

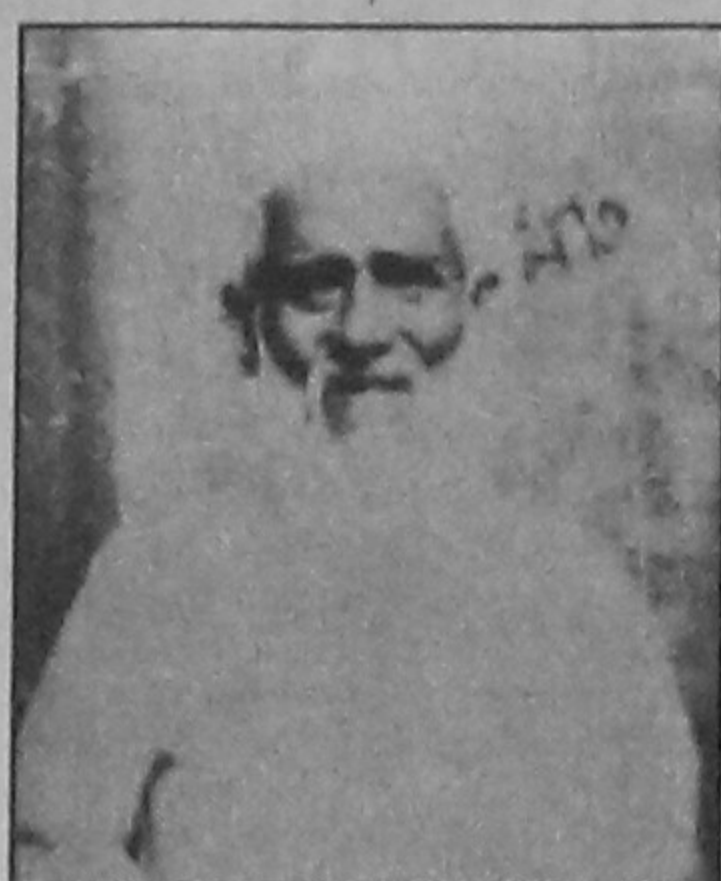
VICTORY DAY SPECIAL

Unsung Heroes

Some of our hitherto unknown martyred freedom fighters

Photo and information: Courtesy Liberation War Museum

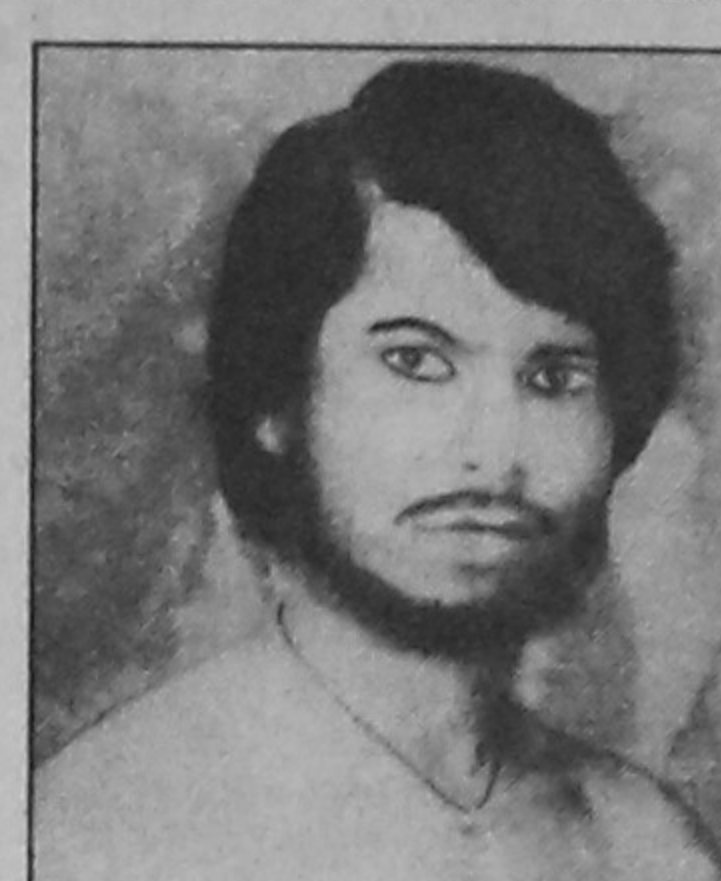
We pay our homage to them



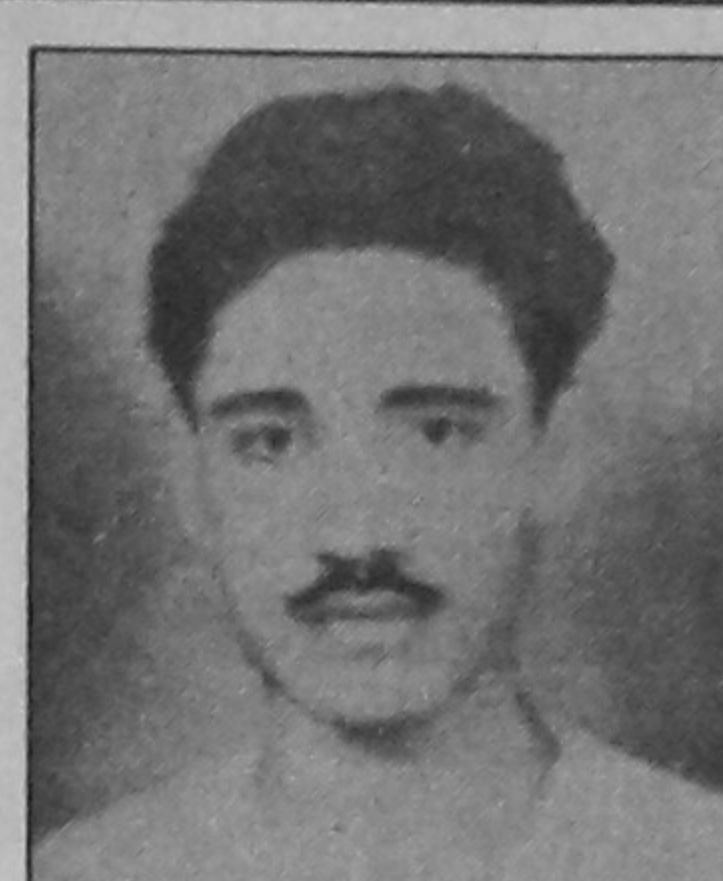
Shaheed Md Abdul Aziz Bhuiyan
Killed at Anowarpur, Austogram of Kishoreganj on 1 September 1971.



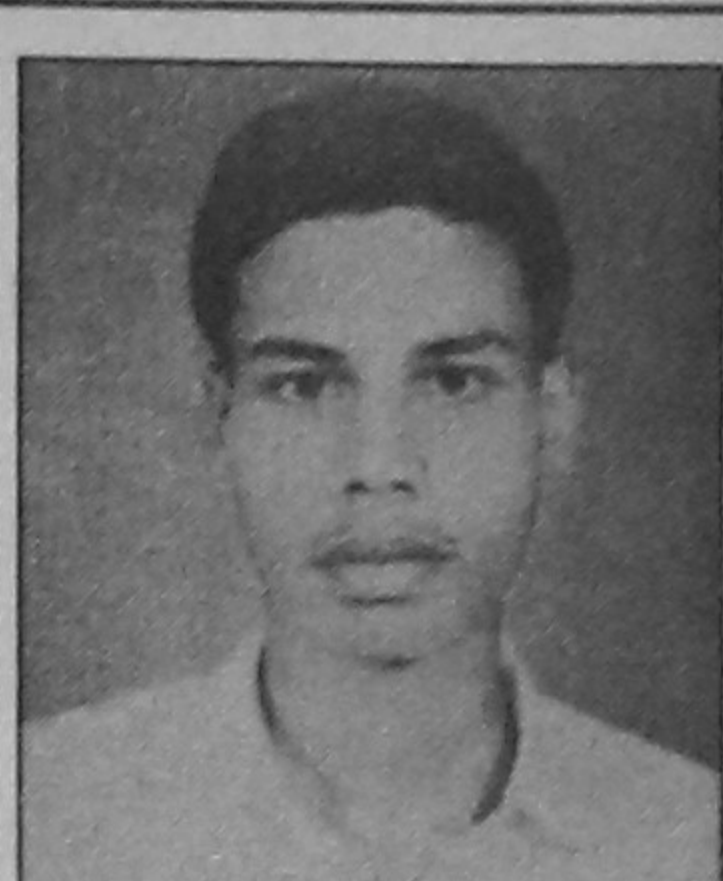
