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## ***ARMED FORCES JOURNAL***

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**A PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF BANGLADESH ARMED FORCES**





## *Father of the Nation*



### জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান (১৯২০-১৯৭৫)

“ইনশাআল্লাহ স্বাধীন দেশে রক্ত দিয়ে স্বাধীনতা এনেছি, এই স্বাধীনতা নিশ্চয়ই ইনশাআল্লাহ থাকবে, কেউ ধ্বংস করতে পারবে না। তবে স্বাধীনতা বৃথা হয়ে যাবে যদি বাংলার দুঃখী মানুষের মুখে হাসি ফুটাতে না পার। সেইজন্য তোমাদের কাছে আমার আবেদন রইল-সৎ পথে থেকো। খোদা নিশ্চয় তোমাদের সাহায্য করবে।”

(১৯৭৫ সালের ১১ জানুয়ারি কুমিল্লায় অবস্থিত বাংলাদেশ মিলিটারি একাডেমি (বিএমএ)-তে প্রথম প্রশিক্ষণ সমাপনী কুচকাওয়াজ অনুষ্ঠানে ক্যাডেটদের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রদত্ত ভাষণ থেকে উদ্ধৃত)





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## EDITORIAL

21st November, illuminated with the lofty emotion of our glorious Liberation War, is a RED LETTER DAY in the history of Bangladesh. The Liberation War which triggered off on 26 March 1971 in response to the clarion call by the GREATEST BENGALIEE OF ALL TIME, FATHER OF THE NATION, BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN, gained momentum in the subsequent months and reached its apogee when on 21st November the valiant members of Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force along with the freedom fighters launched their joint offensive against the adversary. The decisive attacks led to the collapse and surrender of the occupation forces on 16 December 1971 resulting in the heroic victory of Bangladesh. The nation along with the members of the Armed Forces pay homage to the martyrs of our Liberation War and express heartfelt gratitude to all the freedom fighters and their family members. On this very noble day, we pray for the salvation of the departed souls of the valiant martyrs and express our deepest sympathy to their bereaved families. Let the spirit of Liberation War always be echoed in our hearts and minds in every step of our actions.

The Armed Forces Day revitalises the *esprit de corps* among members of the three services and cements their ties with the civil services personnel. By enhancing inter-service bondage the Day strengthens solidarity between the rank and file of three services as well as the common masses. Civil-military relations, thus, gain momentum in this process, which is amply testified by the spontaneous turn up of the enthusiastic people from all walks of life in the exhibitions and displays organised by the Armed Forces Division all over the country.

On this auspicious occasion, this year, Armed Forces Division has taken initiative to bring out two publications namely *Armed Forces Journal* and *Newspaper Special Supplement*. The Armed Forces members have greatly contributed to these publications through their scholarly write-ups highlighting the spirit and ideals of the Liberation War and other contemporary issues of military and strategic interests. The contributors deserve sincere appreciation for their original and insightful writings. In spite of their busy commitments, the contributors could carve out time in pursuit of a noble academic purpose. Inquisitive readers will find food for thought in these writings.

We are highly indebted to the Principal Staff Officer, Armed Forces Division for his dynamic leadership, constant guidance and overall patronage, which were *sine qua non* for organising all the programmes and other commemorative events properly on this solemn occasion. Members of the Editorial Board deserve applause as they put in concerted efforts and worked as a team to ensure standard quality publications as well. All the members of the Armed Forces must be warmly thanked for extending whole-hearted and spontaneous cooperation towards well-organised events held on this Day. In spite of all our sincere efforts, lapses and errors may be traced. We hope and sincerely believe that the valued readers will consider such shortcomings with sympathy.

Armed Forces Day 2021 is a glorious moment for each and every patriotic member of the three services to take a fresh vow to preserve what has been achieved with the aim to attain further skill and efficiency for realising the Forces Goal-2030.

May ALLAH bless us all.

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## **Multinational Operations: Challenges and Way Ahead**

Brigadier General Md Mainur Rahman, SUP, awc, psc

### **Introduction**

Multinational operations simply mean operations conducted by two or more nations.<sup>1</sup> It is generally the outcome of two broad political arrangements—coalitions and alliances. The coalition can be defined as a grouping of like-minded states that agree on the need for joint action on a specific problem at a particular time with no commitment to a durable relationship.<sup>2</sup> Alliances, on the other hand, are enduring relationships that result from formal agreements (like treaties) between nations for furthering common interests. The history of alliances and coalitions is nearly as old as warfare itself—the great Peloponnesian War between Athens and Spartan League (421-404 BC), or frequent wars in China during Warring States Period (600-500 BC) bears testimony to these age-old practices. Since the end of the Cold War in 1991, there has been an increased willingness amongst countries to engage in coalition operations for resolving conflicts. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are two high profile examples.<sup>3</sup> There are three broad reasons why nations conduct operations with allies and partners: to achieve common policy aims, to distribute military tasks and resource burdens, and to provide political legitimacy for military actions. But political and military advantages accrued from such operations come with a price tag, as it poses numerous challenges for the overall military commander leading the multinational force.

Bangladesh Armed Forces were baptised in multinational operations by its participation in Operation Desert Shield in 1991. Roughly from the same timeline, Bangladesh geared up its contribution in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations which, in broad parameters, fulfills the criterion of multinational operations. Today Bangladesh Military is ranked amongst one of the highest peacekeeping troops contributing countries in the world. While Bangladesh Armed Forces are less likely to join any coalition outside UN umbrella, professionalism demands that our military officers are kept abreast with all the variables and nuances of multinational operations. This paper therefore makes an attempt to highlight the opportunities and challenges posed by multinational operations to a nation's military leadership. In the later part, it also suggests a few measures for overcoming the challenges, with a view to chartering a way ahead.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

Multinational alliances or coalitions can often be the outcome of political decisions with associated military consequences. To the political leaders

operating at a national strategic level and shaping the country's global standpoint, it offers a form of international legitimacy and acceptability that cannot possibly be achieved by a nation acting unilaterally. For instance, the US-led coalition against Iraq following the annexation of Kuwait in August 1990 earned unquestionable acceptance owing to UN resolution and righteousness of the cause. Often times in the past, alliances and coalitions have been viewed by nations as force multipliers-predominantly military, but sometimes also economic. The coalition against Napoleon was primarily a military one aimed at defeating an 'invincible' foe. On the other hand, the United States joining the Second World War (1939-45) had overwhelming consequences-both military and economic, so much so that it actually tipped the balance of the war in favour of allied nations. In the present unipolar world order, the United States reigns supreme and they apparently may not have military needs for entering into alliances or coalitions. But with near peers like China and Russia closing in military capabilities, the 2018 US National Defense Strategy (NDS) finally declared a return to great power competition after about two decades of uninterrupted focus on War on Terror.<sup>4</sup> The same strategic document underlined the enhanced military need for effective alliances and coalitions, especially to deal with multiple conflicts simultaneously. When the leading military power relies so heavily on alliances and coalitions, armed forces around the globe surely need to take the same into cognisance. Besides, most of the conflicts today are taking place below the threshold of war in a multi-domain environment, which demands integrating allies, partners and friends in the 'competition continuum.' For the UN peacekeepers, multinational operations are the norm of the day as the troops in blue helmets are almost invariably a motley mix of militaries from all over the world. And what often goes unnoticed is the fact that the UN peacekeepers constitute the second largest military force operating across the globe, to be surpassed in numbers only by the US military's footprint worldwide.

A multinational force definitely offers numerous advantages and opportunities to the overall military commander. Obviously, it can add value by simply augmenting the fighting strength. Forces from modern militaries like the US, UK, France and alike can take the brunt of the intense battles and equally share burdens, as has been experienced in World War II, and recently in Afghanistan and Iraq. Small powers can also contribute meaningfully by taking protective, supportive and secondary responsibilities, thereby relieving the cutting edge military forces for more important tasks. Regional and host nation's military, when available, can offer unique expertise and insights. Ethnic, religious or linguistic commonality with the local populace can offer distinctive advantages. For example, during the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, Turkish forces operated in Kabul with an insight that allowed them to have great credibility with the local people.<sup>5</sup> Again, some militaries offer unique capabilities which can be very useful to a specific environment. For instance, Bangladeshi

peacekeepers operating in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) used humanitarian efforts so effectively to win the hearts and minds of the local population that Bangla was recognised as an official language by the host government as a gesture of gratitude.

Despite the aforementioned advantages, multinational operations can offer many challenges to a military commander. Possibly the greatest challenge that a commander deals with relates to maintaining the unity and cohesion of force. In a multinational environment, every participating nation is likely to have its own national interests, level of commitments, biases, perspectives, and hidden agendas. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and Rules of Engagement (ROE) may vary widely between nations. In UN peacekeeping operations, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) forged with armed forces of various participating nations also varies considerably. Differences in doctrine, training, weapon and equipment can pose serious challenges to interoperability and logistic sustenance. Dissimilarities in language, culture and religion can impede communication, cohesion and mutual trust. Thus, sustaining a strategic military coalition may turn out to be much more challenging than building it – as was experienced during the Gulf War 1990-91 (Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm). From the very outset, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein aptly identified the fragility of the US-led coalition as a critical vulnerability and tried his best to undo the same. He earnestly tried to tie the invasion of Kuwait with the Israel-Palestine conflict and give the issue a regional dimension, with a view to playing on the sentiment of Arab nations. Baghdad even launched Scud missile attacks against targets in Tel Aviv to draw Israel into the military conflict. The coalition survived due to the astute efforts by the US political and military leadership, especially in keeping Israel out of the equation.

Sometimes, the interest of allies and partners can be overwhelming and have implications at policy and grand strategy levels. During World War II, the US top political leadership postponed Operation Roundup (invasion of mainland Europe) - much against the will of its supreme military planners - and embarked upon a North African campaign owing to British interest. At that time, British merchant shipping was taking a serious blow from the German Navy, especially from the infamous German U boats, which almost brought the British economy and military war machine down to its knees. Thus, security of sea lines of communication in the Mediterranean against German attacks became the prime concern for Churchill's Government, which they successfully addressed by influencing Washington to embark on a North African campaign. The British influence continued to play its part with an invasion of Sicily and the subsequent Italian campaign. Similarly, during the Gulf War in 1991, the 'glory' of recapturing Kuwait had to be offered to Arab allies for the greater political interests. It is also believed that coalition sensitivity and fragility of the US-led coalition played an important role in the US policy decision for not attempting a

regime change in Iraq. A multinational force commander frequently needs to walk a tightrope balancing such policy decisions, as “war is merely a continuation of policy by other means.”<sup>6</sup> This is by no means an easy task as it calls for exceptional application of maturity, wisdom and experience on the part of the overall military commander.

**Photo 1: Rare Image of Senior Tigers in Operation Desert Shield (Gulf War 1990 - 91)**



Source: Unit Photograph Archive of Senior Tigers (1 East Bengal Regiment)

The coalition force being inherently an ad hoc arrangement needs the establishment of effective command and control (C2) hierarchy, which poses considerable challenges. The command structure can fall into three broad types viz; an integrated, lead nation and parallel command. The integrated command structure is possibly the simplest and readily available example that can be found in the C2 structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). By the same token, the US/NATO command structure in Afghanistan can be considered as an example of the lead nation C2 arrangement. An example of parallel force command structure can be found in the Gulf War 1991, where Lieutenant General Prince Khalid bin Sultan commanded a separate force responsible for recapturing Kuwait. The parallel force command structure offers a relatively complex situation, wherein the multinational force leadership needs to develop means for coordination amongst both the parallel forces, sometimes laterally down the C2 channel at various tiers. Besides, the aforementioned complexity within the force, contributing countries almost invariably retain some degree of external control on their military, prohibiting their unconditional use.

Thus, each participating nation's military actually maintains two commands simultaneously - national and coalition chain of command, which complicates the situation further. Besides, the selection of key commanders and principal staff also needs critical thinking. During the allied invasion of Sicily under US General Eisenhower as overall allied commander, the predominance of British generals (and equivalents) in the top command and staff positions presumably resulted in operational planning that awarded the British generals greater opportunities for success and glory. Finally, setting up command structure calls for interactions among many nations across all levels of command - starting from strategic, down to operational and tactical levels. It needs to address sensitive issues like intelligence sharing, measures for combat identification, friendly fire prevention, and so on. To top it all, the language barrier can often offer the greatest challenge. Bangladeshi peacekeepers found it much easier to operate in Sierra Leone as locals could converse in English. But same was not the case in DR Congo where communication with the French-speaking locals was (and still is) mostly left to interpreters.

### **Way Ahead**

The multinational operations environment demands a set of command and leadership skills that differ considerably from conventional unilateral settings. The multinational force commander is expected to be flexible, accommodative and tactful under such situations. As mentioned before, the primary focus should be on maintaining the cohesion and unity of command. Maintaining cohesion is easier to achieve when the threat is significant and defeat appears to be a potential option, as was seen during World War II where the very existence of nation-states was at serious risk. But with a lower spectrum of threat, the coalition partners tend to focus more on respective national interests, thereby weakening the glue that binds everyone together.<sup>7</sup> Most of the current multinational operations including the UN peacekeeping operations generally fall in the second category. As such, building and maintaining cohesion inevitably occupies a significant amount of force commander's time and energy today. As discussed before, the political implications of sustainable coalition may often call for military strategic and operational compromises. A degree of pragmatism and conciliation is therefore necessary, as consensus often stems from compromise. The commander must be ready to concede and compromise on certain issues while keeping steadfast on overall political and strategic objectives. To be successful, a joint force commander will have to strike a balance between every partner's national interest and the broad coalition interests.

In the recent past, the US military has taken the lead role in most of the multinational operations. As such, it may be prudent to take a look at the key tenets that they consider important. The US doctrine refers to the key tenets of success in multinational operations as respect, rapport, knowledge of partners,



patience, mission focus and trust and confidence. While these tenets cannot guarantee success, ignoring them may lead to mission failure due to a lack of unity of effort. In assigning missions, the commander must consider that national honour and prestige may be as important to a contributing nation as combat capability. The command and staff should establish rapport with stakeholders from partner countries, develop knowledge and close understanding, and through all these, build a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Maintaining this relationship is even more challenging than building it, especially when the interests conflict. In this regard, patience and overall mission focus can prove invaluable. Overall, it is crucial for the commander to earn acceptability and respect from all the international stakeholders. As supreme allied force commander during World War II, General Eisenhower earned wide credibility, respect and acceptance by adhering to similar general guidelines and displaying superb leadership qualities. In the UN peacekeeping operations undertaken so far, some force commanders stood out clearly with great leadership qualities that earned the respect of troops joining from around the globe under the blue helmet and the local population alike. Unfortunately, opposite examples are not difficult to find either.

**Photo 2: Bangladeshi Peacekeepers Attending Medal Parade Ceremony in DR Congo**



Source: Unit Photograph Archive of Baby Tigers (4 East Bengal Regiment)

The multinational force, being an ad hoc arrangement (barring exceptions like NATO), calls for the careful establishment of C2 structure. It is crucial for the command to correctly orchestrate the grouping of force and associated command, control, coordination and reporting channels, keeping in mind the political and military considerations. The selection of senior leadership, staff and coordination arrangements needs special emphasis too. Besides, two key structural enhancements improve the coordination of multinational forces: effective liaison networks and designated coordination centres. In exceptional circumstances, there may also be a need for 'de-confliction' arrangements. In Syria, for example, the US and Russian military components maintained coordination arrangements to prevent inadvertent escalations. Where necessary, interpreters need to be embedded at appropriate levels to ensure smooth and uninterrupted communication.<sup>8</sup>

As a matter of standard practice, armed forces prepare for war during peacetime by undertaking effective and relevant training, taking into account likely future conflicts. As such, some preparations for future conflicts involving multinational operations can certainly be taken well ahead. In advanced nations like the US and most in Europe, the policy and strategic documents are forward- looking and they comprehensively identify potential future threats. The allies as partners are generally known too. As such, peacetime cooperation, training on common or similar doctrines and exchange programs with allies and partners become relatively easy. Resorting to a similar approach can pay rich dividends to Bangladesh and its armed forces as well. Relationships and connections developed among potential future military decision-makers through opportunities like National Defence Course, War Courses, Command and Staff Courses and alike can pay exceptionally rich dividends. Bangladeshi military officers travel across the globe to various military institutions abroad and foster a wide network of connections, which can also prove very useful. Interoperability in terms of weapons systems, communication and equipment among militaries of friendly countries can prove invaluable, but in reality, it is difficult to achieve beyond the sphere of close allies (like NATO) owing to numerous limitations. Training on language, history, culture and values of potential partners and adversaries alike is necessary. Military commanders may focus on shaping the environment by conducting intensive training, exercises and engagements with other friendly nations to develop better capabilities and understandings between friendly nations to prepare for future conflicts.

### **Conclusion**

In the present global context, most modern militaries around the world identify the network of allies and partners as strategic critical strength. A closer look at the world's leading military nation, the United States, reveals that its National Defense Strategy attaches tremendous importance to multinational

force operations against near-peer adversaries for future conflicts. The future battlefield scenario is likely to be more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. New domains of operations like space and cyber will add to the complexities, coupled with the future possibilities of robotics, artificial intelligence, unmanned aerial and ground-based weapon platforms, and similar technologies. An examination of current UN peacekeeping operations will surely bear testimony of a more hostile and complex environment where troops in the blue helmet are exposed to greater combat risk than before.

The military commander leading a multinational force in such an environment will undoubtedly face monumental leadership challenges, but will also be presented with occasional windows of opportunities. As has been experienced in the Gulf War 1991, the coalition can often have more political implications than military, thus putting the military commander in numerous constraints. Besides, nations often have divergence in motives and interests. Resultant dual allegiance of forces can make maintaining unity, C2, cohesion and alignment to the objective is the greatest challenge. The commander, in his own style, often needs to play a balancing role keeping in view the overall end state. Fostering mutual respect, understanding and intimate relationship can help the force glue together and deliver desired results. The military commander may need to strive hard and build a strong relationship with allies and partners, sometimes during peacetime, so that some common ground can be reached and vital national interests be protected. Leaders of our armed forces need to come to terms with this unique environment in order to cope with the challenges of future conflicts.

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### **Brief Biography**



**Brigadier General Md Mainur Rahman, SUP, awc, psc** was commissioned on 21 Jun 1991 in the Corps of Infantry. He has served in various command, staff and instructor appointments. He has commanded 4 East Bengal Regiment at home and also in UN peacekeeping operations. The officer has undertaken two UN peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and DR Congo. Presently, he is serving as the Director of Weapon, Equipment and Statistics Directorate at Army Headquarters (AHQ).

## **Bangabandhu Satellite: Calibrating a Paradigm Shift for Bangladesh Armed Forces towards Being Digitalised and AI-Centric**

Colonel ANM Foyezur Rahman, psc  
and

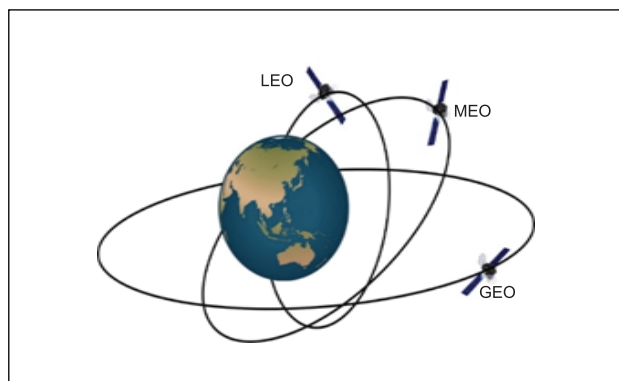
Air Commodore A T M Habibur Rahman, BSP afwc, psc, GD(P)

### **Introduction**

Bangabandhu 1, the first communication satellite of Bangladesh, was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, USA at GMT 02:14 am on May 12, 2018.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the historic event took place Bangladesh became an able 'member of the global space fraternity.' The event shall surely be remembered as a 'giant leap'<sup>2</sup> for the nation towards becoming digitalised, opening doors of immense possibilities for all walks of life. Bangabandhu Satellite, with its capacity to provide reliable, cost-effective, secured and uninterrupted high-speed satellite internet and satellite connectivity services, can be the stepping stone for Bangladesh Armed Forces in their persuasion of the journey to be Artificial Intelligence (AI) centric and digitalised, enabling the soldiers and commanders to calibrate with the rock-solid cyber security foundation in the battlefield scenario in real-time.

The paradigm shift for Bangladesh Armed Forces, if soiled deeply in Bangabandhu Satellite 1, entails having the logistics of a secured internet and telecommunication service while reflecting upon the upskilling of the workforce to perform a wide variety of Artificial Intelligence (AI) centric tasks in areas such 'warfare platforms, cyber security, logistics and transportation, target recognition, battlefield healthcare, combat simulation and training, threat monitoring, situational awareness and data information processing.'<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1: LEO, MEO and GEO Satellite**



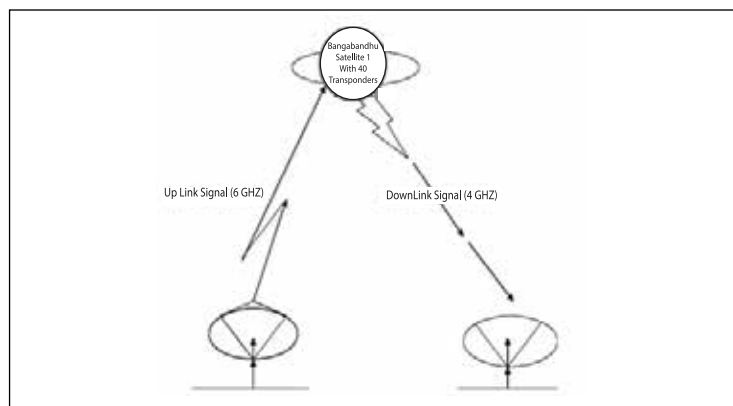
Source: <http://www.btrc.gov.bd/satellite-project>.

Satellite is a small artificial object placed in the earth's orbit to perform multiple tasks like telecommunication, imaging, navigation, observation and warning. The idea of placing a satellite was first conceived by the British writer Arthur C. Clarke in 1945 and the first satellite 'Sputnik' was launched in 1957.

As shown in Figure 1 there are 'three categories of satellites,' namely (i) Low Earth Orbiting (LEO) Satellites, (ii) Medium Earth Orbiting (MEO) Satellites and (iii) Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) Satellites. Bangabandhu Satellite 1 belongs to the third category. It was carried by Falcon 9 Rocket, Block 5. It was manufactured by Thales Alenia Space, launched by Space X, and controlled by BTRC and Thales. It weighs 3600 kilograms and has a life span of 15 years. The government had to spend BDT 2,765.66 billion on its manufacturing cost.<sup>4</sup>

### How Bangabandhu Satellite 1 Works?

**Figure 2 : How Bangabandhu Satellite 1 Works**



Source: <http://www.btrc.gov.bd/satellite-project>.

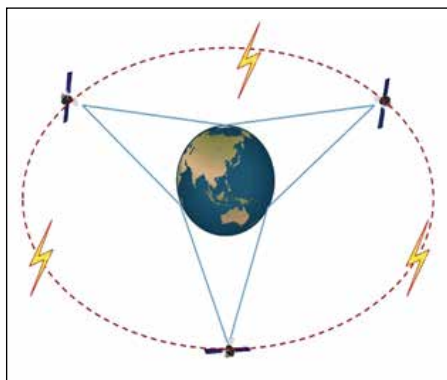
Bangabandhu Satellite 1 communicates by 'exchanging electromagnetic waves' either on the earth's surface or in space, hovering above a pole orbiting us every day. Communication doesn't necessarily have to occur in the Radio spectrum. The TV remote communicates with its set-top box with infrared waves, while phones communicate with microwaves. Information or data in the form of electromagnetic waves or microwave signals are transmitted or up-linked from one station to a device called transponder onboard the Bangabandhu Satellite 1. As part of their default settings, the 40 transponders in Bangabandhu Satellite 1 receive comparatively weak microwave signals at a higher frequency from the earth and then amplify those signals and transform them into a frequency less than the one received and then retransmit (down-links) to distant receiving earth stations.<sup>5</sup> The area covered by the radiation on Earth is called its footprint. The setup in Figure 2 shows the way how information or data are transmitted through the Bangabandhu

satellite in the orbit. It is configured like the other geostationary satellite on a system, 'composed of a space segment, a control segment and a ground segment,' where the control segment consists of all ground facilities for the control and monitoring of the satellite, commonly known as Tracking, Telemetry and Command (TTC) stations and for the management.

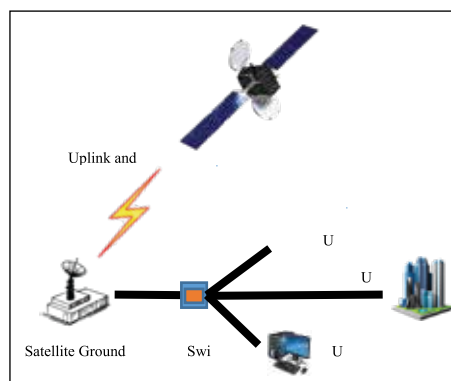
#### **Bangabandhu Satellite 1: 'Space Segment'**

As shown in Figure 3 below Bangabandhu Satellite 1 is positioned at 119.1 degree east longitudinal geostationary slot in the outer space, operating in a hostile environment comprising vacuum of space, radiation and high thermal condition ranging from  $-150^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $+150^{\circ}\text{C}$ . A centrifugal force created by its acceleration of its own pace keeps the satellite aligned in its position in the orbit defying the gravitational force.

**Figure 3: Space Segment**



**Figure 4: Ground Segment**



Source: <http://www.btrc.gov.bd/satellite-project>.

#### **Bangabandhu Satellite 1: 'Ground Segment'**

The ground segment, responsible for the control of the operation of the satellite, looks like a radio relay station with large antennas and a higher power source. After the delivery of the satellite in the orbit, the ground segment takes over the satellite's control. The main ground station for the Bangabandhu-1 satellite is in Gazipur's Telipara and another in Rangamati. The ground segment included a number of subsystems like Satellite Control Centre (SCC), the communication link with the satellite and link with the users.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Reaping the Benefits of Bangabandhu Satellite 1**

Bangabandhu Satellite 1, with its 40 Ku-band and C-band transponders transmit over a large geographical footprint, means that the country shall have a faster internet connection and telecommunication system and the operators in the country incur no additional incremental costs to serve an additional

point regardless of its distance from the programme source. As single-hop transmission refers to a hop which is a chunk of signal's journey from earth station to satellite and vice versa, and it is very energy-saving. Bangabandhu Satellite 1 can solve the crisis of the people who live in remote areas as it can provide rural satellite Internet for remote locations anywhere and anytime.<sup>7</sup>

Of the total 4,562 Union Parishads in Bangladesh, there were 750 Union Parishads with no internet connectivity at all. The government now can link all the union parishads with internet coverage. With the proper Soft-Defined Radio (SDR) tools, including software, tuning device, and antenna, one can turn his 'computer to tune into a large swath of the radio spectrum, from 64 MHz – the lower part of the VHF bands – all the way up to the 1700 MHz UHF bands and beyond. Next, weather forecasting with the help of web images is one of the best applications of Bangabandhu Satellite 1, saving millions of lives and property during natural calamities. However, other meteorological parameters can be driven from Bangabandhu Satellite 1 including temperature and humidity profiles, wind velocity and direction, as well as lightning. Again, earning foreign currency by renting 20 transponders out of 40 of Bangabandhu Satellite 1 to other countries like Indonesia and the Philippines will ensure a good return of the investment over the next couple of decades.<sup>8</sup>

Bangladesh Communication Satellite Company is assigned to look after the commercial aspect of Bangabandhu Satellite. Video streaming, phone calls using VOIP technology, fax etc. all provide scopes for a reliable communication gateway, with a reduced cost. Bangabandhu Satellite 1 based navigation deems to help all maritime applications, including Bangladesh Navy Patrol and Warships, commercially run vessels and unregulated and regulated ships. It can increase performance in terms of correcting the error and data efficiently. It is indeed a breakthrough technology for the broadcast industry, where the primary techniques of direct-to-home (DTH) and contribution and distribution (C&D) are employed throughout the world, allowing people to enjoy access to worldwide TV entertainment cheaply and easily. In disaster recovery, it can essentially microwave radio aimed upward. As it has 40 transponders each with 36 MHz of bandwidth, it is capable of delivering faster internet service with high data speeds to the users via geostationary satellites using several bands to achieve data speeds up to 50 Mbps. The radars as part of the ground segments for military surveillance linked to the Bangabandhu Satellite 1 can be used as the early detector and warning systems for ballistic missiles, proving high-quality security to the nation. The aviation industry including Bangladesh Air Force can use logistics.<sup>9</sup>

No location restrictions offered by satellite services are a big advantage which makes this satellite-based broadband internet service very compatible for Bangladesh Armed Forces for their military application.

**Bangabandhu Satellite 1 and Calibrating Bangladesh Armed Forces with**

**Its Potentials:** The catalytic prospects and possibilities opened by Bangabandhu Satellite 1 for Bangladesh Armed Forces with regards to building 'a holistic AI ecosystem into warfare platforms, cybersecurity, logistics and transportation, target recognition, battlefield healthcare, combat simulation and training, threat monitoring, situational awareness and data information processing' and 'Network-centric Warfare' or any AI-centric digitalised transformation depend largely on creating an independent internet network service and satellite connectivity, freeing all the egalitarian organisations-Army, Navy and Air Force- from their dependences on foreign operators and service providers. In the backdrop of a world where the armed forces around the globe are undergoing a paradigm shift towards being digitalised and AI-centric, upskilling the workforce and the soldiers with the knowledge of how to read data, use software and applications in the battlefields and exchange data within the customized cloud, etc. are like new sets of digital weapons that make the soldiers more agile, stronger, tactically more capable and more formidable. To have an own independent secured Satellite Internet services and independent satellite connectivity is a prerequisite to calibrate with the paradigm shift towards being AI-centric and digitalised, as without ensuring a rock-solid cyber-security Artificial Intelligence, Algorithms, Machine Learning, Big Data, AI-powered, Cloud Sourcing, Blockchain or Network-based Warfare, etc. everything remains vulnerable to cyber-threats.<sup>10</sup>

**Bangabandhu Satellite and Creating Independent Satellite Internet Service and Satellite Connectivity for the Armed Forces of Bangladesh**

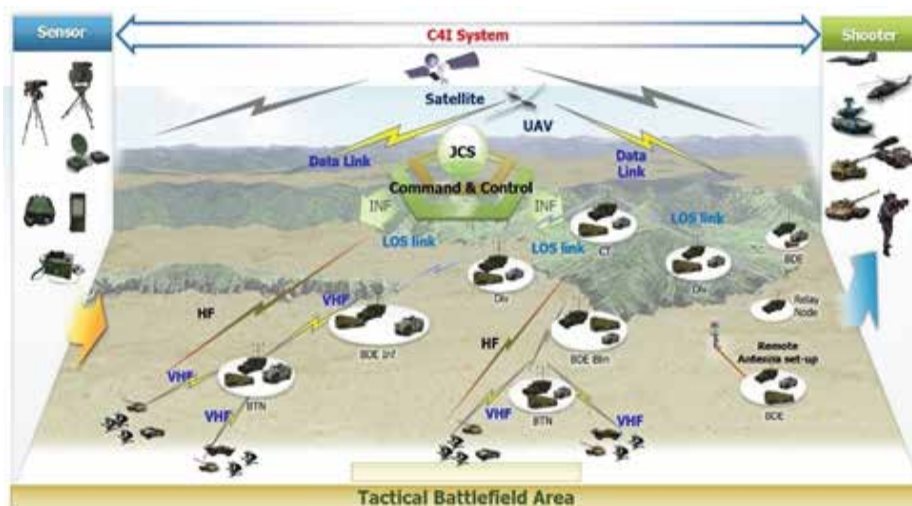
Satellite internet, a wireless internet, requires 3 satellite dishes; one of the internet service providers hub, one in space and one attached to the user's property. A modem with cables running to and from the dish is needed. The antenna dish at the user's property communicates with the satellite dish above the earth's equator, similar to how satellite televisions work.

If Bangladesh Armed Forces start using Satellite Internet and Satellite Connectivity for its military and other customised uses in the battlefields, the benefits they will have include security, reliability, agility, connectivity, pace and precision. Bangladesh Armed Forces, like the Army of the United States, should legislate special cyber security law, supported by its own satellite internet services and satellite connectivity, to (i) establish the Army Cyber Security Program , (ii) set forth the mission, responsibilities and policies to ensure uniform implementation of public law and Office of Management and Budget, Committee on National Security Systems, and Department of Defence issuances for protecting and safeguarding Army information technology and (iii) include the Army-managed portion of the Department of Defence Information Network, and information in electronic format. Failing to build up



strong cyber security systems causes the erosion of the lethality of the joint force, as well. Using the satellite internet, the army, navy and air force soldiers and commandants can get global coverage from any location on earth, covering distances as large as whole oceans or continents. Speed and reliability are big considerations as well. 'The requirement has increased recently as the forces have started to modernise and integrate into line with FG-2030.' When the systems were developed to rely on digitalisation, Big Data, Algorithms, Machine Learning, Blockchain and Cloud Sharing in the coming days, the network must ensure uninterrupted service with super-fast speed, security and reliability and these qualities cannot be ensured unless one's own satellite-based internet network services are used. The satellite speed is ten to thirty times faster than dial-up connection. Again, installation and deployment processes are easy with satellite communication.

**Figure 5: C4I System of Bangladesh Army**



Source: Army Headquarters, Signal Directorate, C4I , Modified

### **Bangabandhu Satellite and Integrated C4I System for BA**

Bangladesh Army's efforts to integrate all their sensors and shooters including the fielded troops using Telecommunication System (TCS) are a timely step. The integrated C4I system as shown in Figure 5 above includes HF, VHF, IP-based telephone and VOIP communication using VSAT to achieve a network-centric environment for better battle-space management. Earlier Bangladesh Army had 'plans to operate more than 20 VSAT by using rented satellite services from foreign providers.' With the launching of the Bangabandhu Satellite, now Bangladesh Army can utilize Bangabandhu Satellite for integrating C4I system as a more secured and reliable alternative.<sup>11</sup>

**Bangabandhu Satellite 1 and Narrowband SATCOM:** Narrowband SATCOM, suitable for small group operation, can be customised to support large operations in combination with wideband SATCOM or VOIP communication. The narrowband SATCOM uses about 8 kbps data for voice communication for each user. But a single satellite transponder of Bangabandhu Satellite 1 with 36MHz capability is capable of supporting 500 users, if all the users remain online at all time or 1000 users for 50% of the times which is generally accepted for uninterrupted SATCOM. Therefore, narrowband SATCOM may be utilised for agencies whose function is critical for the functioning of the integrated C4I system.

**Bangabandhu Satellite 1 and VOIP Using VSAT:** Bangabandhu Satellite 1 is the best solution for outsourcing VSAT service for Bangladesh Army to establish communication through VOIP. Using VOIP enables the communicators to use inbuilt encryption which is very useful for military communication for the sake of security and reliability.

**Bangabandhu Satellite 1 and Integrated Air Defence (AD) Network:** The Air Defence systems of Bangladesh Air Force and Bangladesh Army, currently integrated partially, use the microwave link and Line of Sight (LOS) communication. However, 'Bangladesh Navy couldn't be integrated with the Air Defence systems mainly because of the absence of a reliable communication network'. Network-centric Warfare or Cloud-based Warfare has proved to be very effective nowadays, and without connecting all the Armed Forces and their soldiers and commandants through a single network, integration is impossible. Using Bangabandhu Satellite 1 internet and satellite connectivity can be established in no time. Again, mobile AD elements and airborne platforms would continue to suffer poor integration as they rely on rented HF and VHF communication. In this case too, Bangabandhu Satellite is a lucrative alternate. 'The capability of SATCOM to support reliable voice, video and data communication from anywhere within the coverage area would solve the problems of AD integration for mobile platforms and naval assets. The integrated AD network is shown in Figure 6 and a brief description is as follows:-'<sup>12</sup>

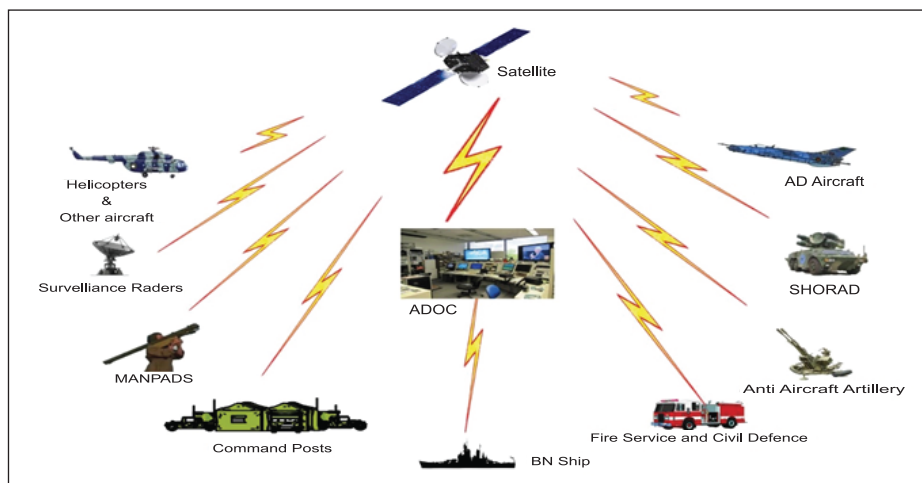
**a. Integration of Sensors:** The AD sensors include all the surveillance radars operated by the armed forces and civil aviation of Bangladesh. All these radars need to be integrated into the Air Defence Operation Centre (ADOC) to develop an integrated recognized radar picture, which provides the real-time air situation update and allows better airspace management. The radars can be integrated using the data communication facility of the satellite transponders and VSAT. The satellite internet service can fix platforms and main link for the mobile and naval AD assets.



**b. Integration of Shooters Using Cloud Infrastructure:** The shooters include all the airborne and ground-based AD systems objects whose integration is relatively complex. To achieve a full system integration for positive and real-time control of the shooters, wideband SATCOM with a data link which supports voice, video and data is required. The ground based fixed shooters may use the SATCOM as an alternate link and all others may use it as the main link. Again, creating a cloud native services that are scalable and resilient, even in an unpredictable environment will integrate the ground forces and air force within the battlefield scenario, enabling them to share information and update everyone about the changes instantly. Bangabandhu Satellite 1 can be the right solution to creating cloud infrastructure to integrate the shooters.

**c. Integration of C4I:** The C4I for integrated AD system may be achieved by using broadcast SATCOM or VSAT communication with a number of digital terminals. In both the cases the ADOC would have a better decision action cycle and achieve absolute battlespace management.

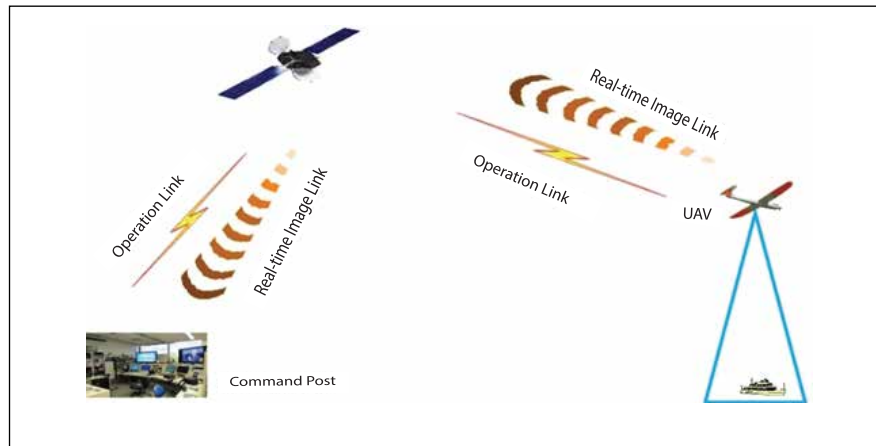
**Figure 6: Integrated Air Defence Network**



Source: Author's self-construct

**d. SATCOM for Bangladesh Navy (BN):** The ships of BN depend on HF and UHF communication for their operation and need to observe strict EMCON policy as these radio frequencies can be easily detected and interfered. SATCOM facilities from Bangabandhu Satellite can immensely benefit BN by increasing their operational capability. Again, the submarine operation that needs secured communication coverage; Bangabandhu Satellite 1 can serve its requirement during surface operations.

**Figure 7: UAV Operation**



Source: Author's self-construct

**UAV Operation:** Figure 7 above shows UAV operations. Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) is planning to induct UAVs for surveillance and reconnaissance. UAVs depends on radio communication for the operations and transmission of the real-time image from its sensors to the ground station. The radio communication between UAVs and the ground station is being planned using LOS communication which has a number of limitations like limited range, no coverage inside the deep sea. Here again Bangabandhu Satellite 1 provides a golden opportunity for long range UAVs operations.

**Maritime Operation Other than War (MOOTW):** The Armed Forces of Bangladesh are regularly participating in MOOTW under the UN banner by using the rented satellite services from foreign satellites. Now the Armed Forces do not need to outsource satellite services from other countries, as Bangabandhu Satellite 1 can serve the purpose with satisfaction. The narrowband SATCOM used by the Armed Forces in performing their roles in disaster management during cyclones and natural calamities and on other occasions to help the civil government, can greatly be supported by Bangabandhu Satellite 1.

### Recommendations

Following are the recommendations:-

1. Bangabandhu Satellite, being positioned in the orbit, is configured to collect data, intelligence and sophisticated information without violating any international laws.
2. Bangabandhu Satellite 1, is the technological breakthrough for Bangladesh Armed Forces to establish a secured, reliable, high performing

satellite internet and communication platform for covering voice, video and data, and enabling the country to remain digitally compatible with the neighbouring countries, especially with China and India.

3. Of the total 40 transponders, only one transponder of Bangabandhu Satellite 1 has been allotted for Bangladesh Armed Forces, meaning that there are still scopes for researchers to assess the actual needs after the careful evaluation of the future goals with regards to the country's ambition to facilitate digitalisation and AI-centric transformation.

4. To have a robust and secured communication infrastructure which is the backbone of the paradigm shift towards being digitalised and AI-centric and Bangladesh Armed Forces need to adapt to policies to incorporate the benefits of having their own satellite internet and connectivity and merge the coordination gaps, if there is any.

5. SATCOM series, UAVs operations, integration of Army, Navy, Air Forces and other para-military forces, integration of C4I, supporting MOOTW and establishing a cloud infrastructure to provide better battlespace management are possible with the help of transponder of Bangabandhu Satellite 1.

6. The feasibility to incorporate imaging and meteorological services in the subsequent satellites may be explored to achieve added advantages for the armed forces.

### **Conclusion**

Considering the economic strength and other regulatory factors, weaponisation of AI or transforming the systems into a digitalised, automated, AI-centric ecology for all the Armed Forces may really sound ambitious at this stage and the efforts may fall flat in the long run if the efforts lack vision and specific future goals. However, with careful strategic planning, data sharing, connectivity, learning to use applications, creating cloud infrastructure, training, upskilling, and resource development Bangladesh Armed Forces can make their soldiers and commanders AI literate and upskill them so that they can skillfully use satellite internet and connectivity to read data, remain connected and use applications in real-time and thus can add on a more powerful weapon to their credits. Bangabandhu Satellite 1 is the first one, and there are two other satellites to be launched as part of the project. It is high time that Bangladesh Armed Forces laid out a holistic strategic plan which would pragmatically assess their strength in financial, technological and resource capacity and set attainable goals to facilitate the paradigm shift in the future. Allocation of only one transponder of Bangabandhu Satellite may not really fulfil the growing needs of satellite internet service and connectivity for Bangladesh Armed Forces. Therefore, the Armed Forces should request more transponders from Bangabandhu Satellite 1 so that the country can fulfil its goals of digitalisation in the coming days.

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#### Brief Biography



**Colonel ANM Foyezur Rahman, psc** was commissioned in 1995 in the Corps of Engineers in Bangladesh Army. A graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, he obtained his Masters in Defence Studies and MBA from BUP and MSc in Environmental Engineering. He served as an Instructor and in staff appointments. He participated in United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Liberia and DR Congo. Presently he is serving as Head of Environment, Water Resources and Coastal Engineering Department of MIST.



**Air Commodore ATM Habibur Rahman, BSP, afwc, psc, GD(P)** was commissioned in 1991. Having graduated from Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC), Mirpur and from Armed Forces War College, NDC, Bangladesh, he pursued his Masters in Defence Studies (MDS) from National University and MSc in Management of the National and International Security Strategies and Leadership from Turkish Air War College. Presently he is serving as Director Air Operations at Air HQ, Bangladesh.

## **Integrated Battlefield for Armed Forces: Preparing for Future Wars**

Colonel Muhammad Mahbub Alam Sikder, afwc, psc

### **Introduction**

The future of warfare is clouded with uncertainty. At the turn of the twentieth century during World War-I (1914-18) trenches were constructed to defend against machine gun and artillery fire. In a war dominated by tanks and planes, blitzkrieg and manoeuvre were crucial. The Cold War period (1947-90) standoff was followed by deterrence in the form of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. Terrorism has dominated battles in the twenty-first century, spurred by asymmetric belligerency based on inexpensive but lethal weapon technology and easy access to enabling electronics. The power of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) has been highlighted by recent wars in the Middle East and Central Asia. Outer Space and Cyber Space as well as the Electromagnetic (EM) Spectrum are set to dominate the future.

As Eric Schmitt observes, “You go to war with the Military you have, not the Military you might want or wish to have at a later time.”<sup>1</sup> Technology adds new aspects to conflict and opens up new battlegrounds. However, the common threat that binds the battlefield is ‘information’, the power of which allows a commander to outthink, out manoeuvre and outshoot the enemy on the battlefield. Emerging advances in Science and Technology (S&T) domains have the potential to change governmental structures, economies and worldwide security. These S&T areas include nanotechnology along with meta-materials; robotics, together with lethal self-sustaining systems; artificial talent and computer learning; the cognitive neurosciences; biotechnology, inclusive of artificial and systems biology; high electricity weapons; additive manufacturing; space weapons and the intersection of each with information.

This paper is qualitative in nature. It examines existing literature on future warfare that comes from varieties of sources that are government and non-government documents, academic journals, books and newspaper articles etc. Despite the changes in the battlefield, this paper is to briefly discuss the probable features of future battlefields way forward for Bangladesh Armed Forces.

### **Changes in the Ways of Wars**

A swing of potentially revolutionary technology and creative applications could alter the way war will be fought in future. These potential changes

could be from three perspectives as shown in Picture 1 below with a brief discussion:-

**Picture 1: Overview of the Future Battlefield**



Source: 'Emerging or Evolving Dynamics', *Global Trends*, April 2021

a. **Hardware:** The weapons systems and new technologies themselves are considered hardware. New and developing technologies might modify four major areas; connectivity, lethality, autonomy and sustainability which are likely to revolutionise the battlefield in coming decades.

b. **Software:** The doctrine, training, and applications of these new technologies are considered as software. Militaries around the world are working to develop the software for how the new tools of war will be used. There are at least four distinct scenarios namely Fast Offence (salvo and Hypersonic weapons system for how actors will use new weapons and techniques), Zone Defence (for situational awareness and defend a country's airspace, maritime claims and land boundary, huge numbers of small and inexpensive unmanned devices may be just as effective), Distributed Warfare (the continued development and application of scattered forces and operations) and Hybrid and Non- Kinetic Warfare (States are expected to compete more in the "grey zone" through non-official or plausibly deniable proxies).

c. **Users:** The states and non-state actors, insurgent and terrorist groups who utilise these weapons and doctrines are the users.



### **Emerging Technologies with Great Impact**

**Nano Technology that Includes Met Materials:** Nanotechnology allows for the miniaturisation of military equipment and weapons, resulting in smaller, lighter and more energy-efficient devices. Meta materials encourage the creation of new materials. Both of these technologies have enormous potentials for the use which are outlined below :-

- a. Lightweight soldier protection suits that guard against bullets, provide active camouflage, give toxicity protection and monitor body parameters.
- b. Communications and technological gadgets that are faster, more dependable, smaller, use less power and are more portable.
- c. Material strength allows various weapons and projectiles, including aircraft and drones to be smaller.
- d. Aerospace applications to meet the needs of smaller satellites and launch vehicles. Information, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and communications can then be carried out by swarms of small satellites.

