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Bara-Bhuiyans, The

Bara-Bhuiyans, The or twelve territorial landholders were the local chiefs and zamindars who put up strong resistance to the Mughals during the time of akbar and jahangir. The term Bara-Bhuiyans means twelve territorial landholders. But who were these bhuiyans could not be identified accurately for a long time. In fact, during the interregnum between Afghan rule and the rise of Mughal power in Bengal, various parts of Bengal passed to the control of several military chiefs, bhuiyans and zamindars. They jointly and more often severally resisted Mughal expansion and ruled their respective territories as independent or semi-independent chiefs. There was no central control, or if there was any, it was nominal. In such circumstances many bhuiyans raised their heads. Taking the whole of Bengal into consideration, the number of bhuiyans must have been many more than twelve.

One group of scholars says the term Bara Bhuiyan does not necessarily mean exactly twelve bhuiyans, the term was applied loosely to mean many. As number twelve was sacred to the Hindus, these scholars examined traditions from scriptures to find out in which of the cases the number twelve was used. They applied the term Bara-Bhuiyans to those who fought for the freedom of their motherland. This view was later modified by another group of scholars to say that only those bhuiyans who fought against Mughal aggression were known as Bara-Bhuiyans. Even the fighters against the Mughals were many more than twelve, so this group also failed to identify the Bara-Bhuiyans.

In recent years, the question of identification of the Bara-Bhuiyans has been studied afresh and they have been identified quite satisfactorily. Modern scholars have found that the Bara-Bhuiyans flourished during the chaotic period of Afghan rule and the period of the conquest of Bengal by the Mughal emperors Akbar and Jahangir. So the Bara-Bhuiyans received proper treatment from the Mughal historians, Abul Fazl, the author of the akbarnamah, and Mirza Nathan, the author of the baharistan-i-ghaibi. Both of them used the numerical word ithna-ashara (twelve), to denote the Bara-Bhuiyans; it means that the word 'Bara-Bhuiyan' was not a vague term, rather it gives the exact number of the bhuiyans. They also categorically say that the twelve Bhuiyans (Bara-Bhuiyan) were people of bhati and they rose to power in Bhati. But the identification of Bhati has not been satisfactorily ascertained.

On the basis of the confusing statements of the European writers, previous scholars also were in confusion about the identification of Bhati. The Bara-Bhuiyans fought against the Mughals in the reigns of emperors Akbar and Jahangir, and they were compelled to submit within a few years of Jahangir's accession. So Bhati of the Bara-Bhuiyans may be identified with the help of the Mughal histories, mainly the Akbarnama, the ain-i-akbari and the Baharistan-i-Ghaibi. In Bengal the word Bhati generally means low lying region and the entire low-lying area of Bengal is Bhati. It is a riverine country, and most of it remains inundated for more than half of the year; the mighty rivers the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and their numerous branches wash and water the whole of eastern and southern Bengal.

Modern scholars have, therefore, suggested that different low-lying areas of Bengal should be identified with Bhati. Some say that the whole of the low-lying tract from the Bhagirathi to the Meghna is Bhati, some others include in Bhati Hijli, Jessor, Chandradwip and Bakerganj. Keeping in view the theatre of warfare between the Bara-Bhuiyans and the Mughals, and on the basis of the details of the warfare as given in the Akbarnama and the Baharistan-i-Ghaibi the limits of Bhati, where the Bara-Bhuiyans flourished and rose to power, may be determined as the area bounded by the river Ichamati in the west, the Ganges in the south, the kingdom of Tippera in the east and Alapsingh pargana (in greater Mymensingh) stretching northeast to Baniachang (in greater Sylhet) in the north. So the low-lying area of the greater districts of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Tippera and Sylhet, watered and surrounded by the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna and their numerous branches constituted Bhati in the days of Akbar and Jahangir. The Bara-Bhuiyans rose to power in this region and put up resistance to the Mughals, until Islam Khan Chisti made them submit in the reign of Jahangir.

Mughal historians, Abul Fazl and Mirza Nathan, state the number of Bhuiyans as twelve, but it should be remembered that the Bara-Bhuiyans of the time of Akbar were not the same as those of the time of Jahangir, because some died in the intervening period. For example, Isa Khan, who fought against Akbar, died in his reign and was succeeded by his son Musa Khan, who took up leadership in the reign of Jahangir. Some parganas changed hands in the meantime; for example, Chand Rai and Kedar Rai were zamindars of Vikramapura and Sripur in the reign of Akbar, but in the reign of Jahangir the family was probably extinct, so that the parganas were found in the hands of Musa Khan. After the Mughal campaign in Bhati, as found in the Akbarnama, the following list of the Bhuiyans may be drawn up: (i) Isa Khan Masnad-i-Ala, (ii) Ibrahim Naral, (iii) Karimdad Musazai, (iv) Majlis Dilwar, (v) Majlis Pratap, (vi) Kedar Rai, (vii) Sher Khan, (viii) Bhadur

Ghazi, (ix) Tila Ghazi, (x) Chand Ghazi, (xi) Sultan Ghazi, (xii) Selim Ghazi, (xiii) Qasim Ghazi.

In the Baharistan-i-Ghaibi, the names of Musa Khan and his 12 zamindar allies are as follows: (i) Musa Khan Masnad-i-Ala, (ii) Alaul Khan, (iii) Abdullah Khan, (iv) Mahmud Khan, (v) Bahadur Ghazi, (vi) Sona Ghazi, (vii) Anwar Ghazi, (viii) Shaikh Pir, (ix) Mirza Mumin, (x) Madhav Rai, (xi) Binode Rai, (xii) Pahlwan, (xiii) Haji Shamsuddin Baghdadi.

The patriotic Bhuiyans, who resisted the Mughal conquest, were famous as Bara-Bhuiyans or twelve Bhuiyans, but in both the above lists, there are thirteen names. Actually they were thirteen including the leader, and in fact both Abul Fazl and Mirza Nathan, while referring to the Bara-Bhuiyans, wrote, 'Isa Khan made the 12 zamindars of Bengal subject to himself', and elsewhere Mirza Nathan wrote 'Musa Khan and his 12 zamindar allies'.

The Bara-Bhuiyans gained strength during the chaotic conditions prevailing in eastern Bengal following the disruption of the two-hundred-year old independent sultanate in 1538 AD. Later Sher Shah's policy of decentralisation had this bad effect is proved by the several rebellions in eastern Bengal against him. The Afghan historians described this state of affairs by using the term *Muluk-ut-tawaif*, which means disorder, chaos and disintegration.

It is evident that after the fall of the independent sultanate (1538 AD) and particularly after the decentralisation of administration by Sher Shah, a chaotic condition and disruptive forces prevailed, particularly in eastern Bengal in the region of Bhati; and during this period of chaos, the Bara-Bhuiyans gained strength and rose to power. The Bara-Bhuiyans were heirs to the two-hundred-year long independent sultanate of Bengal.

