

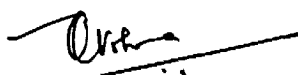
Foreword

"Read and re-read the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Eugene and Fredrick; take them for your model: that is the only way of becoming a great captain to obtain the secret of the art of war." This was the dictat of Napoleon. "Fools say that they learn from their own experience, I have always contrived to get my experience at the expense of others." The practical value of military history could not perhaps be better expressed than through the aforesaid quote from Bismarck, the German Chancellor, who propounded the policy of "Blood and Iron".

The ignorance of history can prove disastrous. An in-depth study of past events not only illuminates but also germinates new ideas which can provide the basis for future policies and plans. This is more true of military history than any other discipline.

India won a convincing victory against Pakistan in the 1971 War, which involved all the three Services. The present history seeks to record the events of the War in an objective manner. It is hoped that military planners and professional soldiers would be able to draw appropriate lessons from this publication.

28th Oct, 1992
New Delhi


(N.N. VOHRA)
DEFENCE SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

PREFACE

India won a glorious victory against Pakistan in the 1971 war. It was her first decisive victory in a major war in centuries. And it was won single-handedly, in the face of opposition and threats from a majority of the UN member-States, including a Super Power. Every Indian patriot felt proud of this glittering chapter in the nation's history.

2. I, therefore, readily agreed to prepare a history of this war when in 1983 I was recalled from retirement and offered the assignment. The Government provided to me the assistance of a team of specialist scholars and hand-picked Service officers. The draft history was completed before the target date in 1985. All the concerned Ministries, Intelligence Agencies and Services Headquarters have vetted the draft. However, they do not necessarily agree with all that is stated in the history, which should not be taken to reflect their views or to commit the Government in any way. I accept full responsibility for the facts stated and the opinions expressed.

3. As desired by Government, this history is as complete and as authentic as we could make it. It views the episode as a major national effort, and covers the problem of the East Bengal refugees, the administrative arrangements required, the internal political developments in India, and the diplomatic efforts abroad to resolve the crisis, apart from the operations of the three Services. The book has been compiled after studying the secondary or published sources, and some 5000 files of the Government, and after interviewing 66 of the important participants in the war. Twenty seven maps have been prepared for inclusion in this history to assist the reader - I wish we could prepare many more maps and sketches to illustrate even the minor operations described in the book. Foot-notes giving the references to original sources and particular files have been deleted under instructions of Government, but they are available in the 'master copy' kept in the History Division, Ministry of Defence.

4. Although this history is complete and authentic as per original records we could unearth from Prime Minister's Office, Ministries of Defence, Home Affairs, and External Affairs etc, the draft has not been finally edited or polished. This effort appears useless and wasteful to me when the account is not to be published, and when the comments of a new set of

vettors would require to be amalgamated in the draft before it is published at some future date. For the present, the draft is released only for limited circulation for official use. I do not consider this account a proper history, but only a compilation of facts in narrative form. Its main value is as a record of facts researched from original records and from interviews with actual participants, while the records are still available and the participants are still alive.

5. Apart from the valuable assistance of the research team working with me, without whose dedicated and competent efforts the book could never have been completed in time, I acknowledge with gratitude the painstaking and wholehearted contribution of Dr. U.P. Thapliyal, the Director, and his colleagues in the History Division, Ministry of Defence, in bringing out this work. My sincere thanks are also due to the Secretarial staff and typists involved in the project, specially Shri Girdhari Lal and Shri D. Tamil Selvan, who worked tirelessly and for long hours to produce a fair copy of the draft. The work could never have been accomplished, of course, without the active support and personal interest of the Defence Ministers and Secretaries (especially Shri S.K. Bhatnagar and Shri N.N. Vohra), to whom I feel deeply indebted.

NEW DELHI
4 JUNE 1992

S.N. Prasad
4 June '92
S.N. PRASAD

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	- Anti Aircraft
AAR	- After Action Report
AB	- Air Borne
AD	- Air Defence
ADCC	- Air Defence Control Centre
ADDC	- Air Defence Direction Centre
Adm	- Admiral/Administration
AF	- Air Force
AHQ	- Army Headquarters
Air Cmde	- Air Commodore
Air HQ	- Air Headquarters
Air Mshl	- Air Marshal
Air OP	- Air Observation Post
AL	- Awami League
ALF	- Awami League Force (Mujib Bahini)
AOC	- Army Ordnance Corps
AOC-in-C	- Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief
AR	- Asian Recorder
Armd	- Armoured
Arty	- Artillery
A/S	- Anti Submarine
AVM	- Air Vice Marshal
AVSM	-Ati Vishisht Seva Medal
BCP	- Banglar Communist Party
BD	- Bangladesh Documents
Bde	- Brigade
BH	- Battle Honours
Bn	- Battalion
BPI	- Bulk Petrol Installation
Brig	- Brigadier
BSF	- Border Security Force
Cab Sectt	- Cabinet Secretariat
CAC	- Central Air Command

CAP	-	Combat Air Patrol
CAS	-	Chief of the Air Staff
Capt	-	Captain
Cdr	-	Commander
C-in-C	-	Commander-in-Chief
Cmde	-	Commodore
CML	-	Council Muslim League
CNS	-	Chief of Naval Staff
CO	-	Commanding Officer
Col	-	Colonel
COAS	-	Chief of the Army Staff
COS	-	Chief of Staff
Coy -	-	Company
CZA	-	Communication Zone Area
DGCA	-	Director General Civil Aviation
Div	-	Division
DNO	-	Directorate of Naval Operations
EAC	-	Eastern Air Command
EBR	-	East Bengal Regiment
EC	-	Eastern Command
ECOSOC	-	Economic and Social Council (UN)
ENC	-	Eastern Naval Command
EPCAF	-	East Pakistan Civil Armed Force
EPR	-	East Pakistan Rifles
FAC	-	Forward Air Controller
FANO	-	Factual Account of Naval Operations
Fd Regt	-	Field Regiment
FF	-	Frontier Force/Freedom Fighters (of MB)
Fg Offr	-	Flying Officer
FM	-	Field Marshal
FOC	-	Flag Officer Commanding
FOC-in-C	-	Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief

FR	-	Fighter Reconnaissance
FUP	-	Forming Up Place
Garh Rif	-	Garhwal Rifles
Gen	-	General
GOC	-	General Officer Commanding
GOC-in-C	-	General Officer Commanding-in-Chief
Gp	-	Group
GR	-	Gorkha Rifles
HQ	-	Headquarters
Hr(s)	-	Hour(s)
Inf	-	Infantry
INS	-	Indian Naval Ship
JCO	-	Junior Commissioned Officer
JCP	-	Joint Check Post (of India and Pakistan)
JI	-	Jamaat-e-Islami
JSD	-	Jatio Samajtantrik Dal
JUI	-	Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Islam
JUP	-	Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Pakistan
KSP	-	Krishak Sramik Party
LFO	-	Legal Framework Order
L Hav	-	Lance Havildar
LI	-	Light Infantry
LLAD	-	Low Level Air Defence
LMG	-	Light Machine Gun
Lt	-	Lieutenant
Lt Cdr	-	Lieutenant Commander
Lt Col	-	Lieutenant Colonel
Lt Gen	-	Lieutenant General
MAC	-	Maritime Air Centre
Maj	-	Major

Maj Gen	- Major General
MAO	- Maritime Air Operations
MB	- Mukti Bahini
MDH	- Ministry of Defence, History Division
MDHS	- Ministry of Defence, Historical Section
MEA	- Ministry of External Affairs
MHA	- Ministry of Home Affairs
MI	- Military Intelligence
MJUI	- Markazi Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Islam
ML	- Muslim League
MLR	- Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation
MMG	- Medium Machine Gun
MNA	- Member National Assembly
MO	- Military Operations
MOP	- Mobile Observation Post
MPA	- Member Provincial Assembly
Mtn	- Mountain
MVC	- Maha Vir Chakra
NAP	- National Awami Party
NCsE	- Non Combatants Enrolled
NI	- Nizam-i-Islam
NM	- Nautical Mile/Nausena Medal
OR	- Other Rank
PAF	- Pakistan Air Force
Para	- Parachute
PDP	- Pakistan Democratic Party
Plt Offr	- Pilot Officer
PIA	- Pakistan International Airlines
PML	- Pakistan Muslim League
PNS	- Pakistan Naval Ships

POK	-	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
POL	-	Petrol, Oil and Lubricant
POW	-	Prisoner of War
PPP	-	Pakistan People's Party
PR	-	Photographic Reconnaissance
PVC	-	Param Vir Chakra
PVSM	-	Param Vishisht Seva Medal
Raj Rif	-	Rajputana Rifles
Regt	-	Regiment
SA	-	Small Arms
SAGW	-	Surface to Air Guided Weapons
SC	-	Southern Command
SM	-	Sena Medal
SNA	-	Southern Naval Area
SONAR	-	Sound Navigation and Ranging
Sqn	-	Squadron
Sqn Ldr	-	Squadron Leader
SU	-	Signal Unit/Surface (naval usage)
Sub	-	Subedar
Sub Maj	-	Subedar Major
TA	-	Territorial Army
TAC	-	Tactical Air Centre
UNCTAD	-	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMOGIP	-	United Nations Military Observer Group for India, Pakistan
VCAS	-	Vice Chief of the Air Staff
VCNS	-	Vice Chief of the Naval Staff
VCOAS	-	Vice Chief of the Army Staff
VM	-	Vayusena Medal
Vr C	-	Vir Chakra
VSM	-	Vishisht Seva Medal
WAC	-	Western Air Command

- WC - Western Command
- WD - War Diary
- WNC - Western Naval Command
- WPR - West Pakistan Rangers

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ANATOMY OF THE CRISIS

THE BIRTH OF PAKISTAN

The creation of Pakistan on 15 August 1947, was a personal triumph for Mohammed Ali Jinnah and a tribute to his political jugglery, which enabled him to carve out an independent Muslim State without any struggle or sacrifice. The Muslim League, of which Jinnah was the undisputed leader, was set up in December, 1906, with the blessings of the then Viceroy of India, Lord Minto, and at the initiative of "nobles, ministers of various states, great landowners, lawyers, merchants, and many others of His Majesty's Mohammedan subjects"(1). Its main objective was "To foster a sense of loyalty to the British government among the Muslims of India"(2). Thus, from the very beginning, the Muslim League was dominated by the feudal landlords, who were interested in maintaining their power and prestige by placating the British rulers.

The protagonists of Pakistan were never in the fore-front of India's struggle for freedom. Jinnah himself had never been jailed for defying the British authority in India (3). It was only after the provincial elections of 1937 (held under the Government of India Act, 1935), when Muslim League fared badly even in predominantly Muslim provinces, that Jinnah declared that the Muslims could expect neither justice nor fairplay under Congress government. Therefore, in the Lahore session of the Muslim League held in March, 1940, Jinnah announced that Muslims were not a minority community in India, but constituted a separate nation. He demanded a separate homeland for them with an independent state, i.e. 'Pakistan'.

The two-nation theory propounded by Jinnah was most gratifying to the British authorities, as it was so much in conformity with their well-established policy of 'divide and rule'. They boosted Jinnah to counter-balance the Congress demands, "...they pampered to his pride, put up with his rudeness, inflated his prestige, and encouraged him to persist in his Congress-baiting, which made him a hero to the unsophisticated Muslim masses, who were ever ready to respond to the call of 'Islam in danger'(4).

The British Prime Minister, C.R. Attlee, made a statement in the House of Commons on 20 February 1947, which inter alia suggested that "His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to

some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people"(5). It certainly had the effect of making Jinnah more obdurate. He refused to join hands with the Congress in the negotiations for the transfer of power by the British Government, as he could see that "The Statement of 20 February 1947, in the context of Indian politics was thus an open licence for Pakistan in some form or other"(6). However, till the end Jinnah was not sure that his bluff would really work. This will be evident from one of his significant remarks on the creation of Pakistan : "I never thought it would happen. I never expected to see Pakistan in my life-time"(7).

INHERENT WEAKNESSES OF THE PAKISTAN POLITY

Thus Jinnah succeeded in carving out an independent Muslim state through political machinations, and also as a result of favour shown by the foreign rulers. But little did he realise the in-built weaknesses of the nascent state. He had been able to secure the following of the Muslim masses in India by creating a sort of 'religious hysteria'. But the millions of Indian Muslims, who had cast their lot for Pakistan, expected the new state to give them a happy and prosperous life also, to be a virtual heaven on earth or a modern Utopia.

In order to fulfil at least some of these high expectations and aspirations of the people, the new state of Pakistan needed a broad-based political structure, a thriving and expanding economy, an equitable distribution of national resources and a liberal and benevolent social system. Unfortunately, Pakistan did not possess any of these. Jinnah himself was an autocrat by temperament, and had no love for democracy. As early as 1940, he had declared that "democracy was unsuited to India"(8). And Pakistan inherited the extremely narrow-based pre-partition structure of power in the Muslim League, which was dominated by the feudal class. That Muslim leadership even in undivided India was confined mostly to the feudal class became evident from the results of the provincial elections of 1937. In U.P., which was the bastion of the Muslim League, out of 66 Muslim members returned to the Council, 21 were Rajas, Nawabs and Zamindars, 12 Khan Bahadurs, 23 Advocates (mainly from Zamindar families) and 10 others.

After the creation of Pakistan, the Urdu speaking elite which had migrated from U.P., and Bihar, and some Muslim leaders from Maharashtra, enjoyed a lion's

share in the political power of the country. But they had only limited experience of political life, and few of them were really of the front rank. So the "alien" elite from U.P., Bihar and certain parts of Maharashtra was soon thrown into the background, and the landed aristocracy of Punjab gained ascendancy, in the political set up of the country after Jinnah's death, and especially after the assassination of the first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, in 1951. Due to local affinity, these feudal landlords from Punjab received whole-hearted support in their actions from the top-brass of the army as well as bureaucracy, both of which were dominated by Punjabis.

This alliance between feudal landlords, military commanders and senior bureaucrats ruled the country unhindered and unopposed. Pakistan's political system during this period has been aptly summarised in the following words : "Pakistan politics is made up of a large number of leading persons who, with their political dependents, form loose agreements to achieve power and to maintain it"(9).

The only force which could have prevented the entire power being concentrated into the hands of a group of privileged persons was an enlightened and politically conscious middle class, which forms the back-bone of every democratic society or country. But, unfortunately such a class was conspicuous by its absence in Pakistan. The politically conscious Muslims who had fought for the creation of Pakistan before 1947, were concentrated in U.P., Bihar and Maharashtra, and mostly remained in India after the partition of the country. The Muslim majority areas which, according to the Radcliffe Award, were grouped together to form the new state of Pakistan, were mostly populated by poor illiterate peasants dominated by feudal aristocracy, both in the Eastern as well as the Western wing of the country.

Pakistan had been predominantly an agricultural country and had inherited the old feudal system prevalent during the British rule in undivided India. There was hardly any big industry in the country, and the minor industrial units which did exist, were mostly engaged in processing the raw materials produced in the country. Most of the trade and commerce of Pakistan was controlled by big business houses in England, and the local people were mostly petty traders, shop-keepers, artisans, craftsmen or middlemen. "Ninety per cent of the banking capital of Pakistan was in the hands of British banks, such as Lloyds and Grindlay's Bank. Roberts, Gill & Co., Imperial Tobacco and other British firms controlled over eighty per cent of Pakistan's import.....The

insurance business was also dominated by British capital"(10).

The level of education in Pakistan was also appallingly low. Even after twelve years of independence, i.e., in 1959-60, the number of school-going children in the age group 6-11 constituted 42 per cent, and those in the age group 11-16 only 12 per cent. The whole country (including East Pakistan and West Pakistan) could boast of only 6 (six) Universities and 4 (four) engineering colleges. There were only 75 primary teacher training institutes and 23 teacher training colleges. The number of school health clinics was only 19, while not a single rural health centre existed in the country"(11).

The above facts bring out the social, economic and educational backwardness of Pakistan. It is, therefore, no wonder that it did not have (and, in fact, it could not have) an enlightened and politically conscious middle class, which could fight for its democratic rights and resist the autocratic tendencies of the ruling class. The country was bound to slip from democracy to dictatorship, as it soon did.

The Pakistani dictators, through systematic exploitation, alienated the Eastern Wing, which eventually led to the dismemberment of the country and the emergence of Bangladesh. It was not so much the Cultural antagonism which created a chasm between the Eastern and Western Wings of Pakistan. "The more important cleavage, and one which finally broke Pakistan, was not between east and west, but between the top and the bottom. Above this horizontal cleavage were those, mostly drawn from West Pakistan's feudal and aristocratic elite, whether bureaucratic, military or purely political, who were anti-democratic in their outlook, and in their policies bitterly anti-Indian...Below the cleavage stood the great majority of East Bengalis, with probably the majority of West Pakistanis, who would have preferred a democratic system, would have benefitted from it more than they did from the oligarchic rule of a military-bureaucratic junta, and because of the predominance of the Bengalis among them would have tilted Pakistan away from a confrontation with India"(12).

RISE OF DICTATORSHIP

Having realised his ambition of establishing the independent Muslim State of Pakistan, Jinnah not only occupied the exalted office of the Governor General of the new state, but assumed "dictatorial powers unknown

to any constitutional Governor-General representing the King"(13). His lust for power goaded him to make the Constituent Assembly pass the Pakistan Provisional Constitution Order, 1947, which conferred enormous powers on the new Governor General. "He was not only authorised to choose and appoint ministers who held office during his pleasure, he could allocate portfolios among ministers. There was no provision that the Governor General was to act on the advice of ministers. He could even bring a minister under his direct control. He could declare an emergency by proclamation and under it make laws for a province or any of its parts"(14). He was also formally honoured with the title of Quaid-e-Azam (the supreme leader) by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, of which he himself was the President. His authority over the new state rose to its pinnacle when his name was read in Khutba in a mosque at Karachi, in keeping with the Muslim tradition of including the names of kings or Caliphs in Khutbas during prayers. A contemporary historian, A. Campbell-Johnson, has aptly described the unchallenged authority enjoyed by Jinnah in the following words: "He makes only the most superficial attempt to disguise himself as a constitutional Governor-General....Here indeed is Pakistan's King Emperor, Archbishop of Canterbury, Speaker and Prime Minister concentrated into one formidable Quaid-e-Azam"(15).

In contrast Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the equally charismatic leader in India, who had spent the major portion of his life in the struggle for freedom and had spent years in prison cells, preferred to become the Prime Minister (and not the Governor General) of India, so that he could serve the masses and not rule over them.

After Jinnah's death in 1948, Khwaja Nazimuddin took over as Governor General of Pakistan and, with Liaquat Ali Khan continuing as Prime Minister, the 'parliamentary facade' was kept up for some time. But after the assassination of Liaquat Ali at Rawalpindi in 1951, the Punjabi dominated bureaucratic-military clique came into prominence and virtually ruled the country. The politicians became mere pawns in its hands. Ghulam Mohammad, a senior bureaucrat, became the Governor General of Pakistan and dismissed the Prime Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin, in April, 1953, although the latter commanded a clear majority in the National Assembly. In his place, the Governor General appointed a man of his choice, one Mohammad Ali of Bogra, as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Surprisingly, this dictatorial action of dismissing the Prime Minister of the country without any plausible cause did not produce any commotion, either

among the legislators or among the public, perhaps because it was fully supported by the army under its Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Ayub Khan. However, this flagrant violation of all parliamentary norms was another major step towards the rise of dictatorship in Pakistan.

Emboldened by the lack of opposition to his autocratic action, Governor General Ghulam Mohammad proceeded to tighten his hold on Pakistan. In the provincial elections held in East Bengal in March, 1954, the United Front emerged victorious under the leadership of Fazlul Haq and H.S. Suhrawardy, while the Muslim league was completely routed. Alarmed at this show of unity and strength by the people of East Bengal, Ghulam Mohammad took the most undemocratic step of negating the will of the people expressed through ballot, and dismissed the duly elected United Front Ministry only a few weeks after it was installed. One of the trusted lieutenants of the Governor General, Iskandar Mirza, the then Defence Secretary, who had the reputation of being a strong man, was sent as Governor and virtual dictator of East Pakistan.

The process of ushering in dictatorship in Pakistan appeared to be complete when, in October, 1954, Ghulam Mohammad took the bold step of dissolving the Constituent-cum-National Assembly and declared a state of emergency in the country. He was afraid that the members of the National Assembly representing East Pakistan, Baluchistan and NWFP might challenge his authority. Some of these members intended to introduce in the House a bill for curtailing the discretionary powers of the Governor General. The Central Cabinet was also dismissed, and Mohammad Ali Bogra was directed to constitute a new Cabinet so as to include "all talents". The "talents" taken in the new Cabinet included, Major General Iskandar Mirza and General Ayub Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the army. They were given charge of two key ministries. Iskandar Mirza was given Interior Ministry, while General Ayub Khan was the obvious choice for the Defence Ministry.

Hardly any one in Pakistan dared to oppose or challenge these dictatorial actions of the Governor General. The lone voice raised against this constitutional outrage was that of Tamizuddin Khan, the erstwhile Speaker of the dissolved National Assembly. He filed an appeal in the highest court of justice in Pakistan, but the only 'justice' he could extract from the court was a directive to the Governor General that a new Constituent Assembly should be convened to frame a constitution for the country. In

pursuance of the above directive from the court, a new Constituent Assembly was convened in August, 1955. It passed the constitution of 1956, but the only important innovation introduced by the new Constitution was to change the designation of the Governor General to that of President.

Another important step taken by the Punjabi dominated bureaucratic-military ruling clique to consolidate its power was to merge the four provinces of West Pakistan, viz., Punjab, Sind, NWFP and Baluchistan, into one unit in 1955. This clever move was intended to serve a dual purpose. In the first place, it would enable the ruling clique to put up a 'united front' to any challenge to its authority from the Eastern Wing of the country. Secondly, it was expected that a single unit would smother any possible unrest or discontent in some parts of the Western Wing itself.

During this period, and for three succeeding years, the outward show of parliamentary democracy was maintained in Pakistan, although the real power was vested in the military-bureaucratic clique which ruled the country. Its dictates were carried out in the name of the President, Iskandar Mirza, who had replaced Ghulam Mohammad in 1955. Several Prime Ministers (both from the Eastern as well as the Western Wing) were appointed, but they were summarily dismissed as soon as they appeared to become too powerful. The President was a mere tool in the hands of the ruling clique. And, when it appeared that Iskandar Mirza himself was trying to build an independent power-base, by forming a separate Republican party, the President was, in a way, forced to declare martial law, on 7 October 1958, abrogate the Constitution and appoint the Commander-in-Chief of the army, General Ayub Khan, as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Within a few weeks, Iskandar Mirza was persuaded to leave Pakistan and settle abroad, thus leaving the stage clear for an indefinite period of army rule in the country.

With the declaration of martial law in Pakistan, even the mask of democratic government was thrown aside, and military dictatorship in its naked form stood revealed. However, the process of concentration of power in the hands of the Governor General or President, and the gradual rise of dictatorship in the country, was in operation from the very beginning. This will be evident from the fact that "during the period 1947 to 1958... the national legislature was in session for a total of 338 days, or for an annual average of 30 days only. During the same period, the National Assembly passed 160 laws while the Governor

General/President issued 376 major ordinances"(16).

Soon after the declaration of martial law in Pakistan, General Ayub Khan gave up the command of the army and assumed the office of the President. He appointed one of his most trusted officers, General Mohammad Musa as the Commander-in-Chief. A senior Civil Servant, Aziz Ahmed, was appointed as Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator to ensure smooth functioning of the government. In matters relating to the army, he himself used to take decisions instead of depending upon the General Headquarters. His intimate and personal knowledge of the army and its problems enabled him to handle this task without any difficulty. Barring three army officers, viz., Lt. Generals W.A. Burki, K.M. Sheikh and Azam Khan, his Cabinet consisted mostly of civilians. In fact, Ayub Khan proved to be a more astute politician than his predecessors. He did not allow any overlapping of functions or authority between his army commanders and civilian advisers, and managed to keep both these groups happy and contented.

Ayub also introduced the new concept of "Basic Democracies", which envisaged a five-tier system of councils. Under this system, the village councils and town committees, which were to be elected on the basis of adult franchise, were to serve as units. The 'Basic Democrats' representing the units, were to form the electoral college for the election of the President, the National Assembly as well as the Provincial Assemblies. Ayub's main intention in introducing the new system was to win over the 'rural elite', from amongst whom the Basic Democrats were mostly drawn, and who benefited most from the developmental grants which were distributed through them. The scheme worked well and made Ayub popular among the electorate, which is evident from his election as President in 1965.

However, the result of the Presidential election from East Pakistan was not very flattering to Ayub, as he managed to win there with only a narrow margin over his rival, Fatimah Jinnah. In fact, the East Bengalees felt alienated right from the beginning, when an effort was made to impose Urdu as their national language. Systematic exploitation in various fields in subsequent years further antagonised them. They were also not happy with the system of Basic Democracies, as it deprived them of the edge they expected to have over West Pakistan due to their numerical superiority. The lifting of the martial law and removal of ban on political activities in 1962, gave the emerging educated middle class of East Pakistan, especially the student community, an

opportunity to launch a movement for autonomy for the Eastern Wing. Even in the Western Wing people were feeling res i ve under the autocratic rule. The spread of education, rapid industrialisation of the country and the technological advancement in various fields over the years, had brought into existence an enlightened middle class - still small - which clamoured for restoration of its civil rights and demanded political freedom. "Popular revulsion against the regime was so great that even the Basic Democrats, pampered as they were by the ruling clique, could not remain totally immune to it"(17).

Things had come to such a pass that Ayub was forced to adopt some means of diverting people's attention. In sheer desperation, he first despatched infiltrators into Kashmir and then forced a war on India by attacking Chhamb on 1 September 1965. But the step actually boomeranged on him. Pakistan's poor performance in the war, which lasted for just twenty-two days, exploded the widely propagated myth that the Pakistani Army was 'the finest fighting force in Asia' and that Pakistan's Air Force could destroy the Indian Air Force without much effort. It also brought home the truth that East Pakistan, completely cut off from the Western Wing during the war, was utterly helpless in defending itself. This made the East Bengalees more vociferous in their demand for autonomy. Their leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (who was also President of the Awami League party), put forth the people's demands in the form of a pamphlet entitled "our Right to Live", which was issued on 23 March 1966, and contained a six-point programme of grant of autonomy to East Pakistan.

However, the "political arrogance of the Military junta was incompatible with the popular demand for the restoration of democratic institutions"(18). President Ayub Khan adopted repressive measures to smother the legitimate demands of the people of East Pakistan. But the situation went from bad to worse. The students, who had spearheaded the resistance movement in East Pakistan right from the beginning, again formed the vanguard of the opposition against the reign of terror unleashed by President Ayub. As early as 1948, the students of Dhaka University (including Mujibur Rahman who was then a student leader) had the courage to hoot down even Jinnah on the imposition of Urdu as the official language of the whole of Pakistan. Manzur Quadir, a Central Minister, narrowly escaped death at the hands of the students of Dhaka University when he went there to speak in favour of the Constitution propounded by Ayub. And now they organised massive demonstrations at Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Bogra and several other places, demanding

restoration of parliamentary democracy. Hundreds of students were arrested along with most of the Awami League leaders, including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Mujib was also implicated in a trumped up case, known as the 'Agartala Conspiracy Case'. There was a wave of resentment among the people, and strikes and 'bandhs' were organised against military oppression. Over one thousand persons were "arrested throughout East Bengal on December 14, 1968"(19). The police resorted to firing in Dhaka, Narayanganj and some other places in which many people were killed.

Ayub could not withstand the popular agitation and was compelled to yield to the people's demands. He had to free Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the Agartala Conspiracy Case against him was dropped. In an effort to control the situation, Ayub convened a meeting of political parties in Dhaka in March, 1969. But no agreed solution could be arrived at, and ultimately Ayub was forced to hand over the reins of the Government to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Mohammad Yahya Khan. However, Yahya Khan also found himself helpless in stemming the tide of opposition and had to declare post-haste that he had assumed power only as a temporary measure for "creation of conditions conducive to the establishment of a constitutional government"(20).

GLARING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO WINGS

The creation of Pakistan has been described as a "geographical and cultural monstrosity"(21). The two erstwhile wings of Pakistan, separated by over 1,600 km of intervening Indian territory, were so fundamentally different that they really were two different countries. The glaring and irremediable differences between the two wings of Pakistan were highlighted by a jurist in the following words : "Pakistan is not a nation and hardly a state. It has no justification in history, ethnic origin, language, civilization, or the consciousness of those who make up its population. They have no interest in common save one : fear of Hindu domination"(22). The physical features, climate, agricultural produce, economic conditions, language and literature, history and culture, of the two wings were entirely different and had conditioned their inhabitants differently - both physically and mentally. The only common link between these two different and far flung regions was that of religion. But, as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad pointed out, it was "one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different"(23).

The two erstwhile wings of Pakistan were situated at the opposite ends of the vast northern Indian plains, without any direct overland line of communication. The physical or geographical differences between these two wings have been summed up in the following words : "There is a popular belief that where West Pakistan ends, the Middle East begins, but where East Pakistan ends, South-East Asia begins. The West is mountainous, arid and desolate; but the East, with its lush green fields and luxuriant vegetation, is a deltaic land traversed by mighty rivers and innumerable streams...Geography, climate and the difference in fertility of soil not only account for the difference in density of population...but also explain the temperamental difference - the West is pragmatic, the East is emotional"(24).

Resembling a rectangle in shape, West Pakistan covered an area of 798,425 sq km, and had a total population of 42.9 million, or 54 persons per sq km on an average, according to 1961 Census figures. On the other hand, the eastern wing or East Pakistan had a population of 50.84 million with an area of only 139,795 sq km(25). This gave East Pakistan an over-all numerical superiority over the western wing.

Due to the difference in location, physical features, weather conditions etc., the people of the two wings of Pakistan also looked different in their outward appearance. Whereas the people of the western wing were tall, fair and hardy, the people of the eastern wing were generally short, and dark complexioned. The main crops of the western wing were wheat, sugar-cane, cotton and tobacco, while the eastern wing produced mainly rice, mustard, jute and tea.

One of the most glaring difference between the two wings of Pakistan and which eventually became a serious bone of contention between them, was their language. While there was only one language, viz., Bengali in the whole of eastern wing, four different languages were used in the four provinces of the western wing, i.e. Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi and Pushtu. None of these languages had anything in common with Bengali. The situation was that "The man in the street in West Pakistan speaks any one of four languages - none of which enables him to communicate with the Bengali-speaking inhabitants of East Bengal. A politician in Karachi who is able to address an East Bengal audience in its own tongue has a rare political asset..."(26).

Culturally also, the two wings of Pakistan were

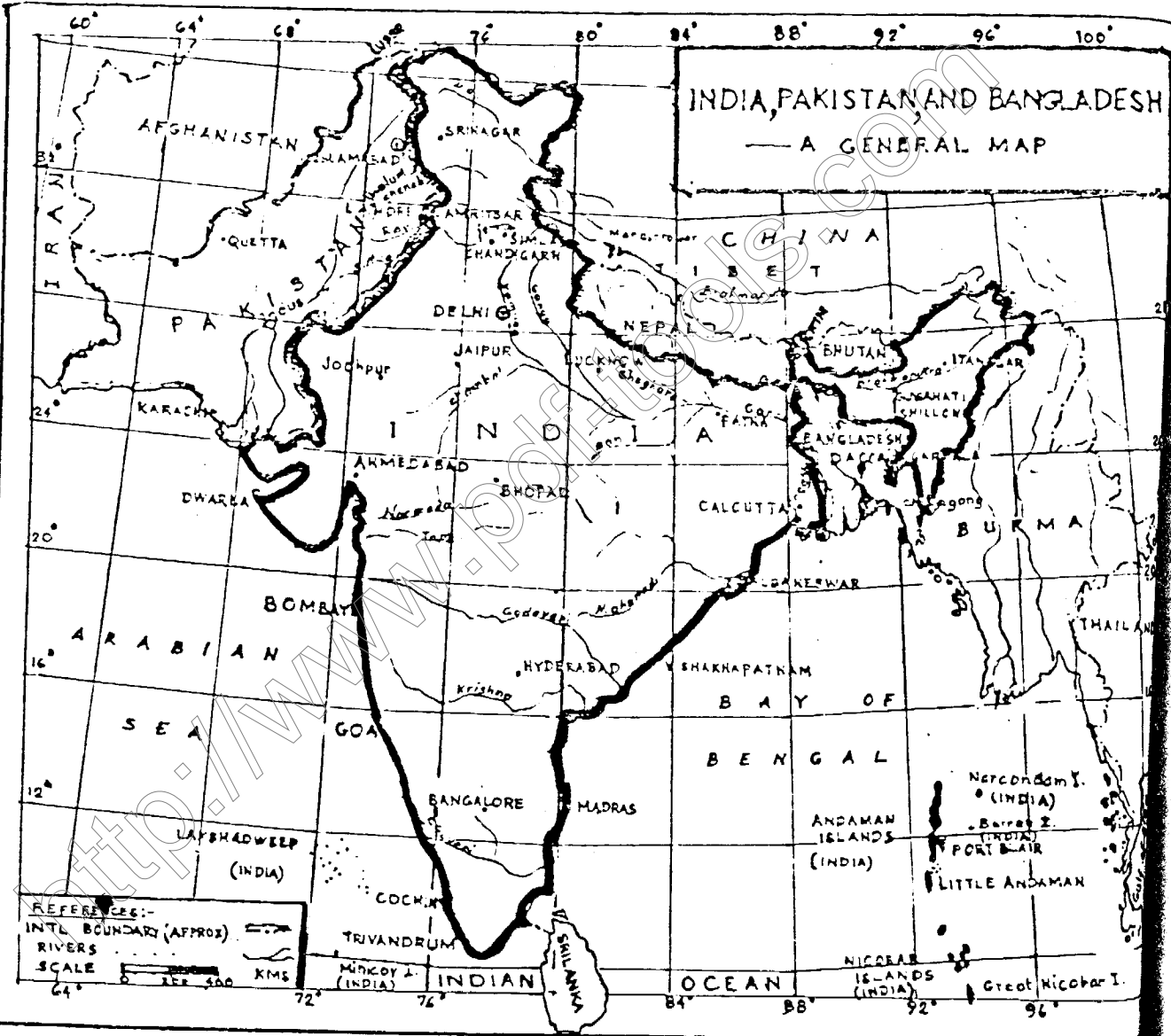
quite different. As mentioned earlier, West Pakistan was more akin to West Asia and Central Asia. "In history and literature, in customs, manners, and even in prejudices, the influence of Arabia and Iran on the peoples of this unit is apparent"(27). East Pakistan, on the other hand, had many things in common with the countries of South East Asia. Like East Pakistan, most of these countries had dense population with marked degree of poverty and were conservative in their outlook. However, though politically divided, East Bengal formed a part and parcel of the composite culture of pre-independence undivided Bengal. In customs, manners, dress, food habits, language and dialect, an East Pakistani was very close to the people of West Bengal, and had hardly anything in common with the people of the Western Wing of Pakistan.




East Pakistanis were proud of their culture and looked down upon the people of the Western Wing who could not appreciate the poetical compositions of litterateurs like Rabindra Nath Tagore and Nazrul Islam. On the other hand, the West Pakistanis had nothing but contempt for East Bengalees. Even Pakistani leaders like Mohammad Ayub Khan considered them very backward and thought that they "belong to the very original Indian races.....they have been and still are under considerable Hindu cultural and linguistic influence. As such they have all the inhibitions of downtrodden races and have not yet found it possible to adjust psychologically to the requirements of the new-born freedom"(28). The cultural difference between the two wings of Pakistan was indeed so pronounced that a Muslim writer with marked pro-Pakistani bias, had to concede that Pakistan was "bi-cultural state"(29).

The oft-repeated and much publicised common bond of religion between the two wings of Pakistan was actually not so common as harped upon from the very beginning by protagonists of Pakistan. Due to affinity of language, customs and manners, as well as physical proximity with the neighbouring Hindus, the religion of East Bengalee Muslims had, over the years, absorbed many of the Hindu traditions, rituals and ceremonies. It was, therefore, more flexible than the rigid cult of Islam prevailing in the Western Wing of Pakistan. It was not uncommon for East Pakistani Muslims to visit Hindu places of worship and even to make offerings, and vice versa. So, the religion of the people in the Eastern Wing was branded as "East Pakistani type of Islam....mixed with Hindu, Buddhist and animistic practices...."(30). This was against the accepted norms of "pure" Islam preached by the 'Mullahs' of the Western Wing.


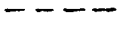
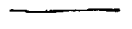
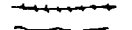

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

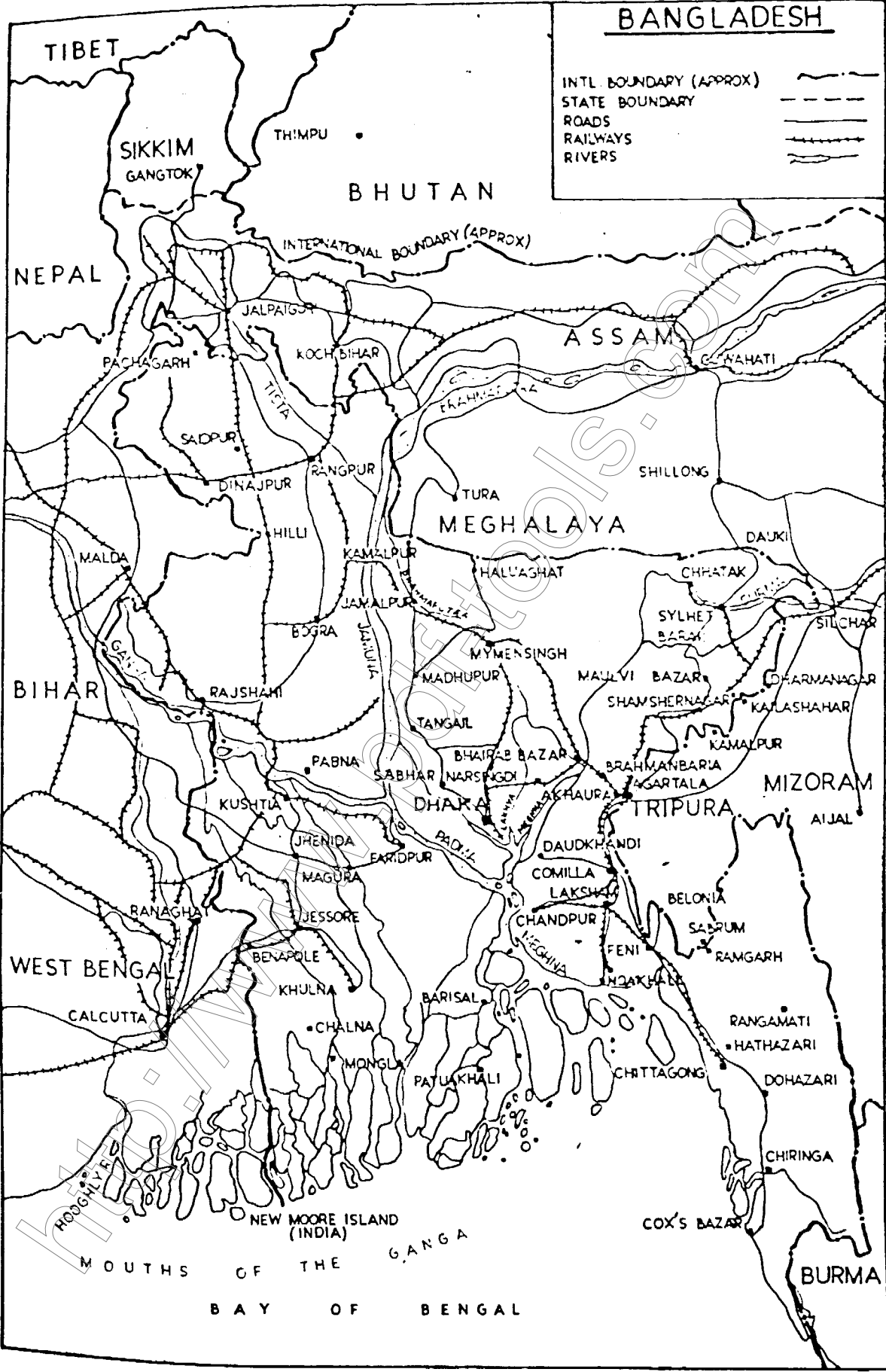
— A GENERAL MAP



REFERENCES:-
 INTL BOUNDARY (APPROX) 
 RIVERS 
 SCALE  500 KMS

BANGLADESH

INTL. BOUNDARY (APPROX) 
STATE BOUNDARY 
ROADS 
RAILWAYS 
RIVERS 



Thus, the two wings of Pakistan were fundamentally different from each other in all respects. No wonder that the union of the two wings, aptly described as a marriage de raison, broke down under various strains that started developing soon after the birth of the new State.

The glaring differences between the erstwhile Eastern and Western Wings of Pakistan enumerated above were due to natural or historical reasons. But the resultant effect of these differences could have been minimised to a great extent by mutual good-will, cooperatin and a broad-minded approach to various problems. But from the very beginning the Punjabi dominated ruling elite of Pakistan systematically and consistently followed a policy of discrimination against the eastern wing.

The policy of discrimination against the East Bengalees perhaps had its origin in the superior attitude adopted by the people of the Western wing. As noticed earlier, even West Pakistani leaders like President Ayub Khan considered that the East Bengalees had "all the inhibitions of down-trodden races....". Another Punjabi leader, Malik Firoz Khan Noon, who was Governor of East Bengal from 1950 to 1953, "once bluntly declared that East Bengal Muslims were converted to Islam from low caste Hindus and they were not real Muslims"(31). This feeling of superiority on the part of the West Pakistanis made them feel that 'they belonged to the race of conquerors', and for all intents and purposes they treated East Pakistan as a colony of the Western Wing.

WIDE DISPARITIES

The exploitation of and the discrimination against the eastern wing were manifest in almost every field of governmental activity right from the creation of Pakistan. With the passage of time, this systematic and continuous policy of discrimination resulted in the development of grave disparities between the two wings. While West Pakistan continued to prosper at the cost of the eastern wing, East Pakistan, which was already poor and under-developed was deprived of its legitimate share of developmental resources, and was thus reduced to still greater poverty and backwardness.

Economic Disparities

The disparities between the erstwhile eastern and western wings of Pakistan were most noticeable in the economic field. The Punjabi dominated ruling elite had so manipulated the economic and financial

policies of the country that "not only should West develop industrially at the expense of the East, but the East should remain a captive market for the industrial products of the West". The effect of these discriminatory economic policies was a phenomenal increase in the difference in per capita income of the two wings. In one decade, i.e., between 1960 to 1970, this difference leaped from Rs.86 to Rs.184. In real terms the difference in the per capita income was much more, as the prices of essential commodities, including main items of food, were much higher in the eastern wing than in the western wing. Thus, while rice and wheat were sold in West Pakistan at about Rs.20 and Rs.15 per maund (about 37.5 kg) respectively, their prices in the eastern wing were about Rs.50 and Rs.35 respectively, or two and a half times as high as the prices prevailing in the western wing(32).

The partisan attitude of Pakistani ruling elite will be evident from a comparative study of developmental expenditure in both the wings of the country, as shown in Table I at page 15(33).

The poster (in Bengali) issued by the Awami League given at page 16 gives a revealing picture of the injustice done to East Pakistan by bringing out the disparity in the Central expenditure on the two wings(34).

The same story was repeated in other estimates of the allocation of foreign aid funds received from various sources. East Pakistan was allocated a mere fraction of these funds, although on the basis of population its share should have been larger than that of the western wing. Thus East Pakistan got only 4% of the total foreign aid (excluding US aid), while West Pakistan was given 96%. Only one third or about 34% of the US Aid Fund was given to the eastern wing, and 66% was allocated to the western wing(35).

The unfair treatment in the allocation of development and other aid funds resulted in phenomenal growth of industries in West Pakistan, while industrial growth in the eastern wing remained almost static or increased marginally.

TABLE 1
DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE IN EAST AND WEST PAKISTAN

East Pakistan				(In Millions of Rupees)				
Period	Development Plan Expenditures			Outside Plan Expenditure		Total Development Expenditure (1+2+3+4+5)	Total Expenditure	Development Expenditure in Regions as Percent of all Pakistan Total
	Total	Public	Private	Works Program				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1950/51-1954/55	1,000	700	300	—	—	1,000	2,710	20%
1955/56-1959/60	2,700	1,970	730	—	—	2,700	5,240	26%
1960/61-1964/65	9,250	6,250	3,000	—	450	9,700	14,040	32%
1965/66-1969/70	16,560	11,060	5,500	—	—	16,560	21,410	36%
West Pakistan								
				Indus Basin Works Program				
1950/51-1954/55	4,000	2,000	2,000	—	—	4,000	11,290	80%
1955/56-1959/60	7,570	4,640	2,930	—	—	7,570	16,550	74%
1960/61-1964/65	18,100	7,200	10,700	2,110	200	20,710	33,550	68%
1965/66-1969/70	26,100	10,100	16,000	3,600	—	29,700	51,950	64%

Note : Public sector development expenditure of the Provincial Govt. plus that of Central Govt. on projects located in the Province, mainly based on Planning Commission estimates. Private development expenditure as estimated by Planning Committee.

Source : Report of Advisory Panels for the Fourth Five-Year Plan, Volume I. Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, July 1971.

সোনার বাঙলা কৃষ্ণাঙ্গল কেন?

কোনো বিষয়	বাংলাদেশ	পশ্চিম পাকিস্তান
রাজস্ব খরচ	১৫০০ কোটি টাকা	৫০০০ কোটি টাকা
উন্নয়ন খরচ	২০০০ কোটি টাকা	৩০০০ কোটি টাকা
মৌলিক পাসাখ	শতকরা ২০ ভাগ	শতকরা ৮০ ভাগ
সেমির দ্রব্য প্রদান	শতকরা ১২ ভাগ	শতকরা ৭৫ ভাগ
কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার চাকরি	শতকরা ১০ জন	শতকরা ৮৫ জন
সামরিক বিভাগে চাকরি	শতকরা ১০ জন	শতকরা ২০ জন
চাউল মণ প্রতি	৫০ টাকা	২৫ টাকা
আটা মণ প্রতি	৩০ টাকা	১৫ টাকা
মরিয়ার তৈল সেব প্রতি	৫ টাকা	২.৫০ পয়সা
সুর্ণ প্রতি ভরি	১৭০ টাকা	১৩৫ টাকা

An Awami League poster shows the disparity in central expenditure on the two wings of Pakistan.

(Courtesy: The Statesman, Calcutta.)

WHY IS GOLDEN BANGLA A CREMATION GROUND?

Items of disparity	Bangladesh	West Pakistan
Revenue Expenditure	1,500 crore Takas	5,000 crore Takas
Development Expenditure	3,000 " "	6,000 " "
Foreign Aid	20%	80%
Import of Foreign Goods	25%	75%
Central Government jobs	15%	85%
Defence Department jobs	10%	90%
Rice per maund	50 Takas	25 Takas
Wheat per maund	30 Takas	15 Takas
Mustard oil per seer	5 Takas	2.50 Takas
Gold per 'Bhari' (A 'Bhari' is approx 10 gm)	170 Takas	135 Takas

The following Table II(36) will illustrate this Point.

TABLE II

Established industries in both wings	West Pakistan		East Pakistan	
	1947-48	1966-67	1947-48	1966-67
Cotton Textile production in million yards	350 1,853% increase	6,836	508 8.26% increase	550
Sugar production in thousand tons	10 2,940% increase	304	25 348% increase	112
Cement production in thousand tons	305 534% increase	1,934	46 63% increase	75

The eastern wing of Pakistan was also deprived of its legitimate share in the country's foreign trade earnings. Although East Pakistan's share of the country's foreign export was about 50% (sometimes rising to as high as 70%), its share in foreign imports seldom exceeded 33%, as shown in the Table III(37):

Not only did West Pakistan prosper at the cost of the eastern wing, it also utilised East Pakistan as an almost inexhaustible market for its finished products. Its exports to the eastern wing from 1957-58 onwards amounted to about half of its total exports, as evident from the Table IV(38).

Disparities in Agriculture and Irrigation

Pakistan has been a predominantly agricultural country. In 1966, eighty per cent of its population earned its livelihood from agriculture. The yield from agriculture constituted 60% of the total national income of Pakistan, and it earned about 71% of its foreign exchange through agricultural produce. Agriculture also provided employment to about 75% of Pakistani labourers(39). Thus agriculture was the mainstay of the country's economy.

* Tables III to IX - See pp.21-25.

In view of the importance of agriculture for the country's economy, the Planning Commission of Pakistan drew up elaborate plans for improvement of irrigation and power generation for agricultural purposes. But these plans were all heavily weighed in favour of the western wing, as will be clear from the Table V(40).

In the matter of distribution of agricultural inputs between the two wings, the same partisan attitude is reflected. In the allotment of tractors, improved seeds, fertilizers etc., the policy of the government was to give priority to West Pakistan, while the needs of the eastern wing were ignored. This is amply illustrated by the Table VI(41).

This preferential treatment brought about a virtual "Green Revolution" in West Pakistan, especially Punjab, while agricultural production in East Pakistan remained almost static.

Disparities in Education and Social Welfare

In the field of education, the ruling elite of Pakistan followed a systematic policy of keeping the eastern wing lagging behind, perhaps with the deliberate design of "giving the West Pakistani children a better academic start so that their future career was firmly assured"(42). The comparative figures relating to the progress of education from primary to university level, in both the wings of Pakistan during two decades since the birth of the country, speak volumes regarding this policy of discrimination against the eastern wing.

These are reproduced in the Table VII(43).

An analysis of the above figures brings out the startling fact that the number of primary schools in the eastern wing actually decreased during twenty years commencing from 1947-48, although the number of children in the school going age increased during the same period. In contrast, the number of primary schools in the western wing during the corresponding twenty-year period increased by 450%. This had a direct repercussion on the "end product" or the number of university students. Whereas the number of students in West Pakistani universities increased thirty times during twenty years (1947-48 to 1968-69), the corresponding number in the universities in East Pakistan increased only five times. It can be safely presumed that this utter neglect of education in the eastern wing was a deliberate attempt on the part of the Punjabi dominated ruling elite of Pakistan to keep the people of the eastern wing educationally backward and thus deprive them of their legitimate share in the

SOWING THE WINDSPOST-ELECTION SCENEYahya Khan's Dilemma

The 1970 election results gave a stunning shock to Yahya Khan and his supporters, and placed them in a very difficult position. That such a crisis was bound to come sooner or later (unless West Pakistan completely changed her policy towards East Bengal) was obvious enough, yet Yahya remained oblivious to this.

Pakistan's political infrastructure was built upon three well-known assumptions: the supremacy of the permanent executive over representative institutions, the dominance of West Pakistan over East Bengal and the financial autonomy of the Pakistan Army. Due to these, the ruling elite of West Pakistan had come to enjoy such vast political powers that all representative institutions became defunct. It was natural for the ruling elite to feel worried over any proposal for reforms which could curtail its powers. However, such a system could not be tolerated by the Pakistani people for long, particularly in view of the growth of democratic institutions in South Asia. In addition, the conversion of East Bengal into a primitive colony naturally generated a demand for change in the system. Hence, the ruling elite in Pakistan had to face two inter-related movements for reforms. While the first demanded the introduction of representative institutions and political reforms, the second asked for autonomy in provinces, particularly in East Bengal. As both the movements grew simultaneously, they gave strength to each other. Yahya Khan could not cope with the developing crisis and so he resigned in 1969. His successor Yahya Khan, to check further deterioration of the situation, promised to introduce reforms and to transfer power to the representatives of the people. He also scrapped the one unit scheme to cool down the advocates of autonomy in Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Though the policy of discrimination towards East Bengal continued, President Yahya Khan did try to placate the East Bengalees too, by promising to hold nation-wide elections and to accord Eastern Wing representation in the legislature proportionate to its population.

These concessions, it appears, had been announced with the expectation that no East Bengalee party would be able to get an absolute majority in the

National Assembly and, therefore, a coalition with certain West Pakistani forces would be inevitable. The military-bureaucratic complex actually hoped that neither of the political groups from East Bengal and West Pakistan would be able to gain majority to form a government individually and for the smooth working of a coalition govt. formed of two or more groups, they would heavily depend on it. Thus, the ruling elite could serve as the arbiter in the political system of Pakistan. If not the King, it would remain the King-maker.

Naturally, the election results came to President Yahya Khan as a thunder-clap. None had anticipated the Awami League's total and decisive victory. According to Yahya's calculations, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League could get at the most seventy seats, the three factions of the Muslim League could get sixty seats, while the remainder would be divided amongst other parties including Maulana Bhashani's National Awami Party and the Jamaat-i-Islami in East Pakistan(1). In West Pakistan, he had hoped that out of one hundred and forty-four seats, the Pakistan People's Party could win at the most thirty seats, the three factions of the Muslim League between sixty to ninety and the remainder divided amongst the National Awami Party (Wali group) and Jamaat-i-Islami(2). Thus, he did not visualise any one single party emerging with a majority either from West Pakistan or from East Pakistan. The free and fair election based on adult suffrage was probably the product of this thinking.

However, when the election results completely belied hopes of the President, he found himself on the horns of a dilemma. His promise to transfer the power to the elected representatives had generated tremendous hopes. Obviously, going back on his promise could lead to a fatal agitation, besides his losing face. The pressure from the people began to increase to bring the situation to its logical outcome. On the other hand, Yahya Khan knew that the ruling elite would not tolerate being deprived of power. It was also strongly opposed to the transfer of power to an East Pakistani party due to its inherent prejudices against the East Pakistani people. Hence, the military-bureaucratic complex began to put pressure on the President not to allow things to move in the direction they had started moving. It was, of course not easy to stop this process. The President and his advisers began to look for ways to come out of this predicament. The first alternative appeared to them to allow Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to form a constitution which could be rejected by the President, as envisaged in the Legal Framework Order. The second

Alternative was to play off Bhutto and Mujib against each other, and thus compel Mujib to water down his Six-Point programme and agree to a coalition of the Awami League and the Pakistan People's Party, with Yahya Khan as the President of Pakistan. And the third alternative was to bring about a deadlock and thus continue the rule of the military-bureaucratic complex.

As the first alternative could prove dangerous, the President and his advisers discarded it. Amongst the other alternatives, as the subsequent events show, they selected the second alternative, thinking that under the circumstances it would be easy to act upon. However, the third alternative was also kept in mind as a substitute for the second.

The delay of several weeks in contacting Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bhutto after the elections, seems to indicate that the President and his advisers took some time to arrive at this decision. Having arrived at that decision, President Yahya Khan began his manoeuvres. Keeping both the alternatives in mind, Yahya, as a first step, desired to bring pressure on Mujib to come to a compromise on the future constitution by using Bhutto. He could count on one of the two eventualities. If Mujib agreed to compromise, then a place for himself (Yahya) could be found and also assurance of sufficient funds for the army. And if Mujib did not, then the resultant deadlock could provide him opportunities to manoeuvre the situation in his favour. Later events showed how after Mujib's refusal to change his Six-Point Programme, a deadlock was manoeuvred, and then subsequently efforts were made to retain power by the ruling elite in collusion with Bhutto, even at the cost of thousands of lives in East Bengal.

Bhutto's Manoeuvres

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), known for his flamboyance, boundless ambition and political astuteness, found himself in a position, after the elections, from where he could bargain to share power with the Awami League. The emergence of the PPP as a strong West Pakistani party having absolute majority in two provinces - Punjab and Sind - with the right to speak for almost two-thirds of West Pakistan, was viewed by Bhutto as an opportunity to gain power at least in West Pakistan. Taking advantage of this peculiar situation arising out of the results of the election, Bhutto moved cautiously to achieve his objective. He could do that with the support of some members of the West Pakistani parties like Wali's NAP, Council M.L.,

P.D.P. and a few uncommitted members, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could run the central administration without any difficulty(3). Hence, Bhutto began to look for ways to bring a deadlock before the National Assembly could meet, with the view to increasing his bargaining power to demand a share in the administration. Fortunately for him, the ruling elite was one with him in opposing the transfer of power to Mujib. Hence, it was not surprising that soon Bhutto-Yahya coalition came into existence to oppose Mujib.

Reviewing the situation, Bhutto saw that while Mujib's party had gained majority in National Assembly, it had not even a single seat in West Pakistan. He immediately thought of using this fact to project the Awami League as the party of one wing only. Taking this plea, Bhutto on 21 December 1970 declared in Lahore that neither the constitution could be framed nor the government at the centre formed without the support of the PPP. He declared that authority at the centre would have to be shared between the AL and PPP to enable the two to execute the mandate given to them by the people(4). Further, he pressed that the problem of autonomy could not be determined on the basis of majority alone as in that case, the National Assembly would not be able to give a constitution acceptable to both the wings of the country. It is interesting to note that Bhutto talked of representation on the basis of two wings, but deliberately did not talk of representation on the basis of the five provinces of Pakistan. In the latter case, his party could represent only two provinces - Punjab and Sind out of total five(5). Justifying his claim for the representation of the Western Wing, he called Punjab and Sind as bastions of power(6). The position taken by him showed a strange inconsistency. While he was denying the right of duly elected majority party to represent the whole country on the ground that it represented only one province, he himself claimed this right for his party in the western wing when his party had majority in only two provinces out of four.

At the end of December 1970, Bhutto met Yahya. Though what was discussed between them is not known authoritatively, it can reasonably be assumed that Bhutto put forward his claims(7). When Yahya went to meet Mujib on 12 and 13 January 1971, Bhutto kept a watchful eye on the developments. Yahya's declaration of Mujib as the future prime-minister of Pakistan must have given Bhutto a jolt, little realising that it was probably intended to activate him further. When Yahya and his top aides were Bhutto's guests for a "Duck Shoot" at Larkana for several days immediately after it is most likely that both decided to force Mujib to

compromise on his Six-Points(8). Bhutto went to East Pakistan on 27 January 1971 and had several rounds of talks with Mujib on the constitutional issues. The discussions remained inconclusive, though both the sides had made their points clear. Knowing pretty well that there was hardly any scope for the AL to change its stand on the Six-Point programme, Bhutto pressed hard for it to bring about a deadlock. Soon after his return from East Pakistan, he declared that it was necessary to meet the leaders of all shades of opinion in West Pakistan, including those of the defeated parties, to have a consensus on constitution-making before convening the National Assembly. Obviously, he was seeking opportunities for conspiring against the Awami League.

In the meantime, the hijacking on 30 January 1971, of the Indian plane by two Kashmiris provided both Bhutto and Yahya with an opportunity to delay further the summoning of the Assembly. Bhutto, planning to take advantage of the anti-Indian feelings in West Pakistan, supported the cause of the hijackers. Yahya used it as a stratagem to send troops to East Pakistan, apparently for protection against any Indian attack but actually to use them against the supporters of the Awami League in case the need arose. Mujib, realising the fact that both Bhutto and Yahya were trying to exploit the situation to their advantage, condemned the incident and demanded inquiry into the matter(9). This further provided an opportunity to Bhutto to project Mujib as pro-Indian(10).

Yahya announced on the 13 February 1971, that the National Assembly would meet at Dhaka on 3 March 1971 for framing the constitution. Bhutto reacted by declaring on 15 February 1971, his decision to boycott the Assembly session. He demanded a promise of accommodation on the AL's Six-Point programme as a price for his participation. He again pointed out that as the people had voted for PPP in great majority in West Pakistan and for AL in East Pakistan, both the parties should share the power. In a dramatic manner, he likened the National Assembly to a slaughter house and said that his partymen would become double hostages if they went to East Pakistan(11).

Following Bhutto's threat to boycott the Assembly session, the efforts of General Umer to dissuade West Pakistani members from participation in the session hint at the deep conspiracy between the PPP and the ruling elite(12). On 28 February, Bhutto proposed two alternatives to resolve the political crisis - the postponement of the National Assembly session or removal of the 120-day time-limit for the

Assembly to frame a constitution. He also warned that if the Assembly session was held on 3 March as scheduled without the participation of the PPP, he would launch an agitation in the whole of West Pakistan from Khyber to Karachi. It was followed by Yahya's announcement of the postponement of the session.

While Yahya's act attracted a sharp criticism from most of political leaders in both the wings, Bhutto welcomed it. Later, when Mujib put forward his 4-point demand, he diplomatically opposed it by saying that he had no objection to the demands pertaining to the holding of inquiry into the killing of civilians by the army in East Pakistan and the return of the army to the barracks, but the other two should be taken up in the National Assembly. On 14 March 1971, he demanded publicly that the power should be transferred to the majority parties in both the wings. Urged by Yahya, he participated in the discussions from 16 March to 24 March, ostensibly to formulate a constitution but actually to buy time for Yahya. The fact that on 24 March, Yahya and Bhutto held a meeting after which both left East Bengal, further strengthened the suspicion of a conspiracy hatched by them. Later on (after the crackdown took place) Bhutto exclaimed: "By the Grace of Almighty, Pakistan has at last been saved."

A study of Bhutto's actions shows that not only he went on changing his demands, he even proposed two prime ministers for the two wings. His sole aim, obviously, was to capture power by any means. For his personal interests, he was prepared to sacrifice the national unity and integrity of Pakistan.

Compulsions of Mujib's Overwhelming Victory

If the massive victory of the Awami League in the elections caught the military-bureaucratic regime by surprise and upset its post-electoral alignments, it placed the Awami League's leader in an incarcerated position that took away his freedom of manoeuvre. The people of East Pakistan had voted for the programme of the Awami League, which promised them freedom from exploitation. Quite naturally, the people now hoped that the future constitution of the country would be framed on the basis of the Six-Point and Eleven-Point programmes. Not only the thumping majority with which AL won was significant but also the fact that while it captured almost all the seats in East Pakistan, it did not have even a single seat in the Western Wing. This explains the hardening of the attitude of Mujib after the declaration of election results. Before the elections, Sheikh Mujib, it is reported, was agreeable

to modify his Six-Point programme and also to show Yahya Khan the draft constitution prepared by the Awami League(13). It is likely that he may have agreed to it as a part of his political strategy, and because he never expected to get an absolute majority in the elections. Whatever might have been the intention of Mujib at that time, after the declaration of the election results it was almost impossible to do anything against the wishes of East Bengalee people. On 3 January 1971, Sheikh Mujib declared that the future constitution of the country would be framed on the basis of programme given in the Awami League's election manifesto(14). Of course, he sought the cooperation of the people's representatives of West Pakistan in framing the constitution but without any compromise of fundamental policy matters(15). He repeatedly expressed that there was no scope of readjustment in his party's Six-Point programme because it was on the basis of this programme that the "referendum" was held in the country. And, therefore, the Six-Point and Eleven-Point programmes were no more his party's property(16), but these belonged to the people of East Bengal. On 4 January 1971, he warned if the Six-Point programme was opposed by any quarter in West Pakistan, the responsibility of any consequences would be theirs(17).

Consistent with his Six-Point Programme, Mujib advocated grant to all the provinces of sufficient autonomy that would solve the problems of West Pakistan as well as of East Pakistan. Such a course could allow him to form a government at the centre without compromising the basic principles on which the Awami League had contested the elections. Any compromise on the Six-Point and Eleven-Point programmes with his absolute majority would have shaken the confidence of the people in the leadership of the Awami League. Besides the above-mentioned compulsions, his firm conviction that his was the victory of certain principles, left little room for making any compromise.

Line-up Of Other Parties

While the elections of 1970 gave the AL absolute majority in the National Assembly, it had placed the PPP as the second largest party in Pakistan, though the latter had captured only about one-half of the seats won by the former. Other minor parties obviously could not bring a radical change in the deliberations in the National Assembly, yet their policies could either increase or decrease the bargaining position of the PPP.

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Before coming to the tie-up of the minor parties, it would be useful to have a look at their strengths in the National Assembly from the Table XIII given below:-

PAKISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS

Name of Party	No. of Seats Contested	PROVINCE WISE RESULT					Baluchistan seats	Tribal Area	Indirectly Elected Women's seats	Total
		Pakistan	Punjab	Sind	NWFP	Baluchistan				
Awami League	162		--	--	--	--	--	7	167	
Pakistan People's Party	122	--	64	18	1	--	--	5	88	
All Pakistan Muslim League (Qaiyum)	132	--	1	1	7	--	--	--	9	
Muslim League (Council)	119	--	7	--	--	--	--	--	7	
Jamaat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (Hazarvi Group)	93	--	--	--	6	1	--	--	7	
Markazi-Jamaat-ul-Ulema- i-Islam- (Thanvi Group)	Not known	--	4	3	--	--	--	--	7	
National Awami Party (Wali Khan)	61	--	--	--	3	3	--	1	7	
Jamaat-i-Islami Muslim League	200	--	1	2	1	--	--	--	4	
(Convention)	124	--	2	--	--	--	--	--	2	
Pakistan Democratic Party	108	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	
Independents	300	1	3	3	--	--	7	--	14	
		162	82	27	18	4	7	13	313	

Of course, the two important parties - the Awami League which stood for secularism, socialistic reforms, full autonomy for East Bengal and friendly relations with India, won 167 (including 7 indirectly elected women) out of 169 seats from East Bengal and the Pakistan's People's Party which stood for Islamic nationalism, socialistic reforms, strong centre and anti-Indianism, won 88 (including 5 indirectly elected women) seats in West Pakistan - had left only a few seats to be shared by these parties. All Pakistan Muslim League of Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan which was known for championing the cause of Islamic nationalism, a strong centre and for its anti-Indian stance, secured a total of 9 seats - 1 each in Punjab and Sind and 7 in NWFP. Pakistan Muslim League (Convention) with similar ideological background could get only 2 seats from Punjab. Another political party with similar ideological orientation Jamaat-i-Islami, secured 4 seats - 1 each in Punjab and NWFP and 2 in Sind. Pakistan Muslim League (Council) of Mian Mumtaz Daultana, which differed with the above mentioned-parties only in one respect as it also demanded the introduction of economic reforms, obtained 7 seats, all from Punjab. Pakistan Democratic Party, having an ideological orientation like that of Pakistan Muslim League (Council), won only 1 seat in East Pakistan. Jamaat-ul-Ulema-i-Islami (Hazarvi Group), a progressive politico-religious party, got 7 seats - 6 in NWFP and 1 in Baluchistan. Markazi-Jamaat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (Thanvi Group), a rightist orthodox party, also got 7 seats - 4 in Punjab and 3 in Sind. The National Awami Party (Wali Group), a pro-Russian party which like the Awami League stood for secularism, socialism, full autonomy for East Bengal and friendly relations with India, won 7 seats - 3 in NWFP, 3 in Baluchistan and 1 indirectly elected women's seat(18). Besides, 14 seats were captured by independents including one from East Pakistan.

As the Awami League had secured absolute majority, it could form the government even without the support from other parties. However, it was obvious even in the beginning that some of the members of the West Pakistan parties either having similar ideological orientations like NAP (Wali group) or advocating economic reforms like the Muslim League (Council) and a few independents would support the AL led by Mujib. In addition, the lone independent member from East Pakistan could be expected to support Mujib. As such a situation was unpalatable for the PPP and the military-bureaucratic elite, they began to oppose the AL and its sympathisers. Attempts were made to assassinate the popular leaders. While Mujib

escaped an assassin's attempt on his life on the night of 8 January 1971, two newly elected MPs at Pabna and Chittagong were killed(19). These incidents, however, did not make any difference to the Awami League's position. Many leaders of West Pakistan pleaded with the ruling junta for a negotiated settlement with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Leaders like Air Marshal Nur Khan of the Council Muslim League, Wali Khan of the National Awami Party and Mufti Mahmud of the Jamait-ul-Ulema strongly denounced Bhutto for unjustifiably opposing the Awami League. Air Marshal Nur Khan, who stood for economic reforms, even went to the extent of saying that Mujibur Rahman's Six-Point programme of autonomy could be as beneficial for Punjab as for East Bengal(20). The fact that the Council Muslim League was known to be a rightist party, wedded to the ideals of unity and integrity of Pakistan and was the second largest political group in Punjab, lent special significance to such pronouncements(21).

The delay in summoning of the National Assembly session and the PPP's manoeuvres against the Awami League provided an opportunity to some of the East Pakistan political parties to take up those policies which could improve their image in the eyes of the people. Therefore, some leaders of different political parties, which had been considerably weakened due to the landslide victory of the Awami League in general elections, met at Santosh in Tangail - the seat of Bhashani - to formulate a strategy for making themselves popular. Aatur Rehman Khan with his truncated Pakistan National League, ASM Sulaiman of KSP, Pir Mohsenuddin (Dadu Miah) of East Pakistan Jamait-ul-Ulema-Islam and Lt Commander Muazzam Hussain, one of the accused of the Agartala Conspiracy Case, all joined the Santosh Parleys. Assuming that the demand for an independent East Bengal had built-in appeal amongst the masses of East Bengal, these leaders thought of giving to the people a clear-cut programme for separation of East Bengal from Pakistan. Obviously, the purpose was to outbid the Awami League and to revitalise themselves in politics by supporting extremist demands.

Another stage of lining up of the minor parties started when Bhutto decided not to attend the National Assembly session on 1 March 1971. Nurul Amin, President of Pakistan Democratic Party opposed this demand of Bhutto and requested all the members of the National Assembly to attend the session. Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maudodi considered Bhutto's demands as improper. Aatur Rehman Khan of Pakistan National League considered this move of Bhutto as an attempt to divide the country. Both the factions of the National

Awami Party also condemned the attitude of Bhutto. Still later when Bhutto opposed Mujib's Four-Point demands, he invited more criticism from various political parties. The General Secretary of PDP, Khwaja Mohd. Rafique condemned the fascist attitude of Bhutto which was responsible for creating an atmosphere of disunity. The General Secretary of Jamat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam, Mufti Mehmud and the Baluchi leader, Nawab Bugti also deplored Bhutto's attitude for creating a deadlock. Begum Tahmina Masud of Bahawalpur United Party, a local party, cautioned Bhutto that history would not forgive him for his deeds and assured Sheikh Mujibur Rahman full support on behalf of thirty-two lakh people of Bahawalpur. The lone member of the PDP in National Assembly, Nurul Amin, termed Bhutto's demands as unreal and irrational. Maulana Hazarvi, General Secretary of Jamat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (Hazarvi) which had 7 representatives in the National Assembly, while criticising Bhutto for his action, endorsed the decision of Sheikh Mujib not to attend the proposed conference of all parties in Dhaka on 10 March 1971. Bhutto, on the other hand, was supported only by Muslim League (Qaiyum Group) and Muslim League (Convention). Thus, Mujib not only had absolute majority in the National Assembly but also had the support of the majority of the representatives from three out of the total five provinces of Pakistan.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The story of National Assembly exposes the attempts of the military-bureaucratic group to thwart the democratic process in East Bengal. This group by its manoeuvres created circumstances in which it became possible, though unjustifiably, to postpone the National Assembly session. The first hint of Yahya Khan's plans is to be found in his two identical congratulatory messages sent to Mujib and Bhutto on the success of their parties in the National Assembly (22). Such an act was questionable as Mujib's party had secured a landslide victory and thereby he had become the democratically elected leader of Pakistan. Unwittingly Yahya Khan by doing so exposed his intention to play Bhutto against Mujibur Rahman and thereby retain power. As Yahya required some time to chalk out his strategy to deal with the unexpected situation, he did not meet Mujib immediately after the election. After about a fortnight of the declaration of the results, probably to know the mind of Bhutto, he first met the PPP leader on the 28 December 1970 (23). At the same time, probably to pacify Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he declared that the National Assembly, when summoned, would first meet at Dhaka (24).

Thinking that Mujib's position had become slightly weak by Bhutto's pronouncements, Yahya Khan went to Dhaka on 11 January 1971 to meet Mujib. During the next two days, he held discussions and secured the assurance from Mujibur Rahman for sufficient federal funds to meet military expenditure. As mentioned earlier while leaving Dhaka, Yahya Khan called Mujib the future Prime Minister of the country which must have alarmed Bhutto. Soon after this meeting, Yahya Khan went to meet Bhutto. It can be presumed that in this meeting Yahya Khan urged Bhutto to meet Mujib on 27 January, and held discussions with the Awami League leader on the Six-Point programme. These talks made it clear to Bhutto and Yahya that the Awami League was committed to the Six-Point and Eleven-Point programmes, and, therefore, some other strategy had to be evolved to deal with the situation.

As mentioned earlier, the hijacking of Indian plane on 30 January 1971, was used by Yahya Khan as an opportunity to create a war hysteria against India. Following this incident, Yahya Khan spoke of an emergency and his military advisers expressed grave anxiety about the 'brink of war' situation. But these attempts did not check the Awami League from demanding the summoning of the National Assembly at the earliest. When the pressure by the Awami League and the people increased, Yahya on 13 February 1971, announced that the National Assembly would meet in Dhaka on 3 March 1971. By this time, Yahya Khan knew pretty well that Bhutto would not agree to attend the session of the National Assembly, and this would provide more opportunity to the President to manage things in his favour.

As was expected, on the 15 February 1971, Bhutto came forward with the declaration of boycotting the National Assembly session, beginning on 3 March in Dhaka. The PPP leader threatened that his party members would resign from the National Assembly before it met. This was not permissible under the Legal Framework Order. So Yahya amended the relevant section of the Order through a Martial Law decree(25). Thereafter, probably to meet any eventuality of strong opposition from the people, Yahya dissolved his civilian cabinet and held a secret conference with all his Governors and Martial Law Administrators(26). The Governor at Dhaka, Vice-Admiral S.M. Ahsan and the Martial Law Administrator, Lt.Gen. S.M. Yakub, apprised Yahya Khan of the dangerous situation in East Bengal and advised immediate political action to end the crisis. Yahya Khan, however, did not pay any heed to it. Taking advantage of Bhutto's statement, that if the National Assembly session was held on 3 March 1971, as scheduled without PPP's participation, he

would launch a popular agitation from Khyber to Karachi, on 1 March 1971, Yahya Khan announced the postponement of National Assembly session for an indefinite period. Justifying his decision, Yahya Khan pointed out that the major party of West Pakistan, namely the Pakistan People's Party, as well as certain other political parties, had announced their intention of not attending the National Assembly session of 3 March 1971. In addition, the general situation of tension created by India further complicated the position, compelling him to take such a step. He, however, promised the people that as soon as the situation would improve, he would have no hesitation in summoning the session of National Assembly.

DE FACTO SELF-RULE IN EAST WING

The indefinite postponement of National Assembly, which was announced on 1 March 1971, produced a sharp reaction in East Bengal. Spontaneously, and even before a strategy could be chalked out by the Awami League, students and others had taken to the streets to demonstrate against this action of thwarting democratic processes. Processions were taken out, raising slogans against Yahya Khan's regime and demanding an independent East Bengal. This was the beginning of mass upsurge. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, deploring the postponement of National Assembly, formulated a plan of non-violent non-cooperation movement against the Central Government of Pakistan. He also called for a complete 'hartal' or strike in Dhaka on 2 March and throughout East Bengal on 3 March(27). While people were reacting angrily to the postponement of the National Assembly session another action of the military junta added fuel to the fire. The postponement of the National Assembly session was accompanied by the removal of Vice-Admiral S.M. Ahsan, a popular figure in East Bengal, as the Governor of East Pakistan. Obviously, he was removed because of his sympathetic attitude to the Bengalees' demands(28). In response to the call given by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, shops and business establishments in Dhaka remained closed and all vehicles went off the roads and train services were suspended on 2 March 1971. National flags were pulled down from the provincial Secretariat, High Court and other Government buildings. The mob even forced a contingent of East Pakistan Rifles to raise slogans of 'Swadhin Purba Bangla' (Independent East Bengal) in Dhaka University. A meeting of about thirty-five thousand people was held, where the speakers made a declaration of independent East Bengal. Following this, the Pakistan Government imposed curfew in Dhaka on 2 March. However, groups of people continued to defy the curfew orders. On 3

March, the Pakistan Government tried to frustrate meeting at Paltan Maidan, which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was to address, but in vain. The Martial Law authorities resorted to firing at certain places, in which a number of persons were killed(29). Sheikh Mujibur Rahman urged the authorities to handover power to the elected representatives of the people(30). He also rejected the invitation of Yahya Khan to attend the proposed meeting of the leaders of all parliamentary groups on 10 March in Dhaka to solve the constitutional tangle. As mentioned earlier, at this stage, many political leaders condemned Yahya's actions and showed solidarity with Mujib.

On 3 March 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced the details of the Non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement from 3 March to 6 March. He called for the observance of a province-wide hartal during this period in all spheres, including Government offices. All Bengalees serving in radio, television and pro-military junta newspapers were asked to refuse to cooperate with the military junta(31). From 4 March 1971, the Awami League police directives began to be issued from the 'Bangladesh Secretariat' at Mujib's house. These directives issued in the name of Bangladesh, helped to keep the Bangladesh economy moving and to maintain law and order(32). On 4 March, Mujib issued a directive to the Government and non-Government offices to function between 2.30 and 4.30 pm where salary had not been paid, for the purpose of disbursing salaries. Exemption was also granted from hartal to the essential services like hospitals, water, gas and electricity supply, telephones (local), fire services etc(33). The demonstrations against the postponement of the National Assembly session continued between 3 March and 6 March, and the army tried to crush them by force. Large numbers of persons were injured while many were killed.

In view of the fast deteriorating situation in East Bengal, Yahya Khan in his address to the Nation on the Pakistan radio on 6 March announced that the inaugural session of the National Assembly would be held on 25th March(34). He also said that while he was trying to initiate the process of transfer of power to the elected representatives, it was obstructed by the political leaders. He particularly blamed Mujibur Rahman for it(35). At the same time, Lt Gen Tikka Khan, well-known for his ruthless repression of dissent, was appointed Martial Law Administrator and Governor of East Pakistan(36). However, the Chief Justice of East Pakistan refused - on the plea of illness - to administer the oath of office to Tikka Khan, and he remained only the Martial Law

Administrator till a judge from West Pakistan was called in. The speech and this move of Yahya Khan confirmed the suspicion of the people of East Pakistan. On 6 March an incident of jail-breaking took place, reminding of the fall of Bastille during the French Revolution. Three hundred and forty-one prisoners escaped from the Dhaka Central Jail and later took out a procession(37). Similar incidents were also reported to have taken place at Narayanganj, Comilla and Barisal(38).

On 7 March 1971, Mujibur Rahman in a public meeting at Dhaka which was attended by over a million people, criticised Yahya Khan for blaming him and the Bengalees for the crisis. He also announced that he would attend the Assembly Session, fixed for 25 March, provided four conditions were satisfied(39). These were : withdrawal of the troops to barracks, the holding of a judicial enquiry into killings by the military, retraction of Martial Law, and immediate transfer of power to the people's representatives(40). Mujib further pointed out that there was still time for both the wings to remain united, if things were settled peacefully(41). Though Mujib did not declare outright independence, he did mention the terms 'freedom' and 'independence'. It appears that as a last attempt to maintain the integrity of Pakistan he had indicated his conditions to the military junta, hoping that Yahya Khan and his supporters might still change their minds and the crisis solved peacefully.

To put further pressure on the military junta, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on 7 March announced a week long programme of agitation starting from 8 March. He pointed out that this programme was in accordance with his programme of non-violent non-cooperation to attain the immediate termination of Martial Law and transfer of power to the elected representatives(42). He called for the continuation of the no-tax campaign, closure of all Government Offices, including High Courts, educational institutions and seaports. Exemption for railway was to continue, but the railway workers and the port-workers were asked not to cooperate with the West Pakistani authorities and to see that the railways and ports were not used for the mobilization of forces. Radio, television and the news-papers were asked to give complete versions of the Awami League statements. Banks were also asked not to effect remittances to the West Wing. This programme also included organisation of Sangram Parishads in each mohalla, thana, sub-division and district under the leadership of the local Awami League activists for implementation of the programme(43). All these directives received almost total obedience from the people throughout East Bengal(44).

The speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7 March 1971 marked a new stage in the development of the movement. He had taken over the virtual control of the administration of East Bengal. Many flags of independent Bangladesh were displayed at the venues of the meetings(45). Black flags were hoisted on many buildings in Dhaka city and other places in East Pakistan. Many political leaders both from East and West Pakistan issued statements supporting Mujib's four demands and urged Yahya Khan to accept them, so that a grave political crisis could be averted. Nurul Amin, President of the Pakistan Democratic Party, pointed out that the non-violent non-cooperation movement was spontaneous upsurge provoked by the several postponements of the National Assembly session. He urged Yahya Khan to devise effective means in consultation with Sheikh Mujib for the transfer of power to the elected representatives(46). K.A. Subur, General Secretary of all Pakistan Muslim League also requested the President to transfer power to the elected representatives through the adoption of Government of India Act, 1935 and the Indian Independence Act of 1947 with necessary amendments(47). Khwaja Khairuddin, President of East Pakistan Muslim League, expressed his full agreement with the demands of Sheikh Mujib. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, President of the pro-Chinese National Awami League, in a public meeting at Dhaka on 9 March expressed full support to Mujib's non-violent non-cooperation movement. Ataur Rehman Khan, President of the Pakistan National League, pointed out that the recent happenings clearly indicated that the people wanted nothing short of an independent Bangladesh. Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, President of East Pakistan NAP (Pro-Russian), said that Sheikh Mujib's conditions for participating in the National Assembly session were just and minimum.

Meanwhile as directed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the movement was conducted in a disciplined manner and, therefore, some semblance of order was maintained. The Awami League organised peace patrols which checked the rioting. The non-violent non-cooperation movement continued successfully in accordance with the programme laid down. Mujib, in addition to the four conditions laid down by his party, demanded three more things: the cessation of military build-up in East Pakistan, stoppage of victimization of Government officers and employees and entrusting the maintenance of law and order only to the police and the East Pakistan Rifles(48). However, Yahya Khan, instead of coming to Dhaka on 10 March, postponed his visit till 15 March. Reacting against this, Mujib on 11 March said that the use of force could silence the voice of the people only

temporarily. He also criticised the Martial Law order imposing upon civil employees of Defence Establishments to resume their duties by 15 March. He pointed out that such order could only serve as a provocation to the people. The civil employees of the Pakistan Defence Establishments took out a procession against the order in Dhaka on 14th March. Later they marched to Mujib's residence and expressed their support to his movement. Mujib, seeing no favourable response from Yahya Khan and the continuation of the policy of repression by the West Pakistani military junta, was forced to assume full responsibility of civil administration in Bangladesh(49). He declared that the Awami League was the majority party according to people's verdict and, therefore, would not allow the repression to continue by the West Pakistani rulers. On the same day, the Government machinery started functioning again with the promulgation of thirty-five elaborate directives(50). Tax collection had to recommence, but all receipts were to remain under the control of the provincial Government. The district administration was asked to keep close liaison with the local Awami League authorities(51). Thus, in an unprecedented, bloodless and open coup, the de facto administration of the province came into the hands of the Awami League. When Yahya Khan came to meet Mujibur Rahman and held discussions with him between 16 March and 24 March, Mujib was effectively in control of East Bengal.

PHONEY NEGOTIATIONS AND MILITARY PREPARATIONS

There is no doubt that Z.A. Bhutto and President Yahya Khan collaborated with each other to deny Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League the political right to frame a constitution for the country and form a government at the Centre(52). But, as already noticed, their respective objectives were incompatible. While Bhutto sought to share power at the Centre and a complete sway over West Pakistan, Yahya's game was to block Mujib with Bhutto and then to crush the East Pakistan's demands by military action. So, in the last week of February, Yahya Khan suddenly dissolved his civilian cabinet and held a secret conference with all his Governors and Martial Law Administrators. On or around 22 February 1971, a high level conference was held at the Army Headquarters in Rawalpindi, which was attended only by President Yahya Khan and the senior-most Army Generals(53). In this conference it was decided that political power should not be handed over to Mujibur Rahman and his party(54). The Generals thought that the autonomy movement of East Pakistan had been created by the politicians, and a few thousand dead could be sufficient to crush it. In March, Bhutto

reportedly revealed similar thinking to some foreign journalists : "The autonomy issue has been created by a few intellectuals. A few thousand dead in Dhaka and East Pakistan will be quiet soon"(55). Similarly General Tikka Khan reportedly told President Yahya Khan : "Give me one week's time, I will bring back normalcy in East Pakistan"(56).

When Yahya arrived in Dhaka on 15 March, for further dialogue with Mujibur Rahman, a number of Generals also arrived in Dhaka to give final touches to the Army's action plan. Next day, Free Bangladesh Students' Central Action Committee issued a press statement condemning the Pakistan Army's repression against the people of East Pakistan. Many many people had been killed and even women folk were tortured brutally. They asked Yahya Khan to "take these soldiers back"(57).

Now there was tremendous pressure on Mujib from the militants within and outside his party not to negotiate with Yahya, as they thought that the latter was not likely to come to terms with the Awami League. However, it appears, Mujib still hoped that Yahya might, due to the pressure of events, agree to the terms of the Awami League. On the other hand, Yahya came to Dhaka under the growing political pressure from the West Pakistani leaders and to buy time for his military preparations. They held several rounds of talks during 16-23 March. In addition, senior leaders of the Awami League and the top advisers of Yahya met separately.

By then it became clear that the East Pakistan Rifles and the police force would not be a party to any military action against the people of East Pakistan. A few incidents confirmed this. In one instance, a Bengalee EPR Naib Subedar, Ahsanullah, refused to open fire on the Bengalee demonstrators. In another instance, Naib Subedar Salek Uddin, also did the same and both of them were arrested. On 19 March, in a military action against civilians at Joydebpur, 40 km away from Dhaka, about 150 people were reportedly killed(58). The following day, the Chief of Staff of Pakistan Army, General Hamid, was seen in Dhaka, from where he started visiting various cantonments of East Pakistan. Bhutto arrived in Dhaka on 21 March and, within two hours of his arrival, joined Yahya in a secret meeting lasting for two hours.

On 23 March, it was reported that an interim agreement had been reached between Yahya and Mujib on immediate withdrawal of Martial Law by a Presidential Proclamation and immediate restoration of power to the

representative parties. The same day, in a meeting between the President's aid and the AL team, a draft constitution was submitted by Dr. Kamal Hussain. It outlined interim administrative arrangements and a procedure for the framing of two constitutions for the two wings of Pakistan by two "constitutional conventions" for the 'Confederation of Pakistan'(59).

While these tortuous negotiations were going on, the events in East Bengal were putting pressure on Mujib to declare complete independence. On 23 March, on the occasion of the Republic Day of Pakistan, the Central Students' Action Committee hoisted the Bangladesh flag in place of the Pakistan flag all over Dhaka. This was a reaction against the Pak army's firings at different places in the province starting from 19 March in Joydebpur. The Central Students' Action Committee also observed 23 March as 'Resistance Day' and marched in a procession to Mujib's house and forced him to hoist the Bangladesh flag at his residence(60). Meanwhile, Radio Pakistan Dhaka, was renamed as "Dhaka Betar Kendra", and it began to issue news bulletins, about revolutionary happenings in East Bengal. During the period of negotiations, the hold of Mujib on East Bengal's administration further increased. Every day, innumerable processions of various bodies, including that of government employees, chanting slogans like 'Jai Bangla' or 'Swadhin Bangladesh Zindabad', paraded the streets of Dhaka. These usually ended at Mujib's house. Moreover, the directives of Mujib were faithfully implemented by the vast majority of the people in East Bengal. Hence, by 24 March 1971, Mujib had virtually established a parallel government which became one of the important dimensions of the Bangladesh Independence movement.

At this time, President Yahya Khan began to put such objections to the draft constitution, submitted by the Awami League that it became clear he was going back on his earlier assurances. The negotiations had virtually come to an end on 23 March. Although, A.K. Brohi - a constitutional expert and member of Yahya's team - opined on 24 March that the Indian Independence Act provided a precedent for the transfer of power by presidential proclamation, the President had other plans to implement(61). While Tajuddin Ahmed, as the spokesman of the AL, was meeting the President's aides to know the decision of Yahya Khan on 24 March, the latter was secretly ordering the Pakistan Army to go ahead with the crackdown. On 25th morning, Bhutto met Yahya and Lt Gen Peerzada to discuss the latest developments. The President left Dhaka secretly for Karachi at 7 p.m the same day, without informing even Bhutto(62).

In retrospect, the discussions that took place in the third week of March 1971, were bound to fail. While for Mujib, the talks were the last attempt to come to a peaceful settlement of the crisis, for Yahya these were merely an eyewash to hoodwink the East Bengal leaders and the world at large, till the time military preparations were over. As soon as these were completed, all pretensions of finding a political solution were thrown to the winds, and the military crackdown started.

The first batch of Pakistani troops had arrived in Dhaka from West Pakistan by a Boeing aircraft of the Pakistan International Airlines on the night of February 28, under strict security cover. Tanks were brought to Dhaka from other cantonments. Immediately on arrival, these were put on soft tracks for use on the city roads. Troop movement by air from the Western Wing to East Pakistan became a regular nocturnal affair(63). Troop movements over such a long distance (three thousand two hundred kilometres) by air, especially after the ban on overflights by India, following the blowing up of the hijacked Indian aircraft, entailed lengthy administrative and logistic preparations at the despatching as well as the receiving ends. A backward calculation of time would show that the troops which moved from Kharian and Quetta cantonments must have received orders to move at least two weeks earlier. Accordingly, the army units must have received their movement orders even before 13 February, when Yahya Khan announced the date of the National Assembly session in Dhaka.

The military build-up was continued furiously. Even as Yahya Khan was sending out the invitations on March 3 for the meeting on March 10, a battalion of the Baluch Regiment (22 Baluch) was airlifted to East Pakistan. This unit was kept at the EPR HQ at peelkhana in Dhaka, and it started reconnaissance in EPR uniform from the following day(64).

When people started talking about the military build-up, Yahya gave the excuse that such a build-up was necessitated by troop concentration by India along the borders. According to one U.S. newspaper report, two Pakistani C-130 aircraft with undisclosed cargo arrived at Dhaka on 16 March 1971, and according to the "Patriot" report datelined 16 March, two ships had brought troops to Chittagong, and those were being landed secretly(65). However, dock workers were refusing to unload the cargo from these ships. The "Patriot" also confirmed the airlift of troops from West Pakistan to Dhaka airport, via Ceylon and Sheikh Mujib got the information that 14,000 Pak troops had been sent to East Pakistan before the arrival of

reinforcements which might have raised the strength to 10,000 troops(66). Sheikh Mujib felt that Yahya's postponement of the National Assembly meeting was aimed at gaining time to rush additional troops to Bangladesh(67).

The ship, MV Swat, arrived at Chittagong port from West Pakistan, loaded with arms and ammunition. The dock labourers of Chittagong port refused to allow the unloading of military stores from the ship because they feared that these were likely to be used against them.

Although it was announced on 24 March that the talks between Yahya Khan and the political leaders of both the Wings of Pakistan were still continuing, the West Pakistani politicians started flying back to Karachi like birds returning to their nests before the coming storm. The same day, General Khadim Hussain Raja alongwith Brigadier Ansari, a West Pakistani Officer, flew to Chittagong in a helicopter, with a view to removing Brig Mozumdar, a Bengalee officer, from his command at Chittagong. He convinced Brig Mozumdar that 2 East Bengal, stationed at Joydebpur, north of Dhaka, who had shown some signs of restiveness, needed a pep talk from 'Papa Tiger'(68). In the evening, he returned to Dhaka with Brigadier Mozumdar, leaving behind Brigadier Ansari to control the situation in Chittagong. This was the end of Mozumdar's command in the Pak Army. Under personal supervision of the new Brigadier, the army started unloading arms and ammunition from the MV Swat. Chittagong seemed to burst in anger and people set up barricades on the road connecting the port with the cantonment. This led to firing on the crowds, and nobody knew how many were killed or injured.

According to a Pakistani officer, it was on 17 March that President Yahya Khan, after his talks with Mujib, reportedly told Gen Tikka Khan : "The bastard is not behaving. You get ready". Tikka Khan rang up the G.O.C. at 10 p.m.: "Khadim you can go ahead"(69). The detailed planning for the Pak military crack-down on Bangladesh then started. On 18 March (morning), Maj Gen Khadim Hussain Raja and Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali met in the G.O.C.'s office to draft the basic plan for "Operation Searchlight" in place of the earlier plan for "Operation Blitz" (to enforce Martial Law in its usual role). While Gen Farman Ali wrote down the first part of the new plan, using an ordinary school pencil, Gen Khadim wrote the second part dealing with the distribution of resources and the allocation of tanks to brigades and units. The plan was read out on 19 March to General Hamid and Lt Gen Tikka Khan who approved the main contents of the plan but struck out

the clause pertaining to the disarming of regular Bengalee troops (not EPR or Police)(70).

All preparations for the military crack-down were completed by 24 March. The final order indicating the time when the crack-down should start was conveyed over telephone at 11 a.m. on 25 March. Lt Gen Tikka Khan rang up Maj Gen Khadim Husain: "Khadim, it is tonight"(71). The date coincided with the second anniversary of Yahya Khan's assumption of power. General Khadim passed the order to his staff for implementation. The General Staff of HQ 14 Division rang up all the outstation garrisons to inform them of the H-Hour through a private code, so that all garrisons could act simultaneously.

THE CRACK-DOWN OF 25 MARCH 1971

Although the fateful hour was set for 260100, i.e., 1 a.m. of 26 March, the actual crack-down began a little earlier. According to the plan of the operation, code-named OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT(72), Maj Gen Farman Ali, with 57 Brigade under Brigadier Arbab, was responsible for operations in Dhaka and its suburbs, while Major General Khadim was to take care of the rest of the province. Lt Gen Tikka Khan and his staff were to monitor the progress of the operations from the Martial Law Headquarters in the Second Capital(73).

Before 11 p.m. on 25 March, Sirajul Alam Khan alongwith some other student leaders met Mujib at his residence and urged him to issue a declaration of independence and call upon the EBR, EPR, Police and Ansars to resist the Pak Army. Mujib agreed, and at about midnight tried to contact the Dhaka Radio Station, but could not do so as the Army had already seized it. He then managed to contact the Chittagong Radio Station through the EPR wireless to broadcast the declaration of Independence. Mujib also gave instructions to his colleagues to go underground, but he himself preferred to remain at home. He knew that he might be killed, but nevertheless, an independent Bangladesh would be built on his grave(74).

Meanwhile, starting from the cantonment at about 11.30 p.m., West Pakistani troops reached their target areas, such as the Dhaka University Campus, Dhanmandi area where Mujib was living, Nawabpur, and the old city, before midnight. In an act of treachery unparalleled in contemporary history, a programme of calculated genocide was unleashed on the peaceful and unsuspecting population of Dhaka by midnight of 25 March. No ultimatum was given to the Awami League by

...hya, not even a curfew order was issued when the machine guns, artillery, and cannon on the tanks launched a reign of terror, death and destruction. At the first shot was fired, the voice of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came faintly through over the radio which sounded like a pre-recorded message. It said, "This may be my last message. From today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh, wherever you are and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved"(75).

Heavy troop movements along the main city roads made the residents of Dhaka believe that some action was imminent. But later when the sounds of guns, tanks and rifle fire came from all sides, people were thrown into confusion, and an unknown fear gripped them all. By 12-30 that night the telephones were dead and the whole city was aflame. The 31 Field Regiment, tactically deployed in the Second Capital area for quite some time, had secretly prepared a target list, and by 1 a.m., on 26 March, the first artillery shells were landing on and around the main targets(76). The bursting of these shells shook the whole city. People took shelter under their bed and children started crying in fear while older people started praying and reciting from the holy Quran. One tank, one APC and a platoon of Special Service Group (Commandos) under Lt Gen Z.A. Khan, the C.O. and Maj Bilal, the Company Commander, raided Mujib's house in Dhanmandi. When they started firing at the house, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shouted at them: "You can arrest me; but stop this firing"(77). Soon, Mujib offered himself for arrest. The raiding party rounded up everybody in the house and brought them to the Second Capital in army jeeps. The voice of Major Jaffar, Bde Major of 57 Bde, came on the army wireless: "Big bird in the cageothers not in their nests.....Over"(78). Mujib was lodged in the Adamjee School for the night. Next day, he was shifted to Flag Staff House, from where he was flown to Karachi three days later. When the Station Commander, Dhaka, asked Sheikh Mujibur Rahman why he stayed back and allowed other leaders to run away or go under round, he replied that he wanted to save Pakistan. During his confinement in the Cantonment, Mujib repeated this many times(79).

While Mujib was resting in the Adamjee School, the residents of Dhaka were passing through hell. According to a Pakistani army officer, who himself witnessed the harrowing genocide: "The prominent feature of this gory night was the flames shooting to

the sky. At times, mournful clouds of smoke accompanied the blaze but soon they were overwhelmed by the flaming fire trying to lick at the stars. The light of the moon and the glow of the stars paled before this man-made furnace. The tallest columns of smoke and fire emerged from the University campus although some other parts of the city, such as the premises of the daily, 'People', had no small share in these macabre fireworks"(80).

Iqbal Hall and Jagannath Hall in the University campus headed the list of targets of the planners of the army crack-down. The troops attacked the resident students and teachers indiscriminately after smashing the buildings with rocket launchers, mortars and recoilless rifles. Hundreds of these unfortunate students, teachers and their family members were queued up and then shot or bayoneted to death. They included Dr. G.C. Dev, Dr. M.A. Khair, Dr. Serajul Haque Khan, Dr. Shahadat Ali, Munier Chowdhury, Mufazzal Haider Chowdhury, Jyotirmoy Guha Thakurata and Anwar Pasha. "Besides, a sizeable number of reputed journalists, doctors and literary persons fell victims to their killing hands. History has hardly witnessed such a massacre of human beings"(81).

The U.S. Intelligence Agency, C.I.A., reportedly collaborated with the Pak military junta in trying to destroy the autonomy movement of East Pakistan by exterminating the Bengalee elite(82).

Other important targets such as the Bengalee officers and Jawans at Kurmitola cantonment, the Police HQ at Rajarbagh, the East Pakistan Rifles HQ at Peelkhana, and the Hindu areas in the old city such as Tanti Bazar, Tejgaon industrial area, ferry ghats, stations, road-side slums, Malibagh, Maghbazar, Bahubazar, Nayabazar, and Shakhari Bazar - wherever there was concentration of population - experienced inhuman massacres and hellish conflagrations. The police force at Rajarbagh and the EPR men at Peelkhana put some resistance, but the army soon overpowered them with the help of their sophisticated weapons including tanks. Incendiary tank shells and liquid fire from flame throwers made a big bonfire of the police barracks. Many were roasted alive with their families. The fighting continued for over six hours. The rootless pavement and slum dwellers were exterminated like vermins, because without their participation no political movement, demonstration or meeting could be organised. A Pakistani officer made a boasting remark to foreign journalists: "We can kill anyone for anything. We are answerable to none"(83). At 8.30 a.m., on 26 March, Bhutto, escorted by Pakistani soldiers, left Hotel Inter-Continental

Dhaka for Karachi remarking, "Thank God, Pakistan has been saved"(84).

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY RESTORED"

By the time the first Martial Law proclamations issued by Lt Gen Tikka Khan, were broadcast the next morning some 50,000 people, had been butchered most of them without offering any resistance. Dhaka had been turned into an inferno with fires raging in most corners of the city. Sleeping inhabitants who had been drawn out of their homes by the fires, started by the military, were machine-gunned as they ran to escape the flames(85).

The military operations in Dhaka continued without interruption. On 27th morning when the curfew was apparently lifted after 33 hours, almost the entire population of Dhaka started fleeing, and within the next 24 hours approximately 75 to 85 per cent of the population is said to have left the city. The West Pakistani rulers ordered Government employees to join their work, but few did. The massacre continued by way of indiscriminate mass killing, loot, arson and rape under a policy of annihilation. Within the next seven days, they burned down most of the populated areas in and around Dhaka.

Jinjirabazar, on the other side of the river Buriganga, was attacked in the dark night and the population of approximately 25,000 suffered terribly. By setting fire, the Pak troops devastated the entire area of approximately 10 to 15 sq. miles and killed approximately 10,000 to 12,000 people. Similar war of annihilation was let loose on Shantinagar Bazar, Rayerbazar, Bhadi, Shakhari Bazar, Tatibazar, Kaptan Bazar, Chakbazar, Narayanganj, Tongi and many other places. The total number of people killed in and around Dhaka city alone would be approximately 150,000. Officers and other ranks in East Bengal Regiments, who were within reach were disarmed and were subsequently killed along with their families. In Jessore and Comilla Cantonments almost all the Bengali Officers (about 30 each) were killed, including their families present at that time. Similar genocide took place in all the other Cantonments and military bases(86).

In every place where they found resistance, they strafed and bombed from the air by Sabre jets. Besides thousands of villages, the towns heavily mortared and bombed from the air were, Chittagong, Sylhet, Maulvibazar, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Narshingdi, Chandpur, Feni, Khulna, Bheramara, Kumarkhali, Alamdanga, Pabna, Shahjadpur, Rajshahi, Nawabganj,

Rangpur, Santahar, Parbatipur, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Bogra, Sherpur, Mymensingh, Tangail, Jamalpur and Joydebpur. Fifteen thousand out of 60 thousand villages were bombed or set on fire along with 20 out of 21 district headquarters. Non-Bengalee collaborators assisted West Pakistani soldiers in searching out prominent Hindus, Awami League leaders and workers and then killing them without discrimination(87). The West Pakistan troops often followed a set pattern in their genocide. Before they sent troops to a particular area, they bombed and strafed indiscriminately, leaving the people terror-stricken. And then the troops would arrive. They killed anybody they found, looted houses, banks, jewellery shops, raped women, stole foodgrains and cattle and finally set the villages on fire.

Hospitals and medical centres were bombed; nurses and sisters driven away from their patients. Young Bengalees' blood would be drained out totally at hospital for transfusion into the veins of wounded Pakistani soldiers, and their dead bodies were thrown into rivers like Buri Ganga. Clergymen were persecuted and missionaries were made to broadcast at gun point at Rajshahi. A large number of Christians were also turned into refugees and there were instances of churches being shelled and damaged(88).

It is difficult to assess the exact damage and loss of life, but a conservative estimate would suggest the number of EBR/EPR and civilian casualties as one million. The Pak forces also suffered considerable casualties(89).

Similar mass killings were perpetrated by West Pakistani troops in Chittagong and other important towns of East Pakistan, where West Pakistani troops were garrisoned. On the night of March 25, the Pakistani troops in Chittagong destroyed the Recruitment Centre of the East Bengal Regiment, killing all the trainees there. Major Rafiq-ul-Islam who was then stationed in Chittagong as the Commander of a EPR Company, wanted to forestall the Pakistani crack-down by launching an armed attack against the West Pakistani forces in Chittagong on the night of March 24, but Lt Col M.R. Chowdhury and Major Zia-ur-Rehman, both Bengalee officers, persuaded him not to start any action, but to wait further(90).

However, when the news of the failure of the talks between President Yahya Khan and Mujibur Rahman reached Chittagong, coinciding with the sudden rupture of wireless communication between the EPR wireless unit in Chittagong and the EPR Control Station at

Peelkhana, Dhaka, in the evening of March 25, Major Rafiq-ul-Islam launched his planned attack against the West Pakistani troops in Chittagong. There were about 300 West Pakistani soldiers in the EPR HQ at Halishahar mostly senior JCOs and NCOs. All these Pakistani troops were cleverly disarmed and taken prisoners(91). Other West Pakistani EPR troops stationed in border posts around Chittagong were also neutralised by the Bengalee troops. But the West Pakistani troops took the initiative and got the upper hand in Chittagong Cantonment and at Sholashahar, though the total strength of Bengalee soldiers of the EBR was about 2000, as against hardly 400 West Pakistani troops (92). At about 11.30 p.m., on 25 March, men of 20 Baluch moved out of their barracks and suddenly attacked their Bengalee comrades in the EBR Centre. First, they captured the armoury and killed its guards. Then they went into a frenzy of killing, murdering more than 1,000 Bengalee soldiers, who had been sleeping. Thereafter, they moved to the latter's family quarters and indiscriminately killed anyone within the range of their weapons. Women and children were simply bayoneted to death. Those Bengalee soldiers, who could manage to escape this massacre, ran away in different directions. Some of them reached Rafiq-ul-Islam's Tactical HQ on the Railway Hill to narrate their harrowing tales, while others moved to 8 East Bengal Regiment stationed at Sholashahar where all soldiers and most of its officers were Bengalees. The escapees from the cantonment requested 8 East Bengal Regiment to come to the rescue of the Bengalee soldiers and their families in the cantonment area. But some officers of 8 East Bengal Regiment argued that there were only 300 soldiers with them with insufficient arms and ammunition, and hence, it would be suicidal to go to the rescue of the East Bengal Regimental Centre against the well-armed soldiers of 20 Baluch(93).

Major Rafiq-ul-Islam fortified his position on the Railway Hill by digging defensive trenches laying new telephone lines and placing defensive weapons such as 3" mortars in pre-selected locations on the Hill. Meanwhile, Major Zia-ur-Rehman and his men successfully arrested the non-Bengalee officers at Sholashahar and left for Patya on that same night. In the early hours of the morning of 26 March, West Pakistani troops moved out from the Naval base and attacked EPR defences at Halishahar, but this attack was beaten back with heavy casualties to the Pakistanis. At this time, a message was received by Major Rafiq-ul-Islam that a big West Pakistani convoy of about 100 vehicles had left Comilla and was moving toward Chittagong. Major Rafiq-ul-Islam moved a Company of EPR under a JCO to ambush this column. The

Pakistani convoy, consisting of 24 FF, detachment of field engineers, and a few 120 mm mortars, and commanded by Brigadier Iqbal Shafi, Commander of the 53 Bde at Comilla, was halted at the Shuvapur bridge, which had been extensively damaged by EPR men. As the repair of the bridge was taking time, the Bde Commander moved toward Chittagong with his infantry, leaving behind the mortars and engineering detachment. When at sun-set Brigadier Shafi and his column reached Kumira, 23 km short of Chittagong, the EPR troops ambushed them with murderous fire, killing about 70 West Pakistani soldiers, including the C.O. of 24 FF, Lt Col Shahpur Khan, injuring many others and destroying a large number of vehicles (94). Brigadier Shafi fled towards the hills for safety. Other survivors followed him in total panic, dropping their weapons and leaving their stores in the vehicles. Meanwhile, the rear half of the West Pakistani convoy, which was out of the EPR troops' firing range, took up positions and started firing back, resulting in a prolonged fight for over an hour, while the Pakistani mortar batteries crossed Shuvapur bridge and joined the rear elements of the Pakistani column. At this, the EPR troops withdrew to the next position about 5 km behind, after suffering casualties of 14 dead and 15 injured.

The lack of information about the Pakistani column created much apprehension in Dhaka. The G.O.C., Maj Gen Khadim Hussain Raja, flew in an army helicopter on 27th to locate the missing column. As his chopper tried to land in the 20 Baluch area, close to the Chittagong hills, it attracted small arms fire from the freedom fighters. Although hit, it managed to land safely. Lt Col Fatimi of 20 Baluch could not give any information about the missing column, but proudly reported his success in killing 50 and capturing 500 'rebels' in the East Bengal Centre. While the G.O.C. continued his search and flew along the Comilla road, his chopper again attracted small arms fire from Kumira area. One bullet grazed the tail of the helicopter, while another pierced through its belly, one inch away from the fuel tank. After that the General lost all interest in his search mission and made straight for Dhaka (95).

Although according to plan, EPR reinforcements from Cox's Bazar and Kaptai were to come to Chittagong to help Maj Rafiq-ul-Islam, they were stopped at Kalurghat bridge by Major Zia, and EPR troops from Ramgarh also failed to come owing to the heavy fighting at Kumira. Thus, Major Rafiq-ul-Islam's plan for attacking the naval base and the port area fizzled out (96). By 9 a.m., on 26 March, Pakistan

helicopters started hovering over the city of Chittagong and giant C-130 transport planes were bringing reinforcements from Dhaka. Now 20 Baluch, supported by tanks, moved out of the cantonment, while EPR troops, occupying vantage points all along Agrabad Road, kept the Pak forces at the Naval base bottled up.

Of the reinforcements, which were airlifted from Dhaka to Chittagong airport during 26-27 March, one column moved towards Agrabad Road, and another towards the EPR HQ at Halishahar. However Brigadier Shafi's troops were so scared after the Kumira ambush, that nothing could induce them to move forward. To boost up their morale, Major General Mittra Khan flew to Kumira by helicopter and told them: "Your officers, men and their families are being killed by the Bengalees, instigated by the Hindus. Unless you move to their rescue they all will be killed. Go and take revenge. Blood for blood. Save Islam and save Pakistan(97). This at last roused their spirit to desperation. Having failed to move along the main road, Brigadier Shafi sent a column through the hills to join 20 Baluch in the cantonment and another column along the sea-shore to outflank the EPR troops who had by then organised a hasty defence. In an ambush, the EPR men inflicted heavy casualties on this column moving along the coastline. Many of the survivors lost direction and landed up in villages where they were beaten to death by infuriated people. Brigadier Shafi had sent for a battery of mortars which joined him from Comilla on 27 March. After making a dawn attack on 28 March he cleared his way to Chittagong and finally reached the Haji Camp, on the edge of Chittagong city.

On the night of 26 March, naval guns opened up with heavy artillery fire, and Pak forces from the naval communication base attacked the Railway Hill. Two attacks came from the Tiger Pass Base also. But all these were repulsed. Similar attacks were made against Halishahar, but were repulsed after fierce fighting. To escape encirclement and attack by tanks, which were being brought from the cantonment, Major Rafiq and his men withdrew to Kotwali Police Station next morning after 8 hours of fighting.

The EPR troops near the cantonment, who were awaiting reinforcements promised by Maj Rafiq, did not get any, and hence fell back on the main defences at Halishahar. Similarly, the Bengalee police personnel at Dampara Police Lines, after putting up a brave resistance against the Pakistani troops and suffering heavy casualties, abandoned their post. Tired, ill-fed and ill-equipped EPR troops fought bravely in

the Circuit House area, Medical College, D.C. Hill, Court Building without reinforcements and with sleep for four nights. On March 30, the Pakistani troops attacked the EPR forces at Haliahahar infantry after a six hours artillery barrage in which the naval guns also took part. According to S. Saif the attacking troops, approximately in battle strength, had the support of a naval destroyer, gun boats, and a heavy mortar battery. When they failed to dislodge 'the rebels' they called for support. Two Pak aircraft came within half-an-hour and started engaging the EPR defences from 12.30 p.m. Non-availability of anti-aircraft weapons gave the attacking aircraft complete freedom and they strafed each and every trench, one by one. By the evening, the Pak troops overran Haliahahar after a hour-long hand-to-hand battle. Brigadier Ansari was rewarded with the award of Hilal-i-Jurat, Pakistan's second highest gallantry award, and promoted to the rank of Major General for his gallantry in this action(98). He was also successful in unloading 90 tons of ammunition from the 'gheraoed' Pak ship(99). The Bengalee troops retreated to an alternate position on the Chittagong-Dhaka highway.

After the fall of Haliahahar, the Pakistani troops' full attention was turned towards the Court Hill, the last EPR strong-hold in the city of Chittagong. On 2 April, a full Pak battalion launched a well-coordinated dawn attack against this stronghold with the help of naval guns, artillery, tanks and mortars. The defenders repulsed several attacks one after another, till their ammunition was exhausted. At 2.30 p.m., the Court Hill fell and in the afternoon the Bangladesh Radio Station operating from Bahaddarhat on the outskirts of the city was silenced by Pak air action. Millions of patriots in Bangladesh, whose hearts were tuned to the broadcast of this radio station, felt that the pulse of the newly born nation had suddenly stopped beating. On April 3, a cyclonic storm lashed Chittagong disrupting its electricity and water supplies. People were on the verge of starvation, and if any man stirred out of his house in search of food, he was shot by the Pak troops. When young children would go for milk or water the mothers would force them to silence, so that their cries would not be heard by the Pak soldiers engaged in mopping up operations. Pressing their children close to their bosoms, mothers shed silent tears. In Bangladesh, only blood and tears were flowing in plenty. "Operation Searchlight" in Chittagong was over, though the Pakistani mopping up operations continued up to 6 April(100).

On 1 April, Maj Rafiq-ul-Islam reached the Indian town of Sabroom in Tripura across the Feni River. From there he went to Agartala and met some senior Indian officials besides the Chief Minister of Tripura, Mr. Sachin Singh. After obtaining some small arms from the BSF authorities there, he returned to Chittagong to help his compatriots fighting at isolated places against the Pak troops.

Meanwhile, having gained the control of the Chittagong city, columns of Pak troops started fanning out towards Rangamati, Kaptai, Cox's Bazar, and Rangarh. Kalurghat bridge, which was defended by 1,000 Bengalee soldiers under Maj Zia-ur-Rehman, fell on 11 April. Karerhat, situated on the Dhaka-Chittagong high-way, and linked with Ramgarh and Subhapur bridge over the Feni river through a hilly road, fell to the Pak troops on 25 April. Two days later, the Pakistanis with a regular commando company along with two Mizo brigades of about 3000 fighters attacked the Bangladeshi forces in Mahalchari area. "Employing the Chinese tactics of sending human assaulting waves, the Pakistanis pushed the Mizos in the frontal assault. Attacks were launched one after another and they were all beaten back. The Mizos suffered heavily. But they could not even withdraw. The Pakistani commando company was sitting behind them, positioned in such a manner as to shoot down any Mizo trying to withdraw to safety"(101). Heavy fighting continued for the whole day before the outnumbered Bengalee forces withdrew to Ramgarh. The next battle took place at Hiakhu on 29 April, when a Pak Battalion was employed. On 2 May, the Pak troops launched the decisive thrust towards Ramgarh. Under the cover of heavy artillery shelling, they attacked the bunkers of the Bengalee forces with anti-tank weapons. While the Indian Army and BSF troops, sheltered in their trenches in Sabroom, watched this battle as spectators, the Bengalee forces withdrew under cover of darkness when they ran out of ammunitions. At night the Pakistanis set fire to many houses in Ramgarh. The entire market was in flames.

The next Pak target was the Shuvapur bridge on the Feni, a portion of which had already been demolished by the freedom fighters with the help of the BSF. For the defence of this bridge, strong bunkers were prepared by the civilian freedom fighters, about one hundred strong, who had received only a week's military training. The Pak artillery pounded these defences, and tanks started destroying the bunkers one by one. Even then, the Bengalee defenders foiled all enemy attempts to cross the river. Meanwhile, the town of Feni fell to the Pak

column advancing from Comilla, and by 11 May the Pak troops came close to the Shuvapur bridge. On 12 May, a Pak force of approximately two battalions, supported by artillery and tank fire, launched the final assault. After a day-long fight, including hand-to-hand combat, the Bengalees, most of whom were seriously injured, withdrew to the Indian territory. A large number of Pak soldiers were killed in this action(102).

After Shuvapur, the last territory under the control of freedom fighters was the bulge of Belonia, where some of the fiercest battles were fought. The western half of the bulge, divided by the Muhari river, was being defended by the troops of Major Khaled Musharraf. On 26 May, the freedom fighters blew up an important bridge at Chandgazi to strengthen the Belonia defences. On 6 June, the Pak troops attacked Chandgazi with 2 Coys. The defenders replied with mortar fire which killed and injured many Pakistanis. The latter then fled towards Chagalnala in panic, pursued by the freedom fighters. After this, it was all quiet in this area for almost 10 days. But the Pakistanis returned with reinforcements. Five Pak helicopters landed troops behind the Belonia defences, while two Pak infantry Battalions under artillery cover launched a fierce offensive. The attacks continued from 16 June to 19 June. Being out-numbered and surrounded on all sides, the freedom fighters had to retreat. For the time being, this was the end of Bangladeshi resistance against the Pak troops in this area(103).

Pak troops undertook similar operations in other parts of Bangladesh also. In the subdivisional town of Feni there was a platoon of West Pakistani troops, but a Bengali Officer, who had defected from the Pakistani Air Force based at Dhaka, organised resistance forces with local police, members of the University Officers Training Corps (UOTC), and a number of Ansars and Mujahids, and forced the West Pakistani platoon to surrender. In the Comilla cantonment there was a Brigade of Pak soldiers, including one Battalion of the EBR. The Brigade Commander and C.O. of the EBR Battalion were West Pakistanis. Major Musharraf, the Bengali Officer who had come on transfer to Comilla from the Dhaka cantonment, was cleverly sent away to Shamsher Nagar, a border town in Sylhet district with a Coy of EBR to guard against 'Indian intrusions'. Major Musharraf, after reaching Shamsher Nagar, found no trace of the alleged 'intrusion'. While in Comilla, the remaining Bengalee soldiers of EBR Battalion were killed on the night of 25 March, and the Bengalee D.C. as well as the Bengalee S.P. were executed after-wards. Getting

...scent of the Pakistani ruse, Major Musharraf dashed towards Brahmanbaria on 27 March, and alongwith Major Shafat Gamil attacked Pakistani troops and imprisoned them, thus "liberating" Brahmanbaria(104).

In the Sub-divisional town of Sunamganj in the district of Sylhet, freedom fighters killed most of the West Pakistani troops stationed there. However, in the district town of Sylhet itself, a batalion of West Pakistani troops established control over the town(105). In the district town of Mymensingh, West Pakistani troops attacked the Bengalee jawans of the EPR in their barracks when they were resting, killing most of them, while the rest managed to escape on 26 March(106). Bengalee troops from Joydebpur under the command of Major Mohd. Shafiullah arrived in Mymensiingh on 27 March after killing most of the Pakistani Officers and jawans at Joydebpur. Next day, they occupied Mymensingh town after killing the majority of the West Pakistani Officers and soldiers. Then Major Shafiullah divided his battalion into two columns, and sent one column towards Tangail and led the other column himself towards Dhaka. But under persuasion from Khaled Musharraf, through wireless, Major Shafiullah withdrew to Kishoreganj with his troops. From there he went to Brahmanbaria to consolidate the forces of resistance(107). In Tangail, the Bengalee Commander of a EPR Coy had killed the few Punjabi soldiers in the Coy before the column sent by Major Shafiullah reached there. While in Munshiganj Sub-division of the Dhaka district, there was a spontaneous revolt by the Awami League volunteers, in Narayanganj, there was hardly any resistance(108).

In Khulna, sporadic fighting took place between the Pak forces and the resistance groups, in which many freedom fighters were killed and the Khulna Sub-divisions remained firmly in the hands of the Pak army. In Bagerhat and Satkhira Sub-divisions, there were no Pak soldiers, and the local administration was taken over by the Awami League(109). In Jessore District, things were different. The Brigade of Pak troops stationed in the Jessore cantonment disarmed and killed most of the Bengalee soldiers on 26 March. However, there was a massive uprising in surrounding rural areas, in Narail and Magura Sub-divisions. Led by two Bengalee army officers, who were on annual leave, a force of about 2000 freedom fighters alongwith some EPR men moved towards Jessore. On the way they met a group of 200 West Pakistani troops and captured all of them. On 31 March, these freedom fighters along with approximately 300,000 civilians surrounded the Jessore cantonment(110). The West Pakistani troops fired heavy guns from the cantonment,

killing hundreds of civilians and most of the "Mukti Bahini" men (Freedom fighters). As a result, the 'rebels' retreated from there by the end of the first week of April 1971.

In the districts of Faridpur, Barisal and Patuakhali, where there were no Pakistani troops, the Awami League volunteers alongwith the local EPR men, the police and the Sangram Parishad tasted freedom for a while(111). In Kushtia Sub-division, there was a Coy of West Pakistani troops who took over the administration of Kushtia town on 27 March 1971. But the EPR men from the border posts, along with the police and Awami League volunteers, soon wiped out this coy and established civil administration with the help of the local Deputy Commissioner. Similarly, in Chaudanga Sub-division, the freedom fighters alongwith the EPR men killed the West Pakistani Sub-divisional Officer and established civil administration there. In Meherpur, there were no Pakistani troops, and the SDO himself led the resistance and maintained civil administration for about three weeks(112).

In Rajshahi, where there was a West Pakistani battalion, some prominent local leaders, including an Awami League member of the National Assembly, were killed by the Pakistanis in the first two days after the military crack-down. The Police and Awami League volunteers organised resistance, and a truce between them and the Pakistani Battalion was arranged by the Deputy Commissioner. However, the Pak troops treacherously launched an attack on the police barracks and killed most of the policemen. A group of EPR men then arrived in Rajshahi and alongwith Officers and trainees of the Police Academy of Sarda near Rajshahi, occupied Rajshahi town in the first week of April and kept it under their control till the 14th of that month. At Nator, the SDO himself led the revolt and organised resistance forces comprising the Police, Ansars and Awami League volunteers, and wiped out a Platoon of Pakistani troops. The town remained "liberated" upto the middle of April. In Naogaon Sub-division, the EPR revolted and killed the Pakistani SDO and took over the administration. Similarly, the administration of Nawabganj Sub-division was also taken over by the Awami League. In Pabna Sub-division, there was one Coy of Pakistani troops which was exterminated by the freedom fighters, organised by the Deputy Commissioner himself. In the Sirajganj Sub-division of Pabna district, there were no Pakistani troops. However, in the Bogra Sub-division there was platoon of West Pakistani soldiers who were wiped out by the 'rebels'. In Rangpur district, there was one brigade of Pakistani troops who killed most of the Bengalee Officers and

jawans of the 3rd EBR during March 25-26 and kept Rangpur town under effective control. Similarly, in Dinajpur Sub-division, where there was a Platoon of the Pakistani troops, and in Thakurgaon Sub-division, where there was no Pakistani detachment, the "Mukti Bahini" took over the control after eliminating the Pakistani elements. In Gaibanda and Nilphamari Sub-divisions the freedom fighters easily gained control(113).

For the time being, as a result of popular revolt and armed resistance, the Pakistani forces withdrew to their cantonment areas in Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Sylhet, Jessore, Khulna and Rajshahi. However, reinforcements from West Pakistan, which had been pouring in from the last week of February, were further accelerated after March 25. For several days the stream of PIA commercial flights with Pak soldiers on board landed at Dhaka Airport via Colombo. Similarly, a convoy of ships carrying soldiers, arms and ammunition reached Chittagong port. Thus, Pakistani rulers managed to move two full army divisions to Bangladesh by the middle of April, 1971(114).

However, according to Maj Gen (Retd) F.M. Khan since 3 March 1971, (when the East Pakistani element in the Pakistan Air Force stationed in East Pakistan, had threatened a mutiny if Pak troops continued to move to Dhaka from West Pakistan by PIA Boeings) till 26 March, no Pak units moved from West Pakistan to East Pakistan, "but it does not mean that troops movement was altogether stopped. Leave parties continued moving, deficiencies in the existing units and formations were made up. These movements were carried out in civilian clothes as was the normal practice when flying via Sri Lanka"(115).

About 6 Coys of Pak troops were lifted by helicopters to Brahmanbaria area, and another battalion arrived there by river. These troops shelled the Mukti Bahini strongholds and the PAF also bombed them. Major Shafiullah, the Commander of the Mukti Bahini in this area, withdrew from Brahmanbaria and took up defensive positions in the northern borders of the Sylhet district. But the Pakistani forces pursued him and ultimately drove him and his men into India.

Vigorous action was taken against Sylhet also. A full brigade of Pak troops was air-lifted from Dhaka to Sylhet, and from there one column moved north to Zakiganj and another column southward to Maulvibazar. These columns drove away the freedom fighters from the towns. Fighting took place between the Pakistani

troops sent from Dhaka and the Mukti Bahini in Rajshahi, Bogra, Saidpur and Rangpur. Inevitably, the freedom fighters were defeated, suffering heavy casualties. Similarly, troops were air-lifted from Dhaka to Jessore from where columns were sent to Kushtia and Khulna. These columns inflicted heavy casualties on the "Mukti Bahini" and put down their resistance.

Thus, by the end of April 1971, the spontaneous and popular revolt in Bangladesh was crushed by the Pakistani rulers. By the end of May, only a part of Tetulia Thana of Dinajpur district, Patgram and Raumari Thanas of Rangpur district (on the eastern side of the river Jamuna), two small pockets in Sylhet district (one in Maulvibazar Sub-division and the other in Sylhet Sub-division), a total area of about 500 square miles, remained free from Pakistani control(116).

"Government's authority has been restored over the entire Province", declared the Army. But it was not the end of the bloody civil war - only the beginning.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Hardly a week before the National Assembly elections, Pakistani intelligence reports gave the following estimate of the seats likely to be won by the major political parties: Awami League-80, Qayyum Muslim League-70, Council Muslim League-40, NAP (Wali-Muzaffar)-35 and PPP-25. (Ayoob Mohammed and Subrahmanyam K., p.87).
2. Khan, Maj Gen Fazal Muqem, pp.40-41.
3. Muhith, A.M.A., p.183.
4. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., pp.152-153.
5. BD I, p.130.
6. Pakistan Observer, Dhaka, 25 Dec 1970.
7. From Official Records.
8. Rafiq, p.31.
9. The Pakistan Observer, Dhaka, 3 Feb 1971.
10. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., p.158.
11. The Dawn, Karachi, 16 February 1971.
12. Muhith, A.M.A., p.191.
13. Ali, K., p.115.
14. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., p.153.
15. BD I, p.138.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p.140.
18. From Official Records.
19. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., p.154.
20. Dewan Badrinath, Tremors in West Pakistan, in Chopra, P., (II) (ed.), p.146.
21. Ibid.
22. Ali K., p.108.
23. From Official Records.
24. From Official Records.
25. The Dawn, Karachi, 19 Feb 1971.
26. Ibid., 23 Feb 1971.
27. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., p.163.
28. Ibid., p.162.
29. From Official Records.
30. The Dawn, Karachi, 4 March 1971.
31. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., p.164.
32. Maniruzzaman, T., p.79.
33. The Dawn, Karachi, 5 March 1971.
34. From Official Records.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., pp.166-167.
39. Ibid.
40. The Dawn, Karachi, 8 March 1971.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. From Official Records.
45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. The Pakistan Observer, Dhaka, 16 March 1971.
51. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., p.171
52. Maj Gen Farman Ali (Retd), who was posted in Dhaka during the Indo-Pak Conflict, 1971, said recently in Islamabad that besides the late Mr. Z.A. Bhutto and Gen Yahya Khan, some top Generals also had a hand in dismembering Pakistan, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had tried till the very end to keep Pakistan united - The Times of India, New Delhi, 16 April 1984.
53. The Dawn, Karachi, 23 Feb 1971.
54. Islam, R., p.34.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Rafiq-ul-Islam, pp.57-58.
58. Ibid., pp.61-62.
59. Ali, K., p.130.
60. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., pp.180-181.
61. Ibid.
62. Bhutto, Z.A. p.49.
63. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.35.
According to T. Maniruzzaman, the first battalion of reinforcements from West Pakistan arrived in Dhaka in the last week of February 1971, and by 1 March, the strength of the Pakistani Army in Bangladesh rose to 1½ Divisions, of which the share of the East Bengal Regiment consisting mainly of Bengalee Officers and soldiers was about 4½ battalions, a battalion each at Jessore, Joydebpur, Rangpur and Comilla, and half a battalion of EBR and about 1,000 EBR recruits under training in Chittagong. Thus, the total strength of EBR was about 4,000, while West Pakistani troops in Bangladesh were about 29,000. The total strength of the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), the vast majority of whom were Bengalees, was about 15,000, while the strength of the Bengalees, in the Police Force was about 40,000 (Maniruzzaman, T., pp.83-84)
64. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.39.
65. From Official Records.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Salik, p.69.
69. Ibid., p.62.
70. Ibid., p.63.
71. Ibid., p.71.
72. Ibid., pp.218-224. Full text of the Plan for operation is given in Appx.
73. A complex of modern red-brick buildings, constructed as the second Federal Capital of

Pakistan, on the South-Western fringe of Dhaka airport.

- 74. Bhuiyan, Md., A.W., p.185.
- 75. Salik, S., p.75.
- 76. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.89.
- 77. Dainik Bangla, 26 March 1972.
- 78. Salik, S., p.75.
- 79. Khan, Maj Gen (Retd) F.M., pp.72-73.
- 80. Salik, S., p.76.
- 81. Ali, K., p.142.

82. The CIA began its Allied Intelligence Operations in East Pakistan, with the beginning of the liberation movement. Initially, their Allied Intelligence Operations were merged generally with the counter-guerrilla operations of the West Pakistan Government. The Bengalee intellectuals were wiped out, on 25 March 1971, following a plan which had been drawn by the "Butcher" Jackson - the former U.S. AID official - in Dhaka. The list of victims was drawn up by an army intelligence officer, Colonel Taj and executed by Brigadier Bashir, Kader and Hijazi who were army interrogators. During the liberation struggle, CIA "pumped in men and money through various relief agencies...to divert the liberation movement from its goal of independence...to a compromise on a formula, short of independence". (The Statesman, 28 October 1971) and succeeded in creating a rift between the Military and the Political Wings of the Mukti Bahini. The political leaders were allured to strip Mukti Bahini's Brigadier Zia Khan (the commander of Rangpur), in the Mymensingh Sector, of his colours when he had already liberated over 500 square miles of East Pakistan's territory in his sector and was preparing to launch an offensive on Dhaka and Chittagong.

Then on the eve of the Pakistan's surrender, a list of three thousand intellectuals, including those fifty who hailed from the Dhaka University, had been prepared for their quick liquidation with the help of the Al Badar's student members who had been incited by the Jamait-e-Islami.

Garg, Captain S.K., p.169-170.

- 83. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.92.
- 84. Salik, S., p.77
- 85. From Official Records.
- 86. Ibid.
- 87. Maniruzzaman, T., p.83.
- 88. Ibid.
- 89. A confidential Note of the Provisional Govt. of Bangladesh claimed that Pakistan "lost atleast 10,000 soldiers including 150 officers," while

- due to their guerilla tactics their own losses were only one hundredth of that. This claim appears much exaggerated.
90. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.67.
 91. It appears likely that such captured enemies were soon killed by either side, though specific information in each case is not available.
 92. According to a Pakistani Army officer who personally witnessed the Bangladesh tragedy, the total number of Bengalee and West Pakistani troops in Chittagong, at that time, were 5000 and 600 respectively, (Salik.S., p.79).
 93. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.82.
 94. Ibid., p.96. However, according to S.Salik, the advance company suffered only eleven casualties, including the commanding officer, (Salik, S., p.80).
 95. Salik, S., p.80-81.
 96. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.97.
 97. Ibid., pp.99-100.
 98. Salik, S., p.83.
 99. Ibid., p.82.
 100. Ibid., p.83.
 101. Rafiq-ul-Islam, p.167.
 102. Ibid., p.175.
 103. Ibid., p.178.
 104. Maniruzzaman, T., p.88.
 105. Ibid., p.89.
 106. Ibid., p.90.
 107. Ibid.
 108. Ibid., p.91.
 109. Ibid., p.92.
 110. Ibid., pp.92-93.
 111. Ibid., p.91.
 112. Ibid., p.93.
 113. Ibid., pp.93-95.
 114. Ibid., p.96. According to S. Salik also, between 26 March and 6 April, Headquarters of 9 Div and 16 Div, five Bde Hqrs, one Commando and 12 Inf Bns arrived in Bangladesh from W. Pak. Three more Inf Bns and two mortar batteries arrived on 24 Apr and 2 May respectively. Similarly, between 10 Apr and 21 Apr, 2 Wings each of E. Pak. civil armed forces (EPCAF) and Rangers (WPR), besides sizeable number of Scouts from the North-West Frontier Province were air-lifted to take the duties of the E. Pak. Rifles and Police - (Salik, S., p.90).
 115. Khan, F.M., p.68.
 116. Maniruzzaman, T., p.98. According to S.Salik, the major towns were secured on the following dates:

Paksy(10	Apr)	Pabna(10
Apr),	Chandarghona(13	Apr),
Rajshahi(15	Apr),	Thakurgaon(15
Apr),	Brahmanbaria(17	Apr),
Darsana(19	Apr),	Hilli (21
Apr),	Satkhira(21	

Apr), Rangpur(26 Apr), Noakhali(26 Apr),
Santahar (27 Apr), Sirajganj(27 Apr), Maulvibazar
(28 Apr), Cox's Bazar(10 May) and Hatia (11
May). (Salik, S., p.90)

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REAPING THE WHIRLWINDREFUGEES START POURING IN

The reign of terror, death and destruction imposed by the West Pakistani military junta from 25/26 March 1971 - "Operation Searchlight" - wrought havoc on East Bengal and its people. A stream of terrified and dumb-founded men, women, and children fled East Bengal and poured into India to escape torture and death at the hands of West Pakistani soldiers and their henchmen.

Eastern Indian states were not unfamiliar with large-scale migrations from East Pakistan. But the exodus since 25 March 1971, was an altogether different proposition.

Since the creation of Pakistan, over 5.2 million persons, had migrated to India from East Pakistan up to 25 March 1971. The entire refugee population of East Bengal that had entered India up till 1969 (numbering about 5 million) had been rehabilitated by June 1971. Upto 19 July 1971, an expenditure of Rs.3580 million had been incurred on relief and rehabilitation of persons who migrated from East Bengal.

The main reasons for the pre-crackdown migrations from East Pakistan to India, as gathered from various reports,(11) had been:-

- (A) General: 1. Adverse economic conditions and growing unemployment.
2. Generally insecure conditions due to deteriorating law and order situation.
3. Propaganda, in the beginning of 1970, in rural areas in East Pakistan that the United Front Govt. in West Bengal had seized huge areas of jote and benami land for distribution among landless cultivators (approximately 2 hectares per family) and if they (East Bengalee landless cultivators) went to West Bengal as refugees, they might get land and other reliefs from West Bengal Government. East Pakistan border officials collaborated in helping landless cultivators to cross over to India.
- (B) Affecting only minorities: 1. Harassment and oppression of minorities (which, for all practical purposes, meant Hindus who constituted 14% of the

total population of East Pakistan), like

- i) forcible occupation of properties of Hindus,
- ii) creation of conditions calculated to disturb and damage their religious, social and cultural life e.g., desecration of temples and religious places, slaughtering cows by Muslims in Hindu houses, etc.,
- iii) forcible conversion to Islam,
- iv) offences against women e.g., molestation, rape abduction, forcible marriages to Muslims, and so on,
- v) dacoities and robberies in the localities inhabited by the Hindus,

together with police authorities' indifferent attitude to complaints against such acts of victimization. They often told Hindus that they need not stay in East Pakistan.

2. Discrimination in matters of general administration and denial of equal opportunities for employment.

3. Anti-Hindu communal riots e.g., in January 1964.

4. Communal politics, particularly on the eve of elections when ultra-rightist communalist parties incited anti-Hindu violence by charging the minorities of nurturing "alien culture", and questioning their loyalty to Pakistan. This happened after 1 January 1970 when full political activity was resumed there.

As an aftermath of the partition, 4.1 million persons of minority communities had migrated from East Bengal to India until 31 March 1958. Thereafter, the number of migrants tapered off and almost ceased by the end of 1963. Later on, one or more of the above-mentioned causes were responsible for fresh exodus of minorities from East Bengal. For instance, as a result of serious communal disturbances in January 1964, large-scale influx began again, and by the end of 1964, 6,93,000 persons had reached India. During the period 1965 - 1969, 1,61,000 more persons migrated to India(2). From January 1970, due to political conditions created by the impending general elections in Pakistan and the propaganda about availability of land in West Bengal for distribution among landless cultivators, the exodus of members of minority communities began again. With the victory of Awami League in December 1970, the minorities looked forward to better days and the exodus reduced

considerably. However, about 2,59,000 persons had migrated from East Pakistan to India from January 1970 to 25 March 1971(3).

But the exodus that began as a consequence of 25 March crack-down was altogether different in character and magnitude. The atrocities perpetrated by the West Pakistani soldiers on an unprecedented scale was directed to crush the nationalist democratic aspirations of the people of East Bengal. General Tikka Khan, the "Butcher of Baluchistan", was appointed on 7 March 1971, Governor and Chief Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan(4). It was lust for political power that moved the Pak military rulers to let loose brutality on the people of East Bengal, whose only crime was that they now refused further economic exploitation and political subjugation by West Pakistan. Giving an eye witness account of the brutalities let loose by the Pakistani military forces, Dr. John E. Rhode, a Physician stationed in East Pakistan under the U.S. Aid Programme, wrote in April 1971, "It is clear that the law of the jungle prevails in East Pakistan where the mass killing of unarmed civilians, the systematic elimination of the intelligentsia and the annihilation of the Hindu population is in progress"(5).

Refugees had streamed into India since partition, but they had been Hindus fleeing away from the newly created Muslim state of Pakistan. But the exodus of refugees in the early stages after the crack-down of 25 March, had a "fundamental difference" - they were largely Muslims "fleeing from a country they had been taught to regard as their own religious state"(6).

The number of refugees coming into India after the military crack-down in East Bengal was not big initially(7). However, by 17 April 1971, 1,19,566 persons(8) had crossed into the Indian border states of West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. From the middle of April the refugee influx started increasing rapidly.

This development was probably due to the fact that the immediate impact of the crack-down was felt in Dhaka and its surrounding areas. It would have taken some time for refugees from those areas to trek down to India. The army must have taken some time to fan out into far flung areas of East Bengal and for the people there to have the taste of their brutality. Moreover, the Bengalee nationalist forces had increased their harassment of the West Pakistani troops, which led to the latter increasing their tempo of arson, loot, rape and murder against the local

population. E. Gallagher, a member of the US House of Representatives, after interviewing a cross-section of the refugees, came to the conclusion that the "brutal policies" of the Government of Pakistan were aimed at crushing the people who had won the elections and that "a calculated attempt to crush the intellectual life of the Bengalee community occurred because of mass killings of professors, students, and everyone of any distinction by the Army. This, in my judgement gives credence to the charge of genocide"(9). The effort, it seems, was to crush the soul of Bengalee nationalism so that it could never again raise its head to demand autonomy or independence from the West Pakistani exploiters.

INDEPENDENT BANGLADESH PROCLAIMED

Sheikh Mujib, while giving a call for a general strike on 1 March 1971, at the postponement of the National Assembly, had warned, "You will see history made if the conspirators fail to come to their senses"(10). The beginning of the history of an independent and sovereign Bangladesh was made when Major Ziaur Rahman, an officer of the 8th Battalion of the EBR at Chittagong, on 26 March, shortly after the military crack-down, made an electrifying broadcast on "Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra" (Free Bangla Radio) announcing the establishment of an independent Bangladesh. He said, "I, Major Zia Rahman, at the direction of Bango Bondhu Mujibur Rahman, hereby declare that Independent People's Republic of Bangladesh has been established. At his direction, I have taken the command as the temporary Head of the Republic. In the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I call upon all the Bengalees to rise against the attack by the West Pakistani Army. We shall fight to the last to free our motherland. Victory is, by the Grace of Allah, ours, Joy Bangla"(11).

A few days later, word reached Golok Majumdar, the Inspector General of the BSF at Calcutta, that two senior leaders of the Awami League had arrived at the Indian border near Banpur. When he reached the place, he was met by two workers of the Awami League who confirmed the information, and went back into East Bengal. It was a dark night, and in half an hour Golok Majumdar saw four muffled figures emerging from the shadows of the mango orchard before him. One of them was Tajuddin Ahmed, the General Secretary of the Awami League.

In similar fashion, most of the prominent leaders of East Bengal, including the vast majority of elected legislators, had crossed over to India by early April. The entire Awami League High Command,

except Sheikh Mujib, who had been imprisoned and constitutional adviser, Dr. Kamal Hussain, who was abroad, were in India.

Meanwhile, the West Pakistani forces were continuing their genocidal repression by indulging in indiscriminate killings, rape and plunder. This further added fuel to the burning fire of Bengali nationalism which soon engulfed the whole of Bangladesh. Political rivalries were forgotten. The pro-Peking NAP of Maulana Bhashani, the pro-Moscow NAP of Muzaffar Ahmed and also the Communist Party of East Pakistan, now renamed Bangladesh, all extended full support to the liberation struggle and its leadership by the Awami League. Only the rightist parties such as Jamaat-i-Islami, the three factions of the Muslim League and the Nizam-i-Islami Party, as well as the right of centre Pakistan Democratic Party, all of whom had been routed in the elections, did not support the independence of Bangladesh. They became the hangers-on of the Pakistani army and were regarded as traitors by the general masses.

The freedom fighters in Bangladesh were bravely fighting the armed forces of Pakistan under a symbolic Bangladesh authority which had not yet taken any shape and, therefore, they lacked a central direction. Without an organised central authority they could not get international support to any appreciable extent. The Bengalees in different parts of the world including those working in Pakistani Missions, were keen to lend their support to the freedom struggle but found themselves in a state of vacuum without a recognised governmental authority(12). Bearing these considerations in mind, and above all to legalise the freedom struggle, the vast majority of elected representatives from Bangladesh who had taken shelter in India, resolved on 10 April 1971, to set up the Provisional Government of Bangladesh in order to carry out the massive mandate given to them by the people of Bangladesh.

Their Proclamation of Independence Order, dated 10 April 1971, recounted the treacherous acts of the West Pakistani authorities in preventing the elected representatives from framing a constitution and launching a genocidal and repressive campaign by the army, which had forced Sheikh Mujib to declare the independence of Bangladesh on 26 March. It went on to proclaim, "we the elected representatives of the people of Bangla Desh, as honour bound by the mandate given to us by the people of Bangla Desh whose will is supreme, duly constituted ourselves into a Constituent Assembly, and having held mutual consultations, and in order to ensure for the people of Bangla Desh

equality, human dignity and social justice, declare and constitute Bangla Desh to be sovereign people's Republic and thereby confirm the declaration of Independence already made by Banga Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and...confirm and resolve that till such time as a constitution is framed, Banga (sic) Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shall be the President of the Republic and that Syed Nazrul Islam shall be the Vice-President of the Republic..." In the interim period till a constitution was framed, the President was to exercise all the executive and legislative powers,... "do all other things that may be necessary to give to the people of Bangla Desh an orderly and just government." In the absence of the President, the Vice-President would exercise all his powers, duties and responsibilities. The Proclamation also said,... "we further resolve that we undertake to observe and give effect to all duties and obligations devolved upon us as a member of the family of nations and by the Charter of the United Nations; we further resolve that this proclamation of independence shall be deemed to have come into effect since 26th day of March, 1971"(13).

The formal installation of the Provisional Government of Bangladesh took place on 17 April at Bhaberpura village located near the border in Meherpur Sub-division of Kushtia district of East Bengal. The place was renamed Mujib Nagar. The ceremony took place amidst thunderous cheers from a 10,000 strong crowd which included correspondents, photographers and TV cameramen. There were reporters from USA, UK, Germany, France, Italy and many other countries, besides Indian newspapers and news agencies' correspondents(14).

BANGLADESHI DIPLOMATS DECLARE ALLEGIANCE

The establishment of the provisional Government of Bangladesh made it a focal point for Bangladeshis serving in Pakistani missions or living abroad to rally round it to help the liberation struggle. The Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan in Calcutta, Hussain Ali, was the first diplomat to declare his loyalty to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Bangladesh on 18 April 1971. All the 70 Bengalee members of his staff, including 5 officers, also transferred their allegiance to the Bangladesh Government(15). Hussain Ali, in a statement recounted how the Pakistan government had flouted the clear verdict of a democratic election and engaged itself in "a planned attempt to subdue and crush the entire Bengali nation". He found it "impossible to continue to represent the Pakistan Government which is engaged by all evidences in a deliberate and systematic

genocide of Bengalis in Bangla Desh". He also made arrangements for meeting the expenses of members who had transferred their allegiance withdrawing on 17 April the entire money in account of the Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner in a bank(16). had the by the in a

Two East Bengalee diplomats of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi - Second Secretary, K.M. Shahabuddin and the Assistant Press Attache, Amjadul Haque - who had defected and obtained asylum in India on 6 April 1971, declared their allegiance to the Bangladesh government on 20 April. They stated that they had severed connections "with the fascist military dictatorship in Islamabad as our conscience no longer permits us to act against our deepest convictions"(17).

The defection of Bengalee diplomats, in Calcutta and in New Delhi proved a trend-setter for Bengalee diplomats working in Pakistani missions in other countries, who also followed in their footsteps and began to transfer allegiance to the Bangladesh government. In all, about 126 East Bengalee officials of Pak Missions abroad, including Ambassadors posted in Iraq, Philippines and Argentina, decladred their allegiance to Bangladesh upto December 1971(18).

The defection of the Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta led to rapid deterioration in the already strained Indo-Pak relations. The newly appointed Deputy High Commissioner, Mehdi Masud, was unable to take over the premises of the Deputy High Commission. Pakistan threatened India of "serious consequences" if the premises were not cleared of its illegal occupants. India told Pakistan that the possession of the premises was an internal matter of Pakistan, and no force would be used by the Indian authorities. On 20 April, India prepared to pull out the staff and their families from its Deputy High Commission in Dhaka as "it had become impossible for the personnel of the Deputy High Commission to live and move about safely in Dacca." India also protested against the rough treatment given to Smt. Sen Gupta, the wife of the Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka, at the Dhaka and Karachi airports. She was taken out of the plane at Karachi and so was the Indian diplomatic courier. Pakistan had debarred Indian diplomats and their families from leaving the country. India retaliated by imposing similar restrictions on Pak diplomats on 26 April.

On 24 April, Pakistan decided to close down its Deputy High Commission in Calcutta and asked India to wind up its Deputy High Commission in Dhaka. It

suggested that all personnel of the Indian Deputy High Commission in Dhaka and of the Pakistan Deputy High Commission in Calcutta be brought to Karachi from where the Indians could go to New Delhi. This was a ruse for forcible repatriation of Hussain Ali and other Bengalee officials of the Deputy High Commission in Calcutta to Pakistan. India emphatically refused to use any force for the purpose as the concerned officials were free to make their own decisions and it was wrong to connect the closure of the Deputy High Commission with total repatriation of the employees. India said that it would follow international conventions in this regard. Pakistan wanted facilities for Mehdi Masud to meet the Bengalee officials of its former Deputy High Commission individually and privately. Hussain Ali offered to meet him on behalf of all the Bengalee staff and suggested that if individual meetings were considered necessary, they be conducted in the presence of an impartial third party. India, while willing to provide facilities for the meetings, refused to use any pressure to force the unwilling Bengalee staff members to meet Mehdi Masud. Because of these illegal demands of Pakistan, the staff and dependents of the former Indian Mission in Dhaka, who had been virtual prisoners for 108 days, could return to New Delhi only on 12 August(19).

In a press statement on 17 April, the date of the formal proclamation of the Provisional Bangladesh Government, its Prime Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed, appealed to all nations of the world to recognise the new nation and give "assistance with material and moral" for its struggle for nation-hood. He declared, "Pakistan is now dead and buried under a mountain of corpses. The hundreds and thousands of people murdered by the army in Bangla Desh will act as an impenetrable barrier between West Pakistan and the people of Bangla Desh." He expressed gratitude to the people of USSR and India and the freedom loving people of all the countries for their full support already given to their struggle. He further added that he would welcome similar support from the People's Republic of China, USA, France, Great Britain and others. Bangladesh sought friendship with all countries, big or small, but would not join any pact or block. Any help rendered must be "free from any desire to control our destinies. We have struggled far too long for our self-determination to permit ourselves to become anybody's satellite"(20).

MUKTI BAHINI TAKES BIRTH

Driven out from East Bengal, the Bengalee "deserters" from the Pak military and para-military

forces were steeled into freedom fighters by the brutality of the Pak forces, and were the first to start hitting back.

After becoming the Commander of the Eastern Command, relieving Lt Gen Tikka Khan on 11 April, Lt Gen A.A.K. Niazi issued a new operational directive for further operations, to be completed by 15 May 1971, in the following five phases :-

- Phase I - Clearing of all major border towns and sealing off the routes of infiltration.
- Phase II - Clearing and holding of Chittagong Base and keeping it safe from artillery and mortar fire.
- Phase III - Opening of essential river, road and rail communications.
- Phase IV - Clearing of all towns in the interior and the coastal area.
- Phase V - Combing of the whole of the province and elimination of rebels/infiltrators"(21).

Emphasis was placed on speed and multi-thrusts towards the objectives. By end April, the Pak Army had occupied all border outposts except the 388.5 sq km Belonia salient where the 'rebels' had consolidated their defences(22). Also by this date, the ports of Chittagong, Chalna and Khulna were secured, and railway communications between Khulna and North Bengal and between Dhaka and Rangpur were made operational during day-time. By the end of May, except for a few small pockets here and there, the 'rebels' had been driven out of all parts of East Pakistan(23).

Now the Pak forces established a reign of terror in the areas occupied by them. They launched a genocide operation in a planned manner in three phases. First, the assaulting group would capture an objective, then the second group would arrive to rape and kill, and the third group, consisting of criminals and supplied with petrol, kerosene, etc., by the Government, then set them on fire. "It is reported that a large number of convicted criminals were transferred from the West Pakistan jails to Bangladesh and set free to commit these atrocities"(24). The targets of the genocide were the Bengalee members of the EBR, EPR, Police, Ansars, Mujahids, the Awami Leaguers - all office-bearers and volunteers down to

the lowest link in the chain of the party command - students, Bengalee intellectuals such as professors, teachers, doctors, and journalists, and the Hindus at large without discrimination(25).

But Niazi's troubles were far from over; in fact they were just beginning.

According to F.M. Khan, on 25 March 1971, there were six Army battalions and one National Service battalion of the EBR, all fully manned by Bengalee ORs, but officered by both East and West Pakistanis. There were 16 Wings of East Pakistan Rifles, manned mostly by East Pakistanis, except for some West Pakistani officers. Its total strength was about 13,000(26). Out of the EBR battalions, posted in East Pakistan, one battalion was preparing to go to West Pakistan on relief, and 75 per cent of its men were on leave. Besides, one newly raised EBR battalion was awaiting embarkation in Chittagong for a move to West Pakistan(27). East Pakistani element in the Pakistan Air Force posted in East Pakistan at that time was 50% of the total PAF strength deployed there(28). According to Major Rafiq-ul-Islam, who was himself an officer in the EPR, there were approximately 15,000 EPR men all over East Pakistan, commanded by Army officers who came on deputation for two to three years. According to him, ninety per cent of the officers and twenty per cent of the men in the EPR were West Pakistanis(29).

The following was the disposition of the EBR in East Pakistan on 25 March 1971(30):

- 1 EBR - Jessore area
- 2 EBR - HQ in Joydebpur in the north of Dhaka.
 - i) 1 Coy in Tongi
 - ii) 1 Coy in Gazipur
 - iii) 1 Coy in Tangail
 - iv) 1 Coy in Mymensingh
- 3 EBR - Saidpur area
- 4 EBR - Comilla Sector
- 8 EBR - Chittagong (Maj Ziaur Rahman, a Bengalee, was Second-in-Command).
- 9 EBR (under raising) - Chittagong
- 10 EBR - East Bengal Regimental Centre in Chittagong(31).

(The 10 EBR was a National Service Battalion consisting of students under training).

Of the above-mentioned Bengalee elements, 1 EBR, located in Jessore, was disarmed on 30 March 1971, after some resistance in which many EBR men were

killed, and the rest escaped to the districts of 24 Parganas and Nadia in West Bengal. 2 EBR, which revolted on 28 March 1971, was also disarmed. Some of them were killed and the rest escaped towards the north into Indian territory. 3 EBR and 4 EBR in Saidpur and Comilla areas respectively could only be partially disarmed. Most of them moved towards Hilli and Sylhet respectively and eventually into Indian territory. However, 4 EBR in order to defend the Bhairab Bazar Bridge had fought a 48-hour pitched battle against a brigade-size Pakistani force, consisting of two infantry battalions, two commando coys, a troop of tanks, and a section of heavy mortars, supported by one gun-boat and some fighter aircraft, launched by Pakistan's 14 Infantry Division. In this battle 500 Bengalee defenders were reportedly killed(32). However, this EBR Battalion, although defeated, escaped to Tripura in good order in April 1971(33).

The 8, 9 and 10 EBR, which were all stationed in Chittagong, shared the same fate. Between them there were about 4,500 officers and soldiers, mostly Bengalee (including approximately 300 from 8 EBR), who revolted(34). The East Bengal Regimental Centre in Chittagong had a strength of about 2,500 men, including 9 EBR, which was being raised,(35) of whom more than 2,000 were Bengalees(36). Approximately 200 of them were killed by 20 Baluch after mid-night on 26 March 1971, and about 1,300 trained soldiers escaped(37). The rebels occupied Chittagong town except the Naval base, harbour and the air-field for several days before they were driven to the Indian territory of Tripura.

One scholar has estimated that the Bengalee military, para-military and police forces who took refuge in Indian territory after the Pak Army crack-down of 25 March 1971, numbered 20,000 in all(38).

These were trained men, and also had weapons acquired from many different sources. For example, 172 rifles, 6 revolvers and some ammunition were taken away from Satkhira Armoury, and in subsequent raids, some RCL guns, HMGs, 3" mortars and vehicles were captured by them in Kushtia district(39). They attacked the Habiganj (in Sylhet district) Sub-Treasury on 28 March, seizing 516 rifles of .303 bore and large quantity of ammunition. They raided a BOP at Akhaura on 30 March, killing ten Pak soldiers and capturing all the arms and ammunition at the post. On 1 April, the Bengalee personnel of EPR in Comilla deserted with arms; and in Jessore, the freedom fighters captured the arms and ammunition of 200 Pak

troops who surrendered on 8 April(40). In addition, 45,000 rifles, stored at various police stations in East Pakistan for the Ansars, were taken over by these 'rebels'. The Bengalee residents abroad also procured arms, ammunition and money for them(41). A sum of £45,000 was collected from the Bengalees in the UK for the purchase of material from foreign countries to help the freedom fighters of Bangladesh(42). On 19 April 1971, Rs. 1,12,60,000 was taken away by MF from Kurigram State Bank(43). Large amounts of money were looted from number of other Treasuries and Sub-Treasuries(44). Towards the end of April, the freedom fighters raided the National Bank at Habiganj and removed about 15 million rupees.

The 'rebels' thus, had arms, and training to use them, and they were in large numbers. Motivation was hardly lacking! And so they began to hit back at the Pakistan army immediately after the crack-down of 25 March, and skirmishes continued all along the border.

As expected, India's Border Security Force, had been watching closely the momentous developments in East Bengal. They had witnessed and kept in touch with the intense agitation by the Bengalee people in March 1971 and the terrible repression and genocide launched by the Pakistan Army from 25 March. The unequal struggle between the EBR, EPR and the people against the heavily armed Pakistan Army, and the indescribable sufferings of the refugees fleeing the terror, was a daily experience for the BSF men. In common with the Indian people - and indeed the Indian government itself - their sympathies lay entirely with the Bengalees. No human being could remain unaffected and unconcerned with the brutalities being perpetrated right before the eyes of the BSF troops. In their bloody campaign against the freedom fighters, the Pakistani forces were firing and intruding into Indian territory again and again at numerous places. In 1947, and again in 1965, Pakistan had deliberately planned and secretly executed armed aggression against India, leading to the two wars already fought between them. In fact, Indian and Pakistan forces had long come to regard each other as natural enemies. The situation developing after 25 March was too much for anybody to care for legal niceties and international proprieties. The BSF officers and men knew and realised that even their senior commanders would secretly bless and support any blow struck against the brutal Pakistanis, provided it caused no diplomatic embarrassment to the Indian government. The utterly confused situation, with extreme violence all round and spilling over into India all too frequently, provided an excellent opportunity to strike small blows without attracting notice. So, without any

written orders, the BSF gave to the Bengalee fighters whatever help it could in the form of tactical guidance and training, small arms and ammunition, encouragement and fire support. The freedom fighters (with BSF support) carried out forays, ambushes and demolitions of many bridges, rail tracks and installations, to harass the Pak forces and to disrupt their lines of communication. In the Tripura Sector particularly, there was much BSF activity by a small force operating under Brig B.C. Pandey, from the end of March to the middle of May. When Col M.A.G. Osmani arrived at Agartala from Dhaka on foot on 2 April 1971, he met Brig Pandey, and the rebel fighters took new heart. Similarly Col Megh Singh, Vr C, operated with his 18 BSF Commando Bn in the Bongaon Sector, Col Rampal Singh, with 103 BSF Bn in Cooch Bihar and Brig M.S. Chatterjee, MC, in the Balurghat Sector. The BSF activities, at that stage, however, were basically defensive and local, and very different - in scale as well as nature of operations - from anything like Indian military involvement in the Bangladesh crisis(45).

On 11 April, Tajuddin Ahmed, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, announced from the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra that a mighty liberation army was being formed with the trained personnel of the EBR, EPR, Police, Ansars, Mujahids, and from thousands of Awami League and other volunteers. He also announced the formation of the following regional commands under commanders to fight the Pak forces effectively:

- 1) Sylhet-Comilla region -
Major Khaled Mosharraf of the EBR
- 2) Chittagong-Noakhali region -
Major Ziaur Rahman of the EBR
- 3) Mymensingh-Tangail region -
Major Md Shafiullah of the EBR
- 4) Kushtia-Jessore region -
Major Osman of the EPR
- 5) Faridpur-Barisal-Khulna-Patuakhali region -
Major Jalil
- 6) Rajshahi district - Major Ahmed
- 7) Saidpur area - Capt Nazrul Huq
- 8) Rangpur area - Capt Nowazesh(46).

On the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Bangladesh as a formally constituted state on 17 April 1971, Col M.A.G. Osmani, a retired officer of the Pak army and elected Member of the National Assembly, was co-opted as a member of the Cabinet and appointed the C-in-C of the Bangladesh Liberation Army(47).

The initial shortage of officers in the Mukti Bahini was partly met by arrival of 20 Bengalee officers who had managed to escape from West Pakistan(48), by the induction of a few retired officers and also by requisitioning the services of some Air Force officers.

In spite of these early efforts and brave declarations, the Mukti Bahini was not a properly organised, well trained force in April-May 1971. But its men and leaders were burning with such fierce anger that they started hitting back at the Pakistan Army in East Bengal without waiting for more arms or better training.

During May-June, the unorganised Freedom Fighters caused some damage to the Pak forces and certain vital installations in several areas of Bangladesh. On 1 May, they clashed with the Pak Army at Hemu, about 19.3 km north-east of Sylhet, and inflicted about 31 casualties on them, including one General Staff Officer(49). They captured the Pak river vessels Kiwi and Bral and set them on fire on 12 May(50). About the end of May, they destroyed four East Pakistan border outposts in different districts(51). On 2 June, the Freedom Fighters destroyed one more border outpost in area Barabaldin in Jessore district. Ten days later, they raided Pak army positions in Jaintiapur area of Sylhet district, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. On the same date it was reported that during an attack on the Belgachi bridge in Bogra, they inflicted 10 casualties on the Pak army, themselves suffering a loss of 17 killed(52). However, on 23 June, the Pak army killed 26 freedom fighters at Morellganj, about 38.6 km south-east of Khulna, and sank two boats loaded with ammunititon(53). During May-June, the Freedom Fighters damaged a large number of road and railway bridges and telecommunication facilities throughout East Bengal.

First effort towards induction of "panic groups" deep inside East Pakistan for destruction of communications and harassment of the Pak army in towns was also attempted from May onwards. However, the outcome of these missions was, by and large, disappointing, and most of the "panic groups" returned

unsuccessful(54).

These developments coming within weeks of the crack-down, showed the definite failure of Yahya's attempt to crush East Bengal. He had sown the winds; now the whirlwind had begun. Very soon India also got sucked into the turmoil, and a new and grave international crisis descended on the world.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. From Official Records.
3. Ibid.
4. He earned this sobriquet when as Commander of the army in Baluchistan during 1958-60, through a reign of terror, he suppressed the Baluch insurgency.
5. BD I, p.538.
6. Ibid., p.495.
7. Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation R.K. Khadilkar informed Lok Sabha on 27 May 1971 that between 26 and 31 March 1971, only 300 refugees had crossed into India, Lok Sabha Debates(LSD), Vol.II, 27 May 1971.
8. From Official Records.
9. BD I, pp.550-553.
10. Ibid., p.190.
11. Sen Gupta, pp.325-326.
12. Ibid., p.333.
13. BD I, p.282.
14. Ibid., pp.289-291.
Sen Gupta, pp.341-342.
15. From Official Records.
16. Asian Recorder (AR), 11-17 June 1971.
17. Ibid.
18. From Official Records.
19. AR 11-17 June 1971 and 17-23 September 1971.
20. BD I, pp.291-298.
21. Khan, p.86. See Map 3.
22. Belonia bulge fell to the Pak forces on 19 June.
Islam, p.178.
23. Khan, p.87-88.
24. Islam, p.164.
25. Bhuiyan, p.191.
26. EBR were deployed alongwith West Pakistani units in various towns of East Pakistan, whereas EPR were deployed all along the 3200-km border, and their officers were generally from West Pakistan on deputation - BSF HQ "Ops Tripura-Assam border, 1971". Part-I, pp.6-7.
27. Khan, p.67.
28. Ibid., p.68.
29. Islam, p.42. According to the Bangladesh government-in-exile, the strengths of the EBR, EPR & the Police deployed in East Pakistan on 25 March 1971, were 3,000, 17,000 & 24,000 respectively.
30. However, according to the BSF sources, there were eight bns of East Bengal Regiment, and out of these, three were in West Pakistan and the advance party of another (8th Bn) had also gone to West Pakistan. Most of them were commanded by West Pakistani officers, though the majority of

junior officers were Bengalees. Very few senior Bengalee officers were serving in East Pakistan at that time - BSF HQ "Ops Tripura-Assam border, 1971". Part-I, p.6.

31. Khan, pp.78-80. The 10 EBR was a National Service Battalion consisting of students under training.
32. Ibid., p.84.
33. Gen Sagat Singh's Interview.
34. Islam, p.60.
35. Khan, p.78.
36. Islam, p.60.
37. Khan, p.78.
38. Jackson, pp.55-56.
39. From Official Records.
40. From Official Records.
41. Khan, p.81.
42. From Official Records.
43. From Official Records.
44. From Official Records.
45. Appendix I.
46. Bhuiyan, pp.194-195 & Maniruzzaman, p.99.
47. Bhuiyan, p.199. However, according to Maj Gen Khan, Osmani was appointed on 14 April 1971. Khan, p.94.
48. There were about 1,100 Bengalee Officers and 28,000 Bengalee ORs in West Pakistan during the period of struggle, 25 March to 16 December 1971. Maniruzzaman, pp.113 and 136.
49. From Official Records.
50. From Official Records.
51. From Official Records.
52. From Official Records.
53. Ibid.
54. From Official Records.

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INDIA CAUGHT IN THE TURMOIL

REACTION IN INDIA

Popular Support

The prospect of the establishment of a democratically elected, representative government in Pakistan after December 1970 elections was a welcome development from the point of view of India. It was thought that with a popular government installed in Islamabad, the chances of good neighbourly relations would brighten. The land-slide victory of the Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the election was even more heartening to the people of India. The Sheikh and his Party "stood for the values which we ourselves cherish, the values of democracy, the values of secularism and the values of socialism"(1).

Naturally, Indians were shocked when Gen Yahya Khan scuttled the democratic process to deprive the Awami League of its rightful claim to form the Government and resorted to a brutal suppression of the people. Bound as they were by geographical, historical, cultural and linguistic ties with the East Bengalees, Indians of almost all shades of opinion reacted instantly and spontaneously.

In Delhi on 27 March, demonstrations were organised by several political parties, e.g., Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, Forward Block, and others. Demonstrating before the Pak High Commission, the protesters demanded immediate withdrawal of Pakistani forces from "Bangladesh". The demonstrating students in Calcutta went in a procession to the office of the Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan and burnt an effigy of Gen Yahya Khan. Public meetings were held at Sapru House, Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and other places. Students, academics and other intellectuals condemned the atrocities committed by Gen Yahya Khan's government. The students met the Prime Minister and demanded categorical Indian support to the people of East Bengal(2).

The Working Committee of the Congress(R) passed a resolution expressing its "deep anguish at the brutal suppression of unarmed, defenceless people of East Bengal", and solemnly pledged itself "to do whatever lies within its power to mitigate their sufferings"(3).

In Delhi, on 10 April, an all-party preparatory

committee was formed to mobilise political, military, and economic support for Bangladesh(4).

The Members of Parliament set aside all political differences and with one voice expressed their solidarity with the people of East Bengal. Sardar Swaran Singh, Minister of External Affairs, making a statement in Rajya Sabha as well as Lok Sabha on 27 March, on development in East Bengal, remarked that the Government of India could not but be "gravely concerned" at the events and said: "Our hearts go out in sympathy to the people who are undergoing great suffering"(5).

In the Rajya Sabha, during the short discussion that followed the above statement, CPI leader Bhupesh Gupta, said: "Our sympathies and our hearts go out to the people of East Pakistan because they are fighting for democracy, fighting for their right of shaping of destiny in their own way." Other Members, too, spoke in the same vein. In Lok Sabha, participating in the discussions that followed, the CPI(M) leader, A.K. Gopalan, condemned "the brutal onslaught and military massacre" and wholeheartedly supported "the struggle of the people of Bangladesh." Prof H.N. Mukerjee (CPI), described the movement in East Bengal as "a kind of revolution almost without precedent in history." Extending support to the struggling people of East Bengal, V.K. Krishna Menon (Ind.), too, termed the "spontaneous movement" of the Bangladeshes as "a revolution which has been sanctified by the vote of the people." The Socialist leader, Samar Guha, urged the Indian Prime Minister to "act as a courageous daughter of Mother India" and "raise the banner of defending revolution in Bangladesh." The cries of woe from Bangladesh, according to A.K. Sen, (Congress-R), represented "the voice of Asia, the voice of the colonial world which is speaking out to the whole humanity for succour and help in their hour of distress and in their hour of enslavement"(6).

The Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, shared the feelings and sentiments of the Members. Intervening in the discussion in the Lok Sabha, she described the situation in East Bengal as "not merely the suppression of a movement, but it is meeting an unarmed people with tanks" and stated that "We do fully share the agony, the emotions of the House and their deep concern over these developments because we have always believed that freedom is indivisible. We have always raised our voice for those who have suffered". In a similar intervention in Rajya Sabha the same day, Indira Gandhi assured the Members that "we are no less full of sorrow and grave concern and even agony at what is heppening there"(7).

The expression of sympathy and support for suffering people of East Bengal reached its high water mark in the 31 March Resolution unanimously passed by the Parliament. The Resolution, moved by Indira Gandhi in both the Houses of Parliament, expressed "deep anguish and grave concern" at "a massive attack" unleashed by armed forces of West Pakistan against "the entire people of East Bengal with a view to suppressing their urges and aspirations".

"Situated as India is and bound as the people of the sub-continent are by centuries old ties of history, culture and tradition", the Resolution continued, "this House cannot remain, indifferent to the macabre tragedy being enacted so close to our border". The Resolution called upon "all peoples and Governments of the world to take urgent and constructive steps to prevail upon the Government of Pakistan to put an end immediately to the systematic decimation of people which amounts to genocide". In conclusion, the Resolution recorded "profound conviction that the historic upsurge of the 75 million people of East Bengal will triumph" and assured them that "their struggle and sacrifices will receive the whole hearted sympathy and support of the people of India"(8).

Popular opinion, especially in West Bengal, regarded the Indian Government's response as inadequate. Junganter (a Bengali daily from Calcutta) voiced these sentiments in editorials on 28 March (Naya Dilli Toiree Thakun - New Delhi be ready) and 11 April (Dillir Dvidha Keno - why does Delhi hesitate?). Press statement of noted West Bengal writers and intellectuals, urged greater Indian assistance to East Bengalees. The Economist (London) on 24 April quoted Deputy Chief Minister of West Bengal, B.S. Nahar, as saying, "We in West Bengal recognise the Bangladesh, although the Central Government has not done so yet"(9).

A large number of political parties passed resolutions urging the Government of India to immediately accord recognition to Bangladesh. They included Samyukta Socialist Party, Praja Socialist Party, Bhartiya Jana Sangh, Hind Mazdoor Sabha, Congress (O), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam(10). The Muslim League in Kerala, Bangla Congress in West Bengal, Azad Pakhtoon Jirga-e-Hind, and all-India Samajwadi Yuvak Sabha were also among those calling upon the Government to recognise Bangladesh(11). Even in All-India Congress (R) Committee meeting on 4 April during a discussion on the resolution extending sympathy and support to the people of East Bengal,

there was a strong demand made for immediate recognition of the "Provisional" Government of Bangladesh. The demand was, however, rejected by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who spoke after the resolution was adopted(12). Swatantra Party was the only party that opposed the demand for recognition.

On 7 May, leaders of 14 opposition parties except the Swatantra, had a 3-hour meeting with the Prime Minister, wherein an overwhelming majority of them demanded immediate recognition of Bangladesh and arms aid to freedom fighters. Only the Muslim League President, Mohammed Ismail, and an independent Member of the Lok Sabha, Dr. Karni Singh, were opposed to recognition(13).

Intellectuals in the Capital, too, were in the forefront to demand an active policy from the Government with respect to the happenings in East Bengal. Within six days of the revolt there, the Indian Council of World Affairs organised a symposium in which K.Subrahmanyam, Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, stated: "What India must realise is the fact that the breakup of Pakistan is in our interest, an opportunity the like of which will never come again. ...The so-called international forum has not deterred any major power from taking action to protect its interest.... A bold initiative on our part to help the struggle in Bangladesh to end quickly and victoriously is therefore called for". The consensus at the seminar viewed the situation as "an opportunity of the century" and favoured direct intervention by India(14).

A group of 300 intellectuals, teachers, writers, journalists, dramatists, and painters, went in a procession from Sapru House, New Delhi, on 5 April, met Indira Gandhi and demanded recognition of Bangladesh. At a two-day Bihar State Conference on Bangladesh on 6 July, the widely respected Jay Prakash Narayan declared that "the country, the Government and the people are unworthy if these are not prepared for a war", implying that India should be prepared to fight Pakistan to solve the Bangladesh problem. He stressed that the "defeat of Bangladesh will be defeat of India"(15). Even Acharya Vinoba Bhave, from his secluded Paunar Ashram, gave an advice that there should be no more delay in India recognising the Bangladesh Government as that step alone could help in solving the problem of the refugees and lead to many other countries recognising Bangladesh(16).

The Delhi Metropolitan Council, in a meeting on

30 March, adopted a resolution which besides recognition, urged the Government to take the issue to the United Nations and to give all possible assistance, including arms, to the freedom fighters(17). The same day Legislative Assemblies in Assam, Tripura, Nagaland and Bihar adopted similar resolutions unanimously(18). A resolution passed by the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha urged the government to recognise the "Provisional" Government and render it all possible assistance(19). The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly expressed concern "over the massacre of lakhs of people of East Pakistan" and wished them success in their struggle for freedom(20).

The demand for the recognition of Bangladesh and extending full moral, political and material help, including military assistance, to the freedom fighters was repeatedly and forcefully raised in both the Houses of the Parliament on every conceivable occasion. Some members even pleaded for military intervention to stem the flood of onrushing refugees, create conditions in Bangladesh for the return of the refugees already taking shelter in India and to stop genocide in East Pakistan. Such demands were made from all sections of the house with hardly any distinction between the members of the opposition and the treasury benches.

On 27 March itself when the External Affairs Minister made a statement on the developments in East Pakistan, V.K. Krishna Menon (Ind.) former Defence Minister, advised that the Government "should not tinker about it and take the risk of recognising that government "if" an application of request is made by the new government of East Bengal"(21). On 1 April, Sunder Singh Bhandari (J.S.) and Raj Narain (SSP) made a fervent plea not only for the recognition of the Bangladesh government but also for extending moral, material and military help to the freedom fighters. Recognition would also "bury the two-nation theory". Bhupesh Gupta, the CPI leader, supporting the demand for recognition, said that "the question of recognition of Bangladesh is the crucial question. It is the test of our life, the test of principles that we have upheld in the world. It is the test of our friendship towards the people of East Pakistan"(22). Niren Ghosh (CPI(M)) called non-recognition of Bangladesh by the Government of India an act of "treachery"(23).

M.S. Gurupadswamy (Cong '0'), leader of the opposition, argued that if the Government had responded with early recognition, it would have really helped the freedom fighters and preempted the refugee influx. Charging government "with inaction"and

"chronic complacency", he said that "it is their hesitation, their procrastination, their vacillation, looking outside always, not looking to themselves, which has caused a great damage to the freedom fighters"(24). He cautioned the government "let Tibet be not repeated in Bangladesh"(25). Atal Behari Vajpayee (JS), also favoured the recognition of an independent Bangladesh and active help to the freedom fighters(26). Shibban Lal Saksena (Ind.) advised the government to send forces to East Pakistan on what he called "a mission of mercy" in order to ensure security of the returning refugees, to end continuing genocide and to put Bangladesh government in full power. Prophetically, he said that the Government of India should not be afraid of sending the army, because "you will have to send them ultimately(27). S.G. Sardesai (CPI) was of the view that by recognising Bangladesh, the Government of India would strengthen its stand that a political solution of the problem could be reached only by an agreement with the Awami League leaders. It would also facilitate extension of military help to the freedom fighters(28).

Members belonging to various parties emphasised the point that the recognition of the Bangladesh government alone could enable the Indian government to render effective moral, material and even military help to the freedom fighters. V.K. Krishna Menon (Ind.) forcefully argued for recognition, debunking Pakistani claim for exclusive domestic jurisdiction over the developments in East Bengal. He observed, "whatever happens on our immediate border ceases to be an internal matter of another country." Recognition by India, he argued, would take away from "the sphere of illegality" any assistance we might give them(29)

Chitta Basu (FB) enumerating the advantages of recognition, said that it would "immediately boost the morale of the freedom fighters"(30). Indrajit Gupta (CPI) argued that "if we recognised the government of Bangladesh as sovereign having its own standing army, the Pakistanis could not have taken shelter behind the propaganda campaign that the freedom fighters were our guerillas whom we are training and sending in Bangladesh"(31).

Samar Guha (PSP) supporting the demand for recognition, argued that the Bangladesh possessed all the traits required for recognition(32). G. Vishwanathan (DMK), held the view that granting of recognition to any state was the discretion of the country doing so and international law could not stand in the way(33). According to Hiren Mukerjee (CPI), recognition was "the inevitable corollary and natural

complement of our resolution" to extend full support to the freedom struggle in Bangladesh(34). P.K. Singh Deo(Swa.), asserted that there was no hard and fast rule for recognition. The national interest of a country was the sole guide(35). Gurupadswamy (Cong'O'), S.M. Sangama (Cong) and N.G. Goray (PSP) advised the government not to hesitate in militarily engaging with Pakistan to achieve its objectives.

A.K. Sen (Cong) wanted India to take active steps, even blockade of ports and seizure of ships to stop all flow of lethal weapons to East Pakistan(36). When threats by Gen Yahya Khan to declare war on India and the reports of shelling by Pak troops on Assam and Tripura borders in July 1971, were discussed, some Members pointed out that if Bangladesh had been recognised, the Pakistan Army would not have dared to shell Indian territory(37).

Samar Guha (PSP) even made an emotional appeal asking the government to give immediate recognition to Bangladesh and render all help as there was a "national consensus" over the matter(38).

Pranab Mukerjee (BC) who had moved a resolution in the Rajya Sabha for immediate recognition and all out help to Bangladesh, stated that it should be done on humanitarian grounds and was justified even under international law(39).

Some Members of Parliament pointed out that if India recognised Bangladesh, other friendly countries would follow its example.

Besides recognition, armed assistance and even direct intervention in Bangladesh, other demands were also addressed to the government as a part of what was thought to be an effective policy with regard to the developments in East Bengal. Some Members of Parliament asked the government to raise the issue in the United Nations and its relevant agencies. A number of Members of Parliament belonging to various parties, and also Jay Prakash Narayan, supported the All India Students Federation and All India Youth Federation's appeal to the World Federation of Democratic Youth to mobilise volunteers and form an international brigade to render help to Bangladesh in the same way as was done by the international volunteers corps during the Spanish struggle against fascism(40). Bahrul Islam, M.P. (Cong), pleaded that if the return of the refugees was not possible or till it became possible, India should "carve out an area of two or three districts of East Bengal to accommodate these (i.e., refugees) under the supervision of a UN authority(41).

Some of the political parties even adopted agitational tactics to press their demand for recognition and increased support to Bangladesh. S.M. Banerjee, (CPI) on 12 April, made an appeal to all trade unions to raise their voice and demand for immediate recognition of Bangladesh(41). The Multi-Party National Coordination Committee for Bangladesh, on 28 April issued an appeal to the people to observe 5 May 1971, as "Bangladesh Recognition Day"(43). The Jan Sangh staged a demonstration in Delhi on 24 May to press for recognition of Bangladesh(44). During the course of Jan Sangh - launched "Recognise Bangladesh agitation" in Delhi, thousands of its volunteers courted arrest which included some MPs and MLAs(45).

As against the sympathy for the plight and support to the struggle of the people of East Bengal so overwhelmingly expressed by the people, press, public leaders and the Government of India, there were some sections who, for reasons of their own, viewed the developments in East Bengal differently. To some of them the likely independence of East Pakistan seemed disastrous from India's point of view, since they apprehended that it would give a fillip to secessionist tendencies in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kashmir and Punjab(46). Others were critical of the Government of India's expression of sympathy and support to the struggling people of East Bengal as, in their view, it amounted to interference in the internal affairs of another country. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, K. Karunanidhi, was one of them. Shyam Lal Yadav, M.P. (Former Law Minister of UP and Vice-President of the Bhartiya Kranti Dal) found the Government's policy inconsistent with the policy pursued with respect to the insurgency in Ceylon. The well-known writer, Nirad C. Choudhari, in an article in the Hindustan Standard, described India's attitude towards East Bengal as "opportunistic and a petti-flogging exercise of chauvinism." Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reportedly said in an interview that "India had been at the back of the events in East Pakistan to advance her own vested interests", and asked: "if West Bengal had come out with the demand for a separate state, would the Prime Minister award a prize for this act of treason?"(47).

Also some sections of the Muslim population in the country adopted an attitude inimical to the aspirations of East Bengalees, as in Cachar District in Assam(48), or did not fall in line with the national sentiments on this issue, e.g., in West Bengal. The Jamaat-i-Islami wanted the Muslims of India to maintain an attitude of stoid silence and its leaders were said to have expressed satisfaction when

Jay Prakash Narayan's mission to the Arab countries did not succeed(49). Even those Muslim parties who had taken a positively nationalist stand and were critical of Pakistan, endorsed the restraint exercised by the Government on the issue. However, in a statement made on 19 August, the General Secretary of the Indian Muslim League, Ebrahim Sulaimen Sait, M.P., said that the League and the eighty million Muslims in India would stand solidly behind the Indian government if it recognised Bangladesh(50).

Thus, the people in India by near unanimity expressed deep anguish at the gory happenings in East Bengal and extended sympathy and support for the democratic urges of its people. As a matter of fact, they felt not that the Government of India was doing too much, but that it was doing too little to help the cause of the people of East Bengal.

Government's Restraint

The Acting President of the provisional government of Bangladesh, Syed Nazrul Islam, had in a letter to the President of India dated 24 April 1971, requested immediate recognition(51). However, the Government of India, while giving all help to the Bangladesh government, including diplomatic support and even limited military support to the freedom fighters, followed a policy of caution and restraint as far as the question of its recognition or of direct intervention was concerned. As early as 27 March 1971 the Government of India had decided that, while the weight of public opinion in India and deep sympathies of government itself with the people of East Bengal were important, in taking public stance in the matter, constraints imposed by international law and by various problems had to be borne in mind(52). On 30 March 1971, the Ministry of External Affairs examined again the question of recognition as it felt that the idea of a unified Pakistan was dead after the military crack-down by the West Pakistan Army. India's main interest was to ensure that the new state of Bangladesh started its existence with the feeling of friendliness towards India, and secondly, that the regime which took over was not oriented towards China. It was realised that the recognition should not be delayed for long, for if the civil war continued for a long period, the leadership would pass to the extreme left. However, recognition should be given only when it was ensured that at least one or two more powers would also do so simultaneously(53).

Meanwhile, India's sympathy and support to the cause of Bangladesh took practical form in many ways. Millions of refugees from East Pakistan were given

shelter and succour in India in spite of the tremendous financial, social and security problems created by their presence and a severe set-back to her own developmental plans. The freedom fighters were extended not only moral, material and medical help but also provided with sanctuary and military assistance in training facilities and some arms and equipment. The government allowed the former Pakistani diplomats, who had declared their allegiance to Bangladesh, to open a diplomatic mission of Bangladesh in India and let them function as such without hindrance. Close contacts were maintained with the Provisional Government of Bangladesh and diplomatic and other support extended to it in international forums. The Prime Minister, the External Affairs Minister and other officials started using frequently the word "Bangladesh" instead of "East Pakistan" or even "East Bengal", which in fact meant de facto recognition.

However, the Government of India was firm that the question of recognition could not be decided on mere sentiments or emotions. It had to be based on hard facts and pragmatic considerations. Any pre-mature recognition would have given a set-back to its avowed objective of return of the refugees after a political settlement acceptable to the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh, as Pakistan would have then got a substantial basis for its accusation that the East Pakistan crisis had been created by Indian aggressive designs. Moreover, it would have proved harmful to the cause of Bangladesh itself, as other countries would have refrained from recognising it, regarding it as a puppet or satellite of the Indian Government. Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, said in Rajya Sabha on 27 March 1971 that the Government had "to act within certain international norms." Rejecting a strong demand by the All India Congress Committee for recognition of Bangladesh, she urged the members not to force the Government to take a step which would complicate matters or create more difficulties(54).

Indira Gandhi told opposition leaders also on 7 May 1971, that several friendly governments who were sounded on the recognition issue, did not favour any hasty action. Even Moscow shared this view, though it had accepted India's assessment of the East Bengal situation(55).

Further, recognition alone would have been of little consequence as far as the attainment of the objectives of the people of East Bengal were concerned unless it was followed by direct or indirect military intervention by India. In either case, Pakistan would have turned a confrontation between East Bengalees and

West Pakistan authorities into an Indo-Pakistan conflict, and an Indo-Pakistan war would have inevitably resulted. Even if India had refrained from intervention after recognising Bangladesh, the very fact of recognition would have given Pakistan a causus belli to declare war on India and seek assistance from the United Nations and the international community, besides putting pressure on the United States to fulfil its commitments under the agreement of 1959 to safeguard its independence and sovereignty. Any cease-fire imposed by UN before the liberation of Bangladesh, either by the Mukti Bahini or with Indian military help, would have only consolidated West Pakistani hold over it. Active US assistance or China's intervention would have created formidable problems for India.

Again, there were hard military considerations which militated against an early recognition involving the very serious risk of an Indo-Pak war. If recourse to war was inevitable to attain India's objectives, it must be a successful lightning strike lasting only a few days. India's hands in the eastern region were full with the West Bengal elections and the Naxalite underground insurgency. The required level of military superiority needed for a short successful war involved transportation of large numbers of men and enormous quantity of equipment and provisions from distant places to the eastern theatre. Only 250 wagons a day, could be ferried before the opening of the broadguage Farakka bridge on 11 November 1971. Thereafter, 700 wagons could be moved(56). The problem of logistics and the chances of Chinese intervention in support of Pakistan in a military conflict when the northern passes were still useable were reasons for the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen S.H.F.J. Manekshaw, to convey to the Prime Minister the reservations of the Army Headquarters about a military conflict before the onset of winter(57).

Thus, political and military considerations weighed heavily in India's decision to adopt a cautious policy with regard to the question of recognition of Bangladesh. Elucidating the official stand, the Foreign Minister assured Rajya Sabha on 19 July that "we are not opposed to the recognition of Bangladesh. We will take a decision at the appropriate and suitable time and we will not hesitate to recognise Bangladesh when we find that it is in our national interest and also in the interests of the freedom fighters"(58).

Thus, the Government thought it "politic to adopt a policy of watch and wait for some time until the situation in Bangladesh crystalizes further," and

in the meantime to "continue to exhibit its full-fledged support to the people of Bangladesh in their saddest hour and to render them moral, financial, medical and other facilities" and to keep "propaganda constantly focussed on the issue"(59).

In pursuance of this policy, the Government did not allow volunteers to go to East Bengal to help the freedom movement there so as not "to bring grist to the mill of Pakistan's malicious propaganda that India had prompted the freedom movement"(60). Again, India's military assistance to the freedom fighters had the limited objective of applying increasing pressure on the military regime to force it to come to a political settlement acceptable to the people of Bangladesh. When Donald Chesworth, a member of the War on the Want Organisation, approached the Ministry of External Affairs with the offer of financing the purchase of war material for Bangladesh, he was asked to discuss the matter with Bangladesh officials in London and elsewhere. The only assistance that the Government of India was willing to give was logistic support for transmitting the equipment after the purchase and other arrangements had been made(61).

The Provisional Government of Bangladesh, which was in early stages unhappy about its non-recognition by India, had by August, come to fully understand and respect the Indian position.

With the benefit of hind sight, few would deny that Indira Gandhi and her Cabinet colleagues showed great courage and statesmanship in resisting the strong popular demand for early recognition of Bangladesh, and for using the Indian armed forces to liberate that territory. Even at the risk of being called weak, she avoided the pit-falls into which she was being hustled; waited resolutely for the most favourable moment, and gave the fullest opportunity to the Government of Pakistan and to the international community to bring about a peaceful solution.

THE MOUNTING FLOOD OF REFUGEES

From the middle of April, the stream of refugees from East Bengal turned into an unending on-rushing torrent because of the cruelties perpetrated by the West Pakistani troops. The total number of refugees,(62) which stood at 1,19,566 on 17 April 1971,(63) had shot up to 43,79,000 by the end of May and by the end of July it had reached the staggering figure of 72,32,000(64). These figures show that during a short period of three and a half months there was a massive increase of over 71,00,000 refugees. The West Pakistani troops had been asked to crush the

engulfing, fiercely rising force of Bengalee nationalism. Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, pointed to the heart of the problem when she said in Parliament in November 1971: "The wrath of the West Pakistan army has been aroused because the people of Bangladesh have stood and struggled for values which the army is unable to comprehend, and which it has suppressed in every province in Pakistan"(65).

Causes of the Influx

The West Pakistani Army was getting increasingly infuriated at the success of the guerrilla operations by the Mukti Bahini and other liberation forces. By August 1971 the guerrillas had broken through the security net of Pakistani Army and brought the 'invisible war' to Dhaka itself. This had a demoralising effect on the Pakistani troops who had no previous experience of guerrilla warfare and retaliated by burning villages and indiscriminately killing civilians and looting their property.

The objective of the West Pakistani authorities in unleashing atrocities against the civilian population in East Bengal was to force as many Bengalees as possible to flee the country and to reduce the proportion of Bengalees by bringing in a large number of civilians from West Pakistan for permanent settlement by offering them inducements of loans and other facilities(66). In fact, it was reported that by April 1971, about 10,000 West Pakistani 'goondas' were brought to Rangpur and other sectors to harass and kill Hindus(67).

The operation depopulation executed by the Pakistani army had another objective viz., of weakening India, by forcing millions of refugees to flee, and hoping that India would absorb them as she had absorbed several millions who had fled East Pakistan since the partition in 1947. This would create formidable problems for India. Indira Gandhi on 26 May 1971, said that the influx of millions of refugees from East Bengal into India would lead to disastrous consequences. 'The cruel tragedy' in East Bengal was having a damaging effect on India economically, socially and emotionally and thus happenings there had now become "an Indian problem and also a world-wide problem"(68).

A number of distinguished foreign dignitaries and journalists who visited East Pakistan have given vivid accounts of the reign of terror perpetrated by the Pakistani army in East Bengal. Reginald Prentice, a member of the British Parliamentary delegation which visited Pakistan and India, said in an article in New

Statesman, London, dated 16 July 1971: "Everywhere we went we questioned refugees at random: everywhere we were told similar stories. The army had come to their village, or a nearby village. People were shot or mutilated, houses and farms burned, women were raped, the soldiers had looted, or encouraged the non-Bengalees to loot the Bengalees (and especially the Hindus). This was still happening. That was why they had left. They wanted to return, but only when it was safe, that is, when Mujib said it was safe, or when the army left"(69). Senator Proxmire, on 29 July 1971, in a statement to the US Senate gave a hair-raising account of army brutality. He said, "It seemed a routine enough request. Assembling the young men of the village of Halughat in East Pakistan, a Pakistani Army Major informed them that his wounded soldiers urgently needed blood. Would they be donors? The young men lay down on makeshift cots(sic), needless(sic) were inserted in their veins - and then slowly the blood was drained from their bodies until they died"(70).

A report by Anthony Mascarenhas, a Pakistani citizen and Assistant Editor of Morning News of Karachi, published in Sunday Times of London, 13 June 1971, vividly describes the inhuman cruelties perpetrated by the Pakistani army. "For Six-days as I travelled with the officers of the 9th Division Headquarters at Comilla, I witnessed at close quarters, the extent of the killings. I saw Hindus hunted from village to village and door to door, shot off-hand, after a cursory 'short arm inspection' showed they were uncircumcised. I have heard the screams of men bludgeoned to death in the compound of the Circuit House (Civil Administrative Headquarters) in Comilla. I have seen truck-loads of other human targets and those who had the humanity to try to help them, hauled off 'for disposal' under the cover of darkness and curfew. I have witnessed the brutality of 'kill and burn missions' of the army units... I have seen whole villages devastated by 'punitive action' and in the officers' mess at night, I have listened incredulously as otherwise brave and honourable men proudly chewed over the day's kill. "How many did you get?" The answers are seared in my memory"(71).

The Washington Daily News in an editorial on 15 June 1971, said that though the military regime of President Yahya Khan denied it was committing "selective genocide", there was mounting evidence that it was "cold-bloodedly murdering minority Hindus, Bengali separatists intellectuals, doctors, professors, students - in short those who could lead a self-governing East Pakistan"(72). The Washington

Post editorial on 30 July 1971, remarked, "In Pakistan the world is witnessing a holocaust unmatched since Hitler and 'witnessing' is the operative word"(73).

The refugees who swarmed into India after the crack-down on 25 March 1971 in East Bengal, were not refugees in the same sense as those who had come since the partition of India in 1947. Previously, the refugees were all Hindus who came to India to escape communal atrocities and suppression or to seek better economic prospects. They came in driblets or in large numbers at the time of serious communal riots but never in such a massive flood as happened now. These new refugees belonged to every religious persuasion like Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians. They came from every social class and age group. Among them were intellectuals comprising professors, doctors, lawyers, students and others as well as poor illiterate people. They were 'victims of war' seeking refuge from "the military terror across the frontier", where the Pakistani army was engaged in both "political and communal persecution and genocide"(74). Another significant fact about these refugees was that in the early stages the ratio of Muslims to Hindus coming to India was 80 per cent to 20 per cent respectively. But since about the end of April the communal composition was reversed; nearly 80% of the people coming were Hindus and 15 to 20% only were Muslims. The reason for this change was that initially the Pakistani Army's killings were indiscriminate, but later the army got engaged in clearing a 10 to 30 mile belt all along the East Bengal-India border of the Hindu population(75). Besides this, the military authorities encouraged the 'Biharis', Razakars, Al Badars and Al Shams to kill and loot Hindus whose shops were allotted to pro-Pakistani Muslims. The authorities were instructed to convert to Islam the able-bodied Hindus who wished to stay in Pakistan and to drive away the old, infirm and non-working Hindus and to loot their property. At some places 60% of Hindus were converted into Islam and those who resisted conversion were eliminated(76).

