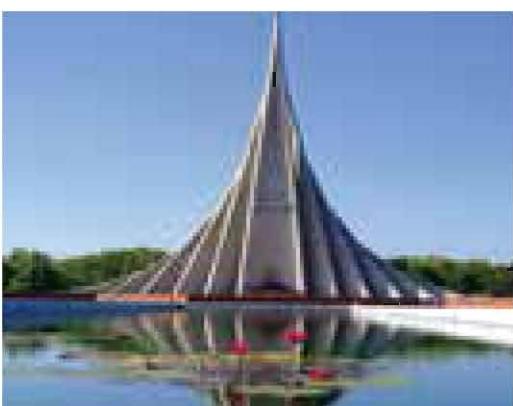


# History of Bangladesh and World Civilization

Classes Nine-Ten



NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOK BOARD, BANGLADESH

**Prescribed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board  
as a textbook for classes nine-ten from the academic year-2013**

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# **History of Bangladesh & World Civilization**

## **Classes Nine-Ten**

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**National Curriculum and Textbook Board**  
69-70, Motijheel commercial Area, Dhaka.

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**First Publication** : September, 2012  
**Revised Edition** : November, 2017  
**Reprint** : , 2019

**Design**

National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh

For free distribution by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Printed by :

## Preface

The aim of secondary education is to make the learners fit for entry into higher education by flourishing their latent talents and prospects with a view to building the nation with the spirit of the Language Movement and the Liberation War. To make the learners skilled and competent citizens of the country based on the economic, social, cultural and environmental settings is also an important issue of secondary education.

The textbooks of secondary level have been written and compiled according to the revised curriculum 2012 in accordance with the aims and objectives of National Education Policy-2010. Contents and presentations of the textbooks have been selected according to the moral and humanistic values of Bengali tradition and culture and the spirit of Liberation War 1971 ensuring equal dignity for all irrespective of caste and creed of different religions and sex.

The present government is committed to ensure the successful implementation of Vision 2021. Honorable Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina expressed her firm determination to make the country free from illiteracy and instructed the concerned authority to give free textbooks to every student of the country. National Curriculum and Textbook Board started to distribute textbooks free of cost since 2010 according to her instruction.

History of Bangladesh and World Civilization is an elective subject for Humanities Group of Secondary Education in classes Nine-Ten. It is important for every citizen of an independent country to know the history of his nation. The socio-economic, geographical and cultural evolution reflect in history consequently. Based on revised curriculum, 2012 the textbook History of Bangladesh and World Civilization have been written with special consideration to make a citizen with human qualities, non-communal and spirit of Liberation War. We hope, objectives of the new curriculum has been reflected in this textbook appropriately.

Considering the challenges and commitments of 21<sup>st</sup> century and following the revised curriculum the textbook has been written. The textbook has been revised and re-edited by a prominent educationist to make it learner friendly in 2017.

I thank sincerely all for their intellectual labor who were involved in the process of revision, writing, editing, art and design of the textbook.

**Prof. Narayan Chandra Saha**  
Chairman  
National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh

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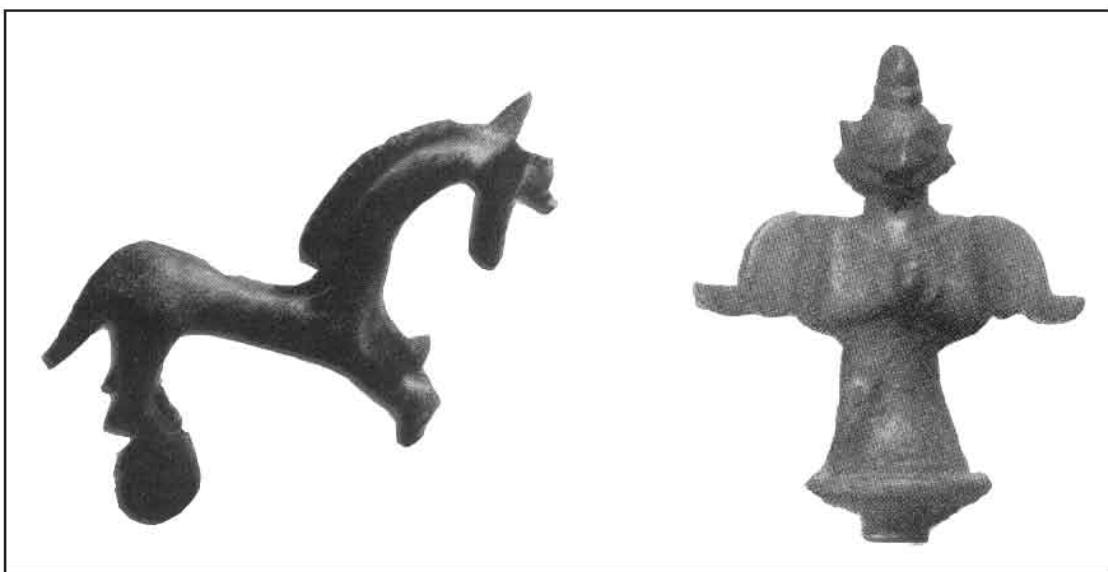
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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction to History**

The Liberation War of Bangladesh took place in 1971. We achieved our victory on 16 December, 1971 by defeating the Pakistani army after a nine month long war. The war of independence is a story of our glory and pride. We have many such glorious events in our national life. If you want to know about them, you have to study the history of Bangladesh. In fact, history presents the truth. In order to have a deep insight into history, you must know the elements and types of history.

Let us begin with-What is history? What are the elements and classifications of history? What are the ways of writing history? What is the necessity of studying history? This chapter focuses on these issues. Therefore, by the end of this chapter you will-



Artifact from Wari-Bateshwar

- be able to explain concepts, nature and scope of history and heritage;
- be able to describe elements and classification of history;
- be able to discuss the usefulness of studying history;
- be interested in history and heritage.

### **The concept of history and heritage**

The meaning of history, '*Itihas*', comes from the word '*itho*' meaning '*oitijyo*' or heritage. Heritage is related to habits, education, language, art, culture and literature of the past which move on or merge to the future. History is a means to pass traditions

from generation to generation. Historian E.H. Carr defines history as an endless conversation between the present and the past. We all know that our present is based on the past. History is the factual narration of the past and its evolution. Nowadays history also narrates contemporary events that is known as contemporary history. Hence the range of History is extended from the remote past to the present.

The Bangla word of history, "Itihas" is a combination of two fragments 'itih+ as'. It means it was like this or it happened. The similar opinion is also expressed by another historian Dd Johnson. He says that History is what has happened. If anything is yet to happen, that is not history.

The English word 'History' comes from a Greek word 'Historia'. This word was first used by the famous Greek historian, Herodotus (5<sup>th</sup> century BC) who is considered to be the "Father of History". He used the term 'History' to name one of his research works. Herodotus believed that the ultimate objective of history is to seek and record what exactly happened. In his research Herodotus analysed different aspects of the war between the Greeks and the Persians. For example, he recorded different information he could collect, important incidents that took place during the war and the victories the Greeks had. His objective was to inspire next generations for bravery and heroic deeds. So that next generation would not forget those events. Herodotus was the first person who combined the two concepts-history and research together. Thus History turned to science, became completely information based and a subject to research. Historian Rapson thinks that history is the continuous and scientific description of events.

The father of modern History, the German historian Leopold von Ranke thinks that History means the research and the true description of what took place. So, it can be said that History means the sequential and true description of different activities related to the evolution of human society. Authentic history is always written based on facts.



Herodotus



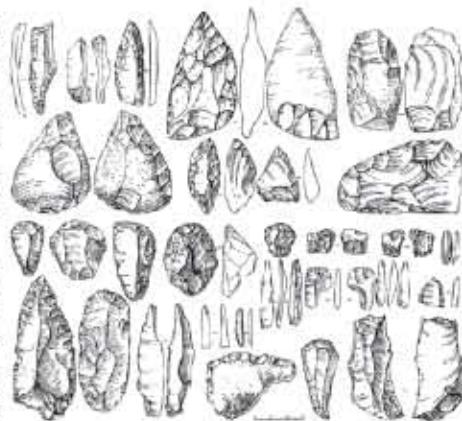
Huien-Tsang

### Sources of history

Sources of history refer to the facts and findings used to establish historical truth. These elements can be divided into two categories, namely written sources and unwritten sources.

- Written Sources:** The written sources of writing history include literature, overseas accounts, documents, etc. Literary works of different times are also good sources of collecting information about that particular time. For example, the Vedas, Arthashastra by Kautilya, Rajtarangini by Kalahana, Tabaqat-i-Nasiri by Minhaj-us-Siraj, Ain-i-Akbari by Abul Fazal, etc. have good historical sources.

Again, the narrations or descriptions of overseas travelers are always considered as the important sources of history. The descriptions of the Chinese travelers, Fa-Hien, Hiuen-Tsang and Itsing who came to Bengal respectively from the fifth to seventh century are some of the wonderful written sources of history. The descriptions of this region are also available in the writings of African traveler Ibn-Batuta and others. We can learn about the society, economy, politics, religious practices, rituals and customs of that time of this region from these descriptions.



Stone tools

Literary sources of history include fairy tales, myths, and stories. The Tibetan writer Lama Tamatha uses historical sources of the Pala Dynasty. He describes how the founder of the Pala dynasty Gopala ascended to the throne; but that was done in a very imaginative, literary way. Thus there are hidden truths behind stories and the job of a historian is to find them out through proper analysis and research. Besides, the government documents such as proceedings, file notes and letters also reveal substantial historical truths.

- Unwritten or Archeological Sources:** Unwritten or archeological evidences refer to those things or sources from which we can get a variety of historical information about a particular time, place or person. All archeological edifices such as coins, inscriptions on stones or copper, column inscriptions and buildings belong to unwritten elements. Scientific experiments and analysis of these elements disclose the social, political, economic conditions of that time. It helps us understand about the civilization, religious practices, lifestyles, urbanization, utensils used, trade and business, agricultural tools, etc. of the ancient people. For example, we may think about the archeological sites of the Indus civilization as well as those of Mahasthangarh, Paharpur and Moynamati of Bangladesh. The new archeological discoveries can change even the history of a nation. For instance, we can consider the new discoveries of



Findings from Wari-Bateshwar

Wari Bateshwar in Narsingdi. The archeological relics found in Wari Bateshwar are proofs of urban civilization in Bangladesh even two thousand five hundred years ago. This discovery is going to open a new horizon about the ancient civilization in the Bengal. Since the discovery is changing many old ideas, the history of the Bengal needs to be written afresh in near future.

**Individual Work:** Make a list on different sources of history.

## Classification of History

With the advancement of human society and civilization, people have been writing history on many new subjects. As a result, the scopes of History are expanding. History is incessantly connecting the past events to the present generation. In that case, it is difficult to classify History. In addition, people, their society, civilization and life-style lie close to each other as the subject-matter of History.

Yet, for the sake of study, discussion and research, history can be divided into two groups—Geographical History and Thematic History.

- 1. Geographical Aspect or Geographical History:** It tells about the context especially the place and time related to the history being written. History can again be divided into three groups for the advantage of understanding from the perspective of geographical situation, such as Local or Zonal History, National History and International History.
- 2. Thematic History:** Thematic History refers to the history which is written based on a particular subject. The scope of thematic History is very wide. Yet, it can generally be divided into five parts, such as Political History, Social History, Economic History, Cultural History and Contemporary History.

## Subject matters of History

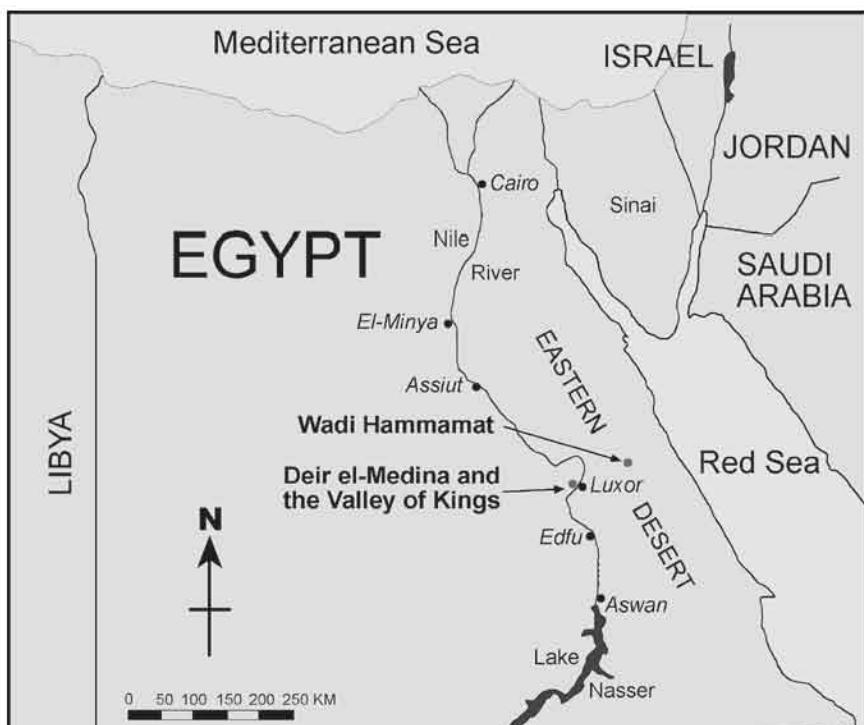
History is the evidences and written documents of chronological changes of people, their society and civilization. One of the modern historians, Vico believes that the inception and growth of human society and institutions are the subject matters of history.

Therefore, all the important achievements that contribute to the development and progress of human society and civilization are the elements of history. For example, art, culture, literature, philosophy, sculpture, politics, warfare, religions, laws etc. which as a whole directly or indirectly influence society and civilization Are the parts of History.

- respect the ancient history and tradition by learning about the world civilization.

## Egyptian Civilization

**Background:** The North-east side of the African continent which is now known as Egypt was once the center of the ancient Egyptian civilization. From 5000 B.C to 3200 B.C, one state emerged on the banks of the Nile River. From this time onwards, Egypt began to influence the ancient civilizations through many contributions.



Map : Ancient civilization of Egypt

In the later periods from 3200 B.C the Early Dynastic Period began which marked the beginning of the historical eras of Egypt. In this period, Narmer or Menes (known by both names) united the Lower and Upper Egypt and became the first ruler and priest of Egypt. He received the honor of being the first Pharaoh. Hence Egypt under the rules of the Pharaohs began to flourish and leave its mark in the world civilizations with important contributions.

**Geographical Location:** From a geographical point of view Egypt was situated in a very important location with three continents surrounding it. The country was situated on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, surrounded by Asia, Africa and Europe. In the north of Egypt is the Mediterranean Sea, in the east the Red Sea, in the west the Sahara

Desert and Sudan and other African countries in the south. It has a total area of nearly 4, 00,000 square miles.

**Time Frame:** The Egyptian civilization continued for more than 2500 years. The long and sustaining history of Egypt began in 5000 B.C. particularly in the Neolithic Age.

However, Egypt was founded under the leadership of Menes and maintained its glory and zenith for 3000 years. In the 10th century B.C a barbarous nation of Libya took over the throne from Pharaohs. In 670-662 B.C the Assyrians spread their dominance over Egypt. But in 525 B.C Persians took over Egypt and the glorious sun of the ancient Egyptian civilization finally came to set.

**State and Society:** In the Pre-dynastic period Egypt was divided into small administrative regions. They were called Nomes. The first ruler or the first Pharaoh, Menes or Narmer, in 3200 B.C united the entire Egypt into one state and made Memphis, located in South Egypt, the capital. From then on, Egypt became a unified state and the dynastic rule emerged. The title Pharaoh originated from the Egyptian term 'Per-o' The Pharaohs were very powerful. They believed that they were the decedents of the Sun God. The title 'Pharaoh' was hereditary. Only the son of a Pharaoh could inherit the title Pharaoh.

**Individual Work:** Make a flow chart showing gradual periods of the rise and fall of the Egyptian civilization.

The Egyptians could be divided into particular classes based on their professions; such as, royal family, priests, elites, scribes, traders, artists, the farmers and slaves to the lands.

The economy of Egypt was basically agriculture based. The staple agricultural products were wheat, barley, cotton, onion, peach, etc. In trade and commerce they were equally advanced. The cultivated wheat, sheets of linen, earthen pots, etc. from Egypt were exported to Crete Islands, Phoenicia, Palestine, Syria and other neighboring countries. The Egyptians imported gold, silver, elephant tusks, wood from their neighboring countries.

**The River:** The river Nile originated from Victoria Lake of Africa. From there the river ran through different countries and finally through Egypt it fell into the Mediterranean Sea. The father of history Herodotus aptly said, "Egypt is the gift of the Nile". Without the Nile river Egypt would have been nothing but a desert. In ancient times, the Nile river flooded every year. After the flood, the land on both sides of the banks would be fertile with the black silt and Egyptians would cultivate many crops in the silt left behind by the flood water.

**Contributions of the Egyptians to Civilization:** There is no way to dispute the contribution made by the Egyptians to ancient civilization. Their religious beliefs, art, sculpture, script writing, invention of paper, the study of science and knowledge everything has been enriched by their tremendous contributions. A very unique characteristic of the Egyptians was that every sphere of their lives was influenced by their religious thoughts and beliefs.

**Religious Beliefs of the Egyptians:** Probably there is no nation among the ancient civilizations that was more involved and influenced by the religious rituals than the Egyptians. Because of this, many of the philosophical ideas, rules and regulations, rites and rituals of human civilization came from the Egyptians. They worshipped inanimate objects, idols and also animals. Though there have been many changes in their religious views. They had a firm belief that the Sun god 'Ray' or 'Aman Ray' and the God of nature, grain and the river Nile 'Osiris' together ruled over the entire world. However, the most important God to the Egyptians was the Sun god 'Ray'.

**Individual Work:** Draw a chart of the exported cash crops and the imported trade products of Egypt.

The Egyptians believed that the dead will come back to life again. Therefore, they used to keep dead bodies fresh by making mommies of the dead bodies and created Pyramids to protect the mommies. The Pharaohs ruled the nation as the representatives of God on earth. They were the chief priests and they appointed other priests in different services.



Pyramid

**Industry:** The paintings and art of the Egyptians are very diverse and historically important. Similar to other countries the art and painting spurred from the religious beliefs of the Egyptians. They first started the painting to decorate their pyramids and their tombs. The popular colors of the time were black and white. In the tombs, pyramids, temples, palace, gardens and even in the walls of common households, the Egyptian artists used to draw beautiful and spectacular pictures. These pict res depicted the political, religious, social and family lives of ancient Egypt.

The Egyptian artists also had tremendous achievements in curving and sculpting. The furniture, earthen potware, gold, silver and valuable stone plates, ornaments, mummy's faces, everyday tools, elephant tusks, etc. bear the mark of excellence of the Egyptian craftsmanship.

**Individual Work:** Draw a chart of the murals illustrated in the wall by the artists of Egypt with their subject matters.

**Sculpture:** No other civilization has been able to make such a contribution as the Egyptians in the art of sculpting. The greatness of size, diversity of style and the religious fervor found in the large scale statues reflect the excellence of the sculpting art of the Egyptians. All the statues are influenced by the religious feelings, rituals and philosophy of life and death. Each and every sculpture in some way or the other bears spiritual artisanship. The greatest specimen of Egyptian sculpture is the Sphinx in Giza. The Sphinx is a statue that has the body of a lion and the head of a man. The biggest Pyramid in Egypt is Pharaoh Khufu's pyramid. The temples of Egypt also reflect the beautiful work of sculpting of this great civilization.

**Writing System and the Invention of Paper:** One important features of the Egyptian civilization was the invention of written characters and letters. The writing system in Egypt emerged with the spread of urbanization. 5000 years ago they were the first to invent a 24 consonant alphabet system. At the very beginning, they communicated and expressed their feelings by drawing pictures. This type of writing system was known as 'Hieroglyphic' or sacred alphabet.

The Egyptians learned to make paper from the mash of reed-like plant. They wrote on this paper. The Greeks called this paper papyrus. The English word "paper" came from the word papyrus. It is noteworthy that Napoleon Bonaparte in his campaign to Egypt discovered a stone plate that is known as the Rosetta stone. On this stone was encrypted in Greek and Hieroglyphic language that conveyed much information about ancient Egypt.

**Science:** It has been said that the Egyptian civilization was based on agriculture. So the flood, the navigability, the measurement of current, ebb and flow of the river Nile and the measurement of land were very important for the Egyptians. Therefore, astrology and mathematics had a deep connection with these measurements. So the Egyptians



Sphinx



Hieroglyphic Inscription

**Architecture and Sculpture:** The Indus civilization has left a very important and amazing contribution to the field of architecture. We have found from two room houses to twenty five room houses. In some places three storied houses were found. The most significant specimen of architecture in Mohenjodaro is the Assembly Hall that is 80 feet long. Besides a big palace has also been found. In Harappa there is a big Granary. The Great Bath found in Mohenjodaro is a water reservoir that is suitable for indoor swimming.



The Great Bath

In the art of sculpting the Indus civilization also left its mark of excellence. Although the stone statues found were very few in number, the quality and the craftsmanship in them were exquisite. So far 13 figures and one limestone head were found from this civilization. In Mohenjodaro, one dancing

female figure was found.

Besides many small human and animal figures were also found that belonged to this civilization. 2500 seals were also found from the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. These were used for trading and religious purposes.



Seal

**Work:** Fill in the chart :

Architectures of the Indus Civilization	Location of the site

## Greek Civilization

**Background:** For many years archeologists around the world have been fascinated with the truth behind the alluring stories of 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' written by Homer, the great poet of Greece. Around the end of the 19th century Homer's story did not only reside in his poetic verses, the truth of one of the great civilizations of ancient times came out. The Greek civilization is one of the greatest ancient urban civilizations situated in the Aegean archipelago and the west coast of Asia Minor. The ruins of hundred cities including the epic city of Troy, were discovered. This was known as the Aegean Civilization or the pre-classical Greek civilization.

It is bounded by the Greek mainland on the west, Asia Minor (now Turkey) on the east, the island of Crete on the south including the small islands of the Aegean Sea. The Greeks were the part of a very prosperous and culturally enriched nation. This civilization can be divided into two parts-

1. The evolution of this civilization was in Crete. The time period of this civilization is from 3000 B.C to 1400 B.C.
2. The second is called Mycenean or Achaean civilization. This civilization was named after the name of the Mycenae city, situated on the southern region of the mainland of Greece. This civilization existed from 1600 B.C to 1100 B.C. It is believed that flood or foreign invasion brought a decline to this civilization.

**Geographical Location and Time Frame:** Greece is surrounded by the Adriatic Sea, the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea. There are two terms that go complimentary with the Greek civilization. One is 'Hellenic' and the other is 'Hellenistic'. The Hellenic culture flourished in the capital city of Athens in the Greek peninsula. On the other hand, the Hellenistic culture flourished with the amalgamation of Greek and the Non-Greek cultures in Alexandria in Egypt under the rule of Greek emperor Alexander the Great.

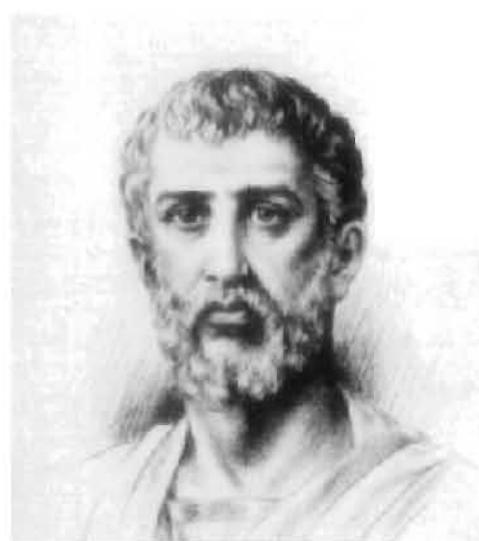
**Sparta, the Military State:** Sparta is one of the many city states that emerged in ancient Greece. This city state was situated in the south of Greece in the area known as Peloponnese. Sparta was different from other city states. A close observation into the lives of the Spartans reveals that they were influenced by military actions and war tactics. Their focus was to increase the military resources of the city rather than to improve the quality of life for the citizens. In 800 B.C after a long battle, the Dorian soldiers were able to take over Sparta. The local people who were defeated in the war were called land slaves or the 'helots'.

The defeated inhabitants who were forced to become land slaves were large in number. To sustain their rule the rulers of Sparta had only one thing in mind- to suppress their uprising.

The Spartans' lives were dedicated to save Sparta. The Spartan society emerged from the necessity of war. The rulers of Sparta were dedicated to prepare its citizens for war and to lead the army. For their war-driven attitudes, the Spartans were left behind in social, political, economic and cultural advancement.

**Athens, the City State:** In ancient Greece the first democratic state to emerge was Athens. But in the earlier days Athens was a monarchy. In the 7th century B.C the mon-archy declined and a form of aristocracy emerged. The power came in the hands of a few elites. They only looked at their own interests in the name of ruling the state. As a result, agitation grew up among the mass people even though they failed to attain power. But some people attained power using them. They were called 'Tyrants' gradual disappointment among the common people and the deprivation of the farmers were turning into a pos-sibility of an uproar, a revolution. Consequently, in the 7th century B.C there was a reform in the state administration. Earlier the members of the noble families were thought to be aristocrats. But after the reform, wealth became the primary standard of aristocracy. In the time of crisis, all the people of the state unanimously nominated a few people to bring reform to the state. Among those few people, the most famous of the aristocrats was Solon. He introduced some new laws and minimized the strictness of the previous laws. He passed the law to free the farmers from debts. He was also responsible for bringing economic reforms to the state of Athens.

After Solon, Peasistratas and Cleisthenes were the ones who came forward to establish the rights of the people of Athens. They both worked to reform the laws and to bring prosperity and peace to the people of the state. However, Athens saw the zenith of democracy at the time of Pericles. His time is known as the "golden age" of Greece. In 460 B.C he came to power and ruled for 30 years. He accepted all the political demands of his citizens. During his time, he gave his citizens right to fully participate in the administrative, legislative and judicial system of the state. The members of the jury who gave the verdict of the trial were chosen from the common citizens. Athens reached the height of success in every field during the time of Pericles. In



Pericles

430 B.C. one fourth of the people of Athens died in a terrible plague. Pericles also died in the plague. After his death, Athens lost its former glory and decline became inevitable. Athens, the state that had great achievements in science, philosophy, literature and politics fell to the military state of Sparta. The longtime war that went on between the two states was known as the Peloponnesian War. The Peloponnesian War (460 - 404 B.C) was fought three times between the two leading city-states in ancient Greece, Athens and Sparta. The two states formed coalition with their respective allies. Athens formed the Delian League with its allies. Peloponnesian League was lead by the Spartans. As a result of the war, Athens lost its prosperity and independence. In 369 B.C. Athens went under Sparta. After this city-state Thebes was taken away by Athens. In 338 B.C. the Macedonian King Philip took over Thebes and Athens came under the Macedonian rule.

**Group work:** Make a list of those great persons of Athens who brought various reforms and passed laws for the welfare of the people of the state.

**Contributions of Greece to Civilization:** Although for the geographical location the Greek city states were separated from each other, their culture was the same. They believed that they inherited the same cultural trends in spite of the political difference. Their language, religion, literature and games and sports united the whole Greece together. Athens played a dominating role in defining the culture of Greece. They gave the name of this culture Hellenic Culture.

**Education:** The Greek scholars had much idea about education. They gave importance to moral and spiritual education. Some of them thought that the responsibility of ruling the state should be in the hands of educated citizens. The education system should reflect the philosophy and the goals of the government. The main purpose of education is to teach discipline and obedience. Greek boys at the age of seven started going to schools. The boys from the rich family were educated formally until they were 18 years of age. The boys of the farmers and the craftsmen used to receive the primary education. The children of the slaves were prohibited from going to schools. The girls were not allowed for any institutional education.

**Group Work:** Fill in the chart

What did they do for the welfare of the citizens of Athenians?	
Solon	
Pericles	

**Group Work:** Write in the chart the names of the three emperors of the triumvirate and the places they were in charge of:

Name of the Emperor	Places they were in charge of.
1.	
2.	
3.	

Pelotas and Terence were very famous for their contributions in literature in this era. They both left great marks in composing comedies of the time. The greatest achievement in literature was found in the period of Augustus Caesar. Horace and poet Virgil were very popular during that period. Virgil's famous work Aeneid is still the one of the best translated works of the world. Ovid and Livi were famous poets of the time too. Livi was also a famous historian. The famous historian Tacitus was born in this time.

#### **Architecture, Sculpture and Science:**

One of the most significant characteristics of the Roman architecture is its enormity. The temple 'Pantheon' made by emperor Hardin is one of the astonishing examples of Roman architecture. In 80 A.D. the Roman emperor Titus built the Colosseum, a theater that could house 5600 spectators at a time. The art of sculpting also flourished beside the blooming field of architecture. The sculptors of Rome created figures and sculptures of Gods and Goddesses, emperors and many mythical characters out of marble.



Colosseum

Some of the scientists left their marks in this field. Among them, Pliny developed an Encyclopedia of science. In this Encyclopedia nearly 500 scientist's works have been included. The Romans also had contribution in the field of medicine. Salsas, a famous scientist wrote a book on medicine. Gallon Rufus has also contributed significantly in medical science.

**Religion, Philosophy and Law:** The Romans were influenced by the Greeks in the field of religion. Many of the Greek Gods and Goddesses have been adapted to the Roman culture with a different name. The principal God for the Romans was Jupiter. Other important Gods and Goddesses are: Juno, Neptune, Mars, Vulcan, Venus, Minerva, Bacchus, etc. The Chief Priest of the temples oversaw the religious rituals. But, the Romans did not believe in the afterlife. From the time of Augustus Caesar, the

custom of worshiping the emperor as the supreme god began. It is noteworthy that during this time the Messiah of the Christian religion Jesus Christ was born. In the later years Christianity spread side by side of the Roman religion. Many Romans were converted into Christianity. The Roman emperor was furious at this popularity of the new religion, because according to the Christian sacrament, the emperor could not be worshiped as equal to God. In consequence, the Roman emperors put a ban on the preaching of the new religion and inflicted torture on the converted Romans. However, Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity and made Christianity the official religion of the state.

Many people believe that the Roman philosophy is influenced by the Greek philosophy. However, Cicero and Lucretius (98 B.C.-55 A.D.) were able to give many well established concepts and ideas in Roman Philosophy. In Rome the philosophical trend of Stoicism was very popular. In 140 B.C. Pontius in the island of Rhodes first started this trend of philosophy.

In the world civilization, the most significant and important contribution of the Romans was its law. In the mid- 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. the Romans were able to formulate the criminal and civil laws. Emperor Justinian in 540 B.C. wrote these laws in 12 bronze plates and these plates were hung in public places for the people to see. According to the Roman law, all men are equal. The Roman laws are divided into three sections. They are:

- 1. Civil Law:** This law was obligatory for the Roman people. This law was both in written and unwritten forms.
- 2. People's Law :** This law was applicable for all the citizens of the nation. This law also included the protection of individual rights. This law acknowledged slavery. Cicero was the legislator of this law.
- 3. Natural Law:** This law talks about the basic rights of the citizens. The modern world relies heavily on the Roman laws. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Justinian first compiled all the Roman laws and legislatures in one place and published it.

## Exercise

### Multiple Choice Questions:

- 1. How many consonant letters did the Egyptians invent?**

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| a. 23 | b. 24 |
| c. 25 | d. 26 |

**2. Why was religion so important for the Egyptians?**

- a. Egyptians were influenced by religion in every sphere;
- b. The Aristocratic society gave importance to religion;
- c. Priests ruled the country;
- d. The Egyptians believed in religion.

**Read the following passage and answer the question number 3 and 4:**

Sima and her family were overwhelmed watching the performance of different countries in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. Sima saw the program and remembered of a civilization. She thought of organizing a cultural ceremony in her school and took inspiration from the show.

**3. What civilization did Sima remember?**

- a. Roman
- b. Greek
- c. Chinese
- d. Sind

**4. By this sort of programs among nations concrete:**

- i. unity of economy
- ii. exchange of cultural views
- iii. political tolerance

**Which of the above answers is correct?**

- a. i
- b. ii
- c. iii
- d. i,ii,iii

### Creative Questions

Bangladesh is a riverine country. Almost every year both the banks of the rivers are overflowed here due to flood. When the flood water goes down, the land in these areas get more fertile due to alluvial deposits. As a result, farmers in these areas have good harvest that contributes to their prosperity.

- a. Which king established the city of Rome?
- b. Explain why the rules of three rulers did not last long?
- c. Explain what civilization is similar to the situation described in the stem and how?
- d. Analyse the significance of the situation stated in the stem in flourishing the civilization.

## Chapter Three

# Janapadas of Ancient Bengal

In any discussion of history periodization is treated as an important issue. This periodization is marked based on socio-economic and political condition of a ruling dynasty. The historians think that 500 B.C to 1300 A.D is the ancient age of history. Meanwhile, some others think that 500 B.C to 600 A.D should be treated as early historic period as well as the time frame from 700 A.D. to 1300 A.D would mention as pre-medieval era.

### **Geography of Bangladesh and its Influences**

Bangladesh is situated on the southern part of Asia. The political condition here changed from the very beginning of history. This is why the boundary also changed in course of time. Bengal was divided into two parts after the British left India in 1947. Its western part was incorporated with India and the eastern part with Pakistan. The part of Bengal of Pakistan was first named East Bengal and later on East Pakistan. In 1971 it became an independent state through the Great War of liberation. The new name of this country became Bangladesh.

The great Himalaya is situated on the north of Bangladesh while the Bay of Bengal's widespread blue water is on southern part. Except the south-eastern part adjacent to Myanmar, the whole country is surrounded by India. The total area of Bangladesh is 1,47,570 square kilometers. Most of the landscape all over this country is plain land. A number of river-channels and canal-lakes found spread all over this country. The main rivers here are the Padma, the Brahmaputra, the Meghna, the Jamuna, the Tista and the Karota.

