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# THE BULLETIN

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## What Is Corroding The Steel Frame?

**By Uday Kumar Varma**

Author is a former IAS Officer of 1976 batch of Madhya Pradesh Cadre. He is Science Graduate from BHU and has Masters Degree in Public Administration from Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA. He retired in 2013 from the post of Secretary, Information and Broadcasting, GOI.

Not many will disagree on the Steel Frame's erosion. Most civil servants today remain just tendril like embellishments on the frame – parasitic, even if presentable. Many have colluded with or ignored the rot that has been eating the frame. Officers of integrity heard echoes and saw strains that led some of them to doubt, question and at times condemn motives and actions of officers. But so deeply was the system entrenched in them that nothing they saw or heard could shake, shock or surprise them into action. Ostrich-like, they felt the problem would go away. But it did not. Why did the service go this way?

### **The Problem?**

#### **1. Obsession with power and privilege**

Over the years, civil servants have become so obsessed with the power and privileges they enjoy that preserving and perpetuating them has become a necessity for them. The commensurate responsibility that accompanies such power may or may not be fulfilled – but the power must remain, it is something taken for granted and a matter of right; this is the persistent attitude.

## **2. Integrity no longer a necessity**

Integrity and probity were their strongest suite. It made their cognition, comprehension and efficiency in meeting the endless challenges of administration stand out. It gave them the moral courage and conviction to stand against the corrupt and unscrupulous.

Over time, unfortunately, some of them became partners and allies of politicians and other vested interests. Some even chose to become the dominant entity in this cooperative. Politicians realized they were on the same page with them in our priorities and convergent on the purpose of being in power.

But the greater tragedy is that a large number of them, who did not wish to join the band wagon, watched and kept quiet because they valued their own stable lives, children's future and due progression in their careers. Being ensconced in positions of authority, they became so insensitive and inured of criticism that they dismissed this perception as the frustrated manipulations of other All India Services or the media.

## **3. Parameters for success have greatly altered**

Over the years, first slowly and later rapidly, the definition of being successful altered. To survive in a post became the foremost criterion for being judged as successful. This became particularly critical in the early days of one's career. Since most Collectors are trusted with the responsibility of effectively implementing developmental and welfare programs, doing so won them laurels, but in the process, leakages – particularly pecuniary leakages – became an integral part of implementation. So, the delivery of the program was successful, yet the full value of benefits did not reach the beneficiaries.

In other words, the criterion for successful implementation of government programs over time discounted the financial discipline and ethical underpinnings that had gone hand-in-hand with implementation in the early days. While the IAS must be given full credit for successfully translating several schemes on the ground, their inability or disinterest in neutralizing corrupt nexuses perpetuated this pernicious practice that eventually acquired an institutional status. Many of them, sometimes willingly, sometimes reluctantly, joined the commonwealth of corrupt.

## **Why did this happen?**

Did it begin like this when we got independence? Around this time, Sardar Patel had called the IAS the “Steel Frame” of India. For around a decade post-independence, the IAS, which had to live up to the legacy of the erstwhile ICS, went about their responsibilities and duties with the highest level of dedication and commitment. Those were difficult years – beset with gigantic challenges following the biggest and bloodiest migration of humankind in history, a devastated economy and hunger and poverty of the worst kind. But the IAS held the country together and delivered what was expected of it in difficult times. It was also free from interference from the political leadership, which was altogether in a different class as far as their dedication, commitment and intent went. The fervor of building a new country subjugated for over eight centuries was strong, deep and pervasive. Personal comforts and privileges were relegated to the background. No sacrifice was considered big or exemplary enough in this pursuit.

While some bring in the issue of reservation as the cause for the first cracks to appear in the frame, a policy which was the first to divide civil servants internally, it is politically incorrect and socially inappropriate to question the policy of reservation, even as its consequences need objective evaluation. We must not forget that reservation is a far more complex issue with any discussion involving aspects of history, sociology, identity and economics, which one is not competent to do in a summary manner.