The Bara-Bhuiyans were not the scions of any royal family, they were zamindars or landholders. They were patriots who with courage and valour resisted the Mughal advance for long three decades. After 1612 when Islam Khan Chishti forced them to submit, the term Bara-Bhuiyans survived only in popular tales and ballads.

Bengal Renaissance

The **Bengal Renaissance** refers to a socio-cultural and religious reform movement during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in undivided India's Bengal province, though the impact of it spread in the whole of India. The Bengal Renaissance is said to have begun with Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1775–1833) and continued until the death of Rabindranath Tagore in 1941. The Renaissance was a revival of the positives of India's past and appreciation of the impact of the Modern West, as it had emerged since the Fifteenth century European Renaissance. Thus, the Bengal Renaissance blended together the teachings of the Upanishad in order to create public opinion against Hindu superstitions including Sati, infanticide, polygamy, child marriage, caste-division, inter-caste hatred, untouchability etc. and the efforts of the Christian Missionaries and the British Colonial Government who introduced Western education, politics and law to administer all those who indulged in superstitions and caste-based Hindu medievalism.

Background

During this period, Bengal witnessed an intellectual awakening questioning the prevalent orthodoxies concerning the social status of women, marriage, the caste system and religion. One of the earliest social movements that emerged during this time was the Young Bengal movement, that espoused rationalism and atheism as the common denominators of civil conduct among upper caste educated Hindus.

The parallel socio-religious movement, the Brahmo Samaj, developed during this time and counted many of the leaders of the Bengal Renaissance among its followers. In the earlier years the Brahmo Samaj, like the rest of society, could not however, conceptualize, in that feudal-colonial era, a free India as it was influenced by the European Enlightenment (and its bearers in India, the British Raj) although it traced its intellectual roots to the Upanishads. Their version of Hinduism, or rather Universal Religion, although devoid of practices like sati and polygamy that had crept into the social aspects of Hindu life, was ultimately a rigid impersonal monotheistic faith, which actually was quite distinct from the pluralistic and multifaceted nature of the way the Hindu religion was practiced. Leader Keshub Chunder Sen was devotee of Brahma, Krishna, Buddha and Christ. It has been argued by some scholars like Sailen Debnath that the Brahmo Samaj movement, in spite of its universality, never gained the support of the masses and remained restricted to the elite, although Hindu society has accepted most of the social reform programmes of the Brahmo Samaj. It must also be acknowledged that many of the later Brahmos were also leaders of the freedom movement.

Literature

The renaissance period after the Indian Rebellion of 1857 saw a magnificent outburst of Bengali literature. While Ram Mohan Roy and Iswar Chandra Vidyaṣagar were the pioneers, others like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee widened it and built upon it. The first significant nationalist detour

to the Bengal Renaissance was given by the brilliant writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Later writers of the period who introduced broad discussion of social problems and more colloquial forms of Bengali into mainstream literature included the great Saratchandra Chatterjee.

The Tagore family, including Rabindranath Tagore, were leaders of this period and had a particular interest in educational reform. Their contribution to the Bengal Renaissance was multi-faceted. Indeed, Tagore's 1901 Bengali novella, *Nastanirh* was written as a critique of men who professed to follow the ideals of the Renaissance, but failed to do so within their own families. In many ways Rabindranath Tagore's writings (especially poems and songs) can be seen as imbued with the spirit of the Upanishads. His works repeatedly allude to Upanishadic ideas regarding soul, liberation, transmigration and—perhaps most essentially—about a spirit that imbues all creation not unlike the Upanishadic Brahman. Tagore's English translation of a set of poems titled the *Gitanjali* won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. He was the first Asian to win this award. That was the only example at the time but the contribution of the Tagore family is enormous.

According to historian Romesh Chunder Dutt:

“ The conquest of Bengal by the English was not only a political revolution, but ushered in a greater revolution in thoughts and ideas, in religion and society... From the stories of gods and goddesses, kings and queens, princes and princesses, we have learnt to descend to the humble walks of life, to sympathies with the common citizen or even common peasant ... Every revolution is attended with vigour, and the present one is no exception to the rule. Nowhere in the annals of Bengali literature are so many and so bright names found crowded together in the limited space of one century as those of Ram Mohan Roy, Muhammad Shahidullah, Akshay Kumar Datta, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Sharat Chandra Chatterji, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Dina Bandhu Mitra. Within the three quarters of the present century, prose, blank verse, historical fiction and drama have been introduced for the first time in the Bengali literature... ”

Science

The Bengal Renaissance saw the emergence of pioneering Bengali scientists such as Jagadish Chandra Bose, Satyendra Nath Bose, Upendranath Brahmachari and Meghnad Saha. Jagadish Chandra Bose was a polymath: a physicist, biologist, botanist, archaeologist, and writer of science fiction. He pioneered the investigation of radio and microwave optics, made very significant contributions to plant science, and laid the foundations of experimental science in the Indian subcontinent. He is considered one of the fathers of radio science, and is also considered the father of Bengali science fiction. He was the first from the Indian subcontinent to get a US patent, in 1904.

Upendranath Brahmachari was a noted Indian scientist and a leading medical practitioner of his time. He synthesized Urea Stibamine (carbostibamide) in 1922 and determined that it was an effective substitute for the other antimony-containing compounds in the treatment of Kala-azar (Visceral leishmaniasis) which is caused by a protozoon, Leishmania donovani. Brahmachari was a nominee for the Nobel Prize in 1929 in the category of physiology and medicine. He was president of the 23rd session of the Indian Science Congress in Indore (1936) as well as the president of the Indian Chemical Society, Calcutta (1936).

Meghnad Saha was an astrophysicist best known for his development of the Saha equation, used to describe chemical and physical conditions in stars. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Physics four times: 1930, 1937, 1939 and 1940.

