



# Islamic Republic National Assembly



## AGENDA

Addressing the Deepening Divide Between East and West  
Pakistan and the Rise of the Awami League.

# IRNA



## STUDY GUIDE



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## LETTER FROM THE BUREAU

Dear delegates,

We are delighted to welcome you all to the tenth iteration of The Shishukunj Model United Nations. It is our honour to serve as the bureau of the Islamic Republic National Assembly, and we look forward to making this MUN a very enriching experience.

The Islamic Republic National Assembly is a historic committee with a freeze date of December 05, 1970. The agenda of this committee is **‘Addressing the Deepening Divide Between East and West Pakistan and the Rise of the Awami League’**. Within this agenda, we shall discuss the factors that led to the rift between East Pakistan and West Pakistan that eventually resulted in them becoming the individual nations they are today.

We believe that to fully comprehend a situation, it is essential to know all sides of a story. The IRNA aims to view this agenda from the perspective of Pakistan; what the people on either side were undergoing, how their desires varied and even clashed. The fate of East and West Pakistan lies in the hands of this committee. Either the rising Awami League pressures for a separation and is successful, or the divide is effectively addressed, meaning that there is peaceful agreement between the two; this committee shall decide.

Do keep in mind, this guide will serve as the basis of your research and the flow of the committee; however, we recommend that you go beyond this guide and research every topic thoroughly. We encourage all delegates to think originally and creatively at all points of the committee, especially during a crisis. Moreover, no act of plagiarism will be entertained by the bureau, and we expect all delegates to treat every issue at hand with the utmost respect and the appropriate attention it demands.

Feel free to reach out to us in case of any concern.

Regards,

**Jahnvi Julka**  
Chairperson

**Aarvee Mishra**  
Vice-chairperson



## COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

The “Islamic Republic National Assembly” is tasked with discussing the agenda “Addressing the Deepening Divide Between East and West Pakistan and the Rise of the Awami League”.



The Islamic Republic National Assembly is a historic committee set in 1970. The freeze date for “IRNA” has been set as December 05, 1970. This freeze date has been chosen because the differences between East and West Pakistan during this period were very high, culturally and politically as well. The primary aim of this committee will not only be to address this divide but also to tackle the rising political tensions brought by the Awami League and thus, maintain proper political stability in the National Assembly and the entirety of Pakistan.

The Pakistani point of view, in many instances, has not been duly discussed, and this year, with the “IRNA”, through our agenda, we aim to throw light on what the internal factors, refusal of transfer of power among the political groups, and international intervention actually resulted in.

The delegates in the “IRNA” will engage in heated debates throughout the conference, represent their respective party stances and portfolios, and propose solutions to solve this ever-increasing problem at hand. The final purpose remains the same, which is to solve the differences, transfer power, or pressure for a separation; whatever the fate of Pakistan, this committee shall decide.



## INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

Agenda Statement : Addressing the Deepening Divide Between East and West Pakistan and the Rise of the Awami League. This agenda will allow the delegates to understand the internal politics of Pakistan during the 1970s and how its escalation will impact the people of Pakistan.



# Part I Pre Partition

## I. Partition of Bengal :

### 1. Background

In 1905, Bengal was partitioned into East and West Bengal by the then viceroy Lord Curzon. Calcutta was the capital in the West, and Dacca was the capital in the East. Before partition, Bengal was a vast province that included present-day West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam and Bangladesh. Geographically, Eastern Bengal included areas like Dacca, Hill Tiperra (Tripura), Chittagong, Malda, Rajshahi divisions and Assam. Western Bengal included present-day West Bengal, Odisha, parts of Bihar and Jharkhand. The British justified the 1905 partition by claiming that the extensive province of Bengal was difficult to govern efficiently. However, there were other hidden motives behind the division of Bengal. This motive was rooted in the age-old British concept of ‘divide and conquer’.



