CHAPTER – 3
DIVISION OF PAKISTAN-CREATION OF BANGLADESH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is ranked as the eighth country in the world in respect of the size of population. Its area is 1,39,523 sq. kilometres. The birth of Bangladesh in December 1971 was a direct outcome of the Indo-Pakistan war in which Pakistani troops surrendered unconditionally in erstwhile East Pakistan.

It was culmination of revolt of Bangladeshis against tyrannical Pakistani regime. The revolt had begun in March 1971, when the most popular leader of Awami League Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was arrested and taken to a West Pakistani Jail. India had full sympathy with the people of East Pakistan in their struggle for independence. Interim Government of Bangladesh had been constituted as early as in March 1971 but India had refrained from giving recognition to it for fear of provoking Pakistan into a war. But, when eventually the war did begin on December 3, 1971 India decided to go ahead and recognition was granted to Bangladesh on December 6, 1971. Pakistani surrender took place on December 16, 1971. During that 13-days war in the winter of 1971 nearly 20,000 Indian soldiers laid down their lives. The emergence of Bangladesh was described as an event of major importance in the sub-continent, “For the people of Bangladesh it was the end of a nightmare of terror and torture, a reassertion of their individuality and personality. For India it was a major victory of democratic socialism”.

The crisis in India-Pakistan relations over the upsurge in East Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh has been described as the most critical crisis. The background of the crisis was essentially an internal matter of Pakistan, but its consequences became vital for Indo-Pak relations. The origins of the 1971 war were markedly different from those of the two previous Indo-Pakistani conflicts. Whereas Pakistan initiated the first two wars, India began the third. Pakistan’s decision to resort to war on the first two occasions stemmed from
false optimism and perceived windows of opportunity. The origins of the 1971 war, however, were more complex.\(^5\)

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to study the emergence of Bangladesh as a division of Pakistan, the factors underlying this division and the aftermaths of 1971 war. With the aforesaid introduction the following section (3.2) identifies the causes, which laid to the division of Pakistan in 1971 in the historical perspective. It also sums up some important events, which preceded the war. Section 3.3 discusses the 1971 war between India and Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh along with some important events, which preceded the war. Finally section 3.4 examines the Shimla Agreement following 1971 war and its impact on Indo-Pak relations.

### 3.2 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF BANGLADESH – A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.2.1 SITUATION TILL 1947

The emergence of East Bengal as an independent State of Bangladesh was not a sudden and disjointed event but was the outcome of historical process. The ground was prepared, manure was applied, seed was sown, watered and nourished before it ultimately bloomed into a flower. The myopic attitude of the leaders and bureaucrats of West Pakistan was responsible for hastening the process, ultimately leading to complete severance of connection with Pakistan.\(^6\) In what follows we shall discuss how all this happened.

The unwieldy Province of Bengal, which included within its boundaries the areas comprising the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and Assam, posed serious administrative problems. For some time before 1905 the solution of administrative problems by partitioning the Province was under active consideration of Bengal Government. The Bengal Presidency had long presented difficult problem to administration. But the problems of Bengal administration, maintenance of its population etc have received step motherly treatment by the policy-makers. By 1900, the problem compounded. The population numbered 78 million; the isolation and difficult communication of
East Bengal resulted in neglect, which sharply contrasted with the prosperity and progressive outlook of West Bengal. West Bengal being mainly Hindu and East Bengal Muslim the contrast was more striking.\(^7\)

There had long been pressing need to lighten the duties of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, his charge having grown to be burden beyond the capabilities of any single man to bear. The population of the Province was seventy-eight millions, almost twice that of United Kingdom. One result of the impossible pressure of work upon the Lieutenant-Governor had been the unavoidable isolation of the districts of the Province that lay east of Ganges. That part of Bengal had been sadly neglected and formed a stagnant backwater in relation to the broad well channelled river of British administration. The peasants suffered from the exactions of absentee landlords, and the police system was even worse than in other parts of India. Internal communications, in a country intersected with broad estuaries, were bad.\(^8\)

Several schemes for solution of administrative problems of the unwieldy Province of Bengal were considered and finally, ‘The new Province would now consist of the Chief Commissioner’s Province of Assam and of Eastern and Northern Bengal, the districts of Chittagong, Dhaka and Rajshahi Divisions, excluding Darjeeling but including Hill Tippera and the district of Malda, which hitherto formed part of Bhagalpur Division. This would comprise an area of 1,06,540 square miles and a population of 31 million of whom 18 million would be Muslims and 12 million Hindus. Against this loss of territory, Bengal would gain on the West Sambalpur and five Oriya States from the Central Province surrendering to it in return five Hindi speaking States. Bengal thus reconstituted would be left with an area of 1,41,580 square miles and a population of 54 million, Hindus numbering 42 million and the Muslims 9 million. The newly constituted Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam would have clearly defined characteristics. Moreover, it would concentrate within its bounds majority of Muslim population of Bengal, and city of Dhaka would become its natural capital with subsidiary headquarters at Chittagong. Again the proposed division would bring the whole of the tea industry (with the
exception of Darjeeling) and the greater portion of the Jute growing areas under single administration. The administrative set up of the new Province would consist of a Legislative Council and a Board of Revenue of two members; the jurisdiction of Calcutta High Court would be left undisturbed.  

The schemes of provincial settlement to resolve the key socio-economic and administrative issues did not, however, prove a great success in achieving the desired goals.

In recommending the revised scheme to the Government of India, the Bengal Government had correctly stated that the interest of these hitherto neglected districts—should obtain greater attention, which they require and deserve. The complaint of officers and people of these districts about the neglect and indifference of the government were well grounded. The condition of the peasants under the exactions of the oppressive agents of absentee landlords was miserable; public administration was weak, inadequate and ineffective; crime was rife; education of the people was neglected and communication system was hopelessly bad. The attention and energies of the Government of Bengal had hitherto been concentrated on Calcutta and the neighbouring districts, and the public works cess, to cite only example, realised from Dhaka and the Eastern districts was almost wholly spent for the improvement of other parts of Bengal.

In the areas not under permanent settlement the land revenue administration was grossly neglected; even in the permanently settled areas the rights of the cultivators were not properly recorded, and as such they were left to the tender mercies of the agents of the landlords and were being constantly harassed and persecuted. Agriculture received little or no attention and curiously enough experiments for improvement of quality of Jute were undertaken in Burdwan in West Bengal and not in the great Jute growing districts of East Bengal or Assam. The system of communication was equally neglected; the port of Chittagong was not properly linked with commercial centres of the Province, the great and mighty rivers were not utilised as navigable channels for large ships for commercial and economic purposes. The
excessive and disproportionate attention paid to the growth and development of Calcutta, though through which British Indian trade in the Gangetic valley passed, crippled the development of the rest of Bengal. The railways and all other means of communications had been developed with main object of linking Calcutta with other important cities and centres of trade in North and West India...The administrative set up of East Bengal districts also betrayed the same neglect, the staff, in number and quality, was neither adequate nor satisfactory.\textsuperscript{11}

According to Fraser, 'no other provincial administration in India was a large charge and it was completed by obstacles to rapid travel’. A dispatch written at that time state that, if Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal spent the whole of available season of the year in touring, he could only succeed during his term of office in visiting a portion of his vast Province’. According to Calcutta review, partition of the unwieldy Province of Bengal was long a crying administrative necessity admitted by all those who knew anything about the difficulty of officials.\textsuperscript{12}

This scheme was sanctioned by the Indian Secretary, Broderick with number of minor amendments one of which related to the name of the Province. Curzon had proposed that it should be christened the North Eastern Province but Broderick urged the change to Eastern Bengal and Assam suggesting that it was undesirable to delete the name of Assam so widely associated with Indian tea from the list of Indian Provinces.\textsuperscript{13}

The scheme as prepared by the Government of India was with minor modifications, approved by the Secretary of State and partition was put into effect on 16 October 1905.\textsuperscript{14}

On the face of it, the scheme of partition had been conceived in the interest of administrative efficiency though plausible arguments could be advanced that the motives were political. The Muslims had not demanded it nevertheless were agreeably surprised to learn that its administration would end the attitude of indifference to their well-being. It was hard for them not to value this well deserved though unexpected boon.\(^{16}\)

The partition was immediately made an occasion for unprecedented agitation by the Hindus, mostly those of West Bengal. Curzon, in having the boundaries modified, was charged with ulterior motives; to favour the Muslims by giving them a new Province; to ‘vivisect’ the Bengali homeland and strike a deadly blow to Bengali ‘nationality’ and to injure and weaken the ‘nationalist’ and ‘patriotic’ movement and spirit of the people of India which had its strongest centre in Bengal.

Curzon had displeased the Hindus by refusing to recognise Indian National Congress officially. He had also annoyed the Bengali Hindus by his reform in the administration of Calcutta University. When he modified the boundaries of Bengal, his erstwhile enemies were provided with clear cut issue on which they could attack the Viceroy. The so called partition of Bengal was thus made pretext for giving vent to all the bitterness and hatred the Hindus had been nourishing for so long.\(^{17}\)

There was violent agitation against partition of Bengal from the Hindus of Bengal and Indian National Congress took up the cause of the Hindus and became a popular organisation.

The reason given above against partition of Bengal was not the real fact. There was other motives too, less ingenious. Lawyers in Calcutta feared competition of the new law courts to be set up in Dhaka, and businessmen also disliked the prospect of competition from the new enterprises that might spring up the new Province.\(^{18}\)

The real reasons for the agitation against partition of Bengal was, “The Bengali Hindus had whole of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, and even U.P. for their pasture. They had captured the Civil Services in all the Provinces. The
The partition of Bengal meant domination in the areas of this pasture. It meant that Bengali Hindu was to be ousted from Eastern Bengal to make room for the Bengali Mussalman who had so far no place in the Civil Service of Bengal. The opposition to partition of Bengal on the part of the Bengali Hindus, was due principally to their desire not to allow the Bengali Mussalman to take their place in Eastern Bengal”.

This was proved by the fact that it was Bengali Hindus who voted for partition of Bengal in 1947 without caring to keep Bengali speaking people under one administration though Bengali Muslims wanted to have Independent Bengal outside India and Pakistan. Perhaps they thought that they would not have exclusive pasture for them in Independent Bengal. They would have to shares the pasture with others.

The Hindus opposed tooth and nail to undo the partition of Bengal and mounted countrywide violent agitation and even resorting to terrorist activities. The partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 by the British who yielded to the Hindus.

The Muslims of Bengal in their bid to retain the new Province in which they were in a majority got little support from the Muslims of other Provinces who remained callous and indifferent to the hopes and aspirations of Bengali Muslims. Though the Muslim League was formed at Dhaka in 1906, it did not take any active step against agitation to undo partition of Bengal. The Muslims of Bengal got the first taste of apathy and step-motherliness from the Muslims of other Provinces of India. Had the Muslims of other Provinces came to the help of their brothers in Bengal and mounted counter agitation against the Hindu agitation for annulment of partition of Bengal, the new Muslim Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam would not have been united again with Bengal to the suffering of Muslims of Bengal.