The drive against the Hindus was meant to achieve some important political objectives. The Hindus fully supported the Awami League because of its secular, democratic and socialistic ideology. The Pakistani authorities were blaming India for the crisis in East Pakistan and, Hindus were considered Indian agents. By encouraging and helping the fundamentalist Muslims and Biharis to plunder Hindu property and to commit rape, arson and murder against them, the Pakistani authorities tried to create Hindu-Muslim clashes which they hoped would divert the people's attention from separatist demand. They hoped

that it would also help to promote the Islamic orthodoxy in East Bengal as well, where it had few followers. It would have been the final fulfilment of the two-nation theory on which Pakistan was founded. To counter the growing international censure against their repression in East Pakistan, they wanted to create an impression that the crisis in East Bengal was not because of confrontation between West Pakistani military rulers and East Bengali nationalist forces, but the usual trouble created by communal animosity.

Looking After the Refugees

The task of meeting the challenge posed by the unending influx of refugees was a very difficult one. It required the mobilisation of all material, financial and manpower resources on a war footing. The Government of India on 27 March 1971, took the decision that the refugees from East Bengal should be provided relief, viz., shelter, food and medical aid, etc. on humanitarian grounds and the cost of such relief would be met by the Central Government. The State Governments were accordingly requested to undertake the requisite relief programme on behalf of the Central Government(77). A branch secretariat of the Department of Rehabilitation was set up at Calcutta to be an executive outpost with the necessary financial powers and authority to undertake relief measures(78). The local administrations asked the officers managing the camps to draw any amount of money from the treasury which they required for food, shelter, etc., for the refugees. No formalities like previous sanction, etc., were to be required(79).

By 3 June, 509 refugee camps had to be erected along 2,800 km(approximately) border from Meghalaya down to Bongaon in West Bengal(80). Every available building, including schools and training institutions, were requisitioned to give shelter to the refugees. The refugee influx over-flowed to the already congested city of Calcutta where the Salt Lake area near the Dum Dum Airport was literally invaded. The Government converted the eastern part of the Salt Lake area into a refugee township where nearly 3,00,000 refugees took shelter. Even then, hundreds of thousands of new arrivals could find shelter only under the trees(81).

Many refugees needed urgent medical attention. Equipment for 1,000 new hospital beds was made available in Tripura and West Bengal. Special teams of surgeons, physicians and nurses and public health experts were deputed to the major camps. Special water-supply schemes were executed on the highest

priority and preventive health measures taken on a large scale(82).

The Chief Ministers of the border States apprehended shortage of essential commodities, serious problems of law and order, communal tension, etc., if immediate steps were not taken to disperse the refugees to other States. As the Indian Government's firm policy was that all the refugees must go back as soon as conditions in East Bengal were favourable, their dispersal to other States far away from the border was not favoured. However, after the Prime Minister's visit to Calcutta on 5 June 1971, it was decided to ease the pressures on West Bengal and Tripura by shifting some of the refugees to the other States, e.g., Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh. The refugees to be shifted were to be concentrated in large central camps with a capacity of 40,000 to 50,000 persons. Large-sized camps were also set up in West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura, which were run centrally by ex-army personnel. These camps were kept segregated and the refugees were not allowed to get mixed up with the local population(83).

As early as 24 May 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had in a statement in the Lok Sabha clearly enunciated Government of India's policy that the refugees had been given shelter purely on humanitarian grounds, and relief could not be perpetual. She declared that "condition must be created to stop any further influx of refugees and to ensure their early return under credible guarantees for their future safety and well being"(84). Again on 15 June she reiterated that India had given shelter on humanitarian grounds to these people fleeing from atrocities committed by the Pakistani army but had "no intention" of allowing them to settle.

India also made it clear that it was extending help and providing succour to people running away from violent political vendetta of a brutal regime, but it could not and should not be the responsibility of a single country merely because it happened to be the next door neighbour. The magnitude of the problem created by the refugee influx was such that "the cost of these (relief) operations finally will obviously be beyond the capacity of India to bear single-handed"(85). The refugees were the responsibility of the international community and India was looking after them on their behalf. The Indian Government requested the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for emergency assistance(86). Various international aid agencies, including World Food Programme, the Congress of Churches and the United Nations International

Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) contributed to meet the urgent needs of the refugees. The UN Secretary General, U. Thant appealed on behalf of the UN Organisation on 19 May 1971, to member governments and private bodies and other sources for extending assistance (87). International relief supplies were received, but the brunt of the burden had to be borne by India. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated in Rajya Sabha on 15 June 1971 that "so far this help has been pitiable in proportion to what is needed. It is about one-tenth of what is actually needed so far as we have been able to assess" (88).

In making arrangements for providing relief to the refugees, the policy adopted was that there should be only minimum assistance to them so that the local population did not get annoyed or estranged to see the refugees enjoying better food, clothing, etc., than they themselves. The policy was to supply a refugee's minimum wants only. But they should suffer some hardships as compared to their life in East Bengal, so that they went willingly back when the time was suitable for their return (89).

The Government of India's position was that the refugee influx was caused by the reign of terror let loose by the Pakistani authorities in East Bengal and they were responsible to stop the influx and to create conditions for the return of refugees already in India. A note handed over to the Pakistan High Commissioner by the External Affairs Ministry on 14 May 1971 stated that "The Government of India, therefore, holds the Government of Pakistan fully responsible for creating such conditions forthwith as would facilitate the return of these refugees to their homes". The Government of India also told Pakistan that it reserved the right to claim from Pakistan appropriate compensation for affording relief to millions of refugees who were victims of a deliberate campaign of terror launched by the armed forces of Pakistan. Unlike in the past, India would not suffer the burden of such a large number of people expelled deliberately by Pakistan (90).

Dangers and Problems

The heavy influx of refugees created many serious problems for India. The Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi stated on 18 May 1971, that "Lakhs of refugees pouring into the border States had created a major problem for the country. This would severely affect the country's economic, social and political life" (91). Again on 26 May 1971, she described the situation as "very critical" which could "lead to disastrous consequences". The refugee problem, she

said, was threatening the peace and security of India. Subsequently, on 15 June 1971 she declared in Rajya Sabha that the problems created for India by the upsurge across the border would "hurt us in many ways"(93).

Swaran Singh, Minister of External Affairs, in his address to the National Press Club, Washington on 17 June 1971, emphasised that the "point has now been reached where the actions of Pakistan's military government threaten to disrupt the economic, social and political fabric of our society and our state. These actions threaten to engulf our region in a conflict the end of which it is not easy to predict"(94).

The foreign press, too, assessed the situation in the same way. David Loshak, reporting in Daily Telegraph on 27 April 1971, noted that with "refugees streaming across the border, it is India which is most affected by the dismemberment of Pakistan. Her resources are already strained, her north-eastern(sic) territories already simmering in latent revolt, and the chaos in West Bengal already burgeoning from the tensions of a huge refugee population. India cannot afford to become embroiled"(95). The Ottawa Citizen(10 May 1971) in an editorial remarked: "Beyond the problem of providing them food, shelter, clothing and medicine now is the bigger one of their future. Given India's over population, especially in West Bengal, the prolonged stay of these refugees in India is bound to create resentment, perhaps even violence, against them"(96). The Sunday Australian(6 June 1971) editorially remarked that "to the prospect of social disintegration and pandemic cholera in West Bengal has been added a new threat to peace throughout the Indian sub-continent"(97). According to the Straits Times (Kuala Lumpur), 8 June 1971, the East Pakistani crisis has created for India "an almost intolerable problem, even threatening peace in the sub-continent"(98). An editorial in The Guyana Evening Post (17 June 1971) noted that the "impact of such a sudden influx of six million people was bound(sic) to cause severe disturbance to the social and economic life of the people of India...."(99).

Faced by such adverse international reaction, President Yahya Khan, blandly claimed that conditions in East Bengal had returned to normal and the refugees were coming back in large numbers. In a broadcast on 21 May 1971, he welcomed the bonafide Pakistani citizens to return home, as law and order had been restored and life was fast returning to normal. According to him, India had been circulating highly

exaggerated and distorted accounts of events and the number of refugees had been inflated by India adding to them "the unemployed and homeless people of West Bengal." The issue was being used by India "to justify its continuing interference in Pakistan's internal affairs"(100). On 18 June 1971, he issued a statement in Rawalpindi repeating his earlier call for the return of refugees with a special appeal to the minorities. He said, "my appeal was addressed to all Pakistani nationals irrespective of the caste, creed or religion; members of minority community should have no hesitation in returning to their homes in East Pakistan. They will be given full protection and every facility. They are equal citizens of Pakistan and there is no question of any discriminatory treatment. I urge them not to be misled by mischievous propoganda being conducted outside Pakistan"(101).

However, the refugees were not convinced. They were willing to return only if their safety and well-being could be secured through a political settlement with their undisputed leader, Sheikh Mujib. On 25 June 1971, the Associated Press correspondent found that only 785 refugees had gone back to the camp in Jhikargarcha in East Bengal(102). Reginald Prentice, a member of the British Parliamentary delegation, found the reception centres designed for returning refugees planned to receive 500 persons a day had a record showing that only 226 returned in 10 days since they were opened(103). The most effective rebuttal of the Pakistani claim was the fact that on 19 June 1971, the number of refugees in India was 59,26,000 and their average daily influx in May 1971 was 1,02,000 and in June 68,000 persons(104).

To solve the refugee problem, India's efforts were directed towards putting pressure on the Yahya regime to reach a political settlement in East Bengal which would be acceptable to its people. The creation of a favourable international public opinion and persuading various governments to make the military regime in Pakistan see reason were the means India adopted in her search for a solution to the aggravating refugee problem.

In the Ministry of External Affairs at New Delhi there was a current of thinking that the independence of East Bengal was inevitable. But this was an alternative scenario and not an essential or the only step which the Government of India envisaged for the return of the refugees. In a letter from the Ministry of External Affairs to all Heads of Missions, it was clearly stated: "It is obvious that the refugees will not return in any significant numbers till they are

confident of being able to do so in safety and this confidence they will have only when a political settlement has been reached which has the support of the people of East Bengal"(105). At one time it was even thought that "if they (the Pakistanis) are not prepared to restore the conditions under which these refugees could return to East Bengal, then the least they should do is to set apart a portion of their territory on which the refugees could be rehabilitated"(106). But the idea was not pursued, probably because it was impracticable. Moreover, any such action by India, to secure a part of East Bengal for the settlement of refugees would have been seen as aggression against Pakistan. It would have enabled Pakistan to invoke the sympathy and the support of the international community. India was keen to explore all possibilities to avoid a war with Pakistan as long as there was hope of political solution of the East Bengal problem either through internal diplomacy or by the pressure created by the force of Bengali nationalism and the Mukti Bahini.

INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

The brutal suppression of the democratic urges of the people of East Bengal at the hands of ruthless military rulers of West Pakistan did cause the neighbouring India concern and anxiety though indirectly. But when the hapless and helpless people began to flee to save their lives and took asylum in their millions on the Indian soil, India began to be directly affected by the developments in East Bengal. With the torrent of evacuees appearing unending, their burden was becoming increasingly unbearable to the host. Moreover, it was seriously threatening the peace in the sub-continent. The refugee problem had to be solved and solved expeditiously.

The influx of refugees was clearly the fall-out of the main political problem inside East Bengal, viz., violent suppression of the democratic rights of the people by the military regime. Government of India felt that steps to mitigate the effect of the fall-out, by economic aid etc., could not produce an effective solution to the problem. Once the basic political issue was resolved, the refugee problem would be solved automatically.

Emanating from the above assessment of the situation official Indian pronouncements clearly differentiated the new arrivals from the old East Bengal refugees. For instance the Prime Minister stated that the East Bengalees who sought shelter now in India were "not refugees as we have understood this word since partition. They are victims of war who

have sought refuge from the military terror across the frontier"(107). For that reason Indira Gandhi preferred to describe them as "evacuees and not refugees"(108). From the beginning of April, as the refugees crossed the border, (unlike in the past), they were now registered as foreigners. Those who failed to register failed to receive a ration card.

The East Bengalee refugees or, more appropriately, evacuees, could not be allowed to settle in India permanently. They were to "go back to their own home and hearth"(109) as soon as the conditions there became suitable. India was "determined" and "clear" that "they have to go back"(110).

India had given temporary shelter to millions of East Bengalees on humanitarian grounds. They were "on trust with us, primarily on behalf of Bangladesh and secondarily on behalf of entire international community"(111). The international community could not, therefore, avoid its responsibility towards those people.

The problem in East Bengal was intially an internal question, but after the cruel and inhuman atrocities on a massive scale perpetrated by the Pakistani military rulers on the people there and the flight or 'pushing out' of many millions into India, the issue certainly crossed the limits of domestic jurisdiction.

As early as 24 May 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in a statement in Lok Sabha, declared "Relief cannot be perpetual, or permanent, and we do not wish it to be so. Conditions must be created to stop any further influx of refugees and to ensure their early return under credible guarantees for their future safety and well-being"(112). Thus suitable conditions had to be created in East Bengal to stop further influx and to motivate the refugees to willingly and voluntarily go back.

In the well-considered view of the Government of India, only a "peaceful political settlement"(113) of the basic problem could help in creating such conditions. Obviously, the required political settlement was one "which has the support of the people of East Bengal"(114). Such a settlement was possible "only if the affairs of Bangladesh are in the hands of elected representatives. It is none else except Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" whose Party "got such an overwhelming majority - 167 out of 169 seats"(115). "Unless he and his party are in charge of the affairs of Bangladesh", Swaran Singh stated categorically,

"there will never be the atmosphere for these refugees to go back"(116). In the same statement the Foreign Minister further cautioned "in unmistakable terms that any regime which consists of breakaway elements from the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, or which consists of persons who might have been won over, cajoled or coerced and thus become willing tools in the hands of the military regime, who were given the facade of the Awami League but who were really puppets or quislings of the military regime, will never be acceptable to the people of Bangladesh"(117). In short, to be acceptable to the people of East Bengal, it should be "a Government which represents the people, which consists of members already elected by the people of Bangladesh"(118).

A UNICEF representative, and a member of the 3-men UNCHR team, reported after visiting many refugee camps in West Bengal, Assam and Tripura, that all groups "were united in their determination to return to East Pakistan once it were a free state in which their safety would be ensured"(119). But the Government of India, in pressing for a political settlement, did not stipulate that independence of East Bengal could be the only political settlement. Independence of Bangladesh might have been thought of, in the official circles, as an alternative scenario or may be even the ultimate solution(120), but the Government did not insist on it as a precondition for solution of the problems in East Bengal.

However, the Acting President of the provisional government of Bangladesh, Syed Nazrul Islam, in a broadcast on 6 June 1971, had put forward very clearly four conditions for a political settlement, one of which was the "recognition of the Sovereign Republic of Bangla Desh"(121).

The basic problems of East Bengal were issues between the people of East Bengal and the military rulers of Pakistan. It was for them to reach a settlement. It was not an Indo-Pak affair. India, therefore, rejected outright the so called offers of mediation between India and Pakistan from leaders of other countries(122). Any attempt to make the East Bengal problem an Indo-Pakistan issue was unacceptable to India.

The suggestion of the posting of UN Observers on both sides of the India-East Bengal border "to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees back to East Bengal" contained in the Secretary General U.Thant's Aide Memoire of 2 August 1971, was "unacceptable" to the Government of India chiefly because it would have created "a misunderstanding in

the international community that the situation in East Bengal is an Indo-Pakistan dispute" and would "equate India and Pakistan" and thereby "divert attention from the root cause of the problem which is the political and military oppression of the people of East Bengal and a denial of their fundamental, human and political rights"(123).

India also rejected,(124) on 18 August, Pakistan's proposal for the establishment of a "Good Offices Committee" of Security Council members for what it called "defusing the tense situation" along the Indo-Pakistan border. The Pak proposal met this fate precisely because its acceptance would have made the situation in East Bengal an Indo-Pakistan issue.

Indira Gandhi, in her statement in the Rajya Sabha on 24 May, had cautioned: "If the world does not take heed, we shall be constrained to take all measures as may be necessary to ensure our own security and the preservation and development of our social and economic life"(125). Explaining the import of the Prime Minister's above statement the Minister of External Affairs said that if the International Community did not succeed in hammering out a satisfactory solution, "then we reserve the right to take whatever action we might consider appropriate"(126). In answering a question put to him after his address to the National Press Club, Washington, Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh had warned, on 17 June 1971 that "if this thing continues, we will not be able to watch helplessly this addition to our troubles and this increasing threat to our security and stability of not only our territory, but of the entire region"(127).

A number of steps were taken to counter Pakistani propoganda and to present before the world the true and objective picture of the happenings in East Bengal. Parliamentarians, diplomatic representatives and other important persons from all countries of the world were invited to visit the Bangladesh refugee camps. Parliamentarians from the USA, UK, Canada, West Germany, Ireland and Australia, besides Ambassadors and other officials of diplomatic missions located in New Delhi, visited the refugee camps. Representatives of the UN agencies concerned with relief measures, and of a number of foreign humanitarian organisations, also visited the camps(128).

Indian diplomatic missions and publicity media were utilized to inform the public and governments of foreign countries about the true facts of the situation in East Bengal. Copies of Parliament's

Resolution of 31 March 1971 were given to the foreign diplomats stationed at New Delhi. Heads of Indian Missions abroad also handed over copies of the Resolution to the governments of the countries to which they were accredited, and to the Secretary General of the United Nations(129). Besides publishing Bangla Desh Documents (in two volumes), the Government of India brought out and distributed the following publications(130):-

- (1) The Issue - Rule by Ballot : The Answer - Reign of Terror (brought out by the office of the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations).
- (2) Genocide in East Bengal (brought out by the above office).
- (3) Prime Minister's speech in the Rajya Sabha on 15 June 1971.
- (4) Foreign Minister's speech at the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September 1971.
- (5) Foreign Minister's speech at the National Press Club, Washington on 17 June 1971.
- (6) Statement by India's Permanent Representative to the UN on 5 October 1971.

India also pressed foreign governments, particularly 'the great powers', and international organizations like the UN, to use their influence over Pakistan to end the genocide and the suppression of human rights of the people of East Bengal.

As early as 29 March, India formally approached the UN Secretary General U.Thant, and requested him "to take initiative and advise or suggest restraint" to the Pakistan Government "and if at all possible, try to prevent this mass slaughter" in East Pakistan(131).

The Government of India remained in constant touch with the Secretary General and made the following concrete proposals(132):

- (i) The Pakistan Government should be asked to restore the fundamental political and human rights to the people of East Bengal according to the norms set out in the UN Charter and various declarations and covenants on human rights to which the Government of Pakistan was committed.
- (ii) The international community should come to

the assistance of the refugees from East Bengal through national and international relief organisations.

(iii) The Government of Pakistan should be held responsible for the refugees who had come to India and for their repatriation back to East Bengal in safety.

(iv) The Secretary General of the United Nations should keep the problem of East Bengal constantly under review and render all necessary advice and assistance to resolve the problem.

The issue was also raised by India at the meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) early in May 1971.

The Ministry of External Affairs also kept in touch with member countries of the UN through diplomatic channels and explained India's concern at the deteriorating situation in East Bengal and the need to exert all possible influence on Pakistan authorities to have a peaceful political settlement with the elected representatives of East Bengal, namely the Awami League headed by its President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman(133).

Sheikh Mujib was the key figure in any settlement of the East Bengal problem and when the news came of his likely execution while in custody in West Pakistan, Indira Gandhi herself sent a message to Heads of Government on 10 August 1971 appealing to them to "exersise(sic) your influence with President Yahya Khan to take a realistic view in the larger interest of the peace and stability of this region"(134) and desist from any such action. In a similar message sent by the Foreign Minister to UN Secretary General it was pointed out that "if the Government of Pakistan do something precipitate and extreme in the context of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's life and welfare" it would have "grave and perilous consequences"(135).

The above efforts were supplemented by personal diplomacy. Several Ministerial and other high level official missions were sent to almost all the important countries of the world "to project the basic issues involved in the situation"(136) and to impress upon the official and non-official leaders, journalists and other makers of public opinion in those countries "the gravity of the situation created by the brutalities of the Pakistani Army, massive influx of refugees from Bangladesh and the urgent need for a political solution with the elected

representatives of people to enable refugees to return to their homeland in safety and with honour"(137).

Heading the list of such special emissaries, Sardar Swaran Singh, Minister of External Affairs, visited USSR, West Germany, France, Canada, USA and UK from 6 to 22 June 1971. From mid-May to July the following (138) were sent abroad:-

S.S. Ray (Minister of Education and Social Welfare); Professor Nurul Hassan, MP; Professor Rasheeduddin Khan, MP; Moinul Haque Choudhary (Minister of Industrial Development); Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (Minister for Agriculture); Barakatullah (Minister for Law & Power, Rajasthan Govt.); Dr. Karan Singh (Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation); S. Mohan Kumarmangalam (Minister for Steel & Mines); V.C. Shukla (Minister of State, Defence Production); Shah Nawaz Khan (Minister of State in Ministry of Steel & Mines); Erasmo D'Sequiera, MP; Ghanshyam Oza (Minister of State in Ministry of Industrial Development); Raj Bahadur (Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Shipping and Transport); H.R. Gokhle (Minister of Law & Justice); K.C. Pant (Minister of State in Ministry of Home Affairs).

The above missions covered all the important West European, Scandinavian, East European and South East Asian nations as well as Japan and major Muslim countries of West Asia and North Africa.

Non-official efforts in that direction included the peace mission undertaken by the revered Sarvodaya leader Jay Prakash Narayan. From 16 May to 27 June, Jay Prakash Narayan toured abroad on behalf of Sarva Seva Sangh and Gandhi Peace Foundation to draw attention of the world to the ghastly events in East Bengal and to arouse world conscience in favour of the struggling and suffering people of East Bengal. His mission took him to many countries which included UAR, Italy, Yugoslavia, USSR, Finland, Sweden, West Germany, France, UK, USA, Canada, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia(139). During his conversation in those countries, Jay Prakash Narayan, apart from dwelling upon the Pakistani atrocities and sufferings of the people of East Bengal and the resultant refugee influx into India, stressed the need for four steps: stoppage of all killings by military forces, return of the Pakistani Army to the barracks, release of all political prisoners and resumption of direct talks between President Yahya Khan and the Awami League leaders for a political solution. Till then, he said, all economic aid, including project aid, to Pakistan should be withheld(140). Stoppage of all kinds of aid to Pakistan was also urged by official emissaries as a

means to pressurize the Pak military rulers to come to terms with the people of East Bengal.

There was a general feeling in India that the Government was "investing disproportionate time and effort in the hope that international opinion would, by itself, bring independence to Bangladesh"(141). Most foreign governments expressed sympathy for the refugees and for India's predicament, but those who were in a position to apply pressure on Pakistan did nothing effective. Giving information about the results of the Government of India's approach to various countries, Surendra Pal Singh, Deputy Foreign Minister, informed Lok Sabha on 24 May that "most foreign governments including the Big Powers have assured us that they are using their influence with the Government of Pakistan to stop the use of force and seek a political solution. Many of them are, however, reluctant to state their position publicly on this issue(142). Answering a question on the performance of various special missions, he stated that now "the background to and facts concerning recent events in East Bengal, and India's reaction to them, are better understood and appreciated abroad. Also international responsibility towards the refugee problem has been stressed and mischievous anti-India propaganda by Pakistan has been countered"(143).

Speaking specifically about the response of Arab countries to India's efforts, Surendra Pal Singh told Rajya Sabha on 21 July that some of them "are now showing a greater understanding of the problem"(144). He also disclosed that "Arab countries have not come out openly in support of Bangladesh. They have not condemned Pakistan for this. There is a feeling amongst them that this is an Indo-Pakistan issue, but they are now beginning to understand it better"(145). Though not very clearly stated, yet, so far as Arab countries were concerned, they felt that it was an internal affair of Pakistan.

About the gains of his own visit to six major countries (viz., USSR, West Germany, France, Canada, USA and UK) in June, Swaran Singh had informed(146) the Lok Sabha on 25 June 1971, that as a result of his talks with the Governments of those countries the following areas of agreements had emerged:-

- (i) That there could be no military solution and all military action in East Bengal must stop immediately;
- (ii) That the flow of refugees into India from East Bengal must immediately stop;

- (iii) That conditions must be created enabling the refugees to return to their homes in peace and security, and that this could happen only if the refugees could be assured of a secure future in East Bengal;
- (iv) That a political solution acceptable to the people of East Bengal was the only way of ensuring a return of normalcy; and
- (v) That the present situation was grave, and fraught with serious dangers for the peace and security of the region.

On 2 August 1971, the Ministry of External Affairs restated that as a result of India's diplomatic efforts "many foreign governments have assured us that they are using their influence with the Government of Pakistan to stop the use of force and to seek a political solution"(147).

But his Deputy Minister had made almost the same statement in May. It was clear that no tangible progress was being made on the diplomatic front and India's strenuous efforts were bearing no fruit.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FROM ABROAD

Even though India's diplomatic and media efforts failed to move the foreign governments, they did move the man in the street in London, Tokyo, Chicago or Lima. The large-scale massacres perpetrated by the Pakistan armed forces against the civilian population of East Pakistan, and the brutal repression of their democratic aspirations aroused deep sympathy and concern in the international community. The world was shocked by the harrowing accounts of genocide. At the same time the international community expressed appreciation of the commendable work done by the government and people of India in giving shelter, food and medical aid to the hapless people who had been forced to leave their homes. India's plea that it was the duty of Pakistan government to stop the repression of the East Bengalis and create normal conditions, by arriving at a political settlement with the elected leaders of East Bengal, also received widespread support. Such support came from various international quarters which included government spokesmen, eminent public figures, unofficial organisations and the Press.

International Support (Official)

Though the governments of many countries

regarded the political crisis in East Bengal as an internal affair of Pakistan and took up the humanitarian aspect of the matter with the Government of Pakistan only through private diplomatic channels, some important government spokesmen of some of the leading countries publicly regarded the problem as of international concern, and expressed support for achieving a negotiated political settlement of the crisis with the elected representatives of East Bengal. The Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, N.V. Podgorny, in a message to the President of Pakistan on 2 April 1971, expressed the conviction that resort to peaceful methods for achieving political settlement would correspond to the interests of the entire Pakistan people and the cause of preserving peace in the region(148). Rt. Hon J.R. Marshall, Acting Prime Minister of New Zealand issued a public statement on 14 April 1971 expressing his Government's concern and calling for an early end of the bloodshed and for the renewal of attempts by Pakistan's leaders to reach agreement by negotiation and compromise(149). William McMahon, Prime Minister of Australia, replying to a question in the Australian House of Representatives on 22 April 1971, regretted the loss of life and bloodshed, even more so after the elections at which Awami League had received strong approval from the people of East Pakistan(150). The President of the Philippines, Ferdinand E. Marcos on 15 June 1971, expressed deep concern for the plight of the people adversely affected by the conflict in East Pakistan and observed that with the influx of millions of refugees to India, it had become a humanitarian problem of international concern(151). In the Canadian House of Commons on 16 June 1971, the Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Canada, Mitchell Sharp, expressed the opinion that the only possible way of dealing with the situation was to come to a political settlement in Pakistan(152). Elaborating, he said, the preferred settlement, of course, would be one in which the elected representatives of the people should be given the responsibility of governing Pakistan, particularly East Pakistan. An official Yugoslav statement on 17 June 1971, expressed great concern over the hardship of millions of East Pakistan refugees in India and urged that measures should be taken to find a political solution to normalise the situation in East Pakistan(153). A statement issued after the meeting of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Sir Alec Douglas-Home with Swaran Singh on 21 June 1971, said that in their discussion the two leaders agreed that it was important that the flow of refugees into India from East Pakistan should cease and that conditions should be created for enabling them to return to their home(154). It was recognised

that this would only be possible if a political solution was found which was acceptable to the people of East Pakistan. At a Press Conference in Bonn on 23 July, 1971, West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, emphasised the same points(155).

Support From Eminent Public Figures

A large body of leading Parliamentarians, Senators and intellectuals of the world community also condemned the brutal armed suppression of democracy and sought to put pressure on Pakistan to arrive at a settlement with the elected representatives of the people in East Bengal. Lord Fenner Brockway, Member of the House of Lords and the guiding spirit behind the British movement for colonial freedom, on 4 April 1971, demanded an immediate ending of the repression, release of political prisoners, and the convening of National Assembly(156). Peter Shore, a former Minister in UK's Labour Government during a Commons debate on 5 April 1971, strongly repudiated the argument that the brutal armed suppression of democracy in East Bengal was an internal matter of Pakistan(157). He appealed to the British Government to bring pressure on President Yahya Khan to stop bloodshed in East Bengal and demanded that the future of East Bengal should be decided by the people themselves and not by the army of West Pakistan. In his testimony before the US Senate on 11 May 1971, Senator Edward M. Kennedy expressed his great concern over the continuing heavy influx of refugees into India(158). In the US Senate on 18 May 1971, Senator Frank Church rejected the Pakistan Government's contention that the slaughter of elected leaders and repression of the majority of its population was not a proper matter of concern for the international community(159). Reginald Prentice, a member of the British Parliamentary fact-finding mission to East Pakistan and India on 4 July 1971, called for international pressure on President Yahya Khan to bring about a political settlement.

In a report released in Ottawa on 19 July 1971, the members of a Canadian Parliamentary delegation also noted that only a political settlement between the Government of Pakistan and the elected representatives of East Pakistan could solve the crisis(160). In the US House of Representatives on 3 August 1971, Congressman Cornelius E. Gallagher supported a political settlement in East Pakistan and said that the issue should not be confused by diversionary move like the proposed posting of UN observers on the Indian side(161). Professor R. Sieber, leader of the three member delegation of the Volkshammer (Parliament) of the German Democratic

Republic, which visited India from 14 to 22 August 1971, observed at a Press Conference on 21 August that a permanent settlement of the basic political problem could "only be brought about in accordance with the Will of the people of East Bengal and in consultation with their elected representatives"(162). Professor John Kenneth Galbraith, former US Ambassador to India, told a Press Conference in New Delhi on 14 September 1971, that a political solution to the Bangladesh problem could be achieved and the refugees allowed to go back to their country in safety(163). He said, "there was great sympathy and support in the United States for the vast number of people who had been driven into India." He went on to say that there "was also great admiration for the courage, restraint and energy with which India was handling the problem."

Many observers not only refuted the Pakistani allegation that India was preventing the return of refugees to their country, but also highly appreciated India's continued willingness to accept refugees in such staggering numbers on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. The UNHCR refuted Pakistani allegation that India was obstructing the return of refugees. Prince Sadruddin, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said there was absolutely no evidence for the host government having obstructed the refugees if they wanted to go(164). Again, in Paris on 10 July 1971, the Prince in reply to a question said that it would not be logical to say that India was in any way holding back their return. On 19 July 1971, at Kathmandu, two volunteers of the British Organisation "War on Want" described as "rubbish" Pakistani allegation that India was holding refugees and preventing their return. At Calcutta on 22 July, Manfred Cross, an Australian M.P., expressed the same opinion. Again, on 3 August, Gallagher said in the US House of Representatives that the Government of India had refrained from recognising the Government of Bangladesh and had accepted and handled the burden of 7½ million refugees with remarkable fortitude and praiseworthy competence(165). At the National Press Club Washington on 26 August 1971, Senator Edward M. Kennedy stated: "The Government of India, as it first saw this tide of human misery begin to flow across its borders, could have cardoned off its land and refused entry. But, to its everlasting credit, India chose the way of compassion. The Indian Government has made Herculean efforts to assist and accommodate the refugees - efforts which history will record and remember"(166).

Support by Unofficial Organisations

A large number of non-governmental organisations

passed resolutions and issued statements assailing Pakistan Government's action in East Bengal and calling for a political settlement of the crisis. The officers of the World Conference of Religion for Peace (WCRP), New York, meeting in New Delhi on 22-23 April 1971, condemned the infliction of suffering and death on masses of innocent human beings(167). They called upon the President of Pakistan and his government to stop violence and repression in East Pakistan. The Socialist International Council Conference in Helsinki on 27 May passed a resolution in which it expressed its profound concern about the tragic situation in Pakistan and called for immediate commencement of negotiations with the elected representatives of the people to achieve a political settlement of the problem(168). The Executive Committee of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs during its 26th session held in Geneva on 9-12 July 1971, expressed concern over the plight of the Pakistani people and urged its national constituents to influence their own governments to press the Government of Pakistan to negotiate a just political settlement with the leaders of East Pakistan(169). Twenty-two international non-governmental organisations on 20 July 1971, petitioned the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to take constructive action "concerning the reports of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedom occurring in East Pakistan"(170). An international conference held in Toronto from 19 to 21 August 1971, and attended by over 30 distinguished scholars, editors, Parliamentarians and former diplomats, called for an immediate end to all killings and stressed that a lasting political solution should be achieved to end the crisis(171). A resolution unanimously passed by the Latin American Parliament at Caracas, Venezuela, on 27 August called upon the Government of Pakistan to desist from committing further violation of human rights, stop military repression, and enter into immediate negotiations with the already elected representatives of the people(172). The 21st Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs held at Sinaia, Rumania, from 26 to 31 August 1971 appealed to the Government of Pakistan to promote speedily a peaceful political settlement and create conditions for the safe return of the refugees to their homes(173). In a statement issued in London on 11 September 1971 the Bureau of the Socialist International expressed its profound concern at the terrible human tragedy in East Pakistan, condemned the violation of human rights by the Pakistan military regime, and declared that there must be a political solution to this tragedy(174).

Support by International Media

The world press also condemned the brutal suppression of human rights and the imposition of reign of terror in East Bengal. It had done a commendable job in rousing public sympathy for the people of East Bengal by giving authentic eye-witness accounts of the gruesome and tragic events and by exposing the lies and half-truths dished out by the Pakistan officials. Sydney H. Schanberg, who was one of the 35 foreign newsmen expelled from East Pakistan, testified in his despatch in the New York Times of 28 March 1971, that the Pakistan Army used artillery and heavy machine guns against unarmed East Pakistan civilians(175). In its editorial on 29 March the Sydney Morning Herald held President Yahya responsible for the tragedy in East Pakistan and observed that a political miracle would be needed to put Pakistan together again(176). The Age, Canberra, in an editorial on 29 March 1971 warned that the nation could not be held together by the military repression of a hostile majority of people(177). On 31 March, the New York Times editorially condemned the brutality of Pakistani troops towards their "Moslem brothers" in East Pakistan and noted that acting "in the name of God and a united Pakistan," forces of the West Pakistan-dominated military government of President Yahya Khan had dishonoured both by their ruthless crackdown on the Bengalee majority(178). The editorial appealed to the world community to call on President Yahya Khan, "in the name of humanity and common sense, to stop the bloodshed and restore Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to his rightful role as elected leader of his people. Commenting editorially on the tragic developments in East Pakistan, The Times (London) on 3 April, concluded that the aim of the military regime was to wipe out the Awami League leadership(179). Anthony Mascarenhas, a Pakistani national and former Assistant Editor, Morning News, Karachi, in Sunday Times (London) on 13 June 1971, gave a gruesome account of the massacre in East Pakistan and was of the opinion that it was deliberately carried out by the West Pakistan army(180). He stated that 'pogrom's victims were not only the Hindus of East Bengal but also many thousands of Bengalee Muslims which included university and college students, teachers, journalists, Awami Leaguers and those who had been prominent in Sheikh Mujib's movement. Murray Sayle in the Sunday Times (London) on 11 July, doubted the claim of the Pakistan Government that life in East Pakistan was returning to normal and wrote : "On the refugee issue, it is clear that only a very brave or very foolish refugee would even try to return as things are, and that his welcome would be very doubtful if he did"(181).

With the migration of millions of refugees into India, the crisis in East Pakistan was no longer considered by the media solely an internal problem of Pakistan. They regarded the problem as of international concern. The New Herald, Kathmandu, in an editorial on 26 May 1971, argued that the massive influx of refugees from East Pakistan into India supported the view that whatever had happened was no longer an internal affair of Pakistan, as claimed by Islamabad Government and its allies(182). The Commoner of Kathmandu on 1 June editorially noted that India had been doing her best to help the refugees from East Pakistan. The paper rejected Pakistani contention that the refugees were encouraged by India to come in. It was incomprehensible why any country, including India, should willingly invite such burdens, the paper commented(183). The Straits Times, Malaysia, said in an editorial on 8 June that with four million refugees having crossed into India, the developments in East Pakistan were no longer solely an internal problem. Even Pakistan had given up the pretence of being able to come to grips with it without massive external assistance, the paper observed(184). Commenting editorially on 10 June, The Straits Echo, Malaysia, lamented the fact that the international community had "failed to take a moral stand on what clearly was a ruthless attempt to subdue a whole people." Referring to the clear evidence of the continuing flight of East Pakistanis into India, which it feared could well number ten million before long, the editorial said: "It is an international problem and the international community and the United Nations must accept the responsibility of rehabilitating the refugees in their own homeland. This means prevailing upon the Pakistan authorities to create conditions which would enable the refugees to return..."(185). Christian Science Monitor in its editorial on 20 May stated that "Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is certainly right in saying that the nearly three million refugees from East Pakistan who have surged across India's borders since the March 25 Civil War are an international problem"(186). Under the caption "Help India solve Refugee Problem," Palaver of Accra in its editorial on 20 May appealed to all freedom-loving peoples of the world to support India in the gigantic task of caring for the refugees who had become a burden and liability on India(187).

It is amply proved, therefore, that official spokesmen, eminent public leaders and the press in most countries of the world clearly endorsed India's position on the East Bengal crisis. Only the powerful governments friendly to Pakistan failed to press Yahya Khan. And without effective pressure the East Bengal

crisis was bound to deteriorate.

THE INDO-SOVIET TREATY

The deepening crisis in East Pakistan was now seriously affecting India's security and economic wellbeing. Yahya Khan's almost weekly statements about a possible war with India with a view to turn the fast deteriorating internal Pakistan crisis into an Indo-Pak problem; unwillingness of the USA to discontinue arms supplies to Pakistan and China's open support to the military regime in Pakistan, were creating a dangerous situation. The Government of India took a momentous decision then to sign a treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation with the USSR(188).

Yahya Khan's pronouncements from May to July showed hardening of attitude and not a movement towards accommodation. Rattled by the increasing tempo of the Mukti Bahini operations with Indian support, he told Neville Maxwell in an interview that if India seized any part of East Pakistan, he would declare war and Pakistan would not be alone.

Realising the gravity of the situation, the Government of India on 13 July decided that the steps required in case of an emergency should be carefully considered and put down in writing, so that action could be initiated quickly if it proved necessary(189). With war clouds hovering over the horizon, it was also logical step for India to give a formal and juridical basis to its existing close relations of friendship and cooperation with the USSR by signing a treaty which would act as a deterrent to any potential aggressor.

The fast changing international configuration of forces also impelled India and the USSR. Henry Kissinger's visit to China in July gave indications of a Sino-US detente with adverse effects on USSR's strategic posture and global policy. China already had close military and economic relations with Pakistan. The now emerging China-Pak-US axis naturally posed a great security threat to India because of its strained relations with both Pakistan and China(190). The changed US attitude towards a possible Sino-Indian conflict was a further cause for concern. Before going to China, Kissinger told the Indian Ambassador, L.K. Jha, that if China attacked India, US response would be as strong as in 1962. He also assured the Indian External Affairs Minister that in any conflict between India and China, USA will be on India's side. But on return from China, he told the Indian Ambassador that America would not intervene in any conflict between India and Pakistan even if

China intervened in support of Pakistan(191). This significant change in US attitude towards a possible Chinese intervention in an Indo-Pak conflict evidently took place because of Henry Kissinger's talks with Zhou Enlai in Beijing during his visit there. A Rumanian diplomat is reported to have told Hemen Ray, an Indian writer, that Zhou Enlai had informed Kissinger that in the event of an Indo-Pak War, Beijing would militarily intervene on behalf of Pakistan. "Zhou also demanded and received a verbal American promise that Washington would not support India in the event of a Chinese military intervention for the sake of developing a dialogue between the two countries"(192). Swaran Singh told Parliament on 20 July that "we cannot at present totally rule out" that any Sino-American detente would not be "at the expense of other countries, particularly in this region." Therefore, India had for sometime been "considering ways and means of preventing such a situation from arising, and meeting it if it should arise"(193).

The Indo-Soviet treaty was not a sudden development. The Soviet Union had wanted India to sign such a treaty and the two countries had it under consideration for about two years. It appeared that India did not want to take any hasty decision about it because of the probability of its being linked with the Soviet proposal of Asian Collective Security suspected to be directed against China. The Indo-Soviet cooperation in economy, industry, science and technology and also in the supply of military hardware by the Soviet Union, was running smoothly without requiring any formal treaty. But now the regional and international situation was gravely deteriorating, requiring a new look at the proposed treaty. Giving legal and juridical shape to India's friendship and cooperation with the USSR would show to the world that India was not alone. If Pakistan took the plunge, China would hesitate to intervene militarily on its side; and even the USA might exercise some restraint in its support to Pakistan. Internationally also, the developments were propitious. There was an air of detente between Western Europe and USSR, symbolised by the "Ostropolitik" of Chancellor Willy Brandt of the Federal Republic of Germany, which resulted in the Soviet-FRG Treaty on 12 August 1971. USA and USSR were regularly holding talks for the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons, which ended in the conclusion of the SALT I agreement in May 1972. In this fast changing international atmosphere for detente and cooperation, an Indo-Soviet treaty was not likely to be misunderstood as placing India in the Soviet camp.

Under the impact of these major changes in regional developments and international configuration of powers, India was receptive to the suggestion made by the Soviet Ambassador to India, N.M. Pegov to the Indian Foreign Secretary, T.N. Kaul, on 16 July 1971, that in view of Kissinger's visit to Beijing, it was urgently necessary to finalise the Indo-Soviet treaty(194). A thorough study was made to see whether the proposed treaty would in any way adversely affect India's long cherished objectives in foreign policy or would be harmful to its international relations in the global context. It was found that the proposed treaty would not conflict with the basic tenets of non-alignment but on the contrary further strengthen it. It would promote stability and security in the region. Western Europe, itself seeking detente with the USSR, logically could not oppose India and the USSR exercising a peaceful and stabilising influence in the area. The countries of Eastern Europe, barring Albania and Yugoslavia, would welcome it. Yugoslavia might not like it but was not likely to oppose it. The effect on the African countries was likely to be wholesome and since they were not directly involved, they were not likely to be opposed to it. The countries of the Caribbean, and Latin America, would perhaps remain neutral or some of them, like Chile, Cuba and Mexico, might even welcome it. Japan, in the new context of a possible Sino-US detente, might not look askance at the treaty. The countries of South and South East Asia would see in the treaty a factor for the stabilisation of peace and security in the region. The effect on the Arab countries should also be healthy, as some of them like the UAR, Iraq and Libya would have second thoughts about aligning themselves with Pakistan. The USA might not like India and USSR coming together. For counter influence, the Americans might further strengthen Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey in the region, which they were already doing any way. They would get reconciled when it was realised that the treaty was for peace, and security and stability of the region. The only countries that were certain to oppose the treaty were China, Pakistan and Albania. However, the treaty would have a deterrent effect on Pakistan and China. Even China might with the lapse of time, take India's offer of normalisation of relations more seriously, if for no other reason at least to wean India away from the USSR. In any case, the treaty would definitely promote India's security and territorial integrity by formally placing on her side a reliable and powerful friend like the Soviet Union. It also placed on a firm legal basis the very beneficial Indo-Soviet cooperation in economy, industry, science and technology and other fields(195).

The Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was signed at New Delhi on 9 August by the Soviet Foreign Minister, A.A. Gromyko and the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Swaran Singh(196).

The treaty consisted of XII Articles. Articles I to III reaffirmed the policy of peaceful co-existence, friendship and cooperation between the two countries and continued efforts by them to strengthen peace and cooperation and for halting the arms race.

Article IV was of special significance, for while it expressed in general terms India's respect for the peace-loving policy of the Soviet Union, the latter explicitly and in unambiguous terms accepted that the Indian policy of non-alignment was an important factor in the maintenance of peace and international security.

Articles V, VI and VII dealt with bilateral relations, maintaining regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting their interests and cooperation in science and technology and expansion of trade.

Articles VIII, IX and X dealt with the safeguarding of security of the High Contracting Parties. They bound them not to participate in any military activity directed against the other party and to prevent the use of the territory of any one of them for the commission of any act which might inflict military damage on the other. The essence of the military provisions was that if either of the two countries was faced with the threat of an attack, they would "immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such a threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of the two countries." The two countries also declared that they would not enter into any obligations which might be incompatible with the terms of the treaty.

Article XI of the treaty fixed its duration for 20 years and provided for its being automatically extended for each successive period of 5 years, unless either party gave 12 months notice for its termination. Article XII provides for the High Contracting Parties bilaterally settling any differences over the interpretation of the treaty.

Pakistan and some other anti-India elements in the Western countries alleged that the treaty adversely affected India's policy of non-alignment.

India's position was that non-alignment did not mean that she could not enter into agreements with friendly countries for establishing peace, particularly when there were threats from various quarters. In the 1950's, India had taken arms exclusively from the Western countries, and between 1962-1965 it had even accepted military assistance from the USA. Later, for many years she was buying military hardware mostly from the USSR. Such military arrangements could not affect her non-alignment policy. The Indo-Soviet Treaty, in fact categorically stated USSR's appreciation of India's policy of non-alignment and reaffirmed that this policy constituted an important factor in the maintenance of universal peace and international security. It was the first time that a great power like the USSR had in a formal document accepted non-alignment as a major factor for peace(197). This lent further credibility to the non-aligned policy of India.

If the Indo-Soviet treaty is compared with similar treaties entered by the Soviet Union with other countries, it would be evident that additional precautions were taken in it to prevent any military entanglement. The Soviet Union's treaty of friendship and cooperation and mutual assistance with Finland (1950), and the treaty of friendship and cooperation with the UAR (1971), had specific provisions for cooperation in the military sphere, but the treaty with India provided only for "mutual consultations." In fact, the Soviet Union had signed a protocol with Canada - a NATO power - which provided for similar consultations when a situation arose which was dangerous for the maintenance of peace or when peace was violated. Agreements entered into by some other non-aligned countries for their defence and security had clear military implications. Malaysia and Singapore were members of the Five Power Defence Arrangement with United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, which had specific military cooperation provisions. Yugoslavia had concluded in 1954 a 20-year Balkan Pact with Greece and Turkey - NATO countries - with specific military provisions. Yugoslavia was somewhat sceptical about the Indo-Soviet treaty in the beginning because of her own bitter experience of agreement with the USSR, but later recognised its validity and necessity(198). President Tito stated that it was a treaty of friendship and not for assistance in war, and that it had a moral and material rather than military significance(199).

As expected, China, reacted against the Treaty with bitter ire. Radio Beijing declared that the Soviet Union had signed a so-called Peace and

Friendship Treaty with India for throwing dust in the eyes of the world and in fact it was a military pact. But analysts concluded that the Chinese anger was directed more against the Soviet Union than against India, and, like the Soviet Union, it looked at the Treaty mainly in the context of the bitter Sino-Soviet dispute.

Both India and the USSR regarded the Indo-Soviet treaty as a major event in international relations having far reaching consequences, not only for their security and development of cooperation in various fields, but also for promoting regional and international peace. B.N. Ponomarev, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Soviet of Nationalities, at a joint sitting of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet, on 11 August, said that the treaty "will exert positive influence in the interests of peace and security of the peoples, in the struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism"(200). Swaran Singh, while speaking at the All India Congress Committee Session at Simla on 8 October 1971 stated that the treaty was concluded at a time when the feelings in the country were fully receptive to a concrete step of this type, as it was often asked who were India's friends in moments of crisis. He summed up the importance of treaty: "the Treaty is sound in content, is practical, safeguards our independence and non-alignment, and at the same time it binds us to constructive course of mutual cooperation; safeguarding the sovereignty and independence of the contracting parties...without the automatic involvement of either of the two countries"(201).

Although these pronouncements, and the Treaty itself, emphasised international peace and cooperation, there is no doubt that Pakistan and her friends were profoundly worried at its possible military implications. The Treaty could even have secret military clauses. An early Pakistani attack, which was widely believed imminent then, was ruled out while the new situation was assessed and analysed. While strengthening India's position, the Treaty, therefore, definitely bought a few more months of peace in the sub-continent. These months could be used by the international community and the Mukti Bahini to put final pressure on the Pakistani rulers to achieve a political solution to the Bangladesh crisis, failing which another Indo-Pak War appeared inevitable.

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<u>Month</u>	<u>Total number of refugees by the end of the month</u>
April 1971	1,221,000
May 1971	4,379,000
June 1971	6,435,000
July 1971	7,232,000

(Statistical information relating to the influx of Refugees from East Bengal into India till 31 July 1971 - Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation, Department of Rehabilitation, Branch Secretariat, Calcutta-17, 3 December 1971, p.3).

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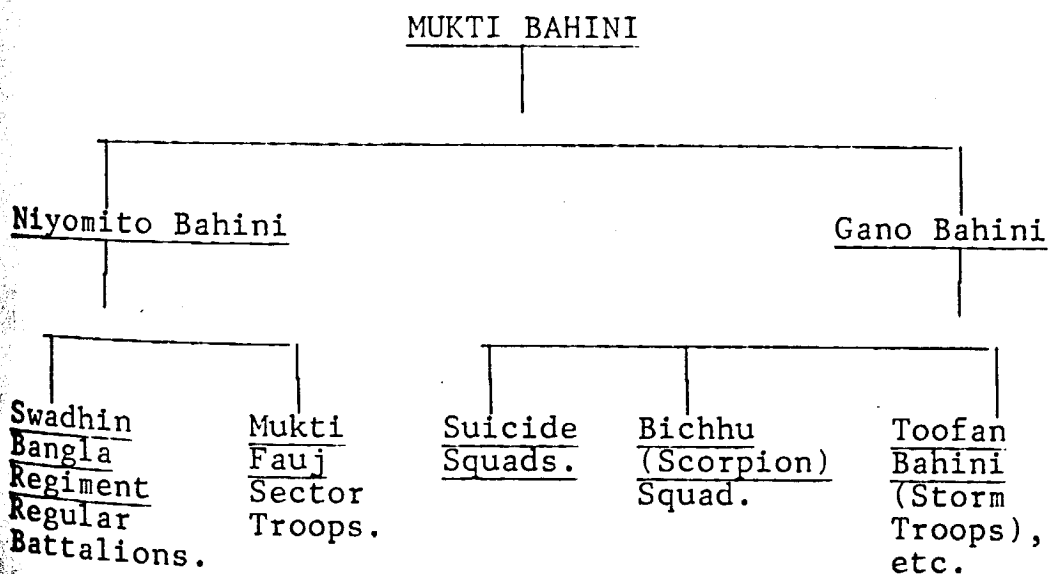
CHAPTER - V

THE MUKTI BAHINI COMES OF AGE

THE BAHINI ORGANISED

The name "Mukti Bahini", was a generic term which comprised various categories of freedom fighters (FF). At the time of its inception, it was known as Mukti Fauj. Later, it was renamed as the Mukti Bahini, possibly because 'Fauj' was an Urdu word.

From a spontaneously-formed, ill-assorted disorganised rabble, it soon grew into a very large, complex organisation of armed and trained men owing allegiance to the provisional government of Bangladesh, and operating under its own officers with their own chain of command. The Mukti Bahini organisation as it emerged finally in late summer of 1971 was as shown in the chart below:-



Besides the Mukti Bahini, there were other resistance groups also which deserve notice.

The increasing terror tactics of the Pakistan Army gave the Mukti Bahini more recruits than they could absorb. Thousands of Bengalees, old and young, including boys of tender age, volunteered for recruitment to fight the Pakistanis. Husbands separated from their wives, sons from their parents, brothers from their sisters, joined the Mukti Bahini

to give an appropriate reply to the Pak occupation force. In this way, by the end of April, the number of Bengalee volunteers rose to about 2,50,000(1). Col Osmani has aptly said: "The Mukti Bahini was manufactured overnight by the Pakistan Army. If the Pakistanis had only limited their action against selected politicians, Bengalees in the army and the police might have stayed neutral. It was only when information got around that the Pakistani army was out to kill Bengalee intellectuals and servicemen as well that they revolted to a man"(2). It is also interesting to observe that there were few from the refugee camps willing to join the Mukti Bahini. Out of more than one hundred thousand freedom fighters trained during this independence struggle, not even one per cent came from the refugee camps. The reason could be that most of the persons who took shelter in refugee camps had come with their families, hence they did not feel the urge to return to Bangladesh till they were absolutely safe, whereas those who reported to the youth camps had left their families behind in Bangladesh, and were all too eager to return after some training to fight against the Pak oppressors(3).

After the influx of the mauled, understrength EBR battalions into India, they formed the nucleus of the Bangladesh Army, or Niyomito Bahini. Their deficiency was made up by drawing manpower from the EPR, Police and battle-hardened guerillas. Out of the over 250,000 volunteers who had reported to the camps for training, the Awami League MNAs and MPAs selected those loyal to the Awami League ideals. After screening and a period of indoctrination, those recommended were trained at centres in West Bengal, Bihar, Tripura and Meghalaya in the use of light automatic weapons, mortars and explosives(4).

A regular Armed Forces Headquarters, with 10 officers under Col Osmani, was set up. Lt Col M.A. Rab(5) was appointed as the Chief of Staff, located within Bangladesh, while Col Osmani was based in India. Group Captain A.K. Khandker was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff with his office in Calcutta(6). On 15 July, the Bangladesh Commanders met Syed Nazrul Islam, the acting President of Bangladesh, and Tajuddin Ahmed, the Prime Minister, and formally swore allegiance to the Government of Bangladesh in an oath-taking ceremony.

Initially, the BSF alone was responsible for the border, and also provided some assistance to the Freedom Fighters as already described. But after the arrival in Bangladesh of two new Pak Army Divisions from West Pakistan, it was appreciated that the BSF was not capable of facing the situation. Hence on 16

May 1971, the Indian Army took over from the BSF the operational responsibility of protecting the Indo-Bangladesh border, and the latter was ordered to operate under the Army's over-all direction(7).

Meanwhile, Col Osmani, Major Shafiullah and Major Khaled Mosharraf met a Teliapara, a place in Sylhet district bordering India, and prepared what is known as the "Teliapara Document" outlining the strategy of the liberation war. It was decided that:

a) A big guerilla force would be trained to destroy the pro-Pak collaborators, disrupt communications to immobilize the Pak troops, and follow hit-and-run tactics against Pakistani posts and convoys so that the Pakistanis would live under perpetual tension and confusion.

b) The already trained forces inside the Mukti Bahini would be organised as Sector troops and placed in different Sectors for giving support to the guerillas.

c) Capable persons from the regular units and guerillas would be selected and trained to form a regular force to undertake armed actions against the Pak Army(8).

After the Teliapara Document was approved by the Bangladesh government-in-exile, a massive programme of recruitment and training of the Mukti Bahini started. The Government of India agreed to help, but this decision was conditional on the Mukti Bahini being led by the Awami League whose general ideological position was similar to that of India's.

INDIA'S SUPPORT

From the very beginning, when after the 1970 General Election, Sheikh Mujib and his Awami League started their struggle against the Pak military junta for the restoration of democracy and assertion of political and economic rights of the people of East Pakistan, who formed the majority of the population of Pakistan, the sympathies of the Indian people undoubtedly lay with the politically and economically oppressed East Pakistan. In fact, the people of West Bengal, Tripura and Assam were the kith and kin of the Bengalees of East Pakistan. After the brutal Pak military crack-down in Dhaka and other places of East Pakistan in late March 1971, the Government of India expressed their shock at the ghastly Pak atrocities in East Pakistan, and conveyed their sympathies for the hapless people of East Pakistan. The Prime Minister of India in her speech in the Lok Sabha on 27 March

1971, "welcomed" the "democratic action" of the people of "East Bengal" and next day assured them of "the whole-hearted sympathy and support of the people of India"(9). And since then there was no let up in the flow of that sympathy and support for the struggle of the people of East Bengal(10). As discussed earlier in details, when the streams of East Bengal refugees started entering India in hundreds of thousands, reaching the monthly peak of 3,158,000 in May 1971, followed by the next highest monthly total of 2,056,000 in June, the East Bengal crisis posed a politico-economic threat to India too(11). Not only was India put under great economic strain in feeding, clothing, sheltering and medically treating millions of penniless refugees from East Bengal, but also faced with the threat to her security.

India soon realised that the continued stay of the millions of refugees in India, and the likely influx of more millions from East Bengal, were sure to create social, economic, communal and law and order problems in the Indian border states. Moreover, many of the uprooted refugee youths could join the violent Naxalite movement then rampant in West Bengal. While India was in no way responsible for the massive upheaval in East Bengal, its effects clearly appeared ruinous for India. Hence, the Government of India became very keen, almost determined, to see a political solution emerging in Pakistan which could restore a climate of peace, enabling the refugees to return home.

However, the Pakistan government appeared totally disinclined to reach any political compromise with the East Bengal people and their leaders. The military action and savage brutalities continued unabated in East Bengal. India was doing its very best to mobilise international opinion to persuade Yahya Khan to come to a settlement with the Awami League. But this diplomatic pressure also appeared ineffective.

The East Bengal refugees had already proclaimed the establishment of their Bangladesh government and had raised the Mukti Bahini. Already the Mukti Bahini was engaged in skirmishes and continual hit-and-run clashes with the Pakistan Army in East Bengal. These operations of the Mukti Bahini appeared to be putting another type of pressure on the Pakistan government to achieve a political settlement. The total defeat of the Mukti Bahini and the freedom movement in East Bengal was, therefore, totally against the Indian interests. There was also the danger of leadership of the Mukti Bahini and the resistance movement passing into the hands of the ultra-leftists, Naxalites or

In the complicated and dangerous situation facing her, India found herself left with no alternative but to provide some organised assistance and some degree of guidance and control to the refugees and their Mukti Bahini. From May 1971 onwards, therefore, she was pushed into and became more and more actively involved as a party, in the Bangladesh turmoil, although the role was definitely not of her own choosing.

India's strategy, basically defensive, thus steadily developed to provide sufficient assistance to the Mukti Bahini and other armed groups to keep up their pressure on the Pakistan government, and to keep the freedom fighters themselves in control, to prevent their going out of hand and joining some destabilising ultra-leftist forces. The Mukti Bahini thus became the sword-arm of the Bangladesh struggle.

TRAINING AND DEPLOYMENT

During 11-17 July, a high level conference, attended by P.M. Tajuddin Ahmed and Commanders of the Mukti Bahini, was held at 8, Theatre Road, Calcutta, to discuss difficulties faced by the Mukti Bahini, and to decide on a coordinated course of action(12).

The following decisions were taken in this Conference:

- "1. Demarcation of the sector boundaries.
2. Organising the guerrilla war as follows:-
 - (a) Trained guerrillas to be inducted inside Bangladesh in groups of five or ten with specific tasks to be performed in specific areas.
 - (b) Guerrillas to be divided as follows:
 - (i) Action Groups: Guerrillas in these groups would carry out direct guerrilla operations against the enemy. They would carry 50 to 100 per cent weapons.
 - (ii) Intelligence Cells: Guerrillas in these groups would not normally get involved in fighting. They would rather concentrate on collecting information about the enemy and disseminate such information to all friendly forces. They normally would

not carry more than 30 per cent weapons.

(iii) Guerrilla Bases: Each such base would accommodate a number of safe houses, where the guerrillas would be sheltered, fed, provided with information and guided to their respective destinations. Each base was to have a medical group to treat the guerrillas whenever needed. Each base was under a political leader who was responsible for conducting psychological warfare aimed at breaking the Pakistanis morale and strengthening the Bengalees psychologically. Each base was also required to remain ready to absorb larger groups of guerrillas or soldiers from Niyomito Bahini for bigger offensives against the enemy.

3. The members of the Niyomito Bahini (regular army) were to be organised into battalions, forces and sector troops immediately.

4. About the military operations against the enemy, it was decided that:

(a) A large number of guerrillas would be sent inside Bangladesh to strike at the enemy at every conceivable(sic) place through raids and ambushes.

(b) Industries would not be allowed to run. This would be achieved by blowing up electrical poles and sub-stations, disrupting power supplies thereby.

(c) The Pakistanis would not be allowed to export any raw materials or finished products. This would be achieved by destroying the godowns where such materials were stored.

(d) Vehicles, railways, river craft which were used for movement of enemy troops and military supplies for the enemy would be systematically destroyed.

(e) Tactical plans would be drawn in such a manner that the enemy was forced to spread out.

(f) After isolating the enemy, the

guerillas would strike deadly blows to the isolated enemy groups"(13).

In the last week of June 1971, 1, 3 and 8 East Bengal Regiment Battalions were moved to Tura in Meghalaya, where they were reorganised and re-equipped. The 2 and 4 East Bengal Battalions, located in Tripura, were also similarly reorganised and re-equipped. In September, it was decided to raise three more East Bengal Infantry Battalions, with recruits mostly comprising trained Freedom Fighters. A nucleus staff was provided by milking the other five battalions. Thus, by the end of November 1971, there were eight East Bengal Infantry battalions fully equipped and available for operations, but the three new battalions had had little time for training(14).

In the first week of August 1971, approximately 80 ex-Pak Bengalee Artillery personnel, who had crossed over into Tripura, were collected and organised into No.1 Field Battery (Mujib), and equipped with four 3.7" Howitzer guns. In October 1971, the Second Field Battery was raised in Silchar area with six 105 mm Italian guns, and in November 1971, the third battery was raised and equipped with 105 mm guns. By the end of November, the East Bengal regular battalions were grouped into three brigades and named Z, K and S Force after the names of their Commanders - Maj Ziaur Rahman, Maj Khaled Musharraf and Maj Shafiullah respectively, as under(15) :-

a) 'Z' Force

1 EB

3 EB

8 EB

No. 2 Fd Bty (105 mm Italian guns)

b) 'K' Force

10 EB

11 EB

3 Fd Bty (105 mm guns)

c) 'S' Force

2 EB

4 EB

9 EB

No.1 Fd Bty (Mujib) (3.7" Howitzer guns)

Regular troops were equipped on similar lines as the Indian Army battalions(16).

550 A Mukti Bahini naval force, consisting of over 550 naval commandos, was formed out of the defected Bengalee personnel of the Pak Navy as well as some Bengalee volunteers. They were trained in under-water

sabotage with the help of limpet mines. By October, a small Mukti Bahini Air Force was also organised with two helicopters, an Otter aircraft and a Dakota, gifted by India, and fitted with bombs, rockets and machine guns(17).

EBR, EPR and Police personnel, not absorbed into the regular army battalions, called Swadhin Bangla regiments, were grouped into units and sub-units as sector troops to operate in their respective sectors. They had lesser fire power as compared to that of the regular battalions. The regular battalions and the sector troops, popularly known as the Mukti Fauj, were subject to army rules and regulations, and paid subsistence allowance, whereas the irregulars or 'Gano Bahini', popularly known as guerillas or Freedom Fighters, did not come under army rules, nor received any pay or subsistence allowance. However, after training, when they were sent into Bangladesh, they were paid some induction money to meet their expenses en route(18).

A total of 45 Companies of the Mukti Fauj (sector troops) were trained, organised and equipped for operations along the periphery of the Indo-Bangladesh border. The strength of each of these companies was approximately 200. A total of 9,660 men were trained, issued with small arms similar to the weapons of a rifle company of the Indian Army. These Mukti Fauj companies were located close to the border and organised and trained under the supervision of regular Indian Army formations and the Border Security Force. As most of the Mukti Fauj personnel were aged, they took very little interest in training, and were not willing to take risks. Their morale was low, and by and large, they set a bad example to the Freedom Fighters. The HQ of the Mukti Fauj was established at Kalyani in West Bengal.

As per the decisions of the July conference, held in Calcutta, Bangladesh was divided into the following 11 sectors:-

Sector No.1: Composed of the districts of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts and a part of Noakhali district (area east of Muhari river), the sector was divided into 5 sub-sectors, with over 2,100 sector troops formed out of 1,500 EPR soldiers, 200 policemen, 300 army personnel, and about 100 from the navy and air force. Besides, there were about 20,000 guerillas of whom only about 35% were armed. At first, Maj Ziur Rahman was the Sector Commander. He was replaced afterwards by Maj Rafiq-ul-Islam(19).

Sector No.2: Covering the districts of Comilla, Faridpur, part of Noakhali, and Dhaka, the sector was divided into six sub-sectors, with approximately 4,000 sector troops and 30,000 guerillas. Maj Khaled Musharraf was the Sector Commander, later replaced by Maj M. Haider.

Sector No.3: Part of Maulvibazar sub-division, part of Brahmanbaria sub-division, part of Narayanganj, and Keraniganj sub-division formed this sector, which was divided into 10 sub-sectors, with around 10,000 men. Maj K.M. Shafiullah was the Sector Commander. But after the formation of 'S' Force, Maj Shafiullah took over as its Commander and Major Nuruzzaman succeeded him as the Sector Commander.

Sector No.4: Lying between Sylhet Police Station in the north and Habiganj Police Station in the south, this sector was divided into 6 sub-sectors, comprising about 3,000 sector troops and 8,000 guerillas. Sector HQ, originally located at Kanaiganj, was later moved to Nasimpur. Maj C.R. Dutta was the Sector Commander.

Sector No.5: It covered the northern part of Sylhet district, with 6 sub-sectors, having about 800 sector troops and 7,000 guerillas, under the command of Maj Mir Shawkat Ali.

Sector No.6: With Rangpur and Dinajpur districts, this sector was divided into 5 sub-sectors, having about 1,200 sector troops and 6,000 guerillas, under the command of Wing Commander M.K. Bashar. Its HQ was at Burimari near Patgram (Rangpur district).

Sector No.7: Comprising the districts of Rajshahi, Pabna, and Bogra and also a part of Dinajpur district, this sector was divided into 8 sub-sectors, manned by about 2,000 sector troops and 2,000 guerillas. When Sector Commander Maj Najmul Haque died in an accident during the war, Maj Q.N. Zaman succeeded him.

Sector No.8: Originally it looked after the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal and Patuakhali, but later, Barisal and Patuakhali were excluded from this sector, which had about 2,000 sector troops and 7,000 guerillas. With 7 sub-sectors, its HQ was located at Benapole, under the command of Maj M.A. Osman Chowdhury. After 15 July 1971, Maj Manzoor, who had escaped from Pakistan, was appointed Commander.

Sector No.9: It comprised Barisal and

Patuakhali districts, and parts of Khulna and Faridpur districts also. Divided into 8 sub-sectors, and commanded by Maj M.A. Jalil, the area had about one battalion of the Army and about 15,000 guerillas.

Sector No.10: This sector had no territorial limits. It had naval commandos for mounting sabotage actions against Pak naval vessels. During different operations, the Commando groups would come under the control of the different sector commanders in whose areas the operations were to take place.

Sector No.11: This, consisting of Mymensingh district, was divided into 8 sub-sectors having a total of about 20,000 guerillas. Maj A.Taher was the Sector Commander. After he was injured in an action on 15 November, Squadron Leader Hamidullah took over(20).

Since the Mukti Bahini depended greatly on the Indian Army for supplies and training, six Brigadiers were deputed by the Indian Army in June to act as Sector Commanders and remain in constant touch with the Mukti Bahini. These Army Officers were directly under the operational and administrative control of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army. Their areas of responsibility - called "Jackpot Sectors" - were:-

Name of the Sector	Name of Sector Commander	Location of Sector HQ	Bangladesh Sector under command
1	2	3	4
A Sector	Brig J.C.Joshi	Binaguri	No.6 Areas west of Brahmaputra upto general line of lateral railway Rangpur-Dinajpur.
B Sector	Brig Prem Singh	Raiganj	No.7 Areas west of Brahmaputra, north of Ganga/Padma and south of lateral railway Rangpur-Dinajpur, with main towns - Pabna and Bogra.
C Sector	Brig N.A. Salick, VrC	Krishnagar	No.8&9 Areas south of Padma and west of Padma-Meghna, with main towns - Khulna and Jessore.

D Sector Brig Shabeg Singh, Agartala No.1,2&3
VSM

Areas south of river Feni, west of Mizo Hills, North of Burma, with the main town - Chittagong.

E Sector Brig M.B.Wadke Masimpur No.4

Areas east of Meghna, north of Feni river, with main towns - Comilla, Chandpur, Dhaka and Sylhet.

F Sector Brig Sant Singh, Tura No.11
(Later MVC
called

F-J Sector)

Area of Mymensingh district, south of Garo Hills, west of Meghna, and east of Brahmaputra. Subsequently E-I Sector was carved out of F Sector in June 1971 reducing its area to include only the Garo Hills district of Meghalaya and Goalpara district of Assam along the international border south of river Brahmaputra upto the junction of river Santosh(23).

E-I Sector Lt Col V.N.Rao Jarain(Shillong) No.5
C.O.5/5 GR(FF)
(Later Brig
K. Lakhpat
Singh)

Area - Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya upto the junction of river Surma and international boundary.

Each Jackpot Sector looked after one or more Bangladesh sectors each of which was commanded by a BSF Commandant alongwith a Bangladeshi Mukti Bahini Commander who shared responsibility of the particular sector jointly(24). It was mainly through the Indian Sector Commanders that the Mukti Bahini maintained their link with the Bangladesh Forces HQ as well as HQ Eastern Command of the Indian Army. All the operational policies were formulated at the highest level jointly by the Eastern Command and the Bangladesh Forces HQ, and the implementation of those policies was the responsibility of the Indian and the Bangladeshi Sector Commanders. At times, however, contradictory orders were sent to the Sector Commanders which hindered their smooth functioning(25).

In order to cover the entire area of Bangladesh,

Freedom Fighters were recruited from all parts and trained in camps, located close to their areas. To obtain the right type of material for recruitment as Freedom Fighters, 25 Youth Camps were established with a capacity of 1,000 youths in each camp under the supervision of the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Government of India. Most of the Freedom Fighters were recruited from these youth camps. The youths were provided free rations and physical and unarmed combat training(26).

The largest number of freedom fighters came from the students and other youths. Perhaps it may be said that the students of Bangladesh made the maximum contribution to their country's freedom. These students, who formed the most politically conscious group and deeply committed to the independence of their motherland, were equally involved in party politics. Their divergent views often led to the sharpening of the political rivalry amongst different groups. However, these rivalries did not reach such proportions as to stand in the way of their freedom struggle. Just after two weeks of training, some of them dreamt of becoming Mao Zedong, Che Guevera, or Lawrence of Arabia, and sometimes refused to obey another student leader's command. The peasants turned out to be the best material for guerrilla warfare, as they did not have any vanity or false pride; they were sincere and dedicated to the cause of freedom. They never grumbled for the lack of jungle boots, or a blanket or even food, ever willing to do their job wherever they were assigned to. As the selection of recruits was made after screening by the Awami Leaguers in different reception camps, there were complaints that over-enthusiastic Leaguers did not select youths belonging to leftist parties. However, due to the intervention of sensible senior Awami League leaders, these problems were gradually settled(27).

Although there were various kinds of hardships in the reception centres, where the Bangladeshi youths came for recruitment, there were very few cases of desertion which were due to extreme hardship, individual family problems, or frustration caused by long waiting at the camps pending selection for recruitment. For example, in a youth camp near Agartala, in end-July 1971, there were 3,000 young men waiting for over two months to receive military training where hygienic condition was pitiable, and food and water supply almost non-existent(28).

Initially six training camps were set up with a capacity of 1,000 trainees in each camp under the supervision of the Jackpot Sector Commanders. These

Freedom Fighters were located as under(29) :-

<u>Location</u>	<u>Sector</u>	<u>Formation Responsible</u>
a) Moorti (West Bengal)	A Sector	33 Corps/20 Mtn Div
b) Raiganj (West Bengal)	B Sector	- do -
c) Chakulya (Bihar)	C Sector	9 Inf Div
d) Deotamura (Tripura)	D Sector	57 Mtn Div
e) Masimpur (Assam)	E Sector	- do -
f) Tura (Meghalaya)	FJ Sector	101 Comn Z Area
g) Jharain (Meghalaya)	E1 Sector	- do -(500 capacity only)

One officer for 100 trainees, one JCO for 50 trainees, and one NCO for 20 trainees were provided as instructional staff. All Freedom Fighters were given four weeks' training which included weapon training, field craft, raids/ambushes, commando training including simple demolitions, and operation of pocket-size radio sets and transmission of messages in morse code at the rate of six words per minute. Subsequently, in August 1971, the period of training was reduced to three weeks only(30).

In July 1971, the number of trainees was increased to 12,000 per month and subsequently in September 1971, to 20,000. Correspondingly, the capacity of the training camps was increased and also some additional training camps were established, with the provision of additional instructional staff, as given below(31) :-

<u>Location</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Sector</u>	<u>Formation Responsible</u>
a) Moorti	2,300	A	33 Corps/20 Mtn Div
b) Raiganj/ Naxalbari	2,300	B	20 Mtn Div
c) Chakulya	2,000	C	9 Inf Div

d)	Rampurhat	2,000	-	50 Indep Para Bde
e)	Agartala	4,500	D	57 Mtn Div
f)	Rangia	2,000	-	23 Mtn Div
g)	Masimpur	1,500	E	57 Mtn Div
h)	Silchar	1,000	-	8 Mtn Div
j)	Tura	1,400	FJ	101 Comn Z Area
k)	Dauki Area	1,000	E1	- do -
	Total	20,000		

By the end of November 1971, over 83,000 Freedom Fighters were trained, of which 51,000 were operating inside East Bengal. They were organised into teams of 10, squads of 20, and groups of 100 to 150(32). Each team was equipped with four .303 rifles, two SLR rifles, three sten guns and one light machine gun, plus two hand grenades per Freedom Fighter and sufficient quantity of explosive for demolitions.

To provide leadership, a total of 130 Officer Cadets were trained in Moorti Camp for three months. Besides, 500 specially selected youths were given passive resistance training, so that they could organise the training of other youths who could not be trained as guerillas(33). They were all inducted inside Bangladesh to organise such training.

Moreover, approximately 1,200 youths were given medical training and provided with medical kits to render medical aid to the needy people inside Bangladesh.

The responsibility for paying salaries to the Bangladesh forces was that of the Jackpot Sector Commanders. The monthly salaries were given according to the following rates :-

a) Regular Troops and Mukti Fauj(Sector Troops)

(i)	Commanding Officer	Rs.500.00
(ii)	Officer	Rs.400.00
(iii)	Officer Cadet	Rs.100.00
(iv)	JCO	Rs.150.00
(v)	OR	Rs. 75.00
(vi)	NCsE	Rs. 70.00

b) Freedom Fighters

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| (i) During training | Rs. 30.00 |
| (ii) On completion of training | Rs. 50.00 |

Besides, two sets of Khaki uniform and a light bedding were issued to regular troops, while non-Service clothing like shirts, 'lungi' and a pair of PT shoes were provided to the Mukti Fauj and the Freedom Fighters. Certain other items like blankets, mugs, plates, etc., were also procured locally and issued. Free rations on the same scale as per the Indian Army and tented living accommodation were provided to all Bangladesh forces. In addition, where possible, some huts were also constructed for keeping arms, ammunition and stores. When the Freedom Fighters were inducted into Bangladesh, they were entitled for ration money at the scale of Rs.2/- per day(34). While the Jackpot Sectors were given a limited number of vehicles, no transport was provided to the Bangladesh forces, which used transport brought from Bangladesh or provided by Indian Army formations.

With the increased intake of trainees in the Mukti Bahini Training Camps, it became difficult to cope up with the demand for arms, ammunition and explosives, hence these had to be air-lifted from the Ordnance Depots to forward support areas. All casualties of the Bangladesh forces were treated in Military Hospitals. Bangladesh forces were provided with free transport on the road or the railway. However, the naval commandos and their stores had, for reasons of security, to be air-lifted to their launching areas, where necessary.

The Mukti Bahini guerillas were organised into various groups, as already mentioned. One of the groups was called the Suicide Squad, whose primary task was to kill prominent workers of the Muslim League and the Jamaat-i-Islami, Razakars, and the Pak government officials. They had orders to commit suicide, if necessary, to avoid arrest. Then there was the Bichchu(Scorpion) Squad, which reportedly had a female wing also, consisting of young girls whose duty was to carry out sabotage, subversion and espionage work in big towns like Dhaka and Chittagong.

Another group was known as the Toofan Bahini (Storm Troops) who acted like commandos(35). The grass-root organisation capable of sustaining guerilla warfare was readily provided by the Sangram Parishads, which had been organised by the Awami League in early 1971 in every village and town, but were operating underground after 25 March 1971(36).

According to Maj Gen Niazi, the relations between the Mukti Bahini and irregular Freedom Fighters were not always cordial, and there were at least two pitched battles between them(37). The Freedom Fighters were jealous of better service conditions enjoyed by the Niyomito Bahini and there were also conceptual differences. The Niyomito Bahini preferred to do sabotage work away from the locale of Pakistani troops. The Freedom Fighters, on the other hand, preferred to close in with Pakistani troops and fight it out with them.

MUJIB BAHINI AND OTHERS

Mujib Bahini

The precise reasons behind the creation of the hush-hush elite group called the Mujib Bahini are far from clear. It is claimed that it was just an extra insurance lest the control of the Mukti Bahini fell into the hands of the ultra-leftists of Bangladesh, especially the Maoists. Anyway, a force thoroughly loyal to Mujib and his ideology of nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy, (called Mujibism) was formed with college and university students belonging exclusively to the Student's League, the student wing of the Awami League. Four devoted followers of Sheikh Mujib (Tofael Ahmed, Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni, Sirajul Alam Khan and Abdur Razzak) were the leaders of this force whose strength rose to about 8,000 in November(38). Its members were given special training for 45 days in guerilla warfare and ideology. It was built up by Maj Gen S.S. Uban as an elite force with its own wireless system and special code of communication, outside the control of Col Osmani and even the Bangladesh government-in-exile, which caused much misunderstanding between various authorities concerned.

It is also claimed that the Mujib Bahini, originally named as the Bangladesh Liberation Force, was formed to provide the political infrastructure by giving ideological motivation to the Freedom Fighters inside Bangladesh to fight against the Pakistan Army. The whole of Bangladesh was divided into four areas under the control of the four leaders of this Bahini. Sheikh Moni controlled Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Noakhali and Sylhet districts and the Bhola sub-division of Barisal district; Abdur Razzak controlled the districts of Tangail and Mymensingh; Sirajul Alam Khan was in charge of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Bogra districts plus the Shirajganj sub-division of Pabna district; and Tofael Ahmed commanded the Mujib Bahini boys in the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, Patuakhali

Barisal (minus Shola) and Pabna (minus Shirajganj)(39).

There had been occasional clashes between the Mujib Bahini and the Mukti Bahini, due perhaps mainly to lack of coordination. In several places the Mujib Bahini worked at cross purposes to the Mukti Bahini, and at one time they even gheraced some Awami League leaders in Agartala. Although things were sorted out afterwards, some members of the Mujib Bahini in Indian uniforms, carrying sophisticated weapons, were detected on the border of Sector No.2 and challenged by the Mukti Bahini to reveal their identity(40).

Uban Force

Another special force, only 1,800 men, not belonging to either the Indian Army or the Mukti Bahini, commanded by Maj Gen S.S. Uban, took part in the Bangladesh Operations, especially in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to harass the Pak forces and destroy their lines of communication in the area. This was actually a small commando force, of which not more than 400 were deployed in action at any point of time. Maj Gen Uban was under the administrative control of Special Secretary to the Cabinet, while he was guided by the Chief of Army Staff as far as his operations were concerned. The Eastern Command of the Indian Army, the Bangladesh government-in-exile, or the Mukti Bahini had nothing to do with the operations of this special force, although Lt Gen Aurora had to arrange for its supplies and logistics. Uban commanded both the Mujib Bahini and this Special Commando Force, but they operated separately exclusive of each other's area of control or operation.

Freelance Guerilla Groups

Besides the above-mentioned liberation forces, trained and equipped by the Indian Army and the BSF, eleven independent guerilla groups were also operating inside Bangladesh in the following sectors:-

(a) Jessore-Khulna sector - six groups led by Khizir and Riyasat (100 men), Sahjahan (250 men), Zia (200 men), Arifin (not known), Mehdi (75 men) and Hemayet (500 men).

(b) Dhaka-Comilla-Chittagong sector - two groups led by Nurul Afsar (400 men) and Haroon (100 men).

(c) Mymensingh sector - three groups led by Kader (approximately 17,000 young men), Abdul Mannan (85 men), and Anwaruddin (100 men).

Out of all these groups, five were cooperating with the MFs/FFs, but two groups belonging to the pro-Chinese National Awami Party were actively hostile to them, and operating along the sea-coast from Fakirhat to Mirsarai in Chittagong and Noakhali districts, and in Sibpur and Manohardi in Comilla and Dhaka districts. The Kader Bahini was the most important of these local forces which were equipped primarily with weapons snatched from the Pakistani forces. Abdul Kader Siddiqui, popularly known as Tiger Siddiqui, a former Non-Commissioned Officer of the Pakistan Army and later Awami League student leader, after whom this Bahini was named, reportedly organised a force of some 17,000 men, plus an auxiliary force of over 70,000 volunteers, mostly rural school students(41). The Kader Bahini became famous in June 1971 when they killed 16 Pakistani soldiers in a surprise attack on a Pakistani outpost in the Tangail area. On 12 August they attacked some Pakistani vessels in the Dhaleshwari destroying two of them and capturing a large amount of arms and ammunition, including Chinese and British rifles, light and medium machine guns, and 70,000 hand grenades. About 100 Pak soldiers were killed in this action. After being injured in the battle of Makrai on 16 August, Kader Siddiqui, along with his father, two of his younger brothers, and some armed followers, escaped to Tura on 24 August and stayed there till 20 September for medical treatment and training of his men. He had long discussions with Indian Army officers, especially Lt Gen Aurora and Brig Sant Singh, for planning future operations. The Kader Bahini was given considerable amount of arms, ammunition, wireless sets, and also some training by the Indian Army(42). It was provided ground support by the IAF during its attacks on Gopalpur and Ghatal Police Stations on 10 December, and on Tangail town the following day. After the Indian para drop, north of Tangail, on 12 December, the Kader Bahini joined with the Indian Para force and Brig Kler's troops in their advance to Dhaka.

Kader Siddiqui claims to have liberated 97 km of the road from Jamalur to Mymensingh, 48 km north of Dhaka, captured 7,000 Pak soldiers and 14,500 Razakars by 15 December, and destroyed 19 bridges on the road to Dhaka, three in Nagarpur, four in Kaddusnagar, five on the Tangail-Mymensingh road, and a big concrete one on the Gopalpur road. According to him, as a result of this, 195 Mtn Bde could advance faster than 4 Corps to Dhaka, although the route from Tura to Dhaka was 322 km long, as compared to the 129 km distance between Akhaura and Dhaka(43).

A guerilla force of approximately 500 men operated under the leadership of Capt Zia, an ex-Pak Army Officer, in Barisal-Morelganj area. They were helped with weapons, ammunition and explosives(44).

Another Force of about 350 ex-military personnel, who were grouped together locally in fighting against the Pak troops, operated effectively under the command of Hav Maj Hemayet. These guerillas had their HQ in village Kandi, under Police Station Kotalipara in Faridpur district. They had fourteen .303 rifles, one Chinese LMG, one Chinese SMG, and one G-3 rifle in their possession. The source of the supply of their ammunition was not known. Members of this Force were paid a salary ranging from R.50 to R.90 per month. Hav Maj Hemayet, who was popularly known as Major, was a terror to the Muslim League and Jamaat-i-Islami people who used to pay him protection money periodically for the security of their lives. Pak troops attacked his group several times, but returned with heavy casualties. The Hemayet Force supported the Awami League and fought in the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Their approach towards the Mukti Bahini was very cooperative, and Hav Maj Hemayet's attitude towards the Bangladesh Government was also favourable(45).

Despite the Awami League policy of excluding the other parties from joining the Mukti Bahini, the different progressive political parties of Bangladesh and their splinter groups either supported the Awami League or created their own forces during this liberation struggle. The pro-Moscow Communist Party of Bangladesh and its front organisations, namely National Awami Party(M), Krishak Samiti (Peasants' Association), Students' Unit, and the Trade Union Centre supported the Bangladesh government-in-exile and participated in the liberation struggle. They were active mostly in Ghorasal, Brahmanbaria, Narsingdi, Comilla, and Dhaka. However, during the freedom struggle they shifted their HQ to Calcutta. This group consisted mostly of well-educated people, and their leaders were Muzaffar Ahmed, Moni Singh Garo, Deben Sikdar and Thakur(46). But, after the formation of the Mujib Bahini, the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Bangladesh raised a force of 20,000 guerillas who became very active in different sectors of Bangladesh during the liberation war. After Muzaffar Ahmed, leader of NAP(M), complained against the Indian government's partiality towards the Awami League, his party also started getting assistance from the Government of India separately(47).

On 9 September 1971, the Bangladesh government-in-exile formed a Consultative Committee

representing various political parties of Bangladesh which supported the Bangladesh government-in-exile. This Committee comprised Bhashani, Moni Singh, Muzaffar Ahmed, Monaranjan Dhar, Tajuddin Ahmed and Khondekar Mushtaq Ahmed. The support given by the Chinese government to the Yahya regime during the liberation movement created confusion among the leftist parties of Bangladesh. Some of these leftist groups such as NAP(B), Co-ordination Committee of the Communist Revolutionaries (CCCR), Communist Workers' Association (CWA), Bangladesh Communist Party (Hatier Group), East Pakistan Communist Party (ML), and Communist Samhati Kendra (Communist Solidarity Centre), led by Amal Sen, came over to West Bengal and formed Bangladesh Mukti Sangram Samonnoy Committee (Co-ordination Committee for the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle) with Maulana Bhashani as the Chairman. It was reportedly backed and supported by CPI(M) of India, which opposed the Chinese attitude towards Bangladesh and supported the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle, but did not like the dominance of the Awami League or the Indian Government(48). However, Bhashani severed his link with this Committee and gave full support to the Awami League government-in-exile. Nevertheless, a section of the EBCP(ML) led by Mohammed Toaha and Abdul Haq opposed the Awami League leadership, and fought against both the Pakistan Army and the Mukti Bahini. While they condemned the Chinese policy towards the liberation war, they described the Awami League-led movement as a conspiracy of Soviet Social Imperialism and Indian expansionism(49). They raised 10,000 "red" guerillas and fought some actions with the Pak Army in different parts of the country. They also clashed with the Mukti Bahini in the districts of Chittagong, Jessore, Khulna, Rajshani and Pabna. They fought courageously against the Pak Army at Ramgati in Noakhali district, but as they were poorly equipped, most of them were killed, and the remainder went underground.

At the early stage, the Matin-Alauddin group of EBCP in a bid to liberate Pabna town, reportedly killed over a hundred Pak troops with the help of police and other freedom fighters. Later, they switched over to the Chinese line of thinking. On the other hand, the Ohidul group of EBCP with their 1,000 guerillas cooperated fully with the Awami League. Another militant group of East Bengal Workers Movement also fought against the Pak troops from inside Bangladesh, but this ill-equipped group lost most of its men. Another pro-Peking group, known as Mythi group after the name of its leader Agni Prabha Mythi, fully cooperated with the Mukti Bahini as guerillas.

The Sarbahara Party (Party of Proletariat), led by Shiraj Sikdar, with its limited strength, also fought well against the Pak forces from inside Bangladesh(50). Derisively called "Mao Test Tube Group", this party had its HQ in Kumarkhali in Barisal district. According to Maj Gen Farman Ali of the Pak Army, this terrorist group was responsible for the political murders during October-November 1971(51). Two other pro-Peking leftist parties were Menon-Kazi Zaffar group and Mashiur Rahman-Nurul Qadir-Huda group. While the former cooperated with the Mukti Bahini, the latter, more socialistic in out-look, was ineffective(52).

As the leftist groups were not generally included in the Mukti Bahini, they set up independent forces. Professor Muzaffar Ahmed and a student leader, Abdul Hakim, both belonging to the National Awami Party (pro-Moscow) set up an independent force, consisting mainly of students. Similarly, Maulana Bhashani along with Toaha and Khusro organised a youth force loyal to the National Awami Party (pro-Chinese). The main objective of this force was the elimination of the rightist elements in the country(53).

The Bengalee guerillas not only carried out sabotage activities inside Bangladesh, but also set about killing pro-Pakistani, non-Bengalee elements as well as Bengalee collaborators of the Pak rulers. They also sought to infiltrate their agents among the Razakars and other elements loyal to Pakistan, and launched a psychological warfare by focussing powerful propaganda towards the people of Bangladesh(54).

OPERATIONS

The armed freedom struggle of the people of East Bengal can be broadly divided into four phases:-

- 1) Period of unorganised resistance (25 March to 15 May 1971).
- 2) Creation and training of the Mukti Bahini (mid May to end June).
- 3) Monsoon offensive (July-August).
- 4) Period of increasing guerilla warfare (September to 3 December).

Developments during the period of unorganised resistance have already been described. With India getting involved in the struggle, it was decided to increase the pressure on Pakistan and to plan on a long-term basis to meet all eventualities if the

crisis worsened.

Till May 1971 the Pak troops crossing into the Indian territory while chasing MFs were allowed to return. But this concession was discontinued from 1 June.

On 1 May 1971, the COAS issued Army Headquarters Operation Instruction number 52 to GOC-in-C Eastern Command, pertaining to operational contingencies within East Bengal.

Overall Aim

The overall aim of the Operation Instruction was:-

a) to assist the Provisional Government of Bangladesh in rallying the people of East Bengal to support the liberation movement;

b) to raise, equip and train East Bengal cadres for guerilla operations for employment in their own native land with a view:-

(i) initially to immobilising and tying down the Pak Military forces in protective tasks in East Bengal;

(ii) subsequently, by gradual escalation of guerilla operations to sap and corrode the morale of the Pak forces in the Eastern theatre, and simultaneously to impair their logistic capability for undertaking any offensive against Assam and West Bengal;

(iii) to avail the guerilla cadres as ancillaries to the Eastern Field Force in the event of Pakistan initiating hostilities against us.

Tasks

GOC-in-C Eastern Command was given the undermentioned tasks:-

a) Advise, guide and encourage the Provisional Government of Bangladesh with the overall context of an independent East Bengal in such a manner so that their concurrence is obtained with regard to :

i) the set-up for political and military organisation for waging war;

ii) the size of the guerilla force;

iii) the scope and intensity of guerilla operations to be conducted in East Bengal;

iv) the evolution of an effective intelligence set up.

b) Plan for organising and equipping a guerilla force, initially limited to some 20,000 men; which could subsequently be enlarged to 1,00,000.

c) By a process of gradual escalation, enlarge the scope of guerilla operations in East Bengal.

d) Perfect the organisation for waging guerilla warfare in East Bengal(55).

While planning operations, the following guidelines were kept in view:-

a) Stage 1:

(i) The border in respective sector areas was to be kept 'hotted up' with a view to keeping a large number of Pak troops tied down.

ii) The isolated Pak BOPs, where retaliation by Pak troops was difficult, were selected and eliminated by the Bangladesh forces with the help of the Indian troops. Artillery and mortar fire support for the capture of such BOPs was provided by the Indian troops and the BSF, when within range.

b) Stage 2:

(i) Induction of the Freedom Fighters inside Bangladesh into various safe havens, where support from local population was readily available, was planned by the Sector Headquarters in conformity with the total number of the Freedom Fighters to be inducted, which was laid down by the Headquarters Eastern Command.

(ii) Destruction of rail, road and inland water transport was planned progressively deeper inside Bangladesh with a view to isolating forward areas and the main support areas such as cantonments and troop concentration areas(56).

(iii) In order to establish guerilla bases deep inside Pak territory, 145 selected students were trained and were infiltrated inside Bangladesh.

c) Stage 3:

The destruction of installations, machinery and big industrial estates including tea factories, petrol dumps and other installations in Jessore, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Rangpur and Dinajpur was undertaken by specially planned raids.

Swadhin Bangla Regiments (East Bengal Regular Troops)

They were mainly employed for the elimination of the Pak BOPs in conjunction with Indian regular troops. Out of five East Bengal regular Battalions which were initially available, 1, 3 and 8 East Bengal Battalions with 'Z' Force Headquarters, located at Tura, were employed in the area of Mymensingh district for elimination of the Pak BOPs, and the other two were employed in the areas of Comilla and Belonia Bulge.

The 'Z' Force was given the task of capturing Kamalpur and Naokuchi Pak-held BOPs. Attacks on these BOPs did not succeed and the EB troops suffered fairly heavy casualties. The task of gaining a lodgement area for subsequent operations in the area of Kamalpur in Mymensingh district which was originally planned for the 'Z' Force had to be changed as the EB troops were not fully trained and needed more experience. Further attacks on Pak-held BOPs were not undertaken.

In the month of October, the 'Z' Force battalions were shifted to the area of Silchar where they were to conduct operations for the destruction of tea factories in Sylhet district and then extend their activities deeper inside Bangladesh with a view to isolating Sylhet by disrupting rail and road communications. Out of these three battalions, one battalion was employed in the area of Dauki with a view to posing a threat to Sylhet from the north. 2 and 4 EB battalions located in Tripura were employed in small-scale operations in the areas of Belonia Bulge and Saldanadi salient.

The other three Battalions which were subsequently raised in the month of October did not take part in any operations till the outbreak of hostilities. However, they carried out their training and reorganised during this period.

Mukti Fauj (Sector Troops)

A total of 45 Mukti Fauj Companies were mainly deployed along the border inside the Indian territory. These companies were controlled and led by the Bangladesh officers. In conformity with the Jackpot sectors, the Bangladesh Sector Headquarters were located in suitable places for the conduct of

operations of the Mukti Fauj and Freedom Fighters. Five to six Mukti Fauj Companies were allotted to each Bangladesh Sector. Most of the Mukti Fauj rank and file were elderly and were not willing to undertake risks. They generally confined their activities close to the border. The tasks carried out by these companies were:-

a) Limited operations along the periphery of the border against the Pak troops such as raiding of the BOPs, ambushing the Pak patrols and patrolling of the border areas.

b) Provision of firm bases close to the border for the conduct of operations by the Freedom Fighters.

c) Laying of road blocks to cut the withdrawal routes of the Pak troops occupying BOPs in conjunction with attacks by the Indian and East Bengal troops on such posts. They managed to inflict some casualties on the Pak troops and prevented them from reinforcing their posts.

Gano Bahini (Freedom Fighters)

On completion of their initial training, the Freedom Fighters were brought from their training camps to the forward support bases, located close to the border and Indian BOPs, occupied by the BSF and regular troops(57). In these forward support bases the Freedom Fighters were gradually "blooded" on operational tasks such as patrolling and raids. These operations were gradually launched deeper inside Bangladesh for the destruction of rail and road communications, power supply, police stations and elimination of the Pak collaborators.

After about 15 days of such activities, these Freedom Fighters were infiltrated inside the Bangladesh areas to which they belonged. The efforts towards induction of panic groups deep inside East Bengal for destruction of communications and harassment of the Pak Army in towns were made from May onwards. However, the outcome of these missions was, by and large, poor and most of the panic groups returned unsuccessful. Since the achievement of panic groups was below expectations, a general directive was issued for carrying out more operations across the border with the aim of 'hottening up' of the border. With increased number of the FFs being turned out from the training camps, forward bases were established inside East Pakistan from July onwards. By June the Pak troops had moved back considerably in the interior, and to take advantage from the situation it

was proposed that ex-gunner officers then in the employment of the BSF be ordered to occupy suitable OPs inside East Pakistan for directing fire. By the end of August a total of approximately 10,000 Freedom Fighters were infiltrated inside Bangladesh. During the months of September, October and November, as the capacity of the training camps increased to 20,000 per month, a large-scale induction of these Freedom Fighters inside Bangladesh also became possible in most of the areas. As a result, by the end of November, approximately 51,000 Freedom Fighters were infiltrated inside Bangladesh. They were organised into teams, squads and groups based on thanas. Each thana had four to five such groups operating in the area. The leadership emerged mostly from within the Freedom Fighters who were picked up during their training and were given additional training to enable them to lead their squads/groups for conducting guerilla operations inside Bangladesh. In the first week of November 1971, the balance of approximately 25,000 Freedom Fighters, who were awaiting induction inside Bangladesh, were organised into companies. Officers, JCOs and NCOs from the Commando Wing of the Infantry School, and Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School, were provided to lead these companies(58). They were employed on limited tasks in conjunction with other formations. Operations were also undertaken to eliminate the Pak BOPs, which totalled 115 at the beginning of the guerilla war, but were reduced to 51 at one time as a result of these operations. But later, as the Pak rulers moved more forces into Bangladesh, some lost BOPs were reoccupied, raising the total number of BOPs under their control to 73 in early December 1971. As a result of attacks by the newly inducted Pak regulars, guerillas' losses in men and arms rose quickly. Hence instructions were issued to the guerillas, who were not till then trained and organised enough, to wait for some time before starting a frontal warfare. While the regular forces of the EBR were allowed to fight limited engagements, the Sector Troops and Freedom Fighters were to undertake only guerilla-type missions. The Pak BOPs were not to be attacked directly by the irregulars, but merely harassed from long distances and their supply parties ambushed. In some of the liberated areas the Indian Army and BSF troops were to support the guerillas. It was decided to carry the guerilla war into the interior of East Bengal in the next stage, so that it could become a real People's War. Hence, a plan was worked out for the induction of guerillas into every district, and arrangements were started to feed and provide them safe refuge(59). The base structure comprising various cells of Underground Organisational Workers were first sent into each district, and after they got

settled, groups of the Freedom Fighters followed. This complex exercise was carried out efficiently, and in a little over three months (September-November) about 51,000 Freedom Fighters were inducted, who were already operating inside East Bengal when the war started in December.

After receiving month-long training in India, the first batch of 110 Freedom Fighters was infiltrated into Madaripur area of Bangladesh in July 1971. A total of five tea factories were damaged or destroyed, and a total of 14 tea gardens were reported to be out of production by end of this month. Considerable damage was caused by sabotage in the inland water port of Naranyanganj. Four ferries and 49 rivercraft were damaged or destroyed; a total of 825 ambushes and raids were organised and a total of 124 road/rail bridges were either destroyed or damaged in July 1971. The demolition of the Narsingdi Railway bridge, north-east of Dhaka, disrupted all rail communications between Dhaka, Comilla and Chittagong. Fourteen train/rail bogies were derailed and 34 sections of rail track were either removed or destroyed. A total of 70 sections of telephone/telegraph poles and 67 power pylons were damaged. The Pak troops reportedly suffered over 4,000 casualties, including 63 officers, as against the Freedom Fighters' casualties of 97 killed, 162 wounded, 51 taken prisoner, and 129 missing.

The FFs continued to dominate or partially hold a few peripheral and riverine pockets on the Indo-East Pakistan border, particularly in the Rangpur sector. The Pak troops made two attempts to evict the FFs from these pockets but met with only partial success and at a considerable cost to themselves. The FFs continued to dominate the following areas:

- i) opposite Siliguri - Pachagarh Salient
- ii) opposite Jalpaiguri - Patgram Salient
- iii) opposite Raiganj - Pirganj Area
- iv) opposite Cooch Bihar - Bhurungamari Salient
- v) opposite Shillong - Sunamganj Area

In the month of August, the number of Bangladesh salients and pockets dominated by the FFs increased to seven, with the addition of the following:-

- i) The Belonia pocket in Tripura.

- ii) The pocket northward of Kailashahar in Tripura.

Besides the three Battalions of EBR troops under training in Tura and another two Battalions functioning in the Comilla area, the over-all fighting strength of the MFs and FFs in August were 5,528 and 22,643 respectively, out of which 5,966 FFs were already operating deep inside Bangladesh and making their presence felt in the districts of Dhaka, Comilla, Noakhali, Faridpur, South Mymensingh, and North Chittagong.

In August, a total of 13 tea factories, one jute mill, and three godowns containing approximately 11,475 tons of jute at Godnail, Narayanganj, and Narsingdi were damaged or destroyed. As a result of over a thousand ambushes and raids organised during this month, 133 road/rail bridges, 23 trains/rail bogies, 46 sections of rail track, and 142 sections of telephone/telegraph lines and poles were damaged or destroyed. The Pak troops suffered about 1,100 casualties against the MF/FF casualties of 692, including 127 killed, 189 missing and 34 taken prisoner.

THE-CULTURAL-FRONT

Any account of the resistance groups will remain incomplete without mentioning the role played by Bengalee intelligentsia comprising writers, poets, journalists, singers, dramatists, painters, and officials and technicians of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. From 25 May 1971 this Betar Kendra, located in Mujib Nagar, started broadcasting nationalistic and patriotic programmes to motivate and inspire the Freedom Fighters and the people of Bangladesh at large. Besides the broadcast of news in English and Bengali, the following special programmes were launched for daily transmission:-

1. Agnishikha (The flame): A programme for the freedom fighters.
2. Bajra Kantha (Voice of thunder): The taped speeches of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
3. Charam Patra (The ultimatum): A satirical programme praising the Freedom Fighters and threatening the enemy with dire consequences if they did not surrender immediately.
4. Darpan (Mirror): A politically analytical programme.

5. Jagarani (Awakening): A revolutionary musical programme.
6. Oikatan (Musical harmony): A choral programme.
7. Rakta Sakshar (Impression in blood): A nationalistic, literary programme.
8. Special English programme for foreign countries.
9. World opinion: Excerpts from different newspapers and comments of the prominent world leaders on the liberation war.

The morning broadcast started every day with recitation from the Quran, and recitations from the Gita (for Hindus) and Tripitaka (for Buddhists) twice a week(60).

The contributions of Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury, Prof. Abdul Hafiz, Abu Toab Khan, Dr. A.R. Mallick, Dr. Ajoy Roy, Dr. Anisuzzaman, Badrul Hasan, Faiz Ahmed, Gaziul Haque, Mahadev Saha, Dr. Mahmud-ul-Islam, Mahboob Talukder, Dr. Mazharul-Islam, Mujib Bin Haque, Nasima Chowdhury, Nawjesh Hossain, Nirmalendu Gun, Ranesh Das Gupta, Dr. Sarwar Murhshed, Satyen Sen, Shanjida Khatun, Shawkat Osman, Sikandar Abu Zafar, Syed Ali Ahsan, Umme Kulsum, Wahidul Haque, and Zaheer Raihan were very valuable. Their articles, stories, dramas, poems and songs inspired the people to fight courageously. Painters like Dey Das Chakraborty, Kamrul Hasan, Nazir Ahmed, Nitin Kundu, and Pranesh Mandal also played an important part. Singers like Abdul Jabbar, Ajit Roy, Apel Mahmood, Arup Chowdhury, Kaderi Kibria, Kalyani Ghosh, M.A. Mannan, Manna Haque, Nawsher, Probal Chowdhury, Rafiqul Alam, Rathin Roy, Smar Das, and Swapna Roy inspired people with their revolutionary songs.

Some of the songs which became very popular were:-

- 1) Ek Sagar Rakter Binimoye Banglar Sadhinata Anlo Jara (Those who brought independence in exchange for a sea of blood), sung by Swapna Roy and others.
- 2) Janatar Sangram Chalbe Chalbe (The people's war shall continue, shall continue), written by Sikandar Abu Jafar.
- 3) Joi Bangla, Banglar Joi (Victory for Bengal).

- 4) Mora Ekti Phulke Bachabo Bole Judhha Kari (We fight to save a flower), written by Gobinda Halder and sung by Apel Mahmood.
- 5) Sona, Sona, Sona, Loka Bale Sona, Sona Noi Tato Khati, Loke Jato Bale, Taro Cheye Khati Amar Bangla Desher Mati (The soil of my Bangladesh is purer than pure gold), written by Abdul Latif.
- 6) Tir Hara Oi Dhewar Sagar Pari Debo Re (We shall cross this wavy ocean which has no shore), sung by Apel Mahmood(61).

Dramatists Hasan Imam, Sumita Devi, Raju Ahmed, Shubhas Dutta, Narayan Ghosh, and Madhuri Chatterjee were reputed participants in the radio programmes. However, the most popular programme was "Charam Patra", by M.R. Akhtar (Mukul), which combined satire with seriousness to make a great impression on the people. Over twenty newspapers came out during the war of liberation, only some of which were printed. Others were cyclostyled or even hand-written, to inspire the people to fight for freedom.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Bhuiyan, p.204.
2. Ibid., p.203.
3. Islam, pp.199-200.
4. Ibid., p.113.
5. Ibid., p.114.
6. From Official Records.
7. Islam, p.201. However, according to Maj Gen Sukhwant Singh, the Indian Army was asked to take over the guidance of all aspects of guerilla warfare on 30 April. Sukhwant Singh (Maj Gen), (I) p.35. Lt Gen B.N. Sarkar, PVSM (Retd) has, however, said that on 9 May 1971 he was told by the Army Chief that the Govt. of India had decided to extend support to the Mukti Bahini and number of Brigadiers, Lt Cols and Majors were urgently required to be sent to the east to train the Mukti Bahini. In August 1971, the, then Maj Gen, replaced Maj Gen O.S. Kalkat as Director of Mukti Bahini Operations, to work under the GOC-in-C, Eastern Command. - Interview with Lt Gen Sarkar on 17 January 1984.
8. Maniruzzaman, p.112.
9. BD I, p.669.
10. Ibid., p.672.
11. BD II, p.82.
12. Those who attended the conference were:
(1) Prime Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed (2) Col(Retd) M.A.G. Osmani (3) Lt Col M.A. Rab (4) Gp Capt A.K. Khandker (5) Maj (Retd) Q.N. Zaman (6) Maj C.R. Dutta (7) Maj Ziaur Rahman (8) Maj K.M. Shafiullah (9) Maj Khaled Musharaf (10) Maj Mir Shaowkat Ali (11) Wing Commander M.K. Bashar (12) Maj Osman Chowdhury (13) Maj Rafiq-ul-Islam (14) Maj Najmul Haque (15) Maj M.A. Jalil (16) Maj A.R. Chowdhury - vide Islam, p.190.
13. Islam, pp.191-192.
14. From Official Records.
15. Ibid., p.151.
16. Ibid., p.165.
17. Samant, (Capt), IN's Report. From Official Records.
18. Islam, pp.195-196.
19. Ibid., Maniruzzaman, p.114.
20. Islam, pp.193-195.
21. From Official Records.
22. From Official Records.
23. From Official Records.
24. Sodhi, p.48.
25. Islam, pp.198-199.
26. From Official Records.

27. Islam, p.187.
28. Ibid., p.199.
29. From Official Records.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Khan, p.98.
36. Ibid., p.100.
37. From Official Records.
38. Maniruzzaman, p.115.
Gen Uban says the number was 10,000.
39. Bhuiyan, p.248.
40. Ibid., p.249.
41. Siddiqui, p.107. According to another source out
of 15,000 personnel of Independent guerilla
groups operating in Bangladesh, Kader's followers
numbered only around 4,000.
From Official Records.
42. Siddiqui, pp.248 and p.257.
43. Ibid., pp.281-282.
44. From Official Records.
45. From Official Records.
46. From Official Records.
47. Bhuiyan, p.250.
48. Ibid., p.251.
49. Ibid., pp.251-252.
50. Ibid., p.253.
51. From Official Records.
52. Ibid.
53. Khan, p.99.
54. Ibid., pp.100-101.
55. From Official Records.
56. From Official Records.
57. Ibid., p.11.
58. Ibid., p.12.
59. From Official Records.
60. Islam, pp.216-217.
61. Ibid., pp.219-220.

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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 1 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-cess-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


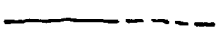
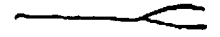
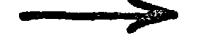
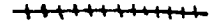
wounded suffered by the Indian Brigade were hardly justified by the result. Its contribution, however, was certainly valuable in blooding the 'raw' Indian troops, facing 'seasoned' Pak soldiers with seven months of operational experience in East Bengal.

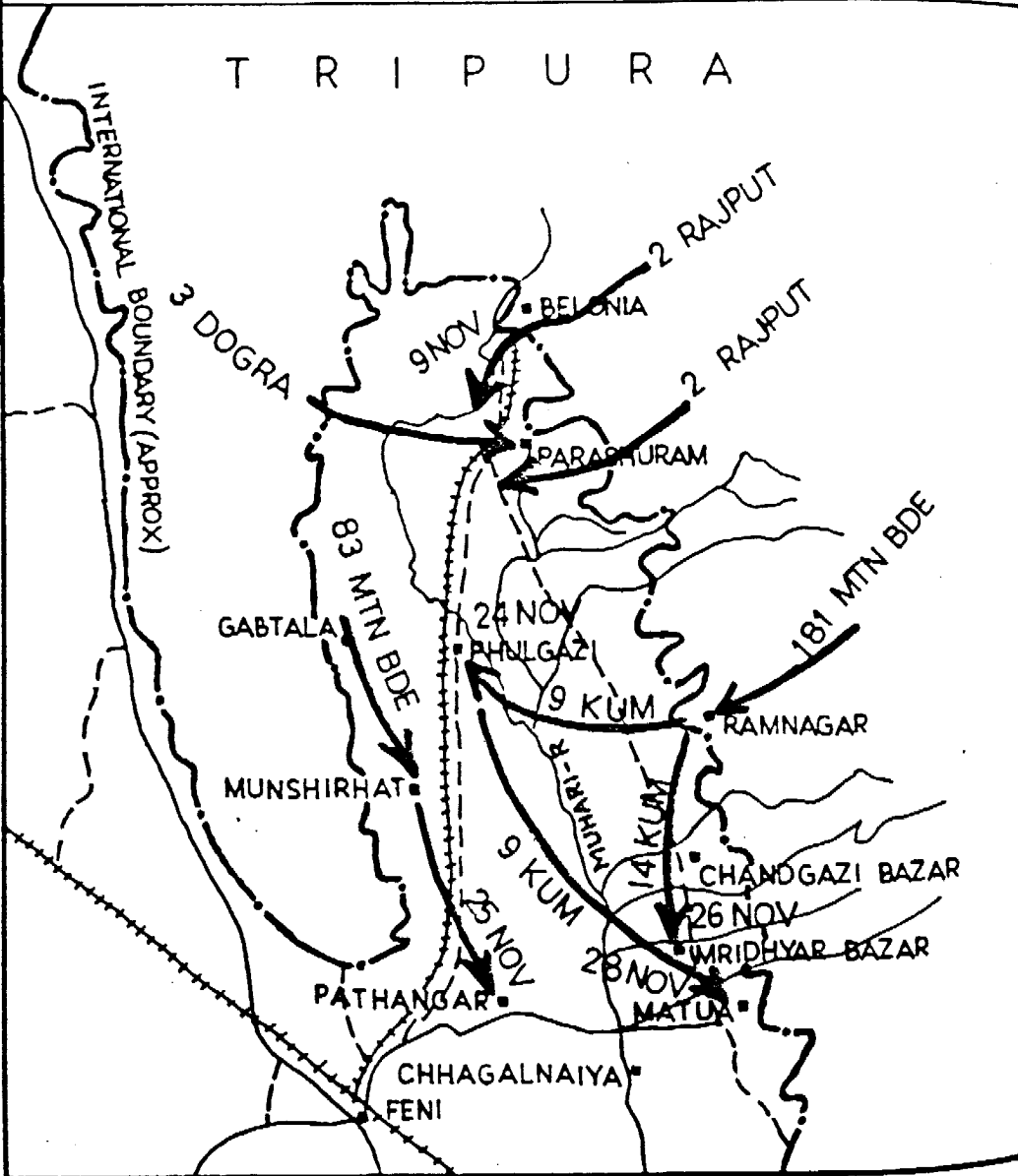
Operations in Belonia Bulge

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 arm'd 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 arm'd
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.

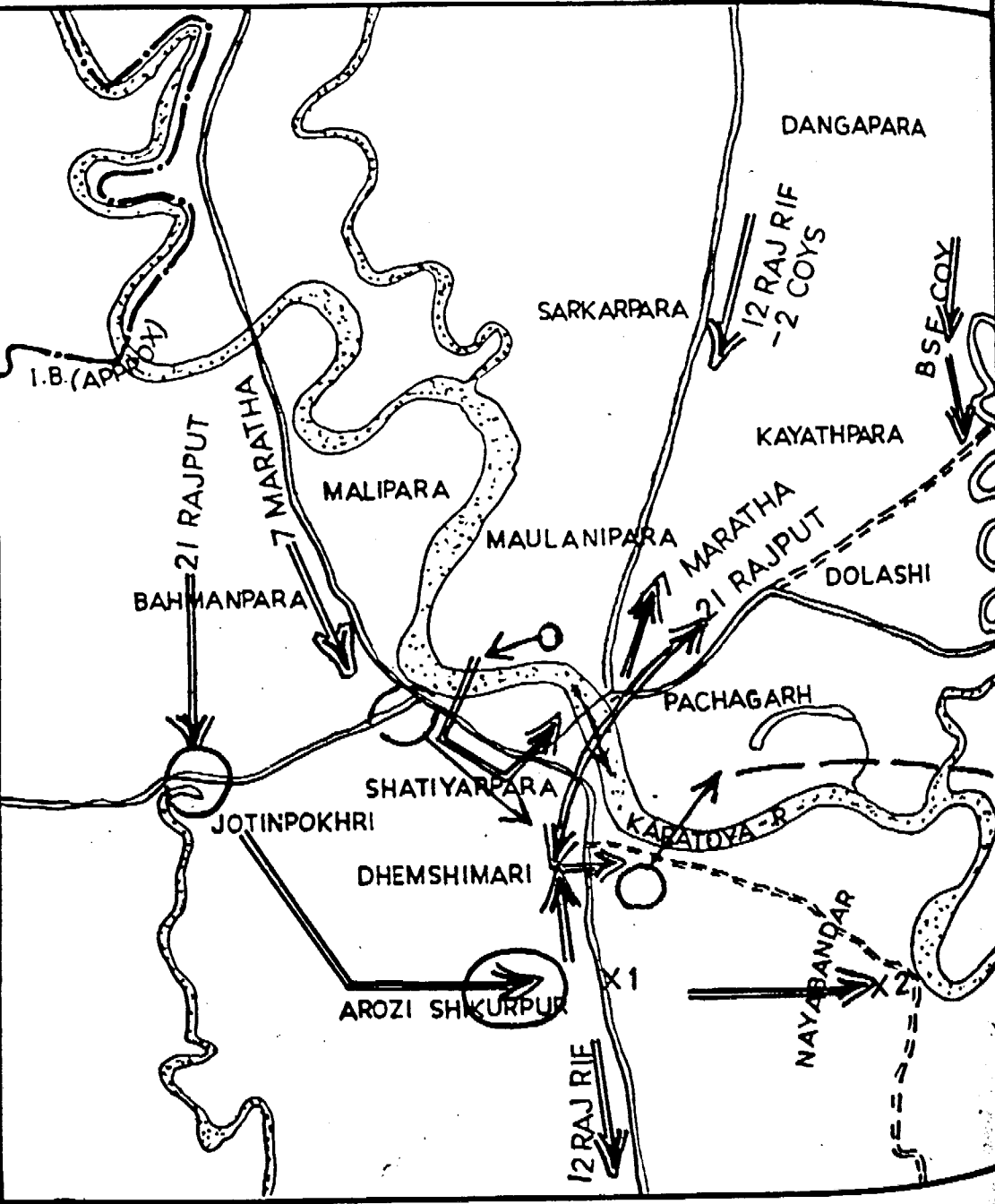
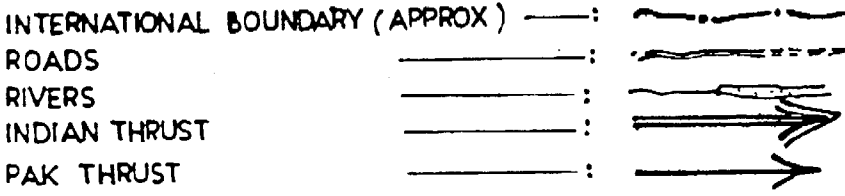
Operation in Akhaura Area

'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

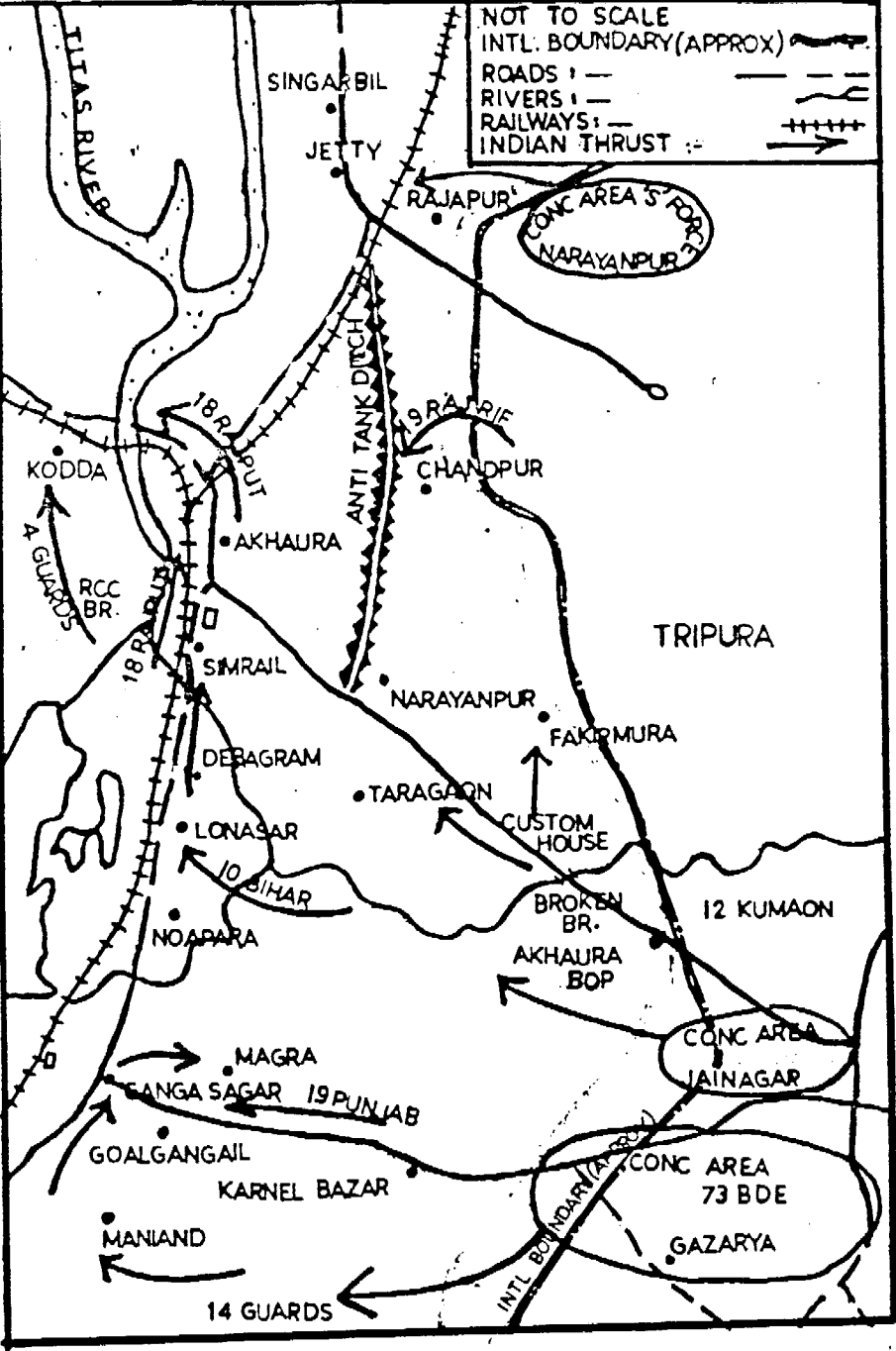
Div), 'Operation Ranjit' was launched to capture areas north of the Dharla river, which was held by 1 Coy 25 Punjab and one Coy EPCAF. The area was captured by 5 Grenadiers on 14 November 1971. Subsequently, the following places were occupied by the Indian troops/MF:-

- 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)

GANGASAGAR & AKHAURA OPERATIONS



242a

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 Dhopakhalī 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)

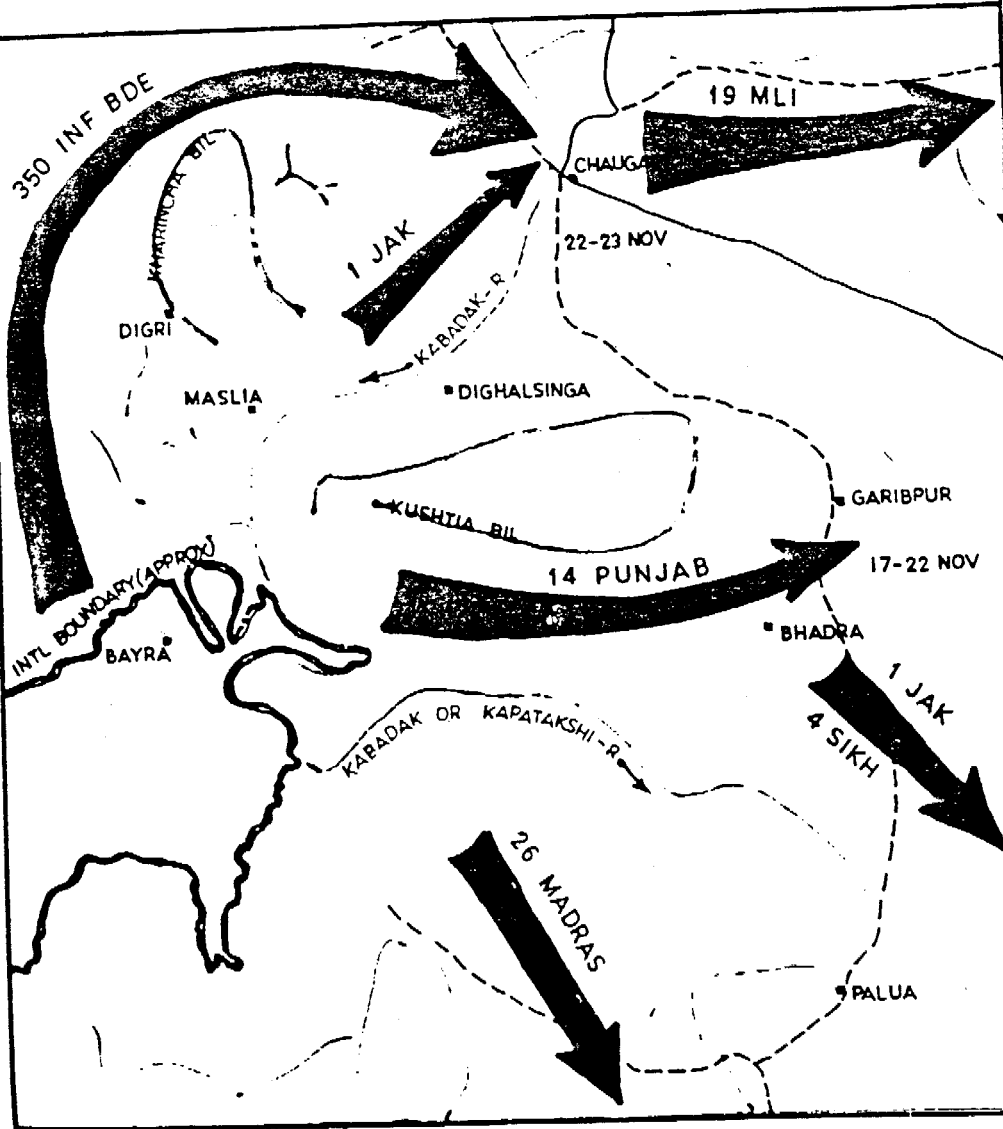
- a) 14 Punjab - 1 JCO, 4 ORs killed, 22 ORs wounded, 15 ORs missing.
- b) 45 Cavalry - 1 Major, and 1 OR killed, 1 Officer and 3 ORs wounded.
- c) 6 Fd Regt - 1 Officer and 1 OR wounded.
- d) 21 Fd Coy - 1 OR wounded.

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 



246a

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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48. AR, 17-23 September 1971.
49. Ibid.
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51. From Official Records.
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57. Refugee statistical information, July 1971, p.3.
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60. From Official Records.
61. Ibid.
62. Mankekar, D.R., p.29.
63. It was an office in India set up by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees to properly supervise the extension of UN aid to Government of India for East Bengal refugees.
64. According to another source, as of 14 October 1971, the anticipated expenditure for 8 million refugees for six months Rs. 2.77 per day per person was Rs. 4,000 million (or US \$533 million) but the foreign assistance offers till then amounted to Rs. 1,263.8 million (or US \$168,511,813). From Official Records.
65. "Effect of Refugee Influx on Economy - World Bank Report", AR, 8-14 October 1971. The 14 member-countries of the Aid-India Consortium which met in Paris on 26 October, too, assessed at \$700 million (5,250 millions) the cost of relief needed by the Indian economy to meet the refugee influx from East Bengal in the financial year ending March 1972. The meeting, like the World Bank Report, noted that the world wide contributions pledged till that time came to over \$200 million only. 'Aid Consortium's assessment of Refugee Relief Cost', Ibid., 26 November 2 December 1971.

Offers of assistance for refugee relief from foreign countries.

	<u>Upto 14.10.71</u>	<u>Upto 16.12.71</u>	<u>Upto 18.1.72</u>
<u>From Foreign Govts.</u>			
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
(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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67. LSD(Fifth):IX; 2 December 1971.
68. Choudhry, Sukhbir, p.13.
69. LSD(Fifth):X; 13 December 1971.
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71. Ibid.
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73. Ibid.
74. AR, 8-14 October 1971.
75. From Official Records.
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77. AR, 26 November-2 December 1971.
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79. LSD(Fifth):VIII; 15 November 1971.
80. From Official Records.
81. BD II, P.240.
82. Ibid., p.241.
83. Ibid., p.256.
84. Ibid., p.258.
85. Ibid., p.259.
86. Ibid., p.284.
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88. LSD(Fifth):VIII; 15 November 1971.
89. AR, 24-31 December 1971.
90. BD I, pp.547-571.
91. Ibid., p.581.
92. From Official Records.
93. From Official Records.
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96. From Official Records.
97. BD I, pp.547-553.
98. Ibid., pp.571-575.
99. From Official Records.
100. From Official Records.
101. According to T. Swaminathan, the then Cabinet Secretary, in September 1971 the liberation of East Bengal had already come into active reckoning in the Government of India's thinking as an alternative solution of the problem. See report of interview of T. Swaminathan on 11 May 1984.
102. Speech at the State Banquet in the Kremlin on 28 September 1971, AR, 22-28 October 1971.
103. Text of a Joint Statement issued at the end of Mrs. Gandhi's visit to USSR from 27 to 29 September 1971, Ibid.
104. From Official Records.
105. Ibid.
106. From Official Records.
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111. From Official Records.
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From Official Records.
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From Official Records.

Ibid.
According to Admiral Nanda's report the number was 450, however, Capt. Samant said it was over 550. From Official Records.
From Official Records.
From Official Records.

Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid.
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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.
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 170. Ibid., p.263.
 171. Ibid., p.281.
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 174. RSD:LXXVIII;5, 19 November 1971.
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 (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.
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 185. BD II, p.33.
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 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. Ibid.
- 55. From Official Records.
- 56. From Official Records.
- 57. From Official Records.
- 58. From Official Records.
- 59. From Official Records.
- 60. From Official Records.
- 61. From Official Records.
- 62. From Official Records.
- 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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DEFENCE POSTURES AND PLANSGEOPOLITICS OF THE SUB-CONTINENTThe Setting

The Indian sub-continent in 1971, included India, Pakistan (with two wings), Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka; with Burma, China, Afghanistan and Russia impinging critically on the sub-continent's security environment. Its dominating frontage on the Indian Ocean, which was becoming a fulcrum of power struggle, had increased its defence problems.

The north-west frontier of the sub-continent had been traditionally difficult for India in security terms. Not only that this area was under Pakistan - a hostile country, but two nations - Afghanistan and Russia - were bordering it. Though no serious challenge had been experienced from them lately, yet India was aware of the potential threat to the Indian security inherent in the peculiar geographical situation. However, the principal security threat in this area was seen as coming from within the sub-continent rather than outside the region. This was due to the fact that all of the highly strategic frontier region in the north-west, with the exception of Kashmir Valley and Ladakh, was part of Pakistan. The Khyber Pass - the historical route to the sub-continent - too was controlled by her. In addition, the Chinese activities in this region had considerably increased the threat to the Indian interests. China had constructed roads linking her with Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

The central frontier of the sub-continent's northern border consisted of three Himalayan Kingdoms - Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan - and the mountainous areas of India lying between Kashmir and Nepal. North to it lay Tibet autonomous region of China. India had open borders with Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan and that placed these nations in an important position in her security framework. However, in this area the threat came from outside the sub-continent rather than from inside. The Chinese had laid claim to Aksai Chin area. The road links established between Nepal and China had put the Indo-Nepal open border within easy reach of the Chinese. Besides, the northern borders of East Pakistan reached very near to the Indo-Nepal border, leaving a narrow strip connecting India's central part with its north-east portion. In 1971, the Sikkim ruler's apparent flirtation with the USA also had a weakening effect on India's security system in a highly strategic area.

The north-eastern land frontier, consisting of the mountainous areas to the east of Bhutan, that separate Assam (the Brahmaputra Valley) from Tibet and Burma, was part of India, with the exception of a narrow East Pakistan-Burma border on the extreme south. This area had its peculiar problems. The tribals of this region were vulnerable to exploitation by three external powers around this area - China, East Pakistan and Burma. On several occasions, the Beijing government had incited the tribals to indulge in anti-Indian activities. The border with Burma also presented a perplexing predicament for India. There were certain dissident tribal communities, in particular the Nagas and Kachins, whose traditional homelands lay on both sides of the border. The Burmese Nagas had on many occasions rendered various kinds of assistance to the Indian Naga rebels. Similarly Kachins and their related communities in the extreme north-east of India were reportedly maintaining links with the Kachins of Burma. Naga and Mizo rebels were often reported to have made their way to China through Burma. East Pakistan too, occupied a strategic position in this region. Dominating all land-routes that connected the rest of India with the north-east through the narrow strip of Indian territory at the foot of the Sikkim and Bhutan hills, she posed a major problem for the Indian defence planners.

The Indian Ocean, though smallest of all the oceans, had a great value both for the littoral states and non-littoral states. It worked as a funnel through which passed all the sea routes from the East to Europe, via the Suez Canal. The strategically located Indian Ocean held a key position to many areas - the South Asia, the South-East Asia and the oil-rich region of West Asia. Hence, the bases here had become the prized possessions for the super-powers. They desired to acquire bases to have the capability to practice traditional "gunboat diplomacy" to shape events to their likings in this region. This made the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands highly vulnerable. Besides, Sri Lanka's policy of giving concessions to the super-powers and Pakistan had further increased the threat to the Indian security. Pakistan too, was reported to have given port facilities to the US ships. This had made a long Indian sea coast all the more vulnerable.

The geographical factors thus imposed on India a wide range of security problems. India's security was threatened both from inside and outside the sub-continent. To get a clear picture of the security

problems of India in 1971, it is essential to look at her relations with two important neighbours - Pakistan and China - and the super-powers' interests in the sub-continent.

Pakistan:

One of the main security problem was caused by Pakistan's geographical situation, whose two wings sandwiched India. Pakistan had maintained an anti-India stance since her inception, as she was created on the basis of the so called 'two-nation theory'. Her leaders knew that there was an inherent danger to her existence due to the cultural similarities between the people of both the countries. Hence, they decided to keep up an anti-India hysteria campaign in Pakistan to maintain her separate identity. In addition, the Kashmir issue, the question of the Indus water and the Farakka barrage were also responsible for exacerbating the relations between the two nations. The maltreatment given to the non-muslim population in East Pakistan with whom the Indian population had close religious and cultural affinity, was another factor that led to the further deterioration of relations between Indian and Pakistan. Pakistan's anti-India stance had gradually created an inflated sense of insecurity, which greatly facilitated the entry of super-powers into the politics of the sub-continent. Pakistan joined two US sponsored military pacts to contain communism - South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in September 1954, and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) in July 1955. She actually used them to improve her military capability against India. Pakistan could adopt any strategem to qualify herself for the supply of arms which could be used against India(1). Internal weaknesses of Pakistan were also responsible for her entry into the US alliances. The economic and political conditions in Paksitan were far from satisfactory. Islamabad hoped that the US would be able to give necessary aid and strength to Pakistan to remove political instability and economic backwardness. These alliances, however, adversely affected the Indo-Pak relations as they circumscribed Pakistan's autonomy in foreign affairs. She obviously could not settle all her differences with India without the tacit approval of the western powers(2). While Pakistan's alliances with the western powers improved her military capability, it intensified rather than relieved the Indo-Pak tensions.

India, on the other hand, embarked on the policy of non-alignment. She felt that the best policy for developing nations was to remain aloof from the power-politics of the super-powers, which could enable

to concentrate on their economic development. India contributed significantly to the formation of a non-aligned group. However, this was looked upon with suspicion by the Pak leaders. They considered it an attempt by India to strengthen herself by taking the leadership of the non-aligned nations.

The basic difference in the foreign policies of these two nations, besides other issues, proved an obstacle. For India, military alliances were the object of hatred, while for Pakistan, they were an instrument for achieving goals of foreign policy. That is why in 1959, when Ayub Khan suggested a joint plan for the defence of the sub-continent, Nehru could not agree to it(3).

Following Kautilya's dictum that one's enemy's enemies are one's friends, Pakistan began to look for close relationships with the enemies of India, and turned her eyes to China. She had realised that the Sino-Indian relations had begun to deteriorate after India gave shelter to the Dalai Lama. During the India-China War of 1962, Pakistan's President defended the Chinese action pointing out that the initial aggressive moves were made by India. The Sino-Pak relations received a fillip after the signing of the Sino-Pakistan Border Agreement in 1963, and were further strengthened during the Kutch episode and the autumn war of 1965. During these crises, the Chinese government wholeheartedly supported Pakistan's manoeuvres against India. After 1965, the Chinese aid to Pakistan considerably increased(4). While China financed many important projects in Pakistan the latter gave certain concessions in her territory to the former. Thus emerged the Sino-Pak axis against India.

It was her friendship with China, and the US military aid, which encouraged Pakistan in August-September, 1965 to try to solve the Kashmir issue by the use of force. Some felt that Pakistan had launched the mini war in April-May 1965 in the Kutch area as a full-dress rehearsal. It appeared that Pakistan wanted to try out the US arms and judge the Indian military capability. As India quickly agreed to cease-fire, Pakistan thought that India was not prepared to face the Pakistan Army, equipped with the US arms. Hence, Pakistan engaged in a full-scale war against India a few months later. As India was interested in solving the Kashmir issue peacefully, it again agreed to the proposal of cease-fire after twenty-two days of war. With the Tashkent Agreement in January 1966, in which they pledged to solve all the problems through peaceful negotiations, it appeared that a new era of goodwill and normalcy

between the two embittered nations had been ushered in. Unfortunately, it proved an illusion. There were several factors that regenerated the tensions between the two nations.

The internal developments in Pakistan to a great extent were responsible for the stepping up of the anti-India campaign. Failures on various fronts in the post-Tashkent era were creating dissatisfaction amongst the Pakistanis and it culminated in the resignation of Ayub Khan. To divert the attention of the Pakistanis, the leaders began to intensify their venomous propaganda against India. This hostile propaganda further strained the relations of the two countries. In addition, against the terms of the Tashkent Declaration, the Kashmir issue was raised many a time by the Pakistani government at various international platforms.

Another important issue that spoiled further the Indo-Pak relations was the East Bengal crisis. From 1964 after serious communal disturbances in East Bengal, the inflow of refugees into India considerably increased. The reasons for this were insecure conditions, economic distress and the deliberate policy of the ruling party. As the ruling elite did not like the large East Bengalee population which was nearly 60% in 1970(5), it continued the policy of discrimination till the liberation of Bangladesh. The large inflow of refugees - and emotional attachment of the Indians to the East Bengalee population, intensified anti-Pak sentiments in India. Eventually, the Indo-Pak relations by 1971, had come to such a pass that a war between the two countries appeared approaching again.

China:

China also occupied an important position in the security environment of the Indian sub-continent. Her proximity to the Indian sub-continent and her emergence as the third super-power had enabled her to play an important role in the power-politics of the sub-continent. Unfortunately, the Sino-Indian relations were characterised by continuing tensions, mutual suspicion, conflicting claims over certain areas at the border, one major armed clash and several border clashes and crises situation in which either the threat of force was employed or actual limited military operations were conducted. Trouble really began with the violation of the Tibetan autonomy by the Chinese government, resulting in a large-scale migration of the Tibetans' from their homeland. The Chinese did not approve of India's giving shelter to these Tibetans. Among other issues that exacerbated

mutual distrust were the Chinese rejection of the McMahon Line, ideological differences, and conflicting claims over Aksai Chin and other areas.

In addition, the Chinese desire to establish her hegemony in South and East Asia was regarded a security hazard by India. Aspiring to become another super-power, China's immediate objective since early 1960s was to dominate the wide arc from Korea to Pakistan. Her dominance could be challenged only by India among the powers in this big land mass. Her virulent communism of the Maoist brand gave an ideological edge to her objective of weakening "capitalist India", even if it involved supporting the feudal oligarchy of Pakistan. Besides, the Dalai Lama and his followers helped by India could some day threaten the Chinese hold over Tibet.

Keeping her objectives in view, China invaded Ladakh and North-East Frontier Agency (now Arunachal Pradesh) in 1962. Her strategy reflected a careful planning in these areas, as the Indian military and logistic capabilities were most limited. And India at that time did not envisage a war with China. As mentioned earlier, China also tried to incite the Indian tribal groups in the north-east region against India, which fortunately met with little success. During the Indo-Pak War 1965, China not only maintained a pro-Pakistani stance but also threatened to invade India from the north. Between 1968 and 1971, a number of small-scale skirmishes between the Indian and the Chinese military forces had taken place.

Thus, India's two important neighbours were threatening her security. Their combination had virtually created a ring of hostile countries around India on three sides that seriously endangered her position.

Super-Powers and the Sub-Continent:

Realising the significance of this area, the super-powers, became active in the sub-continent, and that further vitiated the environment. For USA, this area had gained significance since the end of the Second World War. It was regarded a vital link by John Foster Dulles in the alliance chain that the USA engineered on the rim-land of the Indian Ocean also. The USA was aware of its importance for the oil trade too. About 60% of the oil required by the West European allies of America and 90% of the oil consumed by Japan came from the region around the Persian Gulf(6). A large part of this oil was transported through the Indian Ocean. In the event of a serious

conflict, the dominant maritime power in the Indian Ocean could cut off this vital traffic, causing rapid and grave damage to both the USA and her allies. Therefore, USA desired to control both Indian Ocean and the sub-continent.

When USA looked for allies who could help her in strengthening her control in this area to contain communism, both India and Pakistan received her attention. While Pakistan as mentioned earlier, to qualify herself for arms aid, joined the US sponsored military pacts like CENTO and SEATO, India refused to do so as she believed in the policy of non-alignment.

The US move to win over friends and her entry into the sub-continent introduced the USSR into this area. The US sponsored alliances, threatened the Soviet security from this region. Pakistan joining the US alliances had galvanizing effect on Russia. Under the US control, the Indian sub-continent pointed a dagger at the soft underbelly of the Russian bear. Thus, the initial Soviet interest in the Indian Sub-Continent was a reaction to Pakistan's involvement in the US sponsored alliance system(7). She began to look for allies in this region to check the US designs. India became a natural choice for her due to her dominating position. In addition, a friendly India could help USSR in checking the Chinese designs against her. India had also become worried due to the threatening activities of Pakistan and China. Hence, to protect their mutual interests, the Soviet Union and India began to move closer.

Thus the sub-continent and the Indian Ocean had come under the cross-fire of the super-powers. The interests and policies of the super-powers significantly affected the regional security environment. The US desire to assemble an anti-communist defence system and the USSR's reaction to it brought both the powers face to face in this region. The Chinese interests in the sub-continent had further complicated the situation. Gradually the US-Pakistan-China axis emerged and to counter it Indo-Soviet friendship was promoted. The sub-continent's environment became highly explosive.

INDIA'S-DEFENCE-FORGES:

Pre-1965:

Before India's Independence, the British regarded the defence of India as only one of the fact of Great Britain's wider imperial defence policy. The Indian army was primarily assigned the function of defending the British colony at the North-West

frontier where the British faced troubles from the local population and the Russian threat, and also protecting the British interests within India. However, whenever there was emergency, the Indian troops were utilised to protect British interests in other parts of the world. During the two World Wars, the Indian army was sent to different theatres of war where it earned admiration of friends and foes alike.

At the time of Independence, the partition of India was accompanied by the division of the army. India inherited a force of 350,000 men(8). After Independence, Government of India evolved a new policy for the Indian Army as the tasks assigned to it during the British Raj were unacceptable in nationalist India. Independence brought a sharp reduction in the army's internal security role. As Britain remained no more responsible for the formulation of defence policy, India set up her new machinery to assume this responsibility. A new system of decision making was evolved and the Indians soon learnt how to operate this system efficiently. In addition, organisational changes in the army were made to remove some glaring defects.

So far as the modernisation of the army was concerned, it was never taken seriously before 1962, though proposals for it had been discussed at different levels. In sheer manpower, the strength of the Indian Army during 1947-1962 was sufficient, but it lacked the essential core in the way of equipment, training and general logistic support(9). The year 1962, can be regarded as a landmark in the military history of India. Following the shock of the Chinese invasion in 1962, the first real and systematic effort was made to reorganise the structure of the Indian Army(10). At that time there were 45,000 men in the Indian Air and Naval Forces, while the number of personnel in the Indian Army had increased to 500,000(11). The Government of India decided to expand its armed forces considerably, as also the indigenous production of equipment. Six new divisions were to be created as a part of the proposed ten mountain divisions, and six additional infantry divisions were to complement the existing eight infantry divisions. A second armoured division was also envisaged. This expansion of the Indian Army was planned to take place in a period of about 10 years(12). In addition to these mountain divisions, 2 scout battalions were raised for the purpose of patrolling the Indian border adjoining Tibet(13).

As equipment of the army was obsolete, efforts were made to modernise them. A decision regarding a standard self-loading rifle, which was being argued

over years, was taken in 1963 : the Ishapore rifle soon went into production and became the standard equipment of infantry troops. These semi-automatic Ishapore rifles were standardised on calibre 7.62 mm. The army was provided with lighter and longer range mortars. A mountain gun was developed to increase the army's efficiency in the hilly terrain(14). In addition, a decision to produce MIG-21 in the country was taken. But the tempo was not long sustained and fizzled out gradually as the imminence of China's threat receded into the background(15).

The budget for the supplies to the Indian Forces also gradually increased from Rs.630 million in 1963-64 to Rs.1180 million in 1971-72. However, this increase of 87% is impressive only in monetary terms, as during this period the wholesale price index increased by nearly 10% and of manufactured goods around 60%(16).

Higher level changes were also made to improve the defence control structure. Three Committees were established which were composed of the Defence Minister, the State Minister of Defence, the Defence Secretary, the Scientific Adviser, the three Chiefs of the staff and the Financial Adviser (Defence). These Committees dealt with the following three aspects : the first dealt with plans on Defence subjects, the second dealt with the welfare problems relating to the three Services, and the third dealt with matters pertaining to works and construction of all the three Services(17). In addition to these Committees, three more Committees were formed, known as Defence Minister's Army, Navy and Air Force Committees, for dealing with important matters pertaining to each Services. In the Defence Ministry, a Production Committee under the Defence Minister was also formed to deal with matters relating to indigenous production of defence equipment. After the India-China War 1962, the Joint Intelligence Committee was also reactivated to procure and analyse the required information about India's neighbours(18).

Besides, efforts were made to acquire sufficient number of vehicles, both heavy and light, to improve the logistic system. As India was heavily relying on foreign countries for vehicles, a decision was taken to meet this requirement with indigenous production. The significance of the Indian Air Force for logistic and fire support was also realised and in 1963, a string of airfields was hurriedly constructed below the Himalayan mountain range.

In 1964, a Five Year Plan was made by the Defence Ministry for further strengthening the armed forces, which was initially to cost Rupees thirty

thousand million but was increased later considerably, following the war with Pakistan in 1965 and the devaluation of the rupee in 1966. This Five Year Plan envisaged a well-equipped ground force of 825,000 men and an air force of 45 squadrons(19). The old aircraft like Vampire, Toofanis and Mysteres were to be replaced by more modern aircraft working with radar systems. The 45 squadrons of the Indian Air Force were to include fighter-bombers, reconnaissance aircraft, transport aircraft and helicopters equipped with better weapons to increase their fighting capacity. For development of the Indian Navy in a phased programme, overaged ships were to be replaced by modern ships. The construction of frigates was to be completed in a decades' time. Steps were to be taken to improve roads in the border areas. For the assured supply of arms and ammunition, the indigenous defence production was to be increased(20). For improving the logistic system, the provisioning arrangements in the field were to be reorganised. The plan also emphasised better training facilities. Consequently, a new battle inoculation method was adopted to simulate the noise, confusion and shock of actual warfare with a view to hardening soldiers(21). As the existence of weapons of different calibres had created problems for the efficient functioning of the supply and repair system, it was decided to standardise them. As mentioned earlier, from this time onwards, the Ishapore semi-automatic rifles became the standard weapon of the infantry. It was also decided that light and medium machine-guns would in future use 7.62 mm ammunition(22). The plan would standardise road transportation with Shaktiman TMB vehicles and the Dodge power wagons(23).

The defence plan made in 1964 was indeed a great step forward towards improving the fighting machinery of India. It takes time to translate plans on paper into operational capabilities in the field. Nevertheless, some of the important reforms had been introduced before the 1965 War, particularly in the service structure and in the logistic support. At the time of the 1965 War, the Indian Army consisted of 745,560 men (excluding boys and non-combatants), had ten infantry divisions, ten mountain divisions and one armoured division, and three armoured brigades(24). The IAF had 45 squadrons (including transport squadrons) of MIG 21, HF-24 (Marut), Mystere, Gnat, Canberra, Hunter, Ouragan, Vampire, An-12, C-47, Il-14, Otter, Viscount Avro-748, and Caribou, with 71,379 men excluding non-combatants(25). The Indian Navy had the aircraft carrier Vikrant, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 5 anti-submarine frigates, 3 anti-aircraft frigates, 6 other escort ships and several smaller vessels like patrol boats,

minesweepers, etc. Its aircraft included Seahawk Alize. The manpower was 17,845 only(26).

The Indo-Pak War 1965, exposed lingering shortcomings in the Indian defence policy and defence forces. The Pakistani submarine Ghazi had threatened the Indian coastal shipping and this called for further strengthening of the Indian Navy. Besides measures had to be taken to protect the Indo-Pak border by strengthening the ground and air forces. Thus, as a consequence of the 1965 War, a revised and more balanced plan of modernising all the three Services emerged.

One of the obstacles in connection with the modernisation of the Indian forces was the US decision of not supplying arms to India after the Indo-Pak War 1965. Till then India had been to a great extent depending on imported equipment and arms, mainly from USA and UK. It was only in 1965 that a decision to tap sources outside UK and USA in a big way was taken. Consequently India began to import equipment and arms from USSR and some other countries which were prepared to assist India in modernising her fighting machinery. In addition, India began to reduce her dependence on imported military hardware by laying emphasis on indigenous production.

1966-71:

The build-up of the Indian armed forces from 1965 onwards till the outbreak of the Indo-Pak War 1971, was qualitatively significant. In the Indian land forces, the strength increased marginally. In 1971, the total number of men in the ground forces was 833,835, excluding non-combatants(27). The armoured units remained one armoured division and three armoured brigades. The infantry added four divisions and two para brigades, thereby bringing the total to fourteen infantry divisions, ten mountain divisions and two para brigades(28). There were now 927 medium tanks(29), including Centurian MK 5/7, Shermans T-54/55 and Indian made Vijayanta. In addition it had 3,000 artillery pieces. The army also possessed twenty anti-aircraft artillery units(30).

The Indian Air Force also developed significantly. By 1971, its strength according to foreign estimates, had gone up to eighty thousand(31) though the number of squadrons remained at 100 (including transport squadron)(32), with 625 combat aircraft. It consisted of three light bomber squadrons of Canberra B(i), five fighter-bomber squadrons of Su-7, two fighter-bomber squadrons with HF-24 (Marut 1A), six fighter-bomber squadrons

inter F-56, two fighter-bomber squadrons of Mystere
seven interceptor squadrons of MIG-21, eight
interceptor squadrons of Gnats, one recce squadron of
amberra PR-57, one maritime recce squadron with
1049 Super Constellation. Its fleet of transport
craft of over 450 included fifty-five C-47, sixty
119, twenty Il-14, thirty An-12, twenty-five Otter,
twelve HS-748 and fifteen Caribou with eighty MI-14,
one hundred and fifty Alouette III, ten Bell-47, plus
a few Mi-8 helicopters(33). It had established a
radar network to detect any hostile approach early
enough, if the intruder was not flying low.

However, it was the Indian Navy which expanded
more than the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army
between 1965 and 1971. The British had left a very
small Indian Navy in 1947(34).

Soon after Independence, the Government of India
thought of a naval expansion programme, taking into
consideration the strategic importance of the Indian
peninsula in the Indian Ocean. Subsequently it was
dropped as it was thought that such an expansion was
beyond the country's immediate resources and
needs(35). This thinking continued till early 1960s.
The only development during the early 1960s was the
acquisition of an aircraft carrier - the INS-Vikrant.
In 1963 the Indian assessment changed as a result of
Pakistan's attempt to expand her navy. Next year when
Pakistan acquired a submarine and China embarked on a
policy of expansion of her navy, India tried acquiring
frigates and submarines from UK and USA. However, due
to the indifferent attitude of both the countries and
the pressing need for fortifying the country's
northern frontiers, the Indian Navy remained on low
priority. During the Indo-Pak War 1965, when the
Pakistani submarine Ghazi prowled around the Indian
coast, India felt the pressing need for a strong Navy.
Consequently, in 1966, a decision to build
indigenously the first warship of Leander class was
taken. At the same time the search for submarine in
the over-seas market was intensified. In 1967, it was
decided that submarine would be acquired from the
Soviet Union. The decision to replace the ageing
aircraft of INS-Vikrant by new fighter planes was also
taken. The year 1968 is an important landmark as in
this year the Indian Navy acquired the first submarine
Kaveri, and the first Indian built frigate INS-
Nilgiri(36). It also acquired sophisticated radar
system for the base at Dabolim. In 1969, two new
destroyers, INS-Kamorta, and INS-Kadmata were added.
In 1970, INS-Vikrant received Sea-King helicopters for
anti-submarine warfare. It was also expected to
receive eight missile boats by early 1971(37). These
eventually reached a little before the war(38).

Commands were also reorganised. The Southern Naval Command at Cochin was placed under a Rear Admiral and the Eastern Fleet with headquarters at Vishakhapatnam was formed to operate in Eastern Waters. These were in addition to the Western Fleet with headquarters at Bombay(39). Just before the commencement of Indo-Pakistan War 1971, the Indian Navy consisted of forty thousand men and included the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, four submarines, two cruisers, three destroyers, nine destroyer escorts (including five ex-Soviet Petya class vessels), one general purpose frigate, five anti-submarine frigates, and three anti-aircraft frigates, apart from lesser vessels like patrol boats, minesweepers and seaward defence boats(40).

Thus, the Indian armed forces developed considerably between 1947 and 1971. The colonial army was primarily designed to guard the north-west frontiers and to cater for the imperial needs in the east. Hence, it was not developed beyond a certain stage. Its limitations were evident whenever it faced a well-equipped and well-trained modern force. After Independence it had to protect India's frontiers against its neighbours like Pakistan and China. The commitment of the Indian armed forces increased for the protection of India's national interests against the activities of her neighbours and the super-powers. This enlargement of commitment demanded proportionate increase in their fighting capability. Fortunately, by 1971, their efficiency and strength had increased just enough to meet the challenge.

War Approaching Again

The vortex of the Bangladesh crisis had sucked in India also. The humanitarian considerations, economic burden and resulting social tensions, have already been mentioned in the previous chapters. A large number of Pakistani agents, alongwith the refugees, had entered into India, who tried to cause communal strife and indulge in sabotaging activities. By the end of August 1971, at least four hundred trained Pakistani agents had been rounded up in Assam and Meghalaya(41). While the Pakistani agents were busy in dislocating the Indian system through their activities, the Pak Army's intrusions into the Indian territory while pursuing the Mukti Bahini further increased the threat to India's security.

Hence it was natural for India to be worried over the developments in East Bengal. Pakistan's friendly relations with China and the US aggravated the security problems of India. India's concern was further aroused by the secret visit of Henry Kissinger to China via Pakistan in the summer of 1971 and the

announcement that President Nixon would pay a visit to India. But the gravest threat to India's stability and prosperity arose from the massive and unending influx of millions of refugees driven out from East Bengal, as already discussed at some length. Their permanent or indefinite stay in India was ruinous and therefore totally unacceptable to her. As the External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh told the UN General Assembly in September 1971, a political settlement acceptable to people of East Bengal was the only way to resolve the conflict and help the refugees return to their homes(42). Still later when Indira Gandhi went on a six-nation tour in November 1971, she made it clear at various places that India only desired the early return of the refugees under the conditions, acceptable to them. It is important to note that India had not laid down any condition for a political settlement; she only emphasised a settlement between the people of East Bengal and the Pakistan Government. She did not stipulate whether such a settlement could be within the framework of "United" Pakistan or outside it. India considered that the details of such a settlement could be left to the negotiating parties(43).

The foregoing chapters have already detailed the failure of India's sincere diplomatic efforts to persuade Pakistan to solve the problem by political compromise with the East Bengal leaders, so that about ten million refugees could leave India. When Islamabad realised that other nations were not doing anything except making weak verbal protests and that two big powers were maintaining pro-Pakistani stance, it became bolder in its inhuman attempts to crush all those East Bengalees, who were opposing the Pak military regime. Naturally, the Bangladesh crisis began to deteriorate further.

Soon, Pakistan began to build-up a war psychosis against India by accusing her of trying to dismember the Islamic state. She desired to step up the crisis to a level leading to major hostilities. An Indo-Pak War would convince other nations of the Indian involvement in the crisis. Islamabad further hoped that such a situation would immediately create international pressure for a cease-fire on the lines of the 1965 War. Thus, the basic aim of this strategy of Pakistan was to divert the attention of her people and other nations from the real problem.

Accordingly, Yahya Khan stepped up his activities to increase the probability of war. In July 1971, he said that if India tried to seize any part of East Pakistan, he would declare war(44). Obviously, he was hinting that India was trying to

grab the territory of East Bengal. Yahya Khan in an interview on 11 August with the Columbia Broadcasting System, USA, said that the two countries were very close to war(45). Pakistan also had started concentrating her troops all along the Indo-Pak border as early as June. From the beginning of October, the war preparations were further intensified. The Pakistani Army was put on a 12-hour alert on 5 October 1971(46). Two days later, Lt Gen A.A.K. Niazi declared that the war would be fought on the Indian territory(47). The Pakistani military regime started evacuating the civil population along the western border towns and villages. All along the western border and the Cease-fire Line, enormous quantities of defence stores were piled up. By the middle of October 1971, almost the entire military might of Pakistan had been deployed along Indian frontiers in operational readiness(48).

From October, serious skirmishes began between the Pakistani and Indian troops. On 25 October 1971, Pakistan was reported concentrating more infantry divisions backed up by heavy armour on Jammu border(49). During the next three days, Pakistani troops shelled Agartala airport, and on 29 October a heavy exchange of fire took place in Uri Sector in the west, and in north Tripura. On 3 November, four Pakistani Sabre jets entered into Indian air space in Punjab(50). This was the beginning of violations of Indian air space on a large-scale(51). In the heavy fighting near Boyra on 24 November, the Indian Army destroyed 13 Pakistani Chaffee tanks. On 26 November, in Hilli, town in West Bengal, 80 Pakistani troops and one Chaffee tank were lost(52). A day earlier President Yahya Khan had declared "I may not be here in Rawalpindi during the next 10 days. I may be fighting a war"(53). On 28 November, again an attack was launched by the Pakistani troops in the Hilli Area, in which they lost three tanks. As December dawned, Yahya Khan launched a full-scale war against India and thus started the Indo-Pak War 1971.

Pakistan had succeeded in her strategy of bringing the crisis to a stage where military option became a Hobson's choice for India. War was forced on her. Though a possibility of war between India and Pakistan could not be ruled out after March 1971, India had first tried all other means to solve the problem, although her leadership had the prudence to prepare for the worst if the worst came. A close look at the Indian response from 25 March to 3 December 1971, reveals that diplomatic efforts and the military preparations were undertaken simultaneously and in tandem.

It is also interesting to note that India had planned different levels of war-like responses, desiring only to use the minimum military force to achieve her political objective. In the beginning of March 1971, Indian government had ordered that the Border Security Force would only resist Pakistani attack on the Indian territory, but must not provoke the Pak forces(54). On 7 March, specific instructions were issued to the Border Security Forces that they were to avoid border incidents as far as possible(55). On 30 March, Eastern Command ordered its units to maintain close liaison with the Border Security Force. India, at this stage, did not want to give any pretext to Pakistan to attack and therefore, it was ordered that Bangladesh forces entering into India should be disarmed and interned. The Pakistani forces were also to be arrested in case they intruded. However, by mid-April, India realised the magnitude of the incipient threat, changed her strategy and decided to give a limited opportunity to the Mukti Bahini to fight against the Pakistani forces. They were now allowed to destroy bridges, lines of communication and airfields by sabotage as they were not fit to fight pitched battles(56). At the same time artillery was moved to give assistance to the Border Security Force to repulse Pak attacks. In May, the Mukti Fauj was assisted to establish training camps to train its soldiers(57). India also stopped the practice of allowing the Pak troops, who crossed into Indian territory to go back on tendering apologies. On 30 May, Indian troops were asked to arrest such Pak troops(58).

By June, the threat to Indian security had become more pronounced because of the pro-Pakistani attitude of China and the USA. The Chinese aid to Pakistan had considerably increased since the beginning of the Bangladesh crisis. Encouraged by this attitude of China, Yahya Khan said that if war came, Pakistan would not be alone(59).

Pakistan's unabated assaults on the East Bengalees, the Pak troop's intrusions into Indian territory and the support of USA and China to Pakistan brought home the fact to Indira Gandhi and her advisers that the possibility of war between India and Pakistan had considerably increased. On 13 July 1971, it was decided by the Government of India that though the diplomatic efforts for a political solution of the Bangladesh crisis should continue, preparations should also be made to meet any Pakistani aggression. A contingency plan was made to meet any emergency. In August 1971, regrouping of the Indian forces was envisaged as a result of Pakistan's forward defence posture. The boundaries of the Western and Eastern

Air Commands were revised to make them tactical units. Similarly naval groups were planned for the defence of the Indian coast. Methods for better coordination between the three Services were worked out. Considering the possibility of Chinese support to Pakistan, it was decided to keep a minimum strength of forces to defend India from the north. The call-up and training arrangements of the Territorial Army and the Reservists had been planned to make them available during the likely period of hostilities(60). To minimise the threat from the north, it was planned that if a war had to take place, it should take place during the winter, when the passes at the northern borders of India would be covered by snow and it would be difficult for the Chinese to attack Indian territory in full strength from there(61). However, at this stage, these contingency war plans were only a subordinate alternative to the political or diplomatic efforts.

The treaty with Russia, who had her own reasons to formalise Indo-Soviet friendship, also served to contain partially the threat from the Sino-US-Pak axis. Even in early November 1971, the attitude of the highest Echelon of the War Control Organisation at New Delhi was to take only limited local action in case of Pakistani provocations like recce flights over Indian territory, small under-water attacks in Indian harbours or attacks by ground troops from East Bengal. A general war or total retaliation should follow only serious air and naval attacks or all out ground attacks in the West.

RE-ORIENTATION-OF-DEFENCE-POSTURE

This time India had to completely reorient her operational and logistic preparations, as military operations were envisaged over a larger geographical area than any since Independence. The main operations were now expected to take place on the Eastern Front, with basically defensive or holding operations in the West. A 'volte face' and redeployment of defence forces was necessary. Logistic support for the expected military operations, had to be provided in a short time. To establish arms depots and advanced headquarters, new roads, railway lines, helipades, and airfields had to be constructed and old ones repaired. In August 1971, it was estimated that such tasks could take 3 to 4 months' time(62). The shifting of troops from other areas to Eastern Command involved long moves. Personnel, equipment, vehicles, guns and tanks were moved by rail. Where the distances were short moves were carried out by road, except for tanks, medium guns and engineering equipment, which were moved by rail. For reasons of security, the movement

forces was slow. Special trains were allotted and civilian trucks were also hired. Though the preparations for moving troops and equipment were undertaken as early as August(63), these were completed just before the outbreak of war. The hilly terrain in Meghalaya and Tripura added to the handicap of distance in a race with time. In the Eastern command area, the signal system also required much updating. This task was also fortunately completed before the outbreak of full-scale hostilities. To meet the man-power requirements, a number of units and HQ had to be raised and reorganised to ensure that the army was fully balanced. All these units were raised and reorganised within "the man-power ceiling" and at a short notice. In all 164 units in the Indian Army alone, large and small, were raised and reorganised and put into full operational readiness(64). In the other two Services too, raising and reorganisation of units took place. The shortage of officers posed another problem in all the three Services. Several measures were taken to meet this deficiency, including stoppage of premature retirement or release, extension of service of officers in the rank of Major upto the age of 50 years, termination of most of the courses at the training establishments so as to make both instructors and trainees available, curtailment of training of cadets at the IMA and CTU, and reduction in number of officers with the NCC and other extra-regimental employ. In addition, the reservists, both officers and ORs, were recalled on 22 October 1971(65).

The-Military-Plan

Around the month of October, with the situation deteriorating rapidly, India prepared a more detailed contingency plan for military operations, which had the following objectives :

- a) To assist the Mukti Bahini in liberating a part of Bangladesh, where the refugees could be sent to live under their own Bangladesh Government.
- b) To prevent Pakistan from capturing any Indian territory of consequence in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan or Gujarat. This was to be achieved by offensive-defence and not by merely passive line-holding.
- c) To defend the integrity of India from Chinese attack in the north.

The Western Front was divided into two Sectors- Northern Sector and Southern Sector. In the Northern

Sector, it was envisaged that Pakistan would launch a concentrated attack to capture Punch, and sufficient troops were provided in reserve to meet it(66). The Indian plan was to launch limited attacks to improve the defensive position of the Indian forces in this region. The Shyok Valley, Kargil, Chicken's neck, and the area west of Dera Baba Nanak bridge had been specially chosen for this purpose. A major thrust was planned in Chhamb, but cancelled at the last minute. An enemy attack was also anticipated on the lines of communication from Pathankot to Jammu. To foil this, a plan of an Indian attack with two thrust lines was evolved - one from the north between the rivers Basantar and Beas and the second from the river Ravi at Thakurpur(67).

In the Southern Sector, stretching from Ganganagar to the Arabian Sea, an attack was planned in the Barmer Sector along the rail line towards Naya Chor(68). A thrust towards Rahimyar Khan from Jaisalmer Sector was also planned(69).

In the Eastern Theatre, the strategy was to capture sufficient area bordering the Brahmaputra and Meghna river lines(70). It was also planned that the thrust lines in Bangladesh should isolate and by-pass the Pakistani forces, so that the objectives should be achieved at the earliest. The whole country was divided into four Sectors - North-western Sector, Western Sector, Eastern Sector and North-eastern Sector. In the North-western Sector, it was decided to advance up to Bogra, which was the main communication centre, and pin down the enemy forces there. In the Western Sector, the objective was to capture the major communication centres at Jessore and Jhenida. In the Eastern Sector, it was planned to occupy the Meghna bulge between Chandpur and Ashuganj. The three key points along the Meghna river to be captured were Chandpur, Daudkandi and Ashuganj. Chittagong port was to be dealt with by the Indian Navy. In the Northern Sector, a thrust was to be made along Jamalpur-Tangail line to secure this area(71).

The design for the military operations envisaged joint action by all the three Services to ensure the achievement of the military objectives within the shortest possible time. Hence, in conjunction with the land forces, the IAF and the Indian Navy were assigned suitable tasks keeping in view the master plan.

The-IAF-and-IN-prepare-for-action:

The vital importance of inter-Service cooperation and of joint planning was realised from

beginning. Though adequate institutionalised set for this was not created then, cooperation in actual practice was achieved to a large extent. The exceptionally mature and intelligent personalities of three Service Chiefs served to smoothen out all frictions. During the formulation of the war strategy, constant inter-Service discussions at various levels ensured coordination.

The Indian Air Force was assigned the usual tasks in the military operations of 1971 - to support Indian ground and naval forces in their offensive and defensive operations, to transport the Indian troops, to protect the Indian strategic areas and points from Pak Air attacks, and to attack Pakistan's strategic targets(72). Concomitantly, the Pakistan Air Force was to be prevented from fulfilling a similar role. It was basically the task of achieving air superiority. An additional and novel task was to train the air elements of the Mukti Bahini.

To fulfil its role vis-a-vis the Indian Navy, the IAF was assigned reconnaissance duty in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea in addition to the above mentioned tasks.

Quite distinct from these supporting roles was the air war that the IAF had to fight. The plan envisaged attack on major bases of the Pakistan Air Force in the east and west. The purpose of these attacks was to check or to reduce PAF use of its aircraft against the Indian forces or bases. Deep strike missions were envisaged to destroy the airfields and the aircraft camouflaged or lying in pens. It was also planned to hit economic targets in Pakistan to break her will to fight. Air Defence Control Centres were also established for the protection of Indian air space. The three Commands - Western, Central and Eastern - were invested with the air defence responsibility of their areas. A sufficient number of aircraft were to be kept in reserve to meet any challenge from the north because of the pro-Pakistani attitude of the Chinese in the Bangladesh crisis(73).

As the possibility of war increased, the infra-structure of IAF was improved. The Commands were reorganised as mentioned earlier. Ageing runways were repaired and reactivated. Steps were taken to effectively camouflage airfields, runways and radar establishments. The Maritime Air Centre at Bombay was augmented with two more Centres, one at Cochin and the other at Vishakhapatnam, for better control and coordination of maritime air operations. The IAF also had to provide protective cover for naval ships

carrying out strike missions, particularly in the west. In addition, the IAF was to provide cover over the Indian coasts and Indian merchant ships.

In the Eastern Theatre, the Indian Air Force aimed to achieve total air supremacy at the earliest and then to devote all efforts to hit the enemy's defence positions, guns, tanks, troops and vehicles and to cutting his lines of communication and curbing all his movements. Helicopters and transport aircraft were earmarked for the Indian Army to increase the speed of the advance. Similarly, in the west, the Indian Air Force was to provide protective cover and give offensive air support to the Indian troops fighting on the ground. The wings and squadrons allotted for the offensive air support tasks were familiarised with their likely tasks and the assigned sectors in advance. The targets here included Pakistan's fortified positions, guns, tanks, vehicles and lines of communication(74).

Pens were constructed for the protection of aircraft. Capacity of bulk petroleum installation (BPI) at various airfields, particularly in forward areas, was augmented; airfields were widened and maintenance facilities of aircraft were improved. Anti-aircraft defences were modernised and strengthened. Surface-to-air guided weapon complexes were installed in vital areas. Radars were established at strategic points(75). Operational preparations were also intensified. Intensive training was imparted to aircrew with special emphasis on night flying and on use of new armaments like the 'Y' bomb, especially designed for rendering the runway unusable. Ammunition, explosives and aircraft spares were brought upto authorised scales on priority. Essential spares required from abroad were air-lifted. In tactics, a feature that deserves special mention was the employment of An-12 and Caribou aircraft in night bombing. This was perfected and practised prior to the outbreak of hostilities(76).

A large-scale increase in manpower in a short time for IAF was not feasible, but certain steps were taken in October-November 1971 to increase effective manpower to the maximum extent possible under the circumstances. Personnel from training institutes and units located in non-sensitive areas were moved to the operational Squadrons, wings and units(77).

The Indian Air Force also provided training to the air force personnel of the Mukti Bahini. For this purpose, a quick short training course of the duration of about two months, was designed. Just before the war, the air force of the Mukti Bahini, tiny as it

became operational to participate in the war(78):

As regards the Indian Navy, this was the first military operation since Independence in which it was fully involved. Unfortunately, the Indian defence planners had not given earlier the due emphasis to the development of the Navy, though India has a long coast-line of over 6,000 km. The gravest threat from Pakistan as well as China certainly demanded priority for the needs of the Indian Army and the IAF. However, about a year before the outbreak of the 1971 war, the Indian defence planners began to take serious measures to develop the Indian Navy. The Indian Fleet was divided into two parts - Eastern Fleet and Western Fleet - for the protection of the long coast-line in the east and in the west. In April 1971, the intelligence set-up of the Indian Navy was strengthened to get the desired information continuously about the enemy(79).

To maintain and repair ships, the Naval Maintenance Section was also strengthened.

In addition, the logistic problem was looked into, and essentials procured well in advance. Ships were earmarked to carry out patrolling in the Indian territorial waters and on the high seas; preparations were also made to foil any attack by the Pak submarines.

The Indian Navy planned to carry out a five-fold task in the coming operations - protection of the coast-line and sea lanes, protection of the Indian merchant ships on the high seas, blockading the Pak ports to stop all her sea-borne traffic, striking her vital naval and industrial targets, and training the naval elements of the Mukti Bahini. Some Bengalee personnel of the Pakistan Navy who had managed to escape formed the nucleus of the Mukti Bahini Navy(80). The training provided by the Indian Navy enabled even the new recruits to fight efficiently against the Pakistan forces.

The task given to the Eastern Fleet was to establish a complete blockade of the East Pakistan coast and ports. For this purpose, it was planned to use planes of the Vikrant to bomb the Naval bases of Pakistan, and mines were to be laid around her ports. Aircraft of the Vikrant would scour the skies over the Bay of Bengal and ensure that no ship slipped in or slipped out undetected from East Bengal. Also, the Vikrant, liable to frequent engine trouble, would be less exposed to enemy air or submarine attacks in the Bay of Bengal, compared to the Arabian Sea. Surface vessels also would intercept any enemy ship

venturing out of her ports, and even neutral ships carrying contraband. The Western Fleet also assigned similar tasks to immobilise completely the Pakistani Navy. Moreover, in both the theatres of war, the Indian Navy was assigned to strike vital installations of Pakistan around her sea coast. Naval aviation was assigned the task of providing air cover to the ships on the deep strike missions and to carry out maritime reconnaissance, besides protecting the Indian coast. A new element in the Indian Naval plan was to take the new missile boats near the enemy's coast on the Western Front for launching heavy attacks.

THE ALLOCATION OF FORCES:

Keeping in view the over-all strategy, units of the three Services were suitably allocated between the two fronts. As a decisive offensive was to be carried out in the east, a preponderant force of six divisions and one infantry brigade under a Communication Zone HQ was deployed on the eastern front. It was divided into three corps and a Communication Zone under the Eastern Command - 2 Corps comprising 4 Mtn Div and 9 Inf Div with Hq at Krishnanagar was deployed in the west of East Bengal; 33 Corps comprising 20 Mtn Div with Hq at Siliguri was deployed in the north-west of East Bengal; 4 Corps with Hq at Teliamura and comprising 8, 23 and 57 Mtn Div was deployed in the east of East Bengal; and a force called 101 Comn Zone Area comprising 95 Inf Bde (and 167 Inf Bde inducted subsequently) with Hq at Tura was deployed in the north of East Bengal(81).

In the Northern Sector of the Western Theatre, three corps were deployed along the border - 15 Corps comprising 3, 10, 19, 25 and 26 Inf Divs, HQ 'V' Sector, HQ 121(I) Inf Bde and HQ 3(I) Armd Bde; 1 Corps comprising 54, 36 and 39 Inf Divs, HQ 16(I) Armd Bde and HQ 2(I) Armd Bde(82), and 11 Corps comprising 7, 14 and 15 Inf Divs, 1 Armd Div, 14(I) Armd Bde and 'F' Sector. The Southern Command was given the responsibility to defend the area from Ganganagar to Rann of Kutch(83) with 11 and 12 Inf Divs and about one brigade. On the Western Front, therefore there were thirteen infantry divisions, three independent infantry brigades and four independent armoured brigades, besides the formidable armoured division, to cope with the bulk of the Pakistan Army kept in West Pakistan. In addition, some troops were stationed for protection against any attack across the northern borders(84).

Ten squadrons of fighter and fighter-bombers of the IAF were allotted for operations in East Bengal.

In addition, one Canberra squadron from Gorakhpur was made available for operations there. The allotted squadrons had MiG-21, Hunter, Gnat, Su-7, and Canberra aircraft based at Gauhati, Kalaikunda, Dum Dum, Hashimara, Bagdogra, Nal, Agartala, Panagarh and Gorakhpur. Besides, some Mi-4 helicopters and transport aircraft were placed at the disposal of the Indian Army for transportation of troops quickly. For the Western Front, twenty-two fighter/bomber squadrons (plus two squadrons which were transferred later from the east to the west) and four light bomber squadrons were deployed on rear as well as forward airfields. The squadrons for this side had MiG-21, Canberra, Hunter, Gnat, Su-7, HF-24, Mystere, Vampire and Harvard aircraft, based at Srinagar, Adampur, Pathankot, Amritsar, Chandigarh, Ambala, Bikaner, Sirsa, Hindon, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Uttarlai, Jamnagar, Ahmedabad, Halwara, Rajouri, Bombay, Pune and Agra(85).

The Indian Navy was also suitably deployed keeping in view the main objectives. The Eastern Fleet which operated in the Bay of Bengal was armed with the aircraft-carrier to establish a tight blockade and prevent escape as well as reinforcement of the Pak troops in East Bengal. The Western Fleet was armed with missile boats to carry out deep strike missions. Both the Fleets, in addition, had the usual quota of cruisers, destroyers, frigates, etc.

THE PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES:

In 1971, the strength of the Pakistan Army was about 365,000 men including 25,000 POK troops. In addition to this, the strength of its para-military forces was about 280,000. Besides, Pakistan had raised a new force called the East Pakistan Civil Armed Force. Her regular army according to foreign experts, consisted of two armoured divisions, twelve infantry divisions, one independent armoured brigade and one air defence brigade. Two more infantry divisions were being raised hurriedly. The Pakistan Army's equipment included one hundred M-47, one hundred M-48, one hundred T-54, fifty T-55, and two hundred twenty-five T-59 medium tanks; two hundred M-24, seventy-five M-41, and twenty PT-76 light tanks; and three hundred M-113 APC. Its artillery included nine hundred 25-pr guns, 105 mm, and 125 mm howitzers, and two hundred 130 mm guns. It also possessed Cobra anti-tank guided weapons, and twenty H-13 helicopters(86).

The Pakistan Air Force too had considerably improved its strike power since 1965. In 1971, its strength was about 17,000 men with 273 combat

aircraft, in 13 squadrons. The PAF was organised into one light bomber squadron with B-57, one fighter-bomber squadron with Mirage III, seven fighter-bomber/interceptor squadrons with F-86, three interceptor squadrons with MiG-19, and one interceptor squadron with six F-104.

Similarly, the Pakistan Navy had grown considerably since 1965. In 1971, the strength of the Pakistan Navy was about 10,000 men. It had four submarines, one light cruiser, two destroyers, three destroyer escorts, two fast frigates, and six patrol boats (including two small) and eight coastal minesweepers. It also had 2 VH-19 air-sea rescue helicopters(87). In addition, it had two oil tankers(88).

It is important to note that the POK troops were as good as regulars, especially if employed in Jammu & Kashmir(89). The East Pakistan Civil Armed Force was also given proper training and was able to play an effective role, particularly in holding defensive positions.

These armed forces were allocated suitably between the Eastern and Western Wings of Pakistan. The defence planners at Rawalpindi had to take into account the unique disadvantage of the two wings being separated by 1600 km of Indian territory. Even the long sea route was liable to be cut by India, so switching large forces between the two wings during active hostilities was problematical. And West Pakistan was the real heartland, and the power base of the military junta ruling Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan's basic strategy was to defend the east by an attack from the west. The location of forces was therefore weighed heavily in favour of the Western Wing.

Taking into consideration all these factors, two armoured divisions, two independent armoured brigades, ten infantry divisions, and seven 'Azad Kashmir brigades were deployed in the Western Wing. The PAF had approximately 12 squadrons with an estimated strength of 254 combat aircraft located in West Pakistan. The main air bases were Sargodha, Peshawar, Mauripur/Masrur, Chaklala, Mianwali, Shorkot Road and Murid(90). The main strength of the Pakistan Navy was also harboured around Karachi. The four Pakistani submarines were probably evenly divided between the Eastern and Western Wings(91). However, the Pakistan Navy was in no position to put up its best showing, as Bangladeshis enjoyed a significantly larger representation in the Pakistan Navy compared to other Services, and many of them escaped to join the

liberation war before December 1971:

East Pakistan was garrisoned by more than four infantry divisions, having about 70,000 men. The East Pakistan Civil Armed Force of about 21,500 men was also available there(92). The Pakistan Air Force had located nineteen F-86 Sabres at Tezgaon airfield near Dhaka. Three RT-33, some transport aircraft and helicopters were also available in East Pakistan(93). Most of the Naval craft located in the East Pakistan were small vessels, gun-boats and patrol craft capable of operating deep inside the innumerable rivers and creeks.

PAKISTAN'S STRATEGY AND PREPARATIONS:

Much before December 1971, Pakistan had made a contingency plan against India. This plan was put to test in August 1970, by organising a war game lasting four days(94). As a result of this exercise, certain defects in the Pakistani planning came to light and consequently, her army was reorganised(95). A reserve force of two existing armoured divisions and three infantry divisions was created. In addition, two armoured brigades were formed by withdrawing integral armoured regiments from some of the existing infantry divisions(96). This exercise also revealed the necessity of air cover during ground operations and, therefore, it was decided that cooperation of the Pakistan's Air Force should be ensured in all subsequent operations(97). Another exercise was organised in February 1971(98). These exercises, it appears, centered round launching of the offensive on India's Western Front.

From February 1971 onwards, Pakistani's main concern became the East Bengal crisis. The interrogation reports of the Pakistani officers, who surrendered later revealed that initially Pakistan did not expect a major war with India just then. She also estimated that the East Bengal crisis would be short-lived and it could be easily dealt with by force(99). Consequently, Pakistan began to send troops to East Bengal to keep effective control down to the villages(100). However, as the crisis continued and a large number of people began to flee from East Bengal into India, the Pakistan Govt. changed its plan. It appears that to confuse the issue, Pakistan decided to blame India for the crisis, hoping that it would mislead the international community that India was inciting the people of East Bengal to revolt. And an anti-India tirade could also bring internal unity. The Mukti Bahini was active all along the borders. Keeping all this in view, Pakistan began to launch raids against the Indian borders on

the pretext of capturing the bases of the "raiders" or "terrorists" in India. However, the situation did not improve for Pakistan. Hence, in mid-summer 1971, Pakistan made operational plans to seal the borders with India(101) to deny entry to the Mukti Bahini. A forward posture of defence was adopted(102). A large number of border out-posts (BOPs) were established. The concept of forward defence posture envisaged a ring of border posts backed by strong points and fortified defence as far forward as was tactically possible on all major land approaches from India to East Bengal. These defences were to be stocked with supplies and ammunition varying from 7 to 15 days, with 15 to 30 days reserves held in the rear areas(103). To meet the manpower shortage, new units were raised. By the time war came, the Pak Army in East Bengal had the 9, 14, 16, and 39 Inf Divs at hand, plus the 36 Inf Div with only one brigade operational(104). At the same time, the war hysteria against India was also stepped-up in West Pakistan to keep the Indian forces tied along the Western Front.

Further deterioration in the East Bengal crisis made Pakistan realise that it would be difficult for her to crush the people of East Bengal. From August onwards, while strengthening the forward defence posture, Pakistan began to plan for a full-scale war against India. A new plan for the defence of East Bengal recommended by Lt Gen A.A.K. Niazi was finalised in September 1971. The strange operational plan that emerged for the defence of East Bengal envisaged a number of offensive actions to take the war into the Indian territory. A large number of raids, ambushes and attacks were planned and executed(105). The Indian Army was equally willing to escalate the fighting along the borders. So the skirmishes soon turned into a continuous mini-war.

The forward defence posture was re-enforced when Pakistan Army intelligence reported that the Indian plan was to occupy a chunk of territory in East Bengal to provide a territorial base for the Bangladesh government. Not totally divorced from reality, this information may have been deliberately leaked by Army HQ at New Delhi. In any case, the Pakistan Army in the east thereafter strung itself out in a hard crust all along the East Bengal border, and reacted vigorously to any incursion by the Mukti Bahini aided by the Indian Army. The inevitable result was to deplete seriously the Central reserve, and to destroy the cohesion and striking power of the army formations by distributing the troops in penny packets. The forward defence posture in the east, therefore, proved disastrous for Pakistan when full-scale war finally came in December.

In the West, Pakistan had to mount a successful offensive to capture sufficiently valuable Indian territory to off-set losses in the east and to be in a favourable negotiating position when the cease-fire came. She hoped that China would be intervening actively in her support(106), and the UN would bring about an early cease-fire.

Plans for the offensive were updated by late October 1971. The Pakistan Air Force and Navy were to give active support to the Army, but these two Services were not involved in the planning of the operations(107). The two armoured divisions and ten infantry divisions available in West Pakistan were divided into what may be called a 'holding force' and a 'strike force'. Seven infantry divisions were to be used for holding the ground all along the J & K, Punjab, and Rajasthan border. At New Delhi, available intelligence reports indicated that the 12 and 23 Inf Divs were deployed in "Azad Kashmir"(108); 8 and 15 Inf Divs with 8 Indep Armd Bde were located between the Chenab and the Ravi rivers, 10 and 11 Inf Divs, 3 Indep Armd Bde and 105 Indep Bde Gp were in the Lahore - Bahawalpur Sector, and 18 Inf Div was stationed in Sind, facing the Rajasthan border. These formations would not merely hold the ground but would also attempt limited and local offensive thrusts, to tie down Indian troops and assess their strength in different sectors. The formidable strike force was made up of two armoured divisions and three infantry divisions. The 6 Armd Div and 17 Inf Div made up the 1 Corps, the 1 Armd Div and 33 Inf Div formed the 2 Corps, while 7 Inf Div could join either or act independently.

Indian intelligence sources could give no clear indication of the location of these offensive forces. After the war, it was learnt that 1 Corps was hiding in Gujarat - Kharian area, 2 Corps was in Multan Bahawalpur area and the 7 Inf Div at Peshawar, moving later on to Mandi Sadiq Ganj - Bahawalnagar Sector. But the uncertainty about the locations of these large and powerful formations gave many sleepless nights to the Indian commanders during the war, and compelled them to hold back adequate reserves in many different sectors. The Pakistani 7 Inf Div came to be known as the "Phantom Division" as its presence was reported from many different far-flung places from western POK to Punjab-Sind border.

Pakistan also planned to induct about 10,000 Mujahids into the Kashmir Valley to harass and tie down the Indian forces. As later events showed, Punch was to be captured by regular Pak troops, and major thrusts were to be made in Chhamb-Akhnur and

Ramgarh-Jaisalmer axes. For various reasons discussed later, the main offensive by the armoured divisions or the 'strike force' was never launched.

As already mentioned, the Pakistan armed forces acquired military hardware from many foreign countries to increase their fighting capacity. It was reported that arms and equipment including wireless sets in significant numbers were imported from China(110). China also supplied a large number of tanks in mid-1971, as revealed in the interrogation of Pak POW after the war. From USA, Pakistan imported arms and equipment in at least two ships - Sunderbans and Padma. It was reported that those ships brought spare parts for aircraft and ships, naval stores, and tanks(111). Senator Church was reported to have said that equipment worth \$35 million was in the pipeline in July 1971(112). Intelligence sources reported that Pakistan received substantial aid from USA even after July 1971. It was also reported that Pakistan received spare parts for tanks even from the USSR after the outbreak of the crisis(113). It is possible that these had left Russian ports before 25 March 1971. France supplied helicopters, helicopter spares, torpedoes and operational missiles to Pakistan. A Daphne Class submarine from France, purchased earlier joined the Pakistan Navy in July 1971(114). Pakistan was reported to have received 35 F-86 aircraft from Saudi Arabia during the conflict. In addition, she received military hardware in considerable quantities from Iran and Turkey(115). These, it appears, belonged to USA. For the USA it was a common practice to send her arms and equipment through a third party, and she had resorted to this little trick in cases of certain European countries also. In this manner, Pakistan acquired substantial quantities of sophisticated arms and equipment after the outbreak of the crisis, and even during the war.

Besides, Pakistan made diplomatic efforts to keep the Indian army tied down at the Sino-Indian border as mentioned earlier. Lt Gen Niazi later on revealed that most of the Pakistani officers were under the impression that in case of a war between India and Pakistan, China would definitely intervene by attacking India from the north(116).

To meet the manpower requirements of the coming war, Pakistan raised additional units. The number of recruits was increased and the training period was reduced. The East Pakistan Civilian Armed Force was raised for the support of the regular army in East Bengal. Leave of all officers and other ranks was cancelled in April 1971. Release and retirement of army personnel was also stopped. The Pakistan

ment issued the order of general alert on 9
1971(117).

Improvements were made in the logistic system, particularly in East Bengal. In West Pakistan the Pakistan Army had started taking steps in this direction since 1965, and by 1971 it had established a good network of roads and railway lines. However, further improvements were made in 1971. Along the entire western border, the Pakistan Army had made preparations to check the Indian forces by laying mines, erecting obstacles, large-scale dumping of ammunition and defence stores, and had deployed artillery guns. Water obstacles, new bunkers and pill boxes were also constructed there(118). In East Bengal, arrangements were made to make available to the army units the country boats and rafts(119). Wherever possible, temporary bridges were built. Concrete and wooden platforms for guns were made. Observation posts on tree tops and house tops were established. Bunkers were concealed and dummy tanks were placed to deceive the enemy(120).

The interrogation reports of officers revealed that certain exercises were carried out to achieve Army/Air Force cooperation in the military operations(121). It appears that though there was lack of joint planning at higher level, efforts were made to achieve cooperation between the different services at the tactical level. The soldiers were also imparted training in night operations.

By beginning of December 1971, the Pak military Junta considered the Pakistan armed forces sufficiently well prepared to fight India successfully, at least in a short war and with active Chinese participation on their side. And this assessment was not as unreasonable or unrealistic as would appear from a comparison of India's population of 557 million with Pakistan's 126 million, or of India's total armed forces of 980,000 with Pakistan's 392,000 men(122).

Due to a number of reasons, India was able to field in the west only thirteen infantry divisions against Pakistan's ten, and only one armoured division and four independent armoured brigades against Pakistan's two armoured divisions and two independent armoured brigades. There were twenty-two fighter-bomber and four light-bomber/PR squadrons of the IAF against twelve squadrons of PAF in the West. In the East, six Indian infantry mountain divisions faced four Pakistani infantry divisions. The Indian over-all superiority therefore was only of the order of 1.5:1, when a successful offensive is generally

considered to require a superiority of 3:1. It should be noted that the Pakistani Army units have one-and-a-half-times the small arms and anti-tank fire power of Indian Army units, as the proportion of LMC and RCL guns was much higher in the Pakistan Army units(123). Pakistan, therefore, confidently expects to fight India on more or less equal terms till the inevitable cease-fire came after a few weeks.

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PAKISTAN - CHOOSE - WAR - : - OPERATIONS - IN - J&K

THE - PRE - EMPTIVE - STRIKE

The level of violence along the East Bengal borders had been rising steadily since April 1971. As already described, it had, by the end of November, escalated into an almost intolerable burden of physical attrition and degeneration of morale of the Pakistan armed forces in that theatre. The military rulers of Pakistan finally realised that they could not win that war, nor sustain it for long. They had either to backdown and seek a compromise with the hated "traitor" Mujib, or else 'defend the East by attack from the West', which was the accepted doctrine and the basis of their war planning for years. Seeking a political compromise at that late stage would perhaps have discredited the military rulers so seriously as to jeopardise their hold over the country, and Bhutto was waiting in the wings to take over.

Yahya, therefore, opted for war. With the sudden and secret, pre-emptive air attacks on a large number of IAF bases in the West in the afternoon of 3 December 1971, the conflict entered the decisive phase of full-scale war.

MILITARY - GEOGRAPHY - OF - THE - WESTERN - FRONT

The Western Front was characterised by a terrain as diverse and varied as the habitants. The terrain configuration lent itself broadly to three divisions: the mountain region in the north covering broadly the State of Jammu & Kashmir, the plains of Punjab in the centre and the desert tracts of Rajasthan in the south. The northern area had a common border with or proximity to several countries in the region like China and USSR, which gave it its geo-political importance.

In the north, the Ladakh range separated the valleys of the Indus and the Shyok. The Zaskar range barred routes south of the Indus, with an average crest height of 5800 metres. Further south lay the Greater and Lesser Himalayas. The Pir Panjal range formed part of the latter. It protected the Kashmir Valley from the south and west and included such important passes as Haji Pir (2639 metres) and Pir Panjal (3494 metres). These remained passable for a few summer months only.

The major rivers draining this region were the

Indus, Jhelum and Chenab: The main arteries of communication generally followed the alignment of these rivers. Roads of lesser classification proceeded towards Western Tibet from Eastern Ladakh. As the borders were sealed, these roads in the frontier regions were in disuse. However, they constituted potential routes of enemy ingress that need guarding. Besides these major axes, there were several historical trade routes and narrow valleys which served as potential infiltration routes.

Movement of men, animals and material in this rugged terrain posed difficulties because of steep slopes, snow and ice, lack of oxygen at high altitudes, above tree line, and occurrence of frequent avalanches. The favourable period for military operations was limited to the warmer months from April to November. Troops needed acclimatization. Additionally, weapons and equipment required special care and calibration to counter intense cold and rarefied atmosphere.

The central region comprised the plains of the Punjab and northern part of Sind and Rajasthan. This was the heartland of Pakistan, encompassing in its fold, the richest agricultural land, the most developed communication system and the heaviest population densities. Being an area of great politico-military significance, it got enveloped in all the conflicts between India and Pakistan. It was a flat alluvial plain with no major land features for miles, except the rivers. However, there were numerous man-made features like canals, ditch-cum-bunds and headworks, which left this area susceptible to artificial flooding.

The Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej were the three main tributaries of the Indus river that travelled through this area. The major arteries in Pakistan ran generally from north-east to south-west. The highly developed communication network conferred the advantage of 'interior lines' on Pakistan, particularly in the region bordering the southern POK and the Jammu province. South of the Sutlej lay the canal irrigated areas, which earlier were semi desert. The main routes of ingress from Pakistan to India were from Shakargarh to Gurdaspur; Narowal to Dera Baba Nanak over the bridge on the Ravi; Lahore to Amritsar via Attari (the Grand Trunk Road); Kasur to Firozpur over the Hussainiwala bridge; and, across the Sulaimanke Headworks to Fazilka.

On account of extensive irrigation network and waterlogging, cross country movement of armour and other heavy vehicles was limited in the central zone.

Existing canal systems could also be effectively used at selected locations to create obstacles by artificial flooding. South of Ferozpur, however, the canal system was not very dense, hence the mechanized forces could operate with greater freedom and armour.

In the southern zone, most of the land on either side of the international boundary consisted of series of sand hill ridges, some times covered with stunted brushwood, where cultivation was almost impossible. While the rainfall was negligible, the temperature varied between 4°C and 15°C in winter and from 25°C to 50°C in summer. It was a sparsely populated, featureless tract occasionally interspersed with rocky outcrops. The region suffered from acute shortage of water, almost all the available water being brackish. Further south, the Rann of Kutch was salt covered hard ground during dry season, but turned into a shallow sea or bog during and after rains.

