

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

The Saudi connection

It is pointing fingers at Qatar, but on terror linkages, Saudi Arabia has a record of double-speak



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT

LAST MONTH, SAUDI Arabia and the UAE imposed a blockade on Qatar, arguing that the country was promoting terrorism. The irony is that Saudi and elite groups of nations in the Gulf have also been supporting Salafis and jihadis for a long time.

The Saudis are supporting Salafi enterprises in South India, including in Kerala. According to a Saudi embassy cable in Delhi, millions of riyals have been reserved for the Islamic Mission Trust of Malappuram (Kerala), the Islamic Welfare Trust and the Mujahideen Arabic College in Palakkad.

of them to put pressure on the Pakistani government when it resists Saudi injunctions. In 2015, for instance, when the Pakistan parliament refused to send troops to Yemen, Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat members demonstrated, asking for "unconditional support to Saudi Arabia".

Islamic organisations have benefited from Saudi financial support: The Popular Front of India and the Social Democratic Party of India. Their names do not reflect their religious overtone, but they are propagating a Salafi version of Islam.

While one of the oldest Salafi madrasas of India, the Jamia Salafiya, is located near Varanasi, Kerala is probably where Salafism is gaining momentum more vigorously. This pan-Islamic orientation is more pronounced among those who were already part of local reform movements like the Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen (KNM), formed in 1950.

No STORY OF ITS OWN

Nitish-Congress spat has shown up Opposition's irresoluteness and incoherence

THE PUBLIC SPARRING between Nitish Kumar and the Congress, over the former breaking Opposition ranks to support the NDA's candidate for president, may have subsided for now. But it has been revealing. At the very least, it has shown the Opposition as less united than it pretends to be.

In a diverse and layered democracy, the making of alliances and fronts is a hazardous exercise because of interests that are competing and conflicting. Take Nitish, for instance. For him, arguably, the imperative of Opposition unity at the national level must contend with the pulls and pressures of running the Mahagathabandhan government in Bihar.

The Congress may or may not have fully made up with Nitish, but it would do well to listen to him when he says that the Opposition is unduly reactive, that it lacks a plan and a story of its own. Else, this unequal battle between a strong-willed government and its incoherent political opponent looks set to play on.

HANDLING PYONGYANG

North Korea's claimed ICBM test once again highlights the need for the global community to rethink its approach to it

NORTH KOREA'S TEST of its Hwasong-14 ballistic missile is, potentially, one more step towards catastrophe in one of the world's most perilous regions. Though it is unclear if the missile is, as Pyongyang claims, capable of hitting the United States -- according to an estimate, the Hwasong-14 has a maximum trajectory 6,700 kilometres, putting only Alaska in its range -- the underlying message is clear.

President Donald Trump, who just three days ago fulminated that his patience was "running out" with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, seems to have developed second thoughts. "Does this guy have anything better to do with his life", Trump tweeted in the wake of the test?

There will, of course, now be a tightening of the sanctions screws on North Korea. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on his recent US visit, agreed to collaborate more closely with the global sanctions regime against Pyongyang, to which India is the second-largest exporter.

HEALTH WARNING

Mobile phone addiction could be on its way to becoming a serious issue

IN JUNE 2009, when HTC launched the Android-operated smartphone in India, the child reported by this newspaper as amongst the country's youngest mobile phone dependents was barely a toddler. The nine-year old, who turned suicidal after being deprived of his smartphone, is being counselled at Delhi's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. But the diagnostic manual of psychiatrists doesn't yet have a formal moniker for the child's condition.

A 2014 study by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Sciences (NIMHANS) found obsessive mobile phone surfing as the most common form of internet addiction, with people in the age group of 14-35 most prone to such addiction. Very often, the blame could be laid at the doorstep of parents. It's not uncommon for parents to view mobile phones or tablets as substitutes for kids' toys.

In India, only the NIMHANS and a few private hospitals like Sir Ganga Ram have facilities to deal with mobile phone addiction. The telecom, human resources and health ministries and private medical bodies should join hands before mobile phone addiction becomes a serious public health issue.

IN DEFENCE OF ESOTERICA

Lack of high-end research has a cascading effect. It impacts people's earning abilities



M. RAJIVLOCHAN

INDIANS IN INDIA do not do high-end research. That is well-known. What is less well-known is that they do not do much low-end research either. This seems to have an anti-learning cascading effect lower down, and a disastrous impact on earning abilities. To add to this, in June, a division bench of the Bombay High Court suggested that the school boards examine the possibility of making Mathematics an optional subject for the Class X examination.