Bengal was a very significant province to the British for various reasons. Its fertile land aided the production of crops like rice, tea, jute, and indigo. In addition, the textile industries of cotton and silk were very successful. The British used their control over Bengal’s trade to expand their economy. Moreover, Calcutta served as the capital of British India, and Bengal's strategic location offered the British the opportunity to expand their rule in North India.

Thus, Bengal was a highly productive province for the British. As a result, they exploited peasants, factory workers, labour and natural resources in Bengal to gain maximum profit. This exploitation led to growing dissent among Bengalis. The educated middle class began to resent British rule. Bengal was home to many leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, and Surendranath Banerjee, who propagated nationalist ideas. These ideas were broadly discussed in newspapers, literature and public gatherings. And so, Bengal emerged as a hub of growing nationalism. The British saw this nationalism as a potential threat to their empire. The underlying motive behind dividing Bengal was to weaken the rising nationalist sentiments.

Before the 1905 partition, the Hindu community was at an economic and political advantage. They were big landlords, controlled businesses and trade, and held higher professional positions. So, it can be said that Hindus dominated Bengal before the partition, which is why they opposed the partition. They believed it would greatly diminish their influence, and they feared that Bengalis as a whole would be marginalised.

Previously, Bengal was the most populous province of India, with a population of 78.5 million. Later, East Bengal had a population of 31 million which was predominantly Muslim, and the





remaining population of 47.5 million in West Bengal was predominantly Hindu. The partition of Bengal strategically separated Hindus (in the West) and Muslims (in the East).

East Bengal was not as prosperous as the West. It had very poor communication and was neglected. The British paid more attention to the areas which make up present-day West Bengal and Bihar. Modernisation and developmental efforts were focused towards Calcutta, which was in the West. The partition was implemented on October 16, 1905, which also happened to coincide with the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan, which celebrates siblinghood. On this day, Tagore encouraged Hindus and Muslims to tie rakhis, symbolising their unwavering unity. For centuries, Hindus and Muslims lived in harmony, and it was only under British rule that the two communities started having differences. It was important to remain united against the British rather than turning against each other.

## 2. Aftermath

The partition was welcomed by the Muslims in East Bengal because they had felt neglected throughout British rule. However, some Muslim leaders condemned the partition initially in the name of Bengali solidarity. The Hindus in West Bengal were agitated because they wanted to protect the Bengali community. West Bengal and the rest of India opposed the partition because it was seen as an attempt by the British to cripple nationalism in Bengal.

There were many protests in response to the partition. The most distinct movement was the ‘Swadeshi Movement’. The term Swadeshi means of one’s own country. It was led by prominent extremist leaders of the Congress- Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal (collectively known as Lal-Bal-Pal). It aimed to boycott British goods and promote Swadeshi goods (made in India). It promoted Indian industries, cultural values, patriotism and challenged British dominance. Several protests were led by leaders and lawyers in Bengal, like Surendranath Banerjee, Taraknath Palit and Anand Mohan Bose. Art and literature also served as an important mode of protest.

The partition was also done to appease Muslim Bengalis and so that the British could earn their loyalty. Lord Curzon made Dacca the capital of East Bengal to further please the Muslims. This would ensure that the Muslim community would remain submissive to the British government. East Bengal was a Muslim-majority province, and Dacca became a valuable hub for Muslims. With the formation of the All India Muslim League(AIML)in Dacca in 1906, the city served as a foundation for Muslims advocating for their interests. The AIML was formed to enforce the economic, social and political interests of the Islamic community in India, which felt marginalised in British India. So, they supported the division of Bengal. They wanted to secure adequate representation by separate electorates and reserved seats. The AIML eventually led to the separatist movement, which ultimately culminated in the partition of India in 1947.





On the other hand, the Indian National Congress strongly opposed this partition because it was a method of diminishing unity. Though in reality, the partition helped enhance nationalism in India as people came together to protest against the British.