The Bengali Muslims smarted under grievances at the treatment meted out to them by the Muslims of other Provinces.

The Congress at its Madras session passed a resolution condemning partition of Bengal and asked for its annulment.
In view of the utterances of Dr. Rash Bihari Ghosh and the action of the Madras Congress in passing a resolution against partition of Bengal, the League felt that it was necessary to inform the government and the public of the Mohommedan attitude in the matter, and unanimously a strongly worded resolution in favour of partition was adopted. A very large number of members of the League, hailing from all parts of the country, supported the resolution moved by Syed Nawab Ali Choudhury.  

Though Pirzada mentions in his book, ‘Foundation of Pakistan’ that unanimous resolution was passed at the Amritsar session of the Muslim League in 1908, neither his book nor G. Allana’s book ‘Pakistan Movement-Historic document’ nor Jafri’s book ‘Rare Document’ gives the text of the Resolution. Had it been passed it would have surely found recorded in one of the above-mentioned books.  

Muslims of Bengal became politically conscious when Bengal was partitioned by Lord Curzon and the Hindus started vigorous agitation to undo measure. The setting up of the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, where Muslims would be in majority, stirred hopes and new political life started.  

With the annulment of partition of Bengal and reversion of the Province of Eastern Bengal to Province of Bengal and of Assam to its previous status of Chief Commissioner’s Province, development and progress made in so long neglected areas during six years of existence of a separate Province was halted and people of Eastern Bengal and Assam were relegated to their previous status of neglect upto partition of India in 1947.  

This division of one Province into two, which is known as in Indian history as the partition of Bengal, was an attempt to create a Muslim State in Eastern Bengal and Assam was, barring parts of Assam, a predominantly Muslim area. But the interest of the Muslims in India could not be protected socially, economically and politically. It is interesting to note that even All India Muslim League serve the interest of the British rulers (as Congress did)
and was not concerned with the progress and welfare of the community for which it was established.

The idea of Muslim State in the North-West part of India within or without British Empire sown by Iqbal at the session of Muslim League held at Allahabad in 1930 found fertile soil in the minds of some Muslims who were opposed to All India Federation. They at first tried to sell the idea of such a State to the Muslim delegates at the Round Table Conference in 1930 in London. The Muslim delegates did not give any importance to the idea and considered the same to be 'chimerical and impracticable'. Choudhuri Rahmat Ali, a Punjabi Muslim young man then residing in England gave the movement a shape and form. He, as founder of Pakistan National Movement published a pamphlet “Now or Never” and sent the same to different persons in January 1933. It proposed a scheme for separate State of Muslim (i.e. the partition of India). There also Bengal was excluded in this scheme. The scheme intended to build two Muslim federations. One in the East comprising Bengal and Assam and the other in North Western India composed of Sind, Punjab and the North Western Frontier Province.

The scheme of Muslim homeland made by Choudhuri Rahmat Ali was for a federation of Muslim majority Provinces in the North-West India. It did not include Muslim majority Province of Bengal. His scheme of Pakistan or federation of Pakistan as distinct from Indian federation was Muslim homeland in the North-West India. In this pamphlet he left Muslim minority Provinces and even Muslim majority Province of Bengal was out of his scheme of Pakistan. Subsequently he proposed two more Muslim States, which he called Bangassam of Eastern India comprising Bengal and Assam and Osmanistan comprising Hyderabad and Berar. Upto the last he did not include Muslim majority Province of Bengal in the federation of Pakistan as he did not think such an idea feasible or even practicable.

In his statement of 20 February 1947, six months before the final transfer of power, the then Prime Minister Attele spoke of transfer of power to existing Provincial Governments meaning Provincial Government of Bengal,
Provincial Government of the Punjab, Provincial Government of Sind and Provincial Government of N.W.F.P. which were Muslim majority Provinces. The only Province where Muslim League government would have got power was Bengal and Bengal only and no other Muslim majority Province. There was no Muslim League ministry in other Muslim majority Provinces. Bengal would have been an independent and sovereign State as per Attele’s statement had not Muslim League betrayed Muslims of Bengal.  

On 14 August 1947, a new dominion of Pakistan came into existence under Indian Independence Act of 1947 comprising the whole of the Province of Sind, the whole of the Province of North West Frontier, the whole of British Baluchistan, major portion of the Province of the Punjab, on the Western side, and two third of the Province of Bengal on the Eastern side with part of district of Sylhet of the Province of Assam. The Western part of Punjab, which came to Pakistan, was named West Punjab and eastern part of Bengal and part of Sylhet district which came to Pakistan was named East Bengal. Though afterwards West Punjab Province was named Punjab, East Bengal Province was not named Bengal.  

At partition, the aspect of Pakistan which caused most sceptic among foreign observers was viability of its Eastern Province, which had been created out of Eastern areas of Bengal and Sylhet district of Assam. Separated by thousand miles from West Pakistan, overpopulated and with no local industry, its commerce, administration and communications centralised in the port of Calcutta, with a different language, press, diet and way of life from the Western Provinces. It was rumoured to be likely very soon to secede quietly from unnatural union with Pakistan and merge once more with West Bengal as a unit of Indian dominion.  

They (Muslims of Bengal) did not forget, when they agitated stridently for Pakistan in the ‘forties’, from 1905 to 1912 East Bengal had been constituted as a separate Province, and that superior political organisation of the Hindus had persuaded the British to annul the Bengal partition.
3.2.2 WHY BENGALI MUSLIMS SUPPORTED THE SCHEME OF PAKISTAN: BENGALI HINDU DOMINATION

The Bengali Muslims were concerned not only for Pakistan as a homeland for the Indian Muslims of which they were a part but they were equally concerned for establishing their own homeland which will bring them economic independence from the Bengali Hindus. They joined the call of the Muslim League to form Pakistan not solely on the ground of Muslim brotherhood but also to liberate themselves from the superiority and dominance of the Bengali Hindus. After Bangladesh became an independent country, the question had been raised whether the Bengali Muslims wholeheartedly gave their support for the implementation of the two-nation theory. The truth had been reiterated by J.N. Dixit in these words: "understanding this predicament of Muslims of Bengal (change of position from the rulers to the subservient to the Bengali Hindus) is necessary to comprehend why a major portion of them became advocates of the two-nation theory and of the partition of India". On the eve of the independence of India, the Bengali Muslims realised that the achievement of Pakistan would mean the elimination of Hindu landlords, Hindus money-lenders and Hindu trading classes who had been exploiting them since the beginning of the British rule. During the Pakistan Movement, an overwhelming Bengali Muslims joined the Muslim League and supported the plan of the partition of India in order to free themselves from the all-round domination of the Bengali Hindus. In 1947, the impoverished Bengali Muslims of rural background, who were lagging far behind the Bengali Hindus in all respects, willingly launched a forceful campaign for the establishment of Pakistan.
3.2.3 BASIC PRINCIPLES COMMITTEE (BPC) REPORT: THE CLASH BETWEEN EAST AND WEST PAKISTAN

The prolonged period in framing a new Constitution for the country was due to the fact that no precise social or economic aims or objectives in the post-independence period were advanced during the Pakistan movement before the partition of India except the liberation of the Indian Muslims from the domination of the Hindus. The Objectives Resolution adopted by the Constituent Assembly in March 1949 gave the character of the Constitution as Islamic in principle. One may recall that Jinnah conceived of Pakistan as a State “where principles of Islamic justice could find free play”. On 7 March speaking on the objectives of the Constitution, Liaquat Ali Khan said that it was “dictated by geography” and that “it would be idle to think of a unitary form of government when the two parts of our country are separated by more than 1000 miles”. But as time passed by, the Central Government deviated from this pragmatic path and imposed a strong unitary government upon the country betraying the aspirations of the people of the eastern wing. The Basic Principles Committee (BPC) was set up by the Constituent Assembly on 12 March 1949 to recommend the main principles on which the future Constitution of Pakistan should be framed. On 28 September 1950 the first interim report of the BPC on the Constitution was published which created severe repercussions in East Bengal. Demonstrations and public meetings took place all over East Bengal attacking the Report as designedly framed to cripple East Bengal. The Report recommended that the official language of the State would be Urdu. The Central Government was invested with excessive powers like declaring proclamation of emergency and suspension of the Constitution. The Federal Legislature would consist of the House of Units (indirectly elected by the Provincial Legislature) and the House of the People (directly elected). The two House would have equal powers and all the Provinces would have equal representation in the House of Units. The agitation in East Bengal comprised two basic issues, full Provincial Autonomy and the recognition of Bengali as one of the State languages of the country.
In October 1950, a Committee of Action for Democratic Federation was formed. The convenors of the committee, Ataur Rahman Khan and Kamruddin Ahmad toured the interiors of East Bengal to educate and alert people against the serious consequences of the BPC Report upon the interests of the Bengalis. The Committee organised a Grand National Convention in November 1950, which was presided over by Ataur Rahman Khan and produced a number of constitutional proposals, highlighting the full Provincial Autonomy for East Bengal and the recognition of Bengal as one of the State languages. The East Bengal Muslim League Working Committee also held a meeting on 29 October 1950, in which it protested against the measures of the BPC Report affecting East Bengal adversely and suggested remedial steps. On 2 November the Constituent Assembly resolved that Pakistan should be made an Islamic Republic.

3.2.4 GENERAL ELECTION OF 1954

Fazlul Huq, Bhashani and Suhrawardy forgot their rivalry for the time and formulated a 21-point programme of their United Front to bring down Muslim League party from power. The 21-point programme included, among others, the following:

1. To make Bengali one of the State languages of Pakistan.
19. In accordance with the historic Lahore Resolution, to secure full and complete autonomy to bring all subjects under the jurisdiction of East Pakistan, leaving only Defence, Foreign Affairs and Currency under the jurisdiction of the Centre. Even in the matter of Defence, arrangement shall be such as to have headquarters of the Army in West Pakistan and headquarters of the Navy in East Pakistan and to establish ordinance factories in East Pakistan with a view to make East Pakistan self sufficient in the matter of defence, and convert the present ‘Ansars’ into full fledged militia.
The most important point of the 21-point programme was point no.19 which asked for fulfillment of the desire expressed in the Muslim League Lahore Resolution of 1940—magnacarta of Muslims of India envisaging two separate independent Muslim States, one in the North-Western India and another in Eastern India. It was not possible for the United Front to ask for complete independence of East Bengal in terms of Lahore Resolution then, as such demand had the danger of United Front being branded as traitor and banned. Hence the demand for full and complete autonomy short of independence as per Lahore Resolution.

