

LIBERATION WAR OF BANGLADESH-1971

(A Study on the Armed Struggle: 25 March to 16 December)

by

Md Sarwar Hossain

Department of History

University of Dhaka

A Dissertation Submitted in the Department of History under the University of
Dhaka for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Supervised by

Prof. Dr. Syed Anwar Husain

Department of History

University of Dhaka



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06 September 2016

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Registration No.: 200 (35/2003-04, 83/2009-10)

Session: 2014-2015

06 September 2016

DEDICATION

**THIS IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF THE SUPREME SACRIFICES MADE THE
FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF 1971 WAR**

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the work submitted as the thesis entitled “**LIBERATION WAR OF BANGLADESH-1971 (A Study on the Armed Struggle: 25 March to 16 December)**” to the Department of History, University of Dhaka for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is the result of my research and investigation and was carried out under the supervision of Professor Dr. Syed Anwar Husain, Department of History, University of Dhaka. For the purpose of research, I extensively used the resources of several Liberation War museums including the documents originated from the Headquarters of Bangladesh Forces during 1971. I also extensively interviewed people who had actively participated in the War of Liberation in various capacities. The research work has not previously been submitted anywhere for any degree.

Submitted by

Md Sarwar Hossain

Department of History

University of Dhaka

Registration No.: 200 (35/2003-04, 83/2009-10)

Session: 2014-2015

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Md Sarwar Hossain** worked as a PhD fellow under my guidance. I am pleased to forward his thesis entitled “**LIBERATION WAR OF BANGLADESH-1971 (A Study on the Armed Struggle: 25 March to 16 December)**” which was carried out in the Department of History, University of Dhaka. This work is original and has not been submitted so far in part or full, for the award of any degree or diploma by any other University. It is to be mentioned that he has fulfilled all the requirements of the regulations and prescribed period of research for submission of thesis for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Syed Anwar Husain

Department of History

University of Dhaka

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All the praises to Almighty Allah who enabled me to complete my PhD research work and successful preparation of the dissertation.

I express my deep gratitude and sincere appreciation to my Supervisor Professor Dr. Syed Anwar Husain, Department of History, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, for his planning, scholastic guidance and valuable suggestions throughout the study period and preparation of this PhD dissertation.

Heartfelt appreciation, thanks and gratitude are extended to Mr. Sharifullah Bhuiyan, Ex Chairman National Archive (now Chairman, Department of History, Dhaka University), Major (retired) ASM Shamsul Arefin, Major (retired) Qumrul Islam Bhuiyan, Major (retired) Waker, Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Sajjad Ali Zahir, Major (retired) M Shamsul Haque, Major General Moshfequr Rahman, General Officer Commanding 11 Infantry Division, Brigadier General Saleh Uddin, Bangladesh Election Commission, Colonel Mohammad Sumon Reza, Major Khairul Amin Bhuiyan, Major Mohammad Rafiqul Amin, Major Galib Bin Ahmed, Major Mohammad Afizur Rahman, Major A S M Monjurul Kabir, Warrent Officer Lutfar, Sergeant Salim, Mrs Tareque, Bangladesh National Museum for their invaluable support and assistance. I also express my profound respect to all the teachers of Department of History, University of Dhaka.

I express my heartiest gratitude to all his colleagues of Military Collegiate School Khulna (MCSK), Khulna, Bangladesh especially Vice Principal Lieutenant Colonel Aniruddhya (now Colonel), Lecturer Mahfuz, Lecturer Sharmin Afroz, Sergeant Jashim, Information Technology Laboratory Assistant Ripon for their kind assistance.

I am highly grateful to the '*Bijoyketon*'- Liberation War Museum and all other museums on the liberation war for their continued support and assistance.

I extend my deepest sense of feelings and heartiest thanks to my beloved wife Niru Shamsun Nahar, daughter Anika Tabassum, and son Md Shahariar Hossain for their deep affection, inspiration and support throughout the course of the study, research works and preparation of this thesis.

The Author

ABSTRACT

This research is designed to study the Armed Struggle of Bangladesh Liberation War focusing on the growth and strategies of Bangladesh Forces, its impact on the overall outcome of war including conclusions drawn therefrom. Though the Muslims of both the wings of Pakistan had been the strong proponents of Two Nation theory, the prospect of united Pakistan remained under serious qualm. The postulation that Islam had been a stronger binding force than cultural heritage was proved otherwise. The cumulative impact of economic and political discriminations between the two Wings resulted in the rise of a powerful Bengali Nationalism. In a sheer disregard to the political process, military action was rather resorted to. The Bengali military personnel spontaneously resisted taking risks of their lives. After initial setback, they managed to organize themselves and fought back. As the Pakistani Forces marched towards the countryside, innocent Bengalis fled their homesteads in fear and crossed over to India for safety. The youths voluntarily opted to fight and made significant contributions gradually being organized by those defected soldiers. Local knowledge and popular support coupled with broken terrain, water bodies and poor communication system provided perfect breeding ground for the guerrilla warfare. With gradual raising of conventional outfits, strategies were formulated blending conventional and unconventional warfare to compensate for the technological inferiority and training lag. The Freedom Fighters collectively dissipated the Pakistani Forces and ultimately assisted the victory of the Allied Forces. Owing to the paucity of reliable documentation of events, the subject could not be studied objectively. This research brought out an authentic account on the Armed Struggle of our Liberation War based on literature review. Available primary and secondary sources including interviews of renowned Freedom Fighters, politicians and documents of Mujibnagar Government have been exhaustively studied. After the introductory Chapter, Liberation War has been historically contextualized and geographical conditions have been examined to derive their impact on military operations. Subsequent Chapters described the initial resistance phase, the evolution and organization of various forces including their modus operandi. Finally, the effectiveness of our Freedom Fighters have been highlighted. This research is likely to bring forth a coherent understanding on the growth, roles and effectiveness of the Freedom Fighters based on objective analysis of our Liberation War. The conclusions from the research likely to uphold the axiom of political prowess while dealing with political issues. Other issues may benefit the Military in formulating their

operational strategies, gaining pragmatic knowhow on employment of forces and acquire leadership and management skills.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Word	Abbreviation
Acknowledge	Ack
Acquaintance Roll	A/Roll
Adjutant	Adjt
Aid-de-Camp	ADC
Air Defence	AD
Air Officer Commanding	AOC
Air Vice Martial	AVM
Allowance	Allc
Ammunition	Ammo
Annexure	Annx
Army Service Corps	ASC
Armoured	Armed
Artillery	Arty
Asian News International	ANI
Associated Press	AP
Awami League	AL
Azad Kashmir	AK
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery	MBBS
Baluch (used for graphs only)	BAL
Bangladesh	BD
Bangladesh Air Force	BAF
Bangladesh Mukti Bahini	BLF
Bangladesh Navy	BN
Battalion	Bn
Battery	Bty
Border outpost	BOP
Border Security Force	BSF
Brigade	Bde
Brigade Commander	Bde Comd
Brigade Major	BM
Brigadier	Brig
British Broadcasting Corporation	BBC
Cantonment	Cantt
Captain	Capt
Cavalry (used in graphs only)	Cav
Chief Instructor	CI
Chief of Army Staff	CAS
Chief of Staff	COS

Chittagong	Ctg
Chittagong Hill Tracts	CHT
Civil, Civilian	Civ
Civil Service Pakistan	CSP
Clothing	Clo
Colonel	Col
Combined Military Hospital	CMH
Commander	Comd
Commander-in-Chief	C-in-C
Commanding Officer	CO
Commando	Cdo
Communist Party of India	CPI
Company	Coy
D Day	Operation Day
Deputy	Dy
Deputy Inspector General	DIG
Detachment	Det
Dhaka University	DU
Director General	DG
District	Dist
Deputy Commissioner	DC
Division/Divisional (army formation)	Div
East Bengal	EB
East Bengal Regimental Centre	EBRC
East Pakistan Civil Armed Force (page 138/Belonia)	EPCAF
East Pakistan Communist Party	EPCP
East Pakistan Rifles	EPR
Education	Edn
Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response	EPPR
Engineer	Engr
Equipment	Eqpt
Establish	Estb
Exclude	Excl
Exercise	Ex
Field	Fd
Field Ambulance	Fd Amb
Field Artillery	Fd Arty
Field Regiment	Fd Regt
Field Staff	FS
Figure	Fig
Fire Base	FB
Flight Lieutenant	Flt Lt
Flight Sergeant	Flt Sgt

Flying Officer	Flg Offr
Following	Fol
Forming Up Place	FUP
Frontier Force/Freedom Fighter	FF
General Officer Commanding	GOC
General Staff Office Grade 1	GSO 1
General (used as rank/designation)	Gen
Grid Reference	GR
Group Captain	Gp Capt
Gurkha Rifles	GR
Headquarters	HQ
High Explosive	HE
H hour (specific start time of any operation)	H hour
Hours	Hrs
Independent	Indep
Indian Air Force	IAF
Infantry	Inf
Infantry Brigade	Inf Bde
Include	Incl
Infantry Division	Inf Div
Information	Info
Instructions / Instructor	Instr
Intelligence	Int
Jammu & Kashmir Rifles	J&K Rif
Junior Commissioned Officers	JCO
Kilo Watt	KW
Landing Craft	LC
Landing Craft Tank	LCT
Leader	Ldr
Legal Framework Order	LFO
Liaison Officer	LO
Lieutenant	Lt
Lieutenant Colonel	Lt Col
Lieutenant Commander	Lt Comd
Lieutenant General	Lt Gen
Light Anti-Aircraft	LAA
Light Machine Gun	LMG
Limited	Ltd
Machine Gun	MG
Major	Maj
Major General	Maj Gen
Martial Law Administrator	MLA
Maratha Light Infantry	MLI

Medical Officer	MO
Medium	Med
Member of Constituent Assembly	MCA
Member of National Assembly	MNA
Member of Provincial Assembly	MPA
Millimeters	Mm
Miscellaneous	Misc
Mizo National Front	MNF
Mobilize	Mob
Mortar	Mor
Mountain	Mtn
Naib Subedar Quarter Master	NSQM
Night	Ni
Non Commissioned Officer	NCO
Northeastern	NE
Officer (used in appendixes only)	Offr
Operation	Op
Order of Battle	ORBAT
Other Rank (s)	OR
Organization	Org
Pakistan	PAK
Pakistan Air Force	PAF
Pakistan International Airlines	PIA
Pakistan Naval Ship	PNS
Pakistan Ordnance Factory	POF
Parachute Battalion	Para Bn
Personnel	Pers
Petrol, Oil, Lubricant	POL
Platoon	Pl
Police Station	PS
Pounds	Lbs
Prisoner of War	POW
Quarter Master	QM
Rajput Rifles	Raj Rfl
Punjab (used in graphs only)	PB
Railway	Rly
Railway Station	RS
Recoilless Rifle	RR
Recruiting	Rectg
Regiment	Regt
Road	Rd
Rupees	Rs
Second Lieutenant	2/Lt

Second-in-Command	2IC
Second World War	WWII
Sector Headquarters	SHQ
Self-Loading Rifle	SLR
Services	Svcs
Single Barrel Rocket Launcher	SBRL
Station	Sta
Submachine Carbine	SMC
Submachine Gun	SMG
Support	Sp
Southeastern	SE
Southwestern	SW
Special	Spl
Special Service Group	SSG
Squadron	Sqn
Squadron Leader	Sqn Ldr
Sub Divisional Officer	SDO
Sub Divisional Police Officer	SDPO
Superintendent of Police	SP
Task Force	TF
Telephone Communication	Telecomm
Television	TV
Telegram and Telephone	T&T
Transport	Tpt
Troop	Tp
United Nations	UN
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO
United Kingdom	UK
United States	US
Volumes	Vols
Water & Power Development Authority	WAPDA
Wing Commander	Wg Comd
Wireless	Wrls
Workshop	Wksp

LIST OF SYMBOLS

Serial	Symbols	Meaning
1.		International Border
2.		Railway Line
3.		Bridge/Culvert
4.		Road
5.		Track
6.		River
7.		Troops in defence (Red for Pakistani Forces & blue for BD & Allied Forces)
8.		Depicting platoon strength
9.		Depicting company strength
10.		Depicting battalion strength
11.		Troops not in State of defence (Red for Pakistani Forces & blue for BD and Allied Forces)
12.		Engineer unit, strength unspecified (Red for Pakistani and blue for BD and Allied forces)
13.		Para Battalion (Red for Pakistani and blue for BD and Allied forces)
14.		Depicting Artillery / High trajectory weapon (Red for Pakistani and blue for BD and Allied Forces)
15.		Protective Detachment (Red for Pakistani Forces & blue for BD and Allied Forces)
16.		Paratrooper (Red & blue for Pakistani & BD/Allied Forces)
17.		Depicting brigade strength
18.		Depicting division strength

19. × × × Depicting corps strength

20. (A) Adhoc

21.  Mukti Bahini (Unspecified strength)

22.  Pakistani Forces
(Unspecified strength)

23.  Helicopter

24.  Ship

25.  Paratroop

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 was a logical conclusion of the Bengali Nationalist movement that had started soon after the formation of Pakistan in 1947. The movement based on the genuine aspirations of the people of the erstwhile East Pakistan, was fuelled by the continuous neglect of Bengalis and their interests by the West Pakistani rulers.¹ The movement reached its peak when Yahya Khan, the President of Pakistan refused to hand over power to the Awami League. Finally, Bangladesh appeared as a sovereign entity on the map of the subcontinent as the ultimate outcome of great sacrifices made in the face of unprecedented atrocities and genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani Forces. The Liberation War of Bangladesh in its literal sense is a complicated and voluminous event. There seem two definite reasons for our war being so complex. Firstly, the nation was not prepared for such a war at so short a notice; and secondly it did not have any armed forces of its own. When the British Government divided this sub-continent in 1947, according to Husain, Pakistan received its proportionate share (1/3rd share) of the armed forces as worked out by the Partition Council, chaired by the Viceroy of India, Mountbatten.² Field Marshal Auchinleck, the then Commander-in-Chief, India, was appointed for smooth division of military units including assets.

Though the Bengali masses of East Pakistan had been politically mobilized by the Awami League cadres yet hardly any effort worth the name was ever made to organize and coordinate them into a military cadre around which a viable resistance movement could have been organized.³ So, the Bangladesh Forces did not grow out of colonial regiments nor did it receive any military expertise readily from foreign countries. It is also evident from the fact that during the time of partition, Pakistan Army constituted one percent of Bengalis. Still only 7,117 got inducted from Bengal as opposed to staggering 349,688 from Punjab and 32,181 from the Frontiers.⁴ Besides there was no organized system for executing civil-military activities and organizing other social forces that are considered so vital for waging a war. Yet, the people of East Pakistan fought back right from the onset changing forms and modalities. Actions had been carried out all over the country spontaneously without any direction and control from central authority. They were born rather as the product of the

ongoing socio-political disorder, born out of the ashes of wanton destructions and swelled from the wounds of loved ones. They used indigenous munitions originated in the kitchens and backyards of houses. So, it needed time to emerge as a fighting machine. The people of Bangladesh made it happen which stands out distinctively as the testament of their spirit and dedication. Over the period of last three and half decades, lot of studies have been carried out explaining the genesis of war, the political movement that preceded and ultimately led to the outbreak of an all-out war, interest of superpowers including various other aspects. The canvass of Bangladesh Liberation War is so vast that it leaves much scope and space for studies particularly on the armed struggle of 1971 War. Such studies will not only enrich our history; people at arms will also find it educative from professional perspective. Besides, fulfilling anticipated thirst of the history lovers, this will assist in nurturing the spirit of the Liberation War into the members of future generations.

Research Questions

The research will seek to answer the following question:

Main Question

What was the socio-political context against which and how the Bangladesh Liberation War had been fought leading to the final victory?

Subsidiary Questions

How the initial resistance phase was fought in absence of any organized forces, plan and approach to the war?

How Bangladesh Armed Forces got organized and effectively operated by combining the techniques of conventional and unconventional warfare?

How was the effectiveness of Bangladesh Forces on the overall outcome of the war and what are the conclusions drawn from this war?

Limitations of the Study

In the last twenty years, historians have come increasingly to recognize the often pivotal role played by war and conflict in historical development.⁵ History of Bangladesh Liberation War is still suffering from teething problem. If we look at Bangladesh, immediately after it

got independence, a number of books were published on the freedom struggle. The subject being vast, it had many facets to be covered which most authors seemed to have inadequately addressed. Owing to the paucity of an authentic account of events and associated documentation, the operational details were not available to those authors.⁶ As such, they mostly recorded the heroic deeds of their units/sub-units and in doing so their output sometime lacked clarity and objectivity. The researcher had to be very careful in shifting essentials from the abundant works available on the subject. In some cases, actors of many events are not surviving for which the researcher had to put reliance on secondary sources. Another important aspect is the rapid growth of urban areas that changed country's landscape to a large extent where the battles/encounters had been fought. While analyzing battles/encounters, the researcher had to consider these practical issues while relating a particular event to the ground.

Justification of the Research

In the available literature on the Bangladesh Liberation War very few are exclusively focused on the armed struggle highlighting the role of Bangladesh Armed Forces. Therefore, an analytic study of the events so also an objective perception was conspicuously missing.⁷ It is very difficult to find well-researched and authentic book on the Bangladesh Liberation War authored by a local writer. Recently, some works have come up on the subject though; they don't portray a holistic view of the entire war. The works undertaken by the Indian and Pakistani authors highlighted respective roles focusing very little on Bangladesh War efforts and at places they even tried to undermine the contribution made by the Freedom Fighters. So there is a genuine requirement of a comprehensive account on Bangladesh Liberation War which would serve the purpose of general and military history readers covering the role of armed forces in liberating Bangladesh. We also need to draw appropriate lessons from this war so that necessary doctrine and strategies can be formulated for the training and development of Bangladesh Armed Forces. Considering all these aspects, the current research is a justified requirement and would benefit all including general and military history readers.

Objectives of the Research

So many years have gone by since our independence; we are yet to have a coherent and chronologically structured history of our Armed Struggle. What we have are basically personal memoirs highlighting a particular event or geographical region which often lack

objective coverage and analysis. As such, the main objective of the research is to structure a coherent historical narrative highlighting the role of the armed forces starting from 25 March until 16 December 1971. Specific objectives of the study are given below:

To study the initial resistance phase, growth of Bangladesh Forces including Gono Bahini, simultaneous application of conventional and unconventional warfare techniques including Allied offensive in details for obtaining a comprehensive history based on major geographical areas.

To ascertain the impact of guerilla warfare on the overall outcome of war effort.

To draw appropriate lessons from the war for the security and development of Bangladesh.

Methodology

The research follows a mix of methodologies:

Documentary History Analysis This will be an exploratory kind of research wherein the literature review starts with an extensive study in the field of work related to the history of our Liberation War by domestic and foreign writers. Relevant content analysis has been used to critically and objectively review published and printed facts, opinions, and observations. This has helped to formulate a comprehensive idea regarding the answers to the questions under study.

Primary Data Primary data in the form of question and answer, comments, observations have been collected from the Sector Commanders, Freedom Fighters, Political Leaders, Activists, and Officials alike who were directly involved with the Liberation War of Bangladesh in some capacity or other and hold updated view on the subject. Battle spots and museums have also been visited.

Secondary Data Secondary data on the related issues have been collected from various published reports. Besides, the researcher consulted quite a good number of documents issued both from Mujibnagar Government and Bangladesh Forces Headquarters.

Review of Literature

Before undertaking subject study, I have carried out an extensive literature survey on the history of Bangladesh Liberation War and found the following works done both at home and abroad, which are enumerated below with their strengths and weaknesses:

Victory in Bangladesh by Major General Lachhman Singh deliberately covered the Allied offensive phase highlighting the role of the Indian Forces. The author himself fought the war as formation commander and had acquired firsthand knowledge on the final stage of Bangladesh Liberation War. As far as the military studies are concerned, this book has been written very professionally with relevant lessons from the war. The main shortcoming of his work is that it covered very little about the role of the Freedom Fighters.

Bangladesh at War by Major General (retired) K. M. Safiullah, Bir Uttam, psc, is one of the pioneering works in this field. It primarily dealt with the armed struggle including the context that highlighted the discrimination, neglect and subjugation suffered by the people. The author narrated how the East Bengal Regiments revolted from their respective locations and gathered momentum in terms of spirit and strength to fight against all odds. The author fought as the Sector Commander and S Force Commander during 1971. He defected with 2 East Pakistan from Joydebpur to join the war. As such, the actions of his regiment got prominence in this book. He also covered the Allied offensive phase. Though not coherently structured, the author tried to cover the total war.

A Tale of Millions by Major (retired) Rafiqul Islam, Bir Uttam, psc, is another fine work on the subject. During the war, the author had been serving in the then East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters, Chittagong. So he had witnessed the Chittagong episode closely and recorded for us. He fought very gallantly in Sector Number 1 right from the beginning. After Major Zia took over Z force, Major Rafique became the Sector Commander of Sector-1 and commanded the Sector. He also covered the war of other sectors including that of the Allied offensive.

The Betrayal of East Pakistan written by one of the major actors of 1971, Lieutenant General A.A.A. Niazi. This is his own version of the war where he tried to defend his actions in the East Pakistan. He gave a detailed account of Pakistani Military operations conducted throughout the war and events that had led to their defeat. He blamed the

politicians and military hierarchy at Islamabad for the debacle. This is a one-sided account of our war.

Bangladesh War of Liberation by Major General (retired) Imamuz Zaman, Bir Bikram, has been published recently. This is not a complete work, rather compilation of war related articles which are detailed in nature. He wrote in minute details about the way he saved his life and escaped from Pakistani captivity in Comilla Cantonment to join the war. Initial episodes of Comilla Cantonment have been adequately described in his book.

Spotlight: Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh is a research based book published by Captain (retired) SK Garg, an Indian Army Officer, which he undertook as part of his PhD programme. In his book the author made an in-depth study on the guerrilla warfare and its application to the conflict between East and West Pakistan. The historical review, the strategic and tactical concept and the actual operation of the guerrilla forces have been lucidly presented in his book.

Rifles and Other Forces in Liberation War by Sukumar Biswas is a research based work on the role of Bangladesh Rifles. It gives a detailed account of the role of Bangladesh Rifles including other forces especially how the then East Pakistan Rifles responded to the crackdown and organized themselves quickly to fight the Pakistani Forces within respective area of responsibilities.

The History of Pakistan Army (1966-71) by Major General Shawkat Riza is a rare work for the current research. In this book the growth, training and motivation of Pakistan Army have been portrayed including their impact on professionalism has been described in this book. The author also covered the war adequately highlighting the role of Pakistani Forces.

Dismemberment of Pakistan (1971 Indo-Pak War) by Brigadier Jagdev Singh is a detailed work on the subject. The subject has been dealt with in two parts wherein the first part comprises all major developments that led to the outbreak of war. And in the second part it has covered the military aspect of the war.

Tragedy of Errors by Lieutenant General (retired) Kamal Matinuddin Ahmed is one of the exhaustive research works on the subject. He had started it as part of course curriculum at the Pakistan National Defence College in 1970. Because of the war, like everybody, the author was drawn into the battle that hampered his work. However, after

the end of the war he completed his work. It encompasses both political and military spectrums of the war. While carrying out this research he interviewed many of the major actors of the war: both military and political.

Witness to Surrender is another work of Pakistan origin on Bangladesh War by Siddiq Salik. The author was then a major in the Pakistan Army and had been covering every development in the East as Inter-Services Press Release Staff. He happened to witness the entire episode closely, which he narrated in this book. The author organized his work in three parts covering political, politico-military and purely military matters.

Muki Juddhey Noy Mash by Major General (retired) Mohammad Shubid Ali Bhuiyan is mostly the author's version of the war covering the Chittagong episode. During the initial days, the author had been serving in the then East Bengal Regimental Center where Pakistan military carried out heinous attack on the unarmed recruits. Author managed to escape from the cantonment and joined the war. The scope of this book has been limited to author's engagement in the war only.

Bangladesh Fights for Independence by Lieutenant General (retired) ASM Nasim, Bir Bikram, is an account of our Liberation War in which he participated. He tried to produce a complete work on the military aspects of the war. By and large, the author has covered wider details than any other writer on the subject.

Documents on Crimes against Humanity Committed by Pakistan Army and their Agents in Bangladesh during 1971 is an extraordinary work by the Liberation War Museum. It is an important document for the current research. It contains the report prepared by the Hamoodur Rahman Commission that aimed to determine the nature of the situation that led to the surrender of the Pakistani Forces. The commission mainly protected the politicians. But during the course of inquiry by interviewing 213 persons, many of the tactical mistakes and weaknesses of the Pakistan Army have been pointed out.

Operations of War, Volume One, Bangladesh Army is designed to provide Bangladesh Army's own war fighting doctrine. The contents are primarily based the experience of the Liberation War of 1971. With the theoretical base combined with the practical experience, the pamphlet projects a whole new horizon of tactical ideas that blends conventional warfare with unconventional warfare as major concepts.

Broadly speaking, these works can be categorized into two types i.e. foreign and local; and again, within foreign some are contributed by the Indian writers while few by the Pakistanis. Because of strategic considerations owing to the historical past and also to glorify the roles of respective forces, these accounts largely vary from each other in their theme and coverage about which the researcher paid due attention for the sake of clarity and objectivity.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

As defined in Wikipedia, conventional warfare is a form of warfare conducted by using conventional military weapons and battlefield tactics against opposing state in open confrontation. The forces on each side are well-defined, and fight using weapons that primarily target the opposing army.⁸ It is normally fought using conventional weapons, and not with chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. The general purpose of conventional warfare is to weaken or destroy the opponent's military force, thereby negating its ability to engage in conventional warfare.

When the Pakistan military unleashed heinous attack on the night of 25 March 1971, the Bengalis were not in a position to wage any kind of war. They had barely managed to escape from Pakistani units and installations sustaining casualties though at places exhibited fierce resistance scoring few early successes. Without having to set out strategies, they organized into small units and began to fight - a kind of spontaneous unconventional warfare.

Yuichiro described “Unconventional warfare is a generic term and opposite of conventional warfare that covers all military and quasi-military operations other than conventional warfare. More specifically, one dictionary lists under the heading ‘unconventional warfare’ revolutionary wars and its constituents, subversion and guerrilla; command raids and other and special operations; terrorism and counter-terrorism. But nuclear war, and warfare in which biological and chemical weapons are used, are not included in the concept of unconventional warfare”.⁹

This concept uses unconventional weapons, targets the civilian population as well as the armed forces, and specializes in unconventional tactics. In the brief nine months’ war, Bangladesh Forces conducted both conventional and unconventional warfare. This research has probed to find out how economically and militarily disadvantaged Bangladesh Forces with

handful Bengali military personnel successfully organized them to wage a war combining conventional and unconventional forces.

Outline for the Proposed Study

The dissertation has been outlined comprising 8 chapters as under:

Chapter 1 deals with introductory chapter where a detailed research proposal has been furnished with salient aspects.

Chapter 2 covers the background of the war depicting the sufferings of the people, suppressed for nearly a quarter century under the West Pakistani rule since the partition of 1947. During the British rule how the Muslims got segregated from the power structure, lagged behind in education and in the long run made tremendous impact on their socio-political condition have been vividly discussed. Events leading to separation of Indian sub-continent have been also touched. Then movement of the Bengalis started with the establishing right of language in 1947-1952. Later on, the United Front coalition contested in the election in 1954 and assumed power for a very brief period. This was the period when East Pakistan sought autonomy. Democratic process including prospect of movements had dimmed with General Ayub Khan's take over on the night of 27 October 1958.¹⁰ After the war of 1965, the political movement gained momentum. Around this time, the defence expenditure for the west was enhanced significantly while nothing was done for the security of the East. This was period when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rose to political prominence by declaring historical Six Points in 1966. In the face of mass movement, Ayub Khan announced on 25 March 1969 that he could not preside over the destruction of his country. He relinquished his office and handed over power to Gen Yahya Khan, who on assuming power promised to hold the general election at the earliest.¹¹ The Awami League won landslide victory in the 1970 election. But, the transfer of power had been delayed number of times on several grounds like difficulties in formulating a constitution, review of the Six Points, deciding upon the form of government and many more. Ultimately, the Pakistanis decided to use force as a solution to political problem. Why and how these had developed will definitely provide a better understanding of the whole affairs.

Chapter 3 highlights the geographical attributes of the erstwhile East Pakistan and endorsed the military deployment immediately before the outbreak of hostilities. It has

been planned to study the subject as per the existing natural regions. The major rivers of Bangladesh have divided the country distinctly into four regions as north western (NW) region, south western region, eastern region and central region. The old time administrative regions had been formed along the same line. For better comprehension, the subject has been organized and studied based on these regions. Here, the features of various regions with broad strategic and tactical implications will be narrated.

Chapter 4 discusses the military crackdown unleashed by the Pakistani Forces and impacts they created. Numerous events unfolded immediately after the crackdown which had been spontaneous in nature and simultaneously conducted along the width and breadth of the country. It will remain ever difficult to have a clear picture unless these small pitched battles/small unit actions are pieced together to develop a larger picture. These will be described here in the form of narrative.

Chapter 5 outlines the growth of armed forces. Although, initial resistance phase was a brief one concluding within about four weeks' time, but this phase formed the nucleus basing on which a sizable mixed force comprising regulars and *Gono Bahini* were developed. Here a comprehensive account of evolutionary process through which various forces were developed will be made. This chapter will also focus on unexplored *Gono Bahini* in sufficient details.

Chapter 6 will describe the organization of Bangladesh operational sectors and various forces to include Z, S and K Forces, Navy, Air Force and corps of Artillery. Despite scanty resources, these forces had to be organized to fulfill operational objectives using integral resources and sometimes by raising new units. Though in limited scale, for raising technical outfits we received Indian support.

Chapter 7 describes different informal armies/forces which were developed in different parts of Bangladesh under independent leaders without any orders or instructions from the government. These self declared leaders mostly came from active or retired military background; some had been student leaders or just man in civilian cloth but imbued with patriotism. Most of these forces positively contributed in the overall outcome of the war.

Chapter 8 will describe as to how the blending technique of warfare combining conventional and unconventional forces had been applied including the impact it created

on the overall achievement of Bangladesh Forces. Before launching the main offensive, Mukti Bahini conducted number of operations sometime independently, sometimes jointly with Indian assistance. These operations mainly aimed at establishing a firm base for further operations. It was also intended to assess the capability of our regular forces in conventional role so as to make them compatible with the Indians during final offensive.

Chapter 9 describes the impact of Bangladesh Forces in achieving the final victory. In more than three decades, so much has been written on the Bangladesh Liberation War but very little is available quantifying the role played by the Freedom Fighters. It is often said, the Liberation of Bangladesh would not have been possible without Allied offensive and the Indian writers generally tend to undermine the role of our Freedom Fighters. It's therefore a necessity that an objective analysis is made basing on facts and figures. This chapter will try and put up some arguments based on casualty reports in terms of human lives, infrastructures and resources including their consequent effects on the fighting efficiency of the Pakistani Forces. In doing so, efforts will be made to assess the impact of guerrilla warfare for which the Allied Forces could overrun Bangladesh in quick time. This should be the most interesting and revealing aspect of the study.

Chapter 10 will describe the Allied offensive operations which was conducted in lightning speed to overrun Bangladesh in less than two weeks' time. During this the Bangladesh Forces including Sector troops played a significant role by guiding and at places effectively fighting the adversaries. This phase of the war will be covered under the following heads:

South Western - Here the Indian II Corps offensive will be covered with necessary graphics.

North Western - Indian 33 Corps offensive will be covered here almost in the same line.

Eastern - Indian IV Corps offensive will be studied here.

Central and Capture of Dhaka Bowl - Here in this part, offensive launched by Indian 101 Communication Zone along with IV Corps elements that captured Dhaka will be covered.

Chapter 11 will compile the conclusions drawn from the Bangladesh Liberation War.

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CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

To trace the origin of independent Bangladesh, a brief recount of the historical perspective covering broad socio-economic impulses and resulting political orientation of the Muslims of the subcontinent is essential.¹ The intent of the chapter is to contextualize the Liberation War historically.

Historically, Hinduism made its presence in this subcontinent much before the faith of the Prophet that came after the cohorts of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane had battered their way down the Khyber Pass to weaken the Hindu hold on the great Gangetic plain.² For nearly thousand years, the Muslim leaders ruled over most of the India, preaching in the wake of their legions the message of Islam. The greatest differences between Hindu-Muslim understanding, however, were not metaphysical, but social and religious. Because of tolerance and fraternity, Islam drew millions of Hindus suppressed by the cast culture that had split the society into a myriad of closed guilds into which a man used to be condemned by his birth to work, live, marry and die.³

The British took power in Bengal after the Palassy debacle of Siraj ud-Daulah in 1757.⁴ As the British had snatched power from Muslims, they were always haunted by a sense of apprehension that the Muslims might venture to regain the power. The alleged involvement of the Muslims in the Indian Army mutiny of 1857 was another reason for such suspicion. So the British made concerted efforts to keep the Muslims suppressed in every sector. While creating the power structure, quite understandably the British preferred anyone other than the Muslims. W.W. Hunter, one of the officials of Her Majesty's Civil Service, expressed it in his book *The Indian Musalmans*, "We shut the Musalman aristocracy out of the Army, because we believed that their exclusion was necessary to our own safety. We deprived them of their monopoly of the most lucrative functions in the Administration, because their deprivation was essential to the welfare and just government of the people".⁵ In such a situation, Hindus had bridged the gap between ruling and the ruled classes. Muslims being fresh from the ruling class had been suffering from some kind of a complex and refused a system which gave them no advantages over the people whom they so long ruled, a people whom they hated as idolaters and despised as a servile race.⁶

Besides, the ramification of Lord Cornwallis's land settlement had far reaching impact in shaping the socio-economic fabric in the sub-continent. His administrative reforms spawned the Zamindari system under which the majority Hindus became the Zaminders and bulk of the Muslims comprised the peasant cadre.⁷ This had retarded the Muslims from being intellectually enlightened which caused them to remain unfocused and dormant until the end of the 19th century. Hunter described the condition of the Muslim's as "A hundred and seventy years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born Musalman in Bengal to become poor; at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich".⁸ To those social and religious differences, had been added an even more divisive, more insidious distinction, economic. Some statistics, as stated by Hunter, can prove this statement:

In the highest grade in which the appointments dated from a previous generation, the Muhammadans had not much to complain of, as in April 1869 there was one Musalman to two Hindus; there is now but one Musalman to three Hindus. In the second grade, there were then two Muhammadans to nine Hindus; there is now one Musalman to ten Hindus. In the third grade, there were then four Musalmans to a total of twenty-seven Hindus and Englishmen, there are now three Musalmans to total of twenty-four Hindus and Englishmen. Muslim's setback particularly in socio-economic status brought them to the realization which changed their psyche and soon drove them to establish their rights. They became assertive about their religion and rights. Bengal was the largest state of undivided India with an area of approximately 1,89,000 square miles having eight crore people.⁹ Administratively, it was extremely difficult to manage. It was during this time that in 1905, Lord Curzon decided to partition the province (see fig. 1). It was also done with the belief that this would weaken the Hindus and permanently divide Hindus and Muslims of Bengal. This was also designed to act as a counterweight against the growing nationalist aspirations of India dominated by the Hindus especially after the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885. But Muslims were benefitted by this partition.

This partition did not last long because of the negative role played by the Congress for its annulment. So Muslims soon felt the necessity of a political platform to protect their own interests. The Nawab of Dhaka and some other north Indian Muslims founded the Muslim League in 1906 in Dhaka, where the Bengal Muslims assumed the leading role. Fazlul Haque, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Yousuf Ali Chowdhury, Moulana Bhashani, and Moulana Rasool were noteworthy amongst them.

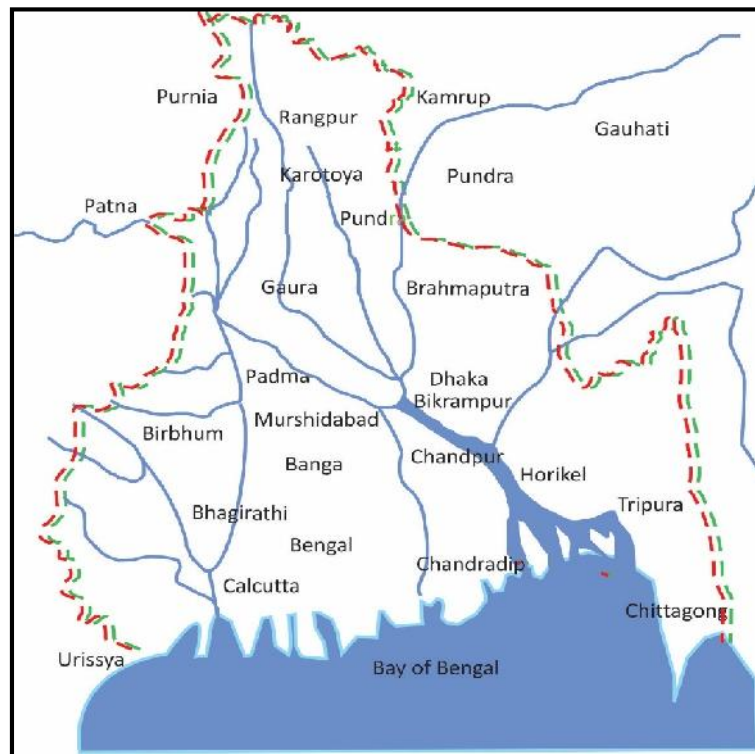


Fig. 1. Map of United Bengal. *'Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

In the face of stiff Hindu opposition, the newly appointed Viceroy Lord Hardinge got both the Bengals united by a proclamation in 1911. During his visit to Dhaka in 1912, he assured of a university to be set up in Dhaka to heal the Muslim wound. In spite of huge criticism from the Calcutta based intellectuals, the University came into being in 1921. Later, this university played a significant role in the Pakistan movement.

It may be remembered that the majority of prominent Muslim leaders from Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and part of Bihar and not from Punjab and Sindh had been the exponents of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. The roots of the Bengal Muslim leaders were deeply attached to the class that had been subjected to genuine deprivation and exploitation for about more than hundred years by the Hindus. These have led the Bengali Muslims to turn out as strong advocates of two-nation theory that emerged later.

The historic Lahore resolution of 1940, moved by A.K. Fazlul Haque required that the areas in which the Muslims were numerically in majority, as in the north western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states in which constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign. When the political wisdom of A.K. Fazlul Haque rightly appreciated the geographical realities in framing the resolution, the landlord class and

the Muslim elite who dominated the Muslim League condemned the plurality of states as a clerical mistake and amended it suitably in 1946 at the Delhi meeting of the Muslim League.

There was a marked difference in the psyche of the Muslims from Bengal and their co-religionists in Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. The Bengali Muslims were comparatively, perhaps less religiously fanatical and insular than their co-religionists in the north central, northern and western parts of India. The orthodox Islam underwent huge transformation in its theology, spiritual content and expressions all over India due to pre-Islamic intellectual, cultural and philosophical traditions of Persia and Central Asia on the one hand and the impact of the tolerant and catholic attitudes of Hinduism on the other.¹⁰ The dilution of Arab Islamic orthodoxy was particularly manifest in the Muslims of Bengal as most of them were converts from local Hindus whereas in Sindh, the Punjab and to some extent Uttar Pradesh, Turkish, Pathan, Persian, Arab and Central Asian migrants comprised larger demographic segment in the Muslim population. The Bengali Muslims, on the otherhand, for obvious historical and cultural reasons have always been liberal in religious ethos.¹¹

Apart from this, Bengali Muslim identity was deeply rooted in the composite Bengali culture, festivities and powerful linguistic traditions of Bengal. They never preferred Urdu, Arabic or Persian as essential ornaments to emphasize their religious identity while they still held strong religious affinity often surpassing their co-religionists in the West. Anthony Mascarenhas - a West Pakistani journalist, vividly described relative social conservatism of both the wings in his book *The Rape of Bangladesh*. As he said, "Prohibition is enforced more rigidly in the East. Unlike any city in the East Bengal, off-license liquor shops in Islamabad, the Pakistan capital, remain open and do a brisk trade on Friday, the Muslim Suburb. Salacious films and cabaret acts which flourish in Karachi and Lahore would immediately draw irate public protest should they be displayed in Dacca or Chittagong".¹² All these have given the Bengali Muslims a distinctly separate identity, quite different from the one propagated Pakistan. As such, there was a religio-cultural dichotomy between the two wings of Pakistan.

Basing on the Two-Nation Theory, on 14 and 15 August 1947 respectively, Pakistan and India came up on the world map with Pakistan having its two wings 1,000 miles apart across the Indian Territory. To the veteran congressman Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, "It was one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different".¹³ He also apprehended

in September 1957 that no one could hope that East and West Pakistan would compose all their differences and form one nation.

Suhrawardy had a great contribution in implementing the Two-Nation Theory and until 13 August 1947, when he was the Chief Minister of undivided Bengal. Astonishingly, Jinnah before leaving for Pakistan, removed Suhrawardy from the leadership of the Muslim League in East Bengal. It is believed that political talent of Suhrawardy forced Jinnah to take such decision. Jinnah also kept other Bengali politicians far from his cabinet so that he could take the full credit for the creation of Pakistan. He was not even hesitant to utter that he alone with his secretary and typewriter earned Pakistan. Unfortunately, the party which fought for and won Pakistan fell in the hands of the Muslim leaders who had joined Pakistan from the Muslim minority province of India, the most prominent of those being Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his chief Liaquat Ali Khan, both formerly residents of what is now India.¹⁴ This might have caused him to rely more on the civil servants than the politicians on major policy decisions. After his demise in September 1948, Liaquat maintained the tradition.

Under the new system, Pakistan comprised two distinct far-flung regions geographically unconnected by 1000 miles of foreign territory named West and East Pakistan. West Pakistan was made up of a number of races including the Punjabis (the most numerous), Sindhis, Pathans, Balochis, Mohajirs (Muslim refugees from India) and others. East Pakistan, on the other hand, was more homogeneous and had a vast Bengali-speaking population. This population was their greatest fear. Every time they thought of some kind of a formula for an equal distribution of power, every option they considered led to the same concern: the Bengalis were more in number than all the rest put together, and under a democracy, nothing could bar them from getting a majority share in the new state.

Even today, Bangla ranks 4th out of top 100 languages by number of population. Immediately after the creation of Pakistan, a conflict over the issue of official state language had begun to take shape. So, it was beyond even simplest comprehension that the Bengalis of Eastern wing would accept any other languages than Bangla. Jinnah was rather insensitive in supporting the demands of refugees from the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, who represented in small scale in the total demographic composition, insisted that Urdu be Pakistan's official language.¹⁵ Such decision did upset the sentiment of the Bengalis of East Pakistan, which constituted 54 percent of the total population.

Other language speakers of Pakistan also became dissatisfied when Jinnah on 19 March 1948 in Dhaka announced that; “the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language, no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function”.¹⁶ But there were countries with more than one language like Canada and Switzerland where states are allowed to retain their respective mother-languages.¹⁷ So, his views on the issue proved to be ridiculous. But this was Jinnah himself had sown the seeds of Pakistan's disintegration. The issue of language started transforming into a movement although quietly in the beginning, changed its form sharply to eventual victory. The reaction of the Bengali people to such a declaration had been strong and spontaneous. The police opened fire on 21st February 1952 on unarmed peaceful protesters causing tragic death to Rafiq, Barkat, Jabbar and Salam. The language issue was settled leaving its wound deep in the hearts and minds of its people. Almost fifty years later, as a matter of universal recognition, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared 21 February as International Mother Language day. The saga of the language martyrs today goes to touch millions of people beyond the geographical confines of Bangladesh. It is believed that the demographic differences would have taken time to disenchant the Bengalis had they not been treated as second-class citizens and deprived of their legitimate rights under the Pakistani misrule.

On 23 June 1949, with the Awami Muslim League came up as the first opposition to the ruling Muslim League under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani. The party was formed to champion the rights of masses in Pakistan against the powerful feudal establishment led by the Muslim League. However, due to its strength stemming from the discriminated Bengali population of the eastern wing, the party eventually became associated and identified with the then East Pakistan.¹⁸ Later it was renamed as the Awami League to make it a broad-based one to accommodate minority communities. Basing on ideological differences, this party was farther split into two that is Awami League with Suhrawardy and the National Awami Party under Moulana Bhashani. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started his political career with the Muslim League and rose to the peak with the Awami League in subsequent years.

After Liaquat's assassination in October 1951, effective power passed to small coterie of bureaucrats comprising Governor General Ghulam Mohammad, and his two principal advisors, Finance Minister Chaudhury Mohammad Ali and Defence Secretary Major General

Iskander Mirza.¹⁹ Without any political base, this group had its strength from the senior officers in the Army and Civil Service. In mid 1950, out of 734 Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Under Secretaries in the Central Secretariat, Bengalis numbered only 42; no Bengali at the time had the rank of Secretary, one or two were Joint Secretaries, 10 deputy secretaries and 30 undersecretaries. Around the same time, the representation of West Pakistan and East Pakistan in the Army Officers corps (to be deleted) was as unbalanced as one could imagine. Out of 897 officers in the rank of major and above in Pakistan Army in 1956, only 15 were Bengalis.²⁰

The achievement of the language movement of 1952 influenced the mass vastly. Including Nurul Amin ill-intended and egotistic Muslim League leadership gradually became alienated from the people and at the same time to achieve political empowerment new power under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani began to toddle forward.²¹ Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy returned to East Pakistan from India and Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque too became active in the politics again. In the month of December 1953, like minded political parties got together and formed the United Front on the basis of a common minimum programme. They realized that in order to defeat the Muslim League, it was necessary to mobilize the entire opposition into a single force. While formulating the 21 Point Programme, it did not only raise Bengali language issue but “the 21 points manifesto was directed towards mobilizing support from the workers and peasants as well. The manifesto, therefore, was very broadly-based and was primarily the programme of the Bengali Nationalist movement.”²²

The results of 1954 elections in East Pakistan were conclusive. The United Front won 210 of the 237 Muslim seats in the provincial assembly and obtained nearly 64% of the votes. In contrast, the Muslim League won only 10 seats and secured less than 27% of the votes polled in the contested constituencies. Among the most significant aspects of the election was the defeat of several ministers including Nurul Amin, the Muslim League Chief Minister.

However, East Pakistan had been clamouring for autonomy, with the Central Government controlling little more than foreign affairs, defence, communications, and currency. This was not desirable by the Pakistanis to have a Chief Minister from the East Pakistan who would threaten the existence of the Muslim League in the overall power structure and reduce the control of the Army on the eastern wing. So, the government of 1954 election was dismissed to serve the purpose of the West. Between 1952 and 1958, there had been three East Pakistani

leaders namely Khawaja Nazimuddin, Muhammad Ali Bogra and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy as the Prime ministers - a measure to narrow down the differences and grievances between the people of both the wings. But under the circumstances they could only play the puppet role because of suppressive clutches of the military bureaucrats over administration.

On October 7, 1958, President General Iskander Mirza declared Martial Law in Pakistan. Within short time, he was ousted by a counter coup and General Ayub. During his reign, West Pakistan was developed on the economy of eastern wing with disproportionate development plan between the two. Here, some of the glaring inadequacies pertaining to the economy and development plan are shown in Appendix A. Even the members of Pakistani planning commission had to take official note of these disparities. These can be also evident from the statistics shown in fig. 2.

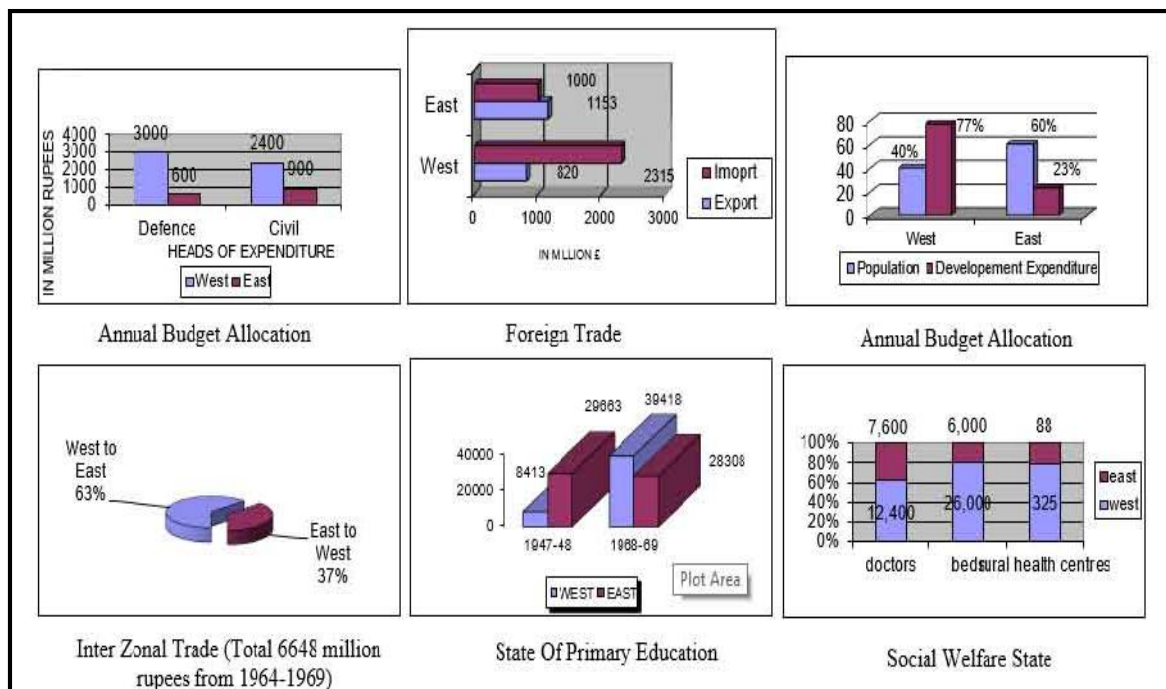


Fig. 2. Statistics on Disparities, *The Bangladesh Papers*. Lahore: Vanguard Books Ltd, n.d. pp, 15-22.

General Ayub also abrogated constitution; the national and the provincial assemblies were dissolved; all political activities were banned. Number of political leaders including Sheikh Mujib were put in jail. Ayub Khan introduced the so-called Basic Democracy which totally relied on Military Bureaucracy, substituting direct elections with an Electoral College. Despite lot of handicaps, the Awami League continued functioning, secretly for of a

possible movement against the Ayub Government. Soon an opportunity presented itself when the government arrested Suhrawardy in June, 1962. The news of the arrest spread like wild fire and the students came out to the streets. The Presidential election of Pakistan was held on January 2, 1965, on the basis of Basic Democracy (the Electoral College comprised only 80,000 voters). Despite the meager chance of winning the election under such a situation, the opposition decided to fight it out jointly. With this end in view and under the auspices of Awami League, a united front named Combined Opposition Party was formed on July 21, 1964. Miss Fatema Jinnah was nominated the candidate of this Alliance for the Presidential polls. Though Miss Jinnah lost in the election, her election campaign created a lot of stir in the public. One positive result that emerged from this election was that it exposed the hollowness and anti-people character of the so-called Basic Democracy system.²³

In 1965, when India-Pakistan War broke out the East Pakistan was left totally denuded of military which could have defended them in eventualities. So the politicians and intelligentsias in the East could never be in agreement with their Pakistani counterpart that the key to East Pakistan's defence lay in the West. Yet, after the 1965 War, Bhutto kept on professing this strategy and made a statement in the National Assembly that "East Pakistan had been 'saved by China'".²⁴ This was the time when the issue of regional autonomy gained momentum. After the war, defence expenditure for West Pakistan had been enhanced enormously while its resultant effects were realized in the East Pakistan in terms of severe economic deprivation.

During this time, Sheikh Mujib earned tremendous political repute and knocked the power base of West Pakistan when he declared the Six Point programme in 1966 (details at Appendix B). The Six Point formula included (1) the constitution should provide for a federation of Pakistan based on the Lahore Resolution, in its true sense based on the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise; (2) the center should be responsible for defence and foreign affairs only; (3) currency should be controlled by regional reserve banks; (4) federating units to provide money to the center on a pre-determined procedure; (5) foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed. (6) federating units can raise their own Military and Para-Military forces.²⁵ This development shattered the Military.

In 1968, to stem the Six Point based strident popular movement, Pakistan Government framed the Agartala Conspiracy case against Mujib and 34 others. This was known as State vs. Mujib Conspiracy case. This had caused the Six Point programme to sustain a temporary pause, but was regained when the 'Chhatra Sangram Parishad' came up with their charter of 'Eleven Points Programme' (details given at Appendix C). The Eleven Points deaned not only reflected Awami League's Six Point programme but also equally addressed right and interests of the middle class peasants and workers. While the trial was on in 1969, co-accused Sergeant Jahurul Haque was killed in prison by the Pakistani sentries. In another incident on February 18, 1969 Dr. Zoha, a young and ever smiling professor of the Rajshahi University was gunned down by Ayub's Military and the mass movement reached its apex; turned into the mass uprising of 1969. Following, explosive political development Sheikh Mujib including all others was freed 22 February 1969 unconditionally. The venue for this historic trial is located right in the heart of the Dhaka Cantonment where the '*Bijoyketon*'- Liberation War Museum has been established. On the following day of release, the Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad (All Parties Students Action Committee) organised a mass reception at Ramna Race Course Ground (now Suhrawardy Udyan) where Tofael Ahmed, the president of the Sangram Parishad, bestowed on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the title of 'Bangabandhu' (Friend of the Bengalis). It may be mentioned that during 23 years of Pakistani rule, Bangabandhu was imprisoned for long 12 years. However, the Six Point movement of 1966, the mass upheaval of March 1968 to 1969 and their attendant repressions progressively reinforced the spirit of Bengali nationalism.²⁶

In the face of mass movement Ayub Khan handed over the power to Yahya Khan on March 24, 1969.²⁷ On assuming power, Yahya, did acknowledge that "East Pakistan was getting a raw deal and that the East Pakistanies in his words, fully justified in being dissatisfied with this state of affairs".²⁸ He was apparently sincere in his wish to handing over power to the elected representatives of the people through democratic process. Yahya also spelt out it clearly in his 26 March broadcast to the nation that he had no ambition other than the creation of conditions conducive to the establishment of a constitutional government. On 30 March 1970, Yahya announced the conditions under which issuing a Legal Framework Order would hold the national and provincial elections.²⁹ It was indeed a framework for the future constitution of Pakistan. But, the Article 25 of the Legal Framework Order appeared to be totally undemocratic. According to this article, the constitution bill passed by the National Assembly would have to be presented to the President for authentication. The national

assembly shall stand dissolved in the event that authentication was refused.³⁰ As the politicians of both the Wings considered it to be curtailment of the sovereignty of parliament and raised doubts about the sincerity of the military to hand over power.

A massive flood struck the coastal areas of East Pakistan in the following year on 12 November, just less than a month before the scheduled date of election that brought about untold misery for its people. Surprisingly, the Central Government was slow to respond in terms of support and sympathy for the management of this catastrophe. President Yahya on his way back from Peking made a stopover and had a bird's eye view while he flew over the affected areas in a folklor and promised all assistance and help to alleviate the suffering.³¹ This event turned the anger of peace loving people of the East Pakistan into strength, which was clearly reflected in the result of December 1970 general election.

In December 1970, the general elections were held and Awami League won a stunning victory winning 160 out of 162 seats in East Pakistan. Awami League won a similar landslide victory in the Provincial Assembly elections also. It won 288 seats out of 300. The net result was, Awami League emerged as the single majority party in the Pakistan National Assembly with 167 seats out of a total of 313. On the other side, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party won 88 seats (all from the Western Wing) and emerged as the second largest Parliamentary party.³² "The initial reaction of General Yahya was as it should have been. 'As far as I am concerned my job is finished', said the President immediately after the election result had been announced".³³ Three days later at Dhaka, he even mentioned casually that Bangabandhu was going to be the future prime minister of the country. This victory demonstrated the power of Bengali Nationalism and a clear defiance to the long bitter domination by the West Pakistan. Constitutionally, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was to take over as Prime Minister of undivided Pakistan. Many in the military hierarchy including the Director General of the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence could not accept the election result. According to Rao Farman Ali, twelve generals were against handing over the power to Mujib.³⁴ "It was said that with Mujib in power, relatively junior East Pakistani officer would be promoted over the heads of the West Pakistani officers in order to balance the share of higher ranks between the two wings".³⁵

Bhutto assumed political control in West Pakistan and was not ready to sit in the opposition. "No constitution could be made, without Pakistan Peoples Party's cooperation,"

said the civilian dictator and feudal landlord.³⁶ The post- election politics appeared to be a power struggle between Bhutto and Mujib with military playing the role of arbitrator.

The time had now arrived for parleys to begin between the President Yahya Khan, the ultimate authenticator representing the military government, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the Awami League and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan Peoples Party. First such meeting took place at the President's House at Dhaka on 13 January 1971.³⁷ In this meeting, Awami League was represented by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tajuddin Ahmed, Khondkar Mushtaq Ahmed, Qamar-uz-Zaman and two others while the President was accompanied by Vice Admiral S.M. Ahsan, Lieutenant General Sahibzada Yaqub Khan and Lieutenant General S.G.M.M. Peerzada. During the session, the President expressed his desire to give it a national character without naming to include some West Pakistani members in his cabinet, which was assured by Mujib. All the political parties in West Pakistan including Bhutto agreed that legally Awami League could frame a constitution as it was the majority party, but without making some concession for the Western Wing it would be a barren exercise.³⁸ As none of the parties achieved majority in both wings, players from the West Pakistan capitalized on that to bargain for power sharing which intensified the struggle between Yahya, Mujib and Bhutto.

Disillusioned, General Yahya accepted Bhutto's invitation. So, on his return from Dhaka Yahya with some of his advisers visited Larkana as Bhutto's guest. "Please tell Mujib that the West Pakistani leadership is in my (Bhutto's) hand and it will be good for the country if he, for the sake of the nation, takes Bhutto in the government and that if he does not do so we (army) will use military force" proposed Bhutto in his meeting with the President.³⁹ History had seen the later events and in that how precisely his wishes were materialized. The President advised Bhutto that if he wanted any representation in the future government, in the interest and well-being of West Pakistan, he (Bhutto) should discuss the thing with Mujib. Bhutto subsequently went to Dhaka on January 27 and met Mujib. There he discussed 6 points, which were hindering the progress of the meeting. Whatever disagreements were there would have been resolved had Bhutto been offered the post of Vice President or the Foreign Minister. But, Mujib could not win over his natural instincts to make such concession for his arch rival. Bhutto had to come back empty handed, his dreams unfulfilled. Meanwhile, Bhutto came under criticism for congratulating the hijackers, who on 30 January 1971 forced an Indian Airlines Fokker to land at Lahore during its flight from Srinagar to Delhi. Every

sensible politician, to name Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Sheikh Mujib, Mr. Wali Khan and Sardar Kayum (Azad Kashmir) categorically condemned the hijacking. In response to this the Indian Government cancelled all over flights by Pakistan aircraft plying between East and West Pakistan.⁴⁰

Mujib was defiant and Bhutto was power hungry. Mujib was not ready to accommodate Yahya too, who was aspiring to stay on as the President. About the role he played regarding transfer of power, Mascarenhas went on to say that he was nowhere as sincere as his words suggested.⁴¹

On 13 February 1971, General Yahya announced his decision to call the National Assembly session on 3 March 1971. Bhutto refused to attend the inaugural session of the assembly and his decision to boycott the National Assembly session was condemned by all political parties. On 13 February 1971, Bhutto having met the President declared that if the National Assembly were held on 3 March he would launch a popular movement. On 22 February 1971, President of Pakistan met the Governors and the Martial Law Administrators discreetly in Rawalpindi. After that Major General Khadim Hossain Raja of 14 Infantry Division stationed at Dhaka and Major General Rao Farman Ali devised an operational plan titled "Operation Blitz". This operation basically aimed at ensuring strict enforcement of martial law in the Eastern Wing. Eventual delay on the plea of discussion allowed them adequate time necessary to reinforce their strength from West Pakistan. On 1 March 1971, General Yahya announced postponement of the National Assembly for indefinite period.⁴² Such a postponement favoured Bhutto at the expense of Mujib.

Disregard to the collective verdict of the people gradually threatened the fate of Pakistan to the process of eventual disintegration. The reaction in East Pakistan was immediate. Strikes, demonstrations, and civil disobedience increased in tempo until there was open revolt. Prodded by Mujib, Bengalis declared they would pay no taxes and would ignore martial law regulations on press and radio censorship. Bangabandhu believed, as did Tolstoy, that such a programme would compel any government to come to terms.⁴³ The Central Government all but ceased to exist in East Pakistan. As the intensity of movement increased so did the claim for independence. The Pakistani Military junta was split on the question of suppressing the movement by military action. Those in East Pakistan were not in favour of it as they had been witnessing the growing popularity of Awami League. They knew it well that even after eliminating die-hard political activists, the movement in favour of Six Point

formula would not die down. Those in the West Pakistan particularly Major General A.O. Mitha (Quarter Master General), Khuda Dad (Adjutant General), Iftikhar Janjua (Master General of the Ordnance), and Ghulam Umar (Chief of the National Security Council) were advocating a strong military action.⁴⁴ The Inter-Services Intelligence also wanted ruthless military action in East Pakistan.

On 2 March 1971, ASM Abdur Rab, the then Vice President of Dhaka University Students Union, had the honour of hoisting the first flag of independent Bangladesh at the Dhaka University premise popularly known as Bat-tala in the presence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.⁴⁵ On 1 March, President Yahya Khan, in a special broadcast over Radio Pakistan, announced the postponement of the National Assembly session scheduled to start in Dhaka on 3 March to a later date. This news was electrifying to the common man in East Pakistan, and especially in Dhaka. Violence broke out in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rangpur, Comilla, Rajshahi, Sylhet, and Khulna, and the Security Forces killed many unarmed protesters. On 3 March, Swadhin Bangladesh Chhatra Songram Parashad in their grand Paltan rally gave the name 'Bangladesh', read out the objectives of achieving independence and gave the outline of actions.⁴⁶ There were open calls for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to declare independence from Pakistan. Considering the military preparedness inside Dhaka Cantonment, it was neither feasible to declare the independence nor was it possible to ignore the call of the public sentiment. So, the Awami League called a large public gathering at Dhaka's Ramna Race Course Ground on 7 March to respond.⁴⁷

The speech, Bangabandhu delivered on 7 March was not a written one but the articulation of theme, content and wordings had been appropriate. Historic speech of 7 March 1971, although not a declaration, gave out some kind of signal for independence movement.

However, Bangabandhu, Bhutto, and Yahya Khan held negotiations in Dhaka from 16-24 March in a final attempt to defuse the growing crisis. Simultaneously, getting order from President Yahya, Major General Khadim Hossain Raja and Major General Rao Farman Ali drafted the plan for 'Operation Searchlight' by 18 March which was approved on 20 March 1971. At the same time, Troop reinforcements from West Pakistan had been continuing. As it was, the talks broke down. On 25 March, Yahya Khan flew back to West Pakistan and Bhutto followed him the next day.

It was the beginning of an end - the disintegration of Pakistan following a ceaseless struggle. The movement prior to March 1971 was founded wholly on the policy of constitution and non-violence. As such, the Bengalis were rather caught by sudden brutal act by the Pakistani Military junta. Yet the desperate Bengali people rose to the occasion and started resisting all over. The war started unfolding both in its dimension and kind at the unprecedented cost in lives and blood. This was how the Liberation War of Bangladesh had started. Now we turn to the geo-strategic setting of this war.

The failure to keep India united left the composite Indian nation in a shamble giving birth to fragile Pakistan and diverse India. Pakistan comprised of East Pakistan and West Pakistan separated by 1,600 kilometers of Indian territory. The crisis of 1971 lay deeply embedded in the myth that Islam was a stronger binding force than cultural heritage. But, Islam failed to bridge the gap that had been caused by the geographical, economic, political, and cultural factors existing between the two Wings. The two Wings had never engaged in any common struggle to achieve the joint nationhood and therefore the Muslims of East Bengal, Punjab and other areas constituting Pakistan failed to create a coherent national ideology in post-partitioned united Pakistan as a Muslim homeland. Yet, when Pakistan was born, the Bengali Muslim elites tried to make Pakistan work for their interest.

Soon after the partition, debate over establishing 'Urdu' as state language disheartened the Bengalis in the East Pakistan. This indifference to the language issue was the major reason for the decline of Muslim League in East Pakistan. The undercurrent of Bengali Nationalism reasserted basing on language issue, economic disparity and political injustice. But, the Bengalis had a demographic advantage in terms of number which resulted in constitutional crisis from the beginning. If provinces had equal share in the legislature it would be unfair for the East Pakistan being the most populous province, if they had representation based on population, the economically dominant West Pakistan, with its bureaucratic and military power would feel threatened. So the West Pakistan hierarchy never wanted democracy to flourish which would reflect the power of people consequently bring the East Pakistani leadership in the pivotal role in administering Pakistan.

However, after 23 years of failed constitutional experiments to institute democracy with the protection of economic and political privileges of the elites in the West Pakistan, allowed political movements to gather momentum in East Pakistan. Meanwhile, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman emerged as an uncontested leader and symbol of freedom for the millions of

Bengalis in the East Pakistan. Following ceaseless political movements, the crisis reached at the boiling point with the election of 1970. Just about a month prior to the election, the Bengalis were shocked by the response of Pakistan as it miserably failed in mitigating the sufferings of the people despite availability of resources and quick response units. It transformed their anger into election mandate and helped Awami League to achieve landslide victory. This was the biggest fear of the ruling Pakistani Military junta and they were not ready to resolve the issue amicably. Yahya Khan, in utter disregard to the people's verdict, stuck to power as an autocrat. His ambition persuaded by the leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party blinded him to the innate strength of Bengali democratic aspirations. He denied elected representative their right to rule Pakistan and reasserted himself, and then forced Pakistan towards ultimate dismemberment.

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CHAPTER 3

GEOGRAPHICAL ATTRIBUTES OF ERSTWHILE EAST PAKISTAN AND INITIAL MILITARY DISPOSITION

Geopolitical Attributes

Geography forms the physical basis of Military Strategy and no military history is possible without knowing, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, the geographical conditions of the area prevailing at the time. It is important that before we go into the depth of the subject we acquire complete geographical details of erstwhile East Pakistan. In this segment the geographical attributes of erstwhile East Pakistan will be studied from different geographical settings with special reference to military operations.

Since long South Asia, of which Bangladesh is a part, occupies a key position of geopolitical importance, chiefly because it serves both overland and maritime link between the east and the west in conjunction with Indian Ocean. The major geo-strategic significance of the Indian Ocean lies in the five straits; the Cape of Good Hope, the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, the Strait of Hormuz, the Strait of Malacca and the Sudan Strait.¹ About one fifth of world's population inhabit this area. The richness of the land had always prompted outsiders, both traders and raiders, to call it most appropriately EL DORADO- the Land of Gold.² Of all the South Asian countries, India comprises 4/5 of the region. Most countries of this region share common history based on religious, cultural and linguistic heritages. Interestingly, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan have common borders with India, but none of these countries has a common border with one another. India and Sri Lanka are apart only by a 33 kilometers stretch of water without any neighbour.³ India, therefore, is too over-arching and too proximate to be ignored. Besides, Kashmir had been a constant factor since 1947, which has a crucial role in shaping regional security matrix. Most South Asian countries are exposed to the large Indian Ocean, which stretches from the southern tips of Africa in the west and Australia in the east. Strategically important Strait of Malacca lies in the southern tip of Malayan Peninsula and the Island of Sumatra is a potential route for maritime transit connecting this area. It is estimated that about thirty seven thousand ships pass through the Malacca strait annually.⁴ This figure is certainly much higher especially following the economic globalization, that is, integration of national economies into the international

economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology. There are as many as 48-50 littoral and hinterland states accounting about one third of the total membership of the United Nations (UN).⁵ Islands of Madagascar, Diego Garcia, and St Martin does have enormous military potentials that could be explored during any conflict within this region.

India's geographical setting including her size and diversity are overwhelming considerations for her being the central actor in this region. South Asian security scenario, therefore remains Indo-centric due to its very geo-strategic location.⁶ Besides the power vacuum created after the departure of the British from this region added another dimension. Since, none of the local powers could craft significant influence here, the Superpowers came into this region to pursue and protect their own defined interests. So, it's obvious that any regional event will by design come under the purview of Superpowers influence directly or indirectly. So, it will not be wrong to presume that because of geographical attributes, the tiny East Pakistan could have even triggered a general war involving several countries.

Unlike many countries on the world map, the erstwhile East Pakistan inherited strange geographical arrangement during the partition. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairman of Boundary Commission, was responsible for this geographical surgery to divide India. It was difficult to ascertain the contiguous areas of Muslims and non-Muslims within two parts of Bengal. However, after 36 days of hard work he had drawn the map of East Pakistan, which is somewhat the same as it is for Bangladesh (see fig. 3).

After the partition of 1947, East Pakistan inherited a disfigured tiny landmass laid out in continuous zigzag manner along the perimeter, which created number of salient and narrow necks of land.

East Pakistan was 1,200 miles apart from West Pakistan and across the water it was about 3000 miles away. In the context of war, such a long supply line could prove extremely difficult as was demonstrated during the British expedition to South Georgia and the Falklands following Argentina's invasion in April 1982.⁷ So unique was the geographical location of the two wings of Pakistan that they could never make a single viable unit. In the 1960's, a quip in East Pakistan was that three things held Pakistan together: Islam, the English and the Pakistan International Airlines.⁸ In such a geographical context, Pakistan could undertake military operations only against two countries namely Afghanistan and India.

But the military operation in East Pakistan was doomed from the very beginning in view of the strategic disadvantages that Pakistan had to cope with.



Fig. 3. Map of Bangladesh. www.newsfrombangladesh.net. 18 March 2014.

From the East Pakistan perspective, the unique physical attributes along the territorial periphery was its strength. Generally, no forces would attempt to evict his opponent from an enclave where physical intrusion of a third country's territory would be necessary provoking needless international repercussion. Strategically, this was an advantage for East Pakistan. After, the independence apart from the name by which the country is known presently, no change had occurred to its geographical layout. There had been number of narrow necks along the border amongst which Thanchi, Belonia, Zakiganj, Bhurungamari and Hilli are worth mentioning. Even after the independence, these narrow necks because of their significance and vulnerability have continued to act as hotspots of border skirmishes.

East Pakistan possessed an area of 1,44,000 square kilometers, which is extended 820 kilometers from north to south and 600 kilometers from east to west. These statistics are good enough to measure the depth, which is vital to the strategists and military planners while planning for both conventional and unconventional operations. The hasty invasion of Iraq into tiny Kuwait back in 1990 may be recalled here with its aftermath. How vulnerable was Kuwait with her small territory that before its people could wake up in the morning it was taken over by Iraq?

Theoretician of guerrilla warfare Mao emphasized depth of any country to be crucial for waging guerrilla warfare. He also mentioned that since guerrilla warfare requires space for maneuvering, it would not be feasible in a small country such as Belgium.⁹ As far as space is concerned Vietnam born out of deadliest guerrilla warfare is just about double the size of Bangladesh. But, a country like Bangladesh with limited depth and plenty of friendly territory surrounding will certainly frustrate this concept. It will be quite interesting to see how Bangladesh had organized and conducted guerrilla warfare during 1971.

The Eastern wing was bordered from all the sides by about 2,400 kilometers of territorial boundary with India and, in the south east, by a short land and water frontier of 193 kilometers with Myanmar. This continuous border with India offered shelter to the millions of people who fled from East Pakistan for safety. The bordering areas also offered facilities for organizing forces and training them. After the military crackdown, such an all-round non-hostile territory was a home away from home for millions of depression weary Bengalis almost throughout the war. And along the Myanmar border, the inaccessible rugged terrain and rising hills hindered the operation of conventional maneuver force.

On the south East Pakistan has a deltaic coastline of about 600 kilometers, fissured by numerous rivers and streams flowing into the Bay of Bengal. Approximately 80 percent of the landmass are made up of fertile alluvial lowland called the typical Bangladesh plain. The land communication system throughout the country was poor in 1971. Unlike other countries, all categories of roads here are higher than the surrounding areas and can be utilized to the full advantage of the forces using it. Elevations in excess of 105 meters above sea level exists in the northern part of the plain while altitude around 10 meters and below are generally seen in rest of the areas with a gradual decrease toward the south. With such low elevations, numerous rivers and seasonal flooding - is a principal physical attribute of the country that is

often proven to be its curse as "Hwang Ho" is to China which causes devastation frequently changing its course.

700 rivers generally flowing south are the principal arteries of commercial transportation and means of irrigation to the country's agriculture. The Ganges or the Padma, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna are wide and the banks could hardly be seen from either side during monsoon. Pakistani Lieutenant General (retired) Kamal Matinuddin in his book *Tragedy of Errors* precisely acknowledged this fact stating "The Seine and Rhine were little streams compared to the several miles wide Ganges, Jamuna and the Brahmaputra".¹⁰ Most of them were un-bridged except in the places of Bhairab and Pakshy. These rivers with their tributaries form an effective natural obstacle system for overcoming which substantial engineer efforts are needed.

The variance to its low elevations is only visible in the Chittagong hills in the south east dominated by reserve forest where it is extremely difficult to operate for any conventional maneuver force. But for waging protracted insurgency the area is quite suitable as we have noted how Shanti Bahini rebels had succeeded in keeping the insurgency alive for such a long duration. The low hills are seen in north east of Sylhet and highlands in the north and north west of the country. West of Chittagong hills; there is a narrow, flat coastal plain located between the cities of Chittagong in the north and Coxsbazar in the south. In the south, there lies the Sundarbans on the south west coast, which is the home of the world famous Royal Bengal Tiger.

The river systems generally divide the entire country into four distinct regions, which are the old time administrative divisions of East Pakistan. These regions again have their own integral characteristics, which definitely influence the planning and execution of military operations. Due to this aberrant river system, the concept of central reserve may not be as effective as it could be in other cases. However, rapid air-bridging including use of airborne forces across the rivers can significantly negotiate these problems. Another river, not connected to the others, is the Karnaphuli, which has converged with the Bay of Bengal. Flowing through the region of Chittagong and the Chittagong hills, it cuts across the hills and runs rapidly downhill to the west and south west and then to the sea. The Feni, Karnaphuli, Sangu, and Matamuhari are the main rivers in this region.

Geographical Regions

Climatically, Bangladesh is moderate except in the rainy season. The rainy season is long and the rains are heavy. During rainy season, humidity increases and is unbearable to those who are not acclimatized to this area.¹¹ The country basically offers three recognized seasons: summer from March to June; rainy monsoon season from June to October; and winter from October to March. Because of climate change these seasonal durations have changed to a great extent across the globe. Before, we study the military aspect of 1971 War; it will be better to get clear ideas about the various regions.

Central Region

This sector constitutes the area bounded by Jamuna in the west, Meghna in the east and the Indian Territory in the north. Being a “Vee” shaped sector the apex forms in the south where Dhaka, the geopolitical heart of Bangladesh is located. The major river systems are the Jamuna, Meghna, Old Brahmaputra, Dhaleshwari, Buriganga, Banar, and Turag etc. The important places are Dhaka, Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Tangail. The Mymensingh-Dhaka road is the shortest and most direct avenue from the bordering areas to the vital ground. The Madhupur uplands are located in the central part of this region with a reserve forest. All the important localities are well connected by railway and road network (see fig. 4).

Eastern Region

This elongated region comprises the districts of Chittagong, Comilla, Noakhali and Sylhet existing from south to north along the eastern extremity of our geographical boundary. Location of Chittagong with second largest township and a seaport made it extremely valuable to the Pakistani Forces. Chittagong seaport could best serve the purpose of an alternative line of communication. This area could offer excellent facilities for amphibious landing as necessary. The area is generally open and flat with the exception of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The significant hill system of the country is located here. These hills rise steeply to narrow ridge lines, generally no wider than 36 meters and are 600 to 900 meters above sea level. At 1,046 meters, the highest elevation is found at Keokradong, in the southeastern part of the hills providing perfect base for guerrilla fighting. The mighty Meghna River runs from northeast to southwest. With its enormous defence potentials, it is able to tie a comparatively larger force on the far bank with minimum strength. It has divided the eastern part of the country, which is linked by a rail

bridge at Ashuganj. This bridge connects Chittagong, Sylhet, and Comilla with Dhaka, Mymensingh and Jamalpur. The important areas here are Akhaura, Brahmanbaria and Ashuganj. The line joining these areas also provides the shortest distance between the border and ferry. Any forces operating in this area would need to control Ashuganj Bridge over Meghna River, as its capture entails isolation of Dhaka from Comilla and

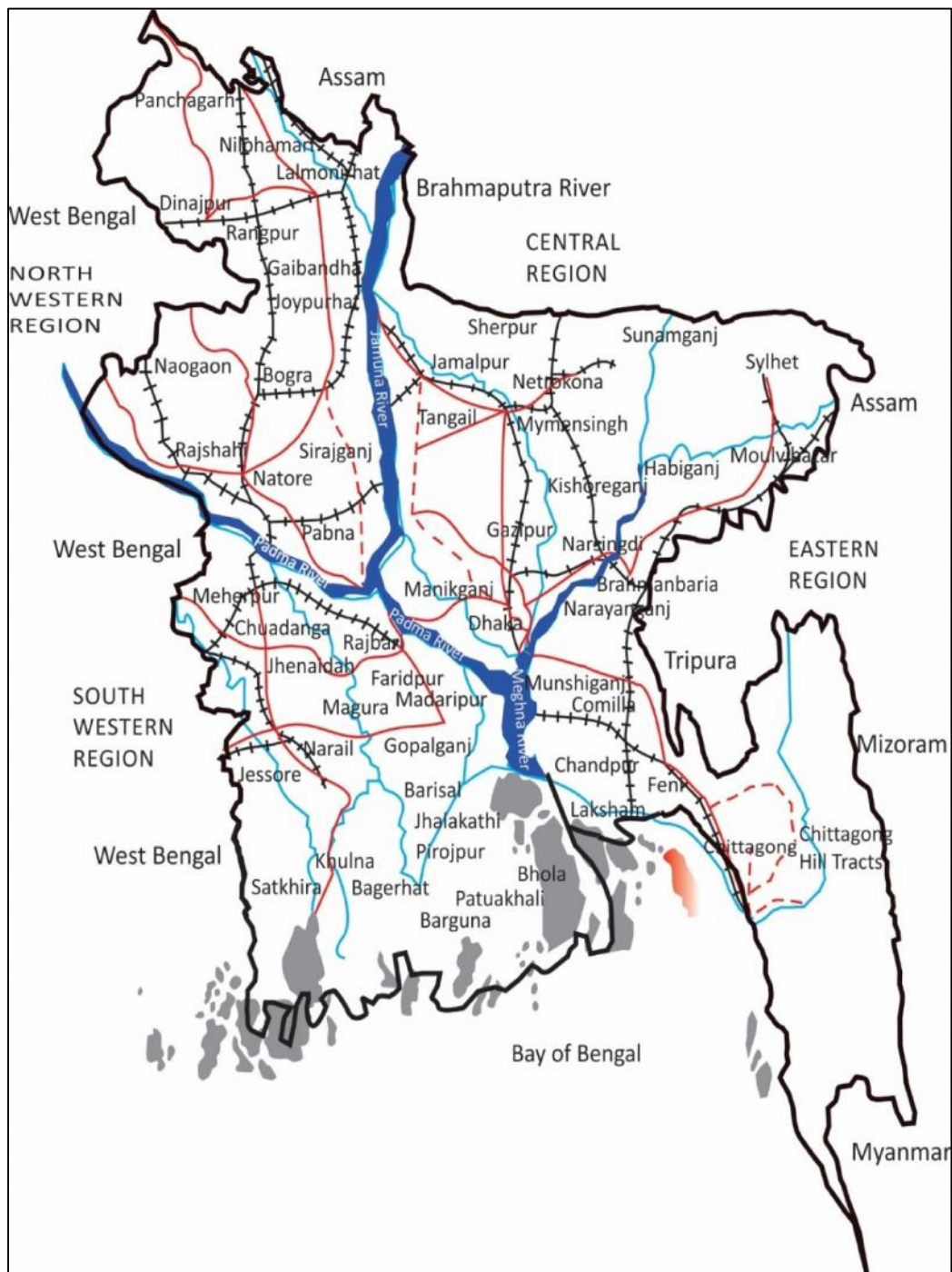


Fig. 4. Geographical Regions of Erstwhile East Pakistan. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

Sylhet. It can also facilitate further operation to Dhaka. Ashuganj, Chandpur and Daudkandi are the three key points along the river line. It is a superior ground for any defender if obstacle value of the Meghna River is meticulously exploited.

South Western Region

This region lies to the south western part of our country, which comprises 21 districts out of 64 according to the existing administrative boundary. Because of its proximity to the Indian city of Calcutta, which is about 30 miles to the west, it merits special attention by the military planners. The area north of Jessore is comparatively more suitable for mobile warfare, especially in winter. Otherwise, countless rivers of varied sizes, mostly flows from north to south, dominate this area. Jessore is an important communication centre with a large cantonment and an all weather airfield located to its west. Khulna is the second biggest industrial town, which linked to the port town of Chalna. Jhenaidah was another important communication centre in the northern half of this area. The Hardinge Bridge was tactically important as it provided the only link between the south western and north western sectors. On the extreme south, there lies Sunderban forest where conventional military operations are likely to be ever difficult for any Army.

North Western Region

This area lay north of River Padma and west of River Jamuna with Indian Territory surrounding from other directions. It comprises 14 north western districts of Bangladesh. The grain of the country runs from north to south so do its major communication systems. The major river systems are the Jamuna, the Tista, the Korotoya and the Atrai which poses considerable difficulties in making any east to west movement. Road connecting Titilya-Panchagarh-Thakurgaon-Saidpur-Rangpur-Bogra-Rajshahi was one way yet good enough to sustain heavy traffic. The area being little higher is less susceptible to flood. Basing on earth bearing and other soil testing criteria the area offered better facilities for tank maneuverability than other regions. The important towns here are Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra, Natore, Rajshahi and Pabna. Road network existed between these townships and with railway tracks running from north to south. Because of poor road communication network, major reliance was placed upon the railway system. This area is connected to the southern part of the country through Hardinge Bridge over Padma River at Pakshy and through Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge to the east

towards Dhaka. The strategic importance of this sector laid in its closeness to the Siliguri corridor. This is strategically important for the fact that all the Indian road and railway communications to the seven eastern states pass through this corridor. If this is lost, it will isolate the Eastern Indian theatre from the rest of it.

INITIAL MILITARY DISPOSITION

General

“A state is secure if it can preserve its minimum core values, political independence and territorial integrity”.¹² It is dependent on the perceived threat of a country which is multi-dimensional and the threat to security may emanate both from within and outside. If we recall the geographical arrangement of Bengal under United India, there had been no foreign territory around it. Perhaps for the same reason the need for a standing army did never receive a serious attention. The British policy also contributed for the nominal Bengali Muslim representation in the military and defence. There was a general perception that the Bengalis lacked martial traits. Although Her Majesty’s Civil Service official Mr. W.W. Hunter had a totally different view. “The Ambeyala campaign has shown us that they are not to be despised and that the timid Bengali will, under certain conditions, fight as fiercely as an Afghan”, he stated in his famous book “*The Indian Musalmans*”.¹³ Whatever fewer opportunities they had, the Muslims proved their mettle as warrior. During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, 1 East Bengal Regiment played an impressive role. Several of its officers and men received gallantly awards.¹⁴ It is quite fascinating to note that these Bengali soldiers who could not be trusted for enrollment in the military in the past now excel globally as most effective peacekeepers.

In 1948, besides the Eastern Frontier Force there had been only two companies of regular troops from 3 Punjab Regiment and 8 Frontier Force primarily to undertake internal security duties.¹⁵ For ensuring security of Pakistan when a distance of more than thousand miles had segregated her two Wings there was no better option than to have two sizable Armed Forces. This was not materialized for the neo-colonial attitude of Pakistan. Moreover, for Kashmir issue, Pakistan accumulated her maximum resources for the West and kept on pursuing a hypothetical policy that “the battle of East Pakistan will be fought in the West Pakistan.”¹⁶ As a result, West Pakistan was being heavily defended while East Pakistan remained comparably vulnerable. During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, politicians in East Pakistan understood the

fallacy of Pakistan defence policy.

Military Deployment by 25 March 1971

Army

Prior to March 1971, the Pakistanis had only one division i.e. 14 Infantry Division in East Pakistan with its Headquarters located in the existing Army Headquarters at Dhaka Cantonment. Of the under command brigades, 57 Brigade was located at Dhaka (Central Region), 53 Brigade at Comilla (Eastern Region), 23 Brigade at Rangpur (North Western Region) and 107 Brigade at Jessore (South Western Region). Besides regular brigades, there were some divisional units to include 29 Cavalry, 43 Light Anti Aircraft Regiment, 6 Engineer Battalion, 19 Signal Battalion and 149 Infantry Workshop.

Central Region.

57 Brigade comprised 18 Punjab Regiment, 32 Punjab Regiment, 22 Baluch Regiment, 13 Frontier Force, 2 East Bengal stationed at Joydebpur, 31 Field Regiment, Company of 3 Commando Battalion and a Task Force comprising of one company each from 18 Punjab Regiment, 32 Punjab Regiment and 22 Baluch Regiment. Of these units, 22 Baluch Regiment and 13 Frontier Force arrived from 27 February to 1 March 1971. This Brigade also had 604 Field Intelligence Unit and slice of divisional resources in the form of Armoured, Artillery and Engineers. There had been few static installations, to include Station Headquarters, Dhaka, Pakistan Ordnance Factory Gazipur, Ammunition Depot, Rajendrapur and Central Ordnance Depot, Dhaka.¹⁷

South Western Region

At Jessore, 107 Brigade had 25 Baluch, 1 East Bengal, 27 Baluch, and 55 Field Regiment. 22 Frontier Force from this brigade was deployed in Khulna prior to the night of 25/26 March 1971. It also had Combined Military Hospital, Jessore, 7 Field Ambulance and other service support units in its order of battle.

North Western Region

23 Brigade was located at Rangpur. It comprised of 3 East Bengal Regiment, 29 Cavalry, 26 Frontier Force, and 23 Field Regiment. 25 Punjab from this brigade was placed in Rajshahi.

Eastern Region

53 Brigade was located at Comilla and comprised 4 East Bengal Regiment, 53 Field Regiment, 24 Frontier Force, 20 Baluch located at Chittagong, 8 East Bengal was at Chittagong and 3 Commando Battalion. Chittagong Cantonment also had a Station Headquarters, the East Bengal Regimental Center, Combined Military Hospital and Embarkation Unit. There had been other logistic units also to support the fighting units, which collectively provided some strength to combat strength.

East Pakistan Rifles

East Pakistan Rifles was raised in 1920 as the “Eastern Frontier Rifles” by the British to perform the border security duties with its headquarters located at Pilkhana, Dhaka. Although initially Gurkhas used to make up the composition of this force. But, inhabitants of Bihar, Punjab and bordering areas joined this force subsequently. It started its journey with only 796 members to include 4 Officers and 8 Junior Commissioned Officers.¹⁸ By March 1971, this force grew into a reckonable size and significantly contributed in the entire war. It then had a total strength of around 15,000 with 17 wings, organized into 6 sectors and dispersed almost across the country as under:

Central Region

Dhaka Sector (Sector 1) comprised Headquarters Wing Dhaka, Signal Wing Dhaka and Field Security Section. Besides, this Sector comprised Number 13 Wing, Number 15 Wing and Number 16 Wing all located at Pilkhana, Dhaka. 2 Wing located at Mymensingh was also under this Sector.

Eastern Region

Chittagong Sector (Sector 6) comprised Sector Headquarters at Haliashahar, 11 Wing at Coxsbazar, 14 Wing at Sajek and 17 Wing at Kaptai.

Sylhet Sector (Sector 2) comprised of Sector Headquarters at Sylhet town, 1 Wing at Kotbari, Comilla, 3 Wing at Sylhet city, and 12 Wing at Khadimnagar.

South Western Region

Jessore Sector (Sector 3) included Sector Headquarters at Jessore city, 4 Wing at Chuadanga and 5 Wing at Khulna.

North Western Region

Rajshahi Sector (Sector 4) comprised Number 6 Wing at Chapainawabganj, 7 Wing at Naogaon, 9 Wing at Thakurgaon and 10 Wing at Rangpur.

Dinajpur Sector (Sector 5) comprised of Sector Headquarters and 8 Wing at Dinajpur.

Pakistan Naval Component

Naval Headquarters was based in Chittagong. Naval Wing had 4 Gun Boats, to name Pakistan Naval Ship Dhaka, Pakistan Naval Ship Rajshahi, Pakistan Naval Ship Jessore (Gunboat - detached to Khulna) and Pakistan Naval Ship Comilla (Gunboat). These were commanded by Rear Admiral Sharif.¹⁹ One destroyer named Pakistan Naval Ship Jahangir left for Karachi in the first week of April.²⁰ Pakistan Navy also remodeled 17 civilian ships into gunboats by adding 12.7/20 millimetre (mm) guns, and .30/.50 Browning machine guns.²¹

Pakistan Air Component

Air Commodore M Z Masud was commanding the air base.²² He gave a presentation to Yahya and other on 16 March concluding that military action was not the proper solution to the crisis which had been earlier approved by Commander-in-Chief, Pakistan Air Force, Air Martial A. Rahim Khan. After the presentation was over, Major General Rao Farman Ali told him that, "You have said what we could not say".²³ However, he is reported to have been removed for not fully cooperating with the Army. He was replaced by Air Commodore Inam-ul-Haque Khan as the new Air Officer Commanding who took

charge on 1 April 1971.²⁴ He had under him one Squadron of F-86 Sabre jets of Pakistan Air Force with an airfield based at Dhaka.²⁵ This Squadron had 16 x F-86 Sabre ground attack aircrafts. Air component also comprised 4 x MI-8 and 3 x Alouette helicopters. This helicopter fleet was given an adhoc name as 'Logistic Flight'. Major Liaqat Bukhari was the Officer Commanding of this unit.²⁶

East Pakistan Police

East Pakistan Police was another significant force of our Liberation War that withstood the onslaught and at the same time joined the war of 1971. Before 25 March 1971, the Police force had a rough strength of 33,995 of whom Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) and Special Action Force (SAF) Police members made up a total of 23,606. While rest were deployed in different police stations as Ordinary Reserve. During the survey and also based on the master roll statistics, it's estimated that nearly 13,000 police personnel deserted from their duty station to join the war. If data in respect of all the districts could be retrieved, this figure could be 50% of the total strength.²⁷

The Ansar Bahini

The Ansar Bahini was raised on 12 February 1948 to assist the law enforcing agencies in improving the deteriorating law and order situation that followed the partition. James Buchanon - a retired officer from the British-Indian Armed Forces was its founder director whose hard work had laid the foundation of today's Ansar and Village Defence Party. After 1948, initially per union 1 platoon Ansar members were recruited. This was later increased to 3 platoons per union. Initially this force did not have their own weapons, they used to borrow weapons from the Police and the Pakistan National Guard for training and firing practices. Around 1970 there had been a total of roughly 1.4 million Ansar personnel on its active list.²⁸ When the Liberation War began, there had been roughly 40,000 rifles with the Ansar personnel and these were used by the Freedom Fighters including ammunitions. Because of their wide geographic dispersion across the wing they could easily join the war. According to the estimate made by Dr Sheikh Gaus Mia based on available information 2150 Ansar personnel joined 1971 War, but this figure could be even more.

ANALYSIS

Physical separation of East Pakistan provided a natural advantage to the local forces over the Pakistani soldiers as they would have to depend on West Pakistan for everything including logistic support and reinforcement. Other geographical attributes also play a significant role in any war when it comes to the consideration of maneuver space, communication facilities, support base, rivers and canals. The physical geography of erstwhile East Pakistan had all these unique features.

East Pakistan is land locked from all sides except in the south where it is connected to the Bay of Bengal. Any blockade on the south could seal off movement and reinforcement using the maritime approach. Because of low lying terrain, most of the roads and railways tracks were raised above the ground level which could have an impact on the movement and effectiveness of ground troops including flat-trajectory weapons. Limited land connectivity posed serious restriction to the mobility of large units. With such a geographical setting, a force coming from outside would likely to face enormous difficulties in operating with a hostile territory all around.

The network of rivers and canals also made this land impregnable to the invaders and the history is full of such proofs. The defenders can make use of this water obstacles to strengthen their defensive positions and gain time in the face of enemy advance. Any force would require huge engineering efforts to negotiate such mighty rivers. So forward planning and concentration of required resources would be key to the success of river crossing operations. Places like Feni, Hilli, Gaibandha provided narrow necks cutting off which could isolate the mainland for gaining operational advantage. Major rivers created geographical regions and therefore influenced the operational plans. Earth bearing in the north is favorable for tank maneuverability while the offshore areas hindered the same. Chittagong Hill Tracts was different than other parts of the country and was perfect for guerrilla fighting which could be suitably used by any forces.

Prior to March 1971, the Pakistanis had 14 Infantry Division with the brigades deployed in major cities to name Dhaka, Comilla, Rangpur and Jessore. However, sub units were detached to locations where they did not have military installations. This wide dispersion between the sub units compelled them to fight often independently without support. Concentration of logistic support units remained Dhaka centric. The East

Pakistan Rifles units were deployed all around the borders with their headquarters little to the rear in the district/sub district headquarters. Air assets were scanty and remained in Dhaka while Naval assets were concentrated in Chittagong and Khulna. These forces were far from adequate to even look after the law and order situation of East Pakistan. For a full scale war, the Pakistanis would need sufficient reinforcement from the West or any friendly country.

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CHAPTER 4

INITIAL RESISTANCE

While the Pakistan military had carried out massacre on the night of 25 March 1971, a handful of Bengali military officers and men forsook the comfort of barrack with unflinching courage and stood shoulder to shoulder with the people to fight back the Enemy. There had been many questions and speculations without any definite answers; such as would any regimental action bring embarrassment for the political leadership? In case of defection, how the supply of arms and ammunition would be ensured? What was the position of other Bengal regiments and what would be the right time to take up arms?¹ They knew it well that their failure could earn them nothing less than death penalty for complicity in mutiny. Practically, a soldier's life is driven by his survival instinct that constantly drives him to challenge uncertainties. It is mostly after a life changing event that most people have their warrior instinct woken within them. The night of 25 March was such an event, when many sons of soil put their courage to testimony. They gallantly fought initial people's resistance phase spearheaded by Bengal regiments laid the foundation for the subsequent phases of our war.

CENTRAL REGION

General Area

This region constituted the area bounded by Jamuna in the west, Meghna in the east and the Indian Territory in the North. Being a "Vee" shaped sector the apex forms in the south where Dhaka, the geopolitical heart of Bangladesh is located. The major river systems are the Jamuna, Meghna, Old Brahmaputra, Dhaleshwari, Buriganga, Banar, Turag etc. The important places are Dhaka, Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Tangail. The Madhupur uplands are located in the central part of this region with a reserve forest. All the important localities are well connected by railway and road network.

Dhaka City

Dhaka city had been the hub of Pakistan military carnage in the initial stage of the war. In the center of the city there were parks, racecourse, governor's palace, university and InterContinental Hotel; and all of which bore signs of grace and aristocracy. Beyond those

there had been series of unplanned housing and mosques connected with narrow streets often difficult to access. To resist the Pakistan Military around Dhaka had been extremely difficult as compared to other areas. This is firstly because of their huge military presence in the cantonments and secondly, the intricacies of fighting in built up area without skilled soldiers had been very unrealistic. Basically, these were the reasons for which the Pakistan Military could subdue the entire city over night.

In Dhaka, there was a non-operational unit raised purely to train college and university students. It was raised as 10 East Bengal Regiment following the National Service Scheme launched by General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan in 1969. A Bengali officer named Lieutenant Colonel Mueed Uddin was commanding the unit.² Virtually, there was no Bengali unit within Dhaka city that could have provided the leadership during the crisis. Major General (retired) MI Majeed and Colonel (retired) Osmani had organized an assembly of retired Bengali soldiers on 22 March near Baitul Mokarram appreciating that their service would be essentially needed in the event of war.³ Therefore, the resistance in the city area had been sporadic and limited mostly to self defence in selected areas like university halls, police stations and barracks.

As part of the overall plan of 'Operation Searchlight' on the night of 25 March, 57 Infantry Brigade was deployed in Dhaka with some additional troops. Details of 'Operation Searchlight' area given at Appendix D. The Brigade Headquarters was set up in the area known as Second Capital. Brigade Major Jafar Khan took over the responsibility from Major Khaled Mosharraf.⁴ The Brigade comprised of 18 Punjab Regiment, 32 Punjab Regiment, 22 Baluch Regiment, 13 Frontier Force, 31 Field Regiment, 43 Light anti-Aircraft Regiment and one company of Commando troops from 3 Commando Battalion located at Comilla. They were tasked to neutralize 2 East Bengal Regiment, Headquarters East Pakistan Rifles (roughly 2,500 Bengali members), Reserve Police at Rajarbagh police line (2000 Bengali members). 10 East Bengal Regiment (National Service Battalion) formed out of the students was already disarmed. They had been also instructed to take over all the communication centers, arrest political leaders, carryout deliberate search in all university halls and also take care of the Ammunition Factory at Rajendrapur. Detailed deployment in Dhaka including tasks as enumerated below:

18 Punjab Regiment was deployed in Nawabpur area of Old Dhaka.

32 Punjab Regiment had to disarm the Bengali members at Rajarbagh police line.

22 Baluch Regiment was tasked to neutralize the East Pakistan Rifles members at Pilkhana.

13 Frontier Force was to secure Dhaka Cantonment and acting as reserve.

31 Field Regiment was deployed in Mohammadpur-Mirpur area.

43 Light anti-Aircraft Regiment were responsible for the security of the airport.

Company of 3 Commando Battalion was given the task of carrying out raid in the residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and apprehended him.

One company each from 18 Punjab Regiment, 32 Punjab Regiment and 22 Baluch Regiment formed a Task Force and deployed in the University area.⁵

14 x M24 Chaffee tanks of 29 Cavalry along with 2 Tank troops with 6 x PT-76 tanks.

Other miscellaneous units included in the order of battle included 604 Intelligence Unit, 149 Infantry Workshop and Pakistan Air Force personnel in Tejgaon.⁶

Execution of "Operation Searchlight" had started from 2330 hrs at night when large military convoy carrying about 3 battalions of Pakistani soldiers rolled into the streets of Dhaka towards south in the city area. The silence was finally shattered when all their guns began to rattle around the sleeping city under chilly darkness. They encountered some small resistance in the form of barricades enroute, but negotiated with minor effort. Young people were barricading the roads with branches of trees and bricks. Whenever the military met with the picketers and protesters, they opened fire killing many on the spot. Earmarked units took up positions as ordered and started executing their tasks ruthlessly (see fig. 5).

In short, while Iqbal Hall and Jagannath Hall within Dhaka University campus were struck before other objectives using rocket launchers. 18 Punjab Regiment and part of 57 Infantry Brigade were committed to this area. Captain Sarwar of 18 Punjab had already carried out reconnaissance around Dhaka University by car in civilian clothes along with Commando Officer Major Billal and Battalion Havildar Major Naib Subedar Yakub.⁷ Surprisingly, for small tasks like internal security duty US supplied M-24 tanks and guns accompanied the columns. Troops took over British Council library and used it as firebase to shell nearby dormitory areas. Some 200 students were killed in Iqbal Hall, headquarters of

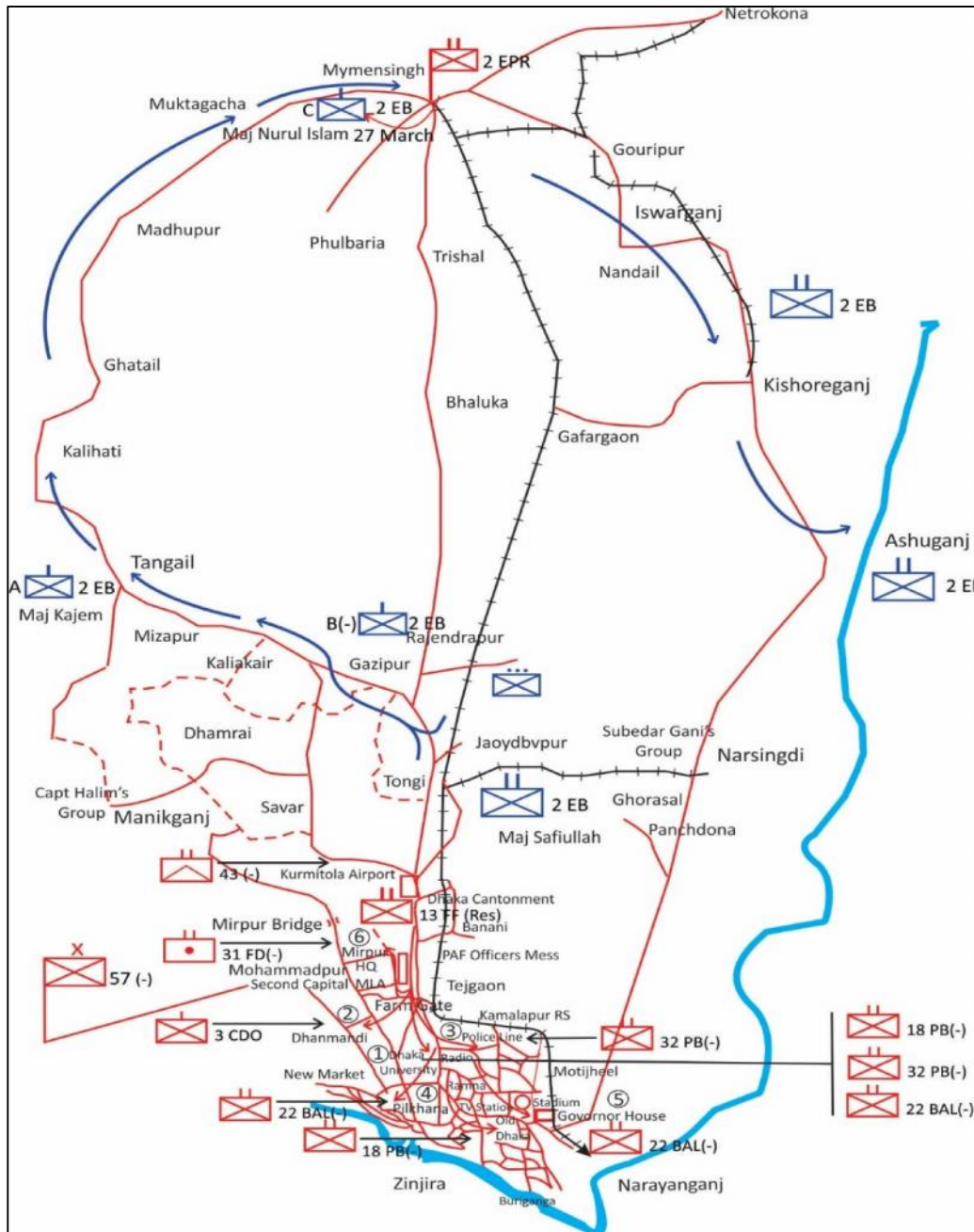


Fig. 5. Initial Resistance in Central Region. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

the militantly anti-government students' union as shells slammed into building and their rooms were sprayed with Machine Gun fire.⁸ It was virtually a full-scale military operation carried out in the university area against absolutely civilian targets. The then Brigade Commander Brigadier Arbab, responsible for the task accepted that it was an over reaction and over kill by the troops under his command.⁹ Later Brigadier Arbab was removed from command on charges of looting and theft. He was found guilty in the court of inquiry carried out against him and was sent back to West Pakistan to be court-martialled.¹⁰ Unfortunately,

he was promoted as Major General and later Lieutenant General under Bhutto. Even General AAK Niazi in his book and in discussion with Sharmila Bose condemned the way in which General Tikka Khan had conducted the military actions in Dhaka on 25 March 1971.¹¹

At around 0100 hrs, the commando elements reached the residence of Sheikh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. From the evening, anxious Awami League leaders had been gathering at Mujib's residence. Tajuddin Ahmed including everyone had been insisting Mujib to move underground. Failing to convince Mujib, Tajuddin along with Barrister Amirul Islam moved toward Faridpur for onward journey to India.¹² Mujib had spent more than 16 years in Pakistan custody and was implicated in a conspiracy case against the state. But he was not a revolutionary leader like Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh or Fidel Castro. He believed in constitutional politics and never thought of going underground. That may have been the reason for which he thought of surrendering at a considerable personal risk.¹³ He might have expected that the Army's ruthless attempts to suppress the movement for autonomy would be only temporary. Then, as in 1969, his arrest would initiate another massive popular movement and he would again be released to ride the crest of a new wave of popularity.¹⁴ However, later, by a swift commando action, Major Billal under the overall command of Lieutenant Colonel ZA Khan arrested Mujib while 31 Field Artillery searched the house.¹⁵ Mujib by surrendering to the Pakistanis virtually got isolated from the process through which the country got liberated. But before his arrest Bangabandhu recorded a message declaring independence of Bangladesh (Appendix E).¹⁶ Then until return, he stayed in an apartment put at the disposal of important political detainees in Lyallpur, near Mianwali, the Punjab prison. Much later on his return to Bangladesh, in an interview with the journalist David Frost while describing his own arrest, the Sheikh said Pakistani troops surrounded his house in Dhaka and fired Machine Guns it from two sides. "Bullets went through a window into a room where my child was sleeping," he said. He added that when he stumbled from the house, "the troops pushed me, beat me and beat me and gave me blows from the back. I asked for my wife. I gave her a farewell kiss." He said further that "I expected to die every moment during entire nine months of war and there was a grave being dug next to his cell."¹⁷ Another group of soldiers had been sent to arrest Dr Kamal Hossain as stated by Commanding Officer 32 Punjab Lieutenant Colonel Taj Mohammad.¹⁸

32 Punjab moved for Rajarbagh police line, where the Bengali police personnel used to reside. Police members with 303 rifles did put up some resistance, but soon faced with fierce

attack from where very few could escape. In Pilkhana also, situation was no different. This complex is currently known as the Den of Border Guard Bangladesh. In Pilkhana, 2,500 East Pakistan Rifles members comprised 13 Wing, 15 Wing, 16 Wing, Headquarters Wing and Signal Wing. There had been six entry points and used to be manned by armed sentries. During those days of March 1971, there had been few recruits and Bengali officers of whom Dhaka Sector Second-in-Command Major Sirajul Islam, Captain Abdullah Azad of Headquarters Wing, Captain MA Latif and Captain Daniel worth mentioning.¹⁹

In the first week of March, 22 Baluch Regiment took up position within Pilkhana complex. This Regiment had just arrived Dhaka to reinforce 57 Infantry Brigade towards the end of February.²⁰ Pilkhana was first to lift the Bangladesh flag which surely have caused irritations for the Pakistani troops.²¹ On the evening of 25 March during games time, the soldiers of 22 Baluch reconnoitered the area in the name of apparently organized evening walk. Since the beginning of March, East Pakistan Rifles elements from Pilkhana had been deployed at the Governor House, President House (now known as Gonobhaban), Mirpur, Gulshan, Ramna Post Office and Commissioner's Residence. On 25 March most of these elements were called back to Pilkhana except from the Governor House, President House and Mirpur area.²² At about 2200 hrs, the troops of 22 Baluch had taken up position and from zero hour they started executing their tasks. Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members who were guarding the gates and deployed in the Quarter Guard could provide little resistance. In short time, Pakistani troops took control of Pilkhana. Before that, Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members could transmit the message of massacre to other stations located in far flung areas using special East Pakistan Rifles wireless net. Here, six Pakistani soldiers including one officer were killed. It's estimated that 600 out of 2,500 troops could manage to escape from Pilkhana.²³ Few joined Captain Halim's group in Manikganj and another group went to Narsingdi under Subedar Gani eventually came under Captain Matin's contingent who joined the war with 2 East Bengal Regiment suspending leave from Kishoreganj.

Simultaneously, Pakistan Military from the top of the then Dhaka Improvement Trust Building engaged the East Pakistan Rifles troops deployed in the Governor House. There had been roughly 110 East Pakistan Rifles members. Non-Bengali Wing Commander Major Jahanjeb asked all to remain confined within barracks and thus everyone passed that night. Next morning, 22 Baluch supported by tanks entered the Governor House and neutralized all Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members. Later on, most of these detainees managed to escape

from the Governor House and joined the war.²⁴ Two companies deployed in the President House faced the worst situation on the night of 25 March. By evening, Pakistan military with tanks took up position inside the President House. Soon after the dusk, Dhaka Sector Commander Lieutenant Colonel Anwar Shah collected all the personal weapons from the East Pakistan Rifles members by order.²⁵ Before the Bengali members could understand anything, they were imprisoned and brutally killed. Another contingent moved towards Bangshal police station. While going from Nawabpur to Bangshal end, the police station stood after crossing little ahead of Dainik Bangla office. As the Pakistani Forces had been nearing the police station, unexpected firing engaged them from the front. Few police members along with Nadir collectively undertook the job. Nadir happened to be a local terror, suddenly transformed into a different character and dedicated himself for the service of the motherland. Later, he was caught by the Pakistan Military and never seen.²⁶

In Mirpur area, the Bengali patrol on duty when met the Pakistani Forces tried to resist them, but failed. In Ramna police station, the situation was totally different, as the Pakistanis had encircled the Bengali members; they faced with impulsive resistance. Another officer Lieutenant Anwar successfully escaped from Dhaka Cantonment and organized a resistance force comprising civilians from different walks of life. On 29 March, they took up defence along Tejgaon Railway line and delivered strong resistance against the Pakistani Forces. In the Tejgaon defence, many enemy soldiers were killed and few transports destroyed. Again on 31 March, they executed an assault on the Pakistani Forces near Asad Gate where five were killed. Later, on the morning of 1 April, Lieutenant Anwar with seven others got apprehended by the Pakistani Forces while many escaped.²⁷

Throughout the night, indiscriminate killing of people and burning of houses had been continuing. In conventional war, guns are usually directed against defined enemy where civilian casualty occurs only occasionally due to poor tactical judgment and sometimes under crossfire situations. But, what happened in Dhaka was completely different. Dhaka city witnessed systematic mass slaughter of civilian population.

Joydebpur

Joydebpur - gateway to Dhaka from the north is only about 30 kilometers away from the heart of the city. This area witnessed another action-packed episode following the insurrection of 2 East Bengal - another premier Bengal Regiment. It was under 57 Infantry

Brigade. Like elsewhere in Bangladesh, the Pakistani authority had been keen in dispersing this unit to different locations. By mid January, A Company under non-Bengali Major Kazem Kamal was sent to Tangail, C Company under Bengali Major Nurul Islam was deployed in Mymensingh, B Company (minus) was at Gazipur Ordnance factory under West Pakistani Major Azad Latif and Platoon from B Company was sent to Rajendrapur Ammunition Depot. Battalion Headquarters, Headquarter Company and D Company were located at Joydebpur.

The Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Masudul Hassan, Second-in-Command Major Safiullah including 11 others were Bengali out of total 17 officers in the unit.²⁸ 2 East Bengal was better prepared than other units because of its close following of events. The unit took some measures to meet any contingency for example; one company was kept on be prepared mission at Rajbari, and another platoon kept a close eye on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway. Other vantage points were physically held for early detection and passage of information.

Around 19 March, mistrust developed between 57 Infantry Brigade Headquarters at Dhaka and 2 East Bengal on the issue of roadblock on Dhaka-Joydebpur road. On the same day, Brigade Commander Brigadier Jahanzeb Arbab Khan with 5 officers and 70 others visited Joydebpur.²⁹ While he was visiting the unit suddenly got disturbed with a message. It conveyed that an angry mob erected a strong barricade near Joydebpur rail-crossing apprehending that the Bengali troops were being disarmed. He ordered to take ultimate action for removing roadblocks when a tragic event happened. A lorry was coming from Tangail to Joydebpur battalion headquarters for carrying weekly ration for the troops. The angry mob stopped the transport and insisted them to join the fight against the Pakistanis. Failing to get any response, the mob snatched their weapons. Five of the soldiers were also taken captive on that occasion. When Brigade Commander came to know this, he became very furious and asked his men to open fire.³⁰

Major Mainul Hossain was instructed to execute the task- the toughest duty he was called on to deal with. Moinul ordered his troops to fire at a height good enough to avoid any kill. Brigadier Arbab got infuriated and ordered for shoot to kill. This time two were killed. After the incident, the Commanding Officer had to explain why there were only two casualties at the expense of 63 rounds of ammunition.³¹ He failed to convince them on this point. In a bid to establish his point on 23 March, the Commanding Officer moved to Brigade Headquarters in Dhaka while the Pakistanis retained him putting Lieutenant Colonel QA FMA Raquib in

his place. He was the Commanding Officer of 32 Punjab, another Bengali officer but known more for his pro-Pakistani mindset.³²

With the name of pacifying the troops of 2 East Bengal, Brigadier Majumder was pulled out of East Bengal Regimental Center to address them. On 25 March at about 1100 hrs, Brigadier Majumder visited the troops at Rajendrapur and returned to cantonment after making a short speech. At 1230 hrs on the night of 25 March, Lieutenant General Tikka Khan made a phone call which was received by the Duty Officer Lieutenant Helal Morshed. Tikka Khan talked to the Commanding Officer and expressed his concerns about the security of the Joydebpur Ordnance Factory. In order to secure the ordnance factory one platoon was immediately sent there.³³ It was around the same time when Brigadier Karimullah of Gazipur Ordnance Factory was stuck in Dhaka, where he was pleading with Lieutenant General Tikka Khan for at least a company of West Pakistani troops to ensure the safety of the factory and the evacuation of West Pakistani and other non-Bengali families to Dhaka.³⁴ After the mass annihilation of 25 March, the ex Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Masudul Hassan from Dhaka kept on informing Major Safiullah about the latest situation. Besides, the Bengali operators were tasked by Major Safiullah to keep a watch on the brigade wireless net. The operator told him that when they switched on to Dhaka frequency they could hear the conversations between the stations. Someone was reporting about their movements, some about casualty figures, and some asking for ammunition replenishment and so on.³⁵ Major Safiullah immediately informed the Commanding Officer. At this time, Lieutenant Colonel Rakib was nonchalant and refrained himself from giving any decision. On the morning of 26 March, the Pakistanis transported huge ammunitions from Rajendrapur Ammunition Depot to Dhaka that gave rise to further suspicion.

As the news of crackdown reached 2 East Bengal, its officers unanimously decided to fight back. On 28 March, Captain Aziz was sent to the company located at Rajendrapur Ammunition Depot so that they could timely extricate to join the main body.³⁶ At about 1000 hrs in the morning, Major Safiullah, Major Moin and other Bengali officers left Gazipur and planned to concentrate in Mymensingh. The Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Raquib stayed back and was later apprehended by the Pakistani Forces who took him to Dhaka.³⁷ While going, Lieutenant Golam Helal Morshed was dropped at Tangail with A Company Commander Non-Bengali Major Kajem Kamal. Lieutenant Morshed was happy to be back amongst his soldiers. Here, student leader Kader Siddique had offered lot of assistance to the

soldiers of 2 East Bengal. Terrified and nervous Major Kamal while trying to escape got killed by the Bengali soldiers including few others.³⁸ Afterwards, A Company under Lieutenant Morshed moved out for Mymensingh.

