

Bangladesh Liberation War

Indian army's support structure

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If your house is set on fire, and my house is adjacent to yours, I cannot rest in peace. That was precisely the case for India in March 1971, when East Pakistan was set on fire by the Pakistani brute military. There were massacres, rapes, destructions and lootings in East Pakistan, forcing millions of Bengali people to search for safety elsewhere. As we were surrounded by India from almost all sides but one, people crossed over to India en masse. Feeding these people, housing them and providing them with medical facilities proved to be a big challenge for India.

The political situation prevalent in India immediately before the March 25 crackdown was turbulent. During that time, Indian Congress Party was in power in India. However, as a result of a rift between two powerful leaders, Morarji Desai and Indira Gandhi, the party was split into two. Indira Gandhi, having been expelled from the party, formed another political party named Congress (Indira) or Congress (I), while Morarji Desai, her rival, represented what was known as Congress (Morarji) or Congress (M).

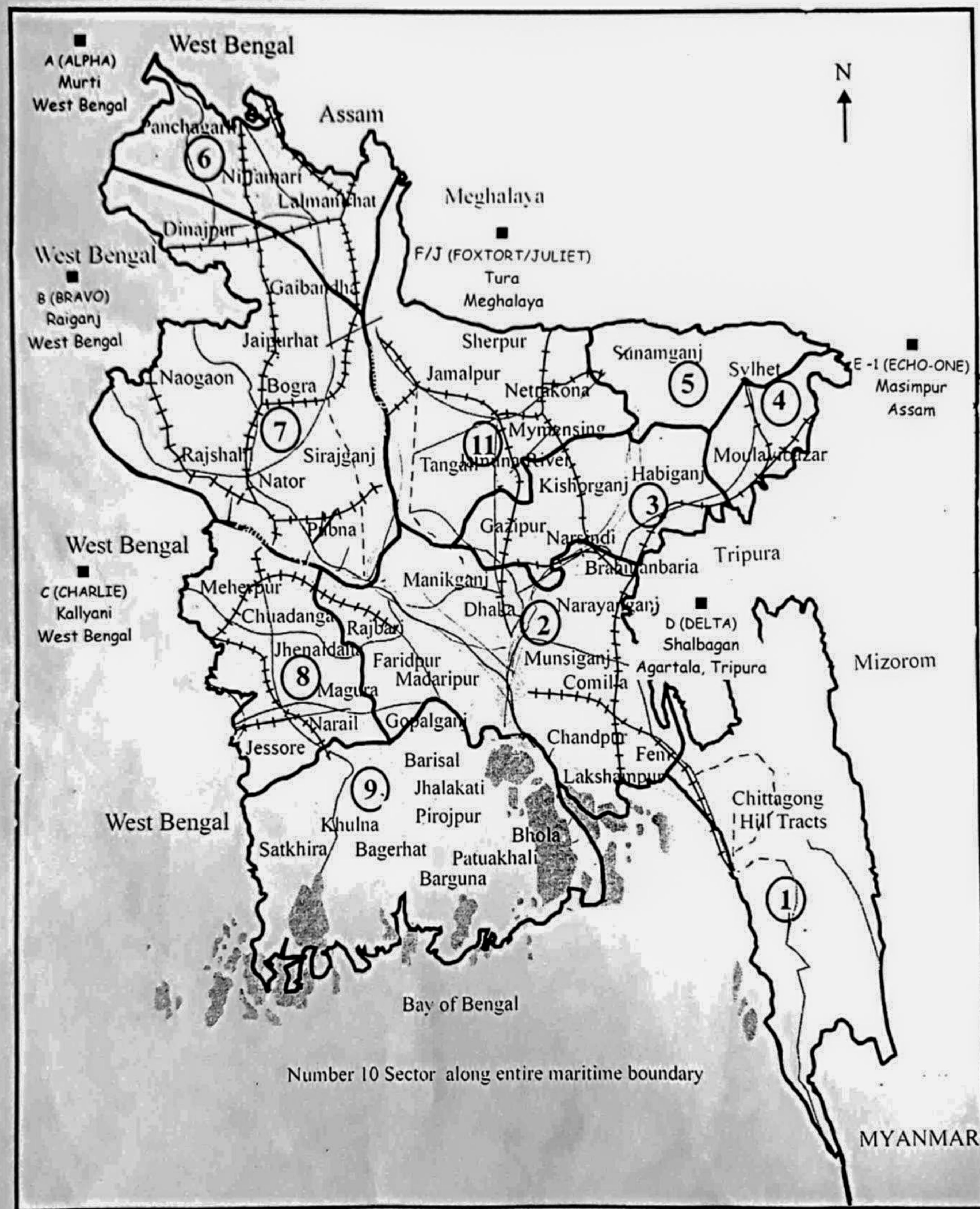
Due to the split, the Congress lost its majority in the parliament, failing as a result to retain its claim to form the government, which forced the then President V. V. Giri to call a new election. The result of the election, fifth in India's history, surprised everybody including Congress (I) itself, as Indira Gandhi's faction singlehandedly won the majority. Indira Gandhi formed her government on March 21, 1971. Four days later, the Pakistani army began its brutal campaign in what now is Bangladesh.

But Indira Gandhi, the prime minister, knew literally nothing of the political developments in East Pakistan. She had been busy with her own political existence and electoral campaign. When she asked RAW (Research and Analysis Wing), India's external spy agency, to give her a brief about East Pakistan's situation, it gave her next to nothing: Only one and a half-page brief.

Six days after the crackdown, on March 31, the Indian Parliament passed a resolution, moved by Indira herself, expressing support for the Bangladesh cause. The last paragraph of the resolution states, "This house records the profound conviction that the historic upsurge of 75 million people of East Pakistan will triumph. The house wishes to assure that their struggle and sacrifice will receive the wholehearted sympathy and support of the people of India."

This was the first public manifestation of India's support to our liberation struggle. While the resolution was ambiguous in terms of the nature of the possible Indian support, a July resolution explicitly states about 'military support'.

BANGLADESH SECTORS - 1971



Source : Bangladesh Forces Headquarters Letter Number 0002 G Dated 18 July 1971, C/O Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mujibnagar.