On the basis of 21-point programme, United Front fought the election and got absolute majority in the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly. The Front secured 218 seats in a House of 310 seats (including the Speaker) and out of 237 Muslim seats. The rest were 72 non-Muslim seats. Of the remaining Muslim seats 9 went to Muslim League, 1 to Khilafat Rabbani and 10 to independents. Chief Minister Nurul Amin himself was defeated by a young man of 25 years in his home constituency. The verdict of the people was against the Muslim League shape of things and was a voice of protest and no confidence. The election was referendum on Lahore Resolution and showed clearly and unmistakably that people of East Bengal wanted fullest and complete autonomy as per Lahore Resolution.44

Muslim League government inspite of exerting fullest influence through government machinery could not change the verdict of the people. Even the exhortations of a high police officer to his subordinates to work in favour of the Muslim League candidates were received with contempt it deserved. An agent of a Muslim League candidate who was a sitting minister, voted against the candidate. The Muslim League government was mad with power and did allow Fazlul Huq, leader of the United Front to occupy Circuit House while on election tour of different districts.45

The victory of the United Front at the general election unnerved the Muslim League and vested interests of Western wing who wanted rule of the country by minority government. The verdict of the people of East Bengal was
not taken with magnanimity by the Pakistan Government. As such they tried all possible tactics not to allow the United Front ministry to function for the term for which they were elected. Full ministry was sworn in on 15 May 1954. Before the ministry could function effectively riots were engineered by the agents of the central ruling clique in collaboration with West Pakistan vested interests. Fazlul Huq ministry was threatened with imposition of Governor’s rule under section 92A of Government of India Act 1935 (as amend) to take away power of the ministry.46

The Central Government made capital out of casual remark said to have been made by Fazlul Huq while in Calcutta, as reported by New York Times that ‘Independence will be one of the first things to be taken up by his Ministry’. The Central Government themselves gave wide publicity in the country and abroad and implanted the idea of independence of East Bengal in the minds of the people of East Bengal. Had not the Central Government made capital out of it, the remark, if any, would have gone unnoticed in Pakistan and elsewhere. It is known to all, that banned or prescribed books or pamphlets are the most read.

Even if Fazlul Huq had made such remark it was in line with his thinking as a man who moved the Lahore Resolution of 1940 at the Muslim League session envisaging two independent Muslim States in India of which one was to be in Bengal area.

Inspite of his denial, Fazlul Huq was branded as a traitor to Pakistan by the Central Government. It is a fact of history that without the help of Fazlul Huq the Muslim League could not have held the session at Lahore in March 1940 at a time when Lahore was surcharged with agitation against the Punjab Government for killing some Ahrars, not to speak of passing the Resolution.

The Central Government took over the administration of East Bengal under section 92A of Government of India Act 1935 and appointed Iskender Mirza as Governor in place of Choudhury Khaliquzzaman and N.M. Khan as Chief Secretary in place of H.M. Ishaque by declaring emergency on 30 May
1954. The verdict of the people of East Bengal was nullified within a few days of United Front Ministry’s taking over power.\(^4\)

As the Central Government did not allow the United Front Ministry to fulfill its election programme including point no. 19 regarding full and complete autonomy on the basis of which United Front was voted to power, there could be no other alternative but to ask for or strive for complete independence of East Bengal on the basis of Lahore Resolution of 1940.

Fazlul Huq, who formed Muslim League Ministry in Bengal, who made Muslim League popular in Bengal, who moved the Lahore Resolution was branded as a traitor by the ruling clique of Central Government, which was not representative of the people. The men posing to represent the people did not dare to seek election for mandate from the people. Just think of a traitor being appointed as minister of interior in the Central Cabinet within one year, in 1955 and Governor of East Bengal in 1956. Had Pakistan Government accepted the verdict of the people of East Bengal who constituted majority of the population of Pakistan, the turn of events would have been different. But the destiny of the new country born out of betrayal of Muslims of Bengal was some where else and nor as a United Pakistan.

Imposition of Governor’s rule in East Bengal in 1954 after the resounding victory at the general election of that year routing the Muslim League, was considered by Dr. Mahmud Hussain ex-minister and ex-Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University and a Muslim League member of the Constituent Assembly as a wrong step. He said that root cause of the trouble in East Bengal was not Communism but ‘hatred between East and West Pakistan’\(^5\).

Inspite of unconstitutional actions of the Central Government, the United Front could not remain united. It would be travesty of truth if it is not admitted that much of the difficulties faced by the Muslims of Bengal in asserting themselves was due to constant quarrel between Fazlul Huq and Shaheed Suhrawardy whom the vested interests of West Pakistan, specially of West Punjab, played one against the other and they fell willing prey to that
game and helped to deny the Muslims of Bengal. Their rightful place in the governance of Pakistan. Had the Muslims of the Bengal remained united, they could have ignored the ascendancy of West Punjab and helped other Provinces who were groaning under the domination of the Punjabis. The leaders of East Bengal failed them miserably and with disastrous result in the end.

3.2.5 DEMAND FOR FULL AUTONOMY OF EAST PAKISTAN

On 3 April 1957, East Pakistan Assembly passed the following unanimous resolution on the issue of full autonomy. “This Assembly was of the opinion that Government of East Pakistan should represent to the Government of Pakistan for taking suitable steps for providing full regional autonomy for East Pakistan, leaving the following subjects only to the concern of the Centre: Currency, Foreign Affairs and Defence”. The motion was moved by Muzaffar Ahmed and supported by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the Awami League and Abu Hossain Sarkar of the Krishak Sramik Party.

3.2.6 POLITICAL CRISIS IN EAST PAKISTAN

The growing conflicts in East Pakistan reflected the interests of various political parties then existed to take the credit. They indulged in internal disputes regarding the division of Pakistan. The situation became precarious and a political crisis emerged in East Pakistan on 31 March 1958. Governor Fazlul Huq turned down a request from Chief Minister Ataur Rahman Khan to prorogue the East Pakistan Assembly, dismissed his cabinet and appointed Abu Hossain Sarkar as the Chief Minister. Suhrawardy put a threat that he would withdraw his support from the central coalition government of Firoz Khan Noon. Within less than twenty-four hours, Governor Fazlul Huq found himself dismissed by President Iskandar Mirza and replaced by Hamid Ali, the Chief Secretary of the Government of West Pakistan. The Acting Governor Hamid Ali dismissed Abu Hossain Sarkar and reinstated the Cabinet of Ataur Rahman Khan. A new crisis broke out when the East Pakistan Assembly opened after the adjournment. The NAP (Nation Awami Party) threatened that it would
withdraw its supports from the Awami League cabinet unless it was willing to sign the NAP’s 5-point programme. As a result, on 18 June Ataur Rahman suffered a vote of no confidence in the East Pakistan Assembly when the NAP played a neutral role. On 20 June Abu Hossain Sarkar formed a new government. The East Pakistan Awami League decided to ignore Suhrawardy’s directives regarding One Unit and foreign policy and came to an understanding with the NAP and as a result they forced Abu Hossain Sarkar to resign on the ground of no confidence after holding office only for 72 hours.

In East Pakistan it became difficult for the political parties to form a clear majority. As a result, the Central Government once again imposed the Governor’s rule on 24 June prorogued the East Pakistan Assembly for two months and appointed Sultanuddin Ahmed as the Governor. Ataur Rahman Khan with the support of Suhrawardy formed a new government on 25 August. The East Pakistan Assembly declared the pro-KSP speaker Abdul Hakim ‘of unsound mind’. When a fight broke out in the East Pakistan Assembly on 21 September, Abdul Hakim escaped serious injuries but was forced to leave the Chamber. On 23 September the police prevented Abdul Hakim to enter the Chamber. During a scuffle between the Government and the Opposition parties, Shahed Ali, the pro-Awami League Deputy Speaker was seriously injured and later died in hospital. Several opposition members including Abu Hossain Sarkar were arrested on 24 September. President Iskandar Mirza dissolved the East Pakistan Assembly, dismissed the Awami League government and later declared martial law in the country.
3.2.7 SIX-POINT PROGRAMME LAUNCHED BY SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN

In a series of attempts made for the regional autonomy of East Pakistan, the six-point programme launched by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in February or March 1966 is worth mentioning (the date of launching six-point programme by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is differently stated by different authors). This six-point programme was launched before an All-Party meeting in Lahore, the city where Sher-e-Bangla Fazlul Huq moved the Pakistan Resolution in 1940 for a confederation of independent Muslim States. Here it is interesting to note that the Bengali Muslims always objected to the 1946 amendment of the Lahore Resolution, which changed the political concept of Pakistan from ‘Independent States’ to a single State.

The source of the inspiration of the six-point programme lies on the original concept of Pakistan that it would consist of “Independent Muslim States”. In 1942 Sir Hassan Suhrawardy said: “Mr. Jinnah envisages the course followed in the evolution of the Union of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of Canada. The Muslim States will first function as separate and independent units in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and, if and when found feasible, confederate as equal partners by mutual consent with other parts of India and with other Dominions”. On the eve of the partition of India, even the British authorities believed that the units of Pakistan would be administratively and financially autonomous. On 5 February 1946, Sir D Monteath (Permanent under-Secretary of State for India) worked to Lord Pethick-Lawrence: as would seem more probable, Western and Eastern Pakistan exist as separate Units, administratively and financially, but united by something like a treaty arrangement for policy purposes.

Since the creation of Pakistan, the Bengali’s were demanding full autonomy for East Bengal. In 1950, the Working Committee of the East Bengal Muslim League stated that it was “strongly of the opinion...in setting up the actual federal structure the geographical position of East Pakistan, its detachment and distance from other units and also from the federal capital itself
has to be seriously considered and provisions made in the Constitution to accord maximum autonomy to East Pakistan and to that effect it is essential that a separate list of subjects to be administered by East Pakistan be incorporated in the Constitution and the residuary powers should rest in the units”. The committee further stated, “that since the railways and navigation system of the eastern wing were separate from those of the west”, communications “can not and should not be a central subject”. It also declared “that so far as the export and import trade of East Pakistan is concerned adequate provision should be made subject to the least possible control of the Centre for the administration of this subject by the Government of East Pakistan”.

It should be noted that the famous 21-point programme launched by the United Front in 1954 included the Point no. 19, which stated: “East Bengal will get complete autonomy according to the Lahore Resolution. Our defence, currency and foreign policy will be joint subjects with the Centre. Army Headquarters will be in West Pakistan and Naval Headquarters are to be set up in East Pakistan, so that this wing can become strong to safeguard her freedom. The Ansar will be equipped with arms”.

The points of the six-point programme were as follows:

1. The character of the government shall be federal and parliamentary in which the election to the federal and legislature and to the legislatures of the federating units shall be direct and on the basis of universal adult franchise. The representation in the federal legislature shall be on the basis of population. Thus, trivially, this point itself consists of the following ingredients.

a. Pakistan shall be a federation,
b. It shall be based on Lahore Resolution,
c. Its government shall be of Parliamentary form,
d. It must be responsible to the legislature,
e. The legislature, must be supreme,
f. It must be directly elected and
g. Election must be on the basis of universal adult franchise.
2. Under this point, federal government shall deal with only two subjects, viz; Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall vest in the federating states.