If that happens, we can effectively bid goodbye to being a society committed to whatever little higher order learning that is happening in India. Could it be that in the absence of high-end research, not much exciting investigation seems to be happening at the lower-end of the research spectrum? And are we, as a society, giving up on formal learning in the misguided belief that if such learning is not insightful or exciting then why waste time on it?

Statistics show that about 5 per cent of the workers have acquired skills commensurate with their work through informal sources or self-learning. Only about 7 per cent workers had exposure to any work-related education, whether formal or non-formal. Such absence of knowledge and skills certainly lowers earning ability.

who graduated from India's colleges took a BSc degree, 15 per cent went in for an engineering degree, 11 per cent studied commerce, 3 per cent passed out with a medical degree and about 1 per cent studied law. Some 3.9 million graduates, half of the total number, preferred a BA degree. Whether this large mass of Indian BAs are making Indians better human beings is not yet known.

Surely, such people end up as part of the workforce. On that count too there are many surprises. The 66th round of survey by NSSO, found that only 2 per cent of the Indian labour force had any formal technical education. Common sense suggests that they might have learnt something on the job, some of them might have acquired skills simply by working under an *ustad* or there might have been hereditary skills imparted by the much-touted caste system in which children take up the profession of their fathers.

Statistics also show that about 5 per cent of the workers have acquired skills commensurate with their work through informal sources or through self-learning. Only about

7 per cent workers had exposure to any work-related education, whether formal or non-formal. Such absence of knowledge and skills may or may not result in potentially harmful workmanship. But at the level of the worker, it certainly lowers earning ability.

Those with a diploma or certificate, the NSSO survey suggested, earned considerably more as compared to their uneducated and unskilled co-workers. In agriculture, the skilled worker earned 31 per cent more than his/her peers. In trade, the increment was 36 per cent, it was 64 per cent in mining and quarrying, 80-95 per cent in manufacturing and in the construction sector a more knowledgeable worker ended up earning twice as much.

Could it be that to boost Indians' interest in formal learning, the high-end researchers need to ramp up their efforts, work on exciting problems, create electrifying results, demonstrate the importance of their conclusions, enthuse people towards formal learning?

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JUNE 30/JULY 5, 1977, FORTY YEARS AGO

WRITER HELD IN NEPAL US WRITER JEFF Long, leader of an unsuccessful international expedition to the Makalu mountain in the Himalayas, was arrested in Kathmandu on suspicion of smuggling several thousands of watches into Nepal. Long was arrested at the airport where he had gone to collect a consignment of eight containers of coffee and biscuit boxes. Customs officials claimed they had opened three of the boxes and found 3,028 watches valued at Rs 1 million.

PARDON FOR PRISONER THE WEST BENGAL government ordered the release of CPM activist, Bharati Tarafdar, after

commuting the unexpired portion of her life sentence. Tarafdar was charged with murder. Minister for Jails Debabrata Banerjee also said the government would soon decide on the life sentences awarded to two Naxalite prisoners, Santimoy Akurey and Malina Dokh, on a charge of murder.

MOB FURY IN MADRAS TWO PERSONS WERE injured when police opened fire to disperse an unruly crowd which attacked a police station and a police party at Red Hills, 25 km from Madras. Earlier, the police resorted to a lathi charge when the crowd turned violent and indulged in stone pelting. Twenty-two police persons,

including a sub inspector, were injured in the stone throwing, according to police sources. About 30 people were reported injured in the lathi charge. Police said the inspector general of police who visited the site has ordered the suspension of a deputy inspector and a constable. These police personnel had raided the area and arrested a few persons which led to the flare up. A magisterial inquiry has been ordered into the incident. The trouble started when a sub inspector seized the records from a lorry driver when the latter refused to obey a stop signal. The SI was manhandled by some lorry drivers. Later, police raided villages in the neighbourhood.

17 EXPLAINED



SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

July 3, 1988, US ship shot down #IR655, killing 290 civilians. Ship capt. was awarded medal for murdering innocents. Iranians won't forget.

JAVAD ZARIF, Foreign Minister of Iran, 744,000 followers. The Tehran-Dubai Iran Air flight was destroyed in Iranian airspace by a missile fired from USS Vincennes, which had entered Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf.