## **II. Reversal of the Bengal Partition :**

Because of the dissatisfaction of the Hindu community, especially the Bengali Hindus, who combined their anger with movements like the Swadeshi Movement, among others, led by the Indian National Congress, started pressuring the British to reconsider the partition of Bengal. Here, murder attempts also started. Not only Lord Minto, but also other British officials and Muslim leaders were attacked by Hindu extremists.

Then came Viceroy cum Governor General Lord Charles Hardinge, who, after receiving several demands by the Hindus to reverse the partition, finally caved into these demands, and at Delhi on 12 December 1911, the partition of Bengal was cancelled.

This decision came as a huge shock to the Muslim community, who called it “the betrayal of the worst kind.” However, in addition to reversing the partition, some other administrative changes were also made on this day. Firstly, the seat of the Government of India was shifted from Delhi to Calcutta. This shifting of capital to the site of past Muslim glory was seen as a move by the British to appease the Bengali Muslim community after the loss of power they had in Eastern Bengal due to this partition reversal.

Secondly, Bengal was placed under a governor, and Assam was placed under a chief commissioner.

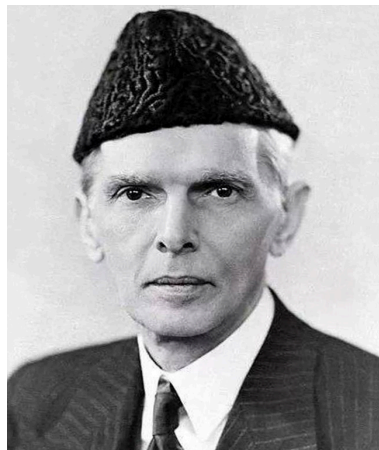
This reunification of Bengal, though, served the interests of the Hindus; it affected the Hindu - Muslim relations significantly. By not granting the Muslims their territorial identity as was promised earlier and by caving in to the demands made by the Hindu community, it became very clear to the Muslims that their say does not matter as long as they live in a Hindu-dominated India.

This resentment was perhaps, among others, one of the most important factors that led to the birth of the All India Muslim League, which voiced the opinions and demands of the Muslims and worked for better and stronger political representation of the Muslim community all across the subcontinent, led by the league’s leader, Mahummad Ali Jinnah.



### III. Muhammad Ali Jinnah :

Jinnah was born on December 25, 1876, and had studied in London and ran a legal practice in Bombay.



He first joined the Indian National Congress in 1906 and was known as the “Ambassador of Hindu Muslim Unity”. This was seen in the “Lucknow Pact of 1916,” which wanted separate electorates for Muslims but was later overruled by the Nehru Report of 1928.

But after Mahatma Gandhi came, he felt that the INC was using harsh means instead of organised peaceful protests to put their demands. Because of this difference, Jinnah left the Congress.

He then joined the All India Muslim League in October 1913 and became its President in 1916, where he released his “14 Point Demand (1929) as a response to the Nehru Report (1928). The main demand was, yet again, that of separate electorates.

But the INC rejected all demands made by Jinnah, and so, Jinnah refused to participate any more and said that this was the “parting of ways” and that he did not want and would not have anything to do with the INC in the future.

Then came the 1937 Provincial Elections. In these elections, the INC won, whereas AIML, led by Jinnah, failed to secure votes, especially in Muslim minority areas. The AIML saw this increasing influence of the INC and felt that they would not address their needs in a Hindu-dominated India.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was now sure that Hindus and Muslims could not live together in a nation peacefully. So he started promoting the “Two-Nation Theory”, which stated that Hindus and Muslims were two different identities with different needs and that Muslims should have their own nation.



# Part II Partition



## I. Aspirations of East Pakistan

In 1947, Pakistan wanted to establish itself as an independent nation with a Muslim-majority population. This aspiration was rooted in the Two-Nations Theory given by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in 1876. They aimed to create a nation where the interests of the Muslim community would be respected, where they could govern themselves and practice their religion without being marginalised. They wanted to be responsible for their development rather than leaving it in the hands of a Hindu-dominant nation.