While 2 East Bengal had been moving out of Joydebpur, ironically Sergeant Hemayet remained cut off from the battalion as he was on patrol. Once they had approached the unit line, they heard of firing in the vicinity. Apprehending this as Pakistani attack, Hemayet decided to hang around until the situation was clear to him. After sometime when they entered unit premises, everybody left. In the early hrs of 29 March, the wireless at Pakistan Ordnance Factory, Gazipur went off the air and 2 East Bengal at Joydebpur could not be contacted either. Commandant Pakistan Ordnance Factory Gazipur Brigadier Karimullah - a West Pakistani officer feared the worst of his officers and men in Gazipur. Shortly afterwards, Brigadier Jahanzeb Arbab confirmed that 2 East Bengal Regiment at Jaidevpur had mutinied. Brigade Commander accompanied by Brigadier Karimullah and other officers and men of 8 Baluch proceeded to Jaidevpur including Bengali Brigadier Majumdar so that he could make an appeal to the 2 East Bengal Regiment to give up. On reaching they found nothing except Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Rakib in civil dress with a Captain and they professed ignorance of how and when the whole battalion had disappeared. A detailed search was carried out. All the West Pakistani officers, men including the families of Junior Commissioned Officers were brutally murdered. However, the Commanding Officer was taken under custody including Brigadier Majumdar. Had they joined 2 East Bengal Regiment, they could have served the Nation in most glorified manner.

2 East Pakistan Rifles Wing stationed at Mymensingh had been experiencing similar situation. Captain Qummar Abbas was working as the acting Wing Commander. In the month of March, Subedar AKM Fariduddin Ahmed was stationed in Wing Headquarters with C Company, Subedar Abdul Hakim with D Company was in Nakshi, Subedar Ziaul Haque with B Company was in Karaitali and Subedar Azizul Haque with A Company was located in Langura.³⁹ For last couple of weeks, troops were put on alert. On order from the East Pakistan Rifles Headquarters, Wing Commander withdrew all non-Bengali soldiers and gathered them in the Wing Headquarters.⁴⁰ He instructed the Bengali Subedar Farid to discontinue the duty that carried more worries. The Junior Commissioned Officer instead alerted all the Bengali members (220 men) and asked them not to deposit their personal arms. It was not easy to conceal since there had been 138 non-Bengali other members. He also

shared this message with C Company of 2 East Bengal Regiment that came from Joydebpur. On the night of 27 March, the non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members attacked C Company location. Though suffered initially, they soon got reorganized under Major Nurul Islam. The Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members also retaliated effectively. The fighting continued until 0500 hrs next morning where more than 120 non-Bengalis got killed including Captain Qummar Abbas and rest surrendered. In this encounter, only few got killed from our side. Besides, the East Pakistan Rifle members captured 1472 rifles, 28 Light Machine Guns (LMG), good number of small arms and huge ammunition, which were used by 2 East Bengal Regiment.⁴¹ After the East Pakistan Rifles attack, on the morning of 28 March Major Nurul Islam requested Major Safiullah to reinforce his force. Failing to convince the Commanding Officer regarding the reinforcement for Mymensingh, Safiullah thought of moving 2 East Bengal Regiment there.⁴² Besides, Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members deployed in bordering areas of Nakshi, Karaitali and Langura were also asked to take appropriate measures. Later, a plan was devised to protect Mymensingh town with assistance from Member of National Assembly Mr Rafiquddin Ahmed, and local elites Mr Sultan and Hatem Ali Talukder. Part of this East Pakistan Rifles Wing remained in Mymensingh while others joined the 2 East Bengal Regiment.

On 29 March, Major Safiullah reached Mymensingh while retired Major Nuruzzaman and Captain Matin joined him and opted to fight. Captain Matiur also joined them escaping from 25 Baluch stationed in Jessore Cantonment. Lieutenant Morshed from Tangail joined him near Muktagacha. Major Moinul Islam also joined with rest of 2 East Bengal Regiment. By 1500 hrs on the same day, Major Nurul Islam with his company also joined the main body. While these sub-units had been making their way out to join the main body from different locations a few Pakistani soldiers got killed in encounters by the Bengali soldiers.⁴³ The inescapable situation thrust upon Major Safiullah the leadership of the entire battalion. By then, he was able to organize a force of nearly 3,500 including members of East Bengal Regiments, East Pakistan Rifles, Police and unskilled fighters.⁴⁴ To assess the situation, Major Safiullah went to monitor the wireless conversation where he found the Colonel Saadullah; Colonel Staff of 14 Infantry Division had been talking to the Brigade Major of Jessore Brigade. Colonel Staff was very concerned about the way the Pakistan Military were routed by Bengali soldiers. He was inquiring if they needed any air sortie to carry the dead bodies not only from Kushtia but also from Chittagong. It was 30 April, having considered the latest situation, Major Safiullah decided to attack Dhaka so that reinforcements to other

stations could be prevented.⁴⁵ They also thought it to be appropriate to attack the Pakistanis in Dhaka before they were reinforced from the West.

Dhaka attack was planned on 1 April. Accordingly, 2 East Bengal Regiment was to advance from the east with and an additional company under Major Safiullah. Two mixed companies were poised at Mirpur, Mohammedpur and Dhaka airport to deceive about the direction of attack. One mixed company was at Gafargaon to deny the use of railway line, one company at Tangail to deny Dhaka-Mymensingh road, one company each at Bahadurabad Ghat and Sirajganj Ghat to block enemy approaching from the north.⁴⁶ The plan of attacking Dhaka against reinforced 57 Brigade with barely the force ratio of 1:2 (attacker: defender) had been a gross deviation from the doctrinal teaching.

However, by 31 March, the troops were in locations to capture Dhaka and Major Safiullah established his headquarters at Kishoreganj. While at Kishoreganj, Safiullah received a note from Major Khaled suggesting him not to undertake the operation right then. To Khaled's understanding, such an attempt would be premature and costly in terms of loss of lives.⁴⁷ After reading the note, Safiullah was convinced and abandoned his plan. While revising his plan, he kept one company along Dhaka-Narsingdi road, one company at Ashuganj and rest of the battalion moved to Brahmanbaria.

EASTERN REGION

Chittagong Area

General

Noisy and bustling activities of Chittagong city had gone out of sight since the beginning of 1971. It's the same region where the anti-British uprisings had flared up in 1930 when a band of youths led by Masterda Surya Sen immobilized the administration taking control of vital installations. Over time, Chittagong emerged as a key transportation hub of Bengal, Assam and Burma. Even during the Burma Campaign during World War II, it served as an important Allied base. The Pakistanis also attached importance to Chittagong after the denial of Indian airspace to reduce the cost of transshipment owing to the circuitous route over Indian peninsula and Sri Lanka (see fig. 6.). Besides, the hilly region of Chittagong offered suitable sanctuaries for unconventional warfare which was also seen when Chakma King Ramu Kha and Janbox Kha effectively adopted guerrilla techniques while resisting the British domination.⁴⁸

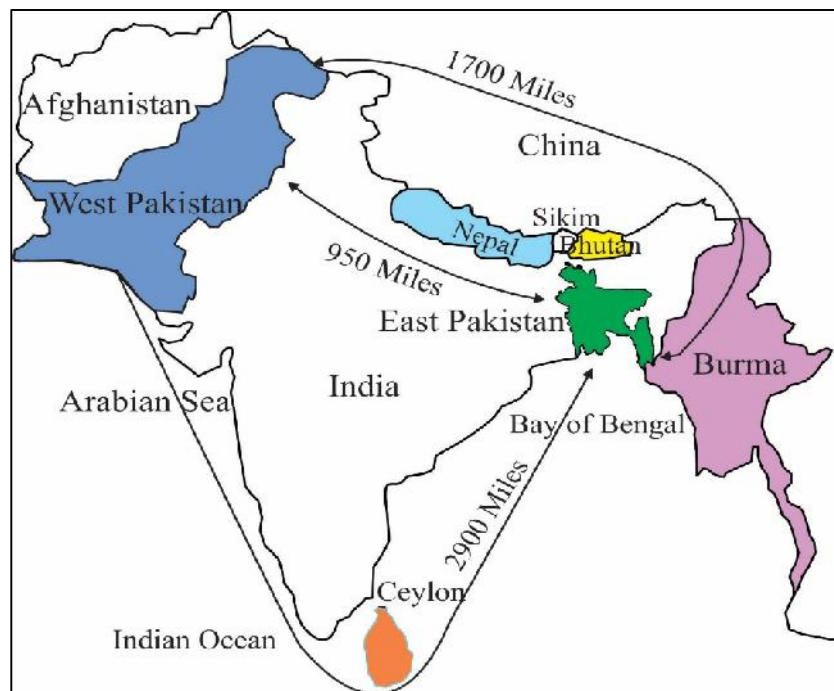


Fig. 6. Alternative Route for Pakistan Military. *Washington Post*, 11 December 1971.

Crackdown and the Aftermath

Situation in Chittagong started deteriorating noticeably after the arrival of commercial ship “MV Swat” that anchored on 28 February carrying 9,000 tons of military hardware.⁴⁹ The hostile response came from the labourers first, when they vehemently refused unloading those armaments. In the backdrop of broiling political situation, leaders, government officials and military officers held a conference on 17 March at Chittagong stadium and decided to fight back. Commandant East Bengal Regimental Center Brigadier Mazumdar being the senior most Bengali officer in the area had been discreetly coordinating these actions. On 24 March 1971, General Officer Commanding 14 Infantry Division Major General Khadim Hossain Raza sensing the role of Brigadier Majumdar shrewdly removed him along with Training Adjutant Captain Amin Ahmed Chowdhury to Dhaka. The underlying reason behind Mazumdar's swift expulsion has been explained by Brigadier Sadullah Khan in his book titled, *East Pakistan to Bangladesh*. He stated, “While 10 East Bengal Regiment was in the process of raising, the East Bengal Regimental Center put up their hands that they could not provide any Junior Commissioned Officers/Non Commissioned Officers. The headquarters at Dhaka agreed to obtain Junior Commissioned Officers/Non Commissioned Officers from West Pakistan as an interim measure. The Awami League got a wind of it. The Centre

Commandant was chided for putting a spoke in the conspirator's wheels. He re-wrote reversing his earlier recommendation, "On detailed review he thought he could provide more Bengali Junior Commissioned Officers and Non Commissioned Officers." "In any case it would not be desirable to have West Pakistani Junior Commissioned Officers and Non Commissioned Officers" he argued! Not even for an interim period of one year!⁵⁰ The Pakistanis sensed a great deal of conspiracy and took stern action. Sudden dislocation of Brigadier Majumder left the Bengalis devoid of minimum support in terms of leadership.

Before the crackdown of 25 March, 8 East Bengal Regiment was located in Sholashahar under Major Ziaur Rahman with six Bengali officers. Major Zia was a very professional military officer who successfully fought in the 1965 India-Pakistan war with 1 East Bengal Regiment.⁵¹ Besides him, Quarter Master Captain Oli Ahmed, Adjutant Lieutenant Shamaher Mobin Chowdhury, Major Shawkat, Captain Khalequzzaman, Captain Sadeque and Lieutenant Mahfuz were present. There were about 3 companies waiting for inter wing transfer almost without arms. The unit had already dispatched its advance party comprising 2 officers and 130 other ranks to Kharian Cantonment in West Pakistan while rest was waiting for ensuing transfer. For training purpose, the unit had only 12 LMGs and 303 Rifles. These weapons were not even worthy of operational utility. The unit had only 4-5 transports.⁵² The distance between Chittagong Cantonment and 8 East Bengal Regiment office in the city was about four miles. 20 Baluch Regiment was located in East Bengal Regimental Center. Headquarters, East Pakistan Rifles 6 Sector was located in Haliashahar with 11 and 14 Wing Headquarters. Companies of 11 Wing were located in Coxsbazar, Teknaf, Barkal, Masalang and Wing Headquarters at Chittagong. Companies of 14 Wing were located in Sajek, Tangdong, and Ramgarh and at Chittagong Wing Headquarters. 17 Wing was deployed in Kaptai. Pakistani Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Aziz Sheikh was the Sector Commander and Major Hamid was the Sector Second-in-Command. Amongst the Bengali East Pakistan Rifle officers, Captain Rafique, Adjutant Sector Headquarters, Major Shamsuddin Ahmed, Wing Commander 14 Wing, Captain Harun Ahmed Chowdhury, Assistant Wing Commander of 17 Wing and Sector Medical Officer Captain AKM Amirul Islam were noteworthy. On 25 March, there were roughly 2000 troops in Chittagong comprising troops from Sector Headquarters and other three wings. Of them, about 1500 were Bengalis and rest Pakistanis.⁵³ Apart from these, East Bengal Regimental Center had roughly 2500 recruits. Newly raised 9 East Bengal Regiment was also located in East Bengal Regimental Center not worthy of fighting though. Since March 1971, East Pakistan Rifle forces were deployed in different

places of Chittagong to name Panchlaish, Railway Station, Wireless Colony, Ambagan Colony, Pahartali Railway High School, Workshop, Victoria Jute Mills. Amin Jute Mills, Halishahar, non-Bengali Colony, Airport, Firoz Shah Colony, Circuit House, Stadium etc (see fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Initial Resistance in Eastern Region-Chittagong Area. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

Concentration of Pakistani troops was mostly in the cantonment and in Double Mooring area. As per the plan of "Operation Searchlight" 20 Baluch Regiment and a Tank Troop, 29 Cavalry were tasked to disarm 8 East Bengal Regiment, Sector Headquarters East Pakistan Rifles, Reserve Police, take control of Radio Station and arrest all student activists in the area. Troops of Naval Base were tasked to arrest the Bengali platoon deployed at the airport. To reinforce Chittagong area, 53 Brigade under Brigadier Iqbal Shafi comprising 24 Frontier Force, 88 Mortar Regiment, slice of engineers and signals from Comilla Cantonment was tasked to link up. Until then, 20 Baluch Regiment was to contain the situation.

The serenity of the cantonment was finally shattered when all their guns began to rattle indiscriminately around the sleeping East Bengal Regimental Center spearheaded by 20 Baluch Regiment at about 2330 hrs, 25 March. The massacre was so inclusive that unarmed recruits were shot to death; burnt alive and blown up by the grenades. They brutally killed Bengali Chief Instructor Lieutenant Colonel MR Chowdhury in the hospital. They also killed Captain Nurul Alam Mallik of the same unit. Commanding Officer of Combined Military Hospital Lieutenant Colonel Badiul Alam Chowdhury, Officer Commanding Station Workshop Captain Mohammad Akhand, Record Officer Lieutenant Matiur were also killed on the same night.⁵⁴ 9 East Bengal had been reorganizing in East Bengal Regimental Center and also met with the similar consequence. This unit did not have any officer. Bengali Major AY Mushtaq Ahmed was posted as the Commanding Officer and unfortunately got killed in Dhaka. Captain Ainuddin was posted, but before he could join the situation got absolutely complicated. He later joined the war with 4 East Bengal Regiment. Recruit Hamidur Rahman was one of very few who had escaped from East Bengal Regimental Center and joined the war with 1 East Bengal in Jessore. During the war, he embraced martyrdom and was awarded with the highest gallantry award "Bir Shrestho" for displaying indomitable courage. During this massacre, around eight officers and 1500 soldiers were killed.⁵⁵

After the massacre, East Bengal Regimental Center Holding Company Commander Captain Shubid Ali Bhuiyan instead of meek submission to Pakistani Forces decided to revolt.⁵⁶ He was joined by some troops under Subedar Mafiz who managed to escape the massacre. Some East Pakistan Rifles troops from Ramgarh joined him in Kumira. Subedar Musa and Habilder Mostafa Chowdhury with some East Pakistan Rifles members also joined him from Haliashahar. Captain Bhuiyan finally mastered a total of 102 infantry and East Pakistan Rifles soldiers for the defence of Kumira to stop the advancing Pakistani column.⁵⁷

It was the gateway to Chittagong - a defensible position qualified by tactical considerations. By 1800 hrs 26 March, they reached Kumira and sited themselves in a manner that the enemy had no other choices but to clear it move towards Chittagong (see fig.8).

The column led by Brigadier Shafi started from Comilla by road after the nightfall of 25

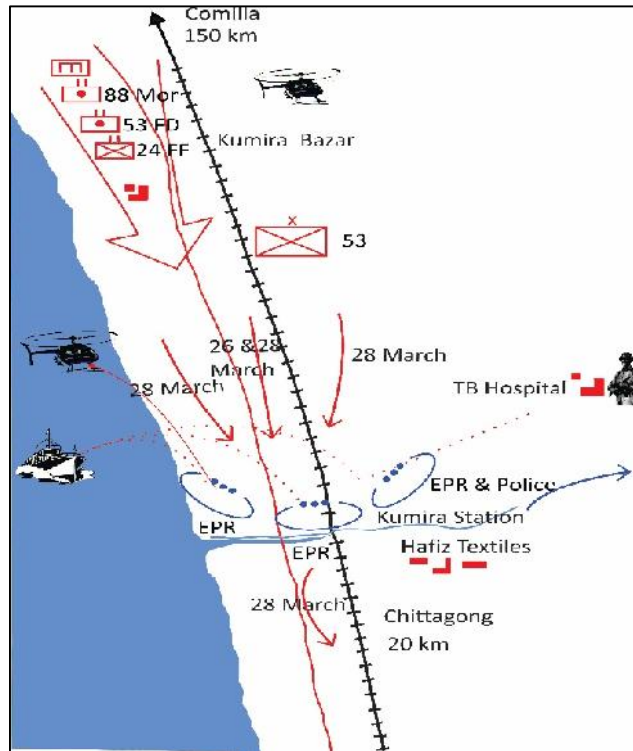


Fig. 8. Battle of Kumira. Safiullah, K.M. *Bangladesh At War*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1995. p, 42.

March. They were held up by a mixed contingent of Freedom Fighters near Subhapur Bridge which was cleared effortlessly. Although, our forces led by Major Shamsuddin later took control of this vital position. After Subhapur, the Pakistani Forces were up against Bhuiyan's Force at Kumira. After fighting for couple of hrs, Captain Bhuiyan's Force ran short of ammunition for which he fell back to Chittagong and never returned.⁵⁸ He later joined Kalurghat. It was 28 March 1900 hrs, little short of the main defence, Brigadier Shafi's column got crammed as the troops coming under open patch got busy in clearing barricades. They were taken by surprise as our troops engaged them with Machine Gun. The column lost contact with its headquarters. Apprehending the fatal consequence of the Brigade, Major General Khadim Hussain Raja himself came out with a helicopter mission to locate them. Determined Freedom Fighters barely missed the aircraft from hitting that forced the General to change his course to Dhaka. The Commanding Officer of 24 Frontier Force Lieutenant Colonel Shahpur Khan Bakhtiar, one Lieutenant including 152 other ranks got annihilated.⁵⁹

After the death of the Commanding Officer, Bengali Second-in-Command Major Amjad led the convoy. Interesting to note that being in the same unit, Second Lieutenant Zafar Imam managed to escape and joined the Liberation War.⁶⁰ It was the most remarkable early success achieved by our forces and the credit goes to the daunting leadership provided by Subedar Musa in absence of Captain Bhuiyan. To enact a link up with 53 Brigade, a commando section from 3 Commando Battalion was air lifted to Chittagong airport. Unfortunately, East Bengal Regimental Center Training Company Commander Captain Aziz who was detailed for unloading “MV Swat” in port area was not very mindful of the situation and paid heavily when most of his troops were killed by spraying Machine Gun fire from the ship on 27 March.⁶¹ During the war, many people came in aid of the Freedom Fighters. For example; Lieutenant Colonel MA Qadir supplied explosives which had been utilized to blow off culverts and bridges. He was then serving in the Oil and Gas Development Corporation’s Chittagong office.⁶² The Pakistanis killed him for his involvement in the war. Later, Qadirabad Cantonment was named after this valiant officer for his outstanding role.

On 28 March, enemy launched repeated attacks with artillery and mortar support on Kumira. At one time they mounted an attack from three sides with naval gun support and managed to take control of hills on the north. Finally, Kumira fell in the hands of 24 Frontier Force. Later it was learnt, the officer who guided artillery fire support was none but a Bengali officer named Captain Fazlur Rahman Bhuiyan.⁶³ With further escalation of war, he left for Pakistan. After capturing Kumira, they kept on advancing towards Chittagong destroying huts and villages on way.

The East Pakistan Rifles personnel withdrew to Bhatiary for stopping enemy advance from some positions. Once the initiative had been lost, East Pakistan Rifles members could no longer put credible resistance and thinned out in a disorganized manner. In the morning of 28 March, another East Pakistan Rifles platoon under Subedar MA Rauf put up stiff resistance from Faujdarhat area. The fighting continued until 1100 hrs, but was not strong enough to impede the advancing forces.

Chittagong city was under effective control of Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members. Captain Rafique, who on hearing about the development in Dhaka, had revolted. It was about 2100 hrs on 25 March night, Rafique quickly managed to neutralize the platoon deployed in Wireless Colony by arresting Pakistani Captain Hayet with four others. Before anybody could sense, Rafique moved to Halishahar, a relatively stronger position where roughly 300

Pakistani soldiers deployed. Rafique effectively took control killing a few on that occasion and established his headquarters at Railway Hill. He managed some troops from outlying posts and made formidable positions around Tigerpass, Dewanhat, Kadamtali, Bandar, Panchlais and Court Hill.

In Sholashahar area, the rebellion of Major Zia took place almost simultaneously. At 2400 hrs on 25 March, he was on way to Chittagong port with his contingent to unload “MV Swat”. Before Zia reached in the port area, Major Shawkat returned to the mess after staying whole day with C Company of 8 East Bengal.⁶⁴ Captain Khalequzzaman and Captain Oli had been passing through stressful period in the office. They received reports of atrocities in and around the country and thought of calling back Major Zia.⁶⁵ Captain Khalequzzaman rushed and could catch up with his convoy near Agrabad and apprised him about the happenings of East Bengal Regimental Center. Without wasting any time, Zia returned to Sholashahar and arrested his Pakistani Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Janjua with other non-Bengali officers and troops and finally led the rebellion. At about 0300 hrs in the morning of 26 March, Major Zia with other officers and men left Battalion headquarters and went out of the city to a place called Karal-Denga Pahar under Boalkhali Police Station and tried to asses the situation.⁶⁶ However, by 27 March, Zia had taken up defensive position at Kalurghat on the bank of Karnaphuli River. It was a typical river line defence over an extended front. Kalurghat Agricultural complex was located on the western bank of Karnaphuli River on Chittagong-Coxsazar road. He cited one company on the western bank of Karnaphuli while placed remaining forces of 8 East Bengal with 4 East Pakistan Rifles companies on the eastern side.⁶⁷ Major Zia and Captain Oli settled in a place called Gomdandi near Patia and set up the battalion headquarters there.⁶⁸

On 27 March, some employees of Chittagong Radio station particularly Belal Muhammad, Abdul Kashem Chowdhury, Abdullah Al Farooque, Kazi Habib Uddin Ahmed, Jahedur Hossain, Aminur Rahman, Syed Abdul Sarker, Shakuzzaman, Mustafa Anwar and Rezaul Karim Chowdhury contacted Zia at Patia following which they returned to Kalurghat Radio station. Since Major Zia was in a much senior and prominent role than rest of his colleagues, he was requested him to deliver the declaration of independence. Accordingly, on 27 March, Major Zia delivered the historic declaration of independence on behalf of the Father of the Nation. (Appendix F)⁶⁹ Meanwhile, from Kalurghat, Major Shawkat went to Coxsazar to prevent likely enemy landing in the beach area. At Kaptai, Captain Harun

revolted arresting his non-Bengali Commanding Officer Major Peer Mohammad including Captain Zayed and Captain Faruque on the night of 25 March.⁷⁰ He joined Major Zia with his company. While he was approaching Chittagong, Subedar Mafiz with another company from Coxsbazar joined him. All these elements finally joined 8 East Bengal. Company commander of Number 17 Wing, Subedar Abdul Gani also revolted arresting all his non-Bengali comrades at Kaptai and reached Chittagong University on the night of 26 March. To stop enemy advance from the cantonment he took up position on the north western side of Nutanpara (Chittagong Cantonment). Vice Chancellor Professor AR Mallick, Professor Anisuzzaman and Professor Syed Ali Ahsan from Chittagong University rendered him support. On 28 March, the Pakistani Forces launched an attack on the East Pakistan Rifles Company at Nutanpara area. The attempt was repulsed, but our forces lost four valuable lives including that of Platoon commander Nazir Ahmed. Later, this platoon carried out operations around Chawk Bazar, Osmania Glass Factory and Ispahani Bhaban areas.

The success of Pakistani Forces in Chittagong hinged upon speed with which they could link up with the reinforcement coming from Comilla. On the morning of 28 March, our forces at Dampara police line and Tiger Pass came in contact with the Pakistani troops from Chittagong Cantonment. After taking over these positions, the Pakistani Forces had set up their headquarters in the Circuit House. Because of compelling security reason, Captain Rafique had to shift his headquarters from Railway Hill. On 29 March, Pakistani troops of Kumira also established contact with the troops of cantonment. With mounting enemy pressure, Rafique was in dire need of additional forces which were not forthcoming. By then, bulk of the East Pakistan Rifles troops coming from outlying posts got merged with the 8 East Bengal. Due to the battle around Kumira, the company at Ramgarh could not join Chittagong. Captain Rafique became weak enough for further battle in the city; therefore, he abandoned the plan of attacking Naval base and port areas. Because of triangular enemy pressure, our pockets of resistances were reduced to Halishahar and Court Hill only.

On the other end, Kalurghat Radio Station became a constant headache for the Pakistani Forces. To dislodge it, a platoon of 3 Commando Battalion under Captain Sajjad occupied the agricultural complex on the night of 29 March and positioned its force on the rooftop of a three storied building near the Radio Station on the western side of Railway Bridge. Captain Mahfuz planned to attack this force and took a mixed platoon of East Pakistan Rifles and infantry soldiers. These forces took up position around 500 yards away beside a thatched hut.

Mahfuz reached as close as 200 yards of the enemy. Because of transparent windows everything was visible. After an intense exchange of fire between both sides, our forces surrounded them from all sides. Fighting was on for quite long time without any result. So, the Freedom Fighters used rocket launchers to weaken the enemy stronghold and they succeeded in making a dent in the building. At about 1000 hrs, two Pakistani Sabor Jets (F-86) strafed over the Radio Station. Yet, the enemy could not capture the position. Our forces secured the complex throughout the night with a view to mounting a dawn attack on 31 March. In the morning, when the main attack was launched, the Pakistani Forces withdrew leaving five casualties and one was taken as prisoners of war. There were no casualties on our side.

Halishahar area had been the prime enemy objective. Retreating troops from Kumira and other places joined Halishahar defence. The Pakistanis made deliberate preparations to take this East Pakistan Rifles stronghold. The defence of this place was strongly buttressed along the embankment with holes and slits to facilitate firing of flat trajectory weapons. The attacking Pakistani troops comprised battalion-sized forces including support of a Naval Destroyer, two Gunboats, two Tanks and a Heavy Mortar Battery. On 30 March, Major Zia after handing over the charge of Kalurghat to Captain Oli, left for Ramgarh with a section. Around the same time on 30 March, the Pakistanis encircled Halishahar from all directions. On the following day, the battle raged for three hrs before our forces could be subdued. In a fierce encounter leaving hundreds dead; East Pakistan Rifles soldiers withdrew and returned to Kalurghat.

On 2 April, Pakistanis launched a coordinated attack on the Court Hill platoon position. By afternoon Court Hill fell in their hand, which was the last stronghold of our forces in the city. From 4 April, Pakistanis took complete control of the city. At this stage our troops were practically on the run and bulk of them got merged with 8 East Bengal while few moved towards the border in search of safe heaven. Meanwhile, on 4 April, from Ramgarh, Zia attended a conference at Teliapara under Sylhet district. It was the first move to mount an organized and concerted offensive by the Bengali military personnel against the Pakistani Occupation Forces. It will be discussed in details subsequently. Around this time, Major Safiullah and Major Khaled Mosharraf had sent one company each under Lieutenant Ezaj and Captain Matin to assist Chittagong area effort and they joined at Ramgarh.

The battle of Kalurghat started with the engagement of enemy near Kalurghat Agricultural complex (see fig. 9). It turned into a fierce battle on 10 April when the enemy planned a joint operation. Pakistani Naval Ship Jahangir reached close to Kalurghat through Sankha River. On the dawn of 11 April, the Pakistani Forces with artillery, mortar and naval gun fire support had launched an attack. An intense frontal attack continued following which the enemy took over the Ispahani building. Lack of coordination including premature withdrawal of our troops enabled the enemy to launch a multidirectional attack. Troops on the far bank fought courageously. Captain Harun received a bullet wound in the abdomen and Lieutenant Shamsheer also got injured. After evacuation, Captain Harun was sent to Patia Hospital and finally to Myanmar and Lieutenant Mobin was taken as prisoner of war by the

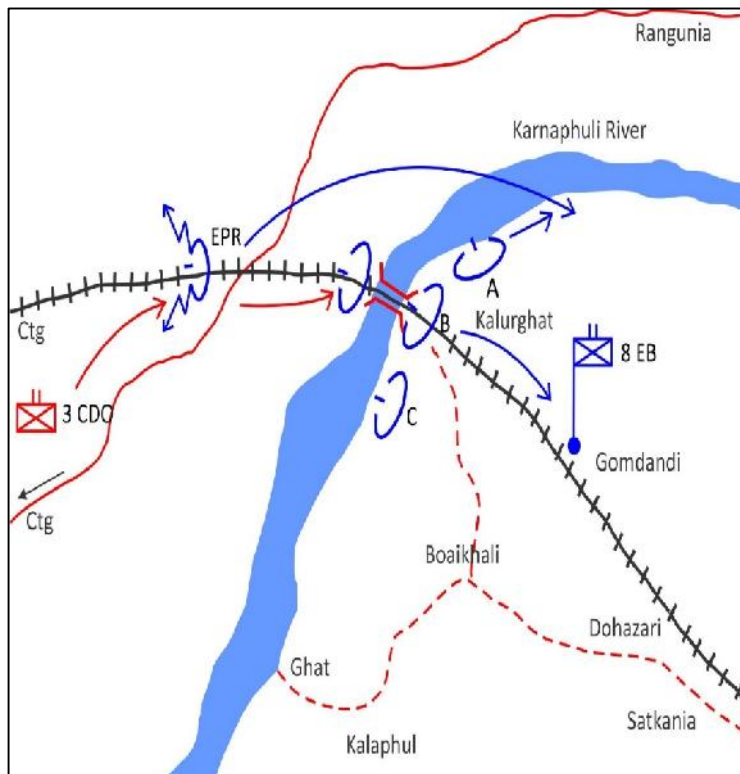


Fig. 9. Battle of Kalurghat. Safiullah, K. M. *Bangladesh At War*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1995. p, 44.

Pakistanis. After the attack troops on the far bank withdrew. After taking over western bank, the enemy went all out to weaken positions on the east. Later, the troops of Kalurghat withdrew to Rangamati and few to Bandarban via Patia. From here Captain Shubid Ali Bhuiyan moved for Sector 3 location in Comilla.⁷¹ This had been one of the intense battles fought in the initial days.

By 12 April, entire force gathered in Rangamati under the command of Major Shawkat. They took up defence in Rangamati and set up the headquarters in Mahalchari. At this stage, Wahab Mia and the then Deputy Commissioner of Rangamati H.T. Imam provided all possible supports to the Freedom Fighters. On 14 April, Captain Aftab joined from leave to participate in the war. On 14 April, Captain Oli was sent with a company to take up defence in Mirsarai. At this stage, Major Shawkat wanted to restrict the Pakistan Army from using the Rangamati-Mahalchari waterway. So, they positioned themselves to defend the area accordingly. Captain Aftab Kader with a company took up position in Ghagra. Captain Khalequzzaman took up position in between Burighat and Rangamati astride Chingri canal with one company. Lieutenant Mahfuz with his company took up defence between Rangamati-Barkal and Subedar Mutalib took up position with a company in Kutubchari area

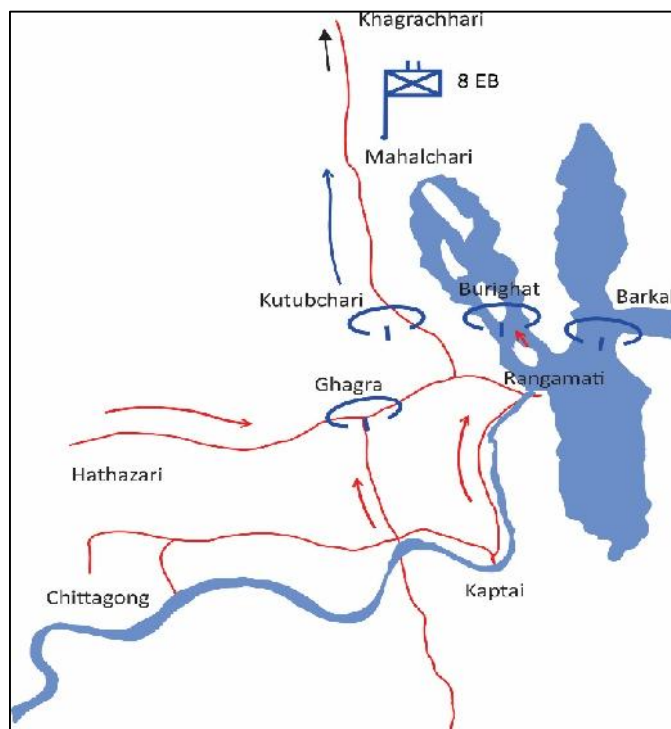


Fig. 10. Battle of Mahalchari. *Bangladesher Swadhinata Juddho: Dalilpatra (Bangladesh Liberation War: Documents)*. 15 Vols. Dhaka: Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, 2004. p, 9:114.

(see fig. 10).⁷²

By then, the Pakistani Military got a rough idea that Ramgarh is the place where both command echelon and the retreating forces from Chittagong would be concentrating. So they advanced along Mirsharai, Karer Hat, Hathazari, Nazirhat-Hiakhu and Rangamati-

Mahalchari-Khagrachhari. By 15 April, the Pakistan Forces reached Rangamati which was welcomed by Chakma King Tridiv Roy. It was 17 April; a platoon of Pakistan Army had been approaching along Chingri canal by a launch and eventually entered the Freedom Fighters defence. Soon they were engaged by the Freedom Fighters and most of them got killed. Two days later, they were back again but regrouped and reinforced. Before approaching they started mortar shelling from a hillock that pinned down the Freedom Fighters to their bunkers. Meanwhile, taking advantage of cover, Pakistani Forces encircled Freedom Fighters from three sides. At this point, Captain Khalequzzaman had to decide whether to continue fighting or to withdraw to a safer position. Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rouf rose to the occasion and volunteered to provide covering fire for the withdrawal. While, the Pakistani troops had been on the move, Rouf stood up in his trench with the machine gun and continued sustained firing. During the encounter, he was suddenly hit by a splinter from closely drooped shell that took his life. Later, Doyal Chakma, a local comrade, pieced together his body and buried in Burighat.⁷³ For his heroic role; he was awarded with the highest gallantry award "Bir Sreshtho". Mounting pressure from all directions forced the Freedom Fighters to readjust their positions. On 21 April, Mahfuz's position also came under pressure in Banduk Bhanga area which was repulsed. On 23 April, two companies of Pakistan military started moving from Rangamati to Mahalchari by road. Major Shawkat instantly sent Captain Kader and Lieutenant Mahfuz to stop the advancing enemy. After conceding a few losses, enemy sent another group through Chingri Canal towards Mahalchari. Meanwhile, all the companies readjusted their position to the rear by 26 April. Major Shawkat instructed Captain Khalequzzaman to take position on the hill near Nanyarchar Bazar and Captain Kader was to hold the main road. Lieutenant Mahfuz was kept as reserve. At this stage, the Mizos supported Pakistan Military by physically joining the war against the Freedom Fighters. During that time, Mizo National Front led by Laldenga had come into Pakistan's assistance.⁷⁴ For years the Pakistan Government had given shelter to about 1,000 Mizo rebels in Chittagong Hill Tracts, a form of support for the Mizo attempt to secede from India.⁷⁵ On 27 April, the Mizos attacked Captain Khalequzzaman's position. Khalequzzaman could do very little even with reinforcement coming from Lieutenant Mahfuz. While Khalequzzaman could make little space to the rear, Mahfuz got encircled. Thousands of Mizos joined this encounter. Understanding the dire situation, Captain Kader and Captain Khalequzzaman came in aid of Mahfuz. In a last bid to defend Mahalchari headquarters, Major Shawkat made all out effort, but thrusts from more than thousand Mizos

and the two companies from 12 Punjab Regiment attacked the defence. Captain Kader received number of bullet wounds in his chest. The body of this unsung hero was taken to Ramgarh for burial. The Freedom Fighters could still hold on to their defence, but due to sudden death of Captain Kader, the undercommands lost energy to continue. Major Shawkat later on withdrew to Khagrachhari and took up defence. During the war, Chakma King Tridiv Roy left East Pakistan supporting the cause of a united Pakistan that generally discouraged other Chakmas from joining the war.

On 28 April, Pakistani Forces advanced to Ramgarh via Guimara. So, the Freedom Fighters quickly adjusted their position to Guimara. Mogh King Mong Prusen rendered all support and quite a good number of people from Marma tribe joined the war. This group of Freedom Fighters later moved to Ramgarh since large Pakistani Forces had been approaching to Ramgarh using Karer Hat-Hiakhu road. Another group of Pakistani Forces in a fierce battle defeated our forces at Shuvapur Bridge. Meanwhile, Freedom Fighters moved to Karer Hat, Hiakhu, Chikon Chara, Baganbari and finally to Ramgarh. On 1 May, Pakistan Army with a brigade size force attacked Ramgarh that continued until evening of 2 May when the Freedom Fighters finally abandoned Ramgarh and crossed over to Sabrum, India.

Comilla-Brahmanbaria Area

General

This region is generally open and flat. The area being close to the border drew the tactical priority of both the forces during the war. All communication facilities that originated from Dhaka linking Chittagong and Sylhet passed through this area. Comilla Cantonment was one of the largest in erstwhile East Pakistan. Till the beginning of 1971, Pakistan Army had 53 Brigade located here that comprised of 24 Frontier Force, 31 Punjab Regiment and 3 Commando Battalion (one company deployed in Sylhet). It also had 20 Baluch Regiment under its order of battle, but was stationed at Chittagong Cantonment for special tasks.

Crackdown of 25 March and Aftermath

On the night of 25/26 March, 24 Frontier Force, 88 Mortar Battery with 120 mm mortars and Engineer contingent moved out under Brigadier Shafi to augment the forces at Chittagong.⁷⁶ 31 Punjab Regiment at Sylhet remained isolated. 53 Field Regiment, 11/2 Mortar Batteries, troops from static units, 3 Commando Battalion less one company were

available to carryout “Operation Searchlight”. They were tasked to disarm 4 East Bengal, Wing Headquarters East Pakistan Rifles including District Reserve Police. 4 East Bengal had a total of 13 officers of which four including Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Khizir Hayat Khan was non-Bengali.⁷⁷ Major Khaled had just joined the unit on 22 March as the Second-in-Command. He served here as Adjutant during 1965 Indo-Pak War and therefore had a strong bond with the unit. Besides, 2 East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters, Sylhet had three units of which Number 3 and 12 Wing was located at Sylhet and Number 1 Wing was stationed at Kotbari, Comilla.⁷⁸ Of its four companies, one was with wing headquarters and other 3 were located at Akhaura, Nayanpur and at Parshuram.

4 East Bengal was an old Battalion raised on 10 February 1963 in Comilla Cantonment. The battalion had successfully served in both the wings. During the crisis, the Pakistan military took a deliberate plan to turn it ineffective by splitting it in sub-units in the name of maintaining law and order. Accordingly, on 24 March, one company under Major Khaled including Lieutenant Mahboob was sent to Shamsheernager, Sylhet. On 25 March night, Captain Ainuddin was manning telephone as Duty Officer at Comilla Cantonment. While conversing with the Commanding Officer of Baluch Regiment identifying as non-Bengali, he came to know that the Pakistanis were planning to attack Khaled’s contingent. Ainuddin was frantically trying to convey this to Major Khaled. Luckily, Khaled left Sylhet before the Pakistanis could execute their plan.⁷⁹ Naib Subedar Jalil was placed in Jangalia Fire station. Major Shafayat was already there at Brahmanbaria with another company. While moving out; they left behind Rear Party Commander Captain Mahmud and Naib Subedar Quarter Master Abdus Salam for administrative reasons.

Comilla Cantonment was overcast with dark clouds reflecting the mood of the troops who were down and out. With the darkness setting in time was approaching to raising the curtain of ‘Operation Searchlight’. It was, Lieutenant Colonel Yakub Malik, the Commanding Officer of 53 Field Regiment, who masterminded this heinous act and Sultan, the West Pakistani Brigade Major played a key role.⁸⁰ They had indiscriminately slaughtered the Bengali Civil-Military personnel. Fortunately, Second Lieutenant Imamuz Zaman, a Bengali officer of the same unit had survived the onslaught. On the same night, all officers were called in the Commanding Officer's office for an appraisal of the latest situation. He also cautioned the Bengali Officers and asked them not to move outside unit premises. At the end of the meeting, all the Bengali officers were singled out and confined to a room. Captain

Nurul Islam and Captain Zaman were other Bengali officers. Captain Siddique was an Urdu speaking non-Bengali but was treated equally like the Bengalis and placed under custody.⁸¹ Of these four detainees, Zaman managed to prove his loyalty to the Pakistanis by serving their purpose and got freed.⁸²

Throughout the night civilians including the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Comilla were brought inside unit premises for interrogations and later killed. In a confessional statement made before the Hamoodur Rahman Commission by Lieutenant Colonel Mansoorul Haq (General Staff Officer Grade-1 at the Division Headquarters) had detailed the magnitude of horrendous killing of the Bengalis. The statement goes like “Massacre on 27/28th of March, 1971 under the orders of Commanding Officer 53 Field Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Yakub Malik, in which 17 Bengali officers and 915 men were just slain by flick of one Officer’s fingers should suffice as an example.”⁸³

Understandably, the Bengali personnel at the Comilla Cantonment had a gloomy forboding about justice. Bengali Captain Haider of 3 Commando Battalion was still in the cantonment with his unit. On the night of 27/28 March, Haider got a message about his planned arrest after dinner from the officer’s mess. Captain Haider requested Major Mannan to join the war. In reply Major Mannan warned him that he would report to Pakistan authority about his intention if he insisted.⁸⁴ This officer later became a business tycoon and the Minister of the government. There was another officer named Captain Mokhles, Army Medical Corps (later promoted as Brigadier) remained loyal to the Pakistan authority. They carried out a number of operations against the Mukti Bahini. By June/July 1971, they were posted to West Pakistan and returned to independent Bangladesh in 1973.⁸⁵ However, Captain Haider drifted towards 4 East Bengal quarter guard instead of going to the mess. He was readily given a Sub Machine Gun with ammunition by Naib Sebedar Quarter Master Salam. Haider escaped from the cantonment to join Khaled’s Force. Later, Salam was taken as prisoner of war by the Pakistanis and freed on 8 December 1971.⁸⁶

In 53 Field Regiment, Lieutenant Imam including others witnessed human killing with mute surprise and were hopelessly awaiting their turn. On 30 March, at about 1600 hrs a Junior Commissioned Officer entered their room carrying a gun and sprayed bullets at will. Captain Nurul Islam died instantly. Captain Siddique and Lieutenant Imam were injured and their bodies remained on the floor for some time. The Junior Commissioned Officer being sure of their death left the room. There had been lot of bleeding from Imam's body. It was late

at night when Imam got back his sense and instantly decided to escape. He asked Siddique to join him which he declined. But relying on sheer courage Imam managed to move out of the security fence for safety (see fig.11).⁸⁷

In 4 East Bengal, the Bengali officers had been continuously maintaining contact amongst

them and were preparing to face any situation. Opportunity came on 27 March, when

Commanding Officer and all officers assembled in the office at around 1000 hrs after

breakfast.⁸⁸ Field office was set up inside a tent. After entering the office when Commanding Officer including non-Bengali officers sat, Lieutenant Kabir and Lieutenant Harun stood up in arms from two sides so that none could react.⁸⁹ Major Shafaat then arrested the Commanding Officer including all non-Bengali officers and declared, “We have decided to revolt against Pakistan Army. You all have been put under arrest. If you all cooperate with us

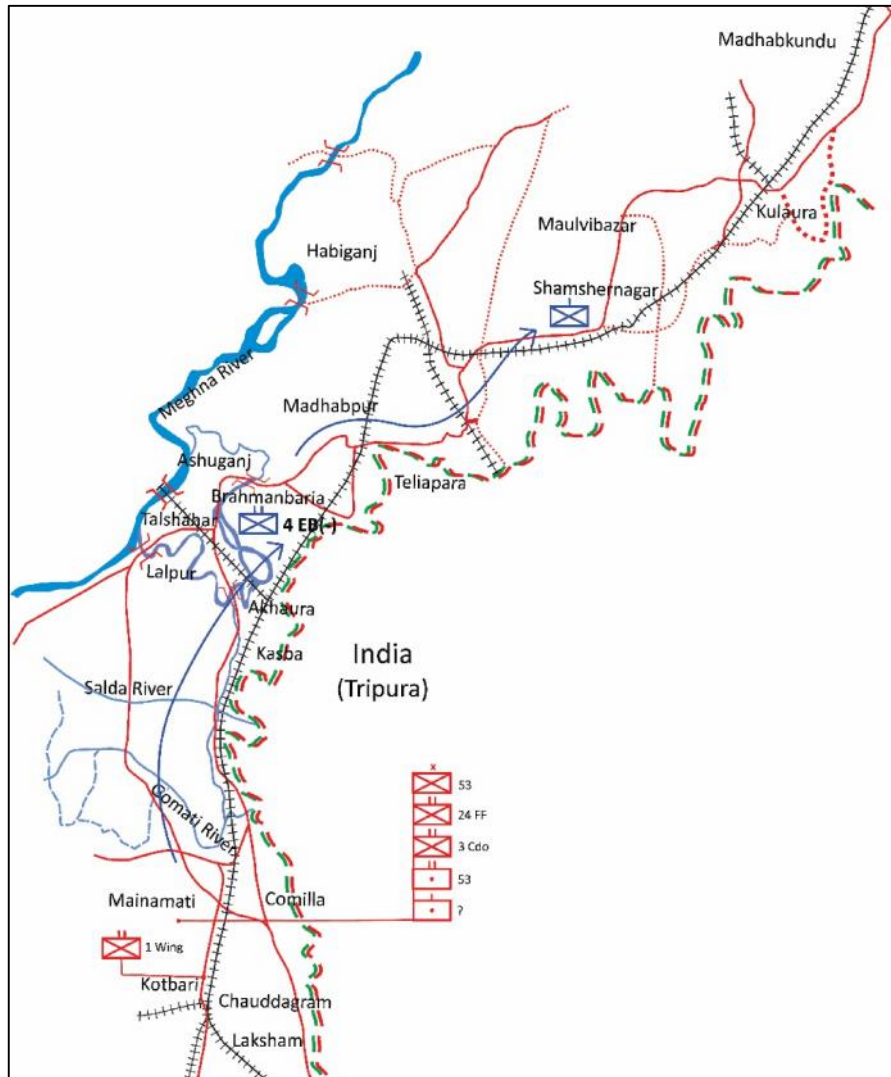


Fig. 11. Initial Resistance in Eastern Region - Comilla and Brahmanbaria. *'Bijoyketon' - Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

we will ensure your security and safety. If any one of you try to do anything contrary to the orders, we cannot guarantee your safety”.⁹⁰ The Commanding Officer became shattered and Major Sadeque tried to react a little but soon turned frozen when he learnt that his weapon had already been neutralized. They were treated as per Geneva Convention and later handed over to the Police Station`. Meanwhile others joined Major Shafayat brushing aside service norms and breaking military discipline and chain of command. After the revolt was complete,

students, farmers and people rallied behind them. Efforts were taken to protect liberated Brahmanbaria area. D Company under Lieutenant Harun and B Company under Captain Gaffer Howlader were already guarding southern and south western approaches respectively. On the same day, by about 1500 hrs, Major Khaled arrived with his contingent from Shamshernagar and took over command of 4 East Bengal. While coming to Brahmanbaria, Khaled tasked A Company under Lieutenant Mahabub to block all movements from Sylhet and Moulvibazar. Around the same time, East Pakistan Rifles troops of 1 Wing under Sylhet Sector also defected leaving their posts when non-Bengali Wing Commander Major Karar Ali provided tacit support. To reduce the gap between Comilla and Brahmanbaria, a defected Platoon from East Pakistan Rifles under Subedar Ambia was placed in Ujanishar Bridge area and rest of the East Pakistan Rifles troops under Subedar Chan Miah took up position on the south of Akhaura in line with Ujanishar. Another Platoon was deployed in Gangasagar area.⁹¹

While soldiers were busy in preparing their defence, Khaled called for an immediate conference at 1530 hrs where all officers and Junior Commissioned Officers joined. His maturity and prudence quickly brought all under a common frame of mind regarding the future course of action. Major Khaled planned to free the Mainamati Cantonment setting up his defence on the eastern bank of the Meghna River. On the north eastern side, he also thought of setting up another camp controlling from Moulvibazar to Sylhet.⁹² During this time local political leaders namely Mr Lutful Hai (Shachu), local Member of Provincial Assembly Mr Jahangir Osman (Later Captain Jahangir Osman, Bir Protik), Taheruiddin Tagore, Mr Humayan and Professor Harun Ur Rashid of Brahmanbaria College rendered useful support.⁹³ With their assistance, initial contact with the Deputy Commissioner of Agartala could be made. As the news of Brahmanbaria liberation got circulation, more and more people started joining the battalion.

On the morning of 28 March, two Pakistan Air Force F-86 Sabre Jets flew over the battalion defence and started firing that killed Lance Naik Abdul Aahad who was manning a LMG near the bridge.⁹⁴ By then some officers who fled from Dhaka reached bordering areas. Contemporary of Colonel Osmani, Lieutenant Colonel ASM Reza was first of them who were serving in Dhaka as the Recruiting Officer. Utilizing the brief curfew relaxation on 27 March, he escaped from Dhaka and reached 4 East Bengal by morning 28 March. Everyone had been very optimistic about him, but his contribution in the war had little impact. Captain Ainuddin who was 4 East Bengal Regiment officer received farewell couple of days back to

join 9 East Bengal Regiment at Chittagong. But the worsening situation of Chittagong forced him to join 4 East Bengal Regiment on 28 March leaving his family in great peril at Comilla Cantonment.⁹⁵ Of other Bengali soldiers of Comilla Cantonment few survived, while others got killed.

On 29 March, using 'Gono Line' (passage of information using local population) the battalion came to know about the movement of a vehicle column from Comilla to Brahmanbaria. While the patrol was entering the defensive area a soldier deployed in the bridge area within D Company defence got nervous and opened fire killing the driver and the commander. On enquiry, it was known that Captain Mahmud, Officer Commanding Rear Party was tasked to find out 4 East Bengal Regiment defence. It was very dramatic to note that a non-Bengali Officer Captain Ikram Shaigol arrived at D Company location and expressed his solidarity with the Freedom Fighters. He was an Army Aviation Pilot who used to carry the Eastern Commander Lieutenant General Tikka Khan in special flights.⁹⁶ His father was also a Pakistani Officer and mother hailed from Bogra who had commanded 2 East Bengal Regiment from 1956 to 1958 while Shaigol was very young.⁹⁷ He might have carried those sweet memories but his motive remained obscure for which he was handed over to the Indian authority. Later, when he managed to escape from Indian prison and joined Pakistan, they also did not trust him. Later, he was reinstated in the Pakistan Army and rose to the rank of Brigadier. He is the editor of the Defence Journal published from Karachi.⁹⁸

On 30 March, when Khaled came to know about the plan of Major Safiullah's Dhaka operation, he instantly sent Captain Mahboob with a note requesting him to abandon the plan. To Khaled, such an undertaking would have been costly in terms of loss of lives at this initial stage of war. On his advice, Major Safiullah gave a thought and mobilized his force towards Teliapara leaving some elements on Dhaka-Narsingdi road. Later Major Safiullah and Major Khaled jointly fought to defend this region. The Teliapara conference which was held on 4 April had a great role in deciding on many pressing issues pertaining to the ongoing war.

By 10 April, column of newly arrived 12 Frontier Force with artillery and air support moved out of Comilla Cantonment. On 12 April the leading elements of the convoy came in contact with the Ujanishar defence. Quiet thoughtfully Captain ATM Haider made the bridge ahead of the defence impassable using explosives. Subedar Ambia conducted the battle very intelligently. Because of the marshes on the flanks and considering frontal attack costly the Pakistanis thought of using the Comilla-Akhaura railway line. On 13 April, the enemy

contacted Gangasagar south of Akhaura. Since establishing contact the enemy brought in artillery and air attacks on Ujanishar and Gangasagar positions. Around this time, 2 East Bengal also crossed Bhairab Bazar and was approaching towards Brahmanbaria under enemy pressure. Appreciating the situation, Major Shafayat Jamil went to Brahmanbaria to take control of the situation there. Captain Ainuddin took all measures in order to abandon Brahmanbaria with the valuables. When darkness descended, Freedom Fighters slowly started to move towards Akhaura against strong resistance of the locals.⁹⁹ By then, the Pakistani soldiers already reached Ujanishar-Gangasagar line. However, it was 0300 hrs on 14 April when the Freedom Fighters reached Akhaura.

East Pakistan Rifles members and local volunteers all together made up about 40 people who were guarding the Gangasagar defence under Subedar Chan Mia. On reaching Akhaura, Major Shafayet asked Lieutenant Harun to occupy the defence. The defence of Akhaura was vital considering the connectivity it offered to Dhaka, Comilla and Sylhet. Lieutenant Harun just followed the line of defence that was already held by the East Pakistan Rifles members including the volunteers. Subedar Anwaor's platoon was ahead of Noapara on the east of railway line, Subedar Rezaul's platoon was on the west of railway on the home bank of the canal and Havildar Munir's platoon occupied depth position covering either side of the railway line (see fig. 12). Because of reinforcement the soldier's morale was high. They remained busy in developing their defence. On the dawn of 15 April, the enemy tried to cross the canal from the left of the defence but failed due to strong resistance from our forces. Here the enemy was in a much advantageous position in terms of logistic, fire support and fighting strengths. They continuously used indirect fire support and air support. We had frequent casualties who were evacuated to Akhaura Check Point manned by Captain Ainuddin.¹⁰⁰ At this stage our forces received mortar fire support from 91 Border Security Force Battalion which were inaccurate and at times created confusions. Again on the morning of 17 April enemy made an attempt from the western flank which was relatively hard considering the marshes. Enemy succeeded in keeping our forces pinned down by sustained artillery fire. These way Freedom Fighters passed the day. Next day on the morning of 18 April enemy indirect fire was intensified notifying preparatory bombardment for impending attack. MI-8 helicopters were seen flying on the western side of the defence near Noadil. Later it was seen that troops that landed at Noadil formed up and launched as assault on our defence from right rear. As the enemy soldiers were approaching the defence, our forces started withdrawing towards Nowapara and thereafter to Akhaura. During withdrawal there had been few

casualties. As per plan platoon on the west of railway line was to withdraw on the east of the railway line under the covering fire of the platoon on the east of the railway line. As Subedar Rejaul organized his withdrawal the LMG group located near the Railway line got hit by enemy rocket that killed both the LMG men. Sepoy Mostafa Kamal was operating another LMG 75 meters away on the right of the destroyed LMG group. Having seen the enemy approaching from the rear, Mostafa refused to withdraw with his platoon and occupied the position where the other LMG group was destroyed. He suggested Subedar Rejaul to withdraw under the cover of his LMG fire. He was then firing at the advancing enemy using 2 LMGs. Because of his effective covering fire, the attack was stalled for about half an hour. Taking advantage of this pause, our forces safely withdrew. Later the enemy sent a special party to neutralize the LMG post. Later the enemy after capturing the post captured the entire area. The dedication and courage displayed by Sepoy Mostafa Kamal would be written in the history of our war in golden words in the days to come. Later it was learnt that, the Pakistanis also gave a guard of honour to this Valiant Fighter for the unique sacrifice he made for his country. In this four and half a day battle, the Freedom Fighters lost 11 including Sepoy Mostafa Kamal and thirty got injured.

After Gangasagar battle Lieutenant Harun went out of enemy artillery range and took up

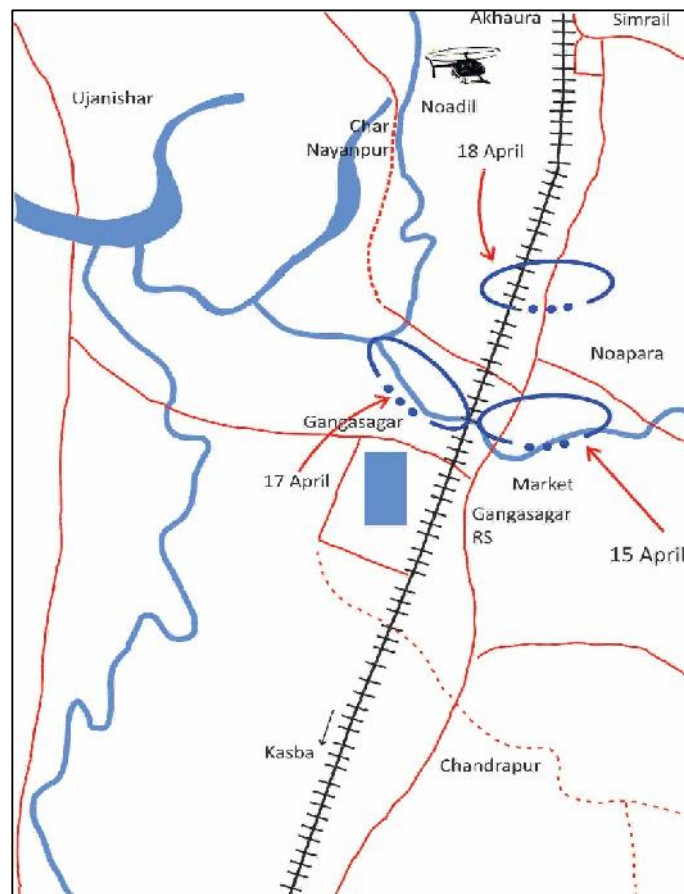


Fig. 12. Gangasagor Defence. Harun-Ar-Rashid, M. *Journey to Freedom: Memoirs of a Freedom Fighter*. Dhaka: Shahitya Prakash, 2013. 96. p, 133.

defence in Durgapur-Kharampur area near the border. It was a relatively higher and defensible ground. The soldiers from Ujanishar defence under Subedar Ambia also joined Durgapur-Kharampur defence by 21/22 April delaying the enemy until 18 April 1971. The enemy followed up the retreating Freedom Fighters and eventually captured Akhaura on 22 April. However, enemy had been in contact for 7 days before our forces finally abandoned their Durgapur-Kharampur defence and crossed over the border for safe sanctuary. This was much orderly than the withdrawal from Gangasagar defence.

2 East Bengal Joins from Joydebpur

As Major Safiullah met Major Khaled, they planned to liberate whole of Brahmanbaria and part of Sylhet. For this, Safiullah moved his headquarters from Kishoreganj to Teliapara on 3 April. Major Safiullah's Force deployed in Narsingdi carried out an ambush on a column of two advancing battalions that killed nearly 100 soldiers.¹⁰¹ Later as the enemy advanced with artillery our forces relocated to Rampur near Bhairab. Apart from controlling Narsingdi-Tarabo-Dhaka road on the west of Meghna, Safiullah's force held part of Brahmanbaria on the east of Meghna to include Azabpur to the north, Ashuganj and Lalpur to the extreme south, Sherpur of Sylhet to the north including Sadipur and Seola Karimganj. On the other hand, Major Khaled's Force had been deployed to the east and southern side of Brahmanbaria. He was controlling Brahmanbaria city, Gokon Ghat, Ujanishar and Gangasagar areas.¹⁰² At Teliapara, considering the increasing need of fighting members, Safiullah employed his Second-in-Command Major Nurul Islam to train the youths. In the 1st batch, nearly 2,000 youths were trained for 2 weeks on basic military training.¹⁰³

Teliapara Summit of 4 April, although not much discussed, played a significant role in organizing our war efforts in the initial days. This historic conference was arranged in the Manager's Bungalow of Telaipara Tea Garden. The participants were Colonel (retired) MAG Osmani who came from Agartala, Major Ziaur Rahman, Major Khaled Mosharraf, Lieutenant Colonel Salahuddin Md Reza, Major Kazi Nuruzzaman, Major Nurul Islam, Major Moinul Hossain Chowdhury and Lieutenant Colonel Abdur Rab.¹⁰⁴ Many important decisions were taken; for example, Colonel Osmani was made the Commander-in-Chief of Bangladesh Forces. A provisional area of responsibility was worked out under which Major Safiullah was to fight in Brahmanbaria-Sylhet area, Major Khaled Mosharraf was to look after Comilla-Noakhali area and responsibility of Chittagong-Chittagong Hill Tracts area was vested to

Major Zia. Colonel Osmani was also persuaded by all to form a Government so that external support could be harnessed and required legitimacy obtained in favour of the war efforts.

After 4 April, Safiullah adjusted his force and placed 2 companies in Narsingdi under Captain Matiur Rahman, one company at Ajabpur, one company at Ashuganj under Captain Nasim, one company at Lalpur under Lieutenant Morshed, one company at Sherpur and Sadipur, Sylhet under Captain Aziz and one company at Sarail under Captin Matin.¹⁰⁵ These forces were positioned in a way to guard likely approaches of Pakistani Forces from Dhaka and Sylhet region. Besides, to reinforce Major Zia's Force, one company under Captain Ezaj was sent to Chittagong on 5 April. When Major Safiullah brought his force in his operational area, Major Khaled pulled out his force and readjusted his deployment.

On April 7, when Pakistan Army pulled out 31 Punjab Regiment from Sylhet and placed in Salutikar airfield, north of Sylhet Town, a major battle had been developing around Bhairab Bazar. After sending 53 Brigade to Chittagong, Pakistan Army focused on controlling Comilla-Sylhet road so that 202 and 313 Brigades could uninterruptedly use it. This would need a breakthrough from Dhaka upto clear Bhairab-Ashuganj. Ashuganj railway station is situated on the home bank of the Bhairab Railway Bridge. Major Safiullah deployed a company under Captain Nasim in Ashuganj, a platoon led by a Junior Commissioned Officer in Ajabpur which was 3 miles north of Ashuganj. Another mixed platoon under Lieutenant Morshed was deployed at Lalpur which was 2 miles south of Ashuganj. Lalpur and Brahmanharia were connected by an unclassified road. Lieutenant Morshed was to deny enemy landing within his area as well as deny the use of road by the enemy to advance towards Brahmanharia. Captain Matiur after fighting his way down from Narsingdi, was deployed at Bhairab Bazar with a company of East Pakistan Rifles.

To reinforce him, first batch of young boys those who received training at Teliapara was given to him. Another mixed company under Captain Ainuddin was deployed at Brahmanbaria facing Gokan Ghat on the River Titas. One mobile East Pakistan Rifles company under Captain Matin was located at Sarail to be used as reserve and also to provide depth to the forward localities by occupying Talshahar and Gokan Ghat when needed. During the day break of 12 April 1971, the enemy with river crafts probed the bank of Meghna River near Lalpur for a landing. They could not figure out the defensive layout hence took time for landing. In anticipation of threat towards Ashuganj Lieutenant Colonel Reza mobilized

Captain Matin from Sarail to Lalpur. On getting information about the enemy landing Major Safiullah who was away from the area of responsibility for a meeting returned to Brahmanbaria at 0400 hrs on 14 April. He did not subscribe to the idea of mobilizing Reserve Company from Sarail to Lalpur. To him depth was more important than putting all resources along the river bank in linear fashion. At 0600 hrs on 14 April, enemy brought pre-H hour bombardment on our defensive positions of Ashuganj, Lalpur and Bhairab (see fig. 13).

The enemy flotilla appeared again in front of Lalpur and was advancing along Meghna.

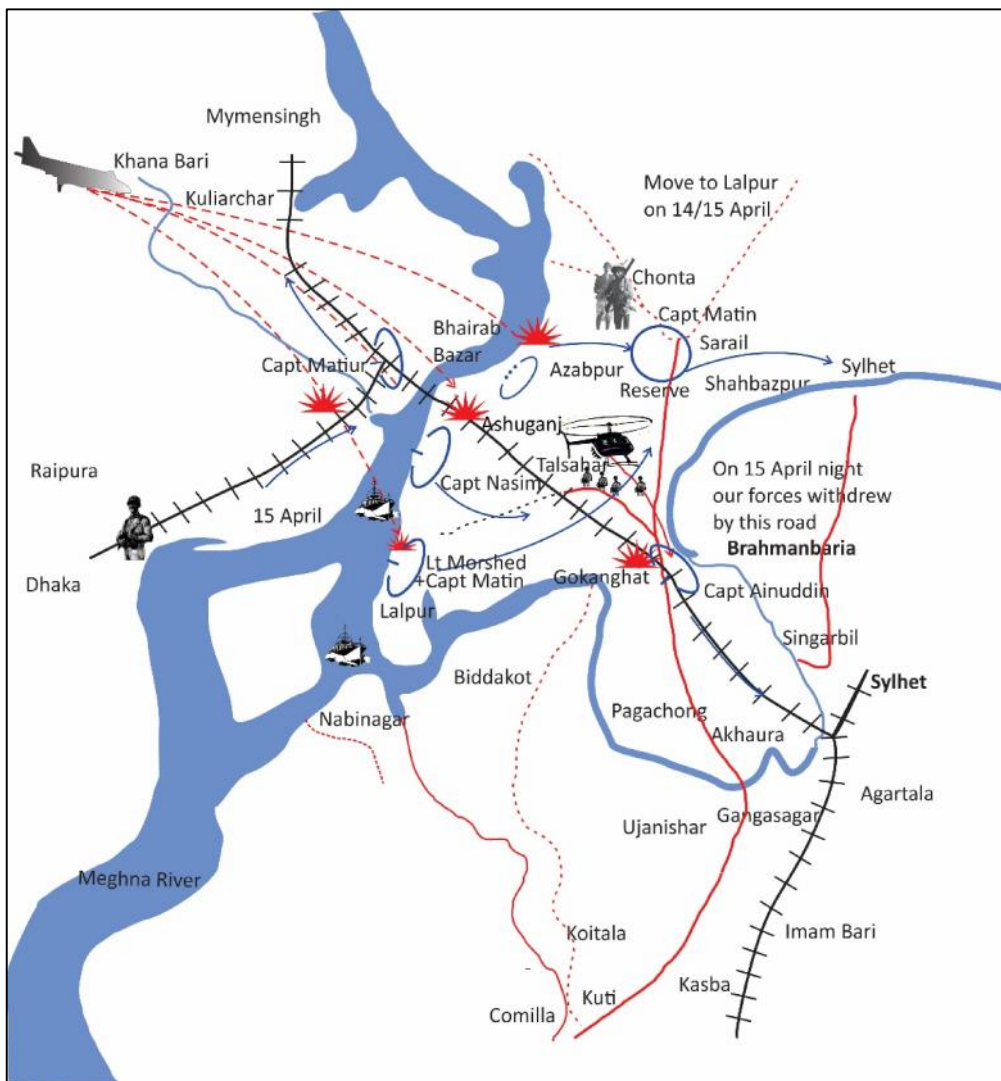


Fig. 13. Battle of Bhairab - Ashuganj. Safiullah, K. M. *Bangladesh at War*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1995. p, 93.

They were heading towards Lalpur for a landing and comprised of two gunboats, two Landing Craft Tanks and four launches including a battalion on board. Another enemy battaion advanced towards Bhairab Bazar along the railway track. Captain Matiur was asked

to stop the advance and delay them as far as possible. By this time, enemy flotilla came close to the bank. One 75 mm Recoilless Rifle was moved from Gokan Ghat to the mouth of River Titas that fired few shells at the Landing Craft Tanks. The defenders at Lalpur instantly opened fire and forced the flotilla to pull back to the mid stream of the river. Quickly six F-86 fighter jet aircrafts (Sabre Jets) flew past the Bhairab-Ashuganj defence and kept the defenders pinned down. Then came the MI-8 helicopters to drop the Special Service Group soldiers at Sohagpur (near Talsahar). Finally, two companies of Special Service Group soldiers were dropped behind Ashuganj defence that made the position untenable. Captain Nasim had to withdraw to Madhabpur and took up fresh defence. On the other end, enemy reached the mouth of Titas River and landed there. When the enemy troops began to advance towards the left flank, Captain Matin's position at Lalpur was becoming untenable. By evening Captain Matin's company fell back cross country to Brahmanbaria from where they proceeded for Shahbazpur and took up defence as per plan. Bhairab could not be held and Captain Matin's position was captured by the enemy. Use of the Bhairab Railway Bridge and Meghna River was denied to Captain Matin's force. So he withdrew to the north along the railway track to Kuliarchar and later joined the main body through Chatalpar.

After falling back from Bhairab-Ashuganj, Madhabpur provided a suitable position. Titas River and Sonai Rivers divided the entire area and the area being low lying and close to international border favoured the defenders. The enemy had been approaching Shahbazpur-Madhabpur axis with two battalions. They enjoyed continuous artillery and air supports. Captain Matin took up defence on the right in Kaitara village, Captain Nasim was guarding the bridge. For providing fire support 3x82 mm Mortar was given to Captain Nasim's company. Subedar Mujibor was asked to take up position with his East Pakistan Rifles Company in such a way that he could provide support during the withdrawal of forward companies. Anti-airborne troops under Lieutenant Mannan took position behind the defence and Lieutenant Morshed organized the Reserve (see fig. 14). On the night of 26/27 April Lieutenant Morshed after a successful raid on enemy position at Shahbazpur returned safely. On 28 April since 0800 hrs in the morning enemy started pounding artillery on the defence. They extensively used explosives around the defence which on explosion created panic. By 1200 hrs, the main body contacted the defence and launched attack dividing them into three columns. One company attacked Captain Matin's company on the right, another company moved between the gaps of the forward companies and third company took Captain Nasim's position frontally on the left. These attacking forces were followed by another follow up

battalion. Although forward companies repulsed wave of attacks at heavy price the enemy

created a dent between the forward companies and went further to the north and attacked

Nasim's Company. At this stage, the forward companies lost contact. Because of tremendous enemy pressure Captain Matin's Company had to move to the rear. When the forward companies were about to be encircled by the attacking forces, Lieutenant Morshed attacked on the flank of the Pakistani Forces from Alinagar village. It allowed time for the forward companies to readjust their positions. Our forces ran short of logistic support including reinforcement and they had no contact with the battalion headquarters. Situation of the Pakistani Forces also came down to a similar level. The courage and dedication of Captain Matin, Captain Nasim, Lieutenant Morshed, Shahjahan (martyred), Mofij and Wahed would be reckoned with honour and dignity in the history of our Liberation War. In this battle 270

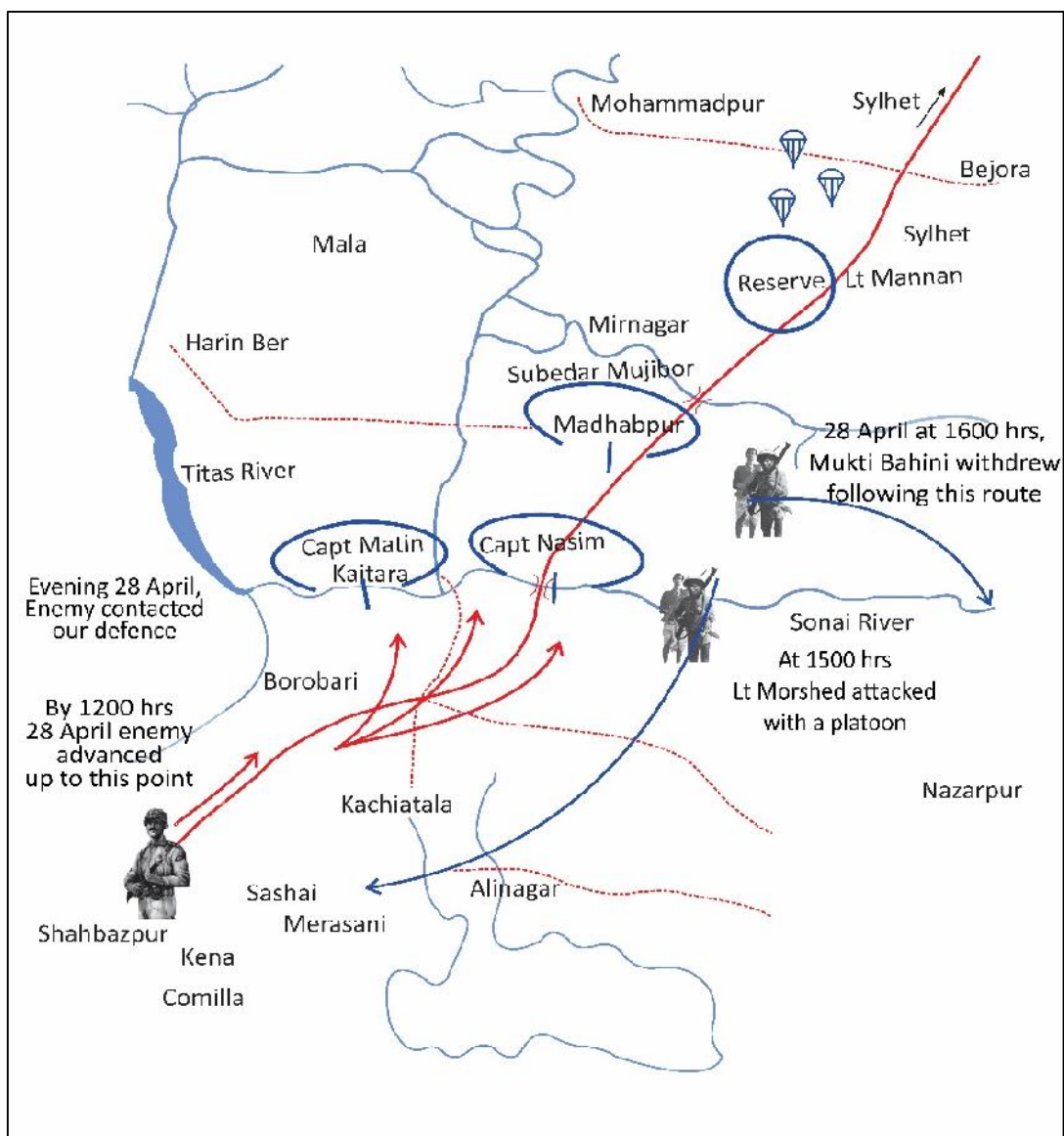


Fig. 14. Battle of Madhabpur. Safiullah, K. M. *Bangladesh at War*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1995. PP,97-101.

members of Pakistani Forces were killed.

Mantala is a small railway station on Akhaura-Sylhet railway track. Three companies from 2 East Bengal Regiment were deployed along this track. Captain Nasim's company was holding general area Mantala railway station. Behind him was Captain Subed Ali's company in general area Kashimpur railway station. Lieutenant Morshed with his company took up position in extreme south in Harashpur Railway station (see fig. 15). These companies had been threatening the enemy's line of communication on Sylhet-Brahmanbaria highway which the enemy wanted to clear the soonest. Sporadic attacks continued for more than three weeks. The enemy was unable to dislodge the defenders and these attacks proved costly for them. Having failed, the enemy changed their strategy. From 15 June, they started advancing with each battalion from Itakhola and Ajabpur to converge around Mantala railway station. Day and night the enemy kept the defenders pinned down by using small arms and artillery fire. Taking advantage of the darkness at night, enemy infantry dug some trenches. Being in trench, they remained out of small arms and the artillery guns were beyond defender's mortar

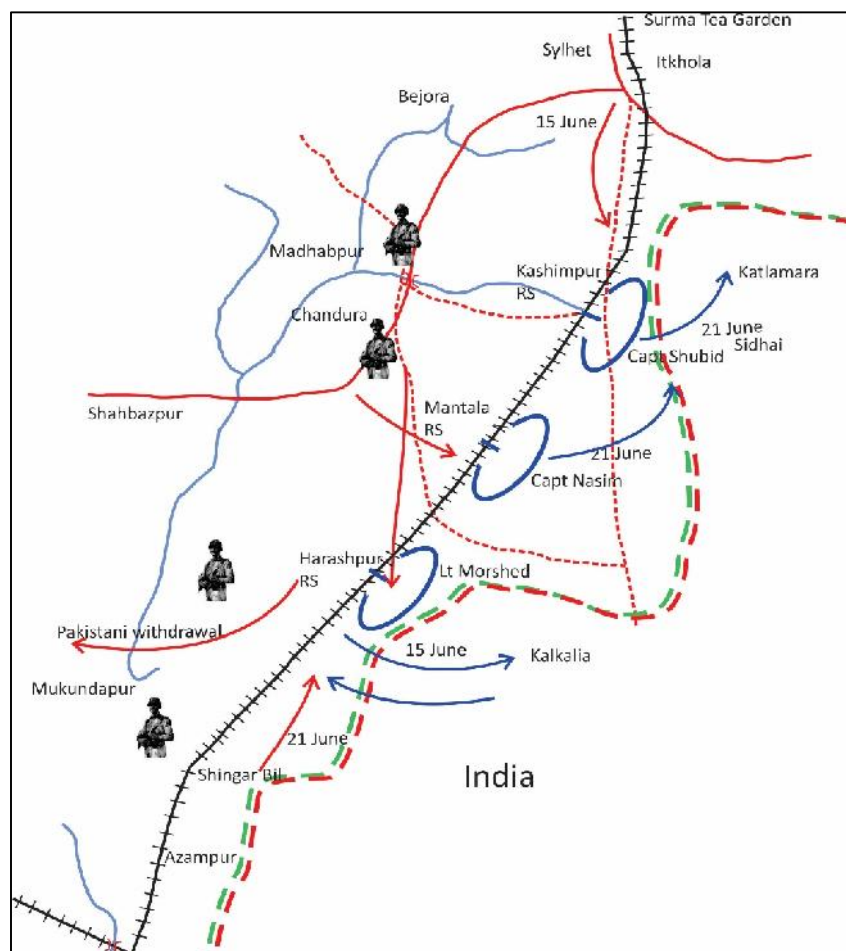


Fig. 15. Battle of Mantala. Safiullah, K. M. *Bangladesh at War*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1995. PP, 116-121.

range. This way by 20 June the advancing battalions reached fairly close to our battle localities and intensified their activities. They also carried out air reconnaissance and took air photos by low flying fighter aircrafts. When Captain Nasim's Company was seriously threatened, he needed reinforcements and Captain Matin was mobilized. In the day break of 21 June, the enemy attacked Mantala complex from three directions with 4 battalions with accurate artillery fire with helicopter borne observation post. Captain Nasim's position was attacked by those two battalions who advanced using ditches and trenches. Captain Bhuiyan's position was attacked by a battalion from the direction of Chandura from the west. Lieutenant Morshed's position was attacked from the south-west direction by a battalion from Mukundapur. The battalion which attacked Captain Bhuiyan's position from the direction of Chandura, overran his position in a lightning speed, sprang towards Harashpur and encircled Lieutenant Morshed's position from the north east direction. Enemy carried out heli landing of Commando behind Lieutenant Morshed's company that added another dimension to the critical situation. The situation went extremely critical when Captain Nasim was fighting a desperate battle, Captain Bhuiyan's position was overrun and Lieutenant Morshed was encircled. Captain Nasim was requesting for reinforcements and Lieutenant Morshed was desperately fighting to get out of enemy encirclement. Accordingly, Captain Nasim was ordered to fall back. At the same time, a counter-attack was planned with only two platoons of Captain Matin, to retrieve Lieutenant Morshed from a critical situation when Captain Bhuiyan's Company was falling back from Kashimpur area. Captain Bhuiyan's Company and two platoons of Captain Matin immediately launched a counter-attack from Kalkalia and extricated Lieutenant Morshed's troops. This desperate attempt reaped benefit and the enemy was forced to fall back. Freedom Fighters not only retrieved Lieutenant Morshed's troops from dangerous situation but also regained some 40 square miles of territory in general area Harashpur-Mukundapur. This small piece of land remained under own occupation and control till liberation. One of the LMG posts of Lieutenant Morshed, held by a valiant Freedom Fighter named Daula Mia played a vital role in the success of this operation. In spite of being surrounded and wounded, he did not give up fighting. Because of this effective fire support, the counter-attack was successful.

Feni

Geographically contiguous Feni is like a finger with very little width situated on the left while moving towards Chittagong. Number 1 Wing under Sylhet Sector was located in

Kotbari, Comilla. During the war, part of this wing joined Khaled's force deployed in Brahmanbaria while others made their way towards Feni. When the bordering troops of 1 Wing came to know about the massacre in Dhaka, they fought their way out killing non-Bengali members. Only 125 Bengali members in the Wing Headquarters got softly disarmed by the non-Bengali Wing Commander Major Karar Ali. On another side, non-Bengali Company Commander Sher Mohammad of Akhaura Company had been organizing the non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members. Appreciating imminent danger, Naib Subedar Golam Ambia of Singer bil Border outpost and Naib Subedar Mohammed Hossain of Kornel Bazar jointly planned to attack Company Headquarters and clear it off the Pakistani Forces.¹⁰⁶ Many students, Labourers, Ansar, Mujahids and few police members also joined. In the dawn of 29 March this East Pakistan Rifles contingent attacked the company headquarters and neutralized it. East Pakistan Rifles members understanding the danger fled during night hrs and few crossed over the Indian border while and many were caught by the locals. On 2 April, on orders from Khaled Mosharraf, Naib Subedar Golam Ambia with his troops took up defence in Ujanishar and Gangasagor area.

Assistant Wing Commander of Number 1 Wing, non-Bengali Captain Faruquee with platoon plus strength was deployed in Feni Circle Officers office since the beginning of March (see fig. 16). After 25 March, with support from non-Bengali members, Captain Faruquee was carrying out a reign of terror. Being terrorized the people fumed with anger encircled and killed four of them by throwing stones while others got injured.¹⁰⁷ Another platoon of East Pakistan Rifles from Number 1 Wing Headquarters under Naib Subedar Aftab reached Parshuram Shaldhar Bazar Border outpost on 26/27 March. Platoon of Naib Subedar Badhsha Mia was eagerly waiting to unite. Both these platoons jointly moved out for Feni. After reaching Feni, this East Pakistan Rifles contingent inducted many students, Ansars, Muzahids, police, and retired soldiers into their contingent. By then 16 Bengali members got freed from the Circle Office and reinforced this group. Later many officers joined this group to name Captain Golam Mawla, Captain Mojibor Rahman, Lieutenant Sheikh Ahmed Chowdhury and Captain Inam from Bengal Regiment. They have organized strong resistance against the opposition forces in Feni, Belonia and Noakhali areas. In the first week of April during an encounter with the Pakistani Forces in Belonia prisoner of war Subedar Moqbul Hossain got freed. During the second week of April, Flight Lieutenant Rauf moved out to assist Major Shamsuddin who was operating on Shuvapur Bridge under Major Zia. From Feni another company went to Laksham. Until 20 April, the fight continued in

different parts of Noakhali. Because of sustained Pakistani attack the Mukti Bahini were pushed towards the bordering areas. Meanwhile on 22 April, Pakistani Forces attacked Feni from Comilla, Noakhali and Chittaging. Failing to withstand the pressure Mukti Bahini crossed over to Indian soil on 23 April.¹⁰⁸

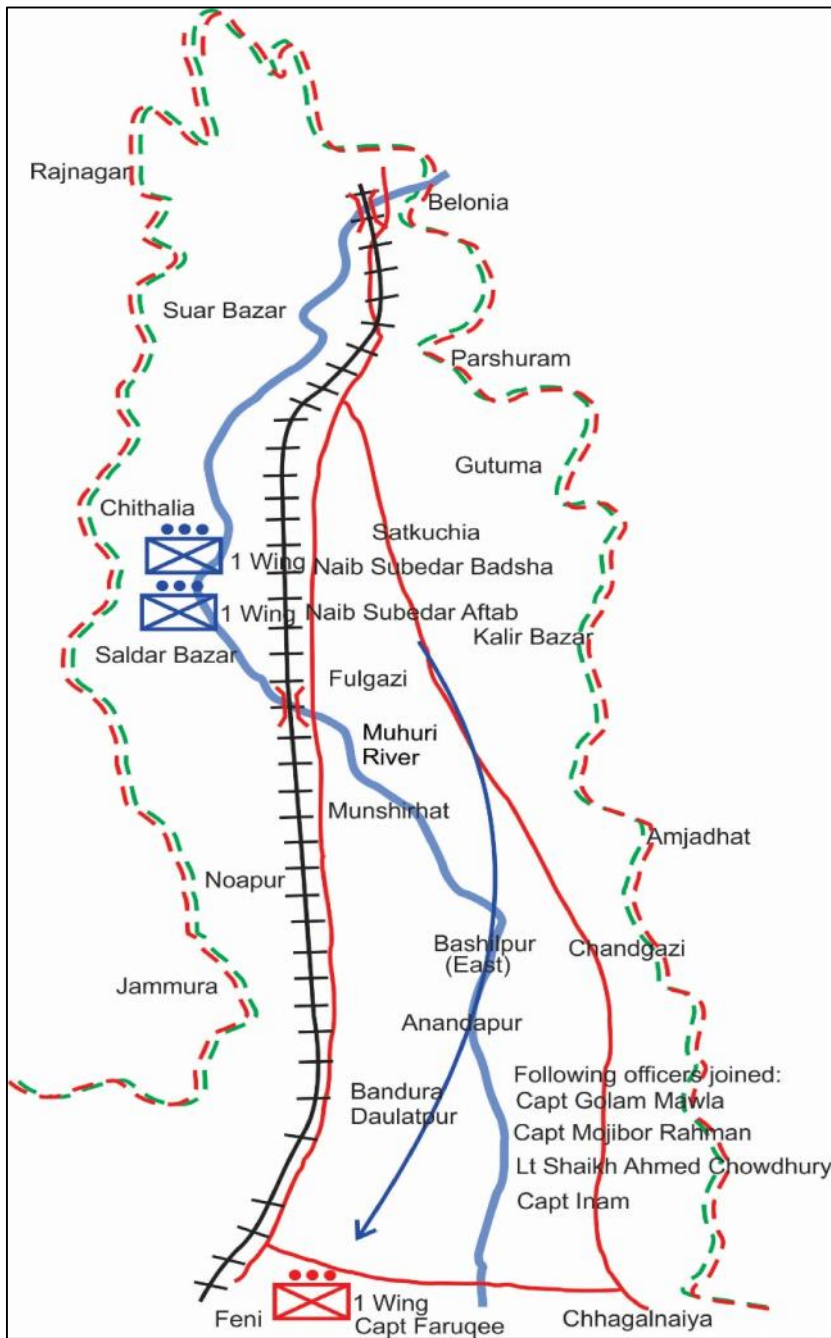


Fig. 16. Initial Resistance in Feni. *'Bijoyketon' - Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

Sylhet Area

General

Unlike other districts of Bangladesh, the periphery of Sylhet district is dominated by low hills on the north and eastern sides with numerous tea gardens. Beside there had been innumerable hrs and bills that made going difficult in all seasons. Two important rivers passed through the Sylhet district adding to her defence potentials. The geographical importance and characteristics largely dictate the growth of military structure. Considering these issues, there was no significant military built-up except few East Pakistan Rifles units for guarding the border. There was a Sector Headquarters stationed in Sylhet comprising Number 3 and 12 Wings situated in Sylhet and Number 1 Wing located at Kotbari, Comilla. Non-Bengali Lieutenant Colonel Sekander Khan was commanding the Sector, non-Bengali Major Karim was Second-in-Command, Captain Nasir Nazir was Adjutant and Captain Alauddin - the only Bengali officer was the Quarter Master.¹⁰⁹ Beside Sylhet Sector troops, 31 Punjab Regiment was deployed in Khadimnagar since 1970.¹¹⁰

Troops of No 3 Wing were deployed in the bordering areas. A company under Subedar Fazal Hossain deployed from Dharmamoy Border outpost to Sindurkhan Border outpost. Two platoons of B Company were deployed in Shamshernagar Airport and another platoon was placed in the Wing Headquarters for the purpose of training. Subedar Mujib was commanding C Company and deployed from Ghandaitila to Gojukata bordering areas. D company under Subedar Abdul Mannan was deployed in area from Dhalai Border outpost to Lathitila Border outpost. On the other hand, 12 wing Headquarters was located in Khadimnagar. Of its 4 companies, A company led by a non-Bengali was deployed in Sylhet town, B company commanded by Subedar Mujibur Rahman was deployed from Lalkhan Border outpost to Kalachatok Border outpost, C company under Subedar BR Chowdhury was deployed from Lakhmibazar Border outpost to Lubachara Border outpost and D company under Subedar Nasibur Rahman was deployed from Sonalichela to Birendranagar bordering areas.¹¹¹

25 March and the Aftermath

For executing “Operation Searchlight”, 31 Punjab was tasked to capture radio station and telephone exchange, control the bridge over Surma River, capture airfield, arrest the Awami League leaders including student leaders and disarm the Police and East Pakistan Rifles personnel.¹¹² The initial resistance phase began on 25/26 March night from Tilagarh in Sylhet area when retired Captain MA Muttalib fired at a driver of 31 Punjab Regiment near Murari Chand (MC) College. His jeep lost control and went off the road while Captain Muttalib managed to snatch away 2 rifles and disappeared. Later on he established contact with Indian authority and apprised them about the situation and sought support. In the East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters, the only Bengali Officer Captain Alauddin failing to appreciate the situation got arrested and later the Pakistanis killed him. Though everyone in the Wing Headquarters was non-Bengali, the companies commanded by the Bengalis played a significant role by arresting the non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members. When Major Khaled Mosharraf took over the command of 4 East Bengal on 27 March after the bloodless rebellion led by Major Shafayat, he informed all about this development through wireless net. Following this most of the Sylhet Sector troops either came under the command of Major Khaled or Major Chittaranjan Dutta to fight the war. Major Dutta was a Freedom Fighter who was on leave in Habiganj during March 1971. After 25 March when retired Colonel Rab, Member of Consituent Assembly and Mr Manik Chowdhury, Member of Constituent Assembly had been organizing the members of Ansar, Police, Mujahid, students, farmers, labours they needed someone to lead when Major Dutta readily agreed and mobilized his force to Rashidpur Tea Garden on 27 March where he set up his headquarters.¹¹³ They thought of liberating Sylhet from the hands of the occupation forces.

Before joining the forces of Major Khaled or Major Dutta, the Bengali East Pakistan Rifles elements under the Junior Commissioned Officer's took independent decisions and achieved early successes. By this time, 31 Punjab took up number of positions in the areas of Shamshernagar, Shalutikar and Moulvibazar (see fig. 17). On 27 March, Subedar Fazlul Haque of 3 Wing launched an attack on the Pakistani Forces deployed in Shomshernagar Airport causing huge losses on the enemy and forced them to withdraw to Sylhet. The East Pakistan Rifles Platoon from here marched towards Moulvibazar and met with 2 platoons of 31 Punjab. After a violent encounter with Pakistani Forces non-Bengali Captain Golam Rasul with 21 others got killed. They also captured few transports from this position. In this operation Sepoy Serajul Islam got killed by the Pakistanis.¹¹⁴ On 28 March Naib Subedar Mosharraf Hossain carried out another attack on the Platoon position of 31 Punjab in

Akhalia. Although Pakistan military lost 3 lives there but quickly repulsed forcing our forces to withdraw. On 29 March, C Company Commander of 12 Wing Subedar BR Chowdhury instructed all Border outposts under his command to concentrate in Lakhmibazar arresting non-Bengali members. On 31 March Subedar BR Chowdhury joined with 3 Wing troops under Subedar Mujibur Rahman and Subedar Abdul Mannan at a place called Zuri.¹¹⁵ On 29 March, Pakistan military launched an attack on the company headquarters of 12 Wing at Sunamganj. Company Commander Subedar Nasibur along with his force had been fully

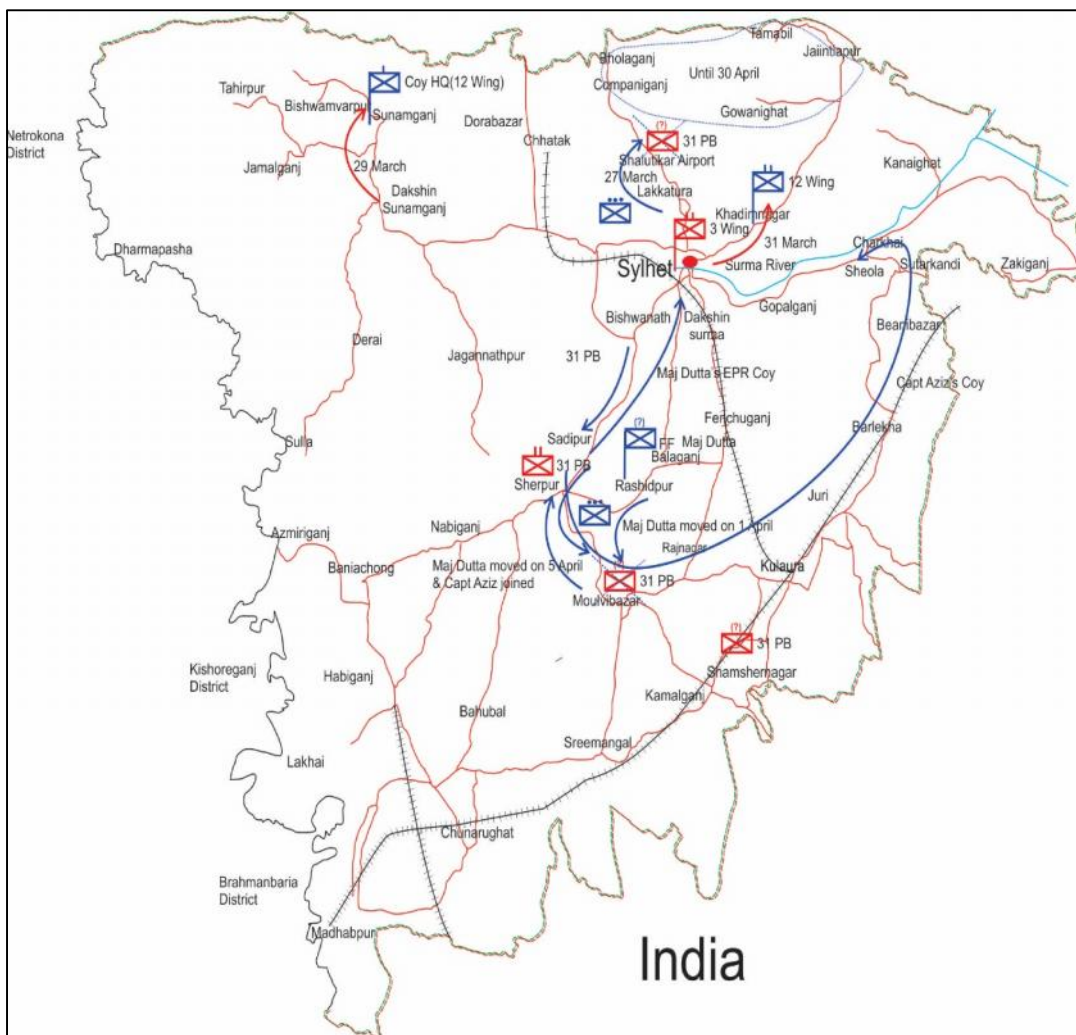


Fig. 17. Initial Resistance - Sylhet Area. *'Bijoyketon' - Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

ready to face the enemy. After a fierce battle, the Pakistani troops withdrew leaving few dead while Sepoy Abdul Halim embraced martyrdom.¹¹⁶

On the morning of 31 March, 31 Punjab Regiment launched a surprise attack on the 12 Wing Headquarter located at Khadimnagar. In the face of combined Pakistani air and land

attack, our forces left the position leaving 3 dead. Meanwhile, on order from Major Khaled, Subedar BR Chowdhury of 12 Wing moved out to attack Shalutikar Airport and Subedar Mannan and Subedar Mujibar from 3 and 12 Wing respectively were asked to concentrate with their forces in Teliapara.¹¹⁷

On 1 April, Dutta relocated his headquarter from Rashidpur to Moulvibazar. He thought it would be easier to attack Sylhet from Moulvibazar. Besides if Pakistani Forces would have planned to move to Brahmanbaria and Comilla they would have needed to clear Moulvibazar. These were the rationales for relocating his headquarters. Any way while moving to Moulvibazar there was an encounter with the Pakistani Forces. Because of thousands of jubilant people joining Duttas force and amidst thundering battle cry, the Pakistanis got confused about the exact strength and withdrew. Many East Pakistan Rifles soldiers who fled from different Border outposts by then joined Dutta's force. Meanwhile, on 4 April, historic Teliapara Summit of senior military officers took place.

Withdrawing from Nayanpur 31 Punjab took up defence in Sherpur and Sadipur. In each places roughly 2 platoons of soldiers were deployed. For carrying out attack on Sylhet, Sherpur-Sadipur had been very important. Dutta thought of capturing these positions and on the night of 4 April, He divided his force into three columns and managed to cross the river with local support. On 5 April in the early morning, Major Dutta launched attack on Pakistani position that continued until mid-day. Failing to withstand the attack many Pakistani soldiers got caught by the villagers while trying to escape. Thus our forces took control of Sadipur.

At this point, Major Safiullah rendered invaluable support to Major Dutta by providing a company led by Captain Aziz that took up defence in Sherpur and Sadipur area. Major Dutta asked Captain Aziz to advance along Kulaura-Sheola-Sutarkandi-Gopalganj and take up defence on the southern bank of River Surma. While advancing Captain Aziz came under surprise attack near Kadamtala. Because of promptly executed counter attack, the Pakistanis left Kadamtali and concentrated in Sylhet.¹¹⁸ Captain Aziz finally took up position on the southern side of Surma. On the other hand, Majain Dutta with his mixed East Pakistan Rifles companies moved towards Sylhet via Sadipur. While advancing Dutta's force met with enemy resistance near Bissyonath and dislodged them. Enemy forces were compelled to fall back to Sylhet. By 7 April Pakistani Forces lost control almost everywhere in Sylhet except Airport and Lakkatura tea garden. Major Dutta's troops joined with Captain Aziz's force went across the bridge and organized themselves into a strong force in general area Sylhet

town and Khadimnagar. Few East Pakistan Rifles members from Sunamganj also joined and the force level rose to four companies including one infantry company.

The enemy build up at Shalutikar needed an immediate action. The Pakistani troops had been busy making dugouts around this place. Fresh reinforcements were coming in by C-130 aircrafts to augment them. It was decided to attack the air base before it was too strong. To compensate for the lack of troops, measures were planned to simulate direction of attack from the western side of enemy position while main attack would come through the jungles of Khademnagar. Member of National Assembly Manik Chowdhury was to provide required manpower which he failed to master and the plan was dropped. One company of regulars and three companies of East Pakistan Rifles already in Sylhet were tasked to execute. Accordingly, one company of irregulars was positioned at Jaintiapara on the south of Shalutikar Airport, one company was deployed on the Chhatak road, East Pakistan Rifles troops from Sunamganj were positioned further west on the Chhatak road. The regular company was deployed in the depth to take care of the Surma Bridge.¹¹⁹

Captain Aziz carried out extensive reconnaissance of Sylhet town during which local support has been praiseworthy especially of Mr Dewan Farid Gazi, Member of National Assembly. By then scattered enemy posts and positions from around township were called back to Shalutikar Airport. On 7 April, with the help of Mr Dewan Gazi the district jail was opened and all the prisoners were freed. Pakistan military had been bringing in reinforcement using airlifts at which Aziz got little worried. He thought of disrupting the activities of Shalutikar airport. On 8 April, two detachments of Machine Gun and 3-inch mortar were sent from the direction of Khadimnagar to the close proximity of the airstrip. When the detachment fired a mortar shell, the enemy reacted with Machine Gun bursts that killed Machine Gun gunner and the mission failed.¹²⁰

On the same day in the evening Captain Aziz deployed his force in the town in Khadimnagar, Ambar Khana and wireless station areas. The regular company was deployed in the southern bank of Surma with a screen position on the northern bank. By morning pressure from Pakistani Forces increased to a great extent that failing to withstand our forces started withdrawing at about 0300 hrs. Enemy extensively used artillery and after a violent fight was able to occupy the town but stopped short of the bridge. Pakistani Forces kept on engaging forces on the south with artillery and long range automatics. At about 1400 hrs enemy Sabre Jets strafed on the defensive position. Following which enemy platoon crossed

the river on the right flank and endangered the whole defence. In this thick of battle, Dutta arrived with an Indian officer named Lieutenant Colonel Limaya and after a brief discussion left the spot. By evening Captain Aziz collected all his men before finally falling back to Sherpur-Sadipur. There he organized a strong defence and was expecting to take on the enemy. On 23 April enemy aircrafts carried out reconnaissance following which begun strafing and rocketing. On 26 April enemy contacted the screen position withdrew after conceding casualties. In this action Havildar Muslemuddin and lance Naik Abdur Rahman died and five were injured. There was lot of casualties on the enemy side too.¹²¹ In this battle, Captain Aziz got injured. In the face of mounting enemy pressure 2 East Bengal elements withdrew to Moulvibazar and others got dispersed in several directions. These forces later got organized and Captain Muttalib divided them into 3 groups. Of these groups, Subedar Nasibur Rahman with his company took up defence in Sripur, Subedar Mujibur Rahman with his company in Protap Pur and Naik Subedar Nur Mohammad took up position in Jaflong area. Until 30 April these forces kept Tamabil, Gowain Ghat, Joiyanta, Bholaganj and Compamiganj areas under effective control. By 3rd week of May Pakistani Forces dislodged our forces from Sylhet following which they crossed the Indian border and took shelter in Sokhapunji.¹²²

SOUTH WESTERN REGION

General

South western region omprises greater Jessore, Kushtia, Faridpur and Barisal districts. It has a long stretch of land boundary with India on the western side and mighty Padma and Meghna situated on the north, north-east and eastern sides. These mighty rivers have always secluded this region from rest of the country and therefore needed more time and special arrangements for carrying out large scale movement. Northern part of this region is relatively higher than the central and southern part. The largest mangrove forest 'Sundarban' is situated on the southern part of the region and could be used as sanctuary for unconventional forces.

Initial Disposition of Forces

In south western region, till the beginning of 1971, Pakistan Army had 107 Infantry Brigade comprising of 1 East Bengal Regiment, 25 Baluch Regiment, 27 Baluch Regiment, element of 24 Field Regiment and 55 Field Regimentt. 7 Field Ambulance was located within

Combined Military Hospital complex, Jessore. Of these elements, 1 East Bengal was a traditional Bengal regiment raised after the partition of Indian subcontinent on 15 February 1948. Ideally, infantry battalion has a strength of 750/800 manpower. Since the unit was earmarked to move to West Pakistan, many of its soldiers were availing leave.¹²³ Of the eight officers, Bengali Lieutenant Colonel Rezaul Jalil was the Commanding Officer, Second-in-Command was a non-Bengali named Major Iqbal Qureshi, and so were Adjutant Captain Nesar Ahmed, Quarter Master Captain Ikram Hossain including a company commander Major Lehrasab. Apart from the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Hafiz, Lieutenant Anwar Hossain and Lieutenant Shafi Wasiuddin (did not participate in the war) were other Bengali officers.¹²⁴ Beside regular forces, there was an East Pakistan Rifles Sector with its headquarters located at Jessore, 4 Wing was located in Chuadanga and 5 Wing in Khulna area. The Sector was commanded by non-Bengali Lieutenant Colonel Aslam and he had two Bengali officers named Captain Awlad and Captain Hasmatullah including few Bengali soldiers.¹²⁵ 4 Wing was commanded by Bengali Major Osman Chowdhury. There had been two Assistant Wing Commanders namely Bengali Captain ARM Azam Chowdhury and Punjabi Captain Sadeq. Of the five companies, A company was deployed in Pragpur area led by Subedar Mojaffar Ahmed, B company under Subedar Khairul Basher Khan in Dhopakhal, one company under Subedar Mukid in Baiddyonathtala, one company under Subedar Abdul Majid Mollah in Jadabpur and E company under Subedar Abdur Razzaq was at Wing Headquarters. Except one assistant wing commander, entire command echelon was represented by the Bengalis.¹²⁶ 5 Wing was located in Khulna. All the officers of this wing were non-Bengali and the company commanders were all Bengalis.

25 March and the Aftermath

Like other Pakistani brigades, 107 Infantry Brigade was tasked to take over civil administration and all vital installations within Khulna administrative division, disarm 1 East Bengal Regiment including local East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters, Reserve Police and Ansar personnel and arrest all political leaders. They were to also ensure the security of the airfield, cantonment and Jessore-Khulna road. Some columns were also sent towards Khulna, Jhenaidah and Benapole. One company from 27 Baluch Regiment was sent to Kushtia. Beside other tasks they were asked to render Kushtia exchange inoperative.

Because of geographical dispersion of regular and para-military forces across the region, the initiation of resistance and responses had been sporadic. In this region 'Operation

Searchlight' began when the Member of National Assembly of Jessore Mr Mashiur Rahman, Superintendent of Police and Deputy Commissioner were arrested and taken to Jessore Cantonment on the night of 25 March. Later by surrendering all powers to the military authority the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police got freed.¹²⁷ In the East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters, on 26 March, the Sector Commander Lieutenant Colonel Aslam and Captain Awlad tactfully collected the arms and kept those under custody. Few brave soldiers did not make mistake in keeping some arms at their disposal. These soldiers later broke into the munitions store for ammunition and in absence of officer leadership accepted Naib Subedar Abdul Malek as leader.¹²⁸ They deployed in the outskirts of Jessore covering likely approaches. On 30 March when the Pakistani Forces were coming from Khulna, the East Pakistan Rifles soldiers engaged them by fire that destroyed 2 transports and killed another 50 lives at the expense of only two on own side. After the independence Captain Awlad and Captain Hashmatullah were dismissed from service for collaborating with the Pakistan military.¹²⁹ Although 107 Infantry Brigade played an instrumental role in executing the tasks of 'Operation Searchlight' about which 1 East Bengal remained completely ignorant. It was deployed in Jagadishpur village about 15 miles away from cantonment in early March in the name of field training exercise.

The soldiers of 4 East Pakistan Rifles Wing seemed more radical in exhibiting their patriotism. They rebelled without even waiting for orders from their officers and disarmed the non-Bengali members in Chuadanga by 26 March. During the process, non-Bengali Captain Sadeq got killed. This unit had roughly 650 soldiers and all were Bengali. In the afternoon, when Wing Commander Major Osman returned from Kushtia, Havildar Major Mojibor Rahman apprised him about the whole situation.¹³⁰ Major Osman held an immediate meeting where he was made the head of civil-military elements. Little away from Chuadanga, non-Bengali Major Shoeib with a company of 27 Baluch took up position in Kushtia under the overall plan of 'Operation Searchlight'.¹³¹ This company was holding the police line, wireless station, Circuit House and Kushtia District school complex (see fig. 18).

On 30 March when Tajuddin Ahmed and Barrister Amirul Islam had been travelling through this area for onward journey to India, the civil-military officials availed this opportunity to discuss the ongoing situations with them. Later, they made invaluable contribution in organizing and stirring our war efforts. Situation of Jessore had been also experiencing a change. It was 29 March, when 1 East Bengal was called back to join Jessore

and it was mid-night 29-30 March when they reached cantonment. On 30 March, Brigadier

Durrani, Commander 107 Brigade ordered 1 East Bengal to deposit their arms. He remained

physically present to be sure if his orders were executed properly and he later took away the

keys of armoury once the deposition was complete.¹³² As the Brigadier left, apprehending the

consequences desperate Bengali soldiers snatched away the arms and ammunition from the

armoury and remained ready to face any eventualities. Soon other units came to know about

the rebellion following which they encircled 1 East Bengal from three sides. Because of

vigilance they repulsed several attacks. During this critical time of the unit when approached by all ranks, the Commanding Officer declined to lead the unit. He was perhaps too cognizant about the security of his family and grown up daughters living in the cantonment. Anyway, because of Commanding Officer's inert role, Lieutenant Hafiz took control of the battalion. After the war, Hafiz retired as a Major and joined in the politics and became minister. However, when Hafiz had been deeply thinking about the impending challenge, young Second Lieutenant Anwar joined him. Indiscriminate employment of automatics worried Hafiz for which he wanted to avoid a fight and leave the cantonment as quickly as possible. Pakistani troops launched attack from north, east and southern sides and western side was covered by sustained firing. Hafiz thought of extricating through western side.¹³³ During the extrication, Lieutenant Anwar received a Machine Gun burst in his waist and died. His

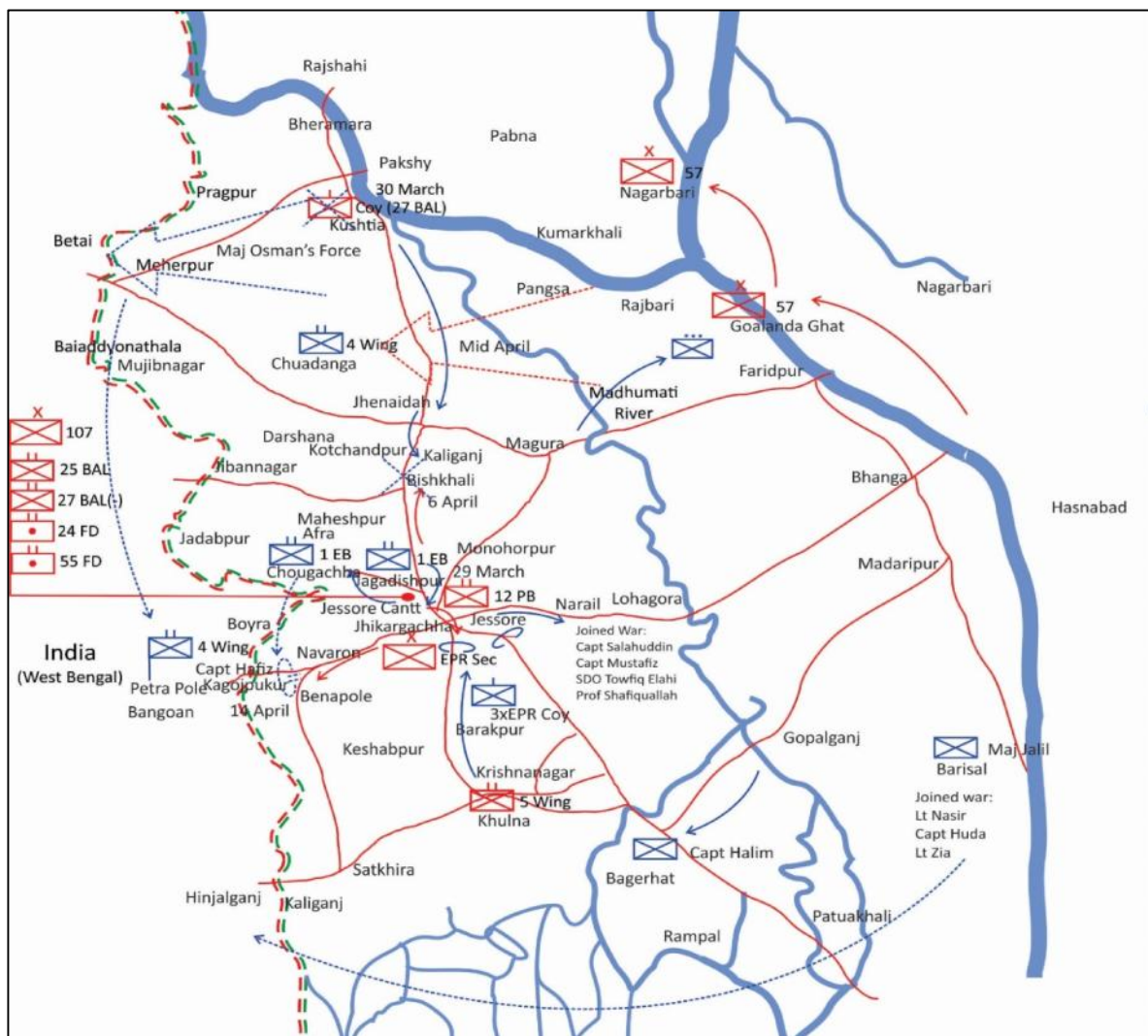


Fig. 18. Initial Resistance-Jessore Area. 'Bijoyketon' - Liberation War Museum. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

departed soul lying in rest at Hybatpur village located on Jessore-Jhenaidah road. As a mark of respect, a girl's school located in Dhaka has been named after this martyr. Like Anwar many soldiers got killed while others extricated through Khitibdia and were asked to concentrate at Chougachha. The Pakistanis buried those dead bodies in a mass grave. Later, the people of Monohorpur village recovered 17 such bodies and buried those near Monohorpur Lake. Much later, Headquarters 55 Infantry Division constructed the existing memorial and named it as "Raktareen".¹³⁴ 7 Field Ambulance also revolted and some of its troops had joined 1 East Bengal. The Bengali Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel MS Hye and Captain Abul Kalam were brutally killed by the enemy in their office. That office is still preserved to commemorate the sacrifice made by Lieutenant Colonel MS Hye. As one enters Jessore Cantonment, the gateway titled "Abdul Hye Sarak" from the north eastern side near Santala is named as a mark of reverence for this martyr.¹³⁵ Outside the cantonment in Jessore the valiant East Pakistan Rifles members with the support of others freed the town by 31 March. These East Pakistan Rifles elements got reinforced when another 3 companies joined from 5 Wing Khulna. Captain Halim who was on leave at Gopalganj locally organized a group of 50 fighters eventually joined the forces operating in Jessore and took control by 1 April.