Shaheed Shree Samir Chandra Som
Date of martyrdom not known Fought in Sector No. 3, killed at Gachhtali of Sadhupara in Sreemangal GRP Thana.



Shaheed Md. Abdul Kadir
of Sunilpara, Siddhirganj Fought in Sector No. 2, killed at Chittagong Road on 5 October 1971.



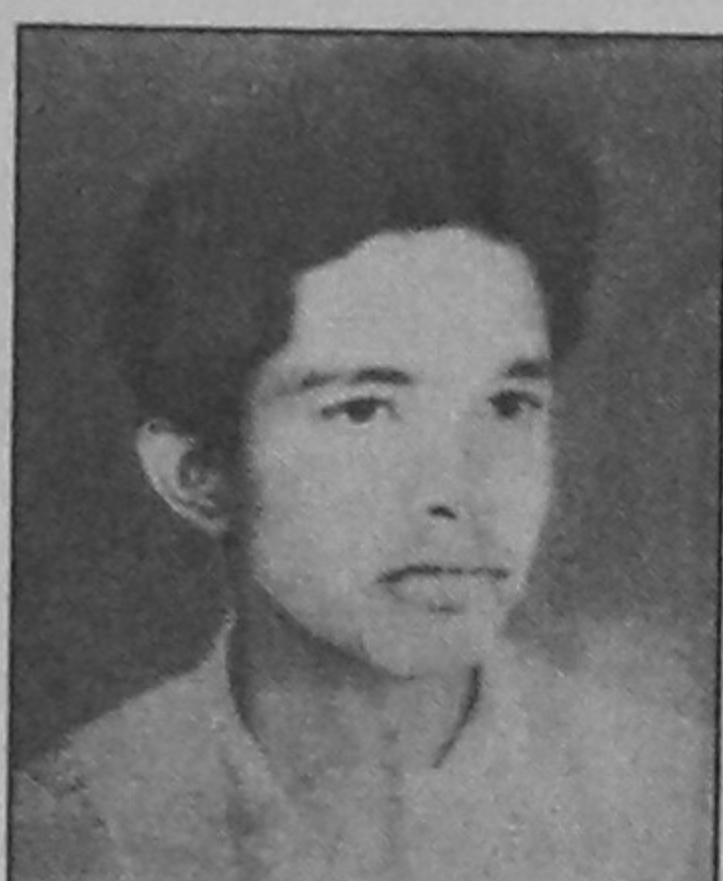
Shaheed Abdul Jabbar
of Naogaon Date of martyrdom not known, killed at Fansipara, Dhamuirhat.



