

CHAPTER - VI

THE CRISIS DEPEENS (SEPTEMBER TO NOVEMBER 1971)

DEVELOPMENTS IN EAST BENGAL

As the long rain-sodden months of the tropical monsoon dragged by, East Bengal's terrible travail continued unabated. The Pakistan Martial Law authorities resorted to more and more brutalities to crush the people, while the Bangladesh people and their Mukti Bahini, increasingly supported by India, retaliated with all their might. Mutual hatred reached new heights. Salik, a Pakistani Officer, wrote "They were not very fond of us before, but now they hated us bitterly. No serious effort was made to arrest this trend or diminish the hatred. Hence, there was no question of mass cooperation by the Bengalees. Only those people joined hands with us who, in the name of Islam and Pakistan, were prepared to risk everything"(1).

In 1971, in East Pakistan there were more than seven hundred thousand "Beharis", i.e. non-Bengalee Muslims who had migrated from India to East Pakistan in and after 1947. They had refused to get merged in the main stream and were prepared to go the whole hog to support the Pakistani rulers against the Bengalee nationalists(2). They joined hands with such reactionary parties as Jamaat-i-Islami, Muslim League, Nizam-i-Islami and the Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan, whose politics was based on religious fanaticism. Some Bengalees also gave support to the Pak troops, either due to fear or due to religious fervour. These pro-Pakistani elements were organised into two groups - Peace Committees, consisting of elderly and prominent pro-Pakistani elements, and the Razakars (helpers or volunteers), consisting of young and active persons. Peace Committees were formed in both towns and rural areas to serve as useful political links between the Pak Army and the local people. Their task was to spy on behalf of the Pakistani Army, provide them with all local assistance, and offer resistance to the Freedom Fighters.

After the Pak military crack-down in East Pakistan, out of the 16 wings of East Pakistan Rifles, only one or two wings remained loyal, and the rest revolted. So it was decided to raise to a new force, called the East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces (EPCAF), taking equal number of persons from both East and West Pakistan. But as sufficient number of recruits were not available in East Pakistan, approximately 4,500 were recruited from East Pakistan and 8,500 from West

Pakistan, including reservists and pensioners, by June 1971. Ultimately the Force had 21,500 men - 7,500 from West Pak Rangers, 3,000 from Frontier Corps, 6,000 Biharis, and 5,000 fresh recruits from West Pakistan(3). The old EPR pay scales were given to them, but later on some additional allowances, including free rations from the Army, were sanctioned to improve the conditions of their service.

This new force was a second-line force. Wherever the EPCAF Wings/Coys were deployed, they came under the operational control of the local Army formation. They were given about one month's training, often in Police Thanas, with the help of military instructors. Their training included handling of weapons, field-craft, tactics like patrolling and ambushing, and guarding of roads, bridges and other important places. They were given the tasks of manning border out-posts, internal security duties and other similar jobs given by the local Army Commanders. There were about 200 Army Officers, seconded to the EPCAF on deputation(4). Maj Gen N. Jamshed, the former Director General of EPR, was flown from West Pakistan to command this force(5). His HQ was in Dhaka, with Brig Bashir as the Second-in-Command. This Force was divided into six Sectors - Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Jessore, Rajshahi and Rangpur. Each of these Sectors, except Rajshahi Sector, was divided into three Wings, while Rajshahi had only two Wings under it. Each Wing was subdivided into four coys. Each coy was divided into three platoons, and each platoon into three Sections. The strength of one Section consisted of 10 ORs with 1 LMG; and one coy comprised approximately 120 persons with a Subedar as Coy Commander; and each Wing had 530 persons and 2 MMGs and 6 Mortars (81mm/3")(6). Till 3 December 1971, the EPCAF suffered casualties of approximately 500 persons killed, 800 wounded and 300 missing(7).

According to some Pakistani PsOW, most of the district Police Force of West Pakistan sent their bad characters to East Pakistan to join the EPCAF, leading to disastrous results. As the regular Pak troops moved to the border, the EPCAF were posted in rear areas where their maltreatment of the local population further antagonised the Bengalees at large(8).

An Industrial Security Force for East Pakistan was also raised, mainly with West Pakistani personnel and Bihari Muslims, for whom training camps were established by the Pak Army at a number of places in East Pakistan(9). The latter became the most useful collaborators of the Pak Army in crushing the freedom movement of the Bengalees. In late summer, the

Razakars were raised to support the West Pakistani troops and to give a sense of participation to the local population. Their number rose to nearly 50,000 as against the target of 1,00,000(10). In September 1971, when a political delegation from West Pakistan complained to Lt Gen Niazi that he had raised the Razakar Force only out of Jamaat-i-Islami nominees, the Razakars came to be rechristened as Al Badar (soldiers of the first battle of Islam) and Al Shams (The Sun) to dispel the impression that they belonged to any single party(11). They were manned by members of Islamic Chhatra Sangha (Islamic Students' Organisation), the fanatical student wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami(12). The Razakars were given two or three weeks' training and armed with .303 rifles(13). They were deployed in the interior near their villages to defend the Police Stations, bridges, railways, and electrical installations, and to provide protection to the loyal population against "terrorist" attacks. An Awami Leaguer has stated: "Although we got many of our trusted men secretly enlisted in the Razakar force, the active Razakars were a great problem for us. At a certain stage we had to pay full attention to them; special operations had to be launched to liquidate the active ones and terrorise the others away"(14).

The Al Badar were trained in the use of modern arms at Peelkhana, Dhaka, which became its centre, while Al Shams had its HQ at Khulna. Al Badar and Al Shams, under the direct control of Major General Rao Farman Ali, Civil Affairs Adviser to the Governor of East Pakistan, were mainly responsible for selective killings. "The military junta wanted to kill all Bengalee intellectuals and highly skilled personnel so that there was a vacuum of 'intellectual leadership'"(15). The members of Al Badar and Al Shams, themselves being Bengalees, could easily mix with the locals without arousing suspicion, collect all information about Awami League sympathisers, especially intellectuals, who supported the liberation movement, and pass it on to the Pak Army. Then the Pak troops would encircle certain areas and kill all those on the hit list. Sometimes, they would arrest suspected persons and bring them to torture chambers in the cantonments for extracting information from them. After torturing some of them to death, they would then throw their dead bodies into mass graves(16). Hundreds of doctors, engineers, educationists, thinkers and highly skilled professionals were killed by the Al Badar and Al Shams, the Hindus receiving special attention. In Dhaka alone, the Al Badar and Al Shams killed 10 teachers of Dhaka University, 5 leading journalists (including the BBC Correspondent), 2 litterateurs, and 26 doctors(17). Even a day before the final

surrender of the Pak Army, they finished off many leading intellectuals of Bangladesh. "In many respects, the members of these two organisations harmed our war effort more than the Pakistanis" said Rafiq-ul-Islam(18). A Pak Officer had admitted: "The Al Badar and Al Shams groups were a dedicated lot, keen to help the Army. They worked hard and suffered hard. About 5,000 of them or their dependents suffered at the hands of the Mukti Bahini for the crime of co-operation"(19).

To cope with the growing strength of the Mukti Bahini, the Pak Army also recruited and trained Mujahids (crusaders), mainly from amongst the non-Bengalees(20). The West Pakistanis were told that the Bengalee Muslims had joined hands with the Hindus, and only a "Jehad" could save the Islamic State of Pakistan. "But within a short time internal dissension among the rank and file of the Pakistani forces grew day by day. It went eventually to the extent of calling a strike sometime in the month of September 1971, by the West Pakistani police in protest of their being always placed on the forefront of the battle. The rivalry between the Punjabis and the Pathans, and between the Punjabis and the Baluchis had taken violent shape. Doubts, distrust and hatred for each other were discernible in them. The Pathans and the Baluchis by then came to realise that it was nothing but to kill the innocent Bengalees only to serve the vested interest of the Punjabis rather than that of Pakistan"(21).

Modern war is a cruel and dirty business, and guerilla war is the cruelest and dirtiest. While pro-Pak elements killed and tortured the Bengalees in lakhs, the Bangladesh guerilla forces also hit back at the Pakistani supporters with savage fury. Some 250 members of the Peace Committees, and many thousands of the Razakars, the Al Badars, Al Shams, Mujahids and EPCAF men were killed, wounded or kidnapped. The guerillas or Mukti Bahini infiltrated their men into the pro-Pak agencies, and got genuine Pak supporters imprisoned or killed by denouncing them as secret guerillas. Personal scores were settled, and enemies eliminated, under the cover of patriotic action. All this led to further deterioration of law and order, and loss of confidence in the Govt.

State of Economy

The civil strife in East Pakistan left the country on the edge of complete economic ruin. The resultant fighting brought damage reminiscent of World War II(22). Pakistan's economy was already in bad shape. War disruptions further compounded the

economic crises. The Pakistan Armed Forces, composed entirely of West Pakistani troops, destroyed food stocks, tea plantations and jute mills(23). Markets were razed and towns were destroyed. The resistance forces retaliated by crippling communications to restrict the army's movements and cutting its supply routes. According to a World Bank report compiled in July 1971, transport and the communications network was badly damaged, many road and railway bridges and culverts had been blown up. The Rail network was badly disrupted in many sections in the province. Many vessels and boats had been sunk or damaged(24).

The shattering impact of the military campaign in the East on Pakistan's economy unfolded itself in various ways. The damage from shelling, fire and sabotage reached colossal proportions(25). Production of jute was in complete disarray. Work had stopped on almost all tea plantations. Exports had sharply declined and the foreign exchange resources were under severe strain(26). Collection of taxes had also suffered. Losses to industry and inter-wing commerce and effects of stalled development were incalculable.

The whole of East Bengal appeared menaced by famine. The food supply in the province dwindled due to the absence of seasonal agricultural operations as a result of the holocaust there(27). Nor was there any import of foodgrains. Due to unloading difficulties at Chittagong and Chalna ports, ships carrying food supplies were either diverted or returned without completing their mission(28). By November 1971, the shortfall in the food requirements and the actual production was estimated at four million tonnes of rice and wheat(29). Millions faced starvation. Unless a relief programme of epic proportions was quickly launched, the danger of starvation was inevitable. However, Yahya's regime was not inclined to sponsor such an effort(30). On the contrary, when the UN Secretary General offered the needed relief on behalf of the UN, President Yahya Khan informed him on 3 May that there was no immediate need for outside relief(31).

Constitutional and Administrative changes

Under international pressure, President Yahya Khan took some steps to bring about cosmetic changes in the constitutional and administrative set up of East Bengal. In a broadcast to the nation on 28 June 1971, he announced his plan for what he called "transfer of power", under which he pledged to revive the National and Provincial Assemblies after "reasonable normalcy" had been restored in the country. But those legislators who had indulged in

"anti-state" activities or had committed "criminal acts" were debarred. He described them as "misguided persons" and said that by-elections would be held to replace them. He also announced that an expert committee had been assigned the task of preparing a Federal constitution "based on Islamic ideology". At the same time he made it clear that martial law would not be withdrawn even after the induction of civilian government.

Another step taken by the Yahya regime to create a facade of return to civil administration, was the appointment of A.M. Malik as civilian Governor of East Bengal with a civilian Council of Ministers on 31 August(33). Following this, on 4 September, a general amnesty was declared. The amnesty included legislators and personnel of the armed forces, the East Pakistan Rifles and the Police, but did not apply to certain members of the National Assembly and of the Provincial Assembly in East Pakistan and certain other individuals against whom criminal proceedings had been initiated(34).

In announcing these measures, Yahya Khan tried to project an image of reasonableness before the world. His plan about the so-called transfer of power announced on 28 June, was clearly a scheme to eliminate the Awami League from East Bengal's political scene and to set up a puppet regime which would continue to be controlled not by popular will but by the army(35). Yahya continued to remain implacably hostile to the members of the Awami League, as was apparent from his broadcast in which references were made to their "uncompromising and unpatriotic attitude". To disqualify most of these representatives on wide generalised ground was to make a mockery of the choice of the people. The military junta arrogated to itself the right to decide whether a particular party or a particular individual should lose its recognition or seat won in open election. Such an arbitrary decision by an executive order completely nullified the electoral process.

To draw up a constitution by nominated experts, when the National Assembly was elected for this specific purpose, was meant to deny the popular will. To keep the cover of martial law was to show a lack of faith in the democratic system and made a farce of the entire exercise of holding elections in December 1970 and its aftermath.

The so-called civilian government in East Bengal consisted of mere figureheads who had no representative character whatever. They were obliged to take orders from the military commanders(36). The

civilian Governor was a puppet in the hands of the military authorities who continued to wield power under the Martial Law. Malik, the new Governor, had been a close confidant and official adviser to Yahya Khan since he assumed power(37). A strange spectacle was witnessed in which the party, which should have been, by right, the Government of Pakistan, was banned and disqualified from political activities. Half the elected representatives were disqualified from sitting in the National Assembly. Out of 167 Awami League members elected to the National Assembly 79 were disqualified: Out of 288 Provincial Assembly Members 194 were disqualified(38).

It was clear that these elected representatives had been excluded from the "general amnesty" because they were the only ones who could stand up and fight for the rights of the people. The amnesty appeared to be aimed at the East Bengalee military and paramilitary forces who had gone underground and were fighting the Pakistan Army in East Bengal. The military junta had tried more than once to assure the Bengalee army personnel and politicians to return to East Bengal or to come out into the open, but few had done so(39).

The measures announced by Yahya Khan were severely criticised even in West Pakistan. Speaking to newsmen in Lahore on 20 July, the Pakistan People's Party Chairman, Z.A. Bhutto, charged that a "Military-bureaucracy combination" was blocking setting up of a civilian government leading to national reconciliation(40). Bhutto flatly told Yahya Khan that his party would not support an army-imposed constitution and said: "How can unknown experts draft a Constitution when we have elected deputies to do it"(41). According to a despatch published in the Karachi Urdu daily, Azad, of 4 September, Bhutto had accused armed Razakars of the Jamaat-i-Islami of killing leftist patriots in East Bengal. Making this first-ever reference to the mass murder in East Bengal, he said that by including persons who believed in killing their political opponents in his Cabinet, Malik would be doing injustice to the country and further aggravating the crisis(42).

Another Pakistani leader, the former Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Chief of the Tehrik-i-Istiqlal Party, demanded that the proposed Assembly for Pakistan should be convened without any constraint. He declared that "any Assembly that functions under martial law is negation of democracy which can neither maintain national solidarity nor effectively solve people's problems"(43).

The by-election for the National Assembly seats, turned out to be a complete sham. Under the guidance of President Yahya Khan, the right wing parties - Jamaat-i-Islami, the three factions of the Muslim League, the Pakistan Democratic Party and the Nizam-i-Islami - had worked out a plan to apportion all the seats amongst themselves, and got their members elected unopposed. Initially, Bhutto's PPP had been left out. But he protested vehemently against the conduct of the rightist parties in East Bengal for their hob-nobbing with the military regime. A delegation of the PPP, which had gone to Dhaka to take stock of the situation in the province in October 1971, expressed doubts about the holding of 'fair and free' by-elections in the country(44). Bhutto finally succeeded in securing six seats - all unopposed - for his party. The same pattern emerged in the Provincial Assembly elections. In phase I of the by-elections for the 105 seats in the Provincial Assembly, 46 candidates, most of them belonging to these parties, had been returned unopposed by the end to October 1971.

All this made a mockery of Islamabad's democratic pretensions. These parties and their leaders in East Bengal were humbled in the 1970 elections which, according to all accounts, were free and fair. President Yahya Khan was clearly playing a double game in arranging the election of the right-front candidates(45). First, he had stocked the National Assembly with his henchmen who would be dependent upon his mercies for the rest of their political lives. Secondly, he had effectively countered Bhutto's leftist PPP's strength in the National Assembly by artificially raising the numerical strength of the rightist parties in the Central Assembly.

Most diplomatic observers regarded Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the jailed leader of Awami League, as the key to any real settlement(46). He was believed to be the only Bengalee leader, with his prestige and personal following, who might be able to reverse the ruinous trend toward chaos in East Bengal. But the military rulers were not willing to negotiate a political settlement. It was announced on 9 August that Sheikh Mujib would be tried for treason in camera and could face the death penalty(47). This provoked serious reactions in India, the Bangladesh government circles and the outside world.

India conveyed its deep anxiety and concern to the Secretary General of the United Nations and foreign governments to save the life of Mujib. In a personal message sent to several Heads of Governments

on 11 August, the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, appealed to these governments to use their influence in order to save Sheikh Mujib's life(48). A similar message was sent by the Minister for External Affairs, Swaran Singh, to the U.N. Secretary General, U Thant, requesting him to take up the issue with Pakistan. India expressed its fears that the so-called trial would be only a cover to execute Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In his message to U Thant, India's External Affairs Minister on 10 August said: "the problems which have been created for us by the Pakistani action in East Bengal will be multiplied ten-fold if the Government of Pakistan does something precipitate and extreme in the context of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's life and welfare"(49). The Acting President of Bangladesh, Syed Nazrul Islam, warned President Yahya Khan that any "attempt" on the life of the Sheikh would destroy Pakistan itself(50). The Prime Minister of the Republic, Tejuddin Ahmed, appealed to all nations of the world to ensure the safety of the Sheikh. Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Secretary of the banned Awami League, on 13 August warned: "If Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is executed his death will be revenged with death"(51).

Even U Thant declared on 10 August, that the fate of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was bound to have repercussions outside Pakistan(52). The International Commission of Jurists formally protested to President Yahya Khan on 10 August against the scheduled trial of the Sheikh. In a telegram sent by the Secretary General of the Commission, Neil Mac Dermott, from Geneva to Pakistan President, he said: "The International Commission of Jurists protest against the secret military trial of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Justice has nothing to hide". Eleven American Senators, including the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, William Fulbright, asked the American State Department to put pressure on the Pakistani government(53). A campaign was launched in the Soviet Press, radio, television and other communications media, against the persecution of Mujibur Rahman(54). Yahya got irritated when messages from foreign governments about the trial of Mujib were delivered to him. He asked the Ambassadors to leave them with the Foreign Office instead. But the Soviet Ambassador in Pakistan insisted on personally delivering the message to President Yahya Khan(55).

However, Yahya Khan was not open to persuasion and rebuffed these overtures. He refused to give an assurance that the Sheikh would not be executed. On the contrary, a statement was issued by the Presidential Office on 28 September to the effect that
20 prosecution witnesses had been heard in the secret

trial of the Sheikh and warned against speculation, which would prejudice the case(56).

REFUGEES ENDANGER INDIA'S STABILITY

With the chances of a genuine political settlement in Dhaka receding further and further and the strangle-hold of the Pakistan Army over East Bengal getting more and more brutal, the exodus of refugees into India was bound to continue unabated.

The Intolerable Burden

The number of refugees from East Bengal upto 31 July 1971 was 7,232,000,(57) but, by 15 December 1971, the number had gone upto 9,899,305. The communitywise breakup of the refugees as on 31 October 1971, was as follows(58):-

Hindus	7,832,500 (82.3%)
Muslims	1,618,500 (17%)
Buddhists/ Christians/others	65,000 (.7%)
	<hr/> 9,516,000

Since the 25 March crackdown, the number of East Bengal refugees entering India was 7,232,000 in a period of only about four months (by 31 July 1971), while in the next four and a half months (upto 15 December 1971) a considerably reduced number of refugees (2,667,305) arrived in India. Daily rate of influx of refugees from August to November, too, was smaller than during the previous months.

The comparative reduction in the quantum of refugee influx from August onward was probably due to two factors. First, the great majority of those people whom the Pakistani Army wanted to drive out and who could flee had already sought shelter inside India during the earlier months of the exodus. Secondly, when the Pakistani Army started its military operations against India along the Indo-East Bengal border from September 1971 and in a full scale war after 3 December 1971, the crossing of the border for East Bengalees had naturally become very difficult.