Towards north, Major Osman decided to capture Kushtia without delay and instructed bordering East Pakistan Rifles elements to join at Chuadanga. Captain Azam led the three-pronged attack on the morning of 30 March.¹³⁶ As per the plan, one group blocked Jessore-Jhenaidah road to prevent enemy movement from Jessore, one group had advanced towards Kushtia, one group advanced along Meherpur-Kushtia road and another group advanced along Bheramara-Kushtia road (see fig. 19). The determined dawn attack shattered the Pakistanis following which they withdrew from Kushtia by evening 31 March leaving behind the casualties. In spite of repeated request for reinforcement from Kushtia, Jessore replied, "Reinforcement not possible, try to live on your own".¹³⁷ In this operation around 20 enemy soldiers got killed in action. By 1 April, Freedom Fighters secured Kushtia. This early achievement boosted the morale of the Freedom Fighters and this was highlighted in "The Hindustan Standard", Calcutta, 4 April, 1971 where it was said 'Kushtia is one of the few districts completely liberated from the Pakistan Army.' The Kushtia town was taken by the Mukti Bahini after a three-pronged assault on the Army on March 30. Recovered items included five 106 mm RR, eight 7.62 mm Machine Gun, ten 7.62 mm LMG, thirty-one 7.62 mm Sub Machine Gun, eighty 7.62 mm Rifles, twelve jeeps, five pick up, seven 3 ton and

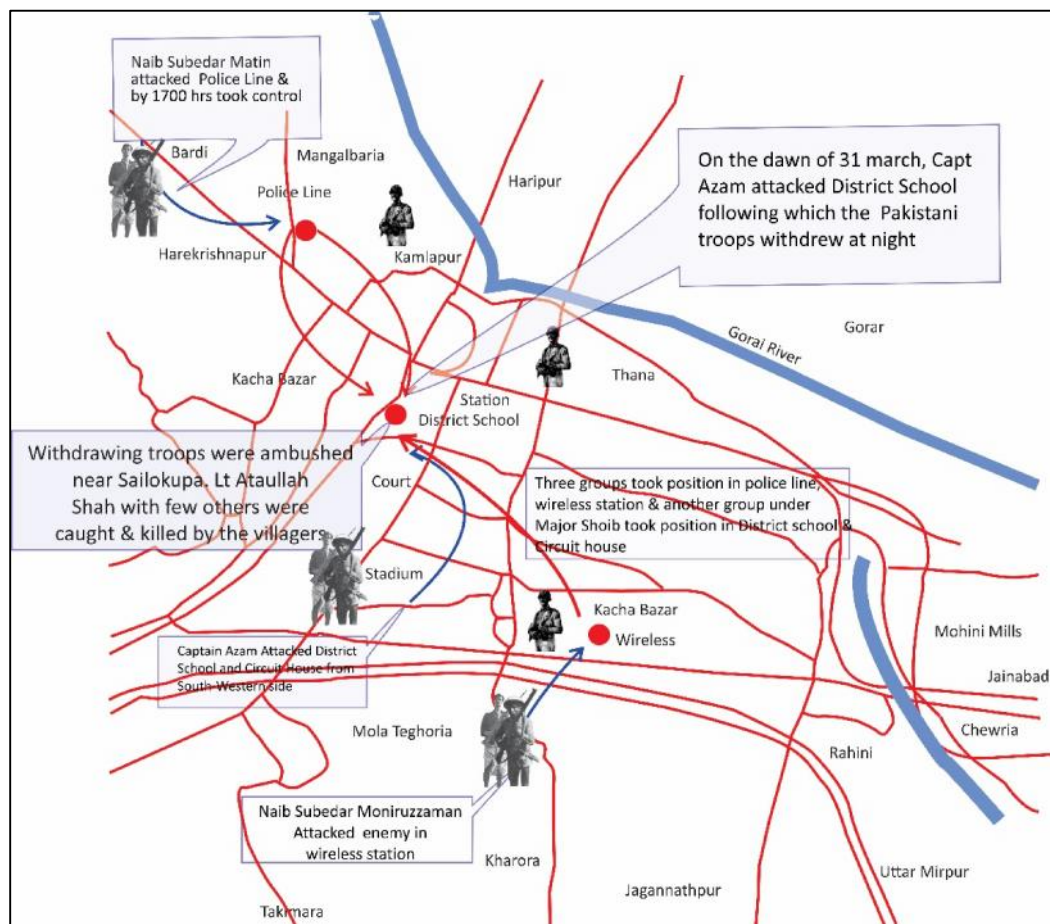


Fig. 19. Kushtia Attack. Wahab, ATM Abdul. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni, 2005. PP,128-130

four wireless sets.¹³⁸ During Kushtia attack, Sub Divisional Police Officer Mahabubuddin Ahmed performed well in defending Jhenaidah area and Dr Ashabul Haque provided significant assistance. After the initial onslaught, when 1 East Bengal was moving towards Chougachha, they came to learn about the rebellion of local East Pakistan Rifles soldiers. East Pakistan Rifles troops welcomed Hafiz's contingent and took them to Maslia Border outpost. On 1 April, East Pakistan Rifles troops left Maslia to join Chuadanga. 1 East Bengal had a rough strength of 1

officer, 10 Junior Commissioned Officers and 225 soldiers. On 2 April, one company took up defence in Salua under Naik Subedar AB Siddique which was about 5 kilometers to the west of Jessore Cantonment. This company dominated surrounding areas by aggressive patrolling. A patrol led by Havildar Abul Hashem and Havildar Mohammad Ibrahim ambushed on a Pakistani patrol that killed six soldiers on the spot injuring another eight. Another officer Captain ATM Abdul Wahab also made his way out of cantonment and reached Simakhali on

Jessore-Magura road where he met a group of armed people led by Havildar Akhter belonged to an artillery regiment. Wahab took control of this group and moved towards Jessore. The Pakistan military did not sit idle. On 2 April, they hurriedly brought 12 Punjab to Jessore by air. Until then the East Pakistan Rifles, police, students, farmers and people from all walks of life surrounded the cantonment. On 3 April, The Pakistanis cleared Jessore by employing a company each from 12 Punjab and 25 Baluch and 210 Field Battery. During the week of April 4 to April 10, Italian Catholic Missionary Father Alberton narrated that the streets and houses of Jessore were full of bodies of local residents who had been executed in batches by the Pakistani soldiers and the 'rajakars' or collaborators. One of the priests estimated that, 10,000 in Jessore and its environs had been slaughtered by the Pakistanies.¹³⁹ After the fall of Jessore on 4 April the Freedom Fighters drifted towards Narail under Captain Halim. During Jessore battle, Member of Provincial Assembly retired Lieutenant Matiur Rahman (Agartala conspiracy case) valiantly fought against the enemy.¹⁴⁰ After clearing Jessore, 12 Punjab and 201 Field Battery advanced towards Benapole. Handing over the responsibility to the Company of 25 Baluch, 12 Punjab returned Jessore to join 57 Brigade at Kushtia. Because of mounting enemy pressure, Major Osman had been suffering from acute shortage of officers. It was a great relief when on 2/3 April Towfiq Elahi, Sub Divisional Officer, Meherpur and Professor Shafiquallah from Jhenaida Cadet College joined the war.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile Captain Wahab losing confidence in the irregulars moved from Jessore towards Magura, he was happy to see Captain Salahuddin and Captain Mustafizur Rahman who had fled from Dhaka to join war on 3 April. They all added strength to the officers state.

The noteworthy officers who voluntarily joined the war in respective areas included Mr Kamaluddin, Sub Divisional Officer, Narail, Waliul Islam, Sub Divisional Officer, Magura, and Shah Farid, Sub Divisional Officer, Goalando. After the Capture of Kushtia, a big chunk of land stretching from Goalanda to Chuadanga - Meherpur came under control of Major Osman. Keeping some troops in Kushtia, Osman sent rest of the forces towards Jhenaida. They took up position in Magura, Bisakhali and Kotchandpur with a view to stopping enemy advance from Jessore. On 3 April, Captain Azam arranged to send those recovered arms, ammunition, transports and automatics to Wing Headquarters at Chuadanga. Major Osman offered some of these weapons to Lieutenant Hafiz during his meeting on 4 April. Around the same time the French Television Corporation had arrived Chuadanga and extensively covered the war activities that earned wider circulation for the Freedom Fighters.¹⁴² Meanwhile Mr Tajuddin with few Indian high officials came to Jibannagar to

meet Major Osman. On meeting Mr Tajuddin, Inspector General Border Security Force and Lieutenant Colonel Chakrabarty, Commander 76 Border Security Force Battalion, Krishnanagar, Major Osman demanded some heavy weapons which they assured to provide. By this time, Pakistan Army advanced from Jessore and launched an attack on Bisakhali in the morning of 6 April. Because of vigilance our troops snatched the initiative and suppressed the enemy. After Bisakhali encounter, Major Osman deployed his force south of Kaliganj about 5 kilometers away from the cantonment with a view to avoiding long range firing.¹⁴³ After 6 April Pakistan Army brought in more reinforcement. Major Osman had been eagerly waiting for support from the Border Security Force which was not forthcoming. Fighting was going on all over within southwestern region. On 8 April, Captain Halim's defence in Daitala, Narail came under attack which the Freedom Fighters repulsed killing many enemies. Next day when the enemy had come with air support, the Freedom Fighters shifted their position to Gopalganj. On 11 April, while patrolling in Kotchandpur area, Osman's patrol came to learn about the movement of a Pakistani convoy comprising 10 vehicles and they were heading from Jessore to Kaliganj in the evening. Handful of soldiers reinforced by another section of local Muzahids ambushed the convoy when 3 transports instantly got off the road and the soldiers tried to disembark. While the Freedom Fighters lobbed grenades that exploded 4 vehicles and killed another 10 soldiers. Next day the Pakistani soldiers carried out vandalism in the surrounding areas. In Gopalganj the Pakistanis succeeded in evicting the Freedom Fighters with assistance of the local collaborators. As a result, on 11 May our forces entered India via Boira border.

Situation was developing very fast in the neighbouring region. On 12 April, sources revealed that Pakistani 57 Brigade would be approaching towards Goalando Ghat from Aricha end.¹⁴⁴ Osman thought if this brigade was allowed a safe landing, it would influence the operation of his sector and therefore a platoon from Magura was tasked to hinder their landing. The platoon engaged the enemy as the enemy approached the Ghat on 13 April. Stiff resistance forced the Pakistanis to drift towards north and land at Nagarbari Ghat next day.¹⁴⁵ However, by mid-April the Pakistani Force captured Chuadanga following which Major Osman shifted his force towards the border in Meherpur. As Pakistani Forces captured Meherpur, Major Osman shifted his Headquarter to Isakhali Border outpost. On the other hand, by 14 April Lieutenant Hafiz leaving Chougachha took up defence in Kagojpukur area on Jessore-Benapole highway with nearly 500 soldiers comprising regulars and East Pakistan Rifles soldiers.¹⁴⁶

Major Osman and Lieutenant Hafiz, so long fought independently, now came together near Benapole. On 17 April when Lieutenant Hafiz went to Betai Border outpost opposite Meherpur, he persuaded Major Osman to relocate his headquarters including forces to Benapole.¹⁴⁷ Later, Major Osman shifted his headquarter to Petra Pole opposite Benapole. On the same day, there was a grand ceremony organized to form the provisional government of Bangladesh. The Cabinet Ministry took oath in bordering village of Baiddyonathtala Mango Grooves, sixteen kilometers south of Meherpur which later came to be known as historic Mujibnagar - a place where Lord Clive had taken over Bengal from the local Muslim chieftain.¹⁴⁸ The forces of Major Osman and Lieutenant Hafiz combined made a very formidable defence astride Benapole-Jessore highway in Kagojpukur area with two East Pakistan Rifles companies up and two infantry companies to the rear. This was about 4 kilometers away from Benapole towards Jessore. On 19 April, Colonel Osmani paid a brief visit to Benapole to see for himself the situation on ground that raised the morale of the fighting soldiers. Meanwhile our reconnaissance patrol confirmed enemy position in general area of Navaron. On 21 April Lieutenant Hafiz quickly launched a raid on that position.¹⁴⁹ On the twilight of 23 April, enemy artillery had been intermittently pounding on the defensive positions that shattered our troops. For most of them it was the first sight of a full scale conventional attack with artillery support. It was not possible to hold the enemy for long as such the forward companies retreated while the depth companies were holding on to their positions. At this point of time, Border Security Force Officer Lieutenant Colonel Megh Singh arrived by a jeep just to cheer up Hafiz's effort. Going beyond the borders and diplomacy, Megh Singh became overtly expressive about his feelings for Bangladesh. He even expressed his keen desire to resign Border Security Force and fight as Mukti Bahini private.¹⁵⁰ The soldiers had firm conviction and were waiting for the enemy to take them on. Instead of attacking on the depth locations, enemy tried to bypass the main defence and reach to the rear. Sensing enemy design of battle, our forces readjusted their positions ahead of Benapole Check post. Gradually a strong defensive position was organized in Benapole Check post area with a company while others were pulled back for rest and refit. It was about first week of May, Prime Minister Tajuddin paid a visit to the forward defended localities. He talked to the soldiers and inquired about the wellbeing of their family members.¹⁵¹ Benapole Check post defence had been the last island on Bangladesh's soil for the forces of Major Osman and Lieutenant Hafiz.

Barisal remained somewhat unconnected with the rest of the region. After clearing the districts in the immediate vicinity, Pakistan Army reached in outlying areas. The volunteers of Barisal organized themselves under Captain Jalil who hailed from this area. He was an armoured corps soldier and later through competitive tests became an officer. Prior to March 1971, he was serving in 12 Cavalry stationed in Multan, West Pakistan.¹⁵² While the country got plunged into the war, incidentally he had been on leave in Barisal from where he joined the war. On 17 April when two Pakistani Sabre Jets strafed Barisal city people fled for safety. Gradually other officers from far and near started joining the war to name few Lieutenant Nasir, Captain Huda, Lieutenant Zia joined and others.¹⁵³ The Freedom Fighters had few weapons collected from the Barisal police armory. Towards the end of April Member of National Assembly Mr Nurul Islam Manju brought some weapons from India and conveyed that Indian Army is willing to provide more support. So, leaving Lieutenant Mehedi in Patuakhali, Lieutenant Zia in Barisal and Lieutenant Naser in Khulna area, Major Jalil discreetly moving through the channels of Sundarbans started for India. On the morning of 24 April, Major Jalil arrived at a place across the border named Parmogoti where Border Security Force Inspector Mr PK Gosh cordially received them. After scrutinizing various details they were directed to Hinjalganj Border Security Force outpost. The road to this Border outpost had been extremely hazardous as the opposite bank was held by the Pakistani Forces. With the assistance of Border Security Force Captain Pandey, Major Jalil moved to Barrackpur via Hasnabad.¹⁵⁴ After a while, Major Jalil arrived at the Officers Mess of 72 Border Security Force Battalion where he met 72 Border Security Force Commander Mr Mukherjee who in turn took them to Deputy Inspector General Mr Majumder. On the same evening, Mr Majumder took the Bangladeshi officers to meet the Inspector General Mr Rustamjee at his residence at Asam House, Kolkatta. On 24 April Mr Rustamjee took Major Jalil to Major Osman who fought fiercely with the Pakistan military in Kushtia district. After series of encounters he was poised at Patrapole near Benapole. Major Osman had a lot of small arms at his disposal and Mr Mukherjee persuaded him to spare few for Major Jalil. He was convinced and spared a truckload of weapons for Major Jalil. Meanwhile, Major Jalil paid a visit to the Eastern Regional Command Headquarters at Fort William and met Lieutenant General Jagjeet Singh Aurora. On hearing about the fall of Barisal on 25 April, Major Jalil started for Barisal using two launches. It was a stormy night and any knowledge on map reading would fail. As such the convoy relied much on the knowledge of the local drivers. Unfortunately, the convoy came under Pakistani gunboat attack. It was difficult to

identify the exact location of the launches. Yet Major Jalil along with other members effectively engaged the gunboats with Machine Gun and grenade destroying one completely while deterred the second one to drift away. Later they identified this place as Gabur. Major Jalil and his team disembarked here in anticipation of Pakistani reprisal. While he was searching for the second launch, it was found lying on the shore completely damaged and its members deserted. Even the accomplices of Major Jalil except the driver deserted him. He lost virtually all the arms and ammunition including his team got split. The local people of this area seemed strongly against the Freedom Fighters. They captured Lieutenant Naser, Member of National Assembly Mr Mohiuddin including 26 others and handed them over to the Pakistani Forces. Despite such risks Major Jalil sought refuge in the house of a local cleric. Having passed the night in his residence Major Jalil managed to reach Hinjalganj with the support of the local guides. Eventually all the Freedom Fighters gathered there except those unfortunate 26 detainees. Then these forces reorganized them in terms of training and organization. Bangladesh Forces Headquarters including Colonel Osmani did not like the way Major Jalil contacted Indian authority violating usual chain of command.

NORTH WESTERN REGION

General

This is a vast area lay north of Padma and west of Jamuna with Indian Territory surrounding other sides. It comprises all the north-western districts of Bangladesh. The area being little higher is less susceptible to flood especially in the north and the western proximities. As existing, this region was connected with the southern part of the country through Hardinge Bridge over Ganga at Pakshy and through Nagarbari ferry ghat to the east towards Dhaka. It is only few years back when the newly constructed Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge significantly improved the communication system with north Bengal. Besides the strategic significance this region is famous for the revolutionary spirit of the people. When the administration had become hopelessly dishonest and inefficient, and the mass of the people had been reduced to the deepest poverty under the Mughals and the East India Company, they rebelled to reverse their fate.¹⁵⁵ The role played by the people of this region in 1971 once again glorified their heroic past.

Initial Disposition of Forces

Pakistani 23 Infantry Brigade was located in Rangpur Cantonment. Of its outfits 3 East Bengal, 26 Frontier Force and 23 Field Regiment had been stationed at Syedpur and 29 Cavalry was at Rangpur. 25 Punjab was stationed at Rajshahi. It also had one signal and an engineer company in its order of battle, which were based in Rangpur. 3 East Bengal was one of the traditional Bengal regiments raised on 4 February 1962 in Comilla Cantonment. Lieutenant Colonel Fazal Karim a non-Bengali officer was the Commanding Officer. Major Wahed Akhter was the Second-in-Command and belonged to the same stock. Including Commanding Officer and Second-in-Command total 6 out of 12 officers had been West Pakistanis. 23 Brigade used to be commanded by Brigadier Abdullah Malik.¹⁵⁶ This region shared the longest territorial boundary with India which had been vulnerable to border skirmishes, smuggling and other issues. Perhaps for the similar consideration 5 out of total 16 East Pakistan Rifles Wings were located here. There had been 2 East Pakistan Rifles sectors in this region namely Rajshahi Sector (4 East Pakistan Rifles) and Dinajpur Sector (5 East Pakistan Rifles). 10 East Pakistan Rifles Wing Headquarters under Dinajpur Sector was located in Rangpur.¹⁵⁷ Non-Bengali Major Mohammad Kazmi was Wing Commander. He had two Assistant Wing Commanders namely non-Bengali Captain Mohammad Ali Bhutto and Bengali Captain Nowajesh Uddin.¹⁵⁸ This Wing had 5 companies and 1 support platoon. These companies were mostly commanded by the Bengali junior leaders except one. Of these companies, B Company under Subedar Abdul Zaman was at Chilmari, C Company under Subedar Arab Ali was at Mughal Hat and D Company under Subedar Borhanuddin was at Patgram, A Company under Subedar Nur Mohammad was at Joypurhat and E Company under non-Bengali Subedar Atower Khan and Subedar Major Osman Gani was at Rangpur.¹⁵⁹

25 March and the Aftermath

Rangpur

Situation in Rangpur started developing very fast over the death of Lieutenant Abbas. When the Pakistan military were denied logistics including daily subsistence by the locals, Lieutenant Abbas from 29 Cavalry came forward to do the job. While trying to collect those he terrorized the people and applied force. The people fumed with anger had been looking for an opportunity to take revenge. Like other days on 23 March when Lieutenant Abbas went out of Rangpur Cantonment the message spread like wild fire in the neighbouring villages of Sonmanipur, Domodpur, Borobari and Monohorpur.¹⁶⁰ People rallied behind young and courageous Shahed Ali and attacked Lieutenant Abbas

including four armed soldiers who accompanied him. Lieutenant Abbas including others sustained critical injuries even before understanding anything.¹⁶¹ They later succumbed to death and the incident brought misery for the people of surrounding villages. On 25 March, while the Pakistanis were busy with pre-burial formalities one MI-8 helicopter landed from Dhaka carrying a military delegation that comprised Colonel Saadullah, Commanding Officer 25 Punjab, Lieutenant Colonel Shafqut Baluch who was awaiting at Dhaka after returning from Hazz and Lieutenant Colonel Taz, Grade-1 Staff Officer (Intelligence).¹⁶² Instead of joining in the pre-funeral rituals they held a closed door meeting in the residence of Brigadier Malik and quickly returned to Dhaka. Many thought the purpose of their visit was to coordinate with the local Commanders regarding the plan of 'Operation Searchlight'. After the delegation had left only few hrs remained to raise the curtain of 'Operation Searchlight'. As per plan, 23 Infantry Brigade was tasked to ensure the security of Rangpur and Syedpur town, disarm 3 East Bengal, take over radio station, telephone exchange and other key installations, arrest political activists, take control of ammunition dump at Bogra and if possible disarm East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters and the Reserve company at Bogra.¹⁶³

On 25 March around mid day, Brigadier Malik called for an urgent conference where the Commanding Officers participated. Captain Nowajesh - the only Bengali officer also joined the conference but was technically turned back. He was instead asked to look after the law and order situation in the town.¹⁶⁴ Commanding Officer 29 Cavalry Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Hossain shrewdly employed the non-Bengalis for the protection of cantonment. Amidst all suspicion the Pakistan Army started executing the tasks of 'Operation Searchlight' immediately after 1200 hrs. When Member of National Assembly Advocate Azizur Rahman and Member of National Assembly Dr Solaiman Mandol were picked up from their residence and later shown arrest that caused much agitation. In the meantime, news came about the rebellion of Bengali officers and men of 7 Wing located at Naogaon. Bengali Wing Commander Major Nazmul opened the armory and distributed arms and ammunition to the Bengali soldiers. Later they took up defence guarding approaches to Rajshahi and Bogra. In Bogra Pakistan Army had an artillery unit including ammunition store and 25 Punjab was located in Rajshahi.¹⁶⁵

When Captain Nowajesh was not allowed to join the conference and he could sense a kind of conspiracy behind this. In anticipation on the night of 25 March he went out of the

city across Tista River along with handful East Pakistan Rifles members and took refuge in Tagraihat village (see fig. 20).

On 28 March Captain Nowajesh held a meeting where Subedar Arab Ali, Havildar Abul Hossain Bhuiyan, Sub Divisional Officer Mamunur Rahman including Awami League politicians joined. All the Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members were instructed to arrest or neutralize the non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members and advance towards Rangpur. As planned by 30 March Nowajesh took up defence on the bank of Tista, area ahead of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat Airport and Saptanachar with a company each.¹⁶⁶



Fig. 20. Initial Resistance in Northwesten Region. 'Bijoyketon' - Liberation War Museum. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

Nowajesh established his headquarters at Kurigram. On 1 April while Major Ejaz Mostafa of 26 Freedom Fighters with Officer Commanding Kaunia came for a reconnaissance near Tista River Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members got an easy prey. After offering little resistance the Pakistani Major with Officer Commanding and section plus soldiers got completely annihilated. This early success raised the morale of our soldiers in the entire region.¹⁶⁷ On 2 April Pakistani Forces launched an attack on the defence around Tista River. In the face of sustained artillery pounding the East Pakistan Rifles members held their nerve and allowed them to close in. As they came very near the East Pakistan Rifles members engaged them killing few on that occasion. After repeated attacks East Pakistan Rifles members readjusted their position to the rear. During Pakistani attack of 4 April East Pakistan Rifles lost control of the airport. Later the Pakistan military brought in reinforcement utilizing this airport. Around this time, the Pakistan military enjoyed full support of the local non-Bengalis. East Pakistan Rifles forces under Captain Nowajesh had to readjust positions in Kularghat, Rajarhat, Saptibari and Kaliganj areas putting one company each in every place. On 8 April Captain Nowajesh held another conference where it was decided that Member of Constituent Assembly Riazuddin and Sub Divisional Officer Mamunur Rashid would contact with Indian authority for obtaining support. Later on the Indian authority provided some assistance in terms of heavy weapons. Around this time many Ansars, Mujahids, students and farmers spontaneously joined. On 12 April the East Pakistan Rifles forces carried out an attack on Pakistani position at Lalmonirhat. Although the Pakistanis lost many lives initially but towards the end they strongly repulsed when the East Pakistan Rifles troops fell back. Meanwhile Pakistani Forces stepped up their operations and attacked East Pakistan Rifles position when they took up new defence occupying Kakina, Patesshwarighat, Rowmari and Phulbari areas. In the face of increasing attack, East Pakistan Rifles had to abandon Patesshari defence by 27 May. Failing to hold ground East Pakistan Rifles forces finally took shelter in Shahebganj area. By 30 May Rangpur fell in the hands of the Pakistani Forces.

Syedpur

Like elsewhere the soldiers of Syedpur Cantonment got equally stimulated by the developments in Dhaka and surrounding areas. To neutralize 3 East Bengal, the Pakistan

military split the battalion and dispatched it in different locations. Commander 23 Infantry Brigade and Acting Garrison Commander Lieutenant Colonel Arshad Quarishi, Commanding Officer 23 Field also gathered local support by establishing contact with the local non-Bengalis. Major Amzad, Brigade Major of 23 Infantry Brigade - known more for his pro-Pakistani stand and remained so until he was taken out of operational area on request in mid-April 1971. He was conversant with the operational design of the Pakistanis and could have assisted the Bengal regiment and the East Pakistan Rifles had he not chosen to be with the Pakistanis. Later this officer rose to the rank of Major General in post independent Bangladesh and turned as a business tycoon after retirement. Of the four officers of the Brigade Headquarters, except the Brigade Commander others were Bengalis; yet 3 East Bengal got so bitterly crushed during the initial resistance phase. Prior to 25 March, 1 platoon of A Company with its Major Safayet Hossain and Subedar Rahmatullah took up position in Parbatipur while rest of the platoons remained at Rangpur. C Company led by Captain Ashraf deployed in Mandalpara near Syedpur. B and D companies were sent to Ghoraghat under Major Nizam (see fig. 20). Lieutenant Mokhles and Second Lieutenant Rafique accompanied him and stayed at Ghoraghat and Palashbari respectively. Mortar platoon without mortars was placed in nearby powerhouse. All heavy weapons including wireless sets were taken under brigade control. Rear Party including the battalion headquarters and few members of the Headquarters Company remained in Syedpur. Captain Anwar being the Quartermaster was left in the rear to look after the administrative details. On 28 March, Captain Ashraf came to the rear and met Captain Anwar. Another Bengali officer Lieutenant Salam of 23 Field Regiment also joined them and they together discussed about the ongoing situation and opted to fight for the country. Other 2 regiments of the brigade were supposed to move to Bogra by 31 March night. Considering this to be the right moment this courageous band of subalterns decided to attack Syedpur Cantonment. But all plans went in vein as 26 Frontier Force and 23 Field Regiment instead of going to Bogra attacked the Bengali soldiers on the same night. The battle raged until 1000 hrs next morning after which the Bengali soldiers extricated from the cantonment and concentrated near Phulbari.¹⁶⁸

On 31 March, Commander instructed Commanding Officer 3 East Bengal to bring back the elements of 26 Frontier Force and 23 Field Artillery who were earlier sent to Bogra to quell the East Pakistan Rifles uprising. Accordingly, Lieutenant Colonel Fazal Karim along with Adjutant Lieutenant Siraj, 3 Non Commissioned Officers and 30 Other

Ranks moved towards Rangpur and Bogra. On 31 March at about 1600 hrs, 26 Frontier Force and 23 Field Artillery launched an attack on 3 East Bengal position at Ghoraghat which Major Nizam was commanding.¹⁶⁹ In this encounter 13 Pakistani soldiers lost their lives. At this stage, East Pakistan Rifles 5 Sector Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Qureshi with few others deliberately bluffed the Bengalis by raising white flags apparently to show their trust which was never to be. Although while talking to Major Nizam, they expressed that they opened up considering 3 East Bengal as East Pakistan Rifles forces. However, Major Nizam offered them tea and while departing Lieutenant Rafique went to see them off. Shrewd Commanding Officer managed to pick up Lieutenant Rafique in his jeep. During the same time, Commanding Officer 3 East Bengal Lieutenant Colonel Fazal Karim had been coming back from Bogra and met with the convoy of Lieutenant Colonel Qureshi. Cunning Qureshi disarmed all the Bengalis and put them in the centre of the convoy while Lieutenant Siraj and Lieutenant Rafique got an opportunity to talk possibly for the last time. The convoy reached Syedpur Cantonment when the officers and troops were segregated and later brutally killed. About this tragic incident Lieutenant Colonel SSH Bokhari, Commanding Officer 29 Cavalry, in a confessional statement made before the Hamoodur Rahman Commission as witness number 244, stated that 'In Rangpur two officers and 30 men were disposed of without trial. It may have happened in other stations as well'.¹⁷⁰

In spite of this initial setback, on 1 April, Subedar Rahmatullah killed his non-Bengali commander Major Shafayet and concentrated at Phulbari with his soldiers. The event brought back the spirit of the Bengali members. On 3 April, B and D Companies also joined Phulbari from Ghoraghat and the strength rose to nearly 450 and the battalion was organized into 3 companies. It was in dire need of leadership preferably by some senior officer. The then Lieutenant Colonel HM Ershad was then availing leave in Rangpur and surprisingly left for his duty station at West Pakistan on 4 April.¹⁷¹ Bangladesh missed his service and none knows for sure if it was for his wishful escape from combat or otherwise. He later became the Chief of Army Staff and the President of Bangladesh for long nine years. Major Nizam had to take over command of the battalion while Captain Ashraf, Lieutenant Mokhles and Captain Anwar got a company each. It was decided that Captain Ashraf would move towards Syedpur via Dinajpur. While approaching Syedpur just about 3 kilometres short of Syedpur, Captain Ashraf's contingent encountered the Pakistani opposition. Lieutenant Mokhles was to join Syedpur via Nilphamari. One

company under Captain Anwar along with Headquarters Company moved from Phulbari to Kholahati.¹⁷² On 10 April Pakistan Army attacked Kholahati position following which Captain Anwar's company fell back to Phulbari. Captain Ashraf and Lieutenant Mokhles also joined Phulbari with their companies. Again on 11 April when Pakistan Army attacked Phulbari - a fierce fight took place. Although pitched battles the role played by the officers and junior leaders had been superb. They did not have any fire support neither any anti-tank protection necessary for such encounters. But the lessons from these battles had far reaching effects. However, in the face of Pakistani attack, 3 East Bengal moved to Charkhai area keeping Captain Ashraf's company on Phulbari - Charkhai road, Captain Anwar's company on Ghoraghat-Charkhai road and Lieutenant Mokhles was in the depth position.¹⁷³

Intelligence sources revealed that the Pakistan Forces would take over Bogra on 13 April. To prevent their further advance towards Hilli via Joypurhat-Pachbibi, one company from 3 East Bengal took up defence on Pachbibi-Hilli road while 2 other companies remained in Charkhai. On 19 April, Pakistani Forces attacked Hilli from Pachbibi side and the battle lasted for 4 hrs. Finally, the Pakistani Forces withdrew leaving behind many casualties. To reinforce Hilli, soon 2 companies from Charkhai joined. On 20 April Pakistan Army attacked Hilli defence. Although Pakistani Forces withdrew but their artillery shelling killed civilians including few Indian citizens. Afterwards on request from Border Security Force Colonel Mukherjee, District Magistrate of West Bengal including Police Super, 3 East Bengal abandoned Hilli position and occupied Kurmile Basic Training Institute in Kamalpara area by late night 20 April. By then 3 East Bengal strength reduced to 250 including all ranks.¹⁷⁴

Dinajpur

5 East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters was located in Dinajpur and it comprised of 8 Wing which was co-located with the Sector Headquarters. 9 Wing was at Thakurgaon and 10 Wing at Rangpur (see fig. 20). The Sector Commander was a non-Bengali Lieutenant Colonel Tarique Rasul Quraishi. Second in Command Mohammad Jubayeri, Adjutant Captain Javed Firoj was non-Bengali. Quarter Master Captain Nazir Ahmed and Medical Officer Major Moksul Hussain Chowdhury was Bengali.¹⁷⁵ On the other side, non-Bengali Major Amin Tareque was commanding 8 Wing and he had one Bengali Assistant Wing Commander named Captain Nazrul Haque. Another Assistant

Wing Commander Captain Julfiqer Ali Chima was non-Bengali. Besides, the wing had few Bengali Junior Commissioned Officer. There have been nearly 300 Bengali soldiers. Since the beginning of March non-Bengali soldiers had been called back from the bordering areas and the Bengalis were relieved of important duties. For improving cohesiveness, Sector Commander arranged a special dinner for the soldiers of East Pakistan Rifles and 26 Frontier Force but who knew that it would instead antagonize them against each other. This Frontier Force Company took position in Dinajpur Circuit House sometime prior to the election of 1970 and time to time got reinforced in strength. However, because of strong dislikes by the Bengali members the Sector Commander asked the Frontier Force soldiers to into civil dress. Later on as they returned, it was too late. On 25 March night, Lieutenant Colonel Tarique Rasul called for a meeting at his residence where all the officers of 8 and 9 Wing joined. When the Bengali soldiers came to know this, it created both fear and suspicion. Again on 28 March when the Sector Commander called for an exclusive meeting of the Bengali officers, everyone thought they would be killed, but the Pakistanis could not execute that. Major Moqsul Hossain, the Medical Officer, East Pakistan Rifles 8 Wing reckoned, 'if the junior leaders and the Non Commissioned Officers did not come forward, the Pakistanis would have killed all the officers on that occasion.'¹⁷⁶ After the conference the Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members were anticipating an attack and considering which Havildar Sayed distributed some arms amongst the Bengali members and cautioned them. As anticipated, on the same day at about 1500 hrs the Pakistani troops from the Circuit House started firing at the East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters. Havildar Muslim quickly organized the Mortar Platoon and took up defence on the bank of Kanchan River. He also contacted the local population and they provided necessary supports. Many East Pakistan Rifles soldiers who were deployed in different parts of the city and in the bordering areas after hearing this joined the Sector Headquarters. East Pakistan Rifles Rear Headquarters was located at Kanchan junction and Subedar Major Osman Gani of 10 Wing took over its command while Subedar Major Abdur Rab of 8 Wing became the operational commander.¹⁷⁷

On the other hand, Basudevpur Company Commander of 8 Wing Subedar MA Sukur arresting all the non-Bengali members concentrated in Phulbari and took up defence astride the road by 29 March. On the night of 29 March, Sector Commander Lieutenant Colonel Qureshi, Second-in-Command Major Jubayeri, Sector Adjutant Captain Javed

Firoj, Assistant Wing Commander, 8 Wing, Captain Julfiqer Ali Chima including few soldiers of 26 Frontier Force and non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members moved for Syedpur Cantonment. As they came close to Phulbari, Subedar Sukur and his forces engaged them. Finding it hard to negotiate, the Pakistanis returned to the cantonment. During the fight, non-Bengali Major Amin Tarique and another officer got killed.¹⁷⁸ On 30 March when Subedar Sukur tried to move towards Dinajpur, the Pakistani Forces attacked them. Failing to subdue them, Sukur reorganized his forces and at about 1600 hrs attacked the Pakistanis. This time, the Pakistani Forces accepting some losses moved towards Syedpur Cantonment. 26 Frontier Force kept up their pressure on Dinajpur Sector and tried to capture Sector Rear Kanchon junction. The fighting between the Frontier Force and the East Pakistan Rifles had been so fierce that the Pakistanis struggled to find respite.

It can be said that on 31 March Dinajpur town got liberated. Habilder Iddris with a patrol freed the families of Major Moksul Hussain Chowdhury and Captain Nazrul from captivity. The same group also rescued Dinajpur Deputy Commissioner Mr Faiz Uddin Ahmed, Superintendent of Police Mr Hashem, District Judge Mr Hannan Chowdhury and Additional Deputy Commissioner Mr MA Kashem from detention.

Thakurgaon

East Pakistan Rifles 9 Wing was stationed in the bordering town of Thakurgaon and was commanded by non-Bengali Major Mohammed Hossain. Non-Bengali Captain Navid Alam was the Second-in-Command. The wing comprised of 5 companies and a support platoon. D Company under Subedar Hafiz was co-located with the Sector Headquarters (see fig. 20). Other company headquarters were located in bordering areas of Ruhia, Chilahati, Tejulia and Panchagar.¹⁷⁹ Most of the company commanders were Bengali. Since 26 March a suffocating situation had engulfed entire Thakurgaon. Adequate measures were taken to protect the Wing Headquarters by digging trenches around the headquarters premises. Outside the barracks they enforced strict curfew. On 27 March, they went on rampage and opened fire mowing down several people on the street. Amidst fluid situation, the Bengali Junior Commissioned Officers of the Wing held an emergency meeting where Subedar Major Mohamad Kazimuddin, Subedar Abdul Hafiz, Naib Subedar Matiur Rahman, Havildar Abu Taleb and Naik Abdul Hakim joined.¹⁸⁰ They planned to attack the Pakistanis on the dawn of 28 March but for some unavoidable

reasons it could not be executed. On 29 March when Subedar Hafiz went out on a patrol along Thakurgaon-Dinajpur highway he met with few Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members who fled from the Sector Headquarters, Dinajpur. From these East Pakistan Rifles members, Subedar Hafiz came to know about the Pakistani Military action. He was very disturbed by the news and was adamant to do something. He took Subedar Major Kazimuddin along and about 2215 hrs on the same night attacked the Wing Commander's residence. At the first shot he killed the Wing Commander's body guard Havildar Zaman. Because of their alertness others could not be neutralized all together.¹⁸¹ It was a bold action by any measure. All bordering companies were also ordered to kill the Pakistani soldiers and concentrate at Thakurgaon. Amidst such a situation Pakistani Captain Navid Alam and his wife had been feeling very unsecured and were desperately looking for a safe exit from cantonment. It's when his Bengali friend Captain Nazir came to assist. When they were attempting to extricate the angry mob eventually killed them all. Captain Nazir had been very patriotic officer who got killed just for trying to save his friend.¹⁸² On 30 March in the early morning Naib Subedar Matiur Rahman launched an attack on the third storied building of the Wing Headquarters which was known to be their strong hold. Failing to penetrate, he was reinforced by another platoon led by Subedar Hafiz and by 1500 hrs the Pakistanis were completely wiped out. During this encounter Wing Commander Major Mohammad Hossain along with his companions got annihilated. During this encounter Subedar Ataul Haque and Lance Naik Jainal Abedin got killed by the Pakistanis.¹⁸³ On the Pakistani side they lost a total of 115 members. By 31 March all the bordering Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members effectively neutralized non-Bengali comrades and concentrated in Thakurgaon. C Company under Subedar Hashem from Panchagar, B Company under Naib Subedar Abdul Khaleque from Tetulia, A Company under Naib Subedar Hazi Murad from Ruhia and E Company under Naib Subedar Badiuzzaman from Chilahati, Rangpur got together under Subedar Kazimuddin's leadership.¹⁸⁴ At this stage the Bengalis, Ansars, Muzahids, police and others formed a battalion sized force. Kazimuddin along with others took a vow to serve for the nation and started taking control of Birganj, Shalbagan and Bhatga areas by holding them physically. Subedar Kazimuddin placed a mixed company each at Bhatga Bridge, Debiganj and Shibganj air strip and one company was kept as reserve at the Wing Headquarters.¹⁸⁵ By then Adjutant Thakurgaon Sub-division organized the local Ansars and Mujahids and started sending them for combat. Bordering area under Thakurgaon

Wing was divided into 2 sub-sectors as Panchagar Sub-sector under Subedar Abul Kashem and Ruhia Sub-sector under Subedar Hazi Murad Ali. These sub-sectors were responsible for taking care of the borders, protecting properties, coordinating and organizing the Ansars, Mujahids, establishing contact with the neighbouring country etc. They also took up positions on the roads connecting Thakurgaon and Syedpur. On 31 March Subedar Major Kazimuddin contacted Border Security Force 75 Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Benarjee and sought their assistance. He in return paid a visit to see the East Pakistan Rifles positions and assured to provide support.¹⁸⁶ On 2 April Major (retired) MT Hossain contacted Subedar Major Kazimuddin and wanted to join the war. He was readily welcomed and given the command. For tactical reason Thakurgaon defence was shifted. Subedar Hafiz with his D Company joined 3 East Bengal defence led by Captain Ashraf in Doshmile area on Dinajpur-Syedpur road. This force gradually advanced towards Syedpur and on 4 April took up defence in Vhusirbandar area. This forces eventually attacked Syedpur Cantonment.

On 5 April a platoon of 9 Wing and another platoon of 8 Wing under Subedar Abdul Majid took up defence on Nilphamari road including Daroani - a place little short of Syedpur town. Pakistan Army attacked on Vhusirbandar but withdrew in the face of stiff resistance. Later this force advanced further upto Champatali and took up defence there.¹⁸⁷ On 6 April, when the Pakistan military again attacked this position, Captain Ashraf with his force launched counter attack that compelled the enemy forces to withdraw. Later as the Pakistanis came back strongly our forces had to fall back. They got divided into two and took up defence in the areas of Vhusirbandar and Khansama. Pakistan Army kept up the momentum of their attack and from 7 to 13 April evicted our forces from Nilphamari, Vhusirbandar, Badarganj, Doshmile and Khansama. When the Pakistani Forces were crossing river near Khansama Freedom Fighters engaged them and achieved complete surprise. Almost 2 Pakistani companies got destroyed on that occasion. On 14 April, Pakistan Army again attacked on Bhatgaon defence and Subedar Khaleque abandoned his position. The same happened to Subedar Hafiz when he left Khansama in face of strong enemy attack. Because of increasing pressure other small positions had to be abandoned and by 16 April East Pakistan Rifles forces concentrated in Panchagar area and took up defence on the bank of Kanchan River.¹⁸⁸ On 19 April Pakistan Army launched an attack with artillery and armour support while our forces withdrew further towards the border and by 20 April Subedar Hafiz and Naib Subedar

Khaleque took up defence in Vhojonpur. This was the last island for the East Pakistan Rifles soldiers during the initial resistance phase of our war in this area.

Rajshahi-Pabna

Under Operation Searchlight, 25 Punjab at Rajshahi was asked to capture Rajshahi Radio and telephone exchange, disarm Rajshahi Reserve Police and East Pakistan Rifles, and arrest the student leaders of Rajshahi University and Medical College. They were also asked to arrest the local Awami League leaders. Besides, 25 Punjab, Rajshahi Sector comprised 6 Wing and 7 Wing which were located in Chapainawabganj and Naogaon respectively (see fig. 20). Sector Commander including all Staff Officers were non-Bengalis. Sector troops included 2 platoons of East Pakistan Rifles from under command wings and 1 support platoon. Besides these East Pakistan Rifles elements, 25 Punjab had set up a camp in the outskirts of Rajshahi near the non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles colony. On 25 March a MI-8 helicopter that carried the military delegation also dropped Lieutenant Colonel Shafqut Baluch to take over the command of 25 Punjab.¹⁸⁹ Though small but many incidents gave rise to tension and suspicion in the minds of Bengali and non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members. The Bengalis were being removed from important appointments and non-Bengalis were pulled out of the far-flung areas. However, on the night of 25 March the Pakistani patrol went out and returned without creating any discomfort for the city dwellers. But tension arose between the Pakistani Forces and the police personnel when they quietly lifted Deputy Inspector General Mr Mamun and the Superintendent of Police Mr Majeed from their residence. These two officers were put to great coaxing and harassment for absence from duty. They were promised freedom if they could disarm the police personnel peacefully. These officers knew the minds of their men and told them “we can not prevail on them. They would not give up arms. You may try and see.”¹⁹⁰ Since this approach did not work, the military decided to use force and tried to capture Rajshahi police line on 26 March. On the following day in a meeting between the army and the police all agreed to refrain from attacking each other. Without paying any heed to the amicable understanding 25 Punjab attacked on the Police line on 27 March. In the face of overwhelming superiority the police members withdrew.¹⁹¹ On the same day the non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members left the Sector Headquarters and took shelter in the army camp set up in the outskirts of Rajshahi. While leaving they set the Sector munitions store and the Radio

Office on fire. Amidst all these the Punjabi Sector Adjutant Captain Ishaq had been unusually kind and helped many Bengalis to escape otherwise only few could survive the onslaught.¹⁹² Later on the Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members of Rajshahi Sector joined with the soldiers of Chapainawabganj Wing and Naogaon Wing and jointly attacked 25 Punjab position. During the same time roughly 100 Pakistani soldiers of 25 Punjab under Major Aslam had been escaping Pabna for Rajshahi. On getting this information Captain Rashid from Sarda and East Pakistan Rifles members from Naogaon engaged these forces on 29 March near Gopalpur. Major Aslam, Company Second-in-Command Captain Reza along with 40 others lost their lives on that occasion.¹⁹³

Bengali Major Nazmul after arriving from West Pakistan took over command of 7 Wing, Naogaon from non-Bengali Major Akram on 18 March. Captain Gias Uddin Chowdhury and Punjabi Captain Nabeed were the Assistant Wing Commander. This Wing had 5 companies and a support platoon. The Company Headquarters elements were located in Buria under Pachbibi police station of Bogra District, Khanjanpur and Charghat of Rajshahi, Jalkorapuladanga, Monkosha and Godagari areas.¹⁹⁴ Situation started deteriorating when Major Akram and Captain Nabeed were compelled to fall back from Nagarbari Ghat by the angry mob on 23 March. They were offered farewell from the Wing and destined for Dhaka. These officers fell back to Naogaon and later got arrested.¹⁹⁵ An untoward incident deteriorated the overall situation drastically when East Pakistan Rifles members of Rohonpur killed Pakistani Subedar Yousuf who was detailed to do an inquiry. Earlier when a Pakistani Captain was approaching Rohonpur with his force, he was shot by the East Pakistan Rifles members. This might have been an overreaction on their part. Any way the Pakistani Junior Commissioned Officer was later sent to ascertain the defaulters involved with this unprovoked killing.¹⁹⁶ On 26 March excited Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members lifted the national flag in the Wing Headquarters premises. On 27 March Captain Gias came to know that the artillery unit in Bogra has been deployed for internal security duty. To counter this Captain Gias moved out with one East Pakistan Rifles Company and 100 plus students towards Bogra. Another company moved towards Sarda following Nature road to join Adjutant Pabna Cadet College Major Rashid to cut off Rangpur-Rajshahi road and prevent Pakistani movement from Rangpur. Major Rashid was also tasked to stop any movement coming from Dhaka.¹⁹⁷ As Captain Gias entered Bogra city, it was empty and a sense of terror prevailed all around. When he reached Bogra police line and met the marooned police

members, it brought back their morale. Captain Gias started gathering information about the artillery unit and planned to ambush on small parties. Pakistani soldiers were not getting any support from Rangpur as the road remained blocked. So they used to frequently enter the villages for their daily subsistence. On the night of 29/30 March, one such Pakistani patrol comprising 3 trucks while retuning was ambushed. There had been 23 casualties on that occasion. After this operation Captain Gias went back to Naogaon.¹⁹⁸ The ammunition dump in Bogra was another prime object. It used to be guarded by a platoon of soldiers under a Captain. On 1 April, in absence of Captain Gias, Naib Subedar Mohammad Ali attacked the ammunition dump and after fighting for two and half hrs, forced the Pakistanis to surrender. These ammunitions were taken to India by the East Pakistan Rifles soldiers and they made the best use of those.¹⁹⁹ Around this time, Major Nazmul and Captain Gias got a very encouraging news of our East Pakistan Rifles Company killed huge Pakistani soldiers by ambushing a company near Arani Bridge, Rajshahi. Thousands of people joined with the Freedom Fighters in this operation.²⁰⁰ Considering this to be a huge opportunity on 31 March, Captain Gias with a company moved from Naogaon to Rajshahi. He also coordinated with the Wing of Chapainawabganj so that they also advance to join with his force. About 6 miles short of Rajshahi, in a place called Nowhata maximum forces of Captain Gias including those of Chapainawabganj united.²⁰¹ By first light 1 April, 7 East Pakistan Rifles took up defence around the outskirts of Rajshahi. The forces of Major Rashid were also asked to take up defence on the eastern side of Rajshahi which he did by 2 April. Pakistani Forces also strengthened their defence around Rajshahi and from 1 to 5 April their fighter planes had been continuously strafing. On 3 April Border Security Force Officer Lieutenant Colonel Sen and Major Tribedi met the officers of 7 Wing and assured of support if necessary.²⁰² East Pakistan Rifles officers sought artillery fire support during Rajshahi attack. It was evening 6 April when the attack started and it had to go without fire support. In spite of intense enemy firing, East Pakistan Rifles troops entered the city and fought their way ahead. After fighting for four hrs Rajshahi got freed. Leaving their defence the Pakistani Forces concentrated in the camp located in the outskirts of Rajshahi. After occupying the camp, they placed mines, erected barbed wire around their positions and intensified air strikes. After reorganizing his forces, Major Nazmul decided to Pakistani position. By 7-10 April East Pakistan Rifles soldiers reached within 300-400 yards of the camp but it was difficult to negotiate the barbed wire and mines. Pakistani Forces directed all their

automatics on the obstacle systems. When East Pakistan Rifles troops had been preparing hard to take on the camp, Major Osman who was fighting in Chuadanga informed that Pakistani 57 Brigade is preparing to make a bridge head at Nagarbari Ghat.²⁰³ Besides reinforcing the Pakistani elements it was to replace 25 Punjab on completion of its tour of duty. They were using every possible means to reinforce their troops by steamer, helicopter and ferries. To disrupt their unopposed landing two companies were sent there. As the Pakistani Forces reached Pabna, East Pakistan Rifles came under artillery and mortar firing. For protection they took up defence in Muladolly. But this defence could not be held for long because of intense artillery firing and air attacks. To alleviate their morale on 12 April Captain Gias with a company marched towards Pabna and rest of the forces kept up their pressure on the Pakistani position in Rajshahi.²⁰⁴ At this moment, East Pakistan Rifles troops in a last bid to resist the Pakistanis took up defence near the turn from where road leads to Rajshahi and Sarda. Thousands of people placed artificial barricades and dug ditches to stop the advancing columns. By 12 April dusk the Pakistani Forces reached East Pakistan Rifles defence and the fight continued whole night. Professor of the then Ayub Cadet College (now Rajshahi Cadet College) who had been fighting here died with few others in this battle. By 13 April morning the Pakistani Forces reached university area. They had been using massive artillery and mortar firing and the air strafing softened East Pakistan Rifles defensive positions. On the dawn of 14 April, when the Pakistani Brigade attack came, it was quite unbearable. Failing to withstand any longer our forces withdrew to Nowabganj. Later on from 17 to 20 April enemy forces launched number of attempts but failed to break in. It was on the morning of 21 April when the Pakistani Forces attacked our position with all their might and by 1000 hrs they have succeeded in dislodging our position. The Pakistanis quickly entered the Nowabganj city except the offshore areas where the East Pakistan Rifles forces organized them. Here the first phase of the war ended.

By the end of April, the armed resistance in Bangladesh had been temporarily suppressed. Pakistani troops having re-established links between major cantonments and having reopened the road and railway communication reestablished their control over most part of Bangladesh. By the end of May, only a part of Tetulia Thana of Dinajpur District, Patgram and Rowmari Thanas of Rangpur District (on the eastern side of Jamuna River), two small pockets of Sylhet District (one in Moulvibazar sub-division) - a total area of 400-500 square miles -remained inaccessible to the Pakistan Army.²⁰⁵

ANALYSIS

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman succeeded in taking the political movement to its peak, but it lacked necessary organization and preparedness in terms of military forces to transform the outcome of this movement into a kind of war against West Pakistan adversaries. The concept of defending the eastern wing keeping it denuded of military relying on the Western Wing had no rationale as a strategic option. Besides, the historical legacies and unequal development policy by the center were other reasons for poor military infrastructure in East Pakistan.

When the Pakistan Military began 'Operation Searchlight' on the night of 25 March 1971, the Bengalis were caught rather unprepared. This was a war forced upon the Bengalis and they had limited options to choose from. The Bengalis could either accept a surrender to the overwhelming Pakistan Military or else offer a resistance with whatever they had. The independence of Bangladesh could never have been achieved had the Bengalis of East Pakistan not risen against the tyranny of the Pakistani Army. The initial resistance phase is therefore so significant in the context of overall war. The outcome of this war was nothing but the culmination of peoples' resistance that began in the immediate aftermath of the horrific massacre on March 25-26, 1971. The situation would have been totally reverse had the Bengalis surrendered to the Pakistanis on that occasion.

The option for fighting against a superior enemy was not an easy one in absence of political directives, clearly spelled out orders, compatible military outfits with logistic support. The resistance war begun instantaneously without coordination under the leadership of handful military officers and soon assumed the character of an organized war of attrition. The East Bengal Regiments including East Pakistan Rifles were in the forefront. The military personnel revolted and joined the war at their personal risks leaving family members in great peril in the cantonments. Though the military leaders were trained to fight conventional wars but they adopted unconventional methods depending on situation.

During the resistance war the Freedom Fighters achieved spectacular successes despite few instances where they had to concede loss of lives especially in Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore and Rangpur. The initial successes achieved by the Freedom Fighters tremendously inspired the people that thousands of people joined the war. In Dhaka, Pakistan military enjoyed huge numerical superiority and therefore it could subdue the geo-political hub in a

very short time. The situation in Joydebpur was totally different where 2 East Bengal eliminated their Pakistani counterparts and joined with Major Khaled's forces in Comilla via Mymensingh. In Chittagong the scenario was opposite, where Pakistani 24 Frontier Force alone killed more than thousands unarmed recruits of East Bengal Regimental Center. Battle of Kumira, Shuvapur, Kalurghat, Mahalchari and Burighat bear the testimony of valour and dedication by our forces. The declaration of independence by Major Zia on behalf of Bangabandhu certainly raised the spirit of the Freedom Fighters. The situation in Comilla area had been very eventful under the leadership of Major Khaled and Major Shafayet Jamil.

The Bengali military leaders only fought in the field but were equally mindful about the fact that war efforts should have recognition by the outside world. They knew that this was the job to be done by the political leaders. To contribute to this end, they held a conference at Teliapara and worked out battle strategies and delegated areas of responsibilities. Colonel Osmani chaired the meeting where senior officers from different regions joined. Gradually our forces were pushed by the Pakistani forces across the border into Indian soil. This was not a retreat rather a strategic retreat forced under circumstances. Through a somewhat failed initial resistance our freedom fighters learnt lessons to be made use of in the subsequent phases of war.

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CHAPTER 5

THE EVOLUTION OF BANGLADESH FORCES

When the Indian sub-continent was divided in 1947, Pakistan received its proportionate share (1/3 share) of the armed forces as worked out by the Partition Council, chaired by the then Viceroy of India. The strength of the armed forces had been nearly 3,73,570. After the partition, Pakistan became the major recipient of US aid which was estimated from \$1.5 to \$2 billion for the period between 1954 and 1965. The assistance included F-104 Star fighters, Patton tanks, armoured personnel carriers, automatic and recoilless infantry weapons.¹ Eastern Wing did not get a slice of this huge military hardware. It was not before 5 February 1948, when for the first time two Bengali Muslim companies had been raised at Kurmitola, Dhaka. These companies had laid the foundation of today's East Bengal regiment. The Bengali representation continued to remain low. For instances, in 1960, 22 Pakistan Military Academy Long and 1st Graduate Courses passed out where only 5 out of 118 were the Bengalis (Appendix G).² This deliberate negligence towards Eastern Wing continued even after the 1965 war. This negligence and deprivation would appear even vividly from the following statistics representing officers' class of West and East Pakistan:

Table 1. Representation of Officers between West and East Pakistan

	Service/Rank	West Pakistan	East Pakistan	Total
Army Officers	Lieutenant General	03	0	03
	Major General	20	0	20
	Brigadier General	34	01	35
	Colonel	49	01	50
	Lieutenant Colonel	198	02	200
	Major	590	10	600
Naval Officers		593	07	600
Air Force Officers		600	40	640

Source: Haque, SK M Shamsul. *Mukti Sangrame Ekattor: Uttor Ronanggon (Seventy-One in Freedom Fight)*. 3rd ed. Dhaka: Rythm Publications, 2015.

Bangladesh Forces therefore did not grow out of colonial regiments nor did it receive any military aids or expertise readily from foreign countries. They were born instantaneously after the massacre carried out by the Pakistan military in 1971. These forces had been quite effective against adversaries and got adaptive to all forms of warfare be it conventional and unconventional.

The Evolutionary Process and the Growth of Bangladesh Forces

During 1971, 5 East Bengal Regiment was stationed at Sialkoat border from where it was possible to cross over to India and consequently joined the war but its Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Rouf did not show interest. When one of its companies went to attack an Indian Border outpost, none of its troops returned except Company Commander Major Sadequr Rahman Chowdhury. These troops later joined the war with different sectors. After repatriation, Major Sadeq rose to the rank of Major General. 6 East Bengal was at Peshawar and 7 East Bengal was deployed in the deserts of Rajsthan along Indo-Pak border.³ Despite keen interest amongst the soldiers of 7 East Bengal in favour of joining in the war, its Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel HM Ershad remained inactive. He reported to have visited Bangladesh during the war and safely returned to Pakistan.⁴ He later became the Chief of Army Staff and the long time President of Bangladesh. After 25 March, officers from 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 East Bengal Regiment and East Pakistan Rifles rebelled taking risks of their lives and took control of the situation. Since the Awami League had been constitutionally fighting the issue, they were not in a position to either assume leadership in the field or fight it by them. The communists possibly could better adapt to this kind of situations as they had long been conditioned by the repressive policies of West Pakistan. In 1947 there was one leftist ideological platform in East Bengal, that provided by former members of the Communist Party of India who had chosen to remain in East Bengal. In 1948-51, the small Communist Party in East Bengal (formally called the East Pakistan Communist Party) fomented peasant revolts among the Hazong peasants in certain areas of the district of Mymensingh and among the Santal tribal in Rajshahi district which the government effectively thwarted and by 1954 banned the Communist Party throughout Pakistan. The East Pakistan Communist Party however continued to exist as an underground party.⁵ In 1971, they failed to cease the initiative because of the lack of credible support base among the population.⁶ The military availed this opportunity not only to steer the war but also contributed substantially in shaping

the forces. During these early days the clandestine radio station set up at Kalurghat revived the spirit of the fighting elements and brought them all under a common psychological structure when Major Zia declared the independence of Bangladesh on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.⁷ While the initial resistance had been continuing without orders and any specific area of responsibility, the officers of 2 and 4 East Bengal thought of bringing in some kind of synergy in their efforts. They assembled at Teliapara Tea garden on 1 April to plan and coordinate about future courses of action when Deputy Inspector General Border Security Force, Eastern Command Brigadier VC Pande appeared on the scene. Brig Pande apprised them about Colonel Osmani and the activities of 8 East Bengal. Later it was decided to hold the meeting on 4 April so that more officers could join. Brigadier Pande informed Col Osmani and 8 East Bengal about the meeting. On 4 April the meeting took place in the Bungalow of Tetulia Tea Garden Manager. Amongst the participants Colonel Osmani, Lieutenant Colonel Salahuddin Md Reza, Major Khaled Mosharraf, Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Abdur Rab, Major Ziaur Rahman, Major KM Shafiuallah, Major (retired) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Major Nurul Islam, Major Shafayet Jamil, Major Moinul Hossain Chowdhury, Captain Abdul Matin etc. Besides Border Security Force Chief Mr Rustam, Brigadier Pande, Tripura District Magistrate Mr Saigol and Brahmanbaria Sub Divisional Commissioner Mr Raquibuddin were present.⁸

A detailed analysis of the situation was carried out basing on which some decisions were taken. Bangladesh Force was formed comprising members of all three services, East Pakistan Rifles, police, ansar and people from all walks of life. World War II veteran Colonel Osmani took over as the Commander-in-Chief.⁹ He is also reckoned as the principal architect of Bengal regiments. After retirement from Pakistan Army in 1967, he joined politics and became Member of National Assembly in 1970. Although Lieutenant General Khwaza Wasiuddin had been the senior most serving officer but the nation missed his service since he was in West Pakistan. Immediately after the crackdown, the Pakistan Army placed him in confinement.¹⁰

The fate of 1 and 3 East Bengal was still not very clear. Basing on available information and progress made by different units, the country was divided into four regions each under a senior military officer. Major Zia was in charge of Chittagong districts including Chittagong Hill Tracts and eastern part of Noakhali, greater Comilla district, Dhaka and western part of Noakhali was under Major Khaled Mosharraf, Sylhet District was placed under Major

Safiullah and Major Osman took over the charge of Jessore, Kushtia and Faridpur Districts. Major Khaled stressed upon the need for immediately forming the provisional government so that ongoing war could be given some kind of legitimacy. They also emphasized on rallying international support in favour of their cause. In spite of such an important role played by Teliapara Summit it remained somewhat unsung in the history. Meanwhile Tajuddin got back to Calcutta around the second week of April and met other political leaders. These leaders including the Member of National Assembly and Member of Provincial Assembly had been stranded at No 10 Lord Sinha Road - a house provided by the Indian Government for the political leaders.¹¹ As soon as the provisional government came into being on 10 April at Agartala of Indian State of Tripura, it endorsed many of the decisions taken in Taliapara Summit. Concurrently at 8 Theatre Road, Calcutta, Bangladesh Forces Headquarters began to take shape. Provisional Government made Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the first President of Bangladesh. Recently elected Member of National Assembly namely Syed Nazrul Islam was made the Vice President and Tajuddin Ahmed was the Prime Minister.¹² Among cabinet members Captain M Mansoor Ali was in charge of Finance, AHM Kamruzzaman Home, Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry and Khondakar Mostaque Ahmed held the charge of Foreign Ministry. Colonel Osmani was made the Commander-in-Chief of Bangladesh Forces with the status of a full minister (Appendix H). The proclamation of independence order was issued on 10 April from Mujibnagar and was operative retrospectively from 26 March 1971.¹³

On 17 April, the Cabinet formally took oath in the bordering village of Baiddyonathtala Mango Groove, Meherpur - a place purposely chosen to evade air attack as such attempts, if undertaken, would compel Pakistan Air Force to violate Indian air space. A smartly turned out mixed contingent of East Pakistan Rifles, police and ansars presented a guard of honour led by Sub Divisional Police Officer Mahabub Uddin Ahmed.¹⁴ This venue later came to be known as historic Mujibnagar. The young Civil Service Pakistan (CSP) officers who crossed over to India following military carnage added great strength to the newly born government. During this time, the state governments of West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura directed all resources to tackle one of the largest human exoduses that came from Bangladesh. By mid-May a daily average of 80,700 men, women and children crossed over to India.¹⁵ According to Thomas Janeison, Director of the UN High Commission for Refugees in Geneva "This is the biggest refugee problem in history..." Indeed an exodus of refugees on such a large scale from one country to other never took place anywhere in the world earlier.¹⁶ Later on specific government organization was set up for the construction of camps

and Reception Centres including their maintenance.¹⁷ Alongside Indian support and sympathies, other people and organizations rendered financial assistance for the management of the refugees. Of those 'The Concert for Bangladesh' alone had generated some US\$ 2,50,000. This was organized by former Beatles's lead guitarist George Harrison and Ravi Shankar on 1 August 1971, playing to a total of 40,000 people at Medison Square Garden in New York. Decade later Shankar would say of the overwhelming success of the event; 'In one day, the whole world knew the name of Bangladesh.'¹⁸ Willing volunteers comprising students and farmers packed these reception centres/youth camps. Though the resurgence of nationalist fervor was prevalent among the working classes, their roots being in the countryside the war drew thousands of youths and peasants from these centers/camps. These youths had been also subject to military's unkind brutality that fanned out from the major townships to the villages in the far flung areas after 25 March. Here the social dynamics had played an important role as the urban people held a strong psychological bond with those in the countryside.

Centuries ago political thinker Machiavelli said, once the people have taken arms against the regime, there will never be lacking of foreigners to assist them. Given the strained relationship between India and Pakistan, support to Bangladesh rebels from neighbouring India was perhaps inevitable.¹⁹ More over for unorganized withdrawal of the Freedom Fighters to India, there was no planned transfer of resources. Initially Border Security Force used to provide very limited and informal support to Bangladesh Forces. By 15 May 1971, appreciating the increasing activities, replacing Border Security Force, Indian Army's Eastern Command was asked to assist Bangladesh Forces.²⁰ Bordering Border Security Force elements were placed under the Eastern Command for this purpose and a separate military establishment was set up. The Indian Army posted Major General Onkar Singh Kalkot under Eastern Command Lieutenant General Aurora to handle the Bangladesh Forces affairs and was later replaced by Major General BN Sarkar in August 1971. Six (6) Indian sectors were set up along the border for providing operational and logistic support.²¹ Of these sectors, original F Sector was based in Rajsthan as such some correspondences were directed to Rajsthan out of confusion. In order to eradicate this confusion F Sector was suffixed by J (J for Joi Bangla).²² While equipping the guerrillas these supporting sectors insisted on a scale of 20% arms for those who were sent inside to operate against the enemy. For rest of the members they recommended them to send unarmed (only with two grenades) and to be

equipped with enemy's resources on capture. Such ideas brought miseries the guerrillas during execution.

Table 2. Indian Administrative Sectors

Indian Sector & Location	Commander	Bangladeshi Sectors
A- Murti Camp, West Bengal	Brigadier BC Joshi	6 Sector
B- Raiganj, West Bengal	Brigadier Prem Singh	7 Sector
C- Chakulia, Bihar	Brigadier NA Salek	8.9 and 10 Sectors
D- Devta Mura, Tripura	Brigadier Shabeg Singh	1, 2 and 3 Sectors
E1- Masimpur, Assam	Brigadier MB Wadh	4 and 5 Sectors
FJ- Tura, Meghalaya	Brigadier Sant Singh	11 Sector

Source: "Indian Administrative Sectors." *'Bijoyketon'*. Dhaka Cantonment. Dhaka.

By June a total of 9 geographical regions came up and they were all known by the name of those areas.²³ Alongside these, 11 administrative regions were also set up to run the administrative functions across the country (Appendix I). The Member of National Assembly, government and semi-government officials defected from the Pakistan Government provisionally were integrated with these offices and they continued to function until Bangladesh Government took charge after 16 December 1971.²⁴

While Bangladesh Forces were in the increasing need of support, Indian approach had been calculative and cautious. The shortage of arms and ammunition continued to slow down the operational activity. This problem remained unresolved from quiet sometimes. Although Bangladesh Forces Headquarters came into being in the month of April, it lacked operation room, wireless network connecting the Forces Headquarters and the sectors including line communications, intelligence cell etc. The situation had been cramped because of lack of

space and manpower, yet Colonel Osmani got his office in relatively short time. With him joined 10 officers including retired Lieutenant Colonel MA Rab who was offered the post of the Chief of Staff. He also fought in World War II and joined politics after retirement to become Member of National Assembly in 1970. Group Captain AK Khandakar was appointed as the Deputy Chief of Staff.²⁵ He was serving in Dhaka as the Deputy Commander of East Pakistan Air Force Headquarters. By May 71, the Forces Headquarters got some kind of a structure.²⁶ Because of vast area, an Echelon Headquarters with the Chief of Staff was set up in the Eastern region to ensure intimate political and logistic cooperation and also to deal with all matters to provide speedy assistance to the Sector Commanders. The stream of new orders, regulations and disciplinary controls emanating from the Forces Headquarters soon brought all elements under its control. Under command outfits had to furnish periodical reports and returns as asked by headquarters (Appendix J).

It dedicated maximum time for the structuring and shaping Bangladesh Forces. While there had been no dearth of volunteers what would be the right size of Bangladesh Forces was a crucial question. Considering beefed up Pakistani 4.5 divisions, a force comprising of 15 divisions would have been adequate to defeat the Pakistanis in conventional war.²⁷ Appreciating this as impracticable, Bangladesh thought of developing a force comprising of conventional and unconventional elements where the guerrillas would be the mainstay. In the month of May 1971, a consensus was built between the Indian Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief Bangladesh Forces to build a force comprising of 20 thousand regulars and 60 thousand guerrillas.²⁸ Unfortunately no further discussion took place with Indian Army to translate this agreement into workable mechanism. Subsequently, when the Prime Minister of India met the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, she conveyed her concurrence on the policy decisions sought and approved the requirement of Bangladesh Forces.²⁹ With an intake of 5 thousand trainees per month it would have taken entire year for the induction of the estimated number of guerrillas. However, to meet the increasing demand, the number of recruits increased from 5 to 8 thousands in the month of July and from 8 to 12 thousands in the month of August.³⁰ These guerrillas used to be drawn from the youth camps which were set up all along the border on Indian side. To meet the increasing demands, the number of training camps grew from 30 in May to 40 in August and 84 in September.³¹ Finally there had been nearly 110 such camps controlled by the Ministry of Defence.³² The list of Youth Training Centres is given at Appendix K and the locations are shown at fig. 21.

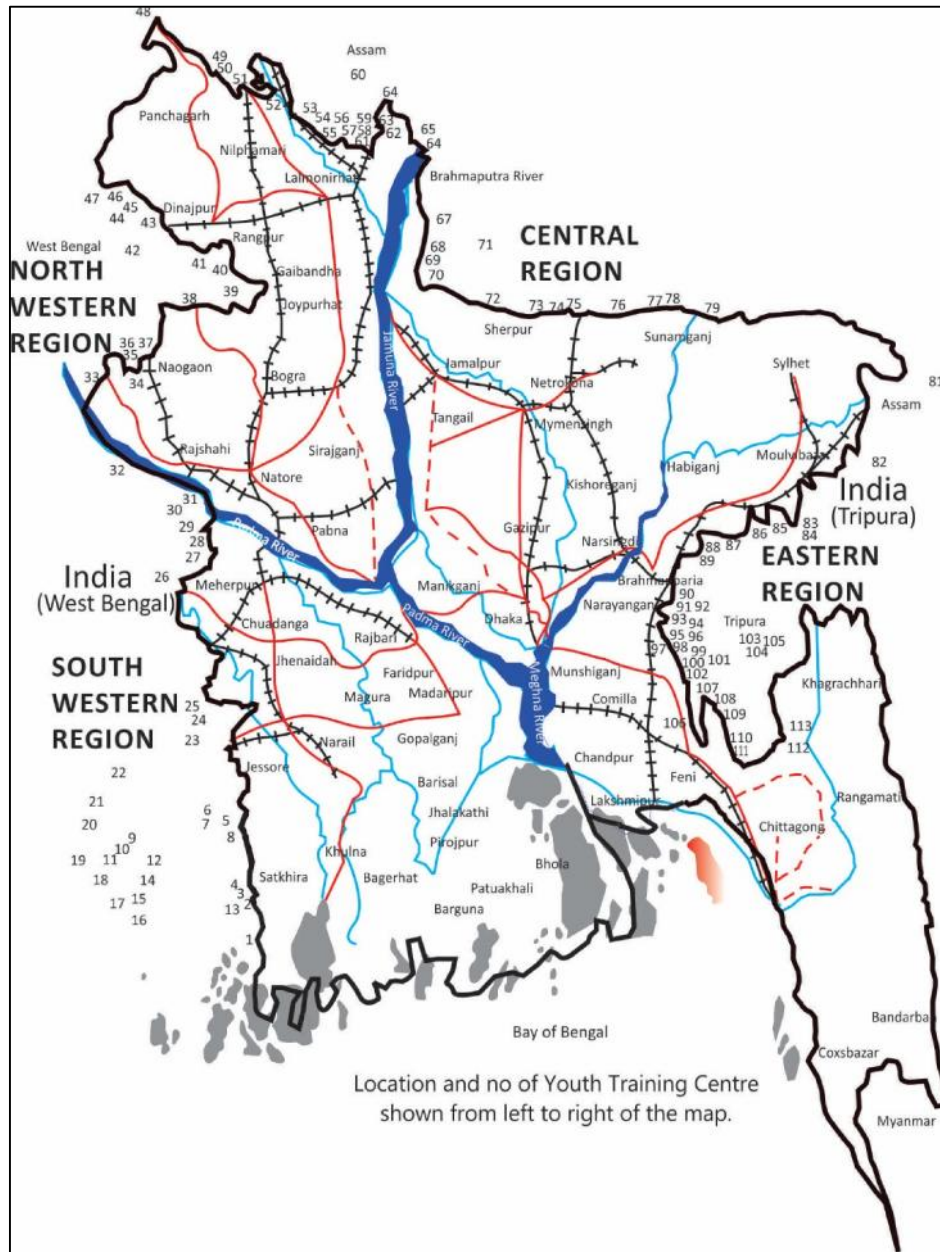


Fig. 21. Location of Youth Training Centres. Map prepared by the Joint Teams of India and Bangladesh in 1998-99 based on interviews under *Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research (BFDR)*.

Meanwhile, an important conference was scheduled from 11-15 July at Bangladesh

Forces Headquarters. For an uncalled dispute over the formation of war council, the

conference started one day later. On 12 July the Prime Minister chaired the meeting where

most of the sector commanders, senior military officers, other civil-military officers of

Bangladesh Forces Headquarters were present. He made some important decisions on

strategy and operating procedure for smooth conduct of war (Appendix L).³³ From the

beginning various units/groups had been operating within mutually agreed geographical areas

which needed clarity. So the country was divided into eleven sectors with specific area to

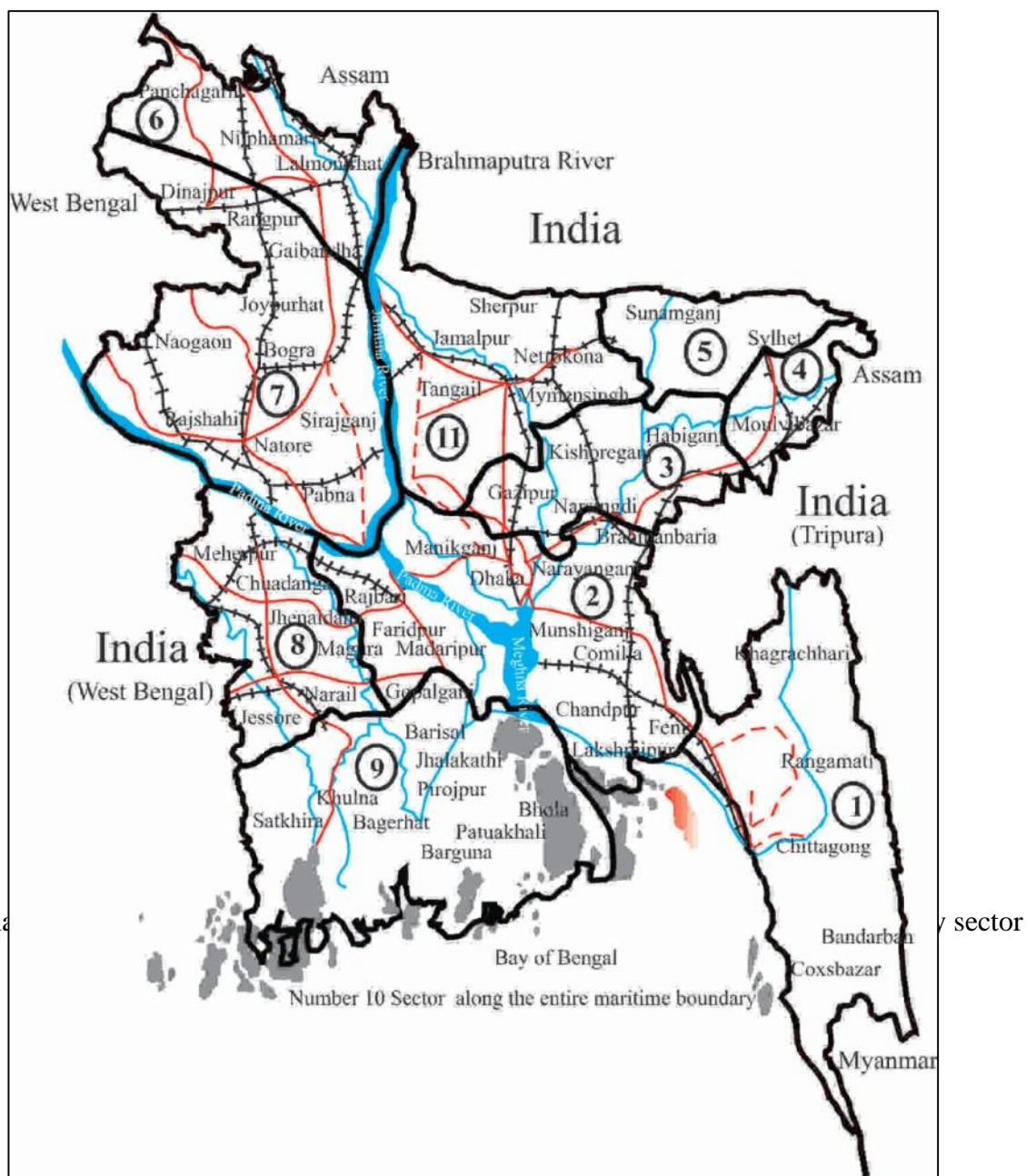


Fig. 22. Bangladesh Operational Sectors. Headquarters Bangladesh Forces, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, *Letter No 0002 G dated 18 July 1971.*

was connected with the Indian border at least in one direction so that it can be supported from

across the border. Sector 10 was unique in the sense that it had neither any definite

geographical boundary nor any commander. Initially it was planned to liberate some areas

from where the government administration could function and later be used as the capital of

Bangladesh.³⁴ Though not implemented, later it was planned to place the liberated areas under

the jurisdiction of Sector 10. Some also held the view that Chittagong Hill Tracts was

earmarked as Sector 10. Considering the geographical challenges, the Pakistan military did not explore this region.³⁵ Details of operational sectors highlighted in next chapter. During initial resistance phase when some of our fighters including Member of National Assembly Mohammad Iddris, Member of National Assembly Nur Mohammad and Captain Harun from this area took refuge in Myanmar, where they were arrested.³⁶ This sector was therefore never made operative instead all the maritime areas were placed under its jurisdiction. For carrying out any operations within the boundary of a particular sector the Naval Commandos used to make early coordination. Location of Sectors and Force Headquarters are shown at fig. 23.

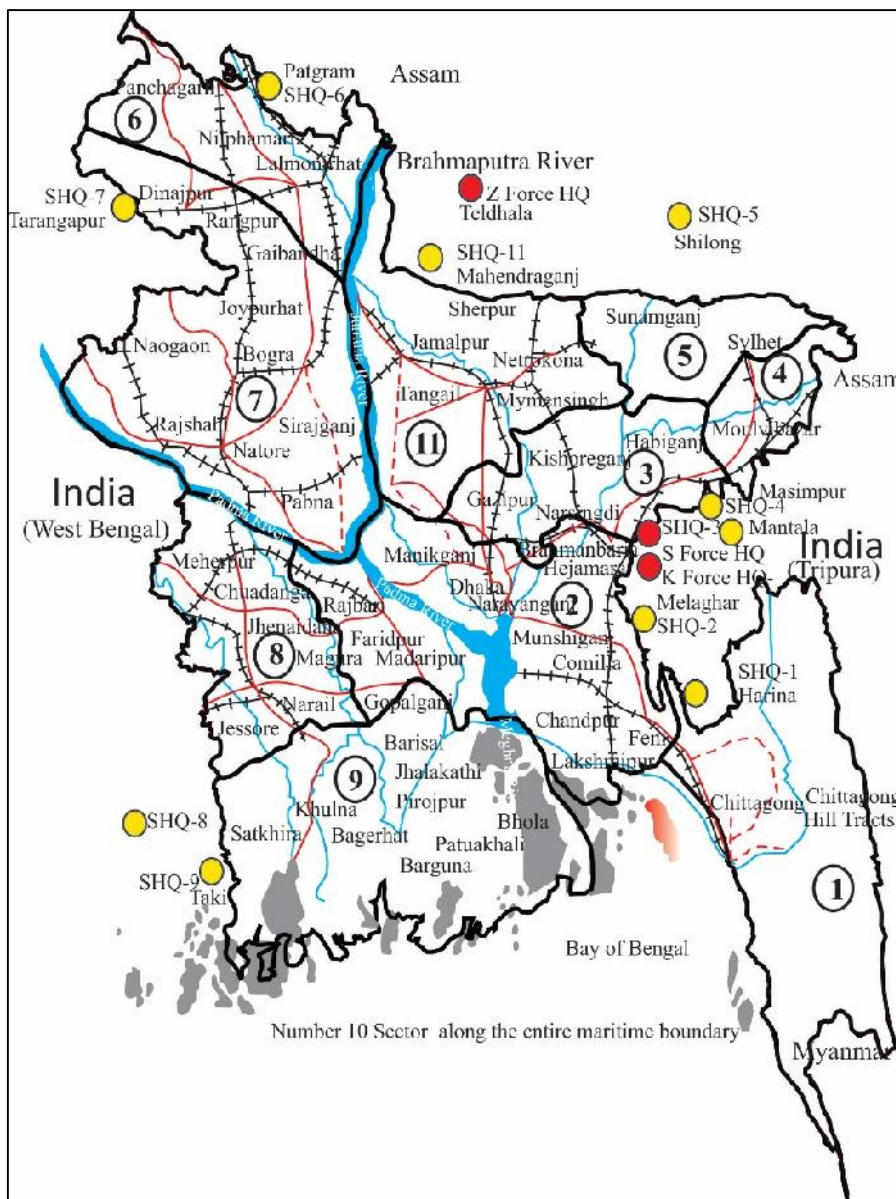


Fig. 23. Location of Sector and Force Headquarters. Headquarters Bangladesh Forces, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, *Letter No 0001 G dated 28 Jun 1971*.

There had been lot of confusions in identifying different forces as they came from different backgrounds, varied degree of training and motivation. To facilitate their identification, induction, training, command control and liaison, Force Headquarters issued different nomenclatures.³⁷ Initially, Freedom Fighters were popularly known as 'Mukti Fauz' which was renamed as "Mukti Bahini" replacing the Urdu word Fouz with Bengali word Bahini to give it a more nationalistic flavor. Afterwards the force also changed its character from a solely land based force to an all services organization.³⁸ However, later on they were formally named as the Bangladesh Forces. It comprised of regular soldiers, sailors, airmen of all ranks, members of East Pakistan Rifles, Police, Ansar and Mujahids who had been operating with regular forces, and other civilians filling specific functions as well as guerrilla and Special Forces. Broadly there had been Regulars (Niomito Bahini) comprising of members of Army (all arms and services), Navy and Air Force and the Irregulars (Gono Bahini) comprising of the Guerrillas and Special Forces who have received special guerrilla or other training (Appendix N). The Force Headquarters brought out a detailed instruction laying down their organization, authorization of arms, ammunition, equipment and employment (Appendix O). Besides, a good number of informal forces was also organized by few young leaders who successfully operated within their areas. These forces are described in Chapter 7.

All these forces were brought under the relevant services acts and connected regulations and the government exercised its command over them through the Commander-in-Chief. He dealt with matters relating to policy concerning operations, organization, personnel administration, logistics, control of weapons, equipment, vehicles, and communication equipment, and appointments, commissions and postings. The command had been decentralized to Sector Commanders who remained responsible to the Commander-in-Chief for exercising their commands and implementation of tasks in line with the policies.³⁹ Shortage of officers and lack of communication means seriously affected headquarters functioning. The Bangladesh Forces had only the scantiest supply of radios and depended largely on the few pieces of the police wireless system that were destroyed in the Army's attacks, plus a few field sets salvaged by the Bengali troops or captured from the small Army units caught in the outlying areas and wiped out in the early days of the fight.⁴⁰ After July the Indians did provide some signal equipment which was meager considering the requirement.⁴¹ To compensate this Bangladeshi Sector Headquarters had been set up close to the Indian

Supporting Sectors and to avail of the communication facilities to ensure links both forward to sub-sectors and rearward to Bangladesh Forces Headquarters.

Induction of 60,000 guerrillas had been a mammoth task. Based on the discussion between Commander-in-Chief Bangladesh Forces and Eastern Command, Supporting Forces a total of 36,000 Rifles, 18,000 SMCs ((Sub Machine Carbine), 6,000 LMGs, 1,000 Rocket Launchers and 1,20,000 Hand Grenades would be needed to equip 60,000 Guerrillas. (At the scale of 1 LMG, 6 Rifles, 3 SMCs and 2 Grenades for a group of ten Guerrillas) (Appendix P). An estimated expenditure for training 50,000 Guerrillas and 18,000 army recruits for the eastern sectors can provide a better picture about overall requirements. It called for an expenditure of RS 1.25 crores over six months at RS 1 lac per month for each camp of 500 trainees (Appendix Q).⁴² This expenditure was borne by the Government of India/Tripura and Bengal Assistance Committee. In some areas the Freedom Fighters collected truckloads of gold and currencies from the banks and treasuries which were later utilized for the development of the Mukti Bahini. Besides all these, we can now imagine the fund expended for nearly 1.5 million Freedom Fighters including 80,000 trained in India.⁴³ After all these investments raw recruits were placed as an effective member of a team and preferably launched into the region he belonged. Section was considered as the basic guerrilla unit comprising 1 leader and 7 guerrillas. Usually these leaders emerge out of the organization. Since this was a lengthy process and would take years to be effective, the immediate leadership was made up by induction. Leaders and Deputy Leaders were elected by the members of the section (Appendix R). The Leader and Assistant Leader usually carried 9 mm Pistol while others would carry 4 x 9 mm SMCs, 2xRifles and 1xLMG. Company leader used to command Guerrilla Company and he had a Political Advisor to motivate the guerrillas. At platoon and company levels there had been delegated intelligence staff to provide intelligence inputs.

Despite above limitations, other issues had exacerbated the performance of these Guerrillas. The prerequisites of success in guerrilla operations are the selection of right material where the political leaders seemed to have compromised.⁴⁴ Consequently, many joined the war only to have a means of living or to get arms for carrying out anti-social activities. Later on, as the Sector Commanders exercised their control and judgment, things turned better. Changes also came in the operational strategy and tactics. They replaced the set piece battles with bold raids and ambushes. To avoid detection our forces frequently changed

their bases. Although sub-sector commanders carried out daily operational activities; their plans used to be coordinated at the sector/battalion level on the basis of fortnightly task plan. While the Guerrillas were inducted in small groups inside Bangladesh for carrying out guerrilla activities, regular forces held defensive positions and tried to create free zones.⁴⁵ During the early days of our war, except 8 and 1 East Bengal, other battalions nearly had their authorized manpower, arms and ammunition. In some cases, they even had more weapons than authorized. This happened as most of the units had been changing their 303 rifles with the Chinese small arms. Some battalions quickly organized training by themselves and made up the strength as required, for example, Major Safiullah started training about 700-800 youths from 4 April in Teliapara camp.⁴⁶ Anyway, Bangladesh Forces required Chinese ammunition to replenish their ammunition which the Indians could manage as 7.62 mm Self Loading Rifle (SLR) ammunition of both Indian and Russian origin had been somewhat compatible with Chinese ammunition.⁴⁷ Bangladesh Forces continued to use the Chinese weapons until those were replaced by Indian weapons in the month of August. Indian Ordnance Factories played a significant role in meeting the requirements of arms and ammunition. Arms were also obtained from Poland, Yugoslavia and even America. 57 mm Recoilless Rifles and Limpet mines from Russia, wireless set from Israel formed part of the contribution from Pakistan's adversaries.⁴⁸ The Indian Army stationed at Aijol, the capital of the Indian State of Mizoram, bordering the Chittagong Hill Tracts, also provided arms to the rebellious groups in Chittagong areas with a view to wiping out the Mizos which were ultimately used in the war.⁴⁹ A number of Burmese rebel groups that had taken shelter in Chittagong Hill Tracts also acted as sources for supplying weapons.⁵⁰ Cannibalization, innovations and modification - all had been tried depending on the need and opportunities. Until Brigade sized forces were organized, these battalions remained within the sector area and operated independently. Every sector would operate within their boundary. Depending on the size of the area of responsibility, number of companies was determined.⁵¹ The Sector Commanders commanded both the sector troops and the battalions. Initially the sector troops had been operating reasonably well but after detaching better lots for the formation of brigades, their effectiveness declined. Some of the East Pakistan Rifles, Mujahids and Ansars while going inside Bangladesh had been indulging in loot, rape, etc. These operations had therefore been counterproductive and alienated a large section of bordering people and consequently they operated against Bangladesh Forces. They could be utilized in defensive role provided they were not subjected to heavy enemy offensive.⁵² While the guerrillas

operated inside, Sector troops kept the border alive by tying down the Pakistani Forces so that they are unable to pullout forces.

It was thought that sooner or later Bangladesh would substantially annihilate the Pakistanis by guerrilla warfare with assistance of regular forces to defeat them. Accordingly, few lodgment areas were earmarked within sector 4, 5 and 7 areas.⁵³ For controlling and expanding these areas, conventional forces were needed. In any case without armour, it would be impossible to launch major offensive and therefore the idea of lodgment area did not gather momentum. During the research, the author discussed in length with retired Freedom Fighter Lieutenant Colonel Sajjad Ali Zahir who had candid discussions with Colonel Osmani on this point. To Osmani, in case of non-availability of foreign support Bangladesh might have to fight a prolonged war and towards the end for capturing ground conventional forces would be necessary. Accordingly, 'Z Force' was raised on 12 July 1971. It was titled after the first alphabet of Lieutenant Colonel Zia comprised 1 East Bengal, 3 East Bengal and 8 East Bengal. It also comprised a Field Battery (Rowshanara Battery) and a Signal Company. These battalions had only 50% or less of the original troops. Therefore, shortfall had to be made up by milking troops such as East Pakistan Rifles, Mujahids and Ansars from sectors. These battalions were dispersed in different locations and for movement. The Brigade started its training in the month of July and had been under training for 3 months. With this brief training and shortages of officers the operational efficiency of the brigade could not be assessed as very high. Like Z Force Bangladesh had two other Brigades after the initial English letter of Major Khaled Mosharraf and Major Safiullah. Though at meagre scale, corresponding artillery resources had been also developed to support these conventional brigades in their operations which has been discussed in subsequent chapter.

The growth of these battalions under different brigades had suffered a lot. Regular battalions were organized to provide it with a flexibility of operation and with the organic fire power to operate against the superior enemy. Our supporting forces tried to suggest a lesser scale of weapons including close support weapons with far less effectiveness and range. This was possibly because they held similar kinds of infantry battalions and anything advanced than theirs would cause heartburning amongst their soldiers.⁵⁴ The scale which was suggested by our supporting forces would substantially weaken our battalions' operational capability and further accentuate our imbalance in relation to the enemy by making our firepower much

lesser than the enemy's (50% in LMG). Bangladesh Forces Headquarters also succeeded in forming both naval and air wings to our war effort which are described in next chapter. Nearly 100 plus army officers, 38 air force officers, 28 retired officers participated in the Liberation War of Bangladesh to include those who were here in Eastern Wing, few deserters from Pakistan including cadets joined from Kakul.⁵⁵ To overcome the shortage of officers, some 130 cadets were recruited in 2 batches and were put through a crash programme of training. In the month of June, Wing Commander Mirza and Major ANM Nuruzzaman went around different sectors and selected the first batch of cadets.⁵⁶ The training camp at Murti trained these cadets. It is a place situated three thousand feet above the sea level under Metly police station of Jalpaiguri District of the State of West Bengal. It was famous for guerrilla and commando types of training in entire India. Since May this camp was training the Freedom Fighters and was popularly known as Mujib camp to the Freedom Fighters. To train Bangladeshi officers the Indian authority turned Murti camp as temporary Officers Training Centre. Brigadier BK Joshi, Indian Army became the Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel PK Das Gupta was the Chief Instructor and Major AS Thapa was the Officer-in-Charge. Other instructors were brought from Indian Military Academy, Dheradhun to make up the training team. Indian 12 Maratha Regiment was responsible to provide administrative support to this centre. 14 weeks long extensive training module was devised comprising training on small arms, tactics, explosives, command and leadership, guerrilla warfare etc.⁵⁷ The first batch of cadets reported for training on 28 June 1971 and was passed out on 9 October 1971. A total of 61 cadets got passed out and these officers were posted in different infantry battalions and sectors. Appreciating their usefulness, the government started training another batch of cadets that began in the first week of November 1971 and could not be passed out before independence.⁵⁸ Many officers fled from their duty stations at Pakistan to join the war. 62 of such officers filled up several staff appointments at the Bangladesh Forces Headquarters including command responsibilities in the sectors.⁵⁹ There had been acute shortage of military maps. Maps available with different units were collected and pieced together to generate the entire area of responsibility. Later on the Indians reproduced those for further distribution. The Indian maps being in meter could not be utilized effectively.⁶⁰ The Bangladesh Forces had only the vehicles they could commandeer from civilian sources. Even most of the jeeps seen at the Border outposts were civilian gifts bearing the clasped hands symbol of the United States Agency for international development. There was virtually no gasoline to run them.⁶¹

In spite of lot of constraints the growth of Bangladesh Forces had been done in fast pace and it played a significant role in 1971.

Basing on threat perception operational strategies are formulated which dictates the size, types, number of formations including categories of military hardware necessary to make those battle worthy. After the partition, Pakistan got due share of the Armed Forces and with US aid they grew further stronger. When Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence, East Pakistan had nothing.

There was no rapid way to build an armed force. Out of 8 infantry regiments, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 East Bengal Regiments were located in East Pakistan to lead the rebellion, without these units it would have taken much longer time to organize Bangladesh Forces. Since Awami League had been fighting the issue constitutionally, they were not in a position to assume leadership in the field. Because of experience in extreme conditions, the communists could better adept to this situation, which they failed to capitalize due to lack of contact with the people.

So the mid-level Bengali officers of the ranks of major and captains from Bengal Regiments including East Pakistan Rifles remained in the forefront. They relied on the arms they brought from their units, later on raided various armories and snatched arms and ammunition from the enemy soldiers. These officers held a meeting in Teliapara with Colonel Osmani in the chair and took some major decisions. By then most of our forces crossed over to Indian territory and added to the increasing burdens of refugees on Indian soil. India had been welcoming just because it considered this as an opportunity to clinch a victory against Pakistan in a relatively advantageous war setting. It was still skeptical and at the same time cautious about the likely international response it might attract. For a poor country like India it was not possible to arrange everything so quickly neither they were willing to miss this opportunity to support Bangladeshi cause.

However, for supporting the Bangladesh Forces, India set up 6 administrative sectors each under a Brigadier. Alongside these, Bangladesh Government set up 11 administrative regions across the country essentially for taking over the administration of new regions as and when they are liberated from Pakistani control. Gradually, Forces Headquarters came into being and staffed with repatriated officers from Pakistan Army and Air Forces. Simultaneously, discussions continued to draw the right balance between the means and ends.

For defeating the Pakistan military with 4.5-5 divisions in a conventional war, roughly 15 divisions would have been adequate.

Considering the poor economic base, overwhelming Pakistani Forces, favourable geographic conditions and availability of volunteers, a mix of conventional and unconventional force was preferred. In the month of May 1971, a more pragmatic size of force comprising of 20 thousand regulars and 60 thousand guerrillas were organized. Accordingly, 110 training camps were set up all along the border. Initially it was estimated to recruit 5 thousand soldiers but considering the growing demand, the number of recruits increased from 5 to 12 thousand. Conditions were favourable for the growth of guerrilla outfit as suggested by Mao. In the month of July after a detailed meeting important decisions were taken.

Initially, the Freedom Fighters were known as Mukti Fauz which was renamed as Mukti Bahini to give it a nationalistic flavour. Later on they were transformed from a land based force to all arms forces. Bangladesh Forces mainly comprised the regular and irregular forces. The Regulars comprised of military and para-military forces while the Irregulars or Gono Bahini comprised of the guerrillas. Forces Headquarters brought out detailed instructions laying down organization, authorization of arms and ammunition, operation and list of do's and don'ts. Both these forces had their own organogram basing on their roles and capabilities. Although India suggested fewer automatics with lesser range for the infantry which was not agreed upon by the local commanders because of modern weaponry of Pakistan military. Necessary fund was provided by government of India/Tripura and Bengal Assistance Committee. Funds were also collected from non-formal sources and volunteers. Regarding the armaments, except 1 and 8 East Bengal Regiments, other regiments had their integral Chinese weapons. Weapons from Poland, China, India, Russia, Israel, India and Yugoslavia were also used. It was difficult to maintain gadgets of different versions but there was no choice.

Besides assisting Bangladesh Forces, the Indian Research and Analysis Wing played a dubious role. They remained concerned about emerging power structure of independent Bangladesh and worked covertly to contain Mr. Tajuddin including the military leadership. To do the job, they raised a more radical and pro-Mujib entity titled Mujib Bahini recruiting educated youths from Chhatra League. A good number of regional forces also came up during the same time and effectively worked. Alongside development of forces, operations

continued. The regular forces engaged them in conventional battles while the guerrillas followed hit and run tactics. Final victory is never achieved without conventional forces which can only hold ground. Bangladeshi think tanks appreciated the matter rightly and organized three brigade size forces out of the sector troops with slice of artillery. Alongside land forces, Bangladesh Forces Headquarters also took every effort to raise the Air and Naval Wing. The sailors who fled from French training camp formed the core of Naval Wing. These sailors trained the famous naval commandos to carry out some unbelievable underwater operations. The state of Air Wing was not very encouraging. Handful small aircrafts were made operational with innovative ideas and sent on missions. Despite so much of limitations, all these forces achieved spectacular successes.

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CHAPTER 6

ORGANIZATION OF BANGLADESH OPERATIONAL SECTORS AND DIFFERENT FORCES

Operational Sectors

Sector 1

1. **General.** On the night of 25 March Bengali Army, East Pakistan Rifles and police members took up arms against the Pakistan military. Bengal Regiment troops and East Pakistan Rifles soldiers played a significant role in the initial resistance phase in Chittagong area. After the Teliapara Summit of 4 April, Chittagong became one of four initial regions to fight the war. 8 East Bengal, 11, 14 and 17 Wings of East Pakistan Rifles Sector 6, police, Ansars, Mujahids and others composed the fighting strength of this sector.
2. **Commander.** Major Zia commanded this sector from April to June. After the Sector Commander's conference in July 1971, this geographical area came to be known as Sector 1. On 7 July when the Z Force was formed, Major Zia took over as its commander handing over the responsibility to Major Rafiqul Islam.¹
3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.
4. **Headquarters.** Harina, Khagrachari, Chittagong Hill Tracts.²
5. **Forces.** There had been a total of 2100 regular troops (300 Army, 1500 East Pakistan Rifles, 200 Police and 100 Navy and Air Force) and approximately 20,000 Gono Bahini members.³
6. **Sub-sectors.** This sector was divided into following sub-sectors:
 - a. **Rishimukh Sub-sector.** Captain Shamsul Huda, Engineers commanded this Sub-sector. After his death on 4 November, Captain AYM Mahfuzur Rahman took over command.
 - b. **Sreenagar Sub-sector.** Initially this was commanded by Captain Oli Ahmed and later on when he left as Brigade Major of Z Force, Lieutenant Mansurul Amin took over command.

- c. **Manughat Sub-sector.** Captain AYM Mahfuzur Rahman joined this Sub-sector in the month of November. Later on Lieutenant Fazlur Rahman Faruque took over command.
 - d. **Tabalchari Sub-sector.** Subedar Ali Hossain commanded this Sub-sector.
 - e. **Dimagiri Sub-sector.** One Subedar was in command of this Sub-sector.
7. **Officers.** Following officers worked in Sector-1 in different time during the war:⁴
- a. Major Rafiqul Islam
 - b. Flying Officer Shakhawat Hossain Khan
 - c. Captain Enamul Haque Chowdhury
 - d. Engineer AKM Ishaque
 - e. Medical Officer Dr Rejaul Haque
 - f. Politician Abdul Hannan
 - g. Member of National Assembly Aatur Rahman Kaiser
 - h. Political Coordinator Nurul Islam Chowdhury
 - i. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Faizur Rahman
 - j. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Mosharraf Hossain
 - k. Captain Shamsul Huda
 - l. Captain AYM Mahfuzur Rahman
 - m. Lieutenant Rakibul Islam
 - n. Lieutenant Fazlur Rahman Faruque
 - o. Lieutenant Mansurul Islam
 - p. Lieutenant Showkat Ali
 - q. Captain Harun Ahmed Chowdhury
 - r. Officer Cadet Jhulon Kanti Pal
 - s. Officer Cadet Abdul Hamid
 - t. Officer Cadet Mir Mahamudul Haque

Sector 2

1. **General.** The embryo of Sector 2 composed 4 East Bengal from Comilla cantonment, East Pakistan Rifles and members from other forces from within surrounding areas. After 25 March, sub-units of 4 East Bengal from different places concentrated in Brahmanbaria and

defied their West Pakistani masters arresting the Commanding Officer and organized resistance in Comilla-Brahmanbaria area. Because of its proximity from Dhaka and India, this sector remained operationally very vibrant throughout the war.

2. **Commander.** Major Khaled Mosharraf commanded this sector from April to October 1971 and then Major ATM Haider commanded this sector until December 1971.

3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.

4. **Headquarters.** Sector Headquarters was located at Melaghar, Tripura, India.⁵

5. **Forces.** The strength of Sector troops and Guerrillas were about 6,000 and 35,000 respectively.⁶

6. **Sub-sectors.** This sector was further divided into eight Sub-sectors.⁷

- a. **Rajnagar Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was commanded by Captain Zafar Imam.
- b. **Mantali Sub-sector.** It was commanded Captain Mohammed Aynuddin.
- c. **Rangamura Sub-sector.** Lieutenant Imamuz Zaman commanded this Sub-sector.
- d. **Nirvoypur Sub-sector.** It was commanded by Lieutenant Mahbubur Rahman.
- e. **Konaban Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was commanded by Captain Abdul Gaffer.
- f. **Salda Nadi Sub-sector.** This was commanded by Captain Abdus Salek Chowdhury.
- g. **Matinagar Sub-sector.** This was commanded by Lieutenant Didarul Alam.
- h. **Dhanpur Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was commanded by Captain Akbar Hossain and Lieutenant Abu Kaiser Mohammed Fazlul Kabir.

7. **Officers.** Following officers worked with this Sub-sector:⁸

- a. Major Khaled Mosharraf
- b. Major ATM Haider
- c. Engineer Mominuddin Ahmed
- d. Medical Officer Nazimuddin Ahmed
- e. Medical Officer Captain Akhter Ahmed
- f. Accountant Mewa Billah
- g. Organizer, Member of National Assembly Khurshid Alam
- h. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Abdur Rashid Engineer
- i. Political Coordinator, Member of National Assembly Nurul Haque

- j. Major Md Aynuddin
- k. Captain M Gaffer Halder
- l. Captain Mahabubur Rahman
- m. Major Abdus Salek Chowdhury
- n. Captain Zafar Imam
- o. Lieutenant Fazlul Kabir
- p. Captain Abdul Halim Chowdhury
- q. Captain Showakat Ali
- r. Humayan Kabir
- s. Lieutenant Didarul Alam
- t. Flight Lieutenant Kamaluddin Ahmed
- u. Officer Cadet Zillur Rahman
- v. Officer Cadet Anwarul Haque Bhuyan
- w. Officer Cadet Ekramul Haque Khandakar
- x. Officer Cadet M Solaiman
- y. Officer Cadet Abdul Kader
- z. Officer Cadet Jahangir Osman
- aa. Officer Cadet Mominul Haque
- bb. Officer Cadet Miron Hamidur Rahman
- cc. Officer Cadet Akbar Yousuf
- dd. Officer Cadet Hafizullah
- ee. Officer Cadet M Mahamudul Masud
- ff. Officer Cadet Jalaluddin Siddique
- gg. Officer Cadet SM Habibullah
- hh. Officer Cadet Rejaur Rahman
- ii. Officer Cadet Karul Haque Shawpan
- jj. Officer Cadet Anisur Rahman
- kk. Officer Cadet Kazi Kamaluddin

Sector 3

1. **General.** 2 East Bengal formed the nucleus of Sector 3. Like other Bengal Regiments, 2 East Bengal was also deployed in Mymensingh, Tangail, Joydebpur and Gazipur Ordnance Factory. On 23 March the Bengali Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Masudul Hasan

Khan was removed putting in his place a pro-Pakistani Lieutenant Colonel AFM Kazi Abdur Raquib. After 25 March, entire unit revolted against the Pakistanis under the leadership of Major KM Safiullah.

2. **Commander.** Major Safiullah commanded this sector until September 1971. In September 1971, Major ANM Nuruzzaman took over the command and continued until December 1971.

3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.

4. **Headquarters.** It was initially located at Mantala, Bangladesh and later on shifted to Hejamura, Tripura.⁹

5. **Forces.** The sector had about 2,000 regular troops and approximately 25,000 Gono Bahini members.¹⁰

6. **Sub-sectors.** The whole sector was divided into ten sub sectors as under:¹¹

a. **Ashrambari Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was first commanded by Captain M Azizur Rahman and later on by Captain Ejaz Ahmed Chowdhury.

b. **Baghaibari Sub-sector.** Captain Ejaz Ahmed Chowdhury commanded this sub-sector.

c. **Hatkala Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was commanded by Captain Matiur Rahman.

d. **Simla Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was commanded by Captain MA Matin.

e. **Panchabati Sub-sector.** Captain ASM Nasim commanded this Sub-sector.

f. **Mantala Sub-sector.** Captain Shubid Ali Bhuyan commanded this Sub-sector.

g. **Bijoyagar Sub-sector.** Lieutenant Shamsul Huda Bacchu was in charge of this Sub-sector.

h. **Kalachara Sub-sector.** Lieutenant Mansurul Islam Mazumdar commanded this Sub-sector.

- i. **Kalkalia Sub-sector.** Captain Golam Helal Morshed Khan was the Sub-sector Commander.
 - j. **Bamutia Sub-sector.** Second Lieutenant Sayeed Ahmed and later on Lieutenant Sadeq Hossain commanded this Sub-sector.
7. **Officers.** There had been quite a good number of officers in this sector. They were as under:¹²
- a. Major KM Safiullah
 - b. Major ANM Nuruzzaman
 - c. Adjutant Lieutenant Syed Mohammad Ibrahim
 - d. Civilian Staff Officer Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal
 - e. Assistant Staff Officer Mohammad Alkas, Political
 - f. Civilian Staff Officer Ashique Ahmed
 - g. Lieutenant Ahmed Ali, Medical Officer
 - h. Accountant MA Mahi
 - i. Political Coordinator, Member of National Assembly Khorshed Alam
 - j. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Ramijuddin Ahmed
 - k. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Lutful Hye Sacchu
 - l. Captain Ejaj Ahmed Chowdhury
 - m. Major Muhammad Matiur Rahman
 - n. Major Abdul Matin
 - o. Captain ASM Nasim
 - p. Captain Muhammad Subid Ali Bhuiyan
 - q. Lieutenant Golam Helal Morshed Khan
 - r. Lieutenant Sadeq Hossain
 - s. Major Moinul Hossain Chowdhury
 - t. Lieutenant Nasir Uddin
 - u. Lieutenant Shamsul Huda Bachchu
 - v. Lieutenant Mansurul Islam Mozumder

Sector 4

1. **General.** During March 1971, Major Chitta Ranjan Dutta was on leave at Habiganj. After 25 March, retired Lieutenant Colonel Rab, Member of Constituent Assembly, Manik Chowdhury, Member of Constituent Assembly, Ansar, Mujahids, Police, East Pakistan Rifles, students, farmers jointly organized resistance against the Pakistan military. In addition to 31 Punjab, by mid-April when 9 and 16 Divisions were brought in to Bangladesh, one brigade was deployed in this sector. Failing to withstand the pressure, local forces crossed over to India.
2. **Commander.** Major Chitta Ranjan Dutta commanded this sector throughout the war.
3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.
4. **Headquarters.** The Sector Headquarters was initially located at Karimganj and later shifted to Masimpur, Assam, India.¹³
5. **Forces.** There had been roughly 1500 regular troops and 9000 Gono Bahini members.¹⁴
6. **Sub-sectors.** For smooth conduct of operations, the sector was divided into 5 sub-sectors as under:¹⁵
 - a. **Jalalpur Sub-sector.** It was commanded by Gono Bahini member Mr Mahabubur Rab Shadi.
 - b. **Baropunji Sub-sector.** It was commanded by Captain Abdur Rab.
 - c. **Kukital Sub-sector.** It was initially commanded by Flight Lieutenant Nurul Kader. Later on Captain Shariful Haque (Dalim) joined this sector after defecting from Pakistan Army and commanded it until he was injured.
 - d. **Kailash Shahar Sub-sector.** This was commanded by Lieutenant Ali Wakiuzzaman.
 - e. **Kamalpur Sub sector.** It was commanded by Captain Khairul Anam. He also joined the war defecting from Pakistan military.

Apart from the above sub-sectors, other camps were set up basing on special requirements.

7. **Officers.** The officers of this sector were:¹⁶

- a. Major Chitta Ranjan Dutta
- b. Flight Lieutenant ATM Ataur Rahman
- c. Political Advisor, Member of National Assembly Montakim Chowdhury
- d. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Azizur Rahman
- e. Mahabubur Rab Shadi
- f. Major Abdur Rab
- g. Captain Shariful Haque Dalim
- h. Flight Lieutenant Nurul Kader
- i. Captain AM Khairul Alam
- j. Lieutenant Jahirul Haque Khan
- k. Lieutenant Ali Wakiuzzaman
- l. Lieutenant Niranjan Bhattacharjee
- m. Lieutenant Dost Mohammad Sikder
- n. Lieutenant Abdul Jalil
- o. Lieutenant MMK Jalalabadi
- p. Officer Cadet Chowdhury Mohammad Ali
- q. Officer Cadet Moktadir Ali
- r. Officer Cadet Jibon Kanai Das
- s. Officer Cadet Chandra Kanta Das
- t. Officer Cadet Abdul Moktadir

Sector 5

1. **General.** Most bills and waterlogged regions came under the purview of Sector 5. Towards Indian side, there had been numerous hills suitable for training and organizing guerrilla forces. Because of unique geographical features there had been no permanent military cantonments/units in this area.
2. **Commander.** Major Mir Shawkat Ali commanded this sector. Initially Major Mir Shawkat Ali fought in Chittagong region and later he joined in Sector 5.
3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.
4. **Headquarters.** Banstala (north of Chhatak).¹⁷
5. **Forces.** About 800 Regulars and 7000 Gono Bahini members.¹⁸

6. **Sub-sectors.** The entire area was divided into six sub sectors as under.¹⁹
 - a. **Muktapur Sub-sector.** Subedar Najir Hossain commanded this Sub-sector.
 - b. **Dawki Sub-sector.** Subedar Major BR Chowdhury.
 - c. **Shola Sub-sector.** Captain Helal was the Sub-sector Commander.
 - d. **Bholaganj Sub-sector.** Second Lieutenant Taher Uddin Akhonje was the Sub-sector Commander.
 - e. **Balat Sub-sector.** Captain Abu Taher Salahuddin was the Sub-sector Commander.
 - f. **Barachara Sub-sector.** Captain Muslimuddin was the Sub-sector Commander.
7. **Officers.** This sector had following officers.²⁰
 - a. Major Mir Shawkat Ali
 - b. Flight Lieutenant AKM Fazlur Rahman
 - c. Civilian Staff Officer Mohammad Mostafa
 - d. Medical Officer Nazrul Haque
 - e. Political Organizer, Member of National Assembly Abdul Haque
 - f. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Abdur Jahur Mia
 - g. Political Coordinator, Member of National Assembly Dewan Obaidur Raja Chowdhury
 - h. Subedar Najir Hossain
 - i. Subedar BR Chowdhury
 - j. Captain AS Helaluddin
 - k. Politician Kais Chowdhury
 - l. Lieutenant ANM Alamgir
 - m. Lieutenant Taheruddin Akhonje
 - n. Captain Abdul Mottalib
 - o. Member of Provincial Assembly Suranjit Sengupta
 - p. Flight Lieutenant Mahfuzur Rahman Bhuyan
 - q. Major Muslemuddin
 - r. Lieutenant Abdur Rauf
 - s. Lieutenant Mahabubur Rahman

- t. Lieutenant SM Khaled
- u. Lieutenant Sarit Kumar Lala
- v. Lieutenant Partho Sarothy Roy

Sector 6

1. **General.** This is the northern most operational sector. East Pakistan Rifles 10 Wing was located here with Bengali Captain Nowajesh Uddin as the Assistant Wing Commander. When the local 23 Brigade Commander Brigadier Abdullah Khan Mallik and East Pakistan Rifle Sector Commander non-Bengali Lieutenant Colonel Tarique Rasul had been conspiring against the Bengalis, Captain Nowajesh managed to get out of the cantonment and took up defence on the bank of Tista River. This force formed the initial combat strength of Sector 6. Within this sector, there was one 50 beds hospital at Tetulia where Dr Atiar Rahman was in charge. Another 50 bed hospital was established at Burimari which Captain Hossain looked after. Few female students of Rangpur Medical College volunteered to perform the duties of nurses. Injured Freedom Fighters were initially sent to this hospital where first aid and minor operations were done. Only serious cases were sent to Bagdogra Combined Military Hospital and Jalpaiguri Civil Hospital.
2. **Commander.** Wing Commander MK Bashir commanded this sector. Later he became the Chief of Air Staff and died in air-crash in 1976.
3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.
4. **Headquarters.** Burimari, Patgram, Rangpur.²¹
5. **Forces.** This Sector had 7,000 Sector troops and 9,000 Gono Bahini members.²²
6. **Sub-sectors.** There had been five (5) sub-sectors as under:²³
 - a. **Vajanpur Sub-sector.** Number of officers commanded this Sub-sector to name Captain Nazrul Haque, Squadron Leader Sadaruddin and finally Captain Sultan Shahriar Rashid who joined the war defecting from Pakistan.

- b. **Patgram Sub-sector.** Initially East Pakistan Rifles junior leaders commanded this Sub-sector and later on taken over by Captain Matiur Rahman.
 - c. **Shahebganj Sub sector.** Captain Nowajesh Uddin was the Sub-sector Commander.
 - d. **Moglahat Sub-sector.** Captain Mohammad Delowar Hossain was appointed as the Sub-sector commander.
 - e. **Chilahati Sub sector.** Flight Lieutenant Iqbal Rashid commanded this Sub-sector.
7. **Officers.** Many other officers operated in this sector are mentioned below:²⁴
- a. Wing Commander MK Bashar
 - b. Lieutenant Abdul Matin Chowdhury
 - c. Medical Officer Captain Moshayeb Uddin
 - d. Political Organizer Member of National Assembly Matiur Rahman
 - e. Political Coordinator Member of Political Assembly Fazlul Karim
 - f. Major Nazrul Haque
 - g. Squadron Leader Sadruddin
 - h. Captain Matiur Rahman
 - i. Major Nowajesh Uddin
 - j. Captain QMM Delower Hossain
 - k. Flight Lieutenant Iqbal Rashid
 - l. Captain Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan
 - m. Lieutenant Mohammad Abdullah
 - n. Lieutenant Masudur Rahman
 - o. Lieutenant Asfaqus Samad
 - p. Lieutenant Delwar Hossain
 - q. Officer Cadet Abdus Salam
 - r. Officer Cadet Ashrafuddoula
 - s. Officer Cadet Khurshid Alam Basunia
 - t. Officer Cadet Aminul Islam
 - u. Officer Cadet Mofijur Rahman
 - v. Officer Cadet Mesbah Uddin Ahmed
 - w. Officer Cader Syed Abul Bashar

- x. Officer Cadet Motahar Hossain
- y. Officer Cadet Firojur Rahman
- z. Officer Cadet Abdul Jalil

Sector 7

1. **General.** Since March Pakistani 25 Punjab Regiment from 23 Brigade positioned itself in the outskirts of Rajshahi. East Pakistan Rifles 4 Wing Headquarters was also located in Rajshahi. 6 and 7 Wings of this Sector were located in Chapainawabganj and Naogaon respectively. On the night of 25 March, one company from 25 Punjab was sent to Pabna while rest of the regiment controlled Rajshahi. East Pakistan Rifles troops of 7 Wing Naogaon revolted under Wing Commander Major Nazmul and Assistant Wing Commander Captain Giasuddin Ahmed Chowdhury. After strengthening the defence around the Wing Headquarters, Major Nazmul sent one company each to Rajshahi and Bogra to fight the Pakistanis. On 28 March, one company of 7 Wing under Captain Gias with nearly one thousand people marched towards Bogra and another company joined Captain Abdur Rashid of the then Ayub Cadet College (now Rajshahi Cadet College). By then contact was made with Chapainawabganj. By 1 April, under the leadership of Captain Gias and Captain Rashid East Pakistan Rifles, Ansars, students and people attacked Rajshahi and forced the Pakistanis to move out of the city. Later the Pakistanis brought about a brigade sized reinforcement from Dhaka and by 14 April managed to take over Rajshahi.

2. **Commander.** Major Nazmul Haque was the first Sector commander. He died in a road accident during the war in July 1971 and after his death Major Qazi Nuruzzaman was appointed as Sector commander from August 1971 onwards.