In the southern sector, the communications near the border generally ran along the Nara Canal from north to south. The area between the Thar Desert and the Indus river tract - generally south of Nawabshah - covered the oldest canal network systems. Because of the proximity of the canal system, the green belt of this region in Pakistan lay close to the international boundary, in contradistinction to its location in India. The main routes of ingress lay along Sadiqabad - Tanot - Rangarh - Jaisalmer; Munabao - Gadra Road - Barmer; and Gadra City - Gadra Road - Barmer. Limited ingress was also possible in the Kutch Sub-sector, particularly during the period of inundation.

The desert posed serious problems of mobility, water, navigation, camouflage and concealment. Construction of field defences, maintenance of health of troops and the serviceability of weapons and equipment also faced special problems. These special problems required long and elaborate preparation before any major offensive could be launched in the southern zone by either side.

Pakistan suffered from a basic strategic weakness, in that its main L of C from Karachi to Lahore ran parallel to the front. This veritable jugular of Pakistan could be cut by any major westward thrust from the long border from Barmer to Bikaner Sectors. It, however, remained an incipient threat in 1971, as the long and careful preparations required were never made by India.

DISPOSITIONS OF FORCES

Pak-Deployment

The pattern of deployment of the opposing forces, particularly in the plain and desert sectors, changed with the political climate and the threat of war. By and large, most of the Pakistan Army formations had been identified, though some of the groupings and affiliations remained unknown till after the cessation of hostilities. However, certain key concerns like Pakistan's 7 Inf Div and 1 Armd Div gave the Indian planners many an anxious moment by successfully concealing their locations and tasks.

According to the Indian assessment Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) was held by 12 Inf Div and part of 23 Inf Div, augmented by a large number of para-military forces like Karakoram, Gilgit and Northern Scouts deployed along the Cease Fire Line in a holding role. The 12 Inf Div was occupying an extended sector from Muzzaffarabad in the north to Kotli in the south. Most of 23 Inf Div and the bulk of the newly-raised 17 Inf Div were located opposite Chham bin the southern POK and available for offensive action.

In November 1971, a significant increase in vehicular traffic and other activities was observed opposite Punch. It was then estimated that the 7 Inf Div (GHQ Reserve) was perhaps being inducted opposite Punch for an offensive(1). The reported induction of 7 Inf Div was not, however, found to be correct(2).

The 1 Corps of Pakistan, which was located in general area Marala - Sialkot - Zafarwal, comprised 15 Inf Div and 8 Inf Div supported by 8 (Indep) Armd Bde - all in the holding role for the offensive phase. The strike element, consisting of the 6 Armd Div(3) and the 17 Inf Div(4) was expected to be located in the general area of Daska - Pasrur(5).

Pakistan's 4 Corps was holding a sector from Lahore to Bahawalpur. In this Corps' sector, 10 Inf Div and 3 (Indep) Armd Bde was located in the general area Lahore, 11 Inf Div in Kasur area and 105 (Indep) Inf Bde Gp in Sulaimanke.

The newly-raised 33 Inf Div was reported to be located in general area Bahawalpur-Sukkur, from where it could be employed for operational tasks either in the Bahawalpur or Sind Sectors(6).

The 18 Inf Div, which was responsible for the defence of the Sind Sector, was stretched from

Rahimyar Khan to Naya Chor and on to Badin(7).

Prior to operations, the 1 Armd Div was reported in area Sahiwal - Okara with one of its Brigades probably in area Pakpattan Haveli(8). The information on its moves was generally vague, and right up to the end of war its precise location was not known(9).

Indian Forces in the West

In J&K, the 15 Corps, comprising 3, 10, 19, 25 and 26 Inf Divs, 121 (Indep) Inf Bde Gp and 3 (Indep) Armd Bde had been deployed. The 3 Inf Div was responsible for the defence of Ladakh. The 121 (Indep) Inf Bde Gp was responsible for the defence of Kargil and the 19 Inf Div for the Srinagar Valley. Occupying an extended sector from Punch to Naushehra was 25 Inf Div. The 10 Inf Div was located in general area Akhnur, while 26 Inf Div and 3 Indep Armd Bde were located in Jammu area(10).

Further south, the 1 Corps, consisting of 36, 39 54 Inf Divs and 2 and 16 (Indep) Armd Bdes, was holding the general area Thakurpur - Pathankot - Samba. The 39 Inf Div was deployed in a defensive role, the remainder of the Corps being available to undertake offensive operations in the Shakargarh - Sialkot sector(11).

India's 11 Corps, which was responsible for the defence of the Punjab and Ganganagar district of Rajasthan, comprised 15 Inf Div located in Dera Baba Nanak - Amritsar Sector, 7 Inf Div in general area Khalra - Khemkaran, 14 Inf Div in Firozpur - Jalalabad Sector, F Sector in general area Fazilka - Ganganagar - Anupgarh, and 14 (Indep) Armd Bde distributed between Ganganagar and Ajnala areas(12).

The 1 Armd Div, which was Army HQ reserve, was located in general area Mukatsar(13).

While all the above formations came under the Western Command at Simla, the 12 Inf Div, and 11 Inf Div, deployed in Jaisalmer and Barmer Sectors respectively, were placed under the Southern Command at Pune.

The Bikaner and Kutch Sectors were looked after by ad hoc Sector HQ and had a mixture of regular infantry and Border Security Force, with little or no supporting arms by way of armour and artillery.

These Indian and Pakistan army formations fought hard in the 14 days of fierce struggle during the 1971

The notable battles and actions along the border are described one by one in the lengthy sections that follow:

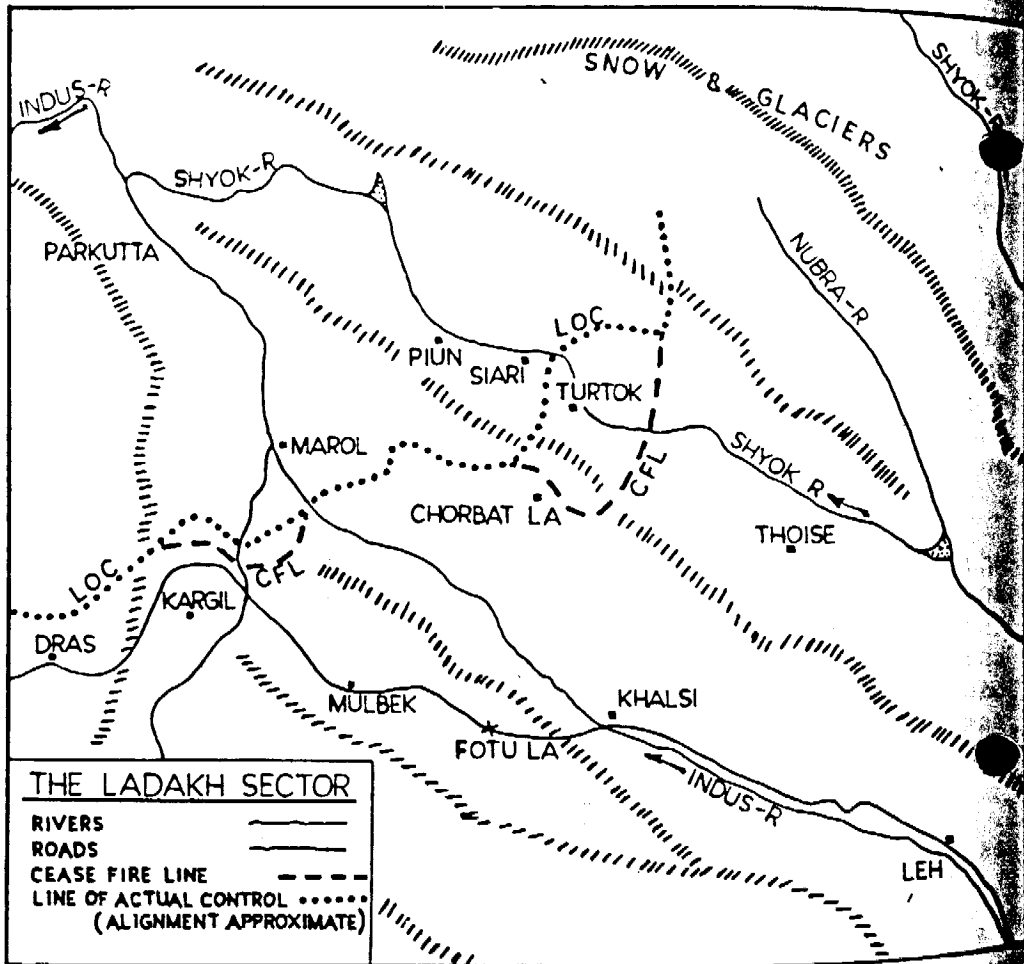
OPERATIONS IN THE PARTAPUR SECTOR

The northern-most area that saw fighting during the 1971 War was the Shyok valley, known generally as the Partapur Sector. It fell under the operational responsibility of Maj Gen S.P. Malhotra, GOC 3 Inf Div and Lt Gen Sartaj Singh, GOC 15 Corps.

The Shyok Valley, running south-east to north-west was long and narrow with steep gradients on the flanks. To the north lay the Karakoram range with peaks going higher than 8,000 metres and few passes. The fertile Nubra valley coming from the giant Siachen glacier of the Karakoram range joined the Shyok valley near the village of Partapur. To the east and the north east lay the Chinese occupied area of Aksai Chin. The ancient caravan route from Leh to Yarkand in China skirted the Aksai Chin area and crossed the fabled Karakoram Pass to enter Sinkiang. Arising from near the Karakoram Pass the Shyok river flowed on from Partapur through Thoise and Turtok to its junction with the Indus, beyond which lay the major Pakistan base of Skardu. To the south, the Shyok valley was separated from the Indus valley by the Ladakh range, and the Khardungla, much higher than the highest peak in Europe, was the main route from Leh into the Shyok Valley.

The climate on this roof of the world is very dry and very cold, and the air rarefied. There is very little oxygen for the troops to undertake major exertion. The temperature at the heights where the Indian troops clashed with the Pakistanis in December was as low as minus 25°C. The terrain was one of the most difficult in the world. The land was broken and rugged, and cut by deep, narrow gorges and ravines. On either side of the valley were steep, rocky mountainous features ranging in height from about 5,500 to 7,000 metres, making it impossible to undertake wide outflanking moves. Rainfall was minimal, and the vegetation confined to the river banks in summer.

The Partapur Sector was connected with Leh by a steep and indifferent pony track across the Khardungla. The Partapur garrison was maintained by airlift upto Thoise, where a fair weather airfield existed. Thoise was linked with the Cease Fire Line



by jeep and pony tracks. The L of C from Thoise long, there was lack of road communications and roads, such as they were, were little more than tracks. Hence, logistic maintenance of forward troops had to be by animal transport and on manpack basis and at places by rafts(14). The position of Pakistan was no different. "Its forward posts close to the cease fire line near Biegdangdo were connected with the military base at Skardu by about 135 km of indifferent jeepable road up to Turtok and from there by foot or animal transport(15). Thus on either side the communications were primitive, lengthy and hazardous and inhibited a major thrust by either Pakistan or India.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the Shyok valley was militarily important to India as its loss would enable China and Pakistan to link up through the Karakoram Pass, and Leh would be gravely threatened. Small Indian patrols were, therefore, being sent regularly over the glacier to check any Aksai Chin type moves by Pakistan. Pakistan, on its part, had been sending parties to probe the area and, if possible, to hold the high points.

The whole of the Partapur Sector was allotted a total of five companies of the Ladakh Scouts and one support company. Two of these were deployed against the Chinese in the east. Only three companies, and two sections each of 81 mm mortars and MMGs, were available for offensive action against the Pakistanis(16). To relieve the regular troops from static guard duties and to hold the firm bases, an irregular force - named Nubra guards - consisting of approximately 500 local men, was raised. These men were given training in handling of rifles for a period of 15 days only(17), and were organised in four companies. Used to the thin air and the intense cold since birth, and intimately familiar with the hills, they proved invaluable as para-military troops.

The Indian commanders decided to seize the initiative in this area, and so an operation to capture Chalunka and advance to Turtok was planned. Chalunka and Turtok were fairly big villages. Pak strength at the time was estimated at approximately three companies of the Karakoram Scouts and support elements distributed over the area. The defenders had 2-3 companies at Chalunka and one at Piun(18). Later some troops were inducted from the Gilgit Scouts(19). The recruitment for the Karakoram Scouts was confined to Baltis and Gilgitis. Most of the personnel were illiterate. Their training was poor and even the JCO could not read maps(20).

The operation started with the capture of Pt. 18402 overlooking the valley early in the morning of 8 December. The Pakistani troops defending Pt. 18402 put up a fight, but soon withdrew after four of them were killed. A firm base was then established in the area of Pt. 18402, and on the night 8/9 December the Old Post was captured after some fighting.

At 0800 hrs on 8 December, the defenders had withdrawn from Tebenala also, (south of the river) and did not offer opposition again until Chalunka was reached(21):

Then began the second phase. The objective was the Chalunka complex of defences. The assault was commenced at 2200 hrs on 9 December 1971 by G and K Companies of the Ladakh Scouts and two platoons of the Nubra Guards under command of Maj C. Rinchen, MVC, S:M(22). Stiff resistance was offered by the Karakoram Scouts who had deployed about a company supported by 3" mortars and MMGs. After an exchange of firing throughout the night, the Indian troops charged the enemy's bunkers and assaulted the MMG nest. The post was overrun by the attackers at 0700 hrs on 10 December(23), and the Karakoram Scouts fled. The Pakistani casualties were 14 dead and 2 JCOs, and 6 ORs made prisoners, while there were no casualties on the Indian side(24). The prisoners revealed that their leaders never expected an Indian attack on this axis, and when they were surprised by the Indians, they felt completely demoralised and started vacating post after post without offering much resistance.

A two-pronged attack was next made to capture two small positions, named OP 1 and CP. The defenders could not withstand the mortar fire, and the outflanking moves of the Indian troops demoralized them completely. They surrendered OP 1 at 1715 hrs on 10 December as their routes of withdrawal had been cut off. At the same time, CP position was occupied as it had been abandoned by the demoralized defenders without a fight(25):

The Indian troops had by then fought for a number of days and nights in extremely cold climate and difficult terrain, and at heights at which, few other troops had ever fought. They halted for a short time to reorganise and commenced the advance to Turtok along both the banks of the Shyok river at 0930 hrs on 11 December. The Pakistani platoon at Turtok was contacted at 1630 hrs the same day. Although the defending troops had mortar support and were in prepared positions, they could not resist long, and Turtok fell at 0430 hrs on 14 December 1971 without any casualty on either side(26). Troops of Gilgit

Scouts who were inducted into the area abandoned their trenches and fled(27). The Indian troops moved forward of Turtok under the leadership of Maj Rinchen and captured Tyakshi NJ 7924 and Puchtang NJ 7726 on 16 December and Thang NJ 7832 on 17 December without much opposition from the enemy(28).

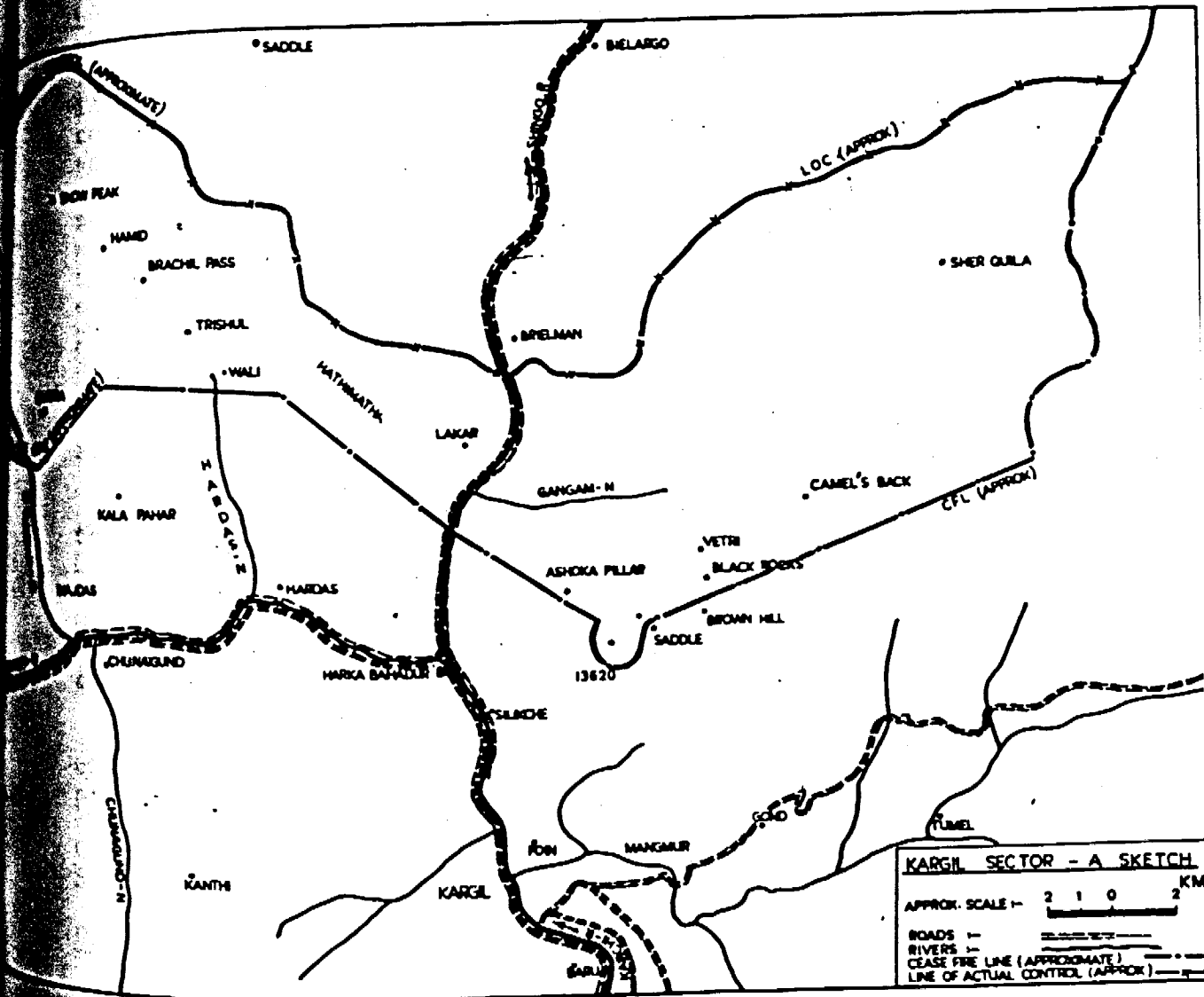
The offensive operations undertaken in the Partapur Sector were distinguished by the tactical skill and gallantry of Indian troops who fought the Pakistani troops in some of the most difficult terrain, and under conditions of extreme cold. They operated at heights between 4,880 and 5,500 metres, and captured a platoon locality at a height of 5609 metres - perhaps the highest picquet ever captured in the history of warfare. It was amazing that only three companies of Ladakh Scouts supported by four coys of irregulars (the Nubra Guards) with only 15 days of military training, worsted approximately three companies of the enemy and dislodged them from well-entrenched defences which they had time to develop over a period of 23 years (since 1948)(29).

The operation took place during hours of darkness when it was still colder(30). The troops spent several nights in the open and in spite of fatigue and prolonged exposure to cold, fought and continued their advance from 7 December till the declaration of cease fire on 17 December when they captured about 804 sq km of POK, comprising five villages with a population of about 1,400 Muslims who joyously welcomed the Indian troops and gave full cooperation. All this was achieved at the cost of only 3 wounded by enemy action, whereas 45 casualties were suffered due to frostbite. The Pakistani casualties were 19 killed and 36 captured.

While the Indian performance in this Sector was extremely creditable, it is strange that Turtok defences were contacted at 1630 hrs on 11 December, and the place could be occupied only some 60 hrs later, and neither the attackers nor the defenders suffered a single casualty in the fight. If the Indian advance had started on 4 December instead of 8 December and if Turtok had not held up the advance for almost three days, perhaps Piun also could have been taken, opening the much shorter route from Kargil base to the Shyok front over the Chorbat La.

OPERATIONS - IN - THE - KARGIL - SECTOR

Kargil lies on the Srinagar-Leh road. The sector was bounded by the Deosai Mountains in the north-west, Ladakh Range in the north-east, Zaskar Range in the south and the Great Himalaya Range in the



KARGIL SECTOR - A SKETCH

APPROX. SCALE - 2 1 0 2 KM

ROADS - ————

RIVERS - ~~~~~

CEASE FIRE LINE (APPROXIMATE) - - - - -

LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL (APPROX) - - - - -

South-west, and covered an area of approximately 6,720 km. It extended from Balti in the north to Zaskar in the south and from Zojila in the west to Fotula in the east. Dras, Shingo, Indus and Suru are the major rivers of the region. The ground of the region is rugged and cut by deep and narrow gorges and ravines.(32)

The POK area opposite Kargil Sector was served by a jeepable road from Gilgit via Skardu to Gangam. But the tenuous road communication in the sector limited Pakistan's capability to induct regular troops in the area, especially in the winter(33). The Pak commanders had, however, taken adequate defensive measures by laying minefields on all likely approaches and developed fortifications around the picquets mostly located at heights ranging from 3960 to 4880 metres(34). Their strength in the sector was 10 coys comprising about two wings of Karakoram Scouts and one of Northern Scouts(35). What worried the Indian planners most was the potential threat to the Srinagar-Leh highway near Kargil, as the Pak posts between Zojila and Haniskot overlooked the highway which was the lifeline of the Indian troops in the area.

The 121 (I) Inf Bde Gp which was responsible for the defence of the sector, had three battalions - 7 Guards, 18 Punjab and 2/11 GR. In addition, three more battalions - 5/3 GR stationed at Leh, 9 J and K Militia at Battalion HQ and 13 J and K Militia at Dras - were available in the area to support any action(36).

The main tasks allotted to the force were to ensure the security of the Srinagar-Leh Road and prevent enemy infiltration astride the road by capturing the overlooking hills and the area up to Olthingthang near the confluence of the Indus and Suru/Shingo rivers(37).

Operations

The task was to be carried out in eight phases, which, however, did not go according to plan. The initial operations visualized the capture of the Brachil Pass by the 18 Punjab and of Camels Back, Post 12 and Black Rocks by 2/11 GR(38).

The Brachil Pass position, situated at a height of 4260 metres, was a vast complex extending over 1,000 metres and comprising the left shoulder, the Pass itself and the Pakistani post Bahar on the right shoulder. The complex was being defended by about a company(39). The troops of 18 Punjab advanced

undetected by the enemy and attacked the post at 0530 hrs on 7 December. The defenders opened up with MGs and other automatic weapons. The Punjabis showed indomitable courage and fought uphill from bunker to bunker in the face of heavy small arms fire and were able to capture the left shoulder of the Pass at 1000 hrs on 7 December, after almost five hours of hand-to-hand and bunker-to-bunker fighting(40). The Pak troops now concentrated efforts on defending the Bahar post on the right shoulder, but could not stand up to the relentless assault of the Indian force. By 1600 hrs on 7 December, the whole complex was in the Indian hands(41).

The Pakistani Post 12 (No 185859) located east of the Shingo river at a height of approximately 4040 metres was strongly fortified, and was held by two platoons and a section of MMGs. On the night of 6 December, 2/11 GR took a difficult approach to the post and, not deterred by small arms and LMG fire, closed in with the enemy. After fierce hand-to-hand fighting the Battalion captured the post at 0845 hrs on 7 December, followed by the reduction of Black Rocks and Post 28 (Hamid), the same day(42).

Though the Brachil Pass was captured, the Pak troops still interfered with the movement of the Indian troops on the spurs and the pass. As the capture of the Pass had been scheduled to be completed by 0200 hrs on 7 December but was, in fact, accomplished only by 1600 hrs that day, the delay had enabled the defenders to set up additional posts, especially west of the Shingo river, and also to hinder the launching of the second phase of the operations by the 7 Guards, who were to pass through the Pass and advance towards Olthingthang(43).

To facilitate its movement the 7 Guards captured Post 29 (Ghora), which was located on the spur leading to Karkit Nala from the Hamid post, at 1630 hrs on 7 December. An ad hoc platoon of the 7 Guards and the 18 Punjab evicted the Pakistanis the same day from posts 30, 31 and 32(44). The next day, the Guards captured the Trishul post located at a height of about 3280 metres and dominating the entire area in the Brachil Pass complex(45). They then tried to cut off the Pak rear by capturing Pt. 3985, but could secure it only after a bitter fighting on the night of 10 December(46). In order to consolidate the position west of river Shingo, two posts, Wali and Malik located east of Trishul on ridge connecting it with Hathimatha, were captured by a company of 18 Punjab on 14 and 15 December respectively, after fierce fighting(47).

Attention was now devoted to the posts located on the east of the Shingo river. The post at Pt. 13,620 was tactically vital and, therefore, most coveted. It was playing havoc with the Indian troops and stores in the plateau area since the start of the hostilities(48). From this post, termed as "The Watch Tower of the Sector", the troops commanded a clear view of the Kargil base(49). On the eastern side of the Shingo river, Post 13 (Laila) covered the approach to Pt. 13,620 from the north and joined it with Black Rocks. This post was captured by 0215 hrs on 9 December as a prelude to the capture of the important post of Pt. 13,620 held by a Pak coy(50). The continuous shelling of the post by the Indian artillery and infantry mortars, four air strikes (two on 7 and two on 8 December) and the cutting off of the water supply to the post, all combined to demoralise its garrison. The 2/11 GR assaulted the post on the afternoon of 9 December but found it already vacated(51).

All this fighting in the past three days had enabled the Indian forces to establish themselves up on the west and east of the Shingo river. However, the main objective of marching to Olthingthang had not yet been achieved. It was, therefore, decided to open a new attack along the west bank of the Shingo, so that Indian troops could advance to Bielargo, located on the Gangam-Olthingthang-Skardu road. It was appreciated that once Bielargo was in Indian hands, it would not only cut off the L of C available to the Pak troops but also help in the reduction of their posts to the east of Brachil Pass(52). However, before a new front could be opened, it was considered expedient to eliminate the Pak post called Ashoka Pillar (NO 170855) which Pakistan had occupied to dominate the Indian 13 and 14 posts and the road Leh-Kargil-Chunagund. The 2/11 GR carried out the task on 9 December(53). It was also found necessary to clear the hostile positions astride the bank of the Shingo river. The 5/3 GR cleared Posts 16, 17 and 18 on the eastern bank by 1800 hrs on 11 December. On the western bank, extensive minefields and wire obstacles had been laid in front of Posts 19, 20, Lakar and 43. While the 5/3 Gr captured Posts 19, 20 and Lakar on the night of 12 December, a coy of the 18 Punjab succeeded in capturing Post 43 on 13 December(54). The Indian troops extended their hold to the east of the Shingo river by the capture of Sherquila by 9 J and K Militia on 15 December(55). On the left of that river, some Pak posts, though encircled by the Indian troops, still held out in the Hathimatha complex (Posts 21, 22, 23 and 24). When the Punjabis failed to capture the complex by attack, a siege was laid to deny water to the defenders.

Finally, a company of 5/3 GR attacked the complex from the rear and captured it on 17 December(56):

This cleared all the hurdles to the march to Bielargo. This, however, could not come off due to the Cease Fire. By the end of the operations, the Indian forces had captured 36 out of 80 Pak posts in an area of approximately 110 sq km in this sector. The enemy line of defence had been shattered, and the Brigade was poised for an offensive up to Olthingthang(57):

During the operations the Pak troops suffered 114 killed and 1 JCO and 31 ORs made prisoners of war. The Indian casualties were 55 killed, 195 wounded and 28 missing(58):

OPERATIONS - IN - THE - KASHMIR - VALLEY

The 19 Inf Div under Maj Gen E. D'Souza, was deployed to defend the Kashmir and Guraiz Valleys. Its area of responsibility extended from Chorpanjal in the south to Karobal Gali in the north and from Zojila in the east to Bugina Bulge in the west. The divisional boundary ran along approximately 338 km of the Cease Fire Line, and the troops were spread out over a number of widely dispersed picquets and posts. The difficult terrain and climate imposed severe restrictions on logistics.

Deployments and Plans

Pakistan's Northern Scouts manned the areas of Minimarg, Kel and Bor; their artillery consisted of detachments of 3.7" howitzers. On the Tangdhar Sector, Pakistan had deployed three battalions, including one battalion and 2 coys at Bugina Bulge, and four companies of Tochi Scouts, two of Dafal Mujahids and one regular company in the Lipa Valley, with four 105 mm batteries and one medium battery. The vital Uri Sector was held by seven regular battalions of the Pak Army and five 105 mm batteries and 2 medium batteries.

The Pakistani posts were well sited and strongly fortified. Fire by 57 mm and 3.5 rocket launchers and recoilless guns had little effect on the bunkers, which were generally inter-linked with communication trenches, making it easy to move the troops and weapons from one bunker to another. These strong structures could be destroyed only by direct hits by mountain guns or precision shooting by medium artillery.

The 19 Inf Div of the Indian Army divided the

whole of its area of responsibility into three sectors - the Northern Sector, the Tangdhar Sector and Uri Sector.

The Northern Sector or the BSF Sector, covered the area Karobal Gali to Bugina Bulge. There was no road communication worth the name in this area, which was sparsely populated. The only threat to the area was from the infiltrators. With the onset of winter, even this threat was minimised because snow closed the passes through which lay the infiltration routes. This Sector was looked after by four battalions of BSF and a battalion of 1 J and K Militia.

The Tangdhar Sector extended from the Bugina Bulge to Tutmari Gali. Lipa Valley, which lies to the south of Tangdhar and north of river Jhelum, formed part of this area. This Sector was held by the 104 Inf Bde with four battalions - (9 Sikh, 8 Raj Rif, 6 Raj Rif and 3 Bihar) and about one BSF battalion.

The third Sector, designated the Uri Sector, covered the area Tutmari Gali to Chorpanjal. The 161 Inf Bde with six infantry battalions (8 Sikh, 7 Sikh LI, 5 Mahar, 4 Raj Rif, 3 Maratha LI and 2 Assam) was responsible for the defence of this Sector.

The 268 Inf Bde with three infantry battalions (12 Grenadiers, 4 Mahar and 2 Guards) was kept as Divisional reserve(59).

The Division took a number of steps to prevent infiltration by aggressive patrolling of gullies and routes and keeping them under surveillance. As the major threat of infiltration was appreciated in the Gulmarg-Kaunrauli area, the Kilo Gulf Sector was established under the command of Brig A.J. Texeira with HQ at Paro (NM 245079). The counter-infiltration measures taken by the formation were effective and successful.

Three operations which had been planned before the outbreak of hostilities and were intended to improve the defensive capability of the Division were as follows(60) :-

- i) Op Ghazab - capture of Ghasla Top and Ring Contour (NL 851382 to NL 862383);
- ii) Op Hasti - capture of Jhandi Mali (NL 9916).
- iii) Op Shikar - capture of Jayshri Pt. 10944(NM 2003) complex.

It was, however, stipulated by the higher

authorities that since the overall stance of the Western Sector was a defensive one, the preplanned operations would not be launched without their prior approval(61). Consequently, on the night of 3 December, when the hostilities commenced, only one operation - Op Ghazab - could be mounted with complete surprise and was, therefore, successful. The other two could not be launched until a day later, causing loss of surprise and providing time to the enemy to reinforce his positions. Predictably, they ended in failure.

The Northern, or the BSF Sector did not witness any major offensive action. However, nine Pak posts were occupied, as a result of which 177 sq km of POK area was captured(62).

The Tangdhar Sector and Lipa Valley

In the Tangdhar Sector, both India and Pakistan tried to outmanoeuvre each other. It was here that one of the preplanned operations, named OP Ghazab, was launched by Indian troops on the night of 3 December, when Ghasla Top was attacked. The Tochi Scouts and Dafai Mujahids manning the defences initially resisted the attack, but were forced to withdraw from the location. The attack for the capture of Ring Contour was mounted through Ghasla Top(63). Due to intense automatic fire from LMGs, the Indian commander had to manoeuvre the commando platoon to assault the post from the rear. This succeeded and the defenders vacated the post at 0800 hrs on 4 December. They left behind 20 dead, and 1 JCO and 14 ORs were taken prisoner. The Indian casualties were 8 ORs killed.

The success in capturing Ghasla Top and Ring Contour on the night 3/4 December was followed up by 'Op Tanaji', which initially envisaged a sortie across Tutmari Gali to clear up the area upto Kaiyan(NL 9834)(64). Since, however, the enemy defences in the area were strongly held, the operation was enlarged to include clearance of the Lipa Valley from the east up to Katha Kazinag Nala, and capture of the Pak positions of Shishaledi (NL 875371), Wanjal(NL 885381) and Jamua(NL 923384) in Phase I, and of Brithwali Gali(NL 887287) in Phase II(65).

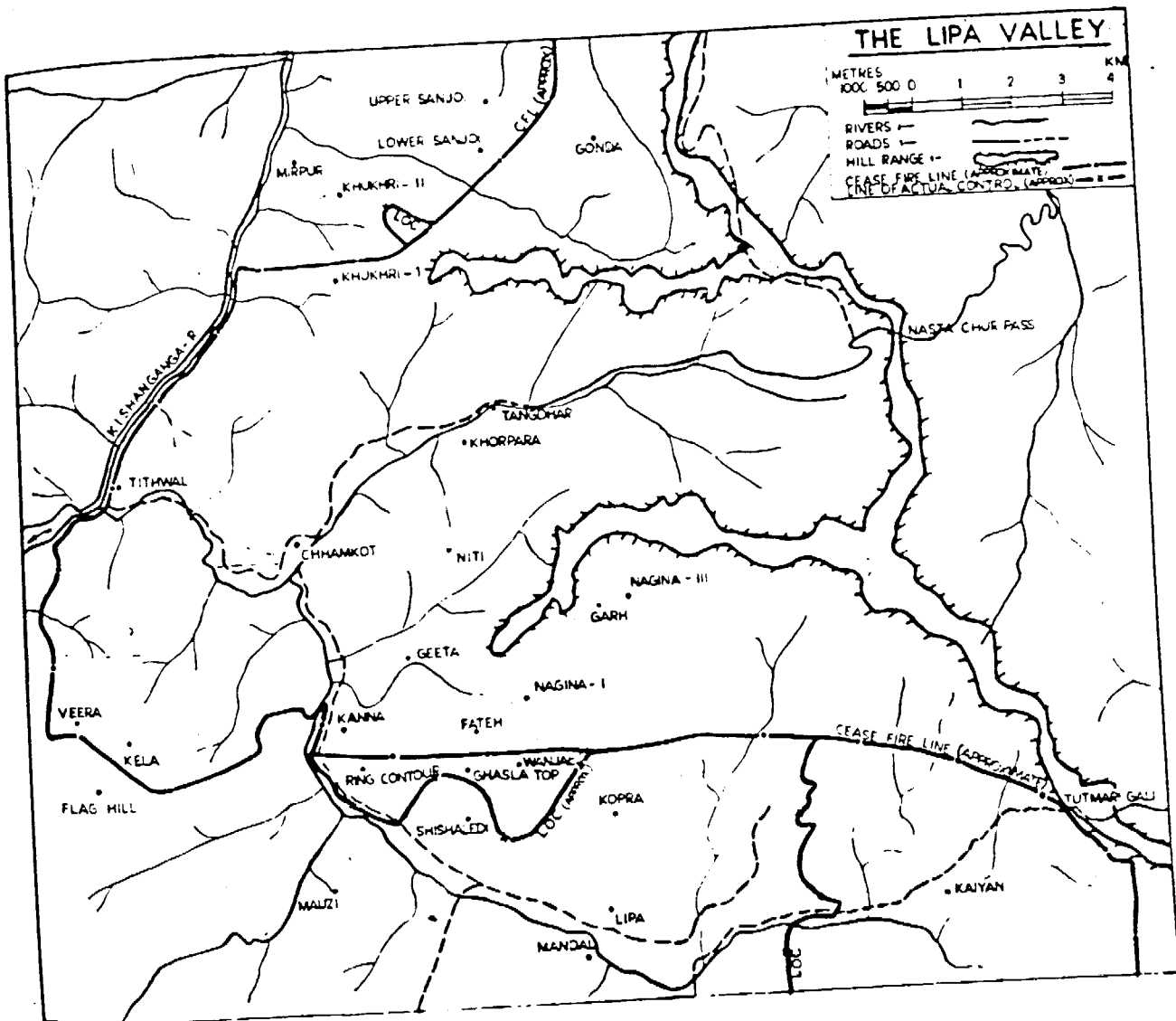
The 104 Inf Bde was entrusted the following tasks in the Lipa Valley :-

- i) Lipa Valley West - to capture suitable spurs proceeding southwards from Sari Ridge with the aim of neutralizing enemy threat into the Tangdhar Valley from Sudpura Gap(NL 8439).

THE LIPA VALLEY

METRES
1000 500 0 1 2 3 4
KM

RIVERS ———
ROADS ———
HILL RANGE ———
CEASE FIRE LINE (APPROXIMATE) - - - - -
LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL (APPROXIMATE) - . - . -



ii) Lipa-Valley-East - to seal all routes of infiltration across the Tutmari Gali into the Srinagar Valley by debouching from that Gali into the Lipa Valley and occupying important heights.

Operations across the Tutmari Gali were not expected by the Pakistanis in view of the imminence of winter and the difficult terrain. Two coys of the 9 Sikh launched a surprise attack on Thanda Pani and Kaiyan from the Tutmari Gali and captured them on the night on 5 December, and another post further west(66) the next day. Apart from its own mortars, the Battalion had a battery of 4.2" mortars also.

On 7 December, the 9 Sikh was joined by its two remaining coys. On the nights of 9, 10, 13 and 14 December, the Battalion captured some more positions(67). The Pakistanis counter-attacked one of the Picquets (9718) twice on 15 December, but were beaten back, mainly due to the precision shooting of the medium guns. That day the battalion captured Seranwali Baihk, which had been reported to be strongly held by the enemy. As 3 Maratha LI had secured Pathri(NL 9732) after a sharp engagement by 2200 hrs on 17 December, 9 Sikh were poised to secure the southern flank. But the Cease Fire intervened, and the task of clearing the Lipa Valley had to stop short at this point(68).

The second part of Phase I of 'Op Tanaji' had visualized the capture of the Pak posts of Shishaledi, Wanjal and Jamua. On the night of 8 December, two companies of the 8 Raj Rif, supported by two commando platoons, assaulted Shishaledi from a steep approach on the west. The attack was, however, foredoomed to failure as the Pak strength had not been correctly assessed. Besides, the defenders displayed great fire discipline and withheld fire until the Indian troops were only about 69 metres from their defence perimeter. Then, before the Indian troops could close in for the 'kill', the defenders lit up the area and opened up with intense small arms fire(69). The Rajputs used 3.5" rocket launchers and two 57 mm recoilless guns in vain to knock out the bunkers. The attack was halted on the Pak side by the obstacle wire. Even the two reserve coys which were launched from the north could not retrieve the situation(70). The Rajputs fought gallantly throughout the night of 8 December, but had to call off the attack at 1000 hrs the next day. Although the Pak casualties were heavy, the Indian casualties were also grim and totalled 2 JCOs and 35 ORs killed, 2 Officers, 2 JCOs and 65 ORs wounded, and one Officer and 3 ORs missing(71).

The Wanjal Complex, consisting of four different localities, was held by a coy of the 16 POK and Pl of the Tochi Scouts. The task of reducing the complex was entrusted to 3 Bihar, who were supported by three commando platoons(72). Precision shooting by two medium guns and direct fire by mountain guns destroyed a number of Pak bunkers on 14 December(73). The 3 Bihar launched the attack on that night and pressed it home with determination. They encountered a minefield, but the engineers breached lanes through it(74). After a hand-to-hand fight lasting about half an hour, the Biharis captured the objective, and by 0430 hrs on 15 December, the whole of the Wanjal Complex was in Indian hands. The Pak troops counter-attacked twice during the day, but were repulsed by artillery and infantry mortar fire(75).

The rest of Phase I of 'Op Tanaji', which was envisaged to be completed by 20 December by the capture of Ziarat, Shishaledi and Jamua, had to be suspended due to enforcement of the Cease Fire from 2000 hrs on 17 December. For the same reason, Phase II of the operations, which contemplated the capture of Brithwali Gali by 22 December, was also given up(76).

The 9 Sikh were relieved from the area of Tutmari Gali on 14 December. The Battalion then cleared the heights dominating Naukot, which were strongly held. The defenders fought hard throughout the night of 15 December and made a strong but futile counter-attack the next morning(77). Soon after came the Cease Fire.

The Uri Sector

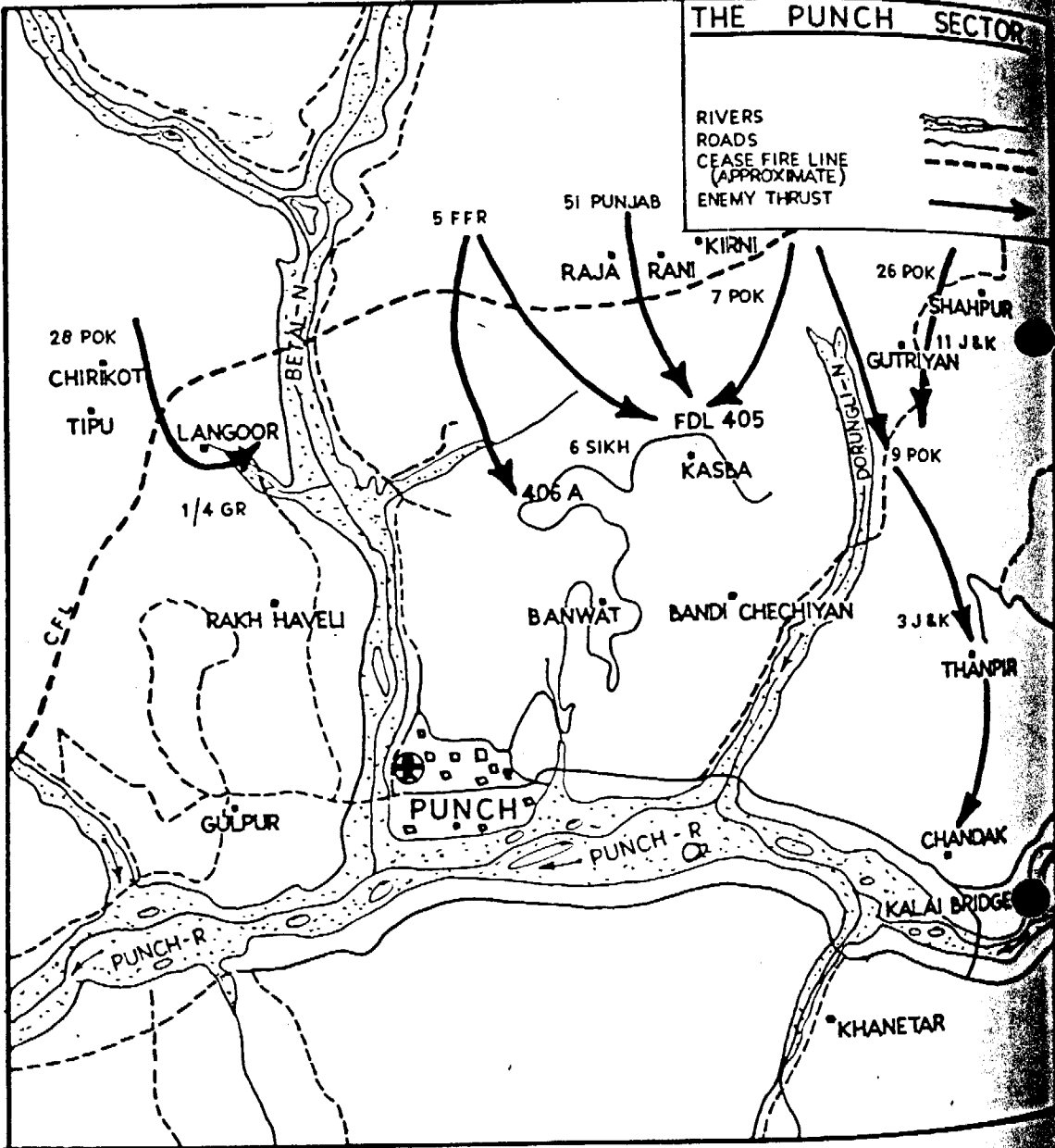
In the Uri Sector, 161 Inf Bde was deployed astride the main road and the Jhelum river. The Brigade initiated two well-planned offensive operations - 'Op Hasti' and 'Op Shikar'(78). But, as already stated, these operations could be launched only on the night of 4 December, depriving the assaulting Indian troops of the element of surprise and resulting in their failure.

For the execution of 'Op Hasti', 8 Sikh posed a threat to Jhandi Mali from the rear in the evening of 4 December. The attacking troops were slow in their march. Their enemy in the meantime, reinforced the post, and the Battalion Commander was forced to pull back the troops(79).

'Op Shikar', which was launched by 7 Sikh LI on the night of 4 December to capture the Pak post Jayshri (Pt. 10944), also failed(80). This post

THE PUNCH SECTOR

RIVERS
ROADS
CEASE FIRE LINE
(APPROXIMATE)
ENEMY THRUST



consisted of three mutually supporting defensive locations. The original plan was to attack the entire complex simultaneously. However, the Company Commander changed the original plan and decided to attack each location in turn. Unfortunately, the fire plan was not modified accordingly. As a result, the defenders were able to launch a counter-attack from the third location and to throw back the Sikhs.

Conclusion

The operations of the 19 Inf Div were thus a mixed bag of success and failures. Of the three planned operations, only one succeeded, resulting in the capture of Ghasla Top and Ring Contour. In the East Lipa Valley also the Division had some easy successes due to relative unpreparedness of the Pak troops. The discomfiture of Shishaledi was offset by the gains in the Wanjal Complex. In the Uri Sector, two planned offensive operations failed due to loss of surprise and inept execution.

However, as 19 Inf Div was basically deployed for the holding role, it could plan only a few limited offensive tasks. They, in certain places, were aimed at providing cushion to important tactical features; in other places, it appears that the object was just to capture more territory which, it was visualised (consequent to the precedent set in 1965), would be utilised as bargaining counter during post war negotiations. The offensive tasks therefore did not fully take into account the indispensable administrative factors. As a result, the requirements of troops to hold the areas captured were not matched by the administrative resources. Subsequent build up was hampered by the tenuous axis of maintenance passing through Tutmari Gali a 11,000 ft (3,830 metres) high snow-bound and avalanche prone bottleneck.

The above defect, coupled with the unfortunate and perhaps the untimely relief of 9 Sikh by another battalion not fully familiar with the areas to be kept under surveillance, resulted in Pakistani encroachments and reinforcements, which went undetected till March 1972. Much of the embarrassment and agony of May 1972 could, perhaps have been averted if sufficient forethought had gone into administrative planning and the existence of an inconvenient enemy 'pocket' (81) in Kaiyan Bowl had not been ignored.

THE OPERATIONS IN THE PUNCH SECTOR

Topography

Pakistan had tried hard, but in vain, to capture

Punch in the 1947 and 1965 conflicts. It made a third bid in 1971. Capture of Punch would bring her political prestige. Strategically, it promised to Pakistan access to the gullies over the Pir Panjal Range which, in turn, would make infiltration easier into the Kashmir Valley. It would also serve to enlarge the Haji Pir Bulge, already occupied by Pakistan.

Punch (about 1000 metres or 3350 feet above sea level), a district Headquarters, lies in the south-western corner of the J and K State. It is about 55 km (34 miles) from Uri via Kahuta (about 13 km from Punch) and 96 km (60 miles) from Srinagar via Shopyan. Punch is surrounded on all sides by high hills.

The Haji Pir salient, held by Pakistan, separates Punch from Uri. Pakistan had excellent lateral roads in the area, as the terrain on its side was easier, sloping down to the plains. Pakistan could therefore, concentrate at will, moving troops along the front.

The area was generally hilly and forested, rising to the Pir Panj rising to the Pir Panjal Range. While the Punch town and the valley were about 1000 meters above sea level, the mountain ridges were about 1800 metres high, and became still higher nearer the range. Most of the nalas drained into the Punch river.

The Cease Fire Line in this Sector ran from south-west (the Punch river) to north-east (Betar Nala). The Punch river flowed out from India to Pakistan across the CFL, while the Betar Nala came in from the Pakistan-occupied area across the CFL. Besides these two main water-courses, there were two other nalas - Tatan-Di-Rangar and Chirikot - both of which originated in Pakistan held territory across the CFL and flowed into Indian territory. These stony nalas had little water most of the year. All these water-courses provided excellent infiltration routes to the Pakistanis.

The Defended Localities

From 1947 onward, the Punch area was defended by HQ 93 Inf Bde. The only link of the Brigade with its Division (the 25 Inf Div) was through the Kalai Bridge on the Punch river. The Brigade had divided the Punch area into three parts before the Indo-Pak conflict of 1971:-

- i) Gulpur Sector, i.e. area to the west of Betal Nala.

- ii) Banwat Sector, i.e. area to the east of Betal Nala.
- iii) Doda Sector, i.e. area to the east of Dorungli Nala.

In its overall plan, the Brigade had assigned the responsibility for the defence of the Gulpur area to 1/4 GR, of Banwat area to 6 Sikhs and 8 Jats, and of Doda area to 11 J and K Militia. Subsequently 13 Mahar from 33 Inf Bde had also been brought into the Punch Sector in the middle of November 1971.

Pakistan had started preparing for an offensive in the Punch Sector in November 1971. Her troops had been seen building up in area Kahuta (NR 1685) by the Indian forward defended localities, which observed vehicular movement in hundreds. The Pakistanis were constructing new tracks and repairing old ones, and a lot of digging on picquets was seen, to strengthen the defences(82). The movement of armed troops and loaded mules was also seen, and it could be easily presumed that Pakistan was bringing in extra troops and stocking defence stores and extra ammunition.

On the outbreak of war on 3 December 1971, Pakistan made an all-out effort in all the Brigade defended sectors to effect a break-through. The Indians were, however, well prepared. They had increased the defence potential of their picquets along the Cease Fire Line by laying mines, improving field fortifications, and positioning reserves.

The Gulpur Sector

The Gulpur defended area, bounded by the Betal Nala on the east and the Punch river on the south, was in the form of a triangle. The Cease Fire Line formed its base and the junction of the Betal Nala and the Punch river its apex.

The area comprised a series of spurs and ridges, starting from certain high points in the Pak-held territory across the Cease Fire Line and gradually sloping down to the Punch river and the Betal Nala on the Indian side(83). On this side, Punch town was only about 8 km away from the CFL as the crow flies. So, this defended area was important to the defence of Punch town in many ways. First, it denied physical domination of Punch town from the north-west. Secondly, it covered the infiltration routes along the beds of the Punch river, Betal Nala and Tatan-di-Rangar Nala and Chirikot Nala. Thirdly, it dominated the old Kahuta-Punch road, and denied its use to Pakistan for movement of troops towards Punch town.

The Pak threat to Gulpur was estimated at a brigade strength supported by adequate artillery. It was also apprehended that the enemy might bring tanks up the Punch river. Adequate precautions were taken to guard against this possibility also. The existing anti-tank minefield was extended up to the water line, and a number of recoilless gun and rocket launcher teams were created to act as tank hunting parties(84).

The 1/4 GR was responsible for the defence of the Gulpur defended area - which included localities 412A (Langoor), 412 (Agni), 413 (Durga), 415 (Lata, Bhim, Hathi), 417 (Sarla, Sumi, Baaz), and 418 (Ujagar) - as part of 93 Inf Bde Sector. Some new defended localities which were prepared and occupied by the outbreak of hostilities were Bump, Rakh Haveli, Veer and Niti (414).

The Pakistani Defence Sector beyond the CFL was divided into two parts by the Tatan-di-Rangar Nala. The area north of it was held by 28 POK and south of it by 5 FFR. Tipu 1, 2 and 3 and Babar 1, 2 and 3 were the strongest Pak positions near the CFL(85).

At 2000 hrs on 3 December, the Pakistan Army started heavy shelling of the area west of Betal Nala, and Punch town to the east across the Nala. By 2030 hrs the mortars of 1/4 GR had joined in the fray and started effectively engaging the Pak troops(86). Indian artillery also started pounding the Pak positions(87). The first Pak attack on Langoor position overran the listening posts, breached the minefield and penetrated inside the entrance to the locality. But the fire control of 1/4 GR was excellent, and Indian artillery wrought havoc and broke the Pak attacks by murderous fire, and drove them out(88).

Another attack launched in the early hours of 4 December was also repulsed by 0300 hrs(89). The Gurkhas claimed that Pakistan suffered about 45 casualties in the attack. In this operation, L/Nk Nar Jung Gurung was found killed with no less than 56 bayonet wounds.

After this encounter, the Pakistanis restricted activity in this Sector to intermittent shelling of the Indian positions. No serious effort was made to capture the posts. Indian artillery continued to pound the Pak positions and strong raiding parties were sent almost every night till the end of the war to keep the Pak troops under surveillance(90).

The Banwat Sector

The Banwat Sector included a hill complex which dominated Punch town. The defence of this Sector was necessary to protect the town from any assault from the east and north-east. The complex culminated at Picquet 405, which included Tund (NR 206777) and Helipad (NR 199779) and was the highest point in the complex. This Picquet and the Picquets 406 and 406A were considered grounds of tactical importance and the 6 Sikhs, were entrusted with the task of defending this area. To the south of the Sikhs was located the 8 Jat Bn. It was put under the 93 Inf Bde on 26 November so as to give depth to the defence of the 6 Sikh(91).

Pakistan had built up heavily on the other side of the CFL in this Sector also with a view to attacking Punch from the north-eastern side. Chand Tekri (NR 192799) and Munawri Tekri (NR 191808), nick-named 'Raja' and 'Rani' respectively, were the two vital Pakistani positions in the area, which was being held by the Pakistanis in brigade strength (7 POK, 5 FFR and 14 POK). On the afternoon of 3 December, the 7 POK troops deployed at 'Raja' and 'Rani' Picquets were relieved by regular troops (coy ex 51 Punjab Regt)(92).

The pattern of attack on the 6 Sikh was similar to that on the 1/4 GR. On 3 December, the Pakistanis started an intensive shelling of the Indian defended area(93). Helipad and Tund were subjected to heavy and continuous shelling with guns of medium calibre. As a result all L of C were cut off near the Brigade Signal Exchange, and radio communication was resorted to.

The 6 Sikh had anticipated the attacks because of the development of a road from Kahuta to Picquet 'Rani' and the Pak build-up in general. The 6 Sikh had also, therefore, improved their preparedness. Extra platoon defence locations outside the existing minefields had been prepared to give depth to the company defence positions. Overhead shelters had been put up on the trenches and listening posts. The mine density on all approaches to various platoon and company defence localities was three. The field engineers had constructed a road of tactical importance from Punch to the base of the brigade ground to facilitate the speedy replenishment of ammunition and evacuation of casualties.

The Pakistan Army launched a full-blooded attack on Helipad and Tund between 0300 and 0600 hrs on the night of 3/4 December, with three battalions - 7 POK,

5 FFR and 14 POK(94). There was fierce hand-to-hand fighting lasting nearly two hours. The Helipad fell to the Pak troops at 1030 hrs. The remnants of the two platoons defending it withdrew to the main defences under very heavy odds and the Pak pressure. The platoons facing Kalas and Kasba approaches held their ground(95) and took heavy toll of the Pak troops and beat back the attack(96). In view of the mounting threat to the area, two platoons of the 8 Jat were sent to reinforce it. The attackers then attempted to isolate the area at 1500 hrs by establishing a road-block between Pts. 405 and 406. But the attempt was foiled by artillery and MMG fire, inflicting heavy casualties(97).

At 1530 hrs on 4 December the Pakistanis moved a mountain battery (3.7-in howitzer) with 40 mules to area Bhai-Bhai(98), and resumed the offensive in the night of 4/5 December. They even managed to disrupt all the Indian lines of communication. The attacks were, however, beaten back again by effective shelling and air strikes(99). Though the Pakistanis remained in occupation of the Helipad, the fire from the Indian MMG and LMGs was too effective for any further advance(100). The gunners did a magnificent job in bringing down accurate fire of entire divisional artillery on the Pak concentration/assembly area, FUP (Forming up place) and all approaches to Picquet 405. The artillery available for this battle of Punch comprised two mountain batteries, one field battery, two light batteries and one medium battery(101).

Artillery shelling went on from the Pak side also and they still continued to probe the Indian defences to gain some ground at any cost. They had orders to capture Punch in the evening of 10 December as revealed by 2/Lt Golap Khan (a Bengalee Officer) of 51 Punjab Regt, who crossed over to India on 7 December. But all Pak efforts failed, and the Indian troops cleared the area north-east of Tund and also Kasba Spur(102). Pakistani losses were so heavy that they broke contact with Pt. 405 and also withdrew from Helipad at 0500 hrs on 6 December. The Helipad was reoccupied at 0900 hrs by two platoons of the 6 Sikh, "The area was found covered with a sheet of blood and considerable amount of ammunition"(103).

The attackers tried to occupy Helipad again at 2235 hrs on 7 December, and formed up with two companies each at the Helipad, Kasba and Kalas approaches. They were dispersed by heavy artillery fire(104). Another attempt, at 0200 hrs on 9 December was again driven back(105).

The 6 Sikh won one MVC, five VrCs and two Mention-in-Despatches for gallantry in the defence of

Punch(106). Pakistan lost approximately 304 men killed. The 7 POK Bn lost 174 killed, the 5 FFR lost 1 Officer, 3 JCOs and 70 ORs killed; the 51 Punjab suffered, 1 JCO and 60 ORs killed. The casualties suffered by the 14 POK are not known(107). The 6 Sikh lost 8 killed and 33 wounded(108).

As stated earlier, the 8 Jat was occupying the area to the south of the Sikhs. The area was subjected to shelling at 2003 hrs on 3 December, followed at 2115 hrs by an assault to Bandi Chechiyan from the side of the Kasba Spur. The attackers, in battalion strength, also sent a coy to the position along Dorungli Nala(109). Indian mortars and MMGs engaged and broke up the attack. The Pakistanis returned twice to attack Bandi Chechiyan, first at midnight of 3/4 December and then at 2000 hrs on 4 December(110). Both the attacks were made in battalion strength, comprising elements of 16 AK Bn, 2 FF Bn, and two Mujahid Coys(111). These attacks were repulsed by the 8 Jat, which also extended effective support to the Sikhs on 4 December during the Pak attacks on Picquet 405(112). On 6 December, one platoon of the Jats surprised and chased away the Pak troops trying to interpose between Picquets 406 and 406A(113). Thereafter, the Jats were not bothered again.

The Doda Sector

In the 93 Inf Bde defence lay-out, the 11 J and K Militia was assigned the Doda Complex to the east of Dorungli Nala. In this defended area, Gutriyan and Shahpur were two vital positions. They were held by D Coy of the 11 J and K Militia.

The Pak offensive in the Sector started with the shelling of Gutriyan and Shahpur at 1930 hrs on 3 December. Two determined attacks followed before midnight. But both were beaten back by the plucky defenders. The skill and heroism involved in these fierce little actions can be appreciated only by a detailed account. The third attack, therefore, is described below in some detail.

At 0230 hrs on 4 December the Pakistanis launched another attack, with the battle cry "Ya Ali" and "Pakistan Zindabad"(114). In spite of heavy shelling and small arms fire, some Pak troops entered into the defended locality and lobbed grenades into the Indian MMG and LMG bunkers, and wounded the gunners. The MMG received a direct hit from a rocket launcher, and the enemy succeeded in occupying one portion of the Militia post(115). The Picquet Commander organised an immediate counter-attack with

whatever strength was left, and after a hand-to-hand fight recovered the fallen area. L/Hav Jagdish Singh fired a light machine gun and at point blank range, killing all the intruders and earned for himself the Vir Chakra. Some of the attackers had infiltrated into the middle of the defended locality. They were spotted by the Company Commander who charged them with 3 ORs(116). The Pak assault leader, who was identified as Company Commander Capt Mohd. Sharif Khan, was wounded and taken prisoner alongwith 5 ORs of Pakistan's 26 AK Bn(117). The attackers left behind a large number of dead bodies, arms and equipment in the area which were recovered later(118). Thus ended the Pak initiative in this area.

The Pakistanis attacked Shahpur also with two companies at 2030 hrs on 3 December, even as they launched the attack on Gutrain(119). Three attempts were made to capture Picquet Shahpur and Shahpur OP. In one of these attacks the attackers managed to come within a few metres of the crawl trenches of the Picquet, but were repulsed. All these attacks were beaten back with heavy casualties.

A part of the Pak force penetrated through the 11 J and K Militia defended sector and attacked Thanpir at 0615 hrs on 4 December in two to three company strength with complete surprise and surrounded the Picquet(120). At this time Thanpir was held by only one platoon. After grim hand-to-hand fight, the numerous attackers managed to capture the feature at 0800 hrs(121). The Militia lost 11 killed and 10 wounded(122). The Pak troops occupied Chandak village also. The occupation of Thanpir endangered defence of Punch and the brigade defended sector from Rajauri and Mandi Valleys, and threatened the strategic Kalai Bridge which was the Brigade's life line.

A grave situation was created. As Thanpir provided close observation into the Mandi Valley and the administrative installations at Khanetar, Punch and Surankot, the reinforcement of the fighting units and the replenishment of ammunition were seriously hampered. It was, therefore, necessary that immediate counter-measures be taken to dislodge the Pak troops from Thanpir.

Hence, at 0645 hrs on 4 December the Commander 93 Inf Bde requested the Commander 33 Inf Bde to move one company forthwith to Thanpir(123). The 13 Mahar had been inducted into the Punch Sector on 25-26 November 1971(124). As part of the 93 Inf Bde the Mahars were originally meant to counter-attack Picquet 405 (held by 6 Sikh) in the event it fell to the Pak troops. But their help was not needed there and the

Sikhs defended the Picquet by themselves. So the Mahars were diverted and ordered to clear the Chadak area (125). A & D Coys of the Battalion proceeded from Sandi Chechiyan to Kalai Bridge, concentrated at Chandak, and started the assault at 1500 hrs on 4 December. Chandak Spur was cleared of the infiltrators in about two hours. The Battalion was then ordered at 0700 hrs on 5 December to capture Thanpir (126).

The operation started at 0800 hrs. The assault echelon (a Company) followed a difficult route so as to avoid enemy fire. It took the knife-edge ridge from Chandak to Thanpir. Another coy was moved from Chandak Spur to the north east. Both coys finally converged to face Thanpir from the south. A BSF coy with one BOP Officer from the 11 Fd Regt climbed up the spur and posed a threat to the Pak's eastern flank. A Para Commando Group was also made available and ordered to climb along Nagali Spur, posing a threat from the west (127).

As the Pakistanis did not expect an attack along this precipitous slope, they were completely taken by surprise. Thanpir was captured at 1800 hrs on 5 December, removing the threat to Punch from the east. The Pakistanis fled, leaving behind 20 dead, and a large number of arms and ammunition, including one recoilless gun of Chinese origin. The body of the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Nazir Ahmed Khan, CO, 26 AK Bn, was recovered alongwith the body of his Battery Commander, Major Javed (128).

With the capture of Thanpir on 5 December the threat to the Punch Sector was eliminated. Thereafter the Pak forces made no serious attack on Punch. The infiltrators who had penetrated into the whole area and posed considerable threat, were successfully flushed out.

Conclusion

Thus the 1/4 GR in the Gulpur Sector, the 6 Sikh and the 8 Jat in the Banwat Sector, and the 13 Mahar further east in the Thanpir and Chandak Sectors successfully checked the Pak advance on Punch. The Pak design of capturing Punch was indeed frustrated in the first few days of the war, though she continued to direct her artillery towards the Indian forward defended localities till the end of the war.

It is apparent from a study of the above operations that the Indian Army had clearly anticipated that Pakistan would make a serious effort to grab Punch in the event of a war. The Indian plan

was sound, well co-ordinated and well executed. Brigade had deployed the units in such a manner that no gaps were left in the defences and one could effectively support the other. The Sikhs from the Banwat Sector came to the help of the Gurkhas in the Gulpur Sector when the latter were in trouble at the Langoor Picquet; the Jats helped the Sikhs when they were in trouble at Picquet 405; and 13 Mahar were placed in readiness to take up the offensive at Picquet 405 in case the Sikhs failed to hold it. All over the Sector, the artillery gave good support to the infantry and often, by itself, broke up the attack before it really got under way. These factors helped the valour of the Indian troops to smash all attacks on Punch by a determined enemy force more than double in numbers.

THE BATTLE FOR DARUCHHIAN

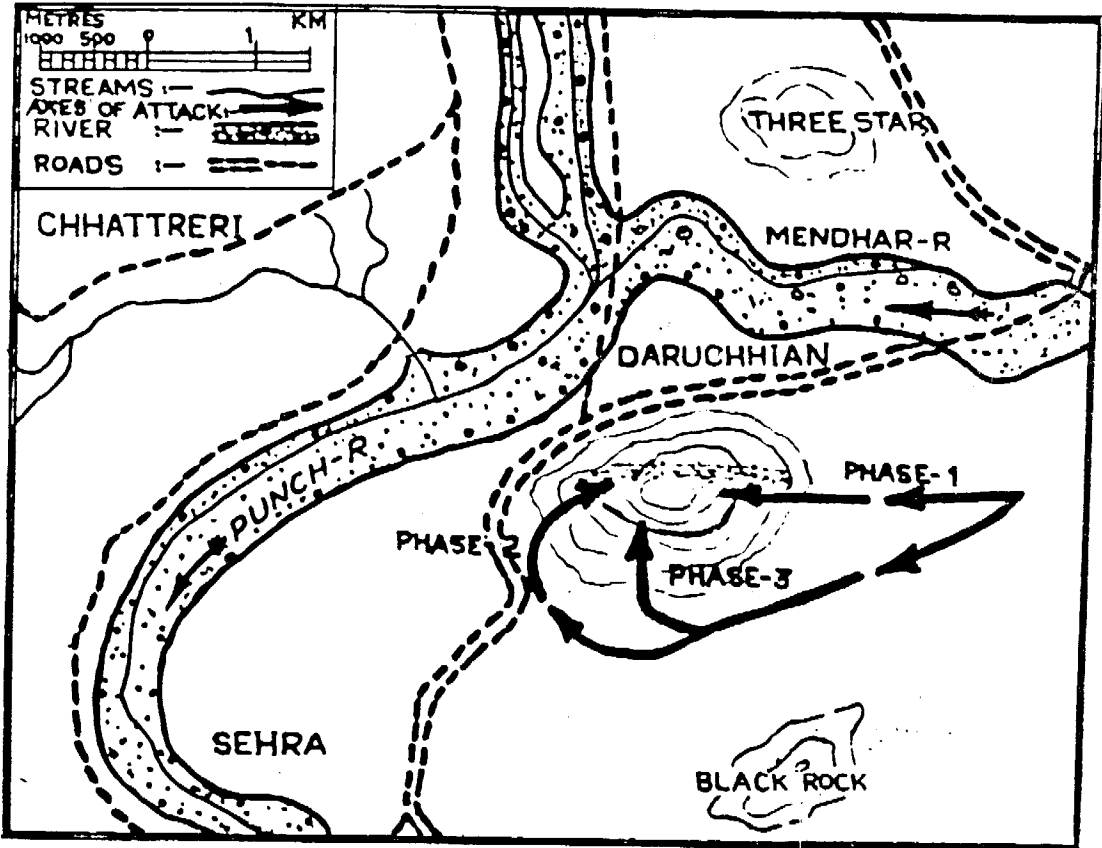
When the Pakistani offensive in the Punch area had failed, it was decided to improve the Indian defensive posture in the area by conducting local and limited actions along the Cease Fire Line. One such attack was made by 21 Punjab with a Company of the 9 Raj Rif(129), in the area opposite Madaripur on the night of 10/11 December, and Nangi-Tekri (NR-0565), Jungle Tekri (NR-0466), and Bump (NR-052649) features were captured, which served the purpose of harassing the Pak troops using the Dwarandi-Daruchhian Road. Nangi Tekri was captured after fierce hand-to-hand fighting. This was followed up with the capture of Jungle Tekri and of Jungle Bump, not without some fierce fighting.

Another such feature which it was decided to capture was Daruchhian (NR-0556), which commanded the Kotli-Balnoi Road between the Punch river and the Cease Fire Line. It was a vital Pak position, for its capture would have led to the fall of the nearby locality of Three Star as well. Hence, it was certain that the defenders would react violently to any Indian attempt to capture it(130).

Daruchhian was a cone-shaped feature, narrow at the top with precipitous projections. It was covered with forests on all sides except the south-west spur which had a thinly scattered growth of low scrub.

The Pak strength at Daruchhian was not more than two platoons. These troops were supported by the picquets nearby - Three Star (NR-0557) in the north and Black Rock (NR-059543) in the south. On every spur of Daruchhian the defenders had prepared pill boxes and bunkers which were sited behind natural rocks and were almost impervious to air strikes.

DARUCHHIAN



artillery fire(131). Five or six of these pill boxes or bunkers were manned. Automatic weapons covered all the major approaches(132). The bunkers were so close to each other that once the objective was reached, artillery fire could not be directed on to it without inflicting casualties on own troops.

The mission to capture Daruchhian (NR-0556) was assigned to the 14 Grenadiers. The 6/11 GR Commando Platoon was deployed north of Daruchhian to stop Pak re-inforcements by establishing a block between Mule Shed and Daruchhian(133). In the south a platoon of the 7 Mahar was to interpose between Black Rock (NR-059543) and point 471 and engage the Pak troops if necessary(134).

The main offensive against Daruchhian was to be executed by 14 Grenadiers in the following three phases:-

1. Phase I - B Coy to capture the OP position (Apex) by H plus 4 hrs.
A Coy less a platoon was in reserve(135).
2. Phase II - C Coy was to capture the West Spur by H plus 8 hrs. Platoon of A Coy was in reserve.
3. Phase III - D Coy was to capture the South-West Spur by H plus 10 hrs. It had in reserve the Coy of the 6/11 GR.

The troops were poised for the assault, H hour was fixed for 2335 hrs on 13 December 1971(136).

The Battle

Commencing Phase I at 2335 hrs on 13 December, B Coy of the 14 Grenadiers moved swiftly and captured the right portion of the OP position (the Apex). But the defenders brought down heavy artillery and machine-gun fire from very strong bunkers, taking a heavy toll of the Company. The Company did not have bunker destruction parties which could crawl close to them and destroy them. The defenders had mined the approaches and dug up small fire trenches in front which were heavily mined and booby-trapped(137). When the Indian troops under fire tried to take position in these dugouts, the mines and the booby-traps caused them heavy casualties. When the Company was only about 18 metres(138) from the objective the attack lost momentum and the men were ordered to stay put and contain the Pak troops(139).

Phase II commenced at 0100 hrs on 14 December, C Coy advanced without opposition two-thirds of the distance to its objective(140). It had come from behind and caught the Pakistanis unawares. But it lost surprise when it charged the bunkers, instead of halting some distance from the objective and sending assault teams crawling up to the bunkers to destroy them with grenades(141). There was hand-to-hand fighting, and both sides suffered heavy casualties(142). But the heavy volume of fire brought down on the Company arrested its further advance(143), and thus Phase II also got bogged down.

While this battle was going on, D Coy was ordered to launch its offensive from the south-west. It could take its position only at 0454 hrs, and was then subjected to heavy shelling(144). A Coy which had been ordered to move to area Mule Shed (NR-052566) at 0130 hrs, lost its Officer Commanding, Second-in-Command, and two others by enemy shelling during their forward movement(145), and had to fall back. B Coy of the 6/11 GR moved to the Mule Shed area at 0540 hrs to replace the Grenadiers. But it was still some distance away from the area when it became daylight. The defenders started pouring down observed automatic and artillery fire, and did not permit the Company to achieve its purpose. Shells with VT Fuzes caught the Indian troops out in the open and inflicted very heavy casualties on them(146).

The Pak reinforcements also arrived at first light and began attacking the C Coy location on the west spur from both sides. A number of counter-attacks were beaten back with a lot of Pak casualties. But the Company was also being gradually decimated(147).

The position at 0400 hours on 14 December was depressing. The B Coy had suffered heavy casualties at the Apex position. The C Coy had captured two-thirds of the objective on the west spur. Though it had not had many casualties, it was pinned down by heavy enemy fire. The D Coy remained dispersed on south-west spur due to the Pak shelling; so did the Commando Platoon 6/11 GR. The A Coy had been rendered ineffective due to loss of its officers. The only troops available to the CO, Lt Col Inderjit Singh, were B Coy 6/11 GR. The Commanding Officer moved to Mule Shed with the intent of linking up with C Coy. He thought this move would not only reinforce C Coy but also block the route for the Pak troops to reinforce Daruchhian Top. He planned to wait till the night and link up with C Coy who were well lodged behind the Pak troops, and then attack(148). But, except the leading platoon, the rest of B Coy 6/11 GR turned back. The Commanding Officer could not move

any further and requested the Brigade Commander to
take control of the battle(149).

At this juncture, Brig Hari Singh, Commander 120
Bde, asked for an air strike at 1130 hrs on 14
December and ordered C Coy to charge through and the
Commanding Officer to assault the objective with coy
6/11 GR. But when he was informed that the Gurkha
Company was not with the Commanding Officer(150), and
he was powerless to influence the course of the
battle(151), the Brigade Commander called off the
operation(152).

Thus, the attack turned out a dismal
failure(153). The Indian casualties in the operation
were - killed 5 Officers, 2 JCOs and 18 ORs, wounded -
1 Officer, 3 JCOs and 15 ORs and missing - 2 Officers,
2 JCOs and 71 ORs.

Conclusion

The attack on Daruchhian was ill-planned. The
Commanding Officer of 14 Grenadiers was not given
sufficient time to carry out patrolling of the
objective or obtain necessary intelligence about the
enemy strength or rehearse his attacking troops(154).
The protestation that 13th was an inauspicious number
for him(155), was brushed aside and he was ordered to
mount the attack on the night of 13 December. As far
as the attack itself was concerned, the wisdom of
launching it from several divergent axes is
questionable. The Commanding Officer alone can not be
blamed for this - the plan had had the approval of the
Brigade as well as the Divisional Commanders.

25 Inf Div claimed that the Battalion Commander
had been sounded about the plan to capture Daruchhian
"so that he could plan it with thoroughness"(156).
This, however, is not borne out by the facts.
Firstly, till as late as 11 December, the 14
Grenadiers were distributed over Galutri (NR 3440),
Punch, Pir Bidesar and Bhimbergali(157). Secondly,
when the Commanding Officer's request for postponement
of the attacks to the night of 14 December was turned
down, he was told that if he could not carry out the
task, it would be given to another Battalion the next
morning(158). There were tactical mistakes galore,
and some poor leadership at different levels. The
defensive position was strong and very well prepared,
and the Pakistani defenders fought exceptionally well.
With the strength of hardly a Company in all, they
repulsed the Indian attack with five Coys. It was a
bright little achievement for Pakistan, to off set her
major discomfiture at Punch.

THE BATTLE OF CHHAMB

Topography of Chhamb

The terrain in Chhamb was generally open. Cut up by seasonal Nalas running here and there. The Chenab River, flowing north-east to south-west, was a major obstacle to trans-river movement, with only one road bridge near Akhnur town. The Manawar Tawi flowed north to south and drained into the Chenab above the Marala Headworks. The Manawar Tawi was fordable at the Mandiala, Chhamb, Darh and Raipur crossings. The area west of this river was gently undulating and suitable for the employment of armour. The southern portion of Chhamb area was lowlying both to the east and west of the Manawar Tawi, with abundant growth of tall Sarkanda reeds. When the water level in the rivers was high, this area became boggy. At other times it was fairly dry and hard. To the north, the area consisted mostly of low hills and ravines. In the background rose the steep Kalidhar Range. These hills in the north and the river Chenab in the south, formed a funnel towards Akhnur, where all roads and tracks converged, to lead towards Jammu across the river.

Tactically, Pakistan had advantageous position in Chhamb. The southern flank of an attack was secured by the Chenab, while the Indians were at a disadvantage as they had the river behind them, which was a major obstacle to movement.

The old Cease Fire Line in the Chhamb Sector emerged from the hills west of Dewa and ran through the plain west of Manawar, where it joined the international border. The village of Chhamb lay near the intersection of the Cease Fire Line and the international boundary between the districts of Sialkot and Jammu.

Chhamb was politically important to India, and strategically important to both. If Pakistan took the initiative and made a thrust through Chhamb, it could threaten Jammu. On the other hand, an Indian pre-emptive thrust could block the movement of Pakistani forces from the Kharian-Jhelum complex towards the Lahore and Sialkot Sectors. And if it reached the Marala Headworks, it could threaten Sialkot from the rear, and not far to the west, cut the Islamabad-Lahore-Karachi main railway line.

In the Chhamb Sector across the river Chenab, there was the Chicken's Neck (Akhnur Dagger) - a piece of Pakistani territory which pointed towards the one and the only bridge across the river Chenab at Akhnur, connecting Punch, Rajauri and Nowshera with Jammu.

Should Pakistan succeed in capturing Chhamb from the west or through the Chicken's Neck and then proceed to capture Akhnur and the Akhnur bridge, it would cut off the main road communication of the Indian troops employed west of the Chenab for the protection of the general areas of Nowshera, Rajouri and Punch. And once the bridge across the river Chenab at Akhnur was in Pakistani hands, it would place the western half of the Jammu Province at the mercy of Pakistan and open the way for operations directed at Jammu from the west.

Pakistan had an edge in the Chhamb offensive in other respects too. With Sialkot in the vicinity, Pakistan could easily switch over its forces from the Punjab for the Chhamb offensive and easily bring them back to the Lahore area when required - the advantage of interior lines. It could launch a surprise attack in this area in preponderant strength with logistic and other support easily available. On the contrary, under the Cease Fire Agreement, India could not induct additional troops into Jammu and Kashmir.

Deployment and Plan of 10 Infantry Division

Ever since the Indo-Pak Conflict of 1965, 10 Inf Div had the operational responsibility for Chhamb and Sunderbani-Kalidhar Sectors. In 1971, it was operating under 15 Corps, and its task for the defensive phase was to delay the enemy in area west of the Manwar Tawi for at least 48 hours and then to fall back on the divisional main defences based on the prepared positions of Kalit (NW-6866), Troti (NW-6962) and Dhon Chak (NW-7059) west of Jaurian. The main battle was to be fought on the Tam Ka Tilla (NW-6867), Troti and Dhon Chak Line(159). However, on 1 November 1971, the GOC 10 Inf Div was told that loss of territory in this Sector was not acceptable, and that he should deploy one infantry brigade group in the Chhamb area. Accordingly, the 191 Inf Bde was inducted into this Sector and pushed forward west of the Tawi on the night of 2/3 November(160).

The role of the Division, however, remained an offensive one and in the offensive phase it was to advance towards Tanda-Gujarat (NW-8478). The General Officer Commanding, Maj Gen Jaswant Singh, continued to plan for offensive action, and adopted what was termed as "forward poise"(161). It was expected that eventually 191 and 52 Inf Bdes would hold the firm base, and 68 Inf Bde would establish, a bridgehead across the Cease Fire Line. It was expected that war with Pakistan would break out on 4 December(162). But on 1 December it was suspected that Pakistan was likely to launch a pre-emptive attack within the next

72 hours(163). This forced the Indian higher command to reverse its operational plans. Besides, on political grounds also the Indian forces were asked, as late as 1 December, to forget about the offensive and remain on the defensive in this Sector(164). It was obviously too late at this stage to make any meaningful preparation for effective defence.

As it turned out, the 191 Inf Bde established the contemplated firm base west of Tawi, and the 68 Inf Bde (comprising 5/8 GR, 9 Jat and 7 Kumaon) was earmarked as the assault echelon in Phase I of the offensive and was kept concentrated at Akhnur for the offensive task(165). The armoured regiment with which it was to break through was 9 Horse(166). Of the other brigades in the area, 52 Inf Bde was located at Akhnur to ward off any Pak attack on the bridge through the Pakistani salient of Chicken's Neck(167). The remaining brigade - 28 Inf Bde - was located on the north-east flank of Chhamb and was responsible for the defence of the area from Sunderbani to Laleali and down to Dewa(168).

The 191 Inf Bde occupied defences on the line Mandiala Heights (NW-5365) - Gurha (NW-5263) - Phagla-Barsala (NW-5258) - Jhanda (NW-5254) - Manawar (NW-5665) - Chhati Tahli (NW-5957) - Nawan Hamirpur. The screens/patrols were maintained up to the International Border and Cease Fire Line. The Brigade had the following infantry battalions under command: 5 Sikh, 5 Assam, 4/1 GR and 10 Garh Rif(169).

Mines had been laid all along the Cease Fire Line. However, the minefield from Barsala (NW-5258) to Jhanda (NW-5254) was only a dummy minefield, as it was through this area that the Indian Army had planned to launch its offensive. When there was change of plan on 1 December, protective minefields were hastily laid to cover the frontage of companies in the dummy minefield area. This task had not been completed when Pakistan started the offensive on the night of 3 December 1971(170).

Considering the possibility of a threat through Chicken's Neck, 3/4 GR of 52 Inf Bde was located at Syphon, east of Akhnur, while the AMX Squadron and 9 Jat of 68 Inf Bde were earmarked for offensive action against the flank of any enemy force advancing towards Damana (NW 9351) from Chicken's Neck(171).

As it was still the intention to go on the offensive at the earliest opportunity, more troops were not committed to the ground, though counter-attack tasks were assigned to 68 Inf Bde(172).

Pak Strength, Dispositions and Plan

It was a formidable enemy the Indian troops were up against in Chhamb. Opposite the 10 Inf Div Sector, Pakistan had 23 Inf Div commanded by Maj Gen Iftikhar Khan, a very bold and competent officer(173). It consisted of 4 POK Bde, 7 POK Bde, 20 Inf Bde, 111 Inf Bde and 66 Inf Bde ex 17 Inf Div(174). These enemy forces were backed by 17 Inf Div deployed in the depth area of Jalalpur (NW 3536) - Peroshah (NW 3045), with one battalion located at Marala Headworks (NW-6141)(175). The regiments of armour identified were 11 Cav, 26 Cav and 28 Cav. The tanks in the south were mainly of the 26 Cav. An armoured brigade comprising 10 and 11 Cav was located at Kharian, poised to back Pak troops in this Sector. Besides, about ten regiments of artillery were concentrated in the area(176).

In the big offensive Pakistan launched from the night of 3 December, it employed 4 POK Bde in the north with a view to attacking 8 J and K Militia in the 707, Laleali and Dewa complex. The 7 POK Bde was employed in the hill area opposite the Indian Division on defensive tasks(177). The rest of the forces were used in the offensive in Chhamb. The 66 and 111 Inf Bdes were to capture the west bank of the Tawi(178). While this was in progress, 13 AK Bn and 47 Punjab were to carry out a wide outflanking move towards the north with the intent of establishing a bridgehead astride the Mandiala Crossing on the east bank of Manawar Tawi by first light of 5 December(179). The troops that attacked Manawar were possibly composite battalions ex 20 Inf Bde(180). The PAF aircraft were to provide close support to ground forces and attack the Indian gun areas, ammunition points and other installations in depth(181).

The balance of troops deployed in the Chhamb Sector was clearly in favour of Pakistan. India had deployed the 10 Inf Div, comprising the 28, 52, 68 and 191 Inf Bdes with two armoured regiments and one medium and one field regiment of artillery in support. Pakistan had committed its 23 Inf Div, consisting of four inf bdes - 4 POK, 7 POK, 20 and 111 Inf Bdes - and also placed under its command the 66 Inf Bde of the 17 Inf Div, making a total of five brigades for the offensive. These were supported by two armoured brigades and by the Artillery Brigade of 17 Inf Div and a medium regiment, giving a definite superiority to Pakistan, particularly in armour and artillery. The IAF aircraft were to provide support to the land forces.

Operations West of Manawar Tawi River







The Pak artillery started shelling all the border posts and the Brigade defended Sector at 2050 hrs on 3 December 1971. Heavy concentration of artillery fire was brought down on Jhanda (NW-5254) Manawar (NW5665), Moel (NW-4760) and Pir Jamal (NW4863), while all the BOPs were engaged with SA and MMG fire(182).

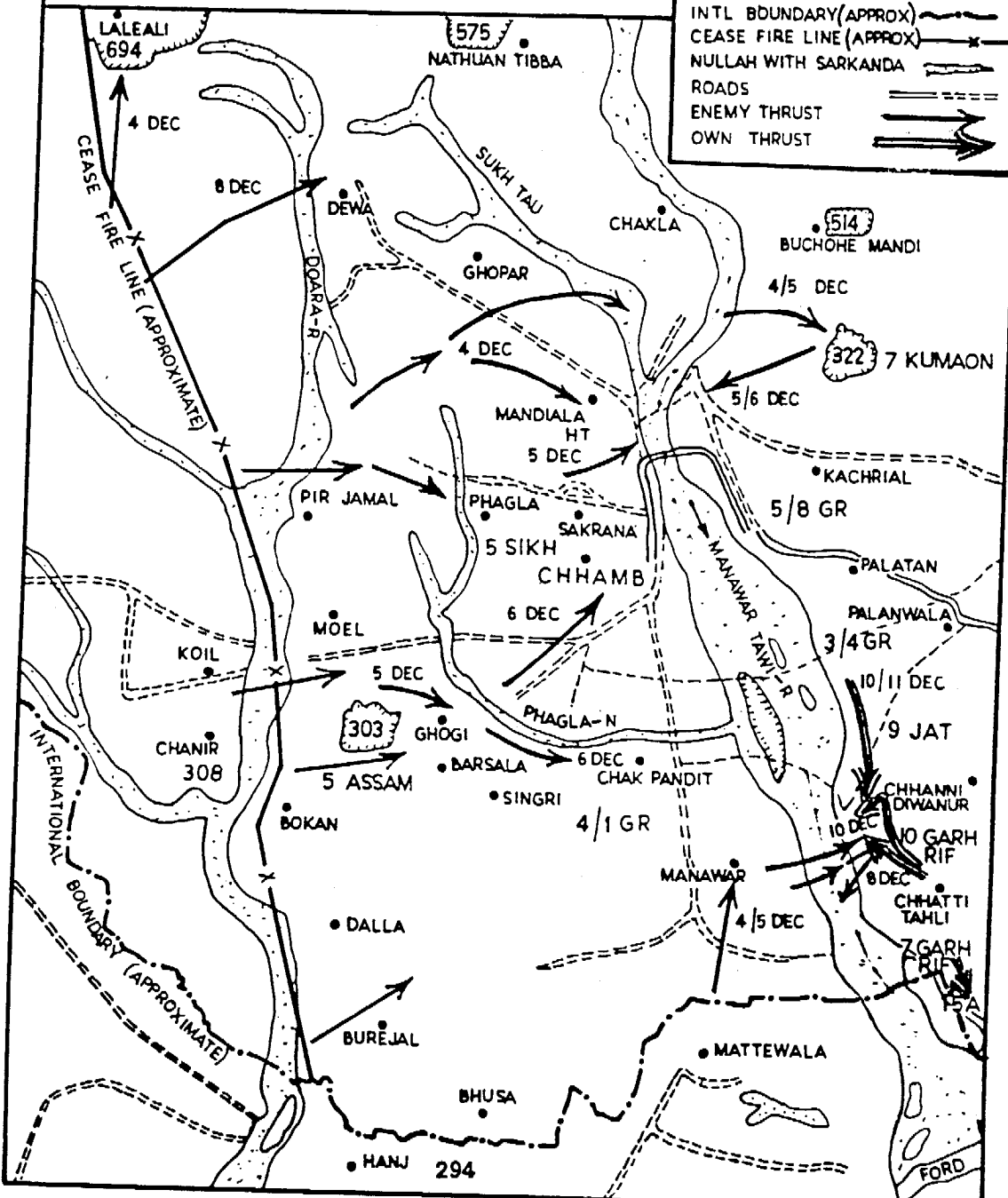
The enemy's operational plan and orbat, found later (on 6 December) on the body of the Adj. 47 Punjab, revealed that, in the big offensive Pakistan launched from the night of 3 December, it employed five infantry brigades of the 17 and 23 Inf Divs, supported by three armoured regiments (11 Cav, 26 Cav and 28 Cav) and nine artillery regiments (seven field and two medium). As already mentioned, Pakistan's 66 and 111 Inf Bdes were to capture the west bank of the Tawi. While this was in progress, 47 Punjab and 13 AK Battalions were to carry out a wide outflanking move towards the north with the intent of establishing a bridgehead astride the Mandiala Crossing (NW-5565) on the east bank of Manawar Tawi by first light of 5 December(183).

On the night of 3 December, the first to be attacked (at 2130 hrs) were Pir Jamal and Moel. While the Pir Jamal post had to be withdrawn under heavy artillery and SA fire, Moel withstood the attack inflicting 25 casualties on the enemy. Of the protective screens of Pussa (NW-5252) and Rana (NW-5452), held by 4/1 GR, Pussa was overrun by the Pak armour and infantry, while Rana was ordered to be vacated(184). Then started probing attacks in the area held by 5 Sikh - Pt.303 (NW-522607), Phagla (NW-5263) and Mandiala (NW-5465)(185), but the Indian artillery and SA fire did not let the attackers make any headway. As the night advanced, the enemy formed up at Nadala (NW-6351) and Marchola (NW-621531) and brought down heavy concentration of artillery fire on 10 Garh Rif posts of 15 Alfa (NW-6153) and Garadh (NW-6451)(186). The Pak troops attacked Ghogi (NW-5158) though only to be repulsed by 5 Assam, suffering about 30 casualties(187). The Pak forces also made infantry and armour attacks on Manawar (NW-5665) and Jhanda (NW-5254) posts of 4/1 GR fist at 0035 hrs and again at 0300 hrs that night, but were beaten back with heavy casualties(188). The Indian artillery contributed significantly with its heavy and accurate shelling(189).

Throughout 4 December there was heavy shelling by Pakistanis. The PAF was also very active and there was an air raid almost every 30 minutes(190). On the

THE CHHAMB SECTOR

INTL BOUNDARY (APPROX) 
 CEASE FIRE LINE (APPROX) 
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 ROADS 
 ENEMY THRUST 
 OWN THRUST 



ground there was heavy fighting all over the front. There was build-up of armour in the Moel (NW-4760) - Bokan (NW-4857) area. The first to experience the weight of their pressure was the 5 Assam. There was a tank battle north of Paur (NW-5057), in which an Indian Captain was killed. At 0700 hrs, the 5 Assam reported that Paur had been occupied by the enemy, though B Sqn of the 9 Horse contradicted it. The uncertainty did not allow any attempt being made at a counter-attack(191).

Pakistan gained further successes on 4 December. She re-inforced her armour in the area Moel (NW-4760) -Bokan (NW-4857) and attacked both the places at 1330 hrs, with infantry and armour. Unmindful of heavy casualties - 70 at Bokan and 20 at Moel - she forced the Indian posts to withdraw, and then overran the Burejal post (NW-5053), presumably killing 2 officers and 23 ORs of the 5 Assam(192). By 1530 hrs, the attackers forced the withdrawal of the Dalla Post which had been depleted by heavy shelling. Attacks on Manawar (NW-5665) and Jhanda (NW-5254), launched at 1500 hrs on 4 December, and made with infantry companies supported by armour, were however repulsed by 4/1 GR.

While these operations were taking place on the west bank of Manawar Tawi river, the Pakistanis had already succeeded in executing their plan of outflanking the 5 Sikh defences towards the north. Manoeuvring infantry and tanks, they captured Mandiala North at 1230 hrs on 4 December 1971. In spite of bitter hand-to-hand fighting, the Pakistani troops succeeded in overrunning the position. It was an important strategic gain for them. They must have perceived that the northern part of this Sector was thinly defended, and that the bias of troop deployment by India was towards the south. Using the Sukh Tan Nala they could easily cross the Manawar Tawi at Mandiala Crossing (NW-5565), thereby turning the defences of 191 Inf Bde(193). The 9 Para Commando and troop C Sqn of the 9 Horse, which were already there, were not sufficient to counter the threat that had arisen from this development. The 7 Kumaon of 68 Inf Bde, along with a squadron of 72 Armd Regt were ordered to occupy a defended area to protect the Mandiala Crossing and the Mandiala Bridge instead of attacking the Mandiala Heights(194).

But the movement of the 7 Kumaon did not go through smoothly. For one thing, the Battalion was unacquainted with the terrain, and, consequently, recess had to be carried out and layout groups established at the proper places. For another, even as it was moving up on foot, it was caught by heavy

enemy artillery fire. The 7 Kumaon and Group 9 Para Commando, supported by C Sqn of the 72 Armd Regt, a troop of the 9 horse and 216 Med Regt met the attack by the 47 Punjab and 13 AK Battalions. The Kumaonis fought from unprepared positions and were completely in the open. The battle lasted six hours - till 0800 hrs on 5 December - in which there was also hand-to-hand fighting. The 7 Kumaon lost 2 JCOs and 19 ORs killed, and 5 officers, 1 JCO and 42 ORs wounded, while it claimed to have inflicted far heavier losses(195). But the position was not restored. Then the 4/1 GR, counter-attacked Mandiala North (NW-5466) at 2030 hrs on 4 December. But the attack did not make much progress again because of very heavy enemy shelling, in which the Company Commander, Maj Gian Singh, was wounded and the senior JCO of the Coy was killed(196).

The night of 4/5 December was crucial. Exploiting the capture of Mandiala North (NW-5466), the Pak commander contrived to infiltrate the 13 AK and the 47 Punjab to the east to Mandiala Crossing (NW-5565) through Sukh Tan (NW-5366) and overran a part of the 9 Para Commando position(197). Though the Para Commandos promptly counter-attacked and ejected the enemy, inflicting approximately 200 casualties(198), a part of the 13 AK bn sneaked towards the Mandiala Bridge (NW-5564) and captured it at 0830 hrs on 5 December(199). Using the Sukh Tan Nala, the Pak armour now tried to cross the river and descend on the Mandiala Crossing and thereby turn the defences of 191 Inf Bde. This attempt was foiled by 9 Horse. However, the Pak attack had spilled over to the gun areas of 216 and 30 Med Regt. Though the latter managed to ward off the attacks, two of the three forward batteries of 216 Med Regt were rendered ineffective. The Pak attack was so fierce and devastating that it seemed to the stragglers of 216 Med Regt that "all the (Indian) troops in the area (Mandiala Crossing (NW-5565) - Chapreal (NW-5666) - Kachrial (NW-5863) had been butchered"(200).

Realizing the gravity of the situation, Brig R.T. Morlin, Commander 68 Inf Bde picked up one coy of the 9 Jat and led them personally along with a sqn of the 72 Armd Regt and finally succeeded in establishing them on the line of the river covering the Mandiala Crossing (NW-5565). The 7 Kumaon, which had been placed under the 191 Inf Bde had substantially regrouped in area Kachrial (NW-5864). They were also moved forward and deployed on the east bank. The Pak infiltrators still lurking in area Kachrial (NW-5864) were cleared on 5 and 6 December(201).

The Indian problem now was how to regain the

Mandiala Bridge (NW-5564) so as to stabilize the position and make at least the east bank secure(202). With this aim in view, a two-pronged counter-attack was launched - two tanks of the 9 Horse and a platoon of the 5 Sikh (of 191 Inf Bde) attacking the Bridge from the west, and 5/8 GR (of 68 Inf Bde) and 72 Armd Regt attacking it from the east(203). The Bridge was recaptured by 1030 hrs and the line was stabilized by 1530 hrs of 5 December. The Indian troops dug down and prepared defences on the east bank from Mandiala Bridge (NW-5564) to Buchohe Mandi (NW-5767)(204).

By 2100 hrs the 9 Jat secured the three eastern crossings of Chhamb (NW-580601), Darh (NW-5860) and Raipur (NW-5858). The 5/8 GR, which was now placed under command of the 191 Inf Bde firmed in astride the Bridge on the east bank of Tawi(205). In the final act of this operation, the 7 Kumaon combed the area Kachrial (NW-5864) - Chapreal (NW-5666) and killed 13 of the infiltrators left behind by 47 Punjab and 13 AK(206).

On the 5 Sikh, the 5 Assam and the 4/1 GR fronts, ding-dong battles raged throughout the day and night of 5 December. There were Pak air attacks and intense shelling throughout the Sector. Repeated Pak attacks were repulsed with heavy casualties, but, undaunted, they returned again and again in greater strength. They launched major attacks on 5 Sikh positions of Pt.303 (NW-522601), Phagla (NW-5263) and Gurha (NW-5365). In the attack at Pt.303, the Company Commander, Maj D.S. Pannu, was killed. The Pakistanis had captured Mangotian (NW-5455) which 4/1 GR recaptured on 5 December(207). And when the enemy attacked Jhanda and Mangotian again at 1700 hrs, employing both infantry and armour, the Gurkhas repulsed the attack(208). The 5 Assam also withstood repeated attacks. The attacks on Ghogi (NW-5158) and Barsala (NW-5258) were repulsed with heavy casualties. But when Ghogi was attacked the third time that day, it fell at 2130 hrs. The 5 Assam counter-attacked and regained the position in less than an hour, though in the process they lost Maj Makin, and 10 ORs were wounded and 4 missing. Pakistan lost about 60 killed and 2 ORs were taken POW(209). The gallantry of the Indian forces in this Sector is highlighted by the fact that the infantry and armour were fighting the enemy west of the Tawi river without any significant artillery support, as 216 Med Regt had been rendered ineffective and the rest of artillery, including HQ 10 Arty Bde had been moved east of Manawar Tawi during the night of 5/6 December.

In the morning of 6 December, the Pakistanis attacked Pt.994 (NW-5260)(210) at 0430 hrs with two infantry companies supported by armour. The attack failed suffering 25 casualties(211). The attackers rallied and launched another major attack on this position at 0620 hrs, this time with a full infantry battalion supported by tanks. There was severe fighting in which the Indian troops were worsted(212). The 5/8 GR, one platoon 5 Sikh and two tank troops of 9 Horse were ordered to counter attack(213). The tanks overran the objective. But 5/8 GR failed to marry up with the tanks, as the Gurkhas were unfamiliar with the terrain. By mistake they had actually assaulted another ridge about 550 metres NE of the target. They married up with the tanks only when 5 Sikh guided them(214). This incident serves to explain some of the reasons for loss of time and frittering away of resources on the Indian side(215).

In view of the casualties suffered in personnel and tanks it now seemed necessary to the Indian commanders to stabilize the position and to create a reserve. Large-scale readjustments were, therefore, ordered at 1115 hrs on 6 December in the whole of the 191 Inf Bde Sector. The primary task before the Indian Army was to counter attack and recapture Mandiala North (NW-5466). But the mounting enemy pressure would not permit this to be done. The Pak forces attacked Gurha (NW-5365) with one infantry battalion supported by one squadron of armour and captured it at 1530 hrs on 6 December. Through consistent probing the Pak Commander had by then discovered that only a dummy minefield existed in front of the 5 Assam position. The war of attrition so consistently waged by him had begun to pay off. He captured Ghogi (NW-5158) at 1600 hrs. Exploiting this success, he presumably infiltrated between the 5 Sikh position at Pt.303 (NW-522607) and Ghogi along the tactical gap in the minefield which 10 Inf Div had purposely left for its projected offensive(216). He could now attack Indian positions more easily, and captured Barsala (NW-5258) and then attacked Pt.951 (NW-5255) with one infantry battalion and a squadron of Pattons and forced the defending company to withdraw at 1715 hrs(217). The Pakistanis had been hammering away at Mandiala South (NW-5465) and after being beaten back twice, finally succeeded in capturing it at 1730 hrs(218). The 102 Fd Coy, which had been positioned at Extension (NW-5464) was forced to abandon it and withdraw to the east of Manawar Tawi(219).

These successive reverses were only partially redeemed when, using the tanks of 72 Armd Regt in assault role, a Coy of 5/8 GR, which had been inducted

in the area in the night of 5 December, counter-attacked Gurha and captured it in about an hour of fighting(220). The 5 Sikh, too, reoccupied Extension by 1900 hrs. But this was not enough. Between the three crucial hours of 1600 and 1900 of 6 December the Pakistanis overran the Ghogi company position, and occupied Singri (NW-5358). They then pressed on to Chak Pandit (NW-5558), and 4/1 GR was forced to withdraw its HQ from there towards the Darh Crossing (NW-5860). Disrupting the communications between 4/1 GR and 101 Fd Coy the Pakistanis compelled the latter to abandon Malke Camp (NW-5457)(221). The tanks of 72 Armd Regt did inflict heavy casualties on the advancing enemy, but it was apparent that the Indian resistance had collapsed and the position of 191 Inf Bde had become untenable. Deploying 9 Horse south of Chhamb in order to check the enemy follow-up, the Brigade crossed over to a prepared defended Sector in the Kalit (NW-6866), Troti (NW-6962) area(222) on the east bank of Manawar Tawi, using all the three crossing sites of Chhamb, Darh and Raipur. The eastern edge of the Mandiala Bridge was blown up at 2400 hrs on 6 December and thus the fate of the Chhamb, territory west of Manawar Tawi was sealed, and it was lost. Fortunately, the Pak Commander was not quick enough to follow up the withdrawal of 191 Inf Bde and made no attempt to cross Manawar Tawi on the night of 6/7 December and during the day of 7 December.

Operations on the East Bank of Manawar Tawi

Prior to the withdrawal of 191 Inf Bde, 68 Inf Bde had been deployed along the east bank of Manawar Tawi from Buchohe Mandi (NW-5767) to the Raipur Crossing in hurriedly prepared defences. No Battery Commander or Observation Post parties were made available till after 48 hours(223). The few troops of tanks available at Darh and Raipur Crossings were still under the control of 52 Inf Bde. The fact also needs to be underscored that Manawar Tawi was no obstacle in the military sense (as other rivers of the Punjab like Chenab, Ravi etc. were) and the western bank completely dominated the eastern bank. It was, therefore, no easy task for the Indian troops to prevent the enemy from gaining further territory in the area(224). However, the Indian Army had already ceded considerable territory and any further enemy ingress had to be prevented at all costs.

With the blowing up of the Mandiala Bridge, and the capture of territory west of Manawar Tawi, and the withdrawal of 191 Inf Bde from there, the Pakistanis held the northern axis in sufficient strength. On the night of 7/8 December, one Pak infantry battalion supported by armour, attacked the defences prepared by 7 Kumaon on the eastern bank of the Manawar Tawi, astride Mandiala Crossing (NW-5565). The Kumaonis answered with effective artillery and RCL fire and broke the attack(225). The same night the Chhamb (NW-580601), Darh (NW-5860) and Raipur Crossings (NW-5858) were also attacked, and at Raipur Crossing the attackers succeeded in securing a foothold. A counter-attack, however, beat them back and the situation was retrieved. But with unabated tenacity the Pakistanis attacked C Coy of 10 Garh Rif at Raipur Crossing next morning (0605 hrs) with approximately three companies. They reached the Company locality, but, after hand-to-hand fighting, were compelled to beat a retreat, leaving behind 37 dead bodies and six prisoners of war(226).

On 8 December, they kept attacking one or the other of the Indian positions on the east bank, and at 0630 hrs overran a part of the 9 Jat localities at the Raipur Crossing. The situation was however stabilized after hand-to-hand fighting. The Pakistanis continued shelling and probing attack at the Crossings during the night of 8/9 December. The Indian Air Force had, however, become active since the morning of 8 December, and during the night of 8/9 December, the Indian bombers attacked the area west of Manawar Tawi. Again, from 0330 hrs to 0800 hrs on 9 December, when the Pak armour was trying to probe the Crossing sites, the Indian aircraft engaged them with telling effect.

The main battle for Darh (NW-5860) and Raipur Crossing (NW-5858) was joined around midnight of 9/10 December. The Pakistanis infiltrated some parties through the gaps between the Indian company positions and attacked both the Crossings from the front and the rear. They had succeeded in forming a bridgehead east of the Tawi. They enlarged it at the Darh Crossing by attacking and overrunning the Coy of 9 Jat with armour and infantry. The Jat Company Commander was killed. The 9 Jat Company at Raipur also, was over-run and its Company Commander killed in action. Simultaneously, the Pakistanis attacked the 10 Garh Rif Company at the Raipur Crossing with infantry supported by armour, and overran two platoon locations. By the morning of 10 December the Pak forces thus established a bridge-head 915 metres deep and 3660 metres wide, which included the Darh and Raipur Crossings(227).

The 3/4 GR launched a counter-attack(228) with armour but most of the tanks of 72 Armd Regt and 9 Horse which had rushed forward from Kachrial (NW-5863) - Lam (NW-6260) and Khaur (NW-606611), got bogged down(229). The Battalion could not make any advance, and was, therefore, ordered to dig down and contain the enemy by preventing any further ingress.

It appeared absolutely necessary to throw the Pakistanis back somehow, otherwise they might expand their lodgement northwards with infantry at night, marry up with armour and then break out towards Khaur (NW-606611), Lam (NW-6260) Syphon and Pahari Wali, which seemed to be their objectives. Indian commanders, therefore, decided to launch a counter-attack from north to south on the axis Chhamb Crossing - Darh Crossing (NW-5860), using the Chhamb locality as a firm base. At 1700 hrs on 10 December 5/8 GR supported by B Sqn 72 Armd Regt made the assault; 7 Kumaon were in reserve; 10 Arty Bde provided fire support, while 3/4 GR gave fire support from the area Palatan (NW-5961). An effective smoke screen was laid by 10 Arty Bde on the western bank of Manawar Tawi, stretching from the Mandiala Heights to the Darh Crossing(230). In this way, the flanks were held firmly and the enemy infantry was separated from his armour, facilitating their eventual destruction.

The start of the counter-attack was not encouraging. Seven of the 11 tanks got bogged down. The ground between the Indian positions, and Darh (NW-5860) and Raipur Crossings (NW-5858) was boggy and unsuitable for armour. Hence RCL screens were established to seek and destroy Pak armour, and the infantry was thrown into the attacks. Darh Crossing was secured by 1930 hrs on 10 December(231). The Pak troops withdrew from the Darh Crossing to the Raipur Crossing. The 3/4 GR was ordered to secure the Raipur Crossing. However, in the mean time, D Coy, 10 Garh Rif, reoccupied the southern location of the Raipur Crossing without a fight, though the Officer Commanding, Lt Col Onkar Singh was fatally hit by a bullet in the stomach. Apparently the Pakistanis had withdrawn from the area for various reasons. For one thing, the Indian air strikes were hampering the Pak build-up in the lodgement area. For another, constant Indian artillery fire effectively interfered with enemy's build-up consolidation. Perhaps the most important factor was death of the redoubtable Pak commander, Maj Gen Iftikhar Khan, in a helicopter crash. Thus the Indian defensive line in the Chhamb area was stabilised by mid-night of 10/11 December on the eastern bank of Manawar Tawi.

After a long period of lull, when D Coy, 10 Garh

Rif, position was engaged by the enemy on 16 December with tank and medium machine-gun fire from across the river, the Company not only silenced the fire but went on to capture Nathukulian on 17 December(232). The 7 Garh Rif too, captured Sangam and 15 Alfa Posts the same day(233).

Operations in the Hills North of Chhamb

In the hilly sector north of Chhamb, the Indian forces had the task of defending the area bounded by Pt.707, (NW-4473), Laleali (NW-4571), Dewa (NW-4968) and Nathuan Tibba (NW-5171). This task devolved on 8 J and K Militia which moved its headquarters on 3 December from Dewa to Nathuan Tibba. It was reinforced by a Coy of 5 Rajput during the night of 4/5 December, and was directly supported by 863 Lt Bty of 86 Lt Regt(234).

The pattern of Pak attacks in this sector also was the same as elsewhere in Chhamb. Here, as indeed in the entire Chhamb area, the enemy hurled his forces in overwhelming numbers and with tremendous artillery support. On the night of 3 December, the Pakistanis first brought down intense MMG, mortar and artillery fire on Pt.707, Laleali and Red Hill (NW-453693). This was followed by assaults on these positions as well as on Dewa. The first to be attacked was Pt.707 at 0100 hrs on 4 December. The assault with an infantry battalion overran the forward posts(235). The Indian troops answered with an immediate counter-attack, and evicted the enemy, taking a heavy toll of 50 lives. This was not enough to discourage the Pakistanis and they attacked these picquets repeatedly till 8 December. The 8 J and K Militia were, however, well prepared. The Battalion had laid wire and mine obstacles to cover the main approaches at all points, and its companies were sited for all round defence.

In the afternoon of 4 December, Laleali (NW-4571) and Pt.707 (NW-4473) were attacked by a battalion each, while Dewa (NW-4968) was attacked from the south with two infantry companies and a squadron of armour. All these attacks were beaten off. A Pak air OP was shot down by small arms fire. The Pakistanis attacked Red Hill (NW-453693) the same day but this assault was also repulsed(236).

The Pak Army became more active on the night of 4 December. It attacked Dewa thrice with infantry and armour, and Red Hill twice. But, 8 J and K Militia threw back all these attacks inflicting heavy casualties(237).

Next day (5 December) a Pak platoon succeeded in infiltrating in the Betal (NW-5471) area where it attacked the wagon lines of the battery of 86 Lt Regt. Company 5 Rajput counter-attacked from Nathuan Tibba (NW-5171) and threw back the Pakistanis, who, it was identified, belonged to 6 AK Battalion of 23 Inf Div of Pakistan. That night another platoon of Pak troops infiltrated at another place, but the Indian troops attacked them and, supported by artillery and mortar fire took a toll of 50 dead(238).

The Pak commander was now concentrating mainly on Dewa and Laleali. He attacked Dewa again three times on 6 December but was beaten back each time. On 7 December it was Laleali which received his main attention and was attacked twice. In the first attack the Pakistanis succeeded in over-whelming the forward defended localities. However, both the attacks were repulsed with heavy casualties. But Pak tenacity paid off on 8 December, when two infantry battalions and armour were hurled into the attacks on Dewa, which, starting from 0815 hrs, were made successively in wave after wave. In spite of stiff resistance by Indian troops and fierce hand-to-hand fighting, Dewa ultimately fell to the attackers at 1445 hrs that day(239).

This was an important gain for Pakistan in this area, as it finally removed the Indian threat on the northern flank. After the capture of Dewa, the Pak troops contented themselves only with probing actions till the Cease Fire on 17 December.

Conclusion

The concept of operations in Chhamb was flawed from the beginning. One wonders how Maj Gen Jaswant Singh, GOC 10 Inf Div was able to sell the idea of an offensive in Chhamb to Lt Gen Sartaj Singh, GOC-in-C 15 Corps and Lt Gen K.P. Candeth, the Army Commander, Western Command. Jaswant Singh was known to be a good planner, but the operations in Chhamb revealed some limitations. He nursed hopes of driving deep into Pakistani territory and turning towards Sialkot, without realizing that a strong enemy force was deployed on the other side of the Cease Fire Line(240). In this specific case, the posture of "forward poise" was adopted. The 191 Infantry Bde was deployed forward near the Cease Fire Line and asked to act as a firm base for the launching of an offensive with 52 and 68 Inf Bdes. But these two brigades were well behind. The 52 Inf Bde was deployed at Akhnur lest Pakistani forces should break out from the Chicken's Neck area. This amounted to a wastage of the 52 Inf Bde as the 26 Inf Bde which had been made

responsible for Chicken's Neck, automatically guarded Akhnur. The 68 Inf Bde continued to be located east of the river Manawar Tawi until 191 Inf Bde was defeated and thrown back across that river.

The decision of change in posture had far-reaching consequences for this Sector, where the Commanders had been so obsessed with the idea of offensive action that steps were not taken to familiarize the troops with the terrain in case the need arose to go on the defensive. The 68 Inf Bde is a case in point. In view of its future role - attack - the Brigade confined its recce and planning to the offensive operational role. Subsequently, when it had to occupy defences in this Sector to stave off further Pak ingress into Indian territory, it rued the time wasted on offensive plans(241). Nor did 72 Armd Regt, which had been affiliated to this Brigade, recce the area(242).

The 191 Inf Bde made the enemy fight hard and delayed his advance before yielding area west of Manawar Tawi. Pakistan had gained absolute local superiority. However, the Pak commanders did not realize that 191 Inf Bde had disintegrated and was incapable of launching a counter-attack. Otherwise, if on the night 6/7 December they had followed up their success, they could have made considerable gains even east of the river. On the eastern bank, 68 Inf Bde gave a good account of itself even though it had not reconnoitred the area. From 8 December the Indian Air Force pounded the enemy fiercely. The Pak forces vacated Darh and Raipur positions for these reasons and also because the plans of Pak 111 Bde miscarried. It attacked these positions on the night 9/10 December, but was not able to coordinate with armour, and Pak tanks failed to fetch up. The Pak troops were exposed. They also knew that the Indian Army was preparing to mount a major counter-attack. Hence, they withdrew quickly, choosing to go while the going was good.

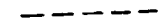
THE BATTLE FOR CHICKEN'S NECK

Chicken's Neck - an area of about 170 sq km - was a dagger-shaped Pakistani salient into the Jammu and Kashmir State. It was bounded by the river Chenab in the west and the Chandra Bhaga or Ghag Nala in the east. The roads in this area generally ran north-south. It was linked with the Sialkot Sector by means of ferries in area Saidpur (NW-7540), Gondal (NW-7039), Majwal (NW-6540) and Gangwal (NW-6647). The area was open and tankable. This salient was of great strategic importance. It provided Pakistan with the shortest approach to the bridge at Akhnur over the

THE CHICKEN'S NECK SECTOR

SKETCH NOT TO SCALE

ROADS



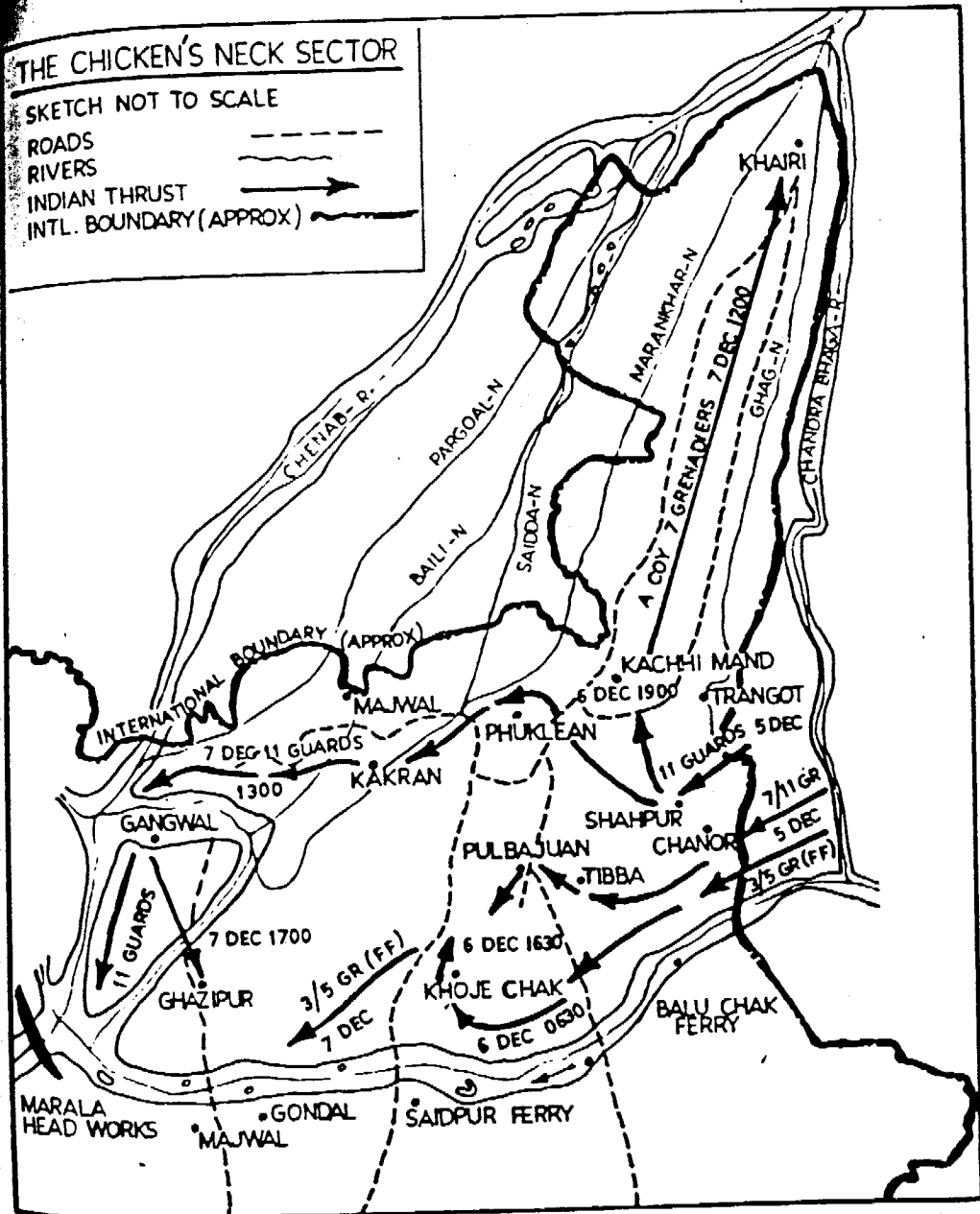
RIVERS



INDIAN THRUST



INTL. BOUNDARY (APPROX)



Chenab, as well as to Jammu, and rendered vulnerable the forces of 10 Inf Div deployed in the Chhamb-Jaurian complex.

In order to obviate this threat, a battalion had been deployed at Syphon, east of Akhnur, and 10 Inf Div had moved an AMX tank Sqn in conjunction with 9 Jat ex-68 Inf Bde to take offensive action against the flank of any Pak force advancing from the Chicken's Neck towards Damana.

Offensive action to capture the Chicken's Neck salient had been planned by India well ahead of the actual date of the start of the hostilities. On 4 December, the codeword "Glowworm" was issued for the capture of Chicken's Neck, and it was decided to commence the operations on the night of 5/6 December. This operation was to go in conjunction with 1 Corps and 10 Inf Div offensives elsewhere(243). Anticipating enemy air activity against the troops, armour and artillery, Combat Air Patrol was arranged over the area Jammu-Chicken's Neck. The operation was conducted by Brig Mohindar Singh, Commander 19 Inf Bde under the direction of Maj Gen Z.C. Bakshi, GOC, 26 Inf Div.

The area was found to be held by elements of one coy of 34 Punjab and Chenab Rangers(244). As they expected attack from the north and east, they had dug in defences including communication trenches, in the line Golpat (NW-8454) - Kachhi Mand (NW-7851), and each location was stocked with sufficient ammunition. Minefields were laid, though the vehicle lanes were not closed. Conceivably the Pak commander had planned to reinforce the area with a regular battalion once he came to know the direction of the threat. Later, depending upon the situation arising from 1 Corps and 10 Inf Div operations, he could react with a brigade from south of Chenab river, moving his counter-attack force through Saidpur, Gondal and Balu Chak by ferries(245). However, as all the routes of reinforcement near the ferry sites were blocked, he just could not bring up any reinforcements. The 19 Inf Bde, with 11 Guards, 3/5 GR(FF) and 7/11 GR as its integral battalions, and supported by armour and artillery, forestalled the probable moves by the enemy and inflicted a fairly swift and crushing blow.

In the first phase of the operation, area Nala Bend (NW-7944) was to be captured by a silent attack by 7/11 GR at 2230 hrs on 5 December. As the area Khoje Chak (NW-7545) was tactically important, since its loss would cut off Pak troops in the Chicken's Neck and would prevent reinforcements from south of the river Chenab(246), Phase I also envisaged that

after the capture of Nala Bend by 7/11 GR, B Group 9 Para Commando, under command of 3/5 GR(FF), would infiltrate and establish themselves astride Road Khoje Chak (NW-7545)-Saidpur Ferry, south of Ghag Nala (NW-7343) by 0600 hrs on D plus 1. The 7/11 GR were, however, able to accomplish their task only by 2310 hrs - 40 minutes late, although the Nala Bend was found unoccupied by the enemy. The 3/5 GR(FF) and 9 Para Commando also wasted time and achieved their objectives 6 hours late. Both received orders to move forward at 2316 hrs. However, this Battalion made thorough preparation for navigation and route marking, lest maintenance of direction should prove difficult(247). As the ground was not known, the Battalion could reach its area only at 0930 hrs(248), against the scheduled time of 0600 hrs.

Now started the second phase of the operation. The 7/11 GR who had captured Nala Bend were thereafter to capture Tibba (NW-7945) by 0300 hrs, on D plus 1. With the support of armour the Battalion occupied Tibba at 0015 hrs on 6 December, ahead of schedule, without encountering any enemy, though the position was found fully prepared and mined(249).

In the third phase, 11 Guards were to capture Pak Chanor (NW-8077) by 0600 hrs, on D plus 1. Supported by two troops of tanks, the Guards cleared Chak Naun (NW-8048) and Kulian Raiyan (NW-8047) in a matter of three hours and captured Chanor (NW-8077) at 0330 hrs(250) without opposition. The defenders it seems, were unnerved by the sound of tanks, and vacated fully prepared positions after firing a few shots as a token. By 0400 hrs the Battalion had exploited up to Shahpur (NW-7848)(251), and cleared the place.

In the next phase (fourth), 7/11 GR were to capture Pul Bajuan (NW-7746) by 0700 hrs on D plus 1. However, they carried out their task well ahead of schedule and occupied the post by 0351 hrs(252). The Battalion encountered no opposition though here, as at Nala Bend and Tibba, the positions were found to have been fully dug and prepared by the Pak troops(253).

In fifth phase, it had been planned that 3/5 GR(FF) would capture Khoje Chak by 1000 hrs on 6 December. As already mentioned, the battalion could establish itself astride the road Khoje Chak-Saidpur, south of Ghag Nala by 0930 hrs - three-and-a-half hours behind schedule. After reaching the area, 3/5 GR(FF) launched the attack with two companies astride the road Khoje Chak-Saidpur. One Sqn of Central Indian Horse was inducted to be at hand for any counter-attack by the enemy. Since neither OC 3/5

GR(FF) nor 8 Cav were aware of this, 8 Cav fired a few rounds against the tanks of Central India Horse. Fortunately no damage was done. The 3/5 GR(FF) experienced difficulty in finding and maintaining direction. An artillery shot on Khoje Chak helped the Battalion determine its position, and Khoje Chak was secured by 1600 hrs on 6 December, six hours later than the planned time(254). In the meanwhile the Para Commandos had entrenched themselves at the Saidpur ferry site. Another team of the Para Commandos dug itself down at the Gondal ferry site on the night of 6/7 December.

In view of the developing situation in Chhamb, where the Pakistani Army had begun to pose a threat to the east bank of the Manawar Tawi, 3/5 GR(FF) were withdrawn from 26 Inf Div and placed under command of 10 Inf Div. The Battalion, therefore, pulled out from the area, which was now handed over to 11 Guards.

In the sixth phase, 11 Guards started their advance from Shahpur at 1100 hrs on 6 December towards Phuklean (NW-7649), which they captured at 1400 hrs that day - more than twelve hours ahead of schedule(255).

All that remained to be done was to mop up the area and take adequate measures to ward off any possible counter-attack across the Chenab from the south. This was done. One Sqn Central India Horse and one coy 7 Grenadiers (Mech.) moved into the area. The Pakistanis had neither armour nor effective anti-tank weapons. The 11 Guards on the other hand were accompanied by two troops of tanks(256). They not only captured Phuklean but also Kakran (NW-7449) and Gangwal villages. The 7 Grenadiers, a mechanised infantry battalion, captured Kachhi Mand (NW-7851) and cleared it by 1900 hrs on 6 December(257). Next day the Battalion mopped up the area north of line Kacchi Mand Trangot (NW-8150) and cleared 15 posts and 20 villages by 1320 hrs. The PAF made heavy air strikes on 6 December on the Indian troops with Mirages, Sabres, and MiG-19 aircraft and inflicted some damage on Indian personnel and vehicles(258). The Indian aircraft on CAP mission effectively engaged them and warded off further enemy attempts to impede the operation(259).

In this operation, the deployment of troops and the actual fighting were carried out with ease and smoothness, even in the hours of darkness. This speaks well of the standard of night training of the Indian troops. Night operations made the task of the enemy air force difficult and minimized casualties on the Indian side. The operations took 48 hours to

complete when it could perhaps have been finished much quicker. In consequence, the Pak garrison was allowed to slip away almost unharmed. Also, it is difficult to understand why the operation had to be conducted from widely separated axes of attack in seven phases when the Indian forces, equipped as they were with tanks and armoured personnel carriers, could have exploited the fire power and mobility thus provided and blocked the ferries quickly, mopping up the small enemy force in the area from south to north. Perhaps the Indian commanders expected stiffer resistance by strong Pak forces and so proceeded cautiously, step by step.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. On 15 December 1971, the Bengalee defectors helped reconstruct the moves of the 7 Inf Div. In actual fact it moved from Peshawar on 26 November 1971 and had arrived in Chhanga Manga on 5 December 1971. It was subsequently concentrated in the area Mandi Sadiq Ganj - Bahawal Nagar from Arifwala area. On or about 16 December 1971, it was poised for an offensive opposite Ganganagar. From Official Records.
3. The exact location of components of 6 Armd Div remained undisclosed, though a few individual units like the 11 Cav (23 Inf Div Sector) had been correctly identified. In the event the 6 Armd Div remained uncommitted. From Official Records.
4. Intelligence relating to the 17 Inf Div was also inadequate. HQ 17 Inf Div less two brigades was reported in Daulat Nagar. Subsequently, it was revealed that this formation did not function as a whole but it was split and the brigades allotted to various formations. From Official Records.
5. Sukhwant Singh, p.24.
6. By 12/13 December, it was clear that the 33 Inf Div was made responsible for the defence of Hyderabad-Badin Sector. From Official Records.
7. Captured maps/prisoners of war, however, indicated that the bulk of the 18 Inf Div was located in area Rahim Yar Khan. From Official Records.
8. From Official Records.
9. Nevertheless, the reported deployment of the 33 Inf Div in area Bahawalpur together with the 1 Armd Div in Okara area imposed considerable caution on the Indian Field Commanders. From Official Records.
10. From Official Records.
11. From Official Records.
12. From Official Records.
13. From Official Records.
14. From Official Records.
15. Sukhwant Singh, p.23.

16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. From Official Records.
32. From Official Records.
34. Ibid.
35. From Official Records.
36. From Official Records.
37. From Official Records.
38. From Official Records.
39. From Official Records.
40. Ibid.
41. From Official Records.
42. From Official Records.
43. Ibid.
44. From Official Records.
45. From Official Records.
46. From Official Records.
47. From Official Records.
48. Ibid.
49. From Official Records.
50. From Official Records.
51. Ibid.
52. From Official Records.
53. Ibid.
54. From Official Records.
55. From Official Records.
56. Ibid.
57. From Official Records.
58. From Official Records.
59. In this Sector, the Indian divisional reserve was the 268 Inf Bde and it alone could carry out major offensive tasks, but the formation could not be committed to any such task because of the uncertainty about the location of the enemy's 7 Inf Div, and any unexpected move it might make. Whatever offensive tasks and raids the 19 Div undertook, as well as the partial clearance of the Lipa Valley, were undertaken by the reserves created through readjustment from within the forces already committed to the ground.
60. From Official Records.

61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. NL 970349.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid. It is not necessary to discuss here the controversy which erupted in 1972 about the exact Indian gains in the Lipa Valley which clouded Gen D' Souza.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. From Official Records.
78. From Official Records.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. On 18 December 1971 when the ceasefire was declared the presence of an uncleared Pakistani pocket in Kaiyan Bowl was, it is claimed, reported by forward troops to HQ 19 Inf Div. As this pocket was completely dominated by Indian troops and hence was at their mercy, its significance was perhaps ignored by the GOC. Taking advantage of the winter conditions and a limited thinning out of Indian troops, Pakistan not only reinforced the 'pocket' but successfully encroached into the Indian territory in Jamua-Gabdori area. In May 1972 heavy fighting broke out in the 'pocket' where Pakistanis launched a full scale attack with almost two battalions supported by medium and field guns, and re-took Seranwali Baihk from the outnumbered Indian troops. On either side, the contestants suffered heavy casualties.
82. From Official Records.
83. From Official Records.
84. Ibid.
85. From Official Records.
86. Ibid.
87. From Official Records.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. From Official Records.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. From Official Records.
95. Ibid.

96. From Official Records.
97. Ibid.
98. From Official Records.
99. From Official Records.
100. From Official Records.
101. Ibid.
102. From Official Records.
103. Ibid.
104. From Official Records.
105. Ibid.
106. From Official Records.
107. From Official Records.
108. From Official Records.
109. From Official Records.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
112. From Official Records.
113. From Official Records.
114. Ibid.
114. From Official Records.
115. From Official Records.
116. From Official Records.
117. From Official Records.
118. Ibid.
119. From Official Records.
120. From Official Records.
121. From Official Records.
122. From Official Records.
123. From Official Records.
124. From Official Records.
125. From Official Records.
126. From Official Records.
127. Ibid.
128. From Official Records.
129. The operation was conducted by 21 Punjab of 93 Bde, 25 Inf Div.
130. From Official Records.
131. "In an area like that you don't have to make pill boxes or bunkers, they are naturally there". - Lt Gen Kundan Singh's interview.
132. "The enemy gun area was at Balnoi between Mendhar and FDL" - Lt Gen Kundan Singh's interview.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Ibid.
136. The CO, Lt Col Inderjit Singh, had asked for an additional day for reconnaissance but he says that the Brigade Commander Brig Hari Singh, over-ruled him, telling him that there were 30-40 men sitting on the FDL in a demoralized state and therefore there was no necessity for recce. The CO had also protested that December was an inauspicious number for him therefore asked for permission to launch the attack a day later.

137. Ibid.
138. Lt Gen Kundan Singh does not agree that the Indian troops were about 18 metres from the objective. He argued when interviewed "if it were so they could throw grenades". He added "Mines are not laid 20 Yards (18 metres) from bunkers. Wires or mines should be at least 40 yards (36 metres) away".
139. Ibid.
140. From Official Records.
141. From Official Records.
142. From Official Records.
143. From Official Records.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. From Official Records.
147. From Official Records.
148. From Official Records.
149. Ibid.
150. "The Gurkhas did not have rapport with the Grenadiers. Ideally only such additional troops should be assigned to a battalion as are akin to each other". Lt Gen Kundan Singh in an interview.
151. The Commanding Officer wanted to wait till night when he would have linked up with C Coy who were well lodged behind the enemy.
152. From Official Records.
153. From Official Records.
154. It is recorded that at the time when the battle was raging, the Brigade Commander was 'nearby', but it is not stated where exactly he was and how he was guiding the battle. He ordered C Coy and also the Commanding Officer, to make a final bid and attack the objective in broad day-light. The air strike made at 1130 hrs on 14 December at his instance obviously failed to register any impact. As apprehended by the Commanding Officer, the attacks made by him and the C Coy at the behest of the Brigade Commander could not achieve the objective and the attack had to be called off.
155. Lt Gen Kundan Singh confirmed in the interview that Lt Col Inderjit Singh, Co, 14 Grenadier, had such misgivings.
156. From Official Records.
157. From Official Records.
158. Ibid.
159. From Official Records.
160. From Official Records.
161. The so-called 'forward poise' had the approval of Lt Gen Sartaj Singh, GOC 15 Corps, Lt Gen K.P. Candeth GOC-in-C Western Command, Gen SHFJ Mandkshaw, Chief of Army Staff. It was, however, not correct to call it as such because

though the 191 Inf Bde was asked to occupy a firm base so that the divisional offensive could be launched, in actual fact it was only a defensive posture which this Brigade presented as the other Brigades were not yet ready to launch the offensive into enemy territory. From Official Records.

162. From Official Records.
163. From Official Records.
164. From Official Records.
165. Ibid.
166. From Official Records.
167. From Official Records.
168. From Official Records.
169. From Official Records.
170. From Official Records.
171. Ibid.
172. Ibid.
173. From Official Records.
174. From Official Records.
175. Ibid.
176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
178. Ibid. The 65 Bde attacked from the west through area Pir Jamal and Moel towards Mandiala Heights, Gurha, Phagla and Pt.994. The 111 Bde attacked area Barsala, Pt.951 and Jhanda from the west and south.
179. This was confirmed by the enemy's operational plan and Orbat found on 6 December on the body of the Adjutant 47 Punjab. From Official Records.
180. From Official Records.
181. Ibid.
182. From Official Records.
183. From Official Records.
184. From Official Records.
185. From Official Records.
186. From Official Records.
187. From Official Records.
188. From Official Records.
189. From Official Records.
190. Ibid.
191. From Official Records.
192. From Official Records.
193. From Official Records.
194. From Official Records.
195. These events remained unknown to HQ 191 Inf Bde due to loss of radio contact. From Official Records.
196. From Official Records.
197. From Official Records.
198. From Official Records.
199. From Official Records.
200. From Official Records.

201. From Official Records.
202. From Official Records.
203. From Official Records.
204. Ibid.
205. From Official Records.
206. From Official Records.
207. From Official Records.
208. From Official Records.
209. From Official Records.
210. The attack was on Pt.904, not Pt.303. It, however, seems both are one and the same picquet. From Official Records.
211. From Official Records.
212. From Official Records.
213. From Official Records.
214. Ibid.
215. From Official Records.
216. Ibid.
217. From Official Records.
218. From Official Records.
219. Ibid.
220. From Official Records.
221. From Official Records.
222. From Official Records.
223. Ibid.
224. Ibid.
225. From Official Records.
226. From Official Records.
227. From Official Records.
228. The capture of Chicken's Neck on 7 December and consequent removal of threat to Akhnur had released the troops deployed there, and 3/4 GR of 52 Inf Bde had been moved forward and placed under command of 68 Inf Bde.
229. From Official Records.
230. From Official Records.
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. Lt Gen Jasbir Singh said in the interview that he warned Jaswant Singh of the presence of Pak 23 Div and armoured manoeuvring across the CFL, but the latter discounted these reports and stubbornly held to the view that the territory opposite was thinly held.
241. From Official Records.
242. From Official Records.
243. From Official Records.
244. Ibid.

- 245. From Official Records.
- 246. From Official Records.
- 247. From Official Records.
- 248. Ibid.
- 249. Ibid. Also From Official Records.
- 250. The time stated is 0300 hrs. From Official Records.
- 251. From Official Records.
- 252. Ibid. 0330 hrs according to Official Records.
- 253. Ibid.
- 254. From Official Records.
- 255. From Official Records.
- 256. Ibid.
- 257. From Official Records.
- 258. 4X1 ton vehicles 1 jeep and 2 APCs - Ibid.
- 259. Ibid.

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THE PUNJAB AND RAJASTHAN FRONTTHE BATTLE OF SHAKARGARHTopography

The Shakargarh Bulge is located between the Chenab and Ravi rivers. In the north this projection runs parallel to the Shivalik Range. The tip of this Bulge points towards Madhopur Headworks and the Pathankot military base on the farther side. The southern portion rests on the Ravi, across which lie the sensitive areas of Amritsar, Batala and Gurdaspur.

The terrain in the Bulge is generally flat and is criss-crossed with numerous nullahs generally running north to south. The notable ones are Aik, Degh, Basantar, Bein and Ujh. As in the plains of Chhamb-Jaurian, so in the Shakargarh Bulge Pakistan could easily exploit the strength of her armour. But while in Chhamb the terrain imposed a disadvantage on Indian armour, it could be used effectively in Shakargarh.

From Sialkot, Gujranwala and Lahore there stemmed a network of roads and rail tracks, the roads running west to east towards Shakargarh and traversing the important communications centres of Pasrur, Chawinda, Zafarwal, Dhamthal and Narowal.

Indian Deployment

The Indian planning team was headed by Maj Gen K.K. Singh, Director of Military Operations, and General Officer Commanding designate of 1 Corps, which was operationally responsible for the Shakargarh Bulge. The Corps was poised by the third week of October and had assigned the following defended sectors to its formations:- (1)

a) 36 Ind Div, under Maj Gen Balwant Singh Ahluwalia to cover the approaches in the general area of Thakurpur-Gurdaspur-Dinanagar-Sherpur, south of the Ravi river with Brigades deployed as follows:- (2)

- i) 18 Inf Bde, including 14 Horse, less a squadron - Thakurpur.
- ii) 72 Inf Bde - Malakpur - Sherpur (SC 7500)(3)
- iii) 115 Inf Bde, including Squadron 14 Horse - Dinanagar - Gurdaspur (SC 6370).

b) 39 Inf Div, under Maj Gen B.R. Prabhu, in the general area of Madhopur-Kathua-Parol-Ujh River-Dayala Chak, to cover the approaches to Madhopur. The dispositions of its brigades were as follows:- (4)

- i) 33 Inf Bde in area Dayala Chak.
- ii) 323 Inf Bde in area Padal.
- iii) 87 Inf Bde in area Parol-Bamial-Madhapur.

c) 54 Inf Div, under Maj Gen W.A.G. Pinto, in the general area of Samba between the Bein River and the Degh Nadi(5). This Division was deployed thus:-

- i) 74 Inf Bde - in area Raiyan - Mawa.
- ii) 91 Inf Bde - in area Rajpura Londi - Bein based on Ujh Canal.
- iii) 47 Inf Bde - area Gujwal on the main Pathankot Road.

d) Sector Ramgarh-Nandpur: The general area of Ramgarh-Nandpur-Samba between Aik Nala-Degh Nadi was held by about two brigades under an ad hoc Headquarters(6).

Pakistani Deployment

Pakistani 1 Corps was operationally responsible for the defence of the Shakargarh Bulge. Pakistan had planned to mount her main offensive in the Ganganagar-Suratgarh area, far to the South. The task assigned to 1 Corps was to get rid of the Indian enclaves on the Pakistani side of the Ravi in the general area of Narowal. It was then to feign offensive actions in order to draw the Indian reserve force into the Bulge and prevent it from extricating itself from there to meet the Pakistan offensive in the Ganganagar-Suratgarh area(7).

To implement this scheme Lt Gen Irshad Ahmad Khan had deployed Pakistan 15 Inf Div and 8 Inf Div (four brigades) supported by 8 Indep Armd Bde in a holding role for the defensive phase in the following manner:-

a) 15 Inf Div located a brigade each in the general areas of Chharprar - Gondal - Marala Headworks and Maharajke-Phillora with aim of defending Sialkot by covering its approaches between the Chenab and Degh Nadi. There was one brigade opposite Ramgarh and Nandpur between the Aik and the Degh Nadis.

b) 8 Inf Div held the Zafarwal - Dhamthal and Narowal fortress line with two brigade groups, and one brigade group was in depth in the general area of Qila Sobha Singh and Pasrur. The fourth brigade (14 Inf Bde) was kept in reserve.

c) The Bulge east of the Zafarwal and Narowal fortress line, including Shakargarh town, was to be defended by para military forces, supported by covering troops comprising 20 Lancers with elements of reconnaissance and support battalion operating in the area(8).

For the offensive, the Pakistani strike force consisted of 6 Armd Div and 17 Inf Div. It was known to be located somewhere west of Pasrur in the general area of Daska-Pasrur so that it could be launched in any direction required(9).

Pakistan seems to have calculated that India would put in the main attack in the salient from Samba area with subsidiary attacks from Shakargarh and Dera Baba Nanak area. Considering their resources, the Pakistanis also seem to have predisposed themselves to yielding area up to the east bank of the Bein river though they would hold the advancing Indian troops as long as possible. But they seem to have been determined to hold ground on the broad fronts between the Degh Nadi and Basantar river. With this end in view, they had prepared defences and laid three extensive minefields in the area bounded by these two rivers in the west and the Bein river in the east. These lateral minefields ran east to west parallel to the international border. The first of these, which ran along the Nainakot-Ikhlaspur-Masrur-Chak Amru line was about 550 metres in depth, the second along the banks of the Bein river about 730 metres, and the third along the Degh Nadi and just north of the Shakargarh-Zafarwal lateral about 1000 metres. Pakistan also assessed that the Indian axis of advance might be the track Sukhowal-Chak Amru-Chakra-Dustri, and so held it strongly and in depth(10).

The Indian Offensive for Shakargarh

The expected Pakistani pre-emptive attack did not come off in this area. It was, therefore, decided to mount the offensive at dusk on 5 Dec. There was, however, obsessive fear of a Pakistani riposte in the direction of Amritsar and Gurdaspur. This tied up substantial troops in defensive tasks.

For the advance into the Shakargarh Bulge, Lt Gen K.K. Singh, MVC, GOC 1 Corps, laid down certain operational imperatives. The various thrusts were to

be geared that they could inter-work in terms of time and space, and their speed of advance was to synchronise. Flank protection was to be ensured and firm bases retained in the rear until new pivots could be set ahead. This excessive caution inevitably had the effect of slowing down the progress of operations(11).

The offensive started off at 1830 hrs on 5 Dec with an advance on the broad front between the Degh Nadi and Basantar river as follows:- (12)

a) 54 Inf Div supported by 16 Armd Bde (less one armoured regiment) from the general area Mawa - Galar.

b) 39 Inf Div and 72 Inf Bde (four battalions) of 36 Inf Div supported by 2 Armd Bde (less one armoured regiment) from the general area Londi - Chak Dolna - Mangu Chak.

c) The remainder of the Corps Sector was to remain on the defensive as follows:-

i) The area of Ramgarh-Bajpur-Samba was organised as X-ray Sector, and was held by 323 Inf Bde of 39 Inf Div and 168 Inf Bde of 26 Inf Div.

ii) 87 Inf Bde of 39 Inf Div held a firm base in the area Bamial-Narot-Parol.

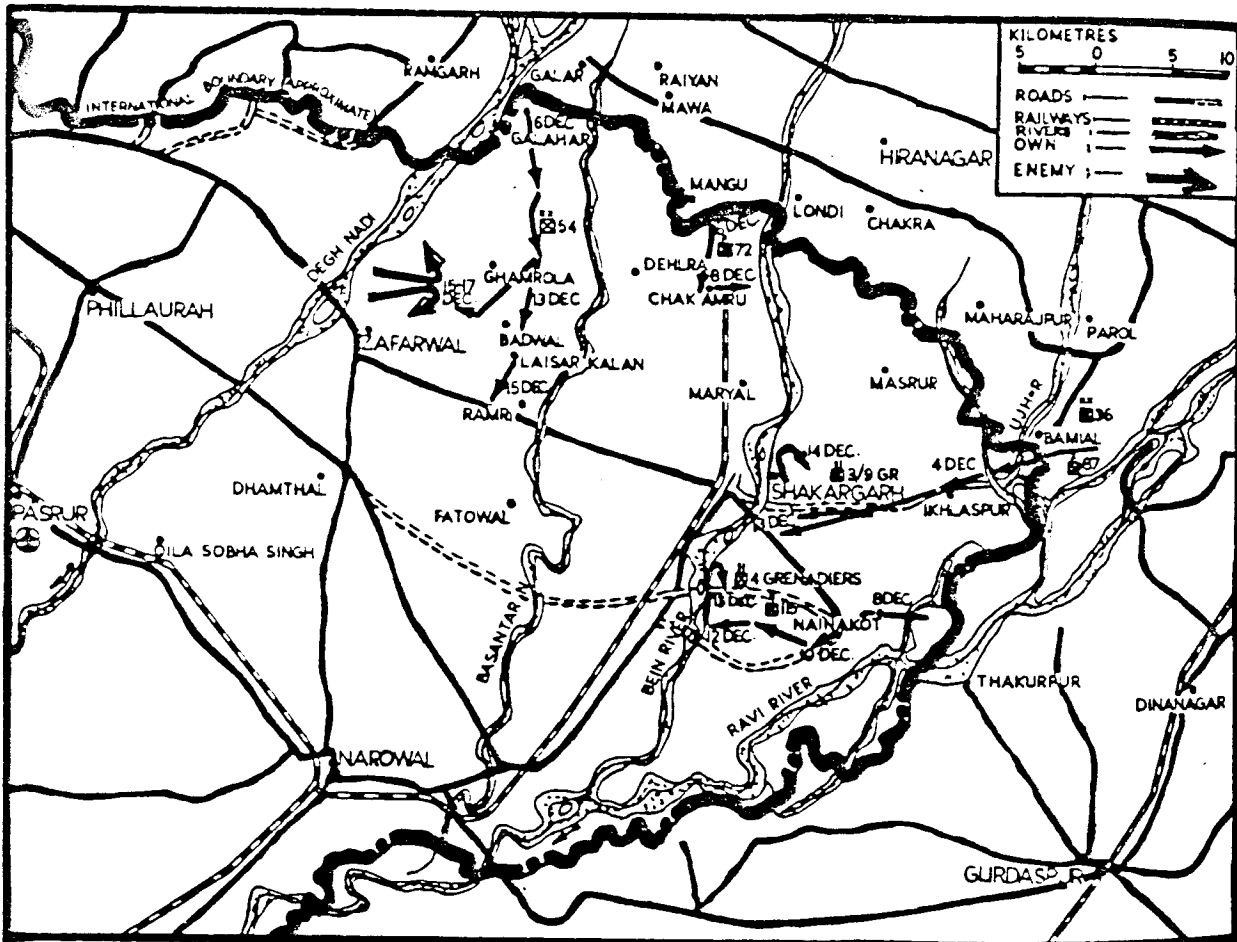
iii) 36 Inf Div (two brigades) and one armoured regiment defended the general area Thakurpur ferry.

39 Inf Div Operations

39 Inf Div was ordered on 4 Dec to capture Shakargarh by advancing along the axis Khaur Post (NX 327141) - Khaira (NX 3311) - Harar Khurd (NX 3209) - Gaddo Pindi (NX 3006) - Shakargarh with 72 Inf Bde Gp and 2 Indep Armd Bde less one regiment. Concurrently 54 Inf Div was to mount an offensive across the International Border from the general area Mawa (NX 3122) - Galar (NX 2423). The boundary between 39 and 54 Inf Divs was the line Mawa (NX 3122) - Dehla (NX 2810) - Karir Nadi.

Originally, operations in the Londi Sector were to be conducted by 36 Inf Div with two infantry brigades - 72 and 115 - and 2 Indep Armd Bde less one regiment. Since, however, it was apprehended that the enemy might break out towards the Thakurpur Gurdaspur Sector, the plan was modified, and 36 Inf Div was made responsible for defending this Sector.

THE SHAKARGARH SECTOR



with 18 Inf Bde, 115 Inf Bde and one regiment of armour ex-2 Indep Armd Bde. The operations in the Londi Sector were entrusted to 39 Inf Div and it was allotted 72 Inf Bde ex-36 Inf Div, 323 Inf Bde and 2 Indep Armd Bde less a regiment, for the task. But 323 Bde was not released, as a large-scale threat was expected in the Ramgarh Sector. And as 33 Inf Bde Gp had been ordered on 25 Nov 1971 to move to Punch, as a substantial enemy build up was reported against that Sector, (13) offensive potential of 39 Inf Div was weakened, more as no reserve was left in the hands of its Commander, Maj Gen Prabhu.

The 72 Inf Bde crossed the International Border on the evening of 5 Dec and captured some border observation posts. The 3 Sikh Lt Inf, supported by A Squadron 7 Cavalry, crossed the border at 2200 hrs and advanced towards Harar Khurd. But the advance soon ran into trouble. On 7 Dec, elements of 7 Cavalry hit a minefield in area Thakurpur - Parni (NX 3011). This, coupled with heavy artillery fire and air attacks, frustrated the attempts of 15 Grenadiers and 1 Horse and 1 Dogra to make headway (14). It was then decided to switch this force and try to break through in the area Harar Khurd from the north.

1 Dogra and A Squadron 1 Horse attacked Harar Khurd (NX 3209) at 0150 hrs on 8 Dec. But when the troops were within 180 metres of the objective, the Pakistanis brought down aimed artillery and tank fire (15). The attack failed with heavy casualties to the Dogras - 24 Killed and 65 wounded. In the words of K.K. Singh, it was a "singularly ill-conceived action, sadly wanting in recce, coordination and fire planning" (16).

In contrast, operations by some other battalions, launched into the assault after adequate patrolling and planning, were successful (17). In the afternoon of 8 Dec, 22 Punjab attacked and captured Chak Amru, 3 Sikh LI evicted the enemy from Parni, and 15 Grenadiers secured Khaira (MX 3311) (18).

But at Harar Kalan-Munan Complex the same dismal story of abortive attempts was repeated. On 8 Dec, 1 Horse Gp was ordered to turn the enemy position at Harar Kalan-Harar Khurd from the east. The going proved difficult. The Indian troops encountered here not only the second minefield west of Shahbazpur (NX 3409), which they had failed to detect earlier, but also the strong points of Dehla and Chakra. The trawls breached the minefield under cover of artillery fire. Two tanks were moved across but a third blew its track while trying to cross the lane. As it was getting dark, and a threat from Pakistani tank hunting

parties was feared, the tanks were abandoned and the trawls ordered to pull out, but these, too, had to be left behind due to failing light(19). The fundamental symmetry in perception (or more aptly misconception) is sharply brought out by the Pakistani version. Brig Nisar Ahmed Khan SJ (Retd) writes, "Unfortunately the sight of enemy trawls advancing through the minefield unnerved the infantry deployed in area Shahbazpur...Soon the squadron began pulling out"(20). The 72 Inf Bde was now to launch an infantry attack on the Harar Kalan-Munan Complex during the night 8/9 Dec. But since the Brigade could not complete recce and fire planning, the attack was postponed to 10/11 Dec. The patrolling proved fruitful; Harar Khurd was found unoccupied and was captured by 15 Grenadiers at 0500 hrs on 10 Dec(21). The Brigade attacked Harar Kalan and Munan at 2100 hrs on 10 Dec. Harar Kalan was captured by 1 Mahar by 2230 hrs at the cost of about 40 killed/wounded. That Harar Kalan was bitterly contested is borne out by the fact that the only Nishan-e-Haider the highest decoration for bravery was won by Sowar Mohammad Hussain on 10 Dec. Meanwhile, the Pakistanis abandoned Munan and 3 Sikh LI secured it without a fight by 0400 hrs on 11 Dec(22). A Company of 22 Punjab captured Shahbazpur at 0320 hrs. The Mahars, however, could not exploit their success, and further advance was halted when another minefield was encountered to the south of Harar Kalan. Meanwhile, 6 Madras which was under the direct command of 39 Inf Div, had occupied village Thakurpur (NX 4907) on 10 Dec, and two days later, supported by 90 Indep Recce Squad, it captured Masrur, which was found strongly fortified.

The Corps Commander decided to attack Shakargarh from yet another direction. It was discovered that the area Ikhlaspur was lightly held by the enemy. The 87 Inf Bde Gp was ordered to secure area Road Junction (SC 4595). The 14 Rajputana Rifles of this Brigade advanced and captured Garota (SC 5498) and Ikhlaspur early in the morning of 11 Dec, and by 1100 hrs the Battalion was at Road Junction (SC 4595)(23). On 12 Dec, the Brigade was placed under command 36 Inf Div for operations against Shakargarh(24).

Much time had, however, been lost and the investing of Shakargarh delayed. The failure of 1 Horse and 1 Dogra to capture Harar Kalan on night 7/8 Dec when they suffered heavy casualties, and the unsuccessful attempt made by 2 Indep Armd Bde to breach the enemy's second minefield around Harar Kalan-Munan Complex, on 8 Dec, had had a demoralising affect on the troops of these units. In view of the Corps Commander, Lt Gen K.K. Singh, if Commander 2 Indep Armd Bde had established a small infantry

bridgehead across the minefield, much of the time and casualties would have been saved. Considering all these factors, the Corps Commander had formed the opinion that the "standard of the stage management for the battle so far displayed was uninspiring and weak." Now the advance of Mahars had also come to a halt. He did not think that at this rate 39 Inf Div would be able to invest Shakargarh in the immediate future, even though they had not far to go. He, therefore, decided to redeploy his forces. On 12 Dec, HQ 39 Inf Div moved to the Ramgarh Sector and took over the operational responsibility of that Sector.

54 Inf Div Operations

The 54 Inf Div (Bison Div) occupied a divisional defended sector in area Samba (NX 3032). The Division did well west of the Karir Nadi. It was supported by 16 Indep Armd Bde, (25) 41 Indep Arty Bde (26) and 9 Engineer Regt (27).

The Division's plan envisaged operations against Zafarwal (NX 0904) - Rajian (NX 0700) - Dhamthal (SC 0895) from area Galar (NX 2432) establishing a bridgehead across the Basantar river and capturing the Supwal Ditch. The Division had three brigades under Command: (28) 47 Inf Bde with 16 Madras, 3 Grenadiers and 16 Dogra; 91 Inf Bde with 3 Garh Rif and 3/1 GR; and 74 Inf Bde with 8 Grenadiers, 6 Kumaon and 9 Marathas (29).

Assault troops of 74 and 91 Inf Bdes crossed the border at 2000 hrs on 5 Dec 1971 and captured some forward posts (30). The 74 Inf Bde had to encounter stiff resistance before it captured Chamana Khurd. The same day 91 Inf Bde captured Mukhwal, Dhandhar and Chak Bhuru, where the Pakistanis had well-developed defences but did not offer determined resistance (31). The 74 Infantry Brigade eliminated Galahar Tanda and Chak Jangu (NX 2120) by 0230 hrs on 6 Dec. At this juncture 47 Inf Bde was launched across the international border, supported by 4 Horse. This Brigade captured Chamana Kalan (NX 2520) without opposition. But its further advance was stoutly opposed. It then probed forward to the flanks of the Thakurdwara - Nagwal minefield on 6 Dec and trawled it under cover of a dust haze, and extended the bridgehead up to north of Bari. The 4 Horse bypassed west and south-west and captured Bari and Darman on 7 Dec (32). The 16 Madras captured Dodwan Kalan (NX 2611) on the night of 7/8 Dec, while 18 Raj Rif took possession of Ghamrola (NX 1911) on 8 Dec (33). However, as both the flanks of the Division were exposed, it was decided not to advance any further until the east flank was secured (34).

As it was appreciated that Chakra position, which lay south of the second minefield, was the pivot on which enemy defences east of Karir Nadi were based, it was considered a vital tactical necessity to reduce Chakra and Dehlra. The Division therefore deviated from its plan of operations and ordered 74 Inf Bde to capture these positions and subsequently exploit south and east(35).

Capture of Chakra and Dehlra

The flanks of both 39 and 54 Inf Divs were seriously threatened by two Pak positions - Chakra and Dehlra. Chakra was a well-developed strong point, held by a squadron of Patton tanks and about a company of infantry with MMGs in bunkers and RCLs in dug-in positions(36). It had a deep minefield with a nullah in between, covering it on three sides, which served as a partial anti-tank obstacle. By virtue of this intrinsic natural strength, Chakra dominated the surrounding area. Dehlra occupied a vitally important position as various tracks converged on to it. It derived its strength from the fortified position around the Chakra village.

As already stated, 39 Inf Div had failed to reach the second minefield west of Harar Khurd. In order to facilitate progress by this Division and enable it to come in line with the advance of 54 Inf Div, the latter was ordered to capture Dehlra. But as it was appreciated that the Chakra position, which lay south of the second minefield, was the axis of enemy defences east of Karir, orders were issued first for the capture of Chakra from the west or north-west across the Karir. This was to be followed by the capture of Dehlra and subsequent exploitation to south and east. The task was to be carried out by 74 Inf Bde. H hour for the attack was fixed for 2100 hrs on 10 Dec. 8 Grenadiers and 4 Horse distinguished themselves in this action.

The Grenadiers mounted a well-planned attack from the rear. The defenders offered stout resistance and there was hand-to-hand fighting for some time, but Chakra was captured by 0100 hrs on 11 Dec. In the meantime, the trawlers started breaching the minefield. But as the leading trawl tank and the one behind it were damaged half-way across the minefield, the rest of the minefield was breached by the engineers by hand, and a bridgehead was established by 0300 hrs on 11 Dec. The enemy made two abortive counter-attacks with his armoured squadron and infantry company. The battle was strongly contested(37). The Division deserved credit for stage

managing the battle well and breaching the minefield(38). The loss of Chakra so upset the Pak commander and threw him off-balance, that 6 Kumaon were able to capture Dehlra without opposition in a matter of 2½ hours - by 0500 hrs on 11 Dec(39). The 8 Grenadiers further exploited southward and captured some more posts, thereby turning partially the next mine and obstacle belt extending from the Supwal Ditch in the west to Laisar Kalan in the east and unhinging the defences east of Karir Nadi. The capture of these places secured the flanks of 39 and 54 Inf Div and sealed off the Pak infiltration route astride Dehlra - Jhangi (NX 3214) - Behr (NX 2713).

Crossing of the Second Minefield

While 74 Inf Bde was engaged in the capture of Chakra and Dehlra, 91 Inf Bde prepared for crossing the second minefield located north of Lagwal - Hamral - Lohara - Barkhaniyan - Jatwal Maihla (NX 2609) - Chakra(40). Commencing the assault on 13 Dec, it made considerable advance towards the south till 15 Dec, capturing Lohara, Laisar Kalan, Mehlwan and Lagwal. But it came across another minefield covering Chakra and Badwal(41). The Division now decided to establish a bridgehead south-west of Basantar Nadi.

36 Infantry Division Operations

The 36 Inf Div(42) held the defended sector in area Thakurpur-Gurdaspur with 18 Inf Bde Gp. With some tanks and infantry this Brigade did a good job in crossing the Ravi river in the Lasian enclave and establishing a bridgehead across the river to a depth of some 1800 to 2750 metres. The 115 Inf Bde and 14 Horse used the Bridgehead to advantage for breaking out towards Nurkot-Shakargarh at 2200 hrs on 8 Dec(43).

The Pakistanis had prepared strong delaying positions, augmented by minefields, at Nainakot, Tanda (SC 4389) - Lallu Chak and Malakpur(44). In the territory east of the Bein river, their policy was to play for time and retard the advance of the Indian troops for as long as possible, and in the process inflict maximum attrition. They achieved this objective through the border observation posts which poured down heavy automatic and artillery fire before withdrawing. The defenders had also established strong platoons on the bunds and villages, and made maximum tactical use of such built-up areas. To boost fire power, these posts had elements of recce and support battalion, which were so deployed as to present a large frontage. MMG and RCL teams at these posts, which were sited in the flanks, augmented fire

power and opened up on Indian advancing troops. The Pak Commander used his artillery boldly and accurately, and also used roving positions to prevent detection of the main gun positions. He withstood two frontal attacks of the Indian troops and did succeed in causing considerable delay. He was also swift in launching counter-attacks to retrieve lost ground.

The 115 Inf Bde secured a bridgehead across the border by capturing Kotli Sainian (SC 5189) - Bakarwal (SC 5190) on 9 Dec(45). It then made an outflanking move and drove the defenders out of Nainkot - a tactically important village - and captured it at 1330 hrs on 10 Dec. The 14 Horse also made a deep outflanking manoeuvre from the south, trapped the Pak armoured squadron and destroyed 7 Patton tanks, and also forced the Pakistanis to withdraw from Lallu Chak and Malakpur (SC 4089) positions which were further in depth(46).

The 87 Infantry Brigade, which had advanced along Ikhlaspur-Shakargarh, was replaced under command of 36 Inf Div on 12 Dec. Helped by the success of the operations of 115 Inf Bde, this Brigade advanced to Badwal (SC 4195) on the eastern flank of the Bein river and secured it by 0300 hrs on 13 Dec(47). On the night of 13/14 Dec, it captured Bhatti and Shahpur Chinjora on the east bank of the Bein.

By now the Division had secured the entire east bank of the Bein river with tanks and cleared the area behind with infantry. A conflict in the assessment of the enemy dispositions across the Bein between the GOC and Commander 115 Inf Bde led to a set back(48). The GOC appreciated that Shakargarh had been vacated by the enemy, and so an assault could be launched to capture it. The Commander 115 Inf Bde, however, disagreed and thought that Shakargarh had deliberate defences and minefields and also tanks and missiles(49). In the meantime, Maj S.S. Choudhary, Commander B Company 4 Grenadiers, assaulted and captured Dinapur Khurd across the Bein immediately south of Shakargarh at 0400 hrs on 14 Dec(50). When the CO 4 Grenadiers told the Commander 115 Inf Bde that the engineers had checked for mines and found none, the whole Battalion was put into the assault(51). The CO 4 Grenadiers was proved wrong. The leading tank of A Squadron 14 Horse, hit a mine and was immobilised when it was attempting to get across the Bein. The B Company in area Dinapur Khurd was encircled by the enemy, and Major Choudhary, 3 JCOs and 75 ORs were reported missing. The attack had to be called off(52).

The Pak Commander was now seized with the need

of defending the west bank of the Bein river and therefore rushed troops from Narowal (SC 0874) and other sectors to build up the area Nurkot-Shakargarh, which was already well prepared with deep minefields covering all likely approaches.

Maj Gen Ahluwalia planned an attack on Shakargarh by 115 and 87 Inf Bdes for the night of 14/15 Dec. The 4 Grenadiers of 115 Bde launched the attack. From what followed it is clear that it was a hasty and not well prepared operation and the Division was thrown off balance(53). Recce was not complete and there was hardly any information about the enemy. His shelling caught one of the companies in the open and caused some casualties, making the sub-units scatter. 4 Grenadiers got demoralised and there was confusion. It was hardly prudent to use this battalion in this operation when it had suffered a set back only the previous night. The attack by 87 Inf Bde also fizzled out. The 3/9 GR mounted a spirited attack and secured part of its objective, namely, Chatrana. But the tanks got bogged down in the Bein and the Gorkhas did not get tank support. The enemy got wise to the move and inflicted heavy casualties on the Battalion, taking a number of its men prisoner. Thus, this attack too failed(54).

At this stage, it was decided to lift 18 Inf Bde from Thakurpur area and, in conjunction with 115 Inf Bde, launch another attack on the night 17/18 Dec(55). The cease fire on 17 Dec, however, precluded the attempt.

Thus the Division could neither capture Shakargarh nor Nurkot, but suffered the following casualties during the operations:-

- (a) Killed - 94
 - (b) Wounded - 307
 - (c) Missing - 173
- (taken PsOW)

The failure was due partly to the stage management of the battle by Maj Gen Ahluwalia and partly to the fact that he was not provided full resources(56). For instance, it conducted most of its operations only with 14 Horse less a squadron and 115 Inf Bde. The 87 Inf Bde was replaced under its command only on 12 Dec. The 2 Indep Armd Bde was deployed from 39 Inf Div Sector into 36 Inf Div Sector on the night 11/12 Dec. It could close in with 1 Horse and 1 Dogra only by night 13/14 Dec. During that night 1 Horse changed command thrice between 115 Inf Bde and 2 Indep Armd Bde.

The Battle of Basantar River

The task allotted to 54 Inf Div was to destroy the Pak 8 Indep Armd Bde and capture Zafarwal(57). It had already captured Lohara - Laisar Kalan - Mehlwan - Lagwal and decided to establish a bridgehead south-west of Basantar Nadi. The 47 Inf Bde was ordered to establish the bridgehead, which was to include Barapind - Sikandarpur - Lalial and south-west shoulder of the Supwal Ditch. The 74 Inf Bde was ordered to capture the remaining position of the Supwal Ditch(58). The Pak troops had predictably concentrated the bulk of their armour west of the Basantar river in the area of Supwal Ditch and Zafarwal. This battle fought from 15 to 17 December turned out to be most significant and decisive, as it was not only eminently well fought, but was also marked by successive counter-attacks by the Pak troops to eliminate the bridgehead 54 Inf Div established across the Basantar River(59).

The terrain was devoid of roads and abounded in streams. The defenders had sited obstacle belts in considerable depth, and to boot, had covered them by infantry, RCLs and tanks(60). Medium machine gun and infantry "Nests" were positioned in between the minefields. The positions were fortified with bunkers, connected by a network of communication trenches and alternate positions. Gaps in platoon localities and flanks were covered by elements of Reconnaissance and Support Battalion.

The Corps Commander, Lt Gen K.K. Singh, later lauded Maj Gen WAG Pinto, GOC 54 Inf Div for his "Exceptional and skilful leadership and praiseworthy stage management of the battle throughout the ops." The mine barriers encountered were formidable, approximately 1460 metres deep. The engineers breached them with considerable skill and resourcefulness. They also forged operational tracks in this dusty terrain and surfaced the roadways with elephant grass and 'Chari'. Other arms too were well integrated. The 54 Arty Bde and 41 Indep Arty Bde shot accurately and were primarily responsible for breaking Pak infantry assaults. Excellent tank gunnery and manoeuvre by armoured squadrons wore down repeated Pak assaults made with superior forces. The Pak formations - 24 Inf Bde, 124 Inf Bde and 8 Armd Bde - suffered crippling losses in personnel and tanks(61) at the hands of 16 Madras, 3 Grenadiers, 6 Madras, 17 Horse and 4 Horse, and they all distinguished themselves in this fiercely contested battle.

The 54 Inf Div chose the area Sarajchak - Lalial

RF - Jarpal - Lohal for bursting through the Basantar River, while the enemy had expected it around Badwal(62).

In phase I of the task assigned to 47 Inf Bde, 16 Madras started the attack on Laliaal and Sarajchak at 1930 hrs on 15 Dec(63). The positions were captured after a violent hand-to-hand struggle. The depth positions were also captured by 2330 hrs at the cost of the heavy casualties on both sides.

The Pak Commander was not reconciled to the loss of these positions and was bent upon eliminating the bridgehead. The bulk of his 8 Indep Armd Bde and 124 Inf Bde made a series of fierce counter-attacks with armour and infantry, preceded by heavy artillery shelling. The battalion had to fight one long action continuously for three nights and two days, repelling counter-attack after counter-attack. Casualties piled up on both sides in this grimly fought battle. Nevertheless, the Madrasis held on to the hard-won ground.

In Phase II, 3 Grenadiers of 74 Inf Bde were to capture Jarpal and Lohal(64). When it became apparent that 16 Madras were involved in a bitter fight with the enemy, 3 Grenadiers were launched at 2230 hrs on 15 Dec. This move had the effect of dividing the enemy's attention who perceived a threat developing towards Zafarwal. In a fierce battle at Jarpal, most of the Pak bunkers were cleared in hand-to-hand fighting. The Battalion mopped up the remnants still hiding in bunkers and sugarcane fields in Lohal and captured its objectives by the dawn of 16 Dec. The Pakistanis counter-attacked with armour and infantry five times during the day of 16 Dec. The Grenadiers, supported by 17 Horse, and with effective use of artillery and mortars, beat off the attacks with heavy losses to the attackers in tanks and men. In one of the tank battles, 2/Lt Arun Khetrapal of 17 Horse (Poona) destroyed five Pak tanks before making the supreme sacrifice, for which he was posthumously decorated with the country's highest gallantry award, the Param Vir Chakra. The Pakistanis were now desperate and put in a most determined effort at 0430 hrs on 17 Dec to dislodge the Grenadiers, charging them in wave after wave. The Grenadiers fought gallantly and beat back all the attacks. Their last counter-attack was made at Jarpal, where Maj Hoshiar Singh, Company Commander, C Company, won the coveted Param Vir Chakra. The enemy was now completely demoralised and called it a day at dusk on 17 Dec, after losing 87 men, among whom was the Commanding Officer Lt Col Mohammad Akram Raja(65). The scale and

severity of the debacle have been brought out by Brig Jahangir Karamat of the Pak Army in the following words. "One cannot, however, help comparing this attack to the controversial change of the Light Brigade.... The armoured brigade lost almost fifty tanks and failed to restore the defences on the Basantar Nullah. The enemy was not destroyed, in fact his losses were less than one third of the armoured brigade's losses"(66).

The Indian troops thus succeeded in destroying a major portion of the enemy's 8 Indep Armd Bde and 24 and 124 Inf Bdes and turned the defences at Supwal Ditch and posed a threat to Zafarwal. Had the war gone on for some more days, Zafarwal would have been almost certainly taken followed by the capture of Shakargarh. However, Pakistan's strongly held fortress chain of Zafarwal-Dhamthal-Narowal remained largely intact, and behind it the 6 Armd Div was still unbeaten.

The Indian chances of full success were perhaps vitiated when it was decided to move 36 Inf Div around to the left flank for a thrust through the Thakurpur ferry. Along with the Division had to be switched away the accompanying armour also, causing disorganisation of movement and unnecessary delay. If all the three divisions had been launched on parallel axes from the Samba area southwards, they would have afforded mutual support and covered one another's flanks. The advance would have been with the grain of the land and parallel to the general direction of the river courses. Besides, when the Indian troops crossed the minefields the Pakistan 6 Armd Div had to be taken into account. But it was not known where it was located, as groves of mango trees abounded in the area and camouflaged armour. The Indian air force also could not be very helpful as all its effort was directed towards Chhamb. These, and above all the overcautious approach to the offensive, were some of the reasons why the Indian forces could not achieve greater success in the Shakargarh Bulge(67).

THE PUNJAB SECTOR

The Topography and Deployment

Having dealt with the operations in the Partapur, Kargil, Jammu and Kashmir and Shakargarh Sectors, we now come to the area which, for some part, was the joint responsibility of 1 and 11 Corps, and for the remaining major part, the responsibility of 11 Corps, under the overall command of Lt Gen K.P. Candeth, GOC-in-C Western Command. The 1 Corps was to defend mainly the approaches to the Pathankot base.

The remaining axes were the responsibility of 11 Corps, which was assigned the task of defending the Punjab and Haryana and Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. Its area of responsibility extended approximately 640 km along the international border. The Corps had its main HQ at Amritsar from where it controlled the northern half of this sector. The skeleton advance HQ at Kot Kapura looked after the area south of the Satluj. Lt Gen N.C. Rawley, PVSM, was the GOC-in-C, 11 Corps.

The 11 Corps consisted of three Divisions and an independent Sector. The Corps had assigned the following defended sectors to its formations:-

(a) 15 Inf Div under Maj Gen B.M. Bhattacharjea, to defend Amritsar Sector including the prominent towns of Amritsar, Dera Baba Nanak and Ajnala, with Brigades deployed as follows:-

- i) 86 Inf Bde in area Dera Baba Nanak
- ii) 58 Inf Bde in area Ajnala
- iii) 96 Inf Bde in area Fatehpur-Burj
- iv) 54 Inf Bde in area Atari-Ranian
- v) 38 Inf Bde in area Neshta-Rajatal

(b) 7 Inf Div under Maj Gen Freemantle to defend all territory south of Bhuchar Headworks including Firozpur. The disposition of its Brigades was as follows:-

- i) 65 Inf Bde in area Khalra
- ii) 48 Inf Bde in Khemkaran axis
- iii) 35 Inf Bde in Firozpur sector (Also under 14 Div from 5 Dec)

(c) 14 Inf Div under Maj Gen Onkar Singh Kalkat (who took command of the Division when Maj Gen H. Bakshi got injured on 7 Dec) to defend the area between Firozpur and Fazilka. The Brigades were deployed as under:-

- i) 116 Inf Bde in area Jalalabad
- ii) 35 Inf Bde (from 5 Dec) in the Mamdot-Firozpur sector
- iii) 29 Inf Bde in Firozpur sub sector.

(d) HQ 'F' Sector under Maj Gen Ram Singh to defend areas Fazilka, Abohar and Ganganagar with its Brigades disposition as under:-

- i) 67 Indep Inf Bde Gp in area Fazilka
- ii) 51 Indep Para Bde at Ganganagar
- iii) 163 Inf Bde (two Bns) at Suratgarh.

Facing India's 11 Corps, Pakistan had deployed its 4 Corps commanded by Lt Gen Bahadur Sher, which was operationally responsible for the area extending from Maqbool Pura, about 37 km northwest of Lahore, to a point on the border southeast of Bahawalpur.

The area opposite 15 Inf Div was held by Pakistan's 10 Inf Div under Maj Gen S.A.Z. Naqvi, with 88 Inf Bde, 114 Inf Bde and 103 Inf Bde, broadly deployed along the forward line parallel to the international border, and 22 Inf Bde deployed in depth in area Harbanspura as a reserve.

Opposite India's 7 Inf Div Pakistan had deployed its 11 Inf Div under Maj Gen Abdul Majid, with one brigade in area Lahore-Khalra-Bhikiwind, the second brigade in the general area Khemkaran and the third in Kasur area in and around Hussainiwala(68). Further down, south of Ferozpur opposite Foxtrot Sector, Pakistan had deployed 105 Bde Gp covering Sulaimanke area and 25 Inf Bde covering area upto Bahawalnagar(69).

Pakistan had concentrated its strike force, 2 Corps, consisting of 1 Armd Div and 33 Inf Div in the general area of Montgomery-Okara-Bahawalpur, which posed a potential threat to Ganganagar-Suratgarh-Bhatinda-Kot Kapura area.

In the northern Punjab Sector, the Indo-Pak border ran from Pathankot, through Gurdaspur towards the Hussainiwala headworks. In this Sector, the strategic bulge between the international border and the Beas and Satluj rivers was of military, political and economic importance. Consisting of the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur, this area might be called the Amritsar Sector. It was a major granary of India. In the war plans of both India and Pakistan, this region figured prominently, as the Pathankot base and its L of C provided logistic support to the whole of the Jammu and Kashmir theatre including Ladakh. India could make deep air raids into the territory from the air force base at Pathankot and the airfield at Amritsar. Amritsar was also the centre of communications and connected by various rail and road routes to Pakistan. In this region, the important highways were: the Grand Trunk Road, the Lahore-Amritsar road, the Kasur-Khemkaran-Amritsar road in the south; and the Quila Sobha Singh-Ajnala Road across the Gil Ferry and the Narowal-Dera Baba Nanak Road over the Ravi in the north. The terrain was level and dry most of the year and thereafter, ideal for armour manoeuvre.

In this area lay the small town of Dera Baba Nanak. Near it were two strategically important enclaves - the Indian enclave north of Ravi called Kasowal, and the Pakistani enclave south of Ravi called Jassar or Dera Baba Nanak. The latter included the Ravi rail-road bridge connecting the Indian communications in the Punjab with those of Pakistan in the Pasrur-Narowal area. The Dera Baba Nanak bridge gave Pakistan the potential of outflanking the defences of Amritsar and Pathankot base.

South of Satluj was the Ferozpur Sector, which included the headworks across the River Satluj at Hussainiwala. South and West of Ferozpur, the Indian defences were based on the Eastern and Gang Canals and the Ferozpur Feeder. The Indian enclave of Hussainiwala was situated west of the Satluj river along the Ferozpur-Lahore highway. The terrain was low lying and flooded by the Satluj during the monsoon. The area was interlaced with numerous criss-crossing flood-cum-check bunds. The more prominent amongst them were the Finger, Kunde Bund, Samadhi Bund, Guide Bund and Perimeter. The road Kasur-Ferozpur passed over the Hussainiwala Headworks, and being the only international land route open then between India and Pakistan, it had a joint Indo-Pak Checkpost (JCP). The Hussainiwala enclave was important for defending the headworks and the rail-road bridge. From this bridgehead across the Satluj, India could develop a thrust towards Kasur and Lahore. The Indian defence in this Sector was to be based on the main obstacle belt made up of Mari Megha and Valtoha Drains north of River Satluj, and the Eastern and Bikaner Canals south of the River Satluj.

About 24 km south-west of Ferozpur was the Pakistani salient of Mamdot across the river Satluj. This bulge had an area of 56 sq km and was full of 'Sarkanda' which provided excellent natural cover to the Pakistanis but posed navigational problems to the Indian troops. The area was generally tankable, except at a few creeks, and posed a threat to the Indian defences in the Ferozpur Sector.

In the Foxtrot Sector of 11 Corps, Fazilka was a prominent border town. It was a vital communication centre. Road and rail arteries ran from it to Ferozpur, Malout and Abohar. The Pakistani headworks of Sulaimanke were in close proximity to the Indian border - 1.5 km or so. This made the area vulnerable from the point of view of Pakistan, and she naturally wished to gain some cushion of depth inside Indian territory as early as possible after the start of the hostilities. For the Indian military planners, Fazilka was particularly important as the Pakistan

strike force, 2 Corps, was positioned in the general area of Montgomery - Okara - Bahawalpur. This force consisted of 1 Armd Div and 33 Inf Div. Pakistan could employ this force for ingress across the Satluj between the Hussainiwala and Sulaimanke headworks and thence into the sensitive areas of Faridkot - Bhatinda or in the north-east in the general areas of Mamdot and Jalalabad. Pakistan could also develop a thrust along the open southern flank of Fazilka in the Ganganagar - Sarupsar area(70).

In the Northern Sector of the area of responsibility of 11 Corps, the defences were based on brigade defended sectors in the general area of Dera Baba Nanak and Ajnala, south of river Ravi. Between the rivers Ravi and Satluj, covering troops were positioned in the Khalra - Khemkaran areas. The Bikaner Gang Canal was considered the limit of permissible enemy penetration between Fazilka and Firozpur. In the Southern Sector where a major thrust by Pak infantry and armour was considered most likely, it was decided to hold Fazilka, Abohar and Ganganagar. In case of counter-offensive operations in this area, 14 Inf Div and 1 Armd Div were to be employed.

The Amritsar Sector

The area of responsibility of 15 Inf Div included the prominent towns of Amritsar, Dera Baba Nanak and Ajnala. The area was large and after covering the important approaches with the five brigades it had (viz. 38, 54, 58, 86 and 96), the Division had no reserve available.

In this Sector the enemy's main thrust was likely to come across the Ravi. The paucity of troops left large gaps to be covered in the defences. As there was danger of the enemy breaking out with armour, particularly through the area between Ranian and Dera Baba Nanak, three armoured regiments were located north of Amritsar. And as there was inadequate artillery support in this threatened Sector, 21 Indep Arty Bde (71) was moved north.

In these operations, the Indian artillery played a notable part both in support of the infantry and to beat back Pak counter-attacks. "Where possible shock action tac was adopted to recapture lost ground"(72). The Division eliminated the Pakistani bridgehead of Dera Baba Nanak after fighting a grim battle and inflicting heavy casualties on the defenders. It repulsed all the Pakistani attacks in the Ajnala Sector, removed enemy threat to Amritsar by capturing Pakistani posts of Burj and Fatehpur after fierce fighting and frustrating enemy designs in the Attari -

Ranian Sector and improved its defensive posture by occupying certain Pakistani posts in the Neshta-Rajatal Sector. The overall direction of the operations was satisfactory. All ranks displayed courage and proved the cohesiveness of the formation.

Battle for Dera Baba Nanak

Dera Baba Nanak was a small town situated on the south bank of the river Ravi near the Indo-Pakistan border. Near the town were two important enclaves. To the north of Ravi was the Indian enclave called Kasowal, and to the south was the Pakistani enclave of Jassar or Dera Baba Nanak. The bridge over the Ravi near Dera Baba Nanak lay within the Pakistan territory and the Pakistani enclave was situated south of that bridge. Dera Baba Nanak town was important as a gate-way to other major towns of the Punjab, such as Gurdaspur, Batala, Beas and Amritsar. Should the enemy capture the town of Dera Bana Nanak, it would afford him a cluster of objectives and would consequently unbalance the Indian defences(73).

After the pre-emptive attack by Pakistan on 3 December, it became imperative that this Pakistani bridgehead be eliminated. As the area was marshy and covered by thick growth of elephant grass, kikar and shisham trees, the strength and disposition of Pak forces could only be surmised, and it was estimated that there were 3 Ranger posts in addition to a network of defences occupied by units of the regular army.

In order to understand the progress of military operations in this area (named OP AKAL) it is necessary to explain the layout of the various features:- (74)

The Eastern End: It consisted of four bunds radiating from the eastern end of the Dera Baba Nanak bridge. In clockwise sequence these were called the Depth Bund, the Rail Bund, the Road Bund and the River Bund. It was the most dominating feature and was considered a ground of tactical importance. The Pakistanis had deployed here one company with battalion headquarters supported by MMGs and RCLs.

The Dhussi Bund (River Embankment) : Branching off from the Rail Bund, it ran eastward up to the Ranger post of Mardana. It was known to have a number of emplacements from 'T' Junction (the junction of Rail Bund and Dhussi Bund) up to and including a feature called '7r'. A small building known as the Colonel's Hut on the south side of this Bund had concrete emplacements and defences. The Pak Commander defended

this Bund and the Ring Bund with one company supported by MMGs and RCLs from the Recce and Support Battalion.

The Ring Bund : To the south of the Dhussi Bund lay seven Ring Bunds in the form of small mounds covered with scrub. The company deployed at Dhussi defended this Bund too. The Western End and Dry Tree End lying to the west of Ravi this area had a strong system of concrete defences all along the river line, and two embankments astride the bridge. The old railway crossing had also been made into a formidable fortress. Here the defenders had 2 companies of the regular army.

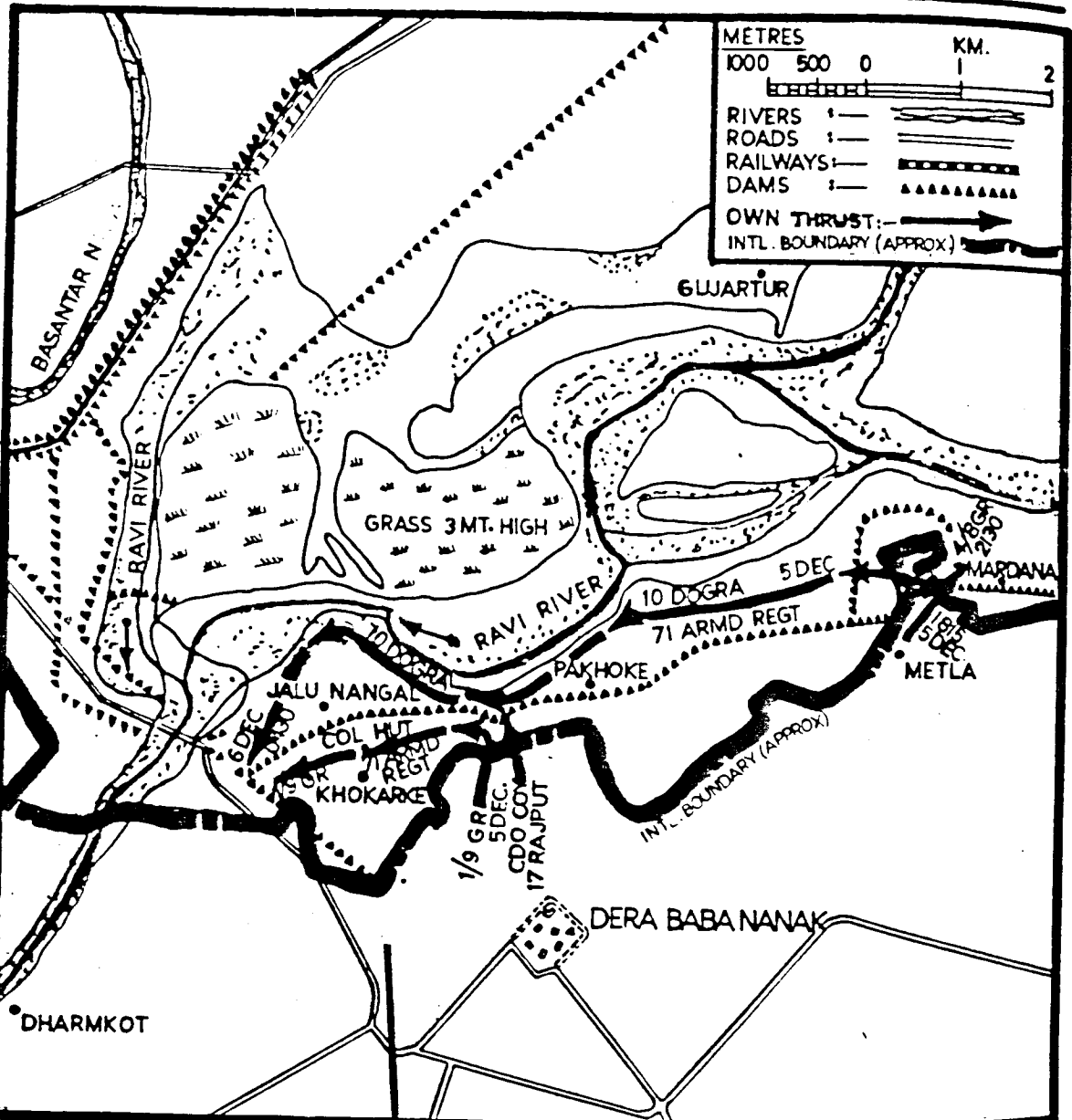
The plan for the elimination of Dera Baba Nanak enclave was drawn up and rehearsed by 15 Inf Div. The task was allotted to 86 Inf Bde. The plan aimed at hitting the enemy from the rear with infantry and armour. It involved a long march through unknown area covered by Sarkanda grass and crossing of the river. The plan was put into action at 1700 hrs on 5 December when a company 4/8 GR moved towards the Metla enclave, and at 1815 hrs secured it against Pakistani interference from Gujartur (2674) and Mardana(75).

The 17 Rajput, with a Brigade Commando Company under command captured area '7r' by 1840 hrs and then, pressing on towards Colonel's Hut, they cleared the area Copse by 2230 hrs on 5 Dec,(76) and secured the crossing site for armoured and infantry columns on the river Ravi in the early hours of the morning.

Phase I of the attack launched at 1700 hrs on 5 Dec embraced the securing of Forming Up Place about 180 metres north-east of Colonel's Hut and Ring Bund No.7, by 0300 hrs on 6 Dec. But 10 Dogra and 71 Armd Regt, which were to execute it, could not advance swiftly enough due to marshy ground and mist, and reached crossing site No.1 behind schedule (2135 hrs)(77). When they found the site unsuitable, they moved towards '7r' to attempt a crossing. They reached it by 2345 hrs. As 10 Dogra would have taken two hours more to reach their Forming Up Place, 1/9 GR was ordered to launch Phase II of the attack, which postulated the capture of Colonel's Hut and Ring Bund No.6. The Gorkhas launched a swift attack on Dhussi Bund in spite of constant firing from MMGs and other arms by defenders entrenched in concrete pill boxes, bunkers and trenches. After hand-to-hand fighting, the Gorkhas captured the Colonel's Hut by 0230 hrs and cleared 'T' Junction by 0600 hrs on 6 Dec, reaching up to the Eastern End(78).

The capture of Colonel's Hut by the Gorkhas went a long way in helping the 10 Dogra attack, who had in

THE DERA BABA NANAK SECTOR



the mean time reached their Forming Up Place at 0315 hrs. The Battalion attacked the Eastern Bund at 0325 hrs. The defences were well-planned and coordinated and included concrete pill boxes. The attack from the rear came as a surprise, but the defenders gave a tough fight and at some places had to be silenced by lobbing hand-grenades into the pill boxes. The Eastern Bund was captured by 0430 hrs on 6 Dec with intimate fire support by 71 Armd Regt and 42 Fd Regt(79). This completed Phase III, that is the final phase, of the operations. The 17 Rajput, who had provided the firm base for the operation, finally cleared Khokarke and Sandhowan posts(80).

The Pakistanis counter-attacked on the night of 6/7 Dec. But the Indian troops foiled it with the help of concentrated artillery fire, and held on to their hard-earned positions. Another attempt on the night of 7/8 Dec to dislodge the Indian troops also failed. In desperation the Pakistanis destroyed the first pier of the Dera Baba Nanak bridge(81). In this operation, Pak casualties were 34 killed and 26 taken prisoners-of-war. The Indian losses were 10 killed, 32 wounded and 3 missing(82).

Ajnala Sector

The Gil Ferry opposite Ajnala offered Pakistan a route of ingress around the northern end of 15 Inf Div's defences. The defence of this sub-sector was entrusted to 58 Inf Bde. As Pakistan on its part, also was sensitive to a threat from this direction, it attacked all the Indian border outposts on the night of 3/4 Dec, with the intent of removing this threat. However, the Indian troops withstood and repulsed all the attacks.

The Brigade Commander, Brigadier Narinder Singh, then set about eliminating the Pakistani posts. By 17 Dec, he had captured Budai Channa Kalan, Darya Mansur, Dhian Singh Pura, Sundergarh and Sherpur in a series of minor actions(83). This Sector saw no major operations.

Fatehpur-Burj Sector

The 96 Inf Bde was given the responsibility of defending the area between Chann Malla(SB 7830)(84) and Bhindi Aulakh (SB 8139). Towards the north-west of Amritsar, across the Ravi, Pakistan had a sizeable enclave at Fatehpur and Bhago-Kamo (SB 7631). Pakistan could establish a bridgehead there and pose a threat to Amritsar. It was, therefore, decided to

to capture these enclaves(85).

On the night of 3/4 Dec, Pakistan inducted the bulk of its 88 Inf Bde, belonging to 17 Inf Div, into this enclave. BSF personnel were forced to vacate Ghoga (SB 7941), Behlol (SB 8142), Gulgarh (SB 8144), Burj (SB 7937) and Fatehpur (SB 7834)(86). The BSF men redeployed at Dag (SB 8034) and Dhindi Aulakh, and the defences were stiffened by a platoon each from 15 Maratha, supported by one troop of 66 Armd Regt(87). As there was no activity on 5 Dec, it was taken to signify that Pakistan had no offensive design in this sub-sector. The decision was, therefore, taken to clear the Pakistanis from the area, and two companies from 15 Maratha and one sub unit from 66 Armd Regt were ordered to attack Tur and Burj. But a company of 43 Baluch pre-empted this move and attacked Bhindi Aulakh at about 1230 hrs on 6 Dec(88). The attack was thrown back by accurate artillery fire and the armoured troops, the attackers leaving behind a number of dead and large quantities of arms and ammunition(89). The Indian troops then pressed their own attack and, fighting from bunker to bunker along the Dhussi Bund, cleared the Pakistanis from Burj and Tur. The two companies of 43 Baluch were badly mauled and lost 52 killed(90). The Pakistanis suffered again at the hands of the Marathas when a series of counter-attacks launched in the afternoon of 9 Dec in a bid to recapture the lost positions, were thrown back. They left behind 32 dead and took away a number of wounded. The 43 Baluch were severely battered in these operations(91).

This action was followed by a fierce battle on the night of 11/12 Dec, in which the jawans of 8 Sikh LI proved their mettle(92). This Pakistani post (Fatehpur) was fortified on all the four sides with high Bunds carrying numerous automatic and anti-tank weapons. Its diamond like shape made it difficult to tackle it from any side(93). The Sikhs rushed forward to capture this objective regardless of heavy casualties(94) caused by small arms fire and artillery shelling, and captured the objective by the morning. The Pakistanis staged quick counter-attacks, but they were beaten back and the diamond-shaped bunds of Fatehpur remained firmly in the hands of Sikhs(95).

Atari-Ranian Sector

Lahore was about 15 km from Atari on the border. Pakistani's Ichhogil Canal, which ran parallel to the border, was a formidable military obstacle(96). From its western bank, raised higher than the eastern bank, Pakistan commanded an excellent observation of any approach from the east. As no military initiative

could be productive in this area, India had decided to remain on the defensive in this Sector. The 54 Inf Bde carried out this task. The Brigade was charged with the responsibility of defending the Amritsar area against an attack along the Grand Trunk Road. Deployed astride this road, the Brigade linked up with 96 Inf Bde at Channa Malla in the north and 38 Inf Bde in the south.

The Pak Commander was keen to capture Ranian because it dominated the western and northern axes and could facilitate his advance to Amritsar. He could cross the Ravi with armour without any hindrance in his own territory in the Bhago Kamo enclave and then make a dash for Amritsar, but the manoeuvre could not succeed without artillery support. And the guns could not be moved on this axis unless Ranian was captured. As long as it remained in Indian hands, Pak artillery could not support the northern axis(97).

The 18 Frontier Force (18 FF) of the Pak Army attacked the Ranian post (SB 7425) on 3 Dec at 2051 hrs(98). The 2 Sikh beat off the attack. The post was, however, attacked again and again on the nights of 4/5, 5/6 and 6/7 Dec, on 9 Dec and lastly on 17 Dec(99). Well coordinated artillery and small arms fire by Indian troops beat back all these attacks with heavy casualties to the attackers.

