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# Azadi

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INDIA AT WAR: A JOURNEY THROUGH  
BATTLES, BRAVERY, AND HISTORY

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# BATTLES FOR SOVEREIGNTY



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## EDITORIAL

Rummaging through the pages of a giant dictionary called 'Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language' at a library in Lucknow years ago I found an interesting distinction in the meaning of Independence and sovereignty. Independence means absence of dependence; from factors holding one back social economic or political. Sovereignty is the ability of a nation to stand alone and being free from any foreign influence. In the context of India's struggle for Independence this acquires great meaning. We won freedom/independence from foreign rule in 1947 but our sovereignty has been challenged a number of times. The pulls and pressures of power blocks, or the war with Pakistan and one with China. Of late arm twisting of the Trump regime with its tariffs is one such case point of our sovereignty being challenged even beyond wars on the borders.

This issue covers the major episodes on the frontline that India fought from 1948 onwards till operation Sindoor. The budding writers have made an effort to bring to light the lesser-known battles fought in the many great wars. As the readers would know, a war as such is a collection of many battles. In this way this yearly magazine from the Department of Humanities and Commerce is a tribute to the Brave.

Happy Reading!

-Prashant Chaturvedi

## WE ARE AT WAR WITH INDIA: ATTACK ON LAHORE REPULSED

### Indian enclaves north of Ravi wiped out

### 800 ENEMY TROOPS KILLED OR HURT

RAWALPINDI, SEPT 6: PAKISTAN TROOPS HAVE THROWN BACK INDIAN AGGRESSORS AND HAVE RECAPTURED THE ENCLAVE SOUTH OF RIVER RAVI IN THE JASSAR AREA WHICH WAS OCCUPIED BY THE INDIAN ARMY IN THEIR FIRST TREACHEROUS PUSH EARLY THIS MORNING.

IN ADDITION, THE INDIAN ENCLAVES NORTH OF THE RIVER HAVE ALSO BEEN LIQUIDATED. AN OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN SAID HERE TONIGHT, PAKISTAN ARMY WAS NOW IN FULL CONTROL OF THE SITUATION IN JASSAR.

Eight hundred Indian armymen were killed or wounded today during fierce fighting on the West Pakistan borders. The battle rations are littered with Indian dead bodies, knocked out tanks, vehicles and weapons. In the Jassar fighting 200 bodies of the Indian soldiers were physically counted and listed after the enemy had been beaten back.

In other sectors of the 500-mile long Lahore front Indian attacks were repulsed by the Pakistan Army with heavy casualties on the enemy. A number of Indian were taken prisoners.

The situation around Wazirabad and Indian has been stabilised. All Wazirabad Indian advances have been fully halted and the enemy is being contained and cornered.

**STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED**

President Ayub yesterday morning declared a State of Emergency in the country.

The Government of Pakistan strenuously protested

### PAF annihilates 22 enemy jets

### STUNNING BLOW TO IAF AT PATHANKOT

RAWALPINDI, Sept 6: Pakistan Air Force today scored a major triumph over India in the air battle when 22 enemy fighter-aircraft were destroyed in operations during the day.

The number of those destroyed was not known, a spokesman said here tonight.

The PAF lost two Sabres during these day-long operations.

Following the invasion of Pakistan by the Indian Force, and the indiscriminate attack by the Indian Air Force against undefended land targets inside Pakistan early this morning, when an IAF "Mistral" jet was shot down by our fighters, the PAF though heavily outnumbered, retaliated with speed and precision.

**PATHANKOT STRIKE**

The spokesman said the aircraft were directed against the enemy aircraft on the ground at Pathankot (East Punjab) — one of the well-defended forward operational airfields which are located in the general area of host operations.

The spokesman said following this retaliatory strike by the PAF at Pathankot 12 Indian Air Force aircraft were burning — nine of which were the supermarine Spitfires built 1942-21. Some others were reported downed.

In "higher sweeps" over the Indian territory, the PAF engaged by IAF planes, the resulting battle and fighting against heavy odds, the PAF fighter pilots, shot down eight Heavier jets.