Contributing institutions

- Asiatic Society (est.1784)
- Fort William College (1800)
- Serampore College (1817)
- Calcutta School-book Society (1817)
- Hindu College (1817)
- Sanskrit College (1824)
- General Assembly's Institution (1830) (now known as Scottish Church College)
- Calcutta Medical College (1835)
- Dhaka College (est.1841)
- Mutty Lall Seal's Free School & College (1842)
- Presidency College (1855)
- University of Calcutta (1857)
- Chittagong College (est.1869)
- Vidyasagar College (1872)
- Rajshahi College (est.1873)
- Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya (1873)
- Banga Mahila Vidyalaya (1876)
- Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (1876)
- Bethune College (1879)
- Ripon College (1884) (now known as Surendranath College)
- Brojomohun College, Barisal (est.1889)
- Murari Chand College, Sylhet (est.1892)
- Comilla Victoria College (est.1899)
- Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh (est.1901)
- Brajalal College, Khulna (est.1902)
- National Council of Education, Bengal (1906) (now known as Jadavpur University)
- Visva-Bharati University (1921)
- University of Dhaka (1921)
- Asutosh College (1916)

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra radio broadcasting centre established by the Bangladesh government in exile soon after the declaration of the war of liberation. The Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, in fact, evolved from the Kalurghat (chittagong) transmission centre from where the declaration of independence was made by ziaur rahman on behalf of bangabandhu sheikh mujibur rahman. The Kalurghat radio centre was abandoned when it was heavily shelled by the Pakistan Air Force on March 30. The centre, however, resumed its second phase of activities from 3 April 1971 at Bagafa (Tripura State) with a short wave transmitter. The centre was later shifted to Shalbagan and Bagafa-Belonia Forest Hills Road, Agartala. The key person in organising the centre in its early stage was Belal Muhammad, a scriptwriter and artiste of Radio Pakistan. Several other liberation activists who joined later included Abdullah-Al-Faruque, Abul Kashem Sandwip, Kazi Habibuddin Ahmed Moni, Aminur Rahman, Rashidul Hussain, A M Sharfuzzaman, Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Syed Abdus Shaker, and Mustafa Monwar. The damaged transmitter that they brought with them from Kalurghat was made operative by engineer Syed Abdus Shaker. The daily programme in this phase consisted of a morning transmission between 8.30 and 9 and an afternoon session between 5 and 7.

On May 25, the centre was shifted to Calcutta where it started functioning on the same day. With the arrival of new and experienced radio personnel from Dhaka, the centre became fully operative technically. From May 26, it was named Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. In August, appointment letters were issued for various positions with effect from June 1971.

Two most popular programmes of Swadhin Bangla Betar were 'Charampatra' and 'Jallader Darbar'. Jallader Darbar written by Kalyan Mitra was a satiric serial exposing the inhuman and beastly nature of General Yahya Khan who was depicted in it as 'Kella Fateh Khan'. Raju Ahmed acted in the main role. Charampatra, a satirical composition, was planned by Abdul Mannan, a Member of National Assembly, and written in typical Dhaka dialect by M R akhter mukul , who himself used to read it out. The programme proved to be immensely popular. It evinced exceptional sense of humour and a nationalist spirit that helped keep the morale of the freedom fighters high.

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra was renamed Bangladesh Betar on 6 December 1971, when India gave formal recognition to independent Bangladesh and its provisional government. The Bangladesh government moved to Dhaka on 22 December 1971 and Bangladesh Betar started broadcasting in independent Bangladesh on the same day.

Language Movement

Language Movement began in 1948 and reached its climax in the killing of 21 February 1952, and ended in the adoption of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan. The question as to what would be the state language of Pakistan was raised immediately after its creation. The central leaders and the Urdu-speaking intellectuals of Pakistan declared that Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan, just as Hindi was the state language of India. The students and intellectuals of East Pakistan, however, demanded that Bangla be made one of the state languages. After a lot of controversy over the language issue, the final demand from East Pakistan was that Bangla must be the official language and the medium of instruction in East Pakistan and for the central government it would be one of the state languages along with Urdu. The first movement on this issue was mobilised by Tamaddun Majlis headed by Professor Abul Kashem. Gradually many other non-communal and progressive organisations joined the movement, which finally turned into a mass movement.

Meanwhile, serious preparation was being taken in various forums of the central government of Pakistan under the initiative of Fazlur Rahman, the central education minister, to make Urdu the only state language of Pakistan. On receipt of this information, East Pakistani students became agitated and held a meeting on the Dhaka University campus on 6 December 1947, demanding that Bangla be made one of the state languages of Pakistan. The meeting was followed by student processions and more agitation. The first Rastrabhasa Sangram Parishad (Language Action Committee) was formed towards the end of December with Professor Nurul Huq Bhuiyan of Tamaddun Majlis as the convener.

The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan was in session at Karachi-then the capital of Pakistan-from 23 February 1948. It was proposed that the members would have to speak either in Urdu or in English at the Assembly. Dhirendranath Datta, a member from the East Pakistan Congress Party, moved an amendment motion to include Bangla as one of the languages of the Constituent Assembly. He noted that out of the 6 crore 90 lakh population of Pakistan, 4 crore 40 lakh were from East Pakistan with Bangla as their mother tongue. The central leaders, including Liaquat Ali Khan, prime minister of Pakistan, and Khwaja Nazimuddin, chief minister of East Bengal, opposed the motion. On receiving the news that the motion had been rejected, students, intellectuals and politicians of East Pakistan became agitated. Newspapers such as the Azad also criticised of the politicians who had rejected the motion.

A new committee to fight for Bangla as the state language was formed with Shamsul Huq as convener. On 11 March 1948 a general strike was observed in the towns of East Pakistan in protest against the omission of Bangla from the languages of the Constituent Assembly, the absence of Bangla letters in Pakistani coins and stamps, and the use of only Urdu in recruitment tests for the navy. The movement also reiterated the earlier demand that Bangla be declared one of the state languages of Pakistan and the official language of East Pakistan. Amidst processions, picketing and slogans, leaders such as Shawkat Ali, Kazi Golam Mahboob, Shamsul Huq, Oli Ahad, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Abdul Wahed and others were arrested. Student leaders, including Abdul Matin and Abdul Malek Ukil, also took part in the procession and picketing.

A meeting was held on the Dhaka University premises. Mohammad Toaha was severely injured while trying to snatch away a rifle from a policeman and had to be admitted to hospital. Strikes were observed from 12 March to 15 March.

Under such circumstances the government had to give in. Khwaja Nazimuddin signed an agreement with the student leaders. However, although he agreed to a few terms and conditions, he did not comply with their demand that Bangla be made a state language. Muhammed Ali Jinnah, the governor general of Pakistan, came to visit East Pakistan on 19 March. He addressed two meetings in Dhaka, in both of which he ignored the popular demand for Bangla. He reiterated that Urdu would be the only state language of Pakistan. This declaration was instantly protested with the Language Movement spreading throughout East Pakistan. The Dhaka University Language Action Committee was formed on 11 March 1950 with Abdul Matin as its convener.

By the beginning of 1952, the Language Movement took a serious turn. Both Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan were dead-Jinnah on 11 September 1948 and Liaquat Ali Khan on 16 October 1951. Khwaja Nazimuddin had succeeded Liaquat Ali Khan as prime minister of Pakistan. With the political crisis, the economic condition in East Pakistan also deteriorated. The people of East Pakistan started losing faith in the Muslim League. A new party, the Awami Muslim League—which would later become the Awami League—was formed under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani in 1949. There was a growing sense of deprivation and exploitation in East Pakistan and a realisation that a new form of colonialism had replaced British imperialism. Under these circumstances, the Language Movement got a new momentum in 1952.