The Pakistanis also tried to capture Shamsheer post nearby "using as their base an area known as 'General's Tube Well'." But their design was frustrated. Brig G.N. Sinha, the Brigade Commander decided to remove this thorn in the Indian side and, just before ceasefire, mounted an attack on 'General's Tube Well' and seized it.

On 17 Dec, 2 Sikh also recaptured Pulkanjri village after getting through a protective minefield and surprising a company of 43 Punjab who were defending it. The Pakistanis tried many times on 17 and 18 December to wrest it back from the Sikhs but the latter did not yield ground, and the village remained in Indian hands when Cease Fire took effect(100).

Neshta-Rajatal Sub-Sector

The area south of the G.T. Road was held by 38 Inf Bde, which was deployed from the G.T. Road to Bhuchar Headworks (SG 9496). There was no intrusion in this Sector and Indian border observation posts remained intact(101). The Brigade, however, improved its defensive posture by occupying the Pakistani villages/posts of Kharak (SB 8308), Thehpura (SB 8506)

and Ghurki (SG 8499). The plan to capture the Kharak village and the Ranger posts was executed by 4 Assam on the night 4/5 Dec. The garrison, about a platoon at this location, abandoned the post after some resistance. The commando platoon of 4 Assam also captured area Sahnke (SB 8208) on the night 6/7 Dec(102). However, with the help of five tanks and several jeeps mounted with RCLs and MMGs, the Pakistanis snatched back the post through a counter-attack at 0400 hrs on 7 Dec and compelled the Indian troops to withdraw(103).

The 16 Grenadiers was assigned the task of capturing Thehpura. The assaulting company left the FUP at 0255 hrs on 5 Dec. When it was within 275 metres of the objective, the enemy opened up with LMGs and MMGs. The commanding officer ordered the company to charge the objective. The defenders abandoned the post and the village, but soon launched a counter-attack which, however, was repulsed by accurate automatic fire and artillery shelling by the Indian troops(104).

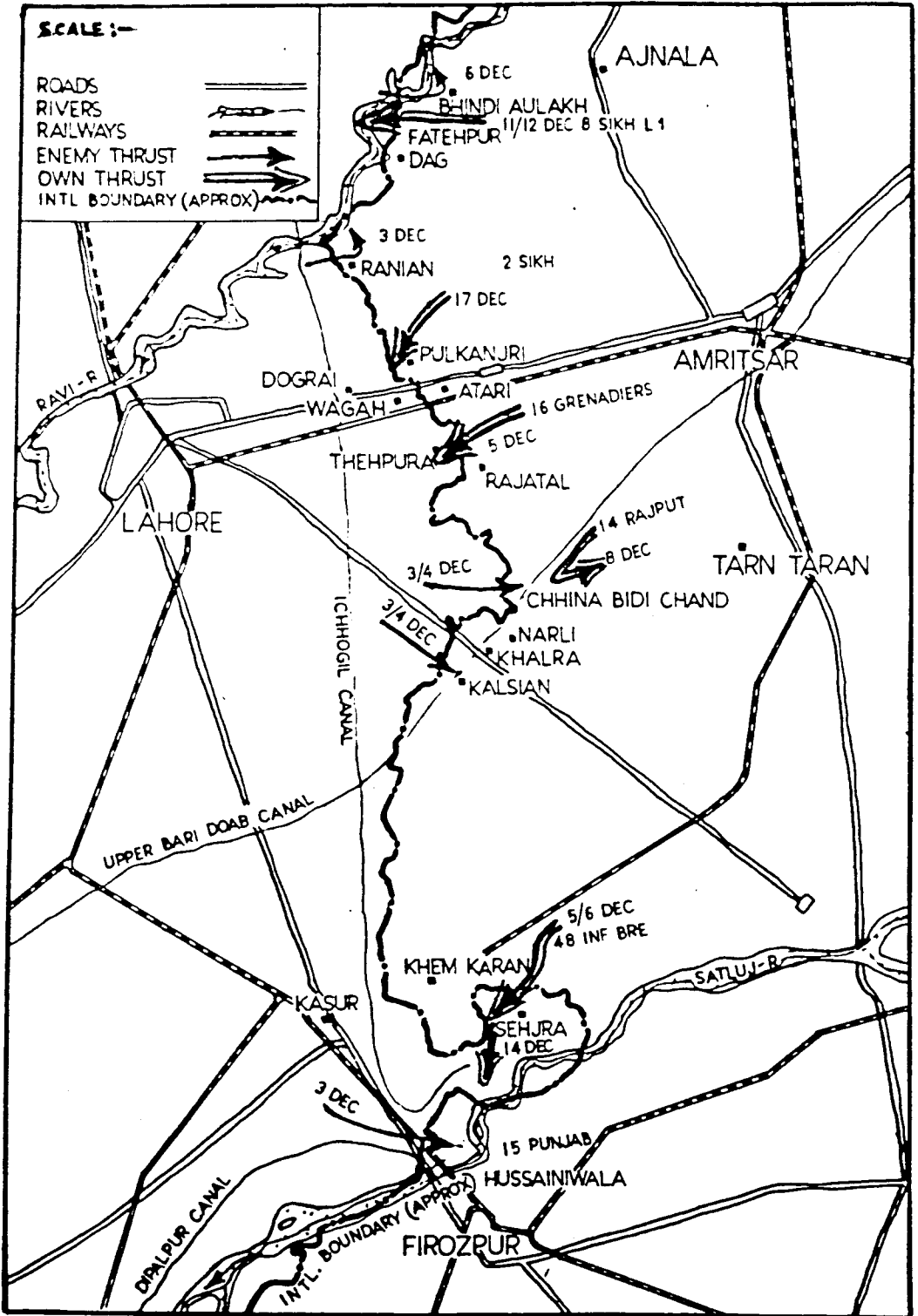
The 8 Garh Rif captured Ghurki village and the Ranger Post at 0330 hrs on 5 Dec. The garrisons had given up the positions before the assaulting troops were on their objectives. However, the Pakistanis continued shelling the village and the Post after their capture in order to prevent the re-organisation of the Indian troops. At 2110 hrs on 7 Dec, they tried to recapture the post but the attempt was foiled(105)

7 Inf Div : Khalra, Khemkaran and Firozpur Sector

The defence of the territory south of Bhuchar Headworks including Firozpur, that is, the area comprising the southern half of the Bari Doab between the Ravi, Beas and Satluj, was the responsibility of Maj Gen Freemantle, GOC 7 Inf Div. The main routes of ingress in this area were through Khalra, Khemkaran and Hussainiwala. Through these approaches Pakistan could threaten the sensitive areas of the Harike Headworks and the Firozpur town. The covering troops were deployed between the international border and the anti-tank obstacle belt of Mari Megha drain which ran 8 to 9 km from the international border, and the main defences were based along this drain. There was also a contingency plan which visualised the capture of the Sehjra Bulge.

The 65 Inf Bde held defences along the Mari Megha drain from Bhuchar Headworks (SG 9496) to Bherowal (SG 8672). The Mari Megha drain - the main obstacle - was held by two battalions - 14 Rajput and

THE LAHORE - FIROZPUR SECTOR



3 Madras, who were extended over a frontage of approximately 26 km. The third battalion, 14 J and K Rifles, was deployed as the covering force in the Khalra area along the southern bank of the disused Upper Bari Doab Canal.

On 3 Dec, at approximately 1830 hrs, the enemy started exerting pressure against the Border Observation Posts west of the Upper Bari Doab Canal. As the Sector was extended and there was paucity of troops, the Border Security Force personnel manning the BOPs were pulled back to the main defences. By mid-night of 3/4 Dec, the Pak troops contacted the Upper Bari Doab Canal opposite Khalra and intruded into the villages of Narli (SG 8989), Dode (SG 8686) and Kalsian (SG 8585) and occupied the village of Chhina Bidi Chand (SG 9093)(106).

On 4 Dec Pakistan continued to build pressure on both the flanks of Khalra and tried to capture the place with the support of armour. Indian artillery fire foiled the bid(107).

As a defensive measure, the following bridges over the Upper Bari Doab Canal were demolished - prematurely, it seems - to prevent the enemy break-through to Khalra:- (108)

- a) Chhina Bidi Chand
- b) Narli
- c) Main Khalra
- d) Kalsian
- e) Baba Pir

Nevertheless, the Pak troops succeeded in crossing the Upper Bari Doab Canal about 275 metres north of Khalra. About a company of them was seen forming up on the southern side of the Indian minefield. But Indian artillery and infantry effectively engaged them and finally beat them back. On 6 Dec, Kalsian village was re-occupied by the Indian troops(109). In order to clear the enemy from the area and to relieve pressure from opposite Khalra, it was imperative to recapture Chhina Bidi Chand also(110). The 14 Rajput captured the village by 0200 hrs on 8 Dec. But at 07715 hrs the Pakistanis counter attacked with approximately two companies of infantry, supported by some tanks. Intense and effective shelling of the route by the enemy precluded the supply of stores, particularly ammunition, to the forward companies. Nor could Indian tanks, which were south of the Upper Bari Doab Canal, cross it and link up with the infantry as planned. The two companies of 14 Rajput had, therefore, to be withdrawn from Chhina Bidi Chand by 1430 hrs on 8 Dec,(111) evidently due to

indifferent liaison between armour and infantry.

The Pakistanis tried to assault the Border Observation Posts at the Khemkaran Barrier, but could not press home the attack due to Indian artillery fire. There was no further serious attack in this Sector, and only shelling and minor skirmishes continued. This made it possible for 48 Inf Bde to proceed and capture the Sehjra Bulge and dispose of the threat from that direction.

The Battle for the Sehjra Bulge

This Pakistani salient of about 55 sq km protruded into the Indian territory south-east of Khemkaran and north of Ferozpur, and was held by about a battalion strength of Pak troops(112). They had developed the village of Sehjra into a virtual fortress(113). Situated on an escarpment, the village dominates the area. On the north of the village, Pakistan had built a bund, 2 to 2.5 metres high, which linked up with the escarpment on both sides.

The Bulge was garrisoned by one company of 25 Baluch, one company of Sutlej Rangers, two to three companies of Mujahids, a 3" Mortar Platoon and elements of the Divisional Recce and Support Battalion(114).

Unlike at Chhina Bidi Chand and Hussainiwala, this battle was well planned, with GOC-in-C 11 Corps, GOC 7 Inf Div and Commander 48 Inf Bde taking care to carry out detailed recce. The 1/5 GR made a wide encircling move from the south along the enemy's route of maintenance. The unexpected direction of the attack surprised the Pakistanis completely(115). Again, unlike at those places, the Commanding Officer in this case was well forward. Under his personal command, the Gorkhas fought bravely and captured all the objectives. The operation nicknamed 'Lightning' was started at 0030 hrs on 6 Dec and was completed at 0630 hrs, the same day with immaculate precision(116). The 6 Mahar had meanwhile blocked the escape routes from Sehjra by occupying the village of Mahiwal(117). The Pakistanis ran into the trap and suffered heavy casualties - 30 killed and 65 Prisoners of War(118) and left behind a large quantity of equipment and arms and ammunition. Simultaneously, 9 Sikh LI captured the Pakistani Border Observation Posts of Mabbuke, Bhukkiwala and Nagar Aminpur(119).

To consolidate the position in the Sehjra pocket, the Indian troops launched attacks on Mahiwala and Fattiwala posts and captured them by 1400 hrs on 6 Dec. In the night of 8 Dec, the Pakistanis shelled

the Khemkaran barrier area and attacked the barrier post in company strength. At about midnight, they were reported to be simultaneously moving from the Kasur and Roriwala directions. Indian artillery kept shelling the advancing enemy troops and the Indian troops eventually repulsed the attack at 0415 hrs on 9 Dec(120). Next day the Pakistanis made another move to attack the Khemkaran barrier post which, however, was again foiled(121) by Indian artillery fire and infantry. On the night of 12/13 Dec, a company of 41 Baluch infiltrated across the minefield and established a base in area '12r' (SG 9150). On 14 Dec, the Gorkhas and the Mahars, and the Border Security Force personnel, supported by a troop of tanks and 174 Fd Regt, surrounded the Baluchis from all sides and overwhelmed them, inflicting casualties of 30 dead and 15 wounded(122).

Thus 48 Inf Bde captured the Sehjra Bulge and succeeded in eliminating the possibility of Pakistan raiding the Harike Bridge or trying to outflank the defences in the Khemkaran Sector.

The Firozpur-Hussainiwala Sub-Sector

The 35 Inf Bde placed under the operational command of 7 Inf Div, was deployed for the defence of Firozpur Sector, with 25 BSF Bn being responsible for the general area Firozpur and 31 BSF Bn for the general area Mandot(123). The Hussainiwala enclave of about 47 sq km was a vital area for India, containing as it did the Hussainiwala Canal Headworks of the Satluj and the road and rail bridges. One company of 15 Punjab had always been deployed even in peace time at the Hussainiwala Bridge. In view of the impending war, it was built up to two battalion strength. In addition, one troop of 'A' squadron, 3 Cavalry was allotted for deployment across the Satluj, to afford protection and support against Pak armour(124). For fire support, a medium regiment, a medium battery, a field regiment, a light battery and an ad hoc light battery were available. A troop of 49 AD Regt was also deployed for the protection of the area. Mines were laid all around(125).

The Hussainiwala Bridge constituted one of the main routes between Pakistan and India, the other being Atari near Amritsar. International traffic remained open from the Hussainiwala Joint Check Post till 1815 hrs on 3 Dec. Due to constant traffic on this route, the dispositions of our troops could not remain concealed from public view. Besides, the movement of cattle and villagers on the Indian side of the international border gave out the layout of the Indian minefields.

As Fazal Muqem Khan says in his book "Pakistan's crisis in Leadership" this battle, like the Sulaimanke battle "was a very good example of careful and skilful planning and determined execution" by the Pakistan Army. On 3 Dec, at about 1830 hrs, Pakistan's 106 Inf Bde brought down such a devastating barrage of artillery fire that all lines of communication were disrupted. Simultaneously, Pakistan attacked 'C' and 'D' Companies of 15 Punjab. Pakistan attacked the 'C' Company locality from the Dipalpur Canal Bund to Samadhi with approximately a battalion supported by a troop of tanks at 1845 hrs. Immediately afterward, 'D' Company locality on Perimeter and Limb were assaulted(126). These initial attacks indicated that Pakistan had employed a minimum of two battalions, supported by armour. It was now obvious that the enemy planned to smash through by a violent and sledge hammer attack and capture Hussainiwala Bridge intact and then get his armour across with a view to capturing Ferozpur(127). 15 Punjab was taken completely by surprise when the attack took place. 'C' Company was astride the main road axis and 'D' Company on the Perimeter defended position, and the Commanding Officer was on the southern bank attending a farewell party for the retiring Subedar Major(128).

The Pakistanis overran 'C' Company(129). 'D' Company on Perimeter Bund, however, offered stiff resistance and held out against a number of attacks throughout the night, inflicting heavy casualties on the attackers(130). But its valiant resistance did not avail much and it had to vacate its positions in the morning of 4 Dec. The remaining battalion offered little resistance. Since the night of 3/4 Dec, the Pakistanis had been attacking 'A' Company at Kunde Bund, and by the following morning had established a foothold there. They then advanced from the Perimeter Bund and occupied the western end of the Guide Bund(131). Indian artillery and the Indian Air Force extended magnificent support and caused very heavy casualties on the Pakistani forces. During the day (4 Dec), they could be seen preparing to launch infantry armour attacks against 'A' and 'B' Companies, holding out on Kunde and Guide Bunds. But timely and extremely effective air strikes kept them at bay. However, as soon as the aircraft went back, Pak armour and infantry would move up and attempt to nibble at the Indian positions. This struggle went on throughout the day. In the meanwhile, a great misfortune had befallen the defending Indian forces(132). Soon after the commencement of the artillery fire on the night of 3 Dec, the Commanding Officer 15 Punjab issued orders to arm the demolitions

on the Hussainiwala Bridge. These were prepared and armed by about 2300 hrs that night(133). At about 0030 hrs, intense enemy shelling, it is claimed, caused a sympathetic detonation to set off the demolition. Approximately 3 spans of the bridge were destroyed. This caused consternation among the defenders. As the company positions were vacated one after another, several men jumped into the water to cross the river, while others tried to make improvised rafts to cross the river even as the battle was in progress(134). While the Battalion was being so mauled, the Commanding Officer remained in his Battalion Headquarters on the southern bank of the river and made no serious attempt to go to his forward Headquarters to control the battle personally(135). Instead of going forward to his advance Command Post, the Commanding Officer painted an exaggerated picture of the plight of the Battalion, infected the Commander 35 Inf Bde also with his pessimism and both, in turn, pressured the GOC 7 Inf Div for permission to withdraw from Hussainiwala. At 1830 hrs on 4 Dec, Commander 35 Inf Bde received permission of the Divisional Commander to pull back his troops from the bridgehead,(136) and the withdrawal to the south bank was completed by 2200 hrs(137). However, Fazal Muqem concedes in his book; "The Indian 15 Punjab fought extremely well....They were fully supported by extensive fire from the other side of the River."

The severity of the fighting is indicated by the casualties suffered on both sides. The losses of 15 Punjab were 19 ORs killed, 3 JCOs and 31 ORs wounded and 2 Officers, 2 JCOs, 67 ORs and 2 NCsE missing.

14 Inf Div Operations

The task of defending the area between Firozpur and Fazilka devolved on 14 Inf Div less 58 Inf Bde. This area contained a number of Pak enclaves which were large enough to be exploited and turned into bridgeheads for launching offensive operations towards Firozpur, Jalalabad, Muktsar or Fazilka. In order to rule out this possibility, it was decided to liquidate the Pakistani enclaves on the Indian side of the Satluj(138).

Accordingly, the formation under its GOC, Maj Gen Onkar Singh Kalkat,(139) made a haul of thirteen Pakistani border posts and recaptured Raja Mahatam. All the attacks were meticulously planned and carried out boldly and efficiently. Barring the Rangewala Post, at all other posts the Indians suffered negligible casualties. All the officers down to unit Commanders and junior leaders, displayed high qualities of leadership. The troops were also blooded

and properly inoculated in the battle. Nowhere did the formation suffer a reverse. At the time of ceasefire, the formation completely dominated the area between Firozpur and Fazilka right upto the River Satluj and the possibility of a Pakistani offensive in this area was completely ruled out(140).

The Jalalabad Sector

The 116 Inf Bde was deployed in this Sector. The Pak battalions identified opposite it were 30 AK, 31 AK and 50 Baluch. The 116 Bde launched bold and meticulously planned attacks on several Pakistani positions and captured them. The mode of attack was to engage the enemy frontally by a small force, while some troops were positioned to cut off the enemy routes of withdrawal. The actual attacks were made from the rear by advancing along the enemy's routes of maintenance(141). The Brigade captured five Pak posts, and it is a measure of the planning that went into the launching of these operations, and the tactical skill in their execution that in the capture of these posts of Peeroke, Kali Sahu, Gatti Bharola, Churka and Amin Bhaini,(142) the Indian troops suffered only one NCO killed while the Pakistanis lost 29 killed and 17 captured(143).

As if in revenge, the Pakistanis showed considerable activity after the Cease Fire and attacked Kali Sahu with approximately one company on 3 Jan 1972, and the company position in area SG 5306 on 4 Jan. Both the attacks were beaten back, and 24 dead bodies of the attackers were recovered, while 12 personnel of 31 AK Bn were captured(144).

Mamdot-Firozpur Sector

This Sector was the responsibility of 35 Inf Bde from 5 Dec 1971, under the operational command of 14 Inf Div. The Sector saw only some minor action. The 15 Dogra first secured the area north of Firozpur upto the Satluj river by capturing Pakistani Border Observation Posts of Basti Anoke and New Kasoke (SG 9346) by 0300 hrs on 7 Dec(145). It then turned its attention to the Pakistani enclave south of the river opposite Mamdot, as this place could be a potential lodgement area for an enemy threat towards Firozpur. The Dogras first attacked the Pakistani Border Observation Post at Rangewala (SG 692283). But as it had halted too near the objective inviting upon itself automatic and artillery fire, it suffered heavy casualties - two officers and 20 ORs killed and one officer, two JCOs and 53 ORs wounded. The Battalion, however, regained control and assaulted the objective again, and occupied it. The Pakistanis left behind

two dead and a large quantity of arms and ammunition. Supported by artillery and A Squadron 3 Cavalry, the Battalion captured the Pakistani Border Observation Posts Jaluke Dhuan (SG 656259) during the night 14/15 Dec and Amrud Wali (SG 656280) on 15 Dec(146).

Another battalion, 13 Punjab, captured Dona Betu (SG 640220) without encountering much resistance. The remaining two posts of Pora Kana (SG 6321) and Jalloke Hittar (SG 6423) were vacated by the Pakistanis on 16 Dec. When on night 17/18 Dec, the enemy infiltrated a strong platoon of 9 Baluch in an attempt to secure a foothold on the eastern bank of the Satluj river, Maj H.C. Sharma of 13 Punjab captured the whole platoon(147).

The Foxtrot Sector

The 'Foxtrot Sector', under Maj Gen Ram Singh, was assigned the task of defending Fazilka, Abohar and Ganganagar at all costs. Close defence of Fazilka was prepared, particularly against an attack from the north in dry weather, because the river Satluj had very little water then(148). The Sector was given the responsibility of defending Suratgarh also and containing, if possible, the Pakistani bridgehead at Sulaimanke. Further, it was allotted the task of holding certain covering positions : one post on the Gang Canal in area Hindumalkot and others along the general line Prithvirajpur Distributary, Karanpur (SQ 7793) and Gajsinghpur (SQ 7571). It was also to block the following main approaches by deploying covering troops :-

- i) Sulaimanke - Fazilka
- ii) Minchinabad - Mandi Sadiq Ganj - Hindumalkot
- Abohar and
- iii) Bahawalnagar - Ganganagar.

For carrying out these tasks, the following formations were deployed in the Foxtrot Sector by the end of November 1971: (149)

- a) HQ Foxtrot Sector at Abohar.
- b) 67 Indep Inf Bde at Fazilka
- c) 51 Indep Para Bde at Ganganagar
- d) 163 Inf Bde (two battalions) at Suratgarh.
- e) Juliet Sector at Abohar.

Foxtrot Sector was thus equivalent to more than an Infantry Division in strength. But it did not have the normal Div HQ or supporting services, and Maj Gen Ram Singh felt handicapped in attending to the administrative chores(150).

No definite information was available about Pakistan deployment opposite Foxtrot Sector. The available information suggested the presence of the following formations/units in the area of Sulaimanke-Fort Abbas:- (151)

- a) 33 Inf Div
- b) 25 Indep Inf Bde
- c) 105 Indep Inf Bde
- d) 20, 12 and 22 Wings of Desert Rangers
- e) 32 Mujahids

In addition, Pakistan could also bring up some of the following formations for operations in the southern sector, though it was unlikely that she would denude the more important North Punjab to any great extent: (152)

- a) 1 Armd Div
- b) One brigade from 11 Inf Div
- c) Elements of 6 Armd Div in case there was no threat to Pakistan's northern Punjab sector.
- d) 7 Inf Div in case of a major thrust in the southern sector (153).

The Fazilka Sub-Sector

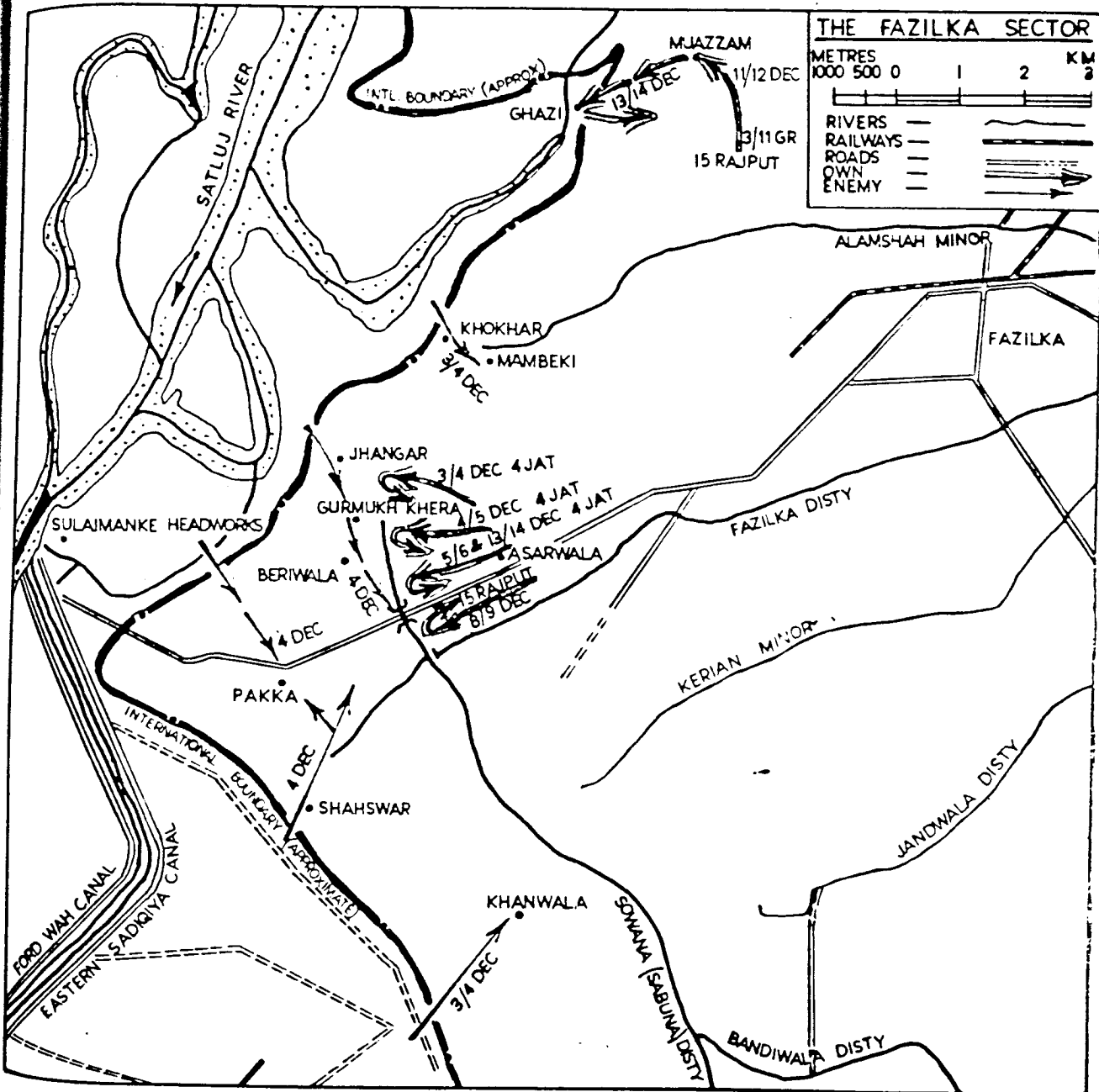
There was a looming shadow of Pakistani aggression in the Foxtrot Sector, as it was a strategic area located on the western flank of 11 Corps(154). As it turned out, the operations did not develop into a major offensive by the enemy but were confined to action only in the Fazilka Sub-sector.

It was appreciated that Pakistan could attack Fazilka through the several enclaves it had south of river Satluj. The attack could come from the north through Jalalabad or from the Sulaimanke bridgehead in the west. It was also appreciated that Pakistan would try to lean against the defences on the Sabuna Distributary(155). It was imperative for the Indian military planners to ensure the security of the bridge over the Satluj and of the Sulaimanke Headworks. Learning from the experience of 1965, India had constructed an anti-tank obstacle in the shape of the Sabuna Distributary which covered all the approaches. It was about 10 to 13 km from the town of Fazilka. The alignment of the distributary was parallel to the international boundary. The Distributary, fourteen miles (22 km) in length, ran from the Gang Canal to the Fazilka Creek, and had many fortifications. The Salem Shah Nala constituted a partial hurdle just north of the Fazilka town, while the Chandbhan Drain formed a good obstacle eight miles (13 km) north of Fazilka(156).

THE FAZILKA SECTOR

METRES
1000 500 0 1 2 KM

RIVERS ————
RAILWAYS ————
ROADS ————
OWN ENEMY ————
ENEMY ————



The 67 Indep Inf Bde deployed for the defence of Fazilka comprised three infantry battalions (15 Rajput, 3 Assam, 4 Jat) 4 Indep Armd Sqn, Sqn 18 Cavalry and 2 troops of 70 Armd Regt. These were supported by one field regiment and one medium battery (157). Two BSF battalions were also provided.

The focus of planning and preparations for the main defensive battle was on Fazilka, which had to be held at any cost. The line of the Sabuna Distributary - Qadir Bakhsh - Muazzam was to be held as a strong covering fence. However, as the area of ground under the operational responsibility of 67 Indep Inf Bde was extensive and there was shortage of troops, the battalions of this Brigade were so deployed that troops could be built up either on the Sabuna Distributary or on Fazilka, depending on the direction of the threat. At the commencement of hostilities, the Brigade was deployed as follows:

- a) Area Shatirwala (SM 3147) on Sabuna Distributary
 - i) 15 Rajputs less two companies.
 - ii) Three companies of 28 BSF Bn.
 - iii) Two companies of 22 BSF Bn.

- b) Area Chananwala (SM 2557) - Choriwala Chisti (SM 2355) - Qadir Bakhsh (SM 2262) - Khokhar (SM 2363) and along the Sabuna Distributary
 - i) 3 Assam with one company plus two platoons of 22 BSF Bn.
 - ii) Two troops of 'B' Squadron 18 Cavalry.

- c) Area Muazzam (SM 2768) - Fazilka, North of Railway Line Fazilka - Muktsar
 - i) Two companies of 15 Rajputs
 - ii) Two companies of 22 BSF Bn

- d) Area Fazilka - South of Railway Line Fazilka - Muktsar
 - i) 4 Jat
 - ii) 4 Indep Armd Sqn
 - iii) B Sqn 18 Cavalry less 2 troops

On 3 Dec, at about 1830 hrs, Pakistan commenced shelling and under cover of fierce artillery fire and supported by some armour, charged through the forward posts held by the Border Security Force, who were so unnerved that they sent highly coloured reports about the strength of the attacking enemy, putting it down

at two infantry brigades and two armoured regiments(158). The 3 Assam deployed in the defence of and on the Sabuna Distributary were taken in by these reports. The Pak Commander caught the Assamese off guard and attacked the company deployed at Pakka with one infantry battalion of his 105 Inf Bde, and approximately two troops of armour. Unfortunately, the 3 Assam Company Commander was killed. This proved to be a signal for a general pandemonium and the confusion was worse confounded when the Commanding Officer issued orders for the withdrawal of the covering troops. In bewilderment, the demoralised troops blasted the bridges on the Sabuna Distributary, except the Beriwala Bridge. The attackers took advantage of the chaos and crossed the Beriwala Bridge and established a foothold on the Sabuna Distributary at about 1930 hrs on 3 Dec.

The hasty and imprudent demolition of 22 bridges over the Sabuna Distributary, excluding the Beriwala Bridge, which was under enemy occupation, foreclosed any chance of success of counter-attacks from any direction except from the limited area bounded by the Sabuna Drain to the east and the Bund connecting the Sabuna Drain and the Sabuna Distributary to the north(159).

It was necessary to restore the situation somehow. Four hours later, at 2330 hrs on 3 Dec, one company of 4 Jat, supported by about a Sqn 18 Cavalry counter-attacked. As the Jats did not know where actually the enemy was or what his strength was, the attack was foredoomed to failure. Though the Jats failed to recapture the bridge, the Battalion re-established itself on the tail end of the Distributary. The 3 Assam held the Distributary south of the Beriwala Bridge.

Both the Battalions - 4 Jat and 3 Assam - were still reeling under the shock of the sudden reverse they had suffered. The Pak force was reported to be moving between Qadir Bakhsh and Muazzam, thereby, threatening to turn the flank of the Sabuna Distributary. The fog of war, coupled with exaggerated reports that the enemy opposite him was worth two infantry brigades and more than two armoured regiments, inclined Brig S.S. Chowdhary, to fall back on to the Fazilka fortress and readjust the defences. Maj Gen Ram Singh, however, overruled him and told him that defences on the Sabuna Distributary would form part of the main defences and instructed Brig Chowdhary not only to evict the enemy from the Beriwala Bridge where he had secured a lodgement but also to capture as many BOPs as possible, especially to the west of Fazilka and opposite the southern half

of the Sabuna Distributary(160).

The 4 Jat launched a second counter-attack on the Beriwalla Bridge on the night 4/5 Dec under the orders of Maj Gen Ram Singh. This time the tanks were in fire support role. But the Pak shelling was so intensive and deadly that it made the counter-attack ineffectual. The Jats suffered heavy casualties, and a total of nine tanks either got bogged down or were destroyed. The infantry was only able to regain possession of Gurmukh Khera and part of the Bund north of the Beriwalla Bridge.

Maj Gen Ram Singh told Lt Gen N.C. Rawlley, GOC 11 Corps, that 67 Indep Inf Bde was discomposed and flustered; its men were demoralised and put out, and he wanted the Brigade to be replaced by another Brigade. This was not agreed to, but the Army Commander (Lt Gen K.P. Candeth) agreed to 3/11 GR being released from 116 Inf Bde and moved to Fazilka. The Battalion reached there on 7 Dec. Candeth also released 115 Inf Bn (TA) less two companies to strengthen the Fazila garrison. The Foxtrot Sector Commander, Ram Singh, further reinforced the garrison by moving one company 60 Engr Regt from Abohar to Fazilka(161).

Having failed to dislodge the enemy in spite of two counter-attacks, 4 Jat supported by tanks launched a third attack on the night 5/6 Dec. This also failed miserably, with the Jats suffering heavy casualties.

After the arrival of 3/11 GR on the scene, it was considered opportune to release 15 Rajput from the Fazilka defences with a view to launching a counter-attack. The counter-attack was made on the night 8/9 Dec, but the Rajputs also recoiled in the face of intense artillery and small arms fire by the Pakistanis.

The heavy losses suffered so far in men and equipment led to the decision that the Pak force be contained on the Sabuna Distributary and should not be allowed to advance further. An enemy attack from the northern direction had been on the cards. It became imminent when the Pak Commander moved approximately one infantry battalion and a troop of tanks into the general area north of Fazilka. The threat was too serious to be ignored. The Indian flank was exposed and the enemy could circumvent the Sabuna defences. To counteract the threat, it was considered essential to capture area Muazzam, and the task was entrusted to 3/11 GR. The Battalion encountered negligible opposition and gained possession of the village Muazzam by mid-night 11/12 Dec. In furtherance of the

objective of disposing of the enemy threat from the north, 15 Rajputs launched an attack on Ghazi Post on the night 13/14 Dec. The Rajputs this time caught their enemy completely unawares. They made a wide, encircling move, went into the rear of the Pak defences and made an attack from a direction never anticipated. The Battalion knocked out two and captured one Sherman tank, seized a large amount of weapons, equipment and ammunition and also captured a large number of prisoners, including the Ranger Officer(162). The Battalion, however, failed to reap the benefits of its efforts. The Pakistanis counter-attacked. The Rajputs, who had not regained their poise, had to withdraw, abandoning most of the arms and equipment they had captured. To avoid further erosion of the position, one company 3/11 GR was moved up and positioned in area Muazzam BOP - Muazzam Bund.

Even as the Ghazi Post was being attacked on the night 13/14 Dec, 4 Jat mounted the fifth Indian, and their fourth, counter-attack to recapture the Beriwalla Bridge, but once again they failed and suffered heavy casualties. After this, the Indian troops stayed put on the Sabuna Distributary and in the area north of Fazilka.

The operations in Fazilka were characterised by fierce fighting, stretching over a period of 14 days. The 4 Jat fought determinedly and suffered heavy casualties. The 3/11 GR and 15 Rajputs also suffered heavy casualties, caused mainly by artillery fire. The total casualties suffered in this Sector were large enough to give an idea of the severity of the fighting, viz., killed 189, including 11 Officers and 10 JCOs, wounded 425 and missing 196(163).

As was the case with most sectors in the Western Theatre, there was paucity of intelligence about the enemy deployment in this Sector too. What intrigued the Indian military planners most in the northern part of this theatre was the precise location of Pakistan 7 Inf Div.

In the Foxtrot and Southern Command Sectors, the unconfirmed intelligence about the location of 33 Inf Div in the Bahawalpur area and of 1 Armd Div in the Okara area, inhibited bold strategic planning and confident moves.

On the concept of battle in the Fazilka Sector, there were differences of opinion between the higher commanders. While the Army Headquarters and Headquarters Western Command wanted Fazilka to be defended at the international border to prevent loss

of real estate and to impose attrition on the enemy, the GOC 11 Corps, Lt Gen N.C. Rawley, held the view that the battle should be joined at Fazilka, which would favour the defenders. This divergence of opinion was unfortunately not ironed out before the commencement of the operations, and this influenced the distribution of available forces between the Sabuna Distributary and the close defence of the Fazilka town. In relation to the threat, the troop density was low, and the units and formations held large frontages with practically no reserves. The 67 Inf Bde was over stretched and the numerous and divergent tasks assigned to it were apparently beyond its capability, comprising as they did the diverse and mutually incompatible functions of defending Fazilka at all costs, containing the Sulaimanke bridgehead, and launching limited offensives. This ambivalence also seems to have been responsible for the sector suffering from ad-hocism and lack of essential infra-structure from the inception.

The tactical concept followed in the Fazilka Sector was fortress type defence and defence on built up areas, and ditch-cum-bund defence. The fact that the forward defences were simply overrun by the enemy, and the bridges were destroyed hastily, shows that the bulk of troops were deployed ahead to provide depth and to ensure that likely assembly areas, FUPs and gun areas for assault on the built up areas were denied to the enemy. The hasty and thoughtless destruction of the bridges deprived the Indian troops of the flexibility to carry out any manoeuvre on the far side of the obstacle.

In view of the tactical significance of the Pak salient across the Sabuna Distributary, a series of counter-attacks were launched under pressure from the higher Headquarters. But the salient could not be eliminated (164). Pak force offered dogged resistance, and relied heavily on fire power. Intense shelling of the objective area and the attacking troops broke up all the Indian assaults. These tactics proved especially effective in the semi-desert area under the Foxtrot Sector where there was no cover worth the name.

However, much loss in men and material could have been avoided if hurried and repeated counter-attacks had not been made to dislodge the enemy from the Beriwalla Bridge. Deplorably enough, the attacks were all made from the same approach, even though it had little room for dispersal or manoeuvre and the attacking troops only exposed themselves frontally to the enemy, offering his artillery easy targets. The heavy casualties sustained eroded morale

further and further. Also the old dictum "In battle never reinforce a failure" was lost sight of. Some attempt was, however, made to change the method and direction of the attack. Rawley tried alternative manoeuvres and directed Ram Singh to raise a task force from whatever reserves were available. The latter ordered Brig G.S. Reen(165) to manoeuvre this force into the rear of the enemy at Pakka from the south-west. However, as not enough armour was available in the sector, the plan to launch the operation was held in abeyance. The 15 Rajput did initiate the manoeuvre from the north-east by assaulting the Ghazi post. Unfortunately, however, this operation too could not be developed further, as the Rajputs failed to hold on to the objective captured by them(166). Rawley also ordered on 16 Dec a raid across the border towards area Mandi Sadiq Ganj, but before it could be executed, cease fire was declared(167).

"Juliet" and Suratgarh Sub-Sectors

The sub-sector named Juliet was assigned the task of defending Abohar by holding covering positions on the Gang Canal. It had its Advance HQ at Haripura (SM 3532), and 19 Rajput and C Sqn 18 Cavalry were deployed in the area. Suratgarh sub-sector was defended by 163 Inf Bde, comprising 5 Bihar and 2/8 GR battalions.

Both these sub-sectors of Foxtrot Sector remained dormant and saw no action worth mention in the War of 1971.

The Ganganagar Sector

Ganganagar district was bounded in the north and west by Bahawalpur district of Pakistan. This region was a sandy, ill-watered and generally unproductive, at the edge of Great Indian desert or Thar. With the construction of the Gang Canal, the north-eastern portion of the Ganganagar district had been reclaimed for intensive agricultural production.

It was envisaged that Pakistan might launch a limited offensive to capture territory upto the Gang Canal, or a major offensive to capture area upto the Rajasthan Canal(168). In the latter case, it would become necessary for the invader to capture Ganganagar town in order to open the axis of maintenance for the force across the Gang Canal. So Ganganagar was prepared as a fortress defence, and Para, 4 Para and 11 Dogra were given the task of guarding the various approaches to the town(169).

Prior to cease fire, a few BOPs were successfully raided by the Indian troops in this Sector. But no major action took place during the war. After the cease fire, about one platoon of the Pak troops infiltrated approximately 550-640 metres on 27 Dec and encroached into the area Sand Dunes (SL 7003) under the very nose of the Border Security Force post at Nagi (SL 7100)(170). One company of 4 Para, with one company in reserve, launched an attack to evict them at 0400 hrs on 28 Dec. But the intruders were strongly placed in trenches and bunkers with overhead protection, and had also mined the area. The Pak field and medium guns poured down concentrated fire and engaged the assaulting Indian company. The 4 Para suffered heavy casualties. Undaunted, the Company Commander rallied his troops and, magnificently defying the artillery shelling, assaulted the objective through the minefield(171). This audacity and valour was rewarded and the Pakistanis fled in disorder. The Para company finally secured the objective by 0550 hrs on 28 Dec(172). The Battalion had to contend itself with this success, which it could not exploit further as the area Tilla was heavily fortified with mines and barbed wire obstacles and held by a platoon supported by MMGs, and the high ground east of Jalwala was also strongly held(173). The short, sharp bout ended.

OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN COMMAND THEATRE

The Southern Command was responsible for the defence of Rajasthan (excluding Ganganagar district which was under 11 Corps) and Gujarat with an international border of 1344 km with Pakistan.

The theatre was divided into the following sectors:- (174)

Sector

Formation allotted operational responsibility

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| i) Bikaner Sector | Sector HQ Bikaner, later HQ Kilo Sector. |
| ii) Jaisalmer Sector | 12 Inf Div |
| iii) Barmer Sector | 11 Inf Div |
| iv) Kutch Sector | Sector HQ Bhuj |

Topography

The area under the Southern Command comprised the districts of Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Barmer in Rajasthan and most of the Little Rann and Great Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. The whole Rajasthan Sector was a vast stretch of sand, while the Rann of Kutch was a vast marshy plain(175). The Rajasthan Sector was

situated along the underbelly of the Pakistani province of Sind. It had many strategic objectives, within striking distance, such as the rail and road communications connecting Karachi with Lahore, the Sukkur Dam at Rohri which was vital for the agricultural economy of the region, the naval and air force installations at Karachi, Badin and Malir. The desert belt, however, was not hospitable and acted as a shield for these attractive military targets. The area was a sandy plain with a few rocky patches. It was dry and ill-watered and unkind to all forms of life. The topography was undulating, covered with sand dunes, and uncongenial to wheeled movement.

In the Kilo (Bikaner) Sector in the north, the road communication was poor, posing logistic difficulties. The Jaisalmer district in the centre was bounded on the west, and north-west by Pakistan. The biggest sand-dunes were found in Ramgarh and Sam Tehsils of Jaisalmer. Many sand-dunes had stabilised as sand hills. The Barmer Sector consisted of the southern portion of the Rajasthan desert up to Bakhasar, north of the Little Rann. The area was a vast sand-covered plain with sub-stratum of gneiss, hornblende and quartz, which rose up here and there through the sand, in some instances to a height of 240 to 300 metres. In the extreme north and west, the sandy plain was diversified by sand hills which sometimes rose to height of 90 to 120 metres(176). The main rail and road communications ran from Barmer to Gadra Road via Ramsar and thence to Munabao on the border and linked with the Pakistani system. Only camel tracks crossed the long border northwards from Barmer to Ganganagar. Metalled roads, however, came near the border on either side at several places.

Enemy Threat and Deployment

It was assessed that Pakistan's 18 Inf Div was deployed opposite the Southern Command. The formation included two armoured regiments with Sherman tanks, five wings of Desert and Indus Rangers and seven or eight Mujahid battalions. The Division had no Recce and Support battalion and the armoured regiments did not have modern T-59 tanks. It was also appreciated that in case an unfavourable situation developed consequent upon an Indian offensive, a portion of 33 Inf Div would be diverted to reinforce 18 Inf Div(177).

The Indo-Pak border in this area was extensive and far-flung. Pakistan's main defences were located at the edge of the green belt. They were not based on any natural obstacle, though minefields had been laid(178). It was reckoned that Pakistan would

generally remain on the defensive in this theatre, as its attention would be focussed on protecting the rail and road communication centres in areas Rahimyar Khan - Sadiqabad (WC 2994) and Naya Chor (QA 4050), opposite the Jaisalmer Sector in the north, and area Naya Chor - Umarnkot (QA 3331) opposite the Barmer Sector. For, these focal points were within reach from the Indian border. Pakistan would, thus, have the advantage of easy availability of water and better communications at the edge of the green belt, while the Indian forces would be handicapped on those counts(179). The Kilo and Kutch Sectors had inhospitable terrain, poor road communications and consequent logistic problems for both sides. At best, Pakistan could mount a limited offensive against either the Jaisalmer or the Barmer Sectors at any one time, with a force of approximately two infantry brigades. The distances from her roadhead would make it difficult for them to maintain such forces, and the capability of the Sherman tanks for traversing the desert for long distances was also restricted(180).

As it turned out, Pakistan deployed approximately one infantry division north of Rahimyar Khan in the jaisalmer Sector. In the Barmer Sector, one infantry brigade group with one armoured regiment (Shermans) was positioned. And the area Mirpur Khas had one infantry brigade group as reserve(181).

Deployment of Indian Forces

Lt Gen G.G. Bewoor, the GOC-in-C Southern Command, had given the 12 Inf Div (Maj Gen Khambata) the operational responsibility for the Jaisalmer Sector, and 11 Inf Div (Maj Gen R.D.R. Anand) for the Barmer Sector, while Commander Kilo Sector and Commander Kutch Sector were operationally responsible for their respective areas.

The 12 Inf Div had 45 Inf Bde Gp strung along the road Kishangarh - Tanot - Sadhewala, the 30 Inf Bde Gp in the rear at Ghantiyal Ka Mandir (LM 1219) and 322 Inf Bde Gp deployed at Kuriya Beri (LM 2225). There was only one Coy located at Longewala to the south. The Division's administrative echelon and supply elements were at Ramgarh.

The 11 Inf Div had deployed its 31 Inf Bde Gp at Gadra Road, 85 Inf Bde at Harsani and 330 Inf Bde at Chauhtan to the south-east.

The task entrusted to 12 Inf Div was to destroy any enemy force that might enter the Jaisalmer Sector, and to undertake offensive operations across the Indo-Pak border by advancing on axis Kishangarh -

Sakhirewala Khu (LM 4438) - Bhagla (WC 6992) and contact Pakistani defences in area Rahimyar Khan; cutting Pakistani rail communications and destroying maximum enemy forces in area Rahimyar Khan -Sadiqabad(182).

The 11 Inf Div was charged with the responsibility of denying approaches into the Barmer Sector, undertaking offensive operations to capture area Khokhropar(QA 8271) and Gadra City, dominating the general area Mankau (LV 6619) - Relnor (QA 6491), covering ingress routes to the Miajlar area by eliminating the Pakistani border posts, and developing a threat towards Naya Chor(183)

Commander Kilo Sector had orders to deny approaches into his sector and destroy any enemy that might enter it, and also destroy some specific Pak Ranger posts. Commander Kutch Sector was commanded to deny approaches to his sector by occupying area Kuarbet (QL 2565) - Nara Bet (QM 9191), prevent enemy penetration beyond the general line Lakhpat (UP 1848) - Khavda (QL 2547) - Nara Bet, and, if so ordered, destroy Pakistani Indus Ranger Posts in area Nagar Parkar (QG 4107) and Rahim Ki Bazar (UK 6406)(184).

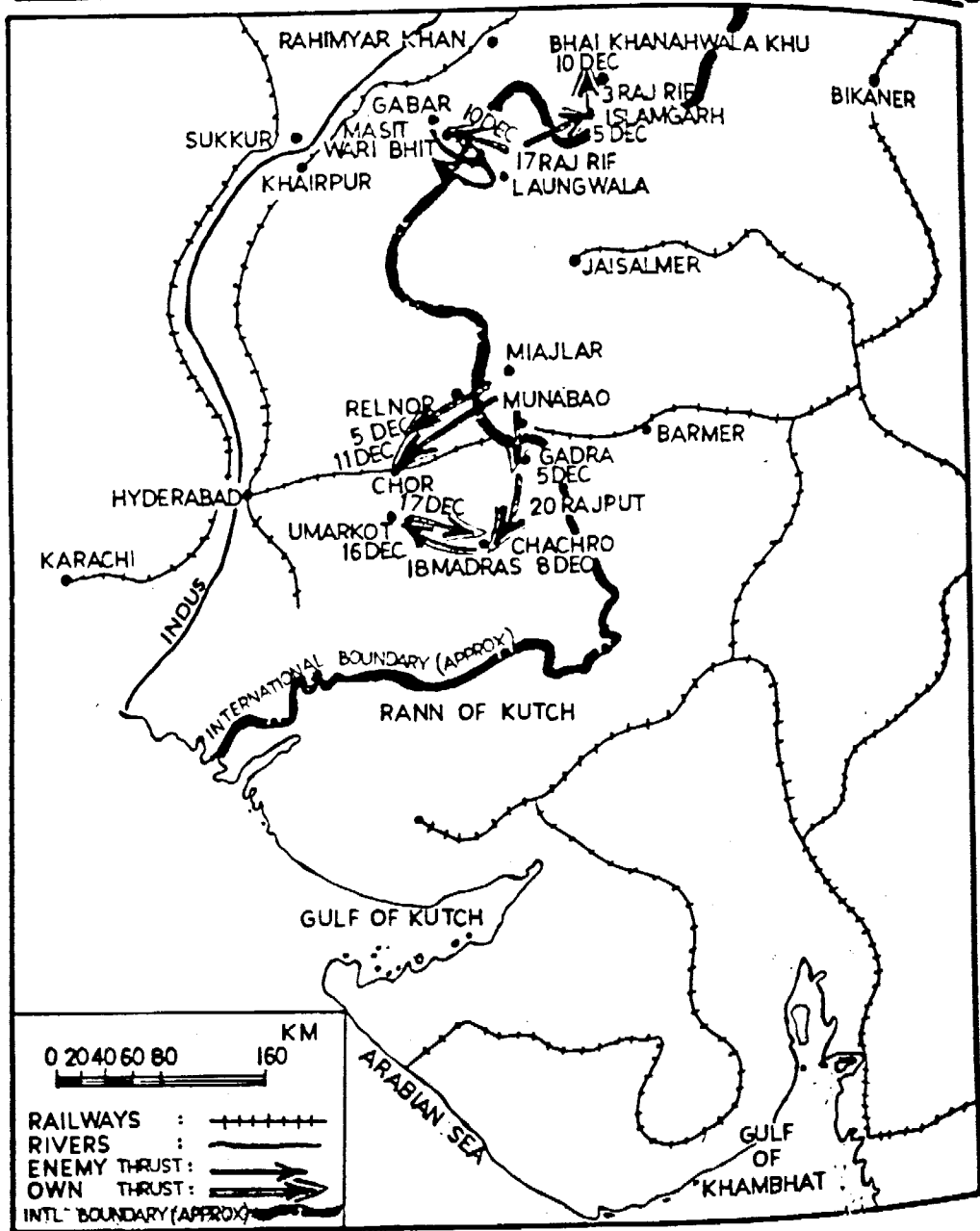
OC 10 Para Commando was assigned the task of assisting the operations of both 12 Inf Div and 11 Inf Div. The Commandos played a significant part in these operations(185).

The only reserve available to the whole of the Southern Command was 27 Madras which was expected to carry out multiple contingency tasks(186).

It was intended to give the impression of simultaneous attack by 11 and 12 Inf Divs on the whole front in order to confuse the Pakistanis about the main thrust line. 11 Inf Div launched its offensive at 1830 hrs on 4 Dec. The 12 Inf Div required some more time to move to the assembly areas. But, to achieve the impression of concurrent attack, this formation was ordered to launch the first phase of the offensive on 4 Dec and capture Sakhirewala Khu and Islamgarh (LM 5729) and raid Sandh (LL 7335),(187) though the main offensive towards Rahimyar Khan would start a day later.

The operations in this theatre are dealt with here from north to south.

THE SOUTHERN COMMAND OPERATIONS



The Kilo Sector Operations

In the Kilo Sector near Bikaner, the operations were basically defensive, and offensive actions were taken only against selected Ranger posts, owing to poor communications, desert terrain, lack of water and limited resources. The Pak BOP at Ghunnewala Khu was successfully raided by a column from 11 BSF Bn on 4 Dec(188). The attack on Rannal by 13 Grenadiers on 6 Dec was preceded by 20 minutes of preparatory bombardment which shook the garrison and the post was captured at 0945 hrs. Next day, the Battalion attacked the Ranger post at Rukanwala from the north and captured it at 1500 hrs(189). Meanwhile, 11 BSF Bn had captured Salamsar (LN 7341) at 0400 hrs. It was then planned to capture Bijnot, but administrative difficulties compelled the postponement of the attack. The Indian Air Force softened the defences on 10 Dec by carrying out a strike mission on the post at 1500 hrs. The 13 Grenadiers marched upon the post the same night, found it vacated, and occupied it. On 17 Dec one platoon of 12 BSF Bn occupied the Ranger post Boreh Ka Toba at 1100 hrs(190). The operations in this Sector resulted in the occupation of 320 sq km of Pakistani territory(191)

The Jaisalmer Sector

As already stated, 12 Inf Div was to begin its main offensive towards Rahimyar Khan on the night 5/6 Dec. Before that, however, to give an impression of concurrent offensive with that of 11 Inf Div in the Barmer Sector, the Division mounted a minor offensive to capture certain enemy positions on 4 Dec. The Indian Air Force made an air strike at Sakhirewala Khu at 1720 hrs. The 3 Jat crossed the international border soon after and captured the position by 1830 hrs(192). The next morning, (5 Dec) at 0400 hrs, 3 Raj Rif captured Islamgarh(193).

The Battle for Longewala: However, soon after, at 0530 hrs on 5 Dec information was received that six Pak tanks had been seen in the area Kharotar (IQ 8488) near Longewala. A slip-up on the part of 12 Inf Div stands out in bold relief. Although preplanned Tactical Recce was available to it throughout the war,(194) it made no effort to recce the Ghabbar-Longeweala axis, trotting out the fallacious plea that there was paucity of Tac Recce sorties(195). Had it detected the Pak thrust on 4 Dec, the Division could have met and dissipated it, and gone ahead with its offensive as originally planned. As it turned out, the Divisional offensive (OP Dare Devil) was postponed, till the clouds gathering over Longewala were dispelled.

Air strikes were requested for and immediately mounted from Jaisalmer airfield. Fifteen modern Pak tanks (T-59) were attacked in the area Longewala at 0830 hrs on 5 Dec and four were destroyed(196). Air recce reported that the advancing column, which had already crossed into the Indian territory and was stretched over a distance of 20 km along the track Kharotar BP 638 - Masjid Wari Bhit (LL 6202) - Gabar, consisted approximately of one armoured regiment of T-59 tanks and one infantry brigade(197). The ominous development indicated that an attack on Longewala and subsequently on Ramgarh and Jaisalmer - only about 100 km from Longewala along a motorable road - was in the offing. All available air effort was diverted to deal with the situation. A total of eleven air strike missions were flown. Seventeen Pak tanks were knocked out and 23 damaged(198). Early in the morning of 6 Dec, the invaders intermittently shelled Longewala with medium artillery(199) and at 1145 hrs their tanks were again reported in area Kharotar(200). A strike mission by the Indian Air Force knocked down two more tanks and twenty vehicles(201). The armoured column was broken up. The major credit for this goes, of course, to the IAF which rose to the occasion on very short notice and inflicted crippling losses on the enemy tanks and vehicles. The company defending Longewala also held out tenaciously against heavy odds until reinforcements arrived. The other factors contributing to Pakistan's debacle at Longewala were her inability to build up and maintain the momentum of her offensive due to the difficult sandy terrain, and failure to provide air cover for her force. Even so, if the Pakistanis had pressed home their attack on 5 Dec, they would have occupied Longewala, though it also appears certain that if they had gone deeper leaving the bulk of 12 Inf Div on their left flank, their total destruction would have become a virtual certainty.

Reports suggested that the bulk of the invading force had bogged on the axis Gabar (BP 638). The Army Commander, Lt Gen G.G. Bewoor, therefore, urged Maj Gen Khambata, GOC 12 Inf Div, to destroy the enemy force (22 Cavalry and approximately two infantry battalions) quickly. He told him that the enemy was without water, facing logistic difficulties, and stuck in the sand and the Indian Air Force had already destroyed half his tank force. Indian armour enjoyed numerical superiority and matched the Pakistan armour in type of tanks. Khambata must not, therefore, let the enemy tanks get away, and must also destroy his infantry within the Indian border, especially as the Indian Air Force was fully geared to support him(202).

The Indian Air Force flew five more strike missions on 6 Dec and played havoc with the Pak column(203). Bewoor congratulated the IAF on their magnificent performance.

The Pak force was in disarray and in the process of withdrawing. The pursuit of the enemy, however, did not immediately get off the ground. 7 Dec was spent in making preparations for the counter-offensive. Bewoor urged Khambata again to speed up the pace of the counter-offensive(204). Had Khambata been able to do so, the whole enemy column could have been annihilated(205). But the pace of the counter-offensive was painfully slow. It commenced only in the morning of 8 Dec, and did not make much headway even by noon. This irritated Bewoor, who directed Khambata to launch strong brigade attacks, supported by armour and artillery and direct the operation personally. Khambata, however, continued to grapple with the enemy companies deployed opposite 322 Inf Bde in the Sakhirewala Khu area in the north, and those holding Sarkari Ka Tibba (LQ 7293) in front of 30 Inf Bde(206). Bewoor asked Khambata to destroy the intruding enemy forces before nightfall on 9 Dec. The Division cleared the invaders from the Jaisalmer Sector by 2135 hrs on 9 Dec(207). One company of 17 Raj Rif advanced beyond the international border and captured area Masit Wari Bhit at 0300 hrs on the night 9/10 Dec after inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. In the north 3 Raj Rif captured Bhai Khanahwala Khu (IM 5242) the same day taking 24 prisoners of war. On the night 10/11 Dec, the Pakistanis were compelled to withdraw from Tamanchi Wala Toba (LL 9138)(208).

The Division did not, however, achieve much success in the Longewala area. But for dislodging the invaders from Indian territory and carrying out a few offensive probes, the Division contented itself with merely keeping the enemy at bay(209).

Therefore, on 12 Dec the Division was ordered to send 322 Inf Bde to the Munabao area, and the next day 27 Madras was also taken away and sent to Kutch Sector. Still, the Cease Fire found 12 Inf Div in occupation of about 800 sq km of enemy territory.

Many reasons were given for 12 Div's failure to destroy the Pak Column near Longewala or advance towards Rahimyar Khan. It could not undertake a major thrust across the border, it is said, in the absence of the support of an integral medium artillery regiment which was surely needed for an advance by armour. The AMX tanks of 20 Lancers were not capable of offensive operation over a long distance(210). The radio communications were in a poor state. Nor was

there adequate logistic and administrative backing available for maintaining the advance forces. While many of these pleas have some force, it cannot be denied that the advance towards Rahimyar Khan had been deliberately planned, and the plan had presumably been accepted as feasible by the Div Commander. Changing the axis of operations in mid-stride is admittedly a difficult manoeuvre and takes some time. HQ 12 Inf Div took 48 hours to do so, but failed to pursue and destroy a retreating enemy in the Longewala Sector, even after the 48 hours.

Operations in the Barmer Sector

On the night 4/5 Dec, 11 Inf Div launched a three-pronged offensive to capture territory up to Naya Chor. The main thrust was on the axis Munabao - Parbat Ali - Naya Chor. The three different thrust axes were: (211)

- (i) The Northern Sub-Sector of Mithrau-Mankau - Saidau (LV 6516) - Relnor-Kitlor (QA 6484) - Jamo (QA 7384).
- (ii) The Central Sub-Sector astride the railway line and track running west from Munabao to Naya Chor.
- (iii) The Southern Sub-Sector of Gadra Road - Gadra City (QB 2965) - Pirani Ka Par (QB 0752) - Dali (QB 1741) - Bagal (QB 0436) and Kelnor - Bhame Ka Tar - Khimsar.

These operations progressed as follows :

The Northern Sub-Sector : Crossing the international border at 1830 hrs on 4 Dec, 17 Grenadiers, the Camel Battalion, secured Ranak - Dhar (QA 7294) at 2359 hrs(212). The next day, it captured Rotak (QA 7091), Relnor and Mankor (QA 6895). From Relnor the Battalion secured area Parchiarisar and Saidau on 7 Dec(213). The Grenadiers were to develop operations along the axis Relnor - Naya Chor and pose a threat to Naya Chor. But 2,000 Mujahids were reported to be concentrated in area west of Saidau, and the task was modified and limited to consolidating the areas captured and denying the ingress routes to Miajlar(214).

The Central Sub-Sector: The Division's main thrust was made in this Sub-Sector, on the axis Munabao - Parbat Ali - Naya Chor. In this sector, the Indian Air Force carried out strikes on Gazi Camp, Kajlor and Khokhropar in the evening of 4 Dec(215). This was followed by a swift offensive by 85 Inf Bde,

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which captured Gazi Camp and Kajlor on the night 4/5 Dec and Bhitala and Khokhropar the next morning. The defenders offered light opposition at these places and left behind a large quantity of ammunition(216).

But now the Brigade faced problems of communication. The track beyond Khokhropar was in a bad condition and the one forward of Bhitala was much worse. The railway line was found in good shape, but there was no rolling stock at the Khokhropar railway station. A duck board track had to be constructed from Munabao to Khokhropar for the movement of logistics(217). These problems slowed down the advance of the Brigade. However, by 1400 hrs on 6 Dec, the area Vasarabh - Sakna (QA 6659) had been secured(218). On 7 Dec, 10 Sikh LI advanced along the railway line and occupied Jalu Jo Chaunro (QA 6158) by 0500 hrs and area Parche Ji Vari by 1000 hrs. The 10 Sikh, who had resumed advance at 0200 hrs south of the railway line on axis Vasarabh - Parche Ji Vari (QA 5156) - Naya Chor, secured an area of approximately 900 metres south-east of Parche Ji Vari by 1300 hrs. The 2 Mahar, who had secured the Vasarabh railway station, advanced along the railway line and south of it and firmed in at Parche Ji Vari railway station by 1500 hrs. During the day, PAF aircraft strafed and bombed 85 Inf Bde four times. Three Sabres and one B-57 strafed Vasarabh and Khokhropar railway stations also at 1530 hrs. The Indian Air Force flew four strike missions in the area Naya Chor(219). The Brigade reached the vicinity of Naya Chor by 0800 hrs on 8 Dec and established contact with the defenders in the area Apex (QA 5051), (220) which was the screen position of the main defences at Naya Chor and formed part of a protective and early warning system(221). By the morning of 11 Dec, the Indian troops moved up to Parbat Ali. The 10 Sikh and 2 Mahar attacked the Apex position at 0135 hrs on 11 Dec. The Pakistanis did not offer much resistance and pulled back to Parbat Ali, which was strongly held by one infantry battalion with at least ten MMGs(222).

It was discovered that Parbat Ali could not be taken by an improptu attack. It dominated both the railway line and the main tracks to Naya Chor and so was build up into a formidable position for the defence of Naya Chor. It was protected by a minefield with a depth of 550 to 730 metres and also by wire obstacles laid in front of the forward localities(223).

Parbat Ali was subjected to a brigade level attack carried out by 2 Mahar and 10 Sikh with 10 Sikh LI and 2 Raj Rif respectively providing them firm bases and simulating attacks from other directions.

The 3 Indep Armd Sqn provided anti-tank cover and simulated an outflanking move on the left flank. The assaulting battalions were provided one medium and three field batteries each. The 78 Fd Coy were to breach the minefield and create a vehicle lane from Apex to Parbat Ali(224).

The attack, preceded by a 10 minute barrage of artillery fire, was launched at 0300 hrs on 13 Dec from an unexpected direction. The defenders did not expect an attack so soon after the capture of the Apex area, least of all from an approach that involved a difficult climb of 80 degrees. The assaulting companies reached the objective at 0745 hrs(225). They came under MMG and small arms fire only when they had come close to the forward localities. Nor could the Pakistanis use artillery or mortar fire during the assault. But still they offered stiff resistance. Both 2 Mahar and 10 Sikh mopped up from trench to trench and succeeded in finally evicting the garrison(226) by 1000 hrs on 13 Dec after hand-to-hand fighting. The Pak troops put in three successive counter-attacks, which were all beaten back. They left behind 57 dead, and 35 prisoners of war were captured(227).

The 85 Inf Bde continued its efforts to close up to Naya Chor. The duck board track had been constructed up to a distance of 9.5 km from Khokhropar. The 10 Sikh LI secured area Parche Ji Vari Village by 0530 hrs on 15 Dec and cleared area Six Trees by 1100 hrs, and thus arrived before the main enemy defences. But these were protected by an extensive minefield in front. The Pakistanis counter-attacked twice with infantry and armour. Though the Sikhs beat back the counter-attacks, they soon withdrew to the area Village as the Six Trees position was dominated by the enemy(228). As the PAF was very active and as it was becoming increasingly apparent that the Division had over-stretched itself, it was decided to give up the piecemeal nibbling of enemy defences and put in a more concentrated effort after proper build up(229). But the Cease Fire came before the build up.

The most important factor which led to the stalemate was the incorrect intelligence about the state of the track Munabao - Naya Chor. It had been appreciated earlier that only a part of the track needed laying of duck board track. It was now discovered that the intelligence had been false and the whole length of the track from Khokhropar to Naya Chor had to be attended to(230). One important gain had, however, been made by these operations: Pakistan had been compelled to reinforce the Naya Chor sector.

with 33 Inf Div which relieved pressure, to some extent, opposite the Western Command.

The Southern Sub-Sector : The 31 Inf Bde crossed the international border at 1830 hrs on 4 Dec. The 20 Rajput captured Bhamka Ka Tar by 1900 hrs and 18 Madras seized Mahadan Ki Dhani (QB 3268) at 2305 hrs (231). On 5 Dec the Pakistanis were dispossessed of many more positions. The 15 Kumaon wrested Gadra City at 0735 hrs that day, in the face of heavy mortar, MMG and LMG fire and after hand-to-hand fighting for an hour. The defenders suffered 40 killed and many wounded (232). The Battalion then advanced towards Dali (QB 1741) at 1400 hrs and captured Kathe Ka Par (QB 2557) by 1800 hrs. The 20 Rajput attacked Khimsar at 1540 hrs and secured it by 1800 hrs. The Battalion suffered only 2 ORs wounded while dead bodies of 1 Officer and 40 ORs of the enemy were recovered. The 18 Madras helped themselves to Pirani Ka Par by 1300 hrs (233). The 15 Kumaon contacted Dali position at 1345 hrs on 6 Dec (234). The Engineers made provision for the maintenance of the track Gadra-Dali. This facilitated the capture of Dali at 0600 hrs on 7 Dec (235). At about 0800 hrs on 7 Dec, 9 Madras captured Mahendro Ro Par (QA 8054) and Fateh Ro Par. The same day (7 Dec) a combat group of 10 Para Commando raided Chachro at about 0300 hrs with a view to facilitating the capture of the place by 20 Rajput. The Commandos captured 17 prisoners of war and some weapons and equipment (236). The Rajputs cleared Chachro by 1300 hrs on 8 Dec, and were thus in possession of the area Khimsar-Chachro. The Commandos then left for Khimsar. Another combat group of the Commandos raided Virawah at 0200 hrs on 8 Dec (237).

The 31 Inf Bde had thus captured Gadra City, Pirani Ka Par, Mahendro Ro Par, Dali, Khimsar, Bagal and Chachro in rapid succession. The troops now concentrated on the consolidation of these areas and on the improvement and maintenance of the tracks and the build up of logistic support.

It was, however, proving difficult in this Sector to build up and maintain the Division on a single desert track. It also appeared necessary to develop a subsidiary operation elsewhere in order to draw a portion of the enemy away from Naya Chor, and thus assist the main offensive against that place. Hence the original plan of confining 31 Inf Bde to the Chachro axis was modified, and it was ordered to send one battalion group to advance on the Chachro - Umarnot axis (238). The 18 Madras, with one field battery and one light battery, was allotted this task, and the advance commenced at 1400 hrs on 13 Dec.

But it proved an ill-advised operation. The Battalion reached the area Hingo Ro Par (QA 4229), 7 km east of Umarkot and took position there during night 16/17 Dec(239). The track conditions did not permit forward movement of the field guns. The defenders were prolific in the use of mines and there were extensive anti-personnel and anti-tank mines along the entire front in depth. A large number of nuisance mines had also been laid along the tracks and the railway line(240). The Battalion was shelled heavily in morning of 17 Dec and was subsequently assaulted. Though the initial attack did not have much impact, the Pakistanis put in a major attack the second time. The infantry column was thus stuck up in an area where it could neither be reinforced nor supported by artillery from the main axis. The Battalion had also spent most of its small arms ammunition. It was, therefore, compelled to fall back to an area within the range of Indian field guns. Fortunately, the Pakistanis proved unenterprising and did not pursue the Battalion. The operation thus fizzled out and the Battalion rejoined 31 Inf Bde at Chachro(241).

During the operations in the Barmer Sector the 11 Inf Div had occupied 4582 sq km of Pakistan territory,(242) even though the objective had eluded it.

Operations in the Kutch Sector

Kutch was a crescent-shaped region forming part of north-west Gujarat. To its north and north-west lay Sind (Pakistan). On the whole, it was a treeless, barren and rocky area, with the aspect varied by ranges of hills, rugged and deeply cut river beds, and tracts of rich pasture land(243). To the south, a high bank of sand lined the sea coast. The international border ran here West to East along the Rann of Kutch, which in winter looked like a frozen desert of salt with few tracks or inhabited localities.

Opposite this Sector, Pakistan had deployed Rangers and Mujahids, backed by regular troops in selected areas. They remained on the defensive in this area, perhaps because they had the impression that one infantry brigade group was deployed in this Sector,(244) whereas, in reality, there were only three BSF battalions and about one infantry battalion of the territorial Army. The Sector Commander had been ordered to remain on the defensive, and to take offensive action only at a favourable time and place without disturbing the balance of deployment. When the intercepted messages revealed that the Pakistanis

planned to vacate certain posts from the Eastern and Central Sub-Sectors, the BSF battalions distinguished themselves by carrying out offensive tasks for which they were not trained or equipped, and captured a large number of posts opposite Dharamsala (QL 1871) and Suigam (QN 0879)(245). The 10 Para Commandos concentrated at Nagar Parkar on 16 Dec and infiltrated and softened up Virawah on 17 Dec by carrying out successive raids. These paved the way for the capture of the whole of the Nagar Parkar Bulge, though not the town itself. So, the Kutch Sector at the time of the Cease Fire occupied 1741 sq km of Pakistan territory.

In the Southern Command area Pakistan could not occupy an inch of Indian territory, while the Indian forces occupied a total of 7443 sq km of Pakistan territory.

LOOKING BACK

On the Western Front the task of the Indian Army was basically to hold the ground, while the Pak Army had to attack and capture enough territory to off-set likely losses in East Pakistan. In the 1971 operations, the Pakistan Army could occupy some territory only in Chhamb, Hussainiwala, and Fazilka Sectors, and these gains were smaller than the Pak losses in the Shyok Valley, Kargil, Chicken's Neck, Shakargarh, and Barmer areas. Pakistan, therefore, had no advantage of conquered territories in the peace negotiations after the loss of entire area of East Pakistan. That was the basis of Pakistan's overall defeat in 1971.

Looking at the Western Front alone, however, the honours were more evenly divided. The Indian Army had planned for an offensive-defensive war to capture and keep the initiative in the West also. But at the same time they had orders to lose no territory anywhere. Such a stipulation over-stretched the resources at the disposal of the Indian Commanders, who tried to play safe by prematurely breaking-up their reserves and dishing out units to vulnerable areas even before the out-break of hostilities. The stipulation also robbed the Commanders of all flexibility and manoeuvrability in conducting the campaign.

In retrospect, it is obvious that the decision at the highest level to change the posture from the offensive to the defensive at the eleventh hour had disastrous consequences, particularly in such key areas as the Chhamb Sector. Irrespective of the spate of arguments and the semantic sophistry that followed the Chhamb debacle, and even though an abler Indian Commander would have escaped more lightly, one

important fact has to be recognised; firm base for an attack cannot have the same defence potential as an organised defended sector.

High Altitude and Hill Sectors

The thinning out of a Brigade from 3 Inf Div consequent on the onset of winter was a sound decision. In the Shyok Valley, operations were successfully carried out at exceptional heights and climatic conditions. But the fact that success was made possible by a very weak opposition should warn Indian Commanders that similar feats would not be repeated against a better equipped and more determined enemy.

The Kargil Sector witnessed bitter close quarter battle where Indian troops got the better of the enemy and won further cushion to the security of the vital Srinagar-Leh artery.

Further South in Punch, timely reinforcement and spirited fighting averted what would have been a major triumph of the Pakistan forces. But the laurels of Punch were squandered away in the ill-fated battle of Daruchhian where the attack floundered on account of faulty planning and poor management.

Plains Sectors

The fate of India's Chhamb offensive was sealed the moment the critical decision was taken just two days before D Day to remain on the defensive initially. The planners ignored a series of indicators and intelligence reports pointing to a contemplated offensive by Pakistan. Circumspection in the face of unambiguous danger signals was thrown overboard. Instead, a misplaced sense of commitment to the offensive pervaded the Div HQ, regardless of the major shift in the strategic posture. Consequently, the Pakistani offensive caught the Division in a state of imbalance, which was compounded by panic reactions. The series of Indian responses which entailed move of reinforcements from Samba and Jammu upset the Indian offensive plans elsewhere. Even with the benefit of hind sight, if Pakistan claims that its 'spoiling attack' in Chhamb achieved its purpose, the assertion appears justified because the offensive, apart from ensuring depth to its vulnerable areas dislocated the contemplated Indian offensive to a lesser or greater degree in a wide area.

The operation in the Chicken's Neck was a copy-book example of an attack by infiltration which was boldly conceived and well executed. The Indians

not only removed a dangerous salient but induced hasty reactions on Pakistan High Command, particularly in relation to the defence of the critical Marala Headworks. The attrition inflicted on the Pak Army, however, was minimal in this action.

The 1 Corps operations have to be viewed against the over-riding consideration that the vital Jammu-Pathankot artery had to be protected against an anticipated foray by Pakistani's 6 Armd Div. At the same time a major offensive was sought to be launched not only to capture some 'real estate' but to maul the Pakistani forces. The ghost of 6 Armd Div appeared to have constantly haunted the GOC 1 Corps. By 9-10 December, it should have been quite clear that the threat from Armd Div was no longer credible. There was still time for bold manoeuvres to outflank the obstacles and hit the communication centres at the rear. Instead, hard slogging matches were deliberately stage-managed against continuous minefield belts and skilful rearguard actions by a nimble-witted enemy. Halfhearted attempts were made to take Shakargarh. The failures only added regrettable chapters to a ponderous story of excessive caution and no ingenuity. With those resources 1 Corps should have made a significant dent. In actual fact, it barely made an impression on the periphery.

Two major setbacks characterised operations in the Punjab Sector. The Hussainiwala enclave was lost on account of complacency followed by confusion. The pugnacity of the forward troops could not be sustained by the indecisive pusillanimity of the commanders, who chose to remain on the safe ground of the Eastern bank instead of crossing over to the West and taking over the battle. In the Fazilka Sector the concept of operation was clouded by ambiguity. The commanders at different levels were not on the same grid as far as the design of the battle was concerned. One company of the enemy rushed to the important bridge at Beriwala and captured it. Instead of delivering well chosen ripostes to out-manoeuve the enemy from his precarious toe hold, futile and bloody counter attacks were repeated. The carnage was frightful, the gains negligible.

The Desert Sector

The unexpected Pak attack on Longewala and the vicious strikes by IAF, which played an outstanding role, changed the complexion of the 12 Inf Div operations. In retrospect, it is doubtful whether the original plans aimed at the capture of Rahimyar Khan had any chance of success. Rahimyar Khan was held almost by two Pak brigades. The head start given by the IAF was not exploited by the ground forces. In

the Barmer Sector the operation made satisfactory progress till the force overstretched itself and suffered a reverse on the outskirts of Umarkot. The operations were enlivened by such unorthodox operations as the daring Commando raid on Chachro.

A survey of the operations in the desert gives an impression that the plans were far too ambitious. Lack of mobility and fire power and the special problems of desert logistics should have dictated a more modest plan which packed sufficient punch to achieve limited objectives. Instead the assets were frittered away on two widely divergent axes in two weak thrusts that were neither individually viable nor mutually complementary.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. Ibid.
3. The Map Grid References are given in yards (and not in metres) according to the old maps then in use.
4. From Official Records.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. The Pakistan Army Journal for September 1984 carries an article "Covering Troops Battle-Shakargarh 1971" by Brig Nisar Ahmed Khan, SJ (Retd). The author claims that the covering troops holding this area were an ad hoc brigade created on 3 December 1971 "to act as covering force in the Shakargarh Sector". This force, called the 'Changez Force', is claimed to have consisted of X Lancers with 35 Sherman II tanks, Y Cavalry having 41 M47 tanks (Pattons) and Z Punjab, a standard infantry unit. A similar account features in the 'History of Pakistan Artillery' by Maj Gen Shaukat Riza (Retd) who states (pp 414-418) that the Changzez Force comprised an Armd Regt (35 tanks) supported by 106 Med Bty. Another Armd Regt (41 tanks) supported by 38 Med Bty, and an Inf Bn (not motorized). Pakistanis also claim that Brig Nisar had been ordered to delay the enemy for 24 hrs and 48 hrs at the first and second positions respectively. In actual fact, the Indians were delayed for seven days. However, Lt Gen WAG Pinto, the then GOC 54 Inf Div, when interviewed, refuted these claims and dismissed them as concoctions innovated to boost Pakistani morale.
9. From Official Records.
10. Ibid.
11. In the interview held with Lt Gen K.P. Candeth, he said that the Corps Commander, Lt Gen K.K. Singh, was rather too cautious. However, K.K. Singh argues that he had to be deliberately cautious because he was also given the vital task of protecting the Jammu-Pathankot road axis.
12. From Official Records.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Brig Nisar Ahmed Khan, Pakistan Army Journal, September 1984.

21. From Official Records.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Brig A.S. Vaidya, MVC, who rose to become Chief of Army Staff.
26. Brig Arjinder Singh.
27. Lt Col B.T. Pandit.
28. From Official Records.
29. The Division was, however, depleted by some operational constraints. 6 Madras ex-91 Inf Bde and 90 Indep Recce Squad ex-16 Indep Armd Bde operated under HQ 39 Inf Div to hold a firm base in the general area Londi till the capture of Shakargarh. Besides, the two battalions defending the area Raipur (NX 2626)-Raiyan (NX 3025) were not to be lifted until the Supwal Ditch had been cleared - Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. 72 Inf Bde and a battalion of 115 Inf Bde of this Division supported by 2 Indep Armd Bde less 14 Horse were placed under command HQ 39 Inf Div for operations from the Londi sector.
43. From Official Records.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. This version is bitterly contested by Maj Chaudhary. He says despite short notice his Coy Gp had successfully infiltrated to what he called the flank and rear of enemy defences who not only panicked but remained inactive till the early hours of morning. His repeated pleadings to move forward the armour and rest of the Battalion were of no avail. He decided, however, to stick on and fought till about 0700 hrs on 14 December when he was hit by a shell splinter on his left eye. He was unconscious

thereafter, and was made POW.

In a tone that barely disguised contempt Maj Chaudhary brought out that he was deserted by his Bty Comdr and Engr Rep who later claimed to be decorated. (It was Maj Chaudhary and not the Bty Comdr who was hit, blinded and rendered unconscious by the shell splinter - Sukhwant Singh, (II)).

53. From Official Records.
54. This is confirmed by a Pak Army Officer, Brig Nisar Ahmed Khan in his article in Pakistan Army Journal, September 1984.
55. From Official Records.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Brig Jahangir Karamat, Pakistan Army Journal, September 1983.
67. Interview with Lt Gen WAG Pinto at Pune.
68. The information regarding deployment of Pak forces is mainly based on Maj Gen Sukhwant Singh's book entitled 'Defence of the Western Border', Vol.II. However, as for Pak 103 Inf Bde whereas Sukhwant Singh has mentioned 108 Inf Bde, Fazal Mugeem Khan and Brig Baqir Siddiqui COS, HQ Eastern Command interrogation reports have mentioned 103 Inf Bde as part of 10 Inf Div. From Official Records.
69. Ibid.
70. For details see Sukhwant Singh, Vol.II, pp. 149-151.
71. Less two regiments.
72. From Official Records.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. 1955 hrs. Ibid.
77. From Official Records.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Killed 3 Officers, 1 JCO and 32 ORs and wounded 1 Officer, 3 JCO and 97 ORs. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Lt Gen P.S. Bhagat in his book "The Shield and the Sword", (pp 30-31) says that "The Ichhogil Canal connects the river Ravi with the water system of the Sutlej and the Canal alignment is important for its strategic value. It runs parallel to the border. In the north, the built-up area of Lahore extends eastwards up to it". It was called BRB Link Canal by Pakistan.
97. From Official Records.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. According to Lt Gen K.P. Candeth, the Commanding Officer, 15 Punjab "was attending a farewell party given to him by his JCOs". p. 140.
129. From Official Records.
130. Ibid. This is concealed by Fazal Muqem as quoted by Candeth in his book, p.140.

131. Ibid.
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Ibid.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid.
139. The formation was initially commanded by Maj Gen H.S. Bakshi who was evacuated on 7 December after being wounded as a result of his jeep going over an enemy anti-tank mine . Ibid.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid.
142. Ibid.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. According to Maj Gen Ram Singh (Retd), the then GOC F Sector, it would have been certainly more appropriate and administratively more efficient if F Sector had been made a full Division, instead of the area being defended by making ad hoc arrangements.
151. From Official Records.
152. Ibid.
153. Considering the fact that 1 and 6 Armd Divs and 7 Inf Div were Pakistan GHQ Reserves, the assessment of enemy threat seems to have been grossly exaggerated.
154. From Official Records.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid.
158. The account of operations in the Fazilka areas has benefited greatly from some valuable studies made at School of Combat, Mhow.
159. When interviewed, Maj Gen Ram Singh, justified the demolition of these bridges. In his view, they were fit only for bullock-carts and could be used by the enemy for infiltration purposes.
160. From Official Records.
161. Ibid.
162. The operation was remarkable for another reason. For the first time, accurate information was gathered about the enemy and his locations. The prisoners revealed that 7 Punjab and two troops of armour were located in the area between Qadir Bakhsh and Muazzam, 6 FFR on the Sabuna Distributary at the Beriwalla Bridge and Pakka and 18 Baluch south of Pakka.

163. From Official Records.
164. Ibid.
165. Virtually in command of the Brigade from 7 to 11 December.
166. From Official Records.
167. Maj Gen Ram Singh justified the repeated but expensive counter-attacks on the ground that they were necessary to restore morale. On the contrary, they eroded morale further.
168. From Official Records.
169. Ibid.
170. Ibid.
171. Ibid.
172. Ibid.
173. Ibid.
174. Ibid.
175. Dist. Gazetteer, Kutch Jaisalmer and Barmer.
176. Ibid.
177. From Official Records.
178. Ibid.
179. Ibid.
180. Ibid.
181. Ibid.
182. Ibid.
183. Ibid.
184. Ibid.
185. Ibid.
186. Ibid.
187. Ibid.
188. Ibid.
189. Ibid.
190. Ibid.
191. Ibid.
192. Ibid.
193. Gen Bewoor told in the interview that when the enemy forces were withdrawing from Islamgarh, our artillery, which consisted of only 25 pr, could not get going and had to be pushed over the track. Had the Indian troops a medium regiment, the enemy could have been annihilated!
194. From Official Records.
195. Ibid.
196. Ibid.
197. Ibid.
198. Ibid. Also acknowledged by Pakistan. See S. Riza, p.449. The IAF tally is not identical, naturally.
199. From Official Records.
200. Ibid.
201. Ibid.
202. Ibid.
203. Ibid.
204. Sukhwant Singh, however, blames Bewoor and gives credit to the Chief of the Army Staff for pressing Bewoor to pursue the enemy.

205. From Official Records.
206. Ibid.
207. Ibid.
208. Ibid.
209. Ibid.
210. Ibid.
211. Ibid.
212. Ibid.
213. Ibid.
214. Ibid.
215. Ibid.
216. Ibid.
217. Ibid.
218. Ibid.
219. Ibid.
220. Ibid.
221. Ibid.
222. Ibid.
223. Ibid.
224. Ibid.
225. Ibid.
226. Ibid.
227. Ibid.
228. Ibid.
229. Ibid.
230. Ibid.
231. Ibid.
232. Ibid.
233. Ibid.
234. Ibid.
235. Ibid.
236. Ibid.
237. Ibid.
238. Ibid.
239. Ibid.
240. Ibid.
241. Ibid.
242. Ibid.
243. Dist. Gazetteer, Kutch.
244. From Official Records.
245. Ibid.

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THE IAF IN THE WESTIntroduction

Tension was mounting along the borders during the monsoon and autumn of 1971. The Pak aircraft continued to violate Indian air space in increasing numbers, even in the west. During November 1971 alone, there were as many as 10 major air violations by Pak F-104s and Mirages in the areas around Srinagar, Amritsar, Jammu, Jamnagar and Ganganagar. In the east, on the afternoon of 22 November 1971, three F-86 Sabres were intercepted by the IAF Gnats over Boyra to the north-east of Calcutta and in the ensuing air battle, all three were shot down(1). Escalation of tension continued until on the evening of 3 December 1971 the Pak Air Force (PAF) carried out its surprise attacks against the IAF airfields in the west.

It was suspected for weeks and months that the Pakistani attack on India would start with pre-emptive air strikes on a number of forward airfields. It appears that some information became available on 1 Dec that Pakistan was likely to strike in the next day or two(2). Under these circumstances, a pre-emptive strike by the IAF would have been prudent and rational. But the Government of India chose to let Pakistan strike first.

At last light, between 1740 and 1745 hrs, on the evening of 3 Dec, the PAF launched attacks simultaneously on the IAF airfields at Amritsar, Srinagar, Avantipur and Pathankot, the Advance Landing Ground at Faridkot, and also the radar unit (SU) at Amritsar. A total of six F-104s and ten F-86s were used. Two minutes before the raid on Pathankot at 1745 hrs two Mirages flew over the airfield. All these airfields being close to the border, there were insufficient warning for air defence aircraft to be scrambled to intercept the raiders. The attacks were with bombs, and only one pass was made over each target. Except for minor damage to the communication equipment at the SU, i.e., the radar unit, at Amritsar and to a light Air OP aircraft at Faridkot, there was no damage of any consequence to other vital installations. One F-104 Star-fighter was shot down by air defences at Amritsar(3).

In response, bomber units of Central Air Command (CAC) were ordered to prepare for strikes on the PAF bases. No fighter bomber attacks could be mounted because of the late hour. But the civil defence

organisation was alerted by the air defence network, steps were taken to control movement of civil craft in Indian air space.

Pakistan's attempted 'Pearl Harbour' having failed dismally, the PAF mounted second blow, of 17 raids with B-57 bombers during the night of 3/4 Dec against the forward airfields in the west and the major air base at Agra. A B-57 was brought down, probably by Ack Ack guns defending the Amritsar radar station. No aircraft was hit on the ground, but some of the airfields were damaged. The runways at Jodhpur, Uttarlai, Agra and Sirsa sustained minor damage, but remained operational throughout that night. The craters at Halwara were more extensive and were repaired only by the next morning.

The PAF having launched its pre-emptive strike without any warning or declaration of war, the Indian armed forces were free to hit back with full vigour. The IAF, which was honed for war but hoped for peace, was ready to give a befitting reply to the aggressor.

The Opposing Air Forces

The IAF with expansion and modernisation had grown both in size and in offensive potential by 1971. It had in fact become the fifth largest air force of the world, after those of the United States, USSR, China and France. The total IAF inventory was estimated at approximately six hundred twenty-five combat aircraft. It was organised into thirty-four fighter squadrons, and five bomber squadrons, twenty eight of which were deployed against West Pakistan and eleven around East Pakistan. These included aircraft from units like Tactical and Combat Development Establishment (TACDE), Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) and Jet Bomber Conversion Unit (JBCU) being formed into Squadrons. Fifteen of the squadrons were equipped with supersonic planes. Air defence had also received considerable attention. A string of modern airfields with concrete covered 'pens' for aircraft had been built along the Western border. Radar controlled guns and SAM-2 Soviet surface to air missiles had been acquired. They were integrated with a good radar network, and atleast the high and medium level radar coverage was fairly extensive. As a result, an effective and formidable defence zone, with only a few gaps, had been created along the West Pakistan border.

Transport aircraft included one maritime recce Squadron with L-1049 Super Constellation aircraft, about fifty-five C-47, sixty C-119, twenty Il-14, thirty An-12, twenty-five Otter, twelve HS-748 and

fifteen Caribou aircraft. Helicopters included about eighty Mi-4, 150 Alouette III, ten Bell-47 and a few Mi-8(4).

The PAF, it was estimated, mustered about two hundred seventy-three combat aircraft consisting of one hundred thirty Sabres, twelve F-104s, ninety Chinese built MiG-19s, twenty-six French Mirage-IIIs, and fifteen B-57 bombers. They were organised into some thirteen squadrons, out of which twelve were in West Pakistan and one in East Pakistan. Their trainer aircraft included 30 T-37 and 17 T-33 aircraft. Transport aircraft included nine C-130 Hercules and one F-27 aircraft. Helicopters included forty Sioux, Huskie, Alouette III and Mi-8s(5).

The IAF

As mentioned, on the Western Front the IAF had twenty-four fighter/bomber squadrons plus four bomber squadrons, deployed at rear as well as forward airfields. The detailed deployment just prior to the onset of hostilities was as follows(6):-

Fighter Aircraft

<u>MiG-21 or Type 77</u>	<u>Sqn Commander</u>	<u>Base</u>
(a) i. 1 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr Upkar Singh	Adampur
ii. 8 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr AK Sen	Pune/Bombay
iii. 29 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr AB Swardekar, KC	Hindon/ Jodhpur/ Uttarlai from 14 Dec 1971.
iv. 45 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr SK Anand	Chandigarh/ ^{Amritsar} Bikaner/ ^{Pathankot} Sirsa
v. 47 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr HS Gill, VM	Jamnagar/ Halwara
vi. TACDE (one flight)	Wg Cdr AK Mukerjee	Amritsar/ Ambala

Hunter

(b) i. 7 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr BA Coelho	Nal, from Dec 71, when it came over from the East.
	Wg Cdr NC Suri, VM	

ii. 20 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr CV Parker, VM	Pathankot
iii. 27 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr YP Mehta	Pathankot
iv. OCU AF	Wg Cdr DM Conquest	Jamnagar/ Jaisalmer

Gnat

(c) i. 2 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr JW Greene, Vr.C.	Amritsar/ Ambala
ii. 9 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr K Yadav, VM	Halwara
iii. 18 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr P Raina	Srinagar
iv. 21 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr SS Malik, Vr.C., VM	Uttarlai/ Ahmedabad
v. 23 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr SD Mohan	Pathankot

Su-7 or S-22

(d) i. 26 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr RK Batra	Adampur
ii. 32 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr HS Manget	Ambala
iii. 101 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr KC Khanna, VM	Adampur
iv. 108 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr DS Deshmukh	Halwara
v. 222 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr AA D' Costa, VM	Halwara
vi. TACDE (one flight)	Wg Cdr AK Mukerjee	Ambala/ Amritsar

HF-24

(e) i. 10 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr KC Aggarwal	Uttarlai/ Jodhpur
ii. 220 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr R Dhawan, VM	-do-

Mystere

(f) i. 3 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr RN Dogra	Sirsa/ Hindon
ii. 31 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr ML Trehan	Nal/Jamnagar

(g) Vampires

Srinagar

(h) Harvards

Rajouri

Bomber Aircraft

(a) 5 Sqn AF

Wg Cdr MS Talwar Agra

(b) 35 Sqn AF

Wg Cdr KK Badhwar Pune

(c) 106 Sqn AF

Wg cdr RS Benegal Agra

(d) JBCU

Sqn Ldr S Thakar Agra

The PAF

16 Sqn F-16

Wg Cdr P Gauram Cozakhpur

Prior to December 1971 conflict, the PAF was composed of 14 Squadron (13 Combat + 1 Tpt a/c) including one F-114 Sqn from Jordan, with an aircraft strength of approx. 273 combat aircraft. During the conflict itself, it received 35 F-86s from Saudi Arabia and Iran. The assessed disposition of the Pakistani Air Force on the eve of hostilities was as given below:-

Deployment (Combat Aircraft)

Peshawar	1 x F 86 Sqn
Chaklala	1 x C-130 Sqn
Murid	1 x F 86 Sqn
Mianwali	1/2 x F 86 Sqn
	1/2 x B-57 Sqn
Sargodha	1 x Mirage III Sqn
	2 x MiG-19 Sqns
Bhagtanwala	1/2 x F-104 Sqn
Risalwala	1 x MiG-19 Sqn
Raficy	1 x F-86 Sqn
Jacobabad	1 x F-86 Sqn
Masrur	1/2x F-104 Sqn
	1/2 x B-57 Sqn
	1 x F-86 Sqn

The PAF had a good network of Radar Units integrated with large numbers of well-trained Mobile Observation Posts in a double layer system. The airfields had anti-aircraft guns, and Combat Air Patrols (CAPs) were mounted to protect the airfields.

Consequent on the imposition of the embargo in 1965 on the supply of arms by the US, Pakistan attempted to diversify her inventory by the acquisition of aircraft and weapons systems from other countries. This implied an element of improvisation, which inhibited to a degree the planned development of Pakistan Air Force.

IAF PLANNING

It was appreciated that Pakistan might attack India in order to sidetrack internal and external pressures and to divert attention from the crisis in East Pakistan. It was also appreciated that China was likely to maintain pressure against India from the north, thus tying up a considerable quantum of Indian forces. Plans were updated from time to time in the light of the changing political and military situation, and forces were redeployed to meet the threats. The plans, inter alia, took into account the contingency of a pre-emptive offensive by Pakistan.

On account of shortages of fuel and transport, China had serious logistic problems in Tibet. Though she had built airfields which were capable of handling jet fighters and bombers with radii of action as far as the industrial complexes of Bengal - Bihar and Kanpur, except for Radar, she had not permanently deployed any elements of her Air Force in Tibet.

Based on these factors, the Chief of Staff appreciated that in all probability the Chinese collusion with Pakistan would amount to only a token show of force to prevent Indian troops along the Chinese border from being pulled out to reinforce those already deployed against Pakistan.

In view of this appreciation, the IAF was instructed not to undertake air action against the Chinese in any form without prior clearance from Delhi, but to retain the option to retaliate in case the Chinese initiated offensive action.

In the light of the directives issued by the Cabinet to the Chiefs of Staff, the following aims were stipulated for the Indian Air Force in the two theatres of operations (7):-

- (a) To defend the home base against enemy air attacks.
- (b) To support the Army in the field, and to be able to do it, gain and maintain a favourable air situation over the tactical area, and mount reconnaissance, interdiction and other operations having direct bearing on the outcome of the land battle.
- (c) To conduct counter air operations, i.e. reduce the effectiveness of the PAF by destroying its aircraft and bases.
- (d) To provide air transport support to own forces.
- (e) To provide maritime air support to the Navy.

After drawing upon the resources of Maintenance and Training Commands, forces were suitably reallocated separately for air force tasks as well as for joint operations involving the Army and the Navy.

The Western Theatre was the area of decision. Against Western Air Command's twenty-eight fighter, fighter/bomber and bomber squadrons, the PAF had a force of fighters and bombers worth twelve squadrons. Neutralising the PAF in West Pakistan would still be a long drawn out affair. It was decided to use the air force in a manner which would ensure that the PAF was not in a position to interfere with the overall plans of the armed forces. In pursuance of this policy, the IAF was to accomplish tasks in the following order of priority:-

- Priority One - Defence of the home base(s).
- Priority Two - Support to the Army and Navy, including gaining and maintaining a favourable air situation over the tactical areas.
- Priority Three - Counter air operations, against enemy air bases and radar stations, and attacks on strategic targets which had a vital role in sustaining the economy and the war potential of the enemy.

Commander No.1 Air Defence Control Centre (ADCC) at Ambala would be responsible for the air defence of the Punjab and Delhi Sectors. Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Western India would be responsible for the Air Defence of Bombay, Pune, Jamnagar and Rajasthan Sector. Air Defence would be carried out by five MiG-21 squadrons and four Gnat squadrons. In addition, there were the SAGW Wings at Chandigarh, Delhi, Agra and Bombay for the protection of these cities and major IAF's complexes.

Western Air Command area had also a fairly wide and effective network of radar and Observer Posts. The personnel and facilities of such organisations as the BSF, Home Guards and the Railways were integrated into the Air Defence network.

It was planned to take the offensive from the very beginning of the war. Western Air Command was to attack PAF bases at Sargodha, Mianwali, Shorkot Road, Murid, Peshawar, Chanderwalla, Risalwala, Chak Jhumra, Karachi, Drigh Road and the radar stations at Lahore, Sakesar and Badin. In addition, the IAF was to carry out interdiction, so as to prevent concentration of troops in the forward areas. The aircraft to be used for these attacks were the HF-24, S-22, Hunter 56-A, Mystere and Canberra. The Canberra aircraft would operate at dusk and at night only.

A few strategic targets like oil installations, gas and power plants and harbour facilities had also been identified for attacks as per a tentative time schedule.

The prime need was to obtain accurate intelligence about PAF bases and radar stations. The plan was to photograph the main PAF airfields on the first day or two of hostilities. In addition, photographs would have to be taken for the army of enemy concentrations and troops movements. Plans also required keeping an eye on the movement of 1 Armd Div of Pakistan, then deployed in Multan under 2 Corps. The movement of this formation was of vital importance to the Army because their own strategy would depend to a considerable extent on where Pakistan chose to employ this potent weapon. For this purpose, it was necessary to take photographs of installations and areas deep inside Pakistan(8). The Canberra Photo Reconnaissance (PR) aircraft was too slow for such missions to penetrate far into enemy territory. Notwithstanding the vulnerability of this aircraft, it had to be used. In an innovative effort some fighter bombers were also fitted with cameras. They brought back very useful photographs. However, the additional

load of the camera equipment correspondingly reduced the fuel carrying capacity, and so targets deeper inside Pakistan could not be reached.

A certain number of squadrons were allotted for direct support to the Army and to provide air defence to troops in the battle areas.

For maritime operations, the Super Constellation aircraft from Pune would be deployed at Hakimpet near Hyderabad. This would not only put these large and vulnerable aircraft out of range of Pakistan aircraft but would also enable them to look after both the Western and Eastern Seaboards. Their operations would be directed by AOC Western India in consultation with the Indian Navy from Bombay.

It was planned that transport squadrons would be moved out of the combat area of Punjab and Agra and be deployed at bases further back. They would move forward as and when required for the support of the Army. Contingency plans to airlift certain Army units to forward areas, use of para forces in selected areas and commando type heliborne operations would be jointly prepared for execution during hostilities. The An-12 cargo or transport planes were also adapted to drop 500 and 1000 lb bombs.

Before the hostilities commenced, the radars were redeployed with a view to obtaining better coverage. This was further improved when it became possible to move additional radar units from the east to the west. For example, deploying a radar unit from the east at Ahmedabad closed the gap between Jamnagar and Jodhpur which had earlier been exploited by the PAF while attacking Agra from Karachi. A P30 radar from Adampur was moved to Amritsar to cater for any damages that might occur to the Signal Units. Similarly P-30 radar was moved from Jodhpur to Uttarlai to update the Ground Control Interception (GCI) facility there. Prior to this, this airfield had only an early warning capability. A single tier Low Level Reporting System (LIRS) was introduced just before the hostilities to provide point defence to vulnerable Areas (VA) and Vulnerable Points (VP). The Observation Posts (OP) were, however, manned by inexperienced and untrained crew. They were only able to provide some early warning of the approaching enemy aircraft.

Surface to Air Guided Weapons (SAGW) were moved from their permanent bases and deployed in most important cities, airfields and economic targets. The Air Defence (AD) Guns, mainly L-60, L-70 and a few 20 mm guns, were deployed around IAF's VAs and VPs

(airfields, SUs and SAGW sites).

The general concept for gaining air superiority was to mount relentless attacks on the Pak airfields and radar installations, so as to force the PAF to deploy major portion of its resources for their defence. Such a reaction would then enable the IAF to concentrate on special/strategic strikes and on close support to ground forces with relative impunity. In the light of subsequent pattern of PAF reactions, the preferred concept stood vindicated.

The efficacy of this strategy was confirmed by F.M. Khan in his book entitled "Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership"(9).

AIR DEFENCE AND CONTROL AIR OPERATIONS

Air defence missions were admittedly different from counter air missions in the tactics used, weapon systems employed and duration of sorties. But both these types of operations represented basically the struggle for air superiority. The overall objective in either was to inflict maximum attrition on the enemy air force and to protect one's own capability in the air. So, it would be logical and convenient to describe air defence and counter air operations together from day to day.

3 Dec

After the pre-emptive strike by the PAF, while the Canberra force was able to mount twenty-three missions against the PAF airfields at Murid, Mianwali, Sargodha, Chander, Risalwala, Shorkot and Masrur (Karachi) scoring direct hits on run-ways and installations, the fighters could not go into action that night because of the late hour. The fighters, however, were fully serviced and armed to go into action at first light the next day, as brought out earlier.

4 Dec

The dawn of 4 Dec found S-22s, MiGs, HF 24s and Hunters going out in force against Pak airfields and radar stations. Aircraft strength at forward airfields at Pathankot, Amritsar and Halwara was augmented by twenty-six fighter bombers which had been kept back at rear bases.

These operations in the West during day light hours cost the IAF seven aircraft in one hundred eighteen counter-air sorties. Three Hunters and one S-22 were shot down by the Pak aircraft, two S-22s

fell to ground fire while the seventh aircraft, a Hunter, was hit by ground fire and severely damaged. The pilot managed to fly it back to base, but it was wrecked on landing. A S-22 was also involved in a take off accident at Adampur. The aircraft was destroyed and the pilot killed. However, thirteen Pak aircraft comprising seven F-86, 2 MiG-19s, one Mirage, 2 B-57s and one C-130 were destroyed on the ground by IAF Hunters and S-22s, apart from the B-57 and the F-104 shot down over Amritsar in the evening and night of 3 Dec(10).

PAF fighters/bombers were active mostly against the ground forces and installations in Chhamb and Jammu Sectors. The PAF also mounted counter air sorties on radar stations at Barnala and airfields at Amritsar, Pathankot and Srinagar. The radar at Barnala was off the air for nearly 12 hours. Three more raids were mounted by the PAF in the afternoon against Pathankot and Srinagar.

Night 4 and 5 Dec

During the night 4/5 Dec, the PAF mounted seven raids against Pathankot, Amritsar, Sirsa and Agra. In the two raids on Agra airfield, the run-way was put out of commission temporarily, and some of the Canberra missions had to be cancelled.

During the night 4/5 Dec, IAF Canberras again struck the Pak airfields. In thirty-five missions 202 bombs of 1000 lb each, were dropped. Eight Canberras attacked Masrur airfield from 2030 hrs onwards. Karachi was easy to find because of the flames in the harbour area, caused by the naval attack. The IAF's attack on Masrur by Hunters in the afternoon and the Canberras at night made a significant contribution towards the success of the naval attack on Karachi harbour the same night. These raids, spread through the night, kept the PAF grounded at this important air base, which controlled the air defence of the Karachi complex. A specially trained force of S-22s and MiGs was also employed for night attacks on Pak airfields in the West. The IAF suffered its first Canberra casualties on this night, when two of them failed to return after raids over Mianwali and Masrur. The Mianwali aircraft was intercepted and shot down by a Mirage while the Masrur aircraft was believed to have been brought down by anti aircraft guns(11).

5 Dec

Pak air activity against the IAF was restricted to six raids during the day. In an attack on Srinagar airfields the runway was slightly damaged, but was

soon repaired. One Alouette helicopter flying near the airfield was shot down and both pilots were seriously injured. A F-104 of the PAF was shot down by ground fire over Amritsar and the pilot captured. Pathankot was raided by three Mirages at 1445 hrs. The PAF had been employing mainly only this type of aircraft against Pathankot. To counter this threat, four MiG-21s were moved up from Chandigarh to join the Gnats already based at Pathankot.

There were nine enemy raids on AF installations, mostly by B-57s and C-130s operating singly. The forward airfields at Pathankot, Amritsar, Adampur, Nal and Bhuj suffered hardly any damage. But the main oil depot at Okha was hit and set on fire. A B-57 was claimed to have been hit by ground fire at Amritsar but the aircraft limped back to its own territory.

Counter air operations on 5 Dec were limited to attacks on the PAF airfields which could be used to mount raids against Indian Army positions in the north. These had the effect of making the PAF withdraw many of its combat aircraft from the forward airfields at Murid, Chander and Risalwala to more secure bases in the rear. As a result, there was an appreciable decline in the number of enemy air attacks on Indian ground forces from 6 Dec onwards. The Pak high-power radar at Sakesar was also attacked by Hunters and S-22s. One of the antennas was hit and the radar was put off the air. It came on again after two days, but at a much lower power. The IAF lost three Hunters and one S-22 over Sakesar - the three Hunters were probably shot down by enemy interceptors. At 1445 hrs in the afternoon, three Hunters attacked Drigh Road airfield near Karachi and scored direct hits on storage hangars. The tally of enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground was two F-86s, one C-130 and one light aircraft; a B-57 was probably destroyed at Shorkot(12).

In the counter-air role the Canberras operated against Shorkot, Murid, Mianwali, and Masrur airfields. They dropped a total of 144 big 1000 lb bombs. Three Canberras which attacked Masrur scored hits on a Bulk Petrol Installation (BPI) and buildings in the technical area. It was a very successful mission. Of the seven Canberras which visited Sargodha, one failed to return. Reports indicated that it was shot down by ground fire.

6 Dec

Throughout the day the PAF refrained from attacking IAF air bases. But as dusk fell, Mirages and F-86s attacked Amritsar and Srinagar. The raids were

in strength, with six aircraft attacking each air base. The Fighters made single passes at low level and high speed. The runways at both airfields were slightly damaged but were quickly repaired.

During the night, the PAF made many attempts to put the airfields at Pathankot and Amritsar and the radar at Amritsar out of action. As many as 10 raids by single aircraft were mounted from mid-night. Mirages attacked the radar station but did no damage. The PAF B-57s concentrated on the airfields. There was no damage at Amritsar. At Pathankot a missile preparation shed was hit but the fire was put out before any damage occurred to the main storage area. Also, an aircraft servicing hangar was hit and a Vampire aircraft parked inside was partially destroyed. But the airfield continued to remain fully operational. Four Mirages attacked Chandigarh at 1827 hrs but no damage was done. In the south, a Pak aircraft bombed Bhuj airfield, the bombs falling clear of the runways.

On 6 Dec twenty two counter air missions were mounted by the IAF in the West, making it difficult for the PAF to bring its offensive support aircraft into the battle zone. The attacks were mainly against Chander and Risalwala during day light hours, while Sargodha and Chaklala (Rawalpindi) were visited by S-22s in the early hours of the night. It was appreciated that the PAF would have strengthened the air defence of the Karachi complex and any more raids by Hunters would be very costly. Moreover, the Canberra night attacks were going through regularly. Therefore, it was decided to move six Hunters from Jamnagar to Jaisalmer to take on the Pak armoured forces in the Longewala area(13).

On the night of 6/7 Dec, most of the Canberras were taken off counter air tasks in the Punjab and employed in the army support role. However, eight of them attacked Drigh Road (near Karachi) which was a major maintenace base of the PAF. It also held reserve aircraft. The hangars were reportedly hit and thick smoke was seen rising from the technical area.

7 Dec

Counter air missions of the IAF on 7 Dec were further reduced in order to step up close air support to the Army. However, the airfields at Risalwala and Chander were attacked. Three Hunters from Pathankot also struck Murid in the afternoon; but their 'kills' appeared to be dummy aircraft on the ground. The Kohat airfield was attacked by Hunters which set fire to a hangar. Camera modified S-22s were sent out to

obtain photo coverage of Chander, Risalwala and Chaklala. All the missions were successful.

At Uttarlai, a Gnat on a CAP mission had a tyre burst on landing. The aircraft was extensively damaged. In another accident, a Gnat being ferried from Halwara was lost near Amritsar airfield. The pilot tried to take evasive action when warned of the Pak aircraft in the vicinity. He lost control and crashed.

A B-57 which came over Amritsar at 0517 hrs was chased away by ground fire without dropping its bombs. Further south at Uttarlai, slight damage was caused to the airfield in three raids. However, the oil tanks at Barmer railway station were hit and set on fire(14).

On the night of 7/8 Dec Canberras continued their raids on the Karachi complex with attacks on both Masrur and Drigh Road. In the north, S-22s and MiGs mounted seven night raids against Sargodha, Chaklala and Chander, bombing the runways. The PAF also paid special attention to Pathankot airfield and mounted eight single-aircraft raids against it during the night. There was no damage worth the mention.

8 Dec - IAF Changes Tactics

From 8 Dec onwards the Western Air Command changed its tactics for counter air and close air support operations. Deliberate attempts were made to attract the PAF's attention and invite aerial engagement. Strike missions were escorted by fighters which flew high enough to be seen on Pak radar screens. But the PAF refused to cooperate. Instead there was a marked decline in the PAF's attacks on Indian troops. In two counter air missions by the IAF, five aircraft were destroyed on the ground at Murid(15) and Chaklala. After the Chaklala attacks the three Hunters went on to strike the oil tanks at Attock for the second time. Some of them were set on fire. Photographs were also taken of Lahore airfield to locate a Pak radar unit which was suspected to be deployed there. One S-22 was lost on a raid over Risalwala airfield while the PAF lost three MiG-19s (two confirmed), one C-130 and a light aircraft(16).

The PAF made two raids in the afternoon against Avantipur and Amritsar radar units. There was no damage to either installation. A detachment of four Hunters from Hindon, belonging to the squadron which had moved from Bagdogra the previous day, was sent to Nal to augment the air effort in support of the army in the Ganganagar sector.

Counter air operations by Canberras were restricted to the Karachi area on the night of 8/9 Dec. Between 0300 and 0400 hrs on 9 Dec, seven Canberras bombed the storage area on Drigh Road airfield while one bombed oil storage tanks in Karachi harbour and obtained direct hits. Four tanks were seen going up in flames. Later reports confirmed the conflagration that was caused by this attack. It was estimated that Pakistan lost over 60% of her oil resources in the Karachi area to air attacks.

9 Dec

On 9 Dec Western Air Command at Delhi was called upon to mount maximum number of sorties in support of army operations, especially in the Chhamb area. To ensure success of these missions, it became necessary to keep the PAF away from the front. Attacks were, therefore, mounted against Chander and Risalwala. In the south, the Pak airfields at Hyderabad, Nawabshah and Jacobabad were also attacked. Nawabshah was attacked because it was suspected of being used to fly in stores from abroad by civil aircraft. A light aircraft was destroyed on the ground. Altogether twenty-two sorties were flown against enemy airfields. One SU 7 was lost after raid on Chander; the aircraft appears to have been hit by a missile. A HF-24 also fell to ground fire over Hyderabad.

There were only four PAF raids during 9 Dec. Four F-86s bombed Srinagar airfield at 0950 hrs causing six small craters on the runway; they were repaired by night-fall. Six Mirages struck Pathankot at 1515 hrs but the damage caused was again negligible. At Okha, one F-104 was shot down by naval air defence fire. The appearance of a F-104 in this area indicated a strengthening of defences of the Karachi complex and more opposition to Indian air operations in southern Rajasthan(17).

On the night of 9/10 Dec, seven Canberras bombed Nawabshah and dropped 53 x 1000 lb bombs. After this attack there were no more radar sightings of aircraft movements at this airfield, either by day or night. During the course of the night there were six raids by Pak aircraft on Pathankot and Amritsar. There was no damage. A B-57 also tried to attack Agra, but was chased away by ground fire.

10 Dec

On 10 Dec, no counter air missions were flown except for obtaining photo cover of Murid airfield. The IAF was busy supporting the land battle. Ground attack aircraft operating in the Chhamb area were

often escorted by fighters to prevent the PAF from interfering with them. On this day one F-86 was shot down by an escorting Hunter. The success of counter air operations was highlighted by the fact that PAF fighter bombers flew only ten to fifteen sorties per day against Indian troops from 6 Dec onwards, and no IAF aircraft was lost to enemy air action while on close support role.

The PAF continued to concentrate its efforts against Pathankot, with a raid at 1110 hrs by six Mirages. The Mirages made three craters on the runway at Pathankot but miraculously, two Hunters about to take-off were not hit. Two Gnats were on CAP at the time. One of them managed to get behind one of the raiders and fired at it, but the quarry pulled away 'with reheat on'. The jettisoned drop tanks showed bullet holes, but the aircraft escaped. There were five more raids on Pathankot during night 10/11 Dec. Amritsar and Uttarlai airfields were also attacked during the night, but again with no significant damage(18).

11 Dec

On 11 Dec, IAF counter air missions were restricted to search for an enemy radar station which, it was believed, was operating somewhere near Zafarwal. Also, a photo reconnaissance sortie was flown over Walton airfield (near Lahore) to locate a low level radar which the PAF had been using to track and intercept IAF aircraft operating through Amritsar. Nawabshah was also photographed for damage assessment. The two Hunter squadrons at Pathankot had been in the thick of battle from first light of 4 Dec, and they had to be rested. The Western Air Command pulled back both of them (29 aircraft) to Hindon, and sent up 9 Hunters from Hindon with fresh pilots to replace them.

The PAF commenced its raids on Indian airfields with an attack by two F-104s on Uttarlai at 0910 hrs. Two HF-24s were about to take-off, and the leader was already lined up on the runway. His aircraft was hit by gunfire and destroyed, but he managed to jump out before it caught fire. An airman inside a blast pen was hit by a bullet ricochet and killed. This was the first occasion when the PAF was able to destroy an IAF aircraft on the ground. There were more raids during the day against Amritsar, Srinagar, Uttarlai and Jammu, where a small hangar was damaged. One F-86 was claimed to have been shot down by air defence guns at Amritsar. During the night, a MiG from Adampur was lost while on an air defence mission near Pathankot.

12 Dec

The increased enemy air activity over Pathankot, especially by Mirages during day light hours, had to be countered. Gnats on CAP over the airfield had not been successful in intercepting the supersonic Mirages. Therefore, seven MiGs were sent from Chandigarh to Pathankot to strengthen the interception capability. There were no Pak raids over Pathankot on this day. But there was one raid by five F-86s on Srinagar at 1128 hrs. Their bombing resulted in five craters on the runway. These were repaired by 1400 hrs.

In Rajasthan, the appearance of F-104s over Uttarlai was countered by moving four MiGs from Hindon to replace four Gnats which so far had been providing air defence for this air base. It was also planned to use the MiGs to escort the HF-24s on their strike missions over Naya Chor and further west.

The IAF suspected that enemy aircraft were making use of a beacon at Chor for making runs to Uttarlai, especially on their night raids. HF-24s had been given the task of destroying this beacon. On 12 Dec, they found the aerial masts and attacked them and the building closeby, after which there were no further night attacks on Uttarlai. The airfield at Jacobabad was photographed to see if the PAF was operating from it. It was not.

The radar station at Badin was important to the PAF for operations in southern Rajasthan. Therefore, on the morning of 12 Dec, two MiGs were sent from Jamnagar to obtain photo cover of the radar complex. At 1242 hrs, four MiGs attacked the complex with bombs which burst close to the aerals. As if in retaliation, two F-104s tried to attack Jamnagar late in the afternoon. The MiGs were scrambled and one of them shot down a F-104 which fell into the sea. The same day, a MiG was lost in a flying accident at Palam(19).

13 Dec

Seventeen daylight counter air missions were mounted by the IAF on 13 Dec, mainly against the Badin radar complex and the airfield at Telhar, north of Badin. At 1040 hrs there was a coordinated attack by three Hunters on Telhar and four MiGs on Badin. The Hunters were intercepted over the airfield by F-86s of whom two were shot down. The MiGs struck the aerals and the power generating building of the radar complex. The area was heavily defended by guns and the MiG leader was shot down. Four Gnats were sent from Jodhpur to Ahmedabad on 13 Dec to work with the

P30 radar which had moved there on 10 Dec to provide air defence to the Koyali refinery.

In order to facilitate evacuation of foreign nationals from Islamabad, a bombing pause was ordered between 0900 and 1200 hrs at Chaklala. Seven aircraft belonging to other countries were still on the airfield at mid-day. Therefore, it was agreed to extend immunity till 1000 hrs the following day. A bombing pause was ordered in the Karachi area also from 0800 to 1000 hrs to enable air evacuation of foreign nationals.

Information was received through Army HQ Ops Room that four F-86s had come over Koyali at 0950 hrs. The refinery was not attacked, but air defence guns opened fire. There was only one day raid on Jammu by two Mirages. During night 13/14 Dec, Pathankot was visited twice and Amritsar once. There was little damage and all IAF airfields remained operational.

14 Dec

On 14 Dec, the Western Air Command tried to locate the Pak radar station believed to be operating in the Zafarwal area, but without success. The airfield at Pasrur was attacked by S-22s and the runway cratered.

There were six PAF raids against Indian airfields, two by day against Srinagar and Jammu, and four during the night of 14/15 Dec against Pathankot and Amritsar by one aircraft. Air defence gunners claimed to have hit a Mirage that attacked Jammu, but the claim remained unconfirmed.

Sekhon wins the first PVC for IAF

Srinagar was one of the airfields very frequently attacked by the PAF. No. 18 (Gnat) Squadron was assigned for its air defence. On 14 Dec the airfield was attacked by six Sabres. Young Flying Officer Nirmaljit Singh Sekhon was still on the runway when the Sabres attacked. Notwithstanding the grave danger of attempting a take-off under such circumstances, Sekhon got airborne and engaged the Sabre formation. Then began an unequal contest between the solitary Gnat and half a dozen Sabres over the airfield. Sekhon shot down one Sabre and managed to set another on fire before sheer numbers gained ascendancy and he was shot down (20). Flying Officer NJS Sekhon was awarded the Param Vir Chakra posthumously, the first individual from the IAF to be awarded India's highest gallantry award for valour above and beyond the call of duty.

15 Dec

The PAF had not been active against Indian troops during the preceding few days, and its raids on airfields had been few and mostly at night. Therefore, counter air operations on 15 Dec were restricted to an attack by four S-22s on Pasrur airfield using the 200 kg. S-24 rockets. Gujarat was another airfield from where Pak aircraft could operate against Indian troops, especially in the Shakargarh bulge. Photographs were taken on this airfield.

The PAF raids fell off sharply, there being only three during the day - one against Srinagar airfield at 1300 hrs and the other two against Mukerian and Dasuya railway stations on the Jullundur-Pathankot rail link at 1620 and 1920 hrs. Minor damage to the track occurred which was repaired quickly. This was the first attempt by the Pakistanis to bomb the railway system. At Srinagar one Vampire was hit on the ground inside a blast pen. The damage was repairable.

16 Dec

The HF-24s from Uttarlai were being escorted by MiG-21s on their attack missions in Pithora area when a MiG-19 tried to intercept them. The enemy aircraft was shot down by the MiG-21 in the ensuing air battle(21).

The PAF made two raids in the afternoon against Srinagar and Avantipur airfields. Five IAF civilians were killed at Srinagar, and the runway again slightly damaged. On an evening raid over Bhatinda, 40 civilians in a mill were killed and the railway yard and control cabin damaged slightly. There was another raid at 0150 hrs on 17 Dec when a PAF B-57 dropped eight bombs some 200 metres from the radar station at Amritsar without causing any damage.

17 Dec

It was known that Pakistan had developed the airfield at Skardu in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). On 17 Dec, three Canberras and an An-12 attacked the target at 1545 hrs. The Canberras raid followed the An-12 raid within five minutes. The An-12 attack was fairly accurate.

In the south, MiGs escorting HF-24s intercepted two F-104s over Umarkot and shot down both of them. A third F-104 on a raiding mission to Uttarlai was also shot down by a MiG. There were no other attempts by the PAF against Indian air bases and facilities. One MiG on an air defence mission was shot down by a Pak aircraft in the Pasrur region(22).

Plans for offensive action during the night of 17-18 Dec were cancelled and Indian forces were ordered to stand-down but remain prepared to support any defensive action by troops if Pakistan did not accept the unilateral ceasefire offered by the Indian Prime Minister. With the acceptance of the ceasefire offer by Pakistan, the Indo-Pak War of 1971 came to an end at 2000 hrs on 17 Dec.

SPECIAL STRATEGIC OPERATIONS

Before describing the major operations of the IAF in support of the land battles, it might be convenient to mention the special operations mounted against some strategic targets. These represented the old concept of Strategic Bombing in miniature, although the IAF was not wedded to this doctrine, nor had the size and equipment to indulge in it.

As early as 4 Dec, Hunters from Jamnagar visited Karachi at 0850 hrs in the morning, their target being the major oil installation at Kiamari. The tactical routing followed by the aircraft, operating at their maximum radius of action, caught the defences unawares. The attacks were pressed home and many fires were started.

The Chiefs of Staff (CsOS) had laid down that the Attock Oil Refinery near Rawalpindi was a target of military importance. Four Hunters from Pathankot were detailed to strike the refinery. Eventually only three aircraft took off and they struck the oil tanks at 0741 hrs on 6 Dec. The strike was successful and huge fires were started.

A special target the next day was the power house at the Mangla Dam. Four Hunters from Pathankot attacked the power house at the eastern end of the dam at 0742 hrs. Two more aircraft followed up with another attack at 1655 hrs. The power house was claimed hit by all aircraft(23).

One week later, a special mission was mounted against the SUI gas plant in northern Sind. Four Hunters from the Jaisalmer carried out a rocket attack at 1258 hrs on 14 Dec and set fire to a part of the plant.

In the event of 15 Dec three An-12s attacked the SUI gas plant - a follow up on the previous day's raid by Hunters. Though 80 x 500 lb bombs were dropped, they failed to hit the target in the failing light. But aerial photos taken later showed substantial damage to the cooling plant, and the complex was reported to be generating only 50% power even in

mid-April 1972. At night five Canberras attacked the Karachi harbour area, including the naval establishment at Manora, within a span of eleven minutes beginning at 2100 hrs. The target was located with the help of flares and Target Indicator bombs. The bombing was accurate and successful(24).

Such special mission, even though brilliantly executed, could not show decisive results in a short war. But they were worthwhile, perhaps, in compelling the enemy to disperse his limited air defence resources.

CLOSE AIR SUPPORT, INTERDICTION AND RECONNAISSANCE

The ground operations in the Western Theatre ranged from the heights of Ladakh to the deserts of Rajasthan. The land battle on the entire front was planned to be an offensive/defensive holding operation. Accordingly, joint planning at higher levels was carried out and the required quantum of air support earmarked for each sector. Though the IAF would be pre-occupied during the initial stages of war in getting the upper hand or "establishing a favourable air situation" in modern military jargon, a definite quantum of air effort was to be always available for the support of the army. This effort played a major role in the ground operations and retrieved some critical situations for the army.

3 Dec

The first air strike of the IAF in support of the army was in the Changa Manga area, south-west of Raiwind. Two An-12s attacked targets in a forest near the town just after mid-night of 3/4 Dec and started some fires. A total of 48 x 500 lb bombs were dropped on what was suspected to be a major supply dump(25).

4 Dec

The army received air support all along the front, even though the major task for the day (4 Dec) was counter air operations against the PAF. A total of 109 sorties were flown for close support and interdiction all along 15 Corps, 1 Corps and 11 Corps fronts, and in the Rajasthan sector. The Pak tanks in the Dera Baba Nanak area were attacked by S-22s from Adampur. Two IAF aircraft were hit by ground fire, but the pilots managed to eject in their own territory. In 11 Corps Sector, a battalion was stranded on the western side of the Hussainiwala bridge which had been destroyed by the Pak troops. The Pak forces put in determined attacks supported by artillery and armour. These were countered by air

strikes throughout the day, and a number of tanks and vehicles were destroyed or damaged. This air action slowed down the enemy build up and helped extricate major elements of the battalion. Four of these sorties against two squadrons of Pak tanks were mounted on an SOS call from the COS 11 Corps.

In Rajasthan, Jaisalmer based Hunters attacked Pak positions at Islamgarh to the north. Along the Barmer railway line, HF-24s from Uttarlai attacked Pak fortifications on the border at Gazi Camp. This was the only defensive position of the Pak troops, who withdrew from it after the air attacks. One HF-24 was shot down by ground fire about 32 km inside Pak territory(26).

The Pak supply dumps at Changa Manga were again attacked by An-12s during night 4/5 Dec. Six of them dropped 66 x 500 lb bombs and 55 x 1000 lb Napalm containers and started some big fires.

5 Dec

From the early hours of 5 Dec, a large part of the air effort of Western Air Command was directed to support operations of the army. At Longewala that day the IAF added to its history a glorious new chapter. Out on the Thar desert of Rajasthan, one Company of 23 Punjab held the lonely post of Longewala which lay on the Pakistani thrust line towards Ramgarh and Jaisalmer. One Pak Infantry brigade, supported by one armoured regiment, launched an attack on the Indian position at Longewala on the night of 4/5 Dec. The objective, it seems was no less than the capture of Jaisalmer. Their way to Ramgarh and Jaisalmer appeared clear, as the Indian troops were very thin on the ground in that area.

Jaisalmer had a total of only four Hunters available from the temporary and hastily raised No. 122 Squadron(27). But on the SOS being received, the Hunters were over the target area as dawn was breaking. By mid-day, about 15 Pak tanks had been destroyed. The pressure was kept up the next day. This was a straight battle between Pak armour and the IAF Hunters. In spite of the intense small arms fire and the frantic evasive actions of the tanks, the Hunters pressed home their attacks, picking off one tank after another. The Pakistanis abandoned their offensive and started pulling out on 6 December's evening, leaving behind 27 tanks destroyed and another ten damaged on the sands of Longewala, along with scores of trucks. The Pakistani armoured offensive at Longewala was effectively stemmed and ultimately routed by a handful of Hunters. The bulk of Pak

armoured regiment was destroyed by air action alone. On 7 Dec, further sorties were launched which damaged or destroyed more of the retreating tanks and vehicles(28).

Opposite the 11 Corps area of operations, fifty two strike sorties were flown, mainly against trains, gun positions and tanks. On the outskirts of Chistian Mandi a train carrying fourteen tanks was repeatedly attacked and set on fire. The IAF aircraft also attacked targets at Mcleodgunj, Haveli, Siddiqgunj and Fort Abbas. Altogether one hundred thirty-two sorties were flown in the west in support of the army. Three aircraft were lost to ground fire and one to air action in these operations(29).

At the Chiefs of Staff Committee meeting on 5 Dec, it was decided that Pak troops concentrations at Kahuta, opposite Punch, should be engaged by the Air Force. Six An-12s were detailed for this task with Time Over Target (TOT) planned for one hour after moonrise. The attacks went through as planned and 140 x 500 lb bombs were dropped on target. The Pak guns, which had been firing at Indian army positions fell silent and general disorganisation in their ranks could be seen by the Indian troops. This attack contributed to the neutralising of the Pak army threat to the Punch valley. The same night, Canberras were also employed in support of the Army operations. Six interdiction missions were flown to attack targets near Pakpattan and the railway lines in Raiwind and Lodhran areas.

6 Dec

In the army support role, some one hundred fifty sorties were flown all along the border from Kargil in the north to Chor in the south on 6 Dec. Attacks against the Pak tanks, troops and vehicles in the Longewala area continued throughout the day. One of the features of air operations in Sind was the volume of interdiction missions that were flown against the main rail links between Sind and Punjab and between Hyderabad and Gadra Road. The latter was in support of the Indian Army's advance into Sind along the Gadra Road-Chor axis. One HF-24 shot down a F-86 at Chor, this being the first air kill for the Indian manufactured Marut.

Opposite the Fazilka - Ganganagar Sector, search and strike missions were continued around Pakpattan, Haveli, Bahawalnagar, Fort Abbas, Chistian Mandi and Sulaimanke. Offensive strikes were also mounted in the Kasur, Jassar and Shakargarh areas, and in the Jammu-Chhamb Sector. At the request of the Army,

forty-four Combat Air Patrol (CAP) sorties were flown by Hunters from Pathankot around Samba and Akhnoor. No Pak aircraft were sighted and as such area CAPs were not mounted again. On this day (6 Dec) three S-22s were lost whilst on close support missions with 11 and 1 Corps. A Mystere had an engine failure (flame-out) over its own territory when on a mission to Haveli; the pilot ejected and later returned to his base. The Pakistanis lost three F-86s to ground fire in 26 Div Sector(30).

The Chhamb area was visited by Canberras for the first time on the night of 6/7 Dec. Four of them were employed against a troop concentration and gun areas, the aircraft being directed to their target by lighted arrows displayed on the ground by forward troops. Other bomber attacks that night were against Pakpattan and Haveli by two Canberras, and Fort Abbas by four An-12s which dropped 95 x 500 lb bombs.

7 Dec

A Pakistani position at a height of about 4,150 metres overlooking the Kargil - Leh Road had to be neutralised. Rocket attacks not proving effective, it was bombed very accurately by the old Vampires on 7 Dec, and the position then taken by the Indian Army. In the Chhamb area, twenty sorties were flown by Hunters and S-22s on close support tasks; these helped to stabilise the positions, with troops holding the east bank of the Munawwar Tawi. At night, four Canberras attacked the Pak concentrations on the west bank of the river and at Karianwala.

The daily allotment of missions in support of 1 Corps could not be fully utilised, as no worthwhile targets were available for air attack. A similar case existed opposite 11 Corps, where twenty-four sorties were flown. However, some tanks were sighted and hits were claimed by pilots. Two Canberras attacked Raiwind railway yard during the night. One S-22 was lost due to air action. The PAF lost three aircraft during the day, all to air defence guns.

With the Pak 1 Armd Div deployed somewhere opposite 11 Corps, twenty-six sorties were flown on search and strike missions in the probable area of its deployment. Four fighter reconnaissance (FR) missions were also flown in the area Haveli-Pakpattan-Sulaimanke to locate the Pak armour. It was suspected that some Pak tanks had concentrated on western approaches to Sulaimanke Bridge and in wooded areas nearby. Two An-12s, therefore, attacked this area on night 7/8 Dec with bombs and napalm.

In the south, support to the army on its advance towards Naya Chor was provided by HF-24s from Uttarlai, and Hunters from Jaisalmer were out hunting for enemy tanks and vehicles and striking the Pak lines of communication between Rati and Khanpur.

8 Dec

On 8 Dec in 15 Corps Sector, the Chhamb area was still active, and a total of twenty-eight S-22 and Hunter sorties were mounted to disrupt Pak forces regrouping across the Munawwar Tawi. Air strikes accounted for a number of tanks and guns, but at the cost of a MiG aircraft shot down by ground fire. In addition, a large number of interdiction and search and strike missions were flown in other areas. The Pak movements into the Shakargarh bulge came under constant air attack, and so did troop concentrations and train movements along the stretch from Dera Baba Nanak to Fort Abbas. Two FR missions were again flown in search of Pak armour near Haveli and Pakpattan. One F-86 was shot down by ground fire at Bari in 1 Corps Sector. Altogether, one hundred eighteen close support and six reconnaissance (PR/FR) sorties were flown; many escorted by MiGs. A Mystere and a Hunter were lost to ground fire near Arruka and Hasilpur.

During night 8/9 Dec, the Canberras were out in force striking at army targets and rail junctions. Six of them were deployed against Pak positions in Zafarwal, Jassar and Chhamb. The rail junctions at Sheikhpura (Lahore), Okara and Raiwind were attacked by nine Canberras, and rail sections between Jhelum-Wazirabad and Montgomery-Pattoki were also attacked. Four An-12s attempted, but failed, to hit the bridge at Sulaimanke.

9 Dec

Opposite 1 Corps Sector, S-22s flew twenty search and strike missions against tanks and gun positions. In the 11 Corps Sector strikes were mainly against Pak armour and guns in Bahawalnagar, Christian Mandi, Amroka and Jalwala areas. In Rajasthan, twenty-four sorties were flown on close support, interdiction and tactical recce missions. Hunter strikes in the general areas of Longewala, Border Post 638 and Gabbar accounted for eight to ten Pak tanks and nearly 20 vehicles. An ammunition dump at Gabbar was also destroyed. Between 5 and 9 Dec, IAF Hunters accounted for twenty-seven tanks destroyed plus ten damaged, ten guns, one hundred twenty vehicles and one major ammunition dump in this area. Western Air Command flew two hundred and six sorties on 9 Dec in support of the army without losing a single

aircraft(31).

During the night of 9/10 Dec, the bomber force was mostly occupied in supporting army operations in the west. Pakistani positions in Bahawalnagar, Sulaimanke, Chhamb and Jassar were attacked by six Canberras and two An-12s. Interdiction targets were the marshalling yard at Lodhran and the railway lines at Kasur and Raiwind. Six aircraft took part in these raids. One of the Canberras returning from Lodhran crashed in its own territory.

10 Dec

The high tempo of air support in the Chhamb area was maintained on 10 Dec. In all forty-two close support sorties were mounted under control of the Tactical Air Centre, against tanks, gun positions, vehicles, fuel dumps and bunkers. Some thirty air defence sorties were also flown in the area, keeping it relatively clear of Pak aircraft. The deployment of such large numbers of aircraft opposite a divisional front of about 24 km was probably the deciding factor in the retreat of the invaders across the Munawwar Tawi. The intensity of the air effort, in time and space, was indeed a record.

In the 1 Corps Sector, Pak defences were strong and a Hunter and a S-22 were lost in ten sorties mounted against concentrations well behind the battle front. The air effort originally earmarked for 11 Corps was diverted to the Chhamb Sector. However, sixteen sorties were still mounted in search and strike and interdiction missions opposite the advanced elements of the Corps. One S-22 was lost to ground fire over Mcleodgunj. In Rajasthan, fifteen sorties were flown around Naya Chor and on interdiction missions in the Rohri-Bahawalpur area.

During night 10/11 Dec bomber operations were on a restricted scale due to poor visibility in Punjab. Only seven Canberra sorties were mounted in support of the Indian Army in the areas of Sulaimanke Headworks, Chhamb and Zafarwal.

11 Dec

The enemy, thrown back across the Munawwar Tawi, was believed to be reforming for another attack on 11 Dec. To prevent this, thirty Su-7 and Hunter sorties, with appropriate air cover, were mounted during the day. Since the Pak forces made no further attempts to advance, it can be presumed that the air action

at least contributed to thwarting their offensive. During the four days of the Chhamb battle, the Indian Air Force flew over two hundred sorties in support of the land forces. Close coordination with the army and purposeful execution of their tasks by the aircrew contributed greatly to the success achieved. After the opening round, complete air superiority was maintained in the tactical area.

In the area of Zafarwal, Nurkot and Dhantal, twenty-seven fighter recce and strike sorties were flown in support of No.1 Corps. One S-22 was shot down by Pak aircraft near Nurkot. Further south, a number of strike missions were mounted against guns and troops along the Ichhogil Canal as well as in the Sulaimanke, Fort Abbas, Jalwala and Asilpur Areas. In Rajasthan, twelve sorties were mounted in support of the army advancing in the Chor area, as also for deep interdiction(32).

An Alouette was lost between Kargil and Srinagar while it was on a casualty evacuation mission. One of the two pilots was killed.

During night 11/12 Dec, bomber support for ground operations was again on a reduced scale. Seven Canberras attacked Pak concentrations at Chhamb and the rail junctions at Lodhran and Larkana. Target indicator bombs were used at Lodhran to pin-point the target.

12 Dec

There was a stalemate in the Chhamb Sector on 12 Dec and only two close support sorties were mounted. Pressure was, however, maintained in Shakargarh bulge as well as in the area opposite 11 Corps. A total of thirty eight search and strike missions were mounted during the day in the areas of Shakargarh, Dhantal, Qila Sobha Singh, Nurkot, Haveli, Chistian Mandi, Jalwala, Fort Abbas and the west bank of the Sutlej. One S-22 shot down a MiG-19 in an air engagement near Hussainiwala. At night, Canberras were again out in force striking at Pak concentrations and the railway system. The targets were Zafarwal, Narowal, Jassar, the boat bridge on the Sutlej opposite Bahawalnagar and the railway lines in Reti, Bahawalpur and Vihari areas.

In Rajasthan, sixteen sorties were mounted in support of the army and interdiction. Recce missions were also undertaken to locate Pak build-up opposite Ganganagar and along the Reti Gabbar axis.

13 Dec

In the Western Theatre, eighty close support sorties were mounted on 13 Dec. In the 15 Corps Sector, 120 Inf Bde was to put in a battalion attack against Pak positions west of Mendhar on the night of 13/14 Dec. As the battalion attack failed, air strikes were called to help extricate the battalion. In the 1 Corps area, twelve Su-7 sorties were mounted against enemy tanks and guns at Shakargarh, Narowal, Zafarwal and Nurkot. Opposite 11 Corps Sector, sorties were flown against enemy positions in Pejowali, Haveli, Fort Abbas and Dipalpur canal areas. One Mystere was brought down by ground fire over Haveli. In Rajasthan, air effort was mostly in support of the Chor battle. Some interdiction missions were also flown against the Reti-Khanpur rail link. A large number of fighter recce sorties were flown in Chhamb sector west of Munawwar Tawi, Shakargarh bulge, Ichhogil canal near Kasur and further south between Narang and Siddhanwal.

At night, Canberra bombers flew fifteen sorties. Six Canberras bombed troops concentrations and vehicles in the Pasrur area. Rail communications around Bahawalpur, Ghotki, Larkana and Khairpur were bombed by nine Canberras.

14 Dec

With the ground situation stabilised in the Chhamb Sector, from 14 Dec Western Air Command concentrated on denying the Pak Army all forms of movement in the rear of their troops facing 1 and 11 Corps. Offensive sweeps took on anything that moved on road or rail. A section of the railway line near Khudian was completely destroyed by S-22s. At the same time, close support to Indian troops continued in all sectors. One Air OP Krishak aircraft was shot down by an F-86 near Nainakot. An IAF Mi-4 helicopter, already airborne from Samba, was diverted to the crash site, and the two casualties were flown to Udampur within an hour. The boat bridge on the Sutlej near Bahawalnagar was repeatedly attacked by Mysteres with bombs and rockets, and put out of use. The important railway junction at Sukkur was attacked late in the evening by an An-12 which dropped its full load of 38 x 500 lb bombs in the centre of the marshalling yard. In the early hours of 15 Dec, five Canberras attacked rail communications near Lodhran, Bahawalpur, Okara and Raiwind. In the Chor Sector, HF-24s flew 14 sorties to strike fuel dumps, troops and the rail links behind the Pak forces holding out at Naya Chor(33).

Western Air Command mounted a number of photo reconnaissance missions in the Sialkot-Tanda area to spot movement of Pak tanks and troops who, it was suspected, might be moving eastward to counter the ground offensive in the Shakargarh bulge. During the night, three Canberras attacked Zafarwal and Dhantal.

15 Dec

On 15 Dec, Western Air Command continued interdiction of the whole transportation system from Sialkot to Sukkur. Sixty-seven sorties were flown without loss of an aircraft, and traffic on Pak roads and railways was reduced to a trickle. The aim of mounting the 'search and strike' interdiction missions appeared to have been achieved, in that pilots on later sorties were hard put to find worthwhile targets. The Sulaimanke headworks was attacked by S-22s employing the 250 kg heavy rockets. Direct hits were scored on the road above the weir. Reports indicated that traffic across the weir was suspended till end of December. Simultaneously, close support missions were mounted on all fronts, and especially in the Shakargarh bulge and Chor-Dhoro-Noro area. Two F-86s were intercepted by hunters in the Pithora area at low level. Both Sabres flew into the ground and were destroyed while attempting to shake off the pursuing Hunters. Pak positions near Lahore and the main marshalling yards received particular attention. Three Hunters, while attacking the Marshalling yard at Sialkot at 0930 hrs, hit a large ammunition dump close-by. Explosions could be heard by forward troops till the afternoon(34).

During the evening hours, three Canberras attacked the boat bridge at Bahawalnagar and a Siphon bridge near Mailasi. Both were claimed hit. Later in the night three Canberras again attacked Narowal and Jassar.

16 Dec

On 16 Dec efforts at intensive interdiction of the Pak hinterland opposite the western border continued unabated. The fighter attack on trains was very effective. In support of land forces, fighter-bombers struck at the Pak troops, guns and tanks in the Shakargarh bulge, opposite 11 Corps and in the Chor Sector. A S-22 was lost to ground fire over Narowal.

During the night, bomber sorties were mounted against the railyard at Sukkur, a key point for the distribution of supplies coming from farther west (Zahidan). Canberras could not be used to strike the

Zahidan-Quetta rail link in daylight hours as they would have had to operate at extreme range and, being comparatively slow, would have been very vulnerable.

17 Dec

The war in the east had come to an end on 17 Dec, but the Pak forces in the west were still offering stiff resistance. In the 1 Corps area, S-22s mounted ten sorties against the Pak positions in Zafarwal, Nurkot and Dhantal. A Pak MiG-19 was shot down by a S-22 over Shakargarh. Another MiG-19 was brought down by ground fire in the same area. Mysteres from Sirsa and Nal continued their attacks in the area opposite 11 Corps. To the south, HF-24s and Hunters escorted by MiGs kept up pressure in the Chor area. One Mystere had a flame out and the pilot ejected safely in Indian territory.

Su-7s continued their interdiction sorties. The railyard at Wazirabad was attacked and a tank train hit. The main railway station at Lahore came in for special attention. In the afternoon, twelve S-22s in pairs and fours, attacked the railyard within a span of 40 minutes. These and other attacks to disrupt the communication system in West Punjab were without air opposition and became almost routine. With acceptance by Pakistan of the ceasefire offer, all air operations in the West also came to an end, at 2000 hrs on 17 Dec. However, fighter bombers continued to remain in readiness to support the Indian Army if the need arose(35).

MARITIME AIR SUPPORT

The Air Force was fully committed to providing maritime reconnaissance (MR) to the Navy even prior to outbreak of hostilities. When the war came, this continued to be its main role in support of naval operations. Also, the IAF mounted a series of operations which contributed towards the success of special naval operations.

Three maritime operation centres were specially provided to support the Navy:-

(a) No.1 Maritime Air Centre at Bombay (AFEJHQ) - for Western Naval Command. The area of responsibility was the Western Sea-Board, excluding Goa.

(b) No.3 Maritime Air Centre at Cochin - for Southern Naval Area. The area of responsibility was the remainder of the Sea-Board from Goa, including Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi

Islands(36).

For air support in area of Western Naval Command, Super Constellation aircraft of No. 6 (MR) Squadron based at Pune, two modified B-56 Interdictors of No.6 Squadron and two Il-14 aircraft of No.42 Squadron Detachment based at Santa Cruz were available.

For air support in Southern Naval Area, three Dakotas were based at Cochin. To increase the range and endurance of these Dakotas, preliminary arrangements had been made to use Trivandrum in the south, and Goa, as staging bases. Similarly, certain arrangements had been made to use Bangalore by Super Constellation aircraft in the southern part of the peninsula. This precautionary arrangement came in useful when MR sorties had to be mounted under control of No.3 Maritime Air Centre from Bangalore.

It had been appreciated earlier by the Indian Navy that Pakistan might launch simultaneous attacks on its warships with submarines, midgets and chariots, and also land beach parties in sensitive areas at the outbreak of hostilities. For operations by small under-water craft and the commandos, the Pakistan Navy would require to position a mother-ship within 100 nautical miles of the Indian coast by last light. Plans had, therefore, been made to search likely areas before dusk. It was also necessary to see that Pak surface units did not operate close to the Saurashtra coast. The necessity of safeguarding Okha, Porbandar and Diu against naval attacks was felt throughout the war and frequent MR sorties were mounted in this area(37).

As soon as AOC Maritime Air Operations (MAO) was informed of the outbreak of hostilities, the two Maritime Air Centres (MACs) on the Western Seaboard (Bombay and Cochin) and one on the Eastern Seaboard (Vishakhapatnam) were instructed to put into operation the plans for maritime reconnaissance. A Super Constellation aircraft was airborne at 2345 hrs to search the area to the west/south-west off Bombay for Pakistani warships and merchant ships that might be proceeding from Karachi towards East Bengal. No MR missions were flown towards Saurashtra, since increased Indian air activity in that area might have drawn unwanted enemy attention and compromised naval plans for offensive action off Karachi on night 4/5 Dec. The task for the aircraft based at Cochin continued to be to search for Pakistani merchant vessels and warships plying between the East and the West Wings, presumably through the 8° and 9° Channels. Several contacts were made, especially off Bombay, but

none of them proved of any significance.

On 4 Dec, MR missions were mounted off Bombay and Cochin. The Pakistani merchant ship Maqbool Baksh was sighted in the afternoon about 375 nautical miles from Bombay by a Super Constellation. The Navy sent out INS Krishna to intercept this ship.

The next day, an air search for Maqbool Baksh was again mounted, as INS Krishna had not made contact with her. She was not spotted. In the south, Dakotas from Cochin were out looking for Pak merchant ship Panjnad, last reported in Colombo. Based on a report from the War Watching Station at Kadmatt (Laccadive) a search was also mounted for a submarine proceeding southward. Aircraft of MAC Bombay reported eight contacts.

On 6 and 7 Dec, search for enemy warships and merchant ships continued. A large number of contacts were reported by the aircraft. But Panjnad could not be sighted, in spite of shifting the search to an area further south. On 7 Dec, a Canberra, specially fitted with missiles for strikes against ships at sea was moved to Jamnagar to take on any target that might present itself.

From 9 to 13 Dec, MAC Bombay was fully occupied in controlling Super Constellations detailed to search for the Pak submarine which had sunk INS Khukri. Reconnaissance of sea areas on the approaches to Bombay was undertaken by Il-14s. A vigorous search was maintained for Pakmer Sipsah which was reported to have sailed from Singapore for Karachi with Chinese arms on board. In spite of 12 sorties flown by Dakotas and Super Constellations in search of this ship, she could not be located. A number of contacts were made, but all of them turned out to be friendly ships.

In the early hours of 13 Dec one of our warships reported a radar contact of two fast moving surface vessels off Cochin. It was appreciated that they could be Pak destroyers, and HQ Southern Naval Area initially planned to attack them with Sea-Hawks based at Trivandrum. Later it was agreed that the Canberra strike force of four aircraft, which had now been moved to Bangalore, would be employed before the Seahawk strike. Air searches for the ships were mounted early in the morning. The Super Constellation which followed also spotted an aircraft carrier at 1209 hrs. This contact on reference to NHQ was identified at HMS Albion(38).

From 14 Dec to 17 Dec, MR activity was on a

reduced scale as Pak warships, after having been engaged off Karachi by IN missile boats, were not likely to venture near the Indian coast for any offensive action. But patrols off Saurashtra were continued.

The first attack by the IAF on Masrur airfield at Karachi was on the night of 3/4 Dec. Between 0456 and 0510 hrs four Canberras bombed the airfield, scoring hits on the runway and installations. Again in the evening of 4 Dec at 1730 hrs, three Hunters from Jamnagar attacked the airfield and destroyed six aircraft on the ground. Three hours later, four Canberras followed up with bombing attacks on the airfield and they were followed by four more between 0450 and 0456 hrs on 5 Dec. There was also the Hunter attack on oil storage tanks on the morning of 4 Dec. These raids paralysed the air defence system at Karachi and Indian naval attacks on Karachi harbour on this night went through without any interference from the PAF, nor were the ships attacked by Pak aircraft at first light on 5 Dec, when they were still within range of enemy aircraft at Masrur. As a precautionary measure, a Hunter CAP was provided to Indian ships that morning. The IAF's efforts in the afternoon of 4 Dec and during the course of night 4/5 Dec made a significant contribution towards the success of the naval operations.

The pressure on the group of military airfields around Karachi was maintained till 9 Dec by Canberra raids at night. It is now known that these air attacks caused considerable damage to the installations at Masrur and Drigh Road. The PAF was again nowhere to be seen during and after the second attack by the Indian Navy on Karachi harbour on night 8/9 Dec.

At 2055 hrs on 9 Dec, MAC Bombay learnt that INS Khukri had been torpedoed and sunk 40 nautical miles south-west of Diu. A Super Constellation, on MR duty off the Saurashtra Coast, was ordered to search the area. Relays of aircraft continued the search that night and through the next four days. They flew one hundred fifty five hours in fifteen sorties on this task. The presence of the aircraft forced the submarine to remain submerged most of the time. It would have been forced to reduce speed to conserve battery life, and hopefully, would not be able to get away from the naval ships which were ordered into the area to detect and destroy it(39).

The first disappearing radar contact was picked up by the aircraft at 0430 hrs on 10 Dec. A second contact close-by was at 0825 hrs in position 2000N

6926E. The next aircraft on task located six dinghies with survivors from Khukri and friendly ships were guided towards them. At 1923 and 2056 hrs three more contacts were made by the aircraft in the same area. Based on this information several attacks were carried out by INS Katchall, Kirpan and Kuthar on underwater contacts.

It was appreciated that the presence of Indian frigates in the area might bring out Pak surface units to engage them. Therefore, three Canberras of the naval strike force were moved to Jamnagar on 11 Dec in anticipation of tasks against Pak warships. But the Pak ships did not put in an appearance.

The air search for the Pak submarine continued till the afternoon of 13 Dec but there were no further contacts. Eventually, the search was called off.

In support of the Indian Navy, the IAF mounted in all ninety-six sorties in the west.

AIR TRANSPORT OPERATIONS

As the war in the east was drawing to a close, approximately two brigades of troops were air lifted from the Eastern to the Western Theatre on 12 and 13 Dec. Air India and Indian Airlines aircraft were utilised to augment the air lift. Transport aircraft were also utilised for speedy transfer of Fighter Squadrons from east to the west on 6 and 7 Dec.

In the Rajasthan Sector, packet aircraft were utilised to air drop supplies to 10 Para Commando Bn. Immediately after the ceasefire, packet aircraft again undertook air drop of stores to troops in J&K and Ladakh. Also the air lift of air defence guns from the east helped to strengthen the IAF low level defence capabilities in the west.

One airborne assault was planned for the Western Theatre, but it was not executed. Casualty evacuation was carried out by both transport aircraft and helicopters. Over 800 casualties were flown out to hospitals in rear areas by An-12s, Packets, Il-14s and Dakotas.

CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

A Review of the Air War

Pakistan's pre-emptive strike against the IAF bases was a dismal failure. Anticipating such a move the IAF had dispersed its aircraft and moved them to the rear air-fields. Moreover, as a foreign observer

noted: "The PAF does not seem to have committed more than 30 per cent of its 300 combat aircraft to its initial attacks between 1740 and 1815 hrs on 3 Dec. This may have been the result of a low serviceability rate on the part of the PAF, but there were demands after the war for an inquiry as to why PAF strength was persistently withheld from the battle. It may be that, with the Yahya regime trying to provoke international intervention in order to restrain India, the Pakistanis tried to ensure that as much of their forces as possible remained intact at the end of the war for political and diplomatic purpose. Such seemingly contradictory concepts of politics and strategy may explain the PAF's indifferent performance".

It is also likely that the PAF was conserving its strength for supporting the planned offensive by Pakistan Army's Strike Force of two armoured and a couple of infantry divisions. Although this Pak offensive never materialised, the PAF must have tried to keep its strength unimpaired to support the decisive offensive when it took place.

As a result, the tempo of the offensive efforts by PAF was decidedly less than what was expected. The information available from material published in Pakistan after the war indicated that a total of 2914 sorties were mounted by the PAF in west during the 14 day war. Of this total, 291 sorties (157 sorties by day and 134 sorties by night) were flown against IAF bases, or on counter air missions. Transport support was provided by 125 sorties, and 27 sorties were mounted in support of the Pak Navy. In contrast 1549 sorties were flown for the air defence of the PAF's own bases and other vital areas. Indian estimates, however, found that instead of 53% of the total effort, as claimed by Pakistan, no less than 70% of the PAF sorties were flown in defence of their own bases(40). The PAF asserted that it mounted 922 sorties in support of the Pak Army. This must be considered a gross exaggeration, as close support by the PAF to the Pak Army was minimal as in Chhamb or totally absent as at Longewala. The Indian estimate was only about 500 close support sorties flown by the PAF, and less than 300 sorties on counter air and interdiction missions. The daily average for PAF offensive sorties was about 60, while it averaged about 100 sorties per day for air defence(41). These figures bring out convincingly the essentially defensive character of the PAF performance in the war.

The same conclusion emerged from the lack of boldness and determination shown by the Pak pilots in their attacks on IAF bases. Almost invariably they

made a single low level high speed pass over the target, dropping their bombs and letting off their guns almost simultaneously before dashing back into their own air space. These hasty hit and run raids did small damage. On the other hand, many hundreds of sorties were flown in mounting Combat Air Patrol over the PAF bases, by day as well as night. As a Pakistani General complained, the PAF "was committed to defending its bases only and waiting for the enemy to come and attack them"(42).

However, it was no mean achievement for the PAF that, in a war against an enemy double its size, it managed to survive with its strength largely intact. By its refusal to close in with its stronger adversary, it at least remained on its feet, and in the ring, when the bell sounded the end of the round.

The IAF performance was certainly much better. By clever anticipation and judicious planning, it avoided any significant damage from the Pak pre-emptive strike on 3 December. The attempted Pearl Harbour by Pakistan was a fiasco, and the PAF raids punched empty air. The IAF also delivered an immediate riposte. Canberra raids were mounted within hours, and were followed by numerous and determined strikes on PAF targets at the crack of dawn on 4 December. The IAF counter air sorties continued the whole day. The intensity of these attacks wrested the initiative from the PAF and threw it on the defensive.

However, the hostile air defence environment over the enemy bases resulted in heavy attrition during the counter air mission of the IAF. Seven fighters were lost in these missions the first day, two Canberras were shot-down during the night of 4/5 December and four more fighters the next day. Changing its strategy in the face of these heavy losses, the IAF gave up its all out attack on the PAF bases, and the tempo of counter air operations was reduced from 6 December. There was a further reduction in the counter air operations from 8 December in order to devote more sorties to close air support and interdiction to defeat the Pakistan army's offensive in Chhamb. The IAF chose not to continue its all out attacks on the PAF bases, perhaps again because it had to avoid heavy losses and remain prepared to assist the Indian army if and when the Pak Army's formidable Strike Force launched its major offensive.

But the net result of the air war after the first few days was to leave much of the Pakistan air space open to the IAF. The PAF concentrated its strength to defend its own air fields and radar units

leaving the IAF largely free to attack strategic targets, railway yards, roads bridges, gun positions and forward troops.

The IAF fully exploited the favourable air situation thus created. Its long range interdiction cut down Pakistan's ability to reinforce the battle areas. Close support missions made a significant contribution to the land battles. In the Punch Sector, the night bombing of Kahuta destroyed Pak dumps and silenced her guns. The Pak offensive in Chhamb was blunted by a constant stream of IAF fighters attacking the troop concentrations, guns and forming up areas. In a remarkable duel between tanks and aircraft, the IAF decimated a Pak armoured regiment at Longewala and threw back a brigade thrust by air action alone.

The Army's requirements of transport support was also fully met. Troops worth two brigades were air lifted from east to west. Helicopters were extensively used for casualty evacuation and communications.

Similarly the maritime air operations gave crucial assistance to the Indian Navy. After the daring raid by the Navy on Karachi harbour, the long range Hunters provided air defence cover till the raiding ships were outside the range of Karachi based fighter-bombers.

The bombing of strategic targets conveyed the fury of the war to the people of Pakistan. The attacks on the Attock oil refinery on 6 Dec, oil installations of Karachi at Kiamari on 8/9 Dec, and the damage inflicted on the Sui gas plant brought home to Pakistan the painful fact that her key installations were wide open to attack by the IAF.

Air defence devolved mainly on the Gnats and the MiGs. Deployed at the forward airfields, they mounted Combat Air Patrols during first light and last light, and also when other aircraft took off or landed. As the Gnat could not cope with the high speeds of the attacking enemy aircraft (F-104 and Mirage) MiGs were later inducted to the forward air bases, and the Gnats were withdrawn to provide air defence to the rear areas. The MiG CAPs and escorts cut down losses in close support missions, and three F-104 and one MiG-19 were shot down on the last two days of the war in the Uttarlai sector. By and large, the Control and Reporting (C&R) performed satisfactorily within their design limitations. The ideal weather conditions of winter did enhance their performance.

The MiG-21 proved to be highly efficient air defence weapons system. Since the PAF concentrated mainly on attacking the runways, air defence guns had to be resisted at some airfields to cover the approaches to the runways.

The tactical and technological innovations introduced by the IAF, particularly in perfecting a sophisticated radar environment, not only paid handsome dividends, but left defence analysts bewildered(43). The fine tuning of Surface to Air Guided Weapons (SAGW) to the air defence system, relocation of aircraft in relation to their performance, judicious use of CAP on airfields, teaming up air defence and ground attack aircraft, effective use of An-12 transport aircraft on night bombing missions and grouping the high flying MiGs with low flying Hunters and Sukhois were some notable examples.

However, no great effort was made in the field of electronic warfare though during the later stages, the IAF attempted jamming the PAFs UHF channels, with limited success.

The Photo Reconnaissance capability boosted by fitting the fighters with cameras proved eminently satisfactory. But there was an unacceptable delay in the dissemination of the intelligence to user units.

The reorganisation of commands carried out in 1970, and the use of the second tier airfields in the west were major factors in the effective coordination of land/air operations. The reduction in both the scope and area of responsibility of Western Air Command undoubtedly helped in the success of the air operations. The five forward airfields, Forward Base Supporting Units (FBSUs) in the west, namely, Amritsar, Sirsa, Nal, Jaisalmer and Uttarlai, were the main bases for launching deep strikes into Pakistan, and between them they mounted some 1480 sorties. They also received nearly 30% of the total enemy air raids. Yet they remained operational almost all the time.

Though only a very small percentage of the IAF's offensive effort was directed against strategic/economic targets, the results far outweighed the effort. Pakistan lost a large chunk of her fuel resources during the conflict, and there was a considerable reduction in the hydro-electric power generation also. A longer war would have meant, in all probability, a disaster for Pakistan.

Statistics of the IAF sorties are interesting. During the fourteen day conflict the IAF flew a total

of eleven thousand five hundred forty-nine sorties (on both the fronts) on fighters, bombers, transport aircraft and helicopters. IAF offensive forces in the West flew a total of four thousand five hundred nine sorties (44), 41.3% of these were devoted to offensive support, 45.9% to air defence, 8.9% to counter air operations, 0.8% to special/strategic missions and 3.1% to recce.

Effectiveness of Weapons

While attacking IAF airfields and Signal Units, the PAF invariably used bombs. The bombs used were their indigenously manufactured 500 lb, British 1000 lb MK 2, and American 500 lb/750 lb/1000 lb bombs. The C-130 was employed at night against Jamnagar, Jaisalmer and Nal and it appeared to carry only 500 lb bombs. Attacks were generally inaccurate and in spite of the fact that delay fuses were used, there was no hold up of IAF operations for any length of time because of cratering/damage to runways. Craters on runways varied between 1.5 to 6 metres in diameter and could be repaired within two to four hours. There were hardly any cases of slab shifting. Bombs, however, threw up large quantities of mud and debris on the runway.

The only other weapon used by the PAF was the gun. There is little evidence of the PAF having used rockets in any of their attacks. The F-104 with the Gatling Gun proved a very effective weapon system. In a short burst at one of the aeriels of an IAF SU at Barnala, sufficient damage was caused to keep the radar off the air for nearly 12 hours. Mirages carried out gun attacks in the same bombing pass, which proved ineffective and wasteful. The Sabres do not appear to have used any incendiary or armour piercing ammunition.

IAF Canberras generally used 1000 lb MK 6 and MK 7 bombs of indigenous manufacture, which were quite effective. As far as the fighter bombers were concerned the MiGs used the Russian M-62 500 kg bombs and the indigenous 1000 lb MK 9 bombs with great effect on the runways in the east. The size of the craters and the slab shifting that occurred showed that these bombs were very effective in keeping runways out of action. Hunters and HF-24s also used the indigenous 1000 lb MK 9 bombs with lethal effect. Su-7s used Russian 500 kg bombs in counter air and close support roles in the west. Only 24 of the newly acquired S-24 rockets were used. It proved a powerful and accurate weapon, with a longer range than the smaller T-10 rockets. Other rockets very extensively used were the 68 mm and 57 mm rockets. Both were very

effective weapons against soft skinned targets, fuel tankers and oil refineries. Post war studies found that pilots preferred attacking with these rockets in salvos from pods or belly launchers instead of using heavier rockets in pairs.

The main gun armament of the IAF was the 30 mm NR on the Su-7 and the 30 mm Aden on the Hunter, HF-24 and Gnat. In the Longewala sector a large number of Pak tanks were destroyed by front gun attacks by Hunter aircraft because the tanks carried extra fuel drums at the rear. The T-10 rockets were also very effective against tanks.

Surface to Air Guided Weapons (SAGW) Sqns of the IAF were deployed at seven bases on the Western Front. With a range of 31 km, the unmodified SAGW was ineffective below an altitude of 500 metres, but the modified missile could be used even at 300 metres altitude(45).

In all seven missiles were fired from three different bases. At one base an aircraft was apparently hit, but not destroyed, as after the missile was fired the aircraft was seen losing height for a second and then disappeared from the radar tube. Later some villagers reported that an aircraft on fire had flown towards Pakistan. This was also confirmed by VOPs. The remaining missiles appeared to have been fired on enemy Electronic Counter Measures (ECM)/Spurious radar pickups. During the war many such false alarm/spurious tracks were picked up. But the presence of the SAGW Sqns did have the desired effect of compelling most enemy intruders to fly below the radar pick-up height of the SAGW system.

Casualties and Losses

The IAF lost a total of seventy one aircraft in the war, of which fifty six were lost due to enemy action and 15 were destroyed or damaged in flying accidents. On the Western Front the IAF lost fifty two aircraft. Particulars of the losses are tabulated below:-

Sl. No.	Type of Aircraft	Air Action in Air	Air action on ground	Ground fire	Destroyed/damaged by flying accident	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	S-22	7	--	10	1	18
2	MiG-21	1	--	3	1	5
3	Hunter	<u>6</u>	--	3	2	11
4	Gnat	1	--	--	2	3
5	Mystere	--	--	3	2	5
6	HF-24	--	1	3	--	4
7	Vampire	--	1	--	--	1
8	Canberra	1	--	2	--	3
9	Alouette	--	1	--	1	2
Grand Total		16	3	24	9	52

The total Indian Air Force casualties during the conflict were 109 officers, airmen and civilians(46).

The breakdown of the casualties are:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Airmen</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed	26	2	5	33
Missing	19	--	--	19
POW	11	--	--	11
Injured	27	19	--	46
Total	83	21	5	109

During the conflict the IAF claimed a total of seventy five Pakistani aircraft. Of these, fifty were claimed on the Western front.

PAF losses in the west according to Indian estimates are given below:-

Sl. No.	Type of Aircraft	Air Action in air	Air action on ground	Ground fire	Destroyed/Damaged by Flying Accident	Total
1	F-104	4	--	4	--	8
2	Mirage	--	1	1*	--	1+1*
3	MiG-19	2+1*	4+1*	3	--	9+2*
4	F-86	4+1*	8	4+1*	--	16+2*
5	B-57	--	2+1*	2	--	4+1*
6	C-130	--	2	--	--	2
7	Light A/c	--	4	--	--	4
Grand Total		10+2*	21+2*	13+2*	--	44+6*

* Indicate probable claims based on Air Force information only.

Analysis of Performance

For assessing the comparative effectiveness and performance of the IAF and the PAF, an analysis of their different types of sorties should be instructive. Air power is essentially an offensive weapon, and is decisive only when it carries the war to the enemy and is able to survive in the hostile air space over enemy territory and over the battle field. Offensive sorties, therefore, on counter air, interdiction and close support missions are the true indices of an air forces' effectiveness and war winning potential. An analysis of the offensive missions, therefore, carries real significance.

The IAF deployed 28 fighter/bomber sqns (448 aircraft) in the west against 12 PAF fighter/bomber sqns (254 aircraft). The IAF flew app 2435 offensive missions, consisting of counter air, interdiction, close air support, special missions and recce - 54% of the total air effort by fighter/bomber. As shown in the table above, the IAF lost 52 aircraft on the Western Front, of which 40 were lost on offensive missions (action in the air plus a/c lost due to ground fire). This gave the IAF an attrition rate for offensive mission of 1.64 -

$$\left(\frac{\text{No. of a/c lost}}{\text{Sorties flown}} \right) \times 100 ;$$

and a utilisation rate of 5.43 sorties per aircraft -

$$\left(\frac{\text{Sorties flown}}{\text{total sorties of a/c}} \right),$$

during the war. Compared to this the PAF flew some 840 offensive missions in the west and lost approximately 27 aircraft in action in the air and by ground fire, giving it an attrition rate of 3.21 and a utilisation rate of 3.3 sorties per aircraft in offensive missions in the west during the war. It is, therefore, obvious that the IAF's utilisation rate for its offensive sorties was nearly double that of the PAF, whilst at the same time its attrition rate was kept down to nearly half that of the PAF. The IAF was able to utilise its offensive force in terms of support to its ground forces, counter air and interdiction four times as well as the PAF, and was definitely on its way to victory when the Cease Fire came.

Conclusion

On an overall view, the performance of the IAF in the west was not as decisive as in the east. If the war had continued for a longer period, the IAF would certainly have inflicted a more decisive defeat on the PAF. But as it was, the IAF was not able to achieve a decisive victory over the PAF in the short 14 day war. There were many reasons for this, e.g., the reluctance of the PAF to engage in dog-fights, conservation of its power by striking mainly at night, and limited support to its army in the field to avoid heavy losses. On the other hand, the IAF supported the Indian Army doggedly, in spite of the inevitable high losses. It carried the day in the crucial Chhamb and Longewala battles. Whilst the PAF was reluctant to use its aircraft over hostile air defence areas and over the tactical battle areas, IAF aircraft were freely used over these areas, attacking vital targets and supporting the land battle. It goes to its credit that with the added risks involved it was still able to keep its attrition rate to nearly half that of the PAF, as brought out earlier.

Another major factor in the success of the air war was undoubtedly the warning period that was available. This time was fully utilised to formulate well conceived plans, issue clear-cut instructions and delegate responsibility. The generous scale of offensive support served to strengthen inter-service confidence and cooperation at various levels.

The disappointing performance of the PAF is

admitted by F.M. Khan: "There was no joint planning. The PAF plan was based on the war lasting six months, as the air C-in-C is reported to have told a number of his officers. His main idea was to conserve the air force. The Supreme Commander or the COS, Army never demanded to see the plan and seemed to have accepted whatever the C-in-C, PAF told them vaguely. In 1965, the PAF had been on the defensive strategically but tactically it was most actively offensive. In 1971, however, it seems that the PAF chose to be on the defensive both strategically and tactically"(47).

During the 14-day Indo-Pak war of 1971, the IAF was put to the test, and was not found wanting. Its Commanders had both the courage to accept risks and the skill to minimise them. Its pilots and technicians pitted their individual qualities of courage, judgement, keenness of vision and technical ability against a formidable enemy, and came out with flying colours on the Western Front.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. It is likely that one Sabre, badly shot up managed to reach its base.
2. Subrahmanyam, K., 'Motherland', 11 February 1972.
3. From Official Records.
4. The Military Balance, 1971-72.
5. From Official Records.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Pakistan was equally interested in the movements of our 1 Armd Div. Pakistan had to be denied this information, to the extent possible.
9. "The IAF had failed to overwhelm the PAF defences and having suffered substantial losses switched its pattern of attack on undefended targets. They turned their attention towards communication centres, selected industrial targets and towns which lay mostly in close proximity of the international borders and affording little reaction time to the PAF. The defensive strategy of the PAF in fact, gave the IAF a free hand to interdict Pakistan communications and other strategic targets and to keep pressure on the Pakistan troops in the forward areas. The situation as it emerged, seemed that, while the PAF had complete superiority in the air on their bases, the IAF could operate without hindrance in the forward areas and over Pakistani vital communications along her borders.

In this sphere, the circumstances for the IAF were favourable and they achieved considerable success....." Khan, p.241.

10. From Official Records.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. This has been acknowledged by Maj Gen Shaukat Riza in the book entitled "History of Pakistan Artillery", p.454. Under the caption 'Murid Air Base', he writes, "On 8 Dec five of our own aircraft were lined up for take off when caught by a low level enemy attack. There had been no early warning and the hostile aircraft got away with a score of five".
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. The leading Pak tank established contact with the Longewala Company (23 Punjab) about first light on 5 Dec.
28. From Official Records.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Khan, p.238.
43. Analysing the reasons for the failure of PAF, H.P. Willimott writes (War in Peace - An Analysis of Warfare since 1945), "The IAF was assisted by Soviet Moss aircraft. These were AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control Systems) aircraft and this war seems to have been first conventional war when such aircraft were used to fulfil their detection, control and communications functions. Every move that the PAF made was immediately known to the IAF and the AWACS aircraft in conjunction with active electronic counter-measures, threw a blanket over Pakistani radar and communications. The IAF was able to operate between 320 and 480 km (200 and 300 miles) behind the front line with impunity". This analysis is totally incorrect, as no Russian aircraft operated from Indian soil or over the Indian skies. It is in fact a signal tribute and acknowledgement of the skill and effectiveness of the IAF men and material.
44. From Official Records.
45. Ibid.
46. Casualty figures for Western and Eastern Theatres separately are not available.
47. Khan, p.238.

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NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE ARABIAN SEA

INTRODUCTION

For several months prior to the commencement of hostilities, it was evident that a political solution to the problems the erstwhile East Pakistanis were faced with was unlikely and military confrontation was coming. This early warning in a large measure contributed to the high state of preparedness of the Indian Navy at the time of the Pak pre-emptive offensive on 3 December 1971(1).

Another contributory factor was the anti-insurgency operations conducted by the Indian Navy in Sri Lanka during March and April 1971 at the request of the Sri Lankan government and which provided the necessary impetus for building up its operational readiness.

It was decided that in the event of an armed conflict, victory on the western front would have to be ensured by delivering quick and decisive blows at the very commencement of hostilities and maintaining continuous pressure until the achievement of complete supremacy at sea. In the western theatre, concerted action was to be taken to launch a bold and direct thrust towards the citadel of the Pak Navy, Karachi, at the onset of hostilities, destroy Pak naval forces defending Karachi and at sea, bombard port installations, prosecute trade warfare by capturing Pak merchant shipping and imposing contraband control, ensure full protection to our shipping around the globe from the threat likely to be posed by Pak naval ships and submarines and cut off supplies of men and material to the Pak forces to the east from west Pakistan by severing the lines of communication between the two wings.

Naval operations in the Arabian Sea were the responsibility of Vice Admiral S.N. Kohli, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command with headquarters at Bombay and Rear Admiral V.A. Kamath, Flag Officer Commanding, Southern Naval Area based at Cochin.

Warships of the Indian Navy were already racing to their deployment stations when the Pakistan Air Force carried out a pre-emptive attack on Indian airfields in the Western Sector on 3 December(2). "Seek and destroy all enemy warships" was the order received by the Flag Officers Commanding-in-Chief of the Naval Commands and the Fleet Commanders from the

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral S.M. Nanda, "The maritime link between the two wings of the enemy is to be sliced forthwith. Ensure that no repeat no supplies reach the Pakistani war machine from seawards".

STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION OF THE WESTERN FLEET

The forces allotted to the Western Fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral E.C. Kuruvila, comprised one cruiser, nine frigates, three destroyers, three Petya class frigates, two tankers, one submarine tender, three survey vessels, eight minesweepers, five patrol boats, eight missile boats, two submarines and one tug(3).

The cruiser was the 11,040-ton Mysore (Captain R.K.S. Gandhi) which was armed with nine 6-inch guns for operations against surface targets (SU), eight 4-inch guns for both surface and aerial targets (AA) and twelve 40-mm guns for aerial targets.

INS Trishul (Captain K.R. Nair) and INS Talwar (Cdr S.S. Kumar) formed the 15th Frigate Squadron, the Trishul being the senior ship of the squadron. Each of these general-purpose frigates was armed with two 4.5-inch guns used against surface and aerial targets, four 40-mm AA guns and two Limbo 3-barrel depth charge mortars for use against submarines.

Three anti-submarine frigates, INS Khukri (Captain M.N. Mulla), INS Kirpan formed the 14th Frigate Squadron, the Khukri being the senior ship of the squadron. Each ship of this class was equipped with three 40-mm AA guns and two Limbo triple-barrel depth charge mortars.

INS Betwa, and anti-aircraft frigate, commanded by Cdr. R.K. Chaudhuri, had four 4.5-inch AA/SU guns, four 40-mm AA guns and its anti-submarine weapon was one Squid 3-barrel depth charge mortar.

INS Cauvery (Cdr I.K. Erry), INS Krishna (Cdr R.A.J. Anderson) and INS Tir (Cdr M. Pratap) were frigates of World War II vintage. The Cauvery and Krishna had four 4-inch SU guns, four 40-mm AA guns and two depth-charge throwers for anti-submarine purposes each. The Tir had one 4-inch SU gun, one 40-mm AA gun and two 20-mm AA guns. These three ships were basically training ships but were being used as frigates for the duration of the war.

The destroyers attached to the Western Fleet included INS Ranjit (Cdr R.N. Singh) equipped with four 4.7-inch SU guns, four 4-inch AA guns, four

depth-charge throwers and eight 21-inch torpedo tubes and INS Godavari and Ganga, each equipped with six dual purpose 4-inch guns and four rapid firing 20-mm AA guns.

The three small Petya class frigates, INS Kiltan (Cdr K.P. Gopal Rao), INS Kadmatt and INS Katchall comprised the 312 Division, the Kiltan being the senior ship of the Division. Each one of these vessels was equipped with five 21-inch torpedo tubes and four dual purpose 3-inch guns.

The two tankers were INS Deepak and INS Sagardeep, each carrying a helicopter on board.

INS Amba was the submarine tender and was equipped with four 3-inch dual purpose guns.

The three hydrographic survey vessels attached to the Western Fleet were INS Darshak, which carried a helicopter on board, INS Suttlej and INS Investigator.

INS Konkan was the only ocean minesweeper in the Western Fleet while the coastal minesweepers were INS Karwar, INS Kakinada, INS Cuddalore and INS Cannanore and the inshore minesweepers were INS Bassein, INS Bhatkal and INS Bulsar.

The five assorted patrol boats were INS Atul, INS Pamban, INS Savitri, INS Subhadra and INS Suvarna.

Eight missile boats, armed with deadly surface-to-surface missiles, were attached to the Western Fleet. These were INS Nirbhik, INS Nipat, INS Nashak, INS Nirghat, INS Vinash, INS Vijeta, INS Veer and INS Vidyut. The Squadron Commander was Cdr B.B. Yadav.

INS Kursura and INS Karanj were the two submarines. Each of these submarines had eight 21-inch torpedo tubes and a maximum speed of 20 knots (nautical miles per hour) on the surface and 15 knots submerged.

The tug attached to the Western Fleet was INS Hathi.

As regards the air element, INS Vikrant which was the flagship of the Western Fleet, had temporarily been transferred to the Eastern Fleet during 1971 and hence, naval air support to the Western Fleet was provided from shore stations(4). At Bombay, there were four Seaking anti-submarine helicopters, three Alize anti-submarine aircraft and three anti-submarine Chetak (Alouette) helicopters out of which two were

The Indian Air Force provided air support to the operations in the western waters for maritime reconnaissance with Superconstellations, Ilyushin 14s, An-12s and Dakotas(5).

PAK NAVAL FORCES IN THE WEST

Immediately preceding the 1971 operations, it was believed that the Pak naval forces had already been deployed for an attack on the Indian naval units, harbours and the merchant marine on the high seas. The western wing of the Pak fleet comprised one cruiser, four destroyers, one fast anti-submarine frigate, one survey ship, eight minesweepers, two Jaguar class motor torpedo boats, three submarines, six midget submarines, twelve chariots/TRAs, three auxiliaries and two seaward defence motor launches. Karachi harbour was reported to be congested with about 75 merchant ships(6).

The Pak naval forces had been carrying out exercises off Karachi during November 1971. Some submarines were also reported to have taken part in these exercises.

The cruiser, PNS Babur, carried eight 5.25-inch guns (SU), fourteen 40-mm guns (AA) and six 21-inch torpedo tubes.

The two destroyers, PNS Badr and PNS Khaibar, were equipped with four 4.5-inch guns (SU), ten 40-mm guns (AA), one Squid triple-barrel depth-charge mortar and eight 21-inch torpedo tubes each(7). PNS Shah Jahan was armed with three 4.5-inch guns (SU), six 40-mm guns (AA), two Squid triple-barrel depth-charge mortars and four 21-inch torpedo tubes while PNS Alamgir was armed with three 4.5-inch guns (SU), six 40-mm guns (AA), two Squid triple-barrel depth-charge mortars and four 21-inch torpedo tubes.

The fast anti-submarine frigate, PNS Tippu Sultan, carried two 4-inch guns (SU), five 40-mm guns (AA), two Squid triple-barrel depth-charge mortars and four 21-inch torpedo tubes. The survey ship, PNS Zulfiqar, was armed with one 4-inch gun (SU) and two 40-mm guns (AA).

The eight minesweepers were PNS Mehmud, PNS Momin, PNS Mashal, PNS Mubarak, PNS Mujahid, PNS Mukhtiar, PNS Munsif and PNS Muhafiz, each one of which was fitted with two 20-mm (AA) guns.

There were two fast Jaguar class motor torpedo boats which had been recently acquired and were to be used for coastal defence.

The three submarines attached to the western wing of the Pak fleet were PNS Hangor, PNS Mangro and PNS Shushuk, all of them of the French Daphne class, capable of doing 15.5 knots submerged and each fitted with twelve 21-inch torpedo tubes.

There were also six midget submarines which, besides being able to operate in shallow waters and offer smaller targets to sonar sensors were able to carry chariots for clandestine sabotage operations in enemy harbours, shore installations, etc.

There were twelve chariots and TRAs (used for training) in the Western Pak Navy.

The little chariot, which is shaped like a torpedo with a diver sitting astride it, and released by the midget submarine near enemy posts or ships at anchor, was difficult to detect at night and could seriously disable powerful warships by attaching limpet-mines, bombs, etc., to their hulls. The chariot and its rider or pilot then silently returned to the midget submarine which had carried him to the enemy port.

The three auxiliary ships included two tankers, Dacca and Attock, and one tug, Madadgar.

There were two seaward defence motor launches, SDML 3517 and SDML 520, each one of which carried one 3-pounder and one 20-mm AA gun.

Strengths of the rival fleets in the West were fairly well matched, as shown in the table below:-

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Indian Navy</u>	<u>Pakistan Navy</u>
Submarines	2	3
Cruisers	1	1
Destroyers/ Frigates	15	5
Auxiliaries and smaller vessels	28	34
Total	<hr/> 46	<hr/> 43

From the comparison of forces allotted to the Pak Navy's Western Wing and those deployed by India's Western Naval Command, it is clear that there was no decisive advantage to either side in terms of 'material'. Victory would, therefore, go to the better side, with higher morale, superior training, and the will to dare.

THE PAK NAVY PREPARES FOR WAR

There were developments in the Pak Navy which indicated that it was preparing for a major operation. For instance, it was reported that the Pak Naval units were regularly carrying out exercises at sea, the pennant numbers of the minesweepers, which were usually displayed on the hull, had been painted over and the patrol craft had been camouflaged with yellow and grey paint(8). Pak warships were sighted off Minicoy Island steering eastward and westward courses and carrying out firing exercises.

By the time an emergency was declared in Pakistan on 23 November 1971, all Pak naval units except two minesweepers had proceeded to sea and the C-in-C of the Pak Navy had assumed control of sailing and routing Pak merchant ships. On 24 November, the Pak authorities called up all reserved and all personnel on the verge of retirement were asked to continue in service. All shipping was prohibited to approach or enter Karachi harbour after sunset and directed to remain 75 miles away till sunrise. On 25 November, all aircraft were prohibited from flying within 3 nautical miles of Karachi. These developments indicated that preparations were afoot for a full-scale naval operation by end November/early December 1971.

It was assessed in New Delhi that the Pak naval forces on the Western Front would be assigned many important roles in the coming war. The Pak surface forces would primarily be deployed to defend Karachi in depth while remaining within the PAF air cover. Elements of this force were likely to attempt a sneak hit and run attack on the Saurashtra coast at the commencement of hostilities, as was done in 1965(9). The submarine forces comprising the submarines, midgets and chariots would be deployed off Karachi, Saurashtra, Bombay and further south, with the midgets and chariots attempting a pre-emptive attack on Bombay, Cochin and Goa at the commencement of hostilities. In support of the surface forces, the PAF would provide strike cover and carry out maritime reconnaissance in depth. The ships and submarine forces would attack Indian merchant ships at sea and try to block India's sea lanes wherever possible. PAF aircraft would attack Indian naval and merchant ships at sea within the strike range of Pak airfields. The submarine forces or naval ships, or even merchant

ships, sailing craft, etc., would attempt to mine the approaches to Bombay, Goa and Cochin. The Pak forces would attempt to block the port of Cochin by sinking a block ship in the channel leading to Cochin and units of the Pak surface fleet would attempt occupation of one or more islands in the Lakshadweep and Minicoy group.

THE INDIAN NAVY CLEARS THE DECK

The overall assessment of the Pak naval strategy, therefore, was that its forces would attempt to inflict as much damage as possible in a pre-emptive coup de main at the commencement of hostilities and then withdraw to Karachi where the PAF and the Pak Navy's submarine arm would strike us hard if Indian naval units counter-attacked their maritime citadel(10).

Based on this threat perception, the tasks assigned to the Indian Navy's Western Command and Southern Naval Area were really challenging. The primary task was the destruction of Pak naval forces by taking offensive measures from the very outset. Energetic steps were to be taken to paralyse enemy's sea-borne trade and traffic and to capture Pak merchant ships. In addition, measures for blockade and contraband control were to be instituted when so ordered by higher authorities; all ports and harbours were to be made secure against pre-emptive underwater attacks and shore targets, especially in Saurashtra, were to be protected against pre-emptive hit-and-run raids. The Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, was to assume world-wide control of all Indian merchant shipping.

In order to forestall a pre-emptive underwater attack on Bombay, Goa and Cochin, a pattern was evolved for the units of the Western Fleet to sail out whenever the situation deteriorated, thus depriving the midget submarines of their principal targets at these places(11). This involved the calculated risk that ships of the Fleet would have to withstand the strain of additional steaming for an undetermined period, and some of the bigger ships were quite old. This was particularly important because sustained high-speed steaming would be required in offensive operations against a well-defended harbour, if the situation did demand such an operation.

In order to forestall a sneak raid on targets on the Saurashtra Coast, missile boats were deployed between Diu and Okha sometime before the commencement of hostilities. If required, these boats would be augmented by additional boats from Bombay and would then strike Karachi. Even though these boats had been designed by the Soviet Navy primarily for defensive

deployment, it was decided to use them in an offensive role. This daring improvisation carried risks as well as advantages. But it paid rich dividends in the 1971 war, and won for the Indian Navy the respect and admiration of professionals all over the world.

In order to pre-empt a possible attempt by the Pak naval forces to execute a surprise attack at the commencement of hostilities, it was planned to launch a series of strikes against Karachi and the Makran Coast until the Pak naval units were forced either to react and get destroyed at sea, or to retire into Karachi.

To counter the threat from Pak submarines, suitable evasive measures were planned, such as coasting within shallow waters. This would render Pak submarines ineffective, while Indian forces could freely coast along until they broke out into the sea at random points. As soon as the deployment of Pak submarines and their positions were reasonably clear, offensive anti-submarine operations would be launched.

The most important aspect of trade warfare was the capture of enemy merchant ships and denial of the use of the sea lanes to the enemy. It was assessed that the Pak authorities would re-route their east-bound traffic along the Makran coast and seek the cover of the international shipping lanes from Sri Lanka to the Persian Gulf, while their west-bound traffic would hug the Arabian and African coasts(12). It was also appreciated that soon after hostilities commenced, Pakistan would divert its ships to neutral ports for the duration of the war. It was, therefore, decided to try to capture Pak merchantmen and ships carrying contraband in the first few days of the war at the very time that many Fleet units would be busy striking enemy ports.

Two other aspects of the operations had to be played off the cuff. The first one was the presence of a fairly large number of US, British and Iranian warships, including two aircraft carriers, in the north Arabian Sea for CENTO exercises being held from the last week of November 1971 till the first week of December 1971. Possibilities of mutual interference between these exercises and the Indian Fleet's operations would have to be borne in mind, and any dislocation or operations minimised(13). The second aspect was the possibility of hitting innocent neutral merchant ships during missile attacks. This risk was obviated by the Pak Naval C-in-C banning the approach of merchant shipping within 70 nautical miles off Karachi between dusk and dawn. As a result, the Indian Navy could safely engage all long range surface radar contacts at will during the crucial hours of darkness.

The three ships attached to the Southern Naval Area, which was responsible for the Southern 600 nautical miles of the West Coast and the 19 islands of the Lakshadweep and Minicoy group of which 10 were inhabited, were INS Amba, INS Godavari and INS Ganga(14). These were to patrol east of Sri Lanka and west of southern tip of India across the route from Colombo to the 8° and 9° Channels, to intercept Pak naval and merchant ships doing the east-west crossing or neutral ships carrying contraband. Two other ships, INS Konkan and INS Hathi, were to be used for patrolling outside Cochin harbour.

THE WAR BEGINS

On 1 December 1971, it was appreciated by the Chief of the Naval Staff that hostilities were imminent and that Pakistan might attempt a pre-emptive midget submarine attack on the Western Fleet in harbour(15). On 2 December, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, sailed the Fleet to an area 200 to 300 miles off Karachi, so that if and when hostilities commenced, it would be well placed to start offensive operations and intercept enemy merchant ships.

On 2 December, INS Cauvery was at Goa, and the Petya class frigate INS Katchall and two missile boats, INS Vidyut and INS Nirghat, were at Okha to forestall any hit-and-run raids on the Saurashtra coast. The frigate INS Kiltan and two missile boats, INS Nipat and INS Veer were at Bombay and sailed on the morning of 3 December to join up with the Saurashtra Force. The training ship INS Krishna and minesweepers of the 18th Mine Counter-Measure Squadron were patrolling off the Floating Light outside Bombay Harbour and the two submarines, Karanj and Kursura were on operational patrol in their designated areas. This left the Fleet with 13 ships. Of these, the cruiser, INS Mysore, the tanker INS Deepak, and two ships towing the two missile boats formed the six-ship main body. The remaining ships provided the anti-submarine screen.

IAF aircraft were to provide maritime reconnaissance for the Fleet when required. Seaking and Alouette helicopters were to augment anti-submarine patrol off Bombay for which shore-based anti-submarine Alize air-craft were also available.

On the morning of 3 December 1971, the Flag Officer Commanding the Western Fleet made the following signal to the ships of the Fleet: "There is most reliable evidence that Pakistan will commence an all out offensive against us in Bangladesh tomorrow, Saturday(16). Our forces are fully prepared to meet this threat and will mount a counter-offensive that

will carry the war deep into BANGLADESH. It is not certain whether the enemy will attack us in the WEST. If he does, it will automatically become an all-out war and the Western Fleet will be actively participating. Your Commanding Officers will inform you of my immediate offensive plan at the right time should the war spread to the WEST. If there is no major reaction by the enemy in the WEST we shall have to wait for a while before taking the offensive.

"Before I deploy you to battle, probably very soon, I would like you all to know that I have the fullest confidence in each one of you and complete faith in our final victory at sea. Our cause is just and I can assure you that God is with us.

Be bloody bold and resolute".

At this time CENTO Exercises were being held in the north Arabian Sea and the ships reported to be taking part in the Exercises were all ships and submarines of Pakistan Navy except the Tughril, Alamgir, Shah Jahan and Madadgar and a fairly large number of ships and submarines of the US and Royal Navy.

The latest weapon in the armoury of the Indian Navy were the recently acquired missile boats and radical tactical innovations had been made to use these boats offensively and to maximum advantage(17). The shipborne air element, i.e., the helicopters, would provide long range reconnaissance reports on targets to the missile boats which would immediately swing into action and deliver the first blow. The surface ships would then follow up and finish off the crippled enemy. Since the missile boats had a limited operational range, they would be required to be towed by ships of the Fleet. This would impose restrictions on the speed of the Fleet and consequently increase the vulnerability of its units to submarine attack. This disadvantage was planned to be overcome by keeping the ships on the move.

As regards the submarine threat, it was known that the only submarine capable of operating in the Bay of Bengal was the Ghazi. The three Daphne class submarines, with their limitations in endurance and logistic facilities, would therefore, be confined to the Arabian Sea and were known to have been deployed in the Western Fleet's area of operations. The Daphnes were among the most modern conventional submarines in the world at that time and posed a serious threat to the Indian ships. Pitted as it was against probably the best conventional underwater attacker at that time, the Indian Navy still decided that the risk was well worth taking. The missile would be its main surface weapon as it would enable

the Indian Navy's task force to rout the enemy in the high seas or off his harbour with little risk of damage to its bigger ships. Guns, which had been the main armament of warships so far, would only play a supporting role in this war.

When the Fleet was about 210 nautical miles south of Karachi on the evening of 3 December 1971, three Pak reconnaissance aircraft appeared and commenced shadowing the Fleet from different sectors while remaining outside the ship's gun range(18). As the ships started tracking the aircraft visually, a signal was received informing the Fleet of the outbreak of hostilities with Pakistan and of the pre-emptive strike made by PAF aircraft on some of the Indian airfields. Since the arrival of Pak reconnaissance aircraft over the Western Fleet coincided with the outbreak of hostilities, it was feared that in all probability Pakistan had advance information on the position and movement of the Fleet and that the PAF either planned to carry out an air strike that evening or at dawn the next morning, or that the Daphne class submarines, capable of moving at high speed on the surface, would be guided to the Fleet to carry out a strike that night or the following day.

No air strike had, however, materialised by sunset. But the shadowing by Pak aircraft continued during the dark hours of the 3/4 December night. In order to shake off the shadowing aircraft and forestall an air or submarine strike on the Fleet at the very commencement of hostilities, the ships were split into two divergent groups under cover of darkness to confuse the enemy. The two forces would regroup the following day and proceed north-westward once again, having ensured that the position, course and speed of the Fleet were not compromised. Besides, this manoeuvre would not only increase the distance from the enemy air bases and possible submarine waiting areas but also divert the enemy from another operation. Operation Trident, which was to become a 'seamark' in the history of naval operations, was being launched at that time to strike Karachi. The diversion produced the desired result and at about 0200 hrs on 4 December 1971, the last of the shadowing aircraft disappeared from the radar screens of the ships of both groups.

