

## Israel's Invisible Dome

By Lt Gen VA Bhat

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Approximately 45 days ago hostilities broke out between Israel and Gaza. Gaza is a very narrow strip of land inside the Palestine area, where the population is 17 Lakhs and growing three per cent every year. The fastest population growth rate in the world. Israel vacated Gaza in 2006. This strip of land is smaller than the smallest state of India, Goa (one-tenth the area of Goa).



Etched region is under Israeli control

The Gaza Strip, or simply Gaza, is a self-governing Palestinian territory on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Its borders Egypt on the southwest for 11 kilometres and Israel on the east and north along a 51 km border. Gaza with an area of 365 km<sup>2</sup> and the West Bank (5,655 km<sup>2</sup>) are claimed by the de jure sovereign State of Palestine. The governance of Gaza has been administered by Hamas since 2006. Hamas a Militant Islamist organisation has been at loggerheads with Israel ever since.

The present skirmish is after a lull of 6 – 7 years. The Map illustrates the narrow Gaza strip in the whole area. Gaza and the Fateh (Palestinian National Authority) have no love lost between them. Israel vacated the Gaza Strip in 1992-1993 as a part of the [Oslo Accord](#). The fundamental difference between Gaza and Fateh is that Fateh recognises Israel's right to exist, Hamas rejects it. Hamas fought with Fateh in 2006 and drove it away from Gaza Strip.

### **What led to this sudden flaring of the border 45 days ago?**

At the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in 2021, Jerusalem Islamic Waqf officials said that on the night of 13 April, the Israeli police entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and severed the loudspeaker cables used to broadcast the muezzin's ritual call to prayer, so that the Memorial Day speech being delivered by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin below at the Western Wall would not be disturbed. Israeli police declined to comment. The incident was condemned by Jordan. The Palestine National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called the incident "a racist hate crime", but it did not draw other international attention. Immediately after, Israeli police blocked off access to the Damascus Gate where Muslim worshippers congregate during the holiday. The barriers at the Damascus Gate were eventually removed some two weeks later in the wake of protests. One more factor that led to the current violence in Israel and Gaza is the possible eviction of 13 Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in the disputed territory of East Jerusalem. Britain's control over what had been Palestine ended after World War II and ownership and control of the land was partitioned by the international community through the United Nations. But there was no agreement on the borders of separate Jewish and Arab states. In 1948, the dispute resulted in a war, through which Israel declared independence and asserted control over more territory than had been initially proposed by the United Nations. The city of Jerusalem is important to both Israelis and Palestinians, who want at least part of it to be the capital of their future state. In 1972, almost twenty years after Palestinians settled in the Sheikh Jarrah area, Jewish settlers started launching legal challenges to the Palestinian claims to the land, initiating a legal battle that continues till today.

The settlers say they have a legal right to the land-based on an Israeli law that permits Jews to recover property abandoned during the war in 1948. There is no equivalent law for Palestinians, who have been unable to reclaim the land they abandoned or were forced to leave during the war.

The 13 Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah have been fighting efforts by settlers to evict them since 2008 in Israeli courts. Protests erupted several weeks ago after a court ruling in favour of the settlers, which cleared the way for some of the families (Palestine) to be evicted immediately. The evictions were put on hold by Israel's Supreme Court, which said it would wait to deliver its verdict on an appeal of the previous ruling in a bid to ease the mounting tension in the Holy City. But as the Muslim holy month of Ramadan drew to a close, unrest at another flashpoint, the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem's Old City pushed the two sides back into armed conflict. Another factor that contributed was the attitude of Mr Netanyahu who was in the middle of coalition negotiations after an election in March — the fourth in two years — that ended without a clear winner. To form a coalition, he needed to persuade several extreme-right lawmakers to join him in order to retain power. He has been the PM of Israel for the last 12 years. On April 29, President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority cancelled the Palestinian elections, which were eagerly awaited, fearing a humiliating defeat result. The decision made Mr Abbas look weak. Hamas saw an opportunity and began to reposition itself as a militant defender of Jerusalem. Hamas thought that by doing so, they were showing that they were a more capable leadership for the Palestinians. On May 4, the Head of the Hamas military issued a warning to Israel – if the aggression does not stop we will not be silent spectators.