The lifestyle and history of a country are influenced largely by its geographical location. This is why, in the different parts of world we can notice different types of livelihood, customs and varied ways of life. Here the connectivity and transportation of goods depend on river as we get a plenty in number. At a time Bengal soldiers became skilled in naval warfare to defend their country from the outside invaders. Again, an agrarian society was also formed here on the basin of fertile land.

The weather here is tropical. Geographical condition of this land enables the people to be calm and polite. On the other hand, due to the variation in climate, the people here also get used to fighting against the disasters as storm and cyclone that make them brave. This is why they had to struggle for decades to establish their basic rights. Therefore, it is said not only the character but also the food habit, dress, housing pattern of people here are influenced by geographical features. This variation of landscape also gives us some extra benefits for our defence. The rivers keep our land safe from the greedy insight of foreign invaders. After all, the 1100 miles distance also played a vital role in the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971.

## Chapter Four

# Political History of Ancient Bengal (326 B.C. -1204 A.D.)

We can get an idea about chronological history of ancient Bengal since the Pala rule. It is not easy to find out the history before that. During this period no ruler could reign for a long time all over Bengal. So, the political life of Bengal evolved disconnectedly. There was an unstable situation after the end of the Maurya and the Gupta rule. Some independent kingdoms rose through this instability. During the age of the evolution of independent states, king Sananka of North Bengal was the most powerful. After his death there was no competent ruler in Bengal for a long time. As a result, there appeared anarchy and disorder all over the kingdom. Nearly one hundred years passed all the way through this condition. Afterwards, a leader named Gopala brought this unstable condition to an end and established the Pala dynasty. In the middle of the twelfth century the Pala dynasty came to its downfall. During that Pala regime small independent kingdoms came into being in South-East Bengal. After that the Senas coming from Kamataka of South India established a kingdom in East Bengal. The Sena reign continued for about two hundred years. In the first decade of the thirteenth century the Sena reign yielded to Muslim power. Then a new chapter started-the Middle Age of Bengal.

**At the end of this chapter we will be able to -**

- give an account of the important dynasties of ancient Bengal and their regimes;
- explain the political condition of Bengal prior to the Pala age ;
- develop positive ideas about the contributions of the then important dynasties to political practices of ancient Bengal;
- explain chronological political history of ancient Bengal after knowing about important dynasties;
- give an account of the kingdoms of South-east Bengal;
- describe the administrative system of ancient Bengal.

### **Important Dynasties of Ancient Bengal and Administrative System**

#### **Bengal during the Age of the Maurya and the Gupta**

There were no sources available to write any chronological history of ancient Bengal prior to the age of the Guptas because people of that time were not used to writing history like those of today. We get a few sources of history from sporadic and separated comments in Indian and foreign literatures about Bengal of that time. But it is not possible to write any chronological history mentioning dates, years and authentic events by on the basis of these unconnected events. In fact, in 327 B.C.-326 B.C.

during the invasion of India by Greek hero Alexander, history took its original form. In the writings of Greek writers there was a powerful kingdom named 'Gongaridoi' in Bengal. The nation 'Gongaridoi' inhabited in the region between the two streams of the Ganges now known as the Bhagirathi and the Padma.

The Greek writers referred to another nation called 'Prasioy' in addition to 'Gongaridoi'. Their capital was Palibothra (Patliputra). From the descriptions of the Greek writers, it can be thought that these two nations fought together under the same dynasty against Alexander. It may be assumed that during the invasion of Alexander, the king of Bengal conquered Magadha and extended his Kingdom upto the Punjab. He was someone from the lineage of the Nanda king of Pataliputra. It is beyond doubt from comments of ancient Greek writers that the king of Bengal was the most powerful during that time.

Just after two years of the departure of Alexander from India in 321 B.C. Maurya king Chandragupta Maurya established the lordship of the Maurya Dynasty on a vast region of India. During the reign of Emperor Ashoka (269B.C.-232 B.C.) the Maurya rule was established in North Bengal. The region turned to a province of the Mauryas. Ancient Pundranagar was the capital of this province. Besides north Bengal, Maurya rule was established in Karnasuvarna (Murshidabad), Tamralipta (Hoogly) and Samatata (South-east Bengal).

After the fall of the Maurya Empire, Shunga dynasty and later Kanva dynasty appeared. It is thought that they established their rule on some small regions. After that quite a good number of foreign powers invaded India. Among them Greek, Saka, Pahlava, Kushana are mentionable. But, it is not certain said whether these invaders came upto Bengal.

The Gupta empire was established in India in 320 A.D. Then some independent kingdoms came into being in Bengal. Among them Samatata of South-east Bengal and Puskorona of West Bengal are mentionable. Some areas of North Bengal came under the possession of the Gupta empire during the reign of Gupta emperor Chandragupta I. Though whole Bengal was conquered during the reign of Samudragupta, Samatata was a vassal kingdom. Since the reign of Samudragupta up to the middle of the sixth century, North Bengal was used to be considered as a 'Province' or 'Bhukti' of the Gupta Empire. Like the Mauryas, Pundrangar of Mahasthangar was the capital of the Guptas.

### **Bengal in the Post-Gupta Period**

As a result of the attacks by the daring mountainous tribe the Huns in the fifth century and by Joshovarman of Malava in the sixth century, Gupta rule completely came to an end at the very first half of the sixth century. After the fall of the great Gupta Empire, there was the emergence of small independent kingdoms in North India. Thus, after the fall

of the Gupta empire, political instability grew all over north India. With that chance two independent kingdoms came into being. One of them was Banga. It was situated in the southern region of South-east Bengal and West Bengal. The second kingdom was Gaur. Its location was in the western and northern regions of Bengal.

**Individual work :** Write down the background of Banga and Gaur Janapadas in the history of Bengal.

### The independent Kingdom of Banga

An independent kingdom emerged in the Banga Janapada with the advantage of the weaknesses of the Gupta Empire. It is known from 'Copper Inscription' declarations that three kings, named Gopachandra, Dharmaditya and Samacharadeva ruled independent Bengal. All of them assumed the title 'Moharajadhiraj'. Their regime was between 525A.D.-600 A.D. When and how the independent and powerful Banga kingdom collapsed is not clear. It is a notion that Kirtivarmana, the king belonging to the Chalukya dynasty brought about the downfall of independent Banga kingdom. Those who do not hold similar opinion say that due to the rise of independent Gaur kingdom, the Banga kingdom collapsed. The rise of some feudal kings is also held responsible for the fall of independent Bengal. Before the seventh century independent and feudal kings belonging to Bhadra, Kharga, Rahr dynasty rose in the kingdom Samatata of south Bengal.

### The Independent Kingdom of Gaur

After the fall of the Gupta dynasty in the sixth century, the kings known as the 'Later Gupta Dynasty' with the title 'Gupta' extended their domination in North Bengal, northern side of West Bengal and Magadha. In the middle of the sixth century Gaur became known as a Janapada in this very region. As a result of fifty years of generational fight among the Maukhari and the subsequent Gupta kings, constant attacks of the Tibetans from the north and the Chalukyans from the Deccan, the kings belonging to the Gupta dynasty of Bengal became weak. Taking the complete advantage of this condition, a feudal king named Sasanka grabbed the power of Gaur region and established the Gaur kingdom at the beginning of the seventh century.

**Sasanka:** The identity, rise and the life of Sasanka are not yet clear to the scholars. A ruler of a large region under the Gupta kings was called 'Mahasamanta'. It is thought that Sasanka was a 'Mahasamanta' of the Gupta king Mahasenagupta and may be his son or nephew.

The capital of Sasanka was Karnasubarna. After strengthening his possession in Gaur he started to extend his kingdom to neighboring regions. He extended his border conquering Dandobhukti (Medinipur), Utkal of Odisha (north Odisha) and Konghod

(South Odisha), Magadha of Bihar. His kingdom was extended to Varanasi to the west. The king of Kamrupa (Assam) was also defeated by him. Then he paid attention to the west border of the kingdom. At that time there were two powerful kings in North India. One was Thaneswar belonging to Pushyabhuti dynasty and the other was Kanyakubja belonging to the Maukhari dynasty. However, due to the nuptial bond of Rajyoshree, the daughter of Prabhakarvardhan, the king of Thaneswar with Grahavarman, the Maukhari king of Kanauj, there emerged an alliance between Kanauj and Thaneswar. Rajyoshree had two brothers named Rajyovardhana and Harshavardhana. As a result of this alliance, the security of Bengal was at stake. With a view to ousting the Maukhari, Sasanka moved forward. As a counter step Sasanka also enhanced his power in diplomatic ways making friendship with Devagupta, the king of Malava.

Before Sasanka had reached to the north, Devagupta, the king of Malava defeated Maukhari Grahavarman the king of Kanauj. His wife, Rajyoshree became a captive. Then Devagupta started to march towards Thaneswar. On the way Devagupta was defeated and killed by Rajyovardhana. Rajyovardhana then moved towards Kanauj. But, he had been killed by Sasanka before he could exercise his lordship over Kanauj and rescue his sister Rajyoshree.

After the death of Rajyovardhana, Harshavardhana ascended to the throne of Kanauj and Thaneswar. Without any delay, he started a military expedition against Sasanka to rescue Rajyoshree and to take revenge on him. At that time Vaskarvarma of Kamrupa came in alliance with him. But, it is not perfectly known about the result of fight or whether there was any fight between them. Sasanka died sometime before 637 A.D.

Sasanka was a follower of Shaiba religion. Hiuen-Tsang called him spiteful of Buddhism. But, there is no strong evidence about the matter till today. Sasanka is a notable name in the seventh century history of Bengal. He was the first important sovereign ruler in the history of ancient Bengal.

**Work:** Make a list of the rivals who Sasanka fought with.

### **Matsyanayam and the Pala Dynasty (750A.D.-1161 A.D.)**

There came a dark and disastrous age in the history of Bengal after the death of Sasanka. Bengal remained without any competent ruler for a long time. As a result, there was anarchy and disorder in the kingdom. In one hand Harshavardhan and Bhaskarvarman lacerated Gaur, on the other hand, every landlord was locked in clash with one another with a view to becoming the king of Bengal. There was no one to take care of the central power with an iron hand. This period of anarchy has been called 'Matsyanayam' in Pala 'copper inscription'. 'Matsyanayam' refers to a condition of

**Group work:** Make a list of towns and ponds founded by Mahipala I mentioning their names and locations.

Mahipala did not leave any capable posteriors. So, as soon as he died, the empire started to be divided. After Mahipala his son Nayapala (supposedly 1043A.D.-1058A.D.) and grandson Vigrahapala III (supposedly 1058A.D.-1075A.D.) ascended to the throne of the Pala dynasty. During the reign of these weak kings, the Pala empire became exhausted due to facing overseas attacks one after another for a long time. Again opposition and disagreement were noticed inside the country. With this chance small independent kingdoms came into being. Vihara which was beyond Bengal started to move from the control of the Pala kings. Thus, during Vigrahapala III the Pala empire of Bengal got broken into many independent parts.

Mahipala II, son of Vigrahapala III, ascended to the throne of the Pala dynasty. During his reign the disastrous condition intensified more. At this time the feudal lords openly declared revolt in the Varendra region of north Bengal. This revolt is known as 'Kaivarta Revolt' in history. The leader of this revolt was Kaivarta hero Divyak or Divya. He occupied Varendra by killing Mahipala II and established his own rule.

When Varendra region was occupied by the Kaivartas, Surapala II (supposedly 1080A.D.-1082A.D.), the younger brother of Mahipala II ascended to the throne of the Pala dynasty. It was he who was their last successful ruler. Biography of Ramapala can be known from 'Ramcharita' written by Sandhakar Nandi, an ancient Bangalee poet. Ramapala, just after taking the responsibility of the kingdom, made attempts to regain Varendra.

To this end, the kings of fourteen kingdoms including Rastrakuta, Magadha, Rahr came forward to help Ramapala with soldiers, arms and money. In this battle, Kaivarta king Bhim was defeated and killed. Then he set up a new capital named 'Ramavati' near present Maldah. During the rule of subsequent kings 'Ramavati' itself was the capital of the empire. After establishing power in Varendra, he established his domination over Magadha, Odisha and Kamrupa in order to bring back the lost glory of the empire.

The bad luck of the Pala dynasty was that the subsequent rulers of Rampala were very weak. As a result, they could not take hold of the Pala dynasty strictly. After Ramapala, Kumarapala (supposedly 1124A.D.-1129 A.D.), Gopala III (1129A.D.-1143A.D.) and Madanpala (supposedly 1143A.D.-1161A.D.) ascended to the throne of the Pala dynasty one after another. During this time, warfare was a common affair. At last, at the second phase of the twelfth century, Bijoy Sena established the rule of the Sena dynasty, destroying the existence of the Pala empire.

**Group work:** Identify what steps did Rampala take to bring back the lost glory of the Pala empire.

### Independent Kingdoms of South-east Bengal

South-east Bengal was independent during most of the periods of the Pala age. Then this region was included in Banga 'Janapada'. From the middle of the eighth century quite a number of kings of dynasties sometimes ruled their areas independently revolting against the Pala kings. Sometimes they would accept submission of the Pala kings.

**The Kharga Dynasty:** Subsequent kings belonging to the Gupta dynasty established their lordship in Magadha and Gaur in the second half of the seventh century. At this time, the kings of the Kharaga dynasty gave birth to an independent kingdom in South-east Bengal. Their capital was 'Karmanta Vasaka'. Probably, 'Karmanta Vasaka' is the ancient name of Comilla district. The possession of the Khargas was extended to Tripura and Noakhali region.

**The Deva Dynasty:** After the rule of Kharga dynasty there was the rise of the Deva dynasty in the same region at the start of the eighth century. We get the names of four kings of this dynasty. They were Sree Santideva, Sree Birdeva, Sree Anandadeva and Sree Bhabadeva. The Deva kings considered themselves very powerful. So, they attached big titles such as Paramasaugata, Paramavattaraka, Prameshwara, Maharajadhiraja, etc. with their names. Their capital was Devaparbata near Moinamoti Comilla. The kingdom of the Devas was extended across the whole Samatata region. The Deva kings ruled supposedly from 740 A.D. to 800 A.D. Like the Pala kings, the Deva kings were Buddhists.

**The kingdom of Kantideva:** An independent kingdom came into being in Horikela Janapada of south-east Bengal in the ninth century. The king of this kingdom was Kantideva. It is not known whether Kantideva had any relationship with the Deva dynasties. His father's name was Dhanadutta and grandfather's name was Bhadrabutta. The present Sylhet was included in the kingdom of Kantideva. The name of his capital was Burdwanpur. At present there is no existence of any such region by this name. At this time, a new power known by Chandra dynasty emerged in south-east Bengal. The kingdom built up by Kantideva was destroyed by this Chandra dynasty.

**The Chandra Dynasty:** The Chandra dynasty was the most powerful independent dynasty of south-east Bengal. The kings of this dynasty ruled for one hundred and fifty years from the beginning of the tenth century to the middle of the eleventh century. The first king of the Chandra dynasty Purnachandra and his son Subarnachandra were probably the landlords of Rohitgiri. His title was 'Maharajadhiraja'. Troilakyachandra established the name of his own dynasty in Horikela, Chandradwip (Barisal and adjoining area), Banga and Samatata i.e. in whole east and south-east Bengal. Lalmai

mountain was the main centre of the Chandra kings. This mountain was known as Rohitgiri near Comilla in ancient time. He ruled supposedly for 30 years (900A.D.-930A.D.). Troilakya Chandra's deserving heir was his son Sreechandra. During his rule honour and power of the Chandra dynasty reached the pinnacle. Undoubtedly, he was the best ruler of this dynasty.

He assumed the title 'Parameshwara Parama Vattaraka Maharajadhiraja'. His kingdom was extended to North-east Kamrupa and Gaur in the North in addition to South-east Bengal. He established his capital in Vikrampura in the district of present Munshiganj. Sreechandra supposedly ruled with glory for 45 years (930-975 A.D.).

Sreechandra's son Kallyan Chandra (supposedly 975A.D.-1000A.D.) and grandson Ladaha Chandra kept the glory of the Chandra dynasty intact. Govinda Chandra, son of Ladaha Chandra was the last king of the Chandra dynasty. During his reign Rajendra Chola, king of the Chola and Karna, kings of the Kolochuri attacked Banga. These two external attacks lessened the power of king Chandra and put an end to their rule.

### **The Varma Dynasty**

The Pala administrative power having become weak at the last phase of the eleventh century, a dynasty with the title 'Varma' shaped itself in south-east Bengal. He who laid the foundation of this dynasty in Banga was Brojovarma's son Jatavarma. It seems that Varmas came to this country with the Kolochuri king. Like his father, at the early stage he was also a feudal king of the Kolochuri king Gangeyodeva and Karna. During Kaibarta revolt, he established an independent kingdom in South-east Bengal with the help and support of his father-in-law, Karna, the Kolochuri king. The capital of the Varmas was Vikrampura of Munshiganj district. After Jatavarma, his eldest son Harivarma ruled 46 years at a stretch. He was on good terms with the Pala kings.

**Individual work:** Arrange the following dynasty in chronological order :

<b>Serial</b>	<b>Name of dynasty</b>	<b>Time of establishment</b>
1	Chandra dynasty	Eighth century
2	The kingdom of Kantideva	Eleventh century
3	Kharga dynasty	Tenth century
4	Varma dynasty	Nineth century
5	Deva dynasty	Seventh century

### **The Sena dynasty (1061A.D. -1204 A.D.) :**

After the fall of the Pala dynasty, Sena dynasty started their rule in Bengal in the second half of the twelfth century. It is supposed that they were intruders to this country. The original abode of their forefathers was in Karnataka of the Deccan. According to some historian they were 'Brahmmakhatriya'. 'Brahmmakhatriya' are those who are first Brahmins and become Khatriya after changing their occupations. The founder of the Sena dynasty in Bengal was Samanta Sena. He showed heroism in his youth and first settled down in Rahr region on the Ganges at the last years of his life. Since he did not establish any kingdom, the dignity of the first king is given to Hemanta Sena, son of Samanta Sena. It is supposed that he was a feudal king under Ramapala.

After the death of Hemanta Sena, his son Vijoy Sena (1098A.D.-1160A.D.) ascended to the throne. During his long reign itself, the rule of the Sena dynasty was established on a strong footing. It is he who probably established himself as an independent king from a feudal king. During Kaivarta revolt, he helped Ramapala. South Rahr was under the Sura dynasty in the eleventh century. He married Bilash Devi, the princess of this dynasty. Vijoy Sena got recognition of being independent in exchange of helping Ramapala to regain Varendra. Again, Rahr came under the possession of Bijoy Sena due to nuptial relation with the Sura dynasty of South Rahr. Then Vijoy Sena brought South and East Bengal under his possession defeating the king of the Varma. Taking the advantage of the weaknesses of the last kings of the Pala dynasty, Vijoy Sena extended his lordship by defeating Madanpala and driving away the Palas from the South and south-east Bengal. Then, he launched an attack on Kamrupa, Kalinga and Mithila. Vijaypura situated in Triveni of Hoogly district was the first capital of Vijoy Sena. The second capital was established in Vikrampura in the district of Munshiganj. Vijoy Sena assumed the titles like Parama Maheshwara, Parameshwara Parama Bhattacharya Maha-rajadhiraja, Auriraj-Brishava-Shankara, etc. The whole Bengal was under a single king first for a long time under only the Sena dynasty. Vijoy Sena was a follower of Shaiba religion.

After the reign of Vijoy Sena, his son Vallal Sena (1160A.D.-1178A.D.) ascended to the throne. During his reign he not only protected the kingdom of his father, but also established Sena rule on a strong foundation by bringing Magadha and Mithila under it. He married Chalukya princess, Ramadevi. Along with other titles Vallal Sena assumed the title 'Auriraj Nishanka Shankara'. At the old age, he handed over the charge of running the kingdom on his son Laksmana Sena and passed rest of his life following 'Banprastha' with his wife near Triveni on the Ganges.

## Questions for Practice

### Multiple Choice Questions

- 1. When was the Gupta empire established in India?**
  - a. 320 A.D.
  - b. 321 A.D.
  - c. 322 A.D.
  - d. 323 A.D.
  
- 2. Sasanka made friendship with Devagupta, the king of Malaba**
  - a. to bring Pushyovhuti under control
  - b. to bring Maukhari under control
  - c. to make Rajyoshree a captive

**Which one of the following answers is correct?**

- a. i and ii
- b. i and iii
- c. ii and iii
- d. i, ii and iii

**Read the stimulant and answer the questions 3 and 4**

Rupganj Union has been governed peacefully for quite a long time. But during the governance of unskilled and weak Chairman Suman, local people grew displeased for different reasons. At one stage they removed Suman from his position by revolting under the leadership of Durjoy.

- 3. Which historical Character is reflected in the revolutionary leader Durjoy?**
  - a. Bhima
  - b. Divyak
  - c. Mahipala, II
  - d. Bigrahapala
  
- 4. The cause of deposition of the same leader like Suman is –**
  - i. failure to stop rebellion
  - ii. inefficiency as a leader
  - iii. inability to solve the problems of the people

**Which one of the following questions is correct?**

- a. i
- b. ii and iii
- c. i and iii
- d. i, ii and iii

## Creative Questions

1. Ajay started to live with his family in Nabinagar leaving his old abode. In course of time he became an administrator of Nabingar. He did many things for the development of the area. Besides, his ancestors also made contributions to education, culture and literature. The people of different religions in his area would become the victims of discrimination.
  - a. Where was the capital of Kharga dynasty?
  - b. Why are the Senas called 'Brahmmakhatriya'?
  - c. Which Sena ruler's activities are reflected in those of Nabinagar's administrator Ajay? Explain.
  - d. Do you think the ancestors of that said ruler made adequate contributions to education and literature? Justify your answer.
2. The Chairman of Ramnagar municipality Saumen Barna established an academic institution in his area. Learners from home and abroad had the opportunity to study in that institution. He became attentive to the advantages of different religious people following their respective religions. He also became able to establish order and peace in his municipality. As a result, he got an opportunity of remaining the administrator of the municipality for a long time.
  - a. Who is the founder of the Pala dynasty?
  - b. What does 'Matsannayam' mean'?
  - c. Is there any similarity between the activities of the chairman of Ramnagar municipality and those of Dharmapala in setting up modern academic institutions? Explain it .
  - d. The ideal and inspiration of Dharmapala worked behind Saumen Barua's running the municipality for a long time. Evaluate the comment .

## **Chapter Five**

# **Social, Economic and Cultural history of Ancient Bengal**

Man is a social being. Naturally they live in societies. This needs mutual cooperation. This is why, they develop different kinds of social, economic and political institutions. Human beings primarily need three essential things for their survival- food, clothes and shelter. Then comes the necessity of education, science, art and crafts, rules of law, etc. to better their life. All these collectively form their culture. Before the arrivals of the Aryans the ancient people of Bengal together developed a certain kind of social and cultural life and that was the most ancient culture of Bengal. Scholars maintain that their language was 'Austric' and they were called 'Nishada' by nationals. Afterwards another national called 'Alpine' got mixed with the small ethnic groups in Bengal. They also contributed to develop the culture of Bengal. In fact, streams of different human clans got mingled in the Bengalee human nature. Thus, the people of Bengal are known as 'crossbreed'. However, due to a long history of people's diverse style of communication and exchange, the people of Bengal have got a specific type of physique.

**At the end of this chapter we will be able to -**

- give an account of the socio-economic conditions of Bengal;
- give an account of art, architecture, sculpture and painting of ancient Bengal;
- explain the origin and development of language and literature of ancient Bengal;
- explain values and beliefs of the people reflected in religious practices, occasions, festivals and rituals of ancient Bengal;
- hold positive ideas about the contributions of the then dynasties in the socio-economic and cultural practices;
- be interested in knowing the origin and development of the cultural life of ancient Bengal through the study of history.

### **Society, Economy and Culture of Ancient Bengal**

#### **Social life in Ancient Bengal**

Before the Maurya rule no political identity grew up in the people of Bengal in true sense. During this time the society was divided in different classes. It was called Kauma society. Some religious thoughts prevailing before the arrival of the Aryans

spread among the Hindus afterwards. Remarkable Among them are 'Karmafala' (consequences of one's actions, especially of previous birth that governs one's weal and woe), belief in rebirth, practice of yoga, etc. The influence of many customs and manners of this age are noticed in Hindu society in the later periods. For example, entertaining the guests with betel leaves and nuts, singing for the Shiva, Saffron ceremony in marriage, putting on 'dhuti-shari' (white cotton sari with narrow border of any color put on by widows of Hindu society or by Brahmins or worshippers) and using vermillion in the forehead of married women, etc.

The caste system was a very essential part of Aryan society. As a result of their living here for a long time, this system was also introduced in Bengal. There were four castes in Bengal in the ancient time Brahmanas, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. In the later period, more varieties of crossbred people originated. Every caste in the society had particular occupation. Studying, teaching and performing religious activities were the jobs of the Brahmins. They would get the highest dignity in the society. The kshatriyas belong to warrior community. Trade and commerce were done by the Vaishyas. The Sudras of the lowest class would generally do agricultural work, fishing and other lower jobs. People of all other castes except the Brahmins would associate with one another. Generally, marriage would take place within the same caste, but the system of inter-caste marriage was also in vogue between a groom of higher class and a bride of lower class. But, in the later, period strict rules were imposed on this matter.

Bangalee women had fame for their good qualities. The girls would receive education. In those days there was no system of putting on veils. Taking only one wife was the social rule. But, men could keep more than one wife. A widow had to take food without animal protein and give up luxury. The husband being dead, the wife would go to Sahamarana (dying or burning with the husband on his pyre). This system is called 'Satidaha Pratha'. Women did not have any right on wealth and property. We can learn about the good moral character of the Bangalees from the ancient religious scriptures of Bengal. But, it cannot be said that there was no corruption and obscenity in the social life of the Bangalee.

Like present time, in those days the staple food of the Bangalees were rice, fish, meat, vegetables, milk, curd, ghee, kheer, etc. Different types of tasty pies were also popular. However Bangalee Brahmanas would eat protein. Then all types of fish were available. In the East Bengal, Hilsa and dried fish were very popular foods. Vegetables

Besides, Some years, back some more Viharas have been discovered at Maynamati of Comilla. It is known as Shalbana Vihara.

In the history of architecture of Indian sub-continent, the temples of ancient Bengal have occupied a special place in terms of dignity and uniqueness. Many temples were built here in ancient time. All the temples were situated in the regions of Pundrabardhana, Samatata, Rahr, Varendra, etc. Stalutes of god and goddesses made of stone and metals are the best testimony of fine arts of this age. In constructing the statues generally octameptal and touchstone were used. Besides, the use of gold and silver are also noticed.

Recently a 2500 years old ancient city civilization has been discovered in Wari Bateshwar. This archeological site is based at Belabo, Shibpur and Raipura upozillas of Narashingdi district. Different types of rocks of the prehistoric era, weapons of fossilized wood, copper stone culture of archeological materials etc. have been discovered from fifty archeological sites here. In fact, Wari-Bateshwar was one of the oldest localities of Bengal.



Ruins of Wari-Bateshwar

In the meantime, many archeological relics have been discovered here. They include clay-made fort-walls, trenches, roads with side-walks and brick-made architectural works. This place was in fact a river-port as well as an international business centre beside the old Brahmaputra basin.

Here flourished a kind of factories that used to produce low priced glass-beads with cheap stones. The relics discovered in Wari-Bateshwar justify the high skills, tastes and philosophy of the artists during this period. Among these discoveries old silver coins, treasure boxes, rare architectures, various kinds of stone beads, magnificent pendants and amulets, measuring weights, terracotta, metal-antics, pottery, art-works, etc. are mentionable.

Recently, a Buddhist monastery have been discovered in an ancient village named Bojrojogini in Bikrampur, Munshiganj. It is the birth place of world famous Buddhist intellectual and preacher, Atish Dipankar. Archeologists maintain that this monastery is built in between eighth or nineth century B.C. The ruins collected from here are of the pre-middle era and include royal inscriptions on copper plates, sculptures made of wood and stone, statues and columns, which are the proofs of the civilization that time.

**Sculpture:** The practice of sculpture and architectures are evident in ancient Bengal. There were many temples in Bengal during that period. Therefore, there is no doubt that it was a period for the significant development of sculptural art. Though many temples are damaged to a large extent in many places, yet idols of god and goddesses have been preserved in them.

The stone cutting and terracotta clay stabs engraved on the walls of Paharpur Temple of Naogaon district revels the own cultural styles of Bengal. Not only the cut work, but also the art work of burnt clay was also very famous in Bengal. A good number of burnt clay tiles and images of deities have been found at Moinamoti and the Lalmai hills of Comilla district.



Terracotta from Paharpur Vihara, Naogaon

**Painting:** No painting belonging to the age prior to the Pala regime is yet to be found. But there was the practice of painting in Bengal in ancient time. Using painting in order to beautify the walls of the temples and viharas was a common practice. In those days the Buddhist writers used to make manuscripts of their books on palm leaves or paper. In order to insert pictures in these books, the writers and artists would draw small pictures.

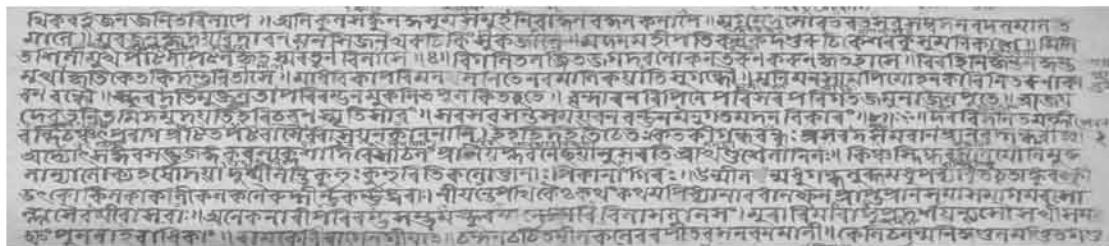
The artists of ancient Bengal showed adequate efficiency in painting through lines. A 'puthi' (a kind of religious or folk story book) '*Astrasahasrika Proggaparamita*' composed during the reign of King Ramapala is an excellent testimony of line painting of Bengal. Another classic example of line painting is that of Vishnu designed on the other side of a copper plate with royal edict of Dommanpala which was found in the Sundarbans.



*Astasahasrika Proggaparamita*

### Bengali Language and Literature: Origin and Development

Austroasiatic was the language of the ancient people of Bengal. After the arrival of the Aryans, this language gradually disappeared. The name of the language of the Aryans is ancient Vedic language. In the later period, this language was reformed. As the ancient language was reformed, so the name of this language was to be called Sanskrit. Many believe that Bangla is derived from the Sanskrit language. But scholars have declined this idea. So, the language that the Aryans used in the most ancient time and the language in which Vedic books were written experienced many changes due to differences of time and places. Later Sanskrit turns to 'Prakrito' and 'Prakrito' turns to 'Apobhrongsho', Bangla language originated from 'Apobhrongsho' in the eighth century. For example: Krishno>Kanu>Kanai.



### Charyapada

The examples of such language are found in four ancient Buddhist 'puthis' collected from Nepal by Haraprasad Shasri. They are known as 'Charyapada'. Bengali literature is originated from this Charyapada. Therefore, the importance of these 'Charyapadas' are invaluable in terms of the history of Bengali language and literature.

## **Cultural life, Values and Beliefs of Ancient Bengal Religious Conditions of Ancient Bengal**

It is not clearly known if there was any religion before the establishment of the Vedic religion. But the small ethnic groups of the said time were quite prejudiced. They were believers of different kinds of worshipping as they had fears as well as respects for many things. Religious practices were not all the same everywhere. Rather it differed according to the caste, class, kauma and janapada. Moreover, the ancient religious beliefs, practice and prejudice, etc. were transformed to and mingled with Vedic religion. Even many women-practices in rural Bengal replicate some of the practices of the small ethnic groups of the ancient period. Some of them are worshipping trees or using amro-pallab (tender mango branches with five or seven leaves), sheaf of paddy, grass leaves, banana, betel leaves and nuts, coconut, ghat (small earthen pitcher), vermillion, etc. for religious festivals and occasions. Thus the worshipping of Manasa, Shashan Kali, Banadurga, Shosti, etc. bear the identity of the religious activities of the small communities. People of different Kaums such as Khasia, Munda, Sautal, Rajbangshi, Buno, Shabar worship trees, stones, mountains, birds and animals, fruits and roots as Gods and Goddesses like their primitive forefathers.

From the very fourth century Bengal came under the influence of three great religions of the sub-continent: Vedic, Buddhism and Jainism. There was no spread of Aryan-Vedic religion and culture here up to the third or fourth century. It is known from copper inscriptions that the Brahmins settled down in many places of Bengal coming from 'Modhyadesh'. Thus, the waves of the Vedic religion and culture reached the eastern frontier of Bengal in the sixth century.

The influence and power of the Vedic religion in the Pala regime remained undamaged. Almost all of the Barma and the Pala kings believed in Brahmin religion. During that

time Buddhism got damaged to a great extent. The influence and power of the Vedic religion in the Pala regime remained undamaged. Almost all of the kings and the Maharajas believed in Brahmin religion. During that time Buddhism lost its glamour somehow. The practice of bathing-charity-meditation at special lunar moments as well as burnt offerings for gods and goddesses began as Vedic occasions. Gradually different rituals like *jatkarma*, *niskramana*, *annaprashana* (first hard food for the child), *churantakarana*, *upanayana*, *somabartana*, *vivah* (wedding), *grihaprobesh* (entering a new house for the first time), etc. spread in the Brahmin society of Bengal. The Brahmins were patronized by the state to spread these rituals all over the country.

