



SALUTE

₹100

TO THE INDIAN SOLDIER

APRIL-MAY 2016, VOL 8 ISSUE 8 www.salute.co.in; <https://saluteindia.org>



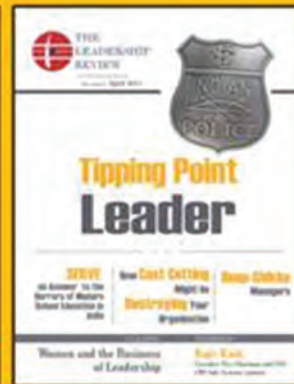
RESURGENT INDIA
LOOKING BEYOND
THE FRONTIERS





THE LEADERSHIP REVIEW

www.theleadershipreview.org



Lifetime

Free Subscription

to *TLR's* e-magazine exclusively for the subscribers of **SALUTE**

To subscribe, please email your details at subscribe@theleadershipreview.org.

Yes! I want to subscribe to **Salute to the Indian Soldier**

Name:

Address:

Tel No: Email:

Enclosed Cheque/ Draft No:

favouring Flags Media Pvt. Ltd. drawn on bank:

Dated: for amount Rs (For outstation cheques please add Rs 50 as bank charges)

Subscriber's signature:

FLAGS MEDIA PVT. LTD. A-47, HAUZ KHAS (LGF), NEW DELHI, 110016

For more details please email us at salutemagazine@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.salute.co.in> and <https://saluteindia.org>

in this issue

04

STEM THE ROT WITHIN | Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch

05

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

06

OPERATION CACTUS | Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia

10

MILITARY INTERVENTION: PRESENT CAPABILITIES, FUTURE REQUIREMENTS | Brig Gurmeet Kanwal

14

OUT OF AREA CONTINGENCIES: NEED TO FINE TUNE RESPONSE | Lt Gen. PC Katoch

18

NON FUNCTIONAL FINANCIAL UPGRADATION: A CASE OF THE TAIL WAGGING THE DOG | Brig Deepak Sinha

20

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GEO-POLITICAL THREAT TO THE INDIAN NATION STATE | Shantesh Hede

22

POINT-COUNTERPOINT: WOMEN IN MILITARIES |

Rafia Zakaria and Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch

26

FOND REMEMBRANCES OF AN ICONIC SUPREME COMMANDER | Lt Gen Baljit Singh

28

LAMB CALLING HAWK... OVER | Wg Cdr Unni Kartha

32

OPINION | Commander Prem Prakash Batra & Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch

33

RAISINA HILL | Lt Col Anil Bhat

34

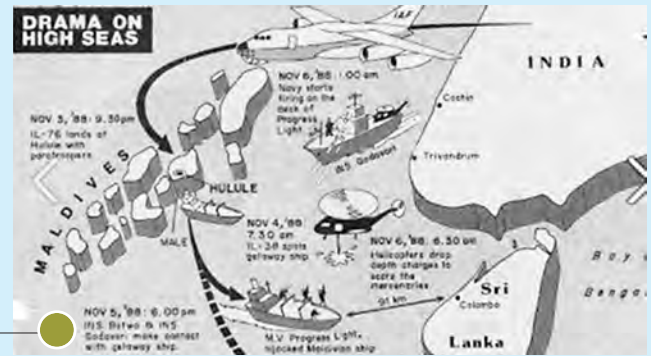
NEWS

36

VETERANS ALERT | Hony Capt Baldev Singh

38

BOOK REVIEW | Lt Col Anil Bhat



39

BOOK REVIEW | Suparna Banerjee

40

TAMATAR KADHI AUR KURKURI BHINDI: A GREAT DESI DISH | Aditi Pathak

41

A TREK TO THE END OF THE MOUNTAIN | Ritu Sharma

42

TO MODERNIZE, WE MUST WIDEN OUR CHOICES, NOT LIMIT THEM | Maroof Raza



EDITOR'S NOTE

Publisher
Maroof Raza

Editor
Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch
SM, VSM

Associate Editor
Lt Col Anil Bhat
VSM (Retd)

Design
UNEEDUS

Publicity Manager
Hony Capt (Retd) Baldev Singh

Board of Advisers
Lt Gen Sudhir Sharma
PVSM, AVSM, YSM, VSM (Retd)

Printed published by
Flags Media Pvt Ltd
A-47 Hauz Khas (LGF)
New Delhi 110016

Printed at
JK Offset Graphics (P) Ltd
C-21, DDA Shed,
Okhla Phase -1
New Delhi -110020

RNI Registration
DELENG/2008/26923

Certified that the views expressed and suggestions made in the articles are made by authors in their personal capacity and do not have any official endorsement

STEM THE ROT WITHIN



MAJ GEN DHRUV C KATOCH

India's dependence on weapon imports remains a serious security concern, begging the larger question: why have our policy makers been tardy in embarking upon a holistic indigenisation programme, to enable the country to achieve a modicum of self sufficiency in this vital aspect? Arms imports drain the national exchequer, consuming valuable resources better spent on poverty alleviation and strengthening the economy. Military strength can only be laid on the foundations on a strong economy, which must precede the development of military power. More importantly however, a thriving indigenous defence industry, by itself would boost the economy by at least a couple of percentage points in GDP terms, besides creating huge employment opportunities within the country. Indigenous weapon systems would cost just half or even lesser than that of imported ones, their maintenance and repair would be simpler and cheaper and their would also be spin off benefits to Indian industry arising from military technological developments.

Indian policy has for long been couched in pacifist terms, which begs another question: has this been a deliberate ploy? The defence budget is rarely discussed in Parliament and purchase of military hardware from foreign vendors is surrounded by very high levels of opacity. This gives the political establishment and the civil service mandarins in the ministry of defence the opportunity to seek huge kickbacks through defence deals with foreign vendors. Is it possible then that the nation's defence has been compromised by a deliberate policy of emasculating the indigenous defence sector? India's space programme proves that the country has the requisite technological skills to be a world leader. If we can send a mission to Mars, why do we lack capability to manufacture world class weapon platforms for the armed forces? We have even been found wanting in producing an acceptable small arms family of weapons system for the

infantry and are looking into importing rifles! Something is evidently wrong somewhere.

The AgustaWestland helicopter scam is merely a symptom of the larger malaise that afflicts the defence sector. It is not surprising that the names which emerge in the murky deal are of senior politicians and the entire decision making hierarchy in the Ministry of Defence, to include the defence secretary, the DG Acquisitions, the financial advisors in the MOD and a few officers of joint secretary rank. Even a section of the media appears to have been bought to promote a specific viewpoint. That a politico-bureaucratic nexus exists in defence deals is no secret. Such a nexus however can only thrive when indigenous manufacturing capability is weak. In the name of national defence, huge purchases can then be made to benefit the rent seekers. Is this then the reason that the DRDO is emasculated and the DPSUs continue to underperform? The import of Tatra vehicles is a case in point, where the concerned DPSU was simply passing off as indigenous, an imported product assembled in India.

There is a thriving mafia in the defence sector which has its tentacles well spread within the Indian system. It will not be easy to empower the indigenous defence sector and truly establish defence economic zones within the country to cater to most of our defence needs, as many powerful vested interests will get hurt. A start has been made in this field by the present government, but undoing the damage caused by decades of neglect will not be easy. Serious reforms are required in the MOD, which must first start with having a professional as the defence secretary. The DRDO and the defence public sector too need to be run on professional lines. More importantly, accountability must be the benchmark. Mr Manohar Parrikar truly has his work cut out for him. He must succeed, if the Prime Minister's 'Make in India' initiative, is to see fruition in the defence sector.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

The time has come for the Ministry of Defence to be populated by professionals. A start could be made by having the next Secretary of Defence, from outside the chosen few amongst the IAS cadre. The NDA government inherited a "bureaucracy problem" from the erstwhile Congress led UPA Government. This view is increasingly being discussed in the media as the article in Live Mint of September 2015 indicates, which states that the bureaucracy is not allowing the Modi government to function.¹ Perhaps the time has come to solve this macro problem by enforcing lateral entry into the IAS at all levels in all ministries.

Need For Reforms in the Ministry of Defence (MOD)

Anyone who visits the MOD to do business or even talk about new ideas has a very bad experience. There appears to be a closed mindset amongst officials in the MOD to new thoughts and ideas. A large number of people whom I have met have spoken of this hostile attitude of the MOD, where leave alone acceptance, even discussion of new ideas appears to be taboo. I too experienced hostility to the point of rudeness from a joint secretary in the MOD, whom I had been directed to meet to present my thoughts on the concept of Defence Economic Zone. Many others have had similar experiences.

It is necessary to start at the very top to bring in change and new ideas in the MOD - the post of defence secretary. Perhaps the next incumbent to this august office could be selected through an open interview process, where the requirements of the job and the

incumbents qualifications are clearly spelt out. This will send a strong signal to the environment that the political authority means business and is interested in bringing in new ideas in accelerating the reform process at the MOD. Thereafter, all key administrative positions in the MOD could be filled through open interview, ensuring that only those with the requisite expertise form part of the MOD. This will dramatically improve performance and change our military establishment in a way not seen since independence in August 1947.

Today, our security establishment is crisis ridden and we need people at the helm of affairs who are well versed with security related issues. As stated by Henry Kissinger, "In crises, the most daring course is often safest". We need change and we need it now.

The current defence secretary has a wealth of experience in various ministries and departments including steel, water resources, rural development, fisheries, export development and VAT Administration. He also has had a short stint at the department of defence production. Other defence secretaries before him have had similar backgrounds. Such qualifications and background hardly equip a person to hold the post of defence secretary, which is why we need professionals who match up to the skill sets required of the organisation. The national interest must take precedence over the interest of a single service, even one as glamorous and much sought after as the IAS. Considering the security environment in which we operate, the people of India have the right to demand that the post of defence secretary goes only to those

persons best qualified to preserve and promote India's national security interests. Not doing so could imperil national defence and we could well be looking at another scenario akin to that of 1962.

Similar reforms would be required in all departments of the GOI and not just in defence. Let us make the top post in each department open to all, and give such positions to the most deserving candidates, based on their qualifications.

This would vastly enhance the talent pool of the country and bring in excellence in all our ministries. Other countries have been doing this for decades. We need to make a start now. If over the next three years, the present government fills over 2000 government jobs through an open interview process, it will create a very dynamic situation and speed up decision making tremendously at all levels of Government, as lateral entry into the IAS gets institutionalised.

This will also give a boost to the Prime Minister's Make in India programme as also create millions of new jobs, bringing down unemployment significantly. I have sent a similar letter to the Defence Minister with copy to members of the Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS) on 30 April 2016.

Yours sincerely,
Ashish Puntambekar
Designer
The Defence Economic Zone Project

¹<http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/ILHrswBVokgjNWqUJmGRwI/Modis-window-of-opportunity-to-bring-in-big-reforms-is-clos.html>



OPERATION

OPERATION CACTUS

Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia, PVSM, AVSM, SM



“India now has the capability of protecting its strategic interests. The massive operation which came as the year was closing, demonstrated that the three services, the Army, the Air Force and the Navy, had acted in perfect coordination. The Maldives Operation has been a show piece in military strategy.”

—Janes Magazine, Dec 1988.

In the early hours of 03 November 1988, 55,000 residents of Male (the capital of Maldives) awoke to the reality of an armed coup, hearing gunshots all round for the first time in their lives. Till then, the Maldivian's had hardly ever witnessed crime leave aside violence. The last murder in this island nation was reported in 1976 and that too of a German murdering his girlfriend and the one before that was way back in 1793. Now, a rich businessman, Abdullah Luthufi, had taken over the island nation, capturing the radio and TV stations and the presidential palace with the help of mercenaries from the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). The 1500 strong National Security Service (NSS) whose headquarter is located adjacent to the presidential palace was besieged by the mercenaries, who fortunately failed to enter and take over the armoury. Complicity of a few NSS cadres was

never ruled out.

Mr Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, the president since 1978, had been returned to power with a 98.5 per cent majority for the third time. He was scheduled to visit India prior to his oath taking ceremony on 11 November. On learning of the coup, the president went into hiding, taking shelter in a safe house in the capital island of Male. From the safe house he requested assistance, first from the U.S. followed by the Soviets and thereafter Pakistan to rescue him. The U.S. base at Diego Garcia was the nearest, located 1,175 kms away, but it was election year with the U.S. Presidential elections scheduled for the 8th of November. Not having received a positive response from the three nations, President Gayoom requested India for assistance. It would be remembered that India was at that time assisting Sri Lanka with the IPKF deployed in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka, fighting the LTTE.

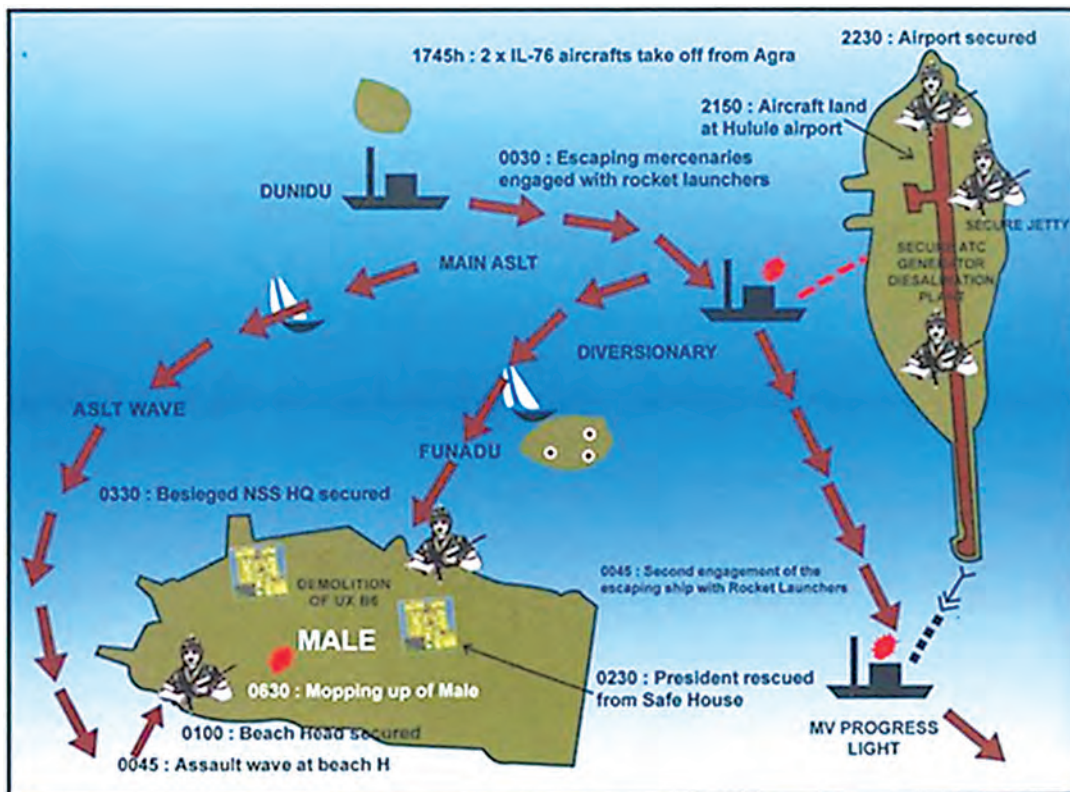
3500 kms away from Male, where this violent drama for power of a small though important island nation was unfolding, another seemingly normal day dawned for the paratroopers of 50 (I) Parachute Brigade located at Agra. This was soon to change to an exciting, challenging and historical day. I was then serving as the Brigade Major (BM) of 50 (I) Parachute Brigade and at around 1000h, I received the first indication of an impending operation when I received a call from Brig. V.P. Malik (later General and COAS) the Deputy Director General of Military Operations (DDG MO). Brig. Malik issued crisp instructions and the urgency in the voice conveyed the gravity of an emerging though uncertain situation. I was informed that the Para Brigade was to move to an

Island for operations. One company group and one battalion group was to be kept at standby to move at 6 hours notice and at 12 hours notice respectively. The Brigade Commander with one staff officer was required to move to the MO Directorate at Delhi by the evening, but the time was not specified.

At this time, Brig. F.E.C. Bulsara, Commander 50 (I) Parachute Brigade was on a visit to the Army Airborne Training Area at Kheria. He was requested to fall back immediately to the headquarters. Not being privy to any further information, we thought that this was one more of the numerous moves of the Para Brigade's Reconnaissance and Order group to Sri Lanka for another of those contingency plans for Op Pawan, the codename given to operations being conducted by the IPKF.

At about 1040h, I received another call from the Army Headquarters, this time from the VCOAS, Lt Gen. (later COAS) S.F. Rodrigues. As the Commander was moving back from Kheria to the brigade headquarters and was not in communication, the Vice Chief spoke to me and gave the following orders/ instructions:

- Brigade to move to Maldives.
- One Battalion group to emplane by 1230 hours (ie less than 2 hours)
- Brigade less battalion group to move to Maldives on night 03/04 November.
- Prepare for an airborne assault on an island, para drop planned on a beach.
- Enemy is equipped with small arms, rocket launchers, mortars and general purpose machine guns (GPMGs). There is no air defence, though the enemy may possess some surface to air missiles.
- Air effort allotted is three IL-76 and ten AN 32 aircraft.



- First and second line ammunition to be carried.

The brigade was located in Agra, but most troops were committed on training and administrative activities. Of the three battalions of the brigade, 7 Para was out on collective training, 3 Para had two companies deployed at Lucknow and 6 Para had two companies providing security at COD Agra. However, 6 Para and 3 Para were both mobilised and 7 Para was instructed to move back to Agra forthwith. In the meantime, 10 Guards (Mechanised) was also mobilised from Gwalior by MO Directorate to move to Agra and marry up with the Para Brigade at the earliest. Those were not the days of the internet and mobile communications, and we had very little or no information on Maldives. All that we knew was that Male was the capital of the Island nation and the airfield was at Hulhule. It was only after Brig. V.P. Malik landed at Agra at around 1515h, with the Indian High Commissioner to Maldives, Mr Ashok Banerjee, that the clarity and enormity of the task dawned

on us. By this time, the Commander had also returned.

