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# INDIA - BANGLADESH BONHOMIE AT 50 1971 AND THE PRESENT

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EDITOR  
SREERADHA DATTA

For Bangladesh and India, the past year has been about celebrating 50 years of Bangladesh and commemorating the iconic event, the Liberation War of Bangladesh, one that irreversibly changed the political landscape of South Asia.

While much scholarly work and detailed research were undertaken and many publications and books were released over the past two years, the question remained as to how many of subsequent generations were aware of this cataclysmic event and India's defining role in it? The Liberation War of Bangladesh is not only integral to Bangladesh but also formed the core underpinning of India- Bangladesh partnership.

This book is a ready reckoner about the Bangladesh Liberation War from the Indian perspective, given the challenges in unearthing new information from official archives. It once again reiterates especially through the narrative of the brave soldiers that while the official war was fought between 3 -16 December 1971, many were already engaged in various sectors training the Bangladeshis who had joined the movement from a cross section of the society. Undoubtedly the Indian defence force was the bulwark of support that ensured the victory for Bangladesh but entire India in various capacities rallied around to support the cause for liberation of Bangladesh.



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Editor  
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*For the 1971 generation  
and beyond*





# Contents

*Introduction* *vii*

## SECTION I

---

Prelude to the War <i>by Sreeradha Datta</i>	3
India's Military Operations: Some Glimpses <i>by Sreeradha Datta</i>	20
United Nations and Select International Responses <i>by Sreeradha Datta, Rishi Gupta</i>	39
Select Conversations with 1971 War Veterans <i>by Aniruddha Awalgaonkar</i>	58

## SECTION II

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India-Bangladesh: Coming Full Circle <i>by Sreeradha Datta</i>	73
Select Annotated Documents: 1972 and 2010 <i>by Sreeradha Datta</i>	88

## Section III

---

A Short Chronology: 1971 Liberation War <i>by Cchavi Vasisht, Aakriti Vinayak</i>	111
Treaties between India and Bangladesh (1972-2001) <i>Compiled by Rishi Gupta, Anushka Saraswat</i>	142

India-Bangladesh Joint Projects	162
<i>Compiled by Khushmita Dhabhai, Nikhil Sahu</i>	
Select Documents	170
<i>Compiled by Aakriti Vinayak</i>	
Latest Select Publications on Bangladesh	208
<i>Compiled by Anushka Saraswat</i>	
About Contributors	210
<i>Index</i>	213





# Introduction

For Bangladesh and India, 2021 has been about celebrating and commemorating the iconic Liberation War of 1971, one that created a new country and irreversibly changed South Asia's political landscape.

While many scholarly works and research have been undertaken and several publications and books have been released over this event, one central question remains: how many of the subsequent generations are aware of this cataclysmic event and India's defining role in it? The Liberation War is integral to Bangladesh and forms the crux of the India-Bangladesh partnership.

Initially, we sought to throw some new light or bring out recently declassified documentation on India's role. The decision-making process that convinced India to go to war was essentially the Bengali populace's quest for freedom from a then tyrannical West Pakistan. However, given the bureaucratic hurdles, the project gradually evolved into a ready reckoner on the Liberation War from an Indian perspective. Seeking authentic archival material and documentation in India is a challenge. For unfathomable reasons, every official or non-official repository has been most reluctant to share them. The Government of India's reluctance to declassify documents continues to baffle many and Indian scholars have been regularly forced to rely on external and foreign sources to bridge the knowledge gap.

This publication does not offer any original ideas or insights about the War but is intended more for the youth, most of whom

are unaware as well as reluctant to pore over scholarly works on this very epochal moment in South Asian history. It once again reiterates, especially through the narratives of brave soldiers, that while the war was fought during 3-16 December 1971, many were already engaged in various sectors training Bangladeshis who had joined the movement from cross-sections of the society. It is also a reminder of how nations have no friends but common interest. Undoubtedly the Indian defence force was the bulwark that ensured the victory while ordinary Indians in various capacities rallied around the cause for liberation of Bangladesh. For a host of reasons, the Bangladesh's struggle for freedom and the ensuing developments remains a unique experience.

While it took many years for Bangladesh to officially acknowledge India's contribution to their Liberation War, the bilateral relationship has undergone a metamorphosis in recent years. Along with the rest of the world, India has rejoiced with Bangladesh in commemorating its new dawn through a host of events like a Mujib-Bapu digital exhibition. Moreover, given the significance of the period, there have been frequent high-level bilateral visits to highlight both the historic ties and the journey both sides have embarked on.

This publication is divided into two broad sections; the first highlights the phase before the war and India's role in the war, and the huge humanitarian support it offered to ten million refugees fleeing political persecution. It brings out the responses from the international actors and the United Nations towards the ongoing genocide against the people of East Pakistan and their liberation struggle.

The second section focuses on bilateral ties, which documents the many bilateral agreements and how the relationship covers a broad spectrum of the field. Two specific agreements, the 1972 Agreement, and the 2010 Joint Communique are annotated to underline their context and relevance. The former set the note for future engagement, but domestic events in Bangladesh derailed their implementation. The

breakthrough occurred with the Joint Communiqué signed during Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in January 2010. Thus, these two documents give a broad perspective on bilateral engagement.

This attempt aims to rekindle memories of one of the most definitive moments in South Asian history. The issue of refugees moved the world, and many individuals highlighted it through writings and cultural activities, but much of the onus on managing them fell on India. While India received some support, it clearly was not even close to what was required by a society struggling to build its own economy. Especially, when the entire nation overwhelmingly supported the political decision to engage in the war. In fact, the Jan Sangh-led opposition was fully behind this decision and supported the government without hesitation. The study of the bilateral trajectory fills one with uneasiness and apprehension about how politics in the region has supplanted the needs of the people.

Much of what was agreed in 1972 took another four decades to be implemented as both neighbours differed on their political perspectives of the other. The common people once again have fallen prey to divisive political forces. Hopefully, the dividend of cooperation, being experienced by both sides, will be strong enough to ensure that bilateral engagement will always be seen as a 'win-win' experience for both.

This publication would not have been possible without Major Shamsul Arefin, Chairman of the Bangladesh Foundation of Regional Studies, a most ardent enthusiast of Bangladesh-India friendship, and a well-wisher I am lucky to know and work with for over two decades. This work was also very different, as despite the virtual limitations, the neighbourhood group came together to make it possible. My young colleagues, Aakriti Vinayak, Cchavi Vasisht, Rishi Gupta,

Aniruddha Awalgaonkar, Anushka Saraswat all delivered despite many other pressing commitments. I am also grateful to the two new young professionals Khushmita Dhabhai and Nikhil Sahu for their timely contribution. I am particularly grateful to all the military officers who shared their wartime experiences with us and provided a rare inside view of the Indian Military operations during the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh. Dr. Arvind Gupta and Gen. Ravi Sawhney remain the guiding lights for all of us at the VIF. I am particularly grateful to the Eastern Army Command for their library support. Needless to mention, all omissions and commissions are entirely mine.

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# SECTION I

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## Prelude to the War

*by Sreeradha Datta*

The partition of the Indian subcontinent led to the birth of Pakistan. Pakistan was created in 1947 from five provinces of India that were predominantly Muslim. Pakistan formed two wings, East and West. The Eastern Wing, which was re-christened as East Pakistan in 1955 and is now, Bangladesh, was situated over 1,000 miles away from the Western Wing. This wing with a predominant Bengali population conscious of its identity as Muslims, but with a distinct Bengali cultural mooring, alongside a twenty million-strong Hindu minority, was distinct from West Pakistan in many ways. The central leadership of the Muslim League in West Pakistan treated East Bengal as a quasi-colony and there was gross inequality, whether in the political, linguistic, military, social, or economic fields, between the two. The differences grew more distinct with time and while much of the available literature does suggest that the idea of a new nation was not initially considered by East Pakistani political leaders, West Pakistan's continued intransigence made the break inevitable. Certainly, many factors over the years contributed to the birth of Bangladesh. In one of the early writings about the ensuing developments in Pakistan, the author points to the economic discrimination that was practised by the West Pakistani leadership.

As noted by Jenefer Coates <sup>1</sup>

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1 Jenefer Coates, "Bangladesh: The Struggle for Cultural Independence", *Index on Censorship*, Volume 1 (1), Mar 19, 1972.

... The decline in the East's economy appears to have begun when East Bengal became East Pakistan. And, while the disparities between the two wings have been discussed more fully elsewhere, the following statistics are significant to this article. Whereas in 1947, East Pakistan had double the number of scholars in the West wing, by 1967, that number had increased 30 times in the West but only by five times in the East. Schools and colleges in the East actually declined in number during that period. Out of 16 research and development centres, 13 were located in the West. The bulk of scholarships and training grants was awarded to West Pakistanis largely because they were advertised in the East when it was too late to apply. It was the same with jobs, which were in any case often filled before being advertised at all (although this is not a problem peculiar to Pakistan). Of the government's administrative jobs, 15 percent went to Bengalis, while only 10 percent of the army was Bengali and the percentage of Bengali officers was even lower...

The Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 strengthened the demand<sup>2</sup> for East Pakistan's autonomy and found expression in 1966 when Mujibur Rahman announced a six-point programme calling for autonomy and respect for the democratic process. The response from West Pakistan was more repressive, which later culminated into the arrest of Sheikh Mujib's arrest in 1967.

As was noted, "The compulsion of economic development was too strong to be side-tracked by the slogan of Islamic solidarity and brotherhood. It would be unfair to think that the people of East Bengal would regard the bonds of Islam so strong that they would be expected to forget their economic exploitation and backwardness."<sup>3</sup> And in the words of Rahman Sobhan, "Bengal's political leadership with West Pakistan was on an ideological basis - in protest and self-defence against the exploitation by a more deployed West Pakistan. Her (East Pakistani) struggle is an attempt at survival and protests against

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2 The wars had wrecked the Pakistani economy further and in order to bring down the domestic criticism President Ayub had declared an emergency and many leaders, including Mujibur Rahman, were arrested.

3 Anthony Mascarenhas, *The Rape of Bangladesh*. (Delhi: Vikas Publication, 1972), Page 12.



exploitation.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, many of the historical accounts of this phase have reiterated that Mujib initially worked towards regional autonomy. “... like many Bengali Muslim politicians of his generation, Mujib hoped both to preserve the unity of Pakistan under a federal structure and to make a bid for national leadership by leveraging the Bengalis’ potential electoral majority.”<sup>5</sup> However, the elections of 1970 proved to be a turning point for Mujibur Rahman and the other East Pakistani leaders.

Elections to the Pakistan parliament were held in 1970, where the Awami League won a massive majority in East Pakistan and an overall majority in the national parliament.

Political Parties	300
Awami League	160
Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party	81
Independents	16
Muslim League (Qayyum Group)	9
Muslim League (Daultana Group)	7
Hazarvi group	7
National Awami Party (Wali Group)	6
Jamat-i-islami	4
Muslim League (FC Choudhury Group)	2
Pakistan Democratic Party	1

Thirteen seats reserved for women were filled in a subsequent election, giving the Awami League seven additional seats, or 167 of the 169 allotted to East Bengal on the basis of population in a house of 313 members.<sup>6</sup>

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4 Ibid.

5 Srinath Raghavan, 1971: *The Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*. (Harvard University Press, 2013), Page 31.

6 Op. Cit. No. 3, P. 62.

For Pakistan, the political consequence of the election was even more shattering than the physical damage wrought by the cyclone and tidal wave in East Bengal a month earlier. For one thing, the rout of obscurantist parties had shown that the new generation of Pakistan, hardly less illiterate than their forebears, would not be misguided by zealots making political capital out of the people's piety and ignorance. Religion would no longer serve as a rallying cry in politics.<sup>7</sup>

The results meant different things to different people. The Bengalis under the Awami league banner were exultant. The people were yearning for democracy, regional autonomy, social justice, and secularism, and the nationalist movement coalesced within a surge for self-rule.

As President, General Yahya Khan used every subterfuge possible in collaboration with Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to deny the Awami League its right to form the government, Mujibur Rahman, as the leader of the Awami League, stood firm on the demand for autonomy and the right to form a government. This resulted in a military crackdown whose ferocity led to a popular resistance; a war for liberation that led to the creation of Bangladesh supported by India broke out on 3 December 1971. As recounted by Deb Mukharji,<sup>8</sup>

“It was a genocide. Equipped with modern weapons of warfare, the army let loose a reign of terror which had no precedence. The avowed intention was to kill in numbers sufficient to ensure submission. Countless were killed and uncounted women violated. Ten million fled for refuge to neighbouring India. Nations, big and small, met in endless conclaves in the hallowed precincts of the United Nations but provided no respite from the continuing carnage. Peasants, students, Bengali officers and men of the Pakistan Army, paramilitary, police, and common people banded together as the *Mukti Bahini* to free their

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7 Ibid.

8 Deb Mukharji, *From 1971 to now, Bangladesh's long journey*. (Indian Express, 16 December, 2021), <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/1971-war-bangladesh-economy-politics-7675009/>

motherland from the barbaric forces. India provided arms and training as the freedom fighters kept the occupying forces under relentless pressure. In a desperate gamble, Pakistan attacked India on December 3.”

The struggle of the millions of Bengalis supported ably by India saw the surrender of the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan took place on 16 December 1971 and a new nation called Bangladesh emerged.

### **West Pakistan's Apparent Tactics to Negotiate**

Yahya Khan went to Dacca on 11 January 1971 to meet Mujib and while leaving, he called Mujibur Rahman the future Prime Minister of the country.<sup>9</sup> On February 13, Yahya announced that the National Assembly would meet on March 3, but on February 15, Bhutto declared his intention to boycott the proceedings, forcing Yahya Khan to announce a postponement of the National Assembly for an indefinite period. This led to a sharp reaction in East Pakistan and Mujib called for a hartal in Dacca on March 2, and across entire East Pakistan on March 3, 1971. The army was brought in to quell the growing unrest and a non-violent, non-cooperation movement was initiated by Mujibur.

On March 7, Lt. General Tikka Khan came to take over as the Martial Law Administrator and Governor of East Pakistan. However, the Chief Justice, feigning illness, refused to administer the oath of office and a judge from West Pakistan had to be called in to do it.

Mujibur's speech on March 7 at the Ramna Racecourse in Dacca led to a new political movement in East Pakistan. While there was no response and only rescheduling of the visit of leaders from West Pakistan, Mujib assumed full responsibility for the civil administration of East Pakistan from March 15. The *de facto* administration of the region came into Mujib's hands.

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9 S. N. Parasad and U.P. Thapliyal, *The India Pak War of 1971*. (Delhi: Ministry of Defence/Natraj Publishers, Delhi, 2014), p. 24.

In the meantime, Mujib and Yahya Khan held several rounds of dialogue. On March 23, it was reported that Mujib and Yahya had worked out an interim agreement for the withdrawal of martial law and the transfer of power to representative parties. On the contrary, as it has increasingly become clear, West Pakistani leaders were preparing Pakistani troops for arriving in East Pakistan from February 28, 1971, long before both the leaders had started their political negotiations. The West Pakistan leaders' plan did not involve giving East Pakistan leaders their politically earned rights.

All preparation for the military crackdown began on March 25, 1971. The troops reached their target areas, including the Dacca University campus and Dhanmondi where Mujib was staying. Mujib gave himself up for arrest and was kept in the Adamjee School for the night and then shifted to Flag Staff House before he was flown to Karachi three days later. In anticipation of such moves, he had prepared a pre-recorded message for his people in which for the first time he mentioned the name "Bangladesh".

"From today, Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh, wherever you are with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistani occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved." <sup>10</sup>

## **The Provincial Government of Bangladesh**

In the wake of the crackdown on March 25, many Awami League leaders were forced to flee to India. Among them was Awami League General Secretary Tajuddin Ahmed. The Indian authorities gave them safety and shelter. On the evening of April 1, Tajuddin and Barrister Amirul Islam were flown from Kolkata to New Delhi in secrecy. Two days

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10 David Ludden, "The Politics of Independence in Bangladesh," *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 46, (35), August 27, 2011.

after his arrival in New Delhi, his meeting with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took place on April 3. It was the first official contact of Awami League leaders with the Indian government more than one week after the crackdown on Dacca. Ahmed apprised Mrs. Gandhi of the freedom movement that had started and said that the people of “Bangladesh” were determined to continue their struggle until independence was achieved. He sought all-out support from the Government of India.<sup>11</sup> The formal installation of the provincial government of Bangladesh took place on April 17 in the presence of both Indian and foreign journalists at Bhaberpura village in Kushtia District, later renamed Mujib Nagar.

As noted by Srinath Raghavan, according to R.N. Kao, then heading the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), it was in India’s interest “to give aid, adequate and quick enough to ensure early success of the liberation movement under the control and guidance of the Awami League and its leaders.” He believed a prolonged liberation struggle would allow the movement to fall into the hands of extremists and pro-China Communists in Bangladesh, which clearly would be “greatly to the disadvantage of India”.<sup>12</sup>

In the meantime, the news of genocide was spread through radio on May 25, 1971, by ‘a motley group of singers, poets and radio broadcasters’ who made their way to a rented house, where a makeshift studio and dormitory for artists had been set up. This two-storied non-descript house at 57/8 Ballygunge Circular Road, stands mute witness to an operation in the run-up to the 1971 war, which gave the Bangladesh government-in-exile a radio station to broadcast “hope” to its people facing genocide by the Pakistan Army. This house on a lane

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11 Syed Abul Maksud, “The Liberation War and the Provisional Government”, Daily Star, 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/independence-day-special-2018/the-liberation-war-and-the-provisional-government-1553428>

12 Op. Cit. No. 5, Page 69.

off the main Ballygunge Circular Road was the headquarters and sole transmitting radio station for ‘Swadhin Bangla Betar’ (Free Bangladesh Radio), broadcasting news bulletins, plays, songs, and above all, a hope for the beleaguered people.

A clandestine radio station had been first set up at Kalurghat in Chittagong on March 26 soon after the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur. It was relocated to Agartala after Kalurghat was shelled by Pakistani Sabre jets and finally came to Kolkata where it was joined by a large number of Bangladeshi radio programmers, newscasters, poets, singers, and journalists. Songs like ‘*Purbo Digante, Suryo Utheche*’ (On the eastern sky, a new sun has arisen), ‘*Shono Ekti Mujjiberer theke*’ (Hear from one Mujibber) and ‘*Mora Ekti Phool Ke Bachabo Bole Juddho Kori*’ (We fight to save one flower) were written, composed and recorded at the Ballygunge studio. In the words of Said Syed Kawsar Jamal, a former All India Radio (Kolkata) broadcaster and radio historian, “Akashvani Kolkata radio station helped with technical support. Our own broadcasters like Debdulal Bandopodhyay were already making history by recording tales of atrocities from survivors who made it to the border.”<sup>13</sup>

For many thousands of Bangladeshis who came out from their homes to participate in the war, poetry, songs, and music played a strong inspirational role. It continues to be an intrinsic part of their memories and journey to freedom. Indeed, Indian playback singer, Lata Mangeshkar, played a key role also in mobilising funds and international opinion in favour of the Liberation War in 1971 by traveling to different cities in Indian Air Force planes. She was a part of a cultural troupe called ‘Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti that was formed

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13 Jayanta Roy Chowdhury, “50 years on, Bangladesh remembers Kolkata Radio Station which gave them hope during Liberation War,” Press Trust of India, May 25, 2021.

by Indian actors to mobilise funds for Bangladeshis.<sup>14</sup> Indians from all walks of life joined hands to support the cause of Bangladesh.

### **India's Official Position**

On March 23, 1971, the Indian Parliament unanimously passed a resolution expressing its deep anguish and grave concern at the massive attack unleashed by the armed forces of West Pakistan against the people of East Pakistan.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had told the Lok Sabha as early as March 27, 1971:

“In a serious moment like this, the less we as a government say, I think the better it is.” She spoke in the Rajya Sabha the same day saying, “A wrong step, a wrong word, can have an effect entirely different from the one which all intend.”<sup>15</sup>

The provincial Government of East Pakistan wrote to the President of India on April 24, 1971 requesting recognition from India. India permitted a government-in-exile by the Awami League near Calcutta (now Kolkata) but refrained from according any formal status to it. On May 7, 1971, leaders of 14 opposition parties demanded the immediate recognition of Bangladesh and arms aid to the Mukti Bahini. K Subrahmanyam, a security expert and then Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), advocated for a, “bold initiative on our part to help the struggle in East Pakistan to end quickly and victoriously is therefore called for.”

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14 Sweta Sengar, “1971 War: When Lata Mangeshkar sang for Bangladesh & raised funds for upkeep of refugees”, India Times, February 07, 2020, <https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/1971-war-when-lata-mangeshkar-sang-for-bangladesh-raised-funds-for-upkeep-of-refugees-561342.html>

15 Rajeev Kidwai, “How Indira Gandhi won the 1971 War”, India Today, December 16, 2021, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/how-indira-gandhi-won-1971-war-1888447-2021-12-16>

When the Opposition became more vocal, seeking the recognition of Bangladesh, Indira Gandhi commented in August 1971: “There are some in the country who are attempting to make political capital out of the Bangladesh issue. This is no occasion for irresponsible action. The government will take any such step [recognition of Bangladesh] only after careful consideration of all aspects of the question.”<sup>16</sup>

In the meantime, between March and October 1971, Indira Gandhi wrote letters to world leaders, apprising them of the situation on the Indian border. She visited Moscow and undertook a 21-day tour of Germany, France, Britain, Belgium, and the United States.

On June 13, 1971, an article by a Pakistani journalist, Anthony Mascarenhas, in the UK’s Sunday Times, carried the story of the ground horrors about what he had witnessed happening in Pakistan. It exposed for the first time the scale of the Pakistan Army’s brutal campaign to suppress its breakaway eastern province in 1971. His account was the first that recorded the genocide so vividly while many other writings in that period captured the plights of the refugees rather poignantly. Interestingly, in August 1971, Pakistan first issued a White Paper, squarely blaming Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League for the crisis. Mujib was tried for treason, and 79 of the 160 elected members of the National Assembly and 195 of the 228 members of the Provincial Assembly, were disqualified.

Beginning September 1971, a civilian governor and ten provincial ministers were appointed. Two of the ten ministers were rebel Awami League leaders and the other eight were unelected. Having marginalised the Awami League, the Pakistan Government ordered by-elections for vacant seats to be held from November 25 to December 9, 1971. This was meant to be Pakistan’s political solution to the crisis.

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16 Ibid.



As pointed out by the Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, “history also has few examples to equal the scale of empathy and grass-root-level support that your struggle evoked in India. People spontaneously opened their hearts and homes to offer all possible support to the people of Bangladesh. It was our abiding honour and our solemn responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in their hour of need.”<sup>17</sup> The outflow of refugees in the face of the genocidal attack has often been sighted as the trigger for the Indian response to Pakistan. The Pakistani intention towards its eastern wing was suspect for long.

### Refugee Crisis

As recorded by Anthony Mascarenhas from an officer of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters at Comilla, “we are determined to cleanse East Pakistan once and for all of the threat of secession even if it means killing off two million people and ruling the province as a colony for 30 years.”<sup>18</sup>

By March 31, 1971, at least 300 refugees were forced to cross over and by April 17, 1,19,566 persons had moved across the border, with 4,37,900 by May end and 7,23,000 by July 1971.<sup>19</sup> By the end of May, the average daily influx into India was over 100,000 and had reached a total of almost four million. The refugee influx from East Pakistan to India touched 10 million by the end of 1971. By June 3, 1971, the 509 refugee camps set up along the border were finding it impossible to cope with the scale of migration. Large camps, run by ex-army personnel, had to be established in eight states across India. By June 3, 509 refugee camps were set up along 2,800 kms of the border.

Post a visit by Indira Gandhi in May to refugee camps in Tripura, Assam and West Bengal followed by other central leaders on June 5,

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17 Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Address by President of India, December 16, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3hXgsiQ>

18 Anthony Mascarenhas, *The Rape of Bangladesh*. (Delhi: Vikas Publication, 1972), 117.

19 Op. Cit. No. 9, 37.

1971, it was decided to lessen the burden on West Bengal and Tripura. Some refugees were shifted to Madhya Pradesh, Bihar Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh, and more camps were set up in Assam and Meghalaya. The Indian government requested the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation for emergency assistance. Although, the international assistance arrived, it was not adequate. On June 15, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi informed the Rajya Sabha that “so far this help has been pitiable in proportion to what is needed. It is about f what is actually needed so far as we have been able to assess.”<sup>20</sup>

The Government of India maintained that the refugee problem was created in India by the Pakistani reign of terror in East Pakistan. The Ministry of External Affairs of India handed over a note to the Pakistan High Commissioner on May 14, 1971, which said: “The Government of India, therefore, holds the Government of Pakistan fully responsible for creating such conditions forthwith as would facilitate the return of these refugees to their homes.”<sup>21</sup> It also reserved the right to claim from Pakistan appropriate compensation for affording relief to millions of refugees who were victims of a deliberate campaign.<sup>22</sup>

In August 1971, Pakistan also issued a district-wise list of refugees, which included approximately one-fourth of the actual number of people that fled from East Pakistan as a result of the genocide. According to analysts, the list just about covered Muslim refugees, implying that Hindu refugees would not be allowed to go back. The situation was a clear message to India. There would be no political solution.<sup>23</sup>

It was initially planned that an Indian Administrative Officer and a police officer would take over the administration of 17 districts of

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20 Op. Cit. No. 9, 38.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Subrata Saha, “And thus a Desh Was Born”, Outlook, December 28, 2020, <https://magazine.outlookindia.com/story/india-news-and-thus-a-desh-was-born/304092>

East Pakistan. For this purpose, one district-level civil service officer and a police officer were to be placed with each division. It was found that the provisional government of Bangladesh, had a large number of officers from the East Pakistan Civil Service and police service, who had sought shelter in India. When a list was drawn up, it was seen that there were district-level or sub-divisional-level civil officers from each district of East Pakistan. These officers assumed executive charge of the district administration from the very start. This proved to be an important factor in the smooth running of civil affairs and in restoring law and order in Bangladesh.<sup>24</sup>

By March 27, India decided to give each refugee relief on humanitarian grounds and all costs would be met by the central government. In the words of Indira Gandhi, “I am haunted by the tormented faces in our overcrowded refugee camps reflecting the grim events which have compelled the exodus of these millions from East Bengal.”<sup>25</sup> Prime Minister Gandhi had visited a refugee camp in Udarband, Silchar, on May 15, 1971, as well as the Agartala camps and a few in West Bengal, and witnessed the sad plight of refugees. The statement in the Indian Parliament in mid-1971 about the status of the camps was very revealing.<sup>26</sup> The numbers swelled further as noted above. The Bengalis continued to find their way into India and move into camps, makeshift arrangements as well as find their way with acquaintances. The Bengali-speaking refugees found comfort in West Bengal and the states of the Northeast. This, in later years, has contributed to local tensions.

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24 Lachman Singh, *Victory in Bangladesh*. (Dehra Dun: Nataraj Publisher, 1981) 275

25 Richard Nixon, “Remarks of Welcome to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India”, The American Presidency Project, November 04, 1971, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/241188>

26 Lok Sabha Debates, “Starred Question About The Dispersal Of Bangladeshi Refugee”, November 18, 1971, [//eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2019/1/lsd\\_05\\_03\\_18-11-1971.pdf](http://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2019/1/lsd_05_03_18-11-1971.pdf)

### State Camps

State	No. of Camps	Inside Camps	Outside Camps	Total
West Bengal	503	50,88,755	22,74,684	73,63,439
Assam	27	2,13,23	88,846	3,02,069
Meghalaya	17	5,80,866	75,684	6,56,570
Tripura	273	8,72,183	5,38,400	14,10,583
Bihar	7	9,282	...	9,282
	827	67,64,329	29,77,614	97,41,943

\*Out of 97, 41, 943 refugees from East Bengal 4, 54, 787 refugees have been accommodated in Central Camps as indicated below: -

State	No. of Camps	Total Population
West Bengal	6	1,11,342
Tripura	3	66,794
Assam	3	25,631
Bihar	1	28,091
Madhya Pradesh	5	2,12,636
Uttar Pradesh	1	10,293
	19	4,54,787

Tripura, one of the north-eastern states with a population of 14 lakh, sheltered nearly 15 lakh refugees and ran at least eight major *Mukti Joddha* (Liberation Warrior) training camps, even as the government swooped into action to feed and attend to refugees for months. Tripura had virtually become the headquarters of the Bangladeshi liberation activities and was one of the safe havens for refugees, apart from Bengal. A combination of several factors meant that the experience of East Pakistan refugees was different in Tripura. After the war, nearly 40 refugee camps were set up across Tripura for seven lakh refugees,

while nearly eight lakh others took shelter at their relatives' homes in the state.<sup>27</sup>

### **Additional Indian Support**

Apart from rendering help to the refugees by setting up camps for them, India had also given a grant of Rs. 18.58 crores to the Government of Bangladesh to be spent on refugee relief in the form of cash doles outs. As noted in the Ministry of External Affairs annual report, India helped in innumerable other ways in the return and resettlement of the refugees, such as in the provision of drugs, medicines, and transport. As an initial help to the war-ravaged and shattered economy of Bangladesh, the Government of India made a further grant of Rs.25 crores for the purchase of urgently needed commodities by the Government of Bangladesh. These commodities include food, petroleum and petroleum products, fertilisers, cotton and yarn, sugar, salt, baby food, oil seeds, cement, steel and steel products, chemicals, power generation, and transmission equipment and vehicles. Another loan of Rs. 10 crores was made for rebuilding the railway network in Bangladesh.

In addition, the Government of India provided a loan worth five million in foreign exchange for the immediate foreign exchange needs of Bangladesh. Similarly, other immediate requirements were met expeditiously, whether in clothing, shipping, or aircraft.<sup>28</sup>

As India noted,

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27 Debraj Deb, "Bangladesh Liberation War: Factors that made Tripura's 1971 experience unique," Indian Express, August 17, 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/tripura/bangladesh-liberation-war-tripura-1971-experience-7677655/>; In 1972, the Indira-Mujib Pact ratified Indian citizenship for refugees who had arrived before March 25, 1971.

28 Ministry Of External Affairs, "Annual Report 1971-72", Page 11, <https://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2498?000>

“The emergence of Bangladesh symbolises the unconquerable spirit of man. It opens up a new chapter of amity and cooperation on India’s eastern frontiers. In cooperation with other disinterested powers, it makes for stability and progress in partnership in South Asia, based on enlightened principles in keeping with the aspirations of the 20th century.”<sup>29</sup>

Abdus Samad Azad, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh, paid an official visit to Delhi during 5-9 January 1972. The Bangladesh Foreign Minister took this opportunity to thank the government and the people of India for their contribution to the liberation struggle. The joint communique issued at the end of it, symbolised “the emergence of the independent Republic of Bangladesh from its long night of travail and the close ties binding the governments and peoples of Bangladesh and India forged during the struggle against the attempted suppression of a people’s will by brute force.”<sup>30</sup> Former diplomat, Tariq Karim reiterates, “India stood firmly with us during that struggle, and the blood of people from the two sides mingled in the soil of Bangladesh as we fought for freedom.”<sup>31</sup>

Besides India and Bhutan, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Mongolia, Poland, Burma, and Nepal were the first countries to recognise Bangladesh. The Pakistan Government tried threats to break off relations with some countries which had recognised Bangladesh. However, by the end of February, 47 countries had accorded recognition to Bangladesh. The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations had visited Bangladesh and discussed the question of that country’s application for membership of the Commonwealth. Although Bangladesh had not yet become a member of the United Nations or

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29 Ibid., Page 12-13.

30 Ibid., Page 7.

31 Jayanta Roy Chowdhury, “Bangladeshi freedom fighters wait to reconnect with old ally India,” Press Trust of India, January 22, 2022.

its other organs, some international organizations like the IMF and the World Bank were already cooperating with the newly-born nation.<sup>32</sup>

In the words of Rear Admiral Santosh Kumar Gupta, “My Memories of the 1971 War”, as narrated to Aniruddha Awalgoankar, “is that we could do no wrong”. The Indian forces at sea were very motivated and fighting for a just cause. Vikrant and her air element had proved a miracle in performance. Gupta believed that the Indian training and maturity paid dividends under a very able leadership on both the western and eastern fronts. For the first time, the navy attacked enemy ports, causing destruction through surprise and audacity. Finally, India did what was never done before, in withdrawing its own forces after the war and helping the new nation build its infrastructure. This historical fact is often reiterated to clarify that India never had any other intention other than to help East Pakistan leave behind the years of subjugation and live without shackles that were imposed upon them. The next chapter highlights some of the operations that were undertaken by the Indian armed forces.

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32 Op. Cit. No. 22, Page 10.



# India's Military Operations: Some Glimpses

*by Sreeradha Datta*

The Liberation War of Bangladesh and India's role has been well documented over the five decades. This historic event in South Asia with far-reaching implications has given way too many rich memoirs not only from those who served during the war but also many who witnessed the war at close quarters, including journalists, political commentators, and others from different walks of life.

India's role in indoctrinating training and equipping the Mukti Bahini prior to the actual operation in December 1971 has been a subject of much discussion. It was identified as early as 1968 that East Pakistan offered immense potential for covert action - this emerged as the two main tasks assigned by prime minister Indira Gandhi to the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).<sup>1</sup>

Post Mujib's electoral victory and Yahya Khan's crackdown, Mujib was able to influence large sections of East Pakistan's intelligentsia to rise against the dominating West Pakistan leadership. Indeed, Mujib's growing popularity provided the much-needed fillip for the expansion of these operations. Much before the Indian Army took over the role of the training the Mukti Bahini, the RAW had already commenced

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1 Arjun Subramaniam, *India's Wars: A Military History-1947-1971*. (Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016), 356.



training a small group of volunteers and was pushing them into East Pakistan. When large elements of the East Pakistan Rifles revolted and crossed over to India, the Indian Army took over and converted this guerilla force into one which was capable of supporting it during full-fledged operations.<sup>2</sup>

East Pakistan then had a population of 71 million largely comprised of 60,000 villages with Dacca and Khulna being the only industrial towns. As General Lachman Singh explains, "To understand the military operations, the geography of that location was important and critical to the planning and eventual victory. East Pakistan had an over 4000-km-long border and the network of communication was hinged on the Chittagong Port and the Calcutta Port which was the main trading hub in the Eastern region."

"East Pakistan also had airfields at Dacca, Chittagong, Comilla, Shamshearnagar, Sylhet, Jessore, Ishurdi, and Lalmanirhat. For Pakistan, Dacca was the strategic centre, but could not be reached by road from any direction without ferrying across one of the main rivers i.e., the Brahmaputra, Jamuna, or the Meghna. While during dry season roads were navigable, during monsoon or even during heavy showers, only small boats were the means of movement. The railway network was limited and there no trans-border railway between India and Pakistan."<sup>3</sup>

As delineated in the work of General Singh Lehl, the northwestern sector had the India-Pakistan border on the west and north, the Jamuna River on its east, and the Ganga on its south. It lay close to the Siliguri Corridor as well as the Chambi Valley in Tibet. This sector was the longest way to Dacca and involved crossing the Jamuna. The

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Lachman Singh Lehl, *Victory in Bangladesh*. (Dehradun: Natraj Publisher, 1981), 3.

southwestern sector had the Ganga River on its north and east, the Bay of Bengal on the south, and the India-Pakistan border on the west. This sector provided the second nearest approach to Dacca, being close to the Indian border and linked with Calcutta through a road network. The eastern sector offered the shortest way to Dacca and had Meghna on the west, Meghalaya on the north, Tripura, the Mizo Hills on the east, and the Bay of Bengal in the south. Chittagong and Cox Bazar were the two ports. The Central sector had an international border on its northern end and Dacca as its southern base. The Meghna runs on its east and Jamuna on its west. The Brahmaputra ran between Meghalaya and Dacca, but that apart, there was no other water obstacle. Given the terrain, any military operation would require river crossing equipment as well as the usage of helicopters to overcome geographical obstacles.<sup>4</sup>

### Planning for War

For Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, there were two major considerations, if it was going to be war, then it should come at a time of India's choosing and as suggested by foreign minister Sardar Swaran Singh, India should first exhaust all diplomatic options before entering into a war.<sup>5</sup> As narrated by Wing Commander Kartha Unni, it was then Major General Jacob who gave Gen. Manekshaw the 12 reasons that made him postpone the war to December during a cabinet meeting in April 1971.<sup>6</sup> After the cabinet meeting, when she was told that the army is not ready, she asked if it was possible to initiate something else in the meantime. This gave rise to the concept of a Clandestine War,

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4 Ibid., Page 11-12.

5 Praveen Davar, "The Decisiveness of 1971", The Hindu, December 16, 2016, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/The-decisiveness-of-1971/article16801228.ece>

6 Major General Jacob was the Chief of Staff, Eastern Command, during this war and General Manekshaw was the army chief during the Liberation War of 1971. He was the first Indian Army officer to be promoted to the rank of field marshal. Both played a critical role in the success of the Indian operation.

by involving and arming the Mukti Bahini and giving rise to the Mitro Bahini, which was a combination of all forces and its other wings. Accordingly, Rustomji, the then Border Security Forces (BSF) chief and Maj. Gen. Sujan Singh Uban, who was controlling the Tibetan Army, known as the 22 Force, were called to explain this move. They defined the clandestine to the prime minister. No one till then had ever thought of ever creating a separate country. The plan only was to get rid of 10 million refugees and solve India's refugee crisis, and arm the rebels and tell them to fight their own war. According to him the creation of Bangladesh was never even thought of. Even when India went to war, as per Manekshaw's plan and Inder Gill's plan, liberating Dacca was not the primary idea. However, some other war literature by former soldiers offers another version.