**Lethal Autonomous Systems and Robotics:** Military robotics has progressed as a science, and robots can now do dangerous, hazy, or repeating operations with precision and accuracy. They conduct reconnaissance in dangerous regions, mine clearance and firefighting, among other activities, and they use unmanned aerial / land / underwater vehicles and drones to perform more aggressive operations.

**Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence (ML and AI):** Electronic and Cyber Warfare (EW&CW) elements can employ AI and ML to detect electronic patterns, identify signals of interest, filter out undesired signal noise and construct a picture of the electromagnetic spectrum with remarkable precision and speed. Information searching, facial recognition, intuitive perception, comprehensive reasoning, hybrid intelligence et cetera and other AI capabilities have a wide range of military applications.

**Synthetic and Systems Biology are Examples of Biotechnology:** The deliberate employment of microbes and poisons to cause disease and/or death in humans and cattle is biological warfare. Synthetic biology and bio security problems have reached frightening proportions as the globe grapples with the COVID-19 Virus.

**Weapons with Huge Energy:** To damage the intended targets, these weapons use highly focused energy. Lasers, microwaves, particle beams and other similar weapons are examples.

**Space-based Weapons:** There are three primary categories of space weapons, which are further subdivided into kinetic and non-kinetic weapons with either temporary or permanent effects.

- a. Anti-satellite (ASAT) kinetic energy weapons that strike or detonate near the target spacecraft or missile causing irreversible damage. ASAT weapons have been tested by China, Russia, the United States and India. Electronic jammers, lasers and cyber-attack methods are examples of non-kinetic weapons that can be used from earth to space.
- b. Co-orbital ASAT weapons that may crash into a target satellite or even explode near it are examples of space-to-space kinetic weapons. Co-orbital jammers, high-powered microwaves and lasers with temporary or permanent impacts will be among the non-kinetic weapons used in space.
- c. Space-to-Earth kinetic weapons are novel technologies that have yet to reach their full potential. The weapon is de-orbited or launched as a laser or electromagnetic wave from a carrier spaceship at terrestrial targets that could be airborne, on land or at sea.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Enabling an Integrated Battlefield: With Net Centricity**

**Modern Warfare Domains:** The competitive realms of modern combat are land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. Militaries will band together to control one or more domains, but gaining control of all three in the same timeframe may be challenging. For example, the Chinese are attempting to counterbalance the dominance of others by taking a more aggressive position in the Cyber domain. Strong militaries, on the other hand, must be able to operate across many domains and maintain a visible presence in one to allow for the exploitation of the other.

Across all areas, the services of Armed Forces themselves perform complementary roles as mentioned below:-

- a. Naval forces can impact land wars by erecting blockades, intercepting enemy shipping's abroad supplies, landing seaborne troops on enemy territory and so on.
- b. Air force missions, such as ISR, interdiction, close air support and electronic warfare, often have an impact on several domains. They play an important role in the land, sea and space domains.
- c. Cyberspace operations will be a force multiplier in any future conflict and a critical component of Hybrid Warfare, Asymmetric Warfare, Proxy Wars and 'No War No Peace' Standoffs/Low Intensity Conflicts.



To span the globe, the United States of America established five regional tri-service commands in 1947. It presently has eleven, with Africa, Central, European, Indo-Pacific, Northern, Southern and Space being the four geographic groups. Cyber, Special Operations, Transportation and Strategic are among its functional commands. China's military was restructured in 2016 into five unified theatre commands: Eastern, Western, Northern, Southern and Central.

### **Network-oriented Environment**

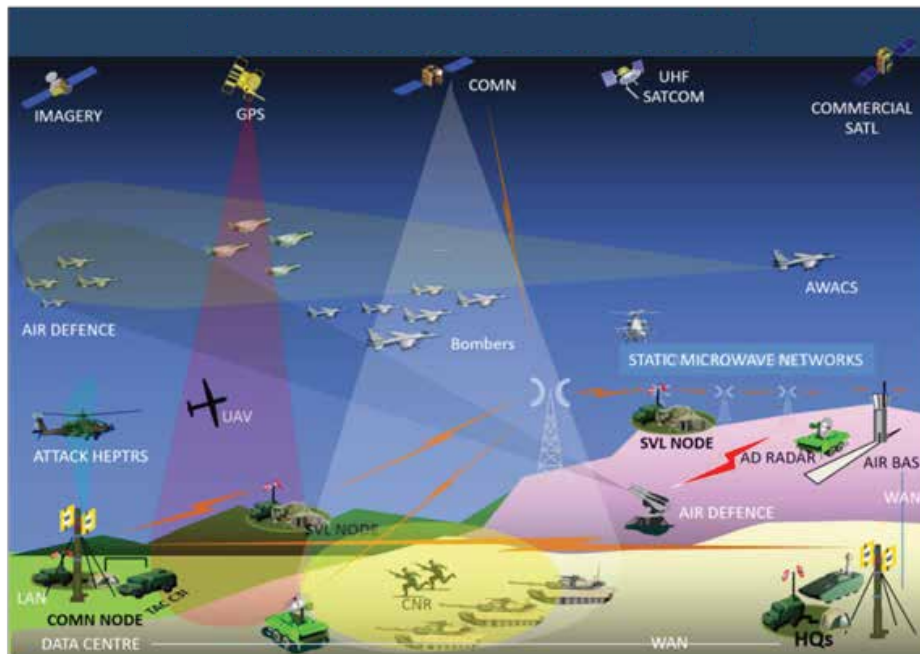
Former US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld highlighted the importance of a fully networked force in his remark, "We must achieve fundamentally joint, network-centric, distributed forces capable of rapid decision superiority and massed effects across the operational environment." Former Commander, US Joint Forces Command emphasised, "A fully collaborative and networked force is an imperative, not a luxury." The former Commandant of the US Marine Corps, General Michael Hagee stressed, "The capability to connect disparate units spread over the battlefield will help to provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to commanders who can then call fire support."<sup>3</sup>

Military communication on the battlefield is more reliable, redundant, survivable, and available due to multi-layered and networked communications. It has the following effects:-

- a. Efficient Command and Control; increasing the speed and tempo of decision-making and command.
- b. Improving the quality of intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) surveillance, reconnaissance and sharing; permit proactive response and maintain surprise and deception.
- c. Greater flexibility in the concentration and dissemination of forces in time and space; effort efficiency and action speed.
- d. For offensive action and a manoeuvre strategy, integration of weapon systems and various other complementary battlefield actions.

Time, space and agility influence the concentration of forces at the decision point, and communications facilitate it. Manoeuvre is enhanced by a well-functioning information/communications network. Similarly, an integrated and networked Air Defence and EW&CW force helps to repel the danger by preventing defenders from being startled by contemporary weapons such as swarms of drones and guided missiles as shown in Picture 2 below:-

**Picture 2: The Sensor to Shooter Spectrum**



Source: Maj Gen SM Harvijay Singh, *Integrated Future Battlefield*, 2021

A commander can use the Integrated Battlefield through the integration of radios, telephone and data communications throughout the combat area to:

- a. See, hear the adversary, move freely with shooters and share combat scenarios using sensors.
- b. Use EW&CW systems to disrupt and deny the enemy access to information systems.
- c. Use Command, Control, Communications, Computing, Intelligence and Information Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR).

As a result, network centricity is more than just a “tool for making decisions.” A Networked and Integrated Battlefield, on the other hand, must keep up with and complement changing military doctrine, modern weapons technology and developing battle scenarios.

### **An Emerging Integrated Tactical Battlefield Scenario-Worldwide Trends**

In the long run, all sophisticated militaries will have to move away from a platform-centric force structure and toward a more integrated network-centric force structure. In the high-intensity conflict in the next decades, the military that best knows how to blend the two into a hybrid force structure that integrates legacy systems with future technologies will have the upper hand. Global trends

of an emerging Integrated Tactical Battlefield Scenarios are described briefly below:-

a. **Lessons from Nagorno-Karabakh:** The battle has demonstrated the necessity for new operational ideas and doctrine that combine traditional platforms such as battle tanks and electronic warfare assets with rising technical capabilities such as unmanned aerial vehicles. This encompasses both defensive and offensive cyber operations, as well as information warfare. Although cyber operations do not appear to have played a significant part in this battle, they will almost certainly be used to disrupt or even destroy command and control assets and air defence systems when a future high-intensity conflict begins.<sup>4</sup>

b. **USA:** Fifth-generation (5G) cellular network technology has the potential to transform battlespace sensing and how militaries handle data. Powerful and tiny microelectronics, data automation, artificial intelligence and enhanced wireless communication are driving the rapid rise of networking technology. All elements on the battlefield will be connected through 5G and nanotechnology, and data will be shared among systems.

c. **Russia:** Russia has transformed from rigid vertical command and control system to a worldwide networked automated command and control system for troops (forces) and armament. In a recent operation in Syria, a swarm of 13 armed UAVs aiming to hit Russian battle headquarters at Khmeimim Air Base was jointly eliminated by electronic counter measures and anti-aircraft missiles, demonstrating Russia's networked defensive capabilities.<sup>5</sup>

d. **China:** The network-centric combat makes the battlefield transparent. The outcome of the conflict is determined by who has the best intelligence about the battlefield, not by who has the most money, men, or technology on the battlefield. The Chinese strategy places a premium on net-centricity. All of their cooperative operations employ networked computerised weapons.<sup>6</sup>

e. **Pakistan:** The al-Khalid main battle tank (MBT) is equipped with an 'Integration Battlefield Management System' (IBMS), which allows commanders on the battlefield to monitor the dangerous environment around them. The IBMS could collect visual or sensor data from aerial intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets in the future, if it hasn't already.<sup>7</sup>

## Way Forward to Enhancing the Battlefield Capabilities for Bangladesh Armed Forces

### Picture 3: Information and Communication Dependency in Modern Warfare



Source: modern-warfare-its-unique-requirements-from-ict-dr-fahim-k-sufi

**Preparation of Joint Doctrine:** As seen in picture 3, under an integrated combat scenario, the Air Force may require the Army's ground-based Air Defence Missile Destroyer capabilities to fulfil the Air Defence mission. The Navy, on the other side, may use the Air Force's air attack capacity to destroy the opponent's Frigates. Both Army and Navy may use Air Force's drone capacity for information and surveillance. This interdependency that modern warfare requires has dictated a more integrated and collaborative approach to defence operations.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Doctrine Should Provide the Basis for the Following:-

- Co-ordination and collaboration among the services, particularly for mutual support and to reduce duplication of efforts.
- Operational, procedural and technical interoperability at both operational and tactical levels.
- Information and intelligence sharing among services and agencies.

**Organisational and Structural Modification:** With the change of the nature of modern warfare, the Army, Navy, Air Force and other services need to work in a more coherent and integrated way, the units and organisations must transform into more combined, flexible and mission-oriented outfits with multifunctional capabilities. Present organisational structures of Defence Forces are not adequate to meet the future operational requirements.

**Creating Awareness on Future War Settings:** Since the future war will be mostly in virtual form, therefore, creating awareness among the leaders and men on future war setting is a must.

**Procurement of Futuristic Equipment:** Future war by its nature will be rooted in technology and fulfilled by equipment. Interoperability compatibility in addition to operational effectiveness must be considered and addressed prior to fielding these systems. Prior to procuring and deploying these systems, interoperability, compatibility as well as operational effectiveness must be studied and addressed.

**Training for Leaders and Men:** Commanders, staff and Electronic Warfare specialists of a sub-unit must be proficient in planning, coordinating and directing all activities of futuristic operations. Considering the threat the potential adversaries pose on the modern battlefield, commanders at all level must ensure that their under command are trained in Electronic Warfare.

**Conducting Joint Exercise:** The organisation's functions and capabilities of all its services may be experimented during these exercises. Weaknesses in training and equipment can be identified through these exercises and required measures can be taken to address them in order to improve operational effectiveness.

**Continuous Study of the War Capabilities of Regional and Developed Countries:** Bangladesh Armed Forces must study and assess the combat capabilities of regional and developed countries, as well as examine doctrine, organisation, training, equipment and other facilities in order to compare and augment their own. It can also assess potential risks to its system and capabilities as a result of this. It may help them recognise weaknesses in their training, equipments and organisational structure allowing them to take corrective measures.

If Bangladesh does not prepare now, it will confront a growing 'adaptability gap' in its ability to change doctrine, technology, organisation and leadership as it shifts from preparing for and waging the war it expects to face the challenges of the conflict that will arrive in future.

### **Recommendations**

As part of modernisation programs of the military, Bangladesh Armed Forces should emphasise the following in order to ensure better integration of Services' efforts and increase the lethality and manoeuvrability of weapon system:

- a. Nano sensors will have to be dispersed throughout all threatened locations to avoid being surprised in all realms of warfare. To successfully



## Integrated Battlefield...

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manage these IoMT devices, a communication backbone built on the 5G network is an unavoidable prerequisite. At the same time potential adversary's various communication nets should be monitored round the clock to collect and analyse data for the preparation of the threat library.

b. To avoid Nagorno-Karabakh-style attrition of tanks and vehicles, Mobile Tactical Networks designed to be reliable, jam-resistant, with end-to-end data security and matched mobility are essential. They must guarantee bandwidth and latency in order to share data, video, images and maps in real-time.

c. To protect against air and drone threats, an integrated ISTAR, Cyber EM Activity and Integrated Air Defence system will be essential. These elements will protect key objectives and will be a part of Field Formations for offensive and defensive operations.

d. Human factor plays a vital role. Education and training of all ranks are indispensable including the perceptive training of leaders. Simulators and lifelong training support must be included in all modern procurements processes.

## Conclusion

The modern battlefield is being influenced and dominated by a concoction of technologies. Artificial intelligence, autonomous and unmanned systems, long-range precision technologies, the Internet of Military Things and 5G domains will all have a significant impact on the modern battlefield. Thousands of dynamically assembled devices with sensors are deployed across the battlefield, utilizing autonomy and artificial intelligence to offer situational awareness and accomplish mission objectives.

Future battles will be complex, encompassing both physical and virtual dimensions, and engaging and combating foes in ways that have never been seen before. These battlegrounds will be home to a variety of new dangers, prompting the military to devise novel methods to defend our motherland. To serve and defend Bangladesh in a more connected and complicated future, the military as it now to refine and transform. The Armed Forces must comprehend the issues that come with quickly changing warfare domains, as well as use technology and develop a grand strategy. The necessity for fused data, cyber infrastructure, digitally enabled technology and an agile mission command organisation will define the future battlefield. The capacity to control the flow of information and use all aspects of intelligence will be critical to success. Therefore, the Armed Forces should learn to live in the future now, because future conventional combat will be incredibly rapid and lethal, and technology stragglers will almost certainly be scorched and bruised.

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### Brief Biography



**Colonel Muhammad Mahbub Alam Sikder, afwc, psc** was commissioned in the Corps of Artillery in Bangladesh Army on 17 June 1994. He served in command, staff and instructor appointments. A graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College and National Defence College, Mirpur he obtained 'Master of Defence Studies from National University, Bangladesh and also completed his Masters in Business Administration. He served as a contingent member in Liberia and as a Staff Officer in Ivory Coast.



## **Land, Maritime and Air Strategy for 21st Century: Supremacy versus Balancing of Strategy- Bangladesh Armed Forces Perspective**

Commander M Tanvir Ahmed, (TAS), psc, BN

### **Introduction**

It is the man on the ground who controls the war, but the victory depends on timely supports from sea and air. Many scholars and strategists have diverse beliefs in their strategic thoughts. However, military history is full of instances where the Armed Forces secured victory through a balanced recipe of combined efforts. During the 1920s, even a small British ground force could manage success in Mesopotamia by combining naval bombardment and air strikes. On the contrary, planning, developing and employing military forces cannot be significant and pragmatic without appreciating the context and strategy. In the 21st century, the context of warfare is more complex, volatile, uncertain and ambiguous. Moreover, the paradigm shift of waging war in the present days, made the concept of Clausewitz's total war debatable. Though the term strategy was first coined by the Romans in the 6th century, it suited more prevalent in the 18th century.<sup>1</sup>

In the view of Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), strategy is defined as the use of engagements to achieve the objective of war, while tactics impart how to use armed forces in that engagement.<sup>2</sup> However, since ancient time, many historians and strategists like Sun Tzu, Thucydides, Kautilya tried to define and formulate strategy in their own accounts. In the modern days, taking the art of war and present context into consideration, the strategy can be described as "the process that converts military power into policy effect, provides purpose and meaning to military activities." Above all, it is the national interest and policy objectives that shape the strategy to attain those. In this expedition, the available means are the elements of national power: diplomatic, intelligence, military and economic (DIME) that eventually form grand strategy. When it is a matter of developing, employing and deploying military forces towards achieving the national goal, then military strategy paves the way encompassing land strategy, maritime strategy and air strategy. Studying military history since 431 BC to date, it is evident that the land, maritime and air power are interdependent and none can alone attain the final victory. The nine-month-long Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 is also an example of that account. Hence, it is always important how strategies are formulated and practiced to influence and complement each other in war and peace for a nation's interest.

This paper will first focus on the concept of strategy and its diverse military dimension. It will then analyze and highlight the present context with a historical perspective combining the views of different strategists. Finally, with an empathetic view of these notions it will try to summarise that air strategy and maritime strategy must be assessed and formulated considering the impact on land strategy.

### Understanding Strategy and Its Military Dimensions

In general terms, strategy is a set of actions to attain a particular goal. The military power has an extensive role in politics necessitating strategy to translate them into effects. Clausewitz's definition of strategy is more warfare oriented emphasizing engagements. Unlike Clausewitz, Sir B.H. Liddell Hart (1895-1970) defined strategy slightly different way. In his view, strategy is the art that defines how military means should be distributed and applied to fulfil the policy ends. However, Colin Gray (1943-2020) argued that strategy is the bridge between military power and political purpose.<sup>3</sup>

In the modern days, strategy can be considered as a process that translates military power into policy effect. Again, each military domain has articulated its own strategy to attain political objectives and stay relevant on the battlefields. Correspondingly, grand strategy is a process by which the elements of national power (DIME) in their right mix are translated into policy effect.

**Figure 1: Instruments of National Power**

<b>D</b> Diplomatic	<b>I</b> Informational	<b>M</b> Military	<b>E</b> Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Embassies/ Ambassadors</li> <li>▪ Recognition</li> <li>▪ Negotiations</li> <li>▪ Treaties</li> <li>▪ International forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Military information</li> <li>▪ Public diplomacy</li> <li>▪ Public affairs</li> <li>▪ Communications resources</li> <li>▪ International forums</li> <li>▪ Spokespersons, timing, media and venues for announcements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Military operations</li> <li>▪ Engagement, Security Coop, Deterrence</li> <li>▪ Show of force</li> <li>▪ Military technology</li> <li>▪ Size, composition of force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trade policies</li> <li>▪ Fiscal and policies</li> <li>▪ Emabargeos</li> <li>▪ Tariffs</li> <li>▪ Assistance</li> </ul>

Source: Thomas, M. Kane, and J. David, *Understanding Contemporary Strategy*. London: Routledge, 2012, p.114

### **Addressing the Arguments-Maritime Strategy and Air Strategy vis-à-vis Land Strategy**

The relevance and importance of military strategy are quite evident in achieving political objectives. Though many strategists and scholars highlighted the significance of strategy in their own accounts, there is a requirement to appreciate the final outcome on the land. On the contrary, in the present day context, neither a single force can decide the victory in war, nor alone can secure the political goals. However, these facts can be further analysed through military history.

#### **Antediluvian Era: Land Power and Maritime Power**

Firstly, in the view of Clausewitz, military power is mostly represented by the land power. But, the history of maritime power and its interdependency with land power is much ancient. The Peloponnesian War of 431 BC is the classical example of confrontations between land power and naval power. The Athens with a stronger navy and the Sparta, the great land power both entered into the War expecting a great victory in their own accounts. Nevertheless, within a few years of War, it was evident that both badly needed expertise to fight and win on other's favourite domain.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Photo 1: Peloponnesian War of 431 BC (War between Athens and Sparta)**



Source: <https://historiarex.com/e/en/123-peloponnesian-war-431-404-b.c.>

Again, the invention of gunpowder and its use in the conflicting 12th century gave a new dimension in warfare. Moreover, its use at sea made a dramatic change. In 1547, the Battle of Pinkie demonstrated the effective use of naval gunfire in support of forces on land. In that battle, the Scottish Army in the banks of the Firth of Forth became highly disordered under the naval gun fire of British ships and finally conceded defeat.

Though Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) was the proponent of sea power, he failed to incorporate the interdependence of armies and navies. However, in his time, Julian Corbett had a wider vision of naval forces in assisting land forces operations on shore. He argued that the possibility of winning a war by lone naval action is less likely as men live on the land. Indeed, a naval power cannot determine the victory of the war, nor land power can alone.<sup>5</sup>

### **World War Era: Emergence of Airpower**

Secondly, prior to WW I (1914-18), the fights mainly took place on land or at sea where the air element was an integral part of the land forces. However, after WW I, the air force got a new entity with the belief of Giulio Douhet considering the future war will be on the air. Many commentators argued that WW I was not entirely won at sea rather backed up land power. Again it is true, without naval power, WW I could have been completely lost.

### **Photo 2: Boeing B-29 Super Fortresses, Strategic Bombing on Japan in WW II**



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-II/Air-warfare-1942-43>



Similarly, during WW II (1939-45), the fall of Singapore proved the limitation of lone British land power in achieving strategic objectives and tactical victory. Throughout the Malayan Campaign in 1941-1942, the British forces in Malay lacked required support from naval and air power, the way US Air Force supported its land troops in Japan through strategic bombing. In the Malayan Campaign, the Japanese success relied on coordinated supports provided by each of their armed forces. Finally, the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 gave a lesson regarding how maritime and air strategy, as well as land strategy would be assessed and practiced to achieve political objectives.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Post-World War Era: Harmonious Land, Maritime and Air power**

Thirdly, during Korean War in 1950, the success of the risky and controversial amphibious landing in Inchon fully relied on the coordinated efforts of allied forces. Despite challenging geographic features and weather conditions, the allied sea power along with air power decidedly supported the land forces in penetrating the hostile perimeter. Finally, the UN forces could capture Seoul, the capital of South Korea and turn the tide of the war. All these historic successes helped to shape up the maritime and air strategy in relation to land strategy towards attaining the political objectives.

#### **Photo 3: Landing at Inchon's Red Beach, September 16, 1950**



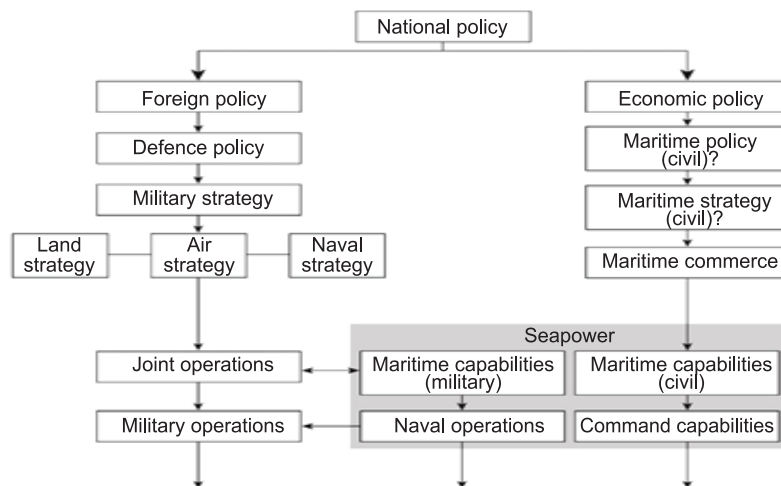
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It is also true that sea power or air power neither of them can alone achieve victory in the modern-day context. At the same time, neither army single-handedly can land ashore nor it can secure its retreat. The same is valid and observed in the Falkland War of 1982, where British ships provided naval fire support to the ground forces for its successful landing and guaranteed required sea control and air superiority. It was the strategic sealift and airlift in support of land forces that made the victory in favour of the British in the Falkland War.

So, the armed forces viz; land, naval and air forces are the three legs of a tripod, while their individual strategies are the means to achieve victory in coordination with each other. Without any of the legs, this tripod is neither balanced nor effective to secure national interest. The same dogma is also applicable even for coalition forces. During the Gulf War of 1991, the US-led coalition forces assembled national resources and armed forces from 50 countries to liberate Kuwait. In that campaign, the navy-marine corps forces involved 19 coalition navies to establish a naval blockade in the Persian Gulf and enforced economic sanction through maritime superiority. That 'Maritime Intervention Operations' facilitated the strategic sealift of more than 18.3 billion pounds of war materials to sustain Operation Desert Shield/ Operation Desert Storm and challenged 7500 merchant ships through 964 boarding operations.

Simultaneously, the six week long air campaign started on 17 January 1991 with the launching of Tomahawk missiles from US naval ships towards Baghdad. The B-52 bombers, F-117A Nighthawk and various fighters with anti-radar missiles and bombs finally dropped 88,500 tons of bombs to destroy Iraqi early warning radar sites, command and control nodes, air defence networks and other centres of gravity.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 2: Concept of Strategy and Seapower**



Source: Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*, Routledge, 2009

Though the maritime intervention operations and air campaign in Gulf War prepared the battlefields and crippled the Iraqi armed forces, the final victory was not achieved till the coalition land forces launched a ground invasion in Kuwait and Iraq on 24 February 1991. Henceforth, it was the coalition land power who ensured the final victory in Kuwait Theatre of Operations, while the coalition maritime power and air power extensively influenced the events as well as kept the tripod balanced to stand productively. However, the concept of strategy and position of seapower in the 21st century is shown above in Figure 2 by Geoffrey Till, a contemporary maritime strategist.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Conflicting Views on Strategic Supremacy: Military Power Perspective**

In contrast, there are few instances where single domain of armed forces dominated the battlefields and successfully secured the strategic objectives. As an example, the Kosovo air campaign of 1999 demonstrated that air power alone has the ability to achieve a major political or strategic objective. On 20 March 1999, NATO initiated air strikes in Kosovo against Serbian military installations and government infrastructures in response to the Albanians ethnic cleansing. The aftermath of NATO air strikes finally compelled Yugoslav President Milosevic to surrender. However, many scholars also criticised the success of NATO air strikes in achieving political objective alone.

Similarly, the Battle of Trafalgar is the classic example of military warfare where naval power alone achieved a decisive victory. On 21 October 1805, the British naval fleet led by Admiral Nelson defeated the Franco-Spanish fleet in the mouth of the Straits of Gibraltar. Thus, the battle was the ultimate victory of the British over Napoleonic France and successfully thwarted Napoleon's plan to invade Britain. Thereafter, this secured the image of invincibility of the British naval power for more than a century.<sup>9</sup>

**Photo 4: Battle of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805**

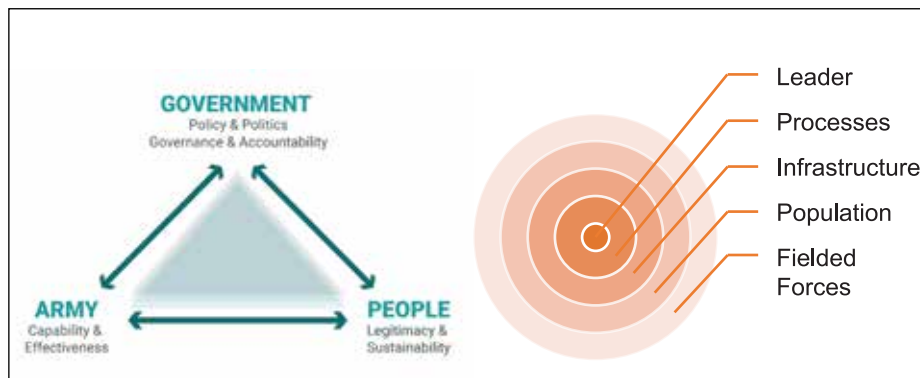


Source: <https://www.royalscotclub.com/the-battle-of-trafficgar/>



At the same time, as a counter argument, it is very difficult to find a nation or coalition forces in military history who either achieved victory in a war, or secured political objectives without involving land troops or at least using sea power. Even after the defeat in the Battle of Trafalgar as a consequence of naval dominance, the French historians argued that the major issues of European states had always been settled by the huge armies fighting on the land, while seapower influenced only the events on shore. Furthermore, many commentators argued that air power had never been a decisive tool to achieve victory alone. The advent of modern air warning radar took the freedom of action and direction of air planes that Douhet believed. Even in the case of Japan in 1945, many scholars think that Japan did not surrender only because of US strategic bombing or atomic bombing. Rather, it surrendered because of Allied naval blockade and invasion of Manchuria by the Russian.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 3: Trinity of War (Clausewitz) and Five Rings Model: Enemy as a System (John Warden)**



Source: <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Share/Blogs/ISSAT-Blog/SSR-and-Clausewitz-s-remarkable-trinity> and [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warden%27s\\_Five\\_Rings](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warden%27s_Five_Rings)

Similarly, though John Warden strongly believed that air power was a decisive factor in the Gulf War in 1991, eventually it was not the only factor. Even, land power alone was not the ultimate determinant of the victory in that war. Moreover, the relevance of Clausewitz's Trinity of War considering only army instead of armed forces is questionable. Reasonably, in the Gulf War, joint and coordinated efforts by land, maritime and air power and their rightful strategy kept the strategic tripod standing and achieved the political objectives.

### **Validity of Balancing Military Strategy vis-à-vis Land, Maritime and Air Strategy**

The recent trends of modern warfare and the war against terrorism have initiated complex hybrid warfare where mission success is also uncertain

without joint efforts from armed forces/coalition forces and their correct strategic evaluation. Moreover, the present warfare is mostly network centric, advanced technology based and more interdependent. Hence, understanding each domain of military strategy and their significance is very critical in the battlefields during peace and war. The recent hybrid war against the Maute terrorists fought by the Philippines military in the Marawi Crisis of 2017 also validated the relevance of balancing the strategy, a joint efforts by the armed forces to secure national objectives. Thus, land power, maritime power and air power are still the three legs of a tripod for operating effectively and determining the final victory, while the elements of national power and individual strategies are the means and key guiding tools. Even, the importance of joint warfare and how modern maritime strategy and air strategy should support land strategy were imprinted in the view of General Dwight David 'Ike' Eisenhower (1890-1969) who argued that lone land, sea, and air warfare is no more valid. If it is required to be involved in war ever, the military should fight with all elements involving all services as a concentrated single effort. However, this notion is yet undeniably valid in modern days.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Bangladesh Armed Forces Perspective**

Bangladesh Armed Forces have also witnessed the effective outcome of joint effort during the Liberation War in 1971. The final victory and birth of Bangladesh were earned with the coordinated operations carried out by the then freedom fighting force, armed forces and the friendly forces from Indian armed forces. In the last leg of the Liberation War on 03 December 1971, the Indian armed forces officially declared war against West Pakistan and joined with Bangladeshi forces (the then East Pakistan). The then Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora from Indian army acted as the commander of the joint forces. The allied land forces started capturing major cities/townships/ports of East Pakistan namely Chattogram, Khulna, Bogura, Jashore, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Kushtia and Dhaka while deployed close to the major rivers Jamuna and Meghna. Thus, the allied land forces could successfully outnumber three divisions of Pakistani land troops. However, the movement of allied land forces was facilitated by the naval operations conducted by the naval forces and naval commandos as well as air operations carried out by Indian Air Forces (IAF). The 'Operation Jackpot' carried out by the naval commandos on 15 August 1971 was a benchmark for shaking the Pakistani forces and drawing the attention of the international community. Around 26 ships were destroyed in the four internal ports of Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) by the attack of naval commandos on 15-16 August 1971. Destroying goods and warships of Pakistani forces and other countries while disrupting maritime communication between West and East Pakistan sent out a strong message to the whole world.<sup>12</sup>

Subsequently, Bangladesh navy was formed by the end of August 1971 with two patrol craft namely Padma and Palash. These ships successfully

carried out mining in Passur River, known as 'Operation Hot Pants'. In this operation, 5 ships were sunk in the River on 10 - 11 November 1971. Moreover, the diesel-electric submarine of Pakistan, PNS GHAZI which sailed from Karachi for a mission in the Bay of Bengal was destroyed on 03/04 December 1971 off Vishakhapatnam. Meanwhile the Pakistani air assets were grounded in the Eastern Theatre as a result of air strikes conducted by IAF including incapacitating Cox's Bazar airfield on 04 December 1971. These operations effectively supported the Indian forces to launch an amphibious landing on Cox's Bazar on the night of 15/16 December 1971 with a committed role from Indian warships VIKRANT, GHARIAL, GULDAR, BRAHMAPUTRA and BEAS. As a whole, with the combined efforts taken by the joint forces including irregular Muktibahini, an unconditional surrender of Pakistani occupation forces was achieved on 16 December 1971; Bangladesh emerged in the world map as a sovereign country.<sup>13</sup>

So, the maritime strategy and air strategy must always be assessed and formulated considering their final impact on land strategy. Besides, these strategies should be evaluated and amended consistently in support of national policies considering the mission success, ongoing context, operational uncertainty and future complexity. This is also clearly applicable for Bangladesh Armed Forces in developing its military strategy and applying it justly.

## **Conclusion**

Indeed, military strategy shapes the battlefields as well as peacetime engagements of a nation. Since the ancient era, strategy helped armed forces to prepare for conflicts in securing national objectives. The historical perspective displayed the effectiveness of even a small land force gaining mission success if it is being responsively supported by air and maritime forces. Many scholars and strategists provided strategic thought in their own accounts. But, the core concept of land, maritime and air strategy is to secure national interest and policy objectives under the broad framework of grand strategy. In the present day context, military powers having a great role in politics need to appreciate the historic lessons while formulating and constructing their individual strategy.<sup>14</sup>

Sun Tzu (544-49 BC), Clausewitz, Mahan, Geoffrey Till (b.1945), Giulio Douhet (1869-1930), John Ashely Warden (b.1943) and so on, all the prominent strategists are shining in the military history for their remarkable strategic thoughts and contributions. In the Clausewitz's era, military powers were mostly subjugated by land power. Despite having few divergences among the strategists and historians, it is clear that air power and maritime power have an influence on land power in attaining the political outcome. These three elements of military power are the three legs of a tripod, without anyone of them the tripod is neither balanced nor can stand effectively. The importance of

maritime power and land power including their interdependency was even felt during Peloponnesian War in 431 BC. Later on, maritime strategists like Sir Julian Corbett (1854-1922) in 1911 and Geoffrey Till in the modern days advocated for joint warfare considering the influence of maritime power on land. However, the air force got individual identity with the belief of Douhet during WW II. On evolving three individual domains of military power, the relevance of joint efforts in mission success started to dominate significantly. In one end, the British paid their prize in the Malayan Campaign of 1941-1942 for ignoring the importance of joint warfare. On the other end, the Inchon landing of the Korean War in 1950 and the Gulf War of 1991 gave us lessons on how a joint effort can change the tide towards unimpeded victory.<sup>15</sup>

Though, all these major victories were finally secured by the ground forces, but it is evident that land forces did not prepare the battlefields alone to achieve victory over Pakistani occupation forces on 16 December 1971; Bangladesh emerged in the world map as a sovereign country with the active participation of all defence forces.

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### Brief Biography



**Commander M Tanvir Ahmed, (TAS), psc, BN** was commissioned in Executive Branch on 24 June 2002 from Bangladesh Naval Academy. A graduate from Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, he has served in staff and Instructor appointments in Bangladesh Navy. At present he is serving in Directorate General Forces Intelligence.

## **The Air War in Bangladesh: Road to Victory in 1971**

Wing Commander Md Ahsan Habib, acsc, psc, GD(P)

### **Introduction**

Air power, with its decisive attributes played a very crucial role in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. A significant aspect of air warfare during the Liberation War was the birth of 'Kilo Flight' which was formed by the valiant Bengalee airmen who defected from the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). Kilo Flight drew its first blood by attacking different targets in Chattogram and Narayanganj on 3rd December 1971 and led the formal air operations over Bangladesh. After the Kilo flight's strike, Indian air units commenced operations from 04 December 1971 in the eastern theatre. Meanwhile, on 3rd December 1971, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) carried out strikes on different airfields in the Western Sector of India which were again retaliated by the Indian Air Force (IAF) by counter air attacks both in the Western and Eastern fronts. The Kilo Flight which formed the embryo of the present Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) played a significant role in the Liberation War by conducting various air operations in support of the liberation forces. The idea of making a meaningful contribution through a separate air arm at the height of the Liberation War proves the supreme commitment and dedication of the brave airmen of the Bengalee nationhood.<sup>1</sup>

**Photo 1: Some of the Members of Kilo Flight**



Source: <https://wikimedia.org.bd/blog/60-baf-cc>, retrieved on 24 June 2021



### **Formation and Training**

**Formation of Kilo Flight :** From the motivating drive of patriotic zeal, a good number of Bengalee officers and airmen including technicians renounced their previous services and joined the Liberation War. It was largely possible due to the sincerity of those members who established the Air Wing of the Liberation War on 28 September 1971 at Dimapur of Nagaland, India. The Air Wing possessed a scanty inventory of one DC-3 airplane, one Otter airplane and one Alouette helicopter. Initially, Kilo Flight comprised 10 officers and 47 technicians. The pioneer members to form the Kilo Flight were Group Captain A K Khandker, Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud, Flight Lieutenant Shamsul Alam, Flying Officer Badrul Alam, Captain Abdul Khaleque, Captain Shahabuddin Ahmed, Captain Kazi Abdus Sattar, Captain Abdul Muqeeet, Captain Akram Ahmed and Captain Sharfuddin Ahmed. A total of 23 valiant Air Force personnel received gallantry awards for their unprecedented bravery and utmost sacrifice towards the motherland.

**Training:** From September to the beginning of December 1971, the crew members were trained in night supply and stealth attack operations. Otter and Alouette-III were modified for attack role. Dakota was assigned for transportation role. Several training missions were flown in the forest of Nagaland against dummy targets. The low flying practice was also conducted to avoid radar detection .

**Command and Control :** Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud was the first Officer Commanding of Kilo Flight. Meanwhile, IAF had Western Air Commands (WAC) and Eastern Air Commands (EAC) to manage the air operations. Air Marshal Maurice Barker was responsible to look after the bomber operations, Air transportation and maritime air support to the Navy. The WAC, commanded by Air Marshal MM Engineer and EAC commanded by Air Marshal HC Dewan, were responsible for Air Defence, Close Air Support and Counter Air Operations in their respective theatres.<sup>2</sup> Pakistan had set up a Joint Operation Centre. However, PAF did not have any separate command in Eastern theatre. The lone squadron left in East was commanded by Wing Commander M Afzal Chowdhury. In the west, Air Marshal Abdur Rahim exercised centralised control over the air operations.<sup>3</sup>

### **Air Order of Battle**

**Aircraft :** On the eve of the Liberation War in 1971, PAF had a total of 280 aircraft, whereas the Indian Air Force had 1025 aircraft in its inventory, this gave the IAF an advantageous overall ratio of 4:1(10:1 in the Eastern front). The Order of Battle (ORBAT) ratio in eastern front indicated the overwhelming numerical superiority of IAF due to Pakistan's poor mobilisation of resources in



East Pakistan. Out of IAF's 39 combat squadrons, 10 combat squadrons were deployed in the East and the rest on the West. Whereas, PAF had total of 13 combat squadrons out of which only one F-86 squadron (No. 14 squadron) was deployed in East Pakistan. IAF also had 4 Helicopter Units under the Eastern Air Command.

**Air Defence and Radar:** PAF had three medium-level and five low-level radars. The coverage was insufficient as these radars provided only 25% of high-level coverage. On the low-level side only 7% of the desired coverage was available. Air Defence coverage was augmented by placing Mobile Observer Units (MOU) in the western side, though MOUs were removed from Eastern theatre due to the fear of Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters). Overall, it can be said that on the western side the network left dangerous gaps in Kashmir sector, area south of Multan, between Sukkur and Hyderabad and Karachi region. On the eastern side, only one radar was available to cover all areas. Contrary to this, the Indian air defence system consisted of a vast network of early warning and low-level radars. The terminal defence at most of the airfields had also been upgraded with radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns and surface to air missiles including measures for Passive Air Defence (PAD). Most of IAF combat aircraft could be dispersed over a number of airfields and housed in concrete pens.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Air Operations at Eastern Front**

**The Kilo Flight :** With the war clouds looming in the air, the newly born BAF took the honour of initiating the air war. Lone Otter and Alouette attacked the oil installations at Narayanganj and Chattogram and set them on fire. A brief insight of the air operations are illustrated below:-

a. **At Chattogram Oil Refinery:** The first air operation was on 03 December 1971 by Otter at the oil refinery at Chattogram port area. The successful bombing mission with primitive weapons denied the oil supply to the Pakistanis. The aircraft received a few bullet hit but the daredevil pilot Flight Lieutenant Shamsul Alam managed to evade the Pakistani anti-aircraft firing by low flying on the river of Karnafuli and landed back safely.

b. **At Godnail Fuel Storage:** Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud with his Alouette-III carried out a second successful mission from Kailashahar attacking fuel storage at Godnail of Narayanganj area. During this mission, the helicopter got a few bullets hit but could land back safely at Teliamura. At one instance, the helicopter suffered so much due to poor visibility caused by fog that it even had to fly below the electric high tension cable line.

c. **Other Operations:** Soon after the successful air attacks, several air operations were carried out by the Kilo Flight during the war. DC-3 was dedicated to the transportation of forces and VIPs. A total of 50 successful air sorties were carried out by Kilo Flight towards the end of the war.

d. **Significance:** The modest effort by the Kilo Flight with the meagre number of aircraft signifies the commitment of the Bengalee airmen to the cause of the Liberation War. The overall impact of the air operations was phenomenal and greatly contributed to raise the morale of the Mukti Bahini and the people who supported them. The careful selection of the targets also signifies the farsightedness of the Bengalee airmen as it was chosen to maximise the effect through limited resources.

**Air Operations by IAF:** In response to PAF's air strikes on 3rd December, the IAF started the air war in the East by night bombing on the airfields of Chattogram, Jashore, Tejgaon and Kurmitola on the night of 3rd and 4th December. However, IAF was first engaged in air combat in the East on 22 November 1971 over Bogura. IAF Gnat fighters scrambled from Dumdum were able to shoot down two PAF F-86 Sabres which violated the Indian airspace to attack Mukti-Bahini. Later, during the campaign, IAF continued their offensive counter-air operations as per plan to achieve control of the air. With a huge numerical advantage, it took only a few hours for IAF to obtain the eventual air superiority. As a result, the PAF did not venture beyond 50 nm of Dhaka till the end of the war. The IAF's Eastern Air Command (EAC) flew a total of 1978 sorties, of which 1178 (60%) were in direct support of the Army. The first three days of the war consumed a fair effort towards Counter Air operations. The subsequent effort was inclined towards Close Air Support (CAS), interdiction and Air Transport Operation.<sup>5</sup>

a. **Attack on Governor's House:** Dr. A M Malik, Governor of East Pakistan, was to chair an important meeting regarding the progress of war on 14th December at 1200 hours at the Circuit House which eventually was relocated at Governor's house. The IAF came to know about this meeting barely 45 minutes before the scheduled time and immediately employed a force of six MiG-21 with rockets for the task. While taxiing out, new intelligence input pointed to the changed location and to the immense credit of Wing Commander Bishnoi and his team that they were able to locate the Governor's House in the busy and congested landscape of Dhaka in quick time; identify the conference room and then fired their rockets with pinpoint accuracy. The shattering explosion caused by the flying rockets totally shattered their morale and broke the 'will' to continue

resisting the advancing force. Immediately, Dr Malik and the entire Cabinet decided to resign and accept Pakistan's defeat. Thus, this precise attack brought the war to a quick end, avoiding further casualties. It nullified the still effective Pakistani Army, which became prisoners of war, numbering 93,000.

**b. Attack on Joydebpur Ordnance Factory:** Joydebpur ordnance factory was producing war ammunition for Pakistan forces; as such it was attacked on 8th, 9th and again on 13 December consecutively. Several aircraft namely MiG-21, Hunter, Canberra, and even AN-12 transport aircraft were used to increase the weight of attack to ensure complete destruction of the installation. This severely curtailed ammunition supplies to the Pakistan forces.

**Missions in Support of Navy:** Indirect support of the IAF for the Indian Navy was attaining air superiority, so that naval aircraft, namely Sea Hawks and Alizes, could operate freely without any fear of encountering Sabres and MiG-19 aircraft. Hunters bombed the Chattogram airfield on 4th December and confirmed the absence of PAF aircraft, thereby, opening up air space for naval aircraft to operate .

**Indian Navy Air Effort:** IAF Sea Hawk and Alize aircraft from INS VIKRANT, Indian Navy's aircraft carrier joined the war and carried out bombing and strafing on shipping, harbour facilities and airfield in Chattogram, Cox's Bazar and Barishal from 07 December onward. Whatever remained of the Pakistan Navy was destroyed or sunk. The airfields in Cox's Bazar, Chiringa and Feni were made inoperative. The first wave was mounted against Cox's Bazar by 8 Sea Hawks on 4th December. The second wave attacked Chattogram. On 5th December attacks were mounted on Mongla-Khulna harbours. A total of 400 sorties were launched from INS VIKRANT.

**Air Operations by PAF:** PAF was on alert and flew Combat Air Patrols, resulting in several dogfights with Indian jets. PAF had flown few operational sorties against IAF incursions on 04 December, expending 30,000 rounds of ammunition, while the ground-based weapons had fired 70,000 rounds on the same day, the highest expenditure per day per aircraft of ammunition in the history of the PAF. Pakistani authorities claimed shooting down more than 12 IAF aircrafts, and simultaneously planned to preserve ammunition anticipating a protracted war. Apart from being vastly outnumbered, PAF had ignored a few fundamental concepts. Passive Air Defence measures taken by PAF were inadequate. The Air Defence system was devoid of missiles and the radar system was not very effective against low level threats. As Pakistani troops were unable to dislodge the entrenched enemy, the ground forces mostly called in

close air support. However, on the 4th December 1971, a daring search and rescue mission was carried out to rescue ejected pilot Flight Lieutenant Sajjaad Noor who had to eject from his disabled F-86. Noor had parachuted down across the river Buriganga, close to an Indian Army unit. An Alouette helicopter was immediately airborne and the downed pilot was picked up in a daring rescue - in which PAF ground combaters showed their bravery to fight Indian ground troops.

The air war in the East was brief and intense. By 15 December, all air operations ceased and the negotiation for the surrender of the Pakistan forces started. On 16 December morning, the IAF helicopter carrying the Indian negotiating team landed in Tejgaon. As the preparation for the surrender was going on, the PAF damaged or destroyed the remaining thirteen F-86s as a part of the denial operations on the ground. Pakistan Armed Forces Headquarters had issued orders to blow up all the remaining aircraft, but Air Commodore Inamul Haque Khan had pointed out that the sight of burning planes would demoralise the Pakistani troops defending Dhaka. Therefore, PAF personnel destroyed the ammunition stocks and sabotaged the electric and hydraulic systems of the aircraft on 15 December. Later, three of these aircraft were repaired and flown by Bangladesh Air Force.<sup>6</sup>

### **Effort Generation**

The IAF flew 7,346 sorties during the whole period of the war in both the theatres whereas PAF flew 3027 sorties during the war. The close air support missions increased considerably and after 05 December it raised to 120 sorties per day for IAF. PAF flew 951 sorties in support of surface forces. Apart from IAF, the air arm of the Indian Navy also carried out 400 missions from the aircraft carrier INS VIKRANT.

