Durand Line extended for about 1,500 miles, running through the Pamir mountain range in the north, to the Arabian Sea in the south, in the mountainous northern and central sectors, cutting through and dividing tribal regions.
- 2 "A thing passes away with its burden". A maxim meaning that all debts, servitudes, and other third-party rights attached to territory or property, are transferred with the sovereignty or title to the territory or property itself.
- 3 Mujtaba Razvi, *The Frontiers of Pakistan: A Study of Frontier Problems in Pakistan's Foreign Policy* (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1971), 144.
- 4 Faqir of Ipi, famous for his anti-British guerilla warfare during the British Raj, managed to rally the Pashtuns of North Western Frontier region for a separate state of Pakhtunistan after partition. He demanded the Government of Pakistan to accord independence to Pakhtunistan which was firmly denied by Pakistan.
- 5 Gordon Martel, ed., *The Encyclopedia of War*, 1st edition (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).
- 6 On September 3, 1961, Pakistan Government, after some border raids from Afghanistan, clearly stated in a white paper; "If the frontier of a country has to be re-determined on the basis of linguistic and ethnic divide as claimed by Afghanistan, it will result in disintegration of Afghanistan. There are 12 million people in Afghanistan. Of these, only 3.5 million speak Pashto, and the rest speak Persian, Turkish, Tadjik, and Uzbek. All these non-Pashto-speaking parts of Afghanistan should, on this basis, be integrated with the neighboring countries.



Faqir of Ipi

(Source: historyofpashtuns.com)

speech in a *jashan* (celebration) in 1950, where Pashtunistan's flags were hoisted and then supplemented by propaganda leaflets dropped by the Afghan Air Force. This was followed by physical raids by Afghan forces on September 30, 1950.<sup>7</sup> In 1955, when Pakistan decided to merge West Pakistan, including the frontier regions, into *ONE UNIT*, the Afghans reacted very strongly.<sup>8</sup>

With the failure of talks between President Ayub Khan and Sardar Daoud, Prime Minister of Afghanistan, to persuade



Sardar Daoud Khan

(Source: althistory.fandom.com)

Afghanistan to join CENTO, the political impasse reached its peak.<sup>9</sup> This was followed by Afghanistan's kinetic efforts to implement her agenda of challenging Pakistani Government's writ in the frontier regions, especially in Dir and Bajaur areas. The Afghans overestimated the support from within Pakistan's tribal population, which had overwhelmingly rejected a merger with Afghanistan in the 1947 referendum.

These Afghan provocations were responded to politically, diplomatically, and

ultimately with a decision to establish the physical writ of Pakistan's Government in the frontier regions—Dir and Bajaur.

#### • Establishment of Writ of the Government in the Frontier Region

On the Pakistani side of the Durand Line, officially the Political Agent of Malakand was also in charge of the area of Bajaur and Dir. In actual fact, neither he nor any other Pakistani Government agency had any control over the affairs in this strategically important area. The presence of Afghan lashkars, regulars and Afghan agents right on the border, required that the Government of Pakistan take active steps to extend its influence in Dir and Bajaur. The main obstacle to the extension of this influence in the area was Shah Jahan Khan,



Nawab of Dir, Shah Jahan Khan

(Source: blogger.com)

Nawab of Dir, his son Shahab ud Din, Khan of Jandol, and some others. The Nawab of Dir considered the area of Dir state as his special preserve, and resented any efforts on Pakistan's part, to have any say in matters

relating to his territory. The Khan of Jandol also did the same to keep any efforts out of Jandol and Bajaur.

The Government of Pakistan set itself the aim *to extend its effective control in Dir and*

7 Razvi, *The Frontiers of Pakistan: A Study of Frontier Problems in Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, p 144.

8 Pakistani missions in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad were ransacked by mobs, and Pakistani flags were insulted. Pakistan Government reacted strongly under intense public pressure who demanded stern action against Afghan attacks on Pakistani missions. Severance of diplomatic relations soon resulted, and Afghanistan ordered a general mobilisation.

9 Pakistan suspected Russians of backing the Afghan Government on the issue of Pakhtunistan, and also influencing the Afghan Government not to join CENTO. At this stage even the Indians backed the Afghan rulers. With such backing from Moscow and Delhi, the Afghan ruler felt encouraged and upped the ante in 1961 against Pakistan, this time on a much larger scale. Afghan tribal lashkars and the regular army was set to cross the international border. (*The Frontiers of Pakistan: A Study of Frontier Problems in Pakistan's Foreign Policy* by Mujtaba Razvi, p-162).





*Bajaur, isolate it from Afghan influence, and to remove any person(s) from the scene whose loyalties were suspected and were likely to prove a source of trouble in future.*<sup>10</sup> The President of Pakistan, Field



President Ayub Khan  
(Source: britannica.com)

Marshal Ayub Khan, directed that military plans be prepared, in case the Afghans made any inroads in Bajaur, or intervened in Dir's affairs. He also directed road construction

projects to counter Afghan penetration in Dir and Bajaur. Military plans were prepared accordingly, by GHQ. On the political side, the Khan of Khar was persuaded by political authorities to construct a road between Munda Qala and



The Khan of Jandol, Shahab ud Din Khan  
(Source: Wikipedia)

Khar. (see map-2). On the instigation of the Khan of Jandol, Utmanzais and Shamozaïs took up positions at Sikandro to obstruct road construction through their territory. The Khan

of Khar also organised his *laskhar* and placed it at Shingaz Ghar (see map-2). A stalemate existed without any significant incident.

## • Political-cum-Military Actions

A series of high level civil-military meetings were held at GHQ. The Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions,



Map-2: Dir/Bajaur Area (Source: AIMH)

and the C-in-C Army, along with civil and military staff, took part in these deliberations. In the meantime, reports were being received about concentration of Afghan *lashkars* and Afghan army in Kunar Valley, however the authenticity of estimates about their strength was questionable. It was therefore, decided to form a political-cum-military intelligence cell with wireless communication, to acquire reliable information. The cell, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Karim, was posted at Khar (see map-2) on 21 September 1960. It was also decided to establish a civil-cum-military group at GHQ for day to day planning and issuing of instructions. The composition was as under<sup>11</sup>:-

- Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence
- Rep Ministry of States and Frontier Regions
- Rep Ministry of External Affairs

<sup>10</sup> Archives, Army Institute of Military History.

<sup>11</sup> Archives, Army Institute of Military History.

- Vice Chief of General Staff (VCGS)
- Director of Military Operations (DMO)
- Director of Military Intelligence (DMI)
- Director of Public Relations
- Rep of PAF

Initially it was decided to send 25 platoons of scouts under the command of Brigadier Rakhman Gul, MC, Inspector



Brigadier Rakhman Gul, MC  
(Source: History of FC-KPK)

General Frontier Corps (IGFC) to Munda Qala and Khar (*see map-2*). The army was to remain in support. Ministry of States and Frontier Regions was instructed to establish its headquarters in Malakand Agency (*see map-2*), and direct the activities of IGFC.



Major General Attiqur Rahman, MC  
(Source: Wikipedia)

As a next step, GOC 7 Division, Major General M. Attiqur Rahman, MC, was appointed as overall military commander, with the Joint Secretary, Ministry of States and Frontier Regions as his

senior political representative.

## • Military Plan

Before arriving at a military plan, the following factors required due consideration:-

- Possibility of Afghan incursions in other parts of the North West Frontier.** It was decided that no more scouts should be taken away from their

normal stations, for operations in Dir and Bajaur.

- Indian Reactions.** It was appreciated that chances of any serious reaction from India were negligible, and it was considered safe to detach some formations from the eastern border, for operations in Dir and Bajaur.

## • Course of Events

In view of increased Afghan incursions and infiltration in Bajaur, it was decided to deploy a military force in Munda Qala and Khar, with the objective of supporting friendly elements, countering Afghan influence, and to support the Khan of



Khan of Khar  
(Source: frontierpakistani.com)

Khar in road construction. GOC 7 Division was given an additional brigade (106 Brigade). Units ex 7 Division, less some division troops, remained at their present locations. In addition 15 Division, under Major General M.G. Jilani, at Sialkot, was placed on 24 hours' notice, with a view to eventually taking over from 7 Division.



Major General M.G. Jilani  
(Source: edurank.org)

On 29 September, 1960, the C-in-C gave orders to formation commanders (GOC 7 Division, GOC 15 Division and Commander 106 Brigade). The plan was divided into two parts as under:-



- a. **Political Action.** Initially a force of 25 civil armed forces (CAF) platoons, under command IGFC, was to move to Munda Qala on 30 September, and then to Khar on 4/5 October. Their main task was to reinforce Khan of Khar's men who were fighting the hostile tribes in area Shingaz Ghar and Sikandro. PAF was to support the CAF action.
- b. **Military Action.** 106 Brigade Group was to move to area Dargai (see map-2) immediately, to come under command 7 Division (ORBAT at Table-1). On orders from GHQ, 7 Division was to launch 106 Brigade in Dir and Bajaur to support the CAF (political action). On entry of the army into Dir and Bajaur, CAF was to come under operational command of 7 Division.

## OPERATION RAPIER (30 September to 4 October 1960)

### • Phase-1 (30 September)

7 Division's operation, code-named *RAPIER*, was launched from Chakdara (see map-2) under the personal command of IGFC, on 30 September, 1960, with a view to fulfilling the political aim as described above. The Frontier Corps, assisted by Frontier Constabulary, reached Balambat (see map-2) without any opposition. The damaged bridge at Balambat was repaired by engineers under command IGFC. The troops continued their advance and reached Munda Qala the same afternoon.

### • Phase-2 (4 October)

The advance from Munda Qala to Khar was resumed on 4 October. This move was supported by PAF. The Utman Khels,

Shamozais and the men of the Khan of Khar vacated the picquets occupied by them, for the Frontier Constabulary troops in area Shingaz Ghar. When the column was returning to Munda Qala, they were fired upon by hostiles who were successfully engaged by own fire, and later on PAF rocketed and strafed them at Sikandro fort.

### • Arrest of Nawab of Dir and Khan of Jandol

The attitude of Nawab of Dir and his son, the Khan of Jandol, was hostile towards re-imposition of writ of the Pakistan Government. Both kept instigating the Utman Khels and Shamozais against the Khan of Khar. They also fed incorrect information to the Army, to buy some time, as they expected some help from Afghanistan. In a meeting at GHQ on 5 October, it was decided to arrest both of them. 15 Division (less a brigade group) and 15 Lancers were ordered to move from Sialkot to Dargai. They arrived at Dargai on 9/10 October. 106 Brigade group was tasked to arrest the Nawab of Dir and Khan of Jandol. The brigade entered Dir on 8 October, and arrested the Khan of Jandol and Nawab of Dir from Munda Qala and Dir respectively, without any opposition.<sup>12</sup> Both captives were moved to Risalpur, and flown to Lahore the same day.

### • Handing over by 7 Division to 15 Division

Orders were issued on 28 October for GOC 15 Division to take charge as Force Commander Dir and Bajaur area, from GOC 7 Division. HQ 7 Division and its troops moved back to Peshawar on 30 October. Hostile activities, and the action

<sup>12</sup> Qasim Ali and Dr. Kishwar Sultana, "Political dimension of Dir State in Historical Perspective," *International Journal of Pukhtunkhwa* 1, no. 1 (2024).





taken by 15 Division during their stay are summarised as under:-

- a. Afghan agents and other hostiles started indulging in anti-Pakistan activities and sniping at Pakistan Army's camps and picquets at night, by removing telephone cables, and in a few cases, blowing up culverts on the roads in Bajaur area.
- b. On 12 November, a patrol of 10 Baluch, (now Baloch) was fired upon by hostiles in Shingaz Ghar, in which the unit suffered six casualties, of whom one died later, and one soldier was reported missing. The missing soldier was later recovered.
- c. In view of the intensification of activities of Afghan agents, notably one Badshah Gul, it was decided at a meeting held at the President's House on 28 January, 1961<sup>13</sup>, to drop leaflets warning Badshah Gul and anyone harbouring him, to desist from such activities. In case the warning was not heeded to, air action was to be taken against all such elements.
- d. A squadron of 15 Lancers was moved to Dargai on 15 March, 1961. A troop of tanks from this squadron was moved to Munda Qala on 1 April.<sup>14</sup>
- e. On 13 May, 1961, seeing the improved situation, 15 Division, with some divisional troops and 106 Brigade Group, was ordered to move back to peace locations. 101 Brigade Group was ordered to take command of the operational area from GOC 15 Division.<sup>15</sup>
- f. The Afghans having suffered a defeat in Bajaur, lost no time to recover their influence by distributing arms, ammunition and money, and thus regained the initiative. Having prepared the grounds, they took action by attacking Shahi Fort (*see map-2*) in May 1961. The Afghan *lashkar* and regulars made three attempts to capture Shahi Fort picquets. These attacks were supported by mortar and medium artillery gun fire, but were repulsed by Pakistani troops. It was later learnt that the Afghans had suffered heavy casualties.
- g. Having failed to capture Shahi Fort, the Afghan *lashkars* and regulars directed their attention to forts at Miskinai and Sangipara (*see map-2*). A mobile column consisting of a troop of tanks and a company of Bajaur Scouts, supported by PAF and medium artillery guns, was sent to the area. Pakistani tanks, medium guns and air force successfully engaged the *lashkars* and regular Afghan soldiers in the area, and inflicted heavy casualties.
- h. After the setback in May 1961, Afghan agents, though active, did not indulge in any large scale attacks except sporadic sniping of military camps. The operational cell, therefore decided, to recommend withdrawal of troops from Bajaur area with effect from (w.e.f) 1 January, 1962. The President approved this decision on 8 December, 1961, and orders for the withdrawal of troops w.e.f 1 January, 1962 were issued.

#### • Salient Conclusions

Some conclusions drawn from these operations on the western border are summarised hereunder:-

13 Archives, Army Institute of Military History.

14 Ibid.

15 Dir/Bajaur Operation, War Diary, 101 Brigade.



- a. **Use of Tribesmen.** Some of our frontier tribes proved invaluable in mounting and conducting the operation. Our tribesmen possessed a great deal of potential strength, and given appropriate encouragement, proved to be most useful and effective in actions against any incursions from Afghanistan.
- b. **Employment of Frontier Corps/ Constabulary.** Initial deployment of these law enforcing agencies (LEAs) facilitated the employment of the Army at later stages of the operation. Most of the CAF soldiers belonged to the area, and knew the terrain well. This was amply used to advantage by the regular troops.
- c. **Intelligence Gathering.** The initial intelligence information about the strength of hostile Afghan Army was not very accurate, which hindered the planning and movement of required number of troops. With the establishment of an intelligence cell, the intelligence picture regarding strength and locations of hostile Afghan soldiers improved, and appropriate actions were taken.
- d. **Role of PAF.** PAF was incorporated from planning to execution stage. They conducted photo and recce missions, column cover, and strafing of the hostile Afghan *lashkars*, Afghan regular troops and a few hostile maliks' houses.
- e. **Importance of Frontier Warfare (FW).** Regular troops participated in Dir-Bajaur operation with inadequate training in FW (frontier warfare). There was a need to train the troops, not only in FW, but equally important were mountain warfare, desert warfare etc. This was later done in the Pakistan Army. General staff publications (GSPs) were formulated accordingly, and training modules included in the curriculum at schools of instruction.
- f. **Logistics.** Importance of logistics, signal communication, and engineer efforts, like construction of roads in rugged terrain at critical stages etc, were realised well, and taken care of, for a successful operation in Dir-Bajaur.

The overall impact of operations in Dir and Bajaur was remarkable and lasting for the prestige, and establishing the writ of Government of Pakistan. The Khan of Jandol and Nawab of Dir were arrested without firing a shot. Hostile tribes were silenced over the issue of *Pashtunistan*. The retreat of Afghan regulars and *lashkars* in the face of successful offensive action by local tribesmen, CAF and Pakistan Army sent a strong message across the Durand Line, that Pakistan would not accept violations of its territorial sovereignty. The tribal population appreciated military action against hostile tribes, and Afghan regulars. There has never been an attempt of this scale after the Dir-Bajaur operation along the Durand Line, by the Afghan Army, or any other tribal



*Dir-Bajaur Tamgha-e-Difa*  
(Source: facebook.com)

force. During the course of operations in Dir and Bajaur, certain important lessons were learnt, which proved valuable

in conducting such operations later, to maintain Pakistan's territorial integrity in frontier regions.

(Research work on Dir-Bajaur operation is ongoing, and will appear as a monograph, covering the military action in greater detail).

**Table-1**  
**ORBAT-7 & 15 DIVISIONS**

7 Division	15 Division
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Battery 22 Field Regiment</li> <li>➤ Detachment 21 Medium Regiment</li> <li>➤ 18 Engineer Company</li> <li>➤ 61 Field Company Engineers</li> <li>➤ 7 Division Signal Regiment</li> <li>➤ 3 FF (ex 14 Para Brigade)</li> <li>➤ Two companies 15 FF</li> <li>➤ 11 MP unit</li> <li>➤ <b>Under Command 7 Division</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>106 Brigade ex 10 Division</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 82 Battery ex 25 Field Regiment</li> <li>• 84 Mortar Battery</li> <li>• Platoon 93 Field Company Engineers</li> <li>• 10 Division Radio Relay Section</li> <li>• 20 Punjab</li> <li>• 10 Baluch</li> <li>• 16 Baluch</li> <li>• Two companies Army Services Corps</li> <li>• Ordnance company</li> <li>• 145 Infantry Workshop Company</li> <li>• Section 10 MP unit</li> <li>• Two Air OPs (1 &amp; 2 Air Op Squadrons)</li> <li>• Detachment 70 Field Company Engineers</li> <li>• 9 FF (ex 100 Armoured Brigade)</li> <li>• Company ex 19 Baluch</li> <li>• 23 Field Ambulance</li> <li>• 28 Mobile Surgical Team</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>CAF</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 platoons CAF</li> <li>• 16 platoons Frontier Constabulary</li> <li>• 1 Mahsud Battalion</li> <li>• 2 Mahsud Battalion</li> <li>• Bajaur Scouts</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>PAF In support</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ HQ 15 Division Troops</li> <li>➤ 15 Lancers</li> <li>➤ <b>Artillery 15 Division</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 2 Field Regiment</li> <li>❖ 4 Field Regiment</li> <li>❖ 12 Medium Regiment</li> <li>❖ 83 Mortar Battery</li> <li>❖ 108 Divisional Locating Battery</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Engineers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 15 Division Engineers Battalion</li> <li>❖ 17 Field Company</li> <li>❖ 32 Field Company</li> <li>❖ 322 Field Park Company</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Signals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 15 Division Signal Regiment</li> <li>❖ 101 Brigade Signal Company</li> <li>❖ 15 Division Radio Relay Section</li> <li>❖ 13 FF Signal Section</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Infantry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 101 Brigade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 Punjab</li> <li>• 14 Baluch</li> <li>• 6 FF</li> <li>• 13 FF</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Army Services Corps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Three division transport companies</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Army Medical Corps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Two field ambulances</li> <li>❖ 31 Mobile Surgical Team</li> <li>❖ 99 Mobile Dental Unit</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Ordnance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 15 Division Ordnance Unit</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Electrical &amp; Mechanical Engineers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Two infantry workshop companies</li> <li>❖ Three transport company workshop sections</li> <li>❖ 13 FF Light Aid Detachment</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>MP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 4 MP Unit</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>PAF In support</b></li> </ul>

### About the author



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# Battle for Milestone-5

## 6 Armoured Division in action during 1965 India-Pakistan War

*Brigadier Muhammad Uzair Ahmed Qureshi, SI(M) retired*



Battle for Milestone-5, oil on canvas

(Source: AIMH)

### **The battle for Milestone-5 around Chawinda in Ravi-Chenab Corridor (RCC) during 1965 India-Pakistan War (IPW)–the zone of the largest tank battle since World War II**

*The above painting is the scene of an intense battle fought around Chawinda, during the final attempt by Indian forces to capture or invest Chawinda, during the second and third battles of Chawinda (16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> September 1965). It is based on research conducted by the author using historic data from the AIMH Defence Archives, war diaries, units' battle accounts and personal interaction with war veterans who took part in this battle. The painting has been composed and painted by renowned military aviation artist Hussaini, who has relived the intense moments of the epic battle of Milestone-5 around Chawinda, in repeated Indian failed attempts to achieve the objective of OPERATION NEPAL.*

This is the second article by the author on the battles of Chawinda. The first, titled '*The Steel Knuckle: BRAVO Squadron of 25 Cavalry in action during 1965 India-Pakistan War*,' published in Bugle & Trumpet (Issue 1/2023), described the heroic action by B Squadron 25 Cavalry around Gadgor, as the Indian Army launched its main effort in RCC, on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1965.

This article, '*Battle for Milestone-5*,' describes the intense battles fought around Chawinda as Indian forces tried harder, initially to capture, and later to invest or bypass, Chawinda. Suffering heavy tank and personnel casualties as they tried to achieve their war aim, Indian strategic formations failed to achieve even an intermediate objective for face-saving. While leading Indian armoured elements were being chastised (and promised awards) to cut the road at Milestone-5, they failed to accomplish this task. Fighting resolutely, attacking wave after wave but failing, the Indian retreat had just begun. India pressed the United Nations for cease-fire<sup>1</sup> which was finally enforced on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, as Pakistani forces were about to launch OPERATION WIND-UP to evict intruding Indian troops.