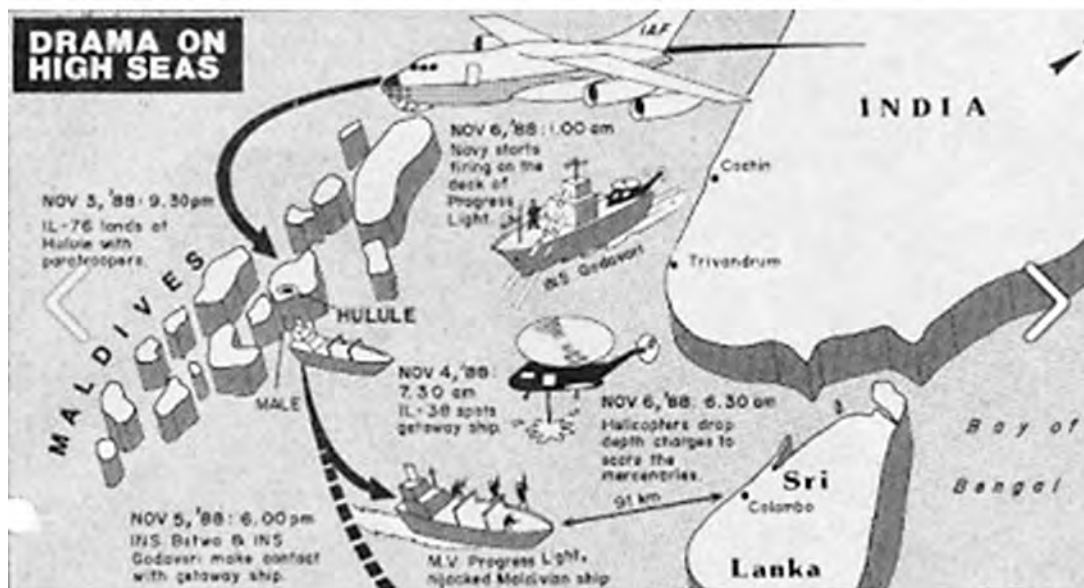
Brig. Malik gave out the task and plan as formulated at MO Directorate. The task was categorical "To rescue the President of Maldives and escort him safely to India". The plan in essence included two airborne assaults - one on a beach at Male and the other in Hulhule airfield. Thereafter, the rest of the combat echelons were to be landed at the Hulhule airfield, once it was secured. However, if the airfield at Hulhule island was under the control of troops loyal to the President, then the two IL-76 aircraft would land troops at Hulhule. However, the airborne assault at Male would still go ahead as there was no wherewithal to move the assault echelons to Male island which was separated by about one kilometre of ocean. If the airfield was in the hands of loyal troops, codeword 'HADIYA' was to be sent by radio and the runway lights were to be switched on and off. To facilitate landing, the airfield lights were to be switched on just prior to landing and switched off once the

landing was successfully accomplished.

With scant inputs of not only the prevailing situation but also of the topography, the situation remained uncertain and confused. The only maps available were photocopies of tourist sketches of Male and Hulhule islands. But now Brig F.F.C. Bulsara, took charge. A decisive military leader and soldier, he comprehended the seriousness of the situation which was compounded by the prevailing confusion, and issued clear and concise instructions not only to the units of the Para Brigade but also to the Air Force and the Military Operations Directorate. He had trained the brigade very effectively so as to achieve all military tasks, especially airborne tasks under the most challenging of circumstances. After getting as much information as he could from Mr Ashok Banerjee's detailed knowledge of Male, Brig. Bulsara decided to launch the operation with Col (later Brig.) S.C. Joshi, CO, 6 Para spearheading the operation. Two plans were made for the operation:



OPERATION



Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi sent troops to assist Maldives, in response to a request for help by President Gayoom

Plan 'A' was to launch an airborne assault with sixty paratroopers from one IL 76 at Hulhule airfield, to capture and secure the airfield. The remaining paratroopers in that IL-76 aircraft were then to be landed, followed by troops from the follow up IL-76 aircraft. Thereafter, the troops were to move to Male to rescue the President by capturing and commandeering local boats. The limit of sixty paratroopers was dictated by the availability of packed parachutes with the Air Force on that particular day and time. Plan 'B' involved a landing at the Hulhule airfield. The decision as to which plan was to be implemented was to be taken by Brig. Bulsara, once the aircraft were over Hulhule airfield or when nearing Maldives. Flying the two aircraft were Group Captain (later Air Marshal) AK Goel and Group Captain A.G. Bewoor, the Commanding Officer of 44 Squadron.

The assault echelons of 6 Para, 3 Para and 17 Para Field Regiment, along with sappers, signallers and medical detachments, embarked in the two IL 76 aircraft and took off from Agra at around 1730 hours. I, along with the GSO3, accompanied the Commander in the lead aircraft as part of the tactical headquarter. The four and half hour

flying time from Agra to Male was well spent in carrying out detailed briefings of all contingencies, including showing the photograph of the president to all ranks.

On approaching Hulhule one could only see the vast ocean. Group Captain Bewoor then confirmed receipt of codeword 'HADIYA' on radio from the ATC. The light signal had also been given. It was decision time now for the Commander.

Was the code given under duress or by deceit? Even during the landing, it was easy for the rebels to simply position a vehicle on the runway, thus jeopardising not only the mission but also the lives of 180 troops on board. The other alternative seemed equally dangerous as Male is about two square kilometres only and the assaulting paratroopers would have mostly landed in the sea, with no chance of survival. The drop zone where the airborne assault was planned was no more than 200 m by 50 m. Weighing up the odds, Brig. Bulsara decided to land. That decision proved vital and was to be discussed in military circles for many years, with many self proclaimed military experts criticising the decision. Given the task and the situation it was a bold and pragmatic decision, the less

risky of the two alternatives and with a better probability of success, exemplifying in full measure the motto of the Paratroopers "Who Dares, Wins".

Fortunately the landing was unopposed and the first IL -76 with 6 Para and the brigade tactical headquarter landed at 2148 hours and secured the airfield in quicktime. The second IL 76 landing after a gap of ten minutes, brought in the company of 3 Para under Maj. (later Lt Gen.) N.K.S Ghei, elements of sappers and medical and the artillery component under Col K.K.K. Singh. Hulhule was totally abandoned, but intermittent firing could be heard at Male. 6 Para with a company under Maj. R.J.S. Dhillon, after commandeering the boats had moved for the main assault to secure a beachhead South West of Male with the 3 Para company heading straight for the Male jetty as a diversionary. Around this time, the troops observed a ship sailing between the two islands. The ATC also gave information that the rebels had taken control of a merchant vessel and were fleeing with hostages including a minister and his wife. The ship was effectively engaged with all available firepower including recoilless guns and machine guns.

In the meantime the Commander



OPERATION

got in touch with the President from the ATC. The President informed him that the situation was desperate as he was surrounded from all sides by the rebels and could not hold out any longer. It is to the credit of the Commander's plan and the flawless execution by the troops that by around 0220 hours, Col SC Joshi and Maj RJS Dhillon secured the President from his safe house. In the meantime troops had lifted the siege on the NSS headquarters, TV and radio stations and the presidential palace and commenced securing and sanitising the areas. President Gayoom, now safe and secure wanted to stay on at Male, whereas the orders were to evacuate him to India. This was also the time that the follow up waves started landing at Hulhule and by early morning more than 1600 troops had built up with all support echelons.

By around 0430 hours the NSS headquarters had been fully secured and the president moved, to enable him to speak on a secure link to the Prime Minister of India. The primary task achieved with surgical precision, the brigade was tasked to now help restore the situation and neutralise all rebels. Early morning the IAF fighter air crafts made a couple of passes over Male reassuring all that normalcy had been restored by the Indian Armed Forces. At 0800 hours an Indian Navy IL 38 reconnaissance aircraft landed at Hulhule and after an update on the ship (MV Progress Light) having escaped with the rebels and hostages on board confirmed that while enroute they had sighted a ship listing portside, South West of Male. The navy thereafter kept a surveillance over MV Progress Light and with INS Godavari and Betwa having moved in on 06 November, rescued the hostages, took the rebels including their leader into custody and destroyed the ship.

The coup leaders and rebels were brought to Male and handed over to the Maldivian authorities. The Indian Army was requested to keep the rebels in their custody till the legal proceedings could

be completed, and accordingly they were taken to a prison Island Gamadoo under the escort of Indian troops. 50 (I) Para Brigade less 6 Para with two companies de-inducted by 17 November. Thereafter, the Indian Army, on the request of the Maldivian government took on the task of capacity building and helping NSS reform to meet their future security challenges.

The precision timed "Operation Cactus" in which Indian armed forces acted within hours to thwart a coup attempt to dislodge a lawfully elected government on the Indian Ocean Island of Maldives made military watchers sit up worldwide.

On 03 April 1989, Time magazine ran



a cover story "Super Power Rising" stating "India asserts its place on the world stage", consequent to the Indian Armed Forces unprecedented success in executing an intervention operations albeit at the request of a friendly government. Op Cactus launched to rescue President M.A. Gayoom, demonstrated Indian power and capability to be a 'net security provider' in the region. The operations launched from a cold start and executed with surgical precision was successfully accomplished within 16 hours of the first indication of an impending operation, 3000 km from base. The cover story of *Time* magazine by Ross H. Munro flags India's growing military power, quote "At an air force base five miles from the Taj Mahal at Agra, hundreds of India's finest combat troops (50(1) Parachute Brigade) filed into the cavernous holds of Soviet built

IL-76 transporters, whose jet engines were whining impatiently. Soon the transporters were headed into the night, winging southwards across the subcontinent and then out over the Indian Ocean. When they landed four hours later at one of the 1200 coral islands, that make up the republic of Maldives, the paratroopers charged out of the planes, rifles at the ready."

Operation Maldives launched conjointly by the Army, Navy and the Air Force was successfully accomplished without a single casualty. The operation exemplifies the excellent jointness achieved. The success of this operation at home mostly went unnoticed as did a few important

lessons learnt. Had it failed, maybe India too would have created structures and organisations to exploit the full potential of a Special Operations Command to safeguard national interest and assets, much like the United States which established the US Special Operations Command (USSOC) comprising the SOF of the three services and marines, in the aftermath of the failure of Operation EAGLE CLAW

to rescue American diplomats held hostage at the US Embassy at Tehran in April 1980.

Operation Cactus is undoubtedly one of the most professionally executed military operation in the world, right on top with the likes of Operation Thunderbolt (Israeli raid on Entebbe), Otto Skorzeny's rescue of Mussolini, the long range desert patrols of David Sterling (Phantom major) and Op Geronimo, the Abbottabad raid by US seals to neutralise Osama Bin Laden among a few others.

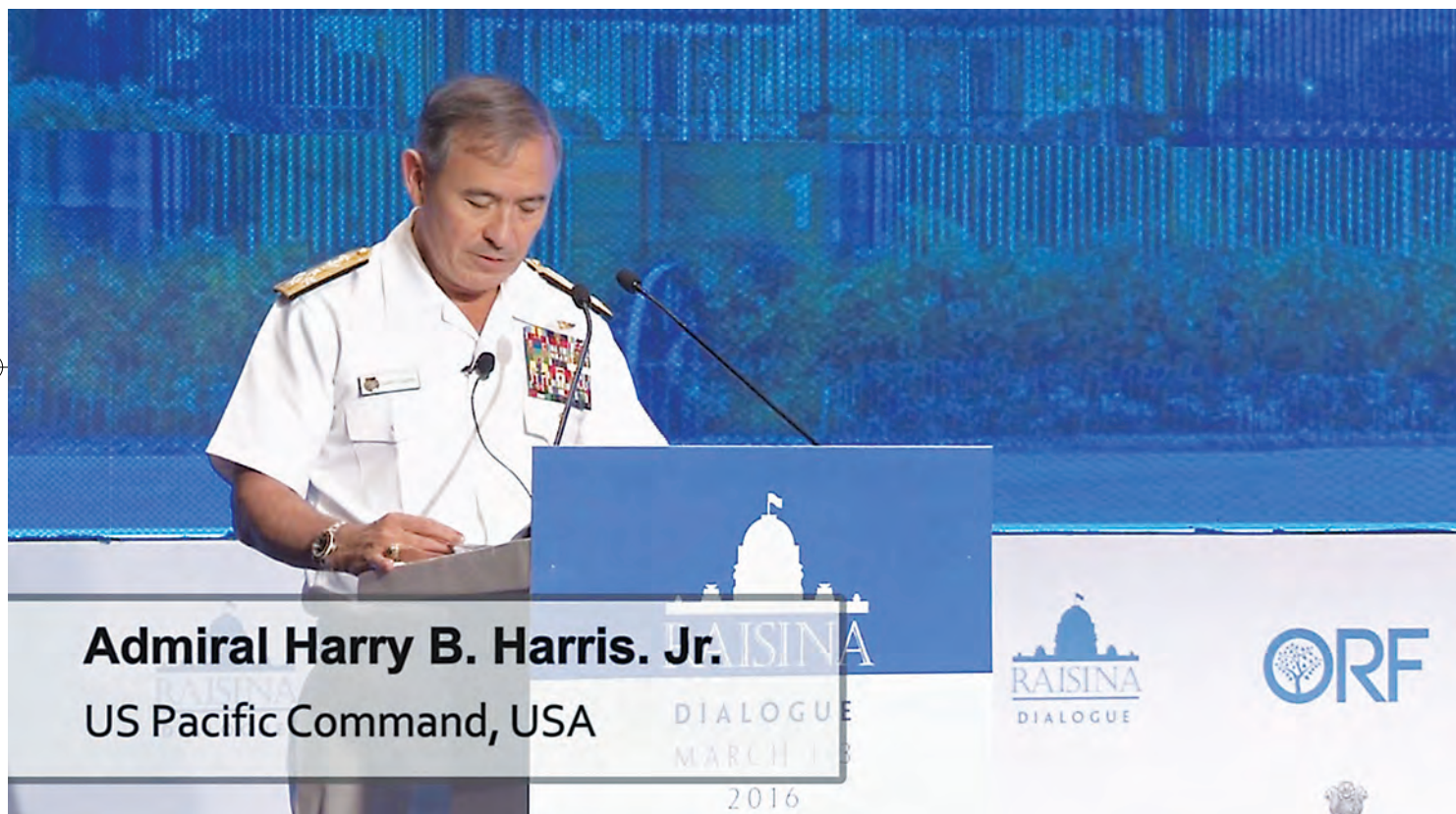
Lt Gen. Vinod Bhatia, PVSM, AVSM, SM was the Brigade Major during the above operation. After superannuating from the Indian Army, he is presently the Director, CENJOWS (Centre for Joint Warfare Studies), an inter-service think tank based in New Delhi. Views expressed are personal.



FORCE PROJECTION

MILITARY INTERVENTION: PRESENT CAPABILITIES, FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

Brig Gurmeet Kanwal



Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr.
US Pacific Command, USA

Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs on March 2, 2016, Admiral Harry Harris, Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Command, called for quadrilateral Australia-India-Japan-US consultations for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. He said, “Together, we can develop a roadmap that leverages our respective efforts to improve the security architecture and strengthen regional dialogues.

Together, we can ensure free and open sea lanes of communication that are critical for global trade and prosperity.”

Ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and maintaining the freedom of the sea lanes of communication for the unfettered flow of trade requires the creation of robust capabilities for military intervention. India has repeatedly demonstrated such capabilities, even if these have been used mostly for humanitarian and

disaster relief (HADR) purposes.

In the space of ten days in April 2015, India had evacuated 5,600 displaced persons from Yemen under Operation Rahat (relief). Of these, 4,640 were from India and 960 from 41 friendly countries, including citizens of Britain, France and the United States. They were evacuated by air by C-17 Globemaster aircraft of the Indian Air Force flying from Djibouti, Ethiopia; by Air India aircraft flying from Sana’a; and, by sea



on board ships of the Indian Navy from Aden, Al Hudaydah and Al Mukalla ports in Yemen.

The operation was meticulously planned and efficiently executed despite the hazards of an ongoing civil war. It was not only a humanitarian relief operation, but also one that showcased India's military intervention capabilities – though in a different context. And, it was not the first time that India has undertaken such an operation. Starting with the war in Iraq in 2003, through the conflicts in Lebanon (2006), Egypt, Libya and Yemen (2011) and Ukraine and Syria-Iraq (2014), the Indian armed forces and civil aviation personnel have been engaged in evacuating beleaguered Indian citizens from war zones.

Post-independence Interventions

Contrary to populist notions of the nation being imbued with a pacifist strategic culture, the Indian government has not hesitated to ask its armed forces to intervene militarily several times since independence, both internally and beyond India's shores, when such intervention was considered necessary in the national interest in order to achieve its foreign policy and national security objectives. The army acted successfully to integrate Junagadh (1947), Hyderabad (Operation Polo, 1948), Goa (Operation Vijay, 1961) and Sikkim (1975) with the Indian Union as part of the nation building process. The Indian armed forces helped to create the new nation of Bangladesh after the Pakistan army's genocide in East Pakistan in 1971 led to a popular uprising and 10 million refugees streamed into India. India intervened in the Maldives and Sri Lanka at the behest of the governments of these countries and was ready to do so in Mauritius when the threat passed.

External threats and challenges have been gradually increasing. When the Taliban had first come to power in Afghanistan, a perplexing question was what India would do if it ever became necessary to launch a military

operation to rescue the Indian ambassador or members of his staff from Kabul. Would India ask for American or Russian help and how would they respond? Or would India have no option but to leave the embassy staff to the mercy of terrorist jihadis? That contingency fortunately did not arise but another one did. Indian Airlines flight IC-814 was hijacked to and parked at Kandahar airfield for several days in the cold month of December 1999. The nation was forced to look on with helpless rage as virtually no military options worth considering were available. That ignominious surrender to the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists had prompted some soul searching. However, the government has been proceeding rather slowly in creating the required intervention capabilities.

Regional Responsibilities

Analysts the world over are now discussing the emergence of a resurgent India that will be a dominant power in Southern Asia. Bharat Verma, former Editor, Indian Defence Review, wrote in 2003: "... our political aim should be the dominance of Asia by 2020 as an economic power backed by a world class military." In keeping with its rapidly growing strategic interests and regional responsibilities, India may soon need to join other friendly countries to intervene militarily in its regional neighbourhood when the situation so demands. While India would prefer to do so with a clear mandate from the United Nations Security Council and under the UN flag, it may not be averse to joining 'coalitions of the willing' when its vital national interests are threatened and consensus in the Security Council proves hard to achieve.