Ask the EXPRESS

YOUR QUESTIONS ON GST ANSWERED

Not inflationary, the GST might in fact be mildly deflationary

How will retail inflation be impacted by GST? What kind of leverage will the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee get from GST for its inflation-targeting objective?

BIBHUTI DAS, CACHAR, ASSAM

Inflation will be under control as items with 50% weightage in the CPI are exempt, and another 50% are in the concessional 5% duty bracket. In fact, the incidence of duty on all the major items is coming down under GST; therefore, the impact of GST, far from being inflationary, might actually be mildly deflationary. Therefore, there may be a case for RBI reducing interest rates post the implementation of GST.

SURRENDERING REGISTRATION

My questions are regarding an existing Service Provider's (SP's) registration under GST. An individual SP is registered for service tax for the last 4 years. Until FY 2016-17, turnover of the SP was between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 16 lakh. He regularly collected and paid service tax. In the first three months of FY 2017-18, i.e., until June 30, 2017, his gross receipts from services was Rs 4 lakh. He has collected and paid service tax for this period. His gross receipts for the whole year 2017-18 would be between Rs 16 lakh and Rs 17 lakh. He has migrated to GSTN and has been provisionally registered under GST laws. He wishes to surrender the GST registration because turnover for FY 2017-18 is expected to be below the threshold turnover limit of Rs 20 lakh. Can he do so?

D K PATEL, RAJKOT

Yes, he is permitted. He need not have got registered, as his status for 2017-18 would be reckoned with respect to the turnover in the previous year, which was less than Rs 20 lakh — and therefore did not require registration.



V S KRISHNAN

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Krishnan will answer questions from the readers of **The Indian Express** on GST. A selection of questions and answers will be published in these columns.

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Behind the ongoing stand-off in Doklam, century-old manoeuvres of geostrategy



IN FACT

BY PRAVEEN SWAMI

EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET

"TIBET, NEPAL and Druk Yul, the Land of the Thunder Dragon," wrote Lian-yu, the Amban, or Chinese governor of Tibet, in 1907, "are side by side like the molar teeth in a man's mouth, and the subjects of all three are those of one kingdom". The next spring, 20 Chinese soldiers started from the Chumbi valley for Bhutan's capital, escorting Ma Chi Fu, the region's Popon, or administrator, on a mission to study the country's agriculture, and its payment of tribute. They bore with them a letter, sternly instructing local officials to serve Fu and his soldiers.

Gongzim Dorji Ugyen, a Bhutanese diplomat, drafted a letter of exquisite politeness. Bhutan, it said, had never been a vassal of China. "Forty years ago, when Bhutan was at war with the British", it read, "we do not recall China offering her assistance." The Chinese letter, it was implied, must have been drafted by a rude clerk in error — and was forgiven. But still, the Popon would not be allowed on to the capital at Thimphu.

Since the beginning of June, Indian and Chinese troops have been facing off across a small meadow called Turning Point at the end of that very valley — an 89 square kilometre pasture called the Doklam plateau, which is claimed by China. For the citizens of the three countries, two of them nuclear-weapons states, it is vital that the diplomatic cables flying between Beijing and New Delhi prove as persuasive as Ugyen's missive.

In an action without precedent, Indian troops have intervened in support of the Royal Bhutan Army, after the Chinese People's Liberation Army refused to stop work on a road leading through the disputed territory towards Doka-La, India's last post overlooking the plateau.

For now, both sides have contented themselves with waving flags at each other and calling on the other side to go back — but in 1967, a similar situation led to military clashes, and a not-dissimilar one sparked tensions in 1986-87. Is the next China-India crisis now brewing on the Doklam plateau?



The heart of the dispute is the Chumbi valley, a gentle, 3,000 metre high Himalayan passageway covered with flowers in the spring, which served as the trade route from Gangtok through Yadong and Gyantse on to the Dalai Lama's court at Lhasa. For centuries, salt, yak tails and silk made their way over the mountains, taxed by mountain warlords operating in an inner-Himalayan world where the dominant power was the Dalai Lama's court at Lhasa, in turn loosely linked to China from the time of the Yuan dynasty. Interestingly, this strategic enclave had



China's Lhasa-Yadong highway, and a soon-to-be-completed branch of the Beijing-Lhasa railroad, allows rapid movement of Chinese troops right up to Nathu La. PTI File

almost eluded China's grasp. In 1904, the imperial military officer Francis Younghusband had led British forces into the Chumbi, following the epic battle of Karo-La, fought by Gurkha and Sikh troops at altitudes of 5,700 metres.