Though Vedic and Brahmin religions spread very fast in Bengal, there was evolution in course of time. Worship of new gods and goddesses started. The new gods and goddesses were basically the gods and goddesses depicted in the Puranas and epics. So, this religion is called 'Puranic Religion'. The 'Purohitas'(priests) got all-out responsibility to conduct religious activities. The complexities of religious activities increased. The custom of sacrificing animals instead of offerings of milk and ghee at the altars of deities spread further. Various types of superstitions appeared as a part of religion. A few religion originated from the rituals of mythical worshipping. Vaishnava religion was the most remarkable among them. Shaiva religion was also practised during the Gupta reign. In addition to these gods and goddesses there were many other deities to worship in Bengal. Among them the most remarkable were the worshipping of the Sun and that of Power. The Jainism was noticed in north Bengal.

In the religious world of ancient Bengal Buddhism has occupied a special place. With the active patronage of the Palas and the rules afterwards for a long period of four hundred years or so this religion gained international dignity and recognition across Bengal and Bihar.

During the Sena rule, worshipping of Gods and Goddesses such as Vishnu, Shiva, Parvati, etc. started and many Hindu temples were built. As a result, the decline of Buddhism started in Bengal. The last strike came from the Turkish Muslims.

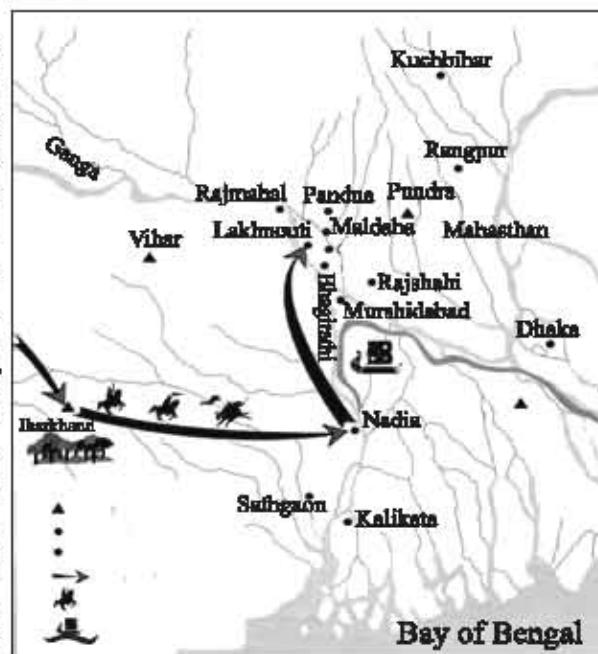
Though there was the existence of Vedic, Puranic (Mythical), Jain, Buddhist and other religious communities in ancient Bengal, there was no conflict and clash among them. Rather they lived in harmony. Though the Pala kings were the patronizers of Buddhism, they were respectful to other religious communities. During this age the religious life of Bengal was quite developed and tolerance to other religions was one of the traits of Bengalee character.

**Individual Work:** Mention the names of religious communities of ancient Bengal.

heroic deeds spread very rapidly. Many fortune-seeking Muslim soldiers joined his group. So, the number of Bakhtiyar's soldiers increased. Thus continuing such raids in the adjacent areas, he came to a castle surrounded by wall in the southern Bihar and attacked it. His opposition could make little resistance. After conquering the castle, he found all the people there with shaven head and the castle full of books. After an enquiry, he came to know that it was a Buddhist monastery (Vihara). It was the Odanta or Odantapuri Vihara. Since that time the Muslims called the place Bihar. It is known as Bihar till today.

After the conquest of Bihar, Bakhtiyar called on Sultan Qutubuddin Aibek with lots of riches and jewels. Being honoured by the sultan he returned to Bihar. Procuring more soldiers he attacked Navadwip or Nadia next year. That time the King of Bengal, Laxman Sena was staying at Nadia. Gour was his capital and Nadia was his second capital. The conquest of Bihar by Bakhtiyar terrified the Sen kingdom very much. The diviners, pundits and Brahmins advised King Lakhman Sena to leave the capital. They advised that because there was clear indication of the conquest of Bengal by the Turkish army in their scriptures. Besides, the description of the conqueror given in the scriptures strictly coincided with the physical appearance of Bakhtiyar. Despite this King Laksman Sena did not leave Nadia.

In order to enter Bengal from Bihar, two mountain passes Teliagarh and Shikharigar were to be used. These two mountain passes were well-protected. He did not take the common passage. Advancing through the paths in the forest, Bakhtiyar's soldiers moved in smaller groups. Escaping the attention of the enemy when Bakhtiyar got to the entrance of Nadia, he had only 17 or 18 cavaliers with him. How was it possible for Bakhtiar to conquer with so small number of soldiers? It is said that he advanced with such swiftness that only 17 or 18 soldiers could follow him. The rest of the main army fell behind him.



It was noon when the king was busy at his lunch. The palace guards were relaxing and the people were doing their daily chores. Bakhtiyar Khalji in the guise of a merchant reached the entrance of the city. This small group of people suddenly whipped their swords in front of the palace and killed the palace guards. This sudden attack raised a

hue and cry all around. Leaving the palace unprotected everybody ran away in fear of death. Meanwhile, the second squad of Bakhtiyar penetrated inside of the city and the third squad reached the archway. Then the whole city was almost under siege. The people were terrified and alarmed. In such a situation King Laksman Sena got disheartened. Finding no means to defend himself against the enemy's attack, he along with his family secretly fled on bare foot through the back door and went by boat to Bikrampur of Munshiganj district of East Bengal and took shelter there. Within a while, the soldiers of Bakhtiyar who had fallen behind also arrived. Thus without any hindrance Nadia and the adjacent areas came to the possession of the Muslims. The historians have differing opinions relating to the exact date of Bakhtiyar's conquest of Nadia. At present, however, 1204 A.D is accepted as the year of Nadia conquest.

After this, Bakhtiyar left Nadia and advanced towards Laksmanabati (Gaur). Taking possession of Laksmanabati, he made it his capital. This Laksmanabati came to be known as Lakhnauti during the Muslim period. After conquering Gaur, Bakhtiyar moved to the further east and established his own authority in Barendra or East Bengal. It is to be mentioned here that Bakhtiyar became the head of an independent Kingdom after the conquest of Nadia. But he could not establish his dominion in whole Bengal. In East Bengal, the rule of Laksman Sena was unaffected. After his death his descendants ruled East Bengal some time more.

Two years after the conquest of Gaur or Lakhnauti, Bakhtiyar went out on Tibet mission. This Tibet mission was the last military expedition of his life. But failing in this mission he went back to Devkota. Here, he fell ill and reached in a dying state in 1206A.D. It is conjectured that he was killed by an Ameer (rich noble man) named Ali Mardan.

The name of Ikhtiyar Uddin Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiyar Khalji is especially pertinent in the history of Muslim rule in Bengal. The establishment of first Muslim rule in this country was due to his efforts. This rule lasted almost more than five hundred years and a half (1204A.D.-1757 A.D.). He was not satisfied only conquering kingdom. He also took proper steps to set up his administration in the conquered reigns. He has significant roles in promoting Islam and Muslim culture. During his reign many Madrshas, Muqtabas and Mosques were established.

### **History of Turkish rule in Bengal**

Bakhtiyar Khalji initiated the Muslim rule in Bengal. The first phase of it was from 1204A.D. to 1338A.D .. It cannot be said that the rulers of this period were entirely independent. Some of them were Bakhtiyar's co-warriors Khalji lords. Again, some were rulers from the Turkish dynasty. All of them were rulers of Bengal under the Delhi Sultans. Later, many of them rebelled against Delhi and tried to be independent. Their rebellion did not succeed at last due to the attacks by Delhi. This period of Muslim rule was full of revolts and chaos. So, the historian Ziauddin Barani named Bangladesh as 'Bulgakpur' which means 'City of Rebellion'!

After the death of Bakhtiyar Khalji, conflicts ensured among his co-warriors regarding power. The names of his three co-warriors are known. They were Muhammad Shiran Khalji, Ali Mardan Khalji and Husamuddin Iwaj Khalji. Many thought that Ali Mardan Khalji was the murderer of Bakhtiyar Khalji. For this reason, Khalji Ameers and soldiers chose Muhammad Shiran Khalji as their leader. He was able to bring back order to some extent. Ali Mardan Khalji was imprisoned. Later on, Ali Mardan fled away and gained the co-operation of Qutubuddin, the sultan of Delhi. The reign of Shiran Khalji lasted only one year. After this, Husamuddin Iwaj Khalji took the charge as the ruler of Devkota in 1208A.D. Ali Mardan Khalji came back after two years with of Delhi co-operation. Iwaj Khalji willingly handed over power to him. Ali Mardan Khalji declared independence in 1210A.D. and changed his name to Alauddin Ali Mardan Khalji. He was a very strict administrator. So, agitation against him escalated high. The Khalji Maliks unitedly rebelled against him and he was killed by them.

Iwaj Khalji came to power for the second term. At this stage he adopted the new name Ghiyasuddin Iwaj Khalji and ruled Bengal as an independent Sultan. He had been the Sultan of Bengal almost 15 years from 1212 A.D. to 1227 A.D ..

### **Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaj Khalji**

Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaj Khalji was undoubtedly the best among the Khalji Maliks. He made efforts to strengthen and stabilize the Muslim kingdom of Bengal established by Bakhtiyar. He transferred his capital from Devakot to Gaur or Lakhnauti for the ease of administration. He built a fort named Basankote to strengthen the defence for the capital. Lakhnauti, standing on a river had the advantage of trade and commerce. Moreover, Iwaj Khalji perceived that the territory of the river oriented Bengal could not be extended with only the cavalry. For this, a strong naval force was necessary. Naval force was also needed to sustain the rule of Bengal. So, it can be concluded that of all the Muslim rulers of Bengal, Iwaj Khalji laid the foundation of the naval force. Wide and deep trench was dug round the capital for its security. He dug many canals and built bridges to save Lakhnauti and adjacent places from the yearly flood. He built roads so that the soldiers could move and the commodity could be carried from one place to another easily. The construction of highway not only facilitated the administration of the kingdom and trade and commerce, but it was also like a blessing to the people because it protected their house and corn-field from the yearly flood.

Gaiyasuddin Iwaj Khalji can be regarded as a good administrator for the above mentioned activities. He also concentrated on the extension of his kingdom. The Hindu Kings of the neighbouring kingdoms like Kamrup, Odisha, Banga (south-east Bengal) were compelled to send him tax. The Abbasid Caliph, Al Nasir recognized Gaiyasuddin Iwaj Khalji as a valid Sultan in a letter.

Iltutmish, the Sultan of Delhi, never liked the extension of the power of the muslim kingdom in Lakhnau under Ghiyasuddin Iwaj Khalji. But at the beginning of his reign, it was not possible for him to pay attention to Bengal as he had immediate dangers and problems to solve. When those were gone in 1224 A.D., he paid attention to Bengal. In 1225 A.D. both armies of Iltutmish and Ghiyasuddin came accross each other near the mountains of Munger or Shokreegoli, Iwaj proposed for a treaty and a treaty was signed. Being pleased Iltutmish appointed Malik Alauddin Jani as the ruler of Bihar and kept Iwaj Khalji as the ruler of Bengal. Then he went back to Delhi. But immediately after the Sultan had returned to Delhi, Iwaj Khalji again declared independence. He attacked Bihar and drove out its ruler Alauddin Jani. Coming back to Lakhnauti, Iwaj Khalji could realize that Iltutmish would attack Bengal again. He stayed in the capital for about one year with preparation and waited for counter attack. At this time the royal force of Delhi got engaged in managing rebellion in Ajodhya. Iwaj Khalji thought that the Delhi soldiers were not in a position to attack Bengal in such circumstances. So, he decided to attack East Bengal in that situation. His capital Lakhnauti was so to say unprotected. Meanwhile, Sultan Iltutmish directed his son Nasiruddin Mahmood to attack Lakhnauti. Taking the advantage of Iwaj Khalji's absence, Nasiruddin Mahmood attacked Lakhnauti, the capital of Bengal. Hearing this news Iwaj came back to the capital with a small member of soldiers. The enemy soldiers had already occupied his Basankot Fort. Iwaj Khalji was defeated in the battle and taken prisoner. Later he was killed. After his defeat and fall Bengal completely came under the dominion of the Sultan of Delhi. Nasiruddin Mahmud was appointed the ruler of Bengal.

Iwaj Khalji was a patronizer of art and literature. Under his patronization, the Zuma mosque of Gaur and several other mosques were built. During his reign, many Muslim Sufis and Saiyads from Central Asia took shelter in his court. These sufis and distinguished people greatly co-operated in preaching Islam. Their presence and the patronization of Iwaj Khalji made Lakhnauti a centre of Muslim education and culture.

Since the death of Iwaj Khalji to 1287 A.D., 60 years, Bengal remained a province under the Muslim rulers of Delhi. During this time fifteen rulers ruled Bengal. Ten of them were slaves. The slaves were called 'Marnluk'. For this reason, the sixty years reign in Bengal is regarded as rule of the slave or 'Marnluk rule' by many people. But all these fifteen rulers belonged to the Turkish race. During the Turkish reign, there was internal trouble in Delhi. As a result, it was not possible for the Sultans to concentrate on the distant provinces like Bengal. So, the Turkish rulers of Bengal could rule pretty independently. The first Turkish ruler was Nasiruddin Mahmood. He was the son of Iltutmish, the Sultan of Delhi. After... the death of Sultan Iltutmish in 1236A.D., there was disturbance in Delhi. Taking

spent money to build mosques and madrasas in Mecca and Medina. Despite some faults and failures in certain fields, Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah was one of the best Sultans of Bengal and he was the last Sultan of Illiyas Shah dynasty. Since his death, the fall of this dynasty began.

### **King Ganesh and the Habshi Reign**

It is generally said that the two hundred years (1338 A.D.-1538 A.D.) is the period of independent reign of the Muslim Sultans. Yet, sometime in the mid part of this two hundred years there was a little break. After the death of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah, his son Saifuddin Hamza Shah came to the throne. But that time there was conspiracy among the aristocrats about seizing power. Having ruled one year, he was murdered by his slave Shihabuddin in 1412 A.D. Being the Sultan, Shihabuddin adopted the name 'Shihabuddin Byazid Shah'; But after two years (1414 A.D.-1415 A.D.) he was killed by some other conspirators. Taking the advantage of this situation, the Hindu aristocratic king Ganesh seized the power in Bengal.

The Sultans of Bengal appointed the Hindus to most of the high posts. King Ganesh too was a high-ranking courtier of Azam Shah. It is known that Ganesh was at first a king of Vatulia region in Dinajpur. He got an employment in the court of the Sultan. Just after having the employment, he started to gather strength secretly. His desire was to turn out the Muslims and establish the Hindus in power. With this very aim he came to power uprooting the Illiyas Shahi dynasty. Ganesh killed many sufie devotees. The leader of the Muslim devotees Nur Qutub-ul-Alam appealed to the Sultan of Jainpur, Ibrahim Sarki to protect the Muslims. As Ibrahim Sarki came to Bengal equipped with army, Ganesh was terrified. At last he made a compromise with the Muslim saint Nur Qutub-ul-Alam. As per the conditions, Ganesh converted his son Jadu into Muslim and left the throne of Bengal to his son. After Jadu had become a Muslim, his name was changed to Jalaluddin Mahmud. Sultan Ibrahim Sharki set Jalaluddin to the throne of Bengal and returned to his own land- Jaunapur.

Ganesh came to the throne twice. First time he was in power only for a few months. In the middle of 1415A.D. Ibrahim Sharki placed Jalaluddin Mahmud Shah to the throne. As Ibrahim Sharki returned, Ganesh felt secured. Through many rites and rituals, he again converted his son to Hinduism. Ganesh died in 1418A.D. After the death of king Ganesh, the Hindu courtiers placed Mahendre Dev, another son of Ganesh, to the throne of Bengal. But shortly Jalaluddin ousted Mahendradeva and came to the throne for the second time. At this stage he was uninterruptedly in power till 1431. During the time of this very competent administrator, the territory of Bengal had a great extension. The whole Bengal, parts of Tripura and south Bihar, except Arakan were within his kingdom at least for some time. Coins with his name were issued from various mints

of his kingdom. He shifted his capital from Pandua to Gaur. After the death of Jalaluddin Mahumud Shah, his eldest son Shamsuddin Ahmad Shah succeeded to the throne. Falling a victim to the plot of the courtiers, he was murdered by the slaves Sadi Khan and Nasir Khan. Thus, the reign of king Ganesh and his descendants came to an end.

### **Individual work**

1. Prove the fact that Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah was a patronizer of education and culture.
2. Analyse the causes of the rise of King Ganesh.

### **Rule of the Laler Illiyas Shahi Dynasty**

After the death of Shamsuddin Ahamad Shah, his murderer, a slave Nasir Khan came to the throne of Bengal. But the aristocrats who instigated Nasir Khan to kill Ahmad Shah, did not kindly take to his ascending the throne. Probably the authority of a slave was humiliating to them. So they unitedly killed Nasir Khan.

After the death of Nasir Khan, the throne of Gaur remained vacant for some time. Ahmad Shah had no son. Then the aristocrats placed a descendant of Illiyas Shah named Mahmud in 1452A.D. to the throne of Gaur. He is known as Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah in history. Thus the descendants again began an independent rule in Bengal. So this period is called 'Later Illiyas Shahi dynasty'. Nasiruddin was a skilled commander-in-chief and just ruler. During the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud, Jessore and Khulna areas were included in the Muslim kingdom. West Bengal, East Bengal, North Bengal and parts of Bihar were within his kingdom. He also issued coins with his own name.

Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah died in 1459 A.D., Then his son Rukanuddin Barbak Shah succeeded to the throne of Bengal. Since his father's reign, Barbak Shah proved himself an efficient ruler. That time he was the ruler of Satgaon. During his reign, the territory of Bengal got extended. The northern part of the Ganges was within his territory. During his reign, Bhagalpur came under Muslim rule. There was trouble about the authority of Chittagong. It was under the Arakan kingdom towards the beginning of Barbak Shah's reign. But Barbak Shah restored it towards the end. Jessore and Khulna were under his authority too. He also extended his territory towards the south.

It was Barbak Shah who first gathered a lot of Abyssinian slaves (Habshi slaves) and appointed them to military posts and important posts in the palace. The number of appointed slaves were eight thousands. Probably he made a group of these Habshis in order to form his own party. But this step brought jeopardy for the future the Kingdom.

Sultan Rukanuddin Barbak Shah was a great scholar. In many stone inscriptions 'Al-Fazil' and 'Al-Kamil' are used. Those proved that Barbak Shah attained the highest appellation in the field of education. He was not only a scholar, but also a patron of literature. He patronized the learned and the scholars of both the Hindus and the Muslims. That he was a king of liberal and non-communal outlook is proved by the fact that he patronized the Hindu poets and scholars and appointed many Hindus to the high posts of the royal court. In this regard, a ruler of liberal mind like Barbak Shah is rare not only in the history of Bengal, but also of India.

Barbak Shah was a true lover of beauty. It was Barbak Shah who constructed the massive and beautiful arch known as 'Dakhil Darwaza' in Gaur. At this time two mosques were built in Mirzagonj of Chittagong and Patuakhali districts. In the light of these activities, Barbak Shah can be considered the best among the Sultans of Bengal.

Barbak Shah passed away in 1474 A.D. Then his son Shamsuddin Abu Muzaffar Yusuf Shah (1474 A.D.-1481 A.D.) became the Sultan of Bengal. The vast kingdom built by his father and grandfather was unimpaired during his time. His territory was extended up to Odisha to the West and Sylhet to the east.

The death of Yusuf Shah was followed by his son Sikandar Shah to the throne. As he fell ill, he was dismissed. Barbak Shah's younger brother Hussain took on the title 'Jalauddin Fateh Shah' and came to the throne (1481 A.D.-1487 A.D.). He issued coins in his own name. But this time, there was trouble in the royal court. The Habshi slaves became very powerful at this time. Jalauddin Fateh Shah tried to curb their strength. This made all the Habshi slaves begin conspiracies against the Sultan unitedly. Sultan Shahjada was the head of the palace guards. Through temptation, the slaves persuaded Sultan Shahzada and his subordinate pikes to join their group. Shahzada killed Fateh Shah inside the palace. With the murder of Fateh Shah, the reign of Illiyas Shahi dynasty in Bengal came to an end. Thus the reign of the Habshi began in Bengal.

**Individual Work:** Find out the steps taken by Sultan Rukanuddin Barbak Shah that was beneficial to his kingdom.

### Habshi Rule

The Habshi rule in Bengal lasted only six years (1487 A.D.-1493 A.D.). The history of this country during this period abounds with wrongs, injustice, revolt, conspiracy and disappointment. All the three of the four Habshi Sultans of this period were murdered.

Habshi leader Sultan Shahzada adopted the title 'Barbak Shah' and began to rule Bengal first. But within a few months, he was killed by Habshi commander-in-chief Malik Andil. Malik Andil assumed the title 'Saifuddin Firuz Shah' and came to the throne. Only his three years reign (1487 A.D.-1490 A.D.) was a little pre-eminent in history.

His death was followed by Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah II. But after a short rule (1490 A.D.-1491 A.D.), he was killed. A Habshi leader killed him and came to the throne with the name 'Shamsuddin Muzaffar Shah' (1491 A.D.-1493 A.D.). He was notorious as a tyrant and killer. Consequently, the aristocrats of Gaur revolted against Muzaffar Shah. Sayed Hossain, an adviser to Muzaffar Shah joined the rebels. At last Muzaffar Shah was killed. With his death, the Habshi rule in Bengal ended.

### **Hussain Shahi Dynasty**

Getting rid of the Habshi rule, Syed Hussain came to the throne of Bengal. As he became the Sultan, he took the title 'Alauddin Hussain Shah'. Thus the rule of a new dynasty named 'Hussain Shahi dynasty' began in Bengal. Of the reigns of the independent Sultans of Bengal, Hussain Shahi reign (1493 A.D.-1538 A.D.) was the most glorious period.

Sultan Alauddin Hussain Shah was the best Sultan of the Hussain Shahi period. He belonged to the Sayed family of Arabia. He came from Mecca to Bengal with his father Sayed Ashraf-al-Hussain and brother Yusuf. He first set his abode in the village Chandpara of Rahr. Later, Hussain Shah went to the capital Gaur and got employment under Muzaffar Shah. Then he became an adviser. Thus, he came to power in Bengal.

There was anarchy and chaos in the kingdom since Alauddin Hussain Shah ascended the throne. After taking up the responsibility of the kingdom, he engaged himself in bringing peace and discipline. There was anarchy in the country due to the maladministration of the Habsli community. They had the main role in the murder of every Sultan. Coming to the throne, Hussain Shah gave directions to the Habshis to stop such activities. But as they disobeyed his order, he gave command to kill them.

This severe measure taken by Hussain Shah made twelve thousand Habshis to lose their lives. The rest of the Habshis were driven out of the kingdom. The next step of Alauddin Hussain Shah was to diminish the power of the bodyguard pikes. This regiment of pikes played the most vital role in all the conspiracies of the palace. Hussain Shah dissolved the regiment of the pikes. In their place, he formed a new regiment of guards consisting of aristocratic Hindus and Muslims.

Alauddin Hussain Shah tried to make politics and social systems free from the Habshi influence for the welfare of the kingdom. He also strengthened the administration by shifting the capital to a place near Gaur. Of all the Sultans of Bengal only he established his capital in a place other than in Pandua and Gaur. Severe measures were taken to punish the aristocrats and courtiers who tried to create anarchy during the Habshi rule. All the oppressive servants with low birth were dismissed. On the other hand, he appointed the Sayeds, Mongols, Afghans and Hindus to different important and high posts of the administration. These measures brought within a short time peace and discipline in the country.

As Muhammad Shah Shur was killed, the emperor of Delhi, Adil Shah appointed Shahbaz Khan the ruler of Bengal. Muhammad Shah's son Khizir Khan was staying at Alahabad that time. Immediately after hearing the news of his father's death, he adopted the title 'Giayasuddin Bahadur Shah' and declared himself the independent Sultan of Bengal. After a few days, he defeated Shahbaz Khan and ascended to the throne of Bengal.

During this time, the political situation in Delhi became much complicated. Exploiting the weakness of Sher Shah's descendants, Sultan Humayun restored his own kingdom. But though he established his authority in Delhi, he got no chance to do the same in Bengal. After the death of Humayun, his son Akbar succeeded to the throne of Delhi and advanced to suppress the Afghan leaders of the Shur dynasty one by one. In the second battle of Panipath (1556 A.D.), Himu, the Commander-in-chief of Adil Shah, was defeated and killed by the Mughal soldiers. Adil Shah was much debilitated by this. Then he fled towards Bengal. On the way, he was defeated and killed by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah in Fatehpur near Surajgar (1557 A.D.).

Afghan Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah, conqueror of Bengal, when advanced towards Jaunpur, Mughal commander Khan-i-Zaman barred his movement. The diplomatic Bahadur Shah made alliance with Khan-i-Zaman and returned to Bengal. After this, he did not make any expedition outside Bengal. He died in 1560 A.D.

After the death of Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah, his brother Jalaluddin Shur took the title 'Ghiyasuddin II' and succeeded to the throne of Bengal. Like his brother, he also maintained friendly relation with the Mughal. As he breathed his last in 1563 A.D., his only son ascended the throne of Bengal. But his name could not be known. After he ruled for only three months, an Afghan leader named Ghiyasuddin III killed him and came to the throne of Bengal. But he could not rule long either. Taz Khan, the king of the Karrani dynasty killed Ghiyasuddin and ascended to the throne of Bengal.

Taz Khan Karrani and Sulayman Shah Karrani were the commander of Sher Khan. Due to praiseworthy contributions in the battle of Kanauj, Sher Shah gave them rent-free land Jaiger in South Bihar. During the reign of Islam Khan, Taz Khan Karrani showed much efficiency as the commander-in-chief and diplomatic adviser. During the time of Firuz, the minor son and successor of Islam Shah, Taz Khan was appointed the Wazir. Killing Firuz, his maternal uncle Muhammad Adil Shur came to the throne. At this time, Taz Khan Karrani fled away and with the help of his brothers he established his dominion in South Bihar. In 1557 A.D. Taz Khan Karrani merely acknowledged loyalty to the Sultan of Bengal, Bahadur Shah Shur. After a certain time, he became totally independent.

He had also fascination for the throne of Bengal. He was waiting for an opportunity. When the unknown Ghiyasuddin occupied the throne of the Shur dynasty, taking advantage of the situation, Taz Khan and his brothers defeated and killed Ghiyasuddin and seized Gaur. Thus Taz Khan Karrani established the rule of the Karrani dynasty in Bengal.

After the death of Taz Khan Karrani in 1565 A.D., his brother Sulayman Khan Karrani became the Sultan of Bengal. This competent ruler included the Afghan leaders in his group. Thus most of the places of Bengal and Bihar became parts of his territory.

He maintained good relationship with the Mughal Empereor Akbar. First of all, he shifted his capital from Gaur to Tanda, situated 15 miles to the south-west of Maldaha. After the death of Sulayman Karrani in 1572 A.D., his son Bayazid ascended the throne. But within a short time, the Afghan leaders killed this tyrant Sultan. This time Daud Karrani the second son of Sulayman Karrani, came to the throne. He was the last Afghan ruler in Bengal. Daud Karrani was a very short-sighted ruler. Seeing the vast empire and abundant wealth, he thought himself equal to Emperor Akbar. So far, the Afghan rulers of Bengal and Bihar openly expressed their loyalty to the Mughal Emperors. But like an independent Emperor, Daud adopted the title 'Badshah' (the king) and introduced sermonising his name before prayer and issued coins with his own name.

The Afgans were quite antagonistic to the Mughals for long. Besides Emperor Akbar was not at ease as the Mughals didn't have any possessions of Bengal and Bihar. He was also annoyed with the self-indulgent attitude of Daud Karrani. This is why Akbar initially ordered Munim Kahn, one of his subordinates and the ruler of Jounapur to attack the kingdom of Karrani. Munim Khan didn't do that instantly. Munim Khan had good terms with Lodi Khan, the Wazir of Daud Khan Korrani. Being advised by Lodi, Daud Khan Korrani did some compromise with Munim Khan in exchange of some wealth and riches for the time being. But this compromise didn't last long. Daud was misled by some conspirators to suspect his Wazir, Lodi. As a result, he persecuted death penalty to Lodi. So far Bengal and Bihar were not attacked by the Mughals due to Lodi's wisdom and friendly relation with Munim Khan. After his death, Munim Khan was unrestricted. He forced the Afgans out from Bihar in 1573. The Afgans, in the meantime, got to be a deceased power due to internal conflicts. Munim Khan took the chance and advanced for Bengal. Afgans fled to Saptagram in Hugli district leaving Tanda, the capital of Bengal. Capturing Tanda, the Mughal soldiers rushed to Saptagram under the leadership of Munim Khan. Daud Khan fled to Odisha. Munim

Khan established Tanda as the capital of Mughal Bengal. At this time plague broke out in Panda and it took away lives of many Mughal soldiers including Munim Khan. Munim Khan's death created chaos in Bengal. This created opportunities for Daud Karrani to recapture the west and north of Bengal. On the other hand, one of the Zamindars of low lying areas in Bengal, Isha Khan, pushed the Mughal soldiers from East Bengal. They took shelter in Bihar.

When the death news of Munim Khan reached Agra, Emperor Akbar sent Khan Jahan Hussain Kuli Khan to Bengal as its ruler. King Todarmal was appointed Kuli Khan's deputy. When Kuli Khan was heading forward, he was resisted by Munim Khan at Rajmahal, the gateway to Bengal. Muzaffar Khan Turbati, the ruler of Bihar, came forward to help the Mughals. There was a severe battle between the Mughals and the Afghans near Rajmahal in 1576 A.D. Daud Karrani suffered the final defeat at the battle of Rajmahal. Later he was sentenced to death. Thus, the Karrani (Afghan) rule ended and Mughal rule began. But it is also true that the Mughal rule did not go far in the face of resistance made by the Baro Bhuiyans.

**Individual work:** Discuss how the Afghan rule was established in Bengal.

### History of the Baro Bhuiyans

Emperor Akbar could not establish his authority over the whole Bengal. The powerful Zamindars of Bengal could not accept the dominance of the Mughals. The Zamindars were independent in their own region. They had powerful army and fleet. They used to attack the Mughal commanders unitedly to defend independence. These Zamindars are known as the 'Baro Bhuiyans' in the history of Bengal.

This 'Bara' does not mean twelve. It is assumed that this 'Baro' refers to the countless number of Zamindars. In the history of Bengal, the existence 'Baro Bhuiyans' are found from the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth century. During that period, those who struggled for freedom against the Mughals are called 'Baro Bhuyians' from the historical perspective. Besides, there were many more less Zamindars in Bengal. They also rebelled against the Mughals. But later they accepted the Mughal authority.

The noteworthy Bhuiyans were:

Name of the Baro Bhuiyans	Areas to dominate
Isha Khan, Musa Khan	Most of Dhaka, almost whole of Mymensingh district, some parts of the districts of Pabna, Bogra, Rangpur.
Chand Roy and Kedar Roy	Sreepur (Bikimpur, Munshiganj)
Bahadur Gazi	Bhawal
Sona Gazi	Sarail (at the northern border of Tripura)
Osman Khan	Bokainagar (Sylhet)
Beer Hamir	Bishnupur (Bakura)
Laxman Manikya	Bhulua (Noakhali)
Paramananda Roy	Chandradeep (Barisal)
Vinod Roy, Madhu Roy	Chandpratap (Manikganj)
Mukundaram, Satrajit	Bhushana (Faridpur)
Raja Kandarpa Narayan, Ramchandra	Part of Barisal

At the beginning, the leader of the Baro Bhuiyans was Isha Khan. As the Hussain Shahi dynasty came to an end. Sulayman Khan, father of Isha Khan, established his zamindari (office of the Zaminder) in the locality of Sonargaon. Khizirpur fort was the centre of his strength. Katrabu near Sonargaon and Khizirpur was his capital. After the fall of Daud Karrani, he established his capital at Sonargaon.

Emperor Akbar paid particular attention to suppress the Baro Bhuiyans. For this reason, he sent to Bengal Shahbaz Khan in 1583 A.D., Sadik Khan in 1585, Uzir Khan in 1586 and King Man Singh in 1594 A.D. as Subadar of Bengal. They were engaged in war in many times with Isha Khan and other small Zamindars. But it was not possible to defeat Isha Khan completely. As a return for his loyalty to emperor Akbar, he maintained his own authority. On the other hand, he declared independence against the Mughals and assumed the title 'Masnad-i-Ala.'

As Isha Khan died in 1599 A.D., his son Musa Khan became the leader of the Baro Bhuiyans. Man Singh was sent to Bengal for the second time. This time Man Singh was successful to some extent. Musa Khan was defeated by Man Singh in a naval war in 1603 A.D. But, before having the final victory, news of the illness of Emperor Akbar reached. Being summoned by the Emperor, Man Singh returned to Agra.

After the death of Emperor Akbar, his son Selim adopted the name 'Jahangir' and succeeded to the throne of Delhi. He again sent Man Singh to Bengal. After one year Qutubuddin Koka was appointed Subadar in Bengal in 1606 A.D. Qutubuddin was killed by Sher Afkun. After one year his successor Subadar Jahangir Kuli Khan died. Afterwards, Islam Khan was appointed the Subadar of Bengal in 1608 A.D.

patronization trades and commerce extended to a great extent. Calcutta, Chuchura and Chandannagar became centres of business of different foreign merchants.

Murshid Kuli Khan had no son. So, his daughter Jinat-un-Nisa's husband Sujauddin Khan (1727 A.D.-1739 A.D.) was appointed as the Subadar of Bengal by the Emperor Farrukh Shiyar. With the dignity of an independent Nawab, Sujauddin came to the throne. He was a competent ruler. He was the Nawab of all the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. He gave high posts to his relatives and trustworthy people. He also made a good relationship with the Zamindars. But the last part of Sujauddin's life did not pass happily. Many of the palaces officials plotted against him. But he faced the crisis with an expert hand. After the death of Sujauddin, his son Sarfaraz Khan became the Nawab of Bengal-Bihar-Odisha. There was chaos all over the country due to his inefficiency. Thaking advantage of this situation, the Nayeb-i-Nazim Alivardi Khan attacked Sarfaraz. Sarfaraz was defeated and killed. Alibardi Khan seized the power of Bengal not with the approval of the Mughal Emperor, but with his own strength. Peace was established in Bengal during the reign of Alivardi Khan (1740 A.D.-1756 A.D.).