3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.

4. **Headquarters.** Tarangapur, Poschim Dinajpur, India.²⁵

5. **Forces.** There were about 2,500 regular troops and 12,500 Gono Bahini members.²⁶

6. **Sub-sectors.** It had following sub-sectors:²⁷

- a. **Malan Sub-sector.** It was first commanded by Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir and after his death, it was commanded by a junior leader from East Pakistan Rifles.

- b. **Tapan Sub-sector.** This was initially commanded by Major Nazmul Haque and subsequently by an East Pakistan Rifles junior leader.
 - c. **Mehedipur Sub-sector.** Initially Subedar Elias was the Sub-sector commander and later on Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir also commanded this Sub-sector.
 - d. **Hamzapur Sub-sector.** It was commanded by Lieutenant Iddris.
 - e. **Anginabad Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was commanded by a member of Gono Bahini.
 - f. **Sheikhpara Sub-sector.** This was commanded by Captain M Abdur Rashid.
 - g. **Thokrabari sub-sector.** This was commanded by Subedar Moazzem.
 - i. **Lagola Sub-sector.** This sub sector was commanded by Captain Giasuddin Ahmed Chowdhury.
 - j. **Bholahat Sub Sector.** Second Lieutenant Rafiqul Islam commanded this Sub-sector.
7. **Officers.** Following officers operated in this sector.²⁸
- a. Lieutenant Colonel Quazi Nuruzzaman
 - b. Major Nazmul Haque
 - c. Teacher Mofij Uddin Ahmed, Administrative Officer
 - d. Businessman Mozammel Hossain, Staff Officer
 - e. Major Moksul Hossain Chowdhury, Induction Officer
 - f. Medical Officer Mohammad Azad
 - g. Political Organizer, Member of National Assembly Professor Abu Sayeed
 - h. Political Coordinator, Member of National Assembly Azizur Rahman
 - i. Political Coordinator, Member of National Assembly Mujibur Rahman Akkelpuri
 - j. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Syed Haider Ali
 - k. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Taherul Islam Khan
 - l. Major Gias Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury
 - m. Squadron Leader Wahidur Rahim
 - n. Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir
 - o. Lieutenant Abdul Awal Chowdhury

- p. Engineer Mohammad Iddris
- q. Major Abdur Rashid
- r. Lieutenant Rafiqul Islam
- s. Subedar Moazzem Hossain
- t. Lieutenant Bazlur Rashid
- u. Lieutenant Mohammad Saifullah
- v. Lieutenant Abdul Quaiyum Khan
- w. Lieutenant Aminul Islam
- x. Lieutenant Kaiser Haque
- y. Officer Cadet ALM Fazlur Rahman
- z. Officer Cadet AB Tajul Islam
- aa. Officer Cadet Mosharraf Hossain
- bb. Dr Mizanur Rahman

Sector 8

1. **General.** After 25 March, the Bengali soldiers of East Pakistan Rifles 4 and 5 Wing of Jessore Sector picked up arms before everyone to fight against the Pakistanis. 4 Wing of Chuadanga along with people from all classes under Major Abu Osman Chowdhury organized strong resistance and wiped out a company of 27 Baluch. 1 East Bengal fought the Pakistani soldiers and made their way out of Jessore cantonment to join the war under Captain Hafiz. They got reorganized around Maslia Border outpost. Later this unit got merged with Major Osman's contingent and fought the Pakistanis in southwestern region.
2. **Commander.** Major Abu Osman Chowdhury commanded this sector until August 1971 and later on Major MA Manjur took charge from August.
3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.
4. **Headquarters.** The Headquarters of this sector had been housed in the six-storied complex of Nehru Hospital in Kallyani- a beautiful modern satellite town about 25 kilometers off from Indo-Bangladesh boundary in the district of Chabbish Pargana, India.²⁹
5. **Forces.** In this Sector, there were 2,000 regular troops and 7,000 guerrillas.³⁰

6. **Sub-sectors.** For smooth conduct of operations, the sector was organized into seven (7) sub-sectors having approximately company strength soldiers as under:³¹

- a. **Shikarpur Sub-sector.** It was commanded by Captain Towfiq Elahi Chowdhury and Lieutenant Jahangir.
- b. **Lalbazar Sub-sector.** Assistant Wing Commander, 4 Wing Captain Azam commanded this sector.
- c. **Banpur Sub-sector.** It was under Captain Mustafizur Rahman.
- d. **Bayra Sub-sector.** This sub-sector was commanded by Captain Khandakar Nazmul Huda. For his involvement with Agartala case, he was dismissed from the service. He joined the war to serve the cause of Bangladesh.
- e. **Benapole Sub-sector.** It was initially under Captain Abdul Halim and later on when Captain Halim joined as Z Force Signal Officer, Captain Taufiq took over the command.
- f. **Hakimpur Sub-sector.** Bengali lecturer of Jhenaidah Cadet College Captain Shafiqullah took over this Sub-sector. He was a given field rank during the war for his invaluable contribution.
- g. **Bhomra Sub-sector.** Initially it was commanded by Captain ATM Salauddin followed by Captain Mahabuddin. He was Sub Divisional Police Officer of Jhenaidah and was also given field rank.

7. **Officers.** The officers of this sector were:³²

- a. Major Abu Osman Chowdhury
- b. Lieutenant Colonel Abul Manjur
- c. Adjutant Flight Lieutenant Jamaluddin Ahmed
- d. Major Shamsuddin Ahmed
- e. Lawyer Mujibur Rahman
- f. Medical Officer Mohammad Sadeq
- g. Political Coordinator, Member of National Assembly Azizur Rahman Akkas
- h. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Abdur Rauf Chowdhury

- i. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Asabul Haque
- j. Politician Raja Mia
- k. Captain Taufiq Elahi Chowdhury
- l. Lieutenant Alik Kumar Gupta
- m. Captain Mahabub Uddin Ahmed
- n. Major Mostafizur Rahman
- o. Major AR Azam Chowdhury
- p. Major Khandakar Nazmul Huda
- q. Captain Abdul Halim
- r. Captain Shafiquallah
- s. Captain ATM Abdul Wahab
- t. Flight Lieutenant Abul Kalam
- u. Lieutenant Khandakar Nurunnabi
- v. Lieutenant Mohammad Mostafa
- w. Lieutenant MH Siddique Akhtar Hossain
- x. Lieutenant Mohammad Jahangir
- y. Officer Cadet Rowshan Yazdani Bhuyan

Sector 9

1. **General.** Before 25 March, the Pakistan military did not have any base in Barisal area. The communication system had been also an important reason for which both military access and activities within this region were limited. It was not until end of March when the people of this area could realize about the situation outside Barisal particularly in Dhaka. Number of officers to name, Major Jalil, Captain Mehedi Ali Imam, Captain Shahjahan Omar, Captain Beg, Captain Ziauddin had been on leave. These officers suspending their leave responded to the call of the motherland and organized the Freedom Fighters to fight against the Pakistan military.
2. **Commander.** Major MA Jalil commanded this sector throughout the war.
3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.
4. **Headquarters.** Taki (near to Indian border), Satkhira, Khulna.³³

5. **Forces.** This sector did not have any regular troops but had around 20,000 Freedom Fighters.³⁴

6. **Sub-sectors.** This sector had three (3) sub-sectors as under:³⁵

a. **Taki Sub-sector.** It was commanded by Captain Shahajahan Omar.

b. **Hingalganj Sub-sector.** It was under Captain Nurul Huda.

c. **Shamshernagar Sub-sector.** It was initially commanded by Flight Seargent Salimullaha and later on taken over by Captain Beg.

7. **Officers.** Other officers of the sector were:³⁶

a. Major Md Jalil Mia

b. Flight Sergeant Fazlul Haque

c. Businessman Mofijur Rahman

d. Assistant Staff Officer Lawyer Obaidur Rahman Mostafa

e. Medical Officer Mohammad Shahajahan

f. Political Organizer, Member of National Assembly Abdul Gafur

g. Political Organizer, Member of National Assembly Nurul Islam Manjur

h. Induction Officer Sultan Uddin Ahmed

i. Captain Nurul Huda

j. Mahfuz Alam Beg, Navy

k. Teacher Md Shahjahan

l. Lieutenant ASM Shamsul Arefin

m. Lieutenant AH Ziauddin

n. Captain Shahjahan Omar

o. Lieutenant Mehdi Ali Imam

p. Member of Provincial Assembly Dr Mansur Ali

q. Businessman Foham Uddin Ahmed

r. Lieutenant Moinul Islam

s. Lieutenant Ashanullah

t. Lieutenant Sachin Karmakar

u. Officer Cadet Shah Alam Talukder

v. Officer Cadet Aatur Rahman

- w. Officer Cadet Jamshed Hossain
- x. Officer Cadet Liaqat Ali Khan
- y. Officer Cadet Asadul Haque
- z. Officer Cadet Isa Gazi
- aa. Dr Rafiqul Islam
- bb. Dr Mujibur Rahman
- cc. Dr Saidul Hossain

Sector 10

This sector did not have any territorial boundary. It comprised of the naval commandos only. These naval commandos, specially trained, were sent to different sectors for carrying out commando operations against the enemy's naval assets in small groups. During the operations, these groups would come under control of the sector commander in whose area the naval operations were to be conducted. After successful completion of naval operations, they used to fall back to their original sector, i.e., Number 10 Sector.

Sector 11

1. **General.** Importance of greater Mymensingh to both Pakistanis and the Freedom Fighters were not realized initially. As such until June this area remained very quiet and out of focus. Until August this area was under Indian supporting FJ sector. On 25 July, Major Abu Taher defected from Pakistan and joined the Liberation War. By then this area also started getting attention from both the forces. On 25 August, when Major Taher with 150 Freedom Fighters attacked Kamalpur Pakistani position, he insisted Bangladesh Forces Headquarters to open this sector and it was established.
2. **Commander.** Major Abu Taher commanded this sector till November 1971. Towards the end of November 1971, when Major Taher got injured in an operation and lost his leg, next senior most officer Captain Aziz took over the charge and continued till end of the war.³⁷
3. **Area of Responsibility.** As per fig. 23 and details at Appendix M.
4. **Headquarters.** Mahendraganj, Meghalay, India.³⁸
5. **Forces.** 3000 regular soldiers and 17000 Gono Bahini members.³⁹

6. **Sub-sector.** This sector had 8 sub-sectors as under.⁴⁰
 - a. **Mainkerchar Sub-sector.** It was commanded by Flight Lieutenant M Hamidullah Khan.
 - b. **Mahendraganj Sub-sector.** Second Lieutenant Mizan commanded this Sub-sector.
 - c. **Purakhasia Sub-sector.** Lieutenant Hashem commanded this Sub-sector.
 - d. **Dalu Sub-sector.** Lieutenant Taher and Lieutenant Kamal commanded this Sub-sector.
 - e. **Bagmara Sub-sector.** It was commanded by a junior leader from East Pakistan Rifles.
 - f. **Shibbari Sub-sector.** This Sub-sector was also commanded by a junior leader from East Pakistan Rifles.
 - g. **Rongra Sub-sector.** Captain Matiur Rahman commanded this Sub-sector. He was locally known as Captain Hamid.
 - h. **Maheshkhali Sub-sector.** Lieutenant Mannan commanded this Sub-sector.
7. **Officers.** Following officers fought with this sector:⁴¹
 - a. Major M Abu Taher
 - b. Captain M Abdul Aziz
 - c. Flight Lieutenant M Hamidullah Khan
 - d. Lieutenant Abdul Mannan
 - e. Engineer Mohammad Ali
 - f. Medical Officer Abdullah Al Mahmud
 - g. Political Coordinator, Member of Provincial Assembly Taherul Islam
 - h. Politician Latif Mirza
 - i. Captain Abdul Aziz
 - j. Abul Hashem
 - k. Lieutenant Syed Kamal Uddin
 - l. Captain Matiur Rahman

- m. Lieutenant Asaduzzman
- n. Student Leader Kader Siddique
- o. Lieutenant Khairul Anam
- p. Lieutenant Taher Ahmed
- q. Lieutenant Shamsul Alam
- r. Lieutenant Mizanur Rahman Mia
- s. Officer Cadet Fazlul Haque
- t. Officer Cadet Akhteruzzaman

Brigade Size Forces

Z Force Brigade

Z Force Brigade was the first regular infantry brigade of Bangladesh Army. The decision of raising this Brigade was on principle in the month of May 1971. Finally, this Brigade came into being on 7 July 1971 in Tura Hills situated opposite Mymensingh under Lieutenant Colonel Ziaur Rahman as its Brigade Commander. Captain Oli Ahmed was appointed as the Brigade Major, Captain Sadeque Hossain was the Deputy Assistant Adjutant & Quarter Master General (DAA&QMG), Captain Halim was the Brigade Signal Officer and Dr Abdul Hye served as Medical Officer.⁴² This Brigade comprised 1 East Bengal, 3 East Bengal, 8 East Bengal, and later on a field battery named 'Rowshan Ara Battery' was also raised with six (6) 105 mm Pack Howitzers.⁴³ It also had a Signal Company under its order of battle. Teldhala of Meghalay state of India was provisionally selected as its base for training and reorganization. 1, 3 and 8 East Bengal Regiments assembled at Teldhala on 24 June, 26 June and in the first week of August respectively. By the end of July, these units were assigned with independent tasks of attacking enemy position.

In the first week of May 1971, when Colonel Osmany came to inspect 1 East Bengal, he ordered Captain Hafizuddin to recruit 600 youths and reorganize the battalion. After recruitment the battalion was ordered to move to Teldhala to form part of Z Force.⁴⁴ Since there were no officers from 1 East Bengal except Captain Hafiz, on 13 July Major Moinul Hossain Chowdhury from 2 East Bengal was asked to take over the command of 1 East Bengal. He commanded this battalion from June to August. Major M Ziauddin - an ex officer

of the battalion who fled from Pakistan to join the war took over command. Major Moinul then took over 2 East Bengal and Major Safiullah, on promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel got busy in assuming the command of S Force Brigade. Z Force Brigade initially operated in Sector 11 area and later on switched to greater Sylhet District which was the operational area of 4 and 5 Sectors. This Brigade came under serious criticism while it launched a frontal attack on Kamalpur Border outpost that annihilated more than 60% attacking troops.⁴⁵ Captain Salahuddin Mumtaz got killed in this operation displaying extraordinary courage. Captain Bazlul Gani Patowary was the Second-in-Command while Flight Lieutenant Liaqat Ali Khan had performed the job of both Adjutant and Quartermaster. Alpha company was commanded by Captain Mahbubur Rahman, Bravo Company was commanded by Captain Hafizuddin Ahmed, Charlie Company Commander was Lieutenant Abdul Quaiyum Chowdhury and Delta Company Commander was Captain Bazlul Gani Patowari. Besides them Second Lieutenant Anisur Rahman, Second Lieutenant M Waker Hassan made significant contribution in various operations.

On 10 June, the Advance party of 3 East Bengal with 4 Junior Commissioned Officers and 119 other ranks under Captain Anwar moved from Hilli to Teldhala. The battalion reached Teldhala on 14 June 1971. The battalion was reorganized and trained under Z Force. 3 East Bengal was commanded by Major Shafat Jamil. Captain Mohsin Uddin Ahmed was the Second-in-Command and Flight Lieutenant Ashraful Alam was the Adjutant. Dr Wahed was the Medical Officer. Captain Anwar Hossain commanded Alpha Company, Bravo Company was commanded by Captain Akbar Hossain, Charlie and Delta companies were commanded by Lieutenant SI Nurun Nabi Khan. Apart from these officers, Second Lieutenant Fazle Hossain, Flight Lieutenant Ashraful Alam and Second Lieutenant Manzur served in this battalion.

In June 1971, Major Ziaur Rahman took available personnel of 8 East Bengal, elements of East Pakistan Rifles and Freedom Fighters to Tura and reorganized it.⁴⁶ During the formation of Z Force, Major AJM Aminul Haque was appointed as the Commanding Officer. Major Khalequzzaman Chowdhury was the Alpha Company Commander, Bravo Company was commanded by Major Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, Captain Sadeq Hossain also commanded Bravo Company for some time; Lieutenant Mosaddeque Hossain Khan commanded Charlie Company, Lieutenant Mahabubul Alam commanded Delta Company.

Besides Lieutenant Imdadul Haque, Lieutenant Oliul Islam, Lieutenant Munibur Rahman, Lieutenant KM Abu Bakar made significant contribution in various operations.

K Force Brigade

This was the third Bangladeshi Brigade raised during the month of September 1971 under Lieutenant Colonel Khaled Mosharraf. This Brigade comprised 4 East Bengal, 9 East Bengal, 10 East Bengal, 1 Field Battery (Mujib Battery), K Force Signal Company and the Bangladesh Hospital. This Brigade had been named after its commander with its Headquarters located in Meghalaya, Agartala, India. Sometime in the last week of September 1971, this Brigade was raised out of the troops of 4 East Bengal, 9 and 10 East Bengal under the direct supervision of the Brigade Commander. Before committing them on the ground a three (3) weeks extensive training session was conducted. The Brigade Headquarters comprised Commander Lieutenant Colonel Khaled Mosfarraf, Major Abdul Matin was the Brigade Major and Major ATM Haider was appointed as the Special Warfare Officer. When Lieutenant Colonel Khaled Mosharraf got injured in the battle of Kashba, Major Abu Salek Chowdhury took over as Commander. This Brigade operated within the operational area of Sector 2.

4 East Bengal was commanded by Major Abdul Gaffer Halder. The soldiers of original Charlie Company and part of Headquarter Company retained with 4 East Bengal.⁴⁷ Lieutenant AK Fazlul Haque was the Second-in-Command. Lieutenant Mamtaj Hasan was the Alpha Company Commander, Lieutenant Fazlur Rahman was Bravo Company Commander, Lieutenant Hashmi Mostafa Kamal commanded Charlie Company and Lieutenant Jamiluddin Ahsan was Delta Company Commander.⁴⁸

Major Mohammad Aynuddin was the Commanding Officer of 9 East Bengal. This unit was raised with the troops of Delta Company and part of Bravo Company of 4 East Bengal.⁴⁹ Dr Farhan Uddin was the Medical Officer. Lieutenant Harunur Rashid was Alpha Company Commander, Captain Ashraf Hossain commanded Bravo Company. Lieutenant Khandakar Azizul Islam commanded the Charlie Company (martyred) and Lieutenant Shahriar Huda commanded Delta Company.⁵⁰

Major Zafar Imam was the Commanding Officer of 10 East Bengal. This unit was raised with the leftover soldiers of Alpha Company and Bravo Company.⁵¹ With him he had Captain Shahidul Islam as the Second-in-Command, Dr Ishrarul Haque was the Medical

Officer, Lieutenant Imamuzaman commanded Alpha Company, Lieutenant Syed Mizanur Rahman was the Bravo Company commander, Lieutenant Didar Atower Hossain was Charlie Company commander and Lieutenant Mokhlesur Rahman was the Delta Company commander.⁵²

Besides these infantry battalions, Captain Abdul Aziz Pasha was the Acting Officer Commanding of 1st Mujib Battery. This Battery had other officers to name Captain Anwarul Alam and Lieutenant Bazlul Huda. Captain Shahidul Islam worked as the Brigade Signal Officer as additional responsibility. By the first week of October, all the battalions were ready to carry out offensive operations.

S Force Brigade

Like other brigades, this Brigade was also tilted after the first letter of its Commander Lieutenant Colonel Kazi Mohammad Shafiullah. Although the decision of raising this Brigade was taken in the month of September 1971, it was formally raised on 1 October 1971, in a place called Hejamura, Tripura, India.⁵³ The under command outfits included 2 East Bengal, 11 East Bengal and S Force Signal Company. Major Safiullah asked senior most Company Commander Major Moinul to take over 2 East Bengal and another company Commander Major Nasim to raise 11 East Bengal taking Alpha Company and part of Headquarter Company from 2 East Bengal. These two under strength battalions provided the manpower of S Force Brigade. In the Brigade Headquarters, Captain Azizur Rahman was the Brigade Major, Captain Abul Hossain was the Deputy Assistant Adjutant & Quarter Master General (DAA&QMG), Flight Lieutenant Abdur Rauf was the Signal Officer and Captain Moktar Kamal Chowdhary was the Medical Officer. This Brigade operated within Sector 2 area of responsibility.

2 East Bengal had Major Moinul Hossain Chowdhary as its Commanding Officer. Major Md. Matiur Rahman was the Second-in-Command of the battalion. Lieutenant Syeed Ahmed was the Adjutant; Lieutenant Abul Hossain was the Medical Officer. Alpha Company was commanded by Major Matiur Rahman, Bravo Company was under Lieutenant Ibne Fazal Badiuzzaman (martyred), after him Lieutenant Selim Kamrul Hasan took over the command. Lieutenant Syed Mohammed Ibrahim commanded Charlie Company and Captain Golam Helal Morshed Chowdhury commanded Delta Company.

On the other side, 11 East Bengal was commanded by Major Abu Saleh Mohammed Nasim. Major Matin took over as Commanding Officer on 06 December 1971 when Major Nasim was injured. Major Subbid Ali Bhuyan was the Second-in-Command. Lieutenant Nasiruddin was appointed as the Adjutant and Captain Moinul Hossain was the Medical Officer.⁵⁴ The company commanders were, Alpha Company led by Second Lieutenant Shamsul Huda Bacchu, Bravo Company under Major Shubid Ali Bhuyan, Charlie Company under Second Lieutenant Nazmul Islam Bhuyan, Delta Company under Second Lieutenant Abul Hossain. Flight Lieutenant Abdul Rauf was the S Force Signal Company Commander.

These newly raised battalions were deficient of trained manpower. About 1200 newly recruited soldiers were trained in October and November to augment these battalions.

Corps of Artillery

The nucleus of Bangladesh Artillery Corps took its shape during the Liberation War and began its journey on 22 July of that year.⁵⁵ Artillery is considered indispensable to the infantry when it comes to conventional employment of forces. With the raising of the brigade sized forces it was essentially important to have artillery fire support to make these forces effective in conventional role. Appreciating this pressing need two batteries initially named 'Mujib Battery' (later 1 Field Regiment) and 2 Field Battery (later 2 Field Regiment) were raised.

The first Battery was raised on 22 July 1971 with six 3.7-inch Howitzers at Konaban under Sector 2 and was placed in direct support to 4 East Bengal of K Force. Indian 59 Mountain Regiment Artillery took over the responsibility of making it operational and it was considered as the fourth battery of the same regiment as '59 Mujib Mountain Battery'. Captain Mahadev of Indian Army took over its command with Lieutenant Kapoor as its Gun Position Officer (GPO). On 22 August Captain Aziz Pasha took over the command and organized the Battery into two troops under Subedar Azizur Rahman and Subedar Sirajul Islam. These Junior Commissioned Officers were from infantry. Musharraf Hossain, student of class XII of Dhaka Jagannath College later on replaced Subedar Aziz. Afterwards Captain Anwarul Azim and Lieutenant Bazlul Huda joined as Battery officers. On 1 April 1972, this Battery was reorganized as 1 Field Regiment.

2 Field Battery was officially raised on 10 December 1971 with six 3.7-inch Howitzers at Kukitola camp in India. But this Battery practically started its operational activities since

mid-November 1971. Captain Khandakar Abdur Rashid Chowdhury took over the command of this Battery assisted by Second Lieutenant Sajjad Ali Zahir. Captain Rashid was commissioned in the then Pakistan 2 Field Regiment Artillery at Bannu in the North West Frontier Province, from where he joined East Pakistan Rifles unit stationed in Khulna and served for a brief period. He was a very upright officer. One day when he caught some gold smugglers, his Pakistani superiors who were alleged to have been involved in money making, quickly sent him back to his parent unit at Pakistan. During Pakistani crackdown, Rashid was deployed in Hajira on the Pakistani side of the cease fire line in Kashmir. From the radio broadcast, he came to know about the situation in Bangladesh and decided to defect with his family members to join the war. Then taking some days of leave he departed for Bangladesh. From Dhaka he managed to send his family to Chittagong and he joined the war in Sylhet area and assumed the command of 2 Field Battery.

Bangladesh Navy

Emergence of Bangladesh Navy during the war had been an episode full of suspense and heroism. The naval commandos added a very different dimension to the evolutionary process of Bangladesh Navy and will be remembered with due respect. Special Forces often use unorthodox tactics and equipment against targets that lie outside the parameters that usually dictate the use of conventional forces.⁵⁶ Application of this tactics in the waterways had been a very innovative and timely one which the world rarely witnessed before. In literal sense, the Naval Commandos of Bangladesh war had been neither special nor regular in nature but in the history of underwater operation, they will be reckoned with much respect for the role they played in 1971. Even Greenwich Naval Staff College, UK found this so relevant that they included it in their curriculum. The operations carried out by the marine commandos aimed at disrupting the maritime communication between the East and West Pakistan. Consequently, a maritime sector i.e. Sector 10 was set up comprising the Bay of Bengal and internal waterways.

Handful Bengali marine commandos who had defected from Pakistan Navy while they had been undergoing training in Toulon, a coastal city of southern France formed the nucleus of this elite force. The saga of their desperate flight from France to Delhi had revealed their daunting courage and patriotism and would stand tall in the history of our Liberation War. It was 1970-71, when the Pakistan Navy purchased a submarine from France titled 'Mangrow'. It was commissioned in France on 5 August 1970. For necessary training and procurement,

Pakistan Navy sent a group of 57 submariners to France of whom 13 were Bengalis. By 1 April 1971, they were supposed to complete their training and depart for Pakistan.⁵⁷ After military actions in the East Pakistan, the people rallied behind the Bengal Regiments to fight the Pakistan Army in different parts of the country. In this crucial hour, these patriotic sailors had been monitoring the political development of Dhaka and made up their mind to stand beside the country, when it was in distress. Initially they thought of destroying the submarine but later realizing its negative impact discarded the plan. Finally, they thought of defecting from Toulon to join the war. To materialize their plan, they started meeting frequently in small groups to finalize their plan. Initially they planned to discreetly leave France and then manage to reach India. On the evening of 27 March, after routine works, all 9 submariners assembled together for tying up details. The passports including other valuables had been kept centrally under a locker. Abdur Rakib Mia and Abdul Wahed Chowdhury were tasked to collect those. Despite lot of risks involved, they got hold of those. Next day, Badiul Alam and Abdul Wahed Chowdhury came out of the submarine for buying tickets. Appreciating the security challenges, they later changed their mind to travel by train. They met again in the evening and planned to quit the submarine at 2300 hours on 31 March, the night before they were scheduled to depart for Pakistan. On the evening of 31 March, one after the other all 9 members came out of the submarine in the name of shopping. Since other 4 submariners had left their families in West Pakistan and therefore could not make up their mind and opted to stay safe.⁵⁸ Before leaving the base, the Bengali submariners shared their plan with some of the very trusted African friends and sought their assistance which was readily met. In small group the submariners assembled in the pre-designated rendezvous. From there every two persons in a taxi cab moved to the neighbouring Marche city. Those trusted African friends came all the way up to Marche to see them off. When everyone had arrived Marche Railway station by 2300 hours, there was a great sign of relief in everybody's face. As they were preparing for Geneva, they had suddenly noticed Abdul Mannan was missing. Everyone had been tensed for a moment but they had no option but to move on for the next destination.

Later it was revealed that Submariner Abdul Mannan wishfully left the group in search of better future in London. Much later in 1978, when AW Chowdhury (as Lieutenant of Bangladesh Navy) had visited UK, he met him there.⁵⁹ The 8 submariner included Gazi Mohammad Rahmatullah, Chief Radio Artificer, Syed Md Mosharraf Hossain, Engine Room Artificer, Aminullah Sheikh, Electric Artificer, Bodiul Alam, Mechanical Engineer, Abdul Wahed Chowdhury, Radio Operator, Ahsanullah, Mechanical Engineer, Abdur Rakib Mia.

Electrical Mechanique, and Abidur Rahman, Steward. The train left timely as all the submariners settled in their sits. By 0800 hours on 1 April, all of them arrived at a bordering place opposite to Geneva city. As they approached the immigration counter, none were allowed entry without visa. They had been trying to make their points for the entry but without any result. The immigration authority instead of issuing visa kept them confined in a room and took off their passports. This had caused serious panic in their minds and could have brought disasters for the entire team. The Police could also inform the Pakistan Embassy both at Switzerland and France. However, when the Immigration Officer came to return their passports, they seemed to have got a second lease of life. By evening 1 April, all of them came to the city of Paris. After coming to Paris they came to learn that 'Submarine Mangrow' had already left and the embassy staff went to see them off. They tried to contact the Indian Embassy but failed and felt Paris is not much friendlier for their stay. So all of them shifted to Lyon - a tiny adjoining city.⁶⁰ When the Pakistani submarine reached Spain, they officially informed the French authority about the defection of their members. It became a huge headline in most media in Europe. Soon the intelligence agencies and law enforcers in France, Spain and Switzerland started looking for them everywhere. Besides the Pakistan and Indian Embassies had been also looking for those deserters. These sailors took a day and a night to reach Lyon city. They identified them as Indians in this new city and hired 3 rooms in three different hotels to evade detection. They went around in search of information and regularly met and shared information if there was anything important.

Meanwhile Gazi Rahmatullah revealed an amazing information from a tourist office that Spain had offered Pakistani passport holders an access without visa for 3 months. For planning purpose, he managed a Spanish tourist guide and a map. So all of them without wasting any time rushed towards Spanish border. By next morning they reached bordering Portbou train station. The Spanish Immigration authority on investigating passports allowed them access. After coming out of the station they hired an ordinary hotel. Next destination Barcelona where they had to travel by train. Arriving at the station they found two trains at adjacent platforms ready to depart for Barcelona and checking passengers' in. They queued up for the check-in but only two could board in the train before it started leaving the rest on the platform. Thus they got split into two groups and had to reach Barcelona by separate trains.⁶¹ After some frantic efforts they got united again and started for Madrid. Arriving in Madrid, they boarded in a small yet beautiful hotel run by the family members. The young daughter Gagelin became very friendly with the submariners. One night the proprietor came

and said that the intelligence people came for checking and we need your identities. Gegelin then came forward to face the intelligence people. She said them that the Pakistani citizens indeed been staying here but had left this morning after staying the night.⁶² Having survived this time, they submariners decided to contact the Indian Embassy. Soon Gazi Mohammad Rahmatullah and Syed Md Mosharraf moved out for contacting the Indian embassy. Since the Ambassador was not present in the office, they met the Charge de-affairs Mr Bedi who warmly welcomed them. They conveyed Mr Bedi about their intention and requirement. In response, Mr Bedi said that we have been waiting to receive you for last couple of days. He added, 'you could have received similar supports from Indian Embassy in Paris. The submariners became very emotional with the kind of support they received. Just few hours back while their future had been so bleak and obscured now seemed to be radiating hope. After these initial conversations, they came back to hotel and by evening all the submariners reported to the embassy. Indian Government played a very proactive role and instructed all their embassies in Europe to provide these submariners necessary legal and moral support. Accordingly, Mr Bedi assured them of every possible support and asked them to apply to Indian Government for political asylum. Till next order they were also advised to remain within hotel premises. For obtaining Indian passport, they submitted their Pakistani passports to Indian authority. Before departing Madrid, they had to stay in the hotels for few more days. As the submariners left Madrid, the Indian authority for the first time officially declared that the defected submariners had been given political asylum by India and now they are on their way to Delhi via Rome. This was breaking news by British Broadcasting Corporation and other international news agencies. On hearing this media people along with Pakistan Embassy staff at Rome had moved. The journalists gathered at Rome airport to interview these submariners. Pakistan authority made extensive diplomatic lobbying to get hold of these defected sailors but did not succeed.

Because of special care taken by Indian embassy staff, things have moved as planned. On their request, local police authority provided them additional security in the hotel. Also to conceal their movement to India, Indian embassy managed Swiss tickets by which they had travelled to Delhi via Geneva. As they reached Geneva, there the Indian embassy arranged their reception and provided other supports. There too the Pakistani embassy staff tried to establish that these are their citizens but it was then too late. All Pakistani efforts went in vain and the submariners very watchfully boarded in the aircraft.

On 10 April the aircraft touched the tarmac of Bombay airport - something which the submariners had been cherishing for long. Next day they reached Delhi and were received by Commander M Sharma, a very professional officer from Indian Navy.⁶³ Initially they were housed in Hotel Ranjit where Commander M Sharma arranged all their administrative details. The Pakistan Government became unusually alarmed with this event. Meanwhile the Indian intelligence deliberately interrogated them to examine their motive and also to gather information about the Pakistan Navy. They also wanted to know as to what they were thinking about the war and what they need to materialize their plan. This was first such a big group of soldiers defected the Pakistani side to join the war. With their arrival, the idea of organizing naval wing got momentum. Commander M Sharma suggested Md Rahmatullah to organize a Naval Commando group. Indian Chief of Naval Staff Mr SM Nanda, Intelligence Officer Mr Roy Chowdhury and Colonel Osmani shown keen interest in the matter. Another 8 soldiers came from Pakistan Navy also joined these submariners. The formation of marine commando was considered as a much classified matter by Indian authority. Initially it was decided to employ the commandos against the Pakistani ships and oil tankers so that their mobility could be restricted. Later their objectives got enlarged depending on the situation and capability. Before setting up the training camp, the submariners underwent training from 25 April to 15 May on scuba diving in the Jamuna River beside Delhi under late Lieutenant Sumir Das and Petty Officer Gupta.⁶⁴ After necessary training in Delhi, team moved to Calcutta on 10 May 1971. Here, on 13 May 1971, the first Naval Commando Training Camp code named C2P was inaugurated near the bank of historic Vhagirathi River of Murshidabad, West Bengal where Lord Clive defeated Nabab Siraj ud-Daulah in 1757. On 21 May Colonel Osmani visited Takipur and Bhomra Youth Camps and recruited 120 youths for Naval Commando training. These camps were under Major Jalil and Lieutenant Colonel Abu Osman Chowdhury. These boys were immediately dispatched to Plassey Camp for training.

The second batch of 200 boys was recruited from different youth camps based in Agartala. They were given vigorous training that included surface swimming, under water swimming, survival training, demolition practices, using limpet mines, hand to hand combat and navigation. The Camp Commander C2P was Commander M.N Somanth, Training Coordinator was Lieutenant Commander G. Martis, both from Indian Navy, while 20 Indian Instructors including 8 Bengali submariners became the trainers. The training of 1st batch of commandos completed on 10 July and 2nd batch completed their training on 31 July 1971.⁶⁵ Later these commandos created havoc for the Pakistani Forces along the waterways in the

month of August 1971. They not only damaged their maritime assets and facilities but also created a global awareness about the scale of immoral military action carried out by the Pakistan military.

While the Naval Commandos proved their worth as potential Naval assets, India came forward to support us by providing two tug boats in the month of October 1971. These were provided from the pull of Kolkata Port Trust to augment the Naval Wing. These two vessels were titled as Ajay and Askhay. These boats underwent a month-long refitting at Khidirpur Dockyard at the cost of 3.8 million Indian Rupees and converted them as Gunboats to carry 2 Canadian 40 mm x 60 mm Bofors Guns and 2 Light Engines and 8 ground mines, four on each side of the deck in addition to 11 ground mines.⁶⁶ They had the provision of carrying four 500 pounds British Mark II mine. On 2 October, these boats were waterborne and renamed as "Padma" and "Palash". These boats were crewed by 44 Bengali sailors and 12 Naval Commandos and officered by Indian Navy personnel and handed over to Bangladesh on 30 October 1971. Bangladesh Government in exile State Minister Captain Kamruzzaman was present when these boats were commissioned by Kolkata Port Trust Chairman Mr P.K Sen. Lieutenant Commander KP Roy and K Mitra of Indian Navy commanded the boats.⁶⁷ These were the major components of our Naval Wing raised during the war.

Bangladesh Air Force

It was not until 1971 when Bangladesh had its own air arm, but the reputation of Bengali members firstly in British-Indian and later in Pakistan Air Force had been one of the most magnificent chapters in the flying history. Bengalis produced quite a few top class combat pilots for whom the Pakistan takes lot of pride as they had all served in erstwhile Pakistan Air Force. Since then the Bengalis made a tradition of making great combat pilots for the generations to follow. In fact, their comrades and followers later came forward to raise an air arm to fight against their Pakistani masters. Of those legends, Squadron Leader MM Alam alone shot 5 Indian air crafts in less than a minute during 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. He was the world's fastest ace pilot and only one of 1965 War. An ace pilot is one who is credited with shooting down several enemy aircraft during aerial combat. Alam opted to live in Pakistan and died in 2013 as retired Air Commodore.⁶⁸ Group Captain Saiful Azam was another ace pilot of Bangladesh creed who was awarded by three different nations for his outstanding role in aerial combat. He shot enemy air crafts in 1965 War, then two years later he shot Israeli combat air craft in the 1967 Arab-Israel War. To-date he remains the highest

shooter of Israeli aircraft in history of dogfight. He retired as a Group Captain from Bangladesh Air Force. In 2001, he was honoured by the United States Air Force and enjoys the status of being one of the twenty two 'Living Eagles' of the World.⁶⁹ Squadron Leader Sarfaraz Ahmad Rafiqui was another outstanding fighter pilot from Rajshahi who died in aerial combat during the 1965 War.⁷⁰ Developing an Air arm had been an extremely challenging affair considering the requirement of huge finance and India was in a position to readily provide support in this regard. Yet the officers and men showed exemplary courage and patriotism. Being an airman, Sergeant Zahurul Haque had been politically so conscious that he was part of a historic plot to liberate the country for which he was an accused in Agartala case. He was killed in prison and Bangladesh Air Force recognized his contribution by naming Bangladesh Air Force Base Zahurul Haque in his honour. Even a student hall in Dhaka University also named after him.⁷¹

In spite of various constraints, it was quite encouraging to note that a good number of Bengali officers and airmen including technicians renounced their duty stations to join the war. Some of them had managed to escape from Kurmitola and joined 2 East Bengal in Joydebpur. Flight Lieutenant Sadaruddin and Flying Officer Nurul Kadir entered India through Comilla. By May number of pilots from Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan International Airlines joined India. Of them, Wing Commander Abul Basher, Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud, Flight Lieutenant Shamsul Alam, Flying Officer Badrul Alam, Captain Sahabuddin Ahmed, Captain Akram Ahmed, Captain ASM Abdul Khaleque (died in an air crash after independence), Captain Kazi Abdus Satter, and Captain Sharfuddin Ahmed (also died in an air crash after independence) joined.⁷² Group Captain AK Khandakar was made the Deputy Chief of Staff of Bangladesh Forces and Wing Commander MK Basher was made 6 Sector Commander. He later on became Air Chief and untimely died on 1 September 1976 in a plane crash while himself piloting an inaugural flight on the occasion of the opening of Flying Instructors School at Bangladesh Air Force Dhaka Base. Dhaka Base was subsequently renamed after him as Bangladesh Air Force Basher Base. There had been others relatively young but experienced officers to include Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud, Flight Lieutenant Rahim, Flight Lieutenant M Sadaruddin and Flying Officer Liaqat Ali Khan. It was about May-June but these officers could not be employed gainfully. Later some of them joined various sectors to fight the war in ground role. Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud and Flying Officer Shakhawat Hossain joined 1 Sector, Flight Lieutenant Kader joined No 4 Sector, Flight Lieutenant M Sadaruddin and Flight Lieutenant Rahim joined 6 Sector. Flying

Officer Liaqat joined Z Force while Flying Officer Badrul Alam joined Bangladesh Forces Headquarters as Staff Officer.

The issue of air arm was first put up to Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed in May 1971 by Group Captain AK Khandakar.⁷³ Later when the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and the Commander-in-Chief visited Delhi, a detailed report was prepared highlighting the requirement of air assets. All appreciated that an air arm far in minority, as well in materials and weapons as in number is the need of the time. In August Group Captain Khandakar had discussed the issue with Indian Secretary Mr KB Lal, Eastern Air Force Commander Air Marshal Hari Chand Dewan and Mr Ashoke Roy. They showed keen interest in helping to build an air arm and asked Bangladeshi pilots to join their squadrons which was politely declined by Khandakar; he instead requested them to provide few air craft's, accessories and an air field. The discussion ended without result. In August while Indian Air Force Chief Air Marshal PC Lal visited Calcutta, he had a detailed discussion with Group Captain Khanadakar on the issue.⁷⁴ Meanwhile Bengali immigrants thought of buying aircrafts and they even carried out market analysis and forwarded feedbacks to assist the government in the planning. Considering other practical issues, the idea of buying air craft was dropped. Few days later the Indian Air Force Chief sent two proposals regarding the formation of air force. First one had been regarding the integration of Bangladesh Air Force personnel with the Indian Air Force and the second one was to raise the air force with old "Vampire" air craft. Though none of these had been workable options, the Bangladeshi fliers continued to press on the Indians about the raising of the air arm.

However, it was in the month of September 1971, Indian Air Force agreed to help Bangladesh Government in raising an air arm. Accordingly, in September, Indian Air Force provided one Attor aircraft; one Alouette helicopter and one DC-3 airplane to take advantage of the lack of night fighting capability of the Pakistan Air Force. The aircrews were quickly dispatched to Dimapur Air field of Nagaland state adjacent to Sylhet. It was a 5,000 feet long abandoned World War II airfield. A group of 10 Air Force officers and Pakistan International Airline Pilots and 67 technicians joined Dimapur base.⁷⁵ They soon began rigging the aircrafts for combat duty. Canadian origin tiny Attor aircraft was upgraded by attaching rocket launchers and machine gun. The helicopter was given a 303 browning machine gun and two rocket launchers to give it some kind of firepower. In addition, 1-inch (25 mm) steel plate welded to its floor to give it better protection. DC-3 was an American aircraft presented

by the King of Jodhpur was modified to carry bombs but were mostly used to ferry personnel. By 28 September, Bangladesh Air Force started its training and the government formally declared its raising on 8 October.⁷⁶ They did extensive training including exercises and demonstrations. To avoid radar detection, they carried out low flying in the hilly areas of Nagaland, Monipur, Arunachal, Tripura and Assam. The embryo of Bangladesh Air Force titled 'Kilo Flight' under Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud had barely hundred members. Official date of formation of Bangladesh Air Force was 28 September though launched on 8 October by the government. On behalf of Indian Air Force, Base Commander Jorhat Airbase Group Captain Chandan Singh provided all sorts of technical, administrative, communication and operational assistance. Another valiant fighter Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman while escaping from Pakistan with a T-33 aircraft to join the war, his aircraft crashed outside Karachi near Talahar of Batta. Bangladesh Air Force owes a great deal to this man for the supreme sacrifice he made for the country. He was later awarded "Bir Sreshtho" posthumously and Bangladesh Air Force Base Matiur is named to pay respect to this great warrior.⁷⁷

ANALYSIS

The concept of sector based operation including creation of sectors evolved out of the geographical realities and the disposition of forces. In the aftermath of military crackdown, though Bengal regiments and members of East Pakistan Rifles and police offered strong resistance, they also paid heavily. It was necessary to organize various active, defected and retired personnel from forces which were materialized by various sectors. Considering these, military officers and personnel were employed in leadership, operational and training roles and others undertook miscellaneous tasks. To augment the sectors, Gono Bahini members were inducted in large number. These forces adopted low cost guerrilla techniques against the Pakistani Forces exploiting the advantage offered by the terrain. Unconventional forces were not designed to capture ground and achieve decisive victory. Therefore, conventional forces had to be raised. In the modern warfare, each of the land, maritime and air components have specific roles to play which none could ignore. Accordingly, Air Wing, Naval Wing came into function. Quantity wise they were not worthy though, the courage and dedication of our naval commandos and aviators made up that deficits. The naval commandos carried out some spectacular underwater operations in the month of August 1971, that not only paralyzed Pakistani supply chain but also caught global attention reflecting the plight of the Bengalis

resulting from the war. When the efforts of the Bangladesh Forces had been declining, performance of marine commandos changed the scene. Pakistan Air Force lacked night flying capability which the local aviators prudently exploited and destroyed number of key oil refineries. For the effective employment of the Brigades in conventional war, two artillery batteries were also raised to provide fire support. By and large, all these forces not only fought conventional battles but also operated in synchronizing with the unconventional forces depending on the need and urgency.

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CHAPTER 7

INFORMAL FORCES OF BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR

Introduction

When Bangladesh Government was busy in mastering resources to organize the sectors and brigades; number of informal forces emerged often in the far flung areas and they took the names after their leaders or the regions from where they originated (see fig. 24). These small indigenous and non-political forces operated independently under self-declared leaders without much control from Bangladesh Force Headquarters have been considered as informal forces. The background and courage of the leaders played an important role in their rise. There had been other dynamics also like so many people were willing to fight for the country but there was no structured procedure for enrollment. As Air Vice Martial (Retired) AKM Khandakar recalled, 'the formation of such forces was caused by the decision of the temporary government when it bared the non-Awami Leaguers to join the war'.¹ Besides Indian control over the Mukti Bahini had also partly contributed in the creation of these forces. The geographical condition was suitable for the employment of indigenous forces of such category. The daring, well-planned guerrilla operations conducted by these forces incapacitated the Pakistani Forces including their accomplices known as Rajakar, Albadar and Al-Shams. However, to reduce the chances of misunderstandings and other ramifications, the government circulated a general policy in respect of these forces so that all elements can function unhindered without jeopardizing the operational objectives. (Appendix S). Heroic operations carried out by the informal forces greatly helped Bangladesh Forces in achieving their operational objectives and often made up its deficits. This chapter will focus on the important informal forces highlighting their leadership, organization, methods of operations and other salient aspects.

Kaderia Bahini

One of the most significant private armies titled Kaderia Bahini was organized in Tangail under the leadership of the then student leader Abdul Kader Siddique. He joined Pakistan Army as a soldier but voluntarily retired from the job before 1971. After returning to Bangladesh, he got admitted to Karatia College and joined Bangladesh Chhatra League.² When Pakistani Forces entered Tangail city on 3 April, Kader Siddique like other local

leaders left the town in anticipation of arrest. On April 19, when a column of Pakistan Army

moved towards Mymensingh, an East Pakistan Rifles led force put up resistance near Kalihati. Kader, who had participated in Kalihati battle with some of the youths, then moved around in rural areas and began to collect arms and organized a resistance force.³ Revolutionary youths, labourers, students and professionals wholeheartedly joined the Kaderia Bahini and it formally started operating from 21 April. It became a vast force of 17,000 fighters and was divided into 5 local sectors which were further divided into 97 companies. Their operational area was spread over 1,500 square kilometers including parts of Tangail, Jamalpur, Mymensingh and Sirajganj districts (see **fig. 24**). For effective employment, this force had several branches to include Military Division, Civilian Division,

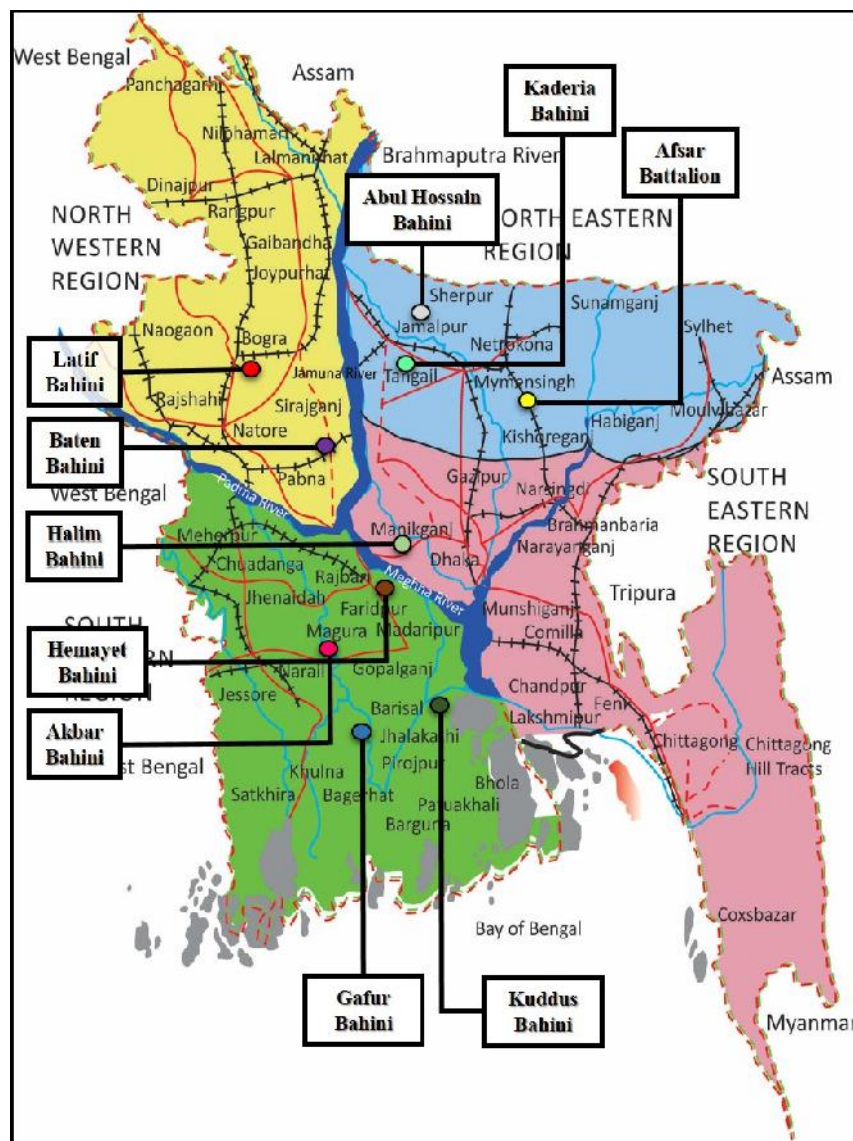


Fig. 24. Operational Area of Informal Forces. Drawn by Author.

Radio Division, Telephone Division, Food and Health Division and Medical Division.

Kaderia Bahini undertook its first mission in Kalihati Charan Village on 22 May 1971 relying solely on own strengths. Their glorious victory in this battle, elevated their self-esteem and enthusiasm among the general people. The other significant battles were Patharghata Battle, Makrai Battle, Dholapara Battle and Kashtar Battle. Kaderia Bahini had fought a total of 73 battles with the Pakistani Army. They were victorious in every single battle and lost none.⁴ Of all the operations, Matikata ambush was the most successful one where Kaderia Bahini destroyed number of ships and water crafts including huge armaments that caused enormous losses for the Pakistani Forces (see fig. 25) With their bravery, power and strength the Kaderia Bahini became a source of constant headache for the Pakistani Forces. Towards the later part of the war, Kaderia Bahini earned great respect by offering

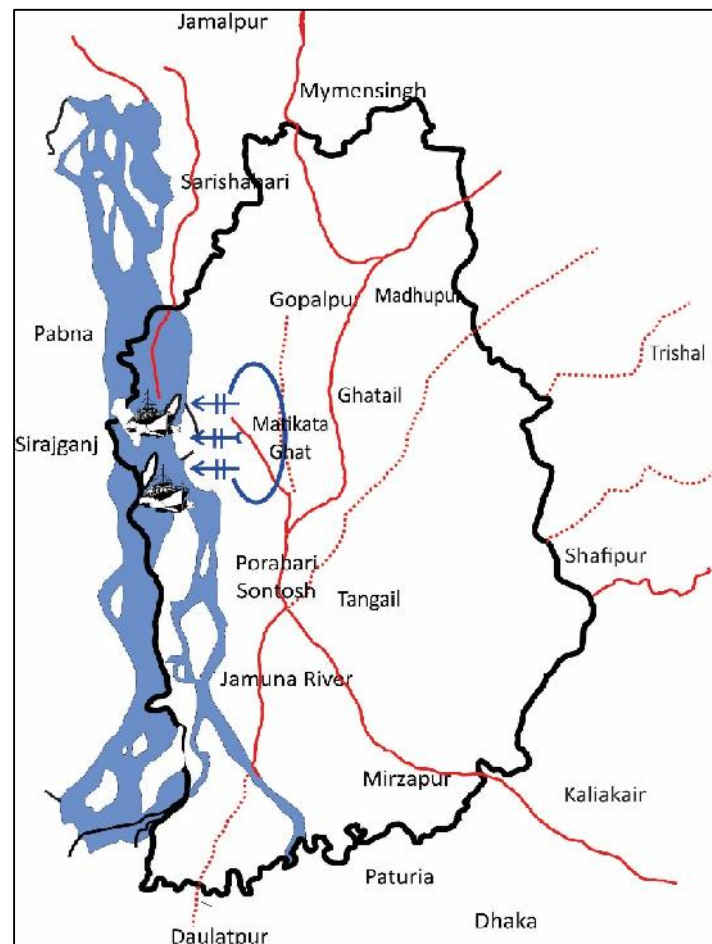


Fig. 25. Ambush on Pakistani Marine Convoy. '*Bijoyketon*'- Liberation War Museum. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka, 5 June 2014.

local support to the Allied para-troopers of 2 Commando Battalion in Tangail area. To raise the morale of this force, a magazine named "Rananggon" used to be published regularly.⁵

They staged several cultural programmes for the amusement of the Kaderia Bahini members. Approximately 31 members of this force were killed in various battles. A total of 17 Freedom Fighters were awarded with gallantry awards, one Bir Uttom, two Bir Bikram and 14 Bir Protik.⁶ Presence of Kader Siddique at the surrender ceremony of Niazi at Race Course on 16 December demonstrated his intense involvement with the 1971 War.

Mujib Bahini (Bangladesh Liberation Forces-BLF)

In the context of a prolonged war, how Bangladesh Government would retain its control over the war including other matters had been a serious concern for the Indian authority. Lack of trust and cohesiveness within and beyond the government had also acted as trigger behind the creation of 'Mujib Bahini' also known as Bangladesh Liberation Force (BLF). Of all the informal forces, the Mujib Bahini had been an exceptional one as it enjoyed the support of the Indian Secret Service (Research and Analysis Wing- RAW). The Chief of Counter Insurgency Operations against the Indian Mizo and Naga rebels, Major General Uban was asked to provide special training to the members of the Mujib Bahini.⁷ He was inextricably involved in the evolution of this force and named it as 'Mujib Bahini'. It was around June 1971, when there was a gossip about the creation of Commander-in-Chief's Special Force. It might have been deliberately floated in the air and named as such to obtain Commander-in-Chief's consent to the creation of such an elite force about which Colonel Osmani was neither critical nor he knew that this force would later become Mujib Bahini. The secretive nature of this force kept everyone in serious qualm. Major Jalil also critically talked about the formation of this force including the role of Indian Secret Service in his book "Orokkhito Swadhinatai Poradhinota". Even the Director General Youth Camp Wing Commander (Retired) SR Mirza did not have any clue regarding the recruitment and induction process of Mujib Bahini and remained in complete dark. The Indian authority trained, armed and launched them for operations under their discretion. So the Bangladesh Forces Headquarters came to know about the activities of this force much later from different sectors again not in much details. The Indian Army deliberately concealed the activities of Mujib Bahini from the Bangladesh Forces. Not a single senior level Awami League leader opposed the formation of this force as Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni, a student leader and the nephew of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was directly involved with the creation of this force. With him he had Sirajul Alam Khan, Abdur Razzaque and Tofayel Ahmed in other key positions.⁸ As per the initial information the strength of Mujib Bahini was estimated to be roughly 4 thousand.

According to Major General Uban, they trained nearly 10,000 Mujib Bahini members as trainers under different categories with an aim to training 1 lac members.⁹ This force had strong political motivation based on complete trust and allegiance to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. They were expected to facilitate the installation of a Pro-Mujib Government in the post-independent Bangladesh. To Uban, many anti-Mujib elements entered the Mukti Bahini who were not loyal and the Mujib Bahini members would largely compensate for these flaws in recruitment. Mujib Bahini was also contain and refrain the leftists from rising into the power. For all these issues the relationship between the Mujib Bahini and the government in exile including Mukti Bahini had been one of confrontational and competing than cooperation.¹⁰ Even Major General Uban mentioned this bitter relationship between the government in exile and the Mujib Bahini.¹¹ However, in some places the Mujib Bahini and Mukti Bahini had cooperated with each other. For example, the Pakistani defence at Bhatia Para of Gopalganj district did not surrender even after 16 December 1971. The Mukti Bahini, Hemayet Bahini and Muzib Bahini jointly lunched an operation on the Pakistani positions at Bhatia Para and forced them to surrender.¹² There had been lot of criticisms about the organization of Bangladesh Liberation Forces which later came to be known as Mujib Bahini. This force had negatively propagated against the temporary government in exile terming it illegal since it was not formed with the approval of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Such propaganda created confusions amongst the Freedom Fighters. Bangladesh Forces Headquarters and various Sectors handled those situations very prudently without jeopardizing the overall objectives of the war.

Mirza Abdul Latif Bahini

Politically conscious Mirza Abdul Latif had been keenly following the events preceding March 1971. To meet any eventualities, he planned to raise a force in the Vodroghat Village under Kamarkhand Thana of Sirajganj District. Initially, he organized a team of youths and named it as 'Polashdanga Youth Camp' with only 7 rifles and 15 members. Later on this force came to be known as 'Latif Bahini'. Gradually Latif Bahini turned out to be a strong fighting squad of more than 8-10 thousand members.¹³ Despite various constraints, his force fought against the Pakistani troops in the vast areas of North Bengal districts that included Bogra, Natore, Rajshahi, Pabna and Sirajganj (see fig. 24). Although the focus of their activities revolved around 'Chalanbil'. In addition to the military training branch, the force had political training, intelligence and reconnaissance branches. Among their operations, the

battle of Kashinathpur Bhab Bagan, battle of Ghatna, attacks on Faridpur, Tarash, Sathia and Gurudaspur Thanas, Kachikata Rajakar camp, Rayerganj Brahammagacha and Sirajganj Boraitola Pakistani camps and battle of Ullapara are remarkable.¹⁴ In the later part of the war, Latif Bahini conducted a raid on Tarash Thana (Sirajganj). They killed many members of Pakistani Army including many Razakars. They could arrest Pakistani Captain Halim and 12 soldiers alive in exchange of no casualty on our side.¹⁵

Afsar Battalion

Afsar Uddin hailed from Bhaluka and had been serving in the then British-Indian Army. After the partition of 1947, he joined in Pakistan Army. During the outbreak of war, he was a retired Lance Naik. People of his locality used to address him as 'Major'. On the request of the locals, he started organizing a force at Mallikbari village of Bhaluka Thana located in Mymensingh district.¹⁶ He gradually increased the strength of his force to 4,500 Freedom Fighters.¹⁷ Afsar organized his forces in line with typical military units and divided them into five battalions comprising 25 companies which were further subdivided into 3 platoons each. He inspired and encouraged his fighters by publishing a weekly magazine called 'Jagroto Bangla'.¹⁸ Afsar Battalion's area of operation extended to the southern part of Mymensingh district and some parts of Dhaka and Gazipur districts (see fig. 24). By adopting guerilla techniques, Afsar Battalion used to collect necessary weapons and munitions from the Pakistani troops. This force also maintained cooperation with other forces in and around their area of operations. The fighters of Afsar Battalion and Kaderia Bahini fought together at Dholla in Tangail district. Their activities in different regions such as Bhaluka, Gaforgaon, Trishal, Sreepur near Joydebpur, Mirzapur, Muktagacha were remarkable. Afsar Battalion kept its area free from enemy till the end of the Liberation War.

The Force of Halim Chowdhury

After the Manikganj city came under Pakistani domination, retired Captain Abdul Halim Chowdhury had been living there. After retirement, he became active in politics and was the member of National Awami Party (NAP-Muzaffor).¹⁹ He felt morally obliged to defend the motherland and quickly moved towards the rural area bagging only thirty-six 303 rifles with him. He started organizing his force by collecting and training the students and youths from various places. He established a training camp near the bank of the Padma River at Harirampur.

His area of operation included the outskirts of Manikganj, Munsiganj and Dhaka (see fig. 24). From first week of July they began to develop strong defence against the Pakistani Forces. In August they raided several examination centers to impede the ongoing School Secondary Certificate examination to undermine the authority of the government in power. In September, Halim Bahini was divided into 4 companies to conduct systematic war against the enemy. Alpha Company was commanded by Harunur Rashid, Bravo Company was commanded by Abul Bashar from Air Force, Charlie Company was under retired army person Abdul Hakim and Delta Company was commanded by Sukkur Chowdhury. These companies carried out extensive operations in and around Manikganj.²⁰ On 13 October they seized the Pakistani camp set up in the office of Harirampur Circle Officer. Among the operations, defence of Satalakkhi village, Battle of Gulaidanaga, ambush of Paturia Thana, raid in Bayonlipur, ambush of Narchikura village, ambush of Sewta Bridge and operation of Manikganj district were noteworthy.

Hemayet Bahini

Havildar Hemayet Uddin was a brave soldier with a very sound professional background. He was a drill instructor in Pakistan Military Academy Abbottabad and a Band Master. During the war, he was serving in 2 East Bengal at Joydebpur. While 2 East Bengal was moving out of Joydebpur, Hemayet was away with a patrol and failed to catch up with the unit. On return to unit location, he found some Punjabi soldiers left in the unit premises. Hemayet killed them all and with the assistance of local people managed some weapons.²¹ Then, Hemayet moved out with his forces to Faridpur via Kapashia. After crossing a long journey on 14 May, Hemayet carried out an attack on Kotalipara Thana. He was able to organize a force with the weapons collected from the operation.

Hemayet Bahini officially began its journey on 29 May at Batra Bazar near the Gauro River. The number of Freedom Fighters enlisted in this group was around 5,000. 45 female Freedom Fighters also joined this force and actively contributed in the war. After he defended Rajapur Camp against the Pakistani attack with his courage and skill, the local support rose to the peak. Inspired by the achievement of this group, many youths voluntarily joined them. He conducted a successful mission against the Pakistani soldiers at Tungipara on 11 July. Hemayet Uddin was shot in his leg in the battle of Ramshil Village. After necessary healing, on 15 September, Hemayet attacked the Kotalipara Thana for the second time. Throughout the Liberation War Hemayet Bahini made it difficult and dangerous for the Pakistani Forces

to operate in the areas of Gopalganj, Barisal, Faridpur and Madaripur districts (see fig. 24). Hemayet Bahini completely destroyed the Pakistani camps stationed in the warehouse of Jessore, Kurpana Community Center and Gopalganj Madrasa.²²

Akbar Bahini

In 1971, Akbar Hossain Miah was the Union Chairman of Srikul Union in Sreepur Thana of Magura. Immediately after the outbreak of war, Akbar Hossain concentrated in organizing the Akbar Bahini. The majority of the members of Akbar Bahini were drawn from amongst the locals of Sreepur area (see fig. 24). Hence, most of the people knew this force as Sreepur Bahini also. Local leaders of Magura, the people and the volunteers wholeheartedly helped Akbar to organize his party. The Akbar Bahini started operating with only 6 rifles and some ammunition. As time passed, it eventually became a strong team of 800 Freedom Fighters. In the early days of the war on 17 April, he attacked Sreepur Thana at around 2300 hours and achieved spectacular result. Subsequently, by undertaking many smaller operations, he caused immense damage to the Pakistan Army. Among the pitched battles, he undertook the Battle of Alkapur, Battle of Sreepur, Attack on Isakhada Rajakar camp, Attack on Magura Ansar camp, Battle of Mashlia, Battle of Boroipara, Battle of Khamarpara, Battle of Bakol, Magura etc were noteworthy. Though the Akbar Bahini fought independently, yet they had good coordination with officers of Sector-8. They used to remain in contact with Major Manjur, Sector 8 Commander. Major Manjur used to advise them in operational planning and sometimes supplied them with arms and ammunition from India.²³

Forces of Engineer Abul Hossain

Engineer Abul Hossain is a prominent Freedom Fighter and performed an admirable role during the Liberation War of 1971. He will be remembered for his courageous role as frontline fighter and also as a dedicated organizer. By mid April 1971, Engineer Abul Hossain left for India with 175 youths from the Char areas of Tangail and received military training under Brigadier Sansingh Babaji in Raushon Ara camp of Tura. After the successful completion of training, Abul Hossain and his men joined the war with Sector 11 under Lieutenant Colonel Taher. He participated in number of successful battles in Sherpur, Jamalpur, Haluaghat and Mymensingh areas (see fig. 24).²⁴ He led his men from the front in

around 17-18 battles of which few were operationally very crucial. The leading Freedom Fighters of his group were Md Shahjahan Miah of Thana Para, Ali of Dighulia, Korban Ali of Anahola, Moyez of Pathrail, Abdul Jalil of Kuchia, Mokaddes Al Mamun of Kakua, Sanwar Hossain of Delduar, Selim of Rupshijatra and Rafiqul Islam Rafique of Chak Gopal.

Of all the battles, Kamalpur, Vaya Danga and Haluaghat battles were very significant. In Vaya Danga village of Sribordi Thana under Sherpur district, a bloody war took place between the Freedom Fighters and the Pakistani Forces. Freedom Fighter Abu Taher gallantly fought and stopped the advancing Pakistani Forces with his Light Machine Gun that ensured safe withdrawal for others. During the battle, Abu Taher and Abdul Gani tried to rescue an injured comrade carrying him on their shoulders. As they entered in a house for safety, unfortunately met with the Pakistani collaborators. The Freedom Fighters got trapped and later on killed by the Pakistani Forces. As the Pakistani Forces abandoned the place, the locals buried the dead bodies as per rituals. Later on the Freedom Fighters picked those Rajakar and Al Badar members and killed them. Much later a monument was constructed in honor of those martyrs in Sribordi area commemorating their sacrifice.

Engineer Abul Hossain performed a very remarkable role in the battle of Kamalpur. It was one of the deadliest battles fought during the entire Liberation War. This battle raged for couple of days and both sides conceded huge loss in terms of lives. Lieutenant Colonel Taher got injured in this battle. As preparatory work, Taher including his small reconnaissance team started confirming the enemy locations from Indian side. When he was entering Bangladesh, suddenly an anti-personnel mine exploded that took off his leg. Engineer Abul Hossain was operating in the same battle zone and he readily came to the aid of Taher. Abul Hossain instantly contacted Indian Brigadier Sansingh and arranged for Taher's treatment. For advance treatment, Taher was evacuated to India by helicopter under arrangement of Brigadier Sansingh.

Engineer Abul Hossain was tasked to attack on the Pakistani location in Haluaghat from the Kamalpur area. Abul Hossain and his forces developed the route for 6 Bihar Battalion from Valur Hills of India up to Bangladesh. His forces also cleared the mines and secured the road for Indian forces and on 5/6 December facilitated the attack on Pakistani Forces in Haluaghat. Initially the enemy repulsed the attack but in the face of heavy Indian air strafing, they had to withdraw. Engineer Abul Hossain and his team fought vigorously with Indian 6 Bihar Battalion and played a significant role in this battle.²⁵

After liberating Haluaghat, Engineer Abul Hossain and his battle group advanced with Indian force towards Mymensingh. After capturing Fulpur, a rigorous battle was fought between the Pakistani and the Allied forces in Mymensingh. Pakistani side conceded heavy casualties in this battle where one Colonel and few officers died. A total of 551 Pakistani troops surrendered after this battle.²⁶ After liberating Mymensingh, Brigadier Sanshing tasked Engineer Abul Hossain to maintain the law and order of this area which he had effectively performed. Colonel Osmani also acknowledged the outstanding contribution of Engineer Abul Hossain both as leader and organizer.

Baten Bahini

The Baten Bahini was formed under the leadership of Khondokar Abdul Baten Chowdhury centering the Kolora village of south Tangail. It was known that initially Baten Bahini was a part of Kaderia Bahini. However, due to the ideological differences and conflicts over leadership issues, Khondokar Abdul Baten Chowdhury left Kaderia Bahini along with his followers and formed a new force.²⁷ The battlefields of this team covered the entire south Tangail, some parts of Dhaka and Gazipur area, south areas of Manikganj and a huge area of Pabna and Sirajganj (see fig. 24). Divided into 21 companies, the Baten Bahini had almost 3,500 members. This force was well organized in its different divisions that included Military Training, Civil Administration, Security, Food, Finance, Justice, Public Relations and Political Training Divisions. Only 4 rifles were the first collection of weapons of the Baten Bahini. In due course of time each and every member of this group had their own weapons which were collected from the enemy. The remarkable operations of this group were attack on Daulatpur Thana on 17 May, Chowhani Thana of Sirajganj and Ghior Thana of Manikganj at the end of May, Paturia Thana on 14 August, Ragabpur Thana on November and the Dholla Bridge Operation of Mirzapur. This force also contributed to a great extent by punishing and killing numerous Rajakars. To circulate the news of operations in different areas of the country, they used to publish a magazine named 'Agnishikha'.

Kuddus Bahini

The Kuddus Bahini was formed under the leadership of Abdul Kuddus. He was a brave man from Muladi, Barishal. Despite his personal When the Liberation War started, he quickly organized a small force with the volunteers and few retired military members. They started with small scale guerrilla operations against Pakistani Forces and used to snatch weapons from the enemy. Thereby slowly and gradually his force appeared to be a terror to the

Pakistani Forces. His force was divided into several small groups and conducted many raids and ambushes on the Pakistani locations and convoys. They operated in Mehendiganj, Muladi, Hizla and other parts of greater Barisal (see fig. 24). Captain Shajahan Omar helped this force with arms and ammunition. He also used to guide them in their operational plan and execution. Abdul Kuddus was awarded with gallantry award Bir Protik for his courageous role in operation.²⁸

Gafur Bahini

Gafur Bahini was formed in the beginning of our Liberation War 1971. Main initiative was taken by Abdul Gafur, Mohiuddin Manik and Benilal Das Gupta to organize a group of Freedom Fighters to resist the Pakistani Force. However, this Bahini was popularly known as Gafur Bahini. The Bahini used to conduct guerrilla operations in general area Banaripara, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Swarupkathi, and in the neighbouring areas (see fig. 24). When Captain Shajahan Omar established his sub-sector at the south western part of Bangladesh, the Gafur Bahini merged with the force of Captain Shajahan Omar and conducted many successful operations. This force also had coordination with Mujib Bahini. Specially, they used to get arms and ammunition support from Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Camp Commander of Kodaldoa Camp (Agailjhara, Barisal). The courage and dedication of Gafur Bahini was praiseworthy and Abdul Gofur and Mohiuddin Manik got Bir Protik for their invaluable contribution.²⁹

ANALYSIS

When the war broke out, there had been no dearth of volunteers to fight for the nation. Among them we had retired military personnel, student leaders and courageous bands of youths. Due to lack of structured process and conducive environment not everyone could join Bangladesh Forces. Besides, supervision of Indian authority and lack of trust within and beyond the government also worked as triggers and inspired many to assume leadership at local level. The overall geographical condition also favoured the effective employment and functioning of small scale guerrilla type of operations. As such the emergence informal forces had some fundamental advantages. Exploiting those advantages, these informal forces very effectively reinforced the overall fighting capability of Bangladesh Forces. With the collective efforts of all the forces, a situation was created for which the Allied Forces could advance in lightning speed and achieved victory.

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CHAPTER 8

BLENDING CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

Historical Perspective and Basic Concept

Wars of National Liberation are as old as recorded human history. It is with the French Revolution in particular that the historians tend to associate the rise of this phenomenon known as nationalism which has so much affected the history in last 200 years. It is the belief that a nation, that is to say a community of persons united by a common language, culture, religion, should be expressed in political terms by the creation by its members of a state, a political entity independent of other political entities.¹ National liberation wars are conflicts fought by nationalities to gain independence. The term is used in conjunction with wars against foreign countries (or at least those perceived as foreign) to establish separate sovereign states for the rebelling nationality. From the different point of view, these are also termed as insurgencies, rebellions, or wars of independence.² The term 'national liberation' is most commonly used for those who fought during the decolonization movement and mostly who fought in Third World backed directly or indirectly by Soviet Union which stated itself as an anti-imperialist country supporting the replacement of western backed government. China also presented herself as an ideal model for backing up such hostilities like they did in Vietnam.³ To communist theoreticians from Lenin to Che Guevara, communism and revolution are indivisible and they naturally conclude that the Communists must adapt themselves to guerrilla warfare. Mao Tse-tung was equally certain about the relationship between revolution and guerrilla warfare.⁴ Communist leaders believe that guerrilla warfare is the outcome of revolution which is commonly understood as sudden or striking change. But in the political arena, sudden political changes are revolution only when they are for the good of the population. Revolution assumes various forms and may take place through various means, for example, Algeria had guerrilla warfare, Burma, India and Pakistan emerged through peaceful settlement, China and Congo came out of open armed uprising, Egypt and Iraq had to experience Coups d'etat.⁵ The political school is led by Carl Von Clausewitz, whose statement, 'War can never be separated from political intercourse' is universally accepted as the basic tenet. Even Mao Tse-tung observed the relationship: 'War cannot for a single moment be separated from politics.... Politics is war without bloodshed

while war is politics with bloodshed'. Therefore, we can say that, according to the political school of thought, guerrilla warfare starts and ends with politics.⁶

It is quite understandable that evolution of guerrilla warfare during 1971 took place for political reasons and it came as absolute necessity. Though sometimes however, guerrilla warfare has nothing to do with revolution and is seen as post-revolution development. It is usually employed when the rebels are extremely weak, unable to start an open armed uprising or to stage a coup and the incumbents stronger and stubborn, refuse a peaceful settlement.⁷ Guerrilla warfare alone cannot achieve the political objectives and therefore at some point for decisive military victory, it becomes necessary to resort to conventional warfare. Concurrent application of unconventional warfare can act as a force multiplier and this is often adopted as a major fighting strategy. It is still a subject of interests in the defence and security circle. Of late, this concept gained currency in Bangladesh Army while formulating its war fighting doctrine. Conventional warfare is conducted by using conventional weapon systems and battlefield tactics as opposed to unconventional warfare that includes all military and quasi-military operations other than war. Free Dictionary by Farlex defines unconventional warfare as, "A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery".⁸

Unconventional warfare differs profoundly from the conventional warfare in which regular armies are openly engaged in combat with a view to establishing control over the state by destroying its military. In contrast, the unconventional forces are designed to act as force multiplier and assist in controlling the state by winning the people first. It is the kind of war, French fought in Indo-China and Algeria, the Russians in Afghanistan, the US in Iraq and Afghanistan, UK in Afghanistan and there can be other examples. However, the relevance of conventional forces for holding and retaining ground will continue to remain as important as it was. If the immediate focus of war is all about incurring cost and casualty upon the enemy, there can be no better strategy than to combine conventional and unconventional warfare. Unconventional warfare should be blended with conventional warfare from the outset of hostility to strengthen overall effect in the battlefield. When conventional forces will engage enemy forces conventionally; unconventional forces will

strike at the enemy's decision cycle and his logistics, and create fluidity in the battlefield through non-linear engagements with whatever weapons they have.⁹ As experienced by the West, the cost of suppressing attacks launched by unconventional forces are many times more than the costs of the communists of mounting them. In Greece between 1945 to 1948 Communist guerrilla forces numbering less than 20,000 armed men successfully cut the country into two halves that the only sea and air connected those. A large Greek Army with US support had to spend 2 billion dollars to contain much smaller force. What made things so effective for the communists is that they controlled the populations well and mastered the skills of guerrilla warfare. They utilized the geographical advantages by selecting regions which are contiguous to communist empire so that shelter, bases and training are easily manageable. They also exploited the pent-up hatreds against the former colonial powers. Though guerrilla warfare was largely idealized by Mao Tse-tung, its genesis goes as early as 1780 when the nature of regular warfare fundamentally changed with the introduction of heavy artillery. The major change has been the disappearance of seize, after which the regular forces revert to mobile combat and the guerrilla got an opportunity to attack them.¹⁰ In 1809, when the Spanish had resisted Napoleon's occupation forces, the opposing forces of Napoleon's Army used to be called as 'guerrilla', bearing connotation of terrorist/bandits. To fight against these irregulars, the Roman Forces required huge manpower for the defence of rear areas, installations and lines of communication. This was another reason for which, the Roman Army was significantly increased in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries. According to current doctrine in many countries suggests a ratio of 6:1 to achieve positive outcome against unconventional forces.¹¹ Guerrilla leader TE Lawrence put it differently, though for the desert warfare, he suggested 20 persons per four square miles.¹²

In September 1812, when Napoleon, in the course of swallowing all of Europe, invaded Russia, it was a weak force unable to withstand the pressure. Russians immediately formed nine guerrilla units employing the peasants to carry out guerrilla operations. After giving up Moscow, these vast groups of organized peasants carried out partisan warfare and continually harassed the French Army. Russia defeated and destroyed an army led by the famous European soldiers and won the war in spite of the fact that her ability to organize guerrilla regime was not fully developed.¹³ There are instances where wars had been lost for failing to combine both the forms of war as fighting strategy. During seven months in 1935 to 1936; the Abyssinians lost their war against Italy. The cause of defeat, aside from the most important political reason, was the failure to combine the war of movement with large scale

guerrilla operations.¹⁴ From 1927 to 1936, when the Chinese Red Army had been fighting against the nationalist forces, they persistently employed guerrilla tactics. Many bases were established, and from guerrilla bands, the Reds were able to develop into regular armies. The coordinated efforts of these guerrillas and the regular forces gained many victories.¹⁵

Given the economic base and infrastructural disadvantages of Bangladesh, there could be no better strategy than to combine conventional and unconventional warfare and the same would possibly suit well if there is no fundamental change in the security architecture within and beyond her borders.¹⁶ Guerrilla warfare is the inevitable result of the clash between the oppressors and the oppressed when the later reach the limits of their endurance as it happened in case of Bangladesh on the night of 25 March; when the Pakistan military let loose their forces to suppress the mounting flare of Bengali nationalism. Guerrillas may be recruited from the ranks of any and every occupation. Just to clarify the point that commando operations are distinctly different from guerrilla warfare. They are launched by special assault troops and teams of sabotage squads that are specially created for this purpose out of regular units.¹⁷ Started with an unorganized rebellion, but the war efforts were soon brought under the purview of the political government. After deliberate thought, Bangladesh Force was organized comprising regulars and irregulars where the guerrillas remained as the mainstay. The general features of orthodox hostilities, that is, the war of position and the war of movement, differ fundamentally from this guerrilla warfare. There are other differences such as those in organization, armament, equipment supply, tactics, command; in conception of the terms 'front' and 'rear'; in the matter of military responsibilities.¹⁸ As Mao preached and professed, without political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail, but the Bangladesh guerrillas differed slightly in regard to political indoctrination and they were not as indoctrinated as the communist guerrillas. But it never hindered in obtaining sympathies, cooperation, and assistance from the people. Guerrilla organization vary from few to few hundred all designed to operate independently and their leaders are much independent and expected to function with minimum of interference. The strategy of guerrilla warfare is manifestly unlike that employed in orthodox operations, as the basic tactics of the former is a constant activity and movement. There is in guerrilla warfare no such thing as a decisive battle; there is nothing comparable to the fixed, passive defence that characterizes orthodox war. In guerrilla warfare, the transformation of a moving situation into a positional defensive situation never arises.¹⁹

Except handful trained deserters from various East Bengal and East Pakistan Rifles units, Bangladesh had no forces to stand against the Pakistan military. For the same reason, they thought of resolving this crisis within a very short time using brute force. During the reoccupation of Vietnam, French Commander General Leclerc estimated that the operation would be a mere military walkover. When encountering the resistance, the French generals still thought it would take ten weeks at the most to occupy and pacify the whole of South Vietnam.²⁰ But, in none of the cases the superior side came out victorious. This is where the application of guerrilla warfare coupled with regular armies made difference. The 1971 War was a huge testing event for Bangladesh. It successfully organized, developed and trained its forces that concurrently employed the conventional and unconventional forces. Even initially while they rebelled without having any contact with each other, conventional and unconventional warfare went hand in hand from the beginning which was later adopted as the war fighting strategy.

Rationale for Blending Conventional with Unconventional Warfare

Apart from shaping the battlefield to our requirement, the concept of blending conventional with unconventional warfare had been particularly needed to compensate for the lack of forces, equipment and training of the Mukti Bahini. The guerrillas' knowledge of the fighting terrain, their capacity for rapid movement, their secretive nature, and their ability to melt away into the countryside and towns while evading pursuit and to obtain shelter, treatment, and sustenance from the surroundings give those many advantages over military units using conventional methods of warfare.²¹ Significant damage can be caused to enemy's battlefield operating systems by combining conventional and unconventional operations. It can force the enemy to disperse and get destroyed in piecemeal by the conventional forces. Unconventional forces can multiply the effectiveness of the conventional operations to a great degree. Other reasons for adopting this as war fighting strategy are discussed under:

Realistic War Fighting Strategy

Resource constrained countries usually adopt defensive strategy with limited offensive options while fighting a stronger adversary. These limited offensives may include engaging the enemy right from his preparatory stage, destroying logistic bases and operating behind the enemy lines. For conducting such operations, Bangladesh did not have assets like air-crafts, missiles and artillery systems. So it was a better option to

utilize her manpower transforming them into a courageous band of guerrilla force to operate alongside the regulars.

Conventional War is an Expensive Option

Besides sizable standing armed forces, for waging a conventional war steady flow of armaments and equipment is a must. Apart from lack of forces, East Pakistan neither had modern armaments nor any defence industry which could ensure steady supply of armaments.

Right Makeup

When the occupation forces advance deep into the heart of the weaker country and occupies her territory in an oppressive manner, there is no doubt that conditions of terrain, climate, and society in general are obstacles to his progress and may be used to the advantage by those who oppose him. In unconventional warfare, these advantages can be turned to the purpose of resisting and defeating the enemy.²² In case of Bangladesh, the geography and the people both combined gave the perfect makeup for blending conventional and unconventional warfare.

Internal and External Support

Because of extensive support from the mass people within East Pakistan, the Freedom Fighters enjoyed a great degree of freedom of action. They received shelter, food and where possible information about the Pakistani Forces. They also received external support readily in the form of training, shelter, arms and ammunition. All these supports played a very significant role in our overall war effort.

Prerequisites for Blending

For blending conventional warfare with unconventional warfare there are some prerequisites for achieving greater effects. As per the draft doctrine on “Blending Unconventional Warfare with Conventional Warfare”- these prerequisites are enumerated as under:²³

Blending of conventional and unconventional warfare must have the force multiplying effects to conventional operations. This is the primary and foremost consideration.

Blending concept demands simultaneous prosecution of both conventional and unconventional warfare for achieving the desired end state. It is therefore important to maintain synergy of operations of both conventional and unconventional warfare forces.

Conduct of any unconventional operations which may jeopardize or give out the intentions of the conventional forces should be avoided.

Strict control on unconventional warfare force may lower their initiative and spirit and thus desired outcome of unconventional warfare force may not be achieved.

Since unconventional warfare force is designed to operate mostly depending on local resources, one of the major considerations for blending is the general environment and the extent of local support.

For achieving the desired effects of blending, there is no alternative of coordination between the forces.

Application of Blending Technique of Warfare - Combining Conventional and Unconventional Warfare

For blending conventional and unconventional warfare geographically based three tiers force structure is generally adopted by most of the guerrilla movements fought around the world.²⁴ At the top there would be regular units to conduct large scale operations; then would militia comprise the auxiliary forces to perform small scale operations and augment the regular units when required; finally at the lowest tier there would be local guerrillas to hit smaller opportunities.²⁵ Because of lack of standing army, it was not possible to organize such infrastructure so rapidly. Only four infantry battalions which were stationed in East Pakistan formed the nucleus of Bangladesh Forces. The contribution of the East Pakistan Rifles had been substantial both in terms of combat strengths and leadership. These forces spontaneously fought the Pakistan military using both conventional and unconventional techniques which was later bolstered by formal strategies and was followed up until final victory. A detailed study on various battles/engagements may provide a better understanding about the level of application of blending technique of warfare including their effectiveness.

Central Region

Central region comprised part of Sector 2, Sector 3 and whole of Sector 11 which was situated on the north. Besides East Pakistan Rifles and police elements, 2 East Bengal was situated within this region. Whatever little resistances they had offered were limited to retaliatory fire, barricades and road blocks. Though Pakistanis subdued Dhaka city in short time, 2 East Bengal remained out of their hold for which they could safely abandon their duty places and concentrated in Mymensingh. This was a very prudent step taken by Major Safiullah. Havildar Hemayet became straggler failing to catch up with the unit, not an expert on guerrilla tactics though; he grasped it well to organize a force of his own and operated in Faridpur area. After reaching Mymensingh 2 East Bengal came under East Pakistan Rifles attack which was quickly repulsed killing about 120 non-Bengalis including the officer in charge. This was one of the early successes but it hardly followed conventional rules of war. Under the given situation they could not have achieved more. Major Safiullah having gained control over 2 East Bengal, planned to attack Dhaka Cantonment. Probably his thoughts were conditioned more by the conventional military wisdom that he received under Pakistan Army. Safiullah planned a typical attack deviating from doctrinal teaching in terms of ratio of forces i.e. 1:2 (our: enemy). However, he later altered his decision when Khaled reminded him of the pros and cons of attacking Dhaka at this stage and moved towards Brahmanbaria. In absence of structured logistic system, Safiullah's forces lived on the lands. "They fed us from the day we bolted out of Joydebpur palace. We never went hungry. We had someone everywhere to look after us" Safiullah added, that was the kind of support received from the people.²⁶

When most of the pro-nationalist security personnel had been pushed out of Dhaka, Crack Platoon made its way by carrying out surprise attacks on the Pakistani Forces and installations. It was the brainchild of Major Khaled, though rough and tough Major ATM Haider trained and organized this force from the scratch. Besides destroying the enemy's will to fight, Crack Platoon raised the spirit of Dhaka dwellers. Continuous attacks within and outside Dhaka crippled the Pakistani logistic system and the over it Pakistani aircraft's remained banned for travelling over Indian airspace which made things very challenging for the ground forces.

In the outskirts of Dhaka also there had been no dearth of volunteers to join in the war. A former Non Commissioned Officer in the Pakistan Army and experienced in 1965 war, Kader Siddique began to operate in and around Tangail towards the end of April. Now into active

politics, Siddique is highly regarded for his role in 1971 War. Lieutenant General (retired) JFR Jacob (the then Chief of Staff, Eastern Command) reckons Siddique's role in the war and for guiding his forces to reach Dhaka in lightning speed on the morning of 16 December 1971. These local forces to some extent compensated the deficits in regular troops. Though slightly varied from each other, the composition of these forces including their strategies; tactics and motivation were pretty much in line with the guerrilla organizations. Kader Bahini had 17,000 members organized into 5 sectors and they had nearly 350 engagements with the Pakistani Forces.²⁷ Of all those, ambushing Pakistani marine convoy near Matikata was noteworthy (see fig. 25).²⁸ It was 11 August, when Kader's forces ambushed Pakistani Engineers Ships, Landing Crafts including other vessels while they had been moving from Dhaka to North Bengal carrying armaments and logistic supplies. These armaments had made up their deficiency to a great extent. The Vietcong regular forces including guerrillas captured weapons from the French after the hostilities had begun and equipped them in the same way. Besides, 100 enemy casualties the Matikata operation paralyzed their logistic supply.²⁹ The signing of friendship treaty between India and the USSR that came into force on 18 August 1971 added impetus to the ongoing war efforts (Appendix T). With Major Safiullah's departure for Brahmanbaria, diehard Major Afsar came to the fore organizing a guerrilla outfit in Bhaluka area. Though had a humble beginning, it was soon raised to the strength of 4 thousand guerrillas. Baten Bahini also began to operate in the same area but it failed to work in unison with Afsar Bahini.³⁰ Despite independent nature of their operations these local forces reinforced the sectors to a large extent. Number of such forces had been operating at different places, but the greater operational onus remained with the sectors. Besides commanding regular forces, the sector commanders planned and directed operations for the 'Gono Bahini' members or the guerrillas. These activities used to be coordinated on fortnightly basis for deriving multiplying effects. After fighting the Pakistanis during the initial resistance phase, the infantry battalions had to tactically relocate across the Indian border but they soon started operating as sectors. With a short training the guerrillas had been inducted under the direct supervision and guidance of the Sector Commanders. This coordination was very vital as the regional area shared its border with number of sectors.

The history of Bangladesh Liberation War usually highlights the national heroes, but Dutch Sergeant WAS Ouderland can be justly proud of the role he played in 1971. He was then serving as the Production Manager of Bata Shoe Company at Tongi and was terribly moved by the happenings around. After the war, in a letter Ouderland wrote, "Having

escaped from the prisoners of war camp after a short internment I joined the Dutch Underground Resistance Movement. As I spoke fluent German and several Dutch dialects, I befriended the German High Command and was thus able to help the Dutch Underground Movement as well as the Allied Forces with vital information. So when the events of March 1971 started with tanks of the Pakistani Forces rolling into Dhaka, I was reliving experience of my younger days in Europe. I could fully appreciate and understand the predicament of the Bengali people and this motivated me to spring into action on their behalf".³¹ He had used the same experience in Bangladesh and worked hand in hand with Crack Platoon. Ouderland trained the guerrillas and directed number of operations around Dhaka. Around June when the Pakistani propaganda had been fooling the world about the exact situation in East Pakistan, Crack Platoon reversed their idea by carrying out clandestine operations in the capital. The World Bank delegation was to make a report for releasing economic aid which was thought to be used for buying weapons. Around the same time, the United Nation's representative Prince Karim Aga Khan visited Dhaka to ascertain the situation. During their stay in the Hotel Inter Continental they saw how fearlessly the Crack Platoon members created panic in those exclusive areas using explosives.³² Initially they had only 17 members and later rose to nearly 140 members. Same was the experience of the British Parliamentary Committee during their Dhaka visit. The Freedom Fighters engaged in every activity which would morally and materially cripple the Pakistan Army including the administration. Even the Power stations in Dhanmondi, Shahbagh, Postagola, Ulan, Motijheel, Demra, Hatkhola, Khilgaon and Kamalapur were either fully or partially damaged (Appendix U). They also destroyed patrol pumps and police check posts in different places. These events created huge impact was created nationally and internationally that seriously questioned the legitimacy of Pakistan military operation. While in the height of their performance, unfortunately on 30 June, Hafiz, Jeweel, Bodi, Azad, Bakey, Rumi and Altaf got caught and killed by the Pakistan Army.³³ This was a huge blow to the Crack Platoon on which Rumi's mother late Jahanara Imam wrote a book - a very personal account of tragedy. Her simple style of writing touched many hearts, particularly those grieved families who had lost members during the war. After this set back, Major Khaled for the time being pulled them out of operation and sent them again with much ferocity and speed. They blew up the biggest power station located in Rampura. That was a complex operation and the Crack Platoon members executed it with precision.³⁴

While other regions could emulate the blending of conventional and unconventional

warfare, it was not the same here in the central region. 'Hit and run' tactics doesn't provide

the decisive result and therefore conventional Forces become a necessity. Appreciating these

requirements in July 1971, Z Force came into being to undertake orthodox tasks. It

concentrated in Teldhala opposite Mymensingh with 1, 3 and 8 East Bengal joining from

three different locations. These units underwent extensive training on 'Attack' operation that

clearly reflected their focus on conventional operations. Once the training was complete,

these battalions were employed in conventional roles while sector troops and Gono Bahini

continued to undertake unconventional operations. 1 East Bengal was tasked to attack

Kamalpur Border outpost situated about 40 miles north of Jamalpur close to the zero line (see

fig. 26). This was held by a mixed company of Pakistani 31 Baluch and Rangers with a section of 81 mm mortar. The Border outpost had both outer and inner perimeter with concrete bunkers connected by communication trenches. H hour was set at 0330 hrs, 1 August. A Company led by Captain Mahabub was sent to Uthanipara as Blocking Position. B and D Company under Captain Hafizuddin and Captain Salahuddin Mumtaz were to attack respectively as left and right forward company. C Company secured the Forming Up Place at Brahmanpara. Zia accompanied the attacking forces to monitor the progress. While moving towards the Forming Up Place, sudden rain delayed the attacking forces in reaching Forming Up Place. Enemy artillery and wireless jamming all combined jeopardized the fire support plan. Attacking forces got completely disorganized but the persuasive leadership of Zia made the forces to press on the attack against heavy odds. Suddenly a bullet pierced Captain Salahuddin's chest that completely silenced him. Appreciating the remote chance of victory, 1 East Bengal was asked to withdraw to base. Here 61 lives including one officer got killed in action. Though the Blocking Position ambushed the enemy convoy killing a dozen of people, the operation as a whole failed.

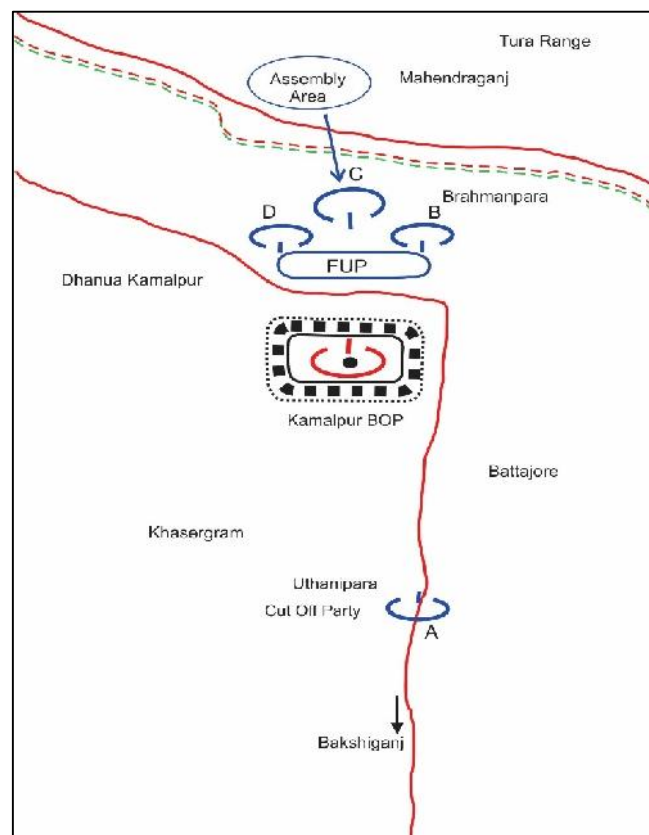


Fig. 26. Battle of Kamalpur. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni, 2005. pp, 237-241.

8 East Bengal after joining Z Force was asked to attack Nakshi Border outpost situated in the bordering areas of Mymensingh (see fig. 27). A Platoon of Pakistani 31 Baluch was

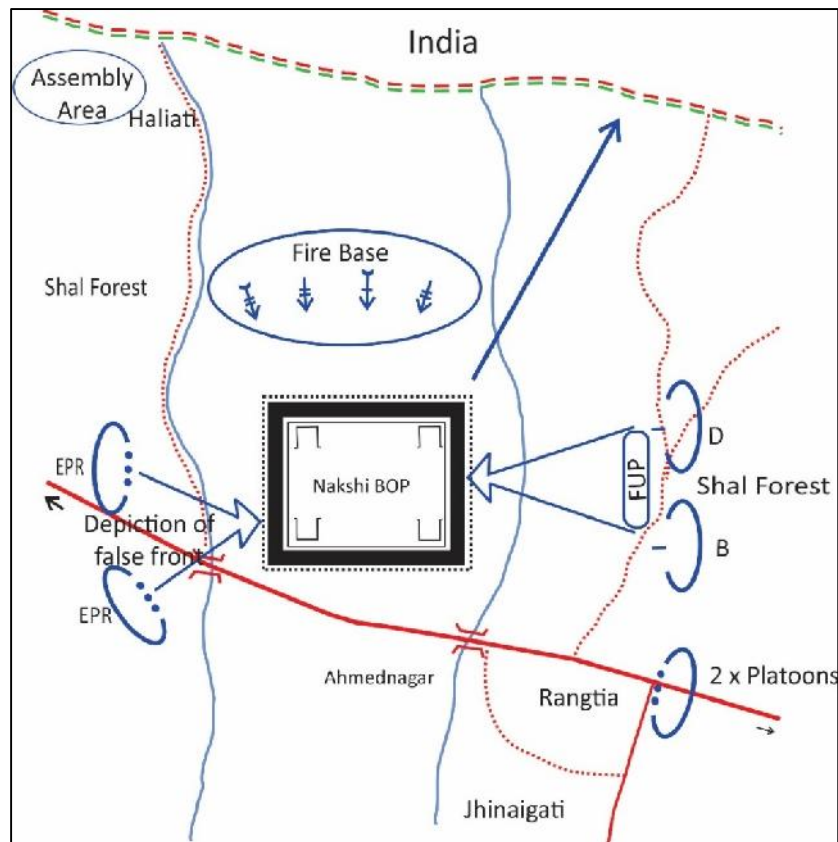


Fig. 27. Nakshi Border outpost Operation. Wahab, ATM Abdul. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni, 2005. pp, 241-245.

occupying this fortified Border outpost. Commanding Officer Major Aminul Haque assigned B and D Companies to attack while other two companies set up Blocking Position at Rangtia. On the western side an East Pakistan Rifles platoon was placed to depict a false front and Fire Base was on the north. H hour was set at 0430 hrs 2 August. By 0335 hrs the assaulting troops took up position in the Forming Up Place. When pre-H hour bombardment was brought, the enemy responded with artillery and mortar firing. Friendly artillery support was not effective enough to suppress the enemy. Shells were landing in the Forming Up Place that injured many troops. The Fire Base opened up as scheduled and the assaulting forces advanced towards the objective. Lack of skill and training made them suffer during this critical stage of the operation. While the enemy illuminating shell exploded over the assaulting forces, they were engaged easily by the enemy. Besides few soldiers were struck in

the mine fields and other field fortifications, Captain Amin was hit by automatics that blown off his gun. In this operation 26 Freedom Fighters got killed while another 50 got injured.

3 East Bengal was given a task in the deep to capture Bahadurabad Ghat - a major transshipment point situated on the eastern bank of Brahmaputra River under Jamalpur District (see fig. 28). A Company of Pakistani 31 Baluch was guarding it. Commanding Officer 3 East Bengal Major Shafaat Jamil asked D Company Commander Lieutenant SIM Noor-Un-Nabi Khan to capture the Ferry Ghat. One Platoon of A Company was deployed in Sabujpur Ghat on the opposite bank of Brahmaputra River to act as Fire Base. Another Platoon of A Company was placed in between Bahadurabad Ghat and Dewanganj in Farazibari Bridge as Blocking Position. Rest of A Company under Lieutenant Mannan was placed in area Jhalur Char. Hazrat Shah Kamal's Mazar was the Assembly Area and Katharbil High School was used as Forward Assembly Area. H hour was fixed at 0400 hrs on 1 August 1971. The entire

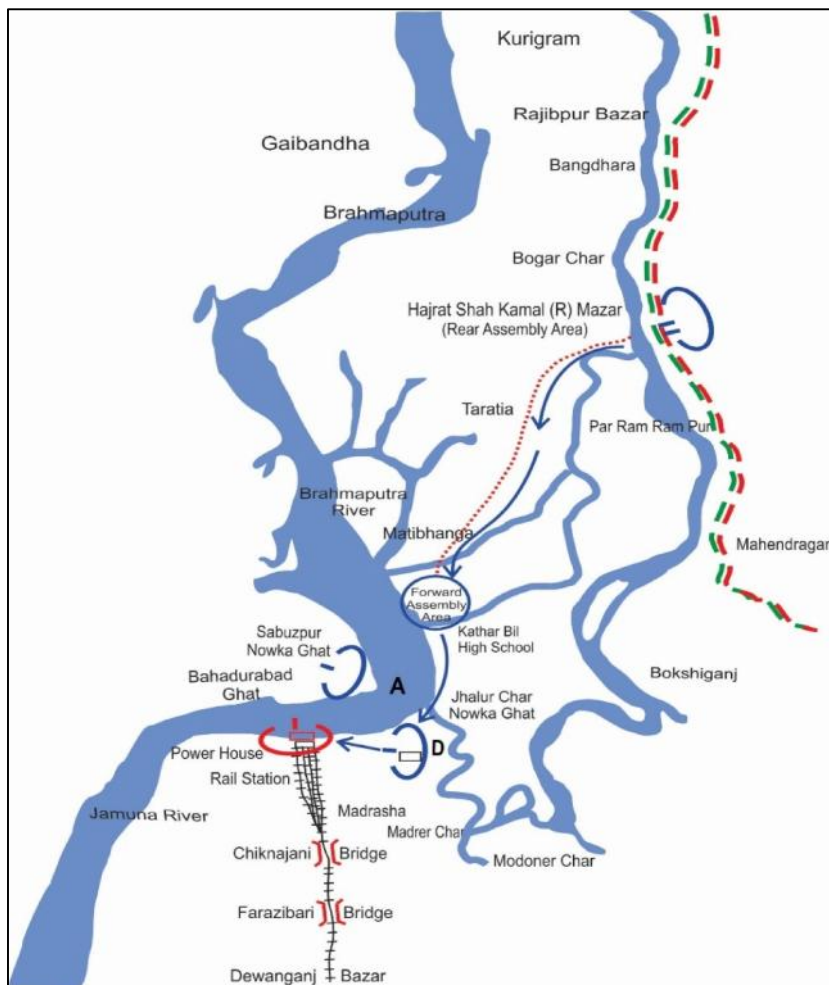


Fig. 28. Bahadurabad Ghat Attack. Wahab, ATM Abdul. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni,

force was transported from Teldhala to Assembly Area. By 2000 hrs after crossing three rivers they reached Katharbil Forward Assembly Area. Taking help of the sugar cane field, the attacking forces reached very close to Bahadurabad Ghat from where they could clearly see the Ghat. Our 3.5-inch Rocket Launcher engaged the generator set kept in the goods train including the engine of the passenger train. Assaulting forces lobbed grenades into the passenger compartment that killed the sleeping soldiers and destroyed other weapons sites. Bahadurabad Ghat was thus liberated. This was a great achievement of Z Force. Despite results achieved, in these operations, the attacking forces identified the enemy, suppressed by artillery and eventually went close to destroy them. Failing to judge the objectives (less Bahadurabad Ghat) and the quality of soldiers brought disasters. Besides inclement weather, inadequate fire support and jamming of wireless net posed serious difficulties. One thing was very clear that victory in conventional war requires absolute numerical superiority though it goes against the concept of 'few against many' as professed by Mao.³⁵ The operation of Kamalpur and Nakshi Border outpost shattered the morale of our forces momentarily but in the long run they paid dividends. Colonel Osmani had to take a stern notice of those casualties and had personally written to Lieutenant Colonel Zia to guard against such reckless employment of force in combat (Appendix V).

Since August Mukti Bahini geared up its operations to the level that the Pakistan military even stopped coming out at night from their camps. Their deployment spread so far away from their lines of communication that it was hard to ensure the logistic support. Things were so bad that according to Major General (retired) Fazal Muqem Khan of Pakistan Army, 'a Brigade Commander was getting one chapatti (bread) to eat in 36 hrs.'³⁶ Overland communication had become completely hazardous and the over flight ban into Indian air space virtually left Pakistan military with no option but to rely more on maritime lines of communication. Around this time, the marine commandos came into operation in non-traditional ways by delivering some incredible underwater operations that turned the maritime environment inhospitable for the enemies. On 11 August, they destroyed 4 vessels in Narayanganj sea port. Another group under Shahjahan Siddique destroyed Daudkandi Ferry Ghat on 16 August. In mid-October, again a group of 7 commandos led by AB Bhuiyan substantially damaged Meghna Bridge at mid-night coming all the way from Hejamura camp, India. Another group of 22 commandos entered Bangladesh from the eastern side and crossed Comilla Cantonment to reach Muchar Char area under Sonargaon from where they regularly carried out operations in the surrounding areas. On 27 October, they carried out another

operation on two foreign ships named “Mini Kin” and “Mini Lady” in Sitalakhya River. In the month of November, another detachment under Commander Abedur Rahman attacked a ship named “Turag” in Dhalleshari River. This ship was carrying rations for the Pakistani forces. In another incident, on 4 November the Naval commandos took up an opportunity target ‘MV Swami’ in broad daylight. It was anchored in the Meghna River at Amirabad under Chandpur district. On 5 November, in another occasion, Naval commando Momin Ullah Patwary along with 5 comrades destroyed a Chinese Ship carrying armaments for the Pakistani soldiers between Meghna Ghat and Chandpur. In the first week of November, in Kalabagan area only 2 Crack Platoon members while travelling by Rickshaw suddenly brought out their weapons and killed most of the members of a military van except the driver. This was a heroic operation conducted by only 2 guerrillas.³⁷ In Savar area, Manik Platoon was equally active and conducted number of successful operations. Numerous operations undertaken collectively by so many different forces, yet there had been no incidents of same side or misunderstanding of any sort. All these operations substantially helped the regular forces which had been engaging the adversaries conventionally along the bordering areas.

Eastern Region

This region is little elongated stretching from Chittagong in the south to Sylhet in the north and all along had common border with India. 4 East Bengal located in Brahmanbaria, 8 East Bengal in Chittagong and East Pakistan Rifles outfits in Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Comilla and Sylhet played significant role during the war. Though 2 East Bengal had been stationed in Joydebpur from where it defected, joined Sylhet-Brahmanbaria area and fought till the end of the war.

Chittagong Area

In Chittagong area, 20 Baluch Regiment, a pure non-Bengali unit, was to undertake ‘Operation Searchlight’. The onslaught began from the East Bengal Regimental Center where unarmed recruits were shot and burnt alive using grenades. They perished our men and officers even in the hospital beds and bayoneted them to death. After this massacre, Captain Shubid Ali Bhuiyan managed to organize a mixed company of 102 soldiers and thought of fighting back. On the same night, Major Zia also revolted quite dramatically returning from the Port area while Captain Khalequzzaman apprised him all about the situation in East Bengal Regimental Center. He quickly fell back to Sholashahar and arrested his

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Janjua and by 26 March took up defence in Kalurghat with 8 East Bengal. This uprising of 8 East Bengal in 1971 was one of the most intriguing incidents, and the causes and impact of the rebellion still continue to interest all. While Captain Bhuiyan took up defence in Kumira, gateway to Chittagong, Zia went in the opposite towards Kalurghat. This might have been because of their varied experience and the way they conceived their immediate and future threats at that point of time. Major Zia had the reputation of being a professional officer and served as Platoon Commander in the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul. However, by 26 March Bhuiyan took up defence in Kumira – a defensible location carefully chosen exploiting the terrain. Though Clausewitz said ‘the defensive form of warfare is intrinsically stronger than the offensive’, it is also less decisive form of warfare. It is said that a force conducts defensive operation when weaknesses compel it to do so as did Captain Bhuiyan. He was not even sure of the size of the force that would be up against him. Hills being on the north and the coastline just about half a mile to the south western side, the enemy had to clear it to reach Chittagong. A column of 53 Brigade moved out on the night of 25 March. Having cleared Shuvapur Bridge, the brigade pressed on Captain Bhuiyan’s position (see Fig. 7. Battle of Kumira). In the evening when the Pakistani convoy got struck before Kumira defence, the defenders effectively engaged and killed 152 all ranks including the Commanding Officer 24 Frontier Force and another officer. Our side lost only 14 lives.³⁸ Defensive operations aim to reduce the enemy strengths exploiting the geographical potentials so that a more balanced correlation of forces can be achieved. Considering the ratio of forces, this has been effectively achieved in the battle of Kumira and the extent of damage caused had been so much that it later came to be known as the grave for the Pakistani Forces. Around this time, Major Zia came on air from Kalurghat Radio Station on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh that not only united the Freedom Fighters but also made huge international impact. His proclamation of provisional government not only showed considerable political acumen on the part of a mid-level military officer, but a certain amount of forethought and planning.³⁹ The man who had technically kept the Radio Station operational was Engineer Shamsuddin from Kaptai Hydroelectric Project; later killed by the Pakistanis for his alleged role in keeping this Radio Station operational.⁴⁰ On 28 March, after repeated attacks by the enemy our forces withdrew to the rear. In Chittagong, Captain Rafique kept the situation under control. He rebelled and neutralized the enemy platoon in Wireless Colony after arresting Captain Hayat and few others. By then Major Zia was ready to take on the enemy in his

typical river line defence made up on the eastern bank of Karnaphuli River. A Company under Captain Chowdhury Khalequzzaman was on the right, B Company under Lieutenant Shamsheer Mobin was in the centre and C Company under Captain Harun Ahmed Chowdhury was on the left. He joined Kalurghat with his company from Kaptai defecting 17 East Pakistan Rifles Wing. The defence was ready by 30 March with Advance Position located in the Agricultural Complex about half a mile ahead of western bank (see fig. 8. Battle of Kalurghat). Some troops were placed on the western bank to provide them security. Besides delaying the enemy by static defence mechanism, the defenders made effective use of mobile elements causing attrition to the enemy. Young officers instead of sitting idle in the defence frequently went out and engaged isolated enemy posts, patrols in Chittagong city. Some would argue that the unconventional phase of the war should begin when the formations no longer retain their fighting capability. Such concept was not based on the premise that unconventional forces can act as force multiplier and can bring better dividend if unconventional and conventional warfare are blended together. This was very effectively applied in Chittagong area. In Kalurghat defence, when a platoon of Pakistani 3 Commando Battalion advanced and occupied Agricultural Complex, Captain Mahfuz carried out a desperate raid and captured the complex. Battle of Kalurghat continued intermittently for several days and our forces foiled number of attacks. On 11 April, enemy carried out a deliberate attack on Advance Position and captured Ispahani Building. Captain Harun after serious injury in his abdomen was taken to Patia Hospital and later on to Myanmar, from where he joined back after the independence. Lieutenant Mobin was so injured that he could not be brought back. The Pakistanis arrested him and later taken to Chittagong Combined Military Hospital. Under heavy attack, defence on the eastern bank became untenable following which part of 8 East Bengal went to Rangamati and rest moved to Bandarban via Patia. These forces later got united at Rangamati on 12 April. 8 East Bengal established its headquarters at Mahalchari. In absence of Major Zia who had left for Ramgarh to coordinate with Indian authority, Major Shawkat planned to defend Rangamati-Mahalchari waterway. Chakma King Mr Tridev Roy lived in this area, left for East Pakistan supporting the cause of united Pakistan. That discouraged other Chakmas from joining the war. For the same reason including unfriendly Myanmar border, the freedom fighting efforts remained latent in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Otherwise this area was suitable for unconventional warfare for natural protection it offered. In 1658, when Bengal Subedar Shah Suza got defeated by his brother Aurangzeb in the battle of Khawaja in Uttar Pradesh, he moved to Arakan via

Chittagong Hill Tracts to settle there. The long-drawn insurgency by the Shanti Bahini in the area bears the testimony. Any way exploiting the hillocks, undulations and water bodies, Shawkat took a two up defence setting up his headquarters at Mahalchari (See fig. 9. Battle of Mahalchari). Because of water logging physical connectivity between sub-units remained weak, but weapon positions had been sited in dominating locations. On 17 April, while a platoon of Pakistan Army had been probing into Chingri canal by a launch, the entire contingent got annihilated. After two days when they returned strongly, our forces could no longer hold on to their position. That was the time when Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rouf laid his life while he was providing covering fire for the safe withdrawal of his company. This was an example of dedication and professionalism displayed by this young soldier. In the Burighat battle, towards the end, Lion Brigade (Mizos) also joined the Pakistanis to fight the Bengalis.⁴¹ In a bid to defend the battalion headquarters, Captain Kader gave his life. The battle raged for quite a few days. Later on, in the face of mounting pressure, Major Shawkat withdrew to Ramgarh via Khagrachhari. On 1 May Pakistan Army launched a brigade attack forcing the Freedom Fighters to abandon Ramgarh and on 2 May our forces took refuge in Sabrum, India.

Though bulk of the rebelling forces went across the border, the operational activities continued from across the border. Thousands of guerrillas started joining them and they were brought under single command. Training camps being on the zero line had facilitated security, support and coordination from friendly forces. These guerrillas frequently sneaked into the Pakistani positions along the periphery and in the interior and carried out frequent raids and ambushes. The stream of operational activities along land and water bewildered the Pakistani troops. On 10 June, our fighting patrol laid an ambush near Hiaku on Ramgarh-Karerhat road where 4 Pakistanis were killed. In another raid conducted on 21 June in Sreepur near Shuvapur destroyed 2 vehicles and killed 5 soldiers. On 23 June, near Hiaku the Freedom Fighters carried out an ambush that killed 4 personnel including one officer and a microbus was destroyed. On 1 July, Captain Shamsul Huda raided Debipur post. The raid was successful where 6 Pakistani soldiers were killed, 12 injured at the cost of 3 casualties on our side. In another ambush on 3 July, 4 Pakistani soldiers got killed including one officer near Chikanchara on Ramgarh-Karerhat road. Alongside frequent raids and ambushes, there was an elaborate denial plan made by the Freedom Fighters. Under this plan, roads, bridges, railway lines, culverts had been blown off to impede enemy mobility and prevent enemy follow up. The Naval Commandos carried out the most spectacular operations in Chittagong

port when a group of 60 commandos discreetly travelled from Pallassey to Harina. After an enduring journey they reached on the bank of Karnaphuli River opposite to Chittagong port on 13 August. They divided into small groups and carried other essentials for the operation. On 14 August when Pankaj Mallik's song 'Aami Tomay Joto Shuniyechilam Gaan' was played over Calcutta Radio station provided an initial order to go ahead with the operation as scheduled. The idea was possibly drawn from the Normandy landing operation where the Allied transmitted messages by the British Broadcasting Corporation on 5 June 1944. Of many streams Verlaine's poem, "Bercent mon coeur d'une langueur monotone" (soothe my heart with a monotonous languor) meant "the attack was to be launched immediately."⁴² The German intelligence had discovered this meaning and got alarmed, but the Pakistanis failed to decipher in 1971. On 15 August, when the song "Aamar Putul Azke Jabe Prothom Shoshur Bari" was played giving the final order the mariners swam across the seven target ships against the dazzling flash and emplaced the mines at the bottom of each ship. No sooner they had reached to safety than all the ships exploded. It appeared like a nightmare to the Pakistanis. Following this incident on 16 August, Lieutenant General Tikka Khan visited Chittagong port and held people responsible for letting them down so awfully (Appendix W).

Besides inflicting moral and physical loss to the Pakistani Forces, Freedom Fighters also made them bleed severely in economic sector by destroying productive facilities. With a view to disrupting the power supply in the first week of September, Sector-1 sent a platoon from Harina to destroy Madunaghat Power Station (see fig. 29) situated on the western bank of

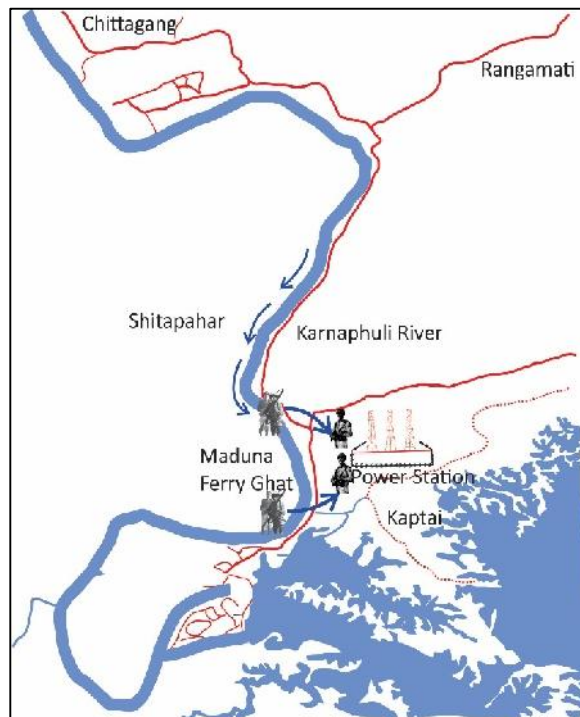


Fig. 29. Maduna Ghat Raid. *'Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

Halda River adjacent to Chittagong - Kaptai road. Raid Commander, Flight Lieutenant Sultan Mahmud having done all the preparations positioned his force around the Power Station on 6 October. The raid was affected right at 0400 hrs in the morning. As the raiding party opened up, the guards retaliated from behind the bunkers. Despite threats of lives, the Freedom Fighters crossed the barbed wire and creped to reach the objective. All 3 transformers were destroyed by putting fire. After this operation, the eastern region came under complete black out. Series of operations were carried out both by the sector troops and guerrilla forces in Mirsharai, Ramgarh, Guthuma, Kariabazar, Hiaku, Andar Manik, Zoraganj, Sreenagar, Chittagong city, Porshuram, Gaurangapara, Joychandpur, Ballavpur, Champaknagar, Belonia, Tabalchari, Karnaphuli Tea Estate, Madhupur, Durgapur and in other places. Guerrillas used to be sent to the sectors falling in his native area to explore their local knowledge and this paid dividend.