Lt. Gen. Shagat Singh, who had moved his headquarters from Tezpur to Teliamura [near Agartala] was given the job to hold the eastern flank and not allow the Pakistanis to enter from Meghalaya, Tripura, and some parts of Mizoram. 2 Corps and 33 Corps commanded by Lt. Gen. Raina and Lt. Gen. Thappan respectively were given the task to enter from the Siliguri Corridor [especially 33 Corps], who were based in Sukna. They were supposed to enter from the northern area and capture the areas of Bogara [now Bagura]. This area is approximately of 45,000 sq. km. It resembles a triangle and forms the northern part of Bangladesh. This was supposed to be captured and made into Bangladesh. This was however Plan B.

Plan A was for the BSF to enter from the Chittagong Tracts and try to capture the Chittagong saliently, the southern side of what was to become Bangladesh. Also, another reason was that the East Pakistani revenue used to be generated by sea through the Chittagong Tracts, and cutting this off would severely result in heavy economic losses for East Pakistan. Therefore, isolating was the original plan. But Lt. Gen. Thappan could not enter his designated areas. His forces were only

able to enter around 3-4 kms of that area. 2 Corps was able to enter till Garibpur, which is only 16 kms from the border.<sup>7</sup>

There is another interesting conversation that captures the essence of the trust and goodwill that the armed forces enjoyed in India. During the course of the war, Manekshaw briefed Indira Gandhi of a debacle at one front. Without any shade of anxiety on her face, she told him, “but, Sam you can’t win every day.” Manekshaw recalled later how her courage was an inspiration for a seasoned army officer like himself. After this crisis was resolved and India regained the losses, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi told Manekshaw that she was really nervous after hearing the news of the reverses.<sup>8</sup> Not that there were no major setbacks over the course of the military operation, but the Indian Armed Forces displayed great ingenuity to ensure a victory despite many challenges.

As was decided, the Indian Army was going to be responsible for training, equipping, and providing logistical support to the Mukti Bahini under “Operation Jackpot”. An elaborate selection of recruits was made and its Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) was to be exclusively in charge of the selection of personnel, discipline, motivation, planning, and execution of operations of Bengali youths. Mukti Bahini guerrillas were trained for four to six weeks at the Indian Army’s “Operation Jackpot” training camps. After basic training in the handling of small arms, light automatic weapons, mortars, and explosives, they were sent for advanced leadership, or other training as per suitability to various Mukti Bahini sectors, run under the command of the C-in-C. The Indian Army initially organised six more training and logistical sectors under “Operation Jackpot.”<sup>9</sup>

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7 Telephonic Interview to Aniruddha Awolgaonkar, October 10, 2021

8 Pupul Jaykar, *Indira Gandhi: A Biography*. (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1985), 69.

9 Brigadier R.P. Singh, “How the Mukti Bahini was trained,” *The Daily Star*, May 24, 2021, <https://www.thedailystar.net/in-focus/news/how-the-mukti-bahini-was-trained-2097481>

	Sector	Location	Commander
2	Alpha Sector <sup>10</sup>	Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal	Brig B C Joshi
3	Bravo Sector	Raiganj district in West Bengal	Brig Prem Singh
4	Charlie Sector	Chakulia in Bihar	Brig N A Salik
5	Delta Sector	Devta Mura in Tripura	Brig Shabeg Singh
6	Echo Sector	Masimpur in Assam	Brig M B Wadhwa
7	Foxtrots Sector	Tura in Meghalaya	Brig Sant Singh

By the end of November 1971, 83,000 freedom fighters had completed their training, out of which 51,000 were operating inside East Pakistan. In addition, 10,000 strong Mujib Bahini cadres were trained by RAW in India.<sup>11</sup>

Retired Air Force officer, Arjun Subramaniam records that the Mukti Bahini was a little over a two division-sized force of regular comprising remnants of East Pakistan Rifles, the East Bengal Regiment, civil police, and around 50,000 irregulars and guerillas trained by India. These were split into battalion groups along the three-sided border with India with specific sectors and sub-sectors assigned to each group. The Mukti Bahini initially opened through Border Security Force sectors and later merged effortlessly into Indian Army formations when they massed along the border in preparation for the final assault on East Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> While there would be many more such instances, one such is recounted by journalist Jayanta Roy Chowdhury. He writes about Subhas Chandra Badal, a student in Sherpur, a small town in Mymensingh district of what is now Bangladesh. When the Pakistan Army launched a genocide in March 1971 and forced him to escape to Meghalaya and join the ranks of the Mukti Bahini to wage a war

<sup>10</sup> The Mukti Bahini Officers Training Wing was also under this sector commander.

<sup>11</sup> Op. Cit. No. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Op. Cit. No. 1, Page 357.

for freedom, it was natural for him to transit from being the district secretary of the Chatra League, the Awami League's student arm, to join the guerrilla army. In the words of Badal, "India opened its arms to our people. People in every state in eastern India, from West Bengal to Meghalaya to tiny Tripura, helped us in whatever way possible... many of us remember fondly Purno Sangma (Indian politician from Meghalaya who later became the chief minister of the state) who acted as a liaison with Mukti Bahini."<sup>13</sup>

Although there was close collaboration, to suggest that all was well between the Mukti Bahini and their Indian trainers would be unrealistic. Indeed, it was evident that September 1971 of the Mukti Bahini was getting restless and straining at the leash imposed by the Indian Army. There were many reports of the Mukti Bahini complaining to Indira Gandhi through the RAW about the conservative approach of the Eastern Army Commander, Lt Gen. Aurora in prosecuting the covert war. Indian army trainers on the other hand were deeply skeptical about the sustained fighting ability of the Mukti Bahini when faced with regular troops of Pak army ...<sup>14</sup>

Another success of the Indian troops centered on-the role of the Special Frontier Forces in covert operations in the marshy tracts of Chittagong during November 1971. It was a force mainly comprising of Tibetan commandos that was raised during the 1962 conflict with China to conduct covert operations in Tibet. The Special Frontier Force was asked to interdict the Pakistani brigade in the Chittagong region.<sup>15</sup>

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13 Jayanta Roy Chowdhury, "Bangladeshi Freedom Fighters Wait to Reconnect with old ally India", Press Trust of India, 22 January, 2022.

14 Op. Cit. No. 1, Page 358.

15 Ibid., Page 359.

## Military Operation

There are accounts by R Sisson and L E Rose of the Indian military's increased action in the first three weeks of November 1971, but in most of these cases, the Indian units would hit their objective and withdraw to Indian Territory. After 21st November, the tactics changed, Indian forces did not withdraw and several army units launched simultaneous military action on all key border regions of East Pakistan from all directions with both armour and air support.<sup>16</sup>

As early as September 1971, specialist counter-insurgency troops from the Indian Army's Jat Battalion 31 had made deep forays into the Chittagong sector and ambushed a large convoy of Pakistan Army boats and then melted away into their home base in Tripura<sup>17</sup> One of the fiercest early encounters took place in late October in Sagar Singh's IV Corps sector around the tea estate of Dhalai, located between Tripura and East Pakistan, about 34 kms away from Maulvi Bazar. This tea estate was captured by the Indian Army and used as one of the many launch pads for the subsequent offensive.<sup>18</sup>

As recollected by Brig. Balbir Singh, who was in 63 Cavalry, most of the equipment was Russian – tanks, guns, explosives, etc. He was in a PT-76 Tank. The gun was very small and perfect for battles in areas of then East Pakistan. They further needed Harvey Guns and tanks as well. Due to this requirement, they were made to convert from PT-76 to T-55. It could outgun the East Pakistani tanks. The whole unit was moved to the eastern sector. They were in the Balurghat area by September.<sup>19</sup>

As air superiority had been created and not a lot of naval action was needed, 45 Cavalry and 69 Armoured Regiment were with them. He

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16 Ibid., Page 367.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., Page 368.

19 Telephonic Interview to Aniruddha Awolgaonkar on October 10, 2021.

worked with the 69 Armoured Regiment as the second-in-command. There were virtually five components to this regiment as they had surrounded East Pakistan from five directions, which later earned them the name “Ghost Regiment” as they were present everywhere. They were deployed in the Hilli area and participated in the Battle of Hilli. T-55 tanks could not function in this area. One tank was sent ahead and it was locked. They mostly had a supporting role. He was asked to ensure that no additional troops enter into the Hilli area.

They had a task to capture Rangpur and Bogra. Rangpur is near the Siliguri side in the north and there is a major road that connects Rangpur, Bogura, and Dhaka. It is virtually a central line in Bangladesh. This line had to be cleared by shift operations. To do this, Rangpur and Bogra had to be captured. They took a route via Nawabganj and Pirganj from Hilli. A separate force was sent to Rangpur and a small tank convoy was sent with them from the 63 Cavalry. He went to Bogura. They had a major hurdle in crossing the river in Gobindagunj. This river did not have even a single bridge that could sustain the weight of tanks. All of Pakistan’s defences, along the river, were facing north. They had anticipated an attack from the north but were attacked from the east. The attack came as such a surprise that they abandoned their entire defences. Indian forces advanced so quickly that the opponents did not get a chance to regroup and assemble. As the advance increased, Indian forces reached Bogra. They did not face any kind of resistance. One of the most important reasons behind this was that they knew that India was not an occupying force. It was looked upon as a liberating force.

Another compelling account of the brave Indian armed forces was one told to us by former defence secretary and Governor Shekhar Dutt in some details about the Naya Chor (Sindh- Pakistan) Sector. Capt. Dutt was the Observation Post Officer in the artillery. His primary



job included reconnaissance.<sup>20</sup> It was decided that in the event of a war, 3 (I) Armoured Sqn was to enter Pakistan from the North of the railway track. It would go behind Pakistan lines at Bhitala and other neighbouring areas. Another group was to cross the border from the south of the railway track and onwards to Chachro. The Division spearheaded by 85 Infantry Brigade would move into Pakistan from Gadra Road – Muna Bao Axis near Border Pillars (BP) 810 and 814, straddling the railway track and onwards to Khokhropar and beyond to Naya Chor. The task of 3 (I) Armd Sqn was to outflank the Pakistani positions so that the main force of the division found it easy to progress through the enemy defences.

By 9th December, the Indian Air Force (IAF), with their HF-24 aircrafts, rocketed and burnt two Pakistani tanks. Possible sites were located and they were ranged with guns and this information was passed to the IAF. Soon after, by 11 December, all objectives were secured and the attack on Parbat Ali started much before daybreak. The units of the 85 Infantry Brigade i.e. 10 Sikh Li and 2 Mahar overran some Pakistani positions. Despite the cold morning with extremely low visibility, land mines and many other obstacles, the 10 Sikh Li and 2 Mahar attacked and captured Parbat Ali which was once occupied by 39 FFR.

There were some Indian losses too. One such incident occurred when Pakistan launched its 23 Infantry Division in the Chhamb Sector on 3 December, with intense artillery concentrations around 20.00 hours, targeting all platoon posts along the LOC. Lt Gen. Sartaj Singh, Commander of the 15 Corps was the first to send his formation into battle in the Chhamb and Poonch sectors. The Pakistan Army's 23 Division led by Maj. Gen. Iftikhar Janjua launched a planned attack on the 191 Brigade, the only brigade defending the area west of the Munawar Tawi River. After two days of bitter fighting, support from

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20 As narrated to Aniruddha Awolgaonkar over phone.

the 5 Sikh regiment led to the withdrawal east of Munawar Tawi.<sup>21</sup> The Indian Army's 93 Brigade and 33 Brigade fought defensive battles between Dec.3-6, 1971. Pakistan had achieved surprise, both tactical and strategic in the Chamb sector; they had completely concealed the readjustments/redeployments of their defensive formations into the offensive entities and in particular the forward deployment of its entire artillery.

As was reported also, Pakistan suffered heavy casualties too. Colonel Anil Heble, then a young soldier posted in that sector, along with his colleagues intercepted signals, and although far away from the ongoing war in the eastern sector, each in their own way contributed to the final Indian success.

The Indian Navy under Admiral Nanda, the chief of naval staff, convinced the government that maritime power can contribute to India's military planning to establish clear military supremacy over Pakistan. His insistence on creating a reasonably potent eastern fleet and unleashing INS Vikrant on Chittagong, Cox Bazar, and Khulna ports despite the submarine threat from the Pakistan Navy was one of the defining moments of the war.<sup>22</sup>

## Naval Operation

Rear Admiral MVC, Santosh Kumar Gupta, was the Squadron Commander (Commanding Officer) of the 300 squadron of Sea Hawk fighter aircraft, recounts his experience with the only operational front-line squadron that could operate from the aircraft carrier (Vikrant) in the Indian Navy. The war in 1971 was the first instance when the Vikrant with the two air squadrons 'drew blood', The point to note is that Vikrant was in dockyard hands since July 1970, awaiting

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21 Op. Cit., Page 399.

22 Ibid., Page 360.

essential equipment from overseas that had a long waiting period and so the ship was non-operational for over a year. This had a roll-on adverse effect on the 300 squadron, thereby losing its importance and soon became non-operational with a lack of aircraft spares and the transfer of experienced pilots to non-flying appointments. Thus, when war clouds were observed on the horizon from mid-1971, it was inconceivable that Vikrant and her squadrons could go to any war. The slow-moving ship would have been an easy target for the enemy, and even if the squadron had been ready, the ship could not deliver the speeds required to launch and recover jet fighters. A miracle indeed that despite all the serious limitations, the Vikrant did fight a war and her aircraft delivered serious damage to enemy ships and vital installations. The blockade of East Pakistan prevented any escape route seawards and outside assistance was also denied to the enemy. The sealing of the sea routes proved most effective, and eventually caused the enemy to surrender with 93,000 soldiers in just 13 days of the war.<sup>23</sup>

The effectiveness of the Indian Navy was also witnessed in two brilliant operations — Operation Trident and Operation Python. The Indian Navy sent a group of Osa-I missile boats — INS Nipat, INS Nirghat, and INS Veer — from Mumbai on December 3. The next day, on December 4, two Petya class Frigates — the INS Katchall and INS Kiltan — joined the missile boats to form the Trident team.

Sailing westward and then northwards, the Osa-Is was successfully towed to reach Karachi harbour (the stronghold of the Pakistani Navy) by night. The attack was planned to take place at night to preclude any air attacks. Pakistani warships were detected 70-nmi to the northwest and northeast of the Indian strike group. INS Nirghat moved forward to the north-west and fired its first Styx missile at PNS Khaiber, a battle-class destroyer at 10:45 p.m. (PKT), hitting its right side. Khaiber

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23 Interview with Aniruddha Awalganekar dated November 10, 2021.

now sank with the loss of 222 sailors. Under Operation Trident, the Indian Navy fired six missiles, sunk three front-line enemy vessels, and destroyed the oil storage facility at the Karachi harbour; The Indian Air Force also played a vital role in this, striking the oil tanks on the same day in a separate operation. The task force then withdrew without a single Indian casualty.

Operation Python followed four days later — sinking another three ships of the Pakistani Navy and setting the oil stores on fire for the second time. By destroying its oil and ammunition supplies (and choking off resupply routes), these decisive victories drastically cut down Pakistan's ability to continue engaging with the Indian forces.<sup>24</sup>

Pratap Chandra Lal, who took over as the air chief in 1969 July, ensured that the IAF emerged equally competent in joint operations.<sup>25</sup> The first major attack into East Pakistan by the Indian Army with the Mukti Bahini was launched on the night of 20/21 November along with multiple points inside East Pakistan. The curtain riser for the air campaign took place in the Sector Sabre of the 14 Squadron IAF, Gnats of the 22 Squadron, IAF.<sup>26</sup>

## Indian Air Force

Kartha Unni was a transport pilot who used to fly through the Chicken's Neck into Assam. His main job was to carry arms and ammo for Mukti Bahini camps. He was assigned to provide for 11 of them, set up all along the border between East Pakistan and India. "The Mukti Bahini was being armed with Ishapore Rifles, mortars, etc. While returning, they were bringing back casualties from those areas, mainly to military hospitals in Kolkata and Guwahati. Choppers used to evacuate the

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24 Interview with Aniruddha Awalganekar dated November 10, 2021.

25 op. Cit. No. 1, Page 360.

26 Ibid., Page 369.

casualties from battlefields that consisted of the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini forces. These kinds of clandestine operations were being done from the end of March-April, 1971. Various formations like 2 Corps, 33 Corps, etc., started crossing the border sometime around 26<sup>th</sup> November [unofficial start]. We shot down 2 Gnats at Boira. They took off from Dum Dum. Pakistan started attacks at the west because of their doctrine that is, to protect the East, we have to engage at the West.”<sup>27</sup>

The early days of ‘shadow war,’ or the shaping of the battlefield prior to 3 December saw Sabers from the 14 Squadron of the Pakistan Air Force provide effective close air support to the Pakistan Army’s 27 Brigade at Akhaura. It was only when IAF fighters started operating from Agartala that close support for IV Corps became easily available.<sup>28</sup>

The initial days of the air war saw two major objectives being achieved by the IAF. First was the effective neutralisation of the Sabre Squadron in East Pakistan by repeatedly attacking the Tejgaon airfield outside Dacca till it was unusable.<sup>29</sup>

Why the IAF chose to attack the Tejgaon airfield with rockets for the first two days of the war baffles many even today, Though IAF suffered a fair bit of attrition in the initial days, both to Sabre and ground fire, it achieved almost total air superiority by 7 Dec, thus paving the way for unrestricted close air support and airborne operations thereafter.<sup>30</sup>

While the IAF and the Indian Army were overcoming initial resistance, the Indian Navy and its mini carrier battle group, comprising aircraft carrier INS Vikrant and the frigates INS Brahmaputra and INS Beas, was lying in wait at Port Cornwallis in the Andaman to attack

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27 Telephonic interview with Anuridha Awogaonkar dated 10 October, 2021.

28 Op. Cit., Page 373.

29 Ibid., Page 374.

30 Ibid., Page 375.

Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. The presence of PNS Ghazi in the Bay of Bengal was a direct threat to the Vikrant. The sinking of the Ghazni outside Vizag harbour in the wee hours of 4 Dec paved the way for the Vikrant, Brahmaputra, Beas, and the rest of the eastern fleet to set sail from the Andaman and operate with impunity in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>31</sup>

The morning of 4 December 1971, saw attacks by IAF Hunters of the 14 Squadron on the Chittagong airfield. INS Vikrant took over the task of carrying out airfield attacks on Cox's Bazar airfields and interdicting missions against shipping with the Sea-Hawks. During 5-14 December, not only did the inland riverine ports of Khulna and Chalna face heavy air attacks from the Vikrant, the effective blockading of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar sealed off the escape route for the Pakistani forces and also choked all seaborne supply routes into East Pakistan. It was further noted that never had all three services of Indian armed forces worked together with such simultaneity before although much of the Chittagong sector was unplanned.<sup>32</sup>

The Pakistani Air Force was knocked out within the first two days of the war and the ground troops could operate without any interference from enemy air. Headquarters Eastern Command under Air Marshal H C Dewan was located in Shillong, while Lt Gen. Aurora's headquarters was in Calcutta. There was no joint command at that level and coordination was of the two services was effected through a liaison cell of the IAF in Calcutta.

The bold employment of helicopters, even though in small numbers for crossing the Meghna, was the most significant war-winning factor in the Bangladesh campaign.<sup>33</sup>

Between December 6 and 12, 1971, a 14 helicopter task force from

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31 Op. Cit. No. 1, P. 378

32 Ibid., Page 382

33 Op. Cit. No. 3, Page 290.

three units had landed over 4000 troops in three locations, flying over 350 sorties, including 100 by night. Concurrently, Shamsheer Mehta and his squadron of 14 PT76 amphibious tanks floated across the Meghna. This squadron caught up with 4 Guards leading battalion from IV Corps and raced to the outskirts of Dacca by December 14, 1971. This war revealed many abilities of the Indian establishment as well as the Indian armed forces. It had not earlier undertaken any airborne operations before the 2 Para drop at Tangail on December 11 to capture the bridge over River Poongli.

As narrated by Lt Gen. Shamsheer Mehta, Shagat Singh, who was part of the Operation Nutcracker from December 01 to 05 1971, it is an outstanding example of what a brigade can do to a fixed, fortified position. They went all around the objective and made the enemy flee. This battle acted like a trigger to the further events of the war and the decision to contact the IAF and ask for their assistance to airlift his troops to the other side of the Meghna River for a patch of around 40 km was a breakthrough. He took his first action on December 09. He then started his airlift which has been the biggest airlift in the world. The IAF carried almost the whole corps. After two reconnaissance missions, certain islands in the Meghna River were identified. By then, three Pakistani PT 76s were captured and they were used as an experiment. After that success, all the Indian tanks crossed the river with the help of the islands identified in the river during recon missions. Gen. Shagat Singh was the brawn and brains behind the capture of Dhaka.

The Mukti Bahini Air Force started out with a DC-3 Dakota gifted by the Maharaja of Jodhpur, a De Havilland Twin Otter plane, and an Alouette III helicopter. Of the nine pilots, only three were from the regular Pakistan Air Force. The Dimapur base where they were to be trained was a World War II vintage airfield with ramshackle flight control and a short runway, where Indian airlines flew in one weekly 40-seater Fokker Friendship flight. Soon after the formal inauguration

on Tuesday, September 28, 1971, as conversion training started for the pilots, the flight of three disparate flying machines was officially dubbed the 'Kilo Flight' in the ledgers of the Indian Air Force. Squadron Leader Sultan Ahmed, formerly of the Pakistan Air Force, was brought in as a commanding officer. The psychological impact of the news that soon to be Bangladesh had fielded its own air force in the skies was tremendous. According to Syed Badrul Ahsan, author of several books on the 1971 liberation war, "we in Dhaka were absolutely thrilled. The news that we had our own air force and it was successful in blowing up vital war materials caught the imagination of the youth. It boosted the morale of people who had been living in fear and suffering for nine long months since the Pakistani crackdown in Bangladesh started."<sup>34</sup>

## The Surrender

The pressure exerted by the Indian Navy with its persistent attacks on Chittagong and Cox Bazar played a part in piling 'joint pressure' on Lt Gen. Niazi to surrender. Without a doubt, it was the joint operations that played a pivotal role in the campaign. On display also was the quality of operational art exercised by Indian commanders as the battle progressed. It was pointed out that this synergy was 'personality driven' and not 'institutionally driven'. This particular trait of Indian operational art continues even today.<sup>35</sup>

Following the IAF attack on 13th December on the Government House, Yahya Khan ordered the Pakistani forces in eastern theatre to lay down their arms and surrender. As pointed out, the Pakistani strategists did not anticipate a major thrust into Dacca. They opted for the defence of maximum territory to deny its occupation and avoid the installation of a Bangladesh government in a sizeable free area of East

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34 Jayanta Roy Chowdhury, "Half a century ago, Remote Dimapur Airstrip gave Wings to Fledgling Bangladesh Air Force," Press Trust of India, September 28, 2021.

35 Op. Cit. No. 1, Page 390.



Pakistan. They chose to defend important and prestigious towns and communications all along the border. This policy resulted in a dispersal of Pakistani forces in small measures which could at least at best hope to check guerilla infiltration or borer excursions by the invading forces.<sup>36</sup>

Niazi opted to denude even the rear areas, including Dacca and other nominated fortresses in-depth to strengthen his border outposts. The Pakistani forces spread themselves so thinly that the Indians were almost certain to achieve a breakthrough by concentrating a superior force at any place of their choice. So, the effort to hold everything could end only in holding nothing.<sup>37</sup>

On December 16-17, 1971, over 92,000 West Pakistani soldiers, sailors, airmen, paramilitary personnel, policemen, and civilians surrendered to India in East Pakistan, ending 24 years of Pakistani rule. It is estimated that between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 civilians were killed in Bangladesh. The sacrifices were immense. An estimated 12,189 personnel of Indian Armed Forces were either killed, reported missing, or wounded with lifelong disabilities.<sup>38</sup> Three million Bengalis lost their lives, and more than 200,000 women were raped. Intellectuals who could have played a significant role in guiding and shaping the politics of the liberated country were butchered on December 14, just before the surrender of the Pakistan Army. There were large-scale destructions of properties in the loot and plunder unleashed by the Pakistan Army.<sup>39</sup>

The defeat of the Pakistani forces and the birth of Bangladesh was

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36 Op. Cit. No. 3, Page 291

37 Ibid.

38 Subrata Saha, *And thus a Desh Was Born.* ( The Outlook, 28 December, 2020).

39 Smruti S. Pattanaik, Remembering Bangladesh's Liberation War, IDSA Comment, 16 December, 2020, <https://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/bangladeshs-liberation-war-sspattanaik-161220>

a milestone in the history of South Asia. For India, having a friendly neighbour would be a very welcome change, given the obvious hostility it had faced from Pakistan. However, the assassination of the Mujibur Rahman and the radical changes that were introduced into the polity has pointed to the presence of forces who were inimical to not only Mujib but also to his ideas of secularism and nationalism. While his daughter, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has addressed many concerns given the dynamism of the political milieu, the next chapter on bilateral ties highlight the growing partnership that is rooted in the Liberation War for what was eventually to be Bangladesh nation.



## United Nations and Select International Responses

*by Sreeradha Datta, Rishi Gupta*

The role, or the lack of it thereof of the international community and the United Nations in the crises leading to the Liberation War of 1971, has often been noted with some cynosure. The world was broadly divided into two sides and the perspective of the unfolding crises in South Asia was largely coloured accordingly. As mentioned earlier, it was a Sunday Times article in June 1971 that, for the first time, drew the attention of the world on the ensuing crises in this part of the world. But as it would appear, the onus largely fell on India to reach out to the major powers and appeal for humanitarian help and support against the large-scale genocide unleashed by West Pakistan on the people of East Pakistan.

Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, in consultation with her advisors, undertook an international tour to draw the world's attention towards the plight of people in Eastern Pakistan. She travelled to Europe and North America to draw their attention to the crisis in South Asia. Her visits proved to be a great success in attracting the world's attention towards the humanitarian crisis in Eastern Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi's meetings with world leaders exhibited India's role as a responsible democracy and a neighbour willing to extend all possible support to another in need.

## United Nations

As documented thereafter, the role of the UN was rather limited. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly debates show that most member states were primarily concerned with the restoration of the status quo - an immediate cease-fire and a mutual withdrawal of forces.<sup>1</sup> The UN initially offered its help by providing relief through the presence of UN observers. However, Pakistan did not want any international agency positioned in the east wing. After June, Pakistan pressed for the deployment of UN observers along its international border, but India felt it would serve no purpose. Therefore, from July onwards, Secretary-General U Thant tried to settle the East Pakistan problems from inside the UN and outside, but with little success.

For many in the international community, military intervention across international boundaries was unacceptable; including a vast majority of the UN members for fear that it might set an unhealthy precedent. The members invoked concepts of territorial integrity, sovereignty, and national independence in the hope that it might somehow stop the fighting. The Soviet Union and Poland were the only two Council members who, along with India, stressed on the need for looking at the “root cause” of the problem and seeking a political solution to the crisis. To call for a cease-fire without correlating it with the attainment of a political settlement in East Pakistan, was considered inadequate and unrealistic.<sup>2</sup>

Through, the report no. 378 dated December 3, 1971, the Secretary-General brought to the attention of the Security Council the efforts he had so far made regarding the grave deterioration in the situation along

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1 N Ved P. Nanda, “A Critique of the United Nations Inaction in the Bangladesh Crisis,” *Denver Law Review*, Volume 49, Issue 1 (January, 1972), <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3395&context=dlr>

2 Ibid.

the borders of East Pakistan and elsewhere in the subcontinent which, in his view, constituted a threat to international peace and security.<sup>3</sup>

On December 3, 1971, based on UN Secretariat reports, Secretary-General U Thant proposed to the UN Security Council that the UN should position observers in India and Pakistan and called for the withdrawal of Indian troops from the border with East Pakistan. The Secretary-General further noted that he had kept the President of the Security Council informed of these efforts under the broad terms of Article 99 of the United Nations Charter.

On December 4, 1971, the representatives of Argentina, Belgium, Burundi, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Somalia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the deteriorating situation that had led to armed clashes between India and Pakistan. By a letter dated December 4, 1971, the representative of Tunisia agreed to the request that the Council be convened.<sup>4</sup> The US supported this proposal, which was included in the first draft resolution tabled on December 4, 1971, in the UNSC. On the same day UN Doc. No. S/10415, a transmitting letter, was submitted by Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury requesting to make a statement before the Council on behalf of Bangladesh.

The resolution called for a cease-fire, withdrawal of the armed forces of India and Pakistan from each other's territories, and the deployment of UN observers. While the US, China, and nine elected members of the UNSC supported the resolution, France and the UK abstained. The Soviet envoy Yakov Malik vetoed the US's draft resolution on grounds that it did not address the need for a political settlement in East Pakistan. Poland voted against the resolution.

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3 UN report on India and Pakistan Situation: Maintenance of international peace and security, [https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/ar/sc/repertoire/69-71/Chapter%208/69-71\\_08-13-Situation%20in%20the%20India-Pakistan%20subcontinent.pdf](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/ar/sc/repertoire/69-71/Chapter%208/69-71_08-13-Situation%20in%20the%20India-Pakistan%20subcontinent.pdf)

4 Ibid.

On December 5, 1971, the Soviet Union proposed a draft resolution that called for a political settlement in East Pakistan as a pre-requisite for the cessation of hostilities. Twelve Council members abstained on this proposal, while China opposed it calling it an internal matter of Pakistan. Hence, the Soviet proposal was not adopted. A second draft resolution moved by the US, along with Argentina, Belgium, Burundi, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, and Somalia on December 5 was vetoed by the USSR. The Soviet Union had vetoed on successive days of the war on the grounds that the proposal would not lead to a political settlement in East Pakistan.

On December 6, 1971, Somalia, supported by Argentina, Burundi, Nicaragua, Japan, Belgium, Italy, and the US proposed UNSC Resolution 303, referring the matter to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) under the “Uniting for Peace” Resolution of 1950. This resolution was adopted with eleven members, including the US and China in favour, and four abstentions (the USSR, France, UK, and Poland). On the other hand, the UNGA in its Resolution 2790 (XXVI) on “assistance to East Pakistan refugees through the United National Focal Point and the United National Humanitarian Assistance to East Pakistan” noted that the UNHCR has been coordinating with international relief agencies to assist East Pakistan from India. It expressed deep concerns about the severe suffering of the people of East Pakistan. It also recognised the “heavy burden imposed on India and at the disturbing influence of the general situation on the process of economic and social development in the area”.<sup>5</sup>

To recount briefly, the Council discussed the situation on December 4, 5, and 6. On the first day of discussion, Pakistan accused

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5 UNGA Resolution 2790 (XXVI) on “Assistance to East Pakistan Refugees through the United National Focal Point and United National Humanitarian Assistance to East Pakistan” [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/644651/files/A\\_RES\\_2790%28XXVI%29%5EB%5E-EN.pdf](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/644651/files/A_RES_2790%28XXVI%29%5EB%5E-EN.pdf)

India of unprovoked “aggression”. Meanwhile, prior to December 3, 49 members had described the East Pakistan crisis as an internal matter of Pakistan and, therefore, “outside the Security Council’s concern”. They also asserted that “it was for the Security Council to find the means to make India desist from its war of aggression.” India replied that genocide had continued in East Pakistan and warned the Council that it “would not be a party to any solution that would mean the continuation of the oppression of East Pakistan.”<sup>6</sup>

Thereafter, on December 7, 1971, the UNGA presided by Foreign Minister Adam Malik of Indonesia conducted an extensive debate. Most speakers focused on whether the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, including addressing internal matters of member-states, could be violated by armed action by another member-state.<sup>7</sup>

The humanitarian dimension, including the genocide and the denial of democratic rights in East Pakistan, were stressed by countries critical of Pakistan. Fifty out of the 131 member-states in the UNGA spoke and 104 voted in favour of the Argentinian Resolution 2793 calling for a cease-fire and withdrawal of armed forces to their respective territories, return of refugees, a role for the UN, and calling on the UNSC to act. These 104 countries included the US, China, and Pakistan. Eleven countries opposed the resolution, including India, USSR, Bhutan, and members of the Warsaw Pact, while ten countries, including France, the UK, Afghanistan, Nepal, Oman, and Singapore abstained from the voting.<sup>8</sup>

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6 Op. Cit. No. 1.

7 Asoke Mukharji, “A Diplomatic Narrative of the 1971 War,” *The Wire*, December 18, 2021, <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/a-diplomatic-narrative-of-the-1971-war>

8 Eric Pace, “U.N. ASSEMBLY, 104 11, URGES TRUCE”, *The New York Times*, December 08, 1971, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/12/08/archives/un-assembly-10411-urges-truce-un-vote-follows-pleas-for-action.html>

On December 9, 1971, Pakistan informed the UNSC President of its readiness to comply with the UNGA resolution.

On December 8, 1971, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev wrote to US President Richard Nixon proposing a “simultaneous” cease-fire and a political settlement in East Pakistan. On December 9, President Nixon proposed to the Soviet Chargé d'affaires Yuli Vorontsov, amongst other issues, that the USSR should agree to work with the US on a cease-fire and talks “within a Pakistani framework” on East Pakistan, so that “the United States and the Soviet Union will be as close together as we were during the great war”.<sup>9</sup>

On December 12, 1971, Mr. Swaran Singh, the Indian Foreign Minister, addressed the United Nations Security Council for an hour and a half. He reiterated that the root cause of the conflict was the “brutal repression” of the populace in East Pakistan by the Pakistani military government and the forced flight of East Pakistani refugees to India.<sup>10</sup> India informed the UNSC President on December 12, 1971, of its inability to comply with the UNGA resolution as it omitted any political settlement in East Pakistan, because India had recognised East Pakistan as an independent state of Bangladesh on December 6, 1971

On December 13, 1971, the United States moved a resolution which mirrored the earlier UNGA resolution. The resolution was again vetoed by the USSR, and abstained on by France and the UK.

On December 15, 1971, when the Council reconvened for its session to consider a draft resolution moved by Poland, Pakistan Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto walked out of the meeting, accusing the Council of a “legalisation of aggression” and procrastinating “for

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9 Op. Cit. No. 7.

10 Op. Cit. No. 8.



Dacca to fall”. The Polish resolution was opposed by China. The Soviet Union tabled another resolution and sought an adjournment till December 16 for delegations to examine the draft, which was agreed to.

When the Council reconvened on December 16, 1971, Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh informed the Council that the fighting in Bangladesh had come to a halt with the surrender of the Pakistani Army in Dhaka. India had announced that it would cease-fire in the western sector on December 17 and it was time for the world to recognise Bangladesh.<sup>11</sup>

On December 21, 1971, the UNSC adopted the Somalia-tabled Resolution 307 to close its consideration of the 1971 India-Pakistan war. The resolution called for a durable cease-fire, withdrawal of forces, upholding of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 on PoWs, and repatriation of refugees. It was adopted by 13 votes and two absentees - Poland and the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup>

The Council met seven times between December 12 and 21, 1971. The Soviet Union vetoed one more resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire and troop withdrawal; and finally, the Council adopted a resolution on December 21 where it demanded that a durable cease-fire and cessation of all hostilities on the India-Pakistan subcontinent be strictly observed until troop withdrawals had taken place. Ironically, India had already declared a cease-fire unilaterally on December 17 after the surrender of the Pakistani armed forces.<sup>13</sup>

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11 Op. Cit. No. 10.

12 UNSC Resolution 307: The Situation in India-Pakistan Subcontinent, [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_303.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_303.pdf)<http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/UNSC/1971/16.pdf>

13 Op. Cit. No. 1.

In the Council debate of December 12, 1971, the Indian delegate succinctly summed up the U.N. dilemma when he said: <sup>14</sup>

“It was not India which declared or started the war; it was not India which was responsible for creating the conditions that led to the present unfortunate conflict; it was not India which deliberately and systematically refused to meet the aspirations of the 75 million people inhabiting the country, once part of Pakistan; it was not India which perpetuated the repression, genocide, and brutality which provided the springboard for the freedom movement of Bangladesh, which led to the decision of the people of that region to create a free and independent nation; it was not India which forsook the long period of nine months during which a reasonable political settlement could have been evolved with the leaders and people of Bangladesh.

India sent delegations to 70 countries, of which 13 were at the ministerial level.<sup>15</sup>

In order to aid individuals from Bangladesh, British, Indian and the American musicians organised the opening event in the New York City. American Senator Ted Kennedy launched a fight in Congress to end Pakistan's military persecution. At the same time, US diplomats in Eastern Pakistan fought vehemently about the close links between the US government and Pakistan's military dictator Yahya Khan.

## USSR

India's diplomatic outreach registered a positive outcome with the USSR when Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny wrote to President Yahya Khan on April 2, 1971, denouncing 'Operation Searchlight' and calling for a "peaceful settlement" in East Pakistan. While Yahya Khan could not be persuaded, India's Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh was able to discuss and negotiate the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in June 1971.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ministry Of External Affairs, Annual Report 1971-72, 1972, <https://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2498?000>.

The seeds of the agreement had already been sowed during India's External Affairs Minister Sardar Swaran Singh's visit to Moscow at the invitation of the USSR Government from April 3 to 5, 1972. The visit became a hallmark of a new era in Indo-Soviet relations. The mutual cooperation during the war for Bangladesh became a testimony to their commitment and determination to further develop the cooperation for international peace. The Soviet Union believed that an early peaceful political solution to the East Pakistan crisis could only resolve the post-war situation in the 'Hindustani Peninsula' where India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan needed to hold direct negotiations. The USSR acknowledged the importance of India in conceptualising a peaceful region.<sup>16</sup>

However, Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi's visit to Moscow in September 1971, made all the difference. Her visit was followed by two high-level delegations from the USSR visiting India on October 22, 1971.<sup>17</sup> The treaty was an important strategic move by India and the USSR amidst a secret trip taken by Henry Kissinger to China. The United States made no secret of its support to Yahya Khan and Kissinger's trip to China exposed the nexus. The treaty exhibited the USSR's humanitarian approach to the crisis and provided strength to India's ongoing efforts to ensure an end to the crisis. Interestingly, for the US, China, and Pakistan, it became a matter of India's policy of non-alignment.

