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Remembering East Pakistan



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Pakistan's military history stretches far back into antiquity, to our sturdy ancestors along the Mighty Indus, who tilled the land and defended themselves against multiple waves of invaders. Our soldiers today are descendent from those very same warriors of antiquity, while structurally, the Pakistan Army is directly descended from the grand old regiments of the old Indian Army, some of which predate Pakistan by nearly two hundred years. It has a rich and proud history extending both sides of Partition (1947) – always defending Pakistan.

Taken together, Pakistan's military history and the overlapping history of Pakistan Army form a substantial part of our nation's history. Add to this the need for our officers and men to be well-versed in general military history - a matter very close to their hearts - and one can see the case for a single organisation to handle these subjects taken together.

The COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa is credited with approving a proposal to establish the Army Institute of Military History (AIMH) on 2nd June 2017 – the day we were officially born. It has been set up as a semi-autonomous research body with a broad outreach both within the civilian and military domains, and is steered by a designated governing body, the Army History Board (AHB).

Located in Rawalpindi and close to the Army Museum and the Army Central Library, the institute is mandated to archive, record, research, teach and promote military history, along with allied subjects such as physical history (in all its dimensions), battle honours, regimental lineages, customs of the service, matters of dress and accoutrements, and so on. The institute also serves as a forum for veterans, academia, subject experts and concerned civil society members to gather and air their learned views on subjects of interest to the Army. AIMH also encompasses outreach to academia and students.

With a Military History Wing, Composite Wing and Contemporary Affairs Wing, the institute is emerging as a centre

for both historical and current affairs; a melting pot for serving and retired officers, and civilians, to meet and exchange views. Our *forte* remains military history, with research directors assigned to regularly visit the Army's schools of instruction, and the nation's universities and colleges, as visiting faculty and guest speakers. Military history buffs will also find themselves welcome in our lounges.

BUGLE & TRUMPET (B&T)

As a publication with the love of military history at its core, Bugle & Trumpet aims at providing readers with a diverse cross-section of articles and narrations that showcase different aspects of military history. It attempts to do so in a readable manner that has little to do with heavy volumes of raw data. It tells the stories of unsung heroes and living legends, and celebrates individual acts of courage. It attempts to stimulate intellectual probity and foster a fondness for this all-important, yet oft-neglected subject.

By means of its interactive nature, whereby readers may freely contribute their anecdotes, personal experiences, photographs and musings, it aims at becoming a publication which is anticipated; a place which every military history enthusiast in Pakistan might call home.

The views expressed in *B&T* are those of the authors and do not reflect those of AIMH. All content is the intellectual property of AIMH and may be reproduced or quoted with due credit to the author and *B&T*. Readers are invited to contribute for the *B&T*. Original articles related to military history, upto 2000 words in font size 12 (Times New Roman) with double line spacing, on A-4 size paper, alongwith relevant details like photographs, maps or sketches may be sent both in hard and soft form to the editor. Endnotes (*Chicago Style*) and a brief biographic note of the author, including passport size photograph, are required. Contributors will be paid a remuneration @ Rs. 3/- per word. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject contributions.

On the Cover: Map of erstwhile East Pakistan (centre), Pakistan Army during 1971 War in East Pakistan (top right & bottom left).
(Source: AIMH)



From The Editor's Desk

Dear readers,

We are pleased to present the 6th issue of *B&T*. This issue has a special significance, as it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the loss of East Pakistan. That event has left an indelible scar on the hearts and souls of all Pakistanis. Notwithstanding the bitter truth that we lost one half of our country, and its causes and factors, we need to be cognisant of the valour and heroic actions of individuals and units. The commemoration of the sacrifices, selflessness and audacity of those unsung heroes, who fought one of the most difficult wars of human history to defend their motherland, is richly deserved and long awaited. The Indians themselves could not resist acknowledging their courage, will to fight and competence.

First part of the article *A 1000 Miles apart; East Pakistan crisis 1971–Part 1* was published in the previous issue (Summer 2021). Part 1 encompassed the causes, perception and reality, the violent political mess and the role of the leadership, besides heart wrenching issues like the large scale killing of Biharis, leading to a worsening law and order situation, followed by a military crackdown. In Part 2, the author mainly dwells upon the events from June/ July-1971 till early 1972, encompassing details of the conduct of war and its outcome, first touching upon subjects like the international and regional environment, and geography of East Pakistan.

An anecdote; *Carnage at Chittagong*, is the story of a veteran who recounts the harrowing events of bloodshed and massacre of the non-Bengali population in East Pakistan.

Articles like *Pakistani Soldiers in East Pakistan 1971–Grit and Guts*, and *Azam Khan of East Pakistan*, are included to pay tribute and remember the unsung heroes and legendary figures, who exhibited commitment, dedication, leadership and unflinching courage.

Pakistan Army Aviation Relief operation in Bangladesh (1991), reflects the feelings of love and respect, besides the desire and conscious effort to bridge the painful gap between two brotherly Muslims states, by burying the bitterness and steering ties in a positive direction.

I wish our readers an enlightening reading.

Tahir Najeeb Raja



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Carnage at Chittagong

By Major Mumtaz Hussain Shah¹, retired

(During the tragic events of 1971, the author was posted in erstwhile East Pakistan, and witnessed the bloodshed and massacre of innocent non-Bengalis by Mukti Bahini rebels. Two such eyewitness accounts are being shared in his own words...)

On the outbreak of an armed Bengali insurrection in East Pakistan in March 1971, the port city of Chittagong had a sparse representation of non-Bengali regular troops. The only regular Army unit—20 Baluch (now Baloch)—was outnumbered by the combined strength of rebels from 8th East Bengal Regiment (EBR), the EBR Centre (EBRC), East Pakistan Rifles Centre (EPRC) and operational wings of EPR. The hopeless troop's ratio of Bengali and Non-Bengalis was 20:1. I was serving as a captain with Headquarters (HQ) 53 Brigade, Comilla. Upon the formation being assigned martial law duties in Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts Districts, we moved and established martial law HQ at Circuit House, Chittagong.

The port city and its suburbs remained at the mercy of Mukti Bahini rebels till the end of April. A formidable force of rebels was formed under Major Zia-ur-Rahman², second in command (2IC) 8th EBR. The rebels put up stout resistance in different parts of the city. The period saw barbaric and unprecedented atrocities perpetrated on unarmed non-Bengali civilians. Rape, plunder and arson were the norm. The Circuit House was used as a slaughterhouse by the rebels of East Bengal Regiment. Chittagong Medical College students established a blood bank and stocked it by forcible bleeding of Non-Bengali civilians. Mopping up operations were underway to clear small pockets of resistance



Map: Chittagong and surrounding areas (Source: quora.com)

within the precincts of the city. In the process some heart-rending instances of non-Bengali massacres came to the fore.

On 15th April, our troops were engaged in a last-ditch battle against rebels in Ispahani Jute Mills Complex (IJMC) on the River Karnaphuli bank, downtown Chittagong. 24 FF reported heaps of dead bodies, piled up in the complex. I went to collect the details and it was a shocking sight. Hundreds of non-Bengalis lay slain,

1 Major (then captain) Mumtaz Hussain Shah was commissioned in Pakistan Army in July 1966. He was posted to HQ 53 Brigade Comilla in October 1970, and later in martial law HQ, Chittagong, during the turbulent period.

2 Major Zia-ur-Rahman, was commissioned in Pakistan Army in 1955. He was 2IC (second in command) 8th EBR on 25th March 1971. He revolted and killed his commanding officer lieutenant colonel Rashid Junjua. On 27th March Zia announced the independence of Bangladesh on radio. Later he rose to the rank of lieutenant general, and became President of Bangladesh in 1977, after killing Sheikh Mujab in a *coup d'état*. He met the same fate when assassinated by his own officers, during a visit to Chittagong in 1981.



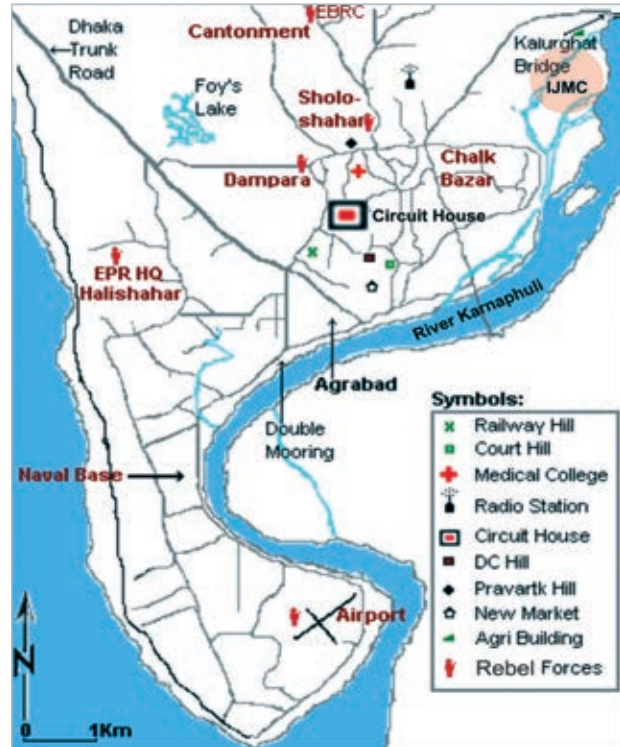
IJMC Complex (Source: googlmaps.com)

mostly women and children. The gruesome massacre was enacted a day earlier. The officers' Club Hall floor was littered with blood drenched dead bodies of helpless non-Bengali officers and workers of the IJM. The walls were riddled with bullets and fired empties were scattered all over. The immediate task was the disposal of dead bodies. Due to heat and dampness, the air was filled with foul odour.

While passing by three-storied residential apartments next to the Officers' Club, I observed blood dripping, turning the stairs red. Along with two soldiers I went up to trace the source of blood. It was from the top floor which was bolted from inside. We knocked the main entrance door. There was no response, except some audible signs of life inside. When we struck the door with rifle butts, an injured lady opened it. Her 15-16 years old daughter clenched her from behind.

The scene was simply awful. We found another 41 dead bodies of women and children. Besides the mother and daughter, there were four more survivors, all injured and traumatised. The survivors including a six-month-old infant, who expired in hospital before being given medical aid after rescue.

The semi-conscious girl named *Haseen* had a bullet in her neck, and bayonet wounds in her belly. We evacuated all the victims to



Chittagong City Map (Source: wikimedia.org)

the Naval Hospital. The incident left indelible imprints on my mind.

In August 1971 I was posted on promotion to 31 Punjab located at Sylhet. After the fall of Dacca I remained captive in India till November 1973. In 1977-78, while serving at Karachi, I tried to locate that little injured teenager³ and her mother, but my efforts bore no fruit. I had to wait for nearly 49 years to rediscover that wounded little angel (now Mrs Haseen Durrani), whose sobs and cries have been haunting me since that heinous crime.



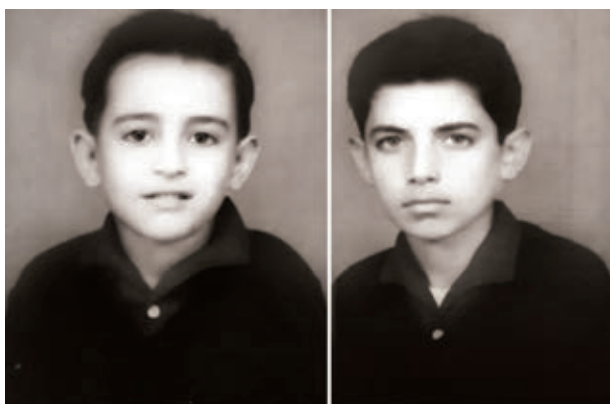
Mrs Haseen Durrani (childhood and now) (Source: Author)

3 Major Aamir-ur-Rahman Syed (ret'd), based at Karachi, made it possible to record Mrs Durrani's eye witness account of the Chittagong carnage.



Hereunder is Mrs Durrani's⁴ eye witness narration of the account, as she was one of the survivors of the massacre at IJMC, Chittagong:

“On 31 March, EBR soldiers in uniform came to IJMC. All the Bengali residents of the complex had gradually left the area since the outbreak of the revolt. Now the left overs were only non-Bengalis officers and employees. The intruders started segregating the male folk, ostensibly for our protection against possible attacks by miscreants. Non-Bengali officers and their families were kept in the three storied apartments, while the workers and their families were concentrated in the officer's club building. They took away five of my family's male members⁵, since then we never heard of them. Only days later we found the dead body of my thirteen year old brother (Asghar), from the backyard of IJMC.



Asghar (13 years) Hassan (18 years)
Two slain brothers of Mrs Haseen Durrani
(Source: Author)

Intermittently, the rebels used to take the women from our apartment. Those unfortunate ladies never returned to tell their tale. We were not allowed to leave the apartment. Soon the water supply of the apartment dried up. A few elderly ladies were permitted to go out to fetch potable water from a nearby tube well of the complex.

We subsisted on whatever was available in the apartments. Soon we ran out of food and spent many days without food.

On 13th April in the evening, the area resonated with the sound of gun shots. The rebels started shooting the detainees of the officers club in batches of 3 to 5, their dead bodies were thrown into the Karnaphuli River.⁶ Then they preyed upon the women and children in the officer's club, sprayed bullets on the locked women and children, killing all of them.

Now it was our turn. Two gunmen broke open our apartment's door and sprayed bullets on us. I got a bullet in my neck and fell down. My mother fell upon me – not due to injury but to protect me. While lying down we were both bayoneted. The rebels left the scene in a hurry, presuming all of us were dead.⁷ Out of 47 women and children, 41 detainees lay slain. Besides we two, the other survivors were a six years old boy – later identified as Fasih Suhrawardy – whose entire family was massacred, and another young mother with an infant.



Fasih (standing at the rear) with his parents and sibling
(Source: Author)

4 Mrs Durrani and her mother were amongst six survivors of the carnage. She is a former teacher and a grandmother leading a retired life at Karachi. Her mother, the other survivor, passed away in 1990. (Mrs Haseen Durrani, interview by author, Rawalpindi, April 22, 2021).

5 It included Mrs Durrani's father, uncle, cousin and two brothers, Asghar (aged 13 years) and Hassan (aged 18 years).

6 River Karnaphuli flows along the southern boundary wall of the IJMC.

7 The feverish hurry in execution of all captives was due to the fact that our security forces were closing on the IJMC.



Entrance of Chittagong Jute Mill Complex (former IJMC)
(Source: Author)

The bloody evening wore off, and night was more haunting. My mother despite her punctured lungs, got up to bolt the door from inside. With great difficulty she also pushed furniture items against the bolted door, against any intrusion.

Next morning, there was again some movement outside our apartment. We thought that those rogues are back again. My mother was more concerned about our honour than our lives. Sickening 13 days detention, ensuing mayhem, the void created by the kidnapping of my father and brother and the wanton killing of my youngest sibling, made her a desperate kamikaze. She was now mentally prepared to take on any intruder. The door was jolted from outside. My mother heard that the people outside were talking in Punjabi and Urdu. She rushed to door as I clenched her from behind to prevent her from opening the door. We saw three Pakistan Army personnel in uniform standing at the door. I was lifted by one of them and I fainted. When I regained consciousness, I was in the Naval Hospital. My mother narrated the whole episode. After removal of the bullet from my neck, and dressing my mother's and my bayonet wounds, we flew to Dacca, where we joined members of my father's family. A few days later we left for Karachi, which was our ultimate destination."

Lieutenant (Lt) Shamsher of 8th EBR – the mastermind of this massacre, was subsequently

captured by 24 FF while fleeing from IJMC. He confessed not only to the brutal killings in IJMC, but also to having raped several dozen non-Bengali girls, to satiate his brutal appetite for vengeance.

Captain Zia Ul Hasnain Shah Jalees Tirmizi, SJ (shaheed)

Captain Zia Ul Hasnain was my close friend and a junior colleague at PMA. We served together at Quetta after passing out, 1966-69. On my posting to Comilla in October 1970, I received a letter from him breaking the news about his permanent posting to East Pakistan Rifles. On arrival, he was to command EPR Wing at Sylhet. Shortly thereafter, his wing moved to Comilla for election duties. Like me, he arrived at Comilla as a newly married person. It was a happy reunion for both of us and soon our wives became good friends too.



Captain Zia Ul Hasnain,
shaheed
(Source: 63 Med Regt Arty)

Before OPERATION SEARCH LIGHT in March 1971, Comilla garrison saw a reduction of Bengali troops, for a possible equilibrium between troops of both sides, in light of the (foreseeable) divide. Captain Tirmizi was ordered to reinforce his already deployed detachment at Feni⁸; further south of Comilla. In his usual exuberance he volunteered to stay with his troops at Feni. Leaving behind his wife and sister-in-law in my wife's care, he departed. None of us could ever imagine that he had *bid adieu* for good.

The situation was getting grim, day by day. Tirmizi was repeatedly attacked by the local mob, and his predominantly Bengali troops

8 Feni was a small town in Belonia Bulge – a hand shaped protrusion into Indian state of Tripura, on Comilla-Chittagong highway. The road was completely dominated by the Indians from across the border. Indian artillery and even small arms fire support was available to miscreants, from across the border.



were reluctant in offering resistance to the attackers. Soon the wireless link with Tirmizi was severed. Two days later his non-Bengali jeep driver returned to Comilla to report that a mob had attacked Feni. Tirmizi held his ground tenaciously, before being overwhelmed. He (the driver) requested him to leave the post being untenable, but he refused. Since then his fate remained unknown. I was to face a touchy and emotional outburst from Mrs Tirmizi, when she enquired about her husband, and I had nothing to tell her with certainty. He was declared missing believed killed. The chapter was closed for the time being when our families were repatriated to West Pakistan in the first week of April.

After clearance of urban Chittagong, efforts were now focused on rural outlays infested by renegade rebels. After long drawn skirmishes and pitched battles, by end of July the revolt had petered out, and the writ of the government re-established in the province. Our brigade tactical HQ was repositioned at Feni. It afforded me an opportunity to investigate the ultimate fate of

Tirmizi. During the clearance of Feni town, we captured two rebel youths. Under interrogation, one of them narrated the saga of Tirmizi's end. His narration is transcribed below:

“We attacked Feni repeatedly, with Indian artillery support from across the border. All our attacks were beaten back with heavy losses, and the battle raged on endlessly. Then we learnt about Bengali troops' defection en masse. The leftover handful of Non-Bengalis couldn't stand the renewed onslaught. Now they were running short of ammunition. Tirmizi was captured wounded, but alive. We summarily disposed of him, tying him to the trunk of a tree, and started shooting from toe to head. Then his dead body was tied up to a jeep and dragged through the town's streets. The scattered parts of his body were collected, and burnt. The ash was thrown into a pond.”

That was the sad end of an exuberant, gallant and above all a pious and devoted officer. Captain Zia was awarded Sitara-e-Jurat (SJ) posthumously.⁹

About the author



Major Mumtaz Hussain Shah, retired, was commissioned in the Punjab Regiment in July 1966. He saw operations in former East Pakistan during the 1971 Indo-Pak War. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College, Quetta. He has been associated with a number of training institutions as a guest speaker. As a freelancer, he scribes for leading national dailies of the country.