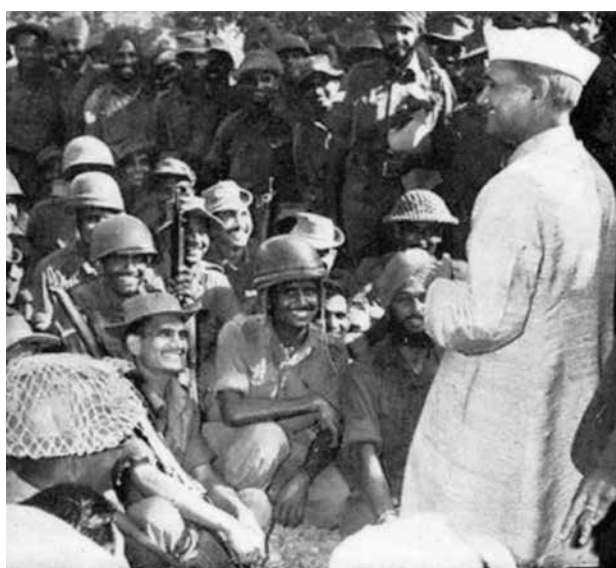
<sup>1</sup> 'We went to Tashkent with pride because we had thwarted the enemy's plans, taken a larger area of its territory and held a larger number of POWs. It was India, which had pressed for a ceasefire then,' the then Pakistan's Foreign Minister Zulifkar Ali Bhutto's remarks published in Dawn, as quoted in General (retired) Muhammad Musa, *My Version: Indian Pakistan war 1965* (Lahore: Wajidali Publishers, 1983).

Sequel to India's embarrassing defeat in the Rann of Kutch conflict (March-April 1965) at the hands of the Pakistan Army, the then Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, during his address to Lok Sabha in April 1965, warned Pakistan, saying, '*we will attack at a time and place of our choosing*'.<sup>2</sup> The threat was manifested five months later when India attacked Pakistan on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1965 across the international border, without declaration of war. While Pakistan had restricted its military operations to the disputed territory of

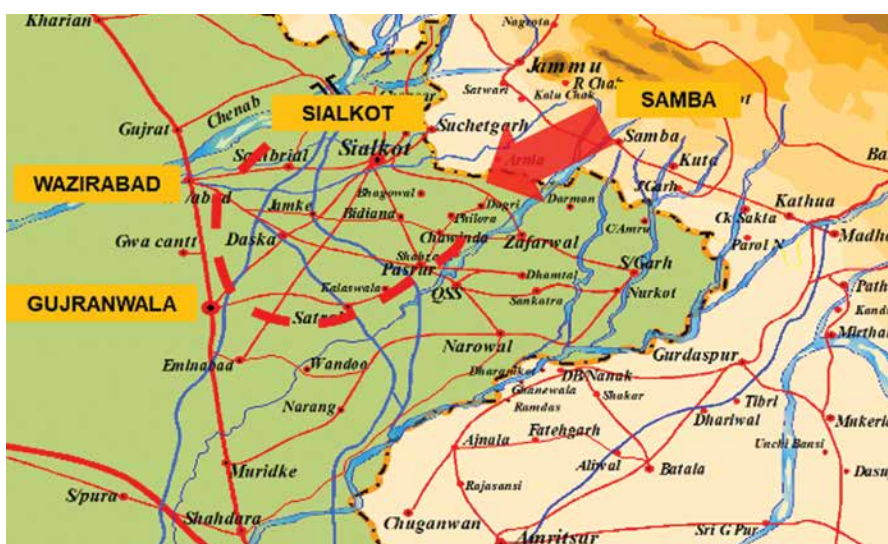
Jammu and Kashmir as part of OPERATIONS GIBRALTAR and GRAND SLAM in August-September 1965, India attacked Pakistan in multiple sectors, across the international border, waging all-out war. On 6<sup>th</sup> September 1965 at 03:00 a.m., the Indian Army crossed the international border simultaneously at Sialkot, Jassar, Wagah and Kasur, without formal declaration of war.

The Indian military aim in the 1965 India-Pakistan War, as per plan conceived under OPERATION NEPAL, was to launch an offensive from Samba area in Pakistan's territory, between Sialkot-Lahore, to reach the Grand Trunk Road between Wazirabad and Gujranwala. This was to cut the major highway, and thus seek victory against Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> The Indian main offensive was, therefore, directed westward into Pakistan's Ravi-Chenab Corridor between Chenab and Degh Nadi (*see map-1*).

In the early hours of 8<sup>th</sup> September, India launched a major offensive in Sialkot sector along Suchetgarh-Sialkot and Charwa-Chobara-Chawinda axes. The Indian Army had employed its strategic reserves in this sector to achieve a quick victory by racing up to the Grand Trunk Road. The Indian strategic



Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, 1965  
(Source: wordpress.com)



Map-1: Area of operations, RCC

(Source: Author)

#### OPERATION NEPAL

Indian plan to launch an offensive from general area Samba in Pakistan's Ravi-Chenab Corridor between Sialkot-Lahore, to reach the Grand Trunk Road between Wazirabad and Gujranwala, in order to cut the major highway and thus seek victory against Pakistan.

2 Lieutenant General (Retd) Mahmud Ahmed, *A military History of the Indo-Pak War -1965* (Karachi: Lexicon Publishers, 2002), 388-412.

3 Ahmed, *A military History of the Indo-Pak War -1965*, 388-412.



Theatre / Sector	Pakistani Forces	Indian Forces
Jammu and Kashmir	12 Division	3, 19 and 25 Division
Chhamb Sector	7 Division	10 Division
Sialkot Sector	15 Division	26 Division
Lahore Sector	10 Division	7 and 15 Division
Kasur Sector	11 Division	4 Mountain Division
Sulaimanke Sector	105 Independent Infantry Brigade	67 Brigade
Sindh Sector	Desert Force (51 Brigade and Rangers)	11 Division
Reserve Formations	1 Armoured Division, 6 Armoured Division (a light division), and 8 Division	1 Armoured Division, 6 Mountain Division, 14 Infantry Division, 50 Brigade, and 2 Independent Armoured Brigade
East Pakistan	14 Division	9, 20, 23 Divisions and 32 (Independent) Brigade (Also five divisions facing China)

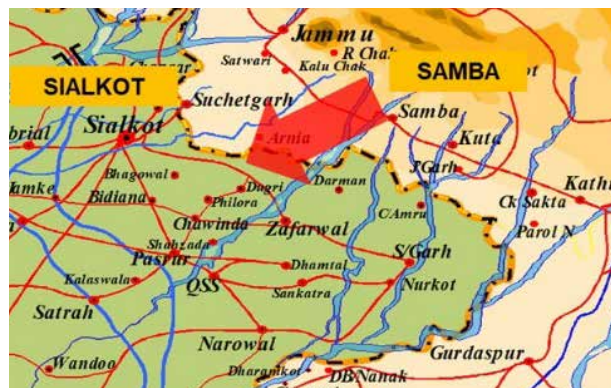
Deployment of troops at the time of commencement of hostilities  
(Source: Author)

objective was quite evident by this time, as OPERATION NEPAL unfolded in RCC (see map-2).



Map-2: Indian main offensive in RCC, west of Degh Nadi  
(Source: AIMH)

On Charwa-Chobara-Phillaura axis, the Indian Army put in its main offensive effort using 1 Corps. The Indian attack was led by their 1 Armoured Division. Their spearheading armour included two famous regiments—4 Hodson's Horse and 17 Poona Horse. The Indian attack on Sialkot-Suchetgarh axis was halted after some loss of ground. On Charwa-Chobara-Phillaura axis, the initial response by B Squadron 25 Cavalry at Gadgor, and later by 24 Brigade, stabilised the situation and after the battle of Phillaura, GOC 6 Armoured Division, Major General Abrar Husain, decided to strengthen defences along Chawinda (see map-3).



Map-3: In the early hours of 8 Sep, India launched a major offensive in Sialkot sector along Suchetgarh-Sialkot and Charwa-Chobara-Chawinda axes  
(Source: AIMH)



8 September 1965, Indian advance halted by B Squadron 25 Cavalry  
(Source: AIMH)

It was to become 'one of the fiercest battles of the war'<sup>4</sup> and the 'graveyard of Indian tanks'.<sup>5</sup> There were three major battles of Chawinda on 14 September, 16 September and night 17/18 September. 16 September was the most fierce tank battle of the war, when all units of 6 Armoured Division, except those in Zafarwal, were fully engaged (see map-4). India launched three major coordinated attacks on Badiana and Chawinda simultaneously, with the intent to mask Badiana and cut Chawinda from the west and rear.<sup>6</sup>

Both sides fought gallantly, but the Indian manoeuvre was completely frustrated by the determination of Pakistani armour, infantry and artillery units. PAF support also played a pivotal role, to help break up waves upon

4 Major General (retired) Abrar Husain, *Men of Steel: 6 Armoured Division in the 1965 War* (Rawalpindi: Army Education Publishing House, 2005).

5 Husain, *Men of Steel*.

6 Husain, *Men of Steel*, 151.



waves of enemy troops and tanks, attacking in a determined effort to break through on a narrow front. Bold forward deployment of Pakistani artillery proved to be one of the major battle winning factors, and helped turn the tables on attacking Indian troops in crucial situations. Indian 'cartwheel movement', led by 4 Hodson's Horse on the outer, and 17 Poona Horse on the inner circle, was intended to envelop Chawinda. Despite heavy casualties and determined opposition, Indian troops gained ground. As a result, Jassoran fell, followed by Buttur Dograndi, and intercepts indicated that the next Indian objective was Sarangpur. Indian troops made the final attempt with the task to cut Chawinda-Pasrur road at Milestone-5, just south of Chawinda. Indian troops planned to develop operations from the direction of Buttur Dograndi, a mile southwest of Chawinda, towards Milestone-5.

On the Pakistani side, the commanding officers of the Pakistani armour, infantry and artillery assets in the field, joined together to concentrate anti-tank firepower. The Pakistani units pressed into the most aggressive action and even the Sexton 25-pounder self-propelled guns fired directly at the advancing enemy tanks. The PAF's F-86s, on-call from Peshawar and Sargodha Air Bases throughout the day, also came in waves for immediate air support. Indian attacking troops were repeatedly ordered, chastised and even promised awards by their seniors to proceed forward, cutting Chawinda-Pasrur Road at Milestone-5, seemingly in a compromise to settle for some gains for face-saving, while suffering huge casualties, in pursuit of their final objective of capturing the area up to the Grand Trunk Road.

At this stage of the battle, an Indian commander was heard in an intercept, saying to the commanding officer of 17 Poona Horse, '*cut the road at Mile 5 and Param Vir Chakra will*

*be laying at your feet for you to pick it up and wear.'* If the enemy commander really meant what he said, the unfortunate commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Tarapore, missed the award by one mile only and died in the attempt. This decoration was later given to him posthumously, and it was deserved.<sup>7</sup> 4 Hodson's Horse and 17 Poona Horse suffered heavy tank casualties, and none could accomplish this task.

By 1630 hours on 16 September, the situation had become critical, as Commander 24 Brigade had assessed that it was becoming difficult to hold positions in Chawinda. His GOC assured him more help, asking him to hold on to Chawinda at all costs. The commander of 24 Brigade readjusted his dispositions. Indian tanks and infantry were approaching Chawinda railway station from the direction of Buttur Dograndi. Initially massed artillery fire with 1 (SP) Field Regiment, firing charge-1 at Indian tanks 1,500 yards away from their gun positions, and later 24 Brigade, halted the Indian advance.<sup>8</sup> The Indian attack lost momentum, and they once again failed to overrun Chawinda.

In the final effort to capture Chawinda, Indian 35 Infantry Brigade launched a strong attack at 0100 hours on night 18/19 September, and managed to get to Chawinda railway station. 24 Brigade gallantly held on to their positions. Having failed to make further headway into Chawinda from the railway station, the Indian effort shifted southwards along the railway line to take the town from the south. Just before dawn, Indian troops were steadily working their way towards the Chawinda-Pasrur road. What happened to these Indian troops is described by GOC 6 Armoured Division:<sup>9</sup>

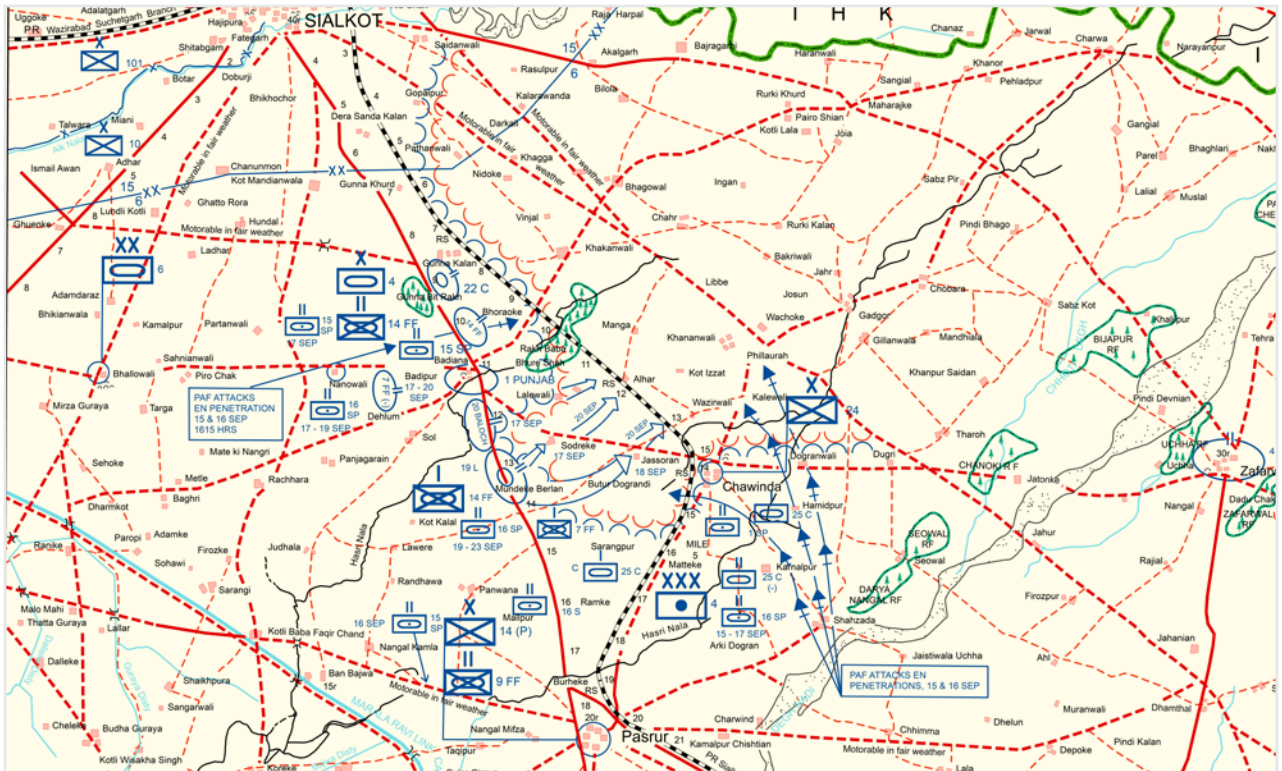
*As the first rays of light pierced the darkness, a squadron of 25 Cavalry,*

<sup>7</sup> Husain, *Men of Steel*, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Husain, *Men of Steel*, 45.

<sup>9</sup> Husain, *Men of Steel*, 45.



Map-4: Battle for Milestone-5<sup>10</sup>

(Source: AIMH)

deployed in crescent shape from south of Chawinda to high ground, saw a mass of Indian infantry coming over the railway line. They shouted 'Jai Hind'. This served as a signal for the defenders to open up with everything they had—.30s, .50s, the HE of the main tank guns, the weapons of the infantry in their dug-in positions, and all the guns of the artillery within reach. A massacre ensued. As the morning sun came over the horizon, it shone over a battlefield littered with Indian corpses. The 35 Infantry Brigade comprising 6 Marhattas, 3 Rajputana and 5 J&K had virtually ceased to exist. At least five hundred were killed and over a hundred taken prisoners. 4 Horse and 17 Horse who were supporting the attack and were to have broken out towards Pasrur also took a heavy beating. A simultaneous frontal attack by the

enemy with a battalion (plus) on 14 Baluch positions met the same fate and the enemy left approximately hundred corpses in that area. These attacks were the most determined infantry charges made so far by the enemy. We intercepted such desperate enemy radio messages as 'objective must be captured, these are orders of the Government.' The replies indicated the inability, due to casualties suffered, of the Indian commanders, to push their troops any harder.<sup>10</sup>

The Indian Air Force helped their ground troops throughout the morning of 19 September, as they were to extricate what was left of their ground forces. At 1500 hours, GOC 6 Armoured Division asked Commander 4 Armoured Brigade to capture Jassoran-Janewal, as there were reports of Indian troops extricating from these areas. The attack on Jassoran started at 1700 hours and Jassoran-

<sup>10</sup> Husain, *Men of Steel*, Map-12.

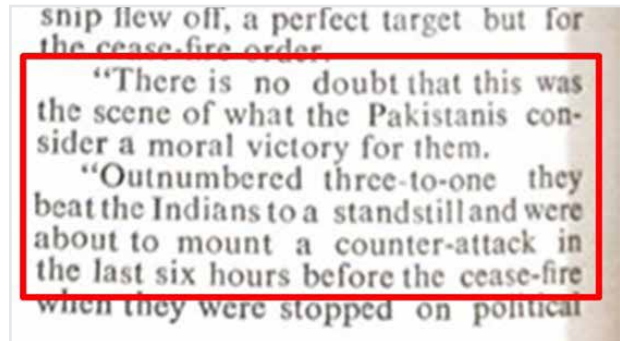
Janewal were recaptured. The Indians, however, succeeded in pulling out bulk of their forces, but left behind nearly a hundred dead bodies, several prisoners and eight Centurion tanks, including two in running condition, and some recoilless rifles. With the successful conclusion of the day's operations, there was a lull in the fighting all along the front. The enemy now went on to the defensive. The crucial, and what later proved to be the final, battle for Chawinda was over.

*Looking back on the details of the last few days' fighting, one could not help feeling that the enemy's final gamble had failed. Their ill-conceived plan of directing all their efforts—to the point of obsession—on the capture of Chawinda rather than on the destruction of the formations that had stood in the way of their victory over Pakistan, had led them to their doom.<sup>11</sup>*

Despite repeated and determined efforts, Indian forces could not accomplish their war aim and suffered heavy casualties. Battle actions of the last few days around Chawinda cost them heavily, while their retreat had already begun. Pakistan's counter offensive in Sialkot sector to reduce Indian gains—OPERATION WIND UP—could not materialise, because of the ceasefire that came into effect on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

The cable sent by Donald Seaman to London *Daily Express*, from Sialkot, published on 24 September 1965 sums it up, saying:

“Outnumbered three-to-one they beat the Indians to a standstill and were about to mount a counter-attack in the last six hours before the cease-fire...”



*London Daily Express, published on 24 September 1965*

Pakistan was able to stalemate an overwhelming large Indian military strength. Pakistan's military denied India to fulfil her war objectives, causing her great losses. India suffered almost three times tank losses.<sup>12</sup> India's aggression cost her heavy men and material losses; 1,617 square miles of territory as compared to 446 square miles of Pakistan's territory, and 20 officers, 19 JCOs, and 569 soldiers taken POW.

Day	Own	Enemy
11 September	22	30-45
12 September	3	20
14 September	4	11
15 September	5	14
16 September	15 + 5	29 + 10
18 September	-	10
18/19 September	3	16
20 September	2	10
21 September	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>158-173</b>

*Comparison of daily tank losses during battle of Chawinda in 1965 India-Pakistan War* (Source: Husain, then of Men of Steel)

Pakistan's Commander-in-Chief General Muhammad Musa, praised the performance of Pakistani forces, saying:

*‘... the great disparity, in men and material, between the opposing forces was made up by our Services with their superior professional skill, better equipment and spirit of defiance. In other words, it was quality versus quantity...’<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>11</sup> Husain, *Men of Steel*.

<sup>12</sup> Husain, *Men of Steel*.

<sup>13</sup> Musa, *My Version: Indian Pakistan war 1965*.



All art forms are soft and effective tools for learning and teaching general and military history. These can be effectively used to record, archive, popularise and honour military history. The author is sponsor of *Military History through Art*, at AIMH. Besides many other projects undertaken to this end, the second painting of the Battle of Chawinda is yet another classic example of recording, archiving, popularising and honouring our military history. The first painting was commissioned

for AIMH in 2021, details of which were published in Bugle & Trumpet issue 1/2023 titled, *The Steel Knuckle*.<sup>14</sup> This painting, *Battle for Milestone-5* was commissioned on 7 June 2022. A number of meetings were held with veterans by the author,<sup>15</sup> besides many by the artist, in 2020-2022, to research relevant details of this battle, which ultimately helped AIMH to commission the two paintings with perfect historical accuracy.