On 27 January 1952, Khwaja Nazimuddin came to Dhaka from Karachi. Addressing a meeting at Paltan Maidan, he said that the people of the province could decide what would be the provincial language, but only Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan. There was an instantaneous, negative reaction to this speech among the students who responded with the slogan, 'Rashtrabhasha Bangla Chai' (We want Bangla as the state language).

A strike was observed at Dhaka University on 30 January. The representatives of various political and cultural organisations held a meeting on 31 January chaired by Moulana Bhasani. An All-Party Central Language Action Committee was formed with Kazi Golam Mahboob as its convener. At this time the government also proposed that Bangla be written in Arabic script. This proposal was also vehemently opposed. The Language Action Committee decided to call a hartal and organise demonstrations and processions on February 21 throughout East Pakistan.

As preparations for demonstrations were underway, the government imposed Section 144 in the city of Dhaka, banning all assemblies and demonstrations. A meeting of the Central Language Action Committee was held on 20 February under the chairmanship of Abul Hashim. Opinion was divided as to whether or not to violate Section 144.

The students were determined to violate Section 144 and held a student meeting at 11.00 am on 21 February on the Dhaka University campus, then located close to the Medical College Hospital. When the meeting started, the Vice-Chancellor, along with a few university teachers, came to the spot and requested the students not to violate the ban on assembly. However, the

students, under their leaders - Abdul Matin and Gaziul Haque - were adamant. Thousands of students from different schools and colleges of Dhaka assembled on the university campus while armed police waited outside the gate. When the students emerged in groups, shouting slogans, the police resorted to baton charge; even the female students were not spared.

The students then started throwing brickbats at the police, who retaliated with tear gas. Unable to control the agitated students, the police fired upon the crowd of students, who were proceeding towards the Assembly Hall (at present, part of Jagannath Hall, University of Dhaka). Three young men, Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Jabbar and Abul Barkat (an MA student of Political Science) were fatally wounded. Many injured persons were admitted to the hospital. Among them Abdus Salam, a peon at the Secretariat, subsequently succumbed to his wounds. A nine-year-old boy named Ohiullah was also killed.

At the Legislative Assembly building, the session was about to begin. Hearing the news of the shooting, some members of the Assembly, including Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish and some opposition members, went out and joined the students. In the Assembly, Nurul Amin, chief minister of East Pakistan, continued to oppose the demand for Bangla.

The next day, 22 February, was also a day of public demonstrations and police reprisals. The public performed a Janaza (prayer service for the dead) and brought out a mourning procession, which was attacked by the police and the army resulting in several deaths, including that of a young man named Shafiur Rahman. Many were injured and arrested. On 23 February, at the spot where students had been killed, a memorial was erected. In 1963, the temporary structure was replaced by a concrete memorial, the Shaheed Minar (martyrs' memorial).

The East Bengal Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution recommending the recognition of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan. The language movement continued until 1956. The movement achieved its goal by forcing the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in adopting both Bangla and Urdu as the state languages of Pakistan. While the Assembly was debating on the language issue, Member Adel Uddin Ahmed (1913-1981; Faridpur) made an important amendment proposal, which was adopted unanimously by the Assembly (16 February 1956). Both Bangla and Urdu were thus enacted to be the state languages of Pakistan.

Since 1952, 21 February has been observed every year to commemorate the martyrs of the Language Movement. With UNESCO adopting a resolution on 17 November 1999 proclaiming 21 February as international mother language day. It is an honour bestowed by the international community on the Language Movement of Bangladesh.

United Front & Twenty One Point Programme

Twenty One Point Programme objectives incorporated in the election manifesto of the united front, an alliance of the opposition political parties, to contest elections of the East Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1954 against the then party in power, muslim league. The United Front was composed of four political parties of East Bengal, namely Awami Muslim League, Krishak Sramik Party, Nezam-e-Islam and Ganatantri Dal. The Front was formed on 4 December 1953 by the initiative of AK Fazlul Huq of Krishak Sramik Party, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy of Awami Muslim League.

The 21-point package programme in the election manifesto adopted by the United Front runs as follows:

1. To recognise Bangla as one of the State Languages of Pakistan;
To abolish without compensation zamindari and all rent receiving interest in
2. land, and to distribute the surplus lands amongst the cultivators; to reduce rent to a fair level and abolish the certificate system of realising rent;
To nationalise the jute trade and bring it under the direct control of the government of East Bengal, secure fair price of jute to the growers and to
3. investigate into the jute-bungling during the Muslim League regime to punish those found responsible for it;
4. To introduce co-operative farming in agriculture and to develop cottage industries with full government subsidies;
To start salt industry (both small and large scale) in order to make East Bengal
5. self-sufficient in the supply of salt, and to investigate into the salt-bungling during the Muslim League regime to punish the offenders;
6. To rehabilitate immediately all the poor refugees belonging to the artisan and technician class;
7. To protect the country from flood and famine by means of digging canals and improving irrigation system;
To make the country self-sufficient by modernizing the method of cultivation
8. and industrialisation, and to ensure the rights of the labourer as per ILO Convention;
9. To introduce free and compulsory primary education throughout the country and to arrange for just pay and allowances to the teachers;
10. To restructure the entire education system, introduce mother tongue as the medium of instruction, remove discrimination between government and private

- schools and to turn all the schools into government aided institutions;
- To repeal all reactionary laws including those of the Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities and to make them autonomous institutions; to make education cheaper and easily available to the people;
11. To curtail the cost of administration and to rationalise the pay scale of high and low paid government servants. The ministers shall not receive more than 1000 taka as monthly salary;
- To take steps to eradicate corruption, nepotism and bribery, and with this end in view, to take stocks of the properties of all government officers and businessmen from 1940 onward and forfeit all properties the acquisition of which is not satisfactorily accounted for;
13. To repeal all Safety and Preventive Detention Acts and release all prisoners detained without trial, and try in open court persons involved in anti-state activities; to safeguard the rights of the press and of holding meetings;
14. To separate the judiciary from the executive;
- To locate the residence of the chief minister of the United Front at a less costly house, and to convert Burdwan House into a students hostel now, and later, into an institute for research on Bangla language and literature;
- To erect a monument in memory of the martyrs of the Language Movement on the spot where they were shot dead, and to pay compensation to the families of the martyrs;
17. To declare 21st of February as 'Shaheed Day' and a public holiday;
- The Lahore Resolution proposed full autonomy of East Bengal leaving defence, foreign affairs and currency under the central government. In the matter of defence, arrangements shall be made to set the headquarters of the army in West Pakistan and the naval headquarters in East Bengal and to establish ordnance factories in East Bengal, and to transform Ansar force into a full-fledged militia equipped with arms;
19. The United Front Ministry shall on no account extend the tenure of the Legislature and shall resign six months before the general elections to facilitate free and fair elections under an Election Commission;
- All casual vacancies in the Legislature shall be filled up through by-elections within three months of the vacancies, and if the nominees of the Front are defeated in three successive by-elections, the ministry shall resign from office.