For a long time, the Marathi robbers known as 'Bargi' had been attacking different parts of Bengal and plagued people's life. Alivardi Khan resisted them for ten years, from 1742 A.D.-1751 A.D.. Finally he was able to drive out the Bargis from the country. As the Afghan army revolted during his reign, he suppressed them with an iron had. During the time of Alivardi, many European merchants including the English carried on commercial activities in different parts of Bengal. At the same time, they went on gathering military power. Alivardi Khan strongly checked their initiatives.

Alivardi Khan chose Sirajuddaula the son of his youngest daughter Amena Begum, as his heir. The first daughter of Alivardi, Ghasheti Begum had the expectation that the son of her second sister, Shawkat Jang would be the Nawab. Consequently, she started conspiracy against Sirajuddaula. Ghasheti Begum gained support from some aristocrats. Like Roydurlav, Mir Jafar, Umichand, Rajballav and others can be mentioned. The shrewd English merchants who came to Bengal for trade, exploited this conspiracy inside the palace. They joined hands with the conspirators. At last, there was a battle between the Nawab and the English. On June 23, 1757 A.D. in the battle of Plassey, the commander-in-chief of the Nawab, Mir Jafar treacherously abstained himself from taking part in the battle. Sirajuddaula helplessly suffered defeat. Thus, through the battle of Plassey, the foundation of the English rule was laid in Bengal. And with this the Middle age ended in Bengal.

**Individual work:**

1. Mention what happened to Subadar Shah Suja at last ?
2. Mention the relics of architecture during the time of Subadar Shaeysta Khan.
3. Explain the role of Subadar Murshid Kuli Khan in establishing independent Nawabi rule.

**Group work:** Arrange chronologically the names of the following rulers:

Serial No.	Name of ruler	Names to be arranged chronologically
1	Islam Khan	
2	Iwaj Khalji	
3	Shayesta Khan	
4	Alauddin Hussain Shah	
5	Shamsuddin Illiyas Shah	

**Exercise****Multiple Choice Questions :**

1. Who named Gaur as 'Jannatabad'?
  - a. Sher Shah
  - b. Humayun
  - c. Jahangir
  - d. Akbar
2. In order to suppress the Baro Bhuiyans, the strategy of Subadar Islam Khan was
  - i. building powerful fleet;
  - ii. shifting capital from Rajmahal to Dhaka;
  - iii. formation of cavalry.

**Which of the following is correct ?**

- a. i and ii
- b. i and iii
- c. ii and iii
- d. i, ii and iii

**Read the following and answer questions 3 and 4**

The elected Chairman of Hajirhat, Mr. Noman is very popular, People of Hindu and Muslim communities live in his locality. Despite being a Muslim himself, he entrusted the Hindus to different responsibilities as per their merit. This liberal attitude of him towards religion brought communal harmony in the area.

- 3. Which Sultan of the Middle age encouraged Mr. Noman in his work?**
- a. Alauddin Hussain Shah
  - b. Sikandar Shah
  - c. Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah
  - d. Alauddin Firoj Shah
- 4. As a result of the activities of these Sultans—**
- i. study of literature got a new momentum;
  - ii. short sighted politics began;
  - iii. the administrative works were done with skill.

**Which of the following in correct?**

- a. i
- b. i and ii
- c. i and iii
- d. i, ii and iii

### Creative Questions

1. Sohel was watching a movie on television about the war fought by the ancient Roman warriors. He saw that as a strategy of the war, the Commander of one group was planning to attack by dividing the warriors into smaller groups. The Commander very secretly took these warriors through the forest. Then they attacked the palace and occupied it.
  - a. Which part of Dinajpur was king Ganesh's territory?
  - b. Why is Illiyas Shah called the first proclaimer of Bengali nationalism in the history of Muslim Bengal in the Middle age?
  - c. Which person in the textbook reflect the war strategy of the Commander mentioned in the above passage? Explain.
  - d. Do you think that although that man failed in different aspects of life in the first stage, fortune and diligence jointly brought success for him? Give arguments.
2. Himchari is a remote place of the hilly region. Communication system being difficult there, it is problematic to market the commodity produced in time. There was a huge production of banana in the sloping lands of the hills. But it was not possible to market them in time. Watching the bananas sold at the cheapest rate, the school-going Durjoy Barua said to his mother, "Huh! It's the repetition of history, I see."
  - a. Who among the Muslim rulers in Bengal founded the navay?
  - b. Why was Bengal called 'Bulgakpur'?
  - c. Who did Durjoy remember from the history of Bengal? Explain.
  - d. Do you think it is reasonable to call the reign of that ruler 'golden period' of architecture?

## **Chapter Seven**

# **Social, Economic and Cultural History of the Middle Age of Bengal**

The royal power of Bengal came to the Muslim through the fall of the Sena dynasty and the conquest of Bengal by Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad-bin Bakhtiyar Khalji. As a result, the Middle Age of Bengal started. Before the arrival of the Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists lived in Bengal. From the eleventh century Sufi devotees started to come to Bengal to preach Islam. Many ordinary Hindus and Buddhists of Bengal became converted to Islam. Thus in Bengal an Islamic social structure started to form. During this time in Bengal, Hindus and Muslims were living in parity. So their lifestyle, ways of thinking, ideas and manners mixed and thus a culture flourished in Bengal bangalee cultural.

**At the end of this chapter we will be able to –**

- explain the contributions of the Sultan and the Mughal rulers in the socio-economic and cultural changes in the Middle Age of Bengal;
- evaluate the contributions of the Sultans and the Mughal rulers in flourishing trades and commerce, architecture and fine arts during this period.
- describe the religious condition of Bengal during the Sultan and the Mughal rule during this period.
- identify the contributions of the Sultan and the Mughal rulers creating in and flourishing of the Bengali language and literature in the Middle Age;
- realize the positive changes in Bengalee lifestyles and intellectual faculties with the advent of the Muslims in the Middle Age .
- be interested in visiting places of historical importance realizing the historical importance of achievements and architectural testimony of the Sultani and the Mughal regime.

### **Social and Cultural Life**

In the Middle Age, the influence of two religions- Hinduism and Islam prevailed in the social system of Bengal. In fact, social customs and practices were introduced centering round these two religions.

produced in plenty. Betel-leaves, nuts, coconuts were also produced in good quantity. 'Gala' was also produced abundantly. Jute and silk started to be produced in Bengal from the very Muslim rule.

The main source of economic prosperity for Bengal was agriculture. Though agricultural products were in abundance in Bengal, the method of cultivation was not developed. There was no arrangement of irrigation in those days like today. Farmers had to depend on rainfall for irrigation most of the time.

Bengal being an agriculture country, a large part of its people were farmers . There was abundance of agricultural products in Bengal. As a result, the surplus products were exported to other countries. In course of time, these commercial activities expanded also in industries. During Muslim rule, textile industry, sugar industry, boat making factory were set up in Bengal.

The prosperity in textile industry was especially remarkable in Bengal. Clothes made here were very famous for quality and standard. So, they had great demand in foreign countries. Here colored and printed clothes were made for domestic use and white clothes for exporting abroad.

Dhaka was famous for Moslin, a kind of very fine cloths and its industries. Moslin was in great demand in Europe. This cloth was so subtle that 20 yards of 'Moslin' could be put into a snuff box. The achievement of Bengal in making jute and silk clothes was also remarkable. Sugar, molasses and shipping industry also spread widely in Bengal.

The middle age of Bengal had its own varieties of small industries. During this time the metal industries were very prominent. It was a time when goods made of iron were widely in use. The blacksmiths would make different kinds of agricultural tools. They would also make everyday metal objects such as double edged swords, knives, scissors, spades, etc. People of this country would make cannons at Kasimbazar and Kolkata. In addition, Bengal was famous for paper, carpets, steel and salt industries. The country had the community of goldsmiths. They could show their special craftsmanship on the work of gold, silver, bronze, wood, stones, and elephant-tasks. Dhaka was also very famous for conch-industries. Shakhari Patti of Dhaka still reminds those memories.

The commercial activities of Bengal during Muslim rule had unprecedented expansion in foreign countries as a result of the abundance of agricultural and industrial goods of Bengal and their great demand in foreign countries. Of the export oriented goods of Bengal cotton cloth, Moslin, silk cloth, rice, sugar, molasses, ginger, chilly, etc. were remarkable. Among the agricultural products rice, tobacco, nuts, jute, fruits, etc. were

exported. Besides various agricultural and industrial products, including salt, vine, opium, different spices, medicine, etc. were sent to different places of India and foreign countries. There was the slave system in the society of Bengal.

Most of the part of trade and commerce was export oriented. A very small amount of goods was imported. Cotton was imported as raw material due to increasing demand of cloth in Bengal. The Bengalee merchants would import cotton from Gujarat, silk from China, luxurious goods from Iran. Gold, silver and precious stones were also imported in Bengal.

During Muslim rule quite a number of sea ports and river ports were built in Bengal. Chittagong was a famous sea port that time. Odisha, Sonargoan, Gaur, Bakla (Barisal), Murshidasbad, Kashimbazar, Hoogly, Patna of Bihar and Pipli of Odisha were remarkable commercial ports.

With the expansion of trade and commerce, there was an increase in transactions of goods and money as well as keeping accounts. So, in course of time banking system evolved. During this time transactions were made in foreign countries through 'Hundi'. Goods were available and cheap in Bengal during the whole of the middle age.

Famous traveler of the 14th century Ibn-Batuta wrote that goods were most cheaply available only in Bengal. In spite of that it is known from contemporary literature that there were a lot of poor people in the country beside the rich. So, though goods were cheap, the ordinary people could not afford to purchase many of them.

The Hindus had more influence than the Muslims in industry, trade and commerce and other economic activities of Bengal. The local traders and dealers did not have any control over trade and commerce. The Arabian and Persian merchants controlled trade and commerce of this country. They had monopoly over trade by river. In the later periods, the Portuguese and other European merchants became influential in the field of business.

**Individual work:** Make a list of agricultural and industrial goods produced in Bengal in the Middle Age.

## Architecture and the art of Painting

The Muslim rulers built many palaces, mosques, graveyards, dargahs (graves of religiously important people), etc. in different places of Bengal in different times in order to establish the glory of Islam and make their conquests and regimes memorable. The Muslim rulers considered building of mosques as very virtuous job. There are still many reminiscences found in the ruins of the buildings constructed during the regimes of the Sultans.

The capital of the Muslim Sultans of independent Bengal was first in Gaur, then Pandua and again in Gaur. So, the architectural art of Muslim Bengal developed in these two cities first. Sultan Sikander Shah built 'Adina Mosque' in 1369 A.D. The graveyard of Sikander Shah was built just to the north side of the mosque.

There is a graveyard of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (1410 A.D.) in Sonarga, 15 miles away from present Dhaka. There are five 'dargahs' and five mosques very near this graveyard. These are known as 'Panch Peerer Dargah'. The tomb of Sultan Giasuddin Azam Shah is a nice testimony of the art of architecture.

A remarkable achievement of the regime of Sultan Jalaluddin is 'Eklakhi Mosque' situated in Pandua. It was built between 1418 and 1423 A.D. There is a hearsay that the mosque was built at the cost of taka one lakh at that time. So, it has been known as 'Eklakhi Mosque'. This mosque is actually a tomb. He, his sons and his wife were buried in this mausoleum. The reflection of Hindu architecture is noticed in the arts of this mosque.

Another name of 'Bara Sona Mosque' is 'Baroduari Mosque'. There were twelve big doors in this mosque. There was inlay of gold gilt in this mosque. Probably so it was called 'Gold Mosque'. This was the biggest mosque of Gaur. Hossain Shah built this mosque to make Assam conquest memorable. Nusrat Shah finished its construction in 1527 A.D.



Adina Mosque, Gaur



Graveyard of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah, Sonarga



Eklakhi Mosque, Pandua.



Bara Sona Mosque  
(Baroduari Mosque) Gaur.

'Choto Sona Mosque' was built at present Firujibad village in the last south end of Gaur. This mosque was small in size. Yet, there was also an inlay of gilt of gold in this mosque. Probably, it is known as 'Choto Sona Mosque' for this reason. One Wali Mohammad was the founder of this mosque during the time of Alauddin Hossain Shah.



Choto Sona Mosque Gaur.

The tomb of Khan Jahan Ali was built in the district of Bagerhat. According to legend, a 'peer' named Khan Jahan Ali settled down at that place. He died in the very place in 1459A.D. He was a contemporary of Sultan Nasiruddin Illiyas.



The Tomb of Khan Jahan Ali, Bagerhat

The 'Shat (Sixty) Gombuj Mosque' of the district of Bagerhat has increased the glory of the regime of the Muslims of Bengal. The 'Shat Gombuj Mosque' is situated three miles south-east of the tomb of Khan Jahan Ali. It is interesting that it has 77 domes, not 60. It was built in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Ulukh Khan Jahan, a Turkish general and an earnest devotee of Islam, built this mosque. This architectural work has been recognized as a 'World Heritage Site' by the UNESCO.



Shat Gombuj Mosque, Bagerhat

'Kadam Rasul' is situated in Gaur. This building was built to show respect to the footprint of the Prophet. Nusrat Shah built this in 1531 A.D. A piece of stone with the footprint of Hazrat Mohammad (Sm) was steadied on a stone of black inlays in a room of this building.



Kadam Rasul, Gaur

With the spread of Islam in Bengal, the Muslim society also started to expand. There were two special classes noticed in the Muslim society in Bengal. One was the Muslims who came from other countries and the other was the converted Muslims. Despite differences of customs and heritage between the Muslims of other countries and the local Muslims, there were no instances of clash among them. This was because of the generosity of the Muslim rulers and their patronage towards local culture and heritage.

#### **Individual Work:**

What were the religious customs and occasions of the Muslims of the Middle Age?

### **Language, Literature and Education**

The contribution of the Sultanate and the Mughal regime to development and promotion of Bengali literature and language is remarkable. In this field the name that can be mentioned first is Sultan Giyasuddin Azam Shah (1393-1411) belonging to Illiyas Shahi dynasty. It was his regime when first Bengali Muslim poet Shah Mohammad Sagir wrote his 'Yusuf-Julekha' or aromance written in poetic form. It was a translation from Persian. Some more poets of the Sultan regime also translated Persian poems. Among them the names of Daulat Uzir Baharam Khan and Dona Gazi are remarkable.

The contribution of the Muslims as the pioneer in writing historical literature in Bengali is unforgettable. Many Muslim poets being inspired by the idealism of Islam wrote poems about invasion and conquest. Among the writers of conquest-verses, Joynuddin the writer of 'Rasul Bijoy' was famous. The Muslim poets of Bengal also wrote collections of verses describing different stories. They were called padaboli. Chand Gazi was the creator of Podaboli of Bengali literature. Many poets of this age wrote poems in Bengali describing the greatness of the 'peers' (religious guru).The Muslim leaders also inculcated music in Bengali. Poet Faizullah wrote the first book on music 'Ragmala', (a collection of ragas) in Bengali literature. Poet Mozammel wrote books named 'Neetishastro Barta' (book on ethics) and 'Satnama'.

The Muslim poets also made great contributions to the prosperity of Bengali language and enhancement of Bengali literature. They used many Arabian and Persian words in Bengali language. 'Allah', 'Khoda', 'Nabi', 'Poygambar', 'kitab', etc. used by the poets of those time have enriched Bengali vocabulary.

During the Sultanate period the Hindu poets also made great contribution to literature. In this case, inspiration and patronage of Muslim rulers inspired the Hindus. The development and promotion of Bengali literature has immortalized the regime of Hussain Shah. Undoubtedly, his generous patronage has increased the beauty of Bengali literature.

Among the Hindus writers and poets of this age Rupgoswami, Sonaton Goswami, Maladhar Basu, Bijoygupta, Biprodas and Joshoraj Khan were remarkable. During that time Maladhar Basu translated 'Sreemathbhagbat' and 'Purana' into Bengali. Kabindra Parameswar translated Mahabharata into Bengali with the patronage of Sultan Hussain Shah and Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah.

The name Brindaban Das as a Baishnab poet is particularly remarkable. It was he who first wrote biographical book 'Chaitanyo-Bhagbat', which is a kind of autobiographhy of Sreechaitanyodeb. Another poet Chandrabati wrote the famous' Monosha Mongol' in verse.

The Muslim Sultans had significant contribution on Sanskrit literature also. Sanskrit and Bengali are closely related languages. That is why many Muslim rulers had interest in it. Many of them practiced Sanskrit language individually. During Muslim rule Bengal was a center for the inculcation of Sanskrit literature. Not only Bengali and Sanskrit, there was an air of studying Arabian and Persian poetry during the Sultanate.

There was an obvious development in Bengali literature and culture during the Mughal period. However, unlike the rulers of Sultani era, the Mughal rulers did not extend much cooperation in the field of language and literature. Rather it was the Zaminders of Bengal who carried on that tradition by their own attempts.

During the Muslim rule Bengal had political relation with its neibouring country, Arakan. As a result, Bengali literature started to spread and expand to Arakan. Daulat Gazi was one of the greatest poets of the royal court of Arakan. Alawal was another poet of that royal court. Of his six poetry books 'Padmabati' was the best. He translated some Persian books of poetry in Bengali. Besides, he wrote a book on music named 'Ragnama'.

Besides Baharam Khan wrote the book of poetry, 'Laily-Majnu'. 'Jangnama' and 'Hitogyan Banee' were written by Kazi Hayat Mahmud. Poet Shah Garibullah was also a famous ancient manuscript writer during this era.

## **Education**

The Muslim rule of Bengal had parallel contributions in the field of sociopolitical as well as in the field of political, social education. During the Muslim rule education was open to all. The 'Khankahs' of the Sheiks and the houses of the 'Ulemas' became the centers for education. During the Muslim rule countless number of mosques were built everywhere in Bengal. There were 'muktabs' and 'madrasas' along with these mosques. Boys and girls together would study in these 'muktabs' and 'pathshallas'. The learners of 'muktabs' and 'madrasas' would receive higher education. Primary education was compulsory for all Muslim boys and girls. Female education was not much that

common. Secondary education was not also compulsory for girls. As a result, the general Muslim girls were deprived of higher education. The language of the rulers was Persian. Therefore, this language had state dignity. Many Hindus received education in Persian language with a view to getting government jobs.

During this time, Bengali language attained particular prosperity. Many books were also written in Bengali so that those who were ignorant of Arabic and Persian could understand the thoughts and ideas of Islam. These works of literature have enriched the store of Bengali language and literature.

Before the Muslim rule, the Brahmins had monopoly in the field of knowledge, wisdom and education in the Hindu society of East Bengal. During the Muslim rule, the door became open to all. Hindu boys and girls would receive primary education in the 'pathshalas'. 'Patshalas' would sit in the abode of the guru or in the house of the wealthy people. Sometimes, 'muktab' and 'pathshala' would sit under the same roof of a room. In the morning, 'munsi' and in the afternoon 'guru' would teach their students respectively. The wealthy persons would bear the expenses of the 'pathshalas'. In this case, Hindus boys and girls had to receive education in the 'pathshalas' for six years. There was a system of 'toul' for higher education. The learners would have to receive education through Sanskrit. Nabadwip and Burdwan were remarkable for the inculcation of Sanskrit literature. Many women had shown their own achievements in the practise of education and Sanskrit this age. A class of the Brahmins would always devote themselves in astrology and astronomy. In addition to different educational institutions, there were different ways to develop several methods in vogue, such as religious songs, popular folk and drama-ballads for the purpose of developing knowledge and intellect among the people.

## Questions for Practice

### **Multiple choice Questions**

- 1. Which poetry is written in Persian?**

(a) Rasul Bijoy	(b) Raghmala
(c) Yusuf-Julekha	(d) Satnama
  
- 2. Why did the Hindus receive education in Persian in the Middle age?**

(a) to write literature	(b) to get jobs
(c) to do administrative jobs	(d) for political purpose

**Read the paragraph below and answer the question 3 and 4**

Limon's uncle had been doing his business in a number of countries in Europe and America for many years. In order to expand his business he has opened a branch office in Narayangonj in his own country. He makes business transactions through banks. He uses personal aeroplane for business advantages.

**3. Which time of Bengal does the business expansion of Limon's uncle has the similarity with?**

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| (a) Pala   | (b) Sena   |
| (c) Sultan | (d) Mughal |

**4. As a result of commercial expansion in that age there grew up -**

- (a) sea port
- (b) river port
- (c) ground port

**Which one of the following is correct?**

- |              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| (a) i        | (b) ii             |
| (c) i and ii | (d) i, ii, and iii |

**Creative Questions**

1. Mr Reja is a big businessman of Chittagong. He has export-import business. He imports gold, silver, ornaments of precious stones, silk, cotton, various costly spices from abroad by ships. Besides, he exports tea and jute products. He arranged polao, kabab, rejala, and sweets on his daughter's birthday last week. Everybody was very pleased to eat those foods.

- (a) Who translated Mahabharata in Bengali?
- (b) Why is agriculture called the main source of economic prosperity of Bengal?
- (c) What period does the food of Mr Reja's house bear similarity with? Explain.
- (d) Do you think the economic condition of Mr Reja was better than the said period? Justify your answer.

The power of the English Company increased further when the Emperor of Delhi Farukshiyar gave them the right of duty free trade in Bengal, Bombay and Madras. At the same time the company got the right to introducing their own currency. English historian Orme referred to this order of the emperor as the Magna Carta of the East India Company. Gaining this right, East India Company started to march forward at an irresistible speed.

#### **Individual Work:**

1. Make a list of three villages centering round which the city of Kolkata came into being. How old is Kolkata now?
2. Why is the certificate given to the English by the Emperor Farukshiyar called Magna Carta? Write down the causes.

#### **The French**

The last European merchant company that came to the sub-continent is the French East India Company. This merchant company was formed in 1664 A.D. In 1668 A.D. the company set up commercial offices first in Surat and in the following year in Muslimpatnam. In 1673 A.D. French colony was built up in Pandichery.

Since 1674 A.D. they expanded commercial activities in Bengal. The company bought the village Chandannagar, situated on the bank of the Ganges from Sayesta Khan, the Subadar of Bengal. Chandannagar turned to a powerful protected French commercial office between 1690 A.D. and 1692 A.D. The company became able to build a powerful fort here in 1696 A.D. On the condition of paying duty at a fixed rate, the French got the right of conducting trade and commerce in Bihar and Odisha in 1693 A.D. In the later periods they were able to set up a commercial office in Balasore in Kashimbazar.

When English merchants were running trade in full swing, the French came to this country. In this state they found it difficult to sustain in competition with the English. Like other European merchants, the French started dreaming about setting up of empire here. As a result, collision became inevitable between the French and the English. The French were defeated because of the intrigues, diplomatic strategy and developed military strategies of the English. They became more exhausted by the success of the English in the battle of Plassey in 1757 A.D. for supporting the Nawabs of Bengal. As a result, the French offices in Bengal went under the possession of the English. The French company left this country after being defeated in the battles of Kamataka of the Deccan. Thus the English became an unparalleled power in India.

#### **The Battle of Plassey**

Alibardi Khan was the Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha from 1740 A.D. to 1756 A.D. He ruled the country successfully despite adverse situations. He became successful in suppressing the Marathas and the Bargis. He controlled the merchants of the British East India Company tactfully. But after his death, there appeared extreme disorder in the politics of Bengal.

Before his death Nawab Alibordi Khan nominated Sirajuddaula, the son of his youngest daughter, as his heir to be the next Nawab of Bengal. Alibordi Khan died in 1756 A.D. and then Sirajuddaula became the Nawab of Bengal. His first and foremost problem was to face conspiracies from his own family and relatives. Alibardi Khan had three daughters. Among them the eldest was Ghaseti Begum. She was especially disappointed to see Siraj as the Nawab of Bengal and so she started hatching conspiracies against Siraj. They were being allied by Raja Rajballav, the dewan of Ghaseti Begum; Sawkat Jang, who was the cousin of Siraj and ruler of Purnia and some others. Siraj was tactful to keep Ghaseti Begum under constant vigilance. Siraj captured Purnia by defeating and killing Sawkat following his revolt against Siraj. Though Nawab could suppress the family conspiracy, another web of conspiracy spread outside the palace. Merchants of home and abroad, influential lords of the palace of Nawab and aristocracy including military general of Nawab, Mirzafar and others were involved in the conspiracy. Everyone conspired against Nawab to gain their respective interest. The conspirators started making the background of the battle of Plassey.

### **The Causes of the Battle of Plassey**

The battle of Plassey was such an event for the people of this region that can cause fearful disaster in the fate of the people of a country. The causes of this event are mentioned below:

- As per tradition, the English did not send any gift to new Nawab after Sirjuddoula ascended to the throne of Bengal and did not pay a courtesy visit. Nawab became very angry at such misconduct of the English.
- The English kept building their fort despite his prohibition.
- The English company having abused the trade conditions, the national merchants started to be losers. Nawab forbade abusing the conditions and ordered to abide by. The company also defied that order.
- The English refused to pay tax by breaching the agreement with Alibardi Khan. Besides, they also showed arrogance to repress the public.



Nawab Sirajuddoula

- Krishnadas, son of Raja Rajballab, together with the family members taking a lot of riches took shelter to the English in Kolkata. Nawab sent messenger to the English to send him back. But English governor insulted the messenger of the Nawab and drove him away. Before that during the rebellion of Shawkat Jang, the English supported the rebels against the Nawab.

The manners of arrogance and disobedience of the English one after another infuriated the Nawab. In order to teach them a good lesson Nawab occupied Kolkata at the beginning of June, 1756. On the way, he also occupied the commercial office of Kashimbazar. At the abrupt attack of the Nawab, the English fled away leaving Fort William. A good number of English including Halwell had to surrender. Acquitted of captivity, Halwell spread a propaganda to debase Nawab which is in history known as 'Andhakup Hattyā' (Killing in dark well). In the propaganda it was said that 146 English men were kept arrested in a room of 18 feet length and 10.14 feet wide. Out of them 123 died of suffocation due to tremendous heat. This propaganda traveled up to Madras. As a result, agitated Watson and Clive came from Madras to occupy Kolkata. They defeated Manikchand, the commander of the Nawab and occupied Kolkata. When Nawab sensed that he was surrounded by intrigues and enemy, he became submissive towards the English and was bound to sign a disgraceful treaty. In history it is called Alinagar Treaty.

Clive's ambition soared high after getting all types of privileges provided in Alinagar Treaty. Taking the advantage of the weaknesses of the Nawab, the English occupied Chandannagar Kuthi belonging to the French on the excuse of a Seven Years War in Europe. In this state Nawab made alliance with the French to teach the English a good lesson. At this Clive became furious and involved himself in conspiracy to depose the Nawab.

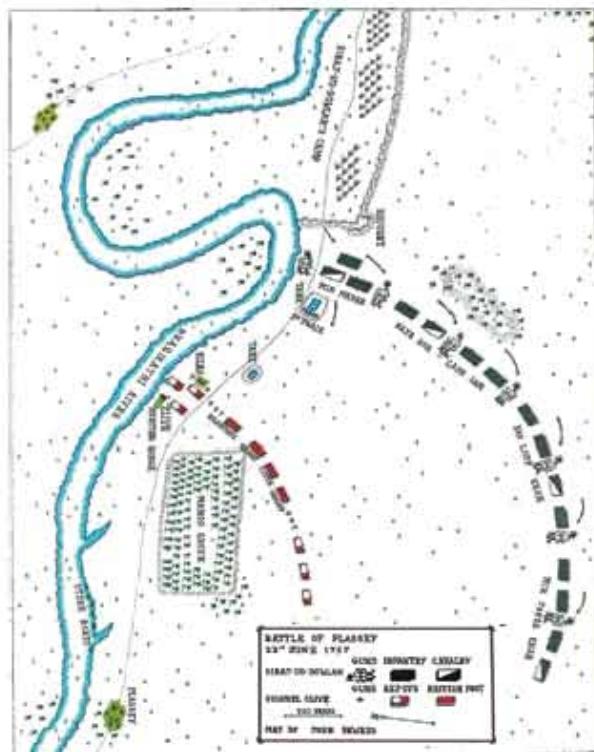
In this conspiracy Clive was supported by extremely rich merchant Jagatsheth, Raydurlav, Umichand, Raja Rajballav and the chief of army Mirzafar.

### **The Event of the Battle of Plassey**

The battle of Plassey is an important event for Bengal, on even for the sub-continent. This battle took place in the mango orchard of Plassey on the bank of the Bhagirathi. By this time, Robert Clive steadied his condition and declared battle against Sirajuddoula on the excuse of breaching the treaty. Patriot Mirmadan, Mohonlal and

French chief of army Sean Frey fought heart and soul in favour of the Nawab. Mirmadan was killed in the battle. Mirzafar conspiratorially stopped fighting sensing the imminent victory of the Nawab. The death of Mirmadan and non-cooperation of Mirzafar tensed the Nawab.

Mirzafar, the army chief of the Nawab, acted like a silent spectator with his non-cooperation in the battle field. Mirzafar did not stop conspiring despite the Nawab getting him swear by touching the holy Quran. When the soldiers of Nawab were taking rest, the English soldiers descended on them at the gesticulation of Mirzafar. The inevitable result of which was the defeat of the Nawab.



The Battlefield of Palassy

### The Causes of the fall of The Nawab

- Treachery and non-cooperation of the army chief of the Nawab and their abettors in the battle field.
- Everyone from the army chief of the Nawab to his courtiers sacrificed the interest of the country for their own interest.
- Young Nawab was deficient of experience, prudence, intelligence and steadiness. He failed to take quick decision in the battlefield.
- He depended on Mirzafar again and again despite his knowledge about the conspiracy of Mirzafar.
- Sirajuddoula did not evaluate the warning and advice of Alibardi Khan about the conspiracy of the English and the French.
- The enemies of the Nawab were united and the had better fighting strategy.
- Robert Clive had prudence and subtle cunningness.

### Dual Administration

Robert Clive gained sole authority of robbing wealth in the name of Diwani certificate. A dual administration developed as the merchant company was given this immense power from Delhi. As a result, the company gained authority without responsibility and the Nawab turned to a powerless ruler, whereas, the Nawab had to carry on full responsibility. As a result, there arose an unprecedented administrative complexity in Bengal and the general people of the country had to pay for that. There



Robert Clive

was a fearful famine in the summer of 1770 (1176 in Bangla calendar year) which is known in history as 'Monontor of 76'. In the words of Murshidabad representative of the company Richard Betcher, 'That the people alive in some places are eating the dead people is not a rumor, but a fact'. One-third of the people of Bengal had to face death in this famine.

The amount of annual revenue collected from 1765 to 1770 was nearly equivalent to the revenue collected in the year of famine. As a result, the people of Bengal became extremely poor and helpless due to extreme exploitation. In the dual system, the Nawab due to inadequate money, failed completely to run the administration. There started disorder all over the country. In this situation in 1772 Warren Hastings did away with the Dual Administration system. He became the first Governor General.

### Permanent Settlement

Lord Cornwallis was sent with the charge of Governor-General and army chief in 1786 to make the administration corruption free and organized. He introduced permanent settlement or permanent land system in 1793. On 22 March of the same year he gave permanent possession to the Zamindars of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha on their land. This settlement of land is called 'Permanent Settlement'.

### Background

Warren Hastings introduced five year settlement to collect revenue in 1772. Though the bid of land was at high stage, revenue could not be collected proportionately. Since there was definite deadline, in order to collect revenue the Zamindars would realize the money from the farmers by any means. They had no interest in either developing the land and or the condition of the farmers. As a result, the farmers in fear of repression would leave the land and flee away. The land would lie uncultivated for years and the prices of land would go down. In this situation Warren Hastings introduced settlement for one year with the Zamindars. This system also failed to benefit the government, Zamindars or

the subjects. Later the parliament of England realized the necessity of inventing a new system to solve the revenue problem in Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. In 1789 Cornwallis took preparation to give ten year settlement to the Zamindars. Having approval from the authority of England Cornwallis introduced ten year settlement with the Zamindars in 1789. He also pledged that with the approval of the meeting of the Company Directors, ten year settlement would turn to the permanent settlement.

The settlement was approved by the Board of Directors in September, 1792. On 22nd March, 1793 Cornwallis declared ten year settlement as the Permanent Settlement.

### **Features**

- Permanent settlement made the Zamindars permanent possessors of land ie. the Zeminders got the right of the possession of land.
- The amount of revenue being fixed, Zamindars gained permanent right to use the land in exchange of regular payment of revenue.
- As a result of the introduction of this system, the administrative power of the Zamindars became extinct. The government itself took the responsibility of maintaining peace and safety.
- If the tax was due, it would be collected by selling some parts of the land of the Zamindars.

### **Results**

The Permanent Settlement cast far-reaching influence on the socio-economic structure of Bengal. Cornwallis himself was a Zaminder. He wanted to form a Zaminder class even in a country like England. But socio-economic structure of Europe and the subcontinent and the fashion of its development were not the same. As a result, disadvantages were more noticed than advantages in this system imposed from outside.

### **Advantages**

- The main advantage of this system was that the government could be sure of the amount of its income. As a result, implementation of budgets and various plans became easy for the government.
- As a result of the Permanent Settlement, the newly created Zaminder class turned to be devoted supporters of the company. Consequently, the Zamindars were able to play an important role in steadyng and strengthening the British rule.
- As the permanent possession of the Zamindars on land being recognized, many of them devoted themselves to do welfare activities in their respective areas.
- They made arrangements to cultivate unused land and the land covered with jungle. Therefor, with the increase in production, the economic condition of the country developed.

## **Demerits**

As a result of the Permanent Settlement, the interest of the Zamindars was well protected. They gradually turned to a wealthy class. On the other hand, the previous right of the subjects on land was abolished. A Zaminder could oust them from land. At the beginning, since there was no law of public rights, people had to depend on the Zaminders.

