

Sectors of the liberation war 1971

During the Bangladesh War of Independence, the Bangladesh Forces (not to be confused with Mukti Bahini) were divided in the geographical area of Bangladesh into eleven divisions designated as sectors. Each sector had a sector commander I.e. Division Commanders who directed the military operation further coordinated through several sub-sectors under sub-sector commanders who fought along with their troops and civilian resistance fighters. Most of the Sector Commanders and several sub-sector commanders remained in security under Indian BSF border camps such as Wing Commander Bashar, Major Shafiullah, and Major Mir Shawkat Ali.

Bangladesh Sector Commanders Conference

The history of the Bangladesh War of Independence dates back to April 1971 when it began its inception with the title of Bangladesh Forces during the first Bangladesh Sector Commanders Conference held in the week of July 11–17, 1971. It was at this conference during which time BD Forces was organized and formed for the independence struggle. It was significant in the light of its official creation and formation as Bangladesh Forces, its command structuring, sector reorganization, reinforcement, and appointing of war commanders were its principal focus.

This conference was presided over by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Tajuddin Ahmed, and Colonel M.A.G. Osmani, during which General Muhammad Ataul Gani Osmani was reinstated from retirement to active duty into the Bangladesh Forces as its senior most official. Colonel M.A.G. Osmani had thereby been appointed Commander in Chief of all Bangladesh Forces with Lt. Col M. A. Rab as Chief of Army Staff. Principal participants of this conference were Squadron Leader M. Hamidullah Khan, Major Ziaur Rahman, Wing Commander M Khademul Bashar, Major M. A. Jalil, Captain Haider, Lt. Col. M A Rab.¹

List of sectors:

Sector No. 1: From Feni River to Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati and Feni was 'Sector No. 1'. Major Ziaur Rahman was the commander of this sector from April to June 1971 and Major Rafiqul Islam was the commander from June to December. This sector was divided into five sub-sectors.

Sector No. 2: 'Sector No. 2' was formed with parts of Dhaka, Comilla, Akhaura-Bhairab, Noakhali and Faridpur. The sector was commanded by Major Khaled Musharraf from April to October and Major ATM Haider from October to December. This sector had 6 sub-sectors.

Sector No.3: Habiganj, parts of Comilla district eastward from Akhaura-Bhairab railway line, and parts of Kishoreganj and Dhaka were under 'Sector No. 3'. Major KM Shafiullah was the commander of this sector from April to September. Major ANM Nuruzzaman served as Sector Commander from September to December. And there were 7 sub-sectors in this sector.

Sector No.4: 'Sector No. 4' was formed out of part of Sylhet district. This sector also had 6 sub-sectors. The sector commander from May to December was Major CR Dutt (later Major General) and later Captain A Robb.

Sector No. 5: 'Sector No. 5' was formed with the bordering areas of Greater Mymensingh and parts of Sylhet district. Major Mir Shaukat Ali was the sector commander. This sector was also divided into 6 sub-sectors.

Sector No.6: 'Sector No. 6' comprises the whole of Rangpur except Thakurgaon Mahakuma in Dinajpur and the Brahmaputra river banks. The Sector Commander was Wing Commander MK Bashar. There were 5 sub-sectors in this sector.

Sector No.7: Except for Rajshahi, Pabna, the entire Bogra, the south area of Dinajpur, and some parts of Rangpur were included in 'Sector No. 7'. The sector commanders were three - Major Nazmul Haque, Subedar Major A-Rob, and Major (later Lt. Col) Kazi Nuruzzaman. There were 9 sub-sectors in this sector.

Sector No.8: Kushtia, Jessore, Daulatpur up to Satkhira Road, and some parts of Khulna District and Faridpur were included in 'Sector No. 8'. The commander of this sector from April to August was Major (later Lt. Col.) Abu Osman Chowdhury and from August to December Major (later Major General) MA Manzoor. There were 7 sub-sectors in this sector.

Sector No. 9: 'Sector No. 9' is formed with Patuakhali, Barisal, and parts of Khulna. The sector commander was Major MA Jalil until early December and then Major Zainal Abedin. Major MA Manzoor was also in additional charge. This sector had 3 sub-sectors.

Sector No. 10: Coastal areas, naval commandos, and inland waterways were under 'Sector No. 10'. In this sector, when the naval commandos were engaged in the mission of the sector, they worked under the direction of the sector commander. The sector had no sub-sectors and no regular sector commanders. It was a special force under the command of the Commander-in-Chief.

Sector No. 11: Apart from Kishoreganj, Mymensingh and Tangail districts are formed by 'Sector No. 11'. Major Ziaur Rahman was the commander of this sector from April to June 1971. The Sector Commander was Major Abu Taher until November and then Flight Lieutenant (later Wing Commander) M Hamidullah Khan. This sector was divided into 7 sub-sectors.