In the elections of East Bengal Legislative Assembly held in March 1954 the United Front won 223 seats out of 237 Muslim seats, whereas the ruling Muslim League managed to bag only 9 seats.

Six-point Programme

Six-point Programme a charter of demands enunciated by the Awami League for removing disparity between the two wings of Pakistan and to put an end to the internal colonial rule of West Pakistan in East Bengal.

The Indo-Pak War of 1965 ended with the execution of Taskent Treaty. To the old grievances of economic disparity added the complain of negligence and indifference of central government towards the defence of East Pakistan. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was vocal on this issue.

The leaders of the opposition parties of West Pakistan convened a national convention at Lahore on 6 February 1966 with a view to ascertain the post-Taskent political trend. Bangabandhu reached Lahore on 4 February along with the top leaders of Awami League, and the day following he placed the Six-point charter of demand before the subject committee as the demands of the people of East Pakistan. He created pressure to include his proposal in the agenda of the conference. The subject committee rejected the proposal of Bangabandhu. On the day following, the newspapers of West Pakistan published reports on the Six-point Programme, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was projected as a separatist. Consequently Sheikh Mujib abandoned the conference.

The Six-point Programme along with a proposal of movement for the realisation of the demands was placed before the meeting of the working committee of Awami League on 21 February 1966, and the proposal was carried out unanimously. A booklet on the Six-point Programme with introduction from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Tajuddin Ahmad was published. Another booklet titled Amader Banchar Dabi: 6-dafa Karmasuchi (Our demands for existence: 6-points Programme) was published in the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and was distributed in the council meeting of Awami League held on 18 March 1966.

Six Points

The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

1. The federal government should deal with only two subjects: Defence and Foreign Affairs, and 2. all other residuary subjects shall be vested in the federating states.

Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced; or if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established, and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.

3. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units and the 4. federal centre will have no such power on the issue. The federation will be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.

There should be two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings; the foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed; indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings, and the Constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries.

6. East Pakistan should have a separate militia or paramilitary force.

The opposition leaders of West Pakistan looked at Mujib's Six-point Programme as a device to disband Pakistan, and hence they rejected his proposal outright. The Ayub government projected Sheikh Mujib as a separatist and later instituted the agartala conspiracy case against him. He was arrested and put on trial. The case led to widespread agitation in East Pakistan culminating into the mass uprising of early 1969. Under public pressure, the government was forced to release him unconditionally on 22 February 1969.

The Awami League sought public mandate in favour of the Six-point Programme in the general elections of 1970 in which Sheikh Mujib received the absolute mandate from the people of East Pakistan in favour of his Six-point. But Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto refused to join the session of the National Assembly scheduled to be held on 3 March 1971 unless a settlement was reached between the two leaders beforehand. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his party sat in a protracted dialogue from 15 March 1971. The dialogue failed to produce any positive result. The army crackdown of 25 March sealed the fate of the Six-point including the fate of Pakistan.

✓ Seventh March Speech

The **Seventh March Speech of Bangabandhu** was a speech given by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh on 7 March 1971 at the Ramna Race Course maidan in Dhaka to a gathering of over 10 lakh (1,000,000) people. It was delivered during a period of escalating tensions between East Pakistan and the powerful political and military establishment of West Pakistan. In the speech, Rahman proclaimed: "The struggle this time, is a struggle for our liberty. The struggle this time, is a struggle for our independence." He announced a civil disobedience movement in the province, calling for "every house to turn into a fortress". The speech inspired the Bengali people to prepare for a war of independence amid widespread reports of armed mobilisation by West Pakistan. The Bangladesh Liberation War began 18 days later when the Pakistan Army launched Operation Searchlight against Bengali civilians, intelligentsia, students, politicians, and armed personnel. On 30 October 2017, UNESCO added the speech in the Memory of the World Register as a documentary heritage.

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Background

Pakistan was created in 1947, during the Partition of India, as a Muslim homeland in South Asia. Its territory comprised most of the Muslim-majority provinces of British India, including two geographically and culturally separate areas, one east of India and the other west. The western zone was popularly (and, for a period, officially) called West Pakistan; the eastern zone (modern-day Bangladesh) was called East Bengal and then East Pakistan. West Pakistan dominated the country politically, and its leaders exploited the East economically, leading to popular grievances.

When East Pakistanis, such as Khawaja Nazimuddin, Muhammad Ali Bogra, and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, were elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, they were swiftly deposed by the predominantly West Pakistani establishment. The military dictatorships of Ayub Khan (27

October 1958 – 25 March 1969) and Yahya Khan (25 March 1969 – 20 December 1971), both West Pakistanis, worsened East Pakistanis' discontent.

In 1966, the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujib, launched the Six Point Movement to demand provincial autonomy for East Pakistan. The Pakistani establishment rejected the league's proposals, and the military government arrested Sheikh Mujib and charged him with treason in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. After three years in jail, Mujib was released in 1969, and the case against him was dropped in the face of mass protests and widespread violence in East Pakistan.

In 1970, the Awami League, the largest East Pakistani political party, won a landslide victory in national elections, winning 167 of the 169 seats allotted to East Pakistan and a majority of the 313 seats in the National Assembly. This gave it the constitutional right to form a government. However, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party and a member of the Sindhi ethnic group, refused to allow Sheikh Mujib to become prime minister. Instead, he proposed having two prime ministers, one for each wing.

Negotiations began in Dhaka between the two sides. In January 1971, after the first round of negotiations, President Yahya Khan promised in the Dhaka airport that Sheikh Mujib would be the next prime minister and that the newly elected National Assembly would convene on 3 March 1971. However, Bhutto was vehemently opposed to a Bengali becoming prime minister, and he began a campaign of racially charged speeches across West Pakistan to invoke fear of Bengali domination. He warned West Pakistani MPs-elect not to travel to the East. Fearing a civil war, Bhutto secretly sent an associate, Mubashir Hassan, to meet with Sheikh Mujib and members of his inner circle. It was decided that Sheikh Mujib would serve as prime minister, with Bhutto as president. These talks were kept hidden from the public and from the armed forces. Meanwhile, Bhutto pressured Yahya Khan to take a stance.

On 3 March, the convening of the National Assembly was postponed until 25 March, leading to an outcry across East Pakistan. Violence broke out in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rangpur, Comilla, Rajshahi, Sylhet, and Khulna, and the security forces killed dozens of unarmed protesters. There were open calls for Sheikh Mujib to declare independence from Pakistan, and the Awami League called a large public gathering at Dhaka's Ramna Race Course on 7 March to respond.