Though it will be a gradual and long-drawn process, it is quite likely that a cooperative international security framework will eventually emerge from the ashes of the ongoing conflicts. Stemming from the need for contingency planning, particularly in

support of its forces deployed for United Nations (UN) peace-keeping and peace-support duties and for limited power projection, India will need to raise and maintain in a permanent state of quick-reaction readiness, adequate forces to participate in international coalitions in India's area of strategic interest.

The aim of such operations will be to further India's national security and foreign policy objectives, to support international non-proliferation efforts, and to join the international community to act decisively against banned insurgent outfits like the al Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taiba or even rogue regimes like the one in Yemen. International non-proliferation initiatives, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and the Container Security Initiative (CSI) particularly cannot succeed in the Southern Asian and Indian Ocean regions without Indian participation as a member or as a partner providing outside support. As an aspiring regional power, India will also need to consider its responsibilities towards undertaking humanitarian military interventions when these are morally justified. Other requirements that are difficult to visualise accurately today but would further India's foreign policy objectives or enhance national security interests in future, will also justify the acquisition of military intervention capabilities.

Force Structure Required

The late General K. Sundarji, former COAS, had often spoken of converting an existing infantry division to an air assault division by about the year 2000. Though the idea was certainly not ahead of its time, the shoestring budgets of the 1990s did not allow the army to proceed to practically implement the concept. Now the time has come to translate his vision into reality. Lt Gen. Vinay Shankar (Retd.) has written, "Some years ago the army had drawn up an approach paper projecting the requirement of two air-mobile divisions... This is now a



FORCE PROJECTION

definite requirement and the proposal ought to be followed up.” Other analysts are also of the view that India needs to put in place a fairly expansive expeditionary capability. Bharat Karnad is of the view: “At the very least, a genuine expeditionary force would have to comprise two division equivalent forces, increasing over time to 5-6 division equivalent for distant employment...”

Lt Gen Satish Nambiar, Force Commander, UNPROFOR in former Yugoslavia in 1992-93, has suggested the following components for a ‘rapid reaction task force’ as he calls it:

- A tri-Service corps sized headquarters.
- A land forces component to include an airborne brigade, and a light armoured or mechanised division comprising an air transportable armoured brigade equipped with light tanks and infantry combat vehicles, an amphibious brigade and an air transportable infantry brigade.
- Army aviation elements, assault engineers, communications units and logistics elements.
- A Naval component that desirably includes an aircraft carrier, appropriate surface and sub-surface craft and aerial maritime capability.
- An Air Force component that includes strike aircraft, helicopters and strategic airlift capability.
- A Special Forces component.
- Civilian component to include diplomatic representatives, civil affairs personnel, civilian police, human rights personnel, etc.

Besides being necessary for out-of-area contingencies, ‘air assault’ capability is a significant force multiplier in conventional conflict. Despite what the peaceniks may say, substantial air assault capability is not only essential for furthering India’s national interests, it is now inescapable for conventional deterrence. The present requirement is of at least one air assault brigade group with integral heli-lift capability for offensive employment on India’s periphery. This capability must be in place by the end

of the 12th Defence Plan period 2012-17. This brigade should be capable of short-notice deployment in India’s extended neighbourhood by air and sea. Comprising three specially trained air assault battalions, integral firepower component and combat service support and logistics support units, the brigade group should be based on Chinook CH-47 and MI-17 transport helicopters. It should have the guaranteed firepower and support of two to three flights of attack and reconnaissance helicopters and one flight of UCAVs.

The air assault brigade group should be armed, equipped and trained to secure threatened islands, seize an air head and capture an important objective inside the adversary’s territory such as a key bridge that is critical to furthering operations in depth. It should also be equipped and trained to operate as part of international coalition forces for speedy military interventions. To make it effective, it will have to be provided air and sealift capability and a high volume of battlefield air support by the IAF and the navy till its deployment area comes within reach of the artillery component of ground forces. Since the raising of such a potent brigade group will be a highly expensive proposition, its components will need to be very carefully structured to get value for money.

Simultaneously, efforts should commence to raise a division-size rapid reaction force, of which the first air assault brigade group mentioned above should be a part, by the end of the 13th Defence Plan period 2017-22. The second brigade group of the Rapid Reaction Division (RRD) should have amphibious capability with the necessary transportation assets being acquired and held by the Indian Navy, including landing and logistics ships. One brigade group in Southern Command has been recently designated as an amphibious brigade; this brigade group could be suitably upgraded. The amphibious brigade

should be self-contained for 15 days of sustained intervention operations. The third brigade of the RRD should be lightly equipped for offensive and defensive employment in the plains and the mountains as well as jungle and desert terrain. All the brigade groups and their ancillary support elements should be capable of transportation by land, sea and air.

With the exception of the amphibious brigade, the division should be logistically self-contained for an initial deployment period of 15 to 20 days with limited daily replenishment. The infrastructure for such a division, especially strategic air lift, attack helicopters, heli-lift and landing ship capability, will entail heavy capital expenditure to establish and fairly large recurring costs to maintain. However, it is an inescapable requirement and funds will need to be found for such a force by innovative management of the defence budget and additional budgetary support. The second RRD should be raised over the 14th and 15th Defence Plans by about 2032 when India’s regional responsibilities would have grown considerably. Unless planning for the creation of such capabilities begins now, the formations will not be available when these are required to be employed.

Special Forces support should be available to the RRDs on as required basis, for conventional conflict and intervention operations. It needs to be appreciated by India’s policy planners that in many situations when war has not yet commenced and it is not possible to employ ground forces overtly, Special Forces can be launched covertly to achieve important military objectives with inherent deniability. In Kandahar-type situations they provide the only viable military option. However, they can act with assurance only if they have been suitably structured and well trained for the multifarious tasks that they may be called upon to perform.

The only airborne force projection capability that India has at present is



FORCE PROJECTION

that of the Independent Parachute Brigade. Since the organisational structure of this brigade is more suitable for conventional operations, this brigade should be retained as an Army HQ reserve for strategic employment behind enemy lines to further the operations of ground forces that are expected to link up with it in an early time frame. However, when necessary, the brigade could be allotted to the RRD for short durations to carry out specific tasks.

A permanent tri-Service headquarters equivalent to a Corps HQ should also be raised under HQ Integrated Defence Staff for continuous threat assessment and operational planning and to provide C4I2SR support to the RRDs and their firepower, combat service and logistics support components. The HQ should also be suitably staffed with a skeleton civilian component comprising diplomats, civic affairs personnel and disaster relief staff. This component should be beefed up when the task force is ordered to be deployed. Unless planning for the creation of the capabilities that are necessary begins now, these potent fighting echelons will not be available when these are likely to be required.

It must be emphasised that rapid reaction-cum-air assault capabilities will provide immense strategic reach and flexibility to the Cabinet Committee on Security and multiple options to the military planners in the prevailing era of strategic uncertainty. As government sanction may take some time to obtain, the nucleus of such a force should be established immediately by the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) by pooling together the resources currently available with the three Services. The nominated echelons must train together at least once a year so that the armed forces can respond suitably to emerging threats.

Cooperative Security Framework

India must join the US and other

strategic partners, such as Australia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam, to establish a cooperative security framework for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and for the security of the global commons – air space, space, cyber space and the sea-lanes of communication – to enable freedom of navigation and the free flow of trade. If China is willing to join this security architecture it should be welcomed. However, it is unlikely to do so as it believes that ‘one mountain cannot contain two tigers’ and sees itself as the lone tiger on the Asian mountain.

The international community hopes



India will soon become a “net provider of security” in the region. The expectations include India joining international counter-terrorism and counter-proliferation efforts; sharing intelligence; upholding the rules and norms governing maritime trade; providing help to the littoral states to meet their security needs; helping to counter piracy and narcotics trafficking; and, continuing to taking the lead in humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) operations in the region. All of these expectations are unexceptionable and India has been contributing extensively to achieving these common goals.

India must not hesitate to intervene militarily in conjunction with its strategic partners if its vital national interests are threatened in its area of strategic interest. This extends from the

South China Sea in the east to the Horn of Africa in the west. India would prefer to intervene under a UN flag but may join a coalition of the willing in case consensus is difficult to achieve in the UN Security Council.

It is necessary to work with strategic partners, other friendly countries in India’s extended neighbourhood, organisations like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and, when possible, even the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), to establish consultative mechanisms through diplomatic channels for the exchange of ideas, coordination of the utilisation of scarce resources and joint training and reconnaissance. Small-scale joint military exercises with likely coalition partners help to eliminate interoperability and command and control challenges. All of this can be achieved without having to enter into unnecessary alliances. Efforts put in during peace time always help to smoothen cooperative functioning during crisis situations when tempers are usually high, the media outcry for military responses is shrill and cool judgment is invariably at a premium.

India cannot aspire to achieve great power status without simultaneously getting politically and militarily ready to bear the responsibilities that go with such a status. Military intervention in support of its national interests is one such responsibility and it cannot be wished away. Unless India becomes the undisputed master of its own backyard in Southern Asia, including the Northern Indian Ocean region, it will not be recognised as a regional power. India’s aspirations of becoming a power to reckon with on the world stage will never be achieved without potent military capabilities.

The writer is Distinguished Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi, and former Director, Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi.



FORCE PROJECTION

OUT OF AREA CONTINGENCIES Need to Fine Tune Response

Lt Gen. PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC

Faced with the third and most potent attempt of a coup d'état in November 1988 (earlier ones being 1980 and 1983), Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom appealed personally and through the Maldivian ambassador to the UN for military assistance from several countries, including India, the US, Britain, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and some other Asian countries. Sri Lanka put 85 commandos on standby at Ratmalana air base, Colombo and Malaysia alerted its navy. US Marines at Diego Garcia too were placed on alert but the Reagan administration chose to work with Britain to help coordinate a response from India. The attempted coup was the handiwork of a group of Maldivian's led by businessman Abdullah Luthufi and assisted by some 80-200 mercenaries from Sri Lanka's Tamil insurgent group People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) who infiltrated the Maldivian capital of Malé. The mercenaries quickly gained control of the capital, including major government buildings, airport, port and television and radio stations. However, President Gayoom managed to escape capture and took refuge in Maldives National Security Service headquarters.

India responded with alacrity under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi – same day as President Gayoom requested intervention. Under codename Op 'Cactus', the operation commenced with elements of 50 (I) Parachute Brigade Group airlifted in IL-76 aircraft





FORCE PROJECTION

ex Agra on night of November 3, 1988, flying non-stop over 2,000 kms, landing over Male's International airport at Hulhule. Additional Indian troops were transported by air and by sea from Cochin and IAF Mirages were deployed over Malé as a show of force. Indian troops had arrived within nine hours of President Gayoom making the appeal to India. The airfield was quickly secured, Male was reached in commandeered boats, President Gayoom rescued and control of the capital restored within hours. Some

mercenaries hijacked a freighter, fleeing towards Sri Lanka with 27 hostages but were intercepted by INS Godavari and INS Betwa off the Sri Lanka coast and captured. Those mercenaries unable to make it to the hijacked freighter were rounded up and handed over to Maldivian security forces. 19 people reportedly died in the fighting, mostly mercenaries and two hostages killed by the mercenaries. Most of the 1600 odd Indian troops were withdrawn from the Maldives after order was restored. Some 150 troops stayed on for a year in

Maldives on request of President Gayoom. A landmark in responding to out of area contingency (OOAC) had been achieved by India that attracted international accolades. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher went on record to say, "Thank God for India: President Gayoom's government has been saved. We could not have assembled and dispatched a force from here in good time to help him". India had demonstrated that it could execute a combined services operation in an efficient and timely manner.





FORCE PROJECTION

The above operation is a model often cited for India's increasing role as a 'net security provider' in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). But let us examine if there are lessons to be drawn from this OOAC mission to Maldives, considering what went on behind the scenes. First, Maldives will always remain an OOAC task for India. With its location 600 km off the southwest coast of India and 750 km southwest of Sri Lanka, its geo-strategic value lies in the fact that it sits astride three of the most important SLOCs through which most of India's trade and oil requirements pass. Yet, when India was required to respond to President Gayoom's appeal, there were no maps of Maldives available. The Director R&AW could sheepishly produce only a 'tourist' map of Maldives. It is on this map that Operation 'Cactus' was mounted. Second, little information was available about the geography of the target area and the deployment areas of the mercenaries and Maldivian rebels. Third, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had originally assigned the task to the National Security Guard (NSG). The NSG was raised in 1984, following Operation 'Blue Star' and the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, as a specialised counter terrorism force. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had been so impressed by witnessing live a massive anti-hijack exercise by the NSG conducted without prior warnings to airlines that he directed that the then IG (Ops) NSG, Maj. Gen. Naresh Kumar (on deputation from the Army) be awarded a PVSM. The Army raised objections saying General Naresh Kumar already was recipient of PVSM and there was no precedent of awarding a second PVSM, but naturally directions of the PM prevailed; General Naresh Kumar remains the only recipient of a PVSM and Bar to date. But getting back to the task allotted to NSG for rescuing President Gayoom and restoring order in the Maldivian capital Male, the intrepid General Naresh Kumar pointed out the following to Prime Minister

Rajiv Gandhi: One, in absence of concrete information, aircraft carrying NSG personnel may not be able to land at Hulhule airfield if fired upon from ground by mercenaries; two, India would lose precious time in case a second force was required to be launched with NSG having travelled over 2000 kms and unable to land, and; third, it would be best to allot the task instead of NSG to the Parachute Brigade whose troops could undertake parachute drops at Hulhule if landing aircraft was not possible.

That is how the task for rescuing President Gayoom and restoring order in Male was shifted from the NSG to the Army. What could have gone wrong? The NSG could have travelled all the way and turned back from Hulhule encountering ground fire. By the time a second force was launched, the mercenaries could have consolidated and reinforced having been alerted by the unsuccessful intervention, making it much more difficult for a second force. As for the Army troops approaching Hulhule, the mercenaries could have held and fired from the airstrip, cratered it or simply blocked the runway with a vehicle or another temporary obstacle, denying aircraft landings. In such eventuality, the blind drop of parachute troops could have landed part of the troops into the sea. Concurrent to Op 'Cactus' were the ongoing operations of the IPKF in Sri Lanka launched in 1987 under Op 'Pawan'. Troops in IPKF were slightly better off in not being launched on tourist maps but were surprised to discover that maps with the Sri Lankan Army were far superior than those issued to IPKF units in terms of physical details and accuracy. Drop zones chosen of the map adjacent to jetties in case of LTTE resistance were found to be highly unsuitable on ground. Ironically, maps continue to be the bane of Indian security forces as updating of maps of areas even within India is some three decades behind schedule.

Intelligence is vital for any operation

particularly OOACs where these are to be conducted on unchartered foreign territory. Last minute intelligence inputs coming in would hardly suffice, as was in the above case of Maldives. Intelligence building has to be a continuous process coordinating all source intelligence. The lack of coordination between our multiple intelligence agencies is no secret and all efforts for bringing them under parliamentary oversight have been in vain. Why we have continuously suffered dearth of intelligence is best described by former Joint Director IB, MK Dhar in his book 'Open Secrets – India's Intelligence Unveiled' published in 2005 wherein he wrote that irrespective of which government was in power, the compete intelligence set up was focused on how to do down the opposition parties. HUMINT will continue to be the heart, soul and brain of intelligence in 21st century conflict situations. It is the HUMINT factor that has enhanced the asymmetric advantage of our adversaries, placing us at serious disadvantage while facing non-traditional threats. Reliance on TECHINT alone is wholly inadequate albeit it was convenient for past governments to obfuscate lack of a coherent intelligence strategy and mismatched inter-agency synergy and functioning. Within the country, while media encourages the citizen journalist concept, the establishment has no such concept - the feasibility of 'billion eyes on the ground' has never been explored. A country like Maldives with some 70,000 foreign employees has thousands of Indians; some 29,000 Indians live and work in the Maldives, many in the tourism sector, and almost 22,000 of them live in Male, who could be a continuous source of information gathering. As per media reports of last year, the NSA is refurbishing the intelligence set up by broadening the manpower base pan-India for intelligence operatives and young well educated youth are volunteering to join up. However, considering the established fact that nearly 80 per cent



FORCE PROJECTION

of information sought is available as open sources intelligence (OSINT), the vast Indian diaspora abroad too must be selectively optimised for information gathering.

In terms of synergising intelligence, the national information grid (NATGRID) appears still hiccupping and the national counterterrorism centre (NCTC) has not even taken off. The Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), though mandated to operate trans-border sources has not been permitted to do so over the past decade plus. Whether the present government would permit the DIA to do so also remains a question mark. Lack of HUMINT contributes to our inability to strategise and cope with irregular and asymmetric threats including assessing upcoming OOACs. Additionally, the DIA is the central repository for all intelligence inputs pertaining to the three Services including Imagery Intelligence (IMINT) and Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) however; we are yet to integrate the aspects of topography with the DIA. Within the existing setup, adequate resources in terms of remote sensing, ELINT payloads and cartography are not available to produce high quality fused data. Therefore, we have not been able to capitalise on geographical intelligence (GEOINT). HUMINT, TECHINT, GEOINT together with signal intelligence (SIGINT), all source intelligence, duly integrated with modern surveillance technology and processing capacity greatly enhances situational awareness, assists the decision support system and leads to better decision-making. A vital requirement also is to monitor the cyberspace, which is a gigantic task. What we need is a complete surveillance system that would capture mobile communications data, including Wi-Fi, all broadband internet traffic, and any data transmitted over 3G in seamless manner that would not be detected or visible to the subscriber.

Another vital void that India has been facing is penetrative intelligence capabilities which advanced armies

have achieved by covertly deploying Special Forces strategically, duly integrated with intelligence agencies, on politico-military missions. Their tasks include continuous surveillance of areas of strategic intelligence, perception management and shaping the environment in favour of own country. Ironically, India's Special Forces employment abroad has largely been limited to IPKF operations in Sri Lanka and UN missions. One of the major reasons for this is that R&AW considers such operations as their exclusive domain. This is why our experiments with organisations like the LTTE and EROS were dismal failures. Not deploying our Special Forces strategically in covert fashion has been to our strategic disadvantage. Such deployment would contribute immensely towards success of OOAC missions.