3. This point states that there shall be two separate, freely convertible currencies for the two wings of the country or in the alternative a single currency, subject to the establishment of a federal reserve system in which there will be regional federal reserve banks which shall devise measures to prevent the transfer of resources and flight of capital from one region to another.

4. Fiscal Policy shall be the responsibility of, and the power of taxation shall vest in, the federating units. The federal government shall be provided with requisite revenue resources for meeting the requirements of defence and foreign affairs, which revenue resources would be automatically appropriable by the federal government in the manner provided and on the basis of the ratio to be determined by the procedure laid down in the Constitution. Such constitutional provisions would ensure that the federal government’s revenue requirements are met consistently with the objective of ensuring control over the fiscal policy by the governments of the federating units.

5. In this point it is recommended that:
   a. there shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earning of the two wings,
   b. foreign exchange of East Pakistan shall be under the control of East Pakistan Government and that of West Pakistan under the control of West Pakistan Government,
   c. foreign exchange requirement of the federal government shall be met by the two wings either equally or in ratio to be fixed,
   d. indigenous products shall move free of duty between two wings,
   e. the Constitution shall empower the unit governments to establish trade and commercial relations with, set up trade missions in and enter into agreements with foreign countries.
6. The governments of the federating units shall be empowered to maintain a militia or para-military force in order to contribute effectively towards national security.

3.2.8 IMMEDIATE REACTIONS OF LAUNCHING OF THE SIX-POINT PROGRAMME

Soon after launching of this programme, it caught the imagination of the people of East Pakistan and transformed it to a political battle cry for making East Pakistan free from all exploitation and domination by West Pakistan and achieving full autonomy. The programme movement proved to be a radical departure from the simple autonomy demand of the past. The programme aimed towards a confederation, instead of a federation. The demand of full control on raising taxes and expenditures along with the freely convertible currencies and the power to enter into foreign trade relationships, keeping foreign exchange earnings separate, was too much for the Central Government to accommodate, so that it castigated the movement as a clear secessionists movement. As the main thrust of the programme was to benefit East Pakistan from the ruthless political and economic oppression of West Pakistan, Nasrullah Khan (the national President of the Awami League) severely criticised the programme.57

In May 1967, five opposition parties, the Awami League, the Council Muslim League, the Jamat-i-Islam, the KSP and the Nizam-i-Islam formed a political organisation in the name of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). In order to diffuse the appeal of the six-point programme launched by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bhutto wanted to influence Maulana Bhashani behind Mujib’s back. He impressed upon the Maulana that the six-point programme had the backing of the American authorities in order to lessen the growing friendship between Pakistan and China.

In March 1966 Ayub Khan came to East Pakistan to launch his attack against the six-point programme when he said that it “would spell disaster for the country and turn the people of East Pakistan into slaves”.58 On 20 March he
denounced the programme, stating that it aimed towards the unification of East Pakistan and West Bengal as an independent State and added that the country would accept the challenge of a civil war if one were forced upon it. On 9 May, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested under the Public Safety Act. A general strike erupted in the main cities of East Pakistan, when police firing killed 10 people and a large number injured. Ayub Khan called Sheikh Mujib a 'secessionist' and threatened to use the 'language of weapons'. In June, the government banned the leading Bengali newspaper the Daily Ittefaq and arrested its editor, Tafazzal Hossain (Manik Mia). The government also forfeited the property of the paper.

The Constitution provided that the Speaker of the National Assembly would discharge the functions of the President when he is not capable due to his illness. But this normal formality was conspicuously absent when Ayub Khan became seriously ill at the end of 1967, presumably because Abdul Jabbar Khan, a Bengali, was the Speaker at that time. In 1968, agitation against the Ayub regime started in West Pakistan but it soon spread to East Pakistan. Although, some economic improvements were made in East Pakistan during the regime of Ayub khan but the disparity was still growing at a slower rate compared with the first decade of independence. Ayub Khan showed his total indifference and contempt towards the political representations of the Bengalis when he appointed some discredited politicians who lost their elections in the popular election of 1954. Of the two Bengali Governors of East Pakistan under Ayub’s regime, one was a police officer, Zakir Hussain and another a discredited Muslim League politician, Monaem Khan who lost in the 1954 election. After about 21 months of detention, on 18 January 1968, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was released but the military personnel took him forcibly from the jail gate and confined him in the Dhaka Cantonment.
3.2.9 AGARTALA CONSPIRACY CASE AGAINST SHEIKH MUJIB

On 6 January 1968, the Ayub regime threw a political bombshell when it issued a statement that 28 people had been arrested on the charge of conspiring to secede East Pakistan from Pakistan. The people arrested included a naval officer, three senior civil servants and a number of junior military personnel. The statement alleged that the persons engaged in conspiracy met Mr. P.N. Ojha (First Secretary of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka) and visited Agartala in India to discuss plans with two Indian officers. The government initiated the Agartala Conspiracy Case against 35 persons, which included Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for an alleged conspiracy to bring about the secession of East Pakistan with the help of India. The trial started on 19 June 1968 before a Special Tribunal inside the Dhaka cantonment and kept it open to the press. The Tribunal consisted of Justice S.A. Rahman (former Chief Justice of Pakistan), Justice M.R. Khan and Justice Maqsumul Hakim. The government engaged Manzur Qadir (former Foreign Minister), an eminent lawyer as the Public Prosecutor. The supporters of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman arranged a renowned Queen’s Counsel of the English bar, Thomas Williams (later Sir Thomas), to defend Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. As the defendants were accused of “plotting to deprive Pakistan of its sovereignty over a part of its territory by an armed revolt with weapons, ammunitions, and funds provided by India”, they all pleaded “not guilty”. “But no solid evidence of a Mujib-Indian conspiracy that had an independent Bangladesh as its objective has yet emerged, even in the post-1971 period, during which Pakistan could have produced such proof without any serious political consequences, domestic or international”. The Agartala Conspiracy Case was a sheer foolhardy on the part of Ayub Khan as it made Sheik Mujib overnight a hero in East Pakistan.

Ayub Khan made an announcement that he would not contest the next Presidential election. The agitation against the Agartala Conspiracy Case was very severe. On 10 August 1968, a strike was called throughout East Pakistan against the recommendations of the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report on
Education. The celebrations of ‘A Decade of Reforms’ launched by the supporters of Ayub Khan came to an end in October 1968. From 8 November, there had been strikes and riots, which had serious effects upon the public services, education, commerce and industry. Economically 1968 proved to be a bad year for East Pakistan as it lost 1,000,000 tons of rice by floods and registered an absolute decline in the Province’s per capita income.\(^6\) On 26 November 1968, S.M. Murshed (Former Chief Justice of East Pakistan) joined the movement against Ayub Khan, as Air-Marshals Asghar Khan started in West Pakistan. At a public meeting in Dhaka on 15 December 1968, both Justice Murshed and Air-Marshals Asghar Khan announced their full support for the legitimate interests of both East and West Pakistan. The demonstrations, which had been confined so far to West Pakistan, spread to East Pakistan when the NAP called a general strike in Dhaka.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman extended his support for the All-Party Students Eleven-Point Programme,\(^6\) which was a compromise solution of all the demands of secular and leftist political parties. The programme was accepted by all the political parties in East Pakistan. On 8 January 1969 at a meeting in Dhaka the leaders of the eight opposition parties formed the Democratic Action Committee (DAC), with a view to replacing the “one-man dictatorship”, which “brought degradation and ruin to the country”, with the parliamentary democracy. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan became the President of the Democratic Action Committee. On 14 January, Maulana Bhashani demanded the implementation of the Lahore Resolution and on 30 January he was arrested with over 1000 members of his party. Due to the widespread riots throughout the country calling for constitutional reforms, Ayub Khan lifted the State of emergency on 17 February, which had been introduced during the war with India in 1965. On 14 February, the Democratic Action Committee (DAC) called a general strike. A large public meeting held in Dhaka was addressed by Tajuddin Ahmed, the General Secretary of the Awami League and Muzaffar Ahmed, President of the NAP (pro-Moscow). An angry mob in Lahore set on fire the premises of the Oxford University Press for the apparent reason of
publishing recently Ayub Khan’s book, Friends and not Masters. Tofail Ahmad came into prominence during the movement against the Ayub regime when he was the Vice President of the Dhaka University Central Students Union. There was outburst of public anger when Sergeant Zahurul Huq, one of the accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case was shot dead on 15 February 1969, while he was in military escort. On 16 February Ayub Khan bowed down to the public demand that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should be allowed to attend the Round Table Conference. On 18 February Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Maulana Bhashani, Bhutto and Air-Marshal Asghar Khan all rejected invitations to attend talks between President Ayub Khan and the Democratic Action Committee. On that day Dr. Shams-uz-Zuha was killed due to indiscriminate firing at the Rajshahi University campus. The house in which Justice S.A. Rahman (Chairman of the Agartala Conspiracy Case) was residing was set on fire by angry mob. Both Justice Rahman and Manzur Qadir (Prosecutor of the case) had to flee for the safety of their lives. On 21 February 1969, Ayub Khan announced that he would not stand for re-election as the President. In the broadcast he said: “people want direct elections on the basis of adult franchise...People in East Pakistan feel that in the present system they are not equal partners, and also that they do not have full control over the affairs of their Province”.

On 22 February at a rally of 100,000 students in Dhaka an ultimatum was given to the members of the National Assembly and the Basic Democrats (who formed both the Electoral College and the members of the Local Authorities) to resign by 3 March or “face the consequences”. Most of the Basic Democrats opted for resignation while two of them were killed. The political unrest was accompanied by mass strikes in the form of gherao tactics where the disgruntled employees locked the employers demanding increase in wages. The whole system of the local government collapsed due to the resignation of the Basic Democrats. The highly unpopular Governor Abdul Monaem Khan kept himself confined in his residence for several weeks and on 21 March he was replaced by Dr. M.N. Huda (former Finance Minister of
East Pakistan) who commanded respect from students so that police were visible on the Dhaka streets after three weeks. Tafazzal Hossain (Manik Mia), the editor of the *Daily Ittefaq* played an important role in voicing the repressive policies of the Ayub regime. He was prosecuted by the Martial Law regime but acquitted due to ineptitude of the prosecuting authorities.

It was the so called Conspiracy Case, which sowed the seed of complete independence from Pakistan in the minds of East Bengal people in place of regional autonomy.

Pakistan Government dominated and controlled by the leaders and officers of West Pakistan entirely forgot that Muslims of Bengal did not want to come with Pakistan in 1947 upto the last minute but was forced by circumstances, to do so, as such there was nothing wrong in trying to get out of it.