## The United States

During the humanitarian crisis in East Bengal, the world community looked at the United States (US) with immense hope. While the United States was expected to intervene and pressurize the Pakistani regime to stop the brutalities of the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan,

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16 Indo-Soviet Joint Statement, April 5, 1972, [https://india.mid.ru/en/history\\_/articles\\_and\\_documents/indo-soviet\\_relations\\_documents\\_1971/](https://india.mid.ru/en/history_/articles_and_documents/indo-soviet_relations_documents_1971/)

17 Op. Cit. No. 7.

the President Nixon administration acted as if the situation was more politically driven, whereas India was the aggressor and willing to use force against West Pakistan. The ‘unholy’ nexus between the United States and Pakistan was wide in open due to the irresponsible behaviour of the United States towards several requests made by India. President Nixon was closely observing the developments in East Pakistan and he was regularly briefed by the National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger. However, all efforts made by India and the international community fell on deaf ears in the United States.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in her letter to President Nixon on May 13, 1971, wrote that the carnage against the people of East Pakistan by the Yahya Khan regime deeply worries the people of India who were pained to see the situation of the refugees arriving in India from East Pakistan. She requested President Nixon to persuade the military regime in Pakistan to stop the carnage. Yet again, Nixon seemed in no mood to stop ongoing material support to the West Pakistan.

Earlier, on April 28, 1971, in a Memorandum on Options for the United States towards Pakistan for President Nixon, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger wrote that the US was considering a three-option strategy on the situation in East Pakistan. One, to continue to sport a posture of political, economic, and military support to Yahya Khan irrespective of Khan’s strategy in East Pakistan. Second, to posture a ‘Genuine Neutrality’ and delay all help and assistance to Pakistan until the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were not satisfied with the developmental commitments made by Pakistan and allocation of resources by the latter to East Pakistan. And third, to “make serious efforts to help Yahya Khan end the war and establish an arrangement that could be transitional to East Pakistan autonomy.”<sup>18</sup>

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18 White House, “Memorandum for the President”, April 28, 1971, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/BEBB9.pdf>.

The US was considering that China will be playing a critical role in ensuring all support to Pakistan. Contrary to this observation, China supported Pakistan in a limited manner while the US went on to extend material and military support to West Pakistan.<sup>19</sup>

The US chose to opt for the latter option by sending military assistance in support of West Pakistan. On December 10, 1971, the US Naval Task Force led a nuclear-powered carrier enterprise that was dispatched from the American fleet in the Pacific to the Bay of Bengal through the Malacca Strait.<sup>20</sup> The Seventh Fleet, led by the 75,000-tonne nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, had over 70 fighters and bombers. The fleet included the guided-missile cruiser USS King, guided-missile destroyers USS Decatur, Parsons and Tartar Sam, and a large amphibious assault ship, USS Tripoli.<sup>21</sup> However, timely support from the USSR for India and East Pakistan proved its potential to stand against the injustice on the Bengali people. As a result, the West Pakistan Army surrendered before the Indian Army.

The unconditional support from the United States to West Pakistan had two important elements. One, the US was aware of India's strong military preparedness, and denying assistance to Yahya Khan would have meant its support to India. Since the US had a lot at stake in West Pakistan in terms of the strategic alliance with West Pakistan, it chose to support the repressive regime of Yahya Khan.

Second, the international media had been focusing on the grim situation in East Pakistan and a wave of support was visible for India's ongoing efforts there. President Nixon did not wish India to rise as an uncontested regional power. On the other hand, the U.S. also saw

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19 Ibid.

20 Lachman Singh, *Victory in Bangladesh*. (Dehradun: Nataraj Publisher, 1981).

21 Subrata Saha, "And Thus a Desh Was Born," *Outlook*, December 28, 2020, <https://magazine.outlookindia.com/story/india-news-and-thus-a-desh-was-born/304092>

the USSR rising to the occasion by signing the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India. While the rivalry between the US and the USSR was a global phenomenon, the bonhomie between India and the USSR was unwanted by the US. However, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, despite her ongoing best efforts to convince President Nixon, had already sensed the US tilt towards Yahya Khan. On her July 1971 visit to the United States, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi was asked about the gravity of the crisis by Dr Kissinger, to which Mrs. Gandhi responded, “The problem is unamenable right now” and India was “just holding it together by sheer will power.”<sup>22</sup> Kissinger had strongly pitched against “extreme measures” to pressurise Yahya Khan. Prime Minister Gandhi had also pointed out that West Pakistan had felt all along that “it will get support from the United States”, which had encouraged an “adventurous policy” on the part of Pakistan.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, with all her efforts, India made it clear that it had no intention of gaining territorial benefits from the situation. Instead, it was concerned about the people and the arrival of refugees arriving into India in large numbers, which was becoming unmanageable. By the end of the day, in her talks with Kissinger, Mrs. Gandhi was given an impression that if Mrs. Gandhi had a clear roadmap in resolving the tensions, she could help the ongoing India-US dialogue.<sup>24</sup> Against this, Mrs. Gandhi replied that the United States was avoiding the situation.

To the concerns of the United States, India’s victory against the Pakistan Army changed the region’s geo-strategic dynamics. Finally, on January 17, 1972, a Memorandum from Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon identified India’s intervention in the war as an undisputed victory for India and the uncontested rise of the latter in the region as a powerful nation. The memo observed that India’s victory

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22 US Department of State, Office of the Historian, Memorandum of Conversation, July 07, 1971, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v11/d91>.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

had changed the ‘relative equilibrium’ between the external powers, including the United States, China and the Soviet Union. The US accepted that the USSR by supporting India had established its firm influence in South Asia and that the duo had risen to a power status in the region. Despite India’s commitment to its Non-Alignment Policy, it carefully chalked out a policy of reasonable distance with the United States and the Soviet Union. At the same time, India stroked a fine line of cooperation with the Soviet Union. It further added that “Pakistan as a unitary state has been destroyed” and the war has tarnished the image of the Pakistani military.<sup>25</sup>

From March to December 1971, the United States was constantly pushing to make China an important player to counterbalance the influence of the USSR in the region. On February 10, 1972, President Nixon, replying to a question on recognising Bangladesh as a sovereign country, responded that the Bangladesh issue had two dimensions - humanitarian and political. He added that the United States had been most generous in empathising with the Bengali people. However, recognising the newly created Bangladesh was a political issue and it was still under study. He indicated that he would be deciding on the matter only after returning from his week-long trip to China.

He was surely willing to observe regional powers like China first hand with regard to Bangladesh before announcing anything on it. After a month of his return from China, the Nixon administration recognised Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign country on April 4, 1972.<sup>26</sup>

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25 Office of the Historian, Memorandum from Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon, January 17, 1972 at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve07/d206>.

26 The American Presidency Project, The President’s News Conference, February 10, 1972, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-news-conference-88>.

## United Kingdom

The role of the United Kingdom during the East Bengal crisis was critical. As the head of the Commonwealth of Nations, it was critical for the UK to closely monitor the situation since the crisis assumed importance at the international level. Therefore, in early March 1971, the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office formed a number of 'Crisis Observation Groups' overlooked by the South Asia Department.<sup>27</sup>

The United Kingdom was closely observing the developments in East Pakistan. It held the view that the issue could be solved through political means and that Her Majesty must use her influence to subvert any brutalities carried out by West Pakistan. The UK was concerned about the manipulation of the number of deaths in East Pakistan. The UK Parliament viewed the mass migration of people from East Pakistan into India as a challenge for India and it appreciated India's efforts in providing food to refugees and those suffering in East Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> The groups were headed by Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home, who was receiving updates from British Deputy High Commissioner Arthur Collins in Dhaka. However, the British Consulate in Dhaka had already anticipated the crisis in December 1970 itself. Hence, it had begun evacuating its nationals from East Pakistan.<sup>29</sup>

Britain was relying on Foreign Office reports which suggested that any individual moves by the Britain may prove to be futile unless all the Security Council members were not on the same page.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, the

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27 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), *A Year Book of the Commonwealth 1971*. (London: HMSO, 1971), 330.

28 British Parliament Debate, September 23, 1971, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1971-09-23/debates/0322ebe2-c4cb-4064-96d3-6868629191b7/EastBengal?highlight=eastpakistan#contribution-9593583a-e11a-4e94-82b6-303b97edad5c>.

29 Minute on, "Situation in East Pakistan", FCO 37/895, April 02, 1971.

30 "India and Pakistan: Memorandum by Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs", October 18, 1971.



British Parliamentarians echoed India's situation in the parliamentary proceedings. On May 14, 1971, the British Parliament held a debate on the situation in East Pakistan. Bruce Douglas-Manna, a Member of Parliament for Kensington North, tabled Motion No. 509, calling on the government of Her Majesty to secure a ceasefire in East Pakistan. The motion was supported by more than 300 members.<sup>31</sup>

Britain continued to rely on the UN crisis assistance in East Pakistan. However, the British representatives were pressuring the Pakistani authorities to stop the trial of Sheikh Mujib. On the other hand, Mrs. Gandhi was making all efforts to reach out to the international community, including the United Kingdom. On her visit to London in October 1971, Mrs. Gandhi told British Prime Minister Edward Heath that India was forced to take military action against West Pakistan as it was facing an unprecedented outpouring of refugees from East Pakistan.

While Prime Minister Gandhi had conveyed to both Prime Minister Heath and US President Nixon India's position on the matter, the UK and the US. were also holding bilateral discussions on the matter. For instance, during Prime Minister Heath's visit to Washington D.C. on December 20, 1971, President Nixon shared a letter of his response to Mrs. Gandhi. President Nixon and Prime Minister Heath seemed more worried about the Soviet role in the crisis than the humanitarian aspect of it. Nixon told Heath that "all we did was to elicit conciliatory steps from Yahya and to try to restrain the Indians. The major mistake we made was to be too reassuring. We were the only a restraining factor."<sup>32</sup>

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31 British Parliament Debate, May 14, 1971, [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1971-05-14/debates/9e0272bd-88f2-4c55-8697-f0f12f608e6e/EastPakistan?highlight=east\\_pakistan#contribution-bb5ca53f-4bc1-4d8d-9d3c-ff1fe3db3a27](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1971-05-14/debates/9e0272bd-88f2-4c55-8697-f0f12f608e6e/EastPakistan?highlight=east_pakistan#contribution-bb5ca53f-4bc1-4d8d-9d3c-ff1fe3db3a27)

32 While House Declassified Memorandum, December 07, 1971, [https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/virtuallibrary/documents/jun09/122071\\_Kissinger.pdf](https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/virtuallibrary/documents/jun09/122071_Kissinger.pdf).

Overall, Britain's role in the East Pakistan crisis was limited to its strategic calculations emanating from a potential rise of India as an uncontested power in the region and its bonhomie with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the UK was among the first European countries to recognise Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign nation on February 04, 1972. The recognition came two weeks after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had met the British Prime Minister in London on his return journey to Dacca on January 10, 1972 after his release from West Pakistan.<sup>33</sup>

## China

The 1971 crisis in East Bengal presented an opportunity for China to assert its regional dominance since the United States and the United Kingdom were looking at its position on it. In its first reaction to the East Pakistan crisis, Beijing protested against the USSR, the US and India for their roles. While the US had already sided with Pakistan, China still suspected the US, as it presented a competing turf to China. On April 11, 1971, the *People's Daily* wrote that there were "foreign aggression and intervention" in the internal matters of Pakistan. Premier Zhou En Lai had written to President General Yahya Khan assuring that in case of an "aggression against Pakistan, the Chinese Government and Chinese people will as always firmly support Pakistan."<sup>34</sup> Although initially, China pretended to stay neutral and respect the *Panchsheel*, it was involved in protecting West Pakistan through its veto power in the United Nations Security Council.

On the other hand, the United States was looking to mend ties with China. Henry Kissinger's secret visit to China in July 1971

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33 Bangladesh High Commission, London, "Bangladesh - UK Relations: A Strong Bond of Friendship", <https://bhclondon.org.uk/bangladesh-uk-political-relations>.

34 "Chou En-Lai's Letters to Yahya Khan and Mrs. Bandaranaike", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 4:1, 138-139, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472337485390171>.

had resulted from Yahya Khan's mediation for the two. The United States was reportedly lobbying with China to side with Pakistan considering China had already fought a war with India in 1962. The Nixon administration had already made overtures to Yahya Khan in protecting Pakistani interests and bringing China into it was thought on those lines.

On December 16, 1971, a Chinese representative at the United Nations made a statement demanding to recall the 'Indian Action' in East Bangladesh. China added that "a large-scale war of aggression against Pakistan was brazenly launched by the Indian Government on Nov. 21, 1971, with the active encouragement and energetic support of the Government of the Soviet Union. This has gravely disrupted peace in the South Asian subcontinent, given a tremendous shock and caused serious anxiety to the people throughout the world."<sup>35</sup>In its blind support to the brutalities and atrocities committed by Pakistan in East Pakistan, China demanded a timely withdrawal of Indian intervention and alleged that "if a timely stop is not put to such aggression committed by the Indian Government, Pakistan will not be the only country to fall victim, inevitably other countries neighbouring on India will also be endangered. Such a state of affairs is absolutely impermissible."<sup>36</sup>

The statement was more preachy and threatening in nature rather exhibiting the accurate picture of West Pakistani atrocities in East Pakistan. It was indeed expected from China, as luring Pakistan, would intensify its futuristic strategic cooperation with the latter.<sup>37</sup>

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35 Text of a statement by the Government of China in a translation issued by its delegation delivered at the United Nations on December 16, 1971, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/12/17/archives/text-of-chinese-statement-on-the-war.html>

36 Ibid.

37 Text of a statement by the Government of China in a translation issued by its delegation delivered at the United Nations on December 16, 1971, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/12/17/archives/text-of-chinese-statement-on-the-war.html>

After Bangladesh was created, China made efforts to ensure a non-entry for Bangladesh in the United Nations. On August 10, 1972, the UN Security Council discussed Bangladesh's application for its entry into the United Nations. Due to differences among members, a vote was sought where China voted against it.<sup>38</sup> However, China refrained from voting during the reconsideration of Bangladesh's UN membership in 1974, because Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto had already recognised Bangladesh as an independent nation in February 1974.<sup>39</sup> Following the recognition from Pakistan, the Bangladesh–India–Pakistan, an Agreement on The Repatriation of Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees, also known as the Delhi Agreement, was signed in April 1974 which finally reduced tensions in the region.

## Conclusion

To conclude, with the exception of India Russia and few more, most of the bigger powers did not lend support to the Liberation War for Bangladesh, in fact USA and others backed West Pakistan and tried to undermine India's intervention and military action against the aggression by West Pakistan. The crisis presented India with a multi-dimensional and multi-fronted challenge. The major powers, including the United States, the United Kingdom, who were seen as the advocates of democracy and people's rights, only voiced their strategic interests by siding with the military brutalities of the West Pakistani regime. Despite the India sending delegation to more than 70 countries at the ministerial level and Indira Gandhi personally visited the United States to stop the war, the level of unhealthy remarks made against India by

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38 Practice relative to recommendations to the general assembly regarding membership in the United Nations, [https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/en/sc/repertoire/72-74/72-74\\_07.pdf](https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil/files/en/sc/repertoire/72-74/72-74_07.pdf).

39 New York Times, Pakistan admits that Bangladesh exists as a nation, February 23, 1974, <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/02/23/archives/pakistan-admits-that-bangladesh-exists-as-nation-prime-minister.html>.

the Nixon and Heath administrations, showed their unwillingness to see India's rise as a regional power standing against the bullies of West Pakistan. The Russian support to India and Bangladesh was crucial which laid the basis of long-term cooperation. Bangladesh has covered large grounds in the past five decades and overcoming a rather difficult past now maintains friendship with one and all and malice towards none as its core foreign policy principle.



# Select Conversations with 1971 War Veterans

*by Aniruddha Awalgaonkar*

## 1. Capt. Shekhar Dutt, SM.

Capt. Dutt was the Observation Post Officer in the Artillery. His primary job included reconnaissance. He highlighted his personal experiences of the war in the “Battle of Naya Chor”, also known as “Operation Cactus Lily”.

He remembers an interesting story. On the night of December 4, 1971, he had three visitors to the squadron. They were Lt. Col. Alexander, CO of a Madras Battalion, Major Viroo Mehta and Captain Upreti of the 70 Armoured Regiment. They were going to their formation/unit South of Chachro. They had a meal with Capt. Dutt and Maj. Mehta told him that he had put his papers and that his discharge from the army was almost through. However, since the war had started, he chose to experience the war first hand and then leave the army. Later, they left in a small convoy.

A few days later, Capt. Dutt and his team were informed that this convoy was ambushed by the enemy and Lt. Col. Alexander and Maj. Mehta were both martyred. Capt. Upreti escaped with serious injuries in one eye and now uses an eye patch. Capt. Dutt says, “I have always thought that the intrinsic romance of taking part in an operation makes heroes out of brave men. Major Mehta was drawn into such a romance.”

December 4, 1971 planning: In the event of a war, the 3 (I) Armoured Squadron was to enter Pakistan from the North of the railway track, and it would go behind the Pakistani post at Bhitala and the neighbouring areas. Another group was to cross the border from South of the railway track and onwards to Chachro. The Div. spearheaded by 85 Infantry Brigade would move into Pakistan from Gadra Road – Muna Bao Axis near Border Pillars (BP) 810 and 814, straddling the railway track, and onwards to Khokhropar and beyond to Naya Chor. The task of the 3 (I) Armoured Squadron was to outflank the Pakistani positions so that the main force of the division found it easy to progress through the enemy's defences.

December 5, 1971: Before daybreak, the brigade had reached their first destination and started engaging the enemy with direct tank fire as well as artillery fire from the med guns. The Pakistanis had little understanding of where this fire was coming from and full surprise was achieved. After capturing the Bhitala Railway Station, a key station in the region, a bulk of Pakistani forces got jittery and scattered. On initial searching of some of the Pakistani positions, the Indian Army found valuable clues regarding their formations and compositions .

December 6, 1971: At noon, anti-tank mines blew off under Col. Handa, Brig. Kataria and Lt. Vikram Burns (who later succumbed to his injuries). In his words, 'When we were advancing towards Naya Chor, sitting on the turret of my tank, I heard a loud blast. This was a bit strange as, so far, the progress had been without any major opposition. However, the noise had come from behind us and after a while, we could see a column of black smoke from the general area of Bhitala. I drew the attention of the tank commander and it was decided that we turn back with a troop of tanks and engage any Pakistani elements who may have caused that blast'. On reaching the site, we found that the 85 Infantry Brigade Commander, Brigadier Kataria's vehicle, had gone over an anti-tank mine. Brigadier Kataria had a bone injury, and

Colonel Handa, the CO of 164 Field Regiment (164 Fd Regt), was also injured. However, young Intelligence Officer (IO), Second Lieutenant Vikram Burns Appalaswami, suffered the most grievous injuries and died while being evacuated. The fact that the brigade commander had come so far ahead demonstrated that the 85 Infantry Brigade had been advancing at a rather fast pace. I knew the three officers fairly well and felt very sorry to see a look of dejection, especially on the face of Brigadier Kataria, whom I had always seen displaying exceptional enthusiasm. I recall him telling us to carry on and that he would return to take part in the operation before long. Vikram Burns, on the other hand, was showing no signs of any response and perhaps had had a massive internal injury. I felt really sorry for him as only a few days ago he had presented me with a book on the war in Vietnam. After ensuring that the brigade commander and the other injured were evacuated for treatment, we resumed our advance towards Naya Chor.

December 7, 1971: The Parcha Ji Veri Railway Station was captured during the morning hours. Although, Pakistani shelling went on for some time, the compound offered good cover. At noon, Sabre jets attacked and some of the Indian Army's three tonners and main supply vehicles were hit. Indian soldiers retaliated using their medium machine guns, which kept the fighter jets at bay. I reckoned that to prevent the possibility of damage due to friendly fire, Pakistani units identified their positions to their returning aircraft by linearly firing smoke shells demarcating the area held by Indian troops. Paying back in their coin, I fired the same colour of smoke shells as a linear target deep inside the Pakistani positions on a few occasions. This led the Pakistani aircraft to strafe and bomb their positions, thinking the Indian troops held it. Since the Pakistani forces were lulled to believe that their aircraft would not bomb them, they were careless in their movements and thereby attracted friendly fire. All through the afternoon, I ranged and registered a number of targets. We had dug in and stayed that night in the Parcha Ji Veri area. I slept under the tank



quite comfortably. Since the operation had started, this was the first night that I had really slept.”

December 8, 1971: At noon, Indian troops took a detour to outflank Pakistani positions as they were informed that there was a counter-attack on 10 Sikh Li. Capt. Dutt was asked to take a troop of tanks to support 10 Sikh Li. While approaching the positions, Capt. Dutt ranged and targeted the Pakistani artillery positions as well as the advancing Frontier Force Battalion. By this time, the forward artillery guns had become available to the Indian troops. This broke the Pakistani counterattack, and they were chased away. As Indian troops advanced, they encountered heavy shelling. This was a well-entrenched defensive position, and the Pakistanis were desperately trying to defend it.

December 9, 1971: In the morning, the Indian Air Force, with their HF-24 aircraft, rocketed two Pakistani tanks and burnt them. Panic-stricken, two enemy tanks broke cover, and they were spotted by the HF-24 aircraft and were knocked out. Quoted directly, “It was a beautiful sightseeing the pair of Marut aircraft coming almost at tree-top level, then climbing up and again diving while releasing their rockets at the enemy tanks.”

December 10, 1971: “Havaladar Keshav Singh, my Mike NCO (for laying telephone lines), was proving to be a man worth his weight in gold as he kept me in contact not only with the Arty BDE Headquarters but also with the regiments and batteries. During the last few days, I had noticed that the Pakistanis had breached our radio net. In order to counter such a possibility, during the exercises, I had developed a simple but failsafe code with Keshav. I used to call him on the PRC 25 radio set and indicate that we should start operating our code. He would then switch to another pre-arranged frequency and receive my instructions, changing the frequency and communicating again. For every new communication, we had a pre-arranged method of changing the frequency and communicating without any possibility of being

intercepted. Havaladar Keshav Singh would relay my instructions to the concerned gun positions online. Keshav was responsible for laying the cables for these lines and connecting me with the gun positions.”

“Many years later, in 1991, when I was Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence and responsible for major projects, electronics and ship building, I was educated about the technology of ‘frequency hopping’ radio sets then just being introduced in military warfare. Keshav and I apparently had hit on this concept of frequency hopping and used it successfully in the 1971 war, much before the development of the technology. I was, therefore, never out of contact with my guns.”

December 11, 1971: The attack on Parbat Ali started much before daybreak. The units of the 85 Infantry Brigade, i.e., 10 Sikh Li and 2 Mahar, overran some Pakistani positions. The Sikh and Mahar’s cries were resonating in the desert. In a panic, the enemy left their trenches, many of them in underclothing. Later, it was found that the Pakistani soldiers, especially the officers, had left evidence (like bangles and other forms of clothing) that pointed out the recent presence of women in their trenches. This was a stark contrast with the Indian Army’s discipline. The attack on Parbat Ali was undertaken by complete surprise. Some enemy elements were seen sneaking in the direction of Naya Chor, and it was necessary to cut them off.

December 11: It was a cold morning with extremely low visibility. Capt. Dutt’s TA, Virendar Pal Singh, was informed that his rifle was not working and that he was trying to fire at some shadowy figures behind some trees. It was suspected that those troops were Indian. They turned out to be men from 10 Sikh Li carrying out some mopping-up operations. As the tanks proceeded, there came a sudden depression. The troops with their tanks were in a minefield.

Shortly after high-pitched whistles and the sound of bullets flying over their heads, it was understood that the Pakistanis would engage with recoilless guns or other anti-tank weapons. Thus, everyone decided

to get off the tanks and walk back. The tank driver asked Capt. Dutt to keep his steps exactly where the driver was stepping on. "Little did we realised that the tank driver knew where the anti-tank mines were laid and there could be anti-personnel mines as well." He was risking his life in order to save Capt. Dutt.

December 12, 1971: In the morning, everyone regrouped and prepared for the final assault on Parbat Ali.

December 13, 1971: 10 Sikh Li and two Mahar attacked and captured Parbat Ali, occupied by 39 FFR in the wee hours. The Pakistani troops suffered heavy casualties, and over 350 prisoners were captured.

## **2. Lt. Gen. Shamsher (Shammi) Mehta.**

"The greatest tribute that has been paid to India in the Liberation War of Bangladesh is by Michael Walzer in his seminal book 'Just and Unjust Wars.' Gen Shammi says that it is the 20th century's most outstanding example of humanitarian intervention. He also says that the world was aware of it, the world chose to neglect it, India had no option but to go in and they did, and they did an outstanding job."

He was a part of 4 Corp and participated in the "Battle of Akhaura", a.k.a. "Operation Nutcracker", from December 1 to 5, 1971. It is an outstanding example of what a brigade can do to a fixed, fortified position. This battle acted like a trigger to the further events of the war.

Lt. Gen. Sagat Singh was the GOC of the 4 Corps. After this battle, he was standing on a 'Y' point. One direction said the battle was over; his job was done. The other direction made him ask what could be done next. This was a masterstroke of the war. Crossing the Meghna River was the biggest hurdle faced by the Indian Army. Lt. Gen. Sagat contacted his counterpart in the Air Force and asked him if an entire

battalion could cross the Meghna with the help of IAF helicopters. He got a positive answer and asked (then Captain) Lt. Gen. Mehta to get his tanks across the Meghna. When asked about how he responded when Lt. Gen. Sagat Singh asked him if he could get his tanks to cross the Meghna River, Shammi responds by saying, “Whenever you have a commander who is as strong, as willing, as capable, no matter what order he gives you, your answer is always ‘YES’.”

After two reconnaissance missions, certain islands in the Meghna River were identified. By then, 3 Pakistani PT 76s were captured, and used as an experiment. After that success, all Indian tanks crossed the river with the help of the islands identified during recon missions.

He claims that this incredible feat was achieved only due to the planning and masterminding of Lt. Gen. Sagat Singh. He noticed the panic in the minds of the enemy soldiers after “Operation Nutcracker” and took full advantage of it. He did not allow his troops to slow down and did more than he was asked to do. This panic in the minds of 30,000 enemy soldiers was exploited perfectly, and it resulted in 3000 Indian soldiers emerging as victors in the war.

Finally, he says that he cannot but close this without a word of praise for the Mukti Bahini. They have a large contribution in ensuring that the dream of Mujibur Rehman (Bangabandhu) succeeded. They helped the Indian Army to a great extent. By pointing out the climatic conditions, helping gather the support of locals for the Indian Army and their massive contribution in making this dream of Mujibur Rahman come true.

### **3. Brig. Balbir Singh.**

He was in the 63 Cavalry and participated in exercises with the Mukti Bahini and some of their operations. Most of the equipment was Russian, such as, tanks, guns, explosives and many more. He was in a

PT-76 tank. The gun was very small and perfect for battles in areas like Bangladesh. They further needed Harvey Guns and tanks as well. Due to this requirement, they were made to convert from PT-76 to T-55. It could outgun the East Pakistani tanks. The whole unit was moved to the Eastern Sector and they were in the Balurghat area by September 1971.

Air superiority had been created, and not much naval action was needed. The 45 Cavalry and 69 Armored were with them. He worked with 69 Armored as the second-hand commander. There were virtually five components to this regiment as they had surrounded East Pakistan from five directions which later earned them the name of “Ghost Regiment” as they were present everywhere. They were deployed in the Hilli area and participated in the Battle of Hilli. The T-55 tanks could not function in this area. One tank was sent ahead and it was locked. They mostly had a supporting role, and he was asked to ensure that no additional troops entered the Hilli area.

They had a task to capture Rangpur and Bogura. Rangpur is near Siliguri in the North of Bangladesh, and there is a major road that connects Rangpur, Bogura and Dacca, a virtually central line in Bangladesh. This line had to be cleared by shift operations. To do this, Rangpur and Bogura had to be captured. They took a route via Nawabganj and Pirganj from Hilli. A separate force was sent to Rangpur, and a small tank convoy was sent with them from 63 Cavalry. He went to Bogura. They had a major hurdle of crossing the river in Gobindagunj. This river did not have a single bridge that could sustain the weight of the tanks. All Pakistani defences along the river were facing North. They had anticipated an attack from the North, but were attacked from the East. The attack came with such surprise that they abandoned their entire defences, allowing the Indian forces to advance quickly so that their opponents did not get a chance to regroup or assemble. As the advance increased, Indian forces reached Bogura; they did not face any resistance. One of the most important

reasons behind this was because they (the people) knew that India was not an occupying force. It was looked upon as a liberating force.

#### **4. Lt. Gen. Ravi Sawhney**

Lt. Gen. Sawhney was a major during the war and was posted at the army headquarters. He says that the planning and execution that he was a part of, was done at the macro-level on the instructions of his military and political superiors.

According to him, this war was a perfect combination of military and political planning and execution. The original plan was to intervene during the summers, in April. He made a special reference to the historic cabinet meeting, where Gen. Manekshaw had suggested postponing the operation to winter.

He says that Gen. Manekshaw did a perfect job in preparing for the war. As a result, India was ready before December to intervene. And, the Pakistani hostilities on the western front provided the perfect opportunity for India to initiate action. He says that one of the most important jobs of the military is to make sure that everything is in place before waging war. Thanks to Gen. Manekshaw and his extremely good relations with the Navy and Air Force chiefs, even in the absence of a Chief of Defence Staff, there was excellent coordination between the three wings of the Indian military forces.

He also appreciates the political leadership, saying that it was commendable of the then prime minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to have put so much trust in the military leadership and allowed them to operate according to their own needs, offering virtually no political resistance. The wonderful partnership between the Indian political leadership and the military establishment was critical for a resounding victory for Bangladesh.

## 5. Wing Commander Kartha Unni

With 24 years in the IAF, he started as a transport pilot and later became a Helicopter Combat pilot and is also a 1971 war veteran. He was later made a qualified flying instructor. He was an experimental test pilot and has had the experience of flying Dakotas, Mi-4 and went on to fly 28 types of aircraft later.

He was commissioned on 22 January 1972 as a copilot during the 1971 War. He used to fly through the Chicken's neck into Assam. His main job was to carry arms and ammunition for Mukti Bahini (MB) camps and he was assigned to provide for 11 of them, set up all along the border between East Pakistan and India. The MB was being armed with Ishapore rifles and mortars and much more. While returning, they were bringing back casualties from those areas. Mainly to MH in Kolkata and Guwahati. Choppers used to evacuate the casualties from the battlefields that consisted of Indian Army and MB forces. These kinds of clandestine operations were being done from the end of March-April, 1971. Various formations like 2 Corps, 33 Corps and a few others started crossing the border sometime around 26 November 1971 (unofficial start).

In his words, "We shot down 2 GNATS at Boira. Pakistan started attacks at the West because of their doctrine that is, to protect the East, we have to engage the West. General Jacob gave Gen. Manekshaw the 12 reasons that made him postpone the war to December, which were later given to the PM in the Historic Cabinet Meeting. Indira Gandhi always used to have five Kashmiri Brahmins as she is considered to be a superstitious person. These records are available in the parliamentary library.'

After the cabinet meeting, when she was told that the army was not ready, she asked if something else could initiate. This gave rise to the concept of the Clandestine War, by involving and arming the

Mukti Bahini in this. Today, they are known as the Mitro Bahini, a combination of all the forces and its other wings. Rustomji, BSF Chief and called Maj. Gen. Sujan Singh Uban, who was controlling the Tibetan Army, known as the 22 Force. They defined the clandestine operation to the PM; till then, none had ever thought of ever creating a separate country. The plan was to get rid of the ten million refugees, solve India's refugee crisis, arm the rebels and tell them to fight their war. Liberating Bangladesh was never even thought. Even when India went to war, according to Manekshaw's plan and Inder Gill's plan, overrunning Dhaka was never even thought of. Lt. Gen. Shagat Singh, who had moved his HQ from Tezpur to Teliamura (near Agartala) was given the task to hold the Eastern flank and not allow the Pakistanis to enter from the sides of Meghalaya, Tripura and some parts of Mizoram. The 2 Corps and 33 Corps commanded by Lt. Gen. Raina and Lt. Gen. Thappan respectively were given the task to enter from the Siliguri Corridor. They were supposed to enter from the northern area and capture the areas of Bogara (now Bagura). This area is approximately 45000 sq km in northern Bangladesh and resembles a triangle. This was supposed to be captured and made into Bangladesh. This was plan B.

Plan A was for the BSF to enter from the Chittagong tract and try and capture the Chittagong silently- the South of Lalmai, the southern side of Bangladesh. Also, another reason was that the East Pakistani revenue used to be generated by sea through the Chittagong tract. Cutting this off would severely result in heavy economic losses for East Pakistan, isolating it. These were the original plan. But Lt. Gen. Tappan could not enter his designated areas. His forces were only able to enter around 3-4 km of that area. The 2 Corps were able to enter Garibpur, which is only 16 km from the border.

We were able to win the war because of the vision of one man, Lt. Gen. Shagat Singh. There was this great obstacle of the Meghna River.



He was only given holding orders because it was considered impossible to overcome the obstacle of the Meghna River. So instead, he contacted the IAF and asked for their assistance to airlift his troops to the other side of the river for a patch of around 40 km. He took his first action on 9th December. He then started his airlift. It has been the biggest airlift in the world. The IAF carried almost the whole corps. He was the brains and brawn behind the capture of Dhaka, and of course, “Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was a tigress of her own.”



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## SECTION II

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# India-Bangladesh: Coming Full Circle

*by Sreeradha Datta*

As Bangladesh turns fifty, the bilateral relationship of five decades has touched heights that reflect the golden hues of the milestone. Arguably, the friendship between *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's first Prime Minister, and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was a unique bond created by common ethos, values, the quest for autonomy, and an assertion in a global system not particularly kind to less-developed nations.

The bilateral ties between two of Asia's growing economies were premised on a cooperative framework and an enabling regional platform that provided opportunities for other neighbours to join. The Liberation War for Bangladesh and India's contribution towards achieving that aim remains a unique instance of neighbourly cooperation not only in South Asia but also in the entire world. There has been no other instance in history where a third country shed blood for another country's freedom. This certainly cemented the relationship between both and laid the ground for strong linkages that eventually covered a broad spectrum, but not before going through many trials and tribulations.

The removal of Indian troops from Bangladeshi soil after the war was another unique instance of India extending its goodwill to a newborn neighbour. Both signed a Peace and Friendship treaty in

March 1972 that cemented the relationship and reflected the deep trust the two leaders had shared.

However, the assassination of Mujibur Rahman in August 1975 reversed bilateral ties to the extent that Bangladesh relegated India to simply being a neighbour, wiping out the special status it had held immediately after the Liberation War. Military leaders held sway for the next fifteen years, ushering in many domestic changes, including Bangladesh's bilateral relations with India. Bangladesh subsequently went through several political developments, which made a huge impact on how its relations with India evolved over the next few decades.

Evidently, the historical context of the bilateral relationship has continued to define ties, and India and Bangladesh are now stably poised and engaged on a broad framework of bilateral issues. While Bangladesh celebrated 50 years of the Liberation War and 50 years of its bilateral ties with India, India also participated through high-level visits and other programs. Both sides marked the special year by celebrating Mujibborsho (100 years of Mujibur Rahman) also. Apart from a Bangabandhu-Bapu digital exhibition, the two Prime Ministers jointly released India-Bangladesh Friendship stamps to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations and laid the foundation stone for a memorial in Ashuganj to honour Indian armed forces personnel who had sacrificed their lives during the 1971 Liberation War and inaugurated three haats (local markets) on the India-Bangladesh border.<sup>1</sup> India's President Ram Nath Kovind attended the 50th Vijay Diwas (Victory Day) celebrations in Bangladesh in December 2021. Undoubtedly, the joint celebration of the last year reflects the special ties and has left an indelible mark on this bilateral journey.

Bilateral relations can be seen through the prism of security, politics, the economy, social and cultural issues, and specific subjects

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1 Indian High Commission at Dhaka, "Brief on Bilateral Relations", July 2021, <https://bit.ly/3q1zV6F>

of water, border, medical, connectivity, and transport. Music and literature has played a cementing role between the people of two sides. Some bilateral issues have been resolved like the border demarcation, or the improved trade and commerce relationship, while water sharing, the most emotive issue from the Bangladeshi perspective remains unresolved. Transformational collaborations have been most evident in cross-border transport connectivity and infrastructural developments.

This chapter focuses on the first phase and the present ongoing phase taken from 2008 when the Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina returned with the largest electoral victory. It attempts to highlight how the ideas and imaginations of India and Bangladesh have taken rather long to fructify since 1971. The return of Sheikh Hasina in 2008 gave bilateral relations a breakthrough. The 1972 agreement between India and Bangladesh had delineated much of the broader bilateral issues that included economic, security, and military ones, and art and literature as well. This period was marked by deep friendship but also with a sense of apprehension about each other. The changing circumstances in Bangladesh heightened the suspicion and mistrust and held both neighbours back from developing robust ties. It took nearly forty years to move ahead and actualise many of the erstwhile plans that were conceived in the initial years. Presently, India and Bangladesh have overcome the lost decades to build a strong bilateral relationship rooted in geographical, social, economic, and cultural proximity. The need to go past suspicion and mistrust should be instructive for India, Bangladesh, and all regional players. As always, the cost of non-cooperation is very high and people on both sides have suffered unnecessarily.