- In the Permanent Settlement there was no arrangement for accurate survey. Sometimes more revenue would be imposed on the tax-free lands. Since there was no land demarcation, clashes and suits about land was very common.
- Many big Zamindaries were destroyed due to strictness of paying the tax before sunset on a fixed date formulated in the Sunset Law.
- Being sure about Zamindary income and possession, the Zamindars started to live in cities putting the responsibility on their rent-collectors and stewards. In absence of these Zamindars, the subjects became irritated at the oppression of their rent-collectors and stewards. As a result, the production of land started to decline, the economic condition of villages also started to worsen.
- The lands of the subcontinent were a symbol of aristocracy. As a result, many people of lower classes and general people who had been the owners of vast wealth by conducting business with the company became busy at gaining dignity of aristocracy by purchasing Zamindary. Consequently, the possibility of the building up of local capital and industry was destroyed. On the other hand, the company also could avoid the probable competition in this country.

As a result of the Permanent Settlement, farmers started to be directly exploited by the Zamindars. Again with the patronage of this Zaminder class, an educated class was formed in the rural society who in the later periods became conscious about the country and nation. At the same time, at the beginning, the British made Zaminder class was the strong foundation of the British Empire. But their subsequent generation receiving in western education jumped into the independence movement to oust British monarchy.

**Individual Work:** How was the economy of Bengal affected by the Permanent Settlement?

## **Questions for practice**

### **Multiple Choice Questions**

1. Which Portuguese sailor first came to the sub-continent by sea?
 

(a) Vasco-da-Gama	(b) Captain Hawkins
(c) Sir Thomas Roe	(d) Job Charnak

**2. Nawab Sirajuddoula was bound to take up arms against the English in the field of Palassy because -**

- i. The English kept building fort defying the order of the Nawab.
- ii. The English refused to pay tax to the Nawab infringing the agreement.
- iii. The Nawab expressed interest to occupy the wealth of the English.

**Which one of the followings is correct?**

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| (a) i and ii  | (b) ii and iii    |
| (c) i and iii | (d) i, ii and iii |

**Read the following passage and answer question 3 and 4**

It was long ago. Mr Rahman of Sylhet and his three friends taking a recommendation letter from the local Zaminder went to Africa and met the authority there with a view to getting commercial facilities. They took the bid of a village on the bank of a river and set up a commercial office there. The local authority gave Mr Rahman and his company right to conduct tax-free business.

**3. Which European nation's commercial activities described in your text book are similar to the activities of Mr Rahman and his friends?**

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| (a) Portuguese | (b) Dutch   |
| (c) Danish     | (d) English |

**4. The activities of aforesaid nations include**

- i. appearing at the court of Emperor Akbar
- ii. building Fort William
- iii. gaining tax-free commercial privilege

**Which one of the followings is correct?**

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| (a) i and ii   | (b) i and iii     |
| (c) ii and iii | (d) i, ii and iii |

**Individual Work:**

1. Which activities of Titumir are the symbols of courage and patriotism?
2. How did religious reformation movement turn into a farmer movement?  
Find out the reasons behind it.

**Group Work :** Take help of your teacher and do a presentation of the Bansher Kella of Titumir. The presentation would include the structure of the Kella, its symbolic value, its glorious role to resist the English rulers and its final consequences.

## The Indigo Revolt

The English came to this country to do business. Due to the weaknesses of the rulers of the sub-continent, they became the rulers of this country. But they were always alert with their business acumen. Due to this alertness, they became greedy about the fertile land of this country. They became interested in producing commercial crops rather than food crops in these fertile lands. Indigo was that commercial crop that interested them the most. At that time indigo business was very lucrative. In fact, with the progress of Textile industry the demand of indigo in England rose so high in order to dye clothes. Besides, due to British colonies in America being independent, indigo cultivation by the English merchants ceased there. As a result, Bengal became the main center of indigo supply. Indigo cultivation started in Bengal in British rule between 1770 A.D. and 1780 A.D.

The indigo planters would select the best lands of the farmers for indigo cultivation. They would compel the farmers to take advanced money for indigo cultivation. And the advanced money once taken, the farmers could never pay off the loan even generation after generation. If the farmers were not agreed to indigo cultivation, they would be inflicted extreme oppression. The English merchants did the monopoly business of indigo. Indigo was cultivated widely in Faridpur, Jessore, Dhaka, Pabna, Rajshahi, Nadia and Murshidabad.

With the increase in prices of things, the cost of indigo production also increased. The indigo-planters did not bother that. Besides, though in the beginning they supplied seeds to the farmers free of cost, they stopped supplying that in the later stages. As a result, indigo production gradually became impossible for the farmers.

There was no means of liberating the farmers from deprivation stated above. Laws were beyond their reach. Most of the law enforcer were friends of indigo-planters or they came from the same country. Moreover, many times the indigo planters were appointed as honorary magistrates. So, the farmers could not take any safeguard or Justice. Under the circumstances, the indigo planters exposed themselves not only as

merchants in the villages but also as very powerful strange oppressive Zaminders. They got so cruel and desperate that they did not even hesitate to kill the disobedient farmers.

As the indigo cultivators having no other means to resist the oppression of the English they burst into tremendous revolt in 1859 A.D. Farmers in villages started to get organized and united. All the revolts were led by indigo cultivators themselves. The leaders of the Indigo revolt in Jessore were two brothers-Nabin Madhab and Beni Madhab. Baidyanath and Biswanath Sarder led the revolted in Hoogly. Megha Sarker was in the leadership in Nadia again, two brothers Vishucharan Biswas and Digwambar Biswas were in the leadership of Chowgasa, Nadia.. The fire of revolt spread in Bengal under local leadership. The farmers took their firm position not to cultivate indigo. Even they defied the order of English magistrate. The people of educated middle class started to express their sympathetic attitudes towards the farmers. Reports on the oppression by the indigo planters on the farmers continued to be published in different newspapers. The story of the play 'Nildarpan' written by Dinobandhu Mitra spread too far and wide.

At last the struggling farmers of Bengal won the victory. In 1861 A.D. British government formed Indigo Commission. Based on the recommendation of the commission, indigo cultivation was declared as 'under the will' of the farmers. Besides, indigo contract was abolished. In this perspective, indigo revolt came to an end. In the later periods, artificial indigo alternative to original indigo having been invented, indigo cultivation ceased for good in 1892 in this country.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Individual Work:</b> | 1. Prepare a case study on the perspectives on which indigo revolt took place.<br>2. Show the background of the end of indigo cultivation in Bengal forever. |
|-------------------------|--|

### Faraizi Movement

The founder of the Faraizi Movement Hazi Shariatullah was born in the village Shashail in the district of Faridpur in 1782 A.D. He stayed in Mecca for long twenty years. He became a profound scholar studying there on Islam.

Returning home, he came to understand that the Muslims of Bengal have moved away too far from the real teachings of Islam. Non-Islamic practices, superstitions, malpractices have engulfed them. He was determined to make Islam free from superstitions and these non-Islamic malpractices. Out of this determination, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century he initiated a religious and social reformation movement among the Muslims. The name of this religious reformation movement of Shariatullah is called the 'Faraizi Movement'.

The word 'Faraizi' has come from Arabic word 'Faraz' (compulsory duty). Those who perform 'Faraz' are called the 'Faraizi' and those who were the followers of Hazi Shariatullah in Bengal are called the 'Faraizi' in history. He called upon the Muslim society to perform ever what are obligatory to be done in Islam giving up all non-Islamic beliefs, practices, manners and ceremonies. He could not comply with the British rule in Bengal that is in India. He looked down upon the English rule. He declared even India as 'Darul Harab' (country of atheists). He directed the Muslims to give up 'Zuma' and prayer of two Eids in the country ruled by the rulers of other religion.

The exploited, oppressed poor rayots, farmers, weavers and 'teli' communities spontaneously joined this movement. The faith and belief of the poor people on Shariatullah and his extraordinary success formed a firm unity among the people of lower classes. The Zamindars started to put hindrances on the religious ceremonies and practices of the Muslims. Shariatullah advised the tenants to refrain from paying illegal tax and took preparation to form resistance against all oppression of Zamindars. While the country was undergoing famine like situation, he demanded for plain rice with salt.

When the Zamindars started oppressing the Faraizi followers on different excuses, he decided to form a stick-fighting battalion to protect the tenants. In 1839 A.D. a police injunction was imposed on him. He died in 1840 A.D. After his death, his worthy son Muhammad Muhsinuddin Ahmed alias Dudu Mia took the charge of the Faraizi Movement. He was born in 1819 A.D. Though he was not so erudite like his father, his organizing capacity was extraordinary.

**Individual work:** Make a list of 'Faraz'(compulsory duties) on which Hazi Shariatullah put on emphasis.

Faraizi Movement under the leadership of Dudu Mia turned into an armed struggle of freedom from exploitation of the peasantry along with a religious reformation movement. The farmers upset with extreme economic exploitation of the English rulers took part in this anti-exploitation movement directly. Thousands of farmers and hundreds of Zamindars joined the movement in order to survive from the oppression of indigo-planters.

Dudu Mia was the master of the Faraizis. After the death of his father he resorted armed struggle giving up his father's peaceful principle. He learned how to move sticks with a view to strengthen the resistance struggle of the Faraizis. He formed a skilled stick fighting lathial battalion by employing Jalaluddin Mollah, a stick fighter of his father's time as the chief of army. Its purpose was to arrange resistance against illegal tax imposed by the Zamindars and oppression of indigo-planters. It is mentionable here that Faridpur, Pabna, Rajshahi, Jessore, Murshidabad, Nadia, etc. regions inhabited by

chiefly Muslims were the best for indigo cultivation. So, the degree of oppression of the indigo planters were also intolerable. Independent government was formed under his leadership in villages. An army (stick fighting battalion) of the independent government was also formed of tenants who were farmers.

East Bengal was divided into some areas in the government system of the Faraizis. Dudu Mia together with his followers continued struggle for a long time against the Zamindars and the indigo planters. Local Zamindars in alliance with foreign rulers and indigo planters kept lodging criminal cases against him. But they had to acquit him for the want of witnesses. At last in 1857 A.D. for the first time the fire of Indian Independence War having been kindled, the British government was intimidated. The alarmed British government detained Dudu Mia as political captive in Calcutta Zail. He came out of the prison in 1860 A.D. and this revolting patriot died in 1862 A.D. After his death, Faraizi Movement became weak for the want of competent leadership.

**Individual Work:** Being alarmed during the Independence War of India in 1857 A.D., the British government imprisoned Dudu Mia. Arrange its causes in sequence.

## Renaissance and Reform Movement

### Renaissance

After the battle of Plassey in 1757 A.D., there was a far-reaching implication of economic and political changes in this region. Again, the Industrial Revolution at the later half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England and French Revolution (in 1789) also influenced politics and economy of this region. At that time some people of Bengal came in contact with these revolutionary changes. They themselves introduced renaissance. The influence of European socio-economy and politics introduced renaissance in the minds of the educated people of Bengal. Under the influence of their leadership, self-consciousness, sense of self-dignity and sense of individuality were acutely aroused in the countrymen. At last, the influence of renaissance itself laid the primary foundation of nationalist spirit among the countrymen which finally took the people of Bengal i.e. the Indians to the way of independence.

New waves of thoughts started flourishing at different aspects of life such as conventional religious thoughts and practices, literature, social customs, and traditions. As a consequence, there incepted new religious doctrines (Brahmna religion and new Hinduism), new education, new literature, new social ideals and practices. The origin of renaissance in Bengal took place among these very novelties. As a result, Bengal became the center of modern thoughts and spirit in whole India. The Bengalees turned to be the custodians of western civilization and culture under the influence of English education and western trends of thoughts. Many of the intellectuals of Bengal gave up

stringed musical instrument) and music from a musician named Ostad Bholanath. His higher education started in Murshidabad. After the death of his father, he returned to Hoogly and went out to travel different countries. He went to Mecca and Madina and performed Haj. He returned home after 27 years traveling Arabia, Egypt and Persia. He had profound knowledge in Arabic, French, Urdu, English and History as well as Algebra. His only sister having no heir died in 1803 A.D., and he became the possessor of vast property. He led a very simple life. Then the Muslims of Bengal were in extreme hard up. They hardly had ability to pursue their education by spending money. Therefore, he spent all his money for the spread of education for receiving treatments and also for helping the poor.

He built a school in Hoogly. He gave a lot of money to develop 'madrashas' in different places like Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore, etc. Six years before his death in 1806 A.D. forming a fund he bestowed all his property for welfare activities. With the money from Mohsin Fund after his death in 1836 A.D. Hoogly Mohsin College Fund, Hoogly Charitable Hospital and in 1848 A.D. Imambara in Hoogly were established. Thousands of Muslim youths got the opportunity of higher education at the money from Mohsin Fund. Sir Amir Ali, was also one of the pioneers of the Muslim society who showed the way of western education in Bengal. Thus, even after his death, he paved the way of education for the Muslims in Bengal. This generous, great man who was a real patron of education died in Hoogly on 29 November in 1812.

**Work:** Make a list to show where the money of Haji Muhammaed Mohsin fund was spent for welfare activities.

### Nawab Abdul Latif

Abdul Latif was born in the district of Faridpur in 1828. He received English education in Kolkata Madrasha. After the completion of his education, he taught at first in Dhaka Collegiate School and then Kolkata Madrasha. He joined the position of Deputy Magistrate in 1849 A.D. He was promoted to the post of Kokata Presidency Magistrate in 1877 A.D. He retired from government service in 1884 A.D. Government conferred on him the titles at first Khan Bahadur and then Nawab for his achievement in his professional life.

Among the Muslims of Bengal, he could understand the necessity and importance of the spread of English education. So, he made efforts to help the Muslims of Bengal educate in modern education. He arranged an essay competition entitled 'The benefits of English education for Muslim students' in 1853 A.D. in order to form public opinion. Anglo-Persian Department was opened in Kolkata Madrasah due to his efforts. An arrangement was also made to learn Urdu and Bengal there. He placed the problems of Muslim students in receiving higher education to the government.

As Hindu College was transformed into Presidency College at his attempts, the Muslim students got the opportunity of pursuing their study there. He built madrashas in different places like Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, etc. The decision that money from Mohsin Fund would be spent only for the Muslims of Bengal was approved in 1873 A.D. at the efforts of Abdul Latif. In the madrasah established by him, English and modern western education were introduced along with religious education. The remarkable achievement of Abdul Latif is the establishment of Mohammedan Literary Society in Calcutta in 1863.

The main purposes of the life-long activities of Abdul Latif were three:

1. To remove malice of British Government against the Muslims;
2. To take necessary steps for the development and progress of the Muslim society; and
3. To establish alliance between the Hindu and the Muslim community.

**Individual Work:** Narrate, in brief, the purposes of the activities of Abdul Latif.

### Syed Ameer Ali

In the last half of 19<sup>th</sup> century the person who made the most important contributions to the renaissance of the Muslim society of Bengal was Sir Syed Amir Ali. He wanted to make social and individual development of the Muslims of Bengal through western education. Besides, he wanted to make them politically conscious.

Syed Ameer Ali was born in a noble Muslim family in Hoogly in 1849 A.D. He obtained M.A. and B.L. from Calcutta University. He passed Bar-at-Law from Lincolns Inn of London in 1873 A.D. and returned home. He worked in different responsible posts in his life. He was employed as a judge of Kolkata High Court in 1890 A.D. He became a member of Privy Council in London in 1909A.D.

He was the first Muslim leader in Bengal, in other words, in India who believed that there should be a political organization for the Muslims. He believed that there should be a respective political organization for the interests of the Muslims to draw attention of the government to their demands. For this purpose, he formed an association named Central Mohammedan Association in Kolkata in 1877 A.D.

He wrote in different dailies and magazines about the Muslims falling back in education and in different fields. As a result, the government took some steps for the progress of education of the Muslims in 1885 A.D. This is why he encouraged English education at the college level at Kolkata Madrasah and established a college in Karachi in 1884 A.D.

Scientific explanation and the past glory of Islam have been upheld in his two famous books 'The Spirit of Islam' and 'A Short History of Saracens'. He believed that Hindu and Muslim, both the communities are required to work together for the development of modern India. He welcomed the establishment of Muslim League in 1906 A.D. He was elected Secretary of Muslim League in 1912. Syed Ameer Ali was also conscious about the rights of women.

**Individual Work:** Make a list of what Syed Ameer Ali did for the progress of the Muslims.

### Begum Rokeya

At the beginning of the 20th century when the light of education was advancing, the Muslim girls of Bengal were still fallen back. The girls of Muslim society were deprived of all rights. Receiving education was almost restricted for them. They would be kept as house-arrested behind the curtains in the name of social customs and religion.

The person, who called for the freedom of Muslim girls from their captivity, was Begum Rokeya. She was born in the village Payrabandh in the upazila of Mithapukur in the district of Rangpur in 1880 A.D. Her father's name was Jahiruddin Mohammad Abu Ali

Saber. Her mother's name was Met. Bahatanessa Sabera Chowdhurani. In this region, Saber family was very noble and conservative. The girls were very careful of not exposing themselves. Begum Rokeya received education from her elder brother Ibrahim Saber and elder sister Karimunnesa. She had to study very late at night so that nobody could sense that. She learned Urdu, Arabic, French, Bengali and English at the sincere encouragement of her elder brother. Though she could not receive education at school, she achieved much proficiency in Bangla. She concentrated on the practice of literature from her Youth.

The theme of her literary practice was women folk. She had witnessed the superstitions of the society, the pathetic pictures of deprivation and negligence of women folk.

She expressed in her writings what she realized. She wanted to point to the society the pathetic condition of women and discriminatory treatment towards them. Her books 'Aborodhibasini', 'Padmoraag', 'Matichur', 'Sultana Swapno', etc. bear those pictures.

In her matrimonial life, she got encouragement from her husband to practise knowledge. After the death of her husband, she passed rest of her life for female education and social work. She built a primary girls' school in Bhagalpur in the name



Begum Rokeya

of her husband. She established Shakhawat Memorial Urdu Primary School in Kolkata in 1911 A.D. It was raised to Girls' English High School in 1931 A.D. Till her death she simultaneously carried out the responsibilities of head teacher and superintendent.

For the establishment of the rights of women she established 'Anjuman Khauatine Islam' (Muslim Women Association) in Kolkata in 1916 A.D. The association was able to play a strong role in female education, employment and in establishing legal rights under her leadership.

The pioneer of women freedom, Begum Rokeya had an acute tone of revolt in her heart against various oppressions and intolerance of the society towards women. She expressed these in her works. This great woman died in Kolkata in 1932 A.D.

**Individual Work:** Make a list of books written by Begum Rokeya mentioning the pathetic condition of women.

**Group Work:**

**Extempore Speech:** Extempore speech about reformers of the Renaissance Movement (selection through lottery).

## Questions for Practice

### Multiple Choice Questions:

1. Who was the publisher of the magazine 'Sambad Kaumodi'?
 

(a) Michael Modhusudan Dutta	(b) Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar
(c) Raja Rammohan Roy	(d) Hazi Shariatullahh
2. Fakirs and Monks were involved in long-standing movement against the British, because the British—
 

(a) considered them dacoits and pirates;	(b) imposed tax on visiting the places of pilgrimage;
(c) hindered their movement and activities.	

### Which one of the followings is correct?

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| (a) i and ii   | (b) i and iii     |
| (c) ii and iii | (d) i, ii and iii |

### Read the stimulant and answer question 3 and 4

The people of the village Rasulpur have become used to different types of superstitions and non-Islamic practices due to the lack of conscious vass and religiously well-educated persons. A man named Abdullah came forward to inform the superstitious people of this area of the right paths.

Besides, a new type of rifles called Enfield was introduced for the use of both Hindu and Muslim soldiers. The bullets of this weapon were to be inserted into the gun after the cartridges were removed by the teeth. A rumour went in rampant that those cartridges were mixed with the fat of the cows and the pigs. As a result, soldiers of both of the religions grew rebellious as they believed that the act was sacrilegious.

**Struggle for Independence:** The first flame of independence grew at Barrackpur in West Bengal. A sepoy named Mongol Pandey started the mutiny by firing a gun shot. It extended in the whole Indian sub-continent including Mirat, Kanpur, Panjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal. In Bengal the mutiny took place in Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore, Sylhet, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Rajshahi.

**Individual Work:** Draw a map of Bangladesh and show the places where this movement spread.

The mutineers occupying Delhi declared Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II as the emperor of India. Many aggrieved and deprived Indians like Nana Shahib, the Queen of Jhansi Laxmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahol of Aodhya, Moulovi Ahmadullah and other native feudal lords also took part in this war. The Indian sepoys and rebel soldiers were defeated after fighting hard. Most of the participants in the war were either killed or hanged.

Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II was exiled in Rengun (Myanmar). Queen Laxmi Bai was killed in the war. Nana Shaheb disappeared after the defeat. The defeated soldiers faced inhuman tortures. The dead bodies of the defeated soldiers were seen hanging at the Bahadur Shah Park in Dhaka. The rulers created such a brutal event with a view to creating terror among the people. Thus, the first struggle for Indian independence ended amid cruelty and torture. Everything ended within July 1858 though the event left far reaching impacts.



Bahadur Shah Park

**The Significance of the First Struggle for Independence:** This struggle had an instant significance. This ended the rule of the Company. The British government took over the responsibility of ruling India itself.

The Doctrine of Lapse and its related rules were declared null and void on 1 November 1858 A.D. by a proclamation of Queen Victoria. It also ensured the employment of the

Indians and their religious freedom as well as an amnesty for the mutineers.

Bahadur shah was sent on exile in Rangoon. The long term impact of this struggle was that the grievance did not stop. People became conscious due to this mutiny and the English rule ended in 1947 after various movements and struggles.

**Individual Work:** Point out the reasons for which the sepoys revolted in India in 1857.

### **Partition of Bengal (1905 -1911)**

The impact of the Partition of Bengal was far reaching in the political history of Bengal. The communal harmony between the Hindus and Muslims was destroyed forever because of the separation of Bengal. They began to consider each other as enemies. The level of disbelief increased between the two. Though the liberal efforts of the leaders, various combined programs, etc. often brightened the prospect of the re-establishment of unity, ultimately the "divide and rule" policy of the British government succeeded. The disbelief and enmity between of the two communities ended with the partition of India in 1947.

**Background of the Partition of Bengal:** The Governor General of India Lord Curzon divided Bengal on October 16 in 1905. This division is known as the Partition of Bengal in history. Before the partition, the Bengal Province or the Bangla Presidency consisted of Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and some parts of Assam. The plan to divide Bengal started much earlier. Since the area of Bengal Presidency was too large, various proposals for the rescheduling its area was presented from 1853 to 1903 to the British government. In the true sense, the plan to divide Bengal was accepted in 1903. The Secretary for India approved it in 1904 and the plan became public in July of 1904. The plan was implemented in October in the same year. According to this plan East Bengal and Assam province was created with Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong of Bangladesh, Assam, Jolpaiguri, Tripura Hills and Maldoho. Dhaka became the capital of this province. On the other hand, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha made West Bengal which had its capital in Kolkata.

**Causes of the Partition of Bengal:** There were a number of reasons behind the partition, which are stated below.

**Administrative Reasons:** During the period of Lord Curzon, the division of Bengal was an administrative reformation. One-third of the population of India lived in Bengal Presidency. It was hard to run the law and order situation and lead administration in the eastern part properly from Kolkata. This was why Curzon considered it an irrational task to keep such a vast area in a single administrative unit. So, he planned to divide Bengal in two parts in 1903 and it was implemented in 1905.

**Socio-economic Reasons:** There were also other reasons behind the Partition of Bengal, one of which was economic and the other one was social. During that time Kolkata became the centre for socio-economic activities. Mills and factories, trade and commerce, courts-offices, education institutions., everything was established centring Kolkata. But there was no appropriate transportation system for the raw materials. As a result, the economic condition of Bengal worsened gradually. The population of this area remained uneducated as they failed to receive education or higher education due to the scarcity of educational institutions they needed. So, unemployment grew up day by day. Considering these the partition of Bengal was inevitable.

**Political Reasons:** Lord Curzon did not divide Bengal only considering the advantages of administration or the welfare of the people of East Bengal, it also involved a far reaching political interest of the British government. The middle class Bangalee intellectuals were gradually becoming conscious of nationalism and politics. The issue could not escape the consideration of Lord Curzon. The Congress leaders led the all India movement from Kolkata. Therefore, its main objective was to stop all anti-British movements that centered upon Kolkata. The united strength of the Hindu-Muslim solidarity and the united Bengal were threats for the British rulers. Therefore, he wanted to kill two birds with one stone. As the strength of the Bangalees was made weak, again, the Muslim community was also made happy in the name of the development of East Bengal. Thus, Curzon divided Bengal more to sustain the British rule than to do welfare in East Bengal according to his 'divide and rule' policy. In this way, arrangements were made to weaken the Indian national unity.

**The Reactions to the Partition:** There was a mixed reaction among the people against the partition. The Muslims in East Bengal led by Nawab Salimullah welcomed the partition. Even the Muslim newspapers also expressed their satisfaction in the partition of Bengal. The majority of the population in the new province was Muslims. Therefore, they gave an absolute support to the partition with the view that the undeveloped Muslim community of East Bengal would get advantage in education as well as in administrative and economic sectors.

On the other hand, there was an extreme reaction among the Hindus against the Partition of Bengal. Led by the Indian National Congress they raised strong united movement against the partition of Bengal. Some historians suggest that the elevated class of the Hindu community i.e. the capitalists, lawyers, owners of the newspapers, politicians opposed the partition because the move would hamper their interests. However, the anti-partition movement became irresistible no matter whether they were guided by their personal interests or by the ideals of national unity. Leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Arbinda Ghosh, Ashwini Kumar Datta, Balgongadhar Tilak and even the liberal leaders like Gokhle also took part in the movement. Suendranath Banerjee defined the partition as a national calamity. The

anti-partition movement gradually assumed the character of Swadeshi movements. Armed activities were also involved in this movement because of some extremist leaders. Failing to dispel the movement the government at last withdrew the declaration of the Partition of Bengal in 1911. King George V declared the abolition of the Partition of Bengal in Delhi in 1911 while he was in a visit in India.

The abolition of the partition made the Hindus happy while the Congress considered it a victory of their policy. But, the Muslim community was much disappointed. They lost their confidence upon the British government and the Congress. They started to believe firmly that the Congress was not concerned with the welfare of the Muslims. The Muslim leaders of the Bengal marked the act as the worst example of treachery.

The relation between the Hindus and the Muslims got a crack after this incident. Communal riots also started after this event. The political aims of the Hindus and the Muslims became different after the foundation of Muslim League in 1906 AD. The Muslims gradually began to feel an extreme urge for an individual national identity.

**Individual Work:** Mark the political objectives of the British government behind the Partition of Bengal .

### Swadeshi Movement

The movement developed by the extremists among the Congress leadership after the failure of the lawful movement against partition of Bangal by the British Goverment is called the Swadeshi Movement. This movement focused on two types of activities- boycotting and being nativist.

The boycott movement aimed at giving up the English goods. Gradually the word boycott assumed a broader use. The activity not only boycotted the English goods, but also included a program like refusing English education system. Thus, the Swadeshi movement assumed the spirit of a national education movement. Many students were expelled from schools and colleges for taking part in the movement which raised the necessity of establishing national education institutions. For the national education movement there grew a number of national schools and a few vocational institutions at different parts of the country.

The Swadeshi movement soon spread at different parts of Bengal. Various actions were taken to boycott English goods like boycotting English education. Oaths were taken through meetings and seminars at different parts in the country to boycott English goods and education. Congress leaders openly encouraged people in the remote areas to burn English goods and to use native products. So, the demand of English goods decreased. During this time, native cotton, soap, salt, sugar and leather industries developed at different places of the country.

The first phase of the Armed Movement in Bengal weakened even before the Partition of Bengal was nullified in 1911. The top leaders of the first phase of this movement were Arbinda Ghosh, Rabindra Ghosh, Bhupendra Nath Datta and so on. Pulin Bihari Das was the leading organizer of the Onushilon Samity in Dhaka. They were involved in various revolutionary activities including making bombs to collecting arms of various types. They made the government restless with armed attacks and secret killings. An effort was also taken to kill Lieutenant Governor Fuller. Prafulla Chaki, an associate of Khudiram to kill English Magistrate Kingsford, committed suicide. Khudiram was hanged after he was being arrested. This time a number of revolutionaries were hanged at different charges including the bomb attack in Maniktola and other places. A number of revolutionaries were also given banishment in the distant islands and many were imprisoned. For such an extreme policy of repression the first phase of the armed revolution became timid. The second phase of the revolutionary movement started in 1912. Though the movement was Kolkata based, it broke out at different parts in East Bengal as well. This time the revolutionaries resumed killing, bomb attack robbery, etc. With this objective an explosive factory was founded in Kolkata. In the meantime, a number of robbery took place in Kolkata, and in different parts in the East Bengal such as Jessore, Khulna, etc. By the end of 1912 Lord Harding was bomb attacked in Delhi under the plan of Rasbihari Basu. Harding escaped the attack but the English government declared an award of taka one lakh to capture Rasbihari Basu.

Many revolutionaries of Bengal dared to collect arms from the foreign countries in the context of the First World War. Their objective was to achieve independence through a battle against the English power. They included Bagha Jatin (Jatindranath Roy), Dr Jadu Gopal Mukhopadhyay, Narendranath Bhattacharya and some others. They were promised by Germany, the enemy of England, to get arms. The government arrested all including Bagha Jatin when the secret was exposed to the government. A revolutionary, Chittopriyo was killed in a battle against police when the revolutionaries confronted them. Bagha Jatin was arrested along with three other revolutionaries. He died during the trial. Two of his comrades were hanged and another one received lifelong imprisonment.

Death sentences, lifelong imprisonment, brutal torture-nothing could remove the revolutionaries from their objectives. The plan to kill all natives and English higher officers sustained. Confrontations with the police, sudden attacks, bombing continued.

The Deputy Police Super Bashanta Chattopadhyay was killed on January 30, 1916 in Bhabanipur. When the number of such confrontations increased the government arrested many revolutionaries in the Defense act in 1916-17. As soon as Mahatma Gandhi withdrew the Non-cooperation program in 1922, arrests and police torture increased considerably. The activities of the revolutionaries increased equally too. The

revolutionaries published a pamphlet with the title 'Lalpatra' (The Red paper) calling to kill the tyrant police members. In 1924 a revolutionary, Gopinath Saha, killed an Englishman in lieu of killing the police Commissioner of Kolkata. Gopinath was hanged for this murder. While visiting the prison the Jail Super of the Alipur Zone was killed by a revolutionary Promod Chowdhury who attacked him with a rod. The English government introduced the Bengal Ordinance in 1924. The revolutionary activities became weak when a huge number of revolutionaries were arrested under this Ordinance.

Mahtma Gandhi started a "law violating movement" in 1930. The revolutionary activities in Bengal increased much with this movement. It is notable that the revolutionary activity was the strongest in Bengal and the Bangalees revolutionaries kept the English administration restless. The young Bangalees always leaped into the armed revolution without caring for their lives.

Such a brave revolutionary was Masterda, who was originally Surya Sen (1894-1934) by name. He came across the revolutionaries when he was a student in a college. After graduation, he joined Umatara Higher English School as a teacher. In the meantime he was popularly known as Masterda. This time he formed a revolutionary organization with the help of Ambika Chakrabarti, Anurup Sen, Nogen Sen and others. He himself and his organization were repeatedly arrested as a result of their involvement in the revolutionary activities, but they were released every time for the lack of any proof. Masterda formed The Chittagong Revolutionary Force to free Chittagong from the English rule. This was later turned into Chittagong Revolutionary Army. This force captured government offices in Chittagong one after another. Last of all they robbed the Chittagong Arms Depot. They also declared 'Independent Chittagong Government' as well as a war against the British government. This was a war between two unequal forces. The English government engaged a huge force against Surya Sen and his allies. The last war took place in the Jalalabad Hills. A number of young people were killed in this battle and many other. The revolutionaries took shelter in the houses of the peasants. Surjya Sen was arrested in 1933 and he was sentenced to death after a summary trial. After some brutal tortures, he was hanged on January 12 in 1934 and his dead body was drowned in the sea.



Surya Sen

Surja Sen's revolutionary army also had women soldiers. Among them the most remarkable ones were Kalpana Dutta and Pritilota Wedder. An uncommonly brilliant student Pritilota stood first in the Intermediate Examination in 1940 and passed B.A. Examination with distinctions. In the meantime, she involved herself in the revolutionary activities and came across the organization of Surya Sen. An uncommonly brave woman Pritilota was assigned to lead the attack on Tahartoli European Club' because of her efficiency. After a successful operation there, she helped her companions to escape the place safely, but committed suicide before being captured. Pritilota has been an icon in the history of all revolutionary movements in Bengal.

Like the revolutionaries of Chittagong, the Jugantor Samity in Kolkata was also very active. The efforts to kill Charles Tegart in the Dalhousie Square in Kolkata failed in 1930. In the same year Inspector-General of Prison Simpson was killed in the Writer's Building in Kolkata. Before that tyrant police officer Loman was killed by Binoy Basu. Binoy and Badal, two accomplices in this operation committed suicide and Dineah was hanged. The effort to kill the Governor of Bengal, Jackson, was failed. An accomplice in this operation Bina Das was given a lifelong imprisonment. Three consecutive English Magistrates were killed in Medinipur by the revolutionaries. Though the revolutionary activities subsided by 1930, the revolutionaries in Chittagong continued their operations one after another. The revolutionaries succeeded to make people aware of their existence by an operation on the Cricket Ground in Chittagong on January 7, 1934. Two revolutionaries were killed on that day and two more were killed after being captured.



Pritilota Wedder

#### Reasons Behind the Failure of the Armed Movement

One of the reasons behind the failure of the armed revolution was its disintegration with the common people. This movement was led by the hidden organizations. Some educated conscious young people were involved with them. All revolutionary activities were run secretly. Common people had no idea about their activities. To the common people, armed attack, bombing, killing - all these meant terrorism and violence. For this they stayed far from them.