“There is a history in all men's lives.”

(William Shakespeare)

Unsung Heroes of the War of Independence 1857

By Dr. Turab-ul-Hassan Sargana

The War of Independence of 1857, called the Indian mutiny by the British, was an important event of our history. The centre of this war was the northern part of India, but in many places in the Punjab, the sepoys and the civil population rose against the British. According to Robert Montgomery, the financial commissioner of the Punjab, the events of revolt occurred at 12 places in the Punjab.¹ At some places the civilian population also fought against the British. Major events of civil resistance took place at Murree and Gugera.² Unfortunately our

Khan was the leader of freedom fighters and according to N.W. Elphinstone, Deputy Commissioner of Gugera, he had been the chief instigator of the movement. His reputation for success in former insurrections was considerable and his influence over the clans on the Ravi unbounded.³

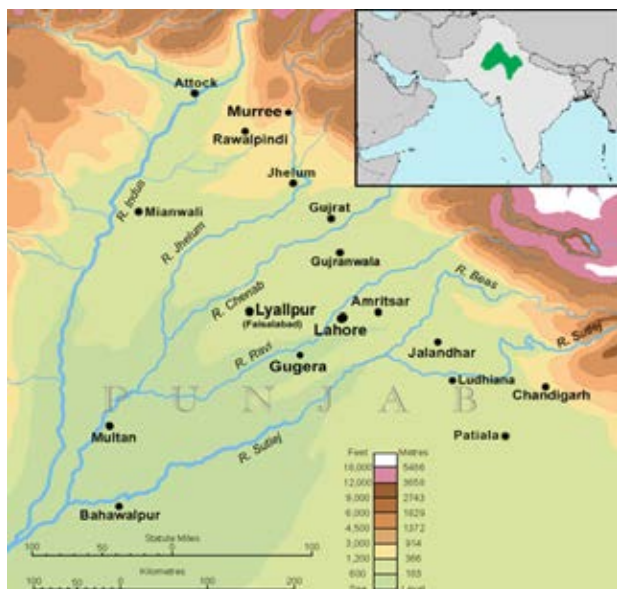


Rai Ahmed Khan Kharral
(Source: reddit.com)

Denzil Ibbetson wrote about him, that Ahmad Khan Kharral led the combined clans successfully in at least five battles, and due to this his popularity spread far and wide and gave him great influence over the clans inhabiting areas near the River Ravi. This was evident during the Gugera Movement, which according to Ibbetson, had been planned and organised by Ahmad Khan Kharral.⁴

The uprising at Gugera started on September 16, 1857. N.W. Elphinstone, officiating Deputy Commissioner Gugera, sent L.P. Berkley with twenty horsemen to Jhamra to arrest Rai Ahmed Khan. As Ahmad Khan was not there, Berkley arrested 20 men and burnt the village of Jhamra.⁵ Next day the British attacked Pindi Sheikh Musa, but failed to arrest the freedom fighters and burnt the town.⁶

On 21 September 1857 the British came to know about the presence of Rai Ahmed Khan and his companions at Gishkori, on the other side of River Ravi. The British under command of Berkley attacked the freedom fighters, and a severe battle was fought. In this battle fourteen or fifteen horsemen of the British were killed, but the loss of freedom fighters was much greater as they lost their great leader Rai Ahmed Khan, and



Map: Punjab before partition (Source: quora.com)

textbooks ignored these events and the local heroes who sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom. A brief introduction of those heroes is given in subsequent paragraphs.

Rai Ahmed Khan Kharral (shaheed)

Rai Ahmed Khan belonged to *Upera* branch of Kharrals and was born in 1776 at Jhamra, now a town in district Faisalabad. His father's name was Rai Nathu Khan Kharral and in the memory of Bajay Khan, this family was known as *Bajay kay Kharral*. Rai Ahmed



his most trusted friend Rai Sarung of *Begey kay Kharrals*. This was a great loss for the freedom movement. According to folklore, Ahmed Khan was martyred while he was offering prayers. Dhara Singh identified him, and Gulab Singh Bedi fired at him and martyred him.⁷



Tomb of Rai Ahmed Khan Kharral (Source: twitter.com)

Rai Sarung Kharral (shaheed)

He was the most trusted friend of Rai Ahmad Khan and was born in 1805 AD in a village near Syedwala. His father's name was Rai Hamand. He became most prominent in the *Begey kay* branch of the Kharral clan and remained with Ahmad Khan from the beginning till the end. He was also martyred on 21 September 1857 at Gishkori, fighting the British, under the command of Rai Ahmad Khan. His descendants are now living at Jaranwala tehsil of district Faisalabad, and many are living in districts Okara and Pakpattan.

Mehr Murad Fatiana (shaheed)

Murad was the son of Dalail, a Fatiana chief of the village Jalhi Fatiana. Fatiana is a branch of the Sial Rajput and the Sial have almost more than one hundred branches. Prominent among them are Fatiana, Tarhana, Hiraj, Bharwana and Sargana etc. Murad accompanied Rai Ahmad Khan in every event of the battle. When Rai Ahmad was martyred on 21 September, Murad pledged to take revenge. So on the very next day, he attacked the British along with many men of Fatiana, Kharral, Qureshi, Wattoo, Tarhana, Murdana, Vehnival and Bhadroo clans, and killed Berkley and many others. Murad Fatiana struck the first fatal blow and more than fifty of



Map: main centres of uprising in Punjab (1857)
(Copyright © AIMH, 2021)

Berkley's men were killed in this fight.⁸ Murad along with others was arrested and sent to Andaman Islands, popularity known as *Kala Pani*. Descendants of Murad Fatiana are found in tehsil Tandlianwala, district Faisalabad.

Mehr Bahawal Fatiana

He was the elder brother of Murad Fatiana and a very prominent leader of the Gugera uprising. According to Cave-Browne, he was very brave and influential⁹ and one of those leaders of the movement who continued it for many months after the martyrdom of Rai Ahmad Khan Kharral. His descendants are now settled in district Sahiwal.

Muhammad Kathia and Nathu Kathia

Kathia family of Harappa played an important role in the war of 1857, and the services of Muhammad Kathia and Nathu Kathia are especially unforgettable. Both were cousins and were born in a village Murad kay Kathia,



which is situated on the bank of River Ravi. The father of Muhammad was Jalla, and Qasim was the father of Nathu. Both of them were born in 1815, and were fairly young at the time of the war. In 1857 all branches of the Kathia clan assembled under the leadership of Muhammad and Nathu, attacked Harappa and occupied it. The British got it back after a great struggle of seven days. Muhammad and Nathu wounded Captain Snow and besieged Major Chamberlain at Chichawatni for four days.¹⁰

They encountered British guns and cannons with sticks, maces and axes. In November 1857, both of them surrendered. Muhammad died in prison whereas Nathu managed to escape from there.

Pir Nadir Shah Qureshi

He was a resident of Pindi Sheikh Musa, now a town in the district of Faisalabad. His forefathers came from Bahawalpur. He was born in 1818 at Pindi Sheikh Musa and his father's name was Pir Sultan Mehmud Qureshi. He was a close friend of Ahmad Khan Kharral, Murad Fatiana, Jalla Tarhana and Walidad Murdana, and supported and accompanied them in every event of the war. His village, Pindi Sheikh Musa, was the centre of resistance along with Jhamra. Due to his activities, his village was burnt twice by the British.¹¹ Pir Nadir Shah Qureshi was arrested in October 1857 and was also sent to the Andaman Islands.

Walidad Murdana

Walidad Murdana, a great freedom fighter of 1857, was born in 1825 at Muhammadpur near Sahiwal and at the time of the war his age was only 32. His father's name was Naurang Khan Murdana. From the beginning he was friends with Rai Ahmad Khan, Nadir Qureshi and Murad Fatiana. When these freedom fighters rose against the British, Walidad also joined them. When the war started in 1857, Walidad destroyed the communication



Map: Location of Andaman Islands (Source: pinterest.com)

system of the British and the mail between Lahore and Multan remained suspended for two weeks. This incensed the British and they burnt the village of Walidad thrice. At last when the war failed due to the treacherous role of collaborators and traitors, Walidad tried to hide himself, but the traitors informed the British about him. He was arrested and sent to the Andaman Islands along with many other freedom fighters. Walidad and some other freedom fighters jumped in the sea and managed to escape. Again the British sent him to Andaman and later the British announced his death on the islands.

Suja Bhadru

Suja Bhadru was born at a village near Noor Shah in district Sahiwal. He had very cordial relations with all the neighbouring tribes. He visited Satghara, Syedwala, Jhamra, Murad kay Kathia and all other centres of the war. He played an important role in bringing all the tribes at one place and motivated them. Suja participated in the war with his four brothers, and played a vital role with Murad Fatiana in taking revenge for the killing of Rai Ahmed Khan. The British never succeeded in arresting Suja Bhadru.

Mokha Vehniwal

The Vehniwal family also played an important role during the war at Gugera. Rajab and Mokha, the two sons of Kohri Vehniwal,



Monument to freedom fighters in Sahiwal
(Source: facebook.com)

fought bravely. Mokha accompanied Murad Fatiana, Jalla Tarhana and Walidad Murdana, and took revenge for the killing of Rai Ahmad Khan, by killing the British officer Berkley, at Kourey Shah. After this the British burnt many villages, including the houses of Vehniwals. Mokha with his many friends

was sent to Andaman. He, with some colleagues, jumped into the sea and came back. He was never arrested again.

Jalla Tarhana

He was the son of Salabat Tarhana, himself a great freedom fighter. Tarhana is also a branch of Sial clan. Jalla and his father Salabat were friends with Rai Ahmad Khan, Nadir Shah Qureshi and Walidad Murdana. Besides the Fatianas, Tarhanas were also very keen to extract revenge for Rai Ahmed Khan, and both the families played a vital role in the battles of Kourey Shah and Jalhi. Tarhanas and Fatianas never reconciled with the British.

Kala Khan

Kala Khan or Kaley Khan was a freedom fighter from Rawalpindi and there is not much information about him. Kaley Khan managed to reach Delhi and joined the freedom fighters there. He shot Nicholson when he was attacking Delhi to recapture it, and Nicholson fell mortally wounded to the ground.¹²

Sardar Baz Khan of Murree

Sardar Baz Khan was the leader of the Murree uprising. He was the son of Fateh Noor Khan, a chief of the Dhund Abbasi clan.

According to the author of *Tareekh-e-Murree*, the real name of Baz Khan was Sultan Ahmad Khan¹³, but like many other stories of this author, this is uncertain. Similarly the story of the kidnapping of Lady Lawrence, by this author, is unlikely as this has not been corroborated by other accounts.

Dhunds came out to challenge the British under the leadership of Sardar Baz Khan. He and his companions went from village to village, to mobilise and organise people for their struggle against the British. Sardar Baz Khan succeeded to get the support of some important chiefs of the clans of the area. Sardar Borha Khan of Satti clan and Sardar Hassan Ali Khan of Karral tribe are worth mentioning.

The main cause of the uprising at Murree was religious. In the month of July 1857, the chiefs of the Dhund and Satti clans met Lieutenant Battye, Assistant Commissioner of Murree, and protested against the ongoing Christian missionary activities. The freedom fighters decided to attack, but Hakim Khan, one of the lumberdars of Lora, and a guard of Lady Lawrence, informed the British about the intention of the freedom fighters. So when on September 2, the freedom fighters attacked, the British were ready to respond. It was estimated that three hundred locals were involved in this attack and total strength of the defenders was four hundred. As the freedom fighters were not expecting this resistance, they were not ready, and soon they went back. In the end the British succeeded in crushing the freedom fighters. Sardar Baz Khan along with many other freedom fighters i.e. Dr. Rasul Bakhsh, Dr Ameer Ali, and a tin worker Syed Karam Ali, were executed. In this way the movement at Murree came to an end.

The fighters mentioned above are the unsung heroes of the war of 1857. *Unsung* in a sense that they are not mentioned in our text books. Otherwise, after passing more than 160



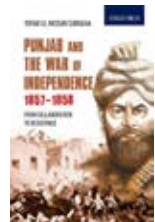
years, ballads are sung about them. They are real heroes of the people and they sacrificed their lives for their country and for the independence of their people. They had no personal grievance against the British, their only aim was the independence of their motherland. Therefore, although their names are not found in our textbooks, folklore and folk songs have kept them alive, and people have great love and respect for these heroes. They are considered the symbol of resistance among the people of Punjab.



Execution of freedom fighters by blowing from guns (1857)
(Source: quora.com)

Notes

1. Report by R. Montgomery, Judicial Commissioner of the Punjab to R. Temple, secretary to the Chief Commissioner for the Punjab, No. 149, Lahore, 24 March 1858 in *Mutiny Reports*, Vol. VIII, Part-II, 199-200.
2. Turab-ul-Hassan Sargana, *Punjab and The War of Independence 1857-1858: From Collaboration to Resistance* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2020), 122.
3. From N.W. Elphinstone to G.W. Hamilton, 30 January 1858 in *Mutiny Reports* vol. VIII, Part II, 49.
4. Denzil Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2001. First Published 1883), 175.
5. *Mutiny Reports*, Vol. VIII, Part II, 45-47.
6. Ibid, 47.
7. A.D.Ejaz, *Kal Bulendi* (Lahore: Pakistan Punjabi Adabi Board, 1986), 137.
8. *Mutiny Reports*, Vol. VIII, part II, 51.
9. Cave-Browne *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857*, vol. II (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1861), 214.
10. *Mutiny correspondence*, vol. VII, part II.
11. *Mutiny Reports*, Vol, VIII, Part II, 47.
12. David Ross, *The Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh* (Lahore All-Biruni, 1976, 1st Published 1883) 174.
13. Noor Elahi Abbasi, *Tarikh-e-Murree* (Muree: Noor Elahi Abbasi Memorial Library, 2005, 1st Published 1985), 93.



About the author



Turab ul Hassan Sargana was born in a village of district Toba Tek Singh in the Punjab, Pakistan. He graduated from Government College Lahore and completed his MSc and PhD in history from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. From 1993 to 2014, he served in different colleges of Punjab as a lecturer and assistant professor. In 2014, he joined Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, as an assistant professor in the department of history, and is still serving there. Besides presenting several research papers in national and international conferences, Dr Sargana authored a book **Punjab and the War of Independence 1857-1858**.



A 1000 Miles Apart; East Pakistan Crisis 1971–Part 2

By Brigadier Nasir Shafiq, retired

With December approaching each year, comes the unforgettable and heart wrenching remembrance of the breakup of Pakistan in 1971. Fifty years ago, on 16th December 1971, a seemingly political mess turned military conflict, ended with everlasting scars on the history of Pakistan. Fully aided and abetted by India, and executed through her mischievous machinations, the better part of Pakistani population—East Pakistan—separated mainly due to political demands. The whole tragedy was divided into two parts. A few essential points, to include the causes of this quagmire, perceptions and realities, the role of leadership, violent political mess, the notion of perceived economic disparity, and Indian involvement have already been covered in Part 1, under the same title, published in the 5th edition of Bugle and Trumpet (Summer 2021). The killings of Biharis and pro-Pakistan Bengalis by Mukti Bahini, worsening law and order situation and the resultant military crackdown against the miscreants (OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT), has also been discussed in the first part. The hectic efforts and sacrifices of Pakistani Armed Forces to restore normalcy after the turbulent period of March-May 1971, have also been mentioned in the previous part.

This part will mainly cover the time period from June/July 1971 till December 1971, and a few months after that. This will include the international and regional environment before the open Indo-Pak armed conflict, and details of the conduct of war and its outcome, this being the mainstay of this part of the article. The geography of East Pakistan, comparison of opposing forces, their deployment and opposing schemes of operations, will also be discussed. A future course of action will be suggested too, in the end.

International Environment

The international environment at that time did not favour Pakistan. Pakistan was an ally of the US since 1954. It was part of SEATO and CENTO, and had been given written and unwritten assurances that the US would support Pakistan in case of aggression from any country, *including India*. Pakistan felt over assured that the US would intervene and prevent its disintegration, however the US followed a coldly calculated policy with regards to helping Pakistan, and the much awaited *US Navy Seventh Fleet* never reached East Pakistan.



Map: South Asia and regional countries (1971)
(Source: pinterest.com)

The USSR almost openly supported India in the months before and during the war. The Soviet Union's support to India was formalised through the *Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation*, signed between India and the USSR on 9th August 1971. During the conflict, the Soviet Union provided military equipment to India and played a major role at the UN Security Council by *vetoing resolutions directed against India*. China was in support of Pakistan in the 1971 crisis.¹ The support however,

1 Maj Gen Lachman Singh, *Victory in Bangladesh*, Natraj Publishers, Dehra Dhun, 1981, 203.



UN Security Council (Source: shwenaychi.com)

- Terrain and weather were suitable for a swift offensive.
- Chances of active Chinese military support for Pakistan were neutralised.
- A situation of no return for any political solution (other than creation of Bangladesh) was reached.
- Favourable international environment to support her offensive was created.

remained restricted to moral and diplomatic domains. The UK openly supported India, and on 23rd June 1971 stopped all economic aid to Pakistan.² It also allowed setting up of a high commission by Bangladesh Government-in-exile in London, September 1971 onwards.³ Pakistan could traditionally bank on support from Muslim countries. Although they were virtually unanimous in their support to Pakistan, the degree of substantive military and financial assistance extended to Pakistan by them, was minimal.

Indian Involvement

The Indian leadership executed their well-conceived preparatory and exterior manoeuvres with professional competence, maturity and political acumen, thereby changing its role from *aggressor* to *liberator*. The cardinal points of her preparatory manoeuvre were to avoid or delay a direct confrontation till:-

- Geo-political opinion swung in her favour.
- Operational preparations were complete.
- Logistic build up was adequate.
- Internal/insurgency situation was sufficiently volatile.

Geography of East Pakistan

It is a low-lying, mainly riverine area with a coastline of 580 kms on the northern littoral of the Bay of Bengal. Replete with mangrove forests and tropical rain forests, the overall land



Map: Geography of erstwhile East Pakistan (Source: researchgate.net)

is mostly flat, with a few hilly areas in the east and southeast. The delta plain of the Ganges (Padma), Brahmaputra (Jamuna), and Meghna



² Aziz, Kursheed Kamal. *World Powers and the 1971 Breakup of Pakistan*, Islamabad: Vanguard, 2003, 162.

³ Ibid, 165.



Rivers and their tributaries occupy 79 percent of the area. Four uplifted blocks (including the Madhupur and Barind Tracts in the centre and northwest) occupy 9 percent, and steep hill ranges up to approximately 1,000 meters (3,300 ft) high occupy 12% in the southeast (the Chittagong Hill Tracts) and in the northeast. It has a tropical monsoon climate characterised by heavy seasonal rainfall, high temperature and high humidity. Natural disasters such as floods and cyclones, accompanied by storm surges, periodically affect the country.⁴ The international border line with India, 4096 kms, is snaky, twisting and runs through plains, forests and numerous water channels, thus making it very difficult to defend effectively.