## **The First Phase**

The first phase is centred around the birth of Bangladesh. It was a short but critical phase, leading to serious consequences for the future of bilateral ties.

In one of his write-ups, P.N. Haksar, the former special envoy of the Prime Minister of India, noted that India chose the more difficult path of withdrawing troops from occupied territory and holding onto prisoners of war because she was sensitive to Bangladesh's priorities. India's stance reiterated that it would support Bangladesh in her efforts to remove the consequences of the 1971 war, provided it benefits both nations. The bilateral treaty was signed on March 19, 1972, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Dacca after the war. The validity of the treaty was for 25 years and included twelve articles and a Preamble, covering economic, security, and military issues, and areas like art and literature. The first bilateral agreement covered significant ground and was important in the context that it captured essential components of the two neighbours who would work for peace and stability and bring in deep-rooted changes for the region.

While at most it would seem a culmination of joint war efforts, some of the provisions of the treaty seemed like a security and military pact to a certain section in Bangladesh and came in for much criticism. Many have argued that the Bangladeshis have not forgotten the looting and trauma of the post-Liberation period, which was largely blamed upon Indian Army soldiers who fought Pakistan troops in what was then East Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> The Bangladeshi domestic dissonance seemed apparent even during the early days. On receiving a communication from the Awami League's then secretary-general, the then Indian home secretary wrote that "our friends are already beginning to get estranged from us." New Delhi's liaison with them needed to be strengthened.<sup>3</sup> The Bangladeshis were concerned and this was conveyed by Jayaprakash Narayan to Prime Minister Gandhi in writing, emphasising "the

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2 Emajuddin Ahamed, *The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh*. (Dhaka: ANUE Press, 2004).

3 P.N. Haksar, *Mukti Fauj: Prospects and Problems*. (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, File 95).



danger of big brother behaviour on our part. The American behaviour in South Vietnam should be a lesson for us—?”<sup>4</sup>

The issue of Indian predominance did cast some apprehension leading Indian policy makers to suggest that the” Mukti Fouj High Command should also be given more freedom and scope to secure help and resources from appropriate quarters . . . otherwise, they might feel that they are under too much control of Government of India—a feeling which is not conducive for promoting long-term friendly relations.” This feeling of distrust has been a recurring one between certain sections of Bangladeshis as well as Indians, although much less pronounced in India and with limited appeal in the overall policy-making towards Bangladesh.

The assassination of Mujibur Rahman in 1975 irreversibly ruptured the special relations shared by the two states and made the Peace and Friendship Treaty of March 1972 almost irrelevant to the new dispensation in Bangladesh. Military rule till 1990 meant that for many years Indo-Bangladeshi relations had no warmth. The political turmoil domestically and Bangladesh’s attempts to look beyond India to gain more strategic autonomy resulted in limited bilateral engagement during this period. Paradoxically, New Delhi’s political proximity to Mujibur in the early years became a liability for the future of bilateral relations.<sup>5</sup> The desire and determination of Mujibur’s successors to break from the past also led to their adoption of an anti-India stance. It has been suggested that the apprehension about India predates the war period. Indian role in achieving a decisive victory was not lost on Bangladesh, which was aware of its limited military strength, but

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4 Ibid.

5 Hashmi Taj, “Islamic Resurgence in Bangladesh: Genesis, Dynamics and Implications,” *Religious Resurgence and its implications in South Asia*, (2004): 35-72, <https://apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/ReligiousRadicalism/ReligiousRadicalismandSecurityinSouthAsia.pdf>

certain sections never fully acknowledged Indian contribution to its liberation struggle. It rose from a fear of possible Indian domination. Arguably, 'Given India's decisive role in the speedy conclusion of the war, many pundits postulated that Bangladesh would remain an Indian client state for long.'<sup>6</sup> Certainly, there are more complexities to the volte-face that the bilateral ties suffered than just that. While Bangladesh's distrust of India has often been cited, much can also be attributed to the deep cleavages in the Bangladeshi polity after the war. The international milieu was also an essential factor.

The Liberation War for Bangladesh took place during the Cold War Situation. Soon after the war ended, over 150 countries recognised Bangladesh, although China's delay in giving recognition weighed heavily on Mujibur Rahman's mind. Thus, recognition or non-recognition of Bangladesh became an issue, and indeed its close association with India also became a factor in the trajectory of its foreign policy. As Imtiaz Ahmed points out, "the first phase could be considered as the diplomacy of recognition as the country had to struggle to build relationships with those countries which were against the Liberation War of Bangladesh with Pakistan".<sup>7</sup> At this juncture, during the early days after the war, Bangladesh was keen on reaching out to a larger global community. Within months, America recognised Bangladesh, while Bhutan, India, the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Poland were among the few that recognised Bangladesh immediately. On the other hand, many states close to Pakistan, including China, preferred not to recognise Bangladesh initially. However, Mujibur Rahman visited China twice in the 1950s and wrote a book titled "Amar Dekha Naya Chin" (The New China as I Saw) and met Mao Zedong and Chou Enlai: he was

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6 Raunaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics : Problems and Issue*. (Dhaka: The University Press, 2005), 274.

7 Imtiaz Ahmed, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Constraints, Compulsions And Choices", *BIISS Journal* 32, no. 3 (July 2011): 207-218, 208.

keen on Bangladesh receiving China's recognition. As has been pointed out, although China's recognition came post-Mujibur's assassination, Mujibur had initiated Sino-Bangladeshi bilateral relations.<sup>8</sup> In fact, this keenness was not lost on India and New Delhi understood that Bangladesh seemed to be actively considering entering into diplomatic relations with China. However, the Bangladesh team was not keen on giving the impression to India that they were establishing relations with China. Bangladesh was working behind India's back.<sup>9</sup> Inevitably, India had some expectations and Bangladesh had many requirements. It was, therefore, difficult to view each other from a common perspective.

In scarcely more than a year after gaining its independence, Bangladesh developed a sense of dependence on India, and Bengalis increasingly began to show their resentment against what they termed "Indian exploitation".<sup>10</sup> Bangladeshis became suspicious of Indian motives and intentions. The critical turn was visible after the change of government in Bangladesh in 1975. 'The collaborators', who were supporting Pakistan and opposing the independence of Bangladesh, were restored to society and were allowed to share power.<sup>11</sup> The anti-Indian feeling, even though not pervasive, was evident to the discerning soon after Bangladesh came into being. In the words of a political commentator:

"I sensed it the first time while talking to journalists at the press club. Even some cabinet ministers complained about it. When I drew

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8 Nafees Sakhawat, "China-Bangladesh relations: Stronger than ever Before", The Daily Star, 6 October, 2020 <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/china-bangladesh-relations-stronger-ever-1972993>,

9 P.N. Haksar Papers, *Bangladesh-China Relations*. (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, File-91).

10 Ishtiaq Hossain, "Bangladesh-India Relations: Issues and Problems", Asian Survey 21, no. 11 (November 1981): 1115-1128.

11 Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*. (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1983), Page 184.

the attention of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, founder of Bangladesh, about it, he said: “I know some elements assisted by international interests are indulging in a whispering campaign against India. But they cannot sabotage the relationship between your great country and Bangladesh. A Bengali does not forget even those who give him only a glass of water. Here your soldiers laid down their lives for my people. How can they ever forget your sacrifice? I can assure you that my people are not ungrateful. Therefore, those who are trying to foment trouble will not succeed in their designs.”<sup>12</sup>

The assassination of Sheikh Mujib changed not only the domestic situation in Bangladesh drastically, but also bilateral ties with India. The political proximity that had existed between both states ceased to exist. Successive military leaders in Bangladesh (1975-1990) deliberately undermined ties with India. “Thus, while the war carried seeds of friendship between the Government of India and Government of Awami League, it also sowed the seeds of discord from within and outside.”<sup>13</sup>

With the return of parliamentary democracy in 1991, there was an attempt to restore normalcy in the relationship. However, the real transformation in the bilateral equation began with Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Sheikh Mujib, who assumed office in 1996. The signing of the Ganges Water Treaty in 1996 and the Chakma Agreement in 1997 removed the two main irritants that had plagued Indo-Bangladeshi relations for years. Although both neighbours had several unresolved issues between them during this period, they were set firmly on a friendly track. Unfortunately, this momentum was lost after the BNP alliance assumed power in 2001. Without much exaggeration, bilateral ties reached their lowest point between 2001 and 2006. However, with a technocratic Caretaker Government in Bangladesh, bilateral relations

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12 Kuldip Nayar, “Between the Lines: Anti-India bias in Bangladesh”, Deccan Herald, December 29, 2004.

13 Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*. (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1983), 184.

improved once again in 2007-08.<sup>14</sup> The breakthrough occurred with Delhi granting Bangladesh tariff-free access to its export of eight million ready-made garment pieces to India. A thaw was also visible in the Caretaker Government's recognition of Indian security concerns, which led to the handover of some Indian insurgents operating from Bangladesh. However, it took Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to ensure a breakthrough in bilateral relations with India.

### **The Breakthrough**

The turnaround between India and Bangladesh happened after the signing of the Joint Communiqué in 2010. This opened up the vistas of bilateral cooperation, leading to regional collaboration in many areas. India and Bangladesh decided to open their borders to facilitate bilateral trade, investment, and energy cooperation. It began with Bangladesh opening up its land and water borders to enable India easier access to its northeast. India agreed to Bangladesh's long-standing demand for transit to Nepal and Bhutan. Both began working in earnest to address each other's outstanding issues under the able leadership of Prime Ministers Hasina and Manmohan Singh. Hasina's political will to address India's security concerns was evident from the outset. Once Dhaka conveyed its intention to stop anti-India activities from its soil, New Delhi found ways and means to address some of Bangladesh's long-standing demands. Delhi agreed to dilute trade barriers, resolved the issue of boundary demarcation, and acceded to Bangladesh's demand for transit to Nepal and Bhutan – much of which was reflected in attitudinal shifts on both sides. The Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) signed by India and Bangladesh in June 2015 helped take bilateral ties to hitherto unexplored areas of common interest.

A significant portion of the first billion-dollar line of credit offered by India in 2010 was towards building transport connectivity and

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14 For more details- Sreeradha Datta, *Caretaking Democracy: Political Process in Bangladesh 2006–2008*. (Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2009)

infrastructure development, such as the laying railway infrastructure; the supply of locomotives and passenger coaches; the rehabilitation of the Saidpur railway workshop; procurement of buses and dredging projects. The agreement also included the purchase of double-decker buses from India, setting up a power grid between India and Bangladesh, and establishing state-run standards and testing institute facilities in Bangladesh by India. This subsequently grew to almost US\$ 8 billion (US\$ 1 billion in 2010; US\$ 2 billion in 2016; and US\$ 4.5 billion in 2017) and was the largest credit loan that India has offered to any state in the neighbourhood or beyond. This helped transform the cooperation landscape.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, many of the border developmental projects that Bangladesh undertook were also supported by India. Many of these projects are in various stages of implementation. Moreover, the first land and air transshipment between both countries took place towards the end of 2018. The first bonded container of 4.41 tons of cargo from Bangladesh moved through the Benapole land border into India through the Petrapole border to head towards Kolkata airport for air freight to Europe. This was the first instance of trucks moving across the border using GPS tracking devices, allowing officials from India and Bangladesh to monitor their progress in real-time. No doubt, the contours of bilateral and regional trade were changing.

Interestingly, the first tangible takeaway of the 2010 agreement was the beginning of energy trade, which was a priority for the Sheikh Hasina government, given its domestic shortfall. Drawing from a basket of types of trade in energy, the bilateral cooperation between both countries has covered a large ground from the first trade in 2013 through the Palatana project in Tripura. The two energy companies - the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and the Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCI) - signed a 35-year agreement

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15 “Lines of Credit for Development Projects,” Ministry of External Affairs, at <https://mea.gov.in/Lines-of-Credit-for-Development-Projects.htm>

to establish energy trade through regional transmission systems. Further, Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation agreed to set up an LPG terminal in Chittagong (in 2016). This would make it possible not only for Bangladesh to receive the gas, but also facilitate the supply of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to north-eastern Indian states including Tripura. The Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and India's National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for improving and developing Bangladesh's power sector. The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline and the Maitree Super Thermal Power Project are also in various stages of implementation.

The idea of developing an energy grid has now got greater traction and is under discussion at the bilateral and regional levels. India is in the process of preparing a draft agreement for regional energy trade. A more tangible initiative of energy trade seems to be in the offing from India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. Bangladesh has also shown interest in signing a mutual power trade agreement with Nepal and has proposed to invest USD1 billion in Nepal's hydropower sector. During the Bangladesh Prime Minister's visit to India in 2019, New Delhi had expressed its willingness to facilitate this cross-border energy trade between Bangladesh and Nepal. An Indian company has already signed an agreement with the Nepal government to build the 900-MW Upper Karnali project in Western Nepal and is in the final stages of acquiring permission to construct the 600-MW Upper Marsyangdi-II project in central Nepal. Bangladesh will import 200 MWs from the Upper Marsyangdi-II project and the remaining 300 MWs will be imported from Upper Karnali. Bangladesh has offered Nepal several proposals to purchase whereas India will provide Nepal with transmission lines to cross over to Bangladesh through India.<sup>16</sup>

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16 Sreeradha Datta, "Towards a Durable Political Understanding: Fifty Years of Indo-Bangladesh Relations," *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 15, no. 3 (July–September 2020): 183–190

## **Cooperation During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

The positive synergy in the relationship between India and Bangladesh has been evident during the Covid-19 pandemic too. While trade and commerce were deeply affected, India continued to develop connectivity projects even during the pandemic. While land border trade between India and Bangladesh was halted due to the fear of the virus spreading, the coastal shipping arrangements continued to work effectively. The first trial container ship from Kolkata to Agartala through the Chattogram Port of Bangladesh was flagged off during this period. The new route will reduce time as well as logistics costs for cargo movement and connect North-East India to Bangladeshi ports. Earlier, in June 2015, India and Bangladesh had signed the Coastal Agreement, which allows goods to move by sea from Kolkata in West Bengal to the Chittagong Port in Bangladesh. India and Bangladesh reached an understanding of Standard Operating Procedures for the use of the Chattogram and Mongla ports for the movement of goods to and from India in 2019. The Indo-Bangladesh Coastal Shipment Agreement, signed in 2018, led to cargo movement on the first trial container ship, which started from Kolkata on 16 July 2020 and reached Chittagong Port (Bangladesh) before travelling via road to Agartala.

Earlier, Bangladesh had agreed to the proposal of India using its waterways to the Ashuganj river port for carrying food grains from Kolkata to Tripura. Many Indian vehicles, including trucks and buses, are transported through the Mongla port into Bangladesh. The Indian company, Ashok Leyland, one of the main suppliers, opened a truck assembly plant in Dhamrai, Savar, in 2017.

This apart, the increased and extensive cooperation in the health sector has become a priority in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, Bangladesh and India are perfectly placed to develop new areas of cooperation for research and development in this sector.



## Defence Cooperation

The 122-member contingent from the Bangladesh armed forces at the Indian Republic Day Parade in Delhi (2020) was another high point of military cooperation growing between the neighbours. Indeed, cooperation in the defence sector has been a new element in the bilateral relationship. It is only in the post-2006 period that Bangladesh has openly acknowledged India's role in its independence. The bilateral defence cooperation has strengthened over time, with India extending a USD 500 million Defence Line of Credit to Bangladesh finalised in 2019. Both neighbours continue their joint training programmes and joint military exercises, apart from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. In 1972, India had provided Rs. 20 crore as defence assistance to Bangladesh, out of which Rs. 15 crores is for the army, navy, and air force and Rs. five crores for the paramilitary *Jatiyo Rakshi Bahini*.<sup>17</sup> However, in April 2017, neighbours signed two defence agreements, apart from conducting joint exercises and training. In fact, *Sampriti*, the joint exercise operation between the two armies to counter-terrorism, completed its ninth round in February 2020. The first exercise in this series was initiated in 2010 at Jorhat, Assam. The two navies have also held two exercises in the Bay of Bengal, CORPAT, in October 2020, which preceded the first *Bongosagor* Exercise in October 2019. Evidently, this is a growing sector between the two neighbours. As seen from the previous sections, India and Bangladesh are not only working closely on their bilateral linkages but also developing a regional partnership.<sup>18</sup>

## Sustaining the Partnership

The growth story of Bangladesh has been inspiring not only for India but the world at large. Its dual graduation – graduation from a low-

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17 Subimal Dutt Papers, *India Defence Assistance*. (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, File 75).

18 Sreeradha Datta, 'Towards a Durable Political Understanding: Fifty Years of Indo-Bangladesh Relations,' *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 15, no. 3 (July–September 2020): 183–190.

income country to a lower-middle-income country and its eligibility for graduation from the group of least developed countries to developing country status in 2018 reflect its remarkable economic and development success. Over the years and through successive changes in government, managed to achieve considerable progress in development and social welfare parameters.

Apart from many achievements, Bangladesh can boast of the longest-serving women leadership. Sheikh Hasina has enjoyed three consecutive terms as Prime Minister, and another in an earlier phase, which is a considerable achievement for a Muslim majoritarian nation founded under challenging circumstances but has been able to carve out a place for itself in the international community.

Bangladesh has moved ahead despite many constraints and managed to deliver to an ever-burgeoning middle-income population, attracting substantial foreign direct investment and foreign remittance.<sup>19</sup> There is much to celebrate - overcoming the initial constraints, economic achievements, improvement in social indicators like mortality rate, life expectancy, and immunisation, have all been remarkable.

However, with elections ahead, first in Bangladesh, followed by India, the uncertainty of the electoral verdict looms large. While Delhi has always enjoyed ties with Bangladesh, experience has shown that non-Awami governments in Dhaka have not been very well disposed towards India. Arguably such concerns cast a shadow, especially when current bilateral relations reflect the depth that Bangladesh's Founding Father, Mujibur Rahman, had planned with India's Premier Indira Gandhi; but as discussed earlier, the needle of mistrust was seen even during the early days.

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19 Sreeradha Datta, "Bangladesh Journey of Fifty Years," VIF Commentary, 14 December, 2021 <https://www.vifindia.org/2021/december/14/bangladesh-journey-of-fifty-years>

Despite Sheikh Hasina being in office for three consecutive terms, vested groups are still working against the people's interests as seen in the recent hostility during Durga Puja celebrations in Comilla, Bangladesh, and nearby districts before it was brought under control by the authorities. Not only do the leaders need to convey that the interests of people lie in bilateral cooperation, but with various projects already in place, hopefully, the people feel the same. People on both sides need to be invested in this idea of a common good that each can contribute to the other, transcending narrow domestic interests. There should be no scope for naysayers and political cussedness to overturn the achievements of the last decade.

Through sustained high-level political contacts, deepening engagement at various levels, strengthening institutional frameworks for future engagements, and continued dialogue to resolve outstanding issues, both neighbours can ward off a derailment of the bilateral trajectory. Post-2010, India, and Bangladesh have built many bridges, creating a bilateral trajectory as envisaged in 1972. The golden period India- Bangladesh presently shares offers a unique opportunity to work out many of the outstanding and unresolved issues as well as focus on strengthening the partnership to enable people, including the borderland population, to enjoy the fruits of cooperation. While large projects are in various stages of implementation, small incremental steps on the ground would go a long way to create and sustain a positive bilateral environment that spreads from bottoms to the top to enable people's wholehearted participation in this bilateral journey. With continued cooperation, both sides will benefit irrespective of which government is in Dhaka or New Delhi. Having felt the cost of non-cooperation, hopefully, the dividends arising from bilateral cooperation will far outweigh all other options for the people of both India and Bangladesh.



## Select Annotated Documents: 1972 and 2010

*by Sreeradha Datta*

**Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace between the  
Republic of India and the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

*Dacca, March 19, 1972*

INSPIRED by common ideals of peace, secularism, democracy, socialism and nationalism,

HAVING STRUGGLED together for the realisation of these ideals and cemented ties of friendship through blood and sacrifices which led to the triumphant emergence of a free, sovereign and independent Bangladesh,

DETERMINED to maintain fraternal and good-neighbourly relations and transform their border into a border of eternal peace and friendship,

ADHERING firmly to the basic tenets of non-alignment, peaceful co-existence, mutual cooperation, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty,

DETERMINED to safeguard peace, stability and security and to promote progress of their respective countries through all possible avenues of mutual cooperation,

DETERMINED further to expand and strengthen the existing relations of friendship between them.

CONVINCED that the further development of friendship and cooperation meets the national interests of both States as well as the interests of lasting peace in Asia and the world,

RESOLVED to contribute to strengthening world peace and security and to make efforts to bring about a relaxation of international tension and the final elimination of vestiges of colonialism, racialism and imperialism,

CONVINCED that in the present-day world international problems can be solved only through cooperation and not through conflict or confrontation,

REAFFIRMING their determination to follow the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter, the Republic of India, on the one hand. and the People's Republic of Bangladesh, on the other, have decided to conclude the present Treaty.

### *Article 1*

The High Contracting Parties, inspired by the ideals for which their respective peoples struggled and made sacrifices together, solemnly declare that there shall be lasting peace and friendship between their two countries and their peoples, each side shall respect the **independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other side.**<sup>1</sup>

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1 Given the circumstances of the Liberation War and India's role in supporting the liberation movement for the creation of Bangladesh, it was important to convey that India had no territorial ambitions, and that India withdrew its troops from Bangladeshi soil was one of the quickest known in history, there were a few murmurs about its intention to be involved in the war. Also, there was much disinformation being spread about some of the Indian troops and their misdemeanors at the time of withdrawal.

The High Contracting Parties shall further develop and strengthen **the relations of friendship, good-neighbourliness and all-round cooperation existing between them,**<sup>2</sup> on the basis of the above-mentioned principles as well as the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

### *Article 2*

Being guided by their devotion to the principles of equality of all peoples and States, irrespective of race or creed, the High Contracting Parties condemn colonialism and racialism in all forms and manifestation and are determined to strive for their final and complete elimination.

The High Contracting Parties shall cooperate with other States in achieving these aims and support the just aspirations of peoples in **their struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination and for their national liberation.**<sup>3</sup>

### *Article 3*

The High Contracting Parties reaffirm their faith in the **policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence as important factors for easing**

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2 Both sides were keen to sustain their relationship on the high note on which it had been initiated and given the speed with which the war was won and the less than three months it took to sign this agreement, the leaders would have been keen to establish themselves as exemplary neighbours through a broad-based bilateral relationship.

3 The common history of imperial rule remained a concern and was reflected in many subsequent foreign policy overtures. Both wanted to lend support to those that were attempting to overcome similar circumstances with fund support. This provision was also included in the Bangladesh Constitution unlike in the Indian. However, this provision was later misused by certain Bangladeshi leaders to lend support to Indian insurgent groups, many of which were given support to operate against India from Bangladeshi soil. However, the return of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League coalition in 2008 addressed these Indian concerns very comprehensively.

**tension in the world, maintaining international peace and security, and strengthening national sovereignty and independence.** <sup>4</sup>

#### *Article 4*

The High Contracting Parties shall maintain regular contacts with each other on major **international problems affecting the interests of both States, through meetings and exchange of views** at all levels. <sup>5</sup>

#### *Article 5*

The High Contracting Parties shall continue to strengthen and widen their mutually advantageous and all-round cooperation in the economic, scientific and technical fields. The two countries shall develop mutual cooperation in the fields of trade, transport and communications between them on the basis of **the principles of equality, mutual benefit and the most-favoured nation principle.** <sup>6</sup>

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4 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, recognising the importance of NAM, decided to join the movement as early as 1973 at the Algiers' Summit. This summit also provided an opportunity for Mujibur to meet several leaders, including Fidel Castro, Colonel Gaddafi, Marshal Tito, Anwar Sadat and Idi Amin, and many others. He had appealed for defining a comprehensive strategy that would help formulate specific proposals for action in the days ahead and suggested self-reliance and economic cooperation would be the two underlying principles.

5 They both worked together to ensure Bangladesh was recognised by various countries and also to ensure its entry into the United Nations, which China blocked and was only made possible in September 1974. However, by March 1973, Bangladesh was recognised by as many as 98 countries and had obtained economic aid of around \$1,300 million from them. Pakistan refused to recognise Bangladesh until 1974 and China did so only in 1975, post the assassination of Mujibur Rahman.

6 It was important that the immediate neighbours continued to treat each other through the special lens that had made their past cooperation possible. The two sovereign nations would work as equal partners and open up all the physical cross-border transportation facilities as well as bilateral trade. India had helped to restore the railway link between Bongoan (India) and Jessore (Bangladesh). This 43.25 km link began on December 12, 1971 and was completed on December 26, 1971.

### *Article 6*

The High Contracting Parties further agree to make joint studies and take joint action in the fields of **flood control, river basin development and the development of hydro-electric power and irrigation.**<sup>7</sup>

### *Article 7*

The High Contracting Parties shall promote relations in **the fields of art, literature, education, culture, sports and health.**<sup>8</sup>

### *Article 8*

In accordance with the ties of friendship existing between the two countries, each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declare **that it shall not enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party.**<sup>9</sup>

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7 India and Bangladesh had agreed to set up a Joint River Commission to not only do a comprehensive survey of rivers, but also wanted to develop joint projects over 54 common rivers. The common rivers were a core aspect of bilateral ties and continue to be so even today.

8 It was decided in 1972 that a cultural cell should be established to facilitate purposeful cultural exchanges and to keep abreast of cultural movements in Bangladesh, especially those with a secular and democratic content, and project these to West Bengal. At the same time, similar movements from West Bengal would be projected to Bangladesh, (NMML Papers: P.N. Haksar, Subject File 91). While officially this has been an important bilateral aspect, most initiatives and collaborations have taken place due to the people-to-people connect that the neighbours enjoy. Joint film ventures were undertaken, as well as artistes from across the field of art and literature, joined hands in annual book fairs and festivals. India has been a favoured destination for many Bangladeshi school and college students. The trend in recent times is, however, changing.

9 Articles 8 and 9 made this agreement appear to some like a defence pact and was a cause of much criticism from within Bangladesh and outside, the prevailing times and the Cold War wedge necessitated to have clarity on some core security issues and Pakistan and China's refusal to recognise Bangladesh, and their attempts to block Bangladesh from the United Nations and other international opportunities, added to the tense atmosphere. India and China already had a strained relationship, given



Each of the High Contracting Parties shall refrain from any aggression against the other party and shall not allow the use of its territory of committing any act that may cause military damage to or constitute a threat to the security of the other High Contracting Party.<sup>10</sup>

### *Article 9*

Each of the High Contracting Parties shall refrain from giving any assistance to any third-party taking part in an armed conflict against the other party. In case either party is attacked or threatened with attack, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to take appropriate effective measures to eliminate the threat and thus ensure the peace and security of their countries.<sup>11</sup>

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- the 1962 border war and the USA making overtures to China, had further added to the tension. The United States and its western allies openly supported Pakistan during the entire phase of the conflict, although it subsequently lifted the food sanctions against India. The Indo-USA bilateral relationship took longer to improve.
- 10 The sensitivity surrounding this issue made it impossible for the neighbours to work out any defence collaboration for many decades. The decision to give defence assistance to Bangladesh was finalised during Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's visit to Calcutta in February 1972. A total of Rs.20 crore was earmarked for defence assistance to Bangladesh from 1972, out of which Rs.15 crore was allocated to the army, navy and air force, and Rs.5 crore for the paramilitary force, The Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini, (NMML Papers: Subimal Dutt: Subject File75). But it was only in April 2017, that the neighbours signed two defence agreements. Apart from conducting joint exercises and training, the two worked together to address issues of counter-terrorism, natural disasters, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- 11 Given the prevailing mistrust among the key powers, it was imperative that India and Bangladesh maintain their channel of communication and ensure that they do not get drawn in further into Cold War hostility. Also, there was an apprehension of threats emanating from Pakistan and its allies, and, while India and Bangladesh enjoyed Russian support fully, the international environment remained rather tense for the neighbours to be sanguine about the possibility of external threats upsetting the regional balance. The threats were looming. In a letter to Haksar dated

### *Article 10*

Each of the High Contracting Parties solemnly declares that it shall not **undertake any commitment, secret or open, toward one or more States which may be incompatible with the present Treaty.**<sup>12</sup>

### *Article 11*

The present Treaty is **signed for a term of twenty-five years and shall be subject to renewal by mutual agreement of the High Contracting Parties.**<sup>13</sup>

The Treaty shall come into force with immediate effect from the date of its signature.

### *Article 12*

Any differences in interpreting any article or articles of the present Treaty that may arise between the High Contracting Parties shall be settled on a bilateral basis by peaceful means in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

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December 14, 1972, Dutt mentioned that the Muslim Bangla movement has been making rapid headway in Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Reports have also been there that the Pakistanis were training the Razakars who had crossed over to the Arakan after the liberation war, (NMML Papers, Subimal Dutt: Unpublished Papers, File No.73).

- 12 There were a few sections in Bangladesh that voiced some reservations and suspicions about India's role in the war and while the Indian opposition, barring the Left parties, had fully supported the Indian Prime Minister's decision to get involved in the war. Both sides tried to ensure that the next governments would follow the path set out by Indira Gandhi and Mujibur Rahman. Given the drastic developments in Bangladesh following Mujibur's assassination, subsequent Bangladeshi leaders did not follow the agreement in spirit or letter and this was evident.
- 13 Both leaders believed that India and Bangladesh would be steadfast partners and the agreement resonated their ideas for peace and friendship. Indeed, Mujibur Rahman's words (February 8, 1972) "India-Bangladesh friendship will remain intact forever. No power in the world can separate it. Occasionally, some anti-independence, fundamentalist forces try to destroy the relations between the two countries. But their efforts will not succeed because the basis of Bangladesh-India friendly relations is trust and confidence. This relationship is written in the blood through the great liberation war."

Done in Dacca on the nineteenth day of March, nineteen hundred and seventy- two.

Sd/-  
INDIRA GANDHI  
Prime Minister  
for the Republic of India

Sd/-  
SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN  
Prime Minister  
for the People's Republic of  
Bangladesh.



**Joint Communique Issued  
on the Occasion of the Visit to India of  
Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh**

*New Delhi, January 12, 2010*

Reaffirming the shared history, traditional links and the desire of the leaders of the two countries to launch a new phase in their bilateral relations, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina is paying a state visit to India from 10-13 January, 2010 at the invitation of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India. Apart from attending the official programme in New Delhi, the Bangladesh Prime Minister will also visit Ajmer Sharif.

2. The Bangladesh Prime Minister was accorded a ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 11 January 2010. She called on President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil.

3. Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna, Railway Minister Kumari Mamata Banerjee and Leader of the Opposition Smt. Sushma Swaraj called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

4. Reflecting the friendly relations existing between the two neighbouring countries, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in her capacity as President of the Awami League and the Awami League-led Mohajote government also called on Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance. She also met with former Prime Minister Shri I.K. Gujral. The meetings and exchanges were marked by great warmth and cordiality on both sides.

5. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh paid tribute and respect to the memories of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Smt. Indira Gandhi and Shri Rajiv Gandhi at Rajghat, Shantivana, Shaktisthal and Virbhumi respectively.

6. During the visit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was conferred the prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2009 at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

7. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh had a meeting with the Prime Minister of India on January 11, 2010, which was followed by delegation-level talks. The talks were marked by great warmth, deep understanding and a spirit of close friendship between the two sides. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh hosted a banquet in honour of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her accompanying delegation.

8. On the Bangladesh side, assisting the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in the talks were: Mr. Ramesh Chandra Sen, MP, Minister of Water Resources; Dr. Dipu Moni MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Advisers to the Prime Minister Mr. H.T. Imam, Mr. Mashiur Rahman and Mr. Gowher Rizvi; High Commissioner of Bangladesh to India Mr. Tariq A. Karim and other senior officials of the Bangladesh Government.

9. On the Indian side, assisting the Prime Minister of India were: Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Finance Minister; Shri P. Chidambaram, Home Minister; Shri S.M. Krishna, External Affairs Minister; Kumari Mamata Banerjee, Minister of Railways; Shri Anand Sharma, Minister

of Commerce; Smt. Preneet Kaur, Minister of State for External Affairs; Shri M.K. Narayanan, National Security Adviser; Shri T.K.A Nair, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and other senior officials of the Indian Government.

10. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her party's impressive electoral victory in the general elections **held in December 2008 and lauded the people of Bangladesh for their abiding faith in democracy**, which eventually paved the way for return of multi-party democracy in Bangladesh. Both leaders agreed that the recent elections in both countries presented them with a historic opportunity to write a new chapter in their relationship.<sup>14</sup>

11. The Bangladesh Prime Minister recalled the shared bonds of history, culture and aspirations that bind Bangladesh and India, and **paid tribute to the sacred memory of the lives sacrificed for the freedom and independence of the two countries**. She called for rededicating efforts to establish a society free from ignorance, fear and want.<sup>15</sup>

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14 The spectacular victory of the Awami League-led grand coalition in the Ninth Jatiya Sangsad elections held on December 29, 2008, marked a landmark development in the annals of Bangladesh after an interregnum between October 2006 and November 2008. After the completion of the previous BNP-led government between 2001 and 2006, the taking over of the caretaker government (run by the armed forces from behind) gave rise to much speculation. Thus, a return to democracy was a much-awaited event. This offered India a window of opportunity to take bilateral relations to a new trajectory. Sheikh Hasina's New Delhi visit resulted in this joint-communiqué which clearly stated that both sides have decided to closely work on many of the outstanding bilateral issues and to resolve them at the earliest. Without a doubt the general atmosphere was now congenial for both sides to address some of the problems that were plaguing the bilateral relations for a while.

15 India's role in the war was officially acknowledged in Bangladesh and the mutual felicitation programs and events are being now held annually. The Eastern Command as well the Ministry of External Affairs annually hosts Bangladeshi soldiers and their families, while Bangladesh reciprocates fully too.

12. Both the Prime Ministers agreed on a vision for the future in the pursuit of the common good - **bilaterally, regionally and globally**. In this context, they reiterated their commitment to work together to solve all issues through cooperation and mutual understanding. They also shared their outlook on the strengthening and reform of multilateral institutions in which developing countries have an effective voice and participation.<sup>16</sup>

13. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh and the Prime Minister of India recognised that **peace and stability in the region is necessary for development and well-being of the people of their respective countries**. In this context, they emphasized the importance of close cooperation between India and Bangladesh and the need to effectively harness their respective resources for the good of the peoples of the two countries.<sup>17</sup>

14. The two Prime Ministers agreed to put in place a comprehensive framework of cooperation for development between the two countries, encapsulating their mutually shared vision for the future, which would include cooperation **in water resources, power, transportation and connectivity, tourism and education**.<sup>18</sup> They agreed on the need to operationalise the various areas of cooperation at the earliest.

15. Both Prime Ministers agreed to consider **strengthening diplomatic and consular presence in each other's countries**.<sup>19</sup>

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16 This was a new partnership that both embarked on. The relationship transformed from bilateral to regional. Bangladesh and India are part of the sub-regional Bangladesh-India-Nepal Initiative in South Asia as well as in BIMSTEC. Bangladesh has shown interest in joining the trilateral highway India is building to connect Myanmar and Thailand.

17 They endeavoured to work on building peace together in the region alongside showcasing the dividends from joint work to build stability.

18 This was the beginning of the opening up of bilateral engagement in all sectors, many of which have now been implemented and many projects are ongoing. The trade and transit have deepened with robust bilateral collaborations in all of these sectors.

19 Consequently, the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs has offices in Delhi,

16. Both Prime Ministers reiterated their commitment to democracy, pluralism and rule of law. They expressed satisfaction that the people of both countries have rejected **violence, extremism and terrorism and reaffirmed their faith in democracy and development**. In this quest, the two leaders resolved to work together to strengthen the forces of democracy and moderation.<sup>20</sup>

17. Both Prime Ministers condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They noted that security remained a priority for both countries, as terrorists, insurgents and criminals respect no boundaries. They underscored the need for both countries to actively cooperate on security issues. **Both leaders reiterated the assurance that the territory of either would not be allowed for activities inimical to the other and resolved not to allow their respective territory to be used for training, sanctuary and other operations by domestic or foreign terrorist/militant and insurgent organizations and their operatives.**<sup>21</sup>

18. Welcoming the Home Secretary level talks held in New Delhi in December 2009, the two Prime Ministers directed their respective

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Kolkata, Mumbai, Agartala, Guwahati and Chennai. India has a presence in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Chittagong.

20 Bangladesh had witnessed several violent incidents pre-2008 and one of the first measures Sheikh Hasina undertook was to deal with menace of terror. Two homegrown Islamic groups – *Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh* (JMB) and *Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh* (JMJB) -- were responsible for many of the terror attacks within Bangladesh, while the *Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami* Bangladesh (HuJI-B) was behind most of the terror attacks across the borders. This phase had witnessed an assassination attempt on Hasina (August 2004), of senior Awami leader S. M. S. Kibria (January 2005) and nation-wide bomb blasts (August 2005).

21 The Sheikh Hasina government, addressing India's security concerns, enabled a cooperative framework hitherto unexplored. For long, non-Awami League governments had justified Bangladeshi support to Indian insurgents. This trend was completely reversed under Sheikh Hasina. Indeed, immediately after coming to power, the Sheikh Hasina government reopened the Chittagong arms haul case of 2004 and arrested key officials who were responsible for the arms cache that were intended for India. Subsequently, India offered the largest line of credit to initiate many of the joint proposals.