The PAF has since Sept 1 destroyed 31 Indian warplanes.—AFP/PA.

### Strike hard at the evil: Ayub's stirring call

RAWALPINDI, Sept 6: "We are at war", declared President Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, in a special broadcast to the nation, following this morning's Indian attack on Pakistan territory in the Lahore area.

The President further said: "Our brave soldiers have gone forward to repel the enemy. The armed forces of Pakistan will press their battle. Armed with an invincible spirit and a determination, which has never faltered they will give a crushing blow to the enemy."

The President declared: "The hour of trial for a hundred million people of Pakistan has struck. The Indian Army attacked Pakistan territory in the early hours this morning on the Lahore front. In a cowardly fashion they also straddled from the air a stationary passenger train in Wazirabad. This is a gross insult to the claim of world sets of aggression which the Indian rulers have been committing for the last five months," the President said.

**Restraint misunderstood**


Outlining the background, President Ayub Khan said "The Indian Army started with their violation of the ceasefire line in July when they occupied three posts on our side in Margil sector. At the intervention of the United Nations, the Indians temporarily vacated these posts and then re-occupied them in August. In their aggression, they proceeded to occupy posts in Tikhal sector and then moved in full strength in the Sri-Panack area. Not content with shattering the ceasefire line they shelled village Awan in Pakistan territory. It was clear that the restraint which we have exercised in the face of all these provocations was misunderstood by the Indians. To contain the Indian aggression the Aard Kashmir Forces were obliged to move in the Hindustan Sector."

The President said: "The Indians recklessly swung their Air Force into action thus precipitating a grave crisis. By then it had become clear to the whole world that Indian aggression in Kashmir was only a preparation for an attack on Pakistan."

**India's evil intentions**

The President emphasised: "Today they have given final proof of this kind of the evil intention which India has always harboured against Pakistan since its inception. The Indian rulers were never reconciled to the establishment of an independent Pakistan whose Muslims could build a homeland of their own. All their subtle preparations during the last 15 years have been directed against us."

The President continued: "They exploited the Chinese Super



### MUSA ASKS ARMY TO DESTROY ENEMY

### Order of the Day

RAWALPINDI, Sept 6: General Mohammad Musa, Commander-in-Chief, Pakistan Army, today asked the Pakistan Army to destroy the enemy which had attacked

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## THE BATTLE OF SHALATENG: A TURNING POINT IN THE FIRST INDO-PAK WAR

*Seventy-five years ago, the Battle of Shalateng played a decisive role in shaping the outcome of the First Indo-Pak War of 1947-48. Fought near Srinagar, this crucial engagement saved the city from a major Pakistani assault and marked a turning point in the conflict.*

*After India's independence on August 15, 1947, talks were underway about Jammu and Kashmir's accession. But on October 22, 1947, tribal raiders (Kabailis) backed by Pakistan invaded the princely state. Their aim was to capture Srinagar and force accession to Pakistan.*

*In response, Indian troops were airlifted to Kashmir. On November 7, 1947, a well-coordinated counter-offensive was launched by 1 Sikh, 1 Kumaon, 4 Kumaon, and a squadron from 7 Light Cavalry, supported by the Royal Indian Air Force. Indian soldiers, along with brave Kashmiri civilians, fought courageously and successfully pushed back the enemy near Shalateng, on the outskirts of Srinagar. The invading forces were defeated and driven out of the region, changing the course of the war.*



*This battle not only saved Srinagar but also allowed India to regain control of large parts of Jammu and Kashmir before the January 5, 1949, ceasefire. It is remembered as the most decisive battle of the war.*



*To honour this historic event, the Sharifabad Garrison was renamed Shalateng Garrison in 2004. As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a mural was painted on its wall showing soldiers raising the Indian flag, with the caption: "Battle of Shalateng - Most Decisive Battle of Indo-Pak 1947-48 War."*