Shaheed Md. Rukanuzzaman Bhuiyan
Killed at Anowarpur, Austogram of Kishoreganj on 1 September 1971.



Shaheed Ramjan Ali
of Sonargaon, Narayanganj Date of martyrdom not known Fought in Sector No. 2 with Major Haider Bir Uttam.



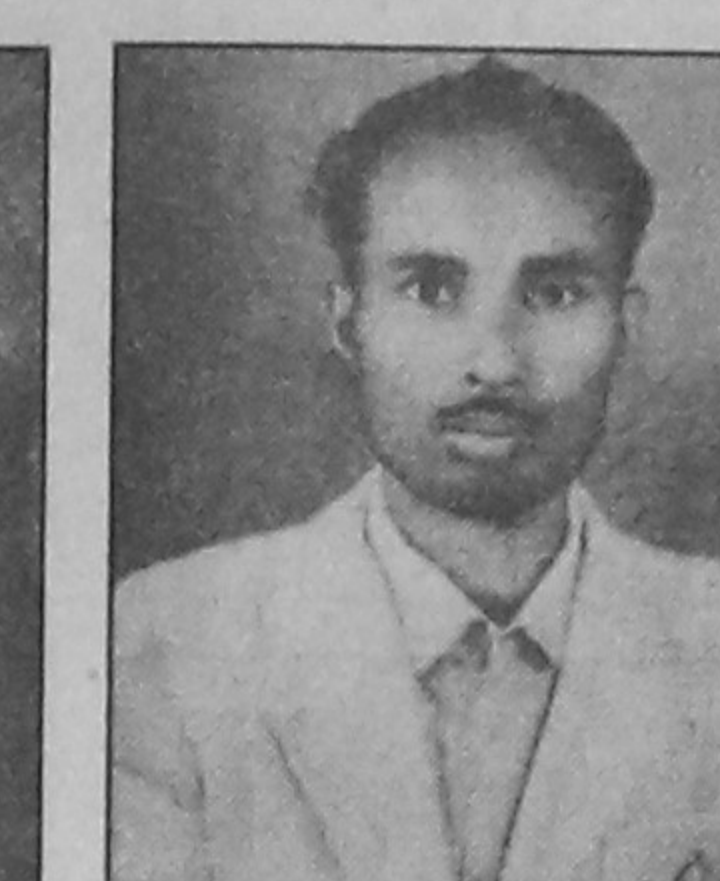
Shaheed Md. Aminul Huq
of Jankuri, Siddhirganj, Narayanganj Fought in Sector No. 2, killed at Karim Market of Adamjee Jute Mills on 16 December 1971.



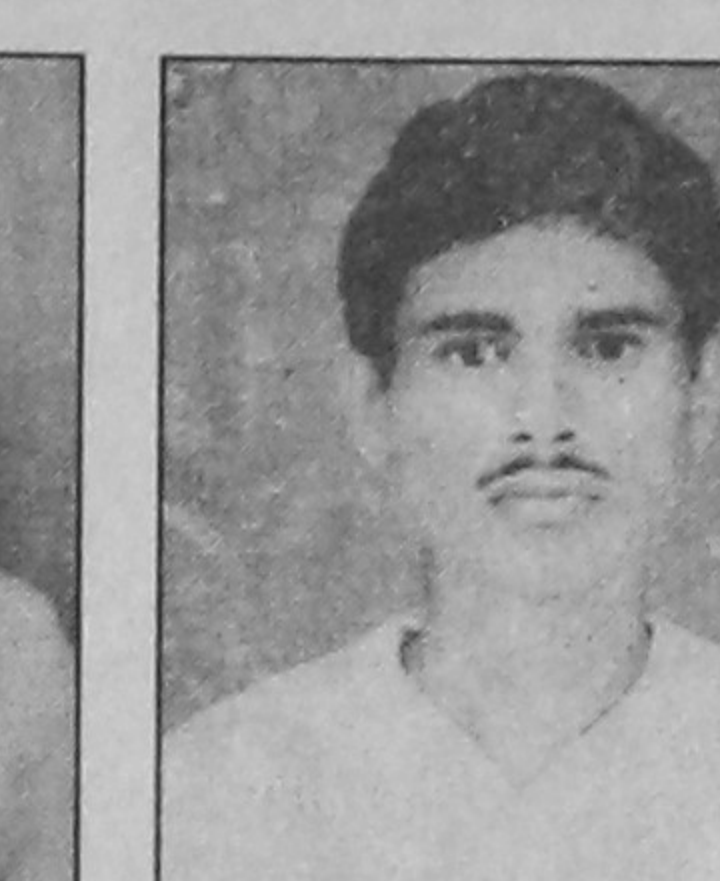
Shaheed Mosharrif Hossain
of Ali Sardi, Bandar, Narayanganj Fought in Sector No. 6, killed at Sirajganj Railway Station, on 9 December 1971.