The Muslim League ruled Pakistan after partition. They sought to realise these aspirations and lead Pakistan to great heights. In the coming years, however, there were several signs of East Pakistan being neglected by the Muslim League. For instance, Urdu was given greater preference for official and administrative purposes. The Bengalis had limited representation in the National Assembly. The One Unit Scheme of 1955, wherein the provinces of West Pakistan were combined, was also seen as a strategy to reduce East Pakistan's political influence. East Pakistan was economically exploited because resources and investments were focused towards West Pakistan.

In light of this, a set of demands arose from East Pakistan. The demands that were first presented against India at the time of partition were now being raised once again, but this time, against West Pakistan. Some of these demands included:

Firstly, they wanted to have proper political representation and a fair say in decision-making. Having a greater population, they expected proportional representation. They believed that representation would give them a fair say in decision-making, and they would be able to safeguard their Bengali identity.

Secondly, they wanted greater economic autonomy. They wanted to manage resources and levy taxes on their own. They also sought control over trade and exchange. Initially, there were requests for a separate banking reserve for East Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan wanted to make their own economic policies and have greater investments made in the upliftment of their economy.

Lastly, they aspired to protect their Bengali identity, where they could speak their language and practice their culture without fearing marginalisation. East Pakistanis aimed to fulfil their aspirations, which in the first place were why they separated themselves from the Hindu-majority India. The population in East Pakistan prioritised their Bengali culture over their Islamic



religion. They wanted the Bengali language to be declared a National Language. Their Bengali identity needed to be respected and safeguarded. They put up demands for higher provincial autonomy. These demands were presented through protests and campaigns time and again, however, they were met with great resistance from the West.



## CURRENT SITUATION (jahnvi)

### MEMO

TO THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN AND TO ALL MEMBERS  
OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Members,

As the representatives of the people of East Pakistan and the members of the Awami League, we write today not to plead, but to state clearly that the existing political order of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has utterly failed the people of East Pakistan.

Since the very birth of Pakistan, we have endured economic marginalization, cultural neglect, and complete exclusion in decision-making despite being the majority in this nation. All our aspirations of a fair nation since partition, it seems have been plain lies.

If this Assembly fails to meet our demands, as mentioned in the Six Point Demand, then it also must realize that when our own government closes its doors, other nations open theirs, even the enemy.

We seek dignity, and if not granted to us willingly, we will claim what's ours rightfully.

Joy Bangla!

Sincerely,

The Awami League  
East Pakistan



It was December 05, 1970, when the divide between East and West Pakistan was at its peak, and politically, the Awami League started gaining momentum as the Six Point Demand introduced by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman demanded for more autonomy over its fiscal policy, foreign trade and reserves, military, currencies and a federal form of government based on the Lahore Resolution of 1940. These demands came as a result of the deliberate negligence of the West Pakistani Government over several factors, like economic, linguistic, and military monopoly over East Pakistan.

## **I. Economic Divide :**

Even though East Pakistan generated 62% of Pakistan's total revenue income through its jute exports, the major share of the national budget (75%) went to West Pakistan, and the remaining negligible amount was given to East Pakistan despite having a larger population.

This relationship between the two wings of Pakistan was similar to the British colonial times, with East Pakistan serving as an economic colony to West Pakistan, where the West Pakistani government profited from the Eastern wing but didn't invest equally in its development.

This disparity was also evident in the distribution of the foreign aid received, i.e, the Eastern wing was always given a smaller part of the total foreign aid.

Additionally, to speed the process of industrialisation in West Pakistan, the surplus generated (for eg, the foreign exchange received by the agricultural exports from East Pakistan) was transferred from East to West, thus making the transfer of such economic resources.