*On November 7, 2022, the Army organised a light and sound show to reenact the battle, reminding the nation of the bravery and sacrifice that preserved the integrity of Jammu and Kashmir.*



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## THE BATTLE OF NAMKA CHU: A TURNING POINT IN THE 1962 INDO-CHINA WAR

The Battle of Namka Chu was one of the earliest and most significant battles in the Indo-China War of 1962, a short but intense conflict. This battle, fought in October 1962, exposed India's military weaknesses and marked the beginning of a devastating war. The conflict between India and China arose due to disagreements over the McMahon Line - a border drawn during British colonial rule, that China refused to recognise. "Forward Policy" followed by India established small military posts along the disputed areas to assert its claim, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh (then NEFA - North-East Frontier Agency).

A post was established along the Namka Chu river - a narrow valley located near Tawang. Indian forces, under Brigadier John Dalvi, were positioned in poor conditions, ill-equipped, and lacking proper winter clothing. On the 20th October 1962, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) launched a surprise attack on the Indian positions. Despite their courage, the Indian troops were overwhelmed by the more well-equipped and dominant superior Chinese forces. The battle lasted for about a week, and Indian defences were quickly invaded. Hundreds of Indian soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured. Brigadier Dalvi himself was caught and later wrote the book "Himalayan Blunder", a detailed report of the failures leading to the defeat.

The outcome of the battle was a major setback for India. As a result, Chinese forces advanced deeper into Indian territory in both the eastern and western border regions. The war ended in November 1962 when China declared a unilateral ceasefire after gaining significant ground.

The Battle of Namka Chu became a symbol of India's unpreparedness and lack of strategic planning. However, it also led to important reforms in India's defence system. In the years that followed, India modernized its army and improved infrastructure in border areas. Though painful, the battle served as a crucial lesson that reshaped India's military policy for the future.



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## LAST STAND AT THE ROOF OF THE WORLD THE SAGA OF REZANG LA

*The 1962 Sino-Indian War was a tough time for India, exposing some serious gaps in military and political readiness. But even amid all the chaos, there was a standout moment—the Battle of Rezang La. This battle took place at a rugged mountain pass in Ladakh, sitting high at 16,000 feet. It was crucial for defending the southern approach to Chushul Valley, which, by the way, had a pretty strategic airstrip.*



*Survivors like Honorary Captain Ramchandrar Yadav and Havaldar Nihal Singh shared gripping accounts of the intense fighting and the unbreakable spirit of Major Singh and his troops. Despite suffering heavy losses, 'C' Company inflicted significant damage on the Chinese, slowing down their advance in that area. Their courage and determination at Rezang La became a source of national pride.*

*The Indian defenders had to deal with some awful weather. I mean, freezing temps and high altitude really made their job tougher. Plus, there was a mountain blocking their artillery, putting them at a big disadvantage. The 13th Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment, specifically 'C' Company, was given the daunting task of holding this vital pass.*

*The battle was fierce, to say the least. The Chinese tried to outflank the Kumaonis, and there was some brutal hand-to-hand fighting. Even with their ammunition running low, the Kumaonis fought like lions, going down to the last few. Major Shaitan Singh, a remarkable leader, kept his men motivated even with bullets flying around. Tragically, he gave his life in the process, but his bravery earned him India's highest military honor posthumously.*

*Interestingly, after the battle, the Chinese showed a surprising amount of respect for the fallen Indian soldiers, covering their bodies with blankets and marking their spots with bayonets. Some soldiers were found frozen in their last moments, still clutching their weapons. The valor of 'C' Company, 13 Kumaon, was recognized far and wide. They received numerous awards, including one Param Vir Chakra, eight Vir Chakras, and four Sena Medals. They're considered one of the most decorated units in the history of the Indian Army.*

*On November 18, 1962, a small group of just a few hundred Indian troops found themselves facing a much larger Chinese force—around 3,000 to 4,000 soldiers, armed to the teeth. But against all odds, these Indian troops held their ground, biding their time to launch a counterattack as the enemy came closer.*



*So, while the overall war was a defeat for India, the Battle of Rezang La stands out as a powerful symbol of bravery and resilience. There's even a memorial at Chushul, perched at 15,000 feet, to honor these courageous soldiers, ensuring their sacrifice is never forgotten.*



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## BATTLE OF ASAL UTTAR 1965

'Asal Uttar' translates to a befitting reply. During the 1965 war, the Indian Army was assigned the task of defending the quiet town of Khemkaran in Punjab. Determined to respond to Pakistan's offensive, they were unaware that they would soon confront the powerful Patton tanks in a battle that would be etched in military history.