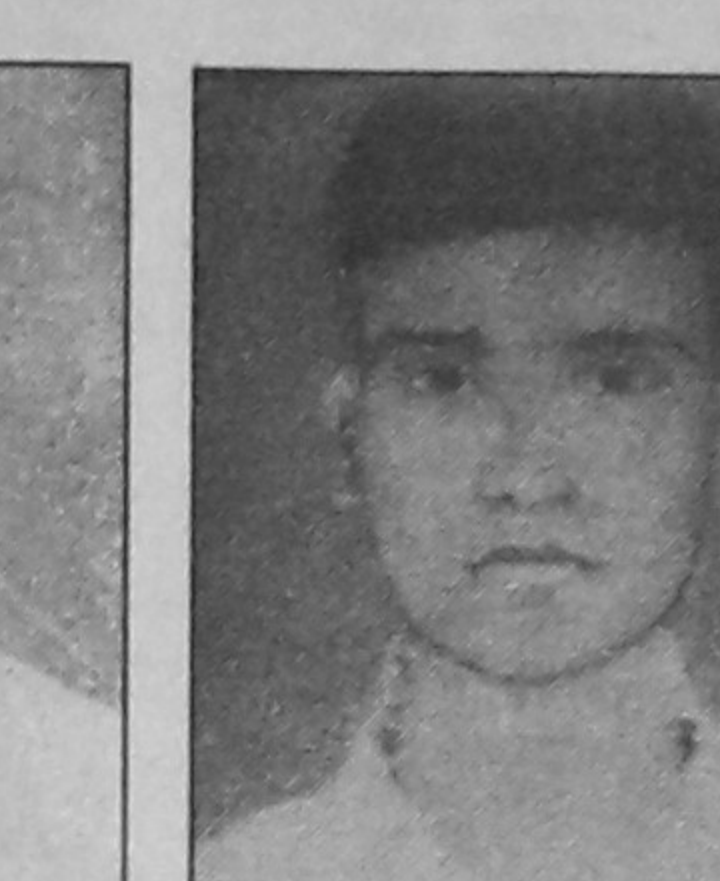
Shaheed Habildar Abdul Malek
Killed at Kurmitola Cantonment on 5 April 1971.



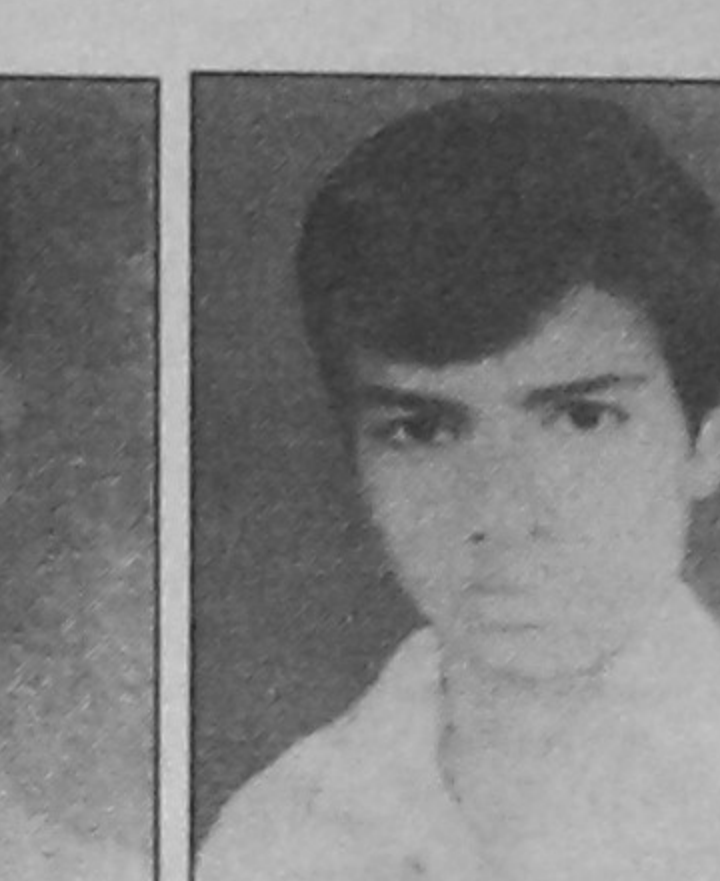
Shaheed Shamsuzzaman Bhuiyan Majnu
of Goadi, Narayanganj Killed in direct encounter at Sonargaon on 24 October 1971.



Shaheed Md. Selim
Killed in direct encounter at Parabhanga in Kishoreganj on 18 July 1971.



Shaheed Gouranga Chandra Mallik
Killed in air attack in front of Sreemangal Thana on 28 April 1971.