Had not Pakistan Government instituted the Conspiracy Case and given wide publicity, the idea of conspiring for independence from Pakistan, as a last resort, would not have cropped up in the minds of people of East Bengal for many years to come and not so soon. The trial of that case, however, did add to the feelings against the government.\(^7\)

### 3.2.10 ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE: CALLED BY AYUB KHAN

With a view to ease the political situation in the country, Ayub Khan called a Round Table Conference on 10 March 1969, inviting the political leaders of the country. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman refused to join this conference on parole. The Awami League announced that it would not join the conference until the charges were withdrawn against all the accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. On 22 February, the government withdrew all the charges against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 33 other accused in the Agartala Conspiracy Case, which enabled Sheikh Mujib to attend the conference on 26 February with his head high as a victor.\(^7\) The conference was attended by Hamidul Huq Choudhury from the Krishak Sramik Party and Justice Murshed.
Neither Maulana Bhashani nor Bhutto attended the conference. At the conference Sheikh Mujib placed his six-point programme for regional autonomy for East Pakistan. He also put forward the demand that the federal capital should be transferred from Islamabad to Dhaka. The demands put forward from East Pakistan were opposed by Maulana Mawdudi (leader of the Jamaat-i-Islami). At the conference, Ayub Khan’s statement that weapons were being smuggled into East Pakistan was seriously questioned by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Air-Marshal Asghar Khan alleged that “certain vested interests in the Government and the Administration” were creating confusion to find pretext to crush the movement for democracy.

Bhutto branded the conference as “a clear conspiracy against the people of Pakistan...because it was the game of Ayub Khan to remain in power by conceding the principle of parliamentary form of government”. On 10 March Maulana Bhashani and Butto entered into a political alliance not to enter into any political negotiations with Ayub Khan. At a large meeting held in Dhaka, Sheikh Mujib reaffirmed his pledge for the implementation of the six-point programme. Sheikh Mujib lost confidence in the Ayub Government, which simply wanted to play with delaying tactics.

Sheikh Mujib was released from the Agartala Conspiracy Case and invited to the Round Table Conference in Rawalpindi. On 11 March 1969, he attended the conference and demanded the implementation of the six-point programme. But the conference reached a deadlock when Sheikh Mujib demanded the full autonomy and the introduction of separate currency, which seemed to the West Pakistani leaders as virtual break-up of Pakistan. On 13 March 1969, Ayub Khan announced that he would accept the principle of parliamentary form of government and direct elections but refused to consider the autonomy for East Pakistan or to restore the four Provinces in West Pakistan.
3.2.11 GENERAL ELECTION OF 1970 AND ITS AFTERMATH

Ayub Khan transferred power, after countrywide agitation against him, illegally and unconstitutionally to Yahya Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, on 25 March 1969. He did not handover the Presidency to the Speaker of the National Assembly as per the Constitution of his own making and allowed Yahya Khan to declare Martial Law in the country for the second time, and abrogate the Constitution of 1962.

Yahya Khan announced the Legal Frame Work (LFW) on 30 March 1970 which, among others, provided for the following:\(^{76}\)

1. One Unit in West Pakistan would be dissolved and Provinces would return to their original position as before the establishment of One Unit.
2. National Assembly will have representation according to population and members would be elected on universal adult franchise. National Assembly would consist of 300 members and 13 women members as follows: -
   a. East Pakistan 169 members including 7 women members.
   b. Punjab 85 members including 3 women members.
   c. Sind 28 members including 1 woman member.
   d. Baluchistan 5 members including 1 woman member.
   e. North West Frontier Province 18 members.
   f. Tribal areas 7 members.

   North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Tribal areas would together elect 1 woman member.
3. National Assembly would initially sit as a Constitution making body. The Constitution should have to be framed within 120 days from the first sitting of the Assembly failing which the National Assembly would be dissolved and a new Assembly would be elected.
4. Each of the Provinces of East Pakistan, Punjab, Sind, North West Frontier and Baluchistan would have Provincial Assemblies with members according to their population.
5. When members would be elected by the members of the National and Provincial Assemblies as per quota fixed for the Province by the members of that Province.

6. The Constitution to be made by the National Assembly should be of federal type with large measure of autonomy for the Provinces.

7. The Constitution so framed would require the assent of the President before it comes into force.

8. General election for National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies was fixed for October 1970 (Actually held in December 1970 except elections in 9 National Assembly seats and 21 Provincial Assembly seats in cyclone affected areas in East Bengal which were held in January 1971).

In the general election held in December 1970, Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman secured 160 seats out of 162 seats allotted to East Bengal in the National Assembly. Other two seats of East Bengal were secured by Pakistan Democratic Party and by Independent candidate subsequently East Bengal members elected 7 women members belonging to Awami League for the National Assembly. The People’s Party led by Zulfiker Ali Bhutto secured 83 seats out of 138 seats allotted to different Provinces in Western Pakistan in National Assembly. Muslim League (Qayum group) secured 9 seats, Muslim League (Council) 7 seats, Muslim League (Convention) 2 seats, National Awami Party (Wali Khan) 7 seats, Jamat-i-Islami 4 seats, Jamat-e-ulamai Islam (Hazarvi) 7, Markazi Jamat-e-ulamai Islam (Thanvi) 7, and independents 13 seats in the National Assembly from different Provinces in West Pakistan. Of the 6 women seats in the National Assembly allotted for West Pakistan Provinces 5 went to People’s Party and 1 to National Awami Party (Wali Khan). In the National Assembly Awami League secured 167 seats and People’s Party secured 88 seats. Absolute majority of seats totaling 167 in a house of 313 seats was secured by Awami League. Awami League could not secure any seat in any Province of West Pakistan and People’s Party could not secure any seat in East Bengal.
Awami League fought the election on the basis of six-point formula for full regional autonomy. Before election Awami League declared that the party would consider the election to be referendum on six-point formula and got the verdict in their favour.\(^7\)

Yahya Khan thought fit to give the country general election, first ever in Pakistan, on universal adult franchise in 1970. Subsequent events showed that it was not out of love for democratic principles, institutions and practices nor for transferring power to the representatives of the people, which actuated Yahya Khan to give people Parliamentary democracy. It was to keep people calm for some time to allow his regime to consolidate its position. Even after announcement of date of general election people in East Bengal were not sure if there would be election specially because young Army officers were not in favour of parting with power so soon. It was thought that Awami League would have absolute majority of seats from East Bengal quota in the National Assembly. It was also believed that with forty percent of seats of East Bengal members from West Pakistan Provinces in the National Assembly would be able to form government at the Centre and thus there would be no change in the power of West Pakistan and West Pakistan leaders and officials would be able to run the affairs of the State, as before. This writer heard a West Pakistani Army officer saying that as per his calculation, Awami League would get utmost sixty percent of East Bengal seats in the National Assembly. But all their calculations fell through. Awami League came out successful in such a big way that even a die-hard optimist could not dream of.

Mujib’s Awami League captured 167 seats out of 169 seats allotted to the East in the 313 members National Assembly giving it a clear majority. The victory meant that Mujib, as leader of the majority party, would be Prime Minister of all Pakistan.

It was something that Yahya had simply not anticipated. He and his fellow Generals expected that Mujib would capture not more than 60% of the East Pakistan seats and that smaller parties in the East would form a coalition with West Pakistani parties, leaving the real power in Islamabad, Mujib feared.
some sort of double cross: If the polls are frustrated, he declared in a statement that proved horribly prophetic, the people of East Pakistan will owe it the million who have died in the cyclone to make the supreme sacrifice of another million lives, if need be so that we can live as free people.78

Bhutto could not take the outstanding victory of the Awami League in good grace. "Bhutto reiterated that his party would resist any intrigue or conspiracy to make it (PPP) sit in the opposition".79

Yahya Khan came to East Pakistan after the general election and congratulated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as future Prime Minister of Pakistan. Yahya Khan met Sheikh Mujib at Dhaka alone but on return to Karachi he went to meet Bhutto at Larkana with some topmost Generals. Subsequent events showed what transpired at the secret meeting at Larkana. It was there that plan to deny East Bengal’s rightful place in the governance of Pakistan was hatched.

Chafing after decades of subjugation, the Bengalis responded with frenzied enthusiasm when their fiery, leonine hero Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led them to the polls in December in Pakistan’s free election after twelve years of military rule. Spurred on by the flamboyant oratory of Mujib (as his worshipful followers call him), the Bengalis voted in such numbers that Mujib and his Awami League won an absolute majority of seats in the country’s new National Assembly. Suddenly it seemed that Bengali’s time had come. But it turned out, Mujib’s platform of economic and diplomatic autonomy for the East was too great a threat to be endured by the Punjabi leaders. Unwilling to play second fiddle to Mujib, West Pakistan’s most popular left wing leader Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, refused to participate in the new Parliament. And in the end President Yahya abruptly postponed the opening of the Assembly indefinitely.80

Yahya Khan, against the wishes of the majority party leader and without consulting his fixed 3 March 1971 for the inaugural session of the National Assembly at Dhaka. Again without consulting majority leader, Yahya Khan postponed the inaugural session, on 1st March 1971 over the radio.
There was sharp and instant protest against the postponement of the inaugural session, in Dhaka and throughout East Bengal. The postponement of the session obviously at the behest of Bhutto, was highly impolitic, injudicious and to the say the least, arbitrary. It showed plainly and nakedly to the people of East Bengal that even if they had got all the seats through election, in the National Assembly, they would not be allowed to take the reigns of government and they were destined to be ruled by the people of West Pakistan as a colony for the purpose of exploitation.

Some members of the National Assembly started arriving in Dhaka on 1st March 1971 for the inaugural session to be held on 3 March 1971. On 1st March 1971 at Lahore, Bhutto threatened to launch a mass movement by his party in West Pakistan if National Assembly was allowed to meet without its participation. He said that Pakistan People’s Party expected the people of Pakistan to take revenge on those who chose to attend the Assembly session, on their return from Dhaka. He also said that if any member of his party attended the session, the party workers would liquidate him.81

On 1st March 1971, Admiral S.M. Ahsan Governor of East Pakistan was relieved of his duties and Lt. General Yaqub Khan was asked to take over charge of civil administration in addition to his duties as Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan. The changes foretold the shape of things to come. Admiral Ahsan was removed as he was somewhat liberal and was not considered suitable for taking the bloody measures contemplated.

