ARBiT
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International Migrants Day

A broad range of factors continue to determine the movement of people. They are either voluntary or forced movements as a result of the increased magnitude and frequency of disasters, economic challenges and extreme poverty or conflict. Approximately 281 million people were international migrants in 2020, representing 3.6 per cent of the global population. All these will significantly affect the characteristics and scale of migration in the future and determine the strategies and policies countries must develop.

राष्ट्रदूत
SATURDAY
18 December 2021
A-B

#EVENT

Gems & Jewellery Galore

The 17th edition of Jaipur Jewellery Show will take place from 24 December to 27 December this year. To be held at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre in Sitapura, the show will witness booths displaying jewellery, gemstones, costumes, artefacts, among others. Around 40,000 domestic and foreign visitors are expected to attend the show.

Tusharika Singh
Freelancer writer and city blogger

With the objective of giving an impetus to the Gems and Jewellery trade and positioning the Pink City on the World Gem & Jewellery Map, the annual Jaipur Jewellery Show (JJS) began in 2003 under the leadership of Late Rashmikant Durlabhji. While it started with just 67 stalls in the first edition, it grew from strength to strength each year and also witnessed better venues and facilities for its exhibitors and buyers making the show a force to reckon with not just in India but also internationally. Owing to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the show could not be organized each year. However, this year the exhibition will be organized from 24 December to 27 December at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre in Sitapura.

800 Booths at the 17th JJS

Popularly known as The December Show, the 17th edition of Jaipur Jewellery Show will witness a whopping 800 booths this year. Out of these 800 booths, 500 will display jewellery, 204 will display gemstones, 64 will display machinery and 10 will showcase costumes, articles and artefacts. A unique aspect of the show is that not only the products but the way stalls are aesthetically created by each exhibitor is an added attraction.

JJS will also be providing free stalls to 15-20 budding jewellery designers. Apart from this, there will also be a stall of 'Museum of Gem and Jewellery Federation' in Jaipur. This time JJS will be attended by 82 new participants and several national brands. The show is expected to be attended by 40,000 domestic and foreign visitors who will get the opportunity to witness the latest and the finest of what the Gems & Jewellery industry has to offer. As many as 400 retailers have also confirmed their participation for the 17th JJS.

JJS-IJ Jewellers' Choice Design Awards

JJS-IJ Jewellers' Choice Design Awards, powered by GIA, will be held once again this year. Now in its 11th year, 'JJS-IJ Jewellers' Choice Design Awards' has created a special place in the hearts of jewellery connoisseurs in and around India.

Over 600 designs have participated in the IJ Awards this year. From these, over 100 designs were evaluated by the eminent jury. The awards will be given away in a glamourous ceremony on the evening of 24 December at JECC Convention Centre by a Bollywood film star.

Jaipur Jewellery Design Festival (JJDF)

To celebrate and promote designers in all its glory, Jaipur Jewellery Show is hosting Jaipur Jewellery Design Festival (JJDF) for the third time this year again.

The festival will have various activities including product display by eminent designer brands, an art gallery to display gemstones artistically, seminars and panel discussions, virtual display of jewellery etc. along with a library, cafeteria, and live music to give a festive look. This year JJDF will give a platform to the students of 5 to 6 prominent designing institutes where these budding designers will display their creations.

This JJDF 2021 will also have women-centric activities where the artwork of selected women jewellers and artisans will be displayed in a very aesthetic manner. The Organizing committee of JJS has also decided to felicitate women designers for their remarkable contribution to the trade through their skill and work.

It's Time to Sparkle

While earlier the show was organized on themes like Ruby, Emerald, Tanzanite, Diamond etc., this year's theme is 'It's Time to Sparkle'. The theme appropriately reflects the consumer's confidence in the jewellery as well as tremendous enthusiasm for the show.