However, from the above, two vital facts become clear. The entry of another nearly 2.7 million refugees from August to December brought the total number of refugees to almost ten million, a truly staggering burden. Secondly, this additional influx clearly refuted the repeated claim of the Pakistani military ruler, Gen Yahya Khan, that things were

The strain on various facets of public life in India was increasing proportionately to the refugee influx from East Bengal. The newly formed Government of Indira Gandhi with a large majority in the Parliament was poised for decisive action for the economic and industrial development of the country. But the refugee problem forced the Government to divert resources from development to refugee relief. According to estimates, by the middle of June 1971, the Government of India was spending Rupees 15 million every day on refugee relief(59). As on 22 September, it was assessed that to maintain eight million refugees in Camps for six months at the rate of only Rs.3 per day, per person, cost would be 4,320 million of Rupees, or about US \$ 576 million. Since the total aid promised by foreign sources by that time amounted to \$ 153.67 million (of which the aid actually received till then was to the tune of \$ 20.47 million only) the vast bulk of the burden was to be borne by India(60). By 22 September, the Government of India was spending Rs.28 million per day on refugees from her own resources(61). Later, according to figures given by the Finance Minister Y.B. Chavan,(62) the total cost of looking after nine million refugees (the number reached by October 1971), came to Rs.5,250 million. Of this other nations' promised aid-coming to the Government of India directly or through the UN Focal Point,(63) amounted to Rs.1,125 million. The balance of Rs.4,125 million had to be spent by India(64).

A World Bank report from its unit in India, which visited refugee camps in August, estimated that if the population of refugees in camps rose to nine million, the cost of refugees upkeep for India's 1971-72 fiscal year would be about \$ 700 million. Total foreign aid pledged amounted to a paltry sum of about US \$ 200 million. If all the pledged relief was delivered before 31 March 1972, still the intolerable burden on India would be about \$ 500 million(65).

According to figures compiled by the Department of Rehabilitation, Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation(66) the total foreign assistance offered to India for refugee relief by 18 January 1972 (no further offers of aid came), amounted to \$ 264,496,462 (or Rs.1,983.7 million). The Lok Sabha was informed on 2 December 1971,(67) that UN aid amounting to Rs.165.3 million was received upto 27 November 1971 by the Government of India. In addition, food stuffs (rice, edible oil, sugar), shelter material, vehicles, medical supplies were received. The value of foreign assistance actually received (by 2 December 1971) in cash through the United Nations was of the order of Rs.565.7 million. But according to a news item

broadcast by AIR, the Government of India had spent about Rs.3,500 million on the maintenance of refugees from East Bengal(68). The Budget for the year 1971-72 as it was finally passed, made a provision of Rs.600 million for providing relief to the refugees. This had to be increased by Rs.2,000 million in August and another demand for Rs.1,000 million was, as of 13 December 1971, before the Parliament(69).

To raise such amounts for refugee relief, the Government of India as well as several Indian States had to adopt a number of measures which naturally put a very heavy burden on the country's economy. Three ordinances were promulgated on 22 October 1971 by the President Shri V.V. Giri to raise additional resources of the order of Rs.700 million to meet the heavy financial burden caused by the unabated influx of refugees. This also included the revenue from the levies in the form of special tax on railway fares, postal articles, newspapers and bills of exchange, which became effective on 15 November(70). Under the first ordinance a 5% tax was imposed on every railway ticket of Re.1/ and above. By separate action, a 5% surcharge was imposed on internal air travel. The second ordinance imposed a tax of 5 paise on all postal articles other than post cards and registered newspapers. Under the third ordinance, an additional duty of 10 paise was levied on bills of exchange, promisory notes, bills of lading, letters of credits, policies of insurance, transfer of shares, debentures, proxies and receipts as well as excise duty of two paise on newspapers and other periodicals(71).

Seven States, viz., Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, too, had announced new levies to raise resources for the relief of the refugees(72).

Besides imposing additional levies, a stringent economy drive was launched by the Government of India from August 1971, for saving funds for refugee relief. These steps included (i) cutting down all non-essential items of expenditure, rescheduling, postponing or dropping of sanctioned programme to the extent feasible and deferring all new activities except for special reasons; (ii) restrictions on unproductive items of expenditure by curtailing the provision made for contingencies, travelling allowances, entertainments and the like and by imposing curbs on filling up of vacant posts, foreign travel, use of telephones and staff cars, purchase of decorative articles and furnishing and so on; and (iii) curtailment of the facility of advances for the purchase of motor cars, scooters and motor cycles admissible to government servants(73). As a result of

the above measures, savings to the extent of R.590 million in the 1971-72 financial year's non-plan expenditure were expected to be achieved(74).

The massive flow of hapless people from East Bengal brought in its train, besides economic drain and disequilibrium, health hazards, social tensions, threat to law and order in eastern States which were already disturbed by anarchical communist activity and tribal unrest and above all, conditions that threatened stability and security of India.

The Threat to Security

The refugees from East Bengal were coming to the sensitive border provinces which were already overcrowded. As early as July 1971, refugees in Tripura comprised more than 2/3rd of the total population of that State. The refugees, in addition to the relief supplies they were getting free, were volunteering to work on wages lower than what was being paid to local workers. That was giving rise to economic competition which threatened to jeopardise stability. Even earlier, the States like Assam had resented outsiders, both Hindus and Muslims, and this was manifesting again against the refugees now pouring in large numbers(75).

There was a real danger of epidemics like cholera spreading in the camps and the densely populated areas, because some of the refugees had brought the infection from East Bengal. It was reported that upto 14 July 1971, there had been 34,039 cases of cholera and about 4,558 persons had died in hospitals, health-centres and camps(76).

Intrusions by Pak Army into Indian territory, in retaliation to the activities of freedom fighters, were creating tension along the Indo-East Bengal border. Moreover, Pakistani agents and spies, having entered into India in the guise of refugees, were increasingly indulging in sabotage and disruptive activities. It was announced(77) on 25 October in the State Assembly of Assam in Shillong that there had been 28 attempts at grave dislocation of vital communication links and creation thereby of panic and demoralization in the border areas of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. It was further disclosed that till then 490 persons had been arrested in connection with suspected espionage, of whom 148 persons were Indians. Besides those arrested on espionage charge, about 12,287 persons had re-entered Assam as evacuees who had earlier been deported as Pakistani infiltrators. The Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram, confirmed the above, informed Lok Sabha on 15 November that "many

acts of sabotage have been committed along our eastern frontiers in an attempt to disrupt our line of communication"(78). A few days later, the Lok Sabha was again informed that "The Government of Assam have intimated that 8 persons including 2 from Meghalaya suspected to be Pak agents entered camps set up for refugees(79).

In a statement on 24 May 1971, Ram Niwas Mirdha, Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs, informed the Lok Sabha that "the Pakistani army in its attempt to extend itself upto the Indo-East Bengal border has intruded into the Indian territory seven times and resorted to firing across the border on our territory on 43 occasions". He informed that "since 30 March 1971, there have been 11 violations of Indian air space in the eastern sector by Pakistani aircraft"(80).

The tremendous strain put by millions of destitute and persecuted people on various aspects of life in India was getting more and more unbearable. This was naturally causing great anxiety to the Government as well as to the people of India.

Indira Gandhi, time and again, expressed the country's deep concern at the explosive situation. Speaking at a dinner she hosted for Soviet leaders in Moscow on 28 September 1971, Mrs. Gandhi recalled the promises made to the people with which her party had been returned to power in March 1971 and added : "But, before we could begin to fulfil the promises which we had made to them during the elections, events took place in a neighbouring country, which, for no fault of ours, placed a tremendous burden on our Government and on the people of India. The burden is a financial one; it is a political one, it is one connected with security problems"(81). Pointing out the explosiveness of the situation, she had remarked in another speech: "When millions of people are pushed into another's territory, jeopardizing its normal life, its plans for the future, and its very security, it is obvious that peace is in peril"(82). In another speech in Vienna in October, Mrs. Gandhi said: "Through the centuries India has offered refuge to the persecuted, but this time the problem is different in size and character. The tensions created in our country are political and social, no less than economic"(83).

In London, in an address to the India League on 31 October 1971, the Prime Minister laid stress on the fact that the refugees from East Bengal "have posed not only a tremendous economic burden, they have created social problems, political problems and, above

all, the question of security, the stability and the integrity of India"(84). Giving her overall assessment of the situation, Mrs. Gandhi further said: "I feel that I am sitting on the top of a volcano and I honestly do not know when it is going to erupt"(85).

In Bonn, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi explained in detail all the problems created for India by the refugee influx. In her speech in Beethoven Hall, on 11 November, she said: "Most of the refugees have come into four states of India in the Eastern region, and in one of them, Tripura, there is hardly room to put a person now. They are occupying the schools and the colleges and parks, every possible public building. In the beginning, the people were very sympathetic. Now the parents say: 'Well we are sympathetic but what about our children? So, all administrative work in some of these States is at a standstill. Every official is busy looking after the camps'(86). Dealing with the multi-dimensional implications for India of the refugee problem, Mrs. Gandhi continued, "we have organised trade unions. There is a recognised rate. Now, the refugees offer their services at a much lower rate. Now, immediately there is trouble because the labour unions say: 'well, this is our rate and you cannot employ'. But we have people who want to take advantage of such a situation, and so we have great social tensions"(87).

The Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram, in a statement in Lok Sabha, on 15 November, observed that East Bengal refugees' "continued stay in our country imposes intolerable strains on us; threatens the stability of our economy, jeopardizes many of the fundamental values enshrined in our Constitution and has engendered social, economic, and political tensions"(88).

Various other Indian political leaders, too, expressed their concern at the situation created by the refugee influx. For example, the President of the Bhartiya Jana Sangh, Atal Behari Vajpayee, called the situation "hour of national emergency" and added that "the fact that a formal emergency is yet to be declared does not make the situation any the less emergent"(89).

A number of foreign dignitaries who visited India and Pakistan also gave vivid and realistic expositions of the very serious problems created for India by the Influx of refugees. Reginald Prentice, a member of the British Parliamentary Delegation which visited Pakistan and India, in an article in New Statesman, 16 July 1971, said: "Whatever the cost of keeping the refugees alive, the real cost of India

India by the influx of refugees. Reginald Prentice, a member of the British Parliamentary Delegation which visited Pakistan and India, in an article in *New Statesman*, 16 July 1971, said: "Whatever the cost of keeping the refugees alive, the real cost of India will be much greater. The immediate cost includes land taken up for camps, officials being taken away from other duties, local development projects postponed and schools closed to their pupils. All this is serious enough in an area as poor as West Bengal..." Speaking about the tensions created among the local population because of the refugees under-cutting their wages, he said that they could deteriorate into communal disturbances, seriously affecting "the turbulent politics of West Bengal"(90).

In a statement in the US Senate on 28 July 1971, Senator J.W. Fullbright stated: "India simply cannot bear the burdens, in terms of food, housing, employment, and health measures, which the refugees have thrust upon it. The situation could easily lead to renewed communal rioting, accelerated revolutionary activity - which could threaten the future of India itself - or another Indo-Pakistan War"(91).

International Reactions

The sad plight of the refugees evoked a good deal of sympathy from well-known non-governmental international organisations, who expressed concern about their well-being. On 20 July 1971, 22 international non-governmental organisations representing a variety of religious, legal, educational, civic and social organisations having consultative status with the UN, petitioned the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to take constructive action "concerning reports of gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms occurring in East Pakistan". The Commission of Churches on International Affairs, in July 1971, expressed concern over the plight of the Pakistani people. The Association of World Federalists at a meeting in Norway on 8 August 1971, asked the UN to undertake planning for the rehabilitation of the refugees from East Pakistan. At the meeting of the UN Sub-Commission on human rights on 16 August 1971, Pakistan government's actions in East Bengal were assailed. The Pugwash Movement at its 21st Conference on Science and World Affairs, held at Sinaia (Rumania) in August 1971, appealed to the Government of Pakistan for an early peaceful political solution and to create conditions for the safe return of the refugees(92).

The Latin American Parliamentary meeting at Caracas on 27 August 1971, passed a unanimous resolution condemning the brutal suppression of human rights and the imposition of reign of terror in East Bengal. The League of Red Cross Societies at a meeting of the Board of Governors held in Mexico in October 1971, expressed their deep concern over the distress of the population of East Pakistan and the Pakistani refugees in India(93). The South Asian Conference organised by Oxfam of Canada at Toronto in August 1971, which was attended by 30 distinguished scholars, editors, parliamentarians and former diplomats from the USA, Canada, UK and Asia, called for an immediate end to all killings in East Pakistan and extended support for a political solution of the crisis. It also urged governments to terminate immediately all military deliveries to Pakistan and to suspend all economic aid to the country(94). The 59th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held at Paris in September 1971, expressed the view that the refugee problem was a "source of pre-occupation for the whole world" to relieve their distress. It appealed to all national groups and their governments "to encourage the steps required to create political, economic and social conditions for the safe return of the refugees to their homeland and to inform them that the necessary conditions guaranteeing them an adequate livelihood and security in freedom exist"(95).

The generous and efficient way in which India looked after such a large number of refugees, inspite of the tremendous problems created by their influx, received high praise from impartial foreign observers. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees in a statement to the UN Economic and Social Council on 16 July 1971, paid tribute to the Indian officials and non-officials who "have stretched their efforts to the limit of their capacity. They have done a magnificent job from the very start of the emergency"(96). Congressman Cornelius E. Gallagher, in his statement to the House of Representatives on 10 July 1971, said that "the response of the Indian Government to the crisis created by the actions of the Government of Pakistan has been magnificent. They have demonstrated almost unbelievable restraint in view of the provocative effects of the army's brutal sweep and they have shown inspiring compassion to the refugees"(97). The report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation which visited India and Pakistan, released to the press on 19 July 1971, expressed the view: "From our visits to camps our interviews with refugees and discussions with those bearing responsibility of caring for these millions of people we developed a high regard for manner in which the Indian Government is coping with this immense

problem. Considering magnitude of the task, India's efforts have indeed been remarkable and deserving of highest commendation"(98).

On the other hand, Pakistan's military government was accused of misuse and callousness in utilising the relief supplies channelled through them. Senator W. Tunney on the floor of the American House of Representatives on 4 October 1971, accused the Pakistan government of misusing the relief supplies. He said, "Too much of our present effort is being converged (sic) by the Government and the Army of Pakistan into their own use rather than being used to assist the starving people". He asked, "How can one possibly expect that an Army which has spent the last several months murdering, raping, ravaging and torturing the people of East Bengal will suddenly distribute food in a humanitarian manner?"

Donald Chessworth of the War on Want Organisation, in a note dated 9 September 1971, "recalled that in the conditions of the East Bengal 1970 cyclone the Pakistani government reacted indifferently and inadequately and at a later stage resented foreign assistance. The events since the end of March show no evidence that humanitarian considerations play a part in the decision making of the Pak Government"(99). Tajuddin, the Prime Minister of the provisional Bangladesh government, on 5 September 1971, in a broadcast said that if the UN Secretary General at all cared for the prestige of the world organisations, he would ensure that the UN relief materials for Bangladesh were not "channelled through Pakistan government, which has had no scruples in using relief helicopters and other vehicles in its campaign of suppression"(100).

Demographic Aggression

By its brutally repressive, inhuman and genocidal actions in East Bengal, the Pakistani military junta had forced the hapless people to flee across the border into India in their millions. This was a demographic aggression of Pak military rulers against India with a view to solve Pakistan's internal problem. By driving out nationalist minded Bengalees the Pak Army sought to make East Bengal secure for their undisputed rule there. In the alternative, with millions of refugees thrust on India, she might be provoked to do something which would be utilised by the Pak rulers to project the problem as an Indo-Pak affair, thereby managing to wriggle out of the political problems which were of their own making.

The refugee flood was threatening to engulf

India. It had created a hydra-headed problem. Gradually the problem had been assuming such proportions that if India were to avert economic collapse, shattering of the fabric of social life, political chaos and instability, and threat to her national security, the problem of East Bengal refugees had to be solved, and solved without any delay.

To the Government of India, somewhat disillusioned with the failure of various governments to exercise their influence on the Government of Pakistan to arrive at a political settlement in East Bengal, the military option might have appeared more likely now. But priority was still accorded to a peaceful political settlement which would automatically resolve the refugee crisis.

The position of the Government of India on the nature of 'suitable conditions'(101) and a political settlement for East Bengal had been firm and consistent. In the words of Mrs. Gandhi, it was the duty of the world not to delay in creating conditions in which these refugees, irrespective of their religion, could return without fear(102). The political settlement in East Bengal, would have to pay "regard to the wishes, the inalienable rights and lawful interests of the people of East Bengal as well as the speediest and safe return of the refugees to their homeland in conditions safeguarding their honour and dignity"(103).

MUKTI BAHINI'S TELLING BLOWS

Alongside these diplomatic manoeuvring and deteriorating situation inside East Bengal, the Mukti Bahini's strength and operational capability kept increasing.

Originally a guerilla force of 20,000 men was required to be raised by 30 September 1971. Subsequently, orders were issued to step up the monthly rate of the output of the trainees to 12,000, later increased to 20,000 per month. As a result, the overall strength of the 'Jackpot' forces (Mukti Bahini) on 30 November 1971 rose to over 1,00,000, made up as follows: (104)

a) EBR	8,156
b) Mukti Fauj (MF)	9,660 (45 Companies)
c) Mujib Bahini and Uban Force	6,000
d) Freedom Fighters (FF)	83,028
Total	1,06,844

bridges were either damaged or destroyed, 12 train/rail bogies were derailed or damaged, 31 sections of railway track were removed or destroyed and 149 sections of telegraph/telephone lines and poles were damaged(107). Pak casualties in this month totalled approximately 1,300, including some officers. But the attacks against the Pak border out-posts during September failed in evicting the Pak troops. It was evident that Pak troops had built up strong bunkers with over-head protection at most of their border out-posts, a number of which had laid down mines as well(108). Fairly heavy artillery concentration could not do much damage to them. In addition, MFs/FFs were reluctant to close in after the Indian artillery fire had been lifted. For, the Bangladesh forces were neither sufficiently trained nor well led to mount deliberate attacks against prepared posts.

The clearing up operations undertaken by Pakistan in E, E-1 and FJ Sectors achieved some successes, specially in E Sector, where MFs/FFs suffered unduly heavy losses in arms due to lack of military discipline. However, the Pak Army had little respite and a certain erosion of its morale was discernible. On 31 October, the operational strength of the Mukti Bahini was as under:- (109)

EBR	7,000
MF	5,914
FF	61,057
Mujib Bahini and	6,000
Urban Force	-----
Total	<u>79,971</u>

Out of the above, 6,728 MFs and FFs were operating inside East Pakistan along the border, and 31,075 MFs and FFs were active deep inside that country. The Mukti Bahini organised 1,226 ambushes and raids, destroyed or damaged 80 road/rail bridges, 2 ferries and 63 river crafts, 133 sections of telegraph/telephone lines and poles, 12 train/rail bogies and 46 sections of rail track in October(110). Besides, eight tea factories were damaged or destroyed, Chittagong-Comilla and Chittagong-Kaptai power lines were cut, and approximately, 3,600 tonnes of jute were destroyed in this month. But the most important event took place in Chhatak in Sylhet district, where 3 East Bengal Battalion in cooperation with MF and FF (in all 1,600 men) carried out operations from 12 October onwards. The area of the cement factory and power house on the north bank of river Surma were captured and heavy casualties inflicted on Pak troops and Razakars. The operation ultimately failed owing to poor leadership at various

Of these, 50,810 had been inducted inside East Bengal by that date(105).

When induction of Freedom Fighters into their areas of operation inside Bangladesh started, there were initially incidents of their parties being ambushed and killed or taken prisoners, with consequent loss of arms to the enemy. This was due to wrong tactics, in that they moved in large bodies instead of infiltrating in small groups. This mistake was soon set right. They faced a problem also of settling into the selected areas of operations; in some instances, collaborators and hostile independent guerilla groups caused their destruction. But in a comparatively short space of time most of the groups were firmly established. Their successful establishment and operation deep inside Bangladesh was helped by the fact that in September the Pak Army in Bangladesh started moving the bulk of its troops close to the border. This forward movement of the Pak Army took place at a time when trans-border operations were on the increase. The Pakistani Commanders felt that in the event of a more serious attack by India, their strong blocking posts close to the border would delay Indian movement to such an extent that the United Nations would be able to intervene. Loss of territory near the border was unacceptable politically, as it would provide a territorial base to the Bangladesh government.