Army Staff Ride for the battle of Chawinda was conducted on 5-7 March 2024, by AIMH faculty, for officers stationed at Sialkot garrison



Author and Mr. Hussaini during discussion session with Brigadier (retired) Ahmed at AIMH



Oral History Preservation Programme session with Brigadier (retired) Mahmud at AIMH by the author



Military Aviation artist Mr. Hussaini with commissioned painting at AIMH

<sup>14</sup> Brigadier Muhammad Uzair Ahmed Qureshi (retired), "The Steel Knuckle," *Bugle & Trumpet* no. 1 (2023).

<sup>15</sup> A number of meetings and interviews were held with veterans, on 17th September 2020 (Oral History Preservation Programme session), 5th November 2020, 19th November 2020 and 27th April 2021 with Brigadier Muhammad Mian Mahmud, and 10th November 2020 with Brigadier Ahmed, by the author at AIMH.

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## About the author



Brigadier Muhammad Uzair Ahmed Qureshi, SI(M), retired, was commissioned in antiaircraft artillery in September 1983. The officer is a graduate of Command and Staff College Quetta and National Defence University Islamabad. He has been on the faculty of Pakistan Military Academy Kakul and Commandant Anti Narcotic Force Academy Islamabad. He has commanded his parent regiment 5 Light Air Defence Regiment (Fakhar-e-Quaid), and an air defence brigade at Malir Cantonment. He has a masters degree in war studies from Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, fellowship in counter terrorism with distinction from National Defence University Washington DC. He is presently serving in Army Institute of Military History as research director. He can be reached at [uzair@aimh.gov.pk](mailto:uzair@aimh.gov.pk)

*“Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles,  
a thousand victories.”*

*(Sun Tzu)*



# Carved in Stone

## The Murree Hills Military Memorials

*Dr Ali Jan*

In the hill station of Murree, established by the British in 1853, lie hidden relics of a bygone era. These are not the iconic structures of architecture that draw the eyes of casual tourists, but quite often overlooked memorials etched into the very stone of the picturesque landscape. Carved by soldiers and officers during the British Raj, these enduring engravings reflect the military presence that once defined this region's strategic importance.

Murree became a favoured hill station for the British seeking refuge from the sweltering heat of the plains. It evolved into both a sanatorium resort and the summer headquarter of the Army's Northern Command. With time, the hills became studded with monuments, memorials and markers, commemorating fallen comrades, and lives lived in service to the Empire. There were 16 British-era cemeteries in and around Murree.

Among the many military monuments that I have researched in the Murree Hills over the years, three stand out for their remarkable endurance and intriguing histories. These surviving relics of the Raj offer a glimpse into the past. In this article, I shall uncover the tales they hold within their timeworn surfaces.

### West Yorkshire Regiment Monument

Among the cantonments near Murree garrison, Kuldana, now the Army School of Logistics (ASL), stands as one of the oldest. It housed various British regiments, with remnants of this military past like old barracks, cemeteries and a chapel still standing today.

During a hike in secluded woods near my summer home in Kuldana many years



*West Yorkshire Regt Memorial* (Source: Author)

ago, I stumbled upon a stone monument commemorating the Prince of Wales's Own West Yorkshire Regiment, stationed here from 1907 to 1910. Curious, I reached out to the Yorkshire Regiment Museum for more information. They confirmed that the regiment had been in the area but were unaware of the monument's existence. Their records stated that the regiment had been involved in hill manoeuvres and part of the Mohmand Field Force.

I shared this discovery online, which sparked interesting responses. Though initially feeling like an explorer, I realised others had long known about the monument. A British Army veteran, Jesse Bridge, wrote to inform me that he had seen the same memorial during his service in Murree in the 1940s. He even sent its photograph taken in 1945. Despite my efforts, I couldn't locate the two additional memorials he mentioned.



*West Yorkshire memorial members of 22<sup>nd</sup> Batt MMGS, 1916*  
(Source: Author)

The large rock monument has a military crest and inscription of the *Prince of Wales's Own (XIV) West Yorkshire Regt* dated 1907-1910. The regimental insignia, the *Nec Aspera Terrent* motto with an image of a horse and 1807-1831 *India*, with an image of a tiger, are visible. The battalion's name *1<sup>st</sup> Bn* is now almost illegible. On top there is a faded inscription *THE KNAVES MIRE*. Below it *XIV* is inscribed in the centre.

From the Yorkshire Regiment Museum, I received this reply:

*Our records state that the 1st Bn West Yorkshire Regiment moved from Lahore to Rawalpindi in 1907 and remained in the (Murree) area until it returned to England in 1911. We were not aware of it and cannot be sure what the memorial stone in Murree commemorates. It may be in memory of the men who died there, or maybe it was simply carved to record the Battalion's three years in the area. Thank you for your interest in it, and we would be delighted to receive a photograph of it (for our museum and newsletter) if this can be arranged.*

The museum also emailed the battalion's *Service Digest* dated 1907-1911. The several-paged document gave details of its general activities in Murree Hills.

According to its history, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (XIV) West Yorkshire Regiment was originally raised in 1685. It was formerly known as the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, also as the Bedfordshire Regiment of Foot, and later as the 14<sup>th</sup> Buckinghamshire. In 1759, when stationed at Windsor, it was granted royal permission to wear the White Horse of Hanover on its crest. From 1807 to 1831, it served in India and subsequently was granted the badge of the Royal Tiger superscribed with 'India'. In 1876, the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII,

presented new colours to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, and conferred on the regiment the title 'The Prince of Wales's Own'. Five years later, in 1881 the 14<sup>th</sup> was honoured and named 'The West Yorkshire Regiment'.

In 1958, the West Yorkshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Own) and the East Yorkshire Regiment (The Duke of York's Own) were amalgamated to form the Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, whose regimental headquarter and museum is located at York in UK.

The regimental stone has stood and watched over the hill for nearly a century. Standing before it, one can easily drift into nostalgia and imagine the soldiers of a bygone era performing their regimental drill to the tune of a bagpiper, or perhaps playing various sports in the ground. To the European soldiers, this place would certainly have seemed like their home away from home.

## de Visme Memorial

This is a roadside memorial on the Lower Jhika Gali Road (formerly Lower Forest



de Visme Memorial  
(Source: Author)

Road) that connects Jhika Gali with the Mall. It marks the spot where Captain Gerard Auriol de Visme of 8<sup>th</sup> King's Royal Irish Hussars died from a rather unusual accident involving a goat.

The inscription records:

*"8<sup>th</sup> K.R.I. Hussars /Erected\ to the memory of Capt G.A. de Visme who was*

*killed near this spot, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1880. Aged 34 years. In the midst of life, we are in death. This stone was erected by the N.C. Officers and Men of his troop as a token of their esteem and regard for the above-mentioned officer. Pristinæ Virtutis Memores”.*

Illustrated London News recorded the following under ‘Deaths’

*Captain G.A. de Visme, 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars, on June 29, at Murree, Punjaub, from a blow of a stone dislodged by a goat on the side of a hill. He was only son of Edward de Visme, Esq., late of New Court, Gloucestershire. (ILN, 1880).*

Another announcement read:

*Murree—Captain de Visme, of the 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars, while riding on the lower forest road on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup>, received a blow on the head from a stone, detached by a goat, rolling from the hill-top. He survived only two hours, and was buried with military honours on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The accident had cast a gloom over the station. (J.W. 1880).*

In 1879, Captain de Visme had recently arrived in British India to take part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Afghan War, where he received an Afghanistan War medal. Just a couple of years prior to it, in an issue dated Nov 3, 1877 de Visme’s promotion from NCO rank to officer was hailed, and he was put on a pedestal for his success and good fortune:

*Promotion in the Army.—The Morning Advertiser asks:—“Who shall now tell us that the British Army holds out no hope of advancement to the zealous and deserving; or that the ‘Queen’s shilling’ is not now and then a talisman of success to the brave man who courts honour in the ranks? In one of last week’s London*



*de Visme roadside Memorial* (Source: Author)

*Gazettes, we read that Lieutenant and Adjutant G. A. de Visme, 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars, is promoted to a troop in the same gallant corps. Captain de Visme’s career has been a fortunate instance of what merit and hard work can achieve. This gentleman enlisted as a private in the ranks of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons (Scots Greys) about half a dozen years ago, and after a short period of service in that rank and the subordinate position of a non-commissioned officer, was promoted to his first commission in July 1872; thus, after five years’ service only, obtaining his grade of captain in a crack cavalry corps. To all who know Captain de Visme, the announcement of his success will be most gratifying, as his brother officers and his superiors recognised in him a smart, intelligent, and industrious adjutant; and his rapid advancement is distinct proof of the readiness of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge to take notice of merit, and advance the interests of deserving subalterns”. (Public Opinion, 1877 Vol 32)*

A year after his promotion de Visme married Geraldine Mary Kyrle (daughter of Major-Gen Ernle Kyrle R.H.A) in July 1878. Rudyard Kipling, when he composed the ‘Arithmetic on the Frontier’ (see below) was talking about Afghanistan—a country which de



Visme survived despite all its perils, however, he met his death unexpectedly from a “blow on the head from a stone dislodged by a goat” in Murree. How would’ve Kipling viewed this almost tragicomic ending? I leave it to the reader’s imagination.

*A scrimmage in a Border Station-  
A canter down some dark defile  
Two thousand pounds of education  
Drops to a ten-rupee jezail.  
The Crammer’s boast, the Squadron’s pride,  
Shot like a rabbit in a ride!*

## Northumberland Fusiliers Monument

Like most hill folk, the natives of Murree are quite friendly and eager to chat with visitors. Once, while driving through Lower Topa, I stopped at a kiosk for tea. An old villager mentioned a weathered rock called *Samp ki Tarrar* in the forest. In the local dialect, *Samp* means serpent, and *Tarrar* is rock.



*Northumberland Fusiliers Lower Topa* (Source: Author)

Legend has it, a giant serpent once terrorised Murree, crushing everything in its path. After many years, a mysterious horseman appeared and killed the serpent, saving the townspeople. Intrigued, I asked to be shown the site.

With the help of a guide, I set out to find the rock. After walking half a mile down

the road to Kohala, we veered off and climbed uphill through thick foliage. There, I found a large, moss-covered boulder about 11 feet wide and 7 feet long. On it was a faded carving of a horseman. From a distance, I thought it might be an ancient Buddhist or Hindu carving, but on closer inspection, it resembled a dragon under the horse’s hooves. As I cleared away the moss and debris, I remembered the tale of St. George and the Dragon, a story I’d read as a child.

The roots of the legend are ancient. St. George is considered an English patron saint and therefore the legend is largely English. The encounter between St. George and the Dragon is said to have happened at a place called *Silene*, in Libya—a sufficiently exotic location, where a dragon might be imagined! Anyhow, according to the legend, the town had a large dragon with insatiable appetite for sheep and town’s children. St. George came on a horse and finally slew the dragon on the condition that the town folks agreed to convert to Christianity.

Images of the legend are often used as English emblems and badges. It is not uncommon to spot British-era military crests carved on the wayside in many parts of Pakistan. Finding such an insignia on a rock in Murree suggested a British-era military connection. The weathered carving included indecipherable Latin letters and a prominent ‘V’.

I photographed the rock from various angles and closely studied the images on my computer. An internet search led me to the Northumberland Fusiliers (NF), a regiment known as the *Fighting Fifth* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which explained the Roman numeral ‘V’. I contacted their regimental museum at Alnwick Castle, UK, and received a reply from curator Mrs. Lesley Frater. She confirmed that the



carving belonged to the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn which had been photographed in 1909. She shared the image that showed the carving was once painted, and the motto *QUO FATA VOCANT* (Whither the Fates call) and the name of sculptor “Pte Bloxham” were visible.

The regimental crest had been carved by Private Bloxham, as documented in the 1909 St. George’s Gazette. Similar carving exists at Cherat, also done by him. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had left England in 1896 and returned in 1913.

Thanks to the old man at the kiosk, I stumbled upon a fascinating relic of the British Raj. Perhaps the legend of St. George and the Dragon had been passed down through



Northumberland Fusiliers Lower Topa postcard, 1909  
(Source: Author)

generations, blending with local folklore over time.

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## About the author



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*“Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.”*

*(Sun Tzu)*

# Agartala 1967–Agartala 2024

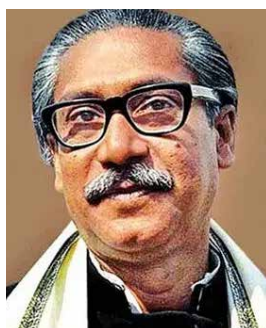
## A Journey of Six Decades

*Brigadier Nasir Shafiq, SI(M) retired*

### Introduction

The History of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent is replete with examples of inter- and intra-ruling class conspiracies. It peaked during colonial rule when colonists attempted every possible way of conspiring to establish their authority and gain more power—brothers against brothers and sons against fathers. After the partition of British India in August 1947, Pakistan experienced two conspiracies within its first twenty years of independence, other than many political happenings. The *Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case* of 1951 was the first to occur just four years after independence. The second was unearthed towards the end of 1967, later known as the *Agartala Conspiracy Case*, with much more grave implications for the future of Pakistan, than the first one.

A specific class of East Pakistani politicians started getting disillusioned about the future of Pakistan right from the beginning, with the Bengali language controversy coming up in March 1948. It grew much more in intensity and magnitude with time, instead of getting settled, especially after the 1965



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman  
(Source: prothomalo.com)

Indo-Pak War. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Awami League, once a student worker of the Pakistan Movement in 1947, and the leader of a dominant political party of East Pakistan in the mid-1960s, shot into prominence after

the departure of three political stalwarts from the eastern wing of the country, namely, A.K Fazlul Haq, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Khawaja Nazimuddin, in 1962, 1963 and 1964 respectively. Having assumed the leadership



A.K Fazlul Haq  
(Source: historypak.com)



Hussain Shaheed  
Suhrawardy  
(Source: dawn.com)



Khawaja Nazimuddin  
(Source: historypak.com)

of Awami League in 1966, he presented his famous *six-point political formula* for enhanced autonomy of East Pakistan, on 5 Feb 1966 at Lahore. Soon after, he embarked upon a political campaign to garner support for his six-point agenda from the East Pakistan masses. While returning from Khulna on 8 May 1966 after addressing a political rally, he was arrested and lodged in Dacca (now Dhaka) jail. While he was in jail, Lieutenant Colonel Shamsul Alam—a Bengali officer—unearthed the *Agartala Conspiracy* which was further investigated by Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Amir Khan, both from Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) in December 1967.<sup>1</sup>

Around this time, Rauf ur Rahman of the East Bengal Regiment, aligned with the alleged conspirators, made an attempt on Alam's life. However, Alam successfully defended himself against the assassination attempt, an act of remarkable bravery that

1 Meraj Hasan, "Agartala Conspiracy: Fact or Fiction?," Pakistani Bibliophiles, May 5, 2019, accessed on November 14, 2024, <https://pakistanbibliophiles.home.blog/2019/05/05/agartala-conspiracy-fact-or-fiction/>.



earned him the *Sitara-e-Basalat* from Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> According to the press note issued by the home department, government of Pakistan, on 6 January 1968, a group of Bengali military officers, civil servants, politicians and a few others were conspiring to secede East Pakistan from Pakistan, through collusion with India. Reportedly, a few conspirators out of 34, had already crossed into India to meet Indian officials at Agartala, the capital of the Indian state of Tripura, and very close to East Pakistan's eastern border. Later, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was also included in the list of conspirators as accused number 1, as conveyed through a separate press note issued on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1968. The trial started on 19 June 1968 and ended within a year on 22 February 1969, without reaching its logical conclusion, amid much political pressure and street agitation in East Pakistan. The framing of the entire case and how it was handled and conducted, had a profound and significant impact on the future of Pakistan, as it later turned out. The Agartala Conspiracy Case remained a mystery, and controversial for many long years, as all the alleged conspirators pleaded 'not guilty', till confession in recent years by a few who were actually part of this conspiracy.

Proving the Agartala Conspiracy to be a reality is not significant at this moment in history, nor is it the intent of this article. The paper aims to analyse and shed light on its consequences and fallout for the political future of Pakistan, especially for the unity of Pakistan between both wings of that time, so as to learn from history. Before discussing the analysis of this historical case, it would be relevant to go through the historical context of the entire political milieu of that time.

## The Historical Context

- By 1946, it became evident that many Bengalis favoured the idea of two distinct Muslim homelands, over a unified Pakistan. However, the Congress cornered the Muslim League, and insisted on the partition of Bengal to secure Calcutta, the region's key port city. With the British endorsing the Congress stance, the Muslim League faced a stark choice: accept partition or risk losing Pakistan altogether. In response, the Muslim League rallied behind the demand for a single Pakistan, even though its founder, M.A. Jinnah, and future prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, had no objection to the concept of a separate Bengali Muslim state. This strategy was aimed at amplifying their collective political voice.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Pakistan was created with two non-contiguous wings. Fazlul Huq, a prominent Bengali leader, assumed the position of chief minister of East Pakistan on 30 March 1954, but his tenure was cut short when Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad imposed governor raj on 30 May 1954, after just two months.<sup>4</sup> In 1956, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy assumed the role of prime minister and announced elections for 1959, igniting fresh hope among Bengalis who believed his return to power could transform their fortunes. However, this optimism was short-lived, as the imposition of martial law in 1958 dashed their aspirations. The instability of Pakistan's political landscape during this period is evident, because between 1947 and 1958, the country saw four heads of state and seven prime ministers.<sup>5</sup>

2 Moiz Khan, "Revisiting the Agartala Conspiracy – Op-ed," *Eurasia Review*, December 15, 2022, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/15122022-revisiting-the-agartala-conspiracy-op-ed/>.

3 Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (UK: Oxford University Press 1984), 323.

4 Inam Ahmed & Shakhawat Liton, "A passage to Agartala," *The Business Standards*, January 24, 2020, <https://www.tbsnews.net/analysis/passage-agartala-38771>.

5 Ahmed and Liton, "A passage to Agartala".



- An early indication of Mujib's aspirations for Bengali independence emerged in 1957, when he questioned Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, then the Prime Minister of Pakistan, about the possibility of political sovereignty for East Pakistan. Suhrawardy, however, firmly dismissed the idea.<sup>6</sup> This has a linkage with the Agartala case, which surfaced a decade later in 1967. Sheikh Mujib's inclination to the secession of East Pakistan, or liberation from Pakistan, whatever scholars may call it, was quite evident ever since the language issue of 1948. Later, while speaking on the occasion of the sixth death anniversary of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy on December 5, 1969, Sheikh Mujib referred to the territory of



Sheikh Mujib on his way to the special tribunal set up in the Dhaka Cantonment to try the Agartala Conspiracy Case in 1969  
(Source: mujib100.gov.bd)

East Pakistan as *Bangladesh*. He declared this name during his speech, saying, "On behalf of the people, I am announcing that starting today, the name of the eastern province of Pakistan will be *Bangladesh* instead of *East Pakistan*."<sup>7</sup>

- Mujib's intentions became evident in an incident from 1970 when he candidly shared his views on the Legal Framework Order (LFO) with his key companions, unaware that the discussion was being surreptitiously recorded for Yahya Khan.



General Yahya Khan  
(Source: bitlanders.com)

Mujib remarked: "My aim is to establish Bangladesh. I shall tear L.F.O into pieces as soon as the elections are over. Who could challenge me once the elections are over?" It was played to Yahya by ISI, who said, "I will fix him up if he betrays me."<sup>8</sup> Even at the informal swearing-in ceremony of newly elected assembly members on January 3, 1971, he announced severe punishment for those who would break the covenants of the 6-point program. He also renamed the *Bangladesh Liberation Front* as *Bangladesh Liberation Force*, heralding the advent of armed struggle.<sup>9</sup> He discussed the creation



Tajuddin Ahmad  
(Source: daily-sun.com)

of Bangladesh with his close allies, party secretary Tajuddin Ahmad and a few other key personnel, and briefed his subordinate leaders about the master plan of the new country, armed

6 Syed Badrul Ahsan, "February 1969: Revisiting the Agartala Conspiracy Case," *Daily Star*, February 2007, <https://archive.thedailystar.net/forum/2007/february/feb69.htm>.

7 "Agartala case: Evidence of Bangabandhu's armed struggle for independence," Awami League Bangladesh, January 7, 2022, accessed on December 5, 2024, <https://www.albd.org/articles/news/38218/Agartala-case:-Evidence-of-Bangabandhu's-armed-struggle-for-independence>.

8 Syed Ali Zia Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan," Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research, May 15, 2017, accessed on December 6, 2024, <https://cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics-governance/leaf-history-india-breakup-pakistan/>.

