

AIR VICE MARSHAL SULTAN MAHMUD, BIR UTTAM

Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud, Bir Uttam joined Pakistan Air Force Academy, Risalpur in 1960 and was commissioned in GD(P) branch on 01 July 1962. He played an important role during our great Liberation War. The officer was one of the leading figures in forming Bangladesh Air Force. Inspired by the spirit of unique patriotism, the then Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud faced great difficulties during the dreadful days of Liberation War.

He first joined the Mukti Bahini of Sector No-2 (Matinagar and Melaghar). Later, he joined Sector No-1 and became Commanding Officer of the civilian forces of Mukti Bahini in Sector No-1. He conducted many adventurous operations with enthusiasm and invincible courage where he defeated the enemy forces despite his limited experience in land and jungle warfare. He along with his team members conducted many operations from Ramgarh to Chattogram. His immense sacrifice during war in Sector No-1 reflects that patriotism, enthusiasm and spirit of sacrifice play greater role in the war. In addition to many unwritten events, he has unique credit for the destruction of power sub-station at Maduna Ghat in Chattogram and disconnecting the power supply of Chattogram area. He got bullet injury during that operation. Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud had to leave his command of the guerrillas due to injury. He was in Bangladesh Forces Headquarters while recovering from injury. Preparation to form an Air Force for Mukti Bahini was in progress at that time. A qualified officer was required at Bangladesh Forces Headquarters to command the 'Kilo Flight'. Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud was made responsible to form and lead 'Kilo Flight', the future Bangladesh Air Force. After 05 months of joining Liberation War, his dream came true. The opportunity came to prove the contribution of Air Force in the battlefield. Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud reached Dimapur to command that Kilo Flight comprising of 08 pilots, 47 airmen and 03 aircraft. Strong human qualities, spirit of self-sacrifice and organizational skills were required to build an Air Force unit with six civilian pilots, air force officers and technicians. The unit proved its capability in the war through many successful air attacks against Pakistani Forces.

Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud along with his co-pilot conducted the first air attack on 03 December 1971. Conducting night attack by primitive Allouette-3 helicopter without appropriate navigation and armament system against heavily defended oil refinery is rare in the history of aerial warfare. Combined attack of Allied Forces began with the success of his night attack. So far, war was being continued in different sectors. On that day, the first bell of Pakistani's defeat was heralded by the Bangladesh Air Force. Since the next morning, a joint multi-dimensional attack began against the Pakistani occupation forces. Daring attack of that night on Godnail fuel depot at Narayanganj and safe return to the base bear the evidence of the extraordinary feat of Bangladesh Air Force. Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud along with his team members launched many operations against Pakistani occupation forces in Sylhet, Shayestaganj, Shamshearnagar, Moulvibazar, Kulaura, Narsingdi, Raipura, Cumilla, Bhairab, Brahmanbaria, Daudkandi and Elliotganj from 03 to 15 December 1971. Squadron Leader Sultan Mahmud participated in 25 air operations. He along with his team members first landed Dhaka Airport on 16 December 1971. He was one of the pioneers in forming BAF and making Tejgaon airport operational within first few days after the victory.

He was awarded with the gallantry award 'Bir Uttam' by the Govt of Bangladesh for his courage during Liberation War. He was appointed as Chief of Air Staff of Bangladesh Air Force on 23 July 1981. Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud, Bir Uttam was also awarded with 'Independence Award-2018' for his outstanding contribution in our great Liberation War.