As Feni remained denude of any security elements, Assistant Wing Commander of Number 1 Wing, Captain Faruqee was sent to occupy Feni Circle Office with a platoon of soldiers since March 1971. In an effort to control the area, he developed bitter relations with the locals. Around this time two platoons of Number 1 Wing under Naib Subedar Badsha Mia united at Saldar Bazar Border outpost and from there set out for Feni to fight the enemy. As time passed, they enjoyed tremendous local support and could recruit many volunteers to augment their force. These people used rudimentary weapons: sticks, spears, scimitars, bows and other indigenous gadgets. They also followed the hit and run tactics and created impact until they crossed over to India on 22 April. Later on, Belonia Bulge - like a nose on human face, became a hotspot of intense encounters as both the forces believed possession of this bulge would assist them in furthering their operations. We noted excellent coordination and cooperation between the neighbouring sectors when our forces took on their adversaries.

In order to liberate Belonia, Major Khaled and Major Zia concentrated their forces on the south (see fig. 30). On 1 June, Major Zia sent 3 companies to Belonia from south of Chandgazi to take up defence between the border and Muhuri River. Major Khaled sent 4 companies to Belonia via Noapur-Jambura who took up defence from border to the Muhuri River. Major AZM Aminul Haque was the overall commander. By 3 June, the defence was completed and the Pakistani Forces attacked from the south on 4 June. Over confident Pakistani Forces conceded 70 deaths here and rest all withdrew. On 7 June as they attacked

again from the same direction, the result was same. On 9 June, the enemy tried to infiltrate from the front which was stopped. 11 such attempts were foiled by the Freedom Fighters.

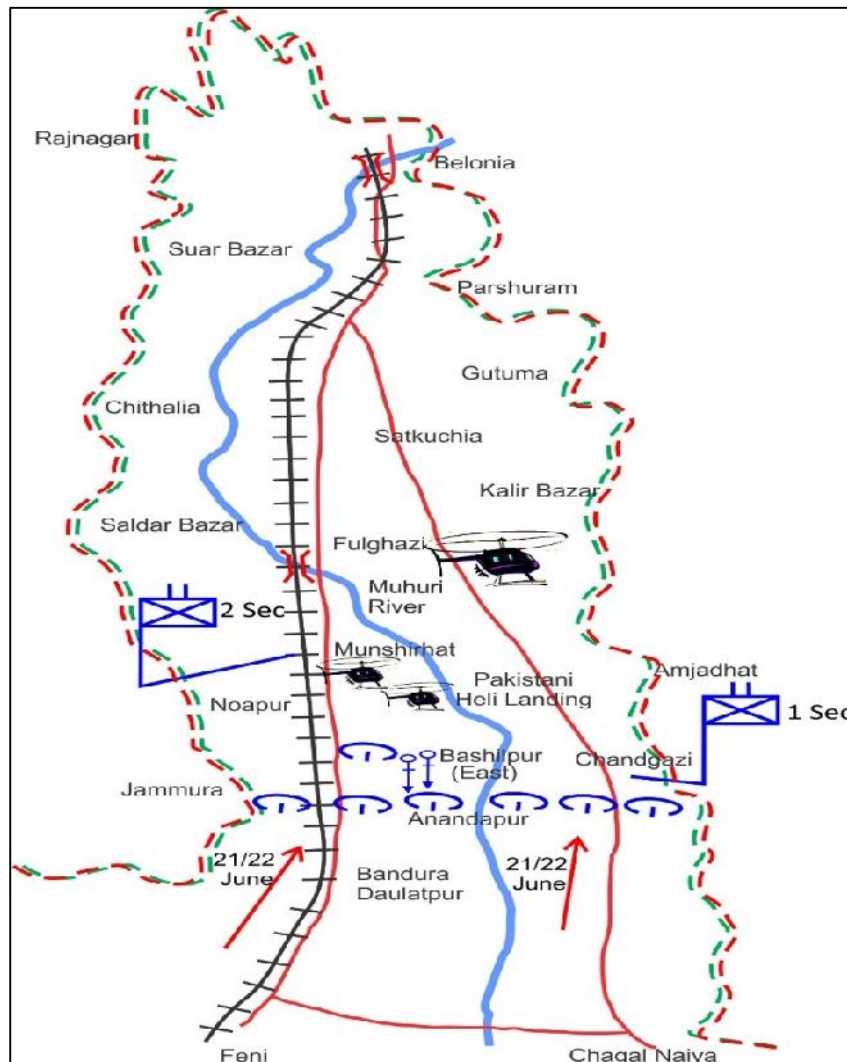


Fig. 30. Battle of Belonia-1. Zaman, Imamuz.*Bangladesh War of Liberation*. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashani, 2001. pp, 29-42.

When the Pakistani President came to learn about the situation of Belonia, he ordered to clear it by 21 June. Immediately in the evening of 21 June, the Pakistan Army dropped soldiers behind the defence using helicopters (see fig. 31). By 2000 hrs the enemy attacked on the depth company at Munsirhat. Under the situation it was necessary to fall back but Lieutenant Imam readjusted his defence facing the enemy to the rear. Enemy concentrated huge forces in Feni-Chagalnaiya area. Evaluating the situation, the Freedom Fighters withdrew by 0200 hrs and took up defence in Fulgazi-Parshuram area by morning of 23 June. At 0500 hrs, the enemy brigade supported by tanks and gunboats attacked and our Freedom Fighters had to withdraw to Parshuram. Later on, Major Khaled reorganized them to take up

defence on the south of Parshuram connecting borders in the east and west. This time enemy frontal attack came from Kaptan Bazar and the Freedom Fighters withdrew to Gutuma. Under heavy enemy pressure, the Freedom Fighters went to India on 24 June and Pakistani 15 Baluch including elements of East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces remained there.

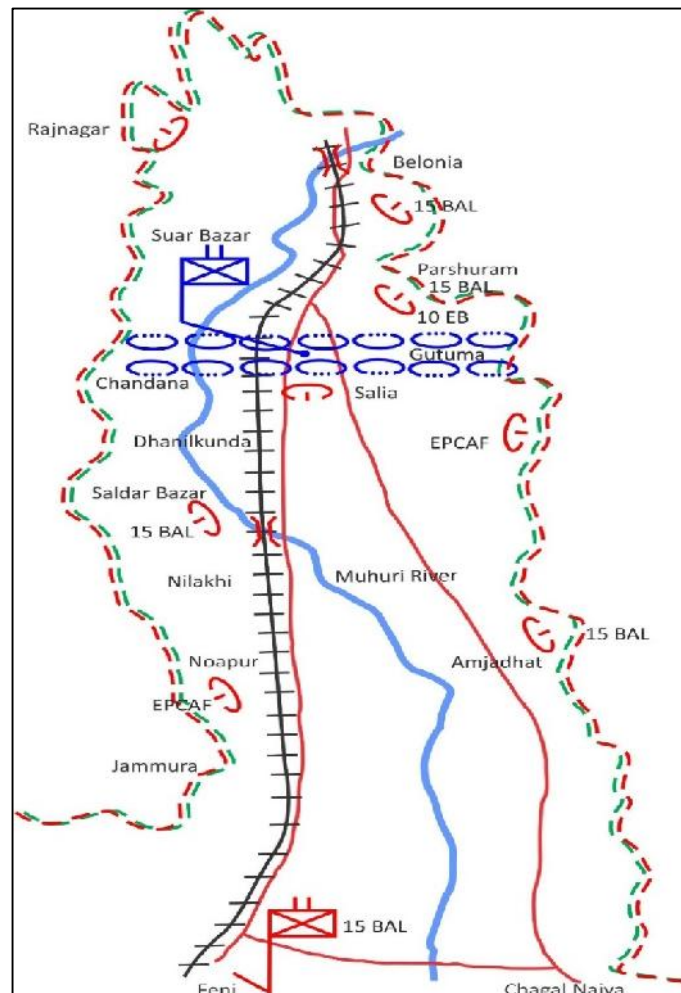


Fig. 31. Battle of Belonia-2. Zaman, Imamuz. *Bangladesh War of Liberation*. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashani, 2001. pp, 29-42.

Considering the importance, the Pakistani Forces partly held this by strengths while rest of the areas had been covered by surveillance measures. 15 Baluch deployed one company each at Belonia, Parshuram, Saldar Bazar-Nilakhi and another company at Amjadhat facing east. One East Pakistan Civil Armed Force Company each deployed at Gutuma and Noapur-Jammura facing eastern and western borders respectively. Freedom Fighters formed a Task Force comprising 10 East Bengal, one company from 2 East Bengal under Captain Helal Morshed and the members of Number 1 Sector under Captain Mahfuz. Major Zafar Imam was made the Task Force Commander. Their task was to infiltrate from the east and west and

then link up with each other and position themselves in a manner to disrupt enemy's support system including reinforcements. After detailed reconnaissance, it was decided to infiltrate on 2 November. Since it was raining from 31 October, it added to the advantages of the infiltrating forces. After the last light of 2 November, all the companies infiltrated between Chandana and Suar Bazar, crossed Muhuri River to reach Salia by mid-night and took up defence along Chandana-Salia-Gutuma line facing north and south. Troops of 1 Sector under Captain Mahfuz infiltrated through Gutuma and contacted 10 East Bengal. Surprisingly, until 0630 hrs in the morning, the Pakistani Forces in the defence did not have any knowledge about the infiltration. By first light on 3 November, the defence was ready. It was a unique operation where innovative ideas and application of conventional and unconventional warfare conducted effectively. In the morning, while one Pakistani officer along with four soldiers were moving towards south Salia using the railway trolley, they were engaged by the Freedom Fighters in the defence and all of them got killed. In a period of relative lull in the afternoon of 4 October, 4 Pakistani F-86 Sabre Jets flew over the skies of Belonia. Two of these aircrafts came down and strafed on the defence. One Junior Commissioned Officer of 2 East Bengal who was manning Machine Gun post was spotted and strafed. Our forces quickly responded and troops saw one of the fighters was hit. This was a rare achievement by a flat trajectory weapon being effective against such a high-speed aircraft. The Junior Commissioned Officer had died in this air action and our positions continued to be held. Meanwhile our forces repelled number of enemy attacks. Pakistani Forces had a strong position in Saldar Bazar Border outpost. On the night of 5 November, a patrol was sent from 10 East Bengal to collect information on Saldar Bazar Border outpost which unfortunately got trapped by enemy ambush. After hearing this, Lieutenant Imam went to rescue the patrol. He launched a quick attack on Saldar Bazar under mortar fire support and captured the Border outpost by 6 November. On the same day, the Pakistani Forces attacked twice to recapture Saldar Bazar but failed. By then Indian 83 Mountain Brigade concentrated along the border and was ready to assist. On 6 November, at about mid-night under the artillery fire support, 3 Dogra Regiment attacked from the northwesterly direction and cleared Belonia by the dawn of 7 November.⁴³

Comilla-Brahmanbaria

Like other infantry units, 4 East Bengal was split and sent to different places in the name of arresting law and order situation. Two of its companies had been sent to Brahmanbaria

while another one was sent to Shamshernagar to deal with the so called threats of Indian intruders under Major Khaled Mosharraf. It seemed deceptive to Khaled, therefore he quickly got in touch with Major Shafayet Jamil who was in Brahmanbaria to share his worries. During this time, the Pakistan military turned Comilla Cantonment as a slaughter house where they brought in the important civil-military personnel and politicians and later indiscriminately killed them. Lieutenant Imamuz Zaman had been one of those victims who was kept under confinement, shot and left alone. Death will eventually claim all of us, but that does not mean we have to go down easily. Perhaps Imam realized it and managed to get him out of that pull of blood and survived. Same was the situation of Captain Haider of 3 Commando Battalion who also sneaked out of his unit to join 4 East Bengal. Most thrilling event was the arrest of non-Bengali Commanding Officer of 4 East Bengal. It was 27 March when all the officers assembled in the office after breakfast, suddenly junior officers as instructed by Major Shafaat Jamil orchestrated Commanding Officer's arrest. Unorthodox tactics has the greatest advantage that it does not need to field equal number of forces against the enemy and it has no rules and conventions. Soon Major Khaled returned from Shamshernagar joined Major Shafaat and took control of 4 East Bengal. After the revolt was complete, students, farmers and people from all creeds rallied behind them. Efforts were taken to protect liberated Brahmanbaria area. One company each was placed guarding southern and south western approaches respectively. Another company was to block all movements from Sylhet and Moulvibazar. Other sub-units were placed to strengthen the overall defence. For the time being, it was a good way to reduce the enemy strength forcing him to attack exposing his weaknesses. For this the defenders made the best use of terrain and time to extract positional advantage over the enemy forces.

Alongside conventional battles, 4 East Bengal did exceedingly well in waging unconventional war where the name of late Naib Subedar Wahab would be remembered with reverence. He was master of unorthodox small unit operations and was very effective against the Pakistanis in Salda Nadi and adjoining areas (see fig. 32). In Salda Nadi area the Pakistanis killed about 500 persons.⁴⁴ It was tactically very important as it dominated the railway line connecting Dhaka and Chittagong. Wahab carried out hundreds of operations here and never lost any. On 18 June when the Pakistani Forces were bringing in ammunition and explosives using the railway trolley from Kasba to Salda Nadi, a foot patrol led by Wahab ambushed them from a close distance using automatic weapons. It shattered the morale of the Pakistani Forces. Again on 10 July, Subedar Wahab came to know that the

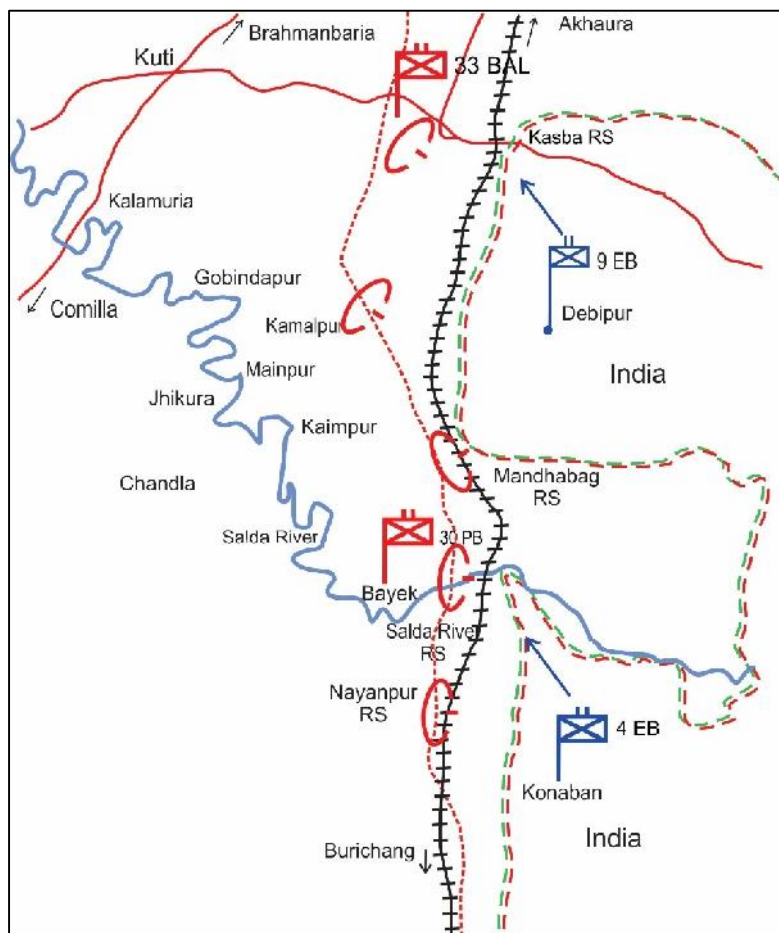


Fig. 32. Battle of Salda River. Wahab, ATM Abdul. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni, 2005. pp, 257-260.

enemy would be moving along Salda Nadi through Jhikura village. Wahab quickly moved out to the ambush site and was eagerly waiting. When the patrol came, it comprised 7 country boats and nearly 100 people were escorting them from both banks. Considering the time and strength it was not possible to engage them instantly. So Wahab thought of engaging them during their return. Accordingly, all were set putting the cut off parties, action party and reserve forces in places. It was about 1430 hrs when the leading speed boat entered the site and all the weapons started roaring. All passengers of the boat were killed and the casualties included 7 officers with 2 Lieutenant Colonels, 1 Subedar Major, 3 Sepoys and one non-Bengali businessman. Captain Bukhari of 53 Field Regiment Artillery also got killed here who carried out atrocities in Comilla town (Appendix X).⁴⁵

Although both sides intermittently engaged in battles in Salda Nadi area; in the month of October it reached its apex. Pakistani 33 Baluch was deployed in Kasba, Kamalpur and Mandabagh areas in the north. And 30 Punjab occupied Salda Nadi and Nayanpur areas in the

south. 4 East Bengal was closely poised in Konaban area under Agartala from where it carried out series of operations and finally dislodged them. K Force Commander Major Khaled tasked Captain Gaffar to capture it. Spontaneous Gaffar over the map made a quick plan to attack the objective in 2 phases. In first phase 4 platoons would launch feint attacks in different enemy locations in Bara Dushia, Chandla, Gobindapur and Kaimpur to keep the enemy in guessing and then launch the main attack depending on the possibility of success. Once the feint attacks were launched, enemy responded from all the positions and firing was on for the whole night. Finally, in the morning of 8 October, the Freedom Fighters launched the full scale attack. 3 junior leaders attacked from the east, north and western sides. Subedar Wahab was to follow the group in the north. The attack progressed as planned. Enemy had 4 bunkers on the southern side of the canal and 2 of which got damaged by the impact of Recoilless Rifles and the crews shifted to other 2 bunkers. Attacking soldiers took this opportunity to swim across the river and occupied those empty bunkers. This has created a panic for which the enemy soldiers got devided. Meanwhile Captain Gaffar intercepted a Pakistani wireless message revealing their unwillingness to hold on to position anymore. On hearing that Gaffar pressed on the attack more vigorously. Around 1100 hrs enemy started falling back to Nayanpur Railway Station in the south. While carrying out reconnaissance for

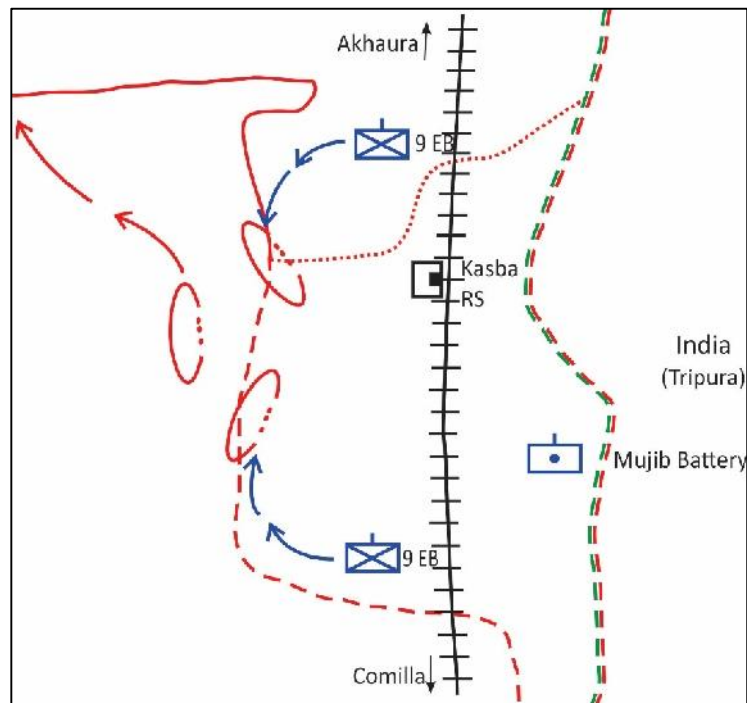


Fig. 33. Battle of Kasba, Bangladesh Army Headquarters, Education Directorate. *Bagladesh Senabahnir Itihash, Prothom Khondo: Muktiyuddha O Senabahini (History of Bangladesh Army, Volume-I: Liberation War and Bangladesh Army)*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Army. 2015. p. ৩০০

possible enemy counter attack, Subedar Belayet was hit by enemy sniper. For the first time during the war, gallantry awards were declared for Captain Gaffar, Subedar Belayet and Subedar Wahab for their valuable contribution.

9 East Bengal was another under command unit which was asked to take on Kasba (see fig. 33). It was in the morning of 22 October when 9 East Bengal launched the attack. After the pre-H hour bombardment was over, 2 companies led by Lieutenant Aziz and Subedar Major Shamsul Haque launched attack on the enemy positions at Kasba from the north. Pakistani Forces were taken by surprise and without much resistance they started falling back. 9 East Bengal captured this position after three hours of fighting. Here 26 Pakistan soldiers were killed and 18 injured. Besides lot of arms, huge ammunition and grenades were recovered. A small group of withdrawing force took up position on the western side of a nullah and reorganized quickly. The company under the junior leader again attacked this platoon. This time also they were completely subdued and lost 20 soldiers and another 22 got injured. With this set back, Pakistani Forces completely withdrew from Kosba and 9 East Bengal took control. Pakistan Forces occupied new positions in general area Monipur, Kaimpur, Kamalpur and other surrounding areas. 9 East Bengal took up defence in areas of Krishanpur, Bogabari and Yakubpur. From the defence number of patrols and raiding parties used to operate in enemy held territories. In these encounters, nearly 22 enemy soldiers were killed and another 30 were injured.

2 East Bengal Joins Eastern Region

As Major Khaled insisted Safiullah to abandon his plan of attacking Dhaka, he moved to Brahmanbaria leaving some elements to secure Dhaka-Narsingdi road including Ashuganj. Even while in the defensive, Safiullah's force had been dynamic and spared no opportunities to harass and ambush the enemy. At this stage, it was important to conserve combat strength than going for attack and conceding losses. Nearly 10 days after the massacre, Major Safiullah and Major Khaled met together and jointly planned to liberate Brahmanbaria and Sylhet. Pakistan military had been planning to make a breakthrough for clearing Bhairab-Ashuganj axis so that they could control territories beyond. To defend this vital communication centre, Major Safiullah placed one company each at Ashuganj Railway Station, Lalpur, Bhairab Bazar, Gokanghat, Ajabpur and another company of East Pakistan Rifles in area Sarail. Defenders made the best use of terrain to impose delay and cause attrition. To offset the defenders, the Pakistanis employed all their assets i.e. land, maritime

and air assets. Since 15 April, the Pakistan artillery started pounding on forward defences. Under artillery cover one enemy battalion approached using the railway line and another two battalions approached through the Meghna River. To disrupt the defence works, 6 Sabre Jets (F-86) strafed over the defence (see fig. 13). They dropped the para-troopers unopposed due to lack of anti-aircraft guns. Due to increasing pressure from land, air and water, defenders had to withdraw after giving a fierce fight. In this battle a good number of enemy soldiers were killed and our forces also suffered heavily.

After falling back from Bhairab-Ashuganj, our forces took up defence in Madhabpur. Low lying surrounding areas along with close proximity to international border favoured the defenders. However, the enemy approached with two battalions along Shahbajpur-Madhabpur axis and launched several probing actions under artillery and air support. Anti-airborne troops were placed behind the defence (see fig. 14). Since 28 April enemy started pounding with greater intensity on the main defence which was an imminent sign of attack. By 1200 hrs the main body contacted the defence and attacked dividing them into three groups. By moving the reserve and launching counter attacks nearly 270 enemy soldiers got killed. Towards the end the defenders also lacked logistic support and reinforcement. At this stage the Freedom Fighters fell back and took up defence in Mantala complex. If we look at the battles of 2 East Bengal, they effectively utilized the terrain and exploited it to cause maximum attrition to the enemy.

Even after the formation of S Force Brigade, 2 East Bengal continued to perform with similar impetus. In November 1971, when 11 East Bengal was busy in training, 2 East Bengal and 18 Rajput was tasked to capture Mukundupur Border outpost (see fig. 34). Since May, the Pakistanis were in control of this area and strengthened it putting a platoon between Mukundupur village and the Railway station. It facilitated their movement and prevented the same to the Freedom Fighters. As per the plan, 18 Rajput took up defence along the Jalilpur Railway line while 2 East Bengal took up position along the railway line near Kolachara River. Second Lieutenant Sayeed was to attack in the night of 18 November with a company from the west. During the reconnaissance, they identified some field fortifications placed in the front and the rear was mined. Besides an array of automatics sited all around made it a formidable position. Northern and western side was relatively unprotected. When the Freedom Fighters needed specific details about the weapon position, assistance from Shaira came very handy. She was the daughter of collaborator Aziz who used to send her to the

Pakistanis understandably to secure their safety. Shaira provided the Freedom Fighters with all the details. At designated time, the forces of Sayeed moved into the Forming Up Place on the south in small groups when Commanding Officer 18 Rajput Lieutenant Colonel Verma conveyed that Major Abraham would launch the attack from the north. Accordingly, on the dawn of 19 October when Abraham's company was advancing, it got stranded in the face of

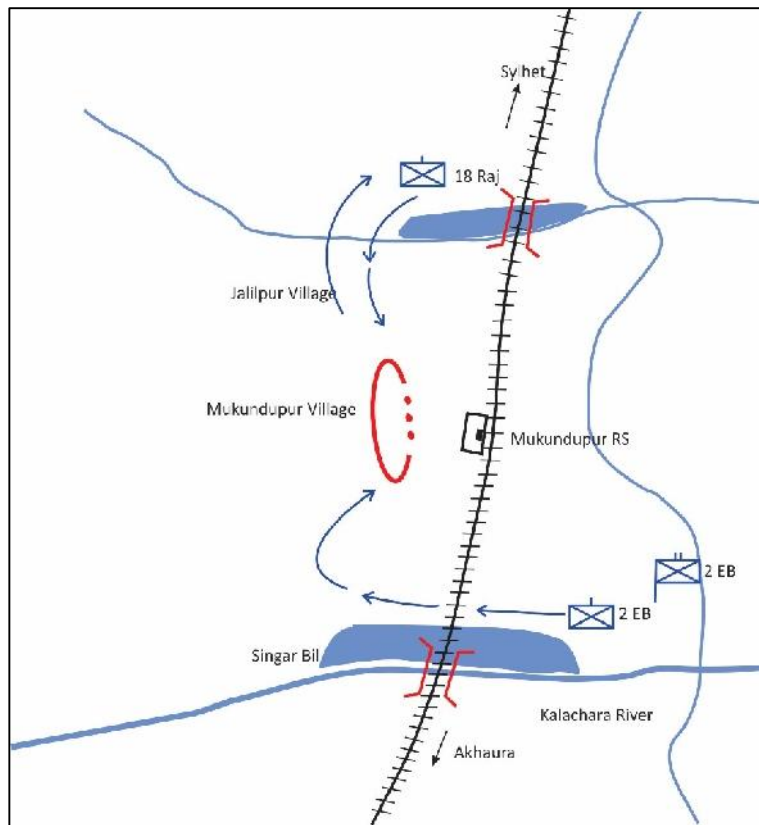


Fig. 34. Battle of Mukundapur. Bangladesh Army Headquarters, Education Directorate. *Bangladesh Senabahnir Itihas, Prothom Khondo: Muktijuddha O Senabahini (History of Bangladesh Army, Volume-I: Liberation War and Bangladesh Army)*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Army. 2015. p, 282.

enemy firing. Then Sayeed's contingent advanced and fiercely attacked enemy position. The fighting continued until evening and the Freedom Fighters finally took over Mukundapur. None amongst the Freedom Fighters got even a serious injury while 31 Pakistani soldiers were taken as prisoner of war and recovered 27 rifles, 2 sten guns, 2 LMGs and one 3-inch mortar.

Sylhet

Except East Pakistan Rifles elements there were no significant military establishments in Sylhet. Comilla Cantonment was keenly following the progress of operation in Chittagong area for which it was not able to spare adequate forces for Sylhet. In Sylhet, they deployed only 31 Punjab. It was to execute the tasks of 'Operation Searchlight' and manage the situation. The distinct feature of this area is that the people from all walks of life got united during crisis. When the civil-military people had organized themselves, they had been looking for someone to lead them. Major Dutta readily accepted the proposal and set up his headquarters at Rashidpur Tea Garden and took a vow to liberate Sylhet. After 25 March, the East Pakistan Rifles elements quickly responded under the junior leaders and decided to fight their adversaries before joining the forces of Dutta or Khaled. 31 Punjab took up number of positions in and around Sylhet to include Shamsheernagar, Shalutikar and Moulvibazar. When Subedar Fazlul Haque attacked the Pakistani Forces in Shamsheernagar they were forced to fall back to Sylhet leaving lot of casualties. This force then proceeded towards Moulvibazar and engaged in a fierce battle with the Pakistanis killing 20 soldiers including one officer. East Pakistan Rifles outfits are generally trained on border management but they had effectively killed and neutralized the enemies. Other junior leaders also carried out attacks on the Pakistani Forces and ended up with similar results. Pakistanis could hardly take any measures to protect them. The US was uniquely empowered by information technology, yet they discovered in Iraq that their lean, kinetic-based, net-centric combat force was ill-prepared for asymmetric soft war against insurgents. While fighting the guerrillas any conventional forces would face the similar challenges as did the US in Iraq or any other nation anywhere under the similar context. However, on 1 April, Major Dutta relocated his headquarters to Moulvibazar appreciating the Pakistanis would have to clear it to go to Comilla or Brahmanbaria. While moving to Moulvibazar, thousands of jubilant people joined the Freedom Fighters with thunderous slogans that confused the Pakistanis about the exact strengths and they withdrew. By then many East Pakistan Rifles soldiers defected from their duty places and joined Dutta's force. 31 Punjab withdrawing from several places took up defence in area Sherpur and Sadipur. On 5 April Dutta's force carried out an attack on Sadipur and captured it. Around this time Captain Aziz from Sector-3 joined Dutta's force that added huge spike. While Captain Aziz was advancing along Kulaura-Sheola-Sutarkandi-Gopalganj to take up defence on the southern bank of Surma, the Pakistanis carried out a surprise attack near Kadamtali. But quickly launched counters attack forced the Pakistanis to fall back to Sylhet. On the other hand, Major Dutta's mixed East Pakistan Rifles force had

been proceeding towards Sylhet via Sadipur and met with resistance near Bissonath which they dislodged successfully. By 7 April Pakistani Forces lost control almost everywhere except airport and Lakkatura tea garden. Captain Aziz deployed his force in the town in Khadimnagar, Ambar Khana and wireless station areas. The Freedom Fighters focused on Shalutikar and thought of attacking the airport before it was reinforced. Local sources also confirmed Captain Aziz about the Pakistani reinforcement which tempted him to undertake pre-emptive action. By morning enemy pressure kept mounting with artillery pounding on the defensive position while air strafing added to the plight further. Enemy succeeded in launching attack from the flanks. Captain Aziz had to fall back to Sherpur-Sadipur. After organizing the defence, Captain Aziz was ready to take on the enemy. From 23 to 26 April, enemy launched determined attack. Both sides conceded loss of lives following which the defenders got divided and moved towards Moulvibazar. These forces independently operated in different parts of Sylhet and by 3rd week of May all of them crossed over to India.

Meanwhile, Z Force joined Sylhet area and began to fight in new environment. Dhalai

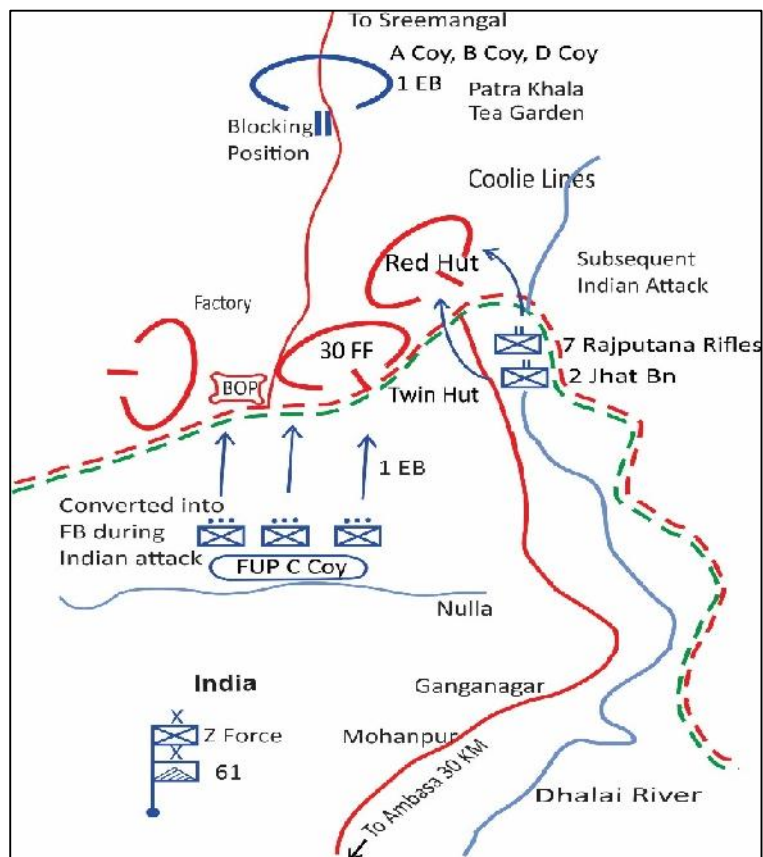


Fig. 35. Attack on Dhalai BOP. Wahab, ATM Abdul. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni, 2005. pp, 253-254.

Border outpost was strongly held by the Pakistanis and just about 400 metre away from the border near Srimangal Police Station of Moulvibazar District. A road leading from Ambasa (inside India) to Dhalai and another leading from Dhalai to Srimangal via Kamalganj made it an important entry point into Sylhet sector. As part of their strong point concept, they converted most of the Border outposts as strong points and held them in strengths. Initially one company of 30 Frontier Force occupied it but later on entire 30 Frontier Force with a Razakar company reinforced this position. In the month of September 1971 when Z Force relocated itself in Sylhet sector, 1 East Bengal was tasked to capture Dhalai Border outpost (see fig. 35). Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Ziauddin concentrated his battalion at Ambasa on Indian side about 35 kilometers south of Dhalai Border outpost. This was one of the most significant operations that created a serious dilemma in the minds of the Pakistani Commanders regarding the concept of their strong point defence. A co-ordination was done between the Bangladeshi Commanders and Commander 61 Mountain Brigade Brigadier SDS Yadav and the plan was approved within the integrated Joint Forces plan.

After detailed reconnaissance it was planned to isolate the enemy location by establishing a blocking position at Patra Khala, approximately 3 kilometers north of Dhalai Border outpost on road Dhalai - Srimangal. The D day was fixed on 28 October 1971 and H hour at 0400 hrs. 26 October. Lieutenant Colonel Ziauddin moved from Ambasa for Patra Khala with 1 East Bengal Regiment less C Company and it carried out preparation and rehearsal at Ambasa Concentration area. It was planned to capture the Border outpost in two phases by adopting fire and move technique. After capture of respective objectives in Phase 1 by forward platoons, Number 3 Platoon was to capture remnants of Dhalai Border outpost. When blocking position was set in place, on 28 October C Company started occupying the Forming Up Place. To supervise the attack Z Force Commander established his Tactical Headquarters about 2 kilometers south of Dhalai Border outpost. At 0400 hrs Lieutenant Quaiyum advanced from the Forming Up Place. Lieutenant Noor with his left forward platoon assaulted first on the enemy. After some time, right forward platoon under Subedar Abul Hashem rushed towards the enemy position. Both the platoons were following fire and move technique supported by automatics but the enemy retaliated with heavy coordinated fire that stalled the attackers between the objective and the Forming Up Place. The Company Commander having assessed the situation asked Sepoy Hamidur Rahman to neutralize the Machine Gun post which was delaying the advance. Sepoy Hamid crawled to reach almost close to the Machine Gun post. He then charged with his weapon and jumped physically on

the enemy and killed the Pakistani LMG men. The weapon post was thus silenced by Hamid's heroic action. By first light, the attack on Dhalai Border outpost came to a stalemate due to stiff resistance put up by the enemy. As such 1 East Bengal readjusted its position and took up defensive position about 600 yards south of Dhalai Border outpost. At this stage, General Officer Commanding 57 Mountain Division ordered 61 Mountain Brigade to launch offensive on Dhalai. On 28 October Brigadier SDS Yadav, Commander 61 Mountain Brigade tasked 2 Jat to capture Dhalai outpost by 1430 hrs. The second attack was planned on the night of 30/31 October. As per plan, 2 Jat was to attack from the east in 2 phases. In Phase-1, A Company was to establish a road block behind Dhalai complex while B and C Companies were asked to capture Coolie Lines and Twin Huts respectively. In Phase-2, D Company, was to capture the Dhalai Border outpost area. Both the Coolie Lines and the Twin Huts were captured; but before C Company could consolidate its position on the objective, Pakistanis counter attacked and pushed back C Company across the border. To make matter worst, Brigadier SDS Yadav was wounded near the Coolie Lines and one company of 7 Rajput Rifles evacuated him. At this point, 2 Jat lost one company in action, another company on the road block and it had only 2 companies. 2 Jat held on their position in Coolie Lines and took on the enemy counter attacks. Meanwhile 7 Rajput Rifles of 61 Mountain Brigade attacked the Border outpost on 1 November with Divisional artillery support. 30 minutes pre-H hour bombardment shattered the Pakistani moral and it paved the way for 7 Rajput Rifles. Though by evening of 1 November, Border outpost was captured, the enemy stayed back in the built up areas of the tea estate. Third battalion was asked to take those on. The battle of attrition continued till night 2/3 November. At first light on 3 November remainder of Pakistani 30 Frontier Force withdrew in a disorganized manner from Dhalai leaving behind 60 dead bodies. Finally, the battle of Dhalai was won by the Allied Forces.

South Western Region

In this region Pakistani Military and para-military outfits were geographically spread and therefore the development of situation was sporadic. In the East Pakistan Rifles Sector Headquarters Jessore, the Sector Commander shrewdly took off the arms from the Bengali soldiers and only few could retain their personal weapons with which they stood against the Pakistanis. Despite para-military training and grooming, these East Pakistan Rifles soldiers responded like conventional outfits. They deployed along the likely approaches leading to

Jessore city making good use of grounds. On 30 March, when an East Pakistan Rifles contingent was coming from Khulna, they were engaged by heavy fire that killed many Pakistani soldiers realizing very little that the outcome could have been very opposite. In Chuadanga the soldiers of 4 East Pakistan Rifles Wing had gone one step ahead. In absence of the Wing Commander, the junior leaders and soldiers killing a non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles officer took control of the Wing. Later when the Wing Commander returned, he took control of the situation integrating all civil-military elements. By then a company of 27 Baluch under non-Bengali Major Shoib was positioned in Kushtia. Major Osman instructed Captain Azam to dislodge the Baluch position and provided him necessary supports. Captain Azam led this classic three pronged attack on 30 March. Simultaneous engagement of enemy and suitably placed blocking positions played a key role in achieving success. This early success was widely covered in the foreign media. The officers from civil administration voluntarily involved them with the war and endured the hardship in the battle alongside military personnel. Imbued with patriotism number of officers started joining from Dhaka, few from leave and others from duty stations far and near. These officers were trained by the Pakistanis in conventional war. As such their instantaneous response to military threat is conditioned by their conventional teachings. When situation demanded, they were equally good at adopting unconventional warfare against the enemy forces.

The bastion of Pakistani Military power in this region lay primarily in 107 Infantry Brigade at Jessore Cantonment. Under the overall plan of the 'Operation Searchlight', 1 East Bengal was called back to join the cantonment. Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Jalil who was making to and fro from cantonment to unit location pushed the unit to dangerous situation by instructing them to join the cantonment. This unit had a mix of officers comprising Bengali and the Pakistanis. Because of training, motivation and sheer political awareness the young Bengali officers took up the leadership when the Commanding Officer got puzzled considering the safety and security of his family members in the face of volatile politico-military situation. 1 East Bengal had been a very professional outfit even by pan-Pakistani standard and did extremely well in the 1965 Indo-Pak war. In the succeeding paragraphs some of the exploits of this unit will be highlighted where they applied the concept of blending conventional and unconventional warfare.

On 29-30 March when 1 East Bengal reached the unit, the Brigade Commander remained physically present to collect the weapons and kept them under lock and key in the munitions

store. When he left the desperate Bengali soldiers broke into the munitions store and snatched the weapons away. As soon as this message spread all non-Bengali units encircled 1 East Bengal. Failing to convince the Commanding Officer about a decision, Lieutenant Hafiz took control of the unit and extricated from the western side of the unit line. It was a very challenging decision indeed but the young subaltern succeeded. During the process Lieutenant Anwar including few others embraced martyrdom. 7 Field Ambulance also revolted and some of its soldiers managed to join 1 East Bengal. With the assistance of East Pakistan Rifles troops, 1 East Bengal reached Maslia Border outpost and consolidated themselves. 1 East Bengal then had a rough strength of 236 all ranks to include a single officer. This was a great handicap for the unit to be operationally effective. From here small group of soldiers moved out to different directions and using hit and run tactics engaged the Pakistani troops and inflicted casualties. Finally leaving Chougachha Lieutenant Hafiz took up defence in Kagojpukur area on Jessore-Benapole highway. In Jessore the East Pakistan Rifles troops successfully wiped off the enemies. When 3 more companies joined from 5 Wing Khulna, it became a huge force. Around the same time Captain Halim with a force of 50 Freedom Fighters fought the enemies in Gopalganj area and later joined Jessore. On 2 April when 12 Punjab arrived Jessore by air an operation was launched to flush out the Freedom Fighters from the city. After clearing Jessore the Pakistani forces moved towards Benapole. By then most of the Freedom Fighters managed to move across the border into Indian Territory. Troops of both Sector 8 and 9 were located along the zero line which facilitated their access into Bangladesh for carrying out operational activities. Some of these operations will be highlighted here to comprehend the nature and effectiveness of operational activities.

22 Frontier Force was deployed along Jhikargachha-Jessore axis with a company size

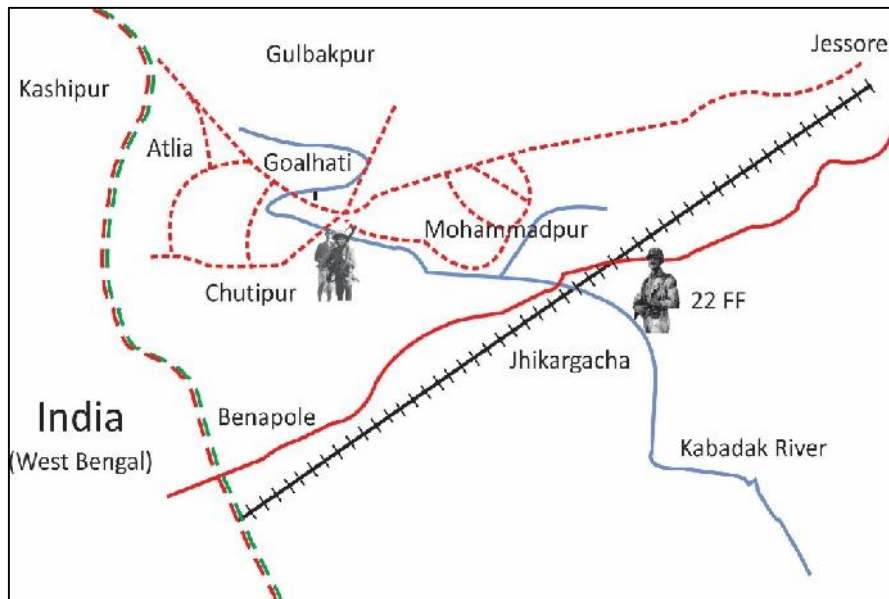


Fig. 36. Goalhati Operation. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

flank protection near the border in Chutipur High School area. One company of Mukti Bahini from Bayra Sub-sector was deployed nearby in Kashipur area. A Platoon from this company established a forward camp at Gulbakpur Primary School. On 5 September, a standing patrol was sent to Goalhati village from this location. At about 0900 hrs, a platoon size Pakistani force was crossing Kabadak River by boat from eastern bank to reach Chutipur. The patrol engaged the enemy with LMG (see fig. 36). Somehow they managed to cross the river and started advancing towards Goalhati. The patrol had to shift its position repeatedly in search of cover. During exchange of fire, LMG man Sepoy Nannu Mia got injured while his comrade Lance Naik Noor Muhammad rushed to the spot and took over his LMG. Because of heavy pressure he had to shift his position to the forward edge of village Atlia but unfortunately got encircled by the enemy from three sides. All of a sudden, a mortar splinter hit him and he was severely injured. He handed over the LMG to another person and asked him to command the patrol and withdrew. Wounded Noor Muhammad continued providing covering fire by his SLR for the safe withdrawal of his patrol members. Because of excessive bleeding he was unable to fire any more. He was captured and bayoneted till death. He gave his life, but did not surrender. Later, local people recovered his dead body and buried him near Kashipur Border outpost. He was awarded highest gallantry award "Bir Shrestho" posthumously.

In another operation in the north, a company size enemy stronghold was located at Dopakhali under Jibannagar police Station of Kushtia District. The Allied Forces raided the position number of times but failed to dislodge. Banpur Sub-sector Commande, Captain Mustafiz was tasked to raid Dopakhali again. Major IK Barma and Captain Mustafiz jointly carried out the raid (see fig. 37). On 13 November, Captain Mustafiz with his troops crossed the border and reached very close to the enemy post. The enemy opened up with MG. They also employed 82 mm mortar and 105 mm gun on to the raiding party. Under that situation Captain Mustafiz with his leadership and courage effectively controlled the party to accomplish their objectives. Enemy shelling continued for about 30 minutes. Captain Mustafiz received injury in his abdomen but led his troops safely to India accomplishing the task assigned to him. This battle gave an indication about the strength of Pakistani Forces at Jibannagar and assisted in planning for the subsequent operation. In this raid about 20 enemy

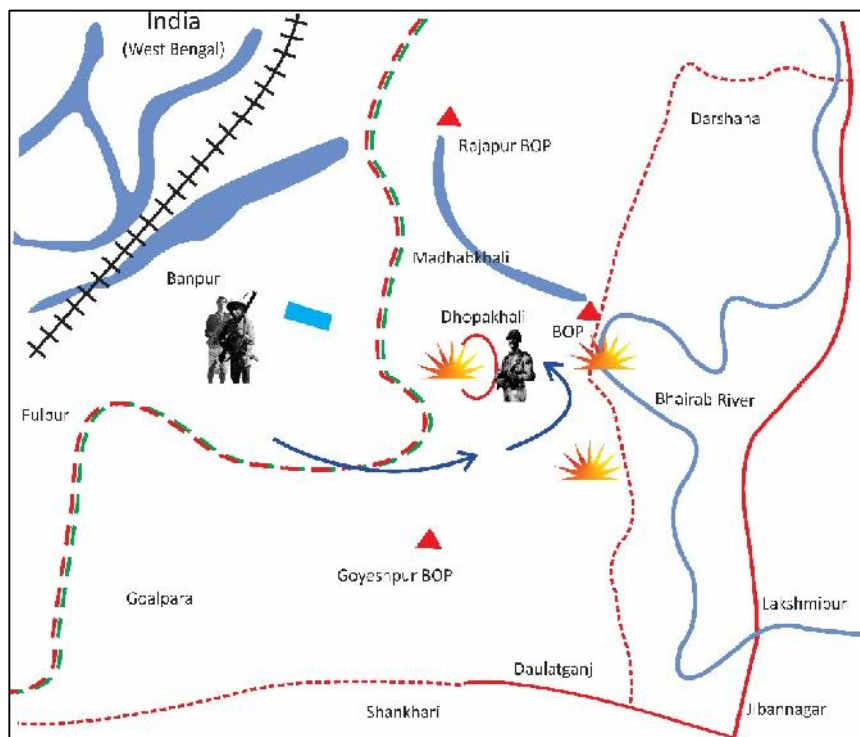


Fig. 37. Dhopakali Raid. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.
soldiers were killed. Captain Mustafizur Rahman was awarded “Bir Bikram”.

Further down the south in Sector 9 areas, the sector troops undertook some daring operations of which Shyamnagar Thana operation was noteworthy (see fig. 38). It was close to Sundarban and situated in the south western part of Satkhira. 21 Punjab Regiment was holding this place. Captain Huda was asked to attack Shyamnagar camp on 20 August. At about 0200 hrs after midnight, having reached Shyamnagar they divided them into 5 groups. Three of these groups led by Captain Huda, Commando Beg and Nayeb Subedar Gafur took position on three sides of the enemy camp and other two groups were deployed as cut off parties. Soon after 0200 hrs Nayeb Subadar Gafur started shelling on enemy position with his 3-inch mortar and a fierce battle had begun. Captain Huda and Commando Beg could not advance due to strong enemy opposition. After sometime being reinforced the enemy began to fight with new zeal. After heavy exchange of fire, there had been many casualties on both sides. Desperate Subadar Elias crawled inside the WAPDA Colony and took position there while other followed him. Captain Huda also crawled inside and took a suitable position. In

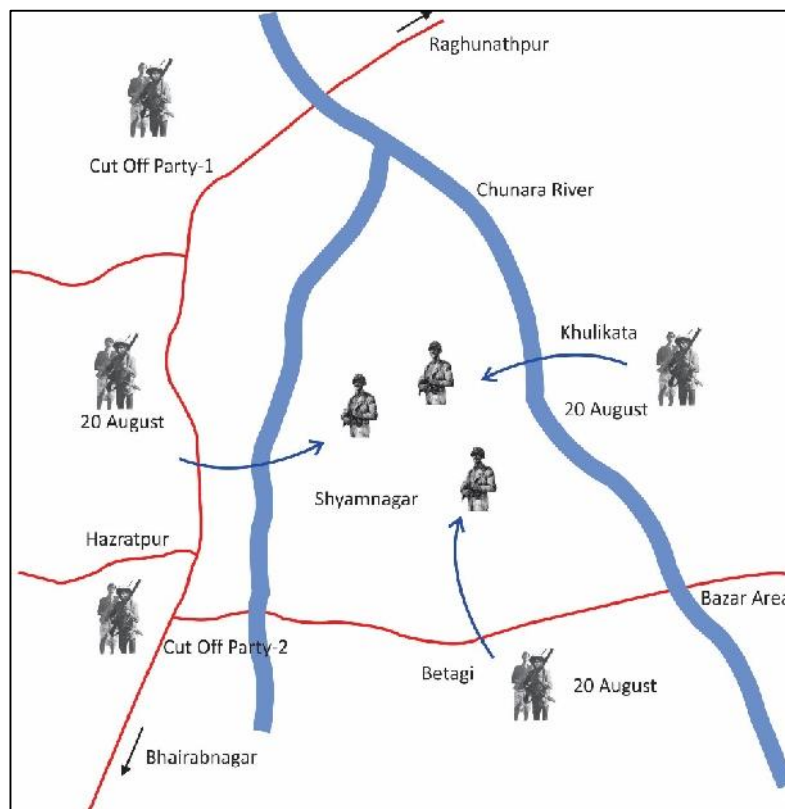


Fig. 38. Shyamnagar Operation. '*Bijoyketon*'- *Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

the face of aggressive advance by the Freedom Fighters, Pakistani soldiers abandoned their

position. The casualties on our side surpassed those of the enemy though, Shyamnagar came under full control of the Mukti Bahini.

Like other bordering places, Pakistani Forces built a strong point in Kaliganj Thana. It was situated between Debhutta and Shyamnagar and fell within the operational area of Hinjalganj Sub-sector of Sector 9. Pakistani Forces had a strong force divided into 3 groups and took up position in police station complex, in the residence of Gaffar Chairman and Karim Gayen. These positions were fortified with sand bags, trenches and bunkers. As planned 3 groups led by Babar Ali, Akbar and Lieutenant Beg attacked police station complex, Gaffar Chairman's house and Karim Gayen's residence respectively (see fig. 39). Captain Huda was the overall commander. Wahiduzzaman with 40 persons remained responsible for guarding Kaliganj road and destroyed Sadpur Bridge. Sheikh Nasim with 7 people protected Paukhali Bridge and the road. All the teams reached their position in time. At around 2300 hrs with the fire support from Captain Huda, the operation started. The

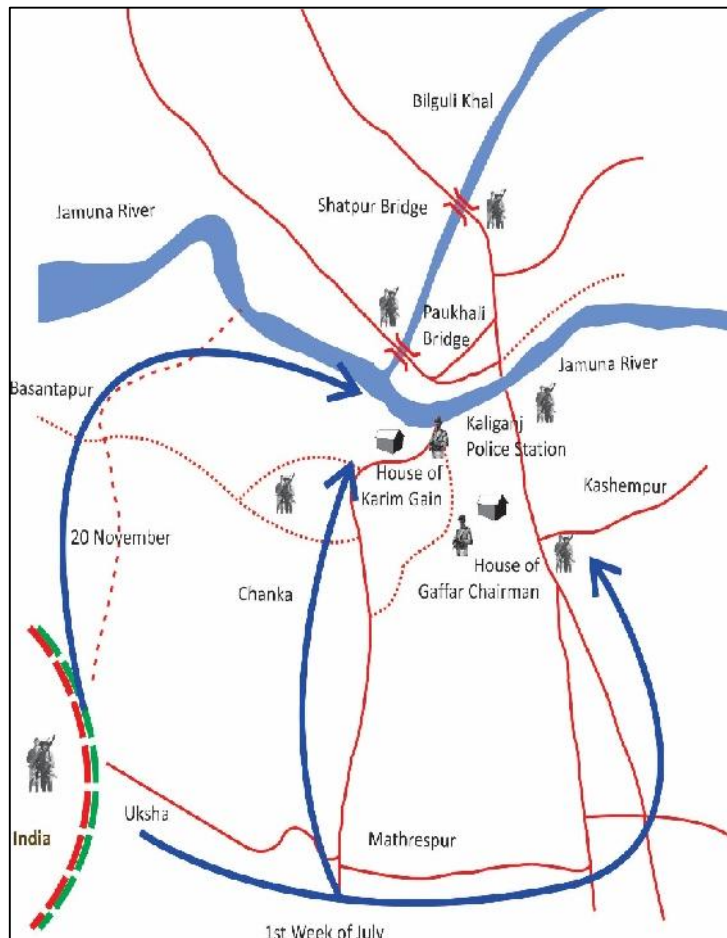


Fig. 39. Kaliganj Thana Operation. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

Pakistani Forces were completely surprised and therefore reacted late. Mukti Bahini continued heavy firing for 35 minutes onto the objective, and then returned to Uksha camp inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

From Uksha camp another operation was launched on Kaliganj WAPDA colony. One Pakistani company with Rangers and Rajakars had been staying there. Two platoons, one led by Captain Huda and other one led by Lieutenant Ahsanullah reached the objective timely. At around 0500 hrs in the morning 20/21 November, the Freedom Fighters launched attack. Allied Rajput Artillery provided fire support from Hinjalganj. The fighting continued up to 0700 hrs in the morning. There was no casualty report. But 40 Pakistani soldiers were apprehended by Mukti Bahini. By the day break, Kaliganj got liberated. Pakistani Forces withdrew to Alipur and took up defence there. The Freedom Fighters destroyed the bridges in Parulia and Alipur areas.

North Western Region

General

The people of this region are historically rebellions since the Mughal era and they had maintained the same spirit even during the reign of the East India Company. Geographically this region was quite large and internal road network running from north to south. Owing to its perpendicular road connectivity with the bordering areas including presence of geographical recesses created number of secluded areas within the region. For obtaining a comprehensive account of operational activities, the initial resistance phase has been discussed within geographically secluded areas and for rest of the duration, only major battles/encounters have been studied to see the application of conventional and unconventional warfare.

Rangpur

Death of Pakistani Lieutenant Abbas triggered the violence in this region. During the non-cooperation movement, Pakistani Military deterrence failed and so did respect for them. This had ultimately caused the angry mob to kill Lieutenant Abbas while he was trying to arrange food stuffs from surrounding areas using force. The local people of this area devotedly joined in the war and rendered all possible supports. Such spontaneous support and sympathies are prerequisites for the success of unconventional forces. Besides morale support, material

requirements are a regular necessity for an ongoing war for which necessary database may be maintained to readily meet the war time requirements. The mainstay of operational activities in this area rested on 23 Infantry Brigade. On 25 March, Operational Staff from Dhaka made a hasty visit by helicopter and finalized the details of 'Operation Searchlight'. During the visit they held a closed door meeting excluding Bengali Captain Nowajesh which emphatically revealed Pakistani intent. Captain Nowajesh had appreciated the situation properly and went out of the city crossing Tista River and took up defence organizing East Pakistan Rifles and other volunteers. On 1 April when a reconnaissance party led by a Pakistani Major was probing around his defence they were instantly engaged and killed by effective fire. It was not possible for the defenders to retain in position for long without depth and mutually supporting locations. Failing to withstand the pressure, Nowajesh readjusted his position in Kularghat, Rajarhat, Saptibari and Kaliganj areas. He also explored possibilities of obtaining external support from Indian by sending out locally influential political leaders. On 12 April, East Pakistan Rifles forces attacked Pakistani position at Lalmonirhat. Initially they lost lots of life but soon came back strongly when East Pakistan Rifles fell back. Nowajesh did very well articulating the moving battles. Despite lack of experience, Nowajesh effectively mixed up both conventional and unconventional warfare and employed them suitably to meet the requirements. There are numerous instances where reliance on sheer weapon power failed while fighting against the dynamism of tactics - for example in the Vietnam battles, Himalayas in India and others.⁴⁶ The Pakistani forces attacked the East Pakistan Rifles new defensive location at Patesshwarighat, Rowmari and Phulbari on 27 May. By 30 May, the Freedom Fighters abandoning their position took shelter in Shahebganj area.

Syedpur

In Syedpur, the Pakistanis applied the same deceptive technique to hamper the cohesiveness of 3 East Bengal. They split the battalion and placed them in different places, even the sub units struggled to communicate with each other. West Pakistani 26 Frontier Force and 23 Field Regiment contacted the Biharies for local support. It was quite strange that despite 3 Bengali out of 4 officers in the Brigade Headquarters, 3 East Bengal got no clues about the situation that unfolded subsequently. The battalion headquarters, few members of Headquarters Company and rear party under Captain Anwar stayed back in Syedpur. On 28 March when Captain Ashraf came to the rear followed by Lieutenant Salam of 23 Field Regiment, they got a chance to open their heart to each other. Together they

decided to fight against the Pakistanis. The Brigade made a cover plan under which 2 Pakistani units were to move to Bogra by 31 March night but practically would be attacking the Bengalis stationed in Syedpur Cantonment for which the Bengali soldiers were otherwise ready. Despite deficits in armaments and manpower, battle raged for long time after which they all extricated and concentrated near Phulbari. On 31 March Pakistani Forces attacked Major Nizam's location at Ghoraghat and lost 13 lives having met strong resistance. If the purpose of war planning is to place the armed forces at a maximum possible advantage over those of the enemies, then these young officers had done it perfectly. At this stage East Pakistan Rifles 5 Sector Commander Lieutenant Colonel Qureshi with few others adopted a trick and deliberately raised a white flag as symbol of their trust on Major Mizan which he took in usual spirit. Lack of experience persuaded Major Mizan to engage them in frank discussion when they said that the Pakistani troops erroneously opened up considering 3 East Bengal as East Pakistan Rifles troops. It was also unfortunate that the Commanding Officer shrewdly picked up Lieutenant Rafique in his jeep during the departure and took him to cantonment from where he never returned. When Subedar Rahmatullah killed his non-Bengali commander and concentrated in Ghoraghat on 1 April that raised the spirit of the Freedom Fighters. With all these joining together 3 East Bengal had 3 companies led by the subalterns while Major Nizam became its Commanding Officer. Of these companies Captain Ashraf and Lieutenant Mokhles reached Syedpur and Captain Anwar set up his defence in Kholahati which was again attacked by the Pakistanis on 11 April. Despite lot of deficits a fierce battle was fought after which Captain Anwar's company fell back to Phulbari. Captain Ashraf and Lieutenant Mokhles also joined Phulbari at this stage. Because of enemy pressure, they adjusted their position keeping Captain Ashraf's company in Phulbari-Charkhai road, Captain Anwar's company in Ghoraghat-Charkhai road and Lieutenant Mokhles was in the depth position. When the Freedom Fighters learnt about the possible movement of Pakistani Forces towards Bogra, one company was rapidly mobilized from Charkhai to take defence along Panchbibi-Hilli road. The Pakistanis attacked this position and had to fall back leaving many dead. Meanwhile 2 other companies from Charkhai joined. On 20 April the Pakistanis again attacked with support from artillery that killed innocent civilians. Later on, by night 20 April the Freedom Fighters crossed over to Indian border.

Dinajpur

5 East Pakistan Rifles Sector was located in Dinajpur and the under command wings were deployed in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Rangpur. The composition of these wings had been mixed with West Pakistani and Bengali soldiers. To promote cohesiveness Sector Commander thought of inviting the soldiers of 26 Frontier Force for a dinner with the East Pakistan Rifles troops. When all came to join the dinner, the soldiers of 26 Frontier Force were in battle dress. It was thought the Bengalis would be shot to kill during the dinner. However, in the face of protest from the Bengali soldiers they had to change into civil dress. Later on the Sector Commander Lieutenant Colonel Quraishi held several meetings with non-Bengali officers that frightened the Bengalis. In anticipation of some armed action on the Bengalis, Havildar Syed distributed some arms amongst the Bengali soldiers of the Sector Headquarters. On 28 March when 26 Frontier Force opened up on the Bengalis, they were not surprised. Later these East Pakistan Rifles members including those had been outside on duty got together and took up defence on the bank of Kanchon River. Junior leaders played a very significant role by assumed command and responsibility at this critical hour. The Company Commander of 8 Wing Subedar MA Sukkur arresting all his non-Bengali comrades on 29 March concentrated in Phulbari and took up defence. On the same night when the Sector Commander Lieutenant Colonel Qureshi including officers, soldiers of 26 Frontier Force and non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members had been moving towards Syedpur, they were engaged by Subedar Sukur's force near Phulbari. During the fight, non-Bengali Major Amin Tarique and another officer got killed.⁴⁷ On 30 March when Subedar Sukkur tried to move towards Dinajpur, the Pakistani Frontier Force attacked them. Failing to withstand the pressure Sukkur reorganized his force and in the evening attacked the Pakistanis following which they fell back to Syedpur Cantonment. The Pakistanis tried to control Dinajpur but failed. It can be said that on 31 March Dinajpur town got liberated. Habilder Iddris with a patrol freed the families including other civil officials from confinement. The role played by the East Pakistan Rifles junior leaders both in orthodox and unorthodox tactics proved effective and the freedom enjoyed by the junior leaders had been the key to their success.

Thakurgaon

9 Wing Headquarters was located in Thakurgaon while other companies were deployed in the bordering areas. Like other battalions the Wing Commander Major Mohammad Hossain and most of the officers were West Pakistani while the junior leaders were predominantly

Bengali. Despite this command handicaps the junior leaders played a very crucial role during the initial days of the war. Digging of trenches including additional duties around headquarters premises made everyone skeptical about the intent of the Pakistanis and that increased tensions within and outside the barracks. On 27 March when the Pakistanis opened up firing on the innocent people, Bengali junior leaders decided to strike back. For unavoidable reasons they could not execute the mission. On 29 March Subedar Hafiz was out on a patrol on Thakurgaon-Dinajpur road where he met with some Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members escaped from Sector Headquarters, Dinajpur. He took them along and straightway moved towards Wing Commander's bungalow on the same night. Wing Commander luckily survived but his body guards did not. Down and depressed Pakistanis out of fear started searching for escape route. It is when Pakistani Captain Navid Alam and his newly wed wife aided by Dinajpur Sector Quarter Master Bengali Captain Nazir Ahmed in an attempt to move to a safer place caught up by the angry mob and had to face the grim fate. On 30 March early morning Naib Subedar Matiur launched an attack on the three storied building of the Sector Headquarters which was the Pakistani strong hold. Finding delay East Pakistan Rifles reinforced the attacking forces following which the Pakistanis got completely wiped. The casualties included 115 lives including the Wing Commander and the East Pakistan Rifles lost of Subedar Ataul Haque and Lance Naik Joinal Abedin in action. By 31 March all the bordering East Pakistan Rifles members concentrated in Thakurgaon and formed a battalion sized force under Subedar Kazimuddin. He physically held Bhatga, Debiganj and Shibganj areas. The District Ansar Adjutant provided great help by organizing the Ansars, Mujahids and sending them to combat zone. Quite thoughtfully to optimize time and efforts, he divided Thakurgaon into two sub-sectors. He also contacted Border Security Force counterpart for support. His forces jointly with 3 East Bengal defended Doshmile area on Dinajpur-Syedpur road and later on attacked Syedpur Cantonment. They took up other defensive position independently or jointly with East Pakistan Rifles 8 Wing and 3 East Bengal and every time they defended their positions. After successive failings the Pakistanis came strongly back and kept up their pressure from 7-13 April. Around this time, they succeeded in evicting East Pakistan Rifles elements from Nilphamari, Vhusirbandar, Badarganj, Doshmile and Khansama. When the Pakistani Forces were Crossing River near Khansama almost two Pakistani companies got drowned and destroyed as defenders engaged them by surprise. In other areas also the defenders came under tremendous pressure failing to withstand all together fallen back to Kanchan River. When the Pakistani Forces advanced

with massive artillery support, the East Pakistan Rifles forces gradually pushed towards the border and finally by 20 April they left their last post Vhojonpur.

Rajshahi - Pabna

Like other areas, 25 Punjab was given the similar tasks under 'Operation Searchlight'. Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Shafqut Baluch had set up his camp in the outskirts of the city close to the non-Bengali colony. East Pakistan Rifles 6 and 7 Wing were located little away in Chapainawabganj and Naogaon respectively. Small little several incidents had been worrying the Bengalis about the safety and security of their lives and properties. On the night 25 March as the Pakistani troops patrolled the city there had been no untoward incident. On 27 March when the Pakistanis attacked on the police line, they all withdrew. On the same day, non-Bengali East Pakistan Rifles members left the Sector Headquarters and took shelter in the Army camp that really set the stage for an open hostility. Later on the soldiers of Rajshahi Sector joined with the forces of Chapainawabganj and Naogaon and jointly attacked 25 Punjab position. The Freedom Fighters utilized every opportunity and when they came to know about the movement of 100 soldiers of 25 Punjab moving from Pabna to Rajshahi, Captain Rashid from Sarda with East Pakistan Rifles soldiers of Naogaon promptly engaged them. They killed Major Aslam including 40 soldiers on that occasion. Situation in Naogaon 7 Wing worsened when the outgoing Wing Commander Major Akram along with another Pakistani Captain Nabeed was turned back from Nagarbari Ghat by the angry mob on 23 March. They later joined Naogaon and got arrested. On another occasion tempted East Pakistan Rifles soldiers killed Pakistani Subedar Yousuf who was doing an inquiry on the unprovoked killing of a Captain while approaching Rohonpur. May not have been a professional act by a soldier in peacetime but who would guaranty safety when both sides engaged in an open hostility. It is generally understood that the East Pakistan Rifles soldiers are not trained and motivated like the army personnel. But these forces had been extremely agile against the Pakistani regular forces. When it was known that an artillery unit was deployed in Bogra for internal security duty, Captain Gias immediately moved out for Bogra with an East Pakistan Rifles Company and some students to counter. Routes of entries from Rangpur and Dhaka were sealed with assistance from Major Rashid of the then Ayub Cadet College. After reaching Bogra, Captain Gias freed the captured police members, ambushed Pakistani patrol and arrested Pakistani contingent guarding the ammunition dump. These ammunitions were later taken to India by East Pakistan Rifles soldiers and used against the

Pakistani Forces. Around this time the Freedom Fighters succeeded in ambushing a Pakistani convoy that not only killed two dozens of Pakistani soldiers including the commander but also involved thousands of people with the operation. Major Nazmul and Captain Gias thought it to be right to make a dash towards Rajshahi now. Captain Gias moved from Naogaon to Rajshahi when East Pakistan Rifles forces of Chapainawabganj joined him. By 2 April 7 East Pakistan Rifles forces took up position in the outskirts of Rajshahi and Major Rashid covered the eastern side. Despite liaison with the Border Security Forces authority attack was launched on 6 April without artillery fire support. In spite of intense firing East Pakistan Rifles troops fearlessly entered the city and wiped out the enemies after four hrs of fighting. The Pakistanis then took over the camp sited in the outskirts of the city and turned as stronghold placing mines and barbed wire around. It was hard to negotiate amidst air starring and sustained automatic firing. Meanwhile information about Pakistani 57 Brigade making a bridgehead across Nagarbari Ghat reached the attacking forces. Instantly two companies were detached to look after the brigade and they could do little to prevent landing. Later on 12 April, Captain Gias joined them to alleviate their morale while others kept up their pressure against Rajshahi. The Pakistani Forces pushed the East Pakistan Rifles forces and reached University area. From 17-20 the Pakistanis carried out number of attacks but could not make much progress. On 21 morning, when they attacked with all their might the East Pakistan Rifles forces could no longer sustain the pressure and moved to Chapainawabganj while the Freedom Fighters moved to the offshore areas in safety.

Operational Activities - Post Resistance Phase

Moglahat Railway junction is situated on the northern side of the region and near to Lalmonirhat under Sector 6. The Pakistanis extensively used it for transporting their supplies and reinforcements. On 15 September, Major Nowajesh and Captain Delwar from Bhurungamari Sub-sector planned to carry out an ambush on a routine train in Durakuti village. In the early morning, the patrol set out for the task and on reaching the site, they laid anti-tank mines, explosives and other accessories. As the train arrived carrying a Pakistani platoon, rapid explosions damaged the engine including few bogies in the front. Soldiers who were sitting at the back quickly disembarked and engaged the Freedom Fighters from three sides. After assessing the situation, Captain Delowar started providing covering fire with his LMG that facilitated the withdrawal of others. For his courage the entire patrol was saved losing only 2 lives and 5 were killed on the enemy side and many got injured.

For several reasons Hilli operation is significant in our war history. Hilli is a small bordering town on the eastern tip of a land, which jutted into East Pakistan. Owing to its geographical location, both Allied and the Pakistan Forces had engaged each other for 19 days in a desperate effort to gain control before the final offensive was launched. Under the overall defence plan of Pakistani 205 Brigade, 4 Frontier Force under Lieutenant Colonel Abbasi took up defence here with additional 2 companies from 13 Frontier Force. There had been regiment of Field Artillery, a mortar battery including few Chaffe tanks. The main defence was around the village Hilli where 4 Frontier Force deployed with C and D Companies on the right and A and B Companies were on the left. The battalion headquarters was located in the rear at Maheshpur. Buildup areas and ponds were turned into strong points to guard against any thrust and penetration. Narrow village lanes were converted as fire lanes. All the entry tracks were mined indiscriminately to trap the invaders. All-important bunkers were provided with overhead cover. Villages were connected by extensive network of communication trenches.

Guard battalion of 202 Brigade launched a frontal attack against Hilli at 0100 hrs on 24 November. The attack was preceded by intermittent artillery fire concentrations for over seven hours, which was a sheer waste of ammunition as it made little impact. The Indian artillery commander failed to justify the usefulness of such a prolonged preparatory bombardment against well dug in positions. So, C Company of 4 Frontier Force which bore the main brunt of the attack held on to its position. The Indian spearheaded battalion had to put in two successive attacks lasting for more than five hours before they were able to surround just a platoon of the forward company, that too for a very brief period. Second Lieutenant Salim was undeterred by the presence of the enemy around him. His personal bravery encouraged others to drive out the Indians back. A third attack on the same platoon by a fresh company was again beaten back. By then it was day light and the Indians decided to take a respite and organize themselves. 8 Guards in the process had lost 139 men including 8 officers and 4 Junior Commissioned Officers in this attack. When the night fell, the attackers began to move forward and this time tried to outflank D Company from the north. But once again the Indians had to suffer a crushing blow at the hands of the Pakistani platoon of 4 Frontier Force. As the dawn broke, the battle-field could be seen littered with the dead bodies of the Indian soldiers. The remnants of Indian company which were seen digging in front of the platoon were also driven back. The Indians suffered, in all, at least 300 casualties including 5 officers and 5 junior leaders. 4 Frontier Force lost only 11 of its soldiers and 22

wounded. Having failed to capture even a platoon position of 4 Frontier Force, the Indians tried to outflank the position from the north and succeeded in overrunning a complex of villages. A counter attack by the depth company of the battalion succeeded partially in evicting the Indians. During this engagement a direct hit from an artillery shell seriously wounded Lieutenant Colonel Abbasi and was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Mumtaz.

Pakistanis were not satisfied with partial success and the battalion was ordered to counter attack again to evict the Indians and through them back. The counter attack by B Company of 4 Frontier Force on the night of 27/28 November succeeded in recapturing the villages. The Indians launched 5 Garhwals for a fresh battalion attack on 30 November. Supported by a squadron of tanks they captured village Raibagh on the northern flank of 4 Frontier Force.

It was the turn of C Company to evict the Indians and they retook Raibagh on the night of 1/2 December. 165 and 202 Brigades of 20 Infantry Division kept on trying to create a dent in the defences around Hilli but even after ten days of battle they failed to break the will of 4 Frontier Force in spite of numerical superiority of 6 battalions against 1 battalion. 5 Garhwal alone lost 65 men, 4 Junior Command Officers and 4 officers. On 5 December the Indians resumed their attack against Hilli. This time they combined an outflanking move from the north with a direct assault on Hilli. The attack again floundered because of the tenacity of C Company as it held on to its position in spite of number of attacks. Major Akram whose company was under attack decided to destroy the Indian tanks which were firing on his

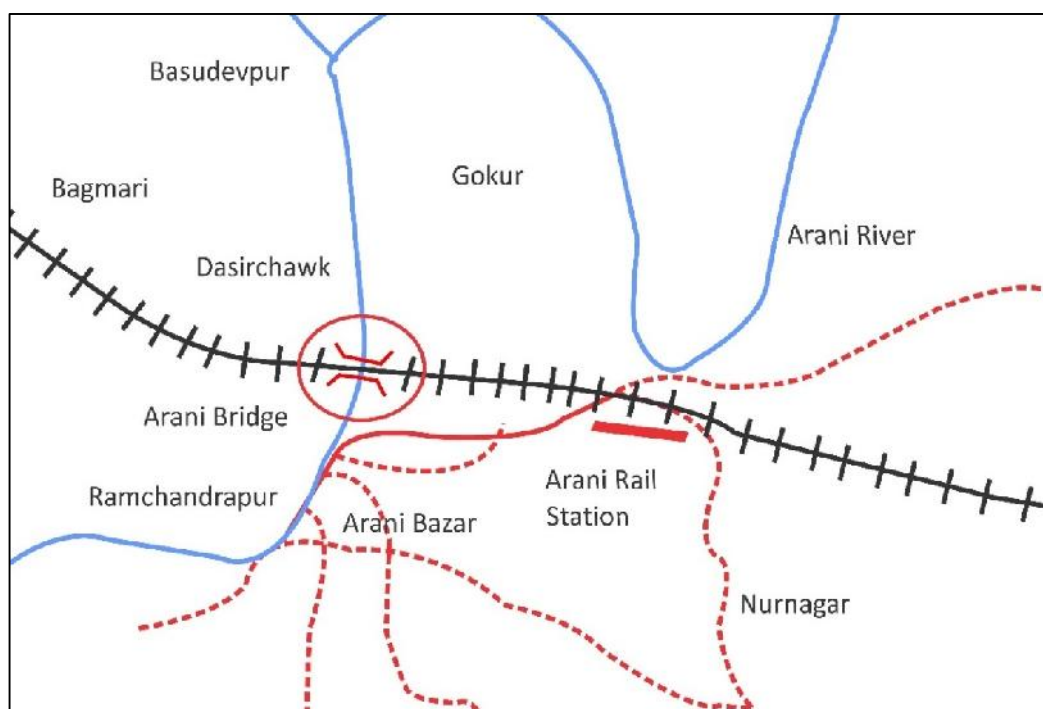


Fig. 40. Arani Bridge Operation. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

position. He took a 40 mm Chinese rocket launcher crawled to reach within 100 yards of the Indian tanks. Then firing from different positions he destroyed 3 tanks before being killed by Machine Gun bullet. Repeated attacks continued to be put in but every time it failed to evict 4 Frontier Force from its defensive positions. After a hard fight lasting 19 days 4 Frontier Force was finally withdrawn from Hilli on 11 December.

When hundreds of trained guerillas had been poured inside Bangladesh from all around the border, they destroyed most of the bridges, culverts and railway lines using mines and explosives. Appreciating Pakistani reliance on railway communication, it was planned to destroy Arani Bridge situated on way to Abdullahpur junction (see fig. 40). For travelling outside Rajshahi, one would inevitably come across this. There had been enemy bunkers on either sides of the bridge. This was a 200 yards long bridge with 6 pillars and 7 spans and therefore required inclusion of experts in the team. Sheikhpara Sub-sector commander Major Rashid tasked Freedom Fighter Azad Ali to destroy the bridge. On reaching Tetulia at late night 22 October, Azad Ali and his patrol stayed the night with some acquaintances. On the following day by 1345 hrs, the patrol took position. From south eastern side by a swift attack they wiped out the Pakistani soldiers. As they left their post for safety towards north, Azad Ali secured the bridge first and asked the commandos to place mines, arm the detonator and set the required safety time. When all got roughly 500 yards away from the site, huge explosion crumbled the bridge.

Effective Azad Ali was tasked again to disrupt Pakistani lines of communication. Pakistanis used to carry out patrolling along Rajshahi-Abdulpur and Natore-Abdulpur route which were to be destroyed. To accomplish the task, Azad Ali selected a quiet place named Nabirpara for ambushing the train (see fig. 41). On the morning, 22 November the Freedom Fighters having reached their position fixed mines and explosives on the rail line. Around 1035 hrs, when the patrol train was heading towards Nabirpara, Freedom Fighters could not yet complete the camouflage of release switch. Mahbubul Ghani removed a brick from over the release switch to quickly make over the camouflage, while Azad Ali was still working with the primer and detonator. Suddenly, the mines exploded as removal of brick released the pressure. The impact took away Azad Ali's left wrist and created 6 big holes on the rail line. The approaching train was in high speed and straight away plunged into those holes that killed 16 Pakistani soldiers.

Another operation was conducted in the bordering Sona Masjid area which was situated on the western side of Rajshahi. It was an important communication centre and connected places on either side with road networks. Pakistanis made a formidable defence here with fortified bunkers, crawl trench and number of observation posts using elevated structures and trees in the vicinity. On 10 November Major Gias was tasked to capture Sona Masjid. He carried out reconnaissance and identified enemy positions in details. He organized 2 Task Forces each having 2 companies. Task Force-1 comprised of A and B companies under Captain Mahiuddin Jahangir and Task Force-2 comprised of C and D companies under Lieutenant Kaiyum. They had three 81 mm Mortar for providing fire support. It was planned to attack from the right flank on the dawn of 14 November. To deceive the enemy a platoon was asked to provide harassing fire from the left flank. Task Force -1 under Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir crossed the canal from south and attacked from the rear to capture enemy headquarters. Task Force-2 under Lieutenant Kayum was to cross the canal and attack from the north. Supporting artillery would start pre-H hour at slow rate from 0300 hrs. All forces would take up position at a distance of 2500 yards by 0100 hrs and at 0200 hrs the crossing of canal was to begin. Registration of targets for pre-H hour bombardment was completed before. Major Gias was in clear picture of whole area so he himself led the group to cross the canal. At 0300 hrs when one platoon started automatic firing on the enemy

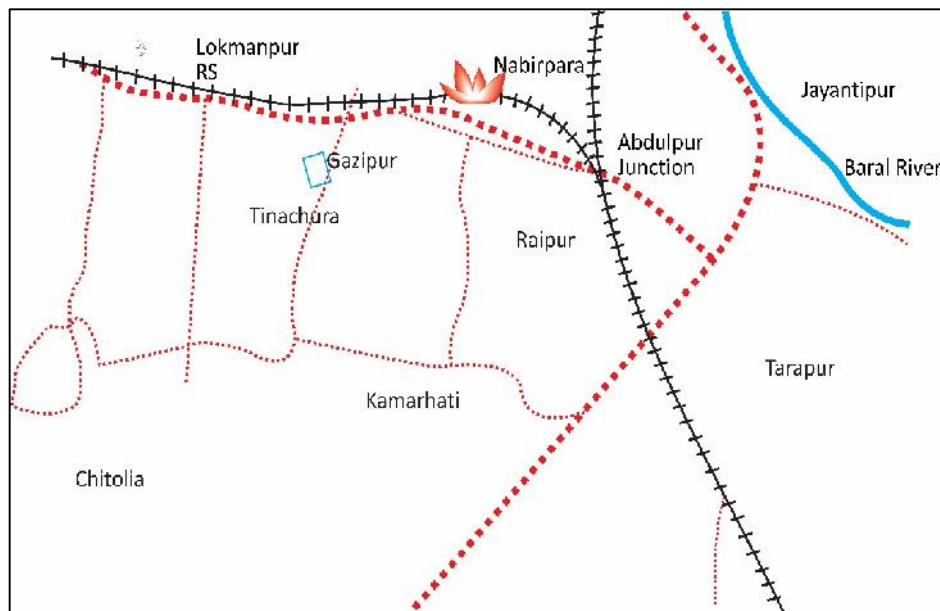


Fig. 41. Nabirpara Ambush. *'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum*. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

location from western side of the canal, pre-H hour bombardment began at slow rate. Unfortunately after 1 hour of artillery firing there was no sign of main attacking force. At last when Major Gias could contacted Lieutenant Kayum at 0500 hrs in the morning, he came to learn that 2 boats were drowned that caused the delay. Finally, at 0530 hrs he started attacking from the right. As the harassing fire carried out from the left, enemy prepared to repel the attack from that direction. At around 0600 hrs Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir was able to establish contact. His wireless set was malfunctioning. He started attacking at around 0630 hrs from the rear of enemy. Yet, the Pakistanis got completely surprised the way they were deceived about the direction of attack. After the initial shock they fought back. At around 0600 hrs Kayum's force came in front of enemy location and started fighting through the objective and captured it by 0700 hrs. After a fierce battle, by 0800 hrs Captain Jahangir also captured his objective. In this battle, 11 Pakistani soldiers died including one captain and 5 others were taken as prisoners of war. Amongst the Mukti Bahini 7 were wounded.

ANALYSIS

Keeping the political, geo-strategic and economic realities in consideration, war fighting strategies are adopted and shaped in different forms to maximize gains and minimize losses over the adversaries. Contextually, blending conventional and unconventional warfare strategies during the Liberation War of Bangladesh against the Pakistani Forces had been a dire need. Bangladesh being resource constrained with poor economic base and significant lack of sizable standing armed forces had to adopt defensive strategy with limited offensive options while fighting the better resourced Pakistani occupation forces. However, by transforming the refugees into a courageous band of guerrilla/irregular force and employing those to operate alongside the regular forces proved to be a realistic war fighting strategy. The success of the strategy of blending was fundamentally hinged upon people centric support and proper synthesis of both the warfare.

Unconventional warfare is a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations undertaken in order to offset the disadvantage of a relatively smaller combat force facing a larger one. It is effectually a force multiplier to assist in controlling the state by winning the people first, augment conventional efforts and bring favorable decision in war. While conventional forces are engaged with the enemy conventionally and linearly, unconventional forces strike enemy's decision cycle and logistics, and create fluidity in battlefield through non-linear engagements with whatever weapons and means available. With the passage of

time, unconventional warfare with assorted asymmetries is evidenced across the globe in 21st century.

For blending conventional and unconventional warfare, a three-tier force structure i.e., regular units, militia comprised of auxiliary forces and local guerrillas is generally adopted by most of the guerrilla movements fought around the world. Due to lack of standing military, time and infrastructure; only four infantry battalions of the then East Pakistan formed the nucleus of Bangladesh Forces or the regular units. As auxiliary forces, contribution of the East Pakistan Rifles had been substantial both in terms of combat strengths and leadership. During 1971, initially the Freedom Fighters adopted both conventional and unconventional warfare, but these efforts were not methodically structured and carried out in isolation without any plan and coordination. Initial unorganized rebellion and war efforts were soon brought under the purview of the political government. After a deliberate thought, Bangladesh Force was organized comprising regulars and irregulars where the guerrillas remained as the mainstay. Later on both conventional and unconventional forces fought as part of comprehensive operational plan. Unconventional forces could cause substantial losses to Pakistani Forces by damaging/destroying their key logistic and communication installations. They were the major sources of collecting intelligence. Allied Forces' final offensive could achieve quick success and end-state for the spontaneous support of unconventional forces. In essence, unconventional operations helped to shape the battlefield to the Allied Forces' design.

Few diehard Bengali army officers organised the 'Gono Bahini' and other guerrilla outfits that created panic in the outskirts of Dhaka and in sector areas by undertaking clandestine operations. Though slightly varied from each other, the composition of these forces including their strategies; tactics and motivation were quite similar to guerrilla organizations. Number of such forces had been operating in different places, but the greater operational onus remained with the sectors in terms of their employment and planning. After fighting the Pakistanis during the initial resistance phase, the infantry battalions had to tactically relocate across the Indian border but they soon started operating as sectors. With a short training the guerrillas had been inducted under the direct supervision and guidance of the Sector Commanders. This coordination was very vital as the regional area shared its border with number of sectors. There had been no dearth of volunteers to join the war and the Freedom Fighters selflessly engaged themselves to cripple the Pakistan Army including the

administration morally and materially. A detailed study on various battles/engagements of four regions of Bangladesh can provide a better understanding about the level of application of blending technique of warfare including their effectiveness.

The most vital region was the central region. Though Pakistanis subdued Dhaka city in short time, 2 East Bengal remained out of their hold for which they could safely abandon their duty places and concentrated in Mymensingh. When most of the pro-nationalist security personnel had been pushed out of Dhaka, induction of Crack Platoon and their surprise attacks on the Pakistani Forces and installations crippled their logistic system and morale. Kader Bahini began to operate in and around Tangail towards the end of April in 1971. They had nearly 350 engagements with the Pakistani Forces of which ambushing Pakistani marine convoy near Matikata was remarkable. Kader's forces ambushed North Bengal bound Pakistani ships and recovered huge armaments. These armaments made up their deficiency to a great extent. While other regions could emulate the blending of conventional and unconventional warfare, situation in the central region was different. Appreciating the requirements in July 1971, Z Force came into being and undertake orthodox tasks. It concentrated in Teldhala opposite to Mymensingh with 1, 3 and 8 East Bengal joining from three different locations. These units underwent extensive training on 'Attack' operation that clearly reflected their focus on conventional operations. However, among the battles fought in the central region, 'Battle of Kamaplur', 'Nakshi Border outpost Operation' and 'Banhadurabad Ghat Attack' were few classic operations where both conventional and unconventional efforts were synthesized to attain favorable result.

Eastern region stretched from Chittagong in the south to Sylhet in the north and shared border all along with neighbouring India. 4 East Bengal in Brahmanbaria, 8 East Bengal in Chittagong including East Pakistan Rifles outfits in Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Comilla and Sylhet played significant role during the war. Though 2 East Bengal had been stationed in Joydebpur after defecting from the Pakistan Army, it joined this region in Sylhet-Brahmanbaria area and fought till the end of war. There were number of battles fought in this region of which 'Battle of Belonia' is noteworthy in a sense that resilient Bangladeshi Forces with Allied assistance applied both conventional and unconventional warfare techniques effectively and with their innovative ideas infiltrated and attacked the Pakistani Forces.

In the south western region Pakistani Military and para-military outfits were geographically spread and therefore the development of situation was sporadic. Despite para-

military training and grooming, these East Pakistan Rifles soldiers responded like conventional outfits. They were deployed along the likely approaches leading to Jessore city making good use of grounds. 'Goalhati Operation', 'Dhopakhali Raid', 'Shyamnagar Operation' are some of the exclusive engagements that bear the testimony of conjunctive use of both conventional and unconventional warfare doctrine in the south western region.

North western region was quite large geographically and had perpendicular road connectivity with the bordering areas including presence of geographical recesses that created number of secluded areas within the region. There were many engagements and battles in Rangpur, Syedpur, Dinajpur, Tahkurgaon, Rajshahi and Pabna area that mirror the images of both conventional and unconventional efforts to seize control against Pakistan occupation forces.

Besides inflicting moral and physical losses, the Freedom Fighters made the Pakistani Forces to bleed severely in economic sector by destroying productive facilities. When thousands of trained guerillas had been poured inside Bangladesh, they destroyed most of the bridges, culverts and railway lines using mines and explosives. Had there been no unconventional forces deployed, the Liberation War could have been prolonged. Concurrent use of unconventional forces created fluidity and made the opposing forces feel insecure as there was no traditional front, rear and flank of the battlefield. In reality, unconventional warfare forces significantly reduced the burden of the conventional force during the final offensive and achieved final victory on 16 December 1971.

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CHAPTER 9

ROLE OF BANGLADESH FORCES IN ACHIEVING THE FINAL VICTORY

Outcome of wars is always difficult to judge. The early empirical war outcome focused on the most easily quantifiable component; battle deaths. It was hypothesized that some relationship existed between battle casualties and the outcome of wars. Richardson, for example, searched for a threshold for population losses and assumed that 'defeat would usually occur when the less populous side had lost in dead some number between 0.05 and 5 percent of its population.'¹ Klingberg found that there is some evidence that nations in modern times will tend to surrender before they have suffered population losses greater than 3 to 4 percent.² Rosen tested Richardson's hypothesis and found that in only 2 of 77 cases did states suffer more than 5 percent population loss in battle before yielding. But "on the other hand, his (Richardson's) lower limit is definitely disconfirmed: in 23 of 77 cases the defeated party lost less than 0.05 percent of its population in battle deaths".³ This segment would therefore study the impact of Mukti Bahini with reference to Pakistani battle field casualties on the point at which it crumbled in the face of short lived allied offensive. Besides some historians tend to refer Bangladesh -Pakistan War as the Indo-Pak War which is not because they lack knowledge of the event rather such acts are deliberately articulated to undermine the Mukti Bahini efforts. If we look at 1971, several wars were being fought, but the primary war was fought between Pakistani and Bangladeshi Forces. This war involved all major powers and the whole dynamics revolved around this event. This war was followed by other wars, including the Indo-Pak War which was the byproduct of the Bangladesh - Pakistan War. It could not have been triggered without the event of March 26. So, everything that happened after 26 March was contingent upon this principal war. These are the issues that need to be studied based on historical and empirical statistics for better comprehension and clarifying doubts and misgivings on the issue.

Strategic Aspect - Performance of Mukti Bahini

Although military hierarchy from all sides variously assessed the performance of the Mukti Bahini but those were by and large mixed and need amplifications. Without the support of the Mukti Bahini, how much longer would it have taken the Indian Army to reach Dhaka? In response to this question, one senior Indian Army officer thought it might have

made a difference of two more weeks. General Niazi's remark which he made immediately after his surrender merit consideration. He also conceded that "the support of the Mukti Bahini might have made a difference of two more weeks". During a war of only 14 days, the difference of two weeks amounts to the total contribution made by India's Defence Forces to the liberation struggle of Bangladesh that too at such a crucial moment when time was a vital factor to the Indian Government and its defence forces.⁴ But in the peculiar circumstances obtaining, could India afford to spend four weeks on the operation, without risking an UN intrusion and even a military intervention from Pakistan's influential friends like the USA and the China? Indeed, it was later apparent that the Task Force of the US Seventh fleet dispatched to the Bay of Bengal by Washington was intended to undermine the Indian offensive in Bangladesh and deflect the Indian Air Force and Navy to the American Task Force (see fig. 42). So as to give the much needed breathing time for General Niazi and his

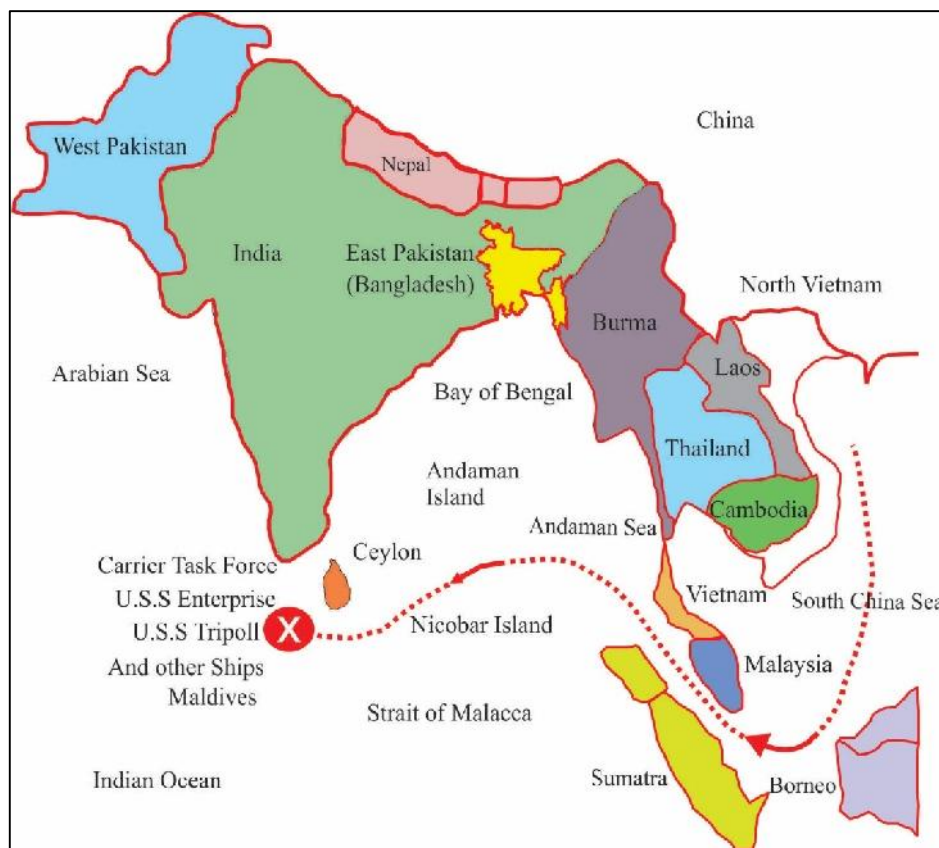


Fig. 42. Route of US Task Force from Vietnam to India. *Washington Post*, 22 December 1971.

garrison at Dhaka. It seems likely therefore that if the campaign had been prolonged by another two weeks, its political and military objectives might have slipped out of India's hands.

Without the Indian intervention, how long would the Mukti Bahini have taken to liberate Bangladesh from West Pakistani? Colonel MAG Osmani, Commander-in-Chief Bangladesh Forces, stated that if the Indian Army had kept out, the Mukti Bahini would have driven out the Pakistan military from Bangladesh in another ten months.⁵ In support of his view Colonel Osmani pointed at the rising tempo of Mukti Bahini activity in November, which made things so uncomfortable for the Pakistani rulers in Dhaka that they lost their mental poise and started butchering people indiscriminately. As against this view, however, there are those who think that if the Indian Army had not intervened, the Bangladesh struggle for independence would have been prolonged for long time and possibly turned into another Vietnam. There had been other compelling considerations like the cost of maintaining a 70,000 men Pakistan Force in Bangladesh was estimated at 2 million USD per day. By August-September it became clear that the Pakistan Government would be without foreign exchange reserves in the near future if the 'suppressive expenses' were not halted. To add to this difficulty of faction ridden Pakistan military junta, political movement erupted in Balochistan and North West Frontier Province threatening further disintegration of Pakistan. In the light of these circumstances there is some justifications in the claim made by the officers of the Mukti Bahini that, "if the Indian forces had not come into the war directly, the Mukti Bahini itself would have liberated the country within six months" or alternatively, that "the Indian Army just walked in when we (the Mukti Bahini) had already finished the job".⁶

However, General Jagjit Singh Aurora, General Officer Commanding in Charge, Eastern Command, in charge of the Bangladesh Operation, himself assigned a fortnight to 18 days for liberating Bangladesh. The Pakistani Army Headquarters at Pindi were looking forward to a war lasting at least three months, by which time Yahya Khan expected his friends in the international community to pull him out of trouble. On the other hand, Moscow was believed to have been pressing India hard to finish the job in 10 days and it is dragged on beyond that time, the Kremlin was reported to be getting somewhat impatient- and no wonder, since the Soviet representative at the UN Security Council had by then already exercised his veto for the third time, and passionately desired to save himself from further embarrassment. Actually by the tenth day, it was clear that the Pakistani Army had lost the gamble in the East and it was only the obduracy of President Yahya Khan that was preventing General Niazi from giving up. By the twelfth day, even Yahya Khan had to concede defeat in the East. So, the two crucial weeks saved by the Mukti Bahini made all the difference and its outcome. This was based on timeline analysis but the Mukti Bahini's contribution had been phenomenal

involving so many different sectors that created a suitable situation for the joint offensive to be effective in so short time.

Performance of the Mukti Bahini based on Enemy Casualty

War time situation reports, assessments, analysis have been used for evaluating the performance of the Mukti Bahini as they can provide accurate data and reflect the battle field scenarios more accurately than all other sources. Assessment carried out for the period between last week of June to 1st week of October and another fortnightly report of November 1971 have been extensively consulted. Assessments/comments by the senior commanders have been also considered to add value to this study. If we look at the available official records from Sector Headquarters, it was not until end of June when they could begin to function. After the formation of the government in exile; some time was necessary for developing coherent understanding and work culture. As such the operational activities carried out prior to last week of June 1971 remained somewhat unrecorded. Until then the Freedom Fighters did not also have any formal or official fighting strategy. The actions carried out throughout the initial resistance phase had been spontaneous in nature and they often combined conventional and unconventional form of warfare. For this study several operational assessments, situation reports and official press release which were made during the war have been considered. Factual variations and inaccuracies were likely to persist considering understandable practical problems like, untimely submission of reports, duplication in compilation, missing out of details and others. Yet by analyzing these figures a general trend of operational activities can be obtained. For analyzing the performance, these reports have been compiled as per the geographical areas shown in the fig. 43, which are though not in conformity with the sector boundaries can yet provide a comprehensive idea.

While counting on number of operations, a raid on Pakistani troop position, demolition of roads, railway bridges, culverts, disruption of railway tracks or telecommunication line, mine

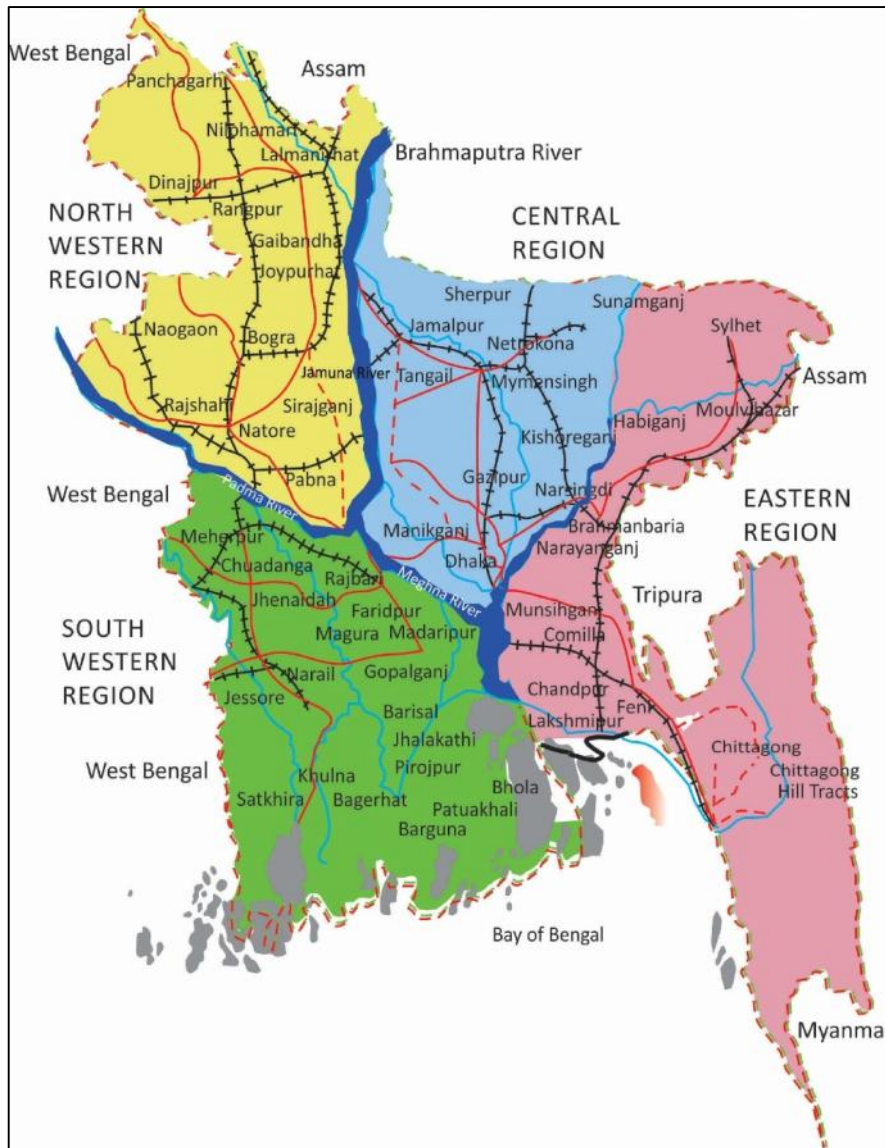


Fig. 43. Geographic Regions for the Assessment of the Mukti Bahini Effectiveness (24 June to 5 October).

laying all have been considered as the same. And a significant operation is the one in which some substantial result is obtained. Total number of operations carried out during this period beginning from 1 August till 5 October is 5,277 (see fig. 44). No data was available for the month of July or earlier. During these operations 6,331 Pakistani regular soldiers and 4,890 irregulars were killed. Depending on their impact, it was found that at least 40% operations had been significant. Based on the number of operations, we can find that north western region

undertook 1592(30.1%) operations, south western region 705 (13.3%) operations, north eastern region 1981(37.5%) operations and south eastern region undertook 999 (19.1%) operations.

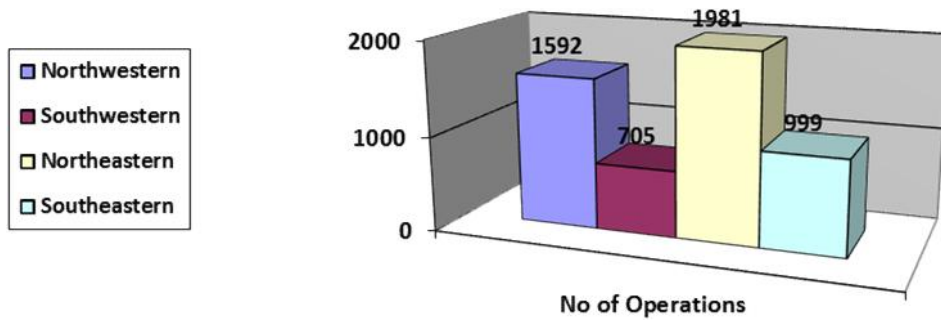


Fig. 44. Number of Operations Conducted by Region. *Assesment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

If a regional comparison is done, it may be seen that south eastern region carried out the highest percentage of significant operations while north eastern region the lowest. There have been some definite reasons for which difference existed in the number and effectiveness of operations. If we look at south eastern region, it was very close to the Indian border, the forces were deployed over the key tactical features and last but not the least, this sector enjoyed quality leadership including the Sector Commander. The operations undertaken by the south eastern region particularly by Sector-2 Commander Major Khaled Mosharraf is vividly portrayed by Granada Television, UK through a documentary titled ‘Khaled’s War’ which was directed by Vanya Kewly based on his eight days stay in Sector-2 area in the month of June 1971. Major Khaled perfected the art of guerilla warfare against the occupation forces and achieved spectacular successes on numerous occasions.⁷ Major Khaled’s exploits are also credited by Major General Shaukat Riza in his book titled *The History of Pakistan* where he wrote, “Musharraf proved an adept pupil. He meticulously followed the education he had received in 57 Brigade. He caused us a lot of sorrow”.⁸ Captain SK Garg (retired) who carried out a research on the application of guerrilla warfare in Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 grossly differed and stated that, ‘Shadows have been cast over the efficacy of the Mukti Bahini, including all the Bengali Freedom Fighters, as a viable force to liberate Bangladesh. It has been contended that, by itself, the Mukti Bahini was not competent to liberate Bangladesh and that without the physical intervention of India’s Defence Forces; Bangladesh’s struggle for

liberation would have been

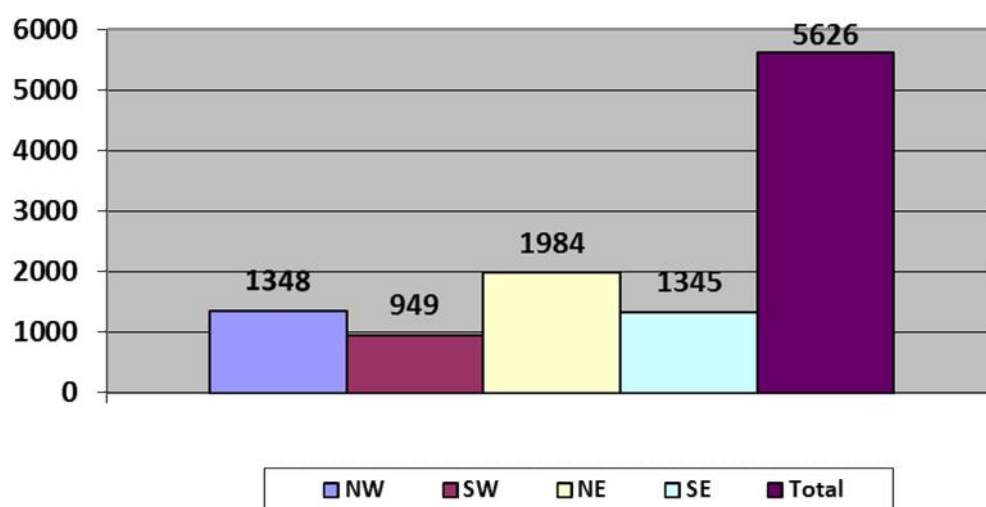


Fig. 45. Number of Razakars Killed by Region. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

inordinately delayed or even degenerated into a Vietnam type of war with an unpredictable outcome.⁹ Such a statement seems absolutely baseless when the Commander Pakistan Eastern Command Lieutenant General AAK Niazi himself confessed that, "Through elusive methods, and guerrilla warfare the Mukti Bahini succeeded in making us "blind and deaf". From this statement one can easily comprehend the ferocity and intensity of Mukti Bahini guerrilla activities that conditioned the mentality of the Pakistan military hierarchy let alone the members in the lower tiers. After the war in a prisoner of war camp in India during a routine search, one of the officers from the camp staff jokingly told the prisoner of war officers that the persons searching them were Mukti Bahini. He took it very seriously. One of them even asked, "How many Mukti Bahini chaps are here?" These prisoner of war officers were mortally afraid of the Mukti Bahini, perhaps because of their guilty consciences. The retribution that they expected made them turn pathetically to a visiting senior Indian Army officer for succor. The latter assured them that it had been only a joke and there were no Mukti Bahini there.¹⁰ This Mukti Bahini apart from its vital role in outflanking and encircling the Pakistani bases, they furnished reliable intelligence as to the exact positions of Pakistani bunkers, ambushes and road blocks, thus enabling Indian attacks to be accurate and very swift. In areas where it liberated unaided, the Mukti Bahini followed solely its own plan. These areas included Kurigram and Lalmonirhat in north Bengal, Sunamganj and Habiganj in Sylhet, Comilla, Akhaura and

northern side of Brahmanbaria; ‘axes of advance’ in Korerhat-Hiako-Hathazari in Chittagong; Alamdanga, Chuadanga and Meherpur in Kushtia; Monirampur and Abhaynagar of Jessore; Bagherhat, Kaligamj and Satkhira in Khulna; Gopalganj and Faridpur in Faridpur District; Barisal and Patukhali, and ‘axes of advance’ in Brahmanbaria-Bhairab-Narsingdi areas in the final stage of the war.¹¹

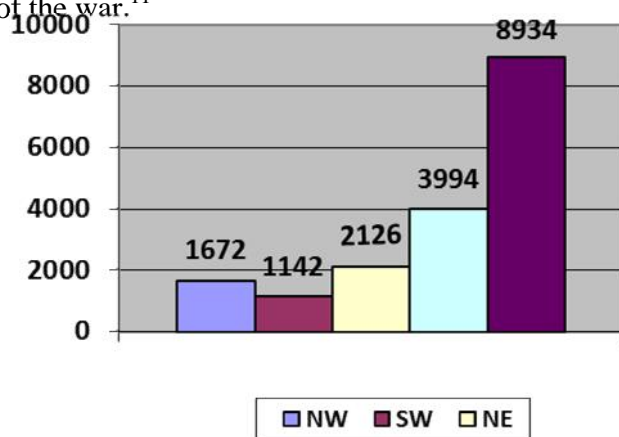


Fig. 46. Number of Pakistani Regulars Killed. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

Now let us see the impact of these operations in terms of enemy casualties. In 14 weeks, there was a total of 14,560 enemy soldiers killed that included 8,934 regulars including 86 officers and 5,226 irregulars. The number of casualties by region and by category is shown in the following graphs (see fig. 45):

Besides these 2,287 Pakistani troops wounded, 163 Pakistani Military vehicles destroyed, 251 strategic bridges and culverts destroyed, 16 ships destroyed or damaged and troops carrying trains derailed at 23 points. So far we saw the cumulative impact of all these operations carried out over a specific period of time. Monthly presentation of the same statistics coupled with results realized would provide us newer dimensions.

This analysis is prepared basing on the enemy casualties. The statistics of Appendix Y, Appendix Z and are plotted in the fig. 53 where the pink line is denoting the casualty state of the Pakistani regulars and the yellow line is indicating the number of para-military troops killed in action. The blue line running above is the casualty state combining both regular and para-military troops. Fig.54 shows a histogram of weekly enemy casualties for 14 weeks (week beginning 24 June).

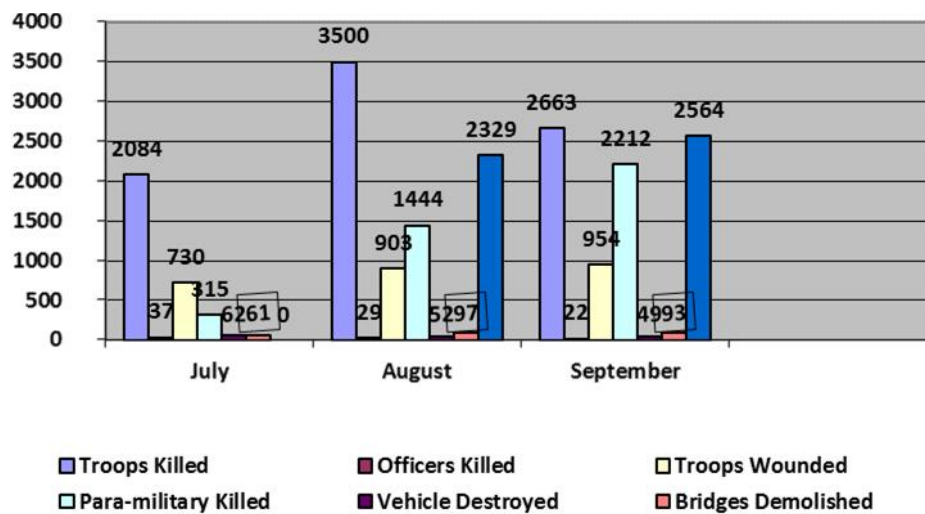


Fig. 47. Monthly Casualty State by Category. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

From the fig. 50 we can easily see that the Mukti Bahini activities and enemy casualties increased rapidly during the 2nd and 3rd week of July reaching the peak during mid-August. ‘East Pakistan Freedom Fighters claimed to have killed between 15 and 20,000 West Pakistani troops and wounded many others so seriously that they must have succumbed to their injuries in hospital’.¹² By 1 August Dhaka’s military hospitals had been so over crowded

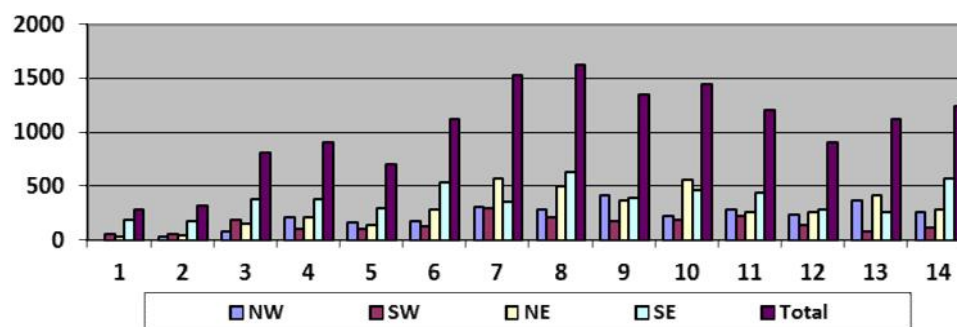


Fig. 48. Weekly Casualty Report - Regular & Para-military. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

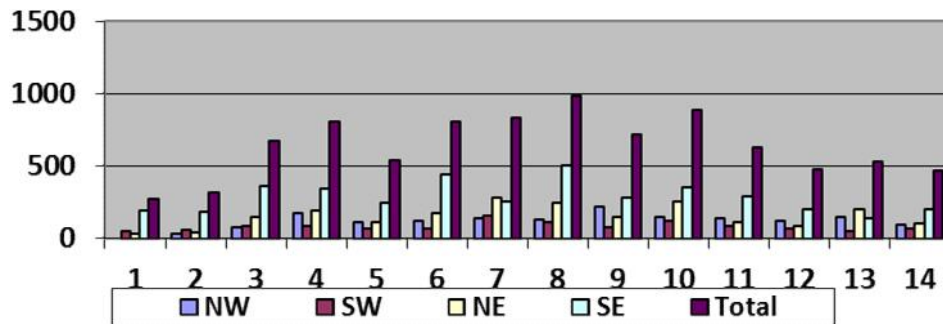


Fig. 49. Weekly Casualty Report - Pakistani Troops. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

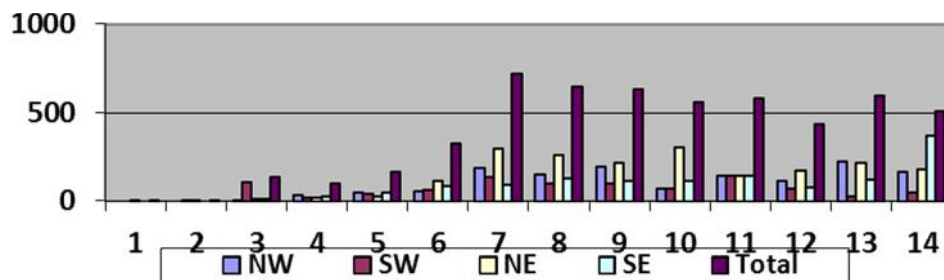


Fig. 50. Weekly Casualty Report - Pakistani Para-military Forces. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

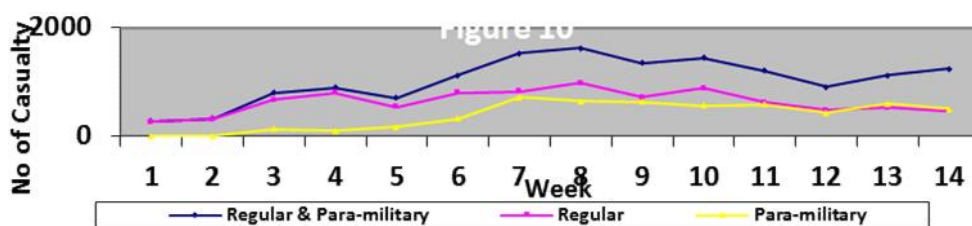


Fig. 51. Weekly Comparative Casualty Report of Regular and Para-military Soldiers. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Force Headquarters.*

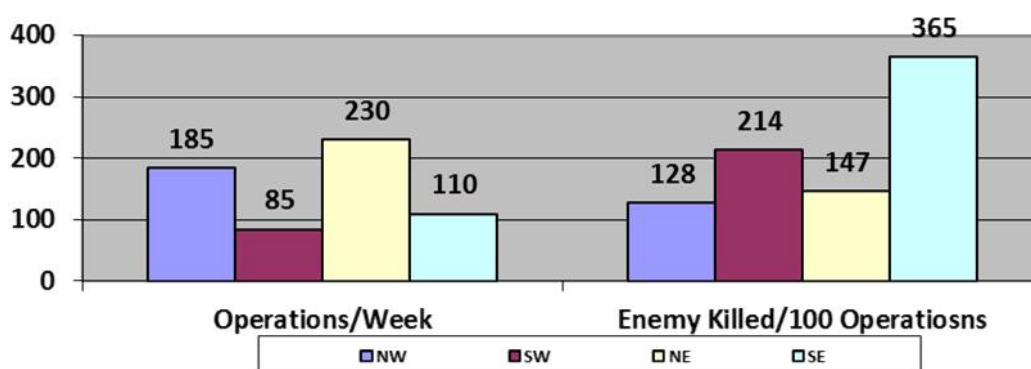


Fig. 52. Performance of Different Regions. *Assessment carried out by Bangladesh Forces*

with outdoor patients, presumably the wounded Pakistani soldiers, that the Pakistan International Airlines, cancelling its several scheduled international flights, had to transport wounded soldiers from Dhaka to Karachi.¹³ Initially the guerrilla organizations had suffered a lot where 8 members out of 10 in a section reported to have been killed in several instances. To be effective in close quarter battle with hand held grenades one had to reach within 20-25 yards of the enemy which was not an easy task for the raw guerrillas to execute with only 2-4 weeks of training.¹⁴ The recruitment process including other issues retarded the operational efficiency on the ground to a large extent. However, Mukti Bahini activities showed a sharp fall towards the end of August and this rise and fall in their performance repeated every fortnightly basis reflected their limited endurance in operation. The number of Pakistani troops killed in action continued to fluctuate throughout September because of the fact that the Rajakars were placed under Major General Jamshed in September 1971 and they began to operate since then. They were organized into brigades of around 3,000-4,000 volunteers attached as an auxiliary to two Pakistani brigades. They often arrested and detained the nationalist Bengali suspects.¹⁵ The brunt of the Mukti Bahini was substantially absorbed by the auxiliary forces for which the number of para-military casualties rose high. If we note the para-military casualty curve it shows that the confrontation with the Rajakars began on the 2nd week of July and the casualty figure had risen sharply during the 2nd week of August.