Recording

The Pakistan government didn't give permission to live broadcast the speech through radio and television on 7 March 1971. AHM Salahuddin who was the then chairman of Pakistan International Film Corporation and M Abul Khayer, a then member of the National Assembly from East Pakistan, made arrangements to record the video and audio of the speech. The video was recorded by actor Abul Khair who was the Director of Films under Ministry of Information of Pakistan at the time. The audio of the speech was recorded by H N Khondokar, a technician of the Ministry of Information.

The audio record was developed and archived by *Dhaka Record*, a record label owned by M Abul Khayer. Later on, copy of the audio and video recording was handed over to Sheikh Mujib

and a copy of the audio was sent to India. 3000 copies of the audio were distributed by Indian record label HMV Records throughout the world.

The speech

Bangabandhu started with the lines, "Today, I appeared before you with a heavy heart. You know everything and understand as well. We tried with our lives. But the painful matter is that today, in Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur, the streets are dyed red with the blood of our brethren. Today the people of Bengal want freedom, the people of Bengal want to survive, the people of Bengal want to have their rights. What wrong did we do?"

He mentioned four conditions for joining the National Assembly on 25 March:

1. The immediate lifting of martial law;
2. The immediate withdrawal of all military personnel to their barracks;
3. The immediate transfer of power to elected representatives of the people;
4. A proper inquiry into the loss of life during the conflict.

He also gave several directives for a civil disobedience movement, instructing that:

1. People should not pay taxes;
2. Government servants should take orders only from him;
3. The secretariat, government and semi-government offices, and courts in East Pakistan should observe strikes, with necessary exemptions announced from time to time;
4. Only local and inter-district telephone lines should function;
5. Railways and ports could continue to function, but their workers should not co-operate if they were used to repress the people of East Pakistan.

The speech lasted about 19 minutes and concluded with, "The struggle this time, is a struggle for our liberty. The struggle this time, is a struggle for our independence. Joy Bangla!" It was a *de facto* declaration of Bangladesh's independence.

International media had descended upon East Pakistan for the speech amidst speculation that Sheikh Mujib would make a unilateral declaration of independence from Pakistan. However, keeping in mind the failures of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence and of the Biafra struggle in Nigeria, he did not make a direct declaration. Nevertheless, the speech was effective in giving Bengalis a clear goal of independence.

Recognition from UNESCO

The speech is on the Memory of the World Register of UNESCO, a list of world's important documentary heritage.^[2] Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO announced the decision at its headquarters in Paris on 30 October 2017.

Legacy

- The documentary film *Muktir Gaan*, by Tareque Masud and Catherine Masud, begins with a video of the speech.
- The novelist and columnist Anisul Hoque incorporated the speech into his historical novel *Maa*, published in 2004.
- In his novel *The Black Coat*, Bangladeshi-Canadian author Neamat Imam created a character called Nur Hussain who memorised the speech during the Bangladesh famine of 1974.
- Ziaur Rahman (later President of Bangladesh) wrote in the magazine *Bichitra* on 26 March 1974 that the speech had inspired him to take part in the 1971 Liberation War.
- The speech was included in the book *We Shall Fight on the Beaches: The Speeches That Inspired History*, by Jacob F. Field.^[11]
- The speech was added in the fifth schedule of Constitution of Bangladesh through fifteenth amendment.

Operation Searchlight

Operation Searchlight The ruthless and brutal armed operation undertaken by the Pakistan army on 25 March 1971 in order to curb the movement of the freedom loving Bangalis against the autocratic rule of the Pakistani rulers. It was termed as 'Operation Searchlight' by the military authority. The purpose of this operation was to arrest or kill the distinguished Awami League leaders, student leaders and Bangali intellectuals in the main cities of the then East Pakistan including Dhaka, to disarm the Bangali personnel of military, para military and police forces and to capture armoury, radio station and telephone exchange, thereby to take over the control of the province of East Pakistan by ruthlessly curbing the non-cooperation movement headed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Military operations were being taken under 'Operation Searchlight' on and from 11-30 pm of 25 March to middle of May in all the big towns of the province.

The Operation Searchlight was scheduled to be launched at 13 hours of 26 March. But in the evening of 25 March the Awami League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman having no positive and tangible result in his discussion with President Yahya Khan had a clarion call to the people to prepare themselves for an all out struggle. On that very night freedom loving Bangalis created resistance in various places in Dhaka. Major Siddique Salek, the public relation officer of Lt General Tikka Khan and AAK Niazi commented that before the Bangalis could create strong resistance the Pakistan forces in order to reach various places of Dhaka changed the schedule of the operation one day ahead i.e. at 11-30 pm of 25 March. But in a White Paper published on 5 August by the Government of Pakistan, it has been mentioned that Awami League had a plan to stage an armed revolution at dawn of 26 March. This information in the white paper may be a contributory factor for bringing the operation ahead by one day.

Major General Khadim Hossain Raja, General Officer Commanding of Fourteenth Division and Major General Rao Farman Ali Khan, GOC of Fifty Seventh Division came to a decision on 22 February 1971 regarding an army expedition, Operation Searchlight by name. As per instruction of the Chief of Staff General Abdul Hamid Khan on 17 March, General Khadim Hossain Raja finalised the plan of the Operation Searchlight on the day following in the office of the GOC in the Dhaka Cantonment. Rao Farman Ali himself prepared this five pages operation plan. For the implementation of the plan, General Hamid, General AO Miththi, Colonel Sadullah had a visit to the different cantonments by helicopter on 24-25 March for inspection on the preparation of the operation. It was decided that at 13 hours of 25 March General Rao Farman Ali will give lead in Dhaka expedition. General Khadim Raja will give lead to operations in other regions of the province. Lieutenant General Tikka Khan will observe the progress of the operation having his post with 31 field command. Besides, for making this operation a success, two intimate officers of Yahya Khan, Major General Iftekhar Janjua and Major General AO Miththi, were by this time summoned to Dhaka.

The following measures were scheduled to be taken under Operation Searchlight:

1. The operation shall be started simultaneously in the whole of East Pakistan.
2. Maximum number of politicians and student leaders, teachers and extremist activists of

cultural organisations shall have to be arrested.

3. The operations in Dhaka shall have to be made a cent percent success. To that end the Dhaka University shall have to be captured.
4. The security of the cantonment must be ensured.

All sorts of domestic and international communications must be disrupted. Telephone exchange, radio, TV, teleprinter service, transmitter in the foreign consulates must be disrupted.

6. The soldiers of the EPR must be disarmed and in their places West Pakistani soldiers shall be deputed to patrol the armoury, and the control of the armoury shall be vested upon them.

In the first phase, the operational zones will be Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong, Comilla, Jessore, Rangpur, Syedpur and Sylhet. The operation planning in Chittagong, Sylhet, Jessore, Rangpur and Comilla shall be implemented by air, if necessary.

The Pak military authority took the following decisions for implementing the aforesaid programm by giving utmost importance to their control over the Dhaka city.

