**Deepest cut to the heart**

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On December 16, 1971, I was only 10 years old but vividly remember my late father striking his fists on the wall with tears pouring out from his eyes. The emotional state of most people in the then West Pakistan was not much different and the day was filled with dark clouds of deepest grief and despair. Forty-nine years down the lane, how many of our brethren even remember that we lost half of our state, i.e. the former East Pakistan, on this most tragic day of our history. However, even more heart-breaking is the fact that, as a nation and as a country, we did not delve deep enough to learn the right lessons from this greatest national tragedy.

The preparation for dismemberment of a united Pakistan began in India under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Indian spy agency RAW was created in 1968 by the Indian Intelligence Bureau that had already succeeded in getting some toehold in former East Pakistan. That helped in sowing the seeds of discord along with the inflammation of existing Bengali discontent with the Urdu language—especially since it was declared as Pakistan’s national language.

[Met Office forecast cold, dry weather across country](https://nation.com.pk/21-Dec-2020/met-office-forecast-cold-dry-weather-across-country)

To be fair, some of the grievances were quite genuine, though perceived in haste. Yet, some other grievances were merely concocted. Those concerns were fed into Bengali minds through well-orchestrated Indian disinformation and psychological war perpetrated in the former East Pakistan as a preparatory phase of strategic covert war and impending open military invasion. The creation of RAW coincided with the recruitment of more than 100,000 Bengali from East Pakistan as Mujib Ur Rehman’s Mukti Bahni. Mukti Bahni was recruited, trained, funded and equipped at the Indian city of Agartala to unleash a reign of terror through rape, arson and the plunder of the civil population. Simultaneously, blame was associated with the Pakistan Army scattered all over the country mostly along the Indian border.

Mukti Bahni was specially tasked to undertake raids and ambushes on army convoys to logistically choke the Pak Army. To the Indian glee, Mukti Bahni and Mujib’s political followers succeeded in bleeding their own countrymen and army by historical backstabbing and shameless conspiracies. Well documented in books is the fact that amid regionalism, hatred for West Pakistan and natural disasters, Pakistan went to polls on December 7, 1970. The Awami League of Mujib scored a convincing victory, by securing 160 out of 162 seats reserved for East Pakistan. Bhutto’s PPP managed to get 81 seats against the 138 allocated for West Pakistan. Quite ironically, out of 81 seats, PPP got 62 seats from Punjab, and only 18 from Sindh and just one from NWFP. Despite that, Bhutto misused the Sindhi language card to subdue the demand for Bengali as the state language in East Pakistan.

[Sindh Assembly to hold session on December 22](https://nation.com.pk/21-Dec-2020/sindh-assembly-to-hold-session-on-december-22)

The last straw on the camel’s back was the non-acceptance of the National Assembly election results primarily by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Consequently, Mujib’s collusion with RAW and Indira Gandhi, Bhutto’s political machination and the announcement of ‘Udhar Tum, Idhar Hum’ (you be there and we be here) and finally General Yahya Khan’s inability to prevail upon both Mujib and Bhutto for the peaceful transfer of power and his failure to apply the right politico-military strategy resulted in the Pak Army getting attacked from all directions and, more sadly, subjected to backstabbing by own countrymen.

Despite exemplary individual acts of valour and heroic battles at a tactical level, the most ignominious surrender of around 30 thousand plus troops with fewer bayonets and bullets left to fight took place. Ironically, it was propagated as 95,000 troops’ surrender that actually included most civilian West Pakistanis.

While the Armed Forces learnt part of their lessons and focused on developing potent conventional and nuclear capability to thwart any future aggression post the 1971 humiliations, other elements of national power in Pakistan remained far from being wiser. The consistent political mayhem continues till to date as the very word and system of democracy remains most misused as almost all political parties thrive on ill-gotten funds and stay focused on multiplying the ill-legitimate wealth. Similarly, political powers in almost all political parties remain hereditary; where children and grandchildren continue to boss the subservient old party stalwarts.

[PML-N Senator Kalsoom Perveen dies due to COVID-19](https://nation.com.pk/21-Dec-2020/pml-n-senator-kalsoom-perveen-dies-due-to-covid-19)

Like in the past, the enemy within is even more harmful than the enemy outside. However, it is quite reassuring that today’s Pakistan is far stronger and geographically cohesive. It has the most battle-hardened armed forces which are duly backed up by potent nuclear deterrence and is blessed with a more aware and educated population when compared with the sad past. Besides, due to the changed global geo-political environment and realignments, strategic partners like China and Turkey are standing shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan with many other friendly countries ready to support newly emerging political, economic and security blocks.