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Special Issue

September (Week 2)

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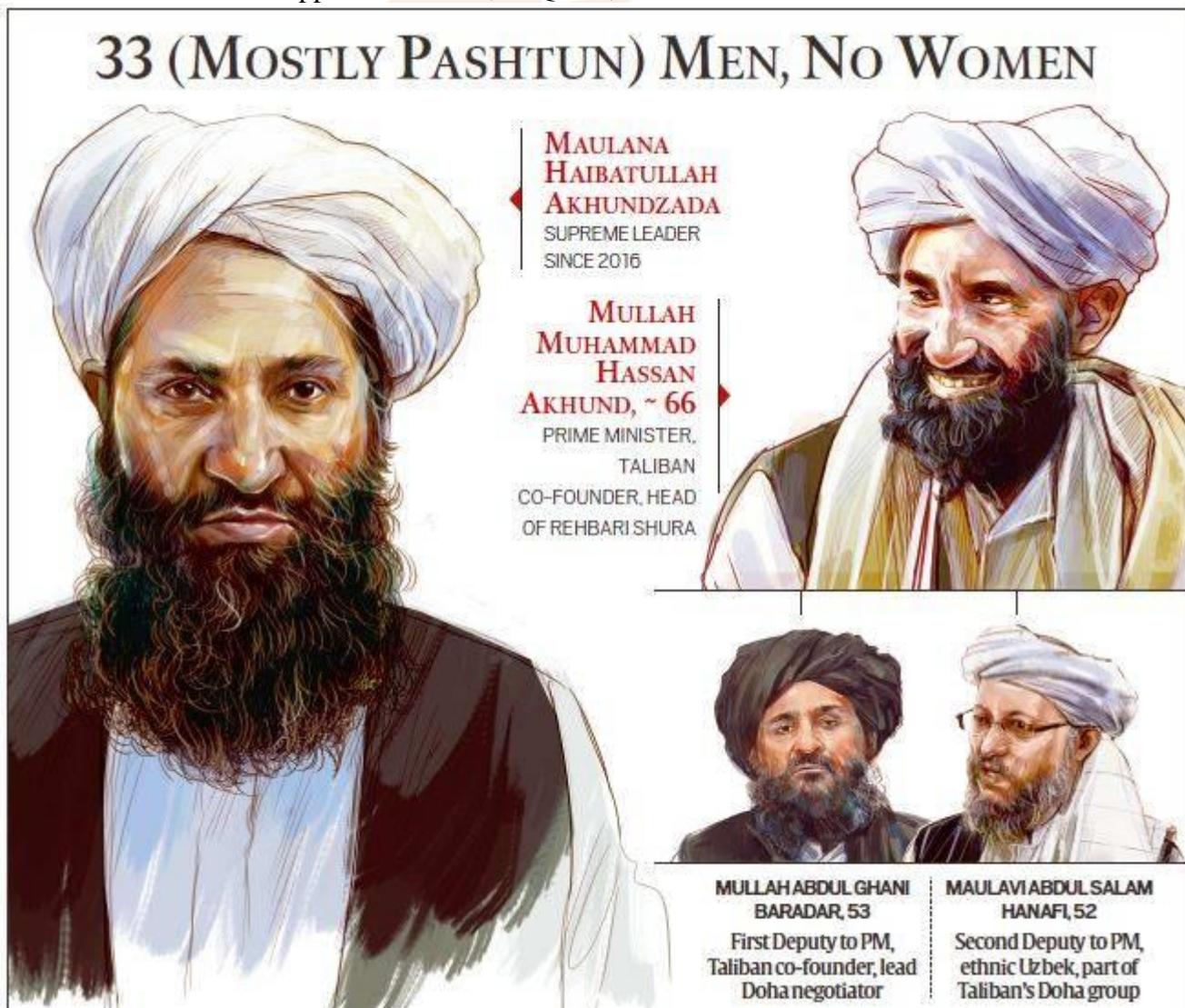


All about The Haqqani Network

Context: The Haqqani Network has emerged as the most powerful group in the **new Taliban government**, with four of the clan nominated as cabinet members. The Haqqani Network takes its name from the leader of the group, Jalaluddin Haqqani, who first fought the Soviet Army in Afghanistan as a loyal ally of the CIA and the ISI, and then fought the US and NATO forces, while he led a protected existence in North Waziristan, where Pakistan gave him and the entire group safe haven.

