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INDIA

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# Myanmar strike: Not the first time Army conducted cross-border operations

In 2006, India, Myanmar are believed to have launched joint ops inside Myanmar to flush out NSCN(K) militants.

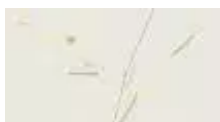
Written by [Sushant Singh](#) | • Agra/new Delhi, New Delhi |

Updated: June 10, 2015 1:18:20 pm

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The shoes of one of the deceased Army men, at the site of the attack. (Source: Express Photo by Deepak Shijagurumayum)

Tuesday's military strike targeting rebels who killed 18 soldiers in Manipur last week is not the first time that India has conducted such operations.

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In the past, the Army has gone across the border, into neighbouring countries, to target militant groups operating from those territories.

*Only a few of these operations have been acknowledged so far.*

\* The Army's operations — in close collaboration with Mukti Bahini — inside then East Pakistan in the build-up to the 1971 Bangladesh war are public knowledge, although they haven't been officially acknowledged by the government.

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\* Then there are the cross-border operations conducted across the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir by Special Forces and Ghatak platoons of infantry units deployed in the area. These cross-border operations are usually tactical in nature, conducted over a few hours with targets selected close to the LoC, to cause short-term damage and send a message to the other side.

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\* Among the cross-border operations tacitly acknowledged by the government is “Operation All Clear” conducted inside Bhutan in December 2003 to eliminate North Eastern militant groups based in South Bhutan. About 30 militant camps – 13 ULFA, 12 NDFB and 5 KLO – were the target of intelligence-based operations which included troops from 3 Corps. The then Army chief, General N C Vij, had announced that 650 militants had been “neutralised” – either killed or captured – during the operations.

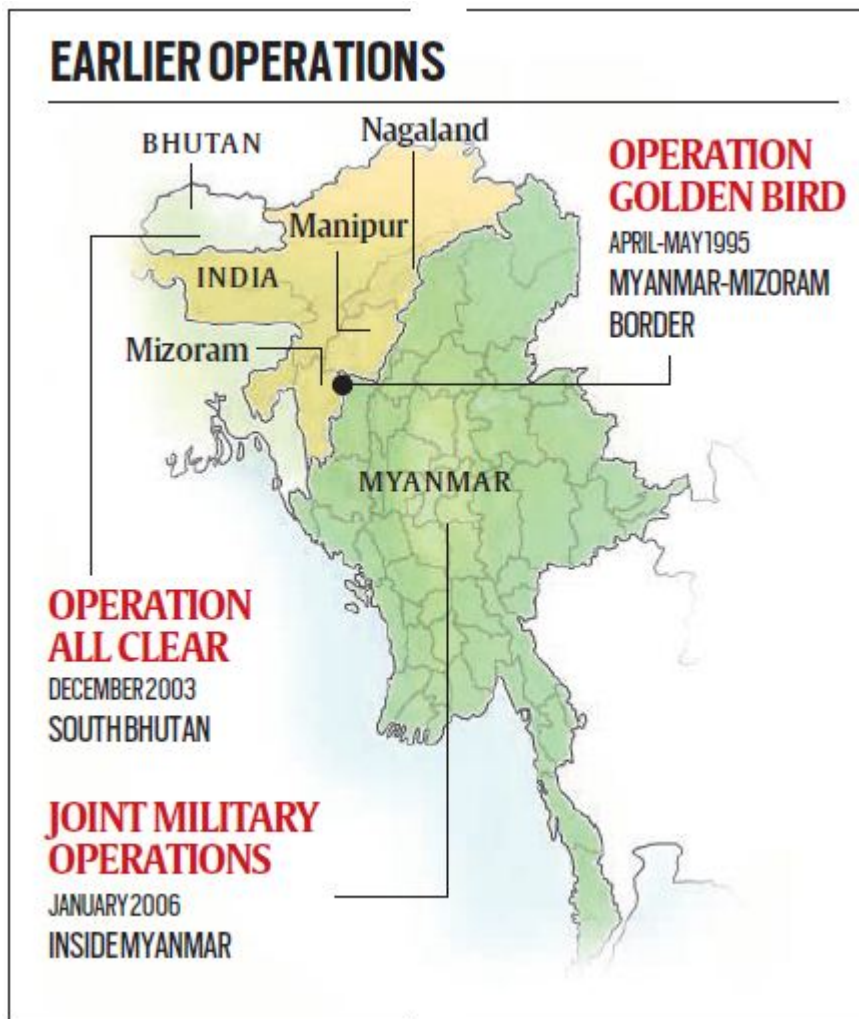
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\* In April-May 1995, following the signing of an MoU for “maintenance of peace and tranquility in border areas”, India and Myanmar (then Burma) conducted a joint military operation, “Operation Golden Bird”. The Indian Army’s 57 Mountain Division blocked a column of around 200 NSCN, ULFA and KLO militants moving through the Myanmar-Mizoram border towards Manipur, after it picked up a consignment of weapons on the Bangladesh coast near Cox’s Bazar.



The Indian government awarded the Nehru Peace Prize to Aung Sang Suu Kyi at the same time, angering Myanmar's military rulers who pulled out of the joint operation. This allowed the trapped militants to escape. The then Eastern Army commander, Lieutenant General H R S Kalkat, later said that "India should leave its Burma policy to the Army. We are soldiers, they (Myanmar Junta) are soldiers and our blood is thicker than the blood of bureaucrats."

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\* In January 2006, India and Myanmar are believed to have conducted some smallscale joint military operations inside Myanmar to flush out militants from NSCN (Khaplang) group. This was supposedly done in exchange of transfer of some military equipment to Myanmar Army by India, following high-level visits by the Indian President, Defence Minister and Air Force chief to Myanmar.

But never before have cross-border operations been conducted by India so quickly after an action by militants. Nor have they been acknowledged – even if somewhat ambiguously – immediately.

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