Younghusband imposed indemnities of Rs 7.5 million on the Dalai Lama's court, knowing it would take decades to pay back — a ruse to hold on to the Chumbi and its trade routes forever. However, in 1905, anti-foreign Tibetan lamas rose up in fierce revolt against French missionaries, Christian converts and Chinese officials. The rebellion strengthened British officials who believed keeping the Chinese in power was necessary for regional stability.

For modern India, the Chumbi valley is a dagger pointed at the so-called chicken's neck sector, the narrow strip of territory that links the country to its Northeast. In recent years, China has built a highway that allows the 500 kilometre journey from Lhasa to Yadong to be completed in eight hours or less. In two years, a branch of the Beijing-Lhasa railroad too will be completed, allowing for rapid movement of troops and armour right up to India's gateway, the Nathu La.

But this sword cuts two ways. Sikkim is one of the few sectors where India has a strategic advantage. In the event of war, India's Brigade-sized military presence inside Bhutan, stationed at Ha, allows it to attack the Chumbi valley from two sides, po-

FLASHPOINT



tentially cutting off Chinese troops stationed facing Sikkim.

From Bhutan's point of view, though, the Doklam standoff will have implications for even larger territorial conflicts. To the north of Doklam lies a 180 square kilometre region of eastern Bhutan, sprawling across Sinchulumpa and Gieu in Ha. China has already built the Yadong-Lhasa highway through this territory. In the north, China claims 495 square kilometres of territory in the Jakarlung and Pasamlung areas.

Until 1959, China made no claims on Bhutan, asserting in one official communication that there were no discrepancies in its maps and those of Bhutan at that time. But now, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs cites the 1890 China-Britain treaty, which states that

the border runs west from Doka-La along the ridgeline — that is, south of the Doklam plateau.

Bhutan disputes this, noting that the 1890 convention applies to the borders of India and China, not Bhutan and China. Herders, it says, may have made payments under PLA coercion in some areas, but maps show Doklam was Bhutanese.



Either way, China first began to turn up the heat along the Chumbi valley in the late 1960s, escalating sharply in coming decade with a growing programme of road works construction. Faced with sharp Bhutanese protests, a *status quo* agreement was signed in 1988, and border talks began. In 1990, in the seventh round of talks, China offered a deal swapping their northern claims for those east of Chumbi — that is, those of most advantage against India. Then, in 1999, China made a territorial deal contingent on establishing full diplomatic relations.

Left to itself, Bhutan might well have gone for the deal: business lobbies in the country wanted greater trade with China, and parliamentary representatives from the border areas, settled rights for herders.

From 2004, China sought to settle the issue by escalating the pressure. That year, road construction work started from the Langmopo stream towards the Zuri ridge. Then, the PLA began a series of intrusions

into the Charithang valley, stretching all the way to the Royal Bhutan Army's outposts at Lahrigang, several kilometres behind the country's claim line. Further road construction work began in 2009 on bridges along the Zuri and Phuteogang ridges, overlooking the Charithang valley.

Like in 1907, more than a few Bhutanese diplomats wondered whether China could be trusted to keep its word even if a deal was made — or whether its strategic ambitions did not stretch to reducing Bhutan to a vassal, just as it had threatened early in the century, and on some occasions even later.

This explains why Bhutan has allowed India to intercede on its behalf, after the Royal Bhutan Army was brushed aside by the PLA patrol constructing road works in Doklam. For China, this demonstration of resolve has been a major surprise. Bhutan knows it is taking a risk. The PLA could, for example, retaliate by stepping up construction work in other disputed enclaves. Bhutan clearly hopes, however, that China would be loath to be seen as a bully — and that India would stand by it militarily should push come to shove.

For now, the most likely outcome is that both sides will back away, giving diplomats and military strategists time to think through their options: India's decision to commit militarily in Bhutan has changed the game for all sides. But no one is walking away from this century-old game just yet.

KARGIL: HOW AIR FORCE DEPLOYED ITS FIRST LASER-GUIDED BOMBS

Israeli help and Indian jugaad in recapture of Tiger Hill

Exactly to this day 18 years ago, the 18 Grenadiers and 8 Sikh snatched the crucial feature back from Pakistani intruders, decisively turning the course of the Kargil conflict. Paving the way for the heroic victory was the Indian Air Force, the munitions for whose assault were supplied by Israel, and tweaked with Indian engineering ingenuity.