As the establishment of the Freedom Fighters inside Bangladesh proceeded apace, and as they extended their hold over the interior of the country, a stepping up of operations along the borders by the regular element of the Mukti Bahini was ordered, often supported by Indian troops and artillery and by the BSF(106). The aim was to cause attrition to the Pak Army, to give experience to the East Bengal Regiment, to assess Pak reactions and to secure tactically advantageous areas to be used as jump-off positions in future operations.↵

However, in spite of massive induction, the FFs failed to carry out much destruction and depredations inside East Pakistan during September 1971, due to weak political and military leadership, and inadequate gestation period for training the Mukti Bahini. This aspect was stressed, time and again on the Bangladesh government-in-exile, who, however, could not do much about it. Also there had been delay in timely passage of information, frictions caused by the induction of Mujib Bahini and insufficient control by Bangladesh Sector Commanders over the planning and execution of operations. Nonetheless, 1,371 ambushes and raids were organised in September 1971, 123 road/rail

levels of the Mukti Bahini, and failure in 3 EBR's radio communication(111). Pak troops recaptured the area soon afterwards by employing 2 of their regular battalions. The Pak forces suffered casualties of approximately 150, including one Major and one JCO in this particular operation, as against the Mukti Bahini's casualties of 135, including 39 killed, 32 wounded, and the rest missing(112).

In another incident also the Mukti Bahini suffered heavily when Pak troops infiltrated behind MF/FF positions north of Sunamganj by night and launched their attack at first-light on 11 October. MFs/FFs abandoned their positions and as many as 300 of them deserted(113). On the night of 23/24 October, MFs/FFs along with the Indian Army's 13 Guards raided Kamalpur BOP in the Mymensingh Sector, but could not capture it(114). They suffered casualties of 5 killed and 9 wounded, including one officer, as against a good number of Pak casualties.

In this month some independent groups, notably the Kader Siddiqui group, conducted successful operations in the Mymensingh area. They regained control over police stations at Gopalpur, Bhuapur, Nagarpur, Basail, Phulbaria and Bhaluka. Over 1,000 Razakars surrendered to these groups(115). Tangail was isolated from both Dhaka and Mymensingh as a result of the destruction of the road bridges of Kalaikar and Poongli.

In November 1971, the Mukti Bahini operations were further intensified, leading to 2,210 actions which included 1,929 encounters with the Pak forces(116). One important engagement took place on 3 November, when two companies of 3 East Bengal attacked Goyan area in E-I Sector, and secured area north of it. But the Pak forces brought reinforcements in five helicopters and several launches and recaptured the area on 4 November(117). However, the Pakistanis suffered heavy casualties, approximately 80 killed including one Officer. Another place, Radhanagar in the same area, was invested by five MF/FF companies, two companies of 3 East Bengal Battalion and one company of 5/5 GR(FF) for a period of 25 days, following which an attack was launched by one company of 3 EBB and one company of 5/5 GR to capture a portion of Radhanagar during 24/25 November night(118). The villages of Chotakhel and Gara and the area upto Goyan-Radhanagar road was secured by them on 25 November. The Pak troops suffered 10 killed as against their adversary's casualties of 3 killed and six wounded. The MFs/FFs penetrated into Sylhet town and damaged a transformer.

Similarly, in area Badalpur, south of Barsore, MFs/FFs attacked the Pak forces, killing 17 Pak regulars and many Razakars on 17 November, FF leader Jagatjyoti Das died in this action(119). The FFs also removed about three km of railway track between Gachihata and Jashodalpur, and another rail track between Shaistaganj and Srimangal.

All Bangladesh forces were placed under the command of the Indian Army and integrated with local formations with effect from 23 November 1971. Their dispositions were: (120)

(a) 'K' Force (Bde) Located in area Belonia Pocket.

- (i) 31 Jat (Both Infantry Battalions)
- (ii) 32 Mahar (from the Indian Army.)
- (iii) 4 East Bengal
- (iv) 9 East Bengal
- (v) 10 East Bengal
- (vi) Mujib Battery: with 4x3.7 inch how guns.
- (vii) Rocket Battery: with CPRL (GRAD) rockets under arrangements with 23 Mtn Div.

(b) 'S' Force (Bde) Located in area north of Agartala

- (i) 2 East Bengal
- (ii) 11 East Bengal

(c) 'Z' Force (Bde) Located in area Ranibari

- (i) 1 East Bengal
- (ii) 3 East Bengal Located in area Dauki for operations in area Chhatak and Sunamganj under 101 Comn Z Area.
- (iii) 8 East Bengal
- (iv) Field battery with 6 x 105mm Italian guns.

Total Pak casualties suffered in November were estimated at over 4,000, including some Officers, as against the Mukti Bahini casualties of 936 including 257 killed(121).

By end of November 1971, the following sub-divisions/thanas (police stations) came under the control of MF/FF:-

(A) Dhaka/Comilla/Chittagong Sector:

(i) Dhaka District:

- (a) Manikganj
- (b) Munshiganj
- (c) Narsingdi and Manohardi Thanas (Under Narayanganj sub-division)
- (d) Tungi and Chorasal Thanas (Under Dhaka North sub-division)

(ii) Comilla District:

- (a) Homna thana in Comilla sub-division
- (b) Chandpur sub-division

(iii) Noakhali District:

Western portion of this district except the area of Chaumohani, and area south of Matlab Bazar upto Lakshmipur.

(B) Mymensingh Sector:

(i) Tangail District:

Most of the Thanas of Tangail district except Tangail town came under the virtual control of Kader Siddiqui(122).

(ii) Mymensingh District:

Ten Thanas out of 12 in Kishoreganj sub-division except Kishoreganj town which was under siege, and Diwanganj Thana in Jamalpur sub-division.

The Mukti Bahini Navy:

A Mukti Bahini Naval Wing was formed in May 1971 under the leadership of Cdr M.N. Samant of the Indian Navy and manned by Bengalee sailors of the Pakistan Navy. About 550 Bangladeshi volunteers were also trained to attack ships and harbours with limpet mines and explosives specially designed and manufactured at the Armament Factory, Kirkee(123). A large number of Mukti Bahini camps were visited by the Naval Wing Officers to interview and select candidates to undergo naval Commando training. The criteria for selection were: good swimmer, medically fit, and resident of the likely target area, so that he had enough terrain familiarity and the ability to speak the local dialect of Bengali language.

Initially eight sailors who had deserted their

submarine PNS Mangro being commissioned at Toulon in France on 29 March 1971, and sought political asylum in India, were selected. They provided a valuable link with the volunteers and also acted as badly needed instructors. Later, eight more sailors joined them. The training of five weeks was conducted by an Indian Naval team of three officers and ten diver sailors of the Indian Navy in a camp on the banks of the Ganga near Plassey in West Bengal. Soon the group expanded to a force of 300 highly motivated well educated youths. Main emphasis was laid on increasing stamina and endurance while swimming with full operational load. The volunteers also had to learn the techniques of self-preservation, master the art of unarmed combat, familiarise themselves with the use of small arms, navigate in the dark and develop the expertise in frogman techniques. The aim of the group, which was virtually 'raring to go', was the destruction of Pak shipping along the 8,000-kilometre inland waterways of East Pakistan and the disruption of the main seaports, especially Chittagong and Chalna through which came the main bulk of supplies for the Pak armed forces.

This type of clandestine operations made great demands on the saboteurs, for swimming several miles in murky, fast-flowing rivers and 'khals' at the dead of night while carrying a heavy load of live explosives for attaching to ships' hulls well below the water-line called for special mental and physical qualities. But raw material was available in plenty because water was the main mode of travel in East Bengal, and all knew swimming. Improvisation, ingenuity and raw courage enabled the naval team and the group of volunteers to carry out their tasks successfully - the acquisition of special skills, the procurement of equipment-limpet mines, and indeed the entire spectrum of raising, equipping and training a body of naval commandos for action against the Pak Army as well as the Navy with nearly 60 gunboats and 1,500 professional sailors.

It was observed that the trainees, though generally physically fit, were badly lacking in stamina. Augmentation of the daily diet with extra rations improved the general health and the stamina, making them capable of swimming for periods upto six hours with full operational load. They were paid Rs.50 per month on successful completion of training. The camp was placed under the administrative control of the Commander, Sector "Charlie", whose HQ was initially at Krishnagar, 60 km from the camp. Logistic support was provided by the 2 Sikh LI stationed at Plassey. A team of two Naval Officers and two sailors was integrated into the Eastern Army

Command HQ, Calcutta, for planning and guiding the Naval Commando operations.

The sea ports of Chittagong and Mongla were accorded first priority for attacks. It was on these ports that the Army of occupation depended for external supplies. The first attack on the night of 15/16 August resulted in the sinking of two ships and the grounding of a third. Thereafter, these ports were subjected to determined attacks once a month. Inland Water Transport (IWT) ports were attacked in order to disrupt traffic and to stretch Pak defences at Chandpur, Narayanganj, Daudkhandi, Barisal, Phulchari Ghat, Khulna, Goalundo Ghat, Aricha Ghat, Nagarbari, Ashuganj and Jamalpur. When, on the night of 15/16 August 1971, the five task groups totalling 173 frogmen were launched, they attacked not only the main sea ports of Bangladesh, but also the river ports of Chandpur, Narayanganj and Barisal, destroying some twenty vessels. By the end of August, 14,000 tons of shipping were sunk and 19,000 tons damaged, against the loss of two frogmen killed and ten missing (124). The Pakistani reaction was the appointment of a Flag Officer to step up anti-frogmen activities in Bangladesh, organise harbour patrols, convoy ships, place guards on merchant ships, and drive away the local fishermen and villagers who lived on the banks of the affected waterways.

After debriefing and a short rest, the task forces were again launched in September to extend their operations to all important waterways and river ports of Bangladesh. They succeeded in sinking 5,700 tons of shipping and damaged another 25,000 tons. An additional 100 frogmen were trained in October and launched to attack shipping in Chittagong and Chalna and to block as many channels as possible. Consequently, 6,000 tons of shipping was sunk and 11,000 tons damaged, leading to the raising of war risk insurance rates by foreign shipping companies from 5 Paise (Pence?) to £ 1 for every £ 100 (125).

The month of October also saw the Mukti Bahini Navy blossoming into a true water borne force by capturing several Pakistani launches in the Sunderbans, and arming them with infantry weapons. In November, 'Padma' and 'Palash' - the two mooring launches of the Calcutta Port Trust - were acquired for the Mukti Bahini Navy, and each fitted at the Garden Reach Workshop, Calcutta, with two 40/60 Bofor guns, a communication set, and a converted fathometer (echo-sounder) to drop mines. They were manned by sailors of the Mukti Bahini Navy and commanded by Indian Naval Officers. These two vessels, with an Indian Navy destroyer acting as distant support, mined

the Pussur channel. The frogmen had meanwhile captured one gunboat, three steamers, two launches and three smaller boats, sunk two ships and five coasters, mined one ship, and damaged four freighters. All this led to a further increase in the pay of the crew of foreign ships in Bangladesh ports by 20 per cent and the war risk insurance rate to \$ 1,000 per ship per day. Night navigation was stopped, waiting delays increased and small aircraft, helicopters and gunboat were put on harbour patrol round the clock. Eventually, when the shipping kill during the month rose to 26,000 tons and the tonnage of damaged ships reached 10,000, the Pak authorities were forced to close the ports of Chalna and Khulna, and the foreign shipping companies put an embargo on their shipping touching Bangladesh ports.

In all, a total of 550 frogmen(126) were trained and launched in operations, for which 1,500 limpet mines and 500 explosive boxes, and several Scuba diving sets were provided. The result was that 50,000 tons of shipping was sunk and another 65,000 tons damaged.

The number of Naval Commandos launched was:-

August 1971	178
September 1971	160
October 1971	250
November 1971	272

The Naval Commandos also attempted to destroy the big Hardinge Bridge-"OP Grey Cat"-on the river Padma on three occasions during the period September-November 1971. On each occasion, a team of six to eight commandos was launched in a country boat from the BSF outpost at Jalangi. On each occasion, the boat was towed by a motor boat upto Raita point, situated about seven nautical miles up-stream from the bridge. On two occasions, the country boat managed to get under the bridge undetected, but failed to cause any damage to the bridge. The team was well practised in boatmanship and use of special explosive devise called Herriks Charge, 24 of which were supplied on each attempt. But the ventures failed, due perhaps to the strong currents under the bridge rendering it impossible to secure the boat to the structure. Fear of detection by the sentries patrolling on the bridge was always there. The team was in fact detected during the third and last attempt. With liberation in sight, a feeling of preserving the "National property" also appeared to be creeping into Mukti Bahini personnel from early November 1971. The bridge was, however, seriously damaged by the retreating Pak Army during early December 1971.

Arani Bridge was another important bridge, situated approximately 20 km south-east of Rajshahi. It was successfully destroyed by the Naval Commandos during October 1971.

The comparatively small band of Naval Commandos performed feats out of proportion to their numbers and against heavy odds. It is clear in retrospect that the sinking of 50,000 tons of shipping and damaging another 65,000 tons by a fledgling band of determined young men after only a few weeks' training under Indian Naval personnel added a new dimension to the art of guerilla warfare in inland waterways. On the negative side, there is reason to believe that 10-15% of them did not attempt the tasks allotted to them, possibly due to fear of the enemy or nearness of their families. But then they were mere young students, non-professionals. The Naval Commando Operations caused direct damage to the tune of Rs.500-600 million by attacks on shipping, IWT traffic and others like jetties and wharves targets. To this can be added the closure of ports, thereby adding to demurrage charges, wage bills, piling up of export products, disruption in flow of supplies, etc, apart from damage to the enemy's morale.

The war-time exploits of the Mukti Bahini Navy, which joined hands with the Indian Navy to attack Mongla and Khulna, are narrated in Chapter XV.

The Mukti Bahini Air Force

On 4 October 1971, the Mukti Bahini Air Force, code-named 'Kilo Flight', was formed at Dimapur under Group Captain Chandan Singh of the IAF. One Dakota, one Otter and one Alouette Helicopter were allotted to this Flight, and conversion training of their pilots and ground crew was carried out in October and November.

On the night of 3-4 December, the Otter aircraft, based at Kailashahar, attacked the fuel dumps at Chittagong and the Alouette raided the fuel dumps at Narayanganj successfully(127). On 4 December 1971, this Flight was placed at the disposal of GOC 8 Mtn Div operating in the Sylhet Sector. Upon the GOC's order for attacks by night on all convoys, river barges and steamers on the Meghna river, north of Bhairab Bazar, the Flight flew five sorties during 4-7 December, hitting bunkers and troop concentrations at Maulvi bazar and also destroyed two steamers and two 3-ton trucks carrying troops. Though initially the strike results of this Flight were not very encouraging, the subsequent improvement was perhaps due to the presence on board of Group Captain Chandan

Singh and Flt Lt C.M. Sangla (IAF Instructor) in every mission. Later, while the Otter aircraft was utilised for armed escort/recce on 2-3 missions in the Sylhet area, the Alouette was used as an armed escort for the heliborne operations at Sylhet, Raipur, Narsingdi and Baidya Bazar during 7-12 December.

Total casualties suffered by the Pak forces during the Mukti Bahini (Jackpot) Operations upto 30 November 1971 were estimated as:- (128)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded.</u>
a) Regulars	4,500	4,000
b) Para-military Forces	909	674
	<u>5,409</u>	<u>4,674</u>
Total -	10,083	

The casualties of the Bangladesh forces were - (129)

Killed	10,957
Wounded	1,704
Captured	1,576
Missing	839
Total	<u>15,076</u>

Assessment of Mukti Bahini Operations

Guerilla operations require careful planning, training, induction and control. The Sector Headquarters were not adequately staffed to carry out these functions, and due to the large numbers of MF/FFs involved, neither detailed planning nor induction could be properly organised (130). A raw person, not familiar with arms and explosives, requires a minimum of three months to become a reasonably efficient guerilla, and a guerilla leader takes considerably longer to train. Against this, Bangladeshi guerillas were given only 3 to 4 week's training, resulting in their limited effectiveness.

Due to shortage of experienced officers, EB Regular troops be given only limited objectives, preferably in conjunction with the tasks allotted to Indian Army formations. Their limited operations along the periphery in Mymensingh, Sylhet, Comilla and Fenny could isolate a few Pak BOPs, with the establishment of blocks, cutting off the enemy withdrawal and preventing his reinforcement. In the process, some casualties were inflicted on the Pak

regular and para-military forces. Their successful raids against tea factories led to the dislocation of the tea industry in Sylhet district. But over the long years of military rule, the people had imbibed a terrible awe and terror of the hefty, ruthless soldier from West Pakistan, and their fear of Pak troops made them shy of closing in with the enemy during the attacks, thus producing unsatisfactory results.

Similarly, except for a few isolated actions, the achievements of the MF companies were not commensurate with their strength and the quality and quantity of weapons issued to them. Their raids on Pak BOPs were generally of a harassing nature, as they opened fire haphazardly from a great distance which was neither cost effective nor of any real value. However, the achievements of the well-motivated FFs were considerable. They contributed some tangible results, e.g., elimination of collaborators, occupation of pockets in the interior of Bangladesh, demolitions, and harassment. They also provided very useful intelligence which helped in the planning and execution of operations everywhere, and lowered the morale of the Pak Army due to casualties and the creation of an all-round hostile environment for the Pakistanis(131). This prompted Lt Gen Niazi to say: "I lost my eyes and ears".

When the Pak Army was forced to move out from its cantonments to the border, the Mukti Bahini had a comparatively free time in the interior of Bangladesh to carry out its depredations. These tied down considerable quantum of troops for the close protection of Vulnerable Areas/Vulnerable Points (VAs/VPs) and administrative installations.

Neither the Indian political leaders, nor their allies from Bangladesh, could properly appreciate, either politically or militarily, the dangers which this large mass of none-too-disciplined but heavily armed Mukti Bahini guerillas would pose after the liberation struggle was over. The guerilla groups with different ideologies mutually antagonistic, trained by different Indian agencies, with different political motivations, were sure to create an unstable situation in the new State(132). Also, knowledgeable persons almost unanimously agree that the Mukti Bahini could not have by itself succeeded in throwing out the Pak Army from East Bengal(133).

Mujib Bahini's Operations:

The Awami League Force (ALF) or Mujib Bahini was trained at a camp near Chakrata and a second camp at Haflong(134). The plan was to have a nucleus of it in

each thana throughout Bangladesh. By the middle of June, out of 253 thanas, only 30 remained to be covered. A Mujib Bahini cell formed in each thana, consisted of five men only: one Organiser, one Deputy Organiser, two Couriers, and a Den Master to organise hiding places and safe shelters for the guerillas to be brought in later. The training proceeded fast and without the knowledge either of the Indian Army or of the Bangladesh provisional government. The strategic concept was to use ALF to form powerful centres throughout Bangladesh to sabotage industrial and strategic installations and to be ready to act as the anvil when the hammer of the Mukti Fauj or the Indian Army hit from outside.

About 10,000 Mujib Bahini leaders/instructors were trained in guerilla techniques by Maj Gen Uban so that they, in their turn, could train up lakhs of Bangladeshis as guerillas inside Bangladesh. Ashraf, the only son of Syed Nazrul Islam, the Acting President of Bangladesh government-in-exile, and Sheikh Jamal, the younger son of Mujib - who was arrested with Begum Mujib, and escaped from the house-arrest, were included in this elite and highly secret force.

It was agreed between Maj Gen Uban and Lt Gen Aurora that Mukti Bahini would be responsible for all assaults upto 32 km inside the Bangladesh border, and beyond that the depth areas would be the responsibility of the Mujib Bahini. The points of entry into Bangladesh through Indian Army/Mukti Bahini areas by Mujib Bahini were made known to the Indian Army Unit Commanders of the concerned localities, but the Mujib Bahini did not disclose anything about the corridors of their entry, safe houses and destinations inside Bangladesh, because they suspected that many of the Mukti Bahini leaders were their political enemies(135).

