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MINISTRY OF
DEFENCE



NAIK PREM BAHADUR GURUNG

SERVICE NUMBER	5343711
RANK	Naik
NAME	Prem Bahadur Gurung
SON OF	Shri Karna Bahadur Gurung
RESIDENT OF (Village/District/State)/ DOMICILE	Village Sidhani, Nepal
UNIT/REGIMENT/CORPS	3/4 GORKHA RIFLES
SERVICE	Indian Army
DATE OF ENROLMENT/COMMISSION	22 November 1976
AWARD/DATE OF ACTION	Maha Vir Chakra (Posthumous)/24 September 1987
WAR/BATTLE/OPERATION	Op MEGHDOOT
OTHER AWARDS WITH DATE	



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Naik Prem Bahadur Gurung was born on 22 November 1956, at Sidhani village in Kaski District of Nepal. The son of Shri Karna Bahadur Gurung, Naik Prem Bahadur joined the Indian Army on 22 November 1976 at the age of twenty. He was enrolled into 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES, an Infantry Regiment known for its gallant soldiers with a long history of numerous battle exploits. After serving for some time, he got married to Ms Maya Devi and the couple had two daughters, Kalpana Devi & Lakshmi Devi and a son Mekh Bahadur. By 1987, he had put in around ten years of service and had been promoted to the rank of Naik. By then he had served in various field areas and gained the field-craft skills required to be a battle-ready soldier.

In the year 1987, Pakistan made repeated attempts to capture the key some Key Posts in Siachen Glacier Complex. Naik Prem Bahadur Gurung's unit was deployed in Siachen Glacier as part of Operation Meghdoot. He was posted at a vital Post at an altitude of 20,000 feet at the Bilafondla Complex where he volunteered to be a part of the mission to safeguard India from enemy intervention as a part of Op MEGHDOOT.



Army Chief General Manoj Pande during his visit to Siachen Glacier

(Source: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/features/operation-meghdoot-victory-amid-heavy-odds-568009>)



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The first battalion of Gurkha Regiment (now GORKHA RIFLES) was raised in 1815 during the Anglo-Nepalese war. Impressed by the qualities displayed by Gurkhas during the war, the British started active recruitment of Gurkhas into the British Indian army. After the partition, in 1947 six Gurkha regiments viz, 1 GR, 3 GR, 4 GR, 5 GR, 8 GR and 9 GR remained with the Indian Army, while 2 GR, 6 GR, 7 GR and 10 GR were transferred to British Army as part of the Tripartite Agreement signed between India, Nepal and Britain. The 4 GORKHA RIFLES was raised in 1817. It was formerly known as the Fourth Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Regiment. Before the reorganisation in 1857, it was known as the *Extra Goorkha Regiment* and following the reorganisation it was named as the 19th Regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry. In 1950, after India gained its republic status, it was renamed to be the 4 GORKHA RIFLES REGIMENT of the Indian Army. The Regiment fought in Europe during World War I and Middle East, North Africa and Italy during World War II. Since independence, the regiment has proved its mettle three Indo-Pak Wars of 1947-48, 1965 and in 1971 and has been awarded battle and theatre honours for all three conflicts. 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES battalion fought a fine action at Bilafond La, at heights of nearly 20,000 feet (6,100 m) in 1987. The 1st Battalion (JETHI) was awarded the COAS Unit Citation in 2002, for its performance in counter terrorism operations in Kupwara district, Kashmir. The Battalion was commended for neutralizing 94 Foreign Terrorists, in a number of operations in Tangdhar, Panzgam and Lolab. The Regiment's motto is '**Kafar Hunu Bhandu Marnu Ramro**' (Better to die than live like a coward).

Operation MEGHDOOT is an ongoing operation along North-Western Border region of India in high altitude area of Siachen Glacier, ranging above 21000 feet. Launched on 13 April 1984, this unique military operation was the first assault launched in the world's highest battlefield. The military action resulted in Indian troops gaining control of the strategically located Siachen Glacier. It is considered as a feat unparalleled in the history of high-altitude warfare where soldiers of Indian Army and Air Force operate under most adverse weather conditions with sub-zero temperatures of minus 50C.¹

The Siachen Glacier is the second longest glacier in the world. The scroll of honour at Indian Army's Siachen Base Camp reads, "*Quartered in snow, silent to remain. When the bugle calls, they shall rise and march again.*"² Beneath the veneer of this bleak beauty lie menacing hazards that snatch away human lives if one is not careful. Given the significance of this Glacier, it provided a strategic importance to India, Pakistan and China as it served as

¹ The Official Website of National War Memorial
https://nationalwarmemorial.gov.in/murals/totem_details/5