This battle, fought between 8- 10 September, is still remembered as one of India's greatest victories and is often compared to the Battle of Kursk in World War II for how it changed the course of the war in India's advantage .

Pakistan's invading force, consisting of the 1st armored division and 11th Infantry division, crossed the Indo-Pak border and captured the Indian town of Khemkaran. Considering the situation, GOC Indian 4th Mountain Division Maj.Gen Gurbaksh Singh immediately ordered the division to fall back and assume a horseshoe shaped defensive position with Asal Uttar as its focal point. On 7th September, 6th Lancers squadron of Pakistan army captured Valtoba against stiff opposition but because of the lack of infantry they had to go back to their Khemkaran basecamp at night in the process a fierce tank battle ensued.

The battle strategy of the Asal Uttar was the thought up by Brigadier Thomas K. Theogaraj

In the night, the Indian troops flooded the sugar cane field, and the next morning, the Pakistani tanks of the 1st Armored Division, consisting mainly of M47 and M48 Patton tanks (which according to the Americans were unbeatable), were lured inside the horseshoe trap.



The marshy terrain slowed down the Pakistani tanks, many of which got stuck in the mud. Over 100 Pakistani tanks were destroyed and another 40+ captured, while the Indians lost only 10 tanks during this counter offensive. Despite the initial gains by the Pakistani Army, the Battle of Asal Uttar ended in a decisive victory for India.

Pakistani forces' commander Maj. Gen. Nasir Ahmed Khan was killed in action. According to military historian Steven Zaloga, Pakistan admitted to losing 165 tanks during the 1965 war, more than half of which were destroyed during the Battle of Asal Uttar.

This battle also saw the heroism of Abdul Hamid , who was later awarded the Param Vir Chakra for his unmatched bravery during the battle of Asal Uttar, he was the soldier who took on advanced Patton tanks with his ordinary anti-tank jeep. Hamid had destroyed two Patton tanks with the help of his jeep and had essentially become an eyesore for Pakistani soldiers. In a melee, Hamid saw a group of Pattons heading towards the battalion defenses. Without caring for his life, he moved out of the flank with his gun mounted on a jeep. Heavy shelling didn't deter him, and he continued firing, knocking out three Patton tanks back-to-back before the fourth one killed him. This battle led to the creation of Patton Nagar (or "Patton City") at the site of the battle. This is because a large number of Patton tanks fielded by the Pakistani forces were either captured or destroyed at the scene.



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## THE BATTLE OF LONGEWALA

*The Battle of Longewala (4–7 December 1971) was one of the first major engagements in the western sector during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971, fought between assaulting Pakistan forces and India defenders at the Indian border post of Longewala, in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan.*



*On the moonlit night of December 4–5, 1971, in the silent expanse of the Thar Desert, Major Kuldip Singh Chandpuri and just 120 men of the Indian Army's 23rd Punjab Regiment made a fateful stand at Longewala. Surrounded by an armoured Pakistani brigade of some 2,000–3,000 troops and nearly 40 tanks, retreat was a luxury they couldn't afford. Chandpuri's calm leadership—moving bunker to bunker, urging his men in Punjabi, "Time to repay a national debt,"—turned fear into fierce resolve. Their few recoilless rifles, mortars, and machine guns found purpose in the still night, halting enemy armour that misread barbed wire as minefield.*

