

CHAPTER-I

THE PARTITION COLOSSUS AND THE POLITICS OF BENGAL

In spite of a common language of which every Bengalese is proud, a shared culture and lifestyle and a common history since at least a thousand years, no Bengalese wanted the partition of Bengal from the core of their heart, yet the partition happened due to the gradual deterioration of communal harmony and thereupon undivided Bengal disappeared from the atlas on 15th August, 1947. In fact, the deterioration of communal harmony began with the unexpected and untimely demise of Desh Bandhu Chittaranjan Das (henceforth C.R. Das) on 16th June, 1925 (henceforth C.R. Das), who was no doubt a pioneer of the emergence of joint Hindu-Muslim front in Bengal politics on the basis of the historic Bengal Pact¹ of 1923, a shining example of an ambitious instrument that could bring the Muslims and Hindus of Bengal together. Chittaranjan Das was the only national leader whom both the Hindus and Muslims relied, that is why with his death the very emotional comments was made by a Muslim daily paper, named '*MUHAMADI*' (in Bengali) as –'God's extreme punishment to our countrymen'.² Not only that the Daily News of London commented with the death of Chittaranjan Das as "For there is apparently no one to replace Das, who stood in an absolutely unique position."³ In that context, Aparna Devi, daughter of Chittaranjan Das wrote in his (C. R. Das's) biography "If the country would advance along with the path indicated by my father at Faridpur (1st May, 1925) with the leaders giving up the illusion of their leadership and egoism, we would have obtained complete independence long ago and India would not be partitioned for gaining independence."⁴

During the lifetime of Chittaranjan Das, though the Bengal Pact (1923) was rejected by Congress Session at Kakinada (1923) which was presided over by Mohammad Ali, but it was endorsed by Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (henceforth BPCC) of Sirajganj (1924), presided by M.M. Akram Khan thereafter majority of the Congress leaders defied their own central leadership and decided to go along with C. R. Das in which they gave utmost priority to the Bengal's larger and long term interests. But, after C. R. Das's untimely and unexpected sudden demise the Krishnagar Session of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC) 1926 under

the presidentship of Birendra Nath Sasmal,⁵ rejected the Bengal Pact and there upon most of the Muslim leaders bonhomie with the Congress party ended and in the election of the Calcutta Corporation of 1927 Muslims fought separately which was a clear signal the return of separatism and the end of the nascent Bengalee nationalism.⁶

In that situation, the Arya Samajists during their procession would play music near Mosques that was objected by the Muslims for their disturbances at the time of prayers, and during the time of Bakr-Id, some of the people of Muslims community would slaughter cows in the open places that would hurt the religious sentiments of the orthodox Hindus. This made the situation worse and aggravated the process of communal polarization in Bengal. It was rebel poet Kaji Nazrul Islam who at that time of budding communalism wrote his most inspiring song named 'Kandari Hushiar' (1926),⁷ in which Hindus and Muslims were asked to unite, but by and large his dictum as well as appeal was unheeded. The widely circulated and much talked composite culture of Bengal and societal tradition gave way to the political stance of 'Islam in Danger' which was primarily the slogan of non-Bengalee Muslims and later on accepted by the large section of Bengalee Muslims to consolidate the Muslim community. In that context, the non-existence of C. R. Das created a void in Bengal politics which was not filled up by anybody. Incidentally, after C.R. Das there was only one politician i.e. Subhas Chandra Bose who had the enormous abilities to keep the Hindus and Muslims together, but unfortunately, he was kept far away from the ongoing political scenario of the country particularly Bengal due to his long period of detention at home or at Mandalay or in exile in Europe.⁸

The promise for united movement against the British rule was seen during the period from 1914 to 1925. But the move for joint action was belied during the time from 1926 to 1935 and it was more deteriorated thereafter, especially on the eve of the independence as well as partition of the country along with Bengal. Actually, after C. R. Das there was none in Bengal politics who could retain the general loyalty of both the communities. From a Special Correspondent, under the caption of 'MASTER ORATOR: "LLOYD GEORGE" OF INDIAN POLITICS' wrote as "Das revealed all through his life an intensely anti- British trait, and although suspect by the Mohammedans, who always referred to Das as being "far too good a 'Hindoo' for them," he was a remarkable personality; a man of great culture and deep learning."⁹

Naturally, after the death of C.R. Das and rejection of the Bengal Pact (1923) in the Krishnagar Session of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC) held in the year of 1926 under the presidentship of Birendra Nath Sasmal, the Muslim separatists started asserting themselves at the aim of claiming to political power of the Bengal province. They adopted various policies and programmes to counteract Hindu bhadraloks' control over different institutions in the soil of demographic preponderance of the Muslims community in Bengal. In that juncture, the process of communal polarization was accentuated by the attitude of the Hindus particularly the leaders of the Congress party along with the Swarajyists regarding the opposition to the passing of the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill in 1928 in the Bengal Legislative Council. It may be mentioned that during the time of the passing of the proposed Bill, the Hindu members of the Legislative Council those who mainly belonged to the Congress party showed their support in favour of the interest of the Zaminders and neglected the interests of the Projas, because most of the leaders of the Congress party were Zaminder in class. In that context Abul Mansur Ahmed remarked, "Neither in terms of the Muslim interest, nor on the Proja interest, was it possible for any longer to rely on the Congress."¹⁰ Centering the passing of the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill in 1928 in the Bengal Legislative Council, many Congress minded leaders among the Muslim communities were disillusioned about Congress party and subsequently they automatically joined anti Congress parties.¹¹

The Bengalee Muslims who were initially loyal to the Congress Party started getting disillusion due to opposing the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1928. This processes of disillusionment continued with the dominance of Hindu bhadralok and wealthy non-Benglaee Muslims. At the same time a powerful proja movement spawned among the Bengalee Muslims for attaining freedom from economic bondage. In the question of forming organization among the Muslims of Bengal- Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (henceforth H.S. Suhrawardy) and Khaja Nazimuddin i.e. non Bengalee Muslims completely favoured a pure Muslim organization, but Abul Kashem Fazlul Huq popularly known as A. K. Fazlul Huq (henceforth Huq), Tamijuddin Khan and some others Bengalee Muslims favoured a concrete non-communal organization. Being influenced by the sentiment and fire brand oratory of Huq, the supporters of the non communal organization among the Muslims formed the Council Proja Party (later known as Bengal proja party) to work for 'safeguarding the interests of tenants and labouring classes of the province' against the economic oppression. A.K. Fazlul Huq

was elected leader of the newly formed Council Proja Party. Soon the Council Proja Party was expanded and it was renamed as the Nikhil Banga Proja Samity towards the end of 1929. Thereafter with the broadening of the support base of the Nikhil Banga Proja Samity, subsequently it turned into the historic Krishak Praja Party (henceforth KPP) in the 1936. A.K. Fazlul Huq's prime motive was to protect the interests of the projas from the oppression of the Zamindars and money-lenders that is why, he opened the door of the praja movement to all.¹² In the question of the interest of the projas, Huq remarked "Hindus are not the enemy of the Muslims. Due to lack of proper education fanaticism has grown up into the minds of both communities and as a result of that they sometimes engaged themselves in communal violence. In case of the exploitation of the Hindu Zamindars, money lenders and lawyers, Huq categorically told that practice was not confined only within a particular community, at the same way the Muslim Zamindars, money lenders and lawyers also exploited the poor peasants as well as projas irrespective of caste and communities"¹³ It is mention worthy that parallel to the proja movement, there was all along another movement among Muslims in Bengal, primarily of non- Bengalee Muslims who were harping on the slogan of 'Islam in Danger' and who aimed consolidating only the Muslims, but at the beginning that slogan was not greeted by the Bengal Muslims.¹⁴

In that context of Bengal politics there were five separate groups which were- i. A upper class Muslim group that was mainly influenced by the non-Bengalee Muslims like Khwaza Najumuddin and H.S. Suhrawardy, ii. Muslim peasantry and professional classes consisted by rural and middle class Muslims of Bengal, dominated by A.K. Fazlul Huq iii. Hindu bhadrak class of Bengal under the fold of the Congress party, dominated by the so-called 'big-five' of Bengal namely Sarat Chandra Bose, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Tulsi Charan Goswami and Nirmal Chandra Chunder, iv. A non-Congress powerful and vocal Zamindar class and v. Scheduled Castes people particularly the Namasudras of Bengal led by Jogendra Nath Mandal. These five distinct groups were pulling the strings of political scenario of Bengal for two decades before 1947. However, the formal Hindu domination in Bengal politics was ended from the year of 1927, because since then, each and every successive Ministry was headed by a Muslim politician who could receive the joint support of the elected Muslim MLAs, the Scheduled Castes Federation MLAs and the European MLAs along with the nominated official members. In that time the policy of the Congress party was successively sending

congressmen into the legislative council only for the aim of wrecking the diarchial constitution. Muslim leaders in Muslim majority provinces would receive every possible support from the British Government and developed a vested interest in separatism which ultimately accentuated the bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims and paved the way towards partition of the country .¹⁵