In the current set up, HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) is operationally tasked to undertake OOACs. In fact, this is the only operational responsibility of HQ IDS under existing arrangement of the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) being a rotational appointment. Both the K Subrahmanyam headed Kargil Review Committee and the follow up Group of Ministers Reports had recommended the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) but this has not been implemented. Instead, the Naresh Chandra Committee on national security that submitted its report in May 2012 recommended a permanent Chairman of COSC. Manoj Joshi, member of this committee later disclosed that MoD did not want CDS because they thought that the Defence Secretary and his IAS colleagues will be "somehow diminished". In absence of a CDS, synergy within the military will remain a misnomer. Presently, the Services neither have compatible communication sets nor common data structures, symbology, interoperable protocols and the like. Dedicated strategic communications are necessary for OOACs. Capacity building

in terms of C4I2SR is moving at excruciatingly slow pace, particularly at the inter-service level. All this adversely affects execution of OOAC missions where jointness is vital.

Together with logistics, preparation and training of task forces for each OOAC mission are essential. HQ IDS does have contingency plans worked out but the quantum of forces, equipment and resources have common base from within the military. Therefore, preparation and training has to be that much continuous ensuring to the extent possible that certain percentage of troops for particular mission can form part of the task force when execution becomes necessary. This would not only need a CDS but also an institutionalised set up within HQ IDS to: continuously assess and review OOAC tasks; refine the execution of individual missions taking into account the resources, means of insertion and extraction, communications and logistics, security; and, organise periodic training at required levels.

India's role abroad in disaster relief has been praised internationally including when responding to the 2004 tsunami disaster. Latter required coordination at the national and international levels, including between MEA, MOD, HQ IDS, multiple ministries, departments and aid agencies – all coordinated through the Crisis Committee and periodic meetings at the interim national command post. However, disaster relief is only one part of OOACs that India faces. With the centre of gravity of future conflict veering towards the Indian Ocean Region, India's volatile neighbourhood and the rising scourge of terrorism coupled with our adversaries waging asymmetric war on us, many more contingencies may be in the offing. We need to therefore prepare much more for future OOACs taking into consideration the issues discussed above.

The Author is a Special Forces veteran of the Indian Army.



NFFU

NON FUNCTIONAL FINANCIAL UPGRADATION: A Case of the Tail Wagging the Dog

Brig Deepak Sinha

Despite the disaster that the Seventh Central Pay Commission recommendation may be for the Armed Forces and national security, Justice Mathur, the Chairman, despite opposition from the other members, has been more than generous on one account. He has gone on to recommend that the Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU), applicable to the Organised Group 'A' Services, should be continued because it has 'existed for the last 10 years'. This, I suppose, is as good a reason as any, though why he has not applied the same yardstick while recommending that free rations for the military be done away is anybody's guess. He out did himself by going further and recommending that NFFU be "extended to all officers in the CAPFs, Indian Coast Guard and the Defence forces" to "ameliorate the difficulties faced by the officers owing to stagnation at various levels".

Off course, it well may be that the recent decision of the Delhi High Court on the host of writ petitions filed by Mr. G J Singh and others, which impugned the decision of the Government not to grant NFFU to officers of the CAPF on the specious grounds that they cannot be considered an organised service, may have also been considered. It stands to reason that if the BSF and Coast Guard are to be given such benefit, the Armed Forces cannot be left out. The other members have dissented to the extent that NFFU should be withdrawn from the Organised Group 'A' Services as also not be given to officers of the Defence Forces.

While governments over the past three decades, including the present one, have refused to honour the promise of One Rank One Pension to our Military Veterans on the specious grounds of financial probity, the 6th Central Pay Commission and the Committee of Secretaries, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, had little hesitation in recommending NFFU for the All India and Group 'A' Services. The

proposition, obviously conceived by bureaucrats, involved two simple tweaks to government rules. Firstly, the grant of a higher pay scale on non-functional (NFFU) basis to the All India and Organised Group 'A' Services till SAG and HAG level after a gap of two years compared to an IAS officer of the same batch who is posted at the Centre at the SAG or HAG level. This promotion was independent of organisational





requirements, availability of vacancies and level of responsibility or span of control of a post. It was completely without precedent anywhere in the world, in either government or corporate governance.

Secondly, it created a new pay grade of HAG+ which along with the Apex Grade become, for all purposes, time scale, thereby ensuring benefits of OROP for life. Off course, by introducing HAG+ the bureaucracy ensures only Army Commanders and equivalent within the Armed Forces fall within its ambit while most other Lt. Generals and their equivalent are left out. Simultaneously large scale upgradation of ranks to HAG+ within the All India and Organised Group 'A' Services ensures that the vast majority now retire at the highest scale. Certainly Christmas came early for the civil servants in 2009, when orders for its implementation were passed.

This scandalous proposal was supposedly introduced in order to address the wide disparity in career progression across different Organised Group 'A' Services (Central Services) and to bring about some parity between them and the IAS. It was accepted by the Manmohan Singh government despite its "wide-ranging financial, organisational and governance implications" as the 7th CPC puts it, especially with regard to inter-se status between various services and their military counterparts, which had been sacrosanct till then since Independence. The irony of it was that the Armed Forces, the worst affected because of their pyramidal structure, were kept out. As was bound to happen it had a particularly disastrous impact on the "Armed Forces morale, status, cohesion, and national security", to quote the 7th CPC, which off course was blithely ignored by Mr. A.K. Antony, the long serving former Defence Minister, and his former cabinet colleagues.

Now that Justice Mathur has attempted to give the same benefits to those left out, along with the sacrilege of recommending the doing away with the two year advantage enjoyed by the IAS, objections from the IAS representative on the Commission was not unexpected. Vivek Rae, the IAS member, recommends that NFFU be done away with on grounds that "To strive for uniform career progression across such a diverse set of services and cadres, with widely varying functions, violates fundamental management principles relating to organisational structures. Such a dispensation, with automatic career progression till HAG level, completely buries the concept of merit based career progression and undermines considerations of efficiency and accountability. In effect, the present policy dispensation converts already weak organisational pyramids in Organised Group 'A' Services into broad cylinders, when in fact, considerations of efficiency and accountability require that the existing cylinders be converted into steeper

pyramids."

Mr. Rathin Roy, the other Member, while agreeing with Mr. Rae, differs on his reasons and points out that the "broad parity was disturbed by granting NFU to IPS, IFoS and Organised Group 'A' Services after the VI CPC report, without a similar dispensation being extended to the Defence Forces. Consequently, the Defence Forces officers, who are in no way lower in status or responsibility than Group 'A' Central Services, though not classified as such, have fallen steeply behind IPS/IFoS and 49 Organised Group 'A' Services." He cites another obvious fact that the pyramidal structure of the Armed Forces cannot be disturbed and therefore since they cannot be given this benefit, it must be done away in totality.

It should come as no surprise that neither Mr. Manmohan Singh's Cabinet nor the Empowered Committee of Secretaries under Mr. K.M. Chandrasekhar, then Cabinet Secretary, could either visualise or comprehend the implications of their actions, a decade ago. As it did in other such matters, a thoroughly corrupt government probably bought off the bureaucracy to do its bidding. If merit has to be the over-riding facet of our governance structures, then overwhelming evidence suggests that NFFU must be completely done away with in toto along with the grade of HAG+. Finally, it is time that issues regarding compensation and service conditions are taken out of the hands of amateurs and those with vested interests. We need to do away with this once in a decade "tamasha" of a Pay Commission and instead establish a permanent independent specialised statutory "Pay and Anomalies" Commission to deal with compensation for our civil servants and legislators.

(The writer is a Military Veteran and Consultant with the Observer Research Foundation)





Climate Change and Geo-Political Threat to the Indian Nation State

(A Bhagwad Gita Perspective on the Role of the Indian Military)

Shantesh Hede

Climate Change, the Harbinger of Political Turmoil and Socio-economic Upheaval

The Bhagwad Gita explicitly states that Kshatriyas (the Indian polity and the military establishment) should have a clear focus towards their 'Dharma' of defence and good governance. Likewise, India needs to clearly acknowledge the threat to its own geo-political stability due to climate change and ecological degradation caused by China's unfettered industrial activity as well as CIA's ongoing attempts to 'weaponise the Climate'. As scientists and intellectuals alike have highlighted, the repercussions of climate change are far beyond natural disasters and change in weather.

The MoD's approval of the 'Ganga Task Force' is indeed noteworthy; however this 'writing on the wall' to India would necessitate the adoption of every possible counter measure in the realm of technological advancements, military strategy and even political economy manoeuvres to secure India's future.

The Thai political crises is a textbook illustration of a grim future for many countries. As the global economy is forced to operate on 'cheaper oil' that threatens the environment, poor economies like Thailand face skyrocketing food/energy prices with loss of foreign currency, increase in foreign debt and burgeoning income inequality. Being a net energy importer, Thailand, perhaps due to policy paralysis had not considerably diversified its energy sources. To add to the country's misery, disruptions in drought and precipitation cycles dramatically impacted the agricultural sector that

engages up to 40 percent of the population, leading to food scarcity and massive social unrest. This ultimately provoked the Thai government's authoritarian military campaigns to restore order.

Concurrently, history is replete with instances of poor harvest and socio-economic turmoil leading to mass religio-political upheaval such as the First Crusade and French revolution, which seems to have appeared now in the 'sensitive areas' of Syria and Iraq, only to become a breeding ground for the Islamic State ideology, which easily exploits the victimhood of the affected



populace. The same has been observed in the flood affected regions of Kashmir where the Indian Armed Forces engaged relentlessly in relief operations while facing backlash from the separatists.

In the presence of such alarming concerns in 'resource rich regions', other formidable nations such as China and the United States would obviously "alter their geo-political equations by adopting every possible means" to secure their future from the imminent threat of climate change's "hydra-like" avatar. For example, in 2013, the United States was

criticised by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs for compelling India to sign the multilateral Montreal Protocol in the name of 'meeting emission reduction targets' which would require India to replace its existing refrigerant gases used in submarines and aircrafts and opt for expensive and less reliable proprietary technologies owned by a handful of US multinational corporations.

India's Vishwa Sankalpana v/s the

Western Worldview or Weltanschauung

From the works of Devdutta Pattnaik, Tufail Ahmad, Rajiv Malhotra, Francois Gautier and Fritjof Capra it is now well known that the narrative of the Western civilisation is primarily comprised of Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian paradigms - consequently raising a quintessential question for India as to what defines the Indian narrative or Vishwa Sankalpana with reference to the Economic and Military Kurukshetra dominated by the West?

More than a decade ago, Maj. Gen. G. D. Bakshi authored a scholarly book titled "The India Art of War: The Mahabharata Paradigm". This book was the inspiration for this article to exemplify the role of the Bhagwad Gita within the Mahabharata context as to India's narrative to combat the onslaught of climate change.

Kshatriya Dharma and the Indian Military Establishment

Notwithstanding the spiritual teachings disseminated in the Bhagwad Gita, it is nevertheless clearly stated by Shree Krishna that the Kshatriya should engage in selfless duty towards the greater good of mankind. Furthermore, the political context of the Mahabharata which even inspired Kautilya's Arthashastra, clearly



illustrates the importance of forging suitable alliances and adopting confrontational or mis-directional tactics to ensure clear victory, especially brute military force and psychological warfare.

During the Bhagwad Gita discourse, Shree Krishna clearly recommends to Arjuna, the Kshatriya, to scrap outdated and irrelevant theories/traditions which fail to address the overall good of the society including the individual who thrives in it. This could also imply the need to rectify flawed economic policies with its underlying principles. Furthermore, Shree Krishna also recommends the state of mind of a 'Muni', a balanced minded sage who upholds the harmonious relationship between the trees, the forest, the climate and the entire well-being of the society. This timeless wisdom also resonates with Adam Smith's observations, which recommend a 'thoughtful and reasonably regulated capitalist economy' to positively benefit the society at large.

Strategic role of the Indian Military Establishment to combat Climate Change

Experienced officers and knowledgeable technology experts within the Indian military establishment can collaborate to form a Strategic Response and Emergence Commission (SREC) which would complement other Planning and Response commissions of the Indian government. The SREC would coordinate across networks of excellence in various knowledge domains that are located across government institutions (such as economic planning, space and defence establishments, research institutions, foreign policy, law enforcement and judiciary, energy policy, healthcare, public utilities, education, military intelligence, infrastructure and telecommunication) and private institutions (including non profit) to deliver an appropriate response towards climate change related crises. In addition, it could look into developing low cost appropriate technologies for renewable energy regeneration, sanitation, restoration and cleaning of

ecological systems, agriculture and water purification for empowering local communities against harmful food price fluctuations and future calamities.

Likewise, the ubiquitous importance of the Indian military establishment in strengthening our political economy necessitates in guiding the Indian polity to promulgate the Indian "Vishwa Sankalpana" in the ongoing global dialogue for reforming the very fundamentals of economic theory, banking (such as the BRICS bank formation) and money creation (such as Public Capitalisation Notes recommended by Prof. Armen Papazian). And accordingly, George Soros, the famous business magnate who founded the Institute of New Economic Thinking for the very purpose, is a striking exemplar from the Western civilisation, thus beckoning India to assert its "Vishwa Sankalpana" on a global platform. Furthermore, the Indian polity can play a decisive role in defining enforceable regulations for the trillions USD market opportunity to fight climate change, which would set the transition for a more sustainable global economy without any dramatic 'shock therapy-like policy' changes.

Furthermore, through fierce commitment towards our spiritual tradition and nation building since millennia, the Indian military establishment has attained profound mental strength and social capital to face insurmountable challenges. Accordingly, the Indian military establishment and its SREC possess the determination to tackle 'seemingly impossible' climate change challenges such as rectifying the ocean acidification and balancing oxygen/nitrogen cycles, which scientific experts claim would take around a 1000 years!

The Bhagwad Gita explicitly states that "Action" is within our reach while outcomes may not be as anticipated. This implies that these "Actions" should be well conceptualised and evaluated without analysis-paralysis. Meanwhile, the SREC can implement mitigation measures to minimise any negative outcomes that emanate from the "Emergence (i.e. Collective Outcome) of

good intention projects" undertaken by the crowd sourcing initiatives, market driven commercialisation/urbanisation as well as State supported reforms. For example: a crowd sourced project for cleaning a local river in a remote village may pose a logistical conflict with a low cost transportation service operated by an NGO, including a road under construction by a private contractor that may damage wetlands and forests as well as the water supply facility managed by the local municipality.

Likewise, in a world slowly taken over by the Internet of 'Things and Convergence'; the SREC should strengthen their capabilities to foreseeing and mitigating systemic risks posed by indiscriminate cyber attacks and unauthorised financial movements. In addition, strengthening public health regulations for waste management/sanitation, tackling the threats posed by antibiotic resistance and providing logistical guidance during disease outbreaks such as Ebola and Swine Flu.

The way forward for the Indian

Vishwa Sankalpana

The Mahabharata war and its accompanying colossal scale of destruction is said to have eventually sown the seeds of the republican form of governance from the ashes of oligarchic rule. Likewise, climate change is anticipated to instigate tectonic changes (metaphorical and even literal) within the global geo-political sphere and accordingly, the Indian nation state needs to focus on 'filling the global leadership vacuum' by establishing itself as the cultural and spiritual power of the future, with sufficient military prowess to protect its interests without the need of colonial ambitions.

Prof. Shantesh Hede completed his Master's in Engineering Management from Duke University in 2008 and thereafter attained his Phd in the Development of Medical Devices with respect to Social, Environmental and Economic Sustainability. Presently, he works from Mumbai as a Senior Research Fellow at The Asia Institute in Seoul, South Korea.



WOMEN IN MILITARIES



Rafia Zakaria

In October 2015, the Indian Air Force (IAF) announced it would allow female fighter pilots within its ranks. “Women fighter pilots will soon touch the skies with glory,” announced *The Times of India* triumphantly. Other Indian newspapers waxed lyrical too, some noting that around 3,000 women are already in the IAF but had not previously been allowed combat roles. By June 2017, however, all of this is going to change, when the first batch of female fighter pilots currently training at the IAF Academy will graduate.

Pakistan welcomed its own first female fighter pilot, Ayesha Farooq, with similar praise a bit over a year ago. At 26, Farooq became one of 19 female fighter pilots who have qualified over the past decade in the country, and over 30 are currently under training in the Pakistan Air Force. In one interview, she confessed that the training facilities where she usually trained often did not even have bathrooms for women. It is undoubted that she, and other Pakistani women in the military, just like the Indian women who will now become fighter pilots, have broken many gender barriers. In doing

so, they are acclaimed for having survived and thrived in a patriarchal and male-dominated environment. In being ready to fight and die for the nation, it seems they have transcended their more problematic reality: the fact that they are women.

This last statement is a controversial one; Indians and Pakistanis (and Americans and everyone else all over the world) pretend that the incorporation of women into militaries is a significant inroad into breaking gender barriers and into the achievement of equality in general. Even as the Indians were rejoicing at their own gender breakthrough, the American news website *The Daily Beast* published the profile of a female drone pilot. Boastfully entitled ‘She kills people from 7,800 miles away’, it tells the story of a Las Vegas-based drone pilot whose daily tasks include unleashing remote-controlled catastrophe on nameless, faceless others thousands of miles away.

A female fighter pilot, or drone pilot, is a clever ploy to disguise the fact that most women are far from equal. Like many such profiles of fighting women, the piece emphasised this lethal woman’s femininity, its second sentence reading, “She pulled her chestnut hair into a bun”. Pakistani profiles of pilots have similarly made note of “olive-coloured hijabs”. The idea beneath all of them is simple: the feminine can be transformed into the powerful by the addition of bombs, fighter jets or remote-controlled drones. The addition of these instruments of destruction, then, is removed from the killing that they cause and seen as a prescription for empowerment.

Underneath the celebration of women as killers in this or that military is, therefore, this premise: that becoming equal in waging war somehow signifies recognition of female equality in general. Nothing, of course, could be farther from the truth, whether the place being

spoken of is the US, India or Pakistan. Even while the greatness of newly anointed female soldiers, drone pilots or fighter pilots is being feted by media outlets high on nationalistic fervour, the status of women in the countries for which women are now fighting continues to plummet.

Recently, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that men’s earnings in the US were growing at twice the rate of women’s earnings. Women working full-time in that country were, according to the latest statistics issued by the US Labour Department, 81 cents to every dollar earned by a man. The figure, which is an improvement over previous decades, is rarely juxtaposed against the gushing





POINT - COUNTERPOINT

praise awarded to women in the military.

