

THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE  
**GLORIOUS**  
**50** YEARS  
OF THE  
**BORDER SECURITY FORCE**



*The First Line of Defence*

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BORDER SECURITY FORCE**



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# GLORIOUS 50 YEARS OF THE BORDER SECURITY FORCE

*Edited by*  
**Anirudh Deshpande**



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## FOREWORD

It is my privilege as the Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF) to present the Official History of the BSF to the people of India on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the raising day of the BSF. The BSF was officially raised in accordance with an Act of the Indian Parliament on 1 December, 1965 not very long after the India-Pakistan War of 1965. The founder Director General of the BSF was the iconic Police Officer Shri K. F. Rustamji who not only raised and trained the first batch of Officers and Battalions of the Force but left his indelible stamp on the organizational structure of the BSF for all times to come. The BSF has come a long way in the service to the Indian nation since 1965. As an armed force of the union, BSF has not only secured the borders of India for the last fifty years but has assisted civil governance in myriad ways. The story of the BSF is recounted in this volume. Although the idea of producing an Official History of the BSF had been in the air for quite some time, practical steps for getting such a history written were initiated earlier this year as part of Golden Jubilee Year Celebrations. It was decided to assemble a BSF History Writing Team comprising suitable BSF officers equal to the task and engage an experienced professional historian to accomplish the History Writing Project. The work of collecting, collating and writing up the materials pertinent to the BSF history

envisaged by the GTS Research Cell under the academic guidance of Dr. Anirudh Deshpande (Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Delhi) was taken up in earnest only towards the end of July, 2015. The History Writing Team has produced an excellent official history of the BSF, often working against the exigencies of time, in a matter of four months. I take this opportunity to congratulate the officers and men of the BSF History Writing Team for presenting to the Indian nation this concise and well informed history of the BSF – India's premier border guarding force. I am hopeful that this volume will be well received by the public in general and the serving and retired officers and men of the BSF and other Indian Armed Forces as well as Police organisations.



**(Devendra Kumar Pathak)**

Director General  
Border Security Force

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Writing this history of the Border Security Force (BSF) has been a great pleasure for me. In the process of writing this history I have developed a close acquaintance with numerous officers and men of the BSF who have participated in this History Writing Project. This project has not only yielded a large volume but, in the process of its making, an archive of the BSF for scholars to consult in future. I thank all the members of the History Writing Team for giving their best to this endeavour and creating an environment of great conviviality in the Chhawla Camp, Delhi and the Kashmir Frontier HQ in Srinagar. I thank the current DG of the BSF, Mr. Devendra Kumar Pathak, IPS, for giving me the opportunity to write this book. This project would not have succeeded without his support. I also express gratitude to Shri Aditya Mishra, IPS, IG (G) for supporting this venture in every possible way. The basis of this volume comprises the written and oral primary source material collected and the rough drafts prepared by BSF History Writing Team. This note of thanks will therefore remain incomplete without mentioning the team members and the Research Assistants by name. I, and the BSF, will remain forever indebted to the following in ways too numerous to recount here. Shri Om Shankar Jha, DIG ('G' Training School, New Delhi), Shri Rajesh Kumar Mishra, Comdt ('G' Training School, New Delhi), Shri Pankaj



Kumar, 2IC ('G' Directorate, FHQ), Shri Nitin Arora, DC (11 Bn), Shri Neeraj Sharma, DC (10 Bn), Shri N S Boparai, DC (145 Bn), Shri Mukesh Kumar Verma, DC (163 Bn) and Shri P N Shukla, DC (27 Bn), who have done their best for this project and deserve the highest possible commendation. Mr. Saurabh Vatsa, M.Phil and Mr. Lalit Kishore Choudhary, M.A., both Research Assistants to this project, kept long hours at the Chhawla Camp. These young historians along with highly committed officers of BSF History Team went through the BSF sources with a diligence and discipline required by the tight schedule imposed on the whole team by the project. I also thank all the retired officers of the BSF who most willingly and graciously gave interviews to the History Writing Team. A lot of interesting information provided by these gentlemen has invariably found its way into the chapters of this volume. I would also like to appreciate the endeavour of the support staff to this project, viz., Shri Mukesh Kumar, DC (FOS), Inspector Sandeep Kalhan ('G' Directorate, FHQ), Inspector Suresh Singh Poonia ('G' Directorate, FHQ), Inspector Akhilesh Kumar ('G' Directorate, FHQ), SI/Min D R Sharma, ASI/GD Fateh Singh (86 Bn), ASI/GD S P Mishra (181 Bn), ASI/Min Rajeev Verma (30 Bn), HC/Min Sanoj P (13 Bn) and Ct/GD Varun Kumar Thapa (FOS) for their valuable supports throughout the project.

**Dr. Anirudh Deshpande**

Associate Professor, Department of History,  
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi.

Editor

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# ABBREVIATIONS

AASU	- All Assam Students' Union
AD	- Air Defense
ANO	- Anti Naxal Operations
AOR	- Area of Responsibility
ATTF	- All Tripura Tiger Force
BEL	- Bharat Electronics Limited
BEST	- Burst Error Control System for Teleprinter
BFSR-SR	- Battle Field Surveillance Radar - Short Range
BGB	- Border Guard Bangladesh
BIDR	- BSF Institute of Disaster Response
BIS	- Bureau of Indian Standards
Bn	- Battalion
BNP	- Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BOP	- Border Out Post
BSF	- Border Security Force
BSO	- Battalion Signal Officer
BTC	- Basic Training Centre
BTF	- Babbar Khalsa Tiger Force
BWWA	- BSF Wives' Welfare Association
CAPF	- Central Armed Police Force
Cdr	- Commander
CENWOSTO	- Central Workshop and Stores
CHT	- Chittagong Hill Track
CI	- Counter Insurgency
CISF	- Central Industrial Security Force
COAS	- Chief of Army Staff
COB	- Company Operative Base
COBOL	- Common Business Oriented Language
Comdt	- Commandant

Coy	- Company
CPOs	- Central Police Organisations
CPWD	- Central Public Works Department
CRPF	- Central Reserve Police Force
CSSR	- Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue
DC	- Deputy Commandant
DG	- Director General
DGFI	- Directorate General of Forces Intelligence
DIG	- Deputy Inspector General
DIGIT	- Defence Institute of Geospatial Information & Training
DOT	- Department of Telecommunication
DRC	- Disaster Recovery Data Centre
DSMD	- Deep Search Metal Detector
DSS	- Decision Support System
Dte	- Directorate
EBR	- East Bangladesh Rifle
EBM	- Effective Border Management
ECC	- Extreme Climate Clothing
EDP	- Electronic Data Processing
EFS	- Electronic Field Station
EPR	- East Pakistan Rifle
ETP	- Electronic Tele Printer
EPABX	- Electronic Private Auto Branch Exchange
FBOP	- Floating Border Out Post
FDL	- Forward Defended Locality
FGN	- Federal Government of Nagaland
FIU	- Field Intelligence Unit
FOS	- Faculty of Studies
FPU	- Formed Police Unit
GIS	- Geographical Information System
GPF	- General Provident Fund
GPS	- Global Positioning System
GOC	- General Officer Commanding
GOI	- Government of India
HM	- Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
HQ	- Headquarters
HHMD	- Hand Held Metal Detector
HHSL	- Hand Held Search Light
HHTI	- Hand Held Thermal Imager
HUM	- Harkat-ul-Mujahideen
IB	- International Boundary
IB	- Intelligence Bureau
IED	- Improvised Explosive Device
IG	- Inspector General
IMD	- Indian Meteorological Department
IFPU	- Indian Formed Police Unit

IPP	– Intranet Prahari Project
IRDE	– Instruments Research and Development Establishment
IS	– Internal Security
ISO	– International Organisation for Standardisation
ISI	– Inter Services Intelligence
IT	– Information Technology
ITBP	– Indo Tibetan Border Police
IWTC	– Inland Water Transport Corporation
JAD(G)	– Joint Assistant Director (General)
KCF	– Khalistan Commando Force
KCP	– Kangleipak Communist Party
KLP	– Key Location Point
KYKL	– Kanglei Yawol KannaLup
LAS	– Laser Aiming Sight
LC	– Line of Control
LeT	– Lashkar-e-Taiba
LHP	– Low Power High Frequency
LIA	– Lead Intelligence Agency
LORROS	– Long Range Reconnaissance & Observation System
LRF	– Laser Range Finder
LRP	– Long Range Patrol
LWE	– Left Wing Extremism
MC	– Medium Craft
MDC	– Mini Data Centre
MDL	– Mazagaon Dock Limited
MEA	– Ministry of External Affairs
MHA	– Ministry of Home Affairs
MMG	– Medium Machine Gun
MNA	– Member of National Assembly (Pakistan)
MNF	– Mizo National Front
MPA	– Member of Provincial Assembly
MPLF	– Manipur People's Liberation Front
MV	– Medium Vessel
NATO	– North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NE	– North East
NEFA	– North East Frontier Agency
NDMA	– National Disaster Management Authority
NDRF	– National Disaster Response Force
NOK	– Next of Kin
NRSA	– National Remote Sensing Agency
NLI	– Northern Light Infantry
NNC	– Naga Nationalist Council
NSCN	– Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland
NSCN(K)	– Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)
NSCN(IM)	– Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak Muivah)
NSCS	– National Security Council Secretariat
NTCD	– National Training Centre for Dogs

NWF	- North West Frontier
NWS	- Night Weapon Sight
OP	- Observation Post
ORL	- Operator Radio Line
PAC	- Provincial Armed Constabulary
PAD	- Pay and Accounts Division
PGA	- Post Group Artillery
PLA	- Peoples Liberation Army
PMM	- Pan Mongolian Movement
PNG	- Passive Night Goggle
POK	- Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
POL	- Petrol Oil Lubricant
POLNET	- Police Network
PPMG	- President's Police Medal for Gallantry
POW	- Prisoner of War
PREPAK	- People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak
PSU	- Public Sector Unit
PVC	- Poly Vinyl Chloride
RA	- Research Assistant
RAC	- Rajasthan Armed Constabulary
R&G	- Rajasthan and Gujarat
RDX	- Research and Development Explosive
RGM	- Revolutionary Government of Manipur
RGN	- Revolutionary Government of Nagaland
ROP	- Road Opening Patrol
SHQ	- Sector Headquarters
SMART	- Spurt Message Alpha Numeric Radio Terminal
SNVP	- Sight Night Vision Passive
SRP	- State Reserve Police
SQL	- Structured Query Language
STC	- Subsidiary Training Centre
STS	- Signal Training School
SSG	- Special Services Group
SW	- South West
TC&S	- Training Centre and School, Hazaribagh
TNV	- Tripura National volunteers
TSU	- Tear Smoke Unit
UAV	- Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UBGL	- Under Barrel Grenade Launcher
ULFA	- United Liberation Front of Assam
UN	- United Nations
UNLF	- United National Liberation Front
UNPKM	- United Nations Peace Keeping Mission
USA	- United States of America
USSR	- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VSAT	- Very Small Aperture Terminal

## **A History of the Border Security Force (BSF)**

*“In early May 1965, at a high level conference in Delhi, I was the lone voice from the police side to oppose the formation of the BSF. A few days later I was called to Delhi and asked to take over the responsibility of raising that force. I raised it and nurtured it for nine long years. To this day, I love the Force and my attachment for it is deep.”<sup>1</sup>*

**K.F. Rustamji**  
Founder Director General BSF

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1. P.V. Rajagopal (ed.), *The British, the Bandits and the Bordermen: From the Diaries and Articles of K.F. Rustamji*, Wisdom Tree, New Delhi, 2009, p. 243.





## INTRODUCTION

### **The historical and colonial context of modern Indian borders**

Nation-states are defined and periodically re-defined by their geographical, social, political, cultural and military borders. At the outset it is important to remember that these borders are both real and imaginary at the same time and in general the public consciousness of them belies the *practical* difficulty of delineating and guarding them. In sum, politico-geographical borders are only represented by the maps and textbooks which condition their formal knowledge received by society. More often than not the geographical border at the ground level is radically different from how it appears in the documents which pre-condition public memory. Nothing illustrates this more than the history and experience of independent India's foremost group of Bordermen – the Border Security Force (BSF). A lot on this has been said in the following pages for the discerning reader. In the matter of national borders the armed forces of a country, including its Paramilitary Forces, are as usual guided

by the political leadership of that country which itself undergoes periodic transformations. In these conditions of historical flux the work of forces, like the BSF raised in 1965 with the specific purpose of manning the Indian borders as the *first line of defence against infiltration, smuggling and military assault*, can hardly be said to comprise an enviable job. For the BSF, and its counterparts in India's neighbouring countries, the border is a live and often unfriendly unstable entity difficult to control and tame. No one knows this better than the hardy and enterprising men and officers of the BSF battalions who spend the whole year at the Border Out Posts (BOPs) often with just their weapons and wild animals for company. The BOPs are established in regions which experience extreme weather conditions. These BOPs are found in the desert of the *Thar* where temperatures can touch 50 degrees centigrade during the tropical summer. They are also located in the freezing mountains of the Kashmir region where the winter temperatures can go down to minus 50 degrees centigrade. In the North-East, the BOPs are situated in remote areas supplied and maintained by air. It rains for months in this region and keeping men, material and weapons dry during the fierce monsoon is in itself a gigantic task. Just imagine launching operations in these conditions against dangerous criminals and insurgents. Operational casualties, diseases, accidents and sudden death are often the constant companions of the BSF men and officers living in the BOPs; in the Rann of Kutch the BOPs can easily become infested with vipers. It often takes several days for the men who have applied for leave to reach their villages in the mainland. It is rather obvious that the BSF is a service not meant for the faint hearted although the public may tend to fantasize otherwise. The manning, guarding and controlling of national borders has historically been a problematic task for any service entrusted with it. The men and officers of the BSF know this from experience, something which cannot be recreated in any classroom. Borders almost everywhere have been extremely sensitive to politics since the modern nation-state system came into existence in 1648 with the signing of the momentous Treaty of Westphalia that ended the devastating wars of religion that had begun in Europe with the

Protestant Reformation. Since then Europe and the World have gone through several wars, including the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815), First World War (1914-1918) and Second World War (1939-1945) caused by nationalism and the political desire to periodically re-draw the borders of the modern nation-states. In most regions of the world, including post-cold war Europe, a settled border is more an aspiration and less an object achieved at the ground level. The contemporary crisis in Ukraine (2014-15) and the so-called Middle East would demonstrate this to anyone who might take a contrary view in these matters.

People and borders keep shifting and nations have been made, unmade and remade throughout history. And, the readers may well be reminded at this early stage of this volume, we speak not only of land borders but even maritime borders and air borders. The evolution of the water and air wings of the BSF should be understood in this connection; water bodies and air space provide routes for communication and transport. They are used to supply remote BOPs and to survey the borders for a variety of purposes. The process of drawing up and re-drawing national borders, as a cursory history of the previous seventy years confirms, did not end with the defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in 1945. The formation of the BSF should be seen in this context which has informed the modern history of India in numerous ways all of which, for reasons of brevity, cannot be recounted in this volume. In sum, borders are the *sina qua non* of all the pre-modern countries and modern nations and guarding them for economic, demographic and other strategic reasons is inherent to the historical evolution of these countries and nations. Without a border there is no locality, region or nation-state. There were borders in the ancient world. There were borders in the medieval ages and there are borders in the modern world, which is both a product and negation of history with which we must all come to grips. Migrants, traders, tourists, smugglers and insurgents pass through borders. These people affect the countries they cross into in myriad ways some desirable and some undesirable. Checking the immigration of criminals and other subversive elements is the responsibility of

forces like the BSF. Often these borders can easily slice through houses, streets, villages, rivers, fields and even cities making their management a Herculean task beyond most armed forces in the world.

The inception of the modern nation-state system in South Asia is a Colonial political legacy left behind by the British who hurriedly withdrew from the Indian sub-continent in 1947, after having been exhausted beyond repair by the Second World War. The borders created by the British rule in India were radically different from those that had prevailed in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century in a region dotted with the regional polities that had inherited the remains of the once mighty Mughal Empire. These regional polities were overrun by the British and if not annexed straightaway, incorporated into the Princely State System. These borders changed periodically in accordance with the expansion and later contraction of British rule in Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth century. In the ultimate analysis, the retreating British neither had the will, capability nor energy to solve the numerous border problems produced in modern South Asia by their own rule which stretched back to 1757. Two centuries of British colonial rule in South Asia had profoundly altered the material and intellectual conditions in the region. The British had taken over a politically variegated India from the Mughal regime between 1757 and 1857 and finally they left India in a condition of political and religious fragmentation in 1947. Consequently the newly independent state of India was left with two important *sets* of borders to deal with in an era of immediate political decolonization that followed the transfer of power. The first comprised the border with the newly created, geographically and culturally truncated state of Pakistan founded on the Two Nation Theory. The border with the Republic of China, where a protracted people's war brought the Communist Party to power in 1949, was bound to be problematic because the Chinese never reconciled with the MacMohan Line drawn by the British primarily in their own colonial interest. The border with Burma, another former colony of Britain and an important link in the illegal Asian opium trade, was not settled.

The Indian borders with the Himalayan Kingdoms of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan required re-drawing and re-affirmation. In addition to this was the maritime border between India and Sri Lanka and the borders of the island groups inherited from the British by India in the Indian Ocean Region. One does not need to be a strategic expert to see the onerous and seemingly impossible task of border definition and management which confronted India's national leadership in 1947. In the north were the lofty Himalayas where large stretches of a no-man's land between Ladakh in the North-West to the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA), later to become our present day Arunachal Pradesh, lay between India and Tibet which would soon be annexed by China. The Western border stretched South West from the Kashmir Valley to Kutch running through the fertile plains of the Punjab and the desert of Rajasthan. In the East were two borders. One, largely watery and marked by shifting deltas and sand banks, between India and East Pakistan and the other both mountainous and forest covered between India and Burma. Another border existed between the remains of the Portuguese *Estado da India* based in Goa and the Republic of India. This border was obliterated in 1961 after the Goa Operations which brought to an end four hundred and fifty years of Portuguese colonial rule in the region.

The second set of borders can be called internal. It comprised the borders of the numerous Princely States created by the system of *British Paramountcy* established in its full form and glory in the nineteenth century. The great majority of these Princely States either joined India or Pakistan in 1947-48. The largest of these were the states of Jammu and Kashmir and the Nizam's State of Hyderabad. In some areas the boundaries of these states overlapped with the boundaries of the two nation-states carved out of British India in 1947. For example the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir shared its borders with India, Pakistan and Tibet and was the site of a major invasion launched by Pakistan backed tribal insurgents as early as 1947. This invasion, foiled by the Indian Army just in time, led to the integration of the state of Jammu and Kashmir with India – an achievement of the Indian leadership disliked by Pakistan for

well known ideological and strategic reasons. It would not be wrong to call this attempt by Pakistan to seize the Kashmir Valley with its Muslim majority population, and its consequences, India's first border war. In Rajasthan and Gujarat, where boundaries of some erstwhile Princely States often became national boundaries between India and Pakistan, the Indian borders were guarded by the ill equipped and ill trained police forces of these Princely States. These border protection arrangements, which emanated from a complacency engendered by British Paramountcy, hardly did justice to the demands of the time. Punjab and Bengal had been partitioned into their Western and Eastern parts in accordance with the submissions of the Border Commissions set by the British under Sir Cyril Radcliffe who was given only five weeks in July 1947 to draw a line between India and Pakistan. Radcliffe had never been to India before this unfortunate trip and, confronted with the immensity of the task assigned to him, had no wish to stay in India for longer than absolutely necessary. The Radcliffe Line proved momentous and sorrowful to millions of Indians whose anxieties were stoked no end by this unprecedented border surgery accomplished by an Englishman and his Indian aides in such haste. The result was a botched operation, the consequences of which have been inherited, first and foremost, by the BSF since 1965. In the north and north-east, between Bhutan and the area earlier called the NEFA, the disputed border between India and China ran along the MacMohan Line named after Sir Henry MacMohan, the Foreign Secretary of the Government of India, who presided over the Simla Conference of 1914. The Simla Accord of 1914 was signed between the British and the representatives of Tibet. China was not truly represented at the conference and till date disputes its problematic result; the Chinese plenipotentiary present in Simla refused to sign the agreement between New Delhi and Lhasa. In short the colonial legacy of drawing up borders, which later became confounded with national borders in the region, ended up creating lasting problems for India and its often over-stretched armed forces. Border wars were bound to happen in these circumstances and they did. In 1962, China and India fought a border war as an epilogue to the problem

of delineating national borders left behind in the region by British Imperialism. The India-Pakistan Border wars of 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 were mainly caused by Pakistan's desire to re-draw its national boundaries at India's expense and at the cost of secularism that challenges the Two Nation theory on which this Islamic Republic is based. The resounding defeat and humiliation suffered by Pakistan in the 1971 war and its vivisection, and the birth of Bangladesh with India's help, convinced the military leadership in Islamabad that the course of future wars with India should be run through the quagmires of low intensity conflicts. The consequence of this was the abiding Pakistani support to insurgencies in the Punjab and Indian Kashmir since the 1980s. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was a like a God send for Pakistan. Within weeks of that ill-fated invasion Pakistan became the Western base for a variety of anti-Soviet activities. Arms and Petro-Dollars poured into Pakistan for the *jihad* against the Communist infidels in Afghanistan. The central role assigned to Pakistan and its armed forces in this war against the USSR would ultimately facilitate and embolden the Pakistan establishment's insurgency-based military strategy against India. Like the USSR, India would be made to bleed. If the *jihadis* could fight against the infidels in Afghanistan, what would stop them from doing so in Kashmir once the Soviets were defeated? In this context, the militarizing of border security became inevitable. However, and as the prescient General J.N. Chaudhuri warned in 1965, the militarization of borders must pay heed to the balance between war and peace. In dealing with borders the policy makers would do well not to forget that borders are ultimately sites of negotiations – a delicate affair between nation-states. If a border force becomes too heavily armed the danger of small incidents spiraling out of control and leading to bigger events and, eventually war, persists. Then, the Army mobilizes and takes over the border or even crosses it in an offensive against the enemy. On the other hand if the border force is inadequately or too lightly armed it will fail to ensure optimum protection of national borders. On both accounts the border force, which takes the brunt of hostile cross border strategy, faces the threat of criticism and censure.



## The formation and establishment of the BSF

Before the BSF was formed the police forces of the Indian states which were located on the Indian borders were entrusted with the task of guarding the borders. In times of emergency these forces were buttressed by the Indian Army and the Central Reserve Police personnel who were rushed *ad hoc* to border areas under particular threat. These police forces dealt with trans-border crimes like cattle theft, abductions, murders, smuggling, land disputes and incursions made by foreign troops. The system of border policing used by these forces, which would be inherited and refined by the BSF later, was based on setting up border outposts at regular distances or at sensitive points and possible day and night patrolling by armed border guards. It is said that these state police forces gave their best in the circumstances created by the division of India in 1947 which opened the Indian borders to a serious threat of infiltration in the post-colonial context. In the ultimate analysis, and as the experience of border protection in Kashmir and Gujarat proved, these forces proved incapable of ensuring satisfactory protection of the Indian borders against a politically and militarily determined adversary of secular India. These forces were understaffed, carried obsolete weapons, were financially not well endowed, improperly trained and not sufficiently disciplined for the task assigned to them, lacked sufficient reserves, had a large proportion of older men whose mental alertness and physical fitness left a lot to be desired and finally, too heterogeneous for the Army to co-ordinate its actions with<sup>1</sup>. The inadequacies of the border policing arrangements present in India, highlighted by the border war with China in 1962 *inter alia*, came to the fore in the border crises of 1965 the year in which the first full scale *declared*

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1. This section is based on the following: Memorandum for Consideration of the Emergency Committee of Secretaries, GOI, BSF Documents Collection (hereafter Memorandum); Border Management, Faculty of Studies, BSF, BSF Academy, Tekanpur, Gwalior, MP, January 2010; Dr. Surinder Singh, *Growth and Functional Dynamics of Border Security Force*, Trikuta Radiant Publications, Jammu, 1999; D. Banerjee (ed.), *Central Police Organizations Part II*, Allied Publishers in collaboration with The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata, New Delhi, 2005.

war between India and Pakistan occurred. Available literature on the subject suggests that after the death of Pandit Nehru, independent India's first and long serving Prime Minister, in 1964, it seemed to outsiders that India was headed into an uncertain political future. This gave some opportunities to Pakistan, whose attempt to seize the Kashmir Valley had been foiled by the Indian Army and the Kashmiri people in 1947-48, on the borders. Consequently Pakistani forces tried to re-draw the border between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch. The focus of the Pakistani Army offensive in this region of Gujarat was the Kanjarkot area guarded by the State Reserve Police (SRP) of Gujarat. When the Pakistani incursions began in January 1965, the SRP proved weak against its better armed adversary and some companies of the Central Reserve Police (CRP – later CRPF) were rushed to the area of operations to deal with the situation. These too proved unequal to the task and this state of affairs emboldened the invaders who attacked, in Brigade Strength, the Sardar Post on 09 April 1965 in a surprise move. Finally the Indian Army had to be deployed in some strength to repulse the invasion and restore the Indian national border in Gujarat. These events speeded up the process which produced the BSF within a year of their having elapsed.

These warlike events were observed with a strategic seriousness by the mild mannered Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri which probably surprised those who might have thought him incapable of military firmness. In the event, the diminutive PM proved his detractors wrong. In January 1965, under Premier Shastri's overall supervision, the Emergency Committee of Secretaries set up a study group to examine "the possibility of streamlining and reducing the multiplicity of paramilitary forces in border areas."<sup>2</sup> The policy initiative for the creation of a single central force tasked with the protection of India's long problematic borders had begun. This *Study Group*, led by Lt. Gen. Kumaramangalam, the Vice-Chief of the Indian Army, submitted its report to the government in April, 1965. This report was examined by General J.N.

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2. Memorandum, p. 2.

Chaudhuri and Shri L.P. Singh, the Home Secretary at the time, who together prepared the blue print for establishing the BSF. After the Pakistani aggression in the Rann of Kutch it had been decided that a “small group consisting of an officer of high standing nominated by the Chief of the Army Staff, a Joint Secretary of the Home Ministry and the Inspector General of Police on Special Duty in the Home Ministry should go into the question of co-ordination and control of border security arrangements immediately.”<sup>3</sup> This was the second group of experts set up to advise the government on border issues. In early May 1965 a meeting of the Home Ministers and the Police Chiefs of all the Indian States was held at the behest of the Prime Minister in Delhi. This meeting concluded with the Prime Minister’s decision to raise a new central force dedicated to India’s border defence. Almost immediately before this, on 22 April 1965, General Chaudhuri, under the pseudonym ‘Military Correspondent’, published an article ‘An Integrated Police Force of Border Defence, Central Control – A Solution to Present Discrepancies’ in the *Statesman*. In this article, a product of the General’s by then informed opinion on the subject, the main problems of India’s border management and possible solutions to these problems were clearly mentioned:

“Should the responsibility lie with the Police in the initial stages and if so at what stage should the Army take over? What equipment should these border forces have, how should they be organized and under whose control should they act? How should liaison be maintained between the Armed Forces proper and a border force? Should the border be a State or Central responsibility and how should the financial burden be shared? Police arrangements as constituted along the border at present seem confused and nobody seems to be quite sure<sup>4</sup>.”

Finally the reports of the two study groups were merged and

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3. Memorandum, p. 2.

4. General Chaudhuri quoted by Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2.

submitted to an adhoc group of Secretaries which met in New Delhi on 16 November, 1965. This committee examined the merged documents and came to “certain conclusions” which formed the basis for the establishment of the BSF. The 1965 war with Pakistan was over but the events of that tumultuous year in Indian history ultimately led to the official raising of the BSF on 01 December, 1965 under the leadership of its founding Director General, the distinguished Police Officer K.F. Rustamji. The Memorandum presented to the Committee of Secretaries earlier presented various details regarding the strength and deployment of the BSF with respect, particularly, to the “case of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat” which comprised the border with West Pakistan. The BSF was planned with the aim of not only protecting the border with Pakistan but also instilling in the panic-prone border population, a sense of confidence in general. The history of the BSF, as the chapters of this book illustrate, proves that the Force has remained true to this basic objective. The founders of the BSF were clear that establishing a special service to serve India’s border needs “would also enable the Army to keep away from the Border even in periods of some degree of tension.”<sup>5</sup> This would give security “in depth” to the country. The effective strength in terms of the battalions needed by the BSF was to be decided with reference to these factors. The experience of border conflicts with Pakistan throughout 1965 guided the process which produced the BSF and the minimum number and necessary equipment of the BSF battalions was calculated on the basis of how the state police forces had fared in that year against the Pakistan Army. Additional strength and the reserve battalions to back the battalions deployed on field duty were also mentioned in the Memorandum. Right in the beginning it was observed that due to the disturbed political conditions prevalent in several states of India in 1965-66, no men from the central forces could be released to raise the new battalions which would constitute the fledgling BSF. Hence it was assumed that the BSF would initially build up its battalions from the border

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5. Memorandum, p. 4.

police battalions and reserves available with the various State Governments. This would make Rustamji's task unenviable because the state forces were ill trained, ill equipped and often lacked suitable manpower. The Memorandum was unambiguous on this score:

“A further disadvantage in having the local (State) battalions deployed on a temporary basis under the operational control of the Border Security Force would be the absence of clear-cut command and control over these battalions. Reorganizing these battalions and giving them cadres and specialized training will have to be with the prior concurrence of the State Government and, to that extent, the Border Security Force will be handicapped operationally<sup>6</sup>.”

The raising of the BSF meant working with heterogeneous men and material and converting the whole mass into a competent, well led, homogeneous, cohesive service. This was easier said than done. The birth pangs of the BSF are best described in Rustamji's own words:

“After handing over charge as IGP Madhya Pradesh, I reached Delhi and wrote my joining report on 21 July 1965...I became the head of a one man organization. I was the sole Borderman; nobody below me, nobody above me...After the Indo-Pak War, I went about the task of collecting the men who would assist me in raising the new Force. I handpicked each one of them and got the best of men from the police, the army, air force, the navy and the academic world... Many of the battalions belonging to the states manning the international borders with Pakistan were taken over by us. The twenty five battalions formed the core of the BSF initially. Gradually we built up the strength by sending teams of officers to rural areas all over

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6. Memorandum, p. 9.

India to select the sturdy types and raised another twelve battalions. Fifteen more battalions deployed in Jammu and Kashmir were taken over in 1966 and within a year we had fifty-two battalions. The battalions belonging to the different states had their own strength and composition. Since they became part of one organization, it was necessary to bring about uniformity in their strength and composition by readjusting them. The process of reorganizing and readjusting increased the number of battalions to sixty<sup>7</sup>.”

The task of raising the foundational battalions of the BSF was accomplished side by side with the work of finding suitable officers many of whom were Emergency Commissioned Officers released from the Army. These officers had served in the Indian Army during the 1962 crisis and the war of 1965 and the “experience that these boys had acquired in the army was invaluable” to the young BSF<sup>8</sup>. From these officers the first lot of 300 was selected as the core of the officers who led the first BSF battalions. Senior officers from the Indian Police joined the service later. In the view of General Chaudhuri the separation of duties between the Army primarily a combat organization and the BSF, a Paramilitary organization whose primary role was border protection and not combating an enemy army, was crucial. Earlier Rustamji had formed a team of senior officers who comprised, it may be said, a sort of original general staff of the BSF. This team included the legendary officers of the BSF like Ranjit Singh, P.R. Rajgopal, K. Ramamurti, P.A. Rosha, Rajdeo Singh, Ran Singh and R.S. Rathore. The BSF high command comprised Ashwini Kumar in Jalandhar, Ram Gopal in Srinagar, P.K. Basu and Golak Majumdar in Calcutta. This team was “full of ideas” and “innovation” was their leitmotif<sup>9</sup>. The officers selected, or rather handpicked by the experienced Rustamji, had the qualities which are the *sina qua non*

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7. Rajgopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-8.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 247-8.

for leadership in any institution set up with a vision. The qualities he looked for, and found, were “courage that is not affected by rumours or setbacks, strength of mind to judge and not be stricken by panic at any important moment, health, mental ability and educational background and finally, the ability to be a leader of men.”<sup>10</sup> The model chosen here was of the Indian Army because since the colonial period the Indian Army was considered an apolitical, secular, thoroughly professional and therefore a reliable organization. The involvement of the BSF in the 1971 war with Pakistan and especially its part in the creation of Bangladesh and the sterling role which the BSF continued to play in several theatres of counter-insurgency operations across numerous parts of the country during the 1980s and 1990s recounted in this volume, proved these assumptions of its founder correct.

Grooming the service in its formative years was not easy but was accomplished with the cooperation of the Finance Ministry, Home Ministry and the men and officers of the BSF. Though the funds in rupees were easily forthcoming, the economic conditions in the 1960s made it clear that foreign exchange for weapons or communications technology would not be available. This “proved to be a blessing in disguise” because the “efficient technicians” of the BSF got down to improvising the technology at their disposal and “revolutionized” radio communications in its workshops with marvelous “ingenuity.” This early achievement of the BSF should be seen in the contemporary context when complaining against a lack of funds has become universal among all sectors of the government. The degree of self-sufficiency achieved by a young service like the BSF in the 1960s and 1970s was remarkable. Special workshops and factories were set up to overcome the shortage of arms and even produce fully functional 82 mm mortars in Ranchi. There were two areas in which the BSF leadership proved their pioneering skills. In Tekanpur, the BSF started its own rocket programme with experiments carried out on missiles with a range of 200, 300 and 400 yards. Later, under the guidance of eminent scientists like Vikram Sarabhai and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who later

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10. Rajgopal, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

became the President of India, the BSF rocket team developed rockets with a range of twenty kilometers. “These rockets”, Rustamji tells us, “were used at the instance of the BSF for the first time in the Bangladesh conflict.” Later, more research enabled the BSF to throw “a rocket ninety kilometers from the base” in Pokhran<sup>11</sup>.

Tekanpur would remain significant to Rustamji’s vision of himself as the founder of the BSF. In 1971, after the BSF had firmly planted its feet on the landscape of the country, he expressed a feeling which must be narrated in his own words:

“On a small island in the lake at Tekanpur will lie the remains of my life – metaphorically – and there I would like to remain forever among the young men who train to join the BSF<sup>12</sup>.”

It was *this* BSF which was especially mentioned alongside the Indian Army, Air Force and Navy by the Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi, in her address to the meeting of the various police IGs at the IsG Conference on 06 April, 1972 in the following words:

“I would like to say a special word of gratitude and appreciation to the BSF. We all know that they bore the brunt of the Bangladesh crisis for a long while before anybody else was on the scene. I think it is largely because of (the) guidance and courage which they showed that the whole thing went along (in the) right direction i.e. that it led towards a good result<sup>13</sup>.”

The War with Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh in December, 1971 proved invaluable to the prospects of the BSF. The war brought home the need for a “re-orientation” of the

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11. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-1.

12. Private Papers, Diaries and Correspondence of Shri K.F. Rustamji (MS Section, NMML, Teen Murti, New Delhi), Diary No. 22, p. 19, dated 28/2/1971.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 181, 6/4/1972.



service. Rustamji's visits to the two fronts in 1971-72 made this clear. The war made it clear that the main aim of the BSF "should not be frontal attacks on the enemy" but the making of "forward movements in such a manner that the great advantage that they have in the knowledge of the ground and local contacts would be" helpful. This required the ability to move fast and correctly over broken ground and also the ability to use explosives and possess leadership at lower level of such imaginative and aggressive nature that it can do the task allotted to it."<sup>14</sup> During the war, the BSF fought and "fell shoulder to shoulder with the Army." Although the BSF functioned under a separate enactment, its officers received commissions from the President and "their contribution to the war of liberation" was described by the PM as "crucial."

### **The research for, and chapters of this book**

This book has been written to provide its readers a well-informed *concise* history of the BSF. It is the first book of its kind produced by the BSF and highlights the importance of associating academics with the scholarly members of the BSF in order to produce more service history volumes such as this. This book does not comprise a comprehensive history of the service in *detail*; indeed the BSF has far too many achievements to its credit in the last fifty years of its existence to be recounted in a single volume. The services which the BSF has provided to the country are too many, ranging from border control to disaster management, to be mentioned in a volume which has been prepared in a very short duration. The team entrusted with the work of producing this volume was formed and started the process of researching the source materials and simultaneously drafting the chapters towards the end of July, 2015. The task at hand was difficult to say the least. The BSF has no archive and this meant that an archive of primary and secondary sources had to be created in the very process of preparing this volume. A lot of information regarding the organizational and

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14. *Ibid.*, section on the Western Front, 14/3/1972, pp. 178-9.

operational aspects of the BSF history lay embedded in the memories of the retired veterans of the service. This made *oral history* integral to this project. Many of these officers were located and interviewed in detail by members of the editorial team either in its Delhi office and volume workshop or in their homes at Dehradun, Bengaluru, Jammu etc. Several interviews were recorded, transcribed and preserved for posterity. Rich material from these interviews was culled and used in the chapters which went through several drafts before being published in record time. The questions asked in these interviews were carefully selected, with inputs coming from both the BSF officers and the academic team. Hundreds of old BSF files had gathered dust and were on the verge of extinction in the BSF records office in Bhondsi, a place close to Gurgaon. Our team members visited this place, sat in the records room with their faces covered with kerchiefs and with considerable risk of suffering an attack of bronchitis or asthma, salvaged whatever they could with an envious and rare dedication. Much of the material thus acquired by the BSF team was passed on to the Research Assistants who, bubbling with the enthusiasm of young historians, organized the information they received before passing it to the editor and chief writer of this volume. They went through the sources diligently and often wrote the first preliminary drafts of some chapters. The atmosphere in the BSF office in Chhawla, where the team worked for long hours, was marked by productive conversations between the BSF History Research team and the academics and a gaiety which no one will ever forget. The readers who wish to acquaint themselves with the numerous achievements of the BSF can also consult the various books mentioned in this volume's bibliography. The Battalions, Companies and Platoons, *the real operational units of the BSF*, have a rich and multifarious history of wartime and peacetime achievements and provide the BSF its legacy of *camaraderie* and *esprit de corps*.

The first problematic issue which confronted us when work began on this volume was related to the selection of a chapter theme which would do justice to the history of the BSF and

*simultaneously* make us adhere to the exigencies of limited time. Our brief was short and simple – a book commemorating 50 years of the BSF had to be written and presented to the country on 01 December, 2015. Right in the beginning it was first decided to exclude the battalion histories from this book in the hope that a battalion level history of the BSF would be conceived and written at a later date. Once we decided to keep out the rich detailed narratives of the BSF battalions from this book, the task became easier. During a few sessions of involved discussion over several cups of tea, both the BSF officers and the academic team thrashed out the issue and arrived at the chapter theme of this volume. This book is divided into four chapters including the introduction which is Chapter one. The introduction has been conceived and written by the editor of the volume with a view to provide the readers the historical and political context within which the BSF is located. It draws upon the rich memoirs left behind by the founder Director General of the BSF, Shri K.F. Rustamji, among other sources. Its objective is to engage the reader with the imagination and historical realities of national borders and the problems associated with guarding them against military attack, insurgency, smuggling etc. The introduction has also focused on the specific problems of border management which have emerged in India since 1947 *because* of the country's colonial legacy. It is evident that the British committed numerous errors in defining the boundaries between India and Pakistan on one hand and India and China on the other hand. In the North-East, the boundary between India and Myanmar was similarly left undecided when the British withdrew in haste from Burma and India after the Japanese defeat in 1945. The BSF *inherited* these myriad border problems at the *operational ground level* – its men and officers were saddled with problems created by a history over which they had no control. Chapter two provides the readers with an overview of the BSF as a unique armed force. Chapter three has two sections. The first deals with the combat operations of the BSF and has sub-sections on the major combat operations undertaken by the force since its formation. There are sub-sections on the India-

Pakistan War of 1971, the militancy in the North-East, the Punjab insurgency in the 1980s and 1990s, the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, the role of the BSF in the Kargil War (Operation Vijay) and the tackling of Left-wing extremism in central and south-central India. The second section of chapter three is dedicated to the various other operations of the BSF which comprise internal security duties and other tasks like United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Disaster Management. Finally, chapter four looks at the Organizational History of the BSF. The chapter has sections on diverse matters connected with the BSF such as its formation and expansion, border fencing, human resource development, its training of foreign nationals, its weapons and technology in general and its air and water wings. The editorial team thought it wise to include photographs from the BSF records and boxes highlighting special information inserted in the main text for the readers. The volume has a bibliography, which, the editorial team feels, should be of great help to those readers who wish to venture beyond the borders of this book into the other realms of the BSF's interesting history. This book is dedicated to the brave men and officers of the BSF, both living and dead, who have served India with great pride and sincerity. They have always lived up to the motto of the BSF:

*Jeevan Paryant Kartavya !*

**Anirudh Deshpande**

## BSF: IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

### Evolution of the border security system

The need to ensure the sovereignty of nations, control violations of borders and prevent cross border crimes led to the historical evolution of border security systems. The relationship between borders and the state has been mentioned in the Introduction of this volume. Historically in South Asia border guarding arrangements consisted of quasi-official policing methods through *chowkidars* (watchmen) and village headmen. This medieval system was inherited by the British in India and reformed from the times of Lord Cornwallis to suit the changing conditions of the nineteenth century. The system experienced a major change as a consequence of the development of the modern policing systems in nineteenth and twentieth century India. As the centers of political power grew stronger, this system graduated to more formal arrangements and the duty of border surveillance and guarding was passed on to the police forces of the various Princely states. The tradition of protecting state borders with lightly equipped state police forces, and a network of informers and *chowkidars* evolved in the nineteenth century. The rise of

nationalism and the formation of new nation-states in the twentieth century and during the Cold War era necessitated an overhaul of border protection systems across the world. Further, the rise of political violence, technological advances and periodic re-definitions of national geo-political priorities created new historical needs for advanced border management techniques and organizations. Usually national borders had been guarded by military forces across the world but experience showed that this system of border management was prone to an enhancement of conflicts primarily because the heavily armed military forces were, in general, geared towards war. In order to avoid frequent conflicts, the comity of nations in their wisdom decided to raise lightly equipped forces based mainly on the police pattern, as border guarding forces. The system of using Scout forces, pioneered by Baden Powell, for border protection had been put in place by the British in their colonies from the late nineteenth century. In the various remote tribal areas of India, organizations like the Tochee Scouts, Corps of Guides, Frontier Force and Eastern Frontier Rifles were put in charge of border security and management by the British.

### **Border security after Independence**

In the Indian sub-continent new problems of border security were created by the birth of two new nation-states in 1947, the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and decolonization in Burma. Independent India had also to re-negotiate its borders with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan in the context of the decline of the British Empire. While the Himalayan Kingdoms usually maintained a friendly posture towards India ever since the later independence from colonial rule, it was with Pakistan that the biggest problems of border management arose. Ever since its creation, Pakistan became embroiled in the 'Great Game' played between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and USSR in central and south Asia. Soon after 1947, the Pakistan Army became the most important political player in the country, democracy was derailed and the country passed under

long spells of military dictatorships that thrive on anti-India sentiments. The Pakistani military Juntas also forged a long term strategic alliance with China to outflank India in the Jammu and Kashmir region which abuts central Asia. Much has been written on this and the story therefore will not be repeated here. Emboldened by the financial and military support provided by the United States of America (USA) and China, the Pakistani regime, since the 1950s, embarked on a series of military adventures against India. This path led Pakistan to fight two major wars with India. In April, 1965, on the day of the festival of Ram Navmi, the Pakistan Army attacked the Sardar Post held by the Central Reserve Police in Kanjar Kote area of the Great Rann of Kutch. Initially the skirmishes were confined to the paramilitary forces but when tension mounted, the responsibility of operations devolved upon the opposing Armies. The situation on the Eastern Front also caused a lot of concern. Pakistan had supported the Naga Guerrillas from 1956 in an effort to destabilize the Indian north-east. These insurgents were trained in special camps established in East Pakistan. Training camps for the Mizo National Front insurgents were also set up from 1966 onwards in East Pakistan. The Pakistani strategy was focused on creating two permanent bleeding fronts for India. At the same time the border between India and East Pakistan remained rather lively because of cattle smuggling and various other day to day criminal activities. The decade of the 1960s proved momentous in many ways to the modern history of border security in India. The India-China Border War of 1962, the India-Pakistan War of 1965, the rise of insurgency in North-East India and the rise of Bengali Nationalism in East Pakistan created the context for the creation of the Border Security Force – a service especially dedicated to defending the long Indian borders. This context has already been discussed in the Introduction to this volume.

### **Terrain as a factor in Indian border security**

Terrain plays an important role in the planning and execution of

border security. This factor of border defence is made more problematic by India's diverse geography and demography. The terrain of present day Gujarat Frontier is characterized by a three band spectrum. They comprise the sand deserts in the Barmer Sector, salt waste land called the Rann under the Gandhinagar and Bhuj Sectors and the volatile Creek area including the marshy stretches of the Harami Nala in the Bhuj Sector. Vast barren spaces have made the physical domination of the entire area very difficult. Primitive communications coupled with the paucity of clean potable water and landmarks hampered operations in numerous ways. High intensity winds and dust storms sweep across the area in a South-West (SW) to North-East (NE) direction for most part of the year. This restricts mobility and the ability to detect and prevent criminal activities. The Rann of Kutch turns into a flat salty waste when dry. It becomes soggy enough during the Monsoon season to make troop movement practically impossible. Readers can gauge for themselves, the travails of securing the nation's borders in these circumstances. The border areas of Rajasthan are characterized by cultivable area, semi-arid zones and the great Thar desert. Over time the northern districts of Rajasthan witnessed considerable development because canals were laid in the region and agriculture prospered. The southern portion of the Rajasthan border comprises a large semi-arid zone and the Thar. Sparse vegetation, shifting sand dunes and strong dust laden winds cause considerable difficulty in dominating the area. On the other hand, the northern border of Rajasthan, with widespread cultivation and settlements close to the International Border (IB) warrants close surveillance and other special security measures. The stretch of IB in the Punjab Frontier is 553 km at present. This includes about 500 km of IB and 53 km of riverine border. Land here is fertile and yields multiple crops. There are three main rivers i.e. Ravi, Sutlej and Beas which flow in the plains of Punjab and twine around IB at several places. The water level in these rivers remains at 10-15 feet during summer and at approximately 20-50 feet during monsoons. Routine border domination has always been an uphill task in the riverine border



belts. The Ravi and Sutlej have created numerous bulges where small pockets of Indian territories are practically surrounded by Pakistani territory. The people on either side of the IB speak Punjabi. Though agriculture is the main occupation, some percentage of border population have developed ties with spies, smugglers and other anti-national elements on either side of the IB to make easy money. Huts, *deras*, tube wells and farm houses, which developed during the Green Revolution, serve the varied interests of smugglers etc. as well.

The border areas of Jammu comprise a combination of the IB and Line of Control (LC). The areas adjoining Kashmir in Rajouri are mountainous. Next to these high mountains are a layer of hills which finally descend into the plains. The line of control moves down the Pir Panjal range in the North-West (NW), moves around Poonch and Rajouri to join the demarcated border in the Chhamb and Sangam point. The terrain in the LC area is mountainous and heavily forested. The area around the IB is also diverse. The presence of mini ravines in Paharpur and the undulating ground on the left bank of the Chenab make matters worse. A number of rivers and wide *nullahs* flow into Pakistan like Basantar, Niki Tawi and Jammu Tawi. These remain in spate during the rains. These *nullahs* are axial and can be used for navigation by assorted miscreants. The banks of the above mentioned rivers are covered by thick *sarkanda* grass. The thick tall grass, deep ravines, swift flowing rivers and *nullahs* in this area make the task of the BSF extremely difficult.

In the east, things are more complex. The India-Bangladesh boundary line enters the main land from Bay of Bengal through the *Sunderbans* – perhaps the world's largest mangrove forest. This area, the abode of the Royal Bengal Tiger, is full of swamps, creeks and water channels overgrown with thick mangroves. The boundary line moves north and later east to enter the Indian State of Assam. Generally, the terrain is flat with dense habitation close to the boundary line. People on both sides of the IB speak the same language and share cultural bonds. Cultivation on both sides extends right up to the border. The rivers remain in spate during rainy season

and often become raging torrents. The area gets flooded during the monsoons. This makes the routine domination of this border difficult. The border of the North-Eastern states of India with Bangladesh is also varied. The border in Lower Assam, along Dhubri district, is riverine. Upper Assam, i.e. the Cachar district, is characterized by the presence of hills and a low density of population. The border areas of Meghalaya with Bangladesh follow a definite pattern of hills mainly on the Indian side and plains mainly on the Bangladesh side. The hills are low, steep and heavily forested. The rivers and *nullahs* emanating from the hills, that come under India, flow towards Bangladesh. Habitation in border areas comprises of tribal people. The border area of Tripura is a mix of plains and varied promontories. The hills have a good forest cover. The population on both sides of the IB thrives on agriculture. The border areas of Mizoram with Bangladesh are mountainous and forested.

### **The mechanics of security**

Although the terrain, demography, crimes and other variegated conditions require a customized, region-specific approach to border security, the BSF, right from the beginning, has embarked on its mission with the aid of some general parameters. To dominate an area, it is important to have a base – from this condition arose the need for the BOPs. In areas where habitation is close to the IB, the BOPs were established well forward: as was the case in Punjab, Bengal and Tripura. On the other hand, in areas where habitation was well behind the IB, the BOPs were well within our own territory. All these BOPs have had one uniform characteristic: all were deficient in basic amenities.

The mechanics of security adopted was the linear pattern of deployment along the IB to cover maximum area. This way of border deployment seems to have been guided by the non-existence of the statutory provisions of ‘depth’ applicable to the border belt and also due to inadequate surveillance equipment. The mechanics of security adopted to dominate the border areas focused on the maximum portion of area of responsibility, with

an element of surprise and deception for criminals 24x7 and all 365 days. Tactical dispositions at the micro level vary from area to area. It was realized rather early that the BSF, because of its vast deployment on the border, would see and hear much which would be of interest to everyone in India. This led to the establishment of the intelligence branch of the BSF. In 1966, a committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Shri P.K. Basu, IG, BSF, Eastern Zone, to study this matter and if possible, make recommendations regarding the establishment of an intelligence wing for the BSF.

Once the BSF intelligence unit started functioning, a culture of being prepared for impending operations and understanding the nefarious designs of the enemy began to take shape. The border areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat were, and remain, notorious for drug and gold smuggling. The BOPs here were established mainly twenty or even forty kms behind the IB due to various administrative reasons. During the day, the BSF kept the area under observation with the help of field glasses, observation points, turrets on high steel towers and vigorous patrolling on camel back and foot.

At night, border ambushes were often laid at selected sensitive points to surprise the criminals and other infiltrators. Over time, the planning and preparedness of the BSF has witnessed an admirable evolution. Since 1965, almost all aspects of the BSF's work have been refined in keeping with changing local conditions of and historical needs. The intelligence has improved manifold, advanced night vision devices have been inducted into service, new vehicles have periodically been acquired and condition of appropriate vehicles have been improvised to deal with contingencies like grenade and bomb attacks. Trucks and mini trucks have been especially armor plated against mines. Between 1996-1998 all the BOPs in Rajasthan were moved forward to gain greater command of the border. These measures yielded good results. Between 1990-2000 around 20,000 infiltrators were intercepted and arrested. Contraband goods worth Rs. 1,392 crores were seized. Assorted arms numbering 557 were seized. A carefully planned and meticulously executed border fencing programme

in Punjab and parts of Rajasthan has improved border security to a remarkable degree. In addition to this, the BOPs, which form the backbone of border defence, are being improved in many ways to ensure the well being of the officers and men who man them round the clock, year after year, at a stretch. These BOPs are much better supplied and logistically better connected to their command centers now than they ever were in the past.

For a long time, crime in the Punjab Frontier has mainly involved illegal infiltrations, smuggling of weapons, narcotics, fake currency etc. The guiding principles of operations here have hinged on border domination at the macro level coupled with precise special operations at micro level. By the middle of the 1980s, when militancy started in Punjab, things turned for the worse. Of the 553 km long Punjab border, a stretch of 120 km was considered the most sensitive. Fencing began in this stretch and was finally extended finally to almost the entire border. The new regime of border protection thus put in place by the BSF broke the back of militancy in Punjab: infiltration declined perceptibly and the seizure of weapons, drugs and fake Indian currency increased to the point of seriously hobbling the efforts of the Pakistan based terrorists. To fight criminals dealing in drugs, weapons and fake currencies, the BSF adopted many special operation programmes to ensure enhanced domination of sensitive areas at the actual ground level.

The Jammu Frontier, a mix of the LC and the IB, is highly sensitive and requires untiring vigil. In addition to the taxing crime pattern, this region was, and remains, notorious for enemy espionage activities. A glimpse of the security scenario prevalent in this area and the effort of the BSF can be gauged from the fact that 456 miscreants were killed by the BSF in various encounters between the years 1990 and 2000. Of these 178 were classified hard-core militants. The seizure of weapons and ammunition has been impressive. Sophisticated weapons numbering about 580 along with 74,000 rounds of ammunition, enough to inflict considerable damage on the country, have been seized. To check terrorist infiltration, the BSF resorted to numerous manoeuvres to erect the security fence despite Pakistani interference. Pakistan

does not recognize the IB as the *de jure* boundary between India and itself but the Pakistani opposition to the border fence was based on other considerations. Its attempts at infiltration have continued unabated. Between 2000 and 2014, the BSF killed two hundred and forty one militants and seized three hundred and seventy seven assorted weapons with 35,482 rounds of ammunition. The seizure of contraband in the same period was valued at Rs. 1,288 crore.

The India Bangladesh border, which the BSF mans, is no less challenging. Quotidian existence on the border is coloured by crop theft, cattle lifting and smuggling, brigandage, drug and arms smuggling, movement of militants, smuggling of utility items, human trafficking etc. Major operational challenges manifested in adverse possession, peculiar alignments of the IB, problems of riverine border areas, malaria, difficulty of domination of area during monsoons, massive unemployment, poverty and their consequences.

The border domination here, from the very beginning, is based on continuous surveillance, effective physical presence, utilization of modern technical gadgets and the constant gathering of intelligence. High levels of poverty underline large scale petty smuggling which makes border guarding problematic. Refractory elements often use crowds comprising children and women who keep the BSF on the defensive. Trans-border criminals often use safe havens in Bangladesh. Even in these difficult conditions the BSF has managed to perform well. Between 1990 and 2014, as many as 3.7 lakh illegal intruders and 680 militants were intercepted. Contraband goods worth Rs. 1,949 crores (approx.) were seized by the BSF between 1990 and 2014. The BSF has demonstrated a flexible approach to the Bangladesh border, in keeping with political changes in Dacca. During the premiership of Begum Khalida Zia of the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) a nexus between the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, Directorate General of Field Intelligence (DGFI) of Bangladesh and various anti-India elements developed in Bangladesh. Insurgents from India's north east found shelter in Bangladesh and even established terrorist training camps there. In those days,

the BSF was forced to adopt an aggressive stance towards border defence. When the secular pro-India Awami League came to power in Dacca things changed for the better and the BSF's attitude towards the Bangladesh border softened. The Government of India directed the BSF to eschew its earlier aggressive posture in favour of a friendly approach. Although this defensive approach has worked to the disadvantage of the BSF at times, the force has not given it up since 2011.

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## COMBAT

### **The BSF in 1971 Indo-Pak War and the Liberation of Bangladesh**

The month of March 1971 proved, in ways too numerous to recount here, historic to the post-colonial story of South Asia. On the fateful night of 25 March 1971, a genocidal campaign was launched by the Pakistani Army against the Awami League and the East Pakistani people. Within three days of the Pakistani crackdown in Dacca, Golak Majumdar, IG Eastern Frontier of the BSF received information from his contacts in East Pakistan that some senior Awami League leaders, including possibly Mujib himself, were heading for Khustia in the guise of poor peasants. On 30 March one of the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) officers who was in contact with the Awami League leaders sent a note for the first time asking for assistance and pleaded for every possible help. Shri Majumdar asked them if he could meet some known leaders of the movement before moving forward on this plan. On 27 March 1971, the SDOs of Meharpur and Jhenaidah came to the BSF Border Out Post (BOP) at Chengrakhali in the Mednipur district and delivered the following message to the Indians. “Two senior members of the government

of independent Bangladesh would like to meet the Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi. They will cross the border only if received with state protocol.” This message was flashed to the senior officers of the BSF in the area and consequently Shri Golak Majumdar, IG BSF, arrived after an hour and welcomed the members to India. Soon thereafter Shri Rustamji, the BSF DG, came down to Calcutta and initiated the BSF’s involvement, with the Indian PM’s unstinting support, in a war which would ultimately be called the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971.

The members referred to in the message were Shri Tajuddin Ahmed, who later became the first Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Barrister M. Amir-ul Islam, the Chief Whip of the Awami League in the National Assembly. They informed Sh. Majumdar that Mujib-ur Rehman had instructed them to disperse and take charge of the resistance movement in different areas as he himself was not able to escape, both these leaders escaped East Pakistan and reached the India border. Later they were brought to New Delhi.<sup>1</sup> As a show of trust, the BSF also provided some weapons and required quantity of ammunition to Major Abu Osman Chowdhury, the Commander of the freedom fighters in the Khustia-Jessore Sector. Seeing him return to fight for his country, Tajuddin in a hopeful manner said “There they go. They carry with them our hopes and aspirations.” These incidents are described in delectable detail by Shri Rustamji in his diaries. The BSF’s involvement, and some of its finest hours in the war of 1971, began with these border incidents.

The political and military context within which the BSF would play a crucial role in the Indo-Pak War of 1971 evolved in the decades between 1947 and 1971. During these momentous decades Pakistan became embroiled in the Cold War politics of the US played out in Asia and came to be ruled by its Army Generals whose political sagacity history has not judged with great sympathy. These decades in the history of Pakistan were marked by the failure of the Two Nation Theory on which the opportunist Muslim League had managed to get Pakistan from the obliging British in 1947.

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1. Article on Golak Majumdar in News Paper.

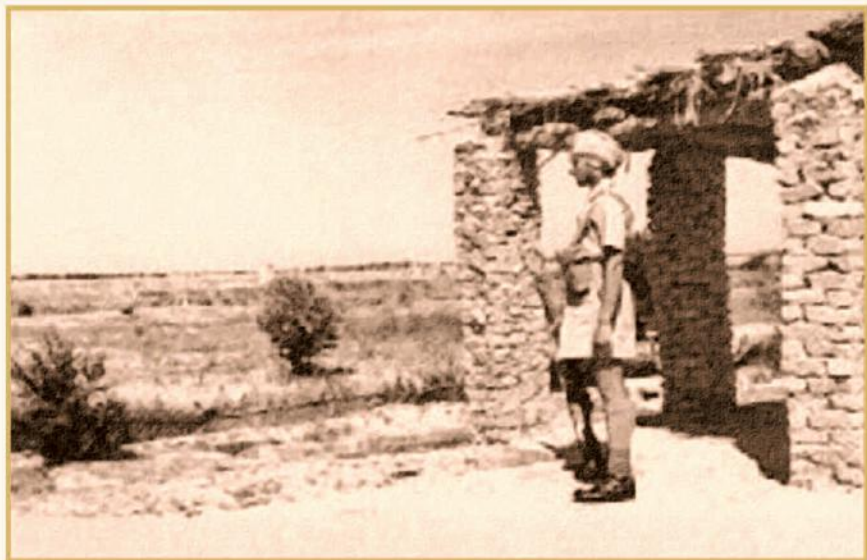


After 1965 the relations between East and West Pakistan began to deteriorate fast; the East Pakistan region, surrounded by India, was fundamentally Bengali in character and resented being dominated by the West Pakistan based Pakistani regime. The key player in this entire affair was the Pakistan Army. Following the defeat of Pakistan in the Indo-Pak War of 1965, the reputation of General Ayub Khan plummeted while in East Pakistan the star of the Awami League had risen. Sheikh Mujib announced a Six-Point Programme to achieve autonomy for East Pakistan in 1966. In response, the Ayub regime in Islamabad implicated the Awami League leader in the Agartala Conspiracy Case of 1968. This action aggravated the situation and created a serious law and order breakdown in East Pakistan which ultimately led to the resignation of President Ayub Khan. The dictator was succeeded by General Yahya Khan who promised free and fair elections based on universal adult franchise for the first time in the short history of the country. In November 1970 East Pakistan was devastated by a massive cyclone which killed 2,30,000 people. This calamity caused widespread damage. The callous attitude towards the aftermath of this disaster displayed by the Yahya regime caused a popular furore in the region, which was capitalized by the Awami League. Following this the Awami League swept the elections held in December, 1970 and Sheikh Mujib became a contender for the post of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The events following this, League victory are too well known to be recounted here. The infamous 'Operation Searchlight' planned and launched by the Pakistan Army must be understood in this context. The Pakistan regime, under the influence of the Pakistan Army, was in no mood to accommodate this Awami League victory and did everything possible to violently suppress the popular movement in East Bengal.

The Military Junta of Pakistan had made detailed plans to deal with the situation by resorting to the genocidal 'Operation-Searchlight' to be launched against the Bengali nationalists. According to the plan, all East Bengal Rifles (EBR) and East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) battalions were to be disarmed, Bengali officers sent on leave and Awami League workers arrested.

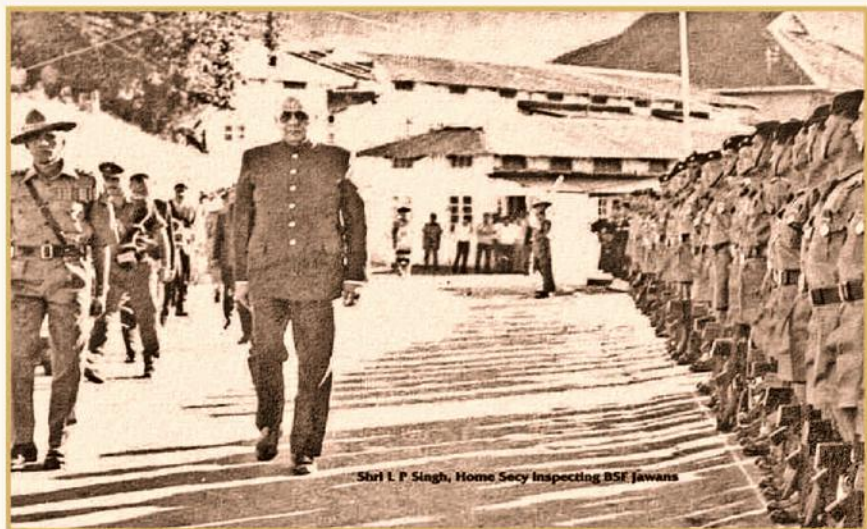
## Formative Years

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Border Security Force established on 1st Dec. 1965 with 25  
Battalions of state armed police.  
BSF sentry on a Punjab border post in 1969 after amalgamation of  
PAP units

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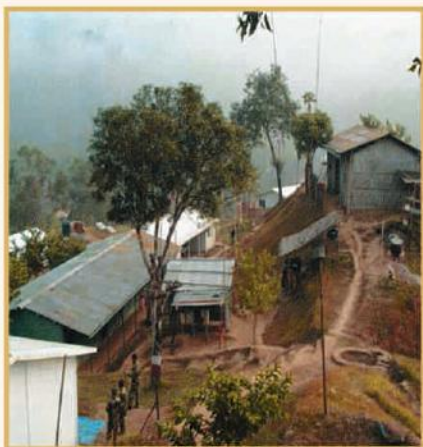
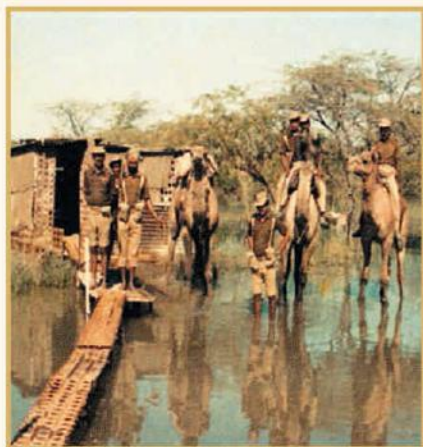
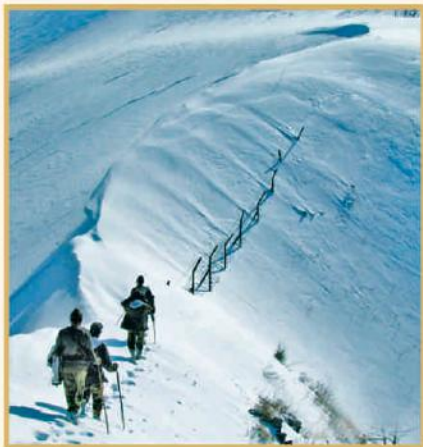
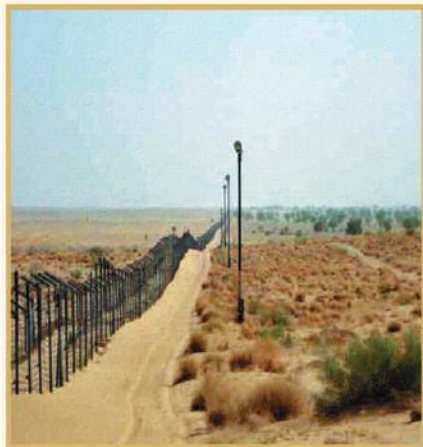
Shri L.P. Singh, Home Secy inspecting BSF Jawans

Shri L.P. Singh, Home Secy Inspecting BSF Jawans

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## Areas We Tread

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# Liberation of Bangladesh-1971

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Brig B C Pandey briefing Gen Manekshaw on Sand Model

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A BSF Sub Unit Advancing on the Battle Field

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# Training of Mukti Vahini

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Disrupting Enemy Lines  
of Communication



War Memorial –  
Saviours of Killapara

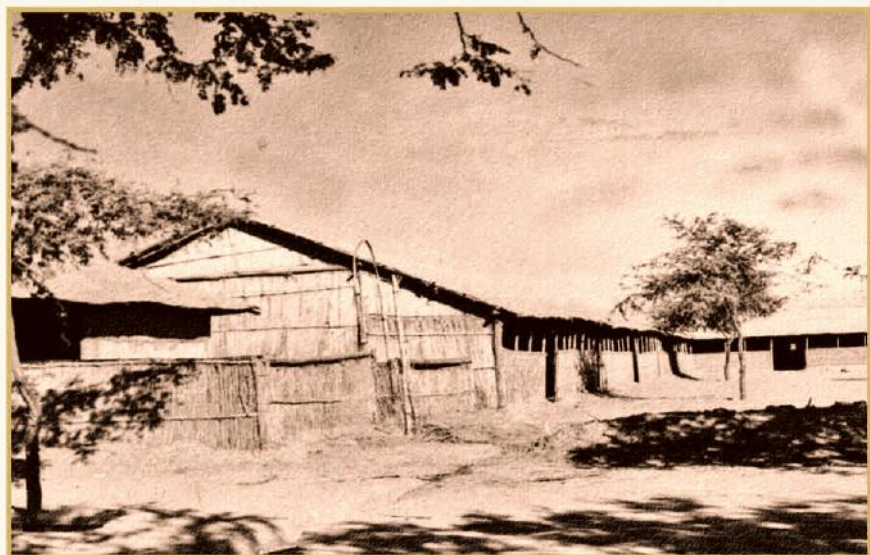


Major General Aziz Ahmed  
of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)  
paying homage to martyrs

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BSF Mortar Det in Action



PAK BOP Kali Bet in Chad Bet Area Captured by BSF

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# Glimpses of Western Theatre–1971 War

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## Rare Moments from the Battle Field

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However events did not move according to plan. At Chittagong port the labourers refused to unload the arms and ammunition brought from West Pakistan. Later troops of 08 EBR were pressed in for the task but they too refused to partake of the Pakistani plans. Soldiers of the Baluch regiment opened fire on the EBR and 13 Bengali soldiers were killed. This set the stage for the orgy of state violence which followed. On 25 March the talks between Pakistani leaders and Bengali nationalists failed and immediately the pre-planned brutal military crackdown on the Awami League workers, soldiers of EBR and the Bengali people in general started. Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman was arrested. Later in the day Maj Zia-ur-Rehman made the historic announcement of the formation of a sovereign democratic republic of Bangladesh from the Chittagong Radio Station. He announced that he had taken over as the Commander of Liberation forces. He appealed to the neighbouring countries to come to the aid of the teeming millions of Bangladeshis who were locked in a life-and-death struggle for their freedom<sup>2</sup>. Thereafter the EBR disappeared from the borders and the Pakistani BOPs remained virtually un-manned. Pakistani regulars along with Rangers and the communal Razakars began patrolling the border and operating against the Bengali guerillas. Incidents of border violations by the Pakistanis increased with each passing week when the Pakistanis pursued the Bangladesh liberation fighters in Indian territory. The young Border Security Force became involved in the Bangladesh crisis from 25 March 1971. On this day the Pakistan Army launched a massive operation against the Awami League-led popular uprising in East Pakistan. Between March and May 1971, the BSF was directed "to take such measures, as would not endanger the security of the border in the Eastern Frontier, while helping the liberation Forces of Bangladesh to achieve their aim".

At the outset the DG BSF received a laconic directive from the Prime Minister, "Do what you like, but don't get caught."

The situation on the eastern front was compounded due to the fact that the general elections were taking place in India and

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2. Shri R.K. Mishra, Comdt/BSF Journal.

Naxalite activity was at its peak in West Bengal. It was apprehended that the Naxalites would make it difficult for the elections to be held in the state. As a result which the government was focused more on the deployment of large contingents of the Army, CRP and BSF in the sensitive areas to ensure peaceful polls. In the meeting held in the house of the Home Secretary on 28 March, Rustamji was asked about the battalions that BSF had and was told to move the spare units to the border and put senior officers and staff of the training institutions in-charge of them after dividing the border into sectors. He lost no time in positioning his ablest men at the most strategic places on the border – Brig B.C. Pandey with his 104 Commando Bn at Agartala, Col Rampal Singh with his 103 Commando Bn at Cooch Behar, Brig M.S. Chatterjee with his Commando staff from Hazaribagh at Balurghat, Col Megh Singh with his 18 Commando Bn at Bangaon. They were entrusted with protecting the borders and dealing with the Pakistan Army operating against the civilians and freedom fighters and providing rations, allowances and clothing to the latter.

Shri Golak Majumdar took charge as the IG of the Eastern Frontier of the BSF, headquartered at Calcutta. He was given clear instructions to (a) do whatever necessary in the nation's interest, (b) follow his own methods, and (c) set his own limits. On reaching there, he immediately revived his intelligence sources which he had developed over the years during his various assignments in West Bengal and Tripura police. He was also the primary conduit for communication with the Indian authorities for the Awami League leaders. He became the main source of information and chief coordinator in management of the affairs at the ground level operation by the freedom fighters.

On 29 March the Chief of the Army Staff ordered limited assistance. On 31 March the Indian Parliament passed a resolution extending support to the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle. Shri Tajuddin and Amirul Islam were taken to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister and some other important functionaries. After spending a week in Delhi they came back to Calcutta on 09 April, 1971 full of hope and determination. In Calcutta, a hotel was placed at the

disposal of the Bangladeshi fighters and political leaders. The first important requirement was to create a nucleus of the movement. The matter was discussed between Shri Rustamji, DG BSF and Tajuddin on 06 and 07 April 1971. Tajuddin seemed anxious to ensure that a formal provisionally independent government in exile be formed as soon as possible to guide the liberation struggle.

To give greater legitimacy to this government it was important that it comprised of many recently elected representatives. A brief constitution for a presidential form of government with a Prime Minister and Cabinet was drafted by Col M.S. Bains, the chief law officer of BSF and vetted by Subrat Roy Chaudhary a Calcutta barrister. It was shown to Tajuddin and his colleagues who, after some discussion, approved it with minor changes. The name Bangladesh, as suggested by Tajuddin, thus appeared formally for the first time. The design for the national flag of Bangladesh was worked out and Rabindranath Tagore's *Amar Sonar Bangla* was chosen as the national anthem of the new nation. These things would not have happened so fast and smoothly without the cooperation and initiative of the officers and men of the BSF.

On the other hand while the government-in-exile was being formed, plans were underway by Shri Rustamji and Golak Majumdar to try to make Hussain Ali, the Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan in Calcutta to defect to Bangladesh. Shri Majumdar established preliminary contact with Shri Hussain Ali and on Tajuddin's assurance this mission was accomplished. On 18 April, the Pakistan flag came down, the Bangladesh flag went up and the official sign board was changed to 'Office of the Deputy High Commissioner, Gana Prajatantric Bangladesh' immediately after. The press publicized this event, which was cheered by thousands of people who had gathered to witness this important symbolic defeat of Pakistan. This event, in the creation of which the BSF played a stellar role, encouraged defections in many other countries. After this the BSF provided hospitality to the Bangladeshi guests till the war ended. Shri Golak Majumdar, who passed away in old age in 2015, was awarded the Param Vishist Seva Medal for these outstanding achievements. The Bangladesh government

recognized his contribution to the Bangladesh Liberation Struggle and awarded him the honorific 'Friend of Bangladesh'.

The role played by the BSF, itself a young service in 1971, in the creation of Bangladesh is a well known fact. No less was the contribution of the BSF to the training, organizing and equipping of the Mukti Yodha, later known as the Mukti Bahini. Here Mukti Bahini was the guerrilla resistance movement formed by Bengal Military, paramilitary elements of Pak army and civilians of then East Pakistan. The contribution of Brig B.C. Pandey must be mentioned. He established contact with some leaders of Mukti Bahini like Col M.A.G. Osmani, who had arrived at Agartala from Dhaka on foot on 02 April. Brig Pandey advised the chief of Mukti Bahini to avoid direct engagement with the Pakistan Army and resort to guerrilla warfare because of the superior strength and greater fire power of the Pakistani forces. Without losing any time, decisions were taken to disrupt important rail/road communication and start training for the Mukti Bahini.<sup>3</sup> Five training centers were opened to train the volunteer Mukti Yodha at Simna, Kathulia, Bagafa, Patharkandi, Ashrambari (All in Tripura). Shri K.G. Kohli and Malhotra were incharge at Simna. This centre was training Mukti Yodha for Major Safiullah. At Kathulia BSF officers like – Bharat Bhusan, M.Z. Choubey and R.S. Chawla were training the volunteers for Major Khalid. At Bagafa, it was being supervised by Y. Kaushik and P.K. Chatterjee. At Ashrambari it was Shri P.K. Sharma who was training the Mukti Yodha. Training camps were set up by BSF in other sectors also, such as at Hingalgang, Hasnabad, Taki, Itinda, Boyra, Betai, Shikarpur, Jalangi, Gourbagan, Patiram, Papri and Tapurhat. Further, Mukti Yodha was divided into four sectors. The first sector was entrusted to Major Jia with responsibility of Chittagong and Feni (HQ at Ramgarh). The second sector was commanded by Major Khalid Musharaf, his Area of Responsibility (AOR) was from Feni to river Titas (HQ at Motinagar). The third sector was put under the command of Major Shafiullah and his AOR was from Titas river to Saistaganj (HQ at Teliapara). The

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3. Compilation by BSF Academy, Tekanpur, 'Role of BSF in 1971 War'.

fourth Sector was under the command of Major Zaman and his area was from Saistaganj to Sylhet (HQ at Maulvi Bazar)<sup>4</sup>. These training camps trained 2,150 Bangladeshi guerrillas and sent them as far as Dhaka and also handed over 950 trainees to the Army on 07 May<sup>5</sup>.

### *Operations in the Eastern Theatre*

The praiseworthy contribution of the BSF to the glorious saga of the liberation of Bangladesh can be broadly divided into three phases. The first phase was from 26 March to 14 May, 1971 when the BSF established Bangladesh Force Headquarters and carried out such tasks as coordination and training of the Mukti Fauj (as it was then called), disrupting rail-road communications and setting up of a proper administration for conducting future operations. These activities were carried out independently under the command of the DG BSF.

#### **ROLE OF BSF IN RUNNING THE BANGLADESH RADIO**

BSF covertly established 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra' at Agartala, only source of hope for the millions of people of Bangladesh with no contact with what was happening in their own country. BSF contingent left no stone unturned to ensure the regularity of the broadcast. 400 Watt transmissions were clearly heard at Calcutta and our broadcasts were being quoted by All India newspapers. Due to fear of being detected and bombarded by Pak army it could not be operated from a fixed place. BSF further operationalized radio transmission from Amtola on 25 May 1971 through tape using giant 50 KMW transmitters<sup>6</sup>.

With a plan to disrupt the communication link between Chittagong and Noakhali, Comilla-Brahmanbavia, Brahmanbavia-Sylhet, Sylhet-Mymensingh, between 02 April to 12 May 1971, BSF officers along with their commando teams were able to destroy a large number of important bridges. Accomplishment of the above mentioned task witnessed active support from Mukti Bahini also. These destroyed bridges included:

4. Shri R.K. Mishra, Comdt/BSF Journal.

5. Compilation by BSF Academy, Tekanpur, "Role of BSF in 1971 War".

6. Role of BSF in running Bangladesh Radio..... Papers from BSF.

- (a) Subhapur bridge over the Fenny on the Chittagong – Comilla line (Night of 1/2 April 1971).
- (b) Ujanisar road bridge over the Titas on the Pak National Highway, linking Comilla with Sylhet (04 April 1971).
- (c) Gangasagar railway bridge between Chittagong and Comilla (04 April 1971).
- (d) Ramnagar railway bridge on Comilla-Dhaka railway line (05 April 1971).
- (e) Dhumghat railway bridge over the Fenny, linking Chittagong with Naokhali and Comilla (08 April 1971).
- (f) Bijaipur road bridge (12 April 1971).
- (g) Mian Bazar road bridge on Kakri Nullah (15 April 1971).
- (h) Shahbazar road bridge on the Titas (16 April 1971).
- (i) Chaudagram road bridge (19 April 1971).
- (j) Gunabati rail bridge on little Fenny (20 April 1971).
- (k) Goadanagar road bridge (26 April 1971).

The commandos also launched daring mortar attacks against several Pakistani airfields in this area, notably Dhulipara in Comilla (07 April 1971), Salutikar in Sylhet (15 April 1971) and Shamshernagar (23 April 1971). Brig Pandey organized a special commando group called the “Black Shirts” for ambushing the Pakistani forces at different places. They inflicted considerable casualties on the Pakistani troops on the south of Subhapur bridge on 03 May 1971.<sup>7</sup> By the mid of November 1971 the grouping of Indian Armed forces to take on the Pakistani Army in the East Pakistan had almost crystallized. Troops to task included, 33 corps, 2 corps, 4 corps, 101 communication zone area along with support elements. In addition there was 1 Mountain Brigade, 1 Para Brigade, 2 Air Defence Brigade, 23 battalions of BSF, 14 battalions of Assam Rifles, approximately 6 Territorial Army Battalions, 3 Bangladesh Brigade and approximately 1 lakh Mukti Yodha. The Navy and Air force had also occupied the designated places. Twenty-three units of the BSF, came under the operational control of the Indian Army with effect from 15 October 1971:

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7. Role of BSF in 1971 War-BSF ACY.

1. 2 Corps Area  
Under DIG, BSF (West Bengal)  
71 Bn BSF  
72 Bn BSF less one Coy  
76 Bn BSF
2. Main 4 Corps Area  
Under DIG, BSF (Tripura)  
DIG BSF (Silchar) (with 8 Mtn Div)  
86 Bn BSF (less one Coy and four pl)  
84 Bn BSF
3. 33 Corps Area  
Under DIG, BSF (North Bengal)  
70 Bn BSF  
73 Bn BSF  
74 Bn BSF  
77 Bn BSF  
78 Bn BSF  
82 Bn BSF (less 2 Coys)  
103 Bn BSF
4. Bengal Area  
One Coy ex 72 Bn BSF
5. 101 Communication Zone Area  
Under DIG, BSF (Shillong)  
82 Bn BSF (2 Coys only)  
83 Bn BSF  
85 Bn BSF  
86 Bn BSF (1 Coy and 2 Pl only)
6. Mizo Hills Range Area  
80 Bn BSF  
87 Bn BSF (2 Coys)  
90 Bn BSF  
91 Bn BSF  
92 Bn BSF  
93 Bn BSF  
104 Bn BSF<sup>8</sup>

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8. Shri R.K. Mishra, Comdt/BSF Journal.



In the second phase between 15 May and 14 October, it was tasked to protect the East Bengal border and defending the BOPs. Operating independently, but in close cooperation with the Army, the BSF continued to arm and train the Bangladeshi freedom fighters, especially in guerrilla war techniques. In the last phase which coincided with full scale war the BSF fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Army. BSF units played a crucial role in training and supporting the Mukti Bahini – the armed wing of the Bangladesh liberation struggle. The BSF's role during hostilities, as envisaged initially, was limited. It included things like holding ground in less threatened sectors, providing extension to the flanks of the main defence line by holding strong points in conjunction with Army units, limited aggressive actions against paramilitary or irregular forces and guarding the rear. These were formidable tasks but the BSF proved itself equal to the task. In several areas its achievements were identical to that of the Indian Army. When the war began, the BSF bore the brunt of several well mounted enemy offensives on the border. The fact that the BSF held its positions and in several cases repulsed armor and heavy artillery backed enemy infantry assaults redounds to its credit. How many paramilitary forces in the world have managed to achieve this and that too in about half a decade of its existence? On the Eastern border the entire burden of the security of the border against increasing enemy pressure was carried out single handedly by the BSF till 17 May, 1971. As the tempo of the liberation struggle, increased and the Pakistani armed forces and their collaborators intensified the suppression of the liberation struggle the BSF was forced to play a pro-active role on the borders. There were twenty BSF units manning Indo-Pak eastern border at that time. Three additional Bns were sent as reinforcements. The deployment is depicted in the map on page 41.

The 71 Bn, deployed at Murshidabad, rendered all assistance to the *Mukti Bahini* and other freedom fighters by supporting them during the Bangladesh Operations at various places in the Rajshahi district. The material distributed to the *Mukti Fauj* was collected from the Army Unit at Krishnanagar. Here it must be mentioned



that these operations were successfully carried out in the teeth of enemy opposition.

The Battle of Jhingergacha (Jessore) Lalminihat, Rajshahi and Chaudnaga (Kustia) will remain high points for unprecedented heroism as displayed by the so called 'police men' of the Border Security Force. When Pakistani Army declared war against India, the B Company of 71 Bn BSF under Shri L.S.J. Negi, Asstt Comdt with some elements of support Coy was placed at the disposal of 1 Naga Regt. The Coy covered left flank of Meharpur (Bangladesh), when Indian Army captured Meharpur. On 13 December 1971, the battalion crossed river Padma with A coy and F Coy from Kaharpara BOP. The D coy crossed river Padma from Khandua BOP and took positions in Char Narenderpur. At Poragram, about 180 personnel of the Mukti Bahini, Freedom Fighters under Major Jiasuddin joined the troops for the final assault against Pakistani troops stationed at Nawabganj. The unit caused substantial damage by killing 25 personnel of the 32 Baluch Regt including Major Iqbal Mohd. In Nawabganj, it was really praiseworthy to note that many Muslim ladies came out of their houses and greeted the BSF with flowers and garlands.

The dauntless courage shown by 10 Post Group Artillery of BSF, from December 07 to 14, 1971 in the liberation of Nawabganj was appreciated by Maj Gen Lachhman Singh, PVSM, Vr C, GOC, 20 Mountain Division. In a Demi Official (DO) letter addressed to the Commander Artillery, BSF, he wrote:

*"The Battery of BSF from Malda area did extremely well and helped a lot in capturing Nawabganj. I am quite sure that this could not have been possible without the support of your battery. Their improvisation and will to fight deserves appreciation"*<sup>9</sup> The BSF personnel often came under heavy shelling and although they were not trained like the Indian Army to handle this kind of combat, they nevertheless came out with flying colours. When war was declared, a company of 71Bn BSF under Shri L.S.J. Negi, Assistant Commandant, held its ground at Harishankara and provided valuable support to the Indian Army. In fact the Indian Army could often launch some of

9. Role of BSF in 1971 War-BSF ACY.

its offensives against the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan because its flanks were often covered by the BSF. During the capture of Nawabganj the 71 Bn BSF crossed the river Padma, braving many difficulties, and immediately came under heavy enemy shelling. Finally the battalion managed to cross the river Mahananda and ambushed a convoy of Pakistani troops near Haripur bridge. This ambush was countered by Pakistani 32 Baluch Regiment which brought the BSF men under intense and accurate shelling. In this battle, ten men were wounded and Ct Padam Bahadur Lama attained martyrdom in a burst of Light Machine Gun (LMG) fire. The BSF retaliated effectively, killing twenty five Pakistani personnel, including Major Iqbal Mohd. in what is remembered as the first regular engagement of the unit in the war. After the surrender of Pakistan Army, the unit was given instructions to proceed to Rajshahi, inside Bangladesh, where cries of “Long live India-Bangladesh Friendship” welcomed the BSF men. In Rajshahi, the BSF, which was hailed as a force of liberation, became privy to the numerous atrocities committed upon the people by the Pakistani armed forces

The Tactical HQ of 77 Bn was established at Hilly post. On 21 April 1971, at about 0530 hrs the Pakistan Army started attacking Hilly from both Ghoraghat and Panch Bibi side. Throughout the day the exchange of fire continued between the combined forces of 77 Bn BSF, EBR and Mukti Fauj on one side and the Pakistan Army on the other. Finally the Pakistanis withdrew with heavy losses. In the evening, the Divisional Commissioner Shri S.K. Banarjee visited Hilly and appreciated the gallantry of these men. On 22 April, at about 05:30 Hours, Pakistan Army again started shelling. The mortar fire under the command of H.K. Sethi, AC compelled the Pakistan army to withdraw. The timely and prompt actions could save Hilly and Balurghat from the Pakistani attack. On the request of Pakistani army flag meeting was organized. Shri P.S. Bedi, Dy Comdt who was attached from the Training Centre & School, Hazaribagh led the BSF team and both the sides agreed not to open fire in the future. Hilly became the focal point of all attention. The highest standard of courage and discipline shown

by the troops of 77 Bn BSF was highly appreciated. The troops of the unit also dismantled a rail line on the East Pakistan side and built their own bunkers. The GOC called the Commandant of the unit on 08 November, 1971 and asked him to launch an attack on Khanpur BOP (East Pak) on 11 November, 1971 alongwith the Mukti Fauj. J.S. Sandhu, Deputy Commandant, led the BSF in the operation. When the BSF formed up for the attack, the Mukti Fauj was nowhere near the area and hence the whole enemy fire was concentrated on 77 Bn BSF Coy. Naik Amal Kumar Mondal got a burst of LMG on his right leg and fell down but refused to be attended to and continued fighting. Later on he succumbed to the injury due to excessive bleeding. At about 0430 hours the BOP was captured. The enemy lost one officer and about 12 men. The 103 Bn BSF was deployed in Cooch Behar sector manning BOP Gitaldah, BOP Singimari and BOP Chawihati opposite Mugal *Haat*. The B&E Coys of the Bn advanced to Baura Sector in the 3rd week of July 1971 and these Coys remained in contact with the enemy and held the ground successfully till the arrival of the army's 6th Guard, 22 Maratha, 4 Rajput and 12 Garhwal Rifles. The battalion performed well with the Army in that sector. These companies further advanced pushing the enemy to the out skirts of Hathbandha on 20/21 November 1971. The total area reportedly liberated from Pakistani control by the BSF and handed over to the Army in the Cooch Behar Sector alone was 1,800 square miles including about 1,200 square miles around Patgram and Hatibandha.<sup>10</sup> The 82 Bn BSF was deployed at Panbari, Assam. The battalion blew off several bridges – Durgapur Railway bridge and road bridge between Kurigram and Alipur, Gangarhat bridge, and the bridge at Phulbari Chanda. A special party headed by J.S. Joura, AC, successfully blew off Pateshwari bridge on 27 May 1971. They also blew off the Raiganj bridge between Kurigram and Nageshwari about 13 kilometres inside East Pakistan.

The most decisive battles were fought in the area of the eastern command of the BSF. After the army troops moved down to the southern sector the operational responsibility of the northern sector fell to the BSF. Consequently on 02 December 1971 a force

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### BATTLE OF RAIGANJ

Two Coys of 78 Bn alongwith Mukti Fauz were asked to capture north bank of Phulkumari river near Raiganj. Both Companies i.e. A/C Coy lead by Shri Indrajeet Singh Uppal, Dy Comdt left their location Andharihar Khamar at 0001 hrs on night 19/20 November 1971 and took opposition on the bank of Phulkumari river. The Companies fought their way upto the North bank against considerable small arms, 82 mm Mortar and 105 mm artillery fire. A fierce battle ensued between the Pakistan and the Indian forces. The enemy bunkers were very heavily fortified. The BSF, Rajput and the Mukti Fauz had a tough time to dislodge the enemy. It was in this battle that Deputy Commandant Indrajeet Singh Uppal came under enemy fire and breathed his last. He was posthumously awarded "VIR CHAKRA".

comprising four coys of 73 Bn and two companies of 75 Bn BSF supported with six sections of MMG, six sections of Mortar and eleven PGA guns was formed by DIG BSF North Bengal under command of Shri D.K. Mahadkar, Commandant 75 Bn BSF and designated as the Peter Force. On 04 December 1971 the Peter Force was concentrated in the area of Homkumari, Hudamdanga and, acting upon the intelligence gathered by patrols, it was decided to capture Chilahati as its first objective. As the Peter Force along with the Mukti Bahini threatened the post the enemy on the night of 04 December withdrew and fell back on Mirzaganj *Haat*. After consolidating its position in Chilahati the force marched towards Mirzaganj *Haat* and captured the Mirzaganj railway station under cover of its own Artillery fire and mortars. The enemy was then forced to withdraw to Domar on 05 December but the Peter Force followed it resolutely. According to intelligence reports, the enemy position in Domar was very strong. It was reported that one thousand men from the villages around the area had been forcibly made to work in preparation of these positions. To counter this, the Peter Force, in conjunction with the Mukti Bahini attacked the position from all directions, especially threatening its rear. The enemy troops depended on the railway line running from Chilahati to Nilfamari and as pressure mounted, the enemy was eventually forced to withdraw to Nilfamari during the night of 11 December. The Peter Force, after succeeding in its assigned task in this area, was directed to advance towards Kishoreganj with great urgency and succeeded in capturing this position by 15 December. It has to be noted that the BSF units in the South Bengal Area organized

### BATTLE OF BANTARA

Many battle experts might have shrugged their shoulders and many others might have posed the question; Is the BSF Jawan any better than a mere policeman? How will he react if he is thrown on the battle? Well all doubts about the BSF's ability were set at rest. The BSF can do it and they proved it in the Battle of Bantara. This was a watershed in the history of the BSF. It gave the BSF confidence and conviction. Bantara, in Dinajpur like many other strongholds, was Pakistan's bridgehead. It was time to call the enemy's bluff. The enemy's sanctuary in Bantara needed to be crushed and the 70 Bn BSF was given the task. Bantara was manned by Pakistan regulars. Hence, it was not going to be a walkover. The strategy of operation was carefully planned. A Coy 70 Bn BSF with Arty support of the Army, under overall command of Lt Col NG O' Connor, the then Comdt 70 Bn BSF, attacked and captured Pakistani regular defences after furious battle at Bantara and Mohanpur BOPs on 05 November 1971. The Pakistan's casualty was ten with one taken prisoner of war (POW). Lt Col N G O' Connor was awarded "Vir Chakra" for his conspicuous gallantry. B.L. Shah, Inspector was awarded "Sena Medal" for his gallant action in Bantara Ops during 1971 war. Late HC Rai Pada Das and Late Const Amarendra Nath Mullick were both awarded "Sena Medal" posthumously for their gallant action in Bantara Ops.

and prepared themselves very quickly to meet the challenge created by the Pakistani aggression and frustrated all its attempts to forcibly enter into the territory. The BSF was an important aide to the Army in various areas which lay deep inside East Pakistan. During the war of 1971, the Indian Navy made good use of the BSF marine vessels in the riverine theatres of conflict.

The 83 Bn BSF was deployed in Tura (Meghalaya) and manned the BOP Dallu and BOP Killapara. More than one lakh refugees reached Killapara area and it soon became a hub of political activity. Several government officials also sought refuge in this area. One day 7-8 leaders including Nazrul Islam (who later became Officiating President of Bangladesh), reached Killapara and stated that they would enter India only if treated as state guests. Initially they were accommodated in nearby huts and subsequently shifted to the unit. Later they were transported to Calcutta. Spies of the Pakistan Army within the refugees informed the Pakistan Army that many anti-Pak activities were being run at the Killapara refugees' camp. One section post was established at the Killapara which was close to zero line and one kilometre away from the

Company HQ Dallu and connected only through field telephone. In the night intervening 24 and 25 May 1971, two companies of Baluch Regiment attacked Killapara and Dallu posts simultaneously. Shri B.S. Tyagi, AC was commanding the company. Anticipating the threat he prepared strong defence spread over 800 yards and placed support weapons tactically. The BSF Company bravely repulsed the attack. Effective fire was brought over the enemy through machine guns and mortars, thus forcing them to fall back. The Enemy reorganized and concentrated the full fire power of two Companies over Killapara, which was occupied by only 11 personnel under command of section commander HC Man Bahadur Rai. They fought gallantly till the last bullet and nine personnel sacrificed their lives and saved not only the post but the life of all the refugees. This valiant act denied the enemy strategic control over Dalu-Tura road. SI(G) Kripal Singh and Ct Mohan Das were reported to be taken as POW. SI(G) Kripal Singh was later released on 16 December, 1971 from the Dhaka Jail after surrender of the Pakistan Army. Shri B.S. Tyagi and the nine martyrs were awarded PPMG and Fire Services Medal. In May 2013, Major General Aziz Ahmed of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) attended the function at Shillong to pay homage to the martyrs in recognition of their supreme sacrifice in the Bangladesh War of Liberation.<sup>11</sup>

On 05 December Shri M.S. Chauhan, Assistant Commandant, was despatched to liberate Kishoreganj. This was occupied by Pak irregulars numbering six hundred armed with LMGs and rifles. The town was captured by first light on 17th morning. 290 Razakars and Mujahids were taken prisoners. On 16 December when Shri B.S. Tyagi, AC, with his column was advancing towards Dacca, at 1100 hours between Nabinagar and Sawar he received information that about 150 regular soldiers of 33 Punjab had laid a road block to stop the advance of Indian forces towards Dacca. They were firing towards the road with MMGs. Shri Tyagi, AC deployed his men tactically and sent a letter to Pak Commander to surrender. The Pakistan coy surrendered with their arms and ammunition. It

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consisted of Commanding officer of 33 Punjab and 118 others along with 35 Razakars. They also handed over four Chinese machine guns, seventy G-3 rifles, one LMG, forty .303 rifles and a huge quantity of ammunitions.

The gallant troops of 85 Bn BSF, which was deployed in the Shillong area, operated deep inside the enemy territory up to Sylhet and executed a number of successful raids/ambushes and destroyed retreating columns of Pakistan army during these special operations. During one such special operation, the troops successfully ambushed and destroyed the retreating Regt HQ of 21 Baluch.

The 86 Bn was deployed at Umpling, Shillong and held BOP Dawki. The Echo Sector Commander, Brig M.B. Wadke and Commandant 86 Bn BSF, Lt Col N.B. Kale, ordered Shri Lalthawma Lushai, AC, Coy Commander, E Coy to capture Kanairghat having strongly defended localities all around it by the first light of 04 December, 1971. Coy reached Lubhacherra tea garden with all elements and contacted Lt Col Dutta, the Mukti Fauj Commander and had a coordination conference. On 03 December, 1971, at about 2100 hours, E Coy moved forward to Kanairghat side for the given task with three coys of Mukti Fauj. Meanwhile message was received that the BSF company would not participate in battle. By this time the BSF party was already in contact with enemy forward localities. After having fought bravely for the whole night the enemy could not hold the position and fled back on the morning of 04 December 1971 and BSF Coy resumed the advance and captured Kanairghat. The enemy strength in Kanairghat was two platoon regular troops of 31 (Pak) Punjab Regt and about 20 Razakars. A number of troops of Pak army/Rajakar were killed in action. Coy took up all round defence at Kanairghat immediately to repulse enemy attack. As a result, the enemy counter-attack was totally defeated. Immediately after this attack, the enemy's heavy shelling started on Kanairghat but the BSF Coy and the Mukti Fauj were already in dug in defences. As a result, the enemy could not succeed at recapturing Kanairghat. By this time the enemy again concentrated in the Birthalpara Market after quick regrouping. Coy advanced and forced enemy

to flee from Birthalpara to Churkhai on 05 December, 1971 at 0300 hours. After that, there was no more fight in Kanairghat area. The Pakistan army suffered casualty of 1 Sub and 25 ORs. Shri Lushai, AC and HC Hari Singh were awarded Vir Chakra.<sup>12</sup>

The road axis Dawki-Sylhet was not clear. This hampered the linking up of supply to our own troops of 5/5 GR, BSF and Mukti Fauj in forward position and also for the follow up action. At 1000 hours on 12 December, 1971, Echo Sector Commander ordered 86 Bn BSF to clear a pocket of the enemy by last light on the same day. This meant a day-light attack on a well-organized enemy stronghold. Accordingly, D Coy of this unit was detailed to carry out the task. The attack was launched at 1540 hours. In the course of the attack other two platoons were pinned down on the ground 200 yards away from enemy. SI Gopal Singh along with his men dashed forward and struck terror into the heart of the enemy. He came under the fire of enemy MMG but advanced undaunted. A hail of bullets hit SI Gopal Singh as he rushed forward. His courageous action inspired his company to overrun the enemy position. On 03 December, 86 Bn BSF was ordered by 5/5 GR that men under Shivaji Singh, Assistant Commandant would capture Kamla Bagan and his party would advance (from South East of Jaintia) towards the main market of Jaintiapur and will meet the advancing (from South West of Jaintia) A Coy 5/5 GR. The same party of Assistant Commandant Shivaji Singh would also clear the enemy's defences in Gyabari and Kazilatekri and will stop any enemy's re-enforcement to Jaintiapur from East and South East. The companies accomplished the tasks successfully. It is worth mentioning that OP Hill and Kamla Bagan are the only high features in Jaintiapur. Both the enemy defences protected any offensive operation on Jaintiapur from North, North-east and East whereas Gyabari protects Jaintiapur from South-east. All the approaches leading to Kamla Bagan OP Hill-Gyabari were blocked by enemy using anti-personnel mines and effective firing with automatic weapons.<sup>13</sup> Operations in Sylhet district were under-

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12. Role of BSF in 1971 War-BSF ACY.

13. Unit History of 86 Bn, BSF.

taken from Cachar side. 86, 87 and 84 Bns, BSF entered Bangladesh from this side. A and E Coys of 87 Bn BSF took part in capture of Zakiganj. B Coy of 86 Bn relieved the Army on the main axis Sylhet-Darbasth road and the Army made a flanking attack. The coy was asked to proceed towards Sylhet and clear all enemy pockets. Immense pressure was put on strong enemy defences at Hemu bridge and, inspite of heavy Arty/MMG/Automatic firing, Hemu bridge was captured intact. Explosive charges were taken off from the bridge in time.

In May, 1971, 104 Bn BSF was deployed at Karimganj (Assam) sector. The battalion made a firm base at BOP Sutarkandi (on Sylhet-Silchar road) and was deployed at Dharmanagar, Kailashahar, Kamalpur, Khowai sectors. In a pitched battle, fought at Phulbari, the BSF troops killed about 100 Pak soldiers, injured about 150 personnel and snatched 02 MMGs from them. The further deployment of coys of the Bn during the month of November and December, 1971 was in Kamalpur, Baligaon, Chandan Nagar and Khowai. MMG/Mor Pl were deployed at Kamalpur. It is worth mentioning that Battle of Dhalai was fought in this area. A war trophy (Silver plaque) was awarded to Bn on 30 April 1972 by Lt Governor of Tripura. The 93 Bn was deployed in Teliamura with Bn HQ at Khasia Mangal and BOPs mainly in Jalaya, Baligaon, Morachera, Karangichera and SK Para. With crackdown in erstwhile East Pakistan on 25 March, 1971, the border of Teliamura Sector also became sensitive and active. The unit organized a Commando platoon under Shri K.R. Rao, AC which destroyed three main bridges opposite Jalya sector and demolished three Pak BOPs namely Tablachari, Taidong and Dewanbazar. The unit carried out a number of operations independently and caused heavy casualty to Pak troops and damaged their defences. The unit established training camps at Jaichandra Bari and Silachari BOPs. The training was organized under the supervision of Shri D.P. Singh, Assistant Commandant at Jalya. By the beginning of October 1971 activities of the Pakistani troops in the northern sector opposite Dharmanagar, Kailashar and Kamalpur area intensified. To neutralize the subversive activities of the enemy, four companies

of 93 Bn BSF were moved from the southern sector to the above mentioned areas. The D Coy with 3 inch Mortar Section and MMG section was the first company to move to Kamalpur sub sector on 09 October, 1971. The company took over the BOPs Baligaon, Mohanpur, Morachera and Chandannagar.

By this time, the Kamalpur area came under heavy artillery shelling. The company, despite this heavy shelling, successfully supported the Indian Army, helped liquidate the enemy stronghold and stopped Pakistani intrusions in the area. Four companies of the battalion (A, B, C and E) were placed under the operational command of 81 Mountain Brigade. The Tac HQ of the unit was established at Kailashar to organize and co-ordinate the operational move of these companies under orders from 81 Mountain Brigade. These companies under Tactical HQ operated in Bangladesh at Chatlapur, Shamshernagar, Maulvi Bazar and Sylhet axis under 81 Mountain Brigade. The 92 Bn BSF was deployed in Belonia and Subroom area of South Tripura which was focal point in Tripura area. Unit played a pivotal role in the liberation war right from the beginning. The Battalion launched a series of commando raids successfully under challenging situations. The unit also shouldered the responsibility of organizing training to Mukti Bahini which included top leaders of Bangladesh like Major Zia-Ur-Rehman (later president of Bangladesh), General Usmani and Capt Huda. Further, this battalion had gallantly protected Shobhpur Bridge on river Fenni and stopped advancing enemy columns towards Commila. Besides that, the battalion performed numerous operations successfully opposite Belonia sub division during the 1971 war and was praised by the Indian Army and Bangladesh leaders.<sup>14</sup>

On the Eastern border the entire burden of the security of the border against increasing enemy pressure was carried out single handedly by the BSF till 17 May 1971. As the tempo of the liberation struggle increased and the Pakistani armed forces and their collaborators intensified the suppression of the liberation struggle, the BSF was forced to play a pro-active role on the borders.

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14. Role of BSF in 1971 War-BSF ACY.

### *The western front*

By the time war broke out on the Indo-Pak western border, serious skirmishes had started between India and Pakistan on the East Pakistan border and the BSF was working in close liaison with the Army. As a consequence, the BSF had spruced up its intelligence and patrolling activities. The direct result of these efforts was realized in the second half of November 1971 when a Pakistani spy in the garb of a *Sadhu* was apprehended in the border district of Ganganagar in Rajasthan. This man was passing on information about the Indian Air force to the Pakistani armed forces. He divulged that Pakistan was planning a pre-emptive air strike on selected Indian targets on 03 December. It was on the basis of this precious information from the BSF that the Indian Air force removed its planes to smaller air force stations in North India and placed some dummy planes in their place thus saving the country a great deal of embarrassment.

### *Gujarat*

In Gujarat, the operational task of the BSF battalions was to capture the Pakistani posts of Jaleli which would act as the bridge head and then extend Indian control to village Alonia, Valawabulge and Barana hill features. Another task was to capture the Pakistani BOP of Vingoor. On the opposite side the Pakistani Rangers were augmented by two Pakistani Infantry Battalions. This comprised a formidable force. On 5-6 December the 1 Bn BSF successfully attacked and occupied the Pakistani BOP Kaliabet. After this the BSF units went on to occupy several BOPs like Vingi, Paneli and Jaattarai. The 2nd battalion, on the other hand, supported by its own mortars, MMGs and post group artillery succeeded in liquidating the Pakistani BOP of Jaleli and later enlarged and consolidated this bridgehead by securing the nearby villages, they went on to capture the Pakistani Taluka headquarters town. At Virawah, the location of wing headquarters commanded by a captain Uttar Khan, the Pakistanis offered stiff resistance to this Indian offensive. However, due to the mortar shelling of the BSF and close air support given by the IAF, the BSF was able to



**Deployment of BSF BNs during 1971 War: Western Theatre dated 25 March 1971**

overcome this resistance. The 3 Battalion of the BSF, which had been given the task of capturing Pak BOP Vingoora, was able to complete its task successfully. The Army authorities in India felt that there were certain areas where they were not capable of providing any Artillery support. These areas were mostly manned and were the responsibility of the BSF. The border of Bhuj, (Kutch

district) with Pakistan in Gujarat was one of them. Accordingly a proposal was submitted to raise twenty Post Groups Artillery (PGA) to meet the situation. Each Post Group was to be equipped with four 3.7 inch Howitzer guns and 4.2 inch Mortars as these were held surplus with the Army with considerable ammunition backing. BSF Artillery was raised on 01 October 1971 after acceptance of the proposal by the government. After brief training 1, 2, 3 and 4 PGAs were deployed in Bhuj and Dantiwada area. The BSF battalions were supported by PGAs from December 5 to 16, in securing the areas of Vingoora and Virawah. On December 6 and 7, 13 Grenadiers were supported in the attack on the Pakistan Post at Ranhal and Rukanwala respectively. PGA units were deployed at Bhuj area of Gujarat State under command of Shri Joginder Singh, DC (Arty). On 17 December, 1971 he reconnoitered to provide fire support to units taking defensive positions in the west of Virawah. While returning from Virawah he came under heavy fire of the enemy. He jumped out of the vehicle and assaulted the enemy with his small party and fought till he succumbed to his injuries. He gave the supreme sacrifice for his country in one of the historic and memorable operations and was posthumously awarded “Vir Chakra”. Shri K.J. Thakur, AC OC 2 PGA also awarded “Sena Medal” in this operation for his conspicuous act of gallantry.”<sup>15</sup>

### *Rajasthan*

Among the major offensives that Pakistan launched in the western front during the 1971 War was in the Jaisalmer sector focused on Longewala. The Pakistani aim here was to quickly overrun the border and capture the strategically important fortress town of Jaisalmer. The Longewala post, manned by the BSF, was surrounded by enemy armour and infantry. The BSF personnel along with the army, put up one of the most heroic fights in the annals of Indian military history. A handful of troops held on to their positions in the face of attack by a much larger force till the enemy armour was destroyed by the Indian Air Force. At the

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15. Role of BSF in 1971 War-BSF ACY.

same time, the BSF also held on to the nearby BOP of Ghotaru independent of the army. In addition the BSF, on its own, had launched a number of offensive actions and captured as many as 23 enemy BOPs inflicting heavy casualties on the Pakistani Regulars and irregular militias like the Razakars etc.

The 14 Bn BSF was deployed in Jaisalmer Sector. On 22 November, 1971, GOC landed at Tac HQ by air OP flight and passed the remarks that 'BSF camouflage is better than few army units, Well done'. On 05 December, 1971, at about 0600 hrs, Commander, 45 Infantry Brigade, informed that own troops have captured Pak post Islamgarh at 0430 hours. The task was performed by 3 Raj Rif along with a platoon of BSF commanded by SI P.D. Joy. The BSF Platoon of 14 Bn BSF was employed ahead of Bn column during its advance towards Islamgarh till the contact was established. SI P.D. Joy briefed Lt Col M.M.K. Baqaya, CO 3 Raj Rif regarding enemy dispositions. Prior to launch of attack, one section of BSF was put on the Islamgarh-Bhagla road and one section on Islamgarh-Ghunnewala to cut off the enemy routes of withdrawal. This small force made the attack successful by inflicting maximum casualties on the withdrawing enemy, who fled leaving behind arms, huge quantity of ammunition and other equipment. On 06 December, 1971, at about 1900 hrs enemy brigade headed by Regiment of T-59 tanks attacked post at Longewala. One Coy of 23 Punjab and a detachment of 14 Bn BSF under L/Nk Bharon Singh held and thwarted the enemy attack. When one of the army jawans was killed, L/Nk Bharon Singh took his light machine gun and inflicted heavy casualties on the advancing enemy. The unit showed act of heroism in the famous battle of "Tanot Longewala" and "Shahgarh buldge" and brought laurels to the Force. On 07 December, 1971, one Patrol party from post Ghotaru captured two prisoners of war belonging to 38 Baluch Regiment. That was a critical catch, which gave valuable information to the Army for further planning of the Operation. The platoon of BSF commanded by Inspector Kumbha Ram along with troops of 8 Dogra captured Mirza Toba. BSF platoon acted as leading assault platoon in the operation. On 12 December, 1971, Pak post Sinahta was captured



by the unit. One platoon each of Pak rangers and Mujahids were deployed at this post which was situated on a higher dominating sand dune. Commandant along with Shri S.S. Sekhon, DC, Shri A.S. Sodhi, AC, Shri R.S. Choudhary, AC and Capt D. Nayak, AMC led the assaulting troops against heavy enemy fire. Our MMG and 3" MOR sections kept the head of enemy down, who fled away leaving behind arms, large quantity of ammunition, maps, equipment and two camels. The enemy was chased and prisoners of war were also captured by the battalion. The unit foiled all enemy plans to disrupt line of communication in Jaisalmer Sector. 14 Bn BSF was decorated with honour and awarded for its achievements in Jaisalmer Sector under the ops control of 12 Inf Div. For the heroic deeds and outstanding performance of the unit, it was bestowed with the title of "*Sentinels of The Thar*"<sup>16</sup>. The 15 Battalion of the BSF alone killed 56 Mujahids in the Barmer Sector. This counts as a singularly significant achievement of the men and officers of the BSF. The 11 Bn BSF was also deployed in Jaisalmer sector under Army ops control. On 04 December 1971 one platoon of the battalion led by Sub Inspector Gokul Deo raided the Pakistan post Ghunnewala successfully. He was awarded the Sena Medal for his extraordinary courage. In a matter of three days the troops of the battalion played a vital role in capturing the Pakistani posts of Salamsar and Rakanwala Under the leadership of S.M. Agarwal the troops of the unit destroyed the Pakistan post Lanewaladhar situated 25 kilometres inside Pakistan. The 11 Battalion has a commendable record of having received 3 Sena Medals and 10 PMGs.

### *Punjab*

The Pakistani Army was eyeing the fertile plains of Punjab and the important Indian border towns like Amritsar, Ferozepur and Fazilka and with this objective in mind attacked the state in force. The speed of the Pakistan Army added by the latest American military technology brought it face to face with the BSF much before the Indian Army could wage its battle against the aggressors. In general,

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16. Role of BSF in 1971 War-BSF ACY.

an army is better equipped and more heavily armed than a Paramilitary Force. In the Punjab the BSF faced a modern army intent on making full use of the latest American technology at its disposal. The men and officers of the BSF displayed indomitable courage in facing the heavy volume of LMG and MMG fire brought on by the Pakistani units and often, refused to withdraw from their BOPs till the *jawans* exhausted their ammunition. Although the BSF met with some setbacks in the Ferozepur-Hussainiwala Sector, the fact remains that they performed with grit and determination in the face of over-whelming enemy superiority. Given below is an account of a commendable battle fought by the BSF on the Western Front in 1971.

### *The storming of Raja Mohtam*

The infantry style attack launched by the BSF on the Raja Mohtam BOP in the Mamdot Sector in the Punjab commands a special place in the historic role the BSF played in the 1971 war. For tactical reasons this BOP had been abandoned earlier and was subsequently occupied by the Pakistani forces. They held and defended it with medium machine guns (MMGs) supplied with copious amounts of ammunition, much of which fell into Indian hands after the post was captured by the BSF. The ground on the Indian side of the BOP was shallow and converted into a minefield by the Pakistanis. In addition the area was infested with *sarkanda* which made swift movements difficult. The almost impossible task of storming and capturing the BOP was assigned to Assistant Commandant Shri R.K. Wadhwa, a "school master's son" and his troops. Two platoons of 60 men each from the 31 Battalion were assigned for this difficult mission. Wadhwa led his men in an outflanking maneuver at night through a minefield and, as Rustamji's diaries noted later, "came up behind the post to be captured." Very early in the morning of 07 December, 1971, Wadhwa led the assault on the post with grenade in hand. The BSF men, who took the enemy by surprise from the rear, overran the post only to realize that the BOP had been held by the

Pakistani Army almost in company strength. Wadhwa was killed in shelling soon after this famous victory:

“This brave leader was bubbling with enthusiasm and joy. He received congratulations from all. Raja Mohtam was the finest hour of the BSF. He was proud that he had participated in it. He also knew that his achievements had been applauded by the whole country because much against instructions and advice it was publicized all over India. But fate had destined otherwise for this brave son of the BSF. He was in a forward bunker from which he was watching the moves of Pakistan to recapture the post. Suddenly a shell landed at the entrance of the bunker. This brave officer was hit by a splinter in the throat. He became unconscious and died on the way to the hospital<sup>17</sup>.”

In the Jalalabad Fazilka sector the BSF stood like a wall and frustrated all enemy attempts to capture any portion of the Indian territory. In the Gurdaspur-Dera Baba Nanak sector the enemy was delivered a crushing blow by the BSF and the force was able to capture as many as 17 enemy BOPs. In many cases the BSF proved its mettle against the regular units of the Pakistani Army. These units were often backed by heavy artillery and armour and were in possession of superior armament. The 27 Bn BSF was deployed in Amritsar (Punjab) during Indo-Pak war 1971. This battalion was placed under the operational control of 15 Infantry Division from 14 October, 1971. Three companies were under 54 Infantry Brigade and two companies under 38 Infantry Brigade and one company directly under 15 Infantry Division. On the intervening night of 3/4 December, 1971 BOP Ranian was attacked four times by two companies of 18 Frontier Force Rifles of Pak Army supported by artillery fire. All the attacks were repulsed inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. In this action Head Constable Mohinder Singh laid down his life fighting gallantly

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17. Private Papers, Diaries and Correspondence of Shri K.F. Rustamji, Diary No. 22, Section on the Western Front, Battles on the Western Side, pp. 107-8, MS Section, NMML, Teen Murti, New Delhi.

for which he was awarded Vir Chakra (Posthumously). Naik Charan Singh and Constable Dalbir Singh were also decorated with Vir Chakra and Sena Medal respectively for their gallant actions. The post was again attacked on the nights of 4, 5, 6 and 17 December, 1971 by the enemy supported by artillery fire and all these attacks were repulsed successfully. On 04 December, 1971, enemy troops of 43 Punjab raided BOP Mulakot at 1800 hours and again at 2300 hours but gallant soldiers of 27 Bn BSF repulsed the attack of the enemy with heavy casualties on their side. On 05 December, 1971 at about 0200 hours the enemy being in large number over ran the BOP Mulakot and also took Cook Duni Chand as prisoner of war. On 12 December 1971 under the brave and energetic command of Captain Swaran Singh of 11 Grenadiers, strong sections of 13 Other Ranks of 'B' Coy, 27 Bn BSF along with equal number of soldiers from 11 Grenadiers volunteered to recapture BOP Malukot by organizing a raid. The raid was successfully carried out and Head Constable Sukhcharan Singh, Lance Naik Harnarayan Singh and Constable Baktawar Singh were in the fore front along with Captain Swaran Singh to create confusion among enemy troops and inflicting heavy casualties, thereby forcing the enemy to flee from the BOP. The Pak army troops called for SOS fire on BOP Mulakot. Consequently Captain Swaran Singh, HC Sukhcharan Singh and Const Baktawar Singh were injured by fire and reached to a place of safety from where they were evacuated to hospital by army<sup>18</sup>. The 23 Bn BSF deployed at Ajnala got gallantry medal and various Commendation rolls. Sub Inspector Ajit Singh led his platoon in broad day light and charged the enemy positions and silenced many rifles and browning machine gun positions. He went from one side and snatched the browning machine gun in action with one hand and with the second hand, threw a grenade inside the bunker which was thrown back by the enemy causing injury to one of the officers. SI Ajit Singh with presence of mind, took out another hand grenade released it after keeping it for 2 seconds in his hand and then correctly dropped it into the enemy bunker

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18. Unit History, 27 Bn, BSF.

killing the browning machine gun numbers instantaneously. He further charged other enemy positions and was hit by an enemy shell in the right arm. In spite of this injury, he led his platoon till the objective was captured and the enemy routed. He refused evacuation and participated in all the operations throughout the conflict. SI Ajit Singh has the rare distinction of winning a “Vir Chakra” during the war. The unit killed and neutralized about 200 Pak soldiers in conjunction with the Army. 57 Pak Army personnel (EBR) were also captured during operations and a huge quantity of arms and ammunition was also captured.<sup>19</sup>

### *Jammu and Kashmir*

In the Jammu sector the BSF, working under operational control of the army was deployed in Ranvir Singh Pura and Chhamb Palanwala sectors. In the Chhamb sector the BSF units came under heavy artillery fire. They often endured strong infantry and, at several points, armoured attacks by the Pakistan Army. Ultimately the BSF detachments were called back and given tasks in depth. In the Ranvir Singh Pura sector, the BSF continued to hold most of the BOPs held before the war while successfully repulsing heavy attacks by the enemy. Other important sectors in this frontier were Rajouri and Bandipur. In the Rajouri Sector the BSF held its posts against enemy attacks and in Bandipur it fought primarily a defensive battle. The Jammu sector had five BSF battalions. After the war started all the BOPs held by 57 and 61 Bns BSF were ordered to be withdrawn on the night of 3/4 December 71. 54 Bn BSF, however, continued to hold 7 BOPs through out the war. The fiercest attack of the enemy was launched in Chamb sector on 3/4 December and lasted up to 10 December 1971 in which BOPs held by 57 Bn BSF were subjected to severe determined attacks. Orders for the withdrawal of BSF personnel from BOPs came rather late in the day and it had therefore to be done under heavy artillery shelling of the enemy. 18 personnel of 57 Bn BSF have remained untraced, suspected to have been either captured by the enemy or killed. Naik/

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19. Unit History, 23 Bn, BSF.

Operator Swaran Singh showed remarkable courage during withdrawal from Nathan Post where he tried to keep communication going even in the midst of heavy enemy shelling and finally attained martyrdom. The most remarkable performance in the Chhamb Sector was of the section of 57 Bn BSF deployed at the Moel Post. The section, under the leadership of Head Constable Darbara Singh, decided voluntarily to stay on at the post with the elements of 5 Sikh Battalion and fight it out with the enemy. Thus fighting along with the Army contingents, this section contributed its bit in repulsing more than one enemy attack before they were finally ordered by the Brigade to fall back to the main defences on 04 December 1971. The personnel of 54 Bn BSF joined regular Army troops in a raid on Saleem Post on the night of 13/14 December 1971 and they were pivotal in the success of various other operations.

In Rajouri sector, four battalions of BSF, viz., 40, 44, 50 and 53 Bns BSF were under Army operational control and the other two (49 and 100 Bns BSF) were under the DIG BSF for anti-infiltration task. During the war one more battalion (46 Bn BSF) was also placed under Army operational control. 40 Bn BSF, with four companies, held an independent sector in the Mandi Mandir area. They captured two infiltrators of Pak Commando Battalion (SSG). The support weapons of 44 Bn BSF had a chance to give a covering fire to 14 Grenadiers in their attack on the enemy post Durchian. One company of 50 Bn BSF took part in an attack along with 13 Mahars for clearing a large number of infiltrators from Thanapir area on 05 December 1971. The unit captured 3 MMGs, 2 automatic Rifles Chinese made, one 61 mm Mor and a large number of ammunition and explosives.<sup>20</sup> The 44 Bn BSF was deployed at Dubey Bridge. On the intervening night of 03 and 04 December, 1971, one Arty gun was dispatched from Balnoi base to Forward Defended Locality (FDL) 471 but could not reach at the destination because of heavy shelling enroute. The party and mules carrying guns lost the direction due to shelling. As per the orders of CO, 7 Mahar, a patrol party

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20. BSF Document, Role of BSF in Western Theatre. Sent by Ftr Jammu, Hall of fame Rajouri material.

consisting of one NCO and six men was sent from B Coy, in spite of heavy shelling all around it could trace the lost party before first light. The party was brought back to FDL 473 and despatched onward to FDL 471. HC Kapoor Singh and six men of his section did commendable job in this search operation. The 11 Raj Rif carried out raid on enemy's Tarkundi Post. The raid succeeded because of the close support of FDL 495 manned by the 44 Bn BSF. As soon as the raiding party withdrew after completing the task, the BSF 3 inch Mortars at FDL 495 engaged the enemy post Topa-Sher-Khan with rapid fire. The enemy opened up with MMG from Topa-Sher-Khan, but it was silenced by own MMG located at FDL 495. The CO, 11 Raj Rif appreciated the close support given by BSF FDL 495 during the operation. The 40 Bn BSF occupied defended area in Saujian (J&K). The dauntless courage and fierce determination shown by all ranks of the Bn earned a commendable name for the force during war. Shri N.S. Dalal, Assistant Commandant sacrificed his life displaying a conspicuous act of gallantry at Delta Contour on 14 April 1972 and was awarded "Vir Chakra" (Posthumously).<sup>21</sup>

DIG Bandipur had independent operations responsibility. This sector had four BSF Bns (41,45,60 and 61 Bns BSF) and three Post Groups Arty (7, 8 and 9). PGA were placed under 19 Inf Div to provide fire support to Brigades operating in Uri, Naugam, Trehgam and Neeru and Gurej/Tallel Valley. BSF battalions in this sector were deployed on a total of fifty-seven Border Out Posts. During operations 15 new posts in the territory previously held by the Pak Army were occupied. All the companies deployed on the pickets had been dominating the area in front of them by aggressive patrolling. 61 Bn BSF displayed a very brave action on 22 November 1971 when its patrol of a platoon strength was caught in the enemy fire near Ring Contour. The Bn Commandant Lt Col Pathania, conducted the battle himself from Kanta Post and directed the fire of 3 inch Mortar and 81 mm Mor on the enemy. Under his guidance one platoon rushed to Point 12280. The platoon brought very accurate and effective fire on the enemy. As a result of our supporting weapons fire and the firing by this

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21. Role of BSF in 1971 War-BSF ACY.

platoon, enemy suffered heavy casualties (10 wounded and several killed who could not be counted as bodies were lifted at night). Three enemy bunkers were completely destroyed. After this incident the enemy refrained from interfering with the BSF patrols in this area. The 61 Bn BSF also carried out outstanding raids which deserve a special mention. On the night of 9/10 December 1971, Shri Y.S. Bisht, AC along with a platoon, one MMG detachment infiltrated into enemy area, occupied a dominating feature and dug in one day earlier. With pre-planned signal, heavy MMG and Mortar fire was brought on the enemy picket all of a sudden which gave the enemy a complete shock. It was estimated that the enemy had suffered 15 to 20 casualties. The BSF platoon moved back to Zafran picket without suffering any casualties.<sup>22</sup>

The 61 Bn BSF was raised at Paloura camp (Jammu) on 15 December 1969 under the command of Col J.N. Kunjru as a Crack battalion and was deployed in the Gurez Sector within two years of its raising. During the 1971 war two companies of this battalion advanced into Pakistan. It reached the divisional headquarters of Minimarg under the command of Shri Ghanshyam Singh and captured about 4 kms of Pakistan territory. In the second week of December 1971, the unit established 5 BOPs in the captured territory. Under the command of W.S. Alley, another company captured the BOP Tota with good artillery support. Further, with the help of air support the unit destroyed Pakistan supplies at Dugri on 10 December 1971. This daring offensive was led by Shri Y.S. Bisht. The 1971 war tested the mettle of the unit with battles often raging at altitudes exceeding 10,000 feet above sea level. This commendable performance of the unit was appreciated by the Chief of Army Staff and the DG BSF and several BSF men and officers received gallantry medals. Late N.K. Umed Singh was awarded with the Vir Chakra, Shri W.S. Alley and Shri Y.S. Bisht got the Sena Medal. The 41 Bn BSF captured the enemy village Rauta, established a new post there and continued to hold that picket throughout. Without any exaggeration it can be said that

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22. Role of BSF in 1971 War-Ftr Jammu.



the performance of the BSF in the N.W.F. during these hostilities surpassed all expectations.

### *Conclusion*

The BSF was involved in the liberation struggle launched by the Bangladesh insurgents in the North-East part of East Bengal from the beginning. In Tripura, during the period between 26 March and 15 May 1971, the entire border was teeming with activities and all prominent MNAs (Members of National Assembly, Pakistan), MPAs (Members of Provincial Assembly), Awami League leaders, freedom fighters as well as those west Pakistani nationals who were sympathetic to the Bangladeshi cause and feared danger to their lives were given protection by the BSF. It had been helping the refugees migrating from across the border while also training the initial elements of the Mukti Bahini in guerilla warfare. It also provided administrative cover to these camps till the army took over. On the operational side the BSF units arranged the guerilla parties and guided them to their objectives, provided fire support for their raids and even went inside enemy territory to extricate them. The BSF personnel working along with the Bengali freedom fighters penetrated deep into enemy territory, disrupted communications by blowing up important bridges and railway tracks. These forces raided police-stations and ambushed the Pak troops and inflicted considerable casualties on the enemies. These operations were undertaken in accordance with the coordinated plans between the army and BSF commanders but the detailed planning was naturally left to the BSF post from where these attacks were launched. The fact that the BSF played a crucial role in undermining the morale of the Pakistan Army should not be overlooked in any history of that fateful war. In conclusion, it can be said that the BSF's fight against the enemy's regular and irregular troops was almost indistinguishable from that of the Indian Army and it earned the wholesome praise from all concerned. This success was not without its price and the BSF lost numerous brave men and officers in these operations.

It is a remarkable fact that the BSF achieved all this with archaic weapons of .303 family. In most cases, fire support available to

them consisted of 3” Mortars which were outraged by comparable enemy weapons. BSF moved astonishingly fast over vast distances under extremely difficult conditions, particularly along the Eastern borders and in Rajasthan and successfully tackled all the rapidly changing situations. It had been provided with a vast variety of antiquated and static wireless sets primarily tailored for a very limited requirement of communication with hundreds of static posts strung along with the Eastern and Western Frontiers. It is a story of amazing improvisation by itself how these assorted equipments were used, repaired and improvised to give the necessary communication backing for the Force to function over such vast stretches. It is extremely creditable that there was never any serious breakdown in communication.

There was yet another direction in which BSF showed remarkable success; this was improvisation, innovation and experimentation with new ideas and with new equipments. When in the middle of the Bangladesh crisis, the BSF needed more mortars, BSF Central Workshop and Stores (CENWOSTO) produced indigenous 3” mortars within a very short time. BSF also successfully operated a wireless station in an area which was not adequately served with broadcasting cover.

Another role in which the BSF carved a niche was in the field of intelligence. BSF was able to collect invaluable and accurate information relating to PAK Formations and dispositions. It proved to be of enormous value for comparison and assessment of information from other sources. The intimate and detailed knowledge of the BSF personnel by virtue of their duties along the border for long period was extensively used by the Army when it moved up to the border and during subsequent offensive thrusts. BSF personnel were extensively used as guides by the Army particularly in Rajasthan.

The BSF came out of this first major test after its inception with flying colours notwithstanding all the serious limitations and teething troubles with which it was beset. Shri V.V. Giri, Ex-President of India has rightly commented on the role of BSF in the 1971 War, which reads as under:

“The role of the BSF in 1971 War won for it the unstinted

admiration of the entire Nation. The BSF forged great camaraderie with the Indian Army, with whom they fought shoulder to shoulder”.

Smt. Indira Gandhi, Ex-Prime Minister of India paid tribute to BSF in a letter written to Shri K.F. Rustamji, then DG BSF as:

Dear Shri Rustamji,

As the first line of our defence, the Border Security Force had to bear the immediate brunt of the enemy onslaught. The manner in which they faced enemy fire and the support they gave to the Army has played a crucial role in our ultimate success.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the men and the officers who have sacrificed their lives in defence of India and her values.

I should like to express the gratitude of the Government and the people of India to you and to your officers and men.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,



(Indira Gandhi)



### SACRIFICE MADE BY BSF

In the Bangladesh Liberation War, BSF gave a very good account of itself in the Eastern and the Western front alike, with all its Frontiers i.e. Rajasthan and Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, East Bengal and N.E.F. Its fight against enemy's regular and irregular troops was almost indistinguishable from that of Indian Army itself and had earned praise from all concerned. Naturally, this excellent BSF work brought in sizeable results in the shape of capture of enemy's strong holds and capture of large areas (both in West Pakistan and the then East Pakistan) alongwith their troops.

The above BSF success was not without its price and details of those killed, wounded etc. have been given as under:

Frontier	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
R&G	08	46	07	61
Punjab	50	156	105	311
Jammu	06	17	20	43
Kashmir	06	12	-	18
West Bengal	28	78	01	107
N.E.F.	27	83	-	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>650</b>

The list of those decorated was also no less impressive and its details are as under:

Decoration	Number
Padma Bhushan	02
Padma Shree	02
Param Vishisth Seva Medal	01
Maha Vir Chakra	01
Ati Vishisth Seva Medal	01
Vir Chakra	11
Sena Medal	46
Vishisth Seva Medal	05
Mention-in dispatches	44
Presidents Police & Fire Services Medal for Gallantry	41
Presidents Police & Fire Services Medal for distinguished services	09
Police Medal for Meritorious Service	13
DG's Commendations	184

### Our Heroes of 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War

#### (a) Maha Vir Chakra

- (i) AC Wadhwa Ram Krishna, 31 Bn : 10 December, 1971 (Posthumous)

#### (b) Vir Chakra

- (i) Lt Col. O'Connor, NC, 70 Bn BSF (IC-1578)
- (ii) DC Joginder Singh (647), 03 Bn BSF: 17 December, 1971
- (iii) DC Inderjit Singh Uppal, 78 Bn (Posthumous)
- (iv) AC Chandan Singh Chandel, BSF (1265): 10 December, 1971
- (v) AC Nafe Singh Dalal, 40 Bn (1616) (Posthumous)
- (vi) AC Lalthawna Lushai, 82 Bn: 04 December, 1971
- (vii) Sub Inspector Ajit Singh, 21 Bn, (66232027)
- (viii) Head Constable Hari Singh, 17 Bn (68176022)
- (ix) Head Constable Mohinder (66276037), 27 Bn: 03 December, 1971 (Posthumous)
- (x) Naik Chanan Singh (67276037), 27 Bn
- (xi) Naik Umed Singh (68588913), 61 Bn: 06 December 1971 (Posthumous)

### ROLE OF BSF IN 1965 WAR

Some units of the Border Security Force took part in the operation during the Indo-Pak war of 1965. Many of these units made substantial contribution in defeating the Pakistani aggression and performed deeds of valor. The BSF units posted on the borders were placed under the operational command of the army. They gave close support to the armed force and on many occasions fought shoulder to shoulder with the army.

#### 33 PAP Bn embodied as 26 Bn BSF

This Bn, located at Amritsar, participated in the 1965 war along with some army units, i.e. 3 Jat, 4 Sikh and Kumaon Regt.

#### 25 Bn BSF

The Bn, located at Ferozepur, was designated as 29 PAP Bn. Its jurisdiction extended from Ferozepur to Fazilka. The Bn faced the first onslaught of the Pakistani army in the 1965 war in the area of Hussainiwala and gave a good account of itself. The bravery displayed by the men of this Bn was duly recognized when they are decorated with 7 gallantry awards including one granted posthumously.

#### 30 Bn BSF

In 1965, 30 Bn BSF was deployed in the Kargil area under the army and was placed on guard duties. On 10 August, while guarding the bridge Shamsha on the Drass-Kargil Highway, two BSF men were killed due to Pakistani firing.

**20 Bn BSF**

This Bn did extremely well in the operation and captured approximately 50 sq km of Pakistani area across the river Ravi before the cease fire was declared. But unmindful of the cease fire, the Pakistanis counter-attacked to re-occupy their lost post at Kot Foaba. The Bn stood firm and repulsed the attack.

**48 Bn BSF**

The Bn was deployed on active duty in R S Pura (Jammu Range) to protect the vital installations there. The men acquitted themselves well and earned appreciation from higher formations. Two officers of the BN earned the President's medal for act of gallantry.

**21 Bn BSF**

This Bn was deployed on both sides of the river Ravi in the Dera Baba Nanak sector during the 1965 war. Fighting along with the army, it occupied two Pakistani posts, inflicted casualties and also captured some important documents. It also captured the Ravi Bridge. When the Pakistanis counter-attacked the bridge, the BSF men assisted the army in holding the position and repelling the attack.

{Ref from Book "*The India-Pakistan War of 1965: A History*" (Appendix – IX)}

## **Role of BSF in Tackling the Problem of Insurgency in the North-Eastern India**

The north eastern states of the Indian Union are important to India in the same way as the Balkan region is to Europe. It is a strategically peculiar area surrounded by countries like China Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh. A narrow corridor, the Siliguri Corridor links the area to mainland India. The geography, history and traditions, which often transcend the political boundaries, have brought the whole region into a single entity. It is also due to the geo-political context that the whole region is considered a single unit. Northeastern India has been witness to a range of ethnic insurgencies since India's independence in 1947. The matrix of ideology and political movements have created a dangerous cocktail which are themselves result of a long tortuous process of history.

The nature of conflicts in the area is multidimensional. The tribal divisions of the region have meant that a single policy response by the Indian Government has not been possible since 1947. The region is marked by three kinds of conflicts. The first comprises the tribal based anti-state insurgency. The second is the conflict between tribes and the third is the one between hill tribes and the people living in the plains. Added to this, is the conflict the states have with each other. Since independence the states in India's north east, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, have witnessed seething unrest caused by a multiplicity of factors; certain tribes want to expand their territory at the expense of other tribes and therefore the histories of tribal identities are constantly changing in the region. In particular, the secessionist movements in the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Assam have been matters of serious concern to the Government of India. These movements pose a grave threat to Indian sovereignty even as they threaten

each other. The British found it difficult to control and administer the areas in India's north east and this legacy of 'governance problematic' has been inherited by independent India.

Despite official efforts at policy formulation to cater to the developmental needs of the northeastern states, significant results are yet to come. In fact, the steady flow of central funds into the hands of the local elite has discouraged local initiatives, which could have been harnessed to raise the financial resources of the different states in the region. Moreover, in many cases, it has given rise to a political leadership more interested in grabbing funds coming from the centre rather than actually using them to uplift the economy of the states. The prevailing confusion on the economic front aids and sustains the local economies. It is very well imaginable in this circumstance, that the entire politico-economic set up is lopsided in favour of insurgencies. In a truncated and fractured economic landscape, the expanding class of young literates views insurgency as attractive and remunerative. Insurgency is a consequence of poor developmental performance of local and central governance and has now become the cause of the economic backwardness of the region.

Generally speaking popular movements in the region have arisen from the *ethnic* aspirations of the people but these ethnic aspirations themselves are challenged from within by the people they pretend to represent. These movements have acquired specific ideological forms over time due to their leadership which has often found sanctuary outside India. The various causes of these protracted movements are usually enumerated as follows:

1. The alleged economic and social neglect of the area by the Union Government.
2. Feelings of alienation – from the state and other people in the region – among the tribal groups in the area.
3. Assistance provided to various rebel groups by the adversaries of India.
4. The availability of safe havens to the insurgents in the neighbouring countries.



5. The concept of 'shared sovereignty' which has emerged in the region because of New Delhi's willingness to consider regional autonomy for some areas under the aegis of the Constitution of India.

### *Insurgency in northeastern States and its causes*

#### *Nagaland*

Nagaland has been the epicenter of insurgency in north-eastern India for a long time. The Naga separatist leaders, like Angami Zapu Phizo, have argued that Nagaland has never been a part of India and as such India had no right to inherit it from the British. According to these leaders Nagaland automatically became independent in 1947 and since then has been illegally occupied by New Delhi. The Naga leaders have marshalled arguments based on language, culture, race and other Naga tribal specifics in support of this claim. Since 1956 the Naga's struggle for independence was supported by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan. This led to the establishment of sanctuaries and training camps in Chittagong Hills Tract (CHT) of East Pakistan. These camps became the training grounds for the insurgents between 1956 and 1967. The Burmese army was incapable and unwilling to stop this traffic. There are evidences of collusion between the Naga insurgents and the officers of the Burmese army. Despite repeated appeals at the level of Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi, no action was forthcoming from the Burmese. It was only when the Indian Nagas joined hands with a section of the Burmese Nagas, the perspective altered to stop the use of territory for the use of insurgents.

The actions of the Indian and the Burmese armies, in co-ordination, checked the movement of the hostiles, and the disruption of the sanctuaries in the CHT, led to the cessation of continued insurgency against the Government of India. The Shillong Agreement of 1975 ended the insurgency. Those groups, who allowed themselves to be indoctrinated by the Chinese and form the current corps of the NSCN, did not shun insurgency.

Currently the movement is carried on by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) which was founded in 1980. The NSCN demands an independent sovereign Nagaland. The NSCN has split into two factions of which the NSCN (Issac Muivah) remains the most formidable insurgent group in the North-East. Its area of operation includes Nagaland and the Naga inhabited areas of Arunachal, Manipur and even Myanmar. The Government of India and NSCN signed a ceasefire agreement on 1 August 1997. Despite more than fifty rounds of negotiations between the two parties, there is still no agreement on the contentious issues and the 'framework agreement' signed between New Delhi and the NSCN (I-M) does not guarantee a long term solution to the vexed Naga problem. The demands of sovereignty and secession have proved particularly difficult to accommodate: "The NSCN (I-M) leadership has mastered the art of semantics but it has hardly endeared itself to the other Naga communities. The NSCN (Khaplang) and the NSCN (Konyak-Kitovi) act independent of it."<sup>23</sup> This gets formulated in the demand for the formation of a Greater Nagaland which would include the Naga inhabited areas of neighbouring states.

### *Manipur*

The roots of insurgency in Manipur goes back to 1956-57 when in some educated public leaders like Prof Nandalal Sharma started the Pan Mongolian Movement (PMM) with the aim to forge unity among the various ethnic sub-groups of Mongoloid race inhabiting the NE region of India and thereafter to create a sovereign nation exclusively for them. In Manipur the insurgency problem essentially has three aspects. The Meities are active in the Valley districts, the Nagas were active in the hill districts and there were clashes between the Nagas and the Kukis over the control of the illicit drug trade with Myanmar. This has made the overall security scenario in the state particularly grim. Further the formation of underground organisations such as the United National Liberation

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23. M.K. Naryanan, 'The devil is in the details', *The Hindu*, September 11, 2015.

Front (UNLF), the Revolutionary Government of Manipur (RGM), People's Liberation Army (PLA) and People's Revolutionary Party of Kangliepak (PREPAK) ensued.

There has been a proliferation of insurgent groups. Some of them are: PLA, PREPAK, UNLF, Kangliepak Communist Party (KCP), Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup (KYKL), Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF) and Revolutionary People's Front (RPF). The total strength of the various insurgent groups is estimated to be 10,000.

Arunba Lup, an umbrella organization of the Meities has been demanding the withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958. The Jeevan Reddy Committee of the Government of India recommended its withdrawal. There have been promises on part of the Government to humanise the law.

### *Tripura*

Insurgency in Tripura is due to demographic invasion of Tripura by the non-tribal population from Bangladesh which has seriously affected the prospects and interests of the indigenous Tripuris. These are 19 major tribes in Tripura, the largest among them being the Tripuris, who constitute a little over 50% of the total tribal population. The other major tribes are Reang, Jamatia, Chakma, Mog and Noatia. The population of tribal which stood at 53.16% of the total population in the year 1941, came down to 30.95% in 1991. This has agitated the tribal in Tripura. The Government's apathy towards the tribal and its failure to implement any worthwhile development plans in the tribal areas has also led to disenchantment.

In December 1978 Shri Harnghawl with the assistance of Shri Laldenga of Mizo National Front formed an underground outfit called the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV). With the return of their cadres after receiving training in Chittagong in Bangladesh, violent activities erupted in the state. In 1988 a 'Memorandum of Settlement' was signed between the Government of India and the TNV extremists. It was then believed that the decade long problem of insurgency had come to an end. But,

contrary to expectations, some of the surrendered TNV extremists who considered the August 1988 accord with the Government as a let down from their original demand for 'Swadhin Tripura', decided to take up arms again and two new militant organizations were formed. 'All Tripura Tribal Force (ATTF)' under the leadership of Debbarma and the 'National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)' under the leadership of Bishwa Mohan Debbarma. In April 1993 when the Left Front formed its Government in Tripura, it persuaded ATTF and Lalit Debbarma to surrender. However, some elements of ATTF, who were opposed to surrender, decided to form a new outfit 'All Tripura Tigers Force (ATTF)' under the leadership of Ranjit Debbarma.

In Tripura, the ATTF has been in conflict with the Government. The State continued to witness large scale killing, kidnapping etc. Again in 1993, the famous surrender of Shikabari took place in which about 1500 cadres of ATTF surrendered. However, the surrender of one faction does not mean the giving up of violence by another faction, often of the same organization. In this situation the lack of political will, partisan politics and fragile developmental processes has delayed solutions to the vexed problems. However, the overall situation in militancy related violence has improved. The number of cases of killing, kidnapping etc. have remarkably come down to almost nil at present.

### *Assam*

Representatives of the 'All Assam Student's Union (AASU)' held a conference in July 1978, at Jorhat. They prepared a 16 point list of demands, which included the identification and deportation of illegal foreign nationals from Assam. These demands were submitted to the Governments of Assam and India. To emphasize their demands, they started with a series of agitations.

The 'United Liberation Front of Assom (ULFA)' was formed in the State on 07 April, 1979. The aim was to liberate Assam from the Indian colonial regime through armed struggle and to bring about a radical transformation of the Assamese society through scientific socialism. The outfit suffered a major setback in

2003 when Bhutan flushed them out of its territory. However the group has taken refuge in Myanmar and Bangladesh and has been able to reorganize itself. There have been offers of a peace agreement from the Government but of no avail. This has been due to the intransigence of the ULFA leaders insisting on their sovereignty. The complexity has further increased by the emergence of Islamic extremist groups in Assam.

### ***Counter insurgency operations by the BSF in the north-eastern States***

The BSF has contributed immensely to the restoration of peace and normalcy in the North-East, initially in the State of Mizoram and later on in Nagaland, Manipur and other States.

#### *Mizoram*

BSF was employed for active operations against the underground elements of Mizo National Army as well as its political wing called 'Mizo National Front (MNF)'. Although, from 1967 onwards, the extent of employment of BSF remained limited to one full battalion with its HQ at Lunglei and two or three companies of another battalion with its HQ at Masimpur near Silchar. The success of BSF in restoration of normalcy can be gauged from the fact that many MNF leaders have surrendered. BSF has several gallantry awards to its credits in these operations during the period 1967 to 1972. Some of these operations have been recounted here.

Two personnel of the 84 Bn BSF, HC Ghan Bahadur Khatri and HC Khum Bahadur Thapa, were awarded the President Police and Fire Service Medal for gallantry. A section of the unit was attached to a platoon of the 18 Battalion of the Assam Rifles at Kamzawl in Mizo Hills. In 1967 an army party was ambushed by a well-armed group of 50 hostiles. The response of the army was led by Kamzawl Post Commander and a section of the BSF led by Head Constable Khatri. The security forces being greatly outnumbered faced a daunting battle. The Commander was wounded and the Junior Commanding Officer of Assam Rifles was killed. At this precarious hour Head Constable Khatri showed great determination and took control of the counter attack.

Head Constable Khum Bahadur Thapa matching up to his men, pushed ahead in the face of heavy automatic fire, and charged towards the enemy's position. This charge towards the enemy by BSF section resulted in the killing of four hostiles and injuring several others, thus forcing the hostiles to flee the ambush site and saving valuable lives of Army men.

On 16 January 1972, information was received that a group of armed militants was going towards Chotahrina in Pizo hills district. SI Muktar Singh Khera of 80 Bn was given the task to stop and neutralize them. SI Muktar Singh undeterred by hilly and rough terrain covered 12 miles in 3 hours on foot along with his platoon and surrounded the militants by 2100 hours. Without much care for his life SI Khera reached very close to the militants and deployed LMG on the escape routes of militants. While he was deploying troops on escape routes he was fired upon by the militants. He ordered his entire platoon to fire on the militants and took over command of operation. The bunkers of the militants were destroyed and 3 militants were killed. For his excellent leadership, SI Muktar Singh was given the Police Medal for Gallantry in this operation.

### *Nagaland*

BSF made its momentous march into Nagaland, facing noxious insurgency, in early 1973 when 99 Battalion of BSF was raised at Longnak in Nagaland by carrying out the first-ever recruitment from Nagaland. Preference was given to those Naga youths who had abandoned the path of violence and now wanted to live a peaceful life. A large number of BSF Officers, Subordinate Officers and Other Ranks were transferred from BSF battalions to provide essential management elements for this new raising. Political leadership in the state gave invaluable support in getting the requisite number of young Nagas recruited in BSF. In a brief period of 6 months, this unit became operational and news started pouring in of its outstanding operational achievements.

One of the agreements that were reached between Smt. Indira Gandhi and the 'Revolutionary Government of Nagaland (RGN)',

was the formation of three battalions of BSF to get their followers absorbed. This was accepted and Smt. Gandhi sanctioned two battalions. The other agreement was for grants for the peace programmes and prosperity of the Naga people, which would lead to their socio-economic upliftment and development. An interesting aspect is that during the formation of the 111 and the 112 Battalion of the BSF it was verbally agreed upon that: (1) the headquarters of these battalions shall never be shifted to any part of India, and (2) the Ex-Undergrounds serving in these battalions should never be transferred out/or posted out to any other Unit.

The agreement between the RGN and the Government of India ended on a positive note. This was the process which led to more than 2000 personnel of the erstwhile Naga army including overground workers of the RGN joining the BSF. They surrendered along with 1800 arms and large quantities of ammunition. The event was celebrated at the local ground Zunheboto.

On 16 September, 1973 Shri K.F. Rustamji inaugurated 111 Bn BSF while the 112 Bn BSF was inaugurated at a later date. This marked the beginning of a new unique and special relationship between two former foes, which has no parallel in the history of the country. The RGN joining the mainstream was a huge blow to the 'Naga Nationalist Council (NNC)' and 'Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN)'.

The Naga battalions became a channel for absorbing disgruntled Naga youth who had abandoned the path of violence. This new battalion was managed by the officers of the BSF who were transferred to this new set up. This wing carried relentless operations against the Naga undergrounds. This unsettled the insurgent groups deep inside the jungles in these areas, who felt the pressure of the operations. This led to the virtual elimination of insurgency in Nagaland. A policy of accommodation of various diverse interests, finally served to restore peace and order in the state. The 111 Battalion was raised in Nagaland on 08 September 1973 consisting mainly of the ex-RGN rebels.

Soon afterwards, 112 Bn BSF was also raised at Zunheboto, and it again displayed the remarkable success of the strategy of

inclusion. The erstwhile insurgents enthusiastically supported the operations of the BSF against their erstwhile Commander-in-Arms. They demonstrated tact in these operations, keeping the violence to a minimum. The long years of jungle training, understanding the psychology of rebel soldiers and the state of insurgency made it necessary that the officers adopt novel methods for achieving the captures and surrenders of the underground Nagas. It was argued that the life of the erstwhile insurgents in BSF should be used as a positive pressure for others to come over-ground. A mix of force and sensitivity was finally successful in subduing insurgency in Nagaland. As a part of its strategy, the intimate knowledge of jungles possessed by these men, was utilized to mount successful operations against the Revolutionary Government of Nagaland.

The 111 Battalion mainly consisted of the Sema tribe with a small sprinkling of other tribes. The successful completion of the rehabilitation meant that the other tribes also threw in their weight behind the process. One of these was the Chakesangs. They formed the 112 Battalions. The rank structure was kept suitably flexible to ensure satisfaction. While initially stationed at Zunheboto, they were later utilized as both a fighting machine and a propaganda vehicle to enable others to convert to the creed of peace. This was key to bringing in a democratic government of the people of Nagaland and for peace to set in. It was creditworthy that these stalwarts led by Shri Zuheto completely merged themselves in making their cause one with the people of Nagaland. The original motive – to make these people partners in peace and development of the region – was thus fulfilled to a great extent. The assurances of permanent employment, higher ranks and regular units reduced the element of hostility.

Currently, the BSF in Nagaland performs various duties. The BSF works in co-ordination with the Army in manning the Road Opening Patrols, and is a crucial link in the provision of quick action troops who know the areas well. The actions of the BSF have resulted in many successes for the security forces. Many actions of the insurgent groups have been thwarted and several



insurgents captured. The training of these men has been highly specialized and over the years it has resulted in a highly effective units which can take on several challenges – both in conventional and guerrilla warfare. These actions of BSF have drawn accolades from one and all. BSF maintains a careful vigil on the sensitive Nagaland border. It has utilized the services of several of the members of the original tribes who formed these battalions in the beginning. The gallantry medals won by these Naga battalions are testimony to the heroic deeds of these men in action. A few heroic details cannot be left without enumeration.

Shri Zuheto Swu, Commandant of a battalion of the BSF rendered very valuable assistance to the BSF in Nagaland. Since 1968, he constantly helped in the operations against the underground hostiles despite having grave risk to his own life. He successfully located and led a number of raids on the hostile camps resulting in the capture of prisoners and recovery of a large number of weapons and ammunition. He led the capture of a gang of 175 well trained hostiles with their leader. For this gallant action, Shri Zuheto Swu was awarded the ‘Kirti Chakra’.

Shri Tokhovi Tuku, AC, played a very prominent role in the capture of a notorious hostile leader and his gang in Nagaland. On a number of occasions, he led detachments in raid on the underground hostiles in utter disregard to his personal safety. He was also instrumental in planning and conducting operations which resulted in the capture of large quantities of arms and ammunitions. He was awarded ‘Shaurya Chakra’.

Inspector Vihoi Sema has rendered valuable assistance in the conduct of several successful operations against Naga hostiles and in the capture of a notorious hostile leader with utter disregard to his personal safety. He personally led a number of patrols against the hostiles and was instrumental in tracking down the remnants of the trained gang of hostiles who were scattered in the jungles in that area. He was awarded ‘Shaurya Chakra’.

Inspector Zekiya Sema was instrumental in the conduct of a number of operations against Naga hostiles which resulted in the capture of many hostiles, and a large number of weapons and

ammunition. He executed the plans for the capture of a notorious hostile leader with his team of 175 men who were fully armed. He was awarded 'Shaurya Chakra'.

On 18 March 1978, Shri B.K. Sridhar Rao, AC who was commanding a company at Meluri post in Nagaland, received information that a gang of notorious hostiles was seen moving towards a thick jungle on the borders of our country. Realising that he hardly had any time to make up a detailed plan, he decided to move immediately even though it was dark. Shri Rao along with ten of his available men and some additional personnel drawn from another unit set out for the suspected hostile hideout. He reached the area after a strenuous night march through dense forests. After a thorough search of the area, he divided his group into two parties to achieve surprise and also to cover the escape routes of hostiles. He entered the enemy camp stealthily and crawled towards the hut and pounced upon the hostile manning the entrance and snatched his rifle. By then other members of his party also closed in on the targets. In this encounter, except the one hostile who was killed when he tried to snatch the rifle from one of his men, all the other twenty one hostiles, who were trying to escape towards the border, were captured alive along with arms, ammunition, documents and other stores. Shri B.K. Sridhar Rao, AC was awarded 'Shaurya Chakra'.

#### *Deployment of Naga battalion in Assam*

These battalions have displayed remarkable success in various deployments that have been assigned to them. They were deployed in several railway stations of Assam during the railway strike in April-July 1974. The student agitation of May to July 1974 also saw significant deployment of the BSF. Both of these were sensitive situations which could have easily escalated into a violent pogrom. The remarkable acumen and sensitiveness displayed by the BSF generated tremendous goodwill and earned the confidence of both the local population and the administrative machinery of the Assam state.

Troops from these units also helped in maintaining law and

order during the clash between the locals and the Bengali community. The deployment of the BSF led to an immediate restoration of normalcy. In 1977 State Assembly Elections and the mid-term elections to the Indian Parliament in January 1980, the troops were also sent for election duty. This enabled the local authorities to control any untoward situation, in what were seen as crucial elections. Since April 1980, to salvage the situation in Assam, four companies of the 112 Bn BSF have been deployed in Upper Assam. They have been involved in manning critical infrastructure like oil installations. They also saw active and quick deployment in Naogaon in May 1980 when the situation suddenly became explosive due to clashes between various groups of people. The BSF again displayed a reasoned mixture of tact and force and brought the situation under control.

### *Manipur*

BSF played a crucial role in containing insurgency in the state of Manipur. BSF Battalions deployed in the State achieved outstanding results in counter insurgency operations. The BSF was raised in Manipur state by incorporating the 3 Manipur Rifle into 95 Bn BSF and 4 Bn Manipur Rifles into 96 Bn BSF in 1968. These battalions were further deployed on Indo-Myanmar Border till 1977. While deployed on borders, these battalions have carried out successful operations against hostiles in border areas.

However BSF was deployed for counter insurgency operations in Manipur during late 1997 and early 1998 by raising a Counter Insurgency Sector (CI Sector). This CI Sector was raised to replace CRPF who had by then faced several reversals against local insurgents. Three BSF battalions placed under this sector have performed exceedingly well to the effect that this sector was abolished in 2003. The heroic and gallant actions of men of these battalions have brought insurgency to almost nil. A few daring operations and gallant action of these men are listed as our tribute to them.

On 19 February 1974, Constable Ambar Bahadur was detailed for escort duties with a polling party in Manipur. At about 1700

hours, when the polling and escort parties were about 3 kilometers from the village Sorde, they were surprised by firing directed at them by hostiles from vantage points. As a result of this firing, Const Ambar Bahadur sustained serious injuries. In spite of being wounded, Constable Ambar Bahadur jumped from the vehicle and started retaliating the fire. Encouraged by the action of the gallant Constable, other personnel of the escort party also took up positions to repulse the attack. Constable Ambar Bahadur led a flanking attack along with other members of the escort party after locating the position of ambush laid by the hostiles. The hostiles, taken aback by the sudden flank movement, abandoned their position and taking advantage of the thick foliage made good their escape. But before doing so, they opened a random burst of fire on the escort party. Constable Ambar Bahadur was hit on the head and died on the spot. He was awarded Police Medal for gallantry.

On the 25 May 1976 at about 1900 hours one armed gang attacked a village volunteer force camp and took away 10 rifles and 781 round of ammunition. Thereafter the gang went to village Thinghazang and took shelter in the house of the headman. On receiving this information on 27 May 1976 the Commandant of 96 Bn BSF immediately detailed Shri D.S. Rawat, AC to locate the gang and liquidate it. Shri D.S. Rawat organized a raiding party and immediately started for the place. When they reached the village Shri Rawat divided the party into four groups and blocked all possible escape routes. A woman, however, saw the party and alerted the gang which tried to escape under cover of fire. Unmindful of the risk involved Shri Rawat himself ran from one post to another encouraging his men to pin down the hostiles. In the melee a leading hostile made a bid to escape. He was, however, detected and Constable Kunwar Singh putting himself at a grave risk to himself chased the hostile, undeterred by the hostile's indiscriminate firing. In the meantime HC Chandra Bahadur took position and opened fire. The hostile went on a desperate firing spree but HC Chandra Bahadur using bold initiative and agility shot the hostile dead. In this encounter, Shri

D.S. Rawat, Shri Chandra Bahadur and Shri Kunwar Singh were awarded Police Medal for Gallantry.

On 23 July 2001, Shri Vivek Saxena, AC, 2 Bn BSF received information about militants movement in his area. Immediately, Shri Saxena with 18 other ranks of Commando Platoon rushed to lay an ambush in the area of Village Lungil hills, District Sugnu, Manipur. After analyzing the terrain and weather conditions, he divided the ambush party into three groups to cover the escape routes/likely approaches of militants and after detailed briefing positioned the ambush parties at about 2030 hours. At about 2130 hours, while lying in ambush, the party led by Shri Vivek Saxena, observed suspicious movement of some unknown persons. On being challenged to surrender, the suspected militants fired heavily with their automatic weapons towards the BSF party. The BSF party retaliated the fire but the militants kept firing and shifting their position in a bid to escape. Shri Saxena, followed by Ct Emamuddin and others, in utter disregard of their own safety, charged towards the militants and continued to chase and fire at the fleeing militants. While chasing the militants, Ct Emamuddin who was firing his LMG, closed in with the militants but was hit by militants fire on his left shoulder. Despite sustaining serious bullet injury and heavy firing from the militants, Ct Emamuddin, stuck to the ground, fired a long burst of bullets on the militants and killed two of them on the spot. Shri Vivek Saxena, AC, seeing his comrade seriously injured, lifted the injured Ct to a safer place but came under heavy firing of the militants. Shri Saxena, jumped to a safer place, took cover and simultaneously fired on the militants, which resulted in killing of yet another militant. On search, three dead bodies of militants along with two AK series rifles, four AK rifle magazine and 30 rounds of AK series ammunition were covered. In this encounter, Shri Vivek Saxena, AC and Ct Emamuddin were awarded Police Medal for Gallantry.

In the night intervening 8/9 January 2003 on receiving specific information regarding presence of terrorists in Village Sajik Tampak, District Chandel (Manipur), a company led by Assistant Commandant Vivek Saxena, 2 Bn BSF cordoned off the village

and a search operation was started. Suddenly, the terrorists opened heavy fire on them from the hilltop. Reacting swiftly, Shri Saxena mounted his Light Machine Guns (LMGs) and retaliated fire on the terrorists numbering about 250 in strength and equipped with sophisticated automatic weapons. Though outnumbered and heavily under the fire from the large number of terrorists, Shri Saxena galvanized the available resources. With utter disregard to his personal safety, he ran from platoon to platoon and motivated the troops. The encounter continued till dusk. Taking advantage of the fading light, the terrorists regrouped and launched a fierce onslaught on the right flank of the BSF party. Shri Saxena rallied his troops and effectively repulsed the thrust of the terrorist's attack. Through his sheer grit and courage, Shri Saxena managed to thwart the offensive launched by the terrorists. Shri Saxena crawled ahead and engaged the terrorists and gave covering fire to his troops in shifting to a safer place. His accurate firing killed three terrorists. In the process he fell to a hail of bullets fired by the terrorists and sacrificed his life fighting the terrorists. He was awarded 'Shaurya Chakra'.

Subsequently, BSF was not deployed for counter insurgency operations in Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. But troops deployed on borders have strongly performed against insurgents operating in those areas and have carried out many successful operations, some of which are narrated as follows:

On 13 April 1994, information was received by 88 Bn BSF about the presence of militants in village Mehargaon, P.S. – Rangapara, District Sonitpur, Assam. The BSF troops immediately cordoned off the area. They noticed eleven armed militants. Upon sighting the security forces, the militants formed two groups of seven and four and ran in different directions. The group of seven militants was chased by the party headed by an Assistant Commandant but they managed to escape towards the jungles. The group of four militants was chased by another group led by Constable Rustam Singh, which surrounded the terrorists. Naik Joseph warned the militants to surrender but they opened heavy fire on the BSF troops. Meanwhile, Constable Rustam Singh started

moving towards the militants, but the militants opened fire on him. In the exchange of fire, Ct Rustam Singh killed one militant but in the process, he himself was fatally hit by the bullets and died on the spot. In the meantime Naik Joseph noticed that Ct Singh was hit by the bullets and that the militants were intending to capture his AK-47 rifle. Realising this, he brought sustained fire on the militants and foiled their attempts. In the subsequent encounter the remaining three militants were killed. The dead militants were later identified as: (i) Prajit alias Swaraj Medhi, (ii) Etool Kalita alias Abhijyoti Kalita, (iii) Mantu Nath alias Nitu Balshya, and (iv) Pranjal Koch, all were trained ULFA activists. During search three .303 Rifles, one US made carbine, one bag of ammunition and large number of live/empty cartridges were recovered from the dead militants. In this encounter Ct Rustam Singh was awarded PPMG posthumously.

On 31 January 2002 at about 1650 hours OP party consisting of Ct Amarjit Singh, Ct Ram Asare Saroj and Ct Prakash Vaishnaw of 161 Bn BSF were returning to BOP Phanda, District – South Garo Hills (Meghalaya) after performing their duty. All the three jawans were crossing a damaged culvert when they were ambushed by militants between boundary pillars No. 1162/9-S and 1162/10-S. Militants opened a heavy volume of fire. Ct Prakash Vaishnaw immediately jumped into the nullah and took position on a raised mound. As a result of firing by the militants Ct Amarjit Singh suffered bullet injuries and succumbed to his wounds. During the exchange of fire, one of the militants attacked Ct Ram Asare Saroj with a Khukari in a bid to kill him and snatch his personal weapon. Ct Prakash Vaishnaw fired immediately and killed the militant on the spot. Another militant, who was hiding in the ambush attacked Ct Prakash Vaishnaw but was also killed by effective fire. In the meantime, Ct Ram Asare Saroj, who had suffered bullet injury also succumbed to the injuries. Remaining militant continuously fired on Ct Prakash Vaishnaw to neutralize him. Due to brave, courageous and effective retaliation by Ct Prakash Vaishnaw, the militants fled the site, which prevented them from taking the weapons of killed constables. Four hand grenades of Chinese make,

124 AK Rifle ammunitions and one magazine were recovered from the spot. Later, it was confirmed that two more militants suffered bullet injuries and one of them namely Sushanto Dango died on 02 February 2002 and another was in a critical condition. In this encounter, Ct Prakash Vaishnaw, 161 Bn BSF was awarded Police Medal for Gallantry.

Thus BSF has contributed immensely to the restoration of peace and normalcy in the North-East. BSF battalions were also deployed to deal with the problem of Gorkhaland in Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Eleven companies of BSF with two adhoc battalion's HQ were deployed in 1986 in Darjeeling district to contain the ongoing insurgency like conditions. BSF was singularly successful in winning the confidence of district administration and GNLf leadership.

It is not often that a paramilitary force achieves such stupendous success in a highly unfavourable terrain, with complexities of ethnicities, nationalisms and poverty. The task becomes doubly difficult because of divided loyalties of the civilian population. That the BSF was able to bring normalcy to an area undergoing such tremendous changes bears evidence to the tenacity, grit and determination of the force.



## **Terrorism in Punjab and the Role of BSF (1989-1993)**

The roots of terrorism in the Punjab, the ultimate objective of which was the creation of a separate Khalistan state based on Sikh identity, can be traced to the years when India gained independence from the British Rule and was simultaneously partitioned along religious lines in 1947. After independence and especially during the late 1960s and early 1970s Punjab underwent the Green Revolution and became one of the most prosperous states of the Indian Union. However, due to the sociological consequences of the Green Revolution and some other political causes not necessary to mention here, Punjab became a politically disturbed state from the late 1970s. By the time the Asian Games were held in Delhi in 1982, the Khalistan Movement had emerged as a major separatist movement in the Punjab aided and abetted by Pakistani intelligence agencies intent on avenging the defeat of Pakistan in the Indo-Pak War of 1971 and the subsequent creation of Bangladesh. Punjab Terrorism entered a decisive phase in the year 1984. In June 1984 Operation Blue Star was launched by the Indian Army against the Khalistani Militants entrenched in the Golden Temple Complex in Amritsar where BSF also played a limited role prior and during the operation. Later that year, in October, the Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in Delhi. This unfortunate event was immediately followed by widespread riots against the Sikhs in many parts of North India. Several hundred Sikh men, women and children were murdered by the mobs during these riots. In the event, the year 1984 proved a watershed in the history of militancy in the Punjab; the events of that year stoked the Punjab insurgency no end and created an atmosphere of bitterness in a sensitive border State of India. The BSF was called upon to

discharge its duties in this context. The task assigned to it was far from easy. Till the BSF was inducted and deployed in Punjab the job of ensuring internal security in the state was mainly the duty of the Punjab Police and the CRPF.

How difficult was the task entrusted to the BSF can be gauged from the example of Gurdaspur, a district bordering Pakistan in the Punjab. The Gurdaspur Sector was raised on 01 April 1987 after the Amritsar Sector was carved into two. The new Sector was raised to counter militancy which, following Operation Blue Star in 1984, had become endemic in the district. The border between Gurdaspur and Pakistan is marked by large tracts of land covered by sarkanda (elephant grass) which is difficult or practically impossible to destroy. This immense growth of tall and thick sarkanda on the international border between India and Pakistan limits visibility and provides cover to terrorists during their cross border movements. After the fateful events which occurred during the summer of 1984 a large number of excitable young men crossed to Pakistan where they received military training in special camps set up by the Pakistani state. The sarkanda topped border was used by these militants to sneak into the Indian side of the Punjab with Pakistani help.

The anti-terrorism operations of the BSF in the Punjab can be traced back to the middle 1980s. The BSF was involved piece meal in combating cross border terrorism from as early as 1984 and some of its battalions functioned under the overall control of the Punjab Police at that time. In these early operations the BSF achieved some notable successes. For instance, on 24 June 1986, one of its units (the 52 Battalion) killed Baba Ranjit Singh, a category 'A' hardcore Khalistani terrorist, in a fierce encounter in the Batala sector. Almost two years later the BSF was successful in eliminating the self-styled General Labh Singh, alias Sukha Sipahi, on 12 July 1988. These praiseworthy anti-terrorist acts of the BSF raised its morale and reputation and consequently it was soon given independent areas for conducting "compact operations" against the various terrorist groups active in Punjab. Soon the force found itself involved in non-stop patrolling and other such penny

packet counter-insurgency operations in the border regions of the Gurdaspur and Ferozepur districts and especially in the riverine belt (Mand) of the Kapurthala district. In these operations a number of dreaded terrorists were killed in combat and the BSF also lost some of its men and officers like Shri Davinder Singh, Deputy Commandant, a gallantry award winner of the 1971 India-Pakistan War. The mobile operations against the well-armed and trained terrorists were high risk operations and several of the men and officers who conducted them in extenuating circumstances received bravery medals for the distinction with which they served the nation. An important result of the BSF experiences during these anti-terrorist operations was the border fencing project. The erection of the border fence manned by the BSF ultimately, and drastically, reduced infiltration and smuggling.

The BSF began replacing the CRPF in the Punjab from 1989 onwards. The BSF, a force trained essentially as the first line of defence since 1965, was inducted for the counter insurgency operations in Punjab with very little experience of counter insurgency operations. Previously it had conducted anti-dacoity operations but home grown dacoits are radically different from well trained, highly motivated political terrorists armed with state of the art weapons. These operations became the BSF's "baptism by fire." There was not much time for the BSF officers and men to learn the ropes of counter insurgency. Initially the force suffered a large number of casualties fighting the motivated and highly trained terrorists in Punjab. It was difficult to either capture or kill the terrorists because most of them carried cyanide capsules and were not afraid of being killed. Many cross-border suicidal missions were launched by the Khalistani Militants and it was extremely difficult to deal with them. In these circumstances the BSF was given the task of controlling and dominating large areas of the Punjab and, as the outcome of the counter insurgency operations tells us, gave a good account of its service. The fact that the BSF adapted itself to the exacting conditions imposed upon it by the Punjab insurgency redounds to the credit of its officers and men. During the counter insurgency operations in the Punjab the BSF

carried out the following operations on a day to day basis. It was active in cordon and search operations, raids on militant hideouts, road opening patrols, day and night patrolling, long range patrolling to cover and sanitize large tracts of the countryside, placing of mobile check posts in the areas where it was suspected that militants were taking up strong positions, vehicle patrolling (day and night) and provision of assistance to civil authorities and civilians wherever required or called upon to do so.

By 1988, BSF had spread all over Punjab. Though still new to the operational environment, dedication to the task started giving positive results. A glimpse of what were to be stupendous successes can be discerned by the following illustrations:

On 29 November 1988, an operational column of 79 Bn BSF, based on hard intelligence received from the Punjab Police in a joint operation with Punjab Police, conducted an encounter in the evening which lasted for 20 minutes. They successfully nabbed 4 out of 6 extremists and recovered a large quantity of arms and ammunitions. One of the apprehended terrorists was identified as Baldev Singh Dharngra, Area Comdr of Babbar Khalsa. He was a dreaded terrorist involved in bomb blasts cases of Gurdaspur and Pathankot. He was carrying an award of Rs. 50,000 on his head.

On 08 May 1988 at about 0930 hours operational columns of 40 Bn BSF on getting reliable information that 6 armed extremists were moving towards village Kotli Harchanda from village Gokhle established contact with the extremists. In a fierce encounter which followed, all the six extremists were killed and a large cache of arms and ammunitions were recovered.

Over the period of deployment there were more than 150 similar successful operations carried out by the BSF. This, in conjunction with the pressure mounted on the border itself, broke the back of militancy in Punjab.

In addition to these duties, the BSF also guarded the vital areas and installations like important public buildings, banks, radio stations, television stations, television towers, roads, railway tracks and bridges. Thus it can be said that the induction of the BSF in the Punjab counter insurgency operations revises our opinion of

counter-insurgency in general. These operations are usually associated with the armed combat between the security agencies and the terrorists in public imagination but in fact have a comprehensive character. In retrospect it can be said that the men and officers of the BSF, recipients of numerous gallantry medals in the Punjab Operations, gave an excellent account of themselves in conditions which would have tested the mettle of the best trained armies in the world. The militancy was at its peak and the terrorists were very active during 1990-92. BSF veterans recall that in those days the Batala belt was one of the most sensitive insurgency affected areas under the infamous terrorist Zaffarwal's leadership. It is said that at his peak several villages were almost under his direct command. However, from 1993 the decline of militancy set in and one of the reasons, inter alia, for this was the practice of intensive night patrolling engaged in by the BSF units. Controlling the countryside and the roads at night was crucial in the operations against the terrorists who were adept at nocturnal operations and ambushes. This was a period when night vision devices were rare and usually the BSF vehicles were equipped with powerful search lights. Another innovation made by the BSF during the Punjab Operations was the fabrication and use of bullet proof tractors in the sugar cane fields against the terrorists. The terrorists usually cleared a central part of a sugar cane field and converted it into a hidden enclave. From this enclave they would fire on the BSF parties and engage them in gunfights. To avoid heavy casualties and the danger of men being killed in cross fire, the BSF resorted to the use of bullet proof tractors which were driven straight into these sugarcane hideouts from different directions and the terrorists were left with the option of either committing suicide by biting on their cyanide capsules, surrender or being killed.

This account of the BSF Operations in Punjab will remain incomplete without its Mand Operations being included in it. One of the major operations undertaken by the BSF during the years of Punjab militancy was the clearing of the Mand Area of the terrorists by the BSF under the leadership of Shri B.S. Tyagi, Commandant. The Mand Region of the Punjab stretches 150

kilometers across the districts of Amritsar, Ferozepur, Jalandhar and Kapurthala between the rivers Sutlej and Beas. The Mand usually comprises dry land interspersed with creeks and gatties (islands), swamps and marshes perennially run over by the tall sarkanda described above. Due to its geographical features it became a safe haven for terrorists who sallied forth from their strongholds to carry out their terror acts in the cities. In totality the area was difficult to administer and the terrorists made good use of it to run a mobile hit and run sort of campaign from it. It became clear to the BSF that unless the terrorists were driven out of the Mand, other counter-insurgency operations in the Punjab would not succeed. Among the dreaded terrorists who operated from the Mand hideouts were men such as Avtar Singh Brahma and Nishan Singh of the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF), Resham Singh of Babbar Khalsa and Yadwinder Singh 'Yadu'. The BSF's plan for carrying out this task was time tested but risky. The BSF formed *shikaar* parties of 18 personnel in the guise of extremists belonging to the well-trained and armed Babbar Khalsa Tiger Force (BTF) group which, according to the intelligence reports, had recently crossed over from Pakistan into Punjab. These *shikaar* parties lived and looked like extremists and often obtained food and support from the local sympathizers. They carried out, incognito tasks like patrolling, search and combing and collection of information regarding terrorist hideouts and sympathizers most of whom were well entrenched criminals of the area involved in a number of nefarious activities. This phase of the Mand operation was carried out between 18 and 25 July 1989. Matter came to a head when it was rumoured that the extremists would hoist the Khalistani Flag on 15 August 1989 and declare the independence of Khalistan. In a meeting of the representatives of the different security agencies in-charge of the situation Commandant Tyagi suggested that the most effective way to wrest this area from the Khalistani extremists would be the physical occupation of their hideouts by the security forces themselves. On 08 August 1989 the next phase of the Mand operation started with the establishment of the first post in the Mand area from Kapurthala

side. The 29th Battalion of the BSF started weeding out the terrorists through fierce encounters. By 20 August the BSF was successful in clearing this whole stretch and had replaced the terrorist strongholds with its own posts. In this commendable, and somewhat unprecedented operation, the BSF killed twelve hardcore terrorists and recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition. This clearing operation was followed by the resettling of farmers in the area. These farmers were provided protection from the terrorists and all kinds of facilities. This single achievement of these brave men of the BSF was praised widely and especially mentioned by the Governor of Punjab and the Union Home Minister.

### *The fencing of border*

While on the one hand the BSF, in a series of operations had neutralized some key targets, the pressure of insurgency kept on increasing. This was mainly due to the fact that that Pakistan was able to replace these insurgents through the land border. Something more than mere human presence was required to stem this tide. In 1988 the Punjab frontier proposed that the border should be fenced. This was accepted by the Government of India (GOI). This would serve as the first and a formidable obstacle against the terrorists. Central Public Works Department (CPWD) was to undertake the project. A BSF committee was formed to work out the design. Fencing models of US-Mexico border and North-South Korea were examined and the final lay out, proved one of the best fencing on any International Border. Once erected the fence was strengthened by the innovative ideas of the officers of Punjab frontier. Small bells were attached to the strands, so that any fiddling with fence could be heard by the sentry. Concertina coils were placed between the rows of vertical fence followed by live electric wire named COBRA running through it. Observation and fire power reinforced this line. A drastic decline in the number of intrusions followed. Incidentally, wireless intercepts of the terrorists showed that the crossings had become increasingly difficult. As per the Punjab Police's monthly Intelligence Summary, the

numbers of terrorists crossing over to India, which were over 350 per month at one time declined to a meager 15 to 20 per month.

The importance of being vigilant on the border, along with a strong handed response in the mainland can not be over emphasized. Even as there has been a modest recognition of the strong handedness, this deft touch in the actions of the BSF has largely gone unnoticed.



## **Kashmir Militancy: A story foretold in 1969 and played out since the 1980s**

### *The BSF's early assessment of the Kashmir Problem*

It is remarkable that senior officers of the BSF had predicted the potential and problem of insurgency in Kashmir as early as 1969 i.e. twenty years before the mass rebellion of 1989 occurred. This meant that when the BSF was inducted into the anti-insurgency operations in the Kashmir Valley at a time of great political upheaval, its officers and men had a fair idea of what to expect. This prescience of the senior BSF officers in 1969 demonstrates that the Force was led by a team of astute officers who worked competently under the leadership of Shri Rustamji, the *imaginative and innovative* founder DG of the BSF. The sources of BSF history leave no doubt on this score. In an official meeting held in Jammu on 01 March, 1969 attended by Shri P.K. Dave, Chief Secretary to the J&K Government, Shri Surender Nath, IGP J&K, Shri K.F. Rustamji, DG, BSF, Shri R.C. Gopal, IG BSF North-West Frontier (NWF), Shri P.R. Rajgopal, DD (G) BSF and Shri Birbal Nath, DIG, BSF, Srinagar the matter of civil rebellion arising in Kashmir in future was discussed. In this meeting Shri Gopal pointed out that the BSF had to be prepared for political unrest in the state created by “local causes”, infiltration on a small scale with sabotage and also “massive infiltration and internal upsurge.”<sup>24</sup> A force of twenty companies was thought sufficient to deal with student trouble in the state but would need large reinforcements in the event of large scale civil disturbances. The domestic political scenario in Pakistan was discussed in the meeting and the fear that the Pakistani regime would divert the attention of the Pakistani people into an anti-India adventure in the

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24. Report of the Meeting in Jammu prepared by P.R. Rajgopal, 7.3.69, BSF. This meeting was held in “pursuance of the Home Secretary’s suggestion to be prepared with contingent plans for meeting possible emergencies in J&K.”

# Insurgency in the Northeastern India

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Naga army personnel including OGWs of the RGN joining the BSF

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Briefing of Naga Bn by Shri K F Rustamji

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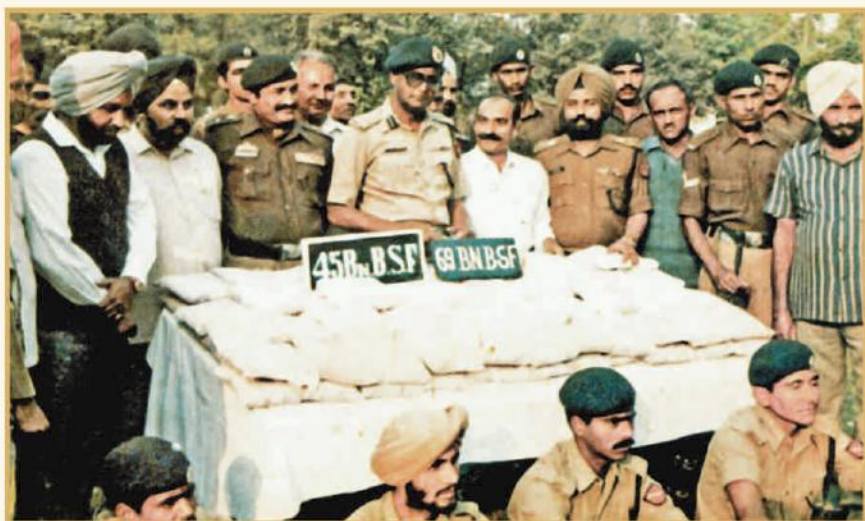
## Terrorism in the Punjab

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Taking local population into confidence

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Curtailing the finances of militants

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# Kashmir Militancy

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Abandoned Building of Kashmiri Pandits in Srinagar

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A BSF Post in Kashmir

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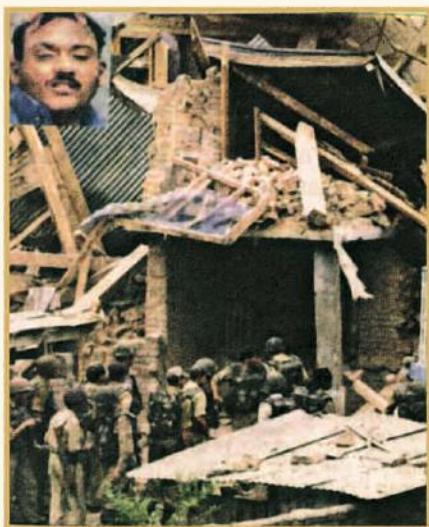
# Kashmir Militancy

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Shri N N D Dubey, 2IC receiving Kirti Chakra

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Wrecked hideout of Gazi Baba

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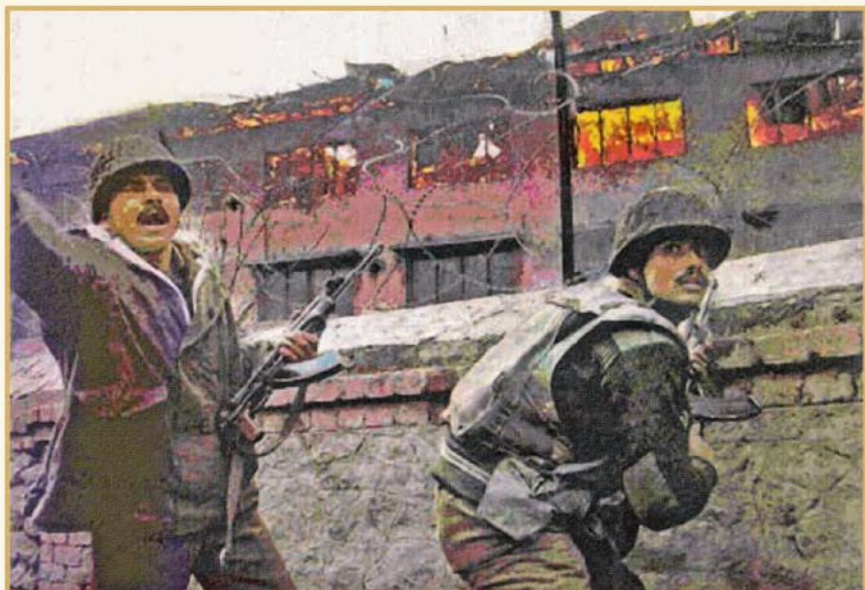
# Kashmir Militancy

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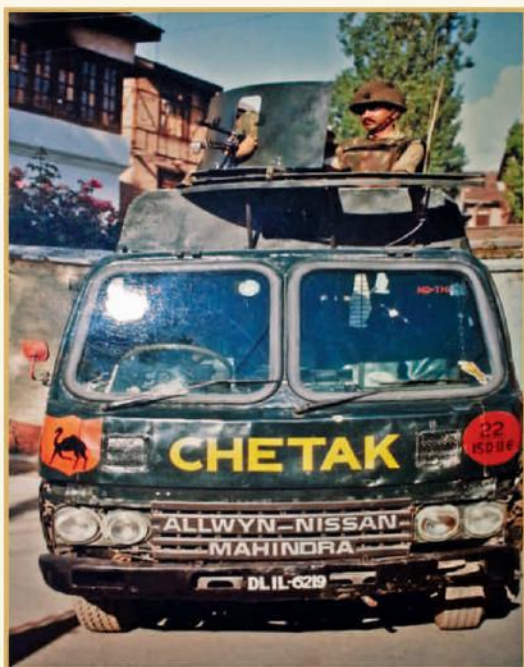
BSF Jawan securing Valley of Kashmir

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BSF Jawans outside the Income Tax Office Building in Srinagar during an operation

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Ground requirements leading to modifications



BSF ensuring secure Amarnath Yatra

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# Operation Vijay–Kargil

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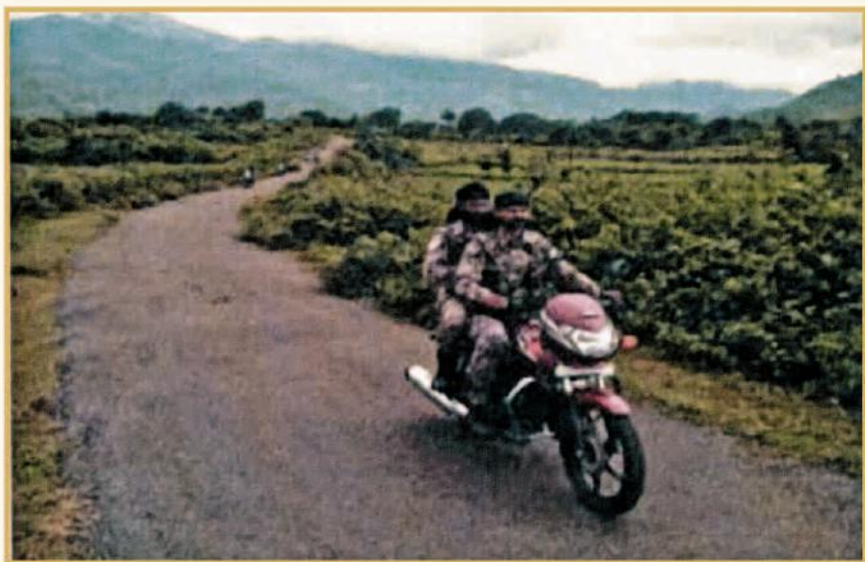
Shri A.B. Vajpayee, Prime Minister in Kargil

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## Left-Wing Extremism

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BSF motorcycle Patrol in Naxal Area

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Establishing BSF Company Operating Base in Naxal Area

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near future was openly expressed. The BSF officers proved farsighted in observing this because within a couple of years the East Pakistan crisis emerged and provided, as observed in our section on 1971, the BSF with the opportunity to play an important role in the liberation of Bangladesh. Shri Rustamji was of the opinion that the Government of India and its agencies, including the BSF, would have to start working in the sensitive state of J&K “on the presumption” that the trends “would ultimately be unfavourable” to India. Further, he warned that the BSF “should be prepared for a general uprising in J&K, aided and abetted by Pakistan” at many places simultaneously. The meeting took serious view of reports “to the effect that a very large number of subversive elements have already woven themselves into the texture of the rural and urban fabric of the population. Many of these are Kashmiris who had migrated to the other side of the Cease Fire Line during the 1965 Conflict and who have since found their way back into the valley. There have been long standing reports to the effect that many of these have been trained in subversive activities by Pakistan before they had returned to Kashmir. Even now the line of returning migrants continues unchecked and they are not being put through even the minimum of security screening. These people would be potential guerillas and/or their helpers and harbourers. Pakistan has been over a period of time spreading these people in the valley with the clear intention to capitalize on their presence at the appropriate time. Having committed a mistake once and paid for it heavily in terms of men, money and material, Pakistan will see to it that she prepares the ground doubly propitious before she launches on her last and final assault. It is only to be expected that she would ensure that her next venture does not fall on barren ground and that she gets very massive support from the local population.” Pakistan would utilize the growing discontent in the youths of the Kashmir valley to plunge the state into a virtual uprising against the Indian state. Further, it was noted with great concern, that Pakistan would appeal to religious sentiments to highlight the only similarity between the majority of Kashmiris and the Pakistanis to weaken the secular nature of the J&K and the Indian state in general.

The conditions and causes of the Kashmir Problem go back to the nineteenth century when this Muslim majority region was sold to the ancestors of Maharaja Hari Singh by the British for a certain sum of money following the defeat of the Sikhs and the annexation of the Punjab by the East India Company in 1849. The majority of Muslims in the Kashmir Valley were peasants whose poverty and indebtedness stood for a century in stark contrast with the affluence of the tiny minority of their Dogra rulers. In 1947-48, 1965 and 1971 the people of Kashmir helped the Indian Army against the regular and irregular invaders who came from Pakistan. Nonetheless, and due to a vexed political history which lies beyond the pale of this volume, between 1971 and 1989 the social ground for a protracted anti-India insurgency was prepared in the Kashmir Valley. In these years the region became troubled waters in which the state of Pakistan came to fish. The Pakistani State and Army could never forget the humiliating defeat of Pakistan in the 1971 war. The defeat of 1971 and the creation of Bangladesh irretrievably damaged the Two Nation Theory on which the very existence of Pakistan is predicated. The official Pakistani discourse on the creation of Bangladesh continued to blame India, rather than the ahistorical and erroneous 'Two Nation Theory', which led to the alienation of the Bengali people from the idea of Pakistan. The 1971 war also taught the Pakistani Army an important lesson. By then Pakistan had fought two conventional wars with India and lost both of them. It was clear to Pakistan that despite the US support it commanded during the Cold War, India was too large a country for its armed forces to defeat. This meant the re-canalization of the anti-India war into the channels of protracted insurgency – India had to be bled to a point when she would accede to the demands made by Pakistan. The greatest opportunity for Pakistan in this connection arose when the Soviet Union unwittingly attacked and occupied Afghanistan in December, 1979. The Afghan struggle against Soviet occupation made Pakistan the base of the US funded and armed *Mujahideen*. By the late 1980s Moscow was losing the war in Afghanistan and the time to re-direct large bands of Islamist insurgents to Indian Kashmir had

arrived. Thus General Zia-Ul-Haque, the dictator of Pakistan, committed the Jihadi warriors to his doctrine of countering India by a policy of a "thousand cuts". The uprising in the Kashmir valley in 1989-90 must be examined in this context. There were several causes for this uprising unrelated to what had happened in Pakistan and Afghanistan during the decade of the 1980s but most certainly Pakistan used this uprising to its benefit. The problem which arose in Kashmir posed a grave threat to India. The Kashmir valley has a Muslim majority and alienating this majority carried the risk of playing into the hands of Pakistan and possibly validating the Two Nation Theory. The uprising in the Kashmir Valley crippled the civil administration in the area. These were the conditions when the forces like the BSF were called upon to safeguard the integrity of the Indian Union in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was during this difficult period that Shri Jagmohan became the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. He took several steps to counter the insurgency in the state and many of these were taken to fortify the armed forces and raise their morale.

The BSF was inducted in J&K for counter-insurgency operations in the late 1980s. By then the BSF was already deployed on LC in Kashmir alongwith the Army. In Srinagar Valley, the BSF was deployed for Airport security duties, Raj Bhawan duties before being given the charge of the internal security duties. These were crucial tasks because without securing these sites no worthwhile counter-insurgency operation was possible. The airports, government offices and other important state installations were the prime targets of the terrorists. The Srinagar Frontier of the BSF was an offshoot of erstwhile North-Western Frontier (NWF) which comprised the entire State of J&K. The Headquarters of the North-West Frontier of BSF was located at Srinagar, J&K under the command of Shri L.S. Bist, IP. In 1981, the NWF was bifurcated into Jammu and Kashmir Frontiers, with Kashmir Frontier looking after the area North of Pir Panjal Range and was given the task of augmenting the Army deployment on Pir Panjal Ranges, Shamsabari Ranges and Kargil Sector. In June 1993, the Kashmir Frontier was further divided into Srinagar and Baramulla Frontiers. The Srinagar Frontier was given

the responsibility of southern and north-eastern parts of Kashmir Valley comprising the strategically important Srinagar, Budgam, Anantnag, Pulwama and Kargil districts.

The first phase of insurgency in the state lasted from 1989 to 1992. This phase was underlined by a mass euphoria revolving around the idea of independence. Kashmiri youths during these years joined the insurgency in large numbers and most of them were trained in terrorist camps established in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. In the next phase, that lasted from 1992-1994, the situation deteriorated to such an extent that the entire valley became hostile to the security forces. In these circumstances gathering intelligence about the movements and whereabouts of the insurgents became almost impossible. Matters often came to a head when the BSF parties encountered liberated zones inside towns where it became difficult for them to enter the fortified *mohallas*. Fired upon from several directions, and often ambushed by insurgents hidden in unfamiliar buildings, the BSF sections and platoons experienced the rigours of urban guerilla warfare for the first time. The insurgents were heavily armed and used sophisticated automatic weapons and grenades in the combat zones. The third phase, which began from 1995 onwards, witnessed a change in the attitude of the people as the atrocities of the insurgents against the Kashmiris themselves became widely known. From 1994-95 the local Kashmiris, many of whom began to tire of these atrocities, expressed a greater willingness in passing on information about the militants to the BSF. This shift in public attitude corresponded with the induction of foreign militants in 1994 and loosening of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) control over the area. Previously, the members of the HM would not harm the local population and their only objective was to harm the security forces. But after the foreigners were inducted into the militancy they showed no such distinction in their actions. The domination of insurgent groups by foreign mercenaries changed the complexion of insurgency and opened up spaces within which the Indian security forces like the BSF could play an important role in pushing back the tide of militancy.

The 1990s comprised a period of peak militancy in the Valley. During this decade the BSF was inducted into this area. The militants were running parallel administrations in many 'liberated' areas located both in urban and rural Kashmir. The militants in many areas openly held parades in full combat uniform and gave the impression that they had achieved their goals in Kashmir. These were years in which the militants were entrenched in numerous urban areas from where it was difficult to flush them out without incurring heavy civilian casualties. Given below are important examples of how the BSF regained control of two such areas.

### *Rainawari*<sup>25</sup>

Rainawari (home of the Rainas), as the name suggests, used to be a large settlement of Kashmiri Pandits, situated to the north-west of Dal Lake, Srinagar, Kashmir. During the height of militancy, most of the habitants of Rainawari, except a few Sikh families, fled to the other parts of the country, leaving their houses vacant. These empty houses often locked from outside later proved ideal hiding places for the militants. Earlier, the militants of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) occupied the area. Subsequently, other groups also joined them. Gradually Rainawari metamorphosed into a sort of HQ of various militant groups who co-ordinated their actions with great competence. It became well known that several training centers for different groups were run in the area by highly motivated instructors who themselves had been trained by either the ISI or the Afghan in the terrorist camps established in Pakistan. Militants active in the rural areas of Kashmir would regularly visit Rainawari to meet their leaders at the respective HQ of their group. The presence of Dal Lake on one side as well as the presence of several *nullahs* on the other made the approach to Rainawari very difficult. One could enter Rainawari through the main road and that too only on foot as vehicles could not move freely in the narrow streets. Militants, in large numbers, took shelter in Rainawari during day time and sallied forth at night to accomplish their nefarious activities. In

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25. Interview of Shri Shivaji Singh, IG (Retd), BSF.

these extenuating circumstances, in the month of August, 1991, the 69 Bn BSF was inducted in Rainawari. The unit had earlier served in Lathpura, Bijbehara, Anantnag and Tral and was the first BSF unit to be deployed in the valley. On 26 August 1991 the designated area was cordoned by the Indian Army while the troops of 69 Bn BSF went inside Rainabari and systematically cleared it of the militants. During this significant operation a huge cache of arms and ammunitions were recovered and a number of militants, who tried their best to flee the scene of action, were apprehended. Following this search and seizure operation numerous BSF posts were established in the heart of Rainabari. BSF bunkers were placed at different choke points to keep track of the movement of people and also the militants. Camouflage nets were often used to shield these bunkers from the grenade attacks launched on them by the terrorists. Once the BSF took control of the corners and streets of this locality it became practically impossible for the militants to move freely in Rainawari. Upon being deprived of this safe haven the terrorists resorted to various means of influencing the locals against BSF; but the Force personnel, because of their sincerity and professionalism, won over the support of the people, most of whom were fed up with militants to begin with.

### *Sopore*<sup>26</sup>

An area of Kashmir where the BSF played a conspicuous part in suppressing the Pakistan sponsored insurgency was Sopore town. From 1990 onwards the BSF parties successfully combed the highly dense built up area followed by slopes and mountains around Sopore and cleared the area of the terrorists who had made life miserable for the security forces by attacking them and firing intermittently from the houses on their convoys. The Sopore operation is best remembered in the words of Shri E.N. Rammohan (Retd DG BSF and the then IG BSF Kashmir Frontier) "The Jhelum flowed through the town of Sopore after emerging from the Wular lake. Sopore was basically a town of traders but had become the hotbed of militancy. It was the stronghold of

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26. Interview of Shri B.S. Tyagi, Commandant (Retd), BSF.

Jamaat-e-Islami. Part of the town was considered as Liberated Zone under the control of militants of HM. It was decided to clear this area of militants. The BSF planned an operation. It would cordon off the area and then started flushing out the militants and subsequently the bunkers were established at strategic points and dominate the area so that militants did not enter the area again. The operation of clearing the area was started by the army in the morning and completed by evening. There were a set of brave officers commanding the battalions in Sopore and they had planned the siting of bunkers strategically. The militants were quite frustrated and could never dominate any part of the town after this operation, though they tried to come into the town many times.”<sup>27</sup>

In the initial stages of the insurgency mainly local militants and a few Pakistanis were involved in anti-India activities. But, for various reasons, the local recruits were found to be soft compared with the hardened *mujahids* who infiltrated into the Valley from the POK. Hence, to keep the insurgency on the boil the Pakistani security forces started pushing militants from other nationalities, mainly footloose Afghans, Sudanese and an assortment of Arabs into the Valley. Many of these hot headed freebooters joined the *jihad* because a stint in the Kashmir valley gave them access to loot and women; these were the more tangible benefits of the politics of identity which initially motivated these social misfits. It has to be noted that even Al-Qaeda affiliated groups had been known to operate from their bases in the jungle of Bhadarwah and other remote areas. The intelligence directorate of the BSF was the first to give a clue about these foreign mercenaries who had poured into Kashmir from groups like *Al-Qaeda*, *Al-Badr* and *Jaish-e-Mohammad*. These foreign militants were equipped with the ultramodern weapons supplied to the *Mujahideen* by the Pakistani agencies and their US sponsors. These *jihadis*, who often sought victory or death and carried sophisticated weapons like rocket launchers, comprised a formidable body of men the BSF had to encounter. From the interviews of the veteran

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27. Simply Khaki by E.N. Rammohan, Vij Books.



BSF senior officers we come to know that the perks that these terrorists received for their nefarious violent activities were quite handsome. The recruiters gave the family of every new recruit one lakh rupees the day he joined the insurgency. Subsequently, they were given six months training before induction in Kashmir. Their initial tenure was six months. During a militant's tenure, all his expenses were met by his sponsors and his family was taken care off. When he finished his tenure, he was paid one lakh more. This meant a tax free income of two lakh rupees in a year with all expenses paid for, during the adventure; an attractive proposition to the poor boys brought up on a staple of Islamic fundamentalism in the north-western areas of Pakistan. This incentive also attracted scores of criminals who were good for nothing in their own countries. The social background of most militants killed or captured, including a couple of militants captured by the BSF in the recent past, tends to substantiate this.

The deployment of the BSF in Kashmir followed two different patterns according to the nature of their deployment area. In the urban areas it is more difficult to fight a local insurgency than in the rural areas. Our section on the BSF combat operations in Punjab has noted the experience this force had accumulated during its counter-insurgency operations in the rural areas of that state. Urban guerilla warfare is different from all this and credit must be given to the BSF for adapting its tactics to the fluid situation of warfare which developed in Kashmir from 1989. In the towns of Kashmir every road junction, lane entrances, culverts and bridges were secured by sand bag bunkers. The BSF worked in extenuating circumstances – the men had no toilets, no respite from snipers, grenade and rocket attacks and no privacy. They often worked long hours without rest or refreshment. For instance, in the case of Srinagar, on the whole the security arrangement was done on the basis of the spread of the Dal lake; the BSF posted one DIG on either side of the Dal lake. The whole city was divided on the same basis i.e. DIG HQ and each unit was given a particular zone like a *mohalla* or a street where the men were supposed to know each person staying there. It is important to remember that the

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for urban warfare had been revised by the BSF so that operations were conducted successfully with the minimum possible collateral damage to the innocent people. In all counter-insurgency operations, but more so in urban counter-insurgency battles, the risk of people getting caught in the crossfire between the embattled opposing forces is very high. Since the support of the people is important to the success of the state security forces it makes perfect sense to keep inadvertent civilian casualties to the bare minimum. The BSF, in general, has a commendable record in this regard. Another contributory factor was the circumstance in which the BSF was operating. In the earlier part of 1990, when the present phase of unrest started, curfew was imposed often. Gradually that policy was abandoned in favour of a new policy. The new policy comprised the locating of bunkers in different residential areas. These bunkers were located at strategically important vantage points from where the area visually commanded by the personnel manning these bunkers could first be seen and observed clearly. This proved salutary in the conditions of urban guerilla warfare which characterized the insurgency in the Kashmir Valley. Most of these bunkers were usually manned by a Section and connected to a grid of bunkers by means of communication devices. There have been instances when bunkers have been the targets of grenades, rockets and various automatic weapons. There have also been instances where those living in bunkers had gradually established friendly relations with people living in the neighbourhood. On occasions they have also been helped by the inhabitants of the area who felt harassed by the terrorists, many of whom were foreigners. In Srinagar, Sopore and Baramulla, the BSF gave a sterling account of itself in tough conditions of urban guerilla warfare. The achievements of the BSF, essentially a paramilitary force, in this new kind of mobile war in which the battlefield can often shift its location within hours are truly praiseworthy. The officers and men of the force often did not sleep for hours, went without food and rest, were drenched in pouring rain and almost froze in the snow and hail but proved true to the slogan of their service.

During the peak of militancy in 1988, a police station was set up by BSF at Gupkar Road, Srinagar under the notification of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. This police station was empowered with both the police powers of local police as well as the tactical capabilities of an Armed Force. The BSF operations were planned in the famous PAPA-I & II, as the institution came to be known as, were based on hard intelligence. Actions were undertaken swiftly by utilizing the QRTs placed nearby. PAPA-II proved highly effective in apprehending several dreaded militants and thereby hastening the decline of militancy in the Valley. The utilization of BSF in aid of Civil Authority in the form of setting up a Police Station in the thick of militancy in Kashmir proved quite successful.

There were numerous anti-terrorist operations successfully conducted by the BSF in J&K. One of them is known as the Gazi Baba Operation. This operation can be counted among the best anti-terrorist operations launched anywhere in the world by a Paramilitary organization. The operation demonstrated that the BSF had truly come of age in its fight against one of the most intractable insurgencies anywhere in the world.

### *The Gazi Baba Operation*

Rana Tahir Nadeem, alias *Gazi Baba*, was a target sought by the BSF since the day the Jaish-e-Mohammad militants attacked the Indian Parliament in December 2001. Due to persistent intelligence and surveillance efforts reliable information about his movements was received by the BSF on the evening of 29 August 2003. The intelligence sources confirmed that Gazi Baba, the Chief Operational Commander of JeM and the most dreaded militant leader and the master mind of the Parliament attack, was holed up in one of the houses in the *Noorbagh* area of Srinagar. It was imperative for the BSF to conduct its operation the same night due to the adversary's penchant for frequently changing his hideout and his ability to avoid capture. The fateful operation was conducted on 30 August, 2003. The 61 and 193 Bns were ordered to carry out this daring operation which was planned by the

Commandant of the 193 Bn and Shri N.N.D. Dubey, Second-in-Command/Officiating Commandant, 61 Bn. In the early hours of 30 August 2003 the terrorist hideout was surreptitiously approached and cordoned off. The team then entered the locked up building in a lightening move by breaking down the front door. As soon as this happened, the power supply was switched off by someone in the building. In the ensuing search operation on the ground and first floor five civilians including four women and one man were captured and these people yielded only an incoherent and suspicious response due to which the presence of militants was suspected. While the men searched the second floor the placement and design of a wardrobe in one of the rooms aroused their suspicion. When the BSF men kicked open this piece of furniture, a heavy volume of fire by automatic weapons and even grenades poured into them. One of the grenades landed very close to the officers and in an act of daredevilry Shri Binu Chandran, AC unmindful of the grave risk to himself, picked it up and threw it back into the terrorists's hiding place. This act flushed out the terrorists from their den. One of the militants jumped out of the hideout firing his sub-machine gun wildly. Constable Balbir Singh, having found Shri Dubey fully exposed to this burst of fire, jumped in front of the officer to tackle the militant. In the ensuing melee Constable Singh took a full burst of AK-47 fire on his abdomen and died on the spot. Shri Dubey, who had in the meantime been hit by several bullets, grappled with the militant and deflected his AK-47 away from his colleagues. The militant drew a pistol from his pouch and fired shattering Shri Dubey's right forearm, thus managed to break free and attempted to flee. In spite of grievous injuries and heavy bleeding Shri Dubey, with Constable Omvir Singh, chased the running militant and engaged him. In this gunfight Shri Dubey ultimately killed this desperate militant who was later identified as Gazi Baba.

While the seriously wounded Dubey finished off Baba, an intense gun fight with the militants continued inside the hideout. Some terrorists took advantage of the darkness and exploding grenades managed to run up to the top floor. At this juncture the

men who were in the inner cordon rushed up to the first floor while the exchange of fire was still going on and quickly secured the room in which the injured were lying and evacuated them along with the civilian occupants of the house to safety. They also rescued those who were injured on the second floor in the thick of firing. The militants sneaked back to the first floor and kept the stairway under fire. By then C.P. Trivedi and Binu Chandran were stranded on the top floor. They were injured, bleeding and running out of ammunition. Realizing their precarious situation and showing commendable presence of mind they broke through to the roof. This led to an operational stalemate with the officers trapped on the roof and militants still active inside the house. The troops were re-deployed to ensure well timed, heavy and accurate fire on all windows and other openings to give cover to the officers who were asked to jump down on to the mattresses placed on the ground. Both officers threw down their weapons and jumped from the roof of the house from a height of 40 feet in spite of having multiple injuries. Once the BSF officers were rescued in this fashion the BSF troops lost no time in demolishing the building and killing the terrorist inside it in one act. This finally brought this encounter to an end. A large cache of sophisticated weapons and Radio-Communication Devices as well as IED's equipped with RDX were recovered from the terrorist hideout along with important militancy related documents. This operation broke the back of militancy in the Valley and the secessionist elements took a long time to recover from this blow. In this operation the BSF displayed exemplary valour. Notably Shri N.N.D. Dubey, 2IC, 61 Bn BSF received the Kirti Chakra and late Ct. Balbir Singh, 61 Bn BSF was awarded Shaurya Chakra. Shri K. Srinivasan, Shri Binu Chandran, Shri C.P. Trivedi and Constable Rajesh Bhadoria received PPMG and Shri Himanshu Gaur, HC/RO Hemant Joshi, HC/RO Manik Chand, HC Kuldeep Singh, CT Neel Kamal and CT Omvir received PMG. This meticulously executed operation reduced the JEM to an army without Generals. The operation was widely praised by all. The Deputy Prime Minister Shri Lal Krishna Advani praised the BSF in the following memorable words

“The success was not accidental but the result of intelligent execution. It was an exemplary achievement on the part of the BSF and the entire credit for the operation goes to BSF.”

The history of the BSF battalions deployed in Kashmir during the militancy years is a saga of valour, sacrifice and a relentless quest for professional excellence usually occluded by the media attention lavished on the Indian Army. Not many Indians know of the myriad tasks undertaken by the BSF in the service of the Indian Republic in the politically disturbed state of Jammu and Kashmir. To give an idea of the crucial anti-insurgency work done in the state by the BSF some noteworthy operations are mentioned in brief below for our readers interested in details.

- (1) *The Greenway Hotel Operation:* On 27 August 2003 at about 1905 hours, militants lobbed grenades near Greenway Hotel which is close to Central Telegraph Office and Chief Minister's residence. Troops of 43 Bn BSF were on domination duty in the city, immediately rushed to the spot and cordoned the area. The desperate militants, who were firing indiscriminately and hurling grenades, managed to enter the nearby Greenway Hotel. The Commandant of 43 Bn BSF immediately redeployed his troops and strengthened the cordon. Shri Deshraj, Addl DIG, SHQ CI (Ops-II) was also there to assess the situation. While Shri Deshraj, ADIG was re-adjusting position and briefing troops who were in the direct observation of militants, he observed two civilian boys trapped in the heavy cross fire. He immediately ordered his troops to stop firing and with utter disregard for his own safety, exposed himself to enemy fire and rushed to rescue the boys. This gallant action saved the boys but he sustained serious bullet injuries in his right shoulder. He was evacuated and subsequently the Commandant of the 43 Bn took charge of situation. Finally his troops were able to eliminate three hardcore militants and evacuated a number of trapped civilians without any injury. This

operation earned the BSF five gallantry awards including HC Md Firdosh Khan (Posthumously). The 43 Bn BSF during its tenure in CI Ops duties in Kashmir eliminated 26 militants and apprehended 47 alongwith a large cache of arms and ammunition.

- (2) *The Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium Operation:* The Honorable Prime Minister was to address a Public meeting at the Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium, Srinagar, J&K on 17 November 2004 around 1300 hours. To disrupt this function and create chaos and panic some militants occupied a hill above the Jan Bakers near Suleman Complex overlooking the Sher-e-Kashmir stadium. The position of the militants was ascertained at about 0815 hours when they fired on the police party which was sent to man the hill in anticipation of a possible terrorist attack. True to their reputation, the battle hardened troops of 43 Bn BSF neutralized two Pakistani militants in the ensuing gun battle. The unit earned five Gallantry medals in this operation.
- (3) *Income Tax Office, Srinagar, Operation:* On 07 January 2005, militants attacked IT office Srinagar with many civilians trapped inside the building. The operation was conducted by troops of 43 Bn BSF with sheer professionalism and clinical precision which resulted in the liquidation of two militants. All the civilians were rescued without any injuries and the unit earned seven Gallantry medals in this operation.
- (4) *The Exploits of 171 Bn BSF:* True to its reputation the Battalion during its deployment in Budgam (J&K) killed 47 hard core militants and apprehended 35 militants including Commanders of different terrorists outfits. However these successes didn't come without a price. On 02 August 2001 the unit Commandant Shri V.P. Purohit was leading an encounter in the village Malpura (Budgam), when a bullet hit the thigh of Shri Purohit, who immediately took cover and retaliated. When the exchange of fire was going on, two terrorists suddenly charged

towards Shri Purohit their guns blazing. Despite bleeding profusely, this brave officer shot dead one terrorist on the spot. The other man, however, managed to advance close to him and fired upon him. Displaying raw courage, Shri Purohit seized the barrel of the terrorist's weapon and diverted it in another direction. In the hand to hand combat which followed this, the valiant officer received a full burst of bullets in his chest. He was posthumously awarded the Kirti Chakra for displaying exemplary courage.

Apart from the above Operations, other Battalions officers and men have also played a crucial role in containing the Kashmir Militancy. Some of the BSF Battalions were 01 Bn, 02 Bn, 04 Bn, 05 Bn, 08 Bn, 09 Bn, 10 Bn, 11 Bn, 16 Bn, 19 Bn, 20 Bn, 22 Bn, 27 Bn, 30 Bn, 33 Bn, 34 Bn, 35 Bn, 41 Bn, 42 Bn, 51 Bn, 52 Bn, 55 Bn, 56 Bn, 65 Bn, 66 Bn, 69 Bn, 71 Bn, 80 Bn, 82 Bn, 83 Bn, 84 Bn, 88 Bn, 90 Bn, 93 Bn, 96 Bn, 97 Bn, 100 Bn, 102 Bn, 120 Bn, 124 Bn, 129 Bn, 136 Bn, 138 Bn, 141 Bn, 142 Bn, 163 Bn, 171 Bn, 173 Bn, 181 Bn, 182 Bn, 183 Bn, 193 Bn, 194 Bn, 195 Bn, 200 Bn etc.

Excerpts from Ex-DG BSF Shri E.N. Rammohan's Articles

“I was struck by professionalism and confidence of BSF men during difficult situations and particularly the leadership qualities of Officers. These qualities were evident in abundance when I joined the BSF in Kashmir in June 1993. Insurgency was at its peak in Kashmir. There were daily firings on the BSF bunkers. The silence of the night would be shattered a dozen times every night with the staccato sounds of firing from AK-47s and SLRs and sometimes from light machine guns. I marveled at the fortitude of the BSF officers and men living in bunkers in the heart of the town at street comers and road intersections. Troops were living in such difficult conditions and under such constant harassing fire. Once again I saw bravery and leadership of the officers of the BSF. The force



had lost a young officer in an operation just before I had joined. I was reading the Court of Inquiry and I, was struck by the bravery of the officer who was leading the operation. Militants had been located in a house and Assistant Commandant S.P. Azad had surrounded the house with his Commando Platoon. Heavy fire had forced the militants to take cover of the first floor. With fire concentrated on the top floor. Azad led the assault into the house. He entered first and firing from his AK charged up the stairs. A militant, who was positioned near the stairs on the top floor, however saw the officer charging up the stairs and Azad took the burst of the militants fire and fell and died on the steps. I was to see such frontal acts of bravery repeatedly in the next two years. Assistant Commandant A.K. Ekka was in charge of the Commando Platoon of the 'G' Branch for nearly two years. He got his transfer orders and was relieved. At that time there was an operation in Chanpura, where some Hizbul militants had been surrounded in a government quarter. I was at the spot after we had demolished a wall on one side of the house. Fire was still coming from the house. The commandant was planning to send an assault party into the house. Suddenly, I saw Ekka in uniform with the bullet proof vest. I asked him what he was doing when he had handed over charge. A very shy and quiet officer, he was wishing the ground would swallow him up as he replied that he wanted to go into the house. I took a conscious decision to allow him wondering how I was ever going to get over it if a tragedy took place. He went in with the assault party and they accounted for the two militants holed up inside. I heard somebody say that Ekka was hit. My heart was in my mouth till saw Ekka coming out with a bullet injury on his hand. I can recount many more such instances of courageous acts of officers and men of this Force.”

The continuous successes which came the BSF's way were the result of sustained efforts coupled with robust and fine-tuned intelligence which had its wings spread all over the Valley. The BSF refined its strategy from killing sporadic militants to put more stress on targeted killing on its Commanders and leaders which resulted in swift elimination of top hierarchy of almost all the militants outfits, such as Saif-Ul-Islam, HM Ops Chief of Valley, Qamar-ul-Zaman, Comn Chief HM and Manzoor Jahid Chaudhary, the master mind of Akshardham Mandir attack. The militant Abu Umer, who massacred Kashmiri pundits in Anantnag was eliminated by BSF. Elimination of Gazi Baba and his Deputy Rashid Bhai of the JeM was followed by elimination of Saharai Baba, his successor immediately after taking charge signaled the BSF's intelligence wings proficiency. In this period the BSF also eliminated Abbas Malik alias M. Arahi, HM Deputy Chief of Valley, Sahid Ahmed Hafiz alias Zulu-4, LeT Commander. The list is endless.

These successes to BSF didn't come without a price. The BSF had to sacrifice more than 1000 of its men and officers, with injuries to more than 3700 bordermen in J&K alone. The gallant acts of these officers and men were rewarded with prestigious awards and decorations which include Kirti Chakra-03, Shaurya Chakra-01, besides 74 President's police medal for Gallantry and 212 Police medal for Gallantry.

### *The humane actions of BSF in Kashmir*

Winning the hearts and minds of the people in insurgency affected regions is essential to the ultimate success against terrorism. The BSF since its induction in Valley had recognized the aspect of human approach as sine qua non in its anti-militancy strategy. It had to change its strategy in tune with the social behaviour and structure. Thus, giving due importance to human rights became a part of the curriculum. While the BSF was ruthless against the militants and their local collaborators, its attitude towards the public in general has been accommodating and caring. The training programme of all *jawans* and officers include topics related

to human rights taught by eminent personalities and the concerned agencies; this had led to the BSF having a good record as far as the cases of human rights violations in Kashmir are concerned. The BSF has tried its best to avoid *collateral* damage during its anti-insurgency operations. While fighting militancy with an iron fist the BSF has adopted a compassionate strategy towards civic action programmes. For instance the BSF Kashmir Frontier adopted 10 schools and provided them furniture, stationery, uniforms and medical facilities. The BSF, by virtue of its assimilation with the border population, has not faced any problem in carrying out the security duty during the Amarnath Yatra since 1994. In addition to these important internal security duties to win the hearts and minds of the local Kashmiri people the BSF has been sending the Kashmiri children from the remote areas of Valley to different parts of India on an annual basis at its own expense. The school children from the remote areas of the Kashmir Valley were selected and sent on the Bharat Darshan Tour to the places like New Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Bangalore, Ajmer etc. During these travels the children have routinely met dignitaries like the President, Prime Minister and Home Ministers in Delhi. It is believed that these actions have gone a long way in reducing the social alienation felt by these children many of whom are exposed to an uncritical anti-India rhetoric since their early childhood.

### *De-induction from Kashmir Valley*

After the Kargil War, the Vohra Committee submitted its report to the GOI and advised the de-induction of the BSF from the Kashmir Valley. Before leaving the Kashmir Valley the BSF was instrumental in providing Support weapon training to the CRPF units which were being inducted in place of BSF. The involvement of the BSF in the counter-insurgency operations in the Kashmir Valley provided the force with many of its proud moments. In all the fields of these operations ranging from intelligence, combing, cordon and search and active combat the BSF excelled. It was thought that in the Kashmir Valley the BSF was being distracted from performing its primary role, i.e., border defence. The

### **'G' BRANCH DURING MILITANCY IN KASHMIR**

The BSF's intelligence wing, the 'G' branch, was able to use a formidable network of informers and technological resources to effectively target terrorist communications. The 'G' also managed police stations and interrogation centres in Srinagar. This provided substantial insights into the working of terrorist groups and generated a lot of strategic information which was used in the state's anti-terrorist operations. By the late 1990s, the BSF's intelligence work laid down the foundations of a successful counter terrorism offensive. This came as a big blow to the various jihadist groups and cells active in the Kashmir Valley. Taking a cue from all this the field formations also activated their unit 'G' network and started reaping rewards. The 'G' passed on information to BSF units operating on the ground and ensured the sharing of data with various police and army units. This was of immense help in the elimination of senior terrorist commanders. In sum, therefore, without the hard work put in by the 'G' branch of the BSF, the other Indian security forces would have faced greater difficulties in fighting the terrorists in Kashmir and many more brave lives would have been lost in the process.

Committee recommended that the government send the forces where they were meant to fulfill the duties they were originally supposed to do. Following this, the BSF was slowly de-inducted from Kashmir to augment the strength of guarding the borders of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This de-induction was carried out in phases according to the intensity of the militancy. First a few battalions were de-inducted in 2003 from Srinagar North and then a few more battalions in September 2005 from Srinagar and Anantnag District. And rest in March 2007 from Srinagar, Baramulla and Bandipur Districts. The BSF has, since then, maintained a slender presence in Srinagar and some other areas of Kashmir but the bulk of its personnel once active in that troubled state have been deployed elsewhere. The BSF has continued with its humanitarian work.

## **BSF in Operation Vijay: Kargil, 1999**

In the summer of 1999, an important and strategically instructive war occurred between Pakistan and India in the high altitude areas of the Kargil region of Jammu and Kashmir. The crucial role which the BSF played in this war is usually underestimated in the public memory of this event influenced by the media. The Kargil War is sometimes called India's first media war because during this war several influential media individuals were flown into the relatively safer parts of the war zone by the Indian Army. Consequently the images beamed from these places succeeded in crafting a narrative which glorified the Indian Army. Our attempt in this chapter is not to contest the valour displayed by several units of the Indian Army in the Kargil War but to highlight the momentous role which the BSF also played in this war. In the public discussion of this war people tend to forget that the BSF has a tradition of manning the BOPs/FDLs round the clock, throughout the year even on the mountains in the Kargil region where temperatures plummet to minus forty degrees during winter.

The present alignment of the *Line of Control (LC)* in the Kargil Sector has remained unchanged since 1971 and this strategically important high-altitude area sandwiched between India and Pakistan remained relatively peaceful till 1990. Things began to change after the Kashmir uprising of 1989. Taking advantage of the disturbed conditions in the Kashmir Valley, from where the road to Leh ran from Srinagar, Pakistan embarked on a farsighted military adventure in the Kargil Sector. The aim of Pakistan here was to interdict the highway running from Srinagar to Leh and outflank the Indian security forces tied down in the Kashmir Valley. The Pakistan Army put into practice a bold plan which met with short term success. Since September 1991, the Pakistani troops, positioned on the Kargil heights started indulging in unprovoked

firing of small arms across the LC. This was done most probably to gauge the Indian reaction to a possible large-scale infiltration of Pakistani regular and irregular troops into the areas. In 1997 the Pakistanis, unmindful of civilian casualties, shelled the Kargil town with heavy artillery. The Pakistani troops mounted Air Defence (AD) guns on the vantage posts near Harka and Khargu bridges and started a kind of target practice on the vehicles plying on the National Highway-1A (NH-1A). In this unprovoked firing seventeen Indian civilians, including women and children were killed. The matter was serious enough for some of the affected villages to be shifted to relatively safer places. Curiously enough, the villages of the Drass Valley were not shelled till April 1999. The reason for this would become clear soon enough. When the intrusions occurred, the Indian military disposition in the area were as follows: The 121 (Ind) Infantry Brigade with its Headquarters (HQ) in Kargil was traditionally deployed on the Line of Control (LC) from Kaobal Gali in the west to Chorbat La in the East. There were four regular Army units and one BSF unit under this brigade. The only BSF battalion i.e. 08 Bn BSF had its HQ in Chennigund. The deployment was as follows (see Plate 1):

- (a) 16 Grenadiers in Drass
- (b) 4 Jat with one BSF coy in Kaksar
- (c) 8 Bn BSF with two coys holding Chennigund Defended area independently
- (d) 10 Garh Rif with one BSF coy in Kargil
- (e) 3 Punjab in Batalik with one BSF Coy deployed in Chorbat-La axis

The responsibility of manning the line of control rested on both the Army and the BSF in the Kargil Sector. Consequently some Forward Defended Localities (FDLs) were manned by the Army and some by the BSF. Further, the area of responsibility assigned to a particular *brigade* along the LC was large and there were huge gaps between the FDLs due to paucity of troops. Conventionally some large gaps between Batalik and Chorbat La and east of Chorbat

La were never occupied due to mutual agreement between India and Pakistan. It seems that the armies on both sides assumed that it was mutually beneficial in peacetime to retreat from the high altitude FDLs during winter and reoccupy them during summer. Here it is important to mention that some of these gaps and continuing hill features had properly developed defences. The pill boxes here were made of concrete by the Indian Army during the 1965 and 1971 wars. Some of the FDLs which were vacated by army units with the objective to reoccupy them after winters were occupied by Pakistani troops. These positions were later used against Indian troops. Even the Long Range Patrols (LRPs) and link patrols sent from the flanking Army units that were normally sent during the winters to periodically check the remote FDLs could not attain their objectives due to extreme cold and heavy snow fall during the winter of 1998-99. *On the other hand none of the posts manned by the BSF were vacated even in these trying conditions.* This is demonstrated by the actions of the BSF battalion occupying Forward Defended Localities (FDLs) in Kaksar, *Chennigund*, Kargil and the highest post of the sector i.e., Chorbat La complex (17,000 feet) overlooking the historic Silk Road. At 17,000 feet, and especially during winter, the oxygen level in the rarified air is dangerously low. Not only was this post not vacated but the Commandant of the 8 Bn BSF, Shri S.C. Negi, in anticipation of the intentions of the Pak Army, in fact strengthened the defences of the Chorbat La complex by occupying a new dominating height called the "Bravo-1", which was very close to LC. Hence, it became the highest and most difficult FDL of the Kargil sector over 18,000 feet. A small team of 8 to 10 highly committed personnel under Shri Sonam Cherring, AC, Company Commander were deployed on this post. Had this post been occupied by the Pakistani army, the complete Chorbat La axis would have come under enemy control. Shri Negi had also set the best example of leadership by visiting this and other posts in peak winter. During this winter visit, the committed officer made an offer of winter withdrawal to the men who flatly refused to withdraw. They made it clear that if their officer was willing to visit the post in the peak of winter, there was no question of them retreating, even temporarily, from the post.

Later the Bn HQ Chennigund became the launching pad for all the troops to be inducted in Kaksar area.

The first report of Pakistani intrusion into the high altitude areas of Kargil was given to the Indian security forces by the Garkhon hunters from a village along the Yaldore Nallah in the Batalik area. These hunters have a tradition of hunting the Ibex (a species of mountain goats) which appear on the high mountains upon the retreat of winter every year. Parties of Garkhon who went up the slopes to the higher reaches in search of the Ibex in early May 1999 came back with news of the presence of strangers in the higher reaches. It is quite obvious that groups of *jihadis* and specially chosen units of the Pakistan Army had sneaked into the gaps and FDLs abandoned by the Indian Army during the winter of 1998-99. The subsequent reconnaissance patrols by the Army were fired upon and suffered casualties, thus confirming the intrusion in various areas. To their credit, the intruders had maintained their surprise till the last minute and immediately after their detection responded with heavy artillery/mortar shelling. They held advantageous positions at Mashkoh, Tiger Hill, Tololing, Bajrang Post and in Batalik area and were able to target military installations, NH-1A, villages and other targets from here at will. The plying of single vehicles and convoys on NH-1A became risky because of observed artillery fire. The extent of intrusion was up to a few kilometers inside Maskoh valley, Tiger Hill, Drass, Tololing, Kaksar, Batalik and Turtuk areas.

Working under the shadow of "Bus diplomacy" conceived by the Prime Ministers of the two countries, the Pakistan Army had made a well-planned attack on Kargil to be carried out by troops comprising a considerable mix of Pak Army regulars and the Mujahids of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM) and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM). They had apparently intruded in the months of December/January 1998-99 and subsequently consolidated their positions with well stocked ration, ammunition, medical facilities and wireless communication with secrecy mode. They even had laid a separate telephone line for ensuring the security of their communication lines. They employed deceptive



communication techniques by using wireless operators conversant in such languages as Pashto, Dardi etc. which were rarely understood by the Indian troops, most of whom belonged to the plains of northern India. It was a matter of pride for the BSF that there was not even a single case of intrusion in their area of responsibility as no BSF post, however difficult, inhospitable and untenable they may be in bone chilling winters was vacated. The BSF troops continued to hold defensive positions independently throughout the Kargil war and stood like a rock and ensured that the enemy made no gains in their area. It is to the credit of the rank and file of the BSF personnel that even as the war was going on, the Director General of the force, Shri E.N. Ram Mohan, IPS, along with the then Inspector General of Kashmir Frontier Shri K. Vijay Kumar, IPS, sustained severe injuries in a vehicle accident while driving in an area highly susceptible to enemy artillery, mortar and air defence guns. They were there to boost the morale of the troops fighting there. Shri S.C. Negi, Commandant, 8 Bn BSF and his dedicated team of officers led the enthusiastic troops from the front. On 09 May, HQ 15 Corps ordered one medium regiment and 1 Naga Battalion to move to Batalik. On the same day, the enemy bombarded Kargil very heavily and succeeded in blowing up the ammunition dump there. At the time Shri S.C. Negi, and Shri Y.S. Rathore, Deputy Commandant, Adjutant, were present in the underground operation room of the Brigade, attending the daily briefing and debriefing. All of them remained stuck there for four hours due to the heavy shelling. It was a time of great chaos. The whole town was being bombarded incessantly and numerous civilians died and many wounded. According to plan, the training coy of BSF was sent to the Batalik area and deployed in a pre-reconnoitred area. At that time around 150 BSF troops were stranded in Srinagar as the Zoji La was still closed. On the instructions of the Brigade, the Zoji La was partially cleared. BSF troops were then transported from Srinagar to Zoji La under arrangements of the sector and then from Zoji La to Chennigund under Shri Y.S. Rathore. On the same day, the unit was ordered to send all available troops to replace the troops deployed in

administrative bases in Batalik area and to move forward already deployed troops to higher posts. The unit was also tasked to occupy all culverts/bridges on the Indus river in Batalik area. This was the most difficult phase as troops were transported in vehicles in the darkness of night with the lights off. The operation was completed in almost 30-36 hours at a stretch without any rest and under heavy artillery shelling. The Bn HQ Chennigund became the launching pad for all the troops to be inducted in Kaksar area. Shri Sukhbir Singh Yadav, Deputy Commandant of 171 Bn BSF had arrived amidst battle as Officer-in-Charge of Advance Party of 171 Battalion BSF. The troops of 171 Battalion BSF had to be deployed in FDLs of 8 Bn BSF even without acclimatization to strengthen the defences. Shri Yadav decided to personally supervise the induction of troops, amidst heavy shelling but succumbed to direct observed artillery fire while moving to FDL. This was the highest example of displaying personal concern for the troops even in the most adverse of circumstances.

The 'Kala Pahar' was the Ground of Tactical Importance manned by troops of the battalion, providing shield to the Battalion HQ location. Any shortfall of shell, targeting Battalion HQ, would drop on this ridge only. During 1965, this ridge was captured by Pakistan cutting the road connecting Ladakh with Kashmir valley. Based on assessment, Brigade HQ ordered BSF to occupy 'Kala Pahar'. There were very old and scattered mines laid by Pakistan during their occupation. There was no shelter or any provision for troops. Water and food was sent by mules. Troops were forced to live in the open. Shri Surender Singh, Assistant Commandant, led a small team and was tasked to occupy the area heavily infested with mines in Kala Pahar, as this was under threat of infiltration and occupation by the enemy. Despite the high probability of stepping on drifted anti-personnel mines, he continued to move to occupy the Kala Pahar, as per the time plan. Unfortunately he stepped on a mine and lost one of his legs. He was awarded with Parakram Padak for his valour. Besides unit Mortar Platoon, unit was provided additional mortars from SHQ and Brigade and the same were deployed at various FDLs. These mortars were used

very effectively by BSF troops. Under the direction of Shri Pradip Kumar, Assistant Commandant, the mortars deployed at Chorbat La were most effective and destroyed a number of Petrol, Oil & Lubricant (POL) dumps, ammunition dumps etc. of Pakistani posts. Since army artillery was used extensively on many fronts, the army was finding it difficult to direct the fire. As BSF posts were on the forward ridge line BSF company commanders like Shri Ajit Kumar, Deputy Commandant acted as Artillery OP and directed fire. With a number of army units engaged in war, there was need for quick dissemination of orders. BSF personnel belonging to south Indian states were provided for Radio Telephony (RT) transmission. It proved to be very useful as information was shared by the army in the quickest possible time without threat of breach of information. Also there was difficulty in deciphering in the intercepted messages of Pakistanis as the local languages were not known to army personnel. For this the local Ladakhi personnel of the BSF deployed at the Army Interception Centre proved to be very useful. Effective medical and logistics cover was provided by the BSF to army casualties, especially in the adjoining areas of Kaksar.

The 153 Bn BSF deployed in the Niru area, adjacent to Kargil also faced similar challenges. This unit, under the command of Shri S.S. Tomar, Commandant, and his team of officers had taken a lot of tactical initiatives and occupied many difficult and dominating posts such as Salil, Jhankar, Tayar, Nadan, Azad, Gola, Gujral and Old Vishwas amidst the enemy artillery shelling to deny any intrusion into their area. Many BSF personnel had sustained severe injuries and several laid down their lives in Kargil as well as outside Kargil on other FDLs all along the LC while fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Army.

The BSF and Army battalions deployed in Kargil were given intelligence cover by Joint Assistant Director (General) [JAD(G)] which is now known as Deputy Commandant (General) [DC(G)] Srinagar Sector, through its excellent network of resources available in the area. They provided intelligence inputs such as the movement of troops, guns/weapons, construction of new roads, tracks, defensive positions, political development, visits by senior

military officers and concentration of mujahids etc. The information was collected and passed punctually to the BSF hierarchy as well as Army authorities. The BSF 'G' branch shared five different intelligence reports from July 1998 to December 1998 covering various aspects like shifting of artillery positions, development of new gun positions, vacation/shifting of POK villages near LC, stopping leave of military personnel, deployment of commandos near LC, construction of tracks near FDLs, stocking of huge quantity of ammunition, increased and frequent visit of senior military officers, deployment of additional air defence guns, movement of militants in hundreds opposite the Kargil sector, presence of hundreds of militants in military camps across the LC, construction of helipads, opening of new Field Intelligence Unit (FIU) office near the LC, construction of underground bunkers, shifting of approximately five hundred militants (apparently Northern Light Infantry personnel in civil dress) and their suspected crossing of LC etc. These inputs had adequate indication of unprecedented military built-up and suspicious militant activities which had tremendous potential for further build up as hard intelligence.

In December 1998, the BSF reported that fighter aircrafts were frequently landing at Skardu and carrying out night-flying practice. This was discussed with the Army and the Air Force both indicated that such activity in this sector was normal. In the same month, an approximately three-fold increase in troop movements over the previous month was noted though this was substantially less compared to December 1997. This was therefore not considered an indicator of extraordinary activity. It was also reported that vehicle and animal transport movements were two-fold and nine-fold greater than those in November 1998.<sup>28</sup> There were also several reports regarding the movement of militants in the area opposite the Kargil sector. These inputs came essentially from the BSF. In October 1998, the Brigade Intelligence Team (BIT) indicated the presence of Taliban elements opposite Kargil. In

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28. Kargil Committee Report.

November 1998, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) reported that militants/Taliban were being trained near Skardu, as also reported earlier by BIT, and that they were learning Balti and Ladakhi in readiness for being infiltrated into the Kargil sector, possibly in April 1999. The BSF reported in December 1998 that five hundred Taliban who were being trained in Gurikot had been sent to Kashmir. All these reports are indicative of infiltration and not of intrusion of the type that was later undertaken by Pakistan. These reports were also sketchy and contradictory in the sense that some suggested that the militants had already been inducted into Kashmir while others suggested that they were to be inducted specifically into the Kargil sector in April 1999.<sup>29</sup>

Immediately after detection of intrusion in the first week of May 1999, the BSF 'G' set up at Chennigund activated their resources and found accurate inputs on the nature and extent of intrusion. After ascertaining some of the facts, these were brought to the notice of Brigade HQ through the Commandant. By the end of the second week of May 1999, the nature and extent of intrusion in various areas were more or less ascertained through BSF 'G' resources. The BSF 'G' resources were also made available to the Army authorities for use in Drass and Batalik areas. These resources, being local and well conversant with the terrain, proved to be of immense help. They were also used to ascertain the mixing of intruders with the local population in the villages. Once they could confirm that no intruders had mixed with the local population, they were further used to identify and find sensitive places and routes of further infiltration and likely escape routes of intruders. All this helped in the proper placing of own troops to effectively control and contain any further intrusion.

Army and other premier intelligence agencies had established interception centres in Drass and Batalik area. However, they found it difficult to interpret the enemy's wireless communication as the intruders were using Dardi, Balti, Pusto, Farsi and Arabic languages during wireless conversation. The BSF's 'G' Branch

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29. Kargil Committee Report.

resources played a vital role at this stage. An interpretation/translation cell was established under direct supervision of JAD (G) Shri O.S. Jha, DC (G) with Unit 'G' Cell at Chennigund, where polyglot resource persons were called from Srinagar and employed. Recorded cassettes of premier intelligence agencies and Army were translated and analyzed by the BSF 'G' set up. This arrangement was of tremendous value in assessing the strength of intruders, locations of their posts, their morale, state of supplies and stores, state of re-inforcement, replenishments, casualties and state of casualties' evacuation, visit of commanders, availability of telephone lines with intruders, effect of Indian Artillery/Mortar shelling, effect of air attack, enemy's likely plan of actions etc. One of the most versatile interpreters was deployed in Drass who was directly listening to the intruders' transmission and translating instantly, thus generating real-time actionable intelligence for the armed forces.

Inspector (G) Habibullah of 08 Bn BSF, (who later died for the country while fighting the militants in Kashmir) was a local resident of Drass and was of immense help in translating Dardi and Balti languages. He was assisting Brigade HQ very frequently for on the spot translation of recorded wireless conversations. He also helped in motivating local youths for working as porters during a crucial stage when the local population had fled from the area in panic due to Pakistani Artillery shelling and nobody was willing to perform the duty of a porter amidst enemy's Artillery/Mortar shelling. The first hand Intelligence input confirming the nature and extent of intrusion was sent to Force Headquarters BSF by JAD (G) BSF Srinagar stationed at Kargil. The same was shared with the Home Ministry by the BSF without any loss of time. This input had acted as an alarm about the extent, nature and seriousness of the intrusion.<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directed BSF to station, JAD (G) BSF Srinagar in battle area permanently providing day-to-day intelligence. Despite serious and direct threat to his life due to Artillery/Mortar shelling and

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30. Based on various interactions and discussion with Shri E.N. Rammohan, IPS (Retd), the then Director General BSF.

### 49 Bn BSF IN KARGIL WAR

'B' coy of 49 Bn BSF was deployed at the LC in saddle complex of Kala pahar under 121 inf bde manning Saddle, Wali, Lt Bump and Rt Bump posts with 13th Sikh Post Ring contour LP & LP1 on its right flank. On 20 August 1984, in the morning, a group of Pakistanis in orange/kesari coloured salwar kameez were seen coming from the Pak post Hut along the LC towards BSF's Saddle post. At the same time a similar colour flag was hoisted at Pak post Hut opposite Sikh LI post LP-I. This group crossed the LC and entered our territory below Saddle post where they started cutting grass. On this a warning was shouted by the BSF officer followed by the firing of a warning shot, which went unheeded.

This made the BSF Company Commander realize that these troops were from some special forces and had come for operation. To be fully prepared for such an eventuality following actions were taken immediately:

- (i) The area from where the Pak troops had crossed into our area was chosen the killing ground i.e. between Pak Post Takri and at own Post Rt bump.
- (ii) MMG of Rt Bump was shifted ahead of the post to deflated position connected by line, comn with Coy HQ to cover the killing ground.
- (iii) LMG Det of three men each, self-contained for 24 hours and equipped with binoculars were deployed at pre-receied positions, i.e. 500-1000 Mtr from the post well before the enemy came.

The next day i.e. 21 August, 1984 at about 0930 hrs fully Armed Pak troops numbering 36 were seen approaching with a HMG and on seeing one of the LMG Det opened fire and the skirmish lasted till last light. In the forenoon 15 black clad Pak troops augmented the Pak troops who had already lost 11 i.e. 6 dead and 5 injured. Out of this new group, two were injured.

The injured were evacuated during the night but the dead bodies were permitted to be taken after two days, under camera at the intervention of UNO.

In this whole incident there were no casualties of BSF troops and for this brave action one LNK was awarded with Sena medal and two head constables were appreciated by Army Chief's Commendation Roll (COAS's CC).

This incident in Kargil sector which had remained dormant was the most serious LC violation since 1971 by the Pak troops. Good vigilance and correct action taken by Sub unit commanders ensured that the LC violation by Pak was severely dealt with.

direct observed fire of the Air defence guns, during any movement in the battle area, the JAD (G) kept visiting the affected areas from Drass to Batalik on a regular basis and collected vital information regarding the morale of intruders and likely resistance

from them and relayed the information to the HQ. Besides Kargil, 'G' inputs from other areas along the LC in J&K were equally valuable during the war scenario. Remarking upon the BSF's human intelligence sources, the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in their report to the Government on Kargil mentioned specifically that they were "by far the MOST SUPERIOR".

The Chennigund area was defended independently by BSF troops, who held their posts valiantly in the face of heavy shelling by the enemy. It should not be forgotten that in J&K the BSF has so far annihilated around 2,000 militants, apprehended around 9,049 and recovered no less than 4,450 AK rifles. In the process, 529 BSF personnel have sacrificed their lives and 2,886 suffered injuries.



## **Left-Wing Extremism**

From its beginnings in the forest tract of northern Bengal, Left-Wing Extremism has expanded to cover a broad geographical area. It has also undergone a tremendous expansion in its ideological space. It is now no longer only a movement against the exploitations by the local landlord or the corrupt forest officials bent on exploiting the already precarious situation of the tribes. This expansion in the scope of the “struggle” has also meant that the security challenge that this movement represented has also multiplied immensely. The prevalent poverty, insensitivity of the administration and political manipulation of the movement by vested political interests have created a dangerous cocktail. It is no longer, for example, possible to take for granted that the tribes in the areas of Abujmar or Koraput look up to the Indian state in their times of need. The collapse of state authority has meant that in large swathes of territory, the political vacuum has been monopolised by a melange of elements which have a tenacious relation to violence.

The increasing foothold of Left-Wing Extremists compelled the Government of India to deploy BSF against what has been described as the “biggest threat to the nation”. On 16 December 2009, Anti-Naxal Operations (ANO), BSF was raised with three sectors – Raipur, Koraput and Thiruvananthapuram with a mandate to assist the police in conduct of ANO. This was to generate a sense of security among the local population and to facilitate developmental activities. The ANO set up of BSF was further bifurcated and renamed as HQ IG (Spl Ops) Odisha with Tac HQ at Bhubaneswar and HQ IG (Spl Ops) Chhattisgarh with Tac HQ at Bhilai. Presently there are 16 BSF battalions fighting against the Naxals in the formidable terrains of India under these two HQ. BSF raised one Frontier and one Left Wing

Extremism (LWE) operational sector initially, on 16 December 2009, and ten units were deployed in LWE-affected districts in Kanker (Chhattisgarh) and subsequently in Koraput and Malkangiri (both in Odisha) from January 2010. Drawing on its vast experience of tackling terrorism in various parts, the BSF adopted a combat and non-combat strategy in consonance with the Government's policy on security and development and increased its footprint to two Frontiers, four Sectors, and sixteen units to assist the state police in conducting anti-Left-Wing operations.

During the early stages of deployment, the BSF met with stiff resistance and skirmishes with Naxalites were more frequent. Naxalites mostly resort to exploding Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), using huge quantities of explosives, stolen from the large number of mining firms active in the area, to inflict maximum casualties on security forces personnel to demoralise and gain the upper hand in the area. In a situation where the troops have been deployed in far off areas and are dependent on vehicular movement, the menace of IEDs played havoc. Getting accustomed to this situation took some time. After gaining some experience, in handling the situations, the combat hardened Force started achieving effective domination of the areas of deployment. The successful experiences of working in Kashmir and the NE, made it possible for the BSF to adopt a combat and non-combat strategy in consonance with the Government to achieve commendable results.

The success of BSF against Maoists is quite evident from the fact that within a short span of time since its entry into LWE areas, the Force has earned more than 25 gallantry awards so far. From the numerous gritty operations being conducted by BSF, a few of them deserve special mention.

On 29 August, 2010 at about 0400 hours, after due preparation as per tactical requirements, a party comprising two Inspectors, fifty seven Other Ranks, Tactical Headquarters elements of 200 Bn BSF four Police Personnel and five Special Police Officers (SPOs) of Chhattisgarh Police left Tactical Headquarters,

Durgkondal to sanitize the area between Durgkondal and Village Bhuski (located on Bhanupratappur-Pakhanjur axis, between Milestones 34 and 35, at a distance of approximately 8.5 kilometres from Durgkondal towards Pakhanjur). The party led by Inspector Arjun Singh was detailed to carry out Area Domination Patrol and Road Security Operation (RSO), while the party of Inspector Manish Kumar was tasked to lay Mobile Check Post. The party advanced tactically taking all precautionary measures. Constable Arup Rakshit, was clearing all the probable IED sites with the help of Deep Search Metal Detector (DSMD). He was followed by Police Constable Vishnu Ram Ladiya and SPO Umed Kumar providing cover from right side of the road. Head Constable Pramod Kumar Singh, Constable Bheema Shankar and Constable Tejendra Singh were just behind, covering the left side of the road. At about 0650 hours, as the leading scouts reached a road bend between milestones no. 33 and 34, located approximately 8.5 kilometres from Durgkondal, they came under heavy fire from the North-West direction. The leading troops, without losing a moment, jumped towards the left side of the road and took cover, but by this time, the Naxals started firing from the South-West direction also. Initially, Head Constable Pramod Kumar Singh, Constable Arup Rakshit, Constable Bheema Shankar, Constable Tejendra Singh and other troops of the patrolling party were pinned down by the heavy volume of fire of the well-positioned and well-entrenched Naxalites who had laid a deliberate ambush. In the face of heavy fire, Head Constable Pramod Kumar Singh, displayed indomitable courage and combat audacity by retaliating the fire. The Naxals suffered heavy casualties. The relentless retaliation by these gallant soldiers compelled the well-entrenched Naxals to shift their positions, which provided an opportunity to the pinned-down members of the patrolling party to reorganize and manoeuvre their positions which helped them break out of the Naxals' ambush. The fierce retaliation by these brave soldiers attracted fire assault from all around making it impossible for these men to be in the open. Still, they continued their advance in utter disregard to their personal safety towards the well-entrenched

Naxals who were targeting the patrol from well-disguised and covered positions. Despite grievous bullet injuries, they stood their ground and fired till their last, exhibiting the highest degree of audacity and courage. Constable Tejendra Singh, who survived, kept on firing on the Naxals' positions, without caring for his personal safety, by shifting positions till the Naxals fled from the site. In the meanwhile, the patrol engaged the other firing positions of the ambush by direct fire and by firing high explosives from 51 mm Mortars from other directions and uprooted the well dug-in Naxals who fled with the casualties and injured Naxals.

This is one of the rarest operations, when a deliberate ambush by well-entrenched Naxalite party was broken by the Security Forces. The gallant efforts of taking the Naxals head-on by Head Constable Pramod Kumar Singh, Constable Arup Rakshit, Constable Bheema Shankar and Constable Tejendra Singh made it a successful counter-ambush operation and saved the precious lives of other members of the patrolling party. However, all the four brave soldiers laid down their lives in the line of duty and were awarded Police Medals for Gallantry. In this operation, huge quantities of explosives and other materials intended to be used against security forces were recovered. This counter-ambush by BSF has made an indelible dent in the psyche of Naxals.

On 26 August 2013, a party consisting of three Subordinate Officers and fifteen Other Ranks of 161 Bn BSF left THQ Balimela, Malkangiri (Odisha) for Battalion HQ, Gandhinagar (Gujarat) in three vehicles (two 5 ton and one TATA 709) carrying arms, ammunition, explosives and other miscellaneous stores. On 27 August 2013, after an overnight halt at Sector Headquarters, Koraput, the party under command of Inspector Gaurav Godbole further moved towards Vishakhapatnam by NH-26. At about 0915 hours, while vehicles were passing over a culvert approximately 6 kilometres ahead of Pottangi, the last vehicle (5 ton) was the target of a severe blast. The Maoists had detonated a powerful IED, followed by heavy volume of fire. The intensity of the blast was so high that the vehicle blew up 40 feet in the air, simultaneously, 60-70 Maoists, who had laid a deliberate ambush with adequate

planning, opened heavy fire on the BSF team from the hillocks. Inspector Gaurav, who was sitting in the co-driver's seat in the middle vehicle, was hit by a bullet which pierced through the left lower back of his body. Despite being grievously injured, he displayed strong determination and valour. Inspector Gaurav took charge of the situation and retaliated the Naxals' fire and simultaneously directed vehicles to move to a safer place. Accordingly, the first and second vehicles were shifted 200 metres ahead from the site. However, the position of the second vehicle was such that the bullets being showered by the Maoists were hitting the vehicle from the left and the rear. The troops jumped out from the vehicle and tried to evacuate Inspector Gaurav to a nearby hospital, but he refused to leave the troops under such crucial circumstances. He even refused to take first aid as the Naxals were re-grouping at the hill top to attack the BSF party and at this point of time he led the troops to repulse the attack of the Naxals without wasting time. With utter disregard to his injury and in the face of fierce attack by the Naxals, Inspector Gaurav deputed a team to occupy dominating position in an adjacent hillock to provide cover fire to the party of the second vehicle who would extricate the injured personnel from the last vehicle. Amidst heavy fire and unmindful of his own life, HC Sunil Kumar TP, who was in the rescue team, rushed towards the wreckage of the vehicle lying on one side of the road. He saw that the BSF personnel of the vehicle were lying all around. The Naxals were firing indiscriminately towards the vehicle. HC Sunil Kumar TP, engaged the Naxals by firing and reached near the wreckage of the vehicle and observed that two jawans were seriously injured and trapped under the debris of the vehicle. He helped them out of the debris and shifted them to a safer place in spite of the heavy volume of fire from the Naxals. In the meantime, a group of Naxals firing heavily attempted to advance towards the damaged vehicle with the aim to loot weapons and ammunition and to kill the injured jawans. Inspector Gaurav kept motivating his section to continue the fight and mount more pressure on the Naxals with fire. Their exemplary courage and remarkable fire discipline

yielded result and the Naxals ultimately fled for their lives. The BSF party displayed exemplary professionalism, grit and bravery by beating back a well-conceived deliberate ambush by numerically superior and hard core Naxalite cadres. Inspector Gourav Godbole and HC Sunil Kumar TP displayed dauntless courage, camaraderie and selfless zeal in the encounter, thus saving lives of injured personnel as well as preventing arms and ammunition from getting looted. After the ambush, large quantities of explosives were recovered from the site. In this encounter Inspector Gaurav Godbole, Constable Sunil T P were awarded President's Police Medal for Gallantry.

The 163 Battalion of the BSF took up the challenge of initially establishing itself in the Koyalabeda location of Chhattisgarh and then improving the village. It was an immensely challenging task to even provide basic amenities to the villagers in the area. The task was especially daunting because every action of the BSF was disapprovingly scrutinized. In this environment, it was very easy for the Naxals to spread their anti-state propaganda. This included explaining the presence of BSF as a symbol of extension of the oppressive arms of the state. The 163 Battalion built a campus in this jungle which was devoid of any road head. The initial challenge of the BSF was to break the nexus between the public and the Naxals. The sentiment had to be propagated that the BSF was out there to help the people. The BSF re-started the bus service which had been stopped by the Naxals. The restoration of the communications followed next. BSNL contributed to this endeavour by establishing lines for the BSF and the village.

Once the battle for the hearts of the people had been won, the BSF started its operative battles. This was a huge success too. This is reflected in the excellent achievements by this unit in capturing weapons, ammunitions and neutralizing targets in their area of responsibility. Also the schools and Anganwadis were re-established and dropouts were persuaded to re-join school. The BSF men also provided security to weekly markets which were better stocked due to improved communications lines. The bonhomie between the unit and the people reached a point when

the officers and men started getting invitations to various functions like marriages and other social gatherings. The village of Koyalabeda, though still a fair distance away from modernisation, is full of praise and thanks for the role played by the BSF in normalising and improving the situation there. For the last six decades the Naxals were hoisting the black flag on Independence Day in the football ground of Koyalabeda. It was the BSF which changed this by hoisting the national tricolour.

BSF also did a remarkable job in providing of medical facilities. It was a challenge to treat the various medical emergencies out there. It was due to the contribution of this unit that a health worker was appointed to look after this area. The praiseworthy work done by the unit to alleviate the suffering of the villagers, who were battling rampant Gastroenteritis drew applause from the villagers and district authorities.

The BSF units in LWE area have showed stellar performance, and have occupied seventy four Company Operative Bases (COBs) till date. Moreover the Left-Wing Cadres are demoralised due to the neutralization of their key operatives. In Kanker, the LWE has been unable to carry out any offensive actions in the last one year. Improved civic facilities like sports infrastructure, distribution of books, medical assistance which have been provided by the BSF have led to increased acceptance of the role of BSF. Due to the BSF's strategy to win the hearts of people, LWE is seen a fall in recruitment. Combined with this, the regional rivalries among various LWE groups have further weakened their campaign against security forces. The apprehension of a large number of LWE operatives has reduced the capacity of these groups to mount attacks.

The BSF has reduced the scope of the safe havens of LWE, by the occupation of new COBs. The BSF has also maintained a regular data of the local villages, crime patterns, and the modus operandi of the Left Wing Groups. The thrust by BSF to improve upon its modern gadgets and equipments in tune with the latest available technologies on the ground has led to improved operational planning which was reflected in the encounter which

**SUPREME SACRIFICE IN THE LINE OF DUTY IN LWE**

On 10 February 2012, at about 0755 hours, Shri Jeewan Ram Khaswan, Commandant 107 Bn along with Inspector(G) Ashok Kumar Yadav, ASI (RM) Jitender Kumar, Ct Bishnu Pani and Ct (Driver) Suvendu Kundu left Tac (HQ) Balimela, Malkangiri (Odisha) for COB Chittrakonda and COB Tunnel Camp to brief the troops in view of Panchayat elections the next day. On the way back Shri Rajesh Sharan, 2IC also joined them at COB Chittrakonda. At about 1245 hours their vehicle came under a severe IED blast followed by heavy volume of fire from 30 to 40 Naxals perched on dominant positions. Commandant and his team sustained grievous injuries. Notwithstanding the same, they managed to come out of the badly damaged vehicle, positioned themselves and effectively retaliated. They stood their ground till the end exhibiting the highest degree of courage against naxalites in this encounter Shri Jeewan Ram Khaswan, Commandant, Shri Rajesh Sharan, 2IC, Shri Ashok Kumar Yadav, Inspector and Shri Jitender Kumar, ASI displayed conspicuous gallantry and were awarded Police Medal for Gallantry posthumously.

Two of the Maoists who were part of this ambush later surrendered before SP of Sukma and DIG of Vizag in August & October 2012 respectively. During the investigation, they confessed that in spite of the powerful IED blast, the BSF officers fought valiantly.

*Praise from the enemy is the best tribute to the gallant BSF men who fell in action.*

took place on 26 June 2011 when an RSO party of 163 Bn BSF came under heavy fire from the Naxals. Displaying tremendous courage and precise operational planning, the BSF troops managed to neutralize four hard-core Naxals in the ensuing encounter. Though the BSF also lost three of its personnel, its party managed to repel the attack from the Naxals whose strength ranged from 300-500. It was a remarkable operation where high degree of training, fire discipline, tactical manoeuvring and comradeship was on display.



## RESPONSE TO OTHER NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS

### **Delhi Police Strike, 1967**

On 13 April 1967, the leaders of the Delhi Police Union raised the banner of revolt to protest against the termination of services of some indisciplined police personnel of the Delhi Police. As soon as the panic stricken IG of the Delhi Police brought the matter to the notice of the Home Secretary, the BSF was pressed in to service to contain, control and overcome the situation.

Shri Rustamji, IP passed an order for the BSF units located in Delhi to get ready for the task and he himself, along with some officers and escort, left for the control room of the Delhi Police. The situation in the control room was highly confusing. Nobody knew the exact location of the agitating Delhi police personnel. Finally, he began along with his party, to locate the procession of the agitated Delhi Police employees on the streets of Delhi. While on the way to Rashtrapati Bhawan, he received an input that 5000 policemen were raising slogans and that the CRP men, who had been deployed inside the North Avenue security lines, had joined the demonstrations. Efforts were made to block their way.

Meanwhile senior Delhi Police officials were trying to negotiate with the Home Minister at his residence. By 1600 hours the procession of the protesting Delhi Police employees was advancing towards the house of the Home Minister where one company of the BSF had taken positions for protection. They tried to break open the rear gate but when they saw the BSF getting ready to fire, retreated, but continued with slogan shouting and provocative speech outside the residence of the Home Minister. The Delhi Police Officers were so afraid that they felt that if the BSF opens fire the backlash would engulf them and their families. They impressed upon the BSF to deposit their weapons and carry on duty with sticks. However, it was turned down. The situation was getting serious. Reinforcement was called. Shri Ashwini Kumar, IG BSF Western Frontier arrived with four battalions. Though operation was to be launched early in the morning and the aim was to arrest all the agitating employees on *dharna* outside the house of the Home Minister, due to a delay in the arrival of reinforcement, it started at around 1530 hours. Prior to that, during a meeting in the Home Secretary's office, the BSF had categorically put forward the requirement of a free hand in dealing with the situation, which was agreed upon. Having acquired a free hand in dealing with the revolt, Shri Rustamji was himself not very confident about the reaction of the BSF troops once they are face-to-face with the task of suppressing police revolt as a majority had a police background. The situation was such that the Home Minister had not been able to come out of his residence for thirty six hours.

Before the final showdown against the striking Delhi Police employees was put in action, a meeting was convened in the morning. It was attended by the Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, Shri K.F. Rustamji, Shri Ashwini Kumar and Shri P.A. Roshia. At the meeting, Shri Rustamji was not in favour of any clampdown. While, Shri Ashwini Kumar put forth his view that clampdown was the urgent need of the hour and all the striking Delhi Police personnel needed to be arrested and sent to jail. The Cabinet Secretary agreed to the advice of Shri Ashwini Kumar and directed Shri Rustamji to work accordingly. Shri Rustamji

was still not confident but the body language, tone and confidence of Shri Ashwini Kumar forced him to allow Shri Ashwini Kumar to go ahead with his plan.

As soon as the plan was put into action, the BSF platoon resorted to a bayonet charge and surrounded the striking Delhi Police employees. The roads to the Delhi Gymkhana and Ashoka Hotel were still open, but before the striking employees could think of anything, the reinforcement of Western Frontier, under Ashwini Kumar, advanced with bayonets fixed. Once the cordon was complete, the Additional District Magistrate announced that the congregations of striking Delhi Police employees was unlawful and they would be arrested. On seeing the posture of the BSF, they raised their hands and surrendered. The entire operation was completed within twenty one minutes. Some of the striking employees tried to escape but they could not. All the striking employees were arrested and sent to jail. Nobody ever expected that the entire operation would end in such a smooth manner.

On 26 April 1967, Shri Y.B. Chavan, the then Home Minister, addressed all the BSF companies and gave a reward of Rs. 500/- each to three injured BSF employees and a Transistor to each company.

### **UP PAC STRIKE**

The agitation by the policemen of the Uttar Pradesh Provincial Armed Constabulary in 1973 is still remembered as one of the most unfortunate law and order disturbances of modern India. As the situation got out of control, the BSF was ordered to handle it. Shri Rustamji, the DG BSF was asked to disarm the PAC battalions which had revolted. He had to do this with a couple of BSF battalions at his disposal. Rustamji replied that he would like to have first-hand information to formulate a plan and that he would have to withdraw at least 20 BSF battalions from border to act with a backing of five army units in reserve. However by evening the Army agreed to tackle the situation on its own. This worsened the situation. Firing broke out at several places and the police and army personnel suffered serious casualties. Finally Army was directed to stop firing. On the other hand, the BSF had surrounded one unit of the PAC and made them surrender without resistance. Lt. Col. R.P. Basi of the BSF accomplished this with great tact and without resorting to violence.

### Ahmedabad Riots, 1969

The city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat was severely engulfed by communal violence as the city was preparing to celebrate the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi. On 20 September 1969 the BSF was informed that the civilian authorities required additional reinforcement in dealing with the outbreak of communal riots in Ahmedabad city. Three companies from the 02 Bn and 03 Bn of the BSF were immediately dispatched to Shahibagh Police Headquarters in Ahmedabad City. The Inspector General of Police of Gujarat rang up to request the DIG BSF for the BSF men to be deployed with *lathis* and that too with penny packets of half sections. This request was politely refused by the BSF officer who drew the attention of the IG to a pamphlet on Internal Security Duties issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in connection with BSF deployment and conveyed to him that the BSF was an Armed Force of the Union and that the rules under which it functions on IS duties did not permit the use of *lathis* or such deployment in penny-packets. The three companies remained in the police stations till late afternoon of 21 September 1969.

As the situation in Ahmedabad city went out of hand, an emergency meeting was convened at the residence of the Chief Minister where it was decided that the Army and the BSF would be called as an aid to the civil authorities. Immediately the platoons which were lying scattered in the Police Stations of the city were concentrated into company formations and deployed in the worst affected areas within the city namely Kalupur, Prem Darwaja and Idgah. By this time companies of the 16 Bn and 18 Bn BSF which were ordered to move to Ahmedabad from Jodhpur and Nagaur respectively had arrived in Ahmedabad city.

On 22 September 1969, another meeting was held at the Chief Minister's residence where the BSF was given the responsibility of

operating in the walled city. Their deployment was completed by 2330 hours within the entire walled city. The city was in such a state of chaos and confusion that there was hardly any time for the city Police Officers to clearly demarcate areas. The area of responsibility allotted to the BSF was approximately 25 Sq miles with dense and mixed population of approximately nine and half lakh people. The deployment was essentially in company strength with specified areas of responsibility in the by lanes and localities given to each platoons. Instructions issued were that sections of these platoons could be deployed in a manner as to be mutually supporting.

Since the law and order situation was appalling the BSF contingents were ordered to act in the exercise of the right to private self defence in order to prevent damage and destruction to public life and property. Besides this area, the badly affected areas of Chamanpura and Asarva which fell outside the walled city were also allotted to the BSF and accordingly companies of 18 Bn BSF were sent to Ambalisan and Vijapur. Thereafter one company of the 18 Bn BSF was diverted to Himmatnagar from Palanpur. Continuous and vigorous patrolling for a period of three days by the BSF personnel yielded very good results. The people came to know and understand that this was a Force which meant business and while no repressive measures were being used against the public, no laxity was shown either. Whenever a BSF contingent or patrol resorted to judicious use of force when the riots were at its peak, it was commensurate with the demands and dictates of each individual situation. Actually the BSF contingents continued to function practically independently under the company commanders in various localities although the elements of the fatigued State Reserve Police and the city Police were present alongside. They also ensured that a local police officer of the city was always present with the detachments within the walled city so that if any contingent dispersal of an unlawful assembly had to be undertaken or be dealt with for violation of curfew, the BSF would have the cover of the local police officer who had the legal powers to use adequate force in dealing with such situation.

The BSF functioned with a complete sense of impartiality in

this very important and delicate Internal Security Duty assignment. In its success in the early years of its inception it showed that it can be an important instrument in the hands of the constitutional authority to deal with anti-social elements and disrupters of organized social living. It performed its duty without any fear or favour from any quarter and thus instilled a lot of confidence in the public as being a true guardian of law and order. The extent to which the BSF work was appreciated by the State Government can be aptly summed up by the fact that the BSF was then requested by the State Government and the IG of Police Gujarat State to train two additional SRP units on the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) pattern for the State Government for meeting precisely such emergencies.

While the people were made aware about BSF's efficiency it also showcased the compassion of the BSF men. A BSF relief camp was organized wherein approximately 250 refugee families were fed and an equal number were provided medical aid. This relief camp was organized and established within a record time of eight hours after receiving the go ahead from the DG BSF. The Union Home Minister and the State Chief Minister were pleased to distribute food-stuffs to the refugees in this camp. Personal touch and constant supervision right from the DIG down to the last Constable, ensured in the minds of all BSF personnel that they were there to work as a team and carry on and fulfill a very imperative duty towards their country and towards their fellow citizens.

### **The Railway Strike, 1974: BSF kept the wheels moving**

The Railways was one of the earliest vehicles of industrial capitalism in India and still is one of the most important cogs that keep the country's economy chugging. The railway industry was also the first in which industrial workers launched collective action as early as 1862. The rail workers' strike of 1974 was one of the largest in independent India. The railway men sought to impress upon the government their grievances by making sure that the nervous system of the country i.e. the railways, comes to a screeching halt. With the rail workers being able to halt work en masse, the strike was intense in several areas of the country, especially Bihar. It was in these pressing times the BSF was called upon to 'Keep the Wheels Moving'. This operation was named 'Operation Thunder'.

The railways in Bihar carry the resources for key sectors of the Indian economy, such as power generation, steel production and movement of foodgrains, petrol and oils to different parts of the country. To keep this route safe for transportation, the BSF planned the operation in co-operation with the state authorities as well as the railway officers concerned. In the third week of April 1974, a special sector was created to deal with the problems of the coal-steel belt of Bihar and West Bengal with HQ at Dhanbad. The Patna sector looked after the rest of the railway system in Bihar. On 08 May 1974, in wake of the complete collapse of the police arrangement at Mughalsarai, the area of responsibility of Patna sector was extended to include it too.

The senior-most officers of the BSF, right from the Director General, were involved in containing this situation. In fact, the IG BSF himself visited most of the important places to ensure that the divisional and district level coordination committees had a clear idea of their tasks and the ways to achieve them.

The tasks that were allotted to the BSF were:

- (a) Escorting the trains and guarding the cabins.
- (b) Protection of the railway lines and vital installations.
- (c) Patrolling in big railway colonies at important places.
- (d) Protection and escorting willing workers.

In order to augment the availability of forces, it was decided to have a platoon strength of Bihar Homeguards attached to each company, and a section to each platoon of BSF. Five hundred and sixty seven Homeguards were thus attached to the BSF for this emergency. The BSF officers and men not only looked after the Homeguards but also did a credit worthy job in upgrading their training during the period of attachment. The performance of the Homeguards attached to the BSF improved to such a level that they came to be known as 'BSF trained Homeguards'. This was in sharp contrast to the situation prevailing just a few months back where the senior officers of the police force were hesitant to take the Homeguards into account at all.

The situation escalated quickly on the night of 01 May 1974 when the striking workers came to know that their leaders such as Shri George Fernandes and others were going to be arrested. Gangs of workers went around the railway station premises at different places and brought about a complete shutdown at many railway stations. The officers and personnel of the BSF played a vital role in containing and reversing this situation, especially at important stations like Danapur, Jamshedpur, Mughalsarai, Gaya etc.

In the discussion about the strike, the importance of Operation 'Salvage Moghalsarai' cannot be overstated. Because of its central position in the rail network of the region it was vital that the Mughalsarai (or Moghalsarai as it was then known) station functioned continuously. On 08 May 1974 while the IG BSF Patna was in the control room of the Police HQ, information was received that movement of trains from Gaya to Mughalsarai had been brought to a halt. It was learnt from the IG BSF Dhanbad that Mughalsarai had completely collapsed leading to total stoppage



of movement of coal trains west of Mughalsarai. He also reported that the lines between Dhanbad and Mughalsarai had been jammed. The DS Danapur came through with the information that all operations at the Mughalsarai station had come to a total halt due to rampaging mobs of striking workers, who were moving all over the yards and railway stations, intimidating willing workers and dragging them away from their places of work under threats of grave violence. The local administration too was found to be hesitant in using force against the striking workers. Accordingly, a platoon of 73 Battalion of the BSF from Danapur, in a special train, and two companies of 18 Battalion BSF were moved in from Delhi, by air, towards Mughalsarai. Immediately upon their arrival, they were tasked with guarding vital installations and driving away the striking workers from the railway premises so that the workforce that had remained loyal could start working in a safe environment and the station could be brought back to its legs. The situation improved by leaps and bounds after these actions were taken and the local authorities were also buttressed.

An effort was made in another direction on 10 May 1974 to restore the confidence of the willing workers. Groups of BSF men were sent out in colonies to meet the workers and increase their confidence about their safety. This was a great success as a large number of workers came out and were given shelter at the platform itself. Arrangement was also made to serve them snacks at regular intervals. Then on 15 May 1974, the IG BSF accompanied by D.S. Danapur visited workers' colonies and assured their families about their well-being. It was through these actions of the BSF in co-operation with other state authorities that the Mughalsarai station was made operational again.

The role of effective electronic communication cannot be ignored in conducting such a large scale operation. Every company HQ was linked with the sub sector by wireless. Some of the most important places like Gaya, Bhagalpur, Dumka and Chapra were on radio telephony too. While the signal boys of the various BSF battalions operating in Bihar worked efficiently round the clock. Shri M. Vijayan, JC (Comn) Communication Directorate indeed

# Responding to the Call of the Nation

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## Ahmedabad Riots



Removing injured policemen on private firing on Dariapur Vadigam area

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Ahmedabad Riots—Kalupur Chalila

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# Bhagalpur Riots

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Shadow of death looming over Bhagalpur District

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# Blood-Bath

(Contd. from page 1)

woman had her stomach crushed with stones by a mob on the railway track near Bhagalpur station in broad daylight resulting in abortion and immediate death.

An army officer, Major G.P.S. Nerk complained to the district authorities about the lack of coordination between the police and the administration in containing the violence in the villages. He specifically mentioned Fatehpur village which had been surrounded by Yadava and Mandal criminal gangsters and Chandri village near curfew-bound Sabour where, according to the latest reports, at least 70 persons have been killed by gangsters.

The BSF Commandant Rajinder Singh did what a conscientious IG or DM should have done. He worked all night sipping an occasional cup of black tea, he organised relief (which incidentally was the administrator's job), carrying food and essential drugs to the relief camps, transporting the sick to hospital, looking after the hundreds of injured, particularly those in a critical condition, and pushing reluctant doctors and

ambulance attendants to all those hot spots around the vulnerable areas, the notorious lanes and by-lanes which had never been patrolled by the Bihar Police. While the houses of the affluent

trading community were brilliantly illuminated for Deepavali, the darkness of death and desolation covered the affected localities.

At the Khanjarpur relief camp the inmates packed like sardines in a middle school had been without food for 24 hours. The District administration had supplied only one bag of flattened rice for 400 and odd inmates of the camp. Mr. Rajinder Singh brought the rice and pulse porridge; cooked for his men and officers. After personally supervising the feeding, he drove a sick woman and her baby to hospital. That was around midnight.

Hats off to the Rajinder Singhs, who are a ray of hope for the besieged and the beleaguered.

We really don't know whether the RSS, VHP, BJP, their numerous satellites as well as the Ruling Congress-I which has played manifestly soft rather questionable role vis-a-vis the Muslim-baiters knows the real implications of their thinking and attitude which has, it seems, resulted in manslaughter, bordering on genocide.

## WARNING

A timely warning has been appropriately sounded by "India Today" (Oct. 31) which bases its latest cover-story on various interviews and the Union Home

"BSF did what a conscientious IG or DM should have done",  
The Hindu, 02 Nov' 1989

# Children'



Bhagalpur's Jawahar Medical College and Hospital, 13-year-old Mallika is in the Deputy Commandant Rajinder Singh's hands. For her and some of other patients at hospital, the BSF officer

in a savour, somebody who has pulled them out from death's door. Baidika too a victim of the Chandri massacre, but a survivor not so lucky as Shikhar, one of the boys, have been chased off. Singh comforts the crying girl, narrows my pen to note down the names of her relatives and promises to look for them, to find out if they are still alive. And he moves to the next bed.

They are new babies, says the BSF officer. I have brought most of them to the hospital and now I am securing my moral duty to look after them, to inquire about their needs, how they are keeping. I have to make a round of the wards every

afternoon, otherwise I have no peace of mind." In the nursery ward, one girl of five, the body swathed in bandages, curses for him, his eyes conveying an expression of deep resentment. At another bed, a young boy, deep wounded, over his body, says, "I can't bear this pain, babu. There you had food," asks Singh.

"No babu. But I want to have rice," Singh orders one of the men to immediately fetch rice. When somebody pleads like that, what else can you do? he tells me.

Outside the hospital, the pain and suffering is less fully expressed. But behind it, the Hindus were better armed, the Mohammedan would have survived today, says my autorickshaw driver. In similar circumstances, a young man counts on his

Continued on page 7



BSF's Rajinder Singh, who has brought comfort to the orphaned and the wounded

BSF taking care of orphans and wounded people

# Railway Strike

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BSF ensuring smooth running of trains during the strike of 1974

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Patrolling at Dhanbad Rly Station during Railway strike

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# Disaster Management

Our Roadside Hospital



Rescue operation by 106 Bn BSF (2nd NDRF) during Kosi Flood

Flood relief camp established by BSF



**BSF offers help to plug breaches**

**Delhi News**

BSF men, equipped with modern equipment, have been deployed to assist the Government and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in the flood-affected areas of Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam. The BSF men are working in the flood-affected areas of Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam. They are providing relief to the people affected by the floods. The BSF men are working in the flood-affected areas of Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam. They are providing relief to the people affected by the floods. The BSF men are working in the flood-affected areas of Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam. They are providing relief to the people affected by the floods.

an aerial view of the flood-affected area in Bihar.

**BSF men rescue thousands of stranded villagers**

victims of cyclone Aila wait for relief at a village in Bahirhat



Relief material distributed by 106 Bn BSF  
(2nd NDRF) during Cyclone 'AILA' in WB

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BSF rescue Operation in Uttarakhand



Compassion for Border Population

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# Contribution to International Peace

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Committed to International peace and harmony



Community Kitchen &  
Training Activities  
during UN Mission



performed so well in organizing the Central Control Room of the I.G. Police Patna that he drew the unstinted admiration of everybody, including the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and the Inspector General of Police of Bihar.

Another aspect of the BSF operations during the strike that cannot be missed is that although more than 50 companies were deployed, extending over three states, the situation everywhere was managed without firing a single shot. And of course, the BSF does not wield a lathi.

The swift action by the force and arrest of prominent leaders weakened the strike and by 14 May 1974, the withdrawal of the some sections of the BSF had already started from Mughalsarai, with the bulk of the forces withdrawn by 02 June 1974.

The entire force employed on the railway strike duty did a commendable work all along the line. It is praiseworthy that in an operation extended over the whole of Bihar and sensitive parts of West Bengal and UP, not a single incident of indiscipline behaviour by the troops was reported. The speed, efficiency, motivation and thoroughness with which the BSF took up every task allotted to it made quite an impression on all the authorities concerned with the upkeep of law and order of the state as well as the common populace.

## **Bhagalpur Riots**

All operations have their characteristic peculiarities to which the Operating Forces must conform and mould themselves to be able to meet the prevailing challenges. Routine duties and operations on our Borders apart, any role assigned to a Force in aid to civil power has its own share of distinct difficulties. Notwithstanding this fact, when a Force is asked in the middle of some serious communal riots to move in, it surpasses all imaginable situations, as utmost tact, restraint and courage is needed to act against a part of our own population, because of its sensitive nature – socially, morally and politically.

Bhagalpur communal riots in Bihar in October 1989 presented such a scenario for the BSF – where it was asked, at an explosive moment, to move in and control the situation. Accordingly, 'A' Coy 23 Bn BSF, which was then located at Patna, was ordered to move immediately to Bhagalpur on the night of 24 October 1989. The coy, under the command of Shri Rajinder Singh, Deputy Commandant, accomplished this move over night and reached Bhagalpur in the wee-hours of 25 October 1989.

On reaching Bhagalpur what met the eye of the officer needed no briefing from any one! It was a ghastly sight. Maddened mobs shouting threatening slogans headed towards Muslim populated localities. There were sporadic explosions in the background and thick smoke coming out of buildings. The prevailing picture was terrifying as evident from the photographs taken by the Company Commander. It spoke of the enormous task lying ahead for the BSF troops.

Things were not easy for the BSF. Soon it was realized that no assistance or cooperation could be expected from the civil administration which was totally inactive and merely a mute spectator to the brutal killings and orgy of violence that was going on so blatantly. Gangsters and criminals joined in to exploit the opportunity. Murders, rape, arson and looting had continued

ruthlessly for three days despite a curfew being imposed. The carnage had claimed lives of scores of peoples from the minority community and left even more disabled, without food or shelter. The Statesman newspaper, had this to say about the Bhagalpur Riots: “Perhaps the worst criminal riots since partition in which nobody quite knows how many killed, how many maimed or how many bodies thrown into the Ganges. Shadow of death looms all over Bhagalpur District.”

The BSF assessed the situation and without losing any time, suitably deployed the troops on ground. They organized flag marches to prevent miscreants being active, surveyed the localities and lanes which were most sensitive and vulnerable, provided assurance to the affected minority community as they were totally terrified having seen their kith and kin being butchered in front of their eyes. They also located the injured and arranged for their transfer to the nearest hospital and shifted the affected people to the temporarily established relief camps.

The relief camps established by the local administration were lacking a proper infrastructure for food, sanitation and medical help. The ration provided by the authorities were proving inadequate. The BSF was helping out as much as possible but the requirement was too big to cater to on a regular basis.

Later, during the reconnaissance of the areas to ascertain the various flanks from where the organized mobs were stealthily entering the minority community localities, the BSF officer in charge came into contact with the Bishop of the local Church. This Bishop was appreciative of the admirable job being done by the BSF in controlling the fiery situation and readily offered to make available all Church resources at his command to the BSF officer to help out the stranded victims: he provided dry ration and some packed food stuff, blankets, medicines, etc. These were then collected and distributed by the BSF Contingent. Groups were organized for this purpose even in distant villages. The transport needed was unofficially mustered from different locations with the help of the Commissioner of Transport.

Feeding thousands of people in the relief camps, and those trapped elsewhere, was becoming a serious problem as the local

administration was ill-equipped to carry out this responsibility. The BSF realized the situation and, with the help of the Church Bishop, established an ad-hoc temporary kitchen near the Church itself where '*khichri*' was prepared on a large scale and supplied as a meal regularly. These humanitarian efforts of the BSF, augmented by the local Church resources, proved to be a great help in tiding over the day-to-day difficulties that were being faced due to lack of a proper infrastructure back up in the relief camps.

Apart from the above, the dead, reportedly in thousands, needed to be traced as they were thrown in the river Ganges nearby, or into wells. They were also buried in freshly planted sites. It was a herculean task, most of which was even beyond the call of duty! It needed guts, gusto and gumption, on the part of the BSF officers and men to manage all this in the face of immense difficulties on a sensitive assignment.

But despite a difficult role, the BSF came out with flying colours. Much to their credit, during their stay in the area, no major incidence of violence was allowed to take place. The bold, courageous and humanitarian approach of the BSF was much lauded, not only by the multitude of men and women whose lives were saved through their efforts but also all the newspapers that were full of praise especially for the BSF troops despite the presence of the Army and the CRPF. Some excerpts highlighting the superb performance of the BSF in these dreadful riots are reproduced below.

***The Hindu, 02 November 1989***

"By the night of October 26 when the Border Security Force was deployed, Nathnagar and Champanagar colonies had been reduced to charred debris. It looked as if the entire area had been shelled. The situation was similar in the other localities where the BSF rescued hundreds of trapped people and took them to improvised relief camps. The injured were sent to hospital. Shri Rajinder Singh, Deputy Commandant/Officiating Commandant of BSF worked all night. Sipping an occasional cup of black tea, he organized relief (which incidentally was the Administration's job), carrying food and essential drugs to the relief camps, transporting the sick to the hospital, looking after the hundreds of injured particularly those in critical condition and pushing reluctant doctors and surgeons into action.

In the midst of all this, he drove around the vulnerable areas, the tortuous lanes and by-lanes, which had never been patrolled by the Bihar Police. At the Khanjpur relief camp, the inmates, packed like sardines

in a Middle School, had been without food for 24 hours. The District Administration had supplied only one bag of rice for all of them. Seeing this, Shri Rajinder Singh brought the rice and pulse porridge cooked for his men and officers. After personally supervising their feeding, he drove a sick woman and her baby to the hospital. That was around midnight. Hats off to the (likes of) Rajinder Singh, who are a ray of hope for the besieged and the beleaguered.”

The *Statesman* of 25 November 1989 reported:

At Bhagalpur’s Jawahar Medical College and Hospital, 12-year old Mallika won’t let go BSF Deputy Commandant Rajinder Singh’s hands. For her and for scores of other patients at the hospital, the Sikh Officer is a saviour; somebody who has pulled them out from death’s door. Mallika too is a victim of the Chanderi, survivor but not lucky as one of her legs have been chopped off. Singh comforts the sobbing girl, borrows a pen to note down the names of her relatives and promises to look for them to find out if they are still alive. And he moves to the next bed.”

“They are my children” says the BSF officer. I have brought most of them to the hospital and now it has become my moral duty to look after them...otherwise I have no peace of mind”

“Rajinder Singh brought comfort to the orphaned and the wounded.”

### VEERAPPAN OPERATION

On 20 May 1993, Bn HQ of 106 Bn BSF moved to Bareilly and its five companies were sent for operation to nab the notorious sandalwood smuggler Veerappan in Male Mahadeshwara Hills on Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border. On 23 March 1994, three companies were withdrawn from the said operations and sent back to Bn HQ. Remaining two companies also returned to Bn HQ in the month of August 1994 and April 1995 respectively. During this period, unit has assisted “Task Force of Karnataka and Tamilnadu States” in carrying out operations against Sandal wood brigand Veerappan. During these special operations, the unit was instrumental in reducing the strength of the gang from 200 to only 5 by arresting/killing dreaded gang members. Consequent upon the good work done by the unit, reward money of Rs. 40 Lacs was sanctioned in the favour of unit personnel in December 2006 by Karnataka State Government.

## Disaster Response

India has been traditionally vulnerable to natural disasters on account of its unique geo-climatic conditions. Floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes and landslides have been a recurrent phenomena. About 60% of the landmass is prone to earthquakes of various intensities, over 40 million hectares is prone to floods, about 8% of the total area is prone to cyclones and 68% of the area is susceptible to drought. In the decade 1990-2000, an average of about 4344 people lost their lives and about 30 million people were affected by disasters every year. The loss in terms of private, community and public assets, has been astronomical.

Two national calamities in quick succession – the Orissa Super Cyclone (1999) and the Gujarat Earthquake (2001) brought about the realization for the need to have a specialist response mechanism at the National level to effectively respond to disasters. This realization led to the enactment of the Disaster Management (DM) Act on 26 December 2005. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was constituted to lay down the policies, plans and guidelines for disaster management. The DM Act has made the statutory provisions for the constitution of a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) for the purpose of specialized response to natural and manmade disasters. Accordingly, in 2006 NDRF was constituted with 08 Bns (02 Bn each from BSF, CRPF, ITBP and CISF). Each NDRF Bn consists of 1149 personnel.

Thus in March 2006, two battalions of BSF i.e. 106 Bn BSF of Digberia, Barasat of South Bengal Frontier and 128 Bn BSF of Patgaon of the then Shillong Frontier (now Guwahati Frontier) were re-designated as Disaster Management Bns. 106 Bn BSF was entrusted with responsibility for specialized response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and all kinds of Natural Disasters in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Sikkim and West Bengal. Similarly 128 Bn BSF was entrusted with responsibility of responding to all

types of Natural Disasters in the North Eastern states. The daunting task of converting these Bns in Disaster Management (DM) fell into able hands of Shri S.S. Guleria, Commandant, then specifically posted in 106 Bn BSF and Shri Daniel Adhikari, then Commandant of 128 Bn BSF. The seriousness of the BSF in converting these Bns into DM units from scratch can be gauged from the fact that within six months of its conversion 106 Bn BSF was called in to manage the fiery Orissa floods. The BSF galvanized its water wing resources from Marine Base Hasnabad (WB) and Dhubri (Assam) by providing ten boats to 106 Bn BSF for specialist response. The swift response by 106 Bn BSF in marooned districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Kendrapara, was applauded by the Orissa State Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Management Authority and Prime Minister's Office as well. The commendable work done by these Bns during Kosi floods of Bihar in 2008 was reason enough for the then Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar, to permanently place one new BSF DM Bn at Patna. The Chief Minister was so impressed by the work of BSF DM Bns that he provided 75 Acres of land free of cost for a new raising of DM Bn. Shri Sukhdev Raj, Commandant 106 Bn BSF, who provided succour to the affected people of Bihar during the aftermath of Kosi floods, took over this land from the Bihar government on behalf of the NDMA. Finally, due to insistence of the Bihar government, the Central government agreed to provide another BSF Bn for converting it into DM Bn in 2010 and for locating it at Bihta, Patna. By this time all BSF NDRF Bns were now re-designated as NDRF Bns after formation of separate NDRF HQ and placement of a DG. Accordingly 128 Bn BSF NDRF was christened as 1 Bn NDRF and 106 Bn BSF NDRF as 2 Bn NDRF. The new DM Bn at Patna was christened as 9 Bn NDRF. Raising of this new BSF Bn (147 Bn) in DM unit again fell into the hands of the versatile Commandant Shri S.S. Guleria, who was brought back to NDRF.

Thus, the work of a force like the BSF, one of whose mandates is to provide aid to the civilian authority in situations of natural disasters, is cut out. It is commendable that the BSF has performed



well in these challenging situations. As the following incidents display, the BSF has faced adversity in the face of natural disasters and each time it has stood the test of time.

### *Bhuj earthquake: 2001*

On 26 January 2001, a massive earthquake practically levelled Bhuj in Gujarat. Almost immediately 120 personnel of 1011 BSF Artillery regiment were sent to various parts of the Bhuj town for rescue operations. A team was sent to Rapar for rescue operations while the remaining personnel remained engaged in operations in various parts of the Bhuj town. In Bhuj city, the team undertook the task of recovering corpses from the debris of collapsed buildings. This included extraction of bodies from the Noormahal area which was the worst affected. A BSF rescue team found a child alive in the hands of his dead mother. The child was covered in the blood of its mother and the body of the mother was decaying under the baby. Upon discovering that the baby was in need of immediate medical attention, it was rushed to the nearest hospital. Two hours after intensive medical treatment, the child was declared out of danger. By then, the grandfather of the child was located. The sensitivity displayed by the team lead by Shri Diwakar Kumar, Commandant, was truly magnificent. The Lions Club Bhuj, presented a memento to 1011 BSF Artillery regiment for its extraordinary work in providing rescue and relief operations during the gravest tragedy experienced by the town.

### *Tsunami: 2004*

The morning of 26 December 2004 brought a disaster of gigantic proportions to the coastal areas of India. In Andaman & Nicobar, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, hundreds died, roads were destroyed and entire habitations wiped out. In certain areas all traces of life were wiped out. No sooner was the news of the Tsunami received it was decided that battalions of North Bengal, South Bengal and Shillong Frontiers would go to Andaman on a large scale disaster management mission. All the troops assembled

at the headquarters of 106 Bn BSF in Kolkata with all necessary equipment. Upon reaching Port Blair, the men were deployed to carry out relief operations in the far-off areas of Nicobar like Cachal and Car Nicobar. The men distributed medicines, life jackets, medical supplies etc. They also cremated or buried the dead. The marooned were rescued and provided medicines and simultaneously the cleaning operation in the inundated areas was carried out. The roads and communications were restored in coordination with the local administration. In Kuchal, where the Primary Health Centre had vanished, a temporary health centre was established at the Beechdera Primary School. In the coastal areas of Jhoola, Upper Kuchal and marine relief and rehabilitation works were carried out. Last rites were also carried out for 300 dead bodies while 900 people were provided medical assistance. In the island group of Car Nicobar, owing to the non-availability of labour, the relief material was unloaded from ships.

*BSF and the second phase of rehabilitation and resettlement*

The men of BSF were called again to provide relief and rehabilitation in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. Under the command of Shri Satnam Singh, 100 men left for Port Blair. In the second phase, the troops carried out work in Kuchal, Komatra, Nankaveri and Teresa Island. In these areas, iron sheets, bamboos etc. were distributed to the needy. In the affected areas medicines were also distributed. The maintenance of the jetty area in Kapanga was also the responsibility of the BSF team. During rehabilitation, the BSF displayed remarkable astuteness and an awareness of the requirements of the operations. They also provided seamless coordination with the other forces like CISF, CRPF who were also deployed in the operations. The Water Wing of the BSF also played an important role in the operations in the second phase. Thirty two men of the Water Wing continuously employed their twenty crafts in supplying varied store in these islands in accordance with the directions of the local administrations. The water wing also rescued stranded people and provided medical facilities to them. The Home Secretary and the Governor of Andaman and Nicobar

praised the BSF and many officers of the BSF were duly awarded for these operations.

### *Kosi flood: 2008*

The Kosi river drains an area of 60,000 square kilometres in southern Tibet and eastern Nepal. The area has mountainous terrain and is undergoing continuous geomorphological changes. On 18 August 2008, heavy monsoon rains and poor maintenance caused a breach in the Kosi embankment. Hundreds of poor and densely populated villages in northern Bihar were submerged in water. Around 493 lives were lost and 3,500 were reported missing in the disaster. Three teams of 106 Bn BSF NDRF were mobilized immediately to reach the districts of Supaul, Saharsa, Madhepura, Araria and Purnia. The teams reached the respective deployment positions with adequate resources in the form of speed boats, life buoys, plastic sheets etc. To co-ordinate the actions of all the responding BSF NDRF teams which were deployed during the floods, a TAC HQ was established in Jilla School Purnia. During these operations, 37,519 people were rescued while the medical team provided aid to 7,594 persons and 60,160 food packets were distributed. The efforts of the BSF NDRF were particularly commendable because there was no other agency available for rescue work at the time. After resuming operations, the teams remained deployed in field for forty days to help the civil authorities in rehabilitation and re-construction.

### *Cyclone - 'AILA' : 2009*

On 25 May 2009 Cyclone Aila with a wind speed of 100-110 kms/hour, hit the West Bengal coast. The cyclone produced waves 25 feet high and ravaged more than 50,000 hectares of land, leaving a huge trail of destruction. In the wake of this disaster, inhabited area was inundated in 5-6 feet of deep water. Simultaneously, embankments all along the tidal canal were breached at a number of places and resulted in continuous flooding of surrounding areas due to coastal tides. Road course was broken at several places and power and communication lines were disrupted at several places.

Human and cattle lives were also lost. On the request of the authorities, initially three teams of 106 Bn BSF NDRF and subsequently four more teams were deployed at different centres. In order to reach the destined locations, the teams had to wait for the tidal canals to calm down before crossing over to the main land.

The 106 Bn BSF NDRF carried out the rescue and evacuation of marooned people, provided assistance to civil administration in the distribution of relief material, undertook distribution of medicines and also ferried civil officials to various places. In all, the team evacuated 1577 persons, while assisted 15193 persons with medical aid, alongwith distributing 9885 food packets. Incidentally, AILA cyclone was the first major cyclone in which BSF NDRF provided rescue services. Despite the blocked roads and disrupted lines of communication, teams reached the spot in a matter of hours. The BSF teams worked hard in these challenging conditions to provide a much-needed relief to the people.

### *Uttarakhand flood: 2013*

In the aftermath of the Kedarnath disaster, a relief and rehabilitation plan was conceived by the DG, BSF Shri Subash Joshi. The plan was labelled 'Mission Kalimath' and was implemented by the BSF team under the leadership of Shri Raj Kumar Negi, Commandant. All the BSF personnel donated a day's salary, which amounted to almost 16 crores. Out of this, 10 crores were donated to the CM's relief fund, 70 lakhs for the Next of Kin (NOK) of the police personnel killed in the disaster. The remaining amount was directed towards the development of the ignored Kalimath valley. The Kalimath valley presented a picture of complete and sudden disaster. The civic infrastructure had been decimated, schools and offices ruined beyond recognition and roads and tracks washed away. What remained, was on the verge of destruction. The villagers who survived the vagaries of death, were battling a lack of water and food supplies. In this context, the BSF started its relief and rehabilitation plan. The team of officers, including medical officers, mountaineers, and resource

persons from the surrounding areas, visited the affected villages to assess the immediate requirements of the people. Accordingly, a phased implementation plan was formulated.

Among the BSF team of 120 troops, was present a team of mountaineers and rafters who rendered the valuable service in opening an old and abandoned Rundkot-Guptkashi crossing point on the river Mandakini. This provided a point for the civilians to cross the valley along with their loads. The route also opened up the axis up to village Chamoli of Kalimath valley upto the Kedarnath shrine. Lady Constables were also placed at these points to ease the crossing for local women and girls. A similar system was put in place between Kotma, Syansu and Chilond, Kalimath and Syansu. Here a nylon rope based wooden bridge was constructed. At Kalimath base, the BSF team diverted the flow of river from the base of Kalimath shrine and started proper embankment along the rivers to avoid further damage to the shrine.

Along with physically boosting connectivity, the efforts of the BSF also covered measures like medical aid, temporary shelter, Nylon rope-improvised-crossings at washed-out points. It is indeed remarkable that all the measures of relief and rehabilitation have been carried out in the stipulated time frame. A team of officers were appointed at all the points to supervise the on-going work. Immediate emergency medical care was also provided to the stranded population by the BSF team. In the villages of Chilond educational fittings and fitments for schools were provided by the BSF team along with the installation of solar lights. In Syansu, along with the schools, PVC installations were provided. Community halls were also constructed. Apart from providing physical connectivity to the cut off villages, the medical teams and educational teams also rendered services, which changed the face of the disaster in Uttarakhand.

### *Srinagar flood: 2014*

The River Jhelum flooded the entire valley region from South to North Kashmir causing the worst floods in the history of Srinagar. The flood waters ravaged the civic infrastructure in the area,

engulfed houses and mounted the death toll to over 250. Several civilian areas were marooned and the civilian machinery was found lacking and unresponsive. In such daunting circumstances, the BSF rose to the occasion. The mammoth efforts of the BSF under command of Shri Paramjit Singh Sandhu, IG BSF Kashmir frontier during Srinagar flood disaster can be gauged from the fact that BSF was providing each and every kind of help envisaged. BSF established Ops Control Room for Ministry of Home Affairs with the Union Home Secretary stationed there. Communication network was the worst effected and the BSF restored POL Net for MHA DCPW & NDRF. The work done by the BSF included establish relief camps, transport relief material, rescue of Army troops, civilians, transport of flood victims, manpower assistance to the Air Force and NDRF, Heli lift/dropping of NDRF teams etc.

First and foremost, BSF assisted the NDRF in launching rescue and relief operations in the flood-affected parts of Central and South Kashmir. It provided base camp to 724 personnel of NDRF at Frontier HQ BSF Humhama Campus. At the same time BSF also provided about 27 vehicles (Light, Medium and Heavy) per day along with about 400 men per day to NDRF for ferrying rescue teams and helping in relief operations.

Further BSF established three medical camps at Humhama, Bandipur and Lashkar village. At Humhama medical camp about 45,000 flood-affected civilians were treated. Similarly at Bandipur and Lashkar village medical camps, civilians were treated at the rate of about 700 per day. Flood relief materials like modified food – 8680 Kg, Bread – 1596 Kg, Namkeen – 690 Kg, Biscuits – 675 Kg, Mix food – 3320 Kg and Water bottles – 22550 Nos. were distributed to civilians in all areas in and around Srinagar. It also transported the stranded people to Udhampur and Jammu by arranging special BSF convoys from Srinagar.

After the culmination of the rescue and rehabilitation operations, the smile on the faces of the civil population was reward enough to the Bordermen for this daunting task.

## **BSF Beyond Borders: Commitment to International Peace**

The BSF has displayed remarkable astuteness in the various missions that it has been deployed under the ambit of the United Nations since the 1990's. The BSF has contributed its personnel for United Nations assignments as members of Formed Police Units as well as United Nations Police Advisors (UNPOL hereafter). The UNPOLs have been usually deployed in strife-torn areas like Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan, Liberia, South Sudan, Cyprus and Haiti. The Formed Police units (FPU hereafter) of the BSF are presently employed at Haiti and Congo. In 1990, the BSF was inducted as the UN Police Monitor in Namibia and helped to conduct fair polls, preserve law and order and ease their transition towards independence. Shri D.S. Ahluwalia, Deputy Commandant, was the contingent commander of this First UN Mission. The BSF contingent delivered exemplary results and Shri Kunwar Virender, Deputy Commandant, laid down his life in the line of duty for the UN while deployed in Namibia. From this modest start, the BSF continues to render its valuable participation in subsequent UN Missions. While working with the United Nations, the role of the BSF has been multi-faceted and some of them are explained in brief:

BSF works to ensure peace in strife-torn areas. They work to build the capacity and management capabilities of the local police by training them in law and order duties. BSF is also engaged in humanitarian activities like supporting orphanages, old age homes medical camps and community kitchen programmes . Apart from these, BSF personnel have been engaged in designing road maps for the future development of the local security forces. Specifically, the BSF has protected the UN personnel and property, provided

escorts to electoral parties, undertake crowd control management and conducted joint patrolling with the local police on a daily basis. The BSF also handled the task of distributing ration and water to epidemic hit areas. In a noble gesture, which evoked a great response, the BSF also adopted a 40-bed orphanage named Kariva in Congo.

Shri Satish Chandra Menon, DC, BSF who laid down his life in 2003 in Congo, and HC Khetpal Singh in 2007 were awarded the Dag Hammarskjold medal posthumously for their valuable contribution in UN Peacekeeping operations.

The peacekeeping contingent usually comprises of 125 BSF personnel who are generally handpicked on the basis of their operational achievements and performance at international borders. This is a true salutation to the spirit of the BSF which is continuously taking on such challenges in hard and testing circumstances.

### *The Democratic Republic of Congo*

In the context of the peculiar requirements of the situation in Congo, the BSF is trained to combat the menace of civil war and assist the local police in maintaining law and order. Before induction, a specific capsule is designed to train the contingent on the requirements of the job. The capsule consists of French language learning skills, mob dispersal techniques, riot control, protective patrolling, civilian aid, human rights awareness and other skills.

The Democratic Republic of Congo was placed under UN supervision due to gross human rights violations and internal disturbances in the country. India has the largest number of troops positioned in the UN mission in Congo. Here, the BSF is assigned the responsibility to provide a peacekeeping contingent in the form of Indian Formed Police Unit-2.

This assignment and several missions before this were not for any strategic or territorial gain but were about upkeeping the UN principles. Lives of men were risked to boost the principles of international solidarity and peace. The troops of India have taken



part in some of the most difficult operations under the most demanding circumstances and have won universal admiration due to their single mindedness and courage. In Congo, the BSF was deployed at Goma and later in Beni to protect UN persons and properties of civilians, to maintain law and order, to provide assistance to police and other law enforcement agencies, to train the local police and to mainstream local Security Forces.

The Indian FPU has performed outstandingly well in support of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Officers of the FPU and Indian UNPOLs have evacuated 100 plus individuals from various life threatening situations, including UN staff, members of the diplomatic community as well as civilians.

The international community in Kinshasa as well as the United Nations have recognized the professional behaviour of the Indian FPU's who have exposed themselves to great dangers by becoming direct targets. The Indian FPU contingents are very highly rated for their dependability, discipline, competence, and operational efficiency. Recently at a discussion held in New Delhi with the officials and dignitaries on the ground, it emerged that Indian FPU's would always be the first choice of the UN for any peacekeeping operations.

### *Haiti*

The United Nations involvement in Haiti began in 1990 as an Observer Group. Thereafter the United Nations Security Council set up the first United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in the country in September 1993. The Multinational Force was followed by a number of successive UNPKM from 1994 to 2000. In February 2004, in response to the situation which emerged due to insurgents taking control of much of the country in the north, the Security Council authorized the creation of the United Nations Stabilization Force to support the continuation of a constitutional political process and the maintenance of a secure and stable environment. To enforce the UN mandate, the first BSF Indian Foreign Police Unit (IFPU) in Haiti was inducted in November

2010 in Hinchi and so far five BSF IFPU contingents have rendered their valuable contributions in stabilizing the situation in Haiti. The BSF contingents have worked tirelessly in Haiti during the aftermath of a devastating earthquake. BSF personnel are functioning in a highly volatile atmosphere, which includes political instabilities leading to violent clashes among political parties, violent public protests, the frequent recurrence of disasters like cyclones and earthquakes.

In one of the discussions with an Indian delegation from the MHA, it was pointed out by the Director General of the Haiti National Police Force that the Haiti National Police needs to develop knowledge and expertise in border management since they have an extensive border with the Dominican Republic. In recognition of the expertise of the BSF in border management, the DG BSF did offer to train the Haitian forces in the areas of Border Management too. The BSF received praise too: it was remarked that the local FPUs had endeared themselves to the local population by extending support and practicing compassion. This had led to the betterment of the lives of the local population in various small ways. The locals, Mayor, Bishop and UN/Police personnel in Hinche, Haiti were all praise for the BSF IFPU personnel. In the interests of operational efficiency, and in an effort to win the hearts of the local population each FPU has maintained good relations with the local population.

### *Other areas*

In addition to BSF IFPUs, the Indian UNPOLs, who are deployed in various UN Missions independently have made their presence felt through their brilliant contribution to UN's mandate in strife-torn countries like Sudan, South Sudan, Liberia, Haiti, Cyprus, Male etc. These Police Advisors work independently in very trying conditions and under the threats and exposure of conflicts, diseases etc. Working in different capabilities in various divisions like Admin & Personnel, Project Management, Training, Operations and logistics, the Indian UNPOLs impact has been manifold which is equally acclaimed by UN officials worldwide.

Apart from assisting UN in Peacekeeping missions, the BSF is deployed in Indian High Commission Security Duty in Colombo and the Consulate General of India at Jaffna in Sri Lanka under the Ministry of External Affairs since December 2005. This contingent of about 40 BSF personnel render impregnable security to these MEA Offices.

## ORGANISATION

### Organisational Setup

India has a land border of about 15,200 kilometers with Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and Bangladesh and a coastline of 7500 kilometers. This also comprises large stretches of riverine and semi-riverine area. The Border Security Force guards 6957 kilometers of land border, 844 kilometers of which is riverine. The border with Pakistan is 2718 kilometers, Bangladesh 4239 kilometers and Myanmar 288 kilometers. To safeguard these national boundaries, the BSF was created under the Border Security Force Act, which states “There shall be an armed force of the union called the Border Security Force for ensuring the security of the border of India and for matter connected therewith”. In times of conflict, the BSF fights either on its own or along with the army and is also used for internal security duties. The role of the Force was demarcated under the Border Security Force Act (47 of 1968) and Rules (1969) as:

- (a) To promote a sense of security among the people living in the border areas.

- (b) To prevent trans-border crimes, unauthorized entry into or exit from the territory of India.
- (c) Prevent Smuggling and any other illegal activities.

The preamble of the BSF Act, Section 4 and the Section 2(1)(a) and Section 2(1)(j) expand the role of BSF as:

- (a) Holding ground in less threatened sectors so long as the main attack does not develop in a particular sector and it is felt that the local situation is within the capability of the BSF to deal with.
- (b) Protection of vital installations particularly air-fields against enemy commando/para troopers or raids.
- (c) Providing extension to the flanks of main defence line by the holding of strong points in conjunction with other units.
- (d) Limited aggressive action against pa-a military or irregular forces of the enemy within the overall plan of the Armed Forces.
- (e) Performing special tasks connected with intelligence including raids.
- (f) Acting as guides in an area of responsibility where routes are known.
- (g) Maintenance of law and order in enemy territory administered under the control of the Army.
- (h) Provision of escorts.
- (i) Guarding of prisoners of war cages.
- (j) Assistance in control of refugees.
- (k) Anti-infiltration duties in specified area.

In 1947 the country inherited the system of border vigilance from police forces of states who guarded the border with the help of check-posts and occasional patrolling. This ad hoc arrangement on the border continued till 1964 as the pressure on the borders were not significant. Thus the coastal borders in Gujarat were unattended, the Rann had some posts of Gujarat Police, while the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary manned some of the posts along the border with Pakistan.

In 1965, the repeated incursions of the Pakistan forces along the Rann highlighted the need for restructuring border policing. Lal Bahadur Shastri became convinced of the need of raising a centralized force for border security.

The essential blueprint of what was to be the Border Security Force emerged after a meeting between the home secretary L.P. Singh and Chief of Army Staff J.N. Chaudhuri. The new force was to comprise of the various state armed police units manning the border. These men were to be trained under appropriate guidance of the army, and this new force was charged with the responsibility of preventing depredations from across the border. This involved prevention of smuggling, infiltrations, and minor intrusions. Operationally the force was to work under the army, during situation of hostilities. In a meeting of the state home ministers which was held subsequently, it was decided that the border police force of various states deployed on the India Pakistan border should be brought under the control of the central government. This central organization would take over the Armed Police Battalion on the border which would subsequently be embodied in this Central Force to be constituted for the security of the border. The younger officers of the existing Armed Police Battalion were to be embodied and the Force was organized on a standard pattern to deal with all border problems.

The report of the Emergency Committee of Secretaries played an important role in the constitution of the BSF. The organization suggested by the Committee was that there would be a Director General in charge with five divisions each under a Deputy Director/Deputy Inspector General/Brigadier. The five divisions were: Intelligence, Communication, Training, Provisions and Administration. The entire border was divided into two parts: eastern and western, each under an Inspector General at Calcutta and Jalandhar. Sub sectors were to be formed for Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura and these were to be commanded by Deputy Inspector General/Brigadiers. Meanwhile the chief ministers of the border States were consulted and their consent obtained to raise this new

Central Force. Shri K.F. Rustamji, who was selected to head this new force, was in Delhi as Inspector General on Special Duty in the Ministry of Home Affairs. He was associated in all the activities towards the constitution of the force.

The Border Security Force thus came into existence on 01 December 1965 and assumed responsibility for the security of the border in terms of Article 356 of the Constitution. Rustamji was appointed as the Director General of the force. The responsibility which now confronted him was to raise the force of which he was appointed the DG. At that time twenty five and a half battalion of Rajasthan Armed Police, Punjab Armed Police, West Bengal Rifles, Tripura Border Police and Assam Armed Police were deployed on the borders. Embodying these battalions as the BSF was the first challenge, which involved tremendous co-ordination with the state governments. A small headquarter was formed in Delhi under Rustamji and two Inspectors General as Sector Commanders and seven Deputy Inspectors General as Sub-Sector Commanders. The work of the BSF headquarters was organized in six directorates which were: Accounts, Administration, General, Operations, Provisioning and Training. Initially the boundaries of the Frontiers were generally related to state boundaries. Thus, there were Frontier Headquarters in Srinagar, Jammu, Jalandhar, Jodhpur, Calcutta, Siliguri, Shillong and Agartala.

Senior Indian Police Service Officers and Army officers took over as Sub-Sector Commanders in the Field. Ashwini Kumar, an IP officer of Punjab Cadre, took over as Sector Commander of the Western Sector on 05 December 1965 and P.K. Basu an IPS of the West Bengal Cadre took over as the Sector Commander of the Eastern Sector. The sub sector commanders were placed at Jalandhar, Jodhpur, Jammu, Srinagar, Bandipur, Kadamtala and Shillong. Along with this, 12 reserve battalions were amalgamated into the Border Security Force.

The release from the army of the Emergency Commissioned Officers provided the much needed Officer corps to the new force and they helped establish the BSF as a distinct force. Thus the core of the BSF was the armed police battalions of border States

many of whom had some experience of border vigilance and also active combat.

Most of the officers who joined Rustamji retired with distinction. Several of these men reached the helm of affairs in the forces like Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force, State Police and so on. Rustamji with his characteristic foresight evolved a training programme which was particular to the BSF. While it drew upon the elements of both the Army and civilian police, it also helped to evolve a distinct character for the BSF. An excellent example of this foresight is that right from the beginning it was ensured that the BSF was a composite Force with an All-India face. Every 'Section' in the BSF has the widest possible representation of the regions and linguistic denominations. This has helped the Force to retain its All-India and secular credentials. Also, one of the reasons for locating the then Reserve Bn in Bangalore was in furtherance of this principle. This has been taken to its logical conclusion by locating BSF units in almost all the States.

In course of discharging their duties, the BSF men are deployed along the border in Border Out Posts. The battalions whose personnel are deployed in these border outposts are also located along the border and are headed by an officer called the Commandant who is assisted by a number of deputy and assistant commandants.

The organizational structure of the BSF as it stands today is as follows: The Director General of the BSF heads the organization. In 2002, one more HQ was added to the chain of command known as Eastern Command and Western Command, each commanded by an officer of the rank of Special Director General. The special Director General of the western command supervises the frontiers of Srinagar, Jammu, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Special Director General (East) has under him the frontiers of South Bengal, North Bengal, Greater Noida, Meghalaya, Manipur & Cachar, Tripura, Bangalore and Guwahati. Further there are four Additional Directors General who supervise Human Resources, Operations, Logistics, and Director of the Academy. The



headquarters in Delhi is split into nine directorates dealing with various aspects of the organisation, namely, Personnel, Operations, Administrative, General, Training, Communication and Information Technology, Provisioning, Air Wing and Medical. Apart from these, there is the Law Branch and the Inspector General Headquarter.

The deployment area of a three to four (depending on the location and area of responsibility) battalions forms a sector and the sector commander is an officer called the Deputy Inspector General. Sectors are grouped into frontier and each frontier is commanded by an officer called the Inspector General.

The process to give shape to the likely lay out of the organisation was initially started by the Organisation Directorate. Before this Directorate was in shape, this work used to be handled by the Administration Directorate. All proposals involving creation of posts, giving shape to concepts involving creation of new manpower facilities in the BSF used to be handled by the Administration Directorate. However, once the Organisation Directorate was set up, all matters involving addition of non-ministerial man-power were dealt by it. While the Deputy Director (DD) was overall in charge of the Directorate, it was the Assistant Director (AD) concerned who initiated proposals, drafted them and once approved, pursued them and processed them in the MHA and Ministry of Finance till the final outcome. Organisation Directorate had, under DD (Org), two ADs and one JAD besides the Chief Law Officer (CLO). AD (Org) was responsible for all matters concerning Organizational development under the DD (Org).

It is relevant to mention that in the initial stages, for nearly one year, DG BSF used to hold 'Monday Morning Meetings' of ADs of the Directorates in BSF HQ, unaccompanied by the concerned DDs. This, as Rustamji explained, was to ensure that ADs who were under normal circumstances required to initiate proposals were properly briefed and given directions by him. He wanted ADs to be competent and efficient to be of adequate assistance to the DDs.

The ethos of cultural cohesion in the Force can be attributed to the fact that for the first thirteen years the Force was to have a continuous leadership at the apex level. K.F. Rustamji remained DG from 1965 to 1974 and was succeeded by Ashwini Kumar who had served in the Force for the entire duration with his predecessor. Ashwini Kumar himself had an uninterrupted tenure of four years.

Then, even though personnel were drawn from diverse sources like the State Police, IPS, Army, Navy and Air Force; all members of the Force were required to wear identical uniforms with only rank based variations. Most importantly, irrespective of the source of recruitment, all personnel had to undergo BSF training, even if it was in the nature of 'orientation courses'.

In the initial years, the direct recruitments were made in the ranks of Assistant Commandant, Sub Inspector, Constable, Tradesman and Follower. With respect to the Ministerial staff (clerical staff), which is combatised, direct recruitment was confined to the ranks of Sub Inspector/Stenographer, Assistant Sub-Inspector/Clerk and Constable/Daftary. Similarly for communication staff direct recruitment was confined to Assistant Sub Inspector/Radio Mechanic, Head Constable/Radio Mechanic, Constable/Radio Mechanic and Constable/Operator. Only two categories of medical staff were directly recruited: Medical Officer Grade II and the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon and Assistant Sub Inspector/Compounder.

To ensure the selection of the best available candidate for a post, all these processes were formalized and a high measure of objectivity was ensured. The largest recruitment happened in the rank of constable and still continues. The process of recruitment consisted of working out the vacancies for the whole year which were allotted to various frontiers which then would be charged with the responsibility of recruiting from defined areas/States. To make the Border Security Force representative of the whole country, it was deliberately designed such that people from all the states and regions were represented. If a region was under represented, the vacancies of this particular region were distributed

amongst the other regions. Recruitment boards were appointed from time to time and they consisted of a Presiding Officer of the rank of Commandant, one Deputy Commandant or Assistant Commandant, one medical officer and two inspectors/sub inspectors, one of whom should be from the deprived communities. Now this process has evolved and the Staff Selection Commission with the help of all CAPFs (Central Armed Police Forces) conducts recruitments for the non-officer ranks. A rigorous process of examination ensures that ineligible candidates are eliminated.

### ***Frontier history***

#### ***Kashmir Frontier***

The BSF battalions, which had been deployed in the Kashmir valley since 1965-66, were assigned the challenging role of combating the rising insurgency in that state from 1990 onwards. These units fought the militancy bravely along with the Jammu and Kashmir Police. Initially only a few battalions of the BSF were inducted in Kashmir in 1990 but later this force was increased substantially from 1993 onwards. The battle against militancy was hard fought—as many as 38 officers and 617 personnel were killed in the line of duty. Following a government order, a few battalions of the BSF were de-inducted in 2003 from Srinagar North and a few more battalions in September 2005 from Srinagar and Anantnag districts. The BSF Srinagar Frontier is an offshoot of the erstwhile North-Western Frontier which comprised the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1981, the NWF was bifurcated into the Jammu and Kashmir Frontiers with the Kashmir frontier looking after the areas north of Pir Panjal and with the responsibility to augment the Army deployment on the Pir Panjal Ranges, Shamsabari Ranges and Kargil Sector. After Operation Vijay, the BSF Bn deployed in Chennigund area was withdrawn in November 1999 and the AOR (Area of Responsibility) of the frontier was restricted to southern and central Kashmir. In 2006, the Baramulla sector was wound up and the Srinagar frontier renamed the Kashmir frontier with its headquarters at Sanatnagar.

The KLP (Key Location Point) of the frontier was to be established at Humhama, Budgam. This Frontier has a composite hospital for all the Central Police Organisation (CPOs) operating in Kashmir Valley. The Subsidiary Training Centre established at Humhama meets the current and futuristic needs of the BSF.

While fighting militancy with an iron hand, the BSF also adopted an empathic attitude towards the local population. The outreach programme in the form of civic actions enabled the force to win the confidence of the local people. The BSF's confidence building measures involved distribution of school furniture, stationery and the organisation of medical camps in remote areas. Bharat Darshan tours for Kashmiri youths have been organized every year since 1999 by the Kashmir Frontier. The human element in the strategy of the BSF has been the *sine qua non* of its operational history in Kashmir. The floods in Srinagar in September 2014 engulfed the various installations in the city and the state machinery was found unprepared to handle this crisis. In these circumstances the BSF personnel stepped in to help the flood affected inhabitants of Srinagar in myriad ways. The frontier headquarters of the BSF served as the operational HQ of the NDRF and the officers of the BSF worked tirelessly and continuously to rescue the marooned civilians and provided relief. The BSF amalgamates the role of providing of both security and service in the work done during the Amarnath Yatra. The BSF has carried out this duty since 1994, capitalizing on the goodwill that it shares with the local population.

### *Jammu Frontier*

The Jammu Frontier was raised on 01 January 1981 under the command of Shri W.G.J. Mudaliar, IPS, IG Jammu after bifurcating the erstwhile North-Western Frontier. Earlier it was the Jammu sector, which was under the North-Western Frontier. The Sector HQ Jammu was established in a rented house. On raising the frontier, the SHQ BSF Jammu and SHQ BSF Rajouri were placed under Jammu frontier. Subsequently in 1992 at the outbreak of the militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, SHQ BSF Doda was raised. This sector was further bifurcated into DIG IS duty

Doda and DIG IS duty Kishtwar. SHQ Kishtwar functioned as an adhoc HQ which was shifted to Counter Insurgency (Ops) Rajouri. SHQ Sunderbani was raised on 31 July 2004 in place of CI (Ops) Sector Rajouri. In March 1997 SHQ Doda was shifted to CI (Ops) Ramban. The LC extends from FDL Khalsa-1 (Mandir Mandi Bn) to FDL Chand (Sunderbani Bn) and further upto FDL Sangam (Army). The IB extends from Sangam to River Chenab (Army) and beyond from BOP OP Chenab (Akhnoor Bn) to BOP Paharpur (Samba Bn). The G (General i.e. intelligence) Set-up of Jammu Frontier came into existence on 06 January 1981 under the guidance of Shri Ashok Patel. There are 06 Field "G" teams i.e. Jammu, Rajouri, Indreshwar Nagar, Sunderbani (Permanent Teams), Samba and Poonch (Adhoc Teams) working under the supervision of DIG (G). The IB Field "G" Teams are providing intelligence cover to the nine Bns units deployed on the international border. Considering that the situation on the LC is usually tense and volatile, the teams have to be on high alert constantly. The Pakistani secret service ISI has tried desperately to push in militants to carry out sabotage activities for a long time. The team has foiled several attempts of infiltration. This is an ongoing process as the Pakistan based smugglers strive continuously to revive their activities. The LC Field G teams i.e. Sunderbani, Rajouri and Poonch provide intelligence cover to 06 BSF Bns as well as army formations deployed on the LC.

### *Punjab Frontier*

Several Armed police battalions such as Punjab Armed Police, Rajasthan Armed Constabulary, and Madhya Pradesh State Armed Police forces, were embodied to form the nucleus of the Border Security Force. The newly formed battalions were deployed on the international border of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat sectors. The Headquarters of the Western frontier was located at Jalandhar. The western frontier was further divided into Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat frontiers. The First sector of the Punjab frontier was raised on 01 December 1965 with its HQ at Jalandhar. Ten battalions of the Punjab Armed Police were deployed on the

International Border of Punjab. The gallant officers and men of this frontier participated in the 1971 war with Pakistan and presented a glorious account of their bravery and sacrifice. They captured eight Border Out Posts and occupied ninety-one square miles of Pakistan territory, including six villages on their own. BSF fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Indian Army and captured thirty-four BOPs and seized a large amount of ammunition and weapons. Officers of the BSF were awarded gallantry awards with Shri R.K. Wadhwa being awarded the Mahavir Chakra, Shri Ajeet Singh and Shri Mohinder Singh the Vir Chakra, and several other men were awarded the Sena Medals.

At the Punjab frontier the following assets have been provided to meet the requirements of the Frontier. The Subsidiary Training Centre was established in Punjab to meet the current and futuristic training needs of the BSF. For effectively guarding the riverine borders the Water wing was created in the Frontier Headquarter with its base at Jalandhar. The Water wing assists the BSF in negotiating rivers, creeks, and streams and also effectively participates in Disaster Management. The Water wing staff has earned the prestigious President's Medal for their bravery during natural calamities.

Large tracts of international border of this frontier are covered with thick Elephant grass. The tall and thick Elephant grass hinders visibility and negotiability in the border areas. To overcome this problem a mounted wing was raised in January 1967. Since then this wing has been actively involved in border domination. The Punjab border has always been a target for infiltration of terrorists. Arms, ammunition and contraband goods enter the country from across the border. To overcome this, the BSF has erected fences on the border with Pakistan. This border fencing has been illuminated with border fencing lights.

### *Rajasthan Frontier*

The border of the Rajasthan Frontier was guarded by the RAC (Rajasthan Armed Constabulary) prior to raising of the Border Security Force. BSF took over effective responsibility of Western

Frontier in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab on 01 June 1966. Frontier HQ of Rajasthan and Gujarat was established on 01 November 1971 at Jodhpur under the command of Shri M.P. Singh, IPS, as its first Inspector General. The total length of Indo-Pak border of Rajasthan & Gujarat Frontier was 1545 kms including 104 kms Creek area. During 1986, Shri K.S. Rathore, IPS, the then Inspector General, Rajasthan and Gujarat Frontier had raised a Camel mounted brass band which now regularly participates in the Republic day parade at Delhi every year and has earned the Force the distinction of having the unique Camel mounted brass band. The responsibility for training the Camel contingent as well as Camel mounted brass band is delegated to Subsidiary Training Centre (STC) of the Frontier.

On 12 July 2004 Rajasthan and Gujarat Frontier was bifurcated into two Frontiers i.e. Rajasthan Frontier and Gujarat Frontier. Shri S.N. Jain, IPS is the first IG of Rajasthan Frontier with HQr at Jodhpur. Now Rajasthan Frontier has four Operational Sectors, i.e. Sriganganagar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer-I and Jaisalmer-II. One Subsidiary Training Centre is located at Jodhpur adjacent to the Frontier HQrs.

### *Gujarat Frontier*

Subsequent to the restructuring of BSF; Gujarat Frontier was carved out of the erstwhile Rajasthan and Gujarat Ftr by bifurcating it. The main objective behind the division was to form a separate Frontier to manage the border in the Great Rann of Kutch. However, to meet the norms of frontier management, Barmer Sector from Rajasthan State was added to it as a case of equilibrium. Gujarat Ftr started functioning on 12 July, 2004 under the command of Shri S. Thangappan, DIG/PSO, as Offg IG. This Frontier has three Sectors namely Barmer, Gandhinagar and Bhuj. Presence of regular Bns, Water Wing and BSF Arty highlights the peculiarity of the area. This frontier also has 01 Reserve Bn (presently deployed at Koraput (Odisha) for ANO duties, and 01 STC located at Chakur. Of late, 01 Marine Bn was raised and has been deployed to dominate the coastal area between Medi to Jakhau.

This Frontier, unlike other Frontiers of the Force, has distinct topography, demography, societal pattern, climatic conditions and an economic pattern of the community particular to each Sector. This configuration of terrain and climatic conditions is heterogeneous in nature. This heterogeneity has its direct and cascading effect on the border management system being followed by this Frontier as well as on the stress and strain factor on troops. In Barmer Sector, it is the prolonged work hours, whereas in Gujarat, it is the extreme climatic condition which is not conducive to the physical and mental well being of the BSF troops. So on one side, it is the prolonged duty schedule, and on the other side, it is the vagaries of nature coupled with harsh living conditions, which the Frontier has to manage and balance to optimize the operational domination and keep the troops in excellent physical and mental state.

### *South Bengal Frontier*

The first Inspector General of the Frontier was appointed on 01 December 1965. In West Bengal nine battalions from the Special Armed Force and the India Reserve Battalion were placed at his disposal. These battalions were placed at strategic points and the officers were trained to build the organisations in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Manipur without any loss of time. In course of time, water wing was added to the BSF with small patrol boats and larger landing crafts namely Chitrangada and Gangalahari. Now there are 40 ships and 12 country boats in South Bengal Frontier BSF to man the riverine border.

Calcutta was seething with naxalites who indulged in killing police officers, judges, university professors and civil servants. Shri P.K. Basu was picked by Home secretary to take charge of the West Bengal Police. A building was hired as the first office of IG eastern Frontier. The Arms Workshop and the Motor Transport Workshop were also located there. On the international border battalions were given permanent bases at Seemanagar, South Dinajpur, Kadamtala in Siliguri, Baikunthpur near Siliguri and Sagar Mahal in Coochbehar.



To increase the alertness in the police, a number of training courses were introduced in both South and North Bengal frontiers. The officers and men of the BSF were given training in the frontier, and the training was of a high quality. On 01 April 1988 West Bengal frontier was bifurcated into two frontiers namely the North Bengal Frontier and the South Bengal Frontier..

### *North Bengal Frontier*

North Bengal frontier with its Head quarter at Kadamtala was raised on 01 April 1988, after being carved out of the erstwhile West Bengal Frontier. The frontier comprises an area of 885 km along the Indo Bangladesh border. The Land Customs Station Fulbari and Immigration Check Posts Chankrabandha are located in this frontier. BSF also maintains the Teen bigha corridor connecting the Bangladesh Enclave Datagram and Angarpota in this frontier. This Frontier has land and riverine borders with rivers originating from Himalayan mountains. The border is also densely populated and the population is engaged mostly in agriculture, tea gardening, jute cultivation and harvesting of natural products. The Kishanganj Sector was raised on 01 April 1989 at Panjipara. It was bifurcated into two sectors Kishanganj and Raiganj. Presently the Sector mans the border of total length of 169 kms. The Siliguri Sector was raised on 09 August 1971 with its HQ at Kadamtala. On 07 January 2002 the HQ moved from Kadamtala to Raninagar. The Jalpaiguri Sector was raised at Radhabari on 05 July 2004 and moved to Manipur on 05 September 2004, where the TAC HQ was established at Koirangi near Imphal. It remained operational in Manipur till 23 November 2005. The Frontier has one Subsidiary training centre at Baikunthpur which was established on an adhoc basis on 01 December 1976 at Ranidanga in Darjeeling. The STC was shifted to its present location i.e. Baikunthpur near Salugara in Jalpaiguri in the year 1983. The total campus area of STC Baikunthpur measures 214.90 acres of land.

A 100-bed composite hospital has been established at Kadamtala. The new hospital building of Composite hospital was

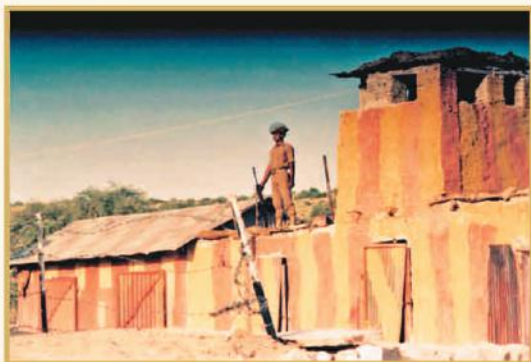
# Border Management

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A Post located in the river bed of Brahmaputra

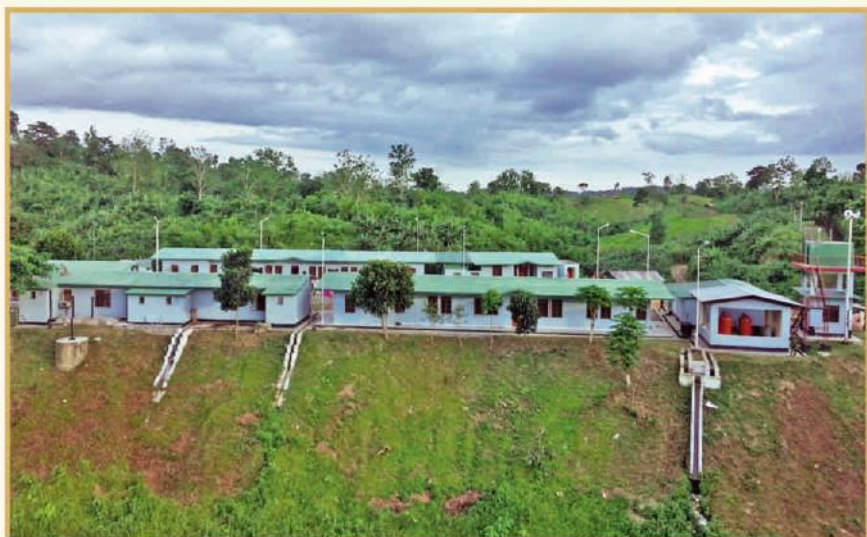


Border Out Posts in initial days



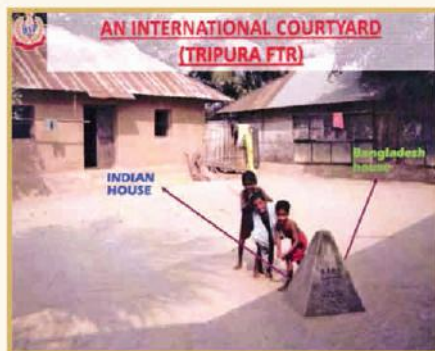


Present Border Out Post

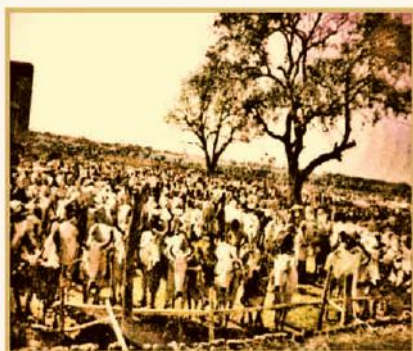


Composite BOP Reang Forward, Tripura

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Peculiar alignment of IB



Cattle in rear areas of border in WB for smuggling purpose

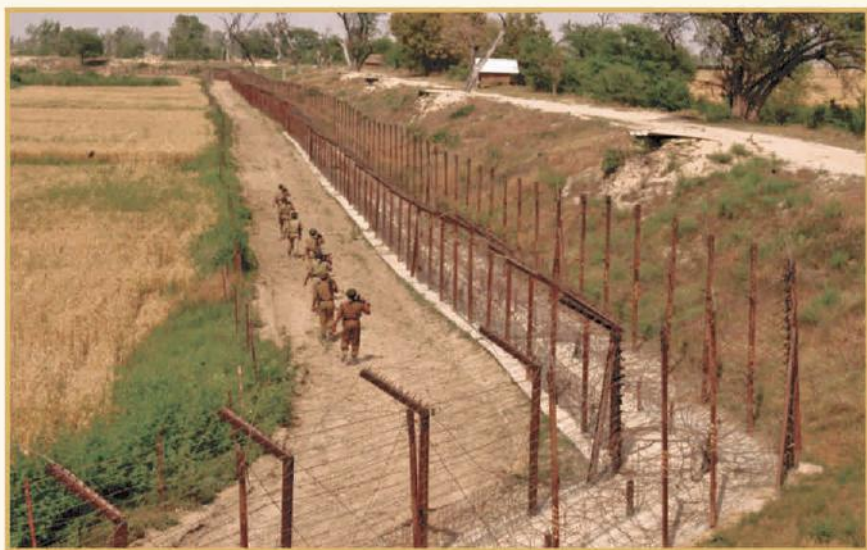


Old Attari Border Check Post

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Border Patrol





Synergy with Animals in border domination





Inclusion of Mahila Praharis in Border Management





## FIRST BORDER HAAT

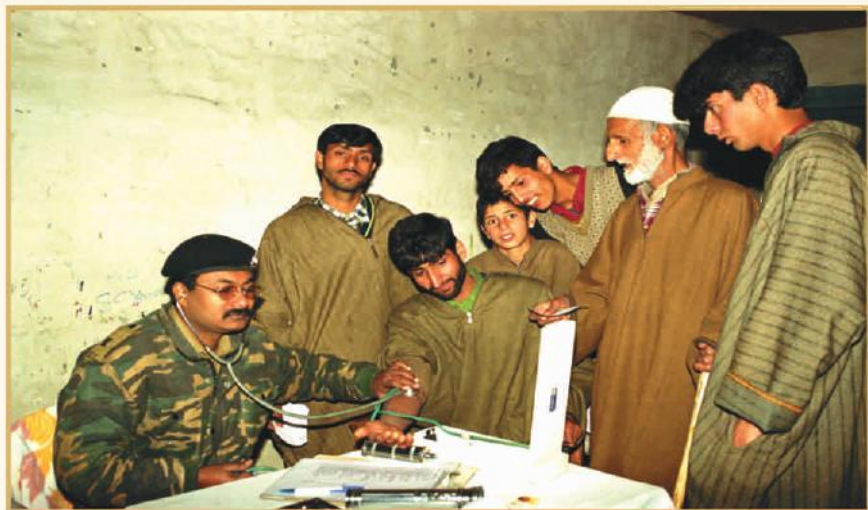


Pahari equipped with Modern Surveillance Equipment



# Community Interface

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inaugurated on 03 January 2006. At present this hospital extends medical facilities to the troops of the North Bengal Frontier and other paramilitary organisations stationed in north Bengal and Sikkim. The composite hospital has facilities of Surgery, Medicine, Radiology, ECG, TMT etc. To provide educational facilities to the wards of the BSF men, a secondary residential school has been set up at Kadamtala which is imparting education according to the CBSE. The school has an academically rich library, games and sports facilities and a vibrant space for cultural activities.

The activities of the BWWA North Bengal Frontier are aimed at enabling the wives of BSF men to become self-reliant and enable the women to face up to the rigours of parenting. Apart from this, the women are encouraged to become active users of new technology like computers. Awareness about the health of their own and their families is also emphasised. The BWWA also undertakes frequent cultural activities, drama, dance and music classes.

### *Tripura Frontier*

The history of the BSF in Tripura dates back to the year 1966 when four State Armed Police battalions were embodied under DIG BSF Tripura Head Quarters. It was located at Police Head Quarters Agartala and the IG(P) Tripura was the ex-officio DIG BSF Tripura. This arrangement continued till 1972, when the HQ DIG BSF Tripura was shifted to Salbagan, the present location of Head Quarters Tripura Frontier.

On 01 July 1983, Tripura Frontier was raised with responsibility of Tripura, Nagaland and Mizoram states. However, this arrangement remained till 01 July 1985 and the Frontier HQ was renamed as TC&M Frontier with jurisdiction on Tripura, Cachar and Mizoram with its HQrs at Salbagan, Agartala. On 01 November 2006, Cachar and Mizoram became part of newly raised M&C Frontier. Presently Tripura Frontier is responsible for the management of Indo-Bangladesh borders in Tripura state only.

### *Meghalaya Frontier*

This frontier was raised on 26 October 1971 as the North-Eastern Frontier in the wake of Mukti Bahini rising in Bangladesh. In June

1983, this frontier was further bifurcated into two separate frontiers: One frontier was – Tripura, Cachar, and Mizoram (TC&M) with HQ at Agartala and the other frontier was the Masimpur areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland (AMM&N) with its HQ at Shillong, Meghalaya. At that time three sectors – Guwahati, Shillong and CI Ops Koirangi (Manipur) – were under AMM&N frontier. The M&C frontier was raised on 01 November 2006 and the AMM&N frontier was renamed as A&M (Assam and Meghalaya) Frontier. Again during re-organisation, the A&M frontier bifurcated into two new frontiers Guwahati and Meghalaya on 01 October 2011. A total of 03 Sectors were raised namely SHQ Tura, Shillong and Jowai in the Meghalaya frontier. The AOR of the Meghalaya frontier is 443 kms along Indo-Bangladesh border. Shri Ranjit Singh was the first IG at the time of the establishment of North-Eastern Frontiers.

### *M&C Frontier*

The erstwhile IS duty frontier of Punjab raised in 1989 was shifted to Kashmir valley in 1993 and further deployed for counter-insurgency ops in Srinagar for a short duration. In 2006 this frontier was shifted to Masimpur by amalgamating the units of Baramulla Frontier with Srinagar Frontier. Subsequently on 01 November 2006, the M&C Frontier came into existence and started functioning at Masimpur by taking over Ops responsibility of Mizoram and Cachar Sectors from TC&M Frontier and CI (Ops) Manipur (SHQ Bagafa). Frontier HQ BSF M&C is deployed in three sectors, 11 Battalions, one STC and one Composite Hospital which is spread in four regions of the north-east. While SHQ BSF, Silchar with its three battalions are deployed in southern districts of Assam state, known as Barak valley, SHQ BSF Aizwal with its four battalions and one Composite Hospital in Mizoram and SHQ BSF CI (Operations) Manipur with its two battalions is deployed in Manipur state and 02 Battalions in Nagaland for CI (Ops) Duties. In addition one STC at Churachandpur in Manipur state is also under this Frontier.

### *Malda Frontier*

The Malda Frontier came into existence under the command of M.S. Malhi, IG on 01 September 2010 after bifurcation of North Bengal and South Bengal Frontier for guarding the Indo-Bangladesh border, at a distance of 07 kms from district town Malda adjacent to NH-34. Initially this Frontier was operationalised along with 09 Bns, which had an AOR 567.330 kms from BP no. 183/MP to 385/5-S, manning 134 BOPs which started from M.S. Pur in the Southern Flank and the last BOP Belagachhi on the Northern Flank. 02 New Bns (125 and 134) were raised on 01 December 2010 and were deployed on the border on the 20/21 June 2011 and the AOR was increased upto BP No.10/6-S (BOP Nimita) to 385/5-S (Belgachi) with a total distance of 606.830 kms. The AOR was handed over to SB Ftr and NB Ftr on 18 January 2013 as per the direction of the FHQ as Malda Ftr was shifted from IB Scenario to ANO Scenario.

Ftr HQ Malda was rechristened as HQ IG (Special Operations) Chhattisgarhand started functioning w.e.f. 07 February 2013 with its THQ at Bhilai and Rear HQ at PAD, Pushpa Bhawan, New Delhi. The Ftr took over Operational Responsibility from THQ IG (Special Operations) Bengaluru which has now been shifted to Bhubaneshwar.

### *Guwahati Frontier*

This frontier was raised on 01 October 2011 under the command of Shri R.K. Chaudhuri, IG FTR HQ initially with 02 sectors (Cooch Behar and Dhubri). Sector Falakata was put under the command of this frontier from 01 April 2012. Seven units have been deployed in the Coochbehar district of West Bengal and three units have been deployed in the Dhubri district of Assam.

### *Ftr HQ (Spl Ops) BSF Bangalore*

The Border Security Force was deployed in Naxal-affected districts of Koraput and Malkangiri in April 2010. FTR CI Ops, ANO BSF initially started functioning at Pushpa Bhawan, Madangir, New Delhi on 16 December 2009. Three Sector Headquarters viz. SHQ BSF

Raipur, SHQ BSF Koraput and SHQ Thiruvananthapuram were also established simultaneously under command of this Frontier. Later on, HQ IG (CI Ops) ANO BSF was renamed as HQ IG (Spl Ops) BSF with its KLP at Bengaluru. Tac HQ of this Ftr was shifted to Bhilai, Chhattisgarh on 13 December 2010.

After bifurcation of HQ IG (Spl Ops) as IG (Spl Ops) Chhattisgarh and IG (Spl Ops) Odisha, Tac HQ of HQ IG (Spl Ops) Odisha was shifted to Khurda, Bhubaneswar on 29 January 2013 and further from Khurda to Koraput on 14 August 2013. Ftr Tac HQ (Spl-Ops) was shifted from Koraput to Bhubaneswar on 16 April 2015 for better coordination and synergy with Strategic Command Centre/SIW as well as other organisations e.g. CRPF, SIB, NCB, SAPF, SOG etc.

During the early stages of deployment, BSF met with stiff resistance and skirmishes between BSF and Naxalites were frequent. Naxalites used IEDs to inflict maximum casualties on the force personnel with the aim of demoralizing and gaining the upper hand in the area. After detailed planning and meticulous execution, effective domination of the area was achieved.

### ***Training Institutions of BSF***

BSF Academy at Tekanpur, the Central School of Weapons and Tactics at Indore and the Training Centre and School at Hazaribagh are three premier training institutions of the BSF. Besides, eight Subsidiary Training Centers (STCs) were also gradually added over time. A brief introduction of all these institutions is given below.

#### *Central School of Weapons and Tactics (CSWT), Indore*

Among premier training Institutions of the BSF, Central School of Weapons and Tactics, Indore is the oldest and subscribed by the widest spectrum of trainees from other organizations. It trains not only BSF personnel for skill-at-arms but also trains officers and constabulary of different States and Central Police Organizations, both for skill-at-arms and minor tactics designed to deal with armed anti-social elements and insurgents operating in different parts of India.

In 1930 Maharaja Tukoji Rao Holkar of Indore commissioned this campus for stationing his 1 Cavalry and Topkhana unit which had approximately 100 horses and a dozen guns. The Cavalry unit was disbanded in 1938 but the guns were retained for ceremonial purpose. Soon after, in 1940, Maharaja of Indore established a training centre for recruits at this location and christened the same as Indore Training Centre. After Independence, these assets were transferred to the Police Department of erstwhile Madhya Bharat State and the Institution was renamed as “Police Training School”, which trained Constables, Head Constables, Sub Inspectors, Inspectors and Deputy Superintendents of Police.

In order to ensure that Police Forces of various states of Independent India are trained in modern weapons and are equipped to deal with armed insurgents, anti-social elements etc, Union Govt re-christened this Institute as Central School of Weapons and Tactics on 15 June 1963 and it started functioning under the aegis of Intelligence Bureau (IB).

Shri K.F. Rustamji, the first Director General of BSF, had this Institution transferred to the BSF on 01 June 1966. This he did in order to realize a dream that conceptualize bringing together ranks and files of various State and Central Police Organizations on a single platform for the purpose of acquiring, enhancing their skills in weapons and minor tactics. He believed CSWT would design and provide uniformly standardized training to the cadres of all the State and Central Police Organizations, (besides other organizations) down their rank and file. This could be achieved by CSWT imbibing all the good practices of a subscribing organizations and vice versa.

CSWT has carried out these tasks with distinction and till 26 September 2012 trained 47,265 personnel (including officers) of BSF, CPOs and SPOs and also trained 180 personnel from other countries like Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan.

CSWT Indore was declared as a Centre of Excellence by the Govt of India on 30 September 1999 for the purpose of training being imparted on weapons and tactics courses conducted at this

institution. CSWT, Indore is among a few premier institutions in India which is ISO-9001:2008 and ISO-14001:2004 certified.

### *BSF Academy, Tekanpur*

Immediately after the raising of the BSF in 1965, a need was felt to establish training institutions. The basic training of the Constables was conducted in two Basic training Centres at Tekanpur and Hazaribagh. These gradually evolved as the premier training institutions of the BSF.

The BSF Academy at Tekanpur is 32 kms away from Gwalior. It is spread over an area of 2923 acres including 643 acres of lake. The academy came into existence as BSF training school in February 1966. It was later renamed as the BSF Academy on 21 November 1966. The birth of the academy was the result of the realisation that training was to play a very important role in the quality of officers that the academy would produce. The qualities that the officers were supposed to have included, honesty, integrity, leadership, good conduct and professionalism.

The BSF Academy conducted Foundation training of Assistant Commandants (Direct Entry), Sub Inspectors (Direct Entry) and In-Service tactical courses for officers. True to the vision of its founding fathers, the institution has evolved its training programmes to aid the changing security environment. It is a matter of great pride that the Academy has been recognised as a Centre of excellence by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Over a period of fifty years, the academy has strived to emerge as a think tank and an academic centre for border management, counter-insurgency, internal security, strategic planning and human resource management. The training requirements of the BSF have evolved over time. To serve these needs various institutions have been established at Tekanpur. A brief description of these follow:

The training Wings are headed by the Deputy Director who is also the Chief instructor of the Academy and seven establishments are also located here. He is an officer of the rank of Inspector General who has a vast experience as a trainer along with on field

experience. He is assisted by an officer of the rank of Second-in-Command who is also training officer of the Academy.

Training of the BSF is the most important responsibility of the Academy. The faculty of training imparts useful knowledge to all the members of the forces who undergo a variety of courses, including the basic course which prepares all the trainees for efficient execution of tasks assigned to them. The faculty of training also monitors and coordinate activities at the Academy.

The administration of training wings is looked after by the Administrative Wing of the Academy. This wing is headed by a Deputy Inspector General designated as the Chief Administrative Officer. He assists Inspector General/Deputy Director and other training wings providing admin support and back up.

### *Tactical Wing*

The tactical branch of the Tekanpur started functioning on 18 September 1967 with an aim to impart Advanced training in tactics, border security and surveillance to the officers, sub ordinate officers and men of the force. The first in-service course entitled 'Company and Platoon Commander' was conducted from 18 September to 23 December 1967. The present building of the wing was inaugurated by Shri V.V. Giri the then president of India, on 05 April 1972. Ever since the building has served as the establishment office of the tactical branch.

The first command of the tactical branch was given to Lt. Col. P.S. Nair, in August 1968. One of the primary functions of the tactical branch has been to evolve new concepts in Border management and to bridge the gap between training and ground reality. The younger officers of the BSF, Central Armed Police Forces, and special police officers have been trained in commando operations. Orientation courses have also been conducted for police and the army officers who choose to join the BSF. Special security forces of various countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, Mongolia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Switzerland and Sierra Leone have been given a variety of training. In recognition of its immense contribution in the field of



training Commando School has been declared as Centre of excellence by the Ministry of Home Affairs in the year 2007.

### *Specialist Training School*

The Specialist Training School at Tekanpur is the alma mater of the BSF officers and Sectional Officers and was established in November 1966. This training school is imparting Basic training to Assistant Commandants (Direct Entry), Assistant Commandants (Limited Departmental Competitive Examination) (LDCE), Sub-Inspector (Direct Entry) and Sub-Inspector (Limited Department Competitive Examination) (LDCE). Training of medical officers, veterinary officers and engineers is also conducted here.

### *Faculty of Studies*

The Faculty of Studies at BSF Academy was established by the order of the DG BSF in June 1986. In 2011 September, the Ministry of Home Affairs sanctioned permanent manpower i.e. 35. The Faculty of Studies has functioned as a nodal agency for evolving an operational doctrine, conduct organizational research, prepare case studies, support training in force and initiate/evolve changes in training methodology, keeping in view the role and task of the force.

The Faculty has been involved in formulating operational doctrines for the Eastern and Western theatres in consultation with Field commanders. The Faculty has also been involved in the preparation of new training literature and materials.

#### **VISIT OF PM TO BSF ACADEMY TEKANPUR**

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi after her visit to Tekanpur in 1974 had said—

“The duties of the BSF have been enlarged because of a greater dependence on them for the internal security role, particularly in border States like Gujarat, West Bengal and Nagaland. In this context it was mentioned that there is need to have another look at the structure of the battalions by increasing the officer strength and reducing the strength of the lower ranks. This should also improve the performance of the BSF in border posts where more officers are required because of the isolation in which units work. The Home Minister may examine the re-organisation proposals and let me know what can be done.”

Realising the importance of horse riding as an important operational need as well as to improve the personality of the officers, Equitation School was established at the Tekanpur Academy in 1974. By 1977 the BSF Equestrian team was raised.

### *BSF Institute of Disaster Response (BIDR)*

The BSF Institute of Disaster Response is a leading agency for imparting training to the National Disaster Response Force and civil agencies. It also serves as a think tank for Disaster Response Training in BSF and coordinates all disaster response activities. The institute has been earmarked as a specialized institute for MFR, CSSR, NBC and Dead Body Management Course and is entrusted with the responsibility to train officers and men who are inducted into the NDRF Battalions. It also trains personnel of other organizations. Remarkably, it was the training provided to the BSF men which has proved more than adequate in various disasters where the force has been deployed.

### *Training Centre and School, Hazaribagh*

The Training Centre and School was raised on 18 November 1966 at Hazaribagh under the dynamic leadership of Lt. Colonel R.P. Macanliffe. Subsequently the institution was shifted to Meru the present location on 25 March 1967. The BSF campus at Meru is spread over an area of 1189 acres of land and is located against the scenic background of dense Sal wood forests.

The centre conducts specialized training for all ranks of the force and trainees of CPOs/SPOs and friendly foreign countries. The centre also conducts training of Sub inspectors and recruits. The center was initially established to cater to the needs of the then authorized 25 battalions. The institution has now developed adequate infrastructure and training methodology to cater to the needs of all the BSF Battalions as well as other CPOs/SPOs.

The training centre has been declared a centre of excellence in 2002 for training needs related to:

- (a) Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism
- (b) Explosive Detection and Training.

The Tactical Wing of the TC&S, Hazaribagh has been entrusted with training the subordinate officers of the Border Security Force in Platoon Commander and Company Commander (Tactical) Course. The Course is designed as an advance level in-service course with an aim to hone the tactical skills of the SOs of the rank of Sub Inspectors and Inspectors.

Counter Insurgency and Commando faculty was established in the year 1978. Initially, the course was called Police Commando and duration of the course was 08 weeks. In the same year, the course was renamed Counter Insurgency and Jungle Welfare with the same duration. The course was rechristened Counter Insurgency and Commando Course with the same duration in 1995 and is running till date. The faculty is also conducting various courses such as Commando team for BSF frontiers, Anti-Terrorist Course, Special Commando Course for SPO/CPO.

### *Subsidiary Training Centres*

With the expansion of the Force, and its operational deployments, a need has been felt to establish subsidiary training centres to cater to the training requirements of the Constabulary of the force. Before 1986, 05 Adhoc Subsidiary Training Centres, one each at Shillong (Meghalaya), Siliguri (WB), Udhampur (J&K), Kharkan Camp (Pb), Jodhpur (Raj) and two BTCs (Basic Training Centres) at Hazaribagh and Tekanpur were functioning in the BSF to cater to the Basic Training needs of constabulary in the BSF.

In 1992 BTC Tekanpur was shifted to Indore. During 1986 MHA conveyed the sanction for regularization of above five Adhoc STCs and also sanctioned the raising of 03 new STCs one—each at Tekanpur, Hazaribagh and Bangalore. The sanction for raising of STC Kashmir was issued by MHA during 1990. As of now, the following STC's are functioning.

Subsidiary Training Centre BSF Tekanpur was raised on 01 March 1986 with a target to train 840 recruits at a time in five

companies. The first commandant of STC was Shri Sudarshan Kumar. The STC has been established in an area of 57.48 acres of land against the authorisation of 125 acres. Since 2011 training capacity has been increased to 1008 recruits. This centre also undertakes training for Ministerial Staff (clerical) of the force.

STC, Hazaribagh came into existence on 01 December 2011 after upgrading the BTC into STC. BTC was raised on 18 June 1967, as an integral part of TC&S. Lt Colonel M.M. Grewal was first Commandant of BTC.

STC BSF Jodhpur came into existence on 01 December 1965 and started functioning with RAC Trg Centre at Mandore Road Jodhpur. It started functioning separately within the campus of RAC from 01 April 1966. Colonel Brij Pal Singh was the first DIG of this STC. It was shifted from RAC campus to the present location in 1975 and has since been functioning here.

The STC Jodhpur also maintains a Camel Wing – including a camel-mounted Band Platoon – consisting of 65 riders and 48 Band men. Men are attached from various battalions of the Rajasthan Frontier to the camel wing. The world famous Camel-Mounted Band is a part of the BSF contingent taking part in the Republic Day Parade and the Raising Day Parade at New Delhi.

Subsidiary training center Srinagar was established in Humhama near Srinagar Airport on 19 June 1990. This Training centre was raised under the command of Shri N.S. Kanwar, Commandant, to impart basic training to the Constables and to run various in service courses, keeping in view the training needs of Srinagar Frontier.

This STC has played a pivotal role in preparing BSF personnel not only by imparting training in routine professional courses, but also teaching subjects like counter-insurgency, counter terrorism and anti-infiltration operations. This STC played a key role in raising a Commando Battalion (199 Bn) on 01 January 1997 to deal with militancy in Kashmir valley. Two Companies of this battalion were specifically raised by imparting training to surrendered militants in this STC.

The Subsidiary training centre, Udhampur was raised on 01

January 1968 at Kaluchak on Jammu Pathankot National Highway. The first commandant of this centre was Colonel B.S. Bajwa. The STC was shifted to Paloura Camp, Jammu when the land for BSF campus was provided here. In 1980 Jammu Frontier was raised and established at Paloura Camp. On 01 July 1982, the STC started functioning from Roundmail location on Udhampur Dhar Road axis, under Udhampur district.

In January 1997, this centre was converted in to a Combat Training School to impart 04 weeks of special training on Low Intensity Conflict to fresh recruits from other courses. Subsequently, the training on Low Intensity Conflict was made a part of training syllabus of recruits and as such on 08 July 1999, Combat Training School was reverted to STC.

STC, BSF Kharkan, is located at a distance of 13 kms from Hoshiarpur City, on Hoshiarpur Una Road, in the foothills of Shivaliks. STC Punjab was initially established at Jalandhar on 01 March 1968 and later shifted to the present location on 25 April 1979. The total area of the campus is 898 acres, under the jurisdiction of Hoshiarpur district of Punjab.

STC Churachandpur was raised at Shillong on 15 March 1968. It was commanded by Shri R. Chontou, IPS. Shri S.N. Hazarika, AC was detailed to look after the STC till posting of a permanent incumbent. The STC was raised to impart basic training to recruits of BSF units located in the then North-Eastern Frontier (NEF)/ Assam, apart from providing pre-course training to BSF personnel of the then NEF, and organise and run force level and frontier level courses and cadres.

In February 1970, the STC was shifted from Umpling to Mawapat in Shillong. During the 1972-1981, considerable progress was made with regard to training infrastructure. In 1981 STC BSF Agartala and STC BSF Koirengi in Manipur was merged with STC BSF Shillong. On 11 June 1981 Shri Jagtar Singh, Commandant was appointed as the first Commandant of this STC.

During the local ethnic clash of 1997-99, STC Churachandpur did a commendable job by way of giving shelter to the victims

and providing medical cover and ration etc. A refugee camp was established by the STC during the clash and all possible help/assistance was provided to the affected and this action was highly appreciated by the Government of Manipur. The troops and families were provided all essential commodities inside the campus.

The STC BSF Bangalore was raised on 11 April 1986, in the premises of 102 Bn BSF, Yelahanka, Bangalore North under command of Shri I.M. Ponnappa, Commandant of 102 Bn BSF. The STC is located 18 kms away from Bangalore city.

STC BSF Chakur was established in 2007 in Latur (Maharashtra) situated above 45 kms from Latur city. From 2007 to 2009 the personnel of this STC stayed in tentage accommodation. Gradually the infrastructure started coming up and now the STC has all the basic facilities.

### *Signal Training School, New Delhi*

Signal Training School, BSF, New Delhi was initially established at R.K. Puram in the year 1966 by getting manpower from the Army on deputation to train the communication manpower of BSF. BSF Signal Training School New Delhi was raised in the year 1970. Later on it was shifted to Tigri New Delhi. Its campus area is 28.99 Acres. This institution is engaged in imparting technical training to meet the requirement of technical manpower of the BSF.

Due to expansion of the Force, it was felt that STS, New Delhi was not in a position to train the required technical manpower of the Force and it was decided to establish another Signal Training School at Bangalore and finally during 1990, the STS BSF Bangalore was established & Operator Course was transferred here while STS New Delhi was entrusted primarily with training Radio Mechanic and Technical officials. However, due to increasing strength of Radio Operator cadre, it became very difficult to run all of the ORL courses at STS BSF Bangalore due to limited capacity and so a few Operator courses were transferred to STS New Delhi.

*Signal Training School, Bangalore*

Signal Training School, BSF, Bangalore was established in June, 1990 to impart basic and in-service training to Radio Operators and Engine Fitters. This Institution is a IS/ISO 9001 : 2008 certified Institution. This certificate was awarded by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on 25 April 2006 for three years and further renewed on training to all categories of communication personnel in Basic and upgradation courses.

Apart from the training institutions, certain specialized training Institutions have been established to cater to the requirements of the force. This has been done in consonance with the increase in the mandated duties of the force. These institutions are:

*Central Workshop and Stores (CENWOSTO), Tekanpur*

At its inception, the BSF was heavily dependent on the army for procurement of arms, ammunition and spare parts. During the sixties the army switched over to 7.62 mm series weapons from .303 weapons system. But, the Border Security Force continued with .303 caliber weapons. Ordnance factories were over worked and they stopped supplying spare parts of .303 caliber weapons to the BSF consequent to which the basic weapons in the BSF such as .303 LMG, Rifles GF Rifles, were rendered unserviceable, with a decrease in the proportion of serviceable weapons. This adversely affected the border duties. To salvage the situation, Central Workshop & Stores was established to fabricate spare parts and regulate the issue of controlled stores like arms, ammunition, optical instruments to BSF Frontiers as well as Central and State Police Forces.

The Central Police Stores-Arms & Equipment which were already functioning at Gwalior since 30 April 1966, was shifted to BSF Academy in 1971, and renamed CENWOSTO with the aim to achieve self sufficiency in management of spare parts and regulate the supply of ordnance stores. CENWOSTO acts as a catalyst for implementing technological modernization in the force at various stages. This depicts a paradigm shift in its growth and performance in various fields of technology.

A premier workshop, CENWOSTO, produces high quality Non-Lethal weapons like Tear Gas Guns, MBL Agnivarsha and all kinds of spare parts for armaments and optical instruments. It also handles their repair and supplies arms, ammunitions and allied equipment to BSF, CAPF and SPOs.

### *NTCD BSF Tekanpur*

Tekanpur also hosts the National Training Centre for Dog set up in the year 1970 under the command of Dr. S.P. Kewal. NTCD is a premier Institute of the BSF. It started with a unit of 20 dogs with 30 men and one principal. For raising the dog school, initial breeding stock was imported from West Germany, followed by another batch of imports in the year 1985. The centre supplies certified pedigree pups to various Government agencies on demand.

### *Tear Smoke Unit*

The riot control munitions manufacturing facility Tear Smoke Unit (TSU) was formally established at Tekanpur on 12 May 1976 as a project of the Ministry of Home Affairs, to produce Tear Smoke Munitions (TSMs) with transfer of technology from Indian Ordnance Factories. This is a one-of-its-kind manufacturing facility in India which produces different types of riot control munitions and is one of the largest manufactures of tear smoke munitions in Asia. The location of the Unit was selected for the plant as it provided the ideal climatic conditions for the production of tear smoke and riot-control munitions supplied to the Indian State Police forces that were then heavily dependent on imported riot control munitions. Establishment of TSU thus enabled the availability of indigenous riot control munitions to meet full requirement of the Police forces.

This unit is headed by a General Manager of the rank of DIG. The sanctioned strength of the Unit in all ranks is 262 personnel. The functioning of the unit is overseen by a high powered Governing body comprising of members from the



Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Defence Research & Development Organisation and DGOF, besides several heads of the CPOs and State Police Organisations. The DG BSF is the Chairman of the Governing Body, which meets every year to review the work of the unit and approve proposals for the year.

The initial capacity of the Unit was 50,000 munitions per annum at the time of its establishment for four types of munitions. Over the years, the Factory has reached an optimum production capacity of 1,25,000 munitions of 32 types per annum. The unit had also exported various Tear Smoke Munitions to Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Mauritius. In addition to this, in order to attract more customers and make an entry into the export market, it is regularly participating in various National and International Exhibitions.

The unit has been pursuing a dynamic Research and Development programme since its inception. Through this programme, the unit has been constantly striving hard to bring in more new generic products to meet the ever changing requirements of its users. This is an ongoing process and its efforts are generally planned on a war footing to give the country's security agencies an edge over the miscreants to combat any situation effectively using minimum force. This unit also conducts training of police personnel. So far TSU has trained 28 officers, 390 SOs and 442 ORs of State Police and 30 SOs, 706 ORs of BSF.

TSU initially started with the production with four types of TSMs and presently has expertise in manufacturing 74 types of riot and mob control munitions and special munitions. Backed by strong quality processes and rich experience of managing clients across the world, TSU aligns production strategies to meet customer requirements. From simple changes in processes to innovative solutions, the unit helps customers harness the power of Non-Lethal Munitions to achieve excellence, customer satisfaction and sustainability. The products developed by the TSU have esteemed positions in the globally well-respected catalogue of Jane's Police and Homeland Security equipment manuals. It is safe to say that this unit has constantly lived up to its motto of 'Minimum Force Maximum Effect'.

## **Border Management**

Borders are a national symbol, and depending on which side of the fence one is at, borders can be areas of restrictions or opportunities. This ambivalence arises because the existence of borders goes rarely unchallenged. Borders are points of intersection of sovereignty, territory, nationalisms and population. It also signifies the rules and laws that the people have to follow and represents the 'national' culture. Such challenges to the Indian borders were witnessed immediately after independence. The necessity of securing the borders for the nascent nation could not be overemphasized. The Border Security Force was set up to deal with the security concerns posed by unregulated and unguarded borders. The strategy for border security management was, however, only gradually formulated. While deliberations began early, at the level of implementation the status quo continued.

### ***Security to management***

The BSF was brought in to existence to secure India's border with Pakistan. One of the primary roles assigned to the BSF was the promotion of a sense of security among the people living along the border. This role demanded that the officers of the BSF be sensitized to the needs of the border population, who are mostly poor and suffer a range of deprivations. To develop a sense of security among the border population, physical security of the borders along with soft tactics which involved winning the hearts of people, were necessary. Mutual co-operation with people living in the border areas was necessary along with a coercive policy which could act as a deterrent to the nefarious elements who frequented the border.

The soft tactics described above were, however, not given due attention at the level of policy formulation. The planners were

pre-occupied with the security aspect of border management. Thus the response of the BSF in such situations depended on the individual initiatives of the field commanders. It was not till the Kargil conflict that the concept of border management received attention from the policy circles.

Border Management has several aspects. These include domination of border to prevent border crimes, integration of the border community with the national social fabric, interactions with counterparts to maintain peace and tranquillity at the borders and other related issues. While the BSF is involved in most aspects of border management, the domination of border to control criminal activity and instilling a sense of security in the border populations have been its primary responsibility as we have already seen in the BSF Rules described in the beginning of this chapter.

### ***Border Out Posts (BOPs)***

The initial task which confronted the BSF was the deployment of troops on the ground. These deployments were based on bases from where operations could be launched. These operational bases were named as Border Out Posts. The whole stretch where the battalion was to be deployed required to be reconnoitered (Recced) and various aspects were to be taken into consideration for establishing BOPs. Since the entire organization was in its infancy, micro level implementations, such as the establishment of BOPs, initially did not have any definite guidelines. It was only in due course of time that guidelines could be framed for the establishment of BOPs.

The initial phase at these BOP's were ridden with numerous difficulties. In several areas even the bare necessities, like water were scarce, housing was inadequate and infrastructure such as roads and electricity were non-existent. In several BOPs in Rajasthan, for example, the men were doused with dust storms which lasted for days on end.

Things started taking shape only when the guidelines for the establishment of BOPs were finalized. It became important to determine the approximate alignment of these posts with respect

to the border. In areas where the habitation extended up to the border areas—Punjab, parts of Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam etc. the alignments of the BOPs were made well forward. Conversely, in under-developed areas, BOPs were established away from the boundary line. Over a period of time setting up of BOPs was made more scientific and took into account various considerations. Operational considerations were the patterns of crime, demography and habitation, areas of responsibility of flanking BOPs, nature and alignment of border, defence potential, location of counterpart BOPs. Administrative consideration included availability of means of communication and public transport, availability of water, etc. In addition to these factors, international political obligations/considerations also got priority.

Most BOPs functioned without electricity. On several occasions, during night time patrols, the party lost its way, and had to be assisted by the BOP. This regularly happened in the desert outposts of Rajasthan. Certain BOPs in the North-East were maintained by air-dropping of provisions. Men deployed in these BOPs battled mosquitoes and torrential downpours. Malaria patients had to be immediately evacuated and in several instances, due to adverse weather conditions, this was delayed. Gradually, the infrastructure at BOPs started getting due attention. Keeping in view the budgetary constraints and the basic minimum requirement of BOPs to meet operational needs, five basic elements were identified as essential and efforts were made to equip all the BOPs with these. They were Barrack-1, Kote-1, Toilet Block-1, Kitchen Block-1 and Post Commander Block-1. However, besides these basic elements, some other elements were also sanctioned:

<b>BOP Elements (Company Level BOP)</b>	<b>BOP Elements (Platoon Level BOP)</b>
1 Admin Block	1 Admin Block
2 16 Men Barrack: Type A	2 16 Men Barrack: Type A
3 16 Men Barrack: Type B	3 16 Men Barrack: Type C
4 Mahila Barrack	4 Toilet Block
5 Toilet Block	5 SOs Room
6 SOs Room	6 Garrage, POL Store, Electric Sub

<b>BOP Elements (Company Level BOP)</b>	<b>BOP Elements (Platoon Level BOP)</b>
7 Garrage, POL Store, Electric Sub Station, Generator Shade and Services	Station, Generator Shade and Services
8 Kitchen Block	7 Kitchen Block
9 Magazine	8 Magazine
10 Kote, wireless and CQMH	9 Kote, wireless and CQMH
11 Bunker (Corner)	10 Bunker (Corner)
12 Bunker (Middle)	11 Bunker (Middle)
13 Sentry Post/View Point	12 Sentry Post/View Point

To meet the enhanced responsibilities certain other additions were made to the provisions of the BOPs. Thus emerged the concept of composite BOPs. In a Composite BOPs, fourteen elements were required for company level BOPs and 13 elements for platoon level BOPs as follows:

<b>Composite BOP Elements (Company Level BOP)</b>	<b>Composite BOP Elements (Platoon Level BOP)</b>
1 Garage	1 Garage
2 Sentry Post	2 Sentry Post
3 Wash	3 Wash
4 Generator Shed	4 Generator Shed
5 POL Store	5 POL Store
6 Magazine, Kote and Wireless	6 Magazine, Kote and Wireless
7 Barrack A	7 Barrack A
8 Barrack B	8 Kitchen Block
9 Kitchen Block	9 Toilet
10 Toilet	10 OP Tower
11 OP Tower	11 Bunker: 6 numbers
12 Bunker: 6 numbers	12 OP Towers (Sides of BOPs): 2 numbers
13 OP Towers (Sides of BOPs): 2 numbers	

Currently, there are about 1900 BOPs along Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh border. Out of these, 509 BOPs are composite BOPs, with 14 basic elements, in varying stage of construction and 1373 BOPs have only five basic elements. Efforts are being made to upgrade all these BOPs so that they have all the 14 basic elements.

BOPs form the basic node of security in the border areas. The strategy of border domination hinges around this pivotal set up. It

was the characteristic feature of border domination right from the beginning. Planning, execution and documentation of all out-door operations, training of troops to keep them fit, recreation and other such associated activities were patterned and made part of routine activities at BOP. Over a period of time, functioning of a BOP became more systematic. The security scenario has gradually become more challenging due to the emergence of militancy. To deal with these challenges, a new strategy in the form of fencing of the borders was mooted.

### *Fencing on border*

The borders of India and Pakistan have a peculiar character. There is not much that is different or distinct on either side of the division. The dense habitations on either side, ethnic bonds of the people, profiteering, smuggling, poverty and unemployment are some of the basic factors which lead to violations of the boundary frequently. Despite the arrangements that were put in place to prevent these violations, the problem became acute with the advent of militancy in Punjab in the eighties when Pakistan abetted and supported the ongoing militancy. It was in these circumstances that a need was felt to strengthen the security on the borders by creating a security fence. Initially the fence was erected in Punjab and later it was extended to the areas in Rajasthan. After the effectiveness of the fencing on the western border was realized, the eastern borders were also included in the ambit of the project.

### *Planning and construction: Punjab and Rajasthan border*

The Fencing project was taken up in a phased manner to enhance the implementation and ensure time bound completion. In the first phase, it was decided to fence those sensitive areas/routes which were being used by insurgents for infiltration/exfiltration and smuggling of arms/ammunition. Accordingly of the 553 km long Punjab border with Pakistan, a stretch of 120 kilometres was identified as being most sensitive and prone to such border crimes. CPWD was entrusted with the responsibility of undertaking the job of erecting the fence.

It was visualized that the attempts to control infiltration/exfiltration in Punjab may have adverse fallout in terms of increased infiltration in the adjoining state of Rajasthan. It was proposed that the physical border should be sealed by the presence of troops and the erection of a physical fence. Ultimately a committee was set up under the chairmanship of DIG Bikaner with the Collector and SSPs of the Districts of Sriganganagar and Bikaner and executive Engineer CPWD as members. The committee went into details of the project and surveyed the area to identify the most vulnerable patches which required immediate erection of Border fence. The meeting was attended by all the Commandants of BSF of the Sector. After considering all the aspects, the committee proposed that border fencing should be erected in Bikaner Sector in the same manner as in Punjab. The area which was not covered by the fence was to be covered physically by intensified patrolling and *Nakas* (a sort of picketing by 3-4 men) by the BSF.

#### *General layout and design*

It was visualized that the Border Security Fence should be laid 150 to 300 Mtrs from the boundary line and immediately ahead of the alignment of BOPs. It was to be laid as straight as possible, thus facilitating efficient and easy surveillance. However, at places the fence had to be shifted in view of non-availability of suitable ground as in the riverine areas. For the purpose of fencing, a strip of land 44 ft wide was acquired. In order to facilitate farmers to cultivate the land in the area falling between the boundary and the fence, steel gates were appropriately located with locking arrangements. These gates also facilitate the movement of BSF patrols and parties who operate to dominate the Border, carry out checking and repairs of Border pillars or to attend flag meeting etc.

In the Rann of Kutch in the Gujarat Frontier the area of responsibility of each unit is so vast that gaps between the BOPs are very large. Therefore it was not possible to have the kind of troop density to guard the borders as in Punjab and Jammu etc. Moreover the marshy land of the Rann of Kutch also pose a stiff

challenge. In 1996, a plan was submitted to the Government to have a border road constructed on a bund to be laid parallel and about 100 to 200 yards on the Indian side of the zero line. This plan was approved by the Government and the work on construction of the bund and fence commenced. BOPs have been constructed just behind these bunds at intervals of five kilometers each. With fencing and lighting of this stretch, this axis has been virtually sealed.

In the Eastern Frontiers along the Indo-Bangladesh borders, the Govt. of India has sanctioned the construction of border road and fencing in two phases. The phase one of the scheme measuring about 837 km started in 1989 and was completed by the end of 2003. There were initial problems in construction due to Bangladesh's objection on the alignment. The alignment had to be changed at places to bring it outside of 150 yards from the boundary line. The presence of local population in close vicinity of the border has also resulted in the change of the alignment of the fence. At some points, these dwellings are situated right on the zero line. However, despite all these challenges, the fencing in the North-Eastern Frontiers is being done at a reasonable pace. This has proved to be an effective deterrent against the incidences of infiltration.

### *Battle for fencing in Jammu and Samba sectors<sup>1</sup>*

The fencing of the international borders in the Jammu region was immensely challenging against the backdrop of active resistance of Pakistani troops by firing and shelling to thwart the fencing work. The Doda Bhadrwah division of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K, hereafter) became the focus of intruders/infiltrators from Pakistan during the latter half of the nineties. This happened primarily due to the fact that the objectives of spreading terrorism in the Kashmir valley had largely been foiled. The Jammu division of the international border (IB) was geographically the most convenient for the purpose of cross border intrusions. In here, the Samba division turned out to be the most vulnerable, as the large sarkanda

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1. Based on inputs contributed by Shri Ravi Ponoth, ADG (Retd.), BSF.



grass growth interspersed with rivers and *Nullahs* provided the necessary cover to the Intruders. The proximity of the National Highway 1-A to the international border in this sub sector was another factor for a spurt in intrusions from Pakistan. This made it extremely easy for the infiltrators to easily mask themselves in the civilian population once they crossed the IB. The busy nature of the highway with a constant stream of vehicles further made detection difficult. The hitherto silent Jammu border suddenly loomed large as a security threat. Armed ambushes on the BSF men became the order of the day and on some occasions the infiltrators managed to pass through the BSF ambush. To salvage the situation, the stalled project of the Central Public Works Department to fence the border was revived. The project was to be executed by the BSF under the supervision of the then DG, Shri E.N. Rammohan.

An officer of IG rank, Shri Vijay Raman was assigned the task of undertaking the fencing of the border. He was to be assisted by Shri A.K. Sethi, DIG Jammu sector, who had a deep understanding of the local conditions and proved to be a valuable aide. The initiation of the project involved deliberations with the commandants of the various battalions posted in the area. In particular the various scenarios were visualised and possible measures to negotiate the difficulties debated. Shri Hemant Desai and Shri Ravi Kumar Ponoth who were posted as the commandants of 53 and 153 battalions at Samba highlighted that as long as the element of surprise was maintained, the project could proceed unhindered. Moreover there were high chances that the Pak rangers would leave no stone unturned to sabotage the project, if they discovered the same. This meant that the BSF should be ready to complete the project under the spectre of enemy fire and suffering the loss of both men and materials.

The result of the deliberations was the classification of the area to be fenced under three categories: Category 1 would include areas where the element of surprise was possible and where the work could be initiated and could proceed unhindered. Category 2 would comprise of areas where the work could be jeopardised if

discovered by the Pakistani Rangers. Category 3 consisted of areas where the work would be hampered from the very beginning. Following this, a strategy was devised which was attuned with the peculiar requirement of all the three areas. For the category 1 areas, it was planned that the work should be completed as soon as possible. Security would be provided to the working party and provisions for retaliation to the enemy attack and evacuation of the working party on a short notice were made. To the extent possible the project would be undertaken covertly.

The same strategy of proceeding with the work, till it lay undetected was adopted for Phase 2 projects too. After this it was decided that a bund be constructed on the Pakistan side which could provide cover, as the work continued. The Bund would be policed by forces, which would deny any approach to the Pakistani elements.

In Phase 3, the construction of the bund was seen as a prerequisite for the work to start. The Bund was to be well provided with lights for better coverage of the area and provide a deterrent to the hostile elements. The BOP where the work would be undertaken was to be sufficiently strengthened with weapons, surveillance gadgets, medical aid and casualty evacuation.

The DG BSF visited the border and apprised himself of the situation. He cautioned that the 153 Battalion AOR would invite heavy fire from the rangers. To start off the project, a 15 kilometre area west of river Basantar, which was not routinely patrolled by the Pak rangers, was chosen. This alignment of the fence was to be in the area of BOP Nursery of 39 Bn BSF which was then commanded by Shri D.S. Randhawa. The team achieved a stellar performance when it completed the work well within the allotted time and without the Pakistan rangers getting any clue about the ongoing project. Upon completion of the project the reaction within the Pakistan rangers establishment was one of immense surprise and disappointment. The pressure put on the officers of the Pak Rangers was unnerving.

However, the awareness of the Pakistan rangers meant that no longer could the project be continued without interference.

Regular firing from medium and heavy machine guns at the fencing sites became a common occurrence. The Pak rangers were also supported by their army in this adventure. It is a great testimony to the resoluteness and bravery of the BSF that they continued the work undeterred. The Pak rangers now resorted to acts of sabotage by trying to explode the fencing and aiding infiltration of saboteurs through the thick sarkanda grass on the Basantar river bed. The days at the border were marked by heavy firing. BSF also dealt with the challenge of keeping the labour motivated by various incentives. The speed of the work was also affected by the occasional flash floods in river Basantar. In one such instance, the alertness of the BSF men averted a disaster when a party of men was caught in a flash flood with a wall of water, 10 feet high, rushing to engulf them. Despite these heavy odds, the first phase of the work was completed within the extended time frame of 31 March 2002.

Even as the work of Phase 1 was under progress, it was decided that the work along the 53 and 153 Battalions should also be commenced. This was the area east of Basantar river and had traditionally been extremely infiltration prone. Both these battalions had reported umpteen number of encounters with the infiltrators. The IB ran almost parallel to the NH1A and from their BOP Dandhar opposite the 153 Bn, the Pak rangers had a commanding view of the Samba town.

All the members of the 153rd Battalion committed themselves wholeheartedly to the work at hand. Having commenced the work in the last week of October, the team proceeded till December, under the looming shadow of heavy fire from the Pakistani rangers and the army. Out of their frustration, bred out of their inability to stop the work, Pakistan army committed an act of unprovoked aggression. On 23 December 2001, taking advantage of the terrain and the natural cover provided by a thick mangrove at the work site between BP nos 51 and 74, the Pakistan army ambushed a BSF party, which resulted in the death of HC Jaya Prakash and Ct K.C. Das and K.S. Bhai, while another, Ct Bhaskar was injured. The Pakistan ambush party was attacked by Insp R.K. Meena

and were forced to beat a hasty retreat. The BSF after a deliberation with top officers decided to answer this aggression of the Pak regular army. In a retaliatory attack, the BSF achieved commendable success and completely decimated the Pak BOP Galar Tanda.

In the wake of the attack on the Indian Parliament, the BSF and the army were deployed as per the hot war plans. Once the Pak army was also deployed, regular fire exchanges became the order of the day. The entire AOR of the 153rd Battalion resembled a war zone. The border fencing had to be suspended as it became almost impossible to continue the work under this war like situations. The work was resumed shortly with orders for the work party to take shelter inside the trench made by heavy earth movers.

After the Galar Tanda Episode, the work on fencing was undertaken at various patches simultaneously. To keep the operation under subterfuge, the heavy equipment was moved when there were local festivals on dark nights, when the loud music masked the sounds of the digging of trenches. Despite this remarkable strategy, on two occasions, the firing from the Pakistani HMGs damaged the boom cylinders of the excavators, and temporarily stalled the work. To counter this, the team constructed dummy JCB's to act as decoy for the firing of the Pakistan army. The unit finished the fencing in the AOR of the 153 Battalion well within the stipulated time period.

The battle for fencing, which had all the elements of a regular battle was completed in a span of five years. In March 2006, the work on 186 kms of border of Jammu was completed. 157 kms of flood lights were also erected by 2007. Both these measures went a long way in arresting the tide of infiltrators towards the Doda-Bhadrawah region.

Thus the battle of wits and bullets between the BSF on one side and Pak rangers and their army on the other, which began on 14 January 2001, continued for more than five years. Finally, the resoluteness, grit and determination of the brave *Praharis* (Bordermen) met with ultimate success and the work on 186 kms of fence on Jammu border was completed in March 2006.

Similarly, 157 kms of Flood Lights were also erected by 2007, all of which contributed to substantially arrest the movement of Pak infiltrators towards Doda-Badarwah region. The average expenditure incurred by the BSF per kilometre of the Fence was less than 50% of the CPWD estimates! In this Battle of the Border Fence, the BSF lost six precious lives and as many as 35 Praharis were injured, all due to Pak firing, ambush, IEDs etc. However it was a battle well fought and won.

### *Community interface*

The participative potential of the community to enhance the effectiveness of the organization and the role of an organization to induce this trend was realized by the BSF from the very beginning. During initial days when BSF was in the process of establishing itself on the border, it felt the need for support of the local population at every step and in all forms and manifestations. It was important to contrive some method through which mutual interdependence of BSF and the border population was able to gain a strong foundation.

The after effects of the partition has had a tremendous impact on the country, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives and untold suffering, economic and other hardships and serious retardation in peace and progress. The Border belt being the naturalized home of the BSF, the agency was witness to the after effects of the historical calamity since 1965 Indo-Pak war. Slow pace of development in border areas had caused the incipience of many criminal activities. This was most vivid in terms of smuggling. It had become a way of life in some parts of the Eastern borders for the local villagers. Later, for combating terrorism and insurgency, quite often the BSF had to resort to tough measures.

These measures sometimes caused inconvenience and annoyance to the local people. This sense of discontent was exploited by hostile elements to create feelings of ill will against the BSF. Be that as it may the BSF had realized that good public relation and community interface was going to streamline its quest for professionalism.

Community development programmes, undertaken by the BSF had different forms and manifestations in different areas. At places it was unidirectional and at places it was multi-directional. Local BSF commanders started the process by engaging village heads and panchayat members in chalking out measures to counter cross-border criminal activities – illegal harvesting, robbery, kidnapping, curbing the problem of stray movement of cattle etc. – thereby making them feel important at the same time availing their valuable local knowledge to contain the problems. Methodologies of public contact were monitored at appropriate levels by the field commanders and higher HQ to ensure that the behaviour of BSF personnel towards those who came to seek help or to redress their grievances were cordial and co-operative. Achieving a people friendly approach in the backdrop of conflicting factors like – checking smuggling and the prevailing feeling in some corners of the organization that promoting community good will makes them soft and ineffective – was not an easy task.

In the 80s and the 90s, the situation in the Western border areas became volatile owing to adoption of the policy of thousand cuts by Pakistan. On the other hand, insurgency in the North-East and smuggling of weapons, drugs and fake currency on the India-Bangladesh border made things worse. In order to check the menace of illegal infiltration and smuggling, Village Defence Committees were formed in many areas. They were mainly engaged in:

- (a) Reporting of any illegal activities and infiltration along the border.
- (b) Keeping allotted areas under surveillance.
- (c) Reporting of any abnormal activity, especially in rugged terrain.
- (d) Providing guides etc.

BSF was and is an extension of the Central Govt in far flung territories. To promote community development, the BSF also

took on the task to serve as a conduit for the genuine local problems and demands to reach higher/right authorities, in aid of community development and participation programmes. At this juncture it is important to mention about the Border Area Development Programme (BADP). The Govt had started BADP with the main objective that this programme will meet the special developmental needs of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international border. BADP is a 100 percent centrally funded programme. The schemes like construction, maintenance of roads, water supply, education, sports, filling gaps in infrastructure, security, organization of early childhood care and education centre etc. are being undertaken under the BADP. BSF has been playing a very important role as being part of screening committee, responsible for the approval of the programmes by projecting the development needs of border villages.

Apart from the above, the BSF has been directly contributing in the development of community related schemes, infrastructure and health and hygiene related aspects of border villages by way of civic action programme. Under this programme, certain amount is given to the field units and they identify the issues of concern to local villages and try to help them accordingly. Civic Action programmes undertaken by the BSF have been able to contribute in the development of local village schools, community libraries, computer education. Under this programme numerous medical camps have been organised in border areas. Many villages which used to slip under the cover of darkness after sun set have been lit up by solar lights. In order to enhance agricultural productivity and other such activities many awareness programmes were launched by roping in the support of professionals.

Post Kargil incident, Border Management gained official currency in India. To make this concept practical a number of recommendations were made by a Group of Ministers. Some of them have been implemented and many valuable recommendations are yet to be implemented. The concept of Border Management, however, has been adopted by the BSF, and a lot is being done by the organization at its own level. This

can be more fruitful if it is given a character as part of a committed policy and included in the Role and Tasks of the border guarding forces supported by the required institutional wherewithal. The Functional dynamics of border management on India-Bangladesh border has moved ahead by institutionalizing the concept of Border Haats.

### ***Border haats on India-Bangladesh borders***

#### *Introduction*

Historically the whole eastern region of the South Asian subcontinent had a strong agricultural base because of the flow of a network of perennial rivers, availability of rich alluvial soils brought and deposited by these rivers, occurrence of high precipitation distributed through a longer period of the year, existence of dense rainforests on the slopes of the Himalayan ranges and an inhabitation of a dense population, particularly in the plain areas which acted as a source of cheap agricultural labours. A large variety of industries based on raw materials produced from the agriculture and plantations thrived in this region. For centuries, this region was noted for its agro-industries producing silk and cotton textiles, indigo, timber, opium, tea, rice, sugar and jute fabrics in the global commercial networks.<sup>2</sup> This region was also rich in a number of mineral resources, notably, coal, limestone, boulders, crude oil, natural gas, etc. which helped in the growth of a number of industries, some in this region. This region was integrated in a web of complex economic ties.

One notable feature of this economic integration, though at the local level only, was a system of interlocking village markets, called “*haats*.” These *haats* served mostly the rural populations, where there were no permanent shops and market places. These *haats* assemble on one or two particular days of a week at a specific place. The inhabitants from local villages and settlements used to visit these *haats* usually on foot or by boat and transact in locally

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2. Amar, Abhishek Singh, “Ancient India in South East Asia”. Matrix: The E-journal of International Relations. Vol. I, No. 2. Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (2000).



produced agricultural and minor forestry produce and other commodities of daily consumption. The days and venues of these *haats* are fixed in such a manner that there is a *haat* in a nearby village almost every day.

Besides being of local economic importance, these *haats* served social and cultural purposes as well. Local culture, traditions and requirements has greater role in establishing the norms of transactions of such markets; such as items to be brought in the market, medium of exchange (either through barter or through some currency) etc. In ancient days, in the border areas of North-Eastern states of India with Bangladesh, barter was the norm. Such markets are of greater significance in the life of people living in the border areas. These *haats*, on one hand provide the markets for the local produce (mainly agricultural produce), and on the other, make items of daily and local consumptions available to local inhabitants. These *haats* are particularly significant for those living in remote and inaccessible mountainous region of North-Eastern States of India and Chakma Hills Region of Bangladesh. As per Historical accounts, border *haats* in Meghalaya State of India were functional even during the Mughal period.

With partition, the newly formed states of India and Pakistan (now Bangladesh) developed economic policies that sought to enclose economic transactions within national territories. The traditional system of market became a cross border affair and made the people dependent on it vulnerable to various types of restrictions and controls of enforcement agencies on both sides of the border. Thus many such *haats* falling in the border areas were either cut off from their respective major supply side or from their main consumption base. Also cross border transactions in these *haats* became illegal. Many of the cross border economic transactions went underground. Subsequently, fencing of the border played havoc with this market system and rendered it unsustainable.

One of the illustrative manifestations of border controls and restrictions on border *haats* was in the Tripura State of India and neighbouring areas across the border. Most of Tripura is hilly and

forested and traditionally dependent on the plains of Bangladesh for vegetable, fish and food items. At the same time, people in the plains of Bangladesh were dependent on Tripura for various forest produce. This is one of the explanations of development of all major townships of Tripura on border areas. The Radcliff Line (the international boundary line between India and Bangladesh) cut apart this mutual dependency. With increased level of enforcement on the border areas, the system of border *haats* in this region became untenable.

In the border areas adjoining the Mizoram State of India and Chittagong District of Mizoram, where fencing of India-Bangladesh border is yet to be done, the system of border *haats* are still prevalent. In such *haats* buyers and sellers from local areas, including from across the border, assemble on specific market days for their transactions. A number of local *haats* may be found in the border areas of Mizoram, such as Rajiv Nagar and Silsuri in Mamit district; Marpara, Dimagiri, Malsuri, Tipperghat, Old Khojaicheri in Lunglei district; and Parva Haat, Lengpuighat, Jagnasuri, Chhotapansuri, Gulsanbagsura, Jarralchuri, Barapansuri in Lawngtlai district. In Bangladesh also, similar *haats*, such as one at Srinagar takes place. These *haats* happen mostly weekly and locally grown agricultural produce are sold there. The general locations of above mentioned Border *Haats* have been represented in the Plate 2.

#### *Inception of border haats at Government level*

The informal trade links among people living on the border areas of India and Bangladesh continued even after partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Such trade links were prevalent in the border areas of Meghalaya (India) and Sylhet (Bangladesh). The merchandises from Meghalaya included oranges, chillies, turmeric, lime, honey, iron, bee's wax, ivory, rubber, betel nuts, betel leaves, spices and potatoes; while those from Sylhet comprised of rice, sugar, fish, salt, tobacco, oil, cotton clothes and spices. This trade link was almost snapped on the Meghalaya-Sylhet border during the 1971 Liberation War that led to the

birth of Bangladesh. However, in the local media, the need to resume the trade links on border areas were expressed by local tribal organisations.<sup>3,4</sup>

During the visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh H.E. Sheikh Hasina to New Delhi from 10 to 13 January, 2010, the two sides agreed to establish Border *haats* “on a pilot basis” in some selected places along the India-Bangladesh border, including in Sylhet-Meghalaya region, to allow trade in specified produces and products in the Border *haats*, in accordance with the regulations agreed and notified by both governments. The expressed aim of such *haats* was to promote the well-being of people dwelling in remote areas across the border of the two countries by re-establishing the traditional system of marketing the local produce through local markets.

#### *Aim of Governmental level intervention*

The aim of establishing Border *Haats* may be narrated under the following headings:

- (a) To bring the population living across the border a little closer. Towards this aim such type of intervention provides a platform to the population living on the both sides of the border to meet, interact and understand each other.
- (b) To encourage trade between the two countries. Towards that end, the border *haat* provides a potential to revive the traditional trade linkage between the two sides of the border and making possible for local border population to participate in local level cross-border trade. Such trade which is otherwise very difficult for them because of various restrictions imposed on the border zone, and due to various institutional/infrastructural difficulties faced by them, in short, creating some opportunities for them.

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3. Outlook India.com, “Mughal-Era Haats on Indo-Bangla Border to be Revived” (11 April, 2010).

4. The Assam Tribune, Guwahati, “Meghalaya-Bangla border Haats likely to be opened in March”, (07 February, 2011).

- (c) To bring commodities presently moving in informal route to formal ones, thus discouraging smuggling or other illegal activities. Towards this end, border *haat* provides an incentive to bring the items, hitherto under informal routes into formal ones. However, the effectiveness depends much on the list and quantity of items permitted for trade in the *haats*.

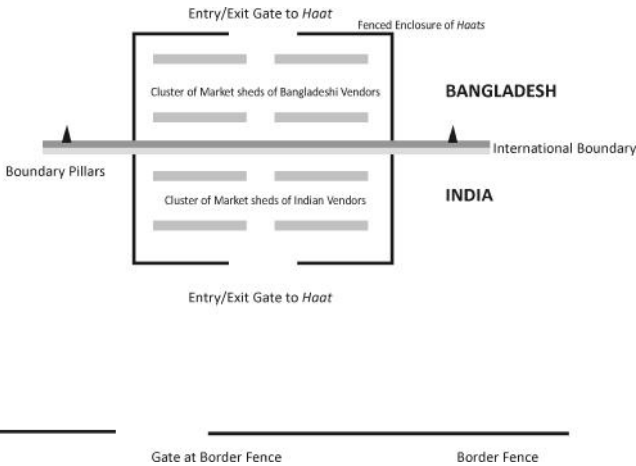
### *Locations of border haats*

At the following places, permanent facilities for border *haats* were provided by the Indian government through agencies of respective Indian States, such as ‘Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation’ and ‘Tripura Industrial Development Corporation’:

Sl. No.	Name of Haat	Indian Administrative Jurisdiction	Bangladeshi Administrative Jurisdiction	Date of Inauguration
1.	Kalaichar-Baliamari Haat	East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya	Sylhet	23 July, 2011 Trading started from 27 July, 2011
2.	Balat-Dalora Haat	West Garo Hills, Meghalaya	Kurigram	01 May, 2012 (Started functioning)
3.	Srinagar-Chhagalnya Haat	Sabroom Subdivision, South Tripura, Tripura	Feni	13 January, 2015
4.	Kamalasagar-Tarapur Haat	Bishalgarh Subdivision, Shipaijhala, Tripura	Brahmanbari	11 June, 2015

### *Design of border haats*

The area of each border *haats* is 75 metre x 75 metre, half of which on both side of the international boundary. The area of the border *haat* is fenced with concertina wire/barbed wire. It has two entry/exit points, one from the Indian side for Indian citizens and another from the Bangladesh territory for Bangladeshi citizens. The security agencies were to advise the Border Haat Management Committee in general layout and design of the border *haat*. Following is the layout of border *haats*:



**Layout of border haat**

In the *haat* premises only one time entry and exit of vendors and vendees is allowed through the respective gates of the country. In the *haat* premises, the vendors and vendees of both countries get totally mixed up.

### *Border Haat Management Committees*

For the management of the respective areas of designated border *haats*, both countries, i.e., India and Bangladesh constituted market management committee, comprising members from local government, police, customs, border security agency and village/local government. The list of the members of the Committee had to be exchanged between the two countries. The Committees have to maintain the list of vendors, entry/exit of vendees, commodities, communication of outbreak of disease, currency exchange etc.

A Joint Committee for border *haats* at the level of the Joint Secretary level officials of relevant departments from both the countries is to review the border *haats* operations, suggest modifications in the operational modalities and propose new locations for border *haats*. The meeting of the Joint Committee would be held every year, or earlier as would be mutually decided.

### *Commodities permissible for trade in the haats*

The agreement on Border *Haats* was for trade in specified products

and produces. The list of commodities to be dealt in the Border *haats* included locally produced items in the concerned districts of respective countries, such as vegetables, food items, fruits, spices; minor local forest produce like bamboo, bamboo grass, and broom stick (but excluding timber), products of local cottage industries like 'Gamcha' and 'Lungi', small locally produced agriculture household implements like 'dao', plough, axe, spade and chisel, locally-produced garments, melamine products, processed food items and fruit juice. It did not include fish, poultry and second-hand garments. The list of items allowed for trade in the Border *haat* was likely to be expanded/modified by mutual consent. The vendees may offer immediate consumption items of snack food/juices as may be allowed by Haat Management Committee.

The *haats* operated once in a week on a mutually agreed day. The timings of *haats* is also mutually decided, varies during summer and winter, and generally of 4-5 hours. The timing and frequency of the border *haat* may be further set/modified by mutual consent of the Border Haat Management Committees.

#### *Vendors and vendees permissible in the haats*

In a particular *haat*, twenty five vendors from each country comprising of residents belonging to villages within five kilometre distance are permitted to sell their produce. They are selected through a due process by the Border Haat Management Committee. The list of vendors and any change in it has to be notified to the Border Haat Management Committee of the other side. Similarly, residents within the same area, as for vendors, were selected as vendees and allowed to buy products in the border *haats*. The number of vendees from both sides was regulated to avoid over crowding in the *haat* premise. Vendors and vendees in the border *haats* were issued photo identity cards by the Border Haat Management Committee for entry in the *haats*. The designated border *haat* areas are exempted from regulations regarding passport and visa.<sup>5</sup> The commodities sold in the

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5. Kharmujai, R.R., "India-Bangladesh border '*haats*' reopen - after 40 years", IANS (24 July, 2011).

designated border *haats* are exempted from the payment of customs duties. Even levy of other duties/taxes, if any, by relevant state authorities, is also exempted.

Both the local currencies, i.e., Indian Rupees and Bangladeshi Takkas are allowed as the medium of exchange in the *haats*. The regulations relating to foreign exchange has been suspended in the designated Border *haats*.

### *Conclusion*

This noble venture of border *haats* was jointly started by the governments of India and Bangladesh with an expressed aim of restoring the traditional economic and social ties of the border populations of both countries.

## Human Resource Development

On 21 July 1965, Shri Khusro Framroj Rustamji, IP, wrote in his joining report of Border Security Force (BSF)<sup>6</sup>:

*“I have taken over charge of BSF”. With this he became the head of a one-man organisation. He was the sole Borderman; nobody below him, nobody above him.*<sup>7</sup>

To begin with, Rustamji focused his attention on the establishment of the BSF headquarters. He saw to it that the HQs were accommodated in the North Block, Sardar Patel Bhavan and Nirvachan Bhawan, New Delhi, close to the centres of power in the country. Later the HQs shifted to 10 CGO Complex, Block IV, Lodi Road, New Delhi in 1982. To start with, the BSF HQs consisted of Directorates, headed by an officer of the rank of IG, DIG and Addl DIG/Assistant Director (AD) respectively. To gather and collate intelligence related to the border, the ‘Intelligence’ Directorate was set up at the BSF headquarters. The name of the ‘Intelligence’ Directorate was later changed to ‘General’ Directorate. The ‘Organisation’ Directorate, as it was called, looked after all aspects of organisational development. Before the ‘Organisation’ Directorate was in shape, all proposals involving creation of posts, giving shape to concepts involving the creation of new manpower facilities in the BSF was handled by the Administration Directorate. The Administration Directorate processed the first re-organisation proposals in 1967-68. Organisation Directorate was later renamed ‘Personnel

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6. The name “Border Security Force” was not new and was already in existence. The Assam Police battalions deployed on the border were formally designated the “Border Security Force”.

7. Rajgopal, P.V. (2009), *The British, the Bandits and the Bordermen*, Wisdom Tree, New Delhi, p. 247.



Directorate'. In 1991, the EDP Cell at FHQ BSF was renamed Directorate of Electronic Data Processing (EDP). In view of increased functional convergence of Communication and Computers in 2004, the 'Communication' Directorate was renamed 'Communication and IT' Directorate. With the expansion of BSF, several new Directorates were established. In 2015, the following Directorates in the HQ of BSF are functional: Administration Directorate, Communication and IT Directorate, General Directorate, IG (HQ), Operations Directorate, Personnel Directorate, Provisioning Directorate, Training Directorate, Law Directorate, Medical Directorate. In addition there are Air, Water and Finance Wings.

To decentralise the command of Force HQ, two commands, Eastern Command and Western Commands were established at Kolkata and Chandigarh respectively under a Special DG in 2002. At the field level, the BSF was initially organised into nine States; Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu, Kashmir, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura and three Frontiers, viz., Western (Gujarat, Rajasthan and Punjab), North-Western (Jammu and Kashmir), Eastern (West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura). Later two battalions of Manipur Rifles were inducted into the BSF as the 95th and 96th Bns under the charge of one DIG. With the expansion of the BSF, described in the following paragraphs, some new Frontiers and Sectors were established and placed under respective Commands. Thus Srinagar, Jammu, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat Frontiers were placed under the Western Command whereas South Bengal, North Bengal, Guwahati, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram and Cachhar Frontiers were placed in the Eastern Command. Two Special Operations Frontiers: Odisha and Chhattisgarh are placed under Eastern Command. There are several sectors in a frontier. In 2011, there were forty four Sectors in BSF. Each sector commands several battalions, which are deployed for a fixed tenure before being transferred to new locations in different sectors. On 01 September 1965, twenty five and a half battalions of different States deployed on the border became part of the BSF under the MHA, Government of India.

On 01 December 1965, the BSF was formally raised. In 1966 and 1967, nineteen and eight more battalions were sanctioned taking the BSF strength to fifty two and a half battalions.

The structure, composition, officering pattern, weaponry, training and uniform, among other things, varied widely among the state battalions. The Task Force headed by General J.N. Chaudhuri, after evaluating the difficulties faced by the Army while moving to borders in 1965, underlined the necessity to adopt uniformity in the structure, strength, training, emoluments, operational-capabilities including deployment pattern, weaponry etc. Therefore the need for a reorganisation of BSF battalions arose. In 1967, the first reorganisation of the BSF was done to bring all these battalions in a line similar to an army infantry battalion. The fifty two and a half battalions of BSF were re-structured into sixty battalions on a standard BSF pattern. Each battalion had six Service Companies with one Support Company and one Headquarters Company. The Service Company carried rifles, LMGs, CMs and Pistols and 2" Mortars (later 51 mm Mortars) and the Support Company carried 81 mm Mortars and MMGs.

By 1971, the strength of BSF had risen to seventy five battalions. During 1971, the need for separate BSF artillery arose due to reasons mentioned in this book. Therefore, one regiment of Post Group Artillery was formed by one of the existing seventy five battalions of BSF. In 1972 and 1973, only one and two more battalions were sanctioned respectively. Thereafter, no augmentation in the strength of the Force was done till 1980, when the BSF was inducted in the counter-terrorism role in the Punjab. In 1980 and 1983 two and six more battalions were sanctioned respectively. In 1986, there was a major expansion in the strength of BSF when fifty four battalions were sanctioned comprising twenty five for the western and twenty nine for the eastern borders. The service expanded further in the 1990s in the context of rising insurgency in Kashmir. Between 1990 and 1996 eighteen battalions were raised. With this, the strength of the force reached the level of one hundred fifty seven battalions.

After de-induction from Kashmir, the BSF has settled down to its prime role of border guarding with an increased emphasis on the eastern border. It is also deployed in containing Left Wing Extremism. The continuous deployment of troops in conflict zones underlined both the importance of resting them and the need for the reserve battalions. At the same time, special dedicated battalions which would respond to natural and other disasters were needed. To guard coastal borders more men were called for. A battalion dedicated to protect the creek area of Gujarat was necessary. Consequently, the BSF was expanded in 2009 when twenty nine new battalions were sanctioned to be raised between 2009 and 2016. This brought the strength of BSF to one hundred eighty six battalions, inclusive of one hundred fifty battalions for border guarding, thirty battalions as reserve, three battalions for disaster management and one marine battalion. Due to the pressing national commitments, all these reserve battalions are in action on a regular basis.

### *Training*

The objective of BSF training is to maintain the highest standard of professionalism in the service. Training is a continuous process involving basic training, collective training, on-the-job training and progressive training. Analyzing the training needs is vital to an effective training programme. The training curriculum of BSF is based on training need analysis (TNA). This enables the BSF trainers to channel resources into the areas where they would contribute the most to its men, morale and organizational excellence. The BSF training courses involve systematic planning, analysis and coordination across the organization to ensure that organizational priorities are taken into account, duplication of effort is avoided and economies of scale achieved. The training policy of BSF encompasses a comprehensive repertoire of training courses specifically designed for imparting technical/practical combat skills in the early stages of a career, management and administration skills in the mid phase and conceptual and strategic skills at the top level. Training underpins the overall and holistic development

of the BSF personnel. The BSF is alive to the imminent challenges posed to its training by modernisation and changing concepts of border guarding. While devising a training programme, the BSF trainers keep in mind the importance of meshing individual and organizational goals in the service. Since its inception, the BSF had to resort to basic training of its men because the new battalions were raised in a hurry. Over time, the training programme of the BSF has evolved into a sophisticated system which caters to the multifarious role of the Force in its service to the country.

Gradually, since 1965, the educational qualifications of the BSF recruits have risen. The aspirations of the present BSF recruits are radically different from the ones entertained by the relatively simple men who joined the service some decades ago. Training has kept pace with these changes. Battle worthiness is the leitmotif of BSF training. To achieve this, the company collective training concept is adhered to. Companies are put into training on a rotational basis so that every company gets a chance to undergo this training. To address the problem of training troops who are always on the go, the "On-The-Job Training" in the BOPs has been carried out. The personnel are also imparted progressive training in the shape of various special courses. These courses cover concepts and practices of management, weaponry and other essential skills. Junior and senior management courses keep in view the responsibility of rank and hierarchy in the force. These courses also expose the BSF men to other services and certain courses for foreign border men are also conducted to impart specialized training. The BSF men are trained border men acutely aware of vocational training and human rights. The elite training institution, the BSF Academy, is located in Tekanpur, Gwalior (M.P.). This Academy conducts basic as well as in-service training for a broad spectrum of BSF personnel. The tactical wing of the Academy trains officers of BSF in tactical handling of sub-units and Sectors in peace, No War No Peace (NWNP) and war-like situations. The objective of these courses is to evolve and validate the concepts of Border management, Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) and Anti-Naxal Operations (ANO). These also analyse

effectiveness of tactical operations being carried out in Field and devise innovative methods/Drills for better results. It also trains young officers of BSF, CAPFs and SPOs in commando operations. This wing conducts courses like Coy Comdr Course, Junior Command Course, Senior Command course, Senior Medical Officers Management Course (SMOMC), Commando course etc.

The Specialist Training School (STS) imparts basic training to Officers and Subordinate officers of the force with the objectives of imparting professional knowledge, understanding, attitudes and behaviour required for effectively discharging their duties as Coy Commanders and Platoon commanders initially and later on man various senior supervisory and staff assignments in the Force.

The Training Centre and School, Hazaribagh conducts specialized training for all ranks of the Force and trainees of CPOs/SPOs and foreign countries in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations. This is a specialized course where trainees are taught planning, preparation and conduct of counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations.

It provides specialized training in explosive detection and handling to enable the trainees to carry out field engineering and bomb disposal related tasks during peace and war. This training centre imparts training in the handling of weapons like 81 mm Mortar and MMG.

Rigorous physical training and training in hand-to-hand combat is also imparted in this centre. The Central School of Weapons and Tactics (CSWT) Indore, a premier training institute, conducts various specialized training programmes in the field of weapons and tactics. The training programmes are developed keeping in view the requirement of the force personnel in the field of weapons maintenance and handling. The training programmes and courses are conceptualized with systematic planning, analysis and coordination of all the concerned factors. A weapon is the constant companion of the border men. Hence its deep knowledge and handling assumes great significance. The training aims at characteristics of platoon weapons and their tactical deployment in varied operations. A special course for IPS

(Probationers) is also conducted by the School. The subsidiary Training Centres (STCs) are sort of nurseries for the entry level border men i.e. the constables. These training centres are spread all over the country to impart basic training to recruits of BSF. These training programmes integrate various aspects of border guarding in their curriculum. Every year thousands of Constables pass out from these training institutes to become an integral part of BSF.

The BSF training professionals constantly monitor the latest international trends and best practices in training and try their best to incorporate them in the evolving training programmes.

### ***Taking care of bordermen and their families – BSF welfare measures***

It has been an endeavour of BSF commanders to take care of their men and their financial needs when they are in distress. The BSF has gone an extra mile to provide financial support to its men, catering to various needs arising out of any eventuality while performing their duties. To look after the Welfare of serving personnel and their families, retired/medically boarded out personnel and the families of deceased personnel, the BSF has created the under-mentioned Regimental funds:

- (a) BSF Welfare fund
- (b) BSF Contributory Benevolent Fund
- (c) BSF Special Relief fund
- (d) BSF Education Fund
- (e) Central Welfare Board Fund/BWWA Fund
- (f) Seema Prahari Beema Yojana Fund

#### ***BSF Welfare Fund***

The BSF Welfare Fund was approved by MHA and came into existence w.e.f. 01 December, 1986. The utility of this fund extends to all members of the force and Ex-BSF personnel and widows/NOKs of deceased BSF personnel to some extent. The main objective of this fund is to provide grant to units/HQrs, Training

Institutions, for providing recreational/entertainment facilities to the Force personnel and other facilities which are not covered under any other fund. The fund is financed from monthly subscription released from members of the Force, grant-in-aid and special grant received from the Government from time to time, income derived from land viz. by growing vegetables, trees etc. Sale proceeds of tickets for sports tournament/entertainment shows, Rum profit, interest on fixed deposit and donation from various sources are admissible in this fund which cover serving, retired, and widows/NOKs of deceased and medically boarded out personnel.

#### *BSF Contributory Benevolent Fund*

The BSF Contributory Benevolent Fund came into existence w.e.f. 01 August, 1976 with the main objective to provide financial assistance to the BSF personnel on their retirement on Superannuation/Voluntary/Medical invalidation and to the NOKs/Widows of those BSF personnel who die while in service.

#### *BSF Special Relief Fund*

BSF Special Relief fund was introduced in 1972 to provide financial assistance and medical facilities for treatment to serving personnel, Daughter marriage of widows, education of children of the widows, rehabilitation of widows and orphans and to provide them with medical facilities. These funds provide financial assistance to the next of kin in case of death of BSF personnel while serving. It funds running of widow homes besides providing suitable employment opportunities, sanctioning stipends for educational and vocational training, etc.

#### *BSF Education Fund*

The BSF Education Fund was established in 1967 to fulfill the need of education by establishing primary schools at all such locations and Secondary School with residential facilities at locations which are contiguous to BSF's far flung border posts.

### *Quality education facilities for children of BSF personnel*

The bordermen are unceasingly guarding the borders with prolonged duty hours and in strenuous conditions at the cost of their family and social responsibilities. These deployments keep them away from their families thus affecting the education of their children. To provide better education facilities for the wards of BSF, various educational institutes have been established at various places to enable them to have a continuous education at affordable cost.

BSF is currently running six Residential schools at Jalandhar, Tekanpur, Jammu, Shillong, Sriganaganagar and Kadamtala, besides a number of primary schools. The BSF Ankur Schools have also been running in most of the unit campuses. The job-oriented diploma courses viz. Diploma in Computer Science, Electronics, Electricals, civil and Automobiles are also being conducted by BSF for the benefit of the wards of BSF serving/ Ex-BSF personnel. The entire cost for running these institutions is met out of the BSF Education Fund. The fund derives its income from the voluntary contributions of the force personnel.

#### *Rustamji Institute of Technology (RJIT), Tekanpur*

As the founder Director General of BSF, Shri K.F. Rustamji, has always had the larger interest of his men at heart. He always felt that the children of BSF personnel operating in remote areas and those who lay down their life should be cared for by providing proper educational facilities to their children. The Rustamji institute of technology is the first engineering college established by the Border Security Force with the aim to provide opportunity to the wards of BSF and other Central Armed Police Force personnel. This institute came into existence on 02 October 1999. It falls under the category of self-financing autonomous institutions and was not provided any grant-in-aid or other financial benefits from the state or central government. Hence Shri S. Ramakrishna, IG and then Director BSF Academy, Tekanpur met the Director of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust at Mumbai for financial aid. The trust



decided to provide a one-time grant of Rs. 3 Crore to the Institute for purchase of equipments etc. This proved to be a great boon for the institution. This institution progressed by leaps and bounds with the involvement of Shri S. Ramakrishna, IG and Shri G.P. Bhatnagar, IG who took keen interest in the institution. The upgrading of educational facilities of RJIT was possible due to diligent efforts of Shri S.K. Singh, the then Dy Comdt, CSMT, Tekanpur. It is a matter of great pride that the institute has managed to break into the top 100 engineering colleges of the country. In line with the repute of the institution, 100 per cent seats are filled in each academic year. The fee structure is in line with the government approved rate. In addition, subsidy is provided to the needy.

### ***BSF Polytechnic Institutes***

BSF Polytechnic Institute, CSMT, Tekanpur was established on 18 October 1988 at Tekanpur. It provides Diploma in Automobile Engineering, Civil and Mechanical Engineering to the BSF and other CAPFs wards.

BSF Polytechnic STS Tigri Camp, New Delhi, BSF is running a 3-year Diploma course in Electronics and Communication Engineering, which is recognized by the Delhi Board of Technical Education, at BSF Polytechnic Signal Training School, Tigri Camp, New Delhi since 1972. It has an intake of 60 students every year from the wards of serving personnel and deceased BSF personnel. Hostel facilities are available to all the BSF wards.

BSF Institute of Technology at STS BSF, Bangalore was established in May 1992 and inaugurated by Hon'ble Home Minister Sri S.B. Chavan in the month of August 1990. The Diploma courses in IT, Computer Science & Engineering, Electrical & Electronics and Diploma in Modern Office procedure are being conducted at this institution.

# Human Resource Development

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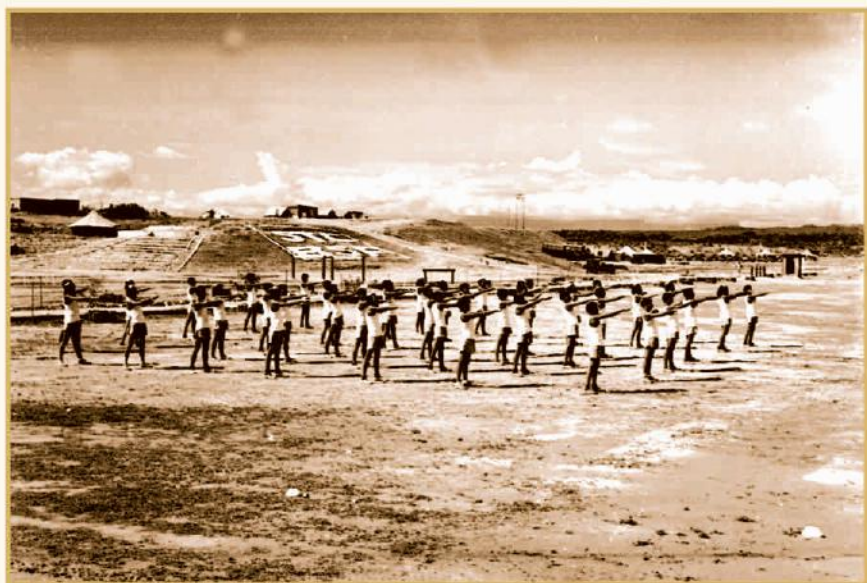


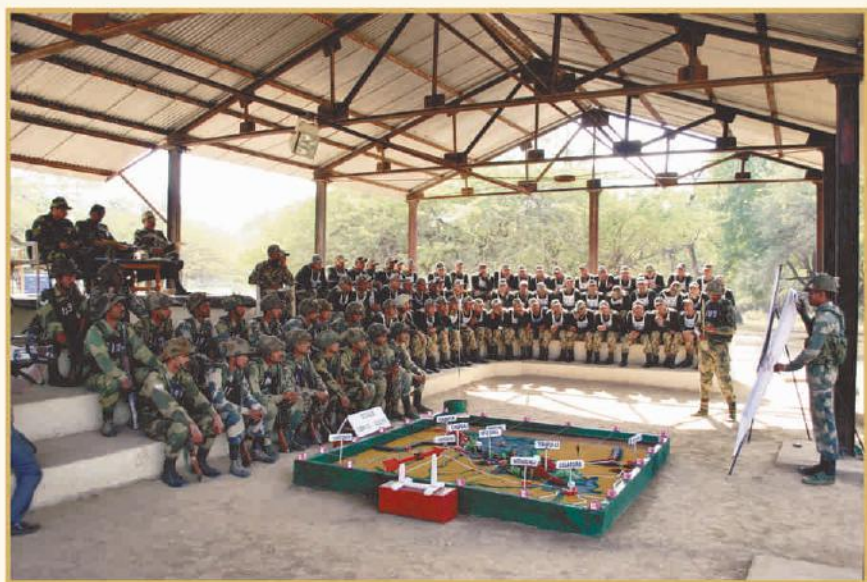
Transforming Civilian into trained Bordermen





Training Activities





Sand Model Discussion – Key to Planning of Operations

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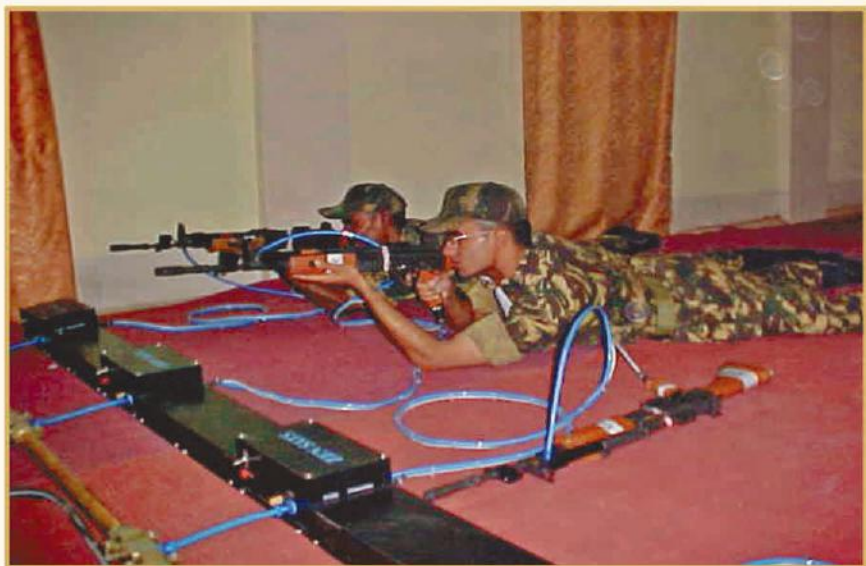


Battle Inoculation



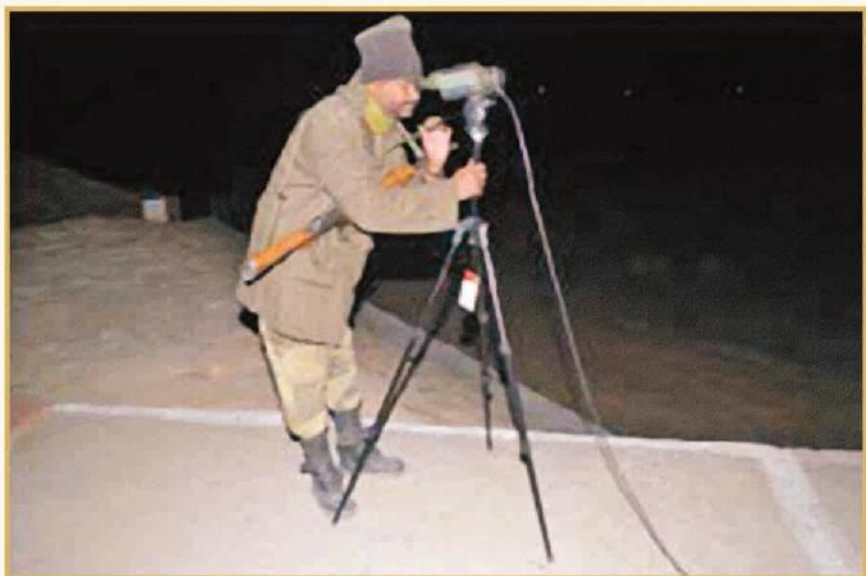
Acquiring Shooting Skills

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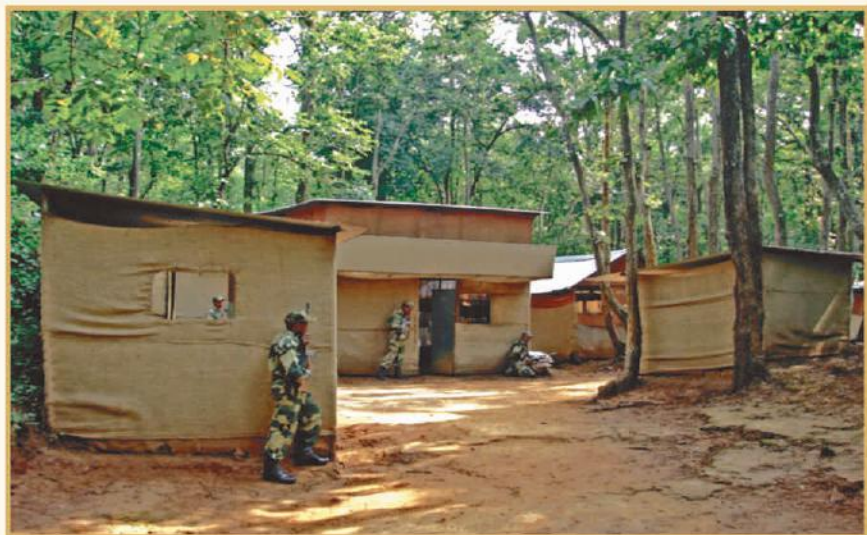
Refining shooting skills through modern simulators

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Trained Prahari using Night Vision Devices

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Fighting in built-up area—Updating Skills

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Action demonstrating training of Dogs

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A Jawan carrying Radio-comn set during war

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Setting of Communication in Kashmir

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Initial BSF Exchange



Rustamji Institute of Technology (RJIT), Gwalior.

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### ***BSF Residential Senior Secondary Schools***

#### ***BSF Senior Secondary School, Jammu***

This school was started as a Primary School in 1972 with 49 students on its Roll and 07 teachers on its Staff. BSF Senior Secondary School, Jammu is situated at Ftr HQ Paloura camp. The School was re-organized as a Residential Institution, upgraded to the Secondary level and got affiliated with CBSE New Delhi in June, 1976.

#### ***BSF Senior Secondary School, Jalandhar Cantt***

BSF Sr. Secondary School, Jalandhar Cantt enjoys the privilege of being the pioneer BSF educational Institution founded in the year 1967. The school shifted to Ftr HQ Punjab, Jalandhar Cantt in the BSF Campus on 25 September 1977 and has the honour of being inaugurated by the former Home Minister Ch. Charan Singh. Currently BSF Sr Sec School, Jalandhar has 928 students on its rolls.

#### ***BSF Senior Secondary School, Sriganganagar***

BSF Sr. Secondary School, Sriganganagar was established on 24 August 1973 by Shri M.P. Singh IPS, I.G. BSF. Initially the school had few students and teachers and the Jawan barracks were used as class rooms. The school assumed the status of Senior Secondary School in 1986 in a new building. The strength of the school is approx. 600.

#### ***BSF Senior Secondary School, Kadamtala***

BSF Senior Secondary Residential School, Kadamtala was founded on 08 September 1990 with a few students and teachers in a small building. It became a full-fledged Senior Secondary Residential School in 1994. The school is located in FTR HQ NB BSF, Kadamtala campus.

#### ***BSF Senior Secondary School, Shillong***

BSF Sr. Secondary School at Shilling is located in BSF Campus. The School was founded on 24 August, 1969. The BSF School is a

Residential and Co-educational School. The School was upgraded from primary to Sr. Secondary level having Arts, Commerce and Science streams

*BSF Senior Secondary School, Tekanpur, Gwalior*

The BSF Senior Secondary School, Tekanpur, Gwalior was initially established as War Memorial Higher Secondary School in 1970 under the diligent efforts and able guidance of two stalwarts of BSF Shri K.F. Rustamji, IP, the then DG of BSF and Brig. B.C. Pandey who was then the O.C./Director of BSF Academy. The foundation stone of the school building was laid down by Shri V.V. Giri the then President of India on 5 April 1972.

***Medical***

The BSF Medical set up was established in 1965 under the CMO as Advisor on Health and Medical matters. All BSF Battalions and Training Institutions were sanctioned 10-bed hospitals with a strength of 1 MO, 2 Pharmacists and 3 Class IV Staff. Two 50-bed Base Hospitals were established at Jalandhar in the West and Kadamtala in the East followed by a 20-bed hospital at Sector HQr Bandipur.

***Hospitals in BSF***

- (a) *At Unit level:* One 10-Bed Hospital provides Primary Health Care.
- (b) *At Sector level:* A Sector Hospital by amalgamating the resources of the local unit Hospital on adhoc basis. Facilities of biochemical Investigation/ECG facilities are available in both the Unit/Sector Hospitals.
- (c) *At Ftr HQ level:* A 20-bed Ftr Hospital by amalgamating the resources of the local Unit of Hospital on adhoc basis Physiotherapy, Radiological Investigation, ECG and Bio-Chemical Facilities are available.

- (d) *At FHQ level:* FHQ Hospital I and II for catering to the referral cases, who come to Delhi for specialized and super specialized treatment. These cater to the basic facilities of Physiotherapy, ECG, Bio-Chemical Investigations, Ultrasonography, Lab investigations etc.

In the year 1989, the MHA approved the Composite Hospital scheme for the Central Paramilitary Forces in which two 100- bed hospitals and eight 50-bed hospitals were sanctioned to BSF. Accordingly The 50-bed Base Hospital at BSF Academy Tekanpur was upgraded to a 100-bed Composite Hospital and has been functional since 1997. The existing 50-bed Base Hospital at Kadamtala was also upgraded to 100-bed. A 50-bed Composite Hospital at Srinagar has started functioning in 2004. Remaining 50-bed Composite Hospitals have been established in r/o Jalandhar, Jodhpur, Hazaribagh, Shillong, Aizwal, Agartala and Kolkata which are now functional. 20-bed Frontier Hospitals are functioning at all Frontier Headquarters where Composite Hospitals are not sanctioned, due to functional requirement by pooling resources from local Unit Hospitals.

In order to improve medical facility, X-Ray, ECG and diagnostic facilities have been established in all Frontier Hospitals apart from Base Hospitals and Composite Hospitals. All units have been provided ECG and Semi Automation blood analyzer for carrying out investigations.

### ***BSF Wives' Welfare Association (BWWA)***

The BSF Wives' Welfare Association was established on 18 September 1992 with a modest membership of 12 under the guidance of Smt. Indu Malini Ananthachari. This day has since been celebrated as BWWA day. The BWWA is registered with the Registrar of Societies, New Delhi. Initially the organization focused on the welfare of widows. On 19 November, 2007 Dr. Mrs Reena Mitra, President BWWA inaugurated the renovated

building of BWWA house. The BWWA is a cohesive organization with identified goals. The collective energy of all the members is channelized into meeting these set goals. The objective of the BWWA initially was reaching out to widows and supporting them. There are efforts to rehabilitate war widows and battle disabled. To rehabilitate widows, widow remarriage is also promoted. As a measure of gratitude, each year during BWWA day, the widows are given awards to inculcate in them the feeling of belonging to a larger BSF family. Each frontier participates in this initiative. The BWWA also focuses on vocational training for the families. In several hospitals, mother and children welfare centres have been established. The BWWA magazine *Prahari Sangini* promotes the creative skills of the BSF personnel by regularly publishing poems and anecdotes in the interest of the BSF *esprit de corps*. The BWWA also plays a role in the border areas. As a part of this initiative, the BWWA has allied itself with the NGO *Smile Train India* to undertake corrective surgeries for the treatment of cleft lip condition. It would be pertinent to mention that *Smile Train India* has completed 7.5 lakh corrective surgeries in 80 countries of the world. The communities in the border areas are the targets of this initiative. The initiative has been successful in engendering goodwill between the border communities and the BSF. The BWWA has been established to fight for the development of the families and the men of the BSF. One of the most important initiatives undertaken by the BWWA in this direction has been the skill development courses started in collaboration with NSDC. An MoU has been signed with the Corporate Partners of NSDC. Under this scheme, the wives, widows and the children of BSF men are provided an opportunity to enrol for vocational courses to ensure that each BSF family has at least one wage earner. These courses have been designed in collaboration with the industry, keeping in mind the employability factor. For this purpose, 26 trainees have been employed and receive wages.

The Ankur play schools have been opened in areas of the country which lack infrastructure for the education of the young ones. These are centres of activity where learning and fun are

combined. The monthly syllabus has been devised to encourage 'learning through playing'. In the school diary, the parents and guardian can monitor the progress of the wards. There have been efforts to make the syllabi of these play schools uniform. On each BWWA day prizes are awarded to the children. The BWWA also undertakes the construction of school buildings. The BWWA is also involved in creating awareness around issues of global warming etc. The 25 Bn BSF in Chawwla, in collaboration with Zee Media, celebrated Earth Day on 04 August 2013 to create consciousness of environmental degradation and the challenges which it represents. Similar events were successfully organized in other frontiers. To generate awareness around the issues a half marathon and bicycle rally were organized. The winners were awarded prizes. The BWWA also organizes the celebration of festivals like Teej and Diwali to keep up the morale of the service. These events also showcase the skill of the members of BWWA. Through the initiative of Guest houses for jawans, BWWA provides an opportunity to the families of the *Jawans* to spend valuable time with their loved ones during vacations. All visiting dignitaries have appreciated the work done by the BWWA.

### ***Sports in BSF***

The Border Security Force has made sports way of life in the organization. Its officers and jawans have brought glory to the Force and the Country in both – the battlefield as well as the sports arena. BSF has encouraged its officers to develop a sportsman like spirit which produces a spirit of healthy competition. That this policy has borne fruit is evident by the performance of BSF team in national as well as international sports events. Apart from regular sports events, there has been a focus on adventurous activities like Mountaineering and Hand gliding. More than fifty players belonging to BSF have participated in national level games.

### ***Vision***

- To promote excellence in games, sports and adventure activities within BSF

- To provide an opportunity to the members of the Force and their families to participate in various games, sports and adventure activities in order to promote health, physical fitness and sports consciousness.
- To develop character, sportsmanship and team spirit and to promote esprit – de corps among the Bordermen and their families.
- To induct most deserving sports persons in the country and facilitate them to achieve optimum performance.
- To raise national level teams in certain identified games and thus contribute to the national efforts to achieve excellence.
- To promote rural sports in the areas of our operations along the border as part of our social commitment.
- To set up and manage efficiently and effectively, sports complexes at various Headquarters and Training Institutions which can not only be used for the improvement of sports in the Force but also to promote the disciplines played in that area.

### *Achievements*

In recognition of the outstanding achievements in sports, several BSF sportsmen have been awarded the Arjuna Award. It is a matter of great pride for the BSF that its men like Udham Singh have represented the country four times in Olympics. It was Shri Ajit Pal Singh, who was once recognized as the best Hockey Centre Forward in the World and under whose captaincy, India won the Hockey World Cup in 1975. The force has bagged 02 Padamshree, 17 Arjuna and 01 National Adventure Awards.

### *BSF and sports disciplines*

Currently BSF maintains sports teams in 24 disciplines and a total of approximately 700 sportsmen. The disciplines are:

### *Hockey*

Two members of the BSF, Udham Singh and Jagjit Singh have become legends in international Hockey. Both these men have

been awarded with the Arjuna Award. Udham Singh has an enviable achievement of having represented India in four Olympic events from 1952 to 1964. To add to this, he captained Indian team to East Africa and the Tokyo Asiad. Among other hockey greats who have graced the BSF are Ajit Pal, Harmik, Baldev, Kulwant, Harcharan, and Charles. All these men were members of the Indian Hockey playing XI for the Bangkok Asiad in 1970.

### *Athletics*

Athletes of BSF have also brought laurels to the Force by winning many medals in Asian Games. Praveen Kumar heads the tally with his gold medal. Much before becoming a household name via the character of Bhim of the TV series Mahabharat, Kumar achieved a stellar status in the world of Discus and Hammer-throw. He represented India in a number of international meets. Ajaib Singh, Ranjit Singh and Lehmbur Singh were awarded the silver and bronze medals in 1974 Asian Games. In the 1986 Asian Games, Manjit Singh and Jagdip Singh won the Bronze medals and added to an already illustrious list of achievements. BSF athletes have dominated the long distance events held in the country. In 1988, Murlidhar represented India in the Malaysia International Meet where he secured the third position. In the Indira Marathon of 1987 and 1988 both Murlidhar and Yaswant Singh Rawat secured first positions. In recognition of this achievement, they were awarded Rs. 71,000 each. In the Rath Marathon, Vidhyadhar secured the first position for which an award of Rs. 10,000 was presented to him. Vidhyadhar and Ishwar Singh are both long-distance runners and have been National Champions. Shri Chand Ram an old Olympian, bagged 5 gold medals at the veterans athletics meet at Hong Kong. He won Long Jump, High Triple Jump and Hammer Throw events. Shri Jora Singh, Asstt. Comdt, created National Record in the 2006 Decathlon with a points tally of 7502. At the International Grand Prix Athletic Meet held at Suzhoy and Kunfhan SI Ajay Kumar won a double gold medal in the 4 × 400 relay race category. SI Simranjit Singh has participated in I, II and III Indian Grand Prix Athletic Event held at Kochi



(Kerala) on 03 May 2009, Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) on 08 May 2009 and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) on 14 May 2009 respectively and won one Gold medal in each Grand Prix in Discus Throw event.

### *Gymnastics*

Gymnasts of BSF have brought laurels to the Force by winning several medals in Asian Games. Shri Manjit Singh, Comdt participated in Commonwealth Games 1978. SI Rohit Jaswal participated both in Commonwealth Games and Asian Games 2006 while SI Dipesh Sahu represented Indian Team in World Asian Gymnastic Championship, Asian Games 2006 and 4th Sr. Asian Gymnastic Championship held at Doha (Qatar) from 13 to 18 November 2008.

### *Football*

The BSF Football team has made head lines in every major Football tournament held in the country. It has won Durand, DCM and a number of other prestigious tournaments. Even as early as 1970, Ajaib Singh of the BSF was a member of the Indian Football Team which participated in the Bangkok Asian Games. He was declared the best Half-back in the 1970 National Football Championship. In the year 1988, the BSF Football Team won the coveted Durand Cup, Punjab Football Association Super League, Munni Shahi Memorial Cup and were runners up in Federation Cup. Biba Saha, Jagmohan Singh and Darbara Singh of the Force were members of the Indian Football Team who played against Sao Paulo Club of Brazil in India. Biba Saha also represented the National Football Team in 1987. BSF team lifted the B.N. Mullick Memorial Trophy in 2007 and 2008 also. They have been reigning champions of the All India Police Meet Games.

### *Volleyball*

Shri Nirpjit Singh and Shri Anil Kumar have been the two stars of Indian Volleyball team. Others have been Shri Jagir Singh, DC, Shri Chanchal Singh, DC, Shri Surjit Singh, AC and Inspector

Roy Joseph who have represented the country in various International Championship tournaments.

### *Handball*

In Handball too, the BSF Handball team has been performing consistently well. Insp Jam Prasad, Insp Ratish Kumar Pandey. Insp Mukesh Kumar and Insp Mukesh Chand Sharma have participated in various International Championships and tournament.

### *Wrestling*

BSF has achievements to its credit in the field of wrestling. Three BSF wrestlers participated in the Great Britain Cup Wrestling held at Manchester in August 1987. Rajesh Kumar got Gold Medal in his category. The other two participants, Chob Singh and Joginder Singh attained 4th position in their category. In the fourth Senior Asian Wrestling Championship held at Bombay in October 1987, BSF wrestler Subhash won Gold Medal in 100 kg category while Rajesh Kumar got Silver Medal in 48 kg category. Twelve BSF personnel were part of India's International Wrestling Team. Subhash Verma and Rajesh Singh of BSF represented India in the Seoul Olympics. In the Asian Games of 1986, Shri Subash Verma, Shri Rajesh Singh and Shri Jagdir Singh were members of the Indian Wrestling Team. It was a proud day for BSF when on 13 March 1989 Shri Subhash Verma was awarded with 'Hind Kesari' title at Kapurthala. He was also awarded with Arjuna Award 1987. The officer has also been awarded Yesh Bharti Award in 2005. Three of the BSF wrestlers namely, Shri Subhash, Shri Rajesh and Shri Jagdip Singh also represented the country in Commonwealth Games held at Malta in 1989.

BSF Wrestlers won the Bronze medal in Asiad 1990 and the Bronze medal in Commonwealth Games 1994. Insp Krishan Kumar and BSF Wrestlers have also participated in Commonwealth Games 2002 and won one the Gold medal. Insp Rakesh Kumar had participated in various International championships and won many medals for the Force.

### *Aquatics*

In the All India Police Aquatic Meet 2008, the BSF team secured the first position. Shri Harinder Singh, Asstt. Comdt is a national record holder, who has represented India more than 12 times, and has won the Gold medal in World Police and Fire Games in 2001 held at the USA. SI Murlidharan created national record in 100 Mtr (Butterfly) with a timing of 0:56.98 in the year 2006. SI Mandar Anand Divase created national record in 800 metre and 1500 metre (Free Style) with a time of 08:31.61 and 16:17.07 respectively in the year 2008 and he has also participated in 10 kms Marathon in 1st Asian Beach Games 2008 held at Bali (Indonesia).

### *Equestrian School*

Though still in its infancy, the Equestrian Wing has performed commendably well. They have participated in various international events such as the Asiad. The Medals won by the wing are as under:

- (a) International Tent Pegging Championship held at Dunlod (Raj.) March 2000 – Silver 01.
- (b) International Tent Pegging Championship held at Dibrugarh (Assam) January 2001 – Gold 02, Silver 02 and Bronze 01.
- (c) International Tent Pegging Pegs Individual held at Bangalore (Karnataka) 2002 – Silver 03 and Bronze 02.
- (d) International Tent Pegging with Lance held at Patiala (Punjab) February 2006 – Gold 06, Silver 04 and Bronze 04.
- (e) International Tent Pegging held at East London, South Africa April 2007 – Bronze 02.
- (f) International Tent pegging held at Oman February 2007 – Gold 05.
- (g) International FEI World Jumping Challenge 2008 held at Bangalore November 2008 – IV.
- (h) International Tent Pegging Sword Championship held at Muscat (Oman) 2009 – Gold 01.

### *Sharp Shooting*

BSF Sharp Shooters have done extremely well in national and international shooting meets. In the All India Police Duty meets, the BSF team has bagged the first position for many years. BSF has also won the championship of the first and second All India Police Sport Shooting Championship 2007-08. Shri Mohinder Lal, DIG, who is also a recipient of the Arjuna Award has represented India in various international meets including Seoul Asiad and Los Angeles Olympics. In the All India Combat Gold Cup shooting competition 1993, Shri S.M. Marwaha won the first place in Pistol Shooting. Numerous achievements have been registered by the BSF shooters in various National and International Shooting Championships.

### *Judo*

The BSF Judokas Insp Nazib Aga, Shri Sarbjeet Singh. AC, Insp Arvind Kumar and SI Vinod Solanki have participated in various international tournaments/championships and have won many medals.

### *Kabbadi*

The performance of BSF sportsmen has been consistently good in Kabbadi. Insp Rambir Singh has represented India in Asian Games 1998 held at Bangkok and secured Gold medal. Insp Jagral Singh has also participated in World Cup Kabaddi 2004 tournament held at Bombay and team secured the first position in the tournament.

### *Water team*

Performance of BSF Water sports team has been remarkable. The team has participated in all the major tournaments of the country. Insp Sanjay Beniwal, Chief Coach of Central Water Sports Team has been selected as the National Coach of the Indian Kayaking and Canoeing team which went to Kamatsu for the pre-Olympic qualifying round in 2008. He excelled in the Budapest Camp organised for the Umpires and Referees. In 2007, BSF Water Sports team won the All India Water Sports championship.

### *Mountaineering*

BSF has undertaken 17 major expeditions and mountaineers have scaled 32 peaks located in the upper and lower ranges of the Himalayas. The details are as follows:

The six members of the team that reached the summit of Mt Trishuli (West) 23075 ft were Inspr Naresh Singh, Dy Leader, H.C.

#### **BSF's MOUNTAINEERING EXPEDITIONS**

Border Security Force (BSF) entered the field of mountaineering in 1978 when its team successfully scaled the 23410 feet high NUN Peak in Zaskar area of Jammu and Kashmir. The national tricolour and the BSF flag have been hoisted by BSF mountaineers on many major peaks of the Himalayas. Prominent among them are Mount Kamet (25447 ft) and Abigamin (24137 ft) in 1987, Mamostong Kangri (24692 ft) in 1990 and Hardeol (23460 ft) and Trisul (23210 ft) in 1991. The expedition in 1992 to Mukut Parbat (23753 ft) in the Garhwal Himalayas was the first by any Indian team and the only one to have successfully climbed the peak after its first ascent in 1951 by the legendary mountaineers Sir Edmund Hillary and the late Tenzing Norgay.

The successful expedition to Nanda Devi East (24388 ft) in 1993 was the first independent Indian expedition. The year 1995 saw BSF lose 13 ace mountaineers while descending from the summit camp at 25170 ft of Saser Kangri-I. However, the expedition successfully scaled Saser Kangri-I.

In June 2001, BSF mountaineering team successfully scaled Jogin Peaks I, II, III and an unnamed virgin peak located near the Bhiringpanth peak and Thalai Sagar Glacier in the Gangotri region of the Garhwal Himalayas at heights of 21210 ft., 20800 ft., 20265 ft. and 18565 ft. The BSF mountaineering team was the only expedition to have scaled all the four peaks in one go.

In year 2005, BSF team organized a pre Everest expedition to Mt Satopanth (23206 m) and created history by placing 20 members on the top of Mt Satopanth since the first ascent in year 1937.

The first BSF Mt Everest expenditure was flagged off on 08 March 2006 by Shri Shivraj V. Patil (then Union Home Minister). This was the first attempt by BSF mountaineering team on Mt Everest led by Shri S.C. Negi, ADIG. On 24 May 2006 Shri S.C. Negi, ADIG along with 06 members including Shri Love Raj Singh Dharmshaktu, Ac (then Insp.) climbed the Mt Everest and become the oldest Indian and highest ranking officer ever to scale the highest peak of world i.e. Mt Everest.

It is worthwhile to mention here that Shri Love Raj Singh Dharmshaktu, Ac is the only BSF personnel to climb Mt Everest five times i.e. in year 1998, 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2013 and for said achievement he was awarded "PADMA SHRI" by Hon'ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee on 26 April 2014.

Kamlesh Kumar, Ct Rakesh Kumar, Ct Kedar Singh, Ct Manoj Dahal and Ct Praveen Kumar. With this feat, the BSF team became the first amongst Armed Forces team to reach the summit of Mt Trishuli (West) 23075 ft. The achievement came at a time when most of the teams on expedition in the Himalayas were badly affected by the weather and either lost their members or had to be evacuated to safer places.

In 2008, the team led by Shri N.S. Satish Chander Nair, Dy Commandant successfully scaled Mt Kanchenjunga (Ht 28170 ft). The summiteers were Inspr Loveraj Singh, HC Kamlesh Kumar Bounthiyal, Ct Praveen Kumar, Ct Kedar Singh and Ct Manoj Dahal. After reconstitution of mountaineering team in 2001, it has won two adventure awards. The team on expedition to Mt Everest in 2011 has the distinction of having the maximum number of summiteers on the top of Mt Everest from a single team.

## Keeping with Technology

The BSF has been a multi-faceted Force since its inception. Excellence in its profession, keeping up a modern outlook in all spheres of its activities, an environment which nurtured initiative and an ability to adapt, a calculated degree of ‘aggressiveness’ in discharging its professional responsibilities have become an integral part of the BSF culture. One of the most important aspects in living up to these high ideals has been to keep pace with modern methods and to make practical use of scientific and technological resources consistent with the ground-level requirements. Of these, constant evolution and upgradation of weaponry, surveillance equipment and information and communication technology has been central. A summary of their evolution and some recent advances in these fields follows.

### *Evolution of weaponry*

The developments in 1962 and the China war thereof, dictated the composition of BSF weaponry which could tackle operationally the external and internal challenges. Further there was a definite need to keep weapon capabilities compatible with the Indian Army so that during wars the BSF could fit easily in large combat plans. However, as the BSF was raised by embodiment of different state armed police, its initial arsenal incorporated Rifle .303 No 4 MK-I and No 1 MK-II as a personal weapon of *Jawan*, Carbine Machine 9 mm Sten MK-2 for Section and Platoon commanders and Pistol Browning FN 9 mm for other commanders at different levels. The section weapon was Gun machine .303 Bren and OML 2” mortar was inducted as platoon weapon. At battalion level it was GM 7.92 mm (HMG) CZ and 3” Mortar as support weapons.

### *The first upgradation of weapons*

After the BSF fought its first conventional war of 1971, accurate,

long-range semi-automatic or automatic weapons that had fire discipline and a higher lethality over ranges of 400 to 500 meters became indispensable. So .303 was replaced by 7.62 mm 2A/2A1, 1A1 and L1A1. It had a thirty-bullet magazine and its rate of fire in the hands of well-trained border men was 60 rounds per minute. This rifle was self loading, gas operated and air cooled. A gas cylinder and an adjustable gas regulator were fitted on the top of the barrel. The amount of gas acting on the piston was controlled by the gas regulator to ensure smooth functioning of the rifle. A flash eliminator was fitted on the muzzle end on which a bayonet could be fitted and it also could fire a grenade by fitting a projector on flash hider. The BSF troops guarded the border and fought Punjab, J&K and NE militancy for long with this rifle before AK-47 and 5.56 mm INSAS took over.

CM Sten was substituted by Sub Machine Gun Carbine 9 mm 1A1 which was intended for Close Quarter Battle (CQB), which means its range was taken as 30 to 100 yards. It was 27" long, easy to carry and operate due to its light weight i.e. 2.83 kgs, and muzzle velocity of 1300 feet per second.

In 1976 Bren was phased out and GM 7.62 mm IB/IC was inducted. It was gas operated long stroke piston with a muzzle velocity of 2700 feet per second. Its magazine could hold 30 rounds and could fire 500 rounds per minute. Its lethality wreaks havoc on the militants and is a support weapon of section commander.

OML 2" mortar remained the 'Topkhana' of platoon commander before 51 mm Mortar E-1 replaced it in 1991. It was superior to its predecessor in term of range and accuracy.