Haqqani Network in Afghan cabinet

- **SIRAJUDDIN HAQQANI**, 48, is the new Interior Minister — an appointment that is a finger in the eye of the international community. He has been a UN-designated global terrorist since 2007, and the FBI has a reward of \$ 10 million for information leading to his arrest. No recent photographs exist of him.
 - According to a 2010 report on the Haqqani Network by US-based think tank Institute for the Study of War, Sirajuddin's mother is an Arab woman who was the second wife of Jalaluddin Haqqani. She is said to be living in a Gulf country.
 - The UN listing of Sirajuddin says he “participated in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf or in support of Taliban, al-Qaeda, and Jaish-i-Mohammed.





- It describes him as “one of the most prominent, influential, charismatic and experienced leaders within the Haqqani Network... and has been one of the major operational commanders of the network since 2004. After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Sirajuddin Haqqani took control of the Haqqani Network and has since then led the group into the forefront of insurgent activities in Afghanistan”.
- According to the listing, he derived much of his power and authority from his father, Jalaluddin Haqqani — who was also listed, and described as “a go-between for al-Qaeda and the Taliban on both sides of the Afghanistan/Pakistan border”. Sirajuddin Haqqani was involved in the suicide bombing attack against a Police Academy bus in Kabul on June 18, 2007, which killed 35 police officers.
- **KHALIL-UR-REHMAN HAQQANI**, the uncle of Sirajuddin, who has been appointed the Minister for Refugees, was listed as a terrorist in 2011. The listing says he travelled to Gulf countries, as well as in South and South-east Asia to raise funds on behalf of the Taliban and the Haqqani Network.
 - He is said to have been one of several people responsible for the detention of prisoners captured by the Taliban and the Haqqani Network. The listing links him to al-Qaeda as well.
- **AJBULLAH HAQQANI**, Minister for Communication, was listed in 2001. He had been a minister in the previous Taliban regime as well — first the deputy minister for public works, and later, deputy minister for finance. He was militarily active until 2010.
- **SHEIKH ABDUL BAQI HAQQANI**, an associate of Jalaluddin Haqqani and the new Minister for Higher Education, is the only leader of the Haqqani Network in the government who not designated by the UN Security Council. However, he has been sanctioned by the European Union.
 - On being appointed the shadow minister for education last month, he was reported as saying that while girls could study, “All educational activities will take place according to Shariah.”

Haqqani Network’s deep roots in Af-Pak

- Jalaluddin Haqqani, a Zadran tribesman from the Loya Paktia (Paktia, Paktika and Khost) area in eastern Afghanistan close to the border with Pakistan, was a member of the anti-communist, anti-Soviet Hizb-e-Islami, and became active as a mujahideen in the 1970s.
- He is an alumnus of the Dar-ul-ulum Madrassa, also nown as the jihad factory, in Akhora Khattak in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.
- As the frontier of the Cold War came to Pakistan’s doors, he and several others were trained in Pakistan for jihad. When the Soviet Army arrived, he was among the CIA’s trusted mujahideen. Charlie Wilson, the US Senator who mustered money and weapons for the war, is said to have described him as “goodness personified”. During this time he forged deep ties with the ISI.
- From a base in North Waziristan, Jalaluddin ran guns and fighters for the jihad all through the 1980s. This is also the time when he met Osama bin Laden in Miramshah, the headquarters town of North Waziristan. While he received largesse from the CIA and ISI, Haqqani is said to have also raised his own funds from wealthy sheikhs in Gulf countries, and during his annual Haj pilgrimage.
- Haqqani joined hands with the Taliban in 1995, and he and his men fought alongside the Islamist movement against the various warring factions of the mujahideen.
- When the Taliban captured Kabul in 1996, he became the Minister of Border and Tribal Affairs. The relationship between him and Mullah Omar was one of common interests, but it was hardly smooth, with Haqqani resentful of the prominence Mullah Omar gave to his inner circle from Kandahar.

