

CREATION OF BANGLADESH: MYTHS EXPLODED

*Review by: Asfand Yar Khan**

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Author: Dr. Junaid Ahmed

The 1971-War has been a tragic incident in Pakistan’s history. The separation of East Pakistan was not a result of abrupt developments, especially in the late 1960s. It had been coming since the inception of Pakistan in 1947. The book titled “Creation of Bangladesh: Myths Exploded” reveals historical facts that caused the upheaval in 1971. It covers the conspiracies, misadventures, and failures while discussing the overstated narratives and their proliferation through hostile powers to tarnish Pakistan’s image. The book exposes misunderstandings in history and unveils the truths about the formation of Bangladesh.

In the opening, the author discusses the narratives critical to Pakistan’s armed forces concerning the massacre in East Pakistan and a complete amnesty to *MuktiBahini* and Indian troops. It also enlists some fabricated myths and breaks them with facts and figures, such as socio-political issues, propaganda against Pakistan armed forces, Indian intrusion, killings, rapes, and Prisoners of War (PoWs).

The author highlights troubling events, including the ethnic divide, leading to bitterness in East Pakistan. It took plenty of sacrifices for Muslims of the subcontinent to carve out their homeland (1947). Despite the inspiring struggle, ethnic polarization started soon after independence, when language became a political issue, whereas human and natural bases further alienated east and west wings. Consequently, five factors like language issues, the damaging role of political parties, colonial-era-inspired bureaucracy, discriminatory part of private investors, and economic deprivation and exploitation widened the gap.

India has been hostile towards Pakistan since its inception. In 1947, slogans of regional reunification emerged within the Indian leadership. The philosophy of *Akhand Bharath* (united India) did not allow Hindu nationalists to accept the 1947-partition; they considered it a temporary event. India’s military and political offices never left any opportunity to damage Pakistan. The book quotes various speeches of Prime Minister

*Mr Asfand Yar Khan is an Intern at Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA), National Defence University, Islamabad.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. It also describes specific facts about Indian Congress and right-wing extremist organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Furthermore, the author discusses the political rivalry between Z. A. Bhutto (Pakistan People's Party) and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Awami League) in the backdrop of the 1970-General Elections.

This book uncovers *MuktiBahini*, including its organizational structure, objectives, and tactics to achieve its goals. It shows the nexus between India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Bengali insurgents. Over the years, the Indian lobby and hostile powers have portrayed Pakistan as an oppressor and *MuktiBahini* as a local revolutionary militia. Agartala Conspiracy case also unveiled the contacts between Awami League and Indian Intelligence. After establishing RAW in 1968, Indian leadership authorized it to raise a militant outfit in border areas of East Pakistan and India to exploit the internal vulnerabilities of Pakistan. The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) provided essential sabotage training to the militants (terrorists in the contemporary environment).

The last section opines that Bangladesh confronted economic and political disturbances soon after separating from West Pakistan. Despite promising a better future, the Awami League exposed its dictatorial and authoritative intentions. Scores of non-Bengalis were brutally killed or starved to death. The Golden Bengal promised by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did not glitter. Bangladeshis are yet to see the prosperity pledged at the time of separation. The bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh did not normalize even after four decades. Mistrust and suspicion have kept the two countries from enabling a cooperative relationship. Pakistan and Bangladesh possess enormous strategic and economic potential. As the author suggests, both states must take confidence-building steps to establish strong ties based on mutual understanding and trust in the future. Pragmatically, there are no permanent adversaries or friends, but only interests. There are examples of past skirmishes entering bilateral agreements and multilateral cooperation for mutual gain in world history. Bangladeshi intellectuals are often sceptical of India's superiority complex over them. Pakistan can capitalize on this opportunity to counter Indian hegemonic designs in the region.