

#PATANG

Kites!... Kites!... Kites!...

Ancient Chinese texts describe kites being used for measuring distances, testing the wind, lifting men, signaling, and communication for military operations

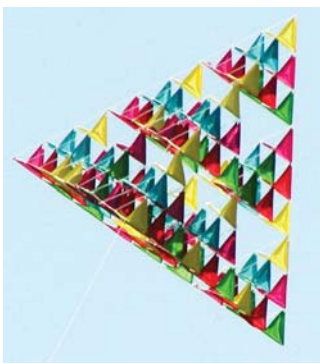


Kite flying (patang) in Rajasthan has a long history, with the tradition in cities like Bikaner reportedly starting in the 19th century. The specific introduction of kite flying to Jaipur is often attributed to Maharaja Ram Singh II, who brought the practice to the city around 150 years ago (mid-1800s).

He even established a dedicated kite factory and a system with horsemen to retrieve cut kites during the evening. This led to the prominent cultural phenomenon of kite flying in Rajasthan, especially during the Makar Sankranti festival in January each year.

While the exact origins of kites globally trace back to ancient China over 2,000 years ago, their earliest widespread adoption as a cultural and recreational activity in the specific region of Rajasthan is linked to these 19th-century developments.

In China, the kite has been claimed as the invention of the 5th-century BC Chinese philosophers Mozi and Lu Ban, who flew wooden kites, called man-ken. With the invention of paper in the Han dynasty, kites made of paper became popular, and kites were called zhiyuan. Materials ideal for kite building were readily available, including silk fabric for sail material; fine, high-tensile-strength silk for flying line; and resilient bamboo for a strong, lightweight framework. By 549 AD, a kite was used as a message for a rescue mission. Ancient Chinese texts describe kites being used for measuring distances, testing the wind, lifting men, signaling, and communication for military operations. The earliest known Chinese kites were flat (not bowed) and often rectangular. Later, tailless kites incorporated a stabilizing bowline. Kites were decorated with mythological motifs and legendary figures. By the Tang dynasty, bamboo flutes, whistles, and ribbons were attached to kites to create sound, the precursor to the modern fengheng, named after the sound the kites made in the wind. After its introduction into India, the kite further evolved into the fighter kite, known as the patang in India, where thousands are flown every year on



festivals such as Makar Sankranti. Kites were known throughout Polynesia, as far as New Zealand, with the assumption being that the knowledge diffused from China along with the people. Anthropomorphic kites, made from cloth and wood, were used in religious ceremonies to send prayers to the gods.

Kites were late to arrive in Europe, although windsock-like banners were known and used by the Romans. Stories of kites were first brought to Europe by Marco Polo towards the end of the 13th century, and kites were brought back by sailors from Japan and Malaysia in the 16th and 17th centuries. Konrad Kyser described dragon kites in Bellifortis about 1400 AD. Although kites were initially regarded as mere curiosities, by the 18th and 19th centuries, they were being used as vehicles for scientific research. In 1752, Benjamin Franklin published an account of a kite experiment to prove that lightning was caused by electricity. Kites were also instrumental in the research of the Wright brothers, and others, as they developed the first airplane in the late 1800s. Several different designs of man-lifting kites were developed. The period from 1860 to about 1910 became the European 'golden age of kiting.'

In the 20th century, many new kite designs were developed. These included Eddy's tailless diamond, the tetrahedral kite, the Rogallo wing, the sled kite, the parafoil, and power kites. Kites were used for scientific purposes, especially in meteorology, aeronautics, wireless communications and photography. The Rogallo wing was adapted for stunt kites and hang gliding and the parafoil was adapted for parachuting and paragliding.



They set up hideouts in jungles near Chowkibal, a town in Kupwara district on the Indian side.



he first signs Operation Gibraltar were visible in early August 1965. Routine Patrols began reporting strangers in the high meadows. Villagers were often heard talking about men who claimed to be traders or herders but carried themselves like soldiers. Radio chatter that didn't match was being picked up. On the face of it, scattered dots on a map but the signs were revealing. There was a feeling that something was not right in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan's plan was audacious: slip thousands of trained men, disguised as civilians in coordinated columns, across the Ceasefire Line (CFL) and ignite an insurgency. The groups named after eight historical Muslim invaders such as Salahuddin, Babur, Ghaznavi and Tariq, were sent along designated routes with specific objectives starting from Kargil extending along Kishan Ganga River and further Southwards till Poonch. It was expected to garner local support and trigger mass uprising in J&K. Designed to tie down the Indian

Army before regular Pakistani forces could exploit the chaos. Their aim was to create a 'People's War' in the Valley with a view to justify Pakistan intervention. General Harkabsh said it was "brilliant in conception."