### **Tactics and Technologies**

The ingenious tactics and technology utilized or evolved in this air warfare are illustrated below:-

- a. The DHC-3 Otter, DC-3 Dakota and the Alouette III helicopters with the Kilo Flight did not have any weapon carriage capabilities. The technicians, however, modified the aircraft for attacking and bombing roles. The Otter was fitted with 07 rockets under each wing and could deliver up to ten bombs which were rolled out through the makeshift door. The Dakota was modified to carry ten 500lbs bombs for low level bombings. The helicopter was rigged to fire 14 rockets from pylons attached to its side and had a twin barrelled .303 Browning machine gun installed and a steel plate welded to the floor for its protection.

**Photo 2: BAF Installed Machine Guns and Rocket Pods in Alouette III Helicopter**



Source: <https://wikimedia.org.bd/blog/60-baf-cc>, retrieved on 24 June 2021

b. Armed with the latest military equipment by the United States of America, PAF had a distinct advantage in terms of the technology at its disposal. The IAF aimed to build asymmetry against this by increasing the quantitative gap and amassing greater assets. While every diplomatic option was being utilized to avert the impending war, simultaneously upgraded programmes of the Hunter, MiG-21 and Su-7 aircraft were undertaken.

c. The K-13 A-A missile on the MiG-21 of IAF was no match for the Sidewinders that the PAF Sabres were equipped with. This gave them a distinct advantage in the air to air combat. To overcome this disadvantage some of the MiG-21 aircrafts were fitted with external Gondola Packs with 23mm Gsh Gun which was capable of firing 3000rds/min.

d. Even though the IAF undertook extensive training for low-level bombing in moonlit conditions, both the warring factions had limited Night Strike capabilities and neither could carry out air interceptions in the dark. IAF also heavily invested in building Hardened Aircraft Shelters and upgraded airfields to support fighter operations. For accurate and effective Close Air Support, each of the Army Corps had been provided with well-trained Forward Air Controllers.

e. While the IAF could position their Mobile Observation Posts all along

the borders, the PAF failed to do so in East Pakistan because of the hostile local population.

f. A simple and highly innovative concept was employed by the IAF where fighter aircrafts were placed at elevations of 9-10kms to relay messages between the radar and the strike aircraft.

g. During the Meghna River bridge operations, the pilots innovated and arranged for a Helipad to be lit by hand-held torch lights with the reflector of the torches removed for lighting up the landing place and minimizing the glare at the pilot's eye.

### Lessons Learnt

Air warfare in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, left many important lessons for future air warriors. Some important lessons learnt are as follows:<sup>7</sup>

**a. Control of the Air Is Crucial:** Kilo Flight and IAF commanders were keen in their planning and execution to gain air superiority on the eastern front within a short time through Offensive Counter Air Operations and Air Interdiction missions. The well-timed air attacks in the Governor's House would not have been possible if there was air opposition. It is now widely accepted that no nation goes into war without achieving a certain degree of control of the air.

**b. Air Operation for Strategic Effect:** It was the Kilo Flight that drew the first blood on 3rd December 1971. The air interdiction missions had a strategic impact on the course of the war. Even the meagre asset of Kilo Flight was able to achieve a strategic objective. This was a comparatively new lesson that evolved and was used effectively in later air warfare.

**c. Importance of PAD Measures:** PAF's air attack to destroy IAF aircraft on the ground in the western front failed to exert the desired outcome. The Indians had learnt their lessons in 1965 Indo-Pak war and had constructed Hardened Aircraft Shelter (HAS) to store their aircraft. They also used the tactics of camouflage and dispersal that reduced the effectiveness of PAF attacks. The Rapid Runway Repair (RRR) team worked efficiently to repair the runways for IAF to operate. PAF aircrafts were also well dispersed and camouflaged on the ground which saved their aircraft on the ground. PAD measures prove effective to date and all nations invest heavily in HAS and camouflaging.

**d. Concentration of Force is Important to Success:** Concentration of force in time and space brings decisive results. PAF lacked the offensive potentials required to confront the IAF and Kilo Flight thrust in the eastern front. They were outnumbered from the beginning and paid heavily throughout the war.



**e. Training and R&D:** Success in war depends on the standard of the training and the will to excel in research and development. The Kilo Flight warriors did extensive training before flying the actual combat sorties. The airmen also gave their extreme effort to conduct R&D to transform non-combat aircraft into a war ready machine.

**f. Synergy Is Vital for Survival:** Synergy is an important facet at all levels of war that enables the Commander to make an informed decision and produce maximum combat power without duplication of effort. PAF suffered from inter-service cooperation with PAK Army and PAK Navy. All the three forces were fighting their own battle not knowing the capability and limitations of each other. PAK Army asked for air support when there was no base within 250 km. Again PAK Navy asked for a maritime support mission 270 nm out to sea at night not knowing that PAF had no night capability over the sea. In contrast, IAF, Kilo Flight commanders and the army and navy were operating in harmony. This provided a well-orchestrated battle rhythm for the tactical level warriors.

**g. Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare (EW) Is Crucial in the War:** It was the correct intelligence through surveillance and recce of the battle-space that allowed IAF and Kilo Flight to have an edge over PAF. The interception of the radio transmissions that provided the information regarding the Governor's house meeting was decisive and proved the testimony of effective EW.

**h. Lack of Effective Early Warning Brought the Demise for PAF:** Early warning facilities are foremost important for a defensive battle. This is more appropriate for a country having less geographical depth. East Pakistan was ill-equipped in this regard and the only long-range radar, a Russian P-35, was also taken to West Pakistan. The only short-range radar the Plassey AR-1 could provide only 3–5 minutes warning. Kilo Flight commanders exploited the weakness of PAF surveillance capability to carry out their first attack at night.

**j. Leadership Is Crucial for Winning Any War:** As Napoleon said, "I do not fear an army of the lion led by a sheep, but I fear the army of sheep led by a lion." For Kilo Flight, it was lion leading the lions. Kilo Flight leaders were not only competent to employ the air resources but they had a vision; a vision of independent Air Force. Bengalee leadership persuaded the Indian leadership since the beginning and got approval to raise an Air Force. The patriot and professional warriors were proud to work for the force and thus produced wonders within a short span of time. Moreover, the excellent understanding among the allied leadership at the top level paved the way for the victory at the quickest possible time.<sup>8</sup>



## Conclusion

Air power played a pivotal role during the Liberation War. For Bangladesh side, the air war started on 3 December with valiant attacks by Kilo Flight by meagre air platforms inside enemy territory at night. Extensive air support from IAF made the job easier for the Freedom Fighters. IAF and Kilo Flight sized up the PAF in the eastern front within 03 days of the first offensive. The types of mission ranged from Counter Air to Anti Surface Force Attack to even strategic air operations. During the air war, new innovations came into operation which not only displayed the ingenuity of the air warriors but also spoke about their visionary leadership.

The outcome of the war was a great achievement for the people of Bangladesh. But to the Armed Forces, it was a war tested learning experience. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could understand the need for a capable Air Force to protect the motherland and paved the way for forming a formidable Air Force for Bangladesh. Since independence, BAF underwent substantial reform and expansion. Concentration has been given on strengthening air power including establishing a required number of Bases, Units and outposts. The vision of the ancestors is carried forward with a vision to build an Air Force capable of credible deterrence and maintaining the sovereignty of the beloved motherland. With the inspiring motto 'Free shall we keep the sky of Bangladesh' in heart; the personnel of today's BAF are committed to safeguard the national interest of Bangladesh, as well as for global peace, security and stability.

## Notes and References

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### **Brief Biography**



**Wing Commander Md Ahsan Habib, acsc, psc, GD(P)** was commissioned in GD(P) Branch on 06 December 1998 from Bangladesh Air Force Academy. A graduate of Air Command and Staff College, Air University of USA, he has completed Masters in Business Administration from Southern University of Bangladesh and Masters in Security Studies from Bangladesh University of Professionals.

He served in command, staff and Instructor appointments. Presently, he is serving as Directing Staff in Defence Services Command and Staff College.

## **Command Philosophy of Military Command: Theoretical Positioning of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Approach**

Colonel Md Arifuzzaman, PBGM, PhD

### **Introduction**

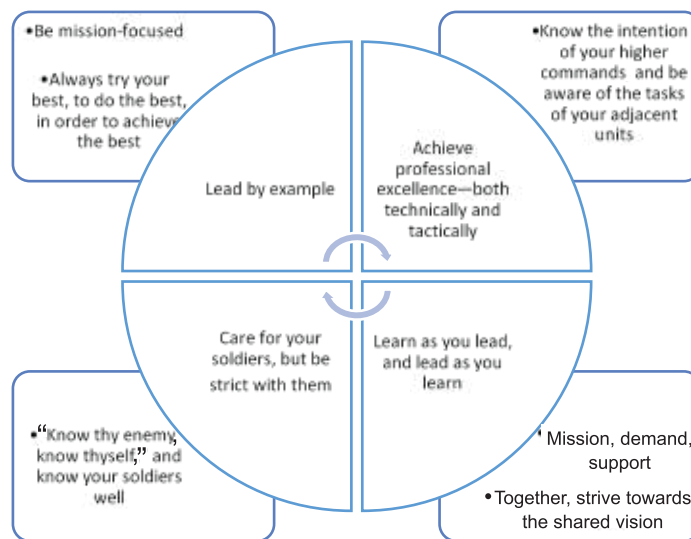
The command is one of the most important parts of any kind of institution. In the military, this command is an essential element of running any unit or group. Moreover, higher authority passes down command to the ground level so for any effective command there should be a certain standard to follow because if there are no rules or regulations regarding command then many kinds of problems may arise. This study focuses on the criteria or area which is important to establish any command philosophy. There are so many fields to improve the command system in the military and there is no limit of upgradation but according to so many fundamental topics and research an attempt has been made to show that there should be some criteria to make the command more effective and what it takes to make good decisions and commands. In this connection, a mathematical foundation has been developed with the theory of in-group out-group relationships which was synonymous with the early Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) leadership approach.<sup>1</sup> However, greater advances in the future appear possible if the basic theoretical, psychometric, and statistical recommendations presented in this review are embraced.

While the fundamental definition of philosophy is “the love of wisdom” that definition is inadequate because there are many different sorts of wisdom, as well as many different ways to pursue that wisdom and many different ways to express that wisdom. “An activity people engage in when they strive to grasp fundamental facts about themselves,” is a better working definition of philosophy. As a result, a command philosophy is a document that describes essential truths about the commander and how he or she desires to interact with his or her command. In order to prescribe a course of action it is important to have a better grasp of oneself. The ultimate result should be a clearly defined command philosophy that can be communicated to everyone in the organisation.<sup>2</sup>

The whole world including military is moving into a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) system. In order to adapt the organization with the SMART system, Army should have a very tangible yard stick to measure the upbringing of the units. This must be progressive and dynamic. Keeping visions and command philosophy of commanders as documented can lead any outfit to the progression. Bangladesh Army, being a highly professional organization has gained a lot of reputation at home and abroad.<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh is proud to have a professional and capable military force in world history because of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast

guardsmen and civil servants. This has been communicated to every commander and man in the units. The purpose was to inform them about the rationale behind the command decisions and actions. Since, then, the philosophy has served well as a platform to discuss command and leadership issues among our commanders, men and myself. It has also been a good reference to align commandship within the division. There are ten tenets in the philosophy of command as shown in the figure below:-

**Figure 1: Ten Tenets in the Command Philosophy**



Source: Author's self construct

According to Paul Malone, command philosophy should represent a mix of candor, idealism and reality, as well as a grasp of the organization's objective and the “contract” as seen by subordinates. It should share idiosyncrasies that will influence interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Similarly, Edgar Schein believes that a command philosophy should explicitly state the commander's values and assumptions. These statements, he emphasises, should highlight a small portion of the assumption set which operates in an organisation and should, most likely, highlight those aspects of a leader's philosophy that lend themselves to public articulation. According to Joseph Badaracco and Richard Ellsworth, leader philosophies should include core beliefs about human nature, organisational personnel, and the types of activities that lead to excellent results. They argue that these ideas develop over time as a result of the experiences and influences that shape one's life. Despite the fact that few leaders pause to consider, reflect on, and make clear their leadership philosophies, their core beliefs impact almost all they do. The ingredients of a command philosophy are drawn from Colonel Michael Plummer's paper 'Winning in Command' in the Army's pre-command courses.

An effective philosophy, according to the text, includes values such as courage, candor, commitment and competence. It should include information on how the command will be exercised, which objectives are significant, a reward and punishment system and an evaluation system.<sup>4</sup>

Colonel Duane Lempke's study, *Command Climate: The Rise and Decline of a Military Concept*, looked at the command philosophies of 27 big unit commanders at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Goals and objectives, values, priorities, purpose and mission, sharing a vision, and teamwork are all mentioned in a command philosophy. A command philosophy should also include goals and objectives, values, priorities, standards, purpose and mission, a vision, and an explanation of leadership style, according to a study of twenty commanders conducted at Fort Benning, Georgia between 1985 and 1988. These polls yielded comparable results despite being taken at various times and in different places. Collectively, the literature suggests that a command philosophy should contain: candidness, idealism, values, objectives, integrity, vision, ethics, mission, standards, policy, idiosyncrasies, goals, a statement of teamwork, priorities, a performance assessment, purpose, an evaluation system, things of importance to the commander, a system of information flow, a reward and punishment system, activities which lead to outstanding results how the command will be exercised, assumptions about human nature, understanding of organisation's mission and history of the organisation.<sup>5</sup>

The Professional Competency for Bangladesh Army Commanders is shown in the table below:-

**Table 1: Professional Competency for Bangladesh Army Commanders**

1.	Effective command and leadership	i-1
2.	Values and ethos	i-2
3.	Golden rule for taking an ethical decision	i-3
4.	Grapevine advice	i-4
5.	Try to be assertive	i-5
6.	Attribution theory and Fundamental attribution error	i-6
7.	Effectiveness and efficiency	i-7
8.	Efficiency-(output/input)	i-8
9.	Respect people	i-9
10.	Punishment should be the last resort to correct people	i-10
11.	Leadership wisdom has no value unless it is shared	i-11
12.	Effective communication is the most important factor for leader and led	i-12
13.	A successful communication lies in understanding the counterpart	i-13

14.	Mental ability has got 7 dimensions	<i>i-14</i>
15.	Deliver well on ground	<i>i-15</i>
16.	Present yourself in a good manner	<i>i-16</i>
17.	Hard work, consistency will never go in vain	<i>i-17</i>
18.	In Military spouse has got equal responsibility	<i>i-18</i>
19.	4B's while selecting Military spouse Blood, Bank, Beauty & Brain	<i>i-19</i>
20.	Parents have got serious role for the children	<i>i-20</i>
21.	Abiding by the customs and etiquettes is a must in military life	<i>i-21</i>
22.	Set a goal; set a moderately challenging goal	<i>i-22</i>
23.	Do better than yesterday	<i>i-23</i>
24.	Goal must be very simple	<i>i-24</i>
25.	Giving reward according to the need	<i>i-25</i>
26.	Difference of opinion in a group discussion	<i>i-26</i>
27.	Devil's advocate	<i>i-27</i>
28.	Train hard fight easy	<i>i-28</i>
29.	Training is the best welfare for a soldier	<i>i-29</i>
30.	5 Classical Roles of a Patriot Citizen as a Military Leader	<i>i-30</i>

Source: Author's self construct

### Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

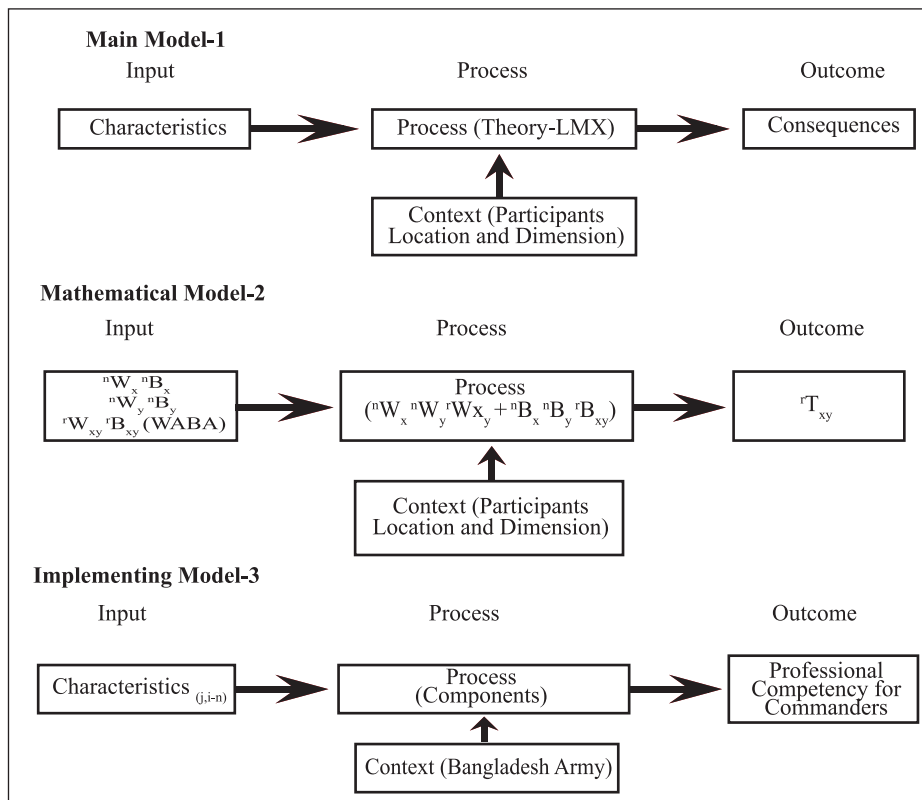
**Analytic Practices in Research:** Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is a relational approach to leadership that examines the dyadic relationship among subordinates (members) and their immediate supervisors (leader). Among the antecedents of LMX that have been studied, leader variables were found to be crucial in the LMX relationships. Because of the inherent power differential in the leader-member relationship, leaders generally have more control in the relationship and hence shape members' perceptions and responses to them.<sup>6</sup>

To this end, the mathematical foundation is being developed with the theory of in-group out-group relationships which was synonymous with the early LMX leadership approach. While theory specification and measurement are critical aspects of increasing knowledge in any research domain, the analysis of data collected tells us what really exists with regard to the phenomenon of interest. Pointing out those incorrect conclusions may be drawn when the level of a theory, its construct measurement and the statistical analyses employed to test the theory is not the same. LMX theory of the 1980s and early 1990s appears to have accepted the position and some LMX researchers have even asserted that the LMX approach is a better predictor of leadership outcomes than is the ALS approach. A major problem with this



fact that it cannot be supported without the use of analytic techniques which are appropriate for testing multi-level theories. This is true because while the ALS and VDL models are theoretically mutually exclusive, they have been found to operate concurrently in some data sets. Although there are several approaches that might be employed to test for different levels of analysis, the within- and between-entities analytical technique of Dansereau, Alutto and Yammarino appears to be the only fully appropriate one used in the literature to date.<sup>7</sup> This approach to illustrate the testing of multiple levels is critical for research in domains such as leader-member exchange as shown in the figure below:-

**Figure 2: Research Model**



Source: Author's self-construct

### Underlies Within-And Between-Entities Analysis (WABA)

The basic practice which underlies Within- And Between-Entities Analysis (WABA) is to partition data into within-cells (deviation from cell average) and between-cells (cell average) components, where the cells represent analytic entities such as working groups. The relationships which result from these calculations may be summarised in an overall equation as follows :-<sup>8</sup>

$${}^nB_x {}^nB_y {}^rB_{xy} + {}^nW_x {}^rW_y {}^nW_{xy} = {}^rT_{xy}$$

Where,  ${}^nB_x$  and  ${}^nB_y$  are the between-entity etas for variables x and y,  ${}^nW_x$  and  ${}^nW_y$  are the corresponding within-entity etas, ( ${}^nB_{xy}$  and  ${}^nW_{xy}$ ... are the corresponding between-entity and within-entity correlations, and  ${}^rT_{xy}$  is the raw-score or total correlation.  ${}^nW_x$  and  ${}^nW_y$  may be calculated by correlating the raw scores ( $[X_N]$  or  $[Y_N]$ ) with the appropriate within-entity deviation scores ( $[X_N - X_k]$  or  $[Y_N - Y_k]$ ) for n parts (e.g., the 1 to N respondents) within k entities (e.g., the 1 to K work units);  ${}^nB_x$  and  ${}^nB_y$  may be calculated by correlating the raw scores of the n parts ( $[x_i]$  or  $[y_i]$ ) with their between-entity scores (i.e., the appropriate  $[X_k]$  or  $[Y_k]$  for the entity within which each part is situated). The within-entity correlation may be computed by correlating the within-entity deviation scores (i.e.,  $x_i - X_k$  and  $y_i - Y_k$ ) for the n parts, while the between-entity correlation may be computed by assigning each part to its appropriate between-entity scores ( $[X_k]$  and  $[Y_k]$ ) and then correlating these across the parts (i.e., between-entity correlations are simply correlations between the entity means weighted by the number of parts within each entity).<sup>9</sup>

As can be seen from the fundamental WABA equation, any raw score correlation is just the sum of two separate components—a between-entity (cell) component ( ${}^nB_x {}^nB_y {}^nB_{xy}$ ) and a within-entity (deviation) component ( ${}^nW_x {}^nW_y {}^nW_{xy}$ ); both are the products of multiplying their appropriate etas and component correlations. Thus, for example, a raw score correlation of 0.00 may be highly misleading if it is based upon a large negative within-entity component and a large positive between-entity component (the conclusion drawn would be one of “no relationship,” while the data actually support a negative within- and a positive between-entities relationship). Consequently, raw score correlations ( ${}^rT_{xy}$ ) cannot be unambiguously interpreted—the explicit examination of levels of analysis is absolutely critical for the drawing of sound conclusions.

Although perhaps seeming obvious at first glance, this review clearly indicates the need for improved theorisation about LMX and its basic process, for improved measurement practices, and for enhanced and more appropriate data-analytic techniques. It is true that many scholars believe that the LMX approach has substantially contributed to deepening our understanding of fundamental leadership phenomena.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

Command philosophy of army has served to illuminate command of armed forces. This paper has served as a guide for subordinates' decisions and actions in their respective units. Together, it is essential to strive to attain excellence. Through this study, a shared vision has been highlighted towards the understanding of this particular area of study in which soldiers strive for it. For Army Division, the shared vision is: (i) a Combined Arms Division

of Excellence, (ii) always operationally ready and capable of achieving mission success, (iii) attain centre of excellence for brigade training, (iv) strive to achieve the highest standards in all fields of endeavours and (v) achieve competent, confident, committed and cohesive family. Through this study, it is hoped to share command philosophy with a wider audience in the army. It is also hoped to use the various classical examples of past commanders to illustrate the essence of the ten tenets of the philosophy of command, and how to apply them in practical operational circumstances. Last but not the least, it can be reiterated what Field Marshal Slim liked to remind all commanders: “command is a completely personal thing because no imitation was ever a masterpiece.” So, it is important to study the ten tenets of command, assimilate what is needed as well as 30 professional competencies and develop own style and philosophy of command.

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#### Brief Biography



**Colonel Md Arifuzzaman, PBGM, PhD** was commissioned on 19 December 1994 with 31st BMA Long Course in the Corps of Infantry. A science graduate from National University he completed Masters and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) from UIBE, Beijing, China. His duties and appointments include staff and command. He participated in UNPK missions. Presently, he is serving as Colonel Staff of Army Headquarters, Adjutant General Branch, Personnel Administration Directorate, Dhaka Cantonment.

## **Defence Diplomacy to Strengthen National Security: Bangladesh Perspective**

Lieutenant Colonel Bhuiyan Md Golam Kibria, SGP, afwc, psc, Engrs

### **Introduction**

Diplomacy is the peaceful engagement of the states to uphold national interests while defence diplomacy is a subset of foreign diplomacy to achieve foreign and national security policy objectives. No nation is isolated in 21st century. Therefore, international, regional and bilateral cooperations in defence sector are very common and can strengthen national security. Now defence diplomacy includes a wide range of activities to deter war and develop mutual trust among the armed forces in the international arena.

Defence diplomacy is defined differently by different scholars and states. Defining defence diplomacy in its own context is important to identify its scopes and relevant stakeholders for policy making and implementation. Defence diplomacy activities include peaceful engagement of defence personnel like personnel exchanges, ship and aircraft visits, high level engagement, multilateral and bilateral meetings, staff talks, training, exercises, regional defence forums, confidence, security building measures and non-proliferation activities.

The horizon of defence diplomacy extended beyond appointing Defence Attaché (DA) practiced by the European states in 19th century. There had been a growing tendency of regional forums since the end of the Cold War in 1990. Defence and security became a major focus of these regional forums and member states developed multilateral military cooperation to strengthen national and collective security. However, some of the regional forums could not be utilized for security and defence due to geo-political scenario of the region like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) where Bangladesh is a member. Defence Diplomacy is one of the core pillars of Bangladesh Defence Policy. Bangladesh defence policy outlook should focus on other regional defence cooperation.

This paper discusses how different scholars and states defined defence diplomacy, its role on regional military cooperation through defence diplomacy and the conduct of defence diplomacy of Bangladesh. In the end, this paper suggests how to link between defence diplomacy and national security in Bangladesh parlance.

### **Defence Diplomacy: Definition and Scope**

Defence diplomacy is a relatively new term and widely used after the end of the Cold War with emerging roles of Armed Forces in different countries. It encompasses wide range of activities which was termed as military

cooperation or military assistance during the pre-cold war era. Appointing military attaché and multinational military cooperation were part of European diplomacy during the 19th century. After the Cold War, many colonial states, primarily Britain and France, used to maintain close military ties with their former colonies. During Cold War, both United States (US) and the Soviet Union used to support their allies through bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation. After the Cold War, many countries engaged their armed forces to pursue foreign and security policies through dialogue and military cooperation. Thus, traditional defence diplomacy started getting re-defined by many scholars and states.

A. Cottey and A. Foster defined defence diplomacy as “peacetime cooperative use of armed forces and related infrastructure (primarily defence ministries) as a tool of foreign and security policy.”<sup>1</sup> This definition recognised shifting roles of the armed forces from their traditional defensive or offensive roles. Tan See Seng and Bhubinder Singh from Singapore defined defence diplomacy as the “joint and coordinated application of peaceful initiatives of cooperation between the defence and armed forces’ leadership to build trust, counteract crises and resolve conflicts.” The latter definition included cooperation among the likeminded states and resolving crisis among belligerents in defence diplomacy.<sup>2</sup>

Defence diplomacy plays an important role in shaping and implementing defence policy in many countries. *Strategic Defence Review* included defence diplomacy as one of the eight core missions of British Defence Policy. SDR defined defence diplomacy as “to provide forces to meet the varied activities undertaken by the Ministry of Defence to dispel hostility, build and maintain trust, and assist in the development of democratically accountable armed forces (thereby making a significant contribution to conflict prevention and resolution).”<sup>3</sup> This definition defines the role of Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence (MOD) and selecting partners for defence diplomacy. Following this definition the UK imposed a ban on Myanmar Military in 2017. Spanish MOD defined defence diplomacy as “a diverse international activity based on dialogue and cooperation, implemented bilaterally by the defence ministry with allies, partners and other friendly countries to support the achievement of goals of defence policy and Spanish foreign policy.” Spanish ‘Defence Diplomacy Plan-2012’ delineated aims, operative principles and principal instruments of defence diplomacy with two years action plan.<sup>4</sup>

The term Defence Diplomacy and Military Diplomacy are interchangeably used by many scholars and in different official documents. Some authors opined that military diplomacy is the domain of armed forces personnel and a sub-set of defence diplomacy. Tang Seng and Bhupinder explained three specific features of contemporary defence diplomacy. Firstly, the impressive range of modalities covers from strategic to tactical level. It begins with

meetings at a strategic level in the ministerial forum, operational-level interactions by senior officials of the defence force, service chiefs meetings and tactical-level interactions by military exchanges, exercises, visits etc. Secondly, the military to military cooperation is not bounded by traditional military roles of defence or deterrence rather inclusive of all security related issues and humanitarian assistance. Thirdly, military to military cooperation does not involve the allies only but also partners and potential allies.<sup>5</sup>

Different countries have defined 'Defence Diplomacy' in different manners according to their foreign and defence policy. Defining defence diplomacy is important to limit the scope and identify stakeholders for a comprehensive defence diplomacy plan in pursuit of national interests. Bangladesh included Defence Diplomacy as one of the core pillars of national defence; therefore there is a necessity to define it in Bangladesh context.<sup>6</sup>

### **Defence Diplomacy for Global and Regional Military Cooperation**

After WW-II, the United Nations was formed on 24 October 1945. Article 1(1) of the UN articulates the sole purpose of forming the UN and provides a security framework for the member states. Since 1945, to be more specific at end of the Cold War in 1990, there had been growing numbers of regional forums like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU leading to African Union AU), the Arab League and the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN). NATO, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), AU, OAS are more security organisations. The member states of these regional forums are engaged in multilateral security talks to develop mutual trust and confidence of the member states. It is important to understand how these global and regional forums provide security to their member states. After analysing the regional forums and their roles, Bailies and Cottey described four models on regional security cooperation for the 21st century: alliances, collective security, security regimes and security communities.<sup>7</sup>

Alliance is an old form of military cooperation which may be designed for both defence and offence. Alliances promote mutual trust and cooperation among the member states. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides the framework of collective defence for NATO member states and creates military alliances. Collective defence means attacks against one ally would be considered an attack against all allies. NATO member states enjoy greater security from military alliances. NATO Article 5 was activated after the 9/11 attack on US.<sup>8</sup>



The collective security system provides security framework by assuring a response to any act of aggression or threat to peace among its members primarily to avoid or contain the war. Article 1(1) of the UN Charter provides collective security to its all member states. Apart from the UN, some regional forums like the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), AU and OAS provide collective security to its member states.

A security-related regime may regulate some behaviours and use of weapons among the participating states. Regional military cooperation like respecting existing international borders, declaring weapon free zone, arms control measures and controlling military movement may be viewed as security regimes. The Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty signed in 1990 by 22 member states of NATO and Warsaw Pact may be viewed as a good example of a security regime.

Participating states provide real assurance of solving disputes other than physical conflicts in a security community. It was conceptualized by Karl Deutch in the late 1950s. It reflects the security community formed by European industrialized democracy after WW-II. The security community provides the best assurance of security. The India-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty signed in 1972, though not discussed much publicly, is also a good example of security community.

Besides traditional security, non-traditional security issues like cyber security, counter-terrorism, maritime security, drug and human trafficking are getting more important in the present security context. Peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace building, humanitarian assistance, disaster management are getting key functional focuses of military cooperation. Peacekeeping became a major focus of AU with its first peacekeeping mission in Burundi in 2003-04 and Sudan in 2004.

### **Bangladesh in Defence Diplomacy**

Bangladesh achieved independence after nine months of the bloody Liberation War in 1971. Initially, Bangladesh was very successful to get all military supports from India. Afterwards, Bangladesh and Indian Forces formed ally against Pakistani Forces and liberated the country. After independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did not hesitate to request the Indian Government to withdraw Indian troops. He understood that the country cannot uphold its sovereignty keeping the foreign troops. He ensured the withdrawal of Indian troops within 87 days of the liberation of Bangladesh. This was a great success in the domain of defence diplomacy. Bangabandhu signed India-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty on 19 March, 1972 with India. It was mostly

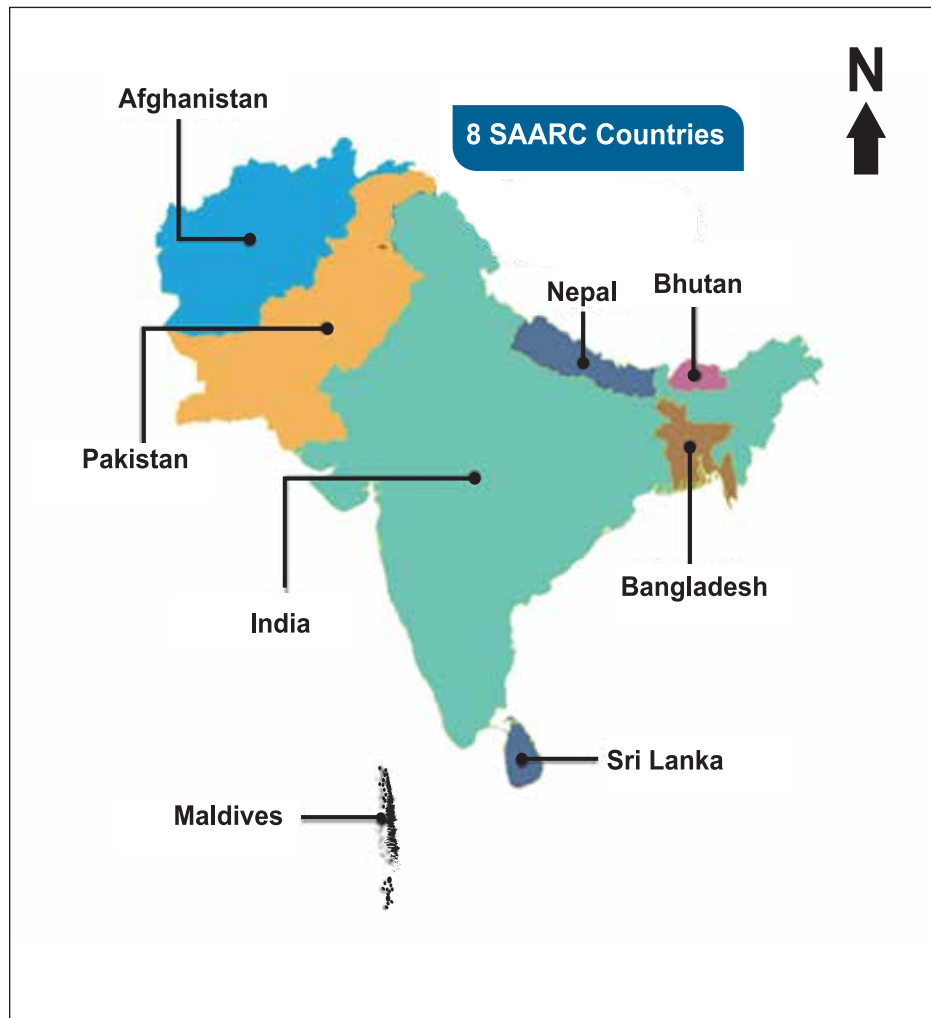
considered a security and military pact where both the countries agreed upon a non-aggression pact against each other. The treaty also included not forming a military alliance and would restrict the use of territories against each other.<sup>9</sup> Bangabandhu visited former Yugoslavia, Egypt and Soviet Union to get military hardware. Egypt donated Bangladesh 44 tanks for the latter's support by sending a medical team in Arab-Israel War in 1973. The Soviet Union donated fighter aircraft, transport aircraft and helicopters to Bangladesh Air Force (BAF).

Over the period of time, Bangladesh developed military relations with many countries of the world including major military powers. Bangladesh developed bilateral and multi-lateral military cooperation to support peace, stability and development. Bangladesh is one of the largest contributors of peacekeepers and usually remains within the first three contributors of the UN. Bangladesh deployed her forces in Kuwait for mine clearance and to support the reconstruction of the war-torn country after the 1990 Gulf War. Recently, Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Saudi Arabia on military cooperation following the constitution. Bangladesh imports military hardware from all major exporters though China is the major stakeholder. After the Rohingya crisis in 2017, it is felt that Bangladesh needs to search for new friends to diversify its defence partners. Bangladesh appointed new Defence Attachés in diplomatic missions to strengthen military cooperation.<sup>10</sup>

### **Challenges and Opportunities of Bangladesh for Regional Military Cooperation**

One of the major challenges of Bangladesh for developing military cooperation is its geographical location. Bangladesh is a South Asian country and a member state of SAARC. It is bounded by India on all three sides, ASEAN country Myanmar and opening towards the Bay of Bengal in the south. China is also a close neighbour and influences the region directly. However, politico-military rivalry exists between two major global and regional powers India and China. On the other hand, both China and India are Bangladesh's development partners. Bangladesh has good military cooperation with both India and China and maintains balance in diplomatic relations. Bilateral or multi-lateral military alliances following NATO or AU against any of them will affect its sustainable development. However, Bangladesh joined Saudi Arabia led 34 State Islamic Military Coalition to fight against terrorism in the Middle East in 2015. This military alliance will not affect regional military cooperation.<sup>11</sup>

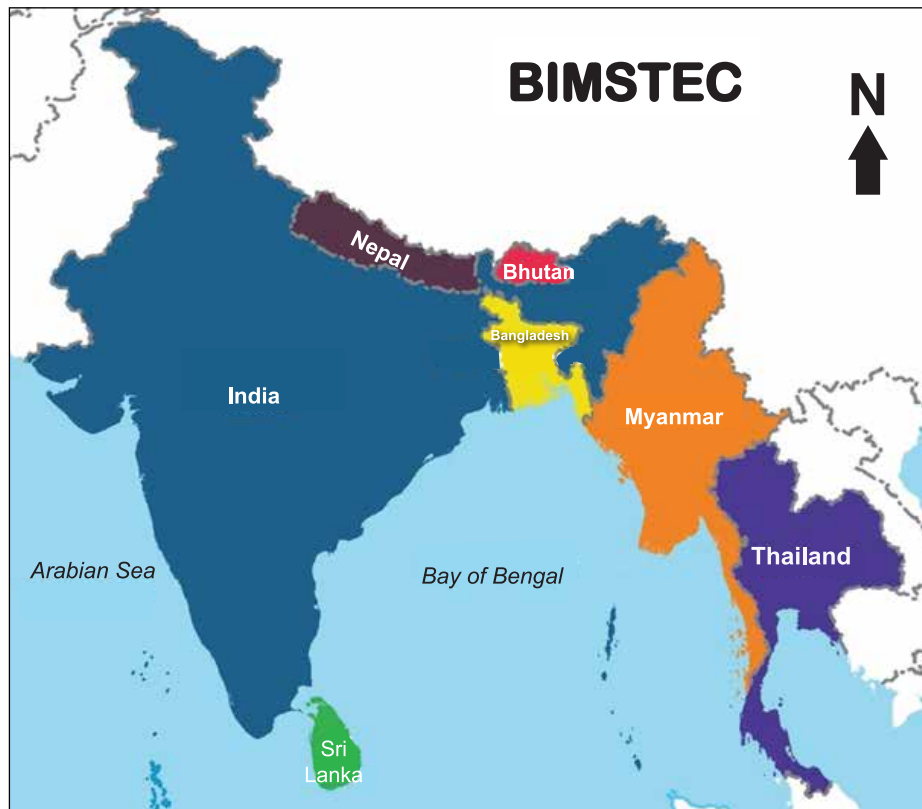
Figure 1: SAARC Regional Map



Source: <https://sari-energy.org/about-sariei/background/>

One of the major challenges of forming a security forum in South Asia is the lack of mutual trust among the member states. Decades of mistrust, confrontations and conflict made South Asia one of the most volatile regions of the world. SAARC could not be utilized for security and defence forum like ASEAN or ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) though counter terrorism got priority in the last few summits. Defence and security cooperation should be included in the SAARC like ARF. However, prospect of such dialogue at SAARC will remain questionable due to India-Pakistan-Afghanistan-China relations equation.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 2: BIMSTEC Regional Map**



Source: TIDES Academy Website July 1, 2019

Another regional platform that Bangladesh can utilize for military cooperation through defence diplomacy is the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). The advantages of utilising BIMSTEC are: some of the member states of BIMSTEC are also members of ASEAN giving the opportunity for greater security. Both India and Myanmar, two neighbouring states of Bangladesh, are members of this regional forum. Security is also getting more important at BIMSTEC. Security experts opined for a cooperative security model for BIMSTEC countries. In the long run, this regional forum can be utilised to create a security regime for sustainable security in the region.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Linking Defence Diplomacy to National Security**

Defence diplomacy is not new to Bangladesh. It had been utilizing all instruments of defence diplomacy to develop military cooperation with friendly states. Structured or formal (Track 1) defence diplomacy is done by the Defence Attachés deployed in foreign embassies, Services Chiefs and Higher

Defence Officials through formal negotiations and meetings. Defence Attachés are responsible to develop military cooperation with the host countries. Members of National Defence College (NDC), Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) regularly visit friendly countries. These visits are useful to develop military-military relations as well as to conduct Track 1.5 and Track 2 diplomacy. Higher defence officials join seminar, symposiums and staff talks on security issues regularly. Inviting respective Army Chiefs by Bangladesh and Indian Army is an excellent demonstration of defence diplomacy to exhibit mutual trust and respect. Bangladesh Armed Forces regularly participate in bilateral and multi-national military exercises (Exercise Balance Buffalo, Tiger Lighting, CARAT, DREE, Cope South with US, Exercise Sampriti with India and multinational Exercise EFES in Turkey etc.). These exercises increase interoperability, coordination and communication among the participating nations at a tactical level. Bangladesh Armed Forces regularly exchange students with friendly countries and train a good number of foreign military students at NDC, DSCSC, MIST and other military institutions.

However, Bangladesh needs to link between defence diplomacy and national security interest. Bangladesh also needs more diplomatic efforts in military cooperation as it is a bridge between South and South East Asia. Inclusion of defence diplomacy in Defence Policy necessitates plan and structural framework with a deliberate action plan with a view to allocating budget and unity of efforts. Defence diplomacy needs definite aims, objectives, operating principles and priorities. Defence diplomacy plan will serve as a reference for all actors to speak in the same language. In Bangladesh, Armed Forces Division (AFD) looks after all operational activities of the Armed Forces and thus can take the lead role supported by other stakeholders like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), think tank organisations like BISS and higher defence institutions (NDC, DSCSC, BIPSOT) to prepare a comprehensive defence diplomacy action plan to pursue national security interest. The regional and global geo-political scenario is always dynamic and there is no permanent friend or foe in the international system. This defence diplomacy plan once prepared will be reviewed periodically or whenever needed.

### **Conclusion**

Defence diplomacy is defined differently by different states to pursue their national security objectives. Many states like the UK, Spain have deliberate defence diplomacy plans for unity of efforts. Defining defence diplomacy is important as it provides scope and objectives for all stakeholders. Defence diplomacy is extended to create military cooperation with allies, friendly countries and even with potential enemies. All efforts are directed towards conflict prevention while keeping the national objectives at priority.

Defence and security become major concerns in regional forums like NATO, AU, OAS, ASEAN and ARF. These regional forums were utilized to create

collective security for member states through dialogue, creation of allies and collective defence. Bangladesh is a member state of SAARC which could not provide collective security in the region though some of the non-traditional security issues like terrorism, drug and human trafficking, cybercrime were discussed in the last few summits. There had been mistrust among the member states of SAARC and materializing defence and security issues in SAARC seems to be difficult. But, Bangladesh is also a member state of BIMSTEC. Two neighbouring states India and Myanmar are also member states of BIMSTEC. Bangladesh can utilize this regional forum in defence and security for a cooperative through defence diplomacy. It will also provide greater security as some BIMSTEC members are also members of ASEAN.

Though Bangladesh is not new in defence diplomacy, it needs a comprehensive approach directed towards national security. Defence diplomacy needs plans and frameworks to activate all actors to speak in the same language. It can be prepared by AFD supported by MOFA, think tanks and higher defence institutions like NDC, DSCSC and BIPSOT.

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### Brief Biography



**Lieutenant Colonel Bhuiyan Mohammad Golam Kibria, SGP, afwc, psc, Engrs** was commissioned on 12 June 1997 in the Corps of Engineers. He is a graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, National Defence College, Military Institute of Science and Technology, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, American International University, Bangladesh and Bangladesh University of Professionals. He served in command and staff appointments. He served twice under UN umbrella in UNMIL, Liberia and UNAMID, Sudan. Presently, he is serving as a Contingent Commander of an Engineer Contingent under MINUSMA, Mali.

## **Information Operations in Liberation War-1971: Insights for Today's Military Leaders**

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Sharif Ul Alam, psc

### **Introduction**

On the fateful night of 25th March 1971 Pakistan Army cracked down on unarmed Bengalee nationals to suppress their aspiration of independence. Father of the Nation's strategic directives of 7th March 1971 led the nation to quickly organize the initial resistance into a struggle for independence. The sacrifice of the greatest souls of the soil liberated the nation only by nine months. Besides freedom fighters, a separate line of operation led by political leadership, intellectuals, journalists, media personalities, artists, diplomats of home and friendly countries, Bengalee nationals living in Europe and the US conducted a relentless information operation (IO) to garner political and diplomatic support for the people's struggle of independence. Though less publicised episode of Liberation War, the well-orchestrated IO significantly contributed to the final victory that can inspire, educate and offer significant insight for today's military leaders.

Today besides military, economy and diplomacy, information is considered as the *sine qua non* of a nation's power. It is considered as one of the key factors behind military success at the strategic, operational, and tactical level of warfare. General Glenn Otis, a former US General and Vietnam War veteran aptly commented "the adversity, who wins the information war prevails." Military historians recognise Sun Tzu (544 BC- 496 BC) as the first information warrior who preached "To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence, supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting."<sup>1</sup>

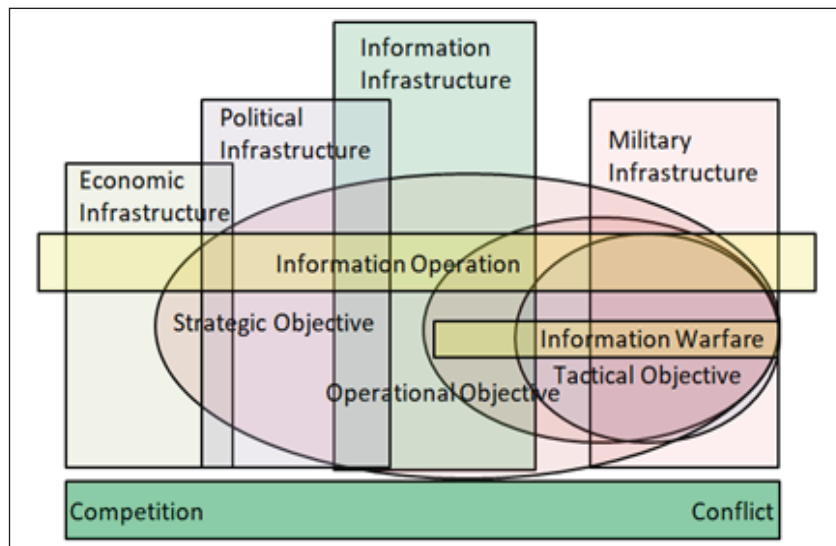
IO is a rapidly evolving and as yet imprecisely defined field of growing interest for militaries and policy makers. It is progressively becoming an inseparable part of a nation's security and military strategy. Today's military leaders need to develop a keen understanding of information related activities of Liberation War 1971 to prepare them for today's operational environment where information is a key battle winning factor. This essay will briefly explore the IO conducted in Liberation War 1971 to bring out insights for today's military leaders and acquaint the readers with theories and practices of IO in the current time.

### **IO in Theory and Practices**

**IO in Theory:** IO is an umbrella term; it is the integrated employment of information- related capabilities in concert with other lines of operations to

influence and disrupt the decision making of adversaries while protecting own. It is an enabler, a source multiplier, a tool that increases one's ability to shape the operational environment. IO supports the strategic, operational and tactical employment of military forces. At the same time, IO itself is a strategy, a campaign that is supported by other military operations. It includes a wide range of information related activities like strategic communication, intelligence, public affairs, civil-military operations, cyber and space operation, military information support operations, deception, operational security, EW, psychological operations et cetera. Another widely used information-related taxonomy is Information Warfare (IW) which is a targeted effort to undercut and neutralise the enemy's command and control (C2) system for the purpose of protecting and coordinating the activities of friendly C2 system.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure-1: Areas of IO and IW**



Source: *Information Operations: The Hard Reality of Soft Power*

Figure-1 shows that IO can produce effects and achieve objectives at all levels of war and across the range of military operations whereas the effect of IW is limited to the military domain and up to an operational level of warfare.