Since the raising of the Mujib Bahini, till the final victory, this force participated in different kinds of secret operations and many of its members lost their lives(136).

Operations by the Uban Force:

Another hush-hush unit, commanded by the ebullient Maj Gen Uban, and named "Uban Force", consisted of highly trained Indian Commandos. The training programme of the Uban Force started on 1 June 1971 with 850 persons under training in two centres(137). However, from end June 1971, it was planned to train 1,600 volunteers in each batch. Chief of the Army Staff gave the following tasks to

the Uban Force:-

- a) to clear Chittagong Hill Tracts of all Mizo hostiles,
- b) destroy the power-house at Kaptai, and
- c) carry out further depredations.

Subsequently, in his later Operational Instructions he included capture of Chittagong as one of Uban's tasks. Later still, the capture of Dohazari bridge for denying Arakan road to withdrawing Pak troops who wanted to escape into Burma, was also added.

Chittagong Hill Tracts was a hilly country with an average height of about 460 metres, most of which was thick jungle, interspersed with nullahs and rivers which could be turned into vast lakes by closing the sluice gates at Kaptai. The area was malarious and dysentery was quite common. The Eastern Command Headquarters had the information that the following enemy forces were in the area:- (138)

- a) HQ 53 Inf Bde - Chittagong.
24 Frontier Force - Chittagong.
15 Baluch - Rangamati.
23 Baluch - Fenny.
- b) Sector HQ East Pak - Chittagong.
Civil Armed Forces
12 Wing - Laksham.
15 Wing - Karerhat.
- c) 3 Commando Battalion - Chittagong.
12% Mizos

Against these, Maj Gen Uban commanded 1,600 commandos, 350 Freedom Fighters and 2 Helicopters as air support(139).

The Force consisted of 18 coys (about 90 each) which were organised into three columns of 6 coys each - North, Central and South columns with Marpara, Kajaichari and Borne Pansuri as their launching bases. Each column was further sub-divided into two groups of 3 coys each so that they could carry out 'Anvil-Hammer' tactics in their own areas(140). Demagiri was the HQ site, the rear base was established at Kumbhigram, the airhead; Lungleh, 483 km away from Kumbhigram, formed the forward administrative base, where the two helicopters were also located along with their repair and maintenance teams.

There were four distinct phases of "OP Eagle" as it was code named: (141)

- (a) Phase I - Destroying enemy bases North of Barkal-Subalong.
- (b) Phase II - Capture of Barkal-Subalong and clearing of enemy from South.
- (c) Phase III - Cutting enemy withdrawal South of Karnaphuli and capture of Rangamati-Kaptai-Mynamukh.
- (d) Phase IV - Clearing Mizos still left in Chittagong Hill Tracts and establishing law and order.

The operation was to start not later than 7 November 1971. However, on 6 November, a powerful tornado hit this area, twisting the rotor blades of the two helicopters at Lungleh and rendering them unserviceable. This also affected the air supply drops on launching bases as well as disrupted and tore the camp sites. So Uban's men crossed into enemy territory on night 10/11 November in spite of lack of boats, pneumatic tubes (for crossing water obstacles) and composite rations. Phase I lasted from 11 November to 3 December. During this period the Force cleared a large area of Pak territory and created a psychosis of fear amongst the enemy Mizos and Pathans alike, which was to help Uban's men in more difficult tasks during Phase II.

Since the war was declared by Pakistan on 3 December 1971, the whole operation had to be speeded up. A new group attacked 10 positions of the enemy, eight of them being close together. These positions were mainly held by Pathans. At a cost of 21 killed the group destroyed all posts by a daring attack with blood curdling war cries. The enemy survivors jumped into the lake to save their lives, but most of them were drowned. Some four Pathans were caught amongst the bushes three days later, starving. On 9 December, Barkal received a very accurate air strike after which it was captured(142). Subalong was captured soon afterwards by a column moving by boat.

On 10 December, Uban received a signal from Chief of Army Staff asking him to capture Dohazari to deny Arakan Road to retreating Pak troops trying to escape into Burma. He immediately landed men at Hajachari in an unreconnoitred hill area. His men blew up the bridge at Dohazari and later captured it.

Rangamati fell on the morning of 17 December 1971. Kaptai and Mynamukh were occupied on 18 December. Although Pak forces had been ordered to surrender on 16 December, it appears that Uban encountered some resistance, perhaps mainly from the Mizo rebels.

According to Uban, his and enemy casualties were as follows:- (143)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>POWs</u>
a) Pakistan Troops & Mizos	452	335	311
b) Uban Force	49	104	-

The Force won the following decorations:- (144)

- a) PVSM - 1
- b) AVSM - 1
- c) Vr.C - 6
- d) VSM - 5
- e) Sena Medal - 5
- f) Mention in Despatches. -11

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS INEFFECTIVE:

Over four months of diplomatic efforts by the Government of India for seeking a political settlement of the East Bengal problem had not yielded any tangible result even till the end of August 1971. Those efforts, no doubt, did help in posting other countries up-to-date on the developments in East Bengal, but they did not bring the basic problem anywhere near a solution.

There was considerable criticism in the country that the Government had been "overdoing the sending of Ministers and delegations" and there was a widespread feeling that it was necessary "to do something more concrete"(145). The demand for immediate recognition of Bangladesh was being raised more and more(146).

But the Government of India did not give in to those pressures. They were determined not to leave any stone unturned "to ensure that the international community exerts all its influence with the military Government of Pakistan to secure the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and to seek a speedy political solution with the already elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh(147). The process of political negotiations and diplomacy was, therefore, continued even after August 1971.

The Government of India took varied initiative for exerting pressure on the Pakistan government indirectly. Those efforts included approaches to various governments through diplomatic channels, direct communications addressed by the Foreign Minister to, and his meetings with his foreign counterparts, visits of special Ministerial delegations to different countries, making the international community fully aware of the realities of the situation by projecting the objective picture of the developments in East Bengal at the United Nations and through the mass media and by facilitating the visits of foreign diplomats, legislators, journalists and intellectuals to refugee camps. The visits of various foreign dignitaries to India were also utilised for the purpose. The official drive was supplemented by similar efforts by non-official organisations.

Continuing the process of sending special emissaries abroad, the Government dispatched some more Ministerial delegations to countries which were not covered so far. The delegation under Law Minister H.R. Gokhale went to East African countries and one under Minister of State for Industrial Development, Ghanshyam Oza to West Africa. Raj Bahadur, Parliamentary Affairs, Shipping and Transport Minister, went to South America and K.C. Pant, Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, led the delegation to Central American and Caribbean countries(148).

The Minister of External Affairs, Swaran Singh, himself undertook visits to Nepal from 3 to 5 September and to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) from 9 to 11 September 1971 to have a "broad exchange of views on all subjects of mutual interest including Bangla Desh"(149).

On 14 September, the External Affairs Minister sent a letter to several Foreign Ministers on the developments in East Bengal and the refugee problem(150).

Swaran Singh drew the attention of the international community to the tragic developments in his address to the United Nations General Assembly. Speaking on 27 September, he called upon the UN and other international organisations "to impress on the military regime of Islamabad that force will not succeed and, therefore, a political settlement between the military regime and the already elected members is essential(151). He said: "Bilaterally all Governments can do their utmost to ensure by whatever means are available to them that the military regime stops its

repression and enters into negotiations with the elected leaders to achieve a political settlement with their Army back to the barracks"(152). Only by these measures would the flow of refugees be stopped and those already in India could return home.

During his sojourn in New York in connection with the General Assembly session in September-October 1971, the Indian Foreign Minister explained the situation in East Bengal and the refugee problem to a number of Foreign Ministers whom he met there. Those matters were also discussed by him with Foreign Ministers from West Asian countries during the meeting of the Non-aligned countries at the United Nations on 30 September 1971(153).

Stoppage of foreign economic aid to Pakistan, whose economy was in a deplorable state, could put considerable pressure on the Yahya regime which, coupled with the political pressure, might force the West Pakistani junta to seek a political rather than a military solution of the East Bengal problem. It was, therefore, decided(154) that before the 'Aid Pakistan Consortium' met to formalise Pakistan's unilateral moratorium on debt repayment and to consider resumption of aid to Islamabad, it should be impressed upon the donor countries that either of those steps would strengthen the Pakistani military machine which would utilise it in further repression of East Bengalees, as was done with the aid given for cyclone relief in 1970. That would further aggravate the tense and abnormal situation.

The diplomatic drive of the Government of India was not an altogether waste of effort. A few countries, as a result of India's efforts as well as of their own judgement, took some initiative in the matter. For example, President Nikolai Podgorny of U.S.S.R., at a banquet in Moscow in honour of the King of Afghanistan, said on 14 September 1971, that : "The preservation of peace in the Southern Asia will depend considerably on the speediest attainment of a political settlement of the problems that appeared in East Pakistan and with due consideration for the lawful interests of its population, on the creation there of safe conditions for the return of the refugees"(155). All the members of the Aid Pakistan Consortium, except the US, during an informal meeting of the Consortium, expressed "dim view of Pakistan's violation of debt obligations" and were in "no mood to legalise unilateral moratorium"(156).

Many International Conferences, which discussed the East Bengal problem, passed resolutions and issued communique in line with the stand of the Government

of India on the issue. An International Conference on Bangladesh, held in New Delhi from 18 to 20 September, passed a long Resolution(157) affirming the imperative need of a political settlement acceptable to the people of East Bengal. The Resolution also appealed to all concerned to stop forthwith all military and economic aid to the Government of Pakistan.

Foreign Ministers of Non-aligned countries at the end of their Consultative Meeting in New York on 30 September also gave a call "for early and effective action, including action at the international level, to stem the flow of these refugees, to alleviate their suffering and promote all the conditions necessary which would create confidence and ensure the inalienable rights of the refugees and their return to their homeland safely and speedily"(158).

But these instances were exceptions rather than the rule. Most of the governments approached by India remained neutral. Even those countries which shared India's views preferred silence. About the apathy of various governments Mrs. Gandhi was constrained to say: "The growing agony of the people of East Bengal does not seem to have moved many Governments. Our restraint has been appreciated only in words. The basic issues involved, and the real threat to peace and stability in Asia, are being largely ignored"(159). It was, therefore, not surprising that India's efforts did not succeed in generating the requisite degree of pressure on Gen Yahya Khan to make him soften his rigid posture.

The attitude of Yahya Khan either towards Sheikh Mujib(160) or towards the Awami League showed no signs of reconciliation. The Pakistan President's much-publicised moves with respect to East Bengal, like the appointment of a civilian in place of an Army Officer as Governor in Dhaka and the phoney amnesty for East Bengalees which excluded Awami League workers, were an effort at 'window dressing'. An illusion of normalcy in East Bengal had to be given on the eve of the U.N. General Assembly session. But, in essence, those steps signalled that Yahya Khan was in no mood to pay any heed to the democratic urges of the people of East Bengal.

Moreover, Yahya Khan and his men were now displaying increasingly provocative and belligerent attitude towards India. In an interview with Le Figaro (1 September 1971) the Pak President gave a warning "that if the Indians imagine they will be able to take one morsel of my territory without provoking war, they are making a serious mistake....it would mean war, out and out war..."(161). Lt Gen Rakhman

Gul, Governor of Sind, said: "Pakistan is ready to face any aggressive design of India, and if she tried to wage war even on a small piece of land of Pakistan she will be badly defeated and crushed"(162). One Deputy Sub-Martial Law Administrator said in Multan on 29 September: "Our army is fully prepared and now we do not need any notice for waging a war"(163). The true import of the above statements would be more clear when viewed in the light of the Pakistani policy to attribute every move made or likely to be made by the East Bengalee freedom fighters to the Government of India(164). Thus, while the problems created by the refugee influx were worsening day by day, the obstinacy and sabre rattling of Yahya regime were adding to the tense atmosphere. The clouds of war loomed large on the Indian sub-continent.

It was at that critical time that Indira Gandhi herself undertook a two-part tour of several major countries to warn the international community of the dangers inherent in the situation and to make a last ditch effort to persuade major powers to do something concrete for a peaceful solution of the East Bengal problem before it was too late.

First Mrs. Gandhi paid a visit to U.S.S.R. from 27 to 29 September 1971. In Moscow although the focus was on Indo-Soviet bilateral relations in the wake of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, the East Bengal problem, too, figured prominently. In an address at the Moscow State University, Mrs. Gandhi said: "We have shown the greatest forbearance, but it is essential that the basic cause of the crisis be immediately removed by a political solution acceptable to the people concerned. Unfortunately, there is no sign that this is being attempted. It is the world's responsibility to create without further delay conditions to enable the refugees to return to their homes in safety and dignity..."(165). The joint statement issued at the end of the visit emphasised that "both sides consider that the interests of the preservation of peace demand that urgent measures should be taken to reach a political solution of the problems which have arisen there (ie., in East Bengal) paying regard to the wishes, the inalienable rights and lawful interests of the people of East Bengal as well as for the speediest and safe return of the refugees to their homeland in conditions safeguarding their honour and dignity"(166).

But, in view of the restraining influence that due to several economic, military and political factors, the Western governments could exercise on the Pakistan government, Mrs. Gandhi's tour

Belgium, Austria, the U.K., the U.S.A., France and West Germany (from 25 October to 12 November 1971) seemed more crucial. About the objective of this tour, Mrs. Gandhi stated subsequently that she "undertook this visit as an earnest of our desire to leave nothing unexplored which might lead to an easing of the burdens imposed upon us and to discourage those who are bent upon finding excuses to threaten our security"(167).

During the six-nation tour Mrs. Gandhi met top government leaders of those countries. During those meetings as well as at several others, which she had with selected audiences and media men, she repeatedly drew their attention to the seriousness of the prevailing situation and emphasised the urgency of a political solution of the East Bengal problem for the preservation of peace in the sub-continent. Addressing the Royal Institute of International Affairs in Brussels, Mrs. Gandhi issued a call: "The basic cause of this crisis must be remedied. A political solution must be found to this problem, and, to be effective, it must be acceptable to the elected representatives of the people of Bangla Desh"(168). In Vienna again, during an interview on the Austrian Radio on 27 October 1971, she expressed her opinion that only a political settlement acceptable to the people of East Bengal and their elected representatives could avoid an armed conflict in the Indian sub-continent(169).

At the banquet hosted by President Nixon in Washington on 4 November 1971, Mrs. Gandhi again reminded that "It is for the international community to try to remove the root cause of the trouble"(170). In an answer to a question during N.B.C. Television interview in 'Meet the Press' Programme, the Prime Minister said: "I certainly think that the U.S. and some of the other big powers are in a position to persuade the leaders of West Pakistan to talk to some of the people concerned with this problem in the East"(171).

At a State Luncheon in Paris (8 November 1971), Mrs. Gandhi restated India's position. She said: "We in India have shown the greatest self-restraint. But there is no doubt that our stability and security are threatened. Indeed we feel the threat is to the peace of the entire region. The basic cause of this crisis must be remedied. A political solution must be found, and to be effective, it must be acceptable to the elected representatives of the people of Bangla Desh..."(172). In Bonn, Mrs. Gandhi reminded her hosts that "the German Government, along with other International governments, could try and make the

Pakistani Government see the reality and talk with the people who can answer for East Bengal"(173).

All the diplomatic efforts put in by the Government of India did bring in some benefit. The response of over sixty countries approached "confirmed their awareness of seriousness of the situation in Bangla Desh and the urgent need for solution which will enable the refugees to return to their homeland in safety and honour"(174). As a result of India's efforts even "some Arab countries have displayed greater awareness of the refugee problem arising out of the events in East Bengal, have offered relief assistance and have shown appreciation of the view that a political settlement of the problem, enabling the refugees to return to their homes, is essential"(175). There was now consensus among the major powers that "The root cause of the problem is the internal situation inside East Bengal" which could be "resolved only by a political settlement with the elected leaders...."(176). It was also agreed that the speedy return of refugees required the "restoration of normalcy" which was possible only on the "basis of respect for humanitarian principles and fundamental human rights" and, for that, all countries, both individually and jointly, should take action(177).

Giving an assessment of her own tour, Mrs. Gandhi told the Parliament(178) that the discussions she had in those countries helped to remove certain misgivings and to focus attention on the root cause of the problem. There was now a growing sense of urgency to seek a solution and Pakistan's efforts to side-track and cloud the basic issue had been exposed. The Prime Minister also stated that she was given to understand that London, Paris and Bonn were no longer supplying arms to Pakistan and the U.S. had also decided to do likewise. She expressed her earnest hope that the efforts of the leaders she met would make the military regime in Pakistan realise the futility of forcing a war on India.

There was indeed some positive response from the international community since Mrs. Gandhi undertook the two-phase tour. The Soviet Union now put in sustained efforts to impress upon Pakistan the seriousness of the situation and the need to take urgent action for a political solution. The Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, addressing the UN General Assembly on 28 September said: "We are convinced that a relaxation of tension in the area can be achieved only through a political settlement of questions that have arisen in East Pakistan"(179). Various Soviet trade unions and other organisations

passed resolutions demanding "urgent steps to achieve a political settlement of the problem.." and the creation of "conditions for the earliest return of the refugees to their homeland"(180). When President Podgorny met Yahya Khan in Persepolis (Iran) on 15 October, he urged the Pak President to take steps to restore democracy in East Pakistan, which should include the release of Sheikh Mujib(181).

In the latter half of November, the Soviet Government sent a message to Yahya Khan warning Pakistan once again against any ill-considered adventurist action against India which, Pakistan was told, would have dangerous consequences(182).

During the Yugoslav President Marshal Tito's visit to India in mid October, both sides declared their agreement that the problem of East Bengal "could only be solved by a political solution acceptable to the representatives who had been elected by the people"(183).

The Belgian Premier also agreed(184) to support a political solution in East Bengal and to canvass for continued suspension of economic aid and military sales to Pakistan till that was achieved.

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, too, conceded in the House of Commons on 4 November that the East Bengal problem "must be settled by dialogue between those in power in West Pakistan and those who command the confidence of the people in East Pakistan", adding that "the form of the dialogue must be decided by the Government of Pakistan"(185). The U.K. Government felt also that no further developmental aid could be given to Pakistan until some progress was made towards a political settlement in East Bengal(186).

President George Pompidou of France, in a statement made on 7 November said that "the crisis in East Bengal was a political one and, therefore, there should be a political solution". Otherwise, he added, the whole of the Indian sub-continent would suffer consequences hard to predict(187). After the talks with Mrs. Gandhi in Bonn, the West German Government issued a statement saying that it was "convinced that for the sake of maintaining peace and stability in that region, a political solution of the problem of East Pakistan must be found that will eliminate the existing situation of strife and ultimately enable the refugees to return home"(188).

other Appeals to the same end also came from several government leaders and non-official

organisations and personalities.

But all those efforts "proved unavailing"(189) in making Yahya Khan adopt a rational and reasonable attitude towards the basic issues. Rather, there was a marked intensification in the provocative and bellicose posture of the Pakistan military regime.

Contemptuously setting aside all the appeals, Yahya Khan continued keeping Sheikh Mujib in prison and trying him in camera for treason(190). He showed no inclination to talk to any of the Awami League leaders. The ban on the Party continued and its duly elected members remained disqualified. Also, Yahya Khan went ahead with the plans for holding farcical by-elections, for enforcing a dictated constitution and for forming a puppet government in Dhaka, headed by a civilian stooge while there was no diminution in the rigours of the martial law in East Bengal. Instead of withdrawing West Pakistan army from East Bengal, Yahya Khan augmented its strength there and moved troops to both the eastern and western fronts against India. The Pak President went on harping on the useless proposals of posting of UN observers and the withdrawal of troops.

From October onwards a war psychosis was created by the Yahya Khan regime in the country by various steps including the free distribution and conspicuous display of "Crush India" and "Go to War" stickers(191). Mahmud Ali, leader of the Pakistani delegation to the UN, warned in October that hostilities on the East Bengal border "might well escalate into a third world war"(192). In the beginning of November a foreign journalist reported that "Pakistan is in a belligerent mood, and the signs of preparation for battle are everywhere"(193). On 23 November 1971, came official announcement about declaration of emergency in Pakistan(194). In a speech on 25 November, Yahya Khan was even more specific. He said: "In ten days, I might not be here in Rawalpindi. I will be fighting a war"(195).