*As dawn broke, six Indian Air Force Hawker Hunters swooped in—destroying or damaging over 40 Pakistani tanks in what pilots called a "turkey shoot". By noon, the attack had collapsed—leaving just two Indian soldiers lost, while Pakistan abandoned tanks and hundreds of troops.*



*The heroism of those few, rising above all odds, forged a legend. Chandpuri earned the Maha Vir Chakra—the nation's second-highest honour—and their tale lived on, immortalized in film and memory.*

*The Battle of Longewala had lasting impacts on India's military and national identity. It boosted morale, showcased the importance of air-ground coordination, and led to stronger border defense strategies. The victory weakened Pakistan's position, helped India focus on the eastern front, and enhanced India's global military reputation. It remains a symbol of bravery and tactical brilliance.*

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## THE DARING IAF STRIKE ON DHAKA'S GOVERNMENT HOUSE IN 1971

In December 1971, the Indo-Pakistani War was at its peak, with India supporting East Pakistan's fight for independence, which would soon birth Bangladesh. One of the war's most dramatic moments came on December 14, when the Indian Air Force (IAF) launched a bold attack on the Government House in Dhaka, the official residence of East Pakistan's Governor, A.M. Malik. This strike, often called the "Governor's House invasion," was a momentous change in the war.

The war began on December 3, 1971, after Pakistan's air strikes on Indian airfields. East Pakistan was crumbling under the pressure of Bengali rebels and Indian forces. On December 14, Governor Malik was holding an emergency meeting with his cabinet at the Government House to discuss surrender plans as Indian troops closed in. At 11:55 a.m., four IAF MiG-21 jets, flying from Guwahati, roared into action. In a swift and precise attack, they fired 128 rockets, hitting the Government House with devastating accuracy.



The building shook as rockets tore through its walls, sending shockwaves through the meeting. Governor Malik and his aides were stunned, and the attack shattered any remaining hopes of holding out. Malik resigned that day, a clear sign that Pakistani control in East Pakistan was over. Just two days later, on December 16, 1971, Pakistan's Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi surrendered, with 93,000 troops becoming prisoners of war. This marked the end of the war and the creation of Bangladesh.

The IAF's strike was a brilliant display of courage and precision, highlighting why their motto, "Touch the Sky with Glory," resonates so deeply. The attack not only crippled Pakistani morale but also became a symbol of India's military prowess. Today, Bangladesh and India celebrate December 16 as Victory Day, remembering this pivotal moment. The Government House attack stays a thrilling chapter in history, proving how a single, well-timed strike can change the course of a war and create a new nation.



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## THE NAVAL BLOCKADE OF EAST PAKISTAN

*In the final days of 1971, as the Indian Navy imposed a naval blockade on East Pakistan, history was being written not just with missiles and warships, but with the lives of countless ordinary people caught in its tide.*

*The blockade was strategic—meant to choke off supplies, isolate East Pakistan, and pressure a surrender. Indian warships, led by INS Vikrant, patrolled the Bay of Bengal, sealing off vital ports like Chittagong and Khulna. Merchant vessels vanished, trade stopped, and with it, the flow of food, fuel, and medicine. For military planners, it was a victory. For the people of East Pakistan, it was suffocation.*

*In a small coastal village near Cox's Bazar, 14-year-old Amin watched from the beach as unfamiliar gray silhouettes appeared on the horizon. "We knew something big was happening," he would later recall. "The sea no longer brought fish or hope. Only fear." His father, a fisherman, stayed ashore for days. The blockade didn't distinguish between soldier and civilian.*



*Onboard an Indian patrol vessel, Lieutenant Rajiv Mehta, just 23 at the time, stood watch every night. He had joined the Navy to serve his country, not knowing he'd have to turn away boats carrying starving families. "One evening," he said, "a small wooden boat approached. We were ready to fire. But then we saw a woman clutching a child, waving a white cloth. We didn't shoot. We handed them food, water—and silence."*



*The blockade hastened the fall of Dhaka and the birth of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971. But its true legacy is etched not just in military success, but in human memory—the fear in a refugee's eyes, the helplessness of young sailors, and the quiet acts of compassion amid war.*