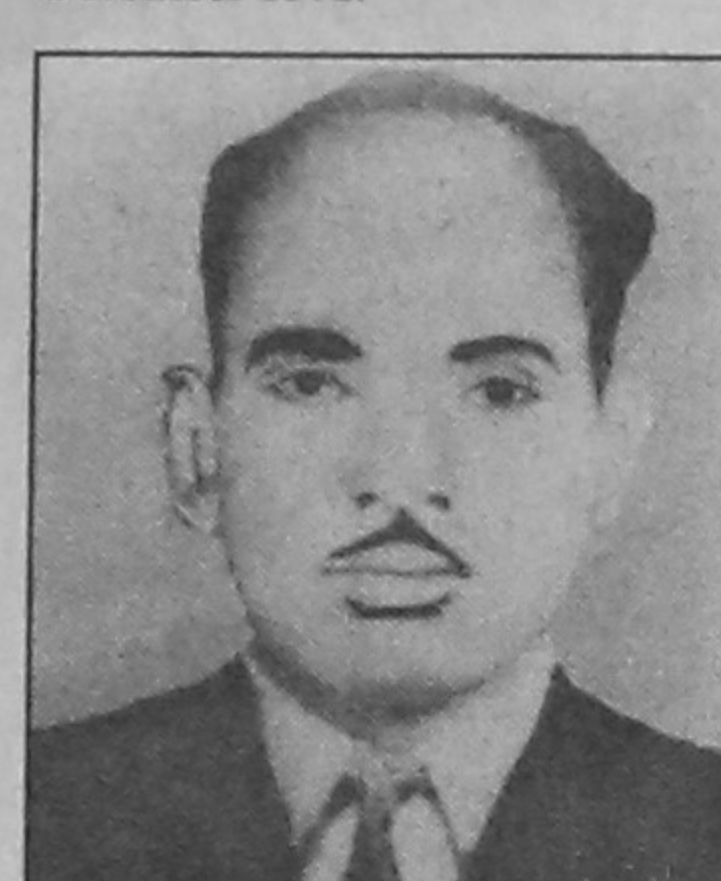
Shaheed Sepahi Ali Akbar
of Narayanganj Killed at Madhabdi, Narsingdi on 16 December 1971.



Shaheed Md Shahiddullah Saud
of Godenail, Narayanganj Killed in direct encounter at Fetihara, Chowddagram in Comilla on 11 November 1971.



Shaheed Mostafa Hassan
Killed at Kishoreganj on 7 November 1971.



Shaheed Jamshed Ali
Date of martyrdom not known Killed at Ishurdi.



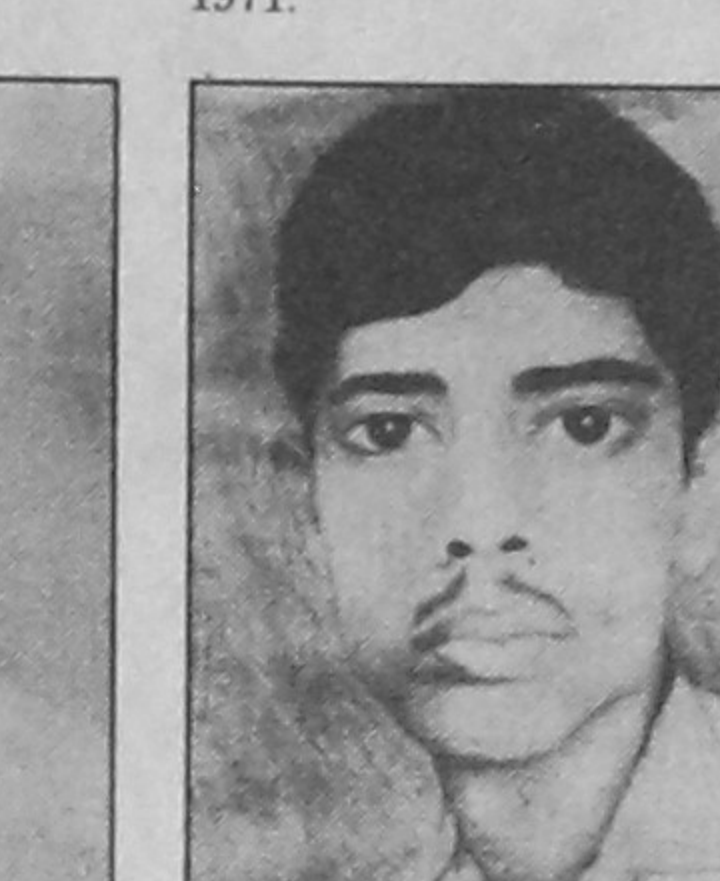
Shaheed Abu Bakar Siddique
of Alinagar, Bandar, Narayanganj Date of martyrdom not known, Killed at Kalibari, Debidwar in Comilla, Sector No. 2.



Shaheed Julhas Mia
of Narayanganj Date of martyrdom not known, Fought in Sector No. 2.



Shaheed Badruzzaman
of Sonargaon, Narayanganj Killed in encounter at Adamjee on 3 December 1971.



Shaheed Sheikh Mesbahuddin Md. Faruk
Killed in direct encounter at Chhatain in Habiganj district on 22 June 1971.



Shaheed Syed Najimul Haq
Killed at Khalishpur in Khulna on 8 April 2000.