The reason is simple: a female fighter pilot, or drone pilot, is a convenient figurehead, a clever ploy to disguise the fact that most women, the large majority of women, are very, very far from being equal. The lie works in the US; it works even better in India or in Pakistan. Everyone is clapping so hard for the female fighter pilots that all the rest of the state's inaction on women's issues — from wage equality, to legal equality, to law-enforcement training for assault, to preventing trafficking — is conveniently pushed aside.

Let's all be happy for the winners, the women who have endorsed the state's rhetoric such that they have become instruments of its defence; after all, Indian men have been fighting Pakistani men for so long, the entrance of women into this game of perpetual hatreds could only be a good thing.

It is not, in fact, a good thing. Women and girls, in Pakistan or India or the United States, must be wary of a state that celebrates only those women who are willing to buy its positions on which violence is and is not justified. The definition of an empowered Pakistani or Indian or American woman must not be reduced to a woman who is willing to kill, whether via remote control or fighter jets. Implicit in this definition of femininity is the exclusion of dissenting women, the premise that women who give life in a far more literal sense than men may disagree on the taking of lives.

The 'inclusion' of women in the killing machines at home and abroad can, if this last fact is considered, be a clever ruse of insisting that the dissenting woman, one who may not believe in the kinds of killing endorsed by a military, is an inadequate woman, never the heroine who is willing to kill.

Women in Pakistan, in any and all societies, should be vigilant about these clever sleights of hand by militaries or militant groups that seek to present definitions of empowerment that pivot in some crucial way on the willingness to take human lives. The grant of licences to kill via jets or drones, long available to men, may not be progress but further constriction, the sly silencing suggesting that the unwillingness to kill reflects a disinterest in gender equality or empowerment — a new sort of unworthiness and deficiency that can now be pinned on women who dare to disagree.

The writer is an attorney teaching constitutional law and political philosophy. This article was first published in Dawn, 28 October, 2015 and is reproduced here with the permission of the author.





SYMBOLISM IS IMPORTANT TOO



Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch

In the larger construct of women striving for gender equality across the world, the entry of women in militaries is seen as 'breaking a formidable male bastion'. The military was considered the exclusive preserve of men, but that situation no longer prevails as many countries now have women serving in their armed forces. Most militaries however, continue to deny a role to women in the combat arms of their armed forces and the breaking of this 'male preserve' is seen by many activists as necessary to usher in an era of gender equality. The issue continues to be hotly debated in India and abroad, the subject having its supporters and detractors in equal measure.

There is no denying the fact that some women have distinguished themselves in combat. Indian history testifies to the heroism and bravery shown by Razia Sultan (1205 - 1240) and Rani Laxmibai, more popularly called the Rani of Jhansi (1835 - 1858). But many more women have distinguished themselves in combat though their exploits are not that well known. To name but a few, Belawadi Mallamma, born to Sode king Madhulinga Nayakawas, formed a women's army to fight the Maratha empire to save her kingdom. Rani Velu Nachiyar was the

first woman of Tamil origin to challenge the British empire, before even Rani Laxmibai. Rani Abbakka from Chowta dynasty ruled a small coastal town called Ullal, 8 km away from Mangalore and fiercely resisted the Portuguese in the first half of the sixteenth century, gaining the name Rani Abhaya (fearless queen). There have been countless others from across the country to effectively disprove the notion that women are not capable of combat.

But is combat a necessary indicator to gauge the success of the gender equality movement? Rafia Zakaria in her article, 'Women in Militaries' has given a contrarian viewpoint, arguing cogently that women in militaries will be seen as mere figureheads in the fight for gender equality, and in the process the more substantive issues which need to be addressed will get ignored.

This line of argument cannot be brushed away. While large strides have been taken towards the emancipation of women, legacy attitudes discriminating against women continue to prevail. Some of these have religious sanction and some are driven by social attitudes and mores. Even advanced western democracies are not free of gender bias, as evinced by a New York Times column of 31 March 2016, which reported that five key members of the United States women's national soccer team, the reigning Women's World Cup and Olympic champion, plan to file a federal complaint charging U.S. Soccer (the governing body for the sport in America) with wage discrimination. The players contend that though the women's team is the driving economic force for U.S. Soccer, its players are paid far less than their counterparts on the men's national team. Similarly, in many parts of rural India, women are paid less than their male counterparts for the same quantum of work. While awareness is causing a dent in female exploitation,

much still remains to be done.

In the above paradigm, Zakaria's contention has merit. It is easy to brush aside gender concerns by the flippant response that women are now equal to men by pointing to the handful of women who are now in combat roles in the military. Women donning combat fatigues and taking part in live combat gives a certain handle to people to proclaim that gender discrimination is now a thing of the past. Such women form convenient figureheads to disguise the fact that most women, the large majority of women, are very, very far from being equal. Zakaria rightly states that "the lie works in the US; it works even better in India or in Pakistan. Everyone is clapping so hard for the female fighter pilots that all the rest of the state's inaction on women's issues — from wage equality, to legal equality, to law-enforcement training for assault, to preventing trafficking — is conveniently pushed aside".

The argument could be stretched to other fields too. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have had women Prime Ministers. But singular success by a small group of women hides within itself the larger ugly reality that women in these countries are uniformly exploited for reasons of their sex. Women continue to be treated as objects of possession, not as individuals in their own right. In many parts of South Asia, women are considered a liability. This reflects in lower literacy levels as compared to men, reduced access to health care and discrimination in food intake within the family structure. The preference for a male child results in female foeticide, which is resulting in skewed sex ratios. Dress codes are imposed on women through religious diktats. Taliban groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan continue to impose restrictions on women - on their movement, dress and behaviour to keep them subservient to



POINT - COUNTERPOINT

men. It is this mass of women that Zakaria addresses, basing her arguments on the premise that empowerment of a few is unlikely to change the lot of the rest of women in society.

This line of reasoning is unexceptionable, but like all facets of life, cannot be straitjacketed. It is true that gender equality requires more than just a token presence of a few female fighters in the combat arms. In any case, there still remains a great deal of opposition to women in the combat arms, and the grounds are not wholly unjustifiable.

It is indisputable that the very raison d'être of any armed force is to ensure the protection of the nation state. The dictates of modern warfare demand a certain calibre of personnel for the military and women thus cannot claim a right to be represented in the armed forces on the basis of gender alone. By the same yardstick, women cannot also be refused the right to join the forces based on their gender. The argument in India has been skewed, largely due to a lack of understanding of service conditions in the Indian context. Stated simply, role definition must be the sole criteria for intake of personnel into the armed forces and this must be independent of gender.

In India, a particularly jarring note was struck when women who had joined the Army as Short Service Commissioned Officers were denied regular commission, while their male counterparts were not similarly restricted. The Apex court rightly struck down the ruling as arbitrary. The Army erred in viewing the issue from a gender perspective and not from the perspective of cadre management of officers. The Army requires a strong support cadre which comes for the most part from Short Service Entry Officers and to grant regular commission to such officers was questionable. Entry to the regular cadre was rightly denied to female officers, but that did not stand the test of equity as it should have been denied to male

officers too.

Arguments against the entry of women in the forces range from fears that service conditions could lead to sexual harassment or of what could happen to them should they be captured by the enemy. These arguments are baseless and stem in large measure from legacy attitudes which define women in certain roles and behaviour patterns. Male prisoners too have been tortured and sodomised by unscrupulous enemies, so why



should women expect to be treated differently? The problem here is a skewed sense of viewing female genitalia as representative of family honour - an attitude stemming from viewing women as property of the male.

Many men in the forces are of the view that "an officer, who cannot run with us, cannot train with us and cannot exercise with us can barely be expected to lead us". This is based on a false assumption that a woman cannot do all of these things. Interestingly, men do not view the male officers in similar light. Again, this has much to do with legacy attitudes and what is perceived to be the defined role for women in society.

The question of women in combat

arms hence cannot be predicated on the basis of gender. Rather, the determining feature must be suitability for the respective role and if a woman fits the bill, so be it. Criteria adopted for selection should be free from gender bias, making competence for the role the sole guiding principle for selection.

Writing on the subject, Colonel Gordon D. Batcheller of the US Marine Corps averred, "Some advocates insist it is a woman's right to serve in the military if she wants. That, of course, is nonsense. The military is created and structured to win wars, and its personnel policies are crafted to serve that end, not satisfy vocational whims". While it is nobody's case that a woman should be enrolled on the basis of her sex, the Colonel is being presumptive in assuming that women lack the competence and skill sets to fight and win wars. Sadly, that too is part of legacy attitudes.

The one single point of difference I have with Zakaria is her contention that women in combat arms will be mere figureheads - a clever ploy to disguise the fact that the majority of women are very, very far from being equal. That may be so but symbolism too has an important role to play in changing the attitude of society to its women. Saina Nehwal and Sania Mirza are two Indian ladies who have transformed the Indian scene with their prowess in badminton and tennis respectively. Mary Kom has done the same in boxing. Geeta Phogat paved the way for women to take up wrestling as a sport - a feat which was near unimaginable just a few years back. Women in India as I daresay in Pakistan too, have broken the glass ceiling in many fields - politics, law, academia, journalism, business, sports, mountaineering - almost every facet of life. By becoming figureheads, they have given new hope to all the women who are shackled by religious and social constraints; they now have hope that their chains too can be broken. The key is to look at issues through the prism of competence and gender neutrality and not discriminate on the basis of sex.



REMEMBRANCE

FOND REMEMBRANCES OF AN ICONIC SUPREME COMMANDER

Lt Gen Baljit Singh, AVSM, VSM

My sense of Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam as an iconic Supreme Commander of India's Armed Forces hinges simply on the fact that he garnered time from his routine to especially visit Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, while he lay ailing and nearing his demise, in the Military Hospital at Wellington. And this was not an isolated act of innate courtesy due to the Service Chiefs from their Supreme Commander because a few years later, he displayed similar resolve during an "At Home" at the Rashtrapati Bhavan when he spotted that The Marshal of The Indian Air Force, Arjan Singh, PVSM, DFC had been seated in the second row of invitees. The President broke with the ongoing protocol, walked up to the MOIAF and showed him to a chair in the front row!

At the personal level, I had a memorable tryst with India's "Missile Man" in my office at HQ Eastern Command, Calcutta in 1991. The Army HQ had made a special budgetary allocation to expose officers on current issues of concern through "guest speakers". So I wrote to Dr Kalam if he would share with us the status of the Integrated Missile Project and his vision for the future. He accepted the invitation promptly and following Services protocol, he was received by a staff officer and guided to my office. I had not understood at all the personal life-style simplicity of this man till I shook hands. Of course, he was dressed in his trade mark open-collar shirt worn over his modest trousers and his feet shod in strapless, flat leather Chappals but the moment I showed him to a sofa-

chair, he immediately slipped his feet out of chappals and sat down cross-legged, folding his legs at the knees upon the sofa-seat! Totally un-self conscious of his posture, he launched in to the history of his project-in-hand. In time, he accepted the offer for a cup of coffee and in between utterances he would transfer some coffee from the cup to the saucer and slurp it, nonchalantly!

His talk to the officers assembled in the auditorium was brilliant for its content and a "teacher" that he was he made extensive use of chalk-n-board to write equations and draw diagrams of trajectories and so on to convey his message in common parlance, to perfection. To my enquiry as to how much lead in time we had over Pakistan in this sphere, his prompt and confident reply was "at least four years". He was applauded and even mobbed by officers as he had no doubt charmed them all by his honesty of commitment, to what he believed in.

We hosted him to a formal lunch in the Command Officers Mess. Although we had correctly imagined that he would prefer boiled rice, Sambhar-n-Rasam but beyond that we had simply not guessed his "native" eating ways. Once again, Dr Kalam adopted the same sitting posture as in my office and taking his seat on my right, he took a good helping of Rice-n-Sambhar, lifted all cutlery from around his dinner plate, neatly piled it aside and with complete concentration and in total silence took his meal using his fingers! The moment he finished his serving on the platter, he simply got up and walked to the wash room to cleanse his hands! We were all

aghast by this definitely the first of its kind in lunch eating performance, in the history of an army officer's mess but at the same time humbled by the deep-set personal living convictions of a self effacing, great man of our times.

My sense of Dr Kalam as the "People's President" is derived from the fact that he was empathetic to the efforts of other Indians striving for the greater, common good. India is the home to the tallest flying bird in the world, that is the Sarus crane, but as with all other species, Sarus too is pushed towards extinction by rampaging "development". In 2002, its last and the most viable breeding ground in the Ettawa-Mainpuri region was chosen by the local politicians to site an airport, posing a threat to the long term survival of this crane species. When all efforts to save the Sarus habitat failed, I wrote to the President soliciting his intervention and within days (27 August, 2002) I received his reply:

"Dear Gen Baljit Singh, I am indeed delighted to receive your letter. I have noted your concern for the vanishing Sarus Crane. I am having the matter looked into. With greetings and best wishes, Yours sincerely, (signed) A P J Abdul Kalam."

Thankfully, the project was disallowed in good time! But I was to know how deeply a compassionate human being The President of India was late in the evening of 03 June, 2004 when a young surgeon from the Remount and Veterinary Corps called to give me the news of a two and a half hour long surgery he had performed a short while earlier. And the story which



emerged from the Rashtrapati Bhavan does proud to the legacy of Emperor Asoka, unarguably India's first Head of State whose writ ran over the entire Sub-Continent, back in 03 BCE. Among the "Edicts" handed down to us by that Emperor through etchings on prominent rock-faces in 247 BCE, "through Rock Edict I, Asoka forbids animal sacrifices....." and in so doing he had embodied the care of wildlife as an instrument of state policy. Notwithstanding Ashoka's intent, as a people this injunction has regrettably remained the least of our concerns. So when an incumbent of the Rashtrapati Bhavan today (in a sense the elected successor of Asoka) reaches out to an animal in distress moved by impulses of compassion, it is surely an occasion for celebration.

Now on 02 June 2004, out on his morning walk in the Mughal Gardens, President APJ Kalam found one adult Peacock crouched and inert by the side of a bush while hundreds of others on the estate were active with the dawn chorus. Observing carefully, he noticed a big lump wedged between the mandibles and over the right eye of the Peacock. There and then the resident veterinary surgeon of the 44 Military Veterinary Hospital located on the estate was spoken to by the President over the cell-phone and the ADC was asked to remain by the peacock till the arrival of the surgeon. On examination, Major Y Sudheer Kumar found a cancerous tumour lodged in the mouth cavity which was also pressing on the right eye ball; the bird could neither eat nor drink and his vision was blanketed from the right side. As a result, the stricken bird had wasted, was acutely dehydrated and the surgeon concluded that it would perish without immediate surgical intervention.

After thorough preparation, surgery was performed on 03 Jun, 2004 and all vestiges of the 3 cm wide by 4 cm deep tumour "along with its stalk originating from turbinate bones" were successfully removed; forty eight hours later the peacock's mandibles regained



MY SENSE OF DR KALAM AS THE "PEOPLE'S PRESIDENT" IS DERIVED FROM THE FACT THAT HE WAS EMPATHETIC TO THE EFFORTS OF OTHER INDIANS STRIVING FOR THE GREATER, COMMON GOOD. INDIA IS THE HOME TO THE TALLEST FLYING BIRD IN THE WORLD, THAT IS THE SARUS CRANE, BUT AS WITH ALL OTHER SPECIES, SARUS TOO IS PUSHED TOWARDS EXTINCTION BY RAMPAGING "DEVELOPMENT".

functions, he took to feeding and what was even more gratifying, the sight of his right eye also seemed restored. The President looked visibly moved when on the seventh day the surgeon handed the Peacock to Dr Kalam for reintroduction to its natural niche. Surely the happy news must have spread among birds, mammals, reptiles and all other creatures of India's wilderness by way of the "jungle

telegram" as envisioned by Rudyard Kipling's setting in the Jungle Books, and all denizens big and small went rushing to the "Council Rock" to pass a vote of thanks to President APJ Abdul Kalam!

"That peacock would in all likelihood have died had the President not spotted it on time. And thereby hangs a touching tale." When a story is too good to believe, it becomes a fable. This one from the Rashtrapati Bhavan surely will in times ahead. As a matter of fact, about two months ago Mr. Ravi Singh, the CEO, WWF-INDIA had called to enquire the whereabouts of Major Sudheer Kumar because a veterinary Doctor in the USA wanted details at first hand as he had a similar case on his surgery table!

Commissioned in the Regiment of Artillery in July 1956, Lt Gen Baljit Singh, AVSM, VSM, retired on 31 July 1992 after 36 years of distinguished service. A keen sportsman, accomplished writer and noted environmentalist, he is an active promoter of Conservation of Nature, more so within and by the Armed Forces.



MOTIVATION

LAMB CALLING HAWK... OVER

Wg Cdr Unni Kartha

A humorous take on a very serious lesson in jointmanship. Editor



I was a bachelor about 27 years old and in Chakabama in Nagaland, flying a ruddy Mi-4. At that time I was a piddly 'French Leather' (F/L) as the English called it or a 'Le Chapeau Anglais' as the French retorted, with zestful reciprocity. I, however had nothing to do with either the English or the French; I had to worry

only about 'Angu', who usually asked me in 'Nagamese' whether I was wearing a 'cap' – she didn't know either English or French!

On a rainy morning in Chakabama, perhaps around 1976 or 77, the field telephone rang incessantly, conveying a great sense of urgency. Rrrrrring,

(pause) Rrrrrring, (pause) Rrrrrring. I pulled the blanket right over my head and tried to blot out the highly offensive noise that was triggering tiny little men to chip away parts of my brain using noisy air driven hammer drills, the kind of things that happens when one has a bad hangover. The field telephone



would not go away, or give up, it kept ringing. So I picked it up.

'Yes', I said feeling very much like the President of the USA, authorising a nuclear strike. There was much static, my ear drums got singed.

'Seven Serra Lamb Calling Hawk, Seven Serra Lamb Calling Hawk, Report Over', the horrible field telephone shrieked into my ears.

'Yeh, I am Hawk, but at the moment I am a 'Grounded Crow' ... over', I said rather witlessly. The ruddy little men were now once again using a hammer drill in my brain. Rum doesn't go away with just sleep, one needs two aspirins and oxygen pressure breathing to get rid of it.

'Hawk, request save my CO'.

'Seven Serra' - the voice at the other end - was my illustrious course mate, Capt. Bedi, who, having nothing better to do, was whiling away his time at 'Jessami', deep down in a valley inside the formidable hills of Nagaland. This tall, handsome, anglicised and very civilised coursemate was the 'Power House Adjutant' of the famed 7 Sikh. I forced my head out from under the blanket. One can't ignore such buggers.