Since Israel was founded in 1948, wars and Israeli settlement construction have led to the displacement of some 5 million Palestinians, [according to U.N. estimates](#).

The situation over the Jewish settlers' bid to expand into more areas by pushing Palestinians out of the land they had occupied for ages. Who has the right to what piece of land is the question. This area has been a place of perpetual conflict. All these events escalated the tension and resulted in the biggest conflict between Israel and Hamas. In all its conflicts Hamas has been raining Israel with mortars and short-range rockets. The aim is to inflict as many casualties on the civilian population and hit the strategic assets of Israel.

In the first or second week of May, the social media was full of pictures that showed the rockets fired by Hamas on Israel hitting an invisible shield.

In the year 2006 more than 3000 short-range rockets were fired on Israel by Hamas and Hezbollah. In 2007 Israel Defence Forces (IDF) decided to develop a countermeasure to destroy rockets in their flight before it reaches their target to minimize human casualties and protect its strategic assets.

In February IDF selected Iron Dome as Israel's defence against this short-range rocket threat. Since then, the \$210 million system has been developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems working jointly with the IDF. The system is designed to counter short-range rockets and 155 mm artillery shells with a range of up to 70 kilometres. According to its manufacturer, Iron Dome will operate day and night, under adverse weather conditions, and can respond to multiple threats simultaneously.

Iron Dome has three central components:

**Detection & Tracking Radar:** the radar system is built by Elta, an Israeli defence company and a subsidiary of Israel Aerospace Industries, and by the IDF.

**Battle Management & Weapon Control (BMC):** the control centre is built for Rafael by mPrest Systems, an Israeli software company.



An example of an interceptor Tamir missile used in Iron Dome System.

**Missile Firing Unit:** the unit launches the *Tamir* interceptor missile, equipped with electro-optic sensors and several steering fins for high manoeuvrability. The missile is built by Rafael. A typical Iron Dome battery has 4 launchers (5 missiles per launcher). The system's radar is referred to as EL/M-2084. It detects the rocket's launch and tracks its trajectory. The BMC calculates the impact point according to the reported data and uses this information to determine whether the target constitutes a threat to a designated area. Only when that threat is determined an interceptor missile is fired to destroy the incoming rocket before it reaches the predicted impact area.

Today the system can neutralise any kind of threat within the range of its vertically launched interceptor. In the beginning, only short-range rockets could be intercepted but today many different types of threats, cruise missiles, UAVs, and longer-range rockets and missiles, that fall within the system envelope can be neutralised. The Iron Dome was deployed in 2011. While Rafael claims a success rate of over 90%, with more than 2,000 interceptions, experts agree the success rate is over 80%. Rafael says on its website that it can "protect deployed and manoeuvring forces, as well as the Forward Operating Base (FOB) and urban areas, against a wide range of indirect and aerial threats".

Once the missile is fired, it should be able to manoeuvre, should be able to see the small target on its own and thereafter go and shoot. But it is impossible to hit the target directly each time, which is why “there is something in each missile called proximity fuse” which is a “laser-controlled fuse”. When passing within ten metres of the target, this activates and blasts the missile with shrapnel that destroys the target. “The warhead is exploded in such a way that it caters for the velocity of the missile and the target.

Each battery, or the full unit, can cost over \$50 million, and one interceptor Tamir missile costs around \$80,000. In contrast, a rocket can cost less than \$1,000. The system dispatches two Tamir missiles to intercept each rocket. Compared with the cost of the missile the countermeasure is very very costly, to say the least. But the return of investment on this system is the saving of lives of the civilian population and protection of Strategic assets.

The time, energy, and cost of rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure is colossal. It is also a Morale Booster to the security forces and its citizens as its exposure to loss of limb and life is grossly reduced. The adversaries’ mood will be in boots as it sees that all its effort in firing the projectile on Israel being reduced to zero. To counter it the Hamas will have to introduce new generation Rockets or Missiles which can escape this INVISIBLE DOME. It will add an enormous burden to its already crippling economy.