Bangladesh Forces and Indian Army Cooperation

by Major Qamrul Hassan Bhuiyan (Retd)

THE prime targets of the Pakistani armed forces in their barbarous crackdown plan, 'Operation-Searchlight' were the Awami League leadership, political activists and the organized armed Bengali personnel. The latter consisted of the 5 East Bengal Battalions, the EPR, the Police, the Ansars and the Mujahids. On different pleas, the East Bengal Battalions, one in each of the four Brigades located at Dhaka, Comilla, Jessore and Rangpur were sent out of the cantonments. The 8th East Bengal Regiment (EBR) was already located at Sholoshahar in the Chittagong city, awaiting transfer by sea to West Pakistan. This was how the Pakistan Army planned to prevent the organized East Bengal Infantry Battalions from putting forward armed resistance to their attempts at brutal persecution. It was indeed impossible to neutralize or exterminate the 17 wings of EPR which were mostly located in the BOPs around, the borders in small bands. The Pakistanis neither considered organized resistance which could jeopardize their crackdown plan, from these scattered EPR personnel not at least immediately. They employed one Infantry Battalion (22nd Baluch Regiment) to exterminate the Bengali soldiers of EPR at its Headquarters at Peelkhan, Dhaka. It was a similar situation with the Police force. The Police personnel were posted in the police stations around the country. Another Infantry Battalion (32nd Punjab Regiment) and elements of the 43rd Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment were entrusted to neutralize the police personnel at the central police lines at Rajarbagh, Dhaka.

The Pakistani Army's genocide plan was conducted with success but not without opposition. 'Operation-Searchlight' was anything but a knife through a piece of butter. This operation was ultimately the cause of their disgraceful fall. Soon after the 25th March crackdown by the Pakistan Army, the armed Bengali personnel, wherever they were, organized themselves and stood up in revolt. The resistance commenced with the total population alongside. This was the genesis of the armed liberation war. Concurrently, a large number of the civil population fled their homes to safety. Subsequently, when the Pakistan Army's savage assaults engulfed literally the whole coun-

try, people en masse migrated across the borders to India for refuge. The armed resistance which was in an embryonic form, started gaining momentum. At the Telipara conference on 4th April, the regular forces who had revolted and the guerrillas were organized under a proper military leadership. The Bangladesh Government was formed on 10th April at Agartala, Tripura, India. Mr Tajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, in his first speech to the nation on 11 April through Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra apprised the nation about the armed struggle for independence and appealed to all able-bodied men of the country to fight back the Pakistani enemies. At first, Indian support was tentative. The Indian Government wished to make sure that the Mukti Bahini had genuine and widespread popular support and that it would endure. The Government was also anxious not to be accused of taking the first oppor-

tunity to embarrass Pakistan for fear of losing international sympathy. The excesses of the Yahya regime in Bangladesh and the seriousness of the refugee problem made support for the freedom fighters possible, discreetly at first but gradually more open and on a larger scale as the enormity of the disaster in Bangladesh turned world opinion against the Islamabad Government. Initially, support for the Mukti Bahini was channeled through the Border Security Forces (BSF), which was controlled by the Home Office. This was considered a more discreet and less provocative channel than the Ministry of Defence and the Army. At this stage, weapon supply was restricted to small arms and ammunition. A BSF Brigadier who supplied mortar bombs was considered to have overstepped the mark. More importantly, the Indians would not supply long range radios to enable Col Osmani and the Provisional

Government to exercise close control of the Mukti Bahini units operating in Bangladesh. By obliging the Colonel to use Indian aircraft and transport to contact his subordinates, the BSF kept effective control over the escalation of the insurgency. The Indian Government did not wish the freedom fighters to bring on a war situation before Indian military preparations and Indian and world opinion were ready. Consequently, Col Osmani's request for an Indian naval blockade of Bangladesh and for an air strike on the PAF base at Dhaka were turned down. K Rustomji, DG, BSF utilized his organization to provide all possible military assistance to the freedom fighters. Others in the BSF who played significant roles were Golok Majumder and Brig V C Pandey, DIG's of BSF in West Bengal and Tripura respectively.

With the escalation of battle activities by the Mukti Bahini, thus increasing dimensions in their organization and modus operandi of war, the BSF with their limited scope and capability found the situation difficult to cope with. This responsibility of collaboration with the Mukti Bahini was given to the Indian Army (IA) on 29th April. Indian Army's Eastern Command with its headquarters at Fort William, Calcutta was officially given the responsibility of assisting the Bangladesh Forces (BDF) in their liberation struggle and the BSF located on the borders were placed under command of the Eastern Army. A separate military establishment at the Command Headquarters at Fort William was created for the purpose. The IA posted Maj Gen Onker Singh Kalkot under the Eastern Command Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora to handle the Mukti Bahini affairs. Maj Gen Kalkot, an orthodox soldier, found himself in a difficult situation trying to handle this peculiar and sensitive assignment. In August he was replaced by Maj Gen B N Sarker. Maj Gen Sarker was a Bengali and hailed from a zamindar family from Protap Pur, Jhalakathi, Barishal. The programme for the assistance to the Mukti Bahini was formulated as a military operation and named 'Operation-Jackpot'. Six IA sectors were raised along the borders for providing the BDF sectors with operational and logistic support. Each of these sectors was commanded by a Brigadier. These sectors,

