Bhaskar Kulal

Aged 34 or 35, from Kundapur, described as a 'commando', working with the Coastal Security Police in Malpe (Udupi District), one of 10 attendees at a 5 day SCUBA course (Anti-terrorism SCUBA diving training event) at a training camp near Nethrani Island, Murdeshwar, Bhatkal.

Details unclear but appears that it was run by a PADI company, Planet SCUBA India, with the lead trainer 'Andy' (Andrew Stonebridge, resort manager and SCUBA instructor in Murdeshwar, from Nottingham, UK) who allegedly insisted that the policeman continue his training even though he was 'ill'.

Went into the water midafternoon on the last day of the course, found underwater, unconscious, had lost his mouthpiece, 'brought to the surface by rescuers still breathing but died shortly later'.

A fellow trainee said that the training was extremely arduous and that "Andy' told them they should learn SCUBA diving within 5 days and 'it's difficult for those who don't know swimming' insisting that the sea was rough, Kulal was ill and the trainer's negligence and apathy led to the fatality.

As a result of complaints from the policemen on the course and Kula's brother-in-law Taghu Kulal, the trainer was arrested by Kawar police (It was also reported that the deceased diver was from a very poor family, wife a wife and two sons lived in police quarters who would now be supported by the Police department, infirm parents also supported by sole income from the policeman).

Reported by Mangolorean.com/Bellevision Media etc

http://www.thediversassociation.com/index.php/sheets
Policeman dies during scuba diving training in Bhatkal
02-28-2013 by: I.G. Bhatkali  S.O. News Service

Bhatkal: Scuba Diving training turned fatal for a policeman who died during its training session near the Nitrani Island in Bhatkal on Thursday afternoon. Even though the trainee wore the scuba equipment, he swallowed a lot of sea water resulting in his death. The deceased is identified as Bhaskar Kulal (34) of the Coastal Security Police hailing from Malpe, Udupi district.

According to sources, the state government had started five day scuba diving training camp for interested civil police personnel bearing the expenditure of 10,000 Rupees per each trainee. 10 Policemen had appeared for training which had begun from 24th of February.

The body has been taken to Murdeshwar government hospital for postmortem after which it will be handed over to the deceased's relatives.

Kundapura: Policeman dies in diving training
March 1, 2013 by Snehalatha, Udupi  Udupi Today Media Network

Kundapur, 01 March 2013: Policeman from Kundapura lost his life during diving training near Murdeshwara, Uttara Kannada district on Thursday evening. The deceased Bhaskar Kulal (34) from Hunsemakki Grama, Kundapur Taluk died deep in the sea due to suffocation by technical failure during the scuba diving training.

His cremation was conducted in his birth place Hunsemakki on Friday afternoon with all the Police honour. Baskar Kulal is the son of Nagu Kulal and Parvati, residents of Hunsemakki. He has left behind his wife Poornima, two sons Bhuvan (3), Prakul (1), one brother, two sisters, relatives and friends.

Baskar has been working with the Police department since 11 years. Currently he was in service with the
Coastal Security Police in Malpe sea shore in Udupi. He was having 5 days training for the underwater scuba diving at Netranagudde Island at the sea near Murdeshwara.

On the last day of the training on Thursday evening as part of the days training, he wore the oxygen mask and dived into 15 meter deep of the sea. But due to malfunctioning of the oxygen cylinder, he suffocated and died underwater.

Without proper safety measures the Police staff have been put into the dangerous training and that is why our son has died, accused the family of Bhaskar. His parents, wife, children and relatives were shocked and are in deep sorrow.
Training camp for the scuba diving was conducted by a Bangalore-based company called Padi for the interested policemen, under the directions of five trainers. Over the past five days, 10 persons had undergone the training, among who was Bhaskar Kulal. It is said that despite being ill for the past two days, Bhaskar was going through the training session on the insistence of trainer Andy from London.

Bhaskar who was already ill lowered himself into the water during the training on Thursday afternoon at around 3.30 pm with scuba diving gear and oxygen mask, and stayed under water at a depth of about 15 metres. However, he soon felt nauseous and the oxygen regulator slipped from his mouth. As a result, he sea water gushed into his lungs and he drowned.

Then the body was taken to Murdeshwar government hospital for postmortem after which it was handed over to his family in Kundapur. The game of the destiny is such that while the news of Bhaskar's death reached home, from the other side the letter from his department had come that Bhaskar is promoted! But it is the game of destiny; Bhaskar is no more to enjoy the happy moment!

Another policeman Manjesh who also underwent the training, said that the training sessions were extremely strenuous and Andy had told them that they should learn scuba diving within five days. "It is difficult for those who do not know swimming. Despite pleas to halt the training session as the sea was rough, Andy did not listen," he said, alleging that Andy's neglect and apathy had led to Bhaskar's death.
Based on complaints by the policemen undergoing the training, the Murdeshwar police registered a case against Andy and took him into custody.