IDF is not going to rest with this countermeasure introduced but will already be engaged in upgrading this system in terms of range and time of interception and to try this on the missile in its flight path before it reaches Israel air space. IDF will be looking at the deployment of a similar or improved weapon system in Lebanon or Palestine or even Jordan/Syria. The initial funding of this project was by Israel alone but in 2009 US also funded this project and helped Israel.

The Invisible Dome of Israel is a major game-changer in the Israel Palestine region. Hamas in spite of firing a large number of Rockets has not been able to inflict any great casualties to the citizens of Israel nor has been able to make any international headlines in the World arena. The primary aim of any terrorist organisation striving to make political gains against the existing ruling dispensation in any country is to make headlines in all media to draw attention towards the cause they advocate. This aim of Hamas has been defeated. So what next? Hamas will make efforts to counter the Dome platform created by taking the help of countries sympathetic to its cause and surprise Israel in the next encounter. It may be a better Rocket that can defeat the Missiles fired by the Dome by having decoys or using electronics to take the Missile away from the Trajectory and this action will result in misfire for the IDF. As already brought out, the IDF is already in the process of upgrading its Dome to counter the next round where Hamas will fire much more sophisticated rockets against Israel. This will add a new dimension to the Air Defence inventory.

## **Quis Custodiet Ispos Custodes? (WHO WILL WATCH THE WATCH-DOG?)**

**By Udaya Kumar Verma**

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To believe that the overall conduct of the news media, in particular TV news Media, in the wake of the recent COVID epidemic is merely a transient aberration, will only reveal an ostrich-like approach, living in stark denial of what is staring us in the face. In ignoring the salience and propriety of issues that confront our news media space and the prevalent discourse that dominates this space these days - decidedly one of the most corrosive, difficult and depressing in recent times, will be perilous, to say the least.

Unfortunately, and ironically, most crises arise, perpetuate and even fester because many of us despite feeling resentment, frustration and even anger choose to be spectators and silent witnesses as grossly improper and unjust events happen around us and eventually overtake us. It is the silence of the sane and reasonable that pushes us down the abyss while a small, shouting and bullying minority decide and dictate; and rest of us choose to collectively suffer in silence, while individually and internally remaining discontented and uncomfortable. And it is true across every segment of society – politics, bureaucracy, academia, intelligentsia, civil society and of course news media. It has happened in the past; it happens even today and it will continue to happen in future as well, such is the nature of our intellectual and cerebral evolution.

History and our collective understanding of the growth of human civilization bear testimony to the fact that as far as freedom of expression and thoughts and ideas is concerned, the State shall never be able to either control or influence it for long. The nature of human intellect, freedom, innovation, endeavour and wisdom as also follies and foibles, ensure a free flow of thinking and an equally fierce desire and will to articulate it. No state can ever be able to control, subordinate or subjugate these desires, aspirations, tendencies, capacities and their free flowing expressions. Therefore, when we talk of news media content, the state shall be in the least effective position to offer an enduring and lasting mechanism to moderate or monitor content. Actually, it is news media itself that should find mechanisms to draw well thought out and defined 'Lakshmana rekha'. Anyone else doing so will inherently invite resentment, refusal and rebellion. It is this aspect that needs appreciation when one discusses why industry should itself volunteer to effectively monitor content.

It will be foolishly and patently erroneous to argue, as a few among us may tend to believe and assert that sanity and propriety has taken leave of the news media world, that everyone in news media today thinks alike and are in broad agreement with the approach, attitudes and motives that dominate and decide the conduct of news media. Nothing can be more preposterous. There are very sensible elements and voices - many of them - not just a handful, who vehemently disagree with what news media is doing today. While most have chosen to strike silence and stoicism, many have voiced their concerns and worries and discomfort and apprehensions in private and at times but only occasionally, even openly. If only some of them are able to pluck enough courage and say what their conscience is constantly goading them to do so, the discourse will change. Or else it may as well continue on its present disastrous trajectory, much as the political philosopher Burke had warned, "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing".