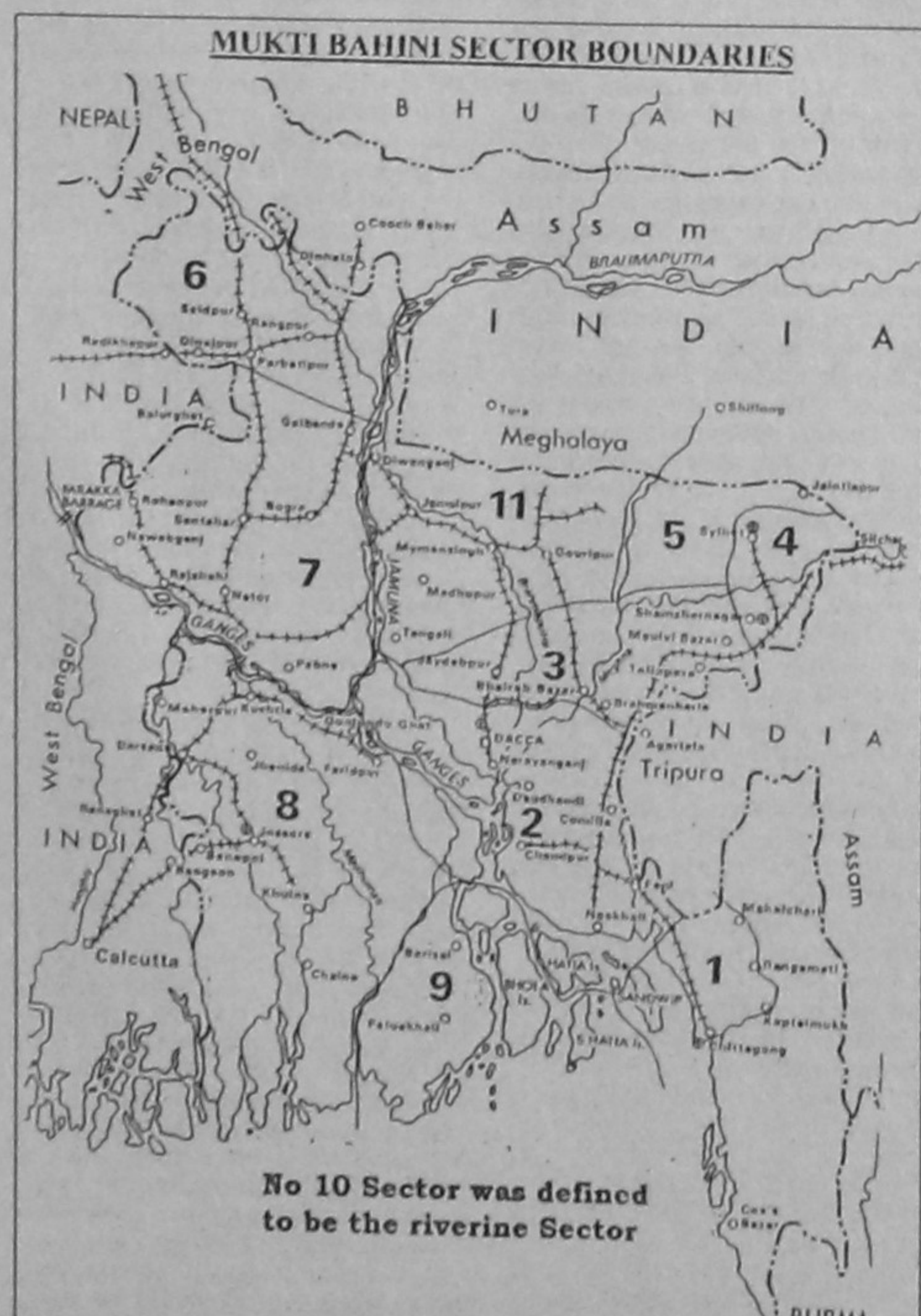
besides operation and logistic support, played a supervisory role to one or more BDF sectors. They were called after English alphabets: A (Alpha) at Murti; West Bengal, B (Bravo) at Chakulia; Bihar, C (Charlie) at Kalyani; West Bengal, D (Delta) at Shalbagan; Tripura, E-1 (Echo-One) at Masimpur; Assam and F-J (Foxtort-Juliet) at Tura; Meghalaya. The Indian officers who commanded these sectors were Brig BK Joshi (6 Sector), Brig Prem Singh (7 Sector), Brig N A Salik (8, 9 and 10 Sectors), Brig Sabeg Singh (1, 2 & 3 Sectors), Brig MB Wadke (4 and 5 Sectors) and Brig Sant Singh (11 Sector).

All the Jackpot sector commanders performed their assigned responsibilities with brilliance and prudence. Maj Gen Sarker proved able to deal and discharge delicate and sensitive matters related with the Mukti Bahini and the IA. Transmission to the local freedom fighters who knew both the ground and the Pakistanis well. Another composite force was created under Brig MB Wadke, Commander E-1 Sector. This force consisted of 3 EBR and freedom fighters of sector 4 and 5. There were elements of IA in this force. Not known about the operations much is conducted by this force except those of 3 EBR and 5/5 Gurkha Regiment. A deep and unexpected cloud cast its shadow on K Force Brigade. Despite clear written orders from Col Osmani, this force was disintegrated in its command and order of battle. 9 EBR was taken away as Division reserve of 23 Mountain Division by its GOC Maj Gen RD Hira. Code named 'Kilo', this force was created with two regular modified 'I' Battalions from Mizo Hills, two East Bengal Battalions 4 and 10 EBR, one BSF Battalion, one CRP (Central Reserve Police) Battal-

Division. 3 EBR was placed on Goyainghat- Sylhet axis, 1 EBR on Kanainghat- Chikragul- Sylhet axis and the 8 EBR on Bharugach-Moulavibazar axis. The principal area of responsibility of Sector 2 and K Force Brigade, Comilla, Dhaka, Noakhali lay with IA. The situation was frustrating. Major ATM Hyder, disregarding the Indian orders reached Dhaka with his Sector troops. He made his presence conspicuously felt at the surrender ceremony escorting Lt Gen Niazi, walking at his immediate left. IA plans envisaged that, (1) No BDF formation or Sector troops should engage themselves with the Pakistani defenders to cause their surrender to them. That would have undermined the IA on the outside world, (2) Mukti Bahini were to be employed in those areas from where on the day of surrender they could not reach Dhaka and any Pakistani Cantonments and (3) BDF would not become a signatory in the Instrument of Surrender which would only be signed by the Commander of the Allied Forces and the Pakistani Military Commander in the theatre.