In the meantime, Ramsay Mac Donald, the then Prime Minister of England had declared his much-talked 'Communal Award' on 10th August 1932. Keeping in mind the 'Communal Award' under the Government of India Act of 1935, out of 250 seats of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Muslims of Bengal were provided 119 seats i.e. 47.6 % of the total seats, against their 54.8 % of total population. The Hindus were given altogether 80 seats i.e. 32% of the total seats while they constituted 44% of the total population in Bengal. On the other hand as many as 25 seats i.e.10% of the total seats were fixed for the Europeans living in Bengal who were a little more than 14 thousand in number and constituting merely 0.25% of the total population. The Anglo-Indians were also given more seats compared to their position in the population ratio of Bengal. The main objective of the British Rulers behind the arrangement of the disproportionate representations in the Bengal Legislative Assembly was to regulate the politics of Bengal by broadening the gap between the Hindus and Muslims.¹⁶ This ratio of the division of seats in between Hindus and Muslims was opposed by the newly formed Hindu Mahasabha by all means. They accused the Congress party for betraying with the interests of the Hindus of Bengal.¹⁷

Then the Muslim League was almost insignificant in the politics of Bengal, but the most influential party among the Muslims communities particularly the East Bengalee Muslims was the Krishak Praja Party (KPP) of A.K. Fazlul Huq. It was fact that the KPP was nominally a Secular political party but it had strong Muslim orientation and dedicated mainly for protecting the interests of farmers and riots from any kind of exploitation and ameliorating their conditions.¹⁸ After establishing the Krishak Praja Party, A. K. Fazlul Huq categorically stated that his fight was with landlords, capitalists and holders of vested interests. Huq also said, "I am fighting for a satisfactory solution of the bread problem or in our words, of the 'Dal-Bhat' problem of Bengal and also for the through overhauling of the Tenancy Laws in Bengal so as to give some relief to agriculturists. This cannot be effected by the Muslim League Parliamentary Board because in that Board out of 28 members, as

many as 11 are non-Bengalees who hail from Ispahan, Teharan, Badakshan and Samarkand and other places of outside Bengal and 89 percent are landlords and capitalists. These landlords and capitalists cannot certainly join us in this fight, because they are the very people with whom we will have to carry on a life and death struggle.”¹⁹

It is important to note that with the creation of strong support base among the peasants as well as *projas* of the Bengal the KPP became cynosure of unscrupulous elements of Bengal politics. As per the version of Fazlul Huq, “Attempts were made to misrepresent our real aims and aspirations and to delude the public about our programme and ultimate goal. Among the Mussalman masses, interested parties carried on a propaganda against us, and accused us of dividing the Mussalmans among themselves, and thus impairing Muslim solidarity. Among the Hindu masses, propaganda was carried on against us that we were in fact a communal party, masquerading under the cloak of the economic interest of the masses. These two criticisms quite obviously cancel one another, and hardly demand any reply from me. But I should like to take this opportunity of stating once again in unambiguous terms what are the aims of our party and what we ultimately seek to achieve. All talks of Muslim unity and solidarity for merely political ends are worse than useless when it is remembered that the Mussalman cultivating classes constitute more than 90 per cent of the total Muslim population of Bengal, and it is therefore their interest which must be fundamental in any scheme we may lay down for ourselves, or for the sake of any ideal which we may seek to achieve. On the fundamental question of the interest of the *Projas* and *Krishaks*, the tillers of the soil who sweat so that others might enjoy the fruits of their labour, there is no difference whatever between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, for their interests are welded into one another, together they stand and we are confident, they shall triumph.”²⁰

Meanwhile, to meet the challenge of the KPP, some of the muslim leaders, notably Nawab Khwaja Habibullah, H. S. Suharawardy and M. A. H. Ispahani founded the United Muslim Party (henceforth UMP) on 25th May, 1936.²¹ In that context, criticizing the UMP, Fazlul Huq described it as a ‘Ministerial party, a Zaminder party, formed to mislead the Bengal Muslim community’. Nawab Khwaja Nazimuddin, leader of the UMP accusing the KPP retorted that the *Proja* Party was not a purely Muslim organization. By this time, the All India Muslim League

(henceforth AIML) led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah (henceforth M A Jinnah) made their sincere attempts to win over the support of the Bengal Muslims by ignoring the Bengal Provincial Muslim League (henceforth BPML) and invited directly some non-Bengalee Muslim leaders like A. R. Siddiqui, M. A. H. Ispahani and K. Nooruddin. Thereafter Jinnah came to Calcutta to discuss with KPP leaders for further coordination. In course of discussion with M A Jinnah, the KPP leaders categorically demanded- i) abolition of Zamindari system without compensation, ii) The right to maintain KPP's separate identity and iii) that there will be no nomination from Jinnah. Though, BPML expressed its full accord with the demands of the KPP leaders but the UMP led by non- Bengalee Muslims vehemently opposed the abolition of Zamindari system. Naturally it was impossible to reach any fruitful solution regarding the unity between the AIML and KPP. During this time the leaders of the KPP and the AIML would represent two contrasting ideologies for obtaining the support of the Bengalee Muslim. The KPP particularly fought for the interest of the tenants and peasant class people while the AIML represented the interests of the Zaminders and Business communities. So, Fazlul Huq emphatically declared, 'From this day onwards begins a grim fight between Zaminders and Capitalists on the one hand, and the poor people on the other. It is not at all a civil war in the Muslim Community but it is a fight in which the people of Bengal are divided on a purely economic issue.'²²

It is noteworthy that from the days of the formation of Muslim League in 1906 to the publication of the activities of the League Parliamentary Board in 1936, Muslim League never took any resolution regarding the abolition of the permanent settlement.²³ Though there was a long history of peasants movement in Bengal and from 1920 to 1934 the peasants also participated in the movements of some regions under the Congress Party, but the Congress leadership also did not take any initiative to form any separate organization for the peasants.²⁴ But peasant conference was convened in Kolkata in the month of August in 1936, by the then illegal Communist Party. After that in March, 1937, the first 'Bengal Provincial Peasants Conference' was held at Patrasayar in Bankura District.²⁵ Though at that time the influence of Krishak Sabha under Communists was very limited, so in the election of 1937 the Krishak Sabha extended its support to Krishak Praja Party of Fazlul Huq and Congress party.²⁶ At that time the K.P.P. of Fazlul Huq was the most influential party in the rural Bengal. That time Fazlul Huq organized the Krishak-Projas at the aim of the abolition of the Permanent Settlement as well as to protect them from the

atrocities of the Zamindars and money-lenders. Actually, no political leader in contemporary Bengal like Fazlul Huq demanded the abolition of the permanent settlement in a loud voice.²⁷

It is already mentioned that through the Government of India Act of 1935, the Muslims, Hindus, Scheduled Castes and Europeans were allotted 119, 50, 30 (30 out of 80 in the Hindu constituency being reserved for Scheduled Castes under the Poona pact) and 25 Assembly seats respectively which once again foreshowed that Bengal politics would be dominated in future by Muslims and it would be inevitable that the caste Hindus would lose their long standing privileged position which they had enjoyed since the beginning of the British rule. Incidentally, the allocation of seats in the Bengal Legislative Assembly was not willingly acceptable to a section of the caste Hindus and as a result of that they refused to cooperate with the Muslim leaders which further intensified the communal divide. It is important to note that the failure of the caste Hindus as well as Congress leadership in Bengal to win over the political support of the Schedule Castes Federation whose steady support to the Muslim League must be considered as a decisive failure of Congress politics in Bengal.²⁸