9 Dr. Abdul Mannan Choudhury, "Agartala Conspiracy Case and Bold Move of DU Students," *Daily Sun*, July 6, 2021 <https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/563096>.



revolution, political pressure, diplomatic engagement, etc. That is how the 7th March Speech 1971 became an *operation order* for total war. That shows how Mujib was playing on both sides of the wicket. He was keeping all political forces engaged through political dialogue, and on the other side, he had full preparation for an armed revolution with help from the Indians.<sup>10</sup>

- In 1958, Governor General Iskander Mirza



Iskander Mirza  
(Source: president.gov.pk)



General Ayub Khan  
(Source: moib.gov.pk)

imposed martial law, dissolved parliament, abrogated the constitution, banned political activities, and appointed General Ayub Khan as the chief martial law administrator on October 7. However, within 20 days, Ayub removed Mirza from power, declared himself president on October 27, and sent Mirza into exile in London. Thus, nine years of constitution-making (1947 - 1956) resulted in just two years of

implementation before the constitution was abolished. The 1956 constitution, often considered balanced, addressed key issues, including the language dispute. During Ayub's rule, the pre-1965 period marked an era of economic and military growth, significantly supported by U.S. aid. However, after the Indo-Pakistan War

of 1965, demands for autonomy gained momentum, prominently represented by the *Six Points* political program, which received backing from the Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Parishad (SBBS), a few Bengali military officers. Following the Pakistan Army's launch of OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT on March 25, 1971, the Provisional Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh—commonly referred to as the Mujibnagar government—was established on April 10, and formally took oath on April 17 in the Meherpur subdivision of Kushtia district. Sheikh Mujib's arrest intensified international attention, with the exiled Bangladesh government appealing to the global community to secure his release and recognise the newly declared *Bangladesh*.<sup>11</sup>

## Analysis

### Truths and Revelations

- For many years, the Agartala Conspiracy Case was regarded as a meticulously crafted scheme by Ayub Khan to demonise Mujib and East Pakistani politics. This was taught even in Bangladeshi schools. It



Professor Ian Talbot  
(Source: theconversation.com)

is well-established in history that the meetings did take place in Agartala, a city in Eastern India, in 1962 and continued till 1967. Professor Ian Talbot has confirmed this in his book *Pakistan: A Modern History*,<sup>12</sup>

10 Squadron Leader (Rtd) M Sadrul Ahmed Khan, "Agartala Conspiracy to Mujibnagar Government: Bangladesh's Provisional Government in Exile," Awami League Bangladesh, April 17, 2021, accessed on December 5, 2024, <https://www.albd.org/articles/news/36336/>

Agartala-Conspiracy-to-Mujibnagar-Government:-Bangladesh's-Provisional-Government-in-Exile.

11 Khan, "Agartala Conspiracy to Mujibnagar Government: Bangladesh's Provisional Government in Exile."

12 Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 190.

Subir Bhaumik in his book *The Agartala Doctrine*,<sup>13</sup> Mujib himself, and even Indian



Subir Bhaumik

(Source: eurasiareview.com)

authorities after the creation of Bangladesh.<sup>14</sup> In 2010, a surviving alleged conspirator and deputy speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Shawkat Ali, confessed that the Agartala

Conspiracy was true. He stated that “part of the plan, called the *Agartala Plot*, had navy steward Mujibur Rahman and educationist Mohammad Ali Reza going to Agartala, to seek Indian support for Bangladesh’s independence”.<sup>15</sup> He repeated this statement on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 when he informed the parliament that the allegations against the accused were genuine. “The charges against us read out on the first day of hearing in the case, were absolutely right. We formed a Sangram Parishad led by Bangabandhu to free East Pakistan through armed protest”.<sup>16</sup>

- The revelations by Sashanka S. Banerjee, a retired Indian diplomat, author, and scholar who served as a diplomat in East Pakistan from 1961 to 1965, and later authored *India, Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh Liberation & Pakistan*, are worth noting. He also accompanied Sheikh Mujib during the latter’s flight from London to Dhaka via New Delhi, after his release from Pakistan on 8 January 1972. He alludes to Sheikh

Mujib’s Indian connection as early as 1962. He says, “I have been associated with the Bangladesh freedom movement since Christmas Day of 1962 when Mujibur Rahman made his first appeal to India for support to the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle. I stood witness when India agreed to extend support on grounds of Mujib’s commitments to the ideals of inclusive secularism, liberal democracy, pluralism, and Bengali nationalism”.<sup>17</sup>



Sashanka S Banerjee, author of ‘India, Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh Liberation & Pakistan’ with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on board a Royal Air Force VIP flight on their way from London to New Delhi and then on to Dhaka on 9 January 1972

(Source: Author)

- He further writes, “Mujib chose Christmas Day of 1962 to open his first line of communication with India. Simply said, it symbolised his commitment, a devout Muslim by religious faith, to secularism”.<sup>18</sup> Mr Banerjee has also commented on Sheikh Mujib’s physical visit to Agartala and meeting with Chief Minister Sachin Singh. He writes in his book, “Mujib felt that dealing with the bureaucrats in Dhaka was getting him nowhere. He decided to change course and pay a secret visit to

13 Subir Bhaumik, *The Agartala Doctrine* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 13; Hasan, “Agartala Conspiracy: Fact or Fiction?”.

14 Abdul Hafeez Kardar, *Pakistan’s Soldiers of Fortune* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1988), 133. ; Hasan, “Agartala Conspiracy: Fact or Fiction?”.

15 <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-142345> (<https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-142345>).

16 Faisal Khosa, “From Agartala to the fall of Dhaka,” *The Nation*, December 22, 2021, <https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Dec-2021/from-agartala-to-the-fall-of-dhaka>.

17 Sashanka S Banerjee, *India, Mujib ur Rahman, Bangladesh Liberation and Pakistan: A Political Treatise* (US: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2011), xxviii.

18 Banerjee, *India, Mujib ur Rahman, Bangladesh Liberation and Pakistan*, 9.

the bordering State of Agartala in India. He crossed the borders in utmost secrecy without a passport. There he had a few meetings with Sachin Singh, the Chief Minister of Agartala, and put across his request for political support to the cause of Bangladesh Liberation to be passed on to the Prime Minister of India. Mujib did not fail to inform the Chief Minister of Agartala that he had also contacted India's Diplomatic Mission in Dhaka but complained that they were taking too much time to respond. He was in a hurry".<sup>19</sup>

- Two other pieces of evidence also merit attention. One notable source is the widely recognised book *Inside RAW* by former RAW operative Ashoka Raina, which explicitly references the Agartala Conspiracy.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, a statement from Mrs. Kohinoor Hussain, the wife of Lieutenant Commander Moazzam Hussain, also supports the authenticity of the conspiracy. The quote is as follows: "Dearest Husband ..... You are no longer with me. I remember your contribution towards the cause of independent Bangladesh. I remember how you came to Dacca from Karachi on leave under a pseudonym, met P.N Ojha, First Secretary Indian Embassy, at the border at Agartala along with other Indian and Bangladesh officers. You



Maj Gen Khadim Hussain Raja  
(Source: wikipedia.org)

negotiated with Indian authorities for arms and other kinds of help...."<sup>21</sup> Likewise, during the transfer of command of Pakistan's 14 Division in East Pakistan to Major General Khadim Hussain Raja, Major

General Muzaffar Uddin succinctly outlined the Agartala Conspiracy. Muzaffar Uddin



Maj Gen Muzaffar Uddin  
(Source: Blogger.com)

explained to Khadim: "Sheikh Mujib Ur Rehman was genuinely implicated. Some Bengali troops were to launch surprise attacks at night and capture quarter guards and armouries of

the West Pakistani military units. These units would be disarmed and confined to the barracks as prisoners of war..... The government of India would assist in various ways, such as banning over-flights from West Pakistan".<sup>22</sup>

- The *Daily Sun* of Bangladesh has narrated another revealing story in this context, lesser-known hitherto, written by Dr Abdul Mannan Choudhury, former vice chancellor of World University of Bangladesh. "In late



Dr Abdul Mannan Choudhury  
(Source: wub.edu.bd)

1969, Bangabandhu went to London for so-called medical treatment and met Indira Gandhi. In clear terms, he stated that he would attain landslide victory in the next election scheduled in 1970, but Pakistan would

not allow him to rule the country. And, therefore, he expressed his intention to launch a movement for independence, asked for training, assistance in arming, procuring weapons and publicity facilities

19 Banerjee, *India, Mujib ur Rahman, Bangladesh Liberation and Pakistan*, 16-17.

20 Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan".

21 Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan".

22 Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan".



to freedom fighters of Bangladesh to Indira Ghandi. When she gave the green signal



Indira Gandhi

(Source: The sunday guardian)

a politician named Chitta Ranjan Suter was made a go between. After winning the 1970 election, Sheikh Mujib emerged as the undisputed leader of Bangladesh; and in March 1971,

Indira also returned to power in India. Bilateral talks continued and Bangladesh Liberation Front (BLF) central command was re-constituted with Sheikh Fazlul Huq



Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni

(Source: bssnews.net)

and Tofail Ahmed. Razzak remained the head of the volunteer force”.<sup>23</sup> There is no doubt that Sheikh

Mujib gave his blessings to the Agartala conspiracy, and his daughter Sheikh Hasina has openly acknowledged this, but the extent of his active involvement after his arrest is unclear. G. W. Chaudhry has reported that Sheikh Mujib kept active contact with the



Sheikh Hasina

(Source: imdb.com)

conspiracy even while he was in jail, and in fact, he was leading the conspiracy from his jail cell.<sup>24</sup>

## The Management and Aftermath of the Case

- The Central Intelligence Bureau investigated the Agartala Case under the monitoring of ISI, and Major Hasan, from the General Headquarters, was appointed to prepare documents of the case and gather key witnesses.<sup>25</sup> A special tribunal was established following an amendment to the penal code, to handle the case. The proceedings began on June 19, 1968, under Sections 121-A and 131, with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman listed as the accused number 1. Initially titled *State vs Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Others*, the case later became widely known as the *Agartala Conspiracy Case*. The tribunal held hearings in a highly secure chamber within Dhaka Cantonment. A charge sheet with 100 paragraphs was presented against the 35 accused, and there were 227 witnesses, including 11 approvers. However, four of the approvers were declared hostile by the government.<sup>26</sup> The Agartala Conspiracy Case was widely discussed after its public announcement on January 6, 1968. Arrests of the alleged conspirators had started in late 1967, but the case gained significant attention after Sheikh Mujib's involvement on January 18, 1968. By that time, Mujib had already been in prison since his arrest on May 8, 1966.<sup>27</sup> He was released from

23 Choudhury, “Agartala Conspiracy Case and Bold Move of DU Students”.

24 Hassaan Bokhari, “The Agartala conspiracy and the resultant deification of Sheikh Mujib in East Pakistan,” *Global Village Space*, November 13, 2021, accessed on December 20, 2024, <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/the-agartala-conspiracy-case-and-the-resultant-deification-of-sheikh-mujib-in-east-pakistan/>.

25 Ahmed and Liton, “A passage to Agartala”.

26 “Agartala Conspiracy case,” *Banglapedia*, last edited on June 17, 2021, accessed on November 23, 2024, [https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Agartala\\_Conspiracy\\_Case](https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Agartala_Conspiracy_Case).

27 G.W. Chowdhury, “The Fall of Ayub: A Personal Account” in *The last days of united Pakistan* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd, 1974), 22.

Dhaka Central Jail on 17 January 1968, but he was arrested immediately at the jail gate under a sedition case.<sup>28</sup>

- Other than Sheikh Mujib, 34 others were also implicated in the case namely, Ahmed Fazlur Rahman CSP, Commander Moazzem Hossain, Steward Mujibur Rahman, former LS Sultanuddin Ahmad, LSCDI Nur Mohammad, flight Sergeant Mahfiz Ullah, Corporal Abdus Samad, former Havildar Dalil Uddin, Ruhul Quddus CSP, Flight Sergeant Md. Fazlul Haq, Bibhuti Bhushan Chowdhury alias Manik Chowdhury, Bidhan Krishna Sen, Subedar Abdur Razzaque, former clerk Mujibur Rahman, former Flight Sergeant Md. Abdur Razzaque, Sergeant Zahurul Haq, A.B. Khurshid, Khan Mohammad Shamsur Rahman CSP, AKM Shamsul Haque, Havildar Azizul Haq, Mahfuzul Bari, Sergeant Shamsul Haq, Shamsul Alam, Captain Md. Abdul Motaleb, Captain A. Shawkat Ali Mian, Captain Khondkar Nazmul Huda, Captain A.N.M Nuruzzaman, Sergeant Abdul Jalil, Mahbub Uddin Chowdhury, Lt. M Rahman, former Subedar Tajul Islam, Ali Reza, Captain Khurshid Uddeen Ahmed, and Lt. Abdur Rauf.<sup>29</sup> Each of the 35 accused had their



Sir Thomas Williams  
(Source: npg.org.uk)

own lawyers, but Sheikh Mujib was explicitly represented by a UK lawyer, Sir Thomas Williams QC. The appointment of the UK lawyer is another fascinating story. It is believed that the



Newspaper Headline on the Agartala Conspiracy Case  
(Source: Liberation War Museum)

chief minister of Tripura, Sachindra Lal Singh, played a leading role in arranging for a foreign lawyer. Sheikh Mujib had developed a close relationship with Sachindra Lal after visiting Agartala in 1963 to discuss the issue of East Pakistan's secession.<sup>30</sup> It is also believed that the



Monem Khan  
(Source: dailysangram.com)

Governor of East Pakistan, Monem Khan, played a crucial role in persuading Ayub that the Agartala Conspiracy presented an ideal opportunity to involve Sheikh Mujib

in the case.<sup>31</sup>

- On the first day of the trial, a 42-page charge sheet outlining the accused's plot to stage a coup and seize power, was presented. As Sir Thomas Williams entered the courtroom the following day, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former foreign minister under Ayub, was already present to represent Sheikh Mujib in the case symbolically. Bhutto had a personal motive for this: having fallen out with Ayub and been dismissed from his position, he was

28 Dr. Atiur Rahman, "The Agartala Conspiracy Case," *Daily Sun*, December 28, 2020, <https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/526389>.

29 (6) Source later – 34 NAMES.

30 Ahmed and Liton, "A passage to Agartala".

31 Ahmed and Liton, "A passage to Agartala".

leading an anti-Ayub movement in West Pakistan, and saw an opportunity to align himself with Mujib's cause.<sup>32</sup> According to the charge sheet, the armed forces officers involved in the plot intended to overpower the small groups of West Pakistani troops, take control, and declare independence, with Sheikh Mujib as their leader. To achieve this, they raised funds to purchase weapons from India. An Indian diplomat in Dhaka acted as intermediary, holding several meetings with the conspirators at his residence, and assuring them of both arms and financial support. However, when a three-member team from the conspirators travelled to Agartala to finalise the arms deal, it fell through, as the Indians considered the team to be of too low a rank.<sup>33</sup> As the case advanced, the Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad, backed by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, began organising a mass movement to oppose the government's actions. They called for immediate dismissal of the case and release of all detainees, including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.<sup>34</sup>

- Amid widespread protests in Dhaka, Sergeant Zahurul Haq, the 17<sup>th</sup> accused in the case, was shot dead on 15 February 1969 while in custody at Dhaka Cantonment. This event fueled street protests and violence. A furious mob torched the state guesthouse, compelling Justice SA Rahman, the tribunal chairman, and Manzur Quader, the chief prosecutor, to escape from East Pakistan.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, the newly formed democratic action committee (DAC) planned to hold a roundtable conference

(RTC) in Rawalpindi, to address political issues. But the Awami League, being the most potent committee member, rejected an offer from Ayub Khan for Mujib to attend the conference on parole. Prominent politician Maulana Bhashani also declined this offer. Confronted with a widespread movement, the Ayub government had no choice but to withdraw the Agartala Conspiracy Case on February 22, 1969. All the accused, including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, were released without conditions. Brigadier Rao Farman Ali accompanied Mujib to his Dhanmondi home, where he was greeted with cheers and celebrations. The following day, February 23, 1971, a grand public reception took place at *Paltan Maidan* in Dhaka, where Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was bestowed the title *Bangabandhu*.<sup>36</sup> After his release,



Sheikh Mujib seen smiling with his daughter Sheikh Hasina after his release from Agartala Conspiracy Case in 1969  
(Source: mujib100.gov.bd0)

Sheikh Mujib continued to carry out parallel democratic activities and armed preparations, for independence. He even decided on the colour and shape of the national flag, and chose a song by Tagore as the national anthem.<sup>37</sup> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rose to political prominence in the early 1960s, and the sudden conclusion

32 Ahmed and Liton, "A passage to Agartala".

33 Ahmed and Liton, "A passage to Agartala".

34 "Agartala Conspiracy case".

35 Md Ziaul Haque Howlader, "Sheikh Mujib Agartala Case Memorial Museum," *Daily Sun*, March 9, 2020, <https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/468087>.

36 "Agartala Conspiracy case".

37 Choudhury, "Agartala Conspiracy Case and Bold Move of DU Students".



of this case propelled him to the top of East Pakistan's political leadership. His innovative approach of playing on both sides of the wicket, helped secure a victory in the 1970 general election, ultimately paving the way for the creation of Bangladesh.<sup>38</sup>

- While there is considerable evidence regarding this conspiracy, the way it was handled was highly inadequate. Involving Sheikh Mujib in the case while he was already imprisoned seemed rather odd. After his involvement, He was released, and the case was dismissed entirely.<sup>39</sup> The RTC proved unfruitful; while Ayub made concessions to Mujib, the West Pakistani leadership opposed them. Mujib's demands were approaching the point of secession. The stage was set for a major confrontation when the time came, with India's role being subtle yet significant. Throughout this period, India increasingly supported Sheikh Mujib.<sup>40</sup> The careless investigation and mishandled judicial proceedings, instead, raised doubts about the conspiracy's authenticity, even among loyal Pakistanis.<sup>41</sup>

## Indian Role

- The Indian role behind the Agartala Conspiracy is no longer a secret. Some Indians involved, and revealed later, included P.N. Ojha, the first secretary of the Indian High Commission, Lieutenant Colonel Misra, and Major Menon. This revelation was not unexpected given the public knowledge of India's connections with East Pakistani leaders. In hindsight, even Mujib acknowledged that he had

engaged in conversations with Indians.<sup>42</sup>

The All-India Radio aired a weekly program called *Apper Bangla Oupper Bangla* (This side and the other side of Bengal). This indicates that India was strongly supporting the separatist movement, which was being conducted under the guise of promoting unity.<sup>43</sup> Four youth leaders, namely Sheikh Fazlul Huq Moni, Serajul Alam Khan, Abdur Razzak and Tofail Ahmed were entrusted with the responsibility of the Bangladesh Liberation Force to unify the scattered forces under a central command.<sup>44</sup> Chitta Sutar, who acted as the intermediary between Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujib, was given additional duties, including working with Tajuddin and the four youth leaders. Sutar, an ex-Awami League member of parliament who had migrated to India, maintained contact with Sheikh Mujib, who tasked him with reaching out to various Indian intelligence agencies to foster a positive attitude toward the emerging liberation movement. He also arranged accommodation for future trainees in India, and worked to create favourable conditions for all those who would undergo mass training. To keep these



Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib  
(Source: bdnews24.com)

activities hidden from Pakistani intelligence, Sutar was placed under the direct supervision of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib (wife of Sheikh Mujib). In March, Dr. Abu Henna was

38 Choudhury, "Agartala Conspiracy Case and Bold Move of DU Students".

39 Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan".

40 Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan".

41 Bokhari, "The Agartala conspiracy and the resultant deification of Sheikh Mujib in East Pakistan".

42 Khan, "Revisiting the Agartala Conspiracy – Op-ed,".

43 Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan".

44 Choudhury, "Agartala Conspiracy Case and Bold Move of DU Students".

secretly sent to assess the progress of these efforts. After confirming that everything was in order, he returned to East Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib also instructed Tajuddin to establish contact with officials from the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. A communication route was also set up through Zahirul Qayyum of Comilla, to facilitate quick contact via the Tripura state government, to support the secession of East Pakistan.<sup>45</sup>

- Following the launch of OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT by the Pakistan Army, Awami League's then General Secretary Tajuddin and Barrister Amirul Islam crossed the Kushtia border, where they were escorted to Kolkata by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). On April 1, 1971, Tajuddin flew to Delhi aboard an AN-32 aircraft of the Indian Air Force. He met with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on April 3, conveying Sheikh Mujib's plan to establish a government-in-exile for Bangladesh, and lead the liberation struggle. After their discussions, Prime Minister Gandhi assured full support for the new country and its government.<sup>46</sup> After returning to Kolkata from Delhi, Tajuddin began searching for his fellow Awami League leaders, a challenging task due to the lack of communication across various borders and camps. With the assistance of the Indian Air Force (IAF), Tajuddin travelled to several refugee camps using airstrips established by the British during World War II. He eventually gathered the prominent leaders from these camps and brought them to Agartala.
- On April 10, 1971, a provisional constitution was created, marking the

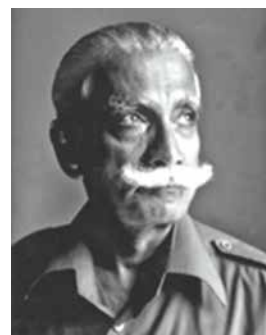
formation of the Bangladesh government in exile. The newly formed government took its oath on April 17, 1971, in Meherpur district. The oath ceremony took place in a mango forest at Baidyanathtala, which the provisional government later renamed Mujibnagar. The selection of this site was strategic: it was relatively free from the Pakistani Army, access by road from East Pakistan was difficult, and India protected it from three sides. However, the Pakistan Air Force's threat of airstrikes remained, making the mango forest's natural cover crucial for the ceremony's security.<sup>47</sup> The cabinet members were Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (President of Bangladesh), Syed Nazrul Islam (Vice President and Acting



Syed Nazrul Islam  
(Source: dailyasianage.com)

President), Tajuddin Ahmad (Prime Minister), A. H. M. Qamaruzzaman (Minister of Home Affairs, Relief and Rehabilitation), Mansur Ali (Minister of Finance and Planning),

Khondaker Mostaq Ahmad (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Law), and Colonel M A G Osmani (Commander-in-Chief of Mukti Bahini). Agartala was the place where



Colonel M A G Osmani  
(Source: bssnews.net)

Sheikh Mujib first shared his vision for creating a new country. Just three years later, members of his government in exile convened at the same location, united by the same goal.<sup>48</sup>

45 Choudhury, "Agartala Conspiracy Case and Bold Move of DU Students".

46 Khan, "Agartala Conspiracy to Mujibnagar Government: Bangladesh's Provisional Government in Exile".

47 Khan, "Agartala Conspiracy to Mujibnagar Government: Bangladesh's Provisional Government in Exile".

48 Khan, "Agartala Conspiracy to Mujibnagar Government: Bangladesh's Provisional Government in Exile".



## Six Points<sup>49</sup>

- Elections to the national and provincial assemblies should be direct and on the basis of universal adult franchise.
- The centre should be responsible for defence and foreign affairs only.
- Currency should be controlled by regional reserve banks.
- Federating units to provide money to the centre on a pre-determined procedure.
- Federating units to maintain their own foreign exchange accounts.
- Federating units can raise their own military and para military forces.