It is possible to invent, create and sustain any narrative and propagate, peddle and sell it; howsoever far removed it may be from reality and truth. The Palestinian American historian Edward Said, author of the monumental 'Orientalism' called such possibility through 'a whole structure of opinion and discourse'. If some among us can successfully create a subversive, corrosive and subjective perspective, the more intelligent and enlightened amongst us, can as well create a counter narrative- positive, hopeful, constructive, pacifying, and healing.

News media has always enjoyed a certain mystical 'mojo' – a magical charm that places her on a pedestal higher and different from others. She acts as a watch dog for everyone else and claims it as one of her basic and inherent rights and privileges. But who will be overseeing her own conduct and character? Who would do the course correction as and when it is required? To argue that news media is a power unto itself and beyond any scrutiny will be in denial of the basic and fundamental law of nature- a law that requires a balance of forces, powers and potentials- and without which neither the universe nor all that it encompasses could originate or exist. Media has the option to be its own watch dog. Is she willing to confront this reality and challenge and and make bold to resolve it?

My own logical conviction is that happen it eventually would! The challenge, of course, pivots around the issue of when and who must take the initiative in this direction

# Tiananmen Square Massacre- 4th June 1989

By Dr. Arnab Chakrabarty

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**“200 lives were a small price to pay for stability”-Deng Xiaopin**

## Tiananmen Square Massacre- A low point in history

The massacre at Tiananmen Square would inevitably go down as one of the darkest chapters in the history of the civilized world, spurring a series of scholarly works albeit many which failed to directly call out the PRC for its atrocities on its own citizens.

Unknown to many the protests that ultimately led to the Tiananmen Square massacre was similar to the **May Fourth Movement (1917-1921)** led by a group of intellectuals known as the **New Youth**. In both the cases the ideas were based on liberalism, democracy, economic and social reforms. In the first case the Japanese brutally crushed the movement while the other culminated in the infamous Tiananmen Square Massacre.

The May Fourth Movement spurred the growth of the **CCP** (Chinese Communist Party) which saw the rise of leaders like **Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu and Mao** (who was a protégé of Li Dazhao). Rampant invasions by the Japanese, militarism, control by the warlords, disunity, and the ultimate **defeat of the Japanese** and the victory of the CCP in the Chinese civil war ultimately turned the **PRC into a communist country**.

After the establishment of the PRC, two main events occurred the **Great Leap forward (1958-1960)** and the **Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)** both which ended in a disaster. Mao's personality cult, his demise and the power struggle later on propelled Deng Xiaoping to the seat of the power ushering in an era of industrialisation and modernisation.

However by the 1980s the demands of the people grew even more. Be aware that by that time the communists all over the world were also struggling and even in **Eastern Europe** and in the former USSR there were **popular revolts and frequent crackdowns**. **Hu Yaobang** who was the General Secretary of the CCP was forced to resign in 1987 as the hardliners within the CCP saw him as a 'bourgeois liberal'. His fate would be similar to that of **Peng Dehuai** (whom Mao had removed after the Great Leap Forward).

On the **15th April of 1989 Hu Yaobang passed away** and students, intellectuals and even workers acclaimed him as a martyr for their cause. As students began to throng the **Tiananmen Square** the government issued **stern warnings** to them, similar crowd also gathered in other cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing, Changsa, Chengdu and Xian. The visit of **Mikhail Gorbachev**, the presence of a lot of foreign journalists also drew attention and the CCP was in a fix regarding the solution. The protesters called for rule of law, end to corruption, free press and media and relaxation of control. Moderates such as **Zhao Ziyang** (the General Secretary of the CCP) advocated a compromise while hardliners such as Li Peng and Deng Xiaoping called for an outright suppression of the demonstrations. In the ensuing debate the **hardliners won** and sent in the military to forcibly suppress the movement.

Minor scuffles between the troops and the protestors saw the troops retreating, the protestors visibly happy gathered around the statue of the Goddess of Democracy (which was made of papier mâché). By the night of 3rd June Tanks, Armoured vehicles and heavily armed troops stormed the place **firing live ammunition** into the crowds and dispersing them forcibly. In retaliation many protestors also attacked the troops but with little success.