Lt General Himmeth Singh

Air Marshal Chandan Singh

Lt Gen Sagat Singh

An Ant's Eye View of the Liberation War

Maj Chandrakant Singh VrC *(Retd)*
Military Historian

#D-DAY

D Day. In military parlance D Day is the day on which according to plans made earlier a military operation is to commence and the time frame for objectives to be achieved if after the commencement of the operation is given as D+5 or whatever, in layman's language it will mean that if the operation is to commence on 15 December which is the D Day than it has to be completed by 20 December which will be D+5. Similarly the time is indicated as H Hour. If some action has to be undertaken before the designated D Day then it will be indicated as D-5 (D minus 5) which would mean 10 December. In military plans which are made earlier in some cases a year or even more all dates and times will be indicated in D Days and H Hours and depending on the situation the specific calendar date and time is given later and can be adjusted according to need and circumstances.

Inspired and encouraged by the account of the 1971 War by my senior in NDA the former Chief of the Indian Navy Admiral Madhavendra Singh published in Arbit on 4 December, I have put together the accounts by three of India's greatest field commanders: Lt. Gen Sagat Singh, Air Vice Marshal Chandan Singh and Lt. Gen Himmeth Singh. General Himmeth was my battalion commander during the war. It was India's good fortune to have these commanders during the war for it is they who led the advance to Dacca. For me to serve under them and be a recipient of their very kind words of appreciation is to me a greater honour greater by far than the medals I wear.

Air Marshal Chandan Singh

My Background in the Area of Conflict.

I was Station Commander Jorhat, which had 2 transport squadrons, a helicopter flight, & a detachment of Hunters & Gnats. I was not supposed to take any part in the war, I was detailed by AOC-in-C Eastern Air Command to take over charge of training the Bangladesh Air force nucleus & build it up to at least a squadron level strength. I had a satellite airfield at Dimapur & placed with 100 Bangladeshi airmen & 12 officers mostly pilots. From the IAF we gave them 2 Otter single engine passenger aircraft, & 1 Alouette helicopter on loan for training & to make them operational.

Our aim eventually was to equip them with Hunters, at that time their pilots & airmen were under qualified. The pilots were trained to fly at ultra-low level at night for carrying out clandestine operations. The Alouette helicopter, for the first time, was equipped with 2 rocket pods one on each under carriage strut, each carrying 14 rockets. In addition we had a LMG mounted behind the pilots, & 2 chutes for dropping 25-pound bombs. Similar attachments were also put on board the Otter aircraft. Training was extensive, & within a month we trained 5 pilots to fly both aircraft solo in all roles of bombing or rocketing at night. It so happened that as soon as these chaps had finished their training we were asked to move to Kumbigram. AOC-in-C asked me to go there & launch operations before the war started.

We arrived at Kumbigram on the 2nd morning in a clandestine manner. We were told that, that night 1 aircraft was to bomb the fuel dump at Chittagong, & another was to bomb the Narayanganj fuel dump. We were all set, but the operation was postponed· by 24 hours. On the 3rd night under a brilliant moon we were told to launch this operation at 0100 on the 4th. The Alouette was detailed to go to Narayangunj & the Otter to Chittagong. We were anxious for the return of these aircraft, as it was their 1st mission in the war. After an hour & a 1/2 I got airborne in the other Otter, so see if there was a glow in the sky as that would tell us of the success of the operation. Sure enough there was a bright glow coming from Chittagong, & on flying towards Dacca I saw a glow coming from Narayanganj.

This little operation although may not have contributed much, other than lowering morale & telling Pakistan that India meant business & was going to use its air arm as well. Later in the morning I was told that the war was on and that Pakistanis had launched pre-emptive attacks on some of our airfields in the west. Therefore a full-fledged war was on in the west as well as in the east.

I would like to make mention of two of these gallant Bangladeshi pilots, one is Sq. Leader Sultan and the other Flt. Lt. Alam. Alam piloted the Alouette went to Narayanganj, and Sultan went to Chittagong. Both were brimming with joy to be part of the liberation of their country. These two along with Flying Officer Ali continued to operate night and day through-out the war, in support of heliborne operations and to destroy stray transport, LOC's etc.

Operations with 4 Corp

On the 3rd morning I was asked to go to Tiliamura, the HQ of 4 Corp, and meet Gen. Sagat Singh. I met him late that evening as soon as he arrived and stayed the night; it was quite an experience. He was full of energy and dynamism; he asked me as to what our little Bangladesh Airforce could do. As a starter, he said that I must leave Kumbigram immediately & come closer to any one of 3 border airstrips available - Kelashehar, Kamalpur or Khowai. I selected Kelashehar, as that was where the action was on. He asked me to target transport movement, LOC's, machine gun concentration of troops and if possible destroy an odd bridge here or there. However, he wanted regular feedback on our doings.