Also, the people of East Pakistan were exploited through a very unfair system of taxation as well. The Central government extracted more from East Pakistan than it invested in it. Thus, this unfair economic allocation against East Pakistan not only led to growing resentment in the public, but also became one of the major demands in the Six Point Movement by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



## II. Linguistic and Social

East Pakistan made up approximately 60% of Pakistan's population. The majority of East Pakistan's population was Bengali Muslim, and they valued their Bengali culture more than their religion, Islam. One of the main aspirations of East Pakistanis was that their Bengali identity must be respected, so that they could live without being marginalised. However, through the years, the dominance of the West and its policies neglected the interests of East Pakistanis, leading to disappointment and resentment.

East Pakistanis' power was weakened by policies made based on language. In 1948, Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared Urdu the only national language. The Bengali-speaking population, which was greater, was sidelined from job opportunities, the media, and decision-making in the government. Agitated, East Pakistanis rose in protest, in which the middle class actively took part. It started with a day-long strike on March 11, 1948, in Dhaka. The tensions kept intensifying and eventually resulted in the Bengali Language Movement in 1952. It was led by activists, political leaders and students of the Dhaka University. They demanded an end to Urdu imposition and that Bengali be given the status of 'national language'. In response to the ongoing protests and demonstrations, the police opened fire on the perturbed Dhaka University students and killed four of them, who are remembered as martyrs.



After this incident, language took a front seat in the politics of East Pakistan. The significant differences between East and West Pakistan, in terms of language, culture and economy, meant that East Pakistanis faced social exclusion. There were several policies which alienated East Pakistanis. For example, the One-Unit Scheme (1955) in which the four provinces of West Pakistan were combined for administrative efficiency; however, in reality, it reduced the influence of East Pakistan on the overall politics to a considerable extent. East Pakistan was underrepresented and had a much smaller say in decision-making. A strong sense of Bengali nationalism emerged as East Pakistanis unitedly stood to challenge the dominance of the West.



### III. Military and Internationalism

In terms of the military as well, East Pakistan did not have equity. The military bases in West Pakistan were far more formidable than those in East Pakistan. For example,

1. Karachi (the naval base of West Pakistan) was much more capable of carrying out operations than Chittagong (the naval base of East Pakistan).
2. PAF Base Masroor was the largest airbase of Pakistan and one of the largest in Asia, stationed in West Pakistan. There were air bases in other cities in West Pakistan as well, including Saragodha and Peshawar. In the East, there was only one significant airbase at Tejgaon (Dhaka), which had relatively underdeveloped infrastructure and limited resources.
3. The army of East Pakistan faced a similar imbalance. Most of the army divisions of Pakistan were situated in West Pakistan. It also had better infrastructure, like training academies, resources like ammunition, cantonments, etc. The army in East Pakistan could not even carry out a long-term military operation. Surrounded by Indian territory on three sides, East Pakistan was very vulnerable from a military perspective. This vulnerability was evident in the 1965 Indo-Pak war.

Imbalance in investments and development efforts, which were mainly directed to West Pakistan added to the disparity in military. Key positions in military personnel were mainly held by Punjabis or Pashtuns, meaning that Bengalis were underrepresented in the military as well.

Apart from internal factors, Cold War geopolitics also enforced these differences. Pakistan was heavily dependent on the United States in the 1960s, considering its alliance during the Cold War. Another reason why West Pakistan's military was much stronger was that military aid given by other countries, especially the USA, was directly received by West Pakistan.

The grievances of East Pakistanis were known internationally, although not extensively. Despite this awareness, countries were reluctant to condemn West Pakistan because they saw it as an internal issue in Pakistan, which wasn't as severe. Since the focus was on the ongoing Cold War, East Pakistan could not manage to mobilise support internationally.

## IV. Rise of The Awami League :

The Awami League was formed out of dissatisfaction with the All India Muslim League (AIML), which had soon forgotten about the needs of the East Pakistanis. In response, on June 23, 1949, some politicians like Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Yar Mohammad, Shamsul Haque, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman broke away from the Muslim League and formed a new party in Dhaka, called the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League.

However, in 1955, the league dropped the word “Muslim” from the name to spread the idea of secularism. The Awami League gained more popularity in the Bengali Language Movement (BLM).