## Ramifications for Pakistan

### Edification of Sheikh Mujib

- The Agartala Conspiracy, a plot with significant implications for Pakistan, shaped the direction of future events. The decision to release Sheikh Mujib was heavily criticised as a grave mistake, undermining the seriousness of the conspiracy.<sup>50</sup> It provided Mujib a platform to promote his political agenda, dramatically increasing his support base. The withdrawal of testimonies by the other conspirators, the sympathy evoked by their emotional displays, the inaction of state institutions, and Ayub Khan's desire for re-election, all contributed to the government's decision to dismiss the case and free Mujib. He was welcomed as a hero and titled *Bangabandhu* (Friend of Bengal). Abdul Hafeez Kardar of the Pakistan People's Party remarked: *Ayub made a martyr of Mujib by insinuating the Agartala conspiracy.*<sup>51</sup> The withdrawal of the case made it clear to all, that the state

could not defend itself against treason.

By this time, there was a clear faction in East Pakistan (albeit in a considerable minority) that advocated the break-up of Pakistan, even with the help of India. That faction received huge encouragement and recruitment after the botched Agartala case.<sup>52</sup>

- Consequent to the withdrawal of the Agartala Case, Ayub Khan resigned and handed over power to General Yahya Khan instead of the national assembly speaker Abdul Jabbar Khan (a Bengali), violating the law. Since Sheikh Mujib had become the unchallenged Bengali leader and champion of East Pakistanis' rights, he continued his campaign to garner support for his political agenda. General Yahya allowed all kinds of political activities to take effect from 1 January 1970, and all parties engaged in election campaigns one year before elections. December 1970 elections are a rare example amongst world democracies, where an election campaign was allowed to continue for one year. Awami League's election campaign, based upon 6 points and the narrative of exploitation by West Pakistan, was intensified and came into full swing of hate, after the devastating *Bhola Cyclone* of November 1970. Awami League played the sympathy card quite effectively, by alleging that the central government had not done enough for the flood victims. Yahya Khan had an opportunity to postpone elections for an indefinite time. Still, he refrained from doing so, which indicates his intent to hand over power to the country's elected representatives. What happened afterwards is another episode, where three major

49 Kamal Matinuddin, *Tragedy of Errors – East Pakistan Crisis 1968-1971* (Lahore: Wajidali, 2011), 39.

50 Khan, "Revisiting the Agartala Conspiracy – Op-ed".

51 Kardar, *Pakistan's Soldiers of Fortune*, 133; Hasan, "Agartala Conspiracy: Fact or Fiction?".

52 Bokhari, "The Agartala conspiracy and the resultant deification of Sheikh Mujib in East Pakistan".



stakeholders (Sheikh Mujib, Z.A Bhutto and Yahya Khan) played their parts in a race to the throne, as per their vested interests. It would not be wrong to say that the creation of Bangladesh was the by-product of the Agartala Conspiracy Case, in so many ways.

- The significance of the Agartala Conspiracy Case for the Bengali nation can be judged from the fact that there is also a museum in Dhaka named after this case. This museum is located on Shaheed Belayet Road in the Dhaka Cantonment area, just a 10-minute drive from Hazrat Shah Jalal International Airport. It is situated near the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and only a few minutes from the Bijoyketon Liberation War Museum, where the trial occurred. The historical events of the Agartala Conspiracy Case closely link the two museums.<sup>53</sup>

## The Rise of Bengali Nationalism

- The Ayub regime expected the Agartala Conspiracy Case to tarnish Mujib's reputation as a conspirator, but the reaction from the Bengalis was entirely unexpected. Rather than discrediting him, it strengthened and unified the concept of Bangla nationalism. The outcome of the case, along with Ayub Khan's removal from



Nur ul Amin  
(Source: pantheon.world)

power, led to a rise in assertive Bengali nationalism, which culminated in a landslide victory for the Awami League in the elections. Awami League won all the seats except two, which Nur-



Raja Tridev Roy  
(Source: flickr.com)

Ul-Amin and Raja Tridev Roy won.<sup>54</sup> The case's withdrawal also revealed the vulnerabilities of the Pakistani government, further fuelling Bengali resentment and

mistrust towards the central government in Islamabad. The election results were not surprising, but they far exceeded the Inter-Services Intelligence expectations. Mujib's Awami League won 160 out of the 162 seats allocated to East Pakistan. The ISI's report predicted that Mujib would only secure around 45 seats, which was a deliberate misrepresentation. The ISI officers responsible for East Pakistan at the time, Major Nurul Islam and Major Anwarul Islam, were both Bengalis with nationalist leanings.<sup>55</sup>

- Ayub has often been heavily criticised for releasing Mujib, thereby enhancing his prominence. However, a closer examination reveals a different perspective. The way the trial was conducted essentially turned Mujib into a hero for the people of East Pakistan. The excessive publicity surrounding the trial transformed him from an outcast into a celebrated figure. Inadvertently, the government did a significant disservice to the nation, by making him a hero. Karrar Ali Agha offers a grim explanation for why Ayub had to release Mujib. He writes; "As political support for Ayub Khan in both wings of the country rapidly diminished due to a massive nationwide agitation in 1968-69, the situation in East Pakistan

53 Howlader, "Sheikh Mujib Agartala Case Memorial Museum,".

54 Dr Farid A Malik, "Understanding Agartala and London Conspiracies," Pakistan Today, June 7, 2023, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2023/06/07/understanding-agartala-and-london-conspiracies/>.

55 Jaffery, "A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan".

worsened. Unchecked violence, murder, and looting escalated in the province... Pro-Mujib protests intensified to the point where Ayub was not only compelled to withdraw the Agartala Conspiracy Case but also to release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from prison without conditions.” Ayub’s hold on power and his health were rapidly declining, leading him to call for a round table conference in a desperate attempt to resolve the crisis.<sup>56</sup>

## Conclusion

Secessionist movements that use armed rebellion and foreign assistance to gain independence often succeed, but at a significant cost to human lives. The secessionist movement of Awami League also succeeded in 1971 at huge human cost, unfortunately, through

overt and covert Indian collaboration, playing to Indian strategic designs of breaking up Pakistan. Resultantly, Bangladesh had to serve as an Indian client state, compromising her sovereignty in multiple ways, much to the dislike of the Bangladeshi people, though. The students’ movement of July-August 2024, which resulted in the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024, is testament to the fact that the Bangladeshi people always believed in the ‘Two Nations Theory’ of M.A Jinnah, and never accepted Indian machinations and hegemonic designs. The forced exit of Sheikh Hasina from Bangladesh’s political landscape indicates that the conspiracy initiated in Agartala in 1963, came full circle, reaching its culmination on August 5, 2024, at Agartala—completing a journey spanning around six decades.

## About the author



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<sup>56</sup> Jaffery, “A leaf from History: India and the Breakup of Pakistan”.

# Information Warfare versus Cyber Warfare

## Explicating Parallels and Distinctions

Brigadier Sohail Nasir Khan, SI(M), retired

*“Information sometimes represent reality, and sometimes doesn’t. But it always connects<sup>1</sup>”*

### Introduction

The great discovery that launched the information age was the awareness, that everything in the external world could be reduced to a combinations of zeroes and ones.<sup>2</sup> The terrorising drums, banners, and gongs of Sun Tzu's warfare, aided by information technology, became the sophisticated psychological operations of modern warfare.<sup>3</sup> Thus, information warfare (IW), through its whole life-cycle (*figure-1*) uses information as an instrument, a class of techniques, including collection, transport, protection, denial, disturbance, and degradation of information, by which one maintains an advantage over one's adversaries.<sup>4</sup> Information warfare in the age of cyber conflict<sup>5</sup> is importunately undermining democracies around the world, as *marketplace of ideas*<sup>6</sup>, by interfering with, steering, shaping and ultimately controlling public opinion, and their discourses.

While IW focusses on cognitive domains i.e. manipulating or influencing adversary to achieve strategic objectives, cyber

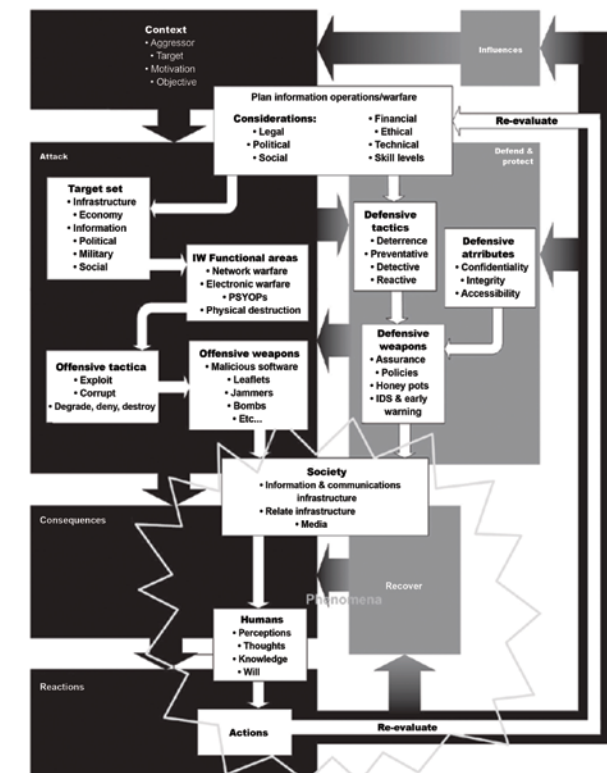


Figure-1: Life cycle<sup>7</sup>

(Source: Author)

warfare (CW) is more focused on physical domains i.e. disrupting, damaging and compromising adversary's critical system and capabilities. CW is more technical in essence,

- 1 Yuval Noah Harari, *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from Stone Age to AI* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2024), 36.
- 2 Colonel Richard Szafranski, "A Theory of Information Warfare: Preparing for 2020", *Airpower Journal* (Spring 1995). Accessed at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/szfran.html>.
- 3 Szafranski, "A Theory of Information Warfare: Preparing for 2020."
- 4 Megan Burns, "Information Warfare: What and How?", 1999, accessed on October 23, 2024, <https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~burnsm/InfoWarfare.html>.
- 5 Christopher Whyte, A. Trevor Thrall and Brian M. Maznec, *Information Warfare in Age of Cyber Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2020), 3.
- 6 Christopher Whyte, "Cyber conflict or democracy "hacked"? How cyber operations enhance information warfare" *Journal of Cybersecurity* 6, no. 1 (2020): 1–17. <https://academic.oup.com/cybersecurity/article/6/1/tyaa013/5905455>.
- 7 Brett Van Niekerk and Manoj S. Maharaj, "Information Warfare Life Cycle Model", *SA Journal of Information Management* 13, no. 1 (2011): 1–9 (Art #476).



and targets digital infrastructures, computer systems, networks and linkages.

As both use digital tools and technology to achieve military or political objectives, they remain closely linked, and even overlap sometimes, but are distinct concepts. For example, cyber-attacks are undertaken to take down media outlets and other platforms thus disrupting the information flow, while simultaneously spreading misinformation and disinformation via the hacked system, to manipulate public opinion and behaviour. Cyberwar is a comprehensive information-oriented approach to battle, that may be to the information age what blitzkrieg was to the industrial age.<sup>8</sup> An understanding of the distinguishing, as well as overlapping, characteristics of IW and CW, can help in developing and honing adequate information operation capabilities, to combat postmodern hybrid conflict, both offensively and defensively in a more balanced and befitting manner (figure-2).

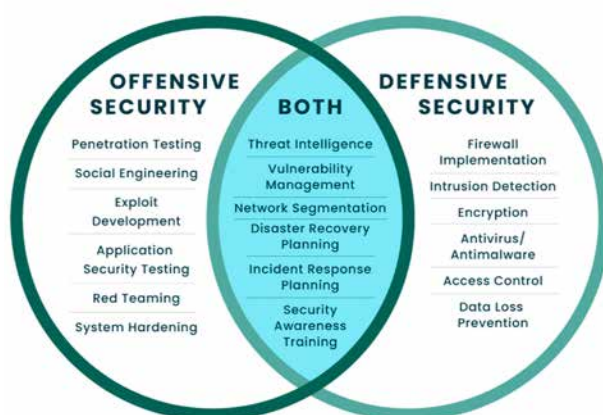


Figure-2: Offensive and defensive security measures in cyber space<sup>9</sup> (Source: linkedin.com)

## Information Warfare

**Key Characteristics.** Information warfare is one's manipulation of information trusted by a target, without their awareness of it, so that their behaviour and decision-making processes could be altered, and aligned to one's own interests. As a consequence, it is not very clear when information warfare begins, ends, and how strong or destructive it is.<sup>10</sup>

- Psychological Influence.** Information warfare is closely linked to psychological warfare.<sup>11</sup> Through propaganda, disinformation or strategic communication, psychological influence is exerted to alter or control popular perceptions, beliefs, decisions and behaviour. The targets include military personnel, political leaders and the general public.
- Disinformation and Misinformation.** It involves spreading false information (disinformation) or misleading information (misinformation), to create confusion, distrust, and manipulate public opinion. It is usually accomplished by spreading misinformation/disinformation through social media, fake news, or sometimes even through traditional media.
- Propaganda.** It includes mass distribution of propaganda themes (white, grey or black propaganda) designed to influence people's attitudes or behavior. This is done either for the adversary's population,

- John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "A New Epoch—and Spectrum—of Conflict", in *Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the information Age*, ed. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (USA: RAND, 1997), 2. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA333391.pdf>.
- "Offensive vs. Defensive Cybersecurity," Core Security, accessed on October 24, 2024, <https://www.coresecurity.com/offensive-security>.
- Jerome C. Glen, Theodore Gorgon and Elizabeth Florenescu, *State of the Future 20.0* (Washington D.C: The Millennium Project, 2024), 13.
- Hung, Tzu-Chieh; Hung, Tzu-Wei. "How China's Cognitive Warfare Works: A Frontline Perspective of Taiwan's Anti-Disinformation Wars," *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 7, no. 4 (2022): ogac016. doi:10.1093/jogss/ogac016. ISSN 2057-3170.



international audience, or even for one's own public.

- d. **Target Audience.** The primary target is human cognition. It is an attempt to exploit the way people process and trust information, including government, military, political movements, and even civil population.
- e. **Platforms.** IW takes place through different platforms, e.g. social media, websites, news outlets and television.

## Objectives

There are many objective which IW intends to achieve, e.g:

- a. Shaping the dominant narrative, or controlling the flow of information in conflict zones.
- b. Undermining public trust in government or other institutions.
- c. Creating divisions within the adversary's society on sectarian, religious, sub-national or ethnic lines.
- d. Influencing public opinion to support or oppose specific actions or policies of the government.
- e. *Examples.*
  - (1) Russian use of disinformation in 2016 US elections<sup>12</sup> through social media, to sow discord among voters.
  - (2) Chinese information campaigns<sup>13</sup> to control narratives on issues like South China Sea or Taiwan.

- (3) During 2008-2009, when OPERATION RAH-E-RAST was launched in Swat, a perception was created by disinformation cells of India and the Western media, that probably Islamabad was falling into Taliban hands. During this campaign Taliban capabilities were exaggerated out of proportion.<sup>14</sup>

- f. US Army's perspective on notional utility of information operation, by integrating them into joint operations, is highlighted below:

## Cyber Warfare

**Key Characteristics.** Cyber warfare presents a unique set of challenges, like easy to organise and cheap to execute, no physical boundaries despite connectivity, no frontlines, and can be fought from the comfort of the home, no physical presence is required, it is difficult to detect and even harder to track, and lastly, can be undertaken or executed 24/7.

- a. **Attacking Networks and Systems.** Launching attacks on computer networks, servers, systems (to steal or corrupt data), disrupt services or damage infrastructure through hacking, denial of service attacks, and exploiting vulnerabilities in software.
- b. **Espionage and Sabotage.**
  - (1) *Espionage:* Stealing sensitive information e.g. military plans, government communications.
  - (2) *Sabotage:* Disrupting essential services like electricity, transportation systems communications and financial networks.

12 Mark Hosenball, "Factbox: Key findings from Senate inquiry into Russian interference in 2016 U.S. election". August 19, 2020, accessed on October 30, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-russia-senate-findings-fact-idUSKCN25E2OY/>.

13 Michael Clarke, "China's Application of the 'Three Warfares' in the South China Sea and Xinjiang", Foreign Policy Research Institute, June 18, 2019, accessed on October 31, 2024, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/06/chinas-application-of-the-three-warfares-in-the-south-china-sea-and-xinjiang/>.

14 Khurshid Khan, "Understanding Information Warfare and its Relevance to Pakistan", *Strategic Studies* 32, no. 4 (Spring 2013): 138-159.



INFORMATION OPERATIONS INTEGRATION INTO JOINT OPERATIONS (NOTIONAL)						
Core, Supporting, Related Information Activities	Activities	Audience/Target	Objective	Information Quality	Primary Planning/Integration Process	Who does it?
Electronic Warfare	Electronic Attack	Physical, Informational	Destroy, Disrupt, Delay	Usability	Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES)/Targeting Process	Individuals, Governments, Militaries
	Electronic Protection	Physical	Protect the Use of Electro-magnetic Spectrum	Security	JOPES/Defense Planning	Individuals, Businesses, Governments, Militaries
	Electronic Warfare Support	Physical	Identify and Locate Threats	Usability	Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace(JIPB)/SIGINT Collection	Militaries
Computer Network Operations	Computer Network Attack	Physical, Informational	Destroy, Disrupt, Delay	Security	JIPB/JOPES/Targeting Process	Individuals, Governments, Militaries
	Computer Network Defense	Physical, Informational	Protect Computer Networks	Security	JOPES/J-6 Vulnerability Analysis	Individuals, Businesses, Governments, Militaries
	Computer Network Exploitation	Informational	Gain Information From and About Computers and Computer Networks	Security	JIPB/Targeting Process	Individuals, Governments, Militaries
Psychological Operations	Psychological Operations	Cognitive	Influence	Relevance	JOPES/Joint Operation Planning	Businesses, Governments, Militaries
Military Deception	Military Deception	Cognitive	Mislead	Accuracy	JOPES/Joint Operation Planning	Militaries
Operations Security	Operations Security	Cognitive	Deny	Security	JOPES/Joint Operation Planning	Businesses, Governments, Militaries
Supporting Capabilities	Information Assurance	Informational	Protect Information and Information Systems	Security	JOPES/J-6 Vulnerability Analysis	Businesses, Governments, Militaries
	Physical Security	Physical	Secure Information and Information Infrastructure	Usability	JOPES/Defense Planning	Businesses, Governments, Militaries
	Physical Attack	Physical	Destroy, Disrupt	Usability	JOPES/Joint Operation Planning	Governments, Militaries
	Counterintelligence	Cognitive	Mislead	Accuracy	JIPB/Human Intelligence Collection	Governments, Militaries
	Combat Camera	Physical	Inform/Document	Usability, Accuracy	JOPES/Joint Operation Planning	Governments, Militaries
Related Capabilities	Civil Military Operations	Cognitive	Influence	Accuracy	JOPES/Joint Operation Planning	Governments, Militaries
	Public Affairs	Cognitive	Inform	Accuracy	JOPES/Joint Operation Planning	Businesses, Governments, Militaries
	Public Diplomacy	Cognitive	Inform	Accuracy	Interagency Coordination	Governments

Figure-3: Information operations integration into joint operations (national)

(Source: wordpress.com)

## c. **Destroying Critical Infrastructure.**

Destruction of critical infrastructure such as power grids, transportation systems, banking systems or defensive networks, in order to cripple key sectors of economy and the government.

- d. **State vs Non-State Actors.** Easy and cheap availability of computer technology to everyone, implies that non-state actors and criminals can use it conveniently and anytime, thereby retaining surprise and initiative, e.g. terrorist groups, hackers, cyber criminals etc.