**IO in Practices:** There are numerous examples in military history where IO significantly influenced the outcome of the conflict. Vietnam War (1973), battle of Mogadishu-1993 (Operation GOTHIC SERPENT), Gulf War (1990) and the annexation of Crimea (2014) by Russia are four significant conflicts where IO decisively influenced the final outcome. Conflicts are briefly analysed below:-

**a. Vietnam War (1968):** Despite winning every tactical battle the US military had to withdraw from Vietnam without achieving objective of the war.

The conflict is often referred to as the “first television war” and it was the first war to be broadcast in colour and with the use of new technologies such as satellites. During Tet Offensive it was unveiled from extensive media coverage that there was a significant gap between what the US Government was telling its people about the war and the realities on the ground.<sup>3</sup>

**Photo-1: An Iconic Image (right) of a Vietcong Being Executed in the Streets of Saigon during the Tet Offensive**



Source: *The New York Times* Archive

US citizens started to receive images of atrocities in South Vietnam (as of photo-1) and the suffering of the US soldiers that galvanised the anti-war movement in the US.

**Figure-2: US People’s View of the Vietnam War and Trust in Military Leaders during the War**

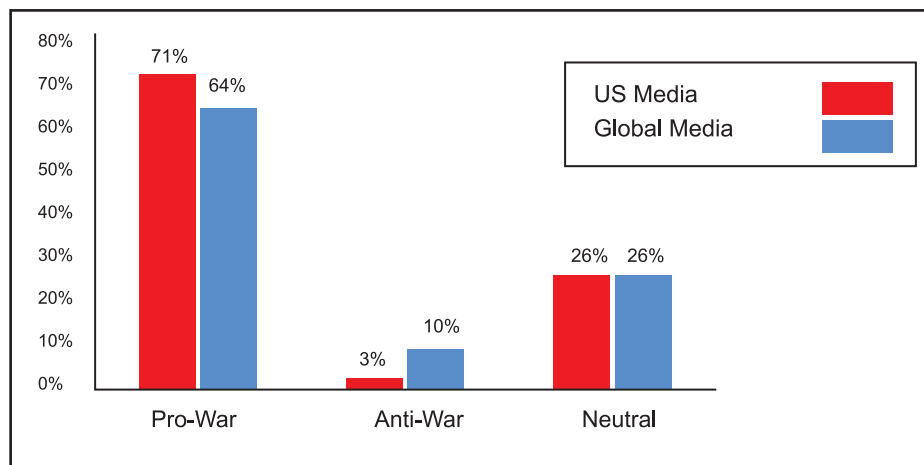


Source: Public Opinion and the War in Vietnam Study

Figure-2 shows that the public opinion in favour of the Vietnam War was 62% at the beginning, but gradually dropped to a low of 27% when US people started to receive facts of the war through the media. At the same time distrust in military leadership started to rise and reached 60% at its peak after the Tet Offensive (1968). The pressure of anti-war sentiment was one of the major reasons for the US Government's decision to withdraw from the war. <sup>4</sup>

**b. The Gulf War (1990):** In contrast to Vietnam War the US established information dominance from the beginning of the conflict. By using the tremendous potential of media and diplomacy the US managed the perception of the global community and isolated Iraq economically and diplomatically long before the war started. With an extensive media campaign the US Government manipulated global opinion and formed a grand coalition of thirty-five nations against Iraq.

**Figure-3: Pro War and Anti War Media during Gulf War (1990)**

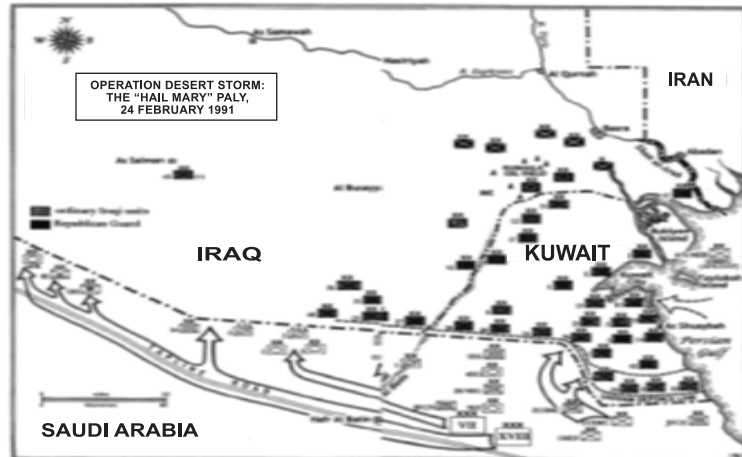


Source: Steve Rendal and Tara Broughel, *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*

Figure-3 shows that in the US nearly 64% of global media and 71% of the US media were pro-war. In contrast, only 10% of global media and 3% of the US media were anti-war. Thus, with global sources, viewers had a scope of viewing six times a pro-war source than an anti-war source and with US media the ratio was 25 to 1.

At the operational level, Iraqi troops were blinded and deafened by the use of EW, psychological operation and deception. The US Marines conducted a successful operational level deception (Operation HAIL MARY PLAY). US military also blinded Iraq's ability to observe Coalition Forces movement by interrupting their satellite system (France's Satellite Pour l'Observation de la Terre).<sup>5</sup>

**Figure-4: Operational Level Deception-Operation HAIL MARY PLAY (Direction of Main Attack was on Kuwait City from the Persian Gulf)**



Source: Congressional Research Service Report

**c. Battle of Mogadishu-1993 (Operation GOTHIC SERPENT):** Somali militia leader and warlord General Aidid used the potential of mass media to keep the militarily superior US Rangers off-balance throughout the conflict. He developed simple, but effective anti-US themes (anti-colonialism, unity of Somalis etc. and propagated them during the campaign. Aidid used the mass media to his advantage and influenced the outcome of the conflict. Broadcast of US soldiers being killed and dragged in the streets of Mogadishu had so much effect on US public emotion that it changed forever the US foreign policy in the region. Though US forces conducted a deliberate PSYOPS, it was largely ineffective due to language barrier and numerous other unfavorable conditions.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure-5: Somali Children with US PSYOPS Leaflet (1993)**



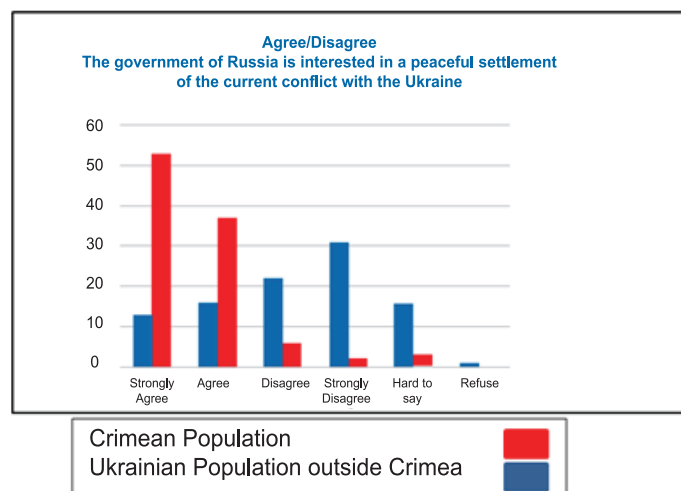
Source: US National Archive



Despite retaining overwhelming military superiority US had to withdraw from Somalia due to US public sentiment against the conflict.

**d. Annexation of Crimea (2014) by Russia:** Russia seized Crimea in 2014 with the help of a well-orchestrated IO without firing a single shot. During that period the Russian Government spent more than \$19 million to fund 600 people to constantly comment on news articles, write blogs, and operate throughout social media. Russia reshaped the public opinion in the region throughout the conflict by skillful use of social media and set the stage for annexation.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure-6: Crimean Population Perception of Russian Intervention in Crimea (2014)**



Source: *Washington Post* 13 February, 2015

Figure-6 shows that during the conflict an overwhelming majority (71.3%) of Crimean's viewed the Russian intervention positively. Though there is controversy regarding the process and acceptability of the referendum, 96.77% of the Crimeans voted in favour of joining the Russian Federation. The conflict showed the world the effectiveness of IO as a weapon system. It also displayed that through proper timing, messaging and population targeting, IO has the potential to manipulate the outcome of a conflict and win a complex engagement.<sup>8</sup>

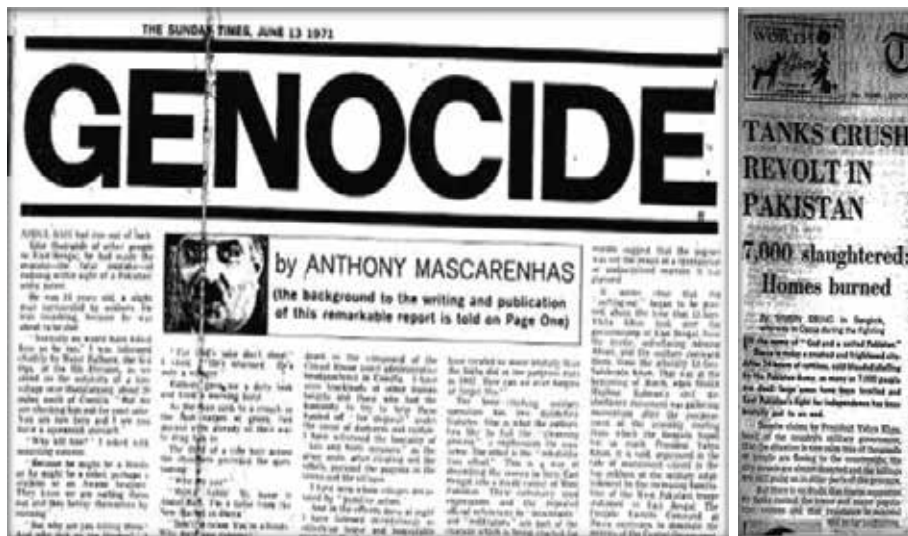
#### IO in Liberation War-1971

There was an extensive IO in the form of the media campaign, strategic communication, key leaders' engagement, public affairs and counter-propaganda to garner international, diplomatic and political support, strengthen the resolve of people and inspire freedom fighters. It contributed significantly to the final victory of the war. Salient IO issues are briefly narrated below:-

## Media Campaign to Influence International Opinion

Internal and External Publicity Department of Mujibnagar Government along with local and international journalists carried out an extensive media campaign to publicise the atrocities of the Pakistani Army. For example, the article named 'Genocide' by Anthony Mascarenhas in *The Sunday Times* of the UK drew the attention of the global community. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi told the then editor of *The Sunday Times*, Harold Evans that the article shocked her deeply and set her on a campaign of personal diplomacy in the European capitals and Moscow. Mofidul Hoque, one of the prominent Trustees of Liberation War Museum commented that 'Genocide' was the most significant article written on the war that helped to inform the world of what was going on in East Pakistan. Another article by British journalist Simon Dring of *The Daily Telegraph* (who escaped from Hotel InterContinental on 27th March 1971 where approximately 200 foreign journalists were locked up) was the first account of the brutal genocide in Bangladesh.

**Photo-2: Two Landmark Articles in International Media 'Genocide' (*The Sunday Times* on 13 June 1971) and 'Tanks Crush Revolt' (*The Daily Telegraph* on 30 March 1971)**



Source: BBC News Web and *The Daily Star*

Internationally reputed newspapers of US like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *News Week* and newspapers of UK like *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *New Statesman*, *The Economist* and *The Sunday Times* used to publish articles related to genocide, causes of conflict and refugee situations that ultimately garnered global opinions and support for the liberation of Bangladesh.

### **Strategic Communication and Key Leader Engagement to Gain Global Diplomatic Support**

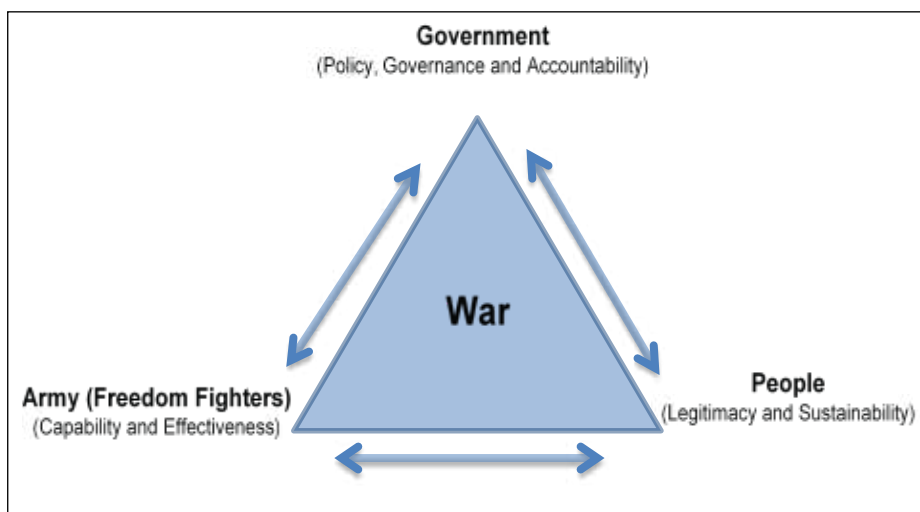
Special envoy to UN Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury (employed by Mujibnagar Government), Bangladeshi diplomats, intellectuals, political leaders and Bengalee community living in Europe and the US communicated with different global forums (UN, OIC, World Bank etc.) and influential global political leaders to gain diplomatic support as well as to stop support to West Pakistan by US and its other key allies like China and Middle East countries. For example, Foreign Ministry submitted a document to the UN named Bangladesh-Contemporary Events and Documents- a compilation of the main events that took place in Bangladesh from March 1969 to April 1971. Another document entitled Bangladesh-A World Commentary: From Autonomy to Independence was prepared by the Foreign Ministry for the global community to expose the atrocities and injustice on the Bengalee population. Press conference and other diplomatic efforts gradually influenced and drifted global diplomatic support in favour of Bangladesh. For example, Archer Blood, Consul General in Dhaka (during 1971) communicated with his government in numerous diplomatic cables about the vivid descriptions of what was transpiring in Dhaka. As per the memoir *The Blood Telegram-Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* he also informed US Government about the Pakistan Army's use of the US military equipment to carry out this genocide. Attempting to influence policy, he strongly urged the US government to curtail its military supplies to Pakistan, issue a moral protest against the genocide and use its considerable influence over the Yahya Khan government to end the bloodshed. Similarly, another US diplomat Kenneth B Ketting (US Ambassador to India) also sensitised his Government on the Pakistan issue and urged to change policy stance on this conflict. Moreover, on 12 August 1971 influential Senator Edward Kennedy (brother of former US President John F Kennedy) visited refugee camps and alerted US Government on the issue. Other key global institutions like the World Bank team also visited the frontline battlefield and refugee camps and reported massacre in East Pakistan in their publication named *Thousands My Lais*.<sup>10</sup>

### **Public Affairs to Steer the War Effort**

Mujibnagar Government (known as 'War Cabinet') used to organize the war effort of different stakeholders in a unified struggle for independence through numerous public affair activities. For example, the political and military leadership of the government like Prime Minister Taj Uddin Ahmed, acting President Nazrul Islam and General Osmani used to provide leadership, guidance and inspiration to people and freedom fighters in their frequent addresses to the nation over Shadin Bangla Betar. Officials of Mujibnagar Government used to visit refugee camps and frontline battlefields regularly to coordinate the aid efforts and other routine affairs of the war. Internal

Publication Department of Mujibnagar Government publicised heroic and encouraging stories of battlefield, issued different instructions and press release regularly that inspired freedom fighters and fortified resolve of the people. Public affair efforts integrated the government, people and army (freedom fighters) of the nation (theoretically known as 'Clausewitz's Trinity'). Integration of all three stakeholders is crucial to drive the war effort of a nation.

**Figure-7: Integration of Government, People and Army (Clausewitz's Trinity) is an Essential Precondition to Drive the War Effort**



Source: Author's Own Conceptualization from Study of Liberation War and Clausewitz's Trinity

### **Psychological Operations**

A well-orchestrated psychological operations in the Swadhin Bangla Betar and local newspapers kept freedom fighters and people inspired as well as demoralized the West Pakistani military and anti-liberation segment of the nation. The Swadhin Bangla Betar used to broadcast a number of inspiring programmes. For example, 'Chorompotro' (popular and comical program hosted by M. R. Akhtar Mukul) used to air inspiring news of the war in local dialect; another popular programme 'Bojro Kontho' used to air inspiring speeches of Father of the Nation. The Swadhin Bangla Betar also contributed to coordinating the military operations. The Operation Jackpot (simultaneous operations by the Bengalee naval commandos on 14 August 1971 in Chattogram, Mongla, Chandpur, Narayanganj that sank 44,500 tons of shipping and damaged 14,000 tons) was coordinated with songs which were aired in the Swadhin Bangla Betar. <sup>11</sup>

**Photo-3: Swadhin Bangla Betar was a Source of Inspiration to the People and Freedom Fighters**



Source: Internet

**Counter Propaganda**

There was widespread misinformation propagated by Pakistan Government about atrocities on the Bihari population in East Pakistan; they projected the military crackdown in East Pakistan as an internal law and order issue to the global community. Pakistan Government also labelled the Liberation War as an anti-Islamic act and used the sentiment to cover-up the atrocities in East Pakistan. The Swadhin Bangla Betar aired a number of programmes to counter those propaganda efforts. For example, there was a programme named 'In light of Islam' conceptualized and hosted by Syed Ali Ahsan (poet, writer and academic who was once the Director of Bangla Academy and the Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University) where he repelled the logic that Liberation War was an anti-Islamic act. 'Stop Genocide' an iconic documentary of Zahir Raihan unveiled atrocities carried out by the Pakistan Army to the global community. *The People*, an English newspaper (edited by Abidur Rahman and published from the bordering area) used to publish updated news of front line battles, a summary of important news and articles published in international media to keep the international community aware of the facts of war.<sup>12</sup>

**Photo-4: *The People*-Voice of Bangladeshi People during Liberation War**



Source: *Dusho Chheshati Dine Swadhinata*

There were frequent press conferences organized by the Mujibnagar Government officials, journalists and editors of local newspapers in presence of diplomats of influential nations and international journalists to keep the international community aware of the events and counter the misinformation of the Pakistan Government. There were also regular press releases of the Mujibnagar Government to clarify different misinformation of the Pakistan Government to global community.<sup>13</sup>

**Insights for Today's Military Leaders**

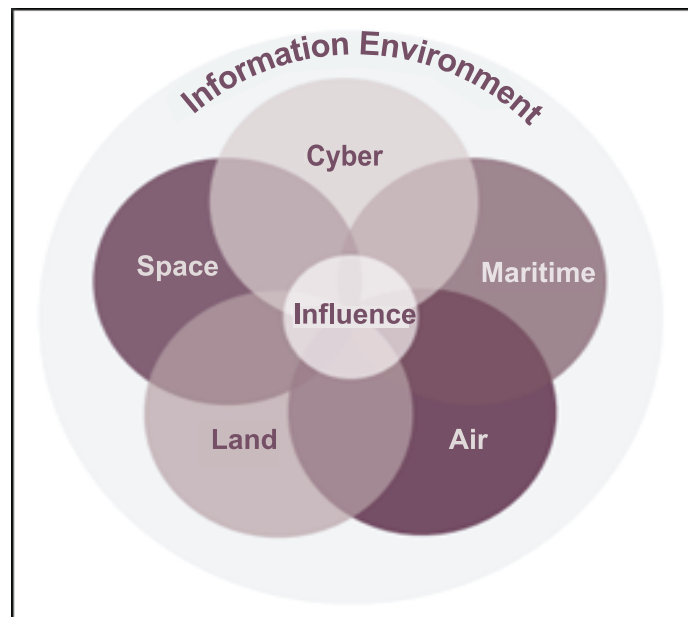
The glorious history of Liberation War 1971 left few significant insights for today's military leaders. Taking inspiration and insight from that historical context today's military leaders need to prepare them for the type and nature of IO they are likely to conduct in future conflicts. A few of the insights for today's military leaders are as follows:-

**Mind is the Future Battlefield:** Former US Secretary of Defence General (retired) Mattis commented "In the future conflict capturing perceptions will be more important than seizing terrain...military must operate within a strategic concept that highlights the battle of the narrative." In the future belligerents will seek to establish moral and psychological superiority to win the war. A few nations like Russia consider that IO itself can win a conflict without the use of kinetic forces. The axiom is validated in the annexation of Crimea by Russia where they didn't fire a single bullet. Considering the emerging developments potential of IO needs to be recognized and integrated with military doctrine and training.



Cyber, Space and Information Environment Space-the fourth dimension and cyberspace-the fifth dimension of battle space are significant components of today's information environment. These have become almost completely integrated into all military activities. The information provided through cyber and space is now the force multiplier with the greatest impact. Space and cyber are critical enablers of the information environment not a dimension only.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure-8: The Information Environment and the Five Operating Dimensions**



Source: Joint Concept Note 1/17

To operate effectively in future information environment militaries need to develop capability in cyber and space dimensions.

**Advanced Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) Capability:** Today's operational environment requires enhanced joint action through exploiting information, being more integrated as a force and more adaptable to changing circumstances. The stunning victory of US forces in Gulf War-1990 and the incompetence of Iraqi forces have aptly validated this axiom. The War is claimed as the first information war and it heralded a new era of warfare. The US forces persistently attacked Iraqi C3I targets that collapsed linkage between the highly centralised decision-making elements (principally Saddam) and both the Iraqi population and military forces. Inevitably large Iraqi land forces remained ineffective and withdrew without fighting. Hence in modern-day conflict technologically advanced C4ISR system

is the nervous system of any military and it is the bedrock of any combat mission. To make a timely and effective decision in the joint environment a fully integrated and interoperability C4ISR system for three services is essential.<sup>15</sup>

**Education on Emerging Information Environment:** IO at strategic, operational and tactical level involves a wide range of stakeholders like the military, media, diplomats, academics, intellectuals etc. A deep understanding by all stakeholders on relevant issues like national interest, global and regional geopolitical developments, the broader context of modern security, the socio-cultural context of contemporary conflicts and changing character of modern conflicts is essential. Through appropriate education uncertainty and ambiguity in operational and information environment can be reduced.<sup>16</sup>

**IO against Non-Traditional Security (NTS):** Currently NTS occupies a prominent place in the global and regional security agenda of almost all states. Different non-state actors have successfully used the information domains specially social media platforms to achieve their agenda. For example, ISIS effectively used Facebook to propagate its ideology; social media is considered as one of the significant strengths of ISIS. On the other hand, IO in the form of counter-narrative or alternative-narrative is proved as the most effective tool in countering a wide range of NTS ranging from terrorism, extremism to environmental degradation. Today of the estimated 7.4 billion global inhabitants, 2.3 billion that is over 31% are social media users. Hence a timely and appropriate narrative or counter-narrative in the information domain (using social media platforms) can reach rapidly to the target audience and can significantly impact them.<sup>17</sup>

**IO in UN Peacekeeping:** Fateful experience of peacekeeping operations in Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo left important lessons on the value and inherent power of IO. The chances of violence are reduced if all stakeholders of a conflict have access to objective reality and a clear understanding of the intentions of all parties. Moreover, a well-orchestrated psychological operations can modify the belief systems of belligerents and assist in removing long term sources of conflict. With effective integration of IO in peacekeeping strategy, peace can be restored in complex conflicts.

The use of information as an element of national power has occurred throughout the history of warfare. The technological development and information revolution of recent time have reinforced the role of information as an element of national power. The character of warfare is gradually changing due to the effect of those factors. In future conflicts, information superiority will be the lifeblood of militaries and key to battle success. Conflicts such as the Vietnam War (1973), Gulf War (1990), Battle of Mogadishu (1993) and the annexation of Crimea (2014) by Russia aptly demonstrate that IO can produce effects and achieve objectives at all levels of war and across the range of military operations.

## Conclusion

There was a well-orchestrated IO in Liberation War-1971 that significantly influenced the course of the war in favour of the newly-born state. Information related activity in that war included strategic communication, key leaders' engagement, public affairs, psychological operations and counter-propaganda etc. These activities garnered global political and diplomatic supports, strengthened people's resolve and inspired freedom fighters. Political leadership, journalists of local and international print and electronic media, diplomats and the Bengalee people living in the US and Europe created support for the new-born nation and influenced the course of the war. Internal and External Publicity Department of Mujibnagar Government, local and international journalists carried out an extensive media campaign to publicise atrocities of Pakistan military and gained political and diplomatic supports of the global community. A well-orchestrated psychological operation using Swadhin Bangla Betar and local newspapers kept freedom fighters and people inspired and demoralised the Pakistan military and anti-liberation segment of the nation. Those success stories can inspire and provide important insight for today's military leaders.<sup>18</sup>

IO needs to be recognized in doctrine and professional training to prepare today's leaders for future conflicts. The development of cyber and space capability is essential to operate effectively in the future operational environment. At the operational and tactical levels an interoperable and integrated C4ISR is required to operate in a joint operational environment. IO involves a wide range of stake holders who need to develop the right understanding of the national interest both in peace and conflict situation at corresponding levels. Global and regional geopolitical developments, the broader context of modern security, the socio-cultural context of contemporary conflicts and changing character of modern conflicts need to be mirrored in military education and training. IO is also an effective tool in countering NTS and in peacekeeping operations. IO in the form of counter-narratives or alternative narratives is proved as the most effective tool in countering a wide range of NTS ranging from terrorism, extremism to environmental degradation. Similarly, in peacekeeping operations the chances of violence are reduced if all stakeholders of a conflict have access to objective reality and a clear understanding of the intentions of all parties that can be achieved through a well-orchestrated IO. Finally, the overwhelming importance of IO can be linked to a comment of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) who once said, "The battlefield is a scene of constant chaos. The winner will be the one who controls that chaos, both his and that of his enemy."<sup>19</sup> Ascendancy in the information domain through a well-orchestrated IO is the lynchpin to control the chaos and win the war.

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### Brief Biography



**Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Sharif Ul Alam, psc** was commissioned with 43<sup>rd</sup> BMA Long Course in the Regiment of Artillery on 26th November 2000. He has served in command and staff appointments in Bangladesh Army. A graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC), Mirpur and Royal Brunei Armed Forces Command and Staff College, Brunei he completed his

Masters in International Security from Massey University, New Zealand. He participated in the UN Peacekeeping Operation in Ivory Coast (UNOCI). Presently he is serving as Assistant Military Secretary at Military Secretary Branch, Army Headquarters.

## **Rohingya Crisis: Persisting Challenges and Plausible Options for Bangladesh**

Lieutenant Commander A T M Reza-E-Rabbi, (TAS), BN

### **Introduction**

Rohingyas are the inhabitants of old Arakan which is now a part of Myanmar (MN). The origin of Rohingya Muslims in Arakan can be traced back to the ninth century when Arab Muslims from Arabia, as well as, Persia and other countries formed the nucleus of the Muslim population in Arakan. Rohingyas have been denied MN citizenship since 1982 when the Burmese Nationality law was enacted. For a long, Rohingya cleansing followed by exodus took place during 1958-1996 in the name of various military operations and lastly in 2017 in the name of counter-insurgency operation.

On 25 August 2017 MN security forces carried out a mass genocide against Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine. UN investigation says as many as 10,000.00 Rohingyas were killed, another 7,40,000.00 fled to Bangladesh (BD). A joint report by Simon-Skjodt Centre for the Prevention of Genocide and Fortify Rights documents the mass atrocities committed against Rohingya civilians by MN Military and details the evidence of genocide.<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) has termed the MN's clearing operations as "Textbook example of Ethnic Cleansing".<sup>2</sup> This has created the world's fastest-growing immigration crisis directly implanting BD.

Though Rohingyas were allowed in BD soil only on humanitarian ground, with their long time nesting, BD is facing serious difficulties. The massive exoduses of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) are posing threat to the internal security of BD. These are vulnerable people in dire need of living and are increasingly getting involved in petty crimes. The presence of more than a million FDMNs in BD is not only a problem for BD but also has a serious impact on local, regional and global security. If prompt steps are not taken to resolve the issue, it will grow out of proportion and cannot be contained in the future. This is no longer a local crisis for BD but a global catastrophe.

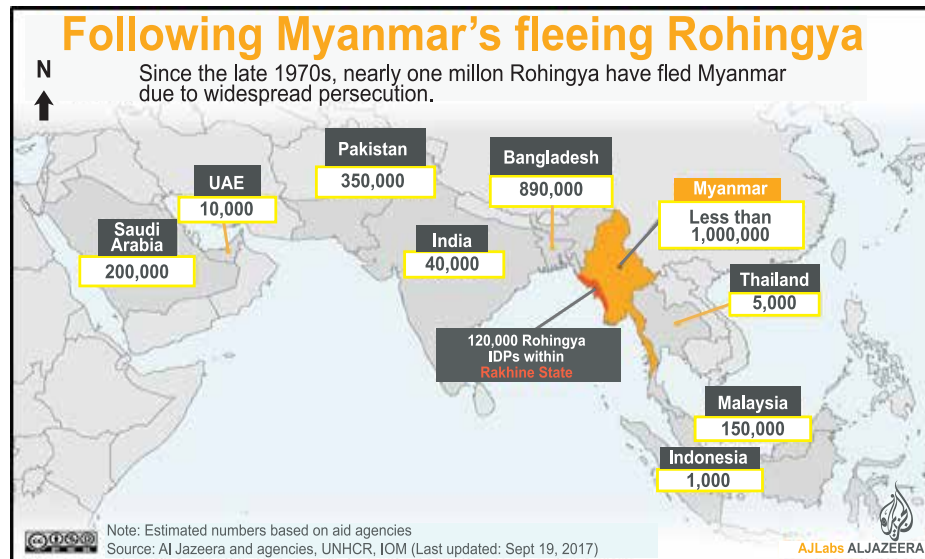
In this paper there is an endeavour<sup>4</sup> to focus on the history of Rohingya Exodus, challenges faced by BD, the salient features of Kofi Annan Advisory Commission's Report, initiatives taken by BD and lastly the plausible options for BD with strategic pathway. It is relevant to point out here that the Government of BD refers to Rohingya as 'Forcibly Displaced MN Nationals' (FDMN), where United Nations (UN) refers to them as 'Rohingya Refugees.' In this paper, these two refer to the same population.



### History of Rohingya Exodus

Since independence on 04 January, 1948 MN has a history of border skirmishes with almost all her neighbours including India, China, Thailand and Bangladesh (previously East Pakistan). Historically, MN Bamars have never accepted other ethnicities and tried to suppress them since independence. From 1962 to 1964 more than 3,00,000 Indians and 1,00,000 Chinese were expelled. From 1992 to 2006 another 1,28,000 ethnic minorities were expelled to Thailand. BD today is hosting more than a million FDMN. In addition, there are more than a million IDPs inside MN.

**Figure 1: Rohingyas Forced to Flee Outside MN**



Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/4/18/who-are-the-rohingya>

For a long, Rohingya cleansing followed by exodus took place after various operations conducted by the MN Military. Background history of Rohingya exodus can be traced as shown below in Table 1:-

**Table 1: Timeline of Rohingya Exodus to BD**

Serial	Timeline	Event	Remarks
1	1958-1961	Operation Monsoon	MN Army launched 'Operation Monsoon' against Rohinya insurgents' movements indiscriminately targeting the entire Rohingya population; thereby an exodus of 1,00,000 people to East Pakistan.
2	1977-1978	Operation Dragon King	An exodus of approximately 3,00,000 to BD
3	1991-1993	Operation Pay Say	An exodus of approximately 2,50,000 to BD
4	2012	Communal Riot	Influx of approximately 60,000 to BD
5	09 October 2016	Counter Insurgency Operation	An exodus of approximately 87,000 to BD
6	25 August 2017 till date	Counter Insurgency Operation	An exodus of 8,90,000 to BD

Source: *Pictorial Handbook Flash on Rohingya Genocide*, AFD 2020, p.03

### **Challenges for BD**

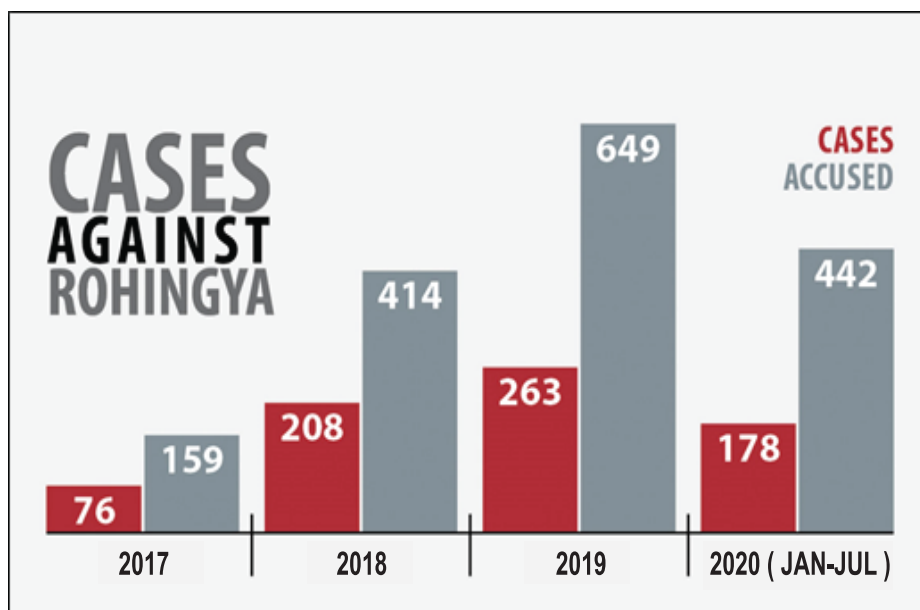
FDMN crisis poses security threats and challenges of the full spectrum related to the security landscape. The challenges will range from human or non-traditional threats, transnational/internal security, militancy and terrorism and border instability etc. The possible security threats can be articulated as follows:-

a. **Radicalization/Military and Terrorism:** The completely marginalised and traumatised Rakhine Muslim population is vulnerable to radicalisation. If it happens, then it will no more be a local or BD issue. It will have regional and global ramifications. The possibility of prolonged ethnic conflict in MN might create a hotbed of terror as foreign fighters set eyes on the region. The security dilemma comes at a time when Islamic State (IS) responding to setbacks in Syria is planning on expanding operations beyond the Middle East. In near future, the Rohingya crisis may turn into a regional flash point if radical Buddhists and radical Muslims are locked in fighting.

b. **Trans-Border Crime:** Rohingyas are found to be involved in cross-border trafficking and smuggling of illegal drugs. Young women and children are prone to trafficking gangs and may end up in international markets for prostitution and slave labour.

c. **Internal Law and Order Situation:** The massive exodus of MN Nationals is posing threat to the internal security of BD. These are vulnerable people in dire need of a living and are increasingly getting involved in petty crimes for their survival. Following the largest-ever influx of Rohingyas in August 2017, at least 76 criminal cases on various charges were filed against the members of the community in the last quarter of the year. In 2018, this figure was 208 cases, and in 2019, rose to 263. In the first seven months of 2020, total of 178 cases have already been filed against Rohingyas.<sup>3</sup>





**Figure 2: Criminal Cases against Rohingyas**



Source: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/refugee-camps-coxs-bazar-rohingyas-tangled-crimes-1951517>

d. **Impact on Health Security:** Many of the arriving FDMNs are already carrying a number of diseases including TB (55%), Hepatitis B and C (13%) and HIV/AIDS (30%). These pandemic diseases could overwhelm the health service resources in the camps and also pose a risk of spreading among the general population within BD. WHO Cox's Bazar Sub-Office statistics show that as of 18 July 2021 total of 2287 FDMN are infected by COVID-19.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: WHO Report on COVID Situation in Cox's Bazar July 2021**

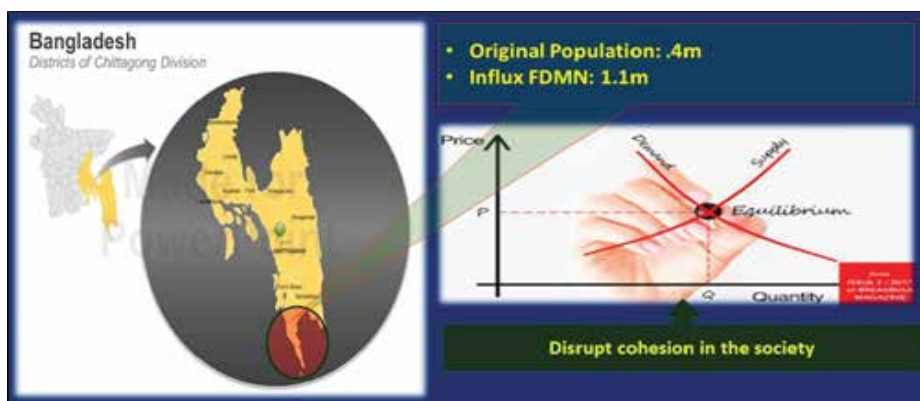
	Host Community	Rohingya refugees
 Total confirmed COVID-19 cases in Cox's Bazar	12 200	2 287
 Total cases in isolation in Cox's Bazar	700	419
 Total number of tests conducted	111 888	52 092
 Total deaths due to COVID-19	126	25

Source: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/who-cox-s-bazar-situation-report-14.pdf>

e. **Orphans and Unwanted Children:** A total of 36,373 orphans have been identified in the FDMNs camps. Besides, many girls and women have been exposed to severe forms of sexual violence in MN before and during the exodus. Many have already given birth to unwanted children in the camps. Both orphan and unwanted children are posing additional social concerns to BD.<sup>5</sup>

f. **Security of Livelihood:** More than a million FDMNs are living in a place where the original population are only 0.4 million. The mass FDMNs presence in a small area of BD is jeopardising the balance in the employment sector. There are signs of disruption in cohesion within the host community.

**Figure 3: Cox's Bazar-Host Community & Rohingya Population: A Comparison**



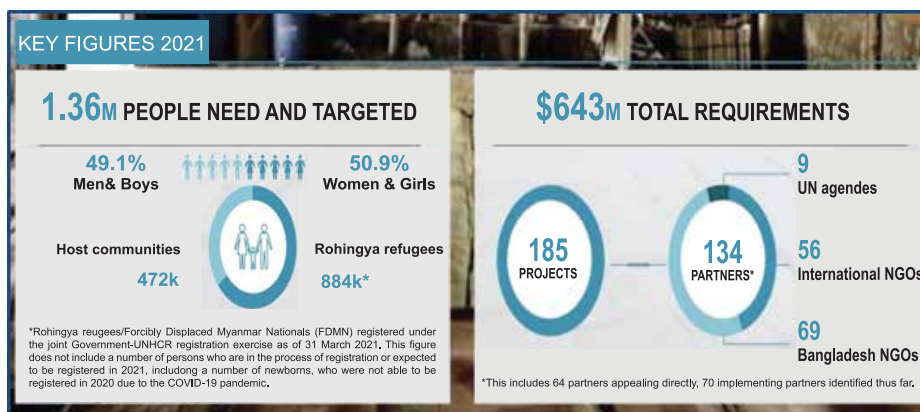
Source: Author's self-construct

g. **Environmental Degradation:** The FDMNs have been accommodated on more than 5000 acres of forest land. Thousands of trees have been destroyed. Cultivable lands have shrunk significantly. Landslides and other natural/manmade disasters have increased. Besides, fencing and landmines at the border by MN security forces are also seriously obstructing the natural migration of wild elephants in that region.<sup>6</sup>

h. **Border Tension:** After the influx of Rohingya in 2017, MN increased deployment of their security forces along the BD-MN Border. MN violated BD air space a number of times. MN laid anti-personnel mines at very close proximity of BD border.

j. **Funding for FDMN:** All activities in aid of FDMN are mostly dependent on donor support. The rate of funding is decreasing day by day. UNHCR estimates the probable fund for every year by Joint Response Plan (JRP). It is learnt that, 69% of JRP 2018 and 67% of JRP 2019 and 65% of JRP 2020 could be collected. The estimated fund for JRP 2021 is 943 million USD from 134 Partners.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 4: Joint Response Plan 2021**



Source: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2021%20JRP.pdf>

#### Kofi Annan Advisory Commission's Report

The Kofi Annan Advisory Commission on the Rakhine State was an international advisory commission headed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to ensure the social & economic well-being of both the Buddhists and the Rohingya communities of MN's conflict-ravaged Rakhine State. The decision to establish the Commission was made on 23 August, 2016. The Commission was an institution of MN established in cooperation with the Kofi Annan Foundation, and most members were MN citizens. It became widely known and referred to as the 'Annan Commission' or the 'Rakhine

Commission.’ The release of the Commission’s Final Report coincided with an explosion of violence throughout Rakhine state that led to the killing, rape and injury of thousands-particularly Rohingya-and the mass expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya from the country, one of the largest humanitarian catastrophes of the early 21st Century. The Annan Commission’s final report was released on August 24, 2017, and it called for several measures to improve life in Rakhine state including improving the rights of the Rohingyas. In the report some specific recommendations were made as follows:-

- a. To invest heavily in infrastructure to help lift both communities out of poverty.
- b. To lift all restrictions on the Rohingya people’s human rights.
- c. To review MN’s 1982 citizenship law.
- d. To instigate a calibrated approach to security.

**The stance of BD:** Despite facing serious difficulties, BD is still accommodating these huge numbers of FDMNs solely on the humanitarian grounds to save the lives of innocent civilians. The foreign policy principle of BD clearly vows, “Friendship to all, malice to none.” Historically, it is evident that BD has never interfered with the internal issue of any neighbouring country. Since its independence, BD has always been the forerunner in resolving issues with neighbours amicably following international norms and procedures. Maritime boundary delimitation with both India and MN is a testimony of the pragmatic approach by BD.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Initiatives by BD**

##### **a. ‘4’ Point Proposal by HPM in UNGA**

The Honourable Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of BD has proposed a ‘4’ point solution in her speech in 74th UN General Assembly which is given below:-<sup>9</sup>

- (1) MN must manifest clear political will supported by concrete actions for sustainable return and reintegration of Rohingyas to MN.
- (2) MN must build trust among Rohingyas by discarding discriminatory laws and practices and allowing go and see visit to Northern Rakhine by Rohingya representatives.
- (3) MN must guarantee the security and safety of the Rohingyas by developing civilian monitors from the international community in the Rakhine State.
- (4) International Community must ensure that the root causes of the Rohingya problem are addressed and the violation of human rights and other atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingyas are accounted for.



**Photo 1: HPM Sheikh Hasina Reiterates Four Points at 74th Session in UNGA**



Source: [https://mofa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mofa.portal.gov.bd/page/58c23f41\\_00e9\\_4d00\\_926b\\_c49af3f94b54/FOBN%20September%202019.pdf](https://mofa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/mofa.portal.gov.bd/page/58c23f41_00e9_4d00_926b_c49af3f94b54/FOBN%20September%202019.pdf)

#### **b. Government-led Organizations**

BD has formed the 'Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC)' for addressing the FDMN issues to work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. In conjunction following committees are working for FDMN management and Repatriation:-

##### **(1) National Taskforce (NTF) on FDMN**

To implement the goals of the approved National Strategy Paper (09 September 2013) by BD Government on the illegal emigrant of MN a 'National Taskforce on FDMN' was formed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gazette No UN-Gen-5013/16/45 dated 31 January 2017. The taskforce had the following mandate:-

- (a) To prepare the total list of illegal emigrants of MN and FDMN.
- (b) To address the basic rights of the listed FDMN.
- (c) To strengthen the management of BD- MN Border.
- (d) To increase diplomatic effort in regional and economic engagement with MN.
- (e) To increase coordination on the National Level for illegal emigrants of MN and FDMN.

**(2) Joint Working Group (JWG)**

An agreement on 'Arrangement on Return of Displaced Person from Rakhine State' was signed between BD and MN on 23 November 2017. As per the provision of the arrangement a Joint Working Group (JWG) containing fifteen members from each country was formed to work on all aspects of the return of displaced MN nationals of BD.

**(3) Repatriation Task Force (RTF)**

To address the coordination work and ease out the repatriation process at the root level a 'Repatriation Task Force' was formed headed by RRRC with the representative of the lead Government agencies in the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar region.

**(4) Committee for Verification and Special ID Card for Rohingya**

To formulate the repatriation process of FDMN a "Committee for verification and special ID card for Rohingya" was formed on 24 June 2018 for verification of FDMN list, preparing database and special ID card for Rohingya. Concern Government organizations/ agencies with UNHCR representatives were included in the committee.

**(5) Executive Committee for Relocation to Bhasan Char**

For the security of FDMN in Cox's Bazar and ensuring better livelihood, an 'Executive Committee for Relocation to Bhasan Char' was formed to relocate one lac FDMN in Bhasan Char. The Committee was also entrusted to take opinions from UN agencies, donors, NGOs/INGOs and other concerned stakeholders. The Committee will also materialise the relocation taking necessary guidance from National Taskforce (NTF) on FDMN.

**(6) National Committee for Coordinating, Managing and Maintaining Law and Order of Rohingya**

BD government has formed a 17-member Committee on 14 December 2020 for coordinating, managing and maintaining law and order of Rohingyas where the Home Minister has been made its convener. The high-level committee will work in coordination with

National Taskforce (NTF) on FDMN and Executive Committee for Relocation to Bhasan Char.

### **c. Diplomatic Efforts**

BD is trying to resolve the ongoing crisis diplomatically. The bilateral and multilateral engagement with MN has been increased. A tri-party Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed in Geneva in April 2018 between BD, MN and UN agencies. Following that, a joint working group with BD and MN representatives has been formed for repatriation. Besides, BD government is also engaging with the regional organisations like ASEAN, International community, UN bodies to create a conducive environment in Rakhine state of MN for voluntary repatriation from BD.

### **d. International Court of Justice (ICJ) Ruling**

As a member state of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Gambia filed case in international Court of Justice (ICJ) for the application of the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of Genocide against MN on 11 Nov 2019. Gambia also asked for provisional measures for the protection of Rohingya Muslims. On 22 Jan 2020 on the 1st hearing ICJ granted the provisional measures and asked MN to stop the genocidal act as well as submit a report within four months confirming action taken to implement the measures and continue to report every six months afterwards.

### **e. International Criminal Court (ICC)**

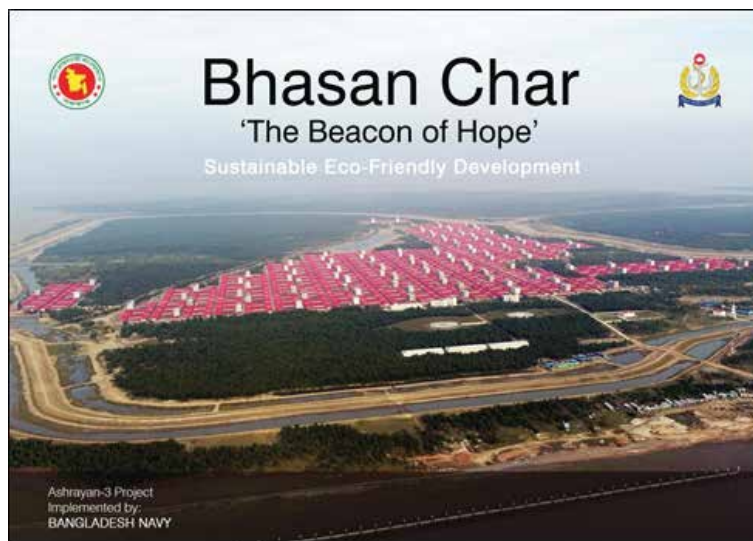
ICC Pre-Trial Chamber rules that the Court may exercise jurisdiction over the alleged deportation of the Rohingya people from MN to BD as a possible crime against humanity. BD is a member of the Hague-based court, but MN is not. According to the court the cross border deportation was sufficient for jurisdiction, MN has so far signaled it does not intend to cooperate with the international court. ICC has started working in Rohingya camps in BD. Recently two MN soldiers were produced to ICC, Hague who confessed to murdering minority Rohingya Muslims during a 2017 Crackdown. It will also expedite the ICC proceedings regarding the Rohingya genocide.