The majority of the population of Bengal remained at a distance from this movement. Since there were some Hindu rituals like taking oath by touching the Geeta, reciting verses in front of the goddess Kali were mandatory for revolutionaries, the Muslims felt obstacles to take part in the revolution.

The revolutionary groups had to work in small units for the sake of security and confidentiality. No groups could know the activities of others. So, there grew a distance

among them. Due to the lack of coordination, there occurred leadership crisis. Besides the secret units worked individually. There was hardly any relationship existed between the units. As there was no single leadership, the armed revolution, occurred isolatedly across the country. This separation among the revolutionaries caused the failure of the revolution.

Moreover, the firmness of the government in tackling the movement and the disintegration of the revolutionaries with the common people made them helpless and cornered. Not only that, as division and enmity among the group leaders made the armed revolution weak, it also gave birth to extreme disliking for each other. In this context a number of revolutionaries joined Communist Party when it was formed in India.

Though the revolutionary movement could not be successful, the self-sacrifice of the revolutionaries, their patriotism, courage captivated Bangalees or even the Indians more for freedom. Though the movement was not a complete success, the ideals of the revolutionaries lit the ways of the farther movements.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Individual Work</b> | 1. Make a list of the leaders related to armed revolutionary movement.<br>2. Write a report on the life and activities of Pritilota? |
|------------------------|--|

### Swaraj and Bengal Pact

Many Congress leaders were released from the jail after Gandhi had withdrawn his non-cooperation program. This time he faced differences in opinion with the released leaders Chittaranjan Das (C.R. Das) and Motilal Nehru regarding the future activities of Congress. C.R. Das and his followers decided to join the councils formed by election. They took that decision because after the failure of the Non-cooperation movement there was no situation to go for law violating movement. Furthermore, they had an objective to foil the Reform Act of 1911 after joining the legislative council. But their efforts went in vain in the Goa Conference of Congress. In this context Swaraj Party was formed in 1922 by C.R. Das with the support of a section of the Congress leadership. C.R. Das became the President of the party while Motilal Nehru became one of the Secretaries.

Those who supported Swaraj Party to achieve self-governance were called pro-changers and those opposed the Swaraj Party were known as no-changers. These two groups had no other difference in their objectives other than determining the means to achieve independence.

The opponents of Swaraj Party were rigid in continuing the non-cooperation movement towards forming a law violating movement. On the other hand, many revolutionaries like Subhash Chandra Basu, Hossein Shahid Suharawardi and other young leaders joined the Swaraj Party.

Muslims began to dream for an independent homeland after the Lahore Resolution. A new stream in Indian politico-constitutional movement began to flow because of this proposal. Mohammad Ali Jinnah began to identify the Muslims as a different nation. For that the establishment of a new state for the Muslims became a matter of time only. From this time the politics of Jinnah and Muslim League ran towards the establishment of an independent state, which had its ultimate result in the division of the country in August in 1947. As a practical consequence of the Two Nations Theory two countries called Pakistan and India were born respectively on August 14 and on August 15.

### **Pre-Partition Politics of East Bengal (1937-1947)**

The death of Chittaranjan Das in 1925 and the Kolkata riot in 1926 created an adverse situation for the Hindu-Muslim relation. In this circumstance Muslim leaders like Moulana Akram Khan and Tamij Uddin Khan left Congress.

A decision was taken to form a party named Nikhil Bongo Proja Samity in 1929 after the provincial legislative election. The principal objective of this party was to improve the condition of the poor peasants of Bengal. As a result, there grew a new stream in peasants movement and politics. In 1935 A.K.Fazlul Hoque was elected the President of Nikhil Bongo Proja Samity in the council in Mymensingh.

The party had a new name 'Krishok Proja Party' in the next year. Krishok Proja Party was absolutely an individual and provincial political party. There was a very close competition between Krishok Proja Party and Muslim league in the general election in March 1937. But both of the parties failed to bag required number of seats to form government. As a result, Muslim League accepted the proposal of forming the government with A. K. Fazlul Hoque as the Chief Minister. Fazlul Hoque was elected the Chief Minister and took the charge of Education Ministry. This coalition government was weak. Thus Krishok Proja Party also became weak.

Fazlul Hoque resigned from Muslim League in 1941 following disagreements with Jinnah. Since Fazlul Hoque had the support of the majority, he formed his second cabinet in December in the same year. This new cabinet was an assembly of various political parties. Fazlul Hoque initiated a new political trend in Bengal by forming such a cabinet. This new trend aimed to solve the crisis through establishing a communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims in Bengal. Fazlul Hoque's new cabinet was in power from 1941 to 1943. He had to resign because of his failure to solve the crisis created by a great famine in 1943.

Khawja Nazimuddin formed his cabinet on April 13, 1943 in the context of the state wide famine. It is thought that more than three million of people died in this devastating famine. Nazimuddin cabinet fell down in 1945.

The Muslim League of Bengal was divided into two factions in 1946 on the issues like the provincial election and the leadership of the party. At last Suhrawardy became the leader of the Muslim League of Bengal. Muslim League bagged 114 seats in the election which in other means reflected the desire of the Muslims of Bengal very clearly.

In the political history of Bengal this election and its result was very much significant. Suhrawardi formed the government on April 24, 1946. In the true sense the tenure of Suhrawardi cabinet marked the transition in the history of Bengal and India. The end of the British rule, riot in Kolkata in the context of dividing India, the attempts to form a united Bengal, and the Partition of India were the significant events of this time.

### **Attempts to Form a United Bengal**

The Hindu-Muslim relation turned to a severe riot in 1947. The British government completely failed to manage the crisis in such an extreme situation and expressed desire to transfer power to the Indians. In this situation the Chief Minister of Bengal Hossain Shahid Suhrawardi presented the proposal to form a Joint Bengal state. Sharat Chandra Bose took a strong stance in favour of the proposal. The proposal was known as the Bose-Suhrawardy pact in the history of this subcontinent.

In a press conference in Delhi on April 27, in 1947 Hossain Shahid Suhrawardi announced the issue of forming an independent and sovereign undivided Bengal state in his speech and also expressed strong arguments in favour of this proposal. Muslim League leader Abul Hashim formulated a framework for this greater Bengal state too. Later in a speech Sharat Chandra Bose called upon to make Bengal a Socialist Republic.



Hossain Shahid Suhrawardi

### **Bose-Suhrawady Pact**

A meeting was held in the house of Congress leader Sharat Bose on May 20, 1947 in favour of a united Bengal. A pact was signed to form an independent sovereign united Bengal in that meeting. For the greater Bengal state the pact was signed by Abul Hasim on behalf of Muslim League and Sharat Chandra Bose on behalf of Congress. Muslim league leaders like Hossain Shahid Suhrawardy, Abul Hashim, Fazlur Rahman, Mohammad Ali, A.M. Malik were present in that meeting. On the other hand, Sharat Chandra Basu, Kiron Shankar Roy and Satya Ranjan Bakhshi were present among the Hindu leaders. Here is the summary of the pact.

1. Bengal would be an independent and sovereign state. The state itself will decide the type of its relation with the other parts of India.
2. The seats of the legislative council will be decided on the ratio of the number of Hindu and Muslim population and the council will be elected by the votes of the adult people.
3. Once the proposal for independent Bengal had been accepted, the present cabinet would be dissolved. An interim cabinet would be formed. The posts in that cabinet will be equally distributed between the Hindu and the Muslim communities except the position of the Prime Minister.
4. Hindus and Muslims would be equal in number in all services including the Military and Police departments. Such jobs would be restricted only for the Bengalees.
5. There would a representatives' council consisting of 30 members to formulate the constitution. Among them 16 members would be Muslim and 14 would be Hindus.

### **The Failure of the Proposal of a United Bengal**

There was an adverse reaction among the Congress and the Muslim League leaders. Initially the fundamentalist conservative Muslim league leaders were in favour of the treaty. At the primary level even Mahatma Gandhi and Mohammad Ali Jinnah also kept silence in support of this proposal. But the issue became complex for the opposition of the top ranking Congress and Muslim League leaders. As a result, both Mahatma Gandhi and Mohammad Ali Jinnah changed their attitudes. Though the Muslim League leaders were initially its supporters, later they, in particular Khawja Nazimuddin and Akram Khan started demanding to make united Bengal a part of Pakistan. Akram Khan after attending a meeting with Mohammad Ali Jinnah on May 16 in Delhi said that the Muslim League did not support the idea of the united independent Bengal. Thus, the Basu-Suhrawardy Pact lost the support of the Muslim League.

The idea of forming a united independent Bengal or the Basu-Suhrawady Pact faced equal strong opposition from the Congress hierarchy from the very beginning. Many Congress leaders including Jawharlal Nehru and Sardar Ballovbhai Patel opposed the plan. They were not prepared to lose Kolkata in independent India. They also didn't want to lose Assam which was rich in petrol and other mineral resources. Furthermore, Congress was concerned with the security of the Hindu community in the Muslim majority state of the united Bengal. Shyamaprasad of the Hindu Mohasava was in extreme opposition against the united Bengal. As a result, the idea of united Bengal lost the support of the Congress. Again, some newspapers and magazines made continuous propaganda against the united Bengal. West Bengal based Bangalee and non-Bangalee business community, traders, capitalists took a strong stand against this proposal.

Even, the Hindu intellectuals in Dhaka were also active against it. In this circumstance the central leadership of Congress refused the independent Bengal plan. On the other side, Lord Mountbatten presented his plan to divide Bengal and the Punjab on June 03 in his declaration of dividing India. As most of the members in the Bengal legislative council voted in favour of the division of Bengal on June 20, the division became inevitable. The Indian Independence Act, 1947 stated the division of Bengal and the Punjab. Accordingly India was divided on August 14, 1947 when an artificial state Pakistan was born. The next day, on 15th August India got freedom. East Bengal became a part of Pakistan which later on came to be known as East Pakistan. West Bengal was attached to India. In this way the dream for forming a united independent Bengal came to an end.

**Individual Work:** Find out the reasons behind the opposition against the united Bengal by its opponents.

## The End of the British Rule

### The Birth of India and Pakistan

When all concerned refused to accept the Cripps Mission proposal in 1942, a serious dissatisfaction developed in whole India. There came deep frustration even in politics. Outside India the world was facing the destructions of the Second World War. The Indians felt a panic on the prospect of an attack upon India by Japan, a close allies of Germany. Gandhiji marked the presence of British government in India as the reason behind the supposed cause of the Japanese attack. Therefore, in the Allahabad conference of the Congress he proposed the British government to leave India in the view that it might change Japan's objective to attack India. Congress started 'Quit India Movement'. People became involved in this movement. The movement spread throughout India and assumed the nature of a strong anti-British attitude. Mahatma Gandhi declared in the historical session of All India Congress Conference in Bombay (presently Mumbai), 'I want freedom. Even I want it within this night, if possible before the dawn" on August 08 in 1942. He also said, "We will achieve independence by struggles. And this will be our last struggle".

But the English government was not prepared then to hand over power to the Indians. Rather the government resolved to stop the movement in an iron hand. Many top ranking Congress leaders like Gandhi, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jawharlal Nehru were arrested overnight. The government declared Congress an illegal organization and almost all leaders were arrested within a week.

The non-violent movement turned violent. Hartals and general strikes were observed in mills-factories and in schools and colleges to press the demand of the release of the

**2. Masterda Surjya Sen's revolutionary activities included –**

- i. forming a revolutionary army in Chittagong;
- ii. declaration of Independent Chittagong government;
- iii. forming a Chittagong Republican Army.

**Which one of the followings is correct?**

- |              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| a. i and ii  | b. ii and iii    |
| c. i and iii | d. i, ii and iii |

**Read the text and answer question nos. 3 and 4.**

The labourers of the Nishapur tea garden were demonstrating on the street to protest against their low wage. When their violence like destructions and blockades went on, the labour leader Kiran asked them to give up violence for a regular movement.

**3. Who influenced the labour leader Kiran?**

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Khudiram       | b. Masterda Surya Sen |
| c. Mahatma Gandhi | d. Pulin Bihari Das   |

**4. That leader's activities included –**

- i. strengthening Hindu-Muslim harmony;
- ii. protesting the repressive acts;
- iii. demanding the release of the determined prisoners.

**Which of the followings is correct?**

- |              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| a. i and ii  | b. ii and iii    |
| c. i and iii | d. i, ii and iii |

**Creative Questions**

1. Salehpur Union is near the river. Crops and roads were damaged widely in the last year's flood. Since it covered a large area, problems arose in the development works including distributing relief goods during the time of the flood. In order to solve this crisis the union was divided into two units.
  - a. Where was Emperor Bahadur Shah II exiled?

- b. What do you mean by the Doctrine of Lapse ?
  - c. What reason behind the Partition of Bengal has been reflected in the text?
  - d. Do you think that was the only reason behind the Partition of Bengal? Give reasons in favour of your opinion.
2. Keya and Kona are two sisters. They went to Eid shopping. Though Keya listed some foreign goods in her preference, Kona consented to give up foreign goods for buying own products. At last Kona succeeded to convince her sister Keya, and both returned home with local products.
  - a. Who abolished the rank of the Emperor of Delhi?
  - b. Why did the Enfield Rifle made soldiers revolt?
  - c. What aspect of the movements against the British encouraged Kona to buy local products. Explain.
  - d. Do you think that Keya's attitudes are adverse to our economic progress? Give reasons.

## **Chapter Eleven**

# **The Language Movement and Afterwards Political Episode**

Language Movement was the movement for the Bangalee's cultural rights to self determination. Subsequently this movement shaped itself as the economic and political movement. This agitation was the first step to evolve Bengalee nationalistic feeling. The then ruling class from West Pakistan vested themselves to exploit East Pakistan in suppressive manner from the very first day of independence in August 1947. They had tried to impose Urdu as the state language; which was spoken only by a minor 3.27% people ignoring the vast majority of 56% of its total population speaking Bangla. The rulers (West Pakistan) in 1948 declared Urdu as the state language of Pakistan ignoring the opinions of the majority group. At first, the scholars of Bengal protested the decision. They strongly protested this discriminatory decision. In this way, the Language Movement started to get its momentum. The agitation reached its peak in 1952. Movement developed throughout the country. For the first time in world history Salam, Barkat, Rafique, Jabbar and many others sacrificed their lives for the love of mother tongue. Language movement had sowed the seed of independence within the dream of a Bangalee nation. This motivated the long thriving struggle and revolution to give birth of a new country. our beloved Bangladesh.

### **At the end of this chapter we will be able to –**

- explain the importance of Language Movement;
- describe the background of declaring 21<sup>st</sup> February as the International Mother Language Day and its honor;
- describe the necessity of forming new political organizations;
- evaluate the formation United Front Coalition and subsequent proceedings;
- honor the language martyrs through honoring the Language Movement;
- be interested in sharing political feeling with others and encourage others as well.

### **The Background of the Language Movement**

Partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 resulted the formation of Pakistan. The then East Bengal became a dominion of the newly formed state Pakistan. The two parts of Pakistan had no similarity in respect of history, tradition, culture, and language. Despite West Pakistan and East Pakistan (East Bengal) having situated 1000 miles apart, they become one on the basis of only religion. As a result, the ruling class of this newly formed country 'Pakistan' stroke the first bolt on its language as a measure of their intention to exploit eastern dominion. The question of 'what would be the state language of Pakistan?' arose before the creation of Pakistan in 1947. At that time, the

influential leaders from Muslim League and scholars opined favoring Urdu to be the state language of Pakistan. Instantly, the scholars and writers including veteran language specialist of the sub-continent, Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah protested the idea. Just after creation of Pakistan, Tamaddun Majlis was formed by Abul Kashem, a Professor of Physics Department University of Dhaka. This was the first organization for language movement. The first published pamphlet by this organization was 'The State Language of Pakistan is Bangla or Urdu' was published on 15 September 1947. The publication stated logics in it favoring Bangla to be the state language. With the initiative of the Tamaddun Majlis, National Language Action Committee which was convened by Professor Nurul Haque Bhuiyan of University of Dhaka was formed in October 1947 to frame it as a political movement. Along with this organization many other organizations, such as, Democratic Youth League, East Bengal Scholar Society, Journalists' Forum demanded in various meetings, gatherings and summits to make Bangla as the state language. Ignoring all these urges, Urdu had been suggested to the Constituent Assembly as the State Language in the Education Summit held in Karachi in December 1948.

From the very beginning of 1948, the educated society of Bengal there was voiced with the demand of Bangla Language. In a meeting of National Language Action Committee, a proposal was made to make Bangla as the medium of education for the primary to secondary level. On 23 February 1948 when the proceedings of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan began simultaneously in Urdu and English, a member of the Assembly and East Bengal Congress Party from Comilla, Dharendra-nath Datta, opposed it and proposed the legislation to include Bangla as an important language of assembly. But, all the members from Muslim League defied the proposal. The students of East Bengal made a huge protest against it. Strike had been observed in all the educational institutions in Dhaka on 26 and 29 February. On 2nd March National Language Action Committee was formed for the second time by the student wing in presence of the scholars of East Bengal.

The new committee for the National Language Action called for strike on 11 March. Their demand was to declare Bangla as one of the State Language of Pakistan and official language for East Pakistan Government. During the procession for the demand of Bangla as the state language, many people were injured by the police batoning. Many of them were arrested including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sham-sul Haque, Oli Ahad, Kazi Golam Mahbub. As a result of this, strike was again observed on 13-15 of March. At this time, not only Dhaka, but also the whole country observed the strike. On the height of the severe protest, the then Chief Minister Khaja Nazimuddin signed a contract with the student leaders.

## Muslim League and Its Undemocratic Activities

After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the All India Muslim League was renamed as Pakistan Muslim League. Muslim League started its journey as the ruling party of a new government. From the very beginning, the party was fully controlled by the Urdu speaking West Pakistani leaders. The Muslim League leaders from West Pakistan adopted the policy of disparity against the Bangalee and started to oppress them in various issues forgetting the efforts, initiatives and self-sacrifice made by Bangalee leaders during the partition for a separate state. The dedicated Bangalee leaders of Muslim League such as AK Fazlul Haque, Hossain Shahid Suhrawardy, Abul Hasim had been ignored. Gradually, Muslim League was alienated from the mass.

During the period after 1947, the Muslim League in Bengal became entangled in internal conflict. The party became divided into two different ideologies. One was the follower of Suhrawardi-Hashim and the other one was the follower of Khaja Nazimuddin -Akram Khan. Followers of the first ideology were generous, democratic, reformatory and the later one were the submissive associates of the conservative West Pakistanis. This internal conflict made the party weak as an organization. Besides, the ruler West-Pakistan always tried to repress and oppress these leaders desiring reformation.

Severe crisis broke out in the country due to the faulty policy of the Muslim League. The government was not interested in the development of East Bengal at all. Gradually, their differentiating attitude towards East Bengal got prominent. The disparity was remarkable in every sector of economy, politics, culture, etc. Public support favoring Muslim League started to deplete rapidly after 1948.

## Newly formed Political Parties

A number of leaders became very upset realizing the undemocratic attitude, suppressive measures, huge disparity between West Pakistan and East Bengal and dishonoring the Bangla language by the Muslim League. The oppositions of Muslim League came forward to create new political party. In addition to the existing Congress and Communist Party, various parties like People's Freedom League, Gono Azadi League, Pakistan Democratic Youth League, Nezam-E-Islam, Khilfat-E-Rabbani, Krishok-Shramik Party were formed. But, the major blow for the Muslim League was the faction within itself. The leaders of the reformatory group formed Awami Muslim League. Under these circumstances in East Bengal, one or more than one political party was formed against Muslim League.

## **Awami League from Awami Muslim League**

The group in the Muslim League believing in democracy and reformation were oppressed and deprived of by the other group of leaders from West Pakistan. This reactive part of the ruling party was gradually detached from the mass people because of their incapability to run the state. On the other hand, public support for the deprived group of the Muslim League was increasing. Among the national leaders; Suhrawardi, Abul Hashim, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani started to protest against the traditional policy of the Muslim League and they felt the necessity to organize a new political party. In May 1948, Suhrawardi called a meeting for the creation of an opposition party. In continuation to this, discussion related to the formation of a new party had been going on with the leaders of West Pakistan opposing the Muslim League. After these initiatives and preparations, a workers' conference was held at a house named the Rose Garden in Dhaka on 23-24 June in 1949. 300 top level representatives participated in that conference. Here it was decided unanimously to form a new political party named 'East Pakistan Awami Muslim League'. A forty member committee was also formed having Maulana Bhashani as Chairman, Shamsul Haque as Secretary, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Joint-secretary. The first public meeting of this newly formed political party was held at Armanitola, Dhaka.

From the inception of the Awami Muslim League, they took a 42 point platform with emphasis on provincial autonomy. Among the main agenda were accepting Bangla as state language, one vote of one person, democracy, framing of the constitution, parliamentary government, regional autonomy and reduction of disparity between West and East Pakistan. Awami Muslim League was the first successful opposition party in the history of East Bengal. Formation of this party filled the gap of the opposition party. The party gained public support because of its strong voice against the Muslim League and ill treatment from the Pakistani rulers. This party played a vital role in formation of a united front coalition in 1954 and its unprecedented victory over Muslim League. After this, Muslim League became only a party in name.

From the very beginning Awami Muslim League believed in non-communal and secular philosophy. As a consequence, the party removed the word 'Muslim' from its name and became 'Awami League' in 1955 and opened its door for the people of other religious beliefs. The party became real party for the mass people by raising Six Point Agenda in 1966. After this, the full political control of East Pakistan became concentrated on Awami League.

In the national election of 1970 , The Awami League bagged absolute majority in Nathania and provincial assembly. It is the Awami League that led the nation to achieve victory in the Liberation War in 1971 and earned independence.

### **United Front Coalition & Provincial Election (1954)**

The United Front Coalition was another important milestone in political history of Bengal. In fact, the election was a 'revolution through ballot' against the exploitation of the ruler and their alliance of Pakistan. It became necessary to form a new political organization due to grouping within the Muslim League, internal conflict, failure in administration, differentiated policy for individual regions since the very beginning of Pakistan. Because of the acute failure of Muslim League in the eastern dominion, various parties were formed such as Awami Muslim League, Peasants-Workers Party, East Pakistan Communist Party, Nizam-E-Islami, Pakistan National Congress, etc. Though, it was decided previously to hold the election for the East Pakistan Constituent Assembly in 1951, the Muslim League Government postponed the date of election time on vague grounds from their anxiety of defeat. At last the date for the election in East Pakistan was fixed on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1954.

### **The Background of Formation of United Front Coalition (Juktafront) and its 21-Points Charter**

Muslim League was the oldest and largest among the political parties in East Bengal before the election of 1954. Besides, Muslim League was leading the provincial government of East Bengal. As a result, the newly formed parties in East Pakistan planned to form a coalition as a strategy to defeat Muslim League in the election of 1954. Resultantly, the decision to form United Front Coalition was taken at the council of Awami Muslim League in Mymensing on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1953. The coalition consisted of four main opposition parties; Awami Muslim League led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Krishak Sromik Party led by AK Fazlul Haque, Nezam-E-Islami of Maulana Atahar Ali and the leftist Democratic Party of Hazi Danesh. The electoral symbol for the United Front Coalition was 'Boat'. The coalition declared 21-point charter of election manifesto by selecting the main demands made on the 42 point election manifesto of Awami Muslim League. Abul Mansur Ahmed was the main person to write the 21-point charter with the view to reflecting the hopes and aspirations of the mass people of East Bengal. The main points are briefly mentioned below:

1. To Establish Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan;
2. To dissolve the Zamidari System without compensation and distribute the surplus land among the landless people;
3. To nationalize the Jute Industry;
4. To establish co-operative agricultural system to develop agriculture;
5. To introduce free and compulsory primary education;
6. Education through mother tongue (language),
7. To construct a monument commemorating the martyrs of 52's Language Movement;
8. To declare 21<sup>st</sup> February as government holiday considering it as Shahid Dibosh;
9. To provide full autonomy to East Bengal as per 1940-Lahore Resolution;
10. In no way the validity of the Legislative Assembly is to be extended;
11. If any seats in the Legislative Assembly become vacant, it should be filled in within three months through by-election.

### **Result of the Election**

The election of 8 March in 1954 was the first general election held in East Bengal with exercise of unrestrained and universal voting right. 37.19% voters voted in the election. Officially the result of the election was declared on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. The coalition attained 223 seats out of the total 309 seats. The ruling party Muslim League obtained 9 seats,

### **The Significance of the Election**

The election of 1954 was the united protest by the Bengalee against the lawlessness, discrimination and administrative failure of the Muslim League. The general public of East Bengal gave a message to the Muslim League that they would no longer cherish them. The immense popularity of the leaders of the coalition, especially the young

## **Chapter Twelve**

# **Military Rule and the Movement for Right of Self-determination (1958 - 1969)**

Since its emergence, the administrative system in Pakistan was always seemed to be overpowered by autocracy and bureaucracy. Apart from this, the influence of army was also evident and this gradually intensified. Army was looking for the opportunity to grab power. General Iskander Mirza was selected as the first President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 23 March, 1956. During his regime, the army started overshadowing the politics in Pakistan. Iskander Mirza obstructed democratic practices in various ways. His conspiracy prompted the central cabinet to fall several times. The confrontation between the Awami League and the Krishak Sramik Party reached to its peak in East Pakistan. At one stage Deputy Speaker Shahed Ali succumbed to death due to a head injury from the opposition the Krishak Sramik Party members during a session of the Assembly in East Pakistan. His death resulted chaos in the politics of Pakistan and paved the way of Iskander Mirza to proclaim the Martial Law.

**At the end of this chapter we will be able to -**

- describe the situation ensued from military intervention;
- describe the contexts and effects of India-Pakistan war in 1965;
- explain the disparities between East and West Pakistan;
- analyze the impacts of Six Points demand in Bangalees' movement for autonomy;
- explain the significance of the historic Agartala Case;
- describe the 11 Points;
- describe the background and effects of Mass Upsurge in 1969;
- be aware of protecting the interests and rights of the country.

### **Martial Law in 1958**

President Iskander Mirza proclaimed Martial Law by compelling the parliamentary government of Malik Feroz Khan to step down on 7 October, 1958. He abolished the constitution, central and provincial assemblies and dismissed the cabinet. He banned the political parties. He appointed General Ayub Khan as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Major General Omrao Khan was appointed the Martial Law Administrator in East Pakistan. But within a few days, General Ayub Khan assumed the Presidency through a coup against Iskander Mirza

### **Basic Democracy of Ayub Khan**

After consolidating the power in 1958, General Ayub Khan initiated to bring about absolute changes in the administrative system and politics in Pakistan. He abandoned

the traditional democratic practices and introduced a strange and new electoral process. It was based on a concept called 'Basic Democracy'. Basic Democracy is a kind of restricted democracy in which a few number of people would enjoy the privilege of electing the President. An ordinance was proclaimed to introduce Basic Democracy in 1959. Initially Basic Democracy had four tiers, (down to top) such as:

1. Union Council (in the villages) and Town and Union Committees (in urban areas);
2. Thana Council in East Pakistan and Tahsil Council in West Pakistan;
3. District Council;
4. Divisional Council.

The Councils were consisted of elected and nominated members as well.

There were 40000 basic democrats in each part of Pakistan totaling the number to 80000 in the country. The members of this Basic Democracy were the Basic Democrats or BD members. People's participation was limited in electing BD members. BD members were the valid electors. None but these BD members could elect the President and the members of the National and Provincial Legislative Councils. Ayub Khan became the President for the following five years after winning the confidence votes of these members. Thus, he also gained the authority to formulate a constitution for the country. The new constitution was made public on 1 March 1962 and the Martial Law was withdrawn on 8 June.

**Individual work:** Prepare a concept of Ayub Khan's Basic Democracy.

### Movement against Military Rule

Hossain Shahid Suhrawardy was taken into custody on 30 January 1964 for his alleged anti-state conspiracy. The news of Suhrawardy's arrest sparked students' reactions in East Pakistan. They called for strike on 1 February and brought out processions. The strike continued at a stretch till 5 February. This student program originated anti-Ayub movement in East Pakistan. The government closed the University of Dhaka sine die. Students confronted huge policing activities on them including arrests and tortures. When Ayub Khan announced the enactment of a new constitution on March 1, the student communities in East Pakistan staged demonstrations and abstained from attending classes. Intellectuals, teachers, politicians and others extended their supports to the students' movement opposing the new constitution. Ayub Khan and the East Pakistan Governor Monaem Khan took strict oppressive measures to control the student movement.

Student movement got momentum when the Sharif Commission Report on education was published in August 1962. The recommendations in the report poised threat

of jeopardizing students' interests and rights. This resulted in a massive student movement. This movement is known as the 'Education Movement, 62'. There were demonstrations every day from 15 August to 10 September. While a hartal was being observed on 17 September, several persons were killed and hundreds of people were injured in police shootouts. This movement forced the government to suspend the recommendations of the Sharif Commission. As a result of this incident, students turned to a very vital force in anti-Ayub movement.

When the Martial Law was suspended on 8 June 1962, rights for politics under the banner of political parties revived. Ayub Khan himself formed a political party named the Convention Muslim League. At the same time Hossain Shahid Suhrawardy urged all the opposition parties to be united to form a coalition. As a result, National Democratic Front or NDF was formed comprising Awami League, Nezam-e-Islami, National Awami Party, Council Muslim League and Muslim League of Nurul Amin. The aim of this front was to regain democracy and to switch back to the constitution of 1956. This front became popular very quickly.

Hossain Shahid Suhrawardy died on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1963. Awami League deserted NDF at the beginning of 1964. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected the General Secretary of the party. Awami League started its new journey under his leadership. It made NDF inactive. However, in the Presidential election on 2 January 1965, Awami league, NAP, Council Muslim League, Nezam-e-Islami, etc. joined again to form a Combined Opposition Party (COP) so that they could nominate a single candidate against Ayub Khan. COP nominated Fatima Jinnah, the younger sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah to contest for the Presidency of Pakistan. Ayub Khan managed to have supports of the Basic Democrats to his side before the election. Though people expressed their enthusiasm about Fatima Jinnah, Ayub Khan won the election race and became the President. National and Provincial Legislative Council elections was held after the Presidential election. Ayub Khan's Convention Muslim League won the majority in this election too.

### **India-Pakistan War in 1965**

When India and Pakistan emerged as two separate countries in 1947, an enmity ensued between them centering Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan considered Kashmir as their inseparable part. The first war between these two countries occurred regarding the control of Kashmir. But the war ended as the United Nations intervened and mediated. The second war between these two countries happened again about Kashmir in 1965. Ayub Khan had a long cherished desire to invade India and capture Kashmir. Tension aroused in the Indian part of Kashmir when the Kashmiri leader Shiekh Abdullah was arrested. Ayub Khan availed himself of this opportunity. He attempted to create rowdiness in Kashmir sending armed guerilla at first .At last, when Pakistan forces attacked Indian

territory on 6<sup>th</sup> September the war began. From the very onset the Indian Army met with considerable success. They forced back Pakistani soldiers marched forward to Lahore. In such a deplorable situation of Pakistan, Bangalee soldiers fought with great courage and saved Lahore from a fall. On the seventeenth day after the war had ensued Pakistan was on the verge of a total wretchedness. Some western countries and the Soviet Union intervened and used diplomatic tools to mediate a ceasefire. The Soviet Union Premier Alexei Kosygin hosted ceasefire negotiations in January 1966 and an agreement was signed between India and Pakistan in Tashkand city . With the signing of this treaty, the second Kashmir war ended.

The second Kashmir war aroused a strong anti-Ayub stance among the common people of East Pakistan. The reason behind this was the obvious absence of any defense mechanism in East Pakistan. This unguarded land could be invaded by Indian forces anytime. During this time even the administrative communications between the East and the West parts of Pakistan were totally cut off. Ayub Khan failed to ensure the security of East Pakistan despite the life risking valiant contributions of the Bangalee soldiers to protect Lahore.

### **Discrimination Towards East Pakistan**

The state of Pakistan emerged in accordance with the proposals made in the Lahore Resolution. But East Bengal did not get the status of a separate sovereign state in accordance with the fundamentals of the Lahore Resolution. East Bengal had to strive for autonomy through movements and agitations for long 24 years. During this long span of time, West Pakistani rulers adopted the policy of discrimination and oppression against the people of East Pakistan in political, administrative, military, economic, educational and cultural areas. In protest of this, movement for autonomy and independence originated in East Pakistan i.e. East Bengal.

### **Political Discrimination**

Since its inception in 1947, East Pakistan was made crippled politically and was dependent on West Pakistan. Though it was mentioned in the Lahore Resolution that the states were to be autonomous, Pakistani rulers were reluctant to this matter from the very beginning. They defied democracy and continued ruling the country through autocracy and military rule. They imposed colonial rule on East Pakistan and worked for the prosperity of West Pakistan by depriving the East in every field of social, political and economic activities. They created stalemate in the political atmosphere of East Pakistan by oppressing and suppressing the political leaders. They repeatedly sent

Furthermore, a separate banking reserve should be established and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.

4. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federal government. The federal will be entitled to deposit a certain portion in the federal fund. The federal government shall use this fund to meet its expenditures.
5. The federal units shall have the full authority to regulate foreign exchange earnings and trade links. The foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed.
6. To safeguard regional solidarity and national security the provinces should have the authority to form and control their own militia or paramilitary force.