## **1. Age of Entry**

A major cause for the present day troubles of the service, in my opinion, starts with the relaxation of the age on entry. In the late seventies, the maximum age allowed for appearing in the civil service examination (the new terminology for the erstwhile IAS/IFS examination, IPS examination and IRS examination, which were earlier held separately) was raised to 27 and the number of attempts were also increased. The age limit was further relaxed by another 5 years for reserved category applicants. Consequently, there emerged a set of applicants who would invest 3-5 years of their lives in preparing for this examination. Some of them would eventually succeed. But the majority would end up seeking alternative avocation after exhausting all their attempts and in the process lose some of the best years of their lives. Many would retain that sense of bitterness towards the examination process and the successful entrants.

The modifications thus made in the recruitment process has led to a situation where the candidates may not be bringing with them the right social, cultural and ethical orientation that qualifies them to pursue a career such as the civil service, a career where apart from opportunities to serve society through positions carrying immense authority and responsibility, one has to display and genuinely pursue a life characterized by complete integrity and probity.

Today the average age of a fresh entrant to the IAS stands at 28 years plus. At this age, attitudes are more or less set and the value system inalterably shaped. To replace these deeply entrenched mindsets with a healthy and passionate ideology of service and sacrifice demands a training program, radically different from what obtains today.

## **2. Deficiencies of Training**

The training of IAS probationers has failed to instill in them the right values and the sense of pride for being upright and beyond reproach in their conduct and comport. In India training is often taken as a necessary but not a serious requirement. Therefore, while going through the motions of imparting training, no serious attempt is made to carefully design training content. The training of IAS probationers in India equips them well with legal knowledge and practical lessons to deal with the requirements of the job but it is woefully unmindful and casual about the ethical dimensions of an IAS officer's duties and the underlying salience of integrity in their professional work. It is also no secret that the job of the Director of the Academy is rarely the first choice of most senior officers eligible for the post. Most of the officers of that seniority will like to serve a mainstream ministry. Consequently, while most of them try to discharge their duties as much as not to invite any criticism of lack of interest, they clearly lack the passion and personal commitment to use the opportunity to prepare the Probationers to deal with issues of corruption and ethics and instill in them an abiding value system that will make the trainees face the harsh and unsavory onslaught with fortitude and tact.

The fact remains that the trainees of the recent batches, during endless interactions, do believe that corruption is a way of life and it is not their objective in service to either eliminate them or deal with them decisively. After all, they argue, they have not joined the service to become social reformers.

## **3. Willful Ignorance**

There is now seen so much of deterioration in our public life and discourse that any thought of it being otherwise only engenders derision. Specifically, the bureaucrat (including police)-politician-contractor (business) nexus would not have become so strong as to control the system, if even a handful of IAS had resolutely raised the red flag. It would still have been there but it would have always been considered vile and to be carried out clandestinely. This is the difference that would have occurred. Ruefully, majority of IAS succumbed to the machinations and manipulations of this nexus.

It is not to say that there are no honest officers in the system. There are, a lot many, but this tribe, barring rare exception, has chosen to look the other way, while people below and above and around go merrily plundering the resources, diminishing and robbing the entitlements at will and filling their bottomless pit of endless greed. The few, whose conscience still revolts and is likely to cause inconvenience to this nexus are suitably dealt with by the system by putting them in places where they can go on writing copious notes and preparing voluminous briefs with no real say in matters of governance.

## **4. No faceless bureaucracy**

But the real failure for which future generation of administrators will hold them accountable and responsible, is their complete indifference to the idea of institutionalizing the good work many of us have done in the field or elsewhere.

In a typical career of IAS officers, two positions hold special significance in terms of visible authority and potential to make noticeable impact. One is that of Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner and the other is of Secretary to Government of India in a Ministry. In both these positions, officers have taken innovative and inspiring initiatives, many of them resulting in substantial success. However, documenting a successful initiative and institutionalizing it has never been the priority of such officers. The same is true of numerous Secretaries who have with or without the active support of their Ministers, conceived and grounded outstanding schemes and programs. But almost to the fault, they never documented the process

and the thinking and philosophy behind such initiatives as also the way forward. Invariably, the successor officer has to understand these initiatives and adopt them for continuation.

This takes time and as human nature is, every officer desires to leave his own very special and personal impact in such assignments. The result is that many of these assiduously planned and developed initiatives are abandoned mid-way: often because either the successor officer did not like to carry on something his predecessor is credited with; or because it takes time to reinvent the wheel and come to the same initiative after a sizable gap of time. The streak, the weakness and the ambition to show individual brilliance and innovation almost completely overshadows the desirability of institutionalizing them and thus deprives the society and the country of the benefits of continuous, focused and sustained thinking, planning and building schemes of great value and impact.