### **f. Bhashan Char Project-A New Hope for FDMN**

BD Government has prepared a mega settlement project at Bhasan Char Island<sup>10</sup> keeping in the mind of the demographical pattern of present FDMN camps. BD govt. has taken the decision to shift one lac FDMN in Bhasan Char with the help of BD Navy. The Bhasan Char is equipped with 1440 cluster houses, a learning centre, two 20 bed hospitals, 04 community clinics, fire station, police station, 2 MW power plants, BD

Navy Forward Base as well as accommodation for Govt officials, INGO and UN personnel. Opportunities for training for practicing economic activities like fishing, cattle farming, agricultural activities, handicraft etc. are also available there. So far over 18500 FDMN had been shifted to Bhasan Char on a voluntary basis. The relocation has been done with the interested FDMN family in the FDMN camps in Cox's Bazar. More so Government has taken initiative for establishing shipping routes connecting Bhasan Char. In this regard, BIWTC will operate a inland shipping line to connect Bhasan Char with the mainland.

**Photo 2: Ashrayan Project-3 in Bhasan Char**



Source: *Bhashan Char -The Beacon of Hope Booklet of Asrayan-3 Project*, Cover page

**Plausible Options for BD**

**a. Rohingya Repatriation**

.For effective repatriation of FDMN, the primary reliance will be on diplomatic efforts with strong/effective military diplomacy, in combination with economic and information lines of efforts to instill confidence in the minds of military strategic leadership of MN. It is evident that, without suitable conditions, Rohingyas will never be willing to return to MN. Thus, it is essential to prepare them psychologically to return to their homeland, once all suitable conditions are in place. Adequate media management both locally and internationally is essential in this regard.

**(1) Multilateral Approach**

BD needs to pursue repatriation with the help of the international community, ICJ and ICC. The international community may be

pursued to offer multiple benefits to MN for allowing the safe return of Rohingyas as well as accommodating some of the refugees in their countries. Besides, the economic and military relations with regional and global influential powers (India, China and Russia) will be strengthened keeping the repatriation of the Rohingya in view, so that they don't prevent any effort of BD. Moreover, credible military deterrence to be observed by BD to prevent the repetition of such exodus in the future.

## **(2) Bilateral Approach**

Strong bilateral relations need to be persuaded with MN in the arena of economy, education and culture, games and sports and military etc. Once strong bi-lateral relations will be at an effective level, the repatriation process may start. Besides, the efforts through ICJ and other international bodies will continue.

### **b. Strategic Pathway of BD**

#### **(1) Diplomatic Line of Operations**

Bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral, and multilateral diplomatic persuasion including incessant persuasion in ICJ as an indirect approach are to be trailed. With that, garner support of the countries facing similar or nearer kinds of challenges like Turkey and Thailand (approximately 2 million from MN Karen State) may get consideration. At the same time, drumming up support and sympathy of the countries which are the alternative destinations of Rohingya people like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Australia should also be explored. The religious sentiment of OIC countries, particularly Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey may be explored too. BD had an experience of repatriating Rohingyas during 1978 and 1993 with the support of OIC and regional powers, which can be shadowed again.

The Rohingya Camp site either in BD or MN may be declared as UN safe zone. The responsibilities of food, medical, water and sanitation, education etc. except security should be handed over to the representatives of UN. It will lessen the economic burden on the affected country and reduce the risk of thinning out of funding in the future. Diplomatic efforts through organisations like ASEAN, BIMSTEC and IONS etc. are to be done.

#### **(2) Information Line of Operations**

Engagement at different tiers by academicians, research institutions, cultural institutions etc. may be increased with immediate effect. Disarmament of mindset of MN's Strategic Leadership is the most significant issue. The cultural exchanges, sports competitions,

strategic and national level bilateral and multilateral talk, seminar, symposium, workshop etc. will have positive nodding and likely to reduce the gap between the two countries. Media management needs to be done for both local and international media to portray the sufferings of Rohingyas and the burden over BD in regards to the economy, environment, law and order situation etc. It should also aim at the psychology of Rohingyas.

### **(3) Economic Line of Operations**

BD needs to increase trade and commerce with MN. Products that are available in the neighboring countries need to be carefully measured so that it tilts towards MN (especially agro products). Issues like importing natural gas, electricity may be assessed while items like fertiliser and other agricultural equipment may be exported to MN. The proposal of the BD-MN-China Corridor encompassing multiple connectivity in the road, railway, gas, oil pipeline and the electric line would usher manifold economic benefits for all three countries. Thus, BD should pursue the implementation of this corridor for the benefits of all the countries. Probable potential space and scope of joint exploration of Offshore Resources and Blue Economy with bilateral and trilateral cooperation are to be analysed.

### **(4) Military Line of Operations**

Presently defense diplomacy has emerged as one of the most important tools of military statecraft. Activities related to it are diverse. Keeping that in mind, engagement at military level between Bangladesh and Myanmar may be amplified. Port calls, training visits, cadet exchange, offering courses, vacancies may be useful in strengthening the relationship between two armed forces. Our Military Academies, National Defense College, Defense Service Command and Staff College training excellence has achieved the level of professionalism that participants from various countries across the globe undergo training. In addition, Bangladesh Armed Forces may take endeavour for Joint Military Exercises, Coordinated Land Border/Maritime Boundary patrol, exchange of visit for high-level military delegation etc with MN.

### **c. Repatriation – The Ultimate Solution**

FDMN are motivated to return to their homeland provided their fundamental rights are ensured and MN Govt. ensured safety and security in northern Rakhine State. Therefore, it is very well possible to repatriate the FDMNs, if MN Govt. ensures proper implementation of the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission's Report for Rakhine State.



### Conclusion

Rohingyas were allowed to enter BD and given shelter solely on the humanitarian grounds. With their long time stopover BD is facing multifarious difficulties. The forcible intrusion of MN nationals into BD is a clear and predominant threat to our national security. FDMN crisis poses security concerns and challenges of the full continuum of the security landscape. The challenges will range from human or non-traditional threats, transnational/ internal security, militancy, terrorism and border instability etc.

BD continues to pursue a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The intention is clearly displayed by its bilateral multilateral outreach to MN and the international community. With that consensual and polygonal diplomatic engagement including incessant persuasion in ICJ as an indirect approach may be the key to the gradual development of the issue. Along with that, the engagement in the academic and economic sector, maintaining a deterrent and credible force collectively will lead towards the edge of the need of BD as well as the FDMN.

The problem from which BD is suffering has neither been created by her nor supported. MN must take back their nationals with full dignity, access to livelihood and freedom of movement. The humanitarian crisis that has plagued the Rohingya people needs to be dealt as an international effort rather than BD solely bearing the burden. Accepting forcibly displaced persons is a temporary and limited humanitarian act that the international community must bear together.

### Recommendations

- a. BD may continue bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral and multilateral diplomatic persuasion effectively for Rohingya repatriation.
- b. BD may engage at different tiers academicians, researchers, security experts, research institutes and think-tank with MN.
- c. BD Government may take necessary steps to increase trade and commerce with MN.
- d. BD Armed Forces may take endeavour for exchange of port of calls, training exchange, joint military exercise, coordinated land/maritime boundary patrol and exchange of high-level military delegation with MN.

### Notes and References

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### Brief Biography



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## **Employment of Armed Drones in Recent Conflicts: Lessons for the Developing Countries**

Lieutenant Colonel Md Shafiqul Hossain, SPP, psc, EB

### **Introduction**

The popular term 'Armed Drone' mostly refers to Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle systems capable of delivering a weapon payload, often designated by the acronym UCAV in conventional militaries. There had been a monopoly in this sector by the western military powers like the USA, UK, Israel etc. for a considerable period of time. The sophisticated technologies were owned by those countries exclusively and the benefits of this amazing technology were mostly enjoyed by them. The characteristics of these armed drones allowed the owners to remain unaccounted for in the grey zones and hybrid battlefields around the world with impunity. It was not until the recent conflicts of Yemen, Syria, Libya and Azerbaijan that countries like Iran, China, Russia and Turkey showcased and unlocked the enormous potentials of drone warfare to the rest of the world. Through their successful employments in recent conflicts around the world, UCAVs displayed the potential of playing a significant role in shaping 21st Century warfare.

Combat Drone technologies have been around since the Cold War era, mostly for reconnaissance purposes. The USA made the debut of their lethal use by eliminating a member of the Taliban in Afghanistan in early November 2001, with a Predator drone firing Hellfire missile. The deadly use never stopped since then and the US allies like the UK, Israel continued to use the UCAVs to shower silent deaths on adversaries around Middle Eastern countries like Iraq, Yemen and Palestine. USA's use of UCAVs over Pakistan drew sharp controversies since 2004 but the USA never confirmed or denied these operations till 2012. In the meantime, countries like China, Russia, Iran, Turkey etc. joined the race to develop combat drones with huge investments in related research. It took them almost a decade to unveil combat-ready drone technologies in the battle fields which were soon adopted by the developing countries and warring factions around the world.<sup>1</sup>

Employment of UCAVs by western powers and their allies in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine etc. war zones was one-sided and in an uncontested environment. With the continuous proliferation of combat drone technologies, it was only a matter of time that the world would witness UCAVs in action in the direct kinetic war in contested airspace. The Turkish forces were the first to use their indigenous UCAVs against a potent opponent in such warfare. The other countries like China and Russia provided related systems and technologies to other developing countries like Syria, Libya, Armenia etc. Thus, in last couple of years, the world witnessed the dawn of armed drone warfare among

developing countries. This paper would critically analyze the employment, development and influence of drone warfare in three most remarkable conflicts of 2020 and make an endeavour to curve out relevant lessons for developing countries like Bangladesh. In this paper, the term UCAV will be used to refer to medium altitude long endurance armed combat drones employed in conventional battlefields.

### **Critical Analysis of Drone Employments in Recent Conflicts**

Warfare involving armed drones has touched new landmarks in the last couple of years where UCAVs have been increasingly used in contested airspace and against opponents fielding potent Electronic/ Electromagnetic Spectrum Warfare Systems (EWS) and missile systems. The recent conflicts, mostly involving the developing countries as the main players, drew the attention of drone warfare enthusiasts around the world to determine the likely influence of UCAVs in future warfare. This paper will discuss three such most recent engagements, the outcome of which were highly influenced by the use of UCAVs.<sup>2</sup>

#### **The Libyan Civil War (2020)**

The Libyan Conflict witnessed one of the first significant employments of armed drones and defence against drones, in conventional warfare, by both the belligerents, in recent years. The employment was so much that, the United Nations Special Representative to Libya, Ghassan Salame, referred to the Libyan Conflict as the largest drone war in the world. The drone episode dates back to 2016, when the Libyan National Army (LNA)- the faction of Libyan Military Forces supported by Egypt, France, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Russia under the Libyan Warlord Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar acquired Chinese-made Chengdu Pterodactyl-1, also known as Wing Loong, MALE (Medium Altitude Long Endurance) UCAVs. It significantly enhanced the LNA's military capabilities. These Chinese-made UAVs—operated by pilots from the UAE and flown out of the Al-Khadim Air Base in eastern Libya—having a combat radius of 1,500 km, could effectively deliver precision-guided missiles and bombs anywhere in the country.<sup>3</sup>

The LNA launched their final coordinated attack on the UN recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) with an ambition to capture the Libyan capital Tripoli, during April 2019 and Haftar claimed that no force could stop his capturing of the capital Tripoli. Being emboldened by the material support of his powerful allies and by the thousands of mercenaries recruited from across Africa, Haftar pounded the capital's suburbs with both aerial and artillery attacks with impunity till November 2019 and was at the doorsteps of Tripoli. That was the moment Turkey stepped in! Mr. Salah Bakkoush, a Libyan political analyst and a former advisor to the High Council of the Libyan state stated that the GNA forces were becoming easy prey to the LNA airpower due to the open

semi-desert nature of the Libyan topography, until Turkish sponsored Air Defence, EWS and drones were made available to reverse the situation. According to experts from the Washington Institute, Turkey established an Air Defence (AD) bubble around the capital Tripoli, deploying multiple SAM systems and other layered air defence systems including KORAL EWS along with large number of UCAVs by December 2019. The KORALs were able to jam the Russian Pantsir-S1 AD system, Chinese UCAVs, Communication Channels and other target sets. It also helped in direction finding and geolocating from radio emissions. These systems covered a radius of 200 Km around Tripoli which allowed the Turkish Bayraktar-TB2 drones to wreak havoc on the forces of LNA, who were inside the radius, preparing for the final assault on GNA. The drones caused damage to the LNA bases, supply lines, armoured vehicles and equipment including the Russian Pantsir-S1 AD System. The success enabled the GNA forces to regain control of almost all of western Libya by the mid of 2020 which was definitely a remarkable feat and illustrates the effectiveness of high-tech drones supported by appropriate EWS.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Syrian War (Turkish 'Operation Spring Shield' 2020)

At the beginning of 2020, the world witnessed with awe, the possibility of a face-to-face encounter between Turkey and Russia, otherwise a long-term ally, as a consequence of events leading to a successful Syrian Government Forces offensive (backed by Russia) against the Turkish backed rebel forces in Syria. Turkish endeavour to establish a de-escalation zone in the bordering Syrian province of Idlib (one of the last Turkish backed rebel strongholds), through a ceasefire agreement with Russia in January 2020, was failing due to continuous offensive actions by the Syrian Government forces (the Assad Regime forces) actively supported by Russian airpower, Hezbollah and other Iranian backed militias.<sup>5</sup>

**Map-1: Location of Idlib De-escalation Zone between Syria and Turkey**



Source: Author's collection



In January 2020, Turkey had already been under pressure because of the 3.5 million Syrian refugees it had taken by 2019 and concerned agencies forecasted that the latest offensive by the Syrian forces was about to push more 3 million refugees to Turkey. To avert the situation Turkish forces started reinforcing the observation posts in Idlib and concentrated around 30000 troops in the bordering areas. There were attacks on the Turkish observation posts since the beginning of February 2020 killing about 8 Turkish soldiers, at which point the Turkish President issued a stern warning against the Syrian Forces that any further attack on the Turkish troops will be dealt with by active engagement of pro-Assad regime forces in Idlib and elsewhere. The warning fell into deaf ears, since the Assad regime forces were confident that with the Russian forces maintaining air superiority, the Turkish forces would not be able to conduct any airstrike or launch any offensive operations against them! On 27 February 2020, the Syrian pro-government airstrikes targeted a convoy of Turkish Mechanized Infantry Battalion in an area named Balyun in the governorate of Idlib killing more than 33 Soldiers and injuring a lot more. The incident momentarily put the Russian forces operating in Syria at a diplomatic disadvantage.<sup>6</sup>

Turkey seized the opportunity by launching a full-scale offensive operation, mostly by their air and artillery assets, codenamed Operation Spring Shield, against the pro-government Syrian forces. The limitation imposed by the Russian declared 'No Fly Zone' constrained Turkish forces not to use conventional fighter planes inside Syria, but it could not stop them from using armed drones. The operation created an opportunity for the world to witness a short, intense and decisive drone battle against the battle-hardened pro-government Syrian forces, directly supported technologically and materially by a major world power like Russia. The outcomes of the engagements were stunning. On the first retaliatory action on 28 February 2020, Turkish drones and artillery strikes hit 200 Syrian government targets and claimed to cause casualties of 309 soldiers and destroy hundreds of high-value military assets in a dedicated operation throughout greater Idlib. Turkish drone strikes on Syrian Army positions in the east and south of Idlib were reported to have targeted helicopters, tanks, armoured vehicles, howitzers, ammunition trucks, ammunition depots and even Russian state of the art Pantsir-S1 AD systems. Riding on the success of the drone attacks and artillery support of Turkey, the rebel factions against the Assad regime started to regain the lost territories in and around Idlib and to retake strategically important locations.



**Photo 1: A Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 UCAV**



Source: Author's collection

The Turkish Forces employed both their Barayktar TB-2 and the newer, heavily armed satellite-linked ANKA-S UCAVs. These drones were used to relay positions of Syrian Forces to the Turkish MLRS and Self-Propelled Guns. They also engaged these targets by themselves by a variety of locally made smart ammunitions, that were easier to integrate with the drones. Most notably, drones were flown in squadron formation for the first time in the history of conventional warfare. They could overwhelm the Syrian Air Defence Systems (which were mostly Russian equipment) and quickly knock them down using drone swarming tactics.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Asad regime denied the exuberant claims of Turkish forces destroying hundreds of Armoured Vehicles including tanks and neutralising thousands of pro-government forces, video feeds of the drones proved that most of the claims by Turkish forces were substantiated. Drone footages circulated on the internet appeared to have shown the destruction of the large number of main battle tanks like T-55, T-62 and T-72, Infantry Fighting Vehicle BMP-1, Pantsir-S1 and ZSU-23 Shilka Short Range Air Defense Systems and different modern Russian Origin Self Propelled Howitzers (2S1, 2S3 etc). In contrast, Syrian forces managed to shoot down some of the UCAVs operated by Turkey, but the damage was minimal comparatively. The success of the Turkish drones may also be attributed to a large degree to the KORAL EWS jamming system with a range of 124 miles (made by Aselsan) which effectively degraded the Syrian Air Defence System.

In the face of mounting losses Assad regime quickly succumbed to a Russian mediated cease-fire with Turkey by 05 March 2020, in and around Idlib, mostly accepting the Turkish terms of reference. This was definitely one of the first incidents of successful projection of power through the employment of armed drones in conventional battles and would probably be noted as a significant event in the history of modern warfare.<sup>8</sup>

### **Second Azerbaijan-Armenian War (Nagorno-Karabakh War 2020)**

This is actually the first war in the history of modern warfare that has been won almost entirely on the strength of drone warfare.

Armenia occupied seven districts outside the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), which were sovereign territories of Azerbaijan, during the first Nagorno-Karabakh war (1988-1994). These areas were since then under the control of Armenia backed Republic of Artsakh (internationally unrecognized). Unlike the ethnic Armenian majority NKAO, the population in these captured areas were of Azerbaijani origin. The occupation caused the displacement of about one million Azerbaijani citizens. Diplomatic efforts by major world powers to return the sovereign territories of Azerbaijan failed for more than two decades since 1994. There had been periodic border skirmishes and minor escalations between these two neighbours since the first war, but those were inconclusive. Finally, on 27 September 2020, Azerbaijan launched a decisive major offensive to regain their lost territories, which became known as the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War.

**Map-2: Location of Nagorno-Karabakh and Occupied Districts Prior to 2020 War**



Source: Wikipedia (Legend in the Blow-UP: the former NKAO is depicted in pink and pre-2020 Azerbaijani-held territory in yellow. Red depicts the territory occupied by Armenia in 1994)

Armenia was happy with the stalemate situation since the last war in 1994 but Azerbaijan was desperate to break the stalemate in favourable terms on their side. Rob Lee, a defence expert in the War Studies Department at King's College London observes that, although the two neighbours were at par in defence capability in the early years of 2000, Azerbaijan invested in high-tech equipment from Russia, Israel and other advanced countries which tilted the balance of military power in their favour since 2016. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Azerbaijan spent more than 19 billion US dollars between 2011 and 2019 on weapon import, which included a whopping 5 billion worth of Israeli Orbiter 1K and Harop 'Loitering Munitions' or so-called 'Kamikaze Drones'. It also made contracts with its regional ally and neighbour Turkey for supplying her battle-tested Bayraktar TB-2 UCAVs, which started arriving by June 2020. On the contrary, Armenia spent about 4.8 billion over the same period in mostly Russian dated weaponry systems, which did not include any advanced drone or defence against drones. Instead, Armenia had a small number of local made UAVs that were only for reconnaissance purposes.

Azerbaijan successfully employed the kamikaze drones from Israel in the four days war of 2016. In July 2020, it had undergone extensive joint exercises with Turkey which included Turkish Air Force fighter jets, armed drones and long range-artillery through which it perfected the employment principles and coordination of UCAVs with other battlefield operating systems. The integration of cutting-edge drone technologies provided Azerbaijan with an asymmetric power projection capability by maintaining a favourable technological advantage. Although technological superiority may not always guarantee victory with adversaries possessing similar baseline capabilities, it may play a critical role, as displayed in this conflict.

Many analysts had expected terrain to be a significant factor in this conflict. The mountainous terrain with canalised approaches and well-prepared defences were expected to assist Armenian forces heavily to secure a stalemate, at least. It was true for the first two weeks, when Azerbaijan was failing to translate its tactical successes into significant gains. Azerbaijan ground forces only advanced in the south where the terrain permitted but not in the north. Soon the scenario changed, and the Azerbaijani Drones started owning the battlefield. They converted 11 slow Soviet-era AN-2 aircrafts into drones and sent them over Nagorno-Karabakh as bait to Armenian air defence system. Once they opened up, the air defence assets were precisely hit by Azerbaijani drones and destroyed. Consequently, the Israeli and Turkish origin drones systematically destroyed the Armenian air defence network, bulk of the armoured forces and caused casualties to the personnel in dug-in bunkers. The losses cannot be independently verified but Armenia losses were staggering, even though they were in defence in favourable terrain. As video documented by analysts in Military Affairs Blog Oryx, Armenian forces lost 185 T-72 tanks, 90 armoured fighting vehicles, 182 artillery pieces, 73 multiple rocket

launchers, 26 surface-to-air missile systems (including a Tor system and five S-300s), 14 radars or jammers, one SU-25 war plane, four drones and 451 military vehicles in a span of 44 days. Azerbaijan losses were much lower than their adversaries despite being on the offensive. They lost 22 tanks, 41 armoured vehicles, one helicopter, 25 drones and 24 vehicles as the analysts concluded.

Even though, the drones played a game-changing role in the conflict, their capabilities should not be exaggerated. These UCAVs can be quite vulnerable to appropriate full-spectrum air defence systems operated by a well-trained force. Armenia did not invest in suitable air defenses designed to counter UCAVs. Most of Armenia's air defences were Soviet-era systems, like the 2K11 Krug, 9K33 Osa, 2K12 Kub, and 9K35 Strela-10. These systems were unable to detect or destroy the TB-2 Drones due to their limited range and poor electronic warfare capability. Even after that Azerbaijan lost 25 Drones. Russian Polye-21 electronic warfare systems, Buk and Tor-M2KM air defences of Armenia could interfere with the drone operations of Azerbaijan, but they were limited in number or deployed at a time when it could no longer save the day. Armenia's larger air defences like the S-300 were not designed to destroy UCAVs and themselves became targets of the Israeli Kamikaze drones.

The videos of drones destroying the Armenian assets and bombarding the personnel were continuously broadcasted on big screens on the streets of Baku, the Azerbaijan capital. The social media platforms were also flooded with crisp videos of the effortless destruction of Armenian assets by Turkish Drones. The political and military cost of the war became unbearable for the Armenians due to the continuous loss of military assets. When Azerbaijani troops were nearing Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenian-held capital Stepanakert, the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had no way but to accept defeat and agree to a Russia brokered cease-fire. The cease-fire came with punishing terms of withdrawing all Armenian forces from territories captured from Azerbaijan in 1994 and stationing a Russian peacekeeping force.

### **Lessons for Armed Forces of Developing Countries**

It is clearly evident from the foregoing discussions that the proliferation and the comparatively lower cost of UCAVs will make them a weapon of choice for the developing countries, in the coming decade. Therefore, the armed forces of the twenty-first century must be prepared to face the low buzz of incoming UCAVs in all future warfare. Military establishments of developed countries remain in the quest for defining conflicts, like the Arab Israeli War 1973, to shape the direction of their future investment in technologies. The recent conflicts discussed in this paper will certainly influence them to look for lessons learnt in regard to employment and the development of capabilities related to UCAVs. The developing countries must also focus on preparing themselves for the next generation of warfare involving UCAV- related systems. This paper will approach the deliberated conflicts from the viewpoint of

developing countries and suggest relevant lessons therefrom in subsequent paragraphs.

**Why Acquire UCAVs?** The policy makers of developing countries need to have clear idea about the benefits of UCAVs to be able to take appropriate decisions. The recent conflicts made the benefits of the UCAV system evident to all the actors seeking to be in an advantageous position in any future conflict. The significant advantages for developing countries are as follows:-

i. The UCAVs can provide the most accurate and up to date operational information in digital form which can be integrated with the most ISR systems available. The same may be acquired by military satellites, which may not always be available to the developing countries. Therefore, drones may become a vehicle for such countries to embark on Network Centric Warfare. It can also make optimal cooperation with heavy artillery and air force to bring accurate fire. It can loiter above the desired target deep inside enemy territory, at high altitude without detection, tracking the target ceaselessly for hours before engaging it, at times creating strategic effect by hitting HPTs.

ii. UCAVs will be attractive because of their lower cost in comparison to the systems capable of producing the same effect, like manned combat aircrafts, long-range precision missiles etc. They are more expendable, replaceable and create a lesser strategic effect in case of loss, compared to pilots.

iii. UCAVs can operate in restricted airspace and with anonymity as seen in Idlib and Libyan war. Though the Syrian airspace was declared No Fly Zone by Russia, Turkish drones operated deep inside Syrian territory which would be difficult for their F-16s. These UCAVs created devastating effect, without incurring the same military or political consequences as conventional fighter jets. It also revolutionised the concept of front and rear on the battlefield. Traditional aircrafts fly into the enemy rear, strike and fall back. On the other hand, UCAVs can control the enemy's rear constantly, attacking at any moment without an early warning, which ruins the mindset of soldiers, as seen in the Idlib conflict.

iv. UCAVs were difficult to be detected even by the latest Russian made counter technologies like Pantsir. Russian experts recognized that the system could not detect low-speed targets. In the case of traditional RADARs, it will be more difficult for sure. The replacement cost also goes in favour of UCAVs. Russia lost 8 Pantsir in the Idlib battle, contrary to 19 Bayraktar UAVs by Turkish forces. Each Pantsir had a price of USD 14 million, whereas the Bayraktars were roughly USD 2.5 million each. The calculation goes in favour of UCAVs for sure. <sup>9</sup>

**Replacing Long Range Missiles:** The UCAVs surely proved more potent than the long-range (LR) missiles in some of the recent conflicts. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan had a large variety of LR missile systems like Russian Iskander and Israeli LORA short-range ballistic missile, which were seldom utilised till the end of



the conflict. One reason was the limited stock of these expensive missiles, thereby deciding to keep them reserved for a decisive moment. Even when the Azerbaijan forces used their LORA to strike a bridge connecting Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, it failed to incapacitate the bridge. On the contrary, the UCAVs and kamikaze drones were more available, cheaper, reliable, accurate and less conspicuous creating an almost similar effect on targets. Even the sophisticated weapon detecting RADARs would become useless, since there would be no launchers for missiles dropped from UCAVs, as was the case with Indian SWATHI RADAR bought by Armenia. In this backdrop, the developing countries would have to think through their choice between LR Missiles and UCAVs.

**Terrain Advantages Overruled:** The Armenian forces were thought to have a definite terrain advantage due to holding high grounds, narrow approaches through defiles and prepared positions. The UCAVs seemed to have overruled all those advantages once they dominated the battlefield. Drone videos of destroying large fortified bunkers with Armenian troops were one of the main weapons to break their will to fight against Azerbaijan. Therefore, an enemy with overwhelming UCAV capability may overrule the preconceived advantage of terrain, be it highly covered or riverine!

**Vulnerability of Tanks/ APCs:** The Azerbaijani forces destroyed around 185 T-72 Tanks and 90 APCs of the Armenian forces in a span of 44 days of war. The loss was simply overwhelming and Armenia could not afford to take it anymore. It might be the highest tank casualty in any recent war, without facing any significant tank battle. The lesson learnt was that there is simply nowhere to hide once the heat signature of the tank is picked by loitering ammunition or UCAV. Due to the silent presence of these UCAV systems, the armoured forces become an easy prey to appropriately armed drones. All forces have to take this into account and devise appropriate strategy to save their Tanks/ APCs. Policy makers may even have to choose between tanks and UCAVs (or Kamikaze drones) to defend against enemy Armoured forces. In terms of protection against UCAVs, Gady in his insightful analysis on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict paraphrased Winston Churchill: 'Armour continues to be the worst form of protection for soldiers against UCAVs- except all the others!!'

**Greater Role of Information Warfare (IW):** The importance of IW in modern warfare was established long before. The recent conflicts involving greater employment of UCAVs, featuring HD cameras, took this concept to a different level. Especially, in the Nagorno-Karabakh War 2020, the belligerents expended significant resources in IW, to control the narratives surrounding the fighting, mobilize public opinion and attract the attention of foreign governments in their favour. Azerbaijan took a lead in this race by disseminating HD drone footage of destroying adversary assets and units in social media like Twitter. In the case of Armenia, the drone footage disseminated by Azerbaijan played a significant



role in destroying the morale of their troops and destroying the will to fight for the entire population. The lesson learnt is that the future conflicts might be dominated by IW or media campaign using UCAV footage, to fuel propaganda narratives, manipulate world opinion, create mass unrest, deprive governments of popular support and ultimately destroy the will to fight for the adversaries, which is many times the 'strategic centre of gravity' for any democratic country.

**Counter Measures Against UCAVs:** As discussed above about the difficulty to detect drones even by the latest systems like Russian Pantsir, developing countries must invest in the right kind of technology to defend against UCAVs. Drone technology is developing faster than its counter measures. Modern armies are preparing to counter the onslaught of autonomous drone swarms, which is deemed as the most likely future of drone technology. Conventional missile defence would not be enough to counter such threats due to the high cost of projectiles and multiple threats presented by drone swarms. As displayed in the Libyan war case, an effective EWS in coordination with layered air defence can prove effective. On the other hand, developing countries can only field a limited number of conventional AD units guarding only vital points. Therefore, armed forces need to consider new ways to camouflage and harden their forces. Ground forces tactics on dispersal and deception including training to limit electronic and thermal signature also need to be reinvigorated. In addition, they must strive hard to acquire directed energy weapons, handheld jamming systems, laser weapons, capable EWS etc. to be deployed up to unit level, in order to avoid the fate like Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh War. India has already focused on developing drone swarming technology and directed energy weapons. The details discussion of possible countermeasures is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is a demand of time to do so in further research for a clearer understanding of the necessary preparations for any future conflict.

**Shaping the Force Structuring:** The tactical lessons as discussed above can lead us to some military-strategic deductions in regards to deciding the approach to force structuring and future investments by developing countries. The particular case of the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict should work as an eye-opener about how investment in the cutting-edge technology compared to the adversary can upset a long-standing military balance. Developing countries may not be able to dramatically restructure themselves into Network Centric Warfare capable forces due to economic implications. They should rather take efforts through novel doctrines to integrate the legacy platforms with emerging technologies to derive the best possible outcomes. The conflicts which have been discussed vividly illustrate that there will be high attrition in terms of armour, AD assets and air assets within a very short time in any future conflict with a potent adversary. Developing countries should invest in platforms and weapons that are more disposable and replaceable with less cost. Since the UCAVs offer the advantage of airpower, sensors and precision

guided weapons at a dramatically discounted price compared to manned aircrafts, therefore army aviation may need to review their future investments in manned close air support platforms. Another very important consideration in force structure that was re-confirmed through these conflicts is that a smaller ground force, well protected from air attacks will prove to be a wiser investment than a larger fleet of armour and artillery without AD cover. Though these trends in warfare were established decades ago, the same is now the case when facing even a smaller adversary armed with UCAVs.

**Lessons Related to International Relations (IR):** Some very important IR lessons were resurfaced through the recent conflicts which are worth mentioning. All three conflicts illustrated that technologically superior allies are important to prevail in modern warfare. The technological support provided by Turkey to GNA in Libya and to Azerbaijan in Nagorno- Karabakh War 2020 proved invaluable. The strategic partnership of Azerbaijan with Israel also allowed them to acquire top-notch military equipment. The Assad government in Syria also prevailed due to the support of Russia. On the other hand, Russia supplied equipment to both Azerbaijan and Armenia and later acted as a mediator for a ceasefire! In the Libyan War, it was observed that the rising drone powers are probably using it as a testing ground for new technology. Regional powers like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey and major powers like Russia, China, France, USA have been seen meddling in the power politics maintaining a considerable degree of deniability through the use of drones. These trends should work as a warning sign for developing countries. They need to find reliable allies who can provide them with reliable superior technologies in order to prevail in any future conflict. Side by side they need to maintain the technological and military capability to prevent situations like Libya where the battle space has become the playground of regional and international players.<sup>10</sup>

### **Conclusion**

UCAVs are considered to be one of the most promising disruptive technologies of the Twenty-first century, which have proved themselves capable of providing a technological edge to the belligerents of modern warfare. Accordingly, many developing countries including the neighbouring ones of Bangladesh have been investing in the related technologies in order to remain relevant in the future conflicts. The recent episodes of conventional conflicts as discussed in this paper are testaments of the enormous potential of this emerging technology, which are definitely going to create a lasting impact in the strategies and force structuring of the armed forces for the coming decade. The lessons derived from the critical analysis of these conflicts need to be absorbed by the field commanders and policy makers of armed forces for the prudent employment of their outfits and organisations in any future conflicts.

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#### Brief Biography



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## **Bangladesh Army-Bangabandhu's People's Force: How They Saved Lives during COVID-19 Pandemic with One Minute Bazar**

Major S M Shafiqur Rahman, psc, Engrs  
and  
Squadron Leader Arham Jahin Majumder

### **Introduction**

The formation of Bangladesh Armed Forces took place during the Liberation War in 1971 which gave birth to a free country. Responding to the call of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, members of the Armed Forces joined the war alongside the freedom-seeking common mass. Together, they won their freedom at the cost of three million lives. Right after the war, Bangabandhu took the initiative to reform the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force which would work to secure the freedom and sovereignty of the country. As a true leader, he taught us to be honest, brave and patriots. He taught us to be trustworthy and to have a mentality to sacrifice our lives if need be. His addresses, famous for his statesmanship, wit and wisdom, thus have been inspiring generations of armed forces members. On 11 January 1975, he delivered a speech at Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) then located in the Cumilla Cantonment on the occasion of the passing out parade of the first batch in which he remarked, "Dear Soldiers of Bangladesh, you will be the People's Force; don't forget that you are more than just a professional armed force; you are more than just a soldier! You will have to cultivate your own crop if the circumstances require you to do so..."<sup>1</sup>

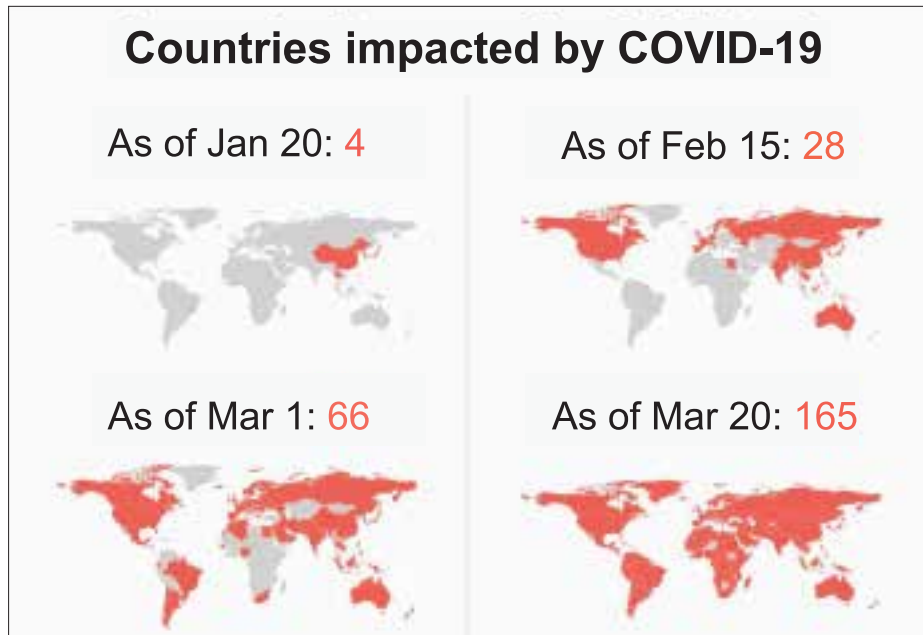
This historic speech of Bangabandhu reflected on the future activities and much-needed modernization of Bangladesh Army to enable it to become a beacon of hope and icon of multi-faceted accomplishments in the global forefront. To be precise, this particular iconic speech first coined the idea, "People's Force," which is an important criterion of Bangladesh's defence policy.

### **Bangladesh Confronts COVID-19 Pandemic**

Bangladesh has been making positive headlines around the world thanks to the dynamic leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the right successor of the Father of the Nation. She too, like her father, is a true patriot and one of the most powerful women leaders of the country. Under her leadership and guidance, the Bangladesh Army has been working relentlessly in many nation-building projects to ensure the development journey from an aid-dependent country to one that can boast about its self-reliance powered by manufacturing and innovation. The role of Bangladesh Army in handling the Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) crisis showed the capability to deal such a complex problem. While the world was planning to march towards another prosperous year in the field of economic development and

innovation, the outbreak of coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, China towards the end of December, 2019. Novel Coronavirus rapidly spread throughout the globe impacting more than 180 countries which are shown below in Map-1:-

**Map 1: Rapid Spread of Coronavirus around the World**



Source: businessinsider.com

The respiratory virus which spread overnight among people of different nations caused a pandemic the world didn't witness in a century. Just like all other nations, Bangladesh too eventually realized that to save the people of the country, maintaining social distancing and ensuring individual hygiene policy would be of utmost importance. In line with the guidance from the Honourable Prime Minister, The Chief of the Army Staff gave directives to the Bangladesh Army to join the war against the virus to save the people of Bangladesh. Besides ensuring hygiene safety and social distancing, the Bangladesh Army also rendered humanitarian help to the distressed citizens. As a part of that plan, the 24 Infantry Division came up with an ingenious plan of organizing a unique service namely "One Minute Bazar" and "One Minute Eid Bazar" for the poor people and "One Minute Boikali (Evening) Bazar" for those who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. The 34 Engineer Construction Brigade worked as a pathfinder to conduct this first of its kind shopping service of essential consumer products through a disciplined open space shopping ground. The whole concept was so perfectly implemented that it earned massive kudos from all and sundry. It proved once again that the Bangladesh Army is a 'People's



Force' and besides having their indomitable attitude as a professional troop of soldiers, they can also set up humanitarian examples nationwide.<sup>2</sup>

### **One Minute Bazar**

“Thakbo ghorey shustho besh, apni hasle hashbe desh” (Let’s stay inside our homes to remain in good health so that your smile can make the nation smile)-this was the slogan for the One Minute Bazar. A never-seen-before, one of its kind model market was initiated by Bangladesh Army to extend their help towards the people living under the poverty line. Under this initiative, vegetables and products were bought from the marginalized farmers directly to keep the wheels of the rural economy moving. At the same time, rice and vegetables were distributed freely among those who are impoverished and jobless to ensure that the food and nutrition deprived families are not deprived of the essential nutrients. During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, this humanitarian initiative was started on May 13, 2020 from the port city of Chattogram. The initiative, receiving applause from all quarters of the society, was adopted around the country for the welfare of a number of approximately 0.2 million families. This was not a usual relief distribution system that takes place whenever people of the countries are in distress due to any natural calamity. At the core of this idea is the essence of providing service to those who need it most! First, a list was prepared with names of poverty-stricken people from different areas; then they were given tokens and finally they were allowed to pick the products they think they would need for their families’ nutrition. Every participant was allowed only one minute to pick their needed items. The program, conducted in different areas, provided one thousand families every day with hygiene products, masks, soaps, rice, and various types of vegetables like okra, bitter gourd, pointed gourd, pumpkin, gourd etc.<sup>3</sup>

### **Photo 1: A Bird’s Eye View of the Ongoing One Minute Bazar**



Source: Author's collection



### **One Minute Eid Bazar**

In 2021, the Muslims had to observe Eid-ul-Fitr at the height of the pandemic. The lockdowns, coupled with economic hardships, withered the spirit of the festive occasion, especially for economically impoverished people.

To provide respite to those enduring the impacts of the pandemic, Bangladesh Army arranged One Minute Eid Bazar. The one of a kind initiative provided people access to new dresses for the occasion. The Bazar also offered nutritious and delicious food items. More than fifty thousand people were facilitated with access to new clothes and good food on Eid-ul-Fitr. This event received accolades for bringing the joy of Eid amidst the dark clouds of the pandemic.

### **Photo 2: A Good Number of Women were Beneficiaries in the Initiative to Collect Their Food Items from One Minute Eid Bazar**



Source: Author's collection

### **One Minute Boikali Bazar**

The whole world is reeling from the deadliest pandemic of the 21st century. As the situation prolongs, economies around the world have entered into a synchronized recession. The economic fallout has multidimensional implications that will persist for years to come. The hardest hit from the extended lockdowns is the poorest segment of the population. A significant portion of the section lost their livelihoods and is facing an uncertain economic future. To pull them out of the grip of that uncertainty, One Minute Boikali

(evening) Bazar was launched under the supervision of the Bangladesh Army. This Bazar allowed people from different professions, including rickshaw pullers, domestic helps, hawkers and transportation workers. Around 20 thousand helpless families received products that will ensure hygiene and food safety free of cost.

**Photo 3: People Entering at the Bazar Ground**



Source: Author's collection

### **Ensuring the Right Price for the Farmers and Marketing of Agricultural Produces**

One-minute bazar usually offered five different types of vegetables. Just like everything else, the supply chain of the agricultural products from rural areas faced backlash in many other countries, an evaluation report from Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development reported. Bangladesh was no exception to this. The total shutdown of the transportation system, which is the lifeblood of marketing of agro items supply chain, disrupted the whole system resulting in the waste of tons of fresh produce every day. The marginalised farmers had to count a terrible number of losses every day. During this precarious moment, the Bangladesh Army came to rescue. The authority of the Army bought these vegetables from the farmers residing at the remote corners of the country. These produces were then transported by the vehicles of the armed forces and made available in the One Minute Bazar. This whole process was complex and

needed a lot of coordination. Nevertheless, Bangladesh Army has time and again proved that they are capable of making the right decisions even during the toughest of crises and their impeccable coordination sense enabled the process to be completed in a successful manner. The benefits of such initiatives on the economy are manifold. As mentioned earlier, the emerging economy of the country is hugely dependent on the informal economy in which farmers play a pivotal role. If their easily perishable products don't have access to the market at the right time, that will incur a not only loss; in turn, farmers will not have money to buy seeds and prepare for the next yield. At the receiving end of this vicious cycle, are the farmers, who form the backbone of the rural economy and live in a rickety condition with shattered confidence. With their One Minute Bazar initiative, Bangladesh Army didn't let this vicious cycle repeat and saved tens of thousands of farmers from going bankrupt and thus saved the rural economy. At the same time, buying their products from them at the right price kept their faith intact in the system which cares about them.

#### **Ensuring Nutrition for Poor Families**

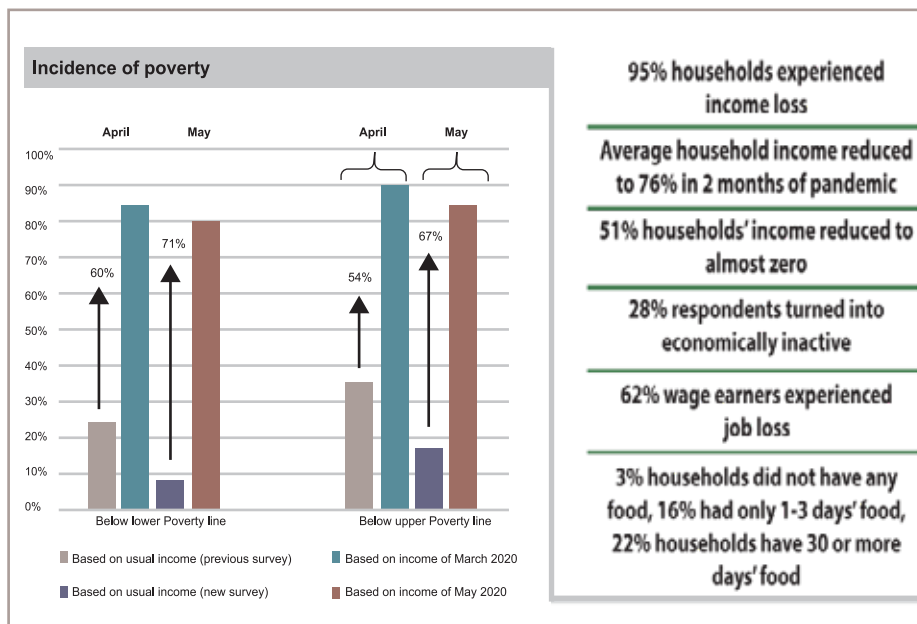
The corona pandemic exposed people to many unpleasant scenarios. While the nation was in shock to see the number of deaths and infected people rising every day; there were doubts of an upcoming food scarcity that might end up affecting the poor people of the country in a severe way. A report of *Dhaka Tribune* citing data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics shows that the poverty rate in Bangladesh declined to 20.5% at the end of 2018-19 fiscal year from 21.8% in 2017-18 fiscal year. As a matter of hope, the extreme poverty rate also came down to 10.5% from 11.3% during the period. However, the pandemic caused the national poverty rate to rise to 29.5% as of June, 2020 due to Covid-19, thanks to the unprecedented job cuts and lockdown induced standstill. Other studies also show a similar result. Of those, quoting Economic Development Research Organization (EDRO), *The Business Standard* mentioned about 16.5 million people to be pushed to poverty. Another statistics from research conducted by BRAC enunciates that among the study population, 95% of households experienced income loss with 57% households having their income coming to zero.<sup>4</sup>

**Photo 4: Essential Food Elements were Made Available for the People**



Source: Author's Collection

**Figure 1: Graph Showing Rising Incidence of Poverty**



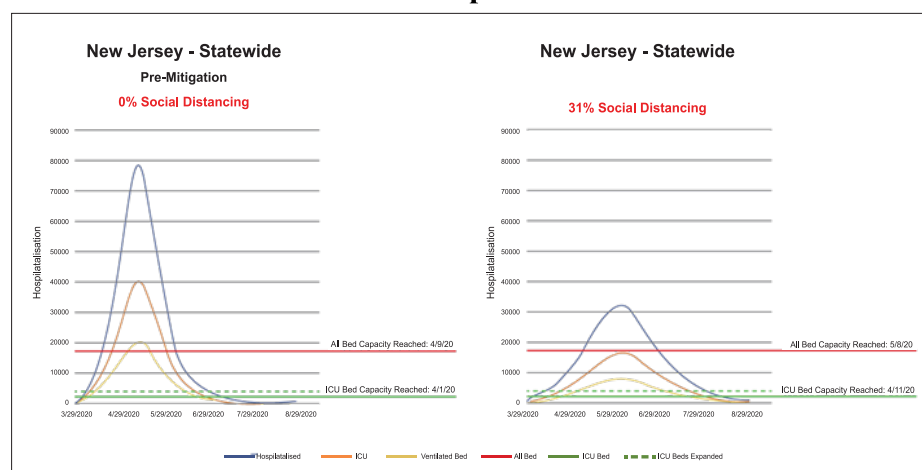
Source: Author's self-construct

From such data, this is easy to understand that the challenges before the low-income families were paramount during the lockdown. Their failure to secure a daily wage resulted in many of these families starving and taking a huge toll on their daily nutrition intake, as suggested by FAO. The same organization's National Poverty and Social Protection Adviser Professor Mizanul Haque Kazal, citing a study of BRAC, said that the income of 95% of families in Bangladesh has reduced due to the COVID-19 and 51% of families' income neared zero. He said that 3% of families had no food, 16% had food for one to three days and 22% had food stock for one month, as per the report of *New Age*. The generous initiative of Bangladesh Army was so time-appropriate that it instantly solved the crisis of such nutrition deficiency among families with young children. The types of vegetables that were chosen to distribute are easy to grow and even to find. They all are packed with a considerable amount of vitamins and minerals. These vegetables are easy to cook too. Thus, with food and nutrition, Bangladesh Army not only put a happy smile on the faces of those families but also took care of their bodily needs of vitamins and minerals. <sup>5</sup>

### Maintaining Social Distancing

One of the most remarkable beauties of the One Minute Bazar initiative is that people participated in a disciplined manner. As per the government directives, maintaining a social distance of 3 feet was extremely important because the public health specialists cautioned to do so to curb the spread of the virus. There were countries around the world that conducted research to show the effect of social distancing and how it can flatten the curve, meaning that the infection rate was coming down.