Bhaskar was from a poor family; they borrowed loans and educated their children. His father Nagu and brother Bhojaraj are coolie workers. Bhaskar's wife Poornima and sons Bhuvan, a three-year-old, and Prakhul who is one-year-old, stay in Brahmarvar police quarters. Poornima too hails from a poor family. Bhaskar was the main breadwinner of the family.

Bhaskar's last rites were conducted at 8 am on Friday March 1. IG Bhaskar Rao, CSP, former MLA Halady Srinivas Shetty, M I Jameel, DySP SP of Coastal Security Police, inspector Taranath of Gangolli, H D Mendonca, railway inspector and others were present.


**Kundapur policeman dies during scuba diving training camp at Murdeshwar**

March 1, 2013

*Kundapur policeman dies during scuba diving training camp at Murdeshwar*  
*Silvester D'Souza / Yahya Hallare*  
*Daijiworld Media Network – Kundapur/Bhatkal*

**Kundapur/Bhatkal, Mar 1:** In a tragic incident, a policeman hailing from Kundapur lost his life during scuba diving training camp near Pigeon Island, Murdeshwar on Thursday February 28 afternoon.

The deceased has been identified as Bhaskar Kulal (34), son of Nagu and Parvati Kulal, residents of Casamakki, Yadady - Matyady, Kundapur.

He was earlier serving in Bangalore and had been transferred to Malpe Coastal Security Police about one year and 7 months ago.

The scuba diving training camp was conducted by a Bangalore-based company called Padi for interested policemen, under the directions of five trainers. Over the past five days, 10 persons had undergone the training, among whom was Bhaskar Kulal. It is said that despite being ill for the past two days, Bhaskar was going through the training session on the insistence of trainer Andy from London.
On Thursday at around 3-3.30 pm, Bhaskar who was ill lowered himself into the water with scuba diving gear and oxygen mask, and stayed under water at a depth of about 15 metres. However, he soon felt nauseous and the oxygen regulator slipped from his mouth. As a result, he sea water gushed into his lungs and he drowned.

The body was taken to Murdeshwar government hospital for postmortem after which it was handed over to his family in Kundapur.

Manjesh, another policeman who also underwent the training, said that the training sessions were extremely strenuous and Andy had told them that they should learn scuba diving within five days. "It is difficult for those who do not know swimming. Despite pleas to halt the training session as the sea was rough, Andy did not listen," he said, alleging that Andy's neglect and apathy had led to Bhaskar's death.

Based on complaints by the policemen undergoing the training, the Murdeshwar police registered a case against Andy and took him into custody.

Bhaskar was from a poor family. His father Nagu and brother Bhojaraj are coolie workers. Bhaskar's wife Poornima and sons Bhuvan, a three-year-old, and Prakhul who is one-year-old, stay in Brahmavar police quarters. Poornima too hails from a poor family. Bhaskar was the main breadwinner of the family.

Bhaskar's last rites were conducted at 8 am on Friday March 1. IG Bhaskar Rao, CSP, former MLA Halady Srinivas Shetty, M I Jameel, DySP SP of Coastal Security Police, inspector Taranath of Gangolli, H D Mendonca, railway inspector and others were present.

Speaking to daijiworld, M I Jameel said that investigation will be conducted by the local police and further action will be taken based on the findings. He assured that the family will get help from government.

**Kundapur: Policeman Dies during Scuba Diving Training at Murdeshwar**


March 2, 2013  By Snehalatha/Bernard D Costa  Bellevision Media Network

**Kundapur / Bhatkal, 02 Mar 2013:** In a tragic incident, a policeman hailing from Kundapur lost his life during scuba diving training camp near Pigeon Island, Murdeshwar on Thursday February 28 afternoon.

The deceased has been identified as thirty-four-year-old Bhaskar Kulal, son of Nagu and Parvati Kulal, residents of Kasamakki, Yadady - Matyady, Kundapur.

Bhaskar was earlier serving in Bangalore and had been transferred to Malpe coastal security over a year ago.
The scuba diving training camp was conducted by a Bangalore-based company called Padi for interested policemen, under the directions of five trainers. Over the past five days, ten persons have undergone the training, while Bhaskar was one among them. It is learned that despite being ill for the past two days, Bhaskar was undergoing the training on the insistence of trainer Andy from London.
On Thursday at around 3.00pm to 3.30pm, Bhaskar who was ill lowered himself into the water with scuba diving gear and oxygen mask. He stayed under water at a depth of about 15 meters. However, he soon felt nauseous and the oxygen regulator slipped from his mouth. As a result, the sea water gushed into his lungs and he drowned.

The body of Bhaskar was taken to Murdeshwar government hospital for autopsy after which it was handed over to his family in Kundapur.