A comparison of Pakistan troops and para-military casualty curve shows that number of Rajakars killed in action remained considerably lower than Pakistani troops during July. The gap narrowed down towards August and September and by 2nd week of September both the curves almost came at par with each other. By 3rd week of September the number of Rajakar killed was more than that of the Pakistani troops. This trend may have been due to increasing induction of Rajakar members and withdrawal of Pakistani troops from the Border outposts. During the last week of August the troop casualty curve experienced a sharp fall. The performance went down during the month of September, despite increase in the number of operations from 2,329 (4 weeks) in August to 2,564 (4 weeks) in September (fig.49). This was indicative of lack of mental and motivational training of guerrillas for prolonged engagement in battles and was a concern for the commanders.¹⁶ Another author believes that up to September the Mukti Bahini's casualty ratio, compared to the Pakistan Army's was 1:4.

Later, it increased to a figure as high as 1: 15. By September end, the Mukti Bahini had inflicted 25,000 casualties upon Pakistani Army who were rapidly replaced with the para-military forces, Tochi Scouts and Khyber Scouts.¹⁷

South eastern region had shown the most outstanding performance- averaging the highest number of significant operations while north eastern region showed the poorest performance. It is also due to the fact that during the period under consideration, there had been no infantry battalion or brigade sized forces within north eastern region. The largest number of Rajakars killed in north eastern region indicated the highest number of hostile population in the region. The growth of Rajakars also indicated a slight shift of public support owing to public frustrations caused by the Freedom Fighter's activities. Certain actions by the guerrillas might have caused public dissention like in number of places water barrages were demolished, personal weapons used to take revenge against the opponents, civilian people killed and buses were shot at. This sort of activities lacked discipline and went against the public sentiment. Certain political and external events might also have affected the public morale for example; replacement of Tikka Khan by a civilian Governor Dr. AM Malik on 3 September 1971, Indo-Soviet Treaty and subsequent press coverage under the headline like "Political Settlement" in mid-August. The sharp fall of significant actions in north eastern region shows that very few operations have been under taken while Chittagong Hill Tracts showed no record of guerrilla action there. Another district operationally remained very dormant that is Pabna. By October, the Mukti Bahini's offensive increased in tempo and geographic scope. They carried out hit and run attacks and sabotages both in the border regions and in the interior at ease resulting in significant achievements. Agence France-Presse's Dhaka correspondent, analyzing an official communiqué, had concluded that 'all 19 districts of East Pakistan had been hit by guerrilla operations.' The official communiqué revealed their field of action as stretching from Chittagong in the South, to Dinajpur, in the North, and from Sylhet District, in the East, to Khulna and Kushtia, in the West'.¹⁸ These operations left deep psychological scarce in the minds of the Pakistani soldiers. The trauma of their battle experiences and their physical disabilities has shattered their lives. They were exposed to a lot of stress, confusion, anxiety, pain, and hatred. In most cantonments, including Dhaka, troops had to confine their movements to daylight hours - seldom venturing out into the countryside except in large columns. Siddiq Salik while evaluating the performance of the Pakistani Forces, he also highlighted that as the guerrilla activities grew, the commanders became indifferent and acted only when it was unavoidable. In the last phase

(October-November), they generally preferred to stick to their bases and did not risk their command.¹⁹

The operational activities by the Mukti Bahini completely disrupted the government's administrative control in the country. In some districts of Dhaka, Comilla, Noakhali, Faridpur, and Bakerganj, the Mukti Bahini seemed to almost move about at will and had, in other areas, set up systems of parallel administration. East Pakistan's vulnerable communication system including infrastructures remained under constant guerrilla threats. Some 90 percent of the culverts and small bridges on the roads linking Dhaka to Comilla, Feni, Jessore, and Kushtia had been destroyed.²⁰ Towards the end of October, Mukti Bahini guerillas began to claim "liberation" of strips of territory - both adjacent to the Indian border and in the interior - in Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna and Noakhali districts. In some of these "liberated" areas the Bangladesh Government-in-exile sent in administrators to reorganize the administration at village and union levels. Even until October 1971, the Pakistanis could only reestablish 90 posts out of 370 posts maintained by the East Pakistan Rifles.²¹

Towards the end i.e. during the last half of November Mukti Bahini carried out nearly 900 operations including a few major offensives against Pakistani troops. During these operations Mukti Bahini killed 1,570 Pakistani soldiers including 25 officers and nearly an equal number of enemy para-military irregulars (Rangers, Razakars, Mujahids, collaborators etc). There had been 785 seriously wounded people and they added nothing to the Pakistani war effort. During these operations Mukti Bahini liberated large areas in Sylhet, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Tangail, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong districts. Areas then under complete control of Mukti Bahini comprised most of the northern part of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Sylhet districts; almost the whole of Tangail district; almost the whole of Kishoreganj sub-division of Mymensingh district; extensive areas in Barisal and Faridpur districts; the western part of Khulna and Jessore districts; in Chittagong Mukti Bahini has taken virtual control of Fatikchari, Patia, Anwara, Raujan and Hatia thanas; and north eastern part of Noakhali. During these operations Mukti Bahini demolished and damaged 40 strategic roads and railway bridges and destroyed 28 enemy vehicles. The Marine commandos of Mukti Bahini damaged 7 ships, 6 coasters, 6 barges, 5 steamers and number of enemy's gun-boats. Enemy troops carrying trains were derailed at 4 different places. Mukti Bahini virtually paralyzed enemy's port activities both at Chalna and Chittagong areas. Internal river

communications were also severely disrupted by making repeated attacks at the following vital river ports and ferry ghats; Chandpur, Narayanganj, Bahadurabad Ghat, Jagannathganj Ghat and several other places. Mukti Bahini also forced the enemy to close the internal flight within Bangladesh.

With every passing day, Mukti Bahini had been tightening their grip around the Pakistani soldiers. They carried a number of successful operations in and around the Capital city of Dhaka virtually cutting it off from the rest of the country. So intensive was their operations that the Pakistani Army had to impose curfew in the city several times, during the fortnight. During the fortnight Mukti Bahini captured large quantity of arms and ammunitions including 1,500 rifles. During the fortnight large scale surrender by Razakars to Mukti Bahini had virtually made the enemy para-military force totally ineffective. An Associated Press correspondent reporting about Dhaka stated: "The Mukti Bahini fighters operate more intensely and openly in Dhaka. The eastern part of the city has become a daily target of bombings and shootings, Green Road, near Dhanmondi residential areas, have become a 'No Man's land' where the Mukti Bahini and Razakars exchange fire in the night".²² Even during the capture of Dhaka, the guerrillas of Kader Bahini had provided extraordinary assistance to the Indian Army by liquidating the enemy's small pockets of resistance while Indian troops were converging upon the capital.²³ While interviewing Lieutenant General (retired) JFR Jacob, the Chief of Staff of the Indian Army's Eastern Command by Smita Prakash in Asian News International Television, he strongly appreciated the role of the Mukti Bahini and the Bengali nation for rising on that occasion and greatly contributing in liberating Bangladesh.²⁴ Finally when on 16 December Lieutenant General Jacob arrived Dhaka Cantonment to negotiate with General Niazi about the surrender, it took only four hours. It happened so easily because by then the Pakistan military lost their mental poise and their nerve trembled. The psychological state of the entire forces went so down that bewildered Niazi with nearly 26,400 soldiers present at Dhaka Cantonment had accepted the one and only unconditional public surrender at the Race Course in the history of war.

The Freedom Fighters alongside incredible operational achievements also severely injured the Central Government's economic activities. Production capability had been deeply eroded in the economic field. In jute sector, many traders fled, and the breakdown on retail trade had affected the jute industry. Instead of being sent to factories through collectors, 1.3 million bales of jute - one sixth of East Pakistan's production were carried by peasants'

producers as head loads for barter in India. Factory production dropped to 35 percent of the production capacity. The Pakistan Tobacco Company had cut output to 40 percent.²⁵ The flourishing tea industry had been brought to grinding halt as tea production dropped to one third in 1971 than its production in the last year.²⁶ Reason being continued guerrilla activities along the bordering areas in Sylhet. Workers instigated by the Mukti Bahini members damaged 38 Jute Mills only in Khulna and Mymensingh.²⁷ Then in November the jute warehouse of a foreign company was burnt into ashes. "Industry within 30 miles of Dacca brought to a complete stand still as 3 of the 4 generators of the power station (at Shiddhirganj) were destroyed by the guerrillas".²⁸ The Karnaphuli paper mills in Chittagong had stopped manufacturing paper on 3 November for want of raw materials which was usually imported from West Pakistan. This closure seriously hampered the educational institutions and offices.²⁹ The guerrillas, in hijacked gunboats, stolen from Khulna, shelled ships, coming to the jute Port of Chalna. This threat to shipping had a major economic implication.³⁰ For instance, East Pakistan needed 3 million tons of rice and grain to supplement local resources, and these imports had to be moved from Chittagong to the interior. Usually 38 percent of goods used to be carried by rail, 34 percent by road, and 28 percent on the networks of rivers. US aid experts estimated that road and rail deliveries had been reduced to 10 percent of the capacity by the demolition of bridges and culverts and loss of vehicles.³¹

Taking above statistics into consideration, it may be said that the overall achievement of the Mukti Bahini had been brilliant for which the Allied Forces could easily overrun Bangladesh in lightning speed forcing Pakistan military to accept a humiliating public surrender in the Race Course. Despite various constraints the Bangladeshi Freedom Fighters led by the leaders in the field made it happen. It is quite interesting to note that, in December 1970 when all the Pakistani Divisional Commanders had nearly 28 years of commissioned service, their Bangladeshi counterparts had barely 8-10 years of service.³² Yet the Bangladeshi military officers outmatched them in operational and tactical wisdom that eventually earned them the victory on 16 December.

ANALYSIS

In war, there is no better yardstick to measure the effectiveness of a particular force by the number of casualties incurred on the opposing forces than any other thing. This can have

severe impact on the tangible and intangible aspects of war. Here the impact on war effort in the politico-military and economic aspects will be analyzed.

Pakistan Government and Army Headquarters at Pindi wanted a war lasting for about three months by which they expected international intervention or military intervention from influential friends like USA and China to respond in their favour. On the other hand, the Indian Government and Eastern Command wanted a swift and short lived war. Indian Eastern command assigned 2-3 weeks for liberating Bangladesh. Moscow was also pressing India to complete the war in 10 days. Allied commanders considered 2-3 weeks good enough for their offensive to be effective. They must have considered the situation after it has been duly softened up by the Freedom Fighters.

The impact of Freedom Fighters' role is evident from the casualty of last week of June to 1st week of October and fortnightly report of November 1971. Because of lack of formal structure or controlling headquarters, data prior to last week of June was not available. During the period under consideration, the Mukti Bahini conducted total 5,277 operations. In 14 weeks, 14,560 Pakistani soldiers were killed by the Mukti Bahini fighters which included 8,934 regulars and 5,226 irregulars. In addition, 2,287 Pakistani troops were wounded, 163 Pakistani Military vehicles destroyed, 251 strategic bridges and culverts destroyed, 16 ships destroyed or damaged and troops carrying trains derailed at 23 points. These operational activities of Mukti Bahini had a great psychological impact on Pakistani Forces. The Pakistani Government's administrative control in the country got seriously disrupted. The flights were busy in evacuating casualties to Karachi. All these had made a difference of two weeks in the final offensive. From these analysis, it may be concluded that, the operational activities of Mukti Bahini shaped the war and assisted Indian Forces for a swift victory in two weeks. This also had a great impact in maintaining Allied political and military objectives in the war.

Mukti Bahini activities had severe impact on the economy of Pakistan. Maintenance of war effort by Pakistan was an important aspect. The cost of maintaining a 70,000 men Pakistan Force in Bangladesh was estimated at 2 million USD per day. By August – September, it was clear that the Pakistan Government would be without foreign exchange reserves in near future if the “suppressive expenses’ were not stopped. Based on this circumstance some Mukti Bahini officers claimed that “if the Indian Forces had not come into the war directly, the Mukti Bahini itself would have liberated the country in six months”

or alternatively, that “the Indian Army just walked in when we (Mukti Bahini) had already finished the job.”

The Mukti Bahini operational activities also severely affected Pakistan’s Central Government's economic activities. In jute sector, factory production dropped to 35 percent of the capacity. Tobacco Company had cut output to 40 percent. The production in tea industry dropped to one third. The Karnaphuli paper mill had stopped manufacturing paper from 3 November which affected educational institutions and offices. The sea ports were under serious threat. Demolition of bridges reduced 10 percent of road and rail deliveries. From this analysis it can be noted that, Mukti Bahini operational activities paralyzed the Pakistan central Government economic activities in East Pakistan to a level that damaged the Pakistan military's operational effectiveness to a great extent.

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CHAPTER 10

PAKISTAN PLAN AND ALLIED OFFENSIVE

The West Pakistani political and military leaders always preached and professed that the “Defence of East lay in the West’ which was never accepted by the politicians in the east”.¹ This false sense of security did not even stand in the face of Bengali uprising. It was never realized that one infantry division without significant naval and air power would be totally inadequate to deal with internal uprising with tacit support from the neighbouring country. In view of the growing threat from India in support of the Mukti Bahini and the need to control an ever increasing hostile population more troops were flown into East Pakistan soon after the military action. Meanwhile Lieutenant General AAK Niazi took over command of the eastern theatre of operation from Major General Tikka Khan. By the time Niazi came on the scene, the Pakistan Army had reestablished control in most part of East Pakistan. The military along with civil armed forces manned purely by the West Pakistanis were manning most of the outposts along the border. By the middle of May 1971, all appeared quiet in the eastern front which in a way made the Pakistanis complacent. Around July or August 1971, Pakistan intelligence revealed that in case of Indian intervention it would at best secure for Mukti Bahini only a part of East Bengal, as was visualized by the Agartala conspirators, that this part would be used for installing the Bangladesh Government and for accommodating Bengali refugees then had been staying in India.² It was also thought that as a sovereign, independent country, and also a member of the UN, India was not in a position to attack Pakistan, another independent country and also a member of a member of the UN. On the basis of this appreciation the subsequent operational Plan of Niazi (3 of 15 July 1971) contemplated a forward posture with strong points and fortresses which were made logistically sufficient for at least 30 days if by past.³ A total of 25 fortresses and 9 strong points were designated though all could not be manned because of paucity of troops.⁴ Dhaka was the heartland but was left denuded. This forward leaning plan was made on the premise that only the Freedom Fighters would attack, with or without overt Indian support. If Indian support is minimal, then forward leaning posture would effectively arrest the situation. But if India joined the insurgents openly, the Security Council and the UN would intervene and force her to abandon, and if she did not, China, most probably would bell out Pakistan from this precarious situation or would join Pakistan to defeat India.⁵ After those initial successes

in terms of suppressing the Mukti Bahini, the Pakistanis lost sight of the volcano which was boiling underneath apparent calmness. The political directive to Eastern Command was not to allow the Mukti Bahini to gain control on any part of the territory so that Bangladesh Government could establish foothold. Yahya remained locked in this limited goal ignoring the possibility of a full scale Indian intervention. Lately though the military leadership sensed the concentration of Indian Forces along the border. Meanwhile the Operational directive issued in September 1971 by General Headquarters, Eastern Command was asked not to carry the war into enemy territory.⁶ East Pakistan was to be defended employing mobile reserve. This would envisage that light forces would guard the border while strategically important areas would be strongly defended including Dhaka Bowl. Based on threat assessment, Niazi tried to compensate the numerical superiority by raising adhoc formations which only added to the number of formations without increasing fighting capability.⁷ However, around mid-November when the Indians started carrying out preliminary operations and Border outposts controlling territories jutting into India started getting lost, Niazi carried out an appreciation of the situation on the presumption that India would invade East Pakistan to capture whole of it. On the basis of this Niazi made a request to Rawalpindi for two more divisions out of which he barely received more than half a division meaning 5 battalions by November.⁸ The order of battle of the Pakistani Forces were as given at Appendix EE.

Indian Plan

Around July 1971, it was apparently clear to India that the Pakistanis would never take back the refugees residing on Indian soil. Given the socio-economic realities, India could ill afford to bear the burden of feeding 8-10 million refugees for a long duration. There was no other option but to reconcile the matter with the Pakistanis, which had already failed. Time was ripe to force the situation in India's favour. Accordingly, India planned to capture Dhaka before any external intervention and international pressure comes into play. Bypassing Pakistani strong points could offer India that leverage in terms of time and efforts. They also thought of blocking major entry ports so that further build up in the region could be prevented after the outbreak of war. This would eventually prevent any intervention by outside. Accordingly the Allied Forces built up three corps with 2 Medium Artillery Regiment, one regiment of T-55 tanks and two regiments of PT-76 amphibious tanks. In addition, there were enough armoured personnel carriers to carry two battalions and they had the capability of

laying 10,000 feet of bridging at any given moment. In the reserve was the Parachute Brigade. Besides, India had compatible air and naval assets. Three corps thrusts were planned from the east, north western and south western side with a smaller thrust would roll down from the north along Mymensingh -Jamalpur area. II Corps under Lieutenant General T N Raina with 4 and 9 Mountain Divisions was to advance into the south western sector from Krishnanagar, West Bengal supported by 8 and 9 Sector Mukti Bahini. XXXIII Corps under Lieutenant General Thapan with 20 Mountain Division and an additional brigade was to advance into North Bengal from Silliguri and Balurghat supported by 6 and 7 Sector Mukti Bahini. The IV Corps under Lieutenant General Sagat Singh which had 3 divisions, namely 8, 23 and 57 Mountain Divisions were to advance from Tripura and capture the eastern part of the country including Dhaka supported by K, S and Z Force; and 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 Sector Mukti Bahini. The 101 Communication Zone Sub Area, which was a Logistic Formation was to advance from Meghalaya with a brigade plus and capture Mymensingh, Tangail and finally Dhaka supported by 11 Sector Mukti Bahini. The crux of the plan was to contain the enemy strong points at the border, while powerful mobile thrust by a series of bypassing moves would cut the enemy's lines of communication and make for the strategic targets. With the cooperation and support of the air and naval arms, the Allied Army would isolate the Dhaka bowl from the bulk of the defending Army. The details of Indian order of battle is given at Appendix DD.

South Western Region

General

Around early November, 9 Division, strongest of the Pakistani divisions under Major General Ansari was responsible to defend this region between rivers of Padma and the Meghna and India- Bangladesh border. He deployed his forces with a bias towards Jessore and the Hardinge Bridge in the north. Troops deployed well forward and planning wise Jessore and Jhenaidah were to be turned into theatre fortresses. 57 Infantry Brigade was deployed in the area from Darshana northward with headquarters at Jhenaidah. 107 Infantry Brigade was responsible for southern half up to Bay of Bengal with its headquarters at Jessore. 314 Adhoc Brigade raised out of East Pakistan Civil Armed Force under Brigadier Fazal-i-Hameed remained deployed in the areas of Khulna and Sunderbans. Four gunboats were also given in support of 9 Infantry Division. Division reserve comprised of 6 Punjab, 21 Punjab less two companies, 3 Independent Armoured Squadron and a section of Special

Service Group at Jessore Cantonment. Division Headquarters was located in Jessore. On the other hand, Allied Forces employed newly raised II Corps under Lieutenant General TN Raina against this region. Eastern Command had allotted time bound objectives and Army Headquarters gave importance to capture of Khulna and Chalna. They also emphasized the need to capture Hardinge Bridge early so that mutual support across the river could be effectively prevented. General Raina planned his major thrust against Jessore. He employed 9 Infantry Division under Major General Dalbir Singh to secure Jessore first and then arrange to capture Khulna with an appropriate force. 4 Mountain Division was employed against Jhenaidah, 50 Parachute Brigade less a battalion was kept as Corps Reserve, which was moved forward towards Jessore on 6 December. 3 December was considered as D Day.

Jhenaidah

On the upward, 57 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier Manzur was responsible for defending general area Jhenaidah. The inter-brigade boundary between 57 and 107 Brigades was along Darsana, which was inclusive to 57 Brigade, while Jibannagar was inclusive to 107 Brigade. A major river protected right flank of this Brigade. Yet, a frontage of about 80 kilometers was large enough to be adequately manned by a under strength brigade. Commander 57 Brigade deployed his forces as under:

18 Punjab to defend Meherpur-Chuadanga and Darsana area.

50 Punjab that joined on 29 November was guarding the Suadih-Kotchandpur axis

38 Frontier Force guarded the Jibannagar-Kaliganj axis. A battalion of 107 Brigade eventually got engaged in the battle of 57 Brigade.

29 Baluch with Squadron of 29 Cavalry that crossed over from Bheramara took up position at Hardinge Bridge area.

4 Mountain Division under Major General MS Barar was employed against Jhenaidah. He was ordered to capture Magura and then the ferry site at Kamarkhali in the depth. To facilitate their capture, Barar was instructed to capture Kaliganj by 9 December and Jhenaidah by 11 December. Magura and the ferry sites over Madhumati River were to be secured by 14 December. 4 Mountain Division operated in Jhenaidah area. 41 and 62 Brigades were to conduct advance to contact and 7 Brigade was kept as follow up brigade. This brigade had one Armour regiment and 130 mm medium battery in support. On 24

November 62 Brigade attacked the company location of 18 Punjab at Darshana and succeeded in capturing it. On the following night another company of the same battalion located in Uthulia few kilometers to the east were also attacked which the Pakistani Forces repulsed. 62 Brigade launched a fresh attack on Uthulia and Andulbaria lies to the further east

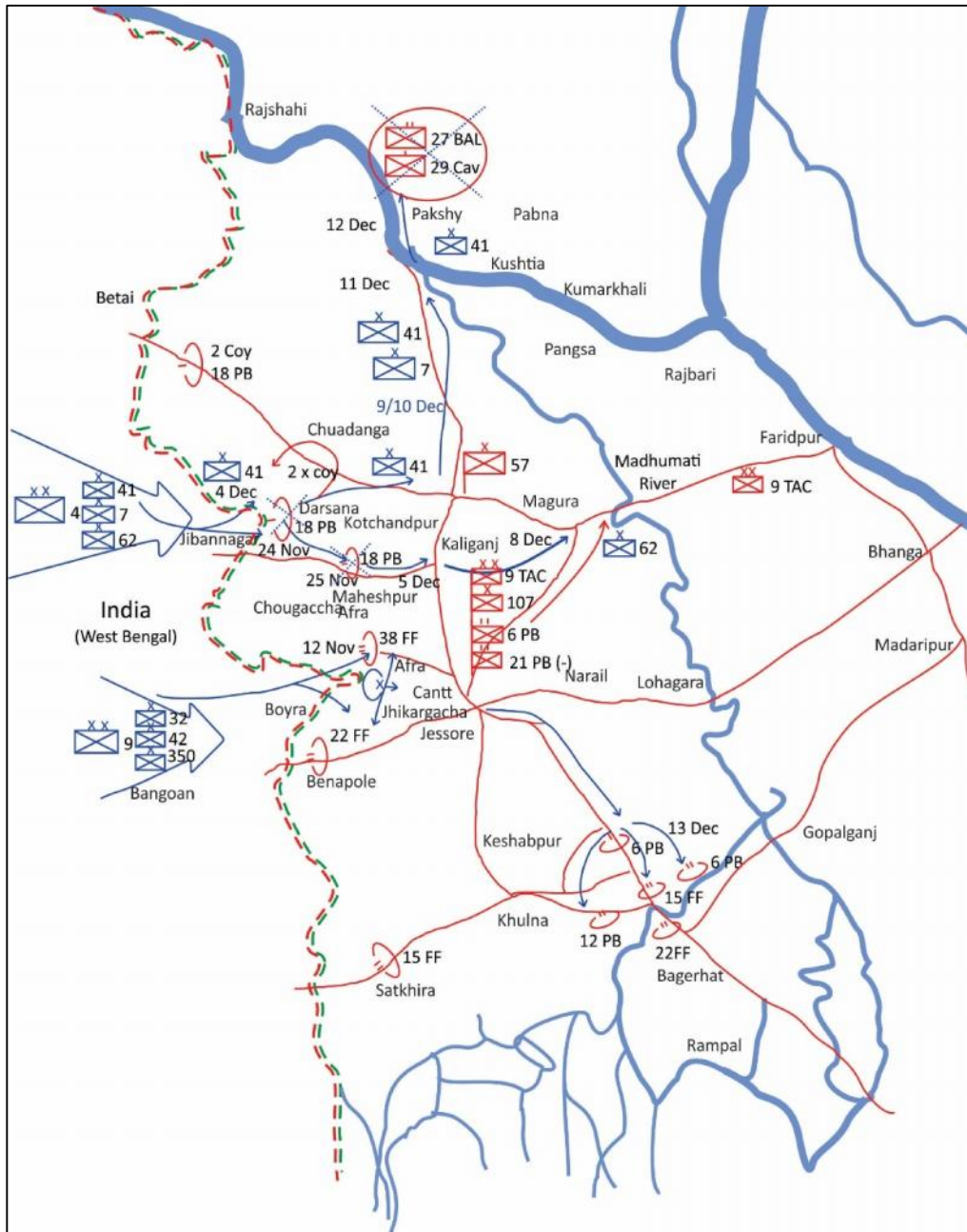


Fig. 53. Final Offensive in South Western Region – Jessore, Kushtia and Khulna Area. Riza, Shaikat. *The History of Pakistan Army (1966-71)*. Lahore: Wajidalis (Private) Limited, n.d. p, 180-191.

and captured them at ease. While, the Allied Forces were focused in their advance towards Kaliganj, the company of Pakistan 18 Punjab reoccupied the Darshana position. Barar had to

commit fresh 42 Brigade to finally clear them by 4 December. At this time, Company of 18 Punjab withdrew to Chuadanga on the same night. Troop of 29 Cavalry also joined this location.

When 62 Brigade was fighting along the inter-brigade boundary, 38 Frontier Force of 107 Brigade eventually got engaged in the battle. The battalion got parted and joined both 107 and 57 Brigades. Once 62 Brigade cleared Kotchandpur to the south of Jhenaidah, by 5 December, the withdrawal route of 18 Punjab got virtually blocked. 18 Punjab in their effort to move towards Jhenaidah from Chuadanga was fired upon by the Allied troops in mid-way. Appreciating this to be as light resistance from the Mukti Bahini, they tried to negotiate. Finding large Allied presence; the battalion fell back to Chuadanga. When they were asked to reach Jhenaidah via Kushtia by train found the slippers of the railway line were erupted by the Mukti Bahini. Bridges on Mherpur-Kushtia road were also destroyed that isolated 29 Baluch from 57 Brigade. However, by 8 December, both 18 Punjab and 29 Baluch regiments managed to reach Kushtia. On the other side, 41 Brigade resumed advance along Talsar track to capture Jhenaidah from the west. By last light, this Brigade could establish a bridgehead across River Chitra. By afternoon on 6 December 41 Brigade captured Jhenaidah. Allied 62 Brigade started advancing towards Magura and reached thereby 8 December. 57 Brigade hastily prepared their defence with whatever troops they could concentrate from the front. Barar concentrated his division at Kushtia on the night of 9/10 December. Indian 41 and 7 Brigade undertook Kushtia operation on mid day 11 December. Kushtia was cleared before the nightfall. 41 Brigade advanced towards Hardinge Bridge and secured by 12 December. On that occasion part of 57 Brigade managed to cross over the Hardinge Bridge for safety and part moved across river Madhumati.

Division less 41 Brigade moved to Magura. On 13 December 62 Brigade and most of the artillery had concentrated east of Magura. 7 Brigade also arrived by midday on 14 December. The Pakistanis were holding the east bank of River Madhumati. 62 Brigade crossed from the north opposite Duman on the night of 14/15 December while 7 Brigade crossed from the south. Kamarkhali was secured by first light on 16 December. About midday on 16 December, Major General Ansari surrendered to Major General Barar with approximately 3,000 troops.

Jessore

On the down south, Brigadier Hayat deployed 107 Brigade on a wide frontage of nearly 120 kilometers with equal emphasis on the Chougachha and Jhikargachha axes. He deployed the Brigade in Chougachha, Jhikargachha and Satkhira area with elements in Afra and 21 Punjab was kept as reserve in Jessore Cantonment.

22 Frontier Force with a battery of 55 Field Regiment on Jhikargachha axis, 15 Frontier Force and a battery of 55 Field Regiment along Satkhira axis

38 Frontier Force with 55 Field Regiment less two batteries were deployed to guard Jibannagar approach.

6 Punjab was deployed to guard Afra defile area was to join the divisional reserve later.

Company of 21 Punjab (Reconnaissance & Support Battalion) was deployed covering the brigade frontage.

The plan of Allied 9 Division was to capture Jessore. After the fall of Jessore, Khulna was to be captured with a brigade group. This formation comprised 32 Brigade, 42 Brigade and 350 Brigade. The tasks allotted to 9 Division were:

Capture Jessore by 10 December along Bangaon axis. Major General Dalbir Singh had planned to hit behind the enemy at Jhikargachha with one brigade coming from Bayra and another from Gobardanga while the third brigade advanced along the highway from Bangaon. After the fall of Jessore, capture Khulna with a brigade group.

Probing action opposite to 107 Brigade front started as early as 11 November with the occupation of a border security post by a company of Jammu and Kashmir Battalion in Chandpur near Chougachha area. Elements of another allied battalion crossed the border line on 12 November and captured Maslia Border outpost. On 13 November, the Pakistani Brigade Commander mobilized one company each from 38 Frontier Force and 22 Frontier Force to evict them but failed to make any progress. In the process one of the company commander Major Anis got killed. The Allied Division Commander Major General Dalbir Singh arranged his proper burial. Such respect for a deceased enemy soldier in the battlefield is an exemplary instance. Having made the opening, Indian Army entered with full might on

the night of 21/22 November. Allied Forces planned to advance from Bayra to capture Chougachha. Accordingly, Allied 14 Punjab of 42 Brigade with an armoured squadron crossed River Kabadak and took up defence at Garibpur. In short span of time, Indian Engineers had constructed a 200-foot class 40 bridge that enabled the armoured column to cross over the water obstacle easily. In the early morning on 21 November, two companies each from Pakistani 6 and 21 Punjab Regiments with a squadron of tanks attacked the defence of Allied Forces from Singhajhuli and Afra respectively. They occupied the area of left forward company, which they could not retain till last. The Pakistani attack from Jagannathpur could be repulsed due to their lack of infantry-armour cooperation. Besides, the Pakistani Forces failed to gather correct information about the Allied strength, which resulted their defeat at heavy price. In this battle, 100 enemy soldiers were killed and 40 injured. Eleven out of fourteen enemy tanks were destroyed. On the other hand 19 Allied soldiers became martyred and 44 injured. Allied Forces lost fewer in comparison to their counterpart.

In spite of heavy losses, Pakistani Forces were still holding the area. When the Brigade Commander realized that the enemy size was much larger than he had assessed initially and withdrew 6 and 21 Punjab to Afra area few kilometers to the east near Jessore Cantonment. By 22 November, Gahribpur went under the control of the Indian Forces. On the same day, Pakistan Air Force remained very active over the skies of Jessore and made some pin pointed air strafing on Garibpur position. The Allied anti-aircraft gunners shot two of their planes down. The fliers could successfully bell out on that occasion but landed in Indian Territory. Wreckages of those aircrafts are still believed to be lying along the zero line near Chougachha.

The company of 38 Frontier Force located in Chougachha was attacked on 23 November and was overrun by the Allied Forces. In the heat of the battle, the company got parted and joined in Afra and Jingerghacha. At this stage, 107 Brigade defensive underwent minor readjustment. 6 Punjab was holding the right flank; 22 Frontier Force took up position facing the Indian Forces. 12 Punjab also augmented the Afra defence coming all the way from Pabna. The position of right forward company at Jibonnagar had not been threatened until it was taken over by the Allied Forces on the night of 26 November. The company withdrew to the rear to join 50 Punjab that came in aid of 9 Division from 16 Division. A battalion group comprising two companies of 21 Punjab, 12 Punjab and a company of 22 Frontier Force were

guarding the Mohammedpur-Jessore axis. This was the shortest axis available to any forces coming from the western direction to avoid the main defence along Benapole-Jessore and Chougachha-Jessore. There had been two-company/battalion level actions in this area on the night of 27/28 November and in the morning of 28 November, which were repulsed by the Pakistani Forces.

There was a lull period from 29 November to 5 December. The Allied Forces made proper use of this time and carried out necessary regrouping and replenishment for fresh attack. They resumed their advance on 6 December. Two brigade attacks were supported by division and corps artillery resources. Main thrust of 32 Brigade rolled over the defence of 6 Punjab in Afra, which soon collapsed. Opening made by 2 Sikh Regiment was farther enlarged so that armour and 7 Punjab can break out to Jessore. 6 Punjab lost its contact with 107 Brigade. Brigadier Hyat decided to withdraw to Khulna. Pakistani Forces were on the run at this hour of the battle. Jessore had been the only town of significance that fell in the hand of the Allied much before the surrender on 16 December. With that, the Division Headquarters also moved across Madhukhali ferry site via Magura.

The Pakistani Forces were on the run at this stage. Battalions rushed towards Khulna without having much coordination amongst them. The Brigade Commander could manage to establish a delaying position in the commercial place of Noapara between Jessore and Khulna. 22 Frontier Force was stranded in the Y junction (Chachrar More area) just on the outskirts of Jessore. They were cut from rest of the bde when 42 Brigade positioned it between 22 Frontier Force and rest of the Brigade. With the help of artillery they could somehow come out of the encirclement.

After the Pakistani Forces achieved a clean break, took up a compact brigade defence in Daulatpur area astride the main road. This place is situated on southeastern side of Gilatala near Jahanabad Cantonment. It was important due to the presence of River Bhairab and the hills surrounding it. Brigadier Hayat organized a strong defence with 107 Brigade and armour at Siramani. That was the most ideal defence taken by 107 Brigade during the final stage of the war. There had been a major obstacle taking care of the right flank while the left flank was full of thick mashes. By last light 9 December disposition of 107 Brigade looked as under:

15 Frontier Force was deployed in area Shiromoni left of road.

6 Punjab was deployed on the right side of the road in Shiromoni.

22 Frontier Force was in the depth behind 15 Frontier Force and 12 Punjab was guarding the Monirampur axis.

One company each from 12 Punjab was given to the battalions.

On 11 December, the Allied Forces contacted the screen positions of 107 Brigade. Accurate fire from Pakistani 55 Field Regiment broke up several attacks. By 2300 hrs, the screen positions were taken back to their main positions. Enemy brigade attacked on 13 December, which was repulsed at the cost of huge losses. From 11-15 December series of attacks were launched without making any headway. This was primarily for shortage of maneuver space that was essential for the division to launch attack. However, on the night of 15/16 December, an effort was made to cross the Bhairab to the east by 42 Brigade to establish a foothold on the main road. By the morning of 16 December, 2 Sikh Light Regiment successfully crossed while rest of the brigade faced stiff resistance. Later it was decided to launch the attack by 350 Mountain Brigade without waiting for 42 Mountain Brigade. The attack was launched in 3 phases. The first phase of attack was launched on 15 December at 1000 hrs on the position around Shamgonj. After four hours of fierce battle, the objective was captured with a casualty of more than 70. In the second phase Allied Forces captured eastern Shiromoni where they again lost 70 soldiers. The third phase of attack was launched at 0600 hrs 16 December and West Shiromoni was captured. Prior to that 22 Frontier Force covered the withdrawal of both 15 Frontier Force and 12 Punjab. Meanwhile, the news of surrender at Dhaka was on the air. Finally, on 17 December at 0800 hrs Brigadier Hayat with 3,700 troops surrendered to the Allied Forces. Both the forces paid heavily in this battle. On the enemy's side, 200 killed, 300 wounded in action and 4 tanks were destroyed. 4 officers, one Junior Commissioned Officers and 20 other ranks were taken as prisoner of war. On the other hand, Allied Forces lost 200 lives, 2 tanks and 300 wounded in actions.

North Western Region

Pakistani 16 Infantry Division held this vital region under Major General Nazar Hossain Shah. This Division covered the vast areas surrounded by Ganges, Jamuna and about 400 kilometers of border with India on the west. General Nazar had 23 Brigade, 34 Brigade, 205 Brigade and 96 Adhoc Brigade which was at later stage moved to Dhaka. He also had one

armoured regiment minus, one artillery brigade minus and one Reconnaissance & Support Battalion. Bordering town Hilli was given maximum priority. Allied XXXIII Corps commanded by Lieutenant General Thapan concentrated against this region by early November. It comprised two mountain divisions, one mountain brigade group, one infantry brigade group, one armoured brigade and one engineer brigade. Other details are given in the order of battle.

XXXIII Corps Thrust

As per the plan, Indian 71 Mountain Brigade was to advance along Mirgarh-Pachgarh-Thakurgaon axis with a view to securing Pachgarh and Thakurgaon. Another Brigade from 20 Division was to advance along Gangarampur-Dinajpur-Kantanagar to link up with 71 Brigade. Simultaneously, 20 Division was to advance with two brigades up along Hilli-Gaibandha and Phulbari-Palashbari axis. In this region, the thrust line was along this geographical waistline. One brigade would be acting as Firm Base. Depending on progress made along these two areas, subsequent move toward Rangpur or Bogra would be made. Besides the primary focus of the operation, it was also visualized that capturing lightly held salient on the northern side could provide some kind of threat towards Rangpur. Depending on the progress made further move to capture Rangpur would be undertaken in conjunction with forces deployed in the south.

By 1 November, Indian XXXIII Corps concentrated around the periphery of north western region. 6 Mountain Division concentrated in Cooch Behar district of India, 71 Mountain Brigade group in the northwest of Silliguri and 20 Mountain in the Balurghat bulge. Tista salient existed between Tista and Dharla rivers. On the night of 20/21 November 4 Rajput of (Mountain Division crossed the border and attacked Nageshwari. One Pakistani company of 8 Punjab had been defending the area.⁹ The position was captured in second attempt on 29/30 November. On 30 November Pakistani elements from Nageshwari was withdrawn to Thakurgaon and Saidpur. 9 Mountain Brigade secured both Lalmonirhat and Kurigram by 6 December. Pakistanis before abandoning this area destroyed all the bridges over Tista River. On the Panchagarh side, 71 Mountain Brigade Commander Brigadier Kathpalia made his expedition along Mirgarh-Panchagarh-Thakurgaon. Along the line, by 4 December he managed to clear Panchagarh and Boda by 4 December. He captured Birganj further to the south by 5 December. Troops of Thakurgaon moved to Pirganj. This place was organized with 34 Punjab (Reconnaissance & Support Battalion). After repeated attacks by 7

Maratha Light Infantry, the position could not be captured. Indian Forces sustained huge casualties here. 34 Punjab continued to hold this position. Along the main axis, 71 Brigade met the enemy near Kantanagar Bridge. The Pakistani Forces demolished the bridge and their position behind the river was strongly held. Finding it difficult to negotiate, 71 Brigade thrust was shifted toward Nilphamari. Accordingly he managed to cross Dhepa River about 16 kilometers to the north and captured Khansama on 13 December. By the time hostilities ceased on 16 December, the Brigade could clear most of the areas west of the general line of the corps operating in this region. Relentless pressure from the 71 Brigade tied down the Pakistani troops in the areas of Dinajpur, Saidpur, Parbatipur, and Rangpur thus prevented possible reinforcement to the threatened areas to the south.

20 Mountain Division, which was poised in the south, kept 165 Brigade to establish a Firm Base in the Balurghat bulge, earmarked 340 Brigade to invest from the south. 66 and 202 Brigades were to launch the main thrust towards Pirganj along two different axes. 202 Brigade was however held up by Pakistani stiff opposition at Hilli and 66 Brigade could capture Phulbari. As 202 Brigade was held up at Hilli, 66 Brigade was instructed to capture Charkai, which was executed on 4 December. 66 Brigade resumed its advance along Charkai-Pirganj track and secured Nawabganj and Hatangi ferry by 6 December. As the advancing columns had been marching into the depth more were the administrative echelons that followed the tail. Armoured vehicles had found it extremely difficult to negotiate. However, engineers had been working extremely hard to rescue the wheeled armoured personnel carrier during this time. Pushing farther ahead, a bridgehead was established by 6 Guards across Kanchdaha ferry ghat by mid day 6 December to assist the formation tasked to undertake subsequent operations.

At this stage, 9 Mountain Brigade was moved to the south of Dinajpur to relieve 340 Mountain Brigade to join 20 Mountain Division thrust. Despite encirclement by two brigades from opposite direction the Pakistani position at Dinajpur was held till the end. On being relieved by 9 Mountain Brigade, 340 Mountain Brigade was committed against Pirganj. On 7 December, 66 Mountain Brigade advanced to contact Ghoraghat from the west. Simultaneously, 340 Mountain Brigade was to capture Pirganj and contact Ghoraghat from the northeast to paralyze the bond between Pakistani elements at Rangpur and Bogra. 66 Brigade on the other hand got stuck up at Bhaduria. They met with stiff resistance of battalion minus with amour. It tied up their movement until it was cleared on 11 December

with substantial losses on both sides. The blunt was absorbed by 17 Kumaon, which attacked

this strongly held position. However, with the capture of Hadrian, communication between

Pakistani troops at Hilli and Ghoraghat became extremely hazardous. 340 Brigade undertook

its mission as planned. Having cleared Pirganj by 8 December in a swift advance without

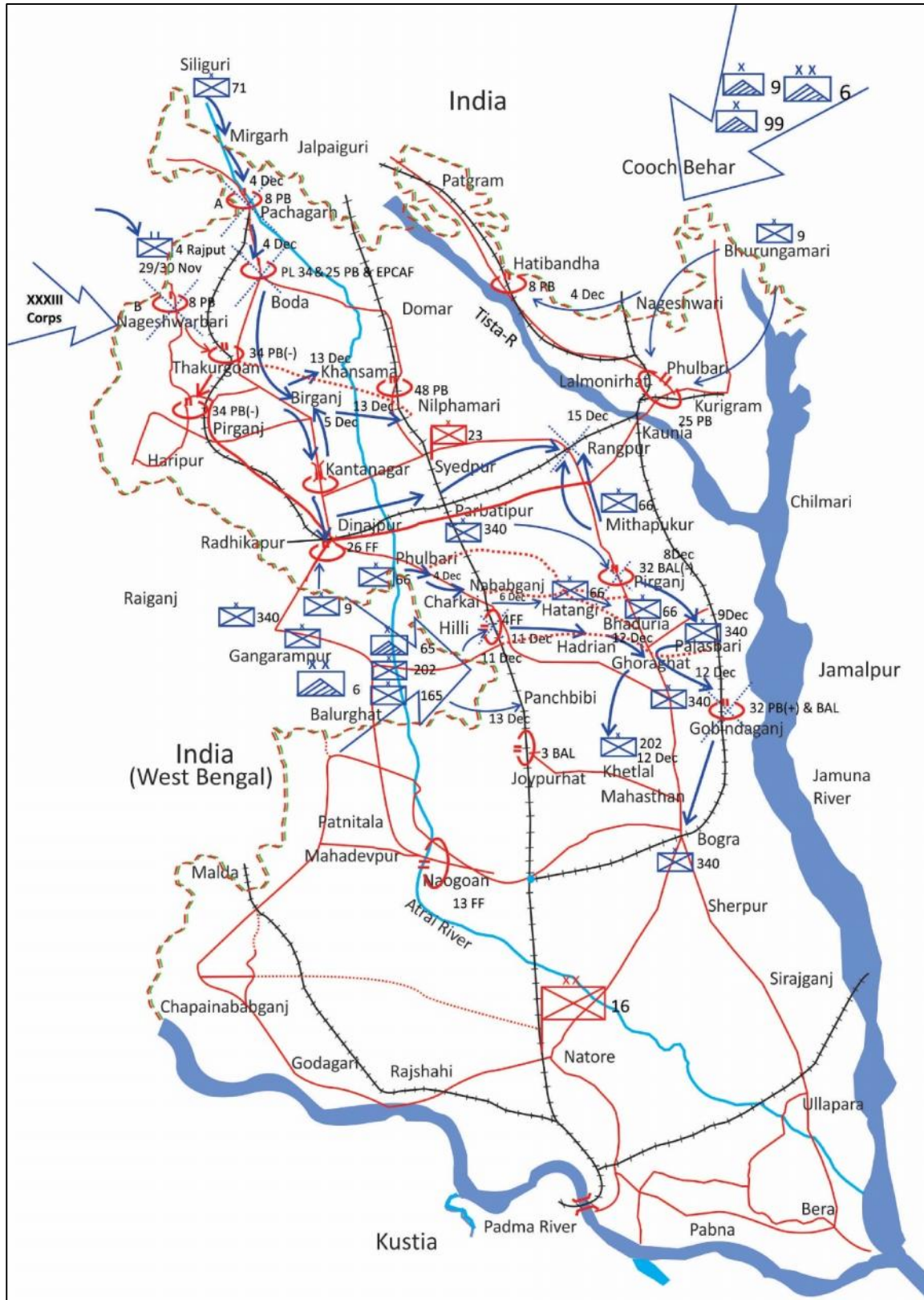


Fig. 54. Final Offensive in North Western Region. Drawn *by the Author*.

minimal opposition, it established roadblock on Rangpur- Pirganj road. 32 Baluch less two companies withdrew from Pirganj to Palashbari using transport. When the troops had been

preparing the roadblock, two Pakistani jeep carrying command personnel moved from Rangpur towards Pirganj unnoticeably struck the roadblock and was fired upon by the troops committed there. A group of Freedom Fighters of sector 7 who had been accompanying them could capture Division Commander's jeep including the runner and the batman. It was later confirmed that Geneneral Nazar Hossain Shah including Brigadier Tajjamul Hussain, Commanner 205 Infantry Brigade had been returning to Bogra after holding a conference at Rangpur merely escaped the deathtrap. After moving towards Rangpur, the Division Commander had been out of contact with the Division Headquarters at Natore. Meanwhile, 340 Brigade took Palashbari on 9 December. On the night of 9/10 December, the Pakistani Division Commander was flown back to his Headquarters. Following this Gaibandha and Phulchari ferry ghat were captured on 10 December. And with progress made along the waistline, the Pakistani Forces were cut and divided to defeat in detail later.

The Pakistani Forces demolished the bridge over River Korotoa. Pakistani 32 Punjab and Baluch established a defensive position at Gobindaganj. On 11 December, 5/11 Gurkha Rifles crossed River Kajla about 8 kilometers east of Gobindaganj with a view to sealing off the route while rest of the elements approached from the north. 340 Brigade kept up its pressure and managed to capture Gobindaganj by 12 December by a swiftly applied enveloping movement. This move was guided by the Freedom Fighters as they were conversant with the topographical information of this area and identified the crossing places without minimum delay. Failing to sustain the pressure, the Pakistani elements made their way to Mahasthan. Meanwhile, the Pakistanis had been fighting strongly from their defences between Hilli and Ghoraghat. Hilli was finally seized on 11 December, which has been covered in details in the earlier chapter. Ghoraghat was captured on 12 December. The Pakistani Forces had been trying desperately to open the road from to Pirganj and launched several counter attacks without substantial progress.

Capture of Bogra

After having concentrated bulk of the forces and securing the waistline, Thapan thought of capturing Bogra advancing along two axes. As per this revised plan, 340 Brigade was to advance along Gobindaganj - Bogra axis and 202 Mountain Brigade along Ghoraghat-Khetlal - Bogra axis. A limited task was also allotted to 165 Brigade to advance to Joypurhat. By 1130 hrs on 13 December, 69 Armoured Regiment and 5/11 Gurkha Regiment group resumed its advance along Gobindaganj - Bogra highway. They contacted Pakistani elements

holding the southern bank of Ichamati River by the same evening and were cleared by the same day. They also took over the bridge over Karatoya intact and when the advance resumed, the armour-infantry group kept Bogra surrounded during 13/14 December. 165 Brigade captured Panchbibi against huge resistance put up by the Pakistani Forces on 13 December and Joypurhat was captured by 13 December. Capture of Joypurhat was relatively unimpeded by enemy troops. Column of 202 Brigade on the other side advanced along Ghoraghat-Saidpur-Khetlal axis and captured Khetlal on 12 December after delivering a tough fight. Advance beyond Khetlal could not be resumed owing to severe track condition. By 14 December, Pakistani resistance from remnants of 205 Brigade at Bogra was more or less eliminated. By the time operation suspended, 340 Brigade secured areas north of Bogra including capture of 20 officers and 500 other ranks were ensured.

Capture of Rangpur

At this stage, operational focus shifted towards capture of Rangpur. A two-pronged attack was planned with 66 and 202 Brigades. 66 Brigade advanced along Mithapukur-Rangpur while 202 simultaneously followed Mithapukur-Nasirabad-Fatepur-Rangpur axis. Mithapukur was captured on 15 December against light resistance put up by the Pakistani Forces. By the time order for suspension of war had been received the command structure of Pakistani 16 Infantry Division was disorganized and Rangpur was surrounded from south western and southern sides by the Indian Forces. So it is seen that Thapan's forces did little to the collapse of the Niazi's forces until orders for suspension was given. The Pakistanis had been retaining potential operational strength to deliver tough fight, which could not be used because of the acceptance of public surrender by Niazi.

Eastern Region

IV Crops Commander Lieutenant General Sagat Singh was tasked to liberate eastern region covering territory south of Surma and east of Meghna rivers. This formation was also asked to disrupt communications to Chittagong with a view to snapping off Pakistani supply chain and also to affect a crossing over the Meghna.¹⁰ For this he had 3 divisions including armoured brigade and Allied supporting units. From Agartola, Ashuganj side had more natural obstacles than from Comilla area especially around Daudkandi. In addition, unlike Bhairab Bazar, the ferry on the opposite bank of Daudkandi was linked with Dhaka by road. The clearing of the area up to Daudkandi offered a bigger chunk of territory than clearing up

to Ashuganj. It also had the benefit of completely isolating Dhaka from Chittagong. He therefore, decided to capture Akhaura and switch over to southwest to capture Daudkandi and thereafter Chittagong. Accordingly, Commander IV Corps tasked 57 Mountain Division to capture Akhaura and then move south to build up across the Gomati River in the Mainamati area by D plus 5. In phase-2, capture Daudkandi by D plus 8, while 311 Mountain Brigade would contain the enemy in the Brahmanbaria area opposite Akhaura and finally capture Chittagong by 'K' Force.

Brahmanbaria and Sylhet

This part of eastern region comprised Brahmanbaria, Moulvibazar and Sylhet and was geographically bordered by Surma and Meghna rivers. Pakistani 14 Infantry Division under Major General Quzi Abdul Majeed deployed 27 Infantry Brigade in Brahmanbaria, 313 Infantry Brigade in Moulvibazar and 202 Adhoc Brigade in Sylhet area. The task of Pakistani formation was to defend Sylhet and Bhairab Bazar at all cost.

Brahmanbaria

27 Brigade commanded by Brigadier Sadullah at Brahmanbaria had two battalions to defend this area. He deployed his forces facing east with 12 Frontier Force in area extending from Akhaura to Gangasagar. 33 Baluch was placed from Kasba to Salda Nadi area.¹¹ The Brigade Headquarters was located in Brahmanbaria. After allotting slice of artillery to the under command units, one lone 105 mm howitzer was placed opposite to Agartala ahead of Pakistani defence.

The Indian Forces had option to advance along Agartala-Akhaura-Brahmanbaria, Bisalgarh-Kasba-Brahmanbaria and Agartala-Shabazpur-Brahmanbaria. However, the Allied Forces penetrated through Akhaura. On 1 December, 57 Mountain Division along with S Force crossed the international boundary dislodging the lone gun position in the initial onslaught.¹² The Indian Forces attacked one of the company locations of 12 Frontier Force with two battalions and had been racing towards Gangasagar. By the evening of 1 December, the Gangasagar position was overrun. During 1-2 December, Indian 4 Guards managed to position itself behind Akhaura. Yet, the Pakistanis had held the Indians here until they were withdrawn to Brahmanbaria using railway line on 5 December.¹³

33 Baluch was also pushed back from Kasba. During the battle of Akhaura, 33 Baluch kept the Indians engaged here from the main battle in Akhaura. Later this battalion withdrew towards Bharmanbaria and Ashuganj. After the fall of Akhaura it was known that Pakistan Army was using the railway embankment for the movement of vehicles in addition to using

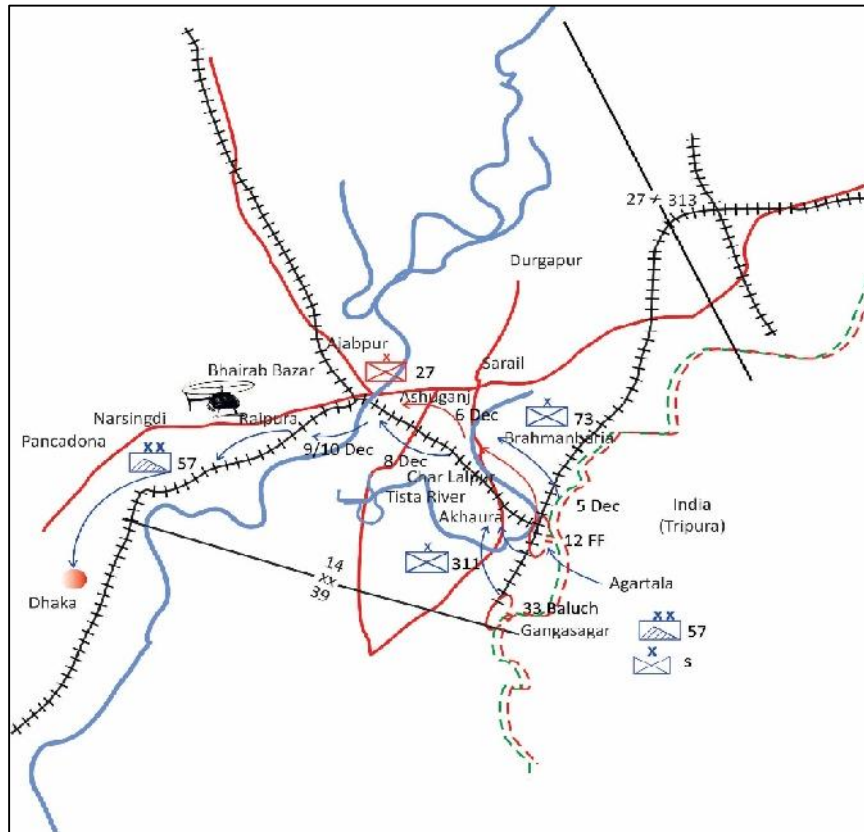


Fig. 55. Final Offensive in Eastern Region. Ashuganj and Brahmanbaria Area, Matinuddin, Kamal. *Tragedy of Errors: East Pakistan Crisis, 1968-1971*. Lahore: Wajidalis (Pvt) Limited, 1993. p,404.

the remaining traffic. Besides offering good approach for the vehicles to travel from Akhaura to Ashuganj, it was the shortest approach to cross the Meghna from the east. Getting this opportunity, General Officer Commanding 57 Mountain Division, Major General Gonsalves altered his original task of capturing Daudkandi and planned to capture Brahmanbaria instead. This dramatically changed the courses of the battle leading to the crossing of Meghna later. Accordingly, on 5 December, 311 Mountain Brigade was ordered to exploit towards Brahmanbaria. 18 Rajput advanced along railway line and secured Datisar about six kilometers west of Akhaura by last light on the same day. At the same time 4 Guards established a roadblock at Ujanisar along the main road to prevent interference by the enemy. Brigadier Tuli with his 73 Mountain Brigade was ordered to establish contact with

Brahmanbaria town not later than last light 6 December. At the same time Brigadier Misra's 311 Brigade was given be prepared mission to secure Brahmanbaria or Ashuganj should the leading brigade is held up by the enemy.

S Force was ordered to advance along Chandura- Sarail- Ajabpur axis to check movement of Pakistani troops from Sylhet to this area. In addition this force could be poised to threaten Brahmanbaria or Ashuganj from the north. It was anticipated that at this stage the Pakistan Army would draw some troops from Moulvibazar to augment its effort to oppose the Indians.

On 6 December 73 Mountain Brigade advanced as leading Brigade. 311 Mountain Brigade was following up. S Force was strengthened with additional allotment of 10 Bihar from 311 Mountain Brigade. This force also started advancing on 6 December 1971. Meanwhile, the Pakistanis established a brigade delaying position at Brahmanbaria, which was withdrawn to Ashuganj on 6 December. On 6/7 December some regrouping within Pakistani Forces was carried out considering the threat to Dhaka. On 8 December Brahmanbaria fell in the hands of Allied Forces without any battle as the Pakistan Army abandoned the town and move towards Ashuganj. After the fall of Brahmanbaria on 8 December 57 Mountain Division resumed its advance to capture Ashuganj bridge intact. This time 311 Mountain Brigade was leading the advance. By last light on the same day both 57 Mountain Division and S Force reached the close proximity of Ashuganj. On 8 December, 311 Mountain Brigade was in area Talshahar-Durgapur, 73 Mountain Brigade was at Brahmanbaria and S Force was in area stretching from Azabpur in the west to Shahbazpur in the east. And Pakistani 27 Brigade made a strong point in general area Bhairab Bazar with Baluch group facing east up to Meghna River, Freedom Fighters group was facing south western direction and Azad-Kashmir group was deployed facing south eastern direction. Brigade Reserve comprised Baluch Company from Sylhet and a company of 31 Baluch. Battle of Ashuganj-Bhairab displayed high quality maneuver by Indian and Mukti Bahini.

On 9 December 57 Mountain Division resumed its advance with a view to capturing Ashuganj. The advance was without artillery support, as this could not be brought along with advancing column. By mid day on 9 December 18 Rajput took a bold step and attacked Ashuganj from north east keeping the Meghna on their right. This was not an organized attack therefore, 18 Rajput not expecting any resistance from Pakistan Army got trapped as they reached the outskirts of Ashuganj. With the enemy in both the flanks, it was difficult for them to extricate from Ashuganj. 10 Bihar and 11 East Bengal attacked Ashuganj from the

direction of Durgapur in order to assist 18 Rajput in extricating from Ashuganj. A squadron of PT 76 supported the attack. It was a determined attack. Enemy opened up with their anti tank guns. With the pressure developing on the left, at last 18 Rajput extricated at the loss of 120 men. Immediately after this about mid day the Pakistani Army collapsing one span of the bridge into the river blew off the bridge. This was the only bridge across Meghna and was not decked for road traffic. At this stage 311 Mountain Brigade less 18 Rajput was called back to Brahmanbaria to undertake a heli-borne task. And 73 Mountain Brigade was directed to force the situation at Ashuganj to make a crossing over Meghna by mobilizing local resources.

During the night of 9/10 December, left over Pakistani troops crossed over to Bhairab bazar in local river crafts. 18 Rajput captured Ashuganj on 10 December without opposition. Appreciating to the situation, Commander IV Corps decided to contain Bhairab Bazar and effect crossing farther south, where only light opposition was expected. Here General Sagat Singh decided to make use of the helicopters available to him to cross River Meghna. Therefore, 18 Rajput and 11 East Bengal were ordered to contain enemy at Bhairab Bazar from the direction of Ashuganj while 19 Punjab under command 73 Brigade was to contain Bhairab bazar from south west. 73 Brigade less 19 Punjab and S Force less 11 East Bengal was ordered to cross Meghna by boats and build up at Narsingdi area.

On 9 December, 4 Guards and a troop of 82 Light Regiment were lifted to Raiputra at 1530 hrs from Brahmanbaria. At the same time 73 Mountain Brigade was ordered to secure the ferry site at Char Lalpur south of Ashuganj on the night 9/10 Dec. 19 Punjab of 73 Brigade crossed the Meghna in country boats on the night of 9 December and secured Ramnagar railway bridge by 0800 hrs on 10 December. A troop of gun had been man carried over a distance of 12 kilometers to the east bank of Meghna to provide artillery support to 19 Punjab. Thus use of Railway by the Pakistani Forces was stopped. 10 Bihar, 65 Mountain Regiment and a troop of 82 Light Regiment was hell-lifted at Narsingdi area by 11 December, which had effectively sealed Pakistani movement to the rear. This was a classic example of by passing tactics adopted during the war. 73 Brigade kept on ferrying troops across the river in country boats at night and had two battalions west of the Meghna by 12 December. S Force also crossed the river by 12 December 1971. 5 Independent Armoured Squadron under Major Mehta made a desperate attempt to cross the river but failed. Later local country boats towed the tanks. During all these actions Headquarters 14 Division along with the remnants of 27 Brigade which was located at Bhairab did not react or counter

attacked the Indian Army. Instead they remained passive in the Bhairab defence. With the crossing of Meghna River, heli lifting to Narsingdi area by 57 Mountain Division, the battle at Ashuganj-Bhairab Bazar came to an end. But pursuit of 57 Mountain Division from Narsingdi towards Dhaka continued till 16 December 1971.

Sylhet

This area stretched from the Sylhet town on the north to Habiganj- Chunarughat line on the south. Strategically Sylhet and Moulvibazar were not as important as other bordering towns though; for some considerations these could not be left unguarded. Of them the number of approaches originated from across the border and ultimately converging at Sylhet was the most important one. This area was immediately north of Brigadier Sadullah's 27 Infantry Brigade operational areas. 313 Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier Iftekher Rana was responsible to defend Moulvibazar while 202 Brigade under Saleemullah defended the northern part i.e. Sylhet area.

313 Brigade had two units namely 22 Baluch and 30 Frontier Force deployed along the Border outpost guarding likely approaches originating from south east side from across the border. And its headquarters was located in Moulvibazar area. It also had 210 Mortar Battery and three 105 mm howitzers of 4 Lahore Battery. 313 Brigade defence primarily held two approaches. These are Kailashpur-Shamsharenagar/Kamalpur- Kamalganj/Kamalpur-Srimangal - Moulvibazar- Sadipur- Sylhet and Dharmanagar- Gazipur- Kulaura- Fenchuganj-Mogla Bazar- Sylhet. Detail deployment can be seen from the order of battle.

202 Brigade comprised of 31 Punjab, 91 Mujahid Battalion, two companies of East Pakistan Civil Armed Force, ½ Wing Frontier Corps, 500 Rajakars, 2/3 Battery (31 Field Regiment) and Brigade Headquarters was located at Sylhet. These elements guarded Companiganj – Goainghat - Sylhet, Jaintapur – Hemu - Sylhet and Kanaighat-Charkhai-Sylhet axes. However, both these bdes were deployed in peni-pockets in conformity with their forward leaning policy.

In this area Allied 8 Mountain Division of VI Corps was up against Pakistani Forces. In order to capture Sylhet, it was planned to invest Sylhet all along the available approaches. It was also anticipated that the Pakistanis would guard all approaches entering East Pakistan from northern and eastern sides. So, it would be easier to punch a hole in their defence if approached from the south. Besides attacking from the south it would be also easier to divide

the Pakistani Forces later to be dealt with separately. However, the 8 Mountain Division was tasked as under:

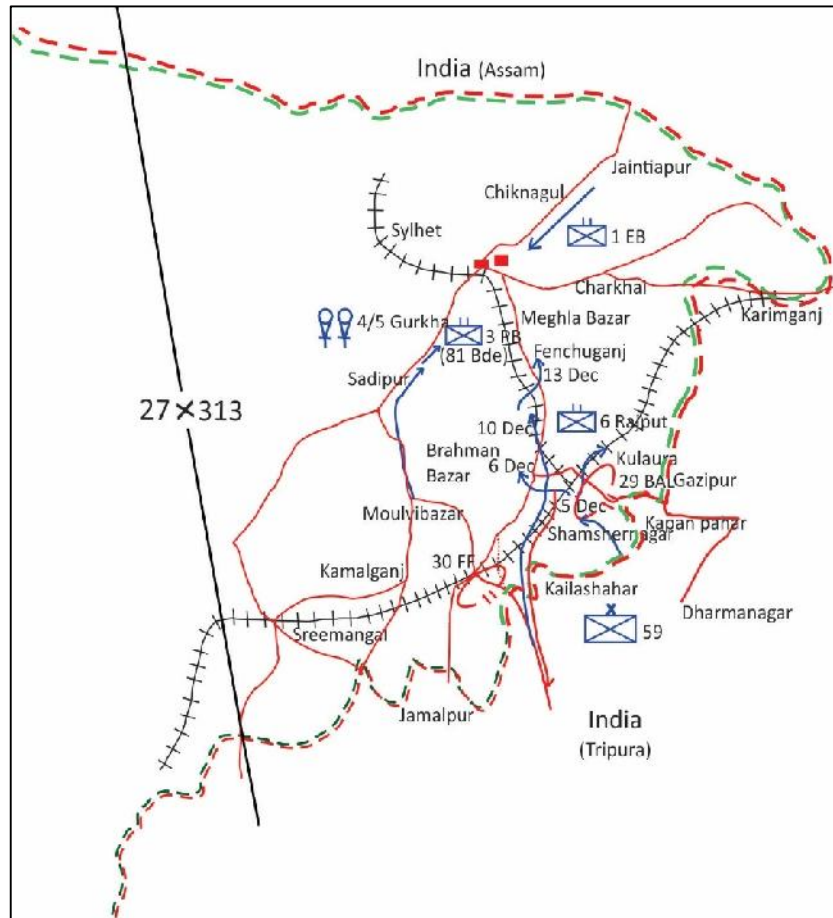


Fig. 56. Final Offensive in Eastern Region - Sylhet Area. Matinuddin, Kamal. *Tragedy of Errors: East Pakistan Crisis, 1968-1971*. Lahore: Wajidalis (Pvt) Limited, 1993. p. 404-406.

To advance along the Dharmanagar-Kulaura-Fenchuganj and Kailashahar-Shamshernagar- Moulvibazar axes.

To capture Moulvibazar and the ferry site at Sherpur-Sadipur.

To contain Charkhai and clear the area south of Surma River to ensure the security of Karimganj area. It was to also develop a subsidiary move along Jaintapur-Sylhet road.

59 Brigade entered from the south eastern side by the end of November. Having dislodged the Border outpost attempts were made to penetrate further. The brigade minus advanced along Dharmanagar-Kapna Pahar-Fenchuganj axis while a battalion moved along Dharmanagar-Kapna Pahar- Kulaura. In the process, 4/5 Gurkha Rifles captured Gazipur on 5 December. 9 Guard Battalion attacked Kapna Pahar on 5 December and succeeded in

capturing without any heavy fight back by the Pakistanis. Having cleared these positions, the Brigade converged at Kulaura on 6 December which the enemy already vacated out of fear and confusion. The non-tactical act on the part of the Pakistani Forces here left Fenchuganj axis nearly exposed. 6 Rajput was leading the advance. On the way it captured Brahmanbazar on 6 December. At this stage the Brigade was ordered to concentrate near Kailashahar.

Meanwhile, intelligence sources revealed that the Pakistani Forces were planning to vacate Sylhet and Moulvibazar with a view to reinforcing Brahmanbaria-Ashuganj area. In order to prevent the Pakistani Forces from carrying out this mission, a heli drop was planned in the outskirts of Sylhet. For this purpose, 4/5 Gurkha Regiment was employed. Pakistani Forces soon noticed the move but failed to deliver any resistance as 1 East Bengal kept them tied in Sylhet. 1 East Bengal joined from Gopalganj- Chicknagul side and deployed in Sylhet on 11 December. This cross country movement was a test of their administrative competence in pressing time. Grouping of 1 East Bengal with the operation in Sylhet had been done to take on the airport at the earliest for the purpose of receiving any assistance on order from the government in exile.

At this stage it was appreciated the heli borne troops for being effective needed a link up operation. Kulaura-Fenchuganj provided the shortest approach and 59 Mountain Brigade was pushed with 6 Rajput leading on 10 December. While approaching they saw that the enemy leaving the bridge over Kushiya River intact vacated Fenchuganj. Soon after, Mogla Bazar was captured on 13 December. At this stage, the Mukti Bahini with assistance from the railway staffs reopened the service. Logistic problem was solved to a great extent with the opening of this facility. With 59 Brigade, 4 East Bengal also marched in. In the morning of 13 December, the Brigade was within one mile of Sylhet town. 3 Punjab of 81 Brigade linked up the Brigade following Moulvibazar axis. Sylhet Railway Station was captured on 15 December and Brigade plus strength surrounded Sylhet town from east and south.

South Eastern Sector (Comilla and Chittagong)

This area covered the stretch of land from Salda Nadi on the north to the border joining neighbouring Burma to the south. The important areas here were Comilla, Daudkandi, Laksham, Chandpur, Feni and Chittagong. Capturing areas north of Feni would automatically paralyze the Pakistanis cutting their lifeline to the rear. To defend this area Pakistani 39 Division took up defence here as early as 18 October. The Division Headquarters was set at

the river port of Chandpur. It comprised 4 Brigades of which 117 Brigade was defending Mainamati Cantonment, Comilla Town and all areas upto Chauddagram while 53 Brigade defended areas between Laksham-Chauddagram line up to Feni. Besides, 91(Adhoc) and 97(Adhoc) Brigades were deployed in Chittagong area. Allied 23 Mountain Division under Major General RD designed this division thrust based on bypassing Pakistani strongholds to capture objectives in the depth. So, the primary focus of the Division was to clear south of Laksham, capture Chandpur and then eliminate enemy from Lalmai. In order to ensure this task, under command formations were tasked as under:

61 Mountain Brigade (ex 57 Mountain Division) to cut Comilla- Daudkani road and by isolating from north and west. Also establish a firm base for subsequent capture of Daudkandi.

301 Brigade was to infiltrate through Himmatpur - Kashinagar.

83 Mountain Brigade was to advance along Chauddagram-Laksham with a view to isolating from the south.

83 and 181 Brigades to jointly capture Laksham.

301 Brigade to capture Chandpur.

Task Force 'K' was to capture Feni and move towards Chittagong.

On 2/3 December, 7 Rajput Rifles of 61 Mountain Brigade, 9 East Bengal and two companies of Sector 2 attacked Pakistani defensive position south of Comilla. Having secured the division flank on the north, task was handed over to 9 East Bengal and 61 Brigade to move towards Jafarganj on 5 December leaving some forces comprising sector troops and 7 Rajput Rifles to secure the southern side of Lalmai hills. These forces later protected Lalmai-Chandpur road. Meanwhile, 12 Kumaon secured Rajapur by 5/6 December for the passage of rest of the Brigade. By the morning of 7 December whole Brigade concentrated near Jafarganj. Then these forces moved to Chandina. The place was captured by noon by the sector troops and 12 Kumaon. Then 7 Rajput Rifles and 9 East Bengal moved towards Mainamati from the west. Another contingent comprising 12 Kumaon along with a troop of tanks moved Daudkandi. Enroute Elliotganj was captured on 8 December followed by Daudkandi on 9 December.

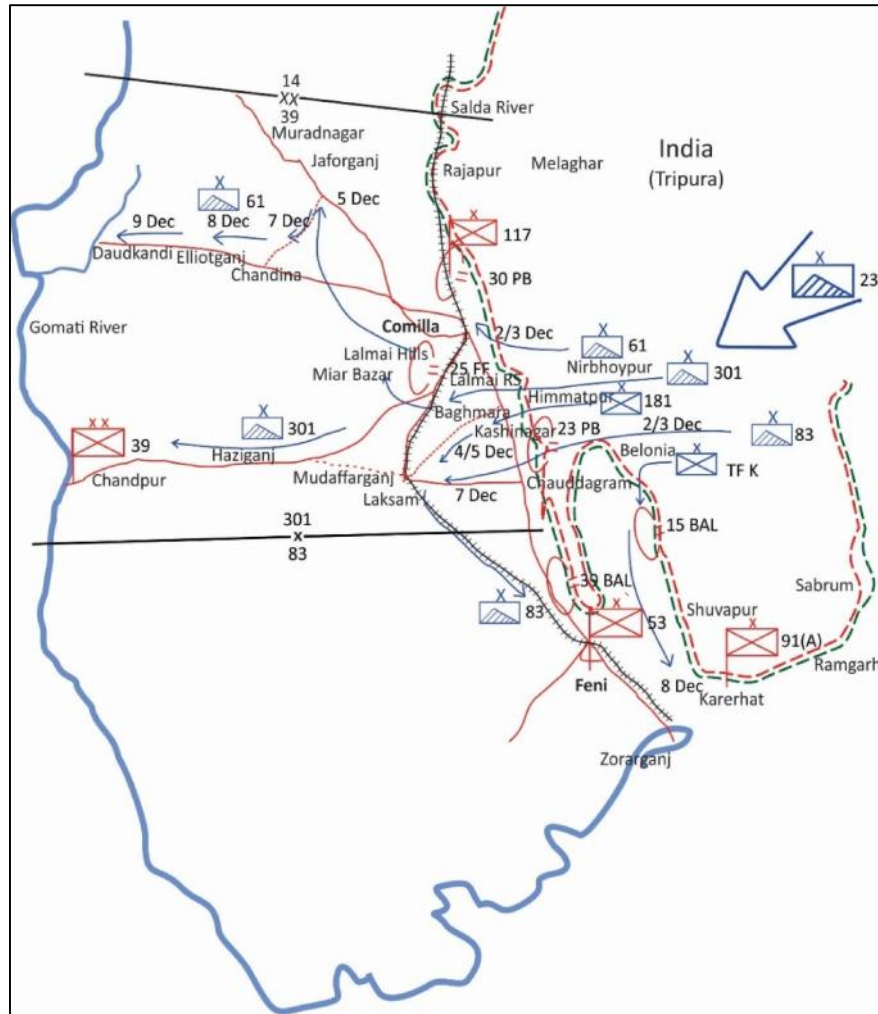


Fig. 57. Final Offensive in Eastern Region – Comilla and Feni Area. Matinuddin, Kamal. *Tragedy of Errors: East Pakistan Crisis, 1968-1971*. Lahore: Wajidalis (Pvt) Limited, 1993. p,414.

So long 9 East Bengal and 7 Rajput Rifles had kept the Pakistani Forces tied in Mainamati. Here some Pakistani troops those who arrived from 53 Brigade put up stiff resistance against the Allied Forces jointly with 117 Brigade. During these encounters around 38 Allied troops were killed in action while substantial damages was caused on the enemy. Finally, on mid day 12 December the Commanding Officer 39 Baluch with around 1,500 men surrendered to the Allied Forces. 181 Brigade on the other side entered the border on 2/3 December through Himmatpur-Kasinagar and advanced towards Laksham on 4/5 December. Encirclement of Laksham was completed by 181 and 83 Brigades by first light 7 December. Commander 117 Brigade made a desperate attempt to exhilarate on the night of 8/9 December leaving behind non-essentials while many were taken as prisoners. From Feni, Commander 53 Brigade could barely reach Mainamati with 200 personnel. These troops later joined the troops of 117 Brigade to fight back Allied 61 Brigade. 83 Brigade advanced along

Chauddagram-Laksham axis. Adopting similar technique, the Allied Forces got behind Laksham. By 9 December 181 Brigade and 83 Brigade jointly captured Laksham. After Laksham fell in the hands of the Allied Forces, 83 Mountain Brigade was regrouped with Task Force K to operate in Chittagong.

301 Mountain Brigade entered through Nirbhoypur-Mia Bazar-Baghmara by last light 3 December. Four companies of Sector 2 and squadron of tanks were grouped with this Brigade. By last light, a blocking position was established south of Miar Bazar by 14 Jat Regiment. Simultaneously, following a bypassing move, 1/11 Gurkha Rifles went behind the enemy forces at Miar Bazar. When Miar Bazar position was taken over by the Allied Forces, 25 Frontier Force including the Commanding Officer and 200 others surrendered to the Allied Forces at Kashinagar.

181 Brigade which was following 301 Brigade led the advance cutting off Lalmai-Laksham road by 5 December. 301 Brigade along with the troops of Sector 2 advanced further to the west and captured Modafferganj by 6 December. Appreciating the danger Pakistani 53 Brigade was withdrawn to Laksham by 6 December. 15 Baluch and 21 Azad Kashmir on the Allied position at Modafferganj launched number of counter attacks, which were repulsed.

After which, 301 Brigade resumed its advance along Comilla-Chandpur axis. On getting this message, Major General Rahim, General Officer Commanding 39 Division left Chandpur using a gunboat on 9 December. He was then chased by Allied aircraft and was injured by air strafing. Once Chandpur was cleared off the Pakistani elements the brigade was ordered to join Daudkani to participate in the final bout waiting at Dhaka. Meanwhile, 181 Brigade was moved from Laksham to Mainamati to join in a coordinated attack on Mainamati position. That was a very difficult Pakistani stronghold and could not be subdued until 16 December when remnants of Pakistani 117 and 53 Brigade surrendered to the Allied Forces.

Chittagong

97 Brigade of 39 Division commanded by Brigadier Atta Malik was deployed to defend this area. This Brigade had two regular infantry battalions and a ranger battalion. 48 Baluch Regiment was deployed in the perimeter defence of Chittagong and considering their efficiency Ranger battalion was tasked to secure all vulnerable and important points of Chittagong city. 24 Frontier Force less two companies with some rangers were deployed

along Chittagong-Shuvapur axis. Although it was planned to capture Chittagong by 23

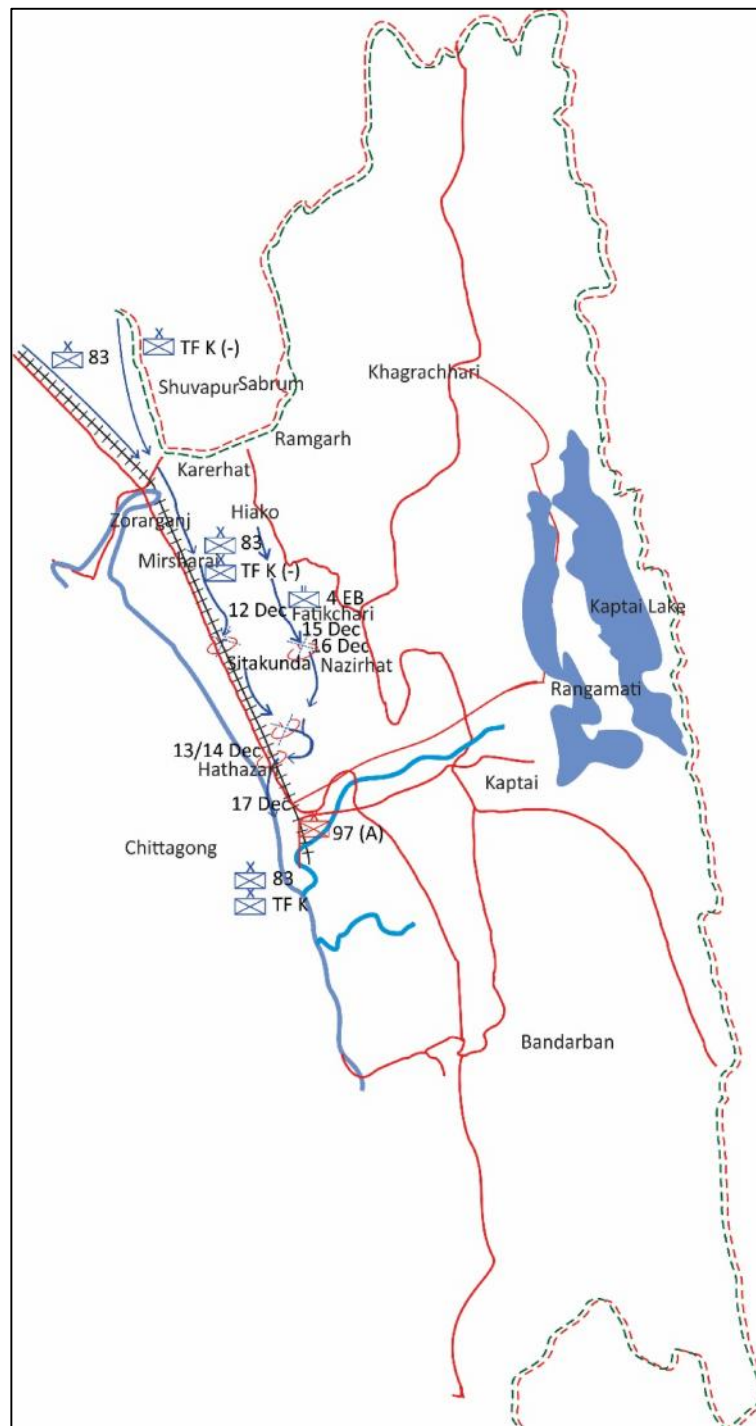


Fig. 58. Final Offensive in Eastern Region - Chittagong Area. Matinuddin, Kamal. *Tragedy of Errors: East Pakistan Crisis, 1968-1971*. Lahore: Wajidalis (Pvt) Limited, 1993. p, 414.

Division after capturing its primary objectives, later on a Task Force 'K' Force was formed comprising of K Force Brigade (less 9 East Bengal), two infantry battalions, one Mountain Regiment Artillery, one Border Security Force Battalion, one Central Police Battalion

(Indian) and troops of Number 1 Sector under Major Rafiq. Since Lieutenant Colonel Khaled Mosharraf was injured, Brigadier Anand Swarup commanded this entire force. On 6 December, when K Force entered Feni, there had been none to resist. They later captured Karerhat and Zorarganj by 8 December. On the same day, they started advancing towards Chittagong. 4 East Bengal moved through Hiaku-Nazirhat-Hathazari and was asked to protect the flank of rest of the forces advancing along the Dhaka-Chittagong highway. On the night of 11 December, the main forces encountered a platoon sized delaying position at Sitakunda and were cleared by 12 December

On 13 December, the advancing column met with a strong enemy opposition near Kumira. It was the same place where the Pakistanis lost many lives during the initial resistance phase. However, after fighting about 24 hours, the Allied Forces captured Kumira by dawn. 4 East Bengal on the other end met with Pakistani defence in Nazirhat on 15 December. The position was cleared by 16 December. By noon they reached near Chittagong University. By morning of 15 December 1971, Allied Forces including K Force under Brigadier Anand Swarup and 83 Brigade under Brigadier Sandhu cleared some more delaying positions south of Kumira and came in contact with the last Pakistani stronghold. The position was stretched from Bhatiary to Fauzdarhat. At this point, the Allied Forces made a desperate move to get behind the enemy defence. Accordingly, Brigadier Sandhu mobilized 2 Rajput Regiment and 3 Dogra Regiment through the hills in the east under the guidance of Sector 1 Mukti Bahini. After crossing about 15 miles of rugged hilly terrain they finally took up position astride the road south of Fauzdarhat. At this stage thousands of people carried man packed logistics. In the evening, K Force attacked the outer defence of Bhatiary, which was repulsed by the Pakistanis. Our forces lost 20 lives in this encounter. Meanwhile there had been some quick development in Dhaka.

While General Niazi was preparing to sign the instrument of surrender at the Race Course, the Allied Forces had been preparing for a fresh attack as news of latest development did not reach them. Just before the sun set one Pakistani Major came up to the damaged bridge of Bhatiary waiving a white flag and wanted to surrender. Allied Forces then entered the Chittagong city on the morning of 17 December. In Chittagong 161 officers, 305 Junior Commissioned Officers/naval petty officers/warrant officers and 6,618 of other ranks surrendered after the cease-fire.

Central Region

The Central Region is a 'V' shaped area stretched along the northern borders of Bangladesh over a distance of 185 kilometers between the rivers of Jamuna on the left and Surma on the south. The Tangail Mukti Bahini (Kaderia Bahini) and 'Afsar Battalion' had remained operationally vibrant during the entire duration of war and kept Tangail and Bhaluka areas free of enemies. Allied 101 Communication Zone was deployed here - although was a logistic formation it assumed greater operational role towards the end of the war. It was also appreciated that a favourable situation may be created which would help in capturing Dhaka by IV Corps or by 101 Communication Zone or jointly. It was therefore allotted with 95 Mountain Brigade from Nagaland. It was supposed to receive another **brigade** had the possibilities of Chinese intervention been completely ruled out. However, this formation was given an additional battalion to be para-dropped in Tangail area for its capture. General Officer Commanding 101 Communication Zone Major General Gurbux Singh Gill planned to advance with 95 Mountain Brigade under Brigadier HS Kler towards Jamalpur while he ordered Brigadier Sant Singh to advance towards Mymensingh. Composition of his forces was as under:¹⁴

The General Officer Commanding of 101 Communication Zone got injured in a mine blast during the initial assault near the border while Major General GC Nagra replaced him. The Indian 95 Mountain Brigade faced with strong resistance as it reached Jamalpur town. Appreciating impending Indian advance along Jamalpur, the Pakistanis brought reinforcement from Mymensingh. 95 Mountain Brigade blocked Pakistani position at Jamalpur by sending a battalion to the rear and captured it. Having captured Jamalpur, 95 Mountain Brigade raced towards Tangail. Mymensingh-Tangail-Dhaka axes were regarded as the shortest and easiest by the Allied High Command. Accordingly, 167 Mountain Brigade led by Brigadier Irani was allotted to Major General GC Nagra to augment and expedite the operation in this axis to reach Dhaka at the earliest. Other two brigades, that is, 340 Mountain Brigade group, were operationally engaged in Bogra under Lieutenant General Thapan, and 5 Mountain Brigade although allotted to Major General GC Nagra; it could not join owing to various problems like river crossing and time constraint. However, 167 Mountain Brigade was hurriedly brought forward but it got stranded at Mymensingh for lack of river crossing equipment to cross River Brahmaputra. The Pakistanis on the other hand thought of moving back 93 Brigade to the rear on the main defences along Lohajong River north of Tangail and

deliver the main battle from there. It was therefore planned to cut off the Pakistanis withdrawing from Jamalpur and Mymensingh towards Tangail. To implement this plan, it was decided to capture Tangail by a parachute battalion. The Mukti Bahini under Kader Siddique offered them local protection and guided the para troopers on landing.¹⁵

On the 11 December at 1600 hrs, the 2 Parachute battalion of the Indian Army was dropped at Kalihati near Tangail. Soon after consolidation, 2 Parachute battalions set up

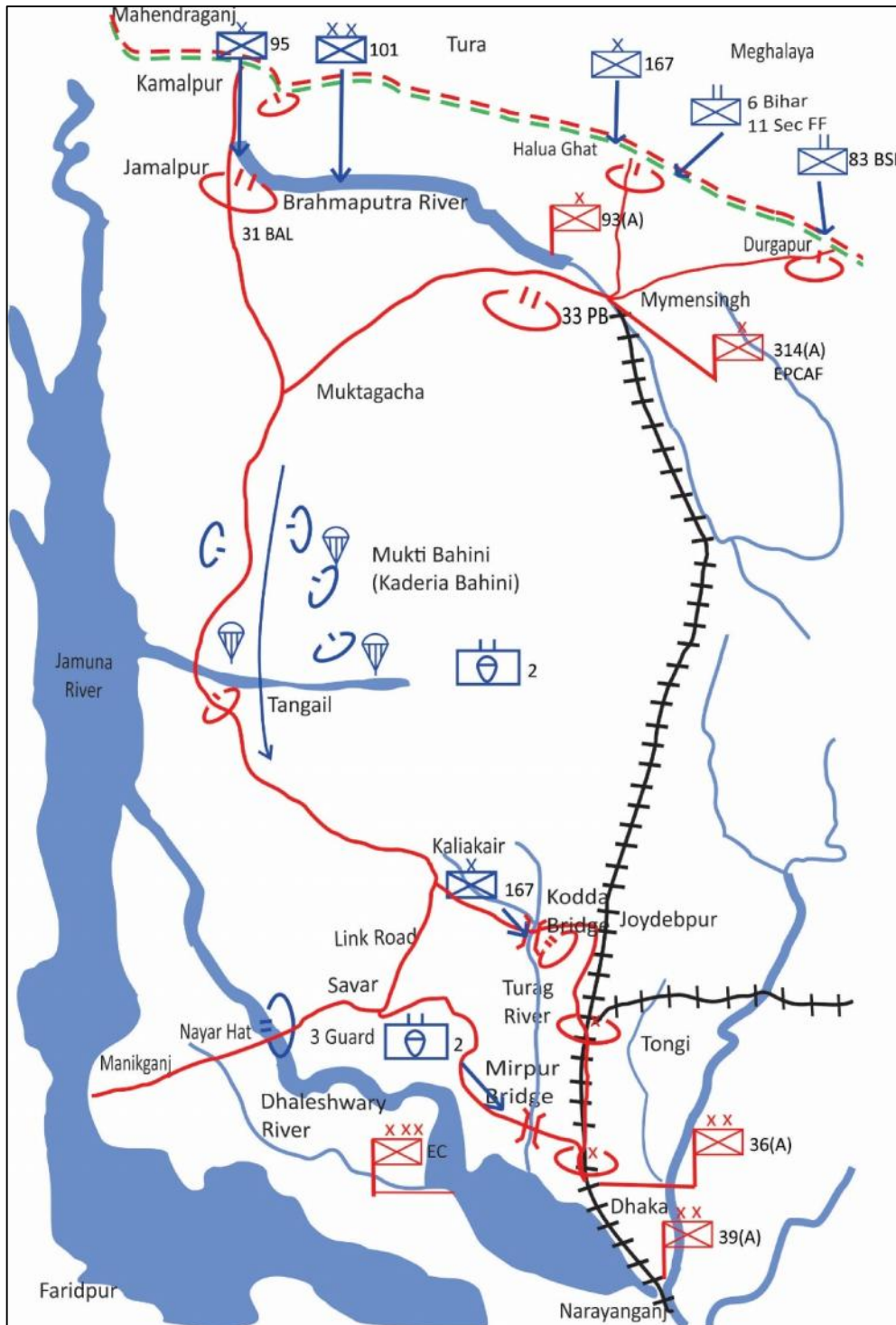


Fig. 59. Final Offensive in Central Region – Dhaka and Mymensingh Area, Wahab, ATM Abdul. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni, 2005. pp, 304-305.

number of roadblocks on Mymensingh-Tangail road. Washington Post stated that, 'in seven days of war in East Pakistan, the Indian Forces have gained complete mastery of land, air and sea operations. Yesterday Indian troops had been moving on Dhaka, the regional capital. It is estimated that 30,000 Pakistani troops of a total of 70,000 to 80,000 are in the area, and their prospects are poor for they are outnumbered 6 to 1.¹⁶ They destroyed a number of Pakistani vehicles, ambushed on outposts, Mortar Convoy, and captured Poongli Bridge over Lohajang River. In the process, the para battalions frequently interrupted and interfered with the Pakistani troops retreating from Jamalpur and Mymensingh. But it transpired later that the main Pakistani column of Mymensingh and Jamalpur garrison managed to fall back before the roadblock by para battalion became effective.

Part of the Pakistani Brigade was cut off from the main body from which some of the officers and troops managed to melt with the countryside and eventually moved towards Dhaka. Allied Forces captured, Brigadier Kader, Commander 93 Brigade. Meanwhile 2 Para battalion linked up with the advancing brigades from Jamalpur and Mymensingh. Major General Nagra advanced south with his forces, 6 Sikh Light Infantry, 13 Guards, 13 Rajput Rifles, 10 J and K Rifles and 7 Bihar along road Tangail-Mirzapur-Kaliakair-Mouchak-Kodda-Ghazipur-Tongi-Dhaka to reach Dhaka. By then, the Kaliakair-Savar link road, which was not very obvious on the map, was discovered by Major General Nagra. He then quickly asked 2 Parachute Battalion to advance along that axis. 3 Guards reached Savar along Mouchak-Savar link road and established roadblock at Nayarhat to stop the enemy advance from Aricha. 3 Guards with 2 Para Battalion also cleared enemy pockets around Savar. Brigade Commanders Brigadier RS Kler, Brigadier Sant Singh and Brigadier Irani had been assisting Major General GC Nagra in the operation.

31 Baluch regiment led by Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Mahmud fighting through the roadblocks and negotiating all hazards with nearly 500 troops including paramilitary took up defence across river Turag at Kodda. The leading elements of 167 Mountain Brigade soon contacted the enemy at Kodda Bridge and got engaged in a fierce fighting. Because of the marshy areas around Kodda, it was not possible to bypass and resume the advance. The units of 167 Mountain Brigade by over flanking move crossed Turag River and reached Joydebpur on 13 December. On being confirmed, the Pakistanis retreated towards Joydebpur.

Allied troops moved further to the south and encountered enemy at about few kilometers short of Gazipur round about. Here the enemy lost 3 tanks including a number of vehicles on 14 December. By 16 December, the leading elements of the parachute battalion had reached the Mirpur Bridge. At this stage, Kader Siddiqui played a significant role in speeding up the pace of Allied advance in this sector. It was particularly possible as the para troopers could safely land in Kader Bahini held areas. Para troopers usually remain vulnerable during and after landing. Kader Bahini reduced their vulnerability by providing local security, logistic support, information and acting as guide. Kader Bahini also undertook several demolition tasks including destruction of Bahadurabad Ghat to secure the area.¹⁷ Major General GC Nagra also joined the parachute battalion and at 0830 hrs sent his Aide de Camp in a jeep under a truce flag to General AA K Niazi with the following message addressed to him "My dear Abdullah, I am here, the game is up. I suggest you give yourself up to me and I will look after you".¹⁸ Prior to entering Dhaka, General Sam Manekshaw, Chief of Staff of the Indian Army urged Niazi to surrender. When the Indian Air Force aircrafts had been continuously bombing over the military targets in Dhaka, they were suddenly asked to halt on the evening of 15 December. When Niazi agreed to surrender, Major General JFR Jacob, Chief of Staff, Eastern Command flew to Dhaka at 1230 hrs on the 16 December with a draft instrument of surrender. Niazi initially objected to the word ' Bangladesh' but he ultimately accepted and initialed the draft instruments of surrender. The history was written in golden words at the cost of millions of lives and supreme sacrifices. By that time thousands of Freedom Fighters entered Dhaka city. Major General GC Nagra entered Dhaka with his forces at 0900 hrs and met Niazi 0930 hrs at his office. The 2 and 11 East Bengal and the leading elements of 57 Mountain Division of IV Corps from Eastern Sector entered Dhaka the same afternoon. General Jagjit Singh Aurora along with his Air and Naval counterparts and Group Captain AK Khandakar, Deputy Chief of Staff of Bangladesh Forces flew into Dhaka to attend the surrender ceremony. A major political mistake at the surrender ceremony was the Indian military high command's inability to ensure the presence of General Osmany, Commander from the Bangladesh side on the Joint Command, at the ceremony and making him a signatory. The formal excuse explaining his absence was that his helicopter did take off but could not reach Dhaka in time for the surrender schedule. But there was widespread suspicion that his helicopter had been sent astray so that he could not reach Dhaka in time and the focus of attention at the ceremony surrounds the Indian military commanders. This was an unfortunate aberration which India could have avoided.¹⁹ However, Pakistan Army

surrendered to the joint command of India and Bangladesh. The instruments of surrender were signed by Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora General Officer Commanding in Chief Indian and Bangladesh Forces in Eastern Theatre and by Commander of the defeated Pakistani Forces Lieutenant General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, Martial Law Administrator Zone B and Commander Eastern Command of Pakistan Army in the evening of 16 December at the Ramna Race Course ground which is now known as Suhrawardy Uddayan.

ANALYSIS

Whether or not Mukti Bahini could liberate Bangladesh on its own, is a mere academic discussion. Since India was burdened with millions of Bengali refugees, it was unable to continue with this burden for any further. The government and the people of Bangladesh also wanted a quicker end to this ongoing misery. The Mukti Bahini did what it could and we saw in the previous chapter as to how effectively it paralyzed the life of the Pakistan military and at the same time paved the way for a speedy Allied victory.

To achieve their military objectives, the Pakistani Forces adopted fortress and strong points concept comprising built up areas. But this could not be implemented in full because of paucity of troops and they thought the soldiers deployed in the front would gradually fall back and take up those strong points and fortresses. This left huge gaps between the fortress and strong points and required mobile reserves to deal with enemy forces exploiting those gaps which the Pakistani Forces could not afford. On the contrary, the Allied Forces relied on the concept of concentration of forces and avoided major battles along the routes of ingress. Indian Eastern Command was tasked to destroy bulk of the Pakistani Forces in eastern theatre and to occupy the major portions of East Pakistan including entry ports of Chittagong and Khulna.

In south western region, II Corps advanced with the objectives of capturing Jessore and Jhenaidah, and after capturing these objectives raced for capturing Khulna, an important township. By 13 December, all the objectives were captured and II Corps was deployed on the west of Meghna River. In north western sector, against Pakistan's 16 Division, the XXXIII Corps had the 20 Mountain Division with an additional brigade, two armoured regiment less one squadron and one engineer brigade. Because of favourable soil condition, the both the forces employed considerable armoured resources here. Indian Forces aimed at cutting off the Hilli-Gaibandha waistline dividing the area into two halves, and then,

advanced to the depth towards Bogra. Despite valiant resistance from the Pakistani Forces, by 15 December, Allied Forces closed in on Bogra. Of all the regions, the northern region had relatively shorter distance to Dhaka without any major geographical rivers. For which the elements of 101 Communication Zone made significant progress while approaching towards Dhaka. As the advancing column linked up with the para battalion dropped in Tangail, it added impetus to the operation. By morning of 16 December, 101 Communication Zone elements reached Dhaka, just before the signing of the instrument of surrender on the same day. In the eastern region, IV Corps was allotted with three divisions less one brigade, K Force brigade and a number of East Pakistan Rifles battalions and two squadrons of armor. This region provided the shortest route to Dhaka. Indian Forces exploited the gaps and suitably bypassed Pakistani resistances with correct intelligence provided by the Mukti Bahini. By 14 December, Bangladeshi Forces closed in the bank of Meghna River and were poised to capture Dhaka.

A close look at the progress made by the Allied Forces in different regions showed that they captured all time bound objectives more or less as per the time plan. On the contrary, the Pakistani Forces failed to conceive the Allied plan of operation. Though major rivers posed serious problems for the Allied advance, but engineering assets at decision points including vertical envelopment using helicopters made things easier. As Allied Forces avoided engagements along the route of ingress from the borders, the Pakistani Forces never got a chance to retreat to defend the Dhaka bowl. So the rapidly advancing Allied Forces reached Dhaka unopposed and attacked Pakistan's center of gravity-Dhaka. Although Pakistan military identified Dhaka as their center of gravity no troops were allotted for its physical security. As such, the result was the unconditional surrender to the Allied Force. The Allied Forces remained firm in their aims and objectives. They decided to fight in Bangladeshi soil for the complete liberation of Bangladesh. For the protection of the western flank, it contained the enemy there until their surrender. Till last, the Allied Forces maintained its aim and were able to achieve its military end state -the destruction of Pakistani Forces and capture of Dhaka. The conventional phase of the war was one of limited objectives by both sides. However, the Pakistanis could not properly coordinate their strategy or their forces to realize success. On the other hand, the Indians produced a simple but flexible plan which they executed with determination and skill. East Pakistan fell much more quickly than Islamabad had anticipated and there was no time for international intervention.

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CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSIONS

The birth of Bangladesh in 1971 and the process through which it was born are extraordinary in contemporary history. The seeds of the discontent and distrust in the minds of the majority Muslim peasantry of East Pakistan prevailed ever since they had been living under the exploitation and social injustice by their Hindu landlords. This relationship had a deeper impact on the political, economic and cultural legacy that matured over the period and eventually provoked the Bengalis to engage in a movement against their landlords. However, later in 1947 Indian sub-continent got divided basing on the two nation theory. But the idea of binding two geographically discontented territories based on religion proved ridiculous. Islam failed to bridge the gap that had been caused by the geographical, economic, political and cultural factors between the wings of Pakistan. Ethnic attitudes, perpetuated by economic opportunism further multiplied these disparities.

The situation got worse as Jinnah on 19 March 1948 in Dhaka announced that the state language of Pakistan was going to be Urdu and no other language. That was the time when the flare of Bengali nationalism just begun to spread and the students were the forerunners to carry this forward. The spirited students came out in the street violating curfew and embraced martyrdom as the police opened fire on the procession. The issue got settled but left its scare in the hearts of the Bengalis. A remarkable change had been noticed in the political polarization that crystalized over the united front election in 1954. In the provincial assembly election of 1954, the Bengali political combine known as the United Front achieved landslide victory. The consequent provincial government was however; unseated quickly by the Central Government. There had been some measures to narrow down the gap between the wings putting Chief Minister from the East Bengal but under that situation they could only serve the interest of the West Pakistan. It was the prospect of Awami League wining an overwhelming victory in the scheduled 1958 election, brought General Ayub Khan at the helm of affairs as Pakistan's first military dictator. West Pakistan was developed with East Pakistan's resources. Every single policy served the interest of the West Pakistanis disregarding the majority Bengalis.

To justify their military expenditure, they used to profess that the 'defence of East Pakistan lay in West Pakistan.' After the 1965 war it become apparently clear that such a

strategic concept had no justification. Around the same time the Six Point (6) movement including the issue of regional autonomy went high on the agenda. To cope with the strident politics in East Pakistan, the government quickly formed a conspiracy case against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with 34 others which was known as State vs Mujib conspiracy case. While the trial was on, a co-accused Sergeant Zahurul Haque was killed in prison. Following this the young Rajshahi University Professor Dr Shamsuzzoha was killed by the Pakistani Military junta that took the movement to the apex. His death sparked off violent protests across the then East Pakistan leading to the fall of the Ayub regime. But like a relay race Ayub Khan handed over the baton to General Yahya for another spell of military rule. There was a general election in 1970, where the Awami League won a landslide victory over its arch rival Pakistan Peoples Party. Then began the biggest fiasco over power transfer. Pakistani ruling elites did everything to prevent the Awami League gaining control of the state power and the Bengalis would never concede. Failing to work out a political solution to the problem, Pakistan resorted to military action on the night of 25 March 1971. The military junta thought they would be able to suppress the ongoing movement overnight which was proved to be wrong. The ill-armed, unequipped and barely organized nationalist forces had difficulties in finding ways to drive the well-armed Pakistan military from their strongholds. The inability of each side to bring things under control forced them to engage in a protracted guerrilla warfare for which the Pakistani Forces were less prepared. In the initial resistance phase the Freedom Fighters including people from all walks of life led by handful military officers challenged the Pakistan military realizing little about the consequences. As such the result of these encounters had been disorganized and mixed. Although Pakistan military pushed all the pro-nationalist fighters across the border by May 1971, the platform for the long drawn war was just in the making.

The military action forced the common people to flee in millions across the border in India. The opportunity given to India was more attractive than she could have hoped. India was deep into a dangerous game of supporting- in fact, of making possible - an effort to overthrow the rule of West Pakistan over East Pakistan. While justifiably complaining about the immense financial burden of refugees from East Pakistan, India had also taken upon itself the burden of financing the Bangladesh Government in exile and its forces. It had been arming and training the Bangladesh Forces and providing it with sanctuaries along East Pakistan's border. There were a few genuine reasons for which India was increasingly getting involved with the neighbour's internal affairs. One was the hope that the Mukti Bahini would force the

Pakistani army to give up the eastern part of the divided country and leave Bangladesh free so that her millions of refugees then burdening India would return home. Besides India preferred to have a conservative middle class led Bangladesh Government in exile including the Mukti Bahini. They feared that the failure of this group based on the Awami League would mean the rise of communist guerrillas. This dilemma compelled them to promote the more radical Bangladesh Mukti Bahini which would take control of the post-independent Bangladesh Government. There was another reason for which India supported Bangladesh was the simple sympathy with the Bengali people of East Pakistan who had common cultural and linguistic background with that of the people of West Bengal. There was also another motive of traditional antagonism between India and Pakistan since the partition in 1947. They fought two wars and never had been good neighbours. Of and on for many years Pakistan had been training the Mizo and the Naga tribesmen from eastern India to fight against the central Indian Government with a hope to gain independence. There was never any hope for Nagas and the Mizos obtaining independence. Pakistan's objective therefore seemed to be simply to create a nuisance for her neighbour. What India had been doing in 1971 could be viewed as a reply in much broader terms.

However, initially the Indian Border Security Forces provided morale support including nominal material support which was later taken over by the Indian army. Alongside Indian support, the people and Bengali expatriates those who lived in different parts of the globe made significant contributions. While restructuring Bangladesh Forces initially the deficiencies of the dissipated infantry battalions were made up. Regular forces comprised all the armed forces and para-military members and the Gono Bahini members made up the Bangladesh Forces. After the initial Pakistani onslaught, Bangladesh took little time to reorganize her forces and to devise appropriate war fighting strategy. To fight against the strong Pakistani Forces, we had to rely much on the hit and run tactics of Mao Zedong or the guerrilla operations. This had been the mainstay of our operational activity until the Pakistanis were reduced in morale and number. Their logistic system had been snubbed forcing them to stick to their bases and camps. Meanwhile Bangladesh raised three brigade sized forces and adopted blending technique of warfare combining the conventional and unconventional form of warfare. This strategy was adopted from the beginning though it was not in a planned manner. When it was adopted as war fighting strategy, all the resources were mobilized under the overall plan and the operations had been coordinated and supported by the Force Headquarters. Gradually Bangladesh Forces acquired Artillery, Air and Naval wing

and all of these components played significant role in combat. Especially the role played by the marine commandos turned around the outcome of war in favour of Bangladesh Forces. Courage, dedication and innovative ideas earned the Freedom Fighters amazing results in the face of uphill challenges. In fact, the Pakistani Military had been fighting a desperate battle of survival. As the time passed, everyone realized that the Freedom Fighters are everywhere - in hotels, banks, shops, foreign consulates and even in the government offices. There was an overwhelming impression in the cities that the Bengali people wanted independence and were ready to fight the Pakistani army to the death for it. It was when the Allied Forces had intervened. On 3 December by a multipronged attack the Allied Forces overran Bangladesh in lightning speed. The strategy of strong point and fortress defence crumbled in the face of Allied Forces lightning speed and bypassing techniques aided by pin point intelligence fed by the Freedom Fighters.

Political Issues

Causes of the War

There can be no single cause which led to the emergence of Bangladesh. It was the amalgam of incompetent Pakistani leadership and their suicidal policies Pakistan to the brink of destruction. After the partition of 1947, little did the Pakistani politicians realize that religion alone could not bind geographically segregated West and East Pakistan for longtime. Apart from other reasons, nationalism was important for sociological reason. Nationalism has symbolic value to citizens. The symbolic value of the fact of belonging to a nation has been and still is a sufficient reason for people to go to war, when they feel their common identity is threatened.¹ It broadly embodies culture, religion, language, ethnicity, traditions etc. Unfortunately, the Pakistani politicians never realized the impact of the unique nature of Pakistan's geography. It should have become evident that East Pakistan would need special political and economic dispensation. Instead the Bengalis had been treated as the second class citizens, deprived of their due economic share, and disparities in many other fields kept on increasing.

Use of Force for Resolving Political Issue

It can be concluded that the major role in the Pakistani disaster had been contributed greatly by the military action in East Pakistan in March 1971. This was the factor for which the political and military situation got seriously aggravated. The world at large was

aware of the fact that, military action can never substitute political settlement. But, the Pakistani High Command did not carry out any study on this important issue, nor it was successful in appreciating the growing discontent of the people of Pakistan and India.² The lust for power and the unholy conspiracy hatched up by Yahiya and Bhutto ignoring the political settlement opted for military action that triggered the war.

Political Consciousness of the Bengali People

A very peace loving, gentle, cultured and naturally docile people, the Bengalis never accepted the mercenaries in their lands; but in them there was a latent acute political consciousness which was stimulated in 1971. When the political fiasco reached its apex, people got obsessed by an avenging spirit that exploded on the night of 25 March when the Pakistan military cracked down on the Bengalis. The men in uniform and others rose to the occasion and fought the adversaries with whatever little they had. Spontaneous participation of youths, students, peasants, workers and people from all walks of life set a new precedence in the history. The Bangladesh Government in exile crystallized this unity and transformed this into a powerful force for which it was possible for the ill-equipped Mukti Bahini to face the superior adversaries squarely.

Right Cause

The victory over a formidable and well-trained army had been possible because of exemplary courage, moral strength and spirit of sacrifice for a right cause. Bangladesh did not have enough force to fight the adversaries, yet thousands of youths from different strata joined in the war. They were all peace loving and naturally docile people but were imbued with patriotism and political consciousness. A right cause inspired them to take the risk of their lives as the struggle had its in-built conviction of righteousness. The battle of Kamalpur may be referred to highlight that; this place was captured after launching consecutive nine attacks by the Mukti Bahini.³ On the contrary, the Pakistani Army engaged them in an unjust war.

Popular Support

From the beginning, the Mukti Bahini enjoyed overwhelming popular support which is vital for waging this 9 month long war. This incredible support enabled them to fan-out fearlessly in every nook and corner of the country. Popular support was one of the major

contributing factors to the victory of the Mukti Bahini including Allied Forces. The Bengalis had assisted the Allied Forces by providing accurate intelligence and logistic support. On the other hand, the Pakistan Army had to operate in a hostile and politically inhospitable land and therefore it was denied every support making the ground operation ineffective and more complicated.

Strategic/Operational Issues

Defenders' Paradise

Bengal had hardly experienced any military conflicts of classical natures. Before the British rule, there were palace raid by Mohammed Bin Bakhtiar Khalzi, armed raid by the Arakanese in 16th century and Maratha's from Central India came to ransack the Bengal area.⁴ These were more of large-scale robberies than organized military encounters. The 1971 War was therefore a testing time for Bangladesh to see how a full scale war involving professional and largely non-professional forces operated in this unique land. The formidable water obstacles, unconnected except in few places along with a network of interconnecting water channels kept the defenders in isolated pockets. While resorting to fortress type of defence the Pakistan military could not overcome the natural obstacles to their advantage. For example, in the south while the Pakistanis had been withdrawing they took up defence only on the home bank of river Madhumati which allowed the Allied Forces to move unopposed up to the river line. On the other hand, the Allied Forces launched the "Lightning Campaign" in the dry season, when communication networks permitted greater mobility facilitating their bypass maneuver and eventual race towards Dhaka. For any military operations to be effective in a terrain like Bangladesh meteorological and geographical conditions must be considered in formulating a plan.

Blending of Conventional and Unconventional forms of Warfare

Since it was not possible to attain parity with the adversaries, Bangladesh formed a force comprising the regulars and Gono Bahini (guerrillas) and conducted the war combining conventional and unconventional methods of warfare. Under the given situation, this strategy was appropriate considering the national spirit, thousands of willing volunteers and favourable local conditions. While the regular units engaged the enemy in orthodox combats the guerilla operations by the Freedom Fighters isolated the Pakistanis by surprise raids and ambushes, hindered their logistics and reinforcements.

For example, the blocking position established by the Mukti Bahini during the second battle of Belonia was a classic example, of blending conventional and unconventional methods of warfare. Along most of the fronts, the guerillas prepared the ground for eventual launching of the Allied Forces and intimately supported them that hastened the Pakistani surrender.

Concept of Fortress and Strong Point vis-a-vis Bypassing Tactics

The Pakistan Forces prepared as many as 25 fortresses and 9 strong points consisting mainly of built up areas such as district or sub-division headquarters and towns, large villages and cantonments. Lack of troops did not permit them to be manned but it was expected that the troops deployed along the border would gradually fall back and take up defensive positions within the fortresses and strong points which they planned to defend to the last man and last bullet. For the fortress concept they required adequate reserves to strike the bypassing enemy, secondly the fortresses should have been so positioned that they can mutually support each other and finally surrounding population should have been friendly. Practically none of these requisites was fulfilled. They established the strong points on the major avenues of approaches keeping the Border outposts ahead and leaving wide gaps in between which could be easily bypassed. Their deployment based on strong point turned out to be a passive form of defence resulting defeat in the end. On the other hand, the Allied Forces bypassing the Pakistani strongholds sealed the enemy from the rear before launching the main assault. This technique was the turning point for the Allied Forces to defeat the Pakistanis in piecemeal.