Ministries and agencies to cooperate closely and implement all decisions taken during the talks. **While recognizing the need to check cross border crimes, both Prime Ministers agreed that the respective border guarding forces exercise restraint and underscored the importance of regular meetings** between the border guarding forces to curtail illegal cross border activities and prevent loss of lives.<sup>22</sup>

19. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh thanked the Prime Minister of India for facilitating the **provision of electricity in Dahagram-Angarpota and invited India to construct a flyover across Tin Bigha Corridor for exclusive Indian use**, as agreed earlier.<sup>23</sup>

20. Both Prime Ministers **agreed to comprehensively address all outstanding land boundary issues keeping in view the spirit of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement**. In this context, they agreed to convene the Joint Boundary Working Group to take this process forward.<sup>24</sup>

21. Both Prime Ministers agreed on the need to amicably demarcate the maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh. **They noted**

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22 The common border of 4,096-kilometer (2,545-mile) border that runs through five Indian states of: West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram. The permeable borders have given rise to many concerns. According to recent data from Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and National Crime Record Bureau, 1,115 Bangladeshis were taken into custody near the border for lacking proper permits during 2020, up to mid-December. In the same period, 3,173 people were arrested for attempting to illegally cross the border from India into Bangladesh. Issues of border killings and other security breaches continue which necessitates constant regular meetings and discussions.

23 This was a long pending demand and cleared many of the misgivings of the local population on both sides.

24 India and Bangladesh have settled almost all disputes over the maritime and land boundary between 2014 and 2015. The signing of the protocol in September 2011 paved the way for a Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) between India and Bangladesh in June 2015. Indeed, the lack of a resolution of the border issue had led to several associated problems which assumed critical importance in the previous phase.



**the initiation of proceedings under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and, in this context, welcomed the visit of a delegation from Bangladesh to India.**<sup>25</sup>

22. It was agreed that Ashuganj in Bangladesh and Silghat in India shall be declared ports of call. The IWTT Protocol shall be amended through exchange of letters. A joint team will assess the improvement of infrastructure and the cost **for one-time or longer-term transportation of ODCs (Over Dimensional Cargo) from Ashuganj.** India will make the necessary investment. Both Governments agreed to expedite implementation. Contractors from both countries shall be eligible for the work.<sup>26</sup>

23. It was agreed that **Bangladesh will allow use of Mongla and Chittagong Sea ports for movement of goods to and from India through road and rail. Bangladesh also conveyed their intention to give Nepal and Bhutan access to Mongla and Chittagong ports.**<sup>27</sup>

24. It was agreed that the construction of the proposed Akhaura-Agartala railway link be financed by grant from India. A joint team of

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25 Given the discovery of gas reserves in the Bay of Bengal, it became imperative that both sides delineate their maritime boundaries. The maritime boundary dispute entailed addressing two contentious issues—that of the baselines to demarcate maritime boundaries and the delimitation of maritime boundaries, including the outer limit of the overlapping extended continental shelf. Bangladesh went to the Permanent Court of Arbitration on October 8, 2009, seeking judgment under the dispute clause of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The court conveyed the verdict on July 7, 2014.

26 Bangladesh and India have a long standing and time-tested Protocol on Transit and Trade through inland waterways first signed in 1972, although very underutilised. A port of call is where ships customarily stop for supplies, repairs, or trans-shipment of cargo. The immediate facilitation of the ODC enabled the start of a very robust energy trade between Bangladesh and Northeast India.

27 Thus, transshipment was initiated under this agreement and it was also the initial measure to enable subregional trade. Nepal and Bhutan being landlocked would now have greater trade route access through the ports too.

the railway authorities of the two countries will identify the alignment for connectivity.

25. They welcomed the starting of Maitree Express between Kolkata and Dhaka and called for resumption of road and rail links between the two countries.

26. The Prime Ministers agreed that Rohanpur-Singabad broad gauge railway link would be available for transit to Nepal. Bangladesh informed of their intention to convert Radhikapur - Birol railway line into broad gauge and requested for railway transit link to Bhutan as well.

27. Recognizing the sufferings of the people of both sides in the face of scarcity of lean season flows of the Teesta River, the Prime Ministers expressed that the discussions on the sharing of the Teesta waters between India and Bangladesh should be concluded expeditiously. **The two Prime Ministers directed their respective Water Resources Ministers to convene the Ministerial-level meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission in this quarter of 2010.** The Joint Rivers Commission will also discuss issues relating to Feni, Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar.

28. They also agreed that the following actions be taken:

- a. Dredging of Ichhamati; and
- b. River protection at Mahananda, Karatoa, Nagar, Kulik, Atrai, Dharla and Feni.

29. The Prime Minister of India agreed to support implementation of strategy of Government of Bangladesh to dredge rivers for flood control, navigation and access to ports. In this context, India agreed to provide, inter alia, dredgers to Bangladesh on an urgent basis. Bangladesh indicated the need for 9 (nine) dredgers.

30. The Prime Minister of India reiterated the assurance that India would not take steps on the Tipaimukh project that would adversely impact Bangladesh.

31. The Prime Minister of India agreed to supply to Bangladesh 250 MW electricity from its grid. In this context, both Prime Ministers emphasized the need to expedite inter-grid connectivity. They also agreed that the two countries shall cooperate in development and exchange of electricity, including generation from renewable sources, and may set up joint projects or corporate entities for that purpose.

32. With a view to encouraging imports from Bangladesh, both countries agreed to address removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers and port restrictions and facilitate movement of containerized cargo by rail and water. In this context, Bangladesh welcomed India's initiative to provide duty-free access to SAARC LDCs to the Indian market. Bangladesh also welcomed the reduction of the number of items from India's negative list that were of direct interest to Bangladesh and requested for further reduction in the list.

33. The Prime Minister of India agreed to support the upgradation of the Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute with a view to building capacity on certification.

34. The Prime Ministers agreed that investments, including joint investment and joint ventures, shall be encouraged by both countries. They agreed that the participation of the private sector in both countries will give an added fillip to economic engagement between the two countries.

35. The Prime Ministers agreed to operationalize land customs stations at Sabroom-Ramgarh and Demagiri-Thegamukh, including putting in place necessary infrastructure and issue necessary notifications. Further, with respect to existing land custom stations, it was agreed to take measures for strengthening infrastructure.

36. It was agreed that border haats shall be established on a pilot basis at selected areas, including on the Meghalaya border, to allow trade in specified produces and products and in accordance with the regulations agreed and notified by both Governments.

37. It was agreed that trucks for movement from Bhutan and Nepal be allowed to enter about 200 meters into Zero Point at Banglabandh at Banglabandh-Phulbari land customs station. Necessary arrangements shall be mutually agreed and put in place by both countries.

38. The Prime Minister of India announced a line of credit of US\$ 1 billion for a range of projects, including railway infrastructure, supply of BG locomotives and passenger coaches, rehabilitation of Saidpur workshop, procurement of buses including articulate buses and dredging projects.<sup>28</sup>

39. Bangladesh requested for assistance to construct road infrastructure in Dhaka, including flyovers. India agreed to consider this request.<sup>29</sup>

40. Recalling the shared legacy of the great poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore, the Prime Ministers agreed to oversee the joint celebrations of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in 2011 in a manner befitting his vision and spirit.<sup>30</sup>

41. Government of India would offer Bangladesh 300 scholarships annually for a period of five years for study and training in universities

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28 This was the beginning of a gamut of bilateral infrastructural collaboration between the neighbours that in the past India was unable to initiate.

29 It opened up the vista of cooperation. Earlier India did not have any scope to collaborate in many such sectors.

30 Bangladesh and India held joint celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. His poetry had been adopted as their respective national anthems. Many programs were held, including some publications on their common cultural icon. Earlier, there were no formal collaboration although, people-to-people contact, especially over Tagore, existed for long.

and training institutions in India, covering a wide range of disciplines as may be required by scholars and persons in government employment. The number may be increased through mutual consultation.<sup>31</sup>

42. Both Prime Ministers underscored the role of SAARC in promoting regional cooperation. **Both leaders agreed to work together in making SAARC a purposeful organization oriented towards implementation, which can revitalize the region through positive measures, concerted action and mutually reinforcing cooperation.**<sup>32</sup>

43. Both leaders welcomed the various steps taken to strengthen regional cooperation under BIMSTEC. **In this context, Bangladesh requested India to support its aspiration to host the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka.** India agreed to give the request due consideration.<sup>33</sup>

44. The two Prime Ministers welcomed **the initiatives taken at the Climate Change Summit at Copenhagen in December 2009.** They underlined that climate change was one of the most important global challenges. They reaffirmed the provisions and principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including that of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and underscored the importance of its full, effective and sustained implementation, giving due consideration to the

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31 For long, India was a favoured destination for Bangladeshi students, although now, the percentage of students coming to India has significantly dropped, especially at the school level.

32 Bangladesh had proposed the idea of SAARC, so they always wished to see it flourish. But given the developments in the region, regional cooperation remains stagnant although, as the SAARC charter had suggested, sub-regional cooperation has shown greater prospects.

33 This was duly set up and the first secretary general was from Sri Lanka, followed by Bangladesh and presently the position is held by Bhutan. India has been keen to encourage BIMSTEC and Bangladesh has been a willing partner.

needs of those which are most vulnerable, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Africa.<sup>34</sup>

45. Both leaders recognized **that the eradication of poverty and ensuring food security were great challenges of the century.**<sup>35</sup> They agreed that the international community should initiate a fully coordinated response and address these issues in a comprehensive manner, from short to medium and long term. They also recognized the need to give added focus on rural development policies, transfer and diffusion of technology and development, in particular to enhance agricultural productivity.

46. The Prime Ministers underscored the importance of an effective multilateral system, centered on a strong United Nations, as a key factor in tackling global challenges. In this context, they stressed the urgent need to pursue the reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council, to make it more representative, credible and effective, particularly with regard to its working method. They also advocated involvement of smaller countries in the reform process.

47. Responding to the Prime Minister of India, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh conveyed her country's support in principle for India's candidature for the permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council as and when the reform of the UN Security Council is achieved. Bangladesh conveyed its support to the Indian Candidature for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC for the term 2011-2012. India

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34 India and Bangladesh share deep climate and environmental concerns. In the latest COP 26, Bangladesh and India pointed out that the mobilisation of climate finance should be stepped up. This issue is discussed bilaterally, while at larger fora, they are often speaking through a common voice.

35 Both have made considerable progress in reducing poverty levels through various measures and would benefit from best practices adopted by each other. Both sides, however, need to work more deeply on agricultural complementarities. Water and land usage has to be effectively managed on both sides and the prism has to be one of sharing equitably.

also conveyed its support to the Bangladesh's candidature for a non-permanent seat in UNSC for the term 2016-2017.

48. The two Prime Ministers witnessed the signing in their presence of the following accords:

- a. **Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters**
- b. **Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons**
- c. **Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking<sup>36</sup>**
- d. **Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Power Sector<sup>37</sup>**
- e. **Cultural Exchange Programme<sup>38</sup>**

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36 Of the five agreements signed during Sheikh Hasina's visit to India, three were directly related to security. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sent a clear message that Dhaka was cognisant of India's security concerns. For years, India was uncomfortable with Bangladesh being a cause of cross-border security concern. While Bangladesh accused India, a larger neighbour, of behaving in a churlish manner, this communique was a break from the past. The new Awami League cabinet not only approved the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Ordinance, promulgated by the caretaker government on June 9, 2008 into law, but also initiated several measures to address the menace of terror faced by Bangladesh. It also set up a 17-member task force to study measures to counter militancy.

37 Energy trade between India and Bangladesh has been transformational. Beginning with a grid connection that gave power to Bangladesh from West Bengal and Tripura, there has been much progress. Presently, there is the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline from Siliguri to Parbatipur in Bangladesh for the supply of high-speed diesel. India has invested nearly USD 24.26 million in two shallow water blocks (SS04 & SS09) in Bangladesh.

38 This aspect continues to be one of the most robust bilateral engagements although, much of the activities have happened without any formal or official support. Music, dance, films, poetry and theatre all resonate equally between Bangladesh and India's West Bengal.

The Prime Ministers also expressed the desire that Line of Credit and the comprehensive framework of cooperation for development be operationalized at the earliest.

49. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh thanked the Prime Minister of India and the Indian Government and people for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to her and the members of her delegation during their stay in India.

50. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, on behalf of herself, her Government and the people of Bangladesh, extended her warm invitation to the Prime Minister of India and Mrs. Manmohan Singh to visit Bangladesh at a mutually convenient time. The Prime Minister of India thanked the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and accepted the invitation with great pleasure. The dates for the visit would be decided by mutual consultations through diplomatic channels.

**New Delhi**

**January 12, 2010**



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## SECTION III

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# A Short Chronology: 1971 Liberation War

*by Cchavi Vasisht, Aakriti Vinayak*

• 1940, March 22 to 24 - Annual 27th Session of the All-India Muslim League held at Lahore. At the session, Muhammad Ali Jinnah delivered his infamous speech, which is often cited as “Two Nations Theory”. He added:

“Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literature. They neither inter-marry nor inter-dine together, and, indeed, they belong to two different civilisations that are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their concepts on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes, and different episodes. Very often, the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.” He further claimed, “Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of nationhood. We wish our people to develop to the fullest spiritual, cultural, economic, social, and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people”.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Address by Mohammad Ali Jinnah at Lahore Session of Muslim League, March, 1940 (Islamabad: Directorate of Films and Publishing, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 1983), pp. 5-23. URL: [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt\\_jinnah\\_lahore\\_1940.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_jinnah_lahore_1940.html)

- **1946, April** - Suhrawardy was sworn in as Bengal's Chief Minister. Under whom the Muslim League won the only provincial elections. His term was famous for the "Great Calcutta Killings."
- **1946, August 16** - Witnessed severe communal clashes between Muslims and Hindus.
- **1947, August 25** - Food situation in East Pakistan serious due to recent floods.
- **1948, March 11** - Mujibur Rehman was arrested while leading a language demonstration.
- **1949, March 24** - Jinnah reasserted that there can be only one Lingua Franca and that language "must obviously be Urdu" at the occasion of Tagore University convocation at Curzon Hall.
- **1950, September 28** - The Basic Principles Committee submitted its first interim report. An objection was raised in East Pakistan to the choice of Urdu as the official language to the exclusion of Bengali. Hartal by students against BPC's decision and demonstrations were taken. A University Committee on National Language was set up.
- **1950, November 24** - Thirteen Bengali members of the Muslim League Assembly Party issued a joint statement demanding internal autonomy for East Bengal.
- **1951** - According to the census, the distribution of languages groups is as follows:

Language group	Percentage of total population	Language group	Percentage of total population
Bengali	54.6	Urdu	7.2
Punjabi	28.4	Sindhi	5.8
Pushta	7.1	English	1.8

- **1952, February 21** - Demonstrations against the Basic Committee Report, which did not grant official status to the Bengali language. 19 students and many other people killed in police firings

- **1953, September** - Abul Kasem Fazlul Huq, also known as the “Tiger of Bengal,” who had in 1940 moved the Lahore Resolution calling for a separate land for the Indian Muslims about to gain independence from the British Raj, forms his own Krishak Sramik Party (the Peasant and Labor Party).

- **1954, March 15** - Section 92 A promulgated in East Pakistan on the expiry of the Provincial Legislative Assembly.

- **1954, March 19** - The United Front, led by HS Suhrawardy of the Awami League Party and Fazlul Haq of Krishak Sramik Party, won the provincial elections and formed the government.

- **1954, April 20** - The Muslim League Party in the Constituent Assembly decided that Urdu and Bengali should be the state languages of Pakistan and that English should continue as an official language for another 20 years.

- **1954, May 17** - Premier Muhammad Ali described the East Pakistani disturbances as a “foreign conspiracy.”

- **1954, May 31** - The United Front Government was dismissed, and Governor’s rule was proclaimed. Fazlul Huq was placed under house arrest, and Mujibur Rehman, Minister for co-operation in his government, was arrested.

- **1954, August 04** - Millions were affected due to floods in East Pakistan.

- **1955, October** - The West Pakistan Bill passed; East Bengal was renamed East Pakistan.

- **1956, February** - The first Constitution of Pakistan is adopted. Pakistan becomes the Islamic Republic, with a President replacing the position of the Governor-General.

- **1957, March** - Governor Gurmani declares presidential rule in West Pakistan.

- **1957, May** - Sheikh Mujib resigned from the cabinet in response to a resolution of the Party to strengthen the organization by working for it full-time.

- **1958, June 24** - President rule enforced in East Pakistan.

- **1958, September 04** - the National Assembly passed a bill for elections on February 15, 1959.

- **1958, October 07** - President Mirza abrogated the Constitution and declared martial law in Pakistan. General Ayub Khan was made the Chief Martial Law Administrator.

- **1958, October 27** - President Mirza was cast out by General Ayub Khan, who assumed the presidency, and the very next day, he proclaimed an American-type cabinet with no Prime Minister.

- **1959, October** - On the first anniversary of 'his revolution' President Ayub Khan promulgated an ordinance to set up "basic democracies," or small units of local self-government in the country. There would be around 120000 such units, each representing 1000 to 15000 citizens. "Democracy has been brought to the very doorstep of the people," he said.

- **1960, January 13** - The President promulgated an order calling for the election commission to hold a secret ballot among the 30,000 elected members of the basic democracy.

- **1960, January 21-28** - President Ayub visited East Pakistan. Speaking at Dhaka University, he talked of oneness and a common ideology.

- **1960, February 14** - President Ayub received the vote of confidence from 80,000 electors.

- **1960, April 15** - lieutenant-General Azam Khan was sworn in as Governor of East Pakistan.

- **1960, July 25** - President Ayub warned the people of East Pakistan of dangers emanating from the Communist political strongholds in Calcutta.

- **1960, August 06** – The Governor of East Pakistan warned about food shortages in East Pakistan and stated that it was communism's most vulnerable attack on the economic front.

- **1960, September 12** - Mujibur Rahman was convicted on the charge of criminal misconduct and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment.

- **1960, October 10** - Cyclone hits East Pakistan killing 3000 people. Another cyclone hit on October 31, killing over 20,000 people.

- **1962, January 20** - President Ayub stated that he would use American arms supplied under the US Mutual Security Act in the event of any threat to Pakistan.

- **1962, January 30** - Suhrawardy was arrested under the Security Act.

- **1961, June 14** - Government takes over the news agency, Associated Press of Pakistan (APP).

- **1962, February 06** - In Dhaka, more than 2000 University students rioted and called for an end to martial law in Pakistan.

- **1962, February 08** - Mujibur Rahman, general secretary of Awami League, was arrested along with 128 persons for defying the ban on public meetings and demonstrations.

- **1962, March 01** - President Ayub announced a new Constitution of Pakistan. The Pakistan Constitution for Basic Democracy also accorded recognition to the Bengali language as a state language of Pakistan at par with Urdu.

- **1962, June 08** - Martial Law ended in Pakistan, and a new National Assembly was sworn in.

- **1962, September 22** - Police opened fire on students in Mirsarai, East Pakistan, observing 'protest day', a nationwide expression of disapproval of education reforms.
- **1962, September 25** - leaders of the united front, NAP, Jamaat, and others decided to go ahead with the formation of the National Democratic Front (NDF) under the leadership of Suhrawardy.
- **1962, September 29** - President Ayub denounced Pakistan politicians for the formation of NDF and called them opponents of the Constitution.
- **1962, October 07** - in Dhaka, Suhrawardy called for a grass-roots campaign to bring pressure on Ayub to permit a 'democratic constitution.'
- **1962, October 25** - Abdul Moin appointed Governor of East Pakistan in place of Ghulam Farooq
- **1963, September 03** - East Pakistan issued an ordinance similar to the one issued in West Pakistan restricting the press "to issue a corrected reporting of proceedings in National Assembly provincial assembly and courts of justice."
- **1964, March 19** - Demonstrations in Dacca and Karachi were demanding direct elections for the country's presidency and legislative assemblies.
- **1964, September 11** - Three opposition papers asked not to publish certain news about students for a month.
- **1964, November 07** - Mujibur Rehman, leader of combined opposition parties, was arrested on unspecified charges of sedition but later released.
- **1965, March 23** - President Ayub was sworn in for a second term (Ayub defeated Miss Jinnah)



- **1966, February 05** - In Lahore, Mujib revealed the six-point formula for regional autonomy for the federating provinces of Pakistan. Alongside regional autonomy, a significant thrust of the six-point was to regionalise economic management. The six points of the formula were: 1) a form of the federal government, a parliamentary system directly elected by one-person-one-vote, 2) two separate reserve banks and currencies for the two wings of Pakistan, 3) Other than defence and foreign policy, all issues will be dealt by the federal provinces, 4) a paramilitary force for East Pakistan, 5) fiscal affairs, much as taxation and resources allocation, will be a state responsibility, and, 6) monetary and trade policies, such as foreign reserve maintenance and establishing trade links, will be handled separately by the two wings.

- **1966, March 16** - President Ayub warned against the six-point programme of the opposition and stated that the dream to achieve greater sovereign Bengal would turn east Pakistan people into slaves.

- **1966, March 20** - At the closing session of the Muslim League Council, President Ayub warned of a civil war.

- **1966, April 18** - Sheikh Mujibur was arrested and released later.

- **1966, May 09** - Sheikh Mujibur rearrested under emergency regulations.

- **1966, June 07** - Vast violent demonstrations in East Pakistan in support of regional autonomy; police clashes were reported in Dacca and Narayanganj. Following this, the parties in East Bengal formulated a Six Point Programme to form a Shadow Government.

- **1967, February 02** - Opposition leaders of East Pakistan formed a united front for gaining regional autonomy for East Pakistan.

- **1967, April 27** - Mujibur Rahman was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment.

- **1967, December 03** - Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) was formed to fight against the anti-Ayub dictatorship.

- **1967, December 17** - Shahabuddin Report on Regional Disparities submitted to the national assembly.
- **1968, January 06** - 28 people, including a naval officer arrested on the charge of conspiracy of talking about the succession of East Pakistan. It was also reported that the conspirators were in touch with the first secretary of the Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Dacca to discuss the plans.
- **1968, January 18** - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was interested and implicated in the Agartala conspiracy case. He was charged with trying to establish independent East Bengal with Indian help
- **1968, June 19** - Agartala conspiracy case - trial of 35 persons including Sheikh Mujibur opened in Dacca accused of plotting to deprive Pakistan of its sovereignty over parts of its territory with the armed revolt and the funds and weapons for the same was provided by India.
- **1968, July 18** - Seventeen East Pakistani districts engulfed by the cyclone.
- **1968, December 07** - Anti-Ayub demonstrations spread in East Pakistan as the National Awami Party called for a general strike in Dacca.
- **1968, December 13** - Police opened fire at Chittagong in unruly crowds.
- **1969, January 04** – Shorbodolio Chatro Shongram Porishad (The All-Party Student Action Committee) put forth its 11-point agenda.
- **1969, January 08** - The leaders of eight opposition parties formed the Democratic Action Committee. They demanded the restoration of democracy and direct elections based on universal adult franchise, full autonomy for East Pakistan, transfer of all powers of the central

government except defence, foreign affairs, and foreign exchange, the introduction of a separate currency for East Pakistan, introduction of separate armed forces or paramilitary forces and ordinance factory, naval headquarters in East Pakistan and also the establishment of sub-federal units in West Pakistan by giving full autonomy to Baluchistan. Furthermore, it demanded the release of all political prisoners and the adornment of the Agartala conspiracy case.

- **1969, January 17** - Democratic Action Committee observed a protest, and demonstrations were held across the country.
- **1969, January 20** - Student activist Asaduzzaman dies as the police open fire on demonstrators.
- **1969, January 24** - the Central Strike paralysed East Pakistan; in Dacca, more than 10,000 students and workers stormed the government secretariat. Matiur, a teenage activist, is gunned down by the police.
- **1969, January 30** - Maulana Bhassani, leader of National Awami Party and over 1000 persons of the party, were arrested.
- **1969, February 01** - President Ayub announced that he would discuss changes in the Constitution with the representatives of “responsible opposition parties.”
- **1969, February 07** - Awami League stated that it would not take part in the talks unless Sheikh Mujibur Rahman represented it, and later on February 16, President Ayub agreed that Sheikh Mujibur would be allowed to attend the talks
- **1969, February 15** - Sergeant Jahurul Haq, one of the convicts of the Agartala Conspiracy Case, is assassinated in the prison of Kurmitola Cantonment, which was followed by violent demonstrations.
- **1969, February 21** - President Ayub declared his decision not to seek re-election for Presidentship.

- **1969, February 22** - There was the withdrawal of the Agartala Conspiracy Case, and the government freed all the political prisoners, including Mujibur. Mujibur Rahman has been imprisoned since May 8, 1966, under the Defence of Pakistan Rules; Mujib had gone through the trauma of a trial in which he and thirty-four other Bengalis (men in the armed forces and the civil administration) had been charged with conspiracy to bring about the secession of East Pakistan from the rest of Pakistan through an armed revolt. It was put about by the regime of Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan that Mujib had travelled to Agartala in India to solicit Indian support for his scheme of breaking up Pakistan. 1969, February 26 - the conference between President Ayub Khan and the opposition leaders opened in Rawalpindi and was later adjourned till March 10.

- **1969, February 23** - Mujib addressed a million-strong crowd of Bengalis at the Race Course (now Suhrawardy Udyan) in Dhaka. Student leader Tofail Ahmed extolled him as Bangabandhu, a friend of Bengal. The new honour accorded to Mujib was accepted by acclamation.

- **1969, February 24** - Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman flew to Rawalpindi at the head of an Awami League team to participate in the round table conference.

- **1969, March 10-13** - Round Table Conference resumed its deliberations. The eight parties constituting the Democratic Action Committee agreed on two points - forming the federal Parliamentary system with regional autonomy and the election of the national and provincial assemblies by the direct adult franchisee. By the end of the session, on March 13, President Ayub agreed that the legislation to restore parliamentary government would be introduced soon.

- **1969, March 25** - Ayub Khan resigned and handed over power to General Yahya Khan, the Army Chief of Staff, proclaiming martial

law. Major General Muzzafar-ud-Din was given in charge of East Pakistan.

- **1969, March 27** - The military government cracks down on violators. And Sheikh Mujibur announced plans for a federal setup.
- **1969, March 31** - Government bans all political activities.
- **1969, April 01** - Yahya assumes Presidency.
- **1969, April 24** - Yahya flew to Dacca and met political leaders Mujibur Lehman, Hamidul Haq, and Masihur Rehman.
- **1969, July 03** - Government proposal to replace English with Bengali and Urdu as the official languages.
- **1969, July 22** - Yahoo announces the appointment of an election commissioner to prepare for elections within 12-18 months.
- **1969, August 09** - Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Abdus Sattar, a Pakistani, took office.
- **1969, August 11** - seven civilians were sworn in as Ministers, and three more were added later. Yahya retained with himself Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Planning.
- **1969, August 27** - A Presidential Order provided for the preparation of Electoral Rolls.
- **1969, September 01** - Admiral S M Ahsan appointed Governor of East Pakistan.
- **1969, November 28** - Yahoo addressed the nation to restore a federal parliamentary system and fixed October 05, for elections in the National Assembly.
- **1969, December 05** - Sheikh Mujib declared at a discussion meeting that henceforth, East Pakistan would be called Bangladesh.

- **1970, January 01** - Ban on political parties lifted.
- **1970, March 07** - Bangabandhu called for independence. In a speech at the Racecourse Maidan (Suhrawardy Udyan), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman urged his fellow countrymen to take all-out preparations for the war of liberation and independence of Bangladesh.
- **1970, March 29** - Texts of President Yahya Khan's Address to the nation - The Legal Framework Order laid down the fundamental principles to be incorporated in the new Constitution. Pakistan would be the Federal Islamic Republic. Out of 313 members of the National Assembly, East Pakistan was allocated 162 seats and seven seats reserved for women.
- **1970, May 07** - Awami League Manifesto was declared, largely based on the demand of the six-point program.
- **1970, June 02** - Sheikh Mujib threatened, "I will proclaim independence and call for guerilla action if the Army tries to stop me. It is primarily fear of communist exploitation, a Vietnam-type situation which has kept me, patient, this long."
- **1970, June 30** – Suhrawardy dies of unnatural reasons.
- **1970, July 15** - Electoral rolls published.
- **1970, August 15** - Elections in East Pakistan postponed to December due to floods. the decision was criticised by Mujib and Bhutto.
- **1970, September 02** - Elections are postponed until December 7 in view of cyclones in East Pakistan.
- **1970, November** - Bhola Cyclone in East Pakistan - Up to 500,000 people lost their lives in the storm, primarily due to the storm surge that flooded much of the low-lying islands of the Ganges Delta. The Pakistani government led by junta leader General Yahya Khan was severely criticised for its delayed handling of the relief operations

following the storm, both by local political leaders in East Pakistan and in the international media.

- **1970, November 27:** While few leaders in East Pakistan demanded postponement of polls, however, Awami League demanded that polls be held on schedule.

- **1970, December 04** - Yahya announced that martial law would remain supreme till there was a transfer of power.

- **1970, December 07** - General Elections in Pakistan- landslide victory of the Awami League. The Awami League won 167 of 169 East Pakistan seats in the National Assembly. It also won 288 of the 300 provincial assembly seats in East Pakistan.

- **1970, December 09** - Maulana Bhashani stated that he would launch a movement for the separation of East Pakistan.

- **1970, December 19** - Mujibur Rehman stated that there could be no constitution except on the basis of the six-point programme.

- **1970, December 22** - Bhutto stated that there were chances for the formation of the coalition government with the Awami League and the People's party.

- **1970, December 29** - Yahya concedes Mujib's demand to hold a National Assembly session in Dacca.

- **1971, January 09** - Leaders of East Pakistan to agree on the five-point programme

- **1971, January 12** - Yahya Khan had talks with Mujib and others. He described the talks as satisfactory and referred to Mujibur Rahman as the future Prime Minister. In mid-January 1971, India's external intelligence agency, the Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW), prepared a detailed assessment of the situation.

- **1971, January 17** - Yahya meets Bhutto for a resolution of understanding between two parties.

- **1971, January 29** - Constitution talks between Mujibur Rahman and Bhutto flounder on the autonomy issue.

- **1971, January 31** - IAC plane hijacked and later blown - and two days later, India banned overflights by Pakistan military planes. Mujib condemned the blowing of the plane and called for a probe. However, Bhutto claimed that Pakistan was not responsible for the act.

- **1971, February 13** - Yahya fixes March 03 for the national assembly session.

- **1971, February 15-16** - While Mujib reiterates the demand over the six-point programme, Bhutto stated that his party would attend the session only if there was a scope of adjustment over the six-point programme. And the very next day, Mujib re-emphasised that the people of “Bangladesh” could no longer be suppressed.

- **1971, February 21** - Yahya Khan dissolves his cabinet.

- **1971, February 28** - Bhutto seeks postponement of the National Assembly inaugural session.

- **1971, March 01** - Yahya postpones the national assembly session as Bhutto threatened a mass movement from Khyber to Karachi if the national assembly session is held without the participation of the Pakistan People’s Party. He also raised concerns about India’s tension, which further complicated the situation. The very same day, martial law was reinstated, and Vice Admiral Ahsan was removed from the governorship of East Pakistan.

- **1971, March 02** - Indian Prime Minister ordered a committee comprising Cabinet Secretary K. Swaminathan, Haksar, Kaul, Kao, and Home Secretary Govind Narain to “examine the issue of giving help to Bangladesh and give their assessment to the PM [Prime Minister].”

- **1971, March 03** - Mujib calls upon people to stop all communication systems and direct people not to pay tax or any form of rent or cooperate with the anti-people government. He, therefore,



asked people to resort to non-cooperation. He further asked the martial law administrators to hand over power to the elected representatives of people before March 05.

- **1971, March 05** - Deputy High Commissioner of India (K. C. Sen Gupta) approached by Tajuddin Ahmad, Awami League's General Secretary. He inquired about the prospect of Indian assistance in the event of a Pakistani attack on East Bengal.

- **1971, March 06** - President Yahya announces the National Assembly session to meet on March 25. Later in the day, Mujib refused to attend the session if the martial law was not lifted and the troops were returned to the barracks.

- **1971, March 08** - Civil Disobedience Movement launched. Following Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speech on March 07, 1971, East Pakistan organised a general strike. Meanwhile, West Pakistan increased its military presence in East Pakistan from 25,000 to 60,000, readying itself for suppressing the growing Bengali independence movement by force.

- **1971, March 09** - East Pakistan judges refused to swear in Lieutenant General Tikka Khan as Governor.

- **1971, March 10** - Expatriate Bengali students demonstrate in front of the United Nations Headquarters and call for UN intervention to end violence on Bengali people.

- **1971, March 14** - Central government issues ultimatum asking workers to return to work by March 15; K. C. Sen Gupta in Dhaka had met Captain Sujat Ali, an emissary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman after the Indian High Commission could not give a response during the earlier meeting.

- **1971, March 15** - Mujib announces the unilateral declaration of autonomy and issues 35 directives to East Pakistanis, and Yahya Khan arrives in Dacca and begins talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

- **1971, March 19** - Gen Tikka announces inquiry into army killings. However, Mujib rejects the inquiry offer; Mujib's message to Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi was conveyed through intelligence conduits for secrecy.

- **1971, March 21** - Bhutto arrives in Dacca and confers with Yahya Khan.

- **1971, March 22** - Inauguration of National Assembly postponed.

- **1971, March 23** - Bangabandhu unfurled the flag of Bangladesh before a large crowd gathered before his Dhanmondi Road-32 residence.

- **1971, March 24** - Yahya Khan and Mujibur Rahman met on March 16 and 24, none of which brought about any resolution. Pakistan Army opens fire on Bengali demonstrators in Syedpur, Rangpur, and Chittagong. More than a thousand people are killed.

- **1971, March 25** - Awami League indicates Constitution talks are deadlocked; more killings reported, and Yahoo leaves for Karachi and gives Army a free hand to eradicate the Awami League.

- **1971, March 26** - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed East Pakistan as a Sovereign Independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh. Later, Yahya charged him with treason and called him and his followers as enemies of Pakistan. The Awami League was completely banned as a political party.

- **1971, March 25 to May 25** - Operation Searchlight - The original plan for Operation Searchlight envisioned taking control of the major cities on March 26, 1971, and then eliminating all opposition, political or military, within one month. It failed as the Pakistani planners did not anticipate a prolonged Bengali resistance.

- **1971, March 26** - Indira Gandhi met with the leaders of the opposition parties and explained her plans.

- **1971, March 27** - Following the military crackdown in East Pakistan, India decided to get involved in Bangladesh's liberation fight. Indira Gandhi, India's prime minister, spoke out in Lok Sabha on March 27, 1971.

- **1971, March 31** - Indira Gandhi introduced a resolution in Parliament sharply condemning the military action, calling for a halt to the bloodshed, which he described as "genocide" and promised wholehearted sympathy and support for the people of "East Bengal." Deliberations in New Delhi were lent urgency by the news that Tajuddin Ahmad had crossed over to India in the early hours of March 30 and was later taken to a BSF safehouse. In Delhi, Tajuddin Ahmed met other Awami League activists who had made their way to the Indian capital separately. Following consultations with M. R. Siddiqi, Sirajul Haque, Abdur Rauf, Rehman Sobhan, and Anisur Rahman, Tajuddin decided to present himself as a duly elected government member and had declared Bangladesh independent.

- **1971, April 03-04** - Indira Gandhi met Tajuddin Ahmad at her residence office. Tajuddin informed the Prime Minister that the Pakistan army had arrested Mujib. In these meetings, Indira Gandhi offered support along the lines that had already been decided. Arms and ammunition, communication and broadcasting equipment, civil supplies and medicines, and safe passage and transit arrangements were among them.

- **1971, April 13** - Independent, Provisional Government of Bangladesh, sworn in and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was named President of a six-member government and Tajuddin Ahmed as the Prime Minister.

- **1971, April 17**, Awami League leaders convened in Meherpur and proclaimed an independent Bangladesh. The oath-taking ceremony of the Mujibnagar Government took place in the absence of Bangabandhu.

- **1971, May 24** - Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi publicly threatened Pakistan in Parliament.
- **1971, June 02** - The Bangla Desh government set up five zones, each under the nodal officer, for administrative purposes.
- **1971, June 06** - Syed Nazrul Islam, acting President of Bangladesh, stated four conditions for a political settlement with Pakistan - unconditional release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; withdrawal of the invading Pakistani Army, recognition of the sovereign Republic of Bangla Desh, and compensation for the losses suffered by the people.
- **1971, June 07** - Pakistan demonetised its currency under the ordinance; Currency notes bearing the inscriptions 'Jai Bangla', 'Bangladesh' and 'Dacca' were also demonetized.
- **1971, June-July** – Mr. Phani Mazumdar, leader of the three-member Bangla Desh Parliamentary delegation, appealed to the people of India to give immediate recognition to Bangla Desh. India started to have its total involvement with the Bangladesh Liberation War. During this period, the Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters) recruitment was intensified. India started giving them training and providing them with arms and ammunition to fight against the strong regular Army of Pakistan.
- **1971, June 08** - a special military court sentenced five people to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment, including acting president Mr. Nazrul Islam and the prime minister Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed and others.
- **1971, June 12** - Bangladesh roving Ambassador MA Sanad appealed to allow the Bangladeshi representative to present their case before United Nations. He stated that President Yahya Khan was misleading the world about the real state of affairs.
- **1971, June 18** - the World Bank recommended an indefinite postponement of aid Pakistan consortium meeting.

- **1971, June 23** - the Bangladesh government stated that the act of the USA to continue the sale of US arms to Pakistan is a stern blow to the 'bleeding people of Bangladesh', and this would create a sense of disillusionment with the free world, particularly the USA.