Yahya Khan gave no reason for postponement of the session of the National Assembly. There was spontaneous demonstration and protest against the postponement of the session and the people came out on the streets throughout East Bengal. The peoples were lathi charged, tear gassed and fired upon by the military and the police. On 2 March 1971 curfew was imposed from 7 pm. to 7 am. in Dhaka city and in important towns. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on 2 March 1971, announced his programme of action which was as follows: 82
a. Province wide hartal to be observed on each day from 3 March 1971 to 6 March 1971 from 6 am. to 2 pm. in all spheres including Government Offices, Secretariat, High Court and other Courts, Semi Government and Autonomous Corporations, P.I.A., Railways and other communication services, transport, private and public, all mills, factories, industrial and commercial establishments and markets. Exemptions were to be extended to ambulances, press cars, hospitals. All persons were urged to observe hartal in a peaceful and discipline manner and to ensure that no untoward incident such as looting, burning etc., took place.

b. March 3, which was to have been the day for sitting of the National Assembly should be observed as a day of National mourning, on which occasion a procession would be led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Paltan maidan at 4 pm. immediately after the conclusion of the meeting being held by the Student’s League.

c. In the event of radio, television and newspapers failing to cover our version of event or our statements, all Bengalis serving in these agencies, should refuse to cooperate, with such gagging of voice of seventy million people of East Bengal.

d. On 7 March 1971 at 2 pm. Sheikh Mujib would address a mass rally at the Race Course maidan, when further directives will be issued.

e. He urged the people to continue the common struggle in a peaceful and disciplined manner.

People followed the directives meticulously. Not at any time before, the people of East Bengal rose like one man in such a manner, in defence of their rights to live as majority people of Pakistan.

On 3 March 1971 Yahya Khan gave his explanation for the postponement of inaugural session of National Assembly and asked all party leaders to attend a conference on 10 March 1971 at Dhaka, which was refused by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and by Nurul Amin and, also by some leaders of West Pakistan. On 6 March 1971 Yahya Khan in his broadcast called inaugural session of the National Assembly to be held on 25 March 1971. Sheikh
Mujibur Rahman demanded that following steps should be taken before he consider whether Awami League would attend the session of the National Assembly called by the President:

a. Immediate withdrawal of military personnel to their barracks;

b. Immediate cessation of firing upon civilians;

c. Immediate cessation of the military build up and heavy inflow of military personnel from the western wing;

d. Non-interference of military authorities in the different branches of the government functioning in Bangladesh and direction to desist from victimisation of government officers and employees;

e. Maintenances of law and order to be left exclusively to the police and Bengali E.P.R. assisted wherever necessary, by Awami League volunteers;

f. Immediate withdrawal of martial law; and


g. Immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people.

In the public meeting attended by several lakhs of people at the Dhaka Race Course maidan on 7 March 1971, as promised, Sheik Mubjibur Rahman announced the following programme of action for the people to follow in non-violent non-cooperation movement starting from 8 March 1971:

1. No tax campaign to continue,

2. The Secretariat, Government and Semi Government Offices, High Court and other Courts throughout Bangladesh shall observe hartal. Appropriate exemptions shall be announced from time to time,

3. Railway and Ports may function but railway workers and port workers shall not cooperate if Railway and Ports are used for mobilisation of forces for carrying out repression against the people, Radio, Television and Newspaper shall give complete version of our statements and shall not suppress news about people’s movement otherwise Bengalis working in those establishments shall not cooperate.

4. Only local and inter district telephone shall function,

5. All educational institutions shall remain closed.
6. Banks shall not effect remittance to Western wing either through the State Bank or otherwise.

7. Black flag shall be hoisted on all buildings everyday,

8. Hartal is withdrawn in all other spheres but complete or partial hartal may be declared at any time depending upon the situation.

9. A samgram parishad should be organised in such union, Mohalla, Thana, Subdivision, and District under the leadership of local Awami League units.

There was great expectation that Sheikh Mujib, as leader of majority party in the National Assembly, would declare independence of East Bengal in the public meeting on 7 March 1971. People were sorely disappointed. The leader of the party having absolute majority in the National Assembly did not want to break away from Pakistan though he was being incited by indiscreet utterance made by Bhutto. Instead, Sheikh Mujib declared that ‘our struggle this time is a struggle for independence’.

Yahya Khan, inspite of mounting unrest in East Bengal, did not care to visit East Bengal. He did not take the path of negotiation, presumably on the advice of Bhutto, but secretly prepared for a show down. On the very day when Sheikh Mujib was addressing a mammoth public meeting, on 7 March 1971, Yahya Khan sent Lt. General Tikka Khan, known for his toughness and brutality, as Governor of East Bengal.

On 14 March 1971 at a public meeting in Karachi Bhutto came out with a fantastic suggestion that power should be transferred to the Awami League and the PPP (Pakistan People’s Party), the two majority parties in the two wings.\(^{85}\)

When confronted with uncomfortable question that there is no West Pakistan but four Provinces Bhutto said ‘that rule of majority does not apply in Pakistan and PPP can not be ignored in the country’s governance’.\(^{86}\)

People’s Party led by Bhutto secured majority of seats in Punjab and Sind but not in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan.

There was stand protest from most of the parties in Western region as they maintained that there was Province of West Pakistan as such there could
not be one majority party in Western wing. They also maintained that as Pakistan is one country there could not be two major parties in Pakistan.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as leader of the majority party in the National Assembly, had no alternative but to start non-violent non-cooperation movement as Yahya Khan did not give any importance to the leader of the party, which got confidence of people of Pakistan or even consulted him on important national issues. Moreover Yahya Khan did not care to visit East Bengal to solve the crisis facing the nation.

Sheikh Mujib issued as many as thirty five directives to run the administration in East Bengal from 15 March 1971. All classes of people, officers, and employees followed the directives fully and carried out his instructions.87

After wasting valuable time, Yahya Khan arrived in Dhaka accompanied or preceded by several top most Generals and after through preparation and detailed plan, not for negotiation and peaceful settlement, but to forcibly suppress movement in East Bengal. This writer learnt, before 15 March 1971, that some Generals had already reached with detailed plan and maps for bombing the areas of Dhaka city.

Yahya Khan started talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and dragged on the same from day to day, not to solve the deadlock but to gain time for preparation to strike hard and to the finish. As the talks with Sheikh Mujib proceeded, all planes from Karachi carried only army personnel and no political leaders. Mujib-Yahya talk on constitutional issues started on 15 March 1971 and continued till 25 March 1971 fruitlessly only to gain time for preparation to strike. Had not that been so Yahya, being President of the country, would not have left East Bengal surreptitiously and secretly on the night following 24 March.

To deceive people it was given out in newspapers on 25 March 1971 that Martial Law was going to be lifted.88 Yahya Khan had no courage to speak out what he thought to be correct while in Dhaka.
People in East Bengal had observed 23 March as Lahore Resolution implementation day or Protirodh Divash (Resistance Day) and not as Lahore Resolution Day or wrongly called. The Resolution adopted on 23 March 1971 was sacrificed for the benefit of non-Bengali leaders of the Muslim League. In January and February 1971, Maulana Bhashani and Ataur Rahman Khan had demanded constitution to be framed as per Lahore Resolution of 1940.

While he (Yahya) negotiated with Mujib, his Generals planned carnage. His vaunted bluff sincerity (and sincerity of Pakistan’s brief return to democracy) lies tattered. Hence forth, the country must be regarded as particularly brutal intensive military dictatorship, it’s elected leadership in prison, majority party obliterated by decree.89

So long power was in the hands of West Pakistan leaders by setting one party against another, the question of two major parties in Pakistan did not arise but once it was found that power was sleeping out of their hand, the theory of two major parties in Pakistan began to be voiced unwearyingly confirming that Pakistan was a two nation State with two major parties in two wings of the country.

The leaders of West Pakistan never thought of or learnt to think of Pakistan as one country. They thought of domination of one wing over another from the beginning. From their behaviour it was established that Pakistan could be called one and indivisible country so long it was dominated by the leaders of West Pakistan.

The demands for the acceptance of the majority party in the National Assembly and subsequently for transfer of power to the Awani League in East Bengal and to the People’s Party in West Pakistan, by Bhutto destroyed the very foundation of Pakistan as one country, one nation often repeated by the leaders of West Pakistan. Had Bhutto allowed the National Assembly to sit as scheduled for 3 March 1971 and had Yahya Khan not succumbed to Bhutto’s threats and taken the path of negotiation with the majority party leader,90 the history of Pakistan would have been differently written.
3.3 1971 WAR & THE BIRTH OF BANGLADESH.

In the midst of discussion with political leaders, Yahya Khan secretly and under the cover of darkness left Dhaka in the early hours of 25 March 1971. It was given out that he had gone to the cantonment for some urgent business. The Pakistani army “action” on 25 March 1971 threw the unprepared Awami League leaders in Dhaka into complete disarray. They were not in a position to control and guide the spontaneous armed resistance offered by the East Bengalis to the Pakistani army in the East.

In the outlying districts, especially in the urban centres, the efforts of the various groups at resistance was often coordinated by a sort of composite leadership of the chief Bengali civil officials, the local legislators-elect (wherever available), student leaders, and, of course, the senior Bengali army officers.

Outside the urban centres, the villages were outwardly tranquil. Nevertheless, the countryside, normally the home of more than 90 percent of the East Bengali population, swelled in population as many city-dwellers flocked to the villages to escape the Pakistani “army-terror”. Consequently, an unprecedented sense of brotherhood and fellow-feeling grew between the various classes and categories of the East Bengali population. Bengali nationalism, thus, appeared to have begun bridging the elite-mass and urban-rural gaps during April and May 1971.

By early April, most of the central leaders of the Awami League, including the vast majority of the legislators-elect, crossed over to India. The entire Awami League High Command except for Sheikh Mujib and his Constitutional Adviser, Dr. Kamal Hussain, were in India by 10 April 1971. A large number of trained East Bengali Civil Servants, including a dozen members of the elite corps, the Civil Service of Pakistan (CPS), and some 50 military officers, were also available in India by early April 1971. The insurgent Bengali armed personnel had been fighting the West Pakistani army from 25 March under the symbolic authorisation of a political authority—the Bangladesh government—that had not come into formal existence even during
the first week of April. Their leaders felt that without the formation of such a
government they would be no more than “brigands” and their struggles would
not be able to draw international sympathy and support.\textsuperscript{92} Hence, they
attempted to impress upon the senior Awami League leaders the need to move
quickly in this respect. Several of these leaders, including Syed Nazrul Islam,
Khondokar Mustaq Ahmed, and General M.A.G. Osmany (at that time a retired
Colonel), were in Agartala in eastern India by the second week of April, and
the East Bengali military leaders contacted them and urged them to hasten the
formation of the Bangladesh Government.\textsuperscript{93} Subsequently, on 8-9 April, there
was a meeting at Agartala of these leaders and Mr. Tajuddin, who had escaped
to West Bengal on or around 30 March 1971, and had conferred with
Mrs. Indira Gandhi in Delhi on 7 April.\textsuperscript{94}

Following their meeting at Agartala, the senior Awami League leaders,
with the acquiescence of the Indian Government,\textsuperscript{95} on 10 April 1971
announced the formation of a Provisional Government of the independent
“People’s Republic of Bangladesh”. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was proclaimed
President, while Syed Nazrul Islam and Tajuddin Ahmed were respectively
appointed Acting President and Prime Minister. Khondokar Mustaq Ahmed
was appointed Foreign Minster.\textsuperscript{96}

Subsequently, the leaders of the Bangladesh Government issued a
formal “Proclamation of Independence” and thereby “confirmed the declaration
of Independence that had already been made by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 26
March 1971”.\textsuperscript{97}

The provisional government of Bangladesh was sworn in on 17 April
1971 “at a brief, and to the many Bengalis present, evidently moving ceremony
in a mango-grove on the western-most edge of East Pakistan”,\textsuperscript{98} speaking on
the occasion, Prime Minister Ahmed said, “Pakistan is dead, murdered by
Yahya Khan and independent Bangladesh is a reality sustained by the
indestructible will and courage of 75 million Bengalis”. He also appealed “to
the nations of the world for recognition and assistance both material and moral
in the struggle for nationhood”.\textsuperscript{99}
The provisional government gave priority to the task of coordinating and organizing the East Bengali military efforts against the West Pakistani armed forces. On 14 April 1971 the Bangladesh provisional government announced that Colonel M.A.G. Osmany, retired officer of the Pakistani army and Awani League member-elect of the National Assembly, had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Bangladesh Liberation Forces, the Mukti Bahini.