I arrived at Kelashehar with my little Bangladesh Airforce on the morning of the 4th. From Kelashehar we mounted a total of 36 sorties on the 4th, 5th & 6th. Mostly disrupting the LOC between Munshibazar - Franchinganj, Munshibazar - Bhramanbaria. I not sure of the success we had with these 3 aircraft, but on the sorties that I was on, we did attack road transport and convoys. On my sorties with Flt. Lt. Singhla (IAF) and Flt. Lt. Sultan (BAF), we managed to hit 3 troop transports. I have my log book in front of me, it mentions two transports were totally destroyed, in the other mission "targets hit but results not known". I am sure similar achievements must have been made during other sorties.

On the 5th evening, over the telephone, I was told by Gen. Sagat Singh that I should call on Maj. Gen. Krishna Rao who was in that area. And enquire if I could be of some help to his operations. I called him on the 6th morning, that particular day a battle had been raging short of Shamshernagar at a place called Alinagar Tea Gardens. I had been watching the progress of this battle from Kelashehar itself, and when the guns at last fell silent I got airborne and landed at Shamshernagar airstrip. I had thought of using this airstrip to move further forward, but found that it had been dynamited to an extent that it was unsuitable even for helicopters. It was very badly pitted, and there were holes all over the airstrip. Nevertheless, we landed there and I got hold of a jeep and asked the driver to take me to the Div. HQ. I noticed a large number of bunkers and foxholes that had been damaged by our own fire or damaged by the retreating Pakistanis. The Div. HQ was slap-bang in the middle of Alinagar Tea Gardens itself.

The caravan in which the commander was staying and had his office, was in a clearing where a helicopter could land. I called on him, and before we could start a conversation we heard a helicopter noise, sure enough it was Gen. Sagat Singh arriving. I was then called in and was told to act as the eyes and ears of the Div. Commander. In addition the Corp Commander said that some more helicopters were being inducted.

On the 6th morning itself he called me up again and said that the garrison at Sylhit (a brigade & a battalion) wanted to surrender. Since our troops were not close enough, I was to fly to the Sylhit airstrip - accept the instrument of surrender and bring it to him, or, if he was to offer the surrender to me, to accept the surrender. It was a great moment and an honour and I was thrilled that time had selected me for participating in this occasion. Early on the 7th morning, as per instructions, I got airborne and went to Sylhit where I saw a dead town with no human movement at all.

I flew on to the airstrip that was 2 ½ miles north of the town; again against my expectation of seeing a large force lined up to surrender, there was no movement. I did two orbits and again saw no movement whatsoever, I had half a mind to return but decided to land, as these were my orders. Maybe these chaps were hiding and after I landed they would come over and offer the surrender. Against my instincts I decided to land this little Alouette helicopter, I was just about to touch down when I heard the rattle tattle of machinegun fire from all directions. I was very lucky that at that moment instinct worked for me, I came up on the collective, opened throttle and got away on a very low level hugging the trees till outside their range of fire. I didn't know if the aircraft would be serviceable, but climbed to 4000 feet away from the airstrip to have a look at the trouble. Once again there was no movement, and I was wondering if I should go down again.

I decided against it and came back to Shamshemagar, and drove straight to the Div. HQ. Sure enough the omnipresent Gen. Sagat Singh was also there. I told him - Sir, I had gone there but there was no reception and that my aircraft had been literally perforated by bullets. Gen. Sagat Singh didn't bat an eyelid, it made no difference to him whether I was hit or not. He said, well then, if that is the case we must now launch a heliborne operation against Sylhit. He didn't express any sympathy. He was looking forward to the launching of an attack on Sylhit. He told me now you're with us and you stay with us. (This partnership between Sagat and Chandan was our greatest battle winning factor.)

Lt. General Himmeth Singh's account.

