

# Lecture 09

# Agartala Conspiracy Case

- **Case**

- The case was filed in early 1968 and implicated Sheikh Mujib and others in conspiring with India against the stability of Pakistan.
- The case is officially called **State vs. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others**
- It is popularly known by **Agartala Shorojontro Mamla** (Agartala conspiracy case) as the main conspiracy was purported to have taken place in the Indian city of Agartala in Tripura state, where Sheikh Mujib's associates met Indian Intelligence Bureau officials.

# Agartala Conspiracy Case

- **Accused**

- The Government of Pakistan resolved to frame charge against 35 concerned political personalities and high government officials under civil law.
- The then leader of the Awami League and East Pakistan, **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** was the main accused for the Agartala conspiracy case.

# Agartala Conspiracy Case

- **Plot and Detection**

- The plot was conceived by Sheikh Mujib in an attempt to ignite an armed revolution against West Pakistan that would result in the secession.
- The alleged conspiracy was uncovered by the **Lt Col Shamsul Alam**.
- 1,500 Bengalis were arrested in connection with the plot in 1967.
- Sheikh Mujib and others were arrested on 9 May 1968.

# Agartala Conspiracy Case

- **Trials**

- Pakistan decided to try the accused under the court martial since a lot of the accused involved military personnel.
- However, this was overturned in favor of a civil trial in order to implicate the politicians ahead of the 1970 elections as well as to provide transparency of the trials.
- Hence, only 35 were finally accused. The accused were then moved from Dhaka Central Jail to the secured borders of the Dhaka Cantonment.
- In the face of mass movement, the government had to withdraw the Agartala Conspiracy Case on 22 February 1969.

# Agartala Conspiracy Case

- **Aftermath**

- The case was ultimately withdrawn in the face of a massive popular uprising,
- Which ultimately resulted in the 1969 uprising in East Pakistan and the fall of General Ayub Khan's dictatorship in 1969.
- The case and the resulting uprising is seen as one of the major events leading to *Bengali nationalism* and Bangladesh Liberation War.

# Agartala Conspiracy Case

- **Confession By Conspirators**
  - In 2010, and on the anniversary of the withdrawal on 22 February 2011, surviving conspirator and Deputy Speaker of the Parliament **Shawkat Ali** confessed to the parliament that:
    - The charges read out to them were accurate, stating that they formed a Shangram Parishad under Sheikh Mujib for the secession of East Pakistan.
  - Parliamentarian **Tofael Ahmed** added that had the case not been filed, the plot would have culminated in the secession of East Pakistan without bloodshed.

# 1969 Uprising In East Pakistan

- **1969 uprising in East Pakistan** (উনসত্তরের গণঅভ্যুত্থান) was a democratic political movement in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) that took place in 1969.
- The uprising consisted of a series of mass demonstrations and sporadic conflicts between government armed forces and the demonstrators.



# 1969 Uprising In East Pakistan

- Although the unrest began in 1966 with the Six point movement of Awami League, it got momentum at the beginning of 1969 and
- It culminated in the resignation of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, the first military ruler of Pakistan.
- The uprising also led to the withdrawal of Agartala Conspiracy Case and acquittal of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his colleagues from the case.

# Timeline of Events In 1969

- **4 January:** *Shorbodolio Chatro Shongram Porishad* (The All Party Student Action Committee) put forth its 11 point agenda.
- **15 February:** Seargent Jahurul Haq, one of the convicts of Agartala Conspiracy Case, is assassinated in the prison of Kurmitola Cantonment.
- **18 February:** Dr. Shamsuzzoha of Rajshahi University is killed as the police opened fire on a silent procession in Rajshahi.

# Timeline of Events In 1969

- **22 February:** Withdrawal of Agartala Conspiracy Case.
- **23 February:** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was accorded a grand reception, where he was given the title **Banggabandhu** (The friend of Bengal).
- **10–13 March:** Ayub Khan calls for a round table meeting with the opposition.
- **24 March:** Ayub Khan handed over power to General Yahya Khan, the army Chief of Staff.