Under the Government of India Act of 1935, the first general elections to the Provincial Legislatures were held in between 16-25 January, 1937. Out of 250 seats of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the party wise position of that election were as follows: Congress- 54, Muslim League- 40, KPP- 36, Independent Muslim- 42, Independent Hindu- 37, European- 25, TKP (Tippera Krishak Party)- 5, Anglo Indian- 4, Nationalist- 3, Hindu Mahasabha- 2, and Indian Christian- 2.²⁹ As a result of Huq's acceptance among the Krishak-Projas, in the election of 1937, Fazlul Huq was able to defeat Muslim League. The personal prestige and influence of Fazlul Huq increased greatly when he emerged victorious by defeating Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin in the election in his Zamindary at Patuakhali. It is important to note that during that time of election Khwaza Nazimuddin was a member of the Governor's executive council and was an important member of the Muslim League. Fazlul Huq's KPP returned with considerable number of Muslim members to the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly and as a result of that he occupied a dominant position in the legislature.³⁰ The Congress Party also became successful in that election. Actually in

that election the reactionary forces were defeated and progressive forces came victorious.³¹

After the election of 1937 when it was found that no party was in a position to form Government due to lack of absolute majority, then Governor Sir John Herbert invited Sarat Chandra Bose, leader of the single largest party i.e. Congress to form the Ministry, but he declined the offer because of the decision of Congress high command. This time Congress high command committed a Himalayan blunder for that Bengal had to pay heavy cost. It was decided by the Congress High Command that the congress would form Ministries only in those provinces where it got an absolute majority in the Assembly election and would not join hands with any other parties for Ministry making. Though Fazlul Huq , leader of Krishak Praja Party requested Kiran Sankr Roy of the Congress to join him in a coalition government under his leadership, Sarat Chandra Bose was intending to agree and requested Abul Kalam Azad, then All India Congress president for permission to join hands with Huq, taking into account the special situation in Bengal, but the Congress high command turned it down despite repeated requests. History would have been different if the Congress agreed to Huq's offer at this juncture. Lastly Huq was compelled to take the support of Muslim League, which promptly seized the initiative and agreed to join the coalition under Huq's leadership. As a result of the formation of Huq - League ministry, the support base of the Muslim League among the Bengalee Muslims increased many times which gradually paved the way for the partition of Bengal as well as India. In that context, Amalesh Tripathy wrote "if Congress would have supported the Ministry headed by A.K. Fazlul Huq from outside, then possibly he would not have to go to the Muslim League and Bengal also would not have divided."³²

Another costly blunder that had long term impact in all India politics was made by Congress in the United Province, where the Congress and the Muslim League jointly fought for the electoral battle, but as soon as the Congress party itself got an absolute majority and hereafter it forgot the understanding with the Muslim League about forming a government together and dumped the latter. The League leadership never forgave the Congress party for this reason and considered it as a breach of faith and went on life and death struggle against the Congress which embittered Hindu Muslim relations and paved the way for adopting the 'Pakistan

Slogan' and materialisation of it. However, cutting across the party line Fazlul Huq selected the ministers from both the Hindu and Muslim communities those who were 'the very best man, the very ablest man, man of sterling character and integrity.'³³ From that point of view, the first problem before A.K. Fazlul Huq was to satisfy the members of League and Proja party and side by side accommodate minister from Hindu community also. At last, Fazlul Huq formed his ministry with 5 Muslim and 5 Hindu ministers. The Muslim ministers were 1. Sir, Khaja Nazimuddin 2. Nawab Habibullah of Dhaka 3. H. S. Suharawardy 4. Sayyid Nauser Ali, and 5. Nawab Mosharof Hussain. The Hindu ministers were 1. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar 2. Maharaja Srishchandra Nandi of Kashimbazar 3. Bijay Prasad Singha Roy 4. Mukunda Bihari Mallick and 5. Prasannya Dev Roykat. Huq himself took the chair of Prime Minister of Bengal.³⁴

From the beginning, there was a discontent within the Proja party regarding the selection of ministers as because there were only two ministers from proja party including Huq. It was commented from a section of Muslim community that "too much favoured had been shown to the Hindus" and the AZAD Patrika i, e, the mouthpiece of the League reported on 18th March in such a way that 'so far as we know the Bengal Moslems will never acquiesce in the fifty -fifty proposal out of their own accord'.³⁵ Though, on behalf of the Hindu community, the editorial of the Amrita Bazar Patrika congratulated Fazlul Huq for the formation of such type of balanced Ministry.

The newly formed ministry faced uneasy times from the beginning. Huq pressed his most important election agenda i.e abolition of the Zamindari system. But it was met with sharp opposition from one of the League ministers named Nawab Musharraf Hussain who declared that "he is willing to spend all his money to get Huq removed from the Cabinet".³⁶ Many members of the KPP were very much dissatisfied regarding the selection of ministry by Fazlul Huq and his failure to abolish of the Zamindari system, the main election pledges of the KPP, due to the strong opposition from the League members and thereupon 20 MLAs of KPP under the leadership of Shamsuddin Ahmed accused Fazlul Huq for this failure.³⁷ In that circumstances, A. K. Fazlul Huq, the supreme leader of the KPP took a stern action against the agitators of the party and lastly at the aim of controlling the internal fray of the party Fazlul Huq expelled 17 MLAs from the KPP. But that action of Fazlul Huq

was reversed to himself because the expulsion of 17 MLAs prompted more members to leave the party and as a result of that Fazlul Huq instantly became a minority within the ministry. In that situation, with severe opposition from his coalition partner i.e, Muslim League and the Congress Legislaturer in the Assembly, Fazlul Huq realised that without understanding with the communal policy of Muslim League it was almost impossible for him to save his ministry and to counter the opposition in Bengal.³⁸ Though, there was no pre- election alliance with Muslim League as well as Jinnah, in spite of that in order to overcome his 'Crisis of Existence' and save his ministry he prepared to join hand with Jinnah as because Huq clearly realized that he could save his ministry only with Jinnah's support, that is why he joined the Muslim League in its annual session at Lucknow in October 1939 along with Siquander Hayat Khan of Punjab.³⁹ After joining Muslim League, A.K. Fazlul Huq, declared "I submit to my leader Mr. Jinnah for all my future work and assured him that I shall abide by his decision... I have entirely thrown myself at the disposal of Mr. Jinnah... I am prepared for any sacrifice when Islam demands it"⁴⁰

It may be considered as a turning point in the political history of Bengal, because it became clear to Jinnah that Fazul Huq was very popular among the Bengalee population and it would be impossible to create a strong support base of Muslim League in Bengal defying Huq. At that point of time considering the stature of Fazlul Huq from that time and onwards Jinnah started using Huq for the purpose of the development of the organization of the Muslim League and inducted him in various important portfolios in the All India Muslim League. The inevitable consequence it was that the Muslim League gradually emerged as a strong organization with mass support base in Bengal which completely changed the balance of Bengal politics.⁴¹

Keeping in mind the enormous contributions of Fazlul Huq behind the organization of the Muslims of Bengal under the banner of the Muslim League, Humayun Kabir, one of the important personalities of the KPP, remarked "...forced into the arms of Muslim League, Fazlul Huq did perhaps more than anybody else in India to restore the prestige of the League and win for its support among the masses of the land. Thus an awakened mass consciousness contributed to the growth of popularity for the League."⁴² In the meanwhile, by a series of administrative and legislative measures such as –the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Act of 1938, the

Debt Settlement Boards and the Money-lenders Act of 1940, Fazlul Huq enhanced his popularity among the Muslim peasants. Though he was not able to become completely successful due to strong opposition of the Zamindar Class of both Congress and Muslim League, but people specially the rural muslim people realized that this government always tried to save their interests from the exploitation of Zamindars and Money-lenders etc.⁴³

Two other contemplated legislations of the Huq ministry ran into serious controversies, namely the Secondary Education Bill and the Communal Ratio Bill. The first aimed at shifting secondary education from the Hindu controlled Calcutta University to a proposed Board of Secondary Education with fifty members, of whom each twenty members were to be nominated from among the Hindus and Muslims, five from among Europeans and five from other categories. Among the total members nineteen were to be directly nominated by the government. There was to be an executive council of fourteen of whom six were to be ex-officio government officials and others members were nominated by the boards.⁴⁴ Communal bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims increased many fold by centering the proposed Secondary Education Bill. Shyamaprasad Barman, one of the members of the Legislative Assembly criticising the proposed Bill remarked, "The main object of the Bill was to make all secondary schools, the training ground in ideas and theories of the League".⁴⁵ This move was interpreted by the Hindu intellectuals like Kiran Sankar Roy, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee etc. as a politically motivated move to communalise school education. Rabindra Nath Tagore and Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy were very much astonished and pained after seeing the communal character of the proposed Bill. Even Moulavi Abul Hossain Sarkar, an MLA from Gaibandha (North), criticized the proposed Bill and accused the influence of non – Bengalee in Bengal politics and said , " They have also discovered that a strong religious feeling pervades the mass mind of Bengal, so these Iranis, Ispahanis, Dadabhais and Adamjis in collaboration with Ghaznavis, Suharawardys and Khwajas, none of whom are Bengalees, have invented the cry of 'Islam in danger' only for the purpose of exploiting Bengal politically and economically."⁴⁶

The various efforts of the Huq ministry about long standing demands of the Muslim community to ensure higher percentage of Government job for the Muslims, tried to materialize through Communal Ratio Act, by which it was decided that at

least 50% government jobs would be reserved for Muslim community and in the subsequent period of about six months government would apprise the House about the Ratio of getting government service of different communities and in order to execute this decision a 'Communal Ratio Officer' was appointed.⁴⁷ Actually, by the Communal Ratio Act what Fazlul Huq attempted to do was nothing more than what Chittaranjan Das had assured Bengal Muslims through his historic 'Bengal Pact' (1923). Naturally, the Communal Ratio Act was welcomed by the Muslim Community specially the educated rural and urban Muslims, but, on the other hand Congress openly calling the ministry a communal ministry as well as Muslim government. As return of Congress as well as Hindu criticism against Communal Ratio Act, supporters of Huq raised the cry of 'Islam in Danger' which embittered Hindu – Muslim relation badly.