'Lamb Ke Bache, call me back after half an hour. I need to bomb the shitty Raj Rif dinner out of my system', I told my famed course mate from the famed Sikh Regiment, whose history goes backwards by couple of centuries. If I had to go and save the mighty CO of such an illustrious battalion of the Sikhs, I had to first crap the Raj Rif dinner that was purposely kept inedible due to the sadistic tendencies of their CO, Lt Col Raj Kadyan. Well, that was my youthful perception.

You see, I had no sense of humour and no love lost for this host from Raj Rif though everyone else from Raj Rif, as well as 81 Brigade and 8 Mountain Division were all my dearest blood brothers, comrades at arms. The only other person that I detested, more than my host, was the Army Commander, Lt Gen. Jacob, the biggest sadist that I had ever met. He always called me 'French Leather' and pissed on the Raj Rif

helipad protection platoon, with utter disregard for their self-esteem, just because they usually dug a hole in the ground around the helipad and sat there immobile, camouflaged like a leafy bush! Jacob loved doing it on a bush, even when the 'Bush' stood up to give a 'General Salute'.

When the field telephone rang, I was suffering from the aftermath of copious quantities of the delectable 'XXX Hercules Rum' that the Raj Rif barman had served surreptitiously the previous night, with utter disregard to Kadyan, who disapproved of such things. He was a funny fellow even then. At dinner, at the head of the table, he would eat his two 'chapatis' quickly and close his

grounded by the bad weather. I could see all that even though I was still suffering from the previous night's indulgence.

'Lamb Calling Hawk, Lamb Calling Hawk, Report... Over'. The field telephone and my course mate from 7 Sikh were very persistent.

I was briefed that the illustrious CO of 7 Sikh had gone and climbed a silly peak near 'Jessami' the previous day, pretending to be Edmond Hillary. But unlike Edmond, the famed CO of 7 Sikh went and twisted his ankle and couldn't come down like Humpty Dumpty. Entire 7 Sikh, with my course mate in the lead, had then charged up the hill to rescue their illustrious CO. But because

YOU SEE, I HAD NO SENSE OF HUMOUR AND NO LOVE LOST FOR THIS HOST FROM RAJ RIF THOUGH EVERYONE ELSE FROM RAJ RIF, AS WELL AS 81 BRIGADE AND 8 MOUNTAIN DIVISION WERE ALL MY DEAREST BLOOD BROTHERS, COMRADES AT ARMS. THE ONLY OTHER PERSON THAT I DETESTED, MORE THAN MY HOST, WAS THE ARMY COMMANDER, LT GEN. JACOB, THE BIGGEST SADIST THAT I HAD EVER MET. HE ALWAYS CALLED ME 'FRENCH LEATHER' AND PISSED ON THE RAJ RIF HELIPAD PROTECTION PLATOON, WITH UTTER DISREGARD FOR THEIR SELF-ESTEEM, JUST BECAUSE THEY USUALLY DUG A HOLE IN THE GROUND AROUND THE HELIPAD AND SAT THERE IMMOBILE, CAMOUFLAGED LIKE A LEAFY BUSH!

plate, even before young 2nd Lt Dhar or I, the youngest at the foot of the table, were served our first chapatti. So 2nd Lt Dhar and I usually survived in Chakabama by eating 'Sadde Ma Ki Dal, Todde Ma Ki Sabzi, and Teri Ma Ki Pickle', with healthy quantities of Rum camouflaged with Coke, which was more expensive than Rum.

After a laborious failed attempt to bomb the pigs with 'Every One's Ma Ki', in the dry sanitation toilet, I realised that there is no water. It was after all 'dry sanitation' those days. So I went out and stuck my backside in the rain. That is how I discovered that I was in Chakabama and it was raining cats and dogs and that even the crows were

of the rain, and slush, and steep gradient, for every three steps they took going uphill, they came down four steps.

'Situation Bahut Kharab Hai', my course mate whispered in my ears through the field telephone. 'Ratbar Koshish Kiya, G****d Phat Gaya'. It was an irrefutable tactical (and not tactful) argument to convince me to fly when crows had grounded themselves under the pretext of 'Flight Safety'. I thought of a number of excuses.

'There is no helipad there, just a bloody mountain peak covered with rocks, trees and your ruddy OP', I lamented sadly.

'It is beyond the authorised service



MOTIVATION

ceiling of my helicopter, the MI-4 cannot go up there', I said sadly, belittling my favourite steed.

'The weather is bad, it is raining cats and dogs, even the crows are grounded', I beseeched my course-mate pretending to be the imperious 'OC Flying', who normally took such decisions.

My arguments, made in my mind, sounded silly. NDA seemed a waste of time if I couldn't display some overtly zealous joint-man-ship.

'You want this done quietly, without telling anyone, the honour of 7 Sikh at stake', I observed dryly.

'When I kill myself, the AF would tell my mother that I was a Rascal', I pleaded. 'So, you see, how do I go and get your CO out of that wrenched OP Hill?

'That is your bloody problem, Crow, you go do it, Meri Kasam'. My course-mate whispered dramatically on the field telephone, like that stupid actor Raj Kumar in 'Hindustan Ki Kasam'. 'Over and Out'. He said it with the finality of a Supreme Court judge, pronouncing my death sentence. The field telephone went dead.

I did not have a choice.

So the first thing I did was to go and put the two airmen from the 'AF Liaison Cell' at Chakabama under close arrest in Raj Rif Quarter Guard. They were put there by HQ EAC to spy on me, to count the number of girls I smuggled in the dicky of the Mi-4 from as faraway places as 'Chura Chand Pur'. Cultural cross pollination was not allowed those days. C-in-C EAC's main concern perhaps was genuine. Crossing Naga, Mizo or Kuki, with a Madras like me, was bound to produce 'Gadhas' striped like Zebras, a terrible anthropological catastrophe. I took away the HF Radio, the one that the AF Liaison Cell used, for sneaking nasty things about me to the C-in-C EAC. Instead I gave them two bottles of Rum. 'Drink it' I told them. 'Early this morning, what the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve'.

'Strip the MI-4', I told my loyal ground crew, my own troops. 'Take out



everything that is not necessary to fly'

They promptly took out the pilot's seat. 'No, not my saddle', I pleaded. It was impossible to ride the MI-4 bare back without a saddle. I got the ground crew to take out all other things that could be taken out, including the rear clamshell door. I de-fuelled the helicopter to minimum fuel.

'Piss Off', I told the Co Pilot, 'Father' Thomas Babu, decreed a Bishop by Vatican, when he was a bachelor with me in Jorhat. That was because he very imaginatively stuffed Hema Malini's calendar art with cotton behind her breasts, to make it look 3D.

'The Lord has ordained in the Bible that I follow you to the heaven and earth', 'Father' said under the impression that I was Moses who was going to part the sea to find Jerusalem. I told him that I was only going next door to Jessami. I did require his help to plead with God to part the clouds. He

stuck quick fix on his ass and sat down in his co-pilot's seat like a good soldier and refused to go away.

We then went looking for the famed CO 7 Sikh with a twisted ankle on the ruddy OP hill east of Jessami, with the Mi-4 acting like a cocktail shaker.

The CO and the mountains in Nagaland were all hiding behind clouds on that stupid rainy morning. I flew about aimlessly around 10 or 15 feet above the trees, gorges, rocks, and villages. We landed at quite a few places to ask the villagers, 'Where are we?'. The navigational aids in Nagaland were the villagers. There were no sign boards or mile stones to look for and my compass had never been swung. Deviation and variation were a thing of joy with the girls from 'Chura Chand Pur'.

To cut a long story short, Father Babu kept praying to God and cursing me loudly, alternating with alarming frequency. I did not hear Father Babu.



MOTIVATION



But God heard him. God then parted the clouds like the Red Sea and I found the CO 7 Sikh on a rocky ledge, on a makeshift stretcher with about fourteen burly Sikh soldiers in FSMO. Now who would ever think of doing mountaineering, or rescue, in FSMO other than my OG coursemate, the famed Adjutant of 7 Sikh? Good Adjutants usually get excited when their CO becomes 'Humpty Dumpty', don't you agree? Lest you get the wrong impression, Bedi is a very fine soldier, one of the finest. He is like a safe deposit locker, you can put your soul in there and he will keep it safe. I am not like that. I had to do it or die. The MI-4 was gasping and wheezing, it was way beyond its service ceiling. I could at best carry a feather. Two feathers at that altitude would make the Mi-4 very angry.

I pleaded with the Mi-4, cajoled, tucked one wheel on a rock and hung

there in thin air, signalling the soldiers to put their CO in. I expected that the famed 7 Sikh would insert the CO through the ass of my MI-4 and then go downhill on their own like good infantry soldiers. But they were from the famed 7 Sikh, they follow their CO wherever he goes. Before I could say 'Jack Robinson', they shoved their CO in and to the last man, all fourteen of them in their FSMO jumped into the MI-4 like the way you board a Punjab Roadways bus.

The MI-4 protested, swung violently, went out of control. Involuntarily I saw the tail rotor swinging past a tree stump, missing couple of rocks. I had lost rudder control.

'Dive, Dive, Dive', I commanded the MI-4 like the Captain of a submarine pushing the Cyclic fully forward. The Collective was already in my armpit. The throttle was wide open but the RPM was decaying. Father started yodelling like Kishore Kumar, calling out to Jesus like the Bishop of Canterbury.

Fortunately we fell like Kadyan's crap for about 400 feet before the MI-4 started to fly again, all on its own. I swear I didn't do anything. Father helped, by cursing me as well as God at the same time.

We landed at Jessami, that was easy. The Mi-4 always knew how to land on its own, sometimes upside down, if it was at the bottom of the valley.

The 7 Sikh took their CO and ran away without a backward glance.

I returned to Chakabama, without wear or tear. The rain had ceased, Father Babu had ceased his cursing, but for some more time, I continued holding the Collective & Cyclic.

The story doesn't end here.

After about a year, the illustrious BM of 81 Mountain Brigade, Rimcolian Maj. Rajan Anne and I smuggled our newly wed wives into strictly 'Men Only' Nagaland, along with Pushpa, the wife of Father Babu, and Nancy her little one. Right under the nose of stern Gen. Jacob, the Army Commander who did not like women. It was supposed to be a clandestine behind enemy line

operation, planned and executed with great élan and military precision by Capt Ravi Nair, the DQ's understudy, another course mate from Sikh LI, who insisted on speaking in Punjabi with an MC/BC inserted between every word, except when the ladies were present. When ladies were present he chewed his walrus moustache to keep his tongue in check, in his cheek. Ravi was a tough burly gentleman extraordinaire, the same kind you could hand over the soul, for safe keeping.

But the ruddy 7 Sikhs, and their famed Adjutant, soon afterwards hijacked the three ladies in the Brigade Commander's armed convoy driven by Ravi, and took them away to Jessami to attend their raising day celebrations, blowing our painstaking cover and concealment. I was not even invited to the party. I was told to go and fly Gen. Jacob the other way, to Tuensang and Mon, to keep him out of the way! Jacob was only interested in asking whether I used 'French Leather' or 'Chapeau Anglais' and hence we got away scot free, with just authorised quota of 'Rum and Sex' with our own wives. It was display of exceptional integrity in Nagaland.

'Lamb calling Hawk'. Do you think this is what Chetwode, the Englishman, who didn't wear the French cap, meant by 'Camaraderie' and 'Esprit De Corps'? Napoleon may have perhaps called it, 'L'Art De Kama Sutra!' Just one of those ordinary daily things, those days.

The sky was way above the service ceiling of the Mi-4. I sadly could never reach it to stamp it with any glory. After my wife arrived in Chakabama, Chura Chand Pur was put out of bounds. So I had to daily script interesting tales of other indiscipline for the two Mallu 'AF Liaison Cell' chaps, to sneak to the C-In-C on their HF set, and keep EAC amused.

Rimcolian (1962-66), Ex NDA (37th Fox) and afterwards a QFI and Experimental Test Pilot in IAF for 23 years, Wg Cdr Unni Kartha raised and commanded a MI35 Squadron. He retired from IAF in 1994.



SAGARMALA PROGRAMME - A GAME CHANGER BUT NATIONAL MARITIME AUTHORITY REQUIRED

Commander Prem Prakash Batra & Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch

'Sagarmala', the government's flagship programme to promote port-led development in the country aims to deliver impact through over 150 projects and initiatives in four broad areas. Modernising India's port infrastructure, improving port connectivity, tapping the potential of port led industrialisation to boost industrial and export growth along the coastline and harnessing the potential of coastal communities through focused skill-development to support port-led industrialisation.

The National Perspective Plan on 'Sagarmala' was released by Prime Minister Modi during the inauguration of the 'Maritime India Summit 2016' in Mumbai on 14 April 2016. The plan, crafted after detailed consultations with key stakeholders in the central and state governments, public sector companies as well as private players from shipping, ports, ship-building, power, cement and steel sectors, takes forward Sagarmala's vision of substantially reducing export-import and domestic trade costs with a minimal investment. It is planned to mobilise one trillion INR in the port sector, and increase port capacity to 3000 million tonnes from the current 1400 million tonnes.

To improve connectivity and give a boost to 'Make in India', major legislative reforms have been carried out over the past two years to codify, rationalise and simplify maritime statutes, Acts, rules & regulations. Emphasis is being laid on e-governance, to make government transactions foolproof and hassle-free, cost-effective and efficient, and also rein in discretion and corruption in the process. In his address, the Prime Minister stressed the need to integrate the ocean network with India's inland river systems, stating that coastal communities can become an engine of growth of India.



While the vision and sweep of Sagarmala is commendable, what is now needed is a National Maritime Authority (NMA). Sagarmala is an important endeavour and the addition of NMA would provide it continuity as well as the backing of Parliament. While important legislative reforms have been made, two legislations, - Factory Safety Act and Labour Safety Act have been left out. Without reforms here, labour will remain inefficient and unproductive. The aspect of skill development must also extend the focus to also include the unorganised sector. Labour here for the most part is uneducated/ poorly educated.

For the Coast Guard (CG) to exercise effective control over coastal waters, the Shipping Ministry must transfer the Light Houses and Lightships Department to the CG. The New Act must also give overall charge of state audit of merchant ships plying in Indian waters and ports to CG. This would result in coastal shipping and navigation becoming safe as any non-recognised target in the coast would show up on coastal radar CCTVs. To improve centre-state coordination and negate corruption, both the coastal police and the coastal customs must be placed under the operational charge of CG as is the norm in countries like the US, China, Russia, Canada and many others. Only then can control over coastal waters be

effective.

Delineation of coastal fairways, bouyage, navigation aids etc. rarely work. With the permission of IMO, the same have to be marked on the charts. Like the Japanese, the shipping ministry must create and mark 'fishing safe havens' on the charts. This would help Indian fishermen and prevent their straying into hostile waters where they could be apprehended by Pakistani or Sri Lankan naval personnel.

The most developed river water system in the world is of the Mississippi River Basin. It covers hinterland up to 800 miles and then the Tributaries. One third of American industry is on its banks up to 300 miles. It took 200 years and billions of dollars for the US Army Corps of Engineers to develop this basin. Later, the Panama Canal system was built by the same Corps of Engineers. It may be in order to consider building the capacity of the Indian Army Corps of Engineers to construct our own river water system.

It is also for consideration to note that after World War II, the US had submitted a 2000 page comprehensive report with drawings for inland waterways. The copy may still be lying in HQ Western Naval Command Headquarters where Commander in 1976 and could be useful. The Americans also had a plan to cut an arc in Visakhapatnam Port. The advantage was a deep water port plus one way traffic, but the project was shelved as the war ended abruptly. Copy of the report may be available with HQ Eastern Naval Command.

Finally, let us remember that a plan is only as good as its execution. We have the 150 beads (projects), but we need a maestro to string them into a 'mala'. Therein lies the key to success.

Commander PP Batra is a Delhi based defence commentator and analyst.



DEFENCE DEVELOPMENTS AND FOLLOW-UPS



Lt Col Anil Bhat

During the financial year 2015-16, 44 contracts worth Rs. 39,955.36 crore have been signed for capital procurement of defence equipment (including helicopters, radars, rockets and simulators) and Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) issued 61 Industrial Licenses (ILs) for manufacture of various defence equipment under IDR Act 1951, till December 2015.

2016 began with signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the French Government for purchase of 36 Rafale Aircraft. The High Committee on Defence Cooperation (HCDC) had the 15th meeting in Paris on 12 January, 2015 to discuss strategic partnership, military cooperation, procurement and research and technology. Besides the Rafale MoU, the other MoU/agreements signed between both the countries are a MoU on supplies of defence equipment, an agreement on defence cooperation, a technical arrangement between Defence Ministers of India and France concerning co-operation in the field of guided weapon systems and technology and an agreement on protection of classified information and material in the field of defence.

Following the second visit of United States Defence Secretary, Dr Ashton Carter, India's Defence Minister, Shri Manohar Parrikar stated, that the India-US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), has provided an



unprecedented platform for the two countries to strengthen bilateral cooperation in cutting-edge technologies and to address procedural delays in decision-making. "We have decided to take forward discussions under DTTI more aggressively on key areas such as jet engine technology. We will also continue our very useful and productive discussions on cooperation in the framework of the Joint Working Group on aircraft carriers. We also agreed to expand DTTI by introducing new and more ambitious projects for mutual collaboration. Both of us noted the strong complementarities between DTTI and the Make in India initiative. I hope to work together with Secretary Carter over the coming weeks and months to facilitate synergies between Indian and US companies in high technology areas, and in particular to promote participation of Indian companies in global supply chains", said Mr Parrikar. Dr Carter was invited by Mr Parrikar to visit Goa, the Indian naval base in Karwar and INS Vikramaditya, to showcase the Indian Navy's commendable capabilities and then both visited the USS Blue Ridge, which was on a goodwill visit to India.

"These visits underline the growing importance of the maritime dimension of our relationship, as manifested in the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean region. It was entirely appropriate that we visited India's western shores. Even as we work with the United States to realise the full potential of India's Act East policy, we also seek a closer partnership with the United States to promote our shared interests in India's West, especially in the context of the emerging situation in West Asia", Mr Parrikar explained.

A new bilateral Maritime Security Dialogue, involving the respective Defence and External Affairs Ministries/Departments, has been initiated. Navy-to-Navy discussions will be enhanced to cover submarine-related issues and both countries will also deepen cooperation in Maritime Domain Awareness by finalising a 'White Shipping' Agreement.