BEYOND THE NEWS

BY SUSHANT SINGH

EXPRESS EDITORS INTERPRET

JUNE 24, 1999. Around 7 am, two Mirage 2000 fighters of the Indian Air Force's 7 Squadron were 18 kilometres short of Tiger Hill, the strategic hilltop then under the occupation of Pakistani infiltrators. The first aircraft brought the crosshairs of the laser designator from the Israeli LITENING pod on to the Pakistani bunkers, which served as the Command and Control centre of the Pakistan Army's Northern Light Infantry battalion, directing artillery fire at the Srinagar-Leh National Highway. When his warjet was

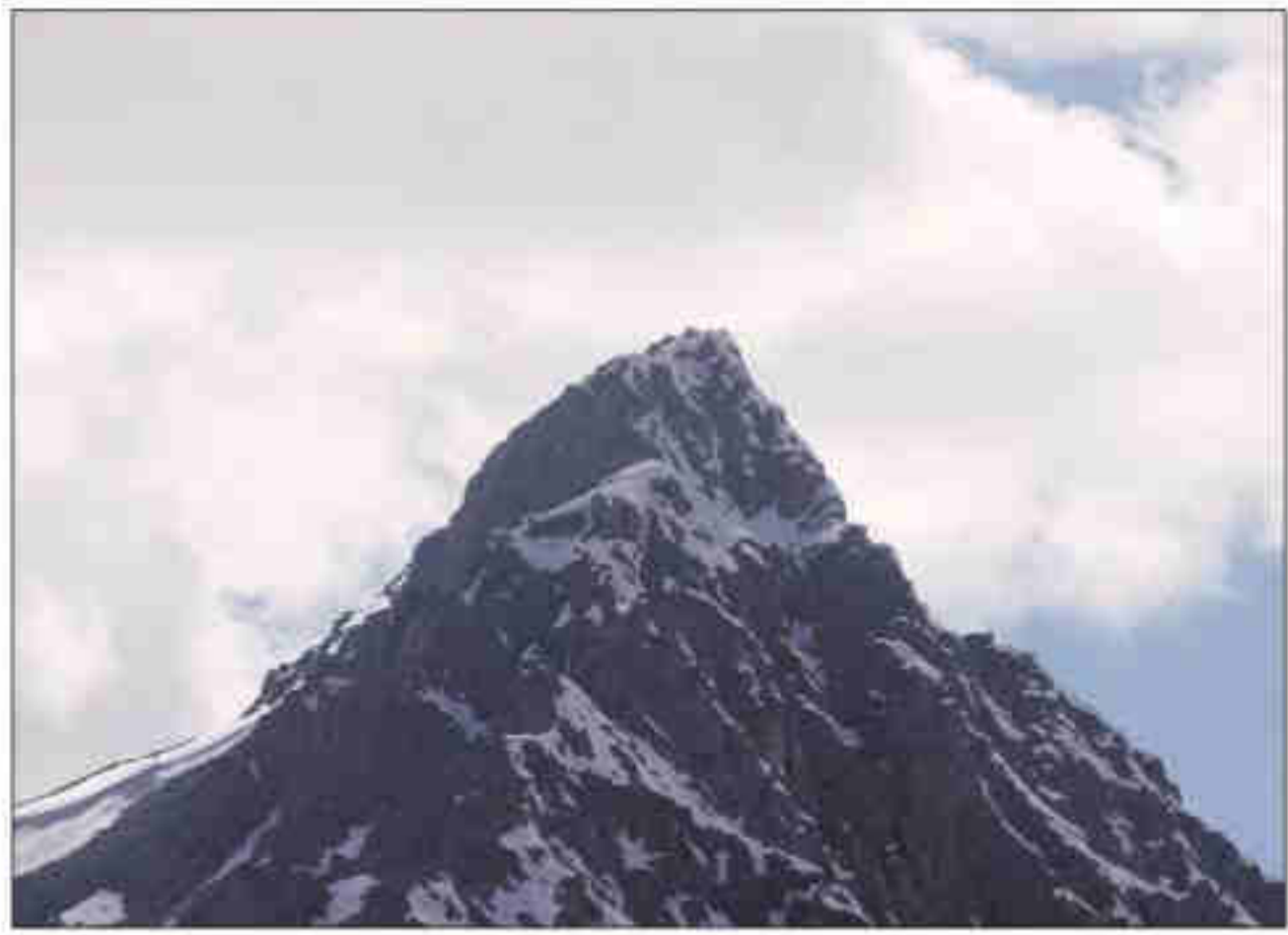
seven kilometres short of Tiger Hill, the pilot let go the Paveway laser-guided bomb (LGB).