But though ambitious, Operation Gibraltar was fundamentally flawed. There was an intelligence and analysis failure by Pakistan which relied excessively on inputs by few radical elements within the Valley who promised more than they could deliver regarding whipping up anti-India sentiment.

It also underestimated the Indian Army's preparedness, over-estimated local support, and more importantly assumed infiltration routes would remain undetected. As the signs of hostile activities started emerging, the Indian Army moved rapidly from reactive defence to pre-emptive and offensive counter-operations, thus upsetting all Pakistani calculations.

#### Detection and Intelligence Fusion

The infiltration of the Gibraltar Force at various points across the 750-km long Cease-fire Line began on 05 August 1965. Initially, about 1,500 infiltrators crossed over in small batches, and concentrated at selected points organizing themselves into larger groups. The second batch of infiltrators, comprising some 6000 men, was pushed into Jammu and Kashmir in the third

week of August. On the whole, about 8,000 infiltrators participated in these operations. By the first week of September 1965, a choice batch of infiltrators, approximately 5,500 strong, was ready in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir for induction. But they could not be sent across the border due to the counter-offensive launched by India in Punjab.

#### Counter-Infiltration Operations

Recognising the magnitude of the threat, Army HQ tasked Western Command to neutralize the infiltrators before they could consolidate. 15 Corps' first move was to choke off the entry points the infiltrators depended on. Battalions were redeployed from depth areas to forward blocking positions in infiltration-prone areas. Mountain artillery Batteries were shifted to dominate likely approach routes and logistics were pushed up to sustain forward Platoons on exposed ridgelines.

Signals Detachments were embedded directly with Brigade HQs, ensuring that intercepted enemy transmissions could be turned into actionable intelligence within minutes. Air-Observation Post (Air OP) helicopters, risky to fly in such terrain, were tasked with scouting infiltration camps for strikes. Having successfully carried out a counter infiltration campaign, Lieutenant General Harkabsh Singh, the Western Army Commander, thereafter

## #OPERATION GIBALTAR 1965



India deployed 100,000 soldiers during the war.

pushed for three major offensives to seal J&K from further infiltration. The first was in the capture of three dominating Pakistani Posts in the Kargil Sector; thereafter, in Kishan Ganga Tithwal Sector where he had been a Brigade Commander in 1948, and finally, he concentrated on the strategic bulge between Uri and Poonch.

#### Kargil Sector: Recapture of Kargil Heights

In the Kargil Sector, the first step was to recapture the three Pakistani posts on the Kargil heights, which posed a constant danger to Srinagar-Leh Road. The Kargil heights, which had been captured by India in May 1965, were returned to Pakistan in June, in response to UN appeal.

On 14 August, a Task Force led by Major Balwant Singh of 17 PUNJAB captured Point 13620, Saddle, and Black Rocks. These objectives were attacked from three different directions. The troops had to climb up the slopes through the gaps in the minefield created by the Engineers in the night. The operation commenced at 0001 hours as planned and all the three objectives were captured by the morning of 15 August, without suffering any casualty.

#### Tithwal Sector

In the Tithwal Sector, the 'Nusrat Force' did not function effectively despite the fact that it was supported by regular Pakistani troops located near Mirpur. However, from 13 to 18 August, the Pakistanis raided some Indian Posts and indulged in intensive firing. In retaliation, the Indian troops crossed the Cease-fire Line on 24 August and occupied three Pakistani Posts. It was during this action that a 'Divisional Order' signed by Maj Gen Akhtar Hussain Malik was captured. On 23 August, a combined Patrol of 2 RAJPUT and 3/8 GORKHA RIFLES secured the Ring Contour area across the Cease-fire Line. Although no opposition was encountered at the objective, the enemy shelled the position throughout the night. On 24 August, 1 SIKH attacked the Pakistani Post on Richhmar Ridge. The attack was ably led by Major Somesh Kapoor, and the enemy, taken by surprise, fled in confusion. On the night of 25-26 August 1965, Pir Sahiba was captured after a determined climb and close combat. This blocked key infiltration routes into Kashmir. On 03-04 September, 3/8 GORKHA RIFLES attacked the Sunjoi feature. After crossing

minefields and fighting hand-to-hand, they successfully evicted Pakistanis from the feature. Two enemy counter-attacks were beaten back. By mid-September, Indian patrols found Parni and Mirpur abandoned, and on 20-21 September night, 4 KUMAON captured Point 9013 after three hours of fierce fighting. The Indian forces now secured control over the Mirpur Sector up to the Kishan Ganga River.