Hindu Muslim relation in Bengal thus deteriorated on the controversy centering the 'Communal Ratio Act' then, Muslim demand for the removal of the 'Lotus Flower' and the word 'Shree' from the logo of the Calcutta University on the ground that these were Hindu symbols – also more embittered the Hindu-Muslim relations . Not only that, a severe criticism started regarding the process of the formation of Senate and Syndicate of Calcutta University. Moulavi Abdul Bari, an MLA accused that out of 70 Syndicate and 100 Senate members, the number of Muslim members were only 01 and 21 respectively. Incidentally, after the establishment of the Calcutta University-there was only one Muslim Vice-Chancellor, Sir Hassan Suhrawardy (Sir Hassan Suhrawardy from 8.8.1930 to 7.8. 1934 and Sir Azizul Haque from 8.8. 1938 to 12.3. 1942) and Muslim employee were only 02 in number out of 180 clerical posts. Besides these, there were only 02 Professor belonging to Muslim community out of 88 Professors.⁴⁸The communal mentality was spread out so widely that even the theme of the Poem '*BICHAROK*' and '*PUJARINI*' of Rabindra Nath Tagore became subject of criticism. In the Poem '*Bicharok*' Tagore wrote:

Kahe Raghunath

Amar Path Rudhile Hatham

Chalechhi korite Yavan Nipat

Jogate jomer Khadya .

(Raghunath said, why are you creating obstruction in my path? I am on my way to terminate the Muslims to feed the God of death.)⁴⁹

In the poem '*Pujarini*' the poet again wrote:

Veda Brahman Raja Chhara Aar

Kichhu Nahi Bhaba Puja Koribar

Eai Kati Katha Jeni Mone Saar

Bhulile Bipad Haba''

(You should keep it in mind that no one could be worshipped other than the Vedas, the Brahmins and the king in this world. Forgetting this may be troublesome.)⁵⁰

In spite of showing adequate respect to Rabindranath Tagore, Mustaghaswal Haque, MLA from Bagerhat commented, "But, we, who constitute Muslim Bengal will not tolerate any poem which definitely shocks Muslim sentiments and which outrages Muslim feelings."⁵¹

Use of Fazlul Huq's Stature by Muslim League and 'Pakistan Resolution'

Fazlul Huque was successfully utilized by Muslim League after his joining to the League (October, 1939) to enhance the support base among the Bengalee Muslims as because Fazlul Huq was very much popular among them. In the mean time, Second World War broke out and India was declared a war country against Germany by Viceroy Lord Linlithgow. In that context, as a protest against this type of

declaration without consulting any Indian as well as Congressmen and the decision of Proja – League government to support it unconditionally, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, the then Finance Minister resigned and there upon Huq entirely compelled to depend on the European and Muslim League MLAs for the survival of his Ministry. This time, Lahore Session of the Muslim League (1940) was convened and 400 delegates from Bengal joined the Lahore Session under the leadership of A. K. Fazlul Huq. Jinnah never trusted Fazlul Huq, but, he was aware that Huq was very much popular in Bengal and he had immense influence over both the Hindu and Muslim communities. That was why M.A. Jinnah, a very shrewd and farsighted statesman tried to dissociate Huq from the Hindus. He created such a situation that Fazlul Huq had to move the historical “Lahore Resolution” on 23rd March, 1940 which was termed by the Hindus as well as nationalist news papers as ‘Pakistan Resolution’ because it was the basis behind the demand for Pakistan. The word ‘Pakistan’ was not included in the proceedings of the Muslim League in its Lahore Session of 1940, but it was the Hindus who used the term ‘Pakistan Resolution’ instead of ‘Lahore Resolution’. In that pretext, M.A. Jinnah applauded the Hindus for using the term ‘Pakistan’ which was later on generally known as ‘Pakistan Resolution’.⁵²

In his address Fazlul Huq emphatically remarked, “We have stated definitely and unequivocally that what we want is not merely a tinkering with the idea of federation but its thorough overhauling so that the federation may ultimately go. This idea of federation must not only be postponed but abandoned altogether. On many occasion on the platform of the Muslim League and the other day on the floor of the House in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, I made an emphatic and definite assertion that the Mussalmans of India will not consent to any such scheme which is framed without our approval. We will make such a constitution absolutely unworkable. I hope those who may have in their power to shape the future constitution of India will take the Muslims feelings into consideration and not take any step which may be regretted. We have made our position absolutely clear. The problem is very simple. At present the Muslims constitute 80 millions scattered all over India. It may sound a big number but, as a matter of fact, the Muslims are in a weak position numerically in almost every province of India. In the Punjab and Bengal we are in an effective majority and are hopelessly in minority elsewhere. The position is such that whatever may be the constitution, Muslim interests are bound to suffer just as they have suffered during the last three years of the working of provincial autonomy”.⁵³ Though, later time Fazlul

Huq was able to realize the limitation of ‘Pakistan Resolution’ and rectifying his mistake on 8th January 1942 he commented, “ ...There is no diversity really in religion. All religions must be, from the basic point of view, One ... The future of India would be decided not by strife but by harmony and concord would be greatest benefactors of the country”.⁵⁴ On 20th June of 1942, Fazlul Huq further remarked, “The Hindus and Muslims have to realize the fact that they had got to live together, sink or swim together and if need be, lay down their lives together for the good of their common motherland.”⁵⁵

Huq-Jinnah Personality Clash

Though, Fazlul Huq joined Muslim League but, always kept contact with the group of the congress leader Sarat Chandra Bose. Sarat Chandra Bose and his followers were very much enthusiastic to form a ‘Proja–Congress’ Ministry excluding Muslim League and in this regard Subhas Chandra Bose initiated discussion with Huq. But in other side Subhas Chandra Bose also started dialogues with Gandhiji. Gandhiji initially showed his flexibility but, he changed his mind after the consultation with G. D. Birla, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad.⁵⁶ Nirad Chandra Chaudhury, personal assistant of Sarat Chandra Bose who had the opportunity to see the all letters of Bose brothers during this time and came to the conclusion that if the proposed ‘Proja-Congress’ coalition Ministry would form, the business interest of Marwari community of Calcutta might be hampered so , Birla tried his best not to form the proposed ministry and he materialized his notion through Gandhiji.