- e. **Platforms.** Attacks conduct through internet, backdoor software exploitations or other communication networks to target servers, software systems or devices.

## Objectives

- Paralyse one's adversary's economy or industrial capabilities.
- Disrupt military communication and logistics.
- Sabotage key infrastructure e.g. power plants, transportation systems, financial and banking systems etc.
- Steal sensitive information or government secrets.

## e. *Examples:*

- (1) *Stuxnet*<sup>15</sup> (2010). A sophisticated cyber-attack, reportedly by USA and Israel,<sup>16</sup> aimed at Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities, damaging

15 The Stuxnet worm was detected in 2010. It is the first worm known to attack SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems.

16 Ellen Nakashima, "Stuxnet was work of U.S. and Israeli experts, officials say". *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2012, accessed on November 1, 2024, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/stuxnet-was-work-of-us-and-israeli-experts-officials-say/2012/06/01/gJQAlnEy6U\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/stuxnet-was-work-of-us-and-israeli-experts-officials-say/2012/06/01/gJQAlnEy6U_story.html).





their centrifuges by exploiting a vulnerability in their industrial control systems.

and companies, but quickly spread globally, causing billions of dollars in damages.

- (2) *Not Petya*<sup>17</sup> (2017). A cyber-attack attributed to Russian actors that was targeting Ukrainian infrastructure

A comparative chart below highlights the important differences:-

Aspect	Information Warfare (IW)	Cyber Warfare (CW)
Focus	Influencing perceptions, behaviour, and public opinion	Infiltrating disrupting, damaging the information infrastructure
Target	Human cognition, emotions and beliefs	Computer systems, networks and critical infrastructure
Primary Methods	Propaganda, disinformation, misinformation, psychological operations	Hacking, cyber-attacks, DDoS, malware ransomware
Objectives	Shape Narratives, create confusion, Influence public opinion & behaviour	Disrupts military systems, sabotage critical infrastructure, steal classified information
Key Players	State actors, media social media platforms, bots	Hackers, States, cyber criminals, malware and ransomware developers
Platforms	Social media, news outlets internet forums, traditional media	Computer networks, servers, industrial control systems
Social Classification and Prevention	General, awareness and education oriented	Particular, specialization and training oriented
Hybrid Warfare Focus	Human cognition	Physical espionage and sabotage

## Conclusion

The information revolution will cause shifts in both how societies may come into conflict [IW], and how forces may wage war [CW].<sup>18</sup> Both IW and CW are critical components of modern warfare, often complementing each other to achieve strategic objectives. An analogy from the process of painting may clarify the nature of broad linkages between them. IW paints the canvas of human imagination with many brushes to create perceptions, including the toughest

brush of CW, that besides having a brush tip on one end, also has a knife at the other end, to cut, adjust, reshape or even destroy the canvas, so that IW can start afresh the process of creating different perceptions, if it does not succeed at first. IW is a veritable option for the U.S. [*as well as Pakistan*] to employ, in an effort to advance its foreign policy interests.<sup>19</sup> It seems befitting to end the preceding discussion on different roles of IW and CW in contemporary postmodern warfare, by quoting from the seminal work of Professor Yuval Noah Harari,

17 Andy Greenberg, "The Untold Story of NotPetya, the Most Devastating Cyberattack in History," *Wired*, August 22, 2018, accessed on October 31, 2024, <https://www.wired.com/story/notpetya-cyberattack-ukraine-russia-code-crashed-the-world/>.

18 John Arquila and David Ronfeldt, "Cyber War is Coming!," *Comparative Strategy* 12, no.2 (Spring 1993): 141.

19 Brian C. Lewis, "Information Warfare", 1996, accessed on October 21, 2024, <https://irp.fas.org/eprint/snyder/infowarfare.htm>. "This report (for US Congress) provides a more in depth context in which to understand *information warfare*, discusses offensive and defensive information warfare and the role of the IC in them, and assesses the adjustment to this Post-Cold War era national security threat".



on history of information networks from the Stone Age to today's artificial intelligence-driven networks.<sup>20</sup> "Nouns like 'facts', and adjectives like 'accurate' and 'truthful', become elusive ..... whose facts and whose truths are

you referring to?" In the new epoch, decisive duels for the control of information flows, will take the place of drawn-out battles of attrition or annihilation; the requirement to destroy will recede as the ability to disrupt is enhanced.<sup>21</sup>

## About the author



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*"The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting."*

*(Sun Tzu)*

<sup>20</sup> Harari, Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from Stone Age to AI, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, "A New Epoch—and Spectrum—of Conflict", 2.

## Brigadier Nur Ul Hassan

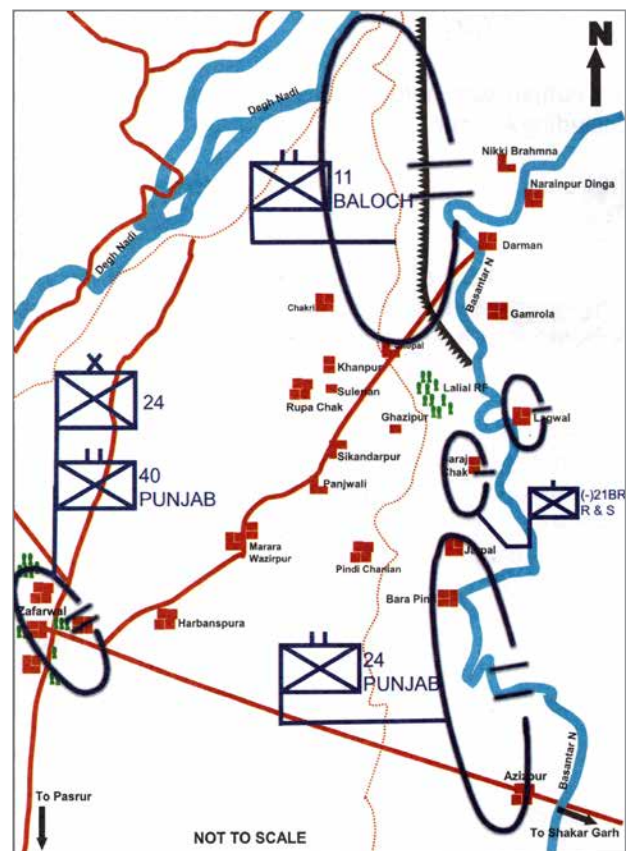
### SJ in Sialkot Sector 1971 War

*Colonel Ashfaq Hussain, retired*

Nur ul Hassan belongs to a small village *Chinji* near Talagang. His father, Darab Khan was a retired havildar from Pakistan Artillery. He was educated up to middle class from his village, and did his matriculation from Talagang. He then joined Army Apprentices School (AAS) Rawalpindi, which was then located where Army Medical College is these days. This school prepared technicians for the military technical services like EME, Signals and Engineers. At the time of joining, Nur ul Hassan also thought that he would get some modest job in the Army. He never knew what was destined for him, and what feats he was to perform in the next war with India. During his training at AAS, he appeared in intermediate examination. After passing intermediate he joined 16<sup>th</sup> War Course, passed out from PMA on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1968, and joined 46 Field Regiment Artillery, which was then located at Garhi Dopatta in Azad Kashmir. The unit moved to Sialkot in July 1969 as part of 8 Division. He was promoted lieutenant in 1969 and captain in 1970.

46 Field Regiment was placed with 24 Brigade which was responsible to defend Zafarwal. Due to the then prevailing situation in the country, the division moved to its operational area on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1971 from Sialkot. It was located at Qila Sobha Singh and comprised 24 Brigade, 14 Para Brigade which was responsible for defending Shakargarh, and 115 Brigade to defend Narowal. At the outbreak of war, the enemy committed three infantry divisions and two independent armoured brigades. 24 Brigade defending Zafarwal, had 24 Punjab, 40 Punjab and 11

Baluch (now Baloch) under its command. 46 Field Regiment, in direct support of 24 Brigade, was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Janjua. Besides direct support regiment, two batteries each from 12 Medium and 33 Heavy Regiments respectively, were available in reinforcing role. The tasks assigned to 24 Brigade were: (*see map-1*)



Map-1: Defence plan of 24 Brigade

(Source: Author)

- Take up defensive positions from *Degh Nadi* to *Basantar Nullah*, with a view to defending area Sakror Bund, Azizpur and Zafarwal.
- Occupy advance position with a company in area village Lagwal.

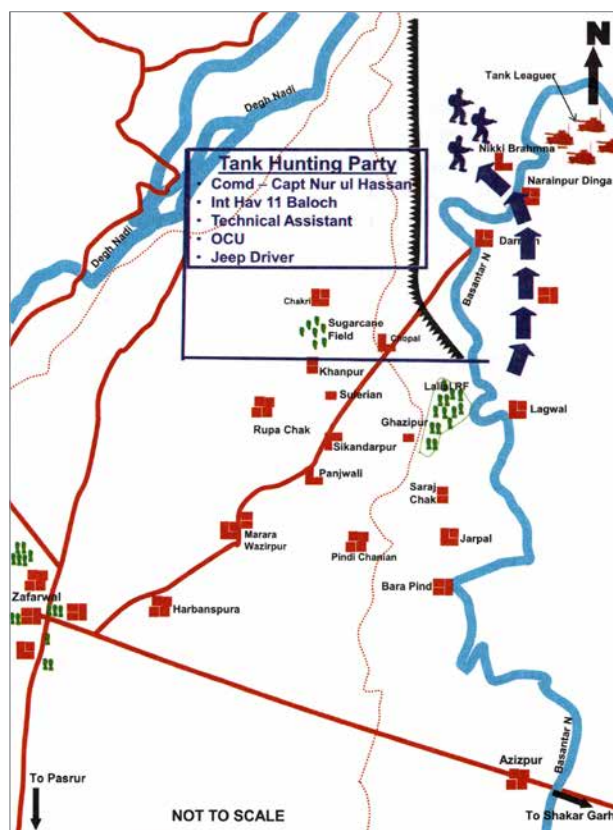


- Be prepared to operate with armoured brigade group to counter attack within brigade area, if needed.

Full-fledged war on the western front broke out on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. In Sialkot sector, 115 Brigade of 8 Division took the initiative and ousted Indian troops from Dharam Enclave, which was north of River Ravi, and which could pose a serious threat to Narowal. On 6<sup>th</sup> December, at about 1630 hours, Captain Nur ul Hassan was asked to go ahead with a platoon of 11 Baluch and engage the enemy as far forward as possible. Exact position of the enemy was not known. He contacted Commanding Officer 11 Baluch, Lieutenant Colonel Walter Herbert, who expressed his inability to spare a platoon due to paucity of troops. Instead, he spared an intelligence havildar to accompany him. According to the CO, he was well familiar with the ground and knew the area well, particularly the layout of minefields and the gaps in between. They were four persons from 46 Field Regiment, forward observation officer (FOO), Captain Nur, driver, wireless operator, a technical assistant, and an NCO from 11 Baluch. (*see map-2*)

Driving on a muddy track in broad daylight, they drove towards the enemy, kicking up a lot of dust, exposing themselves to enemy snipers and artillery observers. It was a risk, but Nur, energetic in the prime of youth, and infused with the spirit of Jihad, didn't care, and kept on moving with speed. They reached *Darman*, crossed *Basantar Nullah* and arrived at a vintage point at *Nikki Brahmna*. Nur scanned the area through binoculars and found that an enemy armoured regiment was concentrating in area *Narayanpur Dinga*. Many vehicles were unloading fuel barrels. It was obvious that those barrels were meant to fill up the tanks before proceeding further.

This area was already surveyed and had been registered. Captain Nur immediately



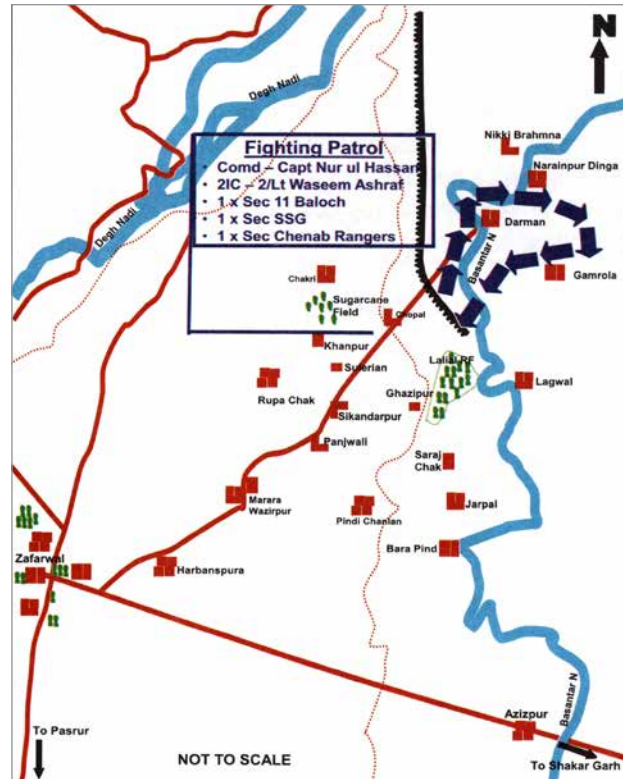
Map-2: Capt Nur destroys enemy tank leaguer, evening 6 Dec 1971  
(Source: Author)

called for the fire of all batteries. They promptly responded and the area was bombarded with heavy shells. The vehicles caught fire and in turn set the fuel barrels ablaze, as well. Many tanks were damaged. Indian officers were heard talking on the wireless in panic, that their tanks were damaged, they were short of fuel and they were not in a position to go for attack. Their conversation was intercepted at 24 Brigade Headquarters. Nur was asked to fall back to brigade headquarters. He returned at about 7 pm. At brigade headquarters he was debriefed and it was revealed that Nur went without a platoon. Commander 24 Brigade asked CO 11 Baluch about the platoon, he had ordered to accompany Captain Nur. For this act of bravery, Captain Nur was recommended for *Sitara-e-Juraat*.

It did not end here for Nur. The same night, it was decided to send a strong fighting patrol ahead with 30 soldiers. Nur was selected

as patrol leader. Normally such tasks are assigned to some infantry officer, but Nur was selected because he was familiar with the area. In fact, he knew the area like the lines of his palms. The troops who were to accompany him came from 11 Baluch, SSG and Rangers, 10 each. Second Lieutenant Waseem Ashraf (later Lieutenant General) of 11 Baluch, was nominated as second in command of the patrol. While advancing between *Darman* and *Ghamrola*, Nur engaged the suspected positions of the enemy with artillery fire. As they were proceeding to Village *Ghamrola*, Captain Nur heard one of their FOOs Captain Saleem, deployed at the right edge of *Sakror Bund*, asking for fire in an area where they were moving. *This is what happens in the fog of war*. It was night time and there were no night vision devices available to Pakistan Army at that time. Captain Saleem spotted some movement in the area and thought that they were enemy troops. With a lot of difficulty Nur succeeded in contacting Saleem and got the fire stopped. Nur scanned the area thoroughly, and reported to brigade headquarters, whatever he observed. He was asked to fall back late at night. (see map-3)

On 8 December, commanding officer of 46 Field Regiment and Commander 24 Brigade came to the gun positions in the evening, and said that it has been decided to send Nur to the advance position at *Lagwal*, where Alpha Company of 11 Baluch was deployed. It was being, commanded by Major Iftikhar Ali Khan (later Lieutenant General). The enemy was moving from *Darman- Ghamrola* towards the south. They launched seven to eight attacks, but Alpha Company fought bravely and repulsed those attacks. Nur also performed his role bravely and brought effective fire on the advancing enemy. By 11 December, the enemy succeeded in reaching the south, bypassing *Lagwal* village. Thus, Alpha Company was



Map-3: Capt Nur leads fighting patrol, night 6/7 Dec 1971  
(Source: Author)

isolated. Realising the precarious situation, the brigade major asked Major Iftikhar Ali to fall back. He insisted to stay, but was finally persuaded to withdraw. The company withdrew on 12 December at 7 am. It was a very difficult situation. The enemy could observe their move from three directions, and impede their withdrawal. Nur played a vital role. He brought fire, smoke mixed with high explosive, around the company, and kept calling shots on the enemy. This facilitated Alpha Company to withdraw safely. Captain Nur was the last man to leave *Lagwal*.

On the night of 15/16 December, the enemy launched a full-fledged attack on 24 Brigade. One infantry battalion, 16 Madras, attacked *Lalial RF* (reserve forest) and *Saraj Chak*, another, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grenadiers, attacked village *Jarpal*. They had the support of 17 Poona Horse (tank regiment). They succeeded in creating a dent in the Pakistani defensive positions. There was a great shemozzle. In short, the enemy



succeeded in occupying *Lalial* RF, *Saraj Chak* and village *Jarpal*.

It was decided to quickly launch a brigade counter attack. Alpha Company of 11 Baluch was tasked to attack *Lalial* RF, while a company of 40 Punjab was tasked to take back village *Saraj Chak*. Alpha Company Commander, Major Iftikhar, requested that Nur should go with him in the counter attack. The request was granted. Captain Saleem went with the company of 40 Punjab. 0105 was fixed as H hour (the time to start action). Since some troops could not reach the start line within the stipulated time, H hour was changed and the two companies reached the FUP (forming up place) at 0115 hours. The counter attack force bravely charged the objective, and in a hand-to-hand fight, the enemy suffered heavy casualties. A number of soldiers of 16 Madras were captured, but there were no arrangements to secure them. Taking advantage of darkness, they managed to slip away.

However, the counter attack did not meet success due to mounting pressure of enemy armour, and on the morning of 16 December, Pakistani troops withdrew to area *Sakror Bund* and village *Ghazipur*. Troops of 11 Baluch holding *Sakror Bund* were further extended towards their right, up to *Ghazipur*. Besides, troops of the company of Major Iftikhar returning after the counter attack, also occupied defences in *Ghazipur*, and covered the gap between *Ghazipur* and *Sakror Bund*.

## Counter Attack by 8 Armoured Brigade

On the early morning of 16 December, 8 Armoured Brigade was ordered to take back positions occupied by the enemy. Keeping in view the information passed by Commander 24 Brigade, 8 Armoured Brigade took four actions:

- Alpha Squadron of 13 Lancers under Major Jehangir Karamat (later General and Chief of Army Staff) crossed Road *Zafarwal-Shakargarh* and started advancing towards village *Jarpal*. While they were moving in that direction, information was passed that some enemy tanks were moving towards *Zafarwal*. They were asked to turn left. After crossing village *Marara/Wazirpur* and village *Sikandarpur*, a number of tanks were knocked down by enemy fire from *Lalial* RF, village *Saraj Chak* and sand dunes between *Saraj Chak* and *Jarpal*.
- In response to the information that seven enemy tanks and an infantry battalion had broken through *Basantar Nullah*, and were heading for road *Zafarwal-Shakargarh*, Charlie Squadron under command of Major K.M. Nasir and Bravo Squadron under Command of Major Asmat Beg, started advancing in the direction of village *Jarpal*. During the advance, a number of tanks were hit by enemy fire, from *Saraj Chak* and *Jarpal*.
- 31 Cavalry was ordered to attack from the direction of *Marara/Wazirpur* between Alpha Squadron and Charlie Squadron. Its leading squadron was commanded by Major Aley Ahmed. Two tanks of the leading squadron were hit. Major Aley Ahmed and Lieutenant Zahid Rashid embraced shahadat. Finally, the squadron went into a counter penetration position in *Marara/Wazirpur*.
- Alpha Company ex 29 FF (then an armoured infantry battalion) commanded by Major Rizvi, under command 13 Lancers, was deployed ahead of village *Barapind* on a mound, to cover the right flank, along with a troop of Charlie Squadron.





13 Lancers lost five officers and 20 JCOs and other ranks. Major K.M. Nasir was awarded *Sitara-e-Juraat* while, Lieutenant Derek Joseph was granted *Tamgha-e-Juraat*. Craftsman Faqir Muhammed earned *Tamgha-e-Juraat*. 31 Cavalry lost 2 officers, 3 other ranks, 2 missing and 6 wounded. 13 Lancers also lost 28 tanks due to enemy fire, while 31 Cavalry lost 13 tanks. Both regiments had lost some tanks earlier in the *Shakargarh* battle, and also due to mechanical problems.

The whole operation helped the enemy earn laurels. Major Hoshiar Singh Dahiya, reportedly hailing from Daska, who claimed to have hit 10 tanks of 13 Lancers, was awarded the highest gallantry award of India, Param Vir Chakra. An Indian tank was hit by 13 Lancers, which was being commanded by Lieutenant Arun Khaterpal from 17 Poona Horse. He was killed. Later he was awarded Param Vir Chakra posthumously.

### Counter Attack by 35 FF

Once 8 Armoured Brigade fell short of its objectives, 35 FF was ordered to go for a counter attack and retake *Jarpal*. The unit was only a few months old, and had been traversing long distances. After being raised at Abbottabad on 19 April 1971, it was moved to Chaman by rail, some 1027 miles away. The founding, and first commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Akram Raja conducted intensive training and operational preparedness exercises till September. The unit was then ordered to move to Quetta for the onward journey. The battalion covered the distance of 77 miles on foot in two days. Thereafter the unit moved to Mahesar, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakpattan, Hakra Canal, Sharaqpur and finally reached Sialkot sector on 13 December.