² The Story of Bana Singh, The hero who helped Win the 1987 Siachen Standoff. The Better India. (Accessed on 06 February 2023)

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/123693/bana-singh-indian-army-param-vir-chakra-hero-1987-siachen/>



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a hub for Shaksham Valley and Karakoram Pass.³



Walkthrough The Life of Indian Army in Siachen

(Source: <https://defencedirecteducation.com/2022/07/13/siachen-glacier-indian-army/>)

Siachen area has been a bone of contention between Pakistan and India for many years. The root cause of the issue can be traced back to the Karachi Agreement of 1949. The representatives of both the nations drew the 'Ceasefire Line' across maps of Jammu and Kashmir from Manawar in the South, to Khor in the North and thence 'North to the Glaciers' through NJ 9842. Presumably when the discussion came up on the glaciated wilderness of snow and ice the representatives stopped at grid Point NJ 9842 on the presumption that neither side would be interested in contesting an area where not a blade of grass grows and even breathing is a problem. The problem started when Pakistan decided to further their ambitions which complicated the issue. They illegally ceded some 5180 square kilometers of Indian territory to China in the area where the boundaries of India, Pakistan and China meet thereby altering the geo-strategic importance of this area. Secondly, by permitting and assisting foreign mountaineering and scientific expeditions in the area it raised the issue of 'rights' in an area that did not belong to them. The cartographic ambiguities of 1962 and Pakistan's growing devious nature had concerned the Indian Army. In mid-seventies reports of foreign mountaineering expeditions crossing the Salto Ridge and Siachen Glacier from

³ What is the Strategic importance of Siachen from the Indian point of view. IDSA. (Accessed on 06 February 2023)



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Pakistan side came to India's notice. It was also learnt that Pakistan Army officers accompanied these expeditions. As a result of these reports to establish our own claim to the area a mountaineering expedition led by one of the Indian Army's leading mountaineers, Colonel Narinder (Bull) Kumar, was sent to area in 1978. The expedition went to Tersam Kangri and in 1984 the Indian Army took pre-emptive action and occupied Saltoro Range.

In April 1984 Operation Meghdoot: Indian Army under the leadership of Lieutenant General Manohar Lal Chibber, and Lieutenant General PN Hoon and Major General Shiv Sharma, learned of the plan by Pakistan Army to seize Sia La, and Bilafond La, on the glacier. Indian Army launched an operation to pre-empt the seizure of the passes by the Pakistan Army.



Heroes of Op Meghdoot commemorated

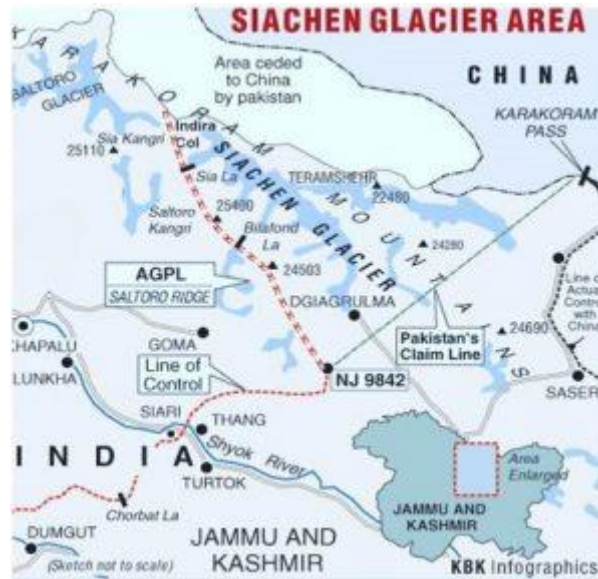
(Source: https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/heroes-of-op-meghdoot-commemorated/#google_vignette)

The task of establishing Indian Army's presence over Siachen Glacier was entrusted to 26 Sector commanded by Brigadier VN Channa. 4 KUMAON, supported by a Company of Ladakh Scouts and two Companies of 19 KUMAON commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier) DK Khanna were in turn tasked to occupy the Siachen Glacier Complex. Before undertaking the task, the Company Group carried out rigorous training for several weeks, which included ice craft, snow craft, survival on snow and physical fitness and mental robustness. The operation 'Meghdoot' was led by Major (later Colonel) RS Sandhu, VrC. The next wave under Captain (later Lieutenant General) Sanjay Kulkarni, landed on the Glacier, and hoisted the Indian Tricolour on Bilafond La (Siachen Glacier). The foot column led by Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) PV Yadav, SM, reached the Glacier subsequently, after an extremely strenuous four-day march over extremely inhospitable terrain. The column set up Camps I, II and III for maintenance of newly established Posts on the Glacier. Companies of Kumaon Battalion were given responsibility for the security of the line of communication of