*History calls it strategy. But for those who lived it, the naval blockade was a moment where war met humanity, where the vast sea carried not just ships, but the weight of human survival.*

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## KARGIL WAR: BATTLE OF TIGER HILL

*The battle for Tiger Hill during the Kargil War (1999) was not just about strategy—it was a brutal, deeply human struggle against impossible odds. At 16,700 feet, soldiers, many barely out of training, faced bone-chilling cold, thin air, and invisible enemies hidden in the rocks. The hill wasn't just a tactical position; it was a towering, ice-ribbed monster guarding the lifeline to Indian troops in Kargil.*

*Among those scaling this beast was Rifleman Ramesh of the 18 Grenadiers. On July 3rd, he inched upward, breath ragged, ribs aching, boots slipping on frozen stone. Every step was a gamble—was the next patch of snow a mine? Would the next rock give way? Enemy gunfire echoed above from hidden bunkers, and silence fell only when the wind howled.*

*Then came July 4th. Not a sunrise, but an explosion of artillery and fire. Bofors shells screamed overhead, shaking the mountain. Amid the chaos, Captain Vikram Batra shouted, "Yeh dil maange more!" It wasn't a slogan—it was a cry of defiance, a spark of courage passed between exhausted men clawing their way up icy cliffs, frostbitten hands clutching grenades and rifles*



*For days, battle raged—men fought not just the enemy, but their own exhaustion, fear, and the cold. They became shadows in a storm, voices lost to wind and gunfire, prayers whispered with each step. On July 8th, through smoke and silence, Ramesh and his brothers raised the tricolor on the summit—hands bleeding, bodies broken, spirits unbowed. Below, a young officer watched the flag rise and wept.*

*Victory at Tiger Hill wasn't just a mark on a map. It was the warmth of a shared cigarette, the crackle of a mother's voice on the radio, the impossible return of a wounded captain's smile. It was the weight of stretcher-borne heroes, wrapped not just in flags but in a nation's love and grief.*

*Tiger Hill lives on not in reports, but in the scars, the tears, and the whisper carried on the wind: "Yeh dil maange more." Ordinary sons fought like giants—not for glory, but for each other, for home, and for India.*



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## OPERATION SINDOOR: THROUGH A LENS

Operation Sindoor was launched by India in the early hours of May 7, 2025, in response to the Pabalgam terror attack on April 22, which killed 26 civilians and security personnel. The attack was linked to Pakistan-based terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, long accused of operating with Pakistani support.

Following the operation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation on May 12, calling Operation Sindoor a “pledge of justice” for the victims. He highlighted the operation’s symbolism, relating “Sindoor” to the traditional red powder representing respect and dignity, especially of Indian women. Modi declared that terrorism would no longer be tolerated and India would act on its own terms. He also rejected Pakistan’s nuclear threats, calling them “nuclear blackmail” and promising a firm response to any aggression.



At about 2:15 AM IST on May 7, the Indian Air Force struck nine terror camps —five in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) and four inside Pakistan, including Bahawalpur and Muridke. Fighter jets like the Rafale, Mirage 2000, and Su-30MKI used advanced weapons, including the BrahMos air-launched cruise missile, one of the world’s fastest supersonic missiles, and the SCALP (Storm Shadow) long-range cruise missile. The operation lasted around 28 minutes, destroying all targets and killing over 100 terrorists, including senior commanders.

In retaliation, Pakistan launched drone and missile attacks. India responded with missile defense systems, including Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) and Advanced Air Defence (AAD) interceptors to shoot down ballistic missiles. The Akash surface-to-air missile system defended against drones and aircraft. The Border Security Force (BSF) also formed UAV squadrons with electronic warfare tools to detect and neutralize hostile drones. These defenses helped keep India’s borders secure amid rising tensions.