There was some sort of polarisation among various governments regarding their perception of the basic issues involved in the East Bengal problem. The ones, who fully or substantially shared India's views, did try to persuade Yahya Khan to see the realities of the situation, but they lacked practicable means to make their efforts effective. The other category of governments could, if they so decided, put sufficient pressure on the Pak military government to solve the problem politically, but they did little. They still tried to equate India and Pakistan on the refugee problem. Though it was rightly held by those

governments that to negotiate a political settlement in East Bengal was an internal affair of Pakistan, they failed to link the two problems. Their first priority was to somehow avert a war on the sub-continent without caring to remove the basic causes responsible for the situation. Hence their emphasis on the proposals for the withdrawal of troops, posting of UN observers and for Mrs. Gandhi - Yahya Khan talks.

In this connection, the U.S.A., China and some Islamic and other countries played a crucial role. Several Muslim countries, either for reasons of 'Islamic solidarity' or for the fact that they themselves had on hand the problems of suppressed nationalities, took a very narrowly legalistic view of the whole situation. They regarded it a purely internal matter of Pakistan with no international implications. Although they were "privately deploring the large scale killings of Muslims in East Bengal", they were "reluctant to say so publicly"(196). Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia were among those countries. Iran was of the view that "nobody should be allowed to suggest either the kind of solution to be imposed or the party with which such a solution could be negotiated"(197). Iran was also sending weapons etc., to Pakistan. Tehran was worried because she thought that break-up of Pakistan would lead to instability along her borders(198). In November 1971, it was made clear that in case of an Indo-Pak conflict, Iran was going to honour her Treaty obligations to Pakistan(199). Similarly, Kuwait, Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia were averse to talk about any solution to the East Bengal problem. They continued to extend all possible diplomatic and material support to the government of Yahya Khan. This unqualified support to Yahya Khan's policy from several Muslim countries, encouraged him to go on suppressing the aspirations of the East Bengalees.

But, even more decisive in this regard was the attitude of the People's Republic of China and the United States of America. Both continued to support the Yahya regime in its repressive policy towards East Bengal since both of them subscribed to the so-called doctrine of the balance of power and, therefore, wanted, at any cost, to maintain status quo in South Asia.

From the very beginning of the East Bengal crisis, Chinese leaders had been making statements assuring full support to the Pak military government. Those statements, at the same time, also contained provocative and bellicose threats to India. Although

in those statements or elsewhere China never specifically promised to physically intervene on the side of Pakistan in the event of an Indo-Pak armed conflict,(200) and China also tendered a friendly advice that "a reasonable settlement should be sought by the Pakistan people themselves,(201) its attitude, at best, could be described as one "fostering doubt and uncertainty about her intentions"(202).

All through the crisis period China continued to provide Pakistan with economic assistance,(203) aircraft, weapons and ammunition,(204) tanks and other equipment to facilitate the raising of two new divisions in West Pakistan(205), and instructors to impart training in counter-guerilla warfare(206).

The assurances of continued resolute support coupled with all kinds of assistance by China to Pakistan were interpreted by Islamabad that China would physically intervene in an Indo-Pak War on the East Bengal issue.

Z.A. Bhutto, one of the key Pakistani figures in the whole arises, stated on 30 April 1971, that China would intervene in case of a war between India and Pakistan(207). On 1 November 1971, Yahya Khan was reported to have said in an interview with the Columbia Broadcasting System that China would "intervene" in the event of an Indian attack on Pakistan(208). While on an important mission to China in November, Bhutto told an American television interviewer that China would help Pakistan in any way she could in the event of an Indo-Pak War(209).

Similarly, the Nixon administration, which did not want to annoy the military ruler of Pakistan who, as a faithful ally, had provided a secret bridge between the U.S. and China, continued to give diplomatic support, economic assistance and arms to Pakistan in defiance of strong congressional and public opinion. It was subsequently claimed by the Nixon administration that it was bringing the East Bengal problem to some solution through its 'quiet diplomacy', but India aborted those efforts. Such claims have been clearly refuted by the correspondence of Kenneth B. Keating, US Ambassador in India,(210) and Mrs Gandhi's letter to President Nixon(211). The Nixon administration might have made some suggestions for a political settlement but with self-imposed restriction in mind to "do nothing to displease Yahya Khan and thereby drive him into Peking's arms"(212). Throughout the months of October and November 1971,(213) the United States continued to make statements and gestures which convinced Yahya Khan of the US "tilt in favour of Pakistan"(214) irrespective of his policies.

The external support to Yahya Khan was an important factor which emboldened him to continue a confrontationist policy. But it was not the sole factor. He had internal compulsions, too.

By his policy aimed at violently crushing the autonomy movement in East Bengal, arresting Mujib, dubbing him a 'traitor', and outlawing the Awami League, Yahya Khan had taken a stand which left him with little room for retreat. Any climb-down or compromise with Sheikh Mujib or Awami League leadership might have discredited him. It would have meant 'political suicide' for Yahya Khan. The ruling coterie in West Pakistan, which had been thriving so far by exploiting the resources of East Bengal, would not have allowed him to do it even if he might have decided to go in for compromise. Moreover, the ambitious Army hawks, on whom Yahya Khan depended much for his support within the Army establishment, might have overthrown him had he decided to soften his stand. Yahya's own survival, therefore, appeared to hinge on the continuance of an anti-people hawkish policy in relation to East Bengal.

Ever since July 1971, Gen Yahya Khan had been trying to internationalise the East Bengal conflict. Assured of the support of the U.S.A., China and some Islamic countries, from October he embarked on a 'strategy of escalation'. It was probably thought that by escalating the situation even to the extent of launching a war against India the military regime would precipitate the matters and convert the whole issue into an Indo-Pak conflict in which, with the active support of Sino-US combine, UN intervention and a cease-fire would be secured. The problem of East Bengal would then be drowned in the procedural technicalities of the UN.

In a war with India, Pakistan was expected to follow a 'grand strategy', i.e., the battle of the east to be fought in the west. Pakistan was confident of gaining a large chunk of territory in Kashmir which would more than balance Indian gains, if any, in East Bengal. At the time of post-cease-fire negotiations, India would have to vacate occupied territory in East Bengal but Pakistan would not have to give up its gains in Kashmir on the basis of the Pakistani fiction that the state of Jammu and Kashmir was a 'disputed territory'. War with India, therefore, seemed to Yahya Khan a better alternative than a settlement with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to bring himself out of the problems of his own making.

The Government of India, on their part, were constrained to come to the conclusion ultimately that

howsoever justified and righteous their position was, the international community was not going to do much to solve the gigantic problem which India was forced to face for no fault of hers. Foreign governments were looking to their own interests as perceived by them and not to the considerations of humanism and justice. India would have to herself find solution of the problem of the East Bengal refugees.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in several of her statements, gave hints that India's patience was running out and India, in order to safeguard her national interests and security, was determined to take any action found necessary. In her address to the India League, London, on 31 October 1971, Mrs. Gandhi remarked: "We have always believed that problems and disputes can be solved by negotiations and by discussions. But there is such a thing as national interest and we cannot allow our national interest, the interest of the people, of their security and their stability to suffer"(215). Speaking at the Columbia University, New York (6 November 1971), she declared that "India is determined to safeguard her interests. India is determined to keep her freedom intact. India is united as never before"(216). "And India", she continued, "is prepared to fight alone for what it thinks worth fighting for..."(217). She emphasised the point again at Bonn saying that "we know that in life, in the ultimate analysis, everybody - each country is alone; and India must learn to stand on her feet; she is going to stand on her feet and deal with the problem herself"(218).

When the US Ambassador to India, Kenneth B. Keating, in his meeting(219) with Mrs. Gandhi on 29 November, again expressed the US hope that India would exercise restraint in dealing with the East Bengal situation, she strongly expressed her exasperation at the failure of the international community, particularly of the USA, to press Yahya Khan for a political settlement. She told Ambassador Keating that during her meetings with Henry Kissinger in New Delhi and with President Nixon in Washington, she had drawn their attention to the seriousness of the situation. Mrs. Gandhi regretted that some people seemed to believe that only if India did nothing, the situation would become normal. What sort of normalcy did they have in their minds, asked Mrs. Gandhi. To a question by Ambassador Keating whether her position on the question of UN observers was the same as when she met President Nixon, Mrs. Gandhi replied with brutal frankness: "My position is harder than it was three weeks ago, and it will get harder day by day. My patience is at an end and I cannot hold the situation

any longer"(220).

Thus, by the time November was making way to December the situation in the Indian sub-continent had become unbearably tense. The calculated game of escalation being played by the military regime of Pakistan, which felt assured of foreign help and support, and the failure of the Government of India to secure, through peaceful diplomatic means, a solution to the dangerous problems created by ten million refugees from East Bengal had brought the Indian sub-continent to the flash point of a military explosion.

SITUATION APPROACHING UNDECLARED WAR

With the increasing tempo of Mukti Bahini operations and the Pakistan Army's retaliatory actions, the situation all along the Bangladesh border was rapidly deteriorating. Shellings, cross-border raids, ambushes and sabotage became daily occurrences. It became necessary to stop the Pakistan Army's harassment and raids. When the Indian Army units started taking preventive or punitive action, the situation degenerated into almost a state of un-declared war.

Although the Indian Army took charge of the Indo-East Pakistan border in May 1971 for checking ingress of the Pak forces across the international border, it did not involve itself much in fighting against the Pak troops who entered Indian territory in pursuit of the Mukti Bahini. However, it helped the Mukti Bahini on many occasions and thus got involved in small skirmishes with the Pak forces of East Pakistan. As a result, the Pakistani forces started moving very close to and sometimes across the international border, and shelling the Indian border posts. As Pakistani shelling on Indian border villages continued, Eastern Command HQ of the Indian Army permitted Divisional Commanders to take limited offensive actions to eliminate the threat of Pakistani small arms and artillery fire to Indian border villages. However, the Indian Air Force was given strict orders not to fly across the international boundary. But the Pakistan Army continued its provocative activities and raids, and seemed in no way inclined to de-escalate the mounting tension and violence. So, later it was found necessary even to occupy temporarily certain areas across the border in order to draw enemy troops closer and to cause maximum casualties to them(221). Four other factors were also responsible for the Army operations, launched in collaboration with the Mukti Bahini and the BSF, inside East Bengal:-

- 1) To eliminate Pakistani Border Posts or salients from where Pak saboteurs were being continuously launched into Indian territory to destroy or damage Indian lines of communication and other vital installations.
- 2) To give the Indian soldiers battle inoculation by 'bleeding' them through involvement in actual fighting(222).
- 3) To improve India's defence posture, so that, in case of bigger operations in future, Indian troops could be on tactically advantageous ground.
- 4) To ascertain Pak reaction to Indian operations, both at strategic and tactical levels.

Thus, limited trans-border operations were undertaken by the Indian Army at carefully selected places on all the Formation fronts along the border. But several of these escalated to fairly deep and large-scale operations, sometimes involving even troops in brigade strength. The operations which require special mention, are detailed below Corps-wise.

4 Corps Sector

Some small engagements involving the Indian Army had taken place in this Sector earlier, some of which are mentioned below, before taking up the bigger operations of the later period(223).

On 19 June, 7 Raj Rif and 5 Indep Armd Sqn under the control of 61 Mtn Bde (57 Mtn Div), supported by MF, destroyed the Pak BOP at Lati (RH 4624), west of Karimganj, held by elements of 22 Baluch, after inflicting casualties of 11 killed and 2 captured. Some arms and ammunition were also obtained from that place. On 14 August, 4 Guard (311 Mtn Bde) exchanged mortar and artillery fire with Pak troops at Alinagar BOP (RR 7635), north of Subhapur, west of river Feni, in which 10 Pak soldiers were killed. On 28 September, one coy of Mukti Fauj and 2 coys plus one platoon 18 Rajput, while infiltrating from Bijoynagar to Itakhola-Dharmagarh (RM 5058), east of Brahmanbaria,(224) suffered 12 casualties as against about 30 Pak casualties. During 15-18 October, the Mukti Fauj along with elements of 10 Bihar had an engagement with the Pak forces in the Saldanadi area (north of Comilla) in which the Mukti Fauj suffered 15 casualties,(225) as against the Pak casualties of 16 killed, including 2/Lt M.D. Parvez Khan of 33 Baluch.

In another engagement, during 23-24 October, one coy of Mukti Fauj, 5 platoons of BSF, and elements of 73 Mtn Bde launched an attack against the Pak forces in the Kasba area (north of Comilla) resulting in 35 casualties to the Mukti Fauj(226).

Operation in Dhalai (Op Tomcat)

Dhalai (RN 0385) was a Pak border out-post opposite (some 1,819 metres north of) Kamalpur on the Indian side in the 61 Mtn Bde Sector (57 Mtn Div under 4 Corps). It had a tea garden and a tea factory where the Pak troops built up a well-defended fortress with a platoon of Regulars and EPCAF. It had been subjecting Kamalpur to constant mortar and artillery fire. 1 EB Bn, supported by two coys 2 Jat, launched an attack on this Pak border post on the night of 19/20 October, but failed to capture it. This was followed by Pak shelling of Kamalpur town on 21 October, in which four civilians were killed and 15 others injured. On the night of 27/28 October, one EB Regiment succeeded in capturing Patharkhola Tea Estate, but could not occupy Dhalai. Consequently, 2 Jat supported by 1 Medium Battery, 2 Mountain Battery, 1 Light Battery and two platoons of mortars crossed the international boundary to launch an attack on Dhalai. Due to stiff Pak resistance, the attack failed to capture the objective(227). On 30 October 1971, 2 Jat launched another attack against the Pak forces, resulting in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. The next day, the Pakistanis brought in some reinforcements, attacked the Jats and held them up. On 1 November, 7 Raj Rif from the same Brigade came to the rescue and captured Dhalai after a successful attack. Although the defenders launched several counter-attacks, they were beaten back. The Pakistanis suffered casualties of 70 killed as against the Raj Rif casualties of 7 ORs killed and 4 Officers, including the CO, Lt Col S. Devesan, and 28 ORs wounded(228). Besides 2 Jat's casualties were 44 killed and 62, including the Brigade Commander, wounded(229).

With the failure of initial attacks on Dhalai, its capture perhaps became a prestige issue with the Corps Commander. Hence a more determined attack was launched on night 30/31 October under his orders, and allegedly in his presence. It resulted in heavy casualties to both sides, but without any success. Some feel that "This had a disturbing effect on all troops.....by putting into doubt the policies and the plans made by officers and interest taken and efforts made, to keep casualties to the minimum"(230). Although an attack by the whole of 61 Mtn Bde ultimately cleared Dhalai on 3 November 1971, the big effort and the total casualties of 51 killed and 94


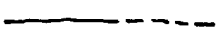
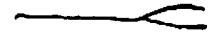
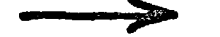
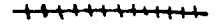
wounded suffered by the Indian Brigade were hardly justified by the result. Its contribution, however, was certainly valuable in blooding the 'raw' Indian troops, facing 'seasoned' Pak soldiers with seven months of operational experience in East Bengal.

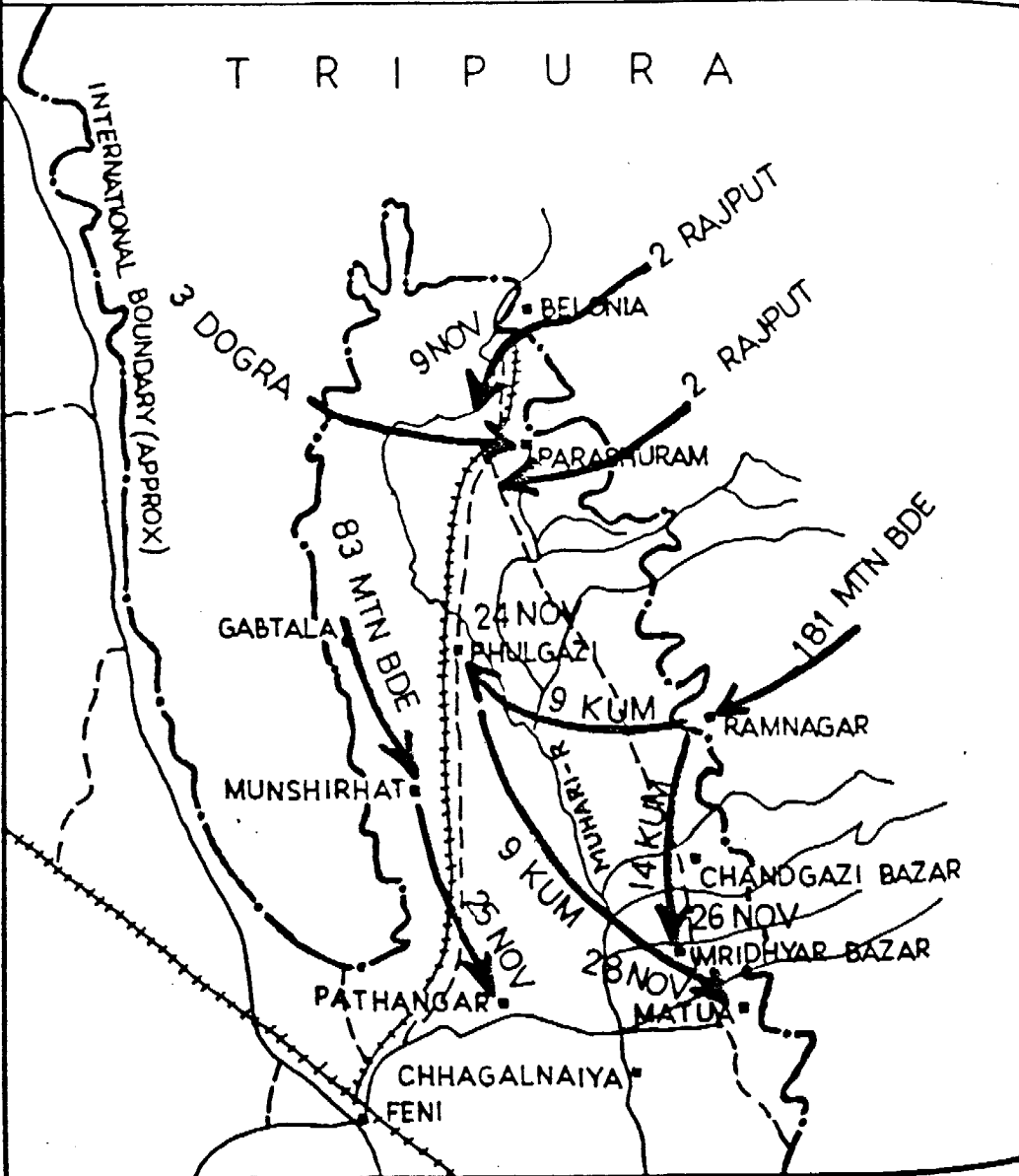
Operations in Belonia Bulge

83 Mtn Bde Group of 23 Mtn Div had concentrated for operation 'Cactus Lily' in Belonia Sector by 4 October and took over operational responsibility in area Belonia RR 629677, Srinagar and Samarganj from 73 Mtn Bde by 17 October. The Belonia Bulge, approximately 8 km by 11 km, jutting northward from Fenny into Tripura, was under the occupation of seven platoons of 15 Baluch, 11 platoons of EPCAF and 70 Razakars. 23 Mtn Div employed 83 Mtn Bde (2 Rajput and 3 Dogra), supported by 57 Mtn Regt, Battery 24 Med Regt, Battery 183 Lt Regt, eight coys of Mukti Fauj and 300 Freedom Fighters in order to straighten the line of control and clear the Pak forces from the area. After infiltration into the enemy-held territory during 5/6 November 1971, (231) the Indian Forces attacked Parashuram (RR 6364) at 2030 hrs on 8 November. After some fighting Parashuram was captured the next day. 3 Dogra suffered minor casualties, as against Pak casualties of 28 killed, and 55 wounded or taken prisoner (232). Meanwhile, on 8 November, two platoons of 2 Rajput and two BSF platoons captured Belonia Railway Station (RR 6267) after a good fight in which 2 Rajput suffered minor casualties as against heavy casualties inflicted on the adversary. Soon afterwards, four Pak Sabre jets strafed Indian troops on 9 November when one of them was damaged by MMG fire from 3 Dogra (233). Next day, four Sabres came again and strafed Indian positions, but three of them were damaged by Indian Air Defence guns. Having thus cleared the Pak forces from the northern part of the Belonia bulge through 'Operation Winter Frost', action was taken to free the other parts of the bulge from Pakistani hands. This necessitated the strengthening of 83 Mtn Bde by bringing 14 Kumaon under its command.