Opposing Forces:

Formations			Ratio
Corps	1	3	1:3
Infantry divisions	3	8	1:2.6
Infantry brigades	9	28	1:3
Para brigades	-	1	0:1
Infantry battalions	34	72	1:2.5
Armoured regiments	1	6	1:6
Independent armoured squadrons	1	3	1:3
Artillery regiments	6	46	1:8
Anti-aircraft regiments	1	4	1:4
Paramilitary forces (battalions)	13	32	1:3
Mukti Bahini	-	100,000 (approximately)	-

Indian Scheme of Operations

The Indians launched their campaign with a mission to capture East Pakistan, so as to declare an independent Bangladesh, and destroy maximum Pakistani forces in the process. They planned their operations in four phases. Phase one was to isolate East Pakistan by imposing a naval blockade, and severing the direct air link with West Pakistan. They also wanted to keep the Pakistani forces dispersed along the borders,

where Mukti Bahini, supported by the Indian Army could deplete the defender's numerical strength, tire them out and lower their morale, before the main offensive was launched. In phase two, the preparatory manoeuvre, they aimed at enticing Pakistani reserves to the borders by intensifying attacks in border areas, and capturing suitable launching sites for the main offensive. In the third phase, the exploitation manoeuvre, the Indians planned to launch a four-pronged land offensive, bypassing the main defences, and preventing troops from withdrawing as a cohesive force, to Dacca. This included a main offensive effort by Indian 4 Corps with three divisions, supported by a Mukti Bahini brigade from the east, to capture area up to Meghna, and then capture Dacca as soon as possible. They planned two secondary efforts as well, one from the southwest and other from the northwest, with two divisions each, in Jessore and Bogra sectors. The main and secondary efforts were supported by an auxiliary effort with a division-size force from the direction of Mymensingh. The fourth phase aimed at capturing Dacca, as and when possible.

Indian Deployment

The Indians deployed a total of eight mountain or infantry divisions and four independent infantry brigades, with three corps headquarters (*Map No 1*). Indian 2 Corps with two divisions was deployed in the southwestern sector. Earlier these divisions were facing China, and by taking a calculated risk, were diverted towards East Pakistan. In the northwestern sector, India deployed 33 Corps with two divisions and a brigade. 4 Corps with three infantry divisions and one armoured brigade was deployed in the eastern sector. Two of its divisions were diverted from operations against the Mizos and Nagas, and one division was taken out from Tibet. 101 Communication Zone with a division-size force, was pitched against Mymensingh sector. Overall,

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Bangladesh.



Deployment of forces of India & Pakistan in 1971 (Map 1)

(Copyright © AIMH, 2021)

Indian reserves comprised two independent infantry brigades and one para brigade.

Pakistani Scheme of Operations

On the Pakistan side, the mission statement was very simple, to defend East Pakistan and deny capture of Dacca at all costs. To achieve this, they envisaged their defensive battle on the following pattern, but without any worthwhile reserves: -

- Adopting a forward defensive posture to defend each and every inch of the territory, so as to deny any chance of establishment of

Bangladesh on captured territory.

- Seal the borders by occupying border outposts, reinforced by a line of defence as far forward as tactically feasible.
- Gaps between strong points were to be surveyed, and any incursion in the gaps eliminated by local reserves.
- A number of strongpoints and fortresses were to be developed in depth, on all likely enemy approaches.
- After the initial battle, if necessary, fall back to strongpoints.



- Subsequently, retreat to *Dacca Bowl* and defend it at all costs.

Pakistani Deployment

In addition to three infantry divisions available, two additional *ad hoc* divisions and five *ad hoc* brigades were also raised, milking troops out of available resources. In the southwestern sector (Jessore), 9 Division with two regular and one *ad hoc* brigade, was deployed against Indian 2 Corps. In the northwestern sector (Bogra), 16 Division with three regular brigades, was employed against Indian 33 Corps. 36 *ad hoc* Division with 93 *ad hoc* Brigade was employed in the central sector (Mymensingh). The eastern sector (Sylhet-Chittagong) was entrusted to 14 Division (with two regular and one *ad hoc* brigade) and 39 *ad hoc* Division (two regular and two *ad hoc* brigades). Pakistan did not have the luxury of worthwhile reserves. Initially one brigade was earmarked for the defence of Dacca, which was later moved to the eastern sector. So no troops were available for the defence of the centre of gravity i.e. Dacca.

Operations of Mukti Bahini

The pattern of Mukti Bahini operations can be summarised in four phases: -

- **Phase-I** (March–April 71). In the first phase, Mukti Bahini operated in border areas and enabled the Indian Army to gain as much information about trans-border terrain, as possible. In an effort to plug every gap, the Pakistan Army had to be dispersed to the farthest areas.
- **Phase-II** (May–July 71). In the second phase, Mukti Bahini appeared more confident, motivated and skilled with their range of sabotage activities extending up to Dacca, by blowing up bridges, blocking roads, ambushing convoys and assassinating isolated army personnel. Concurrently, the naval wing of Mukti Bahini also launched commando raids on major ports



Map: Sectors of Mukti Bahini Rebels in erstwhile East Pakistan
(Source: knowamazingbangladesh.blogspot.com)

and inland shipping. These operations caused disruption in the army's lines of communication, including its command and control system, resulting in increased insecurity.

- **Phase-III** (August–November 71). Insurgents fomented trouble in important cities and towns by killing innocent men, women and children whom they suspected of collaborating with the government. With the support of Indian artillery fire and armour, the Mukti Bahini



Mukti Bahini rebels being trained (Source: thedailystar.net)

attacked border posts and vulnerable enclaves, which could later be used as jump off points by the Indian army.



- **Parallel Phase.** India relied heavily on conduct of psychological operations throughout the insurgency. Indian media concocted highly exaggerated reports of Mukti Bahini successes to build their morale, and lower that of Pakistani forces. Prolonged insurgency, coupled with an effective psychological campaign by India, increased the weariness of Pakistani forces.

Conduct of War

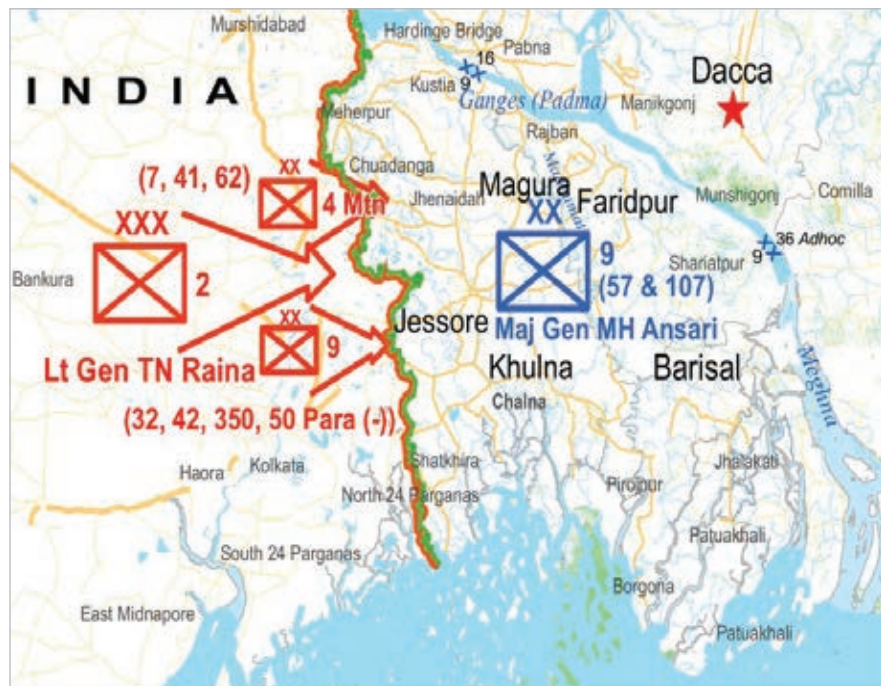
India started an open but undeclared war by crossing the international border on 21st November 1971 (Eid-ul-Fitr day), with complete numerical superiority in air, sea and land forces, and attacked East Pakistan. It is a misperception that India-Pakistan war of 1971 started on 3rd December 1971. (Actually, this date marks the day when hostilities started in the western theatre). The Pakistan Army was very thin on the ground due to less numbers, and was widely spread on the intricate and winding border lines of East Pakistan, defending BOPs (border outposts) with minimum personnel. They were ordered by Army Headquarters to defend every inch of East Pakistan's soil which was really an uphill task, given the numbers of soldiers available. This gave India, fully supported and guided

by Mukti, opportunities of bypassing Pakistan Army positions quite easily. Indian forces always avoided a direct confrontation with Pakistani troops where possible, and tried to bypass them. However, Pakistani troops defended the borders quite effectively, and caused considerable casualties on the enemy. It goes to the credit of Pakistani troops that *no major position could be overwhelmed by the Indian Army*, and they were only occupied once vacated by Pakistani troops.

Indeed, several isolated positions continued to be held by Pakistani troops, even after 16th December 1971. Conduct details of sector-wise operations follow in succeeding paragraphs.

Southwestern Sector

In this sector (Jessore), Pakistani 9 Division (with 57 and 107 Brigades) was attacked by Indian 2 Corps (*Map No 2*), with 4 Mountain Division and 9 Infantry Division. The defensive task of 9 Pakistani Division also included the defence of theatre fortresses of Jessore and Jhenida. Major General Muhammad Hussain Ansari, GOC 9 Division, deployed 57 Brigade in the north and 107 Brigade in the south, to guard Faridpur and Jessore approaches respectively.



Southwestern Sector (Map 2)

(Copyright © AIMH, 2021)

No reserves were kept. Indian 2 Corps launched a three-pronged attack to encircle Jessore. 9 Indian Division managed to achieve an early breakthrough by occupying Jessore on 9 December, *which had already been vacated by Pakistani troops*. This caused the collapse of the Pakistani defence in Jessore sector. 107 Brigade withdrew in confusion towards Khulna instead of Magura as planned; thereafter this brigade fought its own independent battle. Instead of



Eastern Command of Pakistani Armed Forces
(Source: facebook.com)

withdrawing towards Faridpur, 57 Brigade also moved to Kushtia in the north, crossed the river Jamna, and joined 16 Division. Jhenida Fortress was also abandoned on 6 December without a fight, thereafter the remnants of 9 Division of Pakistan Army organised a defence west of Faridpur, and held out till 15 December.

Northwestern Sector

Bogra sector (Map No 3) in the northwest was being defended by Pakistani 16 Division with three infantry brigades (23, 205 & 34) and 29 Cavalry (armoured regiment). They were attacked by Indian 33 Corps with 20 Mountain Division and 6 Mountain Division. 23 Brigade was holding the area north of line Rangpur-Saidpur-Dinajpur, 205 Brigade was in the centre holding Hilli, Ghorghat and Bogra, while 34 Brigade was in Natore area in the south. There were no reserves here as well. Indian 33 Corps two pronged attack met very stiff resistance, and their plan of bypassing and enveloping Pakistani defences could not be executed. 23 Brigade managed to fall back to the fortresses of Rangpur and Dinnajpur, while Hilli and Bogra also held out. Till the surrender, 16 Division's defences remained by and large intact, but stood divided and isolated. Despite overwhelming superiority in all components of combat power, especially in firepower, *the Indians took 25 days to drive a wedge in the defences of 16 Division. The Indians*



Northwestern Sector (Map 3) (Copyright © AIMH, 2021)

wasted 18 precious days trying to capture Hilli where Pakistani 205 Brigade, specially 4 FF, put up a valiant fight against all odds. It requires a stretch of imagination for the Indian offensive to be called a *lightning campaign* or *blitzkrieg*, as claimed by them.⁵ Major Muhammad Akram from 4 FF embraced shahadat while defending his position and was awarded Nishan-e-Haider later on. Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mahmood, commanding officer of 32 Baluch (now Baloch) was even commended by the Indians, for exhibiting extreme bravery by leading his battalion into an attack, and getting martyred in hand to hand combat. The defence of Dinajpur by 26 FF under Lieutenant Colonel Hakeem Arshad Qureshi



Major Muhammad Akram
(Source: facebook.com)



Lieutenant Colonel Raja Sultan Mahmood
(Source: AIMH)

5 Ithar Hussain Shah, *A Thousand Miles Apart*, under publication.

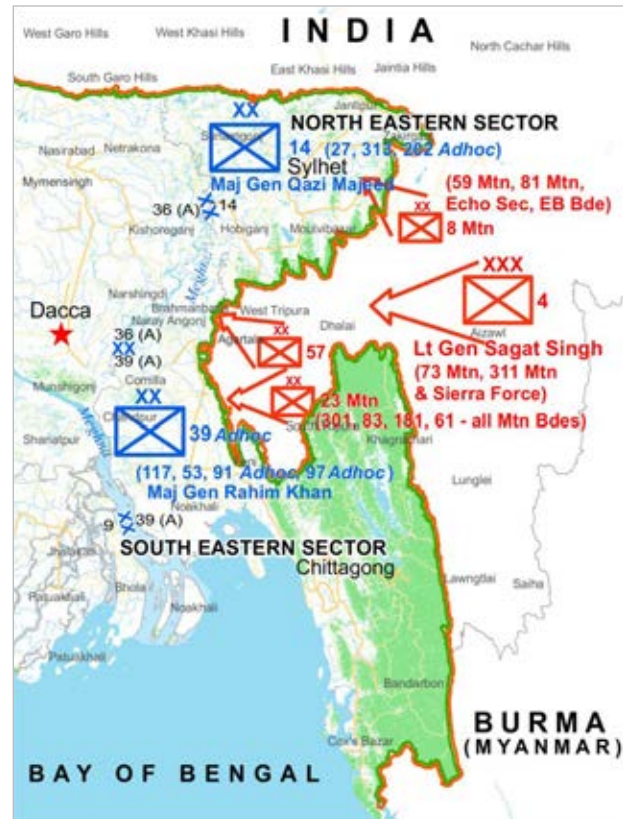


Pakistani gun in action (Source: abbasphotos.org)

(later major general), was another glowing example of a brilliant defensive battle. As far as fighting quality, training and motivation were concerned, 4 FF at Hilli, two companies of 8 Baloch and a company of 13 FF at Bahadria, and 26 FF proved beyond doubt, that despite all odds, the Pakistan Army was one of the best fighting machines.⁶

Eastern Sector

The Eastern sector (*Map No 4*) comprised mainly two subsectors i.e. northeastern sector (Sylhet) and southeastern sector (Comilla, Chittagong), subdivided between 14 Division (313 & 27 Infantry Brigades and 202 *ad hoc* Brigade) in the north, and 39 *ad hoc* Division (117 & 53 Infantry Brigades and 97 *ad hoc* Brigade) in the south. They were attacked by Indian 4 Corps with 8 and 57 Mountain Divisions. 14 Division under Major General Qazi Abdul Majid deployed 202 Brigade at Sylhet, 313 Brigade at Maulvi Bazar and 27 Brigade at Brahman Baria. 39 *ad hoc* Division under Major General M Rahim Khan deployed 117 Brigade in Comilla, 53 Brigade in Laksham Feny and 97 *ad hoc* Brigade at Chittagong. In this case also there were no reserves. Indian 8 Division commenced its advance on 3 December 1971, and captured Shamsheernagar and Maulvi Bazar on 4 December. 313 Pakistani Brigade withdrew



Eastern Sector (*Map 4*) (Copyright © AIMH, 2021)

to Sylhet Fortress, whereas 27 Brigade withdrew to Ashugang and later to Bhairab Bazar west of Meghna, reaching there on night 10/11 December. In Comilla–Chittagong sub sector, 57 Indian Mountain Division attacked Comilla, to further capture Chandpur. Indians succeeded in cutting the road south of Comilla. Pakistani 53 Brigade tried to clear the road block, failing which it fell back to Comilla Fortress. This fortress held out till 16 December despite all odds. 97 (*ad hoc*) Brigade got isolated in the Chittagong area.

Around 12 December, the Indian *Special Frontier Force*, raised and trained by Major General Sujana Singh for anti-guerrilla operations in Mizoram, was ordered to move into Chittagong Hill Tracts, capture Rangamati and pose a threat to Chittagong from the east.⁷ This force commenced operations against Chittagong Hill Tracts from four bases along the

6 Ithar Hussain Shah, *A Thousand Miles Apart*, under publication.

7 Jacob, *Surrender at Dacca*, 123 and 412.



Map: Chittagong and surroundings (Source: theprint.in)

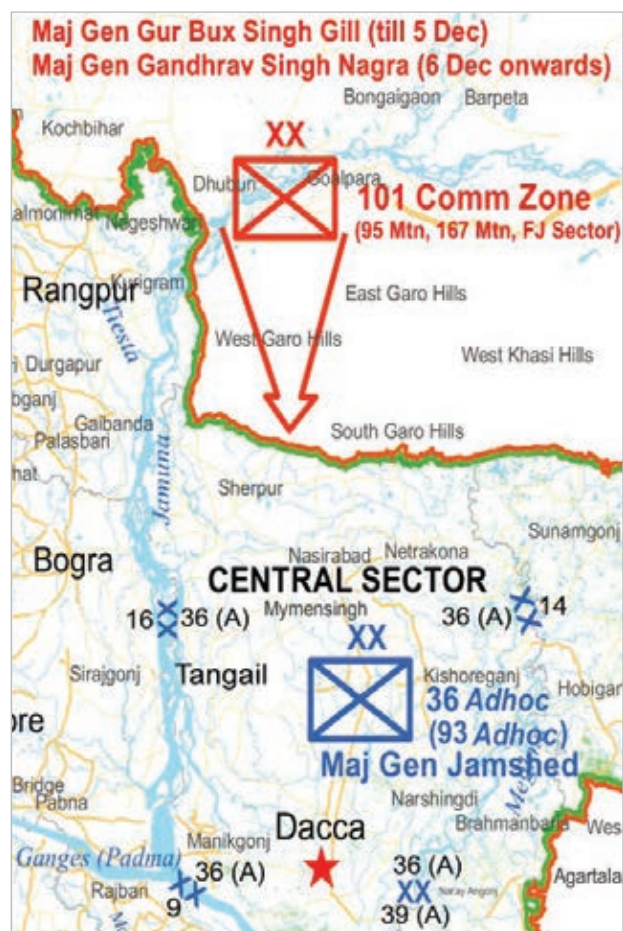
East Pakistan border, in Mizoram. From north to south these bases were at Marpara, Demagiri, Bornapansuri and Jarulchari.⁸ Pakistani troops held onto their defences. On 15 December, the Indians landed troops by helicopters west of Rangamati. They were contained by some troops from Pakistani 2 Commando Battalion and Mizo guerrillas. The rest of the troops in the area, with 2 Commando, managed to withdraw to Chittagong.⁹ General Sujjan Singh's Special Frontier Force reached Chittagong after the war ended.¹⁰

The counter attack by various troops of Pakistani 27 Brigade on 9 December, against the advancing 18 Rajput, was a fine example of quick thinking and offensive spirit of Pakistani officers and soldiers. At that time Pakistani troops were in withdrawal, lacked air support and were surprised by the sudden appearance of 18 Rajput on their northern flank. Ordinarily, any other army would have broken down in such circumstances. However, the well trained and motivated Pakistani soldiers proved that properly led, they could do miracles even in

extremely adverse situations. Till the bitter end, the junior officers and troops remained steadfast and ready to put in their best.¹¹

Central Sector - Battle for Dacca

Defence of this sector (Map No 5) was entrusted to 36 *adhoc* Division under Major General Jamshed, with only 93 *adhoc* Brigade comprising two infantry battalions, and elements ex East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces. According to Pakistani higher command assessment, this sector had no threat, or was least threatened. Indian 101 Communication Zone under Major General GS Nagra, comprising 95 and 167 Mountain Brigades, and some strength of Mukti



Central Sector (Map 5) (Copyright © AIMH, 2021)

8 John H Gill, *An Atlas of the 1971 India-Pakistan War, The Creation of Bangladesh*, Published by National Defence University near South East Asia Centre for Strategic Studies, (Washington DC, 2003), 32.

