

Battles that quickened victory

AHMAD ISTIAK

Throughout the Liberation War, Mukti Bahini waged numerous guerrilla attacks as well as strategically crucial and well-planned battles across the country against the invading army, with the outcomes swinging back and forth between

the two forces.

Undeterred by setbacks, the freedom fighters held their nerve, and their resolute spirit fuelled the fight to liberate Bangladesh. Some of these battles were marked by incredible bravery and daring military tactics. Ultimately, the freedom fighters triumphed in these crucial

engagements, shifting the tide of the war decisively.

Victories in these battles not only solidified Mukti Bahini's position across the country, but also eroded the Pakistan army's confidence and morale, leading to their surrender on December 16, 1971.

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PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

On this day of victory, we remember the sacrifices of our heroes who fought for our freedom and gave us a new dawn. Holding the national flag fluttering in the wind, two children run with joy and laughter in a field of blooming mustard flowers that fill the air with their fragrance. The photo was taken recently in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila.

VICTORY DAY

OPERATION DABAR FERRYGHAT, SUNAMGANJ (Nov 12 & 29, 1971)

- Freedom fighters attack Pak forces on night of Nov 2
- Destroy the terminal, cutting off Pak arms supply route
- On night of Nov 29, they destroy 2 road & rail bridges
- 130 freedom fighters took part in the 4hr operations
- Pak army was forced to flee the area

OPERATION KILO FLIGHT, NARAYANGANJ AND CHATTOGRAM (Dec 3, 1971)

- Operation Kilo Flight was the codename for our air strikes
- The simultaneous air attacks on Dec 3 were a gamechanger
- The attack in Narayanganj destroyed a Pak oil depot
- In Ctg, two more Pak oil depots were attacked
- Pak army lost their air power for lack of fuel

SECOND BATTLE OF BELONIA, FENI (Nov 5-10, 1971)

- Freedom fighters besiege the area on the night of Nov 5
- Fierce battle starts on the morning of Nov 6, lasting 3 days
- Pak army surrender Nov 10
- This was Pak army's first surrender during the war
- This battle strategy is taught in military academies around the world

OPERATION NUT CRACK, BRAHMANBARIA (Nov 30-Dec 5, 1971)

- West part of Akhaura was taken by freedom fighters on Nov 30
- On night of Dec 1, Pak army camp in Singerbil Railway Station attacked
- Pak army initially retreated, but then reorganised and counter-attacked
- On Dec 5, freedom fighters and Indian forces launched joint attack
- Pak army surrender after a six-day battle

OPERATION HOTPANTS, KHULNA (Nov 10-Dec 10, 1971)

- Operation Hotpants were the codename for naval battles
- The operations began on Nov 10
- On Nov 11, a British ship carrying food & arms attacked in Mongla
- 5 foreign ships damaged by mine in last week of Nov
- Hotpants members capture Mongla Port on Dec 10

THIS IS PART 4 OF A 5-PART SERIES. PART 5 COMES OUT TOMORROW.

AL likely to share 30 seats with JP

The ruling party to 'withdraw candidates' from the constituencies, say sources in both parties

RASHIDUL HASAN

The ruling Awami League yesterday agreed in principle to withdraw its nominees in 30 constituencies, so that Jatiya Party candidates do not have to compete against AL picks.

However, the Jatiya Party, the main opposition in parliament, demands easy victories in 40 constituencies, according to sources present at a meeting between delegations of the two parties last night.

A JP leader told this correspondent that the ruling AL did not agree to withdraw AL aspirants who are running for parliament as independents. This means JP leaders will have to compete against AL leaders.

AL leaders will sit with their party president Sheikh Hasina today to know her opinion on the much talked-about issue, insiders of both parties told this correspondent.

After she gives her directives, the AL and JP leaders will hold a final meeting and make a formal announcement today, they added.

At last night's meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader led his party delegation while JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnud led his two-men delegation that included Anisul Islam Mahmud, senior co-chairman of the party.

JP insiders said party Chairman GM Quader did not attend the meeting because he did not want to take the blame in case the JP lost the negotiation with the AL.