The Six Points of Bangabandhu was accepted in the Working Committee meeting of the Awami League held on 13 March 1966. Then Bangabandhu campaigned for creating public opinion in favor of the Six Points. He went to different places and delivered speech on this. He termed these Six Points as 'our demand for survival.' As a result of Bangabandhu's campaign, Six Points gained public support very rapidly. Being scared the Government of Ayub Khan started arresting the leaders and activists of the Awami League. During this time Ayub Khan visited East Pakistan and delivered speech in various public meetings where he termed Six Points as seditious and a threat to unity. The Government of Ayub Khan arrested Bangabandhu on 9 May in 1966 as Six Points gained popularity day by day. On 7 June a general strike was observed to protest the arrest of Bangabandhu. During hartal, a number of individuals were killed in police firing. In protest of this killing, opposition staged walk out from the Provincial Assembly on 8 June. In 1968 the Government put Bangabandhu on trial accusing him in the historic Agartala Case. The case led to mass upsurge in 1969 and the Government was forced to release Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The key factor in Awami League's election manifesto in 1970 was this Six Points program. The Awami League sought public mandate in favor of the Six Points program in the general elections of 1970. A landslide victory was gained with the absolute mandate from the people of East Pakistan in favor of Six-Point program. Yet, this Six Points program could not be implemented. The Six Points program ended with the commencement of the War of Liberation that followed the genocide caused by the Pakistani occupational forces. Afterwards Bangladesh gained independence after a nine months Liberation war.

### **Historic Agartala Case (State vs. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others), 1968**

Since emergence, disparity between the two wings of Pakistan was gradually escalating. Large scale attachment of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the mass people made him a people's leader in East Pakistan. To keep him away from his political activities, West Pakistani government arrested him and sent behind the bars frequently. But nothing could stop Bangabandhu from his efforts to free this land. On various occasions different professionals, especially the young Bangalee members of the armed forces came in contact with him. At one stage he was attracted to armed revolution. Lt. Commander Moazzem Hossain along with a group of soldiers of Pakistan Navy met Bangabandhu. In the meeting they exchanged views on armed movement. In 1963 Bangabandhu visited Tripura secretly. In Agartala, the capital of Tripura, he met Sachindralal Singha, the then Congress leader who became the Chief Minister of Tripura later. In that meeting, Bangabandhu sent a message through Sachindralal Singha to the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, seeking his support for the armed movement. It may be mentioned that the Six Points programme of Bangabandhu in 1966 gained widespread popularity in East Pakistan. Autonomy of East Pakistan became the demand of the people. Meanwhile, few Bangalee officers and soldiers were getting organized for armed revolution to protest the existing disparity in the army. But, the matter was uncovered by Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistani government. 1500 Bengalees were arrested in Pakistan. Bangabandhu was implicated as the main accused of this conspiracy. Bangabandhu was in jail then. A case was filed in January 1968. The Government framed the charged saying Bangabandhu led a secret meeting with the Indian government officials in Agartala. In the meeting a plan was designed to liberate East Pakistan through armed movement with the assistance from the Government of India. This is why it became known as 'Agartala Case'. But officially the case was termed 'The State versus Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others'. But the Pakistani government campaigned it as "Agartala Conspiracy Case"

On 9 May 1966 Bangabandhu was released from the jail, but he was again arrested under Martial Law at the jail gate and was taken to Dhaka Cantonment. 35 persons were accused in this case. Along with Bangabandhu the other 34 accused were Lt. Commander Moazzem Hossain, Steward Mujibur Rahman, LS Sultanuddin Ahmad, Nur Mohammad, Ahmed Fazlur Rahman CSP, Flight Sergeant Mahfizullah, A. B. M. Abdus Samad, Habildar Dalil Uddin Hawlader, Ruhul Quddus CSP, Flight Sergeant Md. Fazlul Haq, Bhupati Bhushan Chowdhury alias Manik Chowdhury, Bidhan Krishna Sen, Subedar Abdur Razzaque, Habildar Mujibur Rahman, Flight Sergeant Md. Abdur Razzaque, Sergeant Zahirul Haq, A.B.M. Khurshid, Khan Mohammad Shamsur Rahman CSP, AKM Shamsul Haque, Habildar Azizul Haq, Mahfuzul Bari, Sergeant Shamsul Haq, Risaldar A. K. M. Shamsul Hoque, Habildar Azizul Haque, Mahfuzul Bari, Sergeant Shamsul Haque, Major Dr. Shamsul Alam, Captain Md. Abdul Motaleb, Captain Shawkat Ali, Captain Khondkar Nazmul Huda, Captain A. S.

M. Nuruzzaman, Flight Sergeant Abdul Jalil, Mahbub Uddin Chowdhury, Lt. M. M. M. Rahman, Subedar A. K. M. Tajul Islam, Md. Ali Reza, Captain Dr. Khurshid Uddin Ahmed and Lt. Abdur Rauf.

A special tribunal was formed for the disposal of the Agartala Case. The hearing of the case started at 11 a.m. on 19 June 1968 in a chamber inside Dhaka Cantonment. There were 227 witnesses including 11 approvers. A defense team of the lawyers of the accused persons was formed under the leadership of prominent lawyer Abdus Salam Khan. On the other hand, Bangalee expatriates in England sent a renowned lawyer Sir Thomas William MP to defend Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The government lawyers leading the case were the former foreign minister Manzur Quader and Advocate General T.H. Khan. The Chairman of the tribunal was Justice S.A Rahman. The other members were M.R. Khan and Muksumul Hakim. On 29 July 1968 the hearing of the case resumed. Sir Thomas William filed a writ petition in Dhaka High Court on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman challenging the legality of the formation of the tribunal.

Anti-Ayub agitation was getting momentum in both the wings of Pakistan during the trial. In East Pakistan people's voice became stronger to realize the demand for the release of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the withdrawal of the case. Gradually the mass movement in East Pakistan turned to mass upsurge in 1969. Some political parties including Awami League, National Awami Party formed a Democratic Action Committee (DAC). At a point of turmoil, Sergeant Zahirul Haq, one of the vital accused in the case, was shot to death in Dhaka Cantonment on 15 February 1969. When the news of his death came out, the people of Dhaka city burst into anger on 16 February 1969. Angry mob paraded the city streets with the coffin of Sergeant Zahirul Haque. In a bid to tame the situation Ayub Khan convened a round-table meeting on 19 February 1969 in Rawalpindi. Maulana Bhashani and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were among others invited to attend the meeting. To pave the way for Bangabandhu to attend the meeting, the Government proposed to release him on parole. But the people of East Pakistan including Maulana Bhashani refused the Govt. proposal and demanded withdrawal of the Agartala Case. At last in the face of the mass movement, the Ayub government was ultimately compelled to withdraw the Agartala Case. All the accused including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were released on 22 February 1969. On the occasion of the release of Bangabandhu a grand public reception rally was organized at the Race Course Maidan on 23 February 1969. In that mammoth rally Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was vested with the appellation of 'Bangabandhu'.

### **Impact of The Agartala Case**

This case played a vital role to ignite nationalist awareness among the Bangalees. The purpose that inspired Ayub Government to lodge the case did not gain any success; rather it acted as a boomerang against Ayub Government. At this stage the leader of the oppressed Maulana Bhashani came forward to the political leadership.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was recognized as the undisputed leader and forerunner the Bangalee for his role as the spokesman of the interest and autonomy of the Bengalees.

## **11 Points Movement**

During the period of 1968 to 1969 the anti-Ayub mass movement in East Pakistan reached its peak. The momentum of the movement was slowed down as the Awami League leaders got arrested for their roles in the mass movement. In this situation students took the leadership of the movement. Students' involvement turned the mass movement to mass upsurge. At the joint initiative of Chhatra League, Chhatra Union (Matia and Menon group) and Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU), student leaders sat together at DUCSU office on 5 January 1969 and formed a united front known as Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad (All Party Student's Action Committee) under the leadership of Tofael Ahmed, the then Vice-President of DUCSU (Dhaka University Central Students Union).

Chhatra Sangram Parishad called for mass upsurge based on their 11 Points demand. This 11 Points program inspired not only the students but also mass people for the movement. The 11 Points demand of the students also included the Six Points of Bangabandhu. Other important demands included the increase of educational facilities with the withdrawal of notorious Dhaka University Ordinance, freedom of speech, individual freedom, freedom of the press, nationalization of large industries, fair wage for labourers, right to form trade union, flood control and proper use of water resources, withdrawal of acts for promulgation of curfew, emergency and other repressive measures, unbiased foreign policy, immediate release of leaders and activists.

## **Mass Uprisings in 1969**

The movement that developed centering students' unrest in November 1968 was no longer confined to students only. It turned into a mass movement with the participation of workers, peasants and general people. A very strong movement against the autocracy of Ayub Khan started and the movement soon engulfed the whole of the then East Pakistan turning it to a mass upsurge. Focusing on the downfall of Ayub Khan, people of both the wings of Pakistan participated together in anti-Ayub movement for the first time. These movements were against the racial repressions, deprivation and disparity done to East Pakistan since the inception of Pakistan. Those factors had their impacts on the mass upsurge in 1969.

The student agitation turned into a vigorous mass movement under the leadership of Maulana Bhashani. As a part of joint program, the National Awami Party, East Pakistan Workers' Federation and East Pakistan Peasants' Association arranged a public meeting at Paltan Maidan to observe the Repression Resistance Day on 6 December 1968. After the meeting was over, a huge procession gheraoed the Governor's House. Maulana Bhashani declared a hartal the next day, following the violent clash between the police and the demonstrators.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

# **The Election of 1970 and The War of Liberation**

The election of 1970 has great significance in the history of the liberation movement of Bangladesh. When the military rulers of Pakistan enforced oppressive measures on the leaders of East Pakistan including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the people of this country organized movements against them. This was resulted in the mass uprising of 1969. As Ayub Khan stepped down following this uprising of 25 March, his successor General Yahya Khan promised re-establishment of democracy in Pakistan. He declared that the military government would delegate power to the elected public representatives. Following this route, a general election was held in 1970. Despite the triumphant victory of Awami League in that election, the rulers of Pakistan were reluctant to hand over power to the elected representatives. At one stage, they fabricated various pretexts to grip the power and at a later stage launched attacks on the innocent people of this country. At this juncture, the people of East Pakistan, under the directives of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, vigorously got engaged in the war of liberation. As a result, Bangladesh was liberated from the aggression of its enemies on 16 December, 1971.

### **At the end of this chapter we will be able to –**

- analyse the impact of the general election of 1970;
- describe the role of provisional government in leading the liberation war;
- evaluate the contributions of the freedom fighters;
- analyse the topic- Independence and Bangladesh on the world map;
- make the national flag and describe the methods of using it;
- narrate the history of the national anthem of Bangladesh;
- explain the significance of various memorials on the liberation war;
- be inspired with patriotism realizing the importance of the liberation war;
- be mindful about upholding the dignity of the national flag;
- be interested in preserving the memorials on the liberation war;
- make posters on the events of emergence of Bangladesh in chronological order;
- draw and display pictures on the Independence Day.

### **The General Election of 1970 and the Later Events**

Coming to power Yahya Khan in a radio address promised to hand over power through the next election to the elected representatives. As a development, political

activities were permitted as all sorts of restrictions were lifted from 1 January of 1970. At the same time polling for election to the National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies were declared to be commenced on 5 October and 22 October respectively. Though the polling dates for the elections were declared, they were rather delayed and finally held on 7 and 17 December respectively. However, elections in several regions knocked by the devastating cyclone and tidal bore on 12 November were held on 17 January in 1971.

### **The Legal Framework Order**

Yahiya Khan, in an address to the nation on 28 March, 1970, announced the basic principles of the Legal Framework Order relating to election. In that address, he focused on the number of seats to be allocated for the Parliament and Provincial Legislative Assemblies, the procedures of polling, the time specified for the elected assembly to frame a constitution and some special measures to bring into line the two parts of Pakistan. The highlights of his speech were as follows:

1. The one unit scheme in West Pakistan shall be abolished to re-establish the provinces those existed earlier. These provinces shall come into being on 1 July, 1970.
2. There shall be a National Assembly of Pakistan consisting of 313 members of whom 13 shall be women and the five Provincial Legislative Assemblies will be composed of 621 members.

**Distribution of seats for the National and the Provincial Assembly**

Regions	National Assembly			Provincial Assembly		
	General	Women	Total	General	Women	Total
East Pakistan	162	7	169	300	10	310
West Pakistan	138	6	144	300	11	311

3. The principle of one person one vote was adopted for the election.
4. The economic and legal responsibilities and power of the two parts of Pakistan shall lie with the elected representatives.
5. The list of voters shall be prepared by June, 1970.

6. A fixed period of 120 days from the commencement of the first session of the assembly was specified for framing the constitution. It was mentioned that if the assembly failed to accomplish the task within that time, it would be dissolved and new election schedule would be announced. It was also mentioned that the Martial Law would persist until the creation and authentication of the constitution. There were directives on the election as well as the foundation of the constitution. The six basic fundamental principles of the constitution were spelt out in article 20 of the Legislative Framework Order, which were;
- a. Pakistan shall be a federal republic;
  - b. Islamic ideology shall form the base of the state;
  - c. Legislative members shall be elected through direct elections on the basis of population and adult franchise;
  - d. The fundamental rights of the citizens shall be guaranteed;
  - e. Within a specified period, economic and all other disparities between different provinces and areas shall be removed;
  - f. The independence of the judiciary shall be secured.

In the Legislative Framework Order of Yahiya Khan, an outline of a weak parliament instead of a supreme parliament was recommended. Hence, it had been much criticized by the political parties of East Pakistan. They demanded abolition of the undemocratic articles of that order.

## **Election Management**

On 2 July, 1969, as per the announcement of Yahiya Khan, an Election Commission was formed which was headed by justice Abdus Sattar, a justice of Pakistan Supreme Court. The initial task of that Election Commission was to prepare a wide-ranging voter list. Out of the total registered voters in this list, 3,12,14,935 were from East Pakistan and 2,52,06,263 from West Pakistan. The members of ethnic minority groups were included in that voter list.

## **Political Parties taking part in the Election**

Though the pro-Awami League parties were interested in forming an alliance with the Awami League to participate in the election of 1970, the party leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared to compete in the election independently. As a result, the political parties nominated their candidates separately for the election of 1970. A total of 781 candidates filed nomination papers for that election. Awami League had 162 candidates running for the National Assembly with the symbol of a country boat. Among other parties contesting the election were, All Pakistan Central Jamiatul Ulema

and Nejame Islam (45), Islamic Democratic Party (5), Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (69), Pakistan Democratic Party (81), Pakistan Muslim League (Convention 93), Pakistan Muslim League (Council 50), Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum 65), etc.

### Election Results

Awami League won 160 out of 162 seats in the National Assembly in the election of 1970. Awami League emerged as the single largest party in the National Assembly by winning a majority 167 seats that included the reserved seats for women. On the other hand, in East Pakistan Provincial Assembly, Awami League held absolute majority by bagging 298 out of a total of 310 seats. During that time the members of the National Assembly and the members of the Provincial Assembly were known as MNA and MPA respectively. An analysis of the election results shows that, in National Assembly, Awami League won 75.10% of the total votes whereas in Provincial Assembly, they got 70.48% of the total vote. Such an elections outcome manifested East Pakistan as a unique region and the Banglaeas as people with distinctive features.

Awami League earned the right to initiate the formation of government by dint of its absolute majority in the National and Provincial Assemblies. But the military ruler of Pakistan Yahya Khan started to show his reluctance in handing over the power to Awami League. He was provoked by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to declare the meeting of National Assembly scheduled on 3 March adjourned. As soon as the declaration came, the common people of East Pakistan including students, workers, government and non-government officers and employees burst into violent protest. People attacked Pakistani soldiers at different places. Many people were killed and injured due to the clashes. On that day the leaders of the Student League formed the 'Swadhin Bangla Chattro Sangram Parishad'. This organization called for a countrywide general strike on 2 March. The flag of Bangladesh was hoisted on this very day at a student rally at Dhaka University. Student League organised a demonstration meeting at Paltan ground on 3 March. Bangabandhu addressed the gathering as the chief guest. Student League adopted the five points resolution in that meeting which was marked as the manifesto of independence. The proclamation of an independent and sovereign Bangladesh was made in this meeting. Moreover, the meeting called for observing half day hartal on 4 and 6 March.

The workers, officers and employees extended their support to that call of the students and observed hartal actively. The artists of Dhaka Betar (Radio) and Television stayed



Bangabandhu surrounded by his colleagues  
after the success of the 70's election

- Group work:** 1. Write down the summary of the declaration of Independence.  
2. Specify why did Bangalees start Independence War?

### Formation of the Bangladesh Government (Mujibnagar Government)

As the Pakistan military force started genocide on March 25, 1971, the Bangalees posed resistance against them initially without any preparation and organizational movement. In order to administer the liberation war efficiently, the first provisional government of Bangladesh was formed on April 10. The formal swearing in ceremony was held on April 17 at Vaidynathatala in Meherpur district. A large number of local and foreign journalists and other dignitaries attended this ceremony. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the president of the government. The village Vaidynathatala was named Mujibnagar after his name and the provisional government also came to be popularly termed as Mujibnagar Government. However, the aircraft of Pakistan Air Force bombed Mujibnagar and took control of Meherpur just after two hours of formation of this government. Hence, the headquarters of Mujibnagar government was shifted to 8 Theatre Road in Kolkata.



The oath of Bangladesh Government (Mujibnagar Government)

### Government of Bangladesh (The Mujibnagar Government)

President	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
Vice President	Syed Nazrul Islam (the Acting President, in absence of Bangabandhu, who was in charge of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Muktibahini)
Prime Minister	Tajuddin Ahmad
Finance Minister	Captain M. Mansur Ali
Home, Agriculture, Relief and Rehabilitation Minister	A. H. M. Kamaruzzaman
Foreign, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister	Khondokar Moshtaq Ahmed
Commander-in-Chief	Colonel (Rtd.) M. A. G. Osmani
Chief of Staff	Lt. Colonel (Rtd.) Abdur Rob
Deputy Chief of Staff	Group Captain A. K. Khondokar

## **Administration under the Mujibnagar Government and the War**

The Mujibnagar Government included the winners of the 1970-71 elections to the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly. The main objectives of that government was to lead the war of liberation and earn worldwide support in favour of Bangladesh.

The government ran its administration by the Bangalee officers. It had 12 ministries or divisions. These were Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance-Industry and Commerce, Cabinet Secretariat, General Administration, Health and Welfare Division, Relief and Rehabilitation Division, Engineering Division, Planning Commission, Control Board for the Youth and Reception camp, etc. Mujibnagar Government established missions of Bangladesh government in the important cities (Kolkata, Delhi, London, Washington, New York, Stockholm) of different countries of the world. These missions tried to run campaigns in favour of Bangladesh and earn support for the government of Bangladesh. The government appointed Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury the special envoy. He devoted his service to mobilise public opinion as well as world support in favour of the liberation war. After founding of the Mujibnagar government on 10 April, initiative was taken to form a freedom fighter force including military, civil and mass people to carry out the struggle for independence. On 10 April, the government divided Bangladesh into four military zones and appointed four Sector-Commanders.

This was restructured on April 11 by creating 11 Sectors. Moreover, a number of Sub-Sectors and three Brigade Forces were set up. The Bangalee military officers and soldiers working in Pakistan Army, police, EPR, members of Navy and Air Force joined these forces. Every force consisted of military, guerrilla and ordinary fighters. They were known as Freedom fighters or Muktifouz. People from various professions including students, youths, women, farmers, activists and supporters of political parties, workers joined these forces.

Those fighters, after receiving training in different training camps, entered the country and attacked various military camps or shelters. Besides, the various forces under the government, a number of forces emerged spontaneously within the country. Those forces had valuable contributions in the war against the Pakistani and Razakar forces. The Kaderia Bahini of Tangail is one of the such forces that had significant contributions. The freedom fighters, under the leadership of Mujibnagar government, fought in the battle fields in order to free the country from the grasp of the Pakistanis. Many of them were injured and many others laid down their lives.

**Group Work:** Identify the activities of the Mujibnagar Government.

## Besieged Bangladesh

The Pakistan military force engaged in a fiesta of assault, murder and destructions all over Bangladesh from March 26 to December 16. The main targets of the mass killing venture that started in Dhaka with the code name, 'Operation Searchlight' were the students of this country including the students of Dhaka University and the educated middle class, who used to believe in secular politics and the minority Hindus became the Pakistani rulers believed that the Hindus had certain roles in instigating movements and struggle in East Pakistan and these had all been patronized by India.

Though Pakistan army was scheduled to start their operation at the 'zero hour' of March 25, the army left cantonment at about half past eleven at night for pre-determined destinations. The Pakistani force started widespread operation all over the country including Dhaka. They attacked the Zahirul Haque Hall, Salimullah Muslim Hall, Jagannath Hall, Rokeya Hall and in the residential buildings of many teachers and killed many of them. They attacked with tanks, cannons and machine guns in different areas of Dhaka including Rajarbag Police Line and the EPR (East Pakistan Rifles), at present BGB (Border Guard of Bangladesh) headquarters at Pilkhana. Thus, the most atrocious genocide in the history began. Being inspired by the March 7 speech of Bangabandhu, people made attempts to put barricades on the streets of Dhaka. The EPR and Police forces showed resistance with boundless bravery. But the Pakistani army equipped with modern weapons modern their way into that resistance with ease.

It can be assumed from the malicious mass killing, assaults and the demolition inflicted on the Hindu community living at Nawabpur, Tatibazar and Sakharibazar areas in Old Dhaka that Pakistani rulers had a more hostile attitude towards them. In the eye of West Pakistani rulers, Hindus were synonymous to Awami League supporters and they were considered threats to the unity of the sacred Pakistan. It was also thought that they were backed and patronized by India. The acts of mass destruction and violence towards women out of such blind convictions revealed the extreme anti-Hindu feelings, animosity and dreadful detestation of the Pakistan army. Due to the abrupt nature of the attack, the innocent and helpless city dwellers had no measures to defend themselves.

Dhaka University became the target of the wrath of the Pakistan Army due to its anti-government movements. Hundreds of students were slaughtered along with professor Gobinda Chandra Dev, Dr. Muniruzzaman. Dr. Jyotirmoy Guha Thakurta suffered bullet injury and died after two days in Dhaka Medical College. The situation in old Dhaka, especially, in Hindu dwelling areas of Sakharibazar, Tatibazar was disastrous. The residents of Dhaka city could not think, even in their dreams, of the barbarous, brutal and mischievous bluster that was awaiting for them. The city of Dhaka turned into a dome of the dead. One could hear only the lament and cry of the distressed human race.

Pakistan army did not confine themselves within Dhaka city, but spread out to the far off villages. The intrusive Pakistan force and their collaborators killed 30 lakh Bangalees and more than two lakh of mothers and sisters fell to their cruel lust. In order to make this country intellectually barren, the Pak army cruelly annihilated the eminent writers, artists, poets, journalists, physicians and engineers in a planned way.

The Rajakars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams and Peace Committee lent their hands to Pakistan army in their act of molestation, execution, setting fire, looting, etc. Those people of this land who used to work as the collaborators of the Pakistani military regime are known as anti-liberation force. Mainly the supporters of Jamaet-i-Islami, Muslim League, Nezam-e-Islami, East Pakistan Council Muslim League, etc. were active against the war of liberation. These parties also took part and assisted in anti-human crimes.

### **The Evil Activities of the Anti-War Forces**

The Rajakar (Rejakar) was the voluntary force organised by the Pakistani government. In June, 1971 Lieutenant General Tikka Khan promulgated the 'East Pakistan Rajakar Ordinance'. At the beginning this force was composed of the Ansars and the Mujahids. Later many pro-Pakistani people joined that force. General Neazi played important role in establishing this force. The Rajakars were trained for one week. They were trained by Pakistan army. They fought against the freedom fighters as the associates of Pakistani force. Besides Rajakar force, there was another ferocious force called Al-Badr. The Al-Badr force was composed of the members of Islami Chatro Sangho, the students wing of Jamaet-e-Islami. The Al-Shams force was formed with the leaders and activists of other pro-Islamic students' organizations. The Al-Badr force was assigned with the main task of executing the Bangalee intelligensia. Therefore, this force was very fearful and atrocious in nature. The former Amir of Jamat-e-Islami, Motiur Rahman Nizami (convicted as committing crimes against humanity during Liberation War) was the chief of Al-Badr force. Another organization that came into being to oppose the liberation war was the 'Peace Committee'. Peace Committee was formed all over the country including Dhaka, the capital city. Having the Governor General of Pakistan Tikka Khan as its patron, the peace committee got expanded with the support and participation of different parties such as Jamat-e-Islami, Council Muslim League, Jamat-i-Olama-Islam, Muslim League, etc. This organization acted as the most loyal subordinate for the tortures, atrocities, and genocides committed by the occupant force. The 'Dhaka Nagarik Peace Committee' was formed with Khaza Khoeruddin, the President of Council Muslim League as the Convener. Leaders of Jamat-e-Islami Golam Azam, Moulavi Farid Ahammad, A.S.M. Solaiman and so on were in this Committee.

The Pakistan army wanted to destroy all the resources and institutions of Bangladesh as per the, 'scorched earth policy'. For this reason educational institutes, shops and

He played a crucial role in the language movements of '48 and '52 . He was among the first group of people who were imprisoned following the Language Movement. His voice was always loud, be it in the parliament or in the streets. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu played invincible role in the election of the United Front in 1954, the recognition of Bangla as the state language by the constitution in 1956, the movement against the military rules of Ayub Khan in 1958, placing of the 'Six Points demands for our sustenance', the Six Points movement in 1966, the mass uprising of 1969, the unprecedented win of Awami League in the General Election of 1970 and the proclamation of independence from the non-co-operation movement and the achievement of independence in 1971.

He spent 12 years in prison out of the 24 years of the Pakistan regime. When, on March 25 the Pakistani occupying force launched crackdown on the innocent Bengalees, he proclaimed independence candidly on the early hour of March 26 (after 12 a.m. of 25 March). Following the course of struggle, he called for the liberation war in his momentous speech on March 7. It was in his name that our war of liberation was carried out. He was the Commander-in-Chief of the war of liberation and the President of the Mujibnagar Government. We have got our independence owing to his sturdy and uncompromising leadership. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the great leader of our freedom and the architect of independent Bangladesh.

### Sayed Nazrul Islam

Syed Nazrul Islam was one of the vice president of Awami League. He was the Vice-President of the Mujibnagar Government during the liberation war. Syed Nazrul Islam took on the charge of Acting President in absence of Bangabandhu. In 1971, he urged all concerned to make the liberation war vigorous and successful. Syed Nazrul Islam was one of the organizers and directors of liberation war.



Syed Nazrul Islam

### Tajuddin Ahmad

Tajuddin Ahmad was the General Secretary of Awami League during the war of liberation. He was a loyal and close companion of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This great leader shouldered the responsibility of Prime Minister of the Mujibnagar Government (April 10, 1971) which was formed to lead the liberation war. He announced the formation of Mujibnagar Government through a radio speech on April 11, 1971. In absence of Bangabandhu, he led the liberation war successfully. He was the Convenor of the Committee formed to regulate the liberation war. His name is closely integrated with the history of the liberation war in Bangladesh.



Tajuddin Ahmad

### Captain M. Mansur Ali

Captain M. Mansur Ali was a prime leader of Awami League and a close aide of Bangabandhu. He was the Finance Minister of the Mujibnagar Government during liberation war. He was in charge of ensuring funds needed for food, clothes, arms and training during liberation war. He carried out those responsibilities successfully.



Captain M. Mansur Ali

### A. H. M. Kamaruzzaman

A. H. M. Kamaruzzaman is another vice president of Awami League. He was the Minister for Home, Relief and Rehabilitation of the government during the liberation war. At that time he carried out important tasks of collecting reliefs for thousands of people taking refugee in India, distribution of reliefs in relief camps and later on arranging rehabilitation for the refugees. He had endless contributions to the liberation war and achievement of the independence of Bangladesh.



A.H.M. Kamaruzzaman

### Other Leaders

Among other leaders the role of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani in achieving the independence is worth mentioning. He played significant roles in the movement demanding for acquittal of Bangabandhu of the historic Agartola Case (1968-69) and in the mass uprising of 1969. Staying in India during the liberation war, he urged different nations to extend their support for and stand beside Bangladesh. Besides him, Professor Mozaffar Ahmed (NAP-Mozaffar) and Comrade Moni Singh of Communist Party played important roles in the liberation war. These three leaders were members of the committee that was formed to lead the war of liberation efficiently.



Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani

### The Role of World Opinion and of Different Countries in the Liberation War

The heinous horror caused by the occupying Pakistani armed forces in 1971 stirred the world conscience. The world mandate came around to protest the acts of ransacking, arson, rapes and extermination committed by the Pakistan forces and their anti-liberation native collaborators. Different countries condemned and protested and conveyed supports to the liberation war. The world voice became louder to protest the acts of the dark night of March 25 and the brutal atrocities afterwards. People from all over the world conferred their support to the liberation war of Bangladesh.

## Role of India

India, the closest neighboring country, gave support to the liberation war of Bangladesh directly. India effectively exposed to the people around the world the brutal massacre on the dark night of March 25, 1971 and the heinous genocide, ransacking and destructions committed by the Pakistani occupying forces throughout the next nine months. The name of the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is closely associated with the history of the independence of Bangladesh. Through her enduring efforts and initiatives, she was the first to present the liberation war of Bangladesh to the international community.

The people and government of India helped nearly one crore of refugees by providing them with shelter, food, clothes and medical treatments as well as giving arms and training to the freedom fighters. Towards the end of the liberation war of Bangladesh, on December 3, 1971, Pakistan launched air attacks on India. In the backdrop of Pakistan's attack, the governments of Bangladesh and India formed the Joint Command consisting of Mukti Bahini and Indian Army. Bhutan and India gave at first recognition to Bangladesh as an Independent state on December 6, 1971. Many Indian soldiers laid down their lives during the liberation war of Bangladesh.

**Role of the Soviet Union and the Communist States:** After India, the highest contributions to the liberation war of Bangladesh was made by the then Soviet Union (Now, Russia). The Soviet Head of the State, Nikita Khrushchev urged the Pakistan President Yahya Khan to put an end to the genocide, blazing of public property and atrocities towards women in Bangladesh by Pakistan forces. He also asked Yahya Khan to transfer power to the elected representatives of Bangladesh. The Soviet newspapers and media helped create the global mandate by publishing stories on the barbarousness of Pakistani forces in Bangladesh and the advancements of the liberation war. Soviet Union exercised 'veto' to discard the proposal of putting an end to the war which was put forwarded by the United States in favour of Pakistan. The socialist countries of that time such as, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, etc. also supported the liberation war of Bangladesh.

**Role of Great Britain, Western World and Other Countries :** Starting from the post-election period of 1970 to the days of liberation war in 1971, the media of Britain, especially, BBC and the newspapers published from London made the people of the world aware of the brutality of Pakistani occupying force, the resistance and struggles of the Bangalees, the miserable conditions of the refugees sheltered in India, the genocide of Pakistani forces and the developments of liberation war. The British Government was also very compassionate towards our liberation war. It may be mentioned that London was the main centre abroad for the campaigning in favour of liberation war. West Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Canada helped formation of world mandate against the Pakistani forces. Iraq supported the cause of the liberation

war of Bangladesh. The people of the United States, media and many Congressmen were vocal in creating opinion in favour of the liberation war of this country. However, the US government, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and other muslim countries in the middle East were against the liberation war of Bangladesh. Yet, the London-born noted singer George Harrison performed songs on the acts against humanity during the liberation war of Bangladesh in front of a crowd of 40,000 in New York in the United States to create awareness in favour of the liberation war.

**Role of the United Nations:** The main aim and objective of the United Nations is to protect world peace and security. When Yahya Khan was busy annihilating the Bengalees instead of handing over power to the elected public representatives, the United Nations played the role of almost a silent observer. The United Nations could not take any step against the heinous atrocities and violation of fundamental human rights.

### The Emergence of Independent Bangladesh

The liberation war of Bangladesh is a very significant chapter in world history. Bangladesh was the first country in the third world which achieved independence through an armed struggle.

India contributed and helped us a lot from the beginning of the liberation war. Particularly on November 21, 1971, the formation of the 'Allied Forces' combining the Mukti Bahini and the Indian Forces was a very significant event. The war intensified after Pakistan attacked India on December 03. Indian Army, Air Force and navy also participated in the war along with the liberation force of Bangladesh from December 6 to 16.

As a result of a strong planned attack the occupying Pakistani force was defeated morally before the formal surrender. At last the commander of the Eastern Command of Pakistani Army Lieutenant General Ameer Abdullah Khan Niazi surrendered along with 93 thousand Pakistani soldiers to Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Arora, the Commander of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army at thirty one minutes past four in the afternoon of December 16, 1971. Group Captain A. K. Khondakar represented the Bangladesh Government. The achievement of this momentous independence came as a result of three million martyrs, limitless sufferings of lakhs of women, torture and sacrifice of the Bengalees. Thus independent, sovereign State-People's Republic of Bangladesh has achieved a proud position in the world map.



Surrender of the Pakistan Army

## National Monuments

### National Martyrs Memorial

Jatiya Smritisoudha was built in order to glorify the immortal memories of millions of martyrs in the war of liberation. It is situated in Savar, 35 kilometers away from Dhaka in the north-west. Architect Moinul Islam designed this mausoleum. The pick of the mausoleum is 150 feet high with seven pairs of triangular walls rising step by step in order of small to big.



National Martyr Memorial

Various objects were used to increase the beauty and gravity of the mausoleum. In order to reach the main pulpit of it, one has to walk a long undulating way, pavement and a bridge upon an artificial lake. All these are indeed the symbols of various movements and struggles of our movement for liberation. There is a mass graveyard beside the place where lie many who sacrificed their valuable lives for our independence. Seven pairs of walls in the main mausoleum practically symbolize the proud struggles of the Bangalees. These political events were 1952, 1954, 1956, 1962, 1966, 1969, and 1971. In fact, the history of our struggles for independence are located in these seven important years. The Bangalees were successful to achieve independence from the chain of domination through the events happened between 1952 to 1971. The National Mausoleum again and again reminds us those great martyrs. The construction of the National Mausoleum started in 1972 and was completed in 1982 in three phases. The Mausoleum is the symbol of the pride, boast and dignity of the Bangalees.