9 *Regimental History of 2 Commando Battalion*.

10 Jacob, *Surrender at Dacca*, 123.

11 Ithar Hussain Shah, *A Thousand Miles Apart*, under publication.



Bahini, attacked this sector. Pakistani troops put up tough resistance initially, but subsequently they withdrew to Mymensing and Jamalpur on 6 December, and held on to this position till 10 December. With the collapse of 14 Division and 39 *ad hoc* Division, Dacca now stood fully exposed and threatened. In the meantime a battalion ex Indian para brigade was also dropped at Tangail on 11 December, which managed to link up with troops of Indian 4 Corps. Therefore, 36 *ad hoc* Division was ordered to withdraw to Kaliakar, however it could not manage to reach its destination. Elements of Indian 4 Corps, para brigade and 101 Communication Zone grouped together and entered the outskirts of Dacca



Map: Dacca (now Dhaka) Bowl (Source: pinterest.com)

on 14 December, putting Pakistani Eastern Command under tremendous pressure. At this time, Pakistani troops were holding on at many positions, but were scattered and in no state to fall back to *Dacca Bowl*.

The Surrender

The ground situation in East Pakistan, coupled with Security Council resolutions repeatedly vetoed by the USSR, landed Pakistan in an extremely precarious situation, forcing President Yahya Khan to send this fateful message to East Pakistan on 14 December.

This unclassified message (in clear) addressed to the Governor and Commander Eastern Command, was received in Dacca at 3:30 PM on 14 December 1971:



Dr. Abdul Motaleb Malik
(Governor East Pakistan 1971)
(Source: Book-Witness to Surrender)

“FLASH

PAK ARMY to Governor CMM Eastern Command G-0013 DTG 141332 dec. For Governor and General Niazi from President (.) Governor's flash message to me refers (.) you have fought a heroic battle against overwhelming odds (.) The nation is proud of you and the world full of admiration (.) I have done all that is humanly possible to find an acceptable solution to the problem (.) 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 loyal elements (.) Meanwhile I have moved UN to urge India to stop hostilities in East Pakistan forthwith and guarantee the safety of the armed forces and all other people who may be likely target of miscreants (.)”

This signal message was followed by another message, which proved to be the very last message from GHQ to Dacca on 15 December. This message (G-0015) from COS Army to General Niazi was sent at 11:50 am on 15th December and read as follows:

“Reference G-1310 (.) Saw your reply to President and heard Indian COAS reply on AIR (.) Suggest accept terms by COAS India as they appear to meet your requirements (.) Will however be local military decision with no bearing on political outcome (.)”



On the other hand in New York, when the Security Council met again on 15 December, news reached that the surrender of Pakistani forces in East Pakistan was being arranged on 16 December.¹² Having received this last command



Lt Gen AAK Niazi
(Source: alchetron.com)

from GHQ to East Pakistan, General AAK Niazi signed the surrender documents at 1631 hours on 16 Dec 1971, and with this, unfortunately the dream of united Pakistan was laid to rest forever. Sadly, the political mess which engulfed the Armed

Forces of Pakistan in an unpleasant and undesirable situation, led to the breakup of Pakistan. Surely this could have been avoided, had the political leadership acted more wisely and maturely, keeping national interests above petty personal and regional concerns. Deeper Indian involvement with their malevolent designs, did not let this happen, by leaving no stone unturned in polluting the minds of the Bengali population of East Pakistan. Had it been left to Pakistan as an internal matter, without unholy external interference (as it was in fact), some workable solution could have been found.

Pakistani Armed Forces, having gone through a nine month long insurgency, without heavy weapons, were faced with an enemy much superior in strength and weapons; almost four times larger. They fought heroically, with unparalleled courage, determination and resolve for the unity of Pakistan. Alongside the Pakistan Army, both Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Navy fought very well, despite their meagre resources. The international community at the UN Security Council discussed the situation for a few days, through multiple resolutions, but could not reach any consensus due to unrelenting vetoes by the USSR, and diplomatic mishandling of the situation by Pakistan at UNO. Timely approval of

resolutions tabled by the Security Council could have saved Pakistan from a lot of bloodshed, the humiliation of surrender, and the agony of prison camps. The Security Council's inaction, and inept handling of the situation by Pakistan at the UN, resulted in *the conversion of a possible ceasefire, into a surrender*. The government was left with no other option but to order Pakistani forces in East Pakistan to accept the Indian offer of surrender, to stop further bloodshed of innocent civilians.

The performance of Pakistani soldiers and their fighting spirit was acknowledged and appreciated even by the Indians. General Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander Indian Eastern Command also commended the war performance of Pakistani forces by mentioning that individually the Pakistani soldiers, units and sub units, fought extremely well, with resolution and competence, but their overall plan on how to fight the war was *faulty*. General Aurora was of the view that if General Niazi had concentrated his force between the natural barriers of the rivers Meghna and Madhmatai, they could have kept the war going for several months. Years later in a video interview, Field Marshal (FM) Manekshaw, the Indian army chief during the 1971 War, paid rich tributes to Pakistan Armed Forces, highlighting their valour and fighting spirit in East Pakistan.



FM Manekshaw
(Source: bbc.com)

The Untold Mass Killings

A lot of bloodshed happened, firstly during March 1971 and then immediately after the fall of Dacca in December 1971. OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT in March 1971 followed a severe wave of killings, when hundreds of thousands of Urdu speaking Biharis, pro-Pakistan Bengalis (to include *Al-Badar* and *Al-Shams*), and other innocent people who

12 Kamal Matinuddin, *Tragedy of Errors*, 444-452.



stood by the unity of Pakistan, were mercilessly killed. The fall of Dacca also witnessed a cruel wave of killings of all non-Bengalis, particularly Urdu-speaking Biharis and West Pakistanis, at the hands of Mukti Bahini and other Indian agents. Their children were torn apart, women raped, properties looted, homes burnt, and the survivors were put into filthy camps, under most inhuman and unhygienic conditions, living there till today. This happened in the presence and under full control of the Indian Army, which had guaranteed the safety and security of minorities. 'People were dragged from their homes and killed outright'.¹³ In the first six months of 1972, Dacca jail which had a capacity of 1966 persons, was packed with 14,000 (so called) *collaborators*, many of them Bengalis. "The worst barbarities of which the Nazis in Hitler's Germany used to be accused were repeated and exceeded".¹⁴ 'Over 50,000 men, women and children were thrown in prison. Mukti Bahini would frequently take some prisoners from jail and shoot them without trial. Many prominent Bengali personalities vanished overnight'.¹⁵ To provide a legal blanket cover to all these atrocities, the Bangladesh government conveniently issued an indemnity order (The Bangladesh National Liberation Struggle Order 1973. President's order, Act number 16 of 1973) in 1973. It reads *no suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie in any court against any person for or on account of or in respect of any act done during the period from the 1st day of March, 1971 to the 16th day of December, 1971, in connection with the struggle for national liberation or for maintenance or restoration of order up to the 28th day of February, 1972*.¹⁶

Many of the massacre pictures of East

Pakistan 1971 shown on the internet, are actually of Biharis, who were targeted by both Mukti Bahini and other Indian agents, to malign Pakistani Armed Forces. This was in fact the *real genocide* undertaken by Mukti Bahini, RAW agents, Indian saboteurs and other fanatic elements of society. These gruesome and horrific



Atrocities committed by Mukti Bahini rebels
(Source: pinterest.com)

tales of the REAL GENOCIDE have been recorded by famous scholar Qutubuddin Aziz, through his interviews of 173 eye witnesses.¹⁷ On 19 December 1971, just three days after the establishment of Bangladesh, while thousands of Indian Army troops were present in Dacca, uniform-clad Mukti Bahini, under Kader Siddique, in full view of thousands of spectators and international media, first badly beat some Biharis and then killed them by bayonetting them. Kader Siddique himself bayoneted three prisoners to death. The international media stood by, took pictures and made videos. These pictures were published in the *Time* magazine on 6 January 1972.¹⁸



Qutubuddin Aziz
(Source: wordpress.com)

13 Fazal, *Pakistan's Crisis*, 191.

14 Sajjad Hussain, *The Wastes of Time*, 39 and 45.

15 Matiur Rehman, *Bangladesh Today*, An Indictment and a Lament, Published by News and Media Ltd, 33, Stround Green Road, (London, N4 3 EF, 1978), 22, 25 and 26.

16 <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-450.html>, accessed on 17 December 2021.

17 Qutubuddin Aziz, *Blood and Tears*, United Press of Pakistan Ltd, 1974, 98-99.

18 Matiur Rehman, *Bangladesh Today*, 28, Jacob, *Surrender at Dacca*, 146 and Fazal, *Pakistan's Crisis*, 191.



Kader Siddique

(Source: pinterest.com)

(Source: alchetron.com)

Dr Syed Sajjad Hussain, the Vice Chancellor of Dacca University, and Dr Hasan Zaman, were picked up from their homes on 19 December 1971 by Mukti Bahini. They were stabbed multiple times and left for dead on a road side. Dr Sajjad was taken to a hospital by a passerby, and survived, though he could never fully recover

Dr Syed Sajjad Hussain
(Source: pathagar.org)

from his injuries. Dr Zaman also survived the attack.¹⁹ Amjad Ali, an ex Muslim Leaguer, was taken out of the *Dargah* of Hazrat Shah Jalal in Sylhet city and brutally killed. His mutilated body was left for days to rot. Maulvi Farid, Vice President of Pakistan Democratic Party, was arrested, his skin was later cut with blades and salt



Maulvi Farid

(Source: en.banglapedia.org)

poured in the wounds. Thereafter he was killed and his body desecrated. Professor Tariqullah, head of Bengali Department of Choumuhari College, Naokhali, was arrested, tortured and killed. Maulana Pir Dewan Ali of Dacca was arrested and flogged publicly. Despite many broken bones, his hands and legs were tied and he was thrown in a river to drown.²⁰

The *liberators* 'took innumerable human lives, inflicted physical injuries and left many of them maimed in their attack. Countless persons were lynched, flogged, flayed, mutilated, cleaved and butchered'.²¹ Thousands of pro-Pakistan Bengalis and Biharis were arrested and hauled up on trumped-up charges of having obstructed the war of liberation. Lucky ones went to jail. "Those not so lucky were straightaway liquidated. Many were publicly lynched".²² 'Never before in the history of Dacca jail, had so many educated people been so packed into its cells. There were five PhDs, barristers, a high court judge, civil servants, doctors, lawyers etc'.²³ 'Over 50,000 men, women and children were clapped in the prisons. Many prominent Bengali personalities vanished overnight'.²⁴ Mukti Bahini had gone berserk after 16 December. "Two weeks after capitulation, the non-Bengalis were in the throes of a slaughter. The Mukti Bahini were taking their revenge by lynching anyone who appeared to be an enemy", writes Oriana Fallachi and Grianfranco Moroldo, the well-known Italian interviewers.²⁵ They had gone so out of control that even the Indian army had to kill several Muktis after the surrender, to put the fear of Allah in them.²⁶

19 Sajjad Hussain, *The Wastes of Time*, 9-10.

20 Dr Abdul Mumin Chowdhury, *Behind the Myth of Three Million*, 41.

21 Dr Abdul Mumin Chowdhury, *Behind the Myth of Three Million*, Published by Hamidur Rehman, Al Hilal Publishers Ltd, London, e-book published by www.storyofbangladesh.com, 38 and 40.

22 Syed Sajjad Hussain, *The Wastes of Time*, Published by Ashraf Hussain on behalf of Muslim Renaissance Movement and Notun Safar Prokashani, 1995, e-book, www.storyofbangladesh.com, 24.

23 Sajjad Hussain, *The Wastes of Time*, 72.

24 Matiur Rehman, *Bangladesh Today, An Indictment and a Lament*, Published by News and Media Ltd, 33, Stround Green Road, (London, N4 3 EF, 1978), 22, 25 and 26.

25 Illustrated Weekly L Europe, January 13, 1972 (Italian).

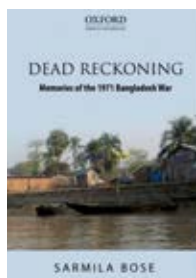
26 Kamal Matinuddin, *Tragedy of Errors*, 238.

Myths and Realities

Sadly, there are a few fabricated myths attached to this tragedy, unchallenged by Pakistan, and the world at large has settled to believe them. The internet and web pages are full of this venomous propaganda, and it is continuously plaguing the minds of all and sundry. These myths are killing of three million Bengalis, dishonouring two hundred thousand women, and ninety-three thousand armed forces personnel as prisoners of war. All these have been proved wrong and fictional, through research by several renowned writers like William Rushbrook²⁷, Mr. Afrasiab²⁸, Abdul Mumin Chowdhury²⁹, Dr Junaid Ahmad³⁰, Mr. Ikram Sehgal & Bettina Robotka³¹, Sarmila Bose³² (a Bengali-Hindu professor) and others. Renowned researchers Yasmin Saikia points out that West Pakistani soldiers were not monstrous and barbaric as they have been depicted, but soldiers who, in the middle of civil war for which they were not prepared, found it difficult to uphold humanitarian values.³³ Killing of three million Bengalis is a story based upon misreporting of a Soviet Newspaper *Pravda*³⁴, which became the rhetoric of Bengali leadership later; a usual propaganda quite often seen during such conflicts.

The allegation of killing 3 million is highly exaggerated³⁵, and the wild figure of three million Bengalis killed during those ten

terrible months, is multiples times higher than the reality.³⁶ By simple calculations of 265 days i.e. from 26th March to 15th December 1971, it translates into killing of 11,320 personnel and dishonouring 754 women every day, by a force of about 40,000 individuals, spread out in the entire length and breadth of East Pakistan, and fiercely engaged in battles with the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini. It is humanly not possible and sounds bizarre. After the formation of Bangladesh, their government announced prize money of 2,000 Takas³⁷ (Bangladesh currency) for every reported killing case, but hardly a fraction of this figure came forward, that too with no veracity of the perpetrators. The figures were even challenged by Colonel Akbar Hussain (a decorated *Mukti Jodha* and a Bengali cabinet minister under both President General Zia-ur-Rehman and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia) in the National Assembly of Bangladesh, in 1993.³⁸ Sarmila Bose states in her famous book *Dead Reckoning* that Bangladeshi eye witnesses and participants of 1971 events told her that women were not harmed by Pakistani Army, except in cross fire.³⁹



Sarmila Bose & her book *Dead Reckoning*
(Source: goodreads.com) (Source: voiceofeast.net)

27 William LF. Rushbrook, *The East Pakistan Tragedy*, Tom Stacey Ltd, London 1972.

28 Afrasiab, 1971: *Fact and Fiction*, Makhdoom Printing press Lahore, 2015.

29 Abdul Mumin Chowdhury, *Behind the Myth of Three Million*, Al-Hilal Publishers, London, 1996.

30 Junaid Ahmad, *Creation of Bangladesh: Myths Exploded*, AJA Publishers Karachi, 2016, 9.

31 Ikram Sehgal & Bettina Robotka, *Blood over Different Shades of Green*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2020, 222.

32 Sarmila Bose, *Dead Reckoning: Memories of the 1971 Bangladesh War*, C.Hurst & Co., London, 2011, 177.

33 Yasmin Saikia, *Women, War and the Making of Bangladesh: Remembering 1971*, Oxford University Press, New York, Pakistan, New Delhi, 2011.

34 Junaid Ahmad, *Creation of Bangladesh: Myths Exploded*, AJA Publishers Karachi, 2016, 258.

35 Ingvar Oja reported in *Dagens Nyheter* on 1st March, 1973.

36 Peter Gill. *Daily Telegraph*, 16 April 1973.

37 Abdul Mumin Chowdhury, *Behind the Myth of Three Million*, Al-Hilal Publishers, London, 1996, 24.

38 Ibid, 5.

39 Sarmila Bose, 'Losing the Victims: Problems of Using Women as Weapons in Recounting the Bangladesh War', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 42, no. 38, 22 Sep, 2007.



Trumpeting of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers as prisoners of war is also grossly exaggerated. East Pakistan garrison was traditionally defended by only one army division i.e., 13,000-15,000 personnel. According to General AAK Niazi, initially he had a fighting force of 34,000 only⁴⁰. Owing to worsening law & order situation and the Indian threat, two more army divisions along with naval and air force reinforcements, were sent to East Pakistan, thus making a total of about 58,000 personnel, including Navy and Air Force. There were many civilians, Biharis and West Pakistanis working in East Pakistan, and their families, who were not spared by Indian Forces, and taken to languish in filthy prisoner of war camps.

Military Casualties and Prisoners of War

The total strength of Pakistan Army prior to outbreak of all out hostilities in East Pakistan (November) was 1833 officers and 50,232 JCOs and ORs (other ranks).⁴¹ From April to October, 237 officers, 136 JCOs and 3559 ORs were martyred.⁴² During the war in East Pakistan from 21 November to 16 December, 115 officers, 40 JCOs and 1182 ORs were martyred.⁴³ As per Lieutenant General (retired) Kamal Matinuddin, the total casualties of Pakistan Army from April to 16 December 1971 were 354 officers, 192 JCOs and 5320 ORs.⁴⁴ Indian casualties in East Pakistan were 1421 killed and 4058 wounded.⁴⁵ The total number of prisoners of war repatriated from India by mid May 1974, was 89,981. Out of these, 57,944 belonged to the three services of Pakistan Armed Forces. There were 1818 officers of the three services, 2138 Army JCOs, 51,897 Army ORs, 1319 naval ratings and 772

airmen. Details of the rest of 32,037 were; 20,766 from Rangers, FC and Police, 882 were civilians paid out of defence estimates, and 10,389 were civilians.⁴⁶ These figures have also been quoted by Major General (retired) Syed Ithar Hussain Shah in his well-researched book “A Thousand Miles Apart”⁴⁷

Analysis and the Way Forward

Whatever the reasons and circumstances, the breakup of Pakistan after only 24 years of birth, is an unpardonable and unforgivable scar, which will live with all Pakistanis forever. It was a national failure on the whole, and no single component of society, may it be armed forces, political entities, leadership or bureaucracy, can be blamed for this tragedy individually. There are many lessons to learn, with the sole purpose of not repeating them in future. The most significant amongst these is safeguarding the ideological and physical sovereignty of the motherland through national integration, taking on board all segments of society. Political issues need to be resolved through the political process only, as per larger interests of the country, and should not be allowed to escalate to a point of no return. The use of the military instrument, if needed, should flow from political consensus, and will of the people (our War on Terror is a case in point). National interests, social justice, equality and rule of law should always stay above everything, and anything else.