**Figure 2: Side-by-side graphs Compare Demand for Hospital Beds if the State Had Done Nothing to Slow the Virus's Spread versus an Assumed 31% Reduction in Interpersonal Contact**



Source: Author's self-construct



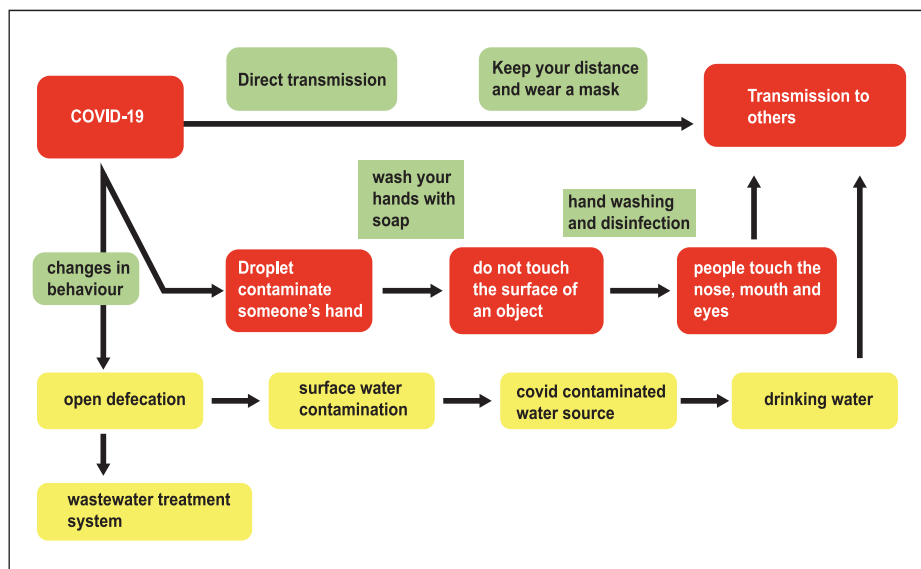
The phrase “flattening the curve” refers to using the best practices in an attempt to slow the rate of spread of COVID-19. This ensures that medical facilities are not overwhelmed. If a large group of people in a specific area were to contract the infection within a timespan of a few days, medical resources including hospital beds, and medical personnel could be overwhelmed and be unable to care for all who are sick. A surge such as the one above is portrayed on a graph as a tall narrow curve. If the same number of patients came to the hospital for treatment but were instead spread out across a month or two, the graph would then take on a shape of a short, much flatter curve. This “flattening of the curve” ensures that hospitals and medical centres are treating patients with COVID-19 on a more manageable, more spread out basis. <sup>6</sup>

Maintaining a queue and entering the shopping ground in a disciplined manner to collect their produce-this was a great lesson learned and adopted by the participating families. More than 0.5 million participants of the One Minute Bazar ensured that this is possible to conduct such systemic shopping even during the most chaotic national crisis.

### Hand Washing and Mask Wearing

It is well-known that a vaccine to save us from the COVID-19 is yet to be available soon. During the lockdown, many speculations emerged about the origin, spread and infect ability of the virus because scientists were still trying to figure out how to reduce the spread of the virus.

**Figure 3: How COVID-19 Spreads**



Source: Author's self-construct



Raising mass awareness among the people about hygiene choices was of utmost importance and scientists and public health experts around the world unanimously agreed on the fact that something as simple as hand washing can save millions of lives, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, though there were doubts about the spread of the virus through the air, eventually we realized that this deadly virus can be airborne and henceforth, the importance of wearing a mask is beyond any question now. CDC and other health authorities around the world suggested the same to avoid the spread of the virus and infection.<sup>7</sup>

**Photo 5: How a Mask Works as an Active Barrier of Spread of Virus**



Source: Author's self-construct

During the One Minute Bazar initiative, there were strict provisions to ensure such hygiene rules. People who participated had to enter the Bazar ground standing in a queue and then entering, they had to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds as per the WHO rules and then collect their masks. The benefit of such disciplines for mass hand washing is that these people went back to their families and taught their family members about the importance of hand washing practice. Thus, healthy practice enabled to make people aware of the tricks to avoid getting infected by the virus.

**Photo: An Old Lady Being Helped to Get Her Hand Disinfected**



Source: Author's collection

**A Great Lesson in Discipline**

Bangladeshi citizens are law-abiding in nature. This One Minute Bazar initiative proves once again that the people participate wholeheartedly and spontaneously provided there is a systematic procedure. The whole initiative was successful because the thousands of participants never showed any haste to break the queue. They all maintained the social distancing rule of 3 feet, which was highly commendable. What came as a surprise to many was that each bazar was monitored by only 15-20 members from the Bangladesh Army. On the other hand, around 1000-1500 people availed of services from this Bazar and with a minimum number of monitors from the Army. The systemic coordination has proved that when any initiative follows a system considered to be pro-people, it is attended properly and it is bound to succeed.<sup>8</sup>

**Photo 7: People Cooperated with the Army for Maintaining Discipline**



Source: Author's collection

### **Connecting with the Common Mass**

Not that the soldiers of the Armed Forces are alienated from the common mass but the fact is many of the citizens hardly have the opportunity to come in contact with them during their lifetime. During peacetime, Bangladesh Army renders a very key role in the development of mega infrastructure projects mostly. The pandemic created a unique opportunity for the members of the armed forces to come closer to the distressed humanity. It is well known that Bangladesh's peacekeeping force has a stellar track record around the world for their development and humanitarian ventures. Both in the national and international press stories their valiance and sacrifice have been highlighted. As the challenges unfolded with the increase of the pandemic, the Army did not step back from flaunting that humanitarian side. While the whole nation was working side by side to face the calamity; the Bangladesh Army's "One Minute Bazar" concept integrated several financial and supply chain-related issues to solve a much bigger problem-the problem of starvation and lack of nutrition. While it is already described how meticulously the whole programme was conducted, one thing must be mentioned and that is coming in contact with the few soldiers on the open field of the shopping zone, the people were elated and felt proud of the selfless services rendered by the devoted members of the peoples Army.<sup>9</sup>

Their trust in humanity was reinstated. Even people with disabilities were allowed to collect their essential products from the market with an ease. Due to

the lockdown, it is natural that people will not be in the best state of their minds. As a result, there were chances of chaos or mismanagement in conducting such an experimental project. But to everyone's surprise, only a few 15-20 soldiers managed a sea of people, made them aware of their health basics and learned lifesaving hacks and at the end enabled them to collect stuff many of them didn't even dream of having during the intense moments of their lives. The bonding they shared is simple and speaks volume about the human-to-human caring and sharing attitude. The poor and ultra-poor people were made to believe that they were not forgotten during the trying times. Their gesture of gratitude would surely add a new chapter in the glorious history of Bangladesh Army.<sup>10</sup>

**Photo 8: Army's Connectivity with the Common People**



Source: Author's collection

**Conclusion**

In the 50 years of the glorious history of Bangladesh the common people of the country have always found Bangladesh Army by their side during trying times. The valiant members of the armed forces are ever ready for sacrificing their lives for humanity during any crisis. This is why the common people too always have pinned their hopes on the capability of the members of the armed forces. The COVID pandemic was no less than a war situation inside the country. This time the war wasn't against any human army. This time the war was against the deadly unseen virus which has already brought even the most developed countries of the world to their knees. With great grief, it must be noted that many personnel of the Armed Forces have passed away in the war



against this pandemic while they were busy serving humanity. So far hundreds of Armed Forces members have been infected and by the grace of Almighty Allah many of them have been cured so far. The heroic role played by the brave soldiers of the country during OP COVID SHIELD<sup>11</sup> will be written in golden letters of history.

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### **Brief Biography**



**Major S M Shafiqur Rahman, psc, Engineers** was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers with 50th BMA Long Course on 28 June 2004. A graduate of Defence Services Command and Staff College, Mirpur, he also accomplished his BSc in Civil Engineering from MIST and achieved Masters of Business Administration (MBA) from University of Dhaka. He served in staff and Instructor capacities in Bangladesh Army. He completed his UN mission as staff officer in Mali in 2015-2016. Currently the officer is serving as Second in Command, 20 Engineer Construction Battalion.



**Squadron Leader Arham Jahin Majumder** was commissioned in the GD(P) branch with 53 Flight Cadet Course (54th BMA Long Course) on 01 June 2006. A science graduate from National University he served as Flying Instructor of Bangladesh Air Force Academy. He completed his UN mission as contingent member of BANAIR in Democratic Republic of the Congo. Currently the officer is serving as General Staff Officer Grade 2 (Joint Operations), Operations and Plan Directorate, Armed Forces Division, Prime Minister's Office.



## **Stability at the Bay of Bengal: A Gateway for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Bangladesh**

Lieutenant Commander Kazi Shakur Mahmood, (C), BN

### **Introduction**

In the context of the contemporary world, stability at sea vis-à-vis secured maritime environment is the foremost concern for the countries, especially for the littorals. Sea has been considered as the lynchpin for a country's economic aspiration. Sea-borne commerce, exploration and exploitation of marine resources, tourism and consumption of free energy, coastal welfare and the overall prospect of a blue economy are among the major dynamic forces for the socio-economic development of a state. Nonetheless, to achieve secure economic progress these fragments also demand a stable, well monitored and prospective maritime environment that incorporates rule of law and good order at sea.

Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is emerging as the fulcrum of power politics.<sup>1</sup> As a co-located and major area of IOR, the Bay of Bengal (BoB) is emerging as one of the most important and complex maritime theatres which connect trade passage between east and west Asia significantly. The paradigmatic shift of the concept from 'Asia-Pacific' to 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'<sup>2</sup> and unprecedented power dominance competition between regional, extra-regional and global powers have drawn apprehensive focus on BoB. Besides, the geographical location of BoB also makes it more vulnerable to multi-dimensional traditional and non-traditional threats which can potentially hinder the development agenda of the littoral states. Consequentially, these volatile and changing scenarios of the BoB generate substantial security concern among the regional littoral states, especially for an economically developing state like Bangladesh.

Historically, Bangladesh is a prominent maritime nation that considers BoB as her 'Third Neighbour.' Bangladesh thrives on economic aspiration by utilising enormous potential of the BoB. As a land-based resource starved-country, Bangladesh is pursuing a stable maritime environment to safeguard her maritime interests. It is evident that, preservation of maritime interests like maritime trade, ship building and repairing, blue economic growth, coastal welfare will always be pivotal components to ensure sustainable socio-economic development. However, this persuasion is always at high risk from the persisting traditional and non-traditional threats. The scope of hegemony by regional powers, power-gaming, absence of effective maritime laws and orders to ensure good order at sea, inadequate collaborative approach between littoral states, regional conflicts will always place the stability at BoB on the edge of the knife. As a result, the prospect of economic progression of Bangladesh by utilizing her maritime assets is at a questionable state.

To overcome these serious but far from insurmountable challenges Bangladesh needs to look for policy adaptation, integration of all sectors to harmonise the effective utilisation of maritime interests and to ensure proper implementation of laws and orders. Besides, Bangladesh also needs to look for a collaborative approach to exterminate the possibility of any security threats and regional instability. Furthermore, Bangladesh needs to develop mutual trust with littoral states for information sharing to bolster prospect of a secure, well-governed and stable BoB. These actions will also require synthesizing the progress which has been already made and identifying the opportunities for the further scope of improvement.

This paper shall endeavour to articulate present day context of socio-economic prospects for the littoral states related to BoB. Thereafter, various sectors for the socio-economic emancipation of Bangladesh will be highlighted. After that, existing challenges to the stability at BoB and its impact on Bangladesh will be discussed. Finally, a pragmatic approach to overcome existing challenges to ensure a stable and safe maritime environment as well as to thrive for the country's socio-economic emancipation will be highlighted.

### **Geographical and Historical Milieu of the Bay of Bengal**

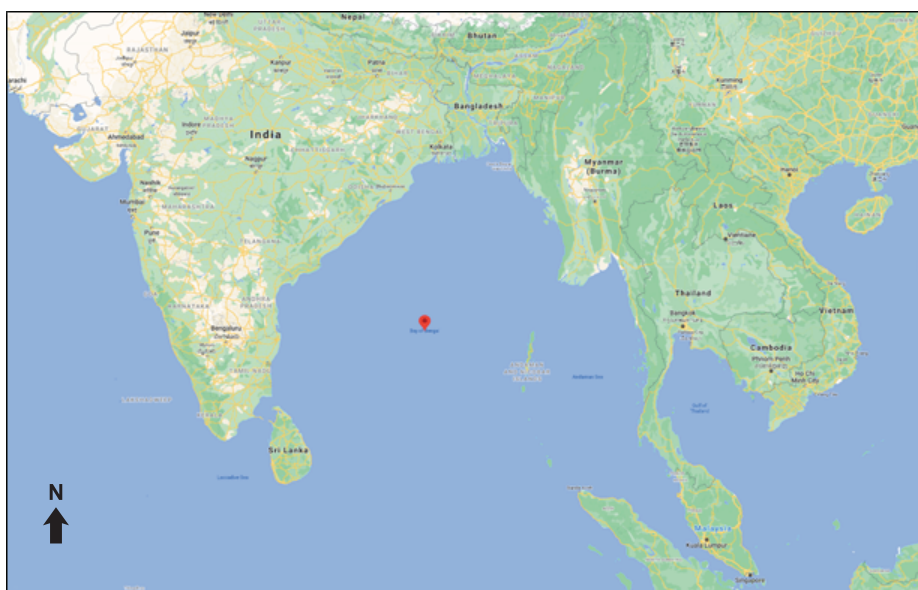
Geographically the Bay of Bengal is located in the north-eastern part of the Indian Ocean. This bay is a large but relatively shallow embayment occupying an area of about 21,73,000 square km. It lies roughly between latitudes 5° and 22° N and longitudes 080° and 090° E. BoB is encircled by Sri Lanka and India to the west, Bangladesh, West Bengal and Odisha of India to the north, Myanmar and the northern part of the Malay Peninsula to the east. The bay is about 1,600 km wide with an average depth of more than 2,600 metres. The BoB along with the adjacent Andaman Sea comprises a great maritime area covering nearly 30,00,000 square km, which is also known as 'Greater Bay of Bengal'.<sup>3</sup>

Historically, the maritime area of the Greater BoB was explored and exploited by many seafaring nations. *The Greek Manual of Sailing Direction* named 'Periplus Maris Erythraei' written in the 1st century AD, described sailing routes from the Red Sea to coastal areas along the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal to eastern India north of the Ganges delta. Great Egyptian geographer Ptolemy (100-170 AD) described voyages from the Ganges across the Bay of Bengal to the Strait of Malacca which reveals the trend of trading voyages during the 2nd century AD.

Chinese presence in the BoB dates from the Nan Song dynasty (1127–1279 CE). Renowned Chinese Admiral Zheng led voyages for the purpose of spreading trade and extending Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean region. The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama led the first European voyage into the bay in 1498. The other major European nations- Dutch, French and British made their voyages across the BoB during the period of the 16th to 19th century. About 25

million people crossed this bay between 1870 and 1930 for migration as well as to look for trade opportunities. The prominence of this bay became even greater especially for the littoral states during the post-World War II period (1939-45) and continues till the present date. Presently, BoB is emerged as the hub of socio-economic development for the littoral states due to its geological, economic, political and most significantly for strategic characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

**Map 1: Maritime Area of the Bay of Bengal**



Source: <https://www.google.com.bd/maps>

### **The Bay of Bengal: Contemporary Context**

The growing importance of the BoB is implicitly and explicitly linked to the rapid economic and military expansion of its littoral states. The littoral states- Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are having a combined GDP of 3.7 trillion USD which features one of the world's fastest-growing economies.<sup>5</sup> Economic growths of the littoral states are mostly affiliated with the exploration and exploitation of the blue economy sectors like shipping and ports, fisheries, marine biodiversity, renewable energy, tourism and hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation. By adopting appropriate policy measures and ensuring public-private partnership along with regional harmony and cooperation, these sectors can thrive for the macro economic growth as well as economic prosperity.

BoB is located in an inimitable strategic location that connects two significant water bodies of the world- the Indian and the Pacific Ocean.

Approximately 66 percent of vital oil shipments for India, Japan and China and 33 percent of the world's bulk cargo pass through the southern part of the BoB. As a result, BoB is reflected as the economic highway of the world. This has provided the impetus for the growth of maritime enterprises of densely populated littoral countries.

Geographically, BoB interweaves some of the world's major sea lanes and strategic choke points like Malacca Strait, maritime communication between the Strait of Hormuz and Malay Peninsula and further east etc. As a result, strategic importance of this bay is enumerating significantly. The growing geostrategic and economic significance of the BoB is leading towards unprecedented jostle due to the overlapping interest and increased competition among regional and extra-regional powers like India, China, USA and Japan. China has ushered in a new era of maritime connectivity and cooperation by introducing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which has established economic connection with the BoB littorals through infrastructure development projects such as power plant construction, port development and augmentation of railway and road network for better seaborne and inland connectivity. To counter China's emerging economic influence in the region, India, USA, Australia and Japan are also focussing on maritime security strategy, military and economic development of the regional states.<sup>6</sup>

Like both sides of a flipping coin, such geopolitical and economic competitions introduce enormous possibilities for socio-economic prospects as well as vulnerabilities to the maritime security environment for littorals. Bangladesh is not an exception as well. To overcome the maritime security challenges and to subsidize the optimum economic prospect through maritime activities in the BoB, Bangladesh needs to focus on identifying the prospecting fields, challenges with relation to the stability at BoB and finally to identify the policy and actions required to subdue these challenges.

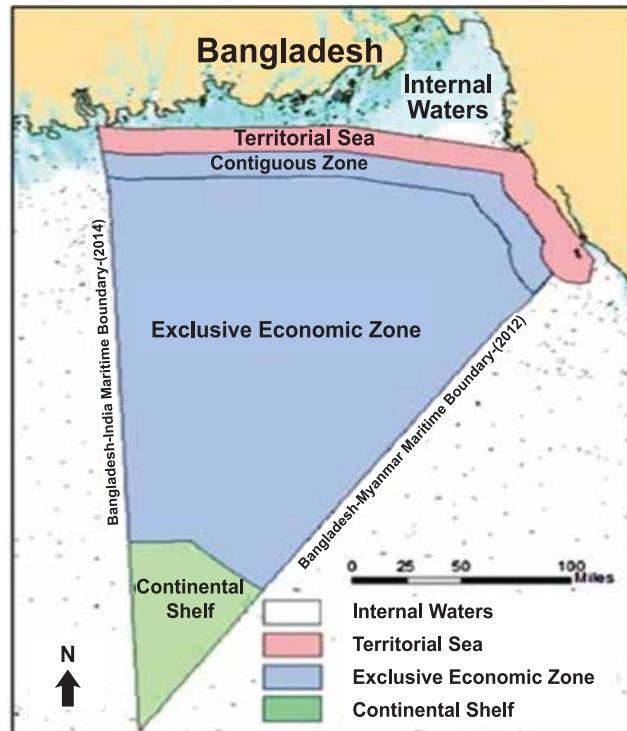
### **The Bay of Bengal: Prospect of Socio-Economic Emancipation for Bangladesh**

Bangladesh, the northernmost littoral state of the BoB is surrounded by the two neighbouring states India and Myanmar on three sides. The country is open to the south to the BoB, which is considered as the 'Third Neighbour.' Traditionally, Bangladesh depends on BoB significantly for her maritime trade which is considered as the 'Life Line' of the country for economic sustenance, fishing and other maritime activities. Considering the depleted land based resources, BoB offers an enormous field of opportunities for the country's socio-economic prospects.

The two important verdicts regarding delimiting maritime boundary between Bangladesh-Myanmar in 2012 and Bangladesh-India in 2014 allow Bangladesh to exercise her sovereign rights over 1,18,813 sq km incorporating

an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 200 NM and a claim of Extended Continental Shelf up to 354 NM. Certainly it is a vast area that generates concerted commercial and economic interests for the socio-economic boons of Bangladesh.

**Map 2: Maritime Boundary of Bangladesh**



Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Maritime-Area-of-Bangladesh-MoFA>

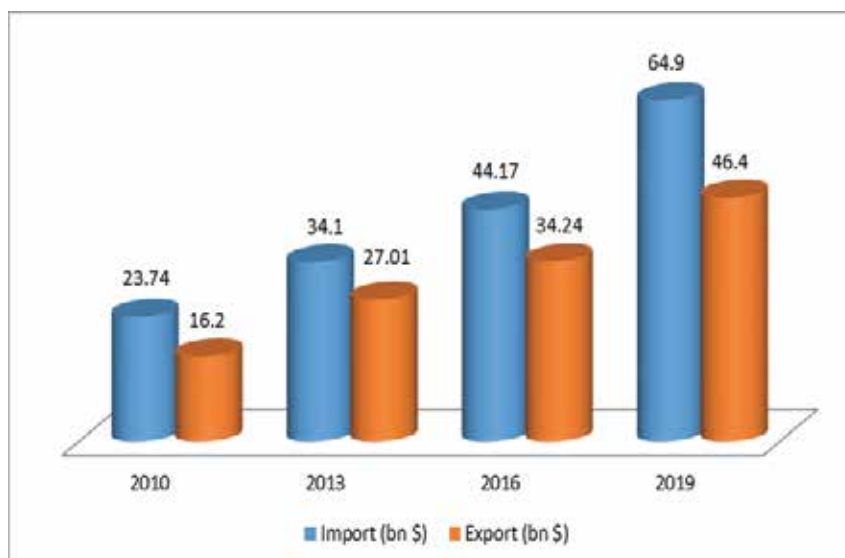
Besides, the geo-political and geo-strategic interests of the regional, extra-regional and global superpowers have also instigated the prospect of infrastructural development for Bangladesh. India, China, Japan and USA- all the countries are showing their interests in the port infrastructure development, automation and development of port security and cargo management system and the installation of an integrated coastal surveillance system for effective and continuous surveillance in Bangladesh. These all generate huge possibilities for Bangladesh to boost its economic prospects.

However, to ensure an effective and concerted effort for the socio-economic boon of the country, the arena for maritime prospects needs to be identified first. This paper makes an attempt to articulate a range of productive economic sectors which can contribute emphatically to the ultimate development of Bangladesh.



a. **Maritime Trade:** Bangladesh is a developing country whose economy is inextricably connected with maritime trade. Approximately 90% of the export and import trade are traversing through the sea. As a result, seaborne trade is considered as the 'Umbilical Cord' of the country for economic progress. The critical goods for the survival of the country like raw materials for garments and industries, machineries, food grains, fertiliser, military hardware, automobiles, POL- all are imported through the sea route. The main export items like apparel, jute material, fish and leather goods are also exported to various parts of the world by shipping. To mitigate the country's gruelling demand, maritime trade in terms of export and import is also experiencing exponential growth each year. As a result, Bangladesh is intrinsically dependent on her maritime trade which is justifiably contributing to the country's economic progress.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 1: Statistical Overview on Maritime Trade Progress of Bangladesh**



Source: Statistics Department, Bangladesh Bank

b. **Maritime Ports and Infrastructure:** As a maritime nation, the maritime ports of Bangladesh are the main gateway for import and export trade. The main two sea ports-Chattogram and Mongla are handling the lion share of the cargoes. In 2020, Chattogram port alone transported more than 90% of the total cargoes transported. With the growing need, Bangladesh government is also focussing on developing the cargo handling capacity of existing sea ports. These activities include installation of numerous cargo-handling equipment, developing cargo management and transportation facilities and construction of new terminals.



Besides, construction of new sea port Payra and deep sea port in Matarbari are also taken in hand for the efficient, fast and increased volume of cargo shipment. At the same time, the capacity development of inland riverine ports is also under active consideration of the government. These will indubitably boost the economic progress of the country by developing scope for handling huge volume of cargoes through maritime ports as well as by also creating plenty of job opportunities for the local people.

**c. Shipbuilding and Ship Recycling Industries:** Bangladesh is having a renowned historical past in shipbuilding that stretches back over several centuries. Most ships and boats built to date were designed for use in inland or coastal waters. Since 2006, Bangladesh has shown significant growth in the shipbuilding industry. Major shipbuilding countries like China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam have shifted their focus towards building large ocean-faring vessels for which less intensive labour is required. This has left a void in the building of small-sized coastal and ocean-faring vessels with a capacity not exceeding 25,000 DWT.<sup>7</sup> Bangladesh earned 170 million USD by exporting small and medium-sized ships. Besides, this sector generates a significant amount of workable force. Presently, approximately two million people are directly or indirectly involved with shipbuilding industries. Subsequently, shipbuilding industries are having huge potential in terms of job opportunities, industrial development and steady flow of revenue. Apart from shipbuilding, ship breaking is also a profitable industry in Bangladesh. At present, Bangladesh is having approximately 125 ship breaking yards with nearly a million people connected with this sector. In terms of Global Ship Breaking Trend, Bangladesh ranks 1st as per gross tonnage and 2nd as per number of ships scrapped every year. This sector also provides raw materials for shipbuilding, construction, re-rolling and steel mills of the country. With sound policy framework and eco-friendly infrastructure, ship breaking sector can achieve more benefit for Bangladesh in future.

**d. Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture:** Fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Bangladesh represent the most productive and dynamic sectors in the country. These sectors play a noteworthy role in food security, employment, and foreign exchange earnings in the economy.<sup>8</sup> Nearly 17 million people are involved directly or indirectly with the fisheries sector which contributes more than 3.5% to the national GDP of Bangladesh. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report, Bangladesh is ranked 3rd in terms of fish production from inland water bodies and 5th in terms of aquaculture production in 2018. However, Bangladesh is still lagging far behind in deep-sea fishing. Government is now taking fundamental drive to explore the potentials

of deep-sea fishing. By harnessing the prospects of marine fisheries and aquaculture, the livelihood of the people may observe constructive development.

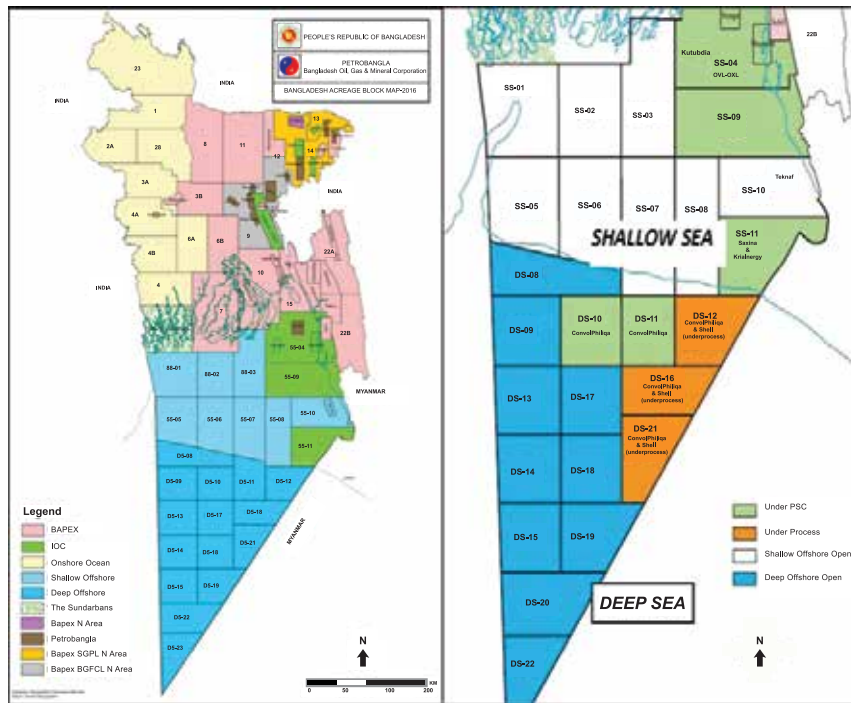
**e. Marine Biotechnology:** Marine biotechnology explores the sea to develop life-saving pharmaceutical drugs, chemical products, enzymes and other industrial products. Though Bangladesh is in the infant stage in this sector, nonetheless, the opportunity for exploiting this sector is highly promising. The untapped microorganisms of the BoB offer the reasonable possibilities to explore in future for marine biotechnology. Perceptibly, this trend will be able to flourish the food, medical and health sectors of Bangladesh.

**f. Hydrocarbon and Mineral Exploration:** The new millennium has brought accelerating utilization of oil, gas and minerals. The utilization of natural resources like oil, gas and marine minerals is driven by growing societal and industrial needs which may be met by turning to the ocean. Bangladesh is yet to assess the true potential of its offshore oil and gas prospects.<sup>9</sup> Approximately 26 trillion cubic feet (tcf) gas reserve has so far been discovered in Bangladesh. Of which, only about 1 tcf is located in the offshore areas. Nonetheless, the shallow offshore blocks of Bangladesh adjacent to the Myanmar blocks may be found with promising interest because of the recent discoveries of several large gas fields (Shwe, Shwe phu, Mia) in the Arakan offshore of Myanmar. The other deep sea offshore blocks are yet to be explored.<sup>10</sup>

Besides, considering the huge energy demand, Bangladesh imports about 1.2 million metric tons of crude oil. The government has also initiated the process of importing expensive Liquefied Natural gas (LNG) for meeting the gas deficit of the country. Furthermore, the entire coastal belt has been explored with the discovery of 17 deposits of potentially valuable minerals such as zircon, rutile, ilmenite, leucoxene, kyanite, garnet, magnetite and monazite.<sup>11</sup>

An adequate and uninterrupted flow of energy through BoB in connection with proper exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons and minerals from sea areas may enhance the growth of different industries which will create huge employment opportunities for the local community.

**Map 3: Shallow and Deep Water Offshore Blocks of Bangladesh in BoB**



Source: <https://seis.news/bangladesh-deep-water-exploration>

g. **Renewable Energy:** Taking into account the depleting reserves of non-renewable hydrocarbons and the detrimental impacts on the earth's climate, the popularity of renewable energy is growing day by day. Bangladesh also has enormous potential in the marine renewable sectors like producing electricity from wind, tide and current. This can bolster the country's energy security as well as can generate new job opportunities for people.

h. **Coastal and Marine Tourism:** Bangladesh is having the world's largest unbroken sea-beach of 120 km in length and a vast coastline. These can promote an immense potentiality to develop sustainable coastal and marine tourism in the country. In Bangladesh, coastal and marine tourism is already in operation. But the growth of the country's tourism is lagging behind comparing to the world due to improper planning and insufficient coordination between the private and government sectors. As a result, the contribution of this sector to the economy of Bangladesh is still well below the mark. With careful and meticulous planning to develop the marine tourism sector, economy can be benefited by harnessing opportunities pertinent to the country's coastal and marine tourism.

Apart from the above-mentioned sectors, there are many other sectors like sea salt production, carbon sequestration by utilising mangrove forests etc. which can also contribute to the socio-economic wellbeing of Bangladesh. It is clearly evident that Bangladesh is having an enormous prospect for ensuring her socio-economic development with the appropriate, concerted and sustainable utilisation of the maritime sectors under the blue economy initiative as highlighted above. Nonetheless, this also demands a well-governed and well monitored stable maritime environment in the BoB, which can be hindered by existing security challenges.

### **Contemporary Security Challenges to the Stability in BoB**

In the context of present-day scenario, the security gamut of the BoB is extremely volatile and always at the edge of the knife. Though, at present, there is no mentionable security threat to the stability in BoB, nevertheless, the existence of various states and non-state actor's overlapping interests, the political instability of littorals, power dominance rivalry between regional and extra-regional countries and the natural disaster phenomena can give birth to the chaotic impact for the overall security environment. The security challenges for a littoral state like Bangladesh is further highlighted below:-

a. **Traditional Security Issues:** Traditional security issues are generally developed from conflicting interests and political disagreements among the state parties. Although, it is clearly discernible that the existing security environment in the BoB is well stable, however, it may exacerbate at any given moment. The delimitation of the Extended Continental Shelf, land border demarcation issues, unresolved border killing issues, Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) influx – all these issues along with other controversial political interests may generate reasonable security concerns. Any kind of coercive measures by the neighbouring states will pose a serious security threat to the maritime trade and other maritime activities of Bangladesh. As a result, the economic progression of Bangladesh will be stalled.

b. **Non-Traditional Security Issues:** Non-Traditional security threats are episodic and variegated in nature, hence difficult to detect. Usually these threats are generated by the non-state actors and also may emanate from land due to 'chaos of the littorals'.<sup>12</sup> In the present world scenario, Moises Naim's five wars of globalization-illegal trade in drugs, arms, intellectual property, people and money are rapidly booming. Due to the paucity of land resources, the sea is becoming the field of fray. As for that, non-traditional security issues like maritime terrorism, piracy and armed robbery, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, illegal goods (drugs, arms) trafficking, maritime pollution, other trans-border crimes are becoming persistent in the maritime arena.<sup>13</sup> BoB is not an exception to that. Maritime pollution, IUU fishing, trans-border illegal drugs and human trafficking including FDMN influx issues are having serious concerns for the littoral state like Bangladesh. The substantial growth of these security

issues and insouciant acts of the littorals will have a grave impact on the overall progress of Bangladesh.

c. **Presence of Regional and Global Superpowers:** Explicably, the paradigmatic shift from 'Asia-Pacific' to 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' has generated unprecedented geo-strategic and geo-political importance of the BoB. The presence of regional and global powers like China, India, the USA and Japan has increased the security alarm in many folds for a littoral state.

To maintain economic, political and military interests in the IOR, China is considering BoB as an important arena for the connectivity of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Taking into account the strategic vulnerabilities of Malacca Strait, China has planned to ensure the uninterrupted trade and energy flow through BoB by developing sea-land connectivity between China and Myanmar and land corridor under Bangladesh-China- India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC).<sup>14</sup>

**Map 4: Proposed Route of the BCIM Economic Corridor**



Source: <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2019/04/29/bangladesh-china-india-myanmar-bcim-economic-corridor/>

The expansion of the Chinese Sphere of Influence in the BoB has created substantial security disquiet for India. Being a regional maritime power, India considers the BoB as its own courtyard. As for that, India is focusing on the impregnable connection with the ASEAN countries through the 'Look East' and 'SAGAR' policy to strengthen her multilateral engagements. Besides, India is also connected with Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) to protect her maritime interest in the IOR along with the aim to counterbalance China's influence. Other members of Quad- Australia, Japan and USA are also showing



their interests in the BoB theatre by introducing security engagement along with the littorals and also by ensuring infrastructural development to counter China's progress.

All these events may create a volatile tense situation in the BoB theatre at any escalated situation. As a result, the political, economic and environmental phenomena of a littoral state like Bangladesh may encounter unfavourable consequences.

**d. Stateless Communities:** The political conflict, climate vulnerability and economic instability of a state create stateless communities who all are vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers. The unruly brutal oppression by Myanmar military force over ethnic minority Rohingya people forced them to seek refuge in Bangladesh. FDMN population is now suffering from a lack of income sources which ultimately induce them for maritime migration or to involve in crime. In either case, these become a serious security concern for Bangladesh and also create a devastative impact on the stability of the BoB.

**e. Lack of Coastal Welfare:** Lack of economic activities for coastal population and climate vulnerabilities can drive coastal communities to engage in illicit maritime activities like illicit maritime trade, drug trafficking, IUU fishing, piracy or armed robbery etc. Though Bangladesh is witnessing positive growth in the Human Development Index (HDI), nonetheless, there are also considerable limitations in the arena of public health, education and standard of living.<sup>15</sup> Without enforcing proper monitoring and adaptation measures, these issues can have serious obligations over the BoB stability as well as to the socio-economic progress.

**f. Absence of Rules of Law:** The absence of appropriate rules of law for a coastal state generates a higher degree of corruption, lesser public service provision and the issues of economic exclusion. Over the years government of Bangladesh has articulated several laws and orders for different sectors to ensure good governance. However, the practical implications of these laws and orders are not monitored and the integration between different law enforcing agencies and associated stakeholders is not well coordinated. As a result, weakened law enforcement and monitoring can inflict instability issues in the BoB.

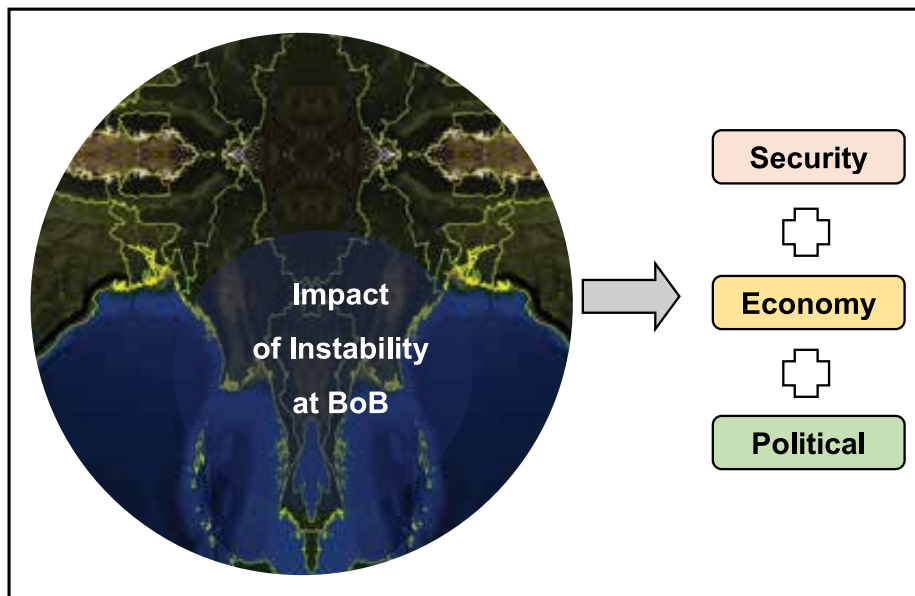
**g. Inadequate Coordination at Regional Level:** The transnational maritime security issues require coordinated and concerted efforts of the affiliated maritime stakeholders at the state and regional levels. At present, very limited cooperative engagements have been incorporated between BoB littorals to mitigate security challenges, which are quite insufficient. Various regional organisations like BIMSTEC, BOBLME, ASEAN, SAARC etc. are also focussing on concerted efforts. However, due to regional hegemony, mistrust, bureaucratic complexities and unwillingness, the prospects of collaboration and coordination are becoming jeopardised.



### Impact of Instability at BoB

The overall impacts of instability at BoB can induce devastating outcomes over a sea-dependent country like Bangladesh. These can be categorized into three broad categories as highlighted below:-

**Figure 2: Impact of Instability at BoB**



Source: Author's self-construct

a. **Security Impact** : Instability at BoB will have severe security impacts for Bangladesh. The spans of traditional and non-traditional threats along with catastrophic climate vulnerabilities are having scopes to easily tear down the security of the maritime environment. Besides, the absence of concerted implementation of rules of law against trans-border maritime crime, unemployment of coastal communities and the influx of FDMN can also play havoc on the security of BoB. The security challenges of maritime arena of Bangladesh will have a serious impact on land domain as well.

b. **Economic Impact**: It is clearly evident that the economy of Bangladesh is explicably intertwined with the maritime activities involved in BoB. Unstable environment in BoB will have a detrimental impact on maritime trade, fishing and other maritime exploration and exploitation activities. Besides, the blue economy initiative of Bangladesh government will also be hindered. As a result, the economy of Bangladesh will be petrified and the socio-economic progress will experience terrific impediments.

c. **Political Impact:** Any deviation in the security environment of the BoB will have an impact on the overall political stability of Bangladesh. The absence of economic activities for the coastal communities related to the sea will create pressure over the land-based livelihood. Moreover, maritime mixed migration from Bangladesh to the regional countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand will also impose political pressure over the incumbent government. In a broader view, instability in the BoB can have catastrophic effects on the existing stable political environment of Bangladesh.

### **Pledging Stability at BOB: Ways Forward**

Comprehensively, the socio-economic emancipation of Bangladesh is extremely connected to the maritime domain. The seaborne trade and other maritime activities under the blue economy initiative directly contribute to bolster the national economy as well as the livelihood of the people. The uninterrupted trade flow and other maritime activities also demand a stable and well-governed maritime environment. Presently, Bangladesh government has taken numerous initiatives like 'Blue Growth through Blue Economy Initiative', implementation of 'Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) – 14' and regional maritime security cooperative engagement with littoral states of BoB through BIMSTEC for sustainable socio-economic progress. However, considering the multifarious dimensions and volatile security matrix of BoB, these steps are not sufficient to thrive for the country's sustainable socio-economic growth. As a result, pragmatic, concerted and well-coordinated efforts at the national and regional level is the demand of time, which are enumerated below:-

a. **Steps at National Level:** Steps at the national level incorporate various internal policy development, coordination and collaboration among various maritime stakeholders, knowledge and awareness building, information sharing, capacity enhancement measures and other associated issues. Necessary steps at the national level required to ensure stability at BoB are as follows:-

#### **(1) Promote Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)**

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) includes efficient knowledge, monitoring and implementation of appropriate measures to ensure safety & security of the marine areas, sustainable socio-economic progress through maritime activities and the preservation of the marine environment. The prospects of sustainable socio-economic development of Bangladesh by utilizing various opportunities offered by the BoB need to be transmitted to all levels to eradicate sea blindness.<sup>16</sup> Government may initiate various 'Maritime Awareness Developing Programme' by taking on board all the stakeholders associated with the maritime domain.

## **(2) Integration of Various Maritime Policies**

Presently various maritime organizations, agencies and law enforcing agencies are working to explore the prospects of BoB by incorporating various national policies. These policies are not fully supportive and complementing each other. As a result, concerted and effective efforts for optimum utilisation of maritime resources from all concerned are not being generated. Maritime Affairs Unit under the Ministry of Foreign affairs (MoFA) can take effort to align and entwine all existing policies and also to develop new policies to fill up the vacuum for synchronized output of maritime activities.

## **(3) Coastal Zone Management**

Considering the proximity of climate vulnerabilities, marine pollution and over exploration and exploitation of marine resources, Bangladesh needs to adapt to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). This will include policy formulation, planning, programme development and implementation. The Coastal Zone Policy of Bangladesh adopted in 2005 also needs to be restructured taking into account existing challenges and future scope of opportunities to obtain pragmatic solutions.

## **(4) Cooperation and Coordination among Maritime Stakeholders**

To ensure a favourable and stable maritime environment in the BoB, cooperation and coordination among various government, private and NGO organisations/institutions are having substantial credibility. Necessary information sharing and policy adaptation among various maritime stakeholders will implicate concerted and comprehensive engagements for sustainable socio-economic progress.

## **(5) Policy for Coastal Welfare**

Approximately 35 million people of Bangladesh are living in the coastal area. These huge numbers of people are extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and climate vulnerabilities which will subsequently lead towards maritime migration or involvement in illicit activities. Bangladesh government needs to develop and promulgate special coastal welfare programme in collaboration with ICZM programme to expunge climate vulnerabilities as well as to ensure sustainable livelihood for coastal communities.

## **(6) Capacity Enhancement of Law Enforcing Agencies**

Bangladesh Navy (BN) along with Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) is ensuring law and order in the maritime zones of Bangladesh. At present, 07-08 BN ships and 03 BCG ships are patrolling in the maritime area of Bangladesh round the clock to safeguard territorial integrity, ensure uninterrupted trade flow and to continue blue economy

activities. Nonetheless, the huge maritime area (1,18,813 sq km) is still vulnerable to security threats generated from multiple sources. As for that, capacity development in terms of efficient crew training, surveillance and monitoring capabilities and increasing the number of platforms are having the essential needs for Bangladesh.

#### **(7) Enforcing Maritime Governance and Good Order at BoB**

Enforcement of maritime governance to ensure good order at sea is extremely required for a coastal state to ensure stability at sea. All the maritime stakeholders need to work in the same frequency to overcome the existing challenges for obtaining amicable solutions. Bangladesh government will have to focus on integrated policy development and collaboration between various law enforcing and other maritime organisations to establish effective maritime governance and good order at the sea. Bangladesh will also need reliable and credible cooperative engagements with other littorals of BoB to handle trans-border security issues for ensuring good governance, which will eventually ensure sustainable economic development.

#### **(8) Friendly Engagement with Other Countries**

‘Friendship to all, malice to none’-is the key principle of the foreign policy of Bangladesh. At present, Bangladesh is maintaining a balanced diplomatic relation with the littoral states like India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia. Besides, Bangladesh is also having friendly and effective relations with extra-regional countries like China, USA and Japan who all are having gruelling geo-strategic and geo-political interests in this region. All these countries are contributing significantly to the socio-economic and infrastructural development of Bangladesh. As a result, Bangladesh needs to maintain an equilibrium condition to obtain a win-win situation with all interested parties maintaining her territorial integrity, political stability and socio-economic development. Bangladesh also needs to pursue at regional and international level an amicable solution for FDMN crisis, which might be a grave maritime security concern for the littorals in the coming days.

**b. Steps at Regional Level:** Regional level steps include effective and essential collaborative approach between regional states, information sharing, involvement of regional organisations and mutual trust building measures. The following steps at the regional level can be effective to ensure stability at BoB:-

### **(1) Mutual Trust and Relation Development**

As the sea facilitates common interests like accessibility, transportation, resource etc., these can also generate dispute among maritime nations. Besides, the hegemony of regional powers may also create mistrust and in insecure environment. As a result, mutual trust and relation development through bilateral or multilateral engagements (agreement, dialogue, policy development etc.) among littorals can impose a stable and secured maritime environment. Cooperation rather than confrontation can be the key to regional prosperity.

### **(2) Smart Border Management**

For a maritime nation, the necessity of smart maritime border management along with effective maritime security cannot be over-emphasised. It is evident that most maritime crimes like maritime piracy, illicit traffic, IUU fishing, pollution etc. are trans-national in nature. Considering that, the optimum result can only come through joint and collaborated efforts for continuous monitoring, patrolling, information sharing and law enforcement among the littoral states, maritime stakeholders and agencies working in this sector.

### **(3) Real-time Maritime Picture (RMP) and Information Sharing**

In order to have a stable and secured maritime environment in the BoB, practical and open sharing of RMP and information related to common maritime security issues is having immense importance. Littoral states of BoB are having the unwillingness to share information among themselves and prefer to operate on a 'need to share' basis. Considering the complexities of the maritime security environment, states need to overcome this limitation and shall operate on an 'open to share' basis. In this regard, BoB littorals can pursue to develop an integrated Regional Information Fusion Centre (RIFC) network. This network will be connected with IFC-IOR of India for necessary information sharing. It is pertinent that, effective and timely sharing of RMP and information can enable law enforcing agencies to prevent various maritime crimes.

### **(4) Cooperative Security Engagement**

Cooperative security engagement between law enforcing agencies of BoB littorals can significantly contribute to maintain stability and enhance maritime activities for regional prosperity. Frequent bilateral or multilateral security exercise, symposium and coordinated patrol can be arranged to promote mutual trust and enhance interoperability among the law enforcing agencies of littoral states.

**(5) Promulgation of Regional Security Policy**

Promulgation of regional security policy to ensure safe maritime trade and to eradicate trans-border maritime crimes can implicate fundamental importance. The policy will provide guideline along with the commitment of regional states to ensure safe passage and favourable environment for maritime connectivity. This will also oblige nations to enforce rule of law to elope maritime challenges. Bureaucratic complexities need to be cast away by the littorals to promulgate and enforce a pragmatic regional security policy.

**(6) Contribution of Regional Organizations**

Cooperative regional organizations like BIMSTEC, ASEAN, SAARC, BOBLME and IONS can work to promote the necessity of stability and security at BoB for regional socio-economic progress in collaboration with the regional states. They can patronize to develop concepts for cooperation not confrontation, transparency not secrecy, assurance not coercion among the littorals. Besides, these regional organisations can also work to promote the requirement of maritime collaboration, information sharing and interoperability among the regional states. They can also arrange multinational symposium, workshop, and seminar to develop MDA and the concepts of socio- economic development.