After partition, the government imposed Urdu as the only national language despite Bengali being the language spoken by the majority, especially in East Pakistan. This led to huge student protests in Dhaka and came to be known as the BLM. Here, the Awami League fought and finally, in 1956, Bengali was recognised as one of the two state languages for Pakistan.

Then came the provincial elections of 1954, where the Awami League, along with other regional parties, formed a coalition called the “United Front”. The United Front won 223 seats out of 309 Muslim seats in whereas the Muslim League got only 9 seats. This helped the Awami League to become the leading political party of East Pakistan.



Now, in response to the discrimination against East Pakistan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman released the Six Points Demand (1966), which demanded more autonomy for East Pakistan. Some other demands were as follows:

1.	A federal government with a parliamentary system based on universal franchise
2.	The centre should control only defence and foreign affairs, all other powers go to the provinces
3.	Introduce separate currencies; have a separate banking system
4.	Provinces should collect taxes, the centre gets a share for its expenses
5.	Separate foreign exchange accounts, provinces should be allowed to trade independently.



6.	Create a separate militia or paramilitary force for East Pakistan
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The Six Point Demands gathered a lot of support from the people of East Pakistan, but they were, in fact, rejected by the political power of the Western Wing. However, despite being rejected, these demands became a core component of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's campaigns and the Awami League's ideology altogether.



## THE INDIAN INFLUENCE

After the 1947 partition, India and Pakistan had two very different styles of governance. Where India chose to focus on secularism, Pakistan was created as a safe space for Muslims and was divided into two wings. However, when the divide between the two wings started to rise due to their language being suppressed, a limited role in administration, not enough representation, etc. India, though, did not intervene directly; it was still aware of what the people of East Pakistan were going through.

When the Awami League (AL) started to gain more support through their protests, the political power in the West saw it as a threat. They felt that the AL was undermining the unity of the country with their demands. The Western Wing also thought that these leaders were conspiring against Pakistan and accused them of secretly engaging with India behind closed doors.

These allegations can be seen in the Agartala Conspiracy Case (1968), where Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 34 others were arrested under Section 131 of the Pakistan Penal Code for “colluding with India against Pakistan” This was seen as a fabrication by the people of East Pakistan, especially when Zahurul Haq, one of the arrested, was shot dead in custody. The case was finally dismissed since there was not sufficient evidence to back the claims, and the people of East Pakistan started protesting heavily.

Even though this case was dismissed, it is important to note that after partition, India and Pakistan’s rivalry under PM Indira Gandhi and President General Yahya Khan, respectively, was still fresh, and so was the desire to establish themselves on an international stage. Thus, it is imperative that the delegates take into account their neighbour’s intentions and ensure that the power and control remain in the hands of only **Pakistan** at the end.



## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Delegates are expected to effectively address the divide between East and West Pakistan by engaging in substantial debates and discussions. The committee must strive to resolve the grievances of East Pakistanis and the conflicts between East and West Pakistan, which have piled up over the years. It is important to devise solutions which can be implemented efficiently.

Considering that the divide is only deepening, something must be done to reduce tensions. If delegates fail to act fast and decisively, Pakistan may have to face adverse consequences. Delegates must think from the perspective of the agitated Bengalis, who are making demands to realise the aspirations for which they decided to join Pakistan back in 1947.

With the Awami League's power increasing, Pakistan cannot afford to let the Bengalis go unheard. In a situation where the issue is not resolved through discussions, it might be possible that West Pakistan could choose to transfer power to the Awami League, or in an extreme case, be compelled to do so. Such a transfer must be done carefully, maintaining the political stability of Pakistan.

Any decisions and actions should be taken keeping in mind that there should be no upheaval in the National Assembly. The committee must ensure that Pakistan's harmony is not compromised at any point in this process. Being a historic committee, the steps this committee takes could significantly impact geopolitical dynamics in today's times. The fate of Pakistan is in the hands of this committee, and it is expected to make decisions in the best interests of Pakistan as a whole, not just in favour of East or West Pakistan.



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