1. 22-Baluch Regiment stationed in Peelkhana shall disarm the five thousand Bangali EPR soldiers and capture their radio centre.

2. 32-Punjab Regiment shall disarm one thousand Bangali policemen in Rajarbagh Police Line which is the main source of armed strength of the Awami League.

3. 18-Punjab Regiment will launch attack on the Hindu majority areas of Nawabpur and in other parts of old Dhaka.

A group of selected soldiers from 22 Baluch, 18 and 32 Punjab Regiment will attack Iqbal Hall (Zahirul Haq Hall), Jagannath Hall and Liaquat Hall of BUET, which are known as centers of strength of the Awami League rebels.

5. One platoon of commando soldiers of special service group will attack the house of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and will arrest him.

6. The field Regiment will control the Second capital and the adjoining settlements (Mirpur-Mohammadpur).

7. In order to show strength, a small squadron of M 24 tanks will be plying on road and will start shelling, if necessary.

8. The above mentioned soldiers will destroy any kind of barricade or resistance on the road, and will launch operation in the houses of listed politicians.

The Pakistani soldiers came out of the cantonment at 11-30 pm, launched indiscriminate attack on the demonstrating Bangalis in the Farm Gate area, and thus initiated the Operation Searchlight. Then as per schedule they launched simultaneous attack on Peelkhana and Rajarbagh. At 1-30 am they arrested Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from his residence. At dead of night they launched operation at the residential quarters of the teachers of Dhaka University including the then Iqbal Hall, Jagannath Hall, Rokeya Hall and killed a huge number of students including nine teachers. Under the same planning, serious attack was made on old Dhaka, Tejgaon, Indira Road, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Dhaka airport, Ganaktuli, Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, Kathalbagan etc. In the same night many people were killed and injured in

Chittagong by the firing of the army. The Pak army launched indiscriminate attack and created havoc within the very month of March under the 'Operation Searchlight' having their post at the cantonment. The offices of the dailies like the Ittefaq, Sangbad and the Peoples were set on fire for their support to the movement of the Bangalis. A good number of journalists, media personnels were burnt to death.

On the eve of the genocide on 25 March, President Yahya Khan left Dhaka for Karachi. But Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the president of the Pakistan People's Party, who came to Dhaka for having a dialogue with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, observed the operation from the Hotel Intercontinental of Dhaka. On the day following on the eve of his departure, Bhutto highly appreciated the action of the army on the previous night and commented, 'Thanks to God that Pakistan could have been saved'. All the army officials including Yahya Khan expressed ovation to the army action. Even in the White Paper published by Pakistan Government on the following 5 August, the military operation on 25 March was termed as 'inevitable'.

The accurate figure of casualty under the operation searchlight on the night of 25 March could not be estimated. The foreign journalists were compelled to leave the country before the operation of 25 March. Because of strong censorship on the newspapers at home nothing substantial could be gathered about the operation. From the report of three foreign journalists, Arnold Jetline, Michael Laurent and Simon Dring, who remained in hiding at a risk, some news can be gathered about the ruthless brutality of that fateful night. From the report of Simon Dring published under the caption Dateline Dacca in the Daily Telegraph of 29 March it was revealed that 200 students of Iqbal Hall, teachers and their family members numbering 12 in the University residential area were killed on that night. In old Dhaka 700 people were burnt to death. Information gathered from various home and foreign sources reveal that on that fateful night seven thousand Bangalis were killed in Dhaka city itself.

Mujibnagar Government

Mujibnagar Government the government constituted at Mujibnagar to conduct the Bangladesh war of liberation, formed on 10 April 1971 after the declaration of independence on 26 March 1971. The Mujibnagar government headed by tajuddin ahmad took oath on 17 April 1971 at Mujibnagar. This government had also been known as Mujibnagar Government in-exile, as the activities of the government had been conducted from outside of the territory of Bangladesh.

Formation of the government On 10 April a government was formed consisting of the top ranking leaders of awami league. The oath taking ceremony of the government took place on 17 April at Baidyanathatala, in the district of Meherpur. The oath taking ceremony was conducted by Abdul Mannan MNA and the proclamation of independence was read out by Professor mohammad yusuf ali. In this place a guard of honour was given to syed nazrul islam, the Acting President of the newly formed government.

Assignment of portfolios Although the government was formed on 10 April and its oath was taken on 17 April 1971, the portfolios were assigned among the ministers on 18 April. The incumbents of the government were:

Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur President
Rahman

Syed Nazrul Islam Vice President, (Entrusted with the powers, functions and responsibilities of the President since the President himself was then detained in Pakistan).

Tajuddin Ahmad Prime Minister, In charge of Defence, Information, Broadcasting and Communications, Economic Affairs, Planning Division, Education, Local Government, Health, Labour, Social Welfare, Establishment as well as other affairs the responsibility of which was not yet entrusted to any one.

Khondakar Mostaq Ahmad Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Law and Parliamentary Affairs.

M Mansur Ali Minister, Ministry of Finance, Industry and Commerce.

AHM Qamaruzzaman Minister, Ministry of Home, Civil Supplies, Relief and Rehabilitation, Agriculture.

Mujibnagar government was divided into fifteen ministries and divisions. Besides, some divisions were placed under the Cabinet. The functions of the ministries and divisions were:

Vice President, Prime Minister, Ministers and Commander-in-Chief Incharge of Mujibnagar Government

Ministry of Defence Staff MAG Osmany, Commander-in-Chief; SA Samad, Defence Secretary; Colonel Abdur Rab, Chief of Staff. The Ministry of Defence divided the war zone into eleven sectors and appointed a sector commander for each of the sectors. But there was no sector

commander for sector No 10 or naval sector. Commandos used to fight under the command of the concerned sector commander whenever and wherever they carried out the operation in a particular sector. Besides, there were three brigades called Z force, K force and S force. Major Ziaur Rahman, Major Khaled Mosharraf and Major Km Shafiullah were the commanders of the brigades respectively.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to obtain support of the foreign governments and people at large for the cause of liberation of Bangladesh by establishing Bangladesh mission abroad and by sending diplomatic emissaries to various countries. With this end in view diplomatic missions were established in Kolkata, Delhi, London, Washington, New York, and Stockholm. Diplomatic delegations were sent to the UNO, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Nepal, Srilanka, Burma, Thailand and Japan for gaining their support to the liberation war.

Ministry of Finance, Industry and Commerce was headed by M Mansur Ali and Khondaker Asaduzzaman was its secretary.

Cabinet Secretariat placed various proposals about the operation of the liberation war to the cabinet meeting, implementation of the decisions of the meeting, and monitoring and recording these decisions. HT Imam was the secretary of the ministry.

General Administration Division was formed under the Ministry of Establishment to deal with appointment, transfer, promotion and framing of service rules. Nurul Qader was the secretary of the Establishment Division.