#### Uri-Haji Pir: Closing the Gateway

Haji Pir Pass, at 8,652 feet, was the key. Whoever held it could control and dominate the main infiltration route between Pakistan-held territory and the Poonch-Uri axis. So long as the Pass was in Pakistani hands, Gibraltar's columns could keep coming. The Pass was dominated by three adjoining hill features, Bedori (3760 m) in the North-East, Ledwali Gali (3140 m) in the North-West and Sank (2895 m) in the North. The capture of these features was considered necessary for advancing to Haji Pir Pass. The Haji Pir Operation, designed as a major pincer, called for a Northern thrust along the Uri-Haji Pir axis and a Southern push from the Punch-Kahuta side. The objective



#### Celebrating the Joy of Kites on International Kite Day

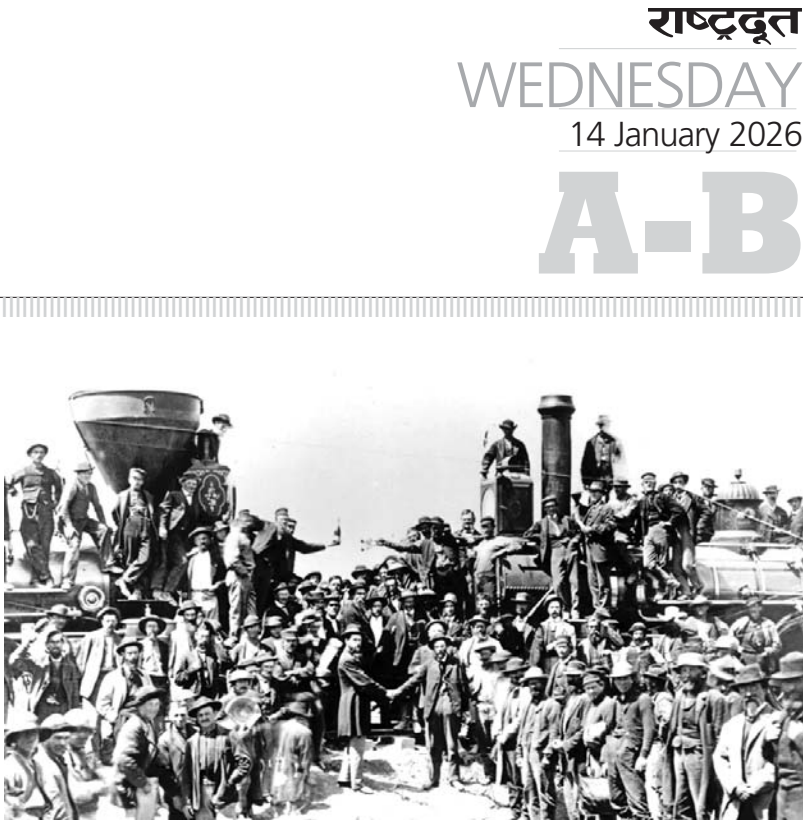
They're colourful, graceful, and dance freely in the sky, yes, they are kites! International Kite Day brings together enthusiasts from all walks of life, each showcasing their uniquely decorated creations. Believed to have originated in China over 2,000 years ago, kites were once used for practical purposes, like a general measuring battlefields, before becoming symbols of joy and creativity. In India, kite flying gained popularity around 500 years ago, often used in playful and romantic gestures. Today, the day celebrates culture, tradition, and the simple thrill of watching kites soar high above us.

# Don't Think Of A Gibraltar Again Pakistan

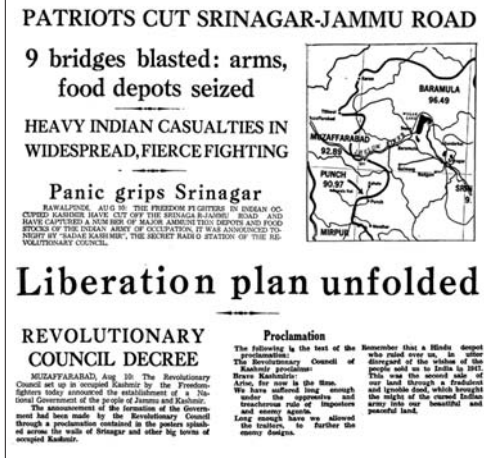


The Kashmir boundary has been a flashpoint for several decades.

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Railroad officials and employees celebrate the completion of the first railroad transcontinental link in Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869. The Union Pacific's Locomotive No. 119 and Central Pacific's Jupiter edged forward over the golden spike that marked the joining of the nation by rail.