A major political mistake at the surrender ceremony was the Indian military high command's failure to ensure the presence of General M. A. G. Osmani, Commander from the Bangladesh side in the Joint Command, at the ceremony and making him a signatory. The formal excuse explaining his absence was that his helicopter did take off but could not reach Dhaka in time for the surrender schedule. But there was widespread suspicion that his helicopter had been sent astray so that he could not reach Dhaka in time and the focus of attention at the ceremony was riveted on the Indian military commanders. This was an unfortunate aberration, which India could have avoided. The event generated much resentment among Bangladeshi political circles. Thus far was the military campaign in Bangladesh in 1971 which culminated in the surrender ceremony at the Dhaka Race Course maidan on the 16th December at 4:31 p.m. The cooperation of Bangladesh Forces and the Indian Army in the battle brought a humiliating defeat to the Pakistan Army, a military victory for the Indians and an independent and a sovereign, cherished home land for the Bangladeshis: Bangladesh.

The Brigade was split up, the major part being integrated with the adhoc IA formation Kilo Force. This force advanced along Feni-Chittagong axis. The principal area of responsibility of Sector 2 and K Force Brigade, Comilla, Dhaka, Noakhali lay with IA. The situation was frustrating. Major ATM Hyder, disregarding the Indian orders reached Dhaka with his Sector troops. He made his presence conspicuously felt at the surrender ceremony escorting Lt Gen Niazi, walking at his immediate left. IA plans envisaged that, (1) No BDF formation or Sector troops should engage themselves with the Pakistani defenders to cause their surrender to them. That would have undermined the IA on the outside world, (2) Mukti Bahini were to be employed in those areas from where on the day of surrender they could not reach Dhaka and any Pakistani Cantonments and (3) BDF would not become a signatory in the Instrument of Surrender which would only be signed by the Commander of the Allied Forces and the Pakistani Military Commander in the theatre.



INDIAN ARMY SECTORS OPERATION - JACKPOT

| Serial | Name | Location | Commander | Bangladesh Forces Sectors |
|--------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | A (ALPHA) | Murti, West Bengal | Brig B K Joshi | 6 Sector |
| 2. | B (BRAVO) | Chakulia, Bihar | Brig Prem Singh | 7 Sector |
| 3. | C (CHARLIE) | Kalyani, West Bengal | Brig N A Salik | 8, 9 and 10 Sectors |
| 4. | D (DELTA) | Shalbagan Tripura | Brig Sabeg Singh | 1, 2 and 3 Sectors |
| 5. | E-1 (ECHO-ONE) | Masimpur, Assam | Brig M B Wadke | 4 and 5 Sectors |
| 6. | F-J (FOXTORT-JULIET) | Tura, Meghalaya | Brig Sant Singh (Babaji) | 11 Sector |

of wireless messages, supply of stores, dispatch of mails, transportation of troops etc, were almost flawlessly handled by the Eastern Command with enormous handicaps and limitations. Though primarily designed to be static in nature, some of these sectors were given operational responsibilities during the final offensive. F-J sector commander Brig Sant Singh was hurriedly given the Sector Troops (Mukti Bahini) of No 11 Sector and a Bihar Regiment to advance to Mymensingh axis. This asserted success in relation to the gains of 95 Mountain Brigade which advanced along Kamalpur-Phulpur- Mymensingh axis. Much of this credit must be given

ion, a Mountain Regiment, Mujib Battery (1 Field Battery) and a BSF post Group. This force was eventually placed under Brig Arand Saroop of the Counter Insurgency School. We had planned for Brig Shaber Singh with his Sector Headquarters (Indian Delta Sector) at Shalbagan, Tripura to command this force. However, when instructed by Aurora to do so he flatly declined saying that it would have an adverse effect on his military reputation. Aurora acquiesced in his refusal. Due to our operations in Laksham area, Feni was vacated by the enemy and secured by Kilo Force on 6 December. Z Force Brigade was moved to areas around Sylhet and put under command of 8 Mountain

November, 11 EBR in a marvelous attack extricated the badly bogged down IA 18 Rajput Regiment in the operations against the enemy in Mukundopur area. The worst happened when Lt Col Shafiqullah was asked by GOC, 57 Mountain Division to remain deployed in Bhairab Bazar area while they were advancing towards River Meghna. In the race for the capture of Dhaka, S Force Brigade was not included in the operational plan. Whereas this force with thorough knowledge of the terrain could have been the forward elements to be present in Dhaka, as could be the units of K Force Brigade and the freedom fighters of Sector 2 (Sector Troops). K Force Brigade lost its entity as a unified fighting formation.