Zonal Administrative Council was formed under General Administration Division. Nine administrative zones with a chairman for each were formed to look after administration of lubrication war activities. Each zone had a headquarters, and a chairman.

Ministry of Health and Welfare worked under a Director General. Later the position of the Director General was elevated to the status of a secretary. The functions of the health department was divided into two sectors: a) to impart medical treatment to the freedom fighters under the army ie under the Ministry of Defence and b) to render medical treatment to such civilians or persons who did not participate in the liberation war directly with arms.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting played important role to build up public opinion in favour of the liberation war. This ministry used to perform its functions through four divisions: a) Radio (swadhin bangla betar kendra), b) Films, c) Publications, d) Fine arts and design.

Ministry of Home was responsible for maintaining law and order in the liberated areas. This ministry selected the uniform, badge and monogram of the Bangladesh police force. Abdul Khaleque was made the first IG of the police and was later appointed as home secretary.

Relief and Rehabilitation Division was created under the supervision of the Ministry of Home and Ministry of Relief with a view to rehabilitate the refugees taking shelter in India.

Parliamentary Affairs Division worked under the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Law and Parliamentary Affairs. The main task of this division was to solve various problems of the members of Provincial and National Assembly and to engage them in various activities.

Agriculture Division worked for finding ways and means for taking measures to overcome food crisis by increasing food production in the post-war Bangladesh, introducing scientific cultivation and providing loans to farmers under easy terms in view of the wartime losses.

War of Liberation, The began on 26 March 1971 and ended with the liberation of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971. The armed struggle was the culmination of a series of events, situations and issues contributing to the progressively deteriorating relations between East and West Pakistan. The questions of land reforms, state language, inter-wing economic and administrative disparities, provincial autonomy, the defense of East Pakistan and many other consequential questions had been straining the relations between the two wings of Pakistan ever since independence of the country from Britain in 1947.

On 4 April, the senior officers of the liberation army assembled at the headquarters of 2nd East Bengal at Teliapara, a semi hilly area covered by tea gardens where Colonel MAG Osmany, Lieutenant Colonel Abdur Rob, Lieutenant Colonel Salahuddin Mohammad Reja, Major Kazi Nuruzzaman, Major KHALED MOSHARRAF, Major Nurul Islam, Major Shafat Jamil, Major Mainul Hossain Chowdhury and others were present. In this meeting four senior commanders were entrusted with the responsibility of operational areas. Sylhet-Brahmanbaria area was placed under the command of Major Shafiullah. Comilla-Noakhali area was given to Major Khaled Mosharraf while Chittagong-Chittagong Hill Tracts was given to Major Ziaur Rahman. Kushtia-Jessore area was placed under command of Major Abu Osman Chowdhury. In the meeting the organisational concept of the freedom fighter forces and the command structure were chalked out. Colonel MAG Osmany was to command the liberation forces, later named as MUKTI BAHINI.

Sectors of the War of Liberation In the War of Liberation in 1971 the whole geographical area of the then East Pakistan was strategically divided into eleven sectors with a sector commander for each of them. For better efficiency in military operations

Sector 1 comprised the districts of Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts, and the entire eastern area of the Noakhali district on the banks of the river Muhuri. The headquarters of the sector was at Harina. The sector commander was Major Ziaur Rahman, later replaced by Major Rafiqul Islam. The five sub-sectors of this sector. A contingent of nearly ten thousand freedom fighters fought in this sector. They included about two thousand members of the EPR, police, army, navy and air forces and about eight thousand paramilitary troops. The guerilla fighters of this sector were deputed to operate inside the country in 137 groups.

Sector 2 comprised the districts of Dhaka, Comilla, and Faridpur, and part of Noakhali district. The sector commander was Major Khaled Mosharraf, later replaced by Major ATM Haider. About thirty five thousand guerilla fighters fought in this sector. Nearly six thousand of them were members of regular armed forces. The six sub-sectors of this sector.

Sector 3 comprised the area between Churaman Kathi (near Sreemangal) and Sylhet in the north and Singerbil of Brahmanbaria in the south. The sector commander was Major KM Shafiullah, later replaced by Major ANM Nuruzzaman. Nineteen guerilla bases operated in this sector. By November 1971, the number of the guerilla fighters in the sector stood at nearly thirty thousand. The ten sub-sectors of this sector.

Sector 4 comprised the area from Habiganj sub-division of Sylhet district on the north to Kanaighat Police Station on the south along the 100 mile long border with India. The sector commander was Major Chittarajan Datta, later replaced by Captain A Rab. The headquarters of the sector was initially at Karimganj and later at Masimpur. The freedom fighters in this sector included about nine thousand guerilla fighters and about four thousand regular members of the armed forces. The six sub-sectors of this sector.

Sector 5 comprised the area from Durgapur to Danki (Tamabil) of Sylhet district and the entire area upto the eastern borders of the district. Sector commander was Major Mir Shawkat Ali. The headquarters of the sector was at Banshtala. The six sub-sectors of this sector.

Sector 6 comprised Rangpur district and part of Dinajpur district. Wing Commander M Khdemul Bashar was the sector commander. The headquarters of the sector was at Burimari near Patgram. The number of soldiers in this sector was 700, which rose to about eleven thousand in December. The five sub-sectors of the sector.

Sector 7 comprised the districts of Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra and part of Dinajpur district. The sector commander was Major Nazrul Haq, later replaced by Subedar Major A Rab and Kazi Nuruzzaman. The headquarters of the sector was at Taranngapur. About fifteen thousand freedom fighters fought in this sector. The eight sub-sectors of the sector.

Sector 8 In April 1971, the operational area of the sector comprised the districts of Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Barisal, Faridpur and Patuakhali. At the end of May the sector was reconstituted and comprised the districts of Kusthia, Jessore and Khulna districts, Satkhira sub-division, and the northern part of Faridpur district. The sector commander was Major Abu Osman Chowdhury, later replaced by Major MA Manzur. The headquarters of the sector was at Benapole. About ten thousand freedom fighters fought in this sector. The seven sub-sectors of the sector.

Sector 9 comprised the districts of Barisal and Patuakhali, and parts of the district of Khulna and Faridpur. The sector commander was Major MA JALIL, later replaced by Major MA Manzur and Major Joynal Abedin. The three sub-sectors of the sector.

Sector 10 This sector was constituted with the naval commandos. Eight Bengali officers of Pakistan Navy trained in France were the pioneers in forming this force. These eight officers were given special training on the river Jamuna near Delhi under the auspices of the Indian Navy. The force was later commanded by Indian commander MN Sumanta.

Sector 11 comprised the districts of Mymensingh and Tangail, Major M Abu Taher was the sector commander. After Major Taher was seriously wounded in a battle, he was replaced by Squadron Leader Hamidullah. The headquarters of the sector was at Mahendraganj. About twenty five thousand freedom fighters fought in this sector. The eight sub-sectors of the sector.