## **5. Lessons given to the new generation**

Today, nowhere, in the training of IAS officer, the necessity and importance of documentation of initiatives is emphasized. The question of being told that you should have zero tolerance for corruption and should not mind a transfer fighting corruption, is left open ended and vague with an advice that it's our job to "manage" politician. The message between the lines is that important thing is to survive, notwithstanding costs that fray your moral fiber and compromise your conscience.

## **6. It's a wakeup call**

'Mission Karmyogi', many believe, is the beginning of end of supremacy of IAS in the bureaucracy. The fact that it was thought necessary to laterally induct specialists and domain experts at higher echelons of governance is an indictment of IAS. It is like acknowledging that in certain areas, the generalist's skills are not good enough. It also implies that many in IAS have not been able to acquire a level of subject matter knowledge and expertise necessary for certain key posts. The critics may also argue that the IAS has not worked hard enough to thoroughly understand and master critical issues related to the areas where they were at the helm of affairs.

However, this also remains a fact that this service has some of the brightest brains and many have an unparalleled commitment to the task assigned to them. But this is not universal. Its time, IAS as a group does some honest and ruthless introspection and take remedial measures least a decade or two from now, they face the certain prospect of this service becoming a part of history.

**It's a wakeup call.**

# **Between the devil and deep sea**

**By Prof Srikanth Kondapally**

The writer is a well-known academician and Professor in East Asian Studies Centre of JNU. He specialises in China related matters.

China is anxiously waiting for the US election results and to see if there's a chance to restore strategic stability between the two countries. China has many stakes in who becomes the next President.

All US presidential candidates since the late 1990s have taken shades of anti-China stance in their poll campaigns, only to switch over to full-fledged engagement with Beijing once they are in the White House. This time, it could be different.

In the last four years, the fundamentals of Sino-US engagement policies, assiduously built since Henry Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing in 1971 and Deng Xiaoping's visit to the White House in 1979, have been revisited, at the cost of the basic tenets of the bilateral relationship.

This drastic change was caused by the epistemological break brought about by China's 19th Communist Party Congress in October 2017, which made attempts to "occupy the centre stage" in the global order. It laid out a roadmap to realise "socialist modernisation" by 2050 -- China intends to replace the US without having to fight a war by constantly expanding the envelope of deterrence.

China is also keen to unveil the first centennial of the Communist Party's establishment and ushering in a "well-off society" next year. It has grand plans for Made in China 2025, of graduating to being a high-tech exporter. It has commenced the 14th Five Year Plan with innovation, dual circulation strategy, and domestic economic restructuring. Strategic stability with the US is crucial for the success of these projects.

President Donald Trump's "decoupling" from China began with the 18-month tariff war, and extended to a revision of US policies on Tibet, Xinjiang, Taiwan, South China Sea, and 5G. The US specifically targeting China's Communist Party cadres and leaders has brought about a new low in ties. China's "wolf warrior diplomacy" has revived Cold War imagery.

Effectively, the Trump administration ended the engagement policies that led to the rise of China. Hence, any coming back of Trump is widely seen in China as a problem, although some Chinese argue that Trumpian structural disruptions, America First and isolationist foreign and security policies, have provided China with opportunities to expand.

The Trump administration's restrictions on financial flows, technology flows, visas, educational exchanges, 5G telecom contracts -- not only in the US but also in the European markets -- have stifled China, leading to a decline in the growth rate, which is essential for social and political stability for the Communist Party. China is thus looking desperately for the restoration of the engagement policies.

On the other hand, some Chinese argue that while Joe Biden may revive multilateralism, or give a new lease of life to Barrack Obama's G-2 (a US-China condominium), he may prioritise the Uighur issue or step up engagement with the Dalai Lama.

Chinese policy analysts are aware that there is now a bipartisan consensus on China policy due to Beijing's assertiveness all around, compounded by the spread of Covid-19, which coincided with over 500,000 people reaching the US before the Wuhan lockdown on January 23. With the US becoming the biggest victim of the pandemic and the high anti-China sentiment there, Covid-19 is going to loom large over US-China ties in the short to medium term.