In case of East Pakistan, whatever happened has happened, leading to a query which needs serious thought—should we keep mourning this tragedy and keep living in the past? Is there a way forward to a better future?

40 A.A.K Niazi, *The Betrayal of East Pakistan*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

41 Kamal Matinuddin, *Tragedy of Errors*, 430.

42 Riza, *The History of Pakistan Army*, 109.

43 Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, (New York, 1994) 418, 419.

44 Kamal Matinuddin, *Tragedy of Errors*, 430.

45 Jacob, *Surrender at Dacca*, 157.

46 *Daily Dawn*, Karachi, 1 May 1974.

47 Ithar Hussain Shah, *A Thousand Miles Apart*, under publication.



Bangladesh—erstwhile East Pakistan—was a part of Pakistan once upon a time, but is a reality now. It is an independent sovereign state in the comity of nations. Like Pakistan, she too is confronted with challenges like poverty, healthcare, development of infrastructure and most significantly, a hostile and bullying neighbour with expansionist designs, always conspiring to dominate smaller neighbours. The survival of both Pakistan and Bangladesh lies in forgetting the bitter past, forgiving each other, and embracing the dictates of a progressive and peaceful future, with open hearts and minds. The precedence of *truth & reconciliation commission*

undertaken by South Africa and a few other countries of the world, can be followed, ending with a possible expression of regret by both sides. For, the future lies in enhanced and closer bilateral ties through people to people contacts, and economic, social, cultural and defence cooperation. Not only Pakistan and Bangladesh, but all countries of South Asia need to develop mutual cooperation and unite against Indian hegemonic designs and her Hindutva-driven policies. Development of societies into progressive nations lies in peaceful coexistence, and getting together against evil forces trying to destabilise regional and international peace.

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About the author



Brigadier Nasir Shafiq, Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was commissioned in Armoured Corps in September 1987. The officer is a graduate of Command & Staff College Quetta and Air War College Karachi. His staff appointments include general staff officer (operations), brigade major of an armoured brigade and general staff officer of a mechanised division. Apart from a stint at Siachen Glacier, the officer has been on the faculty of School of Armour & Mechanised Warfare, Nowshera, twice. He has commanded his parent regiment 38 Cavalry, and 2 Independent Armoured Brigade Group. He holds master's degrees in political science, international relations, defence & strategic studies and business administration (human resource management). Moreover, he also holds an MPhil degree in international relations and is currently pursuing his PhD in management sciences. Presently, the officer is serving in Army Institute of Military History as research director.



The Nishan-i-Haider

By Lieutenant Colonel Imran Hassan Khan Niazi, retired

Nishan-i-Haider, literally meaning the *Mark of the Lion*, is Pakistan's highest gallantry award and takes precedence over all civil and military awards. It is awarded only to those members of the Armed Forces, the Frontier Corps and the Frontier Constabulary (when serving under the Federal Government), who have performed acts of the greatest heroism, or of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger, and have shown bravery of the highest order, or devotion to the country in the presence of the enemy, on land, at sea or in the air. The recipient has the privilege of adding the letters 'NH' after the name.¹ It has however, only been awarded posthumously so far. The recipient's number, rank, name, regiment and date of award are inscribed at the back of the medal.



Nishan-i-Haider
(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

This most prestigious award is cast as a five-pointed star in bronze texture. The centre is in a white enamelled background, gilded with a wreath around a star and crescent. It has a cupronickel metal edging with the inscription *Nishan-i-Haider* on its bar, augmented with a 3.81 cm (1 ½ inch) ribbon of *Pakistan water green plain silk*. It is forged from gunmetal constituting 88% copper, 10% tin and 2% zinc.² When the ribbon is worn without the medal, a miniature replica star is to be attached to the ribbon.³



Reverse side of
the medal
(*Nishan-i-Haider*)
(Source: facebook.com)

This supreme award was instituted on 23rd March 1957 on Republic Day, eligible with effect from 14th August 1947, conferring first NH to an action of 27th July 1948. From 1948 till 1999, it has been awarded to only 11 martyrs. A brief introduction of all recipients is given in subsequent paragraphs.

Captain Muhammad Sarwar

Captain Muhammad Sarwar (shaheed) is the first recipient during the Kashmir Liberation War 1948. While serving with the 2nd Battalion of 1st Punjab Regiment (*now 2nd Battalion The Punjab Regiment*), he was martyred while clearing the enemy fence during an attack on 27th July. Despite being critically wounded, he silenced one of the medium machine guns (MMG) with grenades, and kept controlling his troops. He finally succumbed to a burst of bullets received in the chest. The action was a success, with heavy casualties inflicted upon the enemy.⁴



(Source: socialgrop.com)

Major Tufail Muhammad

Major Tufail Muhammad (shaheed) ex 13th Battalion *The Punjab Regiment* was serving on secondment with *East Pakistan Rifles*. On 7th August 1958, he was ordered to recapture Lakshmipur area which was illegally occupied by India. In a fierce attack he was wounded by machine gun fire



(Source: pakistanarmy.gov.pk)

1 Pakistan Army, *Honours and Awards*, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/Honours-Awards>.

2 Composition details obtained from the Government of Pakistan, *Pakistan Mint Lahore*.

3 *Army Dress Regulations 2010*, Description of Military Awards, Rule 149.

4 Punjab Regiment Centre, *The Story of Punjab Regiment 1959-2017*, (Islamabad: Insta Print System (Pvt) Ltd, 2017), 51-52.



but continued and, despite his injuries, entangled his counterpart Indian major. The area was successfully reclaimed, alongwith taking enemy prisoners. He succumbed to his wounds, while being evacuated to Comilla.⁵

Major Raja Aziz Bhatti

Major Raja Aziz Bhatti (shaheed) was serving with the 17th Battalion The Punjab Regiment during Pakistan-India War 1965 at Lahore. Over-fatigued, sleepless and involved in the defence of Bambanwala-Ravi-Bedian Link Canal (BRBL) for many days and nights, he also launched an attack to clear a position occupied by the enemy, on 11th September. On 12th September, he was martyred by an enemy tank shell, while directing fire of own artillery guns.⁶



(Source: pakistanarmy.gov.pk)

Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas

Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas (shaheed) was on conversion course on T-33 aircraft at Masroor Air Force Base, with Number 2 Squadron. It was a period of insurgency in former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). On 20th August 1971, his instructor Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman, a Bengali officer, made an attempt to overpower him in order to take the aircraft to India. During the struggle, Rashid Minhas crashed the aircraft near Thatta, thereby killing both, and hence prevented his instructor from achieving his *mala fide* intentions. He is



(Source: pakistanarmy.gov.pk)

the first and the only one from the Air Force, to receive this coveted distinction.⁷

Major Muhammad Akram

Major Muhammad Akram (shaheed) was martyred on the eastern front during Pakistan-India War 1971, while serving with the 4th Battalion the Frontier Force Regiment, during a successful defence of Hilli. The enemy attempted to capture the position by coming in wave after wave, supported by armour and artillery, in heavy numbers, for days. They were beaten back successfully. Any minor gains of the enemy were also re-taken through fierce counter-attacks. Major Akram was martyred on night 5/6 December by a tank hit, when he alongwith his anti-tank party crawled forward, and hit three enemy tanks. The enemy was unable to capture Hilli, until the unit was told to pull back.⁸



(Source: pakistanarmy.gov.pk)

Major Shabbir Sharif

Major Shabbir Sharif (shaheed) was serving with 6th Battalion The Frontier Force Regiment during Pakistan-India War 1971, in the Suleimanki area. Already a recipient of Sitara-i-Jurat in Pakistan-India War 1965 as a young subaltern, Major Shabbir is considered the most decorated soldier of Pakistan Army. His company under his dynamic leadership captured the high ground near Sulemanki Headworks, destroyed four enemy tanks and killed 43 soldiers. He was martyred during the 17th successful repulse of enemy



(Source: pakistanarmy.gov.pk)

5 *Ibid.*

6 Punjab Regiment Centre, *The Story of Punjab Regiment 1959-2017*, (Islamabad: Insta Print System (Pvt) Ltd, 2017), 51-52.

7 Colonel Azam Qadri (Retired) and Group Captain Muhammad Ali, *Sentinels in the Sky*, (Islamabad: The Army Press (Regd), 2015), 301-303.

8 Pakistan Army, *Honours and Awards*, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/Major-Mohammad-Akram.php>.



counter-attacks, on 6th December. During this successful defence, he also killed his counter-part company commander in a hand-to-hand fight. The enemy was never able to re-capture that position.⁹

Sowar Muhammad Hussain

Sowar Muhammad Hussain (shaheed) was serving with 20th Lancers during Pakistan-India War 1971, in Zafarwal-Shakargarh area. On 10th December he directed accurate fire of recoilless rifles at Harar Khurd, while the enemy was attempting to breach minefields. His action resulted in the destruction of 16 enemy tanks. He was martyred by a machine gun burst on his chest.¹⁰



(Source: dostpakistan.com)

Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfuz

Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfuz (shaheed) was serving with 15th Battalion The Punjab Regiment during Pakistan-India War 1971 in Wagah-Attari area. On night 17/18 December, his company was ordered to occupy village Pulkanjri, which was found occupied by the enemy in concrete bunkers. The assault was pinned down due to heavy fire from an enemy machine gun. He assaulted the enemy bunker under a spray of bullets, jumped inside the bunker, killed the firer by choking him to death with his bare hands, while being stabbed by the bayonet of another enemy soldier. His action was acknowledged



(Source: facebook.com)

by the enemy company commander in the following words: -

'Never such a single handed heroic action by an individual has been witnessed before'.¹¹

Captain Karnal Sher Khan

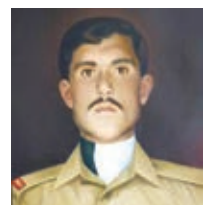
Captain Karnal Sher Khan (shaheed) ex 27th battalion The Sind Regiment was serving with 12th Battalion The Northern Light Infantry during the Kargil conflict of 1999. He defended five vital posts, which he established with his soldiers at the height of 17,000 feet in Gultari area. On 5th July, the enemy with the help of two battalions, managed to capture some portion of one of his posts. Despite being outnumbered, he led a counter-attack and re-captured the lost portion, conducted many raids in enemy area, and inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy. He met martyrdom in his last valiant counter-attack, when he received a burst of fire in the chest.¹² *His body was received by Pakistan with a citation¹³ initiated by the Indian Commander.*



(Source: dailytimes.com.pk)

Havildar Lalak Jan

Havildar Lalak Jan (shaheed) was serving with the 12th Battalion The Northern Light Infantry during Kargil Conflict of 1999 at Gultari sector. Voluntarily deployed on the front position at a jagged peak, he repulsed many aggressive attempts by the enemy and inflicted heavy losses. On 7th July, despite being seriously injured due to



(Source: pakistanarmy.gov.pk)

9 Pakistan Army, *Honours and Awards*, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/Major-Shabbir-Sharif.php>.

10 Pakistan Army, *Honours and Awards*, <https://pakistanarmy.gov.pk/Sowar-Mohammad-Hussain.php>.

11 Punjab Regiment Centre, *The Story of Punjab Regiment 1959-2017*, (Islamabad: Insta Print System (Pvt) Ltd, 2017), 52.

12 Pakistan Army, *Honours and Awards*, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/Captain-Karnal-Sher-Khan.php>.

13 <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2308841/nation-observes-22nd-anniversary-of-kargil-war-hero-capt-karnal-sher-khan>.



enemy's heavy mortar shelling, he frustrated the enemy through his resilience and successful retention of his position. He met martyrdom after he succumbed to his fatal injuries.¹⁴

Naik Saif Ali Janjua

Naik Saif Ali Janjua (shaheed) was a veteran of World War II from the Royal Corps of Indian Engineers. He retired after the war and joined in the establishment of *Haidri Force* on 1 January 1948, as *Sher-e-Riasti Battalion*, under Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Sher Khan. As a platoon commander during the *Kashmir Liberation War*



(Source: soldiers.pk)

1948, he displayed exemplary gallantry during the defence of his post at Bhudha Khanna area, where he inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy. During the battle he was seriously injured, and embraced martyrdom on 26th October. On 14th March 1949, the Defence Council of Azad Jammu & Kashmir awarded him *Hilal-e-Kashmir* (posthumous), and on 30th November 1995, Government of Pakistan declared his *Hilal-e-Kashmir* equivalent to



Hilal-e-Kashmir
(Source: soldiers.pk)

Nishan-i-Haider.¹⁵ During the reorganisation of Kashmir liberation forces into Azad Kashmir Regular Forces (AKRF) in October 1947, *Sher-e-Riasti Battalion* became *18th Battalion AKRF* (now *18th Battalion The Azad Kashmir Regiment*).

The epithet *Haider* is derived from one of over 300 names for *lion* in Arabic, meaning *the fierce lion*. The word is attributed to multiple synonymous explanations for bravery, also refers to Hazrat Ali (R.A) who was conferred the title of *Asadullah* (The Lion of Allah) by the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W.W). It also means '*the bravest amongst the brave*', and '*the fountain of valour and courage*'. '*Naara-e-Haideri*' is also the battle cry of Pakistan Army.

The award was initially suggested as *Nishan-i-Ali* in 1951, but finalised as *Nishan-i-Haider* by Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra in 1955.¹⁶ It replaced the Victoria Cross on the independence of Pakistan. The recipients, being shaheed, are commemorated twice a year, by a guard of honour at their resting places, on the date of shahadat, and on the occasion of *Defence and Martyrs' Day* (6th September).¹⁷

About the author



Lieutenant Colonel Imran Hassan Khan Niazi (retired) was commissioned as a second-generation officer in a mechanised infantry battalion of the elite Frontier Force Regiment in 1987. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College Quetta and a recipient of *Tamgha-i-Imtiaz* (Military). He has diverse experience of various appointments including homeland security and counter terrorism. The officer has been a history student and has also compiled his own battalion's 150 years history in 1999. After retirement, the officer is serving as director of Composite Wing in Army Institute of Military History.

14 Pakistan Army, *Honours and Awards*, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/Havildar-Lalak-Jan.php>.

15 Pakistan Army, *Honours and Awards*, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/Naik-Saif-Ali-Janjua.php>.

16 Government of Pakistan, *Ministry of Interior O.M. Number 44/8/54-Adm dated April 19th, 1955*.

17 Army Policy on the subject issued by Personal Services Directorate, General Headquarters, Rawalpindi.

India, China and the Addis Papers

By Brigadier Imran Haider Jaffri, retired

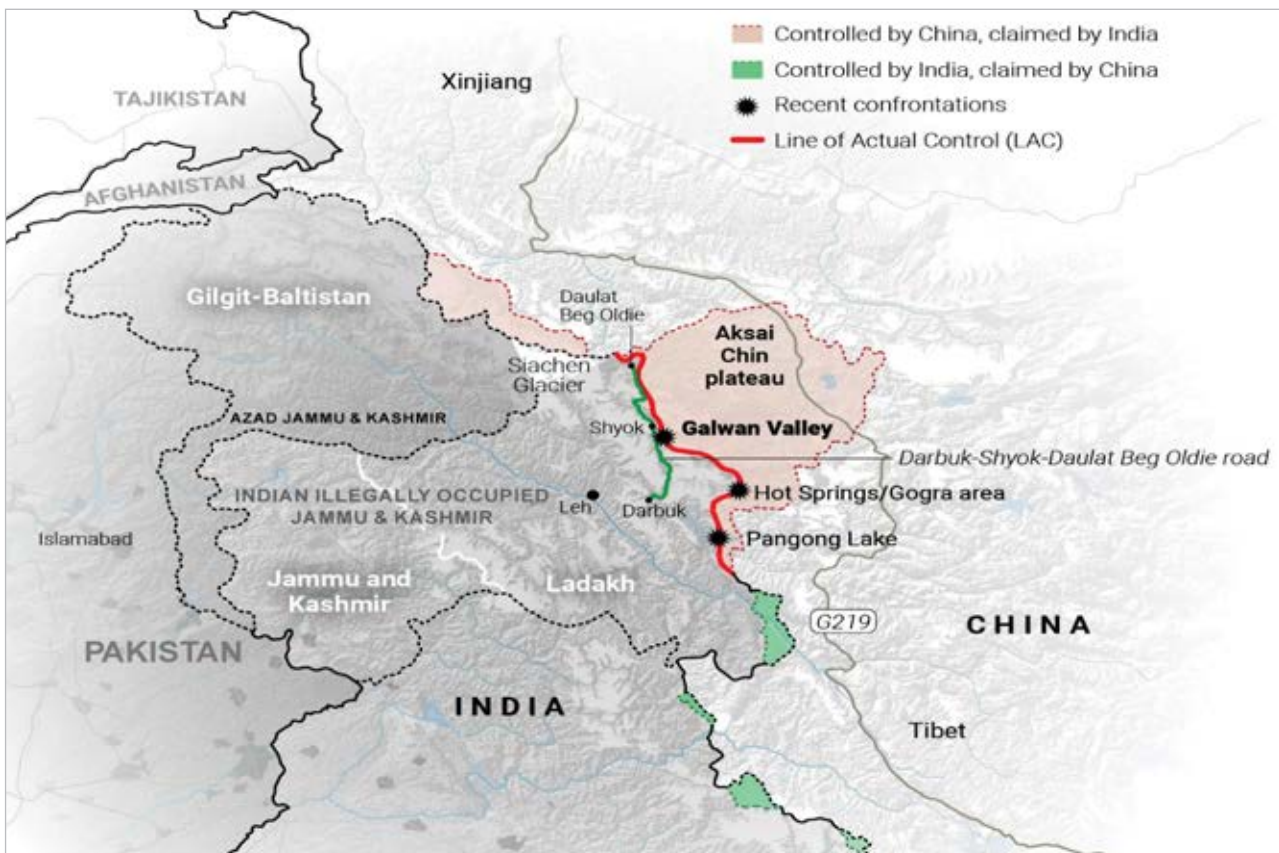
India and China remain locked in a border dispute since April 2020. This border dispute was almost resolved after conclusion of an agreement to de-escalate the situation, on 5 June 2020. The mutual agreement to withdraw troops from Galwan Valley of Ladakh region went horribly wrong on June 15, 2020, when deadly clashes broke out between Chinese and Indian soldiers.

It was a unique clash in the modern age, when no automatic weapons were fired. Instead, wire-wrapped batons, clubs and stones were used at will. At least 20 Indian soldiers were killed and scores seriously injured. Although China did not release any details of her casualties, the Indian media claimed that Chinese casualties might have been double.



Scuffle between Indian & Chinese soldiers (2020)
(Source: eastmojo.com)

Since the Galwan incident, thousands of soldiers have been deployed by both sides in the Ladakh region, along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Experts have been fearing that tension between the two nuclear armed rivals might lead to unintentional war, which is not only a threat to regional peace, but could endanger global peace as well.