Based on information available from troops in contact with the enemy, the enemy

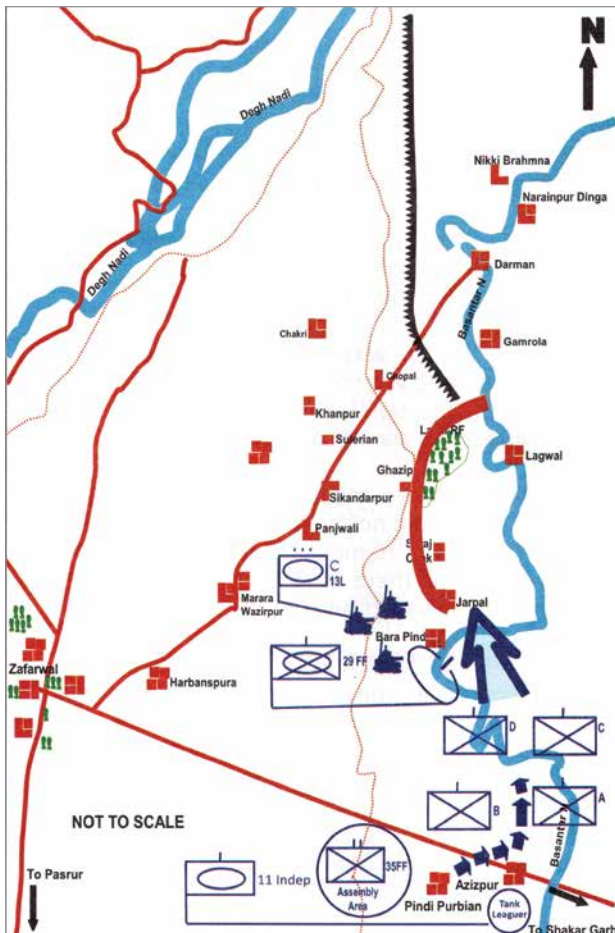
picture as seen at Headquarters 8 Division and 24 Brigade, at about 4 pm, 16 December was as follows:

- The enemy having crossed the minefield in area *Lagwal*, established a bridgehead with approximately two infantry battalions and a tank regiment, in area *Saraj Chak* and *Jarpal*.
- *Lalial* RF and *Ghazipur* were still being held by Pakistani troops, and the bridgehead was being contained by a company of 11 Baluch and other troops.

At about 8 pm, the commanding officer of 35 FF was summoned to brigade headquarters, but since no guidance was provided, he could not locate the brigade headquarters till quite late at night. The orders were passed on night 16/17 December. Salient points were: (*see map-4*)

- 35 FF was to capture *Jarpal* as soon as possible, on 17 December.
- FUP was in a clump of trees along *Basantar Nullah*, east of the objective, which was to be shown by brigade major 24 Brigade.
- The H hour was fixed for 0500 hours on 17 December.

The commanding officer requested that since he was unfamiliar with the area, as were his company commanders, at least a day might be given for reconnaissance, but his request was overruled. Charlie and Delta Companies were to go first, Alpha and Bravo Companies were to follow with a gap of fifteen minutes. Due to intense enemy artillery fire and miscalculation of time and space, the troops of 35 FF reached FUP at about 0515 hours, 15 minutes later than the stipulated time. The irony of fate was, that due to confusion, own troops around, especially a company in *Barapind*, opened fire on the advancing troops of 35 FF. Artillery had opened



Map-4: 35 FF counter attack, 17 Dec 1971  
(Source: Author)

up according to schedule, thus giving away the element of surprise. The enemy was fully alert. Within half an hour of the attack, three officers, the commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Akram Raja, and two company commanders of Charlie and Delta Companies met shahadat. In total four officers, one JCO and 55 other ranks met shahadat. Captain Nur was FOO with Delta Company, and Lieutenant Shabbir Haider with Charlie Company. Nur's wireless operator Lance Naik Siddiq met shahadat during the attack, and his wireless set was also damaged. It could have been understandable for Captain Nur to mark time and look for some shelter, but he didn't. He came back to the FUP where Alpha and Bravo Companies had assembled to go into attack. He borrowed the reserve wireless set of Alpha Company Commander, Major Imtiaz ul Haque (later Colonel),

changed its frequency, and did his best to bring own artillery fire on the enemy. He was recommended for *Sitara-e-Juraat*, for his bold action during this attack. The other FOO with Charlie Company, Lieutenant Shabbir, was seriously injured. Part of his belly was blown away by artillery fire. He was evacuated to CMH. Apparently, there was no hope of his survival, but he did survive. (Much later while riding a motorbike, he met a road accident in which he died).

About midday on 17 December, the attack of 35 FF was halted due to heavy casualties and heavy firing of enemy artillery, tanks and infantry weapons. As for CO 35 FF was concerned, his bravery was acknowledged by the enemy commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Venon Prashad Airy (later Lieutenant General), commanding 3<sup>rd</sup> Grenadier Guards. He wrote a citation and sent it with the dead body of Colonel Akram Raja, shaheed. He wrote that Colonel Akram had displayed the highest level of determination and personal bravery. Colonel Akram Raja was posthumously awarded *Hilal-e-Juraat*.

## Prominent Features of the Battle of Barapind

We call the battle that took place in the area, 'Battle of Barapind', which never fell to Indians despite their vigorous efforts. Indians call it 'the Battle of Basantar' after the nullah mentioned earlier. The officers who took part in the battle in this area, rose to distinction in their respective armies. The enemy suffered heavy casualties in its efforts to capture *Lalial* RF. 16 Madras which came for *Lalial* RF and *Saraj Chak*, suffered heavy casualties, and reportedly was disbanded after the war.

Brigadier Arun Shridhar Vaidya, commanding the Indian armoured brigade operating against 24 Infantry Brigade of

Pakistan, was awarded Vir Chakra for his part in the battle. In the 1965 War, he was commanding an armoured regiment in Khem Karan Sector, and was also awarded Vir Chakra for his bravery in that battle. He rose to the rank of general and became Indian Chief of Army Staff. He commanded the Indian Army from 1983 to 1986.

Major Hoshiar Singh of 3<sup>rd</sup> Granadiers, as mentioned earlier, was awarded the Param Vir Chakra. He retired as colonel, and died at the age of 61.

Major Jehangir Karamat who led a squadron in that battle rose to the rank of general and became Army Chief of Pakistan.

Major Iftikhar Ali who commanded a company of 11 Baluch became a lieutenant



L to R: At RHQ Harbanspura near Zafarwal, Maj Aziz BC, staff repoter Nawai Waqt, staff reporter Mashriq, Capt Mansur, adjt and Nur Ul Hassan, SJ  
(Source: Author)

general, commanded the corps at Bahawalpur and later served as Defence Secretary.

Second Lieutenant Waseem Ashraf of 11 Baluch, who accompanied Captain Nur on the night of 6/7 December, rose to the rank of lieutenant general, commanded a corps and later served as Adjutant General.

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- Babar, *Barapind Jarpal Battles*, 31-34.
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## About the author



Colonel Ashfaq Hussain, retired, is a renowned Pakistani military author, analyst, motivational speaker and educationist. He had served in ISPR, media wing of the Pakistan Army, for many years. He has authored thirteen books, which include six books on his famous 'Gentleman' series. The writer can be reached at [ashfaq801@hotmail.com](mailto:ashfaq801@hotmail.com)

*“In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.”*  
(Sun Tzu)



## The Kitchener Test

*Lieutenant Colonel Rifat Nadeem Ahmad, retired*

General Lord Kitchener was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army



*General Lord Kitchener*  
(Source: britannica.com)

in 1902. It was his first posting to India, and reportedly, he was not impressed with the Indian Army or its sepoys. While the latter could be attributed to his lack of familiarity

with the men—and he did express his fondness for the sepoys later on—the same could not be said for the state of the Indian Army.

Over the years, the Indian Army had become unwieldy and outdated. It certainly was not fit to take on the Russian threat that loomed so large in the minds of its British commanders. Although these deficiencies had been recognised since the 1880s, the process of reforms was slow. Lord Kitchener set about to immediately remedy the situation. He was a forceful man and a hard taskmaster, who soon implemented radical changes in the organisation and training of the army.<sup>1</sup> Kitchener's reforms brought about complete unification of the army, and uniformity in its standards. Unified cavalry and infantry lines were created, and all units were grouped into tactical formations of ten divisions, of two to three brigades each. At the same time an effort was made to equip the Indian Army

with modern weapons. The reforms led to a significant improvement in the outlook of the army, by placing special emphasis on rigorous and standardised training, promotion of sports and regimental clubs, and inter-unit and inter-formation competitions to test the units' efficiency.<sup>2</sup>

In 1904-5, an elaborate and gruelling contest, dubbed *Kitchener Test*, was conducted to test the efficiency of every infantry battalion in the Indian Army. Separate competitions were held for British and Indian battalions.



*General Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief in India and his staff, Delhi 1903*  
(Source: nam.ac.uk)

The contest lasted for three days and nights, and consisted of nine events encompassing all aspects of military training. Marks for the main events were further broken down for different parts of the activities. Marks could also be deducted for falling out during marching, poor shooting performance, or high rate of hospitalisation in a battalion. It was the first time in the history of the Indian Army that such a test was conducted. It not only revealed the state of efficiency of infantry battalions, but also promoted a spirit of healthy competition among them.<sup>3</sup>

### Kitchener Test

Ser.	Event	Details	Marks
1.	Marching	Marching 15 miles under service conditions, carrying 100 rounds of ammunition each.	200
2.	Scouting and outposts day and night	Framing of orders, reconnoitring and, patrolling, map reading and signalling.	300
3.	Attack and defence of positions	Framing of orders, reconnaissance and utilisation of ground, protection of flanks, attack and defence of positions, fire discipline and control, fire effect and casualty evacuation.	800
4.	Duties in bivouac	Construction, defence and, sanitation of camps, water supply and cooking arrangements.	100
5.	Night operations	Framing of orders, reconnaissance and marching discipline.	150
6.	Retirements covered by rear-guard	Retirement over at least 10 miles, pursued by the opposing force.	150
7.	Transport duties	Packing and loading of animals and marching discipline.	120
8.	Physical condition	Tested by climbing hills or any other appropriate obstacle.	100
9.	Miscellaneous duties	Knotting, lashing, bridging, bayonet fighting, physical and running drill, and gymnastics.	80
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>2000</b>

Around 137 Indian infantry, pioneer and Gurkha battalions stationed in India, took part in the competition, which was won by 130<sup>th</sup> Jacob's Baluchis (now 12 Baloch) by obtaining 1395 marks out of a possible 2000.<sup>4</sup> The battalion, which was stationed at Hyderabad, Sindh, had to undergo the test four times, as after winning the brigade contest, it was then tested at division, command and army levels. The contest was held in December to escape the heat of the Indian summer. However, for the winners, it stretched into April, which in the extreme heat of Hyderabad, was exhausting. The battalion was presented a silver trophy by Lord Kitchener, and as an additional distinction, its non-commissioned officers were permitted to wear the Royal and Imperial Cypher of King Edward VII in silver, above the chevrons on their sleeves.<sup>5</sup> Much of the credit for the battalion's success goes to Major (later Major General) FJ Fowler, DSO, the battalion's



130<sup>th</sup> Jacob's Baluchis, Hyderabad, Sindh 1905. Major FJ Fowler is seated 4<sup>th</sup> from right, middle row  
(Source: Author)

second-in-command. He was a dynamic and indefatigable officer with a passion for training. His favourite exhortation to his men was: *Paltan ke waste aur bhi Khuda ke waste achcha karo!* (For battalion's sake, and especially for God's sake, do well!).<sup>6</sup> The 130<sup>th</sup> Jacob's Baluchis were closely followed by 127<sup>th</sup> Baluch Light Infantry (now 10 Baloch) with 1367 marks,<sup>7</sup> while the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment won the competition among British battalions.<sup>8</sup>

In 1906, the Prince of Wales was appointed Colonel-in-Chief of 130<sup>th</sup> Jacob's Baluchis, who were designated *Prince of Wales Own*.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, 127<sup>th</sup> Baluch Light Infantry was designated as *Princess of Wales Own*.<sup>10</sup> It is quite possible that their performance in the Kitchener Test resulted in the royal nod of approval, although it is not recorded as such. When the royal couple succeeded to the British throne as King George V and Queen Mary in 1910, the two battalions were redesignated as 130<sup>th</sup> King George's Own Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles) and 127<sup>th</sup> Queen Mary's Own Baluch Light Infantry.<sup>11</sup> They retained the royal distinctions until 1956, when Pakistan became a republic, and all titles pertaining to British royalty were discontinued.<sup>12</sup>

The test was considered a great success, and it became part of the annual inspection of infantry battalions in the Army. However, undergoing the gruelling contest four times (in the case of the finalists) was simply too exhausting for any unit. There were also



The Kitchener Trophy  
(Source: Author)

questions regarding the fairness of the contest, due to the varied conditions faced by different battalions, and 1904-5 was the only time that it was held as an inter-battalion competition.<sup>13</sup> As such, 12 Baloch has the unique distinction of being the sole recipient of the coveted Kitchener's Efficiency Trophy from the Sub-continent.

## Notes

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3. Indian Army Order no. 726 of 1904.
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5. Regimental Records of 12 Baloch.
6. WE Maxwell, *Capital Campaigners: The History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion*, 43.
7. WE Maxwell, *Capital Campaigners: The History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion*, 48-49.
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10. WE Maxwell, *Capital Campaigners: The History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion*, 45.
11. Lt Col RN Ahmad, *History of the Baloch Regiment* (Abbottabad: The Baloch Regimental Centre, 2017), 44.
12. Ahmad, *History of the Baloch Regiment*, 152.
13. Brian Robson, 'The Indian Army Training Test of 1904-5': 285.

## About the author



Lieutenant Colonel Rifat Nadeem Ahmad, retired, was commissioned in the Army Medical Corps in 1989. He is a professor of pathology with an interest in military history. He is a prolific writer of military history and has written books on Siachen, Somalia and regimental histories. The writer can be reached at [rifatahmad@gmail.com](mailto:rifatahmad@gmail.com)



## The Daredevil who Sprang a Surprise

*Major Mumtaz Hussain Shah, retired*

Captain Bairam Khan Niazi was commissioned from PMA (12 War Course) in October 1967, and retired in 1985. He participated in 1971 War with 15 FF in Jessore Sector. After the Fall of Dacca, he was imprisoned with the author, in Bareilly (UP) Camp No 58. He is leading a retired life. I called on him in May 2024, to refresh memories of his most daring escape attempt.

It was a wet day in August 1973 and a heavy downpour had just stopped. I had scarcely spread my rug for *Maghrib* prayers, when the chattering sound of light machine gun fire, along with rifle shots, broke the silent ambience of our POW (prisoner of war) camp. The alarm was sounded, and Indian soldiers ran helter-skelter to occupy their trenches around the camp. It signalled an emergency. Some anxious officers rushed out of their barracks, to gain first-hand information about the firing. The news that came was disturbing—Captain Bairam Khan Niazi was injured in a shoot out, in an attempt to escape.

Captain Niazi was one of 200 inmates<sup>1</sup> of POW Camp No 58, Bareilly, UP India. He was one of 30 captive officers residing in the



*Capt Bairam Khan Niazi*  
(Source: Author)

same barrack which was starting point of the tunnel.<sup>2</sup> The leakage of information to the Indians, unearthing the tunnel and leading to its abandonment, was a rude shock to Niazi, and those who were

actively involved in its planning and gruelling execution.

Ebullient Niazi, being an active member of the tunnel project, got a shock difficult to digest for a daredevil like him. He openly lamented the attitude of those camp-mates who had not supported the digging of this tunnel; ostensibly being an unviable project. Things were further compounded when Niazi and his tunneling companions repeatedly faced sarcastic remarks and looks from those fellows who had opposed the project.

The Indians tried to cultivate a well-planned anti-escape lobby. To deter the prospective escapees, they propagated the tight security of the POW camp, laced with perfectly elaborate arrangements. Also, the Indians floated the notion of *glass is half empty rather than the glass is half full*, to discourage likely escapees.

Thus, the camp was polarised into distinct groups. The first propounded that at that point of time, when hostilities had ceased, it was unnecessary, and thus not incumbent on POWs to escape. The second view was opposite to it; harboured by the Niazi-type exuberant youngsters, who asserted that cessation of hostilities should not hold back escape, which is incumbent upon all, except sick and wounded prisoners. The third group which accounted for more than the 50 % of camp strength, was neutral and thus remained nonaligned.

It was enough to cast a pall of gloom upon all prisoners, and cause utter frustration

1 There were 190 officers and 10 other ranks (OR), mainly cooks and messing ancillary staff, to serve the officer prisoners.

2 The story of this tunnel has been comprehensively covered in the book, "Those who Dared," by Major General Muhammad Yasin & Lieutenant Colonel Jamil Mukhtar Shah. (Story #38).



to a person like Niazi. Embarrassed and frustrated, Niazi was then set to spring a surprise. Since the failure of the tunnel project, Niazi was determined to escape, even if he had to wade through wire concertina fences, at an opportune time. It was a mission impossible, fraught with fatal consequences.

Let us glance through the elaborate security system of the POW camp. It had three impenetrable layers of wire concertina fence, around the camp. The fences were made of 8 feet tall, 6x6 inches thick concrete pillars, with concertina wire running horizontally and vertically, creating a squarish mesh, that even deterred pie-dogs and stray animals from intruding. To discourage scaling of the fence, the inner pillars were curved inwards at 60-degrees angle to further strengthen the web, the coils of concertina wire were pegged to the ground, running throughout the inner length of the camp. The outer gap (between second and third fence) was patrolled at night by armed sentries with sniffer dogs.<sup>3</sup>

The camp had multiple lighting systems, which virtually turned night into day. The barbed wire fences were lit from dusk to dawn, by powerful floodlights. 20 foot tall observatory towers were erected at regular intervals, overlooking the camp, which were manned round the clock. Besides floodlights and revolving flashlights at the tower, the fence lighting system was supplemented by generators. In case of power outage, it would automatically start the generators; those would light up the area all around the camp within seconds. Further, army *Shaktiman* trucks were deployed along the outer perimeter, and in

case of failure of above-mentioned lighting arrangements, the truck headlights were to be switched on, to illuminate dark patches.

The watchtowers were equipped with automatic weapons and alarms. To plug the gaps between watch towers, there were equally spaced rifleman trenches. These were to be manned in case of electricity breakdown, or on activation of the alarm. It was practiced daily at dawn and dusk<sup>4</sup>, and occasionally at random hours, by creating a mock emergency.

Foolproof security arrangements precluded any chance of escape through the perimeter fence. The Indians had thought over every possible contingency to deal with power breakdown, but never imagined what a person like Niazi was up to. Every day he was seen moving restlessly around the camp, in a bid to find weak spots. His stroll in the camp earned him the title of *astronaut* (rover), albeit sarcastically.

As the days wore on, frustration of the POWs grew. Niazi was no exception. He decided to put his escape plan into action; caring less for the possible dangerous consequences. He was fully cognisant of the fact, that he had a remote chance of success.<sup>5</sup>

His relentless prowling showed to him a faint ray of hope. He decided to capitalise upon it. As a matter of routine, the Indians used to bring Pakistani soldiers (other ranks) for manual labour in the camps.<sup>6</sup> The labouring troops<sup>7</sup> were rotated regularly. One day it was the turn of Niazi's 15 FF. The fatigue party (FP) under a havildar was assigned trimming and removal of grass between the fences, to clear

3 See also account of Captain (later Brigadier) Bhango's second escape attempt. Story No: 33, Book *ibid*.

4 In military terminology it is called *stand to*. It is a battlefield drill practiced by deployed troop on active service, twice a day, at dusk and dawn, and in case of emergency.

5 An Indian interrogating officer was aghast when juxtaposing, fatality versus survival (success) ratio, 99.9 to 0.1%.

6 According to Clause 24 Geneva Convention (page 478, book *ibid*), captive ORs could be employed on manual labor for 2 hours daily.

7 In military terminology such labour troops are called *fatigue party* (FP).

the observation of watchtowers, and ground sentries patrolling the lanes. Niazi indicated a pre-selected spot to the FP, to create an innocuous wedge in the fence; enough for him to crawl through.

Niazi's boys did a wonderful job, stealthily created a wedge in the inner and middle fences, and camouflaged it to evade the eyes of Indian soldiers patrolling in between the fences. Niazi was sure that, though patrolling soldiers usually kept watchful eyes on the activities inside the camp, in all probability any such random change in the outer lanes would go unnoticed surely, for a few days. Now his main concern was the outer lane, for which he had no answer, but had to leave it to fate.

On that day it rained heavily. Observation from the watchtower was blurred by the rain, accompanied by a mild wind blowing head on to the sentries perched on the watchtower. Niazi decided to avail the opportunity. He removed his clothes with the marking of POW, and put on shorts and a vest<sup>8</sup> which he had kept hidden, with Indian currency sewed in the pocket. Our uniform, casual wear, even bedsheets, were marked with a cross (X) and POW in bold letters, with indelible ink, so as not to be able to conceal identity in case of escape. He then confided with his senior battalion colleague, Major Aitzaz Janjua<sup>9</sup>, who had been working in tandem with him, to guard his rear. Janjua was to follow only if Niazi succeeded in crossing the rubicon.