The stakes for China in these US elections are high, ranging from benefiting out of any revival of engagement policies on trade, investment, technology transfers, working together on proliferation and regional stability issues to strategic competition or even conflict over Taiwan, South China Sea, North Korea, the global commons or other issues.

As such, many Chinese see themselves as being caught between the devil and the deep sea. Both candidates can negatively impact China's growth in many sectors, just at the time when China is at the cusp of realising "strategic opportunities" that the four-decades-old engagement policies provided in the first place.

Secondly, while it was the US that sought to export democracy and capitalism to the Soviet republics during the Cold War, today, China is being accused of interfering in the US elections. The Cold War, then, has come a long way between China and the US.

(The JNU Prof has been Peking behind the Bamboo Curtain for 30 years)

Courtesy- Deccan Herald

## **ASSAM'S UNENDING BOUNDARY DISPUTES: EARLY RESOLUTION TOP PRIORITY**

**By Brig R Borthakur (Retd)**

Author is alumni of Sainik School Goalpara and NDA. After military training from IMA, he was commissioned in Garhwal Rifles in 1977. Later on, joined Military Intelligence and retired from there as a Brigadier after 35 years of meritorious service. Later on he was appointed as Chairman, Assam Public Service Commission in April 2017. Presently he is Director at Directorate of Competitive Examinations and Placement with Education Research and Development Foundation, Guwahati.

Most of the border disputes all over the world can be traced back to the past and reasons could be historical, geographical, communal, or even societal. For example, the ongoing border disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan have their origin in the early part of the twentieth century; it acquired a hostile character consequent to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in early the 1990s.

Similarly, while India's border disputes with its neighbours are interlinked with territorial integrity, which makes any compromise unacceptable to the people of the republic. So, what could be attributed to interstate border disputes which are many in our country? Why has the Central Government not been able to resolve these disputes? Some of these boundary disputes especially of those in the North East which at times flare up with hostile acts like encroachment, kidnapping, intrusions, digging of trenches, deployment of the police force, occasional firing and "face-off" much like what happens between two sovereign states.

Similarly like any International border dispute, inter-states boundary disagreements in our country lead to a series of talks between the states involved. However, without tangible solution and only interim agreements to maintain the status quo are achieved. The main reason why such disputes arise is that the borders were not demarcated either on the map or on the ground when states were created. The saddest part is that people residing in these disputed areas live in constant fear just like those living in parts of the disputed territory along the international borders.

While there are many interstate borders disputes in our country, some states have managed such situations peacefully; examples like that of between Karnataka and Maharashtra or that between Punjab and Haryana. Though there have been some instances of violence in the past.

The most harassed and troubled state in case of border disputes is Assam. Assam shares 2616kilometre long boundary with six North East States (all except Sikkim). It may sound odd, but the state has border disputes with the four states which were carved out of Assam. Assam contends that more than 84000 hectares of land have been encroached by her neighbouring states. The situation sometimes is akin to Indo-Pakistan border with an eyeball to eyeball confrontation and this is no exaggeration. For example, media reports on the current tension along the Assam-Mizoram border reveal that Mizoram Police has dug trenches and bunkers. Both states have beefed up their police forces in the disputed areas. Mizoram and Assam share a border of 164 km. This disputed border is rich with minerals and gas deposits. ONGC has discovered hydrocarbon deposit (availability of 552674 cubic feet of gas) in parts of Kolasib district of Mizoram bordering Assam. Though both the states have vowed to maintain peace, the situation is tense. Meanwhile, the Centre has deployed two company of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) to maintain law and order.

However, the most "active border" is that of Assam-Nagaland which has seen many violent activities off and on since the creation of Nagaland state in 1963. The disputes relate to 66000 Sq Km of land mostly along undivided Sibsagar district of Assam. In one such major clash in 1979, Nagas killed 41 people including 28 Assam Police Personnel. In 1985 the Nagas killed 54 People and thousands of people had to take refuge in camps set up by the Government. The last major incident took place in August 2014 when the Nagas killed 20 members of Adivasi and other ethnic tribes to retaliate against the killing of two Naga youths by the All Assam Adivasi Liberation Army (a militant organization).

Because of the border dispute, thousands of hectares of fertile land remain unused because of claims and counterclaims by both the states. The disputed area, known as Disputed Area Belt (DAB), is divided into six sectors manned by the Para Military Forces.