In 1971, I was the commanding officer of 4Guards a battalion that I had been commissioned into in 1949. It is every officer's dream to command his battalion in war, I was lucky that now that dream was to be fulfilled. I talk of the Battle of Akhaura: the first indication that I as a Battalion Commander was given of this battle in which my battalion fought as part of 311 Mountain Brigade; was one evening when my Brigade Commander rang me up to say that he'd like me in his commander's hut that evening at 2100 hrs. When I arrived the two other Battalion Commanders, Sahni and Ashok Verma were there. At one end of the sitting room was a blown up chart of the border area between Tripura going towards Bangladesh, including a place called Akhaura. Thereafter for the next 3 to 4 hours we discussed what ultimately, historically is known as the Battle of Akhaura.

He posed the problem to us, that if the brigade was required to secure Akhaura, how would we go about it? It is odd that the three of us brought up in the same kind of military tradition, chose to do it three different ways. We then batted the three viewpoints with the Brigade Commander, and no final decision was taken at this time. But, at the back of my mind I had no doubt that soon I would have to take part in this Battle at Akhaura, which would possibly be the initiation of the War of Liberation of Bangladesh.

The initial plan conceived, visualised the movement by infiltration of my battalion. With one company moving west of Akhaura, while the remainder of the battalion was going to attack by infiltration, the railway station of Akhaura, which was supposed to be the centre of defence of Akhaura. At one of the war games that were held shortly before we went to war, the plans were presented to Gen. Arora. And Gen. Arora suggested that possibly, the infiltrating force was not suitable for the Battle of Akhaura in strength.

We modified the plan, and thereafter the task given to various people in the brigade. 10 Bihar would lead the initial infiltration up to a place called Lonesar, a little south of Akhaura. Thereafter a gap which was to be found in the southern defences of the Akhaura position and 4 Guards was to infiltrate the entire battalion and locate themselves on the west of Akhaura. While the remainder of the brigade, that is the Biharis' and the Rajputs' would attack Akhaura from the south. Supporting this action of the brigade, would be a simulated attack by an East Bengal Regiment battalion from the north. To clear our line of communication from the Agartala - Tripura border to Akhaura, 12 Kumaon was supposed, and was in actual fact required to clear the Border Outpost of Akhaura, which was on the border.

These final changes were implemented in the tasking of 311 Mountain Brigade, and thereafter it was only a matter of time before we were told the actual day when the operations would be launched. This was told to us on the last day of November, that we would go to war on the evening of 1st December.

I was fortunate enough to have a fine crowd of officers as well as a very talented battalion with whom I had served from the day I was commissioned to the day which comes to very few, when they are fortunate enough to take their battalion to war. Fortunately it had come to me, and there was mutual understanding between all concerned. Which gave me on 1st December, a day, I found I had very little to do. I chose therefore to go take a crack at the golf ball on the local golf course, and managed to play 9 holes before we finally started our infiltration at last light. (16 days later the same four were to play golf at the Dacca Course when Niazi was signing the surrender document.)

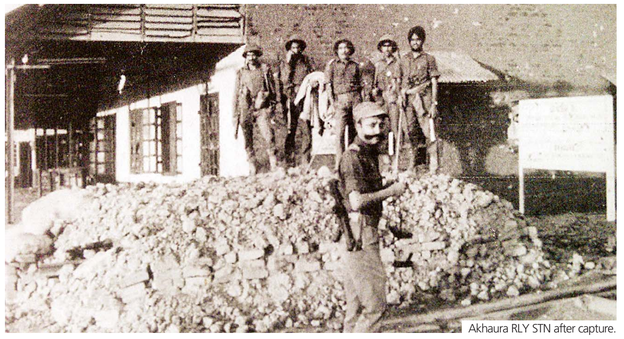
In the East the sun sets early and more so in winter months. We commenced infiltration soon after six in the evening. Harassed by enemy fire, both direct small arms and indirect artillery, and unforeseen difficulties we arrived in our general area of deployment by six in the morning, hours behind schedule. We were asked to go into company sized blocks all within spitting distance of the enemy. This would have been impossible but for heavy fog that screened our movement.