Under 'Operation Skylark', it was planned to capture Phulgazi (RR 6055) as the first step for ridding the southern part of the Belonia Bulge of the Pakistanis (234). On 16 November, 'A' Coy of 14 Kumaon launched an attack against the Pak force in Phulgazi area, but could not make much headway due to Pak shelling, MMG and small arms fire. However, this Coy captured the central part of the area after heavy fighting from bunker to bunker. Subsequently, both 'A' and 'B' Coys beat back two enemy counter-attacks, but in view of stiff Pak resistance and continuous artillery fire, 14 Kumaon was withdrawn from

SKETCH MAP OF BELONIA BULGE

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY (APPROX)	---	
ROADS	_____	
RIVERS	_____	
INDIAN THRUST	_____	
RAILWAYS	_____	



the objective and concentrated at Gabtala (RR 5654).
In this action the Indian troops suffered casualties
of one Officer and 10 ORs killed, one Officer, 1 JCO
and 31 ORs wounded(235)

Due to the failure of this Operation, a new
Operation - 'Operation Harvest' - was launched for
capturing the whole of Belonia Bulge up to the lateral
road Gangadhar Bazar (RR 7142) - Birinchi (RR 5841).
181 Mtn Bde and the Kilo Force were added to 83 Mtn
Bde for this purpose. The Pakistanis also built up
their strength comprising 15 Baluch, 39 Baluch, one
Battalion EPCAF, 3 to 4 Light Tanks, (236) one Field
Battery and one section of heavy mortars, spread over
Ramgarh (RR 9337), Subhapur (RR 7333), Chhagalnaiya
(RR 3842), Feni (RR 5758) and Jagannath Dighi (RR
4853)(237). According to plan, on the night of 22/23
November, 83 Mtn Bde and 181 Mtn Bde moved from the
west and the east respectively after road blocks were
established against the Pak movement in their
respective areas. By first light of 23 November, all
movements of Pak forces along both road axes were
effectively blocked, except for a gap of about 1,830
metres between the two Brigades which held strong Pak
positions at Munshirhat (RR 6050). Unfortunately,
during the night the Pakistanis pulled out with their
guns and equipment through this gap, leaving behind a
few pockets to simulate activity. The same day
various Units were engaged in clearing the Pak
pockets, and one armd squadron alongwith 'D' Coy 9
Kumaon tried to cross Muhari river, which was a big
tank obstacle. After much reconnaissance, the river
could be crossed at 0600 hours the next day and the
Indian troops captured Phulgazi by 1200 hours. On 25
November, 14 Kumaon fought bloody engagements at
Mridhyar Bazar (RR 6845) which caused considerable
casualties to both sides(238). Consequently, one armd
sqn was sent in an out-flanking move from the south
which unnerved the Pak force. With the dislodgement
of the Pak force from Mridhyar Bazar, the whole of
Belonia Bulge was secured, and on 30 November
operational control of Belonia Bulge was handed over
to the Kilo Force. Pak casualties in Operation
Harvest were about 50 killed and 13 taken Prisoners of
War, as against one Officer, one JCO and 6 ORs of 14
Kumaon killed and one wounded. The result of this
operation was somewhat unsatisfactory, as the
Pakistanis pulled out after the initial battle.

It should be noted that the Border Roads
Organisation had improved and constructed roads from
Agartala into and around the Belonia Bulge which could
sustain subsequent operations, undertaken in this
sector after D Day.

Operation in Cachar-North Tripura Area

In order to defend Cachar-North Tripura area from any pre-emptive Pak attack, 59 Mtn Bde ex 8 Mtn Div was moved to this region in end August 1971. 8 Mtn Div was given the following tasks tentatively in the event of offensive operations:- (239)

- a) To advance along axes Dharmanagar (RH 4106) Kulaura (RH 2723) - Brahman Bazar (RH 1822) - Maulavibazar (RH 9618) and Sonakhira (RH 5428) - Juri (RH 3532) - Fenchuganj (RH 1544) and then capture Maulavibazar and Fenchuganj respectively.
- b) To contain Charkhai (RH 3769) by one battalion group and clear the area south of Surma river to ensure safety of Karimganj (RH 6264) and Badarpur (RH 8565).
- c) To capture Shamshernagar airfield (RH 1105) by D plus 5.
- d) To develop subsidiary threat along road Dauki (RH 2303) - Sylhet (RH 0667) with one Inf Battalion Group.
- e) To threaten Sylhet and capture it, if possible.
- f) To protect road and rail communications between Dona (RH 6585) and Kamalpur (RH 0484).
- g) To ensure safety of Kumbhigram airfield.

It was appreciated that the move of guns and later the build-up of the Division would not be possible without a bridge over Manu river. Hence, a class 9 timber bridge at Kailashahar (RH 2318) was got ready in a record time of 16 days.

To secure Indian L of C and eliminate the constant enemy threat to the communication centre of Karimganj (RH 6264) and Badarpur ferry, Op Spring Time was planned. The objective was originally to capture the Karimganj salient comprising the area to the east of Charkhai-Sheola (RH 4366) and the capture of area east of Atgram (RH 6379) - Zakiganj (RH 6166). The known Pak strength in the area was as under:-

Atgram

- Mixed Coy of Pak regulars and irregulars and 75 Razakars.

Rahimpur (RH 7167) - Mixed Platoon plus of Pak regulars and irregulars and 50 Razakars.

Sarifganj (RH 7566) - 50 Razakars.

Zakiganj (RH 6167) - Mixed Coy less Platoon of Pak regulars and irregulars and 75 Razakars.

As both the Pak positions of Atgram and Zakiganj were based on water obstacles, the plan of operations envisaged crossing of the rivers Surma and Kusiya away from the known Pak locations after last light, establishing stops at suitable locations to prevent Pak withdrawal, to launch attacks from flanks and rear in the early hours of the morning, and then capture Atgram and Zakiganj by 20 November 1971. For the capture of Atgram and Zakiganj, certain additional troops were made available to 59 Mtn Bde. While 4/5 GR(FF) and 9 Guards of 59 Mtn Bde were engaged in the capture of Atgram and Zakiganj respectively, 6 Rajput was given the task of denying approaches Sutarkandi (RH 4965) - Karimganj and Latu (RH 4961) - Karimganj to the Pakistanis and preventing Pak reinforcements reaching Zakiganj.

On the night of 20 November, 4/5 GR(FF), while infiltrating after crossing the Surma near Natanpur (RH 6780), came under heavy Pak small arms fire from Bala and Raigram. But the battalion went ahead and attacked Atgram at 0230 hours on 21 November. A fierce hand-to-hand fight from bunker to bunker ensued and finally a khukri attack forced the Pakistanis to flee the area(241). Thus Atgram was captured by 0400 hours on 21 November. Indian casualties were 2 Officers, 1 JCO and 3 ORs killed and one NCO and 18 ORs wounded, as against Pak casualties of 1 Officer and 43 ORs killed, and 5 ORs captured or wounded.

Likewise, 9 Guards, supported by one Coy BSF, one Coy EB Regiment, and 993 Mountain Battery, arrived at the FUP and assaulted Zakiganj in 3 columns. After fierce fighting from bunker to bunker, the objective was cleared by 0900 hours on 21 November. As a Coy 1 EBR failed to cross the river and establish the road block, the Pak troops escaped from Zakiganj without being trapped.

Indian casualties were one OR killed, and 2 Officers, 1 JCO and 6 ORs wounded, as against the Pak casualties of one Officer, 3 JCOs and 21 ORs killed, and one JCO and 24 ORs wounded or captured(242). When on the night of 27/28 the Pakistanis put in a counter-attack with approximately 2 Coys on the

advancing Indian forces in area east of river Surma, heavy volume of Indian artillery fire was brought to bear upon them causing large casualties, reportedly 30 killed including one Major, and two ORs of 31 Punjab taken prisoner.

Although the Pak BOPs from Atgram to Lakshi Bazar (RH 4870) were captured during OP Spring Time, the Pak army was still active in area south of Sutarkandi (RH 4965). It was regularly firing across the border on Indian BOPs and villages all along the international border skirting Karimganj (RH 6165), Sutarkandi (RH 4964), Mukamtila (RH 4940), Kailashahar (RH 2299) and Kamalpur (RH 0383) carrying out sabotage against Indian lines of communication and adopting a threatening posture. Hence, 'Op Winter Flower' was launched to capture area upto and including Kulaura (RH 2623)(243).

The Pak forces (22 Baluch Coys, Militia and Razakars) were positioned at several locations in Sagarnal (RH 3617, Ghazipur (RH 3181), Kulaura (RH 2713) Juri-Dilkush), Latu-Barlekha-Pritampasha (RH 2212) and Shamshernagar-Mamelganj areas. 59 Mtn Bde group with under command 2 Coys of 93 Bn, BSF, 99 Mtn Regt less one battery, and one battery 105mm Howitzer and some Mukti Bahini troops, was assigned the task. The plan was to move along axis Dharmanagar-Sagarnal-Kulaura. While 6 Rajput captured Fultala (RH 3613) on the night of 1/2 December, 4/5 GR(FF) occupied Sagarnal (RH 3717) without any resistance from the Pak army which had already vacated the positions. But 6 Rajput came across stiff enemy opposition in Ghazipur area (RH 2719). Though the battalion captured one Pak Havildar and 8 Razakars, it incurred casualties of one Officer, and 9 ORs killed, 2 ORs missing, and 2 Officers, 2 JCOs and 20 ORs wounded. Consequently, 6 Rajput was pulled back. This area was later captured on 4 December by 4/5 GR(FF).

Operation East of Brahmanbaria

Operation Sun Ray in the area under 311 Mtn Bde (57 Mtn Div) was aimed at capturing the Pak BOP Mukundapur (RH 4053) on the railway line east of Brahmanbaria, perhaps in order to clear the way for Akhaura(244). For this 18 Rajput loss two Coys along with one Coy 4 Guards and one Coy MF were launched. The BOP was to be surrounded, road blocks were to be established and after harassing the enemy for a sufficient period, the BOP was to be captured. The BOP was held by 31 personnel of EPCAF and 25 Razakars, supported by a section of MMGs and two sections

Mukundapur was surrounded by Indian troops by first light on 19 November and captured by 1700 hours. Almost all the Pak personnel were either killed or captured; 12 dead bodies were counted on the objective and 30 men were taken prisoner. The objective was handed over to MF, and the Indian units withdrew by 20 November.

Operation Gladiolus was launched for the capture of Chandrapur (RH 3029) and to invite counter-attacks by the Pakistanis which would enable Indian troops to inflict maximum casualties on them. The operation was undertaken by 19 Punjab strengthened with one Coy of 19 Raj Rif (both under 73 Mtn Bde of 57 Mtn Div) and one Coy of 9 EBR(245). The attack was started by the EBR Coy at 0345 hours on 22 November 1971. 'B' Coy of 19 Punjab reached the forward line of Pak bunkers by 0530 hours. One section advanced from the northern side. Some Indian tanks also were brought in and they neutralised the Pak bunkers at Latumura. By 0830 hours, the objective was captured. A counter-attack put in by Pak troops during the day was repulsed by Indian mortar fire and artillery(246). The Pak casualties in this operation were 40 to 50 killed/wounded, and Indian casualties were one Officer, 2 JCOs and 8 ORs of 19 Punjab killed and 22 ORs of 19 Punjab and 22 MF, including one Officer, wounded.

Operation Black Jack aimed at the capture of Shamshernagar (RH 1205) as the Pak force was firing regularly across the border in this area on Indian BOPs and villages from areas Alinagar (RH 1002), Baghichara (RH 1303) and Chatlapur (RH 1503) carrying out sabotage against Indian L of C and adopting a threatening posture against Indian forces. The known Pak dispositions in the area were one Coy 22 Baluch and one Coy Militia plus Razakars. The task was entrusted to 81 Mtn Bde under 8 Mtn Div. They had under command sqn less two troops 63 Cavalry (ferret cars), 1,816 Pioneer coy less platoon, 8 EB, 93 BSF Bn less four coys, 104 BSF Bn less two coys, and two MF Coys. For fire support there were one mountain regiment, one light Battery, one medium troops and one troop AD. 81 Mtn Bde launched its operations on the night of 29/30 November. 3 Punjab crossed the international border in area Bolsid at last light on 29 November 1971. But the defenders had vacated the Baghichara area. However, when 10 Mahar attacked Chatlapur tea factory in area Shamshernagar (RH 1205) on night 29/30 November, it met stiff resistance, and bunker-to-bunker fighting ensued. By the first light of 1 December, the Pak bunkers had been cleared. One Coy of 10 Mahar cleared the Chatlapur BOP on 3 December after destroying the Pak bunkers in the

area. 8 EB Bn less one Coy contacted the Pak force at Kamalganj (RH 0502) by 0900 hours on 1 December and cleared the area east of Dhalai river by 3 December(247). 4 Kumaon less one Coy with 2 Coys of 3 Punjab attacked Shamshernagar area on 1 December and after a fierce battle cleared the area including the airport finally by 2100 hours on 3 December. Although the Pak aircraft had strafed Shamshernagar area at 1430 hours on 2 December, they could not cause any damage to Indian troops. In this operation the Indian troops suffered casualties of approximately 31 killed, including one Officer, and 87 ORs wounded, whereas during 29-30 November, the Pakistanis suffered casualties of 43 killed, 47 wounded, and 28 captured,(248) besides a large quantity of arms and equipment lost. This operation facilitated the advance of the Indian forces into Maulvibazar area after the start of the War on 3 December 1971.

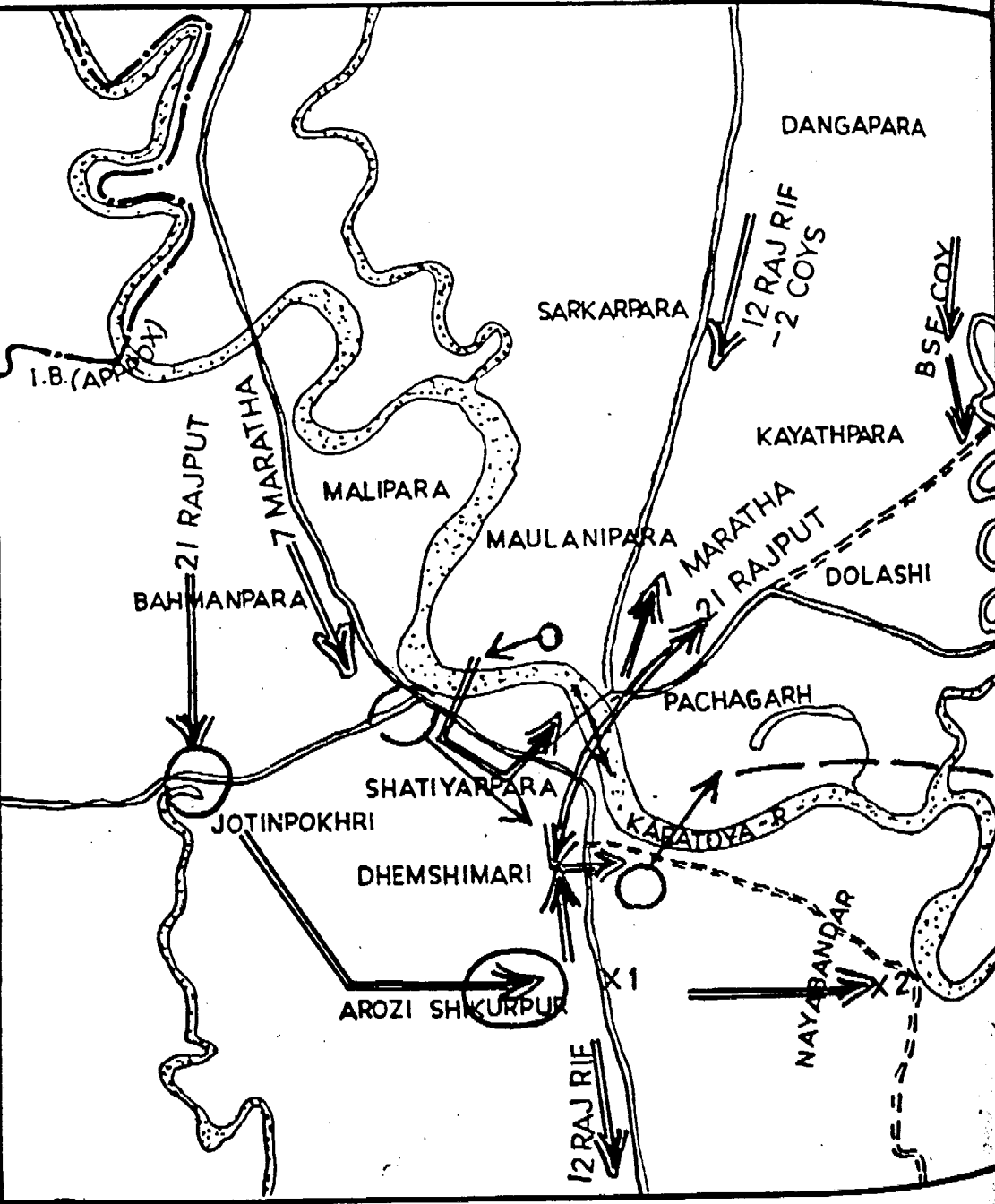
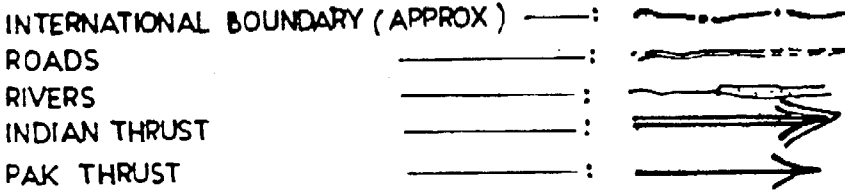
Operation in Akhaura Area

'Operation Nut Cracker' was planned for the capture of Karnel Bazar (RH 3737), Gangasagar (RH 3337) and Akhaura, and denial of the use of Singarbil jetty to the enemy. The Pak strength in the area comprised Bn HQ 12 FF and about four Coys. The Indian troops earmarked for this task were 73 Mtn Bde, 311 Mtn Bde, S Force comprising 2 and 11 EB Bns, two MF Coys and Mujib Battery, 5 Indep Armd Sqn, battery less troop 24 Med Regt, and Coy 234 Eng Regt(249). 73 Mtn Bde launched the operation in the night of 1/2 December, with 14 Guards establishing road blocks south and west of Gangasagar, while 19 Punjab with a troop of tanks captured Karnel Bazar on the same night(250). Thereafter, both these Battalions contacted the Pak force (a Coy each of 12 FF and Para-military Force) at Gangasagar and dispersed them by 1300 hours on 3 December. The Brigade then exploited towards the main road Brahmanbaria-Comilla.

Meanwhile, 311 Mtn Bde also launched its operation on the night of 1/2 December for the capture of Akhaura(251). While the Pak force was distracted by a feint, the Indians secured Rajapur (RH 3646) and Singarbil jetty on 2 December, 10 Bihar advanced from the east, secured areas Lonasar (RH 3439) and Naopara (RH 3439) on night 1/2 December, occupied area Debagram (RH 3540) and exploited upto RCC bridge by first light of 2 December, capturing one 105 mm gun(252). Then 18 Rajput moved through Lonasar, and contacted Akhaura defences from the south. The estimated casualties suffered by both sides during

BATTLE OF PACHAGARH

26-29 NOV 1971



This operation up to 3 December 1971 were:- (253)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>POW</u>	<u>Missing.</u>
Indian	21	101	-	10 (including 1 Officer.)
Pak(Appx.)	130	19	21	-

Besides, a large quantity of arms and ammunition was also captured from the Pakistanis. L/Nk Albert Ekka and Major Ashok Kumar Tara of 14 Guards were awarded Param Vir Chakra and Vir Chakra respectively for gallantry displayed in the battle of Gangasagar on 3 December 1971. 14 Guards and other Units also won several gallantry awards during this operation. Thus the stage was set for the capture of Akhaura later on 5 December after overcoming stiff resistance from the antagonist(254).