Soldiers were authorised to use 'lethal force' to liquidate all opposition. Tanks rolled down people and most of those who were killed were workers, small businessmen, academicians, journalists and even ordinary people. By the end of 4th of June the entire square was cleared of all 'undesirable elements and bourgeois dissidents and thus Chinese democracy was restored'. The most iconic image of the massacre was the tankman, a lone protester standing in front of a column of Type 59 tanks. Jiang Zemin became the General Secretary of the CCP replacing Zhao Ziyang. Arrests continued and many were imprisoned or simply vanished. Operation Yellowbird aided in the escape of many dissidents from the PRC via Hong Kong.

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## Nation is Indebted to:

**LT COL KESHARI SINGH, ARTILLERY  
(03 JAN 1926--26 NOV 2006)**



Avadh region of India during British raj was known as an abode of people who came from abject poverty background but were famous for their valour as well as intelligence. Many of those joined British Indian Army.

Col Keshari Singh was, one of a such soldier from – Pachwas village of Basti district of Avadh region. His father, Thakur Indrasan Singh was a renowned freedom fighter. Col Keshari Singh's childhood was very challenging as he grew in acute poverty. His schooling was from many village schools in that area. After completing his matriculation, to overcome the financial difficulties of his parents, he joined British Indian Army as a sepoy in 1941 in the Royal Artillery. Soon he was promoted to Havaldar clerk's role. After India's Independence, he was selected for Officers role and got commission as 2nd/Lt in the Regiment of Artillery in 1949.

Young Lt Keshri Singh understood the value of being part of Army and soon he started guiding & motivating the youths of Pachwas and nearby villages to join Indian Army. His relentless efforts showed result and over a period of his 33 years of Army life, about 1500 youths, joined the Armed forces from that poverty-stricken area. Some of them joined in Officers cadre. There are more than 15 Officers (Retired/Serving) from that area, even one Officer rose to rank of Lt Gen. In Soldiers category about 20 persons reached to Hony Lt / Capt rank.

This brought a welcome change in the financial conditions of most of the families. Simultaneously, Col Keshari Singh proved his mettle in his professional domain. He did prestigious LGSC Course in 1962, and having completed it with flying colours, was posted as “Instructor Gunnery” at school of Artillery Deolali. During Indo - Pak war in 1965, he led the Artillery attack along with then Maj Ranjeet Singh Dayal MVC in the famous Battle of HAZZI PIR in the Uri sector. Col Keshari Singh during his Army career, commanded two Artillery Regiments at different times, a rare feat from Army standards.

After retirement in 1973, Col Keshari Singh worked relentlessly for the welfare and upliftment of people of that area. He joined Sainik Kalyan Directorate of U P Govt. His efforts made it possible to realise a Govt Primary and Upper School, Inter College, Post Office, public Bus Stand, Nationalised Bank Branch in his village Pachwas. To start the Inter College, Col Keshari Singh even sold his Wife’s jewellery to fund it.

He also joined politics and was elected to UP Vidhan Sabha in 1985 as Congress Party member, from Ramnagar of Basti district. In Politics also, he showed his impeccable character of honesty. A Jeep vehicle, given to him for party campaign, when became unusable, he sold that and proceeds received were dutifully deposited to party fund by him, an unheard act by any political leader.

His zeal for the welfare was exemplary. Those days there was no higher education facility nearby. The nearest Degree College was about 70 Kms away. He donated his farm land to see that a Degree College comes up near his village for the benefit of students. Degree College started by him is known as “Thakur Indrasan Singh Swatantrata Sanagram Senani Rajkiya Maha Vidyalaya, Pachwas”.

This great social worker and Educationist dedicated his entire life for the upliftment of society.

Even today, whole area talks about him very fondly referring to him as “Scooterwale Vidhyak ji” as he used to visit villages of that area on his old rickety Scooter.

It is rightly said “To serve humanity, one need not be born with silver spoon”. Col Keshari Singh is one such example.

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