On the political level the Awami League controlled Bangladesh provisional government faced very little difficulty at this early stage in getting widespread East Bengali support. The Awami League's principal leftist rivals, the pro-Peking NAP led by Maulana Bhashani and the pro-Moscow NAP led by Muzaffar Ahmed, extended unqualified support to the East Bengali liberation struggle and the Awami League leadership. So did the Pro-Moscow Communist Party of East Pakistan (in April 1971 renamed the Communist Party of Bangladesh).

The rightist, religious political parties, such as Jamat-i-Islami and the three factions of Muslim League and the Nizam-i-Islam party, as well as the right of centre Pakistan Democratic Party, did not support the cause of East Bengal's independence. On the contrary, during April, May and June 1971 they cooperated with the Pakistani army by forming "Peace Committees" ostensibly to maintain intercommunal peace and harmony in East Bengal. Later in July and August 1971, the active workers and supports of these parties helped the army's counterinsurgency operations in East Bengal by supplying the manpower of newly raised civil volunteer forces, such as the Razakars, the Al-Shams, and the Al-Badr.

The major political processes of the period extending from June to the middle of October 1971 consisted of triangular interactions of moves and countermoves by Pakistan, India and the provisional government of Bangladesh. The Yahya regime's chief aim was to create a facade of "normalcy" in East Bengal. The Bangladesh Government, on its part, stepped up its guerilla war against Pakistan to achieve two objectives, (i) to obtain and
maintain the support of the East Bengali population by holding out hopes of a
certain and inevitable, even though possibly long delayed, victory for the
Bengali nationalists, and (ii) to convince the world at large that the East
Bengalis were determined to achieve independence at any cost.\textsuperscript{105} India
determined to get rid of the East Bengali refugees and to maintain her
dominating position over East Bengal, continued and by degrees increased her
covert help to the East Bengali commandos. She also sought sympathy and
support from the world community for the solution of the vast humanitarian
problem created by the influx of the East Bengali refugees.

The Pakistan military regime’s overture to the “patriotic” Awami
Leaguers at the end of May gave the provisional government of Bangladesh an
occasion to spell out the terms of an acceptable settlement. The Acting
President of Bangladesh on 7 June 1971 enumerated some conditions, which
the Bangladesh Government considered indispensable for a satisfactory
settlement. One of the conditions was that the Pakistan Government should
recognise “the sovereignty of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh”.\textsuperscript{106}
“Consequently, the Pakistani Governments efforts to mobilise support of a
substantial section of the Awami League legislators elect failed. It could not get
more than 20 Awami Leaguers elected to the National Assembly to agree to
cooperate with it.\textsuperscript{107}

Nevertheless, the military rulers of Pakistan continued their
uncompromising policy toward East Bengal. On 28 June 1971, President
Yahya in a countrywide broadcast reiterated the accusations of conspiracy,
sedition, and rebellion against Sheikh Mujib and the bulk of the Awami League
Party. He also accused India of attempting to “mislead the world about the
happenings in East Pakistan” by means of a “malicious campaign of falsehood”
and charged that India was “utilising coercive measures” against Pakistan
“including a diplomatic offensive, armed infiltration, and actual threats of
invasion”. Ruling out the possibility of a fresh general election in Pakistan,
Yahya said the members elect belonging to the defunct Awami League and
NAP parties, except for those who had participated in anti-State and criminal
activities retained their seats in the Assemblies “in their individual capacities”. The President further announced that the seats made vacant by the disqualification of anti-State and criminal members-elect would be “filled in through the usual method of by-election”.108

In a sharp and immediate reaction to Yahya’s announcement, the provisional government of Bangladesh described it as a “farce” and declared that the proposed by-elections in East Bengal would be boycotted and resisted by the people”.109

India, by then more deeply involved in the East Bengal crisis, also rejected the Pakistani proposals. On 28 June 1971, hours after the Pakistani President’s speech, the Indian Foreign Minister told the Parliament in Delhi, “India would reject any make-shift plan for the transfer of power which did not take the elected leaders of East Pakistan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman into account”.110

Yahya’s scheme to set up a civilian government at least in East Bengal and perhaps in the whole of Pakistan, with partial Awami League support, was thus stillborn. During the month of July 1971, therefore, the Pakistani Government tried to internationalise the conflict in Bangladesh by giving the world at large the impression that the crisis was merely an aspect of the Indo-Pakistani mutual antipathy and tension. Accordingly, the Pakistani Government tried to get United Nations observers posted on both sides of the Indo-East Bengal border. Meanwhile, the secret visit by Dr. Henny Kissinger to Peking (in a Pakistani plane and from a Pakistani airport) signified the beginning of some degree of detente between the United States and China. The announcement by U.S. President Nixon on 15 July that he would visit China early in 1972 clearly indicated that Sino-U.S. rapprochement was in the making.111 Pakistan had acted as an auxiliary courier between her mighty old friends the United States and her zealous “new friend”, China. Consequently, the possibility of Sino-U.S. understanding raised Pakistan’s hopes that the two great powers together would back her in her confrontation with India on the issue of East Bengal. This together with the ambiguities in the Soviet attitude
towards the Bangladesh question probably further encouraged Pakistan to press hard for the acceptance of her proposal to have United Nations observers posted along the Indo-East Bengal border. Both the provisional government of Bangladesh and India resolutely opposed the Pakistani proposal, and it was never implemented. The "diplomatic revolution" epitomised in the unfolding Sino-U.S. detente eventually proved unless to Pakistan. It resulted in the cementing of the existing close Indo-Soviet ties by means of an Indo-Soviet Treaty of "Peace, Friendship and Cooperation" signed in Delhi on 9 August 1971. Subsequently, the Soviet Union backed her new "treaty-ally" India in its stand on East Bengal much more effectively than either the United States or China backed Pakistan.

The Pakistani Government by the end of August, however, seemed unable to fully appreciate the implications of the new developments in the pattern of alignment in South Asia. Unable to win over a substantial section of the Awami Leaguers, unable also to internationalise the East Bengal crisis by getting U.N. observers posted along the Indo-East Bengal border, Pakistan went ahead with her plan of "unilateral civilianisation" of the Government of East Bengal. On 31 August 1971 it announced the appointment as "Government of East Pakistan" of Dr. Abdul Mottalib Malik, an East Bengali and former minister in Yahya's cabinet. Dr. Malik replaced the military Governor, Lt. General Tikka Khan. In reality, though, the substance of power remained in the hands of the West Pakistani army in East Bengal. Dr Malik was without any legitimate political support and consequently most of his fellow East Bengalis regarded him as a "quisling".

The much publicised "civilisation" of the East Bengali Government could not thus persuade the East Bengalis to place further trust in the sincerity of the Pakistani military regime in searching out a satisfactory solution to the political problems of the region. They were by then sadly disillusioned. Consequently, the Bangladesh armed movement for separation from West Pakistan seemed to obtain a greater measure of support from the vast majority of the East Bengalis.
With this sense of increasing positive support from the bulk of the East Bengalis, the East Bengali nationalist leaders stepped up their protodiplomatic activities to persuade the nations of the world to support and assist their cause. In its bid to convince the world community of the seriousness of the East Bengali commitment to independence, the provisional government of Bangladesh encouraged the East Bengali diplomats in Pakistani embassies abroad to "defect" to Bangladesh. By October, nearly one-third of the Bengali diplomats in the service of Pakistan, including three ambassadors, declared their allegiance to Bangladesh.

By September, the provisional Bangladesh Government also opened its "missions" in London and New Delhi. As Bangladesh had not yet been recognised by either of the host countries, these missions did not enjoy official diplomatic status. Nonetheless, they played important roles as propaganda and information offices for the Bangladesh movement.

During October 1971 the Bangladesh Government also sent a 16 member "delegation" to the U.N. General Assembly session. The members of this unrecognised delegation officially met diplomats of more than one hundred States and apprised them of the Bangladesh situation.

From the middle of October 1971, the regular Bangladesh forces, the Niyomito Bahini, launched large-scale attacks against the Pakistani army in East Bengal along the Indo-East Bengal border. These attacks by the Bangladesh army had the blessings and indirect support of India, who by that time had virtually encircled East Bengal with more than seven divisions of her army.

The third phase of the East Bengali partisans struggle was, to a large measure, foreign-linked-intermixed with complex regional and global international power politics. A comprehensive understanding of this phase of the East Bengali struggle, therefore, needs a study of the attitudes and involvements of the concerned external actors, especially India the Soviet Union, China and the United States.
During the second half of October and November 1971, the Bengali regular forces under the cover of Indian artillery engaged the Pakistani units stationed along the border, while the Bengali guerillas intensified their activities within the Pakistani army-held East Bengal. Early in the last week of November, the Indian armed forces became increasingly involved in the clashes. The position of the Pakistani army in the east worsened fast and, probably to relieve the pressure faced by the Pakistani forces in East Bengal.

On the evening of December 3, 1971 Pakistan army began aggression on our Western borders. They attacked several Indian posts on our side of cease-fire line in Kashmir. Pakistan Air Force indulged in heavy bombardment on ten Air Force Stations from Srinagar to Agra in Northern India. However, Pakistan did not achieve much success because in anticipation of Pakistan air attack our aircrafts had been placed in other stations.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi rushed to New Delhi from Calcutta. The President declared State of emergency and Indian authorities decided to destroy Pakistan’s war machinery. Indian army units based in Agartala were directed to march into East Pakistan and defeat the enemy. By mid-night of 3 December Indian aircraft organised several air attacks on Pakistan Air Force bases and inflicted heavy damage. Yahya Khan described it as the last and decisive war in which Pakistani troops would teach a permanent lesson to India. Indeed, it proved to be a decisive war, but it was Indian Army and Air Force that taught Pakistan a lesson. The war lasted only till December 16, 1971. The U.S. President Nixon ordered his all-powerful Seventh Fleet of the Navy to move into the Bay of Bengal. This was to bully India with the threat of a nuclear attack. But, in view of Indo-Soviet Treaty of August 1971, neither China nor U.S.A. intervened. Pakistan only received their moral support and used conventional weapons supplied by them. Pakistan suffered heavy losses both in Western and Eastern sectors.

Lt. Gen. Niazi was Commanding Pakistani troops in East Pakistan (Bangladesh). Indian Army in that sector was under the Command of Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora. Indian Army was supported by the Air Force and Navy as well.
Pakistan army had lost its morale by December 15, but Niazi was still not prepared to surrender, though his forces were surrounded by the Indian troops. They were not in a position to escape. Niazi wanted India’s permission to go to West Pakistan. It was denied by India’s Chief of Army Staff General Manekshaw. Late on December 15, Niazi sent a message for cease-fire. But, Indian authorities told him to surrender unconditionally. After some hesitation, Pakistani forces agreed to surrender. On December 16, 1971 Gen. Niazi surrendered unconditionally to Gen. Aurora in the same ground in which Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had raised the banner of revolt 9 months earlier. Niazi had tears in his eyes as he signed surrender documents and handed over his colours to his one-time fellow-cadet, Lt. Gen. Aurora. About 93000 Pakistani troops who surrendered were brought to India as Prisoners of War (PoWs).  

India decided on unilateral cease-fire in the Western sector on 16 night. By this time Bangladesh had become a reality, yet Yahya Khan was still talking of throwing the enemy (India) out of every inch of Pakistan territory. But, the international community had recognised India’s victory, and pleaded for immediate cease-fire. Within a few hours of his resolve to go on fighting, Yahya Khan accepted cease-fire and said that he had always believed that war was not solution of international disputes. America tried to take credit for cease-fire in the Western sector claiming that it had applied pressure on India through the Soviet Union. However, India denied any such pressure. In any case, India’s decision of unilateral cease-fire in the west was criticised in many circles within the country. The argument was that once again when the army was on the verge of inflicting total defeat on the enemy, declaring cease-fire was against the best interests of the country. The net result of the war was division of Pakistan and creation of sovereign State of Bangladesh, which was recognised by India in December 1971. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was released from Pakistani jail, but only after power was transferred in Pakistan from Yahya Khan to Z.A. Bhutto. The new President took credit for the release of Sheikh, though he himself was largely responsible for his arrest and detention.
While going to Dhaka, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman stopped in Delhi and thanked India for its role in the Independence of Bangladesh.

3.4 SHIMLA AGREEMENT AND ITS IMMEDIATE IMPACT

It was the period of 1970-71, which gave a new direction to the international politics in South Asia in general and India-Pakistan in particular. The reason for lies in the fact that several ups and downs which almost shook the political boundary of Pakistan occurred during this period. The period witnessed the genesis of an international political crisis within the United Pakistan, the secessionist movement and the civil war in East Bengal, the India intervention and culminating in the emergence of Bangladesh as a result of the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971. The Shimla Agreement of 1972 was a milestone because it formed the legal basis for setting the problems arising out of the Bangladesh war and for normalisation of India-Pakistan relations and establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent.

The Shimla Agreement was signed on July 2, 1972 by the then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Pakistan President Mr. Z.A. Bhutto. Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, assisted by their high-level delegations, held complex and extensive discussions on various issues arising out of the war, as well as on general bilateral relations. The issues ranged from the repatriation of prisoners of war, the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan, normalisation of diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan, resumption of trade and fixation of international Line of Control in Kashmir. After prolonged negotiations, Bhutto agreed on essentially a bilateral approach to Indo-Pakistan relations. The accord signed at the end of Shimla Conference provided that both the countries would work to end the conflicts and disputes between them and pledged to work for lasting friendship in the sub-continent. With these objectives in view Indira Gandhi and Bhutto agreed to—

1. seek peaceful solutions to disputes and problems through bilateral negotiations, and neither India nor Pakistan would unilaterally change the existing situation, and
2. not to use force against each other, nor violate the territorial integrity, nor interfere in political freedom of each other.

Both the governments would discourage all propaganda against each other, and encourage such news items as would promote friendly relations. In order to normalise the relations between two countries:
1. all communication links would be re-established;
2. transit facilities would be provided to enable the peoples of two countries to have closer contacts;
3. as far as possible, trade and economic cooperation would be re-established; and
4. mutual exchange in the fields of science and culture would be promoted.

Both the governments agreed in the interest of permanent peace that—
a. the armies of both the countries would return within their respective international borders;
b. both countries would recognise the Line of Control as at the time of ceasefire on December 17, 1971; and
c. the armies would go back to their respective territories within 20 days of enforcement of this agreement.

Finally, it was agreed that heads of two governments would meet in future and the officials of two countries would in the meantime confer among themselves to normalise their relations.

In her Rajya Sabha speech on August 2, 1972 on the Shimla Pact, Mrs. Indira Gandhi stressed the need for peace in the sub-continent in her words: “I have always believed, and I do believe even today that India’s major enemy is not Pakistan, it is not even big powers, which are interested in their sphere of influence. India’s greatest enemy is the economic backwardness of the country. It is the poverty of the country. If we do not have that handicap we would have done many things in the world. We can overcome this handicap, if we have peace”.
Mr. Bhutto too had shown positive response in this direction and said, “Pakistan wants peace with India, not because it is afraid but because peace is necessary for the progress of nation”.128

The critics of Shimla Agreement maintained that it was surrender to Pakistan in so far as our troops were told to withdraw from the areas that they had captured. But, the value of Shimla Agreement lies in the commitment of two countries to resolve all their disputes only through bilateral negotiations. Thus, Kashmir dispute would not be internationalised just as other disputes would also be resolved through direct negotiation.

At Shimla, India, even after getting success in 1971 war, did not try to impose her views over Pakistan but make Pakistan a partner in peace and peace based on equality was concluded. In order to initiate the process of the establishment of peace, India and Pakistan agreed, “their forces shall be withdrawn to their side of the international border. The withdrawal shall commence up on entry into force of this agreement and shall be completed within a period of thirty days of”.129

Both countries implemented almost all the provisions of the agreement within a short duration of three years of the conclusion of the pact. In the past several agreements were signed between the two countries within the intension of resolving their disputes and establishing peace between them as well as in the region, but none of them proved useful in establishing cooperative understanding and durable peace in full spirit. Upto some extent, Indus Water Treaty of 1960 was more helpful in dissolving the controversial problem of division of Indus Water between India and Pakistan and it is the only problem, which had been settled since 1947 between them, and the rest of the treaties were of very short term significance and all of them failed to resolve actual tension.

It was only the Shimla Agreement that taught Mr. Bhutto about his own condition as well as of his own country. Bhutto realised that if he failed to establish friendly and cordial relations with India, he would lose considerably his prestige in the eyes of Asian countries as well as among his own people,
because India had normal relations with all her neighbours. This caused great change in his thinking and till yesterday the so called war like Bhutto who was always talking about wars and destruction at once realised the importance of durable peace, and took necessary and concrete steps to gain durable peace.\textsuperscript{130}

In view of Shimla Agreement and the changing phase of Indo-Pakistan relations, it was widely believed that an understanding had been worked out in regard to a settlement of Kashmir problem centering around the existing realities with certain adjustments. Even if an understanding was reached to find a lasting solution to Kashmir dispute by accepting the Line of Control as international border, it was felt that Bhutto could not be expected to commit himself publicly at that stage. If Line of Control was to become international border, implying division of Jammu and Kashmir along the Line of Control, time would have to be given to the leaders of two countries to prepare public opinion in favour of such an arrangement.

The repatriation over 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war held in India was linked with Pakistan’s recognition of Bangladesh. It was not until late 1973 that these prisoners of war (PoWs) were returned. Besides, no decision about prisoners of war could be taken without the agreement of Bangladesh. In addition to prisoners of war, there were about 30,000 Bangladeshi forcibly detained in Pakistan and 2,60,000 Pakistani’s in Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{131} There were many hindrances in the implementation of provision of restoring communication and other links. An agreement was reached in August 1973 for the repatriation of all prisoners of war except 195 prisoners of war whom Bangladesh wanted to try for war crimes.\textsuperscript{132} Pakistan recognised Bangladesh on the appeal of an Islamic conclave in February 1974. An agreement was concluded between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh on August 9, 1974 whereby Bangla Government agreed to hand over these 195 prisoners of war to India, as Pakistan issued a statement condemning war crimes.\textsuperscript{133}

In pursuance of the Shimla Agreement that trade and cooperation in economic and in other fields would be resumed as far as possible, the two countries signed a Trade Protocol on November 30, 1974\textsuperscript{134} at Rawalpindi.
providing for resumption of trade from December 7, 1974. According to the Protocol, the two countries decided that the trade would be in convertible currency and to begin with generally on a government-to-government basis or through government controlled trade corporations of the two countries unless otherwise agreed. This would prevent speculative exchanges and illegal leakages, and would help in establishing trade through mutually beneficial channels.\textsuperscript{135}

Regarding the provision of payments in convertible currency, some problems arose between the two countries because it was in the interest of India to have trade in rupees. The problem was overcome when India gave concession to Pakistan. The two countries also decided in the Protocol that the trade would be on the basis of the “most favoured nation” principle in accordance with the provisions of the GATT.\textsuperscript{136}

The Protocol noted immediate possibilities of commencing trade in cotton, engineering goods, jute manufacturers, iron ore, railway equipment, rice and tea. The leaders of Pakistani delegation, Eijaz Ahmad Naik, characterised the Protocol as a major step towards normalisation of relations in the Indian sub-continent in accordance with the Shimla Agreement.\textsuperscript{137}

No doubt, the signing of the Shimla Agreement laid the foundation of new contacts and opened possibilities of meaningful trade. But the actual trade started only after the signing of the Trade Agreement of January 23, 1975. This agreement firstly was valid for one year and later it was extended for another period of two year.\textsuperscript{138}

In this agreement it was made mandatory that both the countries have to treat the times of imports and export strictly for home consumption. Both the countries also decided that such items under no circumstances would be re-exported to other countries.\textsuperscript{139}

In one of the most spectacular developments since the Shimla Pact, India and Pakistan agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations by exchanging ambassadors and decided to restore rail, road and air links after three days talks in the middle of May 1976 at Islamabad. Mrs. Gandhi expressed the hope that
the Islamabad accord would lead to a “proper climate of understanding” between the two countries. On the other hand, Bhutto also assured Mrs. Gandhi that Pakistan would implement the accord by the agreed date.  

In spite of the above talks, regarding different matters, many developmental cooperation were discussed between the two countries. It was only in the Shimla Agreement both countries for the first time decided to solve the dispute on any issue bilaterally.
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133. Ibid, p. 94.
134. Surendra Chopra, op. cit., p. 207.
139. Surendra Chopra, op. cit., p. 90.
140. Ibid, p. 224.