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these Posts.⁴ Op MEGHDOOT was executed in the morning of 13 April 1984 and pre-empted Pakistan's impending Operation Ababeel. Indian soldiers managed to control all major mountain passes of Sia La, Bilafond La and by 1987 Gyong La and all the commanding heights of the Salto Ridge west of the Siachen Glacier.⁵



(Source: Civildaily)

In 1987, Pakistan ordered their own troops to establish a Post in Bilafond La in the Indian territory which was named as Quaid Post after Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. In order to take control of the Post, India launched an operation codenamed Operation RAJIV to capture the peak. The operation was named after Second Lieutenant Rajiv Pandey who led a team of soldiers tasked to capture a feature called Left Shoulder at 21000 feet lying between two Indian Posts. During the final assault on 29 May 1987, he was killed.⁶ Quaid Post was located on a massive ice mass located at an altitude of 21,153 feet above sea level. The steep ice-wall of Quaid Post gives it a very dominating position and to defend it one has to just take potshots at anyone trying to crawl up. Naib Subedar Bana Singh of 8 JAK LI volunteered to be a member of a task force constituted in June 1987. He was joined by four others in this

⁴ Op Meghdoot, Indian Army. (Accessed on 06 February 2023)

<https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplate/frmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=0gmQNtAjBjivMiPVgCWpSA==&ParentID=7Tmz9XdTOibFXDXSjBBynw==>

⁵ Wikipedia. (Accessed on 06 February 2023)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Meghdoot#cite_note-time-war-10

⁶ The War Decorated India & Trust. (Accessed on 06 February 2023)

<http://twdi.in/node/4282>



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endeavour. While other members of the Battalion engaged the attention of Pakistani soldiers, Naib Subedar Singh and his team slowly climbed and clawed their way up the steep wall of ice. The team fought all the odds and captured Quaid Post which was later renamed as Bana Top.



Op MEGHDOOT stories of unparalleled courage

(Source: Indian Defence Review)

In the same year, in the month of September 1987 the Bilafondla Complex a vital Post in the Siachen Glacier region situated at the height of 20,000 Feet was attacked by the adversary and had suffered heavy casualties in an attack on 18 September 1987. Naik Prem Bahadur Gurung of 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES was posted at Siachen Glacier area, where his Company occupied defences at Bilafondla Complex. On the night of 23/23 September 1987, enemy troops launched determined attacks on his Post but were repulsed. Again, on the night of 24/25 September 1987, enemy troops launched a massive attack on the Post with heavy artillery. During the action, the Commander was hit and Naik Prem Bahadur Gurung took over as Section Commander. As the battle raged, his Section was running out of ammunition. Undeterred, he ran to his Platoon Headquarters twice under intense fire to replenish the Section with ammunition. His section ultimately beat back a series of enemy attacks.



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On 24 September 1987, at about 0325 hours, enemy troops launched yet another attack. When the troops were just 50 yards from the Post, he got out of his trench and charged them, throwing grenades and firing with his rifle. At this gallant charge, the adversary's troops took to their heels. Having exhausted his ammunition, Naik Gurung threw away his rifles, unbuckled his Khukri and ran after them hacking three of the four fleeing soldiers. But during the hand-to-hand fight, he was shot in the chest and later died. Naik Prem Bahadur Gurung displayed conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy's troops and died fighting for his country. He was awarded Maha Vir Chakra posthumously.



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CITATION

5342711 NAIK PREM BAHADUR GURUNG, 3/4 GORKHA RIFLES
(POSTHUMOUS)

(Effective date of award-24 September 1987)

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Reference: Gazette of India, Notification No dated



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<http://twdi.in/node/4282>



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VIDEOS

Operation Meghdoot | How India Captured Siachen | Battle Ops | Veer by Discovery | ऑपरेशन मेघदूत
(Source: YouTube Veer Discovery)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Q7AC66O8nU>

Operation Meghdoot (Source: YouTube ADGPI Indian Army)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNRQehJCKHo>

Stunning story of Op Meghdoot-Seizing Earth's highest battlefield with Lt Gen Kulkarni
(Retd) (Source: YouTube ANI NEWS)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSYQRJWld0c>

Siachen Glacier : दुनिया के सबसे खतरनाक युद्धस्थल में भारतीय सेना के पराक्रम की कहानी..
(Source: BBC Hindi YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkOb4Y--JJg>

1:47 / 9:49 Operation Rajiv | Capturing Siachen's Highest Peak | Battle Ops | Veer by
Discovery | ऑपरेशन राजीव (Source: YouTube Veer Discovery)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ube1Gx6O6Y&t=105s>

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