Referring to the growing interaction between both countries' armed forces as another significant aspect of the bilateral partnership, the Defence Minister informed that India has more joint exercises with the United States than with any other country in the world. And India's participation in multilateral exercises such as Red Flag Air Force exercise and RIMPAC (Rim of Pacific) naval exercise, the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise, will require developing practical mechanisms to facilitate such exchanges. In this context, Dr. Carter and Mr. Parrikar agreed in principle to conclude a Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement in the coming months.

However, meanwhile, the plan of US to expand cooperation with India in the space sector, is causing jitters to American private space industry owing to the large scale use of low-cost Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launch vehicles for putting American satellites into orbits. It remains to be seen how this will be played out.



INDIA GETS ITS OWN GPS



With the launch on 28 April 2016 of IRNSS-1G, the country's seventh navigation satellite, India entered the exclusive club of five nations that have their own satellite navigation and positioning systems. IRNSS is similar to the global positioning system (GPS) of the US (24 satellites), Glonass of Russia, and Galileo of Europe, as well as China's Beidou. With this indigenous

capability, the country no longer has to depend on any foreign power for military navigation. The system called NAVIC, consists of a constellation of seven satellites and a support ground segment. Three of the satellites in the constellation are located in geostationary orbit (GEO). The other four are inclined geosynchronous orbit (GSO). In addition, various ground-based systems will control, track orbits, check integration and send radio signals to the satellites. The land-based Master Control Centre (MCC) will run navigational software.

The system has an accuracy of 20 meters and an extended range of 1500 km across Indian borders. This assumes significance as India will have the capability to target enemy positions in depth, with reasonable accuracy, once the complete system is in place.

With a life of 12 years, the system can also be used for civilian navigation — aircraft, ships, railways - and as a terrestrial navigation aid for hikers and travellers, along with visual and voice navigation for drivers. It can also be integrated into phones. Other civilian applications include mapping, disaster management, and vehicle and fleet management

SEA TRIALS BEGIN FOR INS KALVARI

In 1999, the then NDA government sanctioned a 30 year plan to build 24 submarines in a phased manner. On May 1, 2016, after 16 years, the first of these submarines, INS Kalvari (meaning Sea Shark), splashed into the sea for trials, under her own propulsion system. Kalvari is the first of six such conventional Scorpene class submarines being built at MDL (Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd Mumbai). During the trials, INS Kalvari will undergo various preliminary tests on the propulsion system, auxiliary equipment and systems, navigation aids, communication equipment and steering gear. Trials will include surface trials, diving trials, weapon trials and noise trials before the submarine is commissioned in the Indian Navy by the end of this year.

This diesel-electric submarine is designated to perform anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying and area surveillance, using stealth technology and precision guided munitions. Being made from special steel, it can withstand high-yield stress and high hydrostatic force, which allow them to augment stealth. The submarine, built with French collaboration, with transfer of technology from the French



defence firm DCNS (French Naval Defence and Energy) allows parallel building of its various sections due to its modular construction. It is also equipped with weapon launching tubes (WLT), which lets sailors carry weapons on board that can be reloaded at sea without any hitch. It also features complex sensors managed by a high-technology Combat Management System and is expected to provide a significant boost to Indian Navy's submarine operations.



DEFENCE PROCUREMENT POLICY (DPP-2016) UNVEILED

The new Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP-2016) was unveiled on 28 March 2016 by the Raksha Mantri, Shri Manohar Parrikar at the inaugural ceremony of the Defence Expo (Defexpo)-2016 at Quepem town, about 50 km from Panaji. DPP-2016 aims to ensure transparency, fast-track acquisitions and to lend a push to the "Make in India" initiative. To be applicable from April, it lays the roadmap on how India will acquire defence equipment in future. A key chapter on strategic partnership is yet to



be added to the DPP which will take another 2 to 3 months to finalise.

As per the Raksha Mantri, the policy is open to review. "I do not say the document is foolproof. Let us take a review after six months. Nothing is perfect, but we are taking it to perfection," he said, adding that the DPP could push the agenda of "Make in India" and help in establishing a defence industrial base.

DEFENCE MANUFACTURING SET TO GROW

Speaking at an interaction between private investors and naval officers, the CNS, Admiral RK Dhowan said "...the navy has outlined its science and technology roadmap for next 15 years and has shared it with the industry, underlining nearly 100 sets of technologies which are to be absorbed in our warships and submarines. The blueprint of the future of Indian Navy is firmly anchored in self reliance and indigenisation and I think this partnership with the Indian industry, both public and private, will ensure that our future warships, submarines and the aviation sector will be 100 percent made in India". The CNS called for increased private investment in defence manufacturing, stating that India is capable of producing the world's best warships and submarines and that the navy would provide all the support to MSMEs (micro, small, medium enterprises) in research, design and development of weaponry.

The above sentiments were echoed by NITI Ayog Chief Executive Officer Amitabh Kant. "If manufacturing has to grow, defence manufacturing has to be the driver. Without defence manufacturing, India can never grow in double digit and sustain

growth trajectory for long", he said, adding that licences for 125 defence manufacturers have been cleared in the last 15 months and that the private manufacturers would be treated at par with the public sector units, so that they get a level playing field to compete and win contracts in India.

As per the CNS, India has achieved about 90 per cent indigenisation in the float components of a warship, enabled largely by the fact that warship seals are being designed and developed by the DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) and are being manufactured in the country, with even the aircraft carrier Vikrant, being built in Kochi, having an Indian seal. In the move components, India has achieved 60 percent indigenisation, where it was building the propulsion and auxiliary machinery. The CNS also



spoke of the huge opportunity of indigenisation and partnering with the public and private sector in making main gas banks, which are the primary requirement for the main propulsion and auxiliary propulsion and said that the navy was expecting foreign assistance in manufacturing pipe components of the warships which comprises weaponry and sensors.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Hony Capt Baldev Singh

The Reserve Bank of India (the Reserve Bank) oversees disbursement of pension by its agency banks. In the process, it receives queries/complaints from pensioners in regard to fixation, calculation and payment of pension including revision of pension/Dearness Relief, transfer of pension account from one bank branch to another, etc. The Reserve Bank has analysed the queries/complaints, and put them in the form of answers to Frequently Asked Questions here. These will cover most of the queries/ doubts in the minds of pensioners.

1. Is it necessary for the pensioner to open a separate pension account for the purpose of crediting his/ her pension in authorised bank?

The pensioner is not required to open a separate pension account. The pension can be credited to his/her existing savings/ current account maintained with the branch selected by the pensioner.

2. Can a pensioner open a Joint Account with his/ her spouse?

Yes. All pensioners of the Central Government Pensioners and those State Governments which have accepted such arrangement can open Joint Account with their spouses.

3. Whether Joint Account of the pensioner with spouse can be operated either by "Former or Survivor" or "Either or Survivor"

The Joint Account of the pensioner with spouse can be operated either as "Former or Survivor" or "Either or Survivor".

4. Whether a Joint Account can be continued for family pension after death of a pensioner?

Yes, the banks should not insist on opening of a new account in case of



Central Government pensioner if the spouse in whose favour an authorisation for family pension exists in the Pension Payment Order (PPO) is the survivor and the family pension should be credited to the existing account without opening a new account by the family pensioner for this purpose.

5. Who sends the Pension Payment Orders (PPOs) to the authorised bank branch?

The concerned pension sanctioning authorities in the Ministries /Departments/ State Governments forward the PPOs to bank branches wherefrom the pensioner desires to draw his/her pension. However, on implementation of CPPCs, pension sanctioning authorities have gradually started sending PPOs to the CPPC of the bank instead of bank branch.

6. When is the pension credited to the pensioner's account by the paying branch?

The disbursement of pension by the paying branch is spread over the last four working days of the month depending on the convenience of the pension paying

branch except for the month of March when the pension is credited on or after the first working day of April.

7. What is the procedure for payment of pension in the case of the transfer of PPO to another branch or bank, as the case may be?

Pension will be paid for three months on the basis of the photocopy of the pensioner's PPO at the transferee (new) branch from the date of the last payment made at the transferor (old) branch. Both the branches (old and new) are required to ensure that all the required documents are received by the transferee branch within these three months.

8. What is the procedure to be followed by the bank branch if the pensioner is handicapped/ incapacitated and is not in a position to be present at the paying branch?

If the pensioner is physically handicapped/incapacitated and unable to be present at the branch, the requirement of personal appearance is waived. In such cases, the bank official visits the pensioner's residence/ hospital for the purpose of identification and obtaining specimen signature or thumb/toe impression.

9. Has the pensioner got right to retain half portion of the PPO for record and to get it updated from paying branch whenever there is a change in the quantum of pension due to revision in basic pension, dearness relief, etc.?

Yes. The pensioner has right to retain half portion of the PPO for record and whenever there is a revision in the basic pension/Dearness Relief (DR), etc. the paying branch has to call for the pensioner's half of the PPO and record thereon the changes according to government orders/notifications and return the same to the pensioner.



VETERANS ALERT

10. Can a pensioner be allowed to operate his/ her account by the holder of Power of Attorney?

The account is not allowed to be operated by a holder of Power of Attorney. However, the cheque book facility and acceptance of standing instructions for transfer of funds from the account is permissible.

11. Who is responsible for deduction of Income Tax at source from pension payment?

The pension paying bank is responsible for deduction of Income Tax from pension amount in accordance with the rates prescribed by the Income Tax authorities from time to time. While deducting such tax from the pension amount, the paying bank will also allow deductions on account of relief to the pensioner available under the Income Tax Act. The paying branch, in April each year, will also issue to the pensioner a certificate of tax deduction as per the prescribed form. If the pensioner is not liable to pay Income Tax, he should furnish to the pension paying branch, a declaration to that effect in the prescribed form (15 H).

12. Can a pensioner withdraw pension from his/ her account when he/she is not able to sign or put thumb/toe impression or unable to be present in the bank?

In such cases, a pensioner can put any mark or impression on the cheque/ withdrawal form and may indicate to the bank as to who would withdraw pension amount from the bank on the basis of cheque/withdrawal form. Such a person should be identified by two independent witnesses. The person who is actually drawing the money from the bank should be asked to furnish his/her specimen signature to the bank.

13. When does the family pension commence?

The family pension commences after the death of the pensioner. The family pension is payable to the person indicated in the PPO on receipt of a death

certificate and application from the nominee.

14. How the payment of Dearness Relief at revised rate is to be paid to the pensioners?

Whenever any additional relief on pension/family pension is sanctioned by the Government, the same is intimated to the agency banks for issuing suitable instructions to their pension paying branches for payment of relief at the revised rates to the pensioners without any delay. The orders issued by Government Departments are also hosted on their websites and banks have been advised to watch the latest instructions on the website and act accordingly without waiting for any further orders from RBI in this regard.

15. Which authority the pensioner should approach for redressal of his/

THE PENSION PAYING BANK IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEDUCTION OF INCOME TAX FROM PENSION AMOUNT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RATES PRESCRIBED BY THE INCOME TAX AUTHORITIES FROM TIME TO TIME. WHILE DEDUCTING SUCH TAX FROM THE PENSION AMOUNT, THE PAYING BANK WILL ALSO ALLOW DEDUCTIONS ON ACCOUNT OF RELIEF TO THE PENSIONER AVAILABLE UNDER THE INCOME TAX ACT.

her grievances?

A pensioner can initially approach the concerned Branch Manager and, thereafter, the Head Office of the concerned bank for redressal of his/her complaint. They can also approach the Banking Ombudsman of the concerned State in terms of Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006 of the Reserve Bank of India (details available at the Bank's website www.rbi.org.in) This is applicable only in respect of complaints relating to services rendered by banks. For other issues, the complainant will have to approach the respective pension sanctioning

authority.

16. Where can a pensioner get information about the changes in the pension/Dearness Relief or any pension related issue?

The pensioner can visit the Official Website of the concerned Government Department as also Reserve Bank of India Website (www.rbi.org.in) to get the information about pension related issues.

17. Whether a pensioner is entitled for any compensation from the agency banks for delayed credit of pension/arrears of pension?

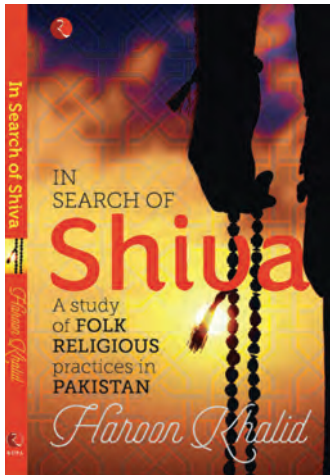
Yes. A Pensioner is entitled for compensation for delayed credit of pension/arrears thereof at the fixed rate 8% and the same would be credited to the pensioner's account automatically by the bank on the same day when the bank affords delayed credit of such pension /

arrears etc without any claim from the pensioner.

Note: These FAQs are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (The Reserve Bank) for information and general guidance purposes only. The Reserve Bank will not be held responsible for actions taken and/or decisions made on the basis of the same. For clarifications or interpretations, if any, readers are requested to be guided by the relevant circulars and notifications issued from time to time by the Reserve Bank and the Government.

A FUSION OF CULTURES

Lt Col Anil Bhat



IN SEARCH OF SHIVA:
A Study of Folk Religious Practices in Pakistan
 By Haroon Khalid
 Rupa Publications
 India Pvt. Ltd.
 245 pages, Paperback
 Price: INR 295/-

Before Pakistan became the new centre of global terrorism and reactionary Islamic forces, the region had a fusion of different religions/cultures/philosophies that emanated or were derived from Hinduism and other religions that it interacted with over the centuries. This book by Haroon Khalid is an attempt to study these religious traditions – those that have not been derived from an orthodox religion, but from indigenous religious practices which in some cases go as far back as the Indus Valley civilisation. Peeling through the layers of Muslim nationalism and Pakistani separatism, the book studies various shrines scattered all over West Pakistan and the adjoining part of India, which included Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, the oldest living civilisation in the world. In this book the author has particularly focused on idiosyncratic shrines, where the practices defy the notions of orthodox Islam.

Khalid's extensive journeys with his wife, Anam, Iqbal Qaiser and some other friends to unique Muslim shrines, Hindu/Jain temples/Gurudwaras in many parts of Pakistan's Punjab and his interactions with their caretakers/followers bring out interesting, fascinating and of course surprising revelations which much of Pakistan's urban populace may still not be aware of. At the shrine of Aban Shah, Village Chak 50, the sacred offering is a hand-carved wooden human phallus, piles of which are stocked. Followers come here wishing for a child, preferably male. At Pakpattan, there is a shrine, where women worship and present a Shivaling (Lord Shiva's phallus) at the grave of the saint. The author also mentions about the archeological discovery in Indus Valley of a male with an erect phallus sitting in the Yogic cross legged pose being that of Lord Shiva.

Then there are the shrines where eunuchs and animals such as dogs, cows, cats, crows etc. are considered sacred. Interestingly, the author mentions that while cats are acceptable to orthodox Muslims, dogs are

acceptable only outside the house as guards and touching a dog must be followed by ritual washing/cleansing of hands. Khalid's book is an informative travelogue that studies these exotic shrines with an academic understanding of how they link back to the Indus valley civilisation or in other cases, Hinduism.

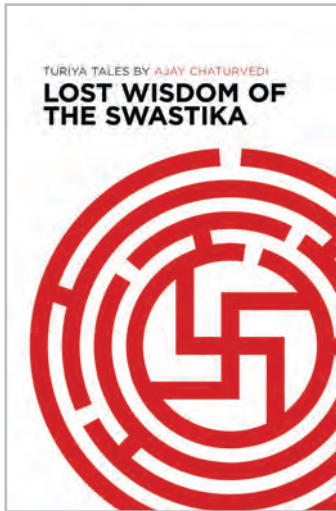
The author maintains that the purpose of the book is not just the documentation of these shrines and their analysis but to also place them in the current geopolitical realities of Pakistan. For most Pakistanis, the two-nation theory that argues that Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations given their irreconcilable religious differences, fed to them throughout their formal educational years, holds sway. Given the political identity of the country, these eclectic shrines that derive inspiration from Hinduism/Hindu religious practices acquire a particular significant character, rebelling against the dogma of state nationalism. The book studies how these political compulsions are altering religious traditions in Pakistan and how these shrines respond to such challenges. Unfortunately, these shrines are now threatened by the sweeping tide of orthodox Islam, which particularly post-9/11, has engulfed the country. Based on notions of miracles and syncretism, their utility value has diminished as educated people and the elite are drawn towards a more "scientific" interpretation of religion, which the orthodoxy in Pakistan readily provides. Not only does the author travel to these shrines but also studies the rise of an orthodox Islam which presents a direct threat to these shrines.

Amidst many reports in media about destruction/defacing of temples/religious historical statues, forced conversion of Hindus, mass killings of non-Muslims and the ongoing sectarian conflict in Pakistan, one hopes that books like those by Khalid, Anam and other bold writers in Pakistan get published, obviously in India, but get wide circulation in both countries.



THE FOURTH STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Suparna Banerjee



**LOST WISDOM OF THE
SWASTIKA**

**By Ajay Chaturvedi
Bennett Coleman
& Co. Ltd,
Pages 214
Price Rs 349
(Paperback)**

Lost wisdom of the Swastika by Ajay Chaturvedi is an intriguing read, yet another in a series of semi fictional, semi-autobiographical books that leverages a personal narrative of pain & loss to reveal deep esoteric gems. The title and the book cover reinforce the elusive myth of a powerful & often misunderstood symbolism. Loosely written in the question answer style, it seems characteristic of a genre which attempts to give answers to soul searching questions. For true seekers an exhaustive compendium of spiritual FAQs in a deceptively slender book.

Set against the backdrop of the crucible of spiritual quest and discovery, the epic Himalayas, Ajay takes us on a vivid sensory tour of its lesser known peaks & valleys, torrential rivers & hidden caves, which hug the immortal mysteries of the universe deep within. But for those who truly seek, the wise men await. Ancient seers & Masters step out of the mist and rickety ashrams to extend more than a half smile and a blessing. Ajay does a good job of asking the questions and the wise ones don't disappoint, imparting priceless revelations in the process. From sun gazing to the scientific reason for wishes coming true to abandoning the ego, there is nothing that the Masters don't know and won't tell you. Ever wondered why bells are placed at the entrance of temples or why babies are called a form of God? Why do we pray with our eyes closed? Or what is the hidden significance of cleaning your tongue first thing in the morning. Why do traditional Indian homes have a tulsi plant inside the house and a neem tree outside. Or the real reason we wear jewellery and why vermilion tika is meant for only married women. And did you know that in ancient times the dried umbilical cord of a new born was always buried at the root of a neem or fruit tree? Natural stem cell banking! If you are curious by nature, you

won't put the book down until the last question is asked and answered.