Operation Sindoor was the second most viral military operation after the Kargil War in 1999, by the help of social media our army gained a massive boost of confidence which helped us in defeating the Pakistani forces and presenting the truth behind Pabalgam, how the innocent citizens of India were brutally murdered by the terrorist forces of Pakistan. This operation sparked controversies about Pakistan in the UN where India had refused the help of US President Donald Trump upholding The Shimla Treaty Signed with the Pakistani Government. After the Pabalgam attack, India has cancelled the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan showing to the world that terrorism will not go unpunished.



# THE PATH TO FREEDOM

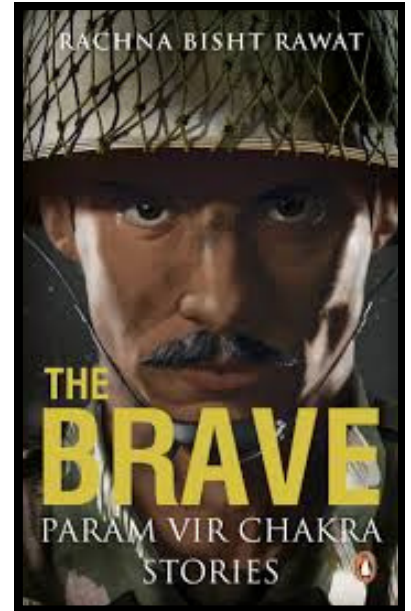
India fought  
with hearts so brave,  
in so many battles  
long and grave.  
The rule was a heavy hand,  
but many fought  
to free the land  
from all that pain.  
The country grew  
on the heroes' sacrifices.  
The freedom flew,  
and so many gave their lives to win  
that courage –  
it lives deep within.  
Not all the heroes have a name,  
but their spirit  
feels the same,  
full of courage and full of valour.  
Each battle made India rise,  
from the one oppressed to unbound.  
Remember the pain  
and all the tears –  
hope came from that, for all of this  
did not come for free.  
Through all the years, India's story,  
strong and true,  
grows from the old  
to something new.

-Navya Rawat

# Brave: Param Vir Chakra Stories – Book Review

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“Brave: Param Vir Chakra Stories” is a collection of 21 true-life chapters, each telling the tale of an Indian soldier who won the Param Vir Chakra (India’s highest wartime gallantry award). The author, Rachna Bisht Rawat (a journalist), arranges the book by historical era – from the 1947–48 Indo-Pak War through the 1999 Kargil War. For example, the contents list covers heroes from Major Somnath Sharma in 1947 to Captain Vikram Batra in 1999, showing the span of conflicts included. Each chapter combines narrative, eyewitness interviews, and family memories to bring these heroes to life.



Reading these stories is emotional and uplifting. The author’s vivid descriptions and quotes make the soldiers feel like real people, not just names. For example, Major Somnath Sharma’s chapter describes him leading a handful of men against a dawn attack in 1947. The text notes he was outnumbered “seven to one” but still held firm, and “inspired his men to fight” on despite heavy casualties. Knowing this was India’s first Param Vir Chakra makes it even more stirring. I felt a lump in my throat reading how he and his comrades stood their ground – it shows duty above fear.

Likewise, Captain Vikram Batra’s Kargil story is both triumphant and tragic. The book quotes his own words and those of people who loved him, which makes his bravery personal. I was especially moved by how Vikram kept a cheeky spirit even in battle. He famously radioed “Veh Dil maange more” (meaning “This heart desires more”) from the slopes of a peak, and the book explains that line “caught the fancy of millions.” Reading about his promise to hoist the Tricolour or come back wrapped in it (words that “echo still in [his brother’s] heart”) gave me goosebumps. Each chapter has moments like these – it might describe a soldier’s last letter home or a family tribute – which left me both teary-eyed and inspired by their courage.

## Notable Heroes and Stories:

Major Somnath Sharma (Indo-Pak War 1947–48): Remembered as India’s first PVC awardee, Sharma led his men at Badgam against a surprise raider attack. Even badly wounded and outnumbered, he kept fighting so that reinforcements could arrive. The book highlights his “tenacious defence” and leadership that inspired the platoon. His story stood out as especially poignant – it’s a mixture of sadness (losing brave young lives) and pride (knowing what they accomplished).