The video of the first LGB hitting Tiger Hill was released in New Delhi on June 25, 1999, and is still available on YouTube. The two Mirages returned after another bombing mission at a target 80 km to the west, and recorded another video of Tiger Hill. The grainy black and white footage shows a lone Pakistani soldier who had survived the attack, trying to climb to the top of the feature.

The second aircraft was a twin-seater, in whose rear seat was Air Chief Marshal A Y Tipnis. For the IAF, it was a momentous occasion — its first ever operational use of an LGB. It was also an achievement inspired by the famed Indian *jugaad*, or innovation on the fly, as the conflict on the heights raged, and after the IAF had lost a couple of fighters.



The Mirage 2000s, bought from France in 1985, were equipped with Thomson-CSF laser designator pods known as ATLS, capable of delivering Matra 1,000 kg LGBs. The IAF had more than 60 Matra LGBs, which were pur-



Tiger Hill, overlooking the strategic Srinagar-Leh highway, was taken back from Pakistani infiltrators over July 4-5, 1999. Express Archive photo from 2009, by Tashi Tobgyal

pose built for the destruction of reinforced targets. But these bombs were very expensive — more than Rs 2 crore each. Also, as an Air Marshal who was then serving in 7 Squadron, told *The Indian Express*, "each of these bombs virtually had a high-value Pakistani target — a bridge, a dam, an ammunition dump — written on it. With the danger of conflict escalation still there, we could not have used them in Kargil". (As it happened, the officer said, all of those bombs were later retired unused.)

The solution came from the Israelis. The IAF

had signed a contract for Israeli-made LITENING electro-optical targeting pods in 1997, but it would take three or four years before these could be made operational. The pods, fitted on aircraft, have a laser designator and a powerful camera, which provides a 10-times magnified view of the target. The Israelis went out of their way to help the IAF integrate the LITENING pods to the Mirages — Israeli technicians flew in urgently and worked with the IAF's Aircraft System Testing Establishment in Bengaluru. As in the 1971 War, Israel delivered when India



The first laser-guided bomb hit Pakistani positions on Tiger Hill on June 24, 1999. IAF video grab

LGBs USED IN KARGIL

- June 24: Tiger Hill and MU4260
- June 25: Tiger Hill and MU4260
- June 26: Point 4388
- June 27: Tiger Hill and MU 4260; MU3663 and MU3762
- June 30: Tiger Hill and MU4260
- July 4: Point 4875

needed it the most.

Paveway-II LGBs were to be used with the LITENING pods' guidance. India had started getting some Paveway kits in 1998, but supplies stopped with the sanctions imposed after the 1998 nuclear tests. The Paveway's tail-kits were made in the US, the front-kits in the UK. As the IAF's traditional 1,000-pound dumb bomb had a shape and design similar to those used by the British, it was decided to fit the 1,000-pounder into the Paveway kit. Problems with fitting the front adaptor into the bomb

was overcome with *jugaad*, while taking care to maintain the safety of the fuse wire setting.



By June 12, 1999, these Mirage 2000s were ready to fire LGBs in operations for the first time. In routine course, these aircraft would have never flown in war because they were not certified. The Paveway kits still had defects that made the LGBs unreliable. The software of the LITENING pod had bugs: it shut down at an altitude of 30,000 feet, and its stability was not of a desirable standard.

But these were unusual times, and the IAF chose to fly into the unknown. The mission for Tiger Hill was repeated on June 25. A total of nine LGBs — eight from Mirage 2000s and one from a Jaguar — were fired until July 4, with five of them targeting Tiger Hill. They formed only a minuscule part of the 979 bombs — 348 tonnes of ordnance — that the IAF dropped on Kargil on 24 target systems, but they were a significant first.

After Tiger Hill was recaptured, the Army's field headquarters sent a congratulatory message to the IAF on July 10, 1999: "You guys have done a wonderful job. Your Mirage boys with their precision laser-guided bombs targeted an enemy battalion headquarters in Tiger Hill with tremendous success. Five Pakistani officers reported killed in that attack and their command and control broke down — as a result of which our troops have literally walked over the entire Tiger Hill area. The enemy is on the run. They are on the run in other sectors also. At this rate, the end of the conflict may come soon."

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