Map: India, China & Pakistan border

(Source: multimedia.scmp.com)



Both the Indian and the international media covered the incident in detail, and kept the world updated. In-depth analyses of the Indo-China border dispute were carried out. Indian media houses portrayed China as the aggressor, while many international news channels followed suit. However, the status of the dispute remains somewhat confused, even today. One wonders as to what is the factual position behind the long border dispute between the two nations. To understand the facts, one may have to turn the pages of border history between British India, independent India and China, to understand the correct perspective of the Sino-India border dispute.

Historical Perspective of the Dispute

J.M. Addis, a British diplomat, dedicated his period of leave in 1962/63 to unearth the truth about the India-China border question, while at Harvard. During his research, Addis discovered that two of the copies of the 1929 edition of London's officially published record of **Treaties and other Diplomatic Engagements** involving its Indian government, known as Aitchison's Treaties (named after the original editor), were contradictory about the outcome of a conference convened by the Government of India in 1914 at Simla. The British covertly induced Tibet and/or China to cede to India a major chunk of territory to India's north-east. One edition claimed success of the attempt while the other reflected failure. Addis found out that the British forgery of the 1914 Simla conference was, in fact, the basis of independent India's false claims to a border that was named *McMahon Line*. The details of the forgery and the identity of the man responsible, Olaf Caroe, were revealed later by Alastair Lamb and an Indian scholar, Karunakar Gupta.



J.M. Addis

(Source: alchetron.com)

Further study of the diplomatic correspondence between India and China, in the late 50s and early 60s, including letters exchanged between the two prime ministers, suggests that the Indians not only insisted on the validity of *McMahon Line*, but also claimed that all the borders with China were indisputable and non-negotiable international borders.



Olaf Caroe

(Source: britishempire.me.uk)

Neville Maxwell, while writing about Addis papers, says, "*Unfortunately Addis' research papers for the Harvard Institute for International Affairs did not come into public knowledge at the time it was written, when its impact would have been explosive. The Indian Government obtained a copy, however, and hotly complained to London about the 'anti-Indian activities' of its diplomat: Addis was sternly rebuked by his superiors, and kept his silence*".



Neville Maxwell

(Source: quora.com)

To understand the geography of the Indo-China border, Addis divided it into western, middle and eastern sectors.

Middle Sector. The frontiers in the middle sector generally run along the crest of the Himalayas, having least border issues except for four small areas. Nehru had confessed on 17 November 1959 that Barahoti was a minor



Map showing location of Barahoti

(Source: gujaratheadline.nichetechqa.com)



Map: Sections of India-China border

(Source: chinausfocus.com)

border issue and could be settled with the Chinese during negotiations.

However, the Chinese regard the area as part of China, and they bring forward two quotations from the reports of Lieutenant Strachey who surveyed this area in 1848, and admitted that he had declared Barahoti as a British area, though it was then part of Tibet.

Western Sector. Both India and China agree that this part of the frontier generally runs along the crest of the Karakoram, and



Map: Western Sector

(Source: googlmaps.com)

that Karakoram Pass is their common frontier. However, their claims run tangent eastwards of this point. China maintains that the frontier runs more or less straight from the Karakoram Range east along the crest of Karakoram Range to Kongka Pass. The Indians claim that from Karakoram Pass, the frontier executes a deep salient up to a point on the crest of Kunlun Range, and descends again to the Karakoram Range at a point east of Kongka Pass.

As per Addis, geographically the frontier should run along the crest of the Karakoram range the whole way up to Kongka Pass, rather than running along the crest for 200 miles, and then making an incursion to Kunlun Range, and back again, before descending to the Himalayas. Although the Indians refer to the 1684 Treaty between Ladakh and Tibet, this treaty does not define the frontiers of Ladakh at all.

The disputed area of Aksai Chin, in this sector, is the major dispute. In the old days authorities in Ladakh and Khotan districts did



(Source: imrmedia.in)

not consider it important to define the limits. This was, however, not good enough for British India, who took over Ladakh in 1846. They twice offered defining the disputed border to China, but China, busy in the Opium War, declined the offers.

Eastern Sector. The disputed area consists of the southern slopes of the Himalayas, from Bhutan in the west, to Burma (now Myanmar) in the east. Indians claim that the frontier from Bhutan eastwards should continue to run along the crest of the Himalayas, contrary to the Chinese claim that it descends from the watershed to where the foothills join the plains (see map). During the 1913-1914 tripartite conference, involving a Tibetan delegate, a representative of the Chinese



Henry McMahon
(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

central government, and Sir Henry McMahon, (a foreign secretary of the British Indian government), a secret bilateral agreement was signed with the Tibetan representative, on a new border line, later known as the McMahon Line. The Chinese central government rejected the accord and their plenipotentiary and the Tibetan government, later disputed the legality of the McMahon Line. However, the British began using the McMahon Line on the Survey of India maps in 1937.

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Map: McMahon Line and North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA)
(Source: quora.com)

McMahon Line and North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA)

McMahon Line has never been recognised by the Chinese, notes John Addis in his papers. The same was conveyed to the British representative by the Chinese on 21



Simla Convention-1914 (Source: tibet.net)

April 1914. The convention of 1914, known as Simla convention, was published years later in 1929, but the Chinese refused to ratify it. The first edition of Aitchison's Treaties did not have the text of the convention. The 1929 edition was expanded to include the text of the convention,

for the first time. The Survey of India published the maps in 1917, showing only the *inner line* in the northeast, and followed the practice of earlier published maps in 1856, 1859 and 1903. The same was followed until 1936, when Indian maps started showing the frontier as *un-demarcated*. Independent India followed the 1936 practice until 1954, when India published a map giving the northeastern frontier according to McMahon Line, without qualification.

The Chinese advance into Tibet dates from 25 October 1950. According to Addis, the Indian government, concerned at the implications of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, decided to extend their hold on the border areas. In 1951 they gave priority to NEFA over the western sector. In 1954, the Indians moved even closer to the borders and occupied the whole of NEFA. The Chinese advance into this region had been up to McMahon Line. When the Indians were busy advancing their frontiers in NEFA, the Chinese moved towards the western sector, which the Indians learnt in 1958 through patrols.

Between 1954 and 1958, there were several incidents when troops of both sides came face to face, but no serious clash occurred. Both sides protested and demanded the withdrawal of troops from the middle sector, especially Barahoti area. The Indians, apprehensive of the trouble to come, began establishing check posts in the frontier zone, particularly in the eastern sector, but not close to McMahon Line, whereas the Chinese were everywhere north of the line. In the western sector, the Chinese had built the Aksai Chin road, also known as *the Sky Road* in Chinese, by autumn of 1957. The period between 1958-59 brought all the issue in the open – the Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin, and their claim to NEFA, their offers of negotiations, and the Indian refusal to discuss the border question. The Tibetan revolt precipitated a further advance by both into the frontier areas, that led to the first exchanges of fire.

The Negotiations

The ensuing correspondence between the two prime ministers suggests that perhaps the Chinese premier wanted to settle the frontier questions through negotiations and maintaining the status quo, while the Indian premier kept refusing any such offers.

In March 1959, the Tibetan insurrection came to a head. The Dalai Lama was given asylum in India and the Indians showed all sympathy to



Dalai Lama with Nehru

(Source: ootkal.com)

the Tibetan revolt. For the Chinese the revolt was a public humiliation, since they believed that the revolt had been supported, if not by the Indian Government, at least by the Americans and Chinese nationalists using Indian soil. After the Longju incident, the Indian Prime Minister revealed on 16 November 1959, that the entire



Map showing Longju

(Source: researchgate.net)

frontier of India was being handed over to the Indian Army. Another major armed clash occurred on 20-21 October 1959 near Kongka Pass, at the junction of Sinkiang with Tibet.



Map showing Kongka Pass (Source: googlmaps.com)

Fire was exchanged, killing seventeen Indian soldiers. Both sides accused each other's patrols of being on their side, and opening fire first.

Diplomatic exchanges of letters between the premiers went on during 1959. The Chinese Prime Minister offered a meeting to Mr. Nehru, either in China or Delhi, and proposed withdrawal of troops 40 miles from the frontiers, which Mr. Nehru refused. Nehru offered separate proposals for withdrawal from the eastern and western sectors, and again refused to accept the status quo proposed by the Chinese premier. After repeated attempts by the Chinese to settle issues at the ministerial level, finally the two leaders met in Delhi from 19-25 April 1960. However, due to the stubborn stance of the Indian Prime Minister, the meeting proved to be a failure in addressing any of the border questions. Even the **Report of Officials**, who met in June 1960, could not prove helpful.

Indo-China War of 1962

Subsequent correspondence and exchanges between the two sides show continuous attempts by the Chinese to reach to some sort of agreement, but the Indian side remained glued to its *Forward Policy*, and kept demanding the unilateral withdrawal of Chinese troops from all three sectors. Events before 20 October 1962, the day the Sino-India war commenced, suggest that the clash between the



Indian and Chinese soldiers - face to face (Source: pinterest.com)

troops reached its climax due to an Indian push forward, as reported by the *Times* correspondent in New Delhi on 12 October 1962. The same day, Addis notes, "Mr. Nehru confirmed to journalists that Indian Army had been ordered to clear the Chinese from Indian territory".



Indian soldiers on patrol during 1962 Sino-Indian border war (Source: scmp.com)

War broke out in the eastern and western sectors on 20 October 1962, and lasted for 5 days. The Chinese decisively defeated and evicted the Indian Army. Mr. Chou En-lai again offered resumption of talks on all border issues, suggesting the frontiers' status quo as of 7 November 1959. The Indian Government modified their earlier stance, and suggested that the Chinese should return to status quo ante (8 September 1962 line), which would leave the Chinese in possession of Aksai Chin. The Indians this time, were also in agreement to discuss the whole frontier, not merely the western sector.

After hectic and fruitless diplomatic exchanges, the Chinese resumed their advance



after a three week lull period, pushing the Indians back in the eastern and middle sectors, while positions in the western sector remained unchanged. On 21 November, the Chinese Government declared a unilateral ceasefire, and withdrew 20 kms behind the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which existed on 7 November 1959. The Chinese also warned India to keep America out of mutual negotiations, after India had abandoned her policy of non-alignment, by accepting US aid.

The border question between the two Asian giants still remains a matter of acute

tension, that will continue to stay as such, until Delhi and Beijing find a more flexible stance. But this remains most unlikely. The relations will remain marred and the border question will trigger small skirmishes now and then, and in the worst scenario, an all-out war – unintended though. Both sides, of course, would not like that to happen. India needs to review its hawkish policies, as to declaring certain areas of frontiers as integral to India, to avoid jeopardising regional peace.

Notes

The entire article is based on J. M. Addis Papers (available online at <https://chinaindiaborderdispute.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/india-china-border2.pdf>), hence no bibliography or footnotes have been given.

About the author



Brigadier Imran Haider Jaffri (retired), Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was commissioned in 1987 in a self-propelled (medium) regiment Artillery. The officer had held various command, staff and instructional appointments during his military career. He has been on the faculty of School of Artillery and School of Armour & Mechanised Warfare. The officer is a graduate of Command & Staff College Quetta and masters of philosophy in international relations from National Defence University, Islamabad. The officer is also qualified in Overseas Joint Warfare Course from Australian Defence Warfare Training Centre. After retirement, the officer is serving as research director at the Army Institute of Military History.

“History never looks like history when you are living through it.”

(John W. Gardner)



Pakistani Soldiers in East Pakistan 1971–Grit and Guts

By Professor Dr Aalia Sohail Khan



Brig Saadullah Khan
(Source: Author)



Book Title: East Pakistan to Bangladesh
(Source: amazon.com)

Exploring the concept of morale, this piece will study the key features of the high morale with which the Pakistan Army fought against India in erstwhile East Pakistan, in 1971. This will exclusively focus on the 1971 war memoir *East Pakistan to Bangladesh*¹ written by Brigadier Saadullah Khan, Hilal e Jurat (HJ). This article deconstructs the odious myth propagated by detractors, that the Pakistani Army had lost the will to fight, and it did not fight courageously in 1971 War in East Pakistan.

It is the morale of armies, as well as nations, more than anything else, which makes victories and their results decisive, writes Antoine Henri Jomini in *Summary of the Art of War*.² Soldiers are the most valuable resource that armies possess. Wars lost by the Americans in Vietnam and Afghanistan indicate that without well-motivated and committed soldiers, the most well-equipped army with sophisticated weapon systems, fails to win wars. General Dwight D. Eisenhower writes in *Crusade in Europe*³, “Morale is the greatest single factor in successful war”. Likewise, General George C Marshall observed “You can have all the material in the world but without morale, it is largely ineffective”.⁴ Morale is defined in the *Australian*

*Army Leadership in Theory and Practice*⁵, as “a positive state of mind which gives a man a feeling of confidence and well-being that enables him to face hardship with courage, endurance and determination”.

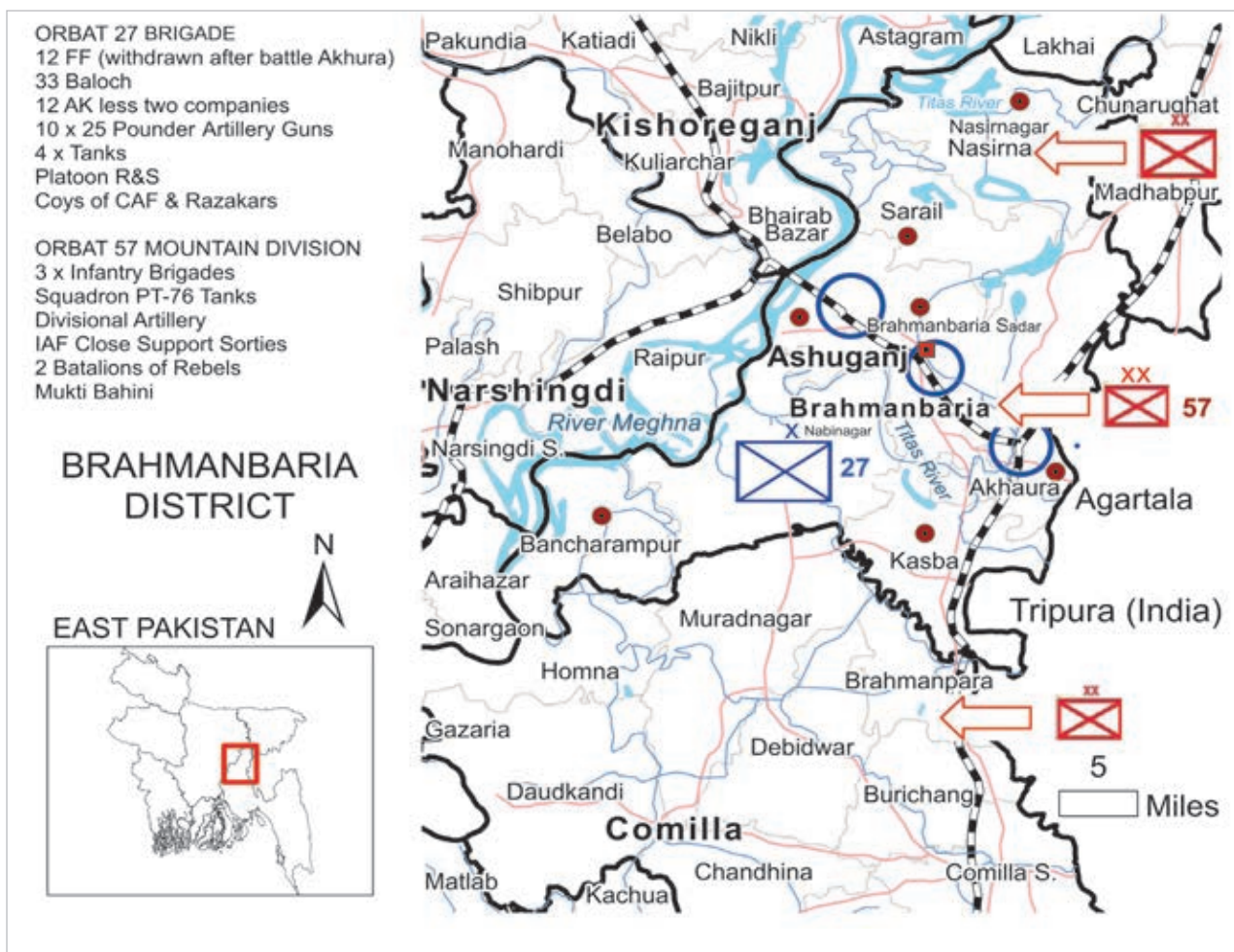
Features Determining the Morale of Pakistan Army Soldiers

The Pakistan Army fought for motives that transcended earthly rewards. To defend the ideology, sovereignty and unity of Pakistan, they were ready to embrace martyrdom. Pakistani soldiers had deep religious beliefs, moral values, self-discipline, confidence, courage, tenacity, endurance and unity of purpose. The high morale of officers and non-commissioned officers was supported by their sense of duty and responsibility, and the knowledge that others relied on them and their decisions. Brigadier Saadullah quotes a Japanese saying, “Death is lighter than a feather and duty is heavier than a mountain”.⁶ He demonstrates a personal compulsion to save his men; “I felt a compulsion to personally get Bukhari’s company back. They had fought heroically for six days ... They had been true to their salt. I just could not leave them by themselves to tackle that very tricky situation”. He finds the same quality in his men. He notes that during war Major Khurram remained glued to his receiver and mike, without caring for his personal safety, rather he would request



Brig Saadullah in East Pakistan
(Source: youtube.com/hijazna)

- 1 Saadullah Khan, *East Pakistan to Bangladesh*, (Lahore, Punjab: UMT Press, 2021).
- 2 Antoine Henri Jomini and O. F. Winship, *Summary of the Art of War*, (San Bernardino, CA, 2015).
- 3 Dwight David Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, (London: William Heinemann, 1948).
- 4 Robert A. Fitton, *Leadership: Quotations from the Military Tradition*, (Westview, 1994).
- 5 Australian Army, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, (Canberra: Australian Army, 1993).
- 6 Saadullah Khan, *East Pakistan to Bangladesh*, (Lahore, Punjab: UMT Press, 2021).



the brigadier to move back to the safety of the headquarters. He further comments, “Safety and security are relative terms. You feel safe where you perceive yourself or others to be safe. Life and death are facets of the same reality. They are both in the hands of Allah.” He writes that while making preparations for combat at Akhaura, the acting commanding officer Yasin ordered his soldiers to dig their weapon pits, and said, “This is our home if we live, and our grave if we are killed; prepare these weapon pits with the loving care they deserve”. Like Tariq Bin Ziad, they had burnt their boats. The men were outnumbered, tired, wounded, short of ammunition, fighting in a horrific environment of close combat, but their will to fight was undaunted, *steady as rocks*.