Haqqani Network post-2001

- After the ouster of the Taliban regime by the US and allied forces in 2001, the Haqqani family fled to Pakistan, where they are believed to have taken refuge in their old stronghold of Miramshah in North Waziristan.
- They were said to be running a parallel administration there, taxing people and making money off construction contracts and investments in real estate in the area. Another source of income was from



fund-raising in the Gulf. Kidnapping for ransom was a major source of income, as was smuggling timber from Afghanistan into Pakistan.

- In 2003, when the Taliban began regrouping, the Haqqani clan was central to their efforts. By then, Sirajuddin had taken over most of the operational aspects of the Haqqani Network from his father Jalaluddin.
- Military observers credit much of the success of the Taliban to the Haqqani Network. The United States often urged Pakistan to “do more” to eliminate the Haqqani Network, but these efforts remained cosmetic.
- The Institute for the Study of War report mentioned earlier says the Pakistani Army consistently refused to launch a military operation in North Waziristan despite the presence of the al-Qaeda’s senior leadership there.
- Even while reporting directly to the Taliban Supreme Council, the Haqqani Network retained its own distinct identity.

Haqqani Network and India

- The 2008 Indian Embassy bombing in which a senior diplomat and a military official posted at the Embassy were killed among dozens others, mostly Afghan civilians, was blamed by US and Afghan intelligence on the Haqqani Network.
- The National Directorate of Security, the intelligence agency of the erstwhile Afghan government, had provided communication intercepts to Indian authorities that pointed to Haqqani involvement, allegedly with ISI support. A similar claim was made by the CIA. Other reports pointed to a Lashkar-e-Taiba involvement, with support from the Haqqani Network.
- The Haqqani Network is also said to have been behind the attacks on Indian construction workers in Afghanistan in the years 2009-2012.
- The group’s long relationship with and loyalty to the ISI make it an invaluable asset for Pakistan, according to security officials. There is considerable disquiet in the Indian security establishment that Sirajuddin Haqqani is a member of the new government of Afghanistan.

All about posting of administrative officers

Context: *The Haryana government has come under the scanner of Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India for alleged flagrant violation of the All India Services (Cadre) Rules as state government continues to post non-cadre officers from IPS, IRS, IFS to the posts that are meant for IAS officers, without seeking a mandatory prior approval from the Centre.*

What is the latest controversy over posting an IPS officer on cadre post meant for IAS officers in Haryana?

- On September 1, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajeev Arora issued transfer and posting orders of 10 IPS officers. Of these, one officer Kala Ramachandran was transferred as Principal Secretary (Transport) with additional charge of ADGP, Crime Against Women.
- The file was sent to Home Minister Anil Vij for approval. Vij, however, halted Ramachandran’s transfer, noting on the file that it was “against the guidelines/ instructions of DoPT, posting of non-cadre officer at IAS cadre post”. He approved the transfer posting of other nine officers.
- Overruling Vij, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar’s Chief Principal Secretary DS Dhesi wrote on the file: “1. CM has approved the proposals (transfer/postings of all 10 officers); 2. Permission of DoPT shall be taken, as per extant instructions, in respect of...[Ramachandran]”.



- As the file was sent back to the home department, on September 2, Vij wrote: “Expedite the process for obtaining permission from DoPT. Till the permission is received, Mrs. Kala Ramachandran shall not be relieved for her new assignment”.
- Meanwhile, chief secretary Vijai Vardhan too raised objections on the transfer of IPS officer on a cadre post meant for IAS officers. He too proposed that the state government should expedite the process to seek approval from Centre before the officer is relieved by the home department for her new assignment. On September 5, CM overruled both Vij and Vardhan. Eventually, Vardhan issued the orders of transfer of the IPS officer as Principal Secretary (Transport).

What do the rules say?

- All India Services (Cadre) Rules, 1954 cover such transfer and postings of non-cadre officers on cadre posts meant for IAS.
- **Rule 9:** Temporary appointment of non-cadre officer to cadre posts
 - **9 (1)** A cadre post in a State shall not be filled by a person who is not a cadre officer except in the following case; namely:- (a) if there is no suitable cadre officer available for filling the vacancy: Provided that when a suitable cadre officer becomes available, the person who is not a cadre officer, shall be replaced by the cadre officer; Provided further that if it is proposed to continue the person who is not a cadre officer beyond a period of three months, the State Government shall obtain the prior approval of the Central Government for such continuance; (b) if the vacancy is not likely to last for more than three months: Provided that if the vacancy is likely to exceed a period of three months, the State Government shall obtain the prior approval of the Central Government for continuing the person who is not a cadre officer beyond the period of three months.
 - **9(2)** A cadre post shall not be filled by a person who is not a cadre officer except in accordance with the following principles, namely: (a) if there is a Select List in force, the appointment or appointments shall be made in the order of the names of the officers in the Select List; (b) if it is proposed to depart from the order of names appearing in the Select List, the State Government shall forthwith make a proposal to that effect to Central Government together with the reasons therefor and the appointment shall be made only with the prior approval of the Central Government; (c) if a Select List is not in force and it is proposed to appoint a non-Select List officer, the State Government shall forthwith make a proposal to that effect to the Central Government together with the reasons therefor and the appointment shall be made only with the prior approval of the Central Government;
 - **9 (3)** Where a cadre post is likely to be filled by a person who is not a cadre officer for a period exceeding six months, the Central Government shall report the full facts to the Union Public Service Commission with the reasons for holding that no suitable officer is available for filling the post and may in the light of the advice given by the Union Public Service Commission give suitable direction to the State Government concerned;
 - **9 (4)** Notwithstanding anything contained in these rules, in relation to the State of Nagaland and the Union Territories, a cadre post may be filled by a person who is a member of the Indian Frontier Administrative Service and was recruited to the Service prior to the 1st of January, 1968.

How did the DoPT intervene?

- Senior IAS officer Ashok Khemka, on November 3, 2020 and December 9, 2020, had flagged the issue of such transfers in Haryana. He sent representations to state government, CM, DoPT and Prime Minister’s Office.
- **March 24, 2021:** DoPT directed Haryana chief secretary to submit detailed comments on the issues raised by Khemka in his representations regarding posting of non-cadre officers on cadre posts in state in violation of Rule 9 of AIS (Cadre) Rules “to ensure and compliance of the Rules in making postings/ transfers/ appointments of Haryana in future”.
- **June 8, 2021:** the state government submitted its reply to the DoPT.



- **June 29, 2021:** the DoPT again wrote to the state government that the reply furnished by it did not address the issues raised by Khemka and state government also did not submit a “detailed report as solicited by DoPT regarding posting of non-cadre officers on cadre posts in Haryana without obtaining prior approval of the Central Government and therefore the same was in violation of Rule 9 of AIS (Cadre) Rules”.
- **August 19, 2021:** the DoPT again directed the state government to send “detailed comments on issues raised by Khemka”.

What is the state government’s take on such transfers and postings?

- The state government continues to make such transfers without taking approval from the central government.
- Currently, there are 10 such non-cadre officers who are occupying the cadre posts meant for IAS officers.
- On the other hand, there are 28 IAS officers in apex/HAG scales serving in the state, currently. The government says, against the 12 posts of principal secretaries, 11 are filled implying that there will be one more non-cadre officer who shall be posted on another cadre post.
- The government says that such transfers “promote fair competition and ensures delivery of services”.
- It adds that there are 47 principal secretaries against 12 sanctioned posts, while the designated posts are only for chief secretary, financial commissioner (revenue) and principal secretary to CM.