On the morning of 4 December 1971, while the two groups of the Fleet were proceeding to rejoin two ships gained firm submarine contact on their sonar (sound ranging device for the detection of underwater objects). The ships continued to seek and attack the elusive submarine for 11 hrs till 2230 hrs that night. The submarine, however, escaped and even the extent of damage suffered by her could not be ascertained as

it had become too dark to look for any tell-tale evidence of damage such as an oil slick, debris or any other flotsam.

The two groups joined up on the evening of 4 December 1971 but INS Kuthar became a 'hors de combat' due to an explosion in her engine room and, as ill-luck would have it, one of the missile boats, INS Vijeta, also became unserviceable(19). The Fleet could ill-afford the loss of a valuable anti-submarine escort and a missile platform at this early stage of the war, but there was no alternative to sending the disabled ships back to Bombay. Five ships had, therefore, to be detached from the Fleet - INS Kirpan and INS Sagardeep to tow the two lame ducks, and INS Khukri, another anti-submarine frigate, to escort the group back through submarine-infested waters.

Sending the Khukri to escort the four ships proved fortunate, as she gained a submarine contact on the morning of 5 December 1971. After a series of attacks by her, a loud reverberating underwater explosion was heard following which the contact was lost. Even if the submarine was not sunk, Khukri had undoubtedly thwarted an attack on the Indian ships.

But even as the main fleet of the Western Naval Command was steaming towards the enemy, the little missile boats had already struck the first resounding blow at the home base of the Pakistan Navy at Karachi.

OPERATION TRIDENT - THE FIRST ATTACK ON KARACHI(20)

Operation Trident, the missile attack on Karachi on the night of 4/5 December 1971, was an exploit to be recorded in the annals of India's naval history in letters of gold. In this operation, for the first time in their history, the tiny missile boats, boldly attacked a heavily defended enemy naval base after a long passage through submarine-infested waters covered by enemy's aerial reconnaissance and strike capability. The very novelty of the concept took the Pak naval authorities by complete surprise, and its success so demoralised them that all their plans for launching offensive naval operations were aborted, and their fleet was bottled up inside Karachi harbour throughout the period of the war.

Since the danger from the PAF was much more serious in daylight than during the dark hours, the attacking Indian warships were planned to remain outside the air strike range of Karachi upto dusk during the approach and, after the attack, the force was to withdraw at high speed so as to be again outside the strike range by dawn. To divert the PAF and to curtail its freedom of action, IAF strikes on

Karachi airfields were to take place at dusk and dawn on the night of the attack. Besides, in order to draw PAF attention away from the strike force operating from Saurashtra, the main Indian Fleet was to carry out suitable manoeuvres.

The task group that was responsible for this operation comprised two Petya class frigates, Kiltan and Katchall, and three missile boats, INS Veer, Nirghat and Nipat. INS Kiltan, and the two missile boats, INS Nipat and INS Veer had sailed from Bombay on the morning of 3 December 1971 and joined INS Katchall and INS Nirghat off Dwarka at 1300 hrs on 4 December. This task group then took evasive action and set off for Karachi at high speed after ensuring that they remained outside the PAF air strike range of 150 nautical miles until nightfall. The measures adopted by them proved completely successful, and at sunset of 4 December, enemy reconnaissance aircraft had still not detected the force.

Sunset that day was at 1812 hrs and soon darkness shrouded the area, further reducing the chances of detection. The high speed of advance itself provided the task force with a substantial degree of anti-submarine defence as no Pak submarine could chase it. Morale was high, anticipation of carrying out a successful strike mounted, and a quiet confidence pervaded the ships. Each missile boat was armed with four missiles, out of which three were to be fired on selected targets, and the fourth was to be kept in reserve to counter any Pak retaliatory action after the attack.

Before the rendezvous, INS Kiltan obtained an underwater contact at a depth of 30 fathoms between Mangrol and Navibandar, but the contact was soon lost.

Earlier, a ship had been picked up on radar at 1600 hrs and was considered to be the PNS Zulfiqar, a survey ship which was moving at an estimated speed of 21 knots. Some more radar contacts were picked up before sunset but no action was taken.

As it neared Karachi, the task group detected its first target at 2105 hrs at a range of 41 nautical miles while the group was heading northwards. A second contact was picked up about an hour later at a range of 44.5 nautical miles. Both were moving at high speed and zigzagging frequently, revealing their hostile intentions. At 2241 hrs the second contact altered course and started moving towards the task force, presumably for interception and investigation.

This ship continued coming towards the task force and was quickly reducing the distance. So, at

2313 hrs, INS Nirghat, the first missile boat, was ordered to fire a missile at her at a range of 19 nautical miles. The missile was observed to score a direct hit, causing a loud explosion. The stricken ship, however, opened up with her guns. A second missile was fired a few moments later at a range of 17 nautical miles. It also scored a direct hit, and within six minutes, the radar contact disappeared from the screen.

INS Nipat, the second missile boat, was ordered to take on the second radar contact. She fired her first missile at 2317 hrs at a range of 17.5 nautical miles. Again a direct hit was scored. Her second missile fired at this target at a range of 15 nautical miles, made another direct hit, causing a huge explosion. This ship too soon disappeared from the radar screen.

Just as these two contacts had been dealt with a third contact was detected to the north at 2326 hrs and was appreciated to be steering a southerly course at 24 knots. The task Force Commander ordered a third missile boat, INS Veer, to deal with this contact. Veer fired a missile at 0009 hrs on 5 December at a range of 16 nautical miles, hitting the target and setting it ablaze.

A few minutes earlier, at 0001 hrs on 5 December, INS Nipat had fired a missile towards Cape Monze, a prominent feature of Karachi harbour. This missile blasted a target inside the harbour and caused a major conflagration.

Having achieved his objective, at 0019 hrs, the Force Commander signalled to the units of his Force that the attack had been successfully completed and the Group was to withdraw southwards at high speed.

The Pak Air Force was expected to carry out a strike on the Force at dawn on 5 December, and hence IAF air cover for the daytime passage of the Force through the areas within the striking range of the Pak Air Force had been arranged. But the PAF made no such attempt, and the Task Force returned home without sustaining any loss or damage.

It was ascertained later that the ships sunk by the missile attack were the 'Battle Class' destroyer, PNS Khaibar, a coastal minesweeper and a Liberian merchant ship, SS Venus Challenger.

Interception of Pak signal traffic indicated that the attack caused utter confusion in Karachi. It was first thought that an air attack had taken place, and hence air raid warnings were sounded. Panic was clear from the signals intercepted, because they gave away the disposition and identity of Pak naval ships. And a desperate plea from the Pak Navy for emergency air support was turned down by the PAF, which declared it had no aircraft available. On the night of 5/6 December, when the Indian ships were nowhere in the vicinity, Pak naval ships conducting rescue operations 'detected' some Indian missile boats and opened fire and again asked for emergency air support, which was once again refused. On the morning of 6 December the PAF launched an F-86 Sabre to investigate reports of some ships at sea. This aircraft mistook a Pakistani patrol craft outside Karachi harbour to be an Indian missile boat, and sank it.

The Pakistani Air Force continued its efforts to search for and attack the Indian missile boats. Okha and the waters off the Saurashtra coast were kept under surveillance. Two air attacks were also carried out on Okha and some fuel tanks were set ablaze, thereby denying the missile boats any further use of this port as a forward base. This was, however, overcome by replenishing the boats at sea further south.

By all accounts, the brilliant and novel missile boat tactics adopted for 'Operation Trident' produced profound results. Two warships destroyed within a few minutes at the very doorsteps of their home base and within 30 hours of the start of the war, stunned the Pakistan Navy and Government. The impudent attackers' successful withdrawal without suffering any loss added insult to injury. The crippling blow suffered by the Pak Navy at the very commencement of hostilities affected its deployment so adversely and shattered its morale so completely that it eschewed all thoughts of launching offensive operations during the entire period of hostilities.

THE MAIN FLEET - SECOND ATTACK ON KARACHI

An IAF superconstellation maritime reconnaissance (MR) aircraft, which was providing MR cover to the Fleet, reported sighting a Pak merchant ship steaming northwards towards the Fleet on the evening of 4 December. The lame ducks and their towing ships and escort had by then been detached from the Fleet and sailed to Bombay. INS Mysore, the flagship of the Fleet, was then ordered to proceed towards the quarry at full speed in the hope of making a quick capture. The search, however, proved unsuccessful and since the allotted tasks were more important, the quest for the merchant ship was abandoned and the Fleet proceeded northwards once again. By the afternoon on 5 December, the residual

Fleet of eight ships had regrouped, refuelled and was proceeding towards Karachi, with the remaining missile boat as the spearhead. By midnight on 5 December, the Fleet was split into three forces and deployed for simultaneous strikes on Karachi and the Makran Coast and interception of merchant ships, to be carried out on the night of 6/7 December. The Karachi strike force comprised two frigates, INS Trishul and INS Talwar, one Petya class frigate, INS Kadmat, and one missile boat, INS Vinash. These were all fast ships capable of sustained speeds of 25 to 30 knots and had effective anti-aircraft defence. The tanker, INS Deepak, and two escorts were deployed 300 miles off Karachi for the interception of merchant shipping and the cruiser, INS Mysore, was to carry out a strike on the Makran Coast as a diversionary measure.

The situation was reviewed on the afternoon of 6 December and the strike was called off because, it is claimed, the IAF had other pressing commitments and was not able to mount a diversionary attack on Karachi on 6 December, or to provide air cover to the Indian ships while they were returning after the attack on Karachi(21). In order to enable a second missile boat to join the Fleet from Saurashtra, the three forces were asked to regroup on the afternoon of 7 December(22). Enemy aircraft were however, shadowing the Saurashtra group of ships and it was reported that a Pak strike force of six aircraft was airborne, presumably heading for this group. As the position of the Saurashtra strike force had been compromised, the rendezvous of the forces was called off by Headquarters Western Naval Command.

By now, Pak aircraft were insistently flying over the Saurashtra coast, and the approaches to Karachi from the south had been placed under heavy air surveillance. Operation Trident having already taken place on 4 December, any further attacks on Karachi from the south or southeast was not likely to achieve the surprise so essential to an operation of this nature. It was, therefore, decided to launch the next attack from the extreme south-west and the Fleet was moved to wait for an opportune moment to carry out the attack.

Unfortunately, by the time all groups of the Fleet rejoined and refuelled on 7 December, the weather deteriorated, making it imprudent to undertake a high-speed offensive operation. The Fleet thereafter continued to steer west or north-west, and waited for the weather to improve. By the morning of 8 December, the weather considerably improved and the forces, after being refuelled, separated for the attack on Karachi and the diversionary attack on the Makran Coast on the night of 8/9 December.

The Karachi group, which comprised two fast frigates, one anti-submarine vessel and a missile boat, had been briefed that it was not likely to encounter any Pak warship outside Karachi harbour as the morale of the Pak Navy had been shattered by the earlier missile attack on the night of 4/5 December. It was reported that some merchant ships in Karachi had been anchored off Hawkes Bay, and the attacking force was ordered, therefore, to attack these ships and to fire any missile remaining unused into the harbour over the low-lying area.

As the Karachi group headed towards the Pak Navy's citadel, some radio transmissions from a source close to it were heard. A mechanised show was soon sighted in the direction from which the transmissions had been coming. It was already known that the Pak Navy was using mechanised dhows as advance scouts for reporting the approach of Indian Naval forces. The ships, therefore, opened fire on the dhow. Some petrol drums stored on her deck were set ablaze and exploded and the dhow was soon reduced to a burning hulk and disappeared from view.

Soon the zero hour approached and the attack on Karachi harbour went off as planned. The missile boat, INS Vinash, fired its full arsenal of four missiles, each one of which caused a major explosion which could both be seen and heard by the ships of the attacking force. The last missile travelled a long distance after it was launched, continued to zoom inland and finally, caused a very loud explosion and conflagration, a pillar of flame rising hundreds of feet into the night sky. When the Indian ships retired from the area, they could see these flames up to a distance of 60 nautical miles. The pilots of the IAF aircraft which went in to bomb and strafe Karachi harbour installations on the following morning, reported that the conflagration was the Kiamari oil installation which had been converted into "the biggest bloody bonfire in ASIA"(23). As reported by eye witnesses later, this fire raged "for 7 days and 7 nights, enveloping the whole of Karachi in a thick pall of smoke shutting out the sunlight for a full 3 days"(24).

The destruction of the Kiamari oil installations considerably reduced Pakistan's fuel reserves and its capacity to continue the war on land, sea or in the air. It was later learnt that, while the fourth missile destroyed the Kiamari oil installations, the first two hit merchant ships and the third hit the Pakistan Navy tanker PNS Dacca, which had been anchored close to the merchant ships. PNS Dacca was later drydocked for a considerable period for the repair of the damage suffered.

While the Karachi group was covering itself with glory, the Makran group was not lagging behind. While patrolling the area off the Makran coast on the evening of 8 December, this group rather unexpectedly encountered, south of Jiwani, the Pakistani merchant ship Madhumati masquerading as a Philippine vessel. Immediately on sighting the Indian warships, the ship altered course and broke radio silence, frantically calling Karachi and reporting the presence of the enemy. A warning broadside was then fired across the bows of Madhumati, which had the desired effect. The ship was captured, taken as prize and later brought to Bombay.

The episode saw one of those dramatic moments produced by war. When the Master of the Madhumati was produced before the Fleet Commander, Rear Admiral E.C. Kuruvila, the two immediately recognised each other and greeted each other warmly. The Pakistani had served as a sailor under Kuruvila in the Royal Indian Navy before the partition.

At 2040 hrs on the same day, about three hours after the capture of the Madhumati, two slow-flying aircraft were seen shadowing the Makran group outside its gun range. This seemed to confirm that the diversionary tactics adopted by the Fleet had worked, and the attention of the enemy had been successfully drawn away from the Karachi group.

The same night, a darkened dhow was encountered by the frigate INS Kadmat which was looking for Pak ships and was challenged. The dhow was stopped and was boarded. On being questioned, the Master stated that the dhow was coming from Dubai and was bound for Karachi, and that its entire crew was Pakistani. A search of the dhow revealed gold worth Rs.6,500,000, which had not been entered in her cargo manifest. As the ship was bound for Karachi, the gold consignment was considered contraband and was seized. The dhow, however, was released and allowed to proceed. Later, when the Fleet returned to Bombay, it did not keep the gold as war booty but handed it over to the Western Naval Command, which turned it over to the Bombay Mint for safe custody. Soon after the war, the Government of India returned the gold to the ruler of Dubai as a gesture of goodwill, thus bringing to a grand finale the 'golden' episode of the Western Fleet operations.

By the evening of 9 December, all groups of the Western Fleet had rejoined and were replenished. By the morning of 10 December, the Fleet had been continuously at sea for nine days, and some of the ships required repairs to be carried out at Bombay. Before the Fleet was redeployed for further

operations, it was decided to return to Bombay for two days of intensive defect rectification. This would also enable the Fleet to tow two rearmed missile boats for the next strike at Karachi. This was considered necessary, as it was felt that some more attacks from the southwest were called for to divert Pakistan's concentrated air activity over the southern and south-eastern approaches to Karachi.

Having sent back five ships to Bombay on 4 December, the Fleet had run short of anti-submarine frigates, and hence it was necessary to adopt some evasive measures to steer clear of the Pak submarines which were believed to have been deployed in the westward approaches to Karachi. It was, therefore, decided to maintain complete radio silence, return to the Maharashtra Coast by making landfall well south of Bombay, and reach Bombay by hugging the coast, i.e., by sailing through waters about three miles offshore where the sea was too shallow for the Pak submarines to operate.

This manoeuvre was successfully carried out and the Fleet arrived at Bombay on 13 December. The ships were quickly repaired and replenished. But by the time the Fleet was ready for the next operation, it was known that 'ceasefire was imminent and all plans for her further deployment were held in abeyance.

A unique phenomenon was witnessed after the second missile attack on Karachi on the night of 8/9 December. Neutral ships in Karachi started seeking the permission of the Government of India in Delhi for "grace and favour"(25) to leave Karachi. Besides, within a week of the commencement of hostilities, i.e., by 10 December, "all Pakistani merchant ships had put into the nearest neutral harbours, and dared not ply the high seas. All neutral ships gave Karachi a very wide berth. The Freedom of the seas was guaranteed to our shipping who went about their business without fear and when the war ended we had not lost one single merchant ship. The enemy Fleet lay bottled up and totally helpless in Karachi and dared not venture out"(26).

By now the whole of the Arabian Sea, from the Persian Gulf to Goa, was under the sway of the Western Fleet, and the blockade of the entire Pak coast was total. The Western Fleet of the Indian Navy completely and totally dominated the whole of the Arabian Sea, including the section that washed Pakistan's shores. For the first time in centuries, India truly ruled the waves, though of a comparatively restricted area. What was achieved by the Western Fleet with the limited resources at its command was a true projection of Admiral Mahan's concept of sea power.

OPERATION FALCON AGAINST THE PAK SUBMARINES (27)

An analysis of signal intercepts from the sea area northwest of Bombay before and immediately following the commencement of hostilities confirmed the deployment of Pak submarines flanking the Indian Navy's approaches to the Saurashtra coast. As already related, five ships of the Western Fleet, the Sagardeep, a tanker, Vijeta, Kirpan and Kuthar had been sent back from the operational area and had arrived at Bombay on 6 December. It was decided to clear the area by using the anti-submarine frigates to hunt down and destroy the Pak submarines.

Out of the three anti-submarine frigates, INS Khukri and INS Kirpan left Bombay on 8 December for seeking and destroying the Pak submarines to provide flank anti-submarine support to the withdrawing Trident force. Though maritime reconnaissance aircraft and Seaking anti-submarine helicopters were deployed in support of these ships, they were too few to provide continuous air cover.

On the night of 9/10 December, INS Khukri was torpedoed 35 nautical miles south-west of Diu Head. Three torpedoes hit the ship in quick succession, and it sank within minutes, taking down with her 18 officers and 176 men, including the Commanding Officer, Captain Mahendra Nath Mullah. INS Kirpan, which was in company, also heard the noise of approaching torpedoes, opened up with her anti-submarine mortars as a torpedo countermeasure, and thus avoided being struck by them.

On receiving a flash message on the sinking of the Khukri, the Western Naval Command Headquarters sailed all available ships to pick up the survivors and to hunt for the Pak submarine.

The Petya class frigate INS Katchall, which was at Jaffarabad in Saurashtra preparing for another missile attack on Karachi, joined INS Kirpan in her search for the enemy. The third anti-submarine frigate INS Kuthar, was sailed from Bombay. All available maritime reconnaissance aircraft were sent to the area in order to force the submarine to remain submerged, exhaust her batteries and eventually surface. Alize aircraft and Seaking helicopters were moved up to the Saurashtra Coast to seek and destroy the submarine. Operation Falcon, the hunt for the killer of INS Khukri was on.

The deeper waters to the south and south-west of Diu were searched immediately, as it was appreciated that the submarine would pass through this area before heading for Karachi(28). Since the destruction of the submarine had assumed priority, the Force Commander decided to carry out a search for it for the remaining hours of the night before picking up the survivors of Khukri. The search proved unsuccessful and 67 survivors of Khukri, 6 officers and 61 sailors, were picked up by INS Katchall and INS Kirpan on the morning of 10 December. While the ships were still picking up survivors, an aircraft patrolling the area picked up a disappearing radar contact which was attacked by an Alize aircraft with depth charges. Several such radar contacts were made during the long and extensive search and were attacked repeatedly with rockets, depth-charges and anti-submarine mortars. But the lucky sub appears to have escaped.

The search continued till the evening of 13 December, when all hope of finding the Pak submarine was lost, and the search was abandoned.

On 10 December, an Alize aircraft of the Indian Navy, which was on a tactical mission off Jakhau on the West Coast, was lost. This was the only aircraft lost by the Navy's air arm during the entire course of the war.

REGULATION OF MARITIME MOVEMENT

In naval warfare, the overall objective has traditionally been to deny to the enemy all the advantages of access to the sea, and to ensure for one's own side the safe and uninterrupted use of the seas for commercial as well as war purposes. Such control of the seas was the result of naval superiority, and also its visible manifestation. It involved complicated administrative regulations concerning all shipping in the area - whether enemy or neutral or one's own - and elaborate arrangements to ensure the safety of ports. The regulations of one's own shipping and the safeguarding of ports is generally called "naval control of shipping", and the regulation of enemy and neutral shipping is classed under "contraband control".

Naval Control of Shipping(29)

In exercising naval control of shipping, the Western Naval Command was charged with the task of controlling about 250 Indian merchant ships and ten times that number of sailing vessels dotting the seven seas, in order to ensure their safety during the operations.

Immediately before the commencement of hostilities, naval control of shipping was enforced and traffic to the Gujarat ports and the Persian Gulf was suspended. Ships entering the Arabian Sea were ordered to report their position, course, speed and destination and to obey routing and other instructions issued by the Command. When hostilities actually commenced, there were 38 Indian merchant ships in the Arabian Sea, six ships in Gujarat ports and 92 ships in other Indian ports on the West Coast. Some of the instructions issued to the ships were: Indian ships on passage off the Indian and Sri Lanka coasts were to proceed to the nearest Indian major port; Indian ships proceeding to foreign ports were permitted to continue their voyage; homeward bound Indian ships in the Arabian Sea were given routing instructions to avoid threatened areas; ships of all countries were prohibited from approaching within 40 nautical miles of all Indian major ports during the hours of darkness; the control of ships outside the area of influence of the Command was to be exercised through Indian missions and trade representatives abroad.

These arrangements required extensive liaison with shipowners, state and port authorities, the Director General of Shipping, the Customs, Excise and Fisheries authorities, and the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs who controlled the commercial radio stations on the coast. They also required the master, radio officers and the crew of the merchant ships and sailing vessels to be briefed and trained in damage control, fire fighting, wireless communication with naval authorities, security, etc. Suitable guidelines were issued to the masters of Indian merchant ships which incorporated detailed instructions on security measures to be adopted for the prevention of sabotage, safety precautions to be taken whilst in harbour and action to be taken at sea when attacked by Pakistani ship, aircraft or submarine.

Harbour security committees were formed at all major ports and suitable security measures instituted in accordance with the advice of naval authorities. In order to ensure continuity of operations of ports in the event of damage or sabotage, emergency operating schemes were prepared in consultation with the Navy. A 'shipping cell' was set up at Naval Headquarters which kept track of all Indian ship movements and maintained liaison with the various civil authorities. A Naval Control of Shipping Officer was positioned at Bombay for the purpose.

The only occasion when Pakistan attacked Indian merchant shipping was on 5 December 1971 when the PAF carried out an air strike on Okha. After the attack, which did no cause any damage, ships in this port were sailed to safer areas in the south.

Control of Indian shipping by the Navy and the Civil authorities was so effective that not a single ship suffered any damage throughout the war. What is more, within 7 days of the commencement of hostilities, Indian merchantmen were freely plying the seas without let or hindrance. In fact, sailing of Indian merchantmen was resumed on 9 December 1971, and ships were permitted to sail from all Indian ports except those north of Bombay. Sailing to the Persian Gulf and Gujarat ports, however, remained suspended. The effectiveness of Indian control of shipping vis-a-vis that of Pakistan is evident from the fact that on 9 December 1971, when restrictions on Indian merchantmen were lifted, there was not a single Pakistani merchantman to be found in the seas around and even neutral merchantmen in Karachi were seeking safe passage from the Government in New Delhi.

Naval control of shipping was continued till 20 December 1971, when restrictions on ships approaching ports during hours of darkness and movements of ships to Gujarat ports, except Porbandar and Veraval, were withdrawn. On 21 December 1971, traffic to the Persian Gulf and Gujarat ports was also resumed. By the end of December 1971, naval control of shipping was removed in order to enable ships to resume peacetime routines and schedules.

Contraband Control(30)

While naval control of shipping ensures safety of the country's ships and merchandise carried in these ships' Contraband Control ensures prevention of such supplies from reaching enemy ports. Reinforcements of arms, supplies and personnel to the Pakistani forces in the then East Pakistan were moved largely by sea and it was considered vital to sever this sea link between the two wings of Pakistan at the very commencement of hostilities. It was also necessary to prevent supplies essential for the Pak war effort from reaching Karachi and other ports of Pakistan.

It was appreciated that in the event of hostilities breaking out, Pakistan might change her shipping routes, disguise her merchantmen and resort to use of neutral shipping. Institution of contraband control would also prevent use of neutral shipping by the enemy. Imposing a total blockade of the entire Pak coast to isolate her from the seas would solve all the problems. The legal aspects of contraband control

and blockade were examined and plans were prepared to adopt suitable measures at short notice. Government notifications in consonance with the requirements of International Law were also prepared. An Examination Service for examination of Pak and neutral ships apprehended or intercepted was planned out in detail.

Immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, contraband control was enforced and paid rich dividends. At 0900 hrs on 4 December 1971, INS Godavari, which was patrolling an area west of the southern tip of India across the route from Colombo to the 8° and 9° Channels, had a radar contact 12 nautical miles from her position(31). The contact became visible at a range of 10 miles. Godavari had already been alerted earlier in the morning that Pak merchantman Pasni might pass through the area being patrolled by her and INS Ganga, and hence when the contact closed to 7 miles, Godavari fired a warning shot and ordered the ship to stop. Instead of stopping, the ship altered course and increased speed. A second warning shot had to be fired before the ship stopped her engines 210 miles away from Cochin, and surrendered. It was indeed the Pakistani ship Pasni. The crew was ordered to abandon the ship. Pasni's boat with the entire crew of 31 then came alongside. A boarding party of three officers and 20 men was embarked in the Pasni's boat, together with four crew members selected from the Pasni's crew, and returned to Pasni. The boarding party steamed the ship to Cochin, arriving there at 1030 hrs on 5 December, Godavari and Ganga then resumed their patrol.

Maqbool Baksh, another merchant ship, was located by Indian maritime reconnaissance (MR) aircraft on 4 December, about 350 miles south-west of Bombay. INS Krishna was sent to intercept her(32). But on the following night, the shadowing aircraft lost her, and all efforts throughout 5 December failed to locate her. Krishna was, therefore, called back and the search abandoned.

On 7 December, it was calculated that Pak merchant ship Madhumati, which had sailed from Karachi on 5 December, would be passing through the area being patrolled by the Western Fleet(33). The ship was captured on the evening of 8 December, south of the Pak port of Jiwani as already described.

Five other merchant ships were intercepted at sea. The Atlas Navigator, a Panamanian merchant ship carrying rice and bound for Karachi, was intercepted on 4 December by INS Amba which was patrolling east of the Little Basses across the usual sea-route into the Bay of Bengal. Amba did not capture the Panamanian

ship, as contraband control was yet to be enforced, and by the time that was done, the ship had taken refuge at Colombo. Some units of the Western Fleet intercepted the Swedish ship Thai off the coast of Saurashtra on 6 December. She was, however, not carrying any contraband and was released with due courtesies and allowed to proceed. On 6 December, information was received that a Norwegian ship, Toronto, was carrying contraband(34). An air search launched from Goa located and identified the ship. INS Ganga was sailed from Cochin on 7 December and intercepted the ship on 8 December. Since, however, it was found that the ship was bound for Colombo and was not carrying any contraband, she was also to proceed. Athenian, a Cyprus merchant ship, was intercepted off Bombay by units of the Western Fleet. She was carrying contraband and hence was escorted to Bombay.

A Panamanian ship Successful Day, which was carrying contraband, was intercepted by INS Katchall off Diu on 7 December and escorted to Bombay. It proved to be a most unsuccessful day for the ship.

Three neutral merchant ships, which were in Indian harbours at the time of the commencement of hostilities, were found carrying contraband. These ships were the American merchant ship Lafayette, the British merchant ship Sindhana and the Czechoslovak merchant ship Republica, and were detained at Bombay. The Contraband carried by the ships was off-loaded and all ships were released by 14 December 1971. The cargo off-loaded included 52 tons of engineering goods, 1374 tons of chemicals and medicines, 222.6 tons of food stuff, 292.38 tons of machinery, 10,819 tons of pig iron, 30.56 tons of personal effects, 0.28 ton of general cargo and 4,699 tons of wheat.

CONCLUSION

Careful preparation and coordination of plans, precise threat perception and analysis, appreciation of Pak strategy before the war and timely deployment of the Indian naval forces paid rich dividends. Offensive use of missile boats which were basically designed for defensive operations near the coast, achieved and desired element of surprise and shattered the morale of the Pak naval personnel(35). Units of the Western Fleet ran the gauntlet of the Pak Air Force, and yet not one ship was attacked from the air. The three modern Daphne class submarines of the Pak Navy which were patrolling the seas could attack only one single IN Ship. Relentless attack on every underwater contact kept the Pak submarines at bay.

The Primary task of the Western Fleet, which was to establish effective naval supremacy in the Arabian Sea, was achieved in full measure as the Pak Navy remained bottled up in the sanctuary of Karachi harbour for the entire duration of the war. The complete blockade of Karachi, the destruction of the Kiamari oil installations, the capture of Pak merchant ships right under its Navy's nose and the paralysis of its merchant shipping achieved the Western Fleet's objectives to a degree that was remarkable in the annals of naval warfare. Some of the headlines in the Lloyds Daily Bulletins during the period were(36):-

- "India has tightened the Naval noose around Pakistanis"
- "The Indian Navy is now in full control of all sea approaches to Karachi"
- "Karachi's off-shore defence have been pierced and large oil installations at Ke'amari set on fire"
- "A spokesman said that foreign vessels wanting to get out of the area of conflict should make contact with Indian Naval Units which would give them safe conduct after 'proper scrutiny'"

The outer and inner defences of Bombay harbour and other Indian ports on the West Coast succeeded in preventing penetration by Pak midget submarines or chariots. Except for a few minor targets at Okha, the entire Western seaboard remained free from Pak air attacks.

As a senior naval officer in charge of the operations put it, "while the spectacular attacks on Karachi, the sinking of the Pakistani warships and the loss of the gallant Khukri captured the nations' imagination, the real success of the naval war in the west lies in the projection of sea power across the West Arabian Sea despite our limited and over-stretched resources in the face of a most credible air, surface and underwater enemy threat".

The most important factor that contributed to the grand success of the Western Fleet was the high morale of its personnel. "Our men went into battle with gusto and covered themselves with glory. Partly this was due to the high morale resulting from the justness of the cause, partly due to the fortunes of war, partly due to the mistakes of the enemy and partly (due) to the thoroughness of our preparations (37).

The operations in the Arabian Sea earned the Navy three Maha Vir Chakras. Two of the recipients were Commander K.P. Gopal Rao, Commanding Officer of INS Kiltan, and Commander B.B. Yadav, Squadron Commander of the Missile Boats Squadron, honoured for valour displayed while leading the attacks on Karachi. The third was Captain M.N. Mulla, Commanding Officer of the Khukri, who went down with the ship after saving the lives of many of his sailors, in true naval tradition.

The Indian Navy had had few achievements to show in the post-independence operations till then. It was unleashed for the first time in the 1971 war. In its very first round, it set up a bench-mark of performance which would be difficult for it to beat, or for others to equal.

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ALL-OUT WAR IN BANGLADESH

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES:

Bangladesh (East Bengal or East Pakistan before liberation), slightly larger in land size than the State of Ohio in the USA(1), lay in the eastern part of the northern Indian plains, between latitudes 20° 30' and 26° 45' north, and between longitudes 88° and 92° 56' east. It was essentially a low plain containing the combined delta of the Ganges (Padma) and the Brahmaputra (Jamuna). The fertile alluvial delta region had been created by rich silt, deposited by the many rivers criss-crossing the territory. The seaward margin of the Ganges delta, known as the Sunderbans, and inhabited by the Royal Bengal tigers, was intricately divided by tidal channels and covered with mangrove forest. The labyrinthine, deltaic channels created flood, food and famine, all the three dominant features of Bangladesh's geography. While the delta land was seldom more than 150 ft above sea-level, high ground was found at the fringes, for example, the Barind upland in the north-west, the upper Surma Valley in the north, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the extreme south-east, rising up to a height of 2,100 ft. However, the high areas were neither as productive nor as densely populated as the delta land which supported nearly 80% of Bangladesh's population(2).

Besides numerous rivers and canals, East Bengal had a number of 'bils', i.e., big marshes. Some were of enormous size and retained water permanently, though its extent varied from season to season. Leading examples were the Gopalganj and Chalan 'bils' and the Sylhet 'Haors' or marshes. During the monsoon months, many parts of East Bengal remained under water of various depths, and communication between places was possible only with the help of boats, big or small.

Monsoon in East Bengal generally covered the period from early June to early October. It extended north-westward from the Bay of Bengal and by the beginning of June it entered East Bengal. After entering the area, the Monsoon rushed north and west and its advance was marked by disturbed weather and heavy squalls. The Cox's Bazar and Chittagong areas and their adjoining hills, the Noakhali coast and the base of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills in north Sylhet received the heaviest downpour. For most of the area, July was the rainiest month, with slightly lowering figures for June and August. Often, there was a break

in August, and other minor breaks were marked by intervals of fine weather and passing clouds. All the months upto early October were marked by humidity averaging well over 80 per cent. Another significant feature was the number of October storms towards the close of the monsoon period. In general terms, the major part of Bangladesh, particularly to the east and south-east, had an excess of rainfall which often brought about unmanageable floods. With the exception of the western parts of the Rajshahi and Kushtia Districts, where the annual rainfall was about 55", no part of the province received a precipitation less than 60". In fact, only about one-third of the country, including the southern part of North Bengal, and Kushtia, Jessore and parts of Faridpur district received a rainfall of less than 70". Annual rainfall amounted to 74" in Dhaka(3). A large area in the south and south-east, comprising Khulna, Barisal, Noakhali, Tippera, Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and also areas to the north-east and north, such as Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rangpur and northern Dinajpur, received a precipitation from 80" to 100". The southern extremity, the Cox's Bazar area, got about 140", and the northern and north-eastern portions of Sylhet district received from 150" to 200" of rain.

Despite the almost complete absence of the winter rain, the ground was so moist that the landscape remained green throughout the year, with Malaria having its strongholds all over the land.

The climate of Bangladesh was characterised by moderately high temperature for about eight months in the year with considerable humidity and heavy summer rainfall. Hence, it had been described, in broad general terms, as "moderately warm, equable and humid"(4), producing enervating effect on human life and causing high incidence of sickness, especially during the monsoon months. While the maximum temperatures were attained over most of Bangladesh in April, generally varying between 91° and 96° F. The minimum summer temperatures over the plains hardly fell below 70° F. The country enjoyed a short winter which started from the last week of November and ended by mid February. In winter, the two warmest parts were the south-eastern corner (Noakhali, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar) and the south-western area (Jessore, Satkhira and Khulna)(5). The diurnal range of temperature for the south-western part of Bangladesh during the monsoon was not more than 12° F., while in the coldest month, January, it rarely exceeded 30° F. Dhaka, the capital which adequately represented the low lands of Bangladesh, had a mean temperature of 67° F. in January, and 87° F. in June. Humidity was

generally high throughout the year. While it varied between 75% and 82% in the winter months, it ranged from 84% to 90% in June and July. Not only the pre-monsoon months of March, April and May, but also October witnessed violent storms, when high wind velocities with speeds generally between 30 and 40 miles per hour, but rising up to 100 miles per hour in some cases, were attained, often causing much damage to property and loss of life. They sometimes developed into full-fledged cyclones, e.g. those of October 1960 and May 1965, resulting in untold sufferings and large-scale destruction of life and property.

Terrain

Bangladesh was divided and sub-divided into different zones by the following five river systems:

1) The Padma system

It included the mother river Padma and its distributaries, such as the Mathabhanga, Ichhamati, Bhairab, Kumar, Kabadak, Chitra, Nabaganga, Garai-Madhumati, and Arialkhan (Tetulia), together covering the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur, Barisal and Noakhali. The gigantic Padma-Meghna estuary, stretching from the Barisal mainland to the Chittagong coast, contained numerous flat islands and wide channels.

2) The Meghna-Surma system

It was linked with rivers Barak (Kushiyara), Dhaleshwari, the Old Brahmaputra, Buriganga and Sitalakhya, which drained the districts of Sylhet, Comilla and Noakhali.

3) The Brahmaputra system

The Brahmaputra along with its affluents and channels covered a large area, extending from the Jamuna to the Meghna.

4) The North Bengal rivers

The Mahananda, Nagar, Kulik, Tangan, Purnabhaha, Atrai, Karatoya, Tista and Dharla drained a large area stretching from the western borders of Bangladesh right up to the Brahmaputra.

5) The hill rivers of Chittagong

The various fast-flowing streams, coming from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Lushai Hills and the Tripura Hills, drained into the four main rivers - the Fenny, Karnafuli, Sangu and Matamuhuri, which ultimately fell into the sea. Of its total length of 170 miles, the Karnafuli, the most important of these rivers, was navigable to ocean-going vessels up to Chittagong, and thereafter, boats carrying cargoes weighing up to 300 maunds could go up to Rangamati, north of Chittagong, in a regular service.

The topography of the country could be divided into: (a) the plains, (b) the tracts of old alluvium, and (c) the hilly region. The Plains could again be sub-divided into:-

- (i) The Deltaic plain, which included Kushtia, Jessore, northern Faridpur and northern Khulna in the west, central and southern Faridpur and Bakerganj in the east, and the Sunderbans located in the south of Khulna and Barisal districts,
- (ii) the plain of the Padma-Jamuna-Meghna which stretched along the great rivers - the Padma, the Jamuna and Meghna - and fell in the districts of Faridpur, Dhaka, Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra, Rangpur, Comilla and Sylhet, and
- (iii) the North Bengal plain which included parts of the Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra, and Rajshahi districts and also the Chalan Bil (140 sq. miles in area) and other marshes situated on the border between the Rajshahi and Pabna districts.

The tracts of old alluvium included the Madhopur Tract, which covered an area - 70 miles long and 35 miles wide - and extended from the central part of the Mymensingh district to the northern part of Dhaka, with an elevation ranging from 50 to 100 ft above sea-level; the Barind Tract, yellowish to red in colour and 20-40' high, which covered about 3,600 sq miles, and sprawled over the districts of Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra and Rangpur; and the 20-40' high Lalmei Hills, located in the south-west of the Comilla town.

Hills were found in Bangladesh only along a part of the eastern margin of the Sylhet plains and in the

south-eastern corner of the Chittagong district and in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Around the Sylhet town, there were many low hills covered with trees and turf with elevations ranging from 100 to 200 ft. Along the Sylhet-Shillong road, some of these hills had risen up to 300 ft. There were tea gardens flourishing on this elevation. South of the Kushiyara river, six hill ranges projected into the Sylhet district from the Tripura ranges, the maximum elevation of which hardly exceeded 800 ft, above sea-level. The Chittagong Hill Tracts were the only extensive hill area in Bangladesh, which was otherwise dominated by wide plains and large rivers. In this hill region, a number of hill ranges ran from north to south, thus enclosing longitudinal river valleys and generally gaining in elevation to the east. The highest peak of Bangladesh (4,034 ft high) was situated in the south-eastern extremity of this area, and there were many peaks located on these hills, which were above 3,000 ft. Most of the valleys in this region were covered with dense, virgin forest, interspersed with small watercourses and swamps of various sizes. Part of the Chittagong town lay on the outlying hillocks of the Chandranath range. In the south, near Cox's Bazar and Teknaf, hills formed precipitous cliffs along the sea and enclosed four wide valleys of great fertility and dense population.

Transportation

Separated from West Pakistan by Indian territory stretching over 1,100 miles, Bangladesh had approximately 2,474-miles long highly zig-zag land/river boundary with India (2,300 miles), and Burma (174 miles), and 445 miles of sea shore(6). The country had maximum over-land distances of 200 and 325 miles from east to west and north to south, respectively. The north-south flow of most of the rivers (with the exception of the Padma which flowed from north-west to south-east) in Bangladesh tended to emphasize the isolation of the eastern from the western part of the land, and gave the surface transport system, mainly by water, a north-south orientation. Some road and rail links did serve the interfluves, but no direct east-west link had so far been possible.

Waterways

Bangladesh had a labyrinth of waterways connecting all parts of the country. There were three types of waterways: (a) large and deep rivers, navigable throughout the year to all sizes of powered vessels, including steamers, flats and launches, (b) smaller and less deep rivers, navigable throughout

the year for country boats of fair size, but negotiable by steamers only in the rainy season, and (c) smaller streams, channels and 'khals' which were navigable in some cases for the whole year and in other cases only during the rainy season for country boats of various sizes.

While regular inland navigation was possible round the year, in the Padma (Ganges), Jamuna (Brahmaputra), Meghna, Karnafuli (lower reaches only), Kabadak, Pussur, and various river estuaries in Barisal and Khulna districts, a number of rivers in the central delta area such as the Madhumati, Arialkhan and Kumar were navigable during the rainy season. The Padma, Jamuna and Meghna were so wide that at places one could not see the other bank. There were no bridges across them except for the Hardinge bridge over the Ganges and the Ashuganj bridge over the Meghna. All crossings elsewhere had to be by ferry. Regular steamer services were run over a length of 2,600 miles of inland waterways, of which 2,260 miles were navigable throughout the year. In 1971, there were five major inland ports - Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chandpur, Barisal and Khulna, besides about 1,150 river stations and landing stages in Bangladesh, handling over 25 million passengers and 2 million tons of cargo annually(7).

Railways

The railways in Bangladesh were greatly influenced by the size and direction of its main rivers. Major lines ran in the north-south direction and there were ferry systems across the big rivers at Bahadurabad, Jagannathganj, Goalundo, Daudkandi, etc. There were only two major railway bridges - one over the Ganges and the other over the Meghna. In 1971, Bangladesh had 1,711 route mileage of railways of which the broad gauge (5' 6") amounted to 545 miles, the metre gauge (3' 8") 1,146 miles and the narrow gauge (2' 6") 20 miles(8), together carrying annually 73 million passengers and 6 million tons of goods. While the metre gauge with progressively dieselised locomotives covered all the areas east of the Jamuna-Padma system, the broad gauge covered the areas west of it, with few exceptions. The following were the main railway lines(9):-

Broad Gauge

- (a) Darsana - Sara bridge-Nator-Parbatipur-Saidpur.
- (b) Darsana - Goalundo

- (c) Bangaon - Jessore-Khulna
- (d) Jessore - Darsana, and
- (e) Ishurdi - Sirajganj

Metre Gauge

- (a) Bahadurabad-Mymensingh-Dhaka, and Jagannathganj-Mymensingh link
- (b) Dhaka-Tungi-Bhairab Bazar-Akhaura-Laksham-Chittagong
- (c) Akhaura-Kulaura-Fenchuganj-Sylhet
- (d) Kurigram-Lalmanirhat-Rangpur-Parbatipur-Dinajpur
- (e) Santahar-Bogra-Gaibanda
- (f) Mymensingh-Bhairab Bazar
- (g) Comilla-Noakhali

Road system

Bangladesh had a poor road system, because it was secondary to the water transport and railway transport systems and the cost of maintenance against the monsoon fury was staggering. Good roads ran only a few miles out of prominent towns, and rural and municipal roads were hardly paved. The country had only five all weather roads and a number of fair weather roads which crossed numerous minor rivers and streams again and again. The smaller rivers and streams could be as wide as 1000 ft and they did not have a bridge at every crossing place, linked by road. At such places road transport had to be ferried across.

The five main roads were:-

- (a) Sibalay-Dhaka-Narayanganj-Daudkandi-(Ferry)-Comilla-Feni-Chittagong-Cox's Bazar.
- (b) Tamabil-Sylhet-Maulvibazar-Comilla
- (c) Pachagarh-Thakurgaon-Saidpur-Rangpur-Bogra-Sirajganj Ferry linking with road(a).
- (d) Nawabganj-Rajshahi-Hardinge Bridge-Kushtia-Jhenida-Kaliganj-Jessore-Khulna.

- (e) Meherpur-Chuadanga-Jhenida-Magura-Ferry-Faridpur or Goalundo Ghat Ferry to road (a)(10).

Besides, there were the following motorable trunk roads:

- (a) Lalmai-Laksham-Noakhali
- (b) Hilli-Gaibanda
- (c) Kotchandpur-Kaliganj
- (d) Rajshahi-Nator-Bogra
- (e) Dhaka-Aricha-55 miles
- (f) Sherpur-Sujannagar-50 miles
- (g) Sorsha-Satkhira-Daulatpur
- (h) Rangpur-Dinajpur-35 miles
- (i) Lalmai-Chandpur
- (j) Pabna-Bogra-Rangpur, and
- (k) Goalundo-Faridpur-Barisal(11).

Any movement off the road and track was not feasible during the monsoons, when small boats were the only means of cross-country surface communication. During the dry weather, December to March, cross-country movement by 4x4 wheeled vehicles with prior reconnaissance was feasible, but a shower could bring all cross-country movement to a stop and dog down all traffic.

There was no direct road links between the Western, Central and the Eastern Sectors. However, all sectors were linked by inland water transport. The Jamuna was not bridged, but ferry points were there at Sirajganj, Chilmari and Phulchhari, with Sirajganj having better road communication and connected by rail as the most direct route to Dhaka.

The Eastern and Central sectors were connected by rail from Akhaura to Mymensingh and from Akhaura to Dhaka via Ashuganj railway bridge. Besides, ferry sites for road crossing to Dhaka were there at Chandpur, Daudkandi and Bhairab Bazar on the Meghna. Only a fair-weather road connected Jamalpur with Dhaka via Tangail which was an important communication centre. Another lateral road connected Madhopur with Mymensingh.

In 1971, Bangladesh had one sea port (Chittagong) with the cargo handling capacity of 4 million tons in 1969, one big riverine port (Chalna) with the cargo handling capacity of 2.3 million tons(12), and 7 civil airports - Dhaka, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet, Shamshernagar, Ishurdi, and Jessore - under operation, besides the following airports which could be used both for civilian and military purposes when needed(13):-

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| (1) Lalmanirhat, | (2) Kasba, |
| (3) Thakurgaon, | (4) Dinajpur, |
| (5) Singarbil, | (6) Bhatpara, |
| (7) Feni, | (8) Ramgarh, |
| (9) Fauzdarhat, | (10) Dohazari, |
| (11) Chiringa. | |

Although the land-based centres of population, especially Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, provided political and tactical objectives to anyone intending to capture the country, and land communications linking these centres determined the pattern of operations, nevertheless woe betide a military force which would surrender the labyrinth of waterways to the adversary. The geographical situation of Bangladesh, the shape of its border, and the orientation of its communications made the terrain very suitable for guerilla operations. Bogra in the north-west, Magura in the south-west, Chandpur, Daudkhandi and Ashuganj in the eastern and Tangail in the central sectors respectively, were the nodal points, thrusts along which could threaten Dhaka.

Administratively, the land was divided into 4 divisions and further subdivided into 17 districts and 59 sub-divisions. The names of the divisions and disticts were:

 Names of Divisions

Names of Districts

Rajshahi Division:

Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra,
 Rajshahi and Pabna.

Khulna Division:

Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna and
 Barisal.

Dhaka Division:

Mymensingh, Dhaka and Faridpur

Chittagong Division: Sylhet, Comilla, Noakhali,
Chittagong and Chittagong Hill
Tracts(14).

People

In 1971, there were approximately 75 million people in Bangladesh, living in an area of 55,126 square miles(15). The density of population was about 1,360 per square mile for the country as a whole, three times more than India's, but in many rural areas in the Padma-Jamuna plains it was over 2,500 per square mile, thus making Bangladesh the most densely populated country of the world(16). Over 90% of the country's population was rural and about 75% of these were engaged in agriculture and associated occupations. While agricultural output made up more than 56% of the country's Gross Domestic Product, her industrial output accounted for only 10% of the GDP. Again, over 60% of all industrial production came from agro-industries. Low per capita income and inadequate domestic investment led to a poor rate of economic growth and made the country economically one of the poorest in the world.

An ardent student of political geography of Pakistan was so much impressed by the striking differences between the two halves of Pakistan - differences in physical factors, in crops, in customs and social attitudes, economic conditions and political biases - that as early as 1964, he considered them as "of fundamental importance to the future of the State as a whole"(17).

What image Bangladesh and its people had in the eyes of the West Pakistani elite is summed up in the following passage of an official publication of Pakistan:-

"The people in this wing of Pakistan have fish and rice as their staple food, grow jute and tea for export and run supply lines on ferry-boat schedules. They produce more jute than any other country, with more than two-third of the world's total output... It is a land of rainbows and songs where the elephant and python and the Royal Bengal tiger roam about in the thick foliage of the Sunderban forests. They are essentially an artistic people, fond of music, dancing, poetry and painting... Here whispering breezes sing the song of 'Sonar Bangla' or the golden land of Bengal through rustling coconut palms"(18).

However, the Pakistani rulers, who generally looked down upon the people of East Pakistan as an indolent, unenterprising and non-martial people, underestimated their patriotism and potential strength. They hardly realized that the whispering breezes of 'Sonar Bangla' could develop into a great cyclone, snapping the political ties between the two wings of Pakistan.

PLANS AND ORBATS

Although the actual hostilities between India and Pakistan started on 3 December 1971 as a result of the pre-emptive Pak air attack on Indian airfields in the evening that day, both countries had prepared war plans and made allocations of forces for their implementation. In the summer of 1971, India made a blue-print of Operation "Cactus Lily" to raise, train and locate forces for the eventual hostilities which were likely to break out between the two countries as a result of intensification of the liberation struggle in Bangladesh. In fact, Operation "Cactus Lily" became operative with effect from 5 August 1971(19).

Pakistan had initially only one Division consisting of four Infantry brigades (fourteen Battalions) deployed in East Pakistan in the beginning of 1971. However, afterwards, this force was increased to three full and two ad hoc Infantry Divisions, comprising thirteen Brigade HQs and thirty-five regular infantry battalions, plus some 73,000 para-military personnel, such as East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces (EPCAF), Scouts, Mujahids and Razakars(20). Pakistan also built up in her Eastern Wing one regiment of M-24 Chaffee tanks, one M-24 indep armour Squadron, and one ad hoc tanks squadron of Chaffees, PT-76s, and Shermans; six field regiments of artillery with 105 mm guns, five Mortar Batteries, some independent Field Batteries, one regiment of Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery and one LAA Arty Bty; nineteen F-86-E Sabre jet fighters, three RT-33, a few light aircraft, transport aircraft and helicopters; and a large number of gun boats, including four sea-going ones(21).

To counter this build-up, Indian formations and units were assembled/raised, and concentrated from mid August to mid November 1971 under the Eastern Command of the Indian Army, based in Calcutta. Commencing from early October 1971, a large number of Formation HQ, units and sub-units were raised, the most important of which was the 2 Corps HQ, established on a reduced scale at Krishnanagar (Dt. Nadia, West

Bengal). Also 4 Corps was split into the Rear Corps HQ, based at Tezpur in Assam, and the Main Corps HQ, based at Teliamura near Agartala (Tripura). In view of the Indian Army's usual commitment to maintain adequate forces for the defence of Sikkim and NEFA and containment of insurgency in Nagaland, Manipur and the Mizo Hills, the following forces could be made available for dealing with the Pak forces in East Pakistan(22):-

Army

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| (a) | <u>North-Western Sector</u>
(North Bengal). | 33 Corps with 20 Mtn Div; 63 CAV less Sqn; and other supporting elements. |
| (b) | <u>South-Western Sector</u>
(South of R. Padma and West of R. Meghna). | 2 Corps with 9 Inf Div and 4 Mtn Div; 45 CAV and a Sqn of 63 CAV; and other supporting elements. |
| (c) | <u>Eastern Sector</u>
(East of R. Meghna). | Main 4 Corps with 8, 23 and 57 Mtn Divs; two Sqns of tanks; and other supporting elements. |
| (d) | <u>Northern Sector</u>
(Between R. Jamuna and R. Meghna - north of R. Padma). | 101 Communication Zone area with 95 Mtn Bde; and other supporting elements. |

Additionally, the Eastern Command had under its control: 340 Mtn Bde Gp, 71 Mtn Bde, 50 Indep PARA Bde, Force HQ OP ORCHID, Bengal Area, 312 Indep AD Bde, 342 Ad Bde, 203 Army Engr Regt, Comd Reserve, etc(23). Besides the above, fourteen Assam Rifles Bns, seven T.A. Inf Bns, some T.A. AD Regts and T.A. Engr Regts; twenty-three BSF Battalions(24), four CRPF Bns and three other Armed Police Bns, three Bdes of Bangladesh regular troops, and about 100,000 MF/FF, etc, were there to help the Indian Armed Forces(25).

Indian Navy

The Eastern Fleet deployed in the Bay of Bengal during the conflict comprised Indian Naval Ships Vikrant, Khanderi (Submarine), Kamorta, Brahmaputra, Beas, Kavaratti, Rajput, Magar, Gharial, Guldar and Desh Deep, etc.,(26).

Indian Air Force

Four Hunter Squadrons, two MiG Squadrons and one Su Squadron, one Squadron of Mi-4 helicopters and some transport aircraft were made available for the Eastern Front(27). Also, Advance HQ Eastern Air Command was organised in Calcutta and Joint Army Air Operation Centre (JAAOC) established(28).

Supply and Logistics

In view of the difficult terrain of Bangladesh, criss-crossed by numerous big and small rivers, logistic and supply arrangements had to be made much in advance of the actual operations. It was, therefore, decided to position one month's stock in advance for two Army Divisions in Tripura, one Division in Tura, two Divisions in Krishnanagar, and one Division in Raiganj. Consequently, the following tonnage of supplies was moved to the following places in advance:-

- (a) Tripura 30,000
- (b) Tura 3,000
- (c) Krishnanagar 14,000
- (d) Raiganj 7,000(29)

Minimum bridging resources could be made available just before the war(30).

Major communication problem related to Tripura and Tura. Tripura was served by a single meter-gauge railway line beyond Gauhati, with a limited capacity of about 30 wagons, and the rail-head of Dharmanagar in Tripura was 100 to 150 miles from the forward administrative echelons. Moreover, the rail and road in this area ran very close to the border, and were, therefore, open to Pak sabotage. Similarly, between Gauhati and Tura there was no railway line. In Tripura a new road network was created to allow supply dumps to be stocked and combat formations to concentrate at jumping off points. Also, river Gomti had to be bridged at two places - Kakraban and Sonamura. Besides, inland water transport support columns were stationed at Dhubri, Farakka, and Hasnabad to provide necessary supplies to the Indian troops advancing along the banks of Jamuna-Brahmaputra and Padma-Madhupati. What is more, local food resources were meagre, particularly in Tripura and Meghalaya, and supplies for the Army had to be brought from outside. For example, frozen milk was obtained from far-off States like U.P. and Punjab.

Continuing efforts had to be made to make up for deficiencies in most items of weapons, equipment and certain types of ammunition. The position of spares for small arms was so bad that items like breech blocks for LMGs and firing pins had to be manufactured and new tracks and links for PT-76 Tanks had to be provided before the commencement of actual hostilities.

New Field Hospitals were created in II and 33 Corps Sectors for 200 beds each, while in Tripura 700 beds provided in three hospitals - Teliamura (400 beds), Dharmanagar (200 beds), and Silchar (100 beds)(31).

In an overall comparison of relative strengths, in the Eastern Theatre, India was superior to Pakistan in the degree of 1.5:1. Taking into account the suitability of Bangladesh terrain for defence and the defensive preparations made in East Pakistan, this could be taken almost as parity(32). Indeed, Pakistan had constructed extensive trenches, ditches and concrete pill-boxes to establish a system of fortifications along the main approaches to certain positions which the Pak Army termed as fortresses, sufficiently stocked with arms, ammunition and supplies to hold out for a period of 45 days(33).

Pak Defensive Deployment in East Pakistan

(a) North-Western Sector

The 16 Inf Div headquarters at Nator, with a reconnaissance and Support Battalion, a regiment less squadron of armour, two field regiments and one mortar battery, deployed as follows:-

- i. 23 Inf Bde of four battalions in Dinajpur-Rangpur area.
- ii. 205 Inf Bde in the Hilli-Ghoraghat area.
- iii. 34 Inf Bde in Rajshahi-Naogaon area.

(b) Western Sector

The 9 Inf Div with a Squadron of armour, two field regiments and one mortar battery deployed as follows:-

- i. Divisional Headquarters and 107 Inf Bde in Jessore area.
- ii. 57 Inf Bde in Jhenida-Meherpur-Jibannagar area.
- iii. Elements in the Satkhira-Khulna area.

(c) South-Eastern Sector

- i. 14 Inf Div with a squadron of armour, two field regiments and one mortar battery with Headquarters initially in Dhaka and later at Bhairab Bazar, 27 Inf Bde in the Akhaura-Kasba-Brahmanbaria area, 313 Inf Bde in the Maulvibazar area, and 202 Inf Bde in the Sylhet area.
- ii. 39 Inf Div headquarters at Chandpur with 117 Inf Bde in Mynamati area, 53 Inf Bde of two battalions in Feni area, 91 Inf Bde of one battalion plus and additional para-military forces in Fauzdarhat-Ramgarh area and 97 Inf Bde in Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts.

(d) North-Eastern Sector

- i. Headquarters 36 Inf Div, formed from the Directorate General of East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces (DG EPCAF), together with 93 Inf Bde and one battery, deployed in area Jamalpur-Mymensingh were responsible for Dhaka-Mymensingh area.
- ii. There were reserves worth about one brigade located in and around Dhaka.

Indian Army's Tasks and Plans

Army Headquarters Operation Instruction No.53, issued on 16 August 1971, specified the tasks as follows:-

- (a) Defend Sikkim and NEFA against possible Chinese aggression.
- (b) Contain insurgency in Nagaland, Manipur and Mizo Hills.
- (c) Destroy the bulk of the Pakistani forces in Eastern Theatre and occupy the major portion of East Bengal including the entry ports of Chittagong and Chalna-Khulna(34).

It was appreciated that although Pak Forces were deployed in East Pakistan primarily for the defence of that country, nevertheless they could undertake one or more of the following offensives against India :-

- (a) A multi-pronged offensive with

approximately two Divisions on to the Indian lines of communication between Silchar and Agartala, destroying Indian formations in this area and thereafter occupying Tripura and part of Cachar district.

- (b) A limited offensive against Calcutta along axes Jessore-Bangaon, and Satkhira-Bashirhat in order to threaten Calcutta.
- (c) A limited offensive against the Siliguri corridor in the north, provided Chinese collaboration was expected. Out of the above-mentioned Pak threats, threat to Tripura was the most sensitive because of the proximity of its metropolis city, Agartala, alongwith its air-field, to the East Pak border(35).

Before the war started, HQ Eastern command held a series of war games, and based on the experience gained from the preliminary operations, they revised their offensive plans. Instead of following well recognised and heavily defended approaches, thrust lines were now directed at nodal points and communication centres rather than important towns, as given below(36):-

- (a) 33 Corps, in modification of the tasks previously allotted, were now only to contain Rangpur and Dinajpur. They were to capture Gaibanda and Bogra via Pirganj and exploit upto the line of the Ganga river.
- (b) 101 Communication Zone were now only to isolate and threaten Mymensingh, and the thrust line was defined as Kamalpur-Jamalpur-Dhaka.
- (c) 4 Corps were now to capture Chandpur and Daudkandi, contain Comilla and the Lalmai Heights, isolate Feni and launch subsidiary thrusts to capture Akhaura, Shamshernagar and Maulvibazar.
- (d) 2 Corps were given Jhenida and Magura as key objectives to be captured via area Kotchandpur with a view to securing the ferry sites on the Madhumati and Padma rivers at Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat. This was in addition to Jessore.

The Army Commander, whilst issuing these changed directions, reminded the formation commanders that the battle would be a fluid one and that his operational instructions should be used as a basis for general guidance(37). Though final objectives would remain unaltered, formation commanders should be prepared to constantly review thrust lines and intermediate objectives as per changed situations. These modifications involved by-passing sizeable enemy strongholds, which not only indicated a significant change in concept, but also expressed a growing confidence and realisation by Eastern Command that a swift advance into the vitals of East Pakistan would threaten Dhaka and bring about a total collapse and defeat of the Pakistani forces(38). Initial plans catered for securing the line of the Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers. Further detailed planning could only be done taking into consideration the progress of various thrusts. It was envisaged that 4 Corps would cross the Meghna between Daudkhandi and Bhairab Bazar and advance to Dhaka. 101 Communication Zone Area with 95 Mtn Bde Gp of four battalions, 2 Para Group, followed by 167 Mtn Bde, would advance to Dhaka from the North. It was felt that these forces would be supported in their advance to Dhaka by Siddiqi Force, a large group of freedom fighters which had been operating with good effect in Tangail district(39).

Contingency plans were also made for elements of 2 Corps to cross the Padma at Goalundo for which purpose suitable Inland Water Transport craft were placed at Dhubri to assist 95 Mtn Bde or move elements of 20 Mtn Div, if required. Army Headquarters Reserve of 50 Indep Para Bde was to provide one complete battalion drop and two-coy drops. It was appreciated that the most important area for the main drop was Tangail in order to ensure the early capture of Dhaka. Second priority was given for two-coy drops to assist in securing Magura if necessary. Due to the limited availability of Mi-4 helicopters, all these helicopters were allocated to 4 Corps to enable them to ferry troops as required. The air effort allotted to the Army was sufficient to cater for an average of 120 sorties per day. Naval forces were to blockade Chalna and Chittagong and Naval Air was to be used in the area Chittagong-Cox's Bazar.

Open hostilities commenced at the time of the year which was most suitable for India. Not only India got about four months to organise and train her forces and build up logistics, but also it was possible to accept some risks in thinning out Indian strength on the Northern borders and allow Indian forces to negotiate less water-logged terrain in Bangladesh during the dry season.

From the Pak angle of vision, the Pak Army, which had initially prepared to fight on the East Pakistan front alone, was compelled to fight on three fronts - West, East and guerillas of Bangladesh. In the East, the Pak forces were in disarray. Many of the Pak formations were rushed to the Eastern Wing in company and battalion groups without their supporting arms like artillery, engineers and armour, and later scattered throughout East Pakistan in penny packets either on search-and-destroy missions or to strengthen the border outposts. Similarly, adequate logistic support could not be organised for the Pak forces in East Pakistan.

As regards Lt Gen Niazi's strategy, he thought that India would not try to capture Dhaka; in its stead she would be satisfied with only capturing some territory where the East Bengal refugees could be settled and a provisional Bangladesh government would be set up. His superiors had assured him that both China and USA would intervene in case of open hostilities, also draw the Pak chestnuts out of fire in the UN, and enforce an early cease-fire. Hence, he adopted the fortress concept for his strategy under which he strengthened the defence of important border towns and communication centres such as Jessore, Jhenida, Bogra, Rangpur, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Bhairab Bazar, Comilla and Chittagong into theatre fortresses(40). He believed that these fortresses would destroy infiltrating Indian columns, and fight "Last man, last round" against the Indian invaders. The disposal of his forces throughout the area of responsibility left no reserves for him, and even the Dhaka Bowl was denuded of troops to provide for a strong forward defence. Thus he deployed his troops for defeat, as Napoleon warned: "He who remains behind his entrenchment is beaten; experience and theory are one on this".

OPERATIONS OF 2 CORPS

When the Indian forces were being restrained from advancing further into East Bengal, the pre-emptive Pak air strike of 3 December on Indian airfields eased the tense situation, and the Indian forces were at once thrown into action, with no punches pulled. At that moment, in the South-Western Sector, the Pak forces were thus deployed(41):-

9 Inf Div (Maj Gen M.H. Ansari).

HQ	Jessore (QU 1256)
Artillery:	
55 Fd Regt	Satkhira (QT 9701) - One Bty
(105 mm)	Jhingergacha area (QT 9949) - two Coys

49 Fd Regt	Meherpur-Chaudanga-Kushtia area
211 Indep Mor Bty	Chaugacha area (QT 9069)
<u>57 Inf Bde (Brig Manzoor Ahmed).</u>	
HQ	Jhenida (QP 0803)
Sqn 29 CAV	Kushtia-Bheramara area
18 Punjab	Meherpur (QO 4832) - Chuadanga (QO 7215) - Darsana (QO 6601) - Natudaha area (QO 5316)
50 Punjab	Jhenida (QP 9069) - Kotchandpur (QT 8987)
29 Baluch	Bheramara (QO 8759) - Salimpur (QO 7262) - Khaliskundi (QO 7544) - Kushtia (QP 0347)
<u>107 Inf Bde (Brig Malik Hayat Khan).</u>	
HQ	Jessore
22 FF	Jhingergacha (QT 9949) - Benapole (QT 7844)
38 FF	Afra (QT 9966) - Sajiali (QO 0266) - Asannagar (QU 0364)
6 Punjab	Jessore area (QU 1256)
21 Punjab (Recce and Sp Bn)	Satkhira - Kalaroa (QT 9320) - Jessore area.
15 FF	Jessore.
12 Punjab Less Coy	Jessore.

Opposite the above-mentioned Pak deployment, was India's 2 Corps consisting of 4 Mtn Div and 9 Inf Div. The final grouping of 2 Corps was as follows(42):-

GOC 2 Corps : (Commander : Lt Gen T.N. Raina)
4 Mtn Div (Commander : Maj Gen M.S. Barar)

HQ 7 Mtn Bde (Commander: Brig Zail Singh)

22 Rajput
5 Jat
Naga Regt

HQ 41 Mtn Bde (Commander: Brig AHE Michigan)

5 Guards
9 Dogra
5/1 GR

HQ 62 Mtn Bde (Commander: Brig Rajender Nath)

5 Maratha LI
4 Sikh LI
2/9 GR

Armour

A Sqn 45 CAV

Artillery

HQ 4 Mtn Arty Bde (Commander: Brig Baljeet Singh)

22 Mtn Regt (76 mm)
194 Mtn Regt (76 mm)
7 FD Regt (25 Pr)
181 Lt Regt (P) (120 Tempella)
Bty 78 Med Regt (130 mm)

Engineers

63 Engr Regt

9 Inf Div (Commander: Maj Gen Dalbir Singh)
HQ 32 Inf Bde (Commander: Brig K.K. Tewari)

7 Punjab
8 Madras
13 Dogra

HQ 42 Inf Bde (Commander: Brig J.S. Gharaya)
(Brig K.L. Kochar from 8 Dec)

14 Punjab
19 Maratha LI
2 Sikh LI

HQ 350 Inf Bde (Commander: Brig H.S. Sandhu)

26 Madras
4 Sikh
1 JAK Rif

On 6 Dec 1971, 50 Indep Para Bde less a Bn Group (Commander: Brig M. Thomas) was placed in ground role by giving it an additional battalion under 9 Inf Div. But, on 10 Dec 1971, it was moved out of 9 Inf Div(43):

2 Para
7 Para

Armour(44)

45 CAV less A Sqn
Sqn 63 CAV

Artillery

HQ 9 Arty Bde:

6 Fd Regt (25 Pr)
14 Fd Regt (25 Pr)
67 Fd Regt (T) (120 Brandt)
78 Med Regt (130 mm) less one bty
88 Lt Regt
201 Div LOC Bty
264 SBRL Increment (GRAD - P)

Engineers

102 Engr Regt

The 9 Inf Div was given the task to capture Jessore (QU 1256) and be prepared to assist 4 Mtn Div in the capture of Magura (QU 3596). It was also to send a brigade to capture Khulna (QU 5015). 4 Mtn Div was to capture Jhenida (QP 0703) and Magura, securing the line of Madhumati river. After the capture of Jhenida a force was to be sent to secure Kushtia (QP 0347) and the Hardinge Bridge (QO 9166). After the capture of Magura the Division was to secure Faridpur (QP 8109) - Goalundo Ghat (QP 7325)(45).

On 3 Dec, Indian forces in the South-western Sector were well poised for the attack. With Chaugacha (QT 9169) firmly in Indian hands, 9 Inf Div had reached almost half way to Jessore (upto Arpara, (QU 0071) on Axis Chaugacha-Jessore, and was in contact with Pak defensive positions west of Jessore. A bridge had been constructed across the Bhairab river at Bayra (T 8563), and road Chaugacha-Jessore had been linked with Bayra. 4 Mtn Div had captured Jibannagar (QT 6888) and Uthali (QT 7097), and advanced eastwards upto Khalispur (QT 8384), on Axis Jibannagar-Kotchandpur (QT 8887), and upto Silinda, on Axis Darsana-Kotchandpur. As a result of the above situation, Pak defensive posture was thrown off

balance, leaving certain axes lightly guarded. Hence, the Indian Army after crossing certain initial obstacles got off to a good start.

Operations of Bengal Area.

As per the Eastern Command plan, HQ Bengal Area under Maj Gen P. Chowdhry, which was directly under the control of the Eastern Command, had the responsibility of defending the Sunderbans and preventing Pak penetration across the Satkhira (GR 9701)-Itinda axis. On 20 November 1971, the MF had driven away the Pak troops from Basantpur BOP (QY 8772), and the Indian troops from Hingalganj crossed the Ichhamati river at QY 8373 and occupied Basantpur and Kaliganj (QY 9171). On 30 Nov, a column of 1/3 GR and forty MF advancing from the south cleared the Pakistanis from village Nabatkati (GR 8597). MF suffered some five casualties in this action. Later, the Indian troops captured Dumduma (GR 8521). On 2 Dec, a BSF Platoon occupied area Kaliganj (QY 9171), and the MF were ordered to press forward towards Satkhira (QT 9701) from the south. By 7 Dec, the Pak troops had withdrawn from Jhapaghat (GR 8722), Baksha (GR 8716), Kalaroa (GR 9320), Jhikra (GR 9219), Mahmoodpur (GR 8798), and Satkhira after destroying some bridges. Tac HQ 11 Bihar moved to Jhaudanga (GR 9214). From 11 Dec the responsibility of Satkhira Sub-Division was handed over to 4 Mtn Div(46).

9 Inf Div Operations

There were several routes for approaching Jessore. From the Indian lodgement in Garibpur (QT 9465) the Jessore Cantonment was only 11 km away, as the crow flies. The Pakistani defences, west of Jessore, had by this time been strengthened by linking up various marshes, and by pulling in troops from Chaugacha area, and flying in a battalion from Rajshahi(47). Commanded by Maj Gen Dalbir Singh, the Division's options were, therefore, reduced to a series of hammering attacks in achieving a break-through at a suitable point. The topographical intelligence available with the Division was very inaccurate, and it was not possible to get correct information about the depth and width of the rivers in that area. The terrain was criss-crossed by rivers, and heavily mined. It was a close country and the soil was still very wet.

Pakistan had deployed nearly four Battalions west of Jessore, taking advantage of the marshes to restrict Indian movements. Consequently, pressure was maintained all along the fronts in order to prevent the Pakistanis from guessing the intention of the

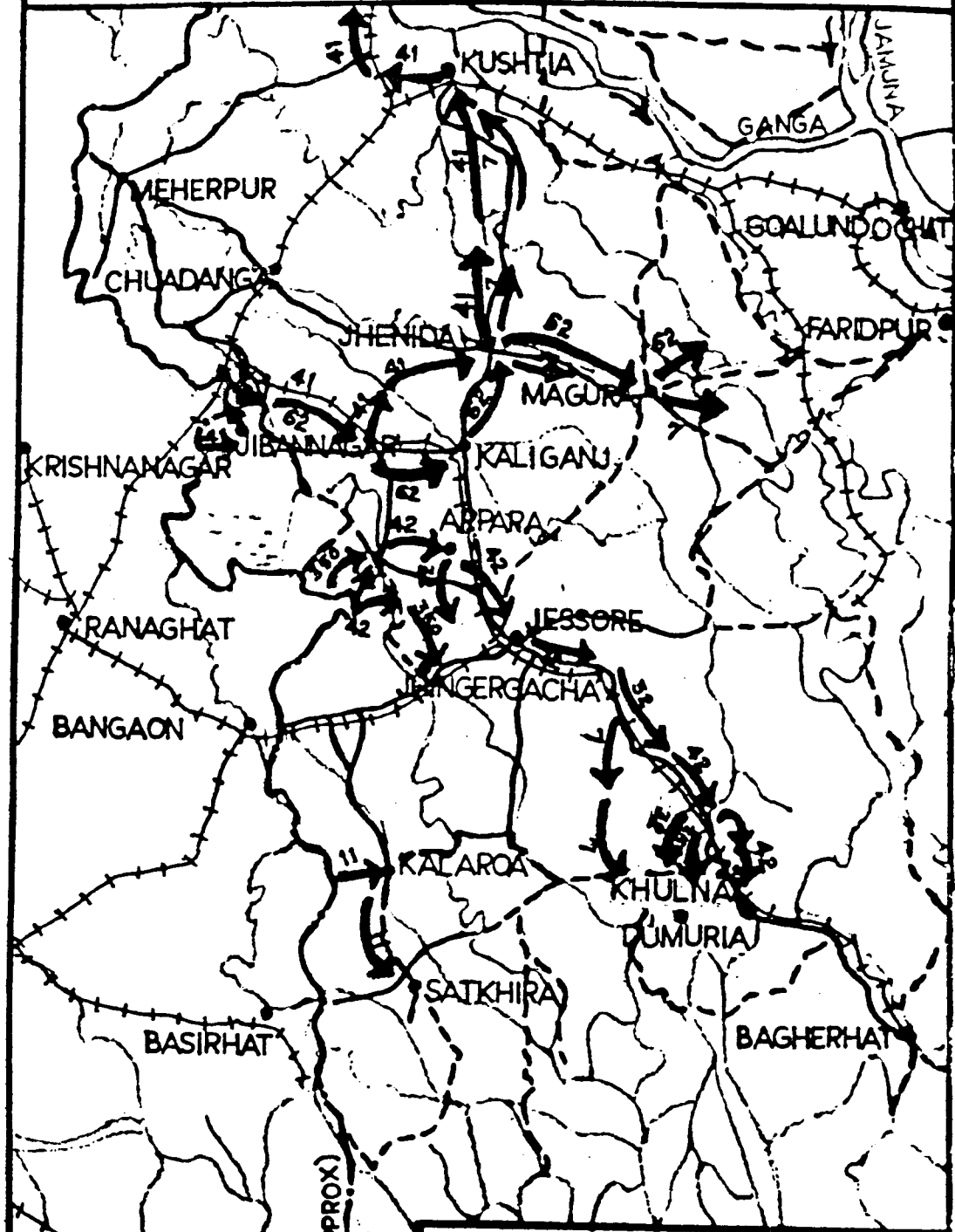
Indian troops. On the northern axis, 19 Maratha LI supported by a Squadron of PT-76 tanks proceeded from Kayarpur (QT 9368) to Jahinaikundu (QU 9570) and cut off the Pak position at Sadipur (QT 9470)-Jamira (QT 9469). As a result, the Pakistanis withdrew in disorder, after suffering heavy casualties. On 4 Dec 1971, it was decided to punch a hole on the northern approach at Durgabarkati (QU 0068). The next day, Charbari (QT 9869) was secured by 14 Punjab by infiltrating into the position and surprising the Pak troops(48).

On the Central axis, when 1 J and K Rif attacked Burinda, one Coy 12 Punjab (Pak) compelled them to fall back, and the Pakistanis occupied Matsyaranga (QT 9660) and Burinda (QT 9659). However, these were continuously counter-attacked by 4 Sikh who cleared them by 5 Dec. Pakistanis fought very courageously here and 4 Sikh suffered casualties of 2 JCOs and 12 ORs killed, and 2 JCOs, 44 ORs and 2 NCSEs wounded. Besides, 1 OR each of 45 Cav and 96 Fd Coy were killed, and 1 Officer, 1 JCO and 3 ORs of 45 Cav and 1 OR of 96 Fd Coy were wounded(49). Close air support missions by Hunters and Gnats operating from Dum Dum failed to break the Pak will to fight in this area. Also six sorties of Canberra were flown to bomb the Pak positions west of Jessore, but it "was not very effective". Hence the village Barakuli (QT 9739) - Chotakuli (QT 9859) was attacked by eight IAF Hunters with napalm bombs, forcing the Pakistanis to vacate it(50). On the other hand, 1 J and K Rif kept up constant pressure on Mohammadpur (QT 9354) position.

As both 32 and 42 Inf Bdes, commanded by Tewari and Gharaya (Kochar took over on 8th) respectively, were heavily committed, with 350 Inf Bde, commanded by H.S. Sandhu, being the Div Reserve, no troops were available for passing through the gap to secure Jessore. Hence, 1/3 GR ex Bengal Area was ordered to take over the responsibility for the defence of the southern sector, and 32 Inf Bde less one battalion were concentrated at Chaugacha (QT 9069). As by mid day on 5 Dec India had achieved complete air supremacy, it was decided to launch attack on Durgabarkati, with air support, at 0800 hrs on 6 Dec, and 32 Inf Bde less one Bn were kept poised to go through and capture Jessore. Unfortunately, due to heavy fog, the Indian aircraft could not take off, and the attack was postponed twice. However, in order to ensure surprise, it was decided to go in at 0930 hrs without air support(51). The whole Battalion of 2 Sikh LI was deployed with all the Companies placed one behind the other. The Pakistani troops were holding the location with two Coys, deployed similarly. The deployability being extremely limited, only one Coy

2 CORPS SECTOR

SCALE :- 0 10 20 30 KM



INTL. BOUNDARY (APPROX)	— · — · — ·
ROADS	— — — —
TRACKS	— · — · — ·
RAILWAYS	— — — —
RIVERS	— — — —
THRUST :- INDIAN :-	→
BDE. NOS. :-	7, 32, 41 ETC.

could be deployed at a time. Hence, there was no way but to launch a frontal attack. When the leading Coy captured part of the objective by 1000 hrs, the second Coy was launched, and the latter also captured the other half of the objective, thus enabling the third Coy to break through. Indian casualties in this battle were 6 ORs killed, 4 JCOs and 20 ORs wounded, as against six Pak dead bodies including that of a Captain of 6 Punjab counted on the ground(52). Mine clearance was started even before the objective was fully captured and, therefore, three safe lanes were cleared by 1230 hrs(53). Now, 32 Inf Bde was passed through the gap, with 7 Punjab and one Squadron T-55 leading. Although due to the marshy nature of the terrain, the progress was slow, Indian troops with considerable dash and determination secured road Chaugacha-Jessore between Jaghati (QU 0166) and Sajiali (QU 0363), and 13 Dogra joined the Brigade by 1830 hrs. At that stage, the leading troops were getting out of the range of the field guns, and hence it was important that guns be redeployed further forward. Consequently, 13 Dogra with a troop of T-55 tanks were ordered to clear Afra, which they did by midnight. Meanwhile, the Pakistanis had blown up the bridge at GR-998660 and heavily mined the area. The mines were cleared by the morning of 7 Dec and a bridge was constructed, thus enabling the guns to be sent across. The performance of the Engineers during the night was commendable indeed.

While the Indian troops were advancing along the main road, 7 Punjab patrolled southwards and secured Asannagar (QU 0364), and its leading elements reached Jessore airfield by 0800 hrs. On 7 Dec, 32 Inf Bde secured the Jessore cantonment by 1230 hrs on the same date. Immediately afterwards, 14 Punjab advanced to Abdulpur (QU 0465) and then to Jessore along road Churamankati (QU 0663) - Jessore. The Battalion advanced with considerable speed and occupied Jessore town in the afternoon of 7 Dec(54). As the cantonment and the airfield had been vacated by the Pak troops, the Indian forces entered there without firing a shot. Houses in Jessore cantonment and the local police armoury were found looted by civilians. The arrival of Indian troops saved much of the Jessore town from being looted and non-Bengalees from being massacred.

The following re-deployments were carried out and revised responsibilities given(55):-

- (a) HQ 9 Inf Div - Jessore Cantt. All administrative echelons were ordered to concentrate in Jessore.
- (b) 32 Inf Bde - Jessore Cantt including

airfield, and to guard against any threat along road Jessore-Khulna.

- (c) 42 Inf Bde - from Churamankati to Jessore city (inclusive), and to guard Jessore against any threat from the north and north-east.
- (d) 350 Inf Bde - to concentrate along the main road Bangaon-Jessore, south-west of the water channel at Mandalganti (QU 0855), and to guard Jessore from any threat from the south-west.

On the southern axis, the Pakistanis were reported to be withdrawing from Nabagram (QU 9054). Hence, 350 Inf Bde was ordered to pursue them. As the bulk of the Pak garrison at Jessore had reportedly withdrawn towards Magura with a view to escaping via Goalundo Ghat, and only rear parties had withdrawn towards Khulna, 32 Inf Bde Group with one Squadron of PT-76 tanks were ordered to pursue the Pakistanis. Meanwhile, on 7 December, 8 Madras with one sqn of tanks secured Nabharan (QT 8944), situated on the Bangaon-Jessore road on the eastern bank of the river Betna, in the morning. Then advancing from Krishnabati (QU 0954), situated on the Nabharan-Jessore road, on 8 December, they established a road block in area QU 1653(56). After this, 7 Punjab, advancing along the Jessore-Khulna axis, contacted the Pak delaying position in area Murali (QU 1454) - Ramnagar (QU 1554), situated on the south-east of Jessore, by 1630 hrs on 8 December. In the battle that followed, armour, artillery and engineers provided excellent support and contributed greatly to the Indian success. 7 Punjab cleared the Pakistanis from this place and compelled them to flee. The Indian troops captured or destroyed approximately sixty Pak vehicles, and also captured four heavy Mortars, some RCL guns and a large quantity of ammunition(57).

Meanwhile, on 8 December, 50 Indep Para Bde Group less bn commenced advance on axis Jessore-Magura(58) to pursue the withdrawing Pak troops. At 1130 hrs, the leading elements ex 7 Para inadvertently bumped into strong Pak opposition in area Khajura (QU 1569). About fifty Pak troops from their bunkers brought down intense small arms (including automatic weapons) fire on the Indians. When 7 Para charged the Pak position, 3 officers, including Lt Col R.P. Singh, C.o., 7 Para Bn, and 3 ORs were killed, and one officer and three ORs were wounded. The Pak position could be reduced subsequently with the help of a troop of tanks.

Thirty-nine Pak troops were killed, and severn others later succumbed to their injuries.

The battalion harboured for the night at Sadipur, 5 km ahead of Khajura, on Khajura-Magura axis. In the morning of 9 December when they resumed their advance towards Magura, they were ordered to return to Jessore(59). The 50 Indep Para Bde as a whole was moved to the Western Theatre subsequently.

Advance to Khulna

On 9 December, 32 Inf Bde less 8 Madras moved on axis Ramnagar (QU 1652) - Manirampur (QU 1440)-Nawapara (QU 3132) alongwith 'C' Squadron 45 Cav, while 8 Madras with 'B' Squadron 63 Cav moved along the axis Jessore-Khulna(60). Due to extensive marshes and absence of any roads and tracks, the progress was very slow. However, 13 Dogra established a road-block on QU-530379 at 1030 hrs on 10 December, and 8 Madras cleared Pak position at Chengutia (QU 2946). The two battalions linked up with each other in area Jafarpur (QU 3537) by mid-day on 10 Dec. Continuing their advance, 8 Madras cleared Phultala (QU 3736) by last light on 11 December after an engagement with the Pak forces, suffering casualties of 2 ORs killed, and one Officer and 31 ORs wounded, as against forty Pak casualties(61). As 13 Dogra now led the advance by-passing Phultala, the Pak troops fell back to Atra (QU 4229). When the Dogras were about to attack Atra, the Pakistanis pulled out without putting up much resistance. Simultaneously, a mobile column comprising one Coy 7 Punjab (APC) and one Squadron of tanks, later reinforced by 7 Punjab less two Coys, was sent to Aranghata area for an attack on Daulatpur (QU 4621) from the west. But as the Pakistanis had demolished a large number of bridges and culverts in the area, and with the marsh all around, 7 Punjab were confined to the road and shelled by the Pakistanis. While trying to cross the marshes, 7 Punjab suffered casualties of 1 Officer and 5 ORs killed, and one Officer and 21 ORs wounded(62). The 13 Dogra, advancing further along the main axis, were also pinned down by heavy and accurate Pak artillery fire in area north-east of Chatala. Similarly, 8 Madras after clearing Gilatala came under heavy Pak fire from Siramani (QU 4427), held by three Pak battalions (about 2,500 Pak regular troops). As 8 Madras failed to evict the Pak troops during night 12/13 December, the Div Tac HQ moved to area north of Damodar (QU 419322), and 42 and 350 Bdes were moved to Gilatala. Two brigades and one Squadron of tanks were employed to capture Siramani. On 12 December, while 19 Maratha LI ex 42 Inf Bde advanced to secure the well-defended Syamganj ferry, 26 Madras attacked

the Pak position on the main road. But as the ferry could not be secured even by 13 Dec, 42 Inf Bde crossed river Bhairab during night 13/14 Dec and set-up ferries by first light. At 0700 hrs on 15 December, 1 J and K Rif ex 350 Inf Bde supported by tanks launched an attack on Syamganj (QU 4526) and secured the position at 1600 hrs after a fierce close-quarter battle in which the Pak troops suffered 53 dead and many wounded, as against Indian casualties of 2 JCOs and 15 ORs killed, and 3 Officers, 1 JCO and 68 ORs wounded(63). By 0600 hrs on 16 December, 4 Sikh established a road block south of Siramani East (QU 4527), while 13 Dogra attacked Siramani West (QU 4226), and captured it. As the attack of 13 Dogra was in progress and 14 Punjab were about to cross river Bhairab, cease-fire order was received. Apart from stray incidents, all firing stopped at 1500 hrs(64). Next day, at 1400 hrs, Brig Hayat Khan, Commander, 107 Inf Bde, along with seven Pak Lt Cols surrendered to Maj Gen Dalbir Singh, GOC, 9 Inf Div, at the Khulna Circuit House, and an instrument of surrender was signed in a brief ceremony. The following Pak troops surrendered at Khulna(65):-

Officers	-	81
JCOs	-	130
ORs	-	3,476
Others	-	207

4 Mtn Div Operations

The 4 Mtn Div (Red Eagle), Commanded by Maj Gen MS Barar was given operational responsibility in the Jhenida (QP 0703)-Kushtia (QP 0347) Sector, which was bounded in the north by the Ganga, and in the south by the Jibannagar (QT 6888)-Kaliganj (QU 0486)-Jhenida-Faridpur (QP 8209) road. The important north-south Pak highway in this sector passed from the Hardinge Bridge (QO 9166) in the north to Jessore (QU 1357) in the south-east, via Kushtia and Jhenida, running almost parallel to the international border, approximately 40 to 50 km east of it. The border area on the Indian side was well-linked with a network of roads, especially the one from Krishnanagar (QT 3286) to Karimpur, within a few km of the border, and to its west the main Krishnanagar-Berhampur (QO 0573) road, passing through historical Plassey (QO 0933). While Hardinge Bridge provided the railway link between the North-western and South-western Sectors, the ferries at Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat (QP 7425), located in this area, provided suitable approaches to Dhaka. There were two main river obstacles in this sector -

the Ganga in the north, and her branch, the Garai-Madhumati, in the east. The latter, with a span of approximately 1,200 feet, and a depth of 40 feet in December, was not bridged anywhere along its course. Although the border area from Meherpur (QO 4831) to Chaugacha (QT 9169), along the general line Chuadanga (QO 7315)-Kotchandpur (QT 8887)- Chaugacha, was dotted with 'bils' (marshes) to the extent of about 20 km, nevertheless this sector was better suited for tank operations as compared with the 9 Inf Div area, south of Jessore. Jhenida town was the most important communication centre in this sector, as it lay on the junction of Kushtia-Jessore and Meherpur-Faridpur/Goalundo Ghat highways. Hence, it was built up as a theatre fortress from which there would be no withdrawal by the Pakistani forces. Kushtia was another important nodal point, linking up Hardinge Bridge in the north-west, and Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat ferries in the east, with railways. Besides, there were two main lateral roads in this sector running east-west to the main ferries on the Ganga.

The 4 Mtn Div less one mountain brigade had been given the revised task of capturing the nodal points at Jhenida and Magura with a view to securing the ferry sites on the Madhumati river and subsequently those on the Padma at Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat. It was to capture Jibannagar by D plus 2, Kotchandpur by D plus 4, Kalinganj by D plus 6, Jhenida by D plus 8, and Magura and ferry sites on the Madhumati river by D plus 11. Subsequently, the Division was to be prepared either -

- (a) to secure Faridpur, and the main ferry site at Goalundo Ghat, or
- (b) to carry out mopping up operations in area Kushtia and Hardinge Bridge, and if required, be prepared to move to Bogra Sector under 33 Corps for mopping up operations(66).

One mountain brigade with one mountain battery was to act as Corps Reserve. Initially, one battalion each from this brigade was to be employed to guard the Shikarpur (QO 5957)-Bheramara (QO 8661) and Meherpur - Kushtia axes, and one battalion was placed under command 9 Inf Div for securing the northern flank of its thrust. The latter battalion was to be reverted to its parent brigade on the capture of Jhingergacha (QT 9653).

Prior to 3 December, 4 Mtn Div had already secured certain Pak border out-posts, east of Karimpur, which resulted in swift reaction from the

Pakistanis who reinforced their positions covering the approaches to the Hardinge Bridge. In the south, the capture of Jibannagar and a portion of the railway line, east of Darsana, isolated this strong Pak border out-post which had maintained its defensive link with Chuadanga. There were two axes of advance before Maj Gen Barar to reach the ferry sites of Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat. These were (i) Meherpur-Chuadanga-Jhenida-Faridpur, and (ii) Jibannagar-Kotchandpur-Kaliganj-Jhenida-Faridpur. But as the latter was the shorter of the two, the Divisional Commander decided to develop his main thrust along this axis. However, he could not do this as long as Darsana BOP remained a thorn in his side. Hence, he decided to capture it, and asked 41 Mtn Bde commanded by Brig Tony Michigan, supported by armour, to perform this task by last light on 4 Dec.

While the inter-brigade boundary between 57 and 107 Pak Bde was along Darsana, which itself was included in the area of responsibility of 57 Bde, commanded by Brig Manzur Ahmed, troops of 107 Bde, in the Jibannagar area, were also placed under Manzur's command.

Capture of Darsana (QT 6601)

According to 41 Mtn Bde plan, 22 Rajput broke through the Pak defences in area Rangiarpota (QT 6896) during night 2/3 Dec, and established a firm base at Akandabaria (QT 6899) for an attack on Darsana(67). Meanwhile, one Coy 5 Guards crossed river Mathabhanga in assault boats and established road block behind Darsana(68). On 4 Dec, attack on Darsana was launched in two phases. In the first phase, one coy 22 Rajput secured five Pak bunkers, while the second Coy was launched to secure the linking row of bunkers between Chandpur (QO 6701) and Darsana. However, the battalion hit a minefield and had to firm in. From this point, 5/1 GR advanced north-east and attacked along the general line Darsana-Chandpur. Now, Engineers cleared a vehicle lane through the minefield and the Indian tanks moved forward. In Phase two, 5/1 GR, supported by tank fire, cleared the Pak defences around Darsana, and subsequently 2/9 GR took over and carried out mopping operations. Darsana was captured at 1300 hrs on 4 Dec. In this operation, 22 Rajput suffered casualties of 4 ORs killed and 23 ORs wounded(69), whereas 5/1 GR casualties were 6, including 1 Officer killed, and 19 wounded(70). The Pak casualties were reportedly 29 killed(71).

After leaving 22 Rajput in the Darsana area, 41 Mtn Bde concentrated in Uthali (QT 7097) area for undertaking operations towards Jhenida via

Kotchandpur. When Brig Manzur learnt about the loss of Darsana, he ordered his troops in the area to fall back on Chuadanga, the home town of East Pak Governor, Dr. A.M. Malik, and defend it, because its fall would open the route to Jhenida or Kushtia for the advancing Indian forces. Hence, Manzur moved his tactical headquarters from Jhenida to Chuadanga to personally control the operations around Darsana and defend the approaches to Chuadanga.

Battle of Suadih (QT 8295)

While 41 Mtn Bde's action against Darsana was in progress, 62 Mtn Bde under Brig Rajinder Nath was ordered at about 2000 hrs on 3 December to secure Kotchandpur by evening on 4 December. Accordingly, one Coy ex 5 Maratha LI advanced east from Andulbaria (QT 7895) along Railway line, but met with strong opposition from well-prepared positions in the area of Railway bridge (QT 8194) over the river Bhairab at 1700 hrs(72). Hence, Maj Gen Barar switched 62 Mtn Bde to the north for capturing Kotchandpur from the north-west. Meanwhile, 5 Maratha LI patrols revealed the existence of Pak forces between the road and the railway line and also in well-prepared positions in Suadih village (QT 8295) and north of it. The Pak defences in Suadih were sited on high ground dominating completely the area in front, and covered by a marsh all along their front, from Bagmara Bil (QT 8297) in the north to Chandi Bil (QT 0392) in the south, 4 to 6 feet deep and 60 to 100 yards wide(73). The Pakistanis were holding this position with approximately three Companies supported by two 105 mm guns, two 3.7" howitzers and six 82 mm mortars, and anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. The 5 Maratha LI with a troop of tanks turned the Pak defenders' northern flank by going round Bagmara Bil and attacked the Pak defences in area 831966. After fierce fighting the position was captured by 1000 hrs on 4 December. The Marathas then attacked Suadih village from the north-east and the Pak troops fought doggedly up till 1600 hrs. Similarly, 9 Dogra, which had launched a frontal attack on the railway bridge area, met very stiff resistance and suffered heavy casualties. The Dogras firmed in, and the Marthas were ordered to continue their attack from the north up to the Railway Bridge. The Marathas first captured Suadih by 1800 hrs, despite two of their tanks being damaged by anti-tank mines, and then occupied the Railway Bridge at 2300 hrs after fighting from bunker to bunker(74). In this action 24 Pak dead bodies were counted and 2 ORs captured, as against Indian casualties of one Officer and 9 ORs killed, and 3 JCOs and 50 ORs injured(75). The Marathas also sent a Company to set up a road block south of Safdarpur

(QT 8393) to cut off the Pak route of withdrawal.

Now in Phase II, 9 Dogra attacked the Pak defences in Madarbere area and captured -Kanyanagar (QT 8292) at 0315 hrs on 5 December. At 0700 hrs, they advanced towards Kotchandpur, giving no respite to the Pak forces. Brushing off Pak resistance on the way, they contacted Kotchandpur at 1030 hrs and captured it by 1400 hrs without a fight. The Pakistanis had pulled out from Kotchandpur before the arrival of Indian troops, as after the battle of Suadih they did not have enough time to occupy the Kotchandpur defences. On Jibannagar-Kotchandpur axis, 4 Sikh LI cleared Khalispur (QT 8384) at 1630 hrs and linked up with 2/9 GR which had been sent from Kotchandpur after its fall. In the whole battle of Darsana-Suadih, the Indian troops suffered the following casualties:-

3 Officers and 16 ORs killed, 3 Officers, 6 JCOs and 65 ORs wounded(76). Maj P.K. Chatterjee and N.K. Karandle (posthumous) of 5 Maratha LI were awarded Vir Chakra for gallantry.

It was originally planned that after the capture of Kotchandpur one brigade will advance from Kotchandpur to Kaliganj (QU 0487) and another brigade from Kotchandpur to Jhenida via Talsar (QT 9197). It was also anticipated that if an Indian thrust after the fall of Darsana was not armed at Chuadanga, the Pakistanis would pull out their troops from Meherpur-Chuadanga complex to reinforce Jhenida. Hence, it was decided to establish a strong road block on the likely approach to Jhenida from the west, thus preventing the withdrawal of Pak troops from Chuadanga to Jhenida. Accordingly, 41 Mtn Bde was given the tasks:- (i) to establish road blocks in area Paschim Durgapur (QT 9098) and Uttar Narayanpur (QO 9205) with 5 Guards and a Squadron of 45 Cavalry less one troop; and (ii) to advance along axis Kotchandpur-Talsar-Jhenida, a difficult and unexpected route, with brigade less a battalion, and capture Jhenida at the earliest. 62 Mtn Bde was ordered to capture Kaliganj by 7 December.

Battle of Kaliganj (QU 0487)

5 Maratha LI advanced towards Kaliganj in hot pursuit of the Pak forces at last light, 5 December. However, the leading Coy came under Pak MMG and LMG fire from the east of a blown culvert (QT 926858). Patrolling revealed that approximately one Coy of Pak troops was holding the position on the both sides of the road covering the blown culvert, which had bridged a 6' deep marsh. Due to the marsh all around, the

position could not be by-passed. Consequently, an out-flanking move was undertaken. While 5 Maratha LI and 4 Sikh LI were employed to maintain contact with the Pak force along the road, 2/9 GR advanced north of the railway line running parallel to the road and established a road block astride the road behind the enemy in area 0085. The 5 Maratha LI attacked from the north-east by making an out-flanking move. This led to a hasty Pak withdrawal and the subsequent occupation of the Pak position by 1100 hrs on 6 December. After withdrawal, the Pak troops took up a prepared position on high ground behind a marsh in Sahapur (QT 9685) area. The Pakistanis, two companies strong, who had six 82 mm mortars, a troop of 105 mm guns, 6-8 HMGs and 12-14 LMGs, subjected the Indian troops to heavy shelling throughout the day. Now, 5 Maratha LI held the firm base and 2/9 GR established a road block in general area QU 0085 by 1500 hrs. After this, 4 Sikh LI attacked the position from the north and captured the position at 2000 hrs after fierce fighting. Twenty-three Pak dead bodies were collected and seven soldiers were taken POW. Then 2/9 GR, resuming advance at first light on 7 December, captured Kaliganj town at 1100 hrs, after brushing off minor resistance on the way and clearing a few Pak pockets in the town. The Pak troops had destroyed the main bridge over the river Chitra (QU 0486) and a similar bridge on the same river in the middle of the town before withdrawing hurriedly the previous night(77).

Battle of Jhenida

According to Plan, 5 Guards, and 'A' Squadron 45 Cavalry less one troop, advancing cross-country from Andulbaria on 5 Dec, crossed river Chitra in area Shibnagar (QT 8798) and established road blocks in Paschim Durgapur and Uttar Narayanpur areas by last light. The road blocks proved to be very effective and timely in preventing the Pak withdrawal from Chuadanga to Jhenida and also inflicting heavy casualties on the Pakistanis in men and equipment. Several Pak attempts, including one in battalion strength, to break through the road blocks were foiled with heavy losses to the Pak troops. Consequently, the Pakistanis west of the road blocks had to withdraw northwards to Kushtia area. The Pak Commander of 57 Inf Bde eventually withdrew over the Hardinge Bridge on North Bengal. These road-blocks proved to be the major turning point in the 4 Mtn Div operations, because, it was here that Pak 57 Inf Bde was split into two, and its Commander got separated from his Headquarters, with his forces becoming completely disorganised and unfit to offer any worthwhile resistance to the Indian troops at Jhenida. Meanwhile

5/1 GR passed through 9 Dogra at Kotchandpur by last light on 5 December, secured 4 bridges intact between Kotchandpur and Talsar and established a bridge-head across the Chitra next morning. Engineers had to put in hard work to improve the track between Kotchandpur and Talsar, and a class 9 Folding Boat Equipment (FBE) bridge was constructed over the Chitra at Talsar by 1800 hrs on 6 December. This helped in building up the artillery units to facilitate the advance.

Now 9 Dogra advanced on foot from Kotchandpur at first light on 6 December. Clearing minor resistance at Jalalpur foot bridge (QT 939937), they contacted the Jhenida defences next morning after marching for 28 hrs day and night and achieving complete surprise. Meanwhile, one troop of tanks withdrew from the road block and joined the leading elements of 9 Dogra who were subjected to heavy small arms, mortar, RCL and artillery fire from the Jhenida defences, held by approximately a Pak Company plus. At 1200 hrs, another troop of Indian tanks withdrew from the road block to join the battle. The final attack was launched from the west and south-west, leading to the capture of Jhenida at 1430 hrs on 7 December. Soon afterwards, two major bridges on the road to Kushtia were captured intact and the Indian troops firmed in across those bridges. The Pak losses in Jhenida were; 24 killed, one wounded and taken POW; 30 vehicles and 500 three-tonner loads of artillery, mortar, RCL and small arms ammunition captured along with Pak Bde HQ documents and maps(78). As the 'B' echelons of 41 Mtn Bde were unable to reach Jhenida due to the bad condition of the road, and the units were without food for over 24 hours, an air drop of essential goods was arranged at 1500 hrs on 7 Dec. Now HQ 2 Corps decided to release its reserve, i.e. 7 Mtn Bde, less the Naga Regt, for offensive tasks under 4 Mtn Div. Thereafter, 7 Mtn Bde less Naga Regt alongwith 22 Mtn Regt less one Bty joined the formation at Jhenida by 2300 hrs on 8 December.

Now it was the turn of 62 Mtn Bde to advance and capture Magura. A Squadron of 45 Cav less two troops and one Coy APCs ex 7 Punjab were allotted to them to quicken the advance. As the bridge on road Kaliganj-Jhenida was found destroyed, a diversionary route via Naldanga (QU 0790) was reconnoitred and the advance began at 0530 hrs on 8 December. Advancing at a great speed, the Indian troops contacted Magura at 1400 hrs, but found that the birds had flown away. After clearing a few stray Pak parties, they captured Magura by 1600 hrs, and 62 Mtn Bde concentrated there by the midnight of 8/9 December. The main bridge on road Magura-Faridpur over Muchakhali river was also captured intact.

Advance to Kushtia

The 7 Mtn Bde was given the task of advancing on axis Jhenida-Kushtia at first light on 9 December and capturing Kushtia at the earliest. Thereafter it was to capture Hardinge Bridge and Bheramara. To accelerate the move, it was decided to advance in motorised transport. Kushtia was only about 45 km from Jhenida. No intelligence was available about the Pak dispositions on the axis of advance. It was not known that 57 Bde under Manzur Ahmed was intact in Kushtia area. The 22 Rajput acting as the leading element with under command two troops of PT-76 tanks commenced advance in the morning of 9 Dec. While they cleared Pak opposition at road-nullah junction (QP 0133), 5 Jat were ordered to deal with Pak elements in Salikura area (QP 1520). The Jats encircled the area and captured 14 regular Pak troops and 87 Razakars. The advance was resumed, and 22 Rajput entered Kushtia at 1400 hrs. When they advanced up to the middle of the town, at 1445 hrs the Pak defenders opened fire from close range with tanks, RCLs, MMGs, artillery, and other automatic weapons. This was the last-minute Pak effort before withdrawing to Hardinge Bridge. The Indian troops were caught in the open without any defensive positions. However, they replied with infantry, artillery and tank fire. Immediate air support was also called for, which, however, could not be provided till 1645 hrs. Meanwhile, the Pakistanis left Kushtia in large numbers with tanks and RCLs and moved on the western flank(79). They knocked out 3 Indian tanks and disabled one on the road, and also captured another. One Pak tank was knocked out. The vanguard Coy of 22 Rajput suffered heavy casualties in the open. The Rajputs in contact pulled back under the cover of artillery fire. Brig Zail Singh, Commander 7 Mtn Bde, was surprised and shocked. He did not know that his opponent, Brig Manzur, being harassed by IAF bombing and strafing in Chuadanga during 5-6 December, and unable to fall back on Jhenida due to the road block at Sadhuhati (QO 8905), had moved to Kushtia on the night of 7/8 December, with the intention of joining the Pak 9 Div HQ in Faridpur by Kushtia-Faridpur railway. But as the rail bridges on this line had been destroyed by the IAF, he was compelled to wait in Kushtia for further developments in the operations.

Brig Zail Singh now tried to stabilise the situation by sending 5 Jat to occupy a firm base in area (QP 0039) based on a canal and halting any further advance by the Pak troops towards south. By 2000 hrs, the situation improved when 5 Guards reached there. Considering the Pak strength, estimated at

about two battalions plus a squadron of tanks, it was decided to thin the Indian strength on the bank of the Madhumati with a view to strengthening the Indian forces in Kushtia. Accordingly, during night 9/10 December, HQ 41 Mtn Bde with 5/1 GR, 'A' Sqdn 45 Cav less two troops, and one artillery brigade less one mountain battery were switched to Kushtia from the Magura axis. During the day on 10 December, IAF and artillery continuously pounded the Pak defences. Meanwhile, 9 Dogra came from Jhenida to join 41 Mtn Bde for the battle, and also 62 Mtn Bde, less 5 Maratha LI, plus two troops of tanks ex 9 Inf Div concentrated at Kushtia for the final round.

In spite of intermittent Pak shelling for the whole night of 10/11 December, 5 Jat and 5 Guards moved forward and occupied a firm base in area Road Junction 9943. Seeing this, the Pakistanis withdrew from this area after blowing up the canal bridge. 41 Mtn Bde moved from the west at noon on 11 December for the capture of Kushtia. By 1400 hrs, it came to be known that the major Pak force had withdrawn from the town towards Bheramara. The Div Commander ordered 7 Mtn Bde to capture Kushtia from the south, while 41 Mtn Bde was asked to prepare for advance to Bheramara. At long last, 7 Mtn Bde captured Kushtia by 1700 hrs, on 11 Dec without opposition(80). In the Battle of Kushtia Indian casualties were: 2 Officers, 4 JCOs and 33 ORs killed; and 3 Officers, 2 JCOs and 54 ORs wounded. Bodies of Indian troops recovered from Kushtia were found badly mutilated, bearing bayonet wounds and marks of brutal treatment(81).

Advance to Bheramara and Hardinge Bridge

At 0700 hrs on 12 Dec, 5/1 GR in MT with under command 'A' Squadron 45 Cav less two troops spearheaded the 41 Mtn Bde advance on axis Kushtia-Bheramara-Hardinge Bridge. The 9 Dogra and 5 Guards followed on foot. Hardinge Bridge and the Ferry Site being the only escape route open to the retreating Pak force, it was decided to dash towards Hardinge Bridge first and deal with Bheramara later. The Pak defences south of Hardinge Bridge were contacted at 1230 hrs, and after tanks were manoeuvred into fire support positions, the attack was launched at 1405 hrs. The formidable Hardinge Bridge defences were cleverly sited along a system of canals and anti-tank ditches, covering all the approaches to the bridge from the west and south-west, and along the Ganges Canal, connecting the Long Bil east of Bheramara with river Ganges, from the east and south-east. Bunkers were sited in triple lines in depth to cover all approaches up to the bridge bund which was 40' high, overlooking the whole area(82). The defences were strengthened

with extensive minefields and strongly constructed tank emplacements. The network of canals and anti-tank ditches denied all approaches to the Indian armour. After some recce, a route was found through the Power House for the Indian tanks and RCL guns to move through to launch the attack. The west end of the Hardinge Bridge was captured by 1700 hrs after putting down minor Pak opposition. Likewise, 9 Dogra along with two troops of tanks launched attack from Baradi at 1500 hrs, and secured Bheramara by 1630 hrs without any opposition. It was assessed that the Pak force had left the area and escaped to the other bank of the Padma in a great hurry, blowing up a span of the bridge and leaving behind a large number of vehicles, guns, equipment and ammunition. It could move only a part of its equipment, tanks and vehicles, and all of its personnel across the river. Although the Pak force, about 2 battalions, supported by a Squadron of tanks and artillery, could have fought a major battle at Bheramara-Hardinge Bridge area, but being demoralised, it lost the will to fight, inspite of the fact that its infantry, i.e. 29 Baluch and 18 Punjab, had not participated in any major action hitherto.

Battle of Madhumati River

After the fall of Magura on 8 December, 62 Mtn Bde commenced advance towards Faridpur, but the Pak troops had blown up the bridge on the river Kumar flowing on the east of Magura and withdrawn to the other bank of the Madhumati, flowing parallel to the river Kumar a few miles east of Magura, leaving behind a rear-guard force in area Majail (QP 4609), west of the river, for delaying the Indian advance. After removing this obstacle, the brigade concentrated on the west bank of the Madhumati by last light on 9 December and started preparations for the crossing of the river, which was approximately 500 metres wide and over 13 metres deep at places.

As has been told earlier, the heavy casualties in men and armour suffered by the Indian force in Kushtia on 9 December had panicked the Commander of 4 Mtn Div, who over-reacted to this temporary reverse and instead of continuing the thrust across the Madhumati, switched over his whole Division less a battalion to Kushtia(83). It was only after the capture of Kushtia, Bheramara and the Hardinge Bridge, that he brought back his forces to the western bank of the Madhumati. The 62 Mtn Bde was concentrated on the west bank of the Madhumati by 13 December, and 7 Mtn Bde concentrated at Magura the following day. The opposite bank of the river was held by two weak Pak battalions, supported by mortars and one battery of

105 mm guns. Although the original plan was for the 62 Mtn Bde to cross the river in the north, outflank the Pak position and then capture Kamarkhali (QP 4901) on the main road, finally it was decided to employ both 62 and 7 Mtn Bdes on the northern and the southern flanks respectively in a pincer movement to cut the road east of the ferry. Both the brigades crossed the river successfully during night 14/15 December, mostly in country boats, inspite of stiff opposition. However, the PT-76 tanks found it difficult to swim through the river at the southern ferry point. Only two tanks could cross over. 7 Mtn Bde's task was also otherwise difficult, because they did not have enough time for reconnaissance, and had to march cross-country for about 30 km to reach the river line. 62 Mtn Bde established a strong road-block about 4,000 metres north-east of Kamarkhali, and similarly 7 Mtn Bde also established some minor road-blocks, thus completely sealing off the Pak withdrawal(84). The Pakistani troops found themselves isolated and cut off. They made a few unsuccessful attempts at breaking through the Indian dragnet under HMG and artillery fire, and then surrendered with all personnel and equipment(85). Eighty-three Pak dead bodies were counted on the ground, and by 2300 hrs, 15 Officers, 10 JCOs and 334 ORs had surrendered(86). In the Battle of Madhumati River, 4 Mtn Div suffered casualties of 1 JCO and 5 ORs killed, and 2 Officers and 22 ORs wounded(87). After the clearance of the far side of the Madhumati by first light 16 December, the Indians resumed their advance towards Faridpur. But, soon after, 4 Mtn Div received orders for a cease-fire, and hence operations were stopped. The Pak GOC of 9 Inf Div along with 3,000 Officers and men from the Faridpur area surrendered to GOC 4 Mtn Div at Kamarkhali on 16 December, bringing to an end the hostilities in this Sector(88).

Assessment of 2 Corps Operations

The 2 Corps achieved substantial successes, in spite of several handicaps. For example, 4 Mtn Div found it difficult to operate in the plains with its limited transport and other resources(89). To remove these inadequacies, the Division had to undergo ad hoc reorganisation which entailed a lot of strain on various arms and services. The Light Regiment (Pack) had to be converted into towed organisation; one mountain regiment had to be replaced by a field regiment, and 106 mm RCL guns and additional vehicles had to be provided. However, in spite of these difficulties, had the 4 Mtn Div Commander not shifted his forces from the Madhumati area to the Kushtia Sector, but carried on the Madhumati battle, perhaps

his Division could have captured Goalundo Ghat earlier and crossed the Padma to attack Dhaka. On the whole it was a satisfactory, though not a brilliant performance, by 2 Corps.

The task allotted to 9 Inf Div was to capture Jessore and be prepared to assist 4 Mtn Div in the capture of Magura, besides sending a brigade to capture Khulna(90). As Jessore was captured on 7 December 1971, the Pak troops retreated towards Khulna, fighting delaying engagements en route at a number of built-up areas. They appeared to have also intended to fight a last-ditch battle from Daulatpur-Khulna fortress. But as the approach to Daulatpur was flanked by marshes on one side and the Bhairab river on the other, Indian advance became slow, and the Pakistanis fought for every bit of ground. And 9 Div could not capture Khulna before the cease-fire. Due to faulty intelligence it was thought that the main body of Pak troops had fled from Jessore to Magura, while approximately 500 Pak troops had withdrawn towards Khulna. Based on this information, the commander of 9 Inf Div initially sent one brigade towards Khulna in pursuit of the fleeing adversary. But later, when stiff resistance was met, another brigade was launched on 14 December to cross the Bhairab. As the remaining Bde was kept in reserve, no effort could be made to push towards Magura. Also, 50 Para Bde had been withdrawn from 9 Div area on 9 December.

One may think that 9 Inf Div's advance towards Khulna was futile and unnecessary, but leaving a large body of enemy troops in Khulna and then advancing towards Magura was not considered tactically sound, as the enemy could attack from the flank(91). In fact, when the Pak troops surrendered at Khulna on 17 December it was found that they comprised Pak 107 Bde with 3,894 all ranks.

OPERATION OF 33 CORPS

In the North-Western Sector, the Pak forces were reportedly deployed in the following manner at the out-break of the war(92):-

16 Inf Div (Maj Gen Nazar Hussain Shah)

HQ	Nator(93)
29 Cav less	Thakurgaon-Dinajpur-Ghoraghat-
Sqn	Hilli area
48 Fd Regt	Thakurgaon-Hathibanda-

	Nageshwari area
80 Fd Regt	Khetlal-Hilli area
117 (Indep) Mor Bty	Nageshwari-Kurigram
211 (Indep) Mor Bty	Nageshwari

23 Inf Bde (Brig Ansari, later Brig Iqbal Md.Shafi)

HQ, One Sqn 29 Cav	Saidpur area
25 Punjab (relieved 8 Punjab)	Hathibanda-Lalmanirhat- Nageshwari-Kurigram area
26 FF	Dinajpur-Phulbari area
48 Punjab	Thakurgaon-Pachagarh area
Coy 8 Punjab	Lalmanirhat-Rangpur area
Coy 34 Punjab (Recce and Sp. Bn)	Thakurgaon-Boda-Nilphamari area
86 Mujahid Bn	Elements at Hathibanda-Hilli area-Gaibanda and Rangpur

205 Inf Bde (Brig Tajammul Hussain Malik)

HQ	Khetlal
32 Baluch	Ghoraghat-Gobindaganj area
4 FF	Hilli area
8 Baluch	Jaipurhat-Jaipur (QJ 8992) and Mahabatpur (QJ 7696) area
Coy 34 Punjab	Panchbibi area

34 Inf Bde (Brig Mir Abdul Nayeem)

HQ	Nator
32 Punjab	Nawabganj-Sibganj Rahanpur-Rajshahi
Coy 12 Punjab	Ishurdi area

As against the above, 33 Corps was deployed in the North-Western Sector as under(94):-

HQ 33 Corps (Lt Gen M.L. Thapan) - Siliguri

71 Mtn Bde (Brig P.N. Kathpalia)

20 Mtn Div (Maj Gen Lachhman Singh Lehl)-
Balurghat.

202 Mtn Bde (Brig F. Bhatta)

165 Mtn Bde (Brig R.S. Pannu)

66 Mtn Bde (Brig G.S. Sharma)

340 Mtn Bde Gp (Brig J.S. Bakshi)

6 Mtn Div (Maj Gen P.C. Reddy) - Binaguri
(for limited use)

9 Mtn Bde (Brig T.S. Verma) with two battalions only.

The Corps had under its command the following supporting elements:-

- (a) One regiment of PT-76 tanks, one regiment of T-55 tanks less one Sqn, and an ad hoc Sqn of PT-76 tanks.
- (b) One APC Battalion (SKOT)
- (c) Seven Bns less two Coys BSF
- (d) Eleven Coys of Mukti Fauj.
- (e) One Engr Bde and one Army Engr Regt, etc.

On 3 December, when the war started, the Indian forces were already in occupation of certain Pak areas in this Sector(95). In area Hilli, Naopara (QD 9115), Morapara (QD 9114) and Basudebpur (QD 9014) (parts of main Hilli defences) had been occupied, although the Pak Army was continuing to hold on to Hilli. In Dinajpur area, Khanpurhat (QD 4941), Mukundapur (QD 4543) and Mohanpur (QD 6343)(96) had been occupied on the southern approaches to Dinajpur and both banks of Icchamati River at QD 7241 secured on axis Samjia (QD 6540)-Phulbari (QD 8540). 71 Mtn Bde advancing south on axis Mirgarh (LY 3942)-Dinajpur had captured

Thakurgaon (LY 3205) by 1200 hrs on 3 Dec(97). In the Barakhata salient, Barakhata (LZ 0304) had been captured and Hathibanda (LZ 0614) near the border, north of Ranjpur, contacted. In the Nageshwari salient, all areas north-north east of Dharla River had been cleared.

Operation Plan

The strategic concept in the 33 Corps Sector was to secure the waist line along the Hilli-Gaibanda axis in the middle of the Sector by moving through Mohanpur bridge on the Atrai in the west and then reaching Gaibanda and Bogra, thus dividing the Pak 16 Division deployed in this Sector. This would have ensured the security of the Siliguri corridor on the one hand, and the subsequent destruction of the Pak forces to the north and south of this waist line, on the other. According to this concept, 20 Mtn Div with under command 340 Mtn Bde Gp was to secure the line Hilli-Gaibanda (QE 5019) and thereafter capture Bogra and then exploit up to the Ganga(98). The main thrust line for the offensive was to be along Phulbari (QD 8540)-Nawabganj (QD 9930)-Pirganj (QE 2369)-Ghoraghat (QE 2209) and then south to Gobindaganj (QK 3396) and Bogra (LY 4325). Meanwhile, Dinajpur was to be contained by subsidiary thrusts from the south along with an advance by 71 Mountain Bde from the north threatening Dinajpur (QD 5156)-and Saidpur (QD 7976).

As during the preliminary operations it was found that the Pak forces had held on to Hilli tenaciously, it would have involved a great loss of men and material in trying again to advance through Hilli. Also as the 20 Mtn Div Commander had no reserves available for dealing with any unforeseen situation, Maj Gen Lachhman Singh was against any frontal advance along the strongly defended approach from Hilli to Ghoraghat, and also against getting involved in fighting in Dinajpur town(99). Hence, the following revised operational plan was made for the 33 Corps(100):-

- (a) The waist line Hilli-Gaibanda would be cut by advancing in strength on axis Mohanpur Bridge (north-west of Hilli)-Phulbari-Charkai-Pirganj-Palashbari (QE 2913) with two brigades, and then after securing Gaibanda, the thrust would turn south along axis Palashbari-Gobindaganj-Bogra.
- (b) The 340 Mtn Bde Gp would contain Dinajpur from the south with one battalion, making available the rest of the brigade as reserve.

- (c) The 202 Mtn Bde was to continue exerting pressure on Hilli to mislead the Pakistanis to think that the Indian intention was to advance along the Hilli-Gaibanda route. At the same time the Bde Group was warned to be ready to link up with 66 Mtn Bde in area Dangapara (QD 9019)-Charkai (QD 8927), after handing over the defence of Hilli to 165 Mtn Bde. 66 Mtn Bde was ordered to launch a cross country move, about twelve miles north of Hilli to capture Phulbari and Charkai by 4 December. Armour was allotted to 66 and 202 Mtn Bdes for their operations.
- (d) There was a Corps cover plan to assist in the furtherance of the main thrust by initially making the Pakistanis deploy as large a proportion of their forces as possible in the Rangpur-Saidpur area. It was planned to engage 6 Mtn Div and 71 Mtn Bde in clearing the northernmost parts of the Sector. The 9 Mtn Bde of 6 Mtn Div was to clear the Tista Pocket and capture Lalmanirhat (QE 4089) as early as possible. Subsequently, it was to keep itself available for employment either in 20 Mtn Div or 71 Mtn Bde area. The 71 Mtn Bde was to advance to Birganj (QD 5384) from Thakurgaon and moving further, capture Kantanagar bridge (QD 5578) intact, if possible. Thereafter, the brigade was to contain the Pakistanis in the area of Atrai br (QD 6273) - Saidpur and exert pressure on Dinajpur from the north. If there were signs of Pakistanis pulling out of Dinajpur, the brigade was to exploit the situation.
- (e) Concurrently with the above, it was also planned to contain and erode the Pak Brigade in the Hilli-Ghoraghat-Khetlal (QK 0348) complex and apply the coup de grace when the main thrust got behind the Pak forces in the general area of Gobindaganj.
- (f) After the capture of Bogra by D plus 9 and Hilli complex, i.e., after the Pak Div sector had been cut into two:-
- (i) Two Brigades with minimum armour and artillery support were to move south, secure Sirajganj (QK 6813), south-east of Bogra, and Bera (QP 6068), further

south of Sirajganj ferries, both on the river Jamuna, clear up the southern part of the Corps sector, including Nator and Naogaon (QJ 8356), to the west of Bogra, and link up with elements of 2 Corps at Hardinge Bridge.

- (ii) Two Brigades with the bulk of armour and artillery support ex 20 Mtn Div were to move north and in conjunction with 71 Mtn Bde Gp reduce Rangpur, Saidpur and Dinajpur in that order.

20 Mtn Div Operations

According to the revised plan, 6 Guards ex 66 Mtn Bde secured area Mohanpur bridge (QD 6443) on river Atrai at the western end of the main thrust line and also the bridge on river Bhalamati (GR 654452), further ahead, by 2 December. The Pak strength here consisted of 'C' Coy 26 FF, two guns and some tanks. Both sides suffered casualties. However, before withdrawing towards north and east, the Pakistanis had demolished the western part of the Mohanpur bridge, thus denying themselves the use of Phulbari (QD 8639)-Dinajpur concrete road, running within a thousand metres of the international border in some places.

Capture of Phulbari: Now the next objective on the axis of advance was Phulbari. This task was entrusted to 69 Armd Regt less two squadrons with under command 20 Maratha LI and 65 Mtn Regt less one battery. Simultaneously, 6 Guards with under command 'C' Sqn 63 Cav cleared the defenders from Icchamati river bridge (QD 7245) by 1430 hrs on 3 December. In order to sustain the line of advance of 66 Mtn Bde Group, 52 Engr Regt developed a new track linking Samjia with Narayanpur (QD 6645) and carried out improvement of track Samjia (QD 6442)-Nabogram (QD 6641)-Bejai (QD 7541) during 1-3 December. The bridge (QD 7245) on Icchamati river, captured by 6 Guards, was also quickly strengthened to take medium guns. 20 Maratha LI then moved on the axis Nabogram (QD 6641)-Bejai (QD 7541)-Phulbari (QD 8639). When at 0700 hrs on 3 December, the advance guard contacted Bejai, held by one platoon of 26 FF plus approximately one coy of Mujahids, the latter offered stiff opposition. After a gallant action, in which 14 Indian ORs got killed and two officers, two JCOs and 16 ORs were wounded, the position was captured by 1010 hrs. The Pak troops suffered 10 dead and a large number wounded. The Indian column reached Phulbari (QD 8630) by 1445 hrs and after clearing light opposition captured it by 1600 hrs the same day. The remnants of Pak troops

withdrew towards Parbatipur (QD 8159) by train. On the fall of Phulbari, 6 ORs of 26 FF, 2 JCOs of EPCAF, 43 Mujahids and Razakars as well as some arms, ammunition and equipment were captured. Before withdrawing from Phulbari, the Pak troops had hurriedly demolished a span of the bridge over river Jamuna (a local river), 260' wide. This would have affected the further advance to Charkai (QD 8927), but a Bailey bridge (class 40) was constructed soon. The Indian troops did not, however, wait for the completion of the bridge and resumed the advance at 0800 hrs on 4 December.

Capture of Charkai: For the capture of Charkai, held by Coy 8 Baluch and about 150 Razakars, the advance guard was composed of 69 Armd Regt, commanded by Lt Col Pawittar Singh, less two squadrons, with under command 'C' Sqn 63 Cav and 20 Maratha LI (Armoured Personnel Carrier)(101). The troops had first to contend against an indifferent mud track, heavily mined by the Pakistanis. Tanks had difficulty in cross-country movement, Armoured Personnel Carriers got badly stuck, and even one ton vehicles found the going difficult. Any way, the advance commenced at 0900 hrs on 4 December. After having established blocks to the rear of the Pak troops, the position was attacked from the west and captured by 1700 hrs on 4 December. Mopping up was carried out to liquidate small pockets of resistance and some Pak POWs, arms and equipment were captured.

To advance further to Nawabganj (QD 9930) a build-up had to be made at Charkai. For this, the line between Phulbari and Charkai had to be strengthened. Hence, 52 Engr Regt cleared the track of mines. Simultaneously, 13 Engr Regt less one field Coy converted the 2 km railway track between Phulbari and Charkai, south of Phulbari, into a class-40 road after blasting the railway line, and constructing four bridges along this axis by 6 December. As the Indian troops and vehicles moved east along this most unexpected road, interspersed by numerous 'bils' and canals, the Pak Commanders were surprised beyond their wits. When the news was sent to the superior Commander, he jeered at the Platoon Commander: "Don't imagine things. How can tanks come when there are so many bheels, marshes and mines there? You must have seen buffaloes". The young captain replied, 'You may be right, Sir. But I swear the buffaloes have 100 mm guns fitted on them and they are picking off our bunkers one by one'(102).

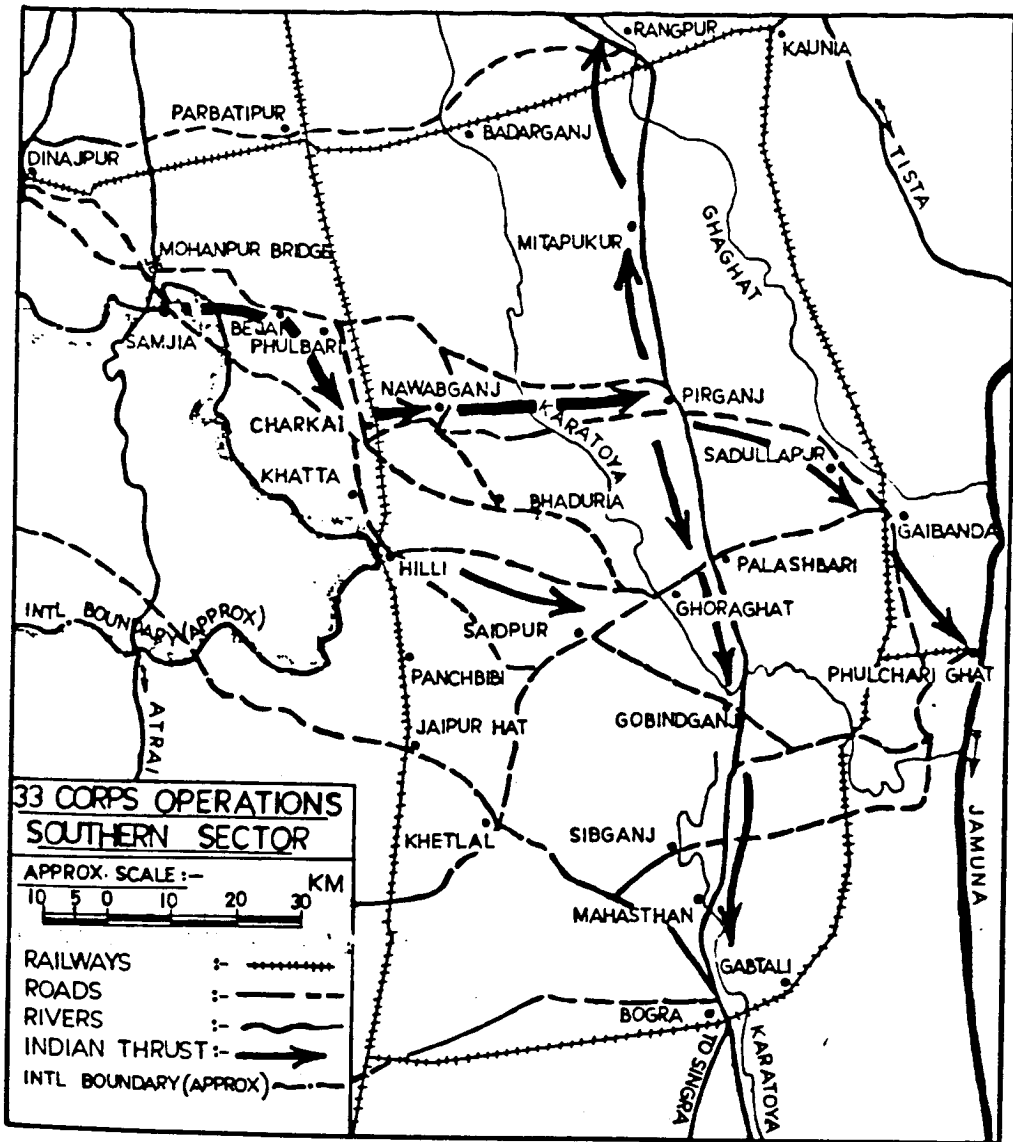
Further, in view of the build-up at Charkai, it was decided to give priority to a link-up between 202 and 66 Mtn Bdes (in area Dangapara (QD 9119)). In

pursuance of this task, 5 Garh Rif ex 202 Mtn Bde attacked and captured Debkhanda (QD 8917), halfway between Hilli and Charkai, after eliminating light opposition by the evening on 3 December. The Unit was, however, unable to advance beyond this point, because one strong Pak Coy supported by other elements was strongly holding the general area ferry (QD 8719)-Dangapara Railway Station (QD 9020). Indian armour and infantry trying to out-flank them came under RCL fire, and what is more, the IAF strafed 5 Garh Rif position of 4 December by mistake, injuring three officers, one JCO and one OR. Although due to heavy Indian pressure the Pak troops withdrew from Dangapara, leaving behind some arms, vehicles and ammunition on night 6/7 December, the Dangapara-Charkai track was found unsuitable for vehicular traffic. Hence, Hilli-Charkai link-up attempt was given up for the time being.

Meanwhile, a 6 Guards patrol reported Pak withdrawal from Nawabganj which was immediately occupied by 6 Guards at 0600 hrs on 6 December(103). Soon after, the same battalion secured the unoccupied Kanchdaha ferry site (QE 0631) on the Karatoya river and established a bridge-head across the river. The 52 Engr Regt then put up a bridge and also laid a class 9 road from Charkai to Kanchdaha Ferry via Nawabganj(104).

Advance to Pirganj: The stage was then set for the advance to Pirganj (QE 2329). For this, 340 Mtn Bde Gp, whose responsibility till then was to contain the Pak forces near Dinajpur was asked to hand over this duty to 165 Mtn Bde and then undertake the advance to Pirganj, Palashbari (QE 2913) and Gaibanda (QE 4918). Commanded by Brig J.S. Bakshi, 340 Mtn Bde Gp, composed of 2/5 GR(FF), 5/11 GR, 6 Guards, 63 Cav less two Sqns, Sqn 69 Armd Regt, two artillery regiments, one medium regiment less one battery, two light batteries and two Engr Regts, commenced advance to Pirganj on 7 Dec. Simultaneously, 66 Mtn Bde Gp, after initially guarding against any Pak advance from the direction of Parbatipur (QD 8159), on the railway line-Dinajpur-Rangpur, was to advance towards Bhaduria (QE 0618) and Nurpur (QE 1515) with the intention of capturing Ghoraghat (QE 2109) and 202 Mtn Bde was to continue exerting pressure on Hilli and outflank it from the north and finally link up with 66 Mtn Bde in area Ghoraghat(105).

On 7 December, elements of 340 Mtn Bde Gp led by 'C' Coy 2/5 GR(FF), mounted on tanks of 'A' Sqn 69 Armd Regt, after brushing aside minor opposition south of Chandipur (QE 1833), established a road block at Laldighi Bazar (QE 2332) just north-west of Pirganj.



At this stage, in the afternoon, a Pak vehicle column, with Maj Gen Nazar Hussain Shah, GOC 16 Inf Div, Brig Tajammal Hussain Malik, Commander 205 Inf Bde, and some other Pak army personnel, returning from Rangpur to Bogra, was fired upon by the Indian tank column at long range, hitting the leading two jeeps, about 2 km north of Pirganj. In the words of S. Salik, "Abandoning their vehicles, they quickly disappeared into a grove of trees. The G.O.C. later triumphantly told me that he had seen 'enemy tanks as close as 500 metres on my right'. He and his party were helped by a God-fearing (sic!) Bengalee who guided them to a safe path which took them towards Rangpur"(106).

From Rangpur Maj Gen Nazar was flown out to Nator by helicopter on the night of 9/10 December. While most of the Pak vehicles turned back to Rangpur, the Indians captured 2 ORs, and one jeep, along with two important military maps showing disposition of Pak forces and location of their MMG and RCL guns(107). Pirganj was captured by 1630 hrs, thus cutting the main Rangpur-Bogra highway in the North-Western Sector(108).

On the night of 7/8 December, two Pak task forces were sent to counter-attack Pirganj from north and south. The northern attack under Brig Nayeem with two Coys 8 Punjab and two troops of armour, and the southern one under Lt Col Sultan Mahmood with 32 Baluch less two Coys were both beaten back. Lt Col Sultan and eleven ORs of 32 Baluch were killed, while 45 ORs were wounded in this action. 2/5 GR(FF) suffered casualties of one officer and four ORs killed and 2 officers and 4 ORs injured(109).

Capture of Bhaduria: While 340 Mtn Bde Gp was consolidating in Pirganj, 66 Mtn Bde went to clear Bhaduria (QE 0618), in the south-west of Pirganj, held by approximately two Coys of Pak troops plus supporting elements, including a troop of armour. The 17 Kumaon, supported by 63 Cavalry launched the attack on 10 Dec, and got involved in hand-to-hand and bayonet fighting. Although one 17 Kumaon Coy Commander was killed in the battle, the Indians kept up a relentless pressure and succeeded in clearing a major part of the objective.

On 11 Dec, a Pak counter-attack was foiled by heavy artillery fire, and later the same day two Coys of 20 Maratha LI with two troops of 'C' Sqn 63 Cavalry cleared the remaining part of Bhaduria. Two Pakistani tanks were destroyed in this action(110). Heavy casualties were suffered by both sides; Pakistan - 82 including one Major and one Artillery officer dead, and 5 PsOW; India - 57 including three officers

killed, and 74 including 4 officers injured(111).

Capture of Hilli: In the 165 Mtn Bde area, on 6 December, when one Coy of 4 Madras was surrounded by two Coys of Pak troops supported by three tanks at Jamalpur (QD 4841), south-west of Balurghat, the Indian Air Force struck against the Pak forces at Jamalpur and Ramsagar (QD 4946) to stabilise the situation. The following day, when the Pak troops attacked Dangi BOP (QD 620304) on the western bank of the Atrai, held by BSF and Mukti Fauj, about fifteen Pak troops lost their lives and four others were wounded. Here also the IAF intervened and destroyed three Pak guns in Jotsriram (QD 7298) area on 8 December.

In the Hilli area, 202 Mtn Bde launched attack on 8 December. The Indian Air Force again played their part by strafing and rocketing Pak defences in Hilli area. By the evening of 11 December, the Pak troops were bottled up at Dangapara (QD 9313) just south-east of Hilli where they had withdrawn from different parts of the Hilli complex, and 8 Guards supported by one composite armd sqdn captured this position after fierce fighting. Twenty Pak soldiers were killed, and one Officer and two ORs were captured. Besides, two Chaffee tanks and three 105 mm Howitzers were destroyed(112). Thereafter, the link-up between 66 Mtn Bde and 202 Mtn Bde was established on 12 December.

The Indian troops' presence in the Pirganj-Palashbari area caused unsettling effect for the border defences of Pak 205 Bde. The extended Pak fingers in the north-west and north-east were expected to fold back to form a fist at Bogra, but not many troops could pull back. In the same way, the Pak posts at Phulcharighat (QE 5702), Bonarpara (QK 4898) and Gobindaganj (QK 3296) in the east were also evacuated(113). After the withdrawal of 4 Frontier Force from the Hilli defences, 16 Div was completely divided, with its 23 Bde being isolated in the Rangpur-Dinajpur area in the north, and 205 Bde cornered in Bogra in the south, with its back to the mighty Brahmaputra (Jamuna).

Capture of Palashbari and Gaibanda: A task force of 340 Mtn Bde Gp, consisting of one squadron 69 Armd Regt, one Coy 5 Garh Rif and 44 Med Bty, advanced at 0600 hrs on 9 December and contacted the Pak position at Sadullapur (QE 4126) on the road to Gaibanda by 0900 hrs. When they were engaged with RCL gun and RR(114) by the Pak troops, Indian tanks destroyed one Pak RCL and surrounded the village. This lightning action by Maj S.C. Mehra of 69 Armd

Regt had its effect and the Pak troops fled. Eighteen ORs of the Pak Army were killed, and 70 Razakars along with weapons and ammunition were captured(115).

Another task force, consisting of 69 Armd Regt less two squadrons, with one squadron 63 Cavalry and 6 Guards, advancing from Pirganj on 9 December cleared minor opposition at Dhaperhat (QE 2820) and also mines on the way, before reaching Palashbari (QE 2913). Despite intense Pak fire from south and south-west of this town, 'A' squadron 63 Cavalry over-ran the position by 1215 hrs. Approximately, 34 Pak troops were killed(116). On 9 December, the third task force, formed with 6 Guards less two coys, and two troops ex 69 Armd Regt, advanced from Palashbari and captured Gaibanda by 1600 hrs, without opposition. Indian armour destroyed the railway line north of Gaibanda railway station, and cut all telephone communication with Bogra and Rangpur, thus sealing off the Pak escape route from Rangpur. The task force then captured Phulchari Ferry (QE 5702) on the river Jamuna south of Gaibanda and demolished the jetty on 10 December(117). In the meantime, advance on the route Palashbari-Ghoraghat-Gobindaganj was continued.

Capture of Ghoraghat: The Divisional Commander ordered an attack on the Pak gun position at Maheshpur (QE 0313), situated on the Hilli-Ghoraghat track, a few km east of Hilli, in conjunction with attacks on Hilli and Bhaduria, because the Pak guns at Maheshpur were giving support to Pak defence in Hilli and Bhaduria, and a Pak Coy deployed on a bund in Maheshpur area gave depth to Hilli defences and protected those guns. Maheshpur was captured by 63 Cavalry less two Squadrons with 4 Madras commanded by Lt Col SL Malhotra, on 10 December(118), and one troop of T-55 tanks managed to ford the Tulsī Ganga nullah and destroyed one 105 mm gun and captured another intact, along with large dumps of ammunition and rations at Hariharpur (QE 0113)(119). Next, a two-pronged attack, led by 20 Maratha LI supported by sqn 63 Cavalry from north, and 4 Madras, cleared the Pak troops at Durga Dighi (QE 0711) on 11 December, and 20 Maratha LI captured Ghoraghat (QE 2008) the next morning against minor resistance. Two Pak tanks were destroyed in air action(120). Then 66 Bde linked up with 340 Mtn Bde in the Ghoraghat area on 12 December.

Capture of Gobindaganj (QK 3296): On 10 December, 340 Mtn Bde was ordered to capture Gobindaganj by 11 December and advance to Bogra (QK 3161) with maximum speed. The Bde had already secured the home bank of the Karatoya by the evening of 9 December. During further advance, when an intensive mine-field was

encountered, the Engineers lifted the mines from the road and the advance continued. In the morning of 10 December, Pak opposition was cleared on the north bank (QE 3301) of the Karatoya(121). The next day, an Indian column made a wide, out-flanking move to cut off enemy routes of withdrawal by establishing a road-block in area QE 3290 and to capture Gobindaganj from south and south-east, while 6 Guards maintained relentless pressure from the north. The task force crossed the Karatoya river at Kajla (QE 4000), north-east of Gobindaganj, approximately 8,000 metres each of the Pak defences which comprised 32 Baluch less two Coys, A Coy 32 Punjab, one Coy 13 Engr Bn, one Coy 83 Mujahid En, one troop Chaffee tanks, and five 105 mm Howitzers(122). Road-blocks were established at Kamar Road Junction (QK 3290) south of Gobindaganj by 1545 hrs. After infiltrating into Pak Commando observation posts and collecting accurate information regarding Pak positions, Indian troops hit the rear area of the Pak defences. There was heavy fighting throughout the night of 11/12 December and infra-red devices of T-55 tanks were fully utilised to destroy Pak bunkers. By the morning of 12 December the Pakistanis had vacated their position. 90 Pak soldiers were killed and 12 captured. Besides, three Chaffee tanks (one destroyed), five 105 mm Howitzers (two destroyed), fifty-five 'B' vehicles, including three ammunition vehicles bearing UN marking, two 106 mm RCL guns and fifteen 3-ton loads of all types of ammunition were captured(123). Indian casualties were one officer and two ORs killed, and three officers and five ORs wounded(124).

The Armd Bde HQ under Brig G.S. Sandhu and all the Sqns except one sqn of 63 Cavalry were withdrawn from the 20 Mtn Div area by 13 December for transfer to the Western Theatre. The disturbing impact of this and the regrouping of forces slowed down the pace of advance, because the armoured units were always in the fore-front of the assaults carried out so far by 20 Mtn Div. The unfortunate result was that neither could these armoured units reach their destination in time, nor 340 Bde could cross Jamuna en route to Dhaka.

Advance to Bogra

Under fresh orders issued by GOC 33 Corps, new thrusts were launched on 12 December. 4 Rajput, under 165 Mtn Bde, captured Jaipurhat (QD 9391), south of Hilli on 13 Dec, without opposition, and 1 Guards advancing on axis Hilli-Panchbibi (QD 9203) at night on 12/13 December, captured Panchbibi the next day after overcoming some opposition. A Pak counter-attack was foiled by the Indian troops.

Twenty Pak troops were killed, and one OR, four jeeps and one 106 mm RCL gun were captured, as against 1 Guards casualties of 3 ORs killed and two Officers and 9 ORs wounded(125).

After the Indian aircraft had rocketed Pak defences around Mitapukur (QD 2048) at 1200 hrs on 13 December, 5 Garh Rif, now under 66 Mtn Bde, supported by armour, advanced on axis Pirganj (QE 2329)-Mitapukur. After clearing minor opposition astride the axis, the unit reached area Kanchanpur (QE 2036) and linked up with 20 Maratha LI.

On the night of 14/15 December, an exchange of fire took place between the Indian and the Pakistani troops, and the Indians suffered eleven casualties. This was followed by a two-pronged Indian attack supported by 69 Armd Regt. Although the Pakistanis were forced to abandon the area, nonetheless, they hit three Indian PT-76 tanks with RCL fire, badly damaging two of them, and inflicted 15 casualties on the Indian troops. The Indians secured Mitapukur by noon on 15 December, capturing 6 ORs of 8 Punjab, 2 HMGs and one Chinese rifle.

As per original orders, 202 Mtn Bde, which was in Hilli area, got ready to advance on Bogra via Khetlal (QK 0383), south-south east of Hilli. Commencing advance on 12 December, the Bde harboured at Ghoraghat for the night. On 13 December(126), 16 Rajput with under command A Sqn 63 Cav and A sqn 69 Armd Regt advanced unopposed along axis Ghoraghat (QE 2008)-Saidpur (QE 1304)-Khetlal. Before Khetlal was contacted at 1930 hrs, the Pak troops and three tanks had already vacated the area, leaving behind bed rolls, equipment and ammunition. One of the Pak tanks was knocked out by the Indian armour(127). Now it was found that the track from Khetlal to Bogra was badly damaged by Pak demolitions and a number of bridges had been destroyed. Moreover, the squadron of 63 Cavalry was withdrawn from 202 Mtn Bde for move to the Punjab front that day. Hence, it was not found feasible for 202 Mtn Bde to maintain its advance to Bogra. The Bde was ordered to concentrate in area Gobindaganj as a divisional reserve.

The capture of Bogra, however, fell to the lot of 340 Mtn Bde Gp. With regard to the line of advance on axis Gobindaganj-Bogra, tactical reconnaissance and captured documents from Gobindaganj had revealed that the bridge on the river Ichhamati at QK 3078 as also Sibga (QK 2479) were held by one Coy each of 32 Baluch the Pakistanis were preparing defences at Mahasthan (QK 2873); and Pak troops and vehicles were withdrawing to Bogra from Hilli and Ghoraghat(128).

Some Pakistani pockets of resistance were there south of the Karatoya, which needed to be cleared(129). Further, the laying of a bridge over the Karatoya at QE 3299 was necessary(130). The clearance of the Pakistani pockets was completed by morning on 12 December and the bridge was also constructed, despite Pak firing, by 1700 hrs that day. At 1230 hrs on 12 December, 69 Armd Regt less one squadron, with under command A Squadron 63 Cavalry and 5/11 GR cut through Pak opposition and contacted the south bank of the Ichhamati river(131). 5/11 GR patrols found a gap, approximately 400 yds wide, in the Pak defences, near the bridge (QK 3078), and one Coy group infiltrated south of the bridge, during midnight, undetected, under the cover of artillery fire, tank noise and intensive patrolling on the flanks of Pak defended localities. At 0400 hrs, on 13 December, the infiltrated Coy silently attacked the battalion HQ of 32 Baluch and captured four officers, including the officiating Commanding Officer, and 2 ORs(132). The Pak forward coys were then attacked and the bridge was captured intact. Of the Pakistani force holding the area, a total of four officers, one JCO and 12 ORs were captured, and 97 killed(133).

Next, the Battalion captured the bridge over the Karatoya at QK 2873, near Mahasthan, on the way to Bogra(134). Now the road to Bogra was open. The Pakistani force holding Bogra reportedly consisted of 8 Baluch, some tanks and artillery; HQ 205 Bde and possibly Tac HQ 16 Div (Pak) were also located there(135). According to plan, on 13/14 December night, 69 Armd Regt less one sqn with under command 6 Guards less one coy carried out an outflanking move from the east and established road-blocks on roads Bogra-Sirajganj (QK 6813) and Bogra-Singra (QK 0519)(136). Bogra was now attacked in the morning of 14 December from two directions. The 69 Armd Regt moved north and 2/5 GR(FF) with under command A sqn 63 Cavalry advanced south on to the northern section of the town. Stiff Pak resistance was met when the Indian troops entered the built-up area. The Pakistani troops started firing from house tops, and a running fight raged in the streets. By 1300 hrs, all areas north of the railway line had been cleared, and the Tactical HQ of 16 Div had also been captured(137). But, though the main objective had been achieved Pakistani resistance continued even upto 16 December.

By the evening of 15 December, 5/11 GR was able to clear all areas of enemy pockets upto the railway line and capture the Bogra Railway Station after a stiff fight. However, the Pak troops in the Police Station held on and put up stiff resistance(138). Similarly, on 15 December 2/5 GR(FF) met with tough

resistance at cross-roads and the market place where due to heavy Pak fire the unit suffered some casualties(139). These Pak troops began surrendering only after the Indian artillery heavily shelled the Market area from 0400 hrs to 0500 hrs on 16 December(140). From the early hours of 16 December, mopping up operations were conducted from north to south and south to north. House-to-house and street-to-street battles still raged, with extensive use of close-quarter-battle weapons and grenades. From 0530 hrs of 16 December more and more of the Pak personnel kept surrendering. It was only then that HQ 205 Inf Bde (Pak) was surrounded by 5/11 GR who captured the commanding officer 80 Field Regt, Brigade Major, two other officers and 50 ORs(141). The time limit for complete surrender was set at 0800 hrs on 16 December, by the Commander of 340 Mtn Bde(142). Though, in response, surrenders en masse began, some resistance still continued which led to Indian artillery firing again. However, surrendered officers of the Pak army requested the Indians to stop the fire, volunteering to go back and return with their colleagues for surrender. By 0930 hrs, the contest seems to have ended. However, Commander 205 Inf Bde, Brig Tajammul Hussain Malik alongwith one OR tried to escape. Caught and badly beaten by civilians, he was rescued by Indian troops and sent to Field Hospital(143). Curfew in Bogra was imposed to check loot, arson and ransacking by undesirable elements. It was only at 1300 hrs on 18 Dec that Maj Gen Nazar Hussain Shah, GOC 16 Pak Inf Div, was flown from Nator by Indian helicopter to sign the instrument of surrender before Maj Gen Lachhman Singh Lehl, Vr.C., GOC 20 Mtn Div, at Bogra.

The following Pak personnel were taken PsOW by 340 Mtn Bde Gp:- Officers - 61; JCOs -57; ORs - 1,701; NCsE - 33(144). In the battle of Bogra, the total number of Pak casualties were approximately 2 Officers and 63 ORs killed, and 1 Officer and 30 ORs, including 1 JCO wounded(145), as against 1 Officer and 16 ORs killed and 49 ORs, including 3 JCOs, wounded on the Indian side(146).

Advance to Rangpur: On 15 Dec, 20 Mtn Div ordered 66 Mtn Bde to capture Rangpur town after advancing along axis Mitapukur (QE 2049) - Rangpur (QE 1870), while 202 Mtn Bde was ordered to advance along the axis Mitapukur-Nasirabad (QE 1357)-Fatehpur (QE 1463)-Rangpur. On 16 December, 5 Garh Rif ex 66 Mtn Bde established road block in area QE 2058 and contacted Pak defences along Ghaghat nullah area (QE 1463), south of Rangpur where three Pak Coys held defensive positions. When the Indian troops surrounded these positions, the CO of 8 Punjab surrendered with 14

Officers, 8 JCOs and 322 ORs, along with their arms and equipment(147). Similarly, 202 Mtn Bde advanced about 24 kms on the night of 15/16 December and contacted the Pak troops at Fatehpur (QE 1463) near the bridge, south-west of Rangpur. It was now planned to send a battalion north-west on the Saidpur-Rangpur axis to enter Rangpur town from the north-west. But unfortunately, Indian Armour elements made some delay in grouping with 22 Maratha LI, and hence this move was postponed for 16/17 night(148). Meanwhile, at 1500 hrs on 16 December, the Pak troops, deployed at the bridge, waved a white flag, signalling surrender. Soon afterwards Brig Nayeem, Commander 34 Inf Bde, offered the surrender of the Rangpur garrison(149). Brig Sharma of 66 Mtn Bde, Brig Bhatta of 202 Mtn Bde, Brig Pannu of 165 Mtn Bde, and Brig Bakshi of 340 Mtn Bde - all under 20 Mtn Div - took the surrender of the Pak troops at Rangpur, Nowgong (south of Balurghat), Isurdi (QO 9676) near Pabna, and Bogra, respectively(159).

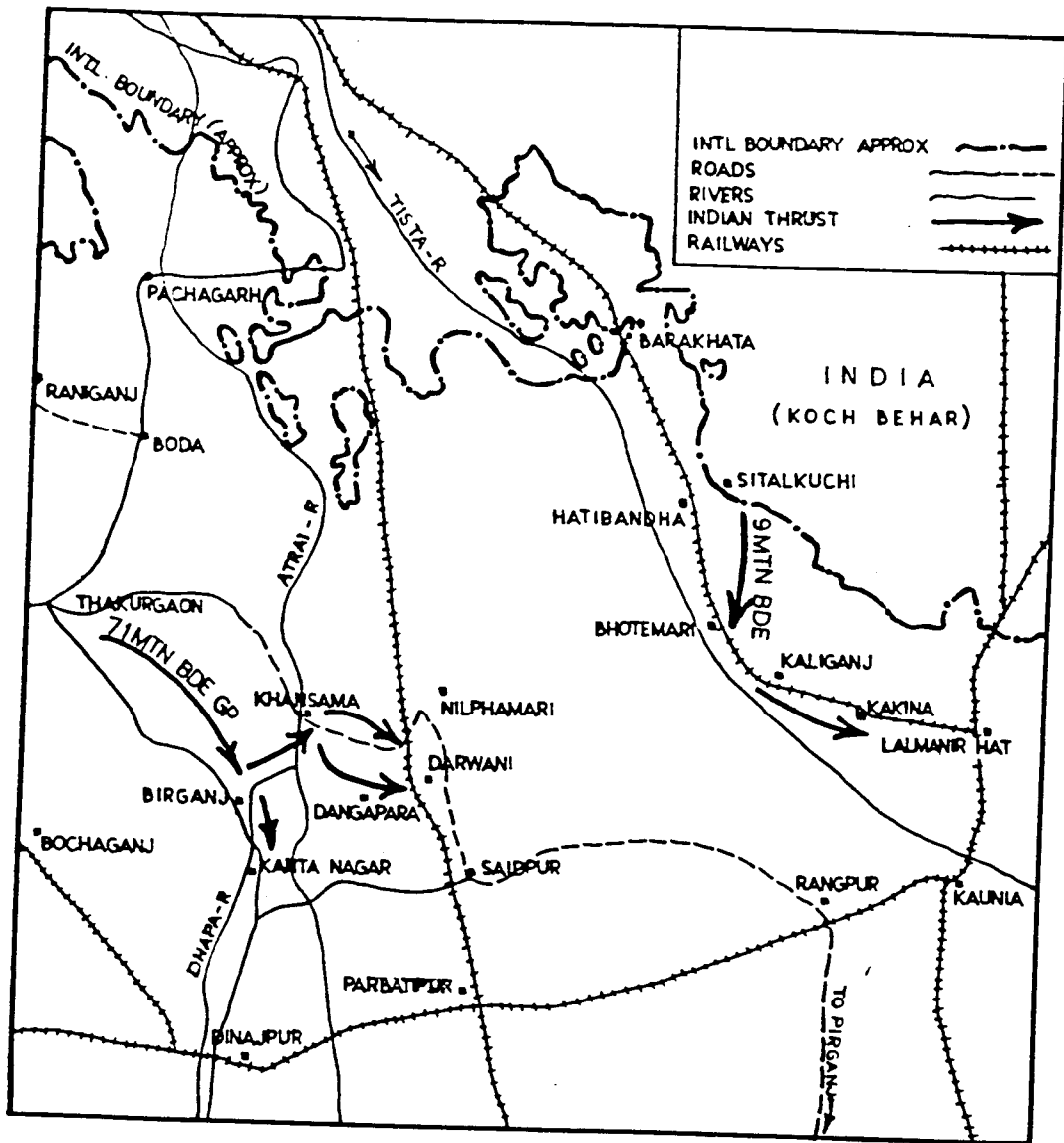
A total of 304 Officers, 371 JCOs and 11,218 ORs of the Pak Army, besides (approximately) 6,000 para-military personnel, surrendered to 20 Mtn Div(151). In the whole operation (3 to 16 Dec 1971), 20 Mtn Div suffered casualties of 148 including 9 Officers killed, and 449 including 27 Officers wounded(152).

71 Mtn Bde Operation

The 71 Mtn Bde, which operated initially under the direct control of 33 Corps(153), was given the task to advance on axis Thakurgaon-Birganj (QD 5384 - Kantanagar bridge (QD 5578) on Dhap river towards Dinajpur. Commencing advance on 3 December, 7 Maratha along with D Sqn 69 Armd Regt captured Birganj by 1730 hrs on 5 December, after brushing off minor resistance on the way. The next day, while advancing towards Kantanagar Bridge, they cleared a Pak defensive position QD 5379 after suffering seven casualties (ORs)(154). On night 6/7 Dec, they crossed the Dhap to capture the Kantanagar bridge area on the east bank. Two attacks launched by 7 Maratha and two coys of 21 Rajput, supported by tanks, were foiled by heavy Pak artillery, mortar and automatic fire. In this battle, 7 Maratha suffered 9 killed, 60 wounded and one PT-76 tank destroyed(155).

At this stage, the Pakistanis were seen reinforcing Dinajpur. Hence, on 11 December, the Bde Commander ordered 21 Rajput to capture Khansama (QD 6191) on the Atrai river midway between Thakurgaon and Saidpur by 13 December. Actually, operation against Khansama was the first step towards the

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capture of Saidpur (QD 7973) from the north. It was appreciated that the Pakistanis were occupying area Khansama (QD 6191) opposite ferry, with approximately one coy plus some irregulars, supported by one section 82 mm Mortars and that they had laid some mines in area QD 6091 on the west bank of Atrai river(156). The 21 Rajput captured Khansama on 13 December inspite of determined Pak resistance, suffering casualties of 9 ORs killed and 32, including one Officer and one JCO injured. They killed 25 Pak regulars in the battle and took one Major and 18 ORs of 48 Punjab (Pak) POW. Now, 12 Raj Rif with D Sqn 69 Armd Regt advanced from Khansama to Darwani (QD 7386) to outflank Saidpur in the evening of 13 December. The next day at 0900 hrs, Indian Air OP helicopters detected Pak troops and tank movement on the way, south of Khansama, towards Dangapara (QD 6286), probably to counter Indian threat to Saidpur(157). Indian Medium Guns dispersed the Pakistanis. At this stage, 5 Grenadiers, which had come under the command of 71 Mtn Bde on 14 December, occupied Dangapara in the evening that day. Next day, 12 Raj Rif cleared Pak troops, approximately Coy plus, supported by two troops of tanks, in Khakharia river area, while 5 Grenadiers reached Darwani Railway Station by 1600 hrs. On 16 December, one platoon patrol from 12 Raj Rif proceeded to Nilphamari (QD 7493) and found it vacant(158). Being surrounded from all sides, the Pak force now offered to surrender. At 1545 hrs on 17 December, Brig Shafi, Commander 23 Inf Bde, surrendered to Brig Kathpalia, at Zam Zam Airport in Saidpur. A total of 4,941 (111 Officers + 155 JCOs + 4,432 ORs + 79 NCsE + 164 civilians) surrendered at Saidpur with all their arms and equipment(159).

During the whole operation from 10 November to 17 December 1971, 71 Mtn Bde suffered a total of 59 dead, 277 wounded and 14 missing(160), as against Pak casualties of 134 killed, 60 wounded and 39(161) captured at the hands of 71 Mtn Bde.

9 Mtn Bde Operation

The 9 Mtn Bde, under the command of 6 Mtn Div, was employed in the north-eastern corner of the 33 Corps Sector, i.e., in Bhurungamari salient. It had under command three battalions - 5 Grenadiers, 4 Rajput, and 12 Garh Rif (from 24 November 1971). As already described, under Operation Ranjit the Brigade had cleared all Pak troops from the area north of Dharla river by 2 Dec 1971(162). Now, 9 Mtn Bde was asked to clear the Tista pocket and capture Lalmanirhat (QE 4089). The 8 Punjab (Pak) and two platoons EPCAF were holding Hatibandha (LZ 0715), on the northern border. It was expected that the Pak,

troops would fight delaying actions with maximum one company, assisted by irregulars at Bhotemari (LZ 0803), Kaliganj (QE 1397), Kakina (QE 1895) and Lalmanirhat (QE 3989)(163).

On 4 December, the Indian Air Force put Lalmanirhat airfield and Tista bridge out of commission. This facilitated rapid advance of the Indian troops with practically no opposition. The 12 Garh Rif with two coys of 103 BSF and five coys Mukti Fauj, already deployed 1000 yards north of Hatibandha (LZ 0715) occupied the objective (Hatibandha) on 5 December, after it had been vacated by the Pakistanis. But the Indian troops had already made arrangements to trap the Pakistanis withdrawing from Hatibandha(164). Two coys of 5 Grenadiers had established a road block in this area (LZ 063120) by 2100 hrs on 4 December and a Mukti Fauj Coy under the command of two instructors from the Commando Wing of Infantry School was ordered to go 12 km behind the Pakistani positions, and destroy the railway track north of Bhotemari (LZ 0803). The latter not only carried out demolitions of the railway track near Botemari, but also trapped a train carrying the Pakistanis pulling out of Hatibandha on night 4/5 December(165). On 5 December, 4 Rajput advanced to Bhotemari from Amtala (LZ 1716) and captured it along with a large quantity of arms and ammunition, after clearing the garrison there(166). Next day, 4 Rajput captured Kaliganj, and 5 Grenadiers advanced to Kakina and reached the outskirts of Lalmanirhat, after traversing a distance of approximately 35 km. Lalmanirhat, already vacated by the Pakistanis, had been occupied by Mukti Bahini, who unaware of 5 Grenadiers' advance, were firing in all directions, thus holding up 5 Grenadiers. The Grenadiers cleared the Pakistanis north of Tista river by 8 December(167).

On 6 December evening orders were issued placing 9 Mtn Bde less 5 Grenadiers under the command of 20 Mtn Div(168). On 11 December, one Coy group 12 Garh Rif ex 9 Mtn Bde with two demolition parties of 1 Fd Coy established a road block on the east bank of Kakra Nallah (QD 6457), east of Dinajpur, to dominate road and rail communications leading to Dinajpur (QD 5256). While clearing some opposition, the Coy group incurred a few casualties. In this action, two dead bodies of Pakistanis were recovered and 4 Razakars captured(169).

During the period 10 November to 17 December 1971, 9 Mtn Bde suffered casualties of 23 killed and 102 wounded, as against Pak casualties of 53 killed, 20 wounded, and 10 captured, inflicted by 9 Mtn Bde(170). Pak casualties upto 16 December 1971,

excluding the general surrender, in the 33 Corps Sector, were 6 Officers, 527 ORs, 5 EPCAF and 82 Razakars killed, 14 ORs wounded, and 25 Officers, 5 JCOs and 484 ORs captured(171). Besides the above, 22,573 all ranks and civilians surrendered to 33 Corps after the cease-fire(172). The Corps suffered 1,310 casualties - 15 Officers killed and 51 Officers wounded; 335 ORs killed, 876 ORs wounded; 31 ORs missing, and 2 NsCE wounded(173).

Assessment

The 33 Corps conducted its operations ably and accomplished its tasks within the given time-frame. They were not asked to cross the Jamuna (Brahmaputra) for advancing towards Dhaka, and as the ferries on this river were destroyed by IAF bombing, it was not possible to do so even if they wanted to. Although, it was planned to link up with elements of 2 Corps on the Hardinge Bridge after the capture of Bogra and Hilli, this could not be accomplished, as the Hardinge Bridge was partly destroyed. As the higher Commanders could not detach themselves from the El Alamein Syndrome of set-piece attacks in favour of manoeuvre tactics, unproductive attacks on un-important Pak strong-holds like Hilli were undertaken, inspite of some hesitation on the part of the Corps Commander and his Divisional Commander. The planning of the operations, it is claimed, was over-centralised at the Command level. Over-centralisation in planning created some lack of confidence in subordinate formations and inhibited local initiative. "Quite apart from the more tangible drawbacks of over-centralisation, this mutual loss of confidence reduces the ability of the system to maximise the combat power applied to the enemy at the pt of impact in the fd"(174).

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Franda, M., p.3.
2. Tayyeb, A., p.11.
3. Cressey, G.B., p.462.
4. Ahmad, N., (II), p.41.
5. Ibid., p.42.
6. Ibid., p.4
7. Ahmad, N., (I), p.154.
8. Ahmad, N., (II), pp.254-255.
9. Ibid., pp.255-256.
10. Gen Vas's Report.
11. Ahmad, N., (I), pp.157-158.
12. Ibid., (II), p.170.
13. The Times of India, 25 April 1971.
14. Ahmad, N., (II), pp.355-366.
15. According to the 1961 Census, the population was 50.85 millions.
16. Franda, M., p.3.
17. Tayyeb, A., p.15.
18. Pakistan - Basic Facts, Pakistan Publications, pp.9-10.
19. From Official Records.
20. Salik, S., p.123; Khan, F.M., pp.276-271. Also From Official Records.
21. From Official Records.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid; Krishnan, N., p.26.
27. According to Official Records, the numbers of Fighter Aircraft were: Gnat-36, Hunters-57, MiG-21 - 54 and Sukhoi-12. Details of the air and naval elements and their operations, are given in Chapters XIV and XV respectively.
28. From Official Records.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Maj Gen Lachhman Singh (Retd), (I), p.39.
41. From Official Records.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid. However another Official source gives 4 Sikh casualties 2 JCOs and 15 OR killed, and 52 OR wounded.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
- According to Maj Gen L. Singh (Retd), Indian troops suffered 93 casualties in the Darsana battle. Singh, L., (Maj Gen Retd), (I), p.107.
72. From Official Records.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid. Maj Zahid of 18 Punjab and Maj Sherur Rehman, the tank commander, were awarded Sitara-i-Jurat for gallantry by Pakistan - Salik, S., p.145.
82. From Official Records.
83. It is not clear whether this move was made by the Div Cdr on his own, or in consultation with the Corps Cdr.
84. From Official Records.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.

91. Lt Gen J.S. Aurora's interview.
92. From Official Records, & captured Pak Map.
93. On 11 December, 57 Bde after withdrawing from Kushtia over the Hardinge Bridge joined up with 16 Div at Nator. Khan, F.M., p.178
94. From Official Records.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Lachhman Singh (Maj Gen Retd), (II), p.51.
100. From Official Records.
101. Ibid. However, another Official report says that 20 Maratha LI with Armour Gp supported by 64 Mtn Regt and a battery each from 38 Medium and 33 Lt Regts advanced towards Charkai at 0900 hrs on 5 December.
102. Salik, S., p.153.
103. From Official Records.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Salik, S., p.154.
107. From Official Records.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
The Indian casualties included men of 17 Kumaon and of 100 Mtn Regt.
112. From Official Records.
113. Salik, S., p,155.
114. Recoilless Rifle, a U.S. weapon supplied to Pakistan.
115. From Official Records.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid. According to Lt Gen Thapan, Commander 33 Corps, IAF attacks destroyed many ferry boats, as a result of which his troops could not cross the Jamuna. - Interview with Lt Gen Thapan on 26 April 1984.
118. From Official Records.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid.

133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Ibid.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid.
139. Ibid.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid.
142. Ibid.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid.
148. As 63 Cavalry had already departed for the Western Theatre, and most of the tanks of 69 Armd Regt were south of Bogra an ad hoc sqn was raised by repairing tanks, left behind by 63 Cav, and regrouped them with 66, 202 and 340 Mtn Bdes for the operation of 16 December - Lachhman Singh (Maj Gen, Retd) (I), pp.92-93.
149. Ibid.
150. Lachhman Singh (Maj Gen, Retd), (II), p.149.
151. From Official Records. According to another Official report the number of surrendered Pak ORs was 10,261, NCSE 282, and civilians 119.
152. Ibid.
153. Ibid. This Bde operated under the command of 6 Mtn Div from 1st to 17th December 1971.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid.
169. Ibid.
170. Ibid.
171. Ibid.
172. Ibid.
173. Ibid.
174. Ibid. Lt Gen Thapan's observation.

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MARCH TO DHAKA

While 2 Corps and 33 Corps were smashing forward into the Bangladesh districts west of the Jamuna-Padma river system, the 4 Corps based in Tripura had started its operations which led it finally into Dhaka.

OPERATIONS OF 4 CORPS

The Pak forces deployed opposite 4 Corps at the beginning of the war were as under:- (1)

14 Inf Div (Maj Gen Qazi Abdul Majid Khan)

HQ	- Ashuganj area.
31 Fd Regt	- Sylhet-Shamshernagar-Brahmanbaria area.
Elements 53 Fd Regt	- Comilla-Feni area.(2)
88 (Indep) Mortar Battery	- Sylhet
171 (Indep) Mortar Battery	- Comilla
34 Punjab less two Coys	- Brahmanbaria-Comilla.

202 Inf Bde (Brig Salimullah)(3)

HQ	- Sylhet
31 Punjab	- Chattack-Sylhet-Jaintiapur-Charkhai area
91 Mujahid Bn (less two Coys)	- Sunamganj-Sheola area
Two Coys 12 AKRF Bn	- Sylhet
Khyber Rifles,) Thal Scouts) Tochi Scouts) (Mixed with) regular Bns))	- In the whole area.

313 Inf Bde (Brig Iftikhar Rana)

HQ	- Maulvibazar
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22 Baluch - Kulaura-Juri area
 30 Frontier Force - Srimangal-Shamsher Nagar-Kamalpur area
 Two Coys 91 Mujahid Bn - Fenchuganj-Sherpur area
 Elements Tochi Scouts - Barlekha area

27 Inf Bde (Brig Saadullah Khan)

HQ - Brahmanbaria
 Two Troops Tanks (Chafees) - Akhaura area
 33 Baluch - Kasba-Saidabad-Kuti area
 12 Frontier Force - Gangasagar-Akhaura -
 - Paharpur-Fakirmura area

39 Inf Div (Maj Gen Rahim Khan)

HQ - Chandpur (was under process of raising, but remained incomplete due to commencement of operations).

53 Fd Regt - Comilla-Feni (4)

53 Inf Bde (Brig Mohd Aslam Niazi)

HQ - Feni
 15 Baluch - Feni area
 39 Baluch - Laksham-Mian Bazar Chauddagram
 23 Punjab - Mian Bazar-Parikot
 21 AK Bn - Laksham-Feni

117 Inf Bde (Brig Sheikh Mansoor Hussain Atif)

HQ - Comilla
 Sqn Tanks (Chafees) - Comilla area
 30 Punjab - Saldanadi-Bibirbazar
 25 FF - Lalmai-Mynamati-Laksham

12 AK Bn (less two Coys) - Comilla

91 Inf Bde (Brig Mian Taskin-ud-Din)

HQ (under raising) - Chittagong

24 FF - Ramgarh-Karerhat-Zorarganj-Chittagong

97 Inf Bde (Brig Ata Mohd Khan Malik)

HQ - Chittagong

48 Baluch (Garrison Battalion) - Chittagong

2 Cdo Bn - Rangamati-Kaptai

60 Wing) Chittagong-Ramgarh-
Rangers) Karerhat area,
61 Wing) - with one Coy at
Rangers) Cox's Bazar.

Against the above, 4 Corps of the Indian Army was deployed as under:- (5)

HQ 4 Corps (Lt Gen Sagat Singh) - Teliamura near Agartala

Elements of Arty,
Engrs, Sigs, ASC,
Med, Ord, EME etc.

8 Mtn Div (Maj Gen Krishna Rao) - Badarpur-Karimganj Dharmanagar area.

59 Mtn Bde (Brig Quinn)

4/5 GR (FF)
9 Gds
6 Rajput

81 Mtn Bde (Brig Apte)

3 Punjab
4 Kumaon
10 Mahar

Under Command of 8 Mtn Div

BSF Bns
84

86
87 (less two Coys)
104 (less two Coys) and
93

1 EB Bde with

1 & 8 EB Bns.

23 Mtn Div (Maj Gen R.D. Hira) - Kamalpur-Mynamati area

83 Mtn Bde (Brig B.S. Sandhu)

2 Rajput
3 Dogra
8 Bihar

181 Mtn Bde (Brig Y.P. Bakshi)

6 Jat
9 Kumaon
14 Kumaon

301 Mtn Bde (Brig H.S. Sodhi)

14 Jat
3 Kumaon
1/11 GR

Under Command

90 BSF (Coy)
2 & 9 EB Bns
Four MF Coys.

57 Mtn Div (Maj Gen Gonsalves) - Tripura-Mizo Hills

61 Mtn Bde (Brig K.P.(Tom) Pande)

2 Jat
7 Raj Rif
12 Kumaon

73 Mtn Bde (Brig Tuli)

14 Gds
19 Punjab
19 Raj Rif

311 Mtn Bde (Brig R.N. Mishra)

4 Gds
18 Rajput

10 Bihar

Under Command

BSF Bns
90 (Coy)
91
104 (Two Coys)

EB Bns
11
MF Coy

Yankee Force

31 Jat
32 Mahar less Coy
4 & 10 EB Bns
92 BSF
38 CRPF
6 MF Coys
Mujib Bty, etc

Tasks

Besides the defensive task of protecting the Indian territory from Badarpur in Assam in the north to the borders of Tripura and Mizoram in the south, opposite Chittagong Hill Tracts, 4 Corps was to destroy Pak forces east of the Meghna and occupy Comilla, Chandpur, Feni and Chittagong(6).

The main aim was to unhinge and isolate the Pak force in area Comilla-Lalmai by advancing swiftly to the line of the river Meghna. For this, the Corps' plan was first to capture Akhaura to block the Pakistani Brigade at Brahmanbaria, capture southern portion of Lalmai heights to obtain the road line of communication, keep the Pak 53 Inf Bde at Feni and Ramgarh engaged, and contain 117 Pak Inf Bde at Mynamati, and then to make a swift advance to capture the river ports of Chandpur and Daudkandi and cut off Sylhet by capturing Maulvibazar town, Sherpur and Sadipur ferries(7). For implementing these tasks, the three Mountain Divisions were suitably deployed, with separate tasks allotted to each of them(8).

8 Mtn Div Operations

This Division, which was to operate in Sylhet district, north of general line Ajmiriganj-Maulvibazar had the following tasks: (9)

Phase I

- (a) To advance along axes Dharmanagar (RH 4106) - Kulaura; Brahman Bazar (RH 1823) - Maulvibazar; and Kailashahar-Shamshernagar-Maulvibazar;
- (b) to capture Maulvibazar and Sadipur/Sherpur ferries (RG 8737), thereby isolating Sylhet from the south by D plus 6;
- (c) to contain Charkhai by one Bn group and clear all area south of R. Surma to ensure safety to Karimganj (RH 6264) and Badarpur Rail Br.(248565);
- (d) to capture Shamshernagar Airfield by D plus 3;
- (e) to develop subsidiary threat along road Muktapur (RC 3400)- Sylhet with one Inf Bn group;
- (f) to protect road and rail communications between Dona and Kamalpur;
- (g) to push Echo Force from Meghalaya down to Sylhet(10).

Phase II

- (a) To be prepared to capture Brahmanbaria (RM 2555);
- (b) to capture Sylhet, if possible by D plus 14.

With the breaking out of open hostilities, 8 Mtn Div commenced Operation "Grand Slam" as part of the general offensive of the Eastern Command. However, against the normal complement of three brigades, 8 Mtn Div consisted of two regular brigades and some BSF and Niyomito Bahini battalions. Keeping in view its tasks, the extent of the area of offensive operations, four widely separated axes of advance and the Pakistani strength opposing this Division, the formation had a hard task before it(11).

On the capture of Shamshernagar town and the airfield, the interrogation of prisoners revealed that the Pak commander was holding in strength the area Munshibazar (RH 0409), ahead of his main defences at Maulvibazar (RH 9618). The task of its capture was assigned to 3 Punjab(12) of 81 Mtn Bde. There were in this area one Coy of 33 FF and some EPCAF personnel. 3 Punjab commenced advance in the evening of 4 Dec,

carried out a cross-country manoeuvre from the north-eastern direction and assembled in area Durgapur (RH 0610) at approximately 0200 hrs on 5 Dec. After occupying Gobindapur (RH 0510) by a swift action, they attacked Munshibazar from the northern side and captured it by 0830 hrs against stiff Pak resistance with MMGs and mortars. Indian artillery engaged all the targets effectively and neutralised them. The fight lasted till 1735 hrs that day, when the remnant of the Pak troops ultimately gave up. The Pak casualties totalled 22 killed, including one officer of 30 FF, and 31 ORs taken prisoner(13). The battalion cleared all pockets of resistance along the river Dhalai during night 5/6 Dec and occupied Daurachara Tea Factory(RH 0012) by the evening of 6 Dec(14).

Advance to Maulvibazar(15) : Advance to Maulvibazar, a communication centre and Pak stronghold of tactical significance on the route of Sherpur/Sadipur ferries and Sylhet, was resumed on 6 Dec. As per earlier information, the Pakistanis were holding this area with two Coys. On 7 Dec, 10 Mahar and 4 Kumaon kept moving forward towards Maulvibazar by leap-frogging until they were within a thousand metres of the Pak troops, but no contact could be established with them. Reports were received that they were gradually pulling out from Maulvibazar. On 8th, Maulvibazar was still subjected to heavy Indian artillery shelling and air attacks, followed by a ground attack on night 8/9 Dec by 10 Mahar and 4 Kumaon. On 9 Dec the Indians entered the area, but found no Pak troops except a few Razakars here and there. The air attacks on Maulvibazar had apparently unnerved 313 Inf Bde which had withdrawn from there in a hurry.

Advance to Sherpur/Sadipur ferries and Sylhet(16) :

During the night of 9/10 Dec, a Coy of 3 Punjab advanced along the Sylhet road and occupied Kazirbazar (RG 9023) without any opposition. 3 Punjab then advanced to Sherpur ferry and secured it by 1330 hrs on 10 Dec. En route, one bridge (in sq RG 7828) was found destroyed by the fleeing enemy. A diversion had to be prepared, which took about six hours. By using country boats at Sherpur, 3 Punjab crossed the Kusiara on the morning of 11 Dec and secured area Sadipur Ferry by 1015 hrs. Large dumps of ammunition, supplies, and POL were found in well-defended positions between the two ferries. It appeared that the Pakistanis had planned to give a stiff fight at these two natural obstacles, but for some reason, they

withdrew to Sylhet.

The 4 Kumaon followed up, and by the morning of 12 Dec, 3 Punjab had built up south of Sadipur, and 4 Kumaon south of Sherpur. The timely build-up across Sherpur/Sadipur ferries was made possible by the Engineers who constructed a class 5 raft and repaired the civilian ferries which had been destroyed by the Pakistanis earlier. 3 Punjab then resumed the advance towards Sylhet, and at 1330 hrs on 13 Dec it contacted the Pak troops in area Mile 2 (RH 0564). An attack was mounted on this position swiftly and the Pakistanis retreated to Sylhet without putting up much of a fight. At this point the 3 Punjab was placed under 59 Mtn Bde for the capture of Sylhet, and 81 Mtn Bde less 3 Punjab was ordered to concentrate at Agartala as Corps reserve.

HQ 59 Mtn Bde was given the task to capture Kulaura (RH 2525) and then advance to Sylhet via Fenchuganj (RH 1544). After the capture of Ghazipur (RH 2820) by 4/5 GR(FF) on 4 Dec, the battalion was ordered to probe further forward up to Kulaura. It moved into Kulaura at 1000 hrs on 6 Dec, found no Pak troops, and immediately occupied it without any opposition. Similarly, 6 Rajput, after establishing road blocks on roads Kulaura Pritampasha (RH 1912) and Kulaura-Brahman Bazar (RH 1922), commenced advance to Brahman Bazar on 6 Dec and occupied it without any opposition by 2100 hrs(17). 9 Guards moved from Kapna Pahar (RH 3526) via Ghazipur and concentrated at Kulaura by 7 Dec 1971. The Pakistanis were holding defences in the Halaichara (RH 1823) area with approximately two mixed platoons and some Razakars. 6 Rajput assaulted and captured the area on 7 Dec(18). The Pakistanis withdrew, leaving behind a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

As wireless intercepts had indicated that the Pak troops were pulling out from this sector and concentrating in area Brahmanbaria, 59 Mtn Bde (less 4/5 GR(FF)) was sent to Kailashahar for subsequent move to Agartala. However, on 10 Dec the Bde Gp (less 4/5 GR(FF)) was ordered to advance to Sylhet along axis Kulaura-Fenchuganj-Sylhet.

Airlift to Sylhet:

As information had been received by GOC 4 Corps on 7 Dec that the Pakistanis were withdrawing from Sylhet, it was decided to airlift 4/5 GR(FF) of 59 Mtn Bde and land it near Sylhet. On 7 Dec, Comdr 59 Mtn Bde accompanied by Gp Capt Chandan Singh and OC 4/5 GR(FF) flew over Sylhet in a helicopter, reconnoitred the area and selected suitable landing sites(19).

The heli-lift of 4/5 GR(FF), ex Kulaura, started at 1500 hrs on 7 Dec. By 1800 hrs that day, a Coy had been airlifted to the site, south-east of Sylhet, across the Surma river(20). The Pakistanis detected the move and the Gurkhas came under fire immediately after landing. The second phase of the airlift started at 0300 hrs on 8 Dec, and the complete Bn less some elements of the Bn HQ were landed in Sylhet by 0800 hrs. During the initial landing, Pak fire was moderate, but in the subsequent landings the Pak troops opened fire from all directions, and there was constant Pak shelling of the landing site whenever Indian helicopters brought troops.

The Gurkhas established a firm base in a grove near Mirapara (RH 0866) in Sylhet. Now, it was discovered that the Pakistanis had built up considerable strength in the area and had taken up positions all around. The earlier information that the Pak troops were pulling out of Sylhet proved incorrect; in fact the Pak 202 Inf Bde was very much in Sylhet and the surrounding area at that time. After the fall of Maulvibazar, 313 Inf Bde also joined the Sylhet garrison. Thus the town was held by the remnants of 31 Punjab, 30 FF, 22 Baluch, and a Bn each of Tochi, Khyber and Thal Scouts. The garrison was supported by 171 Mortar Bty (120 mm) and 31 Fd Regt (105 mm How). From the day of landing of 4/5 GR(FF) in Sylhet till 15 Dec 71, the Pakistanis kept on engaging the battalion's firm base with intense SA, mortar and artillery fire. However, a number of Coy attacks were launched by 4/5 GR(FF) and the Pakistanis were cleared from some of the locations around them. Some ambushes were also laid on Sylhet-Jaintiapur road and casualties inflicted on Pak troops and vehicles. A number of air attacks were also directed against Pak positions. As Indian positions were also well-registered artillery targets, collection of air drops and evacuation of casualties had to be undertaken under fire. 4/5 GR(FF) casualties in Sylhet were 12 dead and 40 wounded.

At the time of the landing of 4/5 GR(FF) in Sylhet, it was appreciated that E Sector troops on Axis Jaintiapur (RH 3489)-Sylhet would effect an early link-up with 4/5 GR(FF). However, till 10 Dec 1971, E Sector troops could only advance up to Hemu (RH 2580), approximately 16 miles away from Sylhet. The Pakistanis had carried out effective demolition of roads and bridges, and the Indian advance could not proceed as fast as expected. Under these circumstances, 59 Mtn Bde (less one Bn) was ordered on 10 Dec to advance along the Axis Kulaura-Fenchuganj-Sylhet and capture Sylhet.

The 6 Rajput, commencing advance from Kailashahar on 10 Dec, reached the Dak Bangalow area (RH 158444) of Fenchuganj in the morning of 11 Dec 1971 without any opposition(21). The Pak troops appeared to have withdrawn in haste on the evening of 10 Dec. Operations were launched at 0500 hrs on 11 Dec 1971 to secure the northern bank of the river Kusiya. Crossing the river on a flank, 6 Rajput launched an attack at 1500 hrs. After severe fighting the Rajputs captured the north bank of the river and later cleared the area upto Illaspur Ferry (RH 138465). The Pakistanis lost 8 killed, and a number of others were wounded. Six, all ranks, were captured by Indian troops, along with a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

The 6 Rajput then commenced advance to Magla Bazar (RH 1156) on the morning of 12 Dec. The Pakistanis were holding small pockets all along the route of advance and kept on firing intermittently. However, a flanking manoeuvre from the west and an assault on the Pak positions, launched at 0330 hrs on 13 Dec 71, forced the Pakistanis to pull out. Advancing from Magla Bazar at 1100 hrs on 13 Dec, the battalion encountered opposition in area Mullergaon (RH 0860) during night 13/14 Dec. Further move along this approach was then found impossible due to marshes and nullahs, and the attack for that night was called off. On the morning of 14 Dec, the position was assaulted and area Kola Bil captured by 1100 hrs. The Pakistanis left behind 15 dead bodies and some weapons. 9 Guards then established a block on Rd Kola Bil-Sylhet, behind the Pak positions, and the withdrawing Pak troops were trapped. One vehicle carrying an officer and eight wounded ORs, and 45 other Pak troops were captured.

Siege of Sylhet: (22)

For the all important task of capturing Sylhet, 3 Punjab ex 81 Mtn Bde was placed under the command of 59 Mtn Bde and the Bn arrived in area Kitta (RH 0564) on 13 Dec. Meanwhile, 9 Guards, which had followed 6 Rajput upto Magla Bazar, resumed advance on 13 Dec along Axis Chhabdalpur (RH 0555)-Kitta and contacted the Pak troops in area Daadpur (RH 0664). 3 Punjab and 9 Guards put in an attack and captured the position the same evening. Pak casualties were 10 regular troops and 7 EPCAF killed and 7 regular ORs wounded. 9 Guards and 3 Punjab then attacked Sylhet Railway Station area on the night of 13/14 Dec. The Pakistanis, approximately one Coy, fought throughout the night, but the Railway Station was captured by 0645 hrs. After suffering casualties of 17 regular ORs and 12 EPCAF men killed and 4 ORs of 22 Baluch and

10 ORs of EPCAF captured, the Pakistanis withdrew to the northern bank of Surma river. Five ORs of 9 Guards were killed and 1 Officer, 1 JCO and 14 ORs wounded in this battle. The southern bank of the Surma was secured by morning on 14 Dec. Meanwhile, Echo Force, consisting of 5/5 GR(FF) and some Mukti Bahini Coys, advancing south from Dauki (RC 2304) to the north of Sylhet under the command of 8 Mtn Div, moved along axis Jaintiapur (RH 3489)-Darbasth (RH 3288)-Sylhet,(23) and captured Sarighat (RH 3492), Darbasth (RH 3288), Chandghat (RH 2579) and Haripur (RH 2579) and invested Sylhet from the north-east. 1 East Bengal Bn had advanced cross-country from Kanairghat (RH 5081) to Chiknagul (RH 2377) and joined up with 5/5 GR(FF) on 12 Dec. The following day, they encountered stiff opposition at Balipara (RH 2679). One Coy 86 BSF and a platoon of MF assaulted the position and captured it. The Pakistanis suffered 20 killed and 10 wounded, and 2 ORs of 31 Punjab were taken prisoner. The Pak position at Khadimnagar (RH 1473) - just to the north-east of Sylhet was contacted on 15 Dec. Here the Pak troops had taken up defences on small hills with approximately two Coys of mixed troops supported by HMGs, mortars and artillery. After a bitter fight, 5/5 GR(FF) captured Khadimnagar at 1020 hrs on 16 Dec and then pursued the withdrawing Pakistanis into Sylhet. The Sylhet gas company complex was captured and later one Coy 86 BSF captured the Radio Station intact. The Pakistanis suffered 11 killed and 14 wounded in this action(24). The BSF also played a creditable role in this sector. By 7 Dec 1971, Latu (Pak) (RH 4856), Juri (RH 3532) and Barlekha (RH 4245) were occupied by a Coy each of 84 BSF and 87 BSF(25). 104 BSF Bn secured areas Srimangal (RG 8996), Shaistaganj (RM 6292) and Habiganj (RG 5805)(26).

Surrender of Sylhet Garrison:

From 9 Dec onwards Sylhet garrison remained surrounded and isolated from the rest of the Pak formations(27). Although no infantry attack was made on Sylhet town, fifty-six IAF sorties were made over Sylhet between 8 and 15 Dec, as a result of which some buildings held by Pak troops were destroyed(28). In the early hours of 16 Dec, the Pak Army Garrison Comdr in Sylhet sent a team of two officers and a few men, carrying a white flag, to 4/5 GR(FF), offering to surrender. A meeting was held between the opposing Commanders near the Sylhet bridge at 1500 hrs on 16 Dec. Later, another meeting was held by Comdr 59 Mtn Bde with the Pak Garrison Comdr and Comdr Pak 313 Inf Bde on 17 Dec, when Dhaka had already surrendered. Plans for the laying down of arms by the Pak forces in Sylhet were finalised. 107 Officers (including three Brigs and one Col), 219 JCOs and 6,229 ORs, i.e. a total of 6,555 all ranks of Pak forces at Sylhet, surrendered to the Indian Army at 1500 hrs on 17 Dec 71(29).

23 Mtn Div Operations

The Plan: The 23 Mtn Div operational area lay from Comilla (RR 3194) in the north, to Chauddagam (RR 4765)-Laksham (RR 2666) track and Laksham-Chandpur (RQ 7364) railway line in the south, and upto the Meghna on the west. In this area Chandpur, Comilla, Laksham and Daudkandi (RL 8001) were the important nodal points. All major roads from Tripura to Chandpur on the Meghna passed through Comilla but there was a minor road to Chandpur passing through Laksham and Lalmai (RR 2980) via Chauddagam, dominated by Pak troops at Laksham in the south and Lalmai in the north. While Daudkandi was linked with Comilla via Mynamati (RR 2497) by an east-west road, Chandpur was linked with Comilla and Laksham via Lalmai village. A number of tracks converged on Comilla (RR 3194) from west linking it with Mynamati-Jafarganj (RM 1706) and Mynamati-Daudkandi roads. On the other hand, Laksham, which was connected with Tripura by a motorable road upto Chauddagam, was linked with Noakhali (RR 2415) and Comilla by road and with Chittagong (RX 0558), Noakhali, Comilla and Chandpur by rail. It was developed into a defensive fortress by the Pak Army. As Chandpur and Daudkandi were major river ports between Chittagong and Dhaka, they were important tactical objectives, besides Mynamati and Lalmai. While Pak 117 Bde under Brig Atif was concentrated in Comilla-Laksham area, Pak 53 Bde defended Laksham-Feni (RR 5738) area, and Maj Gen Rahim Khan GOC 39 Inf Div had his HQ at Chandpur for the security of the whole area from Comilla in the north to Feni in the south. The area north of Comilla remained the responsibility of Pak 14 Inf Div under Maj Gen Abdul Majid Khan.

Lt Gen Sagat Singh, the GOC 4 Corps, was always aware of the formidable Pak fortress at Lalmai, the southern parts of which were only 6 km away from the strong Pak force at Laksham. Mobile Pak army patrols dominated the gap between these two Pak defence areas and the narrow corridor could be easily pinched off. Hence, it was dangerous to push any large force through this gap towards Chandpur. But, as by 3 Dec 23 Mtn Div had already cleared Belonia buldge of Pakistani troops, Brig Niazi, Commander Pak 53 Inf Bde, was led to think that India's main thrust would be towards Feni, and moved forces there from Laksham. This small enemy mistake was enough for the hawk-eyed Rajput General. Taking advantage of the Pak reaction, Sagat Singh decided that Lalmai and Laksham were left with no mobile forces to dominate the gap, and hence there would be no serious threat to his forces trying to by-pass Laksham for advance to Chandpur. On the night of 3/4 Dec, he revised 23 Mtn Div's tasks and

issued orders that 23 Mtn Div (Fighting Cock) was to contain the Pak defences at Lalmai Height, Mynamati and Laksham, and push a Brigade through the gap to capture Chandpur(30). One Squadron of PT-76 tanks and the Corps reserve (61 Mtn Bde) were allotted to 23 Mtn Div for the first phase of its operation, i.e. for containing Lalmai Height and Mynamati. The Corps Commander's aggressive plan evoked the offensive spirit and optimism of the subordinate commanders, who, in their turn, displayed boldness and initiative. 23 Mtn Div allotted the following tasks to the brigades under its command:- (31)

(a) 61 Mountain Brigade

To provide firm base by securing FDLs from Sonamura (RR 4195) to Nirbhaypur (RR 4481) by first light D day. To secure northern flank of 301 Mtn Bde Gp by blocking the road Dhaka-Chittagong in general area south of Suagan (RR 3882).

(b) 83 Mountain Brigade

To infiltrate with two battalions north and south of Road Chauddagram-Laksham and secure area mile 27 by first light D+1, and then liquidate Pak pockets left behind.

To isolate and reduce Parikot (RR 3964) defences by establishing a block in area Bangodda (RR 3864) by first light D+3.

To advance along the axis and assist 181 Mtn Bde in reducing Laksham by light D+5.

To secure the southern flank of the Division.

(c) 301 Mountain Brigade

One battalion group to infiltrate along northern approach to establish a road block and secure Majlispur (RR 3578) by first light D+1.

One battalion to infiltrate south of the central approach to secure Kashinagar (RR 3675) by first light D+1.

To secure Bhuschi (RR 3271) by first light D+2.

To clear all Pak localities between the border and the blocks supported by 1 Independent Armoured Squadron.

(d) 181 Mountain Brigade

To advance along central approach behind 301

Mtn Bde upto Bhushi, establish firm base there and then isolate Laksham by first light D+3.

To reduce Laksham by first light D+5.

61 Mtn Bde Operations: On night 3/4 Dec 1971, 61 Mtn Bde under Tom Pande captured Suagan and reached Majlispur (RR 3578). In the morning of 5 Dec, it occupied Pipulia, south of Comilla, when orders were received for its reversion as Corps reserve under HQ 4 Corps. The Brigade had cut the Comilla-Chittagong road, before being relieved by 9 EB Battalion and a battery ex 57 Mtn Regt. On 6 Dec, it was asked to move north to contain Mynamati(32). After crossing the river Gumti, Pande's troops (12 Kumaon) captured Rajapur (RM 2807) and Burichang (RM 2605), north of Comilla. By first light on 7 Dec, the whole Brigade and a troop of PT-76 tanks built up south of the Gumti in the Jafarganj (RM 1706) area. Resuming advance they established road blocks at Chandina and Jafarganj, and captured both these places. When a Pakistani Coy came in vehicles from Mynamati to dislodge the Indian troops, they were fired upon and dispersed. Hearing of a massive Indian build-up north and west of Mynamati and the fall of Chandina, Brig Atif of Pak 117 Inf Bde got alarmed about the defence of Mynamati itself, which was held by only one battalion at that time. Consequently, he pulled the rest of his brigade, which was deployed in Comilla and Lalmai hills, back into Mynamati. This hasty withdrawal of Pak troops from Comilla and Lalmai hills allowed the advancing Indian troops to use the road from Laksham. The Pakistani Commanders fell in utter confusion, and Comilla was vacated and captured by Indian troops on 9 Dec. Of the Pak troops which tried to fall back on the Mynamati defences, about 500 were taken prisoner. This was the first major Pak surrender during this war. The remainder of the Pak brigade at Mynamati was surrounded by 61 Mtn Bde from the north and west. Pande pushed one battalion towards Daudkandi via Elliotganj, and secured it by 9 Dec, brushing off minor resistance. From 12 Dec onwards Brig Pande came under the command of 23 Mtn Div for the reduction of Mynamati fortress. Pakistani troops withdrew from Laksham towards Mynamati, leaving behind their heavy weapons and vehicles, and moving on man-pack basis. The bulk of these troops were taken prisoner by Indian forces, while only about 200 Pak troops under Brig Niazi could join 117 Bde at Mynamati. The main column under Lt Col Nayeem surrendered to Brig Pande near Chandina on 12 Dec(33). Although, 61 Mtn Bde less one battalion mounted successive attacks on Mynamati from the north and west, this formidable Pak fortress continued to resist till cease-fire.

181 Mtn Bde Operations: The brigade was to advance along Himmatpur (RR 4576)-Bhuschi (RR 3271)-Sasanpur (RR 2971)-Laksham, and isolate Laksham by first light D+3 and then reduce it by first light D+5(34). On 4 Dec, 181 Mtn Bde advanced along the axis Himmatpur-Bhuschi. Next day, 9 Kumaon after cutting road and rail links at Bhora (RR 2571) reached area Harishchar-Bhora Khalilpur. By night 5/6 Dec, they established a road block near Gazaria (RR 2870) by cutting the Comilla-Laksham road. Meanwhile, 6 Jat firmed at Ramchandrapur-Bhakarda (RR 2268) and cut rail link Laksham-Mudafarganj. Thus, by first light on 6 Dec they isolated Laksham from north and west. That day a brisk fight took place between 14 Kumaon and Pak troops in area Dighi (RR 2468) in which the Indian battalion suffered some casualties. On the same date, 6 Jat also came under fire from Pak troops, west and south of Laksham, and suffered 3 ORs killed, and one Officer and 4 ORs wounded. Pak casualties were approximately 75 killed(35).

At this stage it was discovered that Laksham complex was well-defended by about a brigade group, and hence, it was decided not to attack it. Instead it was subjected to intensive air strikes and artillery shelling from 6 Dec onwards. As on 7 Dec, reports were received that Baghmara (RR 2877), situated on the southern part of Lalmai hills, had been vacated by Pak troops, 9 Kumaon less two companies moved on road Laksham-Comilla towards Lalmai and occupied the southern tip of Lalmai hills the next day (36). On 10 Dec, 9 Kumaon and 14 Kumaon entered Laksham from railway station side in the north and, after a little resistance, captured it. The bulk of the Pak troops had abandoned the town on the night of 8/9 Dec, leaving behind huge quantities of arms and ammunition. Pak troops suffered 150 killed here, and the rest withdrew for Mynamati and south of Chandpu in groups of 30 and 40 persons. On night 12/13 Dec, the brigade less 14 Kumaon was deployed for capturing Mynamati, and on 13 Dec, the Brigade HQ shifted from Baghmara to Chaudari Kholā (RR 2685). On night 13/14 Dec, 9 Kumaon captured Mustafapur complex (RR 2592) and repulsed two Pak counter-attacks. Pak casualties were 12 ORs killed and 48 all ranks wounded. On night 14/15 Dec, 6 Jat occupied the Pak position of Alipur (RR 2493) and Budhair (RR 2393). On 15 Dec, due to heavy Pak shelling at Alipur, 2 Officers, 4 JCOs and 11 ORs ex-6 Jat were injured and 3 ORs killed. On night 15/16 Dec, in the midst of intermittent Pak firing, 14 Kumaon, which had come under 181 Mtn Bde on 14 Dec, firmed in area (RR 2590) from Lalmai south. At 1100 hrs, next day, they attacked Mynamati complex from the south (Mustafapur side). As the attack

progressed, Brig Mohd Aslam Niazi, Commander Mynamati garrison, surrendered to Brig Y.P. Bakshi, Commander 181 Mtn Bde, at 1230 hrs on 16 Dec. The formal surrender ceremony, however, took place at 1000 hrs on 17 Dec, and the following Pakistanis were captured: (37)

- (a) Officers - 92 (Brig 2, Lt Col 5, Maj 28, Capt 39, and Lt 18).
- (b) JCOs - 181
- (c) ORs - 4,025
- (d) Civilians - 162 (including 13 women and 18 children).

83 Mtn Bde Operations

Under the revised plan, 83 Mtn Bde under Brig B.S. Sandhu, was ordered to advance along the Chauddagram-Laksham road and to isolate Laksham from the south. After infiltrating across the border, the Brigade established all its road blocks by first light on 4 Dec 1971, and captured Chauddagram at 1000 hrs next day after a fight(38). Indian casualties were 5 ORs killed and 25 wounded (including one officer), while Pakistan suffered 77 killed and 12 prisoners taken from 23 Punjab. Remainder of the Pak troops fled towards Laksham, leaving behind all their heavy weapons, and blowing up the bridge on the Dakatia Nullah near Parikot. Brig Aslam Niazi, Commander 53 Inf Bde (Pak), had been ordered on 4 Dec to move back from Feni to Laksham with 15 Baluch, 39 Baluch, and two Coys 21 AK Bn. This Pak Bde managed to reach Laksham by rail on the night of 5/6 Dec. After clearing Kadba (RR 3664), Parikot (RR 4064) and Dombaria (RR 3064), Indian troops established block at Katiachar (RR 2763), south of Laksham, on 7 Dec. After air, artillery and Grad P rocket attacks, 83 and 181 Mtn Bdes cleared Laksham on 9 Dec(39). Next, 83 Mtn Bde was ordered to carry out offensive towards Chittagong in collaboration with Kilo force, commanded by Brig Anand Sarup.

Operation Trump Card: 83 Mtn Bde was given the task to capture Chittagong quickly in conjunction with Kilo Force(40). Under command were 2 Rajput, 3 Dogra, 8 Bihar, 60 Field Company, supported by 57 Mtn Regt less Battery, and 1832 Light Regiment. Kilo Force, operating ahead of 83 Mtn Bde prior to launching of the operation, was deployed as under:-

- (a) 32 Mahar - In contact with Pak troops at Sitalpur (RW 9572).

- (b) 31 Jat - Area Kumira (RW 9378)
- (c) 4 EB Bn - In contact with Pak troops at Nazirhat (RX 0294).
- (d) 10 EB Bn - In square 9977 blocking lateral road-track Kumiraghat-Hathazari (RX 0378).
- (e) Six MF Coys - Employed with regular infantry Bns.

On 13 Dec, 83 Mtn Bde HQ, 3 Dogra less Coy, 2 Rajput less 2 coys, 8 Bihar, 57 Mtn Regt less Bty, and 1832 Lt Bty, concentrated at Sitakund (RW 8793). The overall strength of the Pak troops in area Chittagong was about two battalions with other garrison troops and administrative units. Their known dispositions were:- (41)

- (a) Sitalpur (RW 9572) - Approximately one company plus
- (b) Area North of Bhatiari (RW 9868) - Approximately two companies plus.
- (c) Fauzdarhat (RW 9868) - Strength not known.
- (d) Nazirhat (RX 0294) - Approximately two companies.

Kilo Force advanced from Sitakund and on the night of 13/14 Dec, captured Kumiraghat, held by two coys of Pak troops - ex 15 Baluch and 25 FF, and Fatikchari (RS 0100), held by one platoon regular troops. On 15 Dec, Kilo Force occupied Sitalpur and Nazirhat without much opposition(42). At last light on 15 Dec, 2 Rajput less coy and 3 Dogra less coy of 83 Mtn Bde advancing from Sitalpur through the hills, east of the road Sitalkund - Chittagong, arrived at Bulako (RW 0070) by mid-day on 16 Dec, when cease-fire talks were in progress(43). Hence, the battalions were ordered to concentrate there. Next day, 2 Rajput and 3 Dogra took surrender of the Pak troops at Fauzdarhat (RW 9767) and Chittagong cantonment respectively. 8 Bihar was deployed in Chittagong to maintain law and order(44).

301 Mtn Bde Operations: While the operations described above were important, the deadliest thrust of 23 Mtn Div was delivered through its 301 Mtn Bde. At last light on 3 Dec, when the war was only a few hours old, all the three battalions of the Bde infiltrated across the border. 3 Kumaon (Rif) cleared

Pak troops from area Chandari (12 r RR 4180) and Chandul Diggi (RR 4279) at 0645 hrs(45). On 4 Dec, they despatched one coy to area Majlispur (RR 3578), and established the rest in the area (RR 4179) covering Dhaka-Chittagong road. They cleared Mian Bazar (RR 4277) in conjunction with 1 Indep Armd Sqn by 1200 hrs. While the Pakistani troops were withdrawing from Mian Bazar, they were engaged by 3 Kumaon (Rif). In the operation, 3 Kumaon (Rif) suffered 2 killed and 2 wounded, while Pakistanis suffered 50 killed and 17 captured. However, the Pakistanis destroyed 3 Indian tanks by A/tk mines, inflicting casualties of 1 OR killed, and 2 Officers, 2 JCOs and 6 ORs wounded on 1 Indep Armd Sqn(46). And 14 Jat could occupy Lalgah (RR 4273) only after two unsuccessful attacks on 4 Dec. The same day, 1/11 GR occupied Kashinagar (RR 3676), Padua (RR 3973) and Gandasa (RR 3974), inflicting casualties of 15 to 16 killed(47). They also captured 6 Pak officers, 8 JCOs and 202 ORs/NCsE of 25 FF, including the commanding officer, while they were trying to escape from area Mian Bazar-Bangalmuri(48). Thus breaking the back-bone of the Pak defence at Kashinagar, the Gorkhas secured Bhuschi (RR 3272) and Sasanpur (RR 2971)(49). On 6 Dec, 1/11 GR cleared Mudafarganj (RR 1769) and secured intact both the bridges at Mudafarganj. In this action, the Pakistanis suffered casualties of 17 killed. One Indian soldier was wounded(50). Pak troops attacked Mudafarganj thrice on night 7/8 Dec, and again incurred heavy casualties. On 8 Dec, the brigade captured Pak positions at Inayatpur (RR 9967)-Rajapur (RR 0067), and Hajiganj (RQ 9568). Indian troops suffered 3 killed and 17 wounded, including one officer(51).

In the north, 14 Jat with one Mtn Bty, 197 Mtn Regt ex 301 Mtn Bde, and 9 EBR were ordered to clear the airfield and Comilla town(52). Advancing from Bhuschi on 7 Dec, they captured Gazaria (RR 3383), Lakshmipur (RR 3487) and the Comilla air field without much effort(53). Advance beyond the airfield was led by a captured Razakar, and fighting for Comilla took place from bunker to bunker on 8 Dec, but it was captured the same day. Indian casualties were six killed and 11 wounded whereas Pak troops suffered 43 dead and one Officer (Maj) and 31 ORs captured(54).

Gen Sagat Singh was continuously monitoring by helicopter the operations along his wide front. It was he, it is claimed, who reced the area, came to Inayatpur on 9 Dec, intimated that Chandpur had been vacated by the Pak troops and ordered the Bde to move immediately. As such, Brig Sodhi of 301 Mtn Bde advanced with tanks and 2 Coys of 3 Kumaon (Rif) towards Chandpur. Brig Sodhi's plea has been that

Chandpur could be reached only after the demolished bridges at Hajiganj and west of it were repaired by the Engineers. As at this time a message was received from 181 Mtn Bde about the Pak withdrawal from the southern Lalmai defences, 301 Mtn Bde could now move forward its guns by the road, which was till then dominated by the Pak forces in southern Lalmai. Meanwhile, Maj Gen Rahim Khan, who had his 14 Div HQ located at Chandpur, realised his helpless condition as he had no reserves to stop the advancing Indians. Therefore, on 8 Dec, he asked Dhaka for permission to withdraw from Chandpur. Lt Gen Niazi sent a gun boat to Chandpur to evacuate Gen Rahim, his HQ and the few remaining Pak troops. This gun boat was, however, hit by the IAF in the morning of 9 Dec. The same day, at noon, Sodhi's troops entered Chandpur. Although some of the Pak troops were killed in this air raid, Rahim reached Dhaka with minor injuries(55). The dead body of his GSO I was later recovered from the river. As one Pak steamer was seen on the Meghna, 1500 yds to the west, carrying troops, it was engaged by tank fire and blown out of the water. None survived. Two more launches carrying Pak troops approaching Chandpur unsuspectingly were also destroyed(56)

By 9 Dec, the Indian Army had captured all the three key towns on the eastern bank of the Meghna-Ashuganj, Daudkandi and Chandpur and secured the Meghna bulge. Although, Lt Gen Sagat Singh's allotted task to reach the eastern bank of the Meghna was accomplished, he, now initiated moves for crossing the mighty river to advance towards Dhaka(57). Unfortunately, there was no river craft available at Chandpur for the crossing and the Meghna was three miles wide. Sagat Singh ordered Maj Gen Hira to reduce the Mynamati defences with 181 and 61 Mtn Bdes, while Sodhi's brigade was sent from Chandpur to Daudkandi for crossing the Meghna under the command of 23 Mtn Div. Once 301 Mtn Bde had crossed to the west bank of the river, it would come under direct command of 4 Corps(58).

On 11 Dec, Brig Sodhi was given the task (Operation Trump Card) to concentrate his 301 Mtn Bde at Daudkandi by first light 16 Dec, commencing it on 12 Dec, for crossing the Meghna later. However, the operational picture of the fast moving battle at the Corps level had undergone a sea change with the successful crossing of the Meghna river near Ashuganj, and the race for Dhaka was on. It was on 13 Dec when Maj Gen Hira told Brig Sodhi that Lt Gen Sagat Singh wanted him to cross the Meghna that very night(59). This made him unhappy, as he had no idea of the Pak strength on the other side of the Meghna, had not even an up-to-date map of the area, nor sufficient means to

effect the crossing. Moreover, his brigade at that time consisted of only 14 Jat, 1/11 GR less a coy, 3 Kumaon less two coys and a platoon, and 197 Mtn Regt.

Sodhi's troops reached Daudkandi at 2130 hrs on 13 Dec and found two steamers (capacity 150 each), one vehicle tug (capacity 6 vehicles) and some country boats (capacity 50 each)(60). It was decided to send 14 Jat by rivercraft on 14th morning and the remainder of the brigade by helicopters when they became available. At 0500 hrs on 14 Dec, in the pre-dawn darkness, 14 Jat left by the river convoy of steamers and the boats along with the vehicle tug carrying a battery (minus its vehicles) of 197 Mtn Regt, prepared to fire in case of any enemy opposition. During the crossing, one steamer got grounded on an island for a short while, while the other experienced engine failure and had to be abandoned, with its load redistributed among the country boats, towed by the steamer and the vehicle tug. This strange flotilla ultimately reached Baidya Bazar (RL 7015) at 0900 hrs, and found it free of Pak troops. Local people rushed forward to unload the vessels and render all other help. By the afternoon, 14 Jat was deployed west of Baidya Bazar.

Meanwhile, the fleet of Mi-4 helicopters had arrived at Daudkandi. One Coy 14 Jat, a few administrative echelons and one Coy 12 Kumaon ex 61 Mtn Bde were ferried across to Baidya Bazar by the first wave of the helicopters at 0930 hrs. On 14 Dec and 15 Dec, 121 helicopter sorties carried 1209 fully armed troops and 38,100 kg of stores from Daudkandi to Baidya Bazar.

On 15 Dec, it was decided to contain the Pak troops at Nabiganj (RL 5814) with 14 Jat and cross the river Sitalakhya at Lakshamnkhola (RL 5916), while 1/11 GR occupied Kuripara the same day. 14 Jat cleared Nabiganj, Bandar and Madanganj (RL 6223) by first light next day. Casualties suffered by 14 Jat were 9 ORs killed and 21 wounded as against 50 Pak troops killed. By noon on 16 Dec 1/11 GR effected crossing of the Sitalakhya; at 1400 hrs came the news of surrender of the Pak Army in Dhaka. Hence, 57 Mtn Div ordered 301 Mtn Bde to concentrate at Dhaka immediately.

During the whole operation, 3 to 16 Dec, 1971, 301 Mtn Bde suffered total number of casualties - 28 killed and 83 wounded(61). 20 Officers, 35 JCOs and 908 ORs of the Pak Army were captured by this brigade(62).

57 Mtn Div Operations

The operational orders required 57 Mtn Div to defend Agartala from any Pak incursion and also to go on the offensive and capture Akhaura, Daudkandi and Feni, in that order. This was in a way complementary to the operation of 61 Mtn Bde, operating directly under 4 Corps which was planned to be employed on the task of crossing the river Gumti, eventually closing in on Mynamati from the west, and helping in its reduction in conjunction with a brigade of 23 Mtn Div. It has been described in a previous chapter how 73 Mtn Bde of 57 Mtn Div captured Gangasagar on 3 Dec, thus sealing off the Pakistani approach to Akhaura from the south; 311 Mtn Bde had penetrated upto Kodda, west of Akhaura, by 2 Dec, and 'S' Force had secured Rajapur and Singarbil jetty to the north on 2 Dec, thus preparing the ground for the capture of Akhaura.

"Akhaura was a well prepared and strong position held by three companies of 12 FF, one coy 21 POK Bn and one coy of EPCAF"(63). While 19 Raj Rif and 'S' Force kept exerting pressure from the north, the main attack was commenced at 2200 hrs on 4/5 Dec from the south. 18 Rajput pushed ahead and captured intact the rail bridge over the Titas river, north-west of Akhaura, in the morning of 5 Dec. Akhaura fell the same day(64). In this action, 1 Indian Officer and 27 ORs were killed, and 4 Officers and 104 ORs wounded, as against 5 Pak PsOW alongwith 2 PT-76 tanks captured(65). Once Akhaura had been captured, 4 Corps diverted 57 Mtn Div from its original task and ordered it to capture Brahmanbaria and then advance to Ashuganj. This was done in order to cut off all routes of withdrawal of Pak garrisons at Sylhet and bottle up 202 Inf Bde and 313 Inf Bde(66).

The task of advancing to Brahmanbaria on the railway line, north-west of Akhaura, was entrusted to 73 Mtn Bde. In the meanwhile, 311 Mtn Bde was ordered to exploit upto Sultanpur, 5 km south of Brahmanbaria. After 18 Rajput had cleared Datalsar on 5 Dec, next morning 4 Guards established themselves astride the Comilla-Brahmanbaria road, south of Sultanpur, and trapped 7 Pak vehicles and killed approximately 70 Pak troops retreating towards Brahmanbaria. The Rajputs secured Sultanpur, the area of the concrete bridge, and Saidabad bridge by 1800 hrs. The Pak troops had abandoned the positions, leaving behind a large amount of arms and ammunition. The capture of Datalsar on the rail track linking Brahmanbaria with Akhaura, and Sultanpur on Brahmanbaria-Comilla road, facilitated the advance of 73 Mtn Bde on the two axes, road and rail, to Brahmanbaria. Again, the securing of Saidabad on the Brahmanbaria-Comilla road to the south-west of Sultanpur further isolated Brahmanbaria.

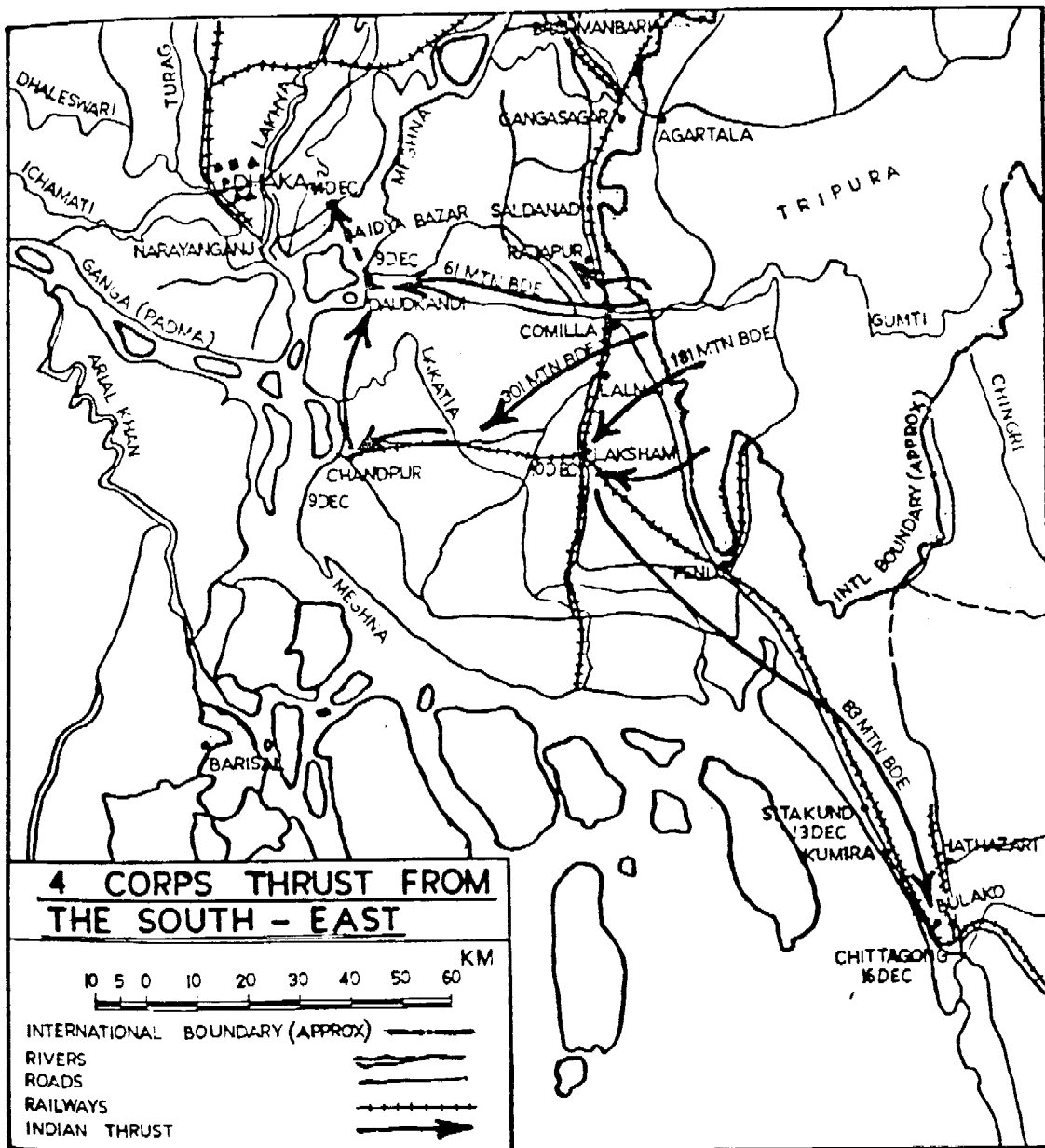
At 0600 hrs on 6 Dec, 73 Mtn Bde began the advance towards Brahmanbaria on the two axes of rail and road. While 19 Punjab and 19 Raj Rif reached the east bank of the Pagla river, Sierra Force had secured Chandura (RM 3756) to the north-east of Brahmanbaria by 1300 hrs on 7 Dec. Now, 14 Guards were ordered to cross the Pagla river. Scared by these enveloping moves, the Pakistanis slipped away from Brahmanbaria. However, it had already been visualised that the Pakistanis would try to pull out of Brahmanbaria towards Bhairab Bazar, and plans had been laid to cut off this withdrawal. 10 Bihar of 311 Mtn Bde was ordered to strengthen the Sierra Force at Chandura to carry out the enveloping move to Shahbazzpur-Sarail-Ashuganj in the north. Elements of 10 Bihar moved to Chandura via Agartala at 0130 hrs on 7 Dec. By 1300 hrs on 9 Dec, 18 Rajput along with elements of 10 Bihar had reached the outskirts of the built-up area of Ashuganj. The Pakistanis had hastily blown up the bridge at 1030 hrs on 9 Dec, even though considerable elements of their 27 Bde together with the Brigade commander had been left behind on the east bank of the river. These Pakistani elements fought desperately against 18 Rajput and 19 Bihar, and forced them to withdraw after inflicting heavy losses, including four tanks. The Indian casualties were 2 Officers, 3 JCOs and 39 ORs killed; 3 Officers, 2 JCOs and 92 ORs wounded and 5 ORs missing. Twenty-three Pak dead bodies were counted on the ground. However, by about 1630 hrs on 9 Dec, the Indian units were able to stabilise the situation. The Pakistanis retreated from Ashuganj crossing over to Bhairab Bazar by boats, and 18 Rajput occupied the place on 10 Dec.

The great river Meghna had now been reached at Ashuganj, Mulkandi as well as Chandpur. Gen Sagat Singh had carried out in full the order given to him in less than a week. But obviously Dhaka itself was the final objective, and he had quietly made plans and preparations for crossing the great hurdle when the time came. Hardly any rivercraft were available and the dozen helicopters under Gp Capt Chandan Singh offered the only possibility. The successful heli-lift at Sylhet a few days earlier had proved the feasibility of such a move, and given confidence to the pilots as well as the troops. The great risk was the likelihood of an attack by Pakistan's 14 Inf Div from Bhairab Bazar, which would have overwhelmed the Indian heliborne force while it was being built up.

A recce report clinched the issue for Sagat Singh. The Corps Commander, constantly hovering over the battle areas in his helicopter, (67) learnt that a Pak Bde was withdrawing from Bhairab Bazar north towards Sylhet and not south towards Dhaka, marching out of the war in effect!

The die was cast, and the Indian forces swarmed across the Meghna. First, 4 Guards of 311 Mtn Bde and a troop ex 82 Lt Regt were heli-lifted to Raipura. They then sent a reconnaissance patrol to Methikanda towards Bhairab Bazar and found Methikanda abandoned. In the meanwhile, 19 Punjab of 73 Mtn Bde, which had moved from Bhatpara to Charlalpur (RH 0956) on 9 Dec, crossed the Meghna by country boats, collected from local fisherman. While they now contained the Pak force at Bhairab Bazar, 4 Guards advanced to Narsingdi at 0730 hrs on 10 Dec. The battalion reached the railway bridge before Narsingdi and kept engaging the Pakistani defenders there, preventing them from destroying the bridge. 19 Raj Rif of 73 Mtn Bde also completed the crossing of the Meghna by 0300 hrs on 11 Dec, and reached Raipura (9856) by 1300 hrs, and came under command 311 Mtn Bde. The same day, 10 Bihar along with one troop of 82 Lt Regt and 65 Mtn Regt were lifted by helicopters and lodged south of Satirpara in the Narsingdi complex. Two coys of this battalion moving south secured the road and rail crossing across the river on the out-skirts of Narsingdi and linked up with 4 Guards who had secured the jetty area earlier in the day. Meanwhile, Sierra Force (2 EB) after crossing the Meghna on 11 Dec was also advancing towards Narsingdi. On 12 Dec, 59 Mtn Regt less troop was also heli-lifted to Satirpara to join the other units of the Div in the Narsingdi area. By 0800 hrs on 12 Dec, 4 Guards had captured Narsingdi after moderate fighting against a determined EPCAF platoon, and then moved to Bulta and Barpa, only 8 miles short of Dhaka. Next day, they established contact with the Pakistanis at Kamarghor east of Dhaka on the east bank of the Lakhya river, and 10 Bihar moved to area Naogaon, while 19 Raj Rif captured intact the Ghorasal rail bridge on the line Narsingdi-Tungi across the Lakhya river. On 14 Dec, learning that there were no more Pakistani troops between the Lakhya and Balu river, Sierra Force (2 EB) along with elements of 10 Bihar crossed to the other side of Lakhya and secured the area between Rugganj and Demra ferry (RL 5625), while 73 Mtn Bde with 19 Raj Rif in the lead moved towards Tungi, to the north of Dhaka and contacted the Pakistani positions at Pipulia at 1600 hrs(68). Now, 65 Mtn Regt under 311 Mtn Bde successfully brought up its guns and on evening of 14 Dec fired into the heart of Dhaka for the first time. Medium guns had also started arriving, mounted on rafts, and towed by motor launches along the river Meghna.

That night a ban on firing on Dhaka was imposed, to last till 0900 hrs next morning. However, during night 14/15 Dec, 2 Coys of 19 Raj Rif, sent behind the



DHALESWARI

TURAG

LAKHNA

MT SHINA

GANGASAGAR

AGARTALA

TRIPURA

ICHAMATI

NARAYANGANJ

SAIDYA BAZAR

SALDANAD

ROJAPUR

GANJA (PADMA)

9 DEC

61 MTN BDE

DAUDKANDI

COMILLA

181 MTN BDE

GUMTI

ARIAL KHAN

LAKHATA

9 DEC

CHANDPUR

9 DEC

LAKSHAM

INTL BOUNDARY (APPROX)

CHINGHI

SHEJHA

BARISAL

88 MTN BDE

STAKUND
13 DEC

KUMIRA

HATHAZARI

BULAKO

CHITTAGONG
16 DEC

Pak defences at Pubail, had a fierce engagement with Pak forces before the latter's withdrawing to Tungri. The Pak troops suffered heavy casualties. Even on 16 Dec, the Pakistanis held on to the position at Tatki and Nagarkachpur (5821) inspite of repeated probes by 4 Guards.

Though there had been indications even from 15 Dec night that the Pakistanis were going to surrender nothing was certain, and hence, in the morning of 16 Dec, HQ 4 Corps issued fresh orders for the capture of Dhaka(69). These were not implemented when Pakistani forces in Dhaka and the rest of Bangladesh agreed to surrender.

The casualties incurred by the various units (including 59 Mtn Regt, 73 Mtn Bde signal coy, 65 Mtn Regt, and 82 Lt Regt) of 57 Mtn Div during the period, 3-15 Dec 1971, (70) were :-

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>JCO</u>	<u>OR (including NCsE)</u>
Killed	5	6	124
Wounded	19	13	387
Missing	-	-	17

Pak casualties were 398 killed, 166 wounded, and 4,958 taken prisoner(71).

Assessment

The 4 Corps operations had fulfilled in more than ample measure the tasks allotted to the Corps. The Meghna line had been reached on a very wide front from Ashuganj to Chandpur. Not content with this, the Corps had crossed the big river with the help of clever improvisations, and advanced within artillery range of Dhaka. In only about 5 days, the following forces had been built up on the western bank of the Meghna:

HQ 311 Mtn Bde

1. Troop PT-76 tanks
2. 65 Mtn Regt less one battery, battery 82 Lt Regt, 4 medium guns and two Kraz tractors
3. 4 Guards, 10 Bihar, 18 Rajput and 2 EB Bns.

Tac HQ 01 Mtn Bde

1. 197 Mtn Regt, one troop of 23 Mtn Regt
2. 14 Jat, 1/11 GR less a coy, 3 Kumaon less 2 Coys.

73 Mtn Bde Units

1. 5 Independent Armd Sqn less 1 troop
2. 59 Mtn Regt, 1 troop 82 Lt Regt.
3. 19 Raj Rif, 19 Punjab and 14 Guards.

This Force, totalling more than nine infantry battalions supported by elements of Armour, Artillery and Engineers, was ready to assault Dhaka from the North-East, East and South-East.

The Corps had surprised every one by its sudden and spectacular crossing of the Meghna. Commanders at all levels, showed exemplary initiative and boldness. Lt Gen Sagat Singh emerged as the outstanding Corps Commander in the entire sub-continent, including the Pakistan Army. It was his initiative, drive, and bold decisions backed by meticulous preparations, supported by Eastern Command, which brought his Corps to the gates of Dhaka in sufficient strength.

OPERATIONS OF 101 COMMUNICATION ZONE AREA(72)

The 101 Communication Zone Area Composite Force based on Tura in Meghalaya was raised on ad hoc basis, by borrowing units from outside formations, and only later, during the course of the operations, it almost doubled its strength with additional troops and resources. Opposite it, the following Pak forces were in position in Mymensingh and Tangail districts on the eve of the war: (73)

93 Inf Bde (Brig Abdul Qadir Khan)

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| HQ | - Mymensingh |
| 83 Indep Mor Bty | - Kamalpur-Mymensingh |
| 33 Punjab | - Mymensingh-Phulpur-Haluaghat(74) |
| 31 Baluch | - Jamalpur-Rajendraganj-Hathibanda-Diwanganj-Tangail |
| 70 Wing Rangers | - Mymensingh-Kishoreganj |
| 71 Wing Ranger | - Jariajhanjail-Shibganj-Biri Siri-Bijaipur |
| Para-military Forces | - 5,000. (including the above Rangers, EPCAF and Razakars)(75) |

The newly created Pak 36 ad hoc Division under DG, EPCAF, Maj Gen Jamshed, with his HQ located in

Dhaka, was entrusted with the protection of Dhaka and its northern areas including Tangail and Mymensingh districts, which had a 185-km frontage from the eastern bank of the Jamuna to the western border of Sylhet district. (76)

Against the above, the Indian strength was grouped as under on 4 Dec 71 :- (77)

HQ 101 CZ Area (Maj Gen G.S. Gill) - Tura

HQ 95 Mtn Bde (Brig H.S. Kler) - Tura

56 Mtn Regt (76 mm Yugoslav guns)

852 Lt Bty (120 mm)

13 Guards

1 Maratha L I

13 Raj Rif

94 Fd Coy

F-J Sector (Brig Sant Singh, MVC) - Tura

851 Lt Bty (Four Mors 120 mm)

6 Bihar

83 BSF Bn less one coy (for offensive operations)

15 Companies of MF/FF

2 Para Bn : (to operate in infantry role under 101 CZ, after being dropped north of Tangail on D+7) (78)

The formation did not have "adequate resources in Engineer, troops and equipment, signals, provost and recovery. This posed considerable problems right through the operations" (79)

It was allotted the task of launching an offensive for destroying Pakistani forces in Tangail and Mymensingh districts of Bangladesh in the event of war, in addition to the Line of Communication duties and protective role.

The following schedules were laid down for the advance of 95 Mtn Bde Gp from Tura :- (80)

- (a) Capture of Kamalpur (QE 8613) by D plus 2.
- (b) Capture of Bakshiganj (QE 8602) by D plus 3.
- (c) Capture of Jamalpur by D plus 6/7.
- (d) Para drop and securing Poongli Bridge (QP 9296), north of Tangail by 2 Para Group on D plus 7.
- (e) Capture of Tangail by D plus 8.

(f) Contacting Dhaka defences by D plus 12/13.

A subsidiary thrust by FJ Sector towards Mymensingh was planned as under:- (81)

(a) 6 Bihar Group - To operate on axis Dalu Razo - Haluaghat - Phulpur - Mymensingh.

(b) 83 Bn BSF (less four companies) - To operate on axis Baghmara-Durgapur-Jariajhanjail-Mymensingh.

95 Mtn Bde Operations

Capture of Kamalpur: The capture of Kamalpur border outpost by 95 Mtn Bde was vital for its advance to Jamalpur. It has already been discussed how this BOP was attacked by the MF on several occasions before December. The post had eight concrete bunkers scattered anti-tank and anti-personnel mines on all approaches. It was manned by about one Company 31 Baluch and a platoon of Rangers and Razakars and commanded by a courageous officer, Captain Ahsan Malik, and supported by three 81 mm mortars(82). On 3 Dec, 1971 the post was under siege by 13 Guards who had blocked all its supply routes. It was subjected to artillery fire on 3 Dec, but with no effect on the concrete bunkers. It was, therefore, decided to neutralise it by air strafing, and seven sorties of air strikes were carried out on the post in three missions the following day(83). After each mission, a letter was sent to the Post Commander through a MF volunteer, advising him to surrender. Though he ignored the first note, he asked his Battalion Commander for permission to surrender after the second strike. The permission was refused, and he was promised assistance of infantry and air strikes which however, never came. The IAF air strikes caused scare and demoralised the Post Commander, who came out at 1900 hrs on 4 Dec with a white flag and surrendered with the whole garrison. In all, 146 personnel including one officer, one JCO and 60 ORs of 31 Baluch, 43 ORs of 70 Wing Rangers and 41 Razakars surrendered. A large quantity of arms and ammunitions was also captured. The bravery and tenacity of the young Pak Commander of Kamalpur was well-appreciated by the Indian Army Chief, Gen Manekshaw, who declared: "Militarily his performance was excellent", and issued instructions that he should be shown special courtesy as POW(84)

Advance to Jamalpur

After Kamalpur, the only strong Pak position on this main axis was one Company 31 Baluch plus para

military forces at Bakshiganj. Its outer defences were based on bunkers/pill boxes on the periphery of the village (800 yds x 600 yds) and the inner defences on the built-up area(85). While 1 Maratha established a firm base of three companies at Khosalpur (QE 8202), the remaining company established a block on road Bakshiganj-Sherpur. Meanwhile, 13 Raj Rif also advanced from east of Kamalpur to encircle Bakshiganj. At 0830 hrs on 4 Dec, a company of Pakistani troops tried to eliminate the Maratha road block on axis Bakshiganj-Sherpur. But Pak troops suffered 9 killed and 3 vehicles destroyed, while only one sepoy of 1 Maratha was killed in the exchange of fire. Throughout the day on 4 Dec and on night 4/5 Dec, Pak troops unsuccessfully engaged the patrolling parties of 1 Maratha and 13 Raj Rif at long ranges with medium machine guns and mortars. At last, realising that they had been surrounded, the Pak troops abandoned Bakshiganj during the same night, withdrawing to Jamalpur. The outpost was occupied by Indian troops at 0430 hrs on 5 Dec.

While inspecting the Pak defences after the capture of Kamalpur, GOC 101 CZA, Maj Gen Gill, and Brig Kler were both injured, the former seriously, when their jeep was blown up by a Pak anti-tank mine on 5 Dec. The following day, Maj Gen G.S. Nagra, GOC 2 Mtn Div, arrived from North Assam and took over the command of 101 CZA.

On 6 Dec, Brig Kler's 95 Mtn Bde resumed advance after about 24 hours. This delay in regrouping the forces probably gave the Pak troops, withdrawing from Bakshiganj, the necessary respite and time to occupy the delaying positions. 13 Raj Rif met stiff resistance in the area of the Bridge (QK 8991) at 1030 hrs on 6 Dec. However, air strikes and artillery fire proved effective and the Pak troops withdrew to area Panchar Char after blowing up the bridge. They suffered heavy casualties and left behind 13 dead bodies. A Bailey Bridge was made ready by 0600 hrs on 7 Dec. After clearing Pak forces from Road Junction (QK 9379), 13 Raj Rif secured north bank of river Brahmaputra by 1900 hrs the same day, But the river was over 1,000 feet wide, and not 450 feet, as was wrongly ascertained earlier. Hence, Nagra asked the Eastern Command for additional bridging equipment, which, however, arrived only on 15 Dec. But somehow the Indian forces moved on.

The 1 Maratha left Bakshiganj at 1300 hrs on 6 Dec. The column, moving across country on bullock cart/man-pack basis for 22 kms, reached No.4 Char at 1900 hrs the same day(86). But it had to wait till 1100 hrs on 7 Dec to cross the river as the bullock

carts carrying heavy mortars and ammunition broke down on the way and could not catch up in time. It crossed the river in local boats in area QK 8778 by first light on 8 Dec and established blocks in area (QK 9463), south of Jamalpur, without the Pakistanis detecting its presence. 13 Guards, simulating advance on Sherpur axis on 6 Dec, met opposition in area Kurua (QK 9993). While one Company firmed in at Kurua, the rest of the battalion was withdrawn to Bakshiganj from where they moved south on 7 Dec and concentrated at area No.4 Char by 1800 hrs the same day(87). After their mortars and ammunition had fetched up at 1040 hrs on 8 Dec, the Bn Gp crossed over in the same area as 1 Maratha, and concentrated at a point (QK 9867) on road Jamalpur-Mymensingh by 0600 hrs on 9 Dec.

The information received on 8 Dec from the captured PsOW and other sources indicated that the Pakistanis had approximately 1,500 men including the complete battalion of 31 Baluch with eight 120-mm mortars, six 6-Pounder Guns, two 106-mm RCL and seventy two LMGs/MMGs holding the defences at Jamalpur(88). Their main defence system was based on the river bank in the north and railway embankment in the south, allowing for the maximum use of the built-up areas strewn with very strong bunkers, and stocked with enough ammunition and rations to last for a long time.

On 8 Dec, information was received about the allotment of 167 Mtn Bde Gp ex Rangia in Assam to reinforce the strength of 101 CZA. Advance elements of 167 Mtn Bde arrived at Sherpur at 1030 hrs on 9 Dec and 6 Sikh Light Infantry arrived in the early hours of 10 Dec 71. From 8 Dec onwards, pounding of Jamalpur defences by aircraft and artillery was continued relentlessly. After concentrated doses of air strikes and artillery fire in the afternoon of 9 Dec, Brig Kler, Comdr 95 Mtn Bde, sent the following letter to Officer Commanding 31 Baluch Regiment at Jamalpur, asking him to surrender:-

"To

The Commander
Jamalpur Garrison

I am directed to inform you that your garrison has been cut from all sides and you have no escape route available to you. One brigade with full complements of artillery has already been built up and another will be arriving by the morning . In addition you have been given a foretaste of a small element of our Air Force with a lot more to come.

Jawalpur
091735 Dec.

Dear Brig.

Hope this finds you in high spirits. Thanks for the letter.

We here in Jawalpur are waiting for the fight to commence. It has not started yet. So lets not talk and start it.

40 sorties, I may point out, are inadequate. Please ask you many more.

Your remark about your massages being given proper treatment was superfluous. Shows how you underestimate my boys. I hope he liked his tea. Give my love to the Muktis.

Hoping to find you with a sten in your hand next time, instead of the pen you seem to have so much mastery over,

I am, your most
Sincerely
Comd Jawalpur Fortress

The situation as far as you are concerned, is hopeless; your higher commanders have already ditched you.

As a soldier to soldier I give you an assurance of safety and honourable treatment when you surrender, since that is the only course now left to you. I am quite sure you will not be foolhardy in risking the lives of the men under your command for your personal ego. You may have heard the appeal of our Army Chief and I once again reiterate that if you wish to be united with your families the only course open is to surrender. We will arrive at formalities as soon as I get your reply.

It may be pertinent to point out that in case you fall into the hands of Mukti Fauj or their sympathizers, they are most unlikely to spare your lives; your colleague Capt AHSAN MALIK wisely surrendered to me at KAMALPUR on 4 Dec and he and his men have been well looked after as per GENEVA Convention.

I expect your reply before 6.30 PM today failing which I will be constrained to deliver the final blow, for which purpose 40 sorties of MiGs have been allotted to me.

In this morning's action the prisoners captured by us have given us your strength and dispositions and are in a position to let you down. They are well looked after.

The treatment I expect to be given to this civil messenger shall be according to a gentlemanly code of honour and no harm should come to him.

An immediate reply is solicited.

9 Dec 71

Brig
(H S KLER)"

The Pak Commander, Lt Col Sultan, sent a fool-hardy reply, enclosing a bullet with his letter, unaware of the fact that a whole Brigade Group was sitting behind him, south of Jamalpur(89). On the morning of 10 Dec, 6 Sikh LI of 167 Mtn Bde, which was placed under the command of 95 Mtn Bde, had crossed the Brahmaputra in country craft in area Ferry (QK 8778), and concentrated in area Dagi (QK 87)-Palbari (QK 86), west and south-west of Jamalpur, by last

light. It was ready for tackling Jamalpur defence from the west along axis Diwanganj (QK 79)-Jamalpur

On 10 Dec, the Jamalpur defences were subjected to three air strikes, at 0900 hrs, 1300 hrs and 1700 hrs, after which 1 Maratha and 13 Guards attacked Pak garrison from south and south-west respectively (90). At 1730 hrs, the Pakistanis started engaging, by very heavy mortar fire, 1 Maratha position astride Tangail road covering their escape route. Then, at 0115 hrs on 11 Dec, Pak forces again brought down heavy SA fire on the forward companies of 1 Maratha LI and sent one Coy' along road. The Marathas held fire and allowed this Coy' to get into the killing area (91). When the Company came within 25 yards of the Marathas on Jamalpur-Madhupur road, the latter mowed down Pakistani troops by medium and light machine gun fire. However, about 40 Pak soldiers, who were behind a grove ten yards away, attacked the protection section of 1 Maratha. Although the section put up a brave fight and accounted for 35 Pak troops, all the men in this section were killed. Thereafter the Pak troops assaulted in waves, and the battle raged till 0500 hrs. At 0400 hrs, when the situation had become quite grave, the excellent artillery firing by 56 Mtn Regt and 852 Lt Bty helped a great deal in repulsing the Pak assault. The cool and calm manner in which 1 Maratha LI, ably commanded by Lt Col K.S. Brahmachari, conducted the defensive battle was commendable. At 0600 hrs, when the fog lifted, one JCO and 63 Pak troops were rounded up from within the defence perimeter of 1 Maratha LI. The heavy fire power used by the Pak troops could be gauged by the fact that a total of 4 Pak medium and light machine guns were recovered from the battle ground.

While 13 Guards and 6 Sikh LI were closing in on Jamalpur to relieve the pressure on the Marathas, a Pak wireless message was picked up. Lt Iftikhar was appealing: "Hello, any Indian station! This is a Pakistani station. I want to surrender" (92). Finally, Lt Iftikhar came out waving a white flag to contact the Indian Commander. The Comdr 95 Mtn Bde, accompanied by CO 1 Maratha LI, drove into Jamalpur at 0630 hrs in the jeep captured from Officer Commanding 31 Baluch, and the appeal for surrender was accepted. Pak troops suffered approximately 300 killed in the battle of Jamalpur (93). Another 379 military personnel surrendered, which included 4 Officers, 10 JCOs, 248 ORs (mainly from 31 Baluch), para-military forces and Razakars. Indian casualties on the night 10/11 Dec were 8 ORs killed and 6 wounded (including one officer) - all of 1 Maratha. A large quantity of Pak weapons and ammunition was also captured.

It was later revealed by captured prisoners that, with the pressure building up against Jamalpur, 31 Baluch had been ordered to pull out on night 10/11 Dec by Comdr 93 Pak Inf Bde, and occupy the defences near Tangail. Pak Commander's decision to fight their way out of Jamalpur that night apparently saved Indian troops many casualties as attack by Indian troops on such heavily fortified position would have proved quite costly(94). As a result of this decision, the whole 31 Baluch was either destroyed or captured, except for a party of 100 men under their Commanding Officer, Lt Col Sultan Ahmed, who had escaped on foot without any fighting equipment, and in no position to occupy any defensive position.

Para drop north of Tangail (95)

The airborne operations of 2 para in Tangail area were planned well in advance. Towards the end of November 1971, an Indian Army Officer, Captain F.K. Ghosh, was infiltrated into Tangail area through F-J Sector(96) in order to link up and establish liaison with the famed guerilla leader Kader Siddiqui, select Dropping Zones in consultation with him, make an estimate of the location and strength of Pak troops in that area, maintain wireless communication with Eastern Command HQ, to supply necessary information on these points(97). The para operation was aimed at capturing Poongli Bridge intact on road Jamalpur-Tangail-Dhaka, and the ferry site east of Poongli Bridge on river Lohajang, in order to intercept and destroy the Pak forces withdrawing from Jamalpur and Mymensingh(98). Some 750 troops of 2 Para battalion alongwith their supplies and vehicles were dropped north of Tangail by 1650 hrs on 11 Dec. Again, the following afternoon, forty paratroopers and second line ammunition were dropped in the same area(99). Although the drop was on the whole satisfactory, one stick of 1 JCO and 18 ORs got dropped about 15 miles north of the DZ, and two heavy loads consisting of 75 mm pack (How) and a jeep were dropped 4 miles south of the DZ(100)

This airborne operation was marked by an extraordinary feat of grit and determination by a young officer, 2/Lt L.G.S. Gill. The officer, who had joined 2 Para on his first posting on 21 Nov 1971, made his first para jump here in combat without any previous parachute training(101) - a sterling achievement that reflected the pride, morale and elan of the elite regiment(102).

Interestingly enough, one paratrooper, Mahadeo Curao, was "hung up" from his C-119 aircraft's tail for about 20 minutes before he was dropped with a

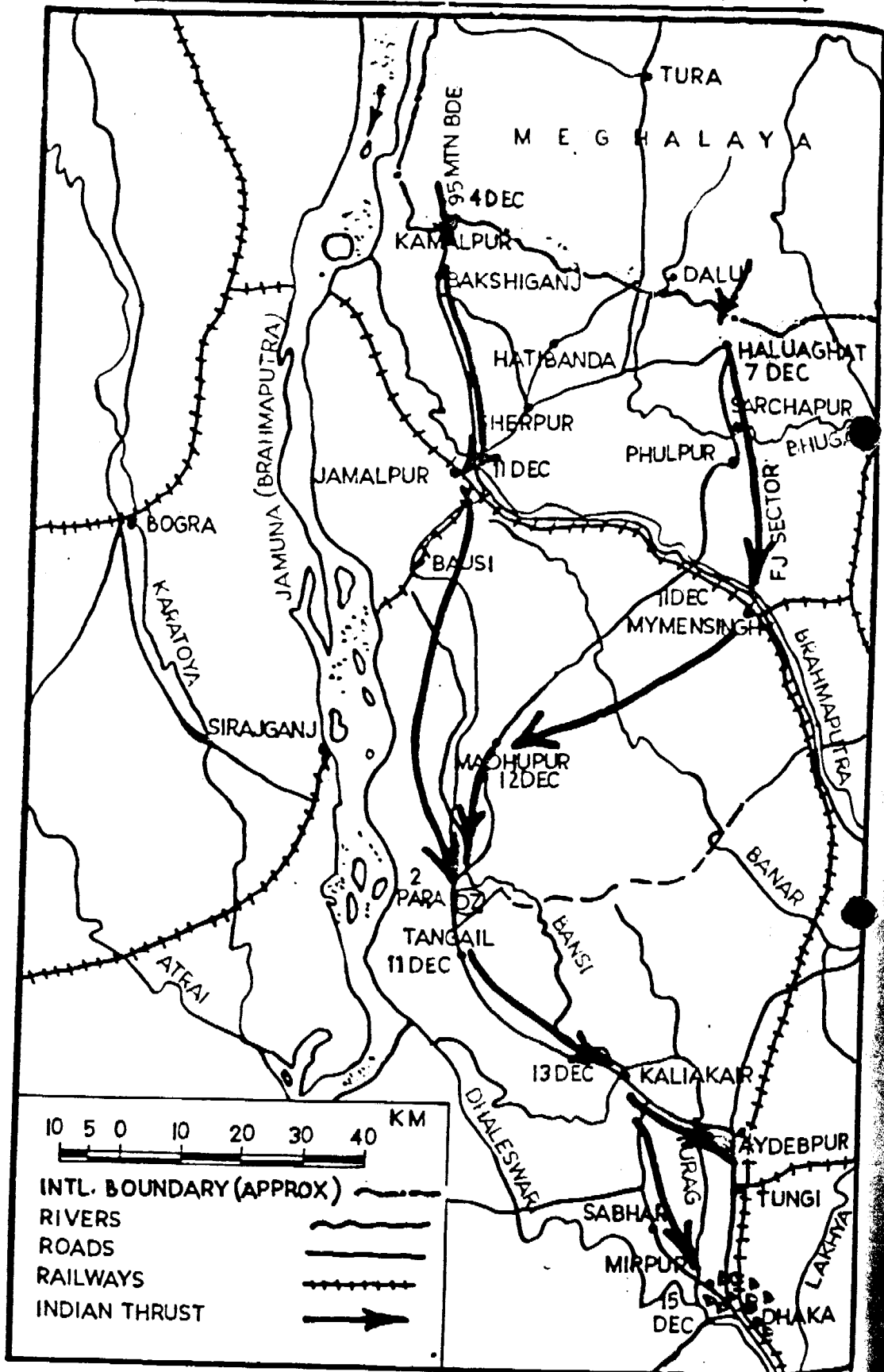
safety parachute near Sara airfield(103). He was injured during the hang-up and fired upon by Pak troops while parachuting down. But he evaded the Pakistanis, walking 10 miles with his 2" mortar and stengun. He took shelter with a local villager for three days, then joined the Mukti Bahini(104). Along with them he carried out three raids on the Razakars, and later collected his parachute and equipment after the Razakars were eliminated. His adventures ended only when he contacted HQ 165 Mtn Bde and joined his Battalion on 2 January 1972.

As a result of this dispersed paradropping, possibly due to strong winds, Kader Siddiqui could not establish contact with all the groups of paratroopers immediately, and as some of the paratroopers landed near the withdrawing Pak troops, they suffered casualties at the hands of the latter. Kader Siddiqui claims that he stopped his mortar fire against the Pak troops from 1630 hrs on 11 Dec to 0700 hrs on 12 Dec, so that the paratroopers did not suffer casualties(105).

When 2 Para Bn Gp was being dropped in the Kalihati area, about 9 km north of Tangail Brig Qadir, Comdr 93 Pak Bde, and Lt Col Sultan Ahmed, who had reached Tangail earlier, saw the air drop. "This development naturally irked Brigadier Qadir, who gallantly drew out his sten gun and emptied one magazine in the general direction of the parachute landing(106). That was his way of expressing his anger. He followed it up by ordering Major Sarwar to take his company (minus) and neutralise the enemy. Sarwar obeyed the orders, but returned within half an hour to report. "Sir, the locals say they are Chinese." But as the reality soon dawned upon him, Qadir decided to resume his withdrawal toward Kaliakair.

Coming back to the paratroopers, 2 Para Bn less D Coy attacked the Poongli Bridge and Ferry, held by approximately two regular Pak platoons and some Razakars. Both were captured by 2000 hrs on 11 Dec against minor opposition. Meanwhile, the elements of Pak 93 Inf Bde, which were withdrawing towards Tangail, attacked the Bridge to dislodge the Para Bn, but the attack was repulsed. Two more battalion-strength attacks by the Pak troops from the flanks during the night were also repulsed. Pak casualties during these attacks were 143 ORs killed and 10 ORs wounded, besides 29 others (including 2 officers) captured. Indian casualties were 3 ORs killed and another wounded. Between 0530 hrs and 1300 hrs on 12 Dec, the Pakistanis launched two more attacks with approximately 500 men consisting of regular troops and Razakars(107). As these attacks

THRUST FROM THE NORTH



were not well-coordinated, they were easily beaten back, and Pak troops suffered additional casualties of 86 ORs, 1 Sub-Inspector and 52 Razakars killed, and 10 ORs wounded, besides 11 ORs and 2 Razakars captured. The Pak troops, after suffering these heavy casualties, withdrew and dispersed to by-pass the Bridge in small groups (108). An air strike at 1245 hrs near village Elenga knocked off a few vehicles and killed some of these retreating troops. Again, Indian patrols ambushed small groups of Pak troops and inflicted casualties. Pak 93 Inf Bde ceased to exist as a fighting formation.

After the fall of Jamalpur, the advance to secure Madhupur could not be resumed till 0300 hrs on 12 Dec, because 95 Mtn Bde had to be replenished and adequate transport was not available south of the Brahmaputra. Although some Inland Water Transport (IWT) boats were put on the Brahmaputra near Dhubri for ensuring supplies to the 101 CZ force, they could not keep pace with the latter's fast advance, for fear of Pak interception. Gen Nagra has described it as an unnecessary and useless plan (109). A supply drop was arranged on the afternoon of 11 Dec to replenish 95 Mtn Bde.

Advance of F-J Sector Force

On the outbreak of war, Brig Sant Singh, MVC, Commander, F-J Sector, was asked to advance towards Mymensingh (RF 4551) on Haluaghat (RF 3793)-Phulpur (RF 3974) axis. Since he had no sufficient troops to capture Haluaghat by a frontal attack, he decided to threaten it and force the Pak troops to withdraw from there. His plan was as follows:- (110)

- (a) 6 Bihar less two companies to attack a position about 3,000 yards south of Haluaghat by infiltrating from south-east.
- (b) From further east, two companies of 6 Bihar to attack and capture Sarchapur (RF 4076).
- (c) MF/FF to encircle and isolate Pak troops stationed in the area.
- (d) Two companies of BSF to march on the axis
Baghmara (RA 7203)-Jaria (RF 7282)-Mymensingh

Accordingly, on 5 Dec, Task Force 'Pat' comprising B and C Coys of 6 Bihar, and one Coy of the Mukti Bahini left their concentration area near Gasuapara (RA 3802) and captured the Pak position at Charbangali (RF 4093), situated 3,000 yards

south-east of Haluaghat. Stiff resistance was put up by the defending Pak troops consisting of a company and a platoon, but in vain. In this attack the Pakistanis suffered 19 killed. Pak troops continued firing throughout the day on 5 Dec, but the Task Force closed with the Haluaghat defence from the east during the night. On 6 Dec, Indian troops made a vigorous attack on Haluaghat along with two air strikes and compelled the Pak troops to vacate the position on night 6/7 Dec. The Task Force then captured Haluaghat. In this action the Indians suffered 5 ORs killed and 3 ORs wounded as against heavy Pak casualties(111).

After capturing Haluaghat, Indian troops moved towards Sarchapur in the south along the Haluaghat-Sarchapur-Ghazipur (RF 3978) axis. Task Force 'Krish', consisting of A and D Coys of 6 Bihar, marine commandos with limpet mines and one Coy of FFs,(112) was ordered to intercept the withdrawing Pak troops at Phulpur (RF 4073), situated a few miles south of Sarchapur. By the evening of 7 Dec, Task Force 'Pat' came in contact with the Pak defences at Sarchapur(113). After some probing on 8 Dec, and leaving a small force on the road of the main axis, the major part of the force crossed the Bhugai river and contacted the Pak defences at Sarchapur from the eastern and western flanks. At the same time, Task Force 'Krish' threatened Phulpur. Once again, the Pak troops abandoned Sarchapur and withdrew towards Tarakanda (RF 4762), situated on river Rangsa. However, Pak troops had destroyed three bridges between Ghazipur and Phulpur. Task Force 'Pat' occupied Sarchapur in the morning of 9 Dec and linked up with Task Force 'Krish' at Phulpur the same day(114). Both the task forces, 'Pat' and 'Krish', left Phulpur and occupied Pak position at Kakni (GR 4366) and Tarakanda the following day(115). After the fall of Tarakanda, Pak troops moved towards Mymensingh after destroying two bridges between Tarakanda and Mymensingh. They also placed some mines along the track. However, seeing the Indian troops advancing towards Mymensingh on 11 Dec, they withdrew from Mymensingh also, and F-J Sector troops captured Mymensingh at 1130 hrs on the same day.

Brig Sant Singh immediately organised a Company column of 6 Bihar under his own command to pursue the retreating Pak forces. After clearing minor opposition en route, he secured Madhupur (RF 6433) road junction by 0830 hrs on 12 Dec(116). 1 Maratha leading elements of 95 Mtn Bde also reached Madhupur at 1130 hrs.

Brig Sant Singh returned with his Company to

Mymensingh, as he could not immediately move towards Dhaka without necessary regrouping and reorganisation. However, 1 Maratha continued advance south of Madhupur, and after securing Ghatail (QK 9816) at 1500 hrs, linked up with 2 Para at Poongli Bridge (QK 9417) at 1730 hrs the same day, i.e. 12 Dec. After this link-up, 95 Mtn Bde continued advance southwards and secured Tangail without any opposition. The Pak troops which had been ordered to organise defences at Tangail had either been intercepted by 2 Para at Poongli Bridge or by the Siddiqui Force. Whatever troops had got away were in no position to occupy any delaying positions as they were completely disorganised and demoralised. 95 Mtn Brigade's advance of over 56 miles in one day, without proper transport or mobile troops to spearhead it, was really praiseworthy(117).

Villagers near Tangail brought to the notice of the Indian troops the existence of an unknown landing ground near Tangail, and it was repaired with their help under the leadership of Kader Siddiqui. From 13 Dec, Indian aircraft landed there much needed supplies for 101 CZ Force and also evacuated casualties(118).

95 Mtn Bde's Advance towards Dhaka

Now 95 Mtn Bde with 1 Maratha, 6 Sikh LI and 13 Guards was ordered to capture Kaliakair (RL 2469) by last light 13 Dec. 6 Sikh LI resumed advance from Tangail at 0600 hrs on 13 Dec with two companies in vehicles, followed by the remaining companies on foot. The latter joined the battalion at 1500 hrs after having marched 20 miles. Jhamurki (RL 0374) was secured by 1500 hrs same day. The Pak troops were on the run and the battalion using outflanking tactics contacted Kaliakair at 1600 hrs. Here, Pakistani troops were holding positions based on the built-up area and bunkers astride the road. But a determined assault from the west captured the position at 2200 hrs. Pak casualties were 6 killed and 2 ORs taken prisoner, while 6 Sikh LI suffered 1 JCO and 1 OR killed and 7 ORs wounded.

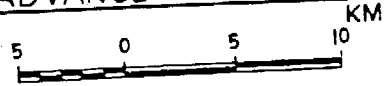
After re-organising, the advance was continued even during the night despite lack of transport and fire support. The vanguard company contacted Pak positions west of river Turag (at RL 3857), ahead of Safipur (RL 3162), at 0800 hrs on 14 Dec. It was appreciated that the Pakistanis there had approximately a Company, supported by medium machine guns. They had engaged 6 Sikh LI's leading elements by automatic and artillery fire. An engineering patrol sent to assess road ferry/bridge conditions at Dhamrai captured one Pak Major, who, on interrogation,

gave information that Comdr 93 Inf Bde, Brig Qadir, with a few more officers was hiding in a nearby jungle. A strong 6 Sikh LI patrol searched out the Pak Bde Comdr and nine other officers and took them prisoner.

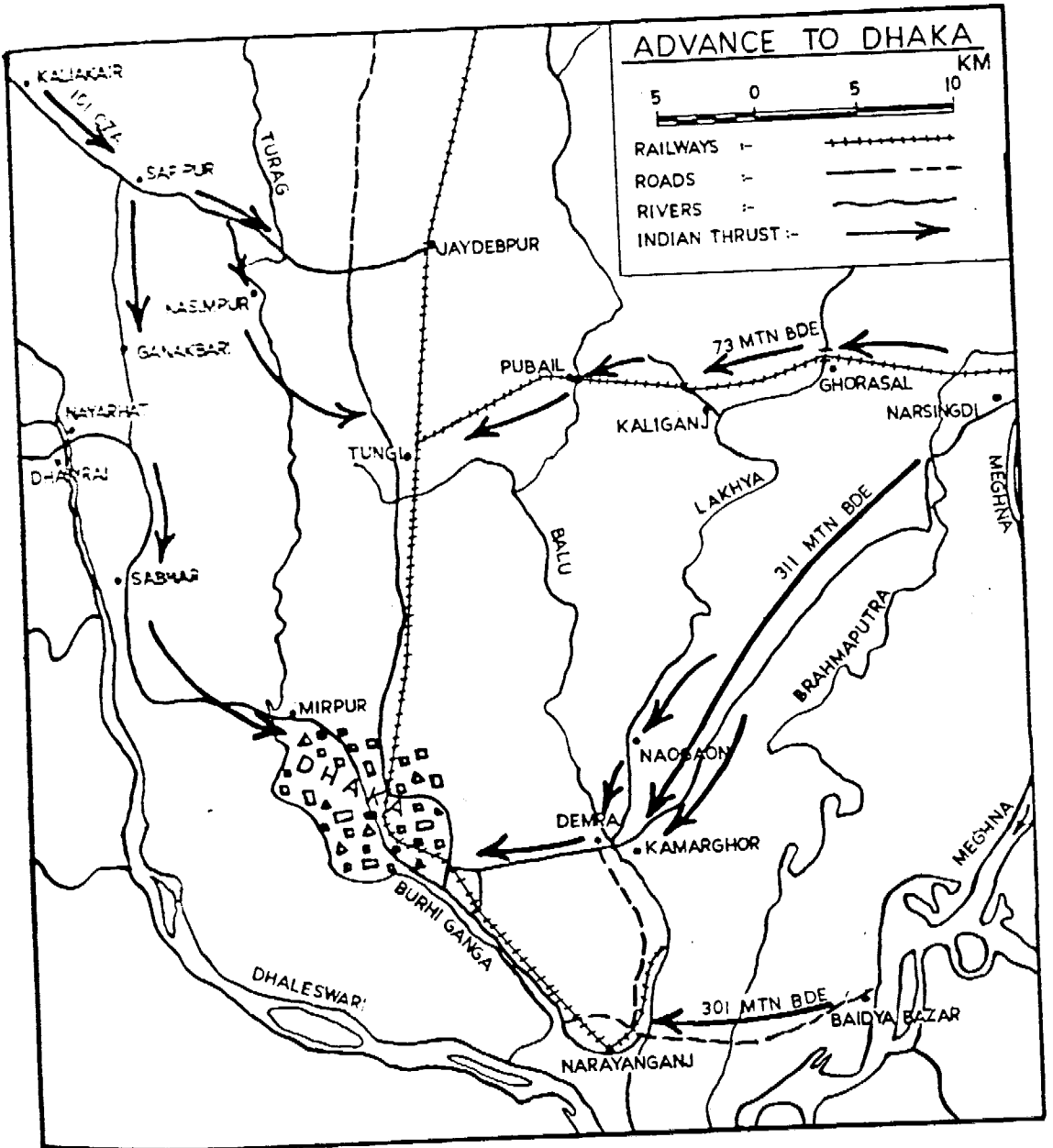
From Kaliakair two roads led to Dhaka - the main approach along the Kaliakair-Chandara (RL 2864) cross roads - Tungi (RL 4545) axis, involving the crossing of the Turag, and the second approach along Kaliakair-Dhamrai (RL 2447)-Mirpur (RL 3932) axis, involving the crossing of the Dhaleswari, east of Dhamrai, and then the Buriganga river at Mirpur. Gen Nagra decided to press on along the Tungi axis. However, the 6 Sikh LI patrol brought news that a good road, not marked on the map and not known to the Indians, a few miles west of Safipur, ran south and joined the Dhamrai-Dhaka road, east of the Dhaleswar river. This road led to the capital of Bangladesh via Sabhar (RL 2941) without any water obstacle, except at the Mirpur bridge on the periphery of Dhaka. This approach allowed the Indian troops to reach the capital without crossing the Turag or Dhaleswari.

As already stated, Pakistanis had a Company strength of troops, supported by medium machine guns, west of the Turag. They had approximately 400 men with 3 to 4 tanks east of the river with their depth positions in area of the cross-roads(119). It was clear that the Pak troops had strong, well-coordinated defensive positions on the river line and cross-roads area. The air strikes carried out on 14 Dec could not locate enemy tanks but caused some damage to his defences and vehicles. By 1300 hrs, Comdr 95 Mtn Bde had moved 1 Maratha forward and deployed it south of the road near Kashimpur Ferry (RL 3856). Knowing that the Pak force was vulnerable to out-flanking movements, one Coy each of 1 Maratha and 6 Sikh LI were sent across the Torag from north and south of the road with instructions to probe the Pak flanks and firm in east of the river, if possible. The Coys moved at 1500 hrs on 14 December but crossed the river rather too close to the road, and consequently drew accurate Pak medium machine gun and artillery fire. The Pak troops also brought up the tanks and engaged the Indian patrols, forcing them to fall back on the home bank by last light. On the morning of 15 Dec, two Companies of 6 Sikh LI were sent across the river on country crafts. Seeing these Companies making a wide-flanking move and as a result of simultaneous assault on the bridge, the Pak force got unnerved, and withdrew from the west bank, after destroying the 150-foot span of the bridge. 6 Sikh LI captured the bridge and also secured the eastern bank of the Turag by 1500 hrs on 15 Dec. 5 Pak ORs were killed against

ADVANCE TO DHAKA



- RAILWAYS - - - - -
- ROADS - - - - -
- RIVERS - - - - -
- INDIAN THRUST :- - - - - -



Indian casualties of 2 ORs killed and 3 wounded. The Indian troops could not, however, advance further as they received heavy medium machine gun and tank fire from the cross-roads where the Pakistanis were occupying strong and well-prepared defences with approximately 500 troops, supported by three tanks.

Advance by 167 Mtn Bde

Meanwhile, 167 Mtn Bde, under Brig Irani, was concentrated at Jamalpur as a reserve brigade to protect the western flank of the line of communication towards Tangail, and 13 Raj Rif was placed under its command. On 13 Dec, two companies of 13 Raj Rif cleared one platoon of Pakistanis from area Bausi (QK 840523)(120). In this action, 5 ORs of 31 Baluch, 8 Rangers and 5 Razakars were killed, and one OR and one Razakar captured, as against minor casualties suffered by the Indians. The same day, 13 Raj Rif brushed aside Pakistani opposition at Dayalpur (QK 8038), and captured a huge dump of rations alongwith some arms and equipment. Next day, they cleared Jagannathganj Ghat (QK 7735) after a fight, in which 18 Pak troops were killed, and 8 Razakars, 22 Mujahids, 61 Police and Rangers, along with some arms and a huge dump of rations were captured. On 15 Dec, after building up at Tangail, 167 Mtn Bde was ordered to resume advance and contact the north bank of the Tungi river (RL 4644). 13 Raj Rif was taken out of its command at this stage. As a Pak Battalion less two companies, supported by tanks and artillery, were occupying well-prepared, strong defences in area Road Junction RL 4256, between Joydebpur and Tungi, the brigade was ordered to clear this Pak opposition. On 15 Dec, 10 JAK Rif, with 852 Light Battery in direct support, established a road block behind the Pakistani position, observing a very strict fire control in order to maintain secrecy. 7 Bihar arrived there in the early morning on 16 Dec to reinforce the road block and deal with any Pak threat coming from Tungi.

At 0400 hrs on 16 Dec, when a Pak ammunition convoy of 9 vehicles was moving south from Joydebpur (RL 4858) towards Dhaka, it was ambushed and liquidated. Sixteen Pak personnel were killed and 3 captured, while the ammunition in the vehicles kept on exploding for over two hours. Later, a column of Pakistani troops in 20 TCVs, led by two tanks, was seen moving from Joydebpur in the north. When this was ambushed by the Indian troops, the Pakistani infantry in the vehicles dismounted and manoeuvred to occupy cover, and the two tanks brought down accurate fire on the Indian positions. An Indian MMG detachment was hit by the tank fire and one of its members was killed and two were injured. While the

Indian gunners were being replaced, the Pak tanks attempted to break through the Indian position. However, 7 Bihar succeeded in destroying one tank, and the other also had to be abandoned by the Pakistanis. The Pak infantry elements trying to close in on the Indian defences were engaged by small arms, mortars and artillery. The battle raged for two hours. By 1600 hrs the Pak troops began surrendering. In this action, the Pakistanis suffered casualties of 93 killed, 20 wounded, and 312 taken prisoner(121). A large quantity of arms and equipment was also captured. This was the last action fought by Gen Nagra's troops, leading to the first entry of Indian troops into Dhaka.

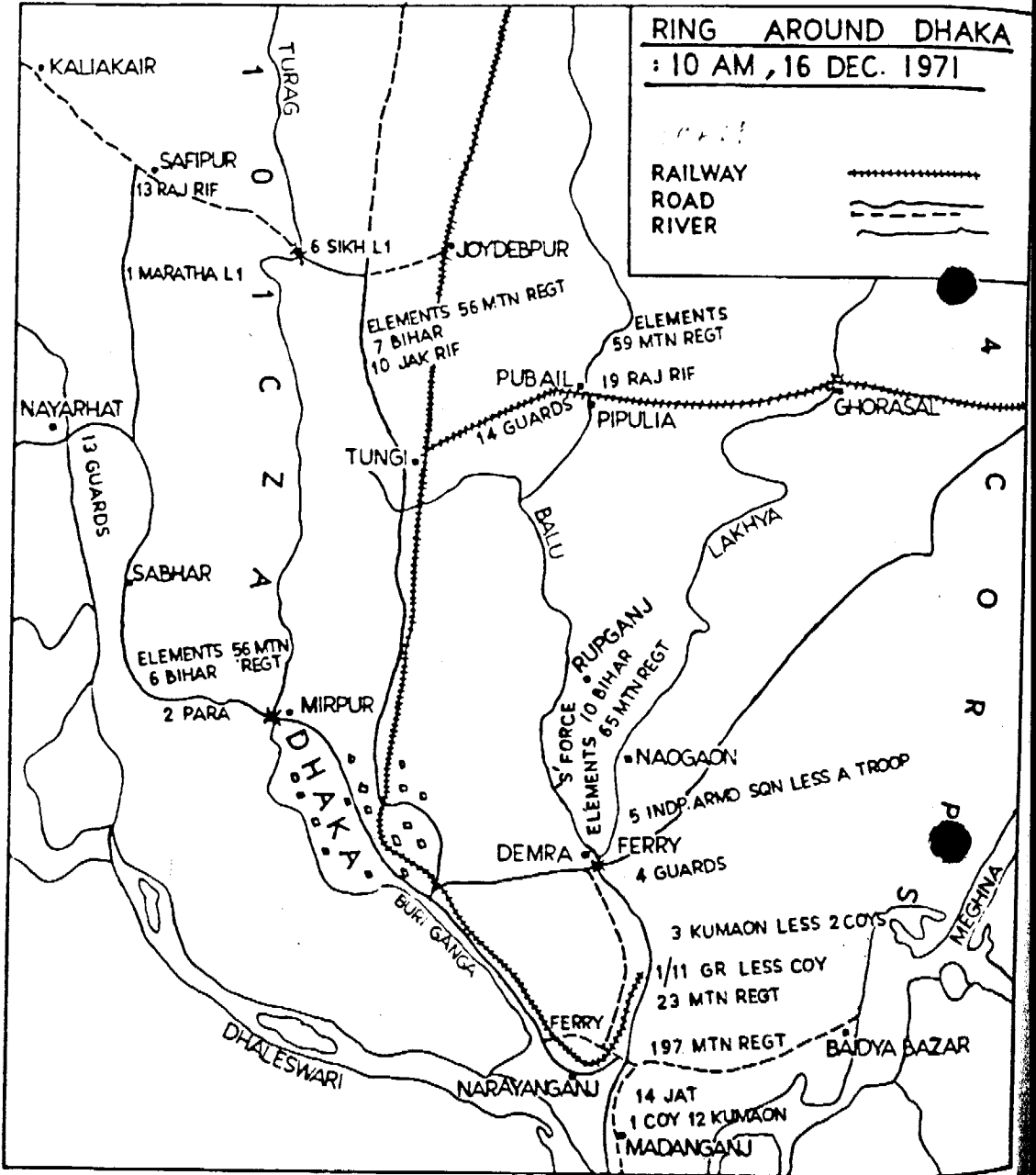
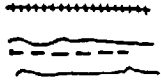
Further Advance by F-J Sector Force towards Dhaka:

Leaving one company of 13 Guards at Nayarhat (RL 2547) to cover the ferry site, the remaining forces on 15 Dec moved towards Sabhar (RL 2941). By 0400 hrs on 15 Dec(122), High Powered Transmitting Station and Military Farm at Sabhar were captured by the advancing forces. At 1100 hrs, the leading company of 13 Guards closed in on the Pak troops at Sabhar. Although the Indian Bde Comdr did not have sufficient troops with him, he took the risk of attacking the Pak positions from the rear with only one Coy. After making a very wide out-flanking move, one Coy assaulted the Pak position from the rear at 1630 hrs, while the leading Coy firmed in within 400 yards of the Pakistani Forward Defended Localities. The Pak troops stuck to their positions till the assaulting Indians closed in to 200 yards, before melting away under the cover of darkness, leaving behind 18 killed and 20 wounded. In this action, Indian troops suffered casualties of 9 killed and 14 wounded. At this place, 13 Guards captured 54 rifles, one Rocket Launcher, 6 LMGs and a large quantity of ammunition(123).

Observing the satisfactory progress of the F-J Sector Force, Gen Nagra allotted 2 Para to Brig Sant Singh for advancing further and capturing Mirpur Bridge (RL 3832) at night on 15 Dec. As there was the possibility of Pak tanks opposing the Indian advance near the Mirpur Bridge, Gen Nagra ordered the four 106-mm RCLs of 2 Para to move upto Safipur (RL 3162) and also brought the MMG-mounted jeeps from 95 Mtn Bde to Sabhar for advance towards Mirpur at night. He specially emphasised the need for a speedy advance and the subsequent digging down on the west bank of the Buriganga before the first light. At 2200 hrs on 15 Dec, 2 Para moved from Sabhar to capture Mirpur Bridge, situated just on the out-skirts of Dhaka city (RL 4523). On their way, they cleared two Pak delaying positions and contacted the Pak position near

RING AROUND DHAKA
: 10 AM, 16 DEC. 1971

RAILWAY
ROAD
RIVER



the western end of the Bridge at 0200 hrs on 16 Dec. After brisk fighting the Indian troops secured the western end of the Bridge at 0300 hrs and the Pak troops withdrew to the eastern side of the Bridge. Indian Commando troops with MMG-mounted jeeps rushed the bridge to capture it intact, but they had to withdraw to the western end of the bridge after suffering casualties. However, 2 Para firmed in at the western end of the bridge and dominated the entire bridge, not allowing the Pak troops to demolish it. During the assault on the bridge, Pak casualties were 26 ORs killed and 15 ORs wounded, whereas Indians suffered 4 ORs killed, and one Officer and one OR wounded. Besides, three Pak vehicles, two 2" mortars and three MMGs were destroyed(124).

At noon on 15 Dec, 101 CZA Force was placed under command HQ 4 Corps. The two formations had closed in on Dhaka from different directions, and local coordination had become imperative.

By the morning of 16 Dec, therefore, troops of 101 CZA were threatening Dhaka from the north and the west. They had reached a point near Tungi, about 20 kilometres from Dhaka, had crossed the Turag river in similar proximity, and were at the Mirpur Bridge in the western suburbs of Dhaka itself.

Assessment

Like 4 Corps, the 101 CZA Force also had achieved more than what was firmly planned or expected of it. Although it was opposed only by the ad hoc 93 Inf Bde of Pakistan comprising only two regular battalions and about 5000 para military forces with a battery of 120 mm mortars and no field guns, it should be borne in mind that Gen Nagra's force was the weakest of the Eastern Command thrusts. Nagra had started off with only one Mtn Bde and an ad hoc Bde (F-J Sector) having only one Battalion of regular troops and no guns. Another Mtn Bde came to him later. Apart from the fact that there were no major Pak forces between the 93 Inf Bde in Mymensingh-Jamalpur area and the outer defences of Dhaka, Nagra's rapid advance was greatly helped by the para drop at Tangail which caught the Pak 93 Inf Bde on the move and almost destroyed it. Maj Gen Jamshed's order to it to withdraw to Dhaka for its defence proved disastrous for the Brigade. While other Pak Commanders ignored such orders, Brig Qadir obeyed. As a result, only 900 bedraggled men reached Dhaka. An eye witness reported: "I saw them arriving; they were unshaven, unwashed and even bootless. Their faces were starved, eyes sleepless and ankles swollen. They needed at least twenty-four hours to be able to

participate in the defence of the provincial capital"(125).

The press reports that a whole Brigade had been para-dropped further helped Nagra by striking fear in the hearts of the Pak garrisons and dislocated Gen Niazi psychologically. Again, the 101 CZA thrust had the unique advantage of support by the formidable guerilla army of Kader Siddiqui(126) which had already liberated a large area around Tangail and upto only 30 miles north of Dhaka.

The operations reflected great credit on Maj Gen Gandharva Nagra, who had taken over the force in the middle of the operations and was not known to his officers or men. His Brigade Commanders, Brig Sant Singh, Brig Kler and Brig Irani proved extremely competent. Sant Singh, with MVC and Bar, had become infact as legendary figure in the area and was affectionately called 'Baba' by the guerillas and the Mukti Bahini, who were ready to follow him to hell and beyond. And yet he remained simple, modest and god-fearing, with none of the inflated ego found all too often in successful commanders. With such officers and men, the 101 CZA Force could never fail. It is only fair to add, however, that the 101 CZA had only eight battalions of regular troops,(127) and no armour or heavy guns, and so was hardly equal to the task of investing and assaulting Dhaka if that became necessary. Only 4 Corps had the size and the weight to do that.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. Maj Gen Riza, S., pp.310 and 314
3. Salik, S., pp.167 and 169. The name Brig Asghar Hussain, as given in Official Records, appears to be incorrect.
4. Maj Gen Riza, S., p.317.
5. From Official Records.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. According to a senior officer who participated in the operations, the fear of a Pakistani attack on Agartala was prominently in the minds of the planners of 4 Corps operations. This fear was re-inforced when in one of the border skirmishes some Pak troops and razakars crossed the border near Agartala and destroyed an important bridge. The officer also testified that on or about 3 November 1971, 4 Corps plans were discussed in detail at a war game attended by Gen Aurora at HQ 4 Corps. The strategy of by--passing Pak strong points had not evolved till then, and the war game discussed things like a deliberate attack to reduce Lalmai heights. 4 Corps was to advance only upto river Meghna . - From Official Records.
9. Ibid., pp.17-18.
10. From Official Records.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Singh, L., p,213.
34. From Official Records.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. However, according to another source, 61 Mtn Bde secured this airfield. From Official Records.
54. From Official Records.
55. Singh, L., p.214.
56. From Official Records.
57. Ibid.
58. Singh, L., p.215.
59. Sodhi, pp.235-237.
60. Ibid., p.238.
61. From Official Records.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. When interviewed, Col. W.H. Grant (Retd) Col. (G.S.) 57 Mtn Div in 1971, stated that the forward posture of Pakistan's 27 Inf Bde east of the Ashuganj Bridge helped the Indian attack considerably.
65. From Official Records.
66. Ibid.
67. His chopper was hit by ground fire, but the bullets just missed him.
68. From Official Records.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. This has been wrongly spelt as Kaluaghat in the Official Record.
75. From Official Records.
76. Salik, S., p.181.
77. From Official Records.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Mankekar, D.R., p.57.

85. From Official Records.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Salik, S., p.188. Original letter reproduced opposite. p.577.
90. From Official Records.
91. Ibid.
92. Mankekar, D.R., p.63.
93. From Official Records.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Siddiqui, K., Vol.II, pp.224 and 228-229.
98. From Official Records.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. He thus upheld a glorious tradition set by his illustrious predecessor and namesake, Lt Gen IS Gill, PVSM, MC (Retd), who during the Second World War, had executed his maiden jump into the combat area.
103. Ibid.
104. Singh, L., p.149. Also From Official Records.
105. Kader, Vol.II, pp.251-252.
106. Salik, S., p.190.
107. From Official Records.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Salik, S., p.192; Khan, F.M., p.186.
126. From Official Records.
127. Namely, 2 Para, 13 Guards, 1 MLI, 13 Raj Rif, 6 Bihar, 7 Bihar, 6 Sikh LI and 10 JAK Rif.

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CHAPTER - XIV

IAF IN THE EASTERN THEATRE

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

With the East Bengal situation deteriorating steadily, alongwith the other two Services, the IAF also began contingency planning and preparations in the summer and monsoon months of 1971. To fight a major war in the east, the IAF too had to update and reorganise its bases and support facilities in eastern India. In addition, the IAF had to assist the Army's build up in the east. During the period from March to November 1971, the IAF provided a large number of transport support missions to Eastern Army Command. In all 2386 hrs were flown by AN-12s, Packets and Dakotas, which lifted some 3700 passengers and 1034 tonnes of load(1). It is worth mentioning that the transport forces of the IAF were simultaneously involved in providing flood and cyclone relief in four States, over and above the normal air maintenance in Ladakh, Nagaland and Mizoram.

Both Central and Eastern Air Commands had to share the responsibility of air operations into East Pakistan. Since the two Air Commands would be operating against a single enemy and against the same target systems, both Air Commands were ordered to prepare detailed coordinated plans to cover various contingencies. Communications between Shillong, the HQ of EAC, and Calcuta, the HQ of Eastern Army Command and Allahabad, the HQ of Central Air Command, were improved. Eastern and Central Air Commands were also advised to concentrate their air effort against the air bases at Dhaka, Jessore, Sylhet and the radars at Kurmitola and Mirpur from D to D+2, by when it was expected that the PAF in the east would cease to be a fighting force. Thereafter the resources of the Air Force in the east could be available in toto to support the Indian Army in its land battle.

It was also assumed that, since the PAF would have the initiative, they would take some form of offensive action against IAF bases. To counter this, the available air defence squadrons were redeployed to cover the Assam Valley and Bengal-Bihar Sectors. The IAF radar capability in this area was considered adequate. To detect enemy raiders trying to intrude at low level below the radar horizon, a comprehensive Observer Corps scheme was drawn up, to be implemented with available assets like the BSF and the Railways manpower and communication channels.

To counter the growing threat in the east, IAF

plans also called for the activation of three DGCA airfields, two in West Bengal and one in Tripura, i.e. Dum Dum, Panagarh and Agartala. During the month of November 1971, Dum Dum and Panagarh were activated in order to familiarise the aircrew and DGCA personnel with their new environments. A detachment of No.221 Squadron which was to augment forces in the event of a war was moved to Panagarh for a period of 15 days, and No.22 Squadron was moved to Dum Dum. At this stage, because of the increased activity of the PAF in support of the Pak Army in the Krishan Nagar and Rangpur-Dinajpur Sectors, it was decided to retain the Gnat detachment at Dum Dum throughout the month of November. This ensured that some fighter force was instantly available to counter any PAF aggression against the Indian Army or violation of Indian air space. Similarly, for the Rangpur-Dinajpur Sector, a section of four Gnats was made available to counter any PAF activity in that area.

The Army wanted photographs of the areas through which they would have to advance into Bangladesh if war broke out. Border violations had by then become routine for either side. With the consent of Air Headquarters, fighter recce aircraft (SU 7 and Hunters) commenced to cover all the areas through which the Indian Army thrusts were to go in. These operations commenced on 24 October and were carried on till 20 November 1971 and proved of great value to the Army(2).

Under arrangements with HQ Eastern Command, Low Level Air Defence guns (LLAD) were deployed at all VAs and VPs under EAC by end of August 1971. A squadron of surface to air missiles was placed around Calcutta. Within the allotted resources and in consultation with GOC-in-C Eastern Command, ack ack defences at some airfields were strengthened while denuding the defences from other airfields and units which were not considered so vulnerable to enemy air attacks. For example, no air defence guns were deployed at Chabua and No.511 Radar Unit. Again under arrangements with Eastern Command, regular/TA troops were deployed at most airfields and SUs for protection against a possible para/commando attack.

On 3 October 1971, EAC was instructed by Air Headquarters to assist the Mukti Bahini Air Force and train it for air operations in Bangladesh. One Dakota aircraft, one Otter and one Alouette helicopters from Air Headquarters reserves were allotted or 'sold' to the Bangladesh government for this flight. The Otter and the Alouette were modified for the carriage of rocket pods and guns.

On 4 October 1971, Mukti Bahini Air Force with

the code name of 'Kilo Flight' was formed at Dimapur under the command of Group Captain Chandan Singh. That very afternoon, conversion training of the Mukti Bahini pilots and ground crew was commenced. The first air operation of Kilo Flight was planned for the night of 10 November 1971. However, because of certain constraints these operations were postponed from time to time and finally took place only in December(3).

Positioning of the Gnat force at Dum Dum and Bagdogra was proved justified on 22 November 1971. That day unidentified aircraft were again picked up violating Indian airspace, and four Gnats of No.22 Sqn were scrambled on a ground controlled interception. Contact was made with 3 American built F-86 Sabres of the PAF in the Bayra area. In the ensuing engagement, all three intruders were shot down, two of the pilots were caught when they ejected over Indian territory.

A first hand account of what happened was given by Flt Lt Massey; "We scrambled from Dum Dum and belted to the border at 450 Kts 3000 ft. My No.2 made contact at 2 O'clock, level, 4 miles. I pulled up over my No.3 and 4 and latched onto one. He did a hard turn and reversed. I took a high angle-off burst and missed. Meanwhile, another Sabre passed us and my No.3 took him on. I took another burst at 700 yards but my starboard gun stopped. I finally got him with my third burst on his port wing"(4).

The Gnat force from Bagdogra also carried out a number of "Flag Showing" flights in the Dinajpur-Rangpur area during this period, and the PAF abstained from interfering with IAF operations in this sector.

In the light of the directive issued by the Government to the Chiefs of Staff, the following aims were stipulated for the Air Force in the Eastern Theatre of Operations(5):-

- (a) Eliminate the PAF at the earliest.
- (b) Render maximum assistance to the Army in the form of offensive support, transport and helicopter support and air borne operations.
- (c) Assist the Navy to isolate East Bengal from West Pakistan and also ensure that the PAF was not able to interfere with the operations of Indian naval ships and aircraft.

- (d) Ensure Air Defence of the area of responsibility (The AD of the steel towns of Bihar and Orissa, though in the area of responsibility of CAC, was entrusted to EAC).

It is pertinent to mention here that the bomber force consisting of five squadrons of Canberra aircraft was under the control of Central Air Command. Since there was no action in the area of responsibility of CAC, the bomber Sqns supported the air effort in the west (four sqns) and east (one sqn).

For effective command and control, the Eastern Theatre of operations was sub-divided into three sectors, viz., Bengal/Bihar Sector, the Assam Valley Sector and the Kumbhigram/Tripura Sector. Air units available for operations were earmarked for deployment between these sectors, and responsibility for operations in each sector was clearly defined.

Bengal/Bihar Sector: The AOC Advance Headquarters, Eastern Air Command was made responsible for the conduct of all air operations - Offensive, Defensive and Transport support - in the area of responsibility which covered Bengal/Bihar Sector in India and the area west of river Brahmaputra in Bangladesh. He was to provide close support to the Army through Nos.3 and 9 Tactical Air Commands(6).

Assam Valley Sector: The Air Defence of the Assam Valley was made the responsibility of Commander, No.3 Air Defence Control Centre. All offensive operations including close support to the Army in the area east of river Brahmaputra up to the Meghna river were to be conducted directly by Eastern Air Command.

Kumbhigram/Tripura Sector: Air Defence operations in this area were to be conducted by Commander No.3 ADCC and air operations in support of the Army, other than transport support, were made the responsibility of Commander, No.5 TAC.

Naval/IAF Responsibility: In consultation with the FOC-in-C Eastern Naval Command, it was mutually agreed that all targets south of latitude 22° 25' N would be engaged by the Naval Sea and Air elements. Subsequently on 4 December Chittagong was struck by Hunters from Dum Dum and on 6 Dec 1971 Barisal airfield by the Gnats, again after consultation with the Navy.

The general strategy followed by AOC-in-C Eastern Air Command during the pre-war phase was to ensure the availability of all administrative and

technical requirements of the Sqns at all war locations. All Commanders were ordered to study their war plans in the minutest detail. This included the personal comfort of both air and ground crews. Where fighter aircraft were inducted into peace time transport bases, suitable officers with fighter background were also posted to these bases to take charge of the conduct of fighter operations. This arrangement resulted in better understanding and higher efficiency in close air support and selection of targets. After the Sqns were deployed at their war locations, HQ EAC followed a policy of strict non-interference.

THE OPPOSING AIR FORCES

Pakistan Air Force: The PAF had 19 F-86 Sabre and 3 RT-33 aircraft deployed at Tezgaon airfield. It also had a few light a/c and helicopters stationed at this airfield. Considering that the PAF had 254 Combat aircraft in the west, the allocation of only 19 fighter aircraft for air operations in the east was indeed an example of the step-motherly treatment of East Pakistan by the military rulers in West Pakistan.

Indian Air Force: The IAF had a total of 10 squadrons deployed in the Eastern Theatre. One MiG Sqn moved to the west on 05 December and has, therefore, been excluded. Considering that the IAF had deployed 24 fighter sqns in the west, the deployment in the east was well balanced and reasonable. In addition, one Canberra sqn from Gorakhpur was made available for the eastern operations. The detailed deployment/redeployment of sqns with their respective Sqn Commanders is given below(7):-

Fighter A/C

	<u>Sqn Commander</u>	<u>Base</u>
(a) <u>MiG 21 (Type 77)</u>		
i. 4 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr JV Gole	Gauhati
ii. 28 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr BK Bishnoi, Vr C	-do-
iii. 30 Sqn AF	Wg Cdr VS Chadha (Moved to west on 5 Dec 1971)	Kalaikunda

A detachment of 4 a/c remained at Panagarh till 12 December 1971 and then moved to the west.

(b) Hunter

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|--|
| i. 14 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr
R. Sunderesan | Kalaikunda/
Dum Dum/
Jessore |
| ii. 17 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr
N. Chatrath | Hashimara |
| iii. 37 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr SK Kaul | -do- |
| iv. 7 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr BA Coelho
Wg Cdr NC Suri | Bagdogra/
Nal in the
west from
07 Dec 1971. |

(c) Gnat

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| i. 15 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr MM Singh | Bogdogra/
Dum Dum/
Agartala |
| ii. 22 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr BS Sikand | Kalaikunda/
Dum Dum |
| iii. 24 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr RL Badhwar | Agartala |

(d) SU 7 (S 22)

- | | | |
|------------|--|----------|
| 221 Sqn AF | Wg Cdr
A Sridharan
(Moved to west
on 14 Dec 1971) | Panagarh |
|------------|--|----------|

(e) Bomber A/C

The Bomber Sqn which supported the war in the east was 16 Sqn AF based at Gorakhpur, commanded by Wg Cdr P Gautam, MVC, VM.

Though the Air Force was not keen to activate Agartala airfield because of its inadequate runway length (about 1460 metres) and other constraints in maintenance support facilities, it had to be done in order to provide effective air support to 4 Corps. The airfield was activated on 8 December by No.24 Sqn (Gnats). Further as Indian forces advanced, it became highly desirable to have a forward airfield to enable fighter aircraft to spend more time on target. Arrangements were, therefore, made with the Indian Army for the repair of Jessore airfield and provision of minimum facilities on it for IAF operations. Jessore airfield was in use by the IAF from 14 December and 10 Hunters of No.14 Sqn were based there.

After complete air superiority was achieved, one MiG, one Hunter and one SU-7 Sqns were moved to the west. After the move out of No.221 Sqn and 30 Sqn detachment from Panagarh, all operational staff were withdrawn from the base to augment the additional personnel required at Jessore.

ESTABLISHING AIR SUPREMACY

The news of the PAF pre-emptive strikes on Indian airfields all along the Western Border was received by EAC Ops Room at 1800 hrs on 3 December 1971. The AOC-in-C, Air Marshal HC Dewan, put all forces in EAC under instant alert. The Canberra force carried out its mission of attacking Tezgaon and Kurmitola airfields on night 3-4 December. This was preceded by an Alouette and an Otter of the Mukti Bahini Air Force attacking the oil installations at Narayanganj and Chittagong. These attacks were successful and fires were started at the oil dumps.

Taking into account the weather at some IAF airfields and in the Dhaka complex, counter-air missions were ordered to strike from 0705 hrs on 4 December. As in the west, CAPs were mounted at the airfields from early morning to foil any PAF attempts at disrupting any operational plan. Eight Hunters from Hashimara, escorted by MiGs from Gauhati, were the first to attack Tezgaon airfield, near Dhaka. Thereafter, continuous pressure was maintained on both the airfields at Tezgaon and Kurmitola (also near Dhaka). The PAF lost seven F-86 Sabre aircraft in aerial battles over Dhaka, (this was subsequently confirmed by Pak AOC Dhaka after the surrender), and three Sabres, one transport and two light aircraft were destroyed or damaged on the ground(8). In one such mission Wg Cdr S. Sunderesan OC 14 Sqn (Hunters) and his No.2 Flt Lt Tremehere were bounded by 6 Sabres over Tazgaon. Flt Lt Tremehere got behind a pair of Sabres. When they carried out a defensive split the No.2 went for the lower aircraft and the leader switched to the upper aircraft. Flt Lt Tremehere got sandwiched by the upper man and could not disengage in time. He was shot down but ejected safely. The leader Wg Cdr Sunderesan meanwhile got behind the Sabre that shot down his No.2 and managed to shoot him down. Throughout the day the airfields of Tezgaon and Kurmitola were attacked by Hunters, with top cover being provided by the MiGs.

By noon on 4 Dec the PAF had lost its sting and was only of nuisance value. The other airfields in East Bengal, the farthest away being Chittagong, also received their share of attention. During the day, 109 counter-air missions were flown from the loss of

four Hunters, and one SU 7. The success of these missions in the east allowed the IAF to move five Hunters to Kumbhigram from Hashimara for supporting the Army. IAF strike and the PAF's reaction to them revealed that it was operating only from the Dhaka complex and would not be in a position to attack any IAF air bases. Therefore, 12 L-70 guns were released from Hashimara for the Western Theatre. These were airlifted to strengthen the defences of Agra which had been raided thrice by Pak B-57s on night 3/4 December.

The main task for the day on 5 December was to eliminate the remaining Pak F-86s and increase support to the Army. It was decided to ground the PAF by bombing Tezgaon and Kurmitola airfields near Dhaka. The Canberras, in the raids of the two previous nights, had left the runways untouched. MiG-21s were, therefore, detailed to bomb the runways with 500 kg and 1000 lb bombs. The bombing by 8 MiGs was very accurate and the runways were deeply cratered. Photographs taken with a hand held camera by one of the MiG pilots showed the bombs exploding on the runway. This pilot also brought back photographs of Tezgaon airfield clearly indicating the layout, and it was most useful for briefing pilots detailed for subsequent missions(9).

The bombing pressure was kept up throughout the period of operations, and post-war inspection revealed 46 direct hits on the runway at Tezgaon and 20 at Kurmitola. Some of the craters at Tezgaon were about 17-metre wide and 3-metre deep. Both the M-62 Russian 500 kg Bomb and the Indian MK-IX 1000 lb bomb proved to be good weapons, though the slightly heavier Russian bomb made somewhat larger craters. The attacks on the runways in the Dhaka complex paid rich dividends in another form, in that they prevented the operation of any Pak transport aircraft also.

With the PAF virtually grounded by midday on 5 December, air defence requirements for VAs and VPs on the Indian side were no more necessary. During the day, only 42 AD sorties were mounted as compared to 116 the previous day. Subsequently, the AD effort was further reduced and became un-necessary from 8 December onwards, though a few CAP sorties were mounted as a precaution during the airborne operations on 11 December. A MiG-21 Air Defence Squadron deployed at Kalaikunda was moved to the west; eight of its aircraft reached Chandigarh by the evening of 5 December and four more followed on 8 December. The AN-12 and Packet fleet ably supported the special re-deployment of the squadron.

On 6 December a R/T intercept led to the

discovery of a landing strip at Barisal which appeared to be in use. The air-strip and a hangar were attacked with bombs and guns, and made totally unusable. Subsequent to this strike Barisal airfield was handed over as a Naval target. The main counter-air effort in the east continued to be bombing attacks on Tezgaon and Kurmitola, to keep them totally unserviceable.

On 7 December bombing of Dhaka airfield was suspended in the morning to enable a RAF C-130 to land at Tezgaon to evacuate UN personnel. But the PAF refused to let the aircraft land, and it had to return to Bangkok. Because of complete air superiority, the IAF was able to use the Gnats and MiG fighters in the ground attack role. Five Gnats from Bagdogra were moved to Dum Dum to support 2 Corps' operations(10). Also, all the ten serviceable aircraft of No.7 Sqn (Hunters) were moved from Bagdogra to Nal, for operations in the west.

Counter-air missions by MiGs on 8 December continued against the Dhaka airfields while Gnats and Hunters attacked Barisal and Ishurdi. On this day, full photo cover was also obtained of both Tezgaon and Kurmitola. They clearly showed the damage to the airfields and installations. Since there was no further danger from the PAF, all air defence guns in the east, except those deployed at some radar stations, were released for the Western Sector. Caribou aircraft continued their night harassment on 8/9 December of Tezgaon and Kurmitola airfields.

Counter-air operations in the east on 9 December were maintained with the aim of preventing repairs to runways.

On 11 December an intelligence report during the day gave rise to the suspicion that six Pak aircraft would try to land near Dhaka in an attempt to evacuate Major General Farman Ali and other senior Pak Officers the same night. Measures were taken to foil this attempt. Canberras were detailed to attack Chittagong airfield in the evening. Two of them bombed the runway and the taxitrack. On the night of 11/12 December, the IAF maintained continuous pressure on the Dhaka area. Eight Canberras in pairs bombed Kurmitola and Tezgaon airfields between 0230 and 0400 hrs. The big 4000 lbs high explosive bombs were used for the first time against Tezgaon. They were meant to inflict maximum damage to standing structures by blast effect. Photographs taken after the cease-fire confirmed that a light aircraft and the Officers Mess were completely destroyed by them. Four MiGs and two Caribous also maintained constant surveillance in the area. These aircraft operated singly at varying

intervals to cover the period before and after the Canberra raids. No Pak aircraft entered the area that night. On this day, an IAF Mi-4 helicopter on a flight from Agartala to Aijal force-landed because of a fire in the air. It was completely destroyed but there were no casualties(11).

On 12 December, MiG and Hunter aircraft carried out 15 counter-air missions against Tezgaon and Rangpur. However, air operations were again suspended over the Dhaka area from 1800 hrs on 12 December till 1400 hrs on 13 December to enable the evacuation of foreign personnel by RAF C-130 Hercules aircraft. One MiG was hit by ground fire at Tezgaon. The pilot ejected and was picked up by the Mukti Bahini.

The RAF C-130s completed their rescue missions from Tezgaon by 1500 hrs on 13 December. At 1515 hrs, the MiGs were back, again bombed the repaired portion of the runway and rendered Tezgaon airfield unuseable. Fighter patrols allowed the enemy no opportunity to make use of the bombing respite to fly any aircraft out of the Dhaka area.

On 14 December, a squadron of S-22s was transferred to the west. They were to relieve other S-22 Squadrons in the west which had been in operations continuously from the morning of 4 December. Another move from the east was that of a guided missile squadron from Barrackpore to Baroda, for the defence fo Koyali refinery. It left on 14 December and was to be deployed at its new location by 16/17 December.

On 15 December, all air effort, including that of the Canberras, was directed at reduction of the Dhaka garrison. No counter-air missions were necessary. At 1700 hrs air action over Bangladesh came to a halt as the Pak Commander, Lt Gen AAK Niazi, asked for time to negotiate a cease-fire. The IAF agreed to cease all operations till 0900 hrs on 16 December(12).

Pockets of Pak troops at Sylhet, Bhairab Bazar and Comilla had been putting up stiff resistance. Agartala had therefore been activated as a fighter base on 9 December when four Gnats had moved there from Kumbhigram. Seven more Gnats were moved from Dum Dum on 15 December, bringing up the force upto almost a squadron strength. These Gnats were extensively employed against the enemy pockets isolated by the rapid advance of 4 Corps troops towards Dhaka. One Mi-4 helicopter was lost on a flight from Agartala. It force-landed due to transmission failure and caught fire on impact with the ground.

On 16 December the cease-fire, which was originally planned at 0900 hrs, was extended upto 1500 hrs, as the Pak Commander asked for more time to inform all his troops throughout Bangladesh and arrange a formal surrender. Aircraft of EAC were recalled from their strike missions to Dhaka minutes before the 0900 hrs deadline. The formal surrender took place at 1631 hrs IST and hostilities in the east came to an end.

AIR OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE ARMY

EAC had planned to make close air support available to the Army from the first day of operations. Accordingly, 55 offensive support and interdiction missions and six photo missions were flown on 4 December. The Pak army had built up strong defences on the ground, and for the initial breakthrough the Air Force was used to neutralise gun positions and bunkers which would otherwise have delayed the advance of the Indian Army. A PR Canberra was also employed on 4 December to obtain photo cover of possible dropping zones for airborne operations. Two Hunter aircraft were lost that day to ground fire while on close support missions in the 2 Corps Sector(13).

Support to the Army was stepped up considerably on 5 December. The 2 Corps Sector, especially opposite Jessore, received nine close air support missions, some of them consisting of four aircraft. In 4 Corps Sector, 52 offensive support sorties were flown by Hunters, Gnats and MiGs around Akhaura, on the roads leading to Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria, Laksham, Kalaura, Mynamati and Maulvibazar. The 33 Corps and 101 Comn Zone troops also received their fair share of offensive support. Close air support sorties to the Army rose from 55 sorties on 4 December to 104 sorties on 5 December. It was also jointly agreed that Canberras should be employed against Pak troops concentrations in the Jessore area. At approximately 1630 hrs, four Canberras escorted by four Gnats from Dum Dum, attacked enemy positions in Jessore and dropped 30 x 1000 lb bombs.

With a decrease in air defence and counter-air operations in the east, support for the Army was stepped up in all the Corps Sectors. On 6 December, thirty-two Hunter and S-22 sorties were flown to neutralise the strong defensive positions holding up 2 Corps advance towards Jhenida. Close support was also given on the approaches to Jessore by fighter-bombers in the morning and Canberras in the afternoon. The Canberras dropped 33 x 1000 lb bombs, in five sorties. The 33 Corps' operations around Hilli and Dinajpur

received close support by 16 sorties by Gnats and Hunters. Hunters, Gnats and MiGs did 40 sorties in support of 4 Corps operations in the areas of Kalaura-Sylhet, Mynamati Cantt and Brahmanbaria-Ashuganj. One of the MiGs, which was hit by ground fire, ran out of fuel on its return flight and the pilot ejected from the aircraft some 16 km short of Gauhati airfield.

On 7 December, the IAF was called upon to deal with the remnants of the Pak Army holding out on the outskirts of Jessore. After the air attacks, the Indian Army entered the town to find it devoid of all Pak troops. Thereafter a number of reconnaissance missions were mounted to locate them(14). Four Canberras bombed the road and railway line on the approaches to Khulna as Pak troops were retreating there from Jessore. Fighter-bombers were also active along the roads Chuadanga-Jhenida and Kaliganj-Jhenida to assist 4 Div in its advance. One Hunter was hit by ground fire. The pilot tried to reach Dum Dum but ran out of fuel and ejected short of the airfield.

In the 4 Corps area, close support was given to Indian troops advancing towards Bhairab Bazar. The 8 Div and 23 Div were also supported in the Sylhet and Mynamati areas. In the operations in Sylhet area, helicopters were used for the first time. Plans had been made to provide helicopters for the air-lift of two Company Groups to selected places behind enemy lines on D+5 i.e., 8 December. The actual sector was not defined but it was agreed that the lift would be to areas where enemy defences were strong. This situation arose on 7 December when the Indian Army's advance on Sylhet was almost halted at Kalaura. A landing zone was, therefore, selected south of Sylhet town after a helicopter reconnaissance. The helilift commenced on the afternoon of 7 December and continued till post midnight 8/9 December.

On 8 December, 55 sorties were flown by fighter-bombers mostly in Maulvibazar, Narayanganj and Sylhet areas to support operations of 4 Corps. The capture of Maulvibazar the next day was due in part, to the 16 sorties of close air support flown to neutralise the defences. The stronghold at Jamalpur was attacked by MiGs using rockets and front guns and followed up by bombing of heavily defended positions. Close support sorties were also flown in 33 Corps and 2 Corps Sectors, mostly in the form of reconnaissance of roads and interdiction of enemy movements. Four S-22s blew up a fuel dump and attacked Pak troops located in Magura college. PR Canberras obtained photo cover of Mymensingh, Joydebpur, Comilla, Mynamati Cantt and Bhairab Bazar at the request of the Army(15).

A total of 147 sorties were flown on 9 December in support of the Army. Many Tac R sorties were flown towards Kushtia, spearheading the advance of 2 Corps. In the 4 Corps area, air support was given to troops in the Sylhet and Mynamati areas. Pak concentrations in Chandpur and Bhairab Bazar were also attacked. The advance from the north remained bogged down at Jamalpur in spite of 12 MiG sorties mounted against bunkers and gun positions. In the 33 Corps Sector also, the Hilli and Rangpur areas were stoutly defended and offensive support continued to be provided there.

By now rail and road communications had been thoroughly disrupted in the east and Pak forces were dependent on waterways for movement of troops and supplies. The IAF's interdiction plan included attacks on enemy shipping and river-craft. Hunters and Gnats operating from Dum Dum, Hashimara and Kumbhigram were ordered to attack all coastal vessels, motorized barges, gunboats and ferries. Country boats were to be spared unless they were found carrying Pak troops. The tally for the (9 Dec) day was approximately 100 vessels destroyed or damaged, mainly in the Narayanganj, Khulna and Sirajganj area. In the afternoon two Canberras (interdictors) were also employed for this task in the Narayanganj area. The attacks were executed so thoroughly that thereafter few gunboats or steamers were to be seen in the Bangladesh rivers(16).

Early morning reconnaissance sorties on 10 December flown along the water-ways in Bangladesh failed to find any major targets. A large number of sorties continued to be flown in direct support of the land battle. In the 2 Corps area, air strikes were called to reduce the defences of Kushtia, which was believed to be heavily defended; 26 sorties were flown though no hard intelligence was available on the exact targets to be attacked. In the 4 Corps Sector, air effort against Mynamati Cantt was stepped up. Extensive fortifications, on high ground, made a frontal attack by the army difficult. The Air Force was, therefore, given the task of neutralising enemy positions, tanks and guns. Though the IAF was unable to make any major dent in the strong defences of Mynamati, the air attacks prevented the Pak troops from counter attacking or making a breakout. While on a strike mission to Narayanganj, one Hunter was shot down by ground fire. Another Hunter was shot down near Lalmanirhat to the north, but the pilot was recovered by Indian troops. One more Hunter was lost on this day when it was badly damaged while making a forced landing at Cooch Bihar airfield.

Eastcom plans also called for clearance of Jamalpur by D+5 i.e. 8 December by 101 Comn Zone troops on their drive southward to link-up with the proposed paradrop at Tangail, scheduled for D+8 i.e., 11 December. The Pak garrison had held up a brigade at Jamalpur till 10 December and link-up with the para force was in jeopardy. The IAF launched 14 napalm, rocket and bombing attacks in quick succession to turn the tide. Jamalpur fell to Indian troops on the morning of 11 December.

Demands for close support to the army on 11 December were on a reduced scale, as Indian troops had bypassed most enemy strongholds. Attacks on the defences around Kushtia preceded the entry of 2 Corps troops into this town. In the 4 Corps area, strikes were against targets in Mynamati and Narasingdi. The latter coincided with the airlift of troops by helicopters from Brahmanbaria to Narsingdi on the west bank of the Meghna.

On 12 December, close support was provided to 2 Corps in the Hardinge Bridge area, where it was reported that about 300 Pak vehicles, tanks and troops were concentrated on the west bank of the Padma. Air attacks broke up the Pak forces and accounted for a large number of vehicles and some tanks. Sorties were also mounted all along the line of retreat and the exit points along the river Padma. In the 4 Corps area, 28 close support missions were flown, mainly again in the Mynamati, Bhairab Bazar and Sylhet areas. In the Sylhet areas. In the Sylhet Sector, air strikes were made to clear the path for advancing troops to link-up with troops in Sylhet who had earlier been brought in by helicopters. A Hunter aircraft was lost in a flying accident at Hashimara, as it was taking off on a strike mission(17).

110 sorties were flown on 13 December in support of the Army. In the 2 Corps area, the retreating enemy was harassed along the line of communication, and rivercraft and road transports were attacked. Daulatpur, which was holding up the advance into Khulna, was also attacked. In the 4 Corps Sector, 45 close support sorties were mounted, mostly against Mynamati Cantt and a few in the Bhairab Bazar area. In the 33 Corps Sector, seven strikes were mounted against Pak troops and bunkers around Sirajganj, Bogra and Saidpur. Full PR cover for the Dhaka area was obtained and sent to Eastcom for planning future ground operations.

A special resupply task for troops in the Tangail area was undertaken by Caribous on 13 December, which flew 14 sorties. Ammunition, rations

and stores amounting to 37.7 tonnes were flown from Gauhati and air-dropped over Tangail.

The main task of the Air Force on 14 December continued to be support to the Army in its advance towards Dhaka. Not many sorties were flown for 2 Corps as the weather was unfavourable and the mounting bases at Panagarh, Dum Dum and Kalaikunda had poor visibility. In the 4 Corps area, the IAF continued to maintain pressure against the Pak garrisons at Mynamati, Bhairab Bazar and Sylhet. In the afternoon, after the fall of Dr. Malik's Government, there was increased air action in the Dhaka complex against the Pak Army of occupation.

The transport force was equally active in moving troops from east to west. Helicopters were busy with their shuttle service carrying troops and equipment across the Meghna from Daudkandi to Baidya Bazar. On 14 and 15 Dec a total of 1200 troops and 38.1 tonnes of load were airlifted in 121 helicopter sorties, flown mostly at night.

At Jessore airfield one Hunter was involved in a landing accident. It had a full load of rockets which wrecked the aircraft, but the pilot managed to escape safely.

Offensive support was stepped up from 91 sorties on 14 December to 152 on 15 December. Gnats and Hunters attacked Pak positions at Daulatpur and Khulna with napalm, guns and rockets. However, the Pak troops were well entrenched and continued to offer stiff resistance to Indian ground forces. In the 4 Corps Sector the pounding of Mynamati continued. Further north troops at Sylhet received close support from 16 sorties by Hunters and Gnats. The ferry site at Narayanganj was also attacked to prevent Pak troops escaping from the Dhaka complex.

Canberras were also employed on daylight raids on Dhaka Cantt. In 12 sorties they dropped 87 x 1000 lb bombs. One Canberra was lost to ack ack fire near Tezgaon airfield. With the Pak Commander's request for a cease-fire, all air action over Bangladesh was halted at 1700 hrs on 15 December(18). On 16 December, Caribous and helicopters were used for airlifting Commanders and press parties to Dhaka for the surrender ceremony.

SPECIAL HELIBORNE AND AIRBORNE OPERATIONS

The Heli Bridges

Heli-borne operations on a large scale were mounted in India, and perhaps in South Asia, for the

first time during the 1971 War. They proved the key to rapid movement of the ground forces in the Bangladesh terrain criss-crossed with innumerable rivers and rivulets. The complete mastery of the air achieved by the IAF in the Eastern Theatre enabled the helicopters to operate safely. There were only 14 Mi-4 helicopters in theatre, and they had been provided primarily for casualty evacuation and to carry the senior commanders to the different sectors of the wide front. But, seeing in them the only means of crossing major rivers like the Meghna, Lt Gen Sagat Singh, GOC 4 Corps and Group Captain Chandan Singh had decided upon and carefully planned the heli-borne operations. The pilots were trained for night landings on unprepared grounds. The Corps Commander, it appears, obtained several hundred torches from Calcutta in order to mark improvised helipads visible at night(19).

The first major heli-lift carried 4/5 GR from Kulaura to Sylhet between 1500 hrs to 1800 hrs on 7 December, and more than a company of troops was moved across. Pakistani troops fired on the helicopters, but the helilift was continued. The operation was halted for a few hrs in the evening to avoid the enemy ground fire on the illuminated landing zone. However, a special communication element was soon inducted for carrying out night operations, and the second phase of helilift operations commenced at 0300 hrs on 8 December. By 0800 hrs, the complete Bn, except a few elements of its HQ, were ferried over. Initially the enemy fire was moderate, but during the later landings, the helicopters met a heavy barrage of fire from all directions. Fortunately only one helicopter was hit by ground fire, causing a total failure of all its electrical services. But it succeeded in flying back to Kailashahar and landing safely.

Helilift operations to Sylhet continued till the early hrs of 9 December, by which time 66(20) sorties had been flown by 12 helicopters operating round the clock for 36 hrs, and 584 troops along with 12,500 kg of essential equipment, including arms and pouch ammunition, had been airlifted. This was the first time that helicopters were used to airlift troops and equipment on such a large scale.

The Pakistanis, while retreating in the Bhairab Bazar Sector, had blown up the main bridge over the river Meghna. The Indian Army having experienced the success of heliborne operations in Sylhet requested for similar help in this area. This requirement was accepted by the IAF on 9 and 10 December and 656 fully armed troops and 8,200 kgs of equipment was helilifted from Brahmanbaria (2359N 9107E) to Raipura

(2358N 9053E)(21). No ground opposition was experienced in this Sector as the Pak troops had fled just prior to the landings.

The success of such missions instilled a new confidence in the Army. This resulted in more requests being put to the IAF, not only to overcome enemy strongholds and geographical obstructions, but also to inject greater impetus into the Indian Army's advance to Dhaka.

To achieve a breakthrough, the biggest helilift operation for transporting troops, arms and equipment was undertaken from Brahmanbaria to Narsingdi and from Daudkhandi to Baidya Bazar between 11 and 15 December. Eight Mi-4 helicopters flew 164 sorties from 11 to 13 December to helilift 1,350 armed troops and 40,070 kg of weapons and equipment from Brahmanbaria to Narsingdi. One sortie was also flown from Agartala to Narsingdi on 15 December to airlift 4 troops and 1,200 kg of equipment. In the first two sectors, the equipment airlifted included medium artillery guns and ammunition(22).

Thus, between 7 and 15 December, these few helicopters flew at total of 222 sorties between Brahmanbaria and Raipura, Brahmanbaria and Narsingdi and Agartala and Narsingdi, carrying 2,010 troops and 49,470 kg of equipment of 57 Mtn Div and 187 sorties from Kalaura and Kailashahar to Sylhet and from Daudkhandi to Baidya Bazar to transport 1,793 troops and 50,600 kg of weapons and equipment.

These special helicopter operations provided a new dimension to the mobility of infantry in India and the experiment was most rewarding. It also contributed richly to the operational experience of helicopter pilots who operated under the most trying conditions both by day and night without much prior training in this role. The important aspects of these operations were:-

- (a) The helilift was undertaken from improvised helipads without any ground facilities.
- (b) The landings on most occasions had to be done in the face of enemy small arms fire.
- (c) These missions were completed with very marginal fuel reserves.
- (d) All the battle-damaged helicopters were repaired in the field.

It was a matter of great pride and satisfaction that the above heliborne task was performed by only

eight to ten Mi-4 helicopters which were operational at a time. The total effort put in on this task was 409 sorties airlifting 3803 fully armed troops and 100,070 kgs of essential equipment which included nine 75-mm guns with 100 shells each(23). It was indeed a great achievement.

The Para Drop at Tangail(24).

Four different para-drop operations had been planned for the Eastern Theatre. But three of them were not found necessary. The fourth operation involved the air dropping of a Para Battalion Group north of Tangail, its aim being the capture of Poongli Bridge on Jamalpur-Tangail road, as already detailed in Chapter XIII.

The fleet of transport aircraft to be used for the operation consisted of AN-12s, Packets and Dakotas which had been marshalled at Gorakhpur, Phaphamau, and Bhita by 10 December and ferried to their mountain bases, Dum Dum and Kalaikunda, on the following day.

The main para drop operation was undertaken on 11 December by 48 aircraft - six AN-12s and 20 Packet aircraft operating from Dum Dum and 22 Dakota aircraft from Kalaikunda - which landed most of the Para Battalion Group along with their supply and heavy drops north of Tangail between 1600 and 1630 hrs, the initial plan for a night drop having been changed to dusk drop due to the prevailing favourable air situation.

Before the main drop was undertaken, a Pathfinder force in a Packet aircraft was dropped on the DZ site and two Caribous, employed simultaneously as decoys, dropped dummies about 16 km away from the actual DZ. The main drop commenced with the AN-12s delivering the heavy loads, followed by the Packets with platform loads and troops. The Dakotas brought up the rear, carrying mostly men though some of them also had door loads of 250 kg. While it had been planned to drop 800 troops and 152.4 tonnes of supplies, including 22 heavy platform loads of guns and vehicles, the actual drop consisted of 750 officers and men of 50 Para Bde with their arms, equipment and light vehicles. Fighter cover for the transport aircraft during different phases of the para drop operations was provided by Gnat and MiG aircraft.

On 12 December, a preplanned resupply for the 50 Para Bde was carried out by five AN-12s and one Packet aircraft which dropped 40 troops and 45 tonnes of second line ammunition and other supplies.

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Government House, Dhaka

This was an operation that hastened the course of events and brought the war in the east to a dramatic end for, within the span of a few minutes, it shattered the morale of the Government in East Pakistan.

Dr A.M. Malik, Governor of East Pakistan, was scheduled to chair an important meeting with his civilian and military officers and East Pak leaders at 1200 hrs (EP Time) on 14 December in the conference hall at Government House, Dhaka. Barely 45 minutes before the scheduled time for its commencement, i.e., at 1115 hrs EP Time (1045 hrs IST), Eastern Air Command received information about the high level meeting that would take momentous decisions on the courses of action to be adopted to save the situation(26). Since the destruction of the focal point of the enemy's 'central nervous system' was likely to paralyse its entire war machinery, Eastern Air Command was ordered to carry out a lightning attack on Government House, Dhaka, while the meeting was in progress.

MiGs and Hunters from Gauhati and Hashimara were immediately alerted, and since only a few minutes were left for the meeting to commence, the pilots, before they were scrambled, were briefed with the help of tourist maps of Dhaka. At 1255 hrs (EP Time), by which time the meeting had been in progress for less than an hour, the IAF arrived on the scene and struck. Four MiGs attacked the Government House with rockets and scored direct hits on the conference hall, followed immediately by another successful rocket attack by two more MiGs and, a few minutes later, by yet another attack by two Hunters.

The sudden and spectacular attack which was carried out with pin-point accuracy and which destroyed a third of the Government House and caused severe damage to the rest of the building, was a turning point in the course of events towards the closing stages of the war. It so completely unnerved and demoralised the persons present at the meeting that the very head of the East Pakistan Government Dr A.M. Malik, along with his entire Cabinet, resigned then and there.

Transport Operations

On 12 December, five AN-12s and one Packet aircraft were employed for resupply of ammunition and stores and para-drop of 40 troops as already related. At the same time, a special air transport force

consisting of AN-12s, Packets and IAC Boeings assembled at Dum Dum to airlift 1,679 troops and 82.9 tonnes of stores of 1 Para Brigade to Palam(27). A total of 23 sorties were flown and the task completed by the afternoon. Another task of airlifting an infantry brigade (comprising 2,464 troops, 12 vehicles with RCL guns and 67 tonnes of stores and supporting equipment) from Bagdogra to Hindon was concurrently undertaken by AN-12s, Packets and Boeings. This airlift consisting of 62 sorties began on 12 December and was completed on 13 December.

Extensive casualty evacuation sorties were continuously undertaken by all transport aircraft and helicopters on their return flights from the forward airfields and landing zones. Special casualty evacuation flights were also arranged from Agartala to Gauhati. In addition to this, normal operational air maintenance sorties were also carried out from Agartala to Gauhati. After the troops were helilanded at Sylhet and Daudkandi and paradropped at Tangail, their operational air maintenance was undertaken by Caribou aircraft. In the NEFA area, routine air maintenance sorties continued from Mohanbari.

AIR OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE NAVY

As soon as AOC Maritime Air Operations (MAO) was informed of the outbreak of hostilities, the three Maritime Air Centres were instructed to put into operation the plans for maritime reconnaissance. The maritime air centre on the eastern seaboard was located at Vishakhapatnam. On 4 December, an HS-748 aircraft commenced a dawn search of the waters off Vishakhapatnam for Pak submarines and surface ships. And maritime air support continued daily thereafter. On 8 December it searched for the Pak merchantship Madhumati and the Norwegian cargo ship Toronto reported to be carrying contraband cargo to Chittagong. The Toronto was sighted and identified by one of the Dakotas from Cochin at 0905 hrs and INS Ganga, which was in the area, was guided in to intercept her. The Madhumati was not sighted. She was eventually apprehended by the Indian Navy off the Makran coast in West Pakistan.

Dakotas operating from Cochin and Tambaram and HS-748s from Vishakhapatnam and Port Blair kept up their search for Pak ships. A specially close watch was kept for merchant ships which might be trying to break out from Bangladesh. Just prior to commencement of hostilities, the Chiefs of Staff had considered employment of Indian Naval ships and aircraft to attack targets south of Latitude 22° 25' N in the east. Because Indian Naval aircraft would not have

been a match for Sabres or MiG 19s, operating from Chittagong, the IAF was given the task of eliminating enemy air from this major air base. On 4 December, Hunters from Dum Dum attacked Chittagong airfield, and when it was confirmed that no Pak fighter aircraft were based there, the Navy was informed to go ahead with its attacks. The elimination of the PAF in Bangladesh by the IAF was part of the coordinated plan for the use of naval air in the east.

THE MUKTI BAHINI AIR FORCE

The birth of the Bangladesh Air Force as Kilo Flight has already been noticed. On the night of December 3-4 the Otter aircraft of this AF attacked the fuel dumps at Chittagong and an Alouette helicopter raided the fuel dumps at Narayanganj. Both the missions were successful. On 4 December, this Flight at Kailashahar airfield was placed at the disposal of GOC 8 Mountain Division, operating in the Maulvibazar/Sylhet Sector. The GOC asked for attacks by night on convoys, river barges and steamers on the Meghna, north of Bhairab Bazar. The flight flew five sorties between 4-7 December, hitting bunkers and troop concentrations at Maulvibazar, and also destroyed two steamers and several 3-ton trucks carrying troops.

From 7 to 12 December the Alouette helicopter was constantly and effectively used as an armed escort during the special helicopter operations at Sylhet, Raipur, Narsingdi and Baidya Bazar. It engaged targets as directed by the FAC at night also.

After the first night raid on Chittagong fuel dumps, the Otter aircraft was utilised for armed escort/recce on a few missions only, in the same area as the Alouette. The overall returns from this Flight were not very encouraging, perhaps because it had no definite tasks. Contribution of this Flight to the war effort was hardly significant. However, as far as raising the morale of the Mukti Bahini was concerned, it did serve the desired purpose. During the period of operations the total flying effort of this Flight was:-

<u>A/C Type</u>	<u>Sorties/Hours</u>
Alouettee	77/68 hrs 10 mts
Otter	12/23 hrs 35 mts

REVIEW

2033 In the Eastern Theatre the IAF flew a total of 2033 sorties on fighter, fighter bomber and bomber

aircraft. Of these 184 sorties were flown in the air defence role (9.1%), 1384 sorties for offensive support and interdiction (68.1%), 390 sorties for counter air (19.2%), 52 sorties on special strategic missions (2.5%), and 23 sorties on photo and fighter reconnaissance (1.1%). The allocation of the flying effort was well planned. A little over two thirds of the total flying effort was in direct support of the Indian Army in the land battle. Only 9.1% of the sorties were flown in the air defence role as the PAF ceased to offer any resistance after the second day of operations(28).

Aircraft Losses

As mentioned in an earlier Chapter, the IAF lost a total of 56 aircraft in the war due to enemy action, of which 43 were lost in the Western Sector. In the Eastern Sector the IAF lost a total of 13 aircraft, as detailed below(29):-

Type of Aircraft	Lost over enemy territory	Lost in Air Combat over own territory	A/C lost on ground by enemy air action	A/C hit in enemy territory but crashed in own territory	Total
S-22 (Su 7)	1	--	--	--	1
Type-77	1	--	--	1	2
MiG 21					
Hunter	8	--	--	1	9
Canberra	1	--	--	--	1
Li-4	--	--	--	--	--
Yakota	--	--	--	--	--
RAND TOTAL	11	--	--	2	13

The Pakistan Air Force lost all its aircraft in the east totalling 19 F-86 Sabre aircraft and 3 RT-33 aircraft. Of these, PAF claimed 9 or 10 F-86 Sabre aircraft and 3 RT-33 aircraft, destroyed by the Pakistanis themselves on the ground to obviate their falling into enemy hands. Also one transport and two light aircraft were destroyed on the ground by bombing.

Comparative losses in aircraft seem to be on par on both Fronts of the War. However, the losses as a ratio of the air effort strongly favoured the IAF, which operated many more sorties in hostile skies deep inside Pakistani airspace, and which pressed home its attacks with determination. And Pak air defence guns were numerous and deadly, particularly over the PAF bases.

Unique Achievements

In many ways the air war in the east presented to this part of the world a unique spectacle. There were features in this struggle which had never been witnessed before, and which are unlikely to be repeated in the future. The total elimination of the rival air power by the IAF within two days of the start of the war reminded observers of the Luftwaffe over Poland in September 1939 and the Israeli Air Force against the Egyptians. In determined attacks pressed home against PAF Sabres and intense ground fire at Kurmitola Air Base(30), the IAF shot down several Sabres, and grounded the rest by cratering the run-ways. Persistent attacks in the days following defeated all attempts to repair the run-ways. Thereafter, the PAF ceased to operate in the east.

This achievement of total air supremacy enabled the IAF to give a revealing demonstration of the unique flexibility and power of a modern air arm. Daylight movements of the Pak Army were effectively interdicted. Concentrated air attacks destroyed within one day almost all gun boats and steamers used by the enemy. Effective support was given to the Indian Army battling on the ground below whenever a request was received. The vulnerable Seahawks of the Indian Navy were enabled by the elimination of the Sabres, to operate with impunity against Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Khulna and Dohazari ports. Elimination of the PAF also permitted transfer from Eastern Front to the Western Front of one MiG, one Sukhoi and one Hunter squadron in the middle of the war.

Only on the first two days of the war, Combat Air Patrols were mounted at IAF airfields for air defence against PAF raiders. No enemy strikes, however, took place and CAPs were discontinued thereafter.

The IAF claimed destruction of 18 enemy tanks, and a large number of artillery guns, in addition to inflicting heavy casualties on enemy troops. The air strikes over Pak strongholds at Lalmai Hills, Comilla and Mynamati proved effective in keeping the troops

bottled up in their bunkers.

As air superiority was complete, several special missions were undertaken. These missions aimed at weakening the enemy's will to fight. Practically every night MiG-21 aircraft were sent to carry out harassment of the Pak troops by flying at supersonic speeds at low levels and firing missiles. The aim was not to attack any particular target but to keep them awake, and guessing. Missions were undertaken to drop leaflets over the Pak troops to exhort them to surrender. There were three other special missions which were carried out with great precision and daring, and deserve special mention, namely the attack on Government House at Dhaka, the strike on Joydebpur Ordnance Factory, and the para drop at Tangail. These missions, especially the first, definitely helped in persuading Gen Niazi to surrender.

With bridges blown up and ferries destroyed, the mighty rivers and innumerable rivulets of Bangladesh presented serious hurdles before the advancing Indian troops. In such situations, IAF helicopters were extensively used for airbridging these obstacles. Less than a dozen Mi-4s airlifted nearly 4,000 troops with supporting arms and equipment across river obstacles at Narsingdi, Baidya Bazar, Raipur and Sylhet.

Both tactical and strategic airlift of troops were carried out. After the situation in the east stabilized, army formations which could be spared were airlifted to the west. Both military and civil aircraft were used for this purpose. The advancing troops were supplied by both para drops and landing sorties, and at times they had to depend only on air supply.

Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft carried out extensive casualty evacuation. The Mi-4s were used to bring the casualties from the battlefield to the forward airfields, and from there serious casualties were evacuated to Gauhati/Calcutta by Dakotas. A total of 899 casualties were airlifted during the period of war in the east. The ready availability of airlift for casualty evacuation was a great morale booster to the troops. Helicopters also provided great mobility to the commanders, enabling them to be present personally at the right time and the right place.

Conclusion

Many factors contributed to the successful and decisive victory in the east, the foremost amongst them being the achievement of air superiority within

the first five hours of undertaking offensive action and thereafter achieving total air supremacy at the end of the second day of operations.

After having achieved air supremacy in the first two days of operations it really paved the way for the army to reach Dhaka with the least possible resistance. Where there were enemy strongholds the IAF pounded them, where there were big rivers to cross the IAF airlifted troops and equipment, and where pressure was required to bear on the enemy to ask for a ceasefire the IAF was thereto apply it.

The high level of cooperation and understanding between the three Services and the local civil government also played an important role in bringing the war to a quick end and contributed a great deal to the high standard of morale of all the fighting forces.

Air Cmde Inam-Ul-Haque, the PAF AOC of Dhaka is quoted as saying that the IAF activity over Dhaka complex was so intense that the ack ack ammunition which he thought would last for months was exhausted in a fortnight, and he had only one day's ammunition left at ceasefire.

Perhaps the best testimony the IAF received was from Gen Niazi himself. One of the senior Air Force Commanders, it is said, asked him why he had surrendered when his army was intact(31). Gen Niazi thought for a moment, walked up to this officer, pointed at the pilot's wings on his uniform and said "Because of this-you, the Indian Air Force".

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid. An Official report, however, says that 110 sorties were flown.
21. From Official Records.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. There were two radars and Chinese LLAD guns at the Dhaka airfields.
31. From Official Records.

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THE INDIAN NAVY IN THE BAY OF BENGALTHE THEATREOverall Concept of the Operations

Prior to the eruption of the crisis in East Pakistan, India's naval strategy vis-a-vis Pakistan saw the Arabian Sea as the main theatre of operations. However, the momentous events of spring and summer of 1971 decisively shifted the geopolitical focus to the east. The consequent build-up and sustenance of the Pak Army in East Pakistan, the cutting edge and chief instrument of policy, had to a large extent, been carried out by sea. Hence the sea lanes between the two wings of the country constituted its jugular, both for the provision of logistic support and for the evacuation of troops in the event of defeat. Severing the jugular, i.e., the destruction of the Pak maritime forces deployed in East Bengal and prevention of sustenance from reaching the enemy by sea, was thus of utmost importance in case war broke out between Pakistan and India. Hence the need arose for India to exercise absolute control over the Bay of Bengal.

The Eastern Naval Command had an operational responsibility of a sea area of over 2.5 million sq.miles. The 3000-km length of India's eastern seaboard and the coastline of the then East Pakistan included the major Indian ports of Calcutta, Haldia, Paradip, Vishakhapatnam, Madras and Tuticorin and the focal point of Pak maritime activities in the east, Chittagong. The Andamans and Nicobars, comprising 219 islands, stretched over a distance of 440 nautical miles, running from north to south, and dominated a large part of the Bay(1).

Strategically it was important, but the impracticability of keeping such a vast area under constant watch was realised. Hence, in keeping with its offensive spirit, the Indian Navy decided to keep the 'neck' of the adversary under active surveillance. In carrying out this task involving a sea area of 18,225 sq. miles, every merchant ship encountered at sea would have to be challenged, identified and boarded, a large number of gunboats and other craft that were being used by the Pak authorities for inland and coastal troop transportation and logistic support would have to be destroyed, Chittagong would have to be isolated from the rest of the world, the entire area of responsibility would have to be 'sanitised' by eliminating the submarine threat, and relentless offensive action mounted against enemy ships and shore

targets. If a war had to be fought, the winter months were considered the most suitable as the rivers and 'khals' (canals) were easier to negotiate during this season. But the possibility of a Pak pre-emptive attack any time between summer and winter could not be ruled out and in case such an attack was launched, it would be required to be neutralised and the initiative retrieved from the attacker by reacting as quickly as possible and launching a bold offensive which, while achieving the naval objectives, would be complementary to the plans of the Indian Army and Air Force(2).

Threat Perceptions and Plans

At the planning stage, the need for wresting the initiative by resorting to offensive operations was at once the moving force and the informing spirit. The main vehicle for such operations, INS Vikrant was, however, sick with boiler trouble which would severely limit her operational capability. It would also increase her vulnerability to an attack by the Pak submarines and if the submarines did succeed in sinking the Vikrant, it would not only be a major blow to the nation's morale but would also present the enemy with a needless triumph. The Arabian Sea was obviously more accessible to Pak submarines, chariots and aircraft. Considering all the factors, it was decided to use the carrier in an offensive role in the Bay of Bengal and commit her entire striking power to the destruction of enemy ships, airfields, ports and harbour installations.

With this momentous decision was born what was christened later as the Eastern Fleet to which, besides the ships and submarines already under the operational control of the Eastern Naval Command, two gunships of the Western Fleet, INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas, were attached for the duration of the operations. The 'teeth' of the Eastern Fleet thus comprised the carrier, the two gunships, two Petya class anti-submarine vessels, INS Kamorta and INS Kavaratti, and the submarine, INS Khanderi.

The main bulk of Pakistan's naval fleet in the east consisted of gunboats with limited seagoing capabilities. The primary threat to Indian ships, ports and harbours in the east was posed by the four Pak submarines. Out of these, PNS Ghazi with an endurance of 14,000 nautical miles, was capable of sustained operations in the Bay of Bengal against the ships of the Eastern Fleet, especially the Vikrant, and the major ports such as Vishakhapatnam and Madras(3). The eastern waters were outside the operational range of the three Daphne class submarines which had an endurance of only 6,000 nautical miles,

but even these could be deployed in the Bay by fuelling en route either from Pak or neutral ships off the coast of Sri Lanka or from a Sri Lankan port. "The weather was suitable and there were no factors to inhibit this"(4). Another threat was the transport, in a similar manner, of midget submarines and the launching of 'chariots' against surface forces in the Indian ports and harbours in the Bay of Bengal. It was, however, appreciated that the Daphne class submarines would be needed in the Arabian Sea for operations against India's Western Fleet, and only the Ghazi would be committed to the east.

It was vital for the Pak forces in East Bengal to keep their life lines open by safeguarding the traffic into and out of its three main ports, Chittagong, Chalna and Khulna. The security measures to be adopted for the purpose, it was appreciated, would include shore defences augmented by ships' guns, mining, aerial strikes and patrolling by smaller craft, while the offensive measures would be the destruction of Indian surface units at sea and damage to Indian ports and harbours by using the submarine and the chariots.

Any war following a pre-emptive Pak attack was likely to be brief, and hence all Indian operations would be required to be quick and sharp(5). The Indian Navy's plans would be required to have built-in "flexibility and the ingredients wherein several options can be individually or collectively implemented in the achievement of the aim. This would also ensure that no opportunity for offensive action is lost and this should be the essence and keynote of our multi-purpose plan. We decided on an omnibus plan to cover the several contingencies likely"(6).

The omnibus plan, while providing strict security measures against sabotage and suitable disposition of ships and secrecy of their movements, included destruction of enemy forces and merchant shipping, strikes of enemy ports and bases, air support to ground forces and preventing ingress into and egress from East Pakistan ports of all Pak and neutral ships by resorting to contraband control, blockade and, if necessary, minelaying by carrier-borne aircraft. Translated into mission-oriented tasks, these involved attacks by ships and aircraft on Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Chalna, Khulna and Mongla, destruction of enemy shipping and submarines at the ports and at sea, providing close air support to the Army, carrying out amphibious landing of troops whenever called for, exercising strict contraband control and security of Indian ports on the Bay of Bengal(7).

THE RIVAL FLEETS IN THE EAST

The Indian Fleet

The Eastern Fleet, which was commanded by Rear Admiral S.H. Sarma and operated under the overall command of Vice Admiral N. Krishnan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, came into being in October 1971. Besides the aircraft carrier, it consisted of two gunships, two anti-submarines vessels, one submarine, one destroyer, three landing ships, one tanker, one seaward defence boat and three patrol craft(8).

INS Vikrant (Captain Swaraj Parkash) which became the flagship of the Eastern Fleet, had a displacement of 19,500 tons, a length of about 210 metres and carried a complement of 25 aircraft - eighteen Seahawk fighter-bombers, five Alize anti-submarine aircraft and two Chetak (Alouette) helicopters. She was fitted with fifteen 40-mm anti-aircraft Bofor guns and had a maximum speed of 24.5 knots. With 182 officers and 1663 sailors on board(10) the carrier was, of course, the biggest ship of the Indian Navy and constituted a miniature India with personnel from different cultural, ethnic, educational, religious and socio-economic backgrounds living together and working for a common cause.

The two frigates in the Eastern Fleet were INS Brahmaputra (Captain J.C. Puri) and INS Beas (Commander L. Ramdas), the former being the senior ship of the squadron. These ships had a displacement of 2,515 tons each and were armed with four 4.5-inch AA/SU guns, four 40-mm AA guns and one Squid triple-barrel depth charge mortar and had a maximum speed of 25 knots.

The two antisubmarine vessels were INS Kamorta (Captain M.P. Awati) and INS Kavaratti (Commander S. Paul), Kamorta being the senior ship of the squadron. Each of these ships had a displacement of 1,200 tons and was armed with four 3-inch AA/SU guns and five 21-inch torpedo tubes.

The submarine INS Khanderi (Commander R.J. Millan) which had a displacement of 2,000 tons (surfaced) and 2,300 tons (submerged), had been assigned to the Eastern Fleet. She was armed with eight 21-inch torpedo tubes.

Desh Deep was a tanker attached to the Eastern Fleet for the duration of the operations.

INS Magar (Commander T.S. Singhal) was a landing ship (tank) of World War II vintage and had a displacement of 4,980 tons. She was armed with two 40-mm AA guns and six 20-mm AA guns. The two landing craft (tanks) were INS Gharial (Lieutenant Commander A.K. Sharma) and INS Guldar (Lieutenant Commander U. Dabir) armed with rocket projectiles. The landing ships and craft meant for amphibious operations were used for landing personnel, tanks, vehicles, weapons, stores, etc.

INS Rajput (Lieutenant Commander Inder Singh), the "greyhound of the Bay of Bengal", was a destroyer equipped with four 4.7-inch AA/SU guns, four 4-inch AA guns, four depth charge throwers and eight 21-inch torpedo tubes. This ship was also of World War II vintage.

INS Akshay (Lieutenant S.D. More) was a seaward defence boat and was equipped with one 40-mm AA gun.

INS Pulicat (Lieutenant S. Krishna), INS Panvel (Lieutenant Commander J.P.A. Noronha) and INS Panaji (Lieutenant R. Chopra) were small patrol craft used for patrolling harbours, ports, bases, etc.

The air element comprised, besides the 25 aircraft on board the Vikrant, some shore based IAF aircraft which were to be used for maritime reconnaissance. There were two HS-748 aircraft at Charbatia and one at Port Blair. For coastal surveillance, one Dakota was positioned at Vishakhapatnam and one at Madras(11).

The IAF was also to provide anti-shipping strikes, fighter cover and photo reconnaissance and meet transport requirements on request.

Pak Naval Forces

PNS Badr, a destroyer of World War II vintage, was the only major warship in East Pakistan before the war. But in August 1971 she was transferred back to West Pakistan for repairs and nearly came to grief during her passage at a position about 800 nautical miles off Goa due to a cyclone.

The major Pak naval units in the east were, therefore, the four Town class patrol craft, PNS Comilla, Jessore, Rajshahi and Sylhet. Besides these, there were 2 landing craft, 2 seaward defence motor launches, 12 Shanghai class gunboats reported to have been received from China and 35 mechanised craft fitted with guns. Each one of the patrol boats was armed with two 40-mm AA Bofor guns. In addition, a large number of AA batteries and guns had been

positioned at strategic points for the defence of important shore installations(12).

The air element, comprising the PAF aircraft in East Pakistan, was formidable. But it was assessed that these aircraft would mainly be deployed in providing air support to the Pak land forces and would not be available to provide adequate support to the Pak Navy.

The only Pak submarine in the eastern waters, immediately before and during the operations, was the Ghazi, a Tench class submarine built at the Portsmouth Naval Dockyard, USA as USS Diablo (the devil) and later transferred to the Pakistan Navy free of cost. It displaced 2,410 tons, had a surface speed of 20 knots and a submerged speed of 10 knots, carried mines and was equipped with ten 21-inch torpedo tubes. She had an operational range of 14,000 nautical miles at 10 knots and a complement of 89 officers and sailors.

Strengths of the rival fleets in the eastern waters at the commencement of hostilities thus were:

<u>Ship</u>	<u>Indian Navy</u>	<u>Pakistan Navy</u>
Submarines	1	1
Aircraft carriers	1	-
Destroyers/frigates	5	-
Landing ships/craft	3	2
Tankers	1	-
Smaller vessels	4	53

While the Indian Navy had deployed such ships in the Bay of Bengal as would constitute a blue water force, the Pak fleet in the east comprised ships that would mainly operate in the harbours and inland waterways of East Pakistan. This was because the tasks of India's Eastern Fleet mainly related to operations on the high seas(13). But in Pak Fleet, only the submarine was to be used in an offensive role for seeking and destroying Indian ships at sea and sabotaging Indian ports and harbours. All surface units, some of which had limited seagoing capability, were to be deployed in a defensive role for the security of East Pakistan's ports, harbours, their approaches and the contiguous sea areas(14).

THE SINKING OF PAK SUBMARINE GHAZI

Elimination of the Sub-Surface Threat

The dawn of 3 December 1971 broke on Vishakhapatnam's shores like any other dawn but the

night of 3/4 December witnessed an exciting event which significantly affected the war(15).

PNS Ghazi, the only Pak submarine operating in the Bay of Bengal, with the mission of sinking INS Vikrant and mining the approaches of Indian ports on the eastern seaboard, was sent to her doom during the early hours of 4 December thus virtually eliminating the underwater threat and 'sanitising' the entire Bay of Bengal.

It has been confirmed from a chart recovered from the wreck of the Ghazi that she had sailed from Karachi on 14 November 1971, was 400 nautical miles off Bombay on 16 November, and reached the Bay of Bengal on 20 November. She was off Madras on 23 November and reached Vishakhapatnam soon after and lay in wait for the Vikrant and other ships to come out of the harbour, not knowing that Vikrant was hundreds of miles away and she had been duped into believing that the carrier was in Vishakhapatnam. This was done by other ships masquerading as the carrier and making signals to various authorities, and by the Eastern Naval Command Headquarters requisitioning berths for the carrier and indenting stores and other supplies at Madras and Vishakhapatnam(16).

In retrospect it is clear that this contrived spurt in requisitioning, particularly for meat and fresh vegetables, must have been picked up by Pak spies. This is further evidenced by the signal, received by the Ghazi from the Commodore in Charge of Pak submarines in Karachi on 25 November, quoted later in this chapter, stating that Vikrant was in Vishakhapatnam(17).

The Denouement

After the feeble attempt at a pre-emptive attack on Indian airfields by the PAF aircraft on the evening of 3 December, it was appreciated by the naval authorities that a pre-emptive underwater attack against the Naval Base at Vishakhapatnam might be imminent. All local naval defences were immediately alerted and precautions were taken within the harbour against possible sabotage. All ships were made to sail out of harbour before midnight(18)

Lt Cdr Inder Singh, Commanding Officer of INS Rajput, took his ship out of the harbour around midnight on 3/4 December. Great care in navigation was necessary as all navigational aids had been completely switched off. He had been briefed by the Eastern Naval Command authorities on the possible presence of a submarine outside Vishakhapatnam harbour

which might try to sink a merchant ship leaving harbour mistaking it for the carrier or to lay a minefield in order to prevent the carrier and other ships from leaving harbour(19).

On sighting a sea disturbance caused by a possible submerging periscope, INS Rajput decided to go into action. She carried out an immediate attack directly over the sea disturbance with depth charges, and then proceeded on her urgent mission.

A few moments before the Prime Minister's broadcast to the nation shortly after midnight, a very loud explosion was heard from the sea which was of such great intensity that it sent shock waves through the buildings on the sea front. The explosion was heard, among others, by the Coast Battery which immediately made a report to the Maritime Operations Room of the Eastern Naval Command Headquarters.

It was initially assumed that the explosion was the result of the attack carried out by INS Rajput. Searches were commenced and co-operation of local fishermen, who had earlier been briefed on possible developments of this kind, was sought.

The next morning (4 Dec), some fishermen reported large oil patches and picked up some debris off the harbour entrance. INS Akshay was immediately ordered to proceed to the area and after a day-long search, she confirmed that there was a large submerged object about three miles off the harbour entrance in about 17 fathoms (30 metres) of water(20).

The next day, i.e., on 5 December, INS Akshay succeeded in identifying the submerged object as a bottomed submarine. She anchored close to the object and sent divers below. At 0914 hrs she made a signal to the Eastern Naval Command Headquarters, confirming that the submerged object was indeed the wreck of the Ghazi, the 'Defender of Faith' lying defenceless on the seabed. She was found in position 17° 40.8' North, 83° 21' East with her head pointing towards the harbour entrance. The length of her hull from the conning tower to the stern was about 61 metres (200 feet) and the forward part had been completely blown off. The stern was intact, there was no sign of life or engine noise, a long slick of diesel oil was still being made, air bubbles were noticed coming out and all hatches (openings) were tightly screwed down. Among the large amount of debris collected was one damaged escape set.

Naval Headquarters was immediately informed. But it was decided that no announcement would be made till the identity of the kill had been established

beyond all doubts. An aircraft was positioned at Vishakhapatnam on 6 December to fly evidence of the submarine's identity to New Delhi.

By now divers had entered the submarine's fin where there was some loose gear but they could not enter the conning tower and hatch. The first break came at 1155 hrs on 7 December when a diver opened the conning tower lower hatch and a dead body was recovered. The hydrographic correction book of PNS Ghazi, PN 83, and one sheet of paper with the official seal of the Commanding Officer of the submarine were also recovered and three more dead bodies were floated out. The dead bodies recovered from the submarine were accorded burial at sea by the Eastern Naval Command in accordance with naval custom.

All papers recovered were in a soggy state and were cleaned and dried out before being sent to Naval Headquarters as the "Ocular Proof" of the identity of the submarine. The Raksha Mantri made the announcement on the sinking of the Ghazi in Parliament on 9 December.

The Command Diving Team was in charge of the diving operations and soon brought up a large number of items from the submarine after blowing open a hatch. One of the items recovered was a clock which had stopped at 0015 hrs which was the time the explosion had taken place on the night of 3/4 December.

A chart recovered from the Ghazi's hull indicated the movements of the submarine immediately preceding her sinking. From this chart and the following signal and other items recovered from her wreck, it is apparent that the submarine had been assigned the task of sinking the Vikrant and mining the eastern ports of India, especially Vishakhapatnam(21):

FM COMSUBS

IMMEDIATE

TO GHAZI

SECRET

INFO PAK NAVY

OCCUPY ZONE VICTOR WITH IMMEDIATE DESPATCH(.)
INTELLIGENCE INDICATES CARRIER IN PORT (.)

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An alternative explanation for the sinking of the Ghazi has been provided by some naval experts as quoted by Vice Admiral N. Krishnan, "The Ghazi had

evidently come up to periscope or surface depth to establish her navigational position, an operation which was made extremely difficult by the black-out and the switching off of all navigational lights. At this point of time, she probably saw or heard a destroyer approaching her, almost on a collision course. This is a frightening sight at the best of times and she obviously dived in a tremendous hurry and at the same time put her rudder hard over in order to get away to seaward. It is possible that in her desperate crash dive, her nose must have hit the shallow ground hard when she bottomed. It seems likely that a fire broke out on board for'd (forward) where, in all probability there were mines, in addition to the torpedoes fully armed. Whatever may be the cause of the final explosion, it was quite enough to seal the fate of the Ghazi forever"(22).

Referring to the sinking of the Ghazi, a Pak General claims that having been loaded with mines the submarine met with an accident on her passage and exploded(23). This explanation is clearly misleading, because the fact that the Ghazi was lying in wait for INS Vikrant has been documentarily proved, besides the 'flotsam' from the Ghazi indicating that debris was picked up from the area in which INS Rajput had dropped her depth charges. But whether the explosion was caused by the bows of the submarine hitting the seabed hard during a crash dive or by the implosive damage caused by the Rajput's depth charges is unlikely to be resolved.

THE BATTLE OF THE BAY

Preparation

On being attached to the Eastern Naval Command as the flagship of the Eastern Fleet, INS Vikrant arrived off Madras on 31 July 1971 and commenced her work up with the other ships which were to operate with her - the anti-aircraft frigates INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas, the anti-submarine vessels INS Kamorta and INS Kavaratti and the submarine INS Khanderi - in order to give them adequate experience in operating with a carrier. During the period of the work up, which continued till 13 September, emphasis was laid on anti-submarine warfare and air strikes on ships and shore targets. Army co-operation exercises were also held with local units of the Army(24).

This was followed by Fleet exercises held in the North Bay in September which culminated in simulated attacks on Vishakhapatnam, the major naval base in the east and the location of the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command.

The Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF), Rear Admiral S.H. Sarma, assumed charge at Vishakhapatnam on 14 October. The same day a flash message was received from Naval Headquarters, saying that a pre-emptive attack by Pakistan was possible that very night. At this time, INS Vikrant was at Madras and the four other ships were at Vishakhapatnam. Vikrant was immediately ordered to prepare for sea with utmost despatch. The Fleet Commander embarked on board INS Brahmaputra and sailed from Vishakhapatnam at midnight, with INS Beas in company, to join the carrier at sea and then to steam towards Chittagong so as to be in a more advantageous position to initiate offensive operations. The other two ships, INS Kamorta and INS Kavaratti, were to sail in order to rendezvous with the Fleet in the Bay of Bengal and, in the event of the pre-emptive attack taking place, commence offensive operations forthwith. The pre-emptive attack, however, did not materialise.

The Fleet thereafter continued its work up and carried out tactical exercises including mock attacks on shore targets in Vishakhapatnam on the night of 26/27 October. The Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral S.M. Nanda witnessed Fleet exercises on 16 November and expressed his satisfaction at the Fleet's combat readiness.

It was now considered necessary to "tuck the Fleet away out of sight" (25) at a place where it could effectively hide itself and still be available to proceed to the operational area assigned to it at short notice. After INS Vikrant had embarked some aircraft to bring her complement up to 18 Seahawks, five Alizes and two Alouettes, the Fleet left Madras on 13 November and reached Port Blair on 17 November. It is interesting to note that the Ghazi sailed from Karachi on 14 November and was off Madras on 23 November.

After the logistic needs of the ships had been met at Port Blair, the Fleet, which now comprised INS Vikrant, INS Kamorta, INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas, withdrew into an even more remote location, Port Cornwallis. This location of the Fleet, while she waited for the hostilities to break out, was one of the most closely guarded secrets of the operations.

Out of the several possible hideouts available for the Fleet in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Port Cornwallis was chosen for the following reasons: Firstly, it was situated near the northern tip of the North Andaman Island and hence the Fleet could reach the operational area in minimum time; secondly, it was almost uninhabited at the time with no means of

communication with the outside world; and thirdly, its lagoon offered adequate natural protection.

At a meeting of the GOC-in-C, Eastern Command, FOC-in-C, Eastern Naval Command and the AOC-in-C, Eastern Air Command held in Calcutta on 1 December, the role of the Eastern Fleet was finalised. It would strike all the ports like Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Chalna, Khulna and Mongla, destroying their airfields, fuel dumps, army camps, coastal shipping, etc(26).

INS Khanderi was the only submarine available for the operations in the Bay of Bengal and was deployed under the direct control of the FOC-in-C, Eastern Naval Command on an offensive patrol across the shipping lanes. The area chosen for the purpose was clear of the operational area of Indian ships. The mission assigned to the submarine was the destruction of Pakistani naval and merchant ships and the provision of timely intelligence on Pak maritime forces.

INS Panvel, which had been fitted with two 40-mm Bofor guns in place of the original single 20-mm Hispano gun, was deployed for patrolling in the Sunderbans area.

The Battle Commences

On the night of 1/2 December, the Fleet Commander received a signal from the Eastern Naval Command Headquarters directing the Fleet to be ready for sailing from Port Cornwallis by sunset on 2 December. Vikrant received replenishment from INS Magar, improvising a catamaran by placing an LCT between her and the landing ship, and the other ships fuelled from the tanker Desh Deep. On receipt of further orders, INS Vikrant, accompanied by INS Kamorta, INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas sailed for the area of operations at 2200 hrs on 2 December(27).

The Fleet steamed through the Cocos Channel in order to avoid possible detection by the Burmese radar station on Preparis Island, and its passage north was uneventful. However, on 3 December the Fleet's passage crossed some routes of international airways and hence several times during the day aircraft were sighted overhead. In order, therefore, not to lose the all-important element of surprise, it altered course to create an impression of sailing towards Vishakhapatnam whenever an aircraft was within 40 nautical miles, though this resulted in some loss of time. Similar action was resorted to when some merchant ships were encountered.

At 1930 hrs on 3 December, the Fleet was informed of the Pak pre-emptive strike on some Indian airfields and the consequent declaration of hostilities. As had been planned earlier, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief ordered the Fleet to carry out a strike on Cox's Bazar on the morning of 4 December and thereafter to take up patrol positions in order to intercept Pak merchant ships.

Besides putting the naval bases in East Pakistan out of action, the Eastern Fleet's mission was to ensure that no material help reached the enemy from the sea and nothing left the enemy ports. In order to carry out this task, the Fleet would have to ensure destruction of Pak gunboats and warships, boarding and search of all merchant ships for contraband, taking ships carrying contraband into custody and preventing movement of troop convoys along the coast and in the inland waterways of East Pakistan. In order to render patrolling of the area effective, the Fleet would have to cover a frontage of about 150 nautical miles, and an area of sea extending over 7,500 square miles. To carry out the above tasks, the Fleet Commander had at his disposal the carrier, only two anti-aircraft frigates and two anti-submarine vessels, one of which had to be withdrawn for a while for major repairs(28). Besides, the Fleet operations at high speeds caused abnormally high fuel consumption and so the ships had to be detached in turn during the course of the operations and sent to a home port for refuelling.

4 December. In naval parlance the Seahawks were generally referred to as the 'White Tigers' and the Alizes as the 'Cobras'. "The quick ferocity of one and the stealthy but venomous bite of the other", were demonstrated for the first time in the history of the Indian Navy's Fleet Air Arm when eight Seahawks, armed with guns and rockets, were launched from the flight deck of INS Vikrant at 1030 hrs on 4 December for carrying out an attack on the Cox's Bazar airfield(29). At that time the carrier was only 85 nautical miles from its target and this was the first time that carrier-borne aircraft of the Indian Navy were "striking with anger". During the attack, which took place at 1055 hrs and lasted only a few minutes, several airfield installations, air traffic control tower, power house transformers, W/T installations and oil dumps were set on fire, damaged or destroyed and a number of vehicles on the runway strafed. There was no air opposition. On completion of the attack, the carrier recovered the aircraft and proceeded towards Chittagong for mounting a strike on its heavily fortified airfield which had already been attacked by IAF aircraft earlier in the day.

While INS Vikrant was proceeding to launch this air strike, INS Brahmaputra reported sighting a submarine periscope and picking up a sonar contact in position 20° 35' North, 91° 40' East at 1328 hrs. The submarine was attacked by INS Beas and Alize aircraft from the Vikrant. It was claimed that the submarine surfaced, was engaged by the 4.5-inch guns of INS Beas which shot at its casing and it dived again after transmitting an SOS, its call sign and the words "Bachao, bachao". A large oil patch was later found in this area but no further sonar or visual contact was obtained despite an intensive search.

During this action, the transmissions made by the submarine and its torpedo HE (hydrophone effect, i.e., the noise made by a torpedo's propulsion device) had been picked up by several ships and torpedo tracks were observed by two escorts(30) but the identity of the submarine, damaged or sunk, was never established, and the whole episode remains an unsolved mystery.

At 1515 hrs on 4 December, a strike of eight Seahawks was launched and carried out a devastating attack on Chittagong. This harbour had been fortified with medium and heavy anti-aircraft guns which opened up as soon as the Seahawks approached. But despite their stiff opposition, the White Tigers destroyed or damaged a number of targets. The air traffic control tower, some hangars and other installations of the airfield and a merchant ship secured alongside a jetty were damaged, two gunboats were attacked with rockets, set on fire and presumably sunk, and six merchant ships at anchor or under way were strafed and immobilised, two of them suffering extensive damage.

5 December. It had been planned to carry out another attack on Chittagong at dawn on 5 December and on Chalna, Khulna and Mongla in the afternoon. But the wind velocity on that day was found inadequate for the Seahawks, even with light weapon loads, and hence the Seahawk strikes for the day had to be abandoned and only Alize aircraft were flown.

Several Alize reconnaissance and strike sorties were launched on 5 December. During a reconnaissance mission over Pussur River and Mongla in the afternoon, an Alize sighted a Pakistani tug and a merchant ship, Mini Lady, and carried out an attack with depth charges scoring direct hits. The aircraft also sighted two merchant ships, Ondarda and Tarqueez Mohammed, and carried out a rocket attack on the latter scoring a direct hit.

That night a successful rocket attack was carried out by two Alizes on two gunboats Salamat and Shahbaz, in the face of heavy anti-aircraft fire at Mongla, while at Chalna harbour installations were attacked with 500-lb bombs. One merchant ship was hit with rockets at the entrance of Pussur river.

Kavaratti had joined the Fleet at 0900 hrs on 4 December. Kamorta, which needed urgent machinery repairs, was detached from the Fleet at 0700 hrs on 5 December and proceeded to Vishakhapatnam. It was decided that the landing ships INS Gharial and INS Guldar were also to form part of the Eastern Fleet and sailed on the night of 5/6 December, followed by Desh Deep on 7 December. The other ships which had been pressed into service were INS Magar, a landing ship and INS Rajput, a destroyer, both of World War II vintage. INS Magar was capable of only 9 knots and INS Rajput, with only one boiler operational, could do only 15 knots(31).

Having disposed of the submarine within hours of the declaration of hostilities and having carried out successful day and night attacks on the major East Pakistani ports, the Fleet received the following signal from the Eastern Naval Command:-

FROM C-IN-C(.) MOTTO FOR EASTERN FLEET IS "ATTACK - ATTACK - ATTACK."

6 December. A dawn strike by 10 Seahawks and two Alizes was carried out on the Pussur river entrance, Mongla, Chalna and Khulna. An Alize sighted the merchant ship Ondarda entering the Pussur river and attacked her with depth charges. It then attacked a W/T station at the Pussur river entrance. The second Alize also attacked these targets, causing extensive damage.

One division of four Seahawks attacked a gunboat and a tug with rockets and heavily damaged six or seven small craft south of Mongla. They also attacked three other gunboats with front guns, damaging one and setting the other two on fire in spite of anti-aircraft fire from the gunboats and some shore installations.

The second division of Seahawks engaged a merchant ship secured alongside a jetty with rockets. The ship and some harbour installations close to it were damaged. Two gunboats, which had opened fire, were silenced by the aircraft using their front guns.

Two Seahawks carried out an attack on a W/T station and a cargo ship on Pussur river, damaging both.

During a second air strike in the afternoon, an Alize again attacked the merchant ship Ondarda with 500-lb bombs. The ship was hit in the forward part, caught fire, listed to starboard and started sinking. Three Seahawks proceeded to Dohazari and attacked a merchant ship with rockets. The ship returned the fire and was attacked again with front guns. Another strike of Seahawks proceeded to Hathazari and, not finding any suitable target there, moved to the Chittagong airfield and attacked the air traffic control tower. Despite anti-aircraft fire the aircraft also attacked a merchant ship and a gunboat outside Chittagong harbour.

A strike of four Seahawks launched at 1515 hrs attacked army barracks and workshops around the Chittagong naval dockyard with rockets. They also silenced the Patanga coast battery which had opened fire with 12 to 15 anti-aircraft guns and attacked two merchant ships, Mini Labor and Mini Tide, with front guns.

Night operations by Alize aircraft were carried out at 2242 hrs on 6 December and 0130 hrs on 7 December and the runways at Chittagong and Cox's Bazar airfields were again attacked with 500-lb bombs.

Having caused considerable damage to a number of runways and airfield installations in East Pakistan, the Eastern Fleet now received a request from the Eastern Air Command to search for grass landing strips in its area of responsibility, render them unusable and further neutralise runways in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and their satellite airfields by surface bombardment and air strikes.

7 December. A strike of two Seahawks on Cox's Bazar airfield was launched in the morning. They attacked airfield installations, the control tower and a W/T station with rockets and strafed some vehicles on the runway. Another strike of four Seahawks attacked the Chittagong airfield causing extensive damage to the runway. They also strafed a building complex, hangars and fuel dumps, setting the latter ablaze. The Alizes continued to fly on reconnaissance missions.

During the course of the day, intelligence from the Eastern Naval Command indicated that the Pakistani forces in Mongla, Chalna and Khulna had realised that these ports had become untenable and they were being evacuated to Barisal.

8 December. Shortly after midnight on 7/8 December, the carrier launched two Alizes for a night attack on the Cox's Bazar airfield. The aircraft dropped eight 500-lb bombs on the runway and caused considerable damage to it.

The Fleet Commander was now directed to concentrate on Barisal and the area in the vicinity as intelligence further indicated that large concentrations of vessels were taking place between Narayanganj and Barisal and that the enemy was preparing to make a desperate bid to break out to sea, most likely through the Meghna river. Messages from Mukti Bahini commandos in the Chittagong Sector indicated that Pak merchant ships at Chalna were changing their names, funnel markings and flags to foreign ones in preparation for escaping into the Bay of Bengal.

Appropriate steps were taken accordingly to hit Barisal and the Fleet Commander redispensed INS Rajput, INS Brahmaputra, INS Guldar and INS Gharial to different patrol stations and ordered them to intercept and seize all craft, using force if necessary.

9 December. At 0204 hrs, two Alizes carried out a night strike under moonlit conditions on Barisal and bombed the steamer service station. The town was fully lit up when the attack on the waterfront commenced, but was soon darkened. Some boats and jetties on the river bank were damaged. The aircraft then carried out reconnaissance along Arialkhan, Tetulia, Bighai and Bishkhali rivers, but no ship movement was observed.

A strike by six Seahawks was carried out on Barisal, Bakharganj and Patuakhali at 0735 hrs. No craft or army concentration was sighted at the first two places but at Patuakhali three barges and an army camp were attacked and destroyed. Three Seahawks carried out an armed reconnaissance of Meghna river at 0925 hrs but no concentration of craft was observed. An Alize aircraft attacked two tankers off Hatia Island at 1400 hrs. One gunboat was sighted in Meghna river and was attacked but escaped under cover of gunfire. At 1527 hrs four Seahawks carried out an attack on the Chittagong ordnance factory and W/T station. Fairly heavy anti-aircraft fire was experienced around the airfield and one aircraft received a bullet hit but returned to the carrier safely.

10 December. Intelligence had indicated that the Pak forces were likely to mine areas off

Chittagong and Cox's Bazar and the Fleet Commander was directed to prevent this.

Between 0750 hrs and 1515 hrs on 10 December, continuous bombing of Cox's Bazar airfield and installations was carried out by five Alizes as wind conditions were not favourable for Seahawk operations. A total of twenty-six 500-lb bombs were dropped, 14 scoring direct hits on the runway resulting in large craters and rendering the airfield unusable for operations for some days at least.

11 December. For several days after 10 December, the Eastern Fleet had to concentrate on preventing the escape of a mysterious Pak convoy known as RK 623, and foiling the suspected mission of the US Seventh Fleet, which appeared on the scene simultaneously. This episode, described later, required neutralising of Chittagong harbour and airfields, besides detecting and stopping the convoy RK 623. The task of preventing the disguised merchant ships in convoy from escaping from Chittagong under cover of darkness on the night of 11/12 December, and rendering the Chittagong airfield unusable was, however, rendered even more difficult by the non-availability of Seahawk aircraft due to the poor wind conditions, which were likely to continue even on 12 December. It was, therefore, decided to mount night strikes on Chittagong airfield on the night of 11/12 December and carry out daytime surface strikes on Chittagong harbour on 12 December using the gunships of the Fleet, INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas, with the Alize aircraft providing reconnaissance support. These two frigates, which had found a concentration of small craft south of Kutubdia Island earlier in the day and sunk four of them, were to establish a patrol during the night north-west of Cox's Bazar to block the escape routes through the Kutubdia channel. Four other ships, INS Rajput, INS Gharial, INS Guldar and INS Kavaratti were assigned new patrol stations. At 2245 hrs an Alize carried out reconnaissance of the area from 10 nautical miles south of Cox's Bazar to Chittagong and bombed the Chittagong airfield.

12 December. Fortunately for the Fleet, 12 December dawned with ideal wind conditions for the launching of Seahawks, and the air operations mounted by Vikrant on this day resulted in a virtual blitzkrieg on Chittagong and on all the possible escape routes of the enemy, "turning the mission of the mighty US Seventh Fleet into one of utter futility"(32). From 0600 hrs onwards 28 sorties by Seahawks armed with 500-lb bombs and rocket projectiles were mounted. The very first strike made at least 6 direct hits on the runway of Chittagong airfield and rendered it unserviceable. Then four

aircraft attacked two merchant ships while they were leaving harbour and another two inside the harbour scoring many hits. Although one aircraft received a direct hit from AA fire on the canopy, which was shattered, all aircraft returned to the carrier safely.

The runway was once again bombed by four Seahawks and gun positions on the airfield were silenced. The aircraft next attacked three merchant ships off Gupta Point with rockets scoring direct hits on the superstructure. In the afternoon, the Seahawks were back again and scored direct hits on two merchantmen of 10,000 and 15,000 tons each. The last strike of 4 Hawks on 12 December 1971 was launched at 1530 hrs armed with two 500-lb bombs each. Enemy airfield and shipping was once again struck causing heavy damages(33).

At the end of the day's operations, Chittagong airfield and harbour were in shambles. The Fleet Commander reported to the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command that "at the end of twenty four hours of continuous sorties commencing 111930 involving constant Alize recce and bombing and twenty eight Hawk sorties, Cox's Bazar and Chittagong airfields have been rendered inoperable in the near future. There is no merchant ship of any size in Chittagong harbour and approaches which has not been struck and incapacitated. There is a complete absence of shipping along the entire coast from Chalna eastward through Meghna Sandwip up to Cox's Bazar and southward"(34).

INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas had been detailed to carry out surface bombardment of the Chittagong airfield before dawn on 12 December but the operation had to be called off, as it was delayed by the encounter with small craft detected during the night. The ships were, therefore, ordered to proceed to Cox's Bazar and destroy the runway, control tower and hangars at its airfield. The bombardment, which lasted 18 minutes, was carried out in the afternoon, using 260 rounds of 4.5-inch high explosive ammunition and causing considerable damage to the airfield installations.

The bombardment also had a great psychological impact and boosted the morale of the local Mukti Bahini personnel. The Pakistani garrison in the area fled when their Commander, a Squadron Leader of the Pakistan Air Force, who was a local tyrant and who at that time was holding a meeting in the Control Tower area, was killed during the attack. The Mukti Bahini regained control of the area.

13 December. The Fleet Commander received a signal from 4 Corps requesting him to strike enemy bunkers. The carrier was requested to come up on the prescribed communication net and confirm the time of strike. Despite repeated efforts, INS Vikrant failed to establish a wireless link with the 4 Corps till 1030 hrs on 14 December. Three strikes of seven Seahawks were, however, sent between 1345 and 1530 hrs to help the Army, but could not establish communication with the Forward Air Controller. Nor did they sight any troop concentrations and, therefore, returned to the carrier.

Many Seahawk and Alize sorties again visited Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Sandwip Island during 13 December. Ships, AA batteries, an ordnance factory and airfields were hit. But worthwhile targets were now getting scarce.

14 December. A dawn strike of five Seahawks carried out an attack on Chittagong cantonment and army barracks, scoring direct hits on the cantonment complex and the headquarters building. An Alize reconnaissance of the area around Cox's Bazar indicated no movement of troops between Tumone on the Burmese border to six nautical miles of Chiranga and no shipping movement on Pussur river. Two W/T stations were attacked and damaged.

INS Vikrant was now running low on fuel while some other ships of the Fleet needed urgent repairs. Having substantially completed the Fleet's task, INS Vikrant and INS Kamorta were detached and directed to return to Paradeep while INS Kavaratti was ordered to proceed to Vishakhapatnam. The Fleet Commander transferred his flag to INS Brahmaputra to supervise the amphibious landing of troops off Cox's Bazar, and INS Rajput was directed to continue to patrol the sea area and intercept any ship trying to break out from Chittagong or Kutubdia.

There were no further air operations. But the state of war at sea continued and there was no relaxation in the efforts, all offensive and defensive measures and contraband control remaining in force until the surrender by the Pak forces on 16 December.

THE US FLEET AND RK 623

By 10 December, the eighth day of the operations, all major ports of East Pakistan had been strafed, bombed and rocketed by aircraft operating from the Vikrant, a large number of ships and craft had been sunk or damaged, and coast batteries, hangars, runways, factories, jetties, etc., had been

destroyed, wholly or partially, and the morale of the Pak naval forces in the East shattered. But on this day two developments of great significance took place which seemed likely to alter the course of naval operations in this theatre.

The first was the news that the formidable Seventh Fleet of the US Navy was speeding towards the Bay of Bengal and was only three to four days' sailing distance away from the operational area. The other was the information obtained from signals intercepted, revealing that a very important convoy of Pak ships - code named RK 623 - was being assembled and would try to escape to Chittagong.

Review of the prevailing situation and these two important developments led to the conclusion that RK 623 was a convoy of disguised vessels carrying Pak senior officers from Rajapur to Chittagong who would then try to escape from Chittagong in some disguised merchant ships under cover of an 'umbrella' of ships and aircraft of the Seventh Fleet.

The US Seventh Fleet consisted of US ships Enterprise, the largest warship afloat in the world at that time, Tripoli, King, Decatur, Parsons and the Tartar Sam. The Enterprise was a nuclear-powered 75,000-ton aircraft carrier, had a maximum speed of 35 knots and a complement of 4,870 personnel including the 2000-strong air wing which operated 100 aircraft from its flight deck. USS Tripoli was a 17,000-ton amphibious assault ship, had a sustained speed of 20 knots, carried 24 medium, four heavy and four observation helicopters and was capable of transporting and landing a marine battalion of 2,100 officers and men along with their arms, ammunition and equipment. The King was a guided missile frigate fitted with surface-to-air missiles and torpedoes while the other three ships were guided missile destroyers which were also armed with surface-to-air missiles.

The Pak authorities were aware of the fact that the Vikrant was by now running low on fuel. Her withdrawal for replenishment would mean a 48-hour absence from the operational area during which there would be better prospects for a successful breakout. For this purpose, the Pak forces were likely to assemble at Chittagong, embark troops on camouflaged ships, and lay minefields to thwart ships of the Indian Navy from approaching the harbour after leaving a narrow channel hugging the coast southwards for the passage of the escaping ships.

The formidable Seventh Fleet could provide more

than adequate support to the Pak forces by attacking ships of the Eastern Fleet, using its aircraft to support the Pak Army in East Pakistan or landing a marine battalion in support of the Pak Army. But none of these courses of action was considered likely as it would be tantamounting to declaration of war against India in defiance of US public opinion. And also, in the words of a senior naval officer, "That might mean the end of the world, or the Americans would find in us a Vietnam to end all Vietnams"(35).

Perhaps it was another instance of the old gunboat diplomacy or sabre-rattling to unnerve India and to rescue the Pak forces in the area. The official explanation of the purpose was the evacuation of US personnel. Nobody believed it.

In his book, 'The White House Years', Dr. Henry A. Kissinger admits that "an aircraft carrier task force that we had alerted previously was now ordered to move towards the Bay of Bengal ostensibly for the evacuation of Americans but in reality to give emphasis to our warnings against an attack on West Pakistan"(36).

However, after considering all possible courses of action that were open to the Pak authorities in East Pakistan and the Seventh Fleet, the conclusion reached was that the Pakistanis had made all preparations for the convoy RK 623 of camouflaged small vessels to escape to Chittagong with senior Pak officers and VIPs, and from Chittagong they would all try to escape on merchant ships lying there. These ships could sneak away either under cover of darkness while Vikrant was away for replenishment, or would be escorted away by the Seventh Fleet under its air umbrella. Though there was no conclusive proof that the RK 623 operation was tied up with the entry of the Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal, the circumstantial evidence of the possible linkage between the two was too telling to be ignored. If, therefore, the Pak efforts to escape, with or without the support of the Seventh Fleet, was to be brought to nought, it was of vital importance that RK 623, the fleet of camouflaged vessels, was located and destroyed as soon as possible and all installations in the Pak ports, airports and harbours which could be used to facilitate such escape destroyed. The C-in-C of the Eastern Naval Command, therefore, made the following signal to the Fleet Commander on 11 December:-

- "1. Appreciate enemy with senior officers including FOCEP (Flag Officer Commanding East Pakistan) planning major break-out

tonight and will probably attempt getaway by hugging coast. Senior officers may try to escape by air. Approach to harbour likely to be mined.

"2. Your mission is :

'A'. To put Chittagong airport out of commission.

'B'. Attack ships by both air and surface units in harbour and if they break out.

'C'. Outer and inner Kutubdia Channel may be mined by you using minimum ship count if you think fit.

"3. This is probably the most important mission of the war in the East. The enemy must be destroyed. Good luck."

It was, therefore, necessary to destroy RK 623 at the first available opportunity. Since 11 December was a 'no wind day', Seahawks could not be launched and only Alizes could be used for strikes. An Alize launched at 0600 hrs had already bombed Rajapur where RK 623 was suspected to be hiding, and carried out reconnaissance of Barisal, the Meghna river and Dakhin Shahbazpur.

Another Alize was launched at 1000 hrs on a reconnaissance strike mission and spotted a tiny island in position 21° 48' North, 90° 07' East, which appeared to be moving! It went into a dive to take a closer look and its crew soon realised that the 'island' was actually a gunboat (later identified as PNS Jessore), a tug and some barges in close formation, which had been camouflaged with green shrubbery and mud and were armed with an array of anti-aircraft guns. This was the elusive RK 623. A rocket and depth charge attack was mounted by two Alizes. The vessels opened fire, but were soon silenced and forced to beach themselves. One of the Alizes received six bullet hits but succeeded in returning to the carrier by the extraordinary skill of the pilot(37).

Another Alize launched at 1135 hrs sighted two dhows carrying concealed cargo suspected to be troops and attacked them with depth charges causing extensive damage(38).

BEARDING THE LION

Naval Commando Operation

A special commando operation was executed by a force known as Force Alpha comprising INS Panvel under the command of Lieutenant Commander J.P.A. Noronha, and three other vessels, MV Chitrangada (Lieutenant Commander G.D. Mukherjee) of the Border Security Force and Padma and Palash of the Calcutta Port Trust. The operation was jointly undertaken by personnel of the Indian Navy and the Mukti Bahini(39). Padma and Palash had been fitted with two 40-mm anti-aircraft guns each, and were commanded by Lieutenant S.K. Mitra and Lieutenant Commander J.K. Roy Choudhury of the Indian Navy respectively(40). The operation was carried out under the overall command of Commander M.N. Samant.

On the morning of 8 December the two gunboats Padma and Palash joined INS Panvel at Sandeshkali. The three ships sailed in company and at 1100 hrs the Force entered Bangladesh at Shamshearnagar on the Jamuna river. At about 1725 hrs they sighted the slower MV Chitrangada which had been sailed in advance and was now at anchor in Garani Khal. All ships anchored at this point and at 2330 hrs, when the moon came up, they weighed anchor and proceeded towards Akram Point on Pussur river, which they reached at midnight. While the ships were under way, they sighted two merchant ships at a range of about 5,500 metres heading towards the sea at full speed and hence the Force signalled a report on the fleeing ships to the Fleet Commander. These two ships, which were identified as Pak merchantmen Anwar Baksh and Baqir, were later captured by the Eastern Fleet in the Bay of Bengal.

The ships of the force returned to Garani Khal on the morning of 9 December, re-entered Pussur river in the evening and anchored off Mongla for the night.

At 0530 hrs on 10 December, the ships weighed anchor and sailed into Mongla harbour. They found that most of the merchant ships at anchor were ablaze, as also the Pakistani pilot vessel CPV Ansar and Pak merchant ships SS Makran, SS Ocean Enterprise and another ship, masquerading as foreign ships Dora, Ceandete and Rigoletto respectively. INS Panvel went alongside CPV Ansar while Padma, Palash and Chitrangada went alongside other ships, sent boarding parties and broke open the safes that contained classified records such as plans, codes, cyphers, etc. But these had already been destroyed. Some documents were, however, salvaged from these ships and taken on board.

Some senior officers of the Force landed ashore at Mongla and were cheered by a large crowd which had gathered on the jetty. It was found that the Pak forces had already left the place and two Pak naval officers had been taken prisoner by the Mukti Bahini.

Commander M.N. Samant, the Force Commander, then ordered INS Panvel, Padma and Palash to proceed to Khulna. The fourth ship, MV Chitragada, was ordered to stay back at Mongla for salvage and rearguard operations, if required. Accordingly, the first three ships sailed from Mongla at 0820 hrs on 10 December and arrived at Khulna at 1120 hrs.

Tragedy of Mistaken Identity

At 1135 hrs, three IAF Gnat aircraft appeared overhead at Khulna. There appeared no cause for worry since all ships displayed large (4.5 metres by 3 metres) yellow pieces of cloth on top of their bridges as recognition signals, as previously arranged. However, to everyone's surprise, while one of the Gnats circled overhead, the other two gained height and suddenly dived towards the ships to carry out an attack.

Padma was hit amid ships by the first aircraft in its first rocket attack and burst into flames. Within seconds, this was followed by the second aircraft hitting Palash between her funnel and gun-mounting, as a result of which her stern caught fire. Palash quickly headed for the starboard bank and beached while members of her crew abandoned the ship by diving into the river or jumping ashore.

The third Gnat now dived and attacked INS Panvel with rockets but missed her narrowly as the ship zigzagged vigorously and manoeuvred in the channel.

Within a few minutes, the ships were again subjected to heavy strafing by the aircraft. Palash was hit by rockets for the second time and members of her crew were strafed while they were trying to take shelter ashore. INS Panvel again had a miraculous escape from the Gnat's cannon fire.

At this time the ships were subjected to intermittent small arms fire from the bank. Commander M.N. Samant, the force Commander, then ordered the ships to be abandoned. INS Panvel continued to manoeuvre herself for some more time and proceeded to the port bank and the crew was ordered to abandon ship.

On completion of the air attack, the three aircraft disappeared over the horizon but several men

of the militia ashore were observed to take up positions with their arms while some others tried to intercept and capture the crew who had abandoned the ship. The crew was immediately ordered to return on board INS Panvel which then pulled herself out and proceeded to rescue survivors of the other two gunboats.

Some survivors of Palash were found swimming in mid-channel and were promptly picked up. Padma was still ablaze and all members of her crew had abandoned the ship. Three officers, Lieutenants S.K. Mitra and J.V. Natu and Sub Lieutenant A.K. Bandopadhyay who had swum ashore were taken prisoner by the Pak forces and came back to India after the surrender.

At this stage a second wave of three Gnat aircraft appeared overhead and INS Panvel, instead of manoeuvring herself in midstream, decided to beach on the starboard bank and ordered the crew to abandon ship and seek safety ashore. The aircraft, however, spared the ships, carried out attacks on ground installations and soon returned. Panvel extricated herself from the bank and proceeded to rescue six more survivors, two of whom died on board due to severe shock and loss of blood.

Attack on Harbour Installations

The three Gnat aircraft paid a third visit a little later, attacked ground installations and the beaching operations were repeated. After the aircraft had disappeared and the crew had returned on board, the ship was extricated from the muddy bank for the third time and proceeded to carry out the task assigned to her and attacked ground installations in Khulna. During the attack she came under heavy small arms and machine gun fire from buildings on either side of the waterway but effectively neutralised them with her Bofors, machine guns, and small arms. As a result, the police headquarters, Khulna shipyard steel mills, gun emplacements, fortifications, the bungalow of the notorious collaborator Sabur Khan, etc., were either severely damaged or razed to the ground.

After the engagement was over, the ship returned to pick up the remaining survivors and a few members of the crew who had remained ashore and sailed for Hasnabad where she arrived at 1845 hrs on 11 December. She left Hasnabad on 21 December and reached Calcutta on 23 December.

The impact of this operation would have been considerably greater if the ships had not been attacked so effectively by India's own air force. It

appears that initially an attack on Mongla and Chalna only had been planned, and Headquarters Eastern Command had informed the air force authorities that the recognition signal to be displayed by the vessels of the task force would be a large yellow flag draped across the top of the bridge. When, however, the task force reached Mongla, it found that its mission of destroying ships in harbour and shore installations had already been accomplished by the IAF and the saboteurs of the Mukti Bahini. Commander Samant, therefore, decided to proceed to Khulna, and informed Headquarters Eastern Command accordingly. The information, however, does not seem to have reached the IAF authorities in time, resulting in the vessels at Khulna being taken for Pak naval units and attacked despite the display of the yellow flag.

CONTRABAND CONTROL AND BLOCKADE

In accordance with International Law, the orders issued regarding contraband control and blockade of East Pakistan were: all ships, neutral or enemy, found proceeding to East Pakistan ports were to be intercepted; all ships belonging to the enemy and armed, even if these were merchant ships, were to be destroyed; all merchant ships encountered were to be challenged, boarded and checked for contraband; if a neutral ship was intercepted and found not carrying contraband, an undertaking was to be obtained from the master of the ship to the effect that he would not visit any East Pakistan port and would not carry any contraband to and from East Pakistan and that any violation of this undertaking would be treated as a hostile act; if contraband was found on board a neutral ship, she was to be escorted or directed to proceed to the nearest Indian port where the detaining officer would arrange to offload the contraband; if any resistance was offered by any ship, force was to be used; if the ship intercepted was an enemy ship and she resorted to any hostile act endangering Indian Naval ships or personnel, this was to be neutralised with all available force and, if necessary the enemy ship was to be destroyed(41).

On 4 December 1971, a blockade of the coast of East Pakistan was declared from 1400 hrs. The line of blockade was from position 21° 43.5' North, 89° 5.75' East to 20° 43' North 92° 21.7' East. All neutral ships within the blockaded area were to be allowed to pass until the time from which the blockade was made effective. Contraband control was also instituted from 1400 hrs on 4 December. The blockade which was later lifted by the Naval Headquarters, (42) and

contraband control led to the seizure of 13 ships between 4 December and 11 December.

A few minutes before midnight on 5 December, INS Brahmaputra picked up two surface contacts which were later identified as the two Greek ships of Liberian registry, Mini Lad and Mini Loaf in position 20° 30' North, 90° 20' East. On investigation, it was found that the ships were carrying contraband and had been chartered to agents in East Pakistan. Both ships were, therefore, seized as prizes and on the morning of 6 December, INS Kavaratti escorted them to Sandheads(43)

At about 1600 hrs on the same day, the Fleet picked up a group of contacts in position 21° 5' North 91° 29' East. INS Beas was ordered to investigate and she apprehended six ships - Gulf Zain, Tina Christiansen, Gulf Crescent, Gulf Princess, Gulf Trader and Gulf Navigator. All ships had Danish crews and were carrying contraband, having been chartered to the Gulf Shipping Corporation of Pakistan. The ships were, therefore, seized as prizes and boarding parties placed on three of them(44). Beas started escorting the ships to an Indian port. The ships were later handed over to INS Rajput who escorted them to Sandheads.

On 9 December, the Fleet picked up some more surface contacts in position 21° 10' North, 89° 40' East. INS Beas and INS Kavaratti were ordered to investigate these contacts. Kavaratti found her contacts to be the Pakistani ships Baqir and the Liberian freighter Voleon which was keeping close company with Baqir. These ships were seized and escorted to Paradip and then to Sandheads in INS Beas and later by INS Kamorta(45).

The contacts investigated by INS Beas were found to be four tugs which were completely darkened. When they were challenged by INS Beas, one of them started replying, 'Paki____' and then quickly changed it to 'Panamanian'. The tugs thereafter continued to evade the Indian frigate and refused to comply with her orders, and hence Beas opened fire and sank one of them following which the other tugs surrendered. Twenty survivors of the crew of the four tugs which were later identified as Shall Be, Should Be, Maggie Be and Lydia Be, were picked up by INS Kavaratti and later transferred to INS Vikrant. These were Thai vessels on charter to Pakistan.

Of the 20 survivors, 13 were wounded, six of them seriously. One of them was dangerously wounded with a shell which had entered the left chest and had lodged itself near the heart. An operation for the removal of the shell was carried out and the patient gradually recovered. Another survivor, however, suffered a heart attack and expired. A proper sea burial was given to the deceased. The rest of the survivors were handed over to the civil authorities at Paradip on 17 December(46).

At about 1330 hrs on 6 December an Alize anti-submarine aircraft launched by INS Vikrant sighted a Pak merchant ship Mini Aemtop (Mini Labor) near Kutubdia and attacked her with rockets. The ship suffered severe damage and was abandoned by the crew(47).

Mini Labor was later apprehended by INS Gharial in position 20° 50' North, 91° 35' East. A boarding party from the Vikrant was sent on board and the ship was found to have been abandoned(48). The engine room was found flooded and the ship's side holed due to rocket and bullet hits. The boarding party anchored the ship and accorded sea burial to one dead body found on board. Eventually INS Rajput had to tow this ship into Vishakhapatnam on 26 December(49).

At about 1750 hrs on 9 December, INS Rajput intercepted a contact in position 21° 10' North, 89° 18' East. On being challenged, the ship replied that she was a Japanese ship, Azuchisam Maru, and was bound from Chittagong to Singapore. A boarding party sent to the ship found that it was a Pakistani vessel, and her real name was Anwar Baksh. She had on board 56 Pakistani nationals including 17 Pak soldiers. The ship was, therefore, seized and escorted to Sandheads by INS Rajput(50).

During the passage to Sandheads the hostile Pak troops turned violent and threatened to attack. The members of the boarding party distinguished themselves by controlling the rebellion and by the time Anwar Baksh reached Haldia, she had a number of casualties on board.

The Anwar Baksh incident has been dramatically described by Vice Admiral N. Krishnan who quotes the report of Lt Commander R. Bajaj, Officer-in-Charge of the boarding party, as under:

"At about 2215 hrs, I received a report that arms were hidden in the officers saloon where I had allowed officers to sleep. At that time, I thought that most probably my two sentries there

had possibly already been overpowered. I went down to the fore-part of the ship where Army Jawans and the crew were under guard. I asked the Army Jawans who their leader was. One man stepped forward. I told him to stand by the guard rail on the port side. The remainder 16 jawans were approximately 20 feet from me. They were in truculent mood and mutinous. I asked these men where are the arms on board Anwar Baksh. The answer was in chaste Urdu but extremely rude. I fired one shot in the air and questioned him again. Before he could make a reply all of the Army Jawans rushed on me shouting "Allah Ho Akbar". I shot the leader in the stomach, put my sten gun to rapid fire and shot at the men who were rushing at me. The leading man of the group fell dead at my feet. The firing did not last more than 5 seconds"(51).

On 11 December INS Kavaratti intercepted two ships in position 20° 24' North, 90° 36' East. These were the Greek ship Trias and the American ship Robert E. Lee and were taken to the assembly anchorage which had been established for all captured ships. INS Rajput had been positioned at the anchorage and took them over from INS Kavaratti on their arrival(52). After investigations Robert E. Lee was released but the Trias was found to be carrying 13 Pakistani nationals. INS Rajput, therefore, put a boarding party on board the Trias and escorted her to Sandheads.

Several other neutral ships were challenged at sea and when on investigation it was found that they were not carrying contraband, they were released and allowed to proceed to their destination. These included the American ship Buck Eye State intercepted off Chittagong on 4 December, the Greek ship Achios Stylanos and the Russian ship Nasagyadok intercepted in the North Bay by INS Rajput, the Greek ships Taxiarchis and Katerina intercepted in the North Bay by INS Guldar on 9 December, Singapore merchant ship Golden Wonder, Somalian merchant ship Prosperity intercepted in the North Bay by INS Gharial on 9 December, and the Monrovia merchant ship Volehl intercepted on 13 December(53)

Nine merchant ships in the eastern ports were found to be carrying contraband for Pakistan. The contraband was offloaded and the ships were released. These ships include the Liberian merchant ship Monoloeverett, Czechoslovak merchant ship Republica, Netherlands merchant ship Abbekerik, Polish merchant ship Stanis Landubois, Yugoslav merchant ship Kumrovec

and British merchant ship, City of Worcester.

The cargo offloaded from the ships at Calcutta included 1000 tonnes of electrical goods, 300 tonnes of motor vehicle parts, drugs and medicines, 1930 tonnes of vehicles, milk powder, chemicals and electronic equipment, 3233 tonnes of foodgrains and 1422 tonnes of steel, jute machinery and drilling rig equipment(54).

Contraband control and blockade of East Pakistan had been enforced with effect from 1400 hrs on 4 December but Naval Headquarters soon realised the impracticability and undesirability of enforcing a blockade with the limited resources available(55). The orders were, therefore, modified to exclude blockade and enforce contraband control only. Naval Headquarters had also imposed an embargo on attacks on merchant ships in enemy ports which placed severe limitations on air operations(56). Still, a comparatively small force comprising the few ships of the Eastern Fleet was able to enforce effective contraband control and a de facto blockade of the East Pakistani Coast. This was largely made possible by the absence of Pakistani major units in this area, the sinking of the Ghazi and the devastating attacks on 4 December on Cox's Bazar and Chittagong and on 15 December on Mingla, Chalna and Khulna.

Only one Pak ship appears to have slipped through the cordon sanitaire and escaped to Akyab. To quote Major General Fazaal Muqueem Khan, "PNS Rajshahi made a heroic and spectacular escape against great odds and through the heavily mined and extensively patrolled water approaches by the Indian Navy off Chittagong harbour. The Captain of the Rajshahi Lieutenant Sikandar Hayat took the daring step and his gallant crew responded", and fled successfully(57).

OPERATION BEAVER

The first amphibious landing by ships of the Indian Navy had been carried out in 1947 during the Junagadh Operations(58). The second time such operations were carried out in the history of the Navy was during the 1971 Operations when troops were landed off Cox's Bazar in order to cut off the possible escape routes of Pak personnel to Burma. It was planned to bring the troops along with arms, ammunition, stores, vehicles, etc., to the selected area on board a merchant ship from Calcutta, transfer them to landing ships and craft of the Indian Navy, and then land them at a suitable site.

The participants in the amphibious operation were INS Brahmaputra, INS Beas and INS Rajput as the support force, INS Magar to be used for transporting fuel and stores, INS Gharial and INS Guldar as the landing ships, Vishva Vijay the merchant ship requisitioned for the purpose of carrying personnel from Calcutta, and one brigade of the Army and one company of the Naval Garrison, to be landed at Raju Creek of Cox's Bazar(59).

On 13 December some personnel and stores for this Operation Beaver were transferred from the flagship, INS Vikrant to INS Gharial. These included the Fleet Gunnery Officer, the Carrier Borne Ground Liaison Officer and communication sailors. The landing was scheduled for 14/15 December and a suitable 'H' hour had been selected(60)

INS Gharial rendezvoused with Vishva Vijay which had arrived from Calcutta, at about 0230 hrs on 14 December and, under the supervision of the Commanding Officer of INS Brahmaputra, the transfer of the first wave of about 250 troops along with their stores, vehicles, arms and ammunition from Vishva Vijay to INS Gharial commenced. The leading ship had secured alongside Vishva Vijay and, after discussions held on board the merchant ship and later on board INS Brahmaputra, it was decided to postpone the H hours to 0530 hrs on 15 December.

INS Guldar, the other landing ship, had also secured alongside the Vishva Vijay at 0410 hrs on 14 December. She too embarked about 250 personnel along with stores, vehicles, artillery pieces, ammunition and rations(61).

Immediately after midnight on 14/15 December, the two landing ships cast off and proceeded towards Raju Creek and arrived there at first light. There was no difficulty in locating the beaching point as Lieutenant Commander G. Martis, an experienced naval diver, and his team had been landed by INS Brahmaputra earlier to carry out a survey of the beach and had marked the channel by placing two red pallets.

The amphibious force was to proceed to the beach-head anchorage south of Raju Creek which was the nearest point to the main road. It was the most suitable point to cut off the escape of enemy troops to Burma.

As Gharial approached the beaching point, her bows touched a sand bar about 180 metres from the waterfront. The bow doors were opened and a rope was passed ashore where it was secured to a crow-bar dug

into the sand. The jawans were then directed to proceed ashore with the help of the rope.

Then the difficulties started. It was found that for some distance the depth of the water was 2.5 metres and most of the jawans found it difficult to negotiate it. The sea conditions had also worsened and there were regular and unrelenting breakers 2.5 metres high. As a result of the first wave sent ashore two men were drowned. The operations were, therefore, called off for the time being, the personnel landed ashore brought back on board on make-shift life-rafts and the ship hauled back and anchored.

After reassessing the situation, it was decided by the Fleet Commander that it was imperative for the troops to land and intercept the fleeing Pak forces even if it risked the landing ships. INS Gharial was, therefore, asked to attempt beaching once again. As she did so, surf and breakers began pounding the ship's hull which began to dig into the sand bar. With the ship embedded on the beach, it was not possible to land troops. In heavy swell and breakers all available means at the disposal of the ship were adopted to refloat her. As INS Gharial started heaving in on her anchor, the anchor wire parted and the anchor was lost. A 6-inch braided nylon rope was then passed to INS Guldar from the stern of INS Gharial to pull her out. The nylon rope also parted within a few minutes. Another line was passed to INS Gharial and efforts to pull her out were resumed. Every time Gharial rose with the surf, excellent coordination between the crew handling the tow rope, stern anchor wire and the engine giving short but quick bursts of power eventually pulled Gharial out and refloated her.

On the same morning, INS Guldar also made an attempt to land troops. The stern anchor was dropped in 5 metres of water near Raju Creek, the cable was paid out and then the bower anchor was dropped. Sounding of water, however, indicated that the gradient was too shallow and hence the ship withdrew from the area and decided to attempt beaching at another spot. But before she could do that, she had to assist in refloating INS Gharial as described earlier.

It was then decided to land the troops in boats. One platoon of troops was landed ashore by the boats of INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas. By late evening on the same day, the platoon reached Cox's Bazar and reported that there were no Pak forces there and that Mukti Bahini forces had assumed command. All

mechanised boats available with the Mukti Bahini were, therefore, requisitioned and the ships proceeded to anchor off Cox's Bazar. Ferrying ashore the troops and stores from Vishva Vijay by the boats continued till the morning of 19 December.

The landing operation was confined to daylight hours only and at appropriate states of tide. Insufficient data on the landing sites and unexpected sea conditions in the area had rendered landing troops and handling boats extremely difficult and hazardous. But the ships participating in the amphibious operation were successful in landing about 1200 troops with store, arms, ammunition and other equipment(62).

It appears that even an unopposed landing got into serious trouble. In fact, the Eastern Command After Action Report described it as abortive. It stated: "'Romeo' Force was hurriedly assembled and sailed off on the morning of 12 December. A Naval contingent of 150 which was to participate did not fetch up.

"On 14 December, the force was transferred to INS Guldar and Gharial. As all planning had been done off the map, actual survey of the beach was carried out on arrival. There were no suitable landing crafts. The LSTs would not beach. One of the LSTs tried to beach and disembark the troops. The LST beached on a runnel. Only 12 men could disembark and 2 out of these got drowned. With another effort 30 men were put ashore"(63).

If anything, the episode illustrated the overriding necessity for integrated training and planning. Amphibious operation in modern warfare is too complicated a business to be left to hasty improvisations.

CONCLUSION

Achievements

The Eastern Fleet, the glorified nomenclature assigned to a fledgling force no bigger than a task group, undertook practically all types of maritime operations, viz., carrier air operations for strike, reconnaissance and Army cooperation missions, blockade and contraband control, anti-submarine operations, surface bombardment, amphibious landing and limited surface action during the 14-day war. Such a variety of activities by maritime forces were probably being witnessed in a single theatre of naval operations for the first time since World War II (64).

This Fleet had been formed during the final stages of the preparatory phase of the operations and consisted of a 'motley' assortment of ships, some of which were recent acquisitions while some others were very old and had limited operational capability. For example, though INS Kamorta, INS Kavaratti and INS Khanderi had been acquired as recently as 1969, INS Kavaratti had to operate with no anti-submarine dome and INS Khanderi had limited battery cycles left. The sonar equipment on board INS Brahmaputra, which was 13 years old, was non-operational; INS Beas, acquired in 1960, had a defective port shaft; INS Rajput, which was of World War II vintage, had only one boiler operational and could operate her guns only in local control; and INS Vikrant, acquired in 1961, had a speed restriction because of defective boilers, and carried aircraft which did not compare favourably with the Sabres that the PAF had in East Pakistan. Besides these handicaps, there were limitations of logistic support, many aspects of which were virtually conducted on a shoe-string basis in an area of responsibility covering several thousand square miles(65).

Some of the more important factors that contributed to the Eastern Naval Command's success in the Battle of the Bay were: careful analysis and planning of all aspects of the operations - logistic support, operational state of ships, training exercises and work up during the preparatory and precautionary phases; close liaison and cooperation between the three Commands of the Army, Navy and Air Force and "the gusto, bravery, determination and superb devotion to duty" of the personnel that manned its ships and establishments.

At least equally important was the factor of complete air supremacy achieved by the IAF in the Eastern Theatre. By eliminating the PAF Sabres, the IAF enabled the Seahawks and Alizés to operate freely without worrying about any air threat to the Vikrant or its aircraft. And of course, there were no major surface vessels of the Pakistan Navy in the East to pose any threat to the Eastern Fleet, small though it was.

During the "naval air operations", the carrier had 15 pilots for 18 Seahawks, eight pilots for the five Alizés and two pilots for the two helicopters on board. Between 03 December and 16 December, these pilots flew a total of 291 sorties out of which 123 were flown by the Seahawks, 70 by the Alizés and 98 by the helicopters. Besides using their front guns, these aircraft dropped a total of 151 500-lb bombs, 694 rockets and 22 depth charges on enemy targets,

ashore and afloat. As a result, out of a total of 31 ships and coasters attacked, 14 were destroyed or heavily damaged, and out of 17 gunboats attacked, six were sunk or put out of action(66). While carrying out these operations, the carrier aircraft located 12 merchant ships which were seized as they were attempting to escape from East Pakistan ports.

Mention also must be made here of the contribution of signal intelligence towards the eventual success of the operations. The enemy's signal code had been broken by naval personnel within a few days of the commencement of hostilities and there were timely and frequent signal intercepts that gave the latest information on the situation and the enemy's plans.

The successful blockade, devastation of ports and harbours, and prevention of the enemy forces from escaping from East Pakistan significantly facilitated the ground operations. Lt Gen J.S. Aurora, GOC-in-C of the Eastern Command, while addressing the personnel of the carrier after the operations, acknowledged the significance of the Eastern Naval Command's achievements by the generous statement that it had "reduced the task of the Army threefold in the Eastern Sector"(67).

After the completion of the surrender ceremony at Dhaka on 16 December, as related by Vice Admiral N. Krishnan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, another little drama took place. The Flag Officer Commanding East Pakistan, as he was called, Rear Admiral (Mohammed) Sharif approached me, and hiding emotions in a gallant effort said "Admiral Krishnan, Sir, soon I will be disarmed. Your Navy fought magnificently and had us cornered everywhere. I would like to surrender my arms to the C-in-C of the Eastern Fleet", and unbelting his holster, handed over his Chinese-made revolver and clip of ammunition"(68).

The other senior naval officers who surrendered were Commodore K.M. Hussain, Commodore-in-Charge, Chittagong, and Commodore I.H. Malik, Managing Director of the Chittagong Port Trust. A total of 97 naval officers and about 1,312 sailors surrendered in East Pakistan including one Rear Admiral, two Commodores, three Captains, 12 Commanders and 67 junior officers(69).

Six merchant ships, MV Andaman, MV Nicobar, Indian Merchant, Vishva Vijay, Jala Vishnu and Jagmanec, were requisitioned by the Indian Navy after the war for the transportation of prisoners of war to India and between 30 December 1971 and 7 January 1972,

12,708 PsOW were transferred in these ships from various ports in Bangladesh to Calcutta(70).

Mutual Assistance

During the course of the operations, the IAF flew 25 sorties of HS-748 aircraft and 10 sorties of Dakota aircraft for MR in support of the Eastern Fleet(71).

The carrier flew 23 Seahawk sorties in support of the Army and carried out attacks on selected Army targets. There were occasions, however, when aircraft from the Vikrant failed to provide air support because proper communication with the Forward Air Controller (FAC) could not be established(72).

Attacks on enemy targets carried out by aircraft from the Vikrant, especially those located close to other buildings occupied by civilians, were extremely accurate and hence there was no unnecessary loss of life and property. This was illustrated by the attack on the Cox's Bazar ATC on 4 December which killed Moinddeun Rehman, a notorious Pak agent and his collaborators, but did not harm the adjoining buildings, the strike on the Dohazari W/T station and other enemy positions located very close to the American Mission Hospital and a bridge, and destruction of a W/T station in a railway building at Chittagong(73).

Technical Problems

There were several limitations under which the carrier had to operate during the war. Besides the restrictions on the carrier's speed, poor surface winds in the area did not allow the launching of Seahawks on four days. On several other days, rather than cancelling the launch, the armament load was proportionally reduced during the earlier strikes. "As the operations progressed the carrier gradually closed to a distance of only 65 miles (104 Km) south of Chittagong, where the depth was hardly 12 fathoms (approximately 22 metres, to launch aircraft with maximum possible load under marginal wind conditions"(74).

Several emergencies were experienced by the aircrew and carrier personnel but they rose to the occasion every time without the loss of a single aircraft, life or limb.

While carrying out strikes on the selected targets, a number of Seahawks and Alizes received bullet hits. Two Seahawks had their forward

windscreens shattered, virtually blinding the pilots; one Seahawk suffered damage to its elevator control; an Alize sustained seven bullet hits causing hydraulic and electrical failure; and two Seahawks suffered a drop in oil pressure below the acceptable limit. But all these aircraft were nursed back to the carrier and landed on the flight deck without any further damage.

On one occasion, while some aircraft were airborne, a lift on the flight deck got stuck two metres below the level of the deck. Since the aircraft had only a few minutes' fuel left, they were advised to prepare to ditch. Fortunately, when the aircraft had only five minutes endurance left, the defect was rectified and the lift brought up to deck level. To prevent the recurrence of such an emergency, the lift was subsequently kept up in the fully locked position whenever aircraft were airborne.

Awards

The operations in the Bay of Bengal earned the Eastern Fleet five MVCs. Captain Swaraj Parkash, AVSM, Commanding Officer of INS Vikrant, was decorated for the air operations which devastated all major ports in East Pakistan and denied the enemy the use of the sea and inland waterways. Commander M.N. Samant, Senior Officer of Force Alpha, received the MVC for the daring attacks on the river ports of Khulna and Mongla. Lieutenant Commander S.K. Gupta, a Seahawk pilot on board the carrier, was rewarded for displaying outstanding leadership in leading a total of 11 strike missions on enemy ships and heavily defended shore facilities with devastating effect. Lieutenant Commander J.P.A. Noronha, Commanding Officer of INS Panvel, was decorated for handling his ships so well in very restricted waters and for silencing the shore defences. The fifth person to receive the MVC was Leading Seaman C. Singh, a Clearance Diver, who was on board the Padma. Despite being wounded by shrapnel and in the face of a small arms barrage from the shore, he rescued two of his shipmates, who had jumped into the river when their boat sank, and helped them in making good their escape by rushing at the enemy on reaching the shore.

NAVAL OPERATIONS DURING THE WAR - A RETROSPECT

Free India's Navy, which was blooded in war during the 1971 operations, did exceedingly well in both theatres of operations - Eastern and Western. The two bold attacks on Karachi bottling up the entire Pak surface fleet, the severance of the maritime link between the two wings of Pakistan, the attrition of Pak occupation forces in its Eastern Wing in which the

aircraft carrier played a magnificent role, and the contraband control effectively enforced in the Arabian Sea as well as in the Bay of Bengal, greatly contributed to the shattering of the morale of the Pak armed forces and Government.

During the process, ships and aircraft of the Indian Navy sank one Pak destroyer (PNS Khaibar), one minesweeper (PNS Muhafiz), one submarine (PNS Ghazi), three patrol craft (PNS Jessore, PNS Comilla and PNS Sylhet) and 14 converted gunboats and damaged one tanker (PNS Dacca). It is assessed that, along with these surface vessels and submarine, the Pak Navy lost about 55 officers and 430 sailors(75).

The Indian Navy lost only one Frigate (INS Khukri) and one aircraft (an Alize) engaged in tactical reconnaissance in the West. The Indian Naval personnel lost included 20 officers and 180 sailors.

During the missile attacks on Karachi harbour, besides the naval ships and harbour installations that were destroyed or damaged, two merchant ships, the Liberian Venus Challenger (10,065 tons) and the Panamanian Gulf Star (1280 tons) were sunk and a third, the British Harmattan (10,411 tons), was damaged(76). In the East, thirteen merchant ships with a total tonnage of about 94,000 tons were sunk during the war(77). These included five Pak ships - Surma (5,890 tons), Anis Baksh (6,273 tons), Karnaphuli (9,123 tons), Al Abbas (8,559 tons) and Rangamati (8,909 tons), one Danish ship, African Proctor, four Greek ships - Thetis (2,276 tons), Mastro Stelios (8,823 tons), Avlios (11,237 tons) and Chrysovalandou (8,151 tons), one Swedish ship Star Altair (8,962 tons), one Spanish ship, Ondarda (8,259 tons) and one Somalian ship, Lightning (7,046 tons). Eight merchant ships belonging to Pakistan, Denmark, Liberia and New Zealand were damaged. Besides these, 36 small craft (35 Pakistani and one Dutch) were sunk and 18 damaged in East Pakistan.

The contraband control and blockade measures adopted in the two theatres of operations yielded excellent results. Seven merchant ships owned or chartered by Pak shipping agencies were captured at sea as 'prize', three neutral ships carrying contraband were intercepted and taken to Indian ports where they were detained and 20 other neutral ships, which were either intercepted at sea or detained in Indian harbours on the commencement of hostilities, were released after offloading the contraband found on board(78).

All in all, no same-sized navy in the world could have achieved more.

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Krishnan, p.28.
14. From Official Records.
15. Ibid.
16. Krishnan, pp.30-43.
17. Ibid., p.38.
18. Ibid., pp.30-43.
19. Ibid.
20. From Official Records.
21. Ibid.
22. Krishnan, p.41.
23. Khan, F.M., p.232.
24. From Official Records.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Krishnan, p.44.
30. From Official Records.
31. Ibid.
32. Krishnan, p.62.
33. Ibid., pp.62-63.
34. From Official Records.
35. Krishnan, p.57.
36. Kissinger, p.905.
37. Gupta, pp.112-114.
38. RK 623 ceased to exist. The US Seventh Fleet withdrew soon after.
39. It has not proved possible to determine whether it was an Indian Navy operation supported by the MB, or a Mukti Bahini operation supported by the IN. The evidence appears conflicting, and the question is really of academic interest only.
40. From Official Records.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Krishnan, pp.46-47.
52. From Official Records.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Khan, F.M., p.153.
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59. From Official Records.
60. Ibid.
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68. Ibid., pp.68-70.
69. From Official Records.
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73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.

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THE PAKISTANI SURRENDER

A combination of various factors - military, organisational, political and psychological - enabled the Indian Army to make steady progress on almost all the fronts in Bangladesh - a land which, because of its riverine terrain, is regarded as one of the most easily defendable regions in the world. A clear-cut politico-military goal, better strategic planning and flexibility, initiative and boldness displayed by local commanders in its implementation, inter-services coordination, overwhelming support of the local population, co-operation of the Mukti Bahini and the national ideological fervour were some of those important factors.

THE DESPERATE SITUATION

The Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy had been contributing significantly to the swift advance of the Indian Army on one hand and blocking the attempts of Pak troops to escape, on the other. Within three days of the commencement of the war, the IAF had eliminated the PAF in the Eastern Theatre by destroying many of the planes and grounding the surviving aircraft by severely damaging the airfields(1). During the whole war, the IAF was complete master of the Bangladesh skies, and provided effective close support to ground troops and straffed with telling effect the ships and rivercraft carrying the Pak troops.

The naval aviation played a similar role from the south. And the aircraft carrier Vikrant and other ships of the Eastern Fleet successfully blocked the passage to and from the Bangladesh coast. As a result, no supplies and reinforcements could come to the beleaguered Pak troops from outside, and their escape routes by sea were cut off.

The cumulative effect of the efforts of Indian Army, Air Force and Navy in the Eastern Theatre was two-fold - liberation of large areas of Bangladesh and lowering of the morale of Pakistani troops.

Various units of 4 Corps from the east and of 101 Comn Zone Area from the north were rapidly approaching Dhaka. The position as it existed on 14/15 December was :-

4 Corps Sector

Over nine battalions belonging to 311 Mtn Bde and 73 Mtn Bde (under 57 Mtn Div) and of 301 Mtn Bde

(under 23 Mtn Div) supported by tanks, medium guns and field artillery had already firmed up on the western bank of the river Meghna poised for advance to Dhaka.

Of the above formations 301 Mtn Bde had reached the eastern bank of the Lakhya river on 14 December(2). The 14 Guards of 73 Mtn Bde, advancing along the Narsingdi-Pubail-Tungi axis had contacted Tungi on 14 December whereas another unit of the bde - 19 Raj Rif - secured Pubail on 15 December(3). Of the units of 311 Mtn Bde, 4 Guards had contacted Demra on 14 December; 2 EB Bn, after crossing the river Lakhya in the north, had secured Rugganj by 14 December, and 10 Bihar had crossed the same river north of Demra in area Pubgaon on night 13/14 December(4). Meanwhile, one 120 mm mortar (belonging to 65 Mtn Regt) had been taken across the rivers Lakhya and Balu and at 1600 hrs on 14 December, Dhaka itself was shelled for the first time(5).

On 15 December 311 Mtn Bde, supported by tanks and field artillery was ready to enter Dhaka any moment, and 73 Mtn Bde was ready to advance to Kurmitola(6).

101 Comn Zone Area Sector

By the evening of 14 December, 95 Mtn Bde with 1 Maratha LI and 6 Sikh LI, supported by light guns and field artillery, had established firm base on the river Turag(7). On 15 December, 6 Sikh LI had secured the eastern bank of the river Turag(8).

The 13 Guards (under FJ Sector), advancing along the Sabhar-Mirpur-Dhaka axis had captured Dhaka High Power Transmitting Station at Sabhar at 0830 hrs and had cleared the town by 1730 hrs on 15 December(9). 2 Para (allotted to FJ Sector) had started advance towards Mirpur Br at 2200 hrs on 15 December(10).

The military situation was, thus, "getting completely out of hand"(11) for the Pakistani occupation army. The encirclement of Dhaka by Indian Army was tightening rapidly. The writing on the wall was clear. The fall of Dhaka was not only inevitable but imminent too. Some of the besieged Pakistani 'fortresses' like Sylhet, Bhairab Bazar, Chittagong, Faridpur and Khulna, were still holding out, but the Pakistani troops confined there were in no position either to fall back upon Dhaka or to slip out of Bangladesh. Their passage for withdrawal or escape was blocked by land, air and sea.

Even before the commencement of the war, the morale of the Pakistani occupation troops in East

Bengal was not high(12). Most of them, who had been indulging in killings, looting and rape for months, had been partly dehumanised and, thus, susceptible to quick demoralisation. One of the important factors for bringing that state of affairs might have been the high number of casualties which they were made to suffer during their operation against the freedom fighters(13).

Now, with hopeless military situation on the ground and the ever-present threat of air attacks, while located amidst a vehemently hostile population in a territory wherefrom all escape routes were sealed off, the Pakistani soldiers were being more and more overpowered by a sense of isolation and encirclement and feelings of desperation and hopelessness. In such a state of mind, some Pak units fought bitterly and desperately, but, by and large, the worsening situation was increasing the demoralisation(14).

At such a critical moment, some developments took place, including a number of steps deliberately taken by India, which proved nerve shattering for the Pak soldiers and officers alike. Those developments and steps can be described under the name of 'psychological and propaganda war'.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

Even before the outbreak of the war, the deployment, manoeuvres and activities of Indian Army were so planned that the Pakistani military leadership got an impression that India wanted to occupy only some territory along the Indo-East Bengal border. Niazi was, thus, inducted to move his troops forward to defend important towns on the border, leaving the Dhaka region with insufficient troops to defend it. It was a strategic advantage gained by India initially and the Pakistani forces played into her hands. The recognition of the Provisional Government of Bangladesh by India on 6 December and an agreement on 10 December between the two Governments to set up Joint Command of Mukti Bahini and the Indian forces under Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC in C, Eastern Command(15) made it clear to Pakistan that India was irrevocably committed to the ouster of Pakistanis from East Bengal lock, stock and barrel. The realisation must have shattered not only their plans but also their morale.

Para dropping of troops by India in the war-zone was in itself a confidence shaking step for Pakistanis, and the media now played its part. A Press agency erroneously reported, and the news was broadcast by BBC, that on 11 December 5,000

para-troopers were dropped near Tangail(16). In fact, the troops so dropped were only one battalion from 50 Para Brigade. The impact of this inadvertent error must have been considerable on the Pakistan Army.

The Indian 'electronic warfare' programme had successfully broken the Pakistan Code and the Indian wireless intercept service worked very well(17). As a result, several important communications about plans and projections of the Pak high command were intercepted, decoded and suitable action taken accordingly. For example, on 11 December at 0930 hrs, Indian forces intercepted and decoded a message(18) about the presence of two coasters and five disguised merchant ships at Gupta Crossing, obviously for rescuing Pakistani troops by 'RK 623'. Suitable preventive action was taken and Gen Manekshaw, in a message to Maj gen Farman Ali and the Pak Flag Officer Commanding, broadcast over AIR, warned that the merchant ships and armed forces would be destroyed "if you endeavour to try this"(19).

Further, the message about the scheduled Cabinet meeting in the Government House in Dhaka on 14 December was intercepted(20). Immediately arrangements were made to bomb the Government House at that time. There were several similar instances of interception of important messages by India, whereby the sense of insecurity and impending doom was increased among the Pakistanis.

Headquarter Eastern Command at Calcutta issued leaflets which had a great demoralising effect on the Pak Army. One such leaflet (Officers and Jawans of the Pakistan Army, Lay down arms; Before the time slips out of hands - Lay down arms) issued on 7 December in Urdu, Roman Urdu, Pushtu, Roman Pushtu and Bengali, was air-dropped in thousands over Pak positions on 8 and 9 December(21). The leaflet conveyed to Pak troops that their position in Bangladesh was hopeless and their only chance for survival was to lay down arms and surrender to the Indian Army. That was the only way open to them if they wanted to go back home and be with their children. The leaflet also warned that the Bengalees were out for their blood and only the Indian Army could save them. It further promised safety to them if they surrendered to the nearest Indian troops as soon as possible(22). Such leaflets were also dropped over Dhaka on 13 December(23).

Hand-written messages in Urdu were also distributed among the Pak troops. One such message "Kuchh Yaad Dilaoon" (Refresh your memories) asked the Pak troops why they were going into the jaws of death.

It exhorted Pak troops to save themselves for their own sake. The message asked them to think the whole affair and get rid of the chains of bondage which selfish officers of theirs had fastened on them. Two more such messages entitled "Sachhcha Mussalman" (True Muslim) and "Hukm Ki Tameel" (Compliance of the order) reminded the Pak troops that the crimes of killing children and innocent, poor and unarmed people, raping of women and arson and looting that they had been committing on the orders from their officers were contrary to the tenets of Islam. The messages asked the Pak soldiers if they did not repent those sins, and then the message went on to advise the Pak troops to refuse to obey such orders(24). These messages came like "psychological hammer blows to a crumbling morale and put the fear of God and Mukti Bahini in the Pakistani troops"(25).

But the biggest blow to the eroding morale of Pakistani soldiers was given by the calls and warnings issued by the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen Mankshaw, to Pakistanis to surrender to the Indian forces. On 8 December, after the fall of Jessore, one of the strongholds of the Pak Army in Bangladesh, Gen Manekshaw issued the first of the series of messages addressed to Pakistani troops in Bangladesh. The message(26), broadcast over All India Radio at frequent intervals, warned the Pakistani troops collecting and concentrating in areas Barisal and Narayanganj in the hope that they might be able to escape or be picked up, that certain death awaited them if they endeavoured to do that, because of the appropriate measures taken by the Indian Navy. The message, however assured them that "Once you surrender, you shall be treated with dignity and as per the Geneva Convention".

India's Chief of the Army Staff, issued another appeal to Pak troops on 10 December, saying, "Your resistance is gallant but fruitless. You are unnecessarily suffering casualties. Your commanders are giving you false hopes". In the appeal, Gen Manekshaw warned them that "you have no chance of being rescued or getting away. For the sake of your families surrender and surrender quickly(27).

Fully informed about the state of lowering morale of officers and soldiers of the Pak Army in Bangladesh, the Indian Army Chief, on 11 December, addressed a message to Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, Military Adviser to the Pakistani Governor in Dhaka, advising surrender. In the message(28), Gen Manekshaw referred to the advice tendered by him earlier to the Pak soldiers to surrendder and said "Resistance is senseless and will mean the death of many poor

soldiers under your command quite unnecessarily". Repeating the guarantee already given by him for "complete protection and just treatment under the Geneva Convention to all military and quasi-military personnel who surrender", the COAS once again asked Rao Farman Ali to heed his advice and surrender. The message was broadcast at frequent intervals on AIR and also conveyed through leaflets dropped in the Dhaka area(29).

On 13 December the Indian Army Chief broadcast another message(30) to Maj Gen Farman Ali asking him to surrender otherwise he would be compelled to order the Indian Army, "now closing in around Dacca" which had come "within the range of my artillery", to reduce those garrisons with the use of force. The guarantee for full protection and just treatment in case of surrender was reiterated.

At the same time, India's Chief of the Army Staff in a message(31), conveyed through leaflets airdropped in and around Dhaka, told all non-Bengali civilians in the area, who were reported to have been armed by the Pakistani Army and were "being egged on to fight", that "such fighting will be futile". They were advised to "surrender to the nearest Indian Army Unit" and lay down their arms. In that case, they were assured of full protection by the Indian Army.

These and several other similar psychological steps proved very effective in hastening further demoralisation of Pakistani soldiers and officers. The state of morale of the Pak Army could be seen from some of the intercepted messages. On 5 December, HQ of a Pak unit, probably either 1 Baluch or 8 Baluch of 205 Inf Bde, asked one of its sub-units to "leave everything and save your life"(32). Some unit in Laksham area (Comilla Sector) informed its control at 1600 hrs on 6 December that "Phunk nikal gai hai, Allah hin bachay"(33) (Extremely Frightened, God alone can save). On 12 December it was disclosed that Brigade Commander of 34 Inf Bde had asked his men to disperse and seek shelter wherever possible(34).

Consequently, the bulk of the Pakistan Army operating in Bangladesh was soon demoralised, disorganised and paralysed. It was no longer in a position to offer effective resistance. To many of the Pakistanis, surrender to the Indian Army appeared to be the only way for survival. Intercepted messages indicated that several Pak garrisons had asked permission to surrender(35). On 4 December, at 1900 hrs the post of Kamalpur surrendered(36). On 11 December the Jamalpur garrison surrendered(37). There were several other individual cases of surrender by or

capture of Pakistani troops in different sectors. The incidents of Pak troops and officers having given up fighting and being taken prisoners by the Indian Army near Hajiganj in the Chandpur Sector on 10 December(38), in the Sylhet area on 11 December(39), at Janglia near Comilla on 12 December(40) and in the Jhenida Sector on 15 December(41) may be cited as examples.

The feeling of uncertainty and insecurity over-powered several officers. Two highly decorated Pak officers reportedly approached their Press Officer and said: "You have access to General Niazi. Why don't you tell him to be realistic, otherwise all of us will die a dog's death"(42). Air Commodore Inam-ul-Haq, Air Officer Commanding PAF, Dhaka, thus gave his assessment of the situation to Air HQ Peshawar on 8 December (1115 hrs): "I think within 48 hrs they (the Indians) are likely to engage DACCA. We have already started destroying TOP SECRET papers and are preparing to demolish all vital equipment(43). The message further informed: "I do not think we shall be able to fly much. So I am putting my maintenance personnel on guard duties and (as) ground combatants. I doubt if we shall be able to fly any more(44). The above message is clear indication of a serious state of demoralisation developing among Pak military leadership in the Eastern Theatre.

Maj Gen Rahim Khan, GOC, 39 Pak Inf Div, who was wounded when fleeing from Chandpur, while convalescing at Farman Ali's residence, on 12 December, told his host, Lt Gen Niazi and Maj gen Jamshed that "cease-fire alone was the answer"(45). And Rahim "insisted that it was already too late"(46).

Lt Gen A.A.K. Niazi, GOC, Eastern Command, Pakistan Army, seems to have given up hopes soon after the commencement of the war. On 7 December when he met the civilian Governor, Dr A.M. Malik, to report on the military situation, "the burly figure of General Niazi", informs Siddiq Salik, "quaked and he broke into tears. He hid his face in his hands and started sobbing like a child"(47). Dr. Malik then tried to console him saying "I know, General Sahib, there are hard days in a commander's life. But don't lose heart. God is great"(48). At the conclusion of the meeting Dr. Malik suggested, "as the situation is bad, I think I should cable the President to arrange a cease-fire". Niazi, naturally, concurred Dr. Malik sent a message to Yahya Khan accordingly, but no action was taken by Pindi on the proposal(49).

On 9 December Dr. Malik sent a signal to Yahya Khan which said, "Once again (I) urge you to consider an immediate cease-fire and political settlement"(50). Yahya Khan ignored it again.

However, the same day, Niazi sent a four-point message(51) to Yahya Khan in which he admitted that the "situation (was) extremely critical", and requested for air support and reinforcements by airborne troops.

The above message of Lt Gen Niazi moved Yahya Khan to act and he sent a telegram(52) to Governor the same night (i.e. on 9 December) leaving the matter "entirely to your good sense and judgement" and informing him that any decision taken by the Governor would be approved by the President and accepted by Niazi, Gen Abdul Hamid Khan, COS, Pakistan Army, also sent a similar message separately to Lt Gen Niazi on 10 December in which he, too, admitted that "it is now only a question of time before the enemy (i.e. India) with its great superiority in numbers and material and the active cooperation of rebels will dominate East Pakistan completely"(53).

Governor Malik, therefore, initiated another move to secure a cease fire. He began his proposals(54) saying "as the conflict arose as a result of political causes, it must end with a political solution". Dr. Malik then pleaded for the UN to effect an immediate cease fire and arrange for a peaceful transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Bengal. He asked for the repatriation with honour of the Pakistani armed forces as well as the peaceful evacuation of West Pakistani civilians who opted for transfer. Guarantees regarding the safety of all persons settled in 'East Pakistan' since 1947 as well as against reprisals should also be given. These proposals were sent to Yahya Khan from Dr. Malik in a signal on 10 December to apprise the Pakistan President of the move alongwith the information about the next step that he was going to take in the matter.

In the meantime, Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, Military Adviser to the Governor, obviously with the consent(55) of the Governor, passed on the proposals to Paul Marc Henry, representative of UN Secretary General who was then in Dhaka. These proposals also asked the Soviet, British, French and US representatives in Dhaka and the Chinese delegation in New York to jointly take control of 'East Pakistan' and implement the proposals(56). Henry referred the proposals immediately to the UN Secretariat. Even efforts were started to convene the Security Council to consider those proposals when Yahya Khan "rescinded and disowned"(57) them. Governor Malik was also informed that his proposals had "gone too far" and that he was expected to take the decision "within the

framework of a United Pakistan"(58). This abortive effort, however, clearly revealed to the world that the end of their resistance in the Eastern Theatre was imminent(59).

On 12 December, Dr. Malik once again sent a note to President Yahya Khan urging him "to do everything possible to save the innocent lives"(60). But this note, too, met with the same fate. Yahya Khan and his advisers in Islamabad still had some hopes.

HOPES OF CHINESE AND US HELP

Lt Gen Niazi is reported to have told Maj Gen Jacob, after the war, that he had recognised defeat and had wanted to surrender at least seven days before he actually capitulated. But direct orders from Yahya Khan prevented it(61).

The Pakistan military junta, from the very early stages of the war, had been exhorting Lt Gen Niazi and other top officials in Dhaka to continue fighting by giving assurance of direct military intervention by "yellow" friends (i.e., the Chinese) from the north and by "white" friends (i.e., the Americans) from the south(62), or "something big"(63) round the corner. On 5 December, the COS, Pakistan Army, is reported to have told Niazi that there was every hope of Chinese activities soon(64). A reference to such assurances was alluded to in the message of Dr. A.M. Malik, sent to Yahya Khan on 7 December, in which it was said that at that stage nothing short of direct intervention would do, and that any such action by friends should be within the next 48 hrs(65). Lt Gen Niazi's pleading with the high command in Rawalpindi to get Chinese action expedited were met invariably with reassurances on that account(66). From the 7 December message of Dr. Malik, the authorities in Islamabad got so alarmed that they assured Dhaka that Chinese activities had already begun(67). As late as 12 December, President Yahya Khan was reported to have claimed that the Chinese Ambassador in Islamabad had assured him that "within 72 hours (from 12 December) the Chinese Army will move towards the border"(68). Even as late as a day before Yahya Khan admitted the "loss of East Pakistan", the Pakistan President reportedly assured the PDP leader Nurul Amin, (who was designated Prime Minister by Yahya Khan and later became Vice President of Pakistan under Z.A. Bhutto), that the Pakistan forces "were in control and were expecting a Chinese intervention and the American Seventh Fleet any moment"(69).

From the available evidence, it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion whether Yahya Khan and

his advisers in Islamabad really believed in such assurances which they were giving to the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh(70).

In some quarters it was held that because of the growing Indo-Soviet friendship, the Pakistan leadership honestly felt that China would militarily intervene on the side of Pakistan in a war with India. Similarly, because of the vital role being played by Pakistan in the overall big-power politics of the US, Washington, too, would go all out to help Pakistan in any Indo-Pakistan conflict. But there is another opinion, held principally by Pakistanis(71), that the assurances about foreign intervention were a hoax played by the authorities in Pindi to keep the fighting in East Bengal going, hoping in the meantime to secure an honourable cease fire through the UN.

Irrespective of the genuineness of the belief of Yahya Khan and his advisers in those assurances, it had some temporary effect on the Pakistani soldiers. They "looked to the skies (for Chinese) and the seas (for Americans) and tried to buy time for those friends to reach them"(72). The Pakistani occupation army and its cohorts continued to swing between hope and despair, depending upon the chances of such physical intervention appearing bright or dim.

Lt Gen Niazi enquired from the Chinese Counsel General in Dhaka on 4 and 6 December what his government was planning to do to effectively intervene in the conflict. On both the occasions, he received the same reply: "I have no orders from my government"(73). Similarly, the senior American representative in Dhaka, when contacted, expressed his ignorance of any such move by the US administration(74).

Headquarters Eastern Command, Pakistan Army, impatiently rang up important sources in Rawalpindi to know the latest about the friendly intervention. The reply everytime was 'soon'. A disgruntled Staff Officer commented; 'Ask them how soon is their "soon"'. Finally, Eastern Command asked GHQ, "Tell us definitely how long have we to wait for "friends?" 'For thirty-six hours more' was the reply. The new deadline was set for the evening of 12 December(75).

In a message conveyed to Dhaka at 1530 hrs on 11 December, it was mentioned "something will come (in the sky). Aega, Aega, something big is coming"(76). The same evening, at 2030 hrs in a conversation with someone in Dhaka, Nurul Amin told from Islamabad: "Those who are in SOUTH by sea and those in NORTH by Air. Movements are going on...."(77). No wonder,

when, on 11 December in the afternoon, 2 Para was airdropped near Tangail, Pakistani soldiers and their commander, Brig Qadir thought they were the much awaited Chinese coming from the air. After an initial flurry of hope the Brigadier reverted to reality(78).

The hopes of direct intervention by China and the USA helped Lt Gen Niazi to maintain a bold posture in spite of the military situation deteriorating fast. On 11 December, he was heard assuring some nurses in Dhaka not to worry because "big help was on the way"(79). When Brig Atif of Mynamati garrison asked advice from Dhaka on 12 December whether he should surrender to the Indian Army, he was told to hold on, as "somethins big was expected to happen"(80).

But that "Something big" did not happen. China did not physically intervene in the war. For a variety of reasons such an action on the part of China seemed most unlikely. China had nowhere, at least in the public pronouncements of its leaders, specifically promised to intervene physically on the side of Pakistan(81). Further, the domestic situation in China - in the throes of the Cultural Revolution - was not such as to allow it the luxury of a military conflict particularly in distant East Bengal. China had kept its options on the Bangladesh issue open by refraining from criticising either Sheikh Mujib or the Awami League, but condemning only India and the Soviet Union. By direct involvement in the military conflict, Beijing would have closed those options.

Again, the Chinese, ultra conscious of their international prestige as a military power, were unwilling to risk that prestige unless they were sure of success. That would have required mobilization and launching of a large force. Beijing had more than half a million troops tied up along the 4,500 km long border with the Soviet Union. It would not have been easy for China, to spare sufficiently large number of troops to open a war front with India. Moreover, trans-border operations by a large force through the Himalayan passes, blocked by winter snows, would have been very difficult, if not impossible. And, India in 1971 was not India of 1962. Hit and run tactics minor border incursions would have made little impact on India. Last, but not the least, China had to think of the likely Soviet retaliation(82) in the wake of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation.

As early as 5 December, the Soviet news agency, TASS had issued an official statement which had asked all countries to keep away from involvement in the India-Pakistan conflict and warned that the Soviet

Union could not remain indifferent, particularly when it was taking place close to the USSR's borders and, therefore, involved the interests of its security(83). At the time, when the reports about likely Chinese intervention in the Indo-Pak war were circulating rapidly, the Soviet military attache in Kathmandu was reported to have met his Chinese counterpart and advised him that "China 'should not get too serious about intervention, because USSR react (sic), had many missiles, etc.,'"(84). Further according to a subsequent report(85), the Soviet Ambassador in New Delhi, Nikolai M Pegov was said to have promised on 13 December 1971, that "if China should decide to intervene in Ladakh.... the Soviet Union would open a diversionary action in Sinkiang".

India's assessment, therefore, was that due to various political and military considerations the chances of physical intervention by China were not high. The conclusion was that "other than making noises" and possibly creating small border incidents the Chinese would do nothing substantial"(86). And India's assessment proved correct.

Short of direct intervention China did everything. It extended verbal, political, moral and material support to Pakistan liberally. It also made some troop movements and other gestures(87) which turned out to be merely symbolic and psychological steps on the part of China to frighten India. But Mrs. Gandhi did not frighten easily, as her worst critics had to admit. There are some indications(88) of the Chinese naval presence, too, in the vicinity of the war zone, which could have helped in evacuating the beleaguered Pakistanis from Bangladesh. But India's retaliatory naval capability deterred the Chinese from making any overt move.

China also sent two Protest Notes to the Government of India, on 16 December and 27 December 1971(89) against alleged intrusions into its territory by Indians on 10 December and then on 15 December, by land and by air. India, naturally, rejected those false and baseless protest notes, which were regarded as a feeble demonstration of China's proclaimed solidarity with Pakistan. Ironically, the first note was given on 16 December, six days after the alleged intrusion and, more significantly, on the very day that the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh was surrendering.

THE US SEVENTH FLEET

After having failed to secure a cease fire through the UN on terms favourable to Pakistan, the United States decided to display its naval power in

pursuance of what was described as the desire of President Nixon "to tilt in favour of Pakistan".

On the specific orders of President Nixon(90) a strong task force(91) spearheaded by nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Enterprise was instructed to proceed from the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal to be available in the vicinity of the area of conflict.

On 9 December the task force moved out from the Bay of Tonkin to assemble in the Malacca Straits the next day. The same day it was ordered by the US Defence Department to sail towards the Bay of Bengal. On 12 December the task force entered the Bay of Bengal off the Malaysian peninsula. For eight days the task force continued cruising in the south-eastern area of the Bay of Bengal, between Penang and Achin(92).

It is very difficult to form a definite opinion about the exact purpose behind the dispatch of this strong naval flotilla to the area of conflict. It was officially claimed(93) that the task force was sent to evacuate US citizens, 47 of them in total, who had, of their own choice, stayed back in Bangladesh while other foreigners, including many Americans, were evacuated under Indian safe conduct(94). This ridiculous explanation could never justify the dispatch of such a strong armada to the war zone.

Writing in Washington Post, the American journalist Jack Anderson, who claimed to have studied secret White House papers, gave the following reasons behind the US Government decision to send the Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal:-

- i. to compel India to divert both ships and planes to shadow the task force;
- ii. to weaken India's blockade of 'East Pakistan' ports;
- iii. to divert the Indian aircraft carrier Vikrant from its military mission; and
- iv. to force India to keep planes on defence alert, thus reducing offensive operations against Pakistani ground forces(95).

On balance it could be said that the task force was sent by the US to influence the course of the war in favour of Pakistan without involving Washington directly in the conflict, if possible, or even by direct intervention, if necessary(96).

The Nixon administration probably expected that the mere appearance of the US task force in the vicinity of the war area would unnerve the Government of India. It would weaken the operations of the Indian Army, thereby helping Pakistan to extricate itself with honour from the hopeless situation in Bangladesh. Even if the task force would not save 'East Pakistan' at least it might provide facilities to the Pakistani troops in Bangladesh to make good their escape to West Pakistan(97), which would also strengthen Pakistan's military efforts in the Western Theatre. Even otherwise, the presence of a nuclear-powered naval flotilla of the US would act as a strong deterrent for India from what the Nixon administration assessed to be India's intentions of "extinguishing"(98) West Pakistan.

The very advent of the Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal was a cause of jubilation for the Pakistanis in Bangladesh. The Biharis in Dhaka started distributing sweets on the streets(99). Lt Gen Niazi, in his message to Gen Manekshaw, in which he had sued for peace, could gather courage to ask for the regrouping of Pakistani troops at designated places, obviously for evacuation to Pakistan. This condition he set forth in his message in reply to the repeated demands made by the Indian Army Chief for the Pakistani troops in Bangladesh to surrender to the Indian Army(100).

India first came to know of the US move through an intercepted message at 1730 hrs on 10 December(101). There were spontaneous demonstrations by public, and Press comments, protesting vehemently against this US 'gunboat diplomacy'. Numerous leaders of public opinion including Members of Parliament, extended full support to the government to face the challenge boldly.

The US move was indeed highly provocative and hostile(102). But the government as well as the armed forces of India refused to be intimidated; they stood firm. Both types of contingencies - direct as well as indirect intervention by the US task force in the war - were thoroughly examined. The US naval force could intervene directly in two ways. They could helidrop US marines in Bangladesh as an assault group to support the beleaguered Pakistani troops. Direct aerial attacks by Enterprise-based fighter bombers on strategic targets in India and the Indian troops and warships in and around Bangladesh could be another scenario of a direct US intervention. In the first case it was thought that a maximum of about 5,000 US marines would be of no consequence.

But the latter case opened up ominous

possibilities. The United States would then have become a belligerent party. The Soviet Union would in that case have felt obliged to come in directly on the side of India(103). A Russian task force consisting of destroyers, cruisers, minesweepers, tankers and other supporting ships, equipped with atomic missiles, was already in the Indian Ocean. Russian nuclear submarines were also there to support the force. According to Jack Anderson, the commander of the Russian task force was authorised to take action if the Americans or Chinese intervened(104). These Soviet ships remained in position of alertness till the Pak troops surrendered in Bangladesh on 16 December and cease fire was agreed upon in the Western Theatre a day later(105). Moreover, the First Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister V.V. Kuznetsov, on a visit to India, postponed his return until 16 December to watch the developing situation from close quarters. Soviet leaders and Press also made the Soviet intentions very clear. L.I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, on 14 December warned the outside powers from interference in the war between Pakistan and India. Tass, on 13 December and Pravda on 16 December, too accused the US of grossly blackmailing India by gunboat diplomacy and warned that the US action would complicate the situation(106). So a direct US intervention in the Bangladesh conflict would have resulted in a grave Super Powers confrontation, with incalculable consequences, India decided to ignore this scenario.

Indirectly, the US task force could help Pakistan in two ways. By its very presence the task force might compel the Indian Navy to divert its attention from the operations in Bangladesh to the defence of the Indian coastline. But this contingency, it was decided, could be best answered by completely ignoring the task force. India did not send a single ship or aircraft to shadow the task force.

The other and the most likely scenario of indirect intervention was "to close Chittagong within range of their air-power, put up a formidable air umbrella over the merchant ships awaiting escape and actually provide air escort for them till they reached the waiting fleet"(107). According to Admiral S.M. Nanda, Chief of the Naval Staff, "the three Service Chiefs sat down and evaluated the various courses of action for the Seventh Fleet. We decided that if there were no ports in Bangladesh from where the Seventh Fleet could operate, and no airfields to land its aircraft, and no ships to evacuate Pakistani personnel, there was very little it could do"(108). The Indian Navy, jointly with the IAF, intensified

bombings of ports, ships, and runways, in the coastal areas of Bangladesh including Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Barisal and Chalna. About 50 smaller vessels were also sunk between 11 and 14 December(109) thereby completely choking the ports and rendering the air strips totally unusable.

On the other hand, the swift progress of Indian Army in reaching Dhaka, the collapse of resistance and surrender by the Pakistan Army in the East when the task force was still 1,500 nautical miles away from Chittagong, left neither Pakistan nor the US any options. The US task force could only stand an important witness to the emergence of an independent and sovereign Bangladesh without in any way affecting the course of the war. The unilateral declaration of cease fire by India on the Western Front further exposed the utter futility of the 'mission' of the Seventh Fleet, and on 21 December, it sailed away towards the southern waters of the Maldivé islands (now the Republic of Maldives).

SURRENDER AT DHAKA

Neither the Chinese from the north nor the Americans from the south made any effective intervention in the war in favour of Pakistan. The much expected Pakistani success, or what Lt Gen Niazi recently termed "some deterrent action against India"(110) on the Western Front, which could have lifted the sagging spirits of the Pak soldiers in Bangladesh, too, did not come about. And there was no hope of its materialising.

The military situation in Bangladesh was deteriorating for Lt Gen Niazi, not by days but by hours. According to F.M. Khan, "The command in Dacca was completely paralysed; the continuous Indian air attacks on Dacca and the area around it were making it more confused(111). The rapid Indian advance coupled with various psychological moves of the Indian Army had completely demoralised the Pak military leadership in Bangladesh. In a conversation between two very high ranking officers/officials between Dhaka and Rawalpindi on 13 December the one from Dhaka pleaded: "Muamla yahan par kuchh nahin raha. Jo kahte hai, khuda ke waste maanlo nahin to kal sham taq yahan par katleam ho jaega : Yeh situation bach nahin sakti ...Speak to 'Bara Sahib' (Presumably President of PAKISTAN) at once...(112) (Here everything is finished. For God's sake accept what they are saying, otherwise by tomorrow evening there will be general massacre. This situation cannot be averted.....). About Lt Gen Niazi, his Press Officer wrote later that he, too, had "lost all hope of foreign help. He

slumped back into his earlier mood of despondency and hardly came out of his fortified cabin. He rode the chariot of time without controlling its speed or direction"(113). The feeling of insecurity and imminent defeat was overpowering the Pak occupation army leadership. On 14 December, the flow of panic signals between Dhaka and Rawalpindi increased, clearly indicating the near collapse in Dhaka(114).

At that critical moment for the Pakistanis in Bangladesh came the shattering bombardment of the Government House by the Indian Air Force jets on 14 December, just at the time when Governor Malik was holding an important meeting with his 'Cabinet'. In panic, Dr. Malik and his 'Cabinet' sent in their resignation en masse, and sought sanctuary in the Hotel Intercontinental, which had been converted into a neutral zone by the International Red Cross. Almost all the top civilian officials had already done the same. This was the collapse of the 'East Pakistan Government' in Bangladesh. This development came as the proverbial last straw on the camel's back in so far as Lt Gen Niazi was concerned. The moment of decision had arrived and Niazi could no longer postpone it. He had only one way open to him, viz., to sue for peace.

Niazi had a day earlier on 13 December, sent a distress signal to Rawalpindi, and had been advised to keep on fighting and to hold on to as much territory as possible, since within a matter of hours the Security Council might bring about a cease fire(115). Niazi had also during the night of 13/14 December requested Gen Hamid, COS Pak Army to "See that some action is taken on them (Niazi's proposals) soon"(116), and Hamid also had advised Niazi on the same lines. But now after the collapse of the East Pakistan government, it seems that the point of no return had been reached.

And at last the gravity of the situation in Dhaka was realised by the military junta in Islamabad also. President Yahya Khan sent a signal to Niazi on 14 December at 1302 hrs (IST) which said: "You have now reached a stage where further resistance is no longer humanly possible nor will it serve any useful purpose. It will only lead to further loss of life and destruction. You should now take all necessary measures to stop the fighting and preserve the lives of all armed forces personnel, all those from West Pakistan and all loyal elements....."(117). The message reached Dhaka in two hours. And the same evening Lt Gen Niazi decided to initiate the necessary steps for getting the fighting stopped.

Niazi approached Spivack, the US Consul-General in Dhaka, with a proposal for immediate cease fire to be transmitted to Gen Manekshaw, COAS, Indian Army. Niazi also sent a copy of the proposals to Yahya Khan on 15 December. But Spivack, for no satisfactory reason, did not transmit the message to Gen Manekshaw. Instead, he sent it to Washington. The US authorities have claimed that they tried to consult the Pakistan President before taking any action(118). The result was that the urgent message of Niazi took more than 20 hours to reach Manekshaw.

Meanwhile, the cease fire message of Lt Gen Niazi was soon carried in news flashes all over the world(119). On 15 December, Governor Malik and Rao Farman Ali also reportedly sent a message to the UN Secretariat that Pakistan was desirous of ending hostilities in 'East Pakistan' and wished a few hours' cease fire for discussion of conditions.

The Indian Army had come to know indirectly about the Pakistani initiative for cease-fire. To remind Lt Gen Niazi or anybody else not to change his mind, India stepped up air attacks. Eight 500 lbs bombs were dropped on Niazi's command post in Dhaka cantonment, and the new site selected for the Eastern Command in Dhaka town was bombed even before the Headquarters had started shifting there(120).

The message of Lt Gen Niazi finally reached Gen Manekshaw through the American Embassy at New Delhi at 1430 hrs (IST) on 15 December. The proposal for immediate cease fire, which was also witnessed by Maj Gen Farman Ali, included the following conditions: (i) Regrouping of Pakistani armed forces in designated areas by mutual agreement; (ii) guarantee for safety of all military and para-military forces; (iii) safety of all those who had settled in 'East Pakistan' since 1947; and (iv) no reprisals against those who helped the administration since March 1971. Gen Manekshaw replied to the message the same evening at about 1830 hrs. In his reply, the Indian COAS, referred to the assurances he had given and said: "Since you have indicated your desire to stop fighting I expect you to issue orders to all forces under your command in Bangla Desh to cease-fire immediately and surrender to my advancing forces wherever they are located"(121). Gen Manekshaw then reiterated his assurances that "personnel who surrender shall be treated with the dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to" and that there would be no reprisals. "Immediately I receive a positive response from you I shall direct Gen Aurora, the Commander of Indian and Bangladesh forces in the Eastern Theatre to refrain from all air and ground action against your forces.

As a token of my good faith I have ordered that no air action shall take place over Dacca from 1700 hrs today (i.e. 15 December)". In order to discuss and finalise matters quickly a radio link on listening watch was arranged. Gen Manekshaw's reply also warned Lt Gen Niazi that "should however you do not comply with what I have stated you will leave me with no other alternative but to resume my offensive with the utmost vigour at 0900 hrs Indian Standard Time on 16 December". This message was broadcast over AIR Calcutta after every half hour(122). The ball was now in Niazi's court.

By the morning of 16 December, 2 Para backed up by artillery had firmed up on the western bank of the Mirpur bridge on the Buriganga, the gateway to Dhaka city from the west. Two battalions (6 Bihar and 13 Guards) were poised behind 2 Para for any offensive task(123). 1 Maratha and 13 Rajputana Rifles (95 Mtn Bde) had reached the outskirts of the capital from the direction of Tungi in the north(124). All these units belonged to the 101 Comn Zone Area. Of the 4 Corps troops, 19 Raj Rif of 73 Mtn Bde had cleared Pubail of Pak troops on 15 December and the tactical headquarters of the Bde was moved to that place the same afternoon(125). 14 Guards of 73 Mtn Bde, after by-passing Pubail from south, had contacted Tungi on 14 December when further advance was halted in order to avoid the danger of a clash with 101 Comn Z A advancing from the north(126). 10 Bihar of 311 Mtn Bde had crossed the river Balu - the last water obstacle towards Dhaka, on 15 December. 4 Guards of 311 Mtn Bde had contacted Demra on 14 December and were poised to cross the river Lakhya in the morning of 16 December(127). 2 EBR, which was part of 311 Mtn Bde, had crossed the river Lakhya in the north and secured Rupganj by 14 December(128). 14 Jat of 301 Mtn Bde, which was advancing towards Dhaka from south-east, had captured Nabiganj on the eastern bank of the Lakhya river by the evening of 15 December. This, and another bn of 301 Mtn Bde, viz., 1/11 GR, were poised to cross the river Lakhya by the morning of 16 December(129).

No less than five brigades of the Indian Army were thus surrounding Dhaka, ready to assault it from the west, the north, the east and the south-east. There was no organised force in Dhaka to offer effective resistance. Maj Gen Jamshed had collected scattered elements from infantry, engineers, signals, EME, ordnance, and ASC to build up a strength of about twelve companies, besides 1,500 E.P.C.A.F., 1800 policemen and 300 Razakars. The total came to about 5,000 men, commanded by surplus staff officers. Most of them had only .303 rifles. There were only one

squadron of tanks, three 3" mortars, four recoilless rifles, two six-pounder guns and some LMGs. There was shortage of ammunition for the armour and artillery(130). After the surrender, Maj Gen Jamshed is also reported to have confessed to Maj Gen Nagra that he was completely unnerved by the capture of Mirpur bridge by the Indian troops and the inability of retreating Pak troops to demolish it, since he had no proper infantry formations/units of artillery to defend Dhaka city(131). While the IAF had been repeatedly strafing strategic positions in and around Dhaka, the capital was virtually defenceless against those aerial attacks. Only one day's supply of anti-aircraft ammunition at the current rate of consumption was left with the Pakistanis. To cap it all, a hundred thousand citizens of Dhaka were waiting to rise up and butcher the Pakistanis at the first opportunity.

In this state of affairs, the assurances repeatedly given by Gen Manekshaw to Pakistani troops of safety and dignified treatment if they surrendered to the Indian Army must have appeared the only way for the Pak troops to escape certain death either at the hands of the advancing Indian troops or at the hands of Bangladeshi freedom fighters. Gen Hamid, too, had suggested to Niazi to accept the terms given by COAS India(132). The above factors helped Lt Gen Niazi to make up his mind. And, he decided to respond positively to Gen Manekshaw's message(133). Lt Gen Niazi is said to have tried to contact Gen Manekshaw on the chosen frequencies, but for unknown reasons that contact could not be established. It was through the United Nations communications network that Niazi's reply to Manekshaw's message could reach Lt Gen Aurora, GOC-in-C Eastern Command, and then Gen Manekshaw on 16 December at about 0830 hours, barely one hour before the expiry of the 'bombing pause' declared by the Indian Army Chief. Lt Gen Niazi's message(134) while informing that he was "going ahead with the cease-fire formalities"(135) requested that "due to communications difficulties and isolation" of Pak forces, "truce be extended for another 6 hours" (i.e. upto 1530 hours IST) and also suggested for a preliminary staff meeting in Dhaka to "facilitate matters".

Sam Manekshaw, in a reply message(136) to Lt Gen Niazi conveyed agreement to pause in bombing and air action over Dhaka till 1500 hours 16 December. The message also stated that Maj Gen Jacob, COS, Eastern Command, would be reaching Dhaka by helicopter by 1230 hrs (IST) to negotiate the terms of surrender and told Niazi: "Your forces in Dacca must surrender at 1600 hrs Indian Standard Time today and other garrisons

elsewhere in Bangladesh as early as possible as they receive orders from you".

In the meantime, at 0730 hrs on 16 December Maj Gen Nagra, GOC 101 Comn Z A, accompanied by Brig H S Kler and Brig Sant Singh, had reached the western side of the Mirpur bridge by helicopter. The message of Lt Gen Niazi asking his troops to ceasefire had been intercepted and Nagra was told that there had been no exchange of fire from 0500 hrs. Nagra, therefore, sent the following message to Niazi through his ADC, Capt HK Mehta: "My dear Abdullah, I am here. The game is up. I suggest you give yourself up to me and I will look after you, Gandharv"(137). Nagra had been some years earlier the Indian Military Attache in Pakistan and knew Niazi personally(138). In response, Maj Gen Mohammed Jamshed, GOC, 36 Pak Inf Div and Garrison Commander of Dhaka, was sent to surrender to Maj Gen Nagra and to conduct him to Niazi's headquarters(139). After Nagra had sent messages to Calcutta and HQ 4 Corps about the meeting, he, accompanied by Brig Kler, Brig Sant Singh and some other officers left for Niazi's headquarters at about 1030 hrs. On seeing Maj Gen Nagra enter his office, Lt Gen Niazi broke down and remarked: "Pindi mein bethe hue haramzadon ne marwa diya" (The bastards in Pindi got us into a mess)(140). He literally cursed Yahya Khan and Hamid for all the tribulations he and his troops had had to go through.

In pursuance of the last message of Gen Manekshaw, the Chief of Staff, Eastern Command, Maj Gen J.F.R. Jacob, accompanied by Col (Int) M.S. Khara arrived at Tezgaon airport of Dhaka approximately at 1235 hrs on 16 December. Maj Gen Nagra and Brig Baker Siddiqui, Niazi's Chief of Staff, were present there to receive him. They were taken straightaway to Pakistan Army Headquarters in Dhaka. Lt Gen Niazi, Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, Maj Gen Jamshed, Rear Admiral Sharif and Air Cmde Inam met them there. A draft surrender agreement which Maj Gen Jacob had taken alongwith him was discussed with the Pakistani officers. The Pakistanis wanted certain changes(141), but they were firmly told that no changes could be considered about the terms of surrender. However, their apprehensions about the treatment they would get and the security of their supporters were assuaged satisfactorily. The Pakistanis deliberated among themselves for a while, and finally agreed(142). The Instrument of Surrender was accepted and initialled at 1445 hrs. The Pakistani forces in Bangladesh were to surrender formally at a ceremony to be held in Dhaka the same afternoon. The arrangements for the surrender ceremony were finalised. A message was flashed to HQ Eastern Command at Calcutta about the

initialling of the agreement. Simultaneously, Lt Gen Niazi issued orders informing all his formations and units about it.

Before leaving the Mirpur bridge for Lt Gen Niazi's headquarters, Maj Gen Nagra had ordered 2 Para to get ready to move into Dhaka(143). Nagra had left the bridge for the city at about 1030 hrs, and at 1045 hrs 2 Para entered Dhaka. By about 1300 hrs, 6 Bihar and 13 Guards had also arrived and elements of 95 Mtn Bde followed soon(144). In the meantime, 4 Guards and 5 Independent Armoured Squadron, heralding the arrival of the formidable 4 Corps, also reached the airfield before the surrender took place(145).

When the Indian troops entered the Bangladesh capital, the streets were deserted. But soon word went round that they had arrived. In no time, people were out on the roads shouting "Joi Bangla", "Joi Mitro Bahini", "Joi Indira Gandhi"(146).

The scene was well-set for the momentous event - the surrender of Pakistan forces in Bangladesh to the Indian Army. Endless crowds of excited Bangladeshes converged from all directions on Ramna Race Course (also called Paltan Maidan), the ground where the ceremony was to be held. It was this very ground from where nine months ago Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had given the clarion call against repression and the military dictatorship.

A group of helicopters flying in formation landed at the Tezgaon airfield in the afternoon on 16 December. Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC-in-C Eastern Command and his wife, accompanied by Air Marshal H.C. Dewan, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command, Vice Admiral N. Krishnan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, Lt Gen Sagat Singh, GOC, 4 Corps, and all his divisional commanders, Group Captain Khondakar, Chief of Staff of the Mukti Bahini Command, Ashok Ray of the MEA and a number of press representatives had arrived for the surrender ceremony. Lt Gen Niazi, accompanied by his senior officers had already arrived to receive Lt Gen Aurora and his party. Amidst shouts and slogans, all of them drove with Niazi to the Race Course.

The setting sun over the Ramna Race Course appeared highly symbolic. It signalled the end of the twenty four-year long Pakistani domination over the people of East Bengal. Arriving at 1620 hrs, Lt Gen Aurora inspected a guard of honour presented by troops of 2 Para Battalion under Lt Col K.S. Pannu, Commanding Officer, and a Pakistani contingent also

presented guard of honour to Lt Gen Aurora. At 1631 hrs (IST) witnessed by nearly one million Bangladeshes and scores of foreign media men, Lt Gen Aurora for India and Bangladesh signed the Instrument of Surrender. Niazi then removed his laynard and surrendered his pistol to Lt Gen Aurora signifying the completion of the last act of submissiion and surrender(147).

The million Bangladeshes present at the ceremony were, understandably, 'raring to go' at the Pakistanis. They would have lynched Niazi and his officers then and there. Consequently, they were removed to the cantonment area under escort. Lt Gen Aurora, the Commander of the Indian and Bangladesh forces, went to meet the crowd as requested, and received a thunderous ovation from the liberated people. At times the crowds literally mobbed him in their effort to show their appreciation. It took Lt Gen Aurora over twenty minutes to get away to the airfield for the return journey. Before leaving, he instructed Lt Gen Sagat Singh to stay in Dhaka and take control of the situation(148). Under Lt Gen Sagat Singh, Commander of the Indian forces in Dhaka, Maj Gen Nagra of 101 Comn Z A was made responsible for disarming the Pak troops and guarding them and the civilians of West Pakistan in Dhaka cantt area, and Maj Gen Gonsalves, GOC, 57 Mtn Div, was ordered to look after the maintenance of law and order in the city(149).

The formal surrender ceremony had taken place on 16 December at 1631 hrs, but the Pakistani troops in Dhaka were allowed to keep their arms for their own safety till the Indian Army was in a position to protect them fully. Further, though major fighting had been brought to a halt before the Dhaka surrender, but some fighting still continued at Khulna, around Sylhet and near Comilla, apparently because the word about surrender had not reached there or because of some local commanders' defiance of the instructions from the headquarters. Consequently, cease fire and surrenders by Pakistani troops in different sectors went on from 16 to 21 December 1971.

Maj Gen Mohammad Jamshed, GOC, 36 Pak Inf Div and garrison commander, Dhaka had formally surrendered to Maj Gen Nagra at the Mirpur bridge at 1040 hrs on 16 December(150), but the Dhaka garrison surrendered a day later. By then many stragglers had come into the city, and total of 100 officers, 4,000 JCOs (of Army, EPCAF and Pclice) and 16,000 soldiers are claimed to have surrendered to Indian Army in Dhaka on 17 December(151). They laid down their arms at 1100 hrs on 19 December at the golf course in the

cantonment(152).

In the South-Western Sector, Maj Gen Ansari, GOC 9 Inf Div and his troops surrendered to the Indian Army at the river Madhumati in the Magura area at 1530 hrs on 16 December(153), at Faridpur at 1030 hrs on 17 December and at Khulna at 1400 hrs on 17 December(154). In the North-Western Sector, Pak soldiers in Bogra started surrendering early on morning of 16 December culminating on 18 December with the surrender of GOC, Pak 16 Inf Div, Maj Gen Nazar Hussain Shah(155). While the Pakistani troops located at Rangpur surrendered at 1500 hrs on 16 December(156), those at Nator(157), Ishurdi(158) and Pabna(159) laid down their arms on 21 December. The garrison at Saidpur surrendered at 1545 hrs on 17 December(160). The Pakistani troops in Chittagong surrendered on 16 December(161), and the garrisons at Bhairab Bazar(162), Mynamati(163) and Sylhet(164) - showed the white flag at 1000 hrs, 1100 hrs and 1500 hrs respectively on 17 December. In all, 92,208 Pakistanis(165) - (including personnel belonging to army, para-military forces, navy, air force, police, and civilians) were taken prisoners by the Indian Army in Bangladesh. The above number does not include para-military personnel of Bangladesh origin, who were handed over to the Bangladesh government.

Talking to newsmen, Lt Gen Aurora expressed his gratefulness to God "in bringing about this moment of triumph and joy to the people of Bangla Desh"(166). Dhaka went delirious with joy. The cool wind of freedom, it seemed, had made the people to forget all the traumatic experiences of the past, particularly, the last nine months. "The euphoria of liberation burst out in Bangladesh" wrote an Indian journalist. Describing the mood of the people at their release from the Pakistani bondage, he reported: "Even among the ruins of the old order based on hatred, people wiped off their tears and rejoiced. Hope of the future, of their own Bangladesh, overpowered the anguish of the past. It was like the bursting of a radiant dawn after long and howling night of storm"(167). The elation of the people at their release from Pakistani control had to be seen to be believed. There were cracker displays all around and the capital city was aglow with a million lights(168).

Indira Gandhi, justifiably displaying a sense of achievement, informed Lok Sabha at about 5.30 p.m on 16 December about the surrender of the West Pakistani forces in Bangladesh and, amidst thunderous applause, she announced: "Dacca is now the free capital of a free country"(169). The commitment that India, her

people and the Government had made to the people of Bangladesh had been fulfilled.

CEASE-FIRE IN THE WEST

With the surrender of the Pakistan Army in Dhaka and the liberation of Bangladesh, India's principal objective in the war was achieved. The same evening a statement of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was released to the Press and broadcast over All India Radio which declared: "We have repeatedly declared that India has no territorial ambitions. Now that Pakistani armed forces have surrendered in Bangladesh, and Bangladesh is free, it is pointless in our view to continue the present conflict. Therefore, to stop bloodshed and unnecessary loss of life we have ordered our armed forces to cease fire everywhere on the Western Front with effect from 2000 hrs IST on Friday, 17 December 1971. It is our earnest hope that there will be corresponding immediate response from the Government of Pakistan"(170).

The next day the Prime Minister herself made statements to that effect in both Houses of Parliament. The offer was conveyed to the UN by Minister of External Affairs Swaran Singh and it was sent to the Government of Pakistan through the Swiss Embassy(171).

Sharing with the Members of Parliament the motivations of the Government behind this move the Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram declared in Lok Sabha on 18 December: "It will now be our endeavour to forge, through bilateral negotiations, a new relationship with Pakistan, based not on conflict but on cooperation, guaranteeing to us the security of our borders and our vital road communications, and assuring to the peoples of two countries freedom from fear of recurring wars and an opportunity to devote their full attention to economic and social progress"(172).

But, later on, the United States claimed for itself the credit for the stoppage of war in the Western Theatre. It was alleged that after the liberation of Bangladesh, India intended to intensify the war to dismember West Pakistan. It was the presence of the US task force in the Bay of Bengal and the diplomatic pressure that the Americans could exert on India through the Soviet Union which made India desist from continuing the war(173).

This claim appears totally baseless and is not supported by any available records in the Government of India. It was clearly an attempt to salvage some

of the US prestige and to convince the Pakistani people that their Uncle Sam was not totally ineffective. India never coveted an inch of Pakistan territory. This she had demonstrated after the 1965 conflict, and assurances to that effect had been reiterated on numerous occasions.

As stated earlier, India had put before herself only limited objective in the war. It was the liberation of East Bengal in order to facilitate the return of nearly ten million refugees to their homes with safety and honour, and in the west the Indian objective was not to allow the Pakistan Army to make any significant or substantial gains.

It is true that India was in a better and more advantageous position militarily on the Western Front. India would have been justified in continuing the war for the purpose of inflicting maximum damage to the war making potential of the aggressor, militarist Pakistan, and to straighten the cease fire line satisfactorily in POK which Pakistan claimed to be a 'disputed territory'. But that was not India's objective. And the decision to declare unilateral cease fire was India's own.

There were some people in India who had reservations about this step of the Government of India. They wanted India to continue the war to inflict a decisive defeat in the West also and thus teach Pakistan a lesson. But, in the calculations of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, with which most Indians perhaps concurred, the political spin-off from the declaration of unilateral cease fire in the Western Theatre immediately after the liberation of Bangladesh far outweighed the military gains to be made by a prolongation of the war. This move was the most effective way to demonstrate to the world that India then, as ever, was for peace and did not entertain any desire for territorial expansion.

But it took Gen Yahya Khan quite some time to respond to the peace move of Indira Gandhi. Ironically, when India announced her decision to declare unilateral cease-fire, the Pakistan President, was indulging in bravado and rhetorics. Addressing his countrymen on Radio Pakistan after the surrender of the Pakistan Army to the Indian Army in Dhaka but lacking courage to acknowledge it in so many words, Yahya Khan ranted that "a temporary setback in one theatre of war does not by any means signify an end of the struggle... We may lose a battle, but final victory in this war of survival shall inshallah be ours", he declared. Yahya Khan also gave a call to all his 'friends' to "stand by us, and rest assured

that the people of Pakistan and their armed forces will not cease their struggle until aggression is vacated...."(174).

But the very next day all that proved just empty rhetoric, and the reality of the situation dawned on him. Pakistan was in no position to continue the fight. The political situation inside Pakistan was getting explosive for the Army. The IAF had played havoc with the oil and ammunition stocks and both would run out of stock in a few weeks with no chances of replenishment because of the blockade of the ports by the Indian Navy(175). On the battle front itself, the Pakistani position was not good and the Indian Army had occupied more enemy territory than the Pakistan Army(176).

Above all, the two countries on whom Pakistan had placed so much reliance for sustaining its war effort appeared in no position to extend active help. While China was still extending verbal and material support but nothing more, the United States had in fact openly welcomed India's declaration of unilateral cease-fire. Even before Gen Yahya Khan made his broadcast on 16 December, a White House spokesman had said in Florida that USA had written off 'East Pakistan' and was now directing its efforts towards saving West Pakistan from the same fate(177). The Indian unilateral declaration of cease-fire on the Western Front was greeted by the USA as "an encouraging turn"(178). The United States, which had been reconciled to the creation of an independent Bangladesh and which had been professedly worrying about the safety of West Pakistan if the hostilities continued, could not but welcome India's declaration.

On the afternoon of 17 December, Radio Pakistan made an announcement in the name of President Yahya Khan which said: "I have, in response to the Indian offer, ordered my forces also to ceasefire today with effect from 14.30 GMT, which correspond to 7.30 p.m. (WPST) and 8.30 p.m. (EPST)"(179) and 2000 hrs Indian Standard Time. The Pakistani response was also conveyed to the Government of India through American and Swiss diplomatic representatives(180). The acceptance by Pakistan of India's offer of ceasefire and its immediate enforcement drew curtain on the fourteen-day Indo-Pakistan War.

GAINS AND LOSSES

India had to pay a heavy price both in men and material in the war of 1971. A total of 12,189 officers and men of the Indian armed forces were either killed or wounded or reported missing during the war, as detailed below:-

ARMY CASUALTIES

Eastern Command(181)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
Officers	68	--	207
JCOs	62	4	169
ORs & NCsE	1,348	43	3,828
<hr/>			
Total	1,478	47	4,204=5,729
<hr/>			

Western Command(182)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Missing/PW</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
Officers	84	19	162
JCOs	61	22	111
ORs & NCsE	1,285	791	3,257
<hr/>			
Total	1,430	832	3,530=5,792
<hr/>			

Southern Command(183)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Missing/PW</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
Officers	7	2	23
JCOs	7	--	7
ORs & NCsE	76	15	222
<hr/>			
Total	90	17	252=359
<hr/>			

Total Army Casualties - 11,880.

Indian Navy

Officers	20
Sailers	180
Total	-----
	200

Indian Air Force

Officers, Airmen and civilians - 109

Pak casualties were estimated to be much more as indicated below:-

Eastern Command (Bangladesh)(184)

Regulars:

	<u>26 Mar-3 Dec 1971</u>	<u>4-16 Dec 1971</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed	4,500	2,261	6,761
Wounded	4,000	4,000	8,000

Para Military Forces:

Killed	909	719	1,628
Wounded	674	314	988

Western Command(185)

Killed	3,730
Wounded	11,302

Southern Command

Killed	336
Wounded	97

Navy

Killed	485
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Air Force

Not known.

Apart from above, about 74,000 military and para-military personnel had surrendered to the Indian Army in Bangladesh and 545 Pakistani soldiers in the Western Theatre were captured by the Indian troops(187).

Losses in weapons and equipment in respect of tanks, guns, class 'B' vehicles and aircraft and ships of two rival forces were estimated as detailed below:-

INDIAN

ARMY(188)

<u>Sr. No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>West Comd</u>	<u>East Comd</u>	<u>South Comd</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Tanks('A' Vehicles)	43	18	8	69
2.	25-Pdr Guns	2	--	1	3
3.	5.5 in Guns	1	--	--	1
4.	130 mm Guns	5	--	--	5
5.	M.G. 7.62 mm	151	63	1	215
6.	M.M.G. 7.62 mm/ MAG-58	39	7	1	47
7.	MMG 30" Browing	40	8	7	55
8.	Vehicles(all types) ('B' Vehicles)	457	92	121	670

AIR FORCE

Aircraft 71

NAVYWarships 1 (Khukri)
Aircraft 1 (Alize)PAKISTANIPAKISTAN ARMY(189)

<u>Sr. No.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Western Theatre</u>	<u>Eastern Theatre</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Tanks ('A' Vehicles)	181	72	253
2.	25-Pdr Guns	9		
3.	122 mm Howitzers	6	105	120
4.	37 mm LAA Guns	--	35	35
5.	6 Pounder AA Guns	15	--	15
6.	Machine Guns Med Machine Guns}	313	475	788
7.	L. Machine Guns	66	1,303	1,369
8.	Vehicles(all types) ('B' Vehicles)	220	1,272	1,492

PAK AIR FORCE

Aircraft 75

PAK NAVY

Destroyers	1 (Khaibar)
Minesweepers	1 (Muhafiz)
Submarines	1 (Ghazi)
Patrolcraft	3 (<u>Jessore</u> , <u>Comilla</u> and <u>Sylhet</u>)
Converted Gun boats	14

The Pakistani losses in personnel and equipment were heavy, but its armed forces in the West were still largely intact at the end of the hostilities. The Army still had about 10 divisions (including two armoured) of a total of 14 divisions. The PAF had avoided getting decimated by drastically reducing its sorties, and the Navy had saved itself by hiding in Karachi harbour.

CONCLUSION

Leaving aside the fact that the war left thousands of families wiped out of destitute and homeless, it cost the Indian Exchequer alone more than

2150 million rupees(190), which included expenditure incurred on actual operations, various compensations and allowances, and on the maintenance of Pakistani prisoners of war. On the other hand, the two-week war, according to one estimate, cost Pakistan Rs.4000 million(191). These, of course, were only the direct costs, leaving out the equipment and stores destroyed and the facilities damaged, which would total thousands of millions more.

Apart from liberating the whole of Bangladesh, the Indian Army made significant and substantial territorial gains on the Western Front. A total of about 16,279 sq km territory was gained only about 359 sq km from India(192). The loss of Chhamb area west of the river Manawar Tawi did, however, create some problems for India. One of them was of refugees. People from across the river as well as from Jaurian, east of Manawar Tawi had to be evacuated and lodged in temporary camps to be settled in suitable places subsequently.

India's success in the war brought in its train a number of highly significant, although intangible, gains for the country, her government and her people.

The emergence of a sovereign independent Bangladesh with the dismemberment of Pakistan was the first instance of its kind after the Second World War. India's military victory over Pakistan having been instrumental in bringing about that historic development, the prestige of India rose high in the comity of nations. She emerged as the pre-eminent power in the region, thereby nullifying the efforts of outside powers to enforce the so-called doctrine of 'Balance of Power' in the sub-continent. India also successfully demonstrated to Pakistan the futility of seeking confrontation instead of friendship with India.

The rise of Bangladesh as an independent nation after the dismemberment of Pakistan gave a death blow to the myth wishfully entertained by leaders of Pakistan that religion was the criterion of the formation of nations in the Indian sub-continent. The "Two-Nation" theory having thus been given a decent burial in December 1971, it was expected that many among the minority community in India, who looked outward would now look inward and would join the mainstream of national life.

There might be many centrifugal elements in the Indian society. On occasions, they create troubles for the people. But under the surface there is a strong sense of national unity which comes into play

in the fullest measure when the nation's security and territorial integrity is threatened. The war of 1971 provided an eloquent example of this innate unity of the people of India. There was total communal harmony in the country during the year-long crisis.

The myth about the so-called martial races, propounded by the British rulers of India, was exploded again in the war of 1971. The Pakistanis and, probably, some others, too, had been under an illusion that in fighting qualities one Pakistani soldier was equal to three or four, or even ten, Indian soldiers. The surrender at Dhaka should have been an eye opener to all those who had been suffering from that illusion. In the process, the Indian Army fully retrieved its reputation, which it had enjoyed earlier, but was unnecessarily and sadly tarnished in 1962. The operations in the Ladakh and Kargil areas of Jammu & Kashmir proved that the Indian Army was capable of operating at high altitudes and in very low temperatures successfully. Not only these, but the exemplary behaviour displayed by Indian soldiers generally during and after the war even enhanced that reputation.

The successful conduct of operations with smooth inter-Services coordination under the overall guidance of and directions from the civilian leadership justified the efficacy of the system of command and control adopted in the Indian polity and the armed forces. Because the system had worked, its defects and weaknesses were discounted and considered imaginary.

In some quarters within the country, there were doubts about the comparative effectiveness of Soviet arms. But the war of 1971 proved clearly that the Soviet military equipment used by the Indian armed forces was equal, if not superior, to the American, European or Chinese in its usefulness in actual war.

The Indo-Soviet friendship, particularly the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, successfully withstood the testing time, justifying thereby the saying: "A friend in need is a friend indeed".

The creation of a friendly independent Bangladesh, it was hoped, had secured India's eastern flank. It would be a damper for anti-India elements, both from within and without, in their designs against India's security in her north-eastern region.

The fortitude, courage, and patience and iron-will displayed by India under the leadership of

Indira Gandhi in meeting the challenge thrown by the crisis provided the clearest possible proof that India had matured as a self-confident and strong nation. She was capable of going to any length, including the resort to arms, to uphold her cherished values and to protect her vital national interests even in defiance of big powers. Indira Gandhi's assertion, in a speech on 10 December, that India would "not give in to any threat or any type of pressure"(193), in pursuit or defence of her national interests, truly reflected the self-confidence and inherent strength of the Indian nation. There was no sign of panic in the country during the war. Life in the country went on as usual. The Parliament met every day during the war.

The above mentioned intangible gains to India as a fallout of her successful conduct of the war appeared very significant, immediately after the conflict. How permanent and lasting those gains would ultimately prove, only the future could tell.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Khan, F.M., p.172.
12. According to Salik, the then Press Officer of the Pakistan Army, Eastern Command, the Pak troops were "in a low state of training, equipment, and morale... They had known no rest or relief for several months.... Worst of all, several of them had no heart in the operations", Salik, p.117.
13. In the 'counter-insurgency' operations the Pak Army had lost 237 officers, 136 JCOs, and 3,559 other ranks. Ibid., p.118.
14. Foreign correspondents visiting Jessore after its capture reported that the morale of Pakistani troops was very low and that accounted for their failure to stand up to the Indians. Bhargava, p.134.
15. Mankekar, D.R., p.63.
16. Official Records say, that 130 transport aircraft dropped para bde South of Tangail at 1600 hrs on 11 December.
17. Palit, pp.153 & 155.
18. From Official Records.
19. Ibid.
20. The information received was: "At 1200 hrs we are going to Government House". Quoted in Sukhwant Singh (I), p.221.
21. From Official Records.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Mankekar, D.R., p.60.
26. From Official Records.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. According to an exchange of wireless messages between the post commander and his battalion

- commander, the post in the early morning had asked permission to withdraw but this was refused. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.189.
37. A total of 376 all ranks including 2 Officers, 9 JCOs and 209 ORs, belonging to 31 Baluch and the remainder to artillery and para-military forces surrendered there. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.198.
38. Salik, pp.176-177.
39. From Official Records.
40. Salik, pp.178-179.
41. Lachhman Singh (I), p.118.
42. Salik, p.195.
43. From Official Records.
44. Ibid.
45. Salik, p.205.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p.194.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid. According to F.M. Khan, the Governor in his message maintained that at that stage any lip service from Western Powers or even material help short of direct physical intervention would not help. He gave notice that if any friend was expected to help then action should have an impact within the next 48 hrs. In that case the fight would continue otherwise he did not think it worthwhile to sacrifice so much when the end seemed inevitable. Khan, F.M., p.175.
50. Salik, p.196.
51. Reproduced in Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p.197.
54. Ibid., p.198.
55. According to F.M. Khan the proposals were approved by Lt Gen Niazi, Maj Gen Jamshed and Admiral Sharif. Khan, F.M., p.184. But Niazi, according to Maj Gen Palit, later on made it clear that he had not authorised any such approach to the UN by Farman Ali. Palit, p.132.
56. Khan, F.M., p.184.
57. Agha Shahi's statement in New York, New York Times, 12 December 1971.
58. Salik, p.199.
59. The London Observer (11 December 1971), reporting this development commented that the Pak Government was "completely resigned" to the loss of 'East Pakistan'. Cited in Mankekar, p.65.
60. Salik, p.206.
61. Mankekar, p.75. F.M. Khan too, is of the view that "by all available evidence, General Niazi had given up hope by 10 December". Khan, F.M., p.182.
62. Salik, p.199. Also Lachhman Singh (I), p.227.
63. Sukhwant Singh, p.219.

64. Khan, F.M., p.174.
65. Ibid., p.175.
66. Ibid., p.174.
67. Ibid.
68. A top secret message disclosed by Jack Anderson, the American journalist, in an article in Daily Telegraph (London), 10 January 1971, reproduced in Jackson, p.230.
69. Nurul Amin's speech in Karachi, 5 January 1972, cited in Chopra (I), p.209.
70. Various public statements of Gen Yahya Khan and the PPP leader, Z.A. Bhutto, who was subsequently designated Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, spoke differently on the subject.
71. Khan F.M. and Salik are among them.
72. Salik, p.199.
73. From Official Records.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Salik, p.190.
79. Ibid., p.201.
80. Lachhman Singh (I), p.219.
81. A member of the Z.A. Bhutto - led delegation to China (November 1971), when questioned about the nature of help China had promised to Pakistan said: "Yes, the Chinese are great friends. They have advised us to win the people of East Pakistan". Salik, p.112.
82. One Chinese diplomat remarked in answer to a question from a Pakistani about the possibility of active Chinese aid to Pakistan 'You know Russia is not afraid of China'. Khan, F.M., p.145.
83. Choudhry, pp.139-140.
84. The dispatch of Col Melvin Holst, American Military Attache in Kathmandu, cited by Jack Anderson in an article in Daily Telegraph, 10 January 1972, reproduced in Jackson, p.230.
85. A CIA report, claimed to have been picked up from a 'reliable source', cited in Ibid., p.231. President Nixon in his Foreign Policy Report, too, stated that the Soviet Union was willing to make military moves to deter China on India's behalf. USIS News Text, (Karachi), 9 February 1972, p.16, quoted in Mehrunnisa Ali, 'China's Diplomacy during the Indo-Pakistan War, 1971', Pakistan Horizon (Karachi) Vol.XXV, No.1, 1972, p.62. This report, however, has not been confirmed by any of the available official Indian sources.
86. From Official Records.
87. CIA reported that 'the Chinese have been passing

- weather data for locations in Tibet and along the Sino-Indian border, since 8 December'. See Jack Anderson's article in Daily Telegraph (10 January 1972), reproduced in Jackson, p.230.
88. Some intercepted messages between China and Pakistani High Command indicated that Chinese rescue ships had been assembled in the Ganges delta for the evacuation of Pakistani forces in Bangladesh, reported Daily Telegraph, 13 & 14 December 1971, cited in Mehrunnisa Ali, p. 58. See also Sharma, p.365.
 89. Text of the Note reproduced in Pakistan Horizon (Karachi), Vol.XXV, No.1, 1972, p.156.
 90. This decision was taken by Nixon on 9 December following the secret meeting of Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) on 8 December. Gupta, p.113. At this meeting, it is reported that the CIA produced a report which allegedly contained minutes of an Indian Cabinet discussion, in which Indira Gandhi was said to have "indicated that before heeding a UN call for cease-fire, she intends to straighten out the southern border" of POK and, "prior to terminating present hostilities" she intended "to attempt to eliminate Pakistan's armour and air force capabilities". See memo on 8 December WSAG Meeting, New York Herald Tribune, (Paris ed.), 15 January 1972, reproduced in Jackson, p.225.
 91. The task force, spearheaded by nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise - the largest ship in the world, consisted of 10 huge fighting vessels. Besides Enterprise, one amphibious assault helicopter carrier, one guided missile frigate, three guided missile destroyers, two amphibious ships and two medium size destroyers were included in the task force. Gupta, p.115.
 92. Indira Gandhi had informed the opposition leaders on 16 December that the task force was 1,500 nautical miles from Chittagong, approximately 30 hours from the Bangladesh coast. Ibid., p.113.
 93. Announcement by the Defence Secretary Melvin Laird, on 14 December, that the US had contingency plans for the evacuation of American citizens in Bangladesh, Jackson, p.139. See also the statement by a Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim on 21 December 1971, AR 15-21 January 1972.
 94. Gupta, p.122. Also Sen Gupta, pp.423-424.
 95. Washington Post, 31 December 1971, cited in Gupta, p.120. According to Jack Anderson, the Soviet Ambassador to India, Nikolai M. Pegov was said to have opined that "the movement of the Seventh Fleet is an effort by the US to bully

India, to discourage it from striking against West Pakistan, and at the same time to boost the morale of the Pakistani forces". Article in Daily Telegraph, 10 January 1972, reproduced in Jackson, p.231.

96. A secret order from Washington asked the task force to conduct "Naval, air and surface operations as directed by higher authority in order to support US interests in the Indian Ocean area". Quoted by Jack Anderson in Washington Post, dated 31 December 1971, cited in Gupta, p.122. In a recent interview to Time, Richard Nixon disclosed that he visualised the Chinese "climbing the walls" and if Soviet reacted the US would have certainly joined in. In that case he was also "thinking of using the atom bomb". (Quoted in Times of India, 23 July 1985). That the US expected the Chinese to intervene directly in the Indo-Pak War has also been confirmed by Henry Kissinger in a recent interview to Washington Post (11 August 1985), as reported in Times of India, 13 August 1985.
97. On 15 December it was officially stated in Washington that the task force might help to evacuate Pakistani forces from the East after a cease fire. Jackson, p.139.
98. Assistant Secretary of State (NEEAR), Joseph Sisco's comment in 6 December WSAG meeting. Memo on 6 December Meeting, reproduced in Ibid., p.223.
99. Sen Gupta, p.427.
100. The fact that it took nearly 20 hours for the US to relay this message to India probably hinted at the possibility of the United States considering to take some overt action in the matter.
101. Krishnan, p.52.
102. Indira Gandhi, in a letter (7 June 1979) to Maj Gen Lachhman Singh (Retd), described the US move as "a threat to our sovereignty and interference in our internal affairs". Reproduced in Lachhman Singh (I), p.298.
103. Sharma, p.244.
104. Gupta, p.128.
105. Sharma, p.244.
106. Gupta, p.126.
107. Krishnan, p.57. According to Gupta, p.114, orders were issued to the pilots in the task force for readiness to man their aircraft.
108. Speech on 31 January 1972 at a Press Association luncheon reception held for the three Service Chiefs. Choudhry, pp.129-130.
109. Chopra (I), p.203.
110. Dawn (Karachi), 18 July 1983.

111. Khan, F.M., p.186.
112. From Official Records.
113. Salik, p.206. As against this as well as against all available evidence, Lt Gen Niazi, putting up a brave face, reportedly told correspondents in Dhaka: "It does not matter if we don't have enough men to defend the city. It is now a question of living or dying and we shall fight to the last man". Quoted in Mankekar, p.66.
114. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.221.
115. Ibid.
116. Salik, p.206.
117. Khan, F.M., p.187. Also Salik, p.207.
118. According to Maj Gen (Retd) DK Palit, the message of Lt Gen Niazi relayed to Washington reached Secretary of State William Rogers who in turn, conveyed it to the White House. From the White House came back word that a surrender by Niazi without the knowledge of his C-in-C Yahya Khan was unacceptable. Attempts were then made to contact Yahya Khan but he was not available. After fruitless efforts the whole night Yahya Khan could be contacted and his authorisation received only the next morning. Palit, p.135.
119. Khan, F.M., p.187.
120. Ibid., p.188.
121. From Official Records.
122. Ibid. The message was delivered to Niazi at 0020 hrs on 16 December.
123. From Official Records.
124. Ibid. Also Salik, p.209.
125. From Official Records.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. This utter inadequacy of forces in Dhaka before surrender was hinted at the time when Pak Generals discussed as to what should be their response to the message sent by Maj Gen Gandharv to surrender. Maj Gen Farman Ali asked Niazi, in Punjabi "Kuj palley hai?" (Have you anything in the kitty?). Lt Gen Niazi looked towards Maj Gen Jamshed who nodded in negative. And then Maj Gen Nagra's message was responded to positively. Salik, pp. 203 & 210.
131. From Official Records.
132. COS, Pak Army in a signal to Niazi late at night on 15 December suggested that the terms laid down by India might be accepted as they appeared to meet his requirements. Khan, F.M., p.188.
133. But, in an interview to Asiaweek, AAK Niazi has blamed President Yahya Khan squarely for the surrender. Giving a different version of

developments, Niazi said: "We were willing to fight until the last man, the last bullet, but I was forced to surrender. (President) Yahya Khan sent me a message saying, 'I am proud of you but please surrender'". But Niazi disobeyed and vowed to fight till the end. Niazi recalled that Yahya Khan told Dr. Malik on telephone, "Tell that bloody man (i.e., Niazi) to stop". According to Niazi when Malik failed to convince him that surrender was the best course, Malik himself resigned. But on 15 December events on the West Pakistan borders took a turn for the worse, and Yahya made a last desperate attempt to get Niazi to lay down arms. "Continuing war" Yahya told Niazi, "could lead to further loss of life and destruction". Reluctantly, Niazi agreed to surrender next evening (i.e., on 16 December). "There was nothing (else) I could do", said AAK Niazi. "Whatever Happened To...", AAK Niazi, the Man who 'Lost' East Pakistan, Asiaweek reproduced in Nawa-i-Waqt (Rawalpindi), 16 February 1982.

134. From Official Records.
135. In a message to his troops in Bangladesh very early in the morning of 16 December, Lt Gen Niazi informed about the sequence of developments leading to his request for a ceasefire which was agreed to by India. "Regretfully", Niazi's message said, "it involves laying down of arms. Like good soldiers I expect that in the disciplined manner you will comply with this". The message then enumerated assurances given by COAS, India to him. The order was effective from 0500 hrs, 16 December. "You will stop all aggressive action and wait for my further instructions", the message said. Ibid.
136. Ibid.
137. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.213.
138. Ibid.
139. From Official Records.
140. Lachhman Singh (I), p.239.
141. According to Salik, Maj Gen Farman Ali objected to the clause pertaining to the 'Joint Command of India and Bangladesh'. Salik, p.211.
142. This account is based broadly on the account given in Official Records.
143. From Official Records.
144. Ibid.
145. Lachhman Singh (I), p.239.
146. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.214.
147. From Official Records.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.

151. Ibid.
152. Lachman Singh (I), p.242; Salik, pp.211-212.
153. From Official Records.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid.
165. For details see Chapter XVIII.
166. Times of India, 17 December 1971.
167. Choudhry, p.79.
168. Times of India, 17 December 1971.
169. LSD, Vol.X, No.25, 16 December 1971.
170. AR, 15-21 January 1972.
171. LSD, Vol.X, No.26, 17 December 1971.
172. Ibid., No.27, 18 December 1971. A similar statement was made by Minister of State (Defence Production) in Rajya Sabha. RSD, Vol.78. No.27, 20 December 1971.
173. In an interview in Time, published on 26 December 1971, Nixon hinted at it while saying that there were no differences between the Soviet Union and the US at the end of the Bangladesh crisis and the Soviet restraint helped to bring about "the cease-fire that stopped what would inevitably have been the conquest of West Pakistan as well". Quoted in Jackson, p.140.
174. New York Times, 17 December 1971.
175. Sharma, R.S., p.142. In WSAG meeting on 6 December Richard Helms, Director, CIA, reportedly informed that the P.O.L. supply situation for Pakistan at that time "looked very bad. The overland L.O.C's from Iran, for example, were very tenuous". Memo on 6 December meeting, reproduced in Jackson, p.221.
176. Gen Hamid, COS, Pakistan Army, while ordering 'Freeze Tikka', gave two reasons for that - First the war was not going on well in 1 Corps area and secondly, he did not believe in the PAF's ability to support operations. F.M. Khan, p.217.
177. Dinesh, p.182. As a matter of fact, the State Department was reconciled to the loss of 'East Pakistan' from the beginning of the war (see Samuel de Palma's and Richard Helms statements in WSAG meeting on 4 December and 6 December as reproduced in Jackson, pp.217 and 220. As early as 6 December 1971, top ranking US functionaries

like Dr. Kissinger, Ambassador Johnson, and Maurice Williams of AID had already started referring to 'East Pakistan' as Bangladesh. Ibid., p.221.

- 178. Dinesh, p.183.
- 179. Text of President Yahya Khan's broadcast, reproduced in Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXV, No.1, p.144.
- 180. Dinesh, p.184.
- 181. From Official Records.
- 182. Ibid.
- 183. Ibid.
- 184. Ibid.
- 185. Ibid.
- 186. Ibid.
- 187. For details see Chapter XVIII.
- 188. From Official Records.
- 189. Ibid.
- 190. The exact estimate of expenditure, Rs.215,32,74,675/58 p. which included expenditure incurred on Pakistani PsOW under Indian protective custody upto 28 February 1974, is based on the Official Records.
- 191. Sethi, p.147.
- 192. Details of the areas are given in Chapter XVIII.
- 193. Sethi, p.148.

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POLITICS IN THE UNITED NATIONS

INDIA APPROACHES UN

The genocidal repression let loose by the West Pakistani Army in East Pakistan in March 1971, led to spontaneous outburst of sympathy and support in India for the East Bengalee struggle for liberation. On 29 March, India formally approached the UN Secretary General, U. Thant, "to take initiative and advise or suggest restraint" to the Pakistan government, "and if at all possible, try to prevent this mass slaughter" in East Bengal(1). Soon the influx of millions of refugees into India from East Pakistan turned what was termed 'an internal problem' of Pakistan into a serious concern of India because of the economic, social and security problems created for her. India gave shelter to the refugees on humanitarian grounds but regarded the problem to be an 'international responsibility'. She made it clear that the only solution of the problem was a political settlement in East Pakistan acceptable to its elected representatives. On 23 April, India requested U. Thant for emergency assistance from the UN to bring succour and relief to the refugees(2). On 6 May, she made another appeal to the UN to take up direct responsibility for relief of the refugees as their crushing burden was fast depleting her meagre resources(3).

The UN Secretary General, while ignoring the Indian appeal for stopping genocidal repression in East Pakistan, issued appeals on 19 May and 16 June to all nations to provide relief for the refugees to reduce the crushing burden on India(4). This was like merely scratching the surface while ignoring the basic fact that the refugees could go back to their homes only if there was a political solution to the crisis in East Pakistan. And the response of the international community to the refugee relief was extremely inadequate - a sum of Rs.550 million till the end of November 1971, less than 11 per cent of the total estimated Indian expenditure of Rs.5,260 million(5).

India called for UN action against Pakistan for violation of human rights when the report of the Committee on Human Rights was discussed at the meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) in May 1971(6). Pakistan blocked any action on the ground that it would amount to an interference in its internal affairs(7). The Ecosoc meeting also discussed a suggestion mooted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), presumably at the

initiative of Pakistan, to send UN 'observers' or 'representatives' to East Pakistan border with India to help create favourable conditions for the return of the refugees(8). Pakistan endorsed the proposal but India was opposed to it as it would have only diverted the attention of the world from the real nature of the conflict and made it appear simply an Indo-Pakistani dispute. It would also have in no way helped in facilitating the return of the refugees.

India's suspicion of the political implications of the UN role in East Bengal grew as the UN Secretary General sent a memorandum to India and Pakistan on 19 July 1971(9), suggesting that a limited number of representatives of the UNHCR be posted on both sides of the India-East Pakistan border to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of the refugees. Pakistan accepted the proposal with alacrity as it was in accord with its efforts to treat the problem as an Indo-Pak one and would also have restrained the activities of the freedom fighters(10). The reaction of India, on the contrary, was sharp and indignant, as it equated her with a regime which had through barbarous atrocities in East Bengal imposed on her unbearable burdens. The main issue was finding a political solution in East Bengal which would give confidence to the refugees to return with safety and honour. There was nothing to watch on the Indian side as a fairly strong team of UNHCR officers, a large number of foreign observers and many international relief organisations had free access to all parts of the border and they had fully informed the world about the plight of the refugees and the Pak Army atrocities which had forced them to seek shelter in India(11).

Through a memorandum on 20 July(12), the UN Secretary General brought the problem to the attention of the President of the Security Council. The memorandum pointed out that the influx of refugees had imposed an enormous burden on India. In East Pakistan, international and governmental efforts to cope with two successive disasters, one of them natural(13), were increasingly hampered by the lack of substantial progress towards political reconciliation and the consequent effect on law and order and public administration. Mentioning that the territorial integrity and self-determination had been the cause of fraternal strife in recent history, the Secretary General added that the situation had been aggravated by the likelihood of an Indo-Pak conflict. The situation was a "potential threat to peace and security" and, therefore, the Security Council should take note of the problem'(14).

The Secretary General's memo indicated some

progress from the previous position when he tried to tackle the refugee problem ignoring the political causes that gave rise to it. India appreciated the Secretary General's concern at the deteriorating situation and was grateful that he had correctly hinted at the root cause of the struggle which was the denial of the right of self-determination, lack of willingness to arrive at a political reconciliation with the genuine political leadership of East Bengal and continued military repression by West Pakistan. India reiterated the fact that she had no territorial or political ambitions against Pakistan; she had given shelter to the refugees temporarily purely on humanitarian grounds and they could go back only if a political solution acceptable to the people was arrived at; and that the armed resistance activities in East Bengal were a spontaneous response to the military repression by Pakistan authorities. India hoped that the President of the Security Council would suggest steps for normalisation of conditions in East Bengal; ensure the safety and release of Mujib; set a time limit for political reconciliation with Mujib and Awami League leaders; make concrete recommendations for stopping the influx of refugees and for their return; and deal with the economic problems created for India by the influx of millions of refugees(15).

India took a firm stand that she would not participate in any Security Council deliberations based on the Secretary General's memo as that would side-track the main issue and make it an Indo-Pak problem. The Soviet Union fully appreciated India's position. The Russian ambassador, N.M. Pegov, assured the Foreign Secretary, T.N. Kaul, that USSR would veto any action by the Security Council on the basis of Secretary General's memo or other similar proposals and would do its best to prevent even any informal action by the UN(16). However, the matter was informally discussed by the members of the Security Council. The suggestion of posting UN observers received enthusiastic US support, but as the majority of the members were opposed to it, the matter was dropped(17).

BASIC ISSUES IGNORED

The problem created by the East Bengalee refugees influx into India featured prominently in the addresses of a large number of representatives at the 26th Session of the UN General Assembly in September-October 1971(18). Some of them expressed fear that the problem might lead to a war between India and Pakistan unless the flow of refugees was stopped and those already in India went back to their homes. Only a few countries linked the solution of

the refugee problem with a political settlement in East Pakistan acceptable to the representatives of the people. Most of the countries looked at the problem only from the humanitarian point of view and expressed the view that the situation in East Pakistan was "an internal matter for the people of Pakistan"(19). They chose to turn a blind eye to the crime against humanity and avoided putting pressure on Pakistan to ensure a peaceful solution of the problem.

The discussions at the General Assembly fully vindicated the Indian decision not to take the problem to the UN forum. This point had been examined in May 1971, and it was felt that without the open support from other countries, the matter would be reduced to a mere political gesture without in any way curbing the West Pakistani atrocities in East Bengal. The Security Council was not likely to arrange for the return of the refugees or take effective action for a political settlement or secure release of Mujib or even condemn Yahya Khan's regime for atrocities in East Pakistan. India would lose its options if it asked her to refrain from taking any further unilateral action or decided to post UN observers(20). When there was a great pressure on the government, in the Parliament and outside, to take the matter to the United Nations, the Minister for External Affairs, Swaran Singh, made the government's position clear by stating in Parliament on 28 June 1971: "I would like to say that this (the United Nations) is a gathering not of judges or jurists, or of people who take decisions on what is spoken to them but these are governmental bodies in which unless there is a governmental support at their capitals, merely making hard or tall speeches does not take us any farther. So, we have first to mobilise all the efforts in the various capitals, and if there is support for any proposition, only then it is worth-while taking it to a UN organisation(21).

PAKISTAN SEEKS AN INTERVENTION

In the hope of bringing in UN intervention, Pakistan in October 1971, raised the level of military confrontation by moving its troops right up to the Indian borders. As a defensive measure, India was compelled to move her troops also to the borders(22). At this stage the UN Secretary General made another attempt to deal with the problem by offering his good offices for mediation in communications addressed on 20 October, to the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India(23). Pakistan naturally welcomed this initiative in the hope that this would not only prevent India from taking effective defensive action but would also help in bolstering the strength of the

West Pakistani Army against the freedom movement in East Bengal. The Indian Prime Minister in her reply to the Secretary General pointed out that she had repeatedly stressed the fact that the crisis had been created and aggravated by Pakistan's military repression in East Bengal(24). Pakistan was trying to sidetrack and cloud the basic issues by seeking to transform an internal problem into Indo-Pak confrontation. She called the "good offices" proposal as an "attempt to save the military regime" and suggested that the offer of good offices of the Secretary General could have been a constructive step provided it was directed towards bringing about a political settlement between the Government of Pakistan and the people of East Bengal, according to the declared aspirations of the latter. India would support his initiatives "If you are prepared to view the problem in perspective".

In a desperate and last bid to involve the UN in perpetuating his policy of repression in East Pakistan, President Yahya Khan in a communication to the Secretary General on 23 November, suggested that he would be willing to locate UN observers on the East Bengal side of the border with India as India was opposed to keep them on the Indian side(25).

India emphatically made it clear to the UN Secretary General that the various moves by Pakistan to involve the UN were attempts only to divert attention from the basic issue of the confrontation between the West Pakistani Army and the people of East Bengal. Pakistan was escalating the military confrontation to involve India diplomatically and politically which the latter was determined to do its best to avoid. Only a political settlement acceptable to the people of East Bengal could defuse the crisis. Though India was prepared to go it alone in not cooperating with the UN if it initiated any action ignoring the basic problem and treating the critical developments as an Indo-Pak problem, the USSR's unstinted support gave a great moral, political and diplomatic boost to her firm stand. The USSR ambassador repeatedly assured the Indian officials that the Soviet Union would always be available to defeat any proposal against the interests of India(26).

YAHYA TAKES THE PLUNGE - SECURITY COUNCIL

PLAYS POLITICS

Yahya Khan having failed in his attempts to bring about UN intervention which would have bailed him out from the endless attrition, his forces were facing in East Pakistan, took a gamble by attacking India in the Western Sector on 3 December 1971. He calculated that an open war was bound to bring about UN intervention and an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of troops, which would enable him to consolidate his hold on East Pakistan and continue his ruthless military repression and control. He also hoped that the quick seizure of territory in the West would give him a strong bargaining counter to regain whatever India might occupy in the East.

The Permanent Representative of India, Samar Sen, and the Permanent Representative of Pakistan, Agha Shahi, conveyed to the UN Secretary General messages giving view points of their countries about the latest developments in the sub-continent. The Secretary General added those two messages (UN Doc.S/10410 Add.1)(27) to his report (S/10410) on the critical situation prepared a day earlier and submitted it to the Security Council for consideration. In the meantime, representatives of nine member countries(28) of the Security Council, on the initiative of the United States, addressed a letter (S/10411) to the President of the Security Council asking for an immediate and urgent meeting of the Council to consider the deteriorating situation in the Indian sub-continent. Consequently the Security Council was summoned to meet the same day, i.e., 4 December 1971.

As soon as the meeting of the Council commenced, Jacob Malik, the representative of the USSR, raised a procedural issue of considerable importance. He asked, first, that the letter of Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, the leader of the Bangladesh delegation to the United Nations, be circulated as a Council Document. In the letter, Justice Chowdhury had asked the President of the Security Council to invite him to make a statement on the situation in Bangladesh. Secondly, Dr Malik asked the Council that Justice Chowdhury should be heard by the Council(29).

In the discussions that followed, except for the representatives of Argentina and China, no one objected to the letter of Justice Chowdhury being circulated as a Council Document and it was, therefore, accepted after some debate. But the second proposal of the Soviet representative did not get

approval. There was strong opposition to it among the members. Argentina's representative, Ortiz de Rozas, was of the opinion that the proposal, if accepted, would "be tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State Member of the United Nations"(30). Describing Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury as "the representative of rebellious elements within East Pakistan", Huang Hua, the representative of China, echoed the argument adduced by the Argentinian representative. Poland supported the Soviet proposal. India's Permanent Representative, too, in his statements made in the Security Council laid emphasis on the necessity and justification of an opportunity being given to the Bangladesh representative to be heard. Although most members, like Italy, Japan, Somalia, Syria and the United States, were not opposed to the proposal in principle, they wanted it to be deferred to a later stage "in order to expedite the discussion and in view of the urgency of the matter"(31). The President of the Security Council, therefore, ruled to defer the consideration of the question.

Though the Soviet representative put up determined and persistent efforts(32) on all the three days of discussions (i.e. 4, 5 and 6 December 1971) to secure for Bangladesh representative a hearing by the Council, the President did not change his ruling on the issue. Thus the Security Council decided, in the words of Samar Sen, to play "Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark"(33).

The above discussions appear important at least in one respect. They clearly indicated what lines various countries in the Security Council, or, for that matter, also in the General Assembly, were going to adopt on the deteriorating situation in the sub-continent.

Substantive discussion on the issue began with the statements from the representatives of Pakistan and India, who were naturally invited to the Council to participate in the debate. Agha Shahi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, in his statement, levelled the oft-repeated charges against India of interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan and of committing, what he called, acts of aggression on Pakistan. India's Permanent Representative refuted those charges and after giving the background of the developments in East Bengal, he blamed the military rulers of Pakistan for not caring to go in for a peaceful political settlement with the elected representatives of the people of East Bengal but trying to suppress violently and brutally the people's aspirations and now launching a large-scale

invasion on India to extricate themselves from the self-created mess in East Bengal. In his hard-hitting and forthright speech, Samar Sen, gave "a very serious warning to the Council that we shall not be a party to any solution that will mean continuation of oppression of East Pakistani people, whatever the pretext, whatever the ground on which this is brought about"(34). He further said that "if Pakistan, by bombing our villages, by raising a hue and cry of internal interference or crossing the frontier, believes that we shall just quietly take all these killings, I think they should think again. We will not permit our national security, our safety or our way of life, to be jeopardized by any of these means. Let there be no doubt about that"(35). Later on, while intervening in the debate on the US-moved draft resolution, Samar Sen made a dig at those speakers who were now showing concern for human lives and remarked that "had this concern for saving lives been matched with a similar concern for saving countless lives during the last nine months, it would have been a source of some comfort to my Government and the Indian people. What, indeed, has happened to our conventions on genocide, human rights, self-determination, and so on?"(36). In the same context, Sen asserted again that India was "not going to submit to any pressures or threats from any quarter. We reserve our right to take, and to continue taking, all appropriate and necessary measures to safeguard our security and defence against aggression from Pakistan. We should be failing in our duty if we did not make it absolutely clear that any interference in India's right of self-defence or any encouragement or cover to Pakistan's aggression will produce grave consequences to the peace and security of this whole region, and let the United Nations and all the members of the Security Council not fail to take full note of this warning"(37).

The three-day deliberations in the Security Council, i.e., on 4, 5 and 6 December 1971, on various resolutions showed that either due to predilections and prejudices of the country concerned or on the basis of merits of the case there were four distinct trends of opinion discernible among the members. One such trend, as represented by People's Republic of China, was blatantly anti-India and pro-Pakistan. It blamed Indian 'expansionists' and Soviet 'Social-imperialists' for committing "armed aggression against Pakistan"(38). China clung to the fiction that whatever the consequences of the developments in East Bengal, they remained "purely the internal affair of Pakistan" and "no one has the right to interfere in it". "The Security Council should surely condemn the act of aggression by the Government of India"(39), was

China's demand. Such speeches the Chinese could surely make, even if they could not do much more to prove their undying love and friendship for Pakistan and its military dictator. The Indo-Pak war, thus, gave China an opportunity to settle political scores with India and the Soviet Union.

The second group led by the USA, under the cover of concern for maintenance of peace, wanted to bail the Pakistani military junta out of the quagmire of East Bengal by arranging an immediate UN supervised ceasefire between India and Pakistan, converting thereby the whole issue into another Indo-Pak feud. That group of countries, particularly the USA, tried to give an impression that they were adopting a balanced approach to the question but theirs, too, was essentially an anti-India and pro-Pakistan stand. The only difference between their approach and that of China was that their support to Pakistan was subtle and the criticism of India was made in a more sophisticated manner. For instance, George Bush, representative of the USA, in his statement(40) made at the time of introducing his draft resolution on 4 December, put the blame for the deterioration of situation at India's doors by expressing regret that India did not accept the US proposal for withdrawal of troops. The US representative also complained against "the repeated violation of frontiers that has taken place in East Pakistan". Obviously, pointing an accusing finger towards India, George Bush warned that "the time is past when any of us could justifiably resort to war to bring about change in a neighbouring country that might better suit our national interests as we see them" - a noble principle which his own govt had forgotten while invading Cuba a decade earlier, and again forgot while invading Grenada a decade later. The attitude of the US and like-minded countries was thus of a false impartiality. The New York Times called it, 'mock even-handedness'(41).

The United Kingdom and France - two Permanent Members of the Security Council - represented the third approach. Although both were allies of the United States, they did not toe the American line. They adopted a balanced approach to the situation and called for a comprehensive solution(42). Their perception of the problems of East Bengal was more objective and nearer to the Indian stand although not the same.

USSR and Poland adopted a stand which was very close to that of India. In their view, the responsibility for the deterioration in the situation rested solely on Pakistan and now it was the responsibility of the international community to see

that Islamabad was made to come to terms with the elected representatives of East Bengal(43).

The four differing trends among the Security Council members, as manifested in their various statements on several draft resolutions, were canalised into two marked lines of approaches to the problem. One line gave top priority to immediate ceasefire between India and Pakistan and the withdrawal of their troops from one another's territory, but assigned little importance to the solution of the basic problem in East Bengal which was at the root of all the troubles. The second line of approach laid emphasis on simultaneity of the two processes, viz. ceasefire and withdrawal of troops, and the solution of the basic problem(44).

A seven-point draft resolution (S/10416) was moved by the US representative, George Bush on 4 December 1971(45). The draft resolution called upon India and Pakistan for 'immediate cessation of hostilities' and 'an immediate withdrawal of armed personnel present on the territory of the other to their own sides'. It also revived the old proposal of placing UN observers along the India-Pakistan borders and the UN Secretary General's offer of his 'good offices'. Only in paragraph four, the draft resolution called upon all concerned "to exert their best efforts towards the creation of a climate conducive to the voluntary return of refugees to East Pakistan".

The representatives of Argentina, Italy, Japan, Somalia, Syria, Belgium and Burundi, made statements in support of the US draft resolution, gave top priority to the question of a cease-fire and suggested that other issues could be tackled subsequently.

The US resolution, if implemented, would only have aggravated the crisis by enabling Yahya to strengthen his armed forces to carry out genocidal activities with greater ferocity, with the Mukti Bahini - totally ignored in the resolution - also stepping up their liberation struggle to meet the challenge. There was hardly any doubt that the dauntless nationalist spirit of the Bangladesh people was unsuppressible and was bound to succeed ultimately. The security, economic, social and human problems caused by about 10 million refugees which was the main concern of India would also have remained unsolved as they could not be expected to return as long as their butchers remained in Bangladesh.

The French representative, Kosciusko - Morizet, speaking after George Bush, succinctly analyzed the

situation(46). In his view "the situation has two aspects: one which is at the origin of the crisis and which is political in nature. It affects relations between the Government of Islamabad and the population of East Pakistan. It is subject to a political solution susceptible of receiving acceptance by both sides. The second aspect is derived from the first, by reason of the influx of refugees to India. It affects relations between that country and Pakistan. It has created a state of tension which after much violence has eventually reached the stage of open acts of hostility. A civil war has thus been transformed into a war between nations". Hinting at the limitations of the US draft resolution, the French Representative declared that "we appreciate the fact that India cannot feel satisfied with superficial solutions when it has millions of refugees under its care", and, therefore, he demanded, instead, "a substantive draft resolution".

Adopting almost similar line as the French representative, Sir Colin Crowe, representative of the UK, said that the whole issue was "a complex matter, and for that very reason, requires a comprehensive solution". He said that not only the conflict but also its causes were to be kept in mind and his delegation was to support only that proposal which was "likely to help us towards a satisfactory solution"(47).

The representative of Poland, Kulaga, stated that the fundamental problems were caused by the Pakistani authorities by their attempts "to overcome and throttle the resistance movement of the population of East Pakistan solely by military means, by oppression and force" and he emphasized that any effort "to limit oneself to the elimination of consequences without taking into account the actual essence of the problem cannot provide any positive results and cannot bring lasting peace to the sub-continent"(48).

The Chinese representative, Huang Hua, in his short intervention, spoke little about the issue under consideration but introduced international power politics in the sub-continental problems by using the UN platform to castigate Indian 'aggression' launched with the support of 'social imperialism' of the USSR(49).

Intervening in the debate, Jacob Malik, representative of the USSR, gave a befitting reply to China saying that "it is precisely chatter, prattle and demogogy about social imperialism that will defend imperialism and its policy of aggression..... It

defends military dictatorship, terror and oppression(50). Citing the report of the Secretary General of 3 December 1971 (S/10412) which clearly stated that it were the Pakistani troops which crossed the cease-fire line first at the Poonch crossing point, Malik took, those governments (meaning, obviously, the USA and China) to task for having attempted clearly "to shift the blame from the guilty party to the innocent party". Coming to the US draft resolution Dr. Malik asked the Council not to "close their eyes to the past" and pointed out how it would be wrong to put India and Pakistan "on the same footing". He called it "a one-sided and unacceptable draft". Referring to the statements of certain representatives supporting the US draft, the Soviet representative called it "a policy of the ostrich, a policy of closing one's eyes to reality, a policy of hiding one's head in the sand" since it ignored "what has been taking place since the beginning of this year, specifically since March of this year (i.e. 1971)".

When the Soviet request for postponing the voting on the US draft was not accepted, the Soviet representative cast negative vote on the US draft(51), and thus it stood vetoed (rejected).

Three more draft resolutions were proposed on 4 December, First S/10417, by Belgium, Italy and Japan; the second, S/10419, by Argentina, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone and Somalia, and the third, S/10418, moved by the USSR, ostensibly to secure some more time before voting on the US draft resolution took place. After the fate of US draft resolution was known, the draft resolution S/10417(52), which suffered from the same defects as the US draft resolution and S/10419, which, in its operative part, only called upon India and Pakistan to take forthwith all measures for "an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of their armed forces" but ignored all other aspects of the problem, were not pressed for voting.

When, on 5 December 1971, the Security Council met in the afternoon, it had three draft resolutions for consideration: (1) S/10418 by USSR which was introduced the previous day; (2) S/10421 by China, and (3) S/10423, moved by eight non-permanent members - Argentina, Belgium, Burundi, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone and Somalia (called eight-power draft resolution)(53).

The Soviet draft resolution, in the first place, called for "a political settlement in East Pakistan which would inevitably result in a cessation of hostilities", and then, it called upon "the Government

of Pakistan to take measures to cease all acts of violence by Pakistani forces in East Pakistan which have led to deterioration of the situation"(54).

The Chinese representative put forward a draft resolution which, in its preamble, strongly condemned India for what it called "subverting, dismembering and committing aggression against Pakistan". The operative part of the draft resolution called upon India to withdraw its armed forces from Pakistan territory "immediately and unconditionally" and Pakistan to withdraw its troops it had "sent into Indian territory for counter-attacks". The draft also called upon India and Pakistan to cease hostilities and to disengage from each other "so as to create conditions for a peaceful settlement of the disputes between India and Pakistan". At the end, the Chinese draft called upon "all states to support the Pakistan people in their just struggle to resist Indian aggression".

The eight-nation draft called upon India and Pakistan to cease-fire immediately and withdraw their troops, and, in the second place, urged that "efforts be intensified in order to bring about, speedily and in accordance with the principles of the Charter, conditions necessary for the voluntary return of the East Pakistan refugees to their homes"(55).

Agha Shahi, representative of Pakistan, in his statement(56) criticised the Indo-Soviet Treaty and India's policy on the East Bengal problem. India's representative, Samar Sen, brushing aside "the Chinese delegation's standard accusations with standard indifference"(57), argued strongly in favour of an opportunity being given to a representative of East Bengal to be heard by the Security Council under its Rule 39.

As the approaches of various member countries were now well-known, it was not difficult to predict the fate of the resolutions before the Security Council. The Soviet draft resolution was first put to the vote. With the Soviet Union and Poland voting for the draft, China against and others abstaining, the Soviet draft resolution came to nothing. The Chinese draft, which was nothing but an outpouring of rabid anti-Indian tirade, was not put to the vote, on the request of the mover himself. Lastly, the eight-power resolution was put to the vote. It was vetoed by the Soviet Union.

The same day, five non-permanent members, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Nicaragua and Sierra Leone, and Tunisia (invitee), in a desperate bid "to get rid of a

resolution somehow or other"(58) introduced a three-para draft (UN Doc. S/10425)(59), which called upon "the Governments concerned forthwith, as a first step, for an immediate cease-fire", requested "the Secretary General to keep the Council promptly and currently informed of the implementation of this resolution", and decided "to continue to discuss the further measures to be taken in order to restore peace in the area".

When the debate resumed on 6 December, the French representative, Koseiusko-Morizet, in his statement read out a five-point resolution, which, however, was not formally submitted since he was convinced that "it would be faced with exceptions and objections"(60). Speaking next, the Soviet representative pointed out that "the approach that is proposed in the five-power draft resolution (UN Doc.S/10425) is inadequate"(61). Elaborating this point, Jacob Malik said: "the defect of the five-power draft resolution is precisely that in it the question of a cease-fire is not correlated with the question of the attainment of a political settlement in East Pakistan". In order to remove that shortcoming, Jacob Malik proposed a few amendments (S/10426)(62) in the five-power draft resolution. The proposed Soviet amendments would have called upon all parties concerned to observe an immediate cease-fire with the "cessation of all hostilities" simultaneously with Pakistan taking effective action for a political settlement acceptable to the duly elected representatives of East Pakistan. The Soviet representative also presented separately his own draft resolution (UN Doc.S/10428)(63) which was exactly what the Soviet delegation would have liked the five-power draft to be.

The implications of the proposed Soviet amendments being obvious, they would not have been acceptable to the sponsors of the draft resolution. The same was the case with the Soviet draft resolution S/10428. On the other side, the original draft resolution S/10425 was not acceptable to the Soviet Union. The fruitless exercise of putting to vote either the five-power resolution or the proposed amendments to it or the Soviet resolution was, therefore, not gone through.

During the course of the debate in the Security Council on 6 December, Samar Sen made a significant statement. He first read out the statement made by the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, in the Parliament declaring that "in the light of the existing situation and in response to the repeated requests of the Government of Bangla Desh, the Government of India

have, after most careful consideration, decided to grant recognition to the People's Republic of Bangla Desh"(64). Pointing out the importance of this step, Sen stated that "this recognition of Bangla Desh has put the relationship of India to Bangla Desh in a completely different legal, political and constitutional context; and I would request the Council to realize this new development before any decision is taken". After dealing with the developments in East Bengal before and after the military crackdown, Sen made the position of the Government of India on various resolutions absolutely clear. Firstly, Samar Sen said, "We cannot expect that any man of reason should equate India with Pakistan in any resolution or decision. We do not expect that, and we certainly do not accept it". "Secondly", continued the Indian representative, "we think it is wrong, illogical, undesirable - disastrous, even-to have to come to a decision without taking into account the point of view of the Bangla Desh representative, the representatives of the main party involved in these tragic circumstances". And thirdly, "We shall not, we cannot and we must not accept any resolution or decision which does not go to the root cause of the matter"(65).

The three-day debate in the Security Council on various resolutions and counter-resolutions had shown a clear cut polarization among its members. One side was insistent not to do anything worthwhile for removing the causes that caused the conflict but to somehow put a halt to the open hostilities. But the other side was equally determined to have a comprehensive approach which would remove the consequences as well as the causes of the East Bengal problem. The Soviet Union was not prepared to accept any resolution which did not mention solution of East Bengal problem as an essential condition but the United States and China were opposed to any resolution which put forward such a condition. The differences between the two sides thus appearing irreconcilable, there was no hope of any acceptable solution emerging from the Security Council.

With a view to escape from that stalemate, Somalia, obviously with inspiration from the United States, moved a 6-power draft resolution(66) in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution 377-A(V) of 3 November 1950 (better known as the "Uniting for Peace" resolution) to take the problem of the fighting in the Indian sub-continent to the General Assembly.

During the debate in the Council, on this six-power draft resolution, the Soviet representative, Jacob Malik, stated that his country "does not consider the transfer of the question to the General Assembly to be correct, either in terms of substance or from the procedural standpoint"(67). He declared that "it is entirely clear that the chief purpose" of the move to transfer the problem to the General Assembly "is to divert attention from the substance of the problem, from the main course of the conflict, to muddy the waters, to confuse the United Nations, and to avoid the adoption of a solution to the problem". The French representative, too, disapproved the move, stating that as a result of it "there will be new delays, new polemics, and in order to come to what? To a resolution, which will only be a recommendation"(68). The British delegate Sir Colin Crowe doubted the desirability of the step suggested in the draft resolution since it was "not likely to change matters or immediately overcome the limitations"(69).

However, when the draft resolution was put to the vote, the three above mentioned permanent members and Poland abstained. All other eleven members voting for it, the draft resolution was approved. The operative paragraph of the resolution said that the Security Council "Decides to refer the question contained in Document S/Agenda/1606 to the 26th session of the General Assembly as provided for in General Assembly resolution 377-A(V) of 3 November 1950"(70).

Thus, the Security Council admitted its helplessness in discharging its primary responsibility of re-establishing peace in the strife torn area, mainly because of utterly unrealistic and purely biased approach of the United States of America and China. The scene now shifted from the Security Council to the General Assembly, where the same drama was re-enacted on a much larger scale.

Meanwhile, on the battlefields on the other side of the globe, the Pakistani offensive had been decisively repulsed in Punch and considerably blunted in Chhamb. Pak armour, hammered by the IAF, had started fleeing from Longewala. By the time the UN General Assembly met in New York on 7 December, Jessore had fallen to the advancing Indian troops in Bangladesh.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY IGNORES BASIC CAUSES *

The Special Session of the General Assembly, which met on 7 December to discuss the conflict in the Indian sub-continent, had two draft resolutions on its agenda. The draft resolution A/L 647/Rev.I was sponsored by 34 countries, including its mover, Argentina. The draft "recognizing the need to deal appropriately at a subsequent stage, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, with the issues which have given rise to the hostilities" and "convinced that an early political solution would be necessary for the restoration of conditions of normalcy in the area of conflict and for the return of the refugees to their homes", in its operational part, firstly, called upon "the Governments of India and Pakistan to take forthwith all measures for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of their armed forces on the territory of the other to their own side of the India-Pakistan borders", and secondly, urged "that efforts be intensified in order to bring about, speedily and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations, conditions necessary for the voluntary return of the East Pakistan refugees to their homes".

The draft resolution moved by the USSR, A/L 648(71) was essentially the same as the one (S/10428) which it had moved in the Security Council on 6 December 1971.

The debate in the General Assembly also followed the same pattern as in the Security Council. George Bush, Permanent Representative of the USA, in his statement, gave a clean chit to the Yahya regime on almost all counts and declared that "India bears the major responsibility for broadening the crisis"(72). After accusing India for the conflict in very clear terms he declared that "we are not here - any nation - to assess blame". Supporting the draft resolution presented by Argentina, Bush hoped that the Assembly would "adopt over-whelmingly" the draft resolution.

The General Assembly debate provided China with yet another opportunity to give expression to its anti-Soviet, anti-Indian prejudices. Qiao, the representative of China, called the Indian government "an outright aggressor"(73). In his view, the Soviet government was "the boss behind the Indian aggressors". He virtually put forward a five-point resolution asking the United Nations to "strongly

condemn India's aggression" and "thoroughly expose the shameless support given by the Soviet social-imperialists to the Indian aggressors"; called upon all countries to support Pakistan; and also called upon India and Pakistan for immediate withdrawal of forces and cease-fire.

Jacob Malik, the Permanent Representative of the USSR, castigated the "initiators and inspirers" of the move to transfer the question to General Assembly as those who wished "to close their eyes to the reality" and resisted elimination of the main causes for "the serious political crisis in East Pakistan"(74). Criticising the United States and China without specifically naming them, he said, "it was the fact that two great powers, because of their political orientation and ideological conceptions and military-political commitments, proved unable to rise above their narrow, selfish considerations and aspirations". Replying to the Chinese accusations against the Soviet Union, he said, "social imperialism is as great an absurdity as fried ice" and "it is being used for base slander and anti-Sovietism by the traitors to socialism and schismatics of China"(75).

As regards Pakistan's motives, Malik reiterated the Russian view that the Pakistani authorities had launched an attack on India "to find a way out" from the uncontrollable fast deteriorating situation in East Pakistan, which was of their own making. "Having initiated the military action, they obviously hoped to transform the domestic problem of East Pakistan into an international one, and therefore to solve it through interference by the great powers and the United Nations"(76). Many countries had rightly emphasised the cease-fire between India and Pakistan but what was objectionable was that "some of them - and not a few - either by accident or deliberately, have left out of account another related problem - the need for the immediate elimination of the prime cause of the conflict"(77). This is why the Soviet Union had put forward the proposal (A/L-648) which envisaged that "there should be, simultaneously, a cease-fire, an end to the bloodshed and hostilities, and the beginning of a political settlement of the problem of East Pakistan on the basis of respect for the lawful rights and interests of its people".

The Permanent Representative of the UK said that object of his government had been "to try to find if there were some ways to stop the fighting and which might lead to a sane and just solution"(78). Expressing his doubts about the utility of either of the pending draft resolutions he pointed out that the on-going debate had shown, "how deeply important

sections of opinion among us are divided" and, therefore, "we do not think that the passage of either draft resolution would really contribute to a settlement - and that is what counts"(79). Sir Colin Crowe was of the view that "the Security Council is still the main forum through which, perhaps by means of bilateral consultations inside and outside, we should explore possibilities to try to overcome the difficulties, halt the fighting and find solutions to the desperately complicated issues which gave rise to the outbreak of war"(80).

Kosciusko - Morizet, representative of France, said that "to urgently seek a realistic and effective solution"(81) was their duty. Pointing out the shortcomings of the two draft resolutions under consideration, he said that they "reflect the division" among the members and they "have been left behind by the progress of events". In his view the "only realistic measure, before all else and without prejudice to what may be decided subsequently, would be to obtain the cessation of hostilities - of all hostilities(82).

Samar Sen, who was one of the early speakers on the subject in the General Assembly, gave a detailed account(83) of the developments in East Bengal, particularly since March 1971, and India's efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the serious fallout on India of the tragic events in East Bengal and remarked: "Had the United Nations recognised these factors earlier, it would have been able to influence the developments of the present crisis". After that, in view of the intensifying resistance of the East Bengalees to the repressive tactics of the Pak Army, the only possibility open to the military rulers of Pakistan "was to involve India in a military conflict so that the world's attention would be diverted from what was happening in East Pakistan and so that a face-saving escape might be provided"(84), stated Sen. And now, he continued "once again when the realization came" to the Pak military junta "that even armed aggression against India would not succeed, United Nations help was invoked". Replying to the oft-repeated Pakistani allegation that India was dismembering Pakistan, Samar Sen said that "it was in fact Pakistan which was dismembering itself all these months". Commenting on the 34-nation draft resolution he pointed out that "the hostilities are taking place not only between the armies of India and Pakistan, but also between the Pakistan army and the Mukti Bahini of Bangla Desh. No cease-fire could be realistic or effective if it did not take into account the Mukti Bahini. No withdrawal of forces could be effective or realistic

if it did not cover the occupation forces of Pakistan in Bangla Desh"(85). Samar Sen made it quite clear that "in so far as the implementation of any resolution of the Assembly is concerned, nothing can be done unless it is acceptable, to the Government of Bangla Desh". In a subsequent intervention, Samar Sen drew the attention of the Assembly to the inadequacies of the 34-nation draft resolution saying that it was "unrealistic, irrelevant and, ... even dangerous. It is unrealistic, because it is not one kind of battle that is going on in the sub-continent, it is two kinds of battle that are going on. There is a battle between Indian soldiers and Pakistani soldiers brought about by Pakistani aggression, and a battle between the Mukti Bahini and Pakistan soldiers brought about by Pakistani repression. What this draft resolution tends to do is to stop one kind of battle and leave the repression part, resistance part alone. This obviously will not work"(86).

Agha Shahi, in his statement once again harped on the non-use of force in international affairs, interference in internal affairs and breaking up of the integrity of his country and, in utter disregard of the facts, alleged that "it was India which, by its interventionist role, caused and aggravated Pakistan's internal crisis and then used that crisis as a pretext for unleashing aggression against Pakistan"(87).

Apart from the above mentioned countries, another fifty countries expressed their views on the issue. The draft resolution was then put to the vote. It was adopted (A/RES/2793 (XXVI), on 7 December 1971) by 104 votes to eleven(88), with ten abstentions(89).

Pakistan's Permanent Representative, Agha Shahi, described the voting as "over-whelming historic vote"(90). But a critical analysis of the voting pattern and speeches made by a large number of countries among the 104 who cast an affirmative vote would show that they voted for reasons other than support to Pakistan's allegations of aggression by India or opposition to the Indian view point that peace could be restored only by solving the basic reason - the want of a just political solution in East Pakistan - which had led to the war. No doubt, some of the countries supported the resolution because of their well-known anti-Indian prejudices or blind support to Pakistan because of religious affinities. Pakistan itself and the countries like USA, China, Israel, Albania, Portugal and South Africa came in the former category, while the Islamic countries belonged to the latter category. It was indeed ironic that the Islamic countries were moved only by the consideration of preserving the unity and integrity of a premier

Islamic country, Pakistan, but ignored the fact that the vast majority of East Bengalees, whom the Pak Army had subjected to mass massacre, and rape were, also Muslims. In this connection, it is significant that Afghanistan and Oman - two members of the Islamic group - were among those who abstained from voting. There were also a number of small countries like Fiji, Costa Rica, Malta, Togo, Haiti and Philippines which presumably because of political, economic and military reasons could not afford to take a line different from that of the United States, which, it was no secret was the main spirit behind the 34-nation draft resolution. Moreover, there were several countries of Asia and Africa like Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Chad, Congo, Cyprus and Ethiopia which faced problems of instability and secession at home. They felt that the success of the Bangladesh movement might set a harmful precedent for the disgruntled and disruptionist elements in their own country. Due to their coloured vision they failed to see that the liberation struggle of the East Bengalees was of a majority of the people of Pakistan against a tyrannical minority.

In fact, a big majority of the countries which cast affirmative votes could not be supposed to have voted against India or India's basic stand on the issue. It was, as a matter of fact, "an acceptance of the standard formula for cease-fire and withdrawals"(91), and it amounted only to unwillingness on part of those countries to consider simultaneously, rather than refusing to recognise, the realities of the situation and the basic issues involved. Their prime concern was to stop the war and bloodshed forthwith. Everything else could be left to be tackled subsequently(92). For example, Canada, Fiji, Malaysia, Algeria and Italy (the last two were among the sponsors of the draft resolution), in their statements, emphasized that cease-fire should be achieved first and at a subsequent stage, the issues which gave rise to the hostilities could be dealt with appropriately(93).

Countries like Cyprus, Greece and Yugoslavia, whose representatives, "blamed Pakistan for suppression in East Pakistan and for violation of human rights"(94) and held that "the crisis would not be over till basic cause of the conflict was removed and political settlement reached", supported the 34-nation draft at the time of the vote. The Netherlands, Gabon, Mexico, Peru and Sweden, besides the above three countries, were also of the view that the problem would not be solved till the basic causes of the conflict were eliminated and an acceptable political settlement was arrived at. But they cast their vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Madagascar and New Zealand, like Cyprus, Yugoslavia, Gabon and Peru, in their statements made in the General Assembly "specifically linked the political settlement with cessation of hostilities and withdrawals, etc", still they voted in the affirmative on the 34-nation draft resolution. It is also interesting to note that countries like Sierra Leone (one of the sponsors of the 34-nation draft resolution) and Gabon wanted both the draft resolutions - A/L 647 Rev.1 as well as the Soviet Union's A/L 648 - to be adopted(95) or their texts to be combined(96) to enable the resolution to command a wide measure of unanimity and effectiveness. Both Sierra Leone and Gabon, obviously, voted for A/L 647 Rev.1 and since the other draft was not asked to be put to the vote, their opinion ultimately remained recorded in favour of the 34-nation draft resolution.

It appears that a majority of the countries were mainly doing something to salvage the prestige of the United Nations by supporting a resolution calling for an immediate end to the hostilities. "Although they differed in their assessments of the situation on the Indian sub-continent, the members shared an immediate concern about doing something to uphold some of the basic principles of the UN Charter or, in any case, to make it at least appear that these principles had been upheld"(97). They failed to realise that the situation which had arisen in the sub-continent was unprecedented. The fire which was raging could not be stopped by playing politics in the UN heedless of history and of justice and giving a routine call for a "cease-fire" without tackling the root cause.

The Secretary General conveyed the General Assembly resolution telegraphically to India and Pakistan and sought their views on it. Pakistan promptly conveyed its acceptance(98). Islamabad also decided now to put every effort to secure a more active UN intervention in the conflict. Z.A. Bhutto was designated Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan and despatched to New York for that purpose.

As regards, the Indian response, an official spokesman, in his briefing to the Press on the subject, said that India would politely but firmly reject the resolution "as an impractical an unrealistic solution to the situation in the sub-continent"(99). But, for conveying their formal response to the telegraphic message of the Secretary General, the Government of India took its own time. Mrs. Gandhi, on 9 December, declared that the resolution was "under consideration of the Government. India had neither accepted nor rejected it"(100).

Finally, on 12 December, a formal reply(101) was sent by India in which it was stated that "there can be a cease-fire and withdrawal of India's forces to its own territory, if the rulers of West Pakistan would withdraw their own forces from Bangla Desh and reach a peaceful settlement" with the people of Bangladesh. It was further stated that Bangladesh fulfilled all the conditions for separate existance and India had recognised the new state. It then asked: "In these circumstances, is it realistic to call upon India to cease-fire without, at the same time, giving a hearing to the representatives of Bangla Desh whose armed forces are engaged against the forces of West Pakistan?"(112). In conclusion, the letter said that "in the light of the facts set out above, the United Nations will consider once again the realities of the situation, so that the basic causes of the conflict are removed and peace is restored. Given an assurance of a desire to examine these basic causes with objectivity, India will not be found wanting in offering its utmost cooperation". Thus, indirectly, India politely rejected the resolution of the General Assembly.

Irrespective of the merits of the General Assembly resolution and the motivations of individual countries at the time of the vote, the Government of India felt concerned over the fact that 104 of them had voted for a draft resolution to which India was opposed. It was, therefore, decided to send a high level delegation consisting of Sardar Swaran Singh, Minister of External Affairs, T.N. Kaul, Foreign Secretary, G. Parthasarathi, a former Permanent Representative of India to the UN, and Prof. Nurul Hassan, Minister of State for Education, to the United Nations who could acquaint different delegations to the United Nations, probably in a more effective way, with the Indian point of view as well as get from them a clearer appreciation of the reasons which made them support the 34-nation draft resolution. This delegation would have also raised the level of India's participation in any further proceedings in the United Nations.

USA REACTIVATES SECURITY COUNCIL

While war ravaged the Indian sub-continent, the UN continued to play politics. The General Assembly resolution of 7 December 1971 having failed in securing what it was expected to, the United States, again requested(103) the President of the Security Council on 12 December to convene its meeting immediately, stating stridently that it had "an obligation to end this threat to world peace on a most urgent basis".

This new urgency and talk of threat to world peace was related to the crucial developments on the far away battlefields. India had delayed its formal reply to the General Assembly resolution till 12 December and the USA also urged the Security Council meeting on 12 December. By then the Pak offensive in Chhamb also had been halted and thrown back on the night of 10-11 December. In the Barmer Sector of the Western Front, Indian troops had occupied Chachro and were approaching Naya Chor in Pakistan on 8 December. In Bangladesh Chandpur, Comilla, Ashuganj and Daudkandi had all been occupied by Indian troops on 9 December and the mighty Meghna river had been crossed by India's 4 Corps on 9-10 December. The para drop at Tangail had taken place on 11 December. Reeling under these hammer blows, the Pak forces in Bangladesh were clearly on their last legs, and defeat stared Pakistan in the face. That was the context of the Indian reply, which no longer referred to a political solution acceptable to the East Pakistan elected representatives and demanded instead the withdrawal of West Pakistan forces from Bangladesh calling it an independent new state. These battlefield developments also explain the urgency and seriousness of the US request for a Security Council meeting.

The Council was convened the same day. The representative of the United States, George Bush, moved a draft resolution (UN/Dec S/10446)(104), which, noted "General Assembly resolution 2793 (XXVI) of 7 December 1971, adopted by a vote of 104-11-10" and Pakistan's acceptance of the resolution and "India's failure to do so". The first operative paragraph of the draft resolution called upon the Government of India "forthwith to accept a cease-fire and withdrawal of armed forces" in accordance with the General Assembly resolution. The six remaining paragraphs of the draft were more or less a repetition of the General Assembly resolution. Later on, since the formal response of the Government of India (A/8580, S/10445) was received and the Japanese representative had requested to do so, the US revised the draft(105) by replacing "India's failure to do so" by reference to India's reply. The following new para was added in the preamble of the draft resolution: "Regretting that the Government of India has not yet accepted an unconditional and immediate cease-fire and withdrawal as set forth in General Assembly resolution 2793(XXVI)". However, the main operative part in the original one - a call upon the Governments of India and Pakistan for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of troops from each others' territories.

While introducing the draft resolution, George

Bush strongly criticised India. He issued a 'good character certificate' to Pakistan and squarely held India responsible for the conflict. Also Bush raised questions about "further intentions"(106) of India. He asked: "Does India intend to use the present situation to destroy the Pakistan army in the West? Does India intend to use as a pretext the counter-attacks in the West to annex territory in West Pakistan? Is its aim to take parts of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir?" He wanted to be assured by India that she did not intend to do any of those things.

Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh, who now represented India in the Security Council, replied to the US representative's allegations and commented frankly on the US-moved draft resolution in his statements made the same day (12 Dec) and the day following(107).

Giving the historical background of the events which led to the tragic conflict, Sardar Swaran Singh said that the basic problem had originated from Pakistan's "denial, by coercive authority and brutality, of the legitimate and declared aspirations of the people of Bangla Desh". Following the "consistent pattern of antagonism and hostility which has characterized Pakistan's policies towards India", Swaran Singh stated, the rulers of the Pakistan, in an attempt "to confuse the issue" "shifted the blame onto India" and ultimately, converted the "war in Bangla Desh" into "a war on India" by launching "a premeditated and massive aggression against India"(108) on 3 December 1971, so that attention would be diverted from the evil and destructive policies of West Pakistan in East Bengal. In the light of the above, India's Foreign Minister submitted that the appeal for stopping hostilities should be directed to the Government of Pakistan(109).

Coming to the then existing situation, the Foreign Minister of India said that "any solution to the present conflict will have to take into account the views of the Government and people of Bangla Desh"(110). He added that "if the Security Council wants to ensure peace and security in the present crisis", it would have to take note of "the successful struggle of the 75 million people of Bangla Desh to assert their birthright of freedom and independence. Any proposal or resolution of the Security Council that does not take note of the existence of the Government of Bangla Desh, established by the democratic Will of the people, and the fact that it is in effective control of its territory, would be a hollow and empty resolution devoid of any effect". It

was, therefore, "imperative for the success of any proposal for a cease-fire, not only in Bangla Desh, but also in the west"(111) that the representatives of Bangladesh be given an opportunity to state their case.

A suitable reply was given by the Indian Foreign Minister to the US representative's charges levelled against India. Swaran Singh adduced several facts to show that, due to intransigence of President Yahya Khan, at no stage the so-called "quiet diplomacy" of the US had created any chance for negotiating a political settlement of the problem of East Bengal, and to accuse India, even by implication, of having "impatiently precipitated the conflict" showed the "one-sided and partisan attitude of the Representative of the United States"(112). About India's intention, Swaran Singh stated categorically that she had "no intention whatsoever of acquiring any part of West Pakistan or of Bangla Desh by conquest or otherwise". India's recognition of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and her willingness to consider any reasonable proposal for cessation of hostilities were proofs of that. As for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, it would be better to ask about Pakistan's intentions since "it appears to be concentrating only on that part of Jammu and Kashmir which is on our side of the cease-fire line. Pakistan has used force against our territory of Kashmir on two occasions in the past, in 1947 and 1965, and is at this very time concentrating practically all its infantry artillery, armour and air force in a massive attack across the cease-fire line in order to extend its occupation and aggression on Kashmir"(113).

Swaran Singh also replied befittingly to the charges levelled against India "so vehemently and rhetorically" by the Pak representative, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Z.A. Bhutto, in his speech in the Council a day earlier. About the "crocodile tears" shed by Bhutto for India's so-called abandonment of non-alignment, as a result of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty, Swaran Singh referred to clause IV of the Treaty and said that it was "not aimed against any country" and Bhutto was critical of the Treaty because it was an impediment to dreams and visions harboured by him "of conquering the whole sub-continent"(114). As to the charge that India was dismembering Pakistan, Sardar Swaran Singh stated that "it is the oppressive regime of West Pakistan which has dismembered Pakistan by its own actions".

Lastly, Swaran Singh turned to the US-moved draft resolution. It reflected "the one-sided approach" adopted by the US representative in his

speech. The Indian Foreign Minister pointed out: "While preambular paragraph 6 pays lip service to the desirability of finding a political solution there is nothing in the operative paragraphs to implement this pious wish". He added that India was "not opposed either to a cease-fire or to a withdrawal. However, there can be no viable ceasefire or durable peace without going into the reasons, the origin and the development of the situation which has resulted in an armed conflict"(115).

He suggested that the Council should accept the right of Bangladesh to be heard in any discussion of the problem and to be a party to any proposed cease-fire arrangements; and a political solution acceptable to the already elected representatives of Bangladesh should be found(116).

The Chinese representative, in each of his interventions during the debate, cared only to denounce India and the Soviet Union in his usual vituperative way. The Soviet representative, Jacob Malik, in his statement during the second day of the debate, accused the US government of pouring oil on the fire in the sub-continent and China of setting Asians against Asians. Malik also noted that although the United States representative had conceded the need for a political settlement, he did not make any suggestion as to the kind of political settlement needed or the means of promoting it(117). As regards the return of the refugees from India, he asked the US representative: "Where and to whom are they going voluntarily to return - the people who have been killing them and from whom they fled in an attempt to survive?"(118). He reiterated his country's stand that a cease-fire, to be effective, should be "closely, indissolubly and organically linked with the solution to the problem of a political settlement in East Pakistan". He expressed the view that the US-moved draft resolution was therefore, "totally unacceptable" to the Soviet Union.

At the conclusion of the first round of debate on 12 December the United States had demanded that its draft resolution be put to the vote that day itself. However, on the request of some representatives, including that of the USSR, it was postponed for the next day. The debate on the issue on 12 and 13 December had shown clearly the sharp division among members of the Security Council, more importantly among its Permanent Members. Still the United States insisted that its draft resolution be put to the vote. Expectedly the draft resolution was vetoed by the Soviet Union(119).

Even before the US-sponsored draft resolution was vetoed, the representatives of Italy and Japan, knowing its likely fate and realising the seriousness of a rapidly deteriorating war situation for Pakistan, had brought forward another draft resolution (UN Doc.S/10451/Rev.1) which envisaged the appointment of a three-member Security Council Committee to assist India and Pakistan in their efforts "to bring about normalcy in the area of conflict, as well as to achieve reconciliation in accordance with the principles of the Charter and in keeping with the aforesaid resolutions and to report to the Council"(120). But in view of the prevailing division among the members this draft resolution was not debated upon and the Security Council, after disposing of the US draft resolution, adjourned for the day.

When the Council resumed its sitting on 14 December, in the afternoon, the writing on the wall was getting clearer. The fall of Dhaka appeared a certainty. The pace of events on the war front in the Eastern Theatre, naturally, had its reflection in the activities in the Security Council. Hectic consultations were on among the members to hammer out a cease-fire resolution which should take into account the rapidly changing situation on the war front and which, at the same time, should achieve unanimous acceptance in the Council. The representative of Poland proposed a draft resolution (UN Doc.S/10453)(121) whose main operative part was for transfer of power to Mujib to be followed by a cease-fire and withdrawal of Pak forces from the Eastern Theatre. The British representative announced that he, in collaboration with his French counterpart, was working on a draft for which intensive consultations would require more time. On his request the Council was adjourned.

On 15 December in the afternoon the Security Council witnessed a hysterical performance by Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister, Bhutto, who had earlier asked the President of the Council permission to make an urgent statement. Bhutto's speech(122) reflected his despondent mood over the worsening war situation and frustration at the ineffectiveness of the United Nations to bail his country out of the trouble. Denouncing the United Nations for 'dilatatory tactics' and 'filibustering', Bhutto, called it a 'fashion house', a 'farce and fraud' which 'hides ugly realities'. The countries which supported India and those adopting neutral attitude, like the UK and France, were also condemned by him. At the end he walked out of the Council, tearing up all his papers and declaring that he 'will not be a party to the ignominious surrender of part of my country'.

Bhutto, who had called for a thousand-year war against India in 1965 and had hailed the genocide in Dhaka exclaiming "Thank God Pakistan is saved", was not relishing the results of his policies. It would be uncharitable to suspect that his tears were only for home consumption, and for image building before he reached Karachi and his goal of becoming the ruler of Pakistan, after defeating Mujib as well as the Pakistan Army.

Bhutto's speech was followed by the statement of the Chinese representative who, in his now familiar offensive manner, condemned India and, even more, the Soviet Union, for having "wrecked the peace on the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent"(123). Jacob Malik returned the Chinese 'compliments' in full measure by saying that China was only interested in exploiting the situation in order to strengthen its position in East Asia and the Indian sub-continent(124).

SECURITY COUNCIL TRIES TO SAVE FACE

With the surrender of the Pakistani troops in the Eastern Theatre round the corner, four more draft resolutions were put forward in the Security Council on 15 December(125): (i) Moved by Poland (UN Doc.S/10453/Rev.1), which was essentially the same as one presented a day earlier). (ii) Co-sponsored by France and the UK, (UN Doc S/10455). (iii) Proposed by Syria (UN Doc. S/10456), and (iv) UN Doc. S/10457), presented by the Soviet Union. All the four resolutions, stressed "the need for a cease-fire, detached it from the withdrawal of forces, and linked it inseparably with a political settlement, thus making it explicit that the mandate of the elections in East Bengal should be respected"(126).

But, due to the fact that the surrender of the Pakistani troops in Bangladesh was imminent and the differences among the Permanent Members of the Security Council still remained, none of the four draft resolutions was pressed for a vote.

The Security Council reassembled on 16 December in the afternoon - when it was early morning in Bangladesh on 17 December, and Niazi had surrendered some ten hours earlier. There were two more draft resolutions on the Security Council's agenda, viz. one by the USSR (S/10458) and the other co-sponsored by Japan and the USA (S/10459/Rev.1)(127). Both these draft resolutions were moved in the wake of the reports reaching the UN Headquarters that the Pakistani forces in Bangladesh had un-conditionally surrendered on 16 December at 1631 hrs (Indian

Standard Time) and soon after that, India had announced unilateral declaration of cease-fire on the Western Front to be effective from 2000 hrs (Indian Standard Time) on 17 December 1971 if Pakistan agreed to it. The Prime Minister's statement to that effect was quoted by Sardar Swaran Singh(128) in the Security Council when it was convened to discuss the draft resolutions on its agenda.

Of the above last two draft resolutions, the one moved by the Soviet Union, not only took cognizance of the sea-change that had taken place in the war situation, but also welcomed the developments in the Eastern Theatre(129). The other draft by Japan and USA, tried to gloss over the momentous changes taking place and demanded that an immediate and durable cease-fire and cessation of all hostilities in all areas be strictly observed(130). But, conspicuous by its absence was the earlier insistence on immediate withdrawal of troops.

The unconditional surrender of the Pakistani forces in Dhaka to the Indian Commander signalled an end to the war in the Eastern Theatre. The unilateral declaration of the cease-fire on the Western Front, by India which was accepted by Yahya Khan, brought to an end the war there also. Thus the war had come to an end by developments which had nothing to do with the United Nations. All the draft resolutions on the agenda of the Security Council were, therefore, rendered infructuous and they remained on record as an evidence of the Council's impotence to discharge its primary duty of maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council adjourned on 17 December.

However, the members of the Security Council, especially the United States and other like-minded countries, wanted to work out "a face-saving device for themselves"(131) which could also give an impression that it was, after all, the Security Council which had the final word on the problem in the Indian sub-continent. In view of the position taken by different delegations it was not an easy task. After intensive consultations, Argentina, Burundi, Japan, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone and Somalia managed to produce a draft resolution (UN Doc.S/10465)(132). The main operative part of the draft resolution, which was vaguely worded in order to get the maximum support, demanded "that a durable cease-fire and cessation of all hostilities in all areas of conflict be strictly observed and remain in effect until withdrawals take place, as soon as practicable, of all armed forces to their respective territories and to positions which fully respect the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir

supervised by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan." The other parts of the resolution dealt with the observation of the Geneva Convention, and the relief and rehabilitation of the refugees, and authorised the Secretary General "to appoint if necessary a special representative to lend his good offices for the solution of humanitarian problems."

When the Security Council was re-convened on 21 December 1971, to consider the above draft resolution, Agha Shahi of Pakistan took a strong exception (133) to a remark of the President of the Council, Taylor-Kamara of Sierra Leone, who while moving the resolution said that it "takes account of the realities of the existing situation." He wanted the sponsors to explain resolution. However, it was clear that if the resolution was made explicit chances for its passage would have been wrecked. Hence, the suggestion of Farah of Somalia that the resolution be voted first and the sponsors make an 'interpretative statement' later was accepted by the Council. The resolution put to vote was approved by the Council with all members voting for it, except USSR and Poland, who abstained. Thus it became resolution No.307(1971), (134) the only resolution adopted by the Security Council on the Indo-Pak War, 1971, much after the war was over.

The reference to the General Assembly Resolution of 7 December 1971 and the responses of Pakistan and India thereto in the preambular part of the resolution(135) were pointless and irrelevant, in view of the fate of that resolution. Significantly, in the same part, the resolution did note that as a consequence of "a unilateral declaration of a cease-fire in the western theatre" by India and "Pakistan's agreement" to that declaration, "cease-fire and a cessation of hostilities prevail." Under the circumstances operative paragraph 1 could only demand that the cease-fire be "durable." Again, about the withdrawal of troops 'to their respective territories', it laid down that it was to take place "as soon as practicable." In the Eastern Theatre, there was no question of withdrawal of the Pakistani troops. All of them had surrendered and were POW. (The resolution did not specifically refer to the surrender of the Pak troops). About the Indian troops' withdrawal from Bangladesh, Pakistan had no say. It was to be negotiated between the Governments of India and Bangladesh. In the Western Theatre, Sardar Swaran Singh stated in the Council after the passage of the resolution that "we wish to negotiate and settle with Pakistan as early as possible(136). About the last part of operative paragraph 1 demanding

full respect to "the cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir supervised by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan,"(137) he stated that though India "respected the cease-fire line" "in order to avoid bloodshed and for preserving peace", there was "need to avoid the repetition of such incidents", (viz. the crossing of this line by the troops of Pakistan in 1965 and in 1971) "by making some adjustments in the cease-fire line in order to make it more stable, rational and viable"(138).

Commenting on the resolution, the Soviet representative, called it 'one sided' since the cease-fire and the cessation of hostilities should have been organically linked with a settlement in Bangladesh and the transfer of power to its representatives(139). The Chinese representative Huang Hua, on the other hand was furious and insisted that the 'occupation' of Bangladesh would lead to instability and that the Pakistani people would not cease their resistance. In contrast to the tone of his own speeches made earlier, as well as to that of the Chinese delegate, George Bush the US representative, now expressed the hope that the resolution would alleviate human suffering in the Indian sub-continent.

Thus the passage of the resolution 307 (1971) of 21 December 1971 marked an end to the 18-day drama in the United Nations, with the conflict in the Indian sub-continent as its theme a conflict, which could have averted but for the alignments and narrow self interests of some Powers or personal prejudices and predilection of some influential individuals(140). The United Nations "could neither prevent nor terminate"(141) the conflict, but could only accept the 'fait accompli'.

In this whole drama the role of the Soviet Union had been vital and helpful. Its Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Dr. Jacob Malik, fully, actively and forcefully supported the Indian stand both in the Security Council and the General Assembly(142). The Soviet Union had to exercise veto on three occasions to frustrate the design of the US-China combine.

The very fact that the UK and France - military allies of the US - took an independent line and did not succumb to the US pressure, as probably, some small countries had to, showed their maturity and statesmanship. A number of other countries, too, withstood such pressures to judge the issue objectively and express their views fearlessly.

Not that the attitude of the above noted countries in the United Nations made or could have made any material difference to the policy and actions of the Government of India, Indira Gandhi was prepared to defy US-manipulated resolutions by the Security Council and the General Assembly. She was fully convinced of the correctness and justice of her stand on the issue and she knew that the international public opinion was behind her. But the direct support of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and the indirect support of the UK, France and a few others did make India's task less difficult. In that respect the exercise of veto by the Soviet Union was "indeed crucial in so far as it could help us to ward off the issue in the Security Council and gave us valuable time to complete operations in Bangladesh"(143). In effect the USSR and Poland held the ring and prevented unfair intervention for the critical few days needed by India to liberate Bangladesh and solve the problem.

PAKISTAN FAILS TO INVOLVE UN AFTER THE WAR

Pakistan and its supporters, especially the USA, did not give up their efforts to work for a UN role in the developments in the sub-continent after the war. Pakistan calculated that if the UN could be involved in a post-war settlement, international pressure could be manipulated to induce India to make concessions on the POW issue; to maintain the 1949 Cease-Fire Line in Jammu and Kashmir; and also, possibly a tenuous link with Bangladesh could be forged. Agha Shahi vociferously complained of cease-fire violations. On 28 January, he formally requested the UN Secretary General for the posting of UN observers on the Western Front under the operative part of S.C. Resolution 307(1971). His move for a Security Council meeting was obviously inspired by the US and China but was frustrated by the USSR opposition to it. India's position was that the cease-fire was the result of bilateral negotiations. The cease-fire violations were of a minor nature and could be bilaterally settled under the modalities already evolved to settle them by flag meetings between the local commanders. There was no need for a third party like the UN to interfere in the matter. The question of observers could arise only after the durable peace was achieved through bilateral negotiations(144).

Again, an unsuccessful attempt was made to revive some kind of UN role in the post-war settlement when the UN Secretary General sent his Special Representative, Winspeare Guiccardi, under the Resolution S.C. 307 (1971) which authorised him to lend his "good offices for the solution of

humanitarian problems". Obviously, under US inspiration, Guiccardi sought to play a political role when during his visit to India from 27 December to 12 January, he indicated to the Indian Foreign Secretary, T.N. Kaul, that he had something more political than merely humanitarian aspect in mind. He offered his good offices to solve the pending problems between India and Pakistan arising out of the recent developments. For example, he could serve as a channel of communications between the two countries and also talk to Bangladesh government which would not mean its recognition by the UN. The Foreign Secretary disabused his mind by firmly telling him that India and Pakistan could discuss their problems directly without UN intervention, and Pakistan and Bangladesh could also discuss their bilateral problem directly(145).

In March 1972, UN Secretary General, Waldheim, turned down the request of Pakistan for reactivating the mission of the Special Representative for humanitarian purposes, Guiccardi, to investigate the allegations of alleged ill-treatment of PsOW in Indian camps. According to the Secretary-General, it was the work of the International Red Cross to inspect the POW camps and it was already doing so(146).

Thus all attempts by Pakistan and its supporters to thrust a UN role again in the solution of the post-war problems in the sub-continent proved of no avail. India's position favouring only direct negotiations between the countries concerned - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh - for solving the problems, held the ground.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. AR 14-20 May 1971.
2. BD II, p.89.
3. AR 18-24 June 1971.
4. Ibid. And AR 30 July-5 August 1971.
5. Misra, pp.58-59.
6. From Official Records.
7. Jackson, p.60.
8. Misra, p.35 and Jackson, p.67.
9. From Official Records.
10. Robert Jackson, South Asian Crisis, p.67. The Government of USA had also made informal suggestions for UN observers. LSD(Fifth):VII; 52, 2 August 1971.
11. BD I, pp.586-587.
12. From Official Records.
13. An obvious reference to the devastating cyclone in 1970.
14. From Official Records.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Misra, pp.38-39.
18. From Official Records.
19. Hindustan Standard, 3 October 1971.
20. From Official Records.
21. LSD(Fifth):IV;26, 28 June 1971.
22. BD II, p.276.
23. Ibid., p.532.
24. Ibid., pp.323-324.
25. Ibid., p.532.
26. From Official Records.
27. BD II, pp.333-334.
28. Argentina, Belgium, Burundi, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Somalia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Misra, p.63.
29. India had held the view that if the Security Council were to discuss the situation arising out of the developments in East Bengal, it should hear what the representatives of the people of East Bengal, the party most affected and directly concerned with the crisis, had to say on the situation. The Soviet Union had assured, on 22 November 1971, that it would support India's viewpoint fully, if the Security Council were to discuss the subject. From Official Records.
30. UN Doc S/PV/1606 4 Dec 1971.
31. Nakagawa, Representative of Japan's statement. Ibid.
32. It included challenging the President's ruling under Rule 39 of the Rules of Procedure of the Security Council which says: "The Security Council may invite members of the Secretariat or other persons, whom it considers competent for

the purpose, to supply it with information or to give other assistance for examining matters within its competence". Misra, p.66.

33. Misra, p.68.
34. Statement of Samar Sen, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, in the Security Council, 4 December 1971, Bangladesh and Indo-Pak War - India Speaks at the UN (hereafter referred to as 'India Speaks at the UN')
35. Ibid., pp.76-77.
36. Ibid., pp.80-81.
37. Ibid., p.81.
38. Statement of Huang Hua, Representative of China, 4 December 1971. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.435-436.
39. BD II, p.436.
40. Ibid., pp.431-433.
41. The New York Times, 5 December 1971, cited in Ibid., p.225.
42. From Official Records.
43. Ibid.
44. Incidentally, the New York Times (4 December 1971) supported the second line and said: "In responding to this crisis, it is essential that it (the Security Council) address itself simultaneously to the root cause of the conflict, the repression in East Pakistan which has placed intolerable strains on the economic social and political fabric of neighbouring India. Quoted in BD II p.224.
45. From Official Records.
46. BD II, pp.434-435.
47. Ibid., p.442.
48. UN Doc S/PV 1606 4 Dec 1971.
49. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.435-436.
50. BD II, pp.436-442.
51. Two Permanent Members of the Security Council, viz., France and the UK, abstained from voting, Poland voted against the US draft.
52. BD II, pp.335-336.
53. Ibid., pp.336-337.
54. Ibid., p.336.
55. Ibid., p.337.
56. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.447-452.
57. From Official Records. Also India Speaks at the UN, p.83.
58. India Speaks at the UN, p.112.
59. BD II, p.338.
60. Ibid., p.459.
61. Ibid., p.460.
62. Ibid., pp. 338-339.
63. Ibid., p.339.
64. India Speaks at the UN, pp.100-109.
65. Ibid., p.109.
66. UN Doc S/10429, 6 Dec 1971; BD II, p.339.

67. BD II, p.485.
68. Ibid., p.487.
69. UN Doc S/PV 1608 6 Dec 1971.
70. BD II, p.340.
71. Ibid., p.342.
72. Ibid., p.494.
73. Ibid., pp.502-504.
74. Ibid., pp.505-509.
75. Ibid., p.509.
76. Ibid., p.508.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., pp.501-502.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p.502.
81. Ibid., pp. 504-505.
82. Ibid.
83. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.494-501.
84. BD II, p.498.
85. Ibid., pp.499-500.
86. Ibid., p.516.
87. Ibid., p.513.
88. Those voting against were: Bhutan, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, India, Mongolia, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. From Official Records.
89. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, Chile, Denmark, France, Malawi, Nepal, Oman, Senegal, Singapore, Ibid.
90. BD II, p.517.
91. Ibid., p.487.
92. This is borne out by the fact that after the unilateral declaration of cease-fire by India on the Western Front on 16 December following the unconditional surrender by the Pakistani occupational forces in Dhaka the same day, Pakistan made an attempt to collect signatures to take the whole issue back to the General Assembly but that attempt failed as it was able to collect only 23 signatures out of 104 countries which had voted for the resolution of 7 December. Ibid., p.518.
93. Ibid., pp.487-493.
94. Ibid., pp.488-490.
95. UN Doc A/PV 2003 7 Dec 1971.
96. Ibid.
97. Misra, p.97.
98. BD II, pp.346-347.
99. The Statesman, 8 December 1971.
100. The Times of India, 10 December 1971.
101. BD II, pp.347-350.
102. Ibid., p.350.
103. Ibid.
104. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.350-352.

105. BD II, pp.351-352.
106. UN Doc S/PV 1611 12 Dec 1971.
107. BD II, pp.518-537 & 537-545.
108. Ibid., p.527.
109. Ibid., p.529.
110. Ibid., p.533.
111. Ibid., p.534.
112. Ibid., p.542.
113. Ibid., p.543.
114. Ibid., p.534.
115. Ibid., p.544.
116. Ibid., p.545.
117. UN Doc S/PV 1613 13 Dec 1971.
118. Ibid.
119. The voting pattern was the same as on 4 and 5 December in the Security Council. The Soviet Union and Poland voted against it, UK and France abstained and the rest eleven members supported it. From Official Records.
120. BD II, p.353.
121. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.353-354.
122. UN Doc S/PV/1614 Add.1, 15 Dec 1971.
123. UN Doc S/PV/1615 15 Dec 1971.
124. Ibid.
125. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.354-357.
126. Misra, p.119.
127. From Official Records. Also BD II, pp.358-359.
128. BD II, p.545 & pp.551-552.
129. Ibid., p.358.
130. Ibid., pp.358-359.
131. Misra, p.120.
132. BD II, pp.359-360.
133. UN Doc S/PV/1621 21 Dec 1971.
134. From Official Records. Also BD II, p.360.
135. Ibid.
136. BD II, p.547.
137. Ibid., p.547. The Statement of Swaran Singh truly reflected the foreign policy of the Govt. of India that "the old cease-fire line in Jammu-Kashmir is no longer tenable because it was violated by Pakistan and a fresh line will have to be negotiated by mutual consent before UNMOGIP or any other observers came into picture". From Official Records.
138. BD II, p.360.
139. AR, 22-28 January 1972.
140. It is said that the Nixon administration's "tilt" towards Pakistan was not because of US national or strategic interests but it was motivated by President Nixon's own prejudices against India and in favour of Pakistan.
141. Misra, p.120.
142. The Soviet Ambassador to India had assured, on 5 December, that the Soviet delegation would closely cooperate with the Indian delegation at

the UN and would support various moves of India. Two days later on 7 December Dr. Jacob Malik was given the following instructions by his Govt:

- i. Maintain close contact and coordinate with the Indian representative and oppose any proposal to send UN observers.
- ii. Oppose any resolution if it is limited to a call for a cease-fire without any clear provision for immediate political settlement in accordance with the wishes of the people of East Pakistan.
- iii. Take into account Indian representative's wishes.
- iv. Step up contacts with members and non-members of the Security Council to seek support for India's cause.

143. Sharma, p.204.
144. From Official Records.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.

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IN SEARCH OF LASTING PEACE

For India, the armistice was not the end of the problem. She now had other tasks to deal with. Bangladesh urgently required a massive reconstruction programme. Arrangements for the return of the refugees had to be made. All efforts were to be made for establishing amity in the Indian sub-continent by ironing out the long standing differences between India and Pakistan. In addition, the problems resulting from the Indo-Pak War of 1971, like the repatriation of PsOW, withdrawal of troops and conflicting claims of territories had to be settled. The Indian government soon took steps to solve all these problems, with a view to restore normalcy to the Indian sub-continent, and in search of lasting peace.

RECONSTRUCTION OF BANGLADESH

Return of Mujib

The defeat and surrender of the Pakistan armed forces in the east infuriated the people of Pakistan, who held Yahya Khan responsible for it. As a result, a spontaneous popular upsurge against Yahya Khan broke out throughout Pakistan(1). Processions were taken out against him at many places, including Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Gujarat, Sahiwal, Jhelum and Gujranwala(2). The processionists carried placards and shouted slogans - 'Pak-Chin Dosti Zindabad', 'Rusi Social Samraj Murdabad', 'Yahya Kutta Hai', etc.(3). He was also described as a drunkard and debauch. The allegation was also made that Yahya Khan had not sought aid from China as he did not want to annoy USSR. At several places, effigies of Yahya Khan were burnt. The initiative in organising the anti-Yahya demonstrations and processions on 17 and 18 December came from the workers of the Pakistan People's Party, and the example was followed by Jamaat-i-Islami and other rightist parties(4).

The popular upsurge against Yahya Khan being unsuppressible, and the military junta being discredited, he had no alternative but to hand-over power to the popular leader of West Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Forgotten was his role as the instigator and supporter of Yahya's policies which had caused the debacle. Master tactician that he was, he had slowly distanced himself from the military junta after egging it on the crack down of March 1971. Bhutto, who was then leading the Pakistani delegation at the UN, was asked to return, and he took over charge as the

President of Pakistan and Chief Martial Law Administrator on 20 December 1971. Thus ended the military rule of Yahya(5).

Bhutto, after assuming power, in an attempt to popularise himself, assured the people in his first broadcast to the nation over the Radio Pakistan that he would obtain their approval on every decision. Knowing that Yahya's policies had become unpopular, he tried to prove that he was reversing his predecessor's policies. He announced the removal of the ban on the National Awami Party and the annulment of the results of the by-elections held in the erstwhile East Pakistan(6).

On 23 December 1971, President Bhutto appointed a 10-member Presidential Cabinet. Subsequently, he appointed four Advisers dealing with Political Affairs, National Security, Public Affairs, and Information, Waqf and Haj. He retired a number of military officers who were associated with the policies of Yahya Khan. Vice Admiral Muzaffar Hassan was replaced by Commodore Hassan S. Ahmed as Chief of the Pak Navy. A number of other naval officers were also retired. Similarly in the army, a large number of officers, including Yahya Khan and Gen Abdul Hamid Khan were retired. Lt Gen Gul Hassan was made the new Chief of the Pakistan Army(7).

In March 1972, President Bhutto made further changes in the higher echelons of the Pakistan Army and the Pakistan Air Force. Lt Gen Gul Hassan was replaced by Lt Gen Tikka Khan as the Chief of the Pakistan Army. Similarly, Air Marshal Rahim Khan, who was spared by Bhutto in the immediate changes in the Pakistan armed forces in Dec 1971, was replaced by Air Marshal Zafar Ahmed Chaudhry as the Chief of the Pakistan Air Force(8). Bhutto made these changes apparently to further consolidate his position by removing those officers who were inclined to dabble in politics or who held independent views.

The suspense regarding the fate of Mujib was removed by Bhutto's declaration, made at a news conference soon after taking over as the President of Pakistan, that he was alive and well(9). Bhutto stated that, in accordance with his declared policy, he would take a decision regarding Mujib's release and of initiating negotiations only after ascertaining the views of his people. However, he said that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was being removed from jail to be kept under house arrest(10). He showed extreme caution in dealing with the matters relating to the release of Sheikh Mujib. He also remained silent about the demand for action against Yahya Khan and his

advisers. Obviously, he did not want to annoy the supporters of Yahya, many of whom were still in power as he could need their support to stabilize his position.

Bhutto, in an attempt to delay the recognition of Bangladesh, at least by friendly powers, which he thought would increase his bargaining position, used the prospects of releasing Mujib as a diplomatic ploy. While hosting a reception for diplomats in Rawalpindi on 27 December 1971, he stated that his government was working out the modalities of Mujib's release, and his people wanted him to negotiate with him, which was also the view prevailing outside Pakistan. Thus, he tried to convey that the possibility of reaching a compromise had considerably increased. He advised the powers not to act in haste in according recognition to Bangladesh as that could complicate matters. He also warned that such action would be regarded as a hostile act(11).

In his best dramatic style, Bhutto addressed a large public meeting in Karachi on 3 January in which he took the approval of the audience for Mujibur Rahman's unconditional release(12). He maintained later that the approval given by the people in Karachi was, in fact, the verdict of the entire nation. He also pointed out that world opinion also favoured the release of Mujib, and his government was honouring it. He hoped for talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was still described by him as the leader of East Pakistan. Meanwhile, the people of Bangladesh were getting impatient with Bhutto's gimmicks. The Bangladesh Prime Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed, told President Bhutto to immediately return Mujib to Dhaka if he wanted to save his "Pakistan and ensure permanent peace in the Indian sub-continent"(13).

Finally, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was released on 8 January 1972 early in the morning and flown from Rawalpindi to London by a special Pakistan International Airlines plane(14). Mujib was seen off by President Bhutto and the Punjab Governor. Radio Pakistan announced that Mujib had chosen to go to London on his own,(15) but it was later denied by him(16). At London, Mujib proclaimed Bangladesh as an unchangeable reality and called for world recognition and the admission of his country to the UN(17). He met the British Prime Minister (Edward Heath) there and requested him to recognise Bangladesh as a sovereign power(18).

Mujib arrived at New Delhi on 10 January 1972, where he was given a joyous welcome by the Indian people and dignitaries, including President V.V. Giri

and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Mujib expressed his gratitude to the Indian people for their untiring efforts for the freedom of Bangladesh. He said, "the people of India stood by us in our darkest hour and we will never forget it"(19). Indira Gandhi, while welcoming Mujib and expressing joy over his release, hoped that secularism and democracy would prosper in Bangladesh under his guidance(20)

Mujib flew the same day from New Delhi to Dhaka where he was given a tumultuous welcome. He was received by the Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam, the Prime Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed, members of the Cabinet,(21) and the representatives of all Diplomatic Missions except the Chinese and the Iranian, but including the American(22). A huge crowd had gathered at the airport to receive the Father of Bangladesh. The road from the airport to the Race Course, where he addressed the public later, was teeming with people. Almost everyone carried Joi Bangla flags and portraits of Mujib. The cheering crowds shouted 'Long live the Father of the Nation' and 'Long live Mujib Bhai'. Some processionists also carried placards saying "burn the 7th Fleet", "destroy American Imperialism" and "long live Bangladesh - Indo-Soviet Union friendship"(23). Mujib addressed his people in an emotionally surcharged atmosphere. He said that an independent Bangladesh was his life's mission and that mission had been fulfilled. He declared that the link between Bangladesh and Pakistan had been snapped for all time. He paid a handsome tribute to his people for their sacrifices and sufferings for the cause of freedom.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, soon after his arrival assumed the office of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. A new 12-member Cabinet was formed. Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury was made the President of Bangladesh. In the new Cabinet, the previous Prime Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed, was given the portfolios of Finance, Planning and Revenue, and the previous Vice-President (who was also the Acting President), Syed Nazrul Islam, was given the charge of Industries.

On assuming the office of Prime Minister, Mujib began to identify the problems of the nascent country(24). The administrative machinery was badly battered. Economically, Bangladesh had been ruined. Ethnic problems generated by the war had to be tackled. Mujib and his Cabinet soon started a crash programme with Indian assistance, to reconstruct 'Sonar Bangla'.

Return of the Refugees

After the liberation of Bangladesh, the most

important problem, which the Indian government had to tackle, was the return of the refugees to Bangladesh. This, certainly, was not an easy task. Before sending them back, administrative arrangements had to be made. There was also a fear of massacre of non-Bengalees in Bangladesh. The Indian Army soon took over task of establishing law and order and arrangements were made for their return. It is interesting to note that even before the Indian government could make arrangements, a large number of refugees had started returning on their own, after the liberation of Bangladesh. However, the Government of India made necessary arrangements soon and their planned movement began from 1 January 1972(25). The Indian government placed a large number of trucks, jeeps and ambulances(26) at the disposal of Bangladesh for the benefit of the refugees. The refugees were issued certificates to enable them to take benefits meant for the refugees in Bangladesh. India also placed at the disposal of Bangladesh Rs.185.8 million for giving cash doles to the refugees(27). These refugees had been living at 825 relief camps. By 25 March 1972, all refugees from these relief camps had left for Bangladesh. On that day, the last batch of refugees, consisting of 3,869 persons, left for Bangladesh. By that time, out of the total of 9,899,305 persons, 9,840,127 persons had left for Bangladesh. The remaining 59,178 non-camp refugees were dealt with under the Foreigners' Act(28). India supplied food, medicines, etc., for the refugees in large quantities. The Bangladesh government drew up a long term plan of Rs.20,000 million for the rehabilitation of the refugees(29). The minorities were also properly looked after(30). Thus, within a short period of about three months, the gigantic task of sending back the ten million refugees was accomplished without any trouble.

Civil Affairs

The other important problem facing nascent Bangladesh and India was the restoration of civil administration. A good administrative set-up was to be established in Bangladesh to put her on a sound footing. Joint plans for it were formulated(31). It was decided that the Indian Army, in cooperation with the Bangladesh forces, would assist the civil administration to restore normalcy and the essential services(32). In addition plans were chalked out to mop up the remnants of the Pakistani forces of occupation in Bangladesh, to safeguard the lines of communications of Joint Command of Bangladesh and India, to protect the ethnic minorities, specially

Bihari muslims and West Pakistani elements, against mob violence and to take the criminals into custody. The Indian government was committed to give all possible assistance to Bangladesh by placing at her disposal the required administrative and technical personnel(33). A Civil Affairs Organisation was established for the restoration of civil administration inside Bangladesh and to ensure law and order. Senior officers from India of the rank of Commissioners and District Magistrates were detailed(34). In addition, officers from the Ministries of Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, Finance and Food Corporation of India were also sent to Bangladesh as Advisers(35).

By the end of the first week of January 1972, the Collectors and Superintendents of Police had at most of the places been positioned(36). Law and Order was restored. Arms from the Mukti Bahini soldiers were collected. The administrative machinery began to function normally. All banks and treasuries in Dhaka were handed over to Bangladesh officials who began to function as early as 27 December 1971(37). With the assistance of the Indian Army, a National Militia was also established in Bangladesh, which included the freedom fighters. By 17 January 1972, a total of 24,234 freedom fighters had joined this Militia. Many more joined it later(38). In addition, the Indian Army assisted in the organisation of the Defence Forces of Bangladesh(39).

Food and Essential Items

The Indian government immediately after the war supplied food and other essential items on emergency basis to meet the requirements of Bangladesh. A foodgrain stock was built up at Dhaka(40). The supply of the different items was planned well before the surrender. Supplies were moved into Bangladesh on a crash programme basis. Later, Bangladesh sought more foodgrains and other essential items, which were despatched immediately(41).

India also supplied urea, High Speed Diesel and lubricating oil, seeds and bullocks in large quantities. In addition, large quantities of blankets, clothes, utensils, milk powder, baby food, shoes, ground sheets, tents and poly-fibre plastic rolls, etc., were sent(42). By November 1972, India had given 750,000 tonnes of foodgrains as a grant to Bangladesh. This was augmented by another 150,000 tonnes by the end of the month, against payment by Bangladesh and by the UNROD (United Nations Relief Organisation Dacca) to meet shortages in northern Bangladesh(43).

The Government of India, in February 1972, announced an initial grant of rupees two hundred and fifty million to Bangladesh to enable her to import some of her most urgent requirements from India(44). The Government of India also granted a loan of £5 million to meet the immediate foreign currency requirements. In the same month, India gave two Fokker Friendship aircraft as well as other accessories worth Rs.29,000/- for the restoration of internal civil aviation in Bangladesh(45).

In addition to aid, India advanced loans to meet the requirements of Bangladesh. Three credit agreements were signed at Dhaka on 16 May 1972, under which India gave loans totalling Rs.240 million to Bangladesh. By one agreement, India gave a loan of Rs.100 million for the rehabilitation of the railway system, the supply of telecommunications stores and for post and telegraph equipment. Another agreement provided for a loan of Rs.60 million for the supply of two ships and two Fokker Friendship aircraft and spares and services related thereto. The third loan of Rs.81 million was meant for the purchase of 500,000 tonnes of crude oil(46).

Later, the Indian aid for rehabilitation and reconstruction was further diversified to improve Bangladesh's economy. A provision of Rs.2,000 million was made in the financial year 1972-73. Out of this, Rs.1,664 million had been fully allotted by the end of November 1972, Rs.1,328 million in the form of grants and Rs.336 million in the form of loans on concessional terms. The grants were largely utilised for foodgrains and other essential commodities. Loans were used to procure oil, railway rolling stocks, ships and planes, telecommunication equipment etc(47).

Alongwith the re-establishment of civil administration and meeting the requirements of food and other essential items, the problem of communications was successfully tackled. Within a short period, telegraph and telephone facilities had been restored at most of the places where they had existed formerly. Equipment was flown in from India for important telephone circuits between Bangladesh and India. Within Bangladesh also, telecommunications were restored. By 10 January 1972, the microwave system, the land-line system and the channelling system had been restored. Two hundred and forty-two trunk circuits, out of a total of three hundred and twenty-two; and sixty-four telegraph circuits out of a total of one hundred and fifteen had been restored(48).

The postal administration in Bangladesh had

asked for necessary material assistance in the way of equipment and stores, which was also provided. Besides, the Indian security press printed postage stamps and money order forms with security marks for Bangladesh. The Bangladesh postal administration sought the advice of technical experts from India to organize their accounts branch dealing with the international postal accounts. A few experts were detailed for this work who completed their task within a short period(49).

Role of Indian Army in Reconstruction

The Indian Army played a significant part in the reconstruction of Bangladesh. Railway lines, roads, and bridges needed repairs, while inland water-ways and ports had to be cleared of the mines. It successfully completed these tasks in about three months' time.

For repairing and constructing railway lines, personnel from Indian Railways and the Railway Engineering Territorial Army Units were sent. Indian Railways supplied four diesel locomotives to the Chittagong area and nine diesel locomotives in the South-Western Sector. Besides, a large quantity of stores and equipment were also supplied by India. Important railway lines were immediately repaired by the personnel of the Indian Railways and the Railway Engineering Units of Territorial Army(50). The Indian contingents cleared the embankments of the mines and also laid new tracks on those portions where no tracks existed. They operated the train services till the Bangladesh Railways could take over(51). They repaired not only the railway lines but also the damaged bridges on their routes. The Indian Railways Engineers completed the repairing of the Hardinge Bridge in Bangladesh which was reopened to traffic on 12 October 1972(52). By the beginning of April 1972, about 75% of railway system in Bangladesh had been restored(53).

The Indian Army Engineers with the help of local engineers of roads and highway department, took up the repair work of roads and bridges. By the beginning of April 1972, important bridges had been repaired and were open to traffic. The Indian Army Engineers had also constructed approximately 90 bridges, including one about 425 metres long across the Madhumati river. They also constructed a jetty at Faridpur which was connected with a 8-km long track. The airfields at Dhaka and Jessore were repaired, and a large number of bombs and land mines were cleared(54).

One of the most immediate and important tasks taken up by the Indian Navy was the opening up of the

sea-ports of Chittagong and Chalna and important links of the Inland Waterways Transportation System for traffic. As the road and rail links in Bangladesh had been disrupted by the Mukti Bahini even before the commencement of the hostilities, and they were further damaged by the Pakistani forces, the restoration of the Bangladesh sea and river ports and Inland Water Transportation assumed the greatest importance. It was realised that this only could enable the early resumption of major mercantile and trade activities in Bangladesh(55). Three teams of Indian Navy personnel, organized on 26 December 1971 at Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna, were assigned the task of clearing the mines from port areas and rivers(56). Before taking up the task, all available information about the minefields was gathered from the officers of the Pakistan Navy. The operation for sweeping the mines was then started(57).

A team of divers was assigned the task around Chittagong port to salvage crypto material, bullion and arms and ammunition. After clearing the harbour area, draught channel clearance was taken up. It commenced on 30 January 1972, and was completed by 12 February 1972(58). By mid-February 1972, almost all port facilities at Chittagong had restarted functioning, and the swept channel established earlier was made usable again by international shipping approximately upto 6 metres draught and 150 metres length. In addition, a new channel about 1,270 metres wide and 42 km long was cleared of mines. Similarly, the Indian Navy Mine-sweepers cleared the mines from Khulna/Chalna/Mongla complex. The mines laid at the entrance of the Pussur river were cleared and the Mongla sea-port was made fully operational(59). Most of the Inland Water Transport routes were made usable again by the Indian Navy by mid-January 1972(60). By April 1972, it had put in operation the raft ferry at Nawabganj. The ferry services from Dhaka to Khulna, Faridpur, Daudkandi and the cross ferry service at Ashuganj and Hardinge Bridge, were also put into operation after removing mines(61). Thus, by the beginning of April 1972, the ports in Bangladesh and Inland Water Transport System had become operational by the hard work of the experts of the Indian Navy.

Withdrawal of the Indian Army

As India had no intention of occupying any part of the territory of Bangladesh, she had announced that her troops would be withdrawn from Bangladesh by 25 March 1972(62). However, as the task of reconstruction and restoration of law and order was

accomplished earlier than expected, the Indian Army left Bangladesh thirteen days ahead of the scheduled date. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh took the salute at the farewell parade and marchpast of the Indian Army on 12 March(63). Sheikh Mujibur Rahman paid rich tributes to the Indian armed forces for their role in the struggle for liberation of Bangladesh and later in the reconstruction of the country. The Indian troops were withdrawn from Bangladesh in a phased manner. About 131,000 troops had entered Bangladesh. By 25 January 1972, except 58,500 the rest had been withdrawn(64). These were also withdrawn by 15 March 1972. Later, however, a detachment of the Indian troops had to be sent in at the request of Bangladesh to help her forces in anti-insurgency operations against the Mizo rebels and the Razakars in the Chittagong Hills. This detachment also left Bangladesh in the middle of May 1972(65).

Bangladesh in the International Community

After the liberation, Bangladesh fulfilled all requirements for recognition as a sovereign independent state, namely popular support, representative government, effective control of territory, stability, and ability and willingness to abide by international obligations(66). The story of the emergence of Bangladesh itself was a proof of popular support to the Bangladesh government. It had announced policies which were in conformity with the principles of liberal democracy and non-alignment and a resolve to abide by the provisions of the UN Charter and the Charter of the Human Rights.

Of course, India was the first country to accord recognition to Bangladesh on 6 December 1971 after an appeal was made by the Acting President, Syed Nazrul Islam(67). India considered that Bangladesh government had a legitimate right to recognition as it reflected the will of the overwhelming majority of the people. India also entered into a number of bilateral agreements with it on 7 December 1971, covering the vital fields of defence, foreign relations and trade. The Defence Agreement pledged India's help to Bangladesh in her struggle for liberation. It was also decided that the liberated areas would be handed over to Bangladesh immediately. In foreign affairs, both the countries declared their allegiance to Panch Shila and non-alignment. India also pledged economic aid of Rs.1000 million for Bangladesh's reconstruction(68).

The Soviet Union recognised Bangladesh within a little more than a month of her liberation, i.e. on 24 January 1972(69). Most of the western states

including Britain, West Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy and Canada recognised Bangladesh before the end of February 1972(70). By this time, most of the neighbours of Bangladesh viz. Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia had recognised her(71). She concluded a 25-year Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace with India on 19 March 1972. The United States also gave diplomatic recognition to the new state in April 1972(72). She also committed immediately a grant of \$90 million to Bangladesh. This aid was increased to \$400 million by the end of November 1972. Such massive aid, it was apprehended, was given to build up US's influence over Bangladesh and to undermine the very close friendship between India and Bangladesh(73). The reported CIA activities and the generation of anti-Indian feelings, particularly amongst the powerful student's group led by Rab and Siraj, pointed the accusing finger towards the US(74). The US desired that Bangladesh should not adopt the policy of non-alignment and accept the role of a puppet nation to suit US needs in the sub-continent. However, the nascent Bangladesh government was able to thwart such attempts.

Bangladesh was admitted to the Commonwealth of Nations on 18 April 1972(75). She was the first state to be negotiated into the membership of the organisation. Pakistan, in protest against the admission of Bangladesh, left the organisation(76). Bangladesh was also admitted to the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation in April 1972(77). In May 1972, she was admitted to three other international organisations - International Monetary Fund, World Health Organisation and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The Bangladesh government also made a formal application to the UN Secretary General for the membership of the United Nations. The Foreign Minister of Australia, Hubert Bowen, on his visit to Bangladesh at the end of May 1972, said that Australia would sponsor a move for admission of Bangladesh to the UN in the next session of the General Assembly(78). The UN, by this time, had committed an aid programme of 625 million dollars for Bangladesh.

On the eve of the Simla Summit, 76 countries had recognised Bangladesh. Bangladesh was admitted in June 1972, to the World Bank and ILO also. By the end of the year 1972, over 95 countries had recognised Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh was not able to secure admission to the UN by then, she had been accorded observer's status. The delay in her admission to the UN was due to the intransigent attitude of China, on the strength of her veto power(79).

Though Bangladesh was by then firmly established in the international community, Pakistan refused to face the facts by withholding recognition to it. The question of Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh took a dramatic form on the eve of the Islamic Summit at Lahore in February 1974. Bhutto came under severe pressure from Islamic countries to recognise Bangladesh to enable that country to participate in the summit. A seven-member delegation of Islamic countries went to Dhaka to persuade Mujib to attend the summit, and to assure him that Pakistan would recognise Bangladesh. On the inaugural date of the summit, 22 February 1974 - Pakistan recognised Bangladesh and within a couple of hours Bangladesh reciprocated by recognising Pakistan, and Mujib arrived at Lahore to attend the summit(80).

