

Operation Meghdoot

Operation Meghdoot was the codename for the [Indian Armed Forces](#)' operation to seize control of the [Siachen Glacier](#) in [Kashmir](#), precipitating the [Siachen conflict](#). Executed in the morning of 13 April 1984 in the highest battlefield in the world, Meghdoot was the first military offensive of its kind. The operation preempted [Pakistan](#)'s impending Operation Ababeel (which was intended to achieve the same objective as Meghdoot) and was a success, resulting in Indian forces gaining control of the Siachen Glacier in its entirety.

Currently, the [Indian Army](#) remains the first and only army in the world to have taken [tanks](#) and other heavy ordnance up to such an altitude (well over 5,000 m or 16,000 ft). Up to ten infantry battalions each of the [Indian Army](#) and [Pakistan Army](#) are actively deployed at high altitudes of up to 6,400 metres (21,000 ft) throughout the region of the [glacier](#).

The Siachen Glacier became a bone of contention following a vague demarcation of territories in the Karachi Agreement of July 1949 which did not exactly specify who had authority over the Siachen Glacier area. Indian interpretation was that Pakistan territory extended only to about the Salto Ridge based on the [Simla agreement](#) where the territorial line's route after the last demarcated Point [NJ9842](#) was "thence north to the glaciers." Pakistan interpretation was that their territory continued northeast from Point [NJ9842](#) to the [Karakoram Pass](#). As a result, both nations claimed the barren heights and the Siachen Glacier. In the 1970s and early 1980s, [Pakistan](#) permitted several [mountaineering](#) expeditions to climb the peaks in the Siachen region from the Pakistani side, perhaps in an attempt to reinforce their claim on the area as these expeditions received permits obtained from the [Government of Pakistan](#) and in many cases a [liaison officer](#) from the [Pakistan Army](#) accompanied the teams. In 1978, the Indian Army also allowed mountaineering expeditions to the glacier, approaching from its side. The most notable one was the one launched by [Colonel Narinder "Bull" Kumar](#) of the [Indian Army](#), who led an expedition to [Teram Kangri](#), along with medical officer Captain A.V.S. Gupta. The Indian Air Force provided valuable support to this expedition in 1978 through logistic support and supply of fresh rations. The first air landing on the glacier was carried out on 6 October 1978 when two casualties were evacuated from the Advance Base Camp in a [Chetak](#) helicopter by Sqn Ldr Monga and Flying Officer Manmohan Bahadur. Contention over the glacier was aggravated by these expeditions, through both sides asserting their claims.

Notably, when Pakistan gave permission to a [Japanese](#) expedition to scale an important peak ([Rimo I](#)) in 1984, it further fueled the suspicion of the Indian Government of Pakistani attempts to legitimize their claim. The peak, located east of the Siachen Glacier, also overlooks the northwestern areas of the [Aksai Chin](#) area which is controlled by [China](#) but claimed by [India](#). The Indian military believed that such an expedition could further a link for a trade route from the northeastern (Chinese) to the southwestern (Pakistani) side of the [Karakoram Range](#) and eventually provide a strategic, if not tactical, advantage to the [Pakistani Armed Forces](#).

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