PARA, Lieutenant Colonel Prabhjinder Singh, was now tasked to capture Haji Pir Pass. A small, self-contained, mixed Company Group was formed under Major (later Lieutenant General) RS Dyal. The column started descending, at 1530 hours on 27 August, from Ledwali Gali into the Hyderabad nullah along the Spur. Two intermediate objectives, Ring Contours 1194 and 1094, were also to be captured. About 1730 hours, it started raining heavily making the going very difficult. By 1900 hours, the Company Group reached Hyderabad nullah. It was now completely dark and Major Ranjit Dyal decided to climb to the Pass.

At 0430 hours, the Company hit the old Uri-Punch Road, 10 kms below the Pass. Here, the troops were given a much-needed rest in a very cold and bitter morning before the final assault. At 0700 hours, the column was again on the march. They reached 700 meters short of the Pass by 0900 hours.

The men again came under fire but Major Dyal ordered two Platoons to climb on to the Spur and assault the enemy from the Western side of the Pass. The enemy could not withstand this daring daylight attack and withdrew in confusion. By 1000 hours on 28 August, the objective had been taken and the Tricolour flew on Haji Pir Pass.

Major Ranjit Singh Dyal then repulsed the expected fierce counterattack on 29 August, surviving a

LMG burst in close-quarter combat that pierced his web equipment but left him unscathed. In one stroke, the main artery of Operation Gibraltar was cut. Both Brigadier Z C Bakshi and Major Ranjit Singh Dyal were awarded the Maha Vir Chakra.

#### Operation FAULAD

Meanwhile, 93 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier Zora Singh, had been pushing Northwards to establish a link up. There were many hill features between Punch and Kahuta which dominated the Punch-Haji Pir track. The enemy picquets also had cement emplacements for MMGs and shelled bunkers.

'Operation FAULAD' saw gallant actions fought for the capture of the Raja and Chand Tekri picquets, both of which were considered to be virtually impregnable. On the night of 05/06 September 1965, a simultaneous attack was launched on Raja and Chand Tekri picquets by 2 SIKH and 3 DOGRA respectively. As the approach lay along steep and slippery slopes, the assaulting troops had to crawl on all fours rather than walk. When they neared the picquets, heavy automatic fire greeted them. A grim hand-to-hand battle raged for over two hours before the picquets fell. Raja picquet fought to the last man. The Indian side also suffered heavy casualties. During the assault on Raja Picquet on 06 September,

Lieutenant Colonel NN Khanna, commanding 2 SIKH, laid down his life while leading his men bravely. He was decorated with the Maha Vir Chakra for his exceptional courage and leadership.

With the fall of Raja and Chand Tekri, the back of Gibraltar Force was broken. Thereafter, Indian troops faced little difficulty in mopping up and liquidating the remaining pockets of resistance in the area. The link-up was completed with the capture of Kahuta on 10 September 1965, and with that, the mouth of the Bulge was sealed.

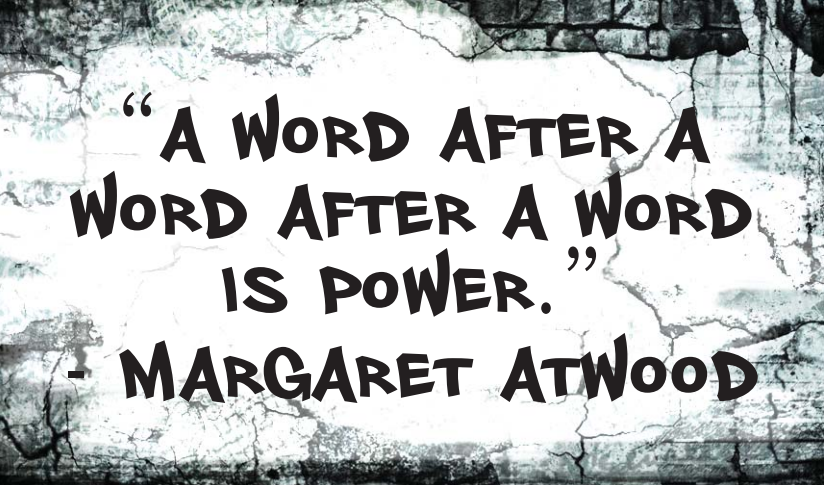
Operation Gibraltar was meant to be a covert blow, giving Pakistan deniability while undermining India's hold on Jammu and Kashmir. Instead, it turned into a lesson in how bad assumptions and weak intelligence can set off a chain reaction. India answered this threat with calm but firm moves that involved counter-infiltration grids, sharp thrusts across the Ceasefire Line, and quick mobilization to meet any wider threat. By the end of it all, Operation Gibraltar collapsed in less than a month. Pakistan's gamble regarding the liberation of Kashmir remained a pipe dream due to a combination of rapid strategic diagnosis, resolve and sector-specific tactics. Unfortunately, Pakistan is yet to learn its lesson.

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A Kashmiri village destroyed during the war.

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman