

CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES(CLAWS)

WEBINAR

VIJAY DIVAS@49: LIBERATION OF A GREAT NATION

AT CHANAKYA HALL, CLAWS

ON 09 DEC 2020

CONCEPT NOTE

1. **Background**. The 1971 War that led to the liberation of Bangladesh is unarguably the most memorable Indian victory. It was a short and swift war that led to a decisive victory coupled with the largest surrender by troops after the Second World War. The victory was achieved on account of meticulous military planning and decision-making using manoeuvre warfare, coupled with well-orchestrated politico-diplomatic moves. This great victory would not have been possible without the support and unflinching resolve of the Mukti Bahini and the local population of Bangladesh.

2. **Environmental Scan and Buildup to The War: Upto Nov 71**. It is axiomatic that the preparations for the war were as important as the conduct and hence it is essential to examine various preparations made both in the politico-diplomatic arena as well as in the military sphere. It is vital to acquaint the future generations with the circumstances that forced India to intervene and led to the people to people synergy enabled the support of the local populace in the '**Just War**' and struck the death knell to the '**Two Nation Theory**', which was the rationale of creation of Pakistan.

3. **Operations in the Eastern Theatre**. The conduct of war on land, water and air, as well as the enormous logistics exercise of crossing the mighty Meghna are indeed the most significant lessons for future generations. Like any other war, this war was also a witness to errors of judgment, military failures as well as acts of immense valour, brilliant foresight and resounding successes. All these need to be analysed dispassionately, so as to draw the correct lessons from this war, which holds a special meaning to both India and Bangladesh. On the day of surrender, Pakistan had thirty thousand troops in Dhaka, which were sufficient to hold Dhaka for a considerably longer period of time if they wished to; however, instead of holding their position and fighting on, the Pakistan Army decided to surrender. It was a manifestation of the Comprehensive National Power, which brought about such a decisive victory. And the lessons learnt from this war are applicable even today.

4. **Role of Mukti Bahini.** Mukti Bahini was born soon after the crackdown of 25 March and gradually grew into a large organization of armed and trained men owing allegiance to the Provisional Government of Bangladesh. By the end of November 1971, Mukti Bahini comprised of over 83,000 men, of which 51,000 operated inside East Bengal. The guerrilla operations of Mukti Bahini and the intelligence support provided to Indian Forces was indeed invaluable. The training and conduct of guerrilla operations is indeed an intricate affair and thus need to be looked at from an overall perspective.

5. **Operations in the Western Theatre.** The formal declaration of war happened due to the Air operations launched by the Pakistan Air Force. The overview of operations of the LC and Western and Southern Theatres will be discussed to bring the successes.

6. **Aftermath: Shimla Accord and PWs.** The loss of half the population of Pakistan and the creation of a new nation bolstered the National Power of India on the Global Stage. The signing of the 1972 Shimla Accord led to return of 93000 POWs back to Pakistan. It is important to analyse the impact of India's standing at the Global Stage.

7. **In Retrospect: Indo- Bangladesh Relations and the Way Ahead.** It is important to review the impact so far on the Indo- Bangladesh relations. The defence cooperation and diplomatic convergence due to improving trade, commerce and communications need to be highlighted and an overview of the Way Ahead is essential.

8. **Objectives of the Seminar.** In light of the background given above, the objectives of the seminar are as under:

(a) Recollect the factors leading to, preparation and eventually the conduct of the battles, and discuss the effect on the National Strategy and aiming for a futuristic perspective on the emerging conflicts in the subcontinent.

(b) Collaborations of the veterans from both India and Bangladesh, who participated in the War of 1971 and further share their perspectives.

(c) Build awareness about the stellar performance of the Indian Armed Forces and Mukti Bahini in liberating Bangladesh.

(d) India Bangladesh Relations: Reset and futuristic collaborations and cooperation.

9. **Conduct of Webinar.** Through this webinar the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) intends to bring together the veterans of the war and to promote the cooperation and collaboration between India and Bangladesh.

Miscellaneous Details

10. **Participants.** The participants will be from the three services, strategic, community, veterans, Embassy staff from Bangladesh, media, children from schools and colleges and academia.

11. **Venue.** Webinar at Chanakya Hall, CLAWS.

12. **Project Coordinator.** Col GS Bajwa, Senior Fellow, CLAWS.

13. **Rapporteurs.** Under Arrangement of CLAWS.

14. **MC.** Under Arrangement of CLAWS.