The author's western education and global footprint gives a contemporary café cappuccino sipping flavour to ageless questions. Amidst chanting of shlokas, muttering of mantras & sipping of hot ginger spice tea, the book advances into a more powerful narrative, probing our old doubts, ultimately laying bare the human existential angst' why are we born and what is our true purpose? We learn about stages of awareness, the chakra system, the trademark yogic liberation through asanas, self-actualisation, self-realisation, even a brief brush with Maslow Need's Hierarchy and its comparison with the Vedic Chakra system. Ajay's Himalayan Maharaj ji discloses that 'an individual can be read in many ways' through his fears, thoughts, actions, or preferences of surroundings.' Skilfully juxtaposing the four classical vedic yugs — (Satyayug-Tretayug-Dwaparayug-Kalyug) to the four stages of evolution and development in man - Aantrik, Maantrik, Taantrik and Yaantrik, Maharajji reminds us that evolution is cyclical. 'Different people, families, societies, cities, states, countries and regions are at different stages of evolution'. And that we are living in a predominately yaantrik yug, dominated by mobile phones, laptops, personal computers. In the future embedded & injectable devices will flow in our bloodstream, sending signals that will help improve our life.

Ultimately, there is a way out of the three dimensional world we live in. There is a fourth dimension, our inner Swastika but to get there we must pierce the illusionary veil that drapes our sensory world. But where does our awareness lie today? How do we get to the next level? where do we go and who do we seek? Who is seeking and who is being sought? Can we Google a Master or is it time to take that one way ticket to higher realms?



Tamatar Kadhi aur Kurkuri Bhindi: A Great Desi Dish

Aditi Pathak

After a phase of trying out various world cuisines, I need to get back to my roots and try something Indian. I recalled a recipe I came across a while back for tamatar kadhi and really craved the delicious flavour of sour tomato curry. But to add a bite to it, I paired it with some Kurkuri Bhindi. Served with some freshly made rice, the meal was just delicious! And very light on the stomach too! So do go ahead and try it out... you're going to love this one. For those of you who don't like the usual gooey texture of bhindi, this one might just change your opinion on this veggie:) So without further ado, let's begin!

TAMATAR KADHI

Ingredients:

- 3-4 tomatoes chopped
- 3-4 tomatoes puréed with an inch of ginger and 3 - 4 garlic cloves
- Fresh curry leaves
- Green chilli 1-2 sliced
- Methi (Fenugreek) seeds 1/2 tea spoon
- Sarson (Mustard seeds) 1/2 tea spoon
- Jeera (Cumin seeds) 1/2 tea spoon
- Haldi (Turmeric) powder 1/2 tea spoon
- Red chilli powder 1/2 tea spoon
- Besan (Gram Flour) 2 tea spoon mixed in water
- Salt to taste
- Oil 2 tablespoons

Recipe:

Heat oil in a pan. When the oil is hot, add the Sarson seeds. Allow to simmer and then follow with Jeera and Methi seeds. Now it's time to add the fresh curry leaves. Keep the lid of the pan handy when adding the curry leaves and cover immediately as the leaves cause a lot of splatter, especially if they have just been

washed! Now it's time to add the tomato, ginger and garlic purée. Sauté and cover for roughly five minutes. Add haldi, chilli powder and salt. Sauté and add the chopped tomatoes and sliced green chillies. Cover for another 6 to 8 minutes. Now add the besan. Mix two tea spoons of besan in water and add this to the tomatoes. Add some more water as desired depending on the consistency you prefer. I added about half a cup of water. Mix well and cover for another five minutes. Voila! Your flavourful, tangy Tamatar Kadhi is ready.

KURKURI BHINDI

Ingredients:

- Okra (Bhindi/ Lady Finger) - I got a packet of large bhindis which had about 8 - 10 bhindis. I sliced my bhindis diagonally
- Besan 2 - 3 tablespoon
- Ajwain (Carom Seeds) - 1 tea spoon
- Red Chilli Powder - 1 tea spoon
- Jeera (Cumin) Powder - 1 tea spoon
- Vinegar 1 tea spoon

- Salt to taste
- Oil to deep fry

Recipe: Put the sliced bhindi in a deep bowl. Add vinegar to this. Follow this with ajwain, jeera powder, chilli powder, besan and salt. Give this mixture a good shake but remember not to apply any pressure to the bhindis. Just let the spices and besan get coated to the bhindi. When the oil is hot, drop bhindi into it to deep fry. Fry for a few minutes, till the bhindi looks ready. Fry the bhindi in smaller batches if you prefer as it will be easier to manage. When it's done, take out and place on a tissue to remove all excess oil. And there you have it, your crispy bhindi is ready.

Serve the tomato kadhi and the kurkuri bhindi with some freshly made rice. Hope you enjoy this light, healthy and flavourful combo:)

Ms Aditi Pathak is based in Singapore. Widely travelled and from a Services background, cooking is one of her many passions.





A TREK TO THE END OF THE MOUNTAIN

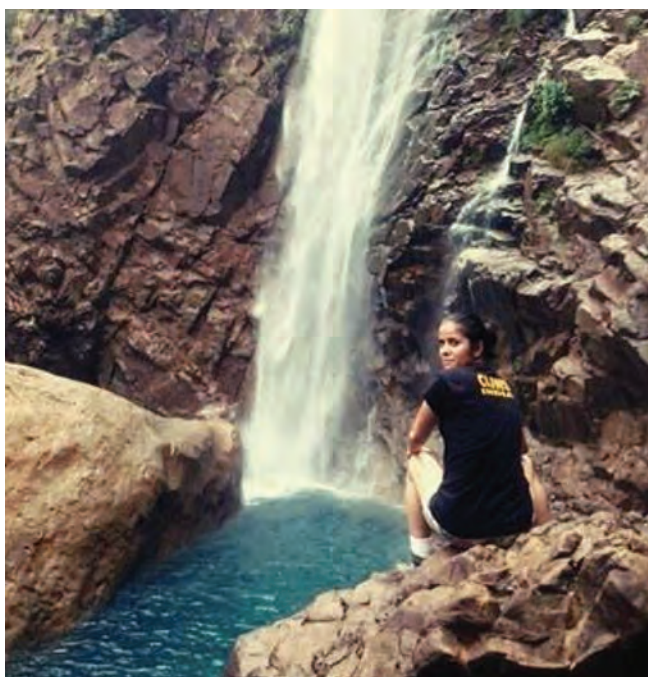
Ritu Sharma

The scene was straight out of the Jungle Book, a dense forest teeming with insects and other living beings, humidity threatening to dehydrate you slowly but surely. And thus began our adventure trek to Nongriat village, roughly 70 km from Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya (literally the abode of clouds). In short we were gearing to play Mowgli without Bagheera to help us out.

April had just begun and we hit the road from Shillong at around 9.30 a.m. The scenic beauty was simply breathtaking. With the monsoon literally knocking on the door, the clouds had descended to the earth, and at places an all embracing mist enveloped us in 'mellow fruitfulness', to paraphrase the poet John Keats. At Cherrapunji, the erstwhile "wettest" place on earth, the clouds shadow the Noakhali waterfalls and the green valley is turned white. We made a pit stop at the Orange Roots where we had sumptuous dosas before resuming our journey. This was essential as Nongriat village had little to offer in terms of refreshments.

We reached Tyrna at around 1 p.m., parked our vehicles and took the first step down. A middle aged lady was dragging herself up from the stairs, huffing and puffing. She could not make it to even the first step – the Single Living Root Bridge. We looked at each other, realising that the trek would not be easy. There are some 2000 stairs with a steep slope. A bunch of young college students right ahead of us were panting for breath and clutching their knees. Yes, the trek would not be easy, but we took a deep breath and soldiered on. Finally the stairs

were over and we reached the entry point for the single root bridge. But our aim was to trek further to Rainbow Waterfalls before sunset. The youngsters ahead of us had called it a day, but we continued towards our destination. To our delight we realised that the worst was over. We crossed beautiful ponds with crystal clear blue mineral water and milky waterfalls; enshrouded by the green tropical forests and greyish sky, it was a surreal experience. We crossed a suspended rope bridge that swayed with the wind and then a single root bridge to arrive at our destination- Nongriat, in the East Khasi hills of Meghalaya. Here we saw a double



decker living Root Bridge; an example of commendable bio-engineering of the local people where they condition aerial roots of big trees through their centuries old method of intertwining and weaving them together.

We put our luggage in the small community guest house in the village – essentially a bed, a clean toilet, four walls and a roof. It was already 3 p.m. and we debated whether we should continue our trek to Rainbow Falls as the sun sets early

in this part of the world. We decided to go ahead sans our backpacks but this stretch proved to be testing for two members of our team with stone pathways wreaking havoc in the calf muscles and humidity getting the better of us. Leaving the two behind, we marched on, till we reached the waterfalls. The view was spectacular – perhaps the best I had ever seen. The waterfall and the natural pond formed by giant monoliths were calling for a dip after the exhausting trek. It took all our rock climbing skills to get down to it. But it was worth the effort many times over.

Much to our delight and before we headed back after half an hour of frolicking, our two stragglers had also fetched up, joining in the fun. We refilled our by now empty bottles with the best mineral water in the world right at the source! Trekking back was easier and on the way we grabbed some dry wood for the bonfire. At the guest house we opened our wine, put some melodious music on our portable speaker and sat around the water fire as power continued to elude the village during our stay.

If you plan to trek to Nongriat, do carry some energy bars and water bottles. You can get it in the shops in villages but it can be expensive. Also, as part of the conservation effort, do bring back all the plastic. The pristine beauty of the place must be preserved. You can continue the adventure further by doing Zip Lining on your way back to Shillong. Enjoy the trek. Besides adventure, there is always the possibility of romance under the sky.

Ms Ritu Sharma is an explorer who likes to wear multiple hats. Military wife, journalist, conflict analysis student and bike enthusiast.





MAROOF'S MUSINGS



Maroof Raza

TO MODERNIZE,
WE MUST
WIDEN OUR
CHOICES, NOT
LIMIT THEM

Ever since independence, almost every major defence deal that has been initiated by India, has run into a controversy. And though the current tightly worded Indian 'Defence Procurement Procedure' has clauses to keep out middlemen and to ensure integrity of the supplier (OEM) of weapons platforms, we have the AugustaWestland scandal that is now causing media headlines. But, in all the cacophony of charges being traded, the central issue that is getting little mention is that India's armed forces are now in for another long lull in the purchase of crucial equipment that they need to remain battle worthy. The past decade – of relative peace on our borders – could have been better used to fulfill the long standing wish list of India's armed forces to modernize and upgrade.

Instead our abysmal state of affairs, leading to a cynical view that 'India's first rate military is now saddled with obsolete equipment' has been brought about for a number of reasons. One is that while India's politicians often pay lip service to the needs of its armed forces, mouthing phrases like: 'all that they require will be provided for'; but the armed forces know better. More recently, precious funds are being diverted to enhance our 'Make in India' capabilities. This however will take a decade or more before any worthwhile weapons platforms will be locally available. Until then, certain weapons systems that are immediately required will have to be imported. Sadly, India's previous defence minister had shown greater zest in canceling contracts and blacklisting companies, than perhaps all his predecessors have done in the past! Add to that the ghost of the 'Bofors scandal' and now that of 'AugustaWestland', and we will see no desire to buy equipment that could lead to a controversy. Sadly, a personal obsession of some politicians to retain their squeaky clean image, has denied India's armed forces even desperately needed air defence systems, the helicopters or artillery weapons, and even a basic rifle for our frontline fighting soldiers.

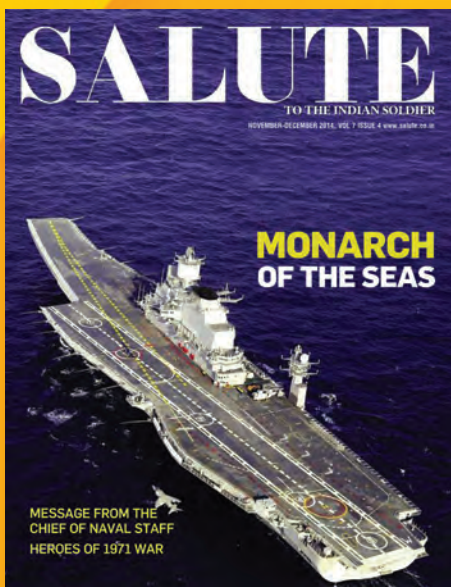
To their credit however, the current UPA-II regime has bought few big ticket items like the C-130 aircraft, but this has been through the direct foreign military sales (FMS) route. However, most of these items – worth around \$10 billion - have apparently come from American companies, as though to make up for not awarding the 'mother of all deals' for the 126 fighter jets to the French Dassault. One reason has been the scam free FMS process as the purchaser (like India) doesn't deal directly with the seller (a US company) but with the US government. This has the added advantage of making Washington feel good! Also, this bypasses the painfully long process of India's defence acquisitions through the DPP route, that takes several years and even then a choice isn't at times made doesn't have to be adopted. Besides it looks good politically, that the needs of the military are actually being met.

However, what went unnoticed was that, such knee-jerk reactions not only unfairly do damage to the reputation of big companies, but also further narrows the pool of companies for India to choose from, in future. Apart from the items listed above, the army's ATGM project and the navy's multi-role helicopters (apparently 125 in all) could either now have one bidder (with BAE backing out), or have no solution at all, as would be the case for naval guns or the army's need for new mechanized infantry vehicles. Ironically therefore, while India is slated to spend about \$200 billion in weapon purchases over the next 10-15 years, there will be few if any companies to buy much needed weapon systems from, if the blacklisting bans are to remain enforced. A pity, because unlike Pakistan India has the money but its choices could soon be few and far between.

For more details on Maroof Raza, visit: <https://www.maroofraza.com>.



“SALUTE” HAS PUBLISHED A NUMBER OF SPECIAL ISSUES, COMPLETELY FOCUSED ON A THEME OR A REGIMENT



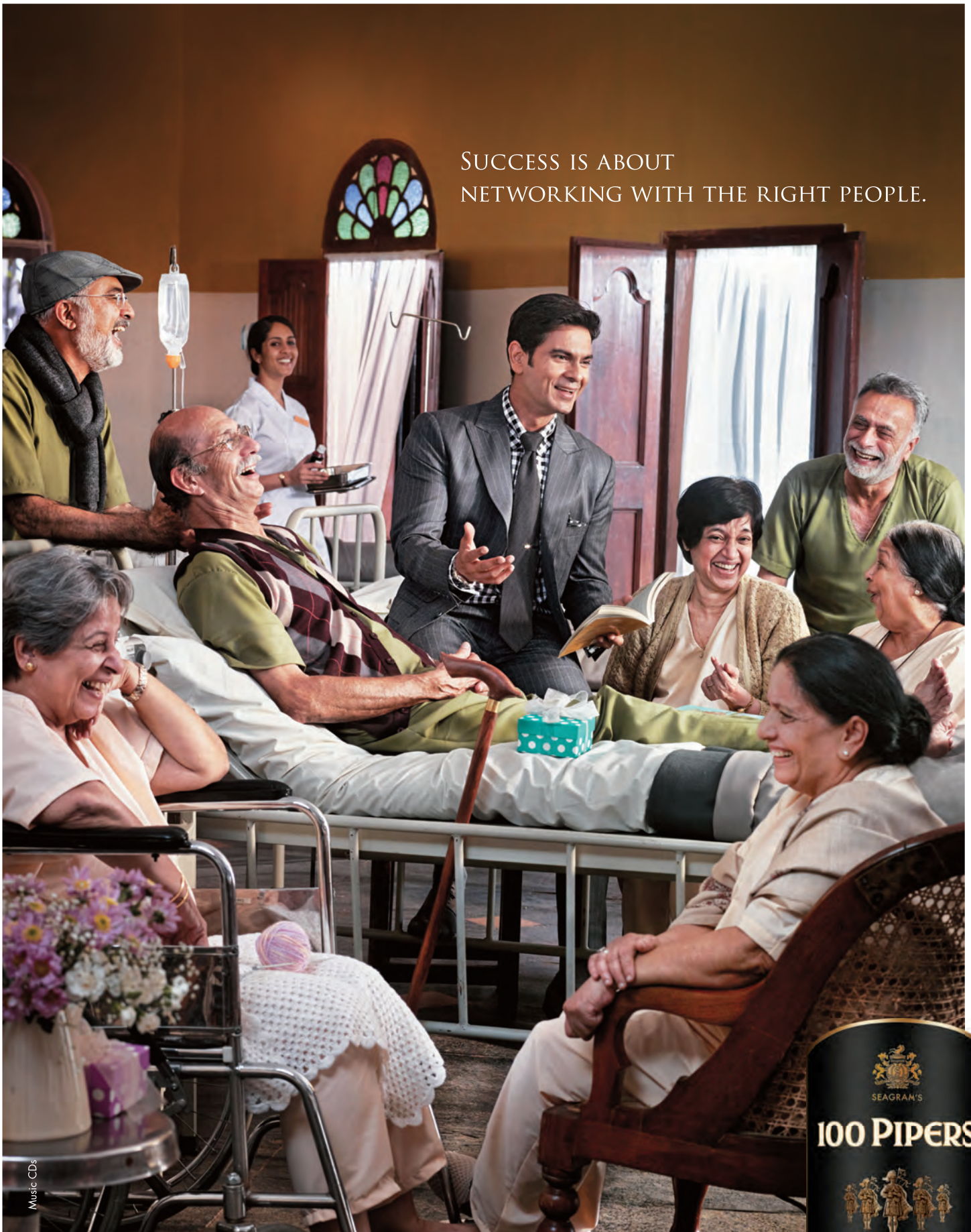
**SALUTE welcomes queries for a Special Issue.
For more details please email us at**

salutemagazine@gmail.com

Visit our website: <https://www.salute.co.in> and <https://saluteindia.org>



SUCCESS IS ABOUT
NETWORKING WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE.



Music CDs



BE REMEMBERED FOR GOOD