However, after Huq’s move to ‘Lahore Resolution’ as well as “Pakistan Resolution” (23rd March, 1940), M. A. Jinnah wished to defame and isolate Huq from the Muslim masses of the country. As Jinnah would not believe Huq and both of them shared a mutual distrust, so as like as very mature and shrewd politician, M.A. Jinnah inspired Fazlul Huq to move the ‘Lahore Resolution’ which might be considered as the greatest diplomatic achievement of Jinnah. Fazlul Huq was very much popular among the both Hindus and Muslims in Bengal as well as a strong proponent of Hindu – Muslim unity, but as a result of Jinnah’s successful diplomacy behind his (Huq) move for ‘Pakistan Resolution’ and thereafter though Muslim League was

expected to get benefit a lot but Huq's popularity among the Hindus started declining. As a leader of Muslim League, Jinnah was so sophisticated that he wanted from his associates' complete subordination. But, A.K. Fazlul Huq due to his mass support base in Bengal politics as well as strong views he could not put up with it. Naturally, there was a personality clash between the two leaders. However, at that point of time, the All India Muslim League instructed its followers to observe the '23rd March' as the 'Pakistan Day' throughout the country. As the communal situation of Bengal was getting overheated so, Fazlul Huq with the consultation of H. S. Suharawardy issued a directive to all branches of the Muslim League in Bengal in 1941 regarding the postponement of the public celebration of 23rd March as 'Pakistan Day'. But, completely ignoring the joint appeal of the Premier of Bengal and President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, the Calcutta District Muslim League committee organized a public meeting at Mohammad Ali Park in order to observe 'Pakistan Day' on 23rd March.⁵⁷ Following the incidents, Fazlul Huq gradually came to the realization that the Muslim League under the leadership of M.A. Jinnah having made full use of his stature and was determined to leave him high and dry. Fazlul Huq as well as the real representative of the Muslim society in Bengal also realized that the Urdu-speaking non-Bengalese Muslim leaders had no attention towards the interests of the Bengal Muslims as because showing Bengal as a Muslim majority province they only wanted to gain more advantage in all India politics. On that pretext, Fazlul Huq protested against the attitude of all India League leaders towards Bengal and emphatically proclaimed that:- "I will never allow the interests of 33 millions of the Muslims of Bengal to be put under the domination of any outside authority however eminent it may be . At the present moment I have a feeling that Bengal does not count much in the councils of political leaders outside our province, although we constitute more than one-third of the total Muslim population in India."⁵⁸

Drama on National Defense Council

In the meantime, in view of the outbreak of the second world war, viceroy Lord Linlithgow nominated the Premier of Bengal, Assam and Punjab i.e. A.K. Fazlul Huq, Mohammad Shadulla Khan and Sikandar Hayat Khan respectively in the National Defense Council in the month of July of 1941. But on 30th July 1941, M.A. Jinnah issued a directive from Hyderabad to the said three League Premiers to resign

from the 'National Defense Council' of viceroy as because they were appointed as the members of the 'National Defense Council' by Viceroy without his clearance.⁵⁹ Though, Sikandar Hayat Khan of Punjab and Mohammad Shadullah Khan of Assam resigned promptly, but Fazlul Huq, was not a man to be frightened by swashbuckling and refused to resign on the ground that he did not do any anti-League activities by accepting the membership of 'National Defense Council'. Jinnah gave him ten days time for resignation and failing which threatened to take disciplinary action.⁶⁰ In that situation, Fazlul Huq resigned under a lot of pressure, but at the same time he showed his anger by resigning from the League working committee simultaneously and accused Jinnah for using arbitrary powers and being 'wholly unconstitutional'. This resulted in an open conflict between the supporters of the Muslim League in Bengal and virtually the League politics moved into two camps one led by Fazlul Huq and the other was guided by the pro-Jinnah Leaguers led by Khwaja Najimuddin and H.S. Suhrawardy. Incidentally, Khwaja Najimuddin took an avenge at this point what he suffered as defeat in the hands of Fuzlul Huq in Patuakhali constituency in 1937.⁶¹

Formation of Progressive Coalition Party (3rd December, 1941)

In that circumstances, Fazlul Huq started looking for symphathisers elsewhere and go for secret negotiation with Sarat Chandra Bose, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and the Scheduled Caste leaders of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. As a result of the herculean task of Sarat Chandra Bose new combination i.e. Progressive Coalition Party consisting of 119 MLAs among whom 28 from Sarat Chandra Bose group, 19 from KPP, 42 from Progressive Coalition, 12 from Independent Scheduled Caste, 14 from Nationalists, 3 from Anglo-Indian and 1 from Labour. As per the proposal of Sarat Chandra Bose, A. K. Fazlul Huq was selected as the leader of the newly formed Progressive Coalition Party secretly. Fazlul Huq thus showed great political sagacity for his survival.⁶² In the meanwhile, as a part of conspiracy to remove Huq from the seat of Premiership of Bengal, four League minister i. e. Khwaja Nazimuddin, H. S. Suharawardy, Nawab Khaja Habibullah of Dhaka and Tamijuddin Khan accused Huq for creating rift in Muslim Unity and they resigned at a time from the Cabinet in its meeting held on December 1st, 1941. The League leaders expected that after the fall of Huq Ministry a new Government would be form

headed by Khwaja Nazimuddin. At that critical situation, in order to give a fitting reply to the anti-Huq group leaders, the very experienced and shrewd politician A.K. Fazlul Huq also resigned on the same day. Thereafter, as a result of secret negotiation with Sarat Chandra Bose and others on 3rd December 1941, Progressive Coalition Party emerged officially. After selecting the leader of the Progressive Coalition Party unanimously, Fazlul Huq declared “that is formation was an augury not only for the cessation of communal strife but also for carrying out of a programme for the good of all sections of the people of the country”.⁶³ Naturally, Jinnah, one of the clever politicians of India had no other alternatives but to accuse Fazlul Huq for anti party activities and eventually expelled him from the Muslim League one day before his formation of the 2nd Ministry i.e. on 10th December, 1941. At that point, M.A.H. Ispahani was inducted in the Working Committee of the Muslim League in place of Huq on 13th December. However, supposing the move of M.A. Jinnah and his followers, Fazlul Huq at the aim of averting the intention of Jinnah as well as Muslim League formed his Second Ministry on 11th December, 1941 including Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and Nawab Habibullah of Dhaka.⁶⁴ In this way, by dint of long political experience Fazlul Huq dismissed the hope and plan of pro-Jinnah Leaguers.⁶⁵

Huq-League Controversy and Second Ministry of Fazlul Huq (11th December, 1941 to 28th March, 1943)

The Progressive Coalition Ministry headed by A.K. Fazlul Huq consisted of Progressive Assembly Party-42, Congress (Bose Group)-28,⁶⁶ Krishak Praja Party-19, Hindu Mahasabha-14, Independent Scheduled Caste Group-12, Anglo-Indian-3 and Labour-1. Besides, the official Congress Party in Bengal having 25 members under the leadership of Kiran Shankar Roy promised responsive cooperation to the Progressive Coalition Government led by A.K. Fazlul Huq.⁶⁷ The Council of Ministers of Progressive Coalition Ministry were as follows:- 1. A.K. Fazlul Huq – Prime Minister- Home, Publicity, 2. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee- Finance, 3. Nawab Khwaja Habibulla Bahadur of Dhaka – Agriculture, Industry, 4. Santosh Kumar Basu- Public Health, Local Self Government, 5. Khan Bahadur M. Abdul Karim MLC - Education, Commerce and Labour, 6. Pramatha Nath Banerjee – Judicial, Legislature, 7. Khan Bahadur Maulavi Hashem Ali Khan- Co-operative Credit & Rural Indebtedness, 8. Shamsuddin Ahmed – Communication & Works, 9.

Upendra Nath Burman- Forest & Excise.⁶⁸ It was no doubt that the formation of the second ministry headed by Huq became possible due to the personal charm and the wide acceptance of Fazlul Huq to the non- League leaders and the compliance of a number of Bengalese leaders including Sarat Chandra Bose and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee for the larger interest of Bengal. At this juncture, being a partner of the 2nd Huq Ministry, popularly known as ‘The Shyama Prasad- Huq Coalition Government’ Sarat Chandra Bose and Shyama Prasad mookerjee had to defy the Congress high command as like as Fazlul Huq defied the attitude of Muslim League headed by M.A. Jinnah. Both the leaders felt that the central leadership of the Congress and the Muslim League were only imposing policies in Bengal for their political interest, not for the interest of Bengal. Revel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam welcomed the formation of that Ministry as a big step towards Hindu – Muslim unity. Hindusthan Standard, one of the leading Newspapers of India commented the situation thus ‘No persons are better fitted at the present moment to restore communal peace and harmony than Mr. Fazlul Huq and Sarat Chandra Bose’.⁶⁹ It is important to note that during the tenure of ‘Huq-Shyama’ Ministry there was not a single incident of communal riot. At the time of presenting budget on 16th February, 1942, the Finance Minister, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee provided one lakh rupees for the promotion of communal harmony- a very unique gesture. Thereafter, Fazlul Huq and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee jointly visited several trouble prone districts of Bengal for propagating the message of communal harmony. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee at the time of his delivering speech at Coronation Park in Dhaka on 21st April, 1942, said that “Bengal Ministry was no longer for any particular community, but for all communities. This would not only solve the communal problem in Bengal, but would show the whole of India how to stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of common danger. He appealed to complete Hindu – Muslim unity and asked the Hindus to defend the Mosque and Muslims to defend the Temples against attacks from goondas.”⁷⁰