Manjesh, another policeman who also underwent the training, said that the training sessions were extremely strenuous and Andy had told them that they should learn scuba diving within five days. ‘It’s difficult for those who don’t know swimming. Despite pleas to halt the training session as the sea was rough, Andy did not listen, said Manjesh, alleging that Andy’s negligence and apathy had led to Bhaskar’s death.

Muardeshwar police registered a case against Andy on the basis of the complaint lodged by the policemen undergoing the training. Andy is now in police custody.

Bhaskar hails from a poor family. His father Nagu and brother Bhojaraj are daily wage earners. Bhaskar’s wife Poornima and sons three-year-old Bhuvan and one-year-old Prakhul stay in Brahmavar police quarters. Poornima also hails from a poor family. Bhaskar was the sole breadwinner of the family.

Bhaskar’s last rites were performed at 8.00am on Friday March 1.
IG Bhaskar Rao, former MLA Halady Srinivas Shetty, Coastal Security Police chief M I Jameel, Gangoli sub-inspector Tarnath, railway inspector H D Mendonca, and others were present.

ANTI-TERROR TRAINING GOES AWRY: COMMANDO DROWNS NEAR BHATKAL
Mar 5, 2013  By Hemanth Kashyap

On the last day of his scuba-diving training on Thursday, commando Bhaskar Kulal (35) jumped into the water with a wave and a smile. He didn’t return.

The trainee divers would usually go into the water with oxygen cylinders and stay inside for about half an hour. “When we noticed that he had failed to come back with the team, we felt something was wrong,” police officials quoted Kulal’s buddies as saying.

“When the master diver and a few others went into the water, they found Kulal lying inside, about 40 feet from the surface of the water, with the regulator off his mouth. He was still breathing when they brought him up. They tried their best to save him and pumped out a lot of water, but he had ingested a lot of it,” police said.

He was subsequently pronounced dead – according to statistics quoted by police, one death per two lakh dives.

According to diving experts, some of the major causes of scuba-diving related deaths are drowning out of panic, arterial gas embolism which is caused by expansion of gases during ascent (more so when the divers hold their breath during ascent), cardiac arrest, decompression sickness and over-exertion caused due to fear following technical issues like running out of air.

Keeping the country safe, but...
Kulal was being trained to be part of the ‘Scuba Army,’ which is part of Karnataka’s attempts to pre-empt terror attacks through the sea. The state had taken the lead among the country’s coastal states to enhance its capabilities to prevent a seaborne attack, even one involving an underwater strike. However, the
first scuba-diving related death during training raises questions about the safety measures adopted during diving practice sessions.

The questions that are being asked now are: Did he display any signs of fatigue, difficulty in breathing, anxiety or complain about muscle-cramping before the dive? Why didn’t Kulal communicate to his master diver or his buddies while underwater about the problems that he was facing? Did he lose sight of his buddies because of a red tide (algae bloom)? Why wasn’t any doctor part of this activity when the training has been a continuous process for these policemen? Why are middle-aged cops being selected for the training instead of young constables given the fact that training is strenuous?

Inspector general of police (internal security) Bhaskar Rao said: “We are shocked. This is something that should not have happened. We are awaiting the autopsy report which will tell us the cause of his death. We have ordered a thorough investigation into the incident. A team from the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) from Australia will also be investigating the death. We have seized the scuba gear including the cylinder and will hand it over to the PADI team for examination.”

When the internal security department decided to prepare a scuba-diving team, officials contacted Madhava Reddy, managing director, Planet Scuba India. The department prepared a plan to train police personnel from police stations established for coastal security at places such as Bhatkal, Bilikere, Gangolli, Hejamadi, Karwar, Kumta, Honnavar, Mangalore and Malpe.

Through Reddy, the department also hired two British scuba-diving trainers for the team. While Andrew Bridgestone, with 16 years of experience in scuba-diving, was the trainer, he was being assisted by Henry. According to Rao, "We spend a lot of money on each policeman for training and Planet Scuba India issues the certificates."

**Trained by PADI**

The scuba-diving training camps started in early 2012 and since then, 10-member teams of the state’s coastal security force have undergone extensive training under specialists.

Kulal was part of the fourth batch of commandos being trained by PADI at Nethrani Islands, 10 nautical miles from Murudeshwara in the Arabian Sea. He was taking the Open Water Divers’ Course which started last Sunday and it was during the last dive of the course that the tragedy happened.

Kulal was working under the Railway police, but was deputed to the coastal security force a few years back. He was chosen for the training after he signed an undertaking.

“Kulal was a very fine swimmer. I don’t say good, but excellent and we have seen his swimming. We prefer guards who know swimming for the scuba-diving training
and that’s why we took him. The age limit for the training is fixed at 40 and he was 35. He performed excellently on the first four days of the training. We still have to find out what happened on the last day,” Rao said.

Kulal is survived by his wife and two little children back in Karwar and his friends say there’s no one to look after his family now.

However, Rao said they would provide support to Kulal’s family.