Vulnerabilities of Dhaka

Dhaka looks like an island surrounded by mighty rivers all around except from the north. From Comilla it is hardly 58 miles and from Mymensingh/Jamalpur, it is 120 miles. Both Pakistan and India were expecting the major thrust to develop from the Comilla and Jessore sectors, but the progress of the war revealed, however, that Dhaka was more vulnerable from the north. No wonder, the less-important 101 Communication Zone column, augmented by para drop at Tangail, reached Dhaka earlier than anybody else. Prior to the war, communication zone was not a fighting formation. It seems that both Pakistan and India grossly miscalculated the magnitude of mighty river obstacles

like the Meghna and the Padma, but it cannot be taken for granted that any future aggressor will repeat the same mistake.

Flexibility in Planning

Since battle field situations are difficult to predict, only flexibility can better protect the operational plans which was clearly manifested during the 1971 war. When Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw ordered the Allied Forces to capture the entry ports of Khulna and Chittagong, Lieutenant General JFR Jacob, the Chief of Staff of Indian Army's Eastern Command argued that Dhaka was the geopolitical and geostrategic heart of Bangladesh and must be taken. During an interview with Smita Prokash in Asian News International Television in a programme titled 'Bangladesh Today', he added, Manekshaw thought by taking Khulna and Chittagong, Dhaka would automatically fall. But the ground comds appreciated that Niazi would hold on to his strong points defence and it would be time consuming and costly in terms of loss of lives to take on those strong points. So they decided to bypass those strong points to reach Dhaka at the earliest ensuring a total collapse of the Pakistani forces. Flexibility in the planning gave dividend.⁵

Air Support

Air support played a vital role during 1971 war. Bangladeshi terrain did not provide sufficient space for depth as well as for manoeuvre. All air fields had been within the easy reach. For Pakistan to counter the Indian raids, the depth was too deep to penetrate. On the other hand, Pakistanis did not cover the space adequately by ground forces. Yet, during the initial resistance phase, the Pakistanis extensively used helicopter gunships, fighter air-crafts and air strikes to liquidate the Bengali resistances across the country and pushed them across the border. But towards the end, the situation was reversed in favour of the Freedom Fighters. Bangladesh air arm carried out some daring unorthodox operations destroying some vital installations of economic value. By 6 December 1971, the Allied Forces gained total air supremacy confining the Pakistani Forces to the isolated geographical sectors. The Pakistani spokesman while discussing the matter with the reporter of *The New York Times* Henry Kamm had commented that the Pakistani troops whose number at the beginning of the fighting was 70,000, were being pounded day and night by the Indian Air Force.⁶ Air power was extensively used in offensive air support,

para dropping; air bridging operations and other support missions including evacuation of casualties. Air power made a huge impact on the progress made by the ground forces of the Allied Forces.

Intelligence

The Chinese military expert Sun Tzu said "Only by knowing your enemy and knowing yourself you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat".⁷ The local people were the main architect and they constantly fed accurate information to Mukti Bahini on the latest enemy movements, dispositions of forces and any changes during the entire period of the war. Based on this information the Mukti Bahini successfully conducted their operations to the utter dismay of superior Pakistani Forces. Such operations reduced their fighting potential, lowered their morale and paralyzed their command structure. During the last phase of the war, the Mukti Bahini besides providing intimate support to the Allied Forces provided intelligence using which the Allied commanders successfully overcame Pakistani strongholds and launched deep-thrusts bringing hostile resistance to the brink of total collapse.

Use of Mines and Explosives

The fear of unknown and unseen engulfed the Pakistani soldiers to a great extent in the battlefield. Mines and explosives were those unseen weapons, which imposed caution on the enemy. The barefooted Mukti Bahini guerillas extensively used mines and explosives against the Pakistani Forces and achieved spectacular successes. Frequent use of these weapons caused an uncanny phobia in the minds of the Pakistani soldiers. It once again demonstrated that despite a superior strength in armaments, small weaponry like mines and explosive can turn the tide in favour of the inferior forces in the battlefield.

Maritime Front

The Maritime front (southern front) is totally exposed to complete naval blockade by outsiders but the shallow waters of the Bay of Bengal prevented war ships (especially submarines) from approaching too close to the coastal areas in 1971. Except in the month of December, the southern front was relatively quiet, which may not remain so in any future battle scenario. During 1971, we have seen the US approach eventually culminated

in the dispatch of a task force headed by the Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal in the middle of December when Bangladesh War was in the decisive stage. The force had a flagship of more than 90,000 tons, the nuclear powered air-craft, carrier Enterprise, capable of launching Phantom fighter bombers, carrying nuclear warheads. There were six other warships, including destroyers and escorts, some marine troops and administrative elements.⁸ The avowed intention of the move was to rescue American citizens from Dhaka for which a nuclear carrier like the Enterprise was certainly not necessary.⁹ Actual objective of the Enterprise was to intimidate India-Bangladesh Forces and raise the faltering morale of the Pakistan Army. The Task Force entered the Bay of Bengal on 15 December through Strait of Malacca and was too late to undertake any of the tasks discussed. This experience suggests that maritime security of Bangladesh of its southern flank be given due consideration in security planning.

Need for Denial Plan

Space should be organized in the battlefield to yield time. While fighting a stronger enemy and to compensate for the lack of resources it is important to restrict and slow down enemy's mobility by denying it infrastructural facilities. This was effectively done by the Mukti Bahini for which they got time to respond and their bases remained protected. On the contrary, the Pakistani Forces failed to implement the same with the result that large quantities of valuable war materials fell in the hands of the Allied Forces after the surrender. This happened even before the final stage of the war which reflected Pakistani ignorance about use of denial plan.

Miscellaneous Issues

Leadership

Leadership plays a vital role in mission accomplishment. There are numerous examples where battles were won by commander's courage, instant decision making skill and for leading under commands while in distress and dilemma. Another important aspect is the moral strength of the leaders that depends on the character and professionalism. The young, agile and morally strong Bengali leaders in the field set examples for the under commands by sacrificing their lives and by setting high standard of dedication. On the

contrary, it was completely opposite in case of the senior Pakistani officers who acquired notorious reputation for sexual immorality with the inevitable consequence that they failed to instill respect and confidence in the minds of their subordinates. These issues adversely affected the performance of Pakistani soldiers in the field.

Climatic Condition

According to the folklore, the onset and termination of war should be determined, in part, by climatologically which might affect military and efficiency, and the growing and harvesting seasons which might in turn, affect provisioning and recruiting in the army.¹⁰ This aspect had been rightly appreciated and taken in to consideration while formulating Allied offensive against the Pakistani Forces particularly for the snows along the eastern hills negating Chinese threat. The timing of rain in Bangladesh could not be ignored in planning military operations. A campaign would have to be planned long enough after the monsoon (June-September normally) to allow the rain-swollen river systems to return to their normal stream.¹¹ From about May, with the melting of snows in the Himalayas, the rivers flow as high and broad as to make the kind of military campaign extremely difficult to execute- which some of the political leaders were planning including Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Chief of Staff General Manekshaw had curtly dismissed such proposals for immediate intervention. While operating in Bangladesh the climatical considerations must be given due care in the planning.

Logistic Supply

Timely and adequate logistic support is the substantial basis and decisive factor in any battle or campaign. During the period of initial resistance phase when the revolting Bengali units had been fighting devoid of logistic support, the local population met their demands except for ammunition. By the time Freedom Fighters were pushed across the border, their ammunition state depleted substantially. At this time, the Bengali troops, despite their high morale had to seek sanctuary in the adjoining provinces of India. However, later a steady flow of logistic supply was provided by India by setting up 6 logistic sectors each of which used to be headed by a Brigadier. Initially it suffered from some teething problems which were overcome with the passage of time. As regard to the joint offensive phase, the general and administrative staffs at all levels did a wonderful job by organizing necessary infrastructures and required logistic built up for the

offensive. It was for the superb performance of Engineers that made successful river crossing operations. Despite the very late release of obsolescent World War II vintage bridging equipment, they were able to collect, have those repaired and move those to the launching areas and finally construct the bridges thus enabling the troops to move and fight.¹² When the Indian Army sprang on the scene on 3 December, the Bangladesh Forces had prepared the ground for them. They received the Allied Forces at various points on the border and guided them to the interior using shortest routes, helped them with transportation and information about enemy dispositions.¹³ All these helped in the speedy execution of operations in the battle field.

Inter Services Coordination

Efficient battlefield management involves cooperation among various organizations, which constitute the total force. With the aim of defeating the Pakistan Army, on 21 November it was decided to form a Joint Forces wherein all the components of Bangladesh Forces came under the command of the supporting forces. Accordingly, a detailed instruction including the modalities of operation was signed on 22 November (Appendix CC). Thus 21 November is significant in the history of our Armed Forces and the day is celebrated as Armed Forces Day every year with due pride and solemnity. Besides intimate coordination between Bangladesh and the Allied Forces, during the offensive on Dhaka the Army, Navy and Air arm of the Allied Forces worked hand in hand for a common goal. While coordinating among these three services, cooperation was vital for the victory. The task of executing this with precision underline high degree of professionalism and great acumen. The Indian Armed Forces and the Bangladesh Forces operated in close coordination and executed their allotted tasks with precision.

Role of Media

The role of media in war needs not to be over emphasized. The foreign press played an important role in building international support for the cause of our Liberation War. When the Pakistan military expelled them from Dhaka, taking risks of their lives, they managed to take out sensitive video footages that reflected the actual state of affairs. These reports as they came on air influenced the global opinion and at the same time psychologically weakened the Pakistani Forces. The Western newspaper agencies and electronic media in particular were successful in projecting the brutalities of the Pakistani

Forces to the world. The courage and determination of media rallied huge international support for the cause of an independent Bangladesh. 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra' also played a significant role in generating fighting spirit amongst all ranks of the Mukti Bahini. The interesting programmes broadcast from this clandestine radio station boosted the morale of the Freedom Fighters and kept the spirit of the Liberation War alive. Because of militant censorship exercised over the press by the Pakistani Government, Mujibnagar Government arranged its own print media that significantly contributed in Bangladesh's endeavours in gaining independence.

After the independence of Bangladesh, *London Times* headlined "If Blood is the price of independence, then Bangladesh has paid the highest price in the history". Besides these phenomenal losses in terms of lives and properties this war gave us some invaluable lessons for the succeeding generations. It taught us how a nation could be mobilized just because it had the right cause to embark on a war. Political issues cannot be resolved by brute force and when this is tried, it becomes counter-productive as it did in 1971. Nature provided Bangladesh all for which it used to be known as defender's paradise. Unfortunately, the defending Pakistani Forces failed to appreciate and exploit these potentials. Bangladesh did not have a compatible force neither adequate military infrastructure to support the war against the Pakistani Forces. As such a fighting strategy which would consider the realities and yet become effective was required. Bangladesh Force Headquarters and the military commanders quite rightly adopted the bleeding techniques of war. It was a good competition between the military commanders as they tested their skills and strategies as opposed to the rival's one. We saw how the concept of fortress defence was by passed to reach the heartland any much of the territory won without even fighting. The leadership in the field had seen extraordinarily for which it was possible to defeat such a strong force in so less time.

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APPENDIX A**DISPARITIES BETWEEN WEST AND EAST PAKISTAN
IN DIFFERENT SECTORS**

There were no efforts for reconciliation but only economic exploitation and social injustice. EB existed only for the interest of the West Pakistani capitalists, merchants, industrialists and contractors, for the militarists and civil bureaucrats. For the last 24 years the Pakistan Government, manned mostly by the west Pakistanis, dominated the state policy aiming to develop the barren deserts of West Pakistan by a deliberate policy which impoverished East Pakistan. These disparities are evident from the available figures as extracted from the book, *The Bangladesh Papers*:

AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET

Total Revenue	RS 6,000 million	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Expenditure on Defence	Total	60%	10%
Civil Expenditure	Total	40%	15%

While East Pakistan provides 60% of the total revenue, it receives only about 25 % for its expenditure and West Pakistan providing 40% in the central exchequer receives 75% of the remaining.

FOREIGN TRADE AND EARNINGS

	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
	Export	Import	Export	Import
1. During 10 years period 1958-1968	£820 m	£2,315 m	£1,153 m	£1,000 m
	41%	70%	59%	30%

In foreign trade, East Pakistan exports constitute 59% of the total but imports only 30% of the imports which consists of consumer goods and food, very little is left for development projects. During the same period West Pakistan earned 41% of the total foreign exchange and was allowed 70% of the foreign exchange earnings. Major portion of this was spent on various development projects in West Pakistan.

Inter Zonal Trade

1964-1969 Exports from West to East Pakistan Exports from East to West Pakistan
 Rs. 5,292 million Rs. 3,174 million

This is an example of continuous drain of East Pakistani capital to West Pakistan. It has been estimated that total transfer of resources from East Pakistan to West Pakistan since 1947 had been £3,000 million

Let us look at typical Export items for the year 1964-65:

Jute and jute products (all from East Pakistan):	Rs. 124,580 m
Cotton & Cotton manufactures (many from W.P.):	Rs. 51,880 m
Hides & Skins (mainly from East Pakistan):	Rs. 6,130 m
Tea (all from East Pakistan):	Rs. 1,000 m
Wool (all from West Pakistan):	Rs. 7,300 m
Others (East & West Pakistan):	Rs. 56,200 m

Percentage of Allocation of Funds for Development Projects

Item	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Foreign Exchange for Various development:	80%	20%
Foreign Aid (Excluding U.S AID):	96%	4%
Foreign Aid:	66%	34%
Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation:	58%	42%
Pakistan Industrial Credit & Investment Corporation:	80%	20%
Industrial Development Bank:	76%	24%
House Building:	88%	12%
	77%	23%

Above figure are clearly indicative for the tremendous industrial growth in West Pakistan which received 77% of the total development expenditure for its 40% of the total population.

Foreign Aid to Pakistan

Chinese loan to Pakistan U.S. \$ 60 m, in 1965 was mostly spent in West Pakistan including a Heavy Machinery complex costing U.S. \$ 9 m, but only U.S. \$ 125,000 for East Pakistan Water & Power Development. But the loan was to be repaid by exporting jute and products.

World Bank credits \$ 14 m in 1954 and \$ 15 m in 1965 for Sui Gas Project in West Pakistan, supplied \$ 17m in 1964 for Karachi Port Development and \$ 30 m to Pakistan Investment and Credit Corporation to finance the projects in West Pakistan. International Development Association (UN Agency) gave a credit of \$ 8.5 m to West Pakistan and \$ 4.5 m to East Pakistan in 1964 for educational projects.

Russian Aid of £11 m to £18 m was given to West Pakistan in 1965 for oil prospecting.

U.K. Loan during the period of 1947-1965 amounted to £64 m has been spent mostly in West Pakistan.

U.S. Aid of \$ 3.6 billion and \$ 2.7 billion spent for Mangla Dam & Tarbela Dam respectively in West Pakistan and only \$ 0.9 billion for control of flood in East Pakistan. These loans no doubt converted the barren lands of West Pakistan into fertile ones whereas very little was done to tackle effectively the flood problem of East Pakistan, the most fertile land in the world. The people of East Pakistan had been allowed to suffer from recurring cyclones and flood disasters since 1953.

Comparative Industrial Development

	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
	1947-48	1966-67	1947-48	1966-67
Established Industries in both wings				
Cotton Textile production in millions yards	350	6,836	508	550
	1,833% increase		8.26% increase	
Sugar production in `000 tons	10	304	25	112
	2,940% increase		348% increase	
Cement production in `000 tons	305	1,934	46	75
	534% increase		63% increase	

The above table clearly shows how the established industries in East Pakistan had been allowed to grow extremely slowly in comparison with the extremely fast growing industries in the West. With the influx of capitalists from Bombay the picture began to change rapidly.

In the field of new industries, the percentage of investments in West and East Pakistan is roughly 75% and 25% respectively. Moreover, East Pakistani industries are mainly owned and controlled by the West Pakistanis, whose main interest is to transfer the profits to West Pakistan instead of helping East Pakistan's prosperity. It had been calculated that since 1947 the real transfer of resources from East to West has been to the tune of £ 3000 million. There was no state control over the private investment and as such the flow had been completely unchecked.

Steel the basic item required for any development, is now being produced in two mills in West & East Pakistan. Funds provided for these mills were £56 million for West Pakistan and £11 million for East Pakistan.

Agricultural Development

	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
Fertilizer distribution during 1964-68 in `000 nutrient tons	739	66%	371	33%
Improved seed distribution during 1964-69, in ` 000 tons	342	89%	40	11%
	1951-52	1966-67	1951-52	1966-67
Increase in fish production in ` 000 metric tons	56	153	175	259
	273%	Increase	48%	Increase
Distribution of tractors				
Wheel type (numbers)	20,069		1,825	
Other large (numbers)	2,000		350	
	91%		9%	

Needless to mention that the arable land in East Pakistan has more acreage and most lands produce 2 to 3 crops a year, whereas in the West the acreage is less and the productivity per acre is much smaller. One fails to understand the logic in these states of affairs.

In agriculture finance, the Pakistan Agricultural Development Bank has lent over Rs. 600 million, but most of this went to West Pakistan farmers. Most of the large irrigation projects have been treated as federal projects and financed by the Central Government and implemented in West Pakistan. This was a deliberate attempt to keep the 75 million Bengalis at starvation level. In the federal army of 500,000 only 20,000 are Bengalis. Those 480,000 West Pakistanis spent their income in the West which indirectly helped the economy of that part of the country. Economic experts have evidence that in 1959 an average East Pakistani was 20% worse off than another in the West. In 1968, he was 40% worse off than his brother in Islam in West Pakistan.

Power Development

Another criterion to measure the progress is the consumption of electric power per head of the population. In Pakistan, the growth in power production has grown considerably. West Pakistan generates by hydel, thermal and other means a total of 838,000KW (83% of the total) whereas East Pakistan generates 179,500 KW (17% of the total). A great share of foreign aid had been spent on various power development projects. Two giant irrigation and power development projects in Indus Basin cost \$ 1800 million and WAPDA spent Rs. 1453 m in 5 years (1959-1964).

Education: Progress in 20 Years

Area	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
	1947-48	1968-69	1947-48	1968-69
Primary School	8,413	39,418	29,663	28,308
	Number increase 4 ½ times		Number decrease in spite of increased children	
Secondary School	2,598	4,472	3,481	3,964
		176% increase		114% increase
College Various Types	40	271	50	162
		675% increase		320% increase
Medical/Engineering/ Agricultural colleges	4	17	3	9
		425% increase		300% increase
University	2		1	
	(654 scholars)		(1620 scholars)	
	6		4	
	(18,708 scholars)		(8,831scholars)	
Increase in scholars	30 times		5 times	

It is interesting to note that although the school going population increased in East Pakistan the number of schools decreased through deliberate policy of neglect, whereas during the same period the Pakistan government spent vast sums of money and increased the number of school in West Pakistan by 4½ times. Was not that a systematic plan for giving the West Pakistani children a better academic start so that their future career could be firmly assured? The natural result was the vast increase in the number of colleges of all kinds and universities. This is a clear evidence of Government policy aiming at keeping the East Pakistani children intellectually inferior by not providing the facilities they deserve. The end product that we see is in the number of University schools. In East Pakistan, which had

double the number of scholars in 1947, the number only increased by five times in 20 years and in West Pakistan the corresponding increase in thirty times. In the field of research and development centers established for agricultural, medical, scientific, industrial research, out of 16 centers 13 are located in West Pakistan. As far as the scholarships and training grants for studies abroad under Colombo Plan, Ford Foundation, Commonwealth Aid and many others the bulk of these went to the West Pakistanis. Some of these are not even advertised in the East Pakistani press and many of these are awarded directly from West Pakistan.

If we consider the question of employment, we can see the repetition of the same injustice. While the state policy on education had kept the East Pakistanis less developed, in the case of recruitment in civil, military and other services the same policy of depriving the Bengalis had effectively carried out. Having most of the recruitment centers, they have the most advantage. HQ of the army, navy, air force and all central government services as well private employees of all kind are located in West Pakistan. Most of the vacancies are either not advertised in the East Pakistani press or the practical difficulty of being interviewed is present. Moreover, the various recruitment boards consisting mostly of West Pakistanis are not so well disposed to accept an East Pakistani. In the armed forces, by making a physical standard far too high for an average Bengali, the system of eliminating the Bengali candidates had been very easy and successful. The following figures show examples of disparity in this field.

	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Central Civil Service	84%	16%
Foreign Service	85%	15%
Foreign Head of Missions (number)	60	9
Army	95%	5%
Army: Officers of General Rank (Number)	16	1
Navy Technical	81%	19%
Navy Non-Technical	91%	9%
Air Force Pilots	89%	11%
Armed Forces (number)	500,000	20,000
Pakistan Airlines (number)	7,000	280
P. I. A Directors (number)	9	1
P. I. A Area Managers (number)	5	none
Railway Board Directors (number)	7	1

Organization Imbalance

The selection of the capital of Pakistan in Karachi in 1947 gave the west a boost to growth in all spheres. Rs. 200 million was spent in development and when it was fully developed it was handed over to the West Pakistan provincial government. All incomes

derived, as a result, went to the provincial government. Thereafter another Rs. 200 million was allocated for the capital development at Islamabad. A sum of only Rs. 20 million was provided for a second capital at Dacca, in East Pakistan

All the offices of the central government are located in the West including the HQ of the army, navy and air force and all the military academies. It is important to note that 60% of Pakistan's budget is spent on defence and 80% of that goes to the military contractors, armed personnel who are West Pakistanis.

Head offices of all the public and private establishments e.g., State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan International Airlines, National Bank of Pakistan and other Banks, Insurance companies, Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, National shipping Corporation, Foreign Missions and hundred other Pakistani and foreign agencies have their head office in West Pakistan and with their West Pakistani bosses and West Pakistani connections made sure that the policies of those organizations favour West Pakistanis.

Social Welfare

In the field of social welfare, the same pattern is reflected. Let us look at some of the statistics comparing the two wings.

	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Population	55 million	75 million
Total number of doctors	12,400	7,600
Total number of Hospital beds	26,000	6,000
Rural Health Centres	325	88
Urban community Development Centres	81	52

East Pakistan has been described as one of the poorest country in the world Even the economists, impartial and foreign, admitted that. How does the average East Pakistani compare with his compatriot West Pakistan?

	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Employment of civil labor force	59%	41%	86%	14%

In West Pakistan the industrial development provided 41% of the total labour force, employment and a better standard of life. In East Pakistan, the poor development in industrial sphere was made only 14% of the total employment available in the cities. The result is reflected in the figures for per capita income and gross domestic product.

	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
	1960	1970	1960	1970
Per Capita income in Pakistan Rupees	355	492	269	308

The difference in per capita income between East and West Pakistan had been 86 in 1960. Ten years later the difference soared to 184. In other words, while the standard of living had been increasing in the West it had been declining in East Pakistan.

	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
	1959-60	1964-65	1959-60	1964-65
Gross domestic per capita	312	391	242	297

Staple food of East Pakistan is rice and of West Pakistani is wheat. Let us compare the market price of two.

	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Rice per mound (82 lbs)	Rs. 18	Rs. 50
Wheat per mound (82 lbs)	Rs. 10	Rs. 35

How could one expect a better health when the East Pakistani had to pay a far higher price for his food when his income was far below that of his compatriot in the West? The picture becomes clearer when we compare the average calories intake rural areas.

	West Pakistan	East Pakistan
Calorie intake in rural areas in 1960-65 per head per day	1,625	1,556

In the urban areas the disparity is even greater. (Calorie intake in U.K. is 3, 25)

* All these statistics have been taken from official and other reliable sources which include: National Planning Commission, 20 Years of Pakistan, Central Bureau of Education, Department of Investment Promotion, Central Board of Revenue, Central Statistical Office, Pakistan Year Book, 1970, Marine Fisheries Department, Pakistan Economic Survey, Government of Pakistan Budgets, Keesing's Contemporary Archives, Financial Times, The Economist Development Prospects of Pakistan (By A Norwegian Economist)

Source: *The Bangladesh Papers*. Lahore: Vanguard Books Ltd, n.d. pp, 15-22.

APPENDIX B

6-POINT FORMULA—OUR RIGHT TO LIVE*by***SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN**

I have placed before the country a 6-point programme as basic principles of a firm solution of the country's inter-wing political and economics problems. I expected and in fact was ready to welcome criticism. But instead of criticizing the programme and pointing out its defects, if there be any, a class of people has started hurling abuses at and ascribing disruptionist motive to me. Normally I would have ignored these vilifications, firstly because these abusive voices are too familiar, these grimacing faces are too well-known, and these sallying patterns are too old to deserve anything but such ignoration; secondly because I have no manner of doubt that my 6-point programme has truly reflected the mind and correctly represented the demands of fifty five million East Pakistanis of their right to live. Neither have I any doubt that all right-thinking patriotic elements of West Pakistan agree with me on these points. This has been amply demonstrated by the newspaper writings and reports, statements and speeches by all sections of the intelligentsia, students and workers. This country-wide tremendous support to the 6-point programme is spontaneous. It is spontaneous because these demands are no new points invented afresh by me or any individual, but are in reality long-standing demands of the people and pledges of their leaders awaiting fulfilment for decades.

This being the case, I am confident that the mischievous propaganda and motivated campaign carried on by the vested interests through their agents and protectors will fail to mislead our people. They will surely not forget that whenever in the past any demand was made by East Pakistanis, however small, simple and reasonable it might be, these beneficiaries and agents of vested interests kicked up the self-same dust by raising the well-known cries of 'Islam in danger', 'disruption of Pakistan' and 'Sovereign Bengal' etc. It was the same set of people who discovered 'hidden hand of India' in our simplest demand for inclusion of Bengali as a State Language along with Urdu. These are the people who brazenly dubbed our Shere-e-Bangal as a traitor and incarcerated our beloved leader Suhrawardy on a fantastic charge of wrecking Pakistan with the help of foreign money. Nothing is too mean for them to achieve their selfish objective which is perpetuation of their exploitation of the people of East Pakistan. I know, our people is quite aware of these events not of very distant past.

But I also know that the mischief-making potentialities of these enemies of the people are inexhaustible; that their resources are unlimited; that they are a multi-colour variety of human species with sub-human conscience. It is this variety who will be found in large number in the camp of the ruling coterie in the name

of 'unity, faith and discipline'; they will be found in larger number in the opposition camp for the sake of 'Islam and democracy'. But wherever they may be, in whatever colour, under whichever garb, they actually belong to one and the same camp, that is, the camp of the enemies of the people. They are thus solidly united in their attitude of denial towards East Pakistan. So, naturally they will leave no stone unturned to achieve their objective as they have done in the past. Whenever it suited their purpose to think that the people of East Pakistan were secretly inclined towards communism, they turned the stone of American aid and assistance by signing military pacts to fight communism and thereby save East Pakistan from secessionist design engineered by the communists. If, on the other hand, it suited their convenience to imagine that East Pakistan was too much wedded to Western democracy and too much attached to U.S.A., they hastened to turn the stone of aid and assistance of communist China to save East Pakistan from falling a prey to dollar imperialism. So on this occasion also they will come to the field to fight 6-point programme just as they did to fight 21-point programme in the past. They have, in fact, already taken the field with varieties of weapons brandished by different heroes of numerous battle fields. The target is the same; it is the 6-point. Therefore, it is quite in the fitness of things that President Ayub, Choudhury Mohammad Ali and Moulana Maududi, outwardly three avowed mutual enemies, wielding their respective weapons from three antipodal horizons, are aiming poisoned arrows on the same target of the 6-point.

I, therefore, deem it my duty to issue this booklet as an explanatory note to the 6-point programme and fervently appeal to the democratic forces in general, and the Awami Leaguers in particular, to spread out in the country and carry the message of the 6-point to every hearth and home. Now that the 6-point programme has been formally adopted by the Awami League, it has undoubtedly become the national demand of the people, particularly the people of East Pakistan. I hope they will find this booklet useful in their confrontations with the agents of the vested interests who are likely to be lying in ambush everywhere.

Point 1

In this point I have recommended as follows:

The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the basis of the Lahore Resolution, and Parliamentary form of Government with supermacy of Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

It will be seen that this point consists in the following seven ingredients, viz: (a) Pakistan shall be a Federation, (b) it shall be based on Lahore Resolution, (c) its Government shall be of Parliamentary form, (d) it must be responsible to the Legislature, (e) the Legislature must be supreme, (f) it must be directly elected and (g) election must be on the basis of universal adult franchise.

Let the opponents of 6-point programme speak out. Which of these seven ingredients are they opposed to? Let the people know who are federalists and who are unitarists. Those who are unitarists are definitely against Lahore Resolution. Conversely, those who are opposed to Lahore Resolution are definitely unitarists. So let it be decided once for all who own and who do not own the Lahore Resolution by which Pakistan was created and is rightly called the Pakistan Resolution. The people who disown Lahore Resolution disown Pakistan itself. It is evidently those people who did not raise their little finger in the struggle for Pakistan but subsequently jumped on it to grab power after it was created with the blood and tears of the people. These opportunists and job-hunters cannot naturally have any regard for or attachment to the sanctity of such an historic Resolution which brought about a revolution in the sub-continent and created Pakistan. Even amongst those who swear by the Pakistan Resolution, there are some pseudo-

federalists. They pay lip-service to the Lahore Resolution but disregard it by speaking against the very fundamental principle of Federation and by introducing extra-political controversies. This confusion has been further confounded by the power that be by forcible addition of political aberrations like basically controlled democracy. It was against such future personal likes and dislikes, whims and caprices, hunger and thirst for power of individuals, that the Lahore Resolution was pledged as a guarantee by the creators of Pakistan under the able guidance of Qaid-i-Azam. It will be sheer political dishonesty to deviate from Lahore Resolution after Pakistan was created by people's votes obtained on the basis of that Resolution. If it is now found necessary to so deviate for the sake of stability and integrity of Pakistan itself, the people will certainly agree to such changes or even complete reversal. But in any event it is the people who will decide and not any body else. As far as the people of East Pakistan are concerned they in the 1954 general election overwhelmingly voted for a constitution based on the Lahore Resolution. If, however, any body has any doubt about their present attitude due to lapse of long twelve years, we are prepared to face another referendum on the issue. Until that is done by a specific referendum on universal adult suffrage the Lahore Resolution and all its corollaries remain the Magna Carta of the people of Pakistan, and the rulers and the leaders are bound to give them a Constitution based on the Resolution.

Point 2

This point recommends as follows:

Federal Government shall deal with only two subjects, viz: Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall vest in the Federating States.

Let us dispassionately discuss whether a two-subject Centre will be sufficiently strong to be a respectable Federation. It should be borne in mind that what makes a Federation strong is not heaps of subjects under it. A Federation becomes strong by the loyalty and affection in which it is held by the people in peace and the allegiance they owe and obedience they show it in war. The happy and strong people represented through efficient and strong units that make the Federation, are the real source of its strength irrespective of the number of subjects dealt with by it. Indeed, a State which serves the base rather than the apex is really the strongest. It is now an well established principle of political science that decentralization rather than centralization makes the work of a State efficient both in the administrative and in the developmental spheres. It is also a well recognised principle of Federation that only those subjects should be in the Federal list which can be jointly managed more efficiently and profitably. It is the same principle that is underlying the system of Local Self-Government like District Councils and Municipalities. The very concept of Federation is based on the maxim of unity in diversity and union without over-centralization.

It was on this principle that in 1946 the Cabinet Mission proposed an Indian Federation with only three subjects, viz: Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communication. Both the Congress and the Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Plan. The fact that ultimately it did not materialize due to a hitch elsewhere is a different matter and quite irrelevant to the issue now before us. Now, the British Government by proposing the Plan and the Congress and the Muslim League by accepting it have all demonstrated their agreement on the feasibility of a Federation with only three subjects. The only difference between the Cabinet Plan and my proposal is that I have given two subjects instead of three given in the Cabinet Plan. Even that difference is only apparent and not real as will be seen in my explanation to the Point 3 given later on. That explanation will show that I too have given three subjects to the Centre and not two. Only I have recommended Currency in place

of Communication as had been earlier done in the famous 21-point programme. I have omitted Communication for obvious reasons. The basic principle on which subjects are handed over to a Federation, as has been said earlier, is the oneness and indivisibility of the interest of the federating units in the subjects concerned. In the case of an undivided Indian Federation, Communication was really such a subject. In it, all the federating units would have been commonly interested and could have been more efficiently and profitably run if jointly managed by the Federation. An unbroken railway line and a non-stop through railway train could have run from Khybar to Chittagong. This would have been so because of the geographical contiguity. Not so Pakistan. Pakistan being comprised of two geographical units separated by over a thousand miles of foreign territory, cannot possibly have any unbroken line of communication between the two wings. The two wings being themselves two compact geographical areas, must have their own system of communication separately organized and managed. It can, therefore, never be a Federal subject. By transferring the railways to the Provinces though after prolonged procrastination the present regime has reluctantly admitted the hard fact of geography. The same will have to be done also in the case of Post and Telegraphs and all other branches of communication.

In this connection another point need be clarified. Here I have recommended designation of the federating units as 'states' instead of 'provinces' as is now done. This very mention of the word 'state' is liable to be mischievously misinterpreted by the unitarist and pseudo-federalists. They will tell the unwary public: "Look, Mujib is wanting independent States". This would be viciously wrong. Everywhere in different Federations of the world federating units are called 'states' and not 'provinces'. U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Federal Germany, Federation of Malaysia, and last of all our neighbour India, all have designated their units as 'states' instead of 'provinces'. Our next door neighbours like West Bengal and Assam are 'states' of Indian Union and not 'provinces'. That designation of Indian provinces has not rendered their Union loose or their Central Government weak. If Assam and West Bengal can have the dignity and honour of being called 'states' without impairing the solidarity of Bharati Union, why can't we have the same dignity and honour without impairing the solidarity of Pakistan Federation? Why are our rulers so allergic to our dignity?

Point 3

In this point, I have recommended either of the following two measures with regard to our Currency, viz:

A. Two separate but freely convertible currencies for two wings may be introduced, or

B. One currency for the whole country may be maintained. In this case, effective constitutional provisions are to be made to stop flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Separate Banking Reserve is to be made and separate fiscal and monetary policy to be adopted for East Pakistan.

From the above it will be seen that I have not recommended the straightway taking of Currency out of the Federal list. If my recommendation contained in B above is accepted, Currency remains a Central subject. In this case, the only difference is that I have recommended the creation of separate Reserve Banks for two wings in a Federal Reserve System as obtains in U.S.A. According to this arrangement, the State Bank of Pakistan will have two Reserve Banks for two wings. The currency for East Pakistan shall be issued through the East Pakistan Reserve Bank and shall be marked 'East Pakistan' or simply 'Dacca'. Similarly, West Pakistan currency shall be issued through West Pakistan Reserve Bank and shall be marked 'West Pakistan' or simply 'Lahore'.

This is the only way by which we can save East Pakistan from sure economic ruination by effectively stopping flight of capital from this wing to the other. The geographical separateness has made the two wings *ipso facto* two economic units. An economic convulsion, either for the better or for the worse, in one wing has no corresponding convulsion in the other wing. So progress and development in the one does not in the least benefit the other. These economic incidents are quite independent of each other in the two wings. Expenditure in one cannot create employment in the other. This economic independence and separateness of the two wings is correctly reflected in their respective price and wage structures including the price of gold. This is what is known as the absence of mobility of labour and capital. This immobility of capital, however, does not prevent flight of capital. This is how it happens under the present dispensation:

We are supposed to belong to one indivisible economy. We have one currency. There is no distinguishing mark to show the currency circulation wingwise. We are under only one Finance Ministry situated in and operating from West Pakistan presided over always by a West Pakistani Minister formulating financial, fiscal and monetary policies through one single Central Bank, that is, the State Bank of Pakistan, also located in West Pakistan, issuing money minted, coined and printed in West Pakistan. This money after travelling and meandering in circulation throughout the country journeys back to and rests in accumulation in West Pakistan. Along with the head office of the Government Central Bank the head offices of all the joint-stock Banks, except one or two small ones of very recent origin, are also located in West Pakistan. The seat of the Government being located in West Pakistan, head offices of the three Armed Forces, all Foreign Missions and almost all foreign and national trades and industries organizations are situated in that wing. As a result, all money transactions done in East Pakistan are instantaneously transferred to West Pakistan. All share money of joint-stock companies, all deposits of Banks, their security money, all Government reserves, all earnings, profits and savings of trade and industry operating in East Pakistan move in a matter of seconds to West Pakistan. Any one conversant with banking operation knows well that only barely ten per cent of the entire deposit need be kept ready for payment and the rest can be and generally is invested. Savings when invested become capital. This investment is naturally done in West Pakistan as West Pakistan's capital. This is how capital formation in West Pakistan has been so rapid. This again is how there has been total absence of capital formation in East Pakistan. As investment means employment, this incident has meant the employment in West Pakistan only. As capital formation is followed by rapid industrialization, this has meant industrialization of West Pakistan alone. This process will continue unless and until the prevailing one-way traffic of finance is effectively checked by stopping this flight of capital. This can be done and capital investment can be generated in East Pakistan only by creating a Reserve Bank for East Pakistan as suggested by me. It is the only way to save East Pakistan from economic extinction. This reform in our currency system while saving East Pakistan from economic collapse will keep currency a Central subject as a symbol of our unity and oneness.

If, however, our West Pakistani brothers think otherwise, then my other alternative may be adopted. Under that arrangement Currency will, no doubt, be a provincial subject, but that will not weaken our Centre. Neither will it affect the oneness of Pakistan. For even then we can have the same currency symbol by mutual discussion and agreement. And for the other, a federation can effectively work and be strong and stable without Currency as its subject. The Cabinet Mission recommended an Indian Federal Centre without Currency in the Federal list. Had it been thought unworkable, British Government would not have recommended it, nor would the Congress and the Muslim League have accepted it.

Point 4

In this point, I have recommended that the power of taxation and revenue collection shall vest in the federating units and that the Federal Centre will have no such power. The Federation will have a share in the state taxes for meeting their required expenditure. The Consolidated Federal Fund shall come out of a levy of certain percentage of all state taxes.

It is this proposal that seems to have most annoyed the unitarists and pseudo-federalists. They are making a lot of noises and kicking up dust of confusion such as distintegration and disruption. These are old bogeys and shibboleths used by the vested interests against all reforms in all ages. They need not worry any Pakistani. The fact is that a strong Federation can successfully work and is actually working without the power of taxation. It makes the Federation rather stronger. This is so because taxation is a duty and necessity rather than a right and power. Levying taxes and collecting them is a responsibility and a botheration. It is just like manually earning one's own livelihood. In our daily life we find people wanting to better employ themselves in finer and nobler work, lease out their properties to others at fixed rent leaving to them the arduous task of collecting small amounts from individual tenants and earning petty sums from day-to-day transactions. The monarchs of the past used to, and land-lords of the present do, lease out their realms in *ijara* for tax collection. The Central authorities in all ages have tried to be spared the botheration of tax collection for their own maintenance. It is only the *banya* mentality of the present day rulers that impels them to handle all money matters themselves. A little reflection will show that the right and power concerned do not rest in the act of tax collection but in the money so collected. If a Central Government is constitutionally assured of the required amount, why should it bother about the actual collection? In the case of a Federation it is only the fiscal taxation in which it is interested. The rest of the purposes of taxation, viz: protective, social, commercial and moral, are the responsibility of the federating units. This is what is done in U.S.A. and some other Federations. In the U.S.S.R. even the fiscal taxation is not done by the Union. There is no Finance Minister and Finance Ministry in the Union Government of the Soviet Union. The Finance Ministries and Ministers are all with the Federating Republics. They meet the requirements and serve the purposes of the Union Government. Have these arrangements weakened the Central authorities of U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.? It was with this knowledge and experience of the working of a Federation that Cabinet Mission offered an Indian Federation without the power of taxation and it was for the same reason that the Congress and the Muslim League accepted the offer. It will, therefore, be seen that a Federation can be firmly provided with its fiscal finances without being burdened with the duty of tax collection. My proposal is precisely to this effect. According to my recommendation, the Constitution will provide that a certain percentage of the Revenue collections on all heads shall automatically be credited to the Federal Fund by the Reserve Banks, on which amount the unit Governments shall have no control. Constitutional provisions may also be made empowering the Federation to raise funds to meet the increased Defence expenditure at the time of war including expansion of Federal jurisdiction in such emergencies. It is, therefore, sheer bunkum to call the autonomists the disruptors of Pakistan. On the contrary, relieving the Federation of the burden of tax collection will have the following salutary effect, viz:

(a) the Federation will have more time to devote in matters of Defence and External Relations and to act as a unifying force;

(b) wastage due to overlapping, duplication and litigation etc. will be saved and money thus saved and officials thus relieved will be available for better and nobler utilization;

- (c) the tax and revenue collection will be cheaper and easier;
- (d) economy of having a single authority for tax collection will have been achieved;
- (e) it will pave the way for introducing and adopting the most modern taxation method, viz. single taxation.

Point 5

In this point, I have recommended that

- (1) there shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings,
- (2) earnings of East Pakistan shall be under the control of East Pakistan Government and that of West Pakistan under the control of West Pakistan Government,
- (3) foreign exchange requirement of the Federal Government shall be met by the two wings either equally or in a ratio to be fixed,
- (4) indigenous products shall move free of duty between two wings,
- (5) the Constitution shall empower the unit Governments to establish trade and commercial relations with, set up trade missions in and enter into agreements with foreign countries.

Now, a panoramic glance at the economic history of Pakistan since its creation will show the following consistent incidents:

- (a) East Pakistan has earned bulk of the annual foreign exchange of Pakistan.
- (b) East Pakistan's earnings have been spent in West Pakistan in industrializing that wing and earnings from those industries have been reinvested in West Pakistan as the earnings of that wing.
- (c) East Pakistan's earnings are not being spent in East Pakistan on the plea of its inability to absorb them due to absence of capital formation.
- (d) Import to East Pakistan is less than her export, whereas import to West Pakistan is more than her export.
- (e) Two thirds of Pakistan's foreign exchange is earned by jute; but that earning is utilized neither for the benefit of the jute-growers nor for East Pakistan.
- (f) Almost all foreign aids and loans are secured against foreign exchange earned by East Pakistan; but they are spent in West Pakistan on the same plea of non-absorbing capacity of East Pakistan. The irony is that interest on these loans and their instalments are being borne by East Pakistan.

Now, the cumulative effects of these economic incidents, all of which are artificial, are the following consequences, viz.

- (i) East Pakistan has not been industrialized sufficiently,
- (ii) the little industrialization that has been done has been done by West Pakistanis or by people other than East Pakistanis with all the characteristics of foreign investments both in the matter of employment and profit earning,
- (iii) there is chronic inflation causing soaring high prices of commodities with all its concomitants like blackmarketing and profiteering bringing untold miseries to the life of the people,
- (iv) jute-growers are not only not getting fair economic price of their produce but even the cost of production is denied to them resulting in their perpetual indebtedness and progressive impoverishment.

These are man-made iniquities and are, therefore, remediable. The obvious remedies are, firstly, to industrialize East Pakistan to produce wealth among and provide employment for East Pakistanis; secondly, to check inflation by equalizing import and export and thereby supplying commodities to the people at reasonable prices; thirdly, to nationalize jute trade and thereby give fair price to the growers and ensure the state's earnings in foreign exchange. It was with this last object in view that Awami League Government set up Jute Marketing Corporation in 1957. It was subsequently reduced to nothing by the vested interests with the help of the Central Government.

Each and every one of these steps presupposes acceptance of the above proposals recommended by me.

Point 6

In this point, I have recommended setting up of a militia or a para-military force for East Pakistan. This is neither unreasonable nor new. We had pledged in the famous 21-point programme in 1954 that we would give arms and uniforms to our Ansars.

Neither is the proposal unprecedented and impracticable. There are instances where such para-military territorial forces are maintained in outlying regions. We ourselves had one such regiment from before Independence. It was the Eastern Rifles. After Pakistan, it became East Pakistan Rifles. The present regime has taken this away from the hand of East Pakistan Government.

East Pakistan is the home of the majority of Pakistanis. To defend it is the political obligation as well as moral duty of the Government of Pakistan. Why then should it be necessary for East Pakistanis to demand it? Why do they not do it on their own initiative? How and with what conscience do they say that defence of East Pakistan lies in West Pakistan? Does it not tantamount to saying that the mouth, the belly and the stomach of East Pakistan lie in West Pakistan? How will the arms, ammunitions and wealth in West Pakistan help East Pakistan when transport between the wings can be snapped in a matter of seconds? Has not the recent 17-days war proved our utter helplessness? How can one brag that some event in Warsaw saved East Pakistan? It is the defence policy of our Government that has reduced us to this position. In spite of all this we want a united Defence of the country and to retain it as a Central subject. But at the same time we want that East Pakistan be made self-sufficient in the matter of Defence; that an Ordnance Factory, a Military Academy and the Navy Headquarter must be set up in East Pakistan. These things were actually demanded in 1954. Nothing, however, has been done in the course of long twelve years. We do not yet know when these will be done.

So in the meantime we want to make our own Defence arrangement in a small way with unsophisticated weapons suited to our own field craft within easy reach of our limited resources. What is the objection? Where does it lie? It is not easy to comprehend. Neither is it easy to understand why a Fund separately raised for East Pakistan war purposes is promptly taken over by the Centre.

AN APPEAL

Now, before concluding, I want to submit a few words to my West Pakistani brethren:

Firstly, they should not run away with the idea that whatever I have stated above I have done in the interest of East Pakistan only. It is not so. In each of my 6-point programme is inherent a corresponding benefit to my West Pakistani brethren. They are sure to derive equal benefit out of their implementation.

Secondly, when I speak of East Pakistan's wealth being flown to and concentrated in West Pakistan I only mean regional concentration. I do not, thereby, mean that this

wealth has reached the masses of West Pakistan. No, I do not and cannot mean that. I know there are millions like us in West Pakistan who also are unfortunate victims of this economic exploitation. I also know that the entire wealth of the country is concentrated in the hands of a few families. This will continue till the capitalistic pattern of our society is not changed. But before that, this regional exploitation must cease. I, however, do not blame West Pakistanis for this regional exploitation.

Thirdly, it is the geographical situation and the unnatural system that is being pursued which are responsible for this injustice. Take only one instance:

Had the Capital of Pakistan been located in East Pakistan instead of West Pakistan this regional exploitation would have occurred in the reverse way. 62% of our Revenue that is being spent on our Defence forces, and 32% of our Revenue that is being spent on our Central Administration would have all been spent in East Pakistan instead of West Pakistan. The well-known Public Finance maxim that "the expenditure of the Government is the income of the people and the income of Government is the expenditure of the people" would have worked in favour of East Pakistan instead of West Pakistan. This 94% of our total Revenue which has been annually spent in West Pakistan, and thus formed the income of West Pakistan, would have in that case been spent in and enriched East Pakistan. The seat of the Government being in West Pakistan, all the three Headquarters of the Armed Forces and all Central institutions and Foreign Missions have got their head offices in West Pakistan as a matter of course. Consequently, all their spendings are done in that wing. All these spendings would have been in East Pakistan had the seat of the Government been here. East Pakistan would have been enriched and West Pakistan impoverished to that extent and in that proportion.

In that event, you, the West Pakistanis, would have made the same demands for regional justice for which you are condemning us, the East Pakistanis, and ascribing all sorts of evil motives. In that case you would have realized that there was no other motive than the motive of self-preservation. In that context, when West Pakistanis would have made such demands of regional justice, do you know what would have been our attitude? We, East Pakistanis, would have straightway accepted your demands instead of calling you bad names like provincial, narrow-minded and disruptionist. We would have at once conceded that it was your right to demand justice and equality and it was your duty to do so. Nay, we would have gone further. We would not have waited for you to make these demands. Instead, we would have met your requirements before you would have demanded them. We really believe in justice, equality and fairplay amongst brothers. A State is nothing if not a big family. Even in a family, eating by one member does not fill the stomach of another. So, how and with what conscience do you call us selfish for demanding our share? What will others call you who are not only enjoying your own share but devouring the share of your brothers also? We are, however, demanding our share only, not yours too. We want to live with you as equal partners, not exploiters.

Fourthly, if we happen to have more than enough, we can even sacrifice something for you from out of our share. We did so in the past. Do not you remember? Please recall:

(1) In the first Constituent Assembly we had 44 and you had 28 representatives. If we wanted we could most democratically have brought the Capital and Headquarters of the three Armed Forces to East Pakistan. We did not.

(2) Out of sheer brotherly feeling and sense of equality we elected 6 West Pakistanis to Constituent Assembly from East Pakistan by East-Pakistani votes.

(3) By our majority we could have made Bengali our only State Language. We, however, demanded and got both Urdu and Bengali.

(4) By majority of votes we could have framed a Constitution favourable to East Pakistan.

(5) To remove any possible complex of domination we sacrificed our majority and accepted parity on your assurance that you would concede parity in all respects.

Fifthly, the above should be enough to convince West Pakistani brothers that we East Pakistanis are really consumed with a sense of brotherly equality towards you by which we want to live in honour and dignity. That we are capable of making sacrifices for you, if you need it, has also been proved in the past. Had the Capital been in East Pakistan we would have on our own initiative set up a real Second Capital in West Pakistan, not merely a hoax of a Capital. We would never have taken advantage of that vantage position and would not have grabbed all the important offices ourselves. We would not have captured all the high and lucrative posts of West Pakistan like chairmanships of Cotton Board, P.I.D.C., Railway Board, P.C.S., Port Trust and WAPDA etc. We would not have thought of capturing the Governorship of your wing. On the contrary, we would have equitably distributed the high offices between the people of the two wings, we would have made effective arrangements for spending Central Revenues equitably between East and West Pakistan, we would have extended regional and provincial autonomy instead of curtailing them. We would never have allowed any disparity to grow between two wings either political, administrative or economic. We would never have done anything to create any feeling that because we East Pakistanis are in a majority, because the seat of the Government is here, we are, therefore, the masters of Pakistan. We would rather have done everything to make you feel that this country belongs to you as well as to us, both in thought and in action. We would have shared State powers equally with you.

We believe that this feeling of absolute equality, sense of inter-wing justice and impartiality is the very basis of Pakistani patriotism. Only he is fit to be a leader of Pakistan who is imbued with and consumed by such patriotism. A leader who sincerely believes that the two wings of Pakistan are really two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two rows of teeth, two hands and two legs of the body-politic of Pakistan, a leader who feels that to make Pakistan healthy and strong one must make each one of these pairs equally healthy and strong, a leader who earnestly believes that to weaken any one of these limbs is to weaken Pakistan as a whole, a leader who zealously holds that any one who deliberately or knowingly weakens any limb of Pakistan is an enemy of the country and a leader who is ready to take strong measures against such enemies, is the only person entitled to claim the national leadership of Pakistan. Pakistan is a magnificent country with an uncommonly wide horizon. To be fit to become its leader one must possess a similarly magnificent heart with an uncommon breadth of vision.

Sixthly, let me humbly remind my West Pakistani brothers and sisters that when we demanded Bengali to be made one of the two State Languages of Pakistan you condemned it as a move to undo Pakistan. When again we demanded joint electorate particularly in the context of parity in representation demanded by you, you condemned our demand to have been inspired from across the border. Both of these two demands have now been accepted; but there has been no undoing of Pakistan due to their acceptance. Does it not put you to shame that every bit of reasonable demand of East Pakistan has got to be secured from you at tremendous cost and after bitter struggle as if snatched from unwilling foreign rulers as a reluctant concession? Does it do you any credit? Please put a stop to such attitude once for all. Please be brothers instead of rulers.

In conclusion, I fervently appeal to my countrymen to deeply ponder over the formula put forward by me. They will find that none of the items in my 6-point programme is either unjust, impractical or disruptive of the country's integrity. I hope I have succeeded, in the short space of this booklet, in showing that the acceptance of these points will not only weaken Pakistan but will on the contrary make it stronger.

But the vested interests for obvious reasons will not agree. They have got their own way of judging things. To them, only the continuation and the perpetuation of their exploi-

tation mean stability of a Society and a State. To them any body who disturbs or threatens to disturb this process of exploitation is a traitor and a disruptor. This is neither new nor surprising. Our great forebears like Fazlul Huq and Suhrawardy had to fall victims to such vitriolics. In taking up the cause of the exploited masses one must, therefore, be ready and prepared for such vilifications and incarcerations. To my lot have fallen many such trials and tribulations in the past. Through the blessings of my superiors, comradeship of my colleagues and affectionate support of my countrymen, God in His infinite mercy gave me courage and fortitude enough to withstand those oppressions. With this boundless affection of my countrymen as my asset, I am fully prepared to make any sacrifice in their service. The life of any individual like myself is nothing compared to the salvation of the people of my country. I know of no nobler battle than to fight for the rights of the exploited millions. This is the lesson I have learnt at the feet of my political master Suhrawardy. He is no longer in our midst to guide us. But I am determined to live upto that lesson and keep his flag flying. The country is passing through the darkest hour of her life. At such a difficult time, Awami League Council has placed the heavy responsibility of its Presidentship on my already overburdened shoulder. But through Allah's mercy I am no shirker. I am not afraid of work. So I have with all humility accepted the great responsibility. I have great faith in my people. I also know that the darkest hour of night is just a harbinger of dawn. My beloved countrymen will only pray to Allah so that He may continue to give me mental strength and physical fitness to devote the rest of my life in fighting for restoration of their rights which have been forcibly snatched away.

APPENDIX C**ELEVEN POINT PROGRAMME**

Eleven Points Programme a charter of demand framed as a remedy to acute economic disparity between East and West Pakistan and as a programme for putting an end to the despotic Ayub regime. The Six Points Movement of Awami League under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman initiated in 1966, sustained a temporary pause consequent upon the en-masse arrest of the Awami League leaders including Bangabandhu, institution of Agartala Conspiracy Case in 1968 and repression on the Awami League activists. The situation led to the formation of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and the Democratic Action Committee (DAC). But when PDM and DAC ultimately failed to intensify the movement against the autocratic Ayub government, the students of Dhaka University organized a united movement in 1968 which soon turned into a mass movement. In October 1968, the East Pakistan Students League and the Menon and Matia group of East Pakistan Students Union formed a political alliance. These two student organizations jointly formed the 'Chhatra Sangram Parishad' in January 1968 and declared an eleven points charter of demand.

1	(a)	To abandon the policy of provincialisation of the financially solvent colleges and to deprovincialise the colleges hitherto provincialised including the Jagannath College.
	(b)	To establish schools and colleges throughout the province especially in rural areas for ensuring wider scope for spread of education and to give early approval to the schools and colleges established by private initiative. To establish adequate number of engineering colleges, polytechnic, technical and commercial institutes for providing wider scope for technical education.
	(c)	To open IA, I Sc, I Com and BA, BSc, B Com night classes in second shift in colleges of the province and to open MA and M Com classes in night shift in the established colleges.
	(d)	To reduce 50% of the tuition fee and to increase the number of scholarship and stipend. Award of scholarship and stipend to any student shall not be seized for his participation in student movement.

(e)	To pay 50% of the charges of hall, dining hall and canteen of hostels by the government as 'subsidy'.
(f)	To solve accommodation problem in halls and hostels.
(g)	To arrange for teaching at all levels of education through the medium of mother tongue. To introduce Bangla as the medium of exchange in offices and courts. To arrange for sufficient number of experienced teachers in all the educational institutions. To enhance the salary of the teachers, and to ensure right of expression of their free opinion.
(h)	To provide for tuition-fees free and compulsory education upto class viii. To expand the scope for female education.
(i)	To establish medical university, and to fulfill the demands of the medical students, such as abolition of automation system, closing of system of admission by nomination, annulment of Medical Council Ordinance, elevation of dental college to full-fledged college, etc. To fulfill all the demands of the nurse-students.
(j)	To abolish automation system in engineering education, annulment of 10% and 75% rule, proper arrangement of central library, and to fulfill all demands of the engineering students including demand for introduction of class gradation in final year.
(k)	To give facilities of 'condensed course' to the polytechnic students and to issue diploma only on the basis of semester examinations having the Board final examination system withdrawn.
(l)	To fulfill immediately all the demands of the students of Textile, Ceramic, Leather technology and Art College. To fulfill ten points demand of the IER, and to fulfill all the demands of the social welfare students, MBA students and of law students. To bifurcate the Commerce Department as separate 'faculty' in all the universities including the Dhaka University.
(m)	To fulfill the legitimate demands of the students of agricultural schools and colleges, and to fulfill all the demands of the agricultural students including the

		demand for condensed course of agricultural diploma students.
	(n)	To arrange for tickets at 50% concession to the students travelling on train, steamer and launch on display of their identity card. Concession is to be made admissible in monthly tickets also. As in West Pakistan, the students should be allowed to travel anywhere within the town at 10 paisa fare. Concession in fare at the rate of 50% should be allowed in bus journey in remote areas. Adequate number of buses should be arranged for the school and college going female students. The students attending as spectators at any sports and cultural functions arranged by the government or any semi-government concerns, should be entitled to 50% concession in tickets.
	(o)	To arrange for surety of job.
	(p)	To annul the defamed university ordinances and to ensure full autonomy to the educational institutions including the universities.
	(q)	To reject the National Education Commission Report and the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report, representing an authentic document of astringent education policy of the ruling class, and to introduce people-oriented and scientific education system for the greater interest of the student community and the people.
2.		To establish parliamentary democracy through direct election on adult franchise. To promote liberty of speech, personal liberty and liberty of press. To withdraw prohibitive order imposed upon the Ittefaq.
3.		To give full autonomy to East Pakistan on the basis of fulfillment of the following demands:
	(a)	The constitutional structure of the country shall be a federation of states and the power of the legislature shall be supreme.
	(b)	The jurisdiction of the federal government shall be limited to defence, foreign policy and currency, and the power of the federating states shall be supreme in all matters.

	(c)	Common currency shall be in circulation in two wings of the country having the system under the jurisdiction of the centre. But there should be specific provision in the Constitution so that the currency of East Pakistan cannot be laundered to West Pakistan. Under this system there shall be a federal reserve bank in Pakistan. There will be two separate reserve banks in two wings, and separate economy for East Pakistan shall have to be introduced.
	(d)	The fixation of all kinds of taxes, land revenue and duties, and the collection of such taxes shall be vested with the regional government. The Federal government shall have no power to fix and impose any tax. A fixed portion of the revenue collected by the regional government shall immediately be deposited to the federal fund. Mandatory rules on the reserve banks to that end shall be incorporated in the Constitution.
	(e)	Each of the federating states shall maintain separate accounts of external trade, and the remittance earned through external trade will lie with the federating states. The federating states shall provide for the necessary foreign currency to the federal government equally or as prescribed in the specific Article of the Constitution. The inter states import and export of inland commodities shall be free of custom duties. Provision shall have to be made in the Constitution guarantying the exclusive right of the federating states in executing trade agreements with the foreign states, establishing trade mission abroad, and in conducting import and export trade.
	(f)	To provide East Pakistan with an authority of forming a militia or para-military Raksi Bahini. To establish ordnance factory and the naval headquarters in East Pakistan.
4.		To constitute sub-federation by giving autonomy to all the provinces including Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province and Sind of West Pakistan.
5.		To nationalize bank, insurance, jute trade and large-scale industries.
6.		To reduce the rate of land revenue and taxes imposed upon the peasants, and to exempt arrear land tax and outstanding debt. To annul the certificate system and to stop the repression of the tahsildars. To fix the minimum price of jute at taka 40 per maund and to ensure legitimate price of sugar-cane.

7.	To pay legitimate wage and bonus to the labourers and to arrange for their education, housing, medical treatment etc. To withdraw all black-laws detrimental to the interest of the labourers, and to ensure their right to strike and right to trade union activities.
8.	To take steps towards flood control measures in East Pakistan, and to ensure overall utilization of water resources.
9.	To withdraw Emergency Act, Safety Act and other repressive Acts.
10.	To annul SEATO, CENTO agreements, Pak-American Military Pact and to ensure non-aligned independent and neutral foreign policy.
11.	To release immediately all the students, labourers, peasants, political activists and leaders, detained in different jails of the country, to repeal warrant and hulia, and to withdraw all the cases instituted on political grounds including the Agartala Conspiracy Case.

The Six Points demand of Awami League had its wide reflection on the Eleven Points demand of the Chhatra Sangram Parishad. The demands relating to the interest of the Bengali middle class peasants and workers were also included in the Eleven Points demand. Consequently, the Eleven Points movement addressed wide public support in East Pakistan, and the leadership of the anti-Ayub movement virtually came within the grip of the student leaders. The student movement was initiated in October 1968, reached its climax in January 1969, and by mid-January culminated into a mass movement. The Eleven Points movement of the students had direct contribution towards preparing the background of the War of Liberation. [Muazzam Hussain Khan]

Source: http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Eleven_Points_Programme

APPENDIX D

OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT BASIS FOR PLANNING

1. AL action and reactions to be treated as rebellion and those who support or defy Martial Law action be dealt with as hostile elements.
2. As AL has widespread support even amongst the East Pakistan elements in the Army, the operation has to be launched with great cunningness, surprise, deception and speed combined with shock action.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

3. The operation to be launched all over the Province simultaneously.
4. Maximum number of political and student leaders and extremists amongst teaching staff, cultural organizations to be arrested. In the initial phase top political leaders and student leaders must be arrested.
5. Operation must achieve a hundred percent success in Dacca. For that DU will have to be occupied and searched.
6. Security of cantonments must be ensured. Greater use of fire against those who dare attack the cantonment.
7. All means of internal and international communications to be cut off. Telephone exchange, radio, TV, Tele-printer services, transmitters with foreign consulates to be closed down.
8. East Pakistan troops to be neutralized by controlling and guarding kotes and ammunition by West Pakistani troops. Same for PAF and EPR.

SURPRISE AND DECEPTION

9. At higher plane, it is requested that President may consider the desirability of continuing the dialogue - even of deceiving Mujib that even though Mr. Bhutto may not agree he will make an announcement on 25 March 1971 conceding to the demands of AL etc.
10. At tactical Level
 - (a) As secrecy is of paramount importance, preliminary operations given below should be carried out by troops already located in the city:
 - i. Breaking into Mujib's house and arresting all present. The house is well- guarded and well-defended.

- ii. Surrounding the important halls of the Universities- Iqbal Hall, DU, Liaqat Hall Engineering University.
 - iii. Switching off telephone exchange.
 - iv. Isolating known houses where weapons etc have been collected.
- (b) No activity by troops in the cantonment area till telephone exchange has been switched off.
- (c) Nobody should be allowed to go out of the cantonment after 2200 hrs on the night of operation.
- (d) On one excuse or the other, troops in the city should be reinforced in the area of the President's House, Governor's House, MNA Hostel, Radio, TV and Telephone exchange premises.
- (e) Civilian cars may have to be used for operation against Mujib's house.

SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS

11. (a) H Hr - 0100 hrs.
- (b) Timing for move out:
- i. Cdo (one platoon) - Mujib's house - 0100 hrs.
 - ii. Telephone exchange switched off - 2455 hrs.
 - iii. Troops earmarked for cordon University - 0105 hrs.
 - iv. Troops from the city to Rajarbagh Police HQ and other PS nearby - 0105 hrs.
 - v. Following places surrounded - 0105 hrs:
Mrs. Anwara Begum's House, Rd no29 & House No. 148, Rd No. 29
 - vi. Curfew imposed – 0110 hrs by Siren (arrange) and loudspeakers. Duration 30 hrs initially. No passes for the initial phase. Due consideration to be given only to the cases of delivery and serious heart attack etc. Evacuate by Army on request. Also announce that there will be no newspapers brought out till further orders.
 - vii. Troops move out to respective sectors with specific missions - 0110 hrs. (For troop alert a drill to be evolved). Halls occupied and searched.
 - viii. Troops move to the university area - 0500 hrs.
 - ix. Road blocks and riverine block establish - 0200 hrs.
- (c) Operation during the Day time
- i. House to house search of Dhanmondi suspected houses, also Hindu houses in old city (intelligence to collect data).

- ii. All printing presses to be closed down. All cyclostyling machines in the University, Colleges (T&T) and Physical Training Institute and Technical Institute to be confiscated.
- iii. Curfew imposed with severity.
- iv. Other leaders arrested.

12. Allotment of Troops to Tasks: Details to be worked out by Bde Comd but the following must be done:

- (a) Kotes of East Pakistan units taken over, including Signals and other administrative units. Arms to be given only to the West Pakistan personnel. Explanation: We did not embarrass the East Pakistan troops and did not want to be used in tasks that may not be pleasant to them.
- (b) Police station to be disarmed.
- (c) DG EPR to ensure security of his kotes.

13. Info required:

- (a) Whereabouts of the following:

i. Mujib	ix. Oli Ahad
ii. Nazrul Islam	x. Mrs Motia Chaudhry
iii. Tajuddin	xi. Barrister Maudud
iv. Osmani	xii. Faizul Haq
v. Sirajul Alam	xiii. Tofail
vi. Mannan	xiv. N. A. Siddiqi
vii. Ataur Rahman	xv. Rauf
viii. Professor Muzaffar	xvi. Makhan

And other student leaders.

- (b) Location of all police stations and of Rifles.
- (c) Location of strong points and arsenal houses in the city.
- (d) Location of cultural centers that are being used for imparting military training.
- (e) Location of training areas and campus.
- (f) Names of ex-service officers who are actively helping insurrectional movement.

14. Command Control - Two commands be established:

- (a) Dacca Area:
 - Comd - Maj Gen Farman
 - Staff - Eastern Comd Staff/ HQ ML
 - Troops - Located in Dacca

- (b) The rest of the Province:
Comd- Maj Gen KH Raja
Staff -HQ 14 Div
Troops-Less those in Dacca
- 15. Security of the Cantt
Phase I De-escalate. All arms including PAF deposited.
- 16. Communication
 - (a) Security
 - (b) Layout

ALLOTMENT OF TROOPS TO TASKS

DACCA

Comd and Control: Maj Gen Farman with HQ MLA Zone B.

Troops: HQ 57 Bde with troops in Dacca. i.e. 18 PB, 32 PB (CO to be replaced by [Lt Col] Taj, GSO I (intelligence), 22 BAL, 13 FF, 31 Fd Regt., 13 LAA Regt, coy of 3 Cdo (from Comilla).

Tasks:

1. Neutralize by disarming 2 and 10 EB, HQ EPR (2500), Reserve police at Rajarbagh (2000)
2. Exchange and Transmitters, Radio, TV, State Bank.
3. Arrest AL leaders --- detailed lists and addresses
4. University halls, Iqbal, Jagannath, Liaqat (Engineering University)
5. Seal off town including road, rail and river. Patrol river.
6. Protect factories at Gazipur and ammo Depot at Rajandrapur.

Remainder: Under Maj Gen KH Raja and HQ 14 Div.

JESSORE

Troops: HQ 107 Bde, 25 BAL, 27 BAL, Elements of 24 Fd Regt. 55 Fd Regt.

Tasks:

1. Disarm 1 EB and Sector HQ EPR and reserve police including Ansar weapons.
2. Secure Jessore town and arrest AL and student leaders.
3. Exchange and telephone communication.
4. Zone of security round cantt, Jessore town and Jessore - Khulna road, airfield.
5. Exchange at Kushtia to be made inoperative.

6. Reinforce Khulna if required.

KHULNA

Troops: 22 FF

Tasks:

1. Security in town.
2. Exchange and Radio Station.
3. Wing HQ EPR, Reserve companies and Reserve Police to be disarmed.
4. Arrest AL students and communist leaders.

RANGPUR - SAIDPUR

Troops: HQ 23 Bde, 29 Cav, 26 FF, 23 Fd Regt,

Tasks:

1. Security of Rangpur - Saidpur.
2. Disarm 3 EB at Saidpur.
3. If possible disarm Sector HQ and reserve company at Dinajpur or neutralize by dispersal Reserve Company by reinforcing border outposts.
4. Radio station and telephone exchange at Rangpur
5. AL and student leaders at Rangpur.
6. Ammo dumps at Bogra.

RAJSHAHI

Troops: 25 Punjab

Tasks:

1. Dispatch CO - Shafqat Baluch.
2. Exchange and Radio Station Rajshahi.
3. Disarm Reserve Police and Sector HQ EPR.
4. Rajshahi University and in particular Medical College.
5. AL and student leaders.

COMILLA

Troops: 53 Fd Regt, 1/2 Mor Bty, Station troops, 3 Cdo Bn (less coy)

Tasks:

1. Disarm 4 EB, Wing HQ EPR, Reserve District police
2. Secure town and arrest AL leaders and students.
3. Exchange.

SYLHET

Troops: 31 PB Less coy.

Tasks:

1. Radio station, Exchange.
2. Koeno Bridge over Surma.
3. Airfield.
4. AL and student leaders.
5. Disarm sector HQ EPR and reserve police. Liaise with Sikandar.

CHITTAGONG

Troops: 20 BAL, less advanced party; coy 31 PB present ex Sylhet; Iqbal Shafi to lead a mobile column from Comilla by road and reinforce. Start Time: 0100 hrs (H hrs) on D-Day.

Mobile Column: Brig Iqbal Shafi with Tactical HQ and communication; 24 FF; Tp Heavy Mortar; Fd Coy Engr; coy in advance to Feni on evening D-Day.

Tasks:

1. Disarm EBRC, 8 EB, Sector HQ EPR, Reserve Police.
2. Seize Central police Armory (Twenty thousand)
3. Radio Station and Exchange.
4. Liaise with Pakistan Navy (Commodore Mumtaz)
5. Liaise with Shigri and Janjua (CO 8 EB) who have been instructed to take orders from you till arrival of Iqbal Shafi.
6. If Shigri and Janjua feel sure about their outfits then do not disarm. In that case merely put in a roadblock to town from Cantonment by placing a coy in defensive position so that later EBRC and 8 EB is blocked should they change their loyalties?
7. I am taking Brig Mozumdar with me. Arrest Chaudhury (CI, EBRC) on D-Day night.
8. Arrest of AL and student leaders after above accomplished.

Source: Wahab, ATM Abdul. *Mukti Bahini Wins Victory: Military Oligarchy Divides Pakistan in 1971*. 2nd ed. Dhaka: Columbia Prokashoni, 2005. pp, 323-330.

APPENDIX E

**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY
BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN ON 26TH MARCH 1971**

শিরোনাম	সূত্র	তারিখ
স্বাধীন বাংলা বেতারকেন্দ্র হতে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের নামে প্রচারিত স্বাধীনতার ঘোষণা।	বাংলাদেশ সরকার, পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়ের বহির্বিশ্ব প্রচার বিভাগ কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত পুস্তিকা—“বংগবন্ধু স্পীক্‌স”।	২৬ মার্চ, ১৯৭১।

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

“This may be my last message, from today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved.”

[Message embodying Declaration of Independence sent by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Chittagong shortly after midnight of 25th March, i.e. early hours of 26th March, 1971 for transmission throughout Bangladesh over the ex-EPR transmitter.]

Source: Mahmudullah, ed. *Bangladesher Swadhinota Juddher Etihash. O Dalilpatra (1905-1971), (The History and Documents of War of Independence)*. Vol.1. Dhaka: Gotidhara, 1999. P, 414.

APPENDIX F

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY MAJOR ZIAUR RAHMAN ON BEHALF OF BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN ON 27TH MARCH 1971

২

শিরোনাম	সূত্র	তারিখ
স্বাধীন বাংলা বেতার কেন্দ্র থেকে মেজর জিয়াউর রহমান কর্তৃক স্বাধীনতার ঘোষণা।*	স্বাধীন বাংলা বেতার প্রচারিত অনুষ্ঠান মালার টেপরেকর্ড, ২৭ মার্চ, ১৯৭১ ; দি স্টেটসম্যান, দিল্লী, ২৭ মার্চ, ১৯৭১।	২৭ মার্চ ১৯৭১।

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Major Zia, Provisional Commander-in-Chief of the Bangladesh Liberation Army, hereby proclaims, on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the independence of Bangladesh.

I also declare, we have already framed a sovereign, legal Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman which pledges to function as per law and the constitution. The new democratic Government is committed to a policy of non-alignment in international relations. It will seek friendship with all nations and strive for international peace. I appeal to all Government to mobilize public opinion in their respective countries against the brutal genocide in Bangladesh.

The Government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is sovereign legal Government of Bangladesh and is entitled to recognition from all democratic nations of the world.

* মেজর জিয়াউর রহমানের ২৭শে মার্চের স্বাধীনতা ঘোষণা পাঠের ঐতিহাসিক মূল কপিটি নিরাপত্তার কারণে নষ্ট করে ফেলা হয়েছিল।

APPENDIX G

**REGULAR COMMISSION - GENTLEMEN CADETS -
PAKISTAN MILITARY ACADEMY 22 LONG AND 1 GRADUATES COURSES**

RESTRICTED

General Headquarters
MS Branch (MS-2A)
RAWALPINDI
Tele. No 534/GHQ
No 0313/0815/MS-2A
17 Oct 60

CM(C), RAWALPINDI - (122)

Copy to:- FMA, KARUL - For issuing necessary casualty return to CM(C).
HQ 1 Corps HQ Divs/Bdes/Sub Areas concerned 4 Corps Arty

Internal distr:- CCRO-(116) Mindef(AL Sec) AC-1 Arty. E-1
Sigs-4 Inf-1 MT-2 PA-2(b) PA-3(a) PA-4(b)
PS-3 ST-1B CS-8

Subject:- Regular Commission - Gentlemen Cadets - Pakistan Military Academy 22 Long and 1 Graduates Courses

- Under the provisions of AI(F) 175/49, the Gentlemen Cadets mentioned in annexure 'A' and 'B' to this letter, who passed out from Pakistan Military Academy on 15 Oct 60 have been selected for the grant of Permanent Regular Commission in the Pakistan Land Forces, as 2/Lts with effect from 16 Oct 60.
- The personal numbers allotted to these cadets are shown against their names. These numbers should be entered in their records of service and must invariably be used with their names in all official correspondence.
- The grant of Permanent Regular Commission to these cadets will be notified in the Gazette of Pakistan in due course.
- Necessary action to make provisional payments, (upto full entitlement of pay and allowances as 2/Lts), may please be taken by you. Bankers nominated by the cadets are shown against their names. Remaining cadets will intimate their bankers direct.
- The cadets allotted to various arms have been posted/attached as ordered vide this GHQ letter mentioned below:-

AC	No 0304/368/MS-4A) - dated 8 Oct 60
Arty	No 0372/776/MS-4A	
Engrs	No 0308/22/MS-4B) - dated 6 Oct 60
Sigs)	
Inf	No 0336/3145/MS-4C	
ASC	No 0308/20/MS-4D	
AOC)	
- The following GCs of 1 Graduate Course have been commissioned provisionally till further orders:-

GC-2548	Muhammad Qasim
GC-2295	Syed Nizhat Hussain
GC-2520	Muhammad Akram
- Photographs of offrs will be forwarded to MS Branch (MS-3) in accordance with P4C 143/56 within one month of offrs' joining the units.

Maj
for Military Secretary
(R H BILGRAMI)

RESTRICTED

Annexure IAI to GHO letter No 0313/0215/MS-2a dated /8 (of 60)

PAKISTAN MILITARY ACADEMY 22 LONG COURSE

CC No.	PERSONAL NO.	N A M E	REGT/ OFFICERS	BANKERS
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
2212	PA-6220	M. ABDUS SAMI	Baluch	Habib Lahore
2188	PA-6221	ANIS AKRAM BEG	AC	National Lahore
2184	PA-6222	RIAZ AHMAD QURESHI	Arty	National Rawalpindi
2154	PA-6223	ABDUL KALEEM	Arty	Habib Lahore
2195	PA-6224	IFTIKHAR AHMED MIR	Punjab	Habib Rawalpindi
2169	PA-6225	MUHAMMAD IQBAL DAR	Arty	Grindlays Lahore
2204	PA-6226	ROSHAN EJAZ	AC	Habib Lahore
2173	PA-6227	CH SARDAR ALI	FF	Lloyds Lahore
2171	PA-6228	SYED MAJID AHMED	Engr	Lloyds Rawalpindi
2161	PA-6229	M MUMTAZ AHMAD	Punjab	Habib Rawalpindi
2122	PA-6230	MOSHARRAF HOSSAIN	ASC	National Chittagong
2155	PA-6231	SAEED AHMAD	Engr	Lloyds Lahore
2172	PA-6232	MASOOD JAN KHAN DERRANI	ACC	Habib Peshawar
2174	PA-6233	SYED SHAHID ABBAS NAQVI	Arty	National Sialkot
2165	PA-6234	ABDUL RAJPKHAN	Sig	Habib Mardan
2177	PA-6235	KHALID LATIF	Arty	Lloyds Rawalpindi
2182	PA-6236	EHSAN ULLAH KHAN	FF	Grindlays Lahore
2167	PA-6237	JEHANGIR MALIK	FF	Lloyds Lahore
2194	PA-6238	MAZHAR-UL-HAQ	Sig	Lloyds Lahore
2178	PA-6239	MASOOD ALI KHAN	Engr	Habib Lahore
2060	PA-6240	KHALID YASIN	Punjab	Lloyds Lahore
2181	PA-6241	MUHAMMAD HAFEEZ KHAN	Engr	Habib Lahore
2180	PA-6242	MUHAMMAD AKHTAR	ACC	Habib Sargodha
2189	PA-6243	AHMED FAROOQ	ACC	Lloyds Lahore
2175	PA-6244	AHSAN ZAMAN	AC	Habib Lahore
2168	PA-6245	MIR SAUDAT ULLAH	Arty	Grindlays Peshawar
2193	PA-6246	GHULAM QADIR KHAN	Arty	Habib Bannu
2203	PA-6247	RAFIQUE AHMAD	ASC	National Lahore
2212	PA-6248	FAZAL ALI RASOOL	ASC	Lloyds Dacca ✓
2207	PA-6249	SYED ZAFAR MEHDI ZAIDI	Punjab	Habib Lahore
2205	PA-6250	BADSHAH SYED GUL	ASC	Habib Peshawar
2200	PA-6251	M ZAHUR AHMAD	Baluch	Lloyds Rawalpindi
2170	PA-6252	MUHAMMAD NASEEM KHAN	Arty	Lloyds Rawalpindi
2133	PA-6253	KHALID MAHMUD	Arty	Habib Lahore
2197	PA-6254	ABDUL GHUFFAR KHAN	Engr	Habib Lyallpur
2197	PA-6255	MALIK MUHAMMAD ISHAQ	Sig	National Sargodha
2171	PA-6256	MUHAMMAD SIDDIQ	Baluch	Lloyds Rawalpindi
2166	PA-6257	GHULAM MUSTAFA	FF	National Kohat
2172	PA-6258	RASHED AHMED	FF	Habib Lahore
2202	PA-6259	NURUL ISLAM LASKAR	Arty	Lloyds Dacca ✓
2191	PA-6260	ABDUL RASHID QURASHI	Arty	Lloyds Rawalpindi

Annexure IRI

PAKISTAN MILITARY ACADEMY LONG GRADUATES COURSE

2236	PA-6261	GHULAM RASUL	Engr	National Sargodha
2231	PA-6262	SHAUKAT ALI	Arty	Habib Lahore
2235	PA-6263	GHULAM AHMAD KABIR	Arty	Habib Rawalpindi
2231	PA-6264	SYED IMTIAZ HOSSAIN ROKHARI	Punjab	National Lahore
2233	PA-6265	MUHAMMAD IQBAL HAQ	FF	Grindlays Peshawar
2237	PA-6266	SULTAN SHEER AFGAN KAINI	Punjab	National
2232	PA-6267	MUHAMMAD IQBAL	Baluch	Habib
2233	PA-6268	MUHAMMAD ABDUL LATIF	Sigs	Habib Lahore
2234	PA-6269	SAEED-UZ-ZAMAN	AC	Habib
2237	PA-6270	HAMEED ULLAH KHAN	Punjab	Lloyds Lahore
2237	PA-6271	ABDUL JAMEEL	Engr	National Lahore
2237	PA-6272	SYED TAFSIR-UL-ISLAM	ASC	National Rawalpindi
2231	PA-6273	JAMIL NAQAR AHMAD	Engr	Habib Lahore

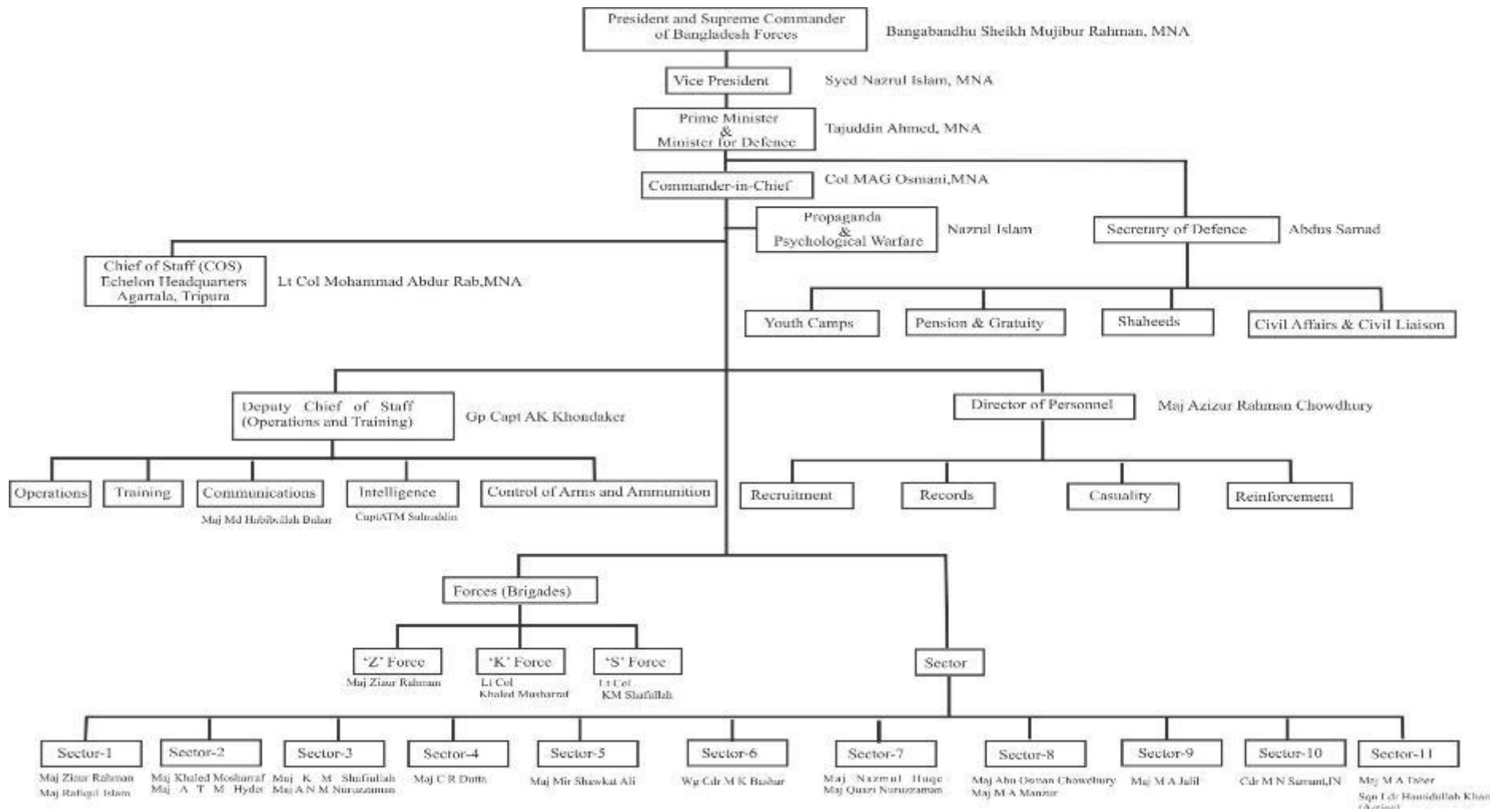
- 3 -

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
2339	PA-6305	BILAL AHMAD	FF	Lloyds Rawalpindi
2340	PA-6306	ZULFIQAR AHMAD KHAN	AC	National
2340	PA-6307	MAMMUD AHMAD KHAN RASHID	ASC	National
2340	PA-6308	MUHAMMAD MUZAFFAR	Baluch	Habib Gujrat
2287	PA-6309	SABIR UDDIN AHMED	Sigs	Habib
2515	PA-6310	ABDUR RAHMAN	AC	National Jhelum
2297	PA-6311	Tariq Mahmud	Baluch	National Rawalpindi
2520	PA-6312	MUHAMMAD AFRAN	ASC	National Rawalpindi
2528	PA-6313	MIAN AHMAD MUSHTAQ TARIQ	Arty	Habib Lahore
2521	PA-6314	MUHAMMAD AFZAL KHAN	Arty	National Lahore
2501	PA-6315	BASIT ALI KHAN	AC	Habib Rawalpindi
2505	PA-6316	MUHAMMAD NASEEM KHAN	Engr	Habib Multan
2553	PA-6317	MUHAMMAD AMIN KHAN BERKI	Baluch	Habib
2505	PA-6318	FARVEZ WALI SHEIKH	ASC	Habib Lahore
2521	PA-6319	SALAH-UD-DIN	FF	Habib Rawalpindi
2514	PA-6320	ZAFAR YAR KHAN	AC	Habib Lahore
2500	PA-6321	ABDUL RASHEED CHADDAN	ASC	Habib Lahore
2525	PA-6322	WASIF ALI	ASC	Habib Lahore
2518	PA-6323	SAMSUDDIN AHMED	ASC	Habib
2503	PA-6324	MUHAMMAD ASAF SHAFI	Punjab	National Lahore
2504	PA-6325	MUHAMMAD IRSHAD	Arty	Habib Rawalpindi
2511	PA-6326	MUHAMMAD ISHAQ	AOC	Habib Sargodha
2315	PA-6327	AURANG ZEB	Engr	National Rawalpindi
2515	PA-6328	ANWAR UL HAQ	Engr	Habib Multan
2507	PA-6329	MUHAMMAD AFZAL	AC	National Lahore
2506	PA-6330	MUHAMMAD AMIN	AOC	National Christian
2312	PA-6331	IFTIKHAR AHMAD AWAN	Punjab	National Lahore
2548	PA-6332	ZULFIQAR ALI MANSOOR	Sigs	National Lahore
2561	PA-6333	ZAFRUL MUKHTAR AHMAD KHAN	Punjab	National
2503	PA-6334	MUNIR ISHRAAT	Arty	Habib Rawalpindi
2504	PA-6335	MUHAMMAD NASIR	Baluch	Lloyds Rawalpindi

Source: Pakistan Army, General Headquarters, Military Secretary Branch (MS-2A), Rawalpindi, Letter No 0315/08/15/MS-2A dated 18 October 1960.

APPENDIX H

ORGANIZATION OF BANGLADESH FORCES



Source: 'Bijoyketon'- Liberation War Museum. Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka.

APPENDIX I

ZONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP

Name of Zone	Zonal HQ	Regional Chairman	Name of the Zonal Administrator
South-East Zone - (I)	Sabrum	Nurul Islam Chowdhury	S. A. Samad
South-East Zone - (II)	Agartala	Jahur Ahmed Chowdhury	Kazi Roquibuddin
East Zone	Dharmanagar	Col M A Rob	Dr. K. A. Hassan
North-East Zone - (I)	Dawki	Dewan Farid Gazi	S. H. Chowdhury
North-East Zone - (II)	Tura	Samsur Rahman Khan	Lutfur Rahman
North Zone	Coochbehar	Motiur Rahman	Fayez Uddin Ahmed
West Zone – (I)	Balurghat	Md Abdur Rahim	M. A. Kasem Khan
West Zone – (II)	Maldah	Ashraful Islam Miah	Jahurul Islam Bhuiyan
South-West Zone (I)	Krishnanagar	Abdur Rouf Chowdhury	Shamsul Hoque
South-West Zone (II)	Bongao	Fanivuson Mojumdar	B. B. Biswas
South Zone	Barasat	Abdur Rob Serneabat	A. Momin

Source: Arefin, A.S.M. Shamsul. *Muktijuddher Prekkhapotey Bektir Abasthan (Place of Personalities in the Context of the War of Liberation)*. Dhaka: Somoy Prakashan, 2012. p, 37.

APPENDIX J

LIST OF REPORTS AND RETURNS REQUIRED BY HQ BANGLADESH FORCES

SECRET

No. 4001- A
HQ Bangladesh Forces
Field
C/O Government of the
Peoples' Republic of
Bangladesh
Mujibnagar
23 Aug 71

To: All Sectors /Bn

Internal


Distr: G & Logs

Subject: List of Reports and Returns

1. List of reports and returns required by this HQ is sent herewith for necessary action.

2. Please ack.

Encl : Sheets


ACOS (Pers & Log)

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

SECRET ~~সীমিত~~ (Issued with HQ BDF(FA) Ltr No 4001-A of 23.LIST OF REPORTS AND RETURNS UNCLASS

REQUIRED FROM SECTORS BY HQ BANGLA DESE FORCES

S.No	Frequency	Nature of Return	Any Prescribed Form	Instruction of transmission	Any other Instruction
1.	Daily at 0600 hrs	Sitrep	-	Op Immediate Signal	
2.	Daily at 1800 hrs	Battle cas	Annex- I	Fri Signal	Nil Not requi
3.	Daily at 1800 hrs	Reinforcement Demand	Annex-II	" "	" " "
4.	Fortnightly (15th & last date of each month)	Operational Activities	Annexure-III	By Courier	
5.	Fortnightly (15th & last date of each month)	Arms' Statement	Annex-IV	Only changes to be intimated after first report.	
6.	Monthly (1st of each month)	Statement of Vols	Annex- V	By Courier	
7.	-do- -do-	Strength Return-all ranks	Annex-VI	-do-	
8.	-do- -do-	State of Clo & Eqpt	Annex- VII	-do-	
9.	On Occurrence	Casualty Return -All Ranks	Annex- VIII	All cas incl battle cas requir published in priors for 48hrs reasons i.e. commit to MCK.	
10.	-do-	Recommendation for Gallantry Award	Annex 'A' to HQ Bangladesh Forces letter No. 1015-A of 30 July 71	By Courier	As per instr issued vide letter No.10 dated 30 Jul

SECRET ~~সীমিত~~

Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, *Letter No 4000-A dated 23 August 1971* on List of Reports and Returns and collected from '*Bijoyketon*'-Liberation War Museum.

APPENDIX K

LIST OF YOUTH/TRAINING CENTRE

1. Hingolganj	30. Jalonggi	60. Cooch Behar	88. Kathalia
2. Hasnabad	31. Seikhpara	61. Chowdhury	89. Mantala
3. Taki	32. Lalgolap	Hat	90. Mohonpur
4. Hakimpur	33. Bholahat	62. Bamunhat	91. Konaban
5. Haridaspur	34. Singhabad	63. Dinhata	92. Joynagar
6. Chapaberia	35. Mohadipur	64. Jhaukathi	93. Norshinghoga
7. Talikhola	36. Parolia	65. Methali	94. Hapania
8. Chanpara	37. Adampur	66. Shahebganj	95. Radhanagar
9. Habra	38. Maloncho	67. Mankerchar	96. Charilam
10. Tetra	39. Balurghat	68. Chaimara	97. Bilashgar
11. Amlani	40. Mohinagar	69. Barakashia	98. Gokolnagar
12. Dholtita	41. Katla	70. Mohendraganj	99. Boxangor
13. Takipur	42. Gangarampur	71. Tura	100. Melaghar
14. Ridoypur	43. Pransagor	72. Dalu	101. Kamalnagar
15. Kadihati	44. Botessor	73. Machangpani	102. Hatimara
16. Damdam	45. Kushmundi	74. Gachuapara	103. Palatana
17. Palta	46. Malon	75. Baghmara	104. Udaypur
18. Nilganj	47. Dalimgaon	76. Rongra	105. Chotokhola
19. Panihati	48. Prodhonnagar	77. Shibbari	106. Rajnagar
20. Neihati	49. Haldibari	78. Udaypur	107. Baromura
21. Kallayani	50. Dewanganj	79. Alambazar	108. Belonia
22. Ranaghat	51. Okerabari	80. Shilong	109. Akinpur
23. Bonkimpur	52. Dahogram	81. Karimganj	110. Harina
24. Dompukur	53. Shitolkuchi	82. Pathorkandi	111. Srinagar
25. Majdia	54. Giridhara	83. Shilachara	112. Harishamukh
26. Betai	55. Shitai	84. Dharmanagar	113. Sabrum
27. Kachudanga	56. Chowmari	85. Koilashahar	114. Dekiajuli
28. Karimpur	57. Nazirhat	86. Kamolpur	115. Chakulia
29. Shikarpur	58. Gitaldoho	87. Khowai	
	59. Shahebganj		

(Source: Map prepared by the Joint Team of India and Bangladesh in 1998-99 based on interviews under *Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research (BFDR)*, 23 Chamelibagh, Dhaka-1217.

APPENDIX L

**MINUTES OF SECTOR COMMANDERS CONFERENCE ALSO ATTENDED BY
CIVIL AFFAIRS ADVISERS HELD AT HEADQUARTERS BANGLADESH
FORCES BETWEEN 12-15**

UNCLASS *officer 6/07*
সমিতি

Copy No 12 of 13 Copies

SECRET

Page No. 1 of Twelve DOCS

MINUTES OF SECTOR COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE ALSO
ATTENDED BY CIVIL AFFAIRS ADVISERS HELD AT
HQ BANGLADESH FORCES BETWEEN 12 - 15 JULY '71

(Absent - Comd Sectors No. 5 and 10 and Civ
Affairs Advisers No. 1,5 and 7 Sectors)

GENERAL POLICY

1. Non receipt of important policy letters

Some Sector Commanders complained about not receiving some of the important policy letters recently issued. Sector Commanders will immediately check if they have received the following letters. Non-receipt will be intimated to HQ Bangladesh Forces by immediate signal for further investigations:-

- a. Top Secret letter No. 0001G of 28 June 71 on Comd and Control.
- b. Confidential letter No. 1025A of 30 June 71 on status of personnel ex LFR and Auxillaries and personnel required for LFRs.
- c. Restricted letter No. 1020A/Rectg of 20 June 71 on recruitment of Bangladesh Forces.
- d. Secret letter No. 1025A of 30 June 71 on completion of document - engagement Bangladesh Forces and oath of allegiance and Secrecy.
- e. Confidential letter No. 2030Q of 30 June 71 on disposal of transport coming out of occupied areas of Bangladesh and those in liberated areas.

2. Staff Officers concerned at HQ Bangladesh Forces will also ensure that they have on file acknowledgements of these letters and any letters issued in future requiring acknowledgement. Non receipt of acknowledgement must immediately be enquired into.

Action : Sector Comds/
Staff Officers
at Forces HQ.

3. Boundaries of Sectors

Boundaries of sectors were re-examined and necessary modification/clarification decided upon. Boundaries of sectors will be communicated under Top Secret letter by Forces HQ to sectors concerned and to Supporting Forces Sectors. Sector Commanders to ensure that their operational boundaries are kept in view in all operations to avoid any confusion. Where it is unavoidable for a Sector to operate inside the boundary of another Sector, it will normally be done after prior consultation with the other Sector commander concerned, to obviate any confusion or clash amongst own forces.

Action : All Sector Comds

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SECRET

Contd 2/

JULY'71

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Page No. 2 of twelve pages

4. Authorised Establishment of Sector HQ

- a. At present some Sectors are being held by Inf Bns. Others by regular troops including those from former EPR and embodied Mujahids and Ansars. Such Inf bns may from time to time withdraw on operational tasks. It is necessary, therefore, to have a carefully assessed establishment for a Sector HQ and its constituent sector troops, in terms of Coys. Of course the number of such Coys in a Sector will vary according to situation and tasks of a sector. The establishment of these coys will have to be different from those of our Infantry Bns which have more organic fire power. The normal tasks of the Sector troops under the Sector HQ will be to carry out commando type of operations against the enemy effect the following:-
- (1) To destroy the enemy's lines of communication and isolate him in small pockets.
 - (2) Daily kill the maximum number possible by ambushes, raids and attacks where he is weak.
 - (3) The lock up enemy troops which could otherwise be used against own guerrillas inside or against own operations elsewhere.
 - (4) By their clear disposition provide launching areas for guerilla to be sent inside.
 - (5) Make free of enemy as much of Bangladesh as possible, in conjunction with the operation of guerilla forces inside.
- b. After careful examination, establishments required for the Sector HQ and each of its constituent companies were decided upon. The number of such Coys required for each Sector was then carefully examined in relation to their tasks. These establishments will be issued to all Sectors and the number of coys required for each Sector to those concerned. Copies to be given to Supporting HQs through IO.

Action : DCOS

Disposal of Regular troops from Other Arms/Services of the Army and from Navy and Air Force

b. Every regular soldier, sailor and Airman joining the Bangladesh Forces ('Mukti Bahini') should be utilised in the liberation war. It is imperative that the training and experience of each individual is fully and correctly utilised, to the maximum extent possible. Keeping this in view personnel will be employed in their corresponding trade in all Sectors. Under no circumstances will skilled categories and technicians be employed on infantry tasks. Sector Commanders will immediately check and get a roll prepared of all personnel of the Other Arms and Services of the Army i.e. other than Inf, and of the Navy and the Air Force by Arms/Services and trade/category, to enable their correct utilisation. Lists of the following category, will be submitted immediately, followed by others:-

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Page No. 3 of Twelve pages

- a. Telecom and Radar Mechanics and Wireless Operators and Radio Mechanics of the three services, and Signallers of the Army Corps of Signals.
 - b. Personnel of the Artillery, showing rank, trade and grade and personnel from Navy and Air Force trained in gunnery
 - c. Personnel trained in repair and maintenance of Arty equipments and guns.
6. Subject to the restriction contained in the policy decision given in para 5 above, personnel of arms/svcs may be used as sector troops to meet requirement of trained personnel. Sector Commanders must, however, ensure that they are available for withdrawal to form units or special units of their respective arms at short notice.

Action : All Sector Comds
ACOS (Pers & Log)

7. Return of Personnel of Platoon from 2 E BENGAL now in Echo Sector

This platoon which has come out and is now in Echo or Foxtrot Sector to be returned immediately to 3 Sector to make up strength of 2 E-BENGAL.

Action : ACOS (Pers & Log)

8. Replacement of Personnel milked from amongst Sector Troops for E-BENGAL Bns

- a. Replacement of personnel 'milked' for making up establishment of E BENGAL Bns from Sector troops, shall be with regular trained recruits ('Young Soldiers')
- b. As the Sector Troops are being provided with an authorised establishment with a proper structure of authorised ranks, future 'milkings' from Sectors for making up establishment of E BENGAL Bns shall be restricted to personnel surplus to establishment of Sectors with particular reference to specialists. Selection shall be by Commanding Officer of E BENGAL Bn concerned, as provided for in para 3 of HQ Bangladesh Forces letter No. 1025A dated 30 June 71.

Action : Sector Comds/
ACOS (Pers & Log)

9. Youth Camps

The Youth Camps' organisation is NOT under the Bangladesh Forces. Although the organisation is under the Prime Minister in his capacity as Minister of Defence, the C-in-C or the Sector Comds are NOT concerned with the affairs of Youth Camps. At an appropriate stage, after the requirements of making up to establish own forces and of immediate expansion are met, the availability of special efforts to assist in the training of guerrillas in Youth Camps shall be examined. Meanwhile, no instructor shall be provided to Youth Camps by the Centres unless specifically directed to do so by HQ BANGLADESH FORCES.

Action : Sector Comds
COS
DCGS

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10. Shifting of Arms to BSF BOP Site for Custody

The shifting of arms of Sector troops to BSF HQ, unknown to Bangladesh Forces, to be taken up with supporting forces and others.

Action : Comd Sector/DCO

11. Arms for trained personnel coming out from Training Centres as trained Guerillas ('GONO BAHINI')

The issue of arms to them on basis of scale given in policy instructions (under issue) to be expedited.

Action : DCOS/Sector Comds

12. Payment of cash to Guerillas in PAKISTAN Currency

Payment of cash for Guerillas are to be made by Supporting Sector Comds. Rates will be intimated separately soon.

Info end: All Sector Comds

Action : COS

DCOS

13. Posting of Trained Guerillas ('GONO BAHINI')

Guerillas employed in Districts other than their own area ineffective. As such it must be ensured that Guerillas are posted to their home Districts and Sector Comds will ensure their employment in such areas.

Action : All Sector Comds

ACOS (Pers & Log)

14. Toll at Ferry near SARJUM

A bill for about Rs. 6,000.00 have been submitted to Comd No. 2-Sector for own transport on duty. Exemption for transport on duty to be arranged by COS in direct communication with appropriate authorities.

Action : COS

Sector Comd

15. Supply of Maps

Requirements for Maps for areas covered by Sectors to be demanded and collected by Sector Comds prior to departure. Comds of Sectors not present in the conference to demand their requirements from HQ BANGLADESH FORCES (Ops and Training).

Action : Sector Comds

DCOS

Comd

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Page No. 5 of Twelve 200916. Disposal of Prisoners of War (POW)

Disposal of POW will be as under:-

- a. Disarming and search on captures followed by immediate interrogation at Coy and Sector HQ.
- b. Thereafter handing over on proper written receipt with full particulars of POW to Supporting Sector HQ under intimation to HQ Bangladesh Forces.
- c. Great care will be taken of quislings and suspects keeping the following in view:-
 - (1) Impracticability of locking up limited 'LUKTI BAHINI' resources by opening upon detention Camp.
 - (2) Limitations of Indian detention loss and dangerous suspects being let off on belief arrested under Indian rule Passport and Visa. Therefore, only the suspects should be handed over to Indian Int Authorities through Sector Comds (under intimation to Forces HQ) with full details of ground for suspect for detention under Indian Security Rule which cannot be easily let off in Courts.

Action : All Sector Comds

17. Commend Organization - Grave limitations posed by lack of Comm Between HQ Bangladesh Forces and Sector HQs/Bn HQs and Sub Sector/Coy HQs

This has been under discussion with the highest level. For the present, the present system of communication through Supporting Forces communication channel (already under heavy strain) is being supplemented by the following links should be examined before the matter is taken up again:-

- a. Wrls link between Supporting Sector HQ and own Sector HQ where locations are NOT adjacent, to ensure speedy intercomm between HQ Bangladesh Forces and Sector Comds.
- b. Wherever line comm facilities are avail, Sector Comd to contact Forces HQ once daily, to deal with any important matter and receive any important comm from Forces HQ, with a view to avoiding delay and unnecessary sig traffic and correspondence.

RECRUITMENT18. Recruitment

Contents of para 2(c) of BANGLADESH FORCES HQ letter No. 1020A/Rectg dated 30 June 71 was explained carefully to Sector Comds and Civil Affairs Advisers and need for timely action through Recruiting Offrs for careful selection from Youth Camps and completion of enrolment forms, verification and medical examination prior to despatch to Training Centres, emphasised. It was pointed that any LMA/LIA can recruit personnel from their respective areas. There is a complain, that:-

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- a. There are some boys who have been students, but were not being accepted in Youth Camps and in consequence are not being recruited though many of them are excellent material for regular forces.
- b. Personnel considered good material for recruitment as regular recruits from amongst rural youths who are between the age limits of 17 and 20 and have minimum edn class VII to Matriculation and strong physique and hearing shall be selected for recruitment and arrangements for temporarily holding them in Refugee or Youth Camps made through the authorities concerned. Such rural youths shall be recruited into the regular force by the Recruiting Office to fill the earliest vacancies occurring so that they do not have to wait for any length of time.

Action : All Sector Comds
Recruiting Offrs
through Civil
Affairs Advisers.

LOGISTICS

System of Payment to Troops

- a. At present Supporting Sectors want A/Rolls prepared and duly signed by Jewans and then on the pay day there are many absent and their names have to be scorded out from A/Rolls. Because of this completely fresh A/Rolls are required to be prepared. There have been cases where A/Rolls have had to be re-prepared three times. This caused avoidable and unnecessary work in the middle of pre-occupation connected with operations.
- b. Recommended System

Demand for cash covering pay for the month upto posted strength within authorised estb of a Sector (being decided - see para 3 above) by ranks to be made by the 25th day of the month and amount drawn by the Sector Comd or the offr prescribed to draw pay of his behalf from the Supporting Sector Comd on the 1st day of the following month. Actual amount for disbursement to Sub Sectors/Coys, are then issued on the basis of their strength to the Sub Sector/Company Commander for distribution on proper A/Rolls duly receipted and witnessed by a person not below the rank of JCO. Where a Coy is commanded by a JCO, Sector Comd will detail an offr to make the disbursement and ensure proper completion of A/Rolls. After statement of Accounts alongwith supporting A/Rolls and any undisbursed amount shall be returned to the Supporting Sector Comd. The following special instructions shall be complied with:-

- (1) Under NO circumstances shall cash to be handled by any one below the rank of a JCO.
- (2) Statement of disbursement and supporting A/Rolls and undisbursed money if any, shall be returned by the 16th of the month by which date all payments must be completed.

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- (3) An escort of one NCO and six ORs fully armed (arms to include one LMG) will be detailed to escort the Offr or JCO handling cash upto an amount of Rs. 50,000.00. For cash in excess of this amount, the escort will be doubled and if it is a lac or more, the strength of the escort will be a full platoon under a JCO.
- c. Cash in excess of Rs. 5,000.00 shall not be held in any single coy position and in excess of Rs. 8,000.00 not held in Sector HQ.
- d. Disbursement to pers must therefore be pre-planned and pay to all completed as prescribed above.

Status of Ansars and Police Officers employed with Forces for assessment of pay

Status of Ansar and Police Offrs for the purpose of assessment pay in terms of equivalent in the forces are as under:-

- a. Ansar Offrs
- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| District Adjnt | - | JCO (Sub Maj) holding Hony Commission as Lieut. |
| Subdivisional Adjnt | - | JCO |
- b. Police Offrs
- | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------------|
| SI of Police | - | JCO (Naib Subedar) |
|--------------|---|--------------------|
- Info and : All Sector Comds
Action : Forces HQ

Scale of Pay of NCOs in relation to other ORs

- a. It was raised for consideration that the payment to all ORs, irrespective of rank, at the flat rate of Rs. 75.00 is not conducive to the maint of discipline and some distinction be made between different ranks of ORs.
- b. C-in-C pointed out that the scale is a flat rate of subsistence allowe and the flat rate applies to Offrs and JCOs also. The present rates cannot be increased and if any scaling is to be made for different ranks, it will entail reduction of scale for some.

Sector Comds to discuss these points with the Offrs/JCOs/NCOs and convey their recommendations to the C in-C during his next visit to their Sectors.

Action: All Sector Comds

Info : ACOS (Pers & Log)

Pay of Civ Cooks and Civ Drivers

It was reported, payment of these categories are not being made by some Supporting Sectors.

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- b. In the case of E BANGAL Bns, those within the prescribed estb must be paid. In the case of Sector troops, the authorised scale is being prescribed in the estb under consideration (see para 4 above) and those within the estb will have to be paid. Pending this, Support HQ to be requested to ensure regular payment to these categories as they are considered as part of Bangladesh Forces ('Mukti Bahini') as defined in the C-in-C's Top Secret letter No. 0001G dated 28 June 71.

Action : All Sector Comds/
COS

ASOS (Pers & Log)

23. Payment of Personnel Operating inside Occupied Areas

- a. Imprecitability of standing Acquittance Rolls inside occupied areas was raised and it was decided the matter will be decided by HQ Bangladesh Forces in consultation with Supporting Forces HQ.
- b. The matter having been carefully considered, following instructions will apply:-
- (1) Sector troops normally returns after operations of a specified period or can be sent back in small number from patrol/raid bases, for payment. Acquittance Rolls will be prepared for them:-
 - (2) For Guerillas ('GONO BAHINI')
A manuscript receipt bearing pseudo name corresponding to real name in nominal roll maintained at Sector HQs, duly attested by courier and Sector Comd will be accepted as receipt for payment.

24. Uniform or Items of Clothings for the Bangladesh Forces ('Mukti Bahini')

Based on considerations of actual requirement and the need for utmost economy, the following scale have been prescribed:-

- a. Guerilla ('GONO BAHINI')
Such items of civ cloths, not of any uniform pattern or type as are prescribed in Instructions (under issue) on the Org, Equipment and Launching of Guerillas.
- b. Regular Troops forming part of E BANGAL Bns or Units of Other Arms when formed
Full scale of clothing, as normally applicable to regular troops.
- c. Sector Troops - Sector Troops are regular troops including those from former BFR, embodied Mujahid and Ansars and forming part of Sector HQ or its constituent coys. Scale for them:-

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Scale</u>
Jungle Boot	One pair
Socks (any colour or pattern)	-do-
Civ Trousers of dull or drab colour but NOT to be of uniform colour.	One
Civ Shirt with full sleeves	Two
'Gamche'	One
Vests Cotton	Two
'Lungi'	Two
Mosquito Net	One
Blanket	One
Civ type Water Proof cover	One
School Boy's Type Sack	One
Aluminium plate	One
Mug	One
1st Pd Dressing	One

Per Section

Two plastic water bottles.

Action : All Sector Comds
Forces HQ

Rationsa. Number Covered by Rations

Number of rations are being issued irrespective of the strength of troops in some Sectors causing considerable hardship as very large number is not provided for. This case will be taken up by Forces HQ with specific reference to the following:-

- (1) Authorized establishment of Sectors under examination (see para 4 above). Any casual not covered by the auth establishment such as those soldiers who come out to join the 'MUKTI BAHINI' will have to be temporarily held at two transit camps one for the Eastern area and one for the remaining areas for which ration cover will have to be provided.
- (2) Meanwhile interim arrangements to provide for for the actual shortfall in Sector No. 2.

Action: COS
ACOS (Pers & Log)

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Deficiency in the Scale of Ration

Deficiency such as irregular supply of fresh items and meat and also perce scale (instead of F.S. Scale) being made applicable to our forces who are actually fighting under extremes of weather and field conditions, requiring extra calories, was strongly brought out. FS scale of rations should be applicable to 'LUKTI BAHINI' and fresh supply, meat/fresh or alternatively authorised substitutes should be issued. Point to be raised with supporting forces. Also a copy of the applicable scale with authorised substitutes should be issued to Sectors/Bns.

Action : ACOS (Pers & Log)

- c. The difficulties arising for non-delivery of rations through supply point close to Sectors was raised. This point has been discussed by the C-in-C with the highest level and delivery through supply point close to Sectors agreed upon. Any deviation from this should be raised with COS in the Eastern area and Forces HQ (ACOS (Pers & Log)) in case of other areas unless it can be locally settled.

Action : Sector Comds
COS
ACOS (Pers & Log)

26. Ration and Accommodation for Shchids' Families

The Govt of Bangladesh have directed the Rehabilitation Minister Mr. QAMRUZZAMAN to arrange for the following. He is going out on tour to arrange for this:-

- a. Ration and accommodation for the Shchids' families.
- b. Ration and accommodation for families of serving soldiers at a convenient place where Sector Comds can supervise their welfare. In the case of 7, 8 and 9 Sectors, accommodation arrangement have been made through Supporting Forces at KALYANI and support with ration is only to be obtained from Rehabilitation Minister. Sector Comds must give complete list with address and number of dependents for both category of families, mentioned above to the Rehabilitation Minister during his ensuing visit. Civ Affairs Advisers should ascertain the programme of Rehabilitation Minister and give prior intimation to the Sector Comds for preparation and handing over the list and also for arranging Rehabilitation Minister's visit to the Sectors.

Action : Sector Comds
Civ Affairs Advisers

27. Medical

a. Medical Cover

Although full logistic support is to be provided by the supporting forces, medical cover has been sadly lacking with resultant effects on morale.

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Supporting Sector (in Eastern Area) say they will provide instruments but arrangements for Doctors/Surgeons be made from within Bangladesh resources.

Action to be taken

- (1) Sector Comds, through supporting Sector Comds, to press on provision of full medical cover, excluding provision of RMOs but incl supply of medicine, medical and surgical stores, hospital and convalescence facilities.
- (2) Ambulance/Jeeps for evacuation to³ be provided by Sectors for which necessary transport will be allocated.
- (3) DG Health Services, Govt of Bangladesh has been directed to visit Sectors and formulate own medical cover required. - including facilities at company locations, Bn/Sector HQ, forward dressing/medical treatment unit forward hospital for surgical treatment, base hospital further rearward, convalescent centre and all connected medical equipment and staff requirements. Also evacuation arrangements. These arrangements, will be with local and other assistance and will be super-imposed over supporting forces requirements so that the supporting forces are relieved of this responsibility to meet their own commitments.
- (4) Two mobile hospitals for the Eastern Area, provided by Dr. IQBAL SEN, for the 'MAKTI BAHINI' were to be located at SONAMURA and KHOWAI. They were NOT traceable. Should be traced and put to correct use. Similarly the Mobile hospital in the SW area presented by Mr. VILMI should be located in no: 8 Sector and used as per DG Health Services Medical plan to support own forces.

b. Diet for Forces Personnel in Hospital

- (1) To obviate diet difficulties in local civil hospitals, forces personnel must be evacuated to nearest Military Hospital. Where this is not possible, until own hospitals (being arranged by JGRS) are functioning, personnel may be taken to nearest hospital for timely medical cure. In such a case arrangements for fruits and special food (preferably tinned nutritious food prescribed by Doctors) should be provided for them. Funds for this will be provided to Sector HQ.
- (2) Sector/Bn and Coy Comds must visit their JCOs and men in hospital respectively once a month and a fortnight (Coy Comd).

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c. Provision for Medical Officers

Medical Officers for Bns/Sectors are authorized in Establishments. Only those who hold MBBS degree considered fit in all respects (age below 30 yrs) be recommended for a Commission. MBBS will be preferred to LAF for appointment as a Civilian Medical Officer. Civil Medical Officers will be paid Rs. 350.00 per month in addition to free rations and accommodation in Sector location. Fifth year MBBS or senior medical students may be employed as Medical Attendants, status equivalent to JCO and paid Rs. 150.00 per month plus free rations.

No. 0010G
HQ Bangladesh Forces
Field
C/ Government of the Peoples'
Republic of Bangladesh
Mujibnagar

6 Aug '71

[Signature]
For Commander-in-Chief

<u>Distribution</u>	<u>Copy No</u>
Cmd No. 1 Sector	- 1
Cmd No. 2 Sector	- 2
Cmd No. 3 Sector	- 3
Cmd No. 4 Sector	- 4
Cmd No. 5 Sector	- 5
Cmd No. 6 Sector	- 6
Cmd No. 7 Sector	- 7
Cmd No. 8 Sector	- 8
Cmd No. 9 Sector	- 9
Cmd No. 11 Sector	- 10
CCS	- 11
DCCS	- 12 ✓
ACCS (Pers & Log)	- 13

— Ack. vide 0010/x/ag 17/

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(Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, *Letter No 0010G dated 06 August 1971* (Minutes of Sector Commanders' Conference also Attended by Civil Affairs Advisers held at Headquarters Bangladesh Forces between 12-15 July 1971), collected from '*Bijoyketon*'-Liberation War Museum.)

APPENDIX M

SECTOR BOUNDARIES

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Copy No 1

No 0002 G
HQ Bangladesh Forces
Field
C/O Govt of the
People's Republic of
Bangladesh
Mujib Nagar
18 Jul 71

To:- HQ X Sector

Subject:- Sector boundaries

1. With immediate effect boundaries of your sector area will be as per annex 'A' attached for operational purposes.
2. Boundaries of adjacent sectors are also given for coordination.