As a result of the outbreak of the second world war(1st September 1939), Subhas Bose’s daring escapes from house arrest at midnight on 16th January 1941 in disguise, when political situation in India as well as world was very exciting, in that critical hour Fazul Huq formed his Second Ministry on 11th December in 1941. In the meanwhile, with Japan’s dramatic entry into the Second world war on 7th December 1941 on the side of Axis power, Congress launched the Quit India Movement from 9th August 1942 , Muslim Leaguers unconditional support to the British warfare of the

British, a strong demand in the Assembly for an Judicial enquiry on the pretext of police excesses at Tamluk in Midnapore district and Huq's ultimate order for judicial enquiry in Midnapore police atrocities ground worked the bitter relation between Fazlul Huq and Governor John Herbert.⁷¹ At this stage , Fazlul Huq was losing the ground of the political platform and became gradually isolated from the main stream politics. The actual winner in the situation created by the above facts and untimely death of Sikandar Hayat Khan of Punjab, an assiduous advocate of a United Punjab and the assassination of Premier Allah Bux in Sind who was not a friend of the Muslim League as well as Jinnah. Activists of the League systematic anti – Huq campaign in and outside the Legislative Assembly and calling him a betrayer against Islam, rapidly isolated Huq among Muslims. The result of the League's propaganda and the deterioration of Huq's popularity were proved in a by-election for a Muslim seat in the Assembly election held in 1942, with a result the League candidate overcame the KPP candidate by 10,843 votes to 840.⁷²

Huq-Jinnah Correspondence

Under that circumstances, Muslim League leaders also continuously poisoned the ears of the British authorities in such a way that since one of the coalition partners of the second ministry of Fazlul Huq was Forward Block, the party of Subhas Chandra Bose who already joined with the Axis Powers against the British in the second world war. Naturally Fazlul Huq and his ministers had spontaneous sympathy for the anti-British activities of Subash Chandra Bose. Thus, after being failed of the League leaders to combat Fazlul Huq politically, a conspiracy was set on foot jointly by the Muslim League, the Governor and the twenty five European MLAs for the purpose to replace the Progressive Coalition Ministry headed by A.K. Fazlul Huq with a Muslim League led coalition Government. In the meantime, due to Shyama Prasad's sudden resignation from the Cabinet and being severely criticized by the Muslim League each and every action of the Ministry, the very perplexed Fazlul Huq came to the realization that he might overcome from that situation only if he could secure support and grace of M.A. Jinnah. Following the realization Fazlul Huq with a comparatively soft voice wrote a secret letter to Jinnah on 13th November 1942, thus,- "After all that has happened during the last 11 months, I was hesitating how write to you, but what I have heard from Quazi Saheb has encouraged me to

write these lines to you. You have known me for over 30 years and you easily realize that I have been longing to meet you and to assure you of my attachment to you and the Muslim League. It is an irony of fate that this rift should have placed between you and me after close cooperation for long span over a quarter of a century. However, I now request you to allow the dead past bury its dead and throw a veil over all that has happened during the past few months”⁷³

In response to the secret letter of Huq, Jinnah laid down some condition i.e. a. Huq had to be expressed his sorrow for his previous activities, b. He had to cut off his relation with Progressive Coalition Party and resign from the post of Premiership of Bengal and only then after discussing the matter in the working committee of League, Mr. Jinnah would take necessary step for lifting ban on Fazlul Huq. In order to get appropriate answer from Huq, Jinnah sent a Telegram to Huq on 11th February 1943 in the following way-“Reference your telephone call and out conversation. Have already posted reply to your letter of the 5th Feb. Reply immediately on receiving my letter. I propose releasing correspondence to avoid circulation of incorrect and misleading version.”⁷⁴ But, before coming any answer from Huq, M.A. Jinnah would hit A. K. Fazlul Huq as like as below the belt by publishing the correspondence in newspaper which would considered as a clear breach of faith. In that context, the very astonished Huq lost his credibility among both the Hindus and also his own party men.⁷⁵

Secrecy behind the Resignation of Huq

In the meanwhile, as a part of conspiracy against Shyama Prasad-Huq coalition Government, Governor Sir John Herbert completely ignoring the ministers started dealing with some crucial matters like removal of food grains from several East Bengal districts, boat removal policy etc. in the name of creating obstruction before Japanese advance, directly with the help of the officials. He did not even consider a memorandum submitted by the ministers about the activities of the officialdom in the Writers’ Building that creating obstruction before the smooth functioning of the cabinet headed by Fazlul Huq. Not only that Governor Sir John Herbert also encouraged the various nefarious designs of the Muslim League in order to disband the functioning of Fazlul Huq’s Cabinet in every possible way. In that situation, when Governor was running the administration bypassing the ministers, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, the then Finance Minister and one of the strong pillars of

the Progressive Coalition Government under the leadership of Fazlul Huq resigned from the cabinet on 16th November 1942, accusing provincial autonomy a ‘colossal mockery’ and charging the governor for taking advice from officials ignoring the ministers in various crucial matters which were concerning the rights and liberties of the common people.⁷⁶ In course of time due to the arrogance and atrocities of the British officers regarding the molestation of the womenfolk at Sanoa region in Noakhali district, appointment of Home Guards, excessiveness of the implementation of the ‘Defense of India Act’, appointment of ‘Rice Control officer’ etc. and continuous support of the Muslim League leaders created in such a situation that it was impossible for any dignified person to continue as a minister. In that critical juncture, Fazlul Huq firstly remarked in the Legislative Assembly and later on wrote a letter to Governor Sir John Harbert on 26th March 1943 that “Cabinet should be constituted so as to include the representatives of all the political parties in the Legislature. If at any time your Excellency feels that I am an obstacle to the formation of such a Cabinet, I shall be prepared to tender resignation of my office in the interest of the country”.⁷⁷ Taking advantage of this type of statement by Fazlul Huq, Governor Sir John Herbert called upon him in the evening on 28th March at 7.30 P. M. to discuss the possibility of the formation of an all party Government. But all on a sudden, the Governor requested Huq to resign from the Premiership of Bengal in order to facilitate the formation of an all party Cabinet and even placed a typed letter of resignation before him for putting his signature. Governor also gave Fazlul Huq an impression that he would be invited again to form an all – party Government. The letter read as follows:

“My dear John,

Understanding that there is a possibility of the formation of a ministry representative of most of the parties in the event of my resignation, I hereby tender my resignation of my office as minister in the sincere hope that this will prove to be in the best interest of the people of Bengal.

Yours Sincerely

A.K. Fazlul Huq”.⁷⁸

Though, A.K. Fazlul Huq simply signed the letter, but it was a very deep rooted conspiracy of the Governor and Muslim League leaders to oust him from power and as a result of that he was never invited to form the new government.

Nazimuddin's Muslim League Coalition Government- (24th April, 1943 --28th March, 1946)

After the resignation of Fazlul Huq, Governor's rule was proclaimed in Bengal under Article 93 of the constitution under the Government of India Act, 1935 for the period of about a month in order to facilitate to install a Government headed by pro-Jinnah League leader Khwaja Nazimuddin. On 24th April 1943, Khwaja Nazimuddin, the leader of the Muslim League in the Assembly was invited to form a Cabinet. The new Ministry headed by Khwaja Nazimuddin comprised of- 140 MLAs among whom the Muslim League- 79, Bengal Swarajya Party- 5, Bengal Legislative SC Party-20 (20 S.C. members united into a new party under the leadership of Jogendra Nath Mondal), European Group- 25, Labour-2, Independent-4, Indian Christian-1 and Anglo-indian-4.⁷⁹ This Cabinet included 7 Muslim members i.e. H.S. Suhrawardy, Tamizuddin Khan, K.B. Saiyed Muzzamuddin Hossain, Musharruff Hossain, Khwaja Sahabuddin, Maulavi Jalaluddin Ahmed and Khwaja Nazimuddin himself took the Premiership; 3 Caste Hindus like Tulsi Charan Goswami, Baroda Prasanna Pyne and Tarak Nath Mukhopadhyay and 3 Scheduled Caste leaders i.e. Premhari Burman, Pulin Behari Mullick and Jogendra Nath Mondal.⁸⁰ But it is said that though, among the 140 MLAs only 79 MLAs belonged to Muslim League, but the very nature of the Government was essentially a Muslim League government, not a national government at all.⁸¹ The purpose behind the removal of Fazlul Huq and bring a government led by loyalist and pliable Nazimuddin by the British authorities was in the context of the great famine of 1943 and the deteriorating war situation with the spectacular Japanese occupation in South East Asia. Moreover, the formation of the Azad Hind Government led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his declaration of war against the British Government and his advancement towards India as well as Bengal's borders with the help of the Japanese army, was incongruous for an independent minded and self-respecting Premier like A. K. Fazlul Huq in Bengal.⁸²