### Oporajeo Bangla

Oporajeo Bangla is the symbol of the protesting attitude of the Bangalees and the spirit of the freedom fighters. It was constructed in the Arts building premise in Dhaka University on a six feet high pulpit. The main sculpture is twelve feet high, eight feet wide and six feet in radius. The students community contributed a lot in all movements and struggles for democracy. Oporajeo Bangla was built in order to immortalize the proud sacrifice of the students in all struggles from the Language Movement of 52 to the liberation war of '71. Freedom fighter and sculptor Khaled Abdullah made this sculpture. Its construction continued from 1973 to 1979. The structure of three young uncommonly brave freedom fighters has been reflected in this sculpture in a very



Oporajeo Bangla

skilled manner. Two young freedom fighters stand for the determination to face the enemy and the young girl with a first-aid bag stands for the services rendered to the injured freedom fighters during the liberation war. Oporajeo Bangla will ever remain as a source of inspiration for the students community of Bangladesh.

#### **Mujibnagar Smritisoudha (Mujibnagar Monument)**

This monumental structure was built in Meherpur in Kustia District in order to honour the memory of the Mujibnagar Government which led the liberation war. The structure has 24 triangular walls gradually becoming higher making the highest at the last. These 24 triangular walls are the symbol of twenty four years of exploitation of the colonial Pakistani rule. The people of this country gradually organized themselves in order to assert their rights since 1947. At a stage they freed their country by dint of strong will and determination. The first government of independent Bangladesh first took oath here. Its architect was Tanveer Karim.



Mujibnagar Smritisoudha

#### **Budhdhijibi Smritisoudha (The Intellectuals Mausoleum)**

As a part of the conspiracy to make Bangalees meritless innumerable intellectuals were killed during the liberation war. The Rajakar and the Al-badr forces helped the Pakistan Army to kill these intellectuals brutally. Two days prior to the final defeat the Pakistan Army killed innumerable intellectuals on December 14. In order to immortalize their memory Budhdhijibi Smriti Soudha (The Intellectuals Mausoleum) was built in Mirpur in Dhaka. Its architect was Mustafa Ali Quddas. Its construction completed in 1972.



Budhdhijibi Smriti Soudha

#### **Shikha Chironton (Flame Eternal)**

Shikha Chironton (Flame Eternal) was built in the Suhrawardy Uddayan on March 26, 1997 to immortalize the memorable martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the Liberation war. Bangabandhu called for the 'struggles for independence and freedom' from this place on March 07 1971. The important thing is that the occupying Pakistan Army surrendered on December 16 in Suhrawardy Uddayan after a nine months bloodshed in the war. Shikha Chironton was founded to celebrate the silver jubilee of the independence of Bangladesh.



Shikha Chironton

### **Rayer Bazar Bodhyobhoomi (Rayer Bazar Scaffold)**

At the time of Liberation war the Pakistan Army and their allies in Bangladesh killed millions of people. Mass graveyards and scaffolds were scattered all over the country. In 1971 the Rayer Bazar area in Dhaka was very calm and quiet. In that time, this area was almost desolate. The area covers some three kilometers from Kalu Shah Pukurpar to Goal Masjid. Rayer Bazar became a scaffold from the month of March. Not only people were killed here but also innumerable dead bodies were brought to this place. People living here did not dare to move around the brick field of this place. Rayer Bazar Bodhyobhoomi was discovered on December 18, 1971. A huge number of rotten and deformed dead bodies were recovered from the holes of this scaffold. The best sons of the country were killed here brutally. Among them the dead bodies of professors, journalists, writers, physicians were majority in number. Razakars and Al-Badrs played a major role in the killing of the intellectuals. Dead bodies found here were so much deformed that they could not be identified. Yet only a few number of dead bodies of the intellectuals like Professor Munir Chowdhury, Journalist Selina Parvin, Dr. Fazle Rabbi, eminent eye specialist Dr. Alim Chowdhury and some others could be identified.



Rayer Bazar Bodhyobhoomi

### **Exercise Questions**

#### **Multiple choice questions**

1. How many seats did Awami League bag in the provincial election of East Pakistan in 1970?
  - a. 167
  - b. 198
  - c. 267
  - d. 298
  
2. Swadhin Bangla Chatra Sangram Parishad was organized-
  - i. for delaying to transfer power to the elected peoples representatives.
  - ii. for withholding the National Assembly session;
  - iii. for increasing admission fees in the university.

#### **Which of the followings is correct?**

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| a. i and ii   | b. i and iii      |
| c. ii and iii | d. i, ii, and iii |

**Read the stimulator and answer to the question nos. 3 and 4**

State 'B' extended its help with shelter, food, clothes and medical aid to the tortured and homeless people of the state 'A' in their rational struggle for freedom from their rulers and focused their miseries to the world community.

**3. Which of the states played the role of the stimulator like state 'B' during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971?**

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| a. China | b. India   |
| c. Nepal | d. Myanmar |

**4. As a result of the measures taken by that country –**

- independence was hastened;
- human rights were defended;
- The image of torture in Bangladesh was exposed to the external world.

**Which of the followings is correct?**

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| a. i and ii   | b. i and iii     |
| c. ii and iii | d. i, ii and iii |

### Creative Questions

1. Abraham Lincoln, the pioneer of the modern democratic world is a memorable name in the history of democracy. His kindness, simplicity, wit, oration and soft manners placed him on the seat of an ideal man in the world. He left an unparalleled mark in politics. Thus he became the President of America from a struggling individual. He freed the humanity from the cruelty of the selfish people. His historical speech for the people aspiring for democracy and freedom "Government of the people, by the people, for the people" has immortalized him even today.

- What was the name of the Prime Minister in the Mujibnagar Government?
- What does "Operation Searchlight" mean?
- Which political leader reflects the characteristics and activities of Abraham Lincoln as narrated above? Explain.
- We achieved our independence for the strong and uncompromising leadership of that leader in Question no. C. Explain.

two years and Pakistan took nine years to write their constitutions. But Bangabandhu's government gave the nation one of the best constitutions in the world of the briefest time of nine months only. It was possible only due to the sincerity and honest commitment to the people by the government led by Bangabandhu.

The government proclaimed 'Constituent Assembly Order' on 23 March, 1972 with a view to drafting the constitution of Bangladesh. The Order was made retrospectively in effect from 26 March, 1971. The constituent assembly consisted of the elected members of the National and Provincial Assemblies of the then East Pakistan in 1970 election. The only function of the constituent assembly was to draft the constitution of Bangladesh.

The drafting of the constitution formally started with this Order. Awami League parliamentary party nominated Bangabandhu the party leader of the constituent assembly. The first session of the constituent assembly sat on 10 April, 1972. Shah Abdul Hamid was elected the undisputed first Speaker of the Assembly and Mohammad Ullah was elected Deputy Speaker. A committee was formed to draft a constitution in the shortest possible time. Dr. Kamal Hossain was the Convener of this committee. The member of the committee was 34 in number. The committee completed the final draft of the constitution by 11 October, 1972. The assembly started general discussion on the Constitution Bill from October 19. After a long discussion, the Constitution Bill was passed on 4 November, 1972 in the Constituent Assembly. The Constitution was in effect from 16 December, 1972 the first anniversary of the Victory Day. In his speech at the assembly on the constitution, Bangabandhu said, 'This constitution is written in the blood of the martyrs. This constitution will prevail as the symbol of the hope and aspiration of the entire nation.'

### **Characteristics of the Constitution**

The constitution of 1972 was a written document. It was drafted both in Bangla and English. But Bangla was accepted as the original language. This constitution had one Preamble, 11 Parts, 153 Articles and 4 Schedules.

The first part of the constitution is on the characteristics of democracy, the second part is on the principles of the governance, the third part is on fundamental rights, the fourth part is on executive divisions, the fifth part is on Jatiya Sangsad, the sixth part is on judiciary, the seventh part is on election, the eighth part is on comptroller and auditor general, the ninth part is on service commissions, the tenth part is on the amendments of the constitution and the eleventh part deals with miscellaneous.

1. **Supreme Law:** The supreme law of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is the constitution of Bangladesh. So, no law inconsistent with the constitution should be passed. It is proclaimed in the constitution that all powers in the republic belong to the people. That power can only be exercised being subject to the constitution and on behalf of the people.
2. **The Fundamental Principles of Governance:** In the Preamble of the constitution four principles are accepted as the fundamental principles of state governance. In this regard, it is mentioned in the constitution 'the high ideals of nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in the war for national liberation shall be the fundamental principles of the Constitution'.
  - a. **Democracy:** People of this region never enjoyed any democratic rights as citizens of Pakistan since 1947. The Constitution proclaimed that the state of Bangladesh will be a Democratic Republic. Every citizen's fundamental human rights and liberty will be ensured by the state. The administration will run by the elected people's representatives.
  - b. **Socialism:** Bangabandhu, all through his political career, told about the economic freedom of the common people. He struggled to remove the sufferings of the distressed. A large portion of the freedom fighters were from lower middle class families. People's dream after liberation was that state will take measures to meet fundamental socio-economic demands of the people. As a result, socialism was taken as a fundamental principle of state governance. In fact, to activate a socialist economy for establishing an exploitation-free society was the objective of the state.
  - c. **Secularism:** The objective of secularism in the Constitution was to avoid communalism and to avoid political status for any particular religion. Religion should not be used for political interest. The state will not patronize any religion. The state will ensure every citizen's freedom to observe religious rights and rituals.
  - d. **Nationalism:** The religion-based nationalism inherited from Pakistan proved null and void through the war of liberation. In contrast to this, Bangalee nationalism emerged on the basis of language and culture. Secularism is the foundation of Bangalee nationalism.
3. **Fundamental Rights:** It is important that there be the assurance of certain rights for the development of a citizen's personality. It is important so that none can interfere one's individual freedom. That is why fundamental rights have been declared to be inviolable and sacred in the constitution.

4. **Unitary Government:** According to this constitution, a unitary system of government was introduced in Bangladesh. There is no province or state in Bangladesh. The administration is run all over the country under the central government.
5. **The Cabinet System of Government:** The Constitution adopted a cabinet system of government. In this system, the cabinet is accountable to the parliament. The President is the administrative head. But, all the executive authority lies with the Prime Minister and the cabinet.
6. **Unicameral Legislature:** The Constitution provides a unicameral legislature. The legislature will consist of directly elected 300 members and 15 reserved-seat for women members. The legislature will be called Jatiya Sangsad.
7. **Rigidity:** A special procedure is followed for the amendment of this Constitution which is not as easy as the procedure of making law. For any amendment, vote of the two-thirds of the total members will be needed. The amendment bill will be sent for the approval of the President. The President will approve the bill in 7 days. After 7 days it will be assumed that the President has approved.
8. **Independent Judiciary:** An independent and neutral judiciary is mentioned in the Constitution. The state will ensure the independence of the judiciary by separating it from the executive wing. According to the provisions of the Constitution, the chief justice and other judges will conduct judicial procedures independently.
9. **A Ban on Communal Politics:** In line with the basic principles of the constitution, Religion-based politics is banned. It is done so that none can differentiate in the name of religion.

The most important success of Bangabandhu government was to draft a constitution in the shortest possible time. This Constitution was very well written and was better than those of many countries. It had the reflection of the hope and aspirations of a newly born country. The fundamental principles played the role of a torch bearer for the advancement of the new state.

**Group Work :** Discuss the main features of the constitution of 1972. Present your opinion in a poster.

### Foreign Relations

The role of foreign policy was very important to ascertain the existence and development of Bangladesh as a newly liberated third world country. Before Bangabandhu's home coming on 10 January, 1972, Bangladesh did not get recognition of any foreign country except India and Bhutan. Most of the countries of the world were in confusion due to the anti-Bangladesh campaign led by Pakistan and their allies. On the other hand, it became very important to have assistance and co-operation of

international community in the reconstruction of the war torn country. Bangabandhu realized by his long political experience and merit that two things should be given importance in the foreign policy of Bangladesh.

Firstly; to enhance the acceptability of Bangladesh in the international arena through acquiring recognition.

Secondly; to ascertain the help of foreign countries in the reconstruction of the country.

Bangabandhu himself was in charge of the planning of the foreign policy of the new state. He always used to say of an independent and non-aligned foreign policy. While giving a direction of the foreign policy, Bangabandhu said, 'We want to make Bangladesh the Switzerland of South Asia.' We find the reflection of Bangabandhu's thoughts in the framework of foreign policy as stated in the Constitution of 1972. The modus operandi of foreign policy is peaceful coexistence and friendship to all, malice to none. Bangabandhu desired that Bangladesh would stand beside the exploited people of the world in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and racism.

The task of winning recognition for Banngladesh was not easy at all. Due to the enimical campaign of Pakistan, the Muslim world and China used to foster negative attitudes towards Bangladesh. Because of the able leadership of Bangabandhu, Bangladesh won recognition of most of the countries of the world and almost all international organizations including the United Nations by 1974. With the unanimous resolution of the General Assembly, Bangladesh joined the United Nations as the Organization's 136<sup>th</sup> member on 17 September, 1974. For the first time in history, Bangabandhu



Bangabandhu's address  
in Bangla at the UN.

delivered his speech in our mother tongue Bangla at the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly on 25 September, 1974. As a result, Bangla won a new status in the international level. During the reign of Bangabandhu, two important states did not offer their recognition to Bangladesh. The two states are China and Saudi Arabia. Bangabandhu took sincere initiatives for normalizing the relationship with the two countries. China gradually began to show positive attitudes towards Bangladesh. Although China did not give recognition, it signed a trade treaty, sent relief for the flood affected in Bangladesh. On the other hand, Bangladesh became the member of the Organization of Islamic Countries and won recognitions of the majority Muslim states. Although Saudi Arabia was yet to give recognition, the image of Bangladesh became brighter among the Muslim states of the Middle East including Saudi Arabia

### Creative questions

Russel's friend, Robert, is charmed at the beauty of Bangladesh. He loves the green nature of this country very much. But the sight of dirty slums besides tall buildings has given much pain to Robert. In their country, the state undertakes the responsibility to meet people's demand of food, clothing, education and shelter. The aim of their constitution is to establish a society free from exploitation. Russel says, their constitution guarantees human rights and individual freedom and the government is run by elected representatives. The parliament is formed by the members directly voted by people. All executive power rests with the Prime Minister. But the President enjoys the highest respect in the country.

- a. Which date did Bangabandhu come back to his own country?
- b. Why did Bangabandhu introduce parliamentary system of government?
- c. Explain which character of the 1972 constitution is noticeable in Robert's country?
- d. 'A portion of the character of 1972 constitution is prominent in Russel's speech'.--- Evaluate.

# **Chapter Fifteen**

## **Military Rule and Subsequent Developments (1975-1990)**

### **Khondokar Moshtaq: a Disgraceful Chapter in History**

As pre-planned, Khondoker Moshtaq Ahmed seized power after the brutal killings of August 15. He has been in power for about three months. He had been in politics with Bangabandhu for a long time. He was one of the confidants and trusted persons of Bangabandhu. However, he was the one who committed vile treachery with Bangabandhu. He gave birth to a disgraceful chapter in the history of this country.

#### **At the end of this chapter we will be able to -**

- describe, the beginning of military rule and the successive political development;
- describe the notable sides of the rule of President Ziaur Rahman;
- evaluate the 1982 military rule and the situation arising out of the developments thereafter;
- explain the important administrative reforms of the Ershad government;
- explain the background of the 1990 mass upsurge and its result;
- show positive attitude towards the significance of democracy in Bangladesh and its application.

The brief rule of Moshtaq ushered a state of serious disorder in Bangladeshi politics. An attempt was made to obliterate all the achievements of Bangladesh earned through the Liberation war; and the restoration of Pakistani trend of thinking started. Within five days of usurping power, Moshtaq declared the first martial law in independent Bangladesh. In his address to the nation on 15<sup>th</sup> August, he started with 'Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim' and concluded by saying 'Bangladesh Zindabad'. Describing the killing of Bangabandhu as a historical necessity, he said that "little by little, under a suffocating situation, the countrymen were becoming ruined in silent pain. Despite the desire at all levels for a change in the country's system of government, the armed forces had to come forward for a change of government as it was not otherwise possible under the existing law. The armed forces opened ahead the door of golden opportunity through fulfilling their responsibility with utmost sincerity.' This was Mostaq's first initiative to deceive the nation.

Moshtaq tried to attribute the conspiracy of a few retired and dismissed low and mid-ranking officers of the armed forces as a coup of the entire armed forces. Moreover, he referred to this brutal, barbaric killing as "a door of golden opportunity." Moshtaq formed a cabinet with Awami League leaders through intimidation. It is not that some were not eager to join the cabinet. However, despite intimidating them with

death, Moshtaq could not influence the “four leaders” and many others. Prime Minister Mansur Ali was arrested on August 17. Tajuddin Ahmed and Syed Nazrul Islam were arrested on August 22. About 20 leaders including Kamruzzaman, Abdus Samad Azad, Korban Ali were arrested on August 23. Many other leaders and workers were arrested as they refused to accept the leadership of Moshtaq. The four national leaders who gaveled leadership during the liberation war had to pay a heavy price. On November 03, Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Mansur Ali, and Kamruzzaman were brutally killed in the Central Jail while held prisoners there. Those who entered the jail and killed the four national leaders were not arrested; no trial was held. Thus another disgraceful chapter was added to the history of Bangladesh.

During this time, Moshtaq took various anti-progressive initiatives which were contradictory to the spirit of the liberation war. For example, he abolished the war chant of the liberation war 'Joy Bangla'. Emulating 'Pakistan Zindabad' he introduced the slogan 'Bangladesh Zindabad' and like 'Radio Pakistan', he used 'Radio Bangladesh'. Moshtaque's most condemnable, detestable act was the promulgation of an order on 20 August, 1975. According to this order, the killers of Bangabandhu and his family members could not be tried. In no civilized society can such a law be passed where killers would not be tried. This black law against humanity known as 'Indemnity Ordinance 1975' was published in Bangladesh Gazette on 26 September, 1975. It was stated in the Indemnity Ordinance that with regard to all plans or activities taken for changing the government on 15 August, 1975 and those who were involved in it, no recourse to any court of law could be taken as punishment to them. Not only that, Khondokar Moshtaq rewarded the killer gang with high posts both at home and abroad and provided them various privileges.

After the August killings, Moshtaq and his associates tried to establish control over the armed forces with the intention of lengthening and securing their power. As part of this attempt, the service of Army Chief K.M. Shafiullah was placed under the disposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moshtaq appointed Major General Ziaur Rahman as chief of army staff on 25 August. Brigadier H.M. Ershad who was undergoing training in India was promoted to Major General and appointed as deputy chief of army staff.

Pakistan was the first country to recognize the Mushtaq government. There was no end to the joy of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto at the news of the brutal killing of Bangabandhu. Bhutto congratulated the killer gang because to him this was a victory for Pakistan as if it were getting back the area it lost in 1971. China and Saudi Arabia recognized Bangladesh on 16 and 31 August, 1975 respectively. The downfall of the unpopular military government of Moshtaq came on 3 November, 1975.

## Khaled Musharraf's Coup and Counter-Coup

As a consequence of the August 15 killing, along with the acute political vacuum in the country, the army was in chaos. It was not possible for Moshtaq to deal with army officers and soldiers. The killer group established their domination on state power by staying in Bangabhaban. Due to this, the chain of command in the army completely broke down. Despite the demands of senior army officers, newly appointed army chief, General Zia did not take any initiative to restore discipline in the army. This is because Zia got the post of Army Chief with the co-operation of those involved in the August 15 killing.

Therefore, it was not possible for Major General Zia to take a strong position against them. Under such circumstances, due to Zia's inactivity, dissatisfaction in the army grew further. The Chief of General Staff in the army, Brigadier Khaled Musharraf took initiative to resolve the leadership crisis in the army. He discussed with senior armed forces officers. He finally decided that it was not possible to restore the chain of command without a military coup. Colonel Shafayet Jamil played an important role in this coup. According to plan, Khaled Musharraf had a secret meeting with some trusted officers on 1 November. According to the final decision on the counter coup, it began with the return of the soldiers of the First East Bengal regiment to the barracks in the cantonment from Bangabhaban on the night of November 2. Ziaur Rahman was placed under house arrest in the early morning of November 3. Khaled Musharraf continued to negotiate with Khondokar Mushtaq on assuming state power. At one stage, on the advice of General Osmani, the August 15 killers along with their family left Dhaka for Bangkok. In the morning of November 4 Khaled Musharraf came to know about the barbaric, brutal Jail Killing.

On the late night of 3 November, 1975, prior to their leaving the country, a killer group, with the permission of president Mushtaq, illegally entered the central Jail and brutally killed the four Liberation War leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, Capt. M. Mansur Ali and A.H.M. Qamruzzaman. Despite intimidating them in various ways, Mushtaq failed to persuade them to accept ministerial positions in his cabinet. As a result of that, the killer group committed such a barbaric killing inside the Jail. This killing was the implementation of the conspiracy and blue print of the defeated forces of the 1971 liberation war as well as the domestic and international opponents of the independence. The main objectives of the two killings were to destroy the achievements of the independence and armed liberation war of Bangladesh, make the country leaderless and establish the ideals of Pakistan. The same group committed the killings of 15 August and 3 November.

On 4 November, Khaled Musharraf informed through an announcement that Ziaur Rahman had retired from the post of Chief of Army Staff. He exerted pressure on

September 1st, 1978. He himself took the responsibility of the Chairman of the party. Various anti-liberation and leftist, rightist parties and individuals joined BNP.

Many politicians gathered around Zia mainly in the hope of getting different privileges and facilities. Zia rewarded them in various ways by giving them various posts. A big number of advisers/ministers during Zia's rule were close associates of Ayub and Yahya. Again, many of them had anti-independence role. Zia appointed a member of the anti-liberation group, Shah Aziz, his Prime Minister.

### **Parliamentary Election, 1979**

According to the announcement of President General Ziaur Rahman, parliamentary election took place on February 18th, 1979. Zia led BNP got 207 seats. Bangladesh Awami League (Malek) on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1979 with 39 seats played the role of the opposition party. Leaders and workers of the opposition party had to face various obstacles and intimidations during the election campaign. In reality, the Election Commission could not work independently under the military government.

### **The Fifth Amendment Law, 1979**

The fifth amendment of the Constitution of Bangladesh was accepted in the parliament (Jatio Sangsad) on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1979. By this amendment all the laws, ordinances, regulations declared and enacted by the unconstitutional governments since the killing of Bangabandhu and his family members till 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1979 were given legal protection. Zia withdrew martial law on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1979.

### **The Law of Indemnity**

The dictionary meaning of 'indemnity' is to provide or exemption from liability someone protection. Indemnity was proclaimed so that none could seek judicial proceeding against the killers of Bangabandhu, his family members and the four national leaders. Thus the killers were given protection which was entirely contrary to human rights. Bangladesh was slammed by many countries for this black law which was promulgated by Major General Zia with a view to providing constitutional protection for some killers. Much later the Government of Sheikh Hasina repealed the law on 12th November, 1996.

### **Development Work**

It is the usual practice by all the military governments to blame the previous government. They do it as a pretext to justify their illegal measures of capturing power. Zia and his allies could successfully run the propaganda that there was no development work during the regime of Bangabandhu. They publicized that all the development work of the country and people's wellbeing were done by Zia. Zia declared his principles and programs based on 19 points on 30 April, 1977.

These programmes had highest priority on some popular issues. They included agricultural development, self-sufficiency in food, women empowerment, health facility for all, improvement of worker's conditions, a corruption free society, and equal rights for all citizens irrespective of their religious affiliations, caste and creed. During his time, some government programmes got huge popularity. The canal digging programme, village government, youth co-operative centre and mass education were some of those programme.

### **Canal Digging**

During Major General Zia's regime the most talked about issue was his canal digging programme or canal digging revolution, which was inaugurated on 1st December, 1979 at Ulashi Jadunathpur in Jashore. However, the canal digging programme did not have long term impact on the agricultural progress in the country.

### **Gram Sarkar (Village Government)**

The Zia government decided that every village in Bangladesh would have its own government known as Gram Sarkar. Such a system would enable the people to deal with their local problems, handle their own law and order situation, work for mass education and other development programmes in the locality. The first Gram Sarkar was established in Jirabo, Savar on 30 April 1980.

### **Mass Education**

There cannot be any debate about the necessity of mass education. With the view to enabling 57,00,000 students to read and write, the Zia government started a mass education programme on 21 February 1980. However, owing to a lack of adequate planning, the mass education programme could not go far.

Zia gave incentives to private sector with a view to strengthening industrial sector. Sometimes state property was sold out with a minimum price. Yet, foreign investments could not be attracted. Though there was a routine growth of national income, revenue, and per capita income; the difference between the rich and the poor became too wide.

During his time, foreign aid and an import based economy was patronized. This had negative impacts in the long run, such as the number of tax evasion, black money, commission agents, smuggling of foreign currency increased. A new middle class was created in rural and urban areas by providing different sorts of financial benefits. This newly rich section was the direct beneficiary of Zia's martial law. Many people became billionaires overnight with the money they borrowed from the banks in the name of doing business and setting up industries. At one stage these rich people appeared as loan defaulters. A huge part of national wealth was wasted due to corruption and abuse of power. Limitless military expenditure halted the national growth. 8,00,000 tons of

food production decreased in 1976- 77 in comparison to 1975-76. The number of landless people increased to 51 per cent in 1979. People had much hardship as there was price hike for fuel, electricity, and rice in the ration. There was no significant change in the socio-economic conditions of the common people during the military rule.

### **Foreign Relations**

Zia framed his foreign policy in line with his domestic policies. He gave importance to developing relations with Muslim countries and made it a part of the constitution. The Islamic identity of Bangladesh was highlighted as the reason of changing the foreign policy. As a result, from the very beginning Zia took an anti Indo-Soviet stand.

Bangladesh's relations with India became very cold and bitter. Due to suspicious attitude, disbeliefs and lack of trust from both the sides, the relation between these two countries deteriorated much. Issues like the Farakka Dam and border clashes made the politics in Bangladesh volatile. Anti-Indian propaganda was in its peak nationally and internationally, especially based on the Farakka Dam. Zia raised the issue of Farakka Dam to UN and other international organisations. When Indira Gandhi lost the election in India in March 1977 and Morarji Desai came to power in India, Bangladesh's ties with India improved somewhat.

During Zia's time the relation between China and Bangladesh developed significantly though the process started during the tenure of Bangabandhu. Bangladesh signed a business treaty with China in May 1975. China gave recognition to Bangladesh on 31 August, 1975 when Mushtaq was in power. The relation between these two countries got more friendly by Zia's visit to China.

On the other hand, Zia took special move to better the relation with Pakistan. In 1976 diplomatic relation was established between Bangladesh and Pakistan by exchanging diplomats. The claim made to Pakistan during the regime of Bangabandhu regarding asset sharing and taking the stranded Pakistanis back remained unsolved. Due to Zia's excessive lenience to Pakistan within a very short time telecommunications, air and marine communications between these two countries were established, trade pacts were signed and courtesy visits of high officials also took place. The Pakistan Government and anti-liberation political organizations in Bangladesh began demanding that Bangladesh and Pakistan should form a confederation. They demanded change of the national anthem and the national flag. They also started propaganda in favour of introducing Islamic rule. However, due to the resistance from the freedom loving majority Bengalees, Zia could not do so.

Zia took initiatives to develop Bangladesh's relation with the Middle East, Far East and the Western countries. He also proposed a forum for increasing regional co-operation among the South Asian countries. It is also to mention here that the necessity of such a

forum for regional co-operation was felt and uttered by Bangabandhu after the independence of the country. Finally in 1985 the proposal was accepted by other South Asian countries when SAARC was formed.

### **Assassination of Major General Ziaur Rahman**

Ziaur Rahman was in power for nearly five and a half years. He didn't have to face any major movement though there was disappointment in national politics regarding martial law. The opposition could not organize any agitation against him due to repressive measures and different kinds of fears and panic. This is why Zia was not worried about political movement. But there were as many as 17 military coups against Zia. Every time he took sternest punitive actions against the revolutionary officers. Hundreds of military persons who were involved in those coups either were dismissed from their jobs or sentenced to death. Yet, attack came on his life from the military side. On 30 May 1981, a group of soldiers of the Bangladesh Army killed him in a coup at Chittagong Circuit House.

### **Justice Sattar's Government**

General Zia was succeeded by his Vice-President Justice Abdus Sattar as an Acting President of Bangladesh according to the country's constitution. On the oath taking day, the then army chief, Ershad who was present on the occasion pledged his support to the 78 year old Sattar. According to the constitution, if the position of the President falls empty, then there has to be by election within 180 days. The new date of Presidential election was fixed on 21 September, 1981.

Sattar was nominated as the Presidential candidate by the Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Dal. But according to constitution, the position of the Vice-President being profitable anyone holding such position could not contest the election. With the power of their majority in the parliament, BNP brought sixth amendment in the parliament that declared the office of the Vice-President not profitable. Therefore, Sattar had no legal barrier in contesting the election. Being over enthusiastic and to show his absolute loyalty Ershad, the Army Chief, announced that army would fully support Justice Satter in the election. Dr. Kamal Hossain was the candidate from the Awami League in the election. BNP candidate tried to influence the election by taking all the services from the government. The opposition raised the point of poll rigging. 55.47 % of the total voters cast their votes. Securing 65.80 % of the total cast votes Justice Satter was elected as the President. His nearest rival Dr. Kamal Hossain got 26.35% vote.

Being sworn in Sattar formed his cabinet with 42 members on 28 December, 1981. But after Zia's death the BNP's intra party feud rose to an immense pinnacle. Sattar faced difficulty in running his administration due to economic instability and deterioration of law and order. Sattar had to abolish his ministerial cabinet in three and a half months

### **Mass Movement of 1990 and Downfall of General Ershad**

During the reign of almost nine years, Ershad had to struggle against the demonstrations from the opposition. 15 party alliances under Awami League, 7 party alliance under BNP, Sramik Karmachari Okya Parisad (SKOP), Ainjibi Samanwai Parisad, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, Farmers society ignited anti-Ershad movement and spread the movement to remote areas of the country.

Inactivity prevailed in the administration due to ofhartals and blockades. At one point of the demonstration, on 10 November 1987, Nur Hossain was killed at the zero point near GPO. On the front and back of his body was written respectively 'Gonotonto Mukti Pak, Soiracher Nipat Jak' (Let democracy be free', 'Let the autocrat fall down'. The mass became more agitated from his death.

Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia were arrested on 12 November 1987 and Ershad government declared emergency on 27 November across the country. During a public meeting of Sheikh Hasina in Chittagong on 24 January 1988, police fired openly and indiscriminately on the public. She escaped death narrowly.

The whole country became agitated out of this issue. The siege of the secretariat on 10 October 1988 by the alliances and political parties made the political situation even worse. On that day, 5 persons were killed and more than three hundred were wounded. In the sequel of demonstration, in the year 1990 on 27 November Dr. Shamsul Alam khan Milon was killed at the corner of TSC in Dhaka University and the anti Ershad movement turned into mass up rising.

On this day, the government announced emergency and imposed curfew. The publications of newspapers were shut down by the journalists. The students and teachers of Dhaka University brought out processions by disobeying the emergency and curfew imposed by Ershad on 27 November.

Public took control over the roads and streets. Dhaka became a city of processions. Under these circumstances, Shahabuddin Ahmed, the Chief Justice of the Bangladesh Supreme Court was made the Chief of interim government according to the outline given by the three political alliances.

Lt. General Ershad was forced to hand over the power to an interim Government headed by Justice Shahabuddin, on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1990. Ershad's long autocratic rule came to an end because of the mass movement of the students and the common people.

## Exercise

### Multiple Choice Questions

- 1. Who proclaimed 'Indemnity Bill' in 1975?**
  - a. Khondoker Mushtaq Ahmed
  - b) General Ziaur Rahman
  - c) Brigadier Khaled Musharraf
  - d) Justice Sayem
  
- 2. What special strategy did Ziaur Rahman take to consolidate his power?**
  - a. Increasing the military budget;
  - b. Introducing an internal political system;
  - c. Taking initiative to form SAARC.

**Which one in below is correct?**

- a. i
- b) ii and iii
- c) i and ii
- d) i ,ii, and iii

**Read the passage below and answer question 3 and question 4**

After seizing power to rule the country the undemocratic government legitimizes work such as mass killing, taking power in an undemocratic way, etc, and provides protection and legality to the work done by its like minded people. In that way, an amended law is made in the parliament to block the trial of the crimes.

- 3. Which amendment of Bangladesh relates to the activities said in the stem or the above text?**
  - a) First
  - b) Second
  - c) Fourth
  - d) Fifth
  
- 4. Through this amendment -**
  - i. the rule of law was blocked;
  - ii. the image of the international community was damaged;
  - iii. the social life of people was affected.

**Which one in below is correct?**

- a) i
- b) i and ii
- c) i and iii
- d) i ,ii and iii

**Creative question**

1. Alene was bewildered by watching an anti-military and mass movement movie. Due to the military oppression people were suppressed and confined. As a result, political parties, general people, farmers, labourers, lawyers, doctors and cultural units started agitation. They had the slogans of freedom of democracy. Nothing could stop them—not even the bullets of the police. Moreover, these oppressive measures made public more agitated and processions were seen throughout the country.
  - a. Who established Upazilla system?
  - b. What do you understand by 'Indemnity Law'?
  - c. The stem reflects characteristic features of a certain movement in post-independent Bangladesh. Explain what movement is it?
  - d. Evaluate the statement ' Democracy was freed through this movement'.

**The End**



দারিদ্র্যমুক্তি বাংলাদেশ গড়তে হলে শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করতে হবে

– মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা

## মুক্তিযোদ্ধারা দেশের শ্রেষ্ঠ সন্তান

তথ্য, সেবা ও সামাজিক সমস্যা প্রতিকারের জন্য '৩৩৩' কলসেন্টারে ফোন করুন

নারী ও শিশু নির্যাতনের ঘটনা ঘটলে প্রতিকার ও প্রতিরোধের জন্য ন্যাশনাল হেল্পলাইন সেন্টারে

১০৯ নম্বর-এ (টেল ফ্রি, ২৪ ঘণ্টা সার্ভিস) ফোন করুন



**Ministry of Education**

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