The Assam Nagaland boundary disputes relate to the creation of Nagaland state in 1963 wherein the Nagas quoting the 1925 Notification (When Naga hill and Tuensang area were integrated as one unit) demanded that all Reserve Forest should be incorporated in Nagaland state. Two commissions namely Sundaram Commission (a retired Supreme Court Judge) and the Shastri Commission were set up by the Central Government. However, the Nagaland Government refused to accept their recommendations. Assam Government had filed a case in the Supreme Court in 1988 for identification of boundary and for resolving the border problems once for all.

ONGC had estimated that 500million tonnes of petroleum deposits are available in the disputed area and had commenced drilling in 1981. However due to objections from Naga Student Federation (NSF) and some militant organisations that such exploration by the ONGC was against the protection given to Nagaland under Article 371A of the constitution, drilling activity was stopped.



Assam Mizoram border dispute stem from a notification of 1875 that differentiate Lushai Hills (earlier name of Mizoram) from the plains of Assam. The 1875 Inner line regulation separated Lushai hill from the plains of Cachar. The Mizoram Government wants the boundary as stated in Notification of 1875 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BFFR) of 1873 as the boundary between the two states. On the other hand, Assam Government had taken a stand that the boundary with Mizoram should be as per the provision of 1933 Notification. Both the state shares a border of 164.6 square km. The latest series of incidents started on 17 Oct 2020 where the residents of Assam (Lyallpur area) clashed with Mizo locals of Kolashib area.

Assam shares a border of 885 square kilometres with Meghalaya. It has disputes in twelve points along the border. The last major violent incident took place in Langpih area bordering Kamrup district when Meghalaya Government alleged that Assam Police was setting up a Police outpost in that area.

Arunachal has a boundary of 792 km area with Assam. The boundary issue goes back to the period of the Ahom Kings who ruled Assam till the British annexed Assam in 1826. Various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh had some understandings with the Ahom rulers. The Assam government has filed a case in the Supreme Court requesting permanent demarcation of the boundary. Meanwhile, officials of the state are in constant touch to ensure that no unwanted elements take advantage of the situation.

Though the encroachments to disputed areas are usually carried by the villagers, at times the state authorities and the local administration display indifference suggesting that such encroachments have official patronage. The Governments responses to such encroachments are typical. The officials of affected states meet and once the situation is stabilized, the issue is put in the cold storage till another round of violence take place. No doubt everyone is looking for a permanent solution. However, like any other international border dispute, there has not been any visible progress.

The aggrieved people particularly in Assam sometimes take the law into their hands. They carry out blockades of roads leading to the hill states as all hill states are connected by road from Assam. At times they are supported by student organizations and some political parties to serve their vested interest. These blockades bring untold miseries to the common people as hundreds of trucks bringing in essentials commodities remain stranded on the border.

While we blame China or for that matter Pakistan for not showing adequate sincerity in solving the border issues, whom should we blame for not being able to resolve the interstate boundary issues? The Present Government (at the Centre and the affected States) must exhibit strength and sincerity to resolve the border issues at the earliest otherwise we will continue to blame history. The Centre had earlier stated that all boundary issues will be resolved by 2021 which hopefully it will be able to achieve with cooperation from the affected states. The affected states also need to rise above the electoral policies and cooperate with the Centre so that the North-East becomes a symbol of peace and prosperity achieved through mutual cooperation and adjustments.

## **Pandemic can shape humanity for good**

**By Gopal Dhok**

Author is a researcher with Forum for Integrated National Security.

The year 2020 may not have been up to the expectation due to pandemic and its economic impact across the world. Thanks to augmented health infrastructure, social distancing, communication mechanism (contact tracing, Aarogya Setu), the number of deaths have been significantly reduced compared with earlier major pandemics. Starting in 1348, the Black Death killed 30 to 50 percent of the population of Europe within a span of years. Between 75 and 200 million people died. The sudden decline in population led to innovation and mechanisation in agriculture and other industries. Today, a pandemic is driving innovation in the digital sphere. UPI transactions have doubled in one year.

The Covid has fastened the pace of innovation in artificial intelligence, machine learning and robotics with underpinning of 5G technology. India needs to adopt these emerging technologies to gain economic advantage. At the same time, we need to synchronise our workforce with these technologies to avoid demographic disaster.