Niazi had no problem with the first two fences, he stealthily crawled through the inner and middle ones. Now the last fence stood in his path to freedom. He had no option but to climb, and after assailing the top, jump out of

the camp. Here luck deserted him;

قسمت تو دیکھ ٹوٹی ہے جا کر کہاں کمند  
کچھ دور اپنے ہاتھ سے جب بام رہ گیا

First the rain stopped. That cleared the observation of the watchtower overlooking the spot. Secondly, climbing over the barbed wire fence, and jumping on the road outside the camp, created a thud and vibrating sound, that alerted the ground sentries. The watchtower sentry was alerted and saw a sole figure moving on the road.<sup>10</sup> In confusion he opened fire. A stray bullet ricocheted and passed through Niazi's left hand, injuring his palm (the scars of which still adorned his left hand). In a clever



Bullet's scars on Niazi palm

(Source: Author)

move, Niazi pretended to be fatally injured, held his belly with both hands, and fell flat on the ground, crying and groaning. The sentry got near him and wanted to shoot him from close quarters. Niazi was alert, pounced upon the sentry, and got hold of his gun from the muzzle end. The alarm was sounded, and other Indians joined the sentry to overpower the injured Niazi. The ground troops went into *stand to*, by occupying their dugouts around the camp, as per their standard operating procedure (SOPs).

The Indians apprehended the injured Niazi. The guard commander discovered that Niazi was feigning serious injury. He ordered a soldier to take him to a dark spot, and kill him. By then the camp inmates who were already alerted by firing, came out from their barracks.

<sup>8</sup> Niazi thinly clad himself, to avoid entanglement in the fences while crawling out.

<sup>9</sup> Major Aitzaz Janjua, 15 FF, is my co-resident in Army Officers Colony Morgah, Rawalpindi, and leads a quiet retired life. I had the good fortune of close contact with him, to verify the eye witness account and refresh the story of Niazi's daring attempt.

<sup>10</sup> The road was used only by Indian security personnel. No civilian was allowed to enter that restricted corridor.





Major Hazoor Hasnain, SJ,<sup>11</sup> led the outcry, and raised enough hullabaloo to deter the Indians from such an extreme action. The guard battalion duty officer and camp commandant<sup>12</sup> arrived at the scene, and whisked Niazi away for interrogation. Later he was given 28 days solitary confinement.

Niazi's catwalk through the fences created ripples in the Indian POW command hierarchy. It hurt their vanity and tarnished their claim of foolproof security. The Indian local command initiated an inquiry, as to how Niazi successfully breached their impregnable security system. The Indians were surprised by Niazi's resolve, when he was asked as to the need to endanger his life, when repatriation was just round the corner. Niazi rebuffed it, and asserted that even if his repatriation date was announced, and he found an opportunity, he would have not hesitated to avail it. It was his earnest desire to go back home as a free soldier, rather than with a prisoner's tag. The Indians initially took it as a mere brag by a young, overambitious Pakistani POW. Soon they realised that Niazi was made of different material, and really meant what he professed.

Niazi's activities never wilted. His restlessness prowling created yet another alarm for the Indians, and they realised that makeshift hospital security was not as elaborate as that of the POW camp. Therefore, his solitary confinement was cut short, and he moved back to the POW camp, after about two weeks.

On his return to camp, he was set again for yet another identical effort. It was only peer pressure that quietened and kept him in check. The Indians kept their fingers crossed, lest Niazi causes them yet another embarrassment. In November 1973, the camp management heaved a sigh of relief as Niazi's name was added to the first ever train of prisoners, leaving Bareilly for Pakistan.

Niazi was happy to return home much



Capt Niazi (left) with the author, Lahore, May 2024  
(Source: Author)

ahead of his colleagues. He definitely carried a stigmatised remorse of entering his homeland with the tag of a prisoner of war.

## About the author



*Major Mumtaz Hussain Shah, retired, was commissioned in the Punjab Regiment in July 1966. He saw operations in former East Pakistan during the 1971 Indo-Pak War. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College, Quetta. He has been associated with a number of training institutions as a guest speaker. As a freelancer, he scribes for leading national dailies of the country. He can be reached at mhshah45@gmail.com*

- 11 Major Hazoor Husnain, SJ, 15 Baloch (20<sup>th</sup> PMA), was a guiding light for young officers like Niazi, being a senior decorated SSG officer, who was dropped in Indian territory in the 1965 War. After completion of his mission he not only managed to return successfully, but also brought back an Indian Army jeep, with an officer and its driver, as prisoners. He was injured by a trigger-happy Indian sentry in a separate firing incident in the camp. He rose to the rank of brigadier, and died in a military aircraft crash in the 1980s, while serving in KPK.
- 12 Camp commandant; Major Bitra, Mahar Regiment.

## 25 Years Ago

### Captain Karnal Sher Khan, shaheed, NH

*Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khalil, AEC*

Captain Karnal Sher Khan embraced *shahadat* during the Kargil conflict of 1999, while fighting. His *shahadat* is testimony to his courage. Born on January 1, 1970, in *Nawan Kallay*, Swabi district, Karnal Sher Khan belonged to a family that was already enriched

by a legacy of sacrifice for the country.

His grandfather, a participant in the 1948 Kashmir Liberation War, inculcated in him love for the armed forces. This familial influence earned him



*Captain Karnal Sher Khan*  
(Source: kp.gov.pk)

the nickname *Karnal* (a localised version of *colonel*), a title that became a lifelong part of his identity.

After completing his intermediate education at Government College Swabi, Karnal Sher Khan briefly served in the Pakistan Air Force as an electric fitter. His aspirations, however, lay in joining the Pakistan Army as a commissioned officer. Overcoming initial challenges, he joined Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul in November 1992 and graduated with the 90<sup>th</sup> Long Course in 1994.



*Captain Sher Khan along with colleagues of his unit, 27 Sindh Regiment*  
(Source: bloombrink.com)

He was initially commissioned into 27 Sindh Regiment, before volunteering for duty on the Line of Control (LOC) in January 1998, where he joined 12 Northern Light Infantry (NLI).

### The Kargil Conflict: Testament to Valour

During the Kargil conflict, Karnal Sher Khan was deployed on forward posts in the Gultari sector, stationed at an altitude of 17,000 feet. He established and defended five important posts against persistent enemy assaults. Despite being heavily outnumbered and under continuous fire, his leadership and



*Captain Sher Khan at his post*  
(Source: pkdefense.com)

courage turned the tide of many engagements. On July 5, 1999, two Indian battalions launched an attack on his positions.

Though the enemy managed

to capture a portion of one of the posts, Sher Khan led a daring counter-attack, regaining the lost ground and inflicting heavy casualties. He pursued the retreating forces into their territory, where he conducted successful raids. During one such engagement, he was struck by machine gun fire and embraced *shahadat*.

### Recognition Across Borders

Karnal Sher Khan's battlefield performance did not go unnoticed by his adversaries. Indian Brigadier M.P.S. Bajwa, wrote a citation acknowledging his bravery, and requested Pakistan to recognise his heroism. This rare tribute from an opposing

commander highlights the respect he commanded even in the heat of conflict. Karnal Sher was posthumously awarded Pakistan's highest gallantry award, the *Nishan-e-Haider*. He became the first officer from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to receive this significant decoration.

## A Legacy of Inspiration

Captain Karnal Sher Khan was laid to rest on July 18, 1999, in his ancestral village, now renamed *Karnal Sher Kallay*. A mausoleum stands there, to his memory. In recognition of his legacy, a cadet college near his hometown on the Swabi-Mardan road, has been named



*Mausoleum of Captain Karnal Sher Khan, shaheed*  
(Source: pkdefense.com)

after him. His life and sacrifice remain a beacon of courage and dedication, embodying the spirit of the Pakistan Army.

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## About the author



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## Military History Minestrone

*Our quiz; for the military history enthusiast and novitiate alike*

*("Minestrone"; a thick soup of Italian origin that has no fixed recipe, as it can be prepared out of whatever vegetables one has.)*

### Select the correct option

- Which Pakistani military commander led the initial deployment of 25 platoons of Frontier Corps during the Dir-Bajaur Operation?
  - Major General Attiquar Rahman
  - Brigadier Rakhman Gul
  - Major General M.G. Jilani
  - Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Karim
- What was the primary reason for the arrest of the Nawab of Dir and the Khan of Jandol, during the operation?
  - Direct attacks on Pakistani forces
  - Refusing to pay taxes
  - Collaborating with Afghan forces against Pakistan
  - Supporting Indian infiltration through the Durand Line
- Which tactical innovation allowed Babur to nullify Ibrahim Lodi's numerical superiority during 1st Battle of Panipat?
  - Deployment of cannons behind protective ditches
  - Encircling cavalry tactics known as *tulughma*
  - Use of elephants as shock weapons
  - Creation of a defensive fortification using stone walls
- Which Ottoman-inspired technique did Babur employ to protect his artillery during the battle?
  - Positioning guns behind interlinked carts (*araba*)
  - Using trenches to hide cannons from view
  - Employing camel-mounted artillery for mobility
  - Deploying wooden towers for long-range fire
- Which Indian armoured regiments led the offensive towards Chawinda during the 1965 War?
  - 3 Cavalry and 8 Deccan Horse
  - 7 Cavalry and 16 Light Cavalry
  - 9 Horse and 14 Scinde Horse
  - 17 Poona Horse and 4 Hodson's Horse



6. What was the decisive Pakistani artillery manoeuvre that disrupted Indian tank advances near Milestone-5?
  - (a) Indirect bombardment from hidden positions
  - (b) Deployment of anti-tank mines
  - (c) Use of Sexton 25-pounder self-propelled guns
  - (d) Concentrated fire from multiple artillery regiments
7. What was the motto inscribed on the Northumberland Fusiliers' carving in Murree?
  - (a) Quo Fata Vocant
  - (b) Pristine Virtutis Memores
  - (c) Nec Aspera Terrent
  - (d) Virtutis Fortuna Comes
8. Who played the role of an intermediary between Sheikh Mujib and Indian intelligence agencies during the Agartala conspiracy in 1967?
  - (a) Tajuddin Ahmad
  - (b) Lieutenant Colonel Misra
  - (c) Major General Khadim Hussain Raja
  - (d) Chitta Ranjan Sutar
9. According to the author which example highlights the use of Cyber Warfare (CW) rather than Information Warfare (IW)?
  - (a) Russian disinformation campaigns during the 2016 U.S. elections
  - (b) The Stuxnet attack on Iran's nuclear facilities in 2010
  - (c) Propaganda campaigns during the Cold War
  - (d) Creation of fake social media profiles to spread misinformation
10. Which unit won the Kitchener Test competition?
  - (a) 130<sup>th</sup> Jacob's Baluchis
  - (b) 127<sup>th</sup> Baluch Light Infantry
  - (c) 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Queen's Regiment
  - (d) 12<sup>th</sup> Frontier Force

**(Answers on page 74)**

## Glimpses of AIMH Activities



Dr Fouzia Farooq Ahmed, session with interns,  
on 9 July 2024



Lt Col Zafar Mehmood Butt, retired, recording oral  
history in East Pakistan Room, on 15 July 2024



Dr Mansoor Akbar Kundi's lecture to interns,  
18 July 2024



His excellency admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne,  
the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, 24 July 2024



ISPR interns in Pandu Hall, on 25 July 2024



Visit of AIMH team to Poonch House, 30 July 2024



## Glimpses of AIMH Activities



5<sup>th</sup> batch of AIMH internship programme,  
1 July to 9 August 2024



General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani NI(M), retired,  
former COAS visited AIMH on 5 August 2024



Delegation of Kashmir Institute of International  
Relations, 15 August 2024



Lieutenant General Shahid Imtiaz HI(M),  
Commander 10 Corps, visited on 2 September 2024



Brig Ghulam Jilani, retired, delivering a lecture in  
Peshawar garrison, 5 September 2024



Colonel Arno Tappe & Mr Benjamin Limlei from  
Germany, 8 October 2024

## Glimpses of AIMH Activities



Faculty and students of NUML, 22 October 2024



Indonesian Delegation, 24 October 2024



Brigadier Dr Saif ur Rehman, retired, delivering lecture to PMA cadets, 14 October 2024



Lt Col Faisal Kamran Afridi, retired, visited grave of Subedar Shahamad Khan, VC, on 23 October 2024



Team of Pak Datacom Limited, visited AIMH on 1 November 2024



AIMH stall in Islamabad Literature Festival, 9 November 2024



## Glimpses of AIMH Activities



Visit of Major General Tom Bateman and UK delegation, 2 December 2024



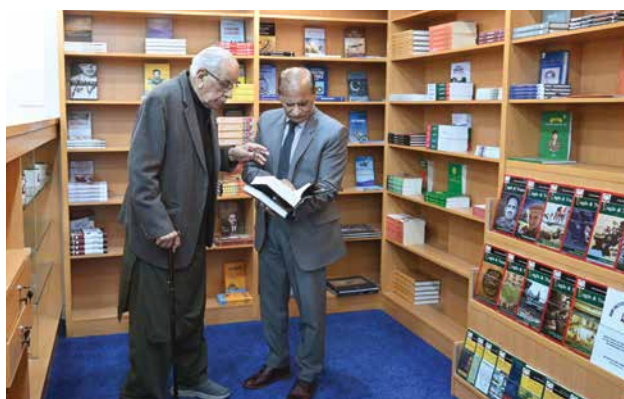
Lieutenant General Shujaat Hussain HI(M), retired, in the Taxila Reference Library on 5 December 2024



Members of Exercise Observation Group of Pakistan-China Joint Exercise Warrior 8, 9 December 2024



Military delegation from China, 12 December 2024

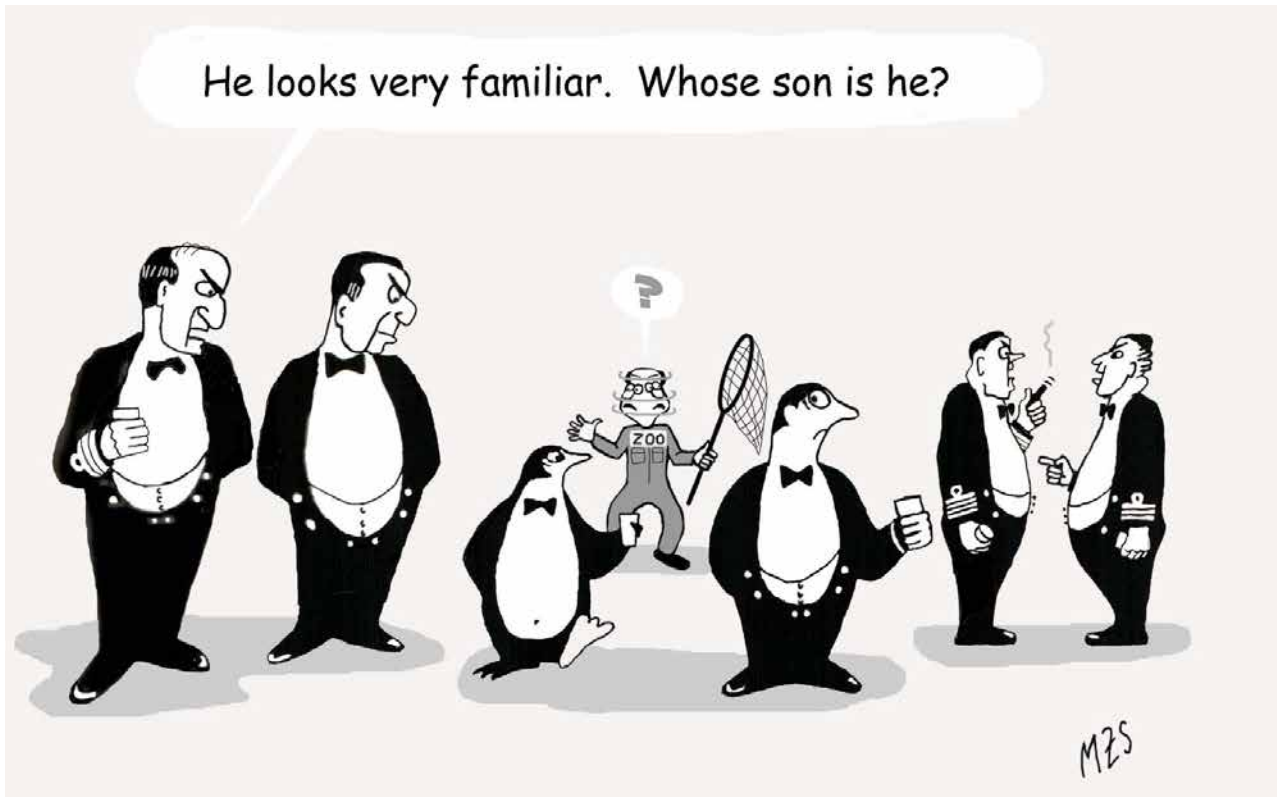


Brigadier Tariq Saddique, retired, in AIMH book kiosk, on 13 December 2024



Book launch ceremony of *The Unaccounted Valour* by Colonel Afzaal Niaz, retired, on 30 December 2024





(By Rear Admiral Mian Zahir Shah, retired, author of *Bubbles of Water*)

#### Military History Minestrone (Answers)

- |        |        |        |        |         |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) | 3. (b) | 4. (a) | 5. (d)  |
| 6. (c) | 7. (a) | 8. (d) | 9. (b) | 10. (a) |

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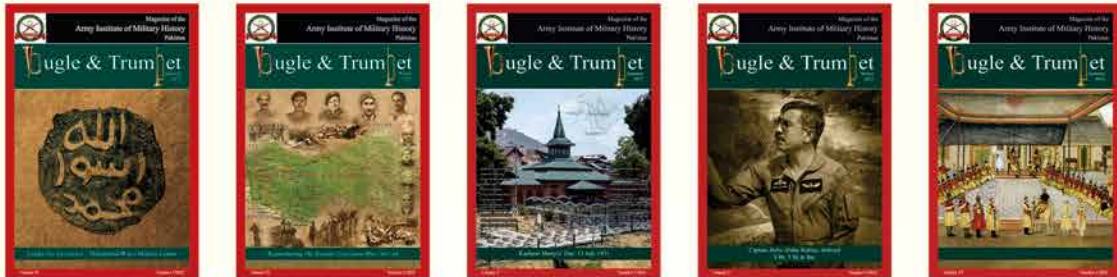
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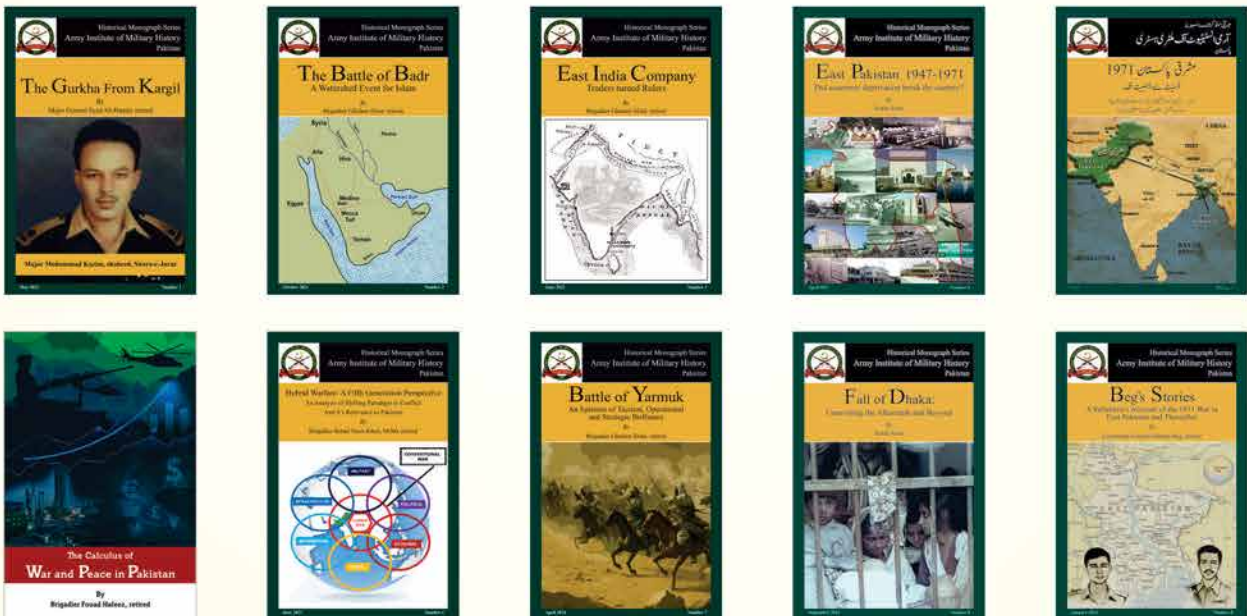
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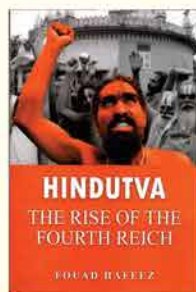
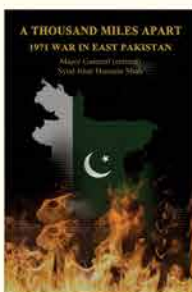
## Bugle & Trumpet (magazine)



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