All about The dispute between Reliance and Delhi Metro

(Source: [Indian Express](#))

Context: *Ending a protracted legal battle, a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday (September 9) upheld a 2017 arbitration tribunal order to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to pay Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Infrastructure Rs 2,800 crore plus interest in connection with the termination of a contract to run the Airport Express Line. The Delhi government, which has a 50 per cent stake in DMRC, had waded into the dispute in 2018, with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal demanding an investigation by the CBI into alleged huge losses to the exchequer. The Centre holds the other 50 per cent stake in DMRC.*

Details:

- In 2008, DMRC had signed a contract with Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Ltd (DAMEPL) promoted by Reliance Infrastructure, related to the design, installation, commissioning, operation and maintenance of the line. This was the first PPP agreement signed by DMRC.
- DMRC Executive Director (Corporate Communications) Anuj Dayal said on Thursday, “The Hon’ble Supreme Court has pronounced judgment in the Airport Metro Express line matter today and the appeal of DAMEPL has been allowed.
- The copy of the judgement is not yet uploaded on the Supreme Court’s website. On receipt of the judgment copy, it will be analysed for future course of action.” Reliance Infra did not immediately respond to requests for a comment.

What is the history of the Airport Express line of the Delhi Metro?

- The 22.7-km Airport Express line, codenamed Orange line, runs between New Delhi Railway Station and Dwarka Sector-21, via IGI Airport’s Terminal 3.
- Built at a cost of around Rs 5,800 crore, it was opened in February 2011, after failing to meet the original launch deadline of before the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

- The trains stop at three stations en route — Shivaji Stadium, Dhaula Kuan, and Aerocity. A commuter can get to the international airport from New Delhi railway station in the heart of the city in just 20 minutes.

What was the dispute about?

- The dispute between the DMRC and DAMEPL started little more than a year after the line became functional.
- On July 7, 2012, services on the line came to a halt with DAMEPL, which was entrusted with running the trains, alleging serious technical defects in its construction.
- By then, Reliance Infra had also claimed that the line was suffering huge losses due to less-than-projected ridership: while the projection was 40,000 persons per day, the daily ridership stood at half that — around 20,000.
- This, DAMEPL argued, was coming in the way of raising revenue through other modes such as advertising, leasing out shops to retailers, and property development, etc.

And when did DAMEPL exit the contract?

- As per the agreement, the DAMEPL was supposed to run the line for 30 years. However, on October 8, 2012, DAMEPL served a termination notice on DMRC, citing issues related to financial viability and the alleged failure on the part of the corporation to fix the defects in the construction.
- DMRC disputed the notice and referred the matter for arbitration proceedings.
- Even as these proceedings were underway, DAMEPL restarted services on the line in January 2013. However, it wrote to DMRC on June 27, 2013 announcing that it would not be able to run the line from the midnight of June 30.
- DMRC then took over the operation of the line, as per the terms of the contract. The line has remained functional, and DMRC has claimed it has managed a turnaround in terms of ridership.

What was the verdict of the arbitration tribunal?

- In May 2017, the tribunal ruled in favour of DAMEPL, and directed DMRC to pay Rs 2,950 crore as compensation along with interest.
- Reliance Infra put the total amount due to it at the time at around Rs 4,500 crore.
- Earlier in 2014, then Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi had opined, based on a reference from the Centre, that the DMRC should pay damages to DAMEPL.
- The DMRC challenged the tribunal order in the Delhi High Court, but got no relief. Subsequently, a division Bench of the court set aside the order, following which Reliance Infra filed an appeal in the Supreme Court. The verdict came on Thursday.

What were the termination clauses in the contract?

- They said that upon termination of the contract, even in the event of default on DAMEPL's part, "DMRC shall pay to the concessionaire by way of termination payment an amount equal to 80% (eighty per cent) of the debt due (of the concessionaire)".
- In the case of termination due to default on DMRC's part, the DMRC shall pay "debt due, 130% of the adjusted equity; and Depreciated Value of the Project Assets, if any, acquired and installed on the Project after the 10th anniversary of the COD (commercial operations date, or date of opening)".

What has been the position of the Delhi government?