33 Corps Sector

In the 33 Corps Sector, three important salients i.e. the Bhurungamari salient, situated between rivers Dhudkumar (QE 7593) and Dharla (QE 5986), the Patgram salient, located between the rivers Dharla and Tista, and the Pachagarh salient, and a few other places were selected by the Eastern Command HQ for operations, as these were either weakly held by Pak BOPs or were strategically important. The capture of these areas offered some strategic advantage to the Indian Army in the event of any future large-scale operation. While Pak armour was not reported in the Bhurungamari salient, it was there in the Patgram and Pachagarh salients. On the part of the Indian Army, lack of bridging equipment precluded any advance across the Dharla or the Tista(255).

In the 340 Mtn Bde Group Sector (27 Mtn Div), Khanpur (QD 4941), south of Dinajpur was captured on 13 November 1971 by one Coy 4 Madras, one Coy 77 Bn, BSF, and one Coy Mukti Fauj after a good fight. In this engagement (Operation Wind Jammer), the Indian casualties were 1 JCO of 4 Madras and 1 NCO of 77 Bn BSF killed and 10 BSF ORs wounded. On the night of 18/19 November 1971, 2 Coys of 4 Madras and one Coy each of BSF and Mukti Fauj occupied Mukundapur (QD 4543), south-west of Dinajpur which had already been vacated by the Pakistanis(256). In the 165 Mtn Bde Sector (20 Mtn Div) one Coy 6 Assam captured Chaughat (QD 6400), south of Balurghat (QD 6507), on 17 November 1971. In this action 6 Assam suffered minor casualties due to a mine explosion(257). In the 66 Mtn Bde Sector (20 Mtn Div), one Coy ex 6 Guards secured both banks of Ichhamati river, south-west of Dinajpur, on 21 November 1971. Both sides suffered one casualties(258). In the 9 Mtn Bde Sector (6 Mtn

Div), 'Operation Ranjit' was launched to capture areas north of the Dharla river, which was held by 1 Coy 25 Punjab and one Coy EPCAF. The area was captured by 5 Grenadiers on 14 November 1971. Subsequently, the following places were occupied by the Indian troops/MF:-

- a) Jaimanirhat (LZ 6410) in the Bhurungamari salient, north-east of Rangpur district, by MF on 14 November 1971.
- b) Pateshwari (LZ 6811) in the north-east of Rangpur district by MF/FF on 15 November 1971.
- c) Raiganj (ZZ 6505) in the north-east of Rangpur district by 4 Rajput, one Coy of BSF and MF/FFs on 21 November 1971(259).

In this Operation the Indian side suffered casualties of 20 killed, 73 wounded and 8 Mukti Fauj missing as against Pak casualties of 24, including one Officer, killed and 6 PsOW. On 30 November, Nageshwari (QE 6693) in the north-east of Rangpur district, was captured by 4 Rajput. The next day, 104 Razakars surrendered to the Mukti Fauj in this place(260). In the 71 Mtn Bde Sector (27 Mtn Div) some important operations were undertaken. The Pak Army had the following strong-holds in this area:-

- a) Pachagarh (LY 4241) - One Coy 48 Punjab (in the north of Dinajpur district) one Recce and Sp Pl 34 Punjab, one engr Pl one EPCAF and 150 Razakars (approximately)
- b) Maidandighi (LY 4330) - One Recce and Sp Pl 34 Punjab
- c) Boda (LY 4324) - One Recce and Sp Coy 34 Punjab and appx 60 irregulars including Razakars and EPCAF
- d) Thakurgaon (LY 3204) (south of Pachagarh) - One Coy 34 Punjab one Coy 48 Punjab one Tp Tks, and 150 Razakars(261)

At the important communication centres, town and bridges, the Pak troops had constructed a series of bunkers along the roads and the main approaches. Each bunker was well-stocked with ammunition. They had also constructed a large number of alternative positions which could be occupied at short notice. Although they did not lay any wire obstacles, they laid a few "nuisance" mines(262).

On the night of 26/27 November, 21 Rajput captured Fakirhat bridge(LY 393402), west of Pachagarh. On 28 November, they were relieved by 12 Raj Rif, and a road block was established across the road Pachagarh-Boda. Soon afterwards, a second road block was established at Nayabandar. At first light on 29 November, 7 Maratha LI captured Pachagarh bridge, while 21 Rajput cleared remaining Pak resistance in Pachagarh area, including the northern half of the town. The 7 Maratha LI suffered casualties of 5 killed, 35 injured and one missing, whereas 21 Rajput suffered casualties of 2 killed and 8 wounded(263).

12 Raj Rif captured Boda on 1 December, despite stiff opposition. By the capture of the bridge over Pathrajnadi at Boda intact, 21 Rajput could advance towards Bhuti Nadi bridge, which was, however, found demolished by the Pakistanis. 21 Rajput discovered a by-pass, approximately 3,000 metres north-east of the demolished bridge. Despite opposition en route, the Rajput reached the outskirts of Thakurgaon at 1600 hours on 2 December. A strong Pak group of approximately 2 Coys plus in dug-in position was reported in that town. However, the Pak force pulled out of that place on the night 2/3 December and the town was occupied by 21 Rajput by noon on 3 December 1971.

In the 202 Mtn Bde Sector (20 Mtn Div), operations were undertaken in the Hilli area (QD 9113). On the night of 23/24 November, Naopara (QD 9115) and Morapara (QD 9114) areas were captured by 8 Guards, and 5 Garh Rif captured Basudebpur (QD 9014) - all of them situated to the north of Hilli. Although the Pakistanis managed to recapture a portion of Morapara, it was re-occupied by 8 Guards on the night of 24/25 November. In these operations, the Indian troops suffered casualties of 53, including 5 Officers, killed and 87 including 3 Officers, wounded, while the Pak troops suffered casualties of 2 Officers and 70 ORs. Besides, one Pak tank was destroyed and one Indian PT-76 tank was damaged. However, Hilli could not be captured then by the Indian troops, and hence this preliminary operation merged in the main operations after 3 December 1971.

2 Corps Sector

On 13 October 1971, HQ 2 Corps received the following tasks from HQ Eastern Command:- (264)

- a) To defend Indo-East Pakistan border from Dhulian (QH 7444) to Hasnabad (QY 7885).
- b) To carry out offensive operations in the Corps Sector of responsibility in East Pakistan.

The operations prior to 3 December 1971 were confined to border areas with a view to dominating certain points and also improving Indian's defence posture. Deployments and readjustments were carried out so that subsequent operations could be launched at a short notice. The defensive postures taken by 4 Mtn Div and 9 Inf Div prior to the out-break of hostilities kept the Pak army guessing about the actual axes of Indian advances.

The Corps Commander felt that instead of attacking prepared enemy positions, the Indian Army should occupy the positions in areas where the enemy was sensitive and thus force him to attack the Indian Army. When such operations were commenced, the results were eminently satisfying.

The operations by 4 Mtn Div took place in the east of Krishnanagar, a few km inside East Pakistan border. On 6 November 1971, a platoon of the Naga Regiment (7 Mtn Bde) with one platoon of BSF and 60 MFs occupied the area of Dharmadah, while one platoon of 5 Jat, one platoon of BSF and 60 MFs occupied area Ramdebpur(265). Next day, they occupied Kamdebpur. However, on 12 November, the Naga platoon position at Dharmadah (624554) was attacked by two to three coys of Pak troops as a result of which Indians suffered casualties of two ORs killed, 8 ORs missing and 6 ORs wounded while inflicting about 100 casualties on the enemy(266). Then, Indian troops from 62 Mtn Bde assisted by MFs raided Dhopakhal post (QT 6792) on 13 November, while two platoons of 5/1 GR (41 Mtn Bde) with one platoon of BSF and 35 MFs occupied area Chhaghari. During 20-25 November 1971, Indian soldiers occupied Dangapara (QT 6197), Santoshpur bridge (QT 695878) and adjacent areas dominating road Jibannagar (QT 6888) - Hansadaha (QT 7386) and also moved to Gangadaspur (QT 6785) areas.

Operation Nila was launched by 4 Mtn Div less one Bde. The aim of this operation was to isolate Jibannagar and to capture it, if it was lightly held,

with a view to opening up the axis of advance to Kotchandpur (QT 8587)(267). 41 and 62 Mtn Bdes were given the task of establishing Battalion blocks in areas north and south-east of Jibannagar on night 23/24 November. 9 Dogra (41 Mtn Bde) and 4 Sikh LI (62 Mtn Bde) made contact with the Pak defences at West Daulatganj (QO 6788) on night 23/24 November. The Pakistani force was completely isolated and constant pressure was kept on it by destroying its bunkers and defences by using RCL guns and medium artillery fire. Meanwhile, 5/1 GR established themselves in the area east of Santoshpur (QT 6954) on 25 November and a Squadron of 45 Cavalry was also moved to area Titolia. On the other side, 4 Sikh LI secured Subalpur (QT 6587) on night 26/27 November, and 5/1 GR less two Companies established road-blocks in area Kasipur (QT 7493) on 27 November to prevent the Pak withdrawal towards north-east from Jibannagar. Jibannagar was captured at 1600 hours on 27 November. The same day, as 2/9 GR attacked Daulatganj (QT 6788) from the east, supported by artillery, the Pak troops fled towards north. At the same time, 2 companies of 9 Dogra attacked Dangapara (QT 6689) from the western flank and established contact with 2/9 GR at 1600 hours. Some Pak personnel escaped towards east. Pak casualties at Jibannagar were 20 to 30 regular troops and 14 Razakars killed/wounded(268).

After the capture of Jibannagar, 62 Mtn Bde resumed its advance on axis Hansadaha-Khalispur (QT 8184) with 4 Sikh LI leading. Hansadaha (QT 7386) was occupied on 28 November, and Fatehpur and Krishnachanderpur (QT 7884) were cleared on 29 November. 41 Mtn Bde resumed their advance on axis Jibannagar-Uthali (QT 7097)-Kotchandpur and 5/1 GR attacked Uthali at 0530 hours on 30 November despite stiff opposition from prepared Pak positions. The Pakistanis appeared to be pulling out and the capture of Uthali was completed by 1100 hours on 30 November. The 5/1 GR casualties at Uthali were 4 killed and 23 wounded as against Pak casualties of 23 killed and 40 wounded. Meanwhile, at 1630 hours on 30 November, 9 Dogra supported by two troops of tanks captured Andulbaria (QT 7695)(269).

On 2 December, at 1730 hours, a company of 9 Dogra captured Shahpur (QT 8023). Although, the advance from Shahpur was interfered with by the Pakistanis from Panka (QT 8195) and Shadih (QT 8395) both these positions were cleared by Maratha LI on 3 December, which also captured the Railway bridge intact.

Operation AXE was launched by 350 Inf Bde in area Garibpur-Chaugacha-Jessore during the period 12 November-3 December 1971, to assess reactions(270). In pursuance of this forward Pak policy, on night 12/13 November, 1 J & K Rif (350 Ind Bde) occupied Digri (QT 8567), Maslia (QT 8666) and Dighalsinga (QT 8966) in the Bayra Bulge, demarcated internationally by river Kabadak, which was about 30 metres wide and 2 metres deep(271). The same day 19 Maratha LI (42 Inf Bde) captured Kakdanga (QT 8515) and 4 Sikh (350 Inf Bde) and 1 J & K Rif occupied areas Makapur (QT 8266) and Azmatpur (QT 8963)(272). However, the Pak troops retaliated at Dighalsinga during 13-14 November, but had to withdraw after suffering heavy casualties. The following day, the Pak troops attacked Maslia with heavy concentration of artillery and mortar fire, but in vain. They suffered 60 to 70 casualties in this action as against the Indian casualties of 2 ORs killed and 9 wounded(273). Well prepared defences of 1 J & K Rif, rigid control of fire by the Indian troops, and accurate shooting by 14 Fd Regt were responsible for the Pak failure(274). On 18 November, 42 Inf Bde was moved to the area of Garibpur (QT 9465) and the Brigade Sectors were sited in such a way that 350 Inf Bde was facing Chaugacha (QT 9069) while 42 Inf Bde was facing Jessore.








On 19 November four Pak F-86 Sabres attacked Garibpur. One civilian was killed and two civilians were wounded(275). This was followed by the Pak Army's attack on Garibpur in three waves with one battalion supported by an Armd Sqn. On 21 November, the Pak troops tried to cut off the 14 Punjab battalion area from the west, but failed as the well-sited Indian tanks and RCL guns inflicted heavy casualties on them. In this attack India's two PT-76 tanks, and one T-55 tank were damaged as against the loss of 8 Pak tanks. Indian casualties were:- (276)

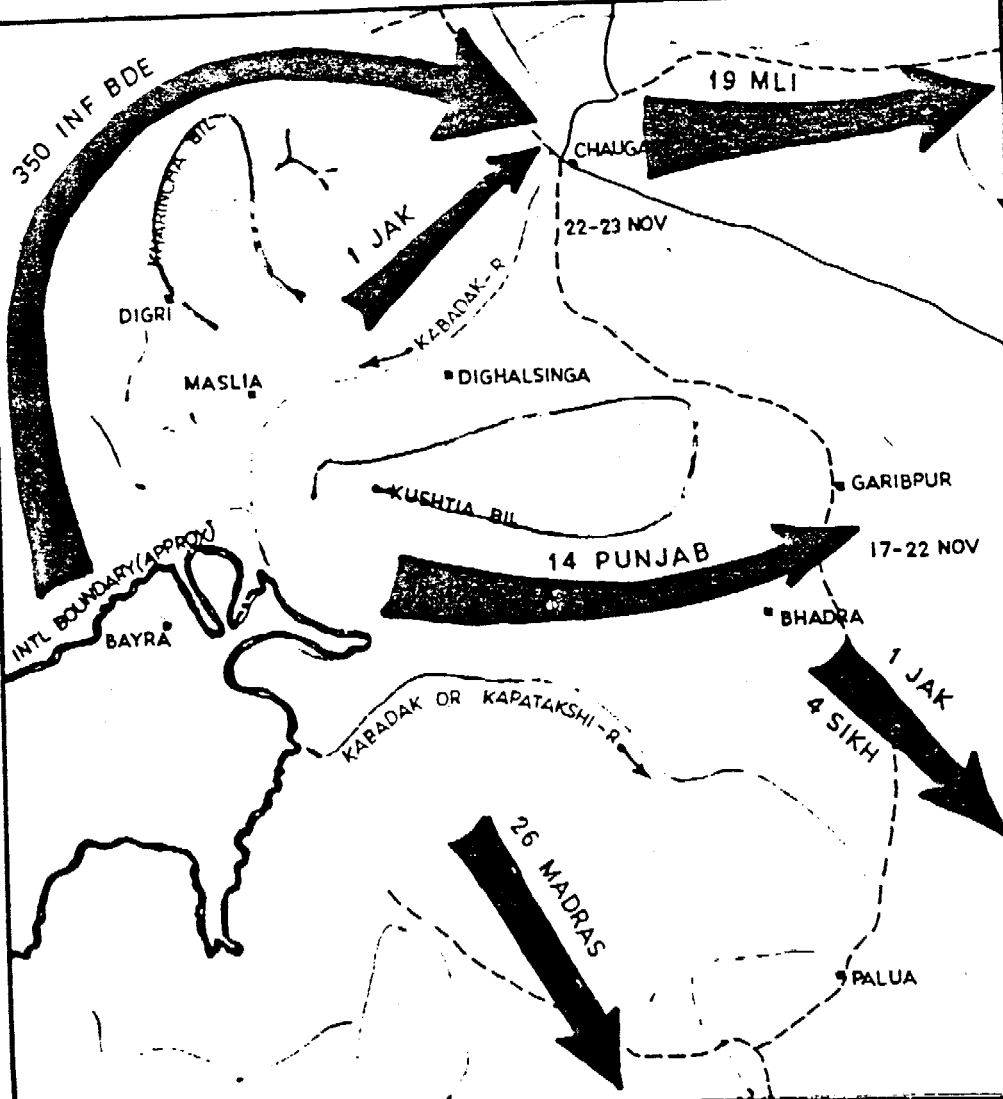
- a) 14 Punjab - 1 JCO, 4 ORs killed, 22 ORs wounded, 15 ORs missing.
- b) 45 Cavalry - 1 Major, and 1 OR killed, 1 Officer and 3 ORs wounded.
- c) 6 Fd Regt - 1 Officer and 1 OR wounded.
- d) 21 Fd Coy - 1 OR wounded.

Pak casualties were approximately 60-70 killed, nearly 100 wounded, 5 PsOW, and a total number of 10 tanks destroyed or damaged(277).

However, the Pak Commanders did not want to give up. At 0930 hours, on 21 November, four Pak F-86 Sabres once again attacked Garibpur, and damaged the

BAYRA - GARIBPUR SECTOR

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY (APPROXIMATE) —: 
INDIAN THRUST  : 
ROADS  : 
RIVERS, BIL  : 



erry over river Kabadak, resulting in a few Indian casualties. So far India had not used aircraft against Pak air attacks. However, on 22 November, clearance was given to intercept enemy aircraft entering the Indian air space. The same day, four Pak Sabres carried out three air attacks in area Garibpur (Bayra) damaging one PT-76 tank and one 3-tonner vehicle. But when they came over Garibpur for the third time at 1500 hrs. Indian Gnats intercepted them, shooting down three of them. Two Pak pilots were captured, after they bailed out. Since then Pakistan did not again use its aircraft in this sector. This event coincided with the second Pak ground attack of armour and infantry at Garibpur, which was again repulsed with heavy losses. Indian troops destroyed three Pak Chaffee tanks, and three more were abandoned by the Pak troops. This completely destroyed Pak armour capability in this sector. Two ORs of 33 FF and one OR from 6 Punjab were taken prisoners in this action. The Pak troops withdrew from Chaugacha, leaving behind a large quantity of ammunition, mines and personal belongings(278). 22 Rajput captured it on the night of 22/23 November. Due to political considerations, 2 Corps was not allowed to follow up its successes and 9 Inf Div was ordered to hold fast and given a forward limit of advance(279). As a consequence, the Pak troops stabilized their defences and anticipated the likely axes of the Indian thrusts in the Jessore Sector. Maj Gen Dalbir Singh, GOC 9 Inf Div, felt he could easily reach Jessore, but he was asked by his superiors to withdraw to the rear(280). On 23 November, 2 Sikh LI advanced from Bhadra (QT 9363) towards road Chaugacha-Jessore, leading to the Pak troops' withdrawal from Bariali (QT 9763)(281). However, on 24 November, the latter attacked the position but were repulsed by the Indian troops. On night 28/29 November, one company of 1 J & K Rif established a firm base about 457 metres west of the Pak troops located at Burinda (QT 9757)(282). The base was reinforced by one company of 4 Sikh, and in spite of heavy shelling by Pak troops it was held. The Indian casualties were : 3 JCOs and 8 ORs killed/missing and 2 JCOs and 21 ORs wounded.

On 1 December, 19 Maratha LI advanced from Sadipur (QT 9470) and occupied Arpara (QU 0700) which was attacked by Pak troops the next day; but they were beaten back with heavy casualties. The total Pak casualties in the 2 Corps action from 22 November to 2 December 1971 were:- (283)

Regulars.

Razakars.

Killed-248, wounded-64,
PsOW-3 (including 2 PAF
personnel).

PsOW-15.

In the preliminary battles of Maslia and Garibpur, 14 Punjab, 1 J & K Rifles, 19 Maratha LI, 45 Cavalry, 63 Cavalry, and 6 Fd Regt were awarded 4 MVCs and 9 VrCs, besides other decorations for gallantry displayed during the operations.