- **1971, June 28** - President Yahya Khan discloses the new constitution plans; Bangla Desh, Home Minister, and others later criticised this as a 'hoax.'

- **1971, July 02** - Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan appealed to the people of Pakistan to consider whether they should support the oppressive Yahya regime or the East Pakistan people. Bangladesh's political leaders rejected President Yahya's framing of the Constitution. Further, the foreign minister of Bangla Desh stated that after the June 28 speech of President Yahya Khan, there is no possibility of compromise.

- **1971, July 11** - Bangla Desh forces set up, with Col. M.A.G. Osmani as Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) with the status of Cabinet Minister, Lt. Col., Abdur Rabb as Chief of Staff (COS), Group Captain A K Khandker as Deputy Chief of Staff (DCOS) and Major A R Chowdhury as Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS). The Mukti Bahini forces numbered 30,000 regular soldiers (including three brigades containing eight infantry battalions and three artillery batteries) and at least 100,000 guerrillas by December 1971. News reports have documented the rise of guerrillas within Dacca and their attacks on the Pakistani Army. The power transmitters were blasted, and rail and roadways were disrupted. Mukti Bahini became more disciplined and organised and liberated considerable parts of Bangla Desh.

- **1971, July 12** - World Bank mission headed by Mr. Peter Corgill fact-finding tour of East Bengal stated that the situation in East Bengal was far from normal. The report recommended against giving international development assistance to Pakistan.

- **1971, July 15** - the National Awami Party and eight other leftist parties, including the Communist Party of East Bengal, formed

Bangla Desh national liberation struggle coordination committee. The immediate objective of this force is to work for the success of the liberation struggle.

- **1971, July 19** - President Yahya Khan told the correspondent of the Financial Times that he would declare war on India if India attempted to seize any part of East Pakistan. He also agreed to have the international body of the UN observers in East Bengal supervise the return of refugees from India.

- **1971, July 19** - Bangla Desh proposed to set up its own Air Force and a naval wing to intensify its military activity. The Mukti Force has been renamed as Mukti Bahini.

- **1971, July 22** - Mr. Bhutto conceded for the first time that a delay in return to normal civilian rule in the eastern wing could be fatal to West Pakistan. Also, he highlighted that the state of Pakistan's economy was miserable, and 70 percent of the budget was spent on the military. Another example of a miserable economic condition is that the military regime could only raise 5 percent of the 16 crores total land revenue in Bangladesh. About 157 major road routes and railway bridges and around a thousand minor bridges were blown up. The Pakistan troops resorted to river craft and ships for the movement of troops; however, these two were destroyed by the Mukti Bahini in different parts of Bangla Desh. The organised and armed detachments of Mukti Bahinis were also severely beaten by superior Pakistani forces in frontal encounters. However, the Pakistan Army, largely made up of West Pakistan men, finds itself completely bogged down and is also not used to fighting in the heavy monsoon conditions prevailing in Bangladesh. While the Mukti Bahini forces were asked to step up the attacks and the commanders warned against any complacency.

- **1971, July 27** - Pakistan education authorities ordered that all textbooks of Pakistan be screened to conform with the ideology of Pakistan as a Muslim nation.

- **1971, July 29** - President Yahya Khan took the first steps towards reducing the Awami league into a minority in the National Assembly. He sent the Chief Election Commissioner to East Bengal to screen the Awami league members.

- **1971, August 01** - the United States and Pakistan reached an accord to post 153 United Nations experts in East Bengal. The Concert for Bangladesh was organised by Bengali musicians Ravi Shankar and George Harrison to raise international awareness and fund relief efforts for refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) following the 1970 Bhola cyclone and support the liberation for Bangladesh.

- **1971, August 03** - Yahya Khan refused to give any assurance that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman would not be executed after a military court had tried him for high treason.

- **1971, August 04** - all Bengali diplomats in the Pakistan embassy in Washington and the Pakistan Mission at the United Nations in Marseille transferred their loyalty to Bangladesh. On the other hand, the Pakistan government released a white paper and raised allegations that India conspired to break Pakistan. It also accused India of collusion with the Awami League. On the following day, President Yahya Khan threatened to go on a war with India if any attempt was made to take away a chunk of East Pakistan territory.

- **1971, August 05** - the Bangladesh government received information about an autonomous movement in Sind called the Mohajirstan movement.

- **1971, August 08** - Sino-American détente through the mediation of Pakistan prompted the Soviet Union to sign the defence pact, which promised Soviet military assistance to India in case of an attack or threat by a third party.

- **1971, August 19** - Pakistani military authorities disqualified more than two-thirds of the Awami league members elected to the East Bengal assembly.

- **1971, August 27** - First diplomatic mission of Bangla Desh outside India was formally inaugurated in London.

- **1971, August 30** - Bangladesh Mission opens in Delhi. The mission will have no diplomatic status until India recognises Bangladesh. Its status will be on par with that of officials maintained from time to time.

- **1971, September** - Freedom struggle in Bangla Desh entered the sixth month. They had achieved significant success by assassinating some prominent Muslim Leaguers, leaders of Jamaat and Nizam Islam party, and some collaborators. A total of around 2500 operations, including raids, ambushing, and mine planting, were conducted in the month of September. According to the report by The Times, the guerrillas were destroying the credibility of the Pakistan Army, and the military administration was forced to spend between Rs.20-30 million per day to maintain 48 battalions of Pakistani troops. The destruction of communications roads and bridges had a shattering effect on the economy. The Pakistani Army was forced to withdraw from vast areas resulting in the creation of large areas of free zones in Bangla Desh under the effective control of Mukti Bahini. The Mukti Bahini claimed to have liberated between 10 to 30 percent of the territory. The Pakistan Army controls no more than 54 of the 229 posts along the border and Mukti Bahini forces have deserted the remaining 175 posts. The depth and extent of local support were visible as the Mukti Bahini developed an excellent intelligence system with advanced information of the enemy strength and deployment supplied by local people. None of the officers of Mukti Bahini fell to the Pakistan army temptations. The force slowly emerged as a secular and a national fighting force. Hindus who were earlier in the small minority their number was fast growing. Student and rural youth of peasants now constitute the majority. Bangladesh Liberation Council started preparing a blueprint for the administration of the country. After liberation, the civil administration began with a well-knit village Panchayat system to bring discipline to



the country. The decision of the five main political parties to form a Democratic front to issue guidelines to Mukti Bahini was significant - with the Awami League, both factions of NAP, the Communist party of Bangla Desh, and the Bangladesh national Congress. Therefore, Mukti Bahini transformed into a People's fighting force.

- **1971, September 01** - Pakistan Ambassador to the USA admitted for the first time that people had lost thousands of friends and relations in East Bengal and West Pakistan was facing an arduous task to control the situation he further admitted that Pakistan army had to go into action against people who possessed light equipment and revolted. However, it also justified the Army atrocities in Bangla Desh. According to a report, 8281220 refugees had crossed over to India from Bangladesh. In contrast, the Pakistan military claimed that only two million people had left Bangla Desh.

- **1971, September 01** - Moscow approved Indian military intervention if necessary. Although the Soviet Union wanted the negotiated settlement of the problem with Pakistan, Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi successfully convinced the Soviet authority and got the approval for the invasion of East Bengal by the Indian Army. The Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty was welcomed by Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed, the prime minister of Bangla Desh, who expressed the hope that India would do more in support of the liberation struggle and that the Soviet Union would give the people of Bangladesh all possible help. The Chief of the Bangladesh Mission in Delhi reiterated the demand for some observers to be allowed to meet Sheikh and ascertain the condition. He also stated that the West Pakistan military had no right to try the President of Bangla Desh, the head of another government. Any such trial was claimed to be illegal and against all international cannons.

- **1971, September 02** - the Bangladesh foreign minister said that appointment of Dr. A Malik as Governor of the occupied part of Bangla

Desh is an acceptance of defeat by the Pakistani military Junta. He stated that Lieutenant General Tikka's rule of ruthless killing, looting and burning, and raping had been a lesson for President Yahya Khan.

- **1971, September 02** - All Pakistan Confederation of Labour left the ICFTU as a mark of protest against the international body as they directed the units. The Bangladesh National Awami Party, the people of Balochistan, have started a movement for full autonomy under the leadership of Khan Abdul Samad Khan, popularly known as Baluch Gandhi. However, Abdul Salad was already put under army custody.

- **1971, September 03** - 145 out of the outlawed Awami league elected and 41 government officials asked to appear before the military tribunal.

- **1971, September 04** - another fear of defection, and the Pakistan government impounded passports of all its diplomatic staff abroad.

- **1971, September 07** - Zulfikar Ali Bhutto reportedly told president Yahya Khan that his party would not support an army-imposed Constitution. Dhaka was a completely sealed state, and the army introduced a system of gates manned by armed guards on all roads and waterways. There was a virtual complete boycott of educational institutions in Bangladesh.

- **1971, September 09** - Abroad Democratic front comprising the five main political parties was set up to advise Bangladesh to open issue guidelines to Mukti Bahini.

- **1971, September 14** - The East Bengal governor A Malik offered India to start negotiations to resolve the refugee problem.

- **1971, September 17** - A ten-member Cabinet under A Malik was sworn in as the first step towards forming a civil government in East Pakistan. Awami League was represented by only two members who had retained their seats individually, and the rest of the cabinet members were from the rightist parties. The following day by-elections

to 78 National Assembly seats from East Bengal and 105 E. Bengal provincial assembly seats were declared to be conducted between November and December.

- **1971, September 22** - Bhutto warned that if the national assembly was not restored to full powers by the beginning of January 1972, the People's party would make recourse to other processes. He also reported that behind a facade of a puppet cabinet under the civilian authority of A Malik, the army had stepped up fresh prosecution of Bengali intellectuals, journalists, and educationists. Further, the Bangla Desh government sent a 14-member delegation to the UN to appraise the UN members of the situation in Bangla Desh.

- **1971, November 01** – President Yahya Khan says that war with India is imminent and declared that China would support his Army with necessary weapons and ammunition. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi says that refugees must go home and that India was facing a situation of indirect repression. Mrs. Gandhi also criticised the western powers saying the governments of the world were doing no good by bolstering Pakistan, which massacred about 1 million people in East Bengal.

- **1971, November 02** - Bangladesh mission chief hopes China will not intervene and help Pakistan in case of a conflict between India and Pakistan.

- **1971, November 03** - Well-known Pakistani journalist Mr. Mascarenhas named five Pakistani generals and two civilians forming the President's Junta. The Mukti Bahini liberated the Kishore Ganj subdivision and occupied seven police stations.

- **1971, November 05** - Indira Gandhi and Nixon talks. Further, the US Senator urges Nixon to stop all aid to Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi also wants the USA that there is no foretelling where it will lead unless the Bangla Desh problem was solved peacefully.

- **1971, November 06** - The US assured the Indian Prime Minister that aid to Pakistan would be stopped. On the other hand, a heavy concentration of Pakistani troops and tanks was reported from the Rajasthan sector.

- **1971, November 07** - The consultative committee of the Bangla Desh government said President Yahya's warlike preparations were to cloud the basic issues and divert attention from the rising intensity and growing success of Mukti Bahini.

- **1971, November 08** - Ex-diplomat says Pakistan uses Gestapo methods, that is- they take away young men for questioning, but they are never seen again. Further Bengali officers holding high positions in Bangladesh and West Pakistan are being removed. About 35,000 West Pakistani Policemen arrived in East Bengal. The signboards and the car number plates have been changed from Bengali to Urdu. Bengali professors and intellectuals are being replaced by Urdu-speaking people. The entire education system is being revised by a commission with the main object of damage in Bengali culture.

- **1971, November 08** - Naval Commander of Mukti Bahini sank in an American freighter near Comilla.

- **1971, November 09** - Civil administration was set up in liberated areas. The Bahinis were now in control of 800 km of the Kusthia district. Indira Gandhi again raised the concern in Paris that Bangla Desh was inevitable.

- **1971, November 10** - The special military court sentenced 55 civil servants and four university teachers of Bangladesh to 14 years in prison for failure to appear before authorities to answer the charges. Increase shortage of water and electricity in Dacca city. Mr. Swarn Singh regretted that Pakistan had adopted a military approach to the Bangla Desh problem.

- **1971, November 11** - Bhutto escapes assassination. Home Minister of Bangladesh reiterated that the liberation struggle would continue till freedom was won.

- **1971, November 12** - Mukti Bahini sank two more ships. Pakistani aircraft violated Indian airspace four times, three times in Jammu and Kashmir, and the fourth time in the east.

- **1971, November 15** - Rightist parties form a united front against Mr. Bhutto's People's Party. Indira Gandhi claimed that India would not depend on the international community to help solve her problems. She declared that she would not withdraw troops from the border unless the border situation was resolved satisfactorily. Further, the defence minister Jagjivan Ram said in the Lok Sabha that if hostilities break out and aggression is committed, the instructions are to carry the war into Pakistan.

- **1971, November 17** - According to a report published in Bangla Desh Weekly, around 1000 persons were killed and thousands arrested during anti-guerrilla operations in Dacca. Reign of terror by Pakistan military. On the other hand, the Pakistan military train was blown up. Indira Gandhi stated that India had no objection to an American mission or a UN mission, provided they were prepared to look into the entirety of the problem. Vajpayee demanded that the Bangla Desh government be immediately identified, and India enter into a military pact with it. He also stated that India should give a befitting reply to the Pakistani attack.

- **1971, November 18** - Indo-Pakistan exchange of diplomatic personnel.

- **1971, November 21** - Indira Gandhi urges Yahya Khan to release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and respect the mandate of the election. In a further attack by Pakistani shelling, eight Indians were killed.

- **1971, November 22** - Dacca isolated from the rest of Bangla Desh as the PIA cancelled all regular domestic flights and the government-owned Road transport Corporation cancelled several bus services. Mukti Bahini further captures eight Pakistan thanas. Mukti Bahini captured 21 out of 22 border posts in the Kusthia sector.

- **1971, November 20-22** - Battle of Boyra and Garibpur. The battle of Garibpur, on the 20th and 21st November, came mere weeks before the official start of the Indo-Pakistani war. It is considered the first major confrontation taking place in a land battle and an air encounter that defined the first victories in the eastern sector in the war.

- **1971, November 20-22** - The Mitro Bahini (Allied forces) comprising Mukti Bahini and the Indian Army were victorious against overwhelming odds. A single battalion had destroyed an entire Pakistani brigade supported by the air force and artillery. On November 22, as an aftermath of the battle of Garibpur, four Indian fighter planes engaged an equal force of Pakistani planes, destroying two and damaging one, in the battle of Boyra. This and victories in other battles nearby, like the battle of Hilli, ensured that the Northern sector of East Pakistan was virtually in the hands of Mitro Bahini before India entered the war officially.

- **1971, November 23** - Pakistan declared a state of emergency.

- **1971, November 24** - Dacca under curfew again. All defence personnel, including those on the reserve list, were asked to report immediately to headquarters. The Pakistan government also promulgated the defence of Pakistan rules and defence of Pakistan ordinance. Four Pakistani Sabres strafed Indian and Mukti Bahini positions in the Chowgacha Mor area. While engaged on a third strafing run, the Sabres were intercepted by four Gnats from No. 22 Sqn, a detachment of which was operating from Dum Dum Airport, Calcutta. The first blood of a new Indo-Pakistan air war had been

drawn. Pre-emptive strikes were launched by the Pakistan Air Force against IAF bases at Srinagar, Amritsar, and Pathankot, followed by attacks on Ambala, Agra, Jodhpur, Uttarlai, Avantipur, Faridkot, Halwara, and Sirsa. Apart from IAF bases, the PAF attacked railway stations, Indian armour concentrations, and other targets. In response, the IAF carried out some 4,000 sorties in the West from major and forward bases in Jammu, Kashmir, Punjab, and Rajasthan, while, in the East, a further 1,978 sorties were flown, in the ensuing two weeks.

- **1971, November 25** - India claimed there was no need for a second Tashkent type settlement. India rules out any mediation. Defence Minister states that the only solution to satisfy the Bangla Desh people to return home was complete independence.

- **1971, November 26** - President Yahya banned all groups and factions of NAP in the East and West wing and set up a special court to try cases of conspiracy spying and aiding the enemy. Vajpayee declared complete support of Jan Sangh in case of a war.

- **1971, November 27** - Yahya and Bhutto discuss the threat of an Indian attack. Two batches of paramilitary forces in Punjab, another in NWFP completed the training. A Reuter respondent who travelled in liberated areas of Bangladesh said that there were no Indian troops anywhere in East Bengal.

- **1971, November 28** - compulsory military training for students was introduced in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Indira Gandhi asked the international community to discipline Pakistan, and Jana Sangh called for a strong case for preventive action against Pakistan.

- **1971, November 29** - BCC reports increased guerrilla activity in Dacca. The Chittagong-bound ship returns unloaded. China's support for Pakistan reiterated and expressed concern over the situation in the Indian subcontinent and supported you as it called for a mutual

withdrawal of troops. China also attacked India and said that India carried out subservience activities and military provocation against Pakistan. President Yahya writes to U Thant, calling his attention to the retreating situation in the subcontinent due to India's large scale and provoked attacks.

- **1971, November 30** - Pakistan's expulsion from Common Wealth demanded. Chinese airlift of arms supplies to Pakistan. Bhutto demands a representative government in Dacca. Indira Gandhi demanded the evacuation of Pakistan troops from Bangla Desh.

- **1971, December 03** - India-Pakistan War - The beginning of the war was marked by Operation Chengiz Khan. Pakistan's pre-emptive strike on 11 Indian airbases. In an address to the nation on the radio that same evening, the Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi held the airstrikes to declare war against Pakistan. The Indian Air Force responded with initial air strikes the same night. Pakistan's strategy was to gain air superiority for a limited time to allow its ground forces to occupy large parts of West India before digging in. Pakistan, however, failed to achieve its strategic goals early on into the conflict.

- **1971, December 04** – Razekar Killing Fields - A large section of the intellectual community of Bangladesh was murdered, mainly by the Al-Shams and Al-Badr forces, at the instruction of the Pakistani Army. Just two days before the surrender, on December 14, 1971, Pakistan Army and Razakar militia (local collaborators) picked up at least 100 physicians, professors, writers, and engineers in Dhaka. They murdered them, leaving the dead bodies in a mass grave.

- **1971, December 06** - Indira Gandhi, Indian prime minister, announced in Parliament that India had accorded recognition to the Bangladesh Government. And also conveyed this in a formal communication to Tajuddin Ahmed, the prime minister of Bangladesh, Mujib Nagar.



- **1971, December 16** - Pakistan Surrenders - The Pakistani Commander Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi surrenders to Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, the Joint Forces Commander at the same Dacca Racecourse where Sheikh Mujib had made his historic call for independence only nine months and nine days earlier. Over 93,000 Pakistani troops surrendered to the Indian forces, making it the largest surrender since World War II. As a result, Yahya Khan's dictatorship collapsed and gave way to Bhutto, who took the opportunity to rise to power. Prime minister Indira Gandhi announces in Parliament, saying, "I have an announcement to make, which I think the House has been waiting for some time. The West Pakistani forces have unconditionally surrendered. Dacca is now the free capital of a free country."



# Treaties between India and Bangladesh (1972-2001)

*Compiled by Rishi Gupta, Anushka Saraswat*

## Treaties, Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bangladesh

*1972*

1. 18 March 1972, **“Trade and Agreement between India and Bangladesh.”** The Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh is mutually interested in strengthening the economic ties. (Link)

2. 19 March 1972, **“Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Bangladesh.”** Inspired by common ideals of peace, secularism, democracy, socialism and nationalism, having struggled together for the realization of these ideals and cemented ties of friendship through blood and sacrifices which led to the triumphant emergences of free, sovereign and independent Bangladesh. (Link)

3. 27 March 1972, **“Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh Regarding Telecommunications.”** The President of India and the President of Bangladesh mutually desirous of establishing telephone and telegraph services between India and Bangladesh and between Bangladesh and countries other than India transited via India. (Link)

4. 16 May 1972, **“Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh for the Supply of Crude Oil.”** The Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh having requested to the Government of India to Assist in the supply of crude oil for feeding its refinery at Chittagong. (Link)

5. 03 August 1972, **“Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh Relating to Passports.”** A passport called “Bangladesh Special Passport” and a passport called “India Bangladesh Passport” will be issues by the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of India respectively. (Link)

6. 30 December 1972, **“Cultural Cooperation Agreement Between the Government of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.”** Treaty was inspired by the Constitution of the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organisation. (Link)

### ***1973***

1. 04 January 1973, **“Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh Regarding Joint Power Coordination Board.”** (Link)

2. 07 April 1973, **“Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh Regarding Telecommunications.”** (Link)

3. 15 July 1973, **“Agreement on Trade between India and Bangladesh.”** The agreement was signed to strengthen economic relations between India and Bangladesh. (Link)

4. 27 August 1973, **“Agreement between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation in the fields of Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy.”** The

Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh, in pursuance of mutual consultation in the field of nuclear energy, recognize the benefits to be derived by both the Republic of India and the Republic of Bangladesh from cooperation in the fields of science and technology in general and the peaceful application of atomic energy in particular. (Link)

### *1974*

1. 27 November 1974, **“Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh Relation to the Exchanges of Insured Letters and Boxes.”** The Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh are desirous of establishing an exchange of Insured Letter and boxes between the Postal Administration of India and Bangladesh. (Link)

2. 27 November 1974, **“Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh Relating to Letter Post.”** In order to establish an exchange of correspondence between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh agreed upon the exchanges of unregistered correspondence: letters, letter cards, single post-cards, reply post-cards, printed papers, small packets, literature for the blind and registered newspapers. (Link)

3. 16 May 1974, **“Agreement between India and Bangladesh Concerning the Demarcation of the Land Boundary Between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters.”** The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, bearing in mind, the friendly relations existing between the two countries, desiring to define more accurately at certain points and to complete the demarcation of the land boundary between India and Bangladesh. (Link)

## *1976*

1. 23 July 1976, **“Agreement Between the Government of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh Relating to Postal Parcels.”**

## *1977*

1. 27 September 1977, **“Agreement Between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh on Running Power for Railways.”** This agreement made on 27th day of September 1977 between the President of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, acting through the Bangladesh Railway Administration (hereinafter) called the Bangladesh Railway on the one part and the President of Indian Union, Acting through the Chairman, Railway Board on the other part to exercise Running Powers for running through passenger, goods and special trains between Bangladesh and India. (Link)

2. 05 November 1977, **“Agreement Between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh on Sharing the Ganga Waters at Farakka.”** The Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, determined to promote and strengthen their relations of friendship and good neighbourliness. (Link)

## *1978*

1. 5 May 1978, **“Agreement between India and Bangladesh Relating to Air Services.”** It is desirable between the contracting parties to establish on the basis of equality and reciprocity air services between and beyond the territories of India and Bangladesh to strengthen their relations in the field of Civil Aviation. (Link)

## *1980*

1. 4th October 1980, **“Trade Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh.”** Desirous of strengthening economic relations between two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. (Link)

## *1999*

1. 17 June 1999, **“Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh for the Regulation of Motor Vehicle Passenger Traffic between the two countries.”** In pursuance of Article VIII of the Trade Agreement entered into between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh on 4.10.1980, the governments of both countries agreed to regulate the motor vehicle passenger traffic. (Link)

## *2001*

1. 23 May 2001, **“Revised Travel Arrangements between India and Bangladesh.”** In order to liberalise the existing Visa Regime between the countries, with a view of removing certain difficulties faced by the nationals of either country in obtaining visa, the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh have agreed to revise certain provisions of the existing Passport/Visa System which came into effect on from September 1, 1972 to regulate travel between the two countries. (Link)

## *2006*

1. 21 March 2006, **“Agreement for Mutual Cooperation between India and Bangladesh for Preventing Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Related Matters.”** The

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Government of the Republic of India; Considering that the Single Convention of Narcotics Drugs, as amended by the 1972 protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the UN Convention Against trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, form the basis for national and international drug control. (Link)

*2007*

1. 26 June 2007, “**Memorandum of Understanding between Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) and Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS).**” (Link)

*2009*

1. 09 February 2009, “**Agreement between India and Bangladesh for the Promotion and Protection of Investment**”, The Government of the Republic of India and the People's Republic of Bangladesh, desiring to create conditions favourable for fostering greater investment by investors of one State in the territory of the other State. (Link)

*2010*

1. 11 January 2010, “**Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.**” The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, guided by the traditional friendly relations between the two countries; recognizing the need to facilitate the widest measures of mutual assistance in the service of summons, execution of warrants and other judicial documents and commissions, desiring to improve the effectiveness of both the countries in the investigation, prosecution and suppression of crime, including crime related to terrorism and tracing, restraint, forfeiture or confiscation of the proceeds and instruments

of crime, through cooperation and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters. (Link)

2. 11 January 2010, **“Agreement between India and Bangladesh on Transfer of Sentenced Persons.”** The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh desiring to facilitate the social rehabilitation of sentenced persons in their own countries; and; considering that this objective should be fulfilled by giving foreigners, who have been convicted and sentenced as a result of their commission of a criminal offence, the opportunity to serve their sentences within their own country. (Link)

3. 23 October 2010, **“MoU and Mode of operation between India and Bangladesh for establishing Border Haats across the border”.** (Link)

## *2011*

1. 11 January 2011, **“Agreement Between India and Bangladesh on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking.”** The Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, guided by the traditional friendly relations between the two countries and their endeavor to contribute to the further development of their bilateral relations; deeply concerned with the expansion of organized crime and international terrorism; convinced of the need to enhance bilateral cooperation in combating international terrorism, transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking; recognizing the mutual advantages of such cooperation for both parties in accordance with their national laws and regulations; taking into consideration the international treaties to which both are parties; Desiring to improve the effectiveness of both countries in the prevention, investigation, prosecution and suppression of crime including crime relating to terrorism and drug trafficking and to



establish a framework for enhancing cooperation between the officials of intelligence and law enforcement agencies of the Parties. (Link)

2. 06 September 2011, “**Protocol between India and Bangladesh on Conservation of Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sunderban.**” Sunderban, which is an excellent tiger habitat and the largest sanctuary of the Royal Bengal Tiger in the world, stands across the common boundary of India and Bangladesh, and India and Bangladesh have a shared and common concern of the Royal Bengal Tiger and accordingly wish to take certain bilateral initiatives for ensuring the survival and conservation of the tiger in the unique ecosystem of Sunderban. (Link)

3. 06 September 2011, “**MoU between India and Bangladesh on Renewable Energy Cooperation.**” The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India and the Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, desiring to enhance traditional ties of friendship between the two countries through development of economic cooperation; having identified New and Renewable Energy as a common area of interest; and desiring to establish New and Renewable Cooperation in this area with the aim of developing new and renewable energy technologies. (Link)

4. 06 September 2011, “**MoU between the Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh on Conservation of the Sundarban.**” The Government of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, considering that both the Governments are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity 1992 and are contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands 1971, recognizing that the Sundarban of India and Bangladesh represent a single ecosystem divided between the two countries; Acknowledging that the wildlife sanctuaries of the Sundarban located in both countries is recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site and in Bangladesh as Ramsar site as well. (Link)

5. 06 September 2011, **“Protocol to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh concerning the demarcation of the land boundary between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters.”** Bearing in mind the friendly relations existing between the two countries, desiring to define more accurately at certain points and to complete the demarcation of the land boundary between India and Bangladesh, Having regard to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh concerning the demarcation of the land boundary between India and Bangladesh and related matters, May 16, 1974 and the Exchange of Letters dated December 26, 1974; December 30, 1974; October 7, 1982, and March 26, 1992 have agreed to agreements. (Link)

6. 06 September 2011, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh on Mutual Broadcast of Television Programmes.”** The two countries desiring to strengthen the friendly relations and cooperation between the broadcasting authorities of two countries. (Link)

7. 06 September 2011, **“Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development Between Government of the Republic of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh.”** The two countries recalling the two countries shared bonds of history, culture and common values; desirous of living in peace and harmony with each other and fostering good neighbourly relations based on sovereign equality, noninterference in each other’s internal affairs and mutual respect and mutual benefit; inspired by an abiding faith in and total commitment to democracy, development, pluralism, and peaceful co-existence; reiterating their common objective of eradicating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease and promoting social justice and inclusive growth with a view to enabling their peoples to realize their potential to the full; desirous of promoting trans-border cooperation in the

management of shared water resource, hydropower potentials and eco-systems and in the areas of connectivity and trade and economic cooperation; convinced that the cooperation at the bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels will accelerate development and enable the two countries to realize their development aspirations, shared destiny and common vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Asia. (Link)

8. 06 September 2011, **“Addendum to the MOU between India and Bangladesh to facilitate Overland Transit Traffic Between Bangladesh and Nepal.”** Addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bangladesh to Facilitate Overland Transit Traffic between Bangladesh and Nepal whereas, on August 15, 1978, the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate overland transit traffic between Bangladesh and Nepal. (Link)

9. 06 September 2011, **“MoU between the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh on Cooperation in the field of fisheries.”** The Government of Republic of India represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh represented by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, mindful of the need to strengthen the existing the friendly relations between the two countries through development of co-operation in the field of fisheries and aquaculture and allied activities, considering that the advantage to be derived from the development of cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture and allied activities. (Link)

## **2013**

1. 28 January 2013, **“Treaty between India and Bangladesh on Extradition.”** The Government of India and the Government

of People's Republic of Bangladesh desiring to make more effective the cooperation of the two countries in the suppression of crime by making further provision for the reciprocal extradition of offenders by recognizing that concrete steps are necessary to combat terrorism. (Link)

2. 28 January 2013, **“Revised Travel Arrangements between India and Bangladesh.”** (Link)

3. 02 February 2013, **“MoU on Cooperation Between India and Bangladesh.”** The Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, the Government of the Republic of India and the Foreign Service Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the spirit of cooperation that has traditionally existed between the two countries. (Link)

4. 02 February 2013, **“Protocol Amending the Convention between India and Bangladesh for Avoidance of Double Taxation.”** The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh desiring to amend the Convention between India and Bangladesh for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to Taxes on Income signed at New Delhi on the 27th day of August 1991. (Link)

5. 16 February 2013, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh for Development of Railway Infrastructure.”** (Link)

6. 16 February 2013, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh for establishment of Indo Bangladesh Foundation.”** (Link)

## **2014**

1. 20 February 2014, **“MoU among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Thailand on the Elimination of Kala-Azar from the Southeast Asia Region.”** (Link)

2. September 9, 2014, **“MoU on Cooperation in The Field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy”**. (Link)
3. September 20, 2014, **“Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of Nalanda University”** (Link)
4. September 09, 2014, **“Joint Statement on The Third Meeting of The India - Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission”**. (Link)
5. October 16, 2014, **“Memorandum of Understanding Between Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India and Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS), Dhaka for coordination of Indian Science and Research Fellowship (ISRF) Programme in Bangladesh”**. (Link)

## ***2015***

1. 06 June 2015, **“Agreement between India and Bangladesh for the Regulation of Motor Vehicle Passenger Traffic between the two countries between Guwahati in India and Dhaka in Bangladesh.”** (Link)
2. 06 June 2015, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh on Bilateral Cooperation for Prevention of Human Trafficking in women in children, rescue, recovery, repatriation and re-integration of victims of trafficking.”** (Link)
3. 06 June 2015, **“Trade Agreement between India and Bangladesh.”** The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, being conscious of the urge of their two peoples to enlarge areas of mutual cooperation; desirous of expanding trade and strengthening economic relations between the two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. (Link)

4. 06 June 2015, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh for cooperation on establishing Indian Economic Zone in Bangladesh.”** The Republic of India (hereinafter referred to as the Indian party) and the People’s Republic of Bangladesh (hereinafter referred to as the Bangladesh Party), desiring to further the friendly relationship between the two countries and expand trade and economic cooperation, regarding cooperation on the Indian Economic Zone, through friendly consultation. (Link)

5. 06 June 2015, **“MoU between Jamia Milia Islamia, India and University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh.”** Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi, India and University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, hereinafter collectively referred to as the parties and individually as “the Party” desiring to establish collaborative relations between the Parties in order to promote friendship and to co-operate toward the promotion of higher education in a mutually beneficial association in general, and therefore, to develop academic and cultural exchange in education, research and other areas in particular. (Link)

6. 06 June 2015, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh for the establishment of collaborative relationship to combat transnational illegal activities at sea and develop regional cooperation between the Indian Coast Guard and Bangladesh Coast Guard.”** The Indian Coast Guard and the Bangladesh Coast Guard, recognizing that cross border crimes at sea create a threat to the safety of maritime transportation and economic activities which endanger the safety of both countries. (Link)

7. 06 June 2015, **“MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to prevent and counter smuggling and circulation of Fake Currency Notes.”** (Link)

8. 06 June 2015, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh relating to the grant assistance from the Government of India under the**

**India Endowment for Climate Change in South Asia for Installation of 70,000 improved Cook stoves in selected areas of Bangladesh.”** (Link)

9. 06 June 2015, **“Agreement between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation in the field of Standardization and Conformity of Assessment.”** (Link)

10. 06 June 2015, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh in the field of Blue Economy and Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean Region.”** The Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, taking into consideration the civilization and close neighbourly relations between the two countries; Recognizing that both countries border the Bay of Bengal and are Littoral States in the Indian Ocean; recalling the importance of their mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields in order to meet increasing maritime challenges; determined to further strengthen and expand their cooperation. (Link)

## ***2017***

1. 08 April 2017, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation in the Peaceful use of Outer Space.”** The Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, intending to place the achievements in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes for the benefit of the peoples of both sides; taking into account the mutual interest in expanding the application of space technology for peaceful purposes; desiring that outer space remain peaceful and open for international cooperation; expressing their desire to develop the organizational basis and effective forms of bilateral interaction in the field of space activities and to promote the development of partnership relations. (Link)

2. 08 April 2017, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation in the Peaceful use of Nuclear Energy.”** (Link)

3. 08 April 2017, **“Arrangement between India and Bangladesh for the exchange of technical information and cooperation in the regulation of nuclear safety and radiation protection.”** (Link)

4. 08 April 2017, **“Inter Agency Agreement between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation Regarding Nuclear Power Plants Projects in Bangladesh.”** (Link)

5. 08 April 2017, **“Inter Agency Agreement between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation Regarding Nuclear Power Plants Projects in Bangladesh.”** The Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP), Department of Atomic Energy of the Government of India and the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, hereinafter referred to individually as “Party” collectively referred to as “Parties”; noting that the Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh have entered in to an Agreement of Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (hereinafter referred to as “IGA”); recalling that IGA provides for sharing of technical expertise between the two countries on different aspects of nuclear technology including construction of nuclear power plants; whereas GCNEP has the mandate and expertise for promoting safe, secure and sustainable nuclear energy for the service of mankind through global partnerships; taking note of GCNEP’s role in capacity building in nuclear energy related technology through education, training and advisory services; whereas BAEC has the mandate to promote peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Bangladesh. (Link)

6. 08 April 2017, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation in the field of Information Technology & Services.”** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Government of Republic of India and ICT Division of the People’s of the Republic of Bangladesh (Hereinafter) referred to as “parties” and individually as



the “Party”, considering the positive development of the relationship between India and Bangladesh when confirm the mutual interest in promotion of stronger ties in the field of information Technology and Electronics, desiring to develop and strengthen industrial, technological and commercial cooperation between India and Bangladesh in IT&E sector; resolving to undertake a sustained effort to promote, facilitate and support joint ventures, joint initiatives and markets of the IT&E sector; have reached the understanding. (Link)

7. 08 April 2017, “Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology Republic of India and the Bangladesh Government Computer Incident Response Team (BDG e-Gov CIRT) Bangladesh Computer Council of Information and Communication Technology Division Ministry of Posts, Telecommunication and IT People’s Republic of Bangladesh.” (Link)

8. 08 April 2017, “MoU between India and Bangladesh on Establishing Border Haats across the borders between India and Bangladesh.” (Link)

9. 08 April 2017, “MoU between India and Bangladesh on Bilateral Judicial Cooperation.” (Link)

10. 08 April 2017, “MoU between India and Bangladesh Cooperation Concerning on Aids to Navigate.” (Link)

## ***2018***

1. 09 April 2018, “MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh for the Construction of the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline between Siliguri (in India) and Parbatipur (in Bangladesh).” Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the

People's Republic of Bangladesh, bearing in mind the close and friendly relations between the two countries and their people; seeking to collaborate in the development of the hydrocarbon sector in Bangladesh; Recalling the commitment made by the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh during the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Bangladesh in June 2015 to deepen Bilateral Cooperation; Desiring to cooperate in the establishment and expansion of the oil and gas pipeline infrastructure in Bangladesh. (Link)

2. 15 July 2018, **“Revised Travel Agreements between India and Bangladesh.”** In order to liberalize the existing Visa Regime between the two countries and with a view to removing certain difficulties faced by the nationals of either country in obtaining visa, the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh have agreed to revise certain provisions of the existing Passport/Visa System which came into effect from September 1, 1972 and the Revised Travel Arrangement that has been in place since May 2001 and revised in January 2013 to regulate travel between the two countries. (Link)

3. 30 October 2018, **“Amendment in the Agreement between India and Bangladesh Concerning to Orbit Frequency Coordination of “South Asia Satellite” Proposed at 48 Degree.”** The Government of India represented by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, represented by Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) hereinafter individually referred to as “India” and “Bangladesh” respectively and jointly as the “Parties”; desiring to amend the original Agreement concerning to Orbit Frequency Coordination of “South Asia Satellite” proposed at 48 degree E signed on 23 March 2017 in Bangladesh (Link)

4. 25 October 2018, **“Agreement on the use of Chattogram and Mangla Port for Movement of Goods to and from India between India and Bangladesh”** (Link)

5. 25 October 2018, “**Addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade Between Bangladesh and India signed on 6 June 2015.**” (Link)

6. 25 October 2018, “**Addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade Between Bangladesh and India signed on 6 June 2015.**” In pursuance of Article 27 on the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (hereinafter referred to as “Protocol”) between the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of Republic of India signed on 6 June 2015 (hereinafter referred to singularly as “Party” and collectively as “Parties”), the Parties have agreed to make Addendum to add new routes and amendments / modifications in the said Protocol. (Link)

7. 25 October 2018, “**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) OF MOU on Passenger and Cruise Services on the Coastal and Protocol Route between the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of the Republic of India.**” (Link)

## **2019**

1. 05 October 2019, “**Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Bangladesh for the Years 2020-2022.**” The Government of India and the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, taking into account the development of Cultural Exchange between two countries; and inspired by a mutual desire to implement the Cultural Co-operation Agreement signed between the two countries on 30th December 1927, have agreed upon the Executive Programme of Exchange for the years 2020-2022. (Link)

2. 05 October 2019, “**MoU between India and Bangladesh on withdrawal of 1.82 CUSEC of Water from Feni River by India for drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town, Tripura, India.**” (Link)

3. 05 October 2019, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation in Youth Matters.”** Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, desiring to expand and strengthen the friendship between the two countries and to promote cooperation on youth matters. (Link)

4. 05 October 2019, **“Agreement between India and Bangladesh Concerning Implementation of the Lines of Credit Committed by India to Bangladesh.”** The Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh (hereinafter referred to as the “Government of Bangladesh”, which expression shall, unless the context or subject otherwise requires, include its successors and permitted assigns) and the Government of the Republic of India (hereinafter referred to as “Government of India”, which expressions shall, unless the context or subject otherwise requires, includes its successors and permitted assigns) whereas Exim Bank of India, on behalf of the Government of India, extends Lines of Credit (LOCs) to the Government of Bangladesh for supporting development projects in Bangladesh. (Link)

## *2020*

1. 08 February 2020, **“MoU between India and Bangladesh on Training and Capacity Building Programme for Bangladesh Civil Servants.”** (Link)

2. 17 February 2020, **“Framework of Understanding between India and Bangladesh on Cooperation in the Hydrocarbon Sector.”** (Link)

3. 17 December 2020, **“MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture between India and Bangladesh.”** (Link)

**2021**

1. 27 March 2021, “MoU between the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Ministry of Home Affairs, the Republic of India and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, People’s Republic of Bangladesh on Cooperation in the field of Disaster Management, Resilience and Mitigation.” (Link)

2. 26-27 March 2021, “MoU between Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) and National Cadet Corps of India (NCC).”