Recollecting the combat at Akhaura, Brigadier Saadullah writes that the Indians repeatedly tried to assault their position “but

all attempts foundered at the resolution of our men. They were steadfast.” On the other hand, the Indians were demoralised as is evidenced by the two enemy wireless intercepts got by D Company, and quoted in his book in these words, “The first [Indian] sounded low morale: *I can take them back but I can't put heart into them*. The speaker seemed to be a company commander”. The second [Indian], who was probably a battalion commander, seemed weary and angry: “I am being treated like this, ordered to go back and forth, we go forward to retrieve the casualties, and suffer more casualties.” He further writes that to lift their morale, Indian soldiers would drink heavily before an assault. Brigadier Saadullah recollects his deep sense of satisfaction in the face of looming death, “Near the Temple was the Tufail Shaheed Memorial Dispensary. He used to be our Chief Instructor



at the Infantry School, Quetta. ‘We may be soon together, sir’, I said softly. The thought was very comforting”⁷

When the time for assault came, Brigadier Saadullah found himself “overwhelmed with sentiments. An overpowering emotion had taken over. My entire being vibrated as if completely intoxicated. Tears welled up in my eyes as I beckoned our men, *Jo Rasul Allah ﷺ ke paon ki khak ko bosa dena chahta hai, aa jaye* (come along, those who yearn to kiss the dust at Rasul Allah’s ﷺ feet). Seven or eight men sprang to their feet, and a similar number followed suit... Yaqub, who had been wounded twice, was also beginning to get up...” Going through a street, they sighted a mosque that “sent through us, a wave of exhilaration. *Tere wuss de rehn dware*, (may your exalted house flourish forever), someone exclaimed with raised up arms... The mosque as a symbol of Islam, had never before meant so much to me. We were in ecstasy. At that moment we could have done anything. The temporal life seemed so insignificant and trivial. In fact, we did not even think about it. Shouting *Nara-i-Takbeer*, *Nara-i-Risalat* and *Nara-i-Haideri*, we continued through.”

Esprit de corps reflects the collective morale of soldiers, their commitment to “the accomplishment of the mission . . . fosters faith, loyalty, pride, confidence, unity and even a feeling of invincibility—a feeling of oneness”. Brigadier Saadullah observes, “there was unison in our sentiment”. They were “tired but cheerful ... The social cement of *esprit de corps* was strong”. Under the relentless fire of the Indians, the man in the foxhole next to Brigadier Saadullah was fatally wounded. “All he said was, *Saab, Khuda Hafiz! menon te lag gai ae* (Sir, Khuda Hafiz! I have been hit). As I fired with the G-3 rifle, he handed me ammunition. He had no weapon

himself. Later on, it transpired [that he had] given me his rifle, had followed without any weapon, and was giving me the filled magazines for which he had to expose himself more than I did.”



GC Saadullah Khan receiving Sword of Honour
(Source: hila.gov.pk)

Martins⁸ versus Elephants

The Pakistan Army fought bravely in the most adverse conditions. It was a hard war; inadequate regular troops, scant, almost no engineering support, ammunition was in short supply, as was artillery and heavy machine gun ammunition. We had no anti-aircraft guns. “The situation was bad but my troops were very determined. Especially the junior leaders were *skillful* and veterans of many small combat actions. Artillery shelling was routine and the troops learnt to live with it. Our peril was great but so was our resolution”⁹ Brigadier Saadullah writes that “lesser men would have caved in much earlier. Out of my two regular battalions, every fifth man was a casualty i.e., killed or wounded”. The Pakistan Army fighting in East Pakistan was literally shorn of all the physical factors that, according to Major General F. M. Richardson¹⁰, boost morale, e.g., provision of good food, rest, good health and amenities like laundry, books. In stark contrast to this, when Brigadier Saadullah felt thirsty on the battlefield,

7 Ibid.

8 A bird known as *Ababeel* in Urdu. It relates to an account in the Holy Quran (Surah Al-Fil 105:1-5).

9 Saadullah Khan, *East Pakistan to Bangladesh*, (Lahore, Punjab: UMT Press, 2021).

10 Major General F. M. Richardson, *In Fighting Spirit* (1978).



he was offered water by an old soldier in his helmet, that had been scooped up from a pond, because fresh water was not available. It could cause dysentery or cholera. There was no time to take rest. The fighting was continuous, the grind of war was relentlessly non-stop. Brigadier Saadullah writes that he had not slept, nor eaten anything for three days, and when after 4 days the soldiers were ordered to stop shelling, they slept instantly in whichever position they were, without complaining of their torn boots.

Refusal to Give In

On one occasion, Indian troops surrounded a post and crept closer to the position. They demanded surrender. “Isolated. Low in ammunition and no hope of succour. No communication with the outside world; no fire support. Yet Havildar Gulab Khan got up with his sten gun lowered. The enemy overjoyed; all of them surged forward to take their weapons. Gulab raised his sten and mowed down the first group... Gulab Khan fell fighting in his bunker, Defiant in death as in life. He had soured victory for the enemy”¹¹

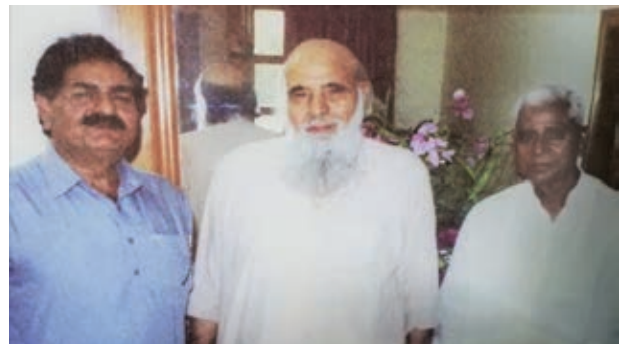


Brigadier Saadullah commanding parade on 23rd March
(Source: Author)

Leading From the Front

Pakistani army officers always lead from the front; The casualty rate of officers and soldiers in the Pakistan army is 1: 12 as compared to the 1:100 casualty rate in the world. Brigadier Saad writes that on one occasion, when there

was a lack of supply officers, and ammunition was needed urgently, the services officers “volunteered to bring out ammunition from the steamers. They knew the risk. They hazarded the risk of artillery and tank fire. At night, one officer with a party of his own servicemen would board a steamer, locate and identify the ammunition, and bring it out of the steamer. The second party would carry the ammunition a little distance away from the river bank. The third party would dismantle the ammunition boxes to reduce the weight... This ritual was carried out every night by different volunteer officers ... The resilience of our soldiers had remained unimpaired.”



Brig Saadullah Khan, HJ (centre) flanked by his staff captain, Maj Munir (left) and his brigade major, Maj Gen Sarfraz, SJ
(Source: Major Munir)

Obedience

Despite knowing that they were defending the undefendable, the orders of the command were resolutely obeyed. Brigadier Saadullah ordered his men, “whatever be our position and here we shall stay! ... [the response] was no complaint, not even his eyes showed any. Zulfi gave me a salute and a fathomless look of complete resignation ... he knew he was going back to a hopeless situation.” Brigadier Saadullah sees through an exchange of fire, a thoroughly overloaded jeep approaching the bridge; “Major Bukhari was in it lying wounded. I walked over to Bukhari. ‘Have I done my job, sir?’ he asked weakly, with half open eyes. ‘You have done more than that son. God be with you.’ To me,

11 Saadullah Khan, *East Pakistan to Bangladesh*, (Lahore, Punjab: UMT Press, 2021), 80.



he had become dearer than a son. Zulfi was also in the same jeep. [He had fallen] *Shaheed*, but not Captain Imtiaz who, with his platoon headquarters men had tried to retake the tanks, and was lying somewhere in the centre platoon with the other *shaheeds* of his platoon. He used to say, ‘she has not given birth to a son who would go through my position while I am alive’. He had been true to his word ... we had asked those gallant sons of Pakistan to hold those lone, isolated posts. They obeyed, unhesitatingly and uncomplainingly”.¹² It was like a filial bond between the commander and the troops. Seeing a soldier carrying two weapons and a shaheed, Brigadier Saadullah writes, “I patted the cheek of the shaheed. It is amazing how much you come to love your men in battle”.

Tenacity of Purpose: Pakistan Army was willing to fight till the last. While they were planning defence and counter attack, all of a sudden there was news of surrender. The response to the orders to surrender, was shock. We were all shocked. There was a flurry of agitated conversation. *Nonsense, it is wrong, It is a fake message*, were the instant reactions... *it was probably a ruse set forth by the enemy*. It was unbelievable as their will to fight was unwavering, and their morale was high. Brigadier Saad writes, “We were stunned. ... We had lost the War without losing in battle”.

About the author



Professor Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan is the daughter of Brigadier Saadullah Khan, HJ. She is the former Vice Chancellor of Rawalpindi Women University. She has extensive experience of teaching, research and administration.

“History had no lessons or rules to offer the student, it could only broaden his understanding and strengthen his critical judgment.”

(Carl von Clausewitz)

¹² Ibid, 118.

Mi-24 Hind

By Major Aamir Cheema, retired

The history of the first ever Mi-24 defections to Pakistan, during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan

The Russian invasion and subsequent occupation of Afghanistan in 1979, was then seen as the final act of the *Great Game*, and it ended with the disintegration of the USSR. Soviet airpower, especially helicopters such as the Mi-24 *Hind*, had a special *mystique* among NATO countries. Soviet rotary war machines



Mi-24 Hind (Source: bizim.media)

were an enigma in terms of their capabilities, design, flying controls and performance in mountainous areas. During this occupation, a few Afghan pilots defected with their flying machines, to Pakistan.

Defection of Mi-24 HIND – Miran Shah to Qasim Base (The Army Aviation Base at Dhamial, Rawalpindi)

On the afternoon of 13 July 1985 at 1120 hours, two *Hinds* landed at the tarmac of Miran Shah (North Waziristan). These helicopters flew *nap of the earth*, avoiding any hostile ground fire, and they just popped up close to Saidgi. Before anyone could react, they were overhead the Tochi Scouts Fort, and after briefly hovering, they both landed, fully armed. Higher authorities decided to immediately fly these helicopters away, whose identity was not known. These were taken as Mi-8 Helicopters, and needed to move from Miran Shah for the fear that sooner or later, they would be attacked and strafed; Miran Shah

airfield had no cover whatsoever, nor any anti-aircraft protection.

Army Aviation was directed to undertake the mission. Major Iftikhar, TJ (Tamgha e Jurrat), was flying in the circuit of Qasim Base when he got a call to make a full stop landing, and immediately report to the base commander. He was told that two Mi-8 helicopters of Afghan Air Force had landed at Miran Shah. After some time Major Iftikhar along with Major Khalid Nawaz, Major Tariq Choudhry and Captain Shahnawaz Badr, landed at Miran Shah airfield in a UH-1H helicopter. The two helicopters were camouflaged under *saroot* (a kind of tall wild growing grass). When this were removed,



UH-1H (Source: digitalcombatsimulator.com)

the army pilots were completely surprised. They had never seen these helicopters before. They were not Mi-8s, but the renowned Mi-24 *Hind*, fully loaded with rockets, missiles and guns. There were Afghan pilots as well on board. Local commanders wanted these helicopters to leave quickly, due to the threat of a Russian air attack.

Major Iftikhar narrates; “The scary part was the tandem seat arrangement. The good point was that cyclic, rudder, pedals and flying instruments were similar to Mi-8. We did not



Map: Main cities and bases

(Source: en.wikivoyage.org)

trust the Afghan pilots and neither had we the time to undergo any kind of conversion training on these Mi-24s. I thus decided to fly them”. Meanwhile Major Tariq got one Mi-24 started by the Afghan pilot, then taxied for some time, and later hovered it, before switching it off. He announced that he was ready to fly. One combat air patrol (CAP) of PAF Mirages was scrambled from Mianwali Air Base, to provide cover to these helicopters.

In Mi-24 (tail No.28) the crew consisted of Major Iftikhar and Major Khalid Nawaz, and the other helicopter (tail No. 12) had Major Tariq and Captain Badr. The Afghan pilots were told to sit in the cargo compartment, but they refused when they saw Pakistani pilots getting ready to fly these machines without any conversion, they were made to sit at gunpoint. Major Iftikhar further narrates; “Cyclic had a lot of buttons and I was unaware of any of them, thus I flew without any trimmers. We were

maintaining 1000 feet above ground level. After take-off a strange female voice came on the radio transmission. I asked Major Tariq about this and he also confirmed this. We thought that Russians were searching for us. The Russian female voice, in fact, was a recorder which announced certain checks and procedures. After 25 minutes of flying, I got a call from Major Tariq that fuel was dripping in his cockpit, and the rest of the engine instruments were in green limits. There was no landing site available. We kept on flying on five minutes basis, thus we flew one hour before we came out of the mountain ranges, left of Kalabagh. We landed across the River Indus in an open field. Major Tariq’s cockpit had half an inch of fuel inside. We left that helicopter there, and took off in the other helicopter for Mianwali, which was another 30 minutes flying”.

Major Tariq, flying the other Mi-24, narrates, “I was flying it like a Mi-8. I kept the gauges, especially the RPM, within green



Mi-8 (Source: digitalcombatsimulator.com)



Mi-24 Hind (Source: Author)

limits. The Mirages were overhead. Around midway, the Afghan pilot announced on inter communication about *benzi* dripping, I did not pay any heed. After some time the Afghan pilot panicked and announced ‘Benzi boom, boom’. On a suitable site I landed”.

Next day Afghan engineers, pilots and Major Tariq Choudhry went to the forced landed helicopter where a guard was placed, and brought it to Mianwali. The same day these two MI-24s landed at Dhamial, after one hour and ten minutes of flying. There was a big reception waiting for them.

It was a historic event. The first time that Mi-24s had landed in a non-communist country. Most importantly the Pakistan Army Aviation pilots had shown their prowess to the world. They had successfully flown these state-of-the-art helicopters, without any conversion or training, relying upon their instincts. All

to see the new machines. Later the Americans helped in unloading the rounds from the gun, and accidentally one round was fired. The next flight of these defected helicopters took place on 19 August 1985, when Major Iftikhar and Major Khalid flew them for thirty minutes. A check-list of these helicopters was made with the help of the defected pilots. On 7 November 1985, one Mi-24 was successfully flown to Chaklala Garrison (in Rawalpindi), by Colonel Razzaq and Major Iftikhar, with Colonel Yousaf as flight engineer. This was despite suffering a hydraulic emergency. This helicopter was later flown out in a C-5 Galaxy. The other Mi-24 was flown by Major Tariq Choudhry to Murid Base on 18th January 1986. This helicopter remained there for another seven years before its next flight.

Another Pair Lands at Chitral

On 4 October 1987 another pair of Mi-24 (tail number 63 and 64) landed at Zivergul, near Chitral. This pair was on a routine Mujahideen hunting mission, and lost its way. This pair belonged to the *Spetsnaz* unit of the Russian Army, and the crew was also Russian. After landing as per their drill, they waited for the rescue, and when it was late, they started destroying the helicopters. One shepherd was watching all this. He walked many miles and told the Chitral Scouts about these helicopters, who reached the spot. The Russians initially offered combat, but soon raised the white flag.

Qasim Base was task to retrieve these helicopters. A team headed by Colonel Razzaq visited the site in a Puma helicopter. The initial



Emblems of 4 Aviation Squadron (left) & Pakistan Army Aviation(right) (Source: Author)

four pilots belonged to 4 Aviation Squadron (*Gallants*). These two helicopters were secured in a hangar and on 17 July 1985, the President General Zia-ul-Haq visited the hangar. There was a stream of visitors, American, British and Chinese, even the Russian ambassador requested



Mi-24 Hind (standing at Army Museum Lahore)
(Source: Army Museum Lahore)

plan envisaged a sling lift of the Mi-24. However due to height and load factor, it was rejected. On 7th October 1987, a ground team reached there. Pakistan Television made a movie of this, which was shown all over the world, the same night.

Major Malang Bukhari was the ground team member and a flight engineer of Mi-8 with almost two decades of experience. He narrates, “It was extremely cold at night, there was constant danger of a Russian rescue team as well. At times Russian jets and Mi-24s were seen prowling in their own area. We started looking at the helicopter and realised that it would be unwise to start it. The Russians had already fired many rounds in the cockpit, and secondly one could not over-rule the possibility of some explosive devices for self-destruction. We started dismantling the helicopters, so they could be slung with a Puma. The location of the forced landing was such that a Puma could not



Puma (Source: defence.pk)

hover there, moreover the threat of the flying Russian Mi-24s dictated that the fuselage should be taken by ground, to a safe place”.

On 14 October 1987, a British team also arrived for assistance. This operation lasted till

21 December 1987, when all parts were removed from the site. All this was done in freezing cold.

Mi-17 – March 1990

In March 1990, Afghan Defence Minister Mr. Shah Nawaz Tanay, along with other high officials and their families, defected from Afghanistan and landed at PAF Base, Peshawar, in one new Mi-17 helicopter. The helicopter was impounded by the PAF, who hid it in an



Mi-17 (Source: wikiwand.com)

available concrete hangar. For the next two years, the helicopter could not fly. In August 1992 it was offered to Pakistan Army Aviation. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ashraf Waraich, then commanding officer *Gallants*



Lt Col Muhammad Ashraf arriving at Qasim Base with defected Mi-17
(Source: Author)

(4 squadron). He was a very experienced instructor with over 4000 hours flying experience on Mi-8, by that time. He narrates, ‘I organised a maintenance team from within the attached LAD (light aid detachment – a maintenance team), in consultation with commander of the Aviation Engineering Group, comprising all necessary trades, to complete 100 hours inspection/service at



Peshawar. Major Khalid Saleem as co-pilot, and Subedar Major Mir Hussain as flight engineer, were included in the team?

On arrival at PAF Base Peshawar, the team inspected the Mi-17 helicopter whose tyres were deflated, and there were bird nests present in the engine intakes. The helicopter was aired up and towed out of the hangar to give it a shower. No documents were found inside, nor did PAF have any additional data. The maintenance team started a detailed inspection and servicing, in line with Mi-8 procedures in vogue, as no manuals were available for Mi-17. The Mi-17 cockpit had all switchology marked in Russian language, which posed difficulties in

recognising the function of each circuit breaker and switch. With the help of a local Russian interpreter, the switches and markings inside the cockpit were understood, and with this experience, the Mi-17 was started.

On 23 August 1992, the Mi-17 was flown from Peshawar with a faulty radio navigation system, but landed safely at Qasim Base, where it was well received. Later, this particular Mi-17 remained the workhorse of the Army Aviation, and it was its performance, more than any thing else, which resulted in induction of over a dozen Mi-17 in mid-nineties, in Pakistan Army Aviation.

Notes

- 4 Army Aviation Squadron, *Digest of Service*.
- Amir Mushtaq Cheema, Mushtaq Madni and Muhammad Azam, *History of Pakistan Army Aviation 1947-2007*, (Islamabad: Army Press, 2007).
- Major Iftikhar, telephonic interview, December 15, 2021.
- Qasim Aviation Base, *Digest of Service*.
- Barry Renfrew, "Pakistani Officials Say Two Afghan Helicopter Gunships Defect." *AP News*, July 13, 1983. <https://apnews.com/article/3b2a3aa70518bcf1984132e81925fc3a>.
- Ashraf Waraich, telephonic interview, December 3, 2021.