- In March 2018, the Delhi government's advisory body, which was at the time led by Ashish Khetan, submitted a report that alleged that DMRC had "wilfully distorted" the agreement with DAMEPL to extend favours to Reliance Infrastructure, thus "bleeding" the public exchequer.



- The report claimed that the provision of Total Project Cost (TPC) in the agreement, which is a standard in public-private partnership projects as it caps the termination liability of the government, was “removed” by the DMRC.
- It also claimed that the agreement had not even been cleared by the DMRC board.
- “This wilful omission (of TPC) in the case of DAEML is one of the main reasons why the private concessionaire led by Anil Ambani Group has bagged such a large arbitral award, to the detriment of the exchequer,” the report said.
- Doing away with the TPC also allowed the concessionaire to indulge in “Gold-Plating of costs”, which essentially means adding unnecessary features, beyond the scope of an agreement, to the tune of over Rs 500 crore, the report alleged.
- It added that the rate of interest on the payment of termination amount was enhanced to provide an “unfair financial advantage” to DAMEPL.
- “Further, there were serious multiple defects and lapses in the entire civil construction of DAEML by the DMRC which led to the termination of the agreement. Safety of passengers has also been seriously compromised.”
- Both DMRC and Reliance Infra had refused to comment on the report.

So what happened next?

- Armed with the report, Kejriwal wrote to then Home Minister Rajnath Singh in July 2018, demanding a CBI probe into the matter.
- “The entire episode would lead to an onerous burden of about Rs 4,700 crore, which will have to be shared equally by the Centre and the Delhi government. Yet, the Government of NCT of Delhi has no means of taking any preventive or corrective action as the DMRC is neither answerable to it nor does it exercise any form of control or authority over DMRC,” Kejriwal wrote.

All about Battle of Saragarhi

(Source: [Indian Express](#))

Context: *September 12 marks the 124th anniversary of the Battle of Saragarhi that has inspired a host of armies, books and films, both at home and abroad.*

What is the Battle of Saragarhi?

- The Battle of Saragarhi is considered one of the finest last stands in the military history of the world.
- Twenty-one soldiers were pitted against over 8,000 Afridi and Orakzai tribals but they managed to hold the fort for seven hours.
- Though heavily outnumbered, the soldiers of 36th Sikhs (now 4 Sikh), led by Havildar Ishar Singh, fought till their last breath, killing 200 tribals and injuring 600.
- In his book ‘The 36th Sikhs in the Tirah Campaign 1897-98 – Saragarhi and the defence of the Samana forts’, Punjab Chief Minister and military historian Capt Amarinder Singh writes that at the very outset of the battle, these soldiers knew they were looking at certain death but they did not flinch. “They could have surrendered, yet they didn’t and displayed unparalleled bravery.”

What was Saragarhi, and why was it important?

- Saragarhi was the communication tower between Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan. The two forts in the rugged North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now in Pakistan. were built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh but renamed by the British.
- Though Saragarhi was usually manned by a platoon of 40 soldiers, on that fateful day, it was being held by only 21 soldiers from 36th Sikh (now 4 Sikh) and a non-combatant called Daad, a Pashtun who did odd jobs for the troops.



- Saragarhi helped to link up the two important forts which housed a large number of British troops in the rugged terrain of NWFP.
- Fort Lockhart was also home to families of British officers. The wife of the commanding officer of 36th Sikh, Lt Col John Haughton, was at the fort till May 1897 when she went home to deliver a baby.

What transpired on that day?

- Around 9 am that day, the sentry at Saragarhi saw a thick haze of dust and soon realised that it was caused by a large army of tribals marching towards the fort. He estimated their number between 8,000 and 15,000.
- The tribals wanted to isolate the two forts by cutting off the lines of communication between them.
- Within minutes of sighting the tribal army, Sepoy Gurmukh Singh, 23, sent a message through the Morse code to commanding officer Lt Col Houghton, saying, “Enemy approaching the main gate...need reinforcement.”
- Unfortunately, the Pathans had cut the supply route between Fort Lockhart and Saragarhi. Houghton radioed back, “Unable to breakthrough, hold position”. Sepoy Gurmukh Singh conveyed this message to platoon commander Havildar Ishar Singh. Fully aware of the consequences, the braveheart responded with a stoic, “Understood.”