One of the strike rifle companies was commanded by Chandrakant. Born a Rajput he nearly had the shortest of army careers ever. On passing out of the Indian Military Academy, he was posted to the Army Service Corps. Hugely disappointed he told the authorities he would resign if not posted to a fighting unit.Though changes are rarely forthcoming, fortunately his posting was altered to 4 Guards.

Chandrakant now a major, reached his designated area of deployment. The position dominated the Akhaura-Brahmanbaria railway line, the main enemy withdrawal route.

A platoon of his that was positioned towards the West, was surprised by enemy tanks and infantry and decimated. Two lads returned to tell the sorry story. For the next three days, Chandrakant's company was hit with everything the Pakies could muster: they were physically assaulted, engaged by artillery, fired at point blank range by tanks and even strafed by enemy aircraft until I thought they could take anymore. Speaking to the Brigade Commander I told him that we were asking too much from Chandrakant and his men and requested for their withdrawal. I was told not to act prematurely. The final decision was mine, he said, but I should take it after meeting Chandrakant.

The next morning near ten as I was approaching Chandrakant's locality it came under intense artillery fire. It lifted as I reached his defences. Looking around I saw Chandrakant striding towards me from the right a little outside the Company's perimeter. On reaching us he wished me with a chuckle and said: "Sir, these Pakistanis have terrific noses. "Seeing me perplexed he continued," On the first day I went behind a bush to relieve myself at seven in the morning and no sooner I had got my pants down the enemy artillery opened up. Yesterday I went at eight and the same thing happened. Today I thought I would flummox them by going later and went to the bog a few minutes ago and they still caught me with my pants down." I was amazed at his flippant remark and that after nearly seventy two hours of near hell.



Akhaura RLY STN after capture.

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Maj Chandrakant and Col Himmeth Singh

Maj Gen Abdul Majid Surrendering to Maj Gen Gonzalves.

PAK tank captured by us on 5 Dec at Akhaura now outside Dacca Intercontinental Hotel for security.

Lt. Gen. Sagat Singh's account.

After the war, General Sagat Singh speaking about the action of Chandrakant's company said: "the HQ of Maj Gen Kazi Abdul Majid GOC 14 DIV was also located alongside the 27 Brigade HQ at Brahmanbaria. They had created a divisional reserve of three companies drawing a company each from battalions of the Frontier Force, Baluch and Azad Kashmir regiments. These three companies along with two troops of PT76 tanks were used to counter attack the company of 4 Guards that had gone across the river and positioned itself behind the Pakistani defences. The company did not have any anti-tank weapons. The Pakistanis made a total of four attempts to dislodge this company of 4 Guards.

It is to the credit of this company that in spite of having no anti-tank weapons or armour, it held firm. In the counter attacks the Pakistani tactic was to make a number of armour/infantry rushes from different sides, hoping the company would dislodge. Over all it was a very tough battle and our troops fought with great determination and valour."

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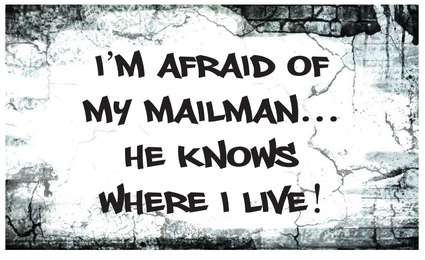
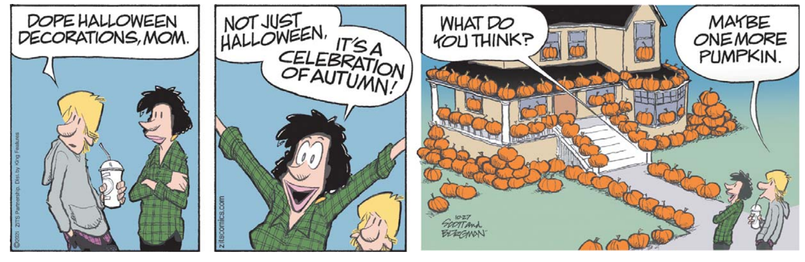
Note: The near annihilation of three companies which comprised the total reserve of 4 Pak Div deprived it of any ability to take any initiative or countermeasures against our further moves. The only alternative left to the Pakistanis was to withdraw or take shelter inside their fortified areas which they did, only to come out later to surrender.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS

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