**(7) Promoting Regional Connectivity**

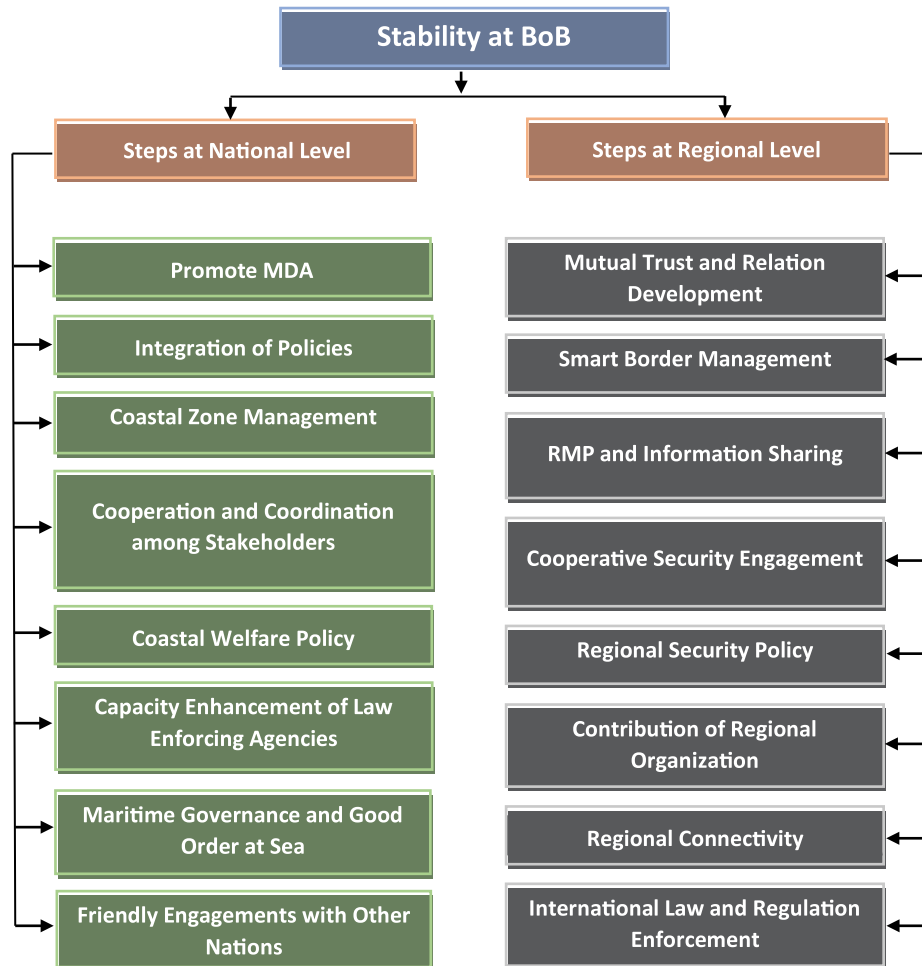
Regional multilateral connectivity between Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) through developing economic corridors for trade and transportation can contribute significantly to the overall economic development of the region. States will have own and common interests to protect the region for ensuring a smooth transition of trade. As a result, this connectivity will enable to promote the overall security environment of the BoB and the littoral states.

**(8) Enforcement of International Regulations and Laws**

Enforcement of international regulations and laws is the fundamental component to ensure a stable and safe maritime environment. Policy, laws and regulations developed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS), International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) can be implemented by the littorals of BoB to eradicate any unlawful activities. A collaborative effort from all the regional states for implementing such laws and regulations will bring desired stable, safe and prosperous maritime environment in context of BoB.



**Figure 3: Measures to Ensure Stability at the BoB (At a Glance)**



Source: Author's self construct

### Conclusion

The BoB is one of the significant maritime areas at present considering its geo-strategic and geo-political magnitude. Significant amounts of trade and transportation traverse through this bay between east and west Asia which generates its economic and strategic importance. The littoral states of the BoB are having one of the world's fastest-growing economies which incorporate massive economic growth of the region. Besides, the extra-regional and global superpowers like China, Japan, the USA are also developing their strategies to exploit this bay for political, military and economic benefits. These phenomena create huge opportunities as well as security challenges for the littoral states like Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a maritime nation whose socio-economic emancipation is intrinsically affiliated with maritime activities. Maritime trade and other blue economy initiatives of the government are ensuring smooth and sustainable economic progress for the country. For uninterrupted maritime activities, a stable, safe and well-governed maritime environment is paramount. Recently, the growing geo-strategic importance of the BoB creates serious security concerns for Bangladesh. Besides, the hegemony of regional powers, conflicting maritime interests among littorals and the presence of non-traditional security challenges like maritime terrorism, piracy, IUU fishing, illicit trafficking, pollution can also pose serious security challenges for an economically developing country like Bangladesh.

To overcome these alarming challenges, the Bangladesh government has already concentrated on the stability and security of the BoB. The government has initiated various programs and policies like Blue Economy Initiatives, SDG-14, Delta Plan - 2100 etc. for sustainable conservation and safeguarding maritime interests. However, these drives are not sufficient enough to mitigate the colossal tasks for ensuring stable and safe maritime arena for socio-economic emancipation of Bangladesh. As a result, Bangladesh needs to thrive for concerted and coordinated effort at national and regional levels to ensure a stability and safety at BoB. Necessary initiatives for maritime domain awareness, integrated policy development, cooperative engagements at various levels, capacity enhancement and information sharing between law enforcing agencies, regional connectivity and the role of regional organizations (BIMSTEC, ASEAN) can contribute significantly to impose stability in the BoB. BoB offers intangible amount of options for the socio-economic progress of Bangladesh. To utilise that, Bangladesh needs to be the vanguard to usher in a new era of cooperative and concerted engagements at all levels to ensure a stable and safe maritime environment, which will subsequently guide towards sustainable the socio-economic development.

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### **Brief Biography**



**Lieutenant Commander Kazi Shakur Mahmood, (C), BN**, a BSc (Pass) graduate from Bangladesh University of Professionals joined Bangladesh Navy as an officer cadet of 2006/B batch and was commissioned in the Executive Branch of Bangladesh Navy on 1st June 2008. He served in various billets of Bangladesh Navy. Presently he is appointed as General Staff Officer-2 (Plans/Navy) in Armed Forces Division.

## **Bangladesh-India Relations: The Geopolitical Aspects of Enhancing Cooperation**

Major Hasanur Rahman, psc, Infantry

### **Introduction**

The People's Republic of Bangladesh, is enclosed by India on all sides except for Myanmar in the southeast and the Bay of Bengal in the south. It shares the largest land border of about 4096 kms with India. The geographic location of Bangladesh and its stretched border with India are crucial to the bilateral relationship between the two countries. As a big neighbour to sub-continental countries, undoubtedly, India is assuming the central position in the region. Moreover, as a formidable power in the region, India owns the maximum responsibilities to present a peaceful region taking its neighbours specially the smaller countries like Bangladesh towards the amicable solutions of the bilateral issues. It is important to mention that, geo-political importance of Bangladesh as well as her economic opulence is also recognised by the world superpowers viz; the USA, China in particular.

Bangladesh-India acquaintances are both social and financial. The two nations are bonded by lingual and communal ties. They share not only a mutual history of struggle for freedom but also an everlasting sense of both fraternal and familial ties. Such shared characteristics are already reflected in multi-dimensional engagements at different levels of association. However, there is still a necessity for better understanding, exchange, participation, discernment and less subtlety in both external and internal affairs. Against this backdrop, this paper will interpret the foreign policies of Bangladesh while examining her diplomatic ties with India. Thereafter, it will endeavour to rationalize the expectations based on the issues of influence and sort a few ways ahead in Bangladesh-India relationship.<sup>1</sup>

### **Foreign Policy of Bangladesh**

With the membership of the United Nations, D-8, Commonwealth, OIC, SAARC, BIMSTEC and many other organisations; Bangladesh maintains warm diplomatic relations in the international arena. She follows a moderate foreign policy, the principle being: "Friendship to all, malice to none." Mutual respect, non-intervention and promotion of Global Peace are the essence of her international relationship. Apart from the partnership with China and Russia for defence procurement; Bangladesh maintains strong diplomatic ties with India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and other regional countries. Bangladesh has also set an epitome of global humanity by providing shelters and basic needs to one million persecuted Rohingyas from it meagre resources.<sup>2</sup>

### **The genesis of the Affiliation with India**

India and Bangladesh share a common history and socio-cultural heritage which is reflected in multidimensional relations with Bangladesh. The early history of the region is characterised by internal fighting, a succession of Indian empires and a scuffle between Buddhism and Hinduism for dominance. The borders of modern Bangladesh were formed after the partition of India and Bengal in August 1947, when this area became East Pakistan as a part of the newly established state of Pakistan following the Radcliffe Line. Present-day Bangladesh came out as a sovereign country in 1971 after breaking away from Pakistan. Relationship with India was forged in that very year as India actively contributed to the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Since then, their strategic partnership has been remarkable in areas like security, trade and infrastructure development among many others. Recently, it has expanded over newer areas like cyber security, blue economy, nuclear energy and even outer space.<sup>3</sup>

### **Development of the Relationship**

At present, the state of diplomatic affinity with India is an all-time high. A large number of Bangladeshis visit India where Indian Mission in Dhaka issues about half a million visas every year. Beside this, thousands of Bangladeshi students study in India. In the field of international business, Bangladesh has one of its largest trading partnerships with India. Moreover, High-level exchanges, visits and meetings take place alongside wide ranging people to people interactions between these two close neighbours. However, Bangladesh-India bilateral relationships are still below the potential. Bangladesh bears a great possibility to position itself as a transportation hub for South Asia, South East Asia by upgrading roads, railways and ports for her strategic location. Better connectivity can include linking the national power grid, gas pipelines, and telecommunications to overcome shortages in certain areas and create synergy.

India offers Bangladesh a vast productive hinterland that would provide far greater opportunities for economic growth, than if it were to rely exclusively either on its domestic markets or on markets much further away. Bangladesh is in an ideal position to gain from granting rail and road transit to India as well as from selling natural gas to it. The Asian highway from North East India to Kolkata via Bangladesh will benefit both countries. India should address the Bangladeshi concerns over unfavourable trade balance, while the Bangladesh Government should show sensitivity to India's security concerns. Illegal immigration from Bangladesh has been a cause for friction with India. The two governments have resumed high level interaction to address all related issues.<sup>4</sup>

The settlement of maritime boundaries between two nations in 2014 has shown new ways of diplomacy between countries. The historic signing of the

'Land-Swap' accord signed between Bangladesh and India in May 2015 has further cemented the relationship. This has offered a new light of hope for more than 53,000 lives in 162 enclaves. The same year, Bangladesh has also given India access to the China-built port, bearing strategic implications. Chattogram port has been developed by China and is part of its famed "string of pearls." India, by using the port can reap immense benefits both in economic terms, and also as an expression of greater trust with Bangladesh.<sup>5</sup>

On 05 October 2019, India and Bangladesh signed seven agreements which include cooperation in the hydrocarbons sector, agriculture and textiles, high impact community development projects to be carried out by India, trans-border elephant conservation, supply of equipment for improving garbage disposal in Bangladesh's Barishal city, and creation of a CEOs Forum ; and also launched three projects after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina held wide-ranging talks to further strengthen bilateral ties. Bangladesh and India have an agreement to use the Chattogram and Mongla ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India, to withdraw 1.82 cusecs of water from Feni River for a drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town in Tripura and also the sourcing of bulk liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from Bangladesh to Tripura by using Bangladeshi trucks . Another project was the inauguration of a skill development centre that will provide basic as well as advanced training to 200-300 Bangladeshi youth annually.<sup>6</sup>

### **Relationship in Defence Sector**

Defence cooperation between India and Bangladesh has also been raised to new heights in recent years. The first ever ministerial level defence dialogue between Bangladesh and India; the Annual Defence Dialogue 2018 (ADD 2018); was held in April 2018 at New Delhi. The Bangladesh side was headed by the Principal Staff Officer (PSO) of the Armed Forces Division (AFD) while the Indian side was headed by the Defence Secretary of the Government of India. It was during this dialogue that the MoU regarding the 500 million US\$ Line of Credit was formalized through signing of an 'Agreement'. The dialogue also outlined the framework of defence cooperation and engagements by the armed forces of the two countries. This is to be noted that, following the ADD 2018 the three services i.e. the Army, the Navy and the Air Force of both the countries have held services level 'Staff Talks' to materialise the defence cooperation framework that had been agreed upon at the dialogue. Staff talks at Army and Navy levels were held at New Delhi while the Air Force Staff Talk was held at Dhaka.

Followed by the 'Inaugural Coordinated Patrol' by the two navies last year, two ships from each navy jointly conducted a maritime patrol in the Bay of Bengal this year. This is a landmark event that will ensure better coordination to ensure maritime security in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>7</sup>



The Chief of the Army Staff (CAS) and the Chief of the Air Staff (COAS) from Bangladesh visited India in 2020, as part of bi-lateral tours. Likewise, the Chief of the Navy Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy also visited Bangladesh. Besides, the CAS of Bangladesh Army visited India for the second time to attend the BIMSTEC Armies' Multi-national Military Exercise (MILEX 2018) and the CNS of Bangladesh Navy visited India to attend the 10th Year Celebration of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). In addition to the visits by the services chiefs, several senior level defence delegations from both Bangladesh and India also visited each other's countries. Delegations from NDCs of both the countries also exchange visits as part of their respective training curricula.

To enhance the mutual understandings and further strengthen the mutual bonding, Bangladesh Army and Indian Army have introduced different adventure/social exchange programs in 2018. Mentionable are: Visit exchange between the Bordering Field Formations, Visit exchange of Young and Mid-level Couples, Joint Mountain Expeditions etc. Besides the already existing regular exchange programs, such as, the Joint Training Exercise (Exercise SAMPRITI), Joint Cycling Expedition etc. visit exchange of BNCC Cadets and students of Cantonment Public Schools have also been initiated.

Training exchanges between the armed forces of the two countries have also increased recently. Both the Armed Forces are sending officers and men to each other's training establishments. Besides, the Indian Army has organized special customized training for Bangladesh Army personnel. Talks are on to conduct bi-lateral maritime exercises by the navies of Bangladesh and India.

Bangladesh Navy ships conducted port calls at Vishakhapatnam and Mumbai while Indian Navy ships conducted port calls at Chattogram. Besides, Bangladesh Navy ships also participated in multi-national maritime exercises (Exercise MILAN 2018) at the Andaman and Nicobar Island.

A total of 72 Armed Forces personnel and their family members from Bangladesh received medical treatments in different hospitals of the Indian Army last year as part of the medical cooperation between the two Armed Forces. Besides, 24 Freedom Fighters from Bangladesh also received medical treatment in the Indian Army hospitals at Delhi and Pune.<sup>8</sup>

### **Issues of Influence vis-à-vis Expectations**

#### **Water Sharing**

**Farakka Barrage:** Being the lower riparian country, Bangladesh has several issues with India on water sharing. The flow of the lean season stream at Farakka is one of them. In 1996, the sharing of the Ganges waters was effectively settled upon between the two countries. But the real zone of debate has been India's development and operation of the dam followed by insufficiency of water in Bangladesh amid the lean season. People of

Bangladesh are concerned about agriculture and the ecosystem being affected by the Farakka barrage.<sup>9</sup>

**Teesta Agreement:** The other part of upstream-downstream debate is about the Teesta Stream. In June 2011, India and Bangladesh concluded the framework of a 15-year treaty for sharing waters of Teesta and Feni Rivers, a solution Bangladesh has been seeking earnestly. In September 2011, both the countries were expected to sign the agreement during Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit. However, the deal fell through when the Chief Minister of West Bengal refused to approve the treaty, fearing that the loss of a higher volume of water to the lower riparian state would cause problems in the northern region of the state. The Modi government has renewed attempts to settle sharing of Teesta water with Bangladesh.<sup>10</sup>

**Tipaimukh Dam:** Due to the development of the Tipaimukh Dam by India, Bangladesh is severely suffering from the unfriendly natural impacts in its eastern Sylhet region which made the people apprehensive. Further effects of the dam will be the massive environmental degradation, drastic effect on weather and climate, turning a wet cooler habitat into a hot uncomfortable cauldron. Most importantly, due to the dam, navigation in river channels in the Meghna (combined Surma and Kushyara) will face depleted water flow, consequent sedimentation and severity of flooding in the wet season; surface irrigation will be in jeopardy as well. However, both countries have concurred on a joint report gathering to look at the key contentions against the Tipaimukh venture.

### **Insurgence**

India's north-eastern states are distressed by insurgency with different radical gatherings working in the areas surrounding Bangladesh. In CHT Bangladesh itself has been fighting insurgents for a long, till the peace accord with the extremists in 1997. Radicals taking sanctuary in each other's territory or utilising cross-outskirt courses for the transportation of snuck arms may add to the contentions. However, the two nations have agreed to take a strong stance against the cross-border insurgent hideouts.<sup>11</sup>

Bangladesh and India have indicated 1,227 and 77 "offenders" individually. In 2011, a major crackdown on the ULFA in Bangladesh greatly assisted the government of India in bringing ULFA leaders to talks. Bangladesh Army, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB) conducted many similar operations in the Chattogram Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. The Director General of the Border Security Force, K K Sharma appreciated the efforts saying, "Whenever we have information about exodus or insurgents of the "northeastern states" in Bangladesh, the information is shared and immediate raids are undertaken (by the BGB). As a result, the number of training places and hideouts of these insurgents has been reduced to almost zero.

### **Transit**

The transit and transshipment agreements between Bangladesh and India are one of the hotly debated and widely discussed issues. Arguments existed both for and against opening up a route between the Indian cities of Kolkata in West Bengal and Agartala in Tripura through the middle of Bangladesh. Non conformists claimed the deal to be a “sellout” that might destroy infrastructure, while Bangladesh government said it would open up greater economic opportunities. While India and Bangladesh have agreed to reduce customs and immigration documents required for transit purposes and built custom stations at or near the points of entry and exit in each country, not much progress has been made in this regard. Inefficient border clearance not only raises the transaction costs and travel time, but also risks jeopardising the security of the country in terms of criminal elements and illegal goods.<sup>12</sup>

Indian businesses have been able to avail of transshipment through the Ashuganj river port through the Akhaura border but the transportation is yet to gain full potential. Nevertheless, Agartala – Akhaura rail link is expected to bring greater profit for Ashuganj port. India and Bangladesh also signed several milestone agreements for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity between the two countries for trade and cruise movements. “When Indian businesses will get the integrated facilities on transshipment and transit routes within Bangladesh, it would become their preferred network” hoped the Chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority.<sup>13</sup>

### **Maritime Boundary**

The Bay of Bengal, considered the pride of Bangladesh, is the largest bay in the world having a length of 233 km. The countries of the region should maintain a stable relationship among their coastal partners for peaceful coexistence and economic excellence as well. About a four decades, longstanding disputes existed between Bangladesh, Myanmar and India. Negotiations on maritime boundaries had been ongoing since the 1970s. Myanmar and India favoured a delimitation based on equidistance. Bangladesh maintained that due to its position within the concavity of the Bay of Bengal, a delimitation based on equidistance would be inequitable, as it would cause a cut-off effect.

It goes without saying that the recent settlement of maritime boundaries has added a new impetus in the political and economic arena of Bangladesh. A Hague-based international court has awarded Bangladesh 19,467 square kilometers out of 25,602 square kilometers disputed area in the Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh can exclusively exercise its own sovereign rights on territorial water up to 12 nautical miles and a further Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 200 nautical miles into the sea. It is obviously a vast area of commercial and economic interests together with environmental stakes. But the protracted dispute resolutions have posed more challenges for taking control over the area and utilising its sea-bed resources.<sup>14</sup>

### **Repatriation of Rohingyas**

Since the massive exodus of Rohingyas from Rakhine to Bangladesh in 2017, a lot has been written and said about the plight of these unfortunate stateless people. After nearly three years, it appears that the regional community has begun to forget about this persecuted ethnic minority. Getting food guarantees and relatively safe living standards in Bangladesh, the Rohingyas are not so interested to return to Rakhine, where the situation is completely opposite i.e. insecure. Many times, the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) tried to break out of the camps to get assimilated into the local Bangladeshi population hiding the original identity. With the passage of time, it is getting clear that Bangladesh is caught up in a complicated geo-political game involving big powers and is doomed to host the FDMN indefinitely.<sup>15</sup>

Obviously China and India are competing for strategic influence over Myanmar in favour of the national interest, as such, both Beijing and Delhi are on the same page over the Rohingya issue. Bangladesh found that Narendra Modi's government expressed solidarity with the government of Myanmar against the "extremist violence" in the Rakhine state which put her into deep thought. To state further, India also refused to be a part of a declaration adopted at an international conference recently in Indonesia. The Indian parliamentary delegation under Sumitra Mahajan, also dissociated itself from the 'Bali Declaration' adopted at the 'World Parliamentary Forum on Sustainable Development' held in Indonesia. As an influential neighbour, Bangladesh must seek strong support of India to mitigate the issue and without the close support of the latter, it will be very difficult for her to resolve the issue. However, Bangladesh still expects India to deepen and expand its engagements in resolving the crisis. Delhi should retain its long tradition of dealing with refugees that would create its space for a leadership role in the region.<sup>16</sup>

### **National Register of Citizens (NRC)**

While bearing the brunt of the Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh has got a new issue of concern, the NRC. It is a list of people who can prove that they went to India by 24 March 1971, the day before neighbouring Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan. Recently implemented in the north-eastern state of Assam, the final version of the list effectively stripped 1.9 million people in the state of their citizenship. Many have criticized the long and controversial process due to the human toll in Assam. According to BBC Hindi reporter Nitin Srivastava, the prospect of the NRC being introduced in Assam is likely to exacerbate widespread fear within the state. The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill attempts raised new questions as it would assure Indian citizenship to non-Muslim migrants.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from all these issues, the biggest fallout of the NRC updating could be India's relation with Bangladesh, which has been on an upswing since

Sheikh Hasina took over as Prime Minister. Notwithstanding the assurance of Indian Prime Minister to Sheikh Hasina, aggressive comments by a few Indian leaders have been raising anxiety about this contentious issue. Bangladesh already accepted quite a few illegals from India but there is no way it could accept millions. Accepting over a million Rohingyas was an inevitable humanitarian gesture but accommodating the same from Assam would be a diplomatic failure. Bangladesh would not lay a welcome door-mat to such an attempt. It is expected that both the governments would agree to tread carefully on this sensitive issue.

### **Conclusion**

Bangladesh is crucial to the success of India's 'Act East' and 'Neighbourhood First' policies. Pakistan being a contiguous adversary, better financial network and improved cooperation with other territorial stakeholders like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and even China are elementary for India. Precariousness along the fringe areas of Bangladesh must not be allowed to drain Bangladesh's motivation to team up with India. Both the countries need to go beyond the geopolitical impulses and move towards more concrete collaboration alike the Southeast Asians and Europeans. The significance of people to people contact in carrying the relationship forward, must be the focal point for all agreements. More prominent local collaboration, particularly in the field of financial improvement might be a definitive objective of both nations.

The interconnected issues which determine the nature of Bangladesh-India relation is mainly characterized by trade, border killings, drug smuggling, water disputes, security, power and connectivity. However, the friendly relations between these two neighbours were reinforced in the recent past with intense high level engagements at the political and official level. To strengthen the existing strong friendly relation between these two neighbours greater understanding, dialogue, diplomacy and above all regional co-operation are a crying need. Undoubtedly, greater involvement of India by constituting an institutional doctrine with a view to helping Bangladesh in different issues will be the best effort to keep her as a close and trusted neighbour and Bangladesh will repay maximum as she is grateful to her for the contribution in 1971. As rightly pointed out by Sheikh Hasina, Honourable Prime Minister, Bangladesh, "Maintenance of good relations with the neighbours-friendship to all, malice to none is the policy pursued throughout my life."<sup>18</sup>

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### Brief Biography



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## **Bangladesh Armed Forces in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission: An Example of Service and Sacrifice**

Instructor Lieutenant Commander M Rafi Ibna Asad, (H3), BN

### **Introduction**

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations began in 1948 when the deployment of UN Military Observers took place to monitor and maintain the ceasefire during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The Security Council authorized the operation which was named the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Since then, United Nations peacekeepers have successfully taken part in a total of 72 missions around the world, 14 of which are still required to keep ongoing. So far millions of military personnel including UN police and other civilians from more than 120 countries participated in UN peacekeeping operations. The peacekeeping force as a whole received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988.

The world is changing everyday rapidly in all aspects including world politics, fundamentalism, terrorism and war trends. Consequently, peacekeeping operations are getting more challenging and demanding every day. The difficulties and dangers have been raised numerously and the number of casualties and injuries is a point to be noted. With all the unexpected challenges peacekeeping operations are still continued to strive to protect and promote human rights, facilitate the political process, protect innocents and civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections and assist in restoring the rule of law. The United Nations Peacekeepers come from different countries with diverse cultures and speak different languages, but share a common purpose: the protection of vulnerable communities and the provision of support to countries struggling to move from conflict to peace.

### **Development of UN Armed Peacekeeping Force**

In the initial phase, UN missions consisted of unarmed military observers and lightly armed troops used to play primarily monitoring, reporting and confidence-building roles. The primary objectives of the peacekeepers were to maintain ceasefires, stabilize situations and provide crucial support for political efforts to resolve conflict by peaceful means. The first UN peacekeeping observer team was deployed to the Middle East in 1948, during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The mission was officially authorized on May 29, 1948 and later on the date is used as a memorial day to all the UN peacekeepers who have lost their lives known as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The observer team named UN Truce

Supervision Organization (UNTSO) continues to monitor the situation by providing observers for a number of conflicts in the region. After the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947, in 1949, the UN deployed the same type of observer team to the border of India and Pakistan in a similar mission (UNMOGIP). The task assigned to this team was also to monitor the border situation.

In 1956, the UN deployed its First UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to resolve the Suez Crisis which is tagged as the first armed peacekeeping operation. The UN responded to the Suez Crisis with the United Nations Emergency Force to supervise the withdrawal of invading forces. The concept of the United Nations Emergency Force as a peacekeeping force as a means of resolving conflicts among states was initially suggested by Lester Pearson, a Canadian diplomat who, later on, ended his career as Canadian Prime Minister. His idea was to deploy unarmed or lightly armed military personnel from a number of countries serving under UN command in the warring region to observe the peace process. This idea won support for sending a United Nations Emergency Force to the region where warring parties were in need of a neutral party to observe the peace process. Pearson was then unsurprisingly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his work in establishing UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>1</sup> UNEF was the first official armed peacekeeping operation framed on Pearson's ideas. Since 1956, most UN peacekeeping forces have been converted to armed.

### **Participation of Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Operations**

Bangladesh, being a small developing country, it is a matter of pride that she is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations. Just after only 17 years of freedom, this South Asian nation first deployed uniformed personnel to serve with the UNO in 1988 when they were deployed to help monitor the armistice between Iran and Iraq. Bangladesh initiated its first deployment in 1988 with UNIIMOG with 15 military observers. In the same year, Bangladesh also deployed a UN peacekeeping force in UNTAG in Namibia.<sup>2</sup>

Later on Bangladesh Army sent a mechanized infantry brigade of approximately 2,193 personnel as part of the UNIKOM force deployed in Kuwait following the Gulf War. Since then, Bangladesh has been involved in up to thirty different UNPKO's covering as many as twenty-five countries. These deployments include military activities at land, boat patrol at the river, ship deployment at sea, aircraft patrol and other activities. This has covered activities in Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Haiti, Tajikistan, Western Sahara, Sierra Leone, Georgia, Congo, and Côte d'Ivoire. So far, Bangladesh has sent her personnel to at least 45 UNPKO and more than 83,000 personnel of Bangladesh have served proudly in those missions. For more than three decades, the contributions of these brave Bangladeshi men and women soldiers in the countries where they rendered services for peacekeeping have been immensely praised.<sup>3</sup>

**Photo 1: Bangladesh Armed Forces Deployment in UN Peacekeeping Operations**



Source: AFD website

**Female Participation of Bangladesh in UN Peacekeeping Operation**

The female peacekeepers from Bangladesh also play a quite significant role in UNPKO. The country first deployed its female peacekeepers on a UN mission in 2000. Bangladesh Armed forces have deployed the women as peacekeepers in volatile security situations of the field missions which played a significant role in women empowerment and gender mainstreaming. So far, total of 413 female peacekeepers from Bangladesh Armed Forces participated in the UN peace operations. Currently 86 female members from Bangladesh Armed Forces are deployed in different peacekeeping missions. To promote the female peacekeeper participation in UNPKO, the UN has set a target of deploying 16% Staff Officers and Military Observer in the UN peacekeeping operations. Bangladesh has reached 16% already and is planning further to increase women participation beyond 16% very soon.<sup>4</sup>

**Photo 2: Bangladesh Army Female Officer in Mali**



**Photo 3: Air Traffic Services by a BAF Female Officer in DR Congo**



Source: AFD website

In 2015, Bangladesh deployed the first all-female peacekeeping unit in Haiti, composed of 160 female troops. The unit was the subject of the documentary 'Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers.' In January 2019, Bangladesh Army started to include "Female Community Engagement Team" in the Battalion and shall continue deploying the same in all subsequent major contingents in UN peace operations.<sup>5</sup> The statistics of Bangladeshi Armed Forces women participation in the UN peacekeeping is shown in the table below:-

**Table 1: Bangladeshi Armed Forces Women Participation in UN Peacekeeping (as of May 2020)**

Service	Participated	Currently Deployed
Army	362	73
Navy	18	05
Air Force	97	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>92</b>

Source: *United Nations Peacekeepers Journal*, Volume 6, Issue 6, May 2020, p.vii

### Running Peacekeeping Missions Participated by Bangladesh

At present 6742 UN peacekeepers from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force are deployed in 10 ongoing UNPKOs in 10 countries. Obviously a lion's share is from Bangladesh Army out of the total figure. More than 85%, i.e. 4790 personnel from Bangladesh Army are now deployed in various contingents or as Staff Officers/Military Observers in 08 peacekeeping missions. The participation of Bangladesh Navy has remarkably increased over the past years. Bangladesh Navy Ship BNS SANGRAM is deployed in UNIFIL (Lebanon) with more than 100 crew and about 200 officers and sailors are deployed in UNMISS (South Sudan). The Air Force has its helicopters and fixed wing aircraft in MONUSCO (DR Congo). More than 100 Bangladesh Air Force officers and airmen are also deployed in MINUSMA (Mali) for this challenging peacekeeping duty.<sup>6</sup> In addition, a good number of officers from Bangladesh Armed Forces are also working in UNDPKO. Force-wise total completed deployment is shown in the table below:-

**Table 2: Bangladeshi Armed Forces Force-wise Total Completed Deployment in UNPKO (as of May 2020)**

Ser	Bangladesh Army	Bangladesh Navy	Bangladesh Air Force	Total
1	137710	5775	7101	150586

Source: *United Nations Peacekeepers Journal*,  
Volume 6, Issue 6, May 2020,p.vii

### **Position of Bangladesh in UNPKO in Terms of Troops Contribution**

Bangladesh holds a position of glory and success regarding its contribution to the UN Peacekeeping. The quick rise of Bangladesh in the UN peacekeeping role is often discussed in the international forum, media and academic circle as well. Our peacekeepers have played a key role in UNPKO successes. Bangladeshi peacekeepers are now deployed in almost all the troubled areas of the world and their footprints are evident all over. Bangladesh joined the second generation of UN peacekeeping and her troops have shown their dedication and professionalism which helped them to cope up with the diverse situations. Undoubtedly, Bangladesh Army took the leading role and subsequently the sister services, i.e. Bangladesh Navy (BN) and Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) as well as Bangladesh Police have reinforced the peacekeeping forces. Over the last three decades, by showing utmost professionalism, dedication and commitment, these forces have developed efficient Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs), established institutional framework to mobilise for peacekeeping operations, and are in a position to train and deploy effective and adequate forces when the UN calls for it.<sup>7</sup>

Since first participation in UNPKO in 1988, the number of Bangladesh forces has kept on increasing. Bangladesh became a top troop-contributing country (TCC) by early 2000, which has been maintained to date. This is a clear manifestation of Bangladesh peacekeepers' impartial commitment, highest professionalism, utmost dedication and adaptability. Bangladesh had been the leading troops contributing country thrice in the last decade securing the top position in 2011, 2014, 2015 and 2021.<sup>8</sup> Position of Bangladesh during this period in terms of troop's contribution is shown in the table below:-

**Table 3: Position of Bangladesh as TCC from 2010-21**

Year	Position of Bangladesh
2021	1 <sup>st</sup>
2019	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2018	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2017	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2016	4 <sup>th</sup>
2015	1 <sup>st</sup>
2014	1 <sup>st</sup>
2013	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2012	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2011	1 <sup>st</sup>
2010	2 <sup>nd</sup>

Source: *United Nations Peacekeepers Journal*, Volume 6, Issue 6, May 2020, p.v

### **Sacrifices Made by Bangladeshi Peacekeepers**

Fundamentalism, terrorism, political unrest, adverse environments, severe conflicts and even completely different cultures are the major obstacles for the peacekeepers. Bangladeshi peacekeepers have never walked back in the face of danger even when they are at life risk. Peacekeepers working under complex and dangerous circumstances on foreign soil, confronted with unknown enemies often endanger their lives. There are many examples of the absolute sacrifice of Bangladeshi peacekeepers on foreign soil.<sup>8</sup>

The leader of Bangladesh contingent to Namibia UNTAG Lieutenant Colonel Md. Faizul Karim died in Windhoek, Namibia in 1989. He was the first Bangladeshi officer who died on a peacekeeping mission abroad.<sup>9</sup>



In 2005, nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed in Congo. In May 2015, one Bangladeshi peacekeeper was killed in a militant attack in Mali during MINUSMA.

On 29 May 2016, four peacekeepers from Bangladesh, who sacrificed their lives while serving in the UN peace operations in 2015, were honoured along with 125 other personnel of various peacekeepers contributing countries at the United Nations while observing the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The four persons who made supreme sacrifices were (a) Lance Corporal Nazrul Islam serving in the UN stabilization mission in Mali made the supreme sacrifice in April 2015; (b) Sainik Nilkanto Hajong serving in the same mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo died in May 2015; (c) Lance Corporal Mozibor Rahman serving in UN mission in Liberia died in December 2015; and (d) Sub-inspector Mainul Ahsan Khan serving in the UN African Union Mission in Darfur died in December 2015.

On 01 March 2018, four Bangladeshi UN peacekeepers were killed and four others seriously wounded in Mali. The troops hit a mine while they were driving on a road linking the towns of Boni and Douentza in the Mopti region. The four deceased were Bangladesh Army's Warrant Officer Abul Kalam of Pirojpur, Lance Corporal Akhter of Mymensingh, troopers Raihan of Pabna and Jamal of Chapainawabganj.

On 26 June 2018, Lieutenant Commander Ashraf Siddiqui, a United Nations peacekeeper was killed in South Sudan when a UN convoy was attacked and shots were fired by an unknown group. The navy officer was part of a convoy protecting humanitarian workers traveling from Yei to Lasu in Central Equatoria province.

On 29 May 2019, the United Nations honoured 12 fallen Bangladeshi peacekeepers who lost their lives on duty in various parts of the world in 2018. They were awarded "Dag Hammarskjöld Medal" who made supreme sacrifice in 2018 for global peace. The 12 fallen Bangladeshi peacekeepers were Sainiks Arzan Howlader, Md Ripul Miah, Mohammad Rayhan Ali, Mohammad Jamal Uddin, Mohammad Rasheduzzaman, Md Zane Alam, Md Motiar Rahman and Md Monjur Ali, Warrant Officer Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad, Lance Corporal Mohammad Akter Hossain, Lance Corporal Md Mizanur Rahaman and Lieutenant Commander Md Ashraf Siddiqui.

The latest sacrifice took place when a heavy explosion occurred at Lebanon's Beirut Port on 04 August 2020. A total of 21 naval personnel of Bangladesh Navy Ship BNS BIJOY were injured as a consequence of the explosion when the ship was at anchor at the said port. One of them was

admitted to the American University of Beirut Medical Centre in critical condition. The ship had been working for over two and a half years in the peacekeeping mission of UNIFIL as a member of the Multinational Maritime Task Force in the Mediterranean Sea to stop the entry of illegal weapons and explosives in Lebanon. Later, BNS SANGRAM was sent as a replacement for the damaged BNS BIJOY on 09 August 2020.<sup>10</sup>

**Photo 4: BNS BIJOY at Beirut Port after the Explosion**



Source: Reuters.

So far, 126 Bangladesh Armed Forces peacekeepers made supreme sacrifices and 236 sustained major injuries for the noble cause of the peace process. A summary of all deceased and injured peacekeepers from Bangladesh Armed Forces is shown in the table below:-

**Table 4: All Deceased and Injured UN Peacekeepers of Bangladesh Armed Forces (April 1989- April 2021)**

Service/Organization	Deceased	Injured
Bangladesh Army	124	222
Bangladesh Navy	04	01
Bangladesh Air Force	09	05
Total	137	228

Source: *United Nations Peacekeepers Journal*, Volume 6, Issue 6, May 2020,p.vii

## **Conclusion**

United Nations Peacekeeping is a role hailed by the Department of Peace Operations as “a unique and dynamic instrument developed by the organization as a way to help countries torn by conflict to create the conditions for lasting peace.” The goal of the UN Peacekeeping Operation is to convert the conflicts into peace over the world. Bangladesh is a peace loving country from the very beginning. This country has registered her name into the map of the world after a sanguinary Liberation War in 1971. Her constitutional obligations generate consistent participation in UN Peacekeeping Operation to maintain peace, freedom and justice across the world. Here is a strong national will to participate in peacekeeping in order to establish global peace.

The peacekeepers working on such missions in adverse situations and different cultures get a chance to improve as well as justify their professional skills and efficiency. Besides, working in a multinational atmosphere, ultimately helps to increase their professional skills and experience. These types of missions give them a real battlefield flavor in some context. From their exposure to the world, they are gaining professionally and acquiring knowledge regarding advanced military operations. Apart from this, Bangladesh can improve her international reputation and build a soft power regarding diplomacy in UN organizations.

As the present circumstances of the world, it is believed that the UN peace operations will continue in the years to come as conflicts are continuing, in some cases increasing, across the world. However, the dynamic changing world politics, nature of the conflicts, modern terrorism and the evolving strategic scenario are likely to create new dimensions and more demand for robust and sustainable peacekeeping operations. So, it may be raised as a challenge where Bangladesh should focus well in time. These can be only met by quality representation, i.e. professionalism, efficiency and expertise.

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**Instructor Lieutenant Commander M Rafi Ibna Asad, (H3), BN** was commissioned in the Education branch on 06 August 2015. Having completed graduation and post graduation degree in Physics discipline from Rajshahi University, he is a specialized hydrographer. He has served as an Instructor and Oceanographic Survey Officer. At present, the officer is serving at BN Hydrographic School.

## বঙ্গবন্ধু ও বাংলাদেশ: বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতা ও রাষ্ট্রের অভ্যুদয়ে বঙ্গবন্ধুর অবদান

লেফটেন্যান্ট কর্নেল মোহাম্মদ শহীদুল ইসলাম, পিএসসি, ইঞ্জিনিয়ার্স

### ভূমিকা

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ছিলেন বাঙালী জাতির অবিসংবাদিত নেতা, স্বপ্নদ্রষ্টা এবং বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতার একজন অন্যতম রূপকার। তিনি ছিলেন দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার অন্যতম একজন প্রভাবশালী রাজনৈতিক ব্যক্তিত্ব। বাঙালীর অধিকার রক্ষায় তিনি ব্রিটিশ ঔপনিবেশিক শাসন থেকে ভারত বিভাজন আন্দোলনে অংশগ্রহণ করেন এবং পরবর্তীতে পূর্ব পাকিস্তান থেকে বাংলাদেশ প্রতিষ্ঠার সংগ্রামে বলিষ্ঠ নেতৃত্ব প্রদান করেন। সারাজীবন তিনি নির্যাতিত, নিপীড়িত ও বঞ্চিত মানুষের দাবি আদায়ের লক্ষ্যে সংগ্রাম করেছেন। বাংলাদেশকে একটি স্বাধীন রাষ্ট্রে পরিণত করতে যিনি সবচাইতে অগ্রণী ভূমিকা পালন করেছেন তিনি হলেন জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান। হাজার বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালী, জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ছিলেন একজন আদর্শ দেশনেতা, রাজনীতিবিদ ও বলিষ্ঠ রাষ্ট্রনায়ক। সারা জীবন তিনি জেল, জুলুম, অন্যায় ও অত্যাচার সহ্য করেছেন। শাসকদের রক্তচক্ষুকে উপেক্ষা করে তিনি সাধারণ মানুষের ভাগ্যোন্নয়নে কাজ করেছেন। তিনি সর্বদা সুবিধা বঞ্চিত ও অবহেলিত মানুষের অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠার লক্ষ্যে বলিষ্ঠ ভূমিকা রেখেছেন।

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ছিলেন বাংলাদেশের ক্যারিশমেটিক লিডার। তাঁর অসাধারণ নেতৃত্ব ও দুর্দমনীয় প্রেরণা বাঙালী জাতিকে দিয়েছিল মুক্তির নির্দেশনা। একটি পরাধীন, হতাশাগ্রস্ত, দারিদ্রপীড়িত, নির্যাতিত ও শোষিত বাঙালী জাতিকে তিনি যাদুকরি নেতৃত্বে উদ্দীপিত ও অনুপ্রাণিত করেছেন। বায়ান্নর ভাষা আন্দোলন থেকে শুরু করে চুয়ান্নর যুক্তফ্রন্ট নির্বাচন, আটান্নর সামরিক শাসন বিরোধী আন্দোলন, ছেষটির ছয়দফা, ঊনসত্তরের গণঅভ্যুত্থান, সত্তরের নির্বাচনসহ বাঙালীর মুক্তি ও অধিকার আদায়ে পরিচালিত প্রতিটি গণতান্ত্রিক ও স্বাধিকার আন্দোলনে তিনি সামনে থেকে নেতৃত্ব দেন। বঙ্গবন্ধু বাঙালীর অধিকারের প্রশ্নে কখনো আপোষ করেননি। ফাঁসির মধ্যে দাঁড়িয়েও তিনি বাংলার জয়গান গেয়েছেন। ১৯৭০ সালের ডিসেম্বর মাসে অনুষ্ঠিত পাকিস্তানের জনসাধারণের নির্বাচনের মধ্যদিয়ে বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের আপামর জনসাধারণের একমাত্র মুখপাত্র হিসেবে আবির্ভূত হন। ১৯৭১ সালের ৭ মার্চ রমনা রেসকোর্স ময়দানে দশ লক্ষ লোকের বিশাল সমাবেশে তিনি যে ঐতিহাসিক ভাষণ প্রদান করেন তা বাঙালী জাতি তথা পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসে অবিস্মরণীয় হয়ে থাকবে। ২৫ মার্চ ১৯৭১ সালে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে গ্রেফতার করে বিচারের জন্য পশ্চিম পাকিস্তান নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়। গ্রেফতার এর পূর্বে বঙ্গবন্ধু স্বাধীনতা ঘোষণা করে তা সম্প্রচারের জন্য ইপিআর ট্রান্সমিটারের মাধ্যমে চট্টগ্রামে এক ওয়্যারলেস বার্তা পাঠান। বঙ্গবন্ধুর অসাধারণ নেতৃত্বে দীর্ঘ নয় মাস সশস্ত্র মুক্তিযুদ্ধের পর ১৬ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৭১ সালে আমরা চূড়ান্ত বিজয় অর্জন করি।

৮ জানুয়ারি ১৯৭২ সালে বঙ্গবন্ধুকে পাকিস্তান কারাগার হতে মুক্তি দেওয়া হয়। ১৯৭২ সালের ১০ জানুয়ারি তিনি লন্ডন হয়ে বিজয়ীর বেশে স্বদেশ প্রত্যাবর্তন করেন। স্বাধীনতা অর্জনের মত দেশ গঠনেও বঙ্গবন্ধু অসাধারণ অবদান রেখে গেছেন। যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত, ক্ষতবিক্ষত ও অর্থনৈতিকভাবে বিপর্যস্ত প্রশাসন বিহীন একটি দেশের দায়িত্ব নেওয়া এবং তা পরিচালনার সুকঠিন চ্যালেঞ্জ বঙ্গবন্ধু সাহসিকতার সাথে গ্রহণ ও মোকাবেলা করেছেন। বঙ্গবন্ধুর নেতৃত্বে সকল ক্ষেত্রে

বঙ্গবন্ধু ও বাংলাদেশ...