Bangladesh was wedded to the path of non-alignment. She declared her desire for friendship with all countries, in particular the major powers. The Bangladesh Foreign Minister announced on 9 August 1972, that the UN Charter and the five principles of co-existence form the basic principles of Bangladesh's foreign policy(81). By the end of 1972, Bangladesh had amply testified it through her relations with other countries.

Thus, Bangladesh within a space of about a year of its liberation had consolidated its position internally and also gained a respectable place in the international community. India's financial, economic, administrative and moral support played a crucial part in setting up the nascent nation on its feet. The Indian armed forces, after the surrender of the Pakistani Army, helped in the establishment of law and order, in restoring communications and giving all help requested by the Bangladesh government. Having accomplished their task within a very short time, the troops were withdrawn even before the scheduled date. India's help to Bangladesh was absolutely without any strings or desire for acquiring any advantage for herself. Her main object was to have a friendly and stable neighbour whose national and international policies would promote durable peace in the sub-continent.

PRISONERS OF WAR AND TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENTS

Besides the question of rendering help to the newly emerged Bangladesh nation, there were several other important problems in the aftermath of the war, whose solution was imperative for the establishment of a durable peace in the sub-continent. The most important among these problems were the questions of

Prisoners of War and territorial adjustments required because of the developments during the course of the war.

Pakistani Prisoners of War and Civil Internees

India, in this war, captured two types of Pakistani Prisoners of War. In the Western Theatre, she captured 545 Pakistani Prisoners of War, who were directly and exclusively under her control(82). In the Eastern Theatre, the Joint Command of Bangladesh and India had 92,208 Prisoners of War and Civil Internees on 15 March 1972. This included 55,692 men of the regular army, 1,047 men of the Pak Navy, 838 men of the Pak Air Force, 449 men of the Merchant Navy, 16,354 men of the para-military forces, 5,296 men of the civil police, 6,403 civilians under protective custody, 1,922 wives of the military and civil officials and 4,207 children(83).

India treated the Prisoners of War and the Civil Internees in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of 1949. A committee was formed in the third week of December 1971, to prescribe the guidelines for the treatment of the Pak Prisoners of War in the light of the Geneva Conventions. In accordance with its recommendations, the regulars of the Pakistan Army as well as para military and civil armed forces were treated as Prisoners of War. Razakars, Al Badar, etc., did not respect any law or customs of war and a large number of them were guilty of general crimes. They did not fulfil the conditions of the Geneva Conventions mentioned either in Article 4-A(2) or in Article 4-A(6) to be treated as Prisoners of War. However, as a gesture of generosity, the public officials, Razakars and others were given all the benefits available to the 'Protected Persons'. It was made clear that those who were guilty of war crimes and genocide could be tried in accordance with international law(84).

The Bangladesh people were naturally seething with rage to take revenge for the atrocities committed by the Pak forces. To protect them from the fury of the people, the Pak PsOW and Internees had to be removed at the earliest. The Indian Railways placed a number of trains at the disposal of the Indian Army for bringing in the large number of Prisoners of War and Protected Persons. More than eighty special trains were run for this purpose. Within three weeks the movement of more than ninety-two thousand Prisoners of War and Civil Internees from Bangladesh to the Indian camps was completed. Forty-nine Prisoners of War camps were established at 13 stations, namely, Meerut, Roorkee, Allahabad, Agra, Faizabad, Fatehgarh, Gaya, Ranchi, Dhana, Ramgarh, Bareilly, Gwalior and Jabalpur(85).

All the weapons with the Prisoners of War and Civil Internees had been withdrawn in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. Valuables and currency that could help in escape were also withdrawn before the Prisoners of War started the journey by train to the various camps in India. On the arrival of Prisoners of War in the camps, their rolls and documents were prepared. The sick and wounded Prisoners of War were taken directly to the Military hospitals. All clothing issued to the Prisoners of War, and their own clothing which they were allowed to retain, had to be marked in black-marking ink with a cross for security reasons(86). Civil Internees, including public officials, Mujahids, Razakars and armed civilians, were given all the benefits available to Protected Persons. Civilians who were not guilty of crimes, were given all the facilities of the Fourth Geneva Convention(87). Prisoners of War were segregated according to their rank and sex. Separate lodgings were provided for senior officers, other officers, JCOs, Jawans, civilians and families with children. However, no distinction was made on the basis of caste or region as Pakistan did in the case of the Indian Prisoners of War in Pakistan(88). The Prisoners of War were given not only the facilities provided under the Geneva Conventions, but also certain other privileges on humanitarian grounds, which were not included in the Geneva Conventions. These included supply of daily news-papers, periodicals, retention of a number of their own transistors and radio sets and holding of free cinema shows(89). PsOW were even permitted periodic visits to their wives in privacy, and generous cash allowances were paid even to the ladies(90). The International Committee of the Red Cross was impressed with the facilities and treatment given to the Pak Prisoners of War and the Civil Internees(91).

The rations provided to the Prisoners of War were at the scale of the Indian troops. Most of the Prisoners of War admitted that they got better rations than what they used to get in Pakistan. A month's advance of pay was arranged, as laid down in Article 60 of the Geneva Conventions(92). Canteen facilities were also provided in each camp from where Prisoners of War could procure articles of daily use. Each camp was provided with a medical aid room, and each group of camps had a hospital. Adequate facilities were provided for religious festivals and ceremonies(93). There was a mosque in each block. Church services were also conducted in camps for the few Christian Prisoners of War. Each POW and civilian under protective custody was issued two postal envelopes and four post-cards free of cost every month. They were

also given all facilities to play both indoor and outdoor games.

During their long stay, certain attempts for escape revealed that many Prisoners of War had managed to hide their valuables, currency notes, gold rings, watches, etc. A pistol was also detected in a sponge pillow. A few Prisoners of War were able to escape. This speaks of certain loop-holes in the security arrangements of the camps.

Prisoners of War received more than generous treatment in India. The report of the International Commission of Red Cross in March 1972 clearly stated that Prisoners of War were well-fed and the rations were sufficient. In fact, there were surplus rations. Meat was served three times a week in accordance with the Islamic rites. The PsOW expressed full satisfaction to the ICRC team about the general conditions in the camps, food, the attitude of Indian soldiers, medical care and hygiene(94).

The interrogation of the Prisoners of War and the Civil Internees was carried out with dignity and without undue pressure. Only the questions permitted by the Geneva Conventions were asked(95). However, the official records suggest that often valuable information which fell into the hands of the interrogators was not transmitted to the HQ immediately. Hence, it could not be utilized by the Indian forces during the operations. One of the glaring examples of such lapses was reported by the Air HQ Evaluation Team. One Pak Pilot, Flt Lt Amjad Ali, who was captured near Amritsar on 7/8 December 1971 was found carrying maps showing the Pak positions, observation posts (OPs) near his parent airfield, the local Signal Unit (SU), and Radio Transmitter (RT) frequencies by which they would be contacted. But there was no proper system of feed back of intelligence information, and probably the interrogators of the captured aircrew were unable to evaluate the information, so this valuable intelligence remained unused by the Indian Army(96).

Indian Prisoners of War in Pakistan

In the Western Theatre, the Pak Army captured 616 Indian Prisoners of War, including 8 civilians and 10 Indian Air Force Officers(97). While the Indian Army personnel were kept in two camps of the civil jail at Lyallpur, the Indian Air Force Officers were kept at Rawalpindi(98).

The treatment given to the Indian Prisoners of War was not in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

Many were blind-folded hit with rifle butts and kicked. All were deprived of cash and valuables which were never returned. Pak troops even took away the woollen clothing from many prisoners. Only a few wounded prisoners were given first aid at the time of capture. During the process of their transfer to the main camps, Prisoners of War were deliberately exposed to abuses, ridicule, rough treatment and in some cases, even to stoning by the public. The public reaction was understandable in the wake of defeat, yet it was the duty of the Pak Army to make proper arrangements for the security of the PsOW according to the Geneva Conventions.

In the POW camps, the Indian Prisoners of War were segregated into different groups. There were separate arrangements for Officers, JCOs (except Muslim JCOs), Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, NE Hill tribesmen, and Muslim JCOs and ORs(99). From the information obtained from repatriated Indian Prisoners of War, it is gathered that the Muslims were given better treatment than the others. The Indian Prisoners of War were allowed to celebrate their festivals, but no special facilities or extra rations were provided. They were occasionally taken to gurudwaras, temples, churches and mosques. In the initial stages, the Prisoners of War were supplied rations given to criminals, but things improved after March 1972, when Pak authorities learnt that Pakistani Prisoners of War were being treated far better in India. Of course, the Prisoners of War were granted monthly allowances, but they were much less than the allowances given to Pak Prisoners of War in India(100).

Canteen facilities were also provided for purchasing the items of daily use. The Prisoners of War wore only minimum clothing. They were issued one Mazri shirt and one pair of trousers each. One quilt and one pillow per Officer and JCO was issued. Quilts were issued at the scale of two for every three ORs, for some inexplicable reason.

Till the middle of March 1972, no radio facilities were provided, but later on radio sets were installed from which Pak news, film songs and Colombo Radio programme were broadcast. After June 1972, BBC and Indian news were also relayed. Newspapers were issued after 4 April 1972, and included Pakistan Times (English) and Daily Jung (Urdu). Old copies of Times and National Geographic magazines were given to the Officers. This was done to show the visiting ICRC team the facilities provided to the Indian Prisoners of War.

Facilities were provided for indoor and outdoor games after the first week of January 1972. It was reported that on the occasion of Baisakhi (13 April 1972), the Gorkhas were forced to play a football match when the ICRC team was due to visit the camp. The Indians were given only the minimum of writing material and only two inland letters a week. Mail was cleared once a month only. Indian PsOW received the first mail on 5 March 1972. They also began to receive gift parcels from India after 7 March 1972. After the Simla Agreement, however, no restrictions were imposed on the number of letters to be written by the Prisoners. Writing pads and ball point pens, received from India, were also issued. The medical facilities were far from satisfactory. Medicines were in short supply, and the Prisoners of War had to buy them from the camp canteens. Of course, serious cases were sent to the District Hospital, Lyallpur and to the Central Medical Hospital, Lahore(101).

The repatriated Prisoners of War stated that they were thoroughly interrogated by the Pakistani troops and intelligence officials. The techniques employed by them were against all international norms. Broadly speaking, they employed five different methods for interrogation. The first was the 'Direct Question' method. It was usually used for simple minded persons. The second was the 'Bullying' method, which was used against more difficult subjects. The third was the 'Know-all', used particularly against the senior officers(102). The fourth was the 'Mutt and Jeff' method which was used whenever required(103). The fifth was the 'Third Degree' method which was specially used against the officers. This method involved humiliation of officers in front of juniors and other officers, stripping of the subject naked and beating him with a stick, torturing the subject by pushing pins in his body, making him stand in cold water for a long period and threats of violence on private parts of the subject.

The interrogations were carried out in three parts - preliminary, detailed and expert. The preliminary interrogation was carried out immediately on capture. Here, generally, the interrogators were very harsh. The detailed interrogation was carried out at the Prisoners of War Camps. Those who were regarded important were taken to Islamabad for expert interrogation. Here the Prisoners of War were kept segregated from others yet to be interrogated. Prisoners of War were interrogated for long hours and in many sittings. All kinds of the last four methods, mentioned earlier, were used here. In violation of the Geneva Conventions, the Pak interrogators enquired

about location of armed forces, air squadrons, operational plans at various levels, topographical information, the Russian equipment with the Indian Army, capabilities of the Indian ordnance factories and reasons for India's intervention in Bangladesh(104).

Pak authorities adopted subtle methods of propaganda and indoctrination among the Indian Prisoners of War to create separatist feelings among the different ethnic and religious groups. Not only were the different communities kept separated - like Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, tribal people of north-east India and Gorkhas - but efforts were also made to inculcate in them separatist tendencies. The Muslims were given a better treatment than others. Obviously, they were trying to win them over. The Sikhs were told that Pakistan would give them all assistance to create a separate homeland. The Sikh Prisoners of War, except the JCOs, were taken to Panja Sahib and Nankana Sahib even against the orders of the Company Commander. Similarly, the Mizo Prisoners of War were also exhorted to fight for their freedom(105).

Territorial Claims

As a result of the 1971 War, each side gained some territories and also lost some to the other side. Pakistan's major loss was, of course, East Bengal which emerged as an independent nation. Besides, she lost about 895 sq km to India along the Cease Fire Line in Kashmir, while she gained from India about 167 sq km along this line. In Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab along the International Border, India gained about 1,115 sq km from Pakistan while she lost about 192 sq km to Pakistan. In Rajasthan and Kutch Sector, India gained about 14,272 sq km, while she lost about .16 sq km to Pakistan. Thus, India, as a result of war, had gained about 16,279 sq km while Pakistan had gained about 359 sq km(106).

India's gains included areas in Shyok Valley, Kargil, Northern Gallies, Uri, and Tithwal Sectors including portions of Lipa Valley and Kaiyan. A few commanding heights across the Cease Fire Line in the Punch, Rajouri and Naushera Sectors, and Chicken's Neck in Jammu Sector were also occupied by India. Areas in Shakargarh, Dera Baba Nanak, Ajnala, Amritsar, Khalra, Khemkaran, Ferozepur, Mamdot and Fazilka Sectors were also acquired by India. In Rajasthan, border posts including Bijot, Islamgarh, Bareh Ka Toba and a few other posts adjoining the Jaisalmer Sector, and the area upto Naya Chor in Barmer Sector, were also gained by India. In

addition, in Kutch-Sind Sector, a large area was occupied by India(107).

Pakistan's gains included little areas in Kargil, Northern Gallies, Tithwal (including Kartan Ki Gali and a portion of Lipa Valley occupied in May 1972), Uri, Punch/Rajouri, Naushera and some portions of Chicken's Neck (including Thako Chak). Some territory in Amritsar, Khalra, Khemkaran (including China Bidi, Chand and Kals) and Jalalabad Sectors (including Nambeke and Ganjekalan) were also captured by Pakistan(108).

The Tangle

The issues of Prisoners of War, Civil Internees and the territorial adjustments, proved difficult due to the divergence of opinion between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. While Pakistan gave priority to the return of Prisoners of War and Civil Internees and to the return of occupied territories, India desired a durable peace in the sub-continent by solving all the problems that had embittered the relations between the two countries. Bangladesh desired recognition by Pakistan and the repatriation of non-Bengalees in Bangladesh and Bengalees in Pakistan.

After the cessation of hostilities, Pakistan insisted that the repatriation of Prisoners of War and Civil Internees and the return of occupied territories be sorted out bilaterally between India and Pakistan. Islamabad argued that Pakistan had lost territories (both in the east and in the west) to the Indian forces, and that the Pakistani forces in the Eastern Theatre had surrendered to the Indian troops, so participation of Bangladesh was not necessary in settling the issues. New Delhi, on the other hand, held the view that the Pakistani forces in the Eastern Theatre, had surrendered to the Joint Command of India and Bangladesh and so Bangladesh's participation was essential to settle the issues concerning Prisoners of War taken in the Eastern Theatre. New Delhi was prepared to settle bilaterally the issue of the Prisoners of War taken in the Western Theatre only. Bangladesh, desired that before tackling the problems between Bangladesh and Pakistan, the latter should recognise the former, so the problems between the two countries could be sorted out through negotiations. The problems that concerned these countries were the repatriation of 'Bihari Muslims' (109) to Pakistan and of Bengalees to Bangladesh, and the exchange of property or compensation to the above mentioned categories of people. It was reported by the International Committee of Red Cross that, besides the Pak Civil

Internees in India, there were Pakistani employees of various categories in Bangladesh numbering 12 to 15 thousand, and about 1.2 million 'Bihari Muslims'. On the other hand, Pakistan had about 46 thousand Bangladeshi civilian employees, businessmen, soldiers, etc. and about 400 thousand Bangladesh nationals(110).

Between India and Pakistan, in addition to the problem of Prisoners of War and the Civil Internees, the issue of territorial adjustments also proved difficult. In this matter again, the approach of the two countries differed in regard to the Cease Fire Line in Kashmir. While Pakistan demanded the withdrawal of forces of both the countries to the old Cease Fire Line, India wanted to retain the positions obtaining after the 1971 War. India did not recognise the Cease Fire Line of 1949 as valid any longer. So far as the International Border was concerned, both the countries were prepared to withdraw their forces behind it.

India's main objective, after the war, being the establishment of a durable peace, she patiently and persistently worked towards it. Her initiatives and willingness to give concessions and to accommodate Pakistan, as far as practicable, ultimately bore fruit in removing the obstacles and creating conditions for an agreement with Pakistan which opened the prospect for a durable peace in the sub-continent.

THE SIMLA AGREEMENT

The Indian Initiative

Taking the initiative in this direction, the Prime Minister of India sent a letter on 14 February 1972, addressed to the Secretary General of the UN, indicating India's readiness to hold bilateral discussions with Pakistan at any time, at any place, without pre-conditions. A copy of this letter was also sent to Pakistan through the Swiss government. However, this initiative did not evoke proper response from Pakistan, except for the repetition of public statements by Bhutto of his readiness to meet the Indian Prime Minister. Taking a cue from it, India took another initiative in proposing Emissary level talks to prepare the way for the summit meeting. This proposal was accepted by Pakistan. D.P. Dhar, the Special Emissary of the Prime Minister of India, went to Murree and Rawalpindi and had talks there from 25 to 29 April 1972(111). The Pakistani side was represented by Aziz Ahmad, Special Emissary of the President of Pakistan. Dhar met others also, including the Pak President.

The Summit Meeting

The Emissary level talks showed the differences in the approach of the two countries towards the settlement of the problems facing them. In the discussions and in the draft agenda, the Pakistan side emphasized the need for the immediate repatriation of the Prisoners of War and withdrawal of the Pakistani and Indian forces to the pre-War positions. The Pak draft, thereafter, put forward a step by step approach, to normalise relations in stages as the climate improved. They desired to leave the basic causes of the conflict, like the Kashmir issue, to an indefinite future. The Indian side, on the other hand, emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach, dealing first with the question of durable peace by putting an end, once for all, to the confrontation during the last 25 years. D.P. Dhar stressed that the step by step approach advocated by Pakistan would not create a conducive atmosphere for lasting peace. He desired to deal with the basic issues first. Following his meeting with President Bhutto in Rawalpindi, he was able to obtain the consent of the Pakistani side to an exchange of views on important matters. Dhar suggested a compromise approach, whereby the two leaders of India and Pakistan would seek to reach agreement in principle on all basic issues, but the implementation of the the agreement could be done in stages(112).

Consequently, an Agreed Agenda was prepared that gave priority to the identification of the elements of durable peace and on the repatriation of Prisoners of War and withdrawal of forces from each other's territory. Items connected with normalisation of relations and development of cooperation then followed in order of priority. President Bhutto had agreed to discuss Jammu and Kashmir at the summit meeting. The Emissaries also drew up a list of Agreed Principles aimed at putting an end to the confrontation and for commencing a new chapter of peace and good neighbourly relations. The Agreed Principles emphasized the need for the establishment of durable peace, casting aside the shackles of the past policies, bringing an end to military confrontation, cooperation in agreed fields, and cessation of hostile propaganda. This Agreement was signed on 29 April 1972 at Rawalpindi(113).

The Emissary level talks had visualised that the proposed summit meeting would take place either at the end of May or in the beginning of June 1972. However, exactly after a month of the conclusion of the Emissary level talks, President Bhutto announced his thirteen day tour of West Asian and African

countries. Due to his tour, the summit meeting had to be postponed. President Bhutto ostensibly went to thank them for the support extended to Pakistan during the Indo-Pak War, but actually to enlist the support of the West Asian and African countries for Pakistan's view of repatriation of Prisoners of War and withdrawal of forces to the Cease Fire Line of 1949 in Kashmir(114). This obviously was done to put pressure on India to agree to Pakistan's demands.

Finally, the summit meeting was held from 28 June to 3 July 1972 at Simla, a hill station in north India. While the Pakistan team was led by President Bhutto, the Indian team was headed by the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. There were a number of official level meetings, and four meetings between the two Heads of the Governments. Unfortunately, D.P.Dhar, due to his serious illness, could not participate in the meetings after the second day. His place was taken by P.N. Haksar, the then Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister. No military expert or Service Officer was included in the Indian team, which, many felt, led to an inadequate weightage being given to strategic considerations in the negotiations(115).

The different approaches of two sides again cropped up at Simla. The Pakistan team, in spite of the Agreed Principles and the Agreed Agenda, went back to their original stand. Right in the beginning, the Pakistani representatives made it clear that they were immediately concerned with the early repatriation of their Prisoners of War, withdrawal from occupied areas and immediate resumption of diplomatic relations. As regards the other questions, they advocated a "step-by-step" approach. They also held the view that the time was not ripe for taking up the fundamental questions for the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, including the Kashmir issue. They were in agreement with the Indian view about the desirability of establishment of durable peace, including a settlement on Kashmir, but pleaded that the time was not propitious for far-reaching commitments at that stage. They wanted the solution of the Kashmir issue to be left to a future summit as they thought that Pakistan being the defeated nation did not enjoy equality in negotiations(116). They repeatedly emphasized that President Bhutto needed time to prepare the Pakistani public for accepting decisions on such fundamental issues which had ruined the relations between the two countries(117).

The Indian team on the other hand, emphasized the fundamental importance of first determining the elements of durable peace, in accordance with the

Agreed Principles and the Agenda prepared in April 1972. They desired a solution of the Kashmir issue, which was the main source of conflict between the two countries. The Indian Parliament and people also held the view that there could be no durable peace till the Kashmir problem was solved. Peaceful means like mediation, arbitration, judicial settlement, etc., could be resorted to under the UN Charter through bilateral agreement. But spelling out these methods in an agreement would convey the impression of continuing mistrust and suspicion on both sides. They pointed out that the talks were on the basis of equality. Indira Gandhi told Bhutto: "Our Foreign Minister was asked by our people to demand more land, a corridor, to get reparations, etc. There is considerable feeling in our political circles on these matters. We are holding them back as the price for peace"(118). India had been victim of aggression several times and a durable peace could be possible only if the main points of dispute like the Kashmir issue were resolved. The Indian people had also to be prepared to accept the Agreement, same as the Pakistani people(119).

On the question of PsOW from the Eastern Theatre, the Indian side held the view that the participation of Bangladesh was essential from both the legal and practical points of view. They refuted Pakistani assertion, that the PsOW had surrendered to the Indian forces alone, by pointing to the Instrument of Surrender signed by Lt Gen Niazi at Dhaka, which stated, "Pakistan Eastern Command agree to surrender all Pakistani Armed Forces in Bangladesh to Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Indian and Bangladesh Forces in the eastern theatre". So any repatriation of PsOW from the Eastern Theatre was a joint responsibility of India and Bangladesh(120). As regards the Pak argument that the repatriation of PsOW must take place according to the Geneva Conventions as the hostilities had ended, India pointed out that according to the Geneva Conventions, the repatriation of PsOW had to take place on the termination of hostilities and not merely on the cessation of hostilities. Termination of hostilities took place only after successful negotiations for an agreement. The danger of renewed war could increase if repatriation of PsOW took place on the cessation of hostilities alone. In this particular case, Pak forces would be augmented by four divisions if the PsOW were repatriated, and the danger of resumption of hostilities would increase if there was no negotiated agreement for durable peace.

On the resumption of diplomatic relations and other measures of normalisation, the Indian

representatives suggested that these would have meaning only if they followed an agreement on the establishment of durable peace. They also emphasized the concern of bilateralism in relations between the two countries. India suggested that the problems between them must be solved through mutual negotiations without third party intervention(121).

After some discussions it was agreed that the draft of a treaty should be prepared by both the sides. Pakistan put forward a draft joint statement that completely left out the essential elements of durable peace, and also introduced as an annexure a compulsory machinery for the settlement of disputes through mediation, arbitration and judicial processes. India also submitted a draft treaty which incorporated acceptable provisions from the above mentioned draft of Pakistani joint statement. The Pakistani side did not like the Indian draft. However, later they were persuaded to consider the Indian draft and specify the provisions which they did not like. The Pakistani representatives submitted on 30 June 1972, what they called a revised draft. But in fact both the Pakistani drafts were basically the same. After long discussions a working draft emerged. Later, changes were made to it as the summit meeting progressed. It is interesting to note that no less than 7 drafts were discussed during the summit meetings, of which four were formulated by Pakistan and three by India. This very fact shows that India did not make any attempt to impose a dictated treaty on Pakistan. Discussions on all these drafts contributed substantially to each side being able to explore fully the other's position. As a result of the discussions, it became possible for the two sides to come to an understanding regarding the major problems affecting the relations of the two countries. Finally, an agreement was signed between the two Heads of Governments on 12 July 1972(122).

The Agreement

The Simla Agreement dealt with two types of issues : one arising out of the Indo-Pak War of 1971 and the other more basic issues which had obstructed normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan. The accord contained 6 Articles. Three articles prescribed the principles to govern the relations between the two countries, two dealt with the problems of the Indo-Pak War 1971, and one dealt with the procedure of ratification of the treaty by both the countries. By Article 1, both the countries resolved to put an end to conflict, to work for the promotion of friendly relations and the establishment of peace in the sub-continent. To achieve the above mentioned aims, both the countries would follow the UN Charter

in spirit, settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations, respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, not interfere in each other's internal affairs and abjure the use of force against each other. Article 2 provided for prevention of hostile propaganda and dissemination of information to promote friendly relations. By Article 3, the normalisation of relations was to be achieved through the 'step by step' approach. It called for cooperation in various fields like communications, travel, economic development and science and cultural development. Article 4 dealt with the problems in the aftermath of the Indo-Pak War, 1971. Both the countries agreed to withdraw their forces to their sides along the International Border and in Jammu and Kashmir along the Line of Actual Control as on 17 December 1971. Article 5 dealt with the procedure for ratification of the agreement by both the countries. Article 6 provided for subsequent meetings between the representatives of the two countries to work out the modalities for the establishment of a durable peace, normalisation of relations, repatriation of Prisoners of War and the Civil Internees, resumption of diplomatic relations, and a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, as far as the Prisoners of War from the Eastern Theatre were concerned, it had been made clear during the talks that in the settlement of the matter Bangladesh would be involved, due to both legal as well as political reasons(123). This also meant that Pakistan had to recognise Bangladesh before any agreement was reached on the Prisoners of War. India also did not discuss the issues of war criminals and Bihari Muslims on which Pakistan had insisted. Thus, the interests of Bangladesh were fully protected while concluding this Agreement.

Normally, a victor claims compensation from the vanquished in a war, especially when the latter had committed aggression, as Pakistan had in the 1971 War. It was estimated that India had incurred a total expenditure of about Rs.5,435 million in connection with the war, including expenditure on the maintenance of the refugees which amounted to Rs.3,216 million(124). This amount could have been claimed by India as war reparations from Pakistan, but as a generous gesture and for the sake of establishing a framework of durable peace, she does not seem to have even raised this point during the Simla talks.

The Simla Agreement was a big step towards the establishment of a durable peace in the sub-continent. It sought to set in motion the process of reconciliation and good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan. Far from imposing any settlement on Pakistan, India went to the utmost limit to meet Pakistan's views and to accommodate her in view of the psychological trauma and internal difficulties faced by her leader because of the crushing defeat. By agreeing to withdraw from Pakistan's territory,(125) India fully demonstrated that she coveted not even an inch of Pakistan as repeatedly declared by Indira Gandhi(126).

Unlike the Tashkent Declaration, the Simla Agreement was reached without the intervention of any third party. The Agreement provided for peaceful resolution of problems through bilateral discussions between India and Pakistan. It was for the first time that Pakistan accepted the principle of bilateralism. In the past she had always tried to internationalise various issues either by bringing in other powers or through the UN(127).

The Tashkent Declaration had recognised the 1949 Cease Fire Line. At the Simla Summit, Pakistan made strenuous efforts to retain the 1949 Cease Fire Line and its UN supervision. However, the Agreement by providing for the Line of Actual Control in Jammu and Kashmir, confirmed the Indian position that the 1949 Cease Fire Line had become defunct because of its repeated violations by Pakistan during wars of aggression against India. Pakistan also agreed not to alter it unilaterally or by use of force(128). India was keen for a final settlement of the Kashmir problem as it had been the basic cause of Indo-Pak Conflicts in the past. Pakistan agreed that the Kashmir issue had to be settled for a durable peace, but pleaded that the people in Pakistan were not yet ready for it(129). India, in the interest of promoting peace, accommodated Pakistan by agreeing to a procedure for a gradual solution of problems through peaceful means and bilateral negotiations.

The Simla Agreement, though it was a definite step forward to promote normal and friendly relations between India and Pakistan, cannot be said to have made a firm foundation for it. The provision regarding Jammu and Kashmir, which had been the basic cause of conflicts between the two countries, was vague and unlikely to lead to a solution because of the different interpretations given to it. Another major drawback of the Agreement was the non-participation of Bangladesh because of Pakistan's refusal to recognise it. No firm and durable peace in the sub-continent was possible without the participation of Bangladesh.

Atal Behari Vajpayee, President of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, described the Agreement as a "sell out" and a "black Agreement". He stated that Indira Gandhi, instead of getting a "package deal" had been "out-maneuvred" by President Bhutto into a "step-by-step Agreement". As a result, important issues such as vacation of Pakistani aggression in Kashmir, war damages, settlement of prepartition debts, evacuee property and compensation for the burden of looking after the refugees before the liberation of Bangladesh, had been by-passed. He alleged that instead of consolidating the military victory to promote lasting peace, the government had, through the Agreement, relapsed into a state of "self-delusion under ritualistic homage to peace, non-interference and friendship"(130).

He may have been right judging by the subsequent history of Indo-Pak relations. But it was surely worth trying. Whatever may have been the lacunae in the Simla Agreement, it can hardly be denied that it was the only practical and realistic step possible towards promotion of normal and friendly relations between India and Pakistan which could lead to a durable peace in the sub-continent. India also ensured that Pakistan in its own interest would have to recognise Bangladesh to get back the Prisoners of War from the Eastern Theatre. Indira Gandhi correctly appraised the Agreement when she told the Lok Sabha on 31 July 1972: "I have made no tall claim for the Simla Agreement, I make no tall claim now. All I may say that it is beginning. It is a small beginning perhaps, but it is a good beginning"(131).

THE IMPLEMENTATION

However, the implementation of the Simla Agreement was not as smooth as was envisaged. The delineation of the Line of Actual Control in Jammu & Kashmir, on which the withdrawal of armed forces depended, ran into trouble. Under the original provisions of the Agreement, it was stipulated that delineation and withdrawal would be completed within a period of 30 days. To achieve these objectives, talks were held between the Senior Military Commanders of India and Pakistan. Pakistan seemd to be going back from the terms of the Simla Agreement in this connection, and demanded that the agreement about the Line of Actual Control in Jammu and Kashmir be applied to only those portions of the Cease Fire Line which had been "disturbed" and undisturbed portions of the old Cease Fire Line should continue to be called as such and be governed by the provisions of the Karachi Agreement. This was a clear violation of the Simla

Agreement in which it was agreed that "in Jammu and Kashmir, the Line of Control resulting from the Cease Fire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides"(132). Obviously, Pakistan was trying to retain the recognition of the CFL of 1949 in Kashmir. This matter was discussed between the two sides first at Rawalpindi from 24 to 31 July and then at New Delhi from 25 August to 29 August 1972. In both the meetings, the Pakistani delegation was led by Aziz Ahmad and the Indian delegation by P.N. Haksar. After reviewing the developments since the Simla Agreement, the two sides agreed that the Line of Actual Control in Jammu and Kashmir would be delineated "along its entire length and respected by both sides, without prejudice to the recognised positions of either sides". It was further agreed that this delineation would be completed by 4 September 1972 and the withdrawal of troops would be completed by 15 September 1972. However, the delineation talks were deadlocked in the subsequent rounds over a small area called Thako Chak. In the seventh round the Indian side pointed out that as the Jammu-Sialkot border was an International Border, the area occupied across this border, i.e. about 180 sq km of Chicken's Neck Shakargarh area occupied by the Indian troops, and Thako Chak area of about 3.88 sq km on the Jammu-Sialkot International Border occupied by Pakistani troops, came under the provisions of paragraph 4(i) of the Simla Agreement(133). India was prepared to withdraw her forces from Chicken's Neck and Shakargarh areas but Pakistan was not prepared to withdraw from Thako Chak. When the Senior Military Commanders of India and Pakistan failed to formulate a solution, the two Chiefs of Army Staff, General Manekshaw and General Tikka Khan, met in Lahore on 28 November and 7 December, after which Pakistan agreed to withdraw from Thako Chak. As a gesture of goodwill India agreed to rationalise the Line of Actual Control with minor adjustments of mutual claims. In the process, India gave up her claim to about 1.16 sq km comprising two villages, Dhum and Chikot, in the Uri Sector along the Line of Actual Control. As a result of the new agreement, Indian and Pakistani troops took up their new positions on the readjusted Line of Actual Control on 17 December 1972(134).

The question of the release of Prisoners of War was also tackled. As there was no dispute regarding the Prisoners of War captured in the Western Theatre, on 1 December 1972, India and Pakistan repatriated Prisoners of War captured there. In addition, from time to time, India repatriated sick and wounded Pakistani Prisoners of War. With the consent of Bangladesh, the sick PsOW and Civil Internees captured in Bangladesh, were also repatriated from time to

time. During 1972, a total of 770 sick and wounded Pakistani Prisoners of War were repatriated in seven batches by India and 35 Indian Prisoners of War were repatriated by Pakistan. India also repatriated 184 civilian prisoners on the eve of Id as a gesture of goodwill, besides 168 sick and wounded Prisoners of War(135).

As mentioned earlier, the Prisoners of War captured in Bangladesh, involved the three countries - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Bangladesh linked the repatriation of the Pakistani prisoners with the problems of repatriation of non-Bengalees in Bangladesh to Pakistan and of Bengalees in Pakistan to Bangladesh. Bangladesh's decision to try 195 war criminals further complicated the issue. Pakistan, on the other hand, did not want to take the non-Bengalee population from Bangladesh, on the plea that it would create a demographic imbalance in certain parts of Pakistan(136). Moreover, Islamabad was vehemently opposed to the trial of 195 Pakistani soldiers for war crimes as demanded by Bangladesh. Pakistan held the view that the Pakistani soldiers fighting in their own country for its defence could not be said to have committed any war crimes. They could only be tried by Pakistan for crimes against their own citizens(137). To counter this proposed trial, Pakistan even threatened to try senior Bengalee officers in Pakistan.

India consulted Bangladesh to solve this issue and a joint offer of three-way repatriation was made in April 1973. According to this formula, there was to be simultaneous repatriation of Pakistani Prisoners of War and Civil Internees to Pakistan except those required by the Bangladesh government for trial, of Bangladeshis from Pakistan to Bangladesh, and of Pakistanis in Bangladesh to Pakistan. In this offer, Bangladesh even dropped the condition of her recognition by Pakistan. Initially, Pakistan did not like the offer and moved the International Court of Justice to prevent Bangladesh from trying the 195 suspected war criminals. However, later at the insistence of India, Pakistan withdrew the case from the International Court of Justice and agreed to hold talks. After two meetings in July and August 1973, Pakistan agreed to the three-way repatriation. But it could not be carried out because of Pakistan's refusal to recognise Bangladesh. Finally, after Pakistan recognised Bangladesh in February 1974, a tri-partite meeting was held at the level of foreign ministers of the three countries - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh - in New Delhi from 5 to 9 April 1974(138). In this meeting, an agreement was reached in regard to the repatriation of Pakistani Prisoners of War and the

Civil Internees, and more than 90,000 Prisoners of War and Civil Internees were returned to Pakistan by 30 April 1974. These included the 195 suspected war criminals earlier detained for trial in Bangladesh. Mujib, who after recognition by Pakistan attended the Islamic Summit meeting in February 1974, had announced at the meeting that the issue of trial of 195 PsOW for war crimes would be settled satisfactorily. Subsequently, as a goodwill gesture, he decided not to proceed with the trials. The last Prisoner of War to be repatriated was, at his own request, Lt Gen A.A.K. Niazi.

After the repatriation of Prisoners of War and Civil Internees, the relations between India and Pakistan further improved. An agreement in September 1974, on exchange of postal articles, telecommunications, visa facilities and visits to religious shrines was concluded. In November 1974, a trade agreement was also signed, and was followed by a more comprehensive trade agreement in January 1975. In May 1976, India and Pakistan re-established full diplomatic relations.

Thus, most of the provisions in the Simla Agreement concerning the problems created in the aftermath of the war were haltingly implemented during the course of about 4½ years. The problems were complex and Pakistan needed time to reconcile herself to the traumatic experience of the loss of her Eastern Wing. But even after the restoration of diplomatic relations, the true spirit of the Simla Agreement was missing, Pakistan kept up her anti-Indian postures. Pakistan's hostile attitude prevented any progress towards the solution of the Kashmir problem which was basic for a durable peace. It tried again and again to internationalise the Kashmir issue by taking it to the UN and indulged in rabid anti-India propaganda on various issues.

At the Emissary level talks and also at the Simla Summit, India had made all possible efforts and concessions for the establishment of a durable peace. In preparing drafts for discussion at the Simla Summit, besides the question of withdrawal of troops, repatriation of PsOW and the solution of the Kashmir problem, India had comprehensively considered proposals for close and friendly relations between the two countries in wide ranging fields, e.g., trade, economy, science, culture, customs, communications, postal exchange, travel facilities, and border check-posts. India had even considered presenting draft of a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between India and Pakistan in its search for a durable peace in the sub-continent(139). But all these

exercises and preparations made by India for securing durable peace proved futile and they could not be even discussed at the Simla Summit because of Pakistan's prevarications and objections to any comprehensive settlement. The Simla Summit was even threatened with a breakdown because of Pakistan's rigid attitude, which thinly disguised its basic hostility to India. An agreement could be reached only because of India's willingness to accommodate Pakistani views as far as they could be reconciled with its minimum national interests. It resulted in ambiguities in the Simla Agreement. To some of its clauses, Pakistan gave interpretations not only opposed to India's views but clearly contrary to the very spirit of the Agreement.

Hardly had the ink on the Simla Agreement dried, when President Bhutto assumed postures and gave interpretations to some of its clauses which clearly showed that he was not prepared to take sincere follow-up steps for ushering in an era of durable peace in the sub-continent. The Simla Agreement did not refer to the UN resolutions on Kashmir, and provided for the resolutions of disputes through bilateral negotiations and peaceful means(140). But Bhutto told the Pakistan National Assembly on 14 July 1972, barely two weeks after the signing of the Agreement, that for the first time after the Tashkent Declaration "the Kashmir question has been activated" and it could again be taken to the UN if bilateral talks failed. He went on to give a 'solemn pledge' that as soon as the "people of Kashmir launch their struggle", the people of Pakistan would go "all out in support and assistance", and would not hesitate to "shed their blood" for the people of Kashmir(141). Bhutto's stand was not only contrary to the spirit of the Simla Agreement but also violated provisions of its Article 1(ii) which provided for abstaining from any step "detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations", pending the final settlement of any problem between the two countries(142):

According to the Indian view, Pakistan's acceptance in the Simla Agreement of the Line of Actual Control in Kashmir resulting from the Cease Fire of 17 December 1971, indicated the new limits within which the final solution would have to be found(145). Bhutto, in his Karachi speech referred to above, claimed that Pakistan had been able to 'delink' the Jammu and Kashmir dispute from the International Border as no withdrawals were to take place from the Line of Actual Control in Jammu and Kashmir, and thus refuted India's claim that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India. He further stressed that "pending final settlement", Pakistan could not accept

the position of India in Jammu and Kashmir, and subject to this alone, Pakistan accepted the position regarding respecting each other's territorial integrity(146). He thus made it clear that as far as Kashmir was concerned, Pakistan was keeping open options other than peaceful bilateral negotiations for its settlement. The Simla spirit had served its purpose, and was blown away.

The Indian people and armed forces had made all the required sacrifices, and the Indian government had made every possible concession, in search of lasting peace. But the ominous pronouncements of the Pakistani leaders showed clearly that the Simla Agreement had not ushered in a lasting peace, but had produced only an armistice, till the next round.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid. Translated into English these slogans would mean, Long-live Pak-China friendship, Death to Russian Social imperialism, and Yahya is a dog.
 4. Ibid.
 5. Bhutto's overthrow and execution by the military junta a few years later shows perhaps that the junta did not forget his perfidious role.
 6. From Official Records.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Ibid.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Ibid.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Ibid.
 13. Sunday Mail, 9 January 1972. Cited in BD II, p.598.
 14. BD II, p.598.
 16. From Official Records. BD II, p.598.
 17. Ibid.
 18. The Sunday Times, 9 January 1972.
 19. The New York Times, 11 January 1972.
 20. The Indian Express, 11 January 1972.
 21. The Statesman, 11 January 1972.
 22. From Official Records.
 23. The Statesman, 11 January 1972.
 24. From Official Records.
 25. Ibid.
 26. Ibid.
 27. Ibid.
 28. Ibid.
 29. Ibid.
 30. Ibid.
 31. Ibid.
 32. Ibid.
 33. Ibid.
 34. Ibid.
 35. According to the Official Records, the following officers had been sent by 11 January 1972.
 - (1) Advisers - 20
 - (2) Chief Civil Affairs Liaison Officer - 1
 - (3) Regional Civil Affairs Liaison Officers - 4
 - (4) District Civil Affairs Liaison Officers (Excluding 9 Indian Army Officers for CA) - 19
- 44

36. From Official Records.
 37. Ibid.
 38. Ibid.
 39. Ibid.
 40. Ibid.
 41. From Official Records.

Supply For Bangladesh (Upto 15 February 1972)

	Immediate demand (in tonnes)	Subsequent demand	Grand total
a. Wheat	21,000	72,000	93,000
b. Rice	21,000	36,000	57,000
c. Sugar	500	--	500
d. Salt	800	--	800
e. Edible Oil	2,300	--	2,300
f. Oil Seeds	2,000	--	2,000
Total	47,600	1,08,000	1,55,600

42. Ibid.
 Blankets 625,100; clothes 1,188 bales; and 219 bags and 115 cartons; utensils 500,000 sets, and 676 boxes of kitchen utensils; milk powder 4,775 bags, baby food 320 cartons; canvas shoes 58 bundles; ground sheets 260 bundles; mosquito net 285 bundles; tents 18,245; poly-fibre plastic rolls 34,365 were supplied to Bangladesh upto 15 February 1972.

43. From Official Records.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. The following three lines were immediately repaired:-

a) The Bangaon-Jessore-Khulna line;

b) The Gede-Darsana-Poradaha-Golundo-Faridpur line; and

c) The Sylhet-Akhaura line (extended upto Karimganj).

51. From Official Records.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. BD II, p.589.
68. AR, 1-7 January 1972.
69. From Official Records.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. It was reported that soon after the liberation of Bangladesh, the CIA started its operations to create a wedge between India and Bangladesh. It systematically spread the feeling that India was exploiting Bangladesh. The mysterious visit of two American Professors - William Griffith of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Robert Sciapins of California University - to Calcutta was suspected to be a move in this direction. They were regarded as experts at masterminding subversion. The modus operandi of CIA was to buy over intellectuals to create an opinion in Bangladesh favouring US goals. The US was supposed to have pumped in \$494,000 through the Asia Foundation under the 'intellectual rehabilitation scheme' to win over academicians and students to the US side. In addition the CIA created law and order problems to dis-credit the new government in Bangladesh. Various splinter groups with extremist leanings, who operated from the hill bases were given support in subversive activities. It was also reported that under the garb of relief supplies, arms and ammunition were supplied by the CIA. As mentioned earlier, the Bangladesh government had to borrow a contingent of the Indian Army to deal with them in May 1972. (For further account see Garg, pp.170-172).
75. From Official Records.
76. Shelly, p.141.
77. From Official Records.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. After Bangladesh was recognised by Pakistan in February 1974, China gave up her policy of opposing Bangladesh's admission into the UN. Hence, Bangladesh was admitted to the UN in

98. From Official Records.
99. Maj S.S. Choudhary of 4 Grenadiers who was the senior most Indian Officer at the Lyallpur POW camp, substantiated it in his interview on 10 April 1985.
100. The monthly allowances paid to Indian PsOW by Pakistan were as follows:-

Sepoy and Lance Naik	Rs. 9/-
Naik	Rs.12/-
Hav	Rs.18/-
JCOs and other Officers upto the rank of Captain	Rs.57/-
Major	Rs.60/-

It may be mentioned that India gave minimum of Rs.14/- below the rank of Havildar. Havildars were given Rs.22/- JCOs and other Officers below the rank of Major were given Rs.92/-, Major and others upto Colonel were given Rs.111/- and other senior Officers above the rank of Colonel were given Rs.139/-

101. From Official Records.
102. The IAF Officers and other senior Officers of the Indian Army, in their reports pointed out that this method was invariably used against them. It is likely that in certain cases they might have collected some information regarding these senior Officers from ORs and then they used this method to get confirmation of those facts.
103. In this method, a pair of officers used to play hot and cold on the subject. One officer used to treat the subject very harshly and the other very politely to win over the PsOW so that ultimately, the latter may be broken by the polite officer.
104. From Official Records.
105. Though the official records mention that there was no impact of this kind of propaganda, yet it is worthwhile to examine the long term effects on the Sikh Prisoners of War and the Mizo Prisoners of War of this propaganda.
106. From Official Records. These figures are not accurate, as large areas under Indian occupation in Sind (Pakistan) were not surveyed by 29 January 1973. It is also mentioned that India claimed 1,123.5 sq km while Pakistan claimed 173.35 sq km along the Cease Fire Line in Kashmir. However, records of later date give the figures given in the text.
107. From Official Records.
108. Ibid.
109. 'Bihari Muslims' was a generic term used for all non-Bengalee Muslims who migrated from India to

East Pakistan after the partition of the country.

110. From Official Records.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
115. Interview with Fd. Marshal Manekshaw.
116. From Official Records.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid.
120. From Official Records. Bhutto seems to have accepted the Indian position in this regard. He said that he was not against Mujib's participation in the talks but the difficulty was regarding the manner and method. He admitted : "Perhaps we have committed a mistake by not according recognition to Bangladesh earlier". He even wanted India to persuade Mujib to meet him without pre-conditions, when he would consider Pak-Bangladesh matters sympathetically. There was difficulty because Bhutto had taken a public stand that there could be no recognition of Bangladesh without a prior meeting with Mujib.
121. From Official Records.
122. Ibid.
123. FM's statement on 3 July 1972. Ibid.
124. From Official Records. The details of the reparations which India could claim are given in Appendix V.
125. As mentioned earlier, India actually withdrew from over 16,000 sq km.
126. From Official Records.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. AR, 15-22 July 1972.
131. From Official Records.
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. Salunke, pp.10-11.
136. It was likely that most of the repatriated persons would have settled in Sind and they could threaten the supremacy of the Pakistan People's Party there.
137. From Official Records.
138. Ayoob, pp.85-133.
139. From Official Records.
140. Ibid.
141. Ibid.
142. Ibid.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.

REVIEW AND REFLECTIONS

The detailed wide ranging account of a multi-dimensional and major historic event often obscures the overall picture. The trees hide the wood. It may be useful, therefore, to recapitulate briefly the salient features of the 1971 conflict before discussing certain matters which seem to deserve particular notice.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT

Exploitation of East Bengal by the ruling class in West Pakistan was a reality that stood out like the Himalayas. Yahya Khan himself admitted it frankly in an interview given in Washington DC in August 1978 to the correspondent of the Urdu Daily Jang(1). He explained that the problem had been with Pakistan since her birth, and was made much worse by the West Pakistani officers posted in East Bengal. Their arrogance and rapacity made the conflict almost inevitable.

Just as the election results of 1970 had come as a complete surprise to the Pakistani rulers, the crackdown in East Bengal on 25 March 1971, came as a complete surprise to India. No plans existed to meet the situation developing in the East. Nor did any military danger loom there in the first few weeks after the crack-down. The Government of India was under pressure to act then not because of any military threat but because of the tremendous public sympathy and support for the freedom fighters and Awami League workers of East Bengal who were being butchered by the Pakistan Army. A democratic Govt. could not remain totally unresponsive to such public pressure. But the Govt. of India did resist the spontaneous demand for immediate military intervention to save the lives of the East Bengal people. In the high level discussions concerning all possible courses of action open to India, the Service Chiefs, and the Chief of Army Staff in particular, advised strongly against any military intervention just then. The events in East Bengal then did not pose any imminent military danger to India. What was happening was still within the confines of East Bengal and was clearly an internal matter of Pakistan. World opinion would have been almost uniformly against any Indian intervention at that stage. The Army was also then busy in the election and law and order duties in West Bengal and troops had left behind the heavy weapons in their depots. The lines of communication to much of the

northern and eastern borders of East Bengal were totally inadequate for large scale military operations. The Himalayan passes would be open during the summer for Chinese intervention against India. In those circumstances, any military move by India would have been opportunistic, aggressive, and militarily unsound.

However, the situation soon began to change drastically. Thousands of armed and trained men of EPR and EBR came into India after running battles with the Pakistan Army in East Bengal. Refugees began coming in their lakhs, carrying tales of terrible massacres and brutalities, and hate in their hearts for the Pakistan Army. The two bodies began hitting back at the Pakistan Army along the borders with India, and the Pakistan Army did not at all show any reluctance in engaging in violent border incidents, bombardments, sorties into Indian territory etc. Provisional Bangladesh Govt. was proclaimed and it was clear that these skirmishes along the border were going to continue and were likely to get intensified. Armed bodies of men were getting together among the refugees and engaging in these skirmishes and hit and run sorties and trying all possible sources - local goondas, Naxalite terrorists, clandestine imports, theft from armouries, etc., - to acquire more and more arms and military training. The local Bengali population, indistinguishable from the refugees by language, culture and race, whole-heartedly supported these efforts of the refugees and of the EPR/EBR veterans. There was clear danger of the leadership of these bands of armed men passing into undesirable hands of ultra leftists and anti social elements(2). The Indian public as well as the Provisional Govt. of Bangladesh were putting tremendous pressure on the Govt. of India to provide atleast some support to the freedom fighters, if not outright recognition of the Govt. of Bangladesh and open military intervention. The BSF border outposts, without any written orders from above, had got involved in the violent incidents from the very beginning : the mass murders, raping, and burning villages just in front produced even in officers of the BSF an indignation so terrible as to drown their normal respect for Pak sovereignty.

It will be recalled that Indian nationalist opinion had been strongly opposed to the creation of Pakistan and the division of the country according to the Two-Nation theory. Besides declaring Indian Muslims to be a separate nation, this theory postulated inevitable and eternal antagonism between the two 'nations', and rejected the possibility of a single multi-national state in India patterned like the Soviet Union, Canada, or Malaysia. The horrors of

the partition riots etched this antagonism deep into the psyche of both Pakistanis and Indians. There had been, therefore, no love lost between India and Pakistan from the very beginning. After fighting two wars - both planned and initiated by Pakistan - their antagonism had reached a stage where their relations represented a Zero Sum Game, and the disadvantage or loss of one country became automatically the advantage and gain of the other. India hoped Mujib in power in Pakistan would bring real peace, secularism and non-alignment to the troubled sub-continent. In this situation, the natural reaction of Indian public, the press and even the forces, was to add to Pakistan's difficulty by aiding East Bengal people by all means short of open war. As a result, the general public, and the BSF also, gave all possible support to the Bangladesh forces right from the end of March 1971, although no written orders to the BSF were passed. Even a special Commando force of the BSF was formed under Brig B.C. Pande and operated against the Pakistan Army along the Tripura border from the first week of April to the third week of May. The scores of bridges damaged, rail lines disrupted and Pak units ambushed were achieved by the EBR/EPR rebels helped significantly by the BSF Commando Groups.

The problem was also considered coolly in the airconditioned office rooms in South Block. It was realised that a united Pakistan was really dead after the military crackdown in East Bengal, and birth of Bangladesh was inevitable. In discussions, even US diplomats agreed with this conclusion. India's concern had to be to ensure that the new state of Bangladesh was born with a feeling of friendliness towards India, and that its regime was not oriented towards China. The longer the Bangladeshes struggled for liberation, the greater would be the chances of the Awami leadership being replaced by ultra leftist, pro-China and anti-Indian elements. India's attitude and actions had to be oriented towards facilitating the inevitable and backing the winning horse.

Taking into consideration all these factors, the Govt. of India began to provide some token assistance in terms of equipment and training to the forces now being called the Mukti Bahini. Maj Gen O.S. Kalkat was sent to Calcutta as Director of Operations to maintain liaison and possible degree of control over the freedom fighters. His main responsibility was to regulate and to monitor the training and arming of the Mukti Bahini, which also enabled India to keep a watch on things. Technically under Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, the Army Commander of Eastern Command, Gen Kalkat was in direct touch with the Chief of the Army Staff at New Delhi. When Kalkat failed to

establish personal rapport with the Bangladesh leaders, he was replaced by Maj Gen B.N. Sarkar, who succeeded admirably.

As the flood of refugees continued to swell and mount in the succeeding weeks, the Govt. of India began to get seriously alarmed at its implications in terms of law and order and the stresses on the social fabric itself. Many Pakistani agents were found to have come with the refugees, to create communal incidents and to sabotage vital installations in India - some 400 of them were actually apprehended. The starving refugees flooding the Calcutta metropolis and surrounding country-side began to compete with the locals for jobs, undercutting the old inhabitants. The communal complexion itself of many border areas began to change. India's vital interests thus began to come under threat. India responded by strenuous efforts to move the international community to put pressure on the Pakistan Govt. to take necessary steps which would result in the refugees going back to East Bengal. Such steps clearly meant coming to a compromise with the elected representatives of the people, so that the refugees felt assured of their safety and an honourable life on their return to their villages and towns in East Bengal. Simultaneously the armed forces of India began the contingency planning for meeting any military threat from the East and for engaging in large scale operations in that direction if such operations became inevitable.

The training and arming of the Mukti Bahini now assumed a different dimension. It was perhaps hoped in New Delhi that the stepped up Mukti Bahini operations would convince the Pakistan rulers that the price they had to pay for continuing the suppression of East Bengal was going to be very heavy, and therefore they would be well advised to come to a political settlement with the Awami League. In other words, the Mukti Bahini operations would be another form of pressure on Yahya Khan, supplementing and supporting the diplomatic pressure, to come to a political settlement.

Yahya Khan, however, saw these developments in a different light. His troops in East Bengal under the ruthless Gen. Tikka Khan had reasserted Govt. authority over the whole of East Bengal, and had driven out the recalcitrant, or "disloyal" elements into India. He had succeeded in his plans up to that point, although the extent and the ferocity of the popular resistance perhaps came to him as a surprise. A wise statesman would at that juncture have come out with a political initiative to have a settlement advantageous to him and to terminate the open

insurgency. Yahya, unfortunately, was not a statesman. He and his advisers thought that a few more weeks of savage repression would finally extinguish the flame of resistance. This was wishful thinking, as the freedom fighters were then too full of hate to care for their lives or to admit defeat. This would have also meant the refugees staying on in India indefinitely, and therefore India was determined not to allow the flame of resistance totally to be extinguished. What is more, India was definitely in a position to ensure this, as East Bengal was surrounded on three sides by Indian territory and was separated by a thousand miles from the base of the Pakistan Army in West Pakistan. Military action alone could not be the solution in East Bengal when the local population was totally alienated, and when India was clearly in a position indefinitely to keep up the pressure and ensure continuing resistance and border skirmishes in that region. Surprisingly oblivious to these considerations, Yahya Khan and his coterie continued with their military action, and the refugees continued to pour into India in ever increasing numbers, crossing the six million mark by end of June.

In fact Yahya appeared to see a new opportunity in the massive influx of refugees from East Bengal into India. If the huge, unending exodus of refugees reduced the population of East Bengal by many millions, then the majority of East Pakistan over West Pakistan would be reduced or eliminated, and the voting pattern would also change in favour of West Pakistan. The refugees coming into India, particularly in the later months, included a very large percentage of Hindus, and this was additionally welcome to the Pakistan rulers, as it meant a reduction in the strength of Hindu population, making the population of Pakistan more homogenous or 'Islamic'. If the Pakistan Govt. could get away with the repression in East Bengal and with the pushing out into India of so many millions of refugees, then an additional advantage would have been to put tremendous burden and expense on India. The resultant financial drain - estimated at a thousand million US Dollars per year - and social, political and communal turmoil for an indefinite period, would have crippled India and would have been far more damaging to her than even a serious military defeat. So Yahya thought he had the proverbial opportunity of killing two birds with one stone. And he hardened his political attitude further. Active and staunch Awami League members of the National Assembly were disqualified, their seats were declared vacant, and were filled by uncontested elections of supporters of the Pakistan ruling junta. Yahya announced in his White Paper fresh crimes and unpatriotic intentions of the Awami League and

declared that Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman would be put on secret trial which could even result in his execution. Al Badar, Al Shams, etc. were organised to intensify repression.

Documentary evidence of this grand design of the Pakistani rulers is, naturally, not available in India. But the circumstances, events and developing attitudes of the concerned parties make this a plausible and reasonable conclusion.

Noticing this further stiffening of Yahya's attitude and faced with the totally intolerable burden of so many millions of refugees, and still more refugees in their thousands coming in every day, India decided to step up its pressure, diplomatically and on the ground. Astute and highly sophisticated, it can perhaps best be described as a "strategy of controlled escalation". Handled adroitly with an uncanny sense of timing by the Indian leadership, it proved an extremely flexible and effective doctrine of state-craft and crisis management. At the beginning it was the BSF posts along the East Bengal borders and the local public which gave support to the Bangladesh freedom fighters. Subsequently the support to the freedom fighters was put on a more organised and substantial basis. Again, no documentary evidence is available to show that the Govt. of India ordered the BSF or the Army to assist the Mukti Bahini. But it is clear that the Govt. tacitly or unofficially, encouraged and approved, or at least turned a blind eye to the provision of arms, equipment and training for the Mukti Bahini by the Armed Forces of India and its officers. The MB began receiving much greater help from India. It became the Indian objective now to assist actively the Mukti Bahini to liberate substantial areas of East Bengal, so that, if the situation deteriorated further, the Bangladesh Provisional Govt. could start functioning from there, could acquire a territorial base, and thus demand recognition more legitimately from the international community. Operational plans also were issued in August to provide for such an eventuality. The earlier deficiencies in terms of deployment of forces and preparation of depots, storage dumps and line of communication all along the borders were largely rectified by September-October. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of August, although it was not aimed specifically against any country, had very definitely strengthened the Indian position against the threat of Chinese and American support to Pakistan if large scale hostilities broke out. The approaching winter, with snow blocking the Himalayan passes, meant reduced Chinese capabilities and threat from the North.

India still kept hoping for, and trying for, a political compromise between the Yahya regime and the Awami League. But she simultaneously went forward with military preparations, firstly to put pressure on Yahya, and secondly, to be prepared for any hostilities if it came to that. When Pakistan moved its army from its cantonments to the border in the West, India responded by doing the same. When Pakistani troops repeatedly intruded into Indian territory in pursuit of, or to attack the bases of the Mukti Bahini, Govt. allowed the Indian Army the right of 'hot pursuit', enabling the Indian forces to beat back the Pakistani raiders and to pursue them inside East Bengal. In her inimitable style, Mrs. Gandhi informed Parliament on 24 November 1971 that, in spite of grave and repeated Pakistani provocations she had "instructed our troops not to cross the border except in self-defence". The implications of the instructions were clear.

Major clashes took place in the Belonia and Sylhet sectors in the East and in Hilli and Bayra sectors in the West, within the borders of East Bengal. Border violations by both sides had become so common that the open and substantial involvement of Indian troops in these operations raised few eyebrows in the international community.

Both India and Pakistan perhaps kept on hoping that stern measures and show of determination would deter the other party and would lead the 'enemy' to back down. It appeared as the good old "Brinkmanship" game again. But either party increasingly got trapped in a posture which meant war if the other party did not back down.

The strain of the continuing crisis lasting over seven months was definitely beginning to tell on both the parties. As autumn freezes into winter, a point seemed to be approaching fast when the one or the other would have to open hostilities in full scale. Attrition rate of the Pak Army had gone up from 90 per month in May-June '71 to 3000 per month by November, and it was clear that East Bengal could not be "pacified" unless Indian 'interference' was stopped. The Pak troops were getting weary and demoralised. For India, the burden of 10 million refugees was getting unbearable, and Mrs. Gandhi had lost all hope of effective international pressure on Yahya after her foreign tour in November. The Bangladesh freedom fighters were losing faith in their old leaders, and new, radical leadership would gain control if the stalemate continued much longer. And campaigning season had arrived.

India desperately wanted to avoid opening full scale hostilities and thus becoming the aggressor in the eyes of the world. But it appears clear, from many evidences of various types, that India would have been forced to take military action in full strength in the first week of December, and perhaps on 4 December, even if Pakistan had not attacked before that. It was an irony of fate that Yahya broke first under the terrific strain, and himself resolved India's dilemma by launching a pre-emptive attack on 3 December 1971. The answer to the intractable, blood soaked Bangladesh question was finally provided by the roar of the cannon.

THE OPPOSING STRATEGIES

Pakistan's grand strategy outlined above had at the beginning its political and military components dovetailed and balanced nicely. In early March 1971, the troops had been withdrawn to Cantonments promptly on Mujib's demand in the hope that a total breakdown of law and order would follow, compelling Mujib himself to request calling the troops back. But the Awami League managed to maintain a semblance of order and civic life, and in fact became the de facto Govt. of East Bengal. To restore the position, the military crack-down of 25 March was considered necessary. Its success opened to Yahya Khan the possibility of restarting negotiations from a position of strength. But the top brass and hawks in Pakistan failed to realise that ultimately there could be no military solution to the political problem particularly in the situation peculiar to East Bengal. That lay at the root of Pakistan's misfortunes.

Operation instructions were issued by Eastern Command at Calcutta to its corps commanders in August, visualizing full scale operations and liberation of the whole area lying to the west of the Jamuna and to the east of Meghna river systems. The outline of these plans leaked out, or was allowed deliberately to leak out; in October Pakistan Army responded by changing its strategy and deployment in East Pakistan. To prevent the occupation of sizeable areas by the Indian and Mukti Bahini forces, the Pakistan Army decided to move out from the Central Citadel or redoubt of the Dhaka triangle to the borders, and to hold in strength the selected places and centres which were developed as Fortresses. These Fortresses were fully stocked with ammunition and supplies for a war lasting several weeks. The troops were spread out and divided into penny packets all along the border to cover the gaps between the fortresses. The strategy and deployment of forces led to the creation of a hard crust along the borders, but left no central reserve

or strike force at the disposal of Gen. Niazi. Pakistan also planned to assume the offensive on the Western Front, so that areas could be occupied in the West to be traded in the post-war negotiations for any area occupied by India in the East. Since the West was considered the decisive theatre, Niazi was instructed to maintain strong forces and an aggressive posture along the border and keep the Indian troops tied down, preventing transfer of Indian units from the East to the West. The GHQ at Rawalpindi had also ordered Gen Niazi not to yield any territory which could provide a toe-hold to the Bangladesh Government inside East Bengal. Niazi stuck to these directives instead of concentrating for a firm defence of the vital Dhaka bowl when all-out war with India became imminent in November 1971. On the contrary, Niazi ordered on 3 December that his troops would vacate no position or post till they had suffered at least 75% casualties, and had obtained permission from two levels higher in the army hierarchy. Such rigidity, amounting to an abdication of generalship, proved disastrous for his army.

However, it must be conceded, in fairness to Gen Niazi, that his problem admitted of no clearly viable solution. The strategy of forward posture and no withdrawals certainly failed. But the alternative of mobile warfare depending on rapid regroupings and manoeuvres was equally flawed in the face of total enemy air superiority, destroyed communications, bitterly hostile population and virtual absence of armour. Niazi's dilemma was indeed similar to the oft-debated problem faced by the German Field Marshals trying to beat back the Allied landing in France in 1944. Neither of the rival strategies advocated by Runstedt and by Rommel appeared clearly viable then; Niazi could hardly hope to fare better than those redoubtable masters of the art of war. And to withdraw early and merely defend the Dhaka bowl was to admit defeat even before the war had started. The Indian divisions would have quickly reached Dhaka from three directions and taken the big unfortified city by assault within a week or so. And in the process a massacre of the Pakistanis by the Mukti Bahini within Dhaka would have been almost a certainty.

Indian strategy, on the other hand, evolved slowly but methodically. Taken by surprise, perhaps Govt. of India hoped that the East Bengal masses mobilised by the Awami League, and the trained and armed EBR/EPR men in their thousands, would be able to defeat the Pakistan Army in the East with the informal assistance of the BSF. By end of April, this wishful thinking was given up. Gen. Manekshaw was formally consulted on the problem by the Govt. for the first

time in the last week of April. Indira Gandhi showed true moral courage and political strength in accepting Manekshaw's cautious advice in the face of the public clamour for immediate military intervention.

Thereafter, the military and political components of the Indian grand strategy were always kept in tandem. Diplomatic and media offensives were stepped up even while logistic preparations, operational planning and movement of forces were taken in hand, apart from the Mukti Bahini effort. The August plan of liberating segments of Bangladesh in the west and in the east was thrashed out. This plan formally held the field even during the December war. It had been accepted by the Indian leaders from April onwards that the ultimate denouement would be the complete liberation of Bangladesh in all probability. But this liberation as an operational task was stated only in Manekshaw's Signal to Aurora on 30 November. And it appears that it was only on 11 December that the Prime Minister issued a written directive to the Chiefs of Staff for the total liberation of Bangladesh.

The August plan - Operation "Cactus Lily" - still visualised an old style war, with setpiece attacks to reduce enemy strongholds, and deliberate advance upto the Jamuna-Padma in the west and the Meghna in the east. It is claimed, however, that the new tactics of bypassing strongholds and advancing swiftly to the farthest were emphasised in oral briefings and the war games held with the formation commanders. The Indian Navy was to impose an effective blockade of East Bengal ports, which perhaps made it redundant for 2 Corps to advance to Khulna, as the plan required.

Against West Pakistan, the Indian strategy was basically defensive. But the holding operations did provide for limited local offensives to keep the enemy off-balance and unable to launch major attacks. The all out war was expected to start simultaneously on the Eastern as well as the Western Front even if India was compelled to start it. But at the last minute - just a few days before the war was actually started by Pakistan - Govt. of India decided that it had no ostensible and clear justification to open hostilities in the West. The projected Indian offensive in the Chhamb sector was cancelled by Gen Manekshaw himself. Indian leaders perhaps hoped that a further escalation of fighting in the East would result in no Pak reaction in the West, just as the escalation of 21 November in the East had not. But the last minute change of posture in the West certainly put the Indian commanders in difficulty, and confused the troops.

In general, however, Indian strategy was well vindicated by the war in the West as in the East.

OBJECTIVE DHAKA ?

The capture of Dhaka in a swift short offensive was indeed a brilliant exploit of Indian arms. The capital and heart of the Pak regime in East Bengal was reached within two weeks, across some two hundred kilometres and many formidable river obstacles. But a moments' thought and a close look reveal some baffling features of the operations and raise some awkward questions. It appears rather strange that the first Indian troops to enter Dhaka came from a static formation - the 101 Communication Zone Area - and not from any of the three Army Corps launched against East Bengal. If this was all according to plan, it is stranger still that this decisive, all important thrust from the north was allowed to remain the weakest in terms of manpower, artillery and armour. And no written orders or Operation Instruction, or even a clear military Appreciation, is to be found on the subject. At the same time, it appears inconceivable that an operation of such magnitude and complexity was successfully mounted without any detailed planning and fore-thought. Whether the capture of Dhaka was pre-planned, and if so by whom, therefore deserves careful consideration on the basis of all the evidence available, from the records as well the personal recollection of the important participants.

All are agreed that no formal orders were even issued to any of the Corps commanders or to the GOC, 101 Comn. Z.A., to capture Dhaka. The August plan for 'Operation Cactus Lily' visualised only the occupation of areas to the east of the Meghna and to the west of the Jamuna-Padma rivers, with particular emphasis on the capture of the ports of Khulna and Chittagong to isolate East Pakistan from West Pakistan. The plan for the Para-drop at Tangail, finalised in October, introduced a new element involving the occupation of areas in the north also, including Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Tangail. After linking up with the Para battalion dropped at Tangail, the advancing brigade of 101 Comn. Z.A. was 'to pose a threat to Dacca'. This guarded and vague language hardly amounted to a clear task to advance to and capture Dhaka. With only one brigade of regular Indian troops allotted to it then, the 101 Comn. Z.A. was obviously in no position to do so.....anyway. And the Para drop at Tangail was only one of the several alternatives mentioned in this plan for utilising the paratroopers. Finally, as late as 30 November 1971, Army HQ ordered Eastern Command to liberate the whole of East Bengal and to capture or

destroy the entire Pak forces there. The war broke out soon after, and Eastern Command never issued formal orders to any of its formation commanders to capture Dhaka.

Detailed discussions with the concerned commanders have yielded no unanimous version. Those who then manned key positions in Army HQ, New Delhi, and in HQ Eastern Command, Calcutta, maintain that the total liberation of Bangladesh was their objective all through, and further orders would have been issued accordingly after the tasks visualised in Operation Cactus Lily had been accomplished. However, whereas the Eastern Army Commander expected the powerful 4 Corps to capture Dhaka when the time came, and had therefore allotted to it all the available helicopters - his Chief of Staff (Maj Gen Jacob) was clear in his mind that the 101 Comn. Z.A. troops - with no major river to cross on their axis of advance - would seize the big prize. As supporting evidence for his version might be mentioned the Para drop in support of this northern column, the stationing of river craft at Dhubri to supply the advancing troops, and repeated efforts to put more weight behind this thrust by allotting to it two more brigades. As it was, the northern thrust was able to use 95 Mtn Bde, the F-J Sector troops approximating another brigade and the 167 Mtn Bde, while the move of 5 Mtn Bde to this front was halted mid-way on orders from Army HQ, which was not prepared to lower its guard against the Chinese in the north. As against all this, Maj Gen Gandharva Nagra commanding 101 Comn Z.A. from 5 December, has disclaimed any instructions from Calcutta about the capture of Dhaka. And his predecessor, the late Maj Gen Gurbax Singh Gill, has stated in his Foreword to a book: "Incidentally, in our planning we had never catered for the capture of Dhaka"(3).

Lt Gen Sagat Singh, the GOC 4 Corps, is equally clear that he received no orders or plan for the capture of Dhaka. The helicopters were allotted to him primarily for casualty evacuation and liaison and inspection duties along his very wide front. He himself decided - fairly early - that his objective would be Dhaka itself, and made the plans and preparations for it with the whole-hearted cooperation of Gp. Capt Chandan Singh. He procured dry cell torches from Calcutta to mark the helipads at night, tried out heli-landing troops under operational conditions at Sylhet, and launched his troops across the Meghna when he found that the enemy was withdrawing from Bhairab Bazar area northwards towards Mymensingh/Sylhet insted of southwards towards Dhaka. It was in the nature of an encounter crossing : launching such a big force across a mighty river with the help of only a dozen medium helicopters could never be planned at Calcutta or New Delhi.

From these many conflicting versions, what really happened can still be reconstructed with a high degree of probability. As mentioned already, the Government of India concluded after the crackdown of March 1971 that events were likely to lead inexorably to the birth of an independent Bangladesh. Military commanders at different levels, when involved in the problem, certainly realised that the final solution would be the military liberation of the entire East Bengal territory. But no plan existed for major operations in that direction, nor was a clear political directive issued to the Armed Forces. The highly confused and nebulous conditions inside East Pakistan, the steady flow of reinforcements from West Pakistan into East Bengal, and China's threat in the North made it impossible for Army Headquarters to designate Dhaka as the military objective while issuing the plan for "Operation Cactus Lily" in August 1971.

However, Dhaka as the objective was definitely in the minds of the Army Headquarters, HQ Eastern Command as well as HQ 4 Corps. Since Manekshaw and Aurora were pre-occupied with innumerable problems, the main thinking on the operations in East Bengal devolved on the DMO at New Delhi and the COS at Calcutta. Major General Jacob, the Chief of Staff, argued with Maj Gen K.K. Singh, DMO, about futility of going for Khulna when Indian Navy could effectively blockade East Bengal. But, although everybody realised that Dhaka was the geopolitical heart, Army Headquarters could not then allocate sufficient forces for a deliberate plan to capture Dhaka. By the time Maj Gen Inder Singh Gill had taken over as DMO, the situation had changed and Jacob received far better response to his ambitious thinking. Between the two of them, - of course with the support of their respective superiors - Jacob and Gill quietly made all possible preparations for the capture of Dhaka when the opportunity came. Right then it was still not considered prudent to declare Dhaka as the objective in formal orders, as there were many imponderables and it was undesirable to put down in cold print an objective which might not be attainable.

Soon, however, the situation changed. The border incursions produced strong and immediate reaction from the Pakistan Army, which strung itself out in penny packets all along the borders. Deep penetration and a drive towards Dhaka then became more practicable. Although the August plan was not amended certain deeper objectives like Tangail and east bank of the Madhumati began to be given in Operation Instructions in October. Gill and Jacob perhaps considered the northern thrust as the one most

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likely to get through, and so this thrust was beefed up to the extent possible. It has been claimed that the formation commanders in the field were also given verbal instructions to go for Dhaka, and the operations were discussed in detail in war games, although this is disputed by the field commanders concerned.

Finally, the orders were revised on 30 November, giving the liberation of the whole of Bangladesh as the military task of Eastern Command. Eastern Command perhaps planned to issue orders to Sagat Singh and Nagra after they had reached the Meghna and Tangail respectively. Aurora and Jacob did not realise that the two bright field commanders would take the bit in their teeth and gallop for Dhaka even before receiving any order. Hastily, Eastern Command placed Nagra under Sagat Singh when both the formations were closing in on Dhaka, in order to avoid inadvertent clashes between the two. Dhaka fell, with its defenders encircled from three sides, bombarded from the air, demoralised by psychological warfare and disillusioned with the hopes of intervention by foreign powers.

It appears clear, therefore, that Army Headquarters and Eastern Command had thought of and made some provision for the capture of Dhaka, but had played safe and issued no formal order to any of the formations in the field. To that extent, Lt Gen Sagat Singh and Major Gen Nagra had used their own initiative, drive and professional acumen to achieve a dazzling victory. It reflects the greatest credit on the Indian Army that it produced field commanders of such calibre, capable of strategic initiative and stage management of major manoeuvres in the course of the campaign without clear orders from above. Sagat Singh in particular stood out as a General any army could be proud of, not only because he had the largest Corps to handle over the longest front but also because he surmounted the stiffest obstacles of the Meghna and Lakhya rivers. A close look at the capture of Dhaka, thus makes the exploit shine brighter than ever.

INTER SERVICES COORDINATION

All wars in modern times involve joint operations by two or more of the Services, and the necessity of ensuring the closest possible cooperation between them is universally accepted. But the unanimity goes no further, and the best pattern of inter-Services coordination for India has been the subject of intense, though muted, debate for years. The related and equally important subjects of higher

defence control organisation and civil-Services equation in the Government machinery have evoked a more intense and more muted controversy. While these crucially important and complicated issues deserve an early and detailed study by the Govt. of India, some brief observations appear necessary here.

India won the 1971 war. But some deficiencies in inter-Services cooperation came to notice even in the euphoria of victory. Close air support in the critical battle of Chhamb was delayed. Capt Samant's naval task force was attacked and decimated by friendly aircraft because its re-routing was not intimated to the IAF in time. The IAF and the IN, both attacking Karachi on the same night to overwhelm or confuse the defences, were, it was reported, totally ignorant of the others participation. Another notable example was the amphibious landing at Cox's Bazar, which came to grief due to inadequate joint planning and hasty improvisations.

India fought the Bangladesh war in exceptionally favourable circumstances, and another war would present a far worse scenario. With technology leading military doctrine in future wars, the difficulties and dangers are bound to get multiplied. The emerging trends emphasise the importance of missiles and electronic warfare, which do not traditionally belong to any of the three Services. Some innovative reorganisation in the near future appears inevitable. It would be wise to introduce the necessary changes in the defence structure at all levels well before electronic and nuclear warfare and their concomitants get imbedded in the old system.

All Service officers in their oral testimonies have demanded changes. Joint staffs were required at formation and Command levels for proper planning and conduct of operations. A theatre of operations needed a Commander with allotted elements of the three Services under his direct command, like South East Asia Command of Mountbatten in World War II and like the existing Fortress Command in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. At New Delhi were required joint planning teams and a Chief of Defence Staff organisation. The old system of coordination managed to cope with the 1971 war only due to the personal qualities of the three Service Chiefs then in position. It would be dangerous to rely on the same fortuitous good fortune in the future, and unwise to bank only on goodwill and voluntary cooperation, in place of formalised and institutionalised arrangements, in such a vital matter. In 1971, Gen Manekshaw was the real architect of India's military victory, and appears to have

functioned in effect like a Chief of Defence Staff with the backing of the Prime Minister. It is interesting to learn from him, therefore, that he received total cooperation from one Service Chief, but not from the other. Manekshaw also revealed that at one point the Prime Minister suggested making him the overall commander of the three Services for the duration of the war in order to ensure smooth coordination. But he advised her against it, lest such a temporary, short term arrangement produced heart burning and strained inter-Service relations.

An integrated Ministry of Defence would cap the new pattern suggested for the defence control organisation. With civilians and men in uniform inter-mixed at various levels, the integrated Ministry of Defence would do away with the existing duplication of men, in the Services Headquarters and in the Ministry, examining the same proposal, thereby eliminating delays and reducing costs. The intimate interaction at all levels between Army, Naval and Air Force officers and civilian administrators including Finance representatives, each contributing his special expertise and experience, would produce superior results and streamline the decision making process. Proposals presented by a Service Chief after full consideration would not require 'de novo' examination in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Finance, and those responsible for results in the field would get more closely associated with the final decision on their recommendations.

There is also the question of creating an Army Air Corps. Army-Air coordination should aim at even higher integration and streamlining, though in 1971 it was better managed compared to the 1965 war. The quicker pace of war in the future and the induction of armed helicopters would require the ground and air elements engaged in the battle to function as a single team. The dual control inherent in the present system would impose unacceptable delays. The creation of Army Aviation Corps, it was argued, would guarantee timely fire support, liaison, and recce and would enable the field commander to overcome opposition by vertical envelopment where necessary. Against these arguments, it was pointed out that the unique flexibility, mobility and range of modern air power require centralised control for its optimum effectiveness. Consideration of the maintenance infrastructure, and economy in manpower and material management also favoured centralised control of all aircraft. The dangers and problems attendant on the control of the air space by Army and Air Force both were also stressed, illustrated by the accidental shooting down of many friendly aircraft by the Egyptian Air

Defence Command during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. In reply, the protagonists of Army Air Corps pointed out that the Armed helicopters and AOP craft would be flying close to the ground and in a different layer of the air space, which the fighters and bombers would not be using. The mistakes of the Egyptian Air Defence Command were due to the fact that it had been set up recently and had not been able to gain experience and to refine its procedures before the 1973 war broke out.

As already stated, these are large and complex issues. Their many pros and cons cannot be adequately discussed except in a separate full fledged monograph. All that is intended here is to draw attention to them, to indicate that there is a strong 'prima facie' case for a change, and to stress the urgency of a detailed study, with firm measures following it. "A system that has worked in the past" must not be retained till it actually proves disastrous.

SOME OTHER ASPECTS OF HIGHER COMMAND

Certain other matters concerning the higher direction and conduct of the war also require notice.

Loss of Territory?

The Government directive issued to the Armed Forces stipulated that, alongwith the advance into East Bengal, the guard against the Chinese threat from the North must be fully maintained, and that no territory should be lost in the operations on the Western Front. The requirement that no territory should be lost on the Western Front was dictated obviously by the plausible consideration of denying any bargaining counter to Pakistan in the post war negotiations. But it must be strongly emphasised that this directive badly handicapped the Indian Commanders. It tied their hands in planning and conducting mobile warfare and inhibited aggressive planning and bold initiatives. Since the Pakistani and Indian forces on the Western Front were in more or less equal strength, the enemy could be defeated only by superior generalship. This required concentration of decisively superior forces at selected points by thinning out troops from less important sectors, and freedom to manoeuvre forces. Only thus could a major victory be won or significant military advantage obtained. If no Indian territory was to be lost anywhere, the planners and commanders were constrained to spread out the troops evenly along the entire front, and to hold back at every level sufficient reserve to counter attack and regain territory quickly in case of enemy incursions. A significant defeat

inflicted on the Pakistani Armed forces would have caused major damage to them and also led to occupation of the territory in important areas. These advantages would have more than offset the loss of some Indian territory in certain areas, leaving India in a much better bargaining position at the post-war negotiating table. Even though such wars might not go on for very long due to international pressures, Clausewitz's dictum is still valid, and the prime objective in war must remain the attrition or destruction of the enemy's armed forces, leaving him defenceless.

An additional reason for the Government directive not to lose any territory might have been the fear of loss of morale and something like panic reaction in the public over initial military reverses. This fear was natural and probably well-justified. The remedy, however, would appear to lie not in tying down the forces to static defence but to educate the public regarding the nature and conduct of war and the elementary facts about defence matters. This education is vital in a democracy in order to encourage informed national debate and consensus on important defence decisions. Indian democracy cannot be considered safe and full-fledged while vital defence matters remain esoteric and totally unfamiliar to the citizen and the voter.

Pakistani commanders seem to have enjoyed a great advantage in this respect. They were, of course, not accountable to the public or their elected representatives but were answerable only to their own comrades and brothers-in-arms manning the government at Islamabad. So they regrouped their forces freely and conducted the operations only in the light of military requirements. They could thin out unimportant sectors, create a strong strike force of armoured and infantry divisions, and paralyse Indian offensive planning or manoeuvres by the mere threat of the strike force.

The lesson for the future is clear.

Quicker Military Responses Required

The East Bengal cauldron took a long time to come to boil. War came at least six months after it was seen coming. Such a long lead time for war preparations was exceptional and is not to be expected in the future. But even so many months were not found enough to complete all the preparations, although just enough had been done to win in the East and to hold the front in the West. The 101 Communication Zone Area operating on the Northern Axis could not be made stronger due, it has been claimed, to the logistic

difficulty of concentrating troops and dumping supplies in Meghalaya. If the Line of Communication through Meghalaya could be adequately improved, two divisions could have been launched from there by taking out troops from the three Corps. Similarly, the advance from Gadra Road on the Naya Chor axis in the southern Rajasthan sector could not be sustained due to the lack of Engineer resources to improve the lengthening L of C. The Civil Affairs Organisation inducted into Bangladesh after the Surrender was hastily improvised and did not function quite smoothly.

Indian Military planners, it seems, need to respond more quickly to the requirements of fast moving crises and operations. Since military men really learn their trade only during actual warfare, all deficiencies are almost impossible to remove in peace time. But greater efforts can perhaps be made in training to reduce the lead time and to produce quick and adequate military responses, by simplifying the procedures, reducing the paper work and providing the incremental elements also in peacetime Exercises and war games.

The Intelligence Aspect

The intelligence machinery gathering, evaluating and disseminating information about the enemy functioned perhaps better in 1971 than it had on previous occasions. The radio intercept and decoding service definitely gave valuable support before and during the operations. "Security" appears to have been well maintained throughout, and major clandestine operations were also undertaken.

But several deficiencies were also repeatedly felt. Commanders at various levels have testified to the handicap imposed on them by incorrect or inadequate intelligence. Predictive analysis by an integrated or at least well knit intelligence apparatus could have enabled the government to anticipate the momentous events of March/April 1971, and to be prepared for them. Pakistan's 7 Infantry Division was never reliably located and came to be called 'the Ghost Division' because it was reported from so many different localities. Its known existence and unknown location tied down all the Indian commanders, from the Kashmir Valley to Rajasthan, as each felt compelled to take into account the possibility of the Ghost Division striking in his sector. Even the 1 Armoured Division of Pakistan was not reliably located till the second week of December 71.

On the tactical level too, intelligence proved

far from satisfactory. The unreported but very real presence of strong Pak forces behind Islamgarh endangered the Indian Army brigade advancing on Rahimyar Khan, in the central Rajasthan sector, and it was perhaps lucky that the Indian force had not embroiled itself deeper. Again, the existence of the new road linking Kaliakair and Sabhar was discovered fortuitously and enabled the 101 Communication Zone troops to reach Dhaka without crossing a major river. It is surprising that Indian Intelligence had been totally ignorant of the existence of this road, in spite of all the sources available to it, including the Mukti Bahini and the friendly population in Bangladesh. It should also be noted that combat intelligence in the battle zone is basically the concern of the field commander.

Intelligence agencies naturally tend to play safe by forwarding to the user all reports received, and the Indian agencies acted accordingly in 1971. This only confused the users. Passing on the information without careful evaluation was unfortunate. The multiplicity of Intelligence agencies working in the field without any centralised control resulted in unhealthy rivalry and waste of effort. There were many cases in which a vitally important information gathered by the interrogation of prisoners of war did not reach in time those to whom it would have proved invaluable. There was delay in interpretation and dissemination of information from aerial photo reconnaissance. In the future, electronic warfare would play a crucial role. The need for electronic warfare units was keenly felt by some commanders even in 1971.

These deficiencies luckily did not prevent the Indian Armed Forces from conducting highly successful campaigns in 1971. But they deserve serious attention from the Indian Government.

The Mukti Bahini

Two widely different assessments about the effectiveness of the Mukti Bahini were voiced after the war.

One assessment, made by many Pakistani and Indian officers, opined that the Mukti Bahini was quite ineffective and would never have liberated Bangladesh without the active intervention of the Indian forces. The Bengalees had lived in terror of the Pak army for decades. Sent in to raid a small Pak army post, they fired a few shots from several hundred yards, and fled as soon as Pak troops fired back, often throwing away their arms in the nearest pond.

The very large force, therefore, could not liberate any sizeable area. Zia's Brigade declined to attack Kamalpur when this was suggested. The Mukti Bahini commanders were holding back, to conserve their strength and weapons intact in order to capture power after liberation.

The opposite assessment claims that, with small beginnings, the Mukti Bahini ruled in the country side after the monsoon, and also in the cities at night. They carried out explosions and assassinations in Dhaka itself. They made Pak troops afraid to move out except in large bodies, particularly at night, and hampered their mobility by destroying many bridges. Pak troops were getting demoralized by autumn. Osmani claimed that the Mukti Bahini would have liberated Bangladesh in ten more months without the intervention of the Indian Army.

The truth lies in between these totally different assessments. The Mukti Bahini could not fight pitched battles even in November 1971, as it lacked heavy weapons and air support. The frogmen of the Mukti Bahini showed great skill and dedication in their hazardous work of attacking enemy ships in harbours a hundred kilometres deep inside hostile territory. The students in the Mukti Bahini were highly motivated, though the EBR/EPR, it often seemed, were not.

Niazi said after the Surrender that the Mukti Bahini had made his forces blind and deaf. Help of the Mukti Bahini in giving intelligence, providing transport etc. was invaluable, although the information provided could not be militarily very valuable due to their lack of training and unfamiliarity with war equipment. In course of time, the Mukti Bahini would have become a formidable force, though it appears highly improbable that it could defeat the Pak Army in East Bengal on its own.

It, however, appears certain that a much smaller force better trained, better armed and highly motivated would have been more effective. The money and effort spent in training and arming this huge force of nearly 100,000 men hardly gave commensurate results during the liberation struggle. And after the liberation of Bangladesh, this horde of half-armed, half-disciplined and ill-assorted men created innumerable problems for its own government. Perhaps it was a political necessity for the Provisional Govt. of Bangladesh to raise such a large force, to keep the more volatile and militant of the refugees from mischief and to allow a controlled and monitored outlet for their feelings and energies. Tajuddin Ahmad and his colleagues may have hoped to convert the

large Mukti Bahini into some sort of a 'Land Army' to undertake reconstruction of the war ravaged country after its liberation. But events developed differently. During the struggle, the ebullient and controversial Maj Gen S.S. Uban had strongly criticised the Mukti Bahini set-up and plan : after the war Gen Manekshaw, Lt Gen Aurora and many others agreed with him substantially, though not entirely. With the benefit of hind sight, history must record it as a major mistake that a force of the size and nature of the Mukti Bahini was created. And it was undoubtedly a graver mistake that the Bangladesh forces included disparate elements like the half-civilian Gano Bahini, the professional Niyomito Bahini, and the elitist Mujib Bahini.

The Para Military Forces

During the Indo-Pak War 1971, the para military forces, and particularly the recently created Border Security Force, played a high profile role. From the middle of May, the BSF along the East Bengal border was placed under the command of the Army. In the prewar skirmishes the force was actively involved, and fought alongside the Army during the December war in several sectors. Most of the Army commanders had praised for the general performance of the BSF. But several unsatisfactory aspects were also pointed out by them.

The para military forces were expected to fulfil two very different roles: one involving active hostilities and counter insurgency operations, and the second in aid of the Civil Power. These two different roles were almost impossible to play satisfactorily. Not having been trained with Army troops in peace, the para military forces could not operate efficiently alongside the Army in war. Even their signal channels were different. Although the BSF had a good deal of fire power, the men were not trained for war. There was, above all, a lack of mutual confidence and understanding between the officers and the men of the different forces and the Army.

Army officers felt, therefore, that the BSF at least should be clubbed together with the Army and employed primarily to repel external aggression. It would be always available to go to the aid of the Civil Power in case of need, just as the Army itself was always available. But such employment should be the exception and not the normal role of the BSF. Other para military forces like the CRPF might be earmarked for the main role of maintaining law and order and assisting the civil authorities. If the BSF was to operate with the Army, the Force should reflect the work, culture and ethos of the Armed Forces and

not those of the Police. It might be necessary for the BSF to be officered by Army Officers, retired or seconded to the BSF, and the BSF in that case should be placed under the control of the Ministry of Defence instead of the Ministry of Home Affairs, on the pattern of the Coast Guard. Such arrangements, it was felt, would enable the BSF to get sufficiently integrated with the Army, enabling it to replace regular Army units in less critical sectors of the battle front.

CONCLUSION

This detailed and frank account of the 1971 war has revealed several inadequacies, and even mistakes, of the Indian Govt. leaders and commanders at different levels. Apart from those already discussed, a few other minor mistakes can be listed. Imposing, and lifting soon after, the naval "blockade" of Pakistan was one. The specially kind treatment of and amenities provided to the Pak PsOW - much beyond the provisions of the Geneva Convention - appears to have been another. It produced no discernible gratitude or friendliness towards India in the PsOW or the Pakistan public. Similarly, the generosity and consideration shown by India in the Simla Agreement did not pay off, and bought no goodwill or amity.

On the whole, however, it was indeed a brilliant performance. Strong public pressure for premature military intervention in East Bengal was successfully resisted by a conscientious Army Chief and a strong and stable Central Government leadership. For once, the diplomatic service received universal acclaim for mobilising public opinion abroad. The media was handled with exceptional competence and sensitivity. The political and military goals were carefully determined, dovetailed and pursued single mindedly. An extremely cohesive team of political leaders, Service Chiefs and bureaucrats planned everything comprehensively and well in time. The Bangladesh leaders, labouring under acute tensions and innumerable pressures, were treated with consideration and the greatest diplomatic skill. International pressures from many quarters were withstood. Redoubtable practitioners of 'real politik' like Kissinger were worsted at their own game. A frail lady and her seemingly soft, "Gandhian" people, faced with mortal peril, fought back with iron determination and uncanny skill, crushed the aggressor, made 'paper tigers' of his mighty friends, and dazzled the world with a brilliant military victory. Power balance in South Asia re-adjusted itself into a new equilibrium commensurate with the changed profile and mood of the new India. December 1971 gave birth to two new nations : Bangladesh, and India too. None could foresee then the deeply disappointing developments in the next few years.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Times of India, 29 August 1978.
2. East Bengal had many left wing parties before 1971, e.g. East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist and Leninist) led by Muhammad Toaha and Abdul Huq, East Bengal Communist Party led by Abdul Matin and Alauddin Ahmad, and NAP (Bhashani). There were also in the Mukti Bahini some dedicated Left Groups, like Abu Tahar, Ziauddin (not famous Zia) and the secret Jatyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) which emerged openly after 1971. The Leftists favoured a long war of independence waged by the workers and peasants without major assistance from capitalist India. They wanted to win the independence struggle as well as the class struggle simultaneously.
3. Sodhi, Brig, H.S., "Operation Wind Fall".

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ROLE OF THE BSF IN THE BANGLADESH LIBERATION STRUGGLE*

BSF units, normally employed on guarding the Indo-East Pakistan border, got involved with the Bangladesh crisis immediately after the Crack-Down of 25 March 1971.

On receipt of frantic requests from the Awami League leaders of Bangladesh for immediate help to continue the freedom struggle, "Border Security Force was directed to take such measures as would not endanger the security of border on Eastern Frontier while helping the liberation forces of Bangladesh to achieve their aim". Shri K.F. Rustamji, Director General, BSF, lost no time in positioning hand-picked officers with their special commando forces at the most strategic points of the Bangladesh border for rendering necessary help to the Freedom Fighters. On 29 March 1971, Brig B.C. Pande of the BSF was verbally directed by Rustamji to proceed to Tripura to help the Bangladesh liberation forces. Brig Pande with his 104 Commando Bn was posted at Agartala, Col Rampal Singh with his 103 Commando Bn at Cooch Behar, Col Megh Singh, Vr C, with his 18 Commando Bn at Bongaon, and Brig M.S. Chatterjee, MC, with his Commando staff from Hazaribagh at Balurghat by the first of April.

On 31 March 1971, Brig B.C. Pande reached Agartala in Tripura with his commando group consisting of a few Officers and 123 other ranks to carry out the following tasks:-

"a) To contact the liberation forces and help them as best as possible.

b) To train para military forces and people who volunteer to join Mukti Bahini.

c) To plan and conduct such operations as may help Mukti Fauj to achieve their aim.

d) To liaise with civil and military authorities and keep them informed about the situation on our borders."

Immediately, Brig Pande established contact with the deserter Officers of EBR and EPR, as well as Col M.A.G. Osmani (Retd), who had arrived at Agartala from Dhaka on foot, on 2 April 1971. He advised the Mukti Bahini to avoid direct engagements with the Pak

*Based mainly on official records.

forces and to take recourse to guerrilla tactics, because of the superior strength and greater fire power of the Pakistanis. Without losing any time, decisions were taken to (i) disrupt rail/road communication on Chittagong-Gomilla, Chittagong-Noakhali, Comilla-Brahmanbaria, Brahmanbaria-Sylhet, and Sylhet-Mymensingh lines; (ii) coordinate Mukti Fauj actions; (iii) start Training Centres for the Mukti Bahini; (iv) set up proper administration to conduct the operations smoothly, and (v) establish the Bangladesh Forces HQ.

Generally speaking, upto the middle of April 1971, the Mukti Bahini controlled the eastern region of Bangladesh, comprising the five districts of Sylhet, Comilla, Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and Noakhali; and the Pak army was either confined to the cantonment areas or was milling around the airfields. The civilian population of Bangladesh was surcharged with great enthusiasm for the liberation of the country, and volunteers were joining the ranks of the Mukti Fauj in large numbers. It was in this atmosphere of unbounded hope and electrifying patriotism that the BSF entered the scene to help the people of Bangladesh resist the brutal Pak genocide of an unarmed nation.

In the Tripura Sector, Brig Pande organised training camps to train the Mukti Fauj guerrillas at:-

- a) Bagafa
- b) Kathalia
- c) Teliapara/Simna
- d) Ashrambari
- e) Patharkhandi

These training camps trained 2,150 Bangladeshi guerrillas and sent them deep inside Bangladesh as far as Dhaka, and also handed over 950 trainees to the Army authorities on 7 May 1971. The training covered Tactics, Field Craft, use of Rifles, LMG, MMG, 3" mortars, and explosives. Brig Pande also installed a transmitter for carrying out psychological warfare against the Pak Army. Training camps were set up by the BSF in other Sectors also - at Hingalganj, Hasnabad, Taki, Itinda, Bongaon, Boyra, Betal, Shikarpur, Jalangi, Gourbagan, Patiram, Dhansairgram, Papri and Tapurhat.

Initially, Brig Pande organised the Mukti Fauj

in his area sector-wise:-

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Headquarters</u>	<u>POL Supply points.</u>
Sector 1	Major Zia	Chittagong to Feni	Ramgarh	Sabrum
Sector 2	Major Khalid	Feni to Titas river	Motinagar	Motinagar
Sector 3	Major Shafiulla	Titas to Shaistaganj	Teliapara	Simna
Sector 4	Major Zaman	Shaistaganj to Sylhet	Maulavi Bazar	Ashrambari and Karimganj.

Each BSF Section was equipped with two LMGs, besides Rifles, grenades, etc., and each Battalion with six MMGs and six 3" mortars. Later, Indian Army issued a few 4.2" mortars, 20mm Guns, 40 mm Guns, 6 Pounders, 3.7" Howitzers, and .50 Brownings.

Brig Pande's commandos demolished a large number of road/railway bridges in Tripura-Sylhet Sector, the more important of which were:-

- a) Subhapur bridge over the Fenny on the Chittagong-Comilla line (night 1/2 April)
- b) Ujanisar road bridge over the Titas on the Pak National Highway, linking Comilla with Sylhet (4 April)
- c) Gangasagar railway bridge between Chittagong and Comilla (4 April)
- d) Ramnagar railway bridge on Comilla-Dhaka railway line (5 April)
- e) Dhumghat railway bridge over the Fenny, linking Chittagong with Naokhali and Comilla (8 April)
- f) Bijaipur road bridge (12 April)
- g) Mian Bazar road bridge on Kakri nullah (15 April)
- h) Shahbazpur road bridge on the Titas (16 April)
- i) Chauddagram road bridge (19 April)

j) Gunabati rail bridge on little Fenny
(20 April)

k) Goadanagar road bridge (26 April)

This resulted in the disruption of supply and communication lines of the Pak forces, and the consequent slowing down of Pak efforts to re-establish authority over all parts of East Pakistan. The commandos also launched daring mortar attacks against several Pak airfields in this area, notably Dhulipara airfield in Comilla (7 April), Salutikar airfield in Sylhet (15 April), and Shamshernagar airfield (23 April). Raiding parties, consisting mostly of students, were sent to deal with quislings who were helping the Pak troops actively. For example, on 5 May, 1971, a raiding party, equipped with light arms, captured the Pak collaborators in the villages of Darogahat and Muhriganj and "gave them the supreme punishment". Similar raiding parties were sent into Feni to deal with the enemies of the liberation movement. In fact, about 500 students, trained by the BSF, operated very effectively in Chittagong-Noakhali area. Brig Pande organised a special commando group called "Black Shirts" for ambushing the Pak forces at different places. Equipped with two Light Machine Guns, three Rifles and one Sten Gun, plus four Grenades per person, the "Black Shirts", numbering six only, inflicted considerable casualties on two truck-loads of Pak troops on the south of Subhapur bridge on 3 May 1971. Similar ambushes were carried out on 5 and 6 May 1971 near Alinagar, across river Fenny. The fall of Subhapur bridge position to the Pak forces on 12 May 1971 after a running fight for 40 days, marked the turning point in the Mukti Bahini struggle in this Sector. However, in the battle of Subhapur nearly 200 casualties were suffered by the Pak troops.

Elsewhere also, BSF disrupted the communication lines with the help of demolition parties, attacked border out-posts and ambushed Pak troops. In early April 1971, 18 BSF Battalion at Petrapole made its mark by putting a ring around and the Pak forces at Jhikargacha and confining them to the Jessore cantonment. The BSF fought effectively against Pak gun boats which came from the Khulna naval base up to the Ichhamati river and threatened the Indian border. The BSF, equipped with six 40 mm guns, sank one Pak gun boat and severely damaged another. They attacked Lalmonirhat airfield on 11 April, demolished a railway bridge on Kurigram-Chilamari line (QE 5857) on 1 May, and three major and five minor bridges on the railway

line between Barakhata and Bhotmari, later. Total pak area reportedly liberated and handed over by the BSF to the Army in the Cooch Behar Sector alone was 1,800 sq. miles including about 1,200 sq. miles around Patgram and Hatibandha.

The BSF activities during the Bangladesh crisis fall under three broad divisions:-

Phase I :- (26 March 1971 to 14 May 1971) - Independent operations, already described above.

Phase II :- (15 May 1971 to 14 October 1971) - During this period, the BSF had the duty of protecting the Indo-East Pakistan border and defending the Indian Border Out Posts. They operated independently during this phase, but in close cooperation with the Indian Army. Although the Army had taken over the responsibility of training, administration and operation of MF/FF since the middle of May 1971, yet most of these functions were performed through BSF, particularly operational planning and sending of MF inside Bangladesh.

Phase III :- (15 October 1971 to 26 January 1972) - During this period, BSF operated under the control of the Indian Army, when counter-offensives against the Pak forces were jointly planned by BSF and Army Formations. Commencing from September 1971, Pak forces were ordered to dominate the border and reoccupy their border outposts which they were forced to abandon earlier. Joint counter-offensives were launched against these Pak efforts. It may be noted here that even after 15 October 1971, the working relationship between the Army and the BSF was not free from confusion. The following two quotes from knowledgeable persons will clarify this point:-

Brig H.S. Sodhi has said: "The BSF came under operational and administrative command around 8 November but the state was still nebulous. Orders were received by them direct through their channels and movement of their troops took place without our prior knowledge, let alone approval. This is an aspect that needs more coordination and willing implementation in the future".

Maj Gen L. Singh has stated: "A number of questions arose as to the command, control and coordination of these joint activities. (The BSF were not placed under my command till the actual operations commenced). This created a lot of unnecessary irritations and delay in tackling local situations".

The twenty-three units of the BSF, located in the following areas, came under the operational control of the Indian Army with effect from 15 October 1971:-

1. 2 CORPS AREA

Under DIG, BSF (West Bengal)

71 BSF Bn
72 BSF Bn less one coy
76 BSF Bn

2. MAIN 4 CORPS AREA

Under DIG BSF (Tripura)
DIG BSF (Silchar) (with 8 Mtn Div)

86 BSF Bn (less one coy and four pl)
84 BSF Bn

3. 33 CORPS AREA

Under DIG BSF (North Bengal)

70 BSF Bn
73 BSF Bn
74 BSF Bn
77 BSF Bn
78 BSF Bn
82 BSF Bn (less 2 coys)
103 BSF Bn

4. BENGAL AREA

One Coy ex 72 BSF Bn

5. 101 COMMUNICATION ZONE AREA

Under DIG BSF (Shillong)

82 BSF Bn (2 Coys only)
83 BSF Bn
85 BSF Bn
86 BSF Bn (1 Coy and 2 Pl only)

6. MIZO HILLS RANGE AREA

80 BSF Bn
87 BSF Bn (2 Coys)
90 BSF Bn
91 BSF Bn
92 BSF Bn
93 BSF Bn
104 BSF Bn

Under the orders of the Indian Army, the BSF established a number of bridgeheads along the Bangladesh border, thus enabling the Indian forces to launch their operations subsequently from these

vantage points. For example, they claim to have advanced from Amarkhana to Jagdalhat, and then to Pachagarh; from Ruhia to Thakurgaon; from Baura to Barakhata and then to Hatibandha; and from Sahibganj to Bhurangamari; from Andherjharkhamar to Raiganj and Kurigram. They also occupied new footholds for the Indian Army by dislodging entrenched Pak forces from Khanpurhat, Bantara, Mohanpur and Haripur, opposite West Dinajpur. Lt Col O'Conor of 70 BSF, personally leading his men eliminated a newly established Pak BOP at Bantara, opposite Samjia, held by a platoon of Razakars stiffened by a Section of 26 FF. He was awarded Vr C for gallantry. Similarly, Lt Col Mukherjee with his 77 BSF Bn removed the Pak BOP at Khanpur which was active in raiding Indian villages in the area. Captain Sidhu, DSP, was awarded Sena Medal in the Khanpur operation. BSF boys stood their ground well against Pak shellings on Radhikapur, Gitaldaha and Sahebganj.

After the Army took over the border of Bangladesh, the West Bengal border was divided into three Sectors: (a) Southern Sector extending from the Bay of Bengal to the Ganges, (b) Western Sector from the Ganges to Radhikapur, and (c) Northern Sector from Radhikapur to Brahmaputra. Each of these sectors was placed under an Indian Army Brigadier, entrusted with the task of training and organising the Mukti Bahini for guerrilla warfare. New training camps were set up at Bhagabangola, Hilli, Raiganj, Haldibari, Dinahata and Satrasal. When the Razakars and criminals started forages into Indian territory to carry off villagers and womenfolk, especially in the Haldibari area of Cooch Behar district and the Islampur area of West Dinajpur district, BSF commandos made daring raids on the Razakar dens, inflicting heavy losses on them. The Pak raids completely stopped.

The BSF had to work hand in hand with the Sector Commanders as well as the local formation commanders of the Indian Army in carrying out guerrilla operations against Pak forces. They protected the flanks of advancing army columns, protected the lines of communication, guarded arms dumps and prisoners of war, and even marched together with the army, e.g. from Boyra to Jessore. At Banpur, Gede, Dadrsana and Meherpur, they entered Bangladesh and got entrenched opposite Pak positions to hold the Pak troops there. They also reduced areas, by-passed by the Indian army columns, and kept large groups of Pak forces engaged, thus weakening Pak opposition against the advancing Indian troops.

The BSF not only trained the Mukti Fauj initially and gave them military aid, guidance and

organisational help, but also kept the liberation struggle alive by dispelling distrust between the Mukti Fauj and the political leaders of Bangladesh. For example, when a lot of misunderstanding developed between the Mukti Fauj Commanders and the Awami League leaders on the ground that the political leaders neither gave any policy directions nor provided any logistic support to the Freedom Fighters for carrying out the freedom struggle, Brig Pande called a meeting of both the parties in his office on 8 April 1971 to settle their differences. At one stage Col Osmani was so excited during his arguments with the Mukti Fauj Commanders that he submitted his resignation. However, Brig Pande after considerable efforts persuaded Osmani to withdraw his resignation and settle the issues. Without such mediatory endeavours on the part of the BSF Commanders, the freedom struggle of Bangladesh could have come to a halt at an early stage during the progress of the struggle.

It may be added, however, that the above account of the BSF achievements, based as it is on the official reports of the BSF Commanders, is not fully endorsed by Indian Army sources. Many Army Officers, including the Chief of Army Staff, felt that the BSF claims were grossly exaggerated.

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TREATY OF PEACE, FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN
THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND THE UNION OF SOVIET
SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

DESIROUS of expanding and consolidating the existing relations of sincere friendship between them,

BELIEVING that the further development of Friendship and cooperation meets the basic national interests of both the States as well as the interest of lasting peace in Asia and the world,

DETERMINED to promote the consolidation of universal peace and security and to make steadfast efforts for the relaxation of international tensions and the final elimination of the remnants of colonialism,

UPHOLDING their firm faith in the principles of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between States with different political and social systems,

CONVINCED that in the world today international problems can only be solved by cooperation and not by conflict,

RE-AFFIRMING their determination to abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter,

The Republic of India on the one side, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the other side,

HAVE decided to conclude the present Treaty, for which purpose the following plenipotentiaries have been appointed:

On behalf of the Republic of India:
Sardar Swaran Singh,
Minister of External Affairs.

On behalf of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic:
Mr. A.A. Gromyko,
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Who, having each presented their credentials, which are found to be in proper form and due order, HAVE AGREED as follows:

ARTICLE I

The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare that enduring peace and friendship shall prevail

between the two countries and their peoples. Each party shall respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other Party and refrain from interfering in the other's internal affairs. The High Contracting Parties shall continue to develop and consolidate the relations of sincere friendship, good neighbourliness and comprehensive cooperation existing between them on the basis of the aforesaid principles as well as those of equality and mutual benefit.

ARTICLE II

Guided by the desire to contribute in every possible way to ensure enduring peace and security of their people, the High Contracting Parties declare their determination to continue their efforts to preserve and to strengthen peace in Asia and throughout the world, to halt the arms race and to achieve general and complete disarmament, including both nuclear and conventional, under effective international control.

ARTICLE III

Guided by their loyalty to the lofty ideal of equality of all peoples and Nations, irrespective of race or creed, the High Contracting Parties condemn colonialism and racialism in all forms and manifestations, and re-affirm their determination to strive for their final and complete elimination.

The High Contracting Parties shall cooperate with other states to achieve these aims and to support the just aspirations of the peoples in their struggle against colonialism and racial domination.

ARTICLE IV

The Republic of India respects the peace loving policy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics aimed at strengthening friendship and cooperation with all nations.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics respects India's policy of non-alignment and re-affirms that this policy constitutes an important factor in the maintenance of universal peace and international security and in the lessening of tensions in the world.

ARTICLE V

Deeply interested in ensuring universal peace and security, attaching great importance to their mutual cooperation in the international field for

achieving those aims, the High Contracting Parties will maintain regular contacts with each other on major international problems affecting the interests of both the States by means of meetings and exchanges of views between their leading statesmen, visits by official delegations and special envoys of the two Governments, and through diplomatic channels.

ARTICLE VI

Attaching great importance to economic, scientific and technological cooperation between them, the High Contracting Parties will continue to consolidate and expand mutually advantageous and comprehensive cooperation in these fields as well as expand trade, transport and communications between them on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual benefit and most-favoured-nation treatment, subject to the existing agreements and the special arrangements with contiguous countries as specified in the Indo-Soviet Trade Agreement of December 26, 1970.

ARTICLE VII

The High Contracting Parties shall promote further development of ties and contacts between them in the fields of science, art, literature, education, public health, press, radio, television, cinema, tourism and sports.

ARTICLE VIII

In accordance with the traditional friendship established between the two countries, each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declares that it shall not enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party.

Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from any aggression against the other Party and to prevent the use of its territory for the commission of any act which might inflict military damage on the other High Contracting Party.

ARTICLE IX

Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other party. In the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries.

ARTICLE X

Each High Contracting Party solemnly declares that it shall not enter into any obligation, secret or public, with one or more states, which is incompatible with this Treaty. Each High Contracting Party further declares that no obligation exists, nor shall any obligation be entered into, between itself and any other State or States, which might cause military damage to the other Party.

ARTICLE XI

This Treaty is concluded for the duration of twenty years and will be automatically extended for each successive period of five years unless either High Contracting Party declares its desire to terminate it by giving notice to the other High Contracting Party twelve months prior to the expiration of the Treaty. The Treaty will be subject to ratification and will come into force on the date of the exchange of Instruments of Ratification which will take place in Moscow within one month of the signing of this Treaty.

ARTICLE XII

Any difference of interpretation of any Article or Articles of this Treaty which may arise between the High Contracting Parties will be settled bilaterally by peaceful means in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

The said Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty in Hindi, Russian and English, all texts being equally authentic and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in New Delhi on the ninth day of August in the year one thousand nine hundred and seventy-one.

On behalf of the
Republic of India

On behalf of the
Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics

Swaran Singh

A.A. Gromyko

Minister of External
Affairs

Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's address at the Columbia University, New York, November 6, 1971.

Following are excerpts from the speech :

....Had I come here just a few months ago and you had asked me what are the difficulties, I would have said: "There are no difficulties now. We are united. We are sure of our direction. And we are going ahead solving our problems one after another". But just a week after our new Parliament met and we were still, in the way of all democratic societies, congratulating one another on our victory, a terrific new burden fell on us. All of you are aware what it is. So I do not want to dwell on it. But I would like to point to some questions which arise and which we think are very basic questions. We are told today that because our forces and those of West Pakistan are facing each other on the borders, there is a threat of war. And this is true. But the real problem is not because these forces are face to face. The real problem is because of what has happened in East Bengal. If today there is peace in East Bengal it would not matter if our forces are face to face in the West or in the East. There would be no war. But there is this a very serious problem there. And how did it arise? It did not arise because there was insurrection or because there was a desire of one part of Pakistan to separate, to secede, to become independent. No such voice was raised. There was an election held, a free election under the present military leadership of Pakistan. The programme for the election was put frankly and openly before the people. If the Government of West Pakistan objected to that programme, that was the moment to say, "we will not allow the elections, we cannot allow your six points, we do not approve of them". Nothing was said. The elections were held and the people of both parts of Pakistan overwhelmingly voted for one party - the Awami League.

I am congratulated on my great majority. But it was nothing compared to the majority which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gained in the election in Pakistan. It was a tremendous victory for him. And he is not an extremist. He was a moderate person. In fact, if I may use the term, he used to be called by some others an American stooge at one time. But once the elections were won, apparently this came as surprise to the Government of West Pakistan and they wanted to find out ways of getting around these results.

Negotiations were begun. We were not in touch with either Sheikh Mujib or his party of East Bengal. We did not know what was happening. We read in the papers that there were negotiations. Later, much later, in fact only about a week before I started on this trip, I happened to meet somebody who said he was present at the negotiations. And, on the 24th of March, they thought that they were coming to a settlement, may be not a satisfactory settlement but still something that could be worked out. But this period was in fact used to bring troops from West Pakistan, and on the 25th of March a reign of terror was let loose. Perhaps you have heard that the biggest concentration, the biggest attack, was on the University of Dacca, where a large number of faculty and students were killed on the very first night. The entire East Bengali population - the civilians, the para-military forces, the East Bengal Regiment and the East Pakistani Rifles - changed their allegiance, that is they decided to fight the Pakistani Army. They are the base today of the fight of the people of East Bengal. They are the people who are training the guerrillas, the young people who are coming across.

Now, we are asked the question why is India hesitating to allow United Nations observers? We are not really hesitating, because we have some observers already. We have United Nations observers on the Western frontier who have been there since many years and we have about ten people from the United Nations High Commission for Relief of Refugees on the eastern border. Ours is a very open society - anybody who comes, any of you, any of the diplomats who are there, the Press, parliamentary delegations from Europe, from Latin America, from Asia, from New Zealand, the Arab countries, the Scandinavian countries, all these people have been to our camps; they have been to the border, and many of them have crossed over and been to East Bengal. Every one of them, without exception, has given one story, which is of the very great misery and the utterly chaotic conditions which exist there. Now, in these conditions we are told that there is an attempt to have a civilian government by declaring some seats vacant which are not vacant. The people who were legally, constitutionally, elected are still there, but their seats have been declared vacant and I am told that 55 people have been declared elected unopposed. Now, in the present conditions they can have the whole Parliament declared unopposed, because it is surely not possible for anybody to vote.

If United Nations observers go, what do they hope to achieve? If they go with the intention of really bringing about peace in East Bengal, they are very welcome on our side : on any side they want to

go, we will facilitate their going there. But this is not what they want to do. They want to say, "what is happening in East Bengal is an internal problem of Pakistan - we will only want to see what is happening at the border". What is happening at the border cannot be divorced from what is happening inside East Bengal. You cannot say, "we will go and try and prevent the guerrillas, but not prevent the army killing the people". I cannot even mention to you what is happening to some of the women there. The UN observers are not going to interfere with those things, but they do want to interfere with what the freedom-fighters are doing.

You may ask, "is India interfering in this by giving some support?" I can tell you that the people of East Bengal are not very happy with what we are doing for them. They think, and I agree with them, we are doing far too little. And what we are doing is something that we cannot help doing. We cannot stop people going across the border either from the other side to our side or from our side across back to East Pakistan. Had we been able to do this, we would certainly have taken measures to stop these millions of refugees from coming. Initially the reaction was, "they are in great trouble, let us allow them in". But very soon the problems for us grew really beyond our control and thus are creating an extremely difficult situation.

The people of America have shown generosity. As I came here, I was given a cheque. I have been given cheques by school children in different countries, by poor people, all kinds of people, and we are grateful for that help. But the major problem is not a financial one. We are poor, we cannot afford these millions of people. But because we are poor, because we have known how to live without food, without necessities, we can put up with any difficulty. We can look after any number of people, of course with great discomfort to them and to us, and may be some people will die also. Nevertheless, we can survive this problem. What is difficult to survive are the political consequences, the social tensions, the difficulty of the administration, and last but not least, the real threat to our independence, to our stability, to our integrity. Because, with the refugees are coming people who are not genuine refugees. We are having sabotage. Our trains have been blown up, and all kinds of other things have happened.

So, India, today is facing a real threat. We had reached a point in economic growth, in social stability, this was not an easy task; it was achieved

against very great odds. We had help from many countries, including the United States, but it has been a very very small part of the major endeavour. The major brunt of the problems - whether it is of the refugees today or whether it is the problem of our own people, has been borne by the Indian people themselves. If there is progress, it is because the Indian people have put in the effort, put in the sacrifice that was needed to go ahead.

So, just when we come to a stage where we think we can go ahead much more easily, much faster, we suddenly have the problems of another country. They are not our problems. This other country has pushed across the border people who did not vote for their Government, but voted for the regime, they wanted. There is no other crime which these people have committed because the cry for independence arose after Sheikh Mujib was arrested, and not before. He himself, so far as I know, has not asked for independence, even now. But after he was arrested, after there was this tremendous massacre, it was understandable that the rest of the people should say: "After this, how can we live together? We have to be separate".

This is the situation. We have no animosity towards Pakistan even though they have campaigns of "Crush India", "Conquer India". They observed a Day or a Week and they had these stickers on their cars. We never had anything like this, and we never shall. We have not had anything against even China. China has attacked us, Pakistan has attacked us. On our side, we have always said we want friendship. On our side, we have always taken unilateral steps which we thought would lead to a normalisation of relations. But there has been no response forthcoming.

We do not mind if there is no response. But we do think that the limit of our endurance has been reached when they think they can just put their troubles on to us. Here was a problem they were facing - that their people had voted against the Government. So what do you do? You send them across the frontier. At one stroke, you get rid of your enemies, you get rid of population, and you weaken India, which you want to weaken. This is something which India just cannot tolerate. May be, I could tolerate. But with all my majority in Parliament, it is not a dictatorship. I have to carry not only my party, I have to carry, in a serious situation, all the other parties of India. And we feel that it is not just the question of India, because we believe that if peace is threatened in India, if stability is threatened in India, there cannot be peace and

stability in any part of Pakistan. They can have all the armies of the world, whether they have from China or the USA or any other country. They cannot bring peace if there is instability in the major part of the sub-continent.

Today, by some countries wanting to support the prestige of one man, they are threatening peace in the entire sub-continent. I do not personally think that they can save Pakistan, or keep it united, or keep it strong by supporting a person who is not an elected person, who is a military dictator. This is what we are concerned about - not really today's problems, but the basic values for which we have fought, for which so many of our people have given their lives. These are the values which are being attacked.

And if they are attacked next door to us, what guarantee have we that they can survive in our country and they cannot be attacked there. This is what bothers us. It is not important who is to blame, though I think Pakistan is to blame, but I do not want to score a debating point. What is important is : How can we now have peace? You cannot have peace just by saying that the troops should move. You can only have peace if the basic problem which has arisen is solved. And the basic problem is not in the West, where the troops are facing each other, but in the East.

Since I have mentioned troops, I would like to say one word more, and that is that Pakistan moved its troops about a week or ten days before we did anything. And the United Nations observer, who was there, took up this question with them. They said, "this is nothing serious, this is just ordinary training exercise". It is very strange indeed that you have these exercises and you keep your troops posted, not for a day or two days, but over a week. And ten days passed without any action from the United Nations or anybody else. Then we said, "these people may attack, and in order to defend ourselves we must move up our troops". Already twice, or three times if you include China, we have been invaded and been found unprepared. No government can last in a country if the people feel that is not going to defend the country or defend security.

We waited patiently, hoping that something would be done, some way would be found. But nobody was bothered. Not a word was said while these troops were on our borders facing us. It was only when our troops went in, that suddenly the world's concern came up: "Oh, the two troops are facing each other".

It is true that war is a dreadful thing. I have

lived through the last war in London during the worst part of the blitz. And I know that wars now are much worse. I know what happens to the civilian population. Never would anybody want war for their people. And certainly India will do nothing to provoke a war or conflict. But India is determined to safeguard her interests. India is determined to keep her freedom intact. India is united as never before, and India feels so strongly about these basic things whether it is freedom, whether it is democracy. It is a whole way of life with us. It is not a dogma, is not an ism, that we follow. It is a way of life which has kept our nation alive for thirty centuries. And we are not going to have it attacked because it suits somebody or other, or does not suit somebody or other. We want help, we want support, we welcome sympathy. But basically, in the world, every individual ultimately is alone and every nation is ultimately alone. And India is prepared to fight alone for what it thinks worth fighting for....

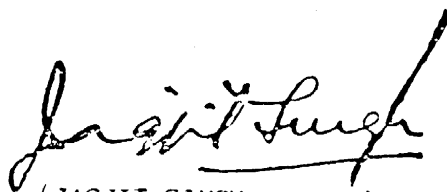
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INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER SIGNED AT DACCA
AT 1631 HOURS (IST) ON 16 DEC 1971

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command agree to surrender all PAKISTAN Armed Forces in BANGLA DESH to Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA, General Officer Commanding in Chief of the Indian and BANGLA DESH forces in the Eastern Theatre. This surrender includes all PAKISTAN land, air and naval forces as also all para-military forces and civil armed forces. The forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the places where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

The PAKISTAN Eastern Command shall come under the orders of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA as soon as this instrument has been signed. Disobedience of orders will be regarded as a breach of the surrender terms and will be dealt with in accordance with the accepted laws and usages of war. The decision of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA will be final, should any doubt arise as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA gives a solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to in accordance with the provisions of the GENEVA Convention and guarantees the safety and well-being of all PAKISTAN military and para-military forces who surrender. Protection will be provided to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of MOST PAKISTAN origin by the forces under the command of Lieutenant-General JAGJIT SINGH AURORA.

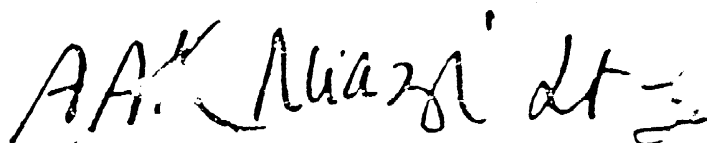


(JAGJIT SINGH AURORA)

Lieutenant-General

General Officer Commanding in Chief Martial Law Administrator Zone B and Indian and BANGLA DESH Forces in the Command Eastern Command (PAKISTAN) Eastern Theatre

16 December 1971.



(AMIR ABDULLAH KHAN NIAZI)

Lieutenant-General

16 December 1971.

WAR REPARATIONS CLAIMABLE FROM PAKISTAN

Information on broad estimates of expenditure etc. and compensation paid.

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---------------------------|
| 1. | Estimated value of total casualties of arms, equipments, vehicles and ammunition etc. in respect of Army during the war. | Rs. | 50,00,00,000-00 |
| 2. | Expenditure on the movement of troops/stores/ammunition by rail during the war. | Rs. | 7,05,36,726-00 |
| 3. | Estimated expenditure incurred by the Indian Air Force during the 14-day war. | Rs. | 55,71,00,000-00 |
| 4. | Estimated expenditure incurred by Indian Navy during 1971 hostilities. | Rs. | 34,98,82,440-56 |
| 5. | Total expenditure incurred by the Govt. of India on the maintenance of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). | Rs. | 326,00,00,000-00 |
| 6. | Payment of ex-gratia compensation assessed for damages to crops etc. during the preparatory stage of the conflict in the border States :- | | |
| | i) Rajasthan | Rs. | 7,14,000-00 |
| | ii) Punjab | Rs. | 36,64,000-00 |
| | iii) J & K | Rs. | 9,05,000-00 |
| 7. | Estimated expenditure incurred on the provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance to uprooted Indian nationals. | | |
| | i) Punjab | Rs. | 7,76,02,000-00 |
| | ii) J & K | Rs. | 2,54,73,000-00 |
| | iii) Rajasthan | Rs. | 99,71,000-00 |
| | iv) Gujarat | Rs. | 5,900-00 |
| | | | (only Rs. 1050 disbursed) |
| | v) Assam | Rs. | 13,904-00 |
| | vi) West Bengal | Rs. | 10,34,951-79 |

8.	Compensation paid by Tripura Government to civilians etc.	Rs.	11,45,490-00
9.	Amount of compensation paid by Rajasthan Govt. due to loss of civilian lives and property during war.	Rs.	6,290-50
10.	Expenditure incurred on assistance to local evacuees by Meghalaya Govt.	Rs.	69,54,145-00
11.	Total compensation paid by Punjab Government.	Rs.	1,77,87,000-00
12.	Compensation payable to Army personnel killed/wounded in war.	Rs.	1,61,39,274-00
13.	Compensation payable in respect of Officers/JCOs/ORs.	Rs.	1,59,70,189-00
14.	Cost of pull-back of troops from Bangladesh.	Rs.	88,79,458-15
15.	POL	Rs.	7,53,02,000-00
16.	Civilian vehicles hired/requisitioned.	Rs.	6,10,29,525-88
17.	Expenditure on the maintenance of PsOW.	Rs.	38,09,98,000-00
	Total -		Rs. 543,51,14,294-90

- NOTE :
- (1) The details in respect of compensation paid is not upto date. The figures given above are based upon the information received in 1972 from the respective State Governments.
- (2) The above figures do not include the compensation paid by J&K Govt. for loss of civilian life/property as it is not available.

Source : Official Records

AGREEMENT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF
PAKISTAN.

1. The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan are resolved that the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing task of advancing the welfare of their people.

In order to achieve this objective, the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan have agreed as follows:-

- i) That the principles and purposes of the Charter of United Nations shall govern the relations between the two countries;
- ii) That the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them. Pending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organisation, assistance or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations;
- iii) That the pre-requisite for reconciliation, good neighbourliness and durable peace between them is a commitment by both the countries to peaceful co-existence, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit;
- iv) That the basic issues and causes of conflict which have bedevilled the relations between the two countries for the last 25 years shall be resolved by peaceful means;
- v) That they shall always respect each other's national unity, territorial integrity, political independence and sovereign equality;

vi) That in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, they will refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of each other.

2. Both Governments will take all steps within their power to prevent hostile propaganda directed against each other. Both countries will encourage the dissemination of such information as would promote the development of friendly relations between them.

3. In order progressively to restore and normalise relations between the two countries step by step, it was agreed that :

- i) Steps shall be taken to resume communications, postal, telegraphic, sea, land including border posts, and air links including overflights;
- ii) Appropriate steps shall be taken to promote travel facilities for the nationals of the other country;
- iii) Trade and co-operation in economic and other agreed fields will be resumed as far as possible;
- iv) Exchange in the fields of science and culture will be promoted.

In this connection delegations from the two countries will meet from time to time to work out the necessary details.

4. In order to initiate the process of the establishment of durable peace, both the Governments agree that :

- i) Indian and Pakistani forces shall be withdrawn to their side of the international border;
- ii) In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this line;

iii) The withdrawals shall commence upon entry into force of this Agreement and shall be completed within a period of 30 days thereof.

5. This Agreement will be subject to ratification by both countries in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures, and will come into force with effect from the date on which the Instruments of Ratification are exchanged.

6. Both Governments agree that their respective Heads will meet again at a mutually convenient time in the future and that, in the meanwhile, the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and normalisation of relations, including the questions of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir and the resumption of diplomatic relations.

Sd/-
(Indira Gandhi)
Prime Minister
Republic of India

Sd/-
(Zulfikar Ali Bhutto)
President
Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Simla, the 2nd July, 1972.

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LIST OF GALLANTRY AWARD WINNERS, 1971:PARAM VIR CHAKRA

1. L/Nk Albert Ekka: Born in village Zari, Ranchi (Bihar) on 27 Dec 1942, L/Nk Albert Ekka (Service No.4239746) of 14 Guards, sacrificed his life on 3 Dec 1971 during a gallant charge on a Pakistani MMG position at Gangasagar in 4 Corps Sector of the Eastern Front. He was awarded PVC posthumously for the most conspicuous gallantry, determination and supreme sacrifice.
2. Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon: Born in village Rurka Isewal, Ludhiana (Punjab), on 17 July 1945, Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon (Service No.10877(P)) of the IAF had taken off from the Srinagar airfield in the midst of a Pakistani air attack on 14 Dec 1971 and hit two of the six enemy Sabres, before his Gnat crashed, causing his death. He was awarded PVC posthumously for supreme gallantry, flying skill and determination above and beyond the call of duty, displayed in the face of certain death.
3. 2/Lt Arun Khetarpal: Born in Pune (Maharashtra) on 14 Oct 1950, 2/Lt Arun Khetarpal (Service No.IC 25067) of 17 (Poona) Horse, foiled an enemy attempt at an armour breakthrough in the Shakargarh area in 1 Corps Sector of the Western Front on 16 Dec 1971, by destroying six Pakistani tanks, before himself being killed. He was awarded PVC for the most conspicuous gallantry in the face of the enemy, indomitable fighting spirit and tenacity of purpose.
4. Major Hoshiar Singh: Born in village Sisana, Rohtak (Haryana) on 5 May 1936, Major Hoshiar Singh (Service No.IC-14608) of the Grenadiers bravely repulsed a strong enemy attack in the Shakargarh area of 1 Corps Sector on the Western Front. In spite of his serious personal injuries, he refused to be evacuated from the battlefield till the cease-fire on 17 Dec 1971. He was awarded PVC for most conspicuous bravery, indomitable fighting spirit and leadership in the highest tradition of the Indian Army.

BAR TO MAHA VIR CHAKRA

<u>S1 No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
1.	Brigadier Singh, Sant, MVC (IC-5479)	Sikh LI	Dec 71
2.	Brigadier Vaidya, Arun Shridhar, MVC, AVSM (IC-1801)	Armoured Corps	5 Dec 71
3.	Major Rinchen, Chawang, MVC (IC-16224)	The Ladakh Scouts	8 Dec 71

MAHA VIR CHAKRA

1.	Brigadier Anand Sarup (IC-4501)	8 GR	
2.	Brigadier Bakshi, Joginder Singh, (IC-4870)	340(I) Inf VSM Bde Gp	7 Dec 71
3.	Brigadier Gharaya, Joginder Singh, Kirti Chakra, VSM (IC-1984)	Bihar	6 Dec 71
4.	Brigadier Gowrishankar, Krishnaswamy (IC-3999)	Signals	5 Dec 71
5.	Brigadier Kler, Hardev Singh (IC-493)	Signals	
6.	Brigadier Michigan, Anthony Harold Edward (IC-4190)	41 Mtn Bde	
7.	Brigadier Natu, Anant Vishwanath (IC-4703)	93 Inf Bde	3 Dec 71
8.	Brigadier Pande, Kailash Prasad (IC-4128)	Artillery	
9.	Brigadier Whig, Mohinder Lal (IC-3940)	121 Indep Inf Bde Gp	6 Dec 71
10.	Colonel Singh, Udai (IC-4868)	8 GR	8 Dec 71
11.	Lt Col Airy, Ved Parkash (IC-7750)	Grenadiers.	

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
12.	Lt Col Ghai, Ved Parkash (Posthumous) (IC-7199)	16 Madras	15 Dec 71
13.	Lt Col Harolikar, Arun Bhimrao (IC-7916)	5 GR (FF)	
14.	Lt Col Kapur, Surinder (IC-7684)	JAK RIF	
15.	Lt Col Khanna, Prem Kumar (IC-7380)	Sikh	3 Dec 71
16.	Lt Col Pannu, Kulwant Singh (IC-6213)	Para	11 Dec 71
17.	Lt Col Pathak, Harish Chandra (IC-7114)	8 Sikh LI	11 Dec 71
18.	Lt Col Rattan, Kashmiri Lal (IC-7661)	Sikh	3 Dec 71
19.	Lt Col Sandhu, Narinder Singh (IC-6638)	Dogra	5 Dec 71
20.	Lt Col Sharma, Rattan Nath (IC-5270)	21 Punjab	10 Dec 71
21.	Lt Col Singh, Hanut (IC-6126)	17 Horse	16 Dec 71
22.	Lt Col Singh, Raj Kumar (IC-7113)	14 Punjab	
23.	Lt Col Singh, Swai Bhwani (IC-9015)	10 Para(CDO)	5 Dec 71
24.	Lt Col Singh, Shamsher (IC-7018)	8 Guards	
25.	Lt Col Singh, Sukhjit (IC-6704)	14 Horse	11 Dec 71
26.	Lt Col Venugopal, Chitoor (IC-5096)	5/1 GR	7 Dec 71
27.	Lt Col Vohra, Raj Mohan (IC-6121)	4 Horse	
28.	Major Bal, Amarjit Singh (IC-13377)	17 Horse	15 Dec 71

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
29.	Major Berry, Vijay Kumar (IC-11567)	Para	
30.	Major Chandpuri, Kuldeep Singh (IC-18067)	23 Punjab	5 Dec 71
31.	Major Chowdhary, Vijay Rattan (IC-11004) (Posthumous)	Engineers	11 Dec 71
32.	Major Gahlaut, Anup Singh (IC-13792) (Posthumous)	Dogra	3 Dec 71
33.	Major Mankotia, Basdev Singh (IC-14221)	9 Punjab	3 Dec 71
34.	Major Narang, Daljit Singh (IC-8140) (Posthumous)	45 Cav	
35.	Major Singh, Dharan Vir (IC-14123)	Grenadiers	10 Dec 71
36.	Major Singh, Jaivir (IC-14509)	5 Sikh	3 Dec 71
37.	Captain Ahlawat, Devinder Singh (IC-19161) (Posthumous)	Dogra	5 Dec 71
38.	Captain Gour, Pradip Kumar (IC-16177) (Posthumous)	AOP Sqn	14 Dec 71
39.	Captain Walkar, Shankar Shankhapan (IC-23473) (Posthumous)	18 Madras	16 Dec 71
40.	Second Lt. Samra, Shamsher Singh (SS 22826) (Posthumous)	Guards	
41.	Subedar Singh, Malkiat (JC 39248) (Posthumous)	14 Punjab	17 Dec 71
42.	Subedar Singh, Mohinder (JC 33029)	18 Punjab	7 Dec 71

<u>S1</u> <u>No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
43.	Havildar Philipose, Thomas (2550166)	16 Madras	15 Dec 71
44.	Havildar Pun, Bir Bahadur (5032571)	5/1 GR	4 Dec 71
45.	Naik Singh, Sujan (2850287) (Posthumous)	7 Raj Rif	9 Dec 71
46.	L/Nk Chhetri, Nar Bahadur (13664646)	12 Guards	4 Dec 71
47.	L/Naik Pandey, Ram Ugrah (13657079) (Posthumous)	8 Guards	
48.	L/Naik Singh, Drig Pal (2960050) (Posthumous)	15 Rajput	13 Dec 71
49.	L/Naik Singh, Shanghara (3355332) (Posthumous)	2 Sikh	17 Dec 71
50.	Rifleman Chettri, Dil Bahadur (5439887)	4/5 GR (FF)	
51.	Rifleman Gurung, Pati Ram (5037008) (Posthumous)	5/1 GR	
52.	Sepoy Prasad, Ansuya (9212865) (Posthumous)	10 Mahar	
53.	Sepoy Salunkhe, Pandurang (2760401) (Posthumous)	15 Maratha LI	6 Dec 71

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VIR CHAKRA

S1 No.	Rank, Name and Service No.	Unit	Date of Award
1	2	3	4
1.	Lt Col Brar, Amarjeet Singh (IC-7814)	Raj Rif	
2.	Lt Col Brar, Kuldip Singh (IC-6732)	Maratha LI	11 Dec
3.	Lt Col Dias, Francis Tiberius (IC-7044)	11 Gorkha Rif	12 Dec
4.	Lt Col Gupta, Suresh Chandra (IC-7140)	5 Gorkha Rif	5 Dec
5.	Lt Col Gurung, Ram Bahadur (IC-6724)	11 Gorkha Rif	6 Dec
6.	Lt Col Kapoor, Satinder Kumar (IC-7414)	9 Gorkha Rif	6 Dec
7.	Lt Col Pandit, Bhartruhari Trimbak (IC-7320)	Engrs	16 Dec
8.	Lt Col Patric, Ian Lawlor (IC-10891)	Bihar	5 Dec
9.	Lt Col Rawat, Narinder Singh (IC-6451)	Arty	
10.	Lt Col Sawhney, Prakash Chander (IC-6796)	Bihar	4 Dec
11.	Lt Col Singh, Jasbir Pal (IC-5984)	8 Gorkha Rif	3 Dec
12.	Lt Col Singh, Raj (IC-4028)	Grenadiers	15 Dec
13.	Lt Col Suri, Raj Kumar (IC-8126)	Jat	
14.	Major Ahluwalia, Sarlejeet Singh (IC-15863)	Ladakh Scouts	8 Dec
15.	Major Anand, Vikram Kumar (IC-16611)	Sikh LI	14 Dec
16.	Major Arora, Ravinder Kumar (IC-58565)	Sikh LI	15 Dec
17.	Major Badgel, Bimal Kishan Das (IC-14797)	11 Gorkha Rif	8 Dec

1	2	3	4
18.	Major Bhanot, Vinod (IC-15906)	Gorkha Rif	16 Dec
19.	Major Bhaskar, Vijay Kumar (IC-16054)	Engrs	6 Dec
20.	Major Bhatia, Lalit Mohan (IC-16165) (Posthumous)	Rajput	14 Dec
21.	Major Bhola, Baldev Raj (SS-18854) (Posthumous)	Dogra	16 Dec
22.	Major Chandrakant (IC-18851)	Guards	4 Dec
23.	Major Chatterjee, Proshant Kumar (IC-11965)	Maratha LI	4 Dec
24.	Major Chaudhari, Suraj Jit (IC-7312)	4 Horse	6 Dec
25.	Major Chopra, Harish Kumar (IC-13761)	Arty	
26.	Major Dadkar, Ramesh Kumar (IC-14290) (Posthumous)	Maratha LI	
27.	Major Datta, Amlan Pratap (IC-12859)	9 Gorkha Rif	
28.	Major Duggal, Manjit Singh (IC-12641)	Arty	7 Dec
29.	Major Dulare, Nand (IC-17413)	Rajput	15 Dec
30.	Major Ganguly, Dipak Kumar (IC-18120) (Posthumous)	Mahar	
31.	Major Gill, Kuldeep Singh (IC-14014)	5 Gorkha Rif	14 Dec
32.	Major Grewal, Hardev Singh (IC-21289) (Posthumous)	Jat	7 Dec
33.	Major Grewal, Harpal Singh (IC-18061) (Posthumous)	Bihar	
34.	Major Gurung, Lil Bahadur (IC-14532) (Posthumous)	Mahar	

1	2	3	4
35.	Major Hansara, Atma Singh (IC-7470)	Arty	5 Dec
36.	Major Jamwal, Surinder Singh (IC-14374)	Dogra	16 Dec
37.	Major Jaswal, Gurdev Singh (IC-16008) (Posthumous)	Punjab	10 Dec
38.	Major Khan, Mahmood Hasan (IC-18691) (Posthumous)	Grenadiers	6 Dec
39.	Major Kharbanda, Inder Prakchu (IC-18612)	4 Guards	4 Dec
40.	Major Kitkule, Prakash Digambar (IC-15664)	Arty	
41.	Major Krishnaswamy, Anantanarayan (IC-11114)	J&K Rif	17 Dec
42.	Major Law, Ravender Datt (IC-11655)	Cavalry	6 Dec
43.	Major Lushai, Kailiana (IC-17484)	Kumaon	
44.	Major Mamik, Abjeet Singh (IC-14461)	11 Gorkha Rif	13 Dec
45.	Major Manjappa, Kuppanda Ponappa (SS-19466)	Kumaon	
46.	Major Nambiar, Satish (IC-10018)	Maratha LI	11 Dec
47.	Major Nanda, Kamal (IC-12307)	4 Horse	6 Dec
48.	Major Pannu, Devinderjit Singh (IC-13158) (Posthumous)	Sikh	4 Dec
49.	Major Poonia, Balbir Singh (IC-13361)	Raj Rif	
50.	Major Prodhan, Krishan Kumar (IC-13647)	1/4 Gorkha Rif	3 Dec
51.	Major Puri, Sheel Kumar (IC-12418)	5 Gorkha Rif	6 Dec

1	2	3	4
52.	Major Rajawat, Rajender Singh (IC-18128) (Posthumous)	Raj Rif	8 Dec
53.	Major Rathore, Jagmal Singh (IC-13058)	Grenadiers	6 Dec
54.	Major Rathore, Shyam Veer Singh (IC-18557)	Grenadiers	
55.	Major Ravi Kumar (IC-14817)	Sikh LI	12 Dec
56.	Major Ravi, Manoptkia Mandappa (SS-19469)	Bihar	3 Dec
57.	Major Ruhil, Virender Kumar (IC-12414)	Arty	15 Dec
58.	Major Sahadevan, Patinhare Veetil (IC-22366)	Madras	16 Dec
59.	Major Salunke, Sadanand Balwant (IC-18389)	Maratha LI	10 Dec
60.	Major Sarda, Sushil Kumar (IC-12099)	Mahar	12 Dec
61.	Major Sarda, Vinod Kumar (IC-6715)	Para	12 Dec
62.	Major Sharma, Narinder Kumar (IC-22596)	Kumaon	
63.	Major Sharma, Pradeep Kumar (IC-13172)	Arty	4 Dec
64.	Major Sharma, Som Dutt (IC-10450)	Para	17 Dec
65.	Major Sharma, Tarsem Lal (IC-20832) (Posthumous)	Rajput	9 Dec
66.	Major Shergill, Malvinder Singh (IC-13152)	7 Lt Cav	13 Dec
67.	Major Singh, Amrik (IC-18055)	Sikh	12 Dec
68.	Major Singh, Dharampal (IC-13817)	Bihar	
69.	Major Singh, Govind (IC-6881)	4 Horse	16 Dec

1	2	3	4
70.	Major Singh, Narain (IC-18086) (Posthumous)	Jat	5 Dec
71.	Major Singh, Panjab (IC-18228)	Sikh	4 Dec
72.	Major Singh, Ranbir (IC-8612)	Maratha LI	6 Dec
73.	Major Singh, Shashi Pal (IC-18798) (Posthumous)	Raj Rif	14 Dec
74.	Major Singh, Sher (IC-14619)	Maratha LI	6 Dec
75.	Major Singh, Sukhpal (IC-19213)	Jat	9 Dec
76.	Major Singh, Sunhara (IC-20901)	Kumaon	5 Dec
77.	Major Sra, Daljeet Singh (IC-21343)	Mahar	5 Dec
78.	Major Surve, Appasaheb Dadasaheb (IC-13403)	9 Gorkha Rif	15 Dec
79.	Major Tara, Ashok Kumar (IC-20506)	Guards	3 Dec
80.	Major Tomar, Jitendra Kumar (IC-13775)	Raj Rif	3 Dec
81.	Major Trivedi, Gopal Krishan (IC-20021)	Grenadiers	11 Dec
82.	Major Vaid, Vijay Kumar (IC-21303)	Grenadiers	
83.	Major Vatsa, Surinder (IC-15055) (Posthumous)	Engrs	13 Dec
84.	Major Vetrinathan (Posthumous) (IC-13991)	Gorkha Rif	6 Dec
85.	Major Virendra Kumar (IC-22619)	J&K Rif	7 Dec
86.	Major Yadav, Jai Bhagwan Singh (IC-16095)	11 Gorkha Rif	12 Dec
87.	Captain Adhikari, Dhan Singh (SS-22082)	Dogra	13 Dec

1	2	3	4
88.	Captain Anand, Rabinder Nath (IC-18742)	Arty	15 Dec
89.	Captain Chandrakant (MR-8580)	AMC	14 Dec
90.	Captain Chaturvedi, Raghunath Prashad (IC-23198)	Arty	
91.	Captain Cherian, Vanchitathil Oommen (SS-20567)	Arty	9 Dec
92.	Captain Dafle, Rajinder Singh Vijay Maratha LI Singh (SS-19786)		11 Dec
93.	Captain Deuskar, Vikram (SS-20902)	Armd Sqn	16 Dec
94.	Captain Ghosh, Prasanta Kumar (IC-15842)	Signals	
95.	Captain Gill, Gurmukh Singh (SS-22577)	Punjab	
96.	Captain Gill, Sukhwant Singh (IC-20521)	Arty	6 Dec
97.	Captain Gosain, Jagdish Chander (IC-18321) (Posthumous)	Arty	13 Dec
98.	Captain Gupta, Ravender Nath (IC-16871) (Posthumous)	Engrs	17 Dec
99.	Captain Jitender Kumar (IC-19997)	Arty	8 Dec
100.	Captain Kahlon, Harbant Singh (IC-16433)	Arty	3 Dec
101.	Captain Karkare, Ashok Kumar (IC-21909) (Posthumous)	Arty	8 Dec
102.	Captain Kaushik, Surendra (IC-17200)	Armd Corps	4 Dec
103.	Captain Khaura, Ravender (Posthumous) (SS-20095)	Arty	3 Dec
104.	Captain Madan Paul (Posthumous) (IC-18747)	AOP Sqn	16 Dec
105.	Captain Madhavan, Pannikote (IC-20198)	Arty	5 Dec
106.	Captain Nath, Surendra (Posthumous) (MS-8540)	AMC	16 Dec

1	2	3	4
107.	Captain Parmar, Naresh Kumar (MS-8542)	AMC	13 Dec
108.	Captain Parmar, Surjit Singh (SS-21614)	Arty	13 Dec
109.	Captain Pathak, Bharat Chandra (SS-20520)	Arty	
110.	Captain Pillai, Gopa Kumar Raman (IC-21975)	Madras	
111.	Captain Punia, Gurmeet Singh (IC-13666)	Arty	14 Dec
112.	Captain Rajawat, Nawal Singh (IC-19010)	Rajput	5 Dec
113.	Captain Rajput, Devinder Singh (SS-20705)	Rajput	
114.	Captain Ramachandra, Naik Balakrishna (IC-16103)	Arty	
115.	Captain Rao, Nagulapalli Narsing (MR-2646)	AMC	11 Dec
116.	Captain Rathi, Kuldip Singh (Posthumous) Jat (IC-19844)		
117.	Captain Reddy, Irala Jayaram (IC-20990)	Arty	13 Dec
118.	Captain Sangha, Prithvi Pal Singh (IC-16285)	Arty	5 Dec
119.	Captain Sathe, Uday Parashuram (IC-17386)	Arty	6 Dec
120.	Captain Sehgal, Satish Chander (IC-20044) (Posthumous)	Arty	16 Dec
121.	Captain Sen Gupta, Rabindranath (IC-20475)	Arty	15 Dec
122.	Captain Sharma, Dhiresk Kumar (IC-21354)	Arty	4 Dec
123.	Captain Sharma, Madan Lal (SS-19515)	Lt Regt(Pack)	4 Dec
124.	Captain Sharma, Vishnu Swarup (SS-20859)	Guards	
125.	Captain Sihota, Gurbaksh Singh (IC-15471)	Arty	9 Dec

1	2	3	4
126.	Captain Singh, Hamir (IC-13935)	Grenadiers	13-14 Dec
127.	Captain Singh, Sheo Ganesh (Posthumous) (IC-18968)	Arty	7 Dec
128.	Captain Singh, Surjit (IC-23708)	Para	16 Dec
129.	Captain Singh, Tirath (IC-23312)	Arty	
130.	Captain Singh, Vijai Pratap (Posthumous) (IC-22198)	Mtn	
131.	Captain Sud, Jatinder Nath (Posthumous) (IC-21836)	Gorkha Rif	8 Dec
132.	Captain Swamy, Gopalan Lakshminarayana (MS-8733)	AMC	16 Dec
133.	Captain Vashisht, Satish Kumar (IC-23301)	Rajput	5 Dec
134.	Captain Yushfji, Inayat Altaf (IC-15992)	Arty	8 Dec
135.	Lieutenant Cheema, Rajvinder Singh (IC-23379)	Armd Corps	6 Dec
136.	Lieutenant Sharma, Suresh Chandra (SS-23011)	Rajput	10 Dec
137.	Lieutenant Singh, Mohan (IC-19912)	Assam	6 Dec
138.	Lieutenant Tyagi, Tejendra Pal (IC-25375)	Engrs	8 Dec
139.	2nd Lt Ahlawat, Avtar Singh (IC-24180)	17 Horse	16 Dec
140.	2nd Lt Bajwa, Gurjeet Singh (SS-228442)	Arty	9 Dec
141.	2nd Lt Bhardwaj, Prabodh Chandra (IC-24175)	Para	16 Dec
142.	2nd Lt Chauhan, Manohar Singh (SS-24349)	4 Gorkha Rif	3 Dec
143.	2nd Lt Chima, Permjeet Singh (Posthumous) (IC-23365)	Engrs	13 Dec

1	2	3	4
144.	2nd Lt Devadasan, David Alexander (SS-22831) (Posthumous)	Mahar	11 Dec
145.	2nd Lt Deval, Devpal Singh B (Posthumous) (SS-23766)	5 Gorkha Rif	
146.	2nd Lt Gill, Baljit Singh (IC-24758)	Jat	
147.	2nd Lt Jaswal, Joginder Singh (SS-22853)	Punjab	5 Dec
148.	2nd Lt Jaswal, Satish Kumar (Posthumous) (IC-23805)	Dogra	15 Dec
149.	2nd Lt Kasana, Bharat Singh (Posthumous) (SS-24026)	Dogra	4 Dec
150.	2nd Lt Khati, Prakash Chandra Singh (SS-24278)	Gorkha Rif	3 Dec
151.	2nd Lt Kumud Kumar (IC-25308)	Raj	
152.	2nd Lt Nanchahal, Ashok Kumar (SS-23228) (Posthumous)	Rajput	7 Dec
153.	2nd Lt Nath, Sheshanna Manju (Posthumous) (IC-24877)	Rajput	3 Dec
154.	2nd Lt Nayyar, Hardev Pal (Posthumous) (IC-23397)	Sikh LI	12 Dec
155.	2nd Lt Pal, Chander (SS-22936)	Armd Corps	4 Dec
156.	2nd Lt Purshottam Tulsian (SS-23082)	Guards	13 Dec
157.	2nd Lt Rane, Jayendra Jaisingh (IC-24201) (Posthumous)	Garhwal	5 Dec
158.	2nd Lt Roy, Tamal Satyanarayan (IC-24594)	Engrs	6 Dec
159.	2nd Lt Sandhu, Rupinder Singh (SS-23317)	Kumaon	
160.	2nd Lt Sethi, Rohit (IC-24323)	9 Gorkha Rif	5 Dec
161.	2nd Lt Singh, Ajit (IC-23772)	Grenadiers	4 Dec

1	2	3	4
162.	2nd Lt Singh, Bahadur (Posthumous) (IC-24250)	Sikh LI	15 Dec
163.	2nd Lt Singh, Hawa (Posthumous) (SS-23003)	Gorkha Rif	
164.	2nd Lt Singh, Kanwarjit (Posthumous) (IC-24921)	Scinde Horse	12 Dec
165.	2nd Lt Singh, Tejender (SS-22989)	Engrs	9 Dec
166.	Subedar Ali, Rajat (Posthumous) (JC-17910)	Raj Rif	7 Dec
167.	Subedar Bhosle, Viswanath (JC-39323)	Mahar	13 Dec
168.	Risaldar Brahmanand (JC-38368)	Cavalry	5 Dec
169.	Subedar Dass, Shreedhara (Posthumous) (JC-39418)	Madras	17 Dec
170.	Subedar Ghodeswar, Dadarao (JC-35642)	Mahar	12 Dec
171.	Subedar Gurung, Megdan (JC-400453)	5 Gorkha Rif(F)	8 Dec
172.	Subedar Lama, Nima (JC-37034)	8 Gorkha Rif	
173.	Subedar Nair, Krishnan (Posthumous) (JC-35544)	Madras	13 Dec
174.	Subedar Nanji Ram (JC-33536)	Jat	
175.	Subedar Negi, Sujan Singh (JC-44856)	Garh Rif	
176.	Subedar Pun, Lalbahadur (JC-41312)	Gorkha Rif	6 Dec
177.	Subedar Singh, Brijendra (JC-43961)	Jat	4 Dec
178.	Subedar Singh, Gurcharan, SM(Posthumous) (JC-15901)	Sikh	12 Dec
179.	Subedar Singh, Hari (JC-28067)	Mahar	9 Dec
180.	Subedar Singh, Pahlad (JC-30557)	Jat	5 Dec

1	2	3	4
181.	Subedar Singh, Pritam (Posthumous) (JC-33019)	Sikh LI	16 Dec
182.	Dafadar Singh, Prithi (1027089)	Cavalry	5 Dec
183.	Subedar Singh, Rajbahadur (Posthumous) (JC-35308)	Guards	
184.	Subedar Singh, Ratan (JC-36940)	Punjab	5 Dec
185.	Subedar Sita Ram (Posthumous) (JC-16783)	Grenadiers	11 Dec
186.	Nb Sub Cheriyan (Posthumous) (JC-638357)	Madras	
187.	Nb Sub Doraiswamy (1311154)	Engrs	11 Dec
188.	Nb Sub Jadav, Arjan (JC-4534061)	Para	11 Dec
189.	Nb Risaldar Khan, Noor Mahammad (JC-51790)	18 Cavalry	3 Dec
190.	Nb Sub Khan, Sultan Mohammed (Posthumous) (JC-225)	J&K Militia	8 Dec
191.	Nb Sub Sharma, Mam Chand (Posthumous) (JC-46727)	Mahar	
192.	Nb Risaldar Singh, Basta (JC-54759)	69 Armd	11 Dec
193.	Nb Sub Singh, Bhrigunath (13653064)	Guards	
194.	Nb Risaldar Singh, Dayal (JC-56028)	Scinde Horse	
195.	Nb Sub Singh, Gian (Posthumous) (3340727)	Sikh	
196.	Nb Sub Singh, Gurcharan (JC-42500)	Sikh	
197.	Nb Risaldar Singh, Mohan (JC-44930)	17 Horse	16 Dec
198.	Nb Sub Singh, Ram (JC-44325)	Jat	
199.	Nb Sub Singh, Ram Kala (JC-60523)	Guards	
200.	Nb Risaldar Singh, Ram Parikashan (JC-53298)	45 Cavalry	

1	2	3	4
201.	Nb Sub Singh, Umed (Posthumous) (JC- 41949)	Jat	
202.	Nb Sub Varghese (Posthumous) (2547394)	Madras	9 Dec
203.	Nb Sub Wangdus, Sherin (JC-52206)	Ladakh Scouts	10 Dec
204.	Hav Maj Babu Mall (11192741)	Air Def (TA)	9 Dec
205.	Coy Hav Maj Singh, Krishan (Posthumous) (3141913)	Jat	
206.	Hav Budhi Ballabh (Posthumous) (9204205)	Mahar	
207.	Hav Chaudhari, Kunwar Singh (6038559)	Garh Rif	
208.	Hav Chettiar, Thapasi Chettiar Ramaswamy (1169089)	Air Def	5 Dec
209.	Hav Dayanand Ram (Posthumous) (2240521)	Raj Rif	4 Dec
210.	Hav Des Raj (2439873)	Punjab	3 Dec
211.	Hav Gopalakrishnan (1171094)	Air Def	5 Dec
212.	Hav Gurao Krishna (2743482)	Maratha LI	11 Dec
213.	Hav Gurung, Dalbahadur (5434807)	Gorkha Rif	6 Dec
214.	Hav Hem Chander (3140746)	Jat	4 Dec
215.	Hav Jawalge, Uttam (1181589)	Air Def	8 Dec
216.	Hav Joshi, Shankar Datt (4142319) (Posthumous)	Kumaon	16 Dec
217.	Hav Kandari, Devendra Singh (4039278) (Posthumous)	Kumaon	10 Dec
218.	Hav Kumar, Rumesh (Posthumous) (3943836)	Dogra	5 Dec

1	2	3	4
219.	Hav Lekh Raj (2440669)	Punjab	
220.	Hav Lipcha, Phurba (9405534)	Gorkha Rif	
221.	Hav Mahalakshmia, Kycharla (1170770)	Arty	17 Dec
222.	Hav Nag, Hari Das (Posthumous) (13652879)	Guards	13 Dec
223.	Hav Neir, KK Gopalakrishan (1155095)	Air Def	4 Dec
224.	Hav Nand Ram (2641259)	Grenadiers	
225.	Hav Rawat, Sangram Singh (4039948)	Naga	
226.	Hav Sangwan, Khazan Singh (9205717)	Guards	6 Dec
227.	Hav Singh, Ajmer (10356147)	Air Def (TA)	5 Dec
228.	Hav Singh, Amar (3144100)	Jat	
229.	Hav Singh, Gurdev (3341590)	Sikh	4 Dec
230.	Dafadar Singh, Harbir (Posthumous) (1026586)	Armd Delivery	5 Dec
231.	Hav Singh, Kushal (Posthumous) (3948143)	Dogra	
232.	Hav Singh, Madan (4146399)	Kumaon	
233.	Hav Singh, Malkiat (3348959)	Sikh	3 Dec
234.	Hav Singh, Nirmal (13716818)	J&K Rif	
235.	Hav Singh, Piara (4441429)	Sikh LI	8 Dec
236.	Hav Singh, Raghbir (3140688)	Para	16 Dec
237.	Hav Thapa, Som Bahadur (Posthumous) (5334168)	Gorkha Rif	5 Dec

1	2	3	3
238.	L Hav Ganga Dhar (Posthumous) (3144417)	Jat	4/5 Dec
239.	L Hav Gian Chand (Posthumous) (2951096)	Rajput	15 Dec
240.	L Hav Gurung, Tek Bahadur (Posthumous) (5233730)	Para	
241.	L Hav Kans Raj (10324414)	Air Def	7 Dec
242.	L Dafadar Ram Chander (10270151)	63 Cavalry	
243.	L Hav Rane, Laxman (Posthumous) (1021241)	Maratha LI	11 Dec
244.	L Hav Sen, Joginder Singh (5833405)	Gorkha Rif	15 Dec
245.	L Hav Singh, Bane (2048099)	Rajput	
246.	L Hav Singh, Dilbagh (Posthumous) (2444085)	Punjab	12 Dec
247.	L Hav Singh, Jagdish (9070887)	J&K Militia	3 Dec
248.	L Hav Singh, Jaswant (1026534)	Grenadiers	16 Dec
249.	L Hav Singh, Jaswant (3154794)	Para	3 Dec
250.	L Dafadar Singh, Katar (103100)	72 Armd	6 Dec
251.	L Hav Singh, Kishan (4141549)	Kumaon	
252.	L Hav Singh, Raghbir (Posthumous) (13710771)	J&K Rif	3 Dec
253.	L Hav Singh, Sukhdev (3950984)	Dogra	16 Dec
254.	L Hav Stobdan, Puncjok (9136879)	Ladakh Scouts	10 Dec
255.	L Dafadar Sushil Kumar (1034139)	9 Horse	5 Dec
256.	Naik Bal Bahadur (1141440)	Arty	7 Dec

1	2	3	4
257.	Naik Bhansode, Dhondy Ram (11193273)	Air Def (TA)	6 Dec
258.	Naik Bhaskaran (2550753)	Madras	12 Dec
259.	Naik Bhosle, Shamu (2743291)	Para	11 Dec
260.	Naik Chavan, Ankush (3750559)	Maratha LI	13 Dec
261.	Naik Kardeo, Eknath (Posthumous) (2747481)	Maratha LI	4 Dec
262.	Naik Khan, Sirdar (2645231)	Grenadiers	
263.	Naik Mani (Posthumous) (2550237)	Madras	17 Dec
264.	Naik Mohamed Fateh (92306050)	Ladakh Scouts	10 Dec
265.	Naik Nakil Maruti (Posthumous) (2748767)	Maratha LI	
266.	Naik Ramesh Chand (Posthumous) (2956048)	Rajput	
267.	Naik Sahadevan (Posthumous) (2558988)	Madras	17 Dec
268.	Naik Sanyasi, Jajula (2552653)	Madras	17 Dec
269.	Naik Singh, Duryodhan (posthumous) (13659162)	Guards	14 Dec
270.	Naik Singh, Gurjant (Posthumous) (3353350)	Sikh	12 Dec
271.	Naik Singh, Khajur (2447488)	Punjab	10 Dec
272.	Naik Singh, Mohinder (Posthumous) (3349282)	Sikh	16 Dec
273.	Naik Singh, Naib (Posthumous) (3348614)	Sikh	3 Dec
274.	Naik Singh, Nihal (285359)	Para	17 Dec
275.	Naik Singh, Raghubir (2851641)	Raj Rif	3 Dec

1	2	3	4
276.	Naik Singh, Raja (Posthumous) (2950437)	Rajput	
277.	Naik Singh, Rajinder (13722858)	J&K Rif	
278.	Naik Singh, Sher (4146822)	Kumaon	
279.	L Naik Abhey Ram (Posthumous) (2849833)	Raj Rif	6 Dec
280.	L Naik Adhikari, Gobardhan (5437972) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	15 Dec
281.	L Naik Chhetri, Om Bahadur (5835313) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	15 Dec
282.	L Naik Durga Datt (Posthumous) (4152120)	Kumaon	5 Dec
283.	L Naik Gurung, Balbahadur (5437958)	5 Gorkha Rif	13 Dec
284.	L Naik Gurung, Jar Jang (53839599) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	3 Dec
285.	L Naik Gurung, Umar Singh (5036571) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	
286.	L Naik Mohan Lal (Posthumous) (9072795)	J&K Militia	7 Dec
287.	L Naik Negi, Gabar Singh (4042984)	Garhwal Rif	17 Dec
288.	L Naik Singh, Bisheshwar (2959144)	Rajput	13 Dec
289.	L Naik Singh, Harbhajan (3357370)	Sikh	
290.	L Naik Singh, Janak (Posthumous) (9070949)	J&K Militia	5 Dec
291.	L Naik (Unpaid) Singh, Magar (13727390) (Posthumous)	J&K Rif	
292.	L Naik Singh, Meghraj (3963905)	J&K Rif	
293.	L Naik Singh, Raghunath (2651351)	Grenadiers	5 Dec

1	2	3	4
294.	L Naik Singh, Shreepati (1275280)	Arty	4 Dec
295.	L Naik Yadav, Chandraket Prasad (4244322)	Bihar	16 Dec
296.	Grenadier Amrit (2658007)	Grenadiers	16 Dec
297.	Gunner (GD) Armugam (Posthumous) (1277821)	Air Def	5 Dec
298.	Sepoy Banwari Lal (Posthumous) (2451226)	Punjab	
299.	Sepoy Birdha Ram (Posthumous) (2955911)	Rajput	15 Dec
300.	Guardman Brij Lal (Posthumous) (13661050)	Guards	14 Dec
301.	Sapper Durga Shankar (12279927)	Engrs	12 Dec
302.	Grenadier Gorakh Ram (Posthumous) (2647963)	Grenadiers	11 Dec
303.	Sepoy Iqbal Mohmad (Posthumous) (9071115)	J&K Militia	5 Dec
304.	Sepoy Jagdale Krishna (2756356)	Maratha LI	4 Dec
305.	Sepoy Kamble, Kashinath Sibrudra (4541237) (Posthumous)	Mahar	12 Dec
306.	Grenadier Khan, Murad (2658792) (Posthumous)	Grenadiers	
307.	Grenadier Khan, Refiq (2658592) (Posthumous)	Grenadiers	
308.	Rifleman Khattri, Uday Bahadur (58400320)	9 Gorkha Rif	15 Dec
309.	Sepoy Krishthapher, Kolli John (2567525) (Posthumous)	Madras	13 Dec
310.	Sepoy More, Hanmant Krishna (2760210)	Maratha LI	9 Dec
311.	Rifleman Nawar, Moti Kumar (5038478) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	

1	2	3	4
312.	Rifleman Negi, Makar Singh (4049455) (Posthumous)	Garhwal Rif	5 Dec
313.	Gunner Pathak, Bhadreswar (1179857) (Posthumous)	Arty (AD)	7/8 Dec
314.	Rifleman Pun, Man Bahadur (5034537) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	
315.	Rifleman Pun, Pas Bahadur (492235) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	
316.	Rifleman Rai, Dhan Bahadur (9408833)	Gorkha Rif	7 Dec
317.	Grenadier Ram Kumar (2647494)	Grenadiers	16 Dec
318.	Sepoy Salve, Kachru (4440674)	Mahar	11 Dec
319.	Paratrooper Shinde, Vaijanath (4535016)	Para	11 Dec
320.	Gunner Singh, Ajit (1243715)	Arty	8 Dec
321.	Sepoy Singh, Avtar (Posthumous) (2449735)	Punjab	10 Dec
322.	Sepoy Singh, Boota (4444564)	Sikh LI	12 Dec
323.	Rifleman Singh, Chagan (Posthumous) (2858706)	Raj Rif	
324.	Sepoy Singh, Ganga (4156190)	Kumaon	14 Dec
325.	Grenadier Singh, Gurbax (2649837) (Posthumous)	Grenatiers	10 Dec
326.	Sepoy Singh, Jagjit (Posthumous) (2457287)	Punjab	5 Dec
327.	Sowar Singh, Jai (1038560)	9 Horse	4 Dec
328.	Sepoy Singh, Karnail (4444667) (Posthumous)	Sikh LI	9 Dec

1	2	3	4
329.	Sepoy Singh, Kharak (9207565) (Posthumous)	Mahar	
330.	Grenadier Singh, Mangal (2660579)	Grenadiers	6 Dec
331.	Sepoy Singh, Mehar (2450841) (Posthumous)	Punjab	5 Dec
332.	Sepoy Singh, Mohan (3365976)	Sikh	13 Dec
333.	Sowar Singh, Mohan (1043502)	17 Horse	
334.	Rifleman Singh, Prem (2860932) (Posthumous)	Raj Rif	
335.	Sepoy Singh, Rachhpal (361952)	Sikh	5 Dec
336.	Sepoy Singh, Sampuran (2464113) (Posthumous)	Punjab	
337.	Sepoy Singh, Sampuran (3364799)	Sikh	3 Dec
338.	Sepoy Singh, Satyawan (2964587) (Posthumous)	Rajput	5 Dec
339.	Sepoy Singh, Swaran (4443902)	Sikh LI	12 Dec
340.	Sepoy Singh, Udai Raj (2951940)	Rajput	11 Dec
341.	Gunner Tek Ram (1193311)	Arty	9 Dec
342.	Rifleman Thapa, Dalip Singh (5743894) (Posthumous)	Gorkha Rif	
343.	Rifleman Thapa, Padam Bahadur (5744329)	8 Gorkha Rif	6 Dec
344.	Rifleman Thapa, Prem Bahadur (5238218)	3 Gorkha Rif	11 Dec
345.	NC(E) Mangat Ram (3554638)	Sikh	4 Dec

N A V YMAHA VIR CHAKRA

<u>Sl No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
1.	Captain Mulla, Mahendra Nath (Posthumous) (--)	9 Dec 71
2.	Captain Parkash, Swaraj, AVSM (00022 Z)	Dec 71
3.	Commander Gopal Rao, Kasargod Patnashetti, VSM (00079 B)	4 Dec 71
4.	Commander Samant, Mohan Narayan Rao (00124 F)	1971
5.	Commander Yadav, Babru Bahan (00101 B)	5 Dec 71
6.	Lt Cdr Gupta, Santosh Kumar, NM (00311 F)	21 Dec 71
7.	Lt Cdr Noronha, Joseph Pius Alfred (00422 H)	8 Dec 71
8.	Leading Seaman Singh, Chiman (87600)	8 Dec 71

VIR CHAKRA

1.	Captain Andrews, Padavupurackal Chandy (00045 A)	Dec 71
2.	Captain Awati, Manohar Pralhad (00037 H)	16 Jan 72
3.	Captain Gandhi, Rustom Khushro Shapoorjee (00021 Y)	Dec 71
4.	Captain Nair, Kumara Madhava Velappan (00051 R)	9 Dec 71
5.	Captain Puri, Jagdish Chandra, VSM (00073 R)	Dec 71
6.	Commander Grewal, Rajinder Singh, NM (00146 F)	4 Dec 71
7.	Commander Sabhlok, Suresh Kumar (00084 R)	23 Dec 71

<u>Sl No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
8.	Commander Millan, Roy Joseph (00168 F)	1971
9.	Commander Ommen, Mukadavil Ommen (--) (Posthumous)	9 Dec 71
10.	Commander Paul, Subir (00127 N)	Dec 71
11.	Commander Ramdas, Laxminarayan, VSM (00132 Z)	Dec 71
12.	Commander Roy Chowdhury, Benoy (40027 W)	Dec 71
13.	Commander Shekhawat, Vijay Singh (00189 B)	Dec 71
14.	Commander Sood, Rishi Raj, NM (00157 F)	Dec 71
15.	Commander Zadu, Kailash Nath (00150 R)	4 Dec 71
16.	Lt Cdr Dhir, Ravindar Das (00319 Z)	5 Dec 71
17.	Lt Cdr Ghosh, Sankar Prasad (00370 R)	Dec 71
18.	Lt Cdr Jerath, Vijai (00409 B)	9 Dec 71
19.	Lt Cdr Kavina, Bahadur Nariman (00416 W)	18 Dec 71
20.	Lt Cdr Kumar, Prabhat (50090 W) (Posthumous)	9 Dec 71
21.	Lt Cdr Martia, George, NM (00445 K)	10 Jan 72
22.	Lt Cdr Mehra, Ashwani Kumar, NM (00310 B)	13 Dec 71
23.	Lt Cdr Mehta, Om Prakash, NM (00442 B)	5 Dec 71
24.	Lt Cdr Ramsagar, Saurirajulu (00379 A)	13 Dec 71
25.	Lt Cdr Roy Ashok, NM (Posthumous) (--)	10 Dec 71
26.	Lt Cdr Roy Choudhury, Jayanta Kumar (00406 Y)	10 Dec 71

<u>S1.</u> <u>No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
27.	Lt Cdr Sen, Rajat Kumar (Posthumous) (--)	9 Dec 71
28.	Lt Cdr Sharma, Inderjit, AVSM (00435 N)	5 Dec 71
29.	Lt Cdr Singh, Inder (83151 B)	5 Dec 71
30.	Lt Cdr Suri, Joginder Krishan (Posthumous) (--)	9 Dec 71
31.	Lieutenant Bhagwat, Bipinchandra Bhaskar (00566 K)	16 Dec 71
32.	Lieutenant Datta, Virendra Kumar (00838 B)	12 Dec 71
33.	Lieutenant Kapil, Vijai Prakash (00667 R)	10 Dec 71
34.	Lieutenant Kumar, Prem (00851 H)	12 Dec 71
35.	Lieutenant Mittar, Suresh Kumar (00723 T)	10 Dec 71
36.	Surgeon Lt Panda, Sudhansu Sekhar (Posthumous) (--)	9 Dec 71
37.	Lieutenant Panwar, Keshar Singh (00685 F)	6 Dec 71
38.	Lieutenant Prakash, Arun (00590 R)	21 Dec 71
39.	Lieutenant Samant, Suresh Gajanan (Posthumous) (--)	5 Dec 71
40.	Lieutenant Sodhi, Raminder Singh (00540 A)	6 Dec 71
41.	Sub Lt Kumar, Ashok (01036 B)	10 Dec 71
42.	Master Chief Electrical Artificer(Power) II Class Sangal, Megh Nath (50896)	5 Dec 71
43.	Petty Officer (Telegraphist) Sharma, Ravindra Nath (88301)	5 Dec 71
44.	Petty Officer Thomachan, Mughilissery Ouseph (046337 N)	5 Dec 71

<u>Sl No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
45.	Mechanician III Class Chakrabarty, Lakshman Kumar (348830)	5 Dec 71
46.	Leading Electrician's Mate Raju, Kapallisai (98148)	10 Dec 71

AIR FORCEBAR TO MAHA VIR CHAKRA

<u>S1</u> <u>No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
1	2	3
1.	Wing Commander Gautam, Padmanabha, MVC, VM (4482)	5 Dec 71

MAHA VIR CHAKRA

1.	Group Captain Singh, Chandan, AVSM, Vr C (3460)	7 Dec 71
2.	Wing Commander Benegal, Ramesh Sakharam, AVSM (4220)	17 Dec 71
3.	Wing Commander D'Costa, Allan Albert (4580)	4 Dec 71
4.	Wing Commander Kaul, Swaroop Krishna (4721)	4 Dec 71
5.	Wing Commander Mangat, Harcharan Singh (4666)	17 Dec 71
6.	Wing Commander Parker, Cecil Vivian, VM (4346)	17 Dec 71
7.	Wing Commander Talwar, Man Mohan Bir Singh (4573)	17 Dec 71
8.	Wing Commander Vasisht, Vidya Bhushan (4584)	3 Dec 71
9.	Sqn Ldr Banerji, Madhavendra, VM (4898)	17 Dec 71
10.	Sqn Ldr Bhardwaj, Ravinder Nath (5001)	5 Dec 71

BAR TO VIR CHAKRA

1.	Wing Commander Bishnoi, Bhupendra Kumar, Vr C (4594)	16 Dec 71
2.	Sqn Ldr Bhatia, Vinod Kumar, Vr C (6497)	17 Dec 71
3.	Flt Lt Neb, Vinod Kumar, Vr C (8189)	4 Dec 71

VIR CHAKRA

<u>S1</u> <u>No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
1	2	3
1.	Group Captain Weir, Robert Arnold (3881)	11 Dec 71
2.	Wing Commander Aggarwal, Keshev Chandra (4434)	9 Dec 71
3.	Wing Commander Badhwar, Krishan Kumar (4669)	14 Dec 71
4.	Wing Commander Chatrath, Narinder (3959)	4 Dec 71
5.	Wing Commander Conquest, Donald Melvyn (4692)	6 Dec 71
6.	Wing Commander Dogra, Ravinder Nath (4725)	17 Dec 71
7.	Wing Commander Gill, Harsern Singh (4657) (Posthumous)	13 Dec 71
8.	Wing Commander Mukherjee, Arun Kanti, VM (4416)	17 Dec 71
9.	Wing Commander Singh, Manmohan (4023)	16 Dec 71
10.	Wing Commander Sundaresan, Ramanathan (4574)	4 Dec 71
11.	Wing Commander Trehon, Murari Lal (4577)	17 Dec 71
12.	Sqn Leader Ahluwalia, Gursaran Singh (4912)	6 Dec 71
13.	Sqn Leader Alley, Allan David (4975)	6 Dec 71
14.	Sqn Ldr Bakshi, Krishan Kumar (5012)	6 Dec 71
15.	Sqn Ldr Bali, Ravindra Nath (5059)	7 Dec 71
16.	Sqn Ldr Bhadra, Anil Kumar (5114)	17 Dec 71
17.	Sqn Ldr Bhandari, Dinesh Chandra (5219)	17 Dec 71
18.	Sqn Ldr Bindra, Iqbal Singh (6360)	17 Dec 71

1	2	3
19.	Sqn Ldr Choudhury, Sanjay Kumar (5863)	8 Dec 71
20.	Sqn Ldr Dass, Dilip Kumar (6334)	6 Dec 71
21.	Sqn Ldr Dutta, Kalyan Kumar (5450)	17 Dec 71
22.	Sqn Ldr Gill, Preet Pal Singh (6342)	17 Dec 71
23.	Sqn Ldr Jafa, Dharendra Singh, VM (4819)	5 Dec 71
24.	Sqn Ldr Jain, Mohinder Kumar (5327) (Posthumous)	10 Dec 71
25.	Sqn Ldr Johri, Vishnu Narain (5676)	5 Dec 71
26.	Sqn Ldr Karnik, Suresh Damodar (5056)	16 Dec 71
27.	Sqn Ldr Kohli, Ramesh Chander (4891)	17 Dec 71
28.	Sqn Ldr Lamba, Arya Bhushan (4713)	9 Dec 71
29.	Sqn Ldr Mehta, Farookh Jehangir (4906)	13 Dec 71
30.	Sqn Ldr Mistry, Jal Maniksha (5006) (Posthumous)	5 Dec 71
31.	Sqn Ldr Sachdeva, Ramesh Chander (5306) (Posthumous)	10 Dec 71
32.	Sqn Ldr Sandhu, Charanjit Singh (5591)	8 Dec 71
33.	Sqn Ldr Shinde, Ashok Prataprao (5671)	17 Dec 71
34.	Sqn Ldr Singh, Charanjit (4823)	17 Dec 71
35.	Sqn Ldr Singh, Jasbir (5783)	9 Dec 71
36.	Sqn Ldr Singh, Jasjit (5100)	17 Dec 71

1	2	3
37.	Sqn Ldr Singh, Jiwa (Posthumous) (4893)	7 Dec 71
38.	Sqn Ldr Singh, Kripal, VM (5115)	17 Dec 71
39.	Sqn Ldr Subbaramu, Sindhaghatta (5371)	17 Dec 71
40.	Sqn Ldr Thapa, Ghanshyam Singh (6003)	4 Dec 71
41.	Flt Lt Apte, Pradip Vinayak (10456) (Posthumous)	4 Dec 71
42.	Flt Lt Bains, Shivinder Singh (7727)	17 Dec 71
43.	Flt Lt Chandrasekaran, Chidambaran Sarangapani (8768)	12 Dec 71
44.	Flt Lt Da Costa, Andre Rudolph (8175) (Posthumous)	4 Dec 71
45.	Flt Lt Das Gupta, Partha (9770)	5 Dec 71
46.	Flt Lt Datta, Aruna Kumar (9738)	12 Dec 71
47.	Flt Lt Deoskar, Arun Laxman (9058)	8 Dec 71
48.	Flt Lt Dhillon, Manjit Singh, VM (7021)	11 Dec 71
49.	Flt Lt Dighe, Dilip Kamalakar (9745)	17 Dec 71
50.	Flt Lt Ganapathy, Mandepanda Appachu (9464)	22 Nov 71
51.	Flt Lt Gosain, Ramesh Chander (9447)	6 Dec 71
52.	Flt Lt Grewal, Malvinder Singh (7728)	4 Dec 71
53.	Flt Lt Jamasji, Parvex Rustom (9834)	16 Dec 71
54.	Flt Lt Jayandra, Sukrutaraj (8423)	16 Dec 71

1	2	3
55.	Flt Lt Junnarkar, Nitin Gajanan (7477)	17 Dec 71
56.	Flt Lt Kalra, Prem Bhushan (8466)	15 Dec 71
57.	Flt Lt Kawatra, Parminder Paul Singh (11383)	16 Dec 71
58.	Flt Lt Kukreja, Niraj (8733)	17 Dec 71
59.	Flt Lt Malhotra, Surinder Singh (8449)	12 Dec 71
60.	Flt Lt Massey, Roy Andrew (8428)	22 Nov 71
61.	Flt Lt Naqvi, Syed Shahid Hussain (7193)	9 Dec 71
62.	Flt Lt Nayyar, Dinesh Chander (8995)	16 Dec 71
63.	Flt Lt Pereira, Lawrence Fredric (8678) (Posthumous)	14 Dec 71
64.	Flt Lt Pethia, Aditya Vikram (8384)	5 Dec 71
65.	Flt Lt Premi, Mahabir Prasad (8378)	6 Dec 71
66.	Flt Lt Raghunath, Aspari (9122)	17 Dec 71
67.	Flt Lt Rai, Gurdev Singh (9015) (Posthumous)	5 Dec 71
68.	Flt Lt Rajwar, Govind Chandra Singh, VSM (8193)	17 Dec 71
69.	Flt Lt Raney, Cherry Hassanand (8782)	17 Dec 71
70.	Flt Lt Rao, Winston Rabinder Sanjeeva (10191)	15 Dec 71
71.	Flt Lt Sahota, Kuldeep Singh (9848)	17 Dec 71
72.	Flt Lt Saklani, Jagdamba Prasad (9554)	17 Dec 71

1	2	3
73.	Flt Lt Sandhu, Mohinder Singh (8101)	4 Dec 71
74.	Flt Lt Sardesai, Hemant Sharat Kumar (9453)	16 Dec 71
75.	Flt Lt Sathaye, Arun Vasant (9039)	4 Dec 71
76.	Flt Lt Sekhon, Manjit Singh, VM (6756)	17 Dec 71
77.	Flt Lt Shah, Samar Bikram (9413)	16 Dec 71
78.	Flt Lt Singh, Apramjeet (7403)	8 Dec 71
79.	Flt Lt Singh, Ashok Kumar (9481)	17 Dec 71
80.	Flt Lt Singh, Harbans Perminder (7485)	5 Dec 71
81.	Flt Lt Singh, Manbir (6771)	16 Dec 71
82.	Flt Lt Singh, Yogendra Prasad (9867)	17 Dec 71
83.	Flt Lt Singla, Chandramohan (6893)	8 Dec 71
84.	Flt Lt Sinha, Robindra Kumar (9032)	17 Dec 71
85.	Flt Lt Soni, Bharat Bhushan (9392)	17 Dec 71
86.	Flt Lt Suresh, Kukke Sreekantasastry (6742)	13 Dec 71
87.	Flt Lt Syed, Iqbal Ali (8420)	12 Dec 71
88.	Flt Lt Vaid, Pushpa Kumar (6892)	8 Dec 71
89.	Flt Lt Wahi, Rajendra Singh (9830)	17 Dec 71
90.	Flt Lt Wahi, Vijay Kumar (10114) (Posthumous)	6 Dec 71
91.	Flg Offr Balasubramanian, Sankaranarayanan (10864)	5 Dec 71

1	2	3
92.	Flg Offr Dhillon, Sukhdev Singh (11378)	17 Dec 71
93.	Flg Offr Dikshit, Mohan (11309)	17 Dec 71
94.	Flg Offr Gahalawat, Jai Singh (11280)	10 Dec 71
95.	Flg Offr Karumbaya, Balachandra Chengapa (10604)	7 Dec 71
96.	Flg Offr Kuruvilla, Kariyadil Cheriyam (10862)	6 Dec 71
97.	Flg Offr Lazarus, Donald (10156)	22 Nov 71
98.	Flg Offr Malkani, Kishan Lakhimal (10576) (Posthumous)	5 Dec 71
99.	Flg Offr Masand, Harish (11272)	4 Dec 71
100.	Flg Offr Ramesh, Bartan (10948)	17 Dec 71
101.	Flg Offr Sharma, Satish Chandra (12244)	9 Dec 71
102.	Flg Offr Tyagi, Sudhir (10871) (Posthumous)	4 Dec 71

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GALLANTRY AWARD WINNERS
(BSF only)UBAN FORCEVIR CHAKRA

<u>S1</u> <u>No.</u>	<u>Rank, Name and Service No.</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date of Award</u>
1	2	3	4
1.	Lieutenant Colonel Purkayastha Prasanta C. (IC-2486)	Garhwal Rif	9 Dec 71
2.	Major Malhotra, Raj Kumar (IC-20824)	Para	9 Dec 71
3.	Major Negi, Survendra Singh (IC-22805)	Grenadiers	
4.	Major Sharma, Harish Chandra (IC-21075)	Jat	9 Dec 71
5.	Assistant Company Commander Valankar, G.B. (1035)		

BORDER SECURITY FORCEMAHA VIR CHAKRA

1.	Assistant Commandant Wadhwa, Ram Krishna (Posthumous)	31 Bn	10 Dec 71
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VIR CHAKRA

1.	Lieutenant Colonel O'Connor, N.G. (IC-1578)	BSF	
2.	Deputy Commandant Singh, Joginder (647)	3 Bn	17 Dec 71
3.	Deputy Commandant Uppal, Inderjit Singh (613) (Posthumous)	78 Bn	
4.	Assistant Commandant Chandel, Chandan Singh (1265)	BSF	10 Dec 71
5.	Assistant Commandant Dalal, Nafe Singh (1616) (Posthumous)	40 Bn	

1	2	3	4
6.	Assistant Commandant Lushai, Lalthawma (--)	82 Bn	4 Dec 71
7.	Sub Inspector Singh, Ajit (66232027)	21 Bn	
8.	Head Constable Singh, Hari (68176022)	17 Bn	
9.	Head Constable Singh, Mohinder (66276064) (Posthumous)	27 Bn	3 Dec 71
10.	Naik Singh, Chanan (67276037)	27 Bn	
11.	Naik Singh, Umed (68588913) (Posthumous)	61 Bn	6 Dec 71

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment Held in 1971</u>
1.	Shri I.K. Gujral	Minister of State for Works, Housing and Urban Development (Later Indian Ambassador to USSR)
2.	Shri T. Swaminathan, ICS (Retd)	Cabinet Secretary
3.	Shri K.B. Lall, ICS (Retd)	Defence Secretary
4.	Shri L.K. Jha, ICS (Retd)	Indian Ambassador to USA
5.	Shri K.F. Rustamji, IP (Retd)	Director General, Border Security Force
6.	Shri Golak Majumdar, PVSM, IPS (Retd)	Inspector General, Border Security Force
7.	Shri A.K. Ray, IFS	Joint Secretary (Bangladesh Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs
8.	Shri N.K. Tiwari, CRPF	Commandant, POW Camp
9.	Dr. Manoranjan Sarkar	Member, Motivational Team
10.	Shri Kader (Tiger) Siddiqui	Bangladesh resistance leader
11.	Shri Subrata Roy Choudhury, Bar-at-Law	Consultant, Government of Bangladesh
12.	Shri Dilip Chakravarty, Ex-MP	Secretary, Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti

Army Headquarters

13.	Field Marshal S.H.F.J. Manekshaw, MC	Chief of the Army Staff (General)
14.	Lieutenant General K.K. Singh, MVC (Retd)	Director of Military Operations, Army Headquarters (Major General)
15.	Lieutenant General I.S. Gill, PVSM, MC (Retd)	Director of Military Operations, Army Headquarters (after Lt.Gen. K.K. Singh, PVSM, MVC) (Major General)

Western Front

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment Held in 1971</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
16.	General G.G. Bewoor, PVSM (Retd)	GOC-in-C, Southern Command (Lieutenant General)
17.	Lieutenant General K.P. Candeth, PVSM (Retd)	GOC-in-C, Western Command
18.	Lieutenant General Z.C. Bakshi, PVSM, MVC, AVSM, VrC (Retd)	GOC, 26 Infantry Division (Major General)
19.	Lieutenant General W.A.G. Pinto, PVSM (Retd)	GOC, 54 Infantry Division (Major General)
20.	Lieutenant General Kundan Singh, PVSM (Retd)	GOC, 25 Infantry Division (Major General)
21.	Lieutenant General E. D'Souza, PVSM (Retd)	GOC, 19 Infantry Division (Major General)
22.	Lieutenant General R.K. Jasbir Singh, PVSM (Retd)	Commander, 191 Infantry Brigade (Brigadier)
23.	Major General Ram Singh, PVSM (Retd)	GOC, Foxtrot Sector
24.	Brigadier K.L. Rattan, MVC	Commanding Officer, 6 Sikh (Lieutenant Colonel)
25.	Lieutenant Colonel S.S. Chawdhary, VSM	Company Commander, 4 Grenadiers (Major)
26.	Lieutenant Colonel Inderjit Singh (Retd)	Commanding Officer, 14 Grenadiers

Eastern Front

27.	Lieutenant General J.S. Aurora, PVSM (Retd)	GOC-in-C, Eastern Command
28.	Lieutenant General M.L. Thapan, PVSM (Retd)	GOC, 33 Corps
29.	Lieutenant General Sagat Singh, PVSM (Retd)	GOC, 4 Corps
30.	Lieutenant General J.F.R. Jacob, PVSM (Retd)	Chief of Staff, HQ Eastern Command (Major General)

1	2	3
31.	Lieutenant General B.N. Sarkar, PVSM (Retd)	Director of Military Operations, Operation Jackpot and later Liaison Officer between the Indian Army and the Bangladesh Government in Exile (Major General)
32.	Lieutenant General R.D. Hira, PVSM, MVC (Retd)	GOC, 23 Mountain Division (Major General)
33.	Lieutenant General A.M. Sethna, PVSM (Retd)	Brigadier General Staff, HQ Eastern Command (Brigadier)
34.	Lieutenant General A.K. Chatterjee, VSM	GSO 1 (Ops) HQ Eastern Command (Lieutenant Colonel)
35.	Lieutenant General P.N. Kathpalia, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)	Commander, 71 Mountain Brigade (Brigadier)
36.	Major General Dalbir Singh, PVSM (Retd)	GOC, 9 Mountain Division
37.	Major General L.S. Lehl, PVSM, Vrc (Retd)	GOC, 20 Mountain Division
38.	Major General S.S. Uban, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)	Commander, Mujib Bahini
39.	Major General G.S. Nagra, (Retd)	GOC, 101 Communication Zone Area
40.	Major General H.S. Kler, MVC, AVSM (Retd)	Commander, 95 Mountain Brigade (101 Communication Zone Area) (Brigadier)
41.	Brigadier Tejinder Singh (Retd)	Commander, Kilo Force
42.	Brigadier Sant Singh, MVC and Bar (Retd)	Commander, FJ Sector
43.	Brigadier A.A. Irani (Retd)	Commander, 167 Mountain Brigade
44.	Colonel P.C. Bhalla, VSM (Retd)	Assistant Director, Signal Intelligence, Eastern Command

1	2	3
45.	Colonel W.H. Grant, AVSM (Retd)	Colonel (GS), HQ 57 Mountain Division
46.	Lieutenant Colonel J.S. Rao	Member, Civil Affairs Staff, Calcutta (Major)
47.	Colonel J.S. Mahalwar	Coy Commander, 2 Para (Major)
48.	Lieutenant Colonel Pritam Singh	Second-in-Command, 18 Rajput, 311 Mountain Brigade (Major)

Navy

49.	Admiral J. Cursetji, PVSM (Retd)	Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (Vice Admiral)
50.	Vice Admiral S.H. Sarma, PVSM (Retd)	Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (Rear Admiral)
51.	Vice Admiral S. Parkash, PVSM, MVC, AVSM (Retd)	Commanding Officer, INS Vikrant (Captain)
52.	Rear Admiral N.N. Anand, AVSM, NM	Executive Officer, INS Trishul (Lieutenant Commander)
53.	Commodore D.R. Mehta (Retd)	Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Air)
54.	Captain M.N. Samant, MVC (Retd)	Staff Officer, Planning and Training (Navy) (Commander)
55.	Captain I. Wadhvani	Squadron Gunnery Officer, 15th Frigate Squadron (Lieutenant)
56.	Captain I.J. Sharma, AVSM, VrC	Commanding Officer, INS Nirghat (Lieutenant Commander)
57.	Captain P.A. Debras, NM	Pilot attached to No.27 Squadron, Indian Air Force (Lieutenant Commander)

Air Force

58.	Air Marshal H.C. Dewan, PVSM (Retd)	AOC-in-C, Eastern Air Command
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| 59. | Air Marshal M.M. Engineer,
PVSM, MVC, DFC (Retd) | AOC-in-C, Western Air
Command |
| 60. | Air Marshal W.S.D. Wollen,
PVSM, VM (Retd) | Station Commander, Air
Force Station, Tezpur
(Group Captain) |
| 61. | Air Marshal D.G. Kinglee,
PVSM, AVSM (Retd) | Student Officer,
National Defence College
till 6 December and
Commander, 3 Air Defence
Control Centre from
7 December
(Air Commodore) |
| 62. | Air Vice Marshal C.V.
Parker, MVC, VM | Officer Commanding,
20 Squadron, Indian Air
Force
(Wing Commander) |
| 63. | Air Vice Marshal J.F.
Lazaro, PVSM, VM (Retd) | AOC, Advance Headquarters,
Headquarters Western Air
Command
(Air Commodore) |
| 64. | Air Vice Marshal Chandan
Singh, MVC, AVSM, Vr C
(Retd) | Station Commander, Air
Force Station, Jorhat
(Group Captain) |
| 65. | Air Commodore M. Banerjee,
MVC, VM | Flight Commander, 101
Squadron, Indian Air
Force
(Wing Commander) |
| 66. | Wing Commander D. Das | Deputy Flight Commander,
Dakota Squadron,
Kalaikonda
(Flight Lieutenant) |

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