3. 26-27 March 2021, “MoU on Establishment of a Framework of Cooperation in the Area of Trade Remedial Measures between Bangladesh and India.”

4. 26-27 March 2021, “Tripartite MoU on Supply of ICT Equipment, Courseware & Reference Books and Training for Bangladesh-Bharat Digital Service and Employment Training (BDSET) Centre.”

5. 26-27 March 2021, “Tripartite MoU for Establishment of Sports Facilities at Rajshahi College Field and Surrounding Areas.”

# India-Bangladesh Joint Projects

*Compiled by Khushmita Dhabhai, Nikhil Sahu*

## Indian Investment in Bangladesh: Development Partnerships

No.	Name	Location	Status	Budget	Additional Data
1.	First Line of Credit <sup>1</sup>	Bangladesh	<b>Start Date: 2010</b> 12 out of 15 projects have already been completed and 3 projects are under execution (2021)	USD 862 million	-
2.	Second Line of Credit <sup>2</sup>	Bangladesh	<b>Start Date: 2016</b> 2 projects are already complete and the other projects are under various stages of implementation (2021)	USD 2 billion	-
3.	Third Line of Credit <sup>3</sup>	Bangladesh	<b>Start Date: 2017</b> 1 project has reached execution stage, while the other projects are under various stages of DPP finalization and tendering (2021)	USD 4.5 billion	In the last three year, more than USD 990.85 million worth of contracts under the LOCs have been awarded. Another USD 325.58 million is yet to be finalized.

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1 All India Radio News, “India, Bangladesh Review Progress of Line of Credit Projects,” All India Radio News, October 29, 2021, <https://newsonair.gov.in/News?title=India%2C-Bangladesh-review-progress-of-Line-of-Credit-projects&id=428911>

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

### Railway Projects

Name	Location	Status	Budget
Agartala-Akaura New Line Project	Agartala in Tripura and Akhaura in Bangladesh	Completed by 2021	₹980 crores
Agartala-Sabroom New Line Project	Agartala-Sabroom ( Tripura)	Completed by 2019	₹1141.75 Crore
Haldibari-Chilahati Rail Connectivity	Haldibar (West Bengal) to Chilahati (Bangladesh)	Completed by 2020	₹82.72 crores
Maitree Express Project	Kolkata(West Bengal)-Dhaka(Bangladesh)	Completed by 2008	–
Bandhan Express Project	Kolkata (West Bengal)-Khulna (Bangladesh)	Completed by 2017	–
Mitali Express Project	New Jalpaiguri (West Bengal)-Dhaka Cantonment	Completed by 2021	–

### Road and Waterway Projects

No.	Name	Location	Status	Budget
1	Maitri Setu	Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh	Completed by 2021	₹133 Crores
2	Ashuganj-Akhaura Road Project	Bangladesh	Ongoing	Tk. 35.67 billion
3	Kolkata–Agartala road link	Kolkata (West Bengal)–Agartala (Tripura)	Completed by 2015	–
4	Sonamura-Daudkandi Route	Daukandi (Bangladesh) - Sonamura (Tripura)	Completed by 2020	–

### Computers and information technology

No.	Name	Location	Status	Budget
1	Bangladesh Bharat Digital Service and Employment Training	Dhaka (Kailakoir), Rajshahi, Natore, Chattogram, Jashore, Khulna	ongoing	6102.59 Lakh4

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- 4 Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, “Establishment of Bangladesh Bharat Digital Service and Employment Training (BDSET) Center Project Information”, Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, June 29, 2021 at <https://bit.ly/3hYk0Sa>

## India Bangladesh Bonhomie at 50: 1971 and the Present

2	Bangladesh Bharat Edutainment Centres	50 districts of Bangladesh	ongoing	–
3	Hi-Tech Park Installation	Mymensingh Sadar, Jamalpur Sadar, Keraniganj in Dhaka, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman University of Science and Technology in Gopalganj, Comilla Sadar South, Port in Chittagong, Ramu in Cox's Bazar, Rangpur Sadar, Singra in Natore, Companiganj in Sylhet, Barisal Sadar and Khulna Kuet.	Completed by 2021	179640.21 lakh taka <sup>5</sup>

### Indian Investment in Bangladesh: Human Resource Development and Education

No.	Name	Location	Status	Budget	Add. Data
1.	MoU National Judicial Academy of India and Supreme Court of Bangladesh <sup>67</sup>	- National Judicial Academy, Bhopal  - Now Online	Start Date: 2017  End Date: 2023  Present Status: Ongoing	Not specified	The Gov. of India has been extending training for 1500 Bangladeshi judicial officials since 2017.
2.	Not specified	Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) at Mussoorie and other places	Start Date: 2015  End Date: 2018  Present Status: Finished	Not specified	Trained 2000 Bangladeshi Civil Servants and 40 members of the Bangladesh Police Force. <sup>8</sup>

- 5 Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, “District Level Hi-Tech Park Installation (12 Districts)”, Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, August 25, 2021 at <https://bit.ly/3pYxtOg>.
- 6 National Judicial Academy of India, “TRAINING PROGRAM FOR BANGLADESH JUDGES AND JUDICIAL OFFICERS - (SE-01), 2021,” National Judicial Academy of India, [https://nja.gov.in/Concluded\\_Programmes/2021-22/SE-01\\_2021%20Programme%20Report.pdf](https://nja.gov.in/Concluded_Programmes/2021-22/SE-01_2021%20Programme%20Report.pdf)
- 7 Ministry of External Affairs, “India-Bangladesh Bilateral Projects”, Ministry of External Affairs, March 2021 at [https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India\\_Bangladesh\\_MAR2021.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_Bangladesh_MAR2021.pdf)
- 8 Press Trust of India, “Over 1,500 Bangladesh civil servants to get training in India”, Business Standard, 7 May, 2015, <https://www.business-standard.com/>



## India-Bangladesh Joint Projects

3.	Not specified	National Center for Good Governance (NCGG), Mussoorie	Start Date: 2019 End Date: - Present Status: Ongoing	Not specified	The Government of India has been training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Service officials from 2019 <sup>9</sup>
4.	ITEC Program <sup>10</sup>	India, currently online	Start Date: 1964 End Date: - Present Status: Ongoing	Not specified	Bangladesh is also an important ITEC partner country and annually around 800 participants from Bangladesh avail the ITEC training courses. <sup>11</sup>
5.	ICCR Scholarships	India	Start Date: 2018 End Date: - Present Status: Ongoing	Not specified	200 scholarships are awarded by ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) every year to students from Bangladesh for pursuing under-graduation, post-graduation and M.Phil/PhD courses in educational institutes of India including the IITs and NIITs. <sup>12</sup>

article/pti-stories/over-1-500-Bangladesh-civil-servants-to-get-training-in-india-115050700948\_1.html

- 9 Ministry of External Affairs, “India-Bangladesh Bilateral Projects”, Ministry of External Affairs, March 2021, [https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India\\_Bangladesh\\_MAR2021.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_Bangladesh_MAR2021.pdf)
- 10 Ministry of External Affairs, “Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme”, Ministry of External Affairs, <https://www.itecgoi.in/about>
- 11 Ministry of External Affairs, “India-Bangladesh Bilateral Projects”, Ministry of External Affairs, March 2021 [https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India\\_Bangladesh\\_MAR2021.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_Bangladesh_MAR2021.pdf)
- 12 BD News 24.com, “Indian Scholarships Open from 2015-2016”, BD News 24.com, 3 January, 2015, <http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2015/01/03/indian-scholarships-open-for-2015-2016>

India Bangladesh Bonhomie at 50: 1971 and the Present

6.	New Muktijoddha Education Scheme <sup>13</sup>	Bangladesh	Start Date: 2019  End Date: 2024  Present Status: Ongoing	Tk 37.99 crore	The scheme aims to benefit 10,000 students from Bangladesh over a period of five years. In 2021, 1000 students each from the Higher Secondary and Undergraduate categories had scholarship amounts directly processed to their accounts.  17,802 students have already benefited from the scheme
7.	Suborno Jayanti Scholarships (SJS)	India	Start Date: 2021  End Date: -  Present Status: Ongoing	Not specified	1,000 scholarships for students and officials of Bangladesh were announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh on March 26-27, 2021 <sup>14</sup>

Indian Investment in Bangladesh: Health Resources

No.	Name	Location	Status	Budget	Add. Data
1.	Muktijod-dha Medical Scheme	India	Start Date: 2019  End Date: -  Present Status: Ongoing	Not specified	2019 onwards, 100 selected Mukti j o d d h a patients were awarded full funded medical treatments in Indian Army Hospitals each year. <sup>15</sup>

13 OnlineTari, “Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme”, OnlineTari, 3 April, 2021, <https://onlinetari.com/latest-news-articles/muktijoddha-scholarship-scheme-i108481.html>

14 High Commission of India (Dhaka), “Suborno Jayanti Scholarships”, High Commission of India (Dhaka), 2021, [https://www.hcidhaka.gov.in/scholarship\\_details](https://www.hcidhaka.gov.in/scholarship_details)

15 GK Today, “The Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme”, GK, <https://www.gktoday.in/question/the-muktijoddha-scholarship-scheme-is-provided-to>

## India-Bangladesh Joint Projects

2.	Aid to Bangladesh Program <sup>16</sup>	Bangladesh (Sunamganj, Habiganj, Brahmanbaria, Jamalpur, Sherpur)	Start Date: 2018 End Date: n/a Present Status: n/a	9 crores <sup>17</sup>	During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in April 2017, the Indian Government signed an agreement over funding the construction of 35 community clinics in Bangladesh
3.	Covid-19 specific aid	Bangladesh	Start Date: March, 2020 End Date: April, 2020 Present Status: Finished	Not specified	Extended three tranches of medical assistance including 30,000 surgical masks, 15,000 head covers, 50,000 surgical latex gloves, 100,000 Hydroxy-chloroquine medicine tablets and RT-PCR test kits capable of running 30,000 Covid tests. Conducting various online training modules to train Bangladeshi Health Professionals on treatment and care of COVID patients. <sup>18</sup>
4.	Covid-19 specific aid	Bangladesh	Start Date: January, 2021 End Date: n/a Present Status: Finished	Not specified	Gifted 2 million Covishield (Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines). Delivered in January 2021 <sup>19</sup>

16 Mukul, "Bangladesh, India Need to Strengthen Cooperation in Health Sector", E Health, 11 October, 2018, <https://ehealth.eletsonline.com/2018/10/bangladesh-india-need-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-health-sector/>

17 Dr Joe Thomas, "India Assistance to Strengthen Bangladesh Health System", Dr Joe Thomas, 2018, <https://joethomas.in/archives/339>

18 Ministry of External Affairs, "India-Bangladesh Bilateral Projects", Ministry of External Affairs, March 2021 [https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India\\_Bangladesh\\_MAR2021.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India_Bangladesh_MAR2021.pdf)

19 Ibid.

## Indian Investment in Bangladesh: Energy Projects

No.	Name	Location	Status	Budget	Add. Data
1.	Tripura Monarchak Power Project	Tripura, India	Start Date: 2013 <sup>20</sup> End Date: 2015 <sup>21</sup> Present Status: Construction finished; plant is generating power	753.68 crore <sup>22</sup>	- Capacity: 101 MW - Managed by: North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO) <sup>23</sup>
2.	Bheramara-Baharampur Grid	Bheramara, Bangladesh	Start Date: 2017 End Date: 2020 Present Status: Finished	\$22.47 mn <sup>24</sup>	- 1st cross border Inter-connection between India and Bangladesh. - Length: 125- kilometer transmission line
3.	Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline	pipeline will run from Siliguri to Parbatipur in Bangladesh	Start Date: 2018 End Date: 2022	Bangladesh will receive Rs 303 crore from India, Bangladesh	- The pipeline will provide fuel from Numaligarh oil refinery

20 Projects Today, “NEEPCO to set up Solar Plant in Tripura”, Projects Today, 19 June, 2013, <https://www.projectstoday.com/News/NEEPCO-to-set-up-solar-plant-in-Tripura>

21 Ibid.

22 IANS, “ONGC Agrees to Supply Gas to Tripura Power Project”, Business Standard, 9 March 2014, [https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/ongc-agrees-to-supply-gas-to-tripura-power-project-114030900206\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/ongc-agrees-to-supply-gas-to-tripura-power-project-114030900206_1.html)

23 Ministry of Power, “Revised Cost Estimates of Gas Based Power Project at Monarchak, Tripura by NEEPCO”, Ministry of Power, 27 January, 2011 at <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=69373>

24 India Investment Grid, “Baharampur [POWERGRID] - Bheramara [Bangladesh] 2nd 400kV D/C Transmission Line [Indian Portion]”, India Investment Grid, 06 August, 201, <https://indiainvestmentgrid.gov.in/opportunities/nip-project/602604>

## India-Bangladesh Joint Projects

			Present Status: Ongoing construction	Petroleum Corporation (Bapex) will provide Tk 150 crore. <sup>25</sup>	in Assam to Bangladesh.  the 125- km-stretch of the pipeline is in Bangladesh, while the remaining 5-km-stretch will be in India.  - Total Volume: 4 lakh metric tonne.
4.	Maitree Super Thermal Power Project <sup>26</sup>	Rampal	Start Date: 2016 End Date: 2021 <sup>27</sup> Present Status: S0 Supposedly finished	1.49 billion USD which will be financed by Indian Exim Bank <sup>28</sup>	Capacity: 1320 MW (2×660 MW)
5.	Solar Farm <sup>29</sup>	Jamalpur District, Bangladesh	Start Date: 2021 Present Status: Ongoing	\$131 million of soft loans	- A 100 MW solar park. - The 325-acre solar project,

25 Sahidyl Hassan Khokon, “PM Modi, Sheikh Hasina inaugurate India-Bangladesh oil pipeline construction”, India Today, 19 September, 2018, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pm-modi-sheikh-hasina-inaugurate-india-bangladesh-oil-pipeline-construction-1343280-2018-09-19>

26 <https://www.bifpcl.com>

27 Rajesh Jha, “First Unit Rampal Maitree Power Project Be Commissioned December 2021”, DD News, 06 July, 2021, <https://www.ddnews.gov.in/national/first-unit-rampal-maitree-power-project-be-commissioned-december-2021>

28 NTPC, “BIFPCL Signs Contract Agreement for Main Plant EPC (Turnkey) Package of 2x660 MW Maitree Super Thermal Power Project at Bangladesh”, NTPC, 14 July, 2017, at <https://www.ntpc.co.in/en/media/press-releases/details/bifpcl-signs-contract-agreement-main-plant-epc-turnkey-package-2x660-mw-maitree-super-thermal-power>

29 PV Magazine Global, “India to Finance 100 MW Bangladeshi Solar Plant”, PV Magazine Australia, 06 May, 2021, <https://www.pv-magazine-australia.com/2021/05/06/india-to-finance-100-mw-bangladeshi-solar-plant/>

					to be built on a mainly government-owned khas (fallow) site leased from the Ministry of Land, will take shape with the help of at least 75% of Indian goods and services, under the terms of the sponsor nation's foreign credit rules.
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Defence Project

During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s four-day visit to New Delhi in April 2017, Bangladesh and India signed two defence agreements, the first such agreements between India and any of its neighbours. Under the agreements, the militaries of the two countries will conduct joint exercises and training. India will help Bangladesh set up manufacturing and service centres for defence platforms that both countries possess with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency in defence manufacturing in Bangladesh, and will also provide the Bangladesh military with expert training, and technical and logistic support.<sup>30</sup> India also extended its first ever defence-related line of credit to a neighboring country, by providing Bangladesh with \$500 million to purchase defence equipment.<sup>31</sup>

30 Wikipedia, “Bangladesh India Relations”, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh%E2%80%93India\\_relations#Defence\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh%E2%80%93India_relations#Defence_relations)

31 Indian Brand Equity Foundation, “Bangladesh to import defence items from India under \$500-million LoC”, Indian Brand Equity Foundation, 17 December, 2021, <https://www.ibef.org/news/bangladesh-to-import-defence-items-from-india-under-500million-loc>

# Select Documents

*Compiled by Aakriti Vinayak*

## Joint Communiqué Issued at the End of The Visit of The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to India<sup>1</sup>

Calcutta, February 8, 1972

On the invitation of the Government of India, His Excellency Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, paid a visit to Calcutta from February 6 to 8, 1972. The Prime Minister was accompanied by the Foreign Minister and senior officials of the Government of Bangladesh. He was received by the Prime Minister of India on arrival and by the Governor of West Bengal at the Raj Bhavan.

During his stay, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh addressed a mammoth gathering of the people of Calcutta. He expressed gratitude on behalf of the Government and people of Bangladesh to the Government and people of India, especially to the neighbouring States of West Bengal, Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam, for the hospitality and assistance given to millions of Bangladesh citizens and for the moral and material support given by the Government and people of India to the struggle for liberation.

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1 India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship (1971-1980), High Commission of India, Dhaka, Bangladesh, at <https://bit.ly/3t5fdEG>.

The Prime Minister of India reaffirmed that the people of India and the people of Bangladesh, having fought together in defence of human liberty, would continue to strive together to safeguard the ideals of freedom and the dignity of man.

The two Prime Ministers had detailed discussions covering every aspect of mutual relations between Bangladesh and India. They reviewed the tangible progress made in all spheres since their last meeting in New Delhi on January 10. They resolved to give practical shape to the legitimate and deeply felt aspirations of the common peoples of the two countries, guided by the principles of democracy, socialism, secularism, non-alignment and opposition to racialism and colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. Towards these ends, they expressed their determination to promote, in every possible way, co-operation between the governments and peoples of Bangladesh and India inspired by a vision of lasting peace, amity and good neighbourliness.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh paid warm tribute to the armed forces of India and the part they played in the liberation of Bangladesh. The task having been completed; the two Prime Ministers felt that these armed forces should be withdrawn. The withdrawal of the Indian armed forces would be completed by March 25, 1972. The two Prime Ministers reviewed the entire field of international affairs. They resolved to work together in the interest of world peace and stability. They agreed that in the achievement of this objective the governments and the peoples of the two countries would be inspired by the ideals, principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh solemnly reaffirmed his resolve to ensure, by every means, the return of all the refugees who had taken shelter in India since March 25, 1971, and to strive, by every means, to safeguard their safety, human dignity and means of livelihood. The two Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction that the refugees were returning to Bangladesh and that nearly seven million had already returned in the short space of six weeks. The Prime Minister of India assured the



continuance of all possible assistance to the Government of Bangladesh in the unprecedented task of resettling the refugees and displaced persons in Bangladesh. Taking note of the humanitarian contribution made by the international community, both Prime Ministers expressed hope that these efforts would be enlarged and augmented so that the vast mass of uprooted humanity is enabled to live and work.

The two Prime Ministers reviewed measures for the rapid evolution of mutually beneficial economic relations between the two countries. It was agreed that regular talks, consultations and visits of delegations will take place between the two countries and that appropriate machinery will be set up, where necessary, to promote close co-operation in the fields of development and trade on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, so that the common people of both countries become the beneficiaries. The two Prime Ministers agreed that trade between the two countries should take place on a state-to-state basis as far as possible. It was decided that the representatives of the Bangladesh and Indian Planning Commissions should meet periodically to identify areas of mutual co-operation in the developmental processes of the two countries. The two Prime Ministers decided that some of the immediate problems concerning the trade between the two countries and, in particular, the traditional border trade should be discussed and solved as early as possible by appropriate delegations of the two countries. The two Prime Ministers agreed that effective measures should be undertaken by the two governments forthwith to prevent smuggling across the border between the two countries.

It was noted with satisfaction that the steps taken by the Government of Bangladesh were resulting in the reactivation of its industry and agriculture. Assistance rendered by India was helping in restoring communications and other infrastructure ravaged by war enabling the people of Bangladesh to revive as soon as possible their normal economic life.

The two Prime Ministers emphasised that the geography of the region provided a natural basis for co-operation between the two countries in the development and utilisation of the resources for the benefit of the people of the region. They discussed the problems of flood control, Farakka Barrage and other problems of development of water and power resources. The Prime Ministers desired that the two governments shall engage in exchanging ideas and in identifying areas of co-operation and in setting up suitable machinery for the formulation of appropriate programmes.

Conscious of the urge of the two peoples to enlarge the areas of mutual cooperation, both the Prime Ministers affirmed their resolve to promote such cooperation in cultural, scientific and technological fields.

Both the Prime Ministers noted the fact that the international community has increasingly recognised the establishment of the sovereign independent Republic of Bangladesh and reiterated the view that only those who desire to introduce instability in the region and imperil world peace would persist in ignoring this reality. They agreed to remain in close touch to review the international situation and the dangers to peace, stability and progress in the region.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh renewed the invitation extended by him to the Prime Minister of India to visit Bangladesh and was assured of the eagerness of the Prime Minister of India to make this visit at the earliest opportunity.

## INDO-BANGLADESH BORDER

### **Agreement Between the Government of The Republic of India and Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh Concerning the Demarcation of The Land Boundary Between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters<sup>2</sup>**

New Delhi, May 16, 1974

The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,

**BEARING IN MIND** the friendly relations existing between the two countries,

**DESIRING TO** define more accurately at certain points and to complete the demarcation of the land boundary between India and Bangladesh,

**HAVE AGREED** as follows:

#### *Article I*

The land boundary between India and Bangladesh in the areas mentioned below shall be demarcated in the following manner:

#### **1. MIZORAM-BANGLADESH SECTOR,**

Demarcation should be completed on the basis of the latest pre-partition notifications and records.

#### **2. TRIPURA-SYLHET SECTOR**

Demarcation which is already in progress in this area on the agreed basis, should be completed as early as possible.

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2 India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship (1971-1980), High Commission of India, Dhaka, Bangladesh, at <https://bit.ly/3t5fdEG>.

**3. BHAGALPUR RAILWAY LINE**

The boundary should be demarcated at a distance of 75 feet parallel to the toe of the railway embankment towards the east.

**4. SIBPUR-GAURANGALA SECTOR**

The boundary should be demarcated in continuation of the process started 1951-52 on the basis of the District Settlement Maps of 1915-1918.

**5. MUHURI RIVER (BELONIA) SECTOR**

The boundary in this area should be demarcated along the mid-stream of the course of Muhuri River at the time of demarcation. This boundary will be a fixed boundary. The two Governments should raise embankments on their respective sides with a view to stabilising the river in its present course,

**6. REMAINING PORTION OF THE TRIPURA-NOAKHALI/ COMILLA SECTOR**

The demarcation in this sector should be completed on the basis of Chakla Roshanabad Estate Maps of 1892-1894 and the District Settlement Maps of 1915- 1918 for areas not covered by the Chakla- Roshanabad Maps.

**7. FENNY RIVER**

The boundary should be demarcated along the mid-stream of the course at the time of demarcation of that branch of the Fenny River indicated as the Fenny River on Survey of India Map Sheet No. 79M/15, 1st Edition 1935, till it joins the stream shown as Asalong C on the said Map. From that point on, downstream, the boundary should be demarcated along the mid-stream of the course of the Fenny River at the time

of demarcation of the boundary. The boundary in this sector will be a fixed boundary.

#### **8. REST OF TRIPURA-CHITTAGONG HILL TRACT SECTOR**

The boundary will follow the mid-stream of that branch of the Fenny River, referred to in para 7 above, upto Grid reference 009779 (Map sheet as in para 7 above) from where the boundary will follow the mid-stream of the eastern-most tributary. From the source of this tributary, the boundary will run along the shortest distance to the mid-stream of the stream marked Bayan Asalong, on the map referred to above, and thence will run generally northwards along the mid-stream of this river till it reaches its source on the ridge (indicated by grid reference 046810 on the map referred to above). From there it will run along the crest of this ridge upto Boghoban Trig Station. From Boghoban Trig Station upto the tri-junction of the Bangladesh-Assam-Tripura boundary (Khan Talang Trig Station), the boundary will run along the watershed of the river systems of the two countries. In case of any difference between the map and the ground, the ground shall prevail. The boundary will be a fixed boundary in this sector.

#### **9. BEANIBAZAR-KARIMGANJ SECTOR**

The un demarcated portion of the boundary west of Umapati village should be demarcated in accordance with the agreed basis of demarcation, leaving Umapati village in India.

#### **10. HAKARKHAL**

The boundary should be demarcated in accordance with the Nehru-Noon Agreement of September, 1958, treating Hakar

Khal as a geographical feature distinct from the Ichhamati River. The boundary will be a fixed boundary.

**11. BAIKARI KHAL**

In the Baikari Khal, the boundary should be demarcated on the agreed basis and principles, namely, that the ground shall prevail, i.e. as per the agreement reached between the Directors of Land Records and Surveys of West Bengal and erstwhile East Pakistan in 1949. The boundary will be a fixed boundary.

**12. ENCLAVES**

The Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and the Bangladesh enclaves in India should be exchanged expeditiously, excepting the enclaves mentioned in paragraph 14 without claim to compensation for the additional area going to Bangladesh.

**13. HILLI**

The area will be demarcated in accordance with Radcliffe Award and the line drawn by him on the map.

**14. BERUBARI**

India will retain the southern half of South Berubari Union No. 12 and the adjacent enclaves, measuring an area of 2.64 square miles approximately, and in exchange Bangladesh will retain the Dahagram and Angarpota enclaves. India will lease in perpetuity to Bangladesh an area of 178 metres x 85 metres near 'Tin Bigha' to connect Dahagram with Panbari *Mouza* (P.S. Patgram) of Bangladesh.

**15. LATHITILLA-DUMABARI**

From point Y (the last demarcated boundary pillar position), the boundary shall run southwards along the Patharia Hills RF

boundary upto the point where it meets the western boundary of Dumabari *Mouza*. Thence along the same *Mouza* boundary upto the tri-junction of *Mouzas* Dumabari, Lathitilla and Bara Putnigaon through the junction of the two *Mauzas* Dumabari and Lathitilla. From this point it shall run along the shortest distance to meet the mid-stream of Putni Chara. Thence it shall run generally southwards along the midstream of the course of Putni Chara at the time of demarcation, till it meets the boundary between Sylhet (Bangladesh) and Tripura (India).

## Article 2

The Governments of India and Bangladesh agree that territories in adverse possession in areas already demarcated in respect of which boundary strip maps are already prepared, shall be exchanged within six months of the signing of the boundary strip maps by the plenipotentiaries. They may sign the relevant maps as early as possible and, in any case, not later than the 31st December 1974. Early measures may be taken to print maps in respect of other areas where demarcation has already taken place. These should be printed by 31 St May 1975 and signed by the plenipotentiaries thereafter in order that the exchange of adversely held possessions in these areas may take place by the 31st December, 1 975. In sectors Still to be demarcated, transfer of territorial jurisdiction may take place within six months of the signature by plenipotentiaries on the concerned boundary strip maps.

## Article 3

The Governments of India and Bangladesh agree that when areas are transferred, the people in these areas shall be given the right of staying on where they are, as nationals of the State to which the areas

are transferred. Pending demarcation of the boundary and exchange of territory by mutual agreement, there should be no disturbance of the *status quo* and peaceful conditions shall be maintained in the border regions. Necessary instructions in this regard shall be issued to the local authorities on the border by the two countries.

#### Article 4

The Governments of India and Bangladesh agree that any dispute concerning the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement shall be settled peacefully through mutual consultations.

#### Article 5

This Agreement shall be subject to ratification by the Governments of India and Bangladesh and Instruments of Ratification shall be exchanged as early as possible. The Agreement shall take effect from the date of the exchange of the Instruments of Ratification.

**SIGNED** in New Delhi on May 16, 1974, in two originals each of which is equally authentic.

For the Government of the Republic of India

Sd/-

INDIRA GANDHI

Prime Minister of India.

For the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Sd/-

SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN

Prime Minister of Bangladesh.



## Joint Communiqué Issued at the End of The Visit of the Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman to India<sup>3</sup>

New Delhi, December 20, 1977

At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of India, His Excellency President Ziaur Rahman of the People's Republic of Bangladesh paid a State visit to India on 19-20 December; 1977. The President of Bangladesh was received by His Excellency Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, President of the Republic of India and His Excellency Shri Morarji Desai, Prime Minister of the Republic of India and was accorded a warm welcome.

The President of Bangladesh, during his stay in India laid a wreath at the *Samadhi* of Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat. The President and his party also visited the *Dargah-e-Sharif of Hazra Khawaja* Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer.

During his stay in New Delhi, the President of Bangladesh called on the President of India, His Excellency Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy who returned the call. The Prime Minister of India Shri Morarji Desai and the Minister of External Affairs of India Shri Atai Behari Vajpayee called on the President of Bangladesh. The President of Bangladesh returned the call of the Prime Minister of India.

The President of Bangladesh and the Prime Minister of India met and discussed all matters of mutual interest in depth. This was followed by a meeting of the delegations of the two countries at which the President of Bangladesh was assisted by H.E. Prof. Muhammad Shamsul Huq, Hon'ble Adviser In-charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; HE. Mr. B.M. Abbas, A.T. Hon'ble Adviser In-charge of the Ministry

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3 India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship (1971-1980), High Commission of India, Dhaka, Bangladesh, at <http://bit.ly/3t5fdEG>.

of Power, Water Resources and Flood Control; H.E. Mr. Tabarak Hussein, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh and other senior officials. The Prime Minister of India was assisted by Shri Jagjivan Ram, *Raksha* Mantri; Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, Minister of External Affairs; Shri Surjit Singh Barnala, Minister of Agriculture and irrigation; Shri V. Shankar, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister; Shri J.S. Mehta, Foreign Secretary; Shri C.C. Patel, Secretary, Department of irrigation and other senior officials.

The talks covered a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest and were held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere. The talks reflected a broad similarity of views on a number of issues of mutual concern and confirmed the common desire to consolidate and develop further this improved climate of relations between the two countries.

The leaders recognised that the two countries were bound by the ties of geography, tradition and culture, and the need for maintaining close and friendly relations between them. Reiterating their commitment to non-alignment, they reaffirmed their determination to develop and strengthen these relations on the basis of sovereign equality, independence and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. They were convinced that this would contribute to the consolidation of the emerging edifice of peace in the region and the promotion of peace and stability in the world at large.

The leaders regarded the Agreement signed in Dacca on 5th November 1977 on the Sharing of the Ganga Waters at Farakka and on augmenting its flows of historic significance. This Agreement was possible because of the spirit of mutual accommodation and understanding shown by the leaders of the two countries.

The leaders attached importance to a speedy solution of the long-term problem of augmenting the flows of the Ganga which was essential

for adequately morning tile requirements of both the countries and thus in the interests of their peoples. They recognised that the Agreement had paved the way for wider cooperation between the two countries particularly for the optimum utilisation of tire water resources of the region as a whole.

The leaders affirmed the heritage of human values of universal brotherhood, tolerance and compassion which their countries share and which inspire and guide them in their policies of social justice and harmony for their respective peoples.

The leaders exchanged views on international situation and noted with serious concern continuing tension and conflict in certain regions of the world. Both the leaders expressed the hope that a durable peace would be achieved in West Asia within the framework of the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations. They reaffirmed their support for the just struggle for majority rule in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

The leaders expressed their concern at the increasing disparity between the rich and poor nations. They, therefore, supported the move for a new and just international economic order and expressed their desire to cooperate in international forums to achieve this common objective. The leaders reiterated their support to the UN Declaration on the Establishment of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

The leaders recognised that the visit of the President of Bangladesh had further contributed to the building of confidence and to the consolidation of their friendly relations.<sup>4</sup>

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4 President Ziaur Rahman who had come to New Delhi after a visit to Kathmandu, on return to Dacca summed up his two visits as very successful and said they had brought about greater understanding and opened up possibilities of wider cooperation between Bangladesh and her neighbours. President Zia, who was talking to newsmen

The President of Bangladesh extended invitations to the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of India to visit Bangladesh and the invitations were accepted. President of Bangladesh expressed his sincere thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and the members of his party during their visit to the Republic of India, by the Government and the people of India.

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on December 20 on his return from New Delhi said that Bangladesh and Nepal have agreed to have regional cooperation for development of irrigation, water and flood control. He added he had discussed the question of overland connection with Nepal for trade and commerce, with the Nepalese Government. The President of Bangladesh said he had also discussed the same question of overland route between Bangladesh and Nepal with the Indian Prime Minister and in this respect, details will be worked out. Referring to his visit to India, he said he had “lengthy talks” with Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai. “We discussed about smooth working of the Farakka Agreement concluded some time ago and also generally talked about the long-term solution of the problem.” Adding he said he also discussed with India the question of maritime boundary and that talks would take place later at an “appropriate level”. He said the expansion of trade and commerce and other bilateral matters were also discussed. He added that he had discussed with the Indian Prime Minister the possibility of overland connection with Pakistan for trade. He told a questioner that Bangladesh had two difficult problems with India—the Farakka and the “dissidents” and added “I think these are solved”. President Zia said that the 25-year-old Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation did not figure in his discussions with Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai.

## **Joint Communiqué issued at the end of the visit of Bangladesh President Hussain Muhammad Ershad to India<sup>5</sup>**

**New Delhi, October 7, 1982.**

1. At the invitation of Her Excellency Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Lieutenant General H.M. Ershad, NDC, PSC, President of the Council of Ministers, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, paid a two-day official visit to India from 6-7 October 1982.

2. His Excellency Lieutenant General Ershad during his visit called on the Acting President of India, Shri M. Hidayatullah. They had a warm and friendly exchange of views.

3. The Heads of Government of Bangladesh and India held detailed discussions. Formal talks were also held between the delegations of the two countries. The President of the Council of Ministers of Bangladesh, Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad, was assisted by Mr. AR. Shamsud Doha, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. Mr. A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan, Minister of Agriculture, Maj. Gen. KMA Wahed PSC, and other senior officials. Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assisted by Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, Minister of External Affairs, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of Finance. Sri Kedar Panday, Minister of Irrigation Shri A A Rahim, Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs. Dr. P.S. Alexander, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Sri K.S. Bajpai, Secretary and other senior officials.

4. Discussions were held in an atmosphere of friendship and great cordiality covering international, regional and bilateral issues. The two Heads of Government felt that the talks had contribute to

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5 India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship, *High Commission of India*, Dhaka, Bangladesh, at [https://www.hcidhaka.gov.in/pdf/bi\\_doc/19901b.doc](https://www.hcidhaka.gov.in/pdf/bi_doc/19901b.doc).

strengthening mutual understanding and had confirmed their common desire to further consolidate the existing friendly relations between the two countries.

5. The two leaders reviewed the international situation and voiced their concern over the dangerous escalation of international tension endangering world peace and security and the continued deterioration of the global economic climate. They emphasised that peace and stability could only be ensured by strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and of the Non-aligned Movement, especially respect for sovereign equality and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes.

6. The two leaders noted with particular concern the dangerous deterioration in the situation in West Asia which threatened both regional and global peace and security. They expressed their shock and revulsion at the recent wanton massacre of innocent Palestinians in Lebanon and the aggressive actions of Israel against the Palestinian people and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Arab countries. In condemning the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, they called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Arab territories. They reiterated their support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the sole and legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine. They emphasised that a comprehensive, just and durable solution of the West Asian crisis could only be achieved through the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights including the right to a sovereign independent state of their own.