Distribution on
reverse

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[Signature]
Dy COS

[Signature]

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APPENDIX 'A'

SECTOR BOUNDARIES

SECTOR NO. 1

- North - Border.
- East - Border.
- South - Sea.
- West - River Mohari (Excl)

SECTOR No. 2

- North - Singher Bill - line (excl)
Brahmanbaria - Raipur - Narayanganj - Tongi -
Balladi - River Bansee . junction of River
Dhaleshwari.
- East - Mohari River.
- South - Sea.
- West - Western boundary of Dacca and district Faridpur*
excluding South-West area of Gopalganj bound on
the North by the line of bill Ramail and others
and area Madaripur north subdivision west of road
Madaripur - Barisal.

SECTOR No. 3

- North - Gaffargaon - Kishorganj - Nabiganj.
- East - Line (all excl) Shingarbill - Churamani -
Srimangal - Hail Howr-Sherpur - Shadipur -
Sylhet.
- South - Singhar bill (ex) - Brahmanbaria - Raipur -
Narsingdi - Tongi - Balladi.
- West - Eastern border of Nymensingh and Tangail.

SECTOR No. 4

- North - River Surma (ex) - River Barak.
- East - Border.
- South - Churamani (incl)
- West - Line (all incl) - Churamani-Hail Howr-
Shamsherganj-Keshabpur-Pital-Sherpur-
Shadipur-Sylhet.

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SECTOR No. 5

- North - Churamoni - Sylhet coming onto Sylhet Rly Sta (incl) thence along the river Surma (Ex).
- East - All (incl) River Surma from its junction with Barak coming north upto Keane bridge at Sylhet, thence SW along but excl road Sylhet - Sadipur and FROGNAU.
- South - From Sherpur forty (Ex) along River Kushiara bybiana incl Markuli incl Ajmiriganj (Excl).
- West - From Ajmiriganj going North along the Western bdy of Sylhet Dist with Mymensingh (incl).

SECTOR No. 11

- North - Border.
- East - Eastern border of Mymensingh.
- South - Border of Tamgail, junction of River Banseo with River Dhakeshwari 15 miles south of Tamgail - Kaliakair (ex) - Malomegh-Kaorite - Banar river - Pakurdia - Kishoreganj (ex) - Itna - Ajmiriganj - Nabinagar.
- West - River Brahmaputra.

SECTOR No. 6

- North - Border.
- East - River Brahmaputra. (Ex)
- South - Line (all excl) Jagdal - Birganj-Saeedpur - Shampur rly sta - Tulshighat-along rail/road (incl) to Gaibandha-Phulchari (incl)
- West - Border.

SECTOR No. 7

- North - Line (all incl) Jagdal - Birganj-Saeedpur-Shampur-Tulshighat-along rail/road(excl) to Gaibandha - Phulchari (excl).
- East - River Brahmaputra (ex) to tip of Pabna.**
- South - River Padma.
- West - Jagdal - Charachat.

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SECTOR No. 8

- North - River Padma.
East - Border of Shatkhira sub-division upto Shatkhira road.
South - Shatkhira - Daulatpur Road.
West - Border.

SECTOR No. 9

- North - Shatkhira-Daulatpur (ex) road, South-West portion of Gopalganj* sub-division bound in the north by line of hills (incl) and portion of Madaripur sub-division West of Road Madaripur - Barisal.
East - River Meghna.
South - Sea.
West - Border.

NOTES

- * (1) Guerillas whose homes are in FARIDPUR district less GOPALGANJ Sub Division will be sent to No. 2 Sector (via Delta Sector). Those whose homes are in GOPALGANJ Sub Division will be sent to No. 9 Sector (Charlie Sector).
- (2) Guerillas whose homes are in KURIERAN and GAIBANDA Sub Division of RANGPUR district will be sent to Sector No. 11 (via Foxtrot Juliet Sector)
- ** (3) Guerillas whose homes are in RAJSHAHI minus NOAGACH and PABNA districts will be sent to Sector No. 8 Sector (via Charlie Sector) (Sector troops located at LAIGOLA - JALANGI area). Those of NOAGACH Sub Division to No. 7 Sector (via Bravo Sector).

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APPENDIX N

**COMMAND AND CONTROL OF BANGLADESH FORCES AND OPERATIONAL
LIAISON / COORDINATION WITH SUPPORTING FORCES**

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TOP SECRET

Copy No 32 of 241 copies

OF IMMEDIATE (BY COURIER)

No. 0001 G

HQ BANGLADESH FORCES,
FIELD

C/O GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLES'
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH,
MULJIB BAGAR.

28 June 71

To

Commanders
All Sectors/Battalions E BENGAL

Subject :- COMMAND AND CONTROL OF BANGLA DESH
FORCES AND OPERATIONAL LIAISON/
CO-ORDINATION WITH SUPPORTING FORCES

INTRODUCTORY

1. Some doubts seem to persist on the subject of command and control of the Bangla Desh Forces, and operational liaison and co-ordination with supporting forces. These are clarified in the succeeding paragraphs, for the success of Bangla Desh Forces in the speediest destruction of the occupation forces, the Mission given to the forces by the Government of Bangla Desh.

COMPOSITION OF BANGLA DESH FORCES ('JAKTI BAHINI')

2. The term Bangla Desh Forces covers regular soldiers, sailors, airmen of all ranks, personnel of civil armed forces (like EPR), auxiliary forces like 'Mujahids' and 'Ansars', now embodied and operating with regular forces (in which they are being absorbed on successful completion of further training, where considered necessary, to attain the requisite standard), Civil Police personnel who have been operating with the regular forces, Civilian officers who have been fighting with the forces and other civilians filling specific combatant functions such as drivers, fitters or as PGsE (cooks, sweepers etc), as well as irregular forces such as guerrillas and Special Forces operating on the ground, water or air.

3. The following nomenclatures will be used :-

a. Regulars ('JAKTI BAHINI')

(1) Army

Regulars of the Infantry, grouped into the East Bengal Regiment (abbreviated - E BE-GAL), which will include personnel of the EPR, embodied 'Mujahids' and 'Ansars', and regulars from other Arms/Services eg, AC/Arty/Sigs, etc

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Page No 2 of 4

- (2) NAVY }
 (3) Air Force } Regulars from Navy and Air Force.

b. Irregulars ('GONO BAHINI')

Comprising of -

(1) Guerrillas

Personnel trained in guerrilla warfare.

(2) Special Forces

Personnel who have received special guerrilla or other training.

4. All personnel of the Bangla Desh Forces come under the relevant services acts, viz, Army, Navy or Air Force Acts and connected regulations made applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to Bangla Desh by the President under the Continuance of Laws Order of April 1971.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

5. The Bangla Desh Forces owe allegiance to the Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangla Desh and are under command of the Government exercised through the Commander-in-Chief, appointed by the Government with the status of Cabinet Minister. The Commander-in-Chief is assisted in the exercise of his command by the HQ Bangla Desh Forces which is a unified command and the appointments to which are made expressly with the approval of the Government.

6. All matters of policy, relating to Operations, Organisation, Personnel, Administration/Logistics or any other policy matter; control of weapons, equipment, vehicles and tele communication equipment and appointments and transfers (other than regimental appointments and appointments and transfers within a Sector/Battalion), Commissions and Postings, are matters for the Commander-in-Chief to decide.

7. Subject to the above, the exercise of command is decentralised to Commanders of Sectors who will be responsible to the Commander-in-Chief for the efficient functioning of their commands and for the correct and speedy implementation of all tasks in conformity with the proscribed policies.

OPERATIONAL COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

8. In view of the geographical situation of Bangla Desh and the communication difficulties, Sector Commanders are authorised to work out details of their operational plans in conformity with the operational policy laid down by the Commander-in-Chief. For current operational policy see Appendix 'A' attached. For the execution of this policy, Sector Commanders will work in close liaison with the Sector Commanders of the Supporting Forces, and will be advised and assisted in their tasks by them.

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Page No 3 of 4

Supporting Forces

9. Regular Indian Army Formations

Designated Indian Army Sector Commanders/Formations are providing all support including fire and full logistic support to the Bangla Desh Sectors in their areas of jurisdiction. Indian Army Sector Commanders are responsible for providing all assistance in planning and coordination of activities of Bangla Desh Forces and the BSF under the overall directions of the Indian Formations on the border. Main HQ of Sectors of Bangla Desh Forces should, therefore, be located nearest to HQ of those supporting sector commands to ensure close cooperation and to avail of the communication facilities, both forward to sub sectors HQ and rearward to HQ Bangla Desh Forces.

10. Sector Commanders will work under these general directions without having to refer to HQ Bangla Desh Forces except on any matter relating to matters mentioned in paragraph 6 above. They should be able to resolve differences, if any, with the supporting forces sector commander. If in exceptional cases these differences cannot be resolved at their level or where any proposed action does NOT conform to the current operational policy, immediate reference will be made to HQ Bangla Desh Forces by Operational Immediate Signal or by a Liaison Officer for the prior approval of the Commander-in-Chief.

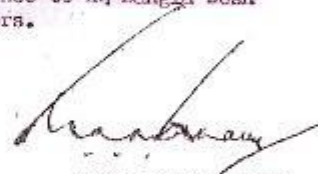
11. BSF

Under the overall guidance of the Indian Army Sector Commander the local BSF Commander is required to assist in the launching of operations by Bangla Desh Forces on the border. Very close coordination with the BSF is, therefore, a must for operational success.

ECHELON OF HQ BANGLA DESH FORCES IN EASTERN AREA

12. An echelon of HQ Bangla Desh Forces with the Chief of Staff Bangla Desh Forces is located in the Eastern Area, to ensure the closest political and logistic co-operation and also to deal with all matters, within the framework of the Commander-in-Chief's policy, without reference to HQ Bangla Desh Forces, to provide speedy assistance to Sector Commanders.

13. Acknowledge.


COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Copy to :-

Chief of Staff,
Bangla Desh Forces.

Supporting Indian Army HQ
through LO (3^{1/2} copies)

IG Operations BSF

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Distribution

9 Sectors of Bangla Dosh Forces	-	9	Copies	
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War Diary	-	1	Copy	
LA LO	-	11	Copies	- for distribution to Indian Army Formations and Sectors

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Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, *Letter No 0001G dated 28 June 1971*, on Command and Control of Bangladesh Forces and Operational Liaison/Co-ordination with Supporting Forces and collected from '*Bijoyketon*'-Liberation War Museum.

APPENDIX O

GUERRILLAS 'GONO BAHINI' - ORGANIZATION, EQUIPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

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Page No. One of Ten Pages.

IMMEDIATE

No. 0009G
THE BANGLA DESH FORCES
FIELD,
C/O GOVERNMENT OF THE
PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF
BANGLA DESH
DHAKA.
27 Jul 71

C-12-6

BANGLA DESH FORCES

GUERRILLAS 'GONO BAHINI' - ORGANIZATION, EQUIPMENT AND

EMPLOYMENT

AIM OF INSTRUCTION

1. To ensure guerrillas coming out of training establishments are inducted on a planned basis in all sectors, these instructions covering the following are issued :-

- a. Organisation, Arms and Equipment
 - b. Phased Induction
- } of Guerrillas.

ORGANISATION

2. Basic Organisation. The basic organisation is a section of 1 Guerrilla Leader and 7 guerrillas, having a total of eight who can be split into two cells each of three to four guerrillas, on areas required basis. Several sections would be constituted into a platoon under a platoon leader who will be assisted by a Deputy Leader. Similarly several (normally-5) platoons would be constituted into a Guerrilla Company which will be led by a Company Leader. A Company Leader would have a political adviser carefully selected by the Bangla Desh Forces Sector Commander on the advice of the Civil Liaison Officer/ Civil Affairs Adviser advising him. The political adviser will advise the Guerrilla Company Leader on all political and internal developments inside the areas of operation and also motivate guerrillas in meeting day to day developments.

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Page No two of 121 Pages.

Indoctrinated locals will normally be used for courier duties. Intelligence net-work will be organized through local agents. At a section level there will be no separate intelligence cell, but at platoon level there will be an intelligence cell of 3 well-trained guerrillas. In addition, there will be a trained nursing attendant. Similarly at a company level there will be eight well trained guerrillas to form an intelligence section, besides a doctor and 3 nursing attendants. For specific areas requiring it, an anti tank detachment and other supporting light weapons detachments shall be attached. All guerrillas, including their units/sub-units, shall come under the command of the Bangla Desh Forces Sector Commander concerned who will coordinate operational tasks. The only exception will be those operating under HQ Bangladesh Forces on special tasks who will be provided with special identity cards for identification in friendly areas. For organization of Guerrilla 'GONO BAHINI' see Appendix 'A' attached.

ARMS, EQUIPMENT AND DRESS

3 Arms and Ammo

a. General.

Arms and Ammo will be issued through the Bangladesh Sector Comd who will maintain proper record of all arms and ammo issued duly supported by receipts.

b. Individual Weapons.

- (i) Leaders. Pistol, firing single and automatic shots, preferably 9 mm with a magazine enabling it to be used as a carbine also.
- (ii) Deputy Leaders. - Pistol 9 mm
- (iii) Guerrillas in a Section - Four with carbines machine sten 9 mm which must be capable of firing single rounds also.
 - Two with Rifles.
 - One with LMG.
- (iv) Nursing Attendants
with platoon and company level - Rifles.
- (v) Guerrillas on intelligence - 25% Pistols 9 mm
working as platoon and company level - 75% Carbine Machine Sten
 - 9 mm (Must be capable of firing single rounds also)

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Page No three of Ten Pages

(vi) Anti Tank | - 4 Guerrillas | 50% Pistol 9 mm
Detachment | | 50% Rifles.

(vii) Every Guerrilla - Two hand grenades and a double edged knife with a 6 in to 9 in edge blade (should NOT be of standard length or pattern).

- c. For each company - A detachment of 4 guerrillas equipped with 2 rocket launchers (3.5 in or 40 mm or equivalent) to deal with gun boats, bunkers, fuel gas dumps etc, shall be provided in areas where it is considered necessary.
- d. Ammunition. Minimum scale of ammunition to be decided, by the Bangladesh Sector Comd, on the basis of the task, length of journey and availability of safe houses! shall be issued. Subsequent replacement will be through couriers who will be sent back to sector Headquarters for replacement. To meet these requirements adequate stock will be made available to the Sector Comd.

Equipment.

- a. Section - One complete demolition kit (preferably US origin)
 - One first aid box.
- b. Platoon - Adequate medical and surgical (dressing/cleansing) kit for the nursing attendant to provide preliminary attention to the casualties at a hidden 'safe house'. Medical kit must include antivenom serum and syringe for administration in case of snake bite.
- c. Company. - Adequate medical/surgical equipment and supplies for treating casualties at a well hidden 'safe house' which should serve as a temporary hospital.

d. Dress. Guerrillas will be dressed in ordinary civilian clothes of a coarse type conforming to those commonly worn in the locality. Uniformity in colour or design must be strictly avoided. Insect repellent oil shall be carried for use at night. Scale of clothing/necessaries to be issued shall be restricted to :-

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| a. Civilian type ground sheet | - | 1 |
| b. Vests | - | 2 |
| c. 'Garcha' | - | 1 |
| d. Lump | - | 1 |

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Page 1b five of Ten Pages

8. Phased Induction.a. Phase I - Establishment of Firm Bases Inside.

- (1) Time - Task to be completed earliest. Progress will be intimated by Sector III through GW LOs being sent from Bangla Desh Forces HQ. Supporting HQ will be kept in picture.
- (2) Tasks to be carried out :-
 - (i) Area analysis or detailed analysis of the terrain and situation inside the area to include collection of intelligence about deployment and activities of enemy forces, and agents.
 - (ii) Establishment of own intelligence net work and clandestine communication system (with alternative arrangements) to higher headquarters and other guerrilla sub-units in the area.
 - (iii) Establish contact with own cells operating inside on similar mission.
 - (iv) Establishment of secure clandestine routes of infiltration and exit.
 - (v) Organisation of logistics for own operations based on local resources.
 - (vi) Selection of 'cache' sites and 'safe' houses.

NOTE - 1. During this phase it is essential to maintain absolute quiet (lying low and under-ground) and peace in the area to avoid suspicion and detection by enemy agents. Hence liquidation of enemy agents must NOT be attempted inside the area at this stage but all information about them collected. Nor should any force be used in the interior during this phase. Instead, diversionary activities combined with elimination of enemy agents should be carried out far away, along the border areas.

2. There must be several alternative secret bases, alternative communication system and clandestine routes organised to prevent detection of any one.

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Page No six of Ten Pagesb. Phase 2 - Unbalancing and Weakening the Enemy

- (1) Time - Task to be completed soonest, after completion of Phase I.
- (2) Tasks to be carried out. In this phase the enemy's ability to operate has to be destroyed by a series of well-planned and vigorous (daily growing in tempo) guerrilla strikes over a wide area in which there will be great need for the utmost pre-thought, secrecy and skill, as the enemy will be in control of the area at the beginning of the phase. The specific tasks to be completed by the guerrillas will include :-
- (i) Liquidation of enemy agents, informers and collaborators and further build-up of own intelligence net work.
 - (ii) Destruction of the enemy's means of communication including destruction of tele communications, rail/road bridges, removal of fish plates from railway lines, removal of navigation marks on inland water ways/ river disruption/denial of ferries on roads, destruction of river ports and jettys and ambushing enemy while trying to disembark troops/stores on river banks.
 - (iii) Denying the enemy all resources by destruction of POL depots, refineries, power supply (by destroying pylons/sub stations).
 - (iv) Organize and instigate resistance and non-cooperation by the local population against the enemy.
 - (v) Destroying the enemy's fighting power and transport by planned ambushes on his road/rail/river lines of communication, and raids on small targets like arms/ammunition/POL/supply depots, river and road transports and stock ponds.
 - (vi) Destroy or render ineffective air base facilities and aircrafts.
 - (vii) Confuse and demoralize the enemy by creating rumours totally unconnected with own future plans or actions.

c. Phase 3 - Knocking out the last breath (from the enemy)

- (1) Time - As soon as the enemy has been incapacitated and he no longer has the ability to strike.

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- (ii) Tasks to be carried out. In close conjunction with regular forces to destroy the already bled and incapacitated enemy and secure liberated areas. In this the guerrillas' particular tasks (to be co-ordinated by the Bangladesh Forces Sector Command concerned) will be to attack the enemy's flanks, rear, his supporting arms and destroy his communications so that he is disabled from concentrating his fire power or switching his forces, thus facilitating the task of his destruction.

d. Phase 4 - Consolidation and Restoration

- (1) Time - On collapse of the enemy government.
- (2) Tasks to be carried out - The main task will be one of consolidation of liberation and restoration of own civil government and administrative authorities. In this the guerrillas' main tasks will be to carry out the following in close conjunction with the regular forces :-
- (i) Elimination of any enemy elements still holding out.
 - (ii) Assist the quick restoration of normal public life.
 - (iii) Conversion from a guerrilla force to a people's Army (2nd line Army) and resettlement of personnel (not desirous of continuing in regular forces) in civil life, to include resumption of education by those whose education was disrupted by the war.

COMMUNICATIONS

g. To obviate interception, all communication between Bangladesh Sector Commanders and guerrilla units/sub units operating inside shall be through couriers operating on clandestine communication system. Progress/completion reports on allotted tasks shall be sent through courier to the Bangladesh Sector Commander concerned at least once a fortnight. Bangladesh Sector Commander will keep HQ Bangladesh Forces (C-in-C, COB and Ops Staff) and also Supporting Forces Sector Commanders informed at all times through personal contact and through liaison officers.

Commander-in-Chief

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APPENDIX 'A'

TO HQ BANGLADESH FORCES

NO. 0009G OF 25 JULY 71

ORGANISATION

Page No. Nine of Ten Pages

OF

GUERRILLA FORCE ('GONO BAHINI')IN BANGLADESH FORCES (GUERRILLA LOS)Bangla Desh Forces Sector III (Civil Affairs Advisers, Guerrilla Couriers)Company II: (for controlling normally 5 Platoons)

Guerrilla Company Leader	-	1 (Pistol 9 mm)
Political Advisor	-	1 (Pistol 9mm)
Intelligence Section	-	3 (2 with Pistols 9 mm) (3 with CBS 9 mm)
Anti tank detachment	-	2 rocket launchers (3 Grenades) (2 with pistols 9 mm) X (2 with Rifles)
Doctor - 1	-	Doctor with Pistol 9 mm
Nursing Attendants - 3	-	3 Nursing Attendants with Rifles.

Platoon Headquarters

Guerrilla Platoon Leader	- 1	Pistols 9 mm
Guerrilla Deputy Platoon Leader	- 1	
Intelligence Cells	- 3	(1 with Pistol 9 mm) (2 with P.M. Sten 9 mm)
Trained Nursing Attendant	- 1	(Rifle)

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(Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, *Letter No 0009G dated 25 July 1971*, on Guerrillas "Gono Bahini" – Organization, Equipment and Employment and collected from '*Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum.*)

APPENDIX P

SCALE OF ARMS FOR GUERRILLAS

D F A
TOP SECRET

No.
HQ Bangladesh Forces
Field
C/O Government of the People
Republic of Bangladesh
Mujibnagar

To: Eastern Comd Aug 71

Info: CCS
All Sector Comds

Subject: Scale of Arms for Guerrillas

Discussion between C-in-C Bangladesh Forces and
Comd Eastern Comd, Supporting Forces of 17 Aug 71 refers.

1. Induction of Guerilla fell far short from the planned target, primarily due to inadequate supply of arms in the past by you, on record. Consequently, it was agreed during our discussion referred to above, that the Guerillas will be armed as per the fol scale; for group of ten :-

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|----|
| a. | LMG | - | 1 |
| b. | Rifle 7.62 | - | 6 |
| c. | SMC | - | 3 |
| d. | HE 36 Hand Grenade- | | 20 |

2. Considering the above scale it is visualised that the requirement of Arms for Bangladesh Guerilla Force will be as follows:-

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| a. | <u>Immediate Requirement</u> | | |
| (1) | Available Trained Guerillas till | - | 19,000 |
| | to date. | | |
| (2) | <u>Requirement of Arms</u> | | |
| (a) | LMG | - | 1900 |
| (b) | Rifle 7.62 | - | 10,400 |
| (c) | SMC | - | 5,700 |
| (d) | HE 36 Hand Grenade- | | |
| (e) | Rocket Launchers - | | 316 (Approx) |
| | (2 per coy) | | |

Contd 2/-

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b. Subsequent Requirement per month

(1)	Trained Guerillas available.	-	12,000
(2)	<u>Requirement of Arms</u>		
(a)	LMGs	-	1200
(b)	Rifle 7.62	-	7200
(c)	SMC	-	3600
(d)	HE 36 Hand Grenade	-	24000
(e)	Rocket Launcher	-	200

3. Total requirement of arms as per plan ceiling of 60,000 Guerillas

a.	Rifle	-	36,000
b.	Sten	-	18,000
c.	LMG	-	6,000
d.	Rocket Launchers	-	1,000

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(Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, **Draft Letter for Approval on Scale of Arms for Guerrillas** and collected from '*Bijoyketon*'-Liberation War Museum.)

APPENDIX Q

**SECURITY - BANGLADESH YOUTH
CAMPS**

SECRET

TELEPHONE - 665

HEADQUARTERS
EASTERN COMMAND GS(X)
FORT WILLIAM
CALCUTTA - 21
Aug 71

No 103999/23/1/GS(INT)X

To

Army Headquarters
General Staff Branch
MI Dte DEAI (A)
DHQ PC, NEW DELHI - 11

SECURITY - BANGLA DESH YOUTH CAMPS

Copies of the following documents are forwarded herewith :-

- (a) Instructions issued by BANGLA DESH (ED) authorities on 5 Apr 71 entitled "YOUTH TRANSIT CAMPS" (Two sheets).
 - (b) "YOUTH TRAINING - OUTLINE OF THE COURSE, by ABU YUSUF, Co-ordinator" (12 sheets).
 - (c) "List of Youth Camps (Eastern Zone) - 6 Jun 71" (One sheet).
 - (d) "Eastern Zone - Directorate of Youth Camp - List of Officers - 4 Jun 71" (One sheet).
 - (e) Note dated 5 Jun 71 on "YOUTH RELIEF CAMPS IN EASTERN ZONE". Prepared by M ALAM, Director, Youth Camps and A YUSUF, Co-ordinator with remarks of Mr MANSUR ALI, Finance Minister of ED approving the proposals of 6 Jun 71 (Nine sheets).
2. It has been confirmed that the final version of the Youth Camp Scheme has gone into the hands of PAK Army authorities who have circulated it to civil offices assisting the Martial Law authorities for counter measures.
 3. The need for care in wording contents of widely circulated material like the instructions at Para 1(a) was stressed to ED authorities through the LC in Jun 71. Need for security in such matters is again being stressed through the LC.
 4. The enclosures at Para 1(b) above may please be returned when done with as no extra copies are available with us.

(AC VORA)
Col
Col (Int)GS(X)
For General Officer Commanding-in-Chief

...2/-

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Copy to :-

- LO - 1. With copies of enclosures at Para 1(a) and 1(c) to (f).
2. BD authorities may please be prevailed upon to instruct the Youth Camp Officers to have such material scrutinised from the security point of view by our Sector Commanders before issue. Their concurrence in this regard please be intimated so that the Sector Commanders may be informed accordingly.

SECRET/IMMEDIATE
dt. 5.6.1971

SUB :- YOUTH RELIEF CAMP IN EASTERN ZONE

The scheme is generally approved. About the items of expenditures, Mr. M.B. Siddiqi will be examine and report. He will be see that maximum economy and austerity is observed. In the meantime an Ad-Hoc amount of Rs. 10(ten) lakhs is sanctioned. Proper accounts for expenditure should be kept and produced before me for final sanctioned.

Sd/- Mansur Ali,
Finance Minister,
6.6.71

A note on the scheme for establishment of Youth Relief Camps in the Eastern Zone (Tripura & Assam upto Karimganj at present) is placed below for Finance Ministers kind information and approval.

2) The Scheme envisages training of the following within six months i.e. December, 1971.

- i) 50,000 Base workers (Junior Guerillas)
- ii) 18,000 Army recruits proceeding their entry into Army training camp.

3) The scheme calls for an overall expenditure of Rs. 1.25 crores over six months, which works out at Rs 1 lakh per month for each camp of 500 trainees or Rs. 200/- per trainees.

4) Govt. of India's representatives visiting Agartala have shown interest in the scheme and have promised material support for its implementation.

5) A team of 7 officers headed by Major Mehta has arrived here on 30th May, 1971 to make initial survey and to provide local co-ordination. No, financial or material assistance has yet been forthcoming from them.

6) In view, however, of the urgent need to harness the overwhelming enthusiasm of our young-men for the liberation of Bangladesh and to counteract the spiralling frustration among them, we have commenced initial work for the establishment of youth Camp, within the overall expenditure

Approved.

Sd/- Mansur Ali
Finance Minister
6.6.71

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ceiling of Rs. 10 lakhs for one month sanctioned by the Zonal political Committee in anticipation of the approval of the Cabinet.

7) A list of camps established, with the active co-operation of the Chief Minister of Tripura and his Government, is attached with the note as app. 'B'.

8) Finance Minister's kind approval is requested for the following :-

- i) The scheme (attached) according to which work is now proceeding.
- ii) Expenditure upto 10 lakhs for the initial setting up and running of the camps.
- iii) An Ad-Hoc sanction of Rs. 10/- per trainee per month as pocket allowance to buy essential personal requirements such as soap, hair-oil, toilet, cigarettes etc. (not provided for in the budget). Total expenditure for all trainees is not likely to exceed Rs.1.20 lakhs per month.
- iv) Expenditure during the next six months not exceeding 1.25 Crores, as envisaged in the budget (attached) reduced, of course, by the amount made available by the Govt. of India/Tripura and voluntary aid giving agencies like Bengal Assistance Committee. The latter's representative, Dr. Triguna Sen, Ex-Education Minister of India have promised some suppliers of outfits and beddings shortly.

pproved.

Sd/-Mansur Ali
6.6.71,
Finance Minister.

Sd/- A. Yusuf,
Training Co-ordinator.

Sd/- M. Alam
5.6.71
Director,
Youth Camp.

B U D G E TFOR TRAINING 50,000 YOUTH IN 6 (SIX) MONTHSSummary of CostI. Non-recurring expenditure :

a) Huts @ Rs 45,000/- per 500 trainees x 21 for 10,500 total camp capacity.	Rs. 9,45,000/-
b) Tube-well @ Rs.3,000/- per 500	Rs. 63,000/-
c) Bedding @ Rs.13,000/- per 500	Rs. 2,73,000/-
d) Lighting @ Rs. 400/- per 500	Rs. 8,400/-
e) Utensils @ Rs. 2000/- per 500	Rs 42,000/-
f) Hand tools @ Rs.500/- per 500	Rs 10,500/-
g) Teaching aids @ Rs.1,700/- per 500	Rs. 35,700/-
h) Furniture @ Rs. 1,000/- per camp x 15 for 15 camps (average 750 capacity).	Rs. 15,000/-
i) Contingency	Rs. 1,00,000/-
	<hr/> Rs.14,92,600/-
	say- Rs.15,00,000/-

II. Recurring expenditure :

a) Maintenance of trainees @ Rs. 60/- per trainee for outfit for 12,000 = Rs. 7,20,000/- p.m. Total for six months	Rs.43,20,000/-
@ Rs. 90/- per head for food for 10,500 = 10,35,000/- p.m. Total for six months.	Rs.62,13,000/-
b) Camp establishment for supervision and training staff @ Rs. 43,200 p.m. for 15 camp. Total for six months.	Rs. 2,59,200/-
c) periodicals @ Rs. 100/- per camp 1,500/- for 15 camps. Total for six months.	Rs. 9,000/-
d) Transport @ Rs. 16,500/- p.m. for 15 camps (Operation and Maintenance)	Rs. 99,000/-
e) Central service office for stores distribution @ Rs. 4,200/- p.m. (for 15 camps.) total for six months.	Rs. 25,200/-
f) Medicines, contingencies and miscellaneous @ Rs. 1,000/- per camp per month. Total for six months.	Rs. 90,000/-

A B S T R A C T :

1. Total Non-recurring expenditure
ii. Total Recurring Expenditure

GRAND TOTAL:-

	Rs.1,10,15,400/-
Say	Rs.1,10,00,000/-
	Rs 15,00,000/-
	<hr/> Rs.1,10,10,000/-
	Rs.1,25,00,000/-

YOUTH RELIEF CAMP
(500 Trained)

B U D G E T

I. Non-recurring expenditure :

A. Group cost for each 500-recruits :

a. Huts @ 25 sq. ft. per trainee = 1,25,000 Sft. @ Rs. 3/50 per sq. ft. with bamboo nothing.	Say Rs. 45,000/-
b. Tube-well 3 @ 100 each.	Rs. 3,000/-
c. Bedding - 1 Satranji @ Rs. 8/- 1 Pillow @ Rs. 3/- 1 Mosqt. Net @ Rs. 8/- 1 Bed sheet @ Rs. 5/-	
Per bend @ Rs. 26/- x 500	Rs. 13,000/-
d. Lighting : @ 25 Lanterns @ Rs. 70/- Say 2 Patromax @ Rs. 100/-	Rs. 200/- Rs. 200/- <u>400/-</u>
e. Utensils for each <u>GROUP</u> of 500 plates 250 @ Rs. 2/- = Rs. 900/- Glass 100 @ Rs. 1/50 = Rs. 150/- Jug 25 @ Rs. 6/- = Rs. 150/- ((one hundred fifty) Padna 25 @ Rs. 5/- = Rs. 125/- (Five hundred fifty). Drums 2 @ Rs. 75/- = Rs. 150/- Degchi(1)6 @ Rs. 90/- = Rs. 550/- " (5)5 @ Rs. 40/- = Rs. 100/- <u>Rs. 1,913/-</u> Say Rs. 2,000/-	
f. Hand tools for manual work of each group (including agricultural implements).	Rs. 500/-
g. Teaching aids Black board etc. audio-visual (2) 200 <u>Radio 6 per camp 1200</u> Newspapers & books <u>300</u> 1700 for each Group.	Rs. 1,700/-

B. Camp Establishment

Furniture for staff (10 members)
(one table (Rs. 20.00) and one Chair
(Rs. 10.00) and Bedding (40.00) for each.

- 1 Camp-in-Chief.
1 Camp-in-Charge.
3 Instructors (average for 750 recruits).
3 P.T.-cum-Manual work Instruction for 750 recruits.
1 Medical Mobiliser.
1 Medical Officer.
10 @ Rs. 100.00 per each = 1000 for each camp. Say Rs. 1,000/-

TOTAL NON-RECURRING
Say Rs. 71,600/
Rs. 72,000/-

-2-

II. Recurring expenditure : (per Month)

a) Per trainee :
Personal effects :

Lungi (1)	Rs. 8/-
Short (1)	Rs. 5/-
Shirts(2)	Rs.15/-
Vest (2)	Rs.10/-
Shoe (1)pair	Rs.10/-
(Bate).	
Socks	Rs. 5/-
Note Book	Rs. 5/-
Pencil etc	Rs. 5/-

Rs.58/- Say Rs. 60.00 x 500 = Rs. 30,000/-

b) Food

@ Rs.3.00 per head per day
for 30 days Rs.90.00 x 500 Rs. 45,000/-

(a) Rs. 5.00 per head for officer = @ = 50 x 10 Rs. 1,500/-
provisions for food for (other camp staff) Rs. 500/-

c) For camp-establishment : (Basic allowance) Rs.

Rs. 47,000/-

Camp Chief	1
Dy. Camp Chief	1
Instructors (one for each 250)	3
P.T. Instructors -do-	3
Student Representative	1
Medical Officer	1

10 @ Rs.300/- p.m. Rs. 3,000/-

For staff (Lun-some) Rs. 500/-

d) Transport :

For Stores and Trainees' movement.

Maintenance and operation of pick up Truck 1(one) Rs. 1,000/- p.m.
Scooter " Rs. 100/-

e) Medicines 1
contingency 1 - - - Rs. 1,000/-
Misc. 0

f) Periodicals for each camp. - - - Rs. 100/-
Total recurring ex- Rs. 82,700/-
pdr
Say Rs. 83,000/-

Abstract

(Expenditure for one Camp (500 trainees for 6 months)

1. Non-recurring	Rs. 72,000/-	-	Rs. 72,000/-
2. Recurring - 83,000/- per month x 6	-	-	Rs. 4,98,000/-
		Grand Total	Rs. 5,70,000/-
		Say	Rs. 5,00,000/-
			i.e. An average of 1 lakh per month per camp.

YOUTH RELIEF CAMP
Budget for 500 Trainees
(A SUMMARY)

NON-RECURRING :

1. Huts (1,25,000 sft.)	-	Rs. 45,000/-
2. Tube-well (3)	-	Rs. 3,000/-
3. Bedding	-	Rs. 13,000/-
4. Lighting	-	Rs. 400/-
5. Utensils	-	Rs. 2,000/-
6. Hand tools	-	Rs. 1,700/-
7. Furniture for Office Use	-	Rs. 1,000/-
8. Contingency	-	Rs. 5,000/-
		<u>Rs. 71,600/-</u>
	Say	Rs. 72,000/-

RECURRING EXPENDITURE : (PER MONTH)

1. Clothing		
(a) Rs.60/- each	-	Rs. 30,000/-
2. (i) Food (a) Rs.3.00 per trainee	-	Rs. 45,000/-
(ii) Food for Officers and staff	-	Rs. 2,000/-
3. Basic allowance for Officers and Staff		Rs. 3,500/-
4. Periodicals	-	Rs. 100/-
5. Transports (P.O.L.)		
Truck - 1, Scooter -1)	-	Rs. 1,100/-
6. Medicines & Contingencies	-	Rs. 1,000/-
		<u>Rs. 82,700/-</u>
	S a y	Rs. 83,000/- per month

A B S T R A C T S

(Expenditure for one Camp (500 trainees for 6 months).)

1. Non-recurring - Rs. 72,000/-	-	Rs 72,000/-
2. Recurring = 83,000/- per month x 6		<u>Rs. 4,98,000/-</u>
	Grand Total	<u>Rs. 5,70,000/-</u>
	Say	Rs. 6,00,000/-

i.e. An average of Rs 1. lakh. per month per camp.

Dated : 3.6.71.

(Note on)
YOUTH RELIEF CAMPS
 (An introduction)

1. OBJECTIVE

- (a) To channel and train the stream of Youngmen coming out of Bangladesh into some organised and purposeful activity in service of Bangladesh on their return.
- (b) To serve as holding camps from which the trainees for our Armed Forces (Regulars and Guerillas) will be recruited.
- (c) To train other as Base-Workers who will also serve as Junior Guerillas as needed in support, and under the command, of the Armed Forces.

2. PROGRAMME

- (a) Training will be given within the next six months to
 - (i) 50,000 Base Workers
 - (ii) 18,000 Armed Forces recruits.
- (b) Average monthly intake will be 12,000.
- (c) Training will be for one month divided into two 15-day parts :-
 - (i) First part mainly motivational training for all new entrants. Armed Forces recruitment will then be made.
 - (ii) Second part mainly methodical training for Base-Work to those not recruited for Armed Forces.
 An outline of the syllabus is attached at Appendix-
 (Summary at Flag - A)

3. BUDGET

Expenditure for each camp of 500 trainees has been calculated at

- (a) Non-recurring - Rs. 72,000/-
- (b) Recurring -Rs. 83,000/- per month.

An overall budget of Rs. 1,25,000/- to cover the scheme has been informally handed over to the Govt. of India Representatives (details attached).

It envisaged an expenditure of approximately Rs. 1 lac per month per camp of 500.

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4. CAMPS SET-UP

Camps will be of two types :

- (a) Reception Camps : About 16 such camps in Tripura, situated about 5 miles within border along main routes of entry. These will provide :
- (i) Initial rest and orientation.
 - (ii) Security check up by respective political leaders.
 - (iii) Some initial training, if possible, for those awaiting admission to regular camps.
- (b) Training Camps : 10 such camps in Tripura with a capacity of about 1000 each, situated in groups in three areas within 30 miles of Agartala.

A list of camps is attached at Appendix - B.

5. CAMP MANAGEMENT

A. Reception Camps will be managed by Committees consisting of

- One Camp-in-Charge.
- One Dy. Camp-in-Charge
- One Camp Supervisor.
- One Student Representative.
- One Health Officer.
- Political & physical Instructor (as needed).

B. Training Camps

Each Training Camp will have the following office-bearers for providing guidance and instructions in their respective fields :-

- One Camp Chief.
- One Dy. Camp Chief.
- One Political Instructor per 250 trainees.
- One Physical Instructor per 250 trainees.
- Student Representative.
- One Health Officer.
- (ii) The Training Programme will be conducted under the over all direction of the Training Co-ordinator (Dr. Abu Yousuf).
- (iii) The Management of the Camp facilities and security will be the responsibility of the Camp Administration being provided by the Government of India.

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6. APPOINTMENTS :

- (a) Camp Chief/Camp-in-Charge and their deputies will be nominated by the Political Committee of the Eastern Zone, from among public representatives.
- (b) Camp Chief/Camp-in-Charge will appoint the other office bearers as follows :-
- (i) Camp Supervisor from among public servants and professionals in consultation with Director, Administration Youth Relief Camp (Prof. N.I. Chowdhury, M.N.A.).
 - (ii) Political Instructions from among professors and Teachers in consultation with Training Co-ordinator (Dr. Abu Yousuf).
 - (iii) Physical Instructors from among servicemen/Ex-servicemen in consultation with Sector Commanders.
 - (iv) Student Representative as nominated by Bangladesh student Action Committee (Mr. A.Q. Makhan).
 - (v) Health Officer in consultation with Medical Co-ordinator (Dr. Akhtaruzzaman).
 - (vi) All appointments will reside in their respective Camps.

7. FINANCE & ACCOUNTS

Camp Supervisor/Camp Administrator will be the drawing/dispersing officer. They will furnish weekly expenditure returns to the Director, Administration, and provision of fresh funds will be subject to upto date accounting of funds already drawn.

8. HEADQUARTERS

A directorate has been established at the Eastern Zone Headquarters for all organisation of the scheme, as at Appendix - C.

APPENDIX - 'B'
LIST OF YOUTH CAMPS
(Eastern Zone)

Dt. 6.6.71

RECEPTION CAMPS

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Present Strengths</u>	<u>Camp Chief.</u>
Chittagong & Hill Tracts	1) Barina	750	M. A. Hannan, Secy., D.A.L.
	2) Harishamukh	-	
	3) Ugaipur	-	Capt. S. Ali, MPA
Noakhali	4) Chothakhola	350	Khauja Ahmed, MNA
	5) Fajnagar	300	Prof. A. Hanif, MNA
Comilla	6) Kathalia (Baramura)	500	Abdul Awal, MNA
	7) Hattimara (Kamalagar)	350	M. A. Rashid, MPA
	8) Bokunagar (Ghyammura)	300	Prof. A. Roaf, MPA
	9) Melagharh	350	Capt. Alam
	10) Konaban		
Comilla, Dacca & Faridpur.	11) Charipara	500	Samsul Huq, MPA
	12) Joynagar	250	Afzal Husain, MPA
	13) Narshingrah	500	D. A. Abbas, MNA
	14) Mohanpur	150	Sharfuddin, MPA
	15) Khowai	250	Mustafa Shahid, MPA
SYLHET	16) Kailashabar	350	Malik Choudhury, MNA
	17) Kariganj (Assam)	450	A. Rahim, MNA
		5,650	

Training Camps

Gokulnagar Area	Camp A	750
	Camp B	750
Padmanagar Area		
Baramura Area		

Appendix - 'C'EASTERN ZONEDIRECTION OF YOUTH CAMP1. OFFICERS

<u>Sl No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
1.	Mr. M. Alam	Director, Youth Camp.	1) Overall Co-ordinator ii) Resource Mobilisation.
2.	Dr. Abu Yunuf	Director, Training, Co-ordination.	1) Preparation and Super- vision of the training programme.
3.	Prof. Nurul Islam	Director, Administration	1) Resource Utilisation and distribution. ii) Finance & Accounts.
4.	Mr. Khaled Mohammed	Director, Motivation.	1) Mobilisation of Students and their Welfare.
5.	Mr. Md. Bazlur Rahman	Supply Officer	1) Arrangement for inflow and outflow of trainees. ii) Procurement of Camp supplies in bulk and its distribution. iii) Support for construction of Camp sites.
6.	Mr. Mosharraf Hussain	General Service Officer	1) Office Maintenance ii) Accounts & Stores.

5.4.1971.

Youth Transit Camps

- Objective :- (i) to channel the stream of youngmen coming out of Bangla Desh into some organised purpose and politically oriented activity to prepare them for returning to their country.
- (ii) to serve as transit camps from which trainees for military or Guerrilla warfare shall be selected.
- Location - site selection - The camps should be near the border, but at a safe distance of 3 to 4 miles from the border and close to B.S.F. Camp/Thana for protection against sudden raid on plea of hot pursuit by enemy forces.
- Magnitude - No. & capacity of Camps - To begin with Camps to hold 5,000 youngmen shall be established 10 camps with capacity of 500 each shall be established.
- Expenditure - (Source of Finance) - (a) The expenses for (i) construction of camps (with bamboo & Thatch), (ii) minimum furnishings, and (iii) recurring cost of food (at Rs.2/- per head) shall be borne out of Relief budget of the Government.
- (b) Additional funds needed for supplementing food, etc, shall be met out of monthly grant of Rs.15,000/- (Rs.3/- per head per month) from the voluntary Relief Organisation.
- (c) Construction material made available by Bangla Desh representatives at some points will be utilised to construct camps on priority basis.
- Administrative Set-up - Each camp should have following categories of office bearers :
- (i) Caretaker from Indian Government to handle supply of food, etc.
- (ii) Bangla Desh Political leader (MNA, MPA, etc) for overall guidance.
- (iii) Student leader for motivation and organisational contact.

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(iv) Teacher for political education.

(v) NCC representative for discipline and physical training.

(vi) Medical training.

<u>Suggested location</u>	<u>Youth coming from</u>	<u>Political Adminis- trator</u>
1. SABRUM	- Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Trails	- Mosharraf Hussain, MP.
2. EKINPORE	- Noakhali	- Khawaja Ahmed, MNA
3. KATHALIA	- Comilla	- Mir Hussain, MPA
4. Boxunagar	- do-	- Prof Khurshid Alam, MNA.
5. MCHANPUR	- do-	- Dewan Abdul Abbas, MNA
6. ASRAMBARI	- Sylhet	- Mustafa Shatud, MPA.
7. KHALIASHAR	-	- Dr. Abdul Ali, Dist Awami League.
8. DHA-PAMNAGAR	-	- A Azizor Rahman, MPA.
9. Karinganj	-	- Farid Ghazi, MNA.
<u>Overall Co-ordination from Bangla Desh Government</u>		
1. Dr. Abu Yusuf	-	Co-ordination & Programming.
2. Nozaffar Ahmed, MPA	-	Movement and Hospitality.

Source: Indian Army, Headquarters Eastern Command GS (X), Fort William, Calcutta, *Letter No 103999/23/1/GS(INT)X dated 17 August 1971*, on Security of Bangladesh Youth Camps and collected from '*Bijoyketon*'-Liberation War Museum.

APPENDIX R

GUERRILLA LEADERSHIP

~~OFFICE~~ UNCLASSGUERRILLA LEADERSHIP

1. Guerilla warfare is basically people based and politically oriented warfare. Guerilla warfare forms the mainstay of our war strategy to liberate the country. Amongst various pre-requisites of successful guerilla operation, leadership is one of the most vital. During the last three months, approximately 7 thousands guerillas have been launched inside. Reports from various sources indicate that some of the guerillas are indulging in anti-social activities, some are sitting absolutely idle and some are taking on irrelevant tasks and only few operating effectively. Even the overall effectiveness of these few is negligible, because the operations have not been co-ordinated and not led by effective leadership. This absence of leadership inside for conducting the guerilla warfare, is in fact damaging our cause. It is, therefore, essential that immediate steps are taken to ensure effective leadership and guidance to operations inside.

2. Based on the study of various guerilla warfare, in the other countries, it has been observed that leaders emerge normally out of the guerillas themselves. However, this is a long process and takes years to become effective. In our peculiar circumstances, the time frame within which we have to liberate our country is very limited and does not allow us to wait for the evolutionary process of providing the leadership to take effect. Therefore, the circumstances dictate that immediate leadership is provided through induction.

3. The guerilla section consists of 8 to 10 guerillas. Leader and Dy leader of the section is elected by the members of the section. These section leaders provide the first rung of leadership. 3 to 5 sections of guerillas form a platoon. According to our plan, number of platoons will be operating from one base. The leader and Dy leader for the platoon will be decided by the various sections forming the platoon. It may be difficult to find, in every village, a suitable political leader. Therefore, a political worker as nominated by the political representatives of the area should work in close liaison with the Pl Comd.

4. 3 to 5 platoons i.e. a total of 150 to 250 guerillas will form a Company. Selection of the Coy leader and Dy leader should be made, from the platoon leaders according to performance and merit. This selection however, must take into account the general feelings of the members of the Company. Selection of the Coy Comd will finally be decided by the En Comd. The Bn consists of 4 to Coys and will have approximately 1000 guerillas. A Bn operating from the bases already established and task allocated should preferably work on the geographical basis of a Sub-Division.

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However, where the Sub-Division has been cut by dividing line between two Sectors, it will be left upto the Sector Comd to decide the op of the Bn.

5. The Bns should be regrouped in certain areas into Bdes preferably/wise, in each sector.

6. The leadership at district level is not required immediately. So far we have inducted approximately 7 thousand guerillas who are operating in Sub-Division. While for every Sub-Division, one officer leader will be required, to begin with we may provide such a leader for those Sub-Divisions where number of guerillas warrants it. As the strength grows we may provide leaders in other Sub-Divisions also. 13 MNAs trained in GW are available. They could be inducted immediately. Subsequent leaders could be drawn from 45 officerstrainees when they pass out in the first week of Oct 71.

7. After reviewing the situation narrated above, the fol measures are recommended :-

- a. 65 officers, expected to pass out shortly, to be inducted inside to operate as Coy leaders and subsequent Bn leader.
- b. Trained MNA/MPA, on voluntary basis, to go inside to give leadership in their respective area.
- c. Emergency scheme is drawn up to train matured leaders, at least two per police station, from amongst public representatives, political workers etc.
- d. Once bns and bdes are organised, selected regular offrs can be inducted subsequently to co-ordinate operation at Sub-Division/District level.

C-in-C

1. See my marginal remarks and correlate with our quarterly directives
2. Please put up some definite action/scheme on suggestion approved above that is immediate

Khan
1/15/71

Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, Note Sheet approved by the Commander in Chief on induction of Guerrilla Leaders and collected from *'Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum*.

APPENDIX S

PRIVATE

ARMIES

Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, *Letter No 0002G dated 31 August 1971* on Private Armies and collected from '*Bijoyketon*'-*Liberation War Museum*.

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No. 0002G
HQ Bangladesh Forces
Field
C/O Government of the Peoples'
Republic of Bangladesh
Mujibnagar

31 Aug 71

To: (All Sector Com's)

Subject: Private Armies

1. The decision on 'Private Armies' conveyed under our letter No. 0002G dated 2 Aug 71 was made in view of the following compelling considerations :-

- a. Ensure all guerilla effort on a concerted basis under comd of Bangladesh Government through the C-in-C and Sector Comds.
- b. Obviate clashes.
- c. Prevent operation of bands of dacoits operating under the guise name Mukti Bahini.

2. Any private hands now operating are NOT required to enlist but declare their bonafides allegiance to the established lawful Govt of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh and form part of the liberation forces. This they have to do by completing the form and oath of allegiance. Any one refusing to do so must be having some other motive or operating as a lawless band.



For Commander-in-Chief

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APPENDIX T

**TREATY OF PEACE, FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF
SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS**

New Delhi, 9 August 1971 (came into force from 18 August 1971)

DESIROUS of expanding and consolidating the existing relations of sincere friendship between them.

BELIEVING that the further development of friendship and cooperation meets the basic national interests of both the States as well as the interests of lasting peace in Asia and the world.

DETERMINED to promote the consolidation of universal peace and security and to make steadfast efforts for the relaxation of international tensions and the final elimination of the remnants of colonialism.

UPHOLDING their firm faith in the principles of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between States with different political and social systems.

CONVINCED that in the world today international problems can only be solved by cooperation and not by conflict.

REAFFIRMING their determination to abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Republic of India on one side,

AND

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the other side.

HAVE decided to conclude the present Treaty, for which purpose the following Plenipotentiaries have been appointed:

On behalf of the republic of India:

Sardar Swaran Singh.

Minister of External Affairs

On behalf of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. A.A. GROMYKO, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

WHO, having each presented their Credentials, which are found to be in proper form and due order.

HAVE Agreed as Follows:

Article I

The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare that enduring peace and friendship shall prevail between the two countries and their peoples. Each Party shall respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other Party and refrain from interfering in the others internal affairs. The High Contracting Parties shall continue to develop and consolidate the relations of sincere friendship, good neighbourliness and comprehensive cooperation existing between them on the basis of the aforesaid principles as well as those of equality and mutual benefit.

Article II

Guided by the desire to contribute in every possible way to ensure enduring peace and security of their people, the High Contracting Parties declare their determination to continue their efforts to preserve and to strengthen peace in Asia and throughout the world, to halt the arms race and to achieve general and complete disarmament, including both nuclear and conventional, under effective international control.

Article III

Guided by their loyalty to the lofty ideal of equality of all Peoples and Nations, irrespective of race or creed, the High Contracting Parties condemn colonialism and racialism in all forms and manifestations, and reaffirm their determination to strive for their final and complete elimination.

The High Contracting Parties shall cooperate with others States to achieve these aims and to support the just aspirations of the peoples in their struggle against colonialism and racial domination.

Article IV

The Republic of India respects the peace loving policy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics aimed at strengthening friendship and co-operation with all nations.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics respects India's policy of non-alignment and reaffirms that this policy constitutes an important factor in the maintenance of universal peace and international security and in the lessening of tensions in the world.

Article V

Deeply interested in ensuring universal peace and security, attaching great importance to their mutual cooperation in the international field for achieving those aims, the High Contracting Parties will maintain regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting the interests of both the States by means of meetings and exchanges of views between their leading statesman, visits by official delegations and special envoys of the two Governments and through diplomatic channels.

Article VI

Attaching great importance to economic, scientific and technological co-operation between them, the High Contracting Parties will continue to consolidate and expand mutually advantageous and comprehensive co-operation in these fields as well as expand trade, transport and communications between them on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual benefit and most-favoured-nation treatment, subject to the existing agreement and the special arrangement with contiguous countries as specified in the Indo-Soviet Trade Agreement of December 26, 1970.

Article VII

The High Contracting Parties shall promote further development of ties and contacts between them to the fields of science, art, literature, education, public health, press, radio, television, cinema, tourism and sports,

Article VIII

In accordance with the traditional friendship established between the two countries each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declares that it shall not enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party,

Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from any aggression against the other Party and to prevent the use of its territory for the commission of any act which might inflict military damage on the other High Contracting Party.

Article IX

Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from providing and assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other Party. In the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries.

Article X

Each High Contracting Party solemnly declares that it shall not enter into any obligations, secret or public, with one or more states, which is incompatible with this Treaty. Each High Contracting Party further declares that no obligation exists, nor shall any obligation be entered into, between itself and any other State or States, which might cause military damage to the other Party.

Article XI

This Treaty is concluded for the duration of twenty years and will be automatically extended for each successive period of five years unless either High Contracting Party declares its desire to terminate it by giving notice to the other High Contracting Party twelve months prior to the expiration of the Treaty. The Treaty will be subject to ratification and will come into force on the date of the exchange of instruments of Ratification which will take place in Moscow within one month of the signing of this Treaty.

Article XII

Any difference of interpretation of any Article or Articles of this Treaty which may arise between the High Contracting Parties will be settled bilaterally by peaceful means in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

The said Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty in Hindi, Russian and English, all texts being equally authentic and have affixed thereto their seals.

DONE in New Delhi on the ninth day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and seventy one.

On behalf of the
Republic of India
Sd/-
SARDAR SWARAN SINGH
Ministry of External Affairs

On behalf of the Union of
Soviet Socialist Republics
Sd/-
A.A. GROMYKO
Minister of Foreign Affairs

APPENDIX U

**REPORT ON SABOTAGE OF ELECTRICAL TRANSFORMERS AT DHAKA ON
19.7.71 AND OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE**

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SECRET.

REPORT ON SABOTAGE OF ELECTRICAL TRANSFORMERS AT DHAKA
ON 19.7.71 AND OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORKS.

HISTORY:

At present Siddhirganj Power Station is the only generating station for the greater Dacca area and electricity is transmitted to Dacca by one 132 KV line and five 33 KV lines to feed 8 Nos. of Sub-stations where giant transformers are installed.

It was seen that transmission lines are temporarily repaired within a short time and the situation becomes normal. Realising this, instructions were given to the 'Mukti Force' to destroy the above 8 Nos. of Sub-stations of Dacca city. These transformers are very sensitive; one bolt is sufficient to discard them totally and WAPDA does not have any spare stock of these except 2 or 3 Nos.

The Sub-stations are:

i) Ulen (Banpara)	...	132 KV/33 KV	-	60 MW.
ii) Manmadi	...	33/11 KV	-	10 MW.
iii) Tejgaon	...	"	-	10 MW.
iv) Khilgaon	...	"	-	10 MW.
v) Kamalpur	...	"	-	10 MW.
vi) Postagala	...	"	-	10 MW.
vii) Mirpur	...	"	-	5 MW.
viii) Tongi	...	"	-	10 MW.

After site survey along with a 'Mukti Force' it was decided that they can perform safe operation on 4 Nos. of Sub-stations named (i) Ulen, (ii) Khilgaon, (iii) Manmadi and (iv) Kamalpur.

ACTION:

On 19.7.71, the 'Mukti Force' attacked all the above four Sub-Stations at a time between 8-15 PM to 8-45 PM.

SUGGESTS:

The 'Mukti Force' could successfully blow off the transformers of the following Sub-stations which are beyond repair with explosives after disarming the Police on duty and confining them, other staff and even the public in both rooms.

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- i) Udon ... 132/33 KV = one transformer of 60 MW.
 ii) Khilgaon ... 33/11 KV - 2 Transformers of 5 MW each.

NON SUCCESS:

Transformers of the following sub-stations could not be blown off because of the reasons stated against them.

- i) Manmadi 33/11 KV - Here the Police could not be disarmed; they opened fire and as such the 'MISAFI FOZ' made about 100 rounds of staim gun firing; killing 2 Nos. of Police and 1 No. of WAPDA GUARD.
- ii) Kamalgur- 33/11 KV- Here the plan did not work well. The boy sent earlier with arms and explosive could not take his position because of the inmates of the hails living just at the back side gate of the Sub-Station.

R E S U L T:

Almost whole of North Eastern side of Dacca remained under darkness for about 48 hours and North Western side for about half a day.

At present total consumption of Dacca is very poor as most of the major and small industries are closed and as such the shortage of power is not felt very much unless there is a major cut down. If at least one more Sub-Station could be blown off the effect would be appreciated.

A R R E S T:

The followings were arrested in the above connection on 21.7.71 from their offices upto 24.7.71:

- i) Mr. Mirajul Haq, Asstt. Engineer, Operation Division, Dacca Electric Supply.
- ii) Mr. Tajul Islam, Security Officer, WAPDA.

It is learnt from a reliable source that they are in the hunt of one Executive Engineer.

P R E S E N T S E C U R I T Y:

At present West Pakistani Police force have been posted in addition to the Bengali Police.

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RECOMMENDATION:

The 'MUKTI FOJZ' is actively thinking of destroying these Sub-Stations by some means which can be discussed.

ONE'S PROPOSED ACTIONS:

I) Destruction of tubular poles of the following transmission lines would result failure of electricity for a reasonable time:

- i) Siddhirganj Postagola.
- ii) Siddhirganj Kamalpur.
- iii) Siddhirganj Khilgaon.
- iv) Siddhirganj Kaliganj.

These lines pass through remote villages and it is very convenient to destroy them.

2) Failure of high power transmitter of the radio at Savar can be caused by the ways stated in the next pages:

- i) Destruction of poles of over-head line between Tongi and Savar;
- ii) Destruction of underground cable line between Mirpur and Savar going along Savar road;

There is a diesel generator set located at Savar but that does not give good performance of the transmitter.

- iii) It has been gathered that the old Dhannandi Power Station (near Hatir Pool) which was abandoned a few years back is going to be commissioned within a month.

As there is no police force over these at present, this Power House can be easily blown off. Regarding inside locations and lay-out discussions may be made.

- iv) On road sides there are scores of "Tidder Pillar Distribution Boxes" and II KV Transformers and Sub-Stations which can be easily blown off disrupting electricity in small areas for a reasonable time.

UNCLASS

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Proper programming can be done after discussion of the blue print already sent.

CAUTION:

The Pak Army have installed "MIMIC" around the 132 KV Transmission Towers against sabotage works.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- (1) Always angle towers or poles and in their absence section towers should be hit;
- (2) More copies of the blue print of the distribution system of electricity in Bangladesh should be made and distributed to other Sectors for their guidance and necessary action;
- (3) It is not understood how Power can come from Kaptai to Chittagong; why the towers are not destructed in the hilly areas?

APPRECIATION:

The boys did excellent jobs in respect of the sabotage works of electricity in and around Dacca. They need more guidance or instruction for effective operation.

CONCLUSION:

- (1) Disruption of electricity should be started in all places at least in Ghalina and Chittagong in consultation with the blue print for hitting the correct target.
- (2) The boys should be given a small lesson in respect of the numerous parts of electricity as well as the trick of the weak points for sabotage.

The LIBERATION FIGHT should be continued till the success is achieved. 'Inshallah' VICTORY is ours.

JOY BANGLA.

৭/৭/৭১

UNCLASS

Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, **Reports on Sabotage of Electrical Transformers at Dacca on 19.7.71 and Other Suggestions for Future Works** and collected from '**Bijoyketon**'-Liberation War Museum.

APPENDIX V

HEAVY CASUALTIES - END OF JULY

সংক্ষিপ্ত UNCLASS

PERSONAL AND SECRET

Nb. 0002G/74
 HQ Bangladesh Forces
 Field
 C/O Government of the Peoples'
 Republic of Bangladesh
 Mujibnagar

To: Lieut Colonel ZIAUR RAHMAN, 2 Sep 71
 P.S.C.,
 Comd 'Z' Force (11 Sector)
 Bangladesh Forces

Subject: Heavy Casualties - End July 71

Reference : Your No. 103/1/G of 12 Aug 71.

1. Whilst noting your assurance of high morale, despite the casualties, and of determination to destroy the enemy, I can NOT help observing that if my advice on the method of inducting into battle hrs of your force (in view of a large proportion of trained recruits), the casualties could have been avoided. Pre-planning on thorough recon (maint of contact with enemy through patrols), provision of adequate fire sp and concentration of fire (from all sources) on objectives coupled with surprise and deception must be ensured in your future ops.

2. You will be well advised to make due note and guide your COs, accordingly, because we can ill-afford abortive actions or heavy casualties - must train hard and carefully prepare, and achieve a series of successes essential for morale of own tps and our civ population.

3. Ack.


 of Commander-in-Chief

PERSONAL AND SECRETNOT ON ORIGINAL

Copy for Confid Dossier Officer 

UNCLASS

1971

Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, Letter No 0002G dated 02 September 1971 on Heavy Casualties by the End of July 1971 and collected from 'Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum.

APPENDIX W

SPECIAL SITUATION REPORT FROM HQ NO 1 SECTOR (G-0724)

From: HQ No 1 Sector
 To : HQ Delta Sector
 Info: Echelon HQ BDF

CONFID
 G-0724

 twenty four FF of spl group returned (.) now staying at camp (.) rest
 of the boys safe (.) reaching soon (.) detail info as under (.)


alfa (.) seven ships and two barges sunk in CTG port (.) one barge
 sank in the centre of river KARNAFULY opposite jetty No 13
 (.) port approach completely blocked (.)

bravo (.) one ship sunk in oil jetty (.)

charlie (.) AL ABAS was unloading ammo (.)

delta (.) Lt Gen TIKKA KHAN came to CTG on 16 Aug to personally
 assess the damage and cause (.) senior naval offr in charge
 of port has been arrested (.) all sentries in the port
 arrested (.) serious clash between PUNJABIS and BALUCHIS
 took place over the ship incidences (.) PUNJABIS blamed
 BALUCHIS for helping MF in blowing the ships (.) by
 exchange of fire between PUNJABIS and BALUCHIS on 16 and
 17 Aug in port area cmm CTG Cantt ~~and~~ and airport
 reported (.) in a clash in CTG airport on the ni of 16/17
 Aug 3 offrs and 20 other ranks killed (.) a large no of
 sentries from BALUCH REGT who were on port duty have been
 shot (.) curfew imposed by ~~gajay~~ pakarnay in CTG port and
 even in KARNAFULY river water (.) no one allowed to port
 area (.)
 BOYS ARE IN HIGH SPIRIT =

File No 101/t/GS(0)


 No 1
 Sector Comd
 23 Aug 71

 UNCLASS

(Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, Letter No 0002G dated 02 September 1971 on Heavy Casualties by the End of July 1971 and collected from 'Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum.)

APPENDIX X

SPECIAL SITUATION REPORT FROM HQ SUB SECTOR D-3

~~TOP SECRET~~ UNCLASS

D T G
16 JUL 1971

OPS MEMORANDUM

FROM : HQ SUB SECTOR D-3,

TO : CONTROL ROOM (D SECTOR)
HQ BANGLA DESH FORCES

SECRET
G-0104

special situation report (.) para 5 of annexure 'A' to our letter
no. BD/0002/G jul 11 (.) It has been confirmed that one of the
officers killed in that ambush was captain BREEZ BUKHARI of 53 FIELD
REGIMENT ARTILLERY

CIN-C	
CO S	
EXT. OFFICER	
HEAD LOCK	
DATE	18-7-71

HEADQUARTERS. BANGLA DESH FORCES	
Recd No	120
D to	18-7-71
Branch	9

C/3006/9

[Signature]
Major

UNCLASS

Source: Special Situation Report from Sub Sector D-3 to Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, Signal Message No G-0104 dated 16 July 1971 confirming Death of Captain Bukhari of Pakistan Army in an ambush and collected from 'Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum.

APPENDIX Y

ASSESSMENT ON MUKTI BAHINI ACTIVITIES-PERFORMANCE

(During the Period: Last week of June to 1st week of
October'71)

^{and}
" ON MukTI BAHINI ACTIVITIES, PERFORMANCE "
(During the Period : Last week of June - 1st week of October'71)

1. INTRODUCTION :

Mukti Bahini's activities for the last 14 weeks have been assessed and certain observations regarding the general trend of guerrilla activities,- sector to sector comparison of performance and the effect of enemy para-military forces are made.

All the figures used in this paper are based on the daily reports reaching the Head Quarters. It must be emphasised that these figures are subject to various kind of error and inaccuracies. While at places there may be repetition it should be kept in mind that the reports reaching HQ do not always contain description of all operations. However, for our purpose of studying the general trend the present figures are sufficient.

No official records of Mukti Bahini activities are available prior to the last week of June. The present paper, therefore, deals with activities of the period between 24th. of June to 5th. of October. It may be mentioned that during the month of June, the activities were basically sporadic and ill-organized. So the period dealt here is the most effective period of the War.

The present study is made by dividing the whole of Bangladesh into 4 sectors (as in the reports). Break up is shown below :-

<u>General Name</u> :	<u>Operational Areas</u> :
(a) Sector 1 - "Rangpur-Dinajpur-Rajshahi"	- Districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Bogra & Pabna.
(b) Sector 2 - "Kushtia-Jessore-Khulna"	- District of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, Barisal & Patuakhali.
(c) Sector 3 - "Mymensingh-Sylhet-Moulvibazar"	- Districts of Mymensingh, Sylhet, Tangail & Part of Rangpur.
(d) Sector 4 - "Dacca-Comilla-Chittagong"	- Districts of Comilla, Chittagong, Noakhali, Hill Tracts, Dacca & Part of Sylhet.

AC
21/10/71

(Cont'd.on.....Page No.2)

(PAGE NO: 2)

The actual sector divisions are different. The present study do not consider the relative strength in personnel of the different sectors.

As stated earlier, the aim of the present study is limited but given time - the data given here could be utilized in more detailed studies.

2. FACTS AND FIGURES :

(i) Number of Operations :

An operation can be a raid on Pakistan troop position, ambush on Pak Patrol, demolition of road, railway bridges and culverts, disruption of railway tracks or telecommunication line, mine planting etc. A significant operation is one in which some substantial result is obtained.

Total number of operations carried out during the period beginning from 1st of August till 5th. of October is 5277. No data is available for the month of July or earlier. During these operations 6331 Pakistani regular soldiers and 4890 irregulars were killed. It is found that on the average approximately 40% of the operations are significant.

SECTOR-WISE DIVISION:

<u>Sector :</u>	<u>No. of Operations;</u>	<u>Percentage :</u>
1	1592	30.1%
2	705	13.3%
3	1981	37.5%
4	999	19.1%

Sector 4 has the highest percentage of significant operations and sector 3 the lowest.

(ii) Performance in 14 weeks:

- (1) In 4 weeks total personnel killed: 14560
- (2) Regular troops killed : 8934 including 86 Officers.
- (3) Irregulars killed : 5626

(Cont'd. on.....Page No.3)

Sector-wise Division.

(PAGE NO: 3)

Sector	P.T.Killed	RAZAKARS		Total Personnel
		A.Killed		
Sector 1	1672	1348		3120
Sector 2	1142	949		2091
Sector 3	2126	1984		4110
Sector 4	3994	1345		5339

Sector-wise division of these figures for all the weeks are shown in Table 1 x 2 x 3 :

- (4) Paki troops (regular) wounded : 2387
- (5) Number of army vehicles destroyed : 163
- (6) Number of strategic bridges & culverts demolished : 251
- (7) Number of ships sunk or damaged : 16
- (8) Troop carrying Trains derailed at : 23 places.

Table

Monthly break of Mukti Bahini performances

All Sectors

	July	August	September
Pak troops killed	2084	3500	2663
Officers	37	29	22
Pak troops wounded	730	903	954
Para-military (Razakars etc) killed	315	1444	2212
Vehicles destroyed (Truck/Jeep)	62	52	49
Bridges demolished	61	97	93
No. of operations	Not available	2329	2564

(PAGE NO: 4)

3. ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE :

The present analysis is made ~~mainly~~ mainly on the basis of enemy casualties. The figures in Tables 1,2 & 3 are plotted in diagram 1 where the blue line indicating the Pak regulars and red line the irregulars killed. The dotted curve is obtained by adding the two. Diagram 2 show a histogram of weekly enemy casualties for the last 14 weeks.

Both the figures indicate that Mukti Bahini activities enemy casualties grew rapidly during the 2nd-3rd week of July reaching a peak during the middle of August. They also show a sharp fall towards the end of August. It is significant to note - that while ~~w~~ dwindle the number of Pak troops killed continue to dwindle throughout the north of September - the overall total has a slight rise at the end of September. This is due to the fact that the Razakars and other para-military forces are having more casualties during the period.

The Razakar casualty curve has distinct features - which indicate that the confrontation with Razakars began on the 2nd week of July - the casualties figure had a sharp rise during the 2nd week of August. A comparison of Pak troops and Razakar casualty curves show that number of Razakars killed ~~remained~~ considerably lower than Pak troops during July. The gap narrowed during August and September and by the second week of September, the two curves almost met each other. By the 3rd week of September the number of Razakar killed became larger than that of ~~one~~ troops and the gap was ~~wider~~ wider in the reverse way during the remaining two weeks. This trend may be due to :-

- (a) increasing number of trained Razakars.
- (b) ~~without~~ withdrawal of Pak army from front lines.

~~Two weeks later~~ive. During the last week of August - the second factor became more prominent as is seen from Troop casualty curve which has a sharp fall at this time. After that the trend continued till the present time. To sum up, we notice :-

(PAGE NO: 5)

(a) a sharp rise of Mukti Bahini activities at the beginning of August - which maintained its tempo for about 2 weeks - then the activities had a sharp fall and finally approached a near ~~st~~ stability ;

(b) while the performance went down during the month of September- the actual number of operations went up from 2329 (4 weeks) operations in August to 2564(4 weeks) in September - meaning thereby that the operations became less significant;

(c) introduction of Razakars had definite effect on the overall performance - the increasing casualty of Razakars and decreasing troop casualty;

(d) Sector 4 (Dacca-Comilla-Chittagong) has shown the most outstanding performance - ~~xxxx~~ averaging the highest number of significant operations - while sector 1 (Rangpur-Dinajpur-Rajshahi) has shown the poorest performance. The largest number of Razakars killed in sector 3(Mymensingh-Sylhet) is probably indicative of proportionately higher percentage of hostile population in these districts. See Table 4

GENERAL COMMENTS :

The rise and fall of Mukti Bahini activities and its timing may be related to various factors. That the peak period did not last more than two weeks - is a matter of serious concern. This is ~~is~~ indicative of lack of proper mental preparation (motivational) on the part of guerrillas for a longer fight.

The growth of Razakars - which is also indicative of slight shift of public support may have also caused their frustration.

Certain actions by guerrillas may have caused public disension - (In a number of places-water-barrages were demolished-civilian buses and trains were shot at). These actions are also indicative of lack of discipline.

Certain political or external events may also effect the public moral and in turn guerrilla activities. These are :-

(i) replacement of Tikka Khan by a civilian ~~Governor~~ Governor, Dr. A.M. Malik (3rd. September '71) and (ii) Indo-Soviet treaty and subsequent press ~~coverage~~ coverage of terms like 'Political settlement' etc. (Middle of August).

(PAGE NO: 6)

The sharp fall of significant actions in ^{SECTOR} operation 4 may be looked into. It is observed ^{that} very few operations have been carried out in the district of Chittagong - while Hill Tracts show no record of ~~curve~~ guerrilla action there. One other district having almost no activity is Pabna.

CONCLUSION :

Table...Weekly casualty list of enemy forces
(Regular Troops & Para-military)

Week	Sector 1	Sector 2	Sector 3	Sector 4	Total
1	00	53	37	189	279
2	36	62	48	180	326
3	82	192	158	375	807
4	210	103	212	378	903
5	161	108	143	296	708
6	178	132	287	530	1127
7	312	295	573	353	1533
8	284	212	505	630	1631
9	415	180	370	391	1356
10	224	193	561	468	1446
11	288	228	260	437	1213
12	239	135	258	281	913
13	372	80	417	260	1129
14	263	119	288	571 320	1241 900

Table :

Weekly casualty list of Pak Soldiers.

Week	Sector 1	Sector 2	Sector 3	Sector 4	Total
1*	00	53	30	189	272
2	36	61	41	180	318
3	79	82	145	364	670
4	177	85	194	347	803
5	114	64	115	247	540
6	121	64	172	446	803
7	141	155	277	257	830
8	128	113	242	502	985
9	216	76	150	278	720
10	150	121	258	355	884
11	143	84	113	289	629
12	122	66	83	205	476
13	147	48	201	136	532
14	97	70	105	199	471

* Week beginning from 24th. June, 1971.

Table :
Weekly casualty list of enemy Para-military forces(Razakars etc.)

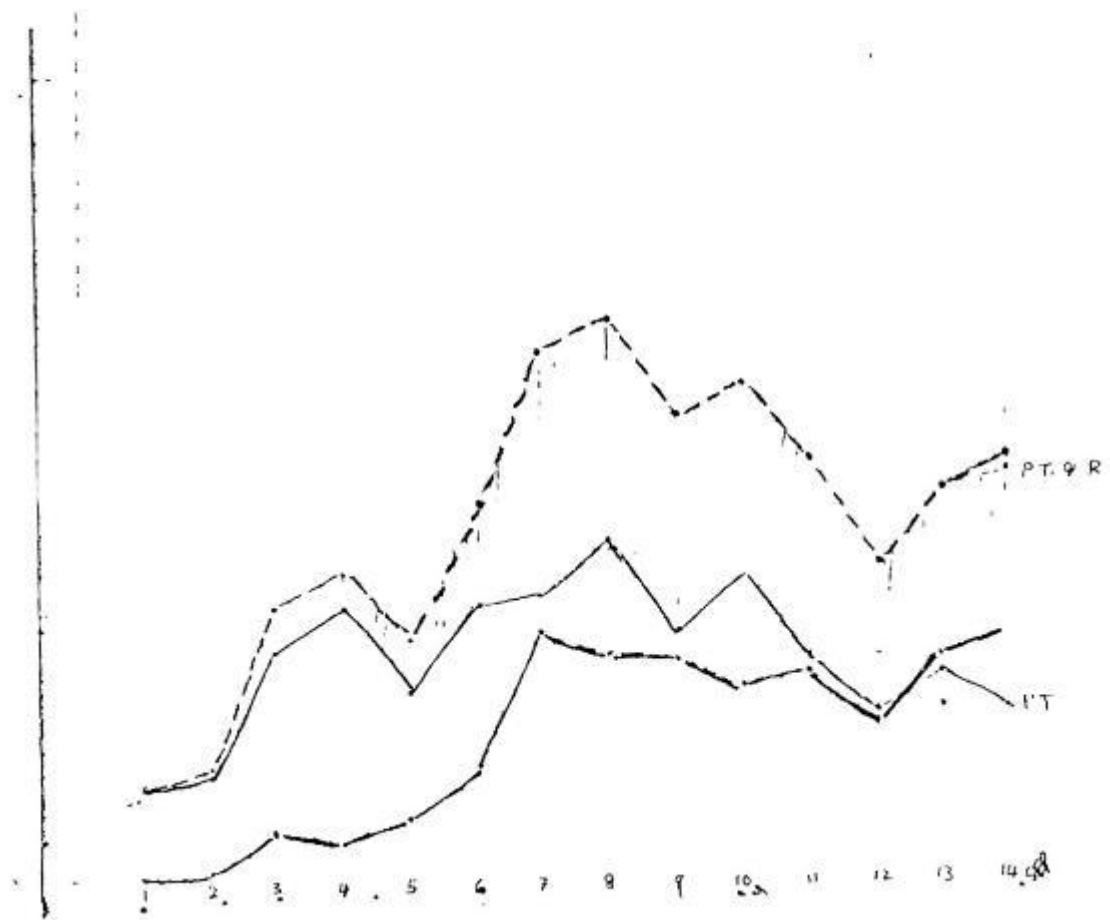
Week	Sector 1	Sector 2	Sector 3	Sector 4	Total
1*	00	00	07	00	7
2	00	01	07	00	8
3	03	110	13	11	137
4	33	18	18	31	100
5	47	44	28	49	168
6	57	68	115	84	324
7	191	140	296	96	723
8	156	99	263	128	646
9	199	104	220	113	636
10	74	72	303	113	562
11	145	144	147	148	584
12	117	69	175	76	437
13	225	32	216	124	597
14	166	49	183	111	509

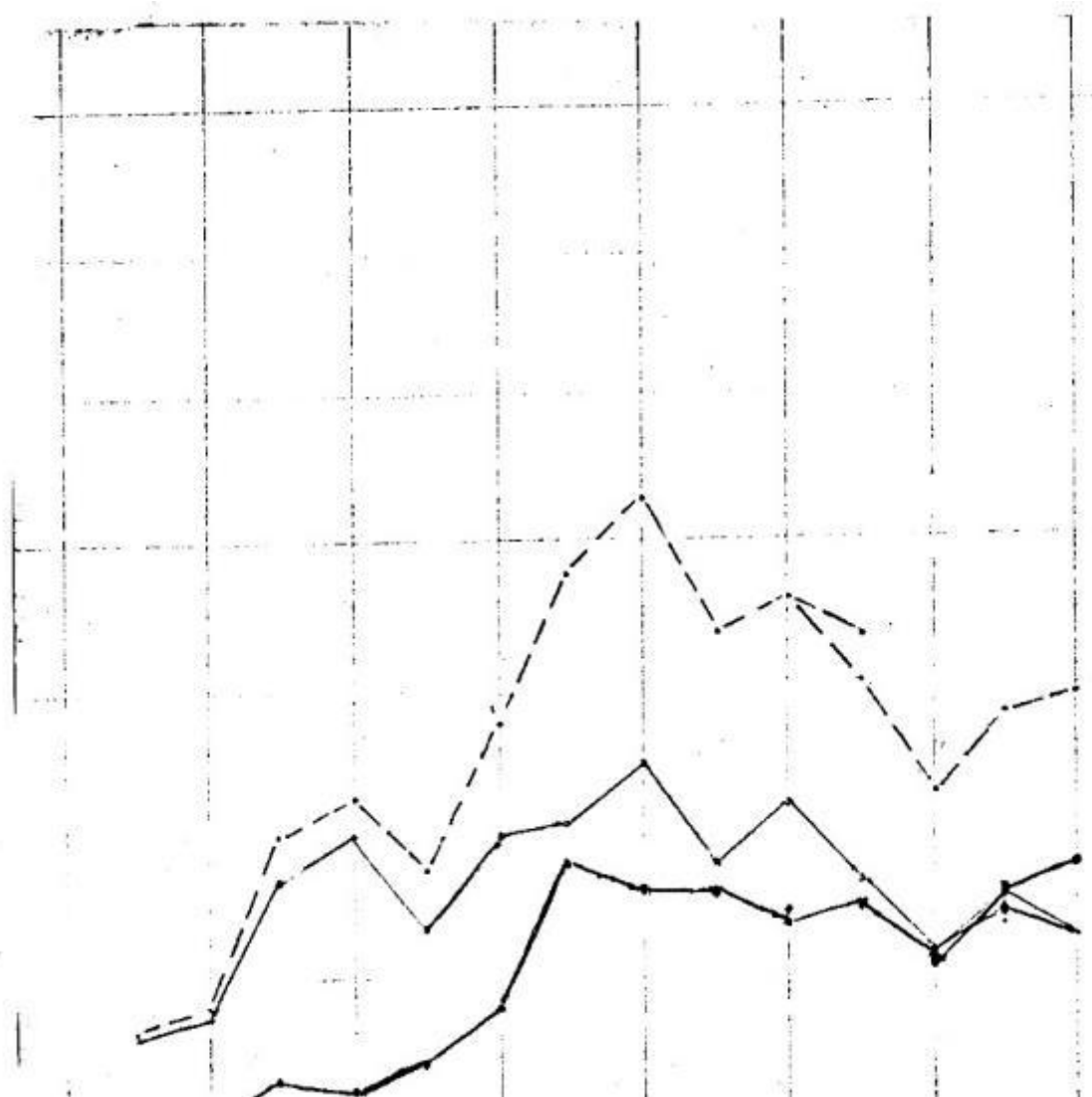
* Week beginning from 24th.June,1971.

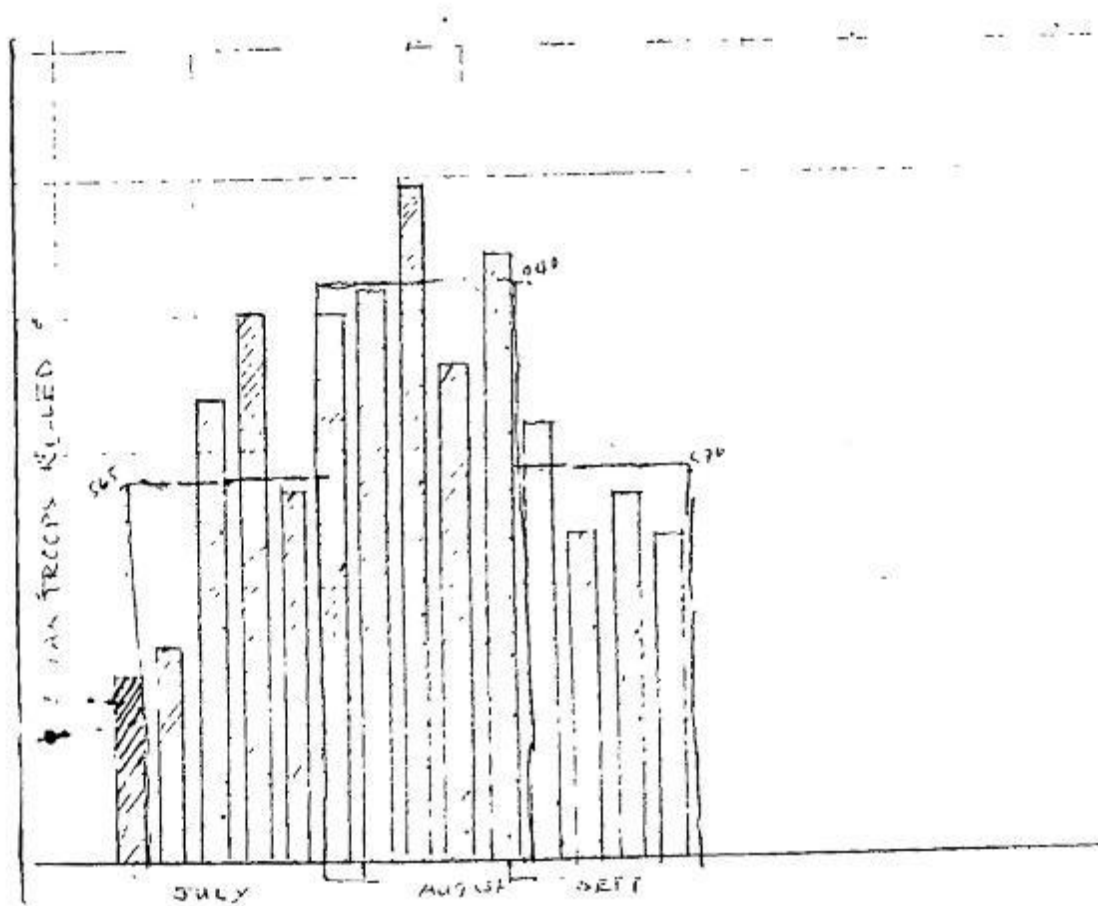
Table 3.3.3.

Comparison of performances of the different sectors.

Sector	No. of Operations/Week	No. of enemy killed per 100 operations.	Percentage of total Pak troops killed in this sector.	Percentage of Razakars killed in this sector.
1	185	128	18.7%	24%
2	85	214	12.7%	16.9%
3	230	147	23.8%	35.2%
4	110	365	44.7%	23.9%







Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, **Assessment on Mukti Bahini Activities and Performance (during the period: last week of June – 1st week of October 1971)** and collected from '*Bijoyketon*'-Liberation War Museum.

APPENDIX Z

**BANGLADESH FORCES HQ – PRESS
RELEASE****BANGLADESH FORCES H.Q., MUJIBNAGAR
PRESS RELEASE**

Dated 3.12.71.

**Fortnightly summary of Mukti Bahini activities
based on the reports reaching during the period
between 15th to 31st November, 1971.**

According to reports reaching HQ during the last half of November Mukti Bahini carried out about 900 independent operations including few major offensive against Pakistani troops in Bangladesh.

During these operations Mukti Bahini killed 1570 Pakistani soldiers including 25 officers and nearly an equal number of enemy para-military irregulars (Bangors, Razakars, Mujahids, collaborators etc). 705 enemy regular troops were seriously wounded.


During these operations Mukti Bahini has liberated large areas in Sylhet, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Tangail, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong districts. Areas now in complete control of Mukti Bahini; most of the northern part of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Sylhet districts; almost the whole of Tangail district; almost the whole of Kishanganj Sub-Division of Mymensingh district; extensive areas in Barisal and Faridpur districts; the western part of Khulna and Jessore districts; in Chittagong Mukti Bahini has taken virtual control of Fatikchhari, Patia, Anwara, Raogson and Hatia thanas; and north eastern part of Mookhill.

During these operations Mukti Bahini demolished and damaged 40 strategic road and railway bridges and destroyed 20 enemy vehicles. The marine commandos of Mukti Bahini sank or damaged 7 ships, 6 coasters, 6 barges, 5 steamers and number of enemy's gun-boats. Enemy troops carrying trains derailed at 4 different places. Mukti Bahini virtually paralysed enemies port activities both at Chalna and Chittagong port area. Internal river communications were also severely disrupted by making repeated attacks at the following vital river ports and ferry ghats; Chandpur, Mazyanganj, Bahadurabad Ghat, Jagannathganj Ghat and several other places. Mukti Bahini has also forced the enemy to close down the internal air-flight within Bangladesh.

- 2 -

The guerrillas of Mukti Bahini carried a number of successful operations in and around capital city of Dacca, virtually cutting off the capital city from the rest of the country. So intensive was their operations that the Pakistani army has to impose curfew in the city several times, during the fortnight.

During the fortnight Mukti Bahini captured large quantity of arms and ammunitions including 1500 rifles. During the fortnight large scale surrender by Razakars to Mukti Bahini has virtually made the ~~main~~ enemy para-military force ineffective.



Public Relations Officer.

Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, **Press Release dated 03.12.71** on Fortnightly Summary of Mukti Bahini Activities based on the Reports/Reactions during the period between 15-30 November, 1971 and collected from *'Bijoyketon'-Liberation War Museum*.

APPENDIX AA

**PAKISTANI FORCES IN EAST PAKISTAN
(DEPLOYMENT AND LOCATIONS ON COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES)**

Formations/Units	Locations
HQ Eastern Command (Lt Gen A A K Niazi)	Dacca
Artillery	
43 LAA Regt	Dacca with elements at Jessore and Comilla
46 LAA Bty	Chittagong
36 Inf Div (Maj Gen Mohd Jamshed Khan)	
HQ	Dacca
93 Inf Bde (Brig Abdul Qadir Khan)	
HQ	Mymensingh
83 Indep Mor Bty	Kamalpur-Mymensingh
33 Punjab	Mymensingh-Phupur Haluaghat
31 Baluch	Jamalpur-Rajendraganj- Hathibanda-Diwanganj- Tangail
70 Wing Rangers	Mymensingh-Kishoreganj
71 Wing Rangers	Jariajhan Jail-Shibganj- Biri Siri-Bijaipur 39 Inf Div (Maj Gen Rahim Khan)

HQ	Chandpur (was under process of raising, but remained in- complete due to commence- ment of operations)
53 Fd Regt	Comilla-Feni
53 Inf Bde (Brig Mohd Aslam Niazi)	
HQ	Feni
15 Baluch	Feni area
39 Baluch	Laksam-Mean Bazar- Chauddagram
23 Punjab	Mean Bazar-Parikot
21 AK Bn	Laksam-Feni
117 Inf Bde (Brig Sheikh Mansoor Hussain Attif)	
HQ	Comilla
Sqn tanks (Chaffees)	Comilla area
30 Punjab	Saldanadi-Bibirbazar
25 FF	Lalmi-Maynamati with element at Laksam
12 AK Bn (Less two Coys)	Comilla
91 Inf Bde (Brig Mian Taskin-ud-din)	
HQ (under raising)	Chittagong
24 FF	Ramgarh-Karerhat- Zorarganj- Chittagong
97 Inf Bde (Brig Ata Mohd Khan Malik)	

HQ	Chittagong
48 Baluch (Garrison Battalion)	Chittagong
2 Cdo Bn	Rangamati-Kaptai
60 Wing Rangers	Chittagong-Ramgarh- Karerhat area with one coy at Cox's Bazar
61 Wing Rangers	
14 Inf Div (Maj Gen Qazi Abdul Majid Khan)	
HQ	Ashuganj
31 Fd Regt	Sylhet-Shamshernagar- Brahmanbaria
88 Indep Mor Bty	Sylhet
171 Indep Mor Bty	Comilla
202 Inf Bde (Brig Asghar Hussain)	
HQ	Sylhet
31 Punjab	Chattak- Sylhet Jaintiapur Charkhai
91 Mujahid Bn (less two coys)	Sunamganj-Sheola area
Khyber Rifles	Mixed with regular Bns and deployed in whole area
Thal Scouts	
Tochi Scouts	
2 Coys ex 12 AK Bn	Sylhet
313 Inf Bde (Brig Iftikar Rana)	
HQ	Maulvi Bazar
22 Baluch	Kalaura-Juri area
30 FF	Srimangal-Shamsher Nagar-Kamalpur area

Two Coys 91 Mujahid Bns	Fenchuganj-Sherpur area
Elements Tochi Scouts	Barlekha area
27 Inf Bde (Brig Sadullah Khan)	
HQ	Brahman Baria
Two Tps Tanks (Chaffees)	Akhaura
33 Bluch	Kasba-Saidbad-
	Kutt
12 FF	Gangasagar-Akhaura Paharpur
	Fakirmura area
16 Inf Div (Maj Gen Nazir Hussain Shah)	
HQ	Nator (unconfirmed reports of move to Bogra area)
29 CAV less Sqn	Thakurgaon-Dinajpur-
	Ghoraghat-Hilli
48 Fd Regt	Thakurgaon-Hathibanda-
	Nageshwari area
80 Fd Regt	Khetlal-Hilli
117 Indep Mor Bty	Nageswari-Kurigram
23 Inf Bde (Brig Iqbal Mohd Shafi)	
HQ	Saidpur
25 Punjab (was scheduled for relief by 8 Punjab)	Hathibanda-Lalmanirhat
26 FF	Nageshwari-Kurigram
48 Punjab	Dinajpur-Phulsari
8 Punjab	Thakurgaon-Pachagarh
34 Punjab (Recce and Sp Bn)	Lalmanirghat-Rangpur
	Thakurgaon-Boda-Nilphamari

86 Mujahid Bn	Elements at Hathibanda-Hilli- Gaibanda and Rangpur
205 Inf Bde (Brig Tajmmal Hussain Malik)	
HQ	Khetlal
32 Baluch	Ghoraghat-Gobindganj
4 FF	Hilli
3 Baluch	Jaipurhat-Jaipur and Muhabbatpur
34 Inf Bde (Brig Mir Abdul Nayeem)	
HQ	Nator
32 Punjab	Nawabganj-Shibganj- Rahanpur- Rajshahi- Ishurdi
Coy 12 Punjab	Panitala-Rasulbil-Sapahar Gondardanga
13 FF	
9 Inf Div (Maj Gen M H Ansari)	
HQ	Jessore
3 Indep Armed Sqn (Chaffee) eliminated on 22 Nov)	Jessore (Sqn completely Satkhira (One Bty) and Jhingergacha area (2 Coys)
55 Fd Regt	Meharpur-Chuadanga-Kushtia Chaugacha
49 Fd Regt	
211 Indep Mor Bty	
57 Inf Bde (Brig Manzoor Ahmed)	
HQ	Jhenida

Sqn 29 CAV	Kushtia-Beramara area
18 Punjab	Meherpur-Chaudanga-Darsana- Natudaha area
50 Punjab	Jhenida-Kotchandpur
29 Baluch	Bheramara-Salimpur Khaliskundi-kushtia
107 Inf Bde (Brig Malik Hayat Khan)	
HQ	Jessore
22 FF	Jhingeragacha-Benapole
38 FF	Afra-Sajiali-Asanagar
6 Punjab	Jessore
21 Punjab (Recce and Sp Bn)	Satkhira-Kalaroa- Jessore
15 FF	Jessore
12 Punjab less Coy	Jessore

SUMMARY

Formations/Units	Total	Remarks
Inf Div HQ	3	Excl one skeleton (HQ 36 Div) and one under raising (HQ 39 Div)
Bde HQ	13	Incl one skeleton (91 Bde)
Inf Bns	35	Including two AK Bns
Armd Regt (29 Cav)	1 (Chaffees)	

Indep Armed Sqns	2 (plus 2 tps PT-76)
Fd Regt Arty	6
Indep Mor Bty Arty	5
LAA Regt Arty	1
LAA Bty Arty	1
Frontier Corps Wings and Rangers	7
Mujahid Bns	5

Deployment: East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces

EPCAF (Maj Gen Mohd Jamshed Khan, DG)	Dacca
DACCA SECTOR	
HQ	Dacca
13 Wing	Dacca area
16 Wing	Dacca
JESSORE SECTOR	
HQ	Jessore
4 Wing	Chuadanga area
5 Wing	Khulna-Bagerhat-Barisal area

15 Wing

Jessore- Chaugacha area

RAJSHAHI SECTOR

HQ

Rajshahi

6 Wing

Rajshahi-Nawabganj-Rahanpur area

7 Wing

Naogaon-Patnitola area

9 Wing

Bogra-Sirajganj area

RANGPUR SECTOR

HQ

Rangpur

8 Wing

Dinajpur

9 Wing

Thakurgaon-Pachagarh area

10 Wing

Rangpur-Lalmanirhat area

COMILLA SECTOR

HQ

Comilla

1 Wing

Comilla

3 Wing

Brahman Baria

12 Wing

Comilla

CTG SECTOR

HQ

Ctg

2 Wing

Feni area

11 Wing

Ctg area

14 Wing

Ctg area

} Elements in
Cox's Bazar

Source: Jacob, J F R. *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation*. Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1977. pp, 185-190.

APPENDIX BB

INDIAN FORCES IN EAST PAKISTAN

(Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC-in-C)

II CORPS (Lt Gen T N Raina)

Corps Tps

HQ 8 Mtn Arty Bde

Bty 48 AD Regt

Tp 107 AD Regt

4 Air Op Flt less two Secs

11 Air Op Flt

Corps Elements - Corps HQ

58 Engr Regt

268 Army Engr Regt

One Pl ex 702 Engr Plant Coy

Det 235 IWT Op Coy with 4xRPLs and 2x40 men boats

Adv Engr Pk Kankinara

One Pl 972 Tpt Coy ASC (Tipper)

63 Engr Regt

4 Mtn Div (Maj Gen MS Barar)

Div Tps

A Sqn 45 Cav

HQ 4 Mtn Arty Bde

22 Mtn Regt

194 Mtn Regt

7 Fd Regt

181 Lt Regt

Bty 78 Med Regt

HQ 7 Mtn Bde (Brig Zail Singh)

22 Rajput

5 Jat

Naga Regt

HQ 41 Mtn Bde (Brig Tony Michigan)

5 Guards

9 Dogra

5/1 GR

HQ 62 Mtn Bde (Brig Rajinder Nath)

5 Maratha LI

4 Sikh LI

2/9 GR

9 Inf Div (Maj Gen Dalbir Singh)

Div Tps

45 Cav less a Sqn

Sqn 63 CAV

HQ 9 Arty Bde

6 Fd Regt

14 Fd Regt

67 Fd Regt

78 Med Regt less one Bty

88 Lt Regt

201 Div Loc Bty

264 SBRL

HQ 32 Inf Bde (Brig M Tewari)

7 Punjab

8 Madras

13 Dogra

HQ 42 Inf Bde (Brig Rajinder Nath)

14 Punjab

19 Maratha LI

2 Sikh LI

HQ 350 Inf Bde (Brig HS Sandhu)

26 Madras

4 Sikh

1 J & K Rif

Main IV Corps (Lt Gen Sagat Singh)

Corps Tps

No 1 Indep Sqn 7 Cav

No 5 Indep Sqn 63 Cav

No 5 Ad-hoc Sqn Ferret Cars

HQ IV Corps Arty Bde

Tp 46 Ad Regt

124 Div Loc Bty

24 Med Regt

Bty 48 AD Regt

6 Air Op Flt

11 Air Op Flt

Corps Elements - IV Corps

4 Engr Regt

62 Engr Regt

234 Army Engr Regt

967 Engr Wksp and Pk Coy

Engr Park/Advance Park

Parks Silchar/Dharamnagar/Teliamura

971 Tps Coy ASC (Tipper)

108 Engr Regt

8 Mtn Div (Maj Gen KV Krishna Rao)

HQ 2 Mtn Arty Bde

99 Mtn Regt

93 Mtn Regt

Bty 85 Lt Regt

Bty 40 Med Regt

HQ 59 Mtn Bde (Brig CA Quinn)

9 Guards

6 Rajput

4/5 GR

HQ 81 Mtn Bde (Brig RCV Apte)

3 Punjab

4 Kumaon

10 Mahar

23 Mtn Div (Maj Gen RD Hira)

Div Tps

3 Engr Regt

HQ 23 Mtn Arty Bde

57 Mtn Regt

197 Mtn Regt

198 Mtn Regt

183 Lt Regt

262 SBRL

HQ 83 Mtn Bde (Brig BS Sandhu)

2 Rajput

3 Dogra

8 Bihar

HQ 181 Mtn Bde (Brig YC Bakshi)

6 Jat

9 Kumaon

18 Kumaon

HQ 301 Mtn Bde (Brig HS Sodhi)

14 Jat

3 Kumaon

1/11 GR

57 Mtn Div (Maj Gen BF Gonsalves)

Div Tps

15 Engr Regt

HQ 57 Mtn Arty Bde

23 Mtn Regt

59 Mtn Regt

65 Mtn Regt

82 Lt Regt

124 Div Loc Bty

HQ 61 Mtn Bde (Brig Tom Pande)

7 Raj Rif
2 Jat
12 Kumaon

HQ 73 Mtn Bde (Brig Tuli)

14 Guards
19 Punjab
19 Raj Rif

HQ 311 Mtn Bde (Brig Misra)

4 Guards
18 Rajput
10 Bihar

Mizo Hills Range (Allotted to Kilo Force)

HQ Mizo Hills Range

31 Jat
32 Mahar

Ex 2 Mtn Div **Allotted to 101 Comn Z**

HQ 5 Mtn Bde for Dacca thrust

3 Rajput
2 Dogra
2 Garh Rif

Ex 5 Mtn Div Allotted to Comn Z

HQ 167 Mtn Bde for Dacca thrust

6 Sikh LI
6 Bihar
10 J&K Rif

XXXIII Corps (Lt Gen M L Thapan)

Corps Tps

63 Cav less Sqn

69 Armd Regt

HQ XXXIII Corps Arty Bde

Bty 46 AD Regt

Two Secs 4 Air Op Flt

15 Air Op Flt

Corps Element- XXXIII Corps

HQ 471 Engr Bde

11 Engr Regt

52 Engr Regt

111 Engr Regt

235 Army Engr Regt

651 Engr Plant Coy

342 Engr Wksp and Pk Coy

585 Engr Prak Bengdubi

Br Coy Normal 1133 ASC Bn

972 Tpt Coy ASC (Tipper) less one Pl

6 Mtn Div (Maj Gen P C Reddy)

Div Tps

51 Engr Regt

HQ 6 Mtn Arty Bde

94 Mtn Regt

98 Mtn Regt

184 Lt Regt less One Bty

HQ 9 Mtn Bde

5 Grenadiers

4 Rajput

HQ 99 Mtn Bde

18 Sikh

11 Garh Rif

16 Kumaon

20 Mtn Div (Maj Gen Lachhman Singh)

Div Tps

13 Engr Regt

HQ 20 Mtn Arty Bde

64 Mtn Regt

95 Mtn Regt

100 Mtn Regt

33 Lt Regt

38 Med Regt

HQ 66 Mtn Bde (Brig G S Sharma)

1 Guards

6 Guards

17 Kumaon

HQ 165 Mtn Bde (Brig RS Pannu)

20 Maratha LI

16 Rajput

6 Assam

HQ 202 Mtn Bde (Brig F P Bhatta)

8 Guards

22 Maratha LI

5 Garh Rif

HQ 164 Mtn Bde

9 Grenadiers

1 Assam

2/1 GR

340 Mtn Bde Gp

HQ 340 Mtn Bde Gp (Brig Joginder Singh)

97 Mtn Regt

4 Madras

2/5 GR

5/11 GR

71 Mtn Bde (Under Corps HQ)

HQ 71 Mtn Bde (Brig PN Kathpalia)

7 Maratha LI

12 Raj Rif

21 Rajput

50 Indep Para Bde

HQ 50 Indep Para Bde (Brig M Thomas)

2 Para

7 Para

8 Para

17 Para Fd Regt

411 Para Fd Coy

Bengal Area

1/3 GR

11 Bihar

12 Garh Rif

CE Bengal Zone

261 Bomb disposals PI

8 Engr E and M Coy

101 Comn Z Area (Maj Gen Gurbax Singh injured on 5 December, Maj Gen G C Nagra)

Allotted 167 and 5 Mtn Bde)

HQ 95 Mtn Bde

(Brig H S Kler)

13 Guards

1 Maratha

13 Raj Rif

5/5 GR

56 Mtn Regt

Bty 85 Lt Regt

Bty 90 Mtn Regt

Bty 85 Lt Regt

Corps Elements – Bengal Zone

94 Fd Coy ex 59 Engr Regt

262 Bomb Disposal P1

583 Engr Pk Narangi

584 Engr Pk Jorhat

Source: Jacob, J F R. *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation*. Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1977. pp, 191-200.

APPENDIX CC

OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE NO.1 – ON RELATIVE ROLES OF BANGLADESH FORCES IN RELATION TO SUPPORTING FORCES IN THE EVENT OF WAR BETWEEN HOST COUNTRY AND THE ENEMY

**BANGLADESH ARMY :
OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES**

TOP SECRET

Copy No. 2
No. 0018 G
HQ Bangladesh Forces
Field
C/O Government of the Peoples'
Republic of Bangladesh.
Mujibnagar
22 Nov 71

To: Lt Col K M Safiullah, psc
Comd 'S' Force
Bangladesh Forces

Copy to: Army Comd, Supporting Forces
- through L.O. (5 Copies)

Subject: Operational Directive No. 1- ON Relative Roles of Bangladesh Forces in Relation to Supporting Forces in the Event of War Between Host country and the Enemy.

AIM

1. The aim of this Operational Directive is to clearly specify, the roles - of Bangladesh Forces in relation to Supporting Forces in the event of War between the host country and the enemy- we are now fighting alone, with help from supporting forces. To ensure timely action, formations/ sectors of BANGLADESH Forces shall with immediate effect come under command of Supporting Forces' Formations subject to the contents of this operational directive.

MISSION

2. To destroy the enemy occupation forces, earliest, in conjunction with the supporting forces and liberate Bangladesh.

**CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT OF
BANGLADESH FORCES 'MUKTI BAHINI'.**

3. The following considerations govern the employment of Bangladesh Forces ('Mukti Bahini'):-
- a. Lack of organic supporting arms incl Signals- except for two arty btys (one 3.7 ins and one 105 mm) raised and in the process of completion of equipment.
 - b. Lot of green stock - besides the guerillas ('Gono Bahini') who have had a short trg for their role, regular battalions and sector troops also have a lot of young soldiers, to make up deficiencies in establishment of Battalions and meet requirement of expansion.
 - c. Operational employment during last seven months - from beginning of May 71, operational employment has tended to be commando - type of operations by regulars and guerilla ops by 'Gono Bahini' training of regular battalions in conventional ops has been limited.
 - d. Acquaintance with ground and contact with interior - particularly the guerillas ('Gono Bahini') and, through them, the regulars have contacts and are generally speaking better acquainted with the ground and people in the interior.
 - e. Political- for vital political and psychological considerations it is absolutely essential that Bangladesh Forces (regular battalions and/or sector troops supplemented by guerillas - 'Gono Bahini' organised in companies) be in the van of final stage of liberation and secure cities and important towns.

Role of Supporting Forces

4. The supporting forces will be responsible for destroying the enemy occupation forces, in conjunction with Bangladesh Forces, and liberate Bangladesh. They will provide full logistic support to Bangladesh Formations / Sectors placed under their command.

Role of Bangladesh Forces

5. In view of para 3 above the tasks of Bangladesh Forces shall be as under :-
- a. Continuation of operations as per the current operational instruction issued under HQ Bangladesh Forces No. 0018G dated 13 Oct 71, except where the 'tasks in particular' conflict with this operational directive.
 - b. Destroy enemy by ambushing all enemy movements by guerillas / sector troops and also by regular battalions.
 - c. Cut the enemy off by well planned blocks/ ambushes in his rear and by threatening / striking enemy flanks, in conjunction with attack by Supporting forces, with a view to achieving the speediest destruction of the enemy.

- d. Securing vulnerable flank of advancing supporting forces by well-planned and well-dug in blocks/ ambushes, for which necessary fire support will be provided by supporting forces.
- e. Raids to destroy/ harass enemy HQ, gun areas, lines of communication, admin areas and prevent enemy troops movements.
- f. Collect and speedily transmit intelligence to own as well as supporting forces.
- g. Maintenance of close contact with own civ population, through own bases, to inspire enthusiasm and obtain the maximum local help for the speediest progress of operations against the enemy.
- h. Mustering of local resources including rivercraft for own and supporting forces and denial of the same to the enemy.
- j. Denial / capture in tact of bridges and ferries behind the enemy lines.
- k. Denial / Capture in tact of vital telephone communication, electric, power, water supply, medical and other essential services and resources (including industries) needed for furtherance of own operations or rehabilitation after liberation.
- l. After the destruction of the main enemy forces, in the final push to selected objectives, Bangladesh Forces will be in the van and secure selected objectives.
- m. Each Bangladesh Formation i.e. 'K' , 'S' or 'Z' force to be employed in area of supporting formation under whose command it is placed from time to time.
- n. Whilst it may not, in view of para 3 above, always be possible (particularly initially) to employ Bangladesh Formations as a formation, every effort will be made to employ them on Bn tasks under their own formation.

Special Instructions

Following special instructions will be strictly observed :-

- a. To obviate enemy troops or agents in disguise, misleading own and supporting forces, No order or information will be accepted from any one whose identity is NOT known or NOT been established. (This requires very careful and fool proof pre-arrangements with supporting forces - those under whose comd placed - and these on flanks).
- b. NO ill-treatment of Prisoners of War NOR of any West Pakistani civilian who will be treated as prisoner and disposed of as per formation instructions but NO one will kill or injure or illtreat any such person. Any individual particularly notorious for his activities may be later dealt with, for which Supporting Forces Comd has been requested NOT to release any one in their custody.)
- c. Commanders at all levels (supporting Forces Army Comd has also directed all his commanders) to enforce right discipline, particular ref. to :-
 - (1) NO looting, rape, molestation or murder of unarmed civilians.

- (2) NO destruction of property or Bangladesh industries/ resources- every effort made, even in action against enemy forces, to avoid destruction of national property/ resources.
- (3) NO extortion or commandeering of civilian property- any local supplies required shall be paid for in cash and any road or river transport essential for operation of own forces and has to be requisitioned shall be so requisitioned in writing by a Bangladesh Forces officer.

Allotment of Troops

7. The troops allotted to you are as given below :
'S' Force composed of HQ 'S' Force, Sig Coy, 2 and 11 E Bengal.

Boundaries

8. Boundary of Bangladesh formations - 'K', 'S' and 'Z' Forces- will be the same as of supporting forces formation under whose command they are placed (subsequently referred as formation concerned'). Sector bdys of each Bangladesh Sector will be as (at present), given below for adjoining sectors :-

Logistics

Policy

9. Supporting Forces are responsible for provision of full logistic support, on following system:-
 - a. Ammunition
 - (1). For Bangladesh Fmns incl Arty Sig and E Bengal Bns and Sector Troops (other than those inside with guerillas (Gono Bahani)).
Res of First line scales will be held/ carried at scale applicable to units of supporting forces. Regular replenishment by formation concerned.
 - (2) For Guerillas (Gono Bahini)- continue with present arrangements of Sector Comds, Replenishing 'caches inside, obtaining it from supporting sector cmd.
 - b. Supplies
 - (1) Reserves and daily replenishment from supporting forces as per instrs issued by fm concerned.
 - (2) Guerillas ('Gono Bahini') shall continue to be given cash subsistence allowance of rupees sixty per month per man.
 - c. POL - will be drawn from the nearest petrol point (pp) of the supporting forces. Reserves will be carried on vehicles as per current orders of the formation concerned or as may be necessary for any task.
 - d. Ordnance supplies incl clothing and eqpt, vehs, arms, spares, shall be obtained from formation concerned.
 - e. Water - as a precaution on against contamination, care will be taken to draw water only from water point of formation concerned or from flowing river/ stream and water sterilising tablets used.

- f. Medicines - bases inside will be adequately stocked with medicines. In other cases, RAPs will carry sufficient quantities for first aid. These will be regularly replenished from the supporting force, medical units.
10. Transport.
- a. Vehicles NOT accompanying inside will be pooled at suitable locations with adequate cover and protection (well dispersed and camouflaged during day) until called forward. Proper track and traffic discipline will be maintained and orders issued by the formation concerned regarding lights, speed, density and allotment of road space will be explained to all ranks and strictly adhered to.
 - b. Requisitioning of any mechanical transport- road or inland water Transport- will only be done under signature of an officer.
11. Maintenance, Recovery, Repair and Replacement
Facilities will be provided by the formation concerned.
12. Reinforcements
Trained reinforcements at 10% of overall authorised strength of regular battalions shall be with units. Deficiencies in the authorised quota of trained reinforcement will be met from amongst those fit for duty ex-hospitals, trained recruits, servicemen, ex-servicemen and by giving further trg to trained guerillas, mujahids/ansars, youth available in the area. Where further trg is required it will be carried out under Bangladesh formation arrangements near rear dumps.
13. Medical- holding / evacuation of casualties.
- a. Evacuation and treatment facilities of supporting forces will be used.
 - b. Where own med facilities, super imposed, are closer these will be used. Evacuation beyond will be to supporting forces hospitals for which arrangement will immediately be finalised with formation concerned.
 - c. Casualties amongst guerillas ('Gono Bahini') inside will be held and treated until evacuation to a or b above possible.

Civil Administration of Libeartion Areas

14. Instruction regarding the setting up of civil administration will be issued by the Govt. of the People Republic of Bangladesh in due course.

Command

15. With immediate effect, you will come under command of 57 Mtn Div. for operations and provision of logistics. Termination of this arrangement will be intimated by HQ Bangladesh Forces to you and HQ Supporting Forces to their formation.
16. Bangladesh Sector
2, 3, 4 and 5 Sectors which were placed under command of Bangladesh fmns ('K', 'S' and 'Z' Forces) shall cease to be under comd of these fmns. All Bangladesh

Sectors shall on this directive being operative come under command of supporting Forces Formation specified in this directive.

Intercom

17. Gen Policy- Intercom will be by:-
 - a. Wrls
 - b. Los
 - c. Couriers
18. Between HQ Bangladesh Forces and Bangladesh Formation /Sectors
Will be by wireless comn available with Supporting Forces (until own facilities available) and through LOs who may be student leaders until availability of officers.
19. Between Bangladesh Fmn/ Sector and Supporting Forces, Fmn under whose comd they will operate and with Bns/ Sub Sectors.
Wrls comn will be supplemented by LOs, who may be student leaders until availability of officers, and by trained couriers.
20. Between Bangladesh Sector HQ and Guerillas ('Gono Bahini') inside General
 - a. Trained couriers, of whom an adequate number will be detailed each terminal and intermediate link of the chain of Communication.
 - b. With selected Guerilla Coy HQ operating as Bn HQ for a gp of coys or an op area (see Appendix 'A' to HQ. 0018 G of 13 Oct 71).

Wrls and couriers.

THIS DIRECTIVE IS ISSUED ON THE BASIS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE C-IN-C, BANGLADESH FORCES AND THE GOC-IN-C, SUPPORTING FORCES, AND WITH APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

Personal Note for All Ranks

THE OPERATIONS ENVISAGED IN THIS DIRECTIVE SHALL BE CRUCIAL - OF DECISIVE IMPORTANCE - FOR THE LIBERATION OF OUR NATION OF 75½ MILLION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT COUNTRY - BANGLADESH. ALL COMMANDERS WILL THEREFORE, STRESS IT ON ALL RANKS AND ENSURE STRICT DISCIPLINE AND SELFLESS AND DEDICATED EFFORTS AT ALL

LEVELS AND UNRESERVED CO-OPERATION WITH SUPPORTING FORCES- IN THE SPEEDIEST DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY FORCES.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT RECIPROCATORY EFFORTS AND UTMOST HELP SHALL BE FORTHCOMING FROM SUPPORTING FORCES AND THERE SHALL BE NO PROBLEM AT ALL: IF ANY APPEARS IT WILL BE IMMEDIATELY SOLVED LOCALLY.

I SHALL BE VISITING YOU AND BE OTHERWISE AVAILABLE AND SHALL EXPECT TO HEAR GOOD NEWS ALWAYS.

ACK - on enclosed form.

MAG OSMANI
Commander-in-Chief

<u>Distribution</u>	<u>Copy HO</u>
Lt Col Khaled Musharrof, p.s.c, Comd 'K' Forces or offr officiating.	- 1
Lt Col Kazi Mohammad Safiullah, p.s.c, Comd 'S' Forces.	- 2
Lt Col Ziaur Rahman, p.s.c, Comd 'Z' Forces.	- 3
Major Muhammad Rafiqul Islam, Comd No. 1 Sector	- 4
Major A. T. Hyder, Ag Comd No. 2 Sector	- 5
Major A. N.M. Nuruzzaman Comd No. 3 Sector	- 6
Lt Col Chitta Ranjan Datta Comd No. 4 Sector	- 7
Lt Col Mir Shawkat Ali, p.s.c Comd No. 5 Sector	- 8
Wing Comd M. K. Bashar. Comd No. 6	- 9
Lt Col Qazi Nuruzzaman Comd No. 7 Sector	- 10
Major M. A. Manzoor, p.s.c Comd No. 8 Sector	- 11
Major M. A. Jalil Comd No. 9 Sector	- 12
Major Abu Tahir Comd No. 11 Sector or offr officiating	- 13
Army Comd, Supporting Forces -through L. O.	- 14 to 91
File	- 92 to 104

Source: Headquarters Bangladesh Forces Field, C/O Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar, Operational Directive No. 1 – On Relative Roles of Bangladesh Forces in relation to supporting Forces in the event of War between Host Country and the Enemy and collected from 'Bijoyketon' – Liberation War Museum'

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H. Miscellaneous

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