Besides being outnumbered, what were the other challenges they faced?

- Capt Jay Singh-Sohal, a British officer whose film ‘Saragarhi: The True Story’ is based on first-hand accounts of the battle, says, “The soldiers were not only outnumbered, they also had limited ammunition with around 400 rounds per man, one reason why Lt Col Haughton, urged them to use their fire-power carefully. “
- The signalman Sepoy Gurmukh Singh was also short of hands. Sohal says the heliograph communication system, which uses sunlight and mirrors to flash messages via the Morse code, was usually operated by three men.
- While one sent the messages, the others would read the incoming message through binoculars, and the third would pen them down. On that day, Gurmukh was doing all three.

Who was Havildar Ishar Singh who led the troops?

- Havildar Ishar Singh was born in a village near Jagraon. He joined the Punjab Frontier Force in his late teens after which he spent most of his time on various battlefields. Soon after it was raised in 1887, Ishar was drafted into the 36th Sikhs.
- He was in his early 40s when he was given independent command of the Saragarhi post. He was married but the couple had no children.
- Ishar Singh was quite a maverick who dared to disobey his superiors but he was loved by his men for whom he was always ready to go out on a limb.
- Writing about him, Amarinder says: “While he will always be remembered for his gallant conduct at Saragarhi, within the regiment they will also rue the loss of their best illicit liquor producer, and a man who ‘borrowed’ meat on hoof for his men, when short of rations, from a neighbouring unit without asking them.”
- Maj Gen James Lunt, a British military historian, wrote, “Ishar Singh was a somewhat turbulent character whose independent nature had brought him more than once into conflict with his military superiors. Thus Ishar Singh—in camp, a nuisance, in the field magnificent.”
- Gurinderpal Singh Josan, chairman of the Saragarhi Foundation, who traced the families of the 21 soldiers, says despite receiving a huge tract of land, Ishar’s family fell on hard times after his death. His wife was killed by his brother who was then sent to Kala Pani (Andaman and Nicobar).
- Naik Gurmukh Singh, the signaler, was the youngest and Naik Lal Singh, 47, the oldest of the 22 men at Saragarhi. Describing the last hour of the battle in his book, Capt Amarinder Singh writes: “Naik Lal Singh, though severely injured, was lying on his bed. Although unable to move, he was conscious and

able to fire his weapon, and is reported to have kept up a steady fire, killing more pathans, as did Gurmukh Singh and Sep/Swpr Daad.”

- Gurmukh continued to report the battle as it unfolded. And then finding the soldiers falling one by one, sent one final message: “Permission to join the battle, Sir.” The response in the affirmative came almost immediately.

Who was Daad?

- Daad was the 22nd man, the non-combatant, in Saragarhi. In his book, Capt Amarinder called him the 22nd soldier. Sweeper Daad was from Nowshera, Pakistan.
- He was denied any honour though he also fought bravely, killing five men before being stabbed to death.

How was the news of the battle received in Britain?

- Making a departure from the tradition of not giving gallantry medals posthumously, Queen Victoria awarded the 21 dead soldiers — leaving out the non-combatant — of the 36th Sikh the Indian Order of Merit (comparable with the Victoria Cross) along with two ‘marabas’ (50 acres) and Rs 500 each.

How are the slain soldiers remembered?

- In 2017, the Punjab government decided to observe Saragarhi Day on September 12 as a holiday.
- Even today the Khyber Scouts regiment of the Pakistani army mounts a guard and salutes the Saragarhi memorial close to Fort Lockhart.
- The British, who regained control over the fort after a few days, used burnt bricks of Saragarhi to build an obelisk for the martyrs. They also commissioned gurdwaras at Amritsar and Ferozepur in their honour.
- Now Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee has named a hall after Saragarhi. Actor Akshay Kumar’s film Kesari was based loosely on the battle.