101 Communication Zone Area.

Initially 5/5 GR(FF) had borne the brunt of operational responsibility in this area since May 1971 when they were stationed at Muktapur(RC 3401) on the Jowai-Sylhet road, although they came under the command of 101 Com Zone area from 3 June 1971. Besides giving training to MF and FF, they captured some Pak BOPs and defended some areas in the Jaintiapur complex in order to facilitate the advance of the Indian Army to Sylhet on the outbreak of open hostilities.

Although MF succeeded in capturing Tamabil Customs Checkpost and BOP and Siripur BOP (RC 3100) on 26 and 27 May respectively, they failed in their attacks on Jaintiapur (RH 3498) in May, June, and August, on Tengatilla (RH 3195) on 28 October, on Sarighat bridge on 13-14 November, on Digrail (RH 3794) on 22 November, and on Radhanagar (RH 2199) on seven occasions between 15 May and 27 November. Eventually, 5/5 GR(FF) took the operation in its own hand. Although their 'C' Coy group captured Digrail in the Jaintiapur complex on 23 November, they were ordered to withdraw the same day. 'A' Coy then attacked Kapaura jungle in the Radhanagar complex on 27/28 November and achieved partial success, while 'B' Coy attacked the northern portion of left Grove (east of Kapaura jungle) a little later on the same night, but incurred sizeable casualties. Later, the battalion less 'C' Coy group could capture Radhanagar on 30 November, which 'D' Coy platoons had been investing since 1 November 1971.

In the whole operation against Radhanagar during November 1971, 5/5 GR(FF) suffered casualties of 2 Officers and 14 ORs killed and 33 ORs wounded, (284) as against Pak casualties of approximately 17 killed, 22 wounded and 1 POW(285). One Officer of 5/5 GR (FF) was awarded Vir Chakra posthumously for gallant action in this operation.

In north-northwest of Kamalpur-Bakshiganj-Jamalpur axis, Chilmari (QE 6845), on the Brahmaputra river, was raided by one company less platoon of 11 Maratha LI under 95 Mtn Bde of 101 Com Z Area with 2 detachments of 57 mm RCL and a section of MMG,

assisted by two companies of MF/FF, on night 16/17 October. The raiding party split into two groups. One group consisting of the detachment of 1 Maratha LI raided area south of the railway track Chilmari-Ulipur, and the second party consisting of MF/FF supported by LMGs of 1 Maratha LI raided the three posts of Rajarvita, Balarbari and Thanahat in area Chilmari. Twenty-seven Pak regulars, including one Officer, and 41 Razakars were killed, 35 wounded, and 63 Razakars captured as against 2 MF/FFs killed and 3 wounded. Besides, 99 rifles, 2 Chinese rifles, 2 SMCs and a large amount of ammunition were captured by the Indian troops(286).

To facilitate Indian Army's advance from the north in the event of open hostilities, 13 Raj Rif captured Telikhali (RF 3199), across the border, east of the road Jamalpur-Tura-Sherpur, on 3 November 1971. In this action, 74 Pak personnel including one Inspector of the Desert Rangers were killed, and 4 others captured. 13 Raj Rif suffered casualties of 19 killed and 3 injured, while 56 Mtn Regt's casualties were one killed and 2 Officers wounded. However, the Pak troops did not take things lying down. They launched three counter-attacks and succeeded in occupying the southern portion of the objective, but Indian troops reoccupied the entire objective after a fresh attack.

Meanwhile, 'Operation Billu' was launched on the night of 13/14 November to destroy the four heavy Pak mortars in area north of Sadhupara (QE 8005), midway between Kamalpur (QE 8613) and Bakshiganj (QE 8602). Maratha LI had established stops in this area to intercept Pak reinforcements from Bakshiganj to Kamalpur. Operations commenced at 0330 hrs on 14 November and seven Pak vehicles carrying reinforcements were intercepted and destroyed. Almost all Pak heavy mortars in the area were also destroyed by 94 Fd Coy. With this, Kamalpur was surrounded by Indian troops. Pak casualties were 54 killed as against the Indian casualties of one Major of 94 Fd Coy killed and 2 Officers, including one Bangladesh Officer, and 5 ORs wounded(287).

Karaitola (RA 3501), another Pak post across the border, opposite Gasuapara on the Indian side, east of Dalu, was raided by two companies of 6 Bihar, supported by a Mountain Battery, on the night of 20/21 November. In the heavy exchange of fire, that followed, five Pak personnel were killed and some were captured, as against only one OR killed on the Indian side.

The Pak Commanders had appreciated that there were three axes for advance by Indian troops from the northern direction -

- (i) axis Kamalpur-Bakshiganj-Jamalpur-Tangail,
- (ii) axis Dalu-Haluaghat-Mymensingh, and
- (iii) axis Bhagmara-Durgapur-Jharia Mymensingh. Jantail

Accordingly 31 Baluch, 33 Punjab and 61 Wing Rangers were deployed to cover the above-mentioned axes. Out of these, one Coy each of 31 Baluch was deployed at Kamalpur, Bakshiganj and Sherpur. Maj Gen G.S. Gill, Commander 101 Com Zone Area, advised Brig H.S. Kler, Commander 95 Mtn Bde, to capture the Pak border out-post at Kamalpur so that the Indian Army's advance along the Kamalpur-Jamalpur axis could be facilitated. As the defences at Kamalpur were very strong, Brig Kler was advised not to expend artillery ammunition which would make little impression on the concrete bunkers. Hence, small raids were to be made on that BOP each night to keep the Pakistanis on the edge, so that the latter would finish their own ammunition(288). The first attack against Kamalpur had taken place as early as 31 July 1971, when 1 EBR and 2 Coys FF fought a losing battle in which 30 of them were killed/missing, 66 wounded and large quantities of arms and ammunition were lost(289). The second important attack against Kamalpur took place on 22 October 1971 in which the Indian troops and units of the Mukti Bahini reportedly suffered nine casualties(290).

In November 1971, the Kamalpur garrison, consisting of 70 regular troops and a platoon of Razakars and Rangers could either withdraw to Bakshiganj or to go on defending the outpost at all costs. The latter alternative was chosen by the Pakistan Army so as to maintain its "forward posture"(291). 95 Mtn Bde organised attacks against Kamalpur again on 17 and 25 November, but the outpost gave stiff resistance on both the occasions. Lt Col Sultan, Commander 31 Baluch, made a determined effort on 27 November to break the Indian encirclement to provide relief to the besieged garrison. He ordered three columns to advance on and astride the Bakshiganj-Kamalpur road, and then to converge on Kamalpur, but the Indian artillery foiled all Pak attempts to move forward. The following night, 13 Guards commenced another frontal attack against the isolated border outpost, but thanks to the concrete bunkers and the solid determination of the Pak garrison, the attack was repulsed with a good number of casualties(292). The situation of Kamalpur garrison at that time, was very bad indeed. The supply of food stuff and ammunition was low, and the wounded soldiers were suffering due to lack of proper medical help or

ourishing food. Hence, Major Ayub, the Pak Coy Commander at Bakshiganj, undertook a replenishment mission on 29 November. But his party of some regular soldiers, Razakars and others carrying crates of ammunition and bags of rations on their heads, and journeying cross-country avoiding the roads, was dispersed by a hail of Indian bullets, a little short of Kamalpur. Consequently, they threw off their loads and crawled back to Bakshiganj. Thereafter, no supplies or reinforcements could reach Kamalpur outpost which was now waiting for its final moment, and that moment came on 4 December after the out-break of regular hostilities between India and Pakistan(293).

Assessment

The preliminary operations had certain important consequences both for India and Pakistan. The latter was forced to react to Mukti Bahini, or India's occupation of small segments of East Pakistani territory all around its periphery. This necessitated rushing of Pak reserves from the rear and depth positions to reinforce border posts or counter-attack ingressive forces and patrols. Counter-attack cost the Pak forces casualties, and they wasted energy, material and manpower on non-vital objective. This created great disadvantages for them. Firstly, their attempts to react swiftly to each and every small incursion by moving platoon reinforcements resulted in units being mixed up, thereby losing their identity to the battalion and even company levels in some sectors. Secondly, the denuding of their rear areas and depth positions to ensure a strong linear perimeter defence eventually weakened their defence in depth and permitted the Indian forces to advance rapidly. For example, after 23 Mtn Div's thrust into the Belonia Bulge, the local Pakistani Division Commander was convinced that the Indian Division's intention was to capture Feni with a view to ultimately carrying on their advance to Chittagong. With this in mind, he thinned out his troops at Laksham and moved them into the defences around Feni. By doing this he seriously weakened the defences of Chandpur, the real Indian objective, when full-scale war started.

Also, these preliminary reactions by the enemy, which left few troops in the depth positions enabled the Mukti Bahini to have a comparatively freer scope for action in the rear areas. Indian forces invariably kept an area quiet after a Pakistani counter-attack had been beaten off. This lulled the Pakistanis into hoping that India had no intention of effecting any large-scale ingression, and they believed that the Pak counter-attacks had paid dividends, since these seemed

to have stopped the incursion from spreading. This led to increased reactions from them to every unimportant incursion. As initial Indian efforts were directed on border posts along the main approaches, the Pakistanis were convinced that the Indian Army's aim was limited and their main effort would be only along the main roads. It was therefore, not surprising that the Pakistani High Command at Dhaka concluded that India's aim was to clandestinely capture one or more enclaves along the border with a view to planting the provisional Bangladesh government there. They were convinced that any deliberate or open attempt by India to cross the International Border in strength and to effect any major lodgement in Bangladesh would be countered by pressure from USA and others and eventually, a cease-fire would be imposed upon India and Pakistan. They, therefore, decided to deploy maximum strength on the border to cover the likely threatened approaches. Their aim was to beat back any border incursion and prevent a major lodgement along the border. They, therefore, reinforced and improved the defences on the main approaches, stocked them with supplies and ammunition for 45 days and ordered them to hold out at all costs. However, their plans misfired.

As far as the Indian Commanders and troops were concerned, they learnt valuable lessons from the preliminary operations against the Pak Forces in East Pakistan. They learnt a lot about Pak strategy, tactics, defences, communication network, intelligence, leadership and above all, morale. Hence, they could plan their tactics suitably and bypass the Pak strongholds to reach Dhaka in a matter of two weeks.

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Offers of assistance for refugee relief from foreign countries.

Upto 14.10.71 Upto 16.12.71 Upto 18.1.72

From Foreign Govts.

i.	Through UN Focal Point	\$109,090,205	\$190,799,978	\$192,935,136
ii.	Direct to GOI	\$ 40,058,285	\$ 41,778,283	\$ 41,778,283
iii.	Through Voluntary Organisations.	\$ 253,685	--	--
Total		\$149,402,173	\$232,578,261	\$234,713,419

(II)	From UN Agencies	\$ 4,355,000	\$ 4,352,280	\$ 4,352,280
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(III) From Voluntary Organisations.

i.	Through UN Focal Point	\$ 1,332,614	\$ 4,337,350	\$ 5,451,140
ii.	Direct to the Govt. of India.	\$ 13,422,026	\$ 18,161,665	\$ 19,979,623

Total		\$ 14,754,640	\$ 22,499,015	\$ 25,430,763
Grand Total		\$168,511,813	\$259,429,556	\$264,496,462

1,263.8 Million 1,945.7 Million 1,963.7 Million

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From Official Records.
From Official Records.

Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
From Official Records.

Major Gen S.S. Uban has, however, criticised the functioning of the Mukti Bahini who were employed in attacking targets close to the border in commando fashion for which they were neither adequately trained nor equipped. As a result, they often suffered avoidable casualties. Also attempts were made to induct the Freedom Fighters deeper inside Bangladesh, but unfortunately they were sent in large batches of upto 200, which small villages could hardly feed; and the Pakistanis could easily detect the arrival of such conspicuous batches. After the departure of the Freedom Fighters, the Pak troops would play hell with the villages which had provided them shelter. This made Freedom Fighters' visits unpopular and hence unfruitful. Higher Commander, however, kept on pushing them in, without bothering about the consequences. Some batches just disappeared into the interior along with their weapons and some others came back after cacheing their weapons and reported their loss due to enemy action. Interview with Maj Gen Uban, 17 September 1984.

Maj Gen Uban also reported in July 1971 that the Mukti Bahini was being infiltrated by Naxalites and pro-Chinese elements. He said that a man called Menon, and his brother Badal and their two other brothers, who were pro-Chinese as well as pro-Pakistani, enjoyed the confidence of Maj Khaled Musharraf and Maj

- Zia. These persons were storing away the arms given by the Indian Army and preparing for the post-independence period when they could swing Bangladesh away from India towards China. He also reported that the Bangladesh Commanders like Musharraf, Zia, Shafiullah, Osman and Matin were also trying to set up private armies with a view to seizing power in post-independence Bangladesh. These Army Officers did not owe real allegiance to the Awami League leadership and Col Osmani. From Official Records.
134. From Official Records.
 135. Interview with Maj Gen Uban, 17 September 1984.
 136. Ali, K, p.152.
 137. From Official Records.
 138. From Official Records.
 139. Ibid.
 140. Ibid.
 141. Ibid.
 142. Ibid.
 143. Ibid.
 144. Ibid.
 145. From Official Records.
 146. In fact, the demand for recognition continued to be pressed as late as 3 December 1971. RSD: LXXVIII;15, 3 December 1971.
 147. Ibid., 5, 19 November 1971.
 148. From Official Records.
 149. RSD:LXXVII;5, 19 November 1971.
 150. Ibid., 10, 26 November 1971.
 151. AR, 22-28 October 1971.
 152. Ibid.
 153. RSD:LXXVIII;10, 26 November 1971.
 154. From Official Records.
 155. BD II, p.161.
 156. From Official Records.
 157. BD II, pp.185-186.
 158. RSD:LXXVIII;10, 26 November 1971.
 159. Speech at a luncheon in Moscow, on 28 September 1971. BD II, p.238.
 160. In an interview to Le-Figaro (Paris), published on 1 September 1971, President Yahya Khan dubbed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the enemy, "of the Pakistani people". Ibid., p.23.
 161. Ibid., pp.136-137.
 162. Jang (Karachi), 19 September 1971.
 163. Jang, 30 September 1971.
 164. Gen Yahya had said that he would declare a total war if the Mukti Bahini gained control of a part of East Bengal with Indian assistance. From Official Records.

165. BD II, p.241.
 166. Ibid., p.163.
 167. RSD:LXXVIII;1, 15 November 1971.
 168. BD II, p.253.
 169. Ibid., p.254.
 170. Ibid., p.263.
 171. Ibid., p.281.
 172. Ibid., p.283.
 173. Speech at the German Society for Foreign Policy, 11 November 1971. Ibid., p.292.
 174. RSD:LXXVIII;5, 19 November 1971.
 175. Ibid.
 176. Ibid.; 10, 26 November 1971.
 177. Ibid.
 178. RSD:LXXVIII;1, 15 November 1971.
 179. AR, 22-28 October 1971.
180. The Soviet Women's Committee Appeal, Pravda (Moscow), 4 October 1971, BD II, p.187. Also the appeal of the Union of Soviet Journalists, S.R. Sharma, p.294.
181. Robert Jackson, pp.88-89.
 182. From Official Records.
 183. BD II, p.166.
 184. Sharma, S.R., pp.104-105.
 185. BD II, p.33.
 186. From Official Records.
 187. AR, 24-31 December 1971.
 188. Ibid.
 189. Statement of Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram. LSD(Fifth)VIII:1, 15 November 1971.
190. In an interview with Le Monde (Paris) Yahya Khan called Mujib 'rebel'. BD II, p.24.
191. From Official Records.
 192. Pakistan Times (Lahore), 7 October 1971, quoted in Ibid., p.137.
 193. "Pakistan in belligerent mood" - a report by William Spencer, Ibid., p.150.
 194. Ibid., p.141.
 195. Ibid., p.138.
 196. From Official Records.
 197. From Official Records.
 198. From Official Records.
 199. From Official Records.
 200. When a high-ranking Pak diplomat complained to his Chinese counter-part in Paris that China was not intervening in the Indo-Pak War as Pakistan expected, he was told that China had never promised intervention. From Official Records.
201. Chinese Acting PM Chi Pengfei's speech on 7 November 1971. From Official Records.
 202. Jackson, p.94.
 203. From Official Records.
 204. See Gen Yahya's interview in News Week (New York), 8 November 1971, K. Sarwar Hasan, No.1,

- p.58.
205. Ibid. Also From Official Records.
 206. Sarwar Hasan, K., (ed), p.58.
 207. Ayooob and Subrahmanyam, p.127.
 208. AR, 17-23 December 1971.
 209. Jackson, p.95.
 210. See, a slightly paraphrase form of Keating's cablegram to Secretary of State, on 8 December 1971, made public by columnist Jack Anderson Jackson, pp.209-211.
 211. BD II, pp.302-304.
 212. Joseph S. Farland, the American Ambassador to Pakistan. Sukhbir Choudhry, p.19.
 213. See Vinod Gupta, Anderson papers; S.R. Sharma, p.244.
 214. AR, 24-31 December 1971.
 215. BD II, p.260.
 216. Ibid., p.276.
 217. Ibid.
 218. Speech in Beethoven Hall, Bonn, 11 November 1971. Ibid., p.288.
 219. Report of the meeting. From Official Records.
 220. Ibid.
 221. From Official Records.
 222. Ibid.
 223. Main 4 Corps HQ came to this area in September 1971.
 224. The Pak casualty figures should be taken only as estimates. From Official Records.
 225. From Official Records.
 226. From Official Records.
 227. From Official Records.
 228. From Official Records.
 229. The whole of 61 Mtn Bde had to be launched to clear the enemy from this post which was captured on 3 November. From Official Records.
 230. Sodhi, Brig H.S. "Operation Windfall" - Emergence of Bangladesh, pp.142-143.
 231. From Official Records.
 232. From Official Records.
 233. From Official Records.
 234. From Official Records.
 235. From Official Records.
 236. From Official Records.
 237. From Official Records.
 238. From Official Records.
 239. From Official Records.
 240. The Atgram-Zakiganj salient was reported to be held with Approx 2 pls of 31 Punjab and one Coy of EPCAF. From Official Records.
 241. From Official Records.
 242. From Official Records.
 243. From Official Records.

- 24. From Official Records.
- 25. From Official Records.
- 26. Ibid.
- 27. From Official Records.
- 28. From Official Records.
- 29. From Official Records.
- 30. From Official Records.
- 31. From Official Records.
- 32. From Official Records.
- 33. From Official Records.
- 34. From Official Records.
- 35. From Official Records.
- 36. Ibid.
- 37. Ibid.
- 38. Ibid.
- 39. Ibid.
- 40. From Official Records.
- 41. Ibid.
- 42. From Official Records.
- 43. From Official Records.
- 44. From Official Records.
- 45. Ibid.
- 46. From Official Records.
- 47. Ibid.
- 48. Ibid.
- 49. From Official Records.
- 50. Ibid.
- 51. From Official Records.
- 52. Ibid.
- 53. From Official Records.
- 54. From Official Records.
- 55. From Official Records.
- 56. From Official Records.
- 57. Ibid.
- 58. Ibid.
- 59. Ibid.
- 60. Ibid.
- 61. From Official Records.
- 62. Ibid.
- 63. From Official Records.
- 64. From Official Records.
- 65. From Official Records.
- 66. Ibid.
- 67. From Official Records.
- 68. Ibid.
- 69. Ibid.
- 70. From Official Records.
- 71. From Official Records.
- 72. From Official Records.
- 73. From Official Records.
- 74. From Official Records.
- 75. Ibid.
- 76. From Official Records.
- 77. Ibid.
- 78. From Official Records.
- 79. From Official Records.
- 280. Interview with Maj Gen Dalbir Singh (Retd) on 24 September 1984.
- 281. From Official Records.
- 282. From Official Records.
- 283. From Official Records.
- 284. From Official Records.
- 285. From Official Records.
- 286. From Official Records.
- 287. Ibid.
- 288. From Official Records.
- 289. From Official Records.
- 290. Salik, p.182.
- 291. Ibid., p.183.
- 292. Ibid., p.185.
- 293. Ibid., p.186.

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