Famine of 1943 and Role of the Muslim League Coalition Government led by Khwaja Nazimuddin

The main challenge before the Muslim League Coalition Government led by Khwaja Nazimuddin was to tackle the great famine of 1943 and the dearth of cotton textiles. The famine of 1943 was so alarming that it was popularly called Panchasher Manbantar (1350 in Bengali Calender) and was compared with the another devastating famine of 1770 i.e, the Chhiattarer Manbantar (1176 Bengali Calender). The famine of 1943 severely damaged the indigenous rural economy as well as rural life of Bengal along with social value system. It was almost a wholly manmade famine which put the death toll at fifteen lakh as per the official enquiry commission headed by Sir John Woodhead. Though unofficial estimates spoke of the figures of death toll was as high as five million. It is noteworthy that applying the same method for calculation of the official enquiry commission, Amartya Sen, famous economist and Nobel laureate estimated a figure around three million deaths.⁸³ In the face of the wide scale confiscation as well as destruction of boats and other means of transport such as bullock carts by the government all over the province in the pretext of Japanese invasion and forcible removal and destruction of paddy from the warehouses of the rich merchants/peasants affected the normal trading system and caused acute scarcity. The Bengal government led by Khwaja Nazimuddin completely failed to tackle the destructive man-made disaster. Such devastation and forfeiture of paddy on a wide scale took place mainly in the districts of Midnapore, 24 Paragana, Khulna, Bakharganj, Noakhali and several others districts. In his memoirs, Ashoke Mitra has categorically described how Munshiganj Sub division i.e. Bikrampur pargana was rendered completely devoid of rice and paddy in 1942-43 and countless number of people had to die as a result of severe scarcity of food grain.⁸⁴ Out of magnitude of the devastating famine of Bengal the *New Statesman* of London in one of its issues of 24th September 1943, under the headline 'Black Death in Calcutta', said: 'The description of life in Calcutta reads like extracts from medieval chronicle of black death'.⁸⁵

The famine coincided with another important man made poverty - that of cotton textiles in 1944-45. This very necessary day to day commodity simply disappeared from the market during Muslim League Coalition Government led by Khwaja Nazimuddin. H. R. Norton, leader of European group of MLAs in Legislative Assembly sharply criticized the incompetence of Nazimuddin Ministry and remarked

“...As a businessman of 36 years experience in Calcutta, I have never known such a dearth of cloth as there has been during the last 12 months.”⁸⁶ Not only that, Governor Sir Richard Casey requested Viceroy Field Marshal Lord Wavell to dismiss the Nazimuddin Government by applying Article 93 due to its failure to tackle the famine properly.⁸⁷ Even after his personal visit to study about the Bengal famine, Lord Wavell blamed the Bengal Ministry led by Khwaja Nazimuddin for this man-made famine and is said to have recommended the dismissal of this Ministry and an imposition of Governor’s rule under Section 93. Though, it was not possible due to the disagreement of the Home Government.⁸⁸

Historic Ruling of Nausser Ali and Imposition of Governor’s Rule

However, Nazimuddin Ministry had lost its popularity in the wake of proper handling of the severe famine situation of Bengal and ultimately became minority in the Legislative Assembly. It is important to note that on 28th March 1945, during the budget session, Agriculture Minister, K.B. Saiyed Muzzamuddin Hossain placed his Agricultural Budget which was defeated on the floor by 106 votes to 97 on the grant for agriculture department.⁸⁹ On the 29th March, 1945, in a historic ruling, Nousher Ali, the then Speaker of the Assembly *inter alia*, stated that refusal by the House of ‘Demand for Grant’ made by the Ministry for a major department was a censure on the Government and that he could not allow the existing Ministry to function any longer as such in the Legislature, and adjourned the House *sine die*.⁹⁰

It is noteworthy that due to the combined opposition under the leadership of Fazlul Huq the Muslim League Coalition Government led by Khwaja Nazimuddin was thrown out in the Bengal Legislative Assembly during the time of Agriculture Budget by 106 to 97 votes on the fateful day of 28th March, 1945. Incidentally, it may be recalled that exactly two years back, on the same day i.e. on 28th March 1943, the Ministry headed by Fazlul Huq had also been terminated. However, on 30th March, 1945 both the Houses of the Legislature were adjourned by the Governor and on 31st March, 1945 the then Governor Mr. R.G. Casey assumed direct administration of Bengal as per the Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935.⁹¹

Though the Muslim League Coalition Government led by Khwaja Nazimuddin failed to tackle the great famine of Bengal (1943) properly, but it became

successful in gaining the support base of Muslim League among the Bengal Muslims enormously. In the pretext of distribution of relief, the League workers extensively visited the districts of Bengal and utilized that opportunity to make mass contact and propaganda for Muslim League. As a result of the constant campaign for Muslim League many KPP and old Congress leaders joined the League. The Muslim League was successful to take the anti Huq propaganda so high that even A.K. Fazlul Huq himself had to face black flag demonstration from students almost in every town of East Bengal after he left the Muslim League in 1941. Thus by 1945, the Muslim League had become the most dominant as well as mass-based political party among the Muslims of Bengal. In that situation, after Speaker's historic ruling, Governor Casey took over the charge of the administration under section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935 without directing the ministers to resign. Taking advantage of this situation, in a desperate move Nazimuddin tried his best to get Jinnah's permission to form a coalition with the official Congress group, and Jinnah gave his conditional nod so long as the provision was in honorable terms.⁹² But, in spite of all attempts made by Khwaja Nazimuddin, it was not materialized. If really it would have happened, most probably a new chapter in the history of Bengal might have opened.

After the defeat of Nazimuddin Ministry on the floor by 106 votes to 97 votes, preparation started among the political parties for next election. It is important to note here that the term of the Present Assemblies was extended more than 5 years by a special Act, passed on 2nd October, 1941 after the end of the war period.⁹³ However, during the campaign for Assembly election in Bengal, the Muslim League made 'Pakistan' the single issue and asked Muslims to vote only for Muslim League candidates to prove that the League alone represents the Muslims. The Muslim League enlisted the support of both 'Muslim Students' and the '*Mullahs*' at the time of their election campaign and also launched a campaign of terror against all non-League Muslim candidates throughout the Bengal particularly in the various parts of East Bengal. There were a number of complaints of bloody attack on non-League Muslim candidates, their kidnapping in some cases and threatening them not to contest in that election against the Muslim League candidates or forcible detention of some of them in their own houses. Even some well known Muslim personalities like Nousher Ali, Speaker of the Assembly and KPP leaders like Syed Jalaluddin Hashemi and Azhar Ali were not spared from heinous attack.⁹⁴ Some of the *Mullahs* and *Pirs* also campaigned in that election in favour of Muslim League and they

vividly spread the theory of fear as well as divine punishment to general Muslim people, warned them to vote only for the Muslim League candidates.⁹⁵ Even Golam Murshed Lahori, the then Imam of Jama Alamgir Mosque of Lohore emphatically declared in his election campaign that, “this election battle is the first battle of achieving Pakistan, our future depends on victory in the election.”⁹⁶

In order to win over the election at the aim of achieving Pakistan, M. A. Jinnah, undisputed leader of the Muslim League declared, “this election is a plebiscite of the Muslims of India on Pakistan”.⁹⁷ Abul Hashem, the then Secretary of the BPML, in his leaflet ‘Let Us Go to War’ appealed to the Muslims “to vote for League candidates and clearly declared that this general election is the beginning of our struggle, immediately after recording our votes in favor of Pakistan at the polling centre after winning our plebiscite liquidating the false claims of the Congress to represent the Muslims, we shall direct our attention towards British Imperialism and demand immediate transfer of power to the people of India on the basis of Pakistan.”⁹⁸ However, due to tireless efforts of Muslim League activists during election campaign specially as a result of the vigorous campaign of Abul Hashem ultimately made Muslim League very popular among the Muslim masses in Bengal and they got the result in ballot box. It is important to note that the general election of 1946 was the last election of undivided Bengal and it had a great importance to both the Congress party and the Muslim League. The British Government also intended to understand the minds of the Bengalese as well as Indians through the said election. Amidst the Muslim League’s spirited campaign to the Muslims vote for Muslim League candidates in order to materialize their dream of a separate state of Pakistan, campaign of the KPP and the Congress party on the basis of political, social and economic issues could not make any indelible mark in the minds of the Muslims. Even Fazlul Huq’s personal charisma also did not work in that election. As a result of that it was clear that the Muslims of Bengal had given their mass support behind the concept of Pakistan of Muslim League.⁹⁹ In the result of the election of 1946, it was found that out of total 250 seats, Muslim League secured 115 seats of the 121 Muslims seats and got 83.64% of the total votes. On the other hand, in spite of all efforts, it became impossible for the Congress party to secure even a single seat in the Muslim Constituencies. However, altogether 87 seats won by the Congress party out of 90 non-Muslims as well as general seats washing out the Hindu Mahasabha, except the university seat won by Shyama Prasad Mookherjee in that election. KPP of Fazlul

