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Report CHFM21/2021/182
INTELLIGENCE BUREAU
for eyes only
DAILY BRIEFING

Late on the night of June 30th, central intelligence agencies reported movement by a key military unit, from the mechanised infantry based in Hisar (Haryana) as a part of the 33rd Armoured Division. The division, which is a part of 1 Corps, a strike formation based in Mathura and commanded by Lieutenant General Amardeep Singh Bhinder, was seen heading in the direction of the capital, 150 km away.

The Ministry of Defence, reportedly, had not been notified about the movement and began actively tracking the division. Efforts by the ministry to contact Lieutenant General Amardeep Singh Bhinder in the late hours of the night failed. The PMO was notified immediately about the developments.

Any suspicion was still considered much too implausible, but lookouts were alerted as a routine step. This was part of a protocol put in place in June 1984 when some mutineers from Sikh units had moved towards the capital in the wake of Operation Bluestar.

The lookouts confirmed the movement of what looked like a sizeable unit. It was soon identified as an entire unit of Mechanised Infantry, with its Russian-made Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs), carried on 48 tank transporters. The movement was towards the capital, which was odd.

The Prime Minister summoned General Manoj Mukund Naravane to his residence immediately. The General could not make it to the PM Residence, citing health reasons. The Prime Minister then held a meeting with the General in the late hours via video-conference. The General clarified that the movement was due to a routine training exercise of the highest order and the secrecy was due to the protocols. He also assured the PM that the exercise had ended.

Air Marshall Vivek Ram Chaudhari succeeds outgoing Vice Chief of Air Staff Harjeet Singh Arora. Air Marshal Balabhadra Radha Krishna takes charge of the western command replacing Chaudhari.

One of the last official orders of AM Arora instructed AM Krishna to immediately leave for Pathankot Air Force Station in Punjab. Concerns were raised by incoming VCAS about the unusual orders issued by a retiring official but similar orders were reissued by Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria in the early hours of today.

Air Marshal Krishna consequently left for Pathankot at his earliest convenience via a specially chartered C-130J Super Hercules from the Palam Airport. It is believed that newly retired former VCAS Arora was also on this flight.