After last night's meeting, several co-chairmen of JP met at Chunnud's home to discuss the issue.

A JP leader told this correspondent that the ruling AL did not agree to withdraw AL aspirants who are running for parliament as independents. This means JP leaders will have to compete against AL leaders.

The AL also wants all the 290 JP nominees to participate in the election so that the polls appear to be participatory.

In the current parliament, the JP has 27 MPs.

The issue will have to be finalised today as tomorrow is the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers.

The AL and the JP have already announced the names of their candidates in 298 and 287 constituencies respectively. In the 2018 national polls, the AL did not field any candidates in 26 constituencies from where JP nominees ran.

280 aspirants win back candidacy

Most of them independents; 5 including 3 from AL lose appeal against nomination cancellation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 280 aspirants got back their candidacy, winning appeals against the cancellation of their bid to run for parliament in the January 7 national election.

While hearing the appeals, the Election Commission also cancelled the candidatures of five aspirants, EC Secretary Jahangir Alam told reporters yesterday.

The appeals seeking the cancellations were filed by their opponents.

Three Awami League nominees and two independents lost their candidacy.

Of those who won back their candidacy, there are two AL, 126 independent, 23 Jatiya Party, 19 Sangskritik Muktijote, 16 Trinamool BNP, 12 Bangladesh Congress, 12 Bangladesh Nationalist Front, eight Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and five Gonoforum candidates.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal and four other commissioners heard 560 appeals from December 10 to yesterday. Of those who filed the appeals, 35 challenged the candidacy of others, said Jahangir.

Officials held 84 hearings yesterday and returned the candidatures of 20.

AL's Faridpur-3 nominee Shamim Haque and Barishal-5 independent Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, also a ruling AL leader, lost their bid because they have dual citizenship.

Objections to their eligibility to participate in the election were filed by Faridpur-3 independent aspirant AK Azad and Barishal-5 AL nominee Zahid Faruque, also the state minister for water resources.

AL's Mymensingh-9 nominee Abdus Salam and Jashore-4 nominee Enamul Haq Babul lost their candidacies for not paying off loans.

Sunamganj-4 independent aspirant Dewan Shamsul Abedin also lost his bid during the appeal hearing.

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IMF lowers forex reserves target for Bangladesh

The revision comes as the country's reserves keep falling

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund has set a new minimum foreign exchange reserves target for Bangladesh as the reserves have dropped at a faster-than-expected pace.

When the Washington-based lender approved the \$4.7 billion loan in January, it had fixed a minimum net international reserve (NIR) of \$26.81 billion for December this year.

Yesterday, the goal was revised downwards to \$17.78 billion, according to documents of the IMF. The country will have to ensure a minimum reserves of \$19.27 billion in March next year and \$20.11 billion in June.

The overall balance of payments (BOP) has deteriorated, given an unprecedented reversal of the financial account leading to forex shortages, the IMF said in a report.

The report was released two days after the executive board of the lender completed the first review of the loan programme and the Article IV consultations and unlocked disbursements of \$689 million in the second tranche.

The revision comes as the

government could not meet two of the six targets that it had to reach in order to qualify for the second instalment. The two targets are related to the reserves and revenue collections.

For example, the minimum reserves target was set at \$24.46 billion for June this year and it was later revised to \$23.74 billion. The reserves stood

The tax collection target has been kept unchanged at Tk 143,640 crore for December this year. Earnings will have to be Tk 276,170 crore in March.

In order to be eligible for the second instalment, Bangladesh had requested a waiver for the non-observance of the end-June 2023 performance criteria on the NIR caused by greater-



The government will have to raise tax collections by 20.41 percent to Tk 394,530 crore in June next year. Receipts stood at Tk 327,650 crore at the end of FY23 against the IMF target of Tk 345,630 crore.

at \$19.56 billion at the end of the last financial year.

In October this year, the NIR amounted to \$15.9 billion.

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than-expected worsening in external conditions and policy response that proved inadequate.

The IMF mission during talks with the government in October backed the waiver, based on the proposed corrective actions that entail further monetary tightening, supported by a neutral fiscal policy stance, and

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