Huq secured only 4 seats from Muhammadan constituencies including 2 contested and won by Huq himself. Communist Party got only - 03 and European Group -25 out of 250 assembly seats respectively.¹⁰⁰ Naturally, the election result clearly established the fact that as Muslim League polled about 45 lakhs or 4.5 million i.e. 75% of Muslim votes and non-League parties polled only 15 lakhs or 1.5 million i.e. 25% of Muslim votes- which could for the time being justify that not only Bengal Muslims but also over all Muslim community of India extended their support of Jinnah's demand of 'Pakistan' in that election.¹⁰¹

Role of the Communists

At that point of time it appears relevant to look at the role of the communist party of India and its activities on the eve of a full-fledged political crisis of the Indian nation. It is a fact that India as a whole and Bengal was not an exception while there was a communal atmosphere and most of the political parties were involved in heated politics and ill-feeling to each other, the CPI was in their dreams for 'revolutionary seizure of state power' and side by side to bring about 'revolution with a proletarian impress and also armed insurrection' wherever it was necessary. The British imperialist power identified the CPI as the main danger of the imperialist war period and "on March 15, 1940 the Central Government passed an order for the detention of the communists under the defense of India Act all over India ..."¹⁰² One may not be so much sure about the activities of the communists on the question of communalism in Indian politics had they not been jailed but it is clear that those who were then outside were much more concerned about 'Peoples' War' rather than to honour the national sentiment of India.¹⁰³ It is again a matter of no less surprise that the communists of India were then much more concerned about "organizing a country wide campaign for national unity and it was in the form of justification of the Pakistan demand of the All India Muslim League on the logic of "the right of self-determination" of the Muslim nationalists", including the right of separation.¹⁰⁴

It may be concluded here that why the communist party of India had the role as explained and that it is still a matter of surprise when there was acute national crisis they turned attention either in international affairs or peoples' war and that they were

either indifferent towards the national crisis of India or wanted to avoid everything just like silent spectators.

Muslim League Ministry headed by H.S. Suhrawardy (24th April, 1946- 1947)

After the result of the general election of 1946, H. S. Suhrawardy was elected the leader of the Muslim League in the Assembly and was invited on 2nd April 1946 by Governor Frederick Burrows to form the Ministry. In that situation, in order to develop the communal amity Congress agreed to cooperate with League. Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Congress president requested Suhrawardy to induct at least one non – League Muslim into his cabinet, M. A. Jinnah would never agree with this proposal, showing this reason Suhrawardy rejected Moulana Azad's proposal.¹⁰⁵ Suhrawardy then formed his Ministry on 24th April 1946, only by the Muslim Leaguers excepting Jogendra Nath Mandal who was the lone Hindu minister and represented the Scheduled Caste Federation.¹⁰⁶ The formation of the Cabinet only by the Muslims and omission of Caste Hindus from Ministry hardened the Bengalese Caste Hindus which sent a strong message to them that what was likely to happen if the whole Bengal would become a part of Pakistan. Naturally, in the pretext of the above circumstances the Bengalese Hindus those who enjoyed the power of Bengal politics since the beginning by and large, campaigned intensively for the partition of Bengal as well as creation of a separate Hindu majority province that would remain as a part of Indian Union and refused to have anything to do with the United Bengal proposed by Suhrawardy - Sarat Bose duo.¹⁰⁷

Cabinet Mission Proposals

In the meantime, before the end of the provincial election in Bengal (March, 1946), another significant development took place in Indian politics with the arrival of 'Cabinet Mission' on 24th March 1946. The Cabinet Mission consisting of three members namely Sir Staford Crips, A.V. Alexander and Pethik Lorange arrived in India at the aim of discussion the question of transfer of power with the political parties in India. The Cabinet Mission had prolonged and niminy-piminy meetings for seven weeks at Simla with not only the leaders of the Congress party including Gandhiji who officially was not even a member of the Congress but practically still

the Supreme commander, J. L. Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Ballavbhai Patel and leaders of the Muslim League namely M. A. Jinnah, Liakot Ali Khan etc. but also with the leaders of other political parties like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and J.N. Mondal of the Scheduled Caste Federation, Master Tara Singh and Baldev Singh of the Akali Dal etc. The members of the Cabinet Mission also discussed with Bengal Provincial leaders like Kiran Shankar Roy, H.S. Suharawardy, A.K. Fazlul Huq, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee etc. After circumstantial discussion with the leaders of the different political parties, the Cabinet Mission rejected Jinnah's demand for 'Pakistan' on various ground and remarked , "It would not solve the communal minority problem but would raise more such problems."¹⁰⁸ When the Indian leaders failed to arrive at a consensus or come to an understanding, then the Cabinet Mission announced its own proposal on 16th May, 1946, which were as follows:

- “ 1. India would constitute as a federal Union with both the British Indian provinces and the princely states of India.
2. The Union will be in charge of foreign affairs, defence and communications (railways, posts and telegraphs, etc.) and all other subjects will be under the provinces and the princely states.
3. British Indian provinces would be grouped into three, such as: 'A' group would be belonged to all Muslim majority provinces comprising Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan; 'B' group would comprises by the Bengal and Assam where Hindus and Muslims are almost equal; and 'C' group would be comprises by the rest of the provinces where Hindus were the majority and in a dominant position.
4. There would also be a loose regional government for each of these groups, and the representatives of each separate group would draw up the constitution for the provinces in the group concerned.
5. The new constitutions both provincial and national would continue for ten years after which any province would have an option to consider the matter and leave the Union and form a separate state.
6. Until the new constitution was in place, the country would be run by the executive council to be designated as an interim government consisting of Indian leaders.

7. The paramountcy of the British Crown over the princely state would lapse. The precise status of the states would have to be negotiated during the building up of the new constitutional structure.”¹⁰⁹

Nehru’s Controversial Faux Pas (10th July, 1946) and Muslim League’s declaration of Direct Action Day (16th August, 1946)

The above proposal of the Cabinet Mission met a mixed reaction. The two main parties i.e. the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League were initially remained silent. On 6th June, 1946 the Muslim League first accepted the Cabinet Mission’s three tier formula on communal basis. A few days later, after three weeks of long debate the Congress Working Committee accepted the Cabinet Mission plan on 26th June, though it was still unwilling to accept the proposal for an interim Government and however lastly the All India Congress Committee accepted the plan by a massive majority on 7th July, 1946. At the same date i.e. on 7th July 1946, with the end of Moulana Azad’s term as Congress president, Jawaharlal Nehru took the responsibility of the Congress party as the new president. The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan which ‘guaranteed the unity of India’ along with necessary assurances to the minorities- by both the Congress and Muslim League was a ‘glorious event’ in the history of the freedom movement of India.¹¹⁰ At that juncture of Indian history one of the unfortunate and provocative comments made by Jawahar Lal Nehru, the then President of the Congress party, changed the entire course of history in India. On 10th July 1946, as a Congress president Nehru held a press conference in Bombay where he was asked by some pressmen whether, the Congress had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan in toto? Pandit Nehru answered that ‘His party was completely unfettered by any agreements and free to meet all situation as they arose’. Not only that in a response to some queries of the press representatives, Nehru emphatically declared that “the Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought best.”¹¹¹ Nehru’s this type of controversial faux pas once again reopened the issues which sabotaged the cause of Indian Unity. He was bitterly criticized by Moulana Azad, in his Memoirs ‘India Wins Freedom’ where Maulana Azad categorically mentioned “I have to say with the deepest of regret that a large part of the responsibility for this development rests with Jawaharlal. His unfortunate

statement that the Congress would be free to modify the Cabinet Mission Plan reopened the whole question of political and communal settlement. Mr. Jinnah took full advantage of his mistake and withdrew from the League's early acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan".¹¹² After making this comment Nehru played into the hands of Jinnah and gave him the excuse to repudiate the agreement. Under the circumstances, M.A. Jinnah thought that Jawaharlal's statement represented the real mind of the Congress. He also felt that Congress could