রাষ্ট্র ও জাতিগঠন কার্যক্রম শুরু হয়। মাত্র দশমাস সময়ের মধ্যে তিনি দেশকে আধুনিক গণতান্ত্রিক সমাজের উপযোগী একটি সংবিধান উপহার দেন এবং সুদক্ষ প্রশাসন গড়ে তোলেন। ২০০৪ সালে বিবিসি বাংলা রেডিও সার্ভিসের পক্ষ থেকে পরিচালিত এক জরিপে বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালি হিসেবে বিবেচিত হন।<sup>১</sup>

#### জন্ম, শৈশব ও শিক্ষা

১৯২০ সালের ১৭ মার্চ ফরিদপুর জেলার গোপালগঞ্জ মহকুমার পাটগাতি ইউনিয়নের টুঙ্গিপাড়া গ্রামে এক সম্ভ্রান্ত শেখ পরিবারে জন্মগ্রহণ করেন বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান।<sup>২</sup> তার পিতা শেখ লুৎফর রহমান ছিলেন গোপালগঞ্জ দেওয়ানি আদালতের সেরস্তাদার এবং মা সায়েরা খাতুন ছিলেন একজন গৃহিণী। পিতা-মাতার চার কন্যা এবং দুই পুত্রের মধ্যে তিনি ছিলেন তৃতীয়। তার ডাকনাম ছিল খোকা। ছোটবেলা থেকেই তিনি ছিলেন সকলের অতিপ্রিয়। তিনি খেলাধুলা করতেন, গান গাইতেন এবং ভালো ব্রতচারী করতেন।

১৯২৭ সালে সাত বছর বয়সে তিনি গিমাভাঙ্গা প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে পড়াশোনা শুরু করেন। ১৯৩০ সালে তিনি মাদারীপুর ইসলামিয়া হাই স্কুলে ভর্তি হন। ১৯৩৪ সালে সপ্তম শ্রেণিতে পড়ার সময় তিনি বেরিবারি রোগে আক্রান্ত হন এবং চিকিৎসার জন্য কলকাতা গমন করেন। চোখের সমস্যা কারণে প্রায় চারবছর তার প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা ব্যাহত হয়। চোখের চিকিৎসার পর শেখ মুজিব ফিরে আসেন মাদারীপুরে। ১৯৪২ সালে গোপালগঞ্জ মিশনারি স্কুল থেকে তিনি ম্যাট্রিকুলেশন পাশ করেন। তিনি কলকাতার ইসলামিয়া কলেজ হতে ১৯৪৪ সালে ইন্টারমিডিয়েট এবং ১৯৪৭ সালে বিএ পাশ করেন। ভারত বিভাগের পর তিনি ১৯৪৭ সালে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে আইন বিভাগে ভর্তি হন।

#### চিত্র ১: ফুটবল টিমের সদস্যদের সঙ্গে বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ



### রাজনৈতিক জীবনের সূচনা

স্কুল জীবন থেকেই শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের মধ্যে নেতৃত্বের গুণাবলির বিকাশ ঘটে। তার পিতা বাড়িতে সংবাদপত্র ও সাহিত্য পত্রিকা রাখতেন। এই সব পত্রিকার মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য ছিল দৈনিক আজাদ, বসুমতি, মাসিক সওগাত, মোহাম্মদী ইত্যাদি। সংবাদপত্র পাঠের মাধ্যমেই তিনি রাজনীতিতে আগ্রহী হয়ে ওঠেন। তার রাজনীতি অনুরাগ বিশেষভাবে সৃষ্টি হয় তৎকালীন বাংলায় ইংরেজ উপনিবেশ বিরোধী রাজনীতি প্রত্যক্ষ করার মাধ্যমে। তখন গোপালগঞ্জ ও মাদারীপুরে ঘরে ঘরে স্বদেশী আন্দোলনের চাপা উত্তেজনা বিরাজমান ছিল। ১৯৩৬ সালে মাদারীপুরের স্বদেশী আন্দোলনকারী এবং ভারতের মহান স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামী নেতাজি সুভাষ চন্দ্র বসুর সমর্থকদের সংস্পর্শেই তার রাজনৈতিক জীবনের সূত্রপাত হয়।

১৯৩৮ সালে বাংলার প্রধানমন্ত্রী এ কে ফজলুল হক, শ্রম মন্ত্রী হোসেন সোহরাওয়ার্দী এবং সমবায় মন্ত্রী মুকুন্দ বিহারী মল্লিক গোপালগঞ্জ সফরে আসেন। তখন স্কুলের ছাদ সংস্কারের দাবিতে বঙ্গবন্ধু একটি দল নিয়ে পরিদর্শকদের সামনে উপস্থিত হন। দাবী আদায় না হওয়া পর্যন্ত তিনি আন্দোলন চালিয়ে যাবার হুমকি দেন। কাজেই স্কুল জীবন থেকেই বঙ্গবন্ধুর মাঝে নেতৃত্ব প্রদানের গুণাবলি অত্যন্ত সুস্পষ্টভাবে সকলের সামনে দৃশ্যমান হয়। ১৯৪০ সালে তিনি নিখিল ভারত ছাত্র ফেডারেশনে যোগ দেন। ১৯৪২ সালে ইসলামিয়া কলেজে অধ্যয়নের সময় তিনি কলকাতা বেকার হোস্টেলের আবাসিক ছাত্র ছিলেন। অল্প দিনের মধ্যেই তিনি কলেজ ও হোস্টেলে জনপ্রিয় ছাত্রনেতা হিসেবে প্রতিষ্ঠা লাভ করেন। বেকার হোস্টেলে অধ্যয়নকালে তিনি হোস্টেলের বিভিন্ন দাবি দাওয়া কর্তৃপক্ষের সামনে উপস্থাপন করেছেন এবং তা সমাধানের জন্য সর্বাত্মক প্রচেষ্টা চালিয়েছেন। ১৯৪৩ সালে তিনি নিখিল ভারত মুসলিম লীগ কাউন্সিলর নির্বাচিত হন। ১৯৪৬ সালে তিনি ইসলামিয়া কলেজ ছাত্র সংসদের সাধারণ সম্পাদক নির্বাচিত হন। ছাত্র সংসদের সাধারণ সম্পাদক এর দায়িত্ব পালনকালে তিনি সর্বদা সাধারণ ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের বিভিন্ন অধিকার আদায়ের লক্ষ্যে নেতৃত্বের ভূমিকায় অবতীর্ণ হন। ১৯৪৬ সালের সাধারণ নির্বাচনে মুসলিম লীগ শেখ মুজিবকে ফরিদপুর জেলায় দলীয় প্রার্থীদের পক্ষে নির্বাচনী প্রচারণার দায়িত্ব অর্পণ করে। রাজনীতিতে তিনি ছিলেন এইচ এস সোহরাওয়ার্দীর একজন একনিষ্ঠ অনুসারী। বঙ্গবন্ধু জীবনের সূচনালগ্ন থেকে একজন আপোষহীন নেতা হিসেবে সকলের হৃদয়ে একটি বিশেষ স্থান দখল করে নিয়ে ছিলেন। জনমানুষের দাবি আদায়ের বিষয়টি একটি পর্যায়ে বঙ্গবন্ধুর জীবনের একমাত্র ব্রত হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। সুবিধা বঞ্চিত নিপীড়িত মানুষের নেতা হিসেবে কাজ করার মধ্য দিয়ে তিনি বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতার রূপকার হিসেবে আবির্ভূত হন, হয়ে ওঠেন গণমানুষের নেতা।<sup>৩</sup>

## চিত্র ২: রাজনৈতিক গুরু শহীদ সোহরাওয়ার্দীর সঙ্গে বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

### ছাত্রলীগ ও আওয়ামী লীগ প্রতিষ্ঠা

১৯৪৭ সালে ভারত পাকিস্তান বিভাজন বাঙালীদের জন্য মোটেই সুখকর কিছু বয়ে আনতে পারেনি। বিভাজনের শুরু থেকেই বাঙালীদের উপর নেমে আসে পাকিস্তানী শাসক গোষ্ঠীর শাসন, শোষণ, আঞ্চলিক বৈষম্য ও জাতিগত নিপীড়ন-নির্যাতন। পাকিস্তান প্রতিষ্ঠার পর প্রথমে ছাত্রলীগ এবং পরবর্তীতে আওয়ামী লীগ প্রতিষ্ঠায় বঙ্গবন্ধু গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেন। ১৯৪৮ সালের ৪ জানুয়ারি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে অধ্যয়নকালে বঙ্গবন্ধু ছাত্রলীগ প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। এটাই ছিল পাকিস্তান রাষ্ট্রে সরকার বিরোধী প্রথম ছাত্র সংগঠন। একদল নিবেদিত প্রাণ কর্মীদের নিয়ে দ্রুততম সময়ের মধ্যে বঙ্গবন্ধু ছাত্রলীগকে একটি শক্তিশালী সাংগঠনিক ভিতের উপর দাঁড় করাতে সক্ষম হন। ভাষা আন্দোলনের সময় ছাত্রলীগ নেতা কর্মীরা বঙ্গবন্ধুর নেতৃত্বে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখেন। তৎকালীন ছাত্রলীগ প্রতিষ্ঠা বাংলাদেশের জন্য একটি যুগান্তকারী পদক্ষেপ ছিল। কারণ পাকিস্তানীদের যে কোন ধরনের অন্যায়, অত্যাচার আর অনাচারের বিরুদ্ধে ছাত্রলীগ সদা সোচ্চার ছিল। পাকিস্তান সরকার এর আত্মসী নীতির চুলচেরা বিশ্লেষণ, পর্যালোচনা এবং এর বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ প্রতিবাদ প্রতিরোধ গড়ে তোলার ক্ষেত্রে বঙ্গবন্ধুর ছাত্রলীগ অগ্রণী ভূমিকা পালন করে।<sup>৪</sup>

১৯৪৯ সালের ২৩ জুন মাওলানা আব্দুল হামিদ খান ভাসানীকে সভাপতি, জনাব শামসুল হককে সাধারণ সম্পাদক এবং শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে জয়েন্ট সেক্রেটারি করে পাকিস্তান আওয়ামী মুসলিম লীগ যাত্রা শুরু করে। ১৯৫২ সালে বঙ্গবন্ধুকে দলের ভারপ্রাপ্ত জেনারেল সেক্রেটারি করা হয়। আওয়ামী লীগকে গড়ে তুলতে বঙ্গবন্ধুর ত্যাগ তিতিক্ষা ও প্রচেষ্টা পরিশ্রমের অন্ত ছিলনা। তিনি মুসলিম লীগের অবর্ণনীয় জেল-জুলুম ও অন্যায় অত্যাচার সহ্য করেছেন। তিনি পাড়ায় মহল্লায় ঘুরে ঘুরে দলের জন্য কর্মী তৈরি করেছেন। দলের পক্ষে মিছিল, শোভাযাত্রা পিকেটিং করতে গিয়ে বহুবার তিনি পুলিশের লাঠির আঘাতে রক্তাক্ত হয়েছেন। স্বল্প সময়ের মধ্যে তিনি আওয়ামী লীগ কে সাংগঠনিকভাবে শক্তিশালী একটি ভিতের উপর দাঁড় করাতে সক্ষম হন। বঙ্গবন্ধুর অসাধারণ নেতৃত্বে আওয়ামী লীগ হয়ে ওঠে তৎকালীন পূর্ব পাকিস্তান এর গণমানুষের দল। সকল শ্রেণী পেশার মানুষ

বঙ্গবন্ধুর আহ্বানে সাড়া দিয়ে আওয়ামী লীগের পতাকাতলে এসে সমবেত হতে থাকে। বাংলার আপামর জনসাধারণকে সাথে নিয়ে বঙ্গবন্ধু বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতা ও সার্বভৌমত্বের সংগ্রামে অবিস্মরণীয় ভূমিকায় অবতীর্ণ হন। তিনি হয়ে ওঠেন আপামর বাঙালীর নয়নের মণি।

### চিত্র ৩: রাজনৈতিক সহকর্মীদের সঙ্গে বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

### রাষ্ট্রভাষা আন্দোলন

বাংলাকে রাষ্ট্রভাষা করার দাবিতে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান সদা সোচ্চার ছিলেন। ১৯৪৮ সালের ২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি পাকিস্তানের গণপরিষদের অধিবেশনে উর্দু ও ইংরেজি ভাষার সাথে বাংলা ভাষাকেও গণপরিষদের ভাষা হিসেবে গ্রহণ করার প্রস্তাব করেন ধীরেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত। পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের গভর্নর খাজা নাজিমুদ্দিন এই প্রস্তাবের বিরোধীতা করে বক্তৃতা দেন। প্রস্তাবটি প্রত্যাখান হওয়ার প্রতিবাদে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের নেতৃত্বে ঢাকার শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে ধর্মঘট পালিত হয়। ১৯৪৮ সালের ২ মার্চ ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ফজলুল হক হলে বিভিন্ন রাজনৈতিক দলের নেতৃবৃন্দকে নিয়ে একটি সম্মেলন অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। এই সম্মেলনে রাষ্ট্রভাষা সংগ্রাম পরিষদ পূনর্গঠন ও সম্প্রসারণ করা হয় এবং ধীরেন্দ্রনাথ দত্তকে তার সাহসী ভূমিকার জন্য ধন্যবাদ জানানো হয়। এই পরিষদের আহ্বানে ১১ মার্চ ১৯৪৮ তারিখে ঢাকায় ধর্মঘট পালিত হয়। এ কর্মসূচি পালন করতে গিয়ে বঙ্গবন্ধু অনেক নেতাকর্মীসহ সচিবালয় ভবনের সামনে থেকে গ্রেফতার হন।

ছাত্র সমাজের তীব্র প্রতিবাদের মুখে ১৫ মার্চ ১৯৪৮ সালে শেখ মুজিবসহ অন্যান্য নেতাকর্মীদের মুক্তি দেয়া হয়। এই মুক্তি প্রদান উপলক্ষ্যে সর্বদলীয় রাষ্ট্রভাষা সংগ্রাম পরিষদ ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বটতলায় র্যালি আয়োজন করে, যাতে সভাপতিত্ব করেন বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান। পুলিশ এই র্যালি অবরোধ করে এবং সকলকে ছত্রভঙ্গ করে দেয়। পুলিশি কার্যক্রমের প্রতিবাদে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ১৭ মার্চ ১৯৪৮ তারিখে দেশব্যাপী ছাত্র ধর্মঘটের ডাক দেন। ১৯৪৮ সালের ২১ মার্চ ঢাকার রেসকোর্স ময়দানে কায়েদে আজম মুহাম্মদ আলী জিন্নাহ ঘোষণা করেন, “উর্দু এবং একমাত্র উর্দুই হবে পাকিস্তানের রাষ্ট্রভাষা।” ২৪ মার্চ মুহাম্মদ আলী জিন্নাহ ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কার্জন হলে এক সমাবর্তন

অনুষ্ঠানে একই ধরনের বক্তব্য রাখেন। উপস্থিত ছাত্ররা সমস্বরে এর প্রতিবাদ জানায়। বঙ্গবন্ধু সর্বদা রাষ্ট্রভাষা আন্দোলনে সামনে থেকে নেতৃত্ব প্রদান করেন। মূলত বঙ্গবন্ধুর রাষ্ট্রভাষা আন্দোলন ছিল আমাদের স্বাধীকার আন্দোলনের সূচনা স্বরূপ। রাষ্ট্রভাষা আন্দোলনের মধ্য দিয়ে বাংলা ভাষার প্রতি পাকিস্তান শাসক গোষ্ঠীর অন্যায়ের যথাযথ ও দাঁতভাঙ্গা জবাব দেয়া হয়। পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসে আমাদের ভাষা আন্দোলন একটি বিশেষ স্থান করে নিয়েছে যার ফল স্বরূপ ১৯৯৯ সালে ২১ ফেব্রুয়ারিকে আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা দিবস হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দেয় জাতিসংঘ।<sup>৫</sup>

#### চিত্র ৪: ২১ ফেব্রুয়ারির প্রভাত র্যালিতে বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

#### চতুর্থ শ্রেণির কর্মচারীদের অধিকার আদায়ের আন্দোলন

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান সবসময় শোষিত, নিপীড়িত আর বঞ্চিত মানুষের পক্ষে কাজ করেছেন। এ জন্য জীবনে তাকে বহুবার কারাবরণ করতে হয়েছে। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে আইন বিভাগে অধ্যয়নের সময় চতুর্থ শ্রেণির কর্মচারীদের ন্যায্য দাবি আদায়ের পক্ষে সোচ্চার হয়ে ওঠেন বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান। ১৯ মার্চ ১৯৪৮ সালে তিনি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে চতুর্থ শ্রেণির কর্মচারীদের অধিকার আদায়ের লক্ষ্যে একটি আন্দোলন পরিচালনা করেন। ১১ সেপ্টেম্বর ১৯৪৮ তারিখে তাকে গ্রেফতার করা হয়।<sup>৬</sup> ১৯৪৯ সালের ২১ জানুয়ারি বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে জেল থেকে মুক্তি দেয়া হয়। জেল থেকে বেরিয়ে তিনি আবার চতুর্থ শ্রেণির কর্মচারীদের দাবি আদায়ের আন্দোলনে জড়িয়ে পড়েন, যার জন্য তাকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে জরিমানা করা হয়। কিন্তু এই জরিমানাকে অবৈধ ঘোষণা করে তা প্রদান থেকে তিনি বিরত থাকেন। এ সময় তাকে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে বহিষ্কার করা হয়। বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মানুষের অধিকার এবং ন্যায্য দাবীর প্রতি সদা সোচ্চার ছিলেন। কখনোই তিনি ব্যক্তিগত সুবিধা অসুবিধার দিকে খেয়াল রাখেননি। চতুর্থ শ্রেণির কর্মচারীদের ন্যায্য দাবির প্রতি বঙ্গবন্ধুর অকুণ্ঠ সমর্থন এবং সেই দাবির সঙ্গে একাত্মতা প্রকাশ তাঁর অতি মহানুভবতা এবং বলিষ্ঠ নেতৃত্বের বহিঃপ্রকাশ মাত্র। ব্যক্তিগত

প্রাপ্তি-অপ্রাপ্তির চাইতে বঞ্চিত মানুষের অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা ছিল বঙ্গবন্ধুর দৃষ্টিতে গূঢ় দায়িত্ব। সাধারণ মানুষের ভালোবাসাই বঙ্গবন্ধুকে আপামর জনতার নেতার আসনে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করে।

### যুক্তফ্রন্ট নির্বাচন

পাকিস্তান সরকার ১৯৫৪ সালে সাধারণ নির্বাচন ঘোষণা করেন। সব বিরোধীদল একত্র হয়ে যুক্তফ্রন্ট গঠন করে। আওয়ামী লীগের সহ সভাপতি আবুল মনসুর আহমদ প্রণীত ২১ দফার ভিত্তিতে যুক্তফ্রন্ট ১৯৫৪ সালের সাধারণ নির্বাচনে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা করে। ১৯৫৪ সালের ০৭-১২ মার্চ নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। এই নির্বাচনে যুক্তফ্রন্ট ২৩৭টি আসনের মধ্যে ২২৩ টিতে বিপুল ব্যবধানে জয় লাভ করে।<sup>১</sup> বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান গোপালগঞ্জ আসন থেকে প্রাদেশিক আইন সভার এমএলএ নির্বাচিত হন। ১৯৫৪ সালের ৩ এপ্রিল এ কে ফজলুল হক চার সদস্য বিশিষ্ট মন্ত্রিসভা গঠন করেন। বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে কৃষি, ঋণ, সমবায় ও পল্লী উন্নয়ন মন্ত্রণালয়ের দায়িত্ব দেয়া হয়। যুক্তফ্রন্ট মন্ত্রিসভার শপথ গ্রহণ অনুষ্ঠান শুরুর আগেই অবাঙালীদের ষড়যন্ত্রে আদমজী জুট মিলে দাঙ্গা শুরু হয়। দাঙ্গায় ১৫০০ নিরাপরাধ শ্রমিক নিহত হন। যুক্তফ্রন্ট সরকারকে হয়ে প্রতিপন্ন করতেই এই ষড়যন্ত্র করা হয়েছিল বলে মনে করা হয়। পাকিস্তানের গভর্নর জেনারেল গোলাম মোহাম্মদ ৩০ মে ১৯৫৪ সালে দেশদ্রোহের অভিযোগে এ কে ফজলুল হকের যুক্তফ্রন্ট মন্ত্রিসভা ভেঙ্গে দেন।<sup>২</sup> বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে গ্রেফতার করে জেল হাজতে পাঠানো হয়। ১৯৫৪ সালের সাধারণ নির্বাচনে যুক্তফ্রন্টের নিরঙ্কুশ সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা পাকিস্তানী শাসকদের ব্যাপকভাবে নাড়া দেয়। বঙ্গবন্ধু ছিলেন বাঙালীর অধিকার আদায়ের জন্য নিবেদিত প্রাণ। তিনি মন্ত্রিসভা থেকে ইস্তাফা দিতে বিন্দুমাত্র কালক্ষেপণ করেননি। তিনি শ্রমিকদের ন্যায্য দাবির প্রতি একাত্মতা প্রকাশ করে কারাবরণ করে নেন। জেল জুলুম, অত্যাচার আনাচার কোন কিছুই বঙ্গবন্ধুর অদম্য নেতৃত্বকে বাধাগ্রস্ত করতে পারেনি।

### চিত্র ৫: যুক্তফ্রন্ট মন্ত্রী সভার সদস্যদের সঙ্গে বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ



### সংগঠক থেকে নেতা

১৯৫৮ সালের ৭ অক্টোবর গণতান্ত্রিক সরকারকে ক্ষমতাচ্যুত করে পাকিস্তানে সামরিক শাসন জারি করা হয়। ৮ অক্টোবর বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান করাচী থেকে ঢাকায় ফিরে আসেন। ১২ অক্টোবর তিনি গ্রেফতার হন। বিনা বিচারে ১৪ মাস আটক থাকার পর ১৯৫৯ সালের ৭ ডিসেম্বর তিনি জেল থেকে ছাড়া পান কিন্তু জেল গেটেই তাকে পুনরায় গ্রেফতার করা হয়। ১৯৬০ সালের ২২ সেপ্টেম্বর দেওয়া এক রায়ে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে দুই বছরের জেল ও পাঁচ হাজার টাকা জরিমানা করা হয়। উচ্চ আদালতে আপিল করেন শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান। ১৯৬১ সালের ২১ জুন উচ্চ আদালতের রায়ে এই মামলা থেকে মুক্ত হন শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান।

এরপর থেকেই শেখ মুজিবের রাজনীতিতে একটি পরিবর্তন লক্ষ্য করা যায়। তিনি তথাকথিত নিয়মতান্ত্রিক রাজনীতি থেকে বের হবার চেষ্টা করেন। এবার শুরু করেন গুপ্ত রাজনৈতিক তৎপরতা। ১৯৬২ সালের ৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি জন নিরাপত্তা আইনে তাকে আটক করা হয়। ১৯৬২ সালের ২ জুন সামরিক শাসন অপসারণ করা হয় এবং ঐ দিন বঙ্গবন্ধুকে মুক্তি দেয়া হয়। ১৯৬২ সালের ২৫ জুন তিনি অন্য রাজনৈতিক নেতাদের সাথে আইয়ুব খান আরোপিত বিভিন্ন রাজনৈতিক ইস্যুর বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রামে নেমে পড়েন। শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান এ সময় মনোযোগ দেন দল পুনর্গঠনে। ১৯৬৪ সালের কাউন্সিলর সভার পর থেকে আওয়ামী লীগ হয়ে পড়ে পুরোপুরি মুজিব নির্ভর একটি রাজনৈতিক দল। সংগঠক থেকে নেতা হিসেবে রূপান্তর ঘটে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের। শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান তার ক্যারিশমাটিক নেতৃত্বের গুণবলিতে দেশের সকল শ্রেণি পেশার মানুষের মন জয় করতে থাকেন। সারাদেশে তিনি সংগঠনিক কার্যক্রম জোরদার করেন এবং স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের স্বপ্ন দেখতে শুরু করেন।<sup>৯</sup>

### চিত্র ৬: রাজনৈতিক সমাবেশে বক্তৃতা দিচ্ছেন বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ



## ছয় দফা দাবি

বঙ্গবন্ধুর রাজনৈতিক জীবন পর্যালোচনা করলে দেখা যায় যে তিনি তার শত্রু ভাবাপন্ন প্রতিপক্ষের সাথে আলোচনায় বসতে কখনো দ্বিধা করেননি। কোন সংলাপ বয়কট বা বর্জনের রাজনীতি তিনি কখনো পছন্দ করতেন না। পাকিস্তান সরকার তাকে অব্যাহতভাবে নাজেহাল করেছে। কিন্তু তারপরও তাকে আলোচনার বৈঠকে আমন্ত্রণ জানালে তিনি তাতে যোগ দিয়েছেন এবং নিজের মতামত তুলে ধরেছেন। আজীবন তিনি বাংলার মানুষের সেবক হিসেবে তাদের রাজনৈতিক ও অর্থনৈতিক মুক্তির সাধনায় নিজের জীবনকে উৎসর্গ করেছেন। ১৯৬৬ সালের ৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি লাহোরে বিরোধী দল-সমূহের একটি জাতীয় সম্মেলন অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। এ সম্মেলনে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ঐতিহাসিক ছয়দফা দাবী উপস্থাপন করেন। ছয়দফা কর্মসূচিতে পূর্ব ও পশ্চিম পাকিস্তান উভয় অংশের জন্যই পূর্ণ স্বায়ত্তশাসনের দাবি করা হয়েছে। পূর্ব বাংলার স্বায়ত্তশাসনের কথা যখনই বলা হয়েছে, পাকিস্তানী শাসকচক্র তখনই একে ভারতীয় ষড়যন্ত্র বলে অপপ্রচার করেছে। ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৯৬৬ তে পূর্ব পাকিস্তান আওয়ামী লীগ কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের আমাদের বাঁচার দাবি ৬ দফা কর্মসূচি পুস্তিকাটি বাঙালীর স্বাধিকার আন্দোলনের ইতিহাসে অবিস্মরণীয় দলিল। ছয় দফার বক্তব্য জনগণের কাছে ব্যাখ্যা করতে বঙ্গবন্ধু বিভিন্ন জেলায় জনসভা করেছেন। ছয় দফা দাবি এক সময় পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের আপামর জনতার প্রাণের দাবিতে পরিণত হয়। বঙ্গবন্ধুর ছয়দফা দাবির মধ্যেই একটি স্বাধীন ও সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশের বীজ বপন করা ছিল। একজন দূরদর্শী নেতা হিসেবে তিনি বাংলাদেশের অভ্যুদয় হওয়ার বিষয়টি সঠিকভাবে অনুধাবন করতে পেরেছিলেন। একজন বিচক্ষণ এবং দূরদর্শী নেতা হিসেবে বঙ্গবন্ধুর এই ছয়দফা দাবি ইতিহাসে চিরস্মরণীয় হয়ে থাকবে।

## আগরতলা ষড়যন্ত্র মামলা

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে সরকার কোনভাবেই দমিয়ে রাখতে পারছিলেন না। জেল-জুলুম অন্যান্য অত্যাচার সব কিছু সহ্য করে তিনি বাঙালী জাতির অধিকার আদায়ের লক্ষ্যে অবিচলভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছিলেন। পাকিস্তান সরকার একের পর এক মিথ্যা মামলা দিয়ে তাকে কারাবন্দি করার চেষ্টা করেছে। সরকার শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের বিরুদ্ধে ক্রমান্বয়ে হীন ষড়যন্ত্রে লিপ্ত হতে থাকে। ১৯৬৮ সালের প্রথমদিকে পাকিস্তান সরকার শেখ মুজিবসহ ৩৫ জন বাঙালী সামরিক ও সিএসপি কর্মকর্তার বিরুদ্ধে একটি মামলা দায়ের করে। এটি ইতিহাসে “আগরতলা ষড়যন্ত্র” মামলা নামে পরিচিত। বঙ্গবন্ধু ও অন্যান্য অভিযুক্তদের সাধারণ কারাগার থেকে নিয়ে ঢাকা সেনানিবাসে আটক করা হয়। শেখ মুজিবসহ অন্য কর্মকর্তারা ভারতের ত্রিপুরা রাজ্যের আগরতলা শহরে এক বৈঠকে পূর্ব পাকিস্তানকে বিচ্ছিন্ন করার ষড়যন্ত্র করেছে বলে মামলায় অভিযোগ আনা হয়। এই মিথ্যা মামলার বিরুদ্ধে সমাজের সর্বস্তরের মানুষ সোচ্চার ও প্রতিবাদী হয়ে ওঠে। শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের প্রতি সব শ্রেণি পেশার মানুষের হৃদয়ে গভীর সহানুভূতি সৃষ্টি হয়। এহেন পরিস্থিতিতে ১৯ জুন ঢাকা সেনানিবাসে কঠোর নিরাপত্তার মধ্যে বিচার কার্য শুরু হয়। আগরতলা ষড়যন্ত্র মামলা বঙ্গবন্ধুকে আপামর জনসাধারণের প্রাণপ্রিয় নেতা হিসেবে পরিণত করে। তিনি মানুষের ভালোবাসায় সিক্ত হয়ে ওঠেন। সমগ্র পূর্ব পাকিস্তান তখন ফুসে উঠতে থাকে। তারা তাদের প্রাণের নেতার প্রতি একাত্মতা ও সহমর্মিতা প্রকাশ করে।

চিত্র ৭: ঢাকা সেনানিবাসে বিশেষ ট্রাইবুনালে যাত্রাপথে বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

#### উনসত্তরের গণঅভ্যুত্থান

১৯৬৯ সালের ৫ জানুয়ারি কেন্দ্রীয় ছাত্র সংগ্রাম পরিষদ তাদের এগার দফা দাবি পেশ করেন যার মধ্যে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের ছয় দফার সবগুলো দাবিই অন্তর্ভুক্ত ছিল। ছাত্র সংগ্রাম পরিষদের সিদ্ধান্তক্রমে আগরতলা ষড়যন্ত্র মামলা প্রত্যাহার এর দাবিতে দেশব্যাপী ছাত্র আন্দোলন এর প্রস্তুতি গৃহীত হয়। এই সংগ্রাম এক সময় গণআন্দোলনে রূপ নেয়। এই গণআন্দোলনই উনসত্তরের গণঅভ্যুত্থান নামে পরিচিত। মাসব্যাপী প্রতিবাদ ও প্রতিরোধ আন্দোলন, ১৪৪ ধারা ভঙ্গ, কারফিউ অমান্য করা, পুলিশের গুলি বর্ষণ এবং বেশ কিছু হতাহতের পর আন্দোলন চরম রূপ ধারণ করে। এহেন পরিস্থিতিতে, তৎকালীন রাষ্ট্রপতি আইয়ুব খান রাজনৈতিক নেতাদের সাথে এক গোলটেবিল বৈঠকের পর ২২ ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৯৬৯ আগরতলা মামলা প্রত্যাহার করে নেন। সেই সঙ্গে শেখ মুজিবসহ অন্যান্য অভিযুক্তদের মুক্তি দেয়া হয়। কেন্দ্রীয় ছাত্র সংগ্রাম পরিষদ ২৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৯৬৯ শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের সম্মানে ঢাকার রেসকোর্স ময়দানে এক জনসভার আয়োজন করে। লাখো জনতার এই সম্মেলনে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে “বঙ্গবন্ধু” উপাধি প্রদান করা হয়। এই সম্মেলনে রাখা বক্তৃতায় শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ছাত্র সংগ্রাম পরিষদের এগার দফা দাবির পক্ষে তার পূর্ণ সমর্থন ব্যক্ত করেন। ১৯৬৯ সালের ডিসেম্বর মাসে সোহরাওয়ার্দীর মৃত্যু বার্ষিকী অনুষ্ঠানে বঙ্গবন্ধু ঘোষণা করেন যে, পূর্ব পাকিস্তানকে এখন থেকে বাংলাদেশ নামে অভিহিত করা হবে। উনসত্তর এর গণঅভ্যুত্থান ছিল মূলত একটি গণবিস্ফোরণ। বঙ্গবন্ধু স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের রূপরেখা প্রণয়ন করেন এবং তা বাস্তবায়নে সমগ্র বাঙ্গালী জাতিকে সংগঠিত করেন। বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতার রূপকার

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের অসাধারণ নেতৃত্বে মুক্তি হয়ে তাইতো কিউবার প্রেসিডেন্ট ফিদেল ক্যাস্ট্রো বলেছিলেন, “আমি হিমালয় দেখিনি, কিন্তু আমি শেখ মুজিবকে দেখেছি। ব্যক্তিত্ব ও সাহসিকতায় তিনি হিমালয়ের মতো।”

চিত্র ৮: রেসকোর্স ময়দানে শেখ মুজিবকে বঙ্গবন্ধু উপাধিতে ভূষিত করা হয়



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

#### সত্তরের নির্বাচন ও স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধ

১৯৭০ এর নির্বাচনে শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান এর নেতৃত্বে আওয়ামী লীগ নিরঙ্কুশ সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা অর্জন করে। পাকিস্তান জাতীয় পরিষদে পূর্ব পাকিস্তান এর জন্য বরাদ্দ ১৬৯টি আসনের মধ্যে আওয়ামী লীগ ১৬৭টি আসনে জয়লাভ করে। নির্বাচনের ফলাফল পাকিস্তানের দুই অংশের মধ্যে মেরুকরণ সৃষ্টি করে। পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানের নেতা জুলফিকার আলী ভুট্টো বঙ্গবন্ধুর স্বায়ত্তশাসন নীতির প্রবল বিরোধিতা করেন। জুলফিকার আলী ভুট্টো এ্যাসেম্বলি বয়কট করার হুমকি দেন। তিনি মুজিব সরকারকে মেনে না নেয়ার ঘোষণা দেন। প্রেসিডেন্ট ইয়াহিয়া খান ১৯৭১ সালের ১ মার্চ এক ঘোষণায় ৩ মার্চ ঢাকায় অনুষ্ঠিত জাতীয় পরিষদের অধিবেশন স্থগিত করেন। পাকিস্তান শাসক গোষ্ঠী তখন দিশেহারা হয়ে পড়ে। তারা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে কোনভাবেই পাকিস্তানের প্রধানমন্ত্রী হিসেবে মেনে নিতে প্রস্তুত ছিলেন না। পাকিস্তান শাসকগোষ্ঠী এক গোপন বৈঠকে বঙ্গবন্ধুকে ভুট্টোর সঙ্গে কোয়ালিশন সরকার গঠনের প্ররোচনা দেন। জুলফিকার আলী ভুট্টো শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের আসন্ন সরকার গঠনকে বানচাল করার জন্য ইয়াহিয়া খানের উপর চাপ দিতে থাকেন।

এ অবস্থায় পূর্ব পাকিস্তানে সর্বাঙ্গিক বিক্ষোভের আগুন জ্বলে ওঠে। এরই প্রেক্ষিতে বঙ্গবন্ধু পূর্ব পাকিস্তানে অসহযোগ আন্দোলনের ডাক দেন। ১৯৭১ সালের ৭ মার্চ শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান রমনা রেসকোর্স ময়দানে দশ লক্ষ লোকের বিশাল সমাবেশে তার ঐতিহাসিক ভাষণ দেন, যা বাঙালী জাতির ইতিহাসে সুরণীয় হয়ে থাকবে। ইয়াহিয়া খান সামরিক আইন জারি করেন, আওয়ামী লীগকে নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করেন এবং মুজিবসহ আওয়ামী লীগের অন্যান্য নেতাদের গ্রেফতারের নির্দেশ দেন। পাকিস্তান সামরিক বাহিনী অপারেশন “সার্চ লাইট” নামে ২৫ মার্চ মধ্যরাতে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়সহ বিভিন্ন স্থানে পৈশাচিক তাণ্ডব চালিয়ে ছাত্র শিক্ষক ও নিরীহ লোকদের গণহারে হত্যা করে। শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে ২৫ মার্চ রাতে গ্রেফতার করে ঢাকা সেনানিবাসে আটক রাখা হয় এবং রাষ্ট্রদ্রোহিতা ও বিদ্রোহে উস্কানি দেয়ার অভিযোগে বিচারের জন্য পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানে নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়। গ্রেফতার হওয়ার পূর্বে বঙ্গবন্ধু বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতা ঘোষণা করে তা সম্প্রচার এর জন্য ইপিআর ট্রান্সমিটারের মাধ্যমে চট্টগ্রামে এক ওয়্যারলেস বার্তা পাঠান। দীর্ঘ নয় মাস রক্তক্ষয়ী যুদ্ধ শেষে ১৯৭১ সালের ১৬ ডিসেম্বর বাংলাদেশ স্বাধীন হয়। পাকিস্তানী শাসকবৃন্দ ১৯৭২ সালের ৮ জানুয়ারি শেখ মুজিবকে মুক্তি দান করেন। তিনি ১০ জানুয়ারি লন্ডন হয়ে বিজয়ীর বেশে স্বদেশে প্রত্যাবর্তন করেন। বঙ্গবন্ধু বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতার অনিবার্যতা আগেই বুঝতে পেরেছিলেন বলে স্বাধীনতা নিয়ে তার মনে দ্বিধাদ্বন্দ্ব ছিলনা। তিনি জানতেন, পাকিস্তানের কাঠামোর মধ্যে বাঙ্গালীর বিকাশ সম্ভব নয়। তিনি একটি স্বাধীন বাংলাদেশের স্বপ্ন দেখেছেন এবং তাকে বাস্তবে রূপ দেয়ার জন্য পাকিস্তান সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে অবিরাম রাজনৈতিক সংগ্রাম চালিয়ে গেছেন। বাঙ্গালী জাতি যদি হয় একটি স্বপ্নের নাম, আকাক্ষার নাম, সংগ্রামের নাম এবং সফলতার নাম, তবে তার রূপকার হলো শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান।

চিত্র ৯ : সড়ের এর নির্বাচনী প্রচারণায় বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

### বঙ্গবন্ধুর ৭ই মার্চের ঐতিহাসিক ভাষণ

১৯৭১ সালের ৭ মার্চ বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতার মহান স্থপতি বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের কণ্ঠ গর্জে ওঠে রমনা রেসকোর্স ময়দানের বিশাল জনসমুদ্রের সামনে। তিনি সেদিন পেশ করেন বিশ্বের ইতিহাসে এক অনন্য সাধারণ ভাষণ। মাত্র ১৯ মিনিটের ভাষণে তিনি বাঙালির সংগ্রামের ইতিহাসের পুরো ক্যানভাস তুলে ধরেন। বঙ্গবন্ধুর এ ভাষণ বিশ্বের প্রথম ও সর্বশেষ মুখে উচ্চারিত ক্ষুদ্রতম কালজয়ী মহাকাব্যের অনুপম দৃষ্টান্ত। বঙ্গবন্ধুর ৭ মার্চের ভাষণটি ছিল একটি উপস্থিত বক্তৃতা যার কোন লিখিত রূপ ছিল না। ২০১৭ সালের ৩০ অক্টোবর বঙ্গবন্ধুর এ ভাষণ ইউনেস্কোর Memory of the World Register এ অর্ন্তভুক্ত হয়েছে।<sup>১০</sup> এটি স্বীকৃতি পেয়েছে ইউনেস্কো কর্তৃক “বিশ্ব প্রামাণ্য ঐতিহ্য” হিসেবে। এ ভাষণের মধ্য দিয়ে বাঙালী জাতি বিশ্ব ইতিহাসে নতুন এক শিখরে পৌঁছে যায়। ১৯৭১ সালের ৭ মার্চ বঙ্গবন্ধুর উদ্দীপ্ত ঘোষণায় বাঙালী জাতি পেয়ে যায় স্বাধীনতা ও গেরিলা যুদ্ধের দিক নির্দেশনা। বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের এ উজ্জীবিত ভাষণে বাঙালী জাতি স্বপ্ন দেখতে শুরু করে। বঙ্গবন্ধুর ৭ মার্চের ভাষণের রাজনৈতিক দিক নির্দেশনার পথ ধরেই নয় মাসের রক্তক্ষয়ী যুদ্ধে লাখো প্রাণের বিনিময়ে বিশ্ব মানচিত্রে আত্মপ্রকাশ করে স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশ।

### চিত্র ১০: বঙ্গবন্ধুর ঐতিহাসিক ৭ই মার্চের ভাষণ



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

### যুদ্ধোত্তর বাংলাদেশ পুনর্গঠনে বঙ্গবন্ধু

বঙ্গবন্ধু হাজার বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালী, শতাব্দীর মহামানব। শতাব্দীর পর শতাব্দী তিনি বাঙ্গালীর হৃদয়ে অক্ষয় অমর হয়ে থাকবেন। তিনি বাঙালী জাতির প্রেরণা ও উদ্দীপনার উৎস। তিনি ছিলেন বাঙালী জাতির মুক্তির দূত। তিনি ছিলেন ইতিহাসের মহানায়ক। তিনি দুঃখী মানুষের স্বপ্নদ্রষ্টা। তিনি ছিলেন অলৌকিক ক্ষমতার অধিকারী একজন রাজনীতিবিদ, একজন নেতা এবং সংগঠক। তিনি ছিলেন এদেশের খেটে খাওয়া মানুষের আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষার প্রতীক। স্বাধীনতা অর্জনের মত দেশ গঠনেও বঙ্গবন্ধু অসাধারণ নেতৃত্ব দিয়েছিলেন। শূন্য থেকে শুরু করে তার সরকারকে যুদ্ধ

বিশ্বস্ত একটি দেশের অগণিত সমস্যার মোকাবিলা করতে হয়েছে। যুদ্ধবিশ্বস্ত ক্ষতবিক্ষত ও অর্থনৈতিকভাবে বিপর্যস্ত প্রশাসন বিহীন একটি দেশের দায়িত্ব নেয়া এবং তা পরিচালনার সুকঠিন চ্যালেঞ্জ বঙ্গবন্ধু সাহসিকতার সাথে গ্রহণ করেছেন। বঙ্গবন্ধুর নেতৃত্বে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সকল ক্ষেত্রে রাষ্ট্র এবং জাতিগঠন কার্যক্রম শুরু হয়। আইন শৃংখলা পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠা, অবৈধ অস্ত্র উদ্ধার, মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুনর্বাসন, যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থা পুনঃনির্মাণ এবং সবচাইতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ছিল লক্ষ লক্ষ ক্ষুধার্ত মানুষের জন্য খাদ্য সংগ্রহ করা। এ সকল সমস্যা সমাধান তার সরকারের সামনে দুঃসাহসিক চ্যালেঞ্জ হিসেবে দেখা দিয়েছিল।

মাত্র দশ মাস সময়ের মধ্যে তিনি দেশকে আধুনিক গণতান্ত্রিক সমাজের উপযোগী একটি সংবিধান উপহার দেন। সুদক্ষ প্রশাসন গড়ে তোলেন। সেনাবাহিনী, বিডিআর ও পুলিশ বাহিনী গঠন করেন। তিনি ভারতে অবস্থানকারী এক কোটি শরণার্থীর পুনর্বাসনের ব্যবস্থা করেন। পাকিস্তানে আটকে পড়া নাগরিকদের স্বদেশে ফিরিয়ে আনেন। স্বাধীনতার মাত্র তিন মাসের মধ্যে তিনি ভারতীয় মিত্রবাহিনীর প্রত্যাবর্তন নিশ্চিত করেন। শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পরিবারবর্গকে আর্থিক সাহায্য প্রদান ও নির্যাতিতা মা-বোনদের দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করেন। মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট গঠন এবং পঙ্গু ও আহত মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের বিদেশে চিকিৎসার ব্যবস্থা করেন। তিনি দেশের আপামর জনসাধারণের নিকট হয়ে ওঠেন এক জীবন্ত কিংবদন্তী।

#### চিত্র ১১: ঢাকা স্টেডিয়ামে মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের অস্ত্র জমাদান অনুষ্ঠানে বঙ্গবন্ধু



সূত্র: লেখকের নিজস্ব সংগ্রহ

#### উপসংহার

জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান ছিলেন বাংলাদেশের ক্যারিশমেটিক লিডার। তাঁর অসাধারণ নেতৃত্ব ও দুর্দমনীয় প্রেরণা বাঙালী জাতিকে দিয়েছিলেন মুক্তির নির্দেশনা। ফাঁসির মঞ্চে দাঁড়িয়ে তিনি বাংলার জয়গান গেয়েছেন। স্বাধীনতা অর্জনের মত দেশ গঠনেও বঙ্গবন্ধু অসাধারণ নেতৃত্ব দিয়েছেন। শূন্য থেকে শুরু করে তার সরকারকে যুদ্ধ বিশ্বস্ত একটি দেশের অগণিত সমস্যার মোকাবিলা করতে হয়েছে। বঙ্গবন্ধু হাজার বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালী। বঙ্গবন্ধু জাতীয় ঐক্যের প্রতীক। বাংলাদেশ ও বাঙালী জাতি তার নিকট চিরঞ্চা। দেশ ও জনগনের প্রতি তার অসামান্য অবদানের জন্য বাংলাদেশ ও বঙ্গবন্ধু আজ এক অভিন্ন সত্তায় পরিণত হয়েছে।



টীকা ও তথ্যনির্দেশ :

- ১। Wikipedia, Greatest Bengalee of all time, available at: en.m.wikipedia.org accessed on 15 March 2020
- ২। শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান, অসমাপ্ত আত্মজীবনী, ঢাকা, দি ইউনিভার্সিটি প্রেস লিমিটেড, ২০১২
- ৩। শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান, কারাগারের রোজনামা, ঢাকা, বাংলা একাডেমী, ২০১৭
- ৪। সিরাজ উদ্দীন আহমেদ, বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান, ঢাকা, একান্তর প্রকাশনী, ২০১৮
- ৫। আমির হোসেন, বঙ্গবন্ধু ও মুক্তিযুদ্ধ, ঢাকা, অ্যাডর্ন পাবলিকেশন, ২০০৮
- ৬। মুন্সী ফয়েজ আহমেদ, হৃদয়ে বঙ্গবন্ধু ও বাংলাদেশ, ঢাকা, মিয়াজী পাবলিকেশনস, ২০১৬
- ৭। ড. আবদুল জলিল মিয়া, বঙ্গবন্ধু: রাজনীতি ও দর্শন, ঢাকা, মওলা ব্রাদার্স, ২০১৮
- ৮। আবুল হোসেন আহমেদ, শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙ্গালী বঙ্গবন্ধু, ঢাকা, প্রতিভা প্রকাশ, ২০২০
- ৯। ড. মোঃ আনোয়ারুল ইসলাম, আমাদের বঙ্গবন্ধু, ঢাকা, বীর বাঙ্গালী প্রকাশনী, ২০১৮
- ১০। মাহাবুবুল আলম বিপ্লব, বঙ্গবন্ধু ও বাংলাদেশ দুটি নাম একটি ইতিহাস, ঢাকা, পার্ল পাবলিশার্স, ২০১৫

সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিচিতি



লেফটেন্যান্ট কর্নেল মোহাম্মদ শহীদুল ইসলাম, পিএসসি, ইঞ্জিনিয়ার্স ১৯ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৯৪ সালে ৩১ বিএমএ লং কোর্সের সাথে বাংলাদেশ সেনাবাহিনীতে কমিশন লাভ করেন। তিনি বাংলাদেশ সেনাবাহিনীর বিভিন্ন ইউনিট ও প্রতিষ্ঠানে কমান্ড, স্টাফ ও প্রশিক্ষক হিসাবে চাকুরী করেন। তিনি ডিফেন্স সার্ভিসেস কমান্ড এন্ড স্টাফ কলেজ মিরপুর থেকে গ্র্যাজুয়েশন ডিগ্রী লাভ করেন এবং এমআইএসটি হতে বিএসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং (সিভিল) পাস করেন। তিনি ব্যানইঞ্জিনিয়ার-৪ (কন্সট্রাকশন) লাইবেরিয়াতে জাতিসংঘ মিশনে অংশগ্রহণ করেন এবং ওকেপি-১ (কুয়েত) এ ইউডি অফিসার হিসেবে ডেপুটেশন এ নিয়োজিত ছিলেন। বর্তমানে তিনি সদর দপ্তর আর্মি ট্রেনিং এন্ড ডকট্রিন কমান্ড এ জিএসও-১ হিসেবে কর্মরত আছেন।

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- iv) Year of publication
- v) Volume, Issue, Page number

## II. Example:

### A. Book Referencing:

#### Notes and References:

1. P.K. Hitti, *Islam A Way of Life*, London, Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 90
2. Salar Khan et al, *Scientific Indications in the Quran*, Dhaka, Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh, 1995, pp.33-35
3. Abul Kalam, *Bangladesh in the new Millennium-A University of Dhaka Study*, Dhaka, Dhaka University Press, 2004, Pp.ii+8
4. Shaikh Maqsood Ali, *From East Bengal to Bangladesh: Dynamics and Perspectives*, Dhaka, University Press Ltd, Second Edition, 2017, p.110
5. Md Mahfuzur Rahman, *A Study on Drug Proliferation in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, Procholon Prokashan, 2017, p.255
6. Forces Goal 2030 is a long term modernization program for Bangladesh Armed Forces. Its main purpose is expanding the force size, acquiring modern war weapons and equipments and providing advanced level training. The Goal also stresses on developing indigenous defence industries.

### B. Journal/Magazine/Periodical Referencing:

7. Fazilatun Nesa, 'Modern Education in the life of Women,' *Sikha*, Vol 2, 1928, pp. 223-266
8. A. O. Aldridge, 'The Sources of Franklin's The Ephemera,' *New England Quarterly*, Vol 27, 1954, p.388
9. Henning Cohen, 'Why Isn't Melville for the Masses,' *Saturday Review*, 16 August 1969, pp.19-21

### C. Visiting website Referencing:

10. 'Turkey,' *CIA World Fact Book*, available at:  
[www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/goes/tu.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/goes/tu.html).accessed on.....(date).....

### D. টীকা ও তথ্যনির্দেশ

১. হাসান হাফিজুর রহমান (সম্পাদিত), *বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতাযুদ্ধঃ দলিলপত্র*, ১-১৫ খন্ড, ঢাকা, তথ্য মন্ত্রণালয়, গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার, ১৯৮৪
২. মোহাম্মদ মোশাররফ হোসেন, *আল কুরআনে নারী* (প্রথম খন্ড), ঢাকা, আধুনিক প্রকাশনী, ২০০২
৩. সিরাজুল ইসলাম চৌধুরী, *অর্থনৈতিক ভূগোলঃ বিশ্ব ও বাংলাদেশ*, ঢাকা, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ২০০৩
৪. এ.বি.এম হোসেন, *বাংলাদেশের সাংস্কৃতিক সমীক্ষামালা-২*, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ এশিয়াটিক সোসাইটি, ২০০৭
৫. ১৯৪০ সালের ২২ মার্চ শিলাইদহে অনুষ্ঠিত নিখিলবঙ্গ পল্লীসাহিত্য সম্মেলনে কুঠিবাড়িকে জাতীয় সম্পদ হিসেবে সংরক্ষণের প্রস্তাব গৃহীত হয়। বাংলাদেশের একজন শিল্পী-সাহিত্যিকের উদ্যোগে এর আয়োজন হয়েছিল।

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