# Brave: Haram Hir Chakra Stories – Book Review

Captain Vikram Batra (Kargil War 1999): Nicknamed “Shershaah,” Batra’s chapter captures his high spirits and heroism in the heights of Kargil. He’s portrayed as fearless and caring for his team. The most memorable detail is his famous radio message: from 18,000 feet up, he told the base “Veh Dil maange more”. This quote (included in the text) still sends shivers down my spine because it shows how determined he was. The book also quotes friends and family – for instance, his brother’s tribute – which makes his sacrifice feel very real.

Others: The book is full of such heroes. For example, Bana Singh’s chapter covers the freezing Siachen Heights and Operation Rajiv; it shows him braving -45°C to capture an enemy post. Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon’s story (1971) highlights how one young pilot faced waves of enemy jets alone to defend Srinagar airfield. Each story is different, but all emphasize selflessness and patriotism.

After finishing the book, my understanding of bravery and patriotism feels deeper. These chapters show that courage isn’t about being without fear – it’s about doing what must be done for others. I realized that soldier was once a teenager or college student with simple dreams, yet they chose duty above all. Reading their last letters, or how calm they were on the battlefield, made me admire them enormously. I also felt emotional – the book often reminded me of loved ones praying and hoping in safe houses or bases, which shows the sacrifice of families too.

In sum, Brave left me proud and thoughtful. It turned abstract ideas (bravery, sacrifice, patriotism) into vivid stories of real people. I feel more respectful toward the military after reading it. As a student, it taught me that patriotism can be quiet and personal, not just loud slogans.

-Aarav Dhanuka



# The War of Words



- (1) RECONNAISSANCE
- (2) CASUALTIES
- (3) SIEGE
- (4) CONQUEST
- (5) HOSTILITIES
- (6) INFANTRY
- (7) TREATY
- (8) ALLIANCE
- (9) LOGISTICS
- (10) NEUTRAL
- (11) GUERRILLA
- (12) DEPLOY
- (13) PACT
- (14) ZEAL
- (15) ENEMIES
- (16) STRATEGY
- (17) YIELD

# Clues:

## Down

1. Injured or dead soldiers
2. Military blockade of a city or fortress
3. Taking control of a place or people by use of military force
4. Soldiers marching or fighting on foot
5. A formally concluded and ratified agreement between countries
6. A union or association formed for mutual benefit
7. Detailed organization and implementation of a complex operation
8. A formal agreement between individuals or parties
9. Great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or objective

## ACROSS

1. Military observation of a region to locate an enemy
2. Acts of warfare
3. Not supporting or helping either side in a conflict
4. A member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting
5. Move troops into position for military action
6. Those who are hostile to someone
7. A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim
8. Give way to pressure or influence

# SOURCES

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## Fiery Speech By Narendra Modi

The Prime Minister of India

India would pursue terrorists to the ends of the earth. Today I say to the whole world, India will identify, trace and punish every terrorist and their backers. We will pursue them to the ends of the earth. India's spirit will never be broken. Terrorism will not go unpunished. Every effort will be made to ensure that justice will be done. The entire nation is firm in this resolve. Everyone who believes in humanity is with us. I thank the people of various countries and their leaders who have stood with us during this time. Some lost their son, some lost their brother, some lost their spouse. Some of the victims spoke Bengali, some of them spoke Marathi, some of them Kananada, some spoke Gujarati, some spoke Odia, while some were from Bihar. From Kargil to Kanyakumari, our pain is one. This attack is not only on innocent tourists, the country's enemies have dared to attack India's soul. I want to state clearly that those who have committed this attack will be punished beyond their imagination. National security is essential for development. For Viksit Bharat, Viksit Bihar is necessary.

# Inspirational Quotes

- Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw : If a man says he is not afraid of dying, he is either lying or is a Gurkha.



- Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa : The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time .



- Major Somnath Sharma (PVC) : I will fight to the last man and the last bullet.



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