At the battalion level, HMG CZ was replaced by GM 7.62 mm IMAG 2A1 and 81 mm Mortar E-1 was brought in place of OML 3". Both the support weapons are technically advanced in many aspects and play a crucial role against Pakistan's misadventures at the Line of Control due to their high speed fire power, true to the saying: "when the speed of attack increases, it automatically reduces the response time of the enemy'.



*The further modernization*

Keeping in view BSF's requirement there are numerous add-ons to its arsenal. The 7.62 mm SLR rifle made way for Ordnance Factory Board manufactured 1B1 Insas Assault rifle of 5.56 calibre. The BSF also acquired the AK series rifle from Russia and purchased Israeli Rifle 5.56 mm X-95 Assault in 2010-11. Specialized rifles for usage by snipers include the Rifle 7.62 mm x 51 mm (SSG Model-69). Coming to the machine guns, the BSF is equipped with light and medium machine guns. The 5.56 mm INSAS Light Machine Gun (LMG) is derived from the assault rifle and it also has the MAG 58, 7.62 mm Medium Machine Gun (MMG) which is extremely effective up to ranges of 1,800 metres and does serve the role of air defence against subsonic aircraft.

The Grenade used by BSF can be hand lobbed, rifle launched and released from an Automatic Grenade Launcher (AGL). The 36 mm hand grenade can be hand lobbed or rifle launched. The 30 mm Automatic Grenade Launcher, inducted in 1998-99 during J&K militancy, is an extremely effective weapon which can successfully engage small targets up to 800 metres and area targets depending upon the observation to a range of 1,700 metres. Beside these, the 84 mm Carl Gustav is an excellent Rocket Launcher which is capable of engaging tanks at 150 metres and stationary targets at 1,000 metres. In the small arms category, we have two types of mortars, the 51 mm mortar and the 81 mm mortar. While the 51 mm mortar has a range of 750 metres, the 81 mm mortar has a maximum range of 5,650 metres.

The next category of weapons comprises the Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) which is a great deterrence to Maoists in LWE affected areas. Also the 12 Bore Pump Action Gun (PAG) introduced in 2010-11 as a non-lethal weapon has proved to be very effective in the Eastern Command against the unarmed smugglers.

Pistol Glock 9 x 19 mm and Anti Material Rifle (AMR) are some other weapons which are doing a creditable job in all sorts of combats.

### *Evolution of surveillance equipment*

Manning a 3323 km long border facing hostile Pakistan and 4096 km not-so-friendly Bangladesh require constant monitoring and surveillance. Since its inception BSF had been keeping vigil on these borders with standard surveillance equipment like luminous flux of common domestic torch lights, which had a limited range and scope, and the BSF sentry at border was almost “night blind” after the dark fell.

However, as the Punjab terrorism escalated in the 1980s and with pressure mounting to check the infiltration, BSF started looking to augment its observation capabilities, especially the night surveillance. In 1988-90, for the first time, BSF attained night vision competence by importing night vision goggles from M/s. Litton, USA. It included, firstly, Passive Night Vision Goggle (PNG) model no 915 which provided improved night vision by using available light from the night sky. An auxiliary Infra-red light source provided illumination for close up work when ambient light was low. This precision electro-optical instrument enabled the user to perform normal tasks such as reading, walking and driving on the ground or seeing from the air. On a clear, star-lit night a person could be detected from 200 m and be recognized from 150m. The goggle was mounted in a cushioned face mask assembly which was strapped to the user head and could be borne with or without a battle or flight helmet. The operational work of this device could not be hampered even when one monocular or its tube became defective since the scene can be viewed by another monocular. The second was Night Weapon Sight (NWS) Model M 845. It was a portable, self-contained, battery-operated optical instrument used for night time observation and/or aimed weapon fire. It did not emit visible infrared light that can be detected by the enemy or subject under surveillance. It had been specifically designed to be mounted on 7.62 mm SLR for use in various environment and under a variety of climatic conditions for both short and long ranges. The third Litton device imported was Laser Aiming Sight (LAS). Aimed firing in dark night with the help of night vision

goggles and binoculars, then in use, was not possible except by a night weapon sight mounted on a weapon. This LAS was a very light equipment operated with 2nos Lithium cells of 3.5v each. This device could be mounted on a variety of weapons, from hand guns to short-range missile launchers, by using a suitable weapon adapter. Apart from importing, BSF also inducted indigenous Goggles Night Vision Passive 102A and Passive Night Vision Binoculars 101A designed and developed by Instrument Research and Development Establishment, Ministry of Defence, Dehradun (Uttarakhand)

Other surveillance equipment added to the BSF inventory was Twin Telescope 30 × 75. It is a light weight and a very powerful telescope used for long-distance observation. The fine details of the viewing target or activities can easily be observed by this telescope from own BOP or a considerable distance of 18-20 kms since its magnification is 30x. Fitted on a tripod, it has various facilities like interpapillary distance setting, central focusing and diopter setting. Besides this, the common torches being used were replaced by very powerful dragon search lights called as Hand Held Search Lights (HHSL) for use in night operations/nakas. They had high power spread beam upto 600m or more. But there was a drawback in using these hand-held lights against militants. They would expose the user's position resulting in an aimed fire from adversary. To mitigate this aspect, HHSL with Remote control/remote cable operated were put into use. They were placed at a distance from the troops' position, foxing militants to fire upon their illumination and exposing their position and consequently getting a befitting retaliation from BSF men in return. During this phase, Deep Search Metal Detector (DSMD) Model DS-1 and Hand Held Metal Detector (HHMD) Model SDS H2 were also introduced for searching purpose. DSMD was very successful in searching buried land mines, weapons and other metallic substances up to a depth of 1m below the ground depending on the size and volume of metallic body and type of ground. HHMD would give a continuous tone if brought closer to any metallic body. It helped a lot in frisking suspected people. Watchman

Intruder Detection System (or Night Watch Intruder Alarm) operated by small 9v battery was another light-weight equipment deployed on border to give early warning about the intruder.

*Next phase of high tech equipment induction*

Between 1996-2002, the BSF focused on upgrading the available surveillance technology based on the fact that “*Human eye provides more than 3/4th of total information to brain and information transfer capabilities deteriorate with the decrease in light levels*”. Sight Night Vision Passive (SNVP), KN 250 SIMRAD (Night Vision Sight), Advanced DSMDs and HHSL Dazzel became the additional eyes of a border man.

*The first modernization of BSF*

While India has largely completed an ambitious fencing plan along the Pakistan borders to prevent intruders like terrorists, illegal immigrants and criminals from entering India, the BSF needed much more to reinforce the border security management. Latest border surveillance gadgets were the need of the hour because of the rising incidence of illegal immigrants, terrorists’ infiltration and intrusion by the adversary forces on the borders along Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Hand Held Thermal Imager (HHTI) was one of those items which the BSF bought under its modernization plan and it proved to be the “game changer” on the ground. This real-time thermal imaging camera, operating nominally in the 8.0 to 10.5  $\mu\text{m}$  spectral region, provides observation capabilities in full darkness as well as under harsh battlefield and degraded visibility conditions. It became the *bête noire* of the intruders/militants and BSF achieved tremendous success with it. The other modern equipment deployed in BSF was Long Range Reconnaissance and Observation System (LORROS) which is a high quality observation system designed for medium- and long-range observation. It is of modular construction, allowing the utilization of existing observation means in conjunction with automated aiming and scanning capabilities, providing exceedingly high

accuracies. The next equipment was Battle Field Surveillance Radar-Short Range (BFSR-SR). It is a man-portable, battery-powered, tripod-mounted radar system meant to provide ground-surface target detection and automatic tracking. This sensor provides real-time positional information on all moving ground surface targets over any designated sector. Since the borders with both the countries have entirely different terrains and temperature profiles, BSF further enhanced its surveillance systems on these different border areas by deploying Global Positioning System (GPS) Sportrak Megallen, and later Garmin, to navigate its area of responsibility and Laser Range Finder (LRF) to engage its long-distance targets.

The latest to join BSF's ever strengthening surveillance capabilities is Unmanned Ariel Vehicle (UAV). Known as "Eyes of the Commander", UAV provides live video streaming and picture of the targets in depth which was not visible directly to the commander earlier. The multidimensional duties of BSF in border area, LWE, ISD etc. has considerably increased the utilisation spectrum of UAV. The border area already has in place a strong surveillance mechanism, including three-tier fencing, flood-lighting, sensors, thermal imagers and manual patrolling, and the UAV is further enhancing BSF's surveillance capabilities. The UAVs and other surveillance gadgets already deployed have significantly reduced the incidents taking place due to human error. UAV is proving to be very effective in gathering real-time intelligence and surveillance, for detecting human and vehicular movement, in identification and acquisition of targets and in electronic and communication intelligence.

### ***GIS: A visual treat***

The enormous demand for storage, analysis and display of complex and voluminous data has led, in recent years, to the use of Geographical Information System (GIS) enabling for effective data handling, analysis and transfer of information around the world.

A Geographical Information System is an organized storehouse

of spatial data sets which can be assessed, integrated, visualized, queried, analyzed and retrieved in a desired format on a computer, thus acting as a force multiplier in the day-to-day decision making process using a computerized Decision Support System (DSS). Spatial data and information, especially maps, is used extensively by forces at all levels for planning and implementation of operations.

The information provided in plate 3 describes the topographical details existing at the time of collection of such information. However, due to continuous activities of various natures occurring around, there is a need to supplement the map information with real-time or near real-time situation. Such information collected and provided by various agencies needs to be integrated with the spatial information provided in maps to visualize the situation at the time of interest. Manual integration and analysis to help the decision making process cannot consider all aspects in totality.

The digital techniques of handling spatial data in a GIS environment make it possible to consider all aspects of the available data, giving all possible alternatives in the form of reports or another set of data sets, which can be used as DSS and in support of Operations, Intelligence and logistics management. This information can be used for present and future strategic and tactical planning. The emphasis is on developing a digital spatial database, using the data sets derived from precise navigation and imaging satellites, aircrafts, digitization of maps and transactional databases.

A sum of Rs. 15 Crores was allocated to BSF by MHA under the modernization plan for establishment of Geographical Information System in stages. A case for revised sanction of Rs. 24.79 Crore was sought from MHA for further stages of implementation of GIS and the same was sanctioned by the MHA.

The GIS project was implemented in BSF from 2005 onwards at all field locations from the Special Directors General Headquarters to the Battalions level to meet the intelligence and operational requirements. Interestingly BSF was the first among the CAPF's and other forces to introduce GIS at Battalion level. At present GIS is functional at 207 BSF locations.

The objective of establishing GIS was to provide an environment that will enable the force personnel to enhance their strategic and tactical planning capabilities and awareness skills and allow them to examine and exercise their tactical deployment capabilities. The objectives of the GIS keeping in view our aim and available technology capability are as follows:

- To improve strategic planning skills by providing opportunities to plan various operations on 2D/3D models of areas of responsibility
- To exercise tactical planning and development skills within a learning environment
- To ensure that Senior Officers are updated and kept aware of strategic and tactical changes within our area of operational responsibility.
- To allow officers the opportunity to exercise various options when dealing with the theatre of operations, thus enabling them to take appropriate and timely decisions.
- To provide a method for evaluating the operational needs of individual officers and the service in general.
- To integrate and synergies operations with the sister agencies.

In relation to BSF operations, the GIS software provides the following features like mark-up function fly through, walk through, line of sight, data security and history tracking etc. Usage of GIS in terrain related utility are in areas such as terrain analysis using dynamic 2D/3D features and, management of the IB, border pillars, border fence and border road etc. Aspects of Non-Terrain Utility are briefing of dignitaries at all levels, logistic support management, psychological operations, civic action planning and analysis, macro-micro level analysis of the information, near real-time border violation, incident reporting and analysis and demographic pattern analysis etc. The intelligence-related uses are compilation of spatial knowledge, preparation of better intelligence inputs, collection and compilation, dissemination of intelligence inputs from sister agencies, analyze smuggling, infiltration, exfiltration prone areas and vulnerable points etc.

Thus a GIS-oriented BSF commander can archive paper maps, get data and information for effective operational planning, intelligent sighting of observation posts and ambush points. He can also do macro-micro level analysis of information from office, brief officers at all levels, effectively deploy troops, achieve proper border violation incident reporting and analysis and so on.

A lot of effort has gone in collating good quality digital maps from satellite imageries, 3D terrain data, portable maps, manpower and training of GIS personnel with help of SOI (Survey of India), NRSA (National Remote Sensing Agency) and DIGIT (Defense Institute of Geo-Information Technology) through an ongoing process.

GIS has emerged as a powerful tool which has the potential to organize complex spatial environment with tabular relationships. The full potential of the GIS is still waiting to be explored. GIS is a force multiplier for BSF, decision making becomes faster and better informed with supervision becoming more effective and quick. To sum up, GIS is a quid pro quo for Effective Border Management (EBM) (Plate 4).

## ***Evolution of Communication and IT***

### *Communication*

In early 1965 to 1975 the communication equipments used valves as active devices, but these equipment were bulky in size. Then technology switched over from valve version to transistor-based equipment from 1975 to 1985 and then to integrated circuit version. Now all communication equipment use embedded microprocessor based technology.

**HF Communication:** In 1965-1985 CW (Morse code communication) was used through HF radio sets to provide long-distance communication in remote border outposts. The deployment of BSF was scattered in vast extended states along international border of Bangladesh and Pakistan. The following HF radio equipment were used that time in BSF-SSB 100 Watt, BC-191, BC-375, GE 524, HM 30 etc. Later, from 1985 to date,



LHP 2Ig, LHP 229, BARRAT, LHP 229A, LHP 265D and such modern HF radio sets are being used in BSF. The medium and high power transmitters like MHM 100 watt and 500 watt transmitters are also being used for long distance communication. Some HF receivers such as RG 2003 and HS 456 were used in BSF for interception and monitoring purposes.

In addition to HF communication, VHF Comn has also been provided. To achieve this, the following VFIF radio sets were used in BSF-GH 650, GH 750, GV 650, LVP 2L3, and ZPH Mobile phone (German made) etc. during 1965-1985. In VHF band itself, BSF is using low band and high band frequencies. Considering the demand for voice communication channels and other frequency constrains in VHF, BSF is also using UHF band of frequencies. During the period from 1985 to 2005, the VHF 5 watt/20 watt radio sets such as LTS, RCL, PWSL, Meltron, SXA and ANPRC etc. were used. Since 1995, the modern intelligent 5 Watt and 25 Watt radio sets of Motorola, Icom, Kenwood etc. have been introduced in BSF. VHF repeaters also used long distance voice communication through VHF channel. During 1990-2000, most of the BOPs all alongwith the Border were connected with Permanent Line (PL) Route. After completing its life, upto 2000-2001, the PL Route has been phased out. At BOP, the line communication was again entirely dependent upon JWD cable.

#### *Data Super/Automax*

In 1990 the IP and microprocessor based store and forward equipment data supper/automax DOS based messaging system was introduced to replace the ETPs for speedy clearance of signal traffics in between FHQ signal Centre and Ftr HQ Signal Centres through DOT leased lines.

#### *BEST and SMART Equipment*

In 1990, the microprocessor based BEST and SMART equipment manufactured by BEL were introduced in BSF which are interfaced with HF/VHF radio sets for long distance data





Plate-2

# WHAT GIS CAN OFFER



QUERY/  
ANALYSIS

EFFECTIVE  
DEPLOYMENT



WEB  
APPLICATION

MAP  
UPDATE



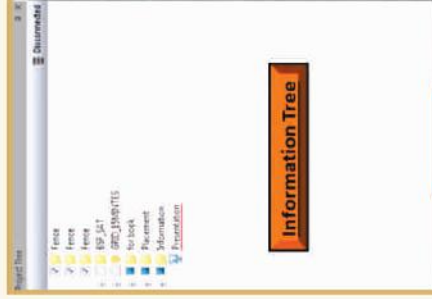
GIS

3D  
MODELING



BRIEFING





## BSF CAMEL CONTINGENT



The camel contingent of the BSF is the proud inheritor of a great heritage of the Bikaner Royal Camel Force, Known as the "*Ganga Risala*". Though the Bikaner Kingdom had well developed teams of camel riding soldiers in its ranks, the use of camels in the wars has a past dating back to a much earlier period. Historical records indicate that a camel army was set up in Bikaner in 1465. It is also known that many irregular camel forces were found in various other princely states in the region. Maharaja Ganga Singh, (1880-1943) who ruled the Bikaner Princely State for 56 years and was responsible for many other improvements and developments of the Bikaner State. One of the troops he focused intensely was the Camel Contingent, which was named after him as the Ganga Risala.

The BSF has a camel contingent, which is generally stationed at out posts located on the India- Pakistan border, predominantly situated in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

## BSF COLOUR – OUR PRIDE



The term colour includes the standards and guidons carried by infantry and cavalry regiments. Soldiers rallied round their colours when their side was in disarray on the battlefield and performed incredible heroic deeds under their shadow. Though colours are not carried into action any more, they are venerated as they stand testimony to the heroic traditions of the regiment.

The design of the BSF colour indicates its rich heritage and important operational role. Since the BSF was formed by integrating State Armed Police Battalions, the traditional red and blue colours of the Police have been included in the design. The colour white has been added to highlight the peace-time role of the BSF of guarding frontiers and combating smuggling and other trans-border crimes. The earlier Motto of the Force – “Duty unto death” has been displayed under the BSF Emblem. The new Motto is “जीवन पर्यन्त कर्तव्य”.



## TEAM JAAN BAZZ



BSF's motorcycle stunt team '*Jaan Bazz*' has been captivating audiences since its inception in 1990. The team was formed with the aim of showcasing to the world that the Border-Man not only guards but possesses other skills such as: efficiency, marksmanship and dedication by displaying acts of daredevilry while riding Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycles. Their riders are trained at BSF's Central School of Motor Transport, part of the BSF Academy, Tekanpur.

Due to the dangerous nature of the various acts and stunts to be performed, the team starts intensive training from September onwards to participate at BSF's Raising Day Parade (each year) and Republic Day Parade (every alternate year). Usually a team consists of 64 personnel and trick riders on 34 Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycle.

Over the past few years the fearless '*Jaan Bazz*' team has achieved many successes; in fact their name has also been featured in the Limca Book of world Record. In 2006, '*Jaan Bazz*' created two new world records by forming a Human Pyramid of 26 '*Jaan Bazz*' stuntmen riding on just 3 Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycles, covering a distance of 1 km in 1 minute 16 seconds. The other records was created by having 40 '*Jaan Bazz*' stuntmen ride on just 1 Bullet motorcycle covering a distance of 32 meters in 48.11 seconds.

The Honorable Prime Minister of India and several national/ international dignitaries have appreciated their efforts and performances.





communication. These equipment were upgraded by BEL time to time as MK-I, MK-II, MK-III etc. and till date it is being used for communication from battalion HQ to Sector HQ and Coy HQ to Battalion HQ.

### *Telephone and Exchanges*

Initially, the Magneto telephone and exchange instruments were used in BSF and in later stages these instruments were replaced by push button telephone instruments and automatic exchanges. Some of the names of above equipment are as under DJL, ITI Desk type, IT modified, 10 Line Magneto exchange and 15 Line Field exchange etc. These line equipment were generally used in field areas. As the telecommunication technology advanced, above equipment had been replaced by modern high capacity auto exchanges. Some of the variants are: BPL, KAREL, MATRIX having capacity of 16, 64, 128, 256 and 512 ports.

### *Police Communication Network (POLNET)*

The POLNET satellite communication infrastructure of MHA was introduced for connecting all paramilitary forces, all state police HQrs, Police Stations, District HQrs for voice, data and Fax communication without any civil interference so that anti-criminal action can be taken very fast. It also enables the Rapid Action Force to come into action immediately anywhere in India. POLNET can be installed in hilly, island and remote places. It also enables global communication around the world. In this system, data transmission is secure. It gives instant connectivity. Its cost and tariff charges are very low. Its installation, repair and maintenance is easy. In the year 2003, 63 Nos. VSAT terminals were provided to BSF by DCPW under POLNET scheme. In the year 2007, 103 Nos. VSAT terminals were also provided by MHA (Procurement Cell). Total numbers of VSAT terminal (POLNET terminals) is 166 and laid in various HQrs/Trg Institutions/BOPs of BSF locations.

### *WAN*

In the Year 2006, the IP based Wide Area Network (WAN) system

was introduced in BSF which is working on BSNL leased line to provide data, voice, video conference, FAX communication among all BSF establishments. Now, it has become the backbone of BSF communication system.

### *Cellular Phone and DSPT*

Cellular Phone has also been provided in 2000 for better communication to all BOPs through available service provider network upto the BOP level. For remote BOPs, DSPT, for welfare of troops to communicate with their families and also for Adm/Operational purposes were installed during 2005-06. These have been introduced on the BOPs where Mobile phone connectivity was either very limited or not available.

A constant march towards betterment has been a hallmark of the Force and these modernizations are just an indication of the zeal that the BSF personnel possess so that they are able to serve their country to their maximum capability.

### *Information Technology*

#### *Formation of BSF EDP Cell (1969)*

BSF established EDP Cell in December 1969 with an objective to computerise Pay Roll System on experimental basis for 10 BSF Battalions of Rajasthan Frontier as a Pilot project. After successful completion of this Pilot Project, in 1970, the NGO's Pay Roll system was further expanded to cover the entire BSF battalions. At that time Pay Roll system was developed on Honey Well-400 (H-400 computer) of IBM make installed at Department of Statistics under Ministry of Planning. H-400 was a second generation Computer based on transistor based technology. This Computer was hired for about 16 hours every month on time sharing basis for Pay Roll Processing and printing. At that time there were only four such computers in India.

#### *EDP Centre (1976)*

In 1976, Directorate of Co-ordination Police Computers (DCPC) was formed. Ever since then BSF EDP started its operations at

DCPC and BSF NGO's Pay roll system was switched over from H-400 computer to TOC-316 computer with BAL (Basic Assembly Language) and punch card system. This was replaced by DCM SPECTRUM-7 in 1980. Further in 1985 DCM SPECTRUM-7 Computer was replaced with DCM TANDY TRS 80 computer, Model-4 for editing, validation of data and independent processing of small application systems.

*Formation of EDP OTE and BSF'S First Computer Center (1988)*

Due to increase in workload of EDP, on account of expansion of the Force over the years, in 1988 EDP Centre was transformed to EDP Directorate. A model Computer Centre was established by BSF in CGO Complex in 1988 by installing One Minicomputer, Series-386 of WIPRO make with its 3 Main consoles, and two high speed line printers with the speed of 900 Lines per minute (LPM) 6 Nos additional 8088 Computer Machine terminals were also installed for Data Entry of Pay Changes. These computer did not had any Hard disk memory, however it had two 5 1/4 Floppy drives. One Floppy was that of DOS operating system which was put in one of the Floppy drives to load the OS in the computers. The computer did not have any OS in itself.

*Development of application softwares (1988)*

In 1988 EDP Section independently developed the Pay Roll Systems in COBOL and C Language for GO's and NGO's on Unix platform. Systems for PMIS, operations, and confidential records was also implemented in other Directorates

*Establishment of frontier computer centers (1991)*

In 1991-92 one computer center each was established in each frontier by installing 1 PC XT Machine and Printer with DOS operating System. Common Software Application package for PMIS, Ops and Inventory management was developed in house and installed on the frontier computer to collate data pertaining to the entire frontier.

### *Implementation of 5th Pay Commission and resolution of Y2K problem (1996-1999)*

In January 1996 Wipro S-386 Minicomputer was replaced by Acer-Altos 700es series Server and 02 Nos 900 LPM line printers were replaced by three high speed MT 691 Line Matrix printers (of LIPI make) with a printing speed of 1400 LPM. Similarly all other Applications systems were also ported on the new Server. With the installation of this combination of Server and printers the Pay Roll Processing and Printing time reduced to nearby half. In 1997 EDP Dte successfully implemented the 5th Pay Commission recommendation in BSF Pay roll systems. In the year 1998-99 EDP Officers had resolved the Y2K problem by changing all Programs of Softwares and Hardware running in Computer Centre and also changing the date format of entire current and historic data available with BSF.

### *Formation of Communication & IT Directorate (2003)*

In 2003 EDP & Communication was merged as Communication & Information Technology (Comn & IT) Directorate & EDP was re-named as Information Technology (IT) Wing. BSF Website for all FTR HQrs Trg institution was also launched during the same year.

### *Implementation of 6th Pay Commission and Online Pay Roll System (2008)*

Year 2008 was a land mark year in which IT Wing implemented the Pay Scales of the 6th Pay Commission in one month and also converted the Pay Roll Applications from COBOL on Unix platform to latest technology on SQL Server and dot net on Windows platform. During this conversion, the manual system of printing and dispatch of Pay Bills and other statements such as Pay Slips etc. which used to take one month were dispensed with and all bills and other statements were made available online.

### *Development in Intranet Prahari Project (IPP)*

The Intranet Prahari Project (IPP) was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Home Minister on 5 January, 2012 which was awarded on 25

February 2010 as a turn-key Project i.e. Application software connected from FHQ to all locations (up to Battalion level). Its Data Centre (DC) is at Delhi and Disaster Recovery Data Centre (DRC) is at Bangalore and 10 Mini Data Centres (MDC) are at various Frontiers. Project included delivering and installing Hardware, its Networking infrastructure, Licensed Software and development of Integrated Application Software modules for BSF functioning. The IPP system facilitates operational analysis, efficient planning in the domain of leave, finance and manpower and training management, resulting in quicker and better decision making. Its main aim is to facilitate near paperless functioning, enhancement of productivity and efficiency and prospective planning. Under this Project, state of the art Data Centers have been established and all BSF establishments up to Battalion HQ have been connected through BSF intranet and has been secured by implementing ISO 27001:2015 ISMS security standards. For successful implementation of BSF IPP about 25,000 BSF personnel were trained at all BSF location. Some of the major projects that have been implemented in the field of IT:

- (a) Conversion of the BSF payroll system from COBOL platform to the latest platform of DOT NET and SQL server.
- (b) Development of application for new pension scheme.
- (c) Hosting of pay slips on the BSF portal.
- (d) Implementation of the BSF's e-mail system.
- (e) Deployment of a security matrix consisting of hardware and software application to protect IT assets of BSF from Cyber threats.
- (f) Installation and Development of toll-free helpline of HIV AIDS at BSF Hospital, R.K. Puram, New Delhi, a project sponsored by United Nations.
- (g) Upgradation of MHA Ops Control Room.
- (h) Installation of Voice Response System to handle calls pertaining to pay roll, GPF and other pay related enquires.

Now modernization of Communication equipment is in full swing with the induction of digital and 'state of the art' equipments, Wide Area Network to connect all BSF establishments up to Battalion level and Intranet Prahari Project (IPP) to achieve paperless office in BSF.

## Other Support Wings

### *Air Wing*

The Air Wing made a humble beginning on 01 May 1969 with just one Queen Air C-80 Aircraft, acquired from the King of Nepal. This light Executive Aircraft was used for conveyance of DG BSF and other senior officers in connection with their operational duties, small contingents of 5-6 troops and for the VIPs.

The idea of setting up of a full-fledged Air Wing on a trial basis under the auspices of BSF was conceived as a result of the conclusions drawn from the study of Indo-Pak War of 1971, when the BSF troops were fully deployed on borders of India and East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh. It was felt by the then DG, Shri K.F. Rustamji, that an ever increasing operational commitments of the Force and its subsequent deployment anywhere in the country at a very short notice required an Air Wing to airlift men and material for augmenting its capabilities.

In the light of this requirement of national importance, a fleet of five Dakota aircrafts were inducted on an experimental basis in the year 1972. These Dakotas were used for air carriage of BSF personnel to and from border areas, transportation of arms, ammunition, sensitive communications equipment and other logistic supplies as well as stocking of essential stores in far flung and remote areas.

During the year 1973-74, a new dimension was added to the role of this Wing when this small fleet of Dakota aircraft was utilized for IS duties. During this period, BSF personnel were airlifted to Gorakhpur in the wake of a sudden PAC revolt. But for the timely airlifts, the large scale violence planned by PAC could not have been averted. Similarly, the contribution of the Wing during All India Railway Strike has been substantial and equally praiseworthy when the troops were airlifted to hurriedly



semi-prepared kachha strips to ensure the guarding of strategic Grand Chord Section of the Railway Tracks.

With the growth in capability of this unit in terms of operational experience, a regular courier flight schedule was introduced to provide logistic support and achieve the objectives of reaching far flung areas in various Frontiers. Subsequently, in the interest of optimum utilization and cost effectiveness the scope of air wing was extended to encompass all the CAPFs, like CRPF, ITBP, Assam Rifles, CBI, CISF etc. in the year 1974. The changed internal and external environments since 1975 demanded extensions and modifications in the role of this unit and one more Dakota aircraft was added to the fleet. That apart, the role of BSF Air Wing was extended to Internal Security duties involving movement of troops, VIPs and carrying out special missions. Since then, the scope of its duties has been gradually extended to cover multifarious assignments of nationally significant nature, so much so that in 1987, a regular fortnightly IPKF courier service was introduced to Sri Lanka for CRPF.

The designated roles of the Air Wing are the following:

- (a) To transport essential operational loads such as arms, ammunition, Extreme Cold Clothing (ECC), medicines, communication material, food articles and all other logistic items, required for effective functioning of the troops in border areas and in insurgency prone areas.
- (b) To move personnel of all ranks of CAPFs to remote advance field areas and to Heli operations for deployment in operational duties and during emergencies.
- (c) To provide air travel facilities to VIPs/VVIPs, Central/State Ministers, Ministry officials, visiting foreign delegates, Inquiry commissions, Advisory boards, Security liaison teams, Medical teams during natural calamities etc.
- (d) To conduct Aerial survey of the areas affected by floods, earthquakes etc. and to provide aerial dropping of food and medicines in such areas.
- (e) Evacuation of casualties to the nearest base hospitals and transportation of dead bodies to various designated places.

- (f) To transport criminals/terrorists from one place to another as per the instructions of higher authorities.
- (g) To facilitate Border surveillance and maintenance of Border Out Posts.

Maintenance of the internal security of the country is the responsibility of the Central and State governments. The Centre assists the States whenever the law and order situation deteriorates significantly due to violent agitations or when there is a grave threat to the governance in the State itself due to extremists, terrorists or subversive elements. All the seven CAPFs have a vital role to play in safeguarding the internal environment of the country from disruptive activities that can potentially lead to disorder, loss of citizens' lives and destruction of public and private property.

Many of these deployments are in such remote areas that they can only be supported by air. For example, the BSF has a number of border outposts in remote areas of the North-East. Besides, quick mobilization of security personnel and commandos engaged in Counter Insurgency (CI) operations in militancy affected areas that are in inaccessible hill and jungle terrains and have inhospitable weather conditions is possible only with a dedicated air support. In most CI operations, the success of the operations of the CAPFs is critically dependent on the quality and speed of their action so that their adversary can be caught by surprise. Besides, the task for disaster management is also with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Ten battalions of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been raised for this purpose. Air support is especially required for these battalions in the aftermath of disasters for mounting prompt relief and rescue operations such as dropping of rations and life saving medicines, casualty evacuation and transportation of men & materials. In addition, casualty evacuation of the jawans, Air Courier Service for the CAPFs jawans on the pattern of the Army, evacuation of jawans from remote areas after completion of their term of duty, surveillance and patrolling of the borders, transportation of VIPs has to be done through air support.

To cater to the needs of deployment, helicopters were inducted in the Force in 1978. Accordingly, the Air Wing acquired four Mi-4 Hepters in 1978 and their operation and maintenance was entrusted to the IAF for ensuring availability of Hepter flying hours at concessional rates. According to the provisions of an agreement between the BSF and the IAF, the BSF Hepter requirements in High altitude Sectors was formally accepted by IAF. Through this agreement, the BSF had not only become the only paramilitary Force of the country in acquiring such assured logistic support from IAF, but had also helped in decreasing the operational cost for the BSF.

The experiment of merging our Hepters in IAF inventory did not prove to be fully effective due to time consuming procedures and uncertain availability of helicopters. Consequently, the Government purchased two Chetak Helicopters and handed over their maintenance and operational requirement to the BSF's Air Wing. These helicopters on contract initially with Pawan Hans Helicopters Pvt. Ltd., and now with Summit Aviation Ltd. are placed in J&K and Jodhpur to cover the North-Western and Western Frontiers respectively. The services of the Helicopters are at ninety percent availability to BSF's commitments.

Helicopters have been pivotal in bringing laurels to the MHA in the hostile terrains of North, North-East and Central India. Evacuation from live operations, induction of troops and operational reconnaissance of militancy affected areas are some of the more regular roles in which the Air Wing has augmented all of the CAPFs in their operations. The Mi-17 IV helicopters operating from Delhi caters to the needs of ITBP, BSF and NSG, not to mention the important commitments of the MHA. Cheetah helicopters have been a lifeline for the troops of Jammu and Kashmir. The ALH fleet operates from Raipur and Ranchi for anti-Naxal role and from Agartala for logistic support to troops deployed in the North-East.

The highest standards of flight safety achieved by this Unit in carrying out assigned tasks were appreciated by the Government as a result of which the Air Wing was called upon in 1978 to provide

operationally sensitive airlift support to VIPs, Cabinet Ministers as well as foreign delegations.

The changing security scenario necessitates constant modernization of the Force to be able to serve at its optimal capacity. As the demand for airlifts grew from CPOs for IS duties, which necessitated all-weather operation and added safety margins, the need for modernization and expansion to enhance the bulk airlift capability, speed and range was felt. The Government therefore approved the phasing out of the obsolete fleet of Dakotas and Queen Air aircraft. The Queen aircraft was replaced by one of the most sophisticated aircrafts, Super King in 1982 and the new aircraft joined the fleet in January 1982. The Dakotas were replaced by the two comparatively bigger and pressurized AVRO aircraft, one of which joined the fleet in April 1982 and the other, a military freighter version with higher range and pay load capacity and which could traverse through much higher hilly terrain, was inducted on 12 August 1984. Three more AVRO aircrafts were bought from HAL in 1991. The executive carrying capability of the fleet was augmented by induction of the advanced version of Super king Aircraft on 21 August 1987.

The air support requirements of the troops are in terms of movement of resources and personnel posted on the border under very hostile environmental conditions, medical-evacuation, surveillance and movement of troops for counter-insurgency (CI) operations, NSG operations, transportation of VIPs, air courier service for moving jawans to the nearest railhead and air support for rescue and rehabilitation of the affected after disasters. The wing thus enhances the effectiveness of security personnel guarding the borders, engaged in counter-insurgency operations, anti-Naxalite operations. It also enables the quick mobilization of the NDRF personnel for relief and rescue operations and also helps in the relief and rehabilitation efforts.

All these duties have been tirelessly carried out by the BSF's Air Wing despite facing operational challenges in terms of induction of trained manpower and old age of the aircraft, which sometimes results in non-availability of spares. Even though the

strength of the BSF Air Wing has been augmented in phases over time, the available air support from the BSF Air Wing has some limitations too. Due to expansion in the scope of BSF Air Wing, BSF gets only limited air support for borders, naxal affected areas and internal security duties. To counter these challenges the BSF in 2006-07 sent its own officers to be trained in both fixed wing aircrafts as well as helicopters. This was an important milestone in the quest for self-reliance and to reduce its dependence on the Indian Air Force and civil market by creating its own pool of pilots.

The Air Wing of the BSF has played an important role in various scenarios that it has been called to serve in. It has inducted new platforms to its fleet thereby becoming one of the prized assets of the MHA. Presently it consists of Embraer-135 J, AVRO (HS-748) and Super King B-200 aircrafts in fixed wing and ALH (Dhruv), Cheetah and Mi-17-IV in rotatory Wing. The Fixed Wing Aircrafts are operating from Delhi Airport with dedicated crew of pilots, engineers and other support staff. They have become a force multiplier for the MHA. Air Wing has been the mainstay of BSF armoury and endeavour's to maintain the high standards of operational efficiency and preparedness that it has set for itself and to bring glory to the Force and peace throughout the nation.

### ***Water Wing***

The Indian Border with Pakistan and Bangladesh has diverse terrain. It has rocky hills and snow bound mountains in the Jammu and Kashmir, arid deserts in Rajasthan and dense forests in the East. Out of about 7,400 kms length of border with Pakistan and Bangladesh, approximately 1215 kms. is riverine.

Consequent upon raising of the Border Security Force in 1965, the need for movements and physical presence in the riverine border was felt. A BSF battalion has been modeled on the pattern of an Infantry Battalion. The battalion has all the components to make it self-reliant in the field of arms and ammunition, Radio and communications and motor transport and other logistic supports. The BSF battalions which had riverine borders in their

AOR were permitted to hire local country boats and boatmen for patrolling in the riverine border area. A manpower consisting of 82 Constable/Boatman was sanctioned to the Water Wing by the MHA in 1966.

With the growing operational requirement, 20 Speed/Outboard engine river boats alongwith 104 posts were sanctioned by the MHA in 1980. BSF Frontiers started to procure small boats to operate in their respective riverine border area. In the year 1968, two medium vessels namely, "PB-Gangalahari" and "PB-Chitragada" were procured from the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation (CIWTC), Kolkata. These 02 medium vessels took active part in Indo-Pak war in the year 1971 and served continuously for 40 years in the Water Wing, South Bengal Frontier. Year wise raising of Water Wing establishments in various Frontiers are as under:

(i)	WW South Bengal	South Bengal Ftr	1966
(ii)	WW Madhopur	Punjab Ftr	1968
(iii)	WW Bhuj	Gujarat Ftr	1969
(iv)	WW Dhubri	Guwahati Ftr	1973
(v)	WW Jammu	Jammu Ftr	1989
(vi)	WW North Bengal	North Bengal Ftr	1989
(vii)	WW Kashmir	Kashmir Ftr	1990
(viii)	WW Masimpur	M&C Ftr	1991

In the year 1984, recruitment of crews staff, masters, engine drivers and workshops staff were conducted in the rank of CT (Boatman), NK, HC, SI, Inspr, AC, DC, 21C and Commandant against sanctioned posts to operate the boats and vessels sanctioned and procured by the MHA. 390 posts in various ranks/trades were sanctioned by the MHA. From 1984-90, six medium crafts namely, 'MV-Vir Arjun', 'MV-Akbar', 'MV-Ashoka', 'MV Bikram', 'MV-Pratap', 'MV-Ranjeet' and 21 Mechanized boats were procured for Sunderban (South Bengal Ftr), Dhubri (Guwahati Ftr) and Bhuj (Gujarat Ftr).

In the aftermath of the Bombay serial bomb blasts in the year 1993, the riverine border area along Sir Creek in Bhuj Sector gained importance. To strengthen the border domination patrolling

in the Sir-creek area, 04 Medium Crafts namely, 'Shivaji', 'Kunjil', 'Drona' and 'Trishul', 04 Speed Boats and 05 mechanized boats were purchased in the year 1994.

The nature of water current, i.e. speed and tidal height and the depth of the riverine border is different in different Frontiers. Except in the Sunderbans of South Bengal Frontier and Creek area of Gujarat Frontier, the rivers which forms the IB or flow close to the IB in other Frontiers have different types of riverine border in terms of depth and water current for different seasons. During monsoon, the rivers flow in full swing. Sometimes, the BOPs are over flooded and the BOP land gets eroded because of the high speed water current, especially in the Dhubri Sector of Guwahati Frontier and in the Jammu Sector of Jammu Frontier.

Different types of boats having different length and breadth and engine capacity have been inducted in the BSF Water Wing for different Frontiers in the following period of time:

Sl. No.	Type of Boat/Water Crafts	Category	Year of induction
(i)	Medium Craft	Medium Vessel	1967
(ii)	Aluminum Country Boat	Light Vessel	1977
(iii)	Speed Boat (Single Engine)	Light Vessel	1984
(iv)	Mechanized Boat	Medium Vessel	1988
(v)	Country Boat in Board Motor (CBIBM)	Light Vessel	1997
(vi)	Swamp Boat	Light Vessel	2001
(vii)	Country Boat (Wooden)	Light Vessel	2002
(viii)	Speed Boat (Double Engine)	Light Vessel	2003
(ix)	Aluminum Naka Boat	Light Vessel	2003
(x)	Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB)	Light Vessel	2003
(xi)	Floating BOP	Mother Craft	2003

In the year 1999-2000, a need was felt to have a platoon post which could float on water. The idea of having such a floating post was considered to avoid loss of Government property and ordnance stores and threat to human life during floods in the Brahmaputra river. The design of the Floating Border Out Post (FBOP) was conceptualized by the BSF Water Wing with the help of Inland Water Transport Corporation (IWTC), Guwahati. Specifications of the FBOP was framed by the BSF Water Wing.

The FBOP was aimed at having a Platoon post which would be anchored and stationed at different places on the riverine border and troops on board would carry out area domination patrolling with the help of speed boats, provided with each FBOP. Initially, fourteen FBOPs were sanctioned by the MHA at the cost of Rs. 164,11,50,000 for deployment in Dhubri, Sunderban and Creek area of Bhuj (five, three and six numbers respectively). The work was assigned to M/s. Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL), Mumbai, a defence PSU in ship building and manufacturing, to manufacture and supply the FBOPs. All the FBOPs were to be supplied in 3 batches starting from 26 December 2002 to 25 July 2003.

Due to the problems related with trans shipping the FBOPs from Bay of Bengal to Dhubri, Assam via Bangladesh, only nine FBOPs could be built, which were inducted for the BSF from the year 2003 to 2004 in Sunderbans (South Bengal Frontier) and in Bhuj (Gujarat Frontier). Three FBOPs, namely 'Sagar', 'Durga' and 'Kamakhya' were deployed in Sunderban area of South Bengal Frontier and six FBOPs, namely 'Bajarang', 'Trishul', 'Pratap', 'Dwarika', 'Shakti' and 'Somnath' were deployed in Sir-creek area of Gujarat Frontier.

In the aftermath of 26 November 2008 terrorist attack in Bombay, the Committee of Secretaries in a meeting, held in New Delhi on 17 May 2010 entrusted BSF with the responsibility of guarding the coastal area of Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat Frontier, in between the regions of Medi and Jakhau. Accordingly, one Marine battalion was sanctioned for coastal security of approximately 85 kms. long stretch of area from Medi and Jakhau. In the Marine battalion, 01 Marine Coy consisting of 87 crew staff and workshop personnel of various ranks were sanctioned. 03 Medium Crafts, 01 Mechanized boat and 09 Speed boats were additionally sanctioned for the Marine battalion.

In the year 2005, the Recruitment Rules of BSF Water Wing were implemented. Various technical Crew staff in technical trade like, Master, Engine Driver and Marine Workshop posts had been identified and got sanctioned by the Government. The Recruitment Rules were framed for appointment and promotion



of various Crew Staff in different posts and trades in accordance with the Indian Inland Vessel act 1917. The government sanctioned a total of 1243 technical staff for the BSF Water Wing to operate and maintain the Water Crafts and Boats.

At present, the BSF Water Wing has more than 500 water crafts and boats of different sizes and capacities. Four new 'state of the art' watercrafts having Jet propulsion systems and sensor-based control equipment are being imported from the USA for deployment in the Creek area of Gujarat Frontier to strengthen domination of the Sir Creek border. Proposals are in hand to construct jetties and proper mooring places at important locations/ Ferry points. Efforts are on to phase out the old models of Watercrafts and Vessels and induct more modern Water Crafts/ Boats which are best suited to meet our operational requirements and which would be environment friendly and provide fuel-economy.

### ***Artillery Wing of the BSF***

Artillery serves as an important function in any armed force in the world, be it in a situation of Hot war, where it augments the troops' firing capabilities or in peace time, where it acts as a tool to convey the intention and seriousness of the deployed troops to the enemy without having to deploy any troops. The BSF, over a period of time has gained considerable experience in handling and deployment of artillery. It is a matter of pride that BSF is the only CPO to have its own artillery. This gives it an edge over the other CAPFs as far as Operational efficacy is concerned. With the primary task of protecting the International Border, the role that artillery plays in providing sustainability to troops on the ground cannot be over emphasized.

Artillery is a very potent and battle winning arm. It provides the troops deployed on the ground very intimate fire support to enhance its capability to hold ground against a superior enemy. Moreover it enables a force to close in with the enemy, to overpower or capture ground. Even in thick jungles or difficult areas, it supports our troops without having to deploy our troops.

# Ancillary Wings

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## BSF Artillery



Gun position in Rajasthan



Artillery Battery in Action

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3.7" Howitzer



6 PDR Anti Tank Gun

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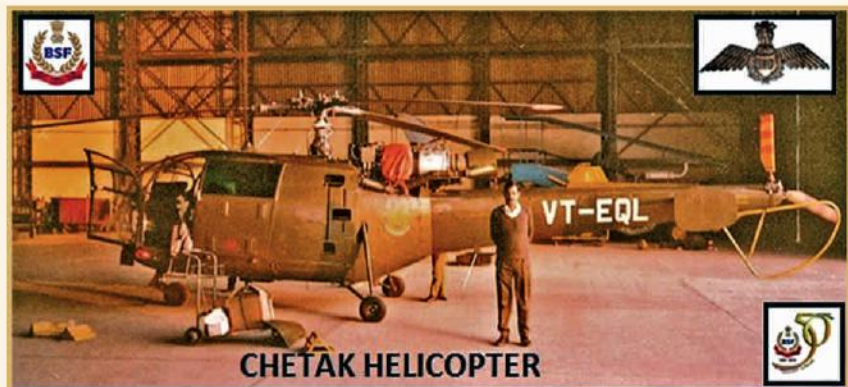
Survey of newly inducted arsenal in front of then  
BSF HQ, South Block, New Delhi



Preparations for Rocket Fire at Pokhran

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# Air Wing





BSF Helicopter during Rescue Operation



# Water Wing

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Floating BOP





Domination of riverine area

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# Cherished Memories

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Briefing  
Shri Gyani Zail Singh

Visit of  
Mrs Gandhi  
to the Border Areas  
of Rajasthan



Lighter Moments with  
BSF - Shri Rajiv Gandhi

On Way to Historical  
Mission-  
Shri A.B. Vajpayee at  
Attari Check Post



This is on account of its extended range and observation capabilities.

The BOPs of BSF are exposed to enemy offensives before actual deployment of the Army. Even before the actual war breaks out on certain segments of the border, exchange of fire takes place before the actual commencement of hostilities. These battalions need effective fire support to prevent the enemy from gaining surreptitious foothold in our territory. During actual hostilities, certain BSF Bns are tasked independently and get involved in undertaking limited offensive. Integral fire support available to such subunits prove very useful as it offers adequate latitude and freedom of action to BSF Commanders undertaking such vital operational tasks. This was clearly reflected in the very first deployment that this new wing of the force took part in, i.e. the 1971 war.

As the tension gradually increased between India and Pakistan in the middle of 1971, it escalated on both the fronts, i.e. in the West along the Frontiers of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat and in the East along the Frontiers of then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and the Indian States of North Bengal, Assam and Tripura. Pakistan had also concentrated its forces along the borders with India both in the East and West. The Indian government naturally had to be prepared for all eventualities in such a situation. The Army authorities in India felt that there were certain areas where they would not be able to provide effective and concentrated Artillery support. The areas were Bandipur (NG) Sector in J&K, Bikaner Sector in Rajasthan, the border along Bhuj and Kutch with West Pakistan in Gujarat, Belonia Bugle in Tripura Sector and some areas in North Bengal. These areas were mostly manned by the BSF.

Gen S.H.F.J. Manekshaw, the then COAS, discussed the situation with Shri K.F. Rustamji DG BSF and suggested the raising of some Post Group Artillery for which guns, connected equipment and ammunition was to be provided by the Army but was to be staffed by the BSF. The main task of this Post Group Artillery was to provide close support to BSF units in primary defensive role

by engaging the enemy in assembly areas, start lines so as to provide defensive fire and also provide support in limited offensive tasks. The main tasks assigned to the PGA were:

- (a) To hold ground in the first hours after outbreak of hostilities till the Indian Army takes over and then become useful arm with the Indian Army.
- (b) In any small scale skirmish, provide support and protection to local population living on borders which will look up to the BSF in the first instance.
- (c) To have a deterrent effect on the intentions of counterpart forces.
- (d) To provide fire support to BSF troops deployed in isolated pockets in various theatres of War.

Shri K.F. Rustamji accepted the suggestion and accordingly submitted a proposal to raise twenty Post Groups Artillery to handle the scenario. Fifteen Post Groups were required for the various Sectors and the balance were to be kept as reserve, to be raised as Rocket Batteries later. Each Post Groups were to be equipped with four 3.7 inch Howitzer guns and 4.2 inch Mortars as these were held in surplus with the Army alongwith considerable ammunition stocks. The proposal was immediately accepted by the Government in principle and BSF Arty was raised on 01 October 1971 by disbanding 101 Battalion of the BSF. A simultaneous action was initiated by BSF HQ to concentrate personnel, make arrangements for their training and obtain equipment. The procurement of equipment was accorded highest priority and to commence training of gun detachments, equipment was obtained on loan from the Army. This required constant personal liaison between the local Army authorities and the BSF at various levels and was amicably maintained at all levels.

While equipment for training purpose was being procured from the various sources, the tasks of selection of personnel was initiated at HQ BSF. Brig. R.P. Mittal, Ex-Commander Artillery from Army, was appointed as Commander Artillery BSF and was assigned the

task of raising this important wing of the Force with its Headquarters in Delhi. He also had the responsibility of screening and selecting personnel for the raising. Officers, NCOs and ORs were selected and units were asked to earmark suitable personnel having experience of handling weapons like 3 inch MORs/MMG and with reasonable standard of education for Artillery. Here considerable difficulty was experienced as some of the units had sent personnel who did not have any of the desired qualifications. These tasks took considerable efforts on the part of the officer in charge but were accomplished within the stipulated time period.

By this time the political situation between India and Pakistan had further deteriorated and it appeared that hostilities could commence at any moment. Shri K.F. Rustamji, DG BSF, in one of his speeches had wondered that since the time for the collection of equipment and training was short, would the BSF Artillery be available for employment during the hostilities. Brig R.P. Mittal and his team accepted the challenge and assured the DG that all efforts would be made to raise, train and deploy PGAs, in the eventuality of an outbreak of hostilities. Brig Mittal personally visited all Post Group Artillery units in different locations and kept close liaison with Army authorities to impart training.

While concentration of personnel was going on, the equipment was being collected. It had been a herculean task to organize, train, undertake live fire practices and deploy a body of troops in a record time of four to six weeks and that too on weapons with which they were not familiar with. The BSF's success in accomplishing this task is a testimony to all ranks, particularly those who joined the BSF Artillery and who by their sheer will, dedication and determination to the country completed the training in the shortest period and willingly moved for war duties on being declared fit by the Army authorities.

The other important factor that needs to be mentioned is the establishing of the HQ Arty. Brig R.P. Mittal had moved all by himself in this direction with the service of just one stenographer from Rajasthan at his disposal. The lack of office staff had its reflection on one or two very important aspects of pay of personnel

and documentation. Since all the personnel had moved at a short notice, neither the battalions from where personnel came nor the Commander Arty, for lack of office staff, could keep the PAD updated with the details of the movement and location of these personnel. However, this situation was not allowed to last for long and most of the records were updated with due co-operations of the respective BSF units and hard work of officers and staff. Initially PGAs were administratively managed through the local BSF units i.e. where PGAs were deployed or located.

The month of October 1971 and early part of November were wholly devoted to advanced training and by mid November, with the efforts of training teams from Indian Army and dedication of our own men, the Post Group Artillery were in a position to carry out live practice firing. Having completed their Practice Firing Camp, Post Groups were deployed in the following operational areas:

<b>PGA Units</b>	<b>Sector</b>
7, 8 and 9	Bandipur (J&K)
1, 2, 3 and 4	Bhuj/Dantiwada (Gujarat)
5 and 6	Bikaner (Rajasthan)
10, 11 and 12	Coochbehar, Malda (West Bengal)
13, 14 and 15	Agartala (Tripura)

All PGA units were operational during the 1971 War and were employed both in defensive as well as limited offensive roles. During the Liberation War 13, 14 and 15 PGAs provided close fire support to advancing formations of 4 Corps. In the Kashmir Theatre 7, 8 and 9 PGAs were placed under operational control of 19 Infantry Division to provide fire support to formations operating in Uri, Naugam, Trehgam, Neeru and Gurez/Tallel Valley. In Gujarat, BSF Battalions were supported by 1, 2, 3 and 4 Post Group Artillery from December 05 to 16, in securing the areas of Vingoor and Virawah. On 06 and 07 December 1971, 13 Grenadiers were supported in the attack on Pak Post at Ranhal and Rukanwala respectively. The dauntless strength shown by our 10 PGAs from 07 to 14 December 1971 in the liberation of Nawabganj (East Pakistan) was appreciated by Maj Gen Lachhman

Singh, PVSM, VrC, GOC 20 Mtn Div. During the war in Bhuj sector, certain PGAs were deployed under command of Shri Joginder Singh, DC (Arty). He made the supreme sacrifice for the country in one historic and memorable operational action on 17 December 1971 in the battle of Rann and was awarded the Vir Chakra posthumously. Shri K.J. Thakur, AC OC of 2 PGA was also awarded the Sena Medal in this operation for his conspicuous act of gallantry.

In October 1971, the Army authorities also felt that there was a need to dominate the area of Sunderbans in West Bengal and for that purpose BSF help was sought. One Post Group ear-marked as reserve was retained at Barrackpore, Kolkata. It was equipped with 40 mm light Anti Air Craft guns. Later on, 40 mm guns were also mounted on boats and were deployed in Sunderbans for patrolling purposes. Some light Anti Air Craft guns were also provided to the troops to engage the enemy who could penetrate through the various channels of Sunderbans violating Indian Air Space.

Before the advent of the Artillery, BSF had been taking a keen interest in the development of ground-to-ground rockets in the rocketry club at the BSF Academy Tekanpur. During the 1971 operations these rockets had actually been tried both in the Eastern as well as the Western Sectors. Reports had indicated that these had a demoralizing effect on the enemy. The remaining four Post Groups were then assigned to the task of further developing the technology of rocketry which was done under the guidance and assistance of the Indian Space Research Organization, Thumba. Success was achieved in launching of the rockets but accuracy could not be achieved. Efforts to achieve the desired accuracy continued for quite some time under the leadership of Shri G.P. Bhatnagar who was then posted at BSF Academy Tekanpur. He was assisted by other officers namely Shri I.M. Bhakhri and Shri Balaraman. The Rocket Wing continued to function smoothly for some time but it was felt that BSF did not have the resources to achieve the much-wanted accuracy and since the weapon system

was already available with the Army, it was decided to close the Rocket Wing in 1971.

During the 1971 conflict 18 × 6 Pounder Anti Tank Guns were also procured and issued to BSF Bns located in North Bengal, Rajasthan and Rann of Kutch (Gujarat). It was felt that these could perhaps be used against light tanks, tracked vehicles or in anti-personnel role. The weapon was eventually taken off the inventory of BSF at the end of the War.

Post the Liberation of Bangladesh, six Post Group Artillery Units deployed in eastern theatre were moved to western theatre. From time to time various measures were adopted to streamline the administration, training, provisions and re-structuring of the Regiment of Artillery of BSF.

During the operations, since the Post Group Arty units were static and lacked mobility, they moved from one location to another by improvised means such as Camel carts in Rajasthan. They operated in difficult terrain like the marshy areas of the Rann of Kutch, the wet areas of the Eastern region and the snow-covered heights of Bandipur Sector. In all these areas, the men did exceedingly well, demonstrating strong resolve and grit.

If one was to go into the history of BSF Arty since its raising in 1971, one would realize the commendable job done by the BSF gunner: be it the 1971 war, 1984 in Dhubri (in Assam) or in Belonia in Tripura where it prevented any foolhardy misadventure by Bangladesh; or the telling reply to unprovoked firing by Pak from across the Border in 1997 in Bandipur and Naugam Sector and subsequently in operation Vijay in 1999 and Operation Parakram in December 2001. The professional competency of the BSF gunners and their prowess with the equipment was at display during these telling moments. The promptness and effective response prevented situations turning adverse. The brave men of the BSF Artillery wing have always stood firm against all such forces that have attempted to harm the country.

### ***Synergy between Men and Animals: The Bordermen's four legged companion***

It is significant to note that the BSF has its own contingents of camels and horses and squads of dogs, which support Border vigil duties.

#### ***BSF Camel Contingent***

The Border Security Force has an authorized strength of 1200 camels. The *Seema Praharis* and camel perform numerous duties in several sensitive zones of our national frontiers. A substantial number of these camels are generally stationed near the border outposts located on the India-Pakistan border, predominantly situated in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

#### ***Glorious heritage of the BSF Camels – The Ganga Risala***

The Camel Contingent of the BSF is the proud inheritor of a great heritage of the Bikaner Royal Camel Force, known as the Ganga Risala. Though the Bikaner Kingdom had well-developed teams of camel riding soldiers in its ranks, the use of camels in wars (on the Indian subcontinent) has a past dating back to a much earlier period. Historical records indicate that a Camel army was set up in Bikaner in 1465. It is also known that many irregular Camel forces were found in various other princely states in the region. Maharaja Ganga Singh, (1880-1943) who ruled the Bikaner Princely State for 56 years, focused intensely on his Camel Contingent, which was named after him as the *Ganga Risala*.

#### ***Camel training unit Jodhpur***

The Camel Training Centre of the BSF is located in Rajasthan Frontier Headquarters at Jodhpur and is the first permanent training center of the BSF meant exclusively for its camels. The BSF Camel Training Centre has 62 camels and 70 Jawans (i.e. handlers of camels) on its rolls, drawn from various units of the Rajasthan Frontier. The training programme is intended to enable the men to learn the art of handling camels as well as to train the animals in a successful manner. Among other things, the Camel



Training Centre has two specialized programmes. The first one deals with a “*Desert Course*” to familiarize the trainees with the use of camels. The other programme is known as the “*Camel handling and Management Course*” to train the personnel of the BSF in making them skilled in riding camels as well as taking care of them.

#### *Camel contingent of the BSF and its battle readiness*

The duty charter of the camel units includes patrolling and surveillance as well as related responsibilities. In addition, the camels have to be trained to respond as required in hostile situations. Being ever ready for any contingency also includes the need to use arms by the Seema Praharis as and when needed. To accomplish all such critical goals, the camel-bound Seema Prahari has to be trained as well as readied with appropriate resources. As a corollary, the camels will have to be well trained to respond to all such situations in an appropriate manner.

#### *Colour and pageant of the Camels and Camel riders*

There are over seventy five different dress items that are necessary to ceremonially dress camels and riders of the BSF. The visual appeal of the ceremonial outfit of BSF camels and riders is a stunning riot of colours and beauty. The dress order of the camel riders is similar to the uniforms and decorations worn by the erstwhile *Ganga Risala* with the organizational and frontier identities like the BSF logo/Rajasthan Frontier logo/badges of rank of Men riding them.

#### *Camel Band of the BSF*

The Camel Band is a creative and innovative way of presenting martial music and has gone through various stages of evolution, more particularly since 1986. Camel musical rides and camel acrobatic shows of the BSF are very popular and eagerly awaited events in places where such shows are organized. Besides the Republic Day Parade and the BSF Raising Day Event, Camel contingents participate in various festivals and major events like the Jodhpur Sthapana Divas, Desert Festival, Thar Mahostav at

Barmer, Desert Festival of Jaisalmer, Annual Camel fair and festival of Bikaner, Marwar Festival.

### *The Equestrian Wing*

Until 1970, the Border Security Force did not have any horses. The founding Director of the BSF Academy at Tekanpur (near Gwalior) Brigadier B.C. Pandey introduced the first unit of Horses in the Academy. Over the years the Horse unit at the Tekanpur Academy got well established and is currently thriving in an impressive way. The Border Security Force has used horses effectively for numerous duties like patrolling, surveillance, escort and other ceremonial duties. The Border Security Force has a total strength of 341 Horses which are deployed in Punjab Frontier, Rajasthan Frontier and at BSF Academy at Tekanpur. These horses at Tekanpur are part of the Academy, imparting training in equestrian to the officer trainees of the BSF. In addition, horses stabled at the Tekanpur Campus have also been used in honing the skills of the personnel of the Force in various equestrian sports.

### *National Training Centre for Dogs*

The National Training Centre for Dogs (NTCD) is a premier training institution run by the Border Security Force at Tekanpur, Gwalior on behalf of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). This training centre was established in 1970 and breeds service dogs, trains them and their handlers of all Central Police Organisations, State Police Organisations and other task forces. In the year 2001, this institute was declared as a “Centre of Excellence” by MHA and awarded with ISO certification 9001 : 2000 in the year 2006. The aim of NTCD is to impart training to Dogs, Dog handlers and to conduct other trainings associated to Dogs for CPOs, SPOs and Law-Enforcement Agencies of India and other Foreign Countries.

Dogs and dog handlers of various Central, State Police and other Law enforcement agencies of India and abroad are trained in various dog training disciplines viz. basic obedience, Explosive detection, Narcotic detection, Search & Rescue dog training,

Tracker dog training, Infantry Patrolling, Poison Detection Training and Guard duties. The training period of dogs for Search and Rescue is 36 weeks.

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## LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Sl. No.	Name of Officer	Rank
1.	Shri Prakash Singh, IPS	DG (Retd)
2.	Shri T. Ananthachari, IPS	DG (Retd)
3.	Shri S.K. Sharma, IPS	DG (Retd) NCRB
4.	Shri Chaman Lal, IPS	ADG (Retd)
5.	Shri R.K. Ponoth	ADG (Retd)
6.	Shri A.S. Alur	IG (Retd)
7.	Shri G.P. Bhatnagar	IG (Retd)
8.	Shri A.K. Sarbadhikari	IG (Retd)
9.	Shri V.S. Sirohi	IG (Retd)
10.	Shri S.S. Kothiyal	IG (Retd)
11.	Shri V.K. Gaur	IG (Retd)
12.	Shri R.P. Singh	IG (Retd)
13.	Shri Shivajee Singh	IG (Retd)
14.	Shri S.K. Dutta	IG (Retd)
15.	Shri J.P. Sinha	IG (Retd)
16.	Shri P.J. Sebastian	IG (Retd)
17.	Shri K. Srinivasan	IG (Retd)
18.	Shri Anil Kamboj	IG (Retd)
19.	Shri N.N. Sharma	DIG (Retd)
20.	Shri N.S. Yadav	DIG (Retd)
21.	Shri R.M. Kadian	DIG (Retd)
22.	Shri J.S. Bhalla	DIG (Retd)
23.	Shri R.P. Dabas	DIG (Retd)
24.	Shri W.S. Elley	Comdt (Retd)
25.	Shri B.S. Tyagi	Comdt (Retd)
26.	Shri V.S. Jamwal	Comdt (Retd)
27.	Shri T.R. Mallick	Comdt (Retd)
28.	Insp Thoru Ram	Inspr (Retd)

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