About the author



Major Aamir Mushtaq Cheema was commissioned in 1984 in 58 Medium Ack Ack Regiment. He joined Army Aviation in 1989 and retired in 2008. He holds a master's degree in history and master of letters in war studies from the University of Glasgow. He is the author of History of Royal Air Observation Corps 1936-1956, North Waziristan Militia & Tochi Scouts 1895-2012 and An Illustrated History of Chitral Scouts 1903-2014. He also co-authored History of Pakistan Army Aviation 1947-2007.



Pakistan Army Aviation Relief Operation in Bangladesh

By Lieutenant Colonel Malik Jawed Ahmed Khan, AEC

The Pakistan Army has played a key role in disaster management operations inside the country as well as in friendly countries. Pakistanis have an emotional attachment with their brethren in Bangladesh. Therefore when a natural calamity hit part of Bangladesh in 1991, the Pakistan Army moved to participate in relief operations, by sending an Aviation team.

Doomsday

When on the night April 29/30th 1991, a deadly tropical cyclone hit the coastal areas of Bangladesh, Pakistan decided to help their stranded and homeless brethren.

The cyclone was termed a *super cyclonic storm*, highest winds were at 270 km per hour, for over four minutes. The extreme tidal surge took along with it an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 people, never to see daylight again. The temperature of the eye of the cyclone, which was centred on Chittagong, was 350 degrees centigrade, that caused ships in the Indian Ocean

(Bay of Bengal), the Chittagong Airport and parts of the city centre, to burn to ashes. Very large vessels were thrown on to the land, and it appeared as if Chittagong was a ship breaking industrial coast.



Devastation of cyclone (Source: pinterest.com)



Map showing cyclone affected areas of Bangladesh in 1991

(Source: pinterest.com)



Cyclone – affected areas of Chittagong (Source: redr.org.uk)

Realising the magnitude of the catastrophe, the Pakistani Prime Minister, tasked the Pakistan Army to respond. The army decided to dispatch two helicopters for relief operations in Bangladesh. The responsibility was assigned to 6 Aviation Squadron, that took it as a challenge under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Wahid Khan (formally 9 Frontier Force Regiment, and later Pakistan Police).



Lieutenant Colonel Wahid Khan (Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)

Move from Pakistan to Bangladesh

It was for the first time in the history of Pakistan Army Aviation, that an Aviation team was proceeding on a trans-frontier mission. The



UH-1H (Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)

Indian Government was approached to grant permission to ferry the helicopters to Dhaka over Indian territory, and for provision of refueling. This was turned down by the Indian authorities. However, a one-time clearance for Pakistani C-130s to fly over Indian territory was granted. After visa formalities, two UH-1H helicopters along with pilots,

maintenance personnel, accessories, rations and basic necessities were loaded into three C-130s and one Boeing 707. They took off from PAF Base Chaklala around 0500 hours, and reached Dhaka by 1100 hours on 5th May 1991.

Arrival at Dhaka

The arrival of the Pakistani team at Dhaka was taking place 20 years after the loss of East Pakistan. The commanding officer, Colonel Wahid had fought in East Pakistan as a second lieutenant twenty years before, and had now arrived there to help those, against whom he had fought in 1971. There were mixed feelings of pain and satisfaction. Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) Chief, Air Vice Marshal Mumtaz ud Din Ahmad, Psc, received the team. The commanding officer was told by the BAF Chief that accommodation has been booked at the Sheraton Hotel Dhaka,



Disembarkation at Dhaka Airport (Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)

as it would take a few days before they could proceed for relief operations, as the infrastructure in the affected area had been cut off or damaged. Besides, he added that an Indian relief team was also lodging at the Sheraton Hotel. On this disclosure, Colonel Wahid politely declined the offer to stay in the hotel where the Indians were residing, and requested for accommodation in BAF officers mess, or a separate barrack. If not possible, then they may be allotted a piece of ground to pitch tents, which they had brought along. This made the BAF Chief emotional, and he couldn't control his tears.



Relief Operation kicks off...

Around 1430 hours on May 6th, the team took off despite stormy and windy weather, and managed to reach Chittagong in two hours; a journey of 1 hour 5 minutes of flying in normal weather. The air traffic control tower at Chittagong and other navigational facilities including radars, had been destroyed by the tidal surge. Thus, the squadron had no option but to operate without any communications.

The team at Chittagong was received by Group Captain Fakhar ul Azam (later BAF Chief), who happened to be the class fellow of Colonel Wahid at PAF College Sargodha. The team immediately met General Officer Commanding (GOC) 24 Division, Major General Mehmood ul Hassan, who was in charge of relief operations. The general officer explained that



Distribution of relief goods
(Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)

the operation would be conducted in two phases. In phase 1, the Aviation team would meet the immediate requirements of affected people by 20th May. The second phase would entail dumping for any future eventuality. The operation was carried

out by the pilots over the sea, to the islands, by carrying maximum loads and with minimum safe fuel. Accordingly, each helicopter flew 8 to 10 hours per day. The team was also supposed to transport foreign journalists, medical teams, VIPs, relief goods etc.

It is noteworthy that the Pakistani relief team was the first one to reach cyclone-hit Chittagong, and till 15th May the only team which performed successful relief operation, by fulfilling immediate requirements of homeless victims, dumping goods and evacuating the injured. Post 16th May, relief teams of seven

countries started to pour in. Helicopters of other countries were twin engine. Pakistani UH-1H were single engine and hazardous to fly with full loads, over the sea, with no means of recovery in case of any mishap. Pakistani pilots did not even have survival vests and floats; five tyre tubes were arranged for each helicopter, to get away from a ditched helicopter, in case of an emergency. Despite a lack of navigational and basic facilities, the pilots worked tirelessly.

The team was preparing for the second phase when an American task force arrived on the scene, and took over the second phase of the relief work. The GOC Chittagong requested Colonel Wahid to brief the Americans on the progress and requirements of relief work, and the priorities in relation to the different needs of the islands. The Pakistani relief team earned the trust and confidence of the Bangladeshis in a short span of two weeks, through their tireless hard work and devotion.



Lt Col Wahid Khan receiving shield from GOC Chittagong
(Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)



Pakistani crew at Dhaka airport (Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)

Return to Pakistan

After handing over to the Americans and familiarising them with operations, the Pakistani team was cleared to fly back to Dhaka on 24th May, and from there to Karachi. On return



Pakistani crew with senior Pakistani and Bangladeshi officials before returning to Pakistan (Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)

home, the (then) Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Farrakh Khan, was briefed about the accomplished mission, despite hostile weather and foreign land. The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Mirza Aslam Beg awarded COAS commendation cards to the entire team, which is unique in the history of Pakistan Army.

The Prime Minister was keen to be briefed about the relief operation, as he himself witnessed the team working during his visit to Bangladesh. The Prime Minister was very happy with the efforts rendered by the relief team, and



Briefing to Prime Minister by Lt Col Wahid Khan and his team (Source: Lt Col Wahid Khan)

appreciated the accomplishment of this uphill task. He was impressed with the professionalism of the team, and cancelled the planned disbandment of the parent squadron, while ensuring provision of funds for spares, induction of new helicopters and provision of land for a heliport at Islamabad.



6 Squadron (Source: defence.pk)

“ANY TIME ANY WHERE”

Editor’s Note

This article is based on the account initially written and shared by Lieutenant Colonel Wahid Khan, retired, who was in charge of Pakistan Army Aviation Relief Operation in Bangladesh, in 1991. Pakistan Army Aviation Squadron which took part in relief operation, included the following officers:

- Maj Iqbal Kashmiri
- Major Hafiz Nasir
- Captain Abid
- Captain Tareen
- Captain Asad

Notes

- Lieutenant Colonel Wahid Khan, interview by the sub-editor *B&T*, Rawalpindi, January 17, 2022.
- Wahid Khan, *Pakistan Army Aviation Relief Operation in Bangladesh* (unpublished manuscript, October 17, 2021).

About the author



Lieutenant Colonel Malik Jawed Ahmed Khan was commissioned in Army Education Corps in May 2002. He holds an M.Phil degree in English Literature. He served as an instructor at Pakistan Military Academy Kakul, Military College Jhelum and Armor Institute, Royal Saudi Land Forces KSA. Presently, he is serving in Army Medical College Rawalpindi.



Azam Khan of East Pakistan

By Lieutenant Colonel Hassaan Javaid, AEC

He came, he saw, he conquered. This great quote of William Shakespeare truly applies to Lieutenant General Azam Khan (late) who earned the love and respect of the people of erstwhile East Pakistan, which none other could, earlier. Born on 1 August 1908 in Mathra near Peshawar, British India, young Azam was commissioned from Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 1929. He served in Burma as a staff officer during World War II. After independence, he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier in 1948, and later Major General in 1950. He served as general officer commanding (GOC) and martial law administrator of Lahore in early 50s. As a lieutenant general, he served as the first commander of the newly raised I Corps of Pakistan Army, in 1957.¹

General Azam was appointed governor of erstwhile East Pakistan in 1960.² He won the hearts and minds of the people of the province through his kind heart and loving nature. During a brief period of two years as governor, he made extensive visits to far flung towns and villages of the province, and interacted with the common man to understand his problems. He initiated many development projects with emphasis on education, for the uplift of East Pakistan. Being the chancellor of East Pakistani universities, he

laid special emphasis on higher and technical education. General Azam established *Graphic Arts Institute* in Dacca, the first ever of its kind in the region. He promoted sports and cultural activities in the province. He brought hope and aspirations in the eyes of the people of erstwhile East Pakistan. General Azam worked hard during rescue and relief operations in Chittagong and surrounding areas of East Pakistan, when it was severely hit by a cyclone in October 1960.



Clockwise from top left : Maj Gen Azam Khan as GOC Lahore, Azam Khan with Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin, Azam Khan taking oath as Governor East Pakistan, Azam Khan in East Pakistan
(Source: flickriver.com)

General Azam received an unprecedented farewell from the people of East Pakistan on completing his tenure as governor of the province. His love and affection with erstwhile

- 1 Lieutenant Colonel Rifat Nadeem Ahmad, author of book *History of The Baloch Regiment*, telephonic interview by author, Rawalpindi, May 16, 2021.
- 2 Megasthenes, 'Remembering Azam Khan', *The Daily Star*, Bangladesh English Newspapers, October 7, 2010.



East Pakistan, and later Bangladesh, never ended. After retirement, he was offered to become high commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh, which he declined on the grounds that he could not become ambassador in his own country. This

legend passed away in Lahore in 1994, but his memories will remain forever, in erstwhile East Pakistan.



Postage stamp
showing map of East
Pakistan

(Source: thefridaytimes.com)

About the author



Lieutenant Colonel Hassaan Javaid was commissioned in Army Education Corps in April 2001. Besides serving in a brigade headquarters and Frontier Corps Balochistan as general staff officer (education), he served as an instructor in Pakistan Military Academy Kakul for 8 years, and Military College Jhelum for 6 years. He holds a master's degree in physics, mass communication and English. He also holds a MPhil degree in media studies. Presently, the officer is serving in the Army Institute of Military History, Rawalpindi and is also sub-editor of B&T magazine.

“Change is the end result of all true learning.”

(Leo Buscaglia)



Military History Minestrone

(Our quiz; for the military history enthusiast and novice alike)

Minestrone; a thick soup of Italian origin has no fixed recipe as it can be prepared out of whatever vegetables one has.

Select the best option

- The dropping of atomic bombs by the United States, over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945 respectively, forced the Japanese imperial forces to surrender. Which aircraft was used by the US Air Force to drop the atomic bomb?
 - B-29 Superfortress
 - B-10 Martin
 - B-23 Douglas Dragon
 - B-24 Liberator
- The International Committee of the Red Cross is a humanitarian organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland, which is mandated to protect victims of international and internal armed conflicts. Which conflict led to the foundation of the Red Cross in 1863?
 - The Indian Mutiny
 - The American Civil War
 - The Franco-Austrian War
 - The Franco-Russian War
- The Conquest of Makkah is a very significant event in Islamic history. The Muslims led by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) entered Makkah in 8 Hijri. Which surah was recited by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), while entering the city?
 - Surah Al-Fath
 - Surah Al-Kausar
 - Surah Al-Anfal
 - Surah Al-Ankaboot
- On January 13, 1842, a British army doctor reached the British sentry post at Jalalabad, Afghanistan. He was the lone survivor of a 16,000 strong Anglo-Indian expeditionary force that was massacred during its retreat from Kabul.
 - Sidney Langford Hinde
 - Samuel Ludlow
 - James Barry
 - William Brydon



5. During 1971 War, Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfuz (shaheed) was wounded in his legs by shrapnel, but he moved towards an enemy bunker and jumped inside. He got hold of an enemy soldier by his neck and killed him. He was stabbed with bayonets and embraced martyrdom on the night of 17 December 1971. This fight took place in which sector?
- (a) Shakargarh-Sialkot (b) Sulemanki
(c) Poonch (d) Wagah-Attari
6. He was second-in-command of the PNS Ghazi, and participated in a successful attack on the Indian naval base Dwarka during 1965 war. During 1971 war, he commanded PNS Hangor, a submarine that sank the INS Khukri. He is the recipient of Sitara e Jurrat (SJ) & Bar. This valiant officer of Pakistan Navy is:-
- (a) Vice Admiral Afzal Rahman (b) Admiral Mohammad Shariff
(c) Vice Admiral Ahmad Tasnim (d) Vice Admiral Muzaffar Hassan
7. Which Ghazwa is mentioned in Surah Al Imran of the Holy Quran?
- (a) Uhad (b) Khandaq
(c) Tabuk (d) Hunain
8. The First Battle of Panipat was fought between the invading forces of Zaheer uddin Babur and the Lodi Empire, which took place on 21 April 1526 in North India. It marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire in India. Which factor played a key role in the victory of the Mughal army?
- (a) Elephants (b) Horses
(c) Artillery (d) Phalanx
9. The recent border skirmishes between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan River valley, Eastern Laddakh region, are part of a longstanding border dispute between the two countries. Both countries had also fought a major war in the past in which India was badly defeated. In which year was this war fought?
- (a) 1961 (b) 1963
(c) 1962 (d) 1964
10. Sir Winston Churchill was a renowned statesman who led Britain to victory in the Second World War. In his youth, Churchill also served as a war correspondent with an expeditionary force formed to restore order in a region now part of Pakistan. Where exactly did he serve?
- (a) Hunza (b) Zhob
(c) Malakand (d) Gilgit

(Answers on page 61)



Glimpses of AIMH Activities



Visit of General Nadeem Raza, NI(M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, on 6 October 2021



Lieutenant General Faiz Hamid, HI(M), Director General Inter Services Intelligence, visiting AIMH on 16 November 2021



Visit of Lieutenant General Akhtar Nawaz, HI(M), Chairman NDMA, on 22 October 2021

Glimpses of AIMH Activities



Visit of Lieutenant General Nigar Johar, HI(M), Surgeon General, on 10 November 2021



General Muhammad Yusaf Khan, NI(M), retired, visiting AIMH on 11 October 2021



Dr Moeed Wasim Yusuf, National Security Advisor, visiting AIMH on 25 November 2021



Glimpses of AIMH Activities



Students' delegation from Quaid e Azam University, Islamabad (left) and National University of Modern Languages (right) visiting AIMH



Dr Mariam Chughtai, scholar and educationist, along with Major General Muhammad Asghar, HI(M), Director General FGEIs visiting AIMH on 14 October 2021

Focused group discussion being held in Azadi Lounge on 10 September 2021

Military History Minestrone (Answers)

- | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (c) | 3. (a) | 4. (d) | 5. (d) |
| 6. (c) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) | 9. (c) | 10. (c) |

(800 Years Ago, 1221-1222)

The Battle of Indus¹

The battle fought between a Mongol army led by Genghis Khan, and forces of Jalal al-Din Khwarazm Shah, during the winter of 1221 on the western bank of the Indus River; in an area now part of Pakistan...



Mongol Empire & other contemporary dynasties of 13th century (left), inset :images of Jalal al-Din Khwarazm Shah (top left) and Genghis Khan (top right) , Jalal al-Din Khwarazm Shah escaping Genghis Khan and his army while crossing the Indus River (right)

Genghis Khan (real name Temüjin), is one of the most famous conquerors of history. At its peak, his empire extended across Asia to Europe. After conquering China and Mongolia during the early years of the 13th century, he moved towards Central Asia.

At that time, most of Central Asia was under the rule of Alauddin Muhammad Khwarazm Shah, of the Khwarazmian dynasty. Although Shah challenged the Mongols' advance, he failed to resist. A series of battles was fought between the Mongols and the forces of the Khwarazmian Empire, resulting in the defeat of the latter, and destruction of great Islamic culture and civilisation.

After the death of Alauddin Muhammad Khwarazm Shah in 1220, his son Jalal al-Din came to power and fought several battles against the Mongols, but was defeated and forced to retreat towards Afghanistan. The Mongols followed him in Afghanistan and finally caught him when he was preparing to enter India, while crossing the River Indus, with his loyal forces, during the winter of 1221. A fierce battle was fought between the two opposing armies and is known as *The Battle of Indus*. During the battle, Jalal al-Din took a strong defence on the western bank of the River Indus. Initially, the Mongol attack was beaten back and the Khwarazmian army almost breached the Mongol lines during their counter attack, but then they lost impetus and were forced to retreat. Jalal al-Din himself escaped by swimming his horse across the Indus. Interestingly, Genghis Khan did not follow him, and returned to Mongolia.

Jalal al-Din could not secure permanent refuge in India, which was then under the rule of the Mamluk king Shams ud-Din Iltutmish. Jalal al-Din stayed for a brief period in the Sindh Sagar Doab region (area between River Indus and River Jhelum, modern day Pakistan) and spent the next few years fighting a border war against the Mongols, till his death in 1231, in exile.

¹ Harold Lamb, *Genghis Khan; The Emperor of All Men* (New York: R.M. McBride & company ,1927)



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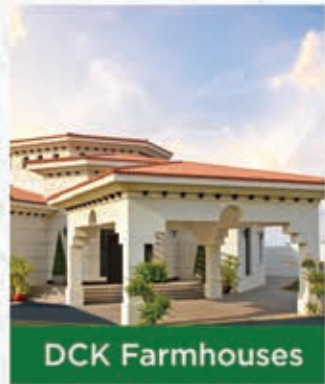
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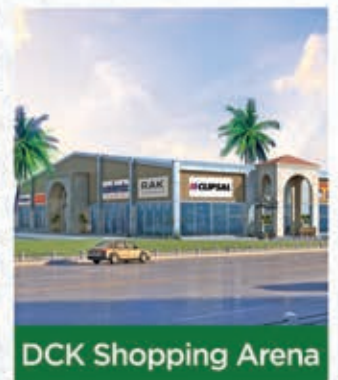
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Fifty years ago, Army Welfare Trust made a modest beginning, in 1971. Today it is a shining example of success and resilience. Our raison d'être is to generate funds for the welfare of shuhda of Pakistan Army and their next of kins. Established for the noble cause, today over 20 business units of the awt group are making contribution towards the nation economy, employment and industrial growth.



Lt Gen. Naveed Mukhtar (Retd), HI(M)
Managing Director, AWT