Designing flexible basic infrastructure as a norm to provide backup support for such situations should be part of future developments. Incorporating emergency support systems as a part of design will be helpful in overcoming such challenges in the future. IT infrastructure such as Aarogya Setu can be scaled up for other chronic diseases by integrating data from smart devices (smart watch, blood oxygen sensors) to monitor health levels of citizens to get early alerts and rapid response.

Virus has also been a driver for remote working and could reduce the trend of urbanisation and congestion in cities. As people can work from remote places, energy independent (off the grid), sustainable habitats on a larger scale to reduce burden on cities can be a real possibility which can make the population resilient against economic shocks.

The event, which is still unfolding, may have lasting impact on the human psyche for good. Covid has also heightened the awareness about natural disasters for the generation and its impact on human society. In a sense, virus may prove crucial in dealing with climate change and sea level rise - an upcoming challenge.

Covid is also a glimpse of what this century will unfold in terms of Climate Change. As rise in atmospheric temperature will not affect weather patterns and our capability to grow food. Climate change will also expose humanity to more such diseases. The impact of the climate change crisis will be far more devastating. Just one meter of sea level rise will affect 250million people within 50KM of the Indian coastline. We have seen the severe impact of covid on migrant labor force. Climate change and sea level rise will lead to displacement at a much higher scale within and from outside India. Countries like India, Maldives, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar need to start talking about challenges of climate change and sea level rise at policy level. It is a collective challenge for the world and most importantly for South Asia due to our geography, population density and economic situation.

It is also a time we look at health security and climate change as a national security threat. The lesson from the virus is simple; India needs to rethink economy, health security, climate change and national security as a whole and needs to plan for 10 decades ahead to overcome such challenges which we don't want to see until it knocks on our door. Virus is a good teacher.

Pandemic (Black Death) in the 14th century led to European Renaissance. We can make something similar out of this pandemic too.

**Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the FINS or its members.**



***Wish You Happy, Healthy and Prosperous Years to Come***





## Nation is Indebted to:

Commodore Babru Bhan Yadav, MVC

Sea warrior who set Karachi port ablaze in 1971 Indo Pak War



(14 September 1928 – 22 January 2010)

Babru Bhan Yadav, affectionately known to all simply as Babru, was born into a military family at Bharawas village in Gurgaon district of then undivided Punjab.

Babru grew up listening to the stories of valour of 'Veer' Ahirs from his father Major Bhagwan Singh, a decorated soldier who served with distinction in the British Indian Army. Young Babru knew he was destined to be a soldier. He graduated in the science stream from the prestigious St Stephen's College, Delhi, and was selected as a Direct Entry Graduate. He served onboard HMS Devonshire as Midshipman for two years and was commissioned into the Indian Navy, the multi-dimensional combat force for blue waters tasks, on January 1, 1951. Water deficient Ahirwal produces a shipman, and daredevil at that, what a feat!

Babru was quick at uptake and ever exuberant and was soon learning the nuances of the sea warfare. His brilliant aptitude at all matters of marine did not go unnoticed by his superiors. With just four years into service, Babru was nominated to attend the Anti-Submarine Warfare course in the United Kingdom in 1955; a specialised course done mostly on front line ships. As Commander (equivalent to Lieutenant Colonel in the Army), Babru Bhan had a one-year challenging tenure on missile boats in the USSR. Commander Babru Bhan became an anti-submarine warfare specialist and with one year on missile boats, he was considered most suitable to command a frigate. With war clouds hovering, Commander Babru Bhan, on December 2, 1971, was given the command of 25th 'K' (Killer) Squadron composed of three missile boat task force, namely INS Veer, INS Nipat and INS Nirghat. And who knew just two days later, during the 1971 war with Pakistan (Operation Cactus Lily), the Karachi harbour would be in flames and witness to the onslaught and fury of this Killer Squadron led by daredevil Babru Bhan.

The Killer Squadron led by Babru Bhan annihilated the Karachi Harbour with a fleet of just three missile boat task forces; the Japanese had employed a far bigger Armada to annihilate the US naval fleet at Pearl Harbour 26 years ago.

Commander Babru Bhan was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, first time in the Indian Navy, for his conspicuous act of bravery in the face of the enemy against all possible odds during the 1971 war on the western water front.

Commodore Babru Bhan never married. Even after retirement, he remained wedded to his first and only love — the Indian Navy. He breathed his last on January 22, 2010.

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