

WITH LESS THAN ₹15K IN HAND, NITISH COULD BE ONE OF THE POOREST CHIEF MINISTERS IN INDIA | 11

CONG SNUBS SHASHI THAROOR ON DISCLOSURE OF DELHI GANGRAPE



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Son-crazed Pune man held for torturing 7-yr-old daughter

Pune: In a throwback to 2012 baby battering cases of Falak in Delhi and Ahuti Joshi in Mumbai, a 13-month-old girl was brutally beaten up allegedly by her father who was joined by some of his women relatives in the torture at their residence, police said on Wednesday.

Baby Jiya, with her both legs and a hand fractured, had been admitted to a private hos-

Army awardee breaks rank ceiling

Brig Pithawalla Is First Ashoka Chakra Winner To Become Two-Star General

Rajat Pandit | TNN

New Delhi: Most winners of India's highest gallantry award — Param Vir Chakra in war and its peacetime equivalent Ashoka Chakra — have received it posthumously, laying down their lives while displaying "most conspicuous bravery" in battling the enemy or terrorists.

The ones who survived never went beyond the rank of a Colonel.

Now, for the first time ever, an officer who won such an award three decades ago has breached this inexplicable glass ceiling. Ashoka Chakra awardee Brigadier Cyrus Addie Pithawalla was on Wednesday approved for the rank of a Major General and

posted as the general-officer-commanding of the Andhra Sub-Area.

Brig Pithawalla is among the only four such awardees — two Ashoka Chakra and two PVC — currently serving in the army. While one is a major, two are from the "other ranks". The late Hoshiar Singh, awarded PVC during the 1971 war, had retired as a Colonel.

Medals like PVC and Ashoka Chakra come few and far between. Only 21 PVCs and about 60 Ashoka Chakras have so far been awarded despite India fighting several wars and battling full-blown insurgencies since the 1947-48 J&K operations.

Brig Pithawalla, as a Second-Lieutenant leading a



Brigadier Cyrus Addie Pithawalla

company of his 17 J&K Rifles in July 1981, had conducted a daring raid on a hideout of the People's Liberation Army, leading to the capture of the insurgent outfit's chief N

Bisheshwar Singh and death of seven militants. Despite being hit in the right shoulder by bullets, he refused to be evacuated till the entire operation was over.

He was awarded the Ashoka Chakra during the 1982 Republic Day parade.

Though approved only in the "staff stream", and not the "command and staff" one, which would have given him an infantry division's command, Brig Pithawalla has become the first Ashoka Chakra/PVC awardee to become a two-star general.

"While gallantry awards are factored in, the most important criterion in promotion boards is an officer's annual confidential reports (ACRs) during different ap-

pointments. Just because someone has got a top gallantry medal does not automatically mean he is suitable for a higher rank like commanding a brigade, division or corps," said a senior officer.

Incidentally, the army is currently relooking at the "quantification-based" selection system as part of the overall re-examination of its "cadre-management policy".

Under it, 95% marks are given for "quantified parameters" like ACRs, courses and awards. The rest (5%) is kept for "value judgement" by selection board members on criteria like performance, recommendations, potential for employability in higher ranks and "degree of difficulty" in tenures.