7. The two leaders expressed great concern that the escalation of great power rivalry in the Indian Ocean posed a threat to the peace, security and stability of the region. They reviewed the efforts made by

the Non-aligned Countries to convene the International Conference on the Indian Ocean with a view to implementing the 1971 UN Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which included inter-alia a call for progressive reduction and eventual elimination of great power military presence including bases and attendant facilities from the Indian Ocean. They expressed their unhappiness that these efforts had not yet succeeded and called for their intensification so that the security of the States in the Indian Ocean could be strengthened.

8. The two reaffirmed their consistent commitment to the policy of Non-alignment and stressed the critical role of Non-aligned countries in safeguarding peace in the world, in the struggle of peoples for independence and freedom, and for the determination of their Governments to work preservation of the principles of the Non-aligned Movement as an independent global factor for strengthening the solidarity, unity of action and cooperation of the Non-aligned countries and for promoting peace and understanding among nations. The two leaders recognising that the convening of the Seventh Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government at New Delhi was of exceptional significance in the present unfavourable development of international political and economic relations resolved to exert their maximum concerted efforts to make it a success.

9. The two leaders expressed their regret at the continued stalemate in North- South relations and the deterioration in the climate of multilateral economic cooperation. They expressed the conviction that all efforts should be made to reach an agreement on the early launching of global negotiations consistent with the wishes of the vast majority of developing nations. They also urged that simultaneous efforts should be made to achieve progress in dealing with the problems of the least developed countries and in areas of critical importance to developing countries such as food, energy, financial flows and trade in the forthcoming meetings of the specialized agencies. The two

leaders noted with appreciation the efforts made to foster economic cooperation among developing countries and stressed the need for these countries to agree on a charter of action for collective self-reliance which would reduce their vulnerability to pressures emanating from the developed countries.

10. The two Heads of Government expressed their conviction that increased cooperation among the countries of South Asia in a climate of mutual respect and equality should contribute to the welfare of the region. The two leaders welcomed the progress that had been made in promoting South Asian regional cooperation and noted with satisfaction that necessary preparatory work was well under way to launch a comprehensive programme for cooperation to be launched by the Foreign Ministers at their meeting.

11. The two Heads of Government recognised that friendly and good-neighbourly relations between Bangladesh and India were clearly in the larger interest of the peoples of the two countries and also of peace and stability in the region. They reaffirmed their commitment to promote the well-being of all their peoples and to raise the quality of their lives.

12. The two leaders discussed the actual experience by the two sides of the working of the 1977 Farakka Agreement which would be coming to its end on November 4, 1982. They agreed that it had not proved suitable to be a satisfactory and durable solution and that with its termination fresh efforts were necessary to arrive at such a solution. They directed the Joint Rivers Commission to ensure that a full and final agreement is arrived at by effective use of the time gained by the interim arrangements that have been worked out for the 18 months following the ending of the 1977 Agreement, as incorporated in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two Foreign Ministers on October 7, 1982.



13. The two leaders noted with satisfaction the progress achieved at the recently concluded 22nd meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission and the commitment to reach an agreement on an expeditious determination of the formula for sharing the Teesta Waters. They were confident that the Joint Rivers Commission would be able to finalise the sharing formula and arrive at mutually acceptable permanent solution of the problem within the stipulated periods.

14. The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to complete as early as possible all steps leading towards the implementation of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement. They agreed that intensified efforts should be made to speed up the process of demarcating the remaining sectors of the land boundary. They noted with satisfaction that the two Governments had signed the terms of the lease in perpetuity of the Tin Bigha corridor in pursuance of Article I, para 14 of the Land Boundary Agreement. The two Governments agreed to take immediate steps to complete the modalities of implementation of the lease terms including verification and marking of the leased area on the ground. The Indian side affirmed that the terms of lease would be implemented as soon as possible even prior to the ratification of the Land Boundary Agreement of 1974.

15. The two leaders noted the discussions that had taken place at the official *level* in January 1982 on the question of New Moore/South Talpatty Island. They agreed that early talks should take place at the level of Secretaries to study the additional information exchanged on the basis of in-depth examination of all relevant facts and principles. The Secretaries should report to their Foreign Ministers for further necessary steps to be taken with a view to an early and peaceful resolution of the problem.

16. The two Heads of Government briefly reviewed the progress made on the delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between the

officials of the two countries in December, 1980 and January, 1982. They reiterated that this question should be resolved by mutual agreement in a spirit of understanding and good neighbourliness and decided that the dialogue should continue at a mutually convenient date.

17. Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to take effective measures to ensure that peace and tranquillity is maintained on the borders and that their respective territories are not used for hostile activities directed against the other.

18. Both sides reemphasized the need, to stop illegal movement of people across the border and reiterated their determination to stop such illegal movement by all possible means including the strengthening of existing arrangement and mutual cooperation in this regard.

19. The two leaders reviewed the question of extension of Railway transit facilities for Indian goods through Bangladesh territory. They agreed that modalities for such in-transit railway facilities may be worked out under the auspices the Joint Economic Commission with a view to expeditious implementation.

20. The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the establishment of the Indo- Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission, according to the Agreement signed by their respective Foreign Ministers at New Delhi on 7th October, 1982 or decided that the Commission should meet in November 1982 at New Delhi to give necessary directives to the concerned agencies of the two Governments to take decisions required for removing existing bottlenecks any, and to identify new areas of mutually beneficial co-operation.

21. The two leaders noted the great potential for enlarged cooperation in scientific, technological, technical, agricultural, transport, small scale rural, industries and other fields, including establishment of joint ventures. While emphasising the need for expanding Bangladesh's exports to India, they stressed that in the long term the best opportunity for reducing the trade gap between the two

countries and for forging closer links of economic cooperation could be provided by joint collaboration between India and Bangladesh the establishing industries in Bangladesh, the products of many of which could be exported to India. In this connection, they felt that the feasibility of setting up such projects, *inter-alia*, as a sponge iron and steel complex, manufacture of cement and newsprint, gas-based manufacturing units, carriage manufacturing units, diesel engines for agricultural pumps, textiles and sugar mills, and a wide range of small-scale industries etc. should be urgently explored. They also recognised the immense scope of cooperation between the two countries in the field of railway and other transport infrastructure. They agreed that opportunities should be enlarged and incentives provided to both their private and public sector enterprises to enter into as many of such joint collaborative arrangements as possible. In order to facilitate such projects and for various development programmes India agreed to consider the extension of credits to Bangladesh. The two leaders directed those concrete steps be taken to further promote bilateral cooperation in these fields and that the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to the Joint Economic Commission should be effectively implemented so that the objective of diversified, durable, and mutually advantageous cooperation between the two countries is furthered.

22. The two leaders recessed the need of further expanding the trade between the two countries, and directed that the concerned secretaries of the two Governments meet urgently to review their existing trade relations. In this connection they agreed that their experts should explore the feasibility of entering into long term arrangements for increasing exports from Bangladesh in respect of such commodities as urea, newsprint, bitumen, wet blue leather, special textiles etc. In the trade advantageous trade, it was agreed that efforts from both sides would be intensified to reduce the existing imbalance in the trade exchanges between the two countries. In this regard the Indian side also emphasised the need for increased export promotion efforts by Bangladesh.

23. In reviewing the scope of their bilateral relations, the two leaders noted with satisfaction the signing of the Trade Agreement in 1980, Tele-communication Agreement in 1981, the Memorandum at Understanding on Technical Cooperation in December, 1981 and the Protocol of Inland Water Transport and Trade in August, 1982.

24. The two leaders emphasizing the ties of geography, history common tradition and culture that hound their two countries, reiterated the importance of mutual exchange of visits at the highest level and recognised that such periodic visits were useful in promoting friendly relations, between them.

25. Expressing their satisfaction over the results of the visit of His Excellency Lieutenant General H.M. Ershad to New Delhi the two sides noted that tic fruitful and constructive discussions had contribute greatly towards increasing mutual trust and friendship between the two countries.

26. The President of the Council at Ministers of Bangladesh expressed his sincere gratitude to the Prime Minister, the Government and the people of India for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to his and the members of his delegation during then stay in India.<sup>6</sup>

27. The president the Council of Ministers of Bangladesh extended an invitation to the Prime Minister of India to visit Bangladesh. The invitation was accepted with pleasure.

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6 Bangladesh media gave an unreserved support to the outcome of Chief Martial Law Administrator's visit to New Delhi. The Government owned Bangladesh Observer on October 9 described it "A Historic Visit" while the other Government owned Bangladesh Times editorially said it was a "Successful summit". Dainik Bangla described it as "Opening a significant chapter in the history of Indo-Bangladesh relations." Bangladesh Observation philosophically said "it is this sprit which is important. This memorable visit of General Ershad would, we hope, mark the beginning of a new era of understanding and cooperation between the two countries." Bangladesh Times poetically said: "Bangladesh and India have now entered into a new phase of bilateral relations marked by a greater understanding of each other's problems and a genuine resolve to find amicable solutions to them."

**Treaty between the Government of the Republic of India and the  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on sharing  
of the Ganga/Ganges Waters at Farakka<sup>7</sup>**

**New Delhi, December 12, 1996**

The Government of the Republic India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,

**DETERMINED** to promote and strengthen their relations of friendship and good neighbourliness,

**INSPIRED** by the common desire of promoting the well-being of their peoples,

**BEING** desirous of sharing by mutual agreement the water of the international rivers flowing through the territories of the two countries and of making the optimum utilization of the water resources of their region in the fields of flood management, irrigation, river basin development and generation of hydro-power for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the two counters.

**RECOGNISING** that the need for making an arrangement for sharing of the Ganga/Ganges waters at Farakka in a spirit of mutual accommodation and the need for a solution to the long-term problem of augmenting the flows of the Ganga/Ganges are in the mutual interests of the peoples of the two countries.

**BEING** desirous of finding a fair and just solution without affecting the rights and entitlements of either country other than those covered by this Treaty, or establishing any general principles of law or precedent.

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<sup>7</sup> India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship, *High Commission of India*, Dhaka, Bangladesh, at <https://bit.ly/34IuguQ>.

**HAVE AGREED** as follows:

### **Article-I**

The quantum of waters agreed to be released by India to Bangladesh will be at Farakka.

### **Article - II**

- (i) The sharing between India and Bangladesh of the Ganga/ Ganges waters at Farakka by ten-day periods from the 1st January to the 31st May every year will be with reference to the formula at Annexure I and an indicative schedule giving the implications of the sharing arrangement under Annexure I is at Annexure II.
- (ii) The indicative schedule at Annexure II, as referred to in sub para (i) above, is based on 40 years (1949-1988) 10-day period average availability of water at Farakka. Every effort would be made by the upper riparian to protect flows of water at Farakka as in the 40-year average availability as mentioned above.
- (iii) In the event flow at Farakka falls below 50,000 cusecs in any 10 day period, the two governments will enter into immediate consultations to make adjustments on an emergency bases, in accordance with the principles of equity, fair play and no harm to either party.

### **Article - III**

The waters released to Bangladesh at Farakka under Article I shall not be reduced below Farakka except for reasonable uses of waters, not exceeding 200 cusecs, by India between Farakka and the point on the Ganga/Ganges where both its banks are in Bangladesh.

#### **Article - IV**

A Committee consisting of representatives nominated by the two Governments in equal numbers (hereinafter called the Joint Committee) shall be constituted following the signing of this Treaty. The Joint Committee shall set up suitable teams at Farakka and Hardinge Bridge to observe and record at Farakka the daily flows below Farakka Barrage, in the Feeder Canal, and at the Navigation Lock, as well as at the Hardinge Bridge.

#### **Article-V**

The Joint Committee shall decide its own procedure and method of functioning

#### **Article - VI**

The Joint Committee shall submit to the two Governments all data collected by it and shall also submit a yearly report to both the Governments. Following submission of the reports the two Governments will meet at appropriate levels to decide upon such further actions as may be needed.

#### **Article - VII**

The Joint Committee shall be responsible for implementing the arrangements contained in this Treaty and examining any difficulty arising out of the implementation of the above arrangements and of the operation of Farakka Barrage. Any difference or dispute arising in this regard, if not resolved by the Joint Committee, shall be referred to the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission. If the difference or dispute still remains unresolved, it shall be referred to the two Governments which shall meet urgently at the appropriate level to resolve it by mutual discussion.

### **Article - VIII**

The two Governments recognize the need to cooperate with each other in finding a solution to the long-term problem of augmenting the flows of the Ganga/Ganges during the dry season.

### **Article - IX**

Guided by the principles of equity, fairness and no harm to either party, both the Governments agree to conclude water sharing Treaties/Agreements with regard to other common rivers.

### **Article - X**

The sharing arrangement under this Treaty shall be reviewed by the two Governments at five years' interval or earlier, as required by either party and needed adjustments, based on principles of equity, fairness, and no harm to either party made thereto, if necessary. It would be open to either party to seek the first review after two years to assess the impact and working of the sharing arrangement as contained in this Treaty.

### **Article - XI**

For the period of this Treaty, in the absence of mutual agreement on adjustments following reviews as mentioned in Article X, India shall release downstream of Farakka Barrage, water at a rate not less than 90% (ninety per cent) of Bangladesh's share according to the formula referred to in Article II, until such time as mutually agreed flows are decided upon.

### **Article - XII**

This Treaty shall enter into force upon signature and shall remain in force for a period of thirty years and it shall be renewable on the basis of mutual consent.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto by the respective Governments, have signed this Treaty.

**DONE** at New Delhi 12th December, 1996 in Hindi, Bangla and English languages. In the event of any conflict between the texts, the English text shall prevail.

Sd/-  
(H.D. DEVE GOWDA)  
Prime Minister,  
Republic of India

Sd/-  
(Sheikh Hasina)  
Prime Minister,  
People's Republic of Bangladesh

Annexure - I

Availability at Farakka	Share of India	Share of Bangladesh
70,000 cusecs or less	50%	50%
70,000-75,000 cusecs	Balance of flow	35,000 cusecs
75,000 cusecs or more	40,000 cusecs	Balance of flow

Subject to the condition that India and Bangladesh each shall receive guaranteed 35,000 cusecs of water in alternate three 10-day periods during the period March 1 to May 10.

**Annexure - II****Schedule**

(Sharing of waters at Farakka between January 01 and May 31 every year)

If actual availability corresponds to average flows of the period 1949 to 1988 the implication of the formula in Annex-I for the share of each side is:

Period	Average of total flow 1949-1988	India's share	Bangladesh share
	(cusecs)	(cusecs)	(cusecs)
January			
1-10	107,516	40,000	67,516
11-20	97,673	40,000	57,673
21-31	90,154	40,000	50,154
February			
1-10	86,323	40,000	46,323
11-20	82,859	40,000	42,859
21-28	79,106	40,000	39,106
March			
1-10	74,419	39,419	35,000
11-20	68,931	33,931	35,000*
21-30	64,688	35,000*	29,688
April			
1-10	63,180	28,180	35,000*
11-20	62,633	35,000*	27,633
21-30	60,992	25,992	35,000*
May			
1-10	67,351	35,000*	32,351
11-20	73,590	38,590	35,000
21-31	81,834	40,000	41,834

## Press Release

### Text of Exchange of Letters on Modalities for Implementation of India- Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement 1974 and Protocol of 2011 to the Land Boundary Agreement<sup>8</sup>



विदेश सचिव  
FOREIGN SECRETARY

No. 9596/FS/2015

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June 6, 2015

Excellency,

In pursuance of the exchange of Instruments of Ratification between our two governments on June 6, 2015 to bring into effect the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh concerning the demarcation of the Land Boundary between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters, 1974 and the 2011 Protocol to the said Agreement, I have the honour to propose the following subsequent steps to implement the said Agreement and Protocol

#### I. Enclaves

- (i) India and Bangladesh agree that the Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and Bangladeshi enclaves in India exchanged pursuant to the 1974 Agreement and 2011 Protocol shall stand transferred to the other with effect from the midnight of July 31, 2015. This shall be referred to as the "Appointed Day";

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8 India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship, High Commission of India, Dhaka, Bangladesh, at <https://hcidhaka.gov.in/pdf/PR-I.pdf>.

- (ii) Prior to the Appointed Day, representatives of the two Governments shall conduct a joint visit to the enclaves for the following purposes:
  - a. Informing the residents of the enclaves of the provisions contained in the 1974 Agreement and the 2011 Protocol, including their rights relating to nationality and citizenship;
  - b. Identifying the residents who wish to continue to retain the nationality they hold prior to the actual transfer of territory. This right is available only to those residents who are included in the joint headcount of the population of the enclave finalised and exchanged by the two governments in July 2011 and to the children born to such residents from July 2011 till date.
  - c. Collection of data, including photographs, required for issue of entry passes or any other document to facilitate the travel and entry of an enclave resident choosing to retain his original nationality.
- (iii) The entry, stay and secure functioning of the representatives in the joint visit, and setting up of camps shall be facilitated by both Governments;
- (iv) Both Governments shall facilitate orderly, safe and secure passage to residents of enclaves along with their personal belongings and moveable property to the mainland of India or Bangladesh, as the case may be, including through provision of travel documents;
- (v) The travel of the residents who exercise the option of moving from an enclave to the mainland of India or Bangladesh, as the

case may be, will be arranged by the respective Governments through cooperation as mutually agreed, and will take place by November 30, 2015. Entry/exit points would be Haldibari, Burimari and Banglabandha on the India-Bangladesh border.

- (vi) Both Governments shall ensure the safe custody and integrity of land records, where available, and other immovable properties of residents of enclaves till the date of actual transfer when the said enclaves shall vest in the sovereign jurisdiction of the other State and the records shall be exchanged through the relevant designated District Administrations of the two Governments latest by November 30, 2015.

## II. Adverse Possessions

- (vii) As regards the Adverse Possessions covered under the 2011 Protocol, India and Bangladesh shall print, sign at the plenipotentiary level and exchange the interim strip maps prepared as provided in Article 3 of the 2011 Protocol to complete the transfer of territorial jurisdiction on the Appointed Day. The ground demarcation of the boundary as per the Interim strip maps will be completed by the respective Survey Departments of the two Governments by June 30, 2016.

## III. Undemarcated Boundary

- (viii) India and Bangladesh shall print, sign at plenipotentiary level and exchange the interim strip maps of the undemarcated sectors prepared as provided in Article 2 of the 2011 Protocol by the Appointed Day. The ground demarcation of the boundary based on these Interim strip maps will be completed by June 30, 2016.

#### IV. Ownership and Transfer of immovable Properties

- (ix) The enclave residents exercising the option of moving from an enclave to the mainland of India or Bangladesh, as the case may be, shall inform the relevant district administrations prior to the Appointed Day details of the records and specifications of immovable property held by them. The respective district administrations shall put these records in the public domain prior to their moving so as to avoid misuse or usurpation of such property and to enable sale by the owner of the property. The two Governments shall facilitate remittance of sales proceeds of above-mentioned immovable properties as appropriate.

2 The existing mechanism of India-Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) will finalize all further details in this regard. The same mechanism will be used to address any issue that may arise after the transfer for the next five years till June 2020. Issues pertaining to modalities to facilitate sale of immovable properties referred to in paragraph 1(ix) above and remittance of such sales proceeds will be addressed by the JBWG at an early date,

3 Excellency, I have the honour further to propose that this letter and your Excellency's reply thereto, confirming that the above sets out correctly the understanding between us shall constitute an Agreement between our two Governments.

(Dr. S. Jaishankar)

H.E. Mr. Md. Shahidul Hogue  
Foreign Secretary Government  
of the People's Republic of  
Bangladesh Dhaka

**The Letter received from the Bangladesh side is as follows:<sup>9</sup>**

GOVERNMENT OF THE  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA



Foreign Secretary

June 6, 2015

Excellency,

In pursuance of the exchange of Instruments of Ratification between our two governments on June 6, 2015 to bring into effect the Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of the Republic of India concerning the Demarcation of the Land Boundary between India and Bangladesh and Related Matters, 1974 and the 2011 Protocol to the said Agreement, and your letter of June 6, 2015, I have the honor to confirm that the following correctly sets out the subsequent steps to implement the said Agreement and Protocol:

**I. Enclaves**

- (i) Bangladesh and India agree that the Bangladeshi enclaves in India and Indian enclaves in Bangladesh exchanged pursuant to the 1974 Agreement and 2011 Protocol shall stand transferred to the other with effect from the midnight of July 31, 2015. This shall be referred to as the "Appointed Day";
- (ii) Prior to the Appointed Day, representatives of the two Governments shall conduct a joint visit to the enclaves for the following purposes:

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<sup>9</sup> India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship, High Commission of India, Dhaka, Bangladesh, at <https://hcidhaka.gov.in/pdf/PR-I.pdf>.



- a. Informing the residents of the enclaves of the provisions contained in the 1974 Agreement and the 2011 Protocol, including their rights relating to nationality and citizenship;
  - b. Identifying the residents who wish to continue to retain the nationality they hold prior to the actual transfer of territory. This right is available only to those residents who are included in the joint headcount of the population of the enclave finalised and exchanged by the two governments in July 2011 and to the children born to such residents from July 2011 till date;
  - c. Collection of data, including photographs, required for issue of entry passes or any other document to facilitate the travel and entry of an enclave resident choosing to retain his original nationality;
- (iii) The entry, stay and secure functioning of the representatives in the joint visit, and setting up of camps shall be facilitated by both Governments;
- (iv) Both Governments shall facilitate orderly, safe and secure passage to residents of enclaves along with their personal belongings and moveable property to the mainland of Bangladesh or India, as the case may be, including through provision of travel documents;
- (v) The travel of the residents who exercise the option of moving from an enclave to the mainland of Bangladesh or India, as the case may be, will be arranged by the respective Governments through cooperation as mutually agreed, and will take place by November 30, 2015. Entry/exit points would be Haldibari, Burimari and Banglabandha on the Bangladesh-India border.

- (vi) Both Governments shall ensure the safe custody and integrity of land records, where available, and other immovable properties of residents of enclaves till the date of actual transfer when the said enclaves shall vest in the sovereign jurisdiction of the other State and the records shall be exchanged through the relevant designated District Administrations of the two Governments latest by November 30, 2015.

## **II Adverse Possessions**

- (vii) As regards the Adverse Possessions covered under the 2011 Protocol, Bangladesh and India shall print, sign at the plenipotentiary level and exchange the interim strip maps prepared as provided in Article 3 of the 2011 Protocol to complete the transfer of territorial jurisdiction on the Appointed Day. The ground demarcation of the boundary as per the Interim strip maps will be completed by the respective Survey Departments of the two Governments by June 30, 2016.

## **III. Undemarcated Boundary**

- (viii) Bangladesh and India shall print, sign at plenipotentiary level and exchange the interim strip maps of the undemarcated sectors prepared as provided in Article 2 of the 2011 Protocol by the Appointed Day. The ground demarcation of the boundary based on these Interim strip maps will be completed by June 30, 2016.

## **IV. Ownership and Transfer of Immovable Properties**

- (ix) The enclave residents exercising the option of moving from an enclave to the mainland of Bangladesh or India, as the case may be, shall inform the relevant district administrations prior

to the Appointed Day details of the records and specifications of immovable property held by them. The respective district administrations shall put these records in the public domain prior to their moving so as to avoid misuse or usurpation of such property and to enable sale by the owner of the property. The two Governments shall facilitate remittance of sales proceeds of above-mentioned immovable properties as appropriate.

2. The existing mechanism of Bangladesh-India Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) will finalize all further details in this regard. The same mechanism will be used to address any issue that may arise after the transfer for the next five years till June 2020, Issues pertaining to modalities to facilitate sale of immovable properties referred to in paragraph 1(ix) above and remittance of such sales proceeds will be addressed by the JBWG at an early date.

3. Excellency, I have the honour to confirm that the above understanding between us on the modalities for implementation of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement and its 2011 Protocol shall constitute an Agreement between our two Governments.

4. Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Md. Shahidul Haque)

H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar  
Foreign Secretary  
Ministry of External Affairs  
Government of the Republic of  
India New Delhi

New Delhi  
June 08, 2015

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Batabyal, G. (2020) *Politico-Military Strategy of the Bangladesh Liberation War, 1971*. Routledge India.

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Mujeri, K. & Mujeri, N. (2020) *Bangladesh at Fifty: Moving beyond Development Traps*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Narayan, S. & Datta, S. (2020) *Bangladesh at 50: Development and Challenges*. Orient Black Swan Private Limited.
- Narayanan, M. (2020) *When Sparrows flew like Eagles: 1971 Indo-Pak War of Liberation of Bangladesh*. Pentagon Press.
- Rahman, S. (2021) *Apoorn Atmakatha in Marathi - An Autobiography of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman | The Struggle for Democratic Rights of Bangladesh (Marathi)*. Inking Innovations Publishers.
- Rahman, S. (2021) *Bangabandhu for You*. Deep Prakashan Publishers.
- Rahman, S. (2022) *Prison Diaries: The Rebel Who Founded a Nation*. C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd.
- Rahman, T. (2020) *Remembering 1971: On British Bangladeshis Transmitting Memories from the Bangladesh Liberation War*. Independently Published.
- Seidle, D. (2021). *Celebrating 50 Years of Bangladesh*. Daniel Seidle.
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# Index

- 1971 3, 5, 9-10, 12, 15-25, 27, 29-30, 32, 35-37, 40-41, 43-47, 49-65, 68-73, 75, 77, 84-86, 101, 121, 133-51, 157, 159, 181, 182, 185, 191, 197, 218, 219
- 1971 Liberation War 5, 12, 84, 121
- Aircraft Carrier 40, 43, 59
- Air Force 20, 35, 39, 42-46, 71, 73, 76, 140, 149-50
- All India Radio 20, 172
- Anthony 14, 22-23
- Anthony Mascarenhas 14, 22-23
- Army 14, 16-18, 23, 32, 34, 36-37, 68, 76-77, 95, 103, 136-37, 142-45
- Asia 9, 28, 30, 48-49, 61-62, 64, 83, 87, 99, 108, 161-62, 165, 168, 193, 196, 198, 221-22
- Assam 23-24, 26, 35, 42, 77, 95, 110, 179, 181, 187
- Autonomy 14-16, 58, 83, 87, 122, 127-30, 134-35, 144
- Awami League 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 85-86, 90, 100, 106-07, 109, 117, 123, 125, 129-30, 132-33, 135-37, 141, 143-44
- Bangabandhu 74, 83-84, 130, 132, 136-37, 174, 181, 218-19
- Bangladesh 5-6, 9-23, 25, 27-28, 30-31, 33, 35, 38, 44, 46-48, 50-51, 54-57, 59, 61, 64-67, 73, 75-76, 78, 83-118, 131-32, 134, 136-47, 149-50, 152-85, 187-95, 198-219, 222
- Bangladesh and India 9, 28, 30, 83, 94, 107-08, 111, 114, 116-17, 155, 169, 171, 180, 182, 195, 198, 202, 214, 216
- Bangladeshi 20, 25-26, 28, 36, 83, 85-90, 94, 99-100, 102, 104, 107, 109, 115, 138, 174, 177, 179, 210, 214, 222
- Bangladeshis 10, 20-21, 86-87, 89, 110, 219
- Bangladesh Liberation War 27, 138, 218-19
- Battle 38, 68, 73, 75, 148
- Bay of Bengal 32, 44, 59, 95, 111, 165
- Bengali 9, 13-16, 25, 34, 59, 61, 90, 122-23, 125, 131, 135-36, 141, 145-46
- Bhutto 15-17, 54, 66, 132-34, 136, 140, 144-45, 147, 149, 150-51
- Bogra 38
- Bonhomie 60, 64
- Brahmaputra 31-32, 43-44
- BSF 33, 78, 110, 137

## India Bangladesh Bonhomie at 50: 1971 and the Present

- Calcutta 21, 31-32, 44, 103, 122, 125, 148, 181
- Calcutta Port 31
- Caretaker Government 90-91
- Ceasefire 63
- China 19, 36, 51-53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 64-66, 88-89, 101-03, 145, 149-50, 221
- Chittagong Port 31, 94
- Chronology 5, 121
- Clandestine War 32, 77
- Collaborators 89, 142, 150
- Cooperation 11, 17, 28, 57, 61, 65, 67, 83, 85, 91-92, 94-95, 97-101, 108, 114-15, 118, 135, 154, 158-67, 170, 177, 184, 193-94, 197-98, 200-02, 212, 215
- Corridor 31, 33, 78, 110
- Covert 30, 36
- Cox Bazar 32, 40, 46
- Dacca 17-19, 31-33, 43, 45-47, 55, 64, 75, 86, 98, 105, 126-29, 131, 133, 135-36, 138-39, 146--51, 192-93
- Deb Mukharji 16
- Defence 17, 21, 72, 76, 91, 95, 130-31, 149, 180, 222
- Dhaka 38, 45, 46, 55, 62, 78-79, 84, 86, 88-91, 96-97, 109, 112, 114-15, 117, 124-26, 130, 135, 144, 150, 163, 173-74, 176, 181, 185, 191, 195, 203, 210, 214
- Eastern Command 32, 44, 107
- East Pakistan 10, 13, 14, 15, 17-18, 21, 23-26, 29-31, 33, 35, 37-38, 41-44, 46-47, 49-54, 56-59, 62-65, 75, 77-78, 86, 122-37, 139-41, 144, 148, 188
- Energy 91-93, 111, 154, 159, 166, 197
- Europe 49, 92
- External 24, 27, 56, 57, 92, 105-07, 162, 174-75, 177, 191-92, 195, 217
- Field Marshal 130
- Freedom 9-10, 17, 19-20, 28, 35-36, 56, 83, 87, 107, 138, 147, 182, 197
- Frigates 41
- General Assembly 50, 52
- General Tikka Khan 17, 135
- Gen. Manekshaw 32, 76, 77
- Genocide 10, 16, 19, 22, 24, 35, 49, 53, 56, 137
- Haksar 86, 89, 102-03, 134
- Henry Kissinger 57-58, 64
- India 5-6, 9-11, 13, 16-21, 23-25, 27-36, 38, 40, 42, 46-67, 73, 76-78, 83-118, 121, 128, 130, 133-35, 137-38, 140-45, 147-50, 152-192, 194-95, 198, 200-04, 206-22
- India-Bangladesh 5, 6, 9, 83-84, 93, 104, 117, 167, 172, 174-75, 177, 179, 181, 185, 191, 195, 203, 210, 212-14

- Indian Air Force 20, 39, 42, 46, 71, 150  
 Indian Army 30-32, 34-37, 40-43, 59, 69-70, 72-74, 77, 86, 143, 148, 176  
 Indian Navy 40-43, 46  
 India-Pakistan 31-32, 55, 150  
 Indira Gandhi 19, 21, 22-25, 30, 32, 34, 36, 49, 57-58, 60, 66, 76-77, 79, 83, 86, 96, 104, 106, 136-38, 143, 145-47, 149-51, 195  
 Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 14  
 Infantry Brigade 39, 69-70, 72  
 Infrastructure 29, 92, 111, 113-14, 168, 183, 201  
  
 Jamat-i-Islami 15  
 Jamuna 31-32  
 Jayanta Roy Chowdhury 20, 28, 35-36, 46  
 Jenefer Coates 13  
 Joint Communiqué 28  
  
 Kolkata 18, 20-21, 42, 77, 92, 94, 109, 112, 173, 222  
  
 Land Boundary Agreement 91, 110, 199, 210, 217  
 Liberation War 5, 9, 10, 12, 19-20, 27, 30, 32, 47-49, 66, 73, 83-84, 88, 99, 121, 138, 218-19  
 Line of Credit 91, 109, 114, 180  
 LoC 180  
  
 Maneckshaw 32  
 Meghna 31-32, 44-45, 73-74, 78-79  
  
 Member of Parliament 63  
 Military 12-13, 16, 18, 31-32, 34, 37, 40-42, 50, 54, 56, 58-59, 61, 63, 66, 72, 76, 85-87, 90, 95, 102-03, 131, 134-44, 146-47, 149-50, 180, 197  
 Military Operations 5, 30  
 Missile 218  
 Mitro Bahini 33, 78, 148  
 Moscow 22, 57, 143  
 Mrs. Gandhi 19, 49, 60, 63, 145  
 Mujib 10, 14-15, 17-19, 22, 27, 30, 35, 48, 63, 90, 124, 127, 130-35, 136-37, 150-51  
 Mujibur Rahman 14-17, 22, 48, 64, 74, 83-84, 87-90, 96, 101, 103-04, 125, 127-36, 138, 147, 174, 181, 218-19  
 Mukti Bahini 16, 21, 30, 33-36, 42-43, 45, 74, 77, 78, 138-40, 142-48  
 Mukti Joddha 26  
 Muslim League 13, 15, 121-23, 127  
  
 Naval 37, 40, 75, 128-29, 140  
 New Delhi 2, 18-19, 34, 86-87, 89, 91, 93, 97, 105, 107, 109, 118, 137, 162, 164, 180-82, 185, 190-91, 193-95, 197, 200, 202-03, 207, 217, 220-22  
 Nixon 25, 54, 58-61, 63, 65, 67, 145  
 Northeast 41, 91  
  
 Operation Jackpot 34  
  
 Pakistan 9-10, 13-19, 21-33, 35, 37-67, 69, 75, 77-78, 86, 88-89, 101-03, 121-51, 188, 194

## India Bangladesh Bonhomie at 50: 1971 and the Present

- Pakistan Democratic Party 15  
Pakistan Government 22, 28  
Pakistani Air Force 44  
Parliament 21, 25, 62-63, 137-38, 150-51  
Peace and Friendship 60, 83, 87, 152  
Persecution 10, 56  
Poland 28, 50-52, 54-55, 88  
Political 9-11, 13-14, 16-18, 22, 24, 30, 48, 50-52, 54, 56-58, 61-62, 64, 76, 84, 87, 89-91, 97, 121, 125, 129, 130-33, 136, 138-39, 143-44, 197, 221  
Prelude 5, 13  
President Nixon 54, 58-61, 63  
Projects 72, 92, 94, 97, 102, 108, 113-14, 170, 172, 201  
Publications on Bangladesh 6  
  
Rahman Sobhan 14  
Ramna Racecourse 17  
Rangpur 38, 75, 136, 174  
RAW 19, 30, 35, 36  
Refugee crisis 33, 78  
Refugees 10, 11, 21-27, 33, 52-55, 58, 60, 62-63, 78, 140-41, 143, 145, 182-83  
Research and Analysis Wing 19, 30  
Russia 66  
  
Security Council 50-51, 53-54, 62, 64, 66, 116  
Sheikh Hasina 11, 48, 85, 90-92, 96-97, 100, 105-07, 109, 117, 177, 179-80, 207  
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman 64, 83, 89, 90, 101, 103, 128-30, 132, 135-36, 138, 147, 174, 181, 218, 219  
Shillong 44  
Siliguri Corridor 31, 33, 78  
South Asia 9, 28, 30, 48-49, 61-62, 83, 87, 108, 161, 165, 168, 198  
Soviet 50-52, 54-57, 61, 63-65, 88, 141, 143  
Srinath Raghavan 15, 19  
Struggle 10, 14, 17, 19, 21, 23, 28, 88, 100, 140, 142-43, 147, 181, 193, 196-97  
Sunday Times 22, 49  
Surrender 17, 41, 46-47, 55, 150-51  
Swaran Singh 32, 54-57  
  
Tanks 37-39, 42, 45, 69, 71-75, 146  
Tibet 31, 36  
Treaties 5, 152, 206  
Tripura 23-24, 26-27, 32-33, 35-37, 78, 92-94, 110, 117, 169, 173, 178, 181, 187, 189  
troops 18, 36-38, 44-45, 51, 70-75, 79, 83, 86, 99, 135, 140, 142, 146-47, 149-51  
  
UNGA 52-54  
UNHCR 52  
United Kingdom 51, 62-64, 66  
United Nations 5, 10, 16, 28, 49-51, 54, 64-66, 99, 101-02, 111, 115-16, 135, 138, 141, 153, 182, 193, 196

- United States 22, 51, 54, 57-61, 64, 65, 66, 103, 141
- UNSC 50-55, 116, 117
- USSR 52-54, 56-57, 59-61, 64
- U Thant 50-51, 150
- Veteran 77
- War 5, 9-10, 12-14, 17, 19-21, 27, 29-30, 32, 45, 47-49, 53, 66, 68, 73, 77, 83-84, 88, 99, 102-03, 121, 138, 150-51, 218-19
- Washington 63, 141
- West Bengal 23-26, 35-36, 94, 102, 110, 117, 173, 181, 188
- West Pakistan 9, 13-14, 17-18, 21, 30, 49, 58-60, 62-64, 66-67, 123, 126, 129, 135, 140, 143, 146
- Yahya Khan 16-18, 30, 46, 56-60, 64-65, 130, 132-36, 138-41, 144-45, 147, 151

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## About the VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Vivekananda International Foundation is an independent non-partisan institution that conducts research and analysis on domestic and international issues, and offers a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution. Some of India's leading practitioners from the fields of security, military, diplomacy, government, academia and media fields have come together to generate ideas and stimulate action on national security issues.

The defining feature of VIF lies in its provision of core institutional support which enables the organization to be flexible in its approach and proactive in changing circumstances, with a long-term focus on India's strategic, developmental and civilisational interests. The VIF aims to channelize fresh insights and decades of experience harnessed from its faculty into fostering actionable ideas for the nation's stakeholders.

Since its establishment, VIF has successfully embarked on quality research and scholarship in an effort to highlight issues in governance and strengthen national security. This is being actualized through numerous activities like seminars, round tables, interactive-dialogues, Vimarsh (public discourse), conferences and briefings. The publications of the VIF form the lasting deliverables of the organisation's aspiration to impact on the prevailing discourse on issues concerning India's national interest.



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