

THEME 7: Liberation of Bangladesh, 1971

Crisis in 'East Pakistan' (1947 onwards)

- **Economic exploitation by W. Pakistan**
- **Cultural, social subjugation of Bengali population**
- **Denial of linguistic freedom: Imposition of Urdu as official language.**
- **Bengali speaking population under-represented in the military, bureaucracy, judiciary.**
- **False supremacy of W. Pakistanis over Bengali speaking eastern population**
- **Desperate struggle for autonomy, electoral mobilisation**



5th General election in India, March 1971

- Spectacular victory for Indira Congress faction
- Congress (O) faction defeated
- Centralisation of executive power in the PMO
- “Young Turks”
- “Panch Pandava” in the PMO: DP Dhar, PN Dhar, TN Kaul, RN Kao, PN Haksar (Advisers)
- “Green Revolution” underway

General election #1 in Pakistan, 1970

- **December 1970: Gen Yahya Khan calls elections**
- **PPP (ZA Bhutto) ; S Mujibur Rahman (National Awami League)**
- **Overall Majority: Awami League**
- **January 1971: Bhutto-Mujibur Talks Fail**
 - **Separate Currency for E Pakistan**
 - **Full autonomy**
 - **Federal Constitution**
- **24/25 March 1971: Military crackdown begins in East Pakistan “OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT”**

Safeguarding Indian Security

- “In the event of either Party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the High Contracting Parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries.”
 - Article 9, Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation ; August 1971

Indian Diplomacy: August-November 1971

US; Nixon

- **Coordinated Trips to Washington, London, Paris, Moscow**
- **Indian diplomats working through embassies to highlight E Pakistan crisis**

USSR ; Brezhnev

- **Focus on “Humanitarian disaster” ; impact of refugee crisis on Indian security**
- **Public outreach**

US-PAKISTAN-CHINA Axis: 1970-72

- Yahya Khan's Partnership with Richard Nixon: Great Friends
- Yahya Khan's Relationship with China
- US Cold War Rivalry with USSR
- USSR's poor relations with China
- US outreach to China = To Tip the balance of the Cold War = To Put USSR on the defensive
- India, USSR Treaty = Counters US + China + Pakistan Axis

Military Balance between India & Pakistan

- Development of Indigenous Armoured vehicles in India
 - ‘Vijayanta Tanks’
 - New Artillery Guns
 - Armoured Personnel Carriers
- New regiments, expansion of manpower in East & West sectors > Pakistan Army strength
- **Border security Force:** Covert operations + Training of **Mukti Bahini** (later transferred to Indian Army)

Full-Scale War, November-December 1971

- **October-November 1971:** Border clashes in East, led by Mukti Bahini
- **20/21 November 1971:** Eastern border crossed by Indian forces attack from multiple directions.
- **3 December 1971:** PAF attacks Indian air fields.
- **4-14 December 1971:** Offensive into East Pakistan
- **US Seventh Fleet:** US coercion ; ineffective ; alerted. **Soviet Naval Task Force**
- **14-15 December:** Fall of Dhaka

Pakistan Surrenders

- 16 December 1971: Pakistan forces lay down arms.
- Bangladesh recognised as a separate country
- Tactical reasons for Indian victory
 - Joint operations
 - Robust Civil-Military Relations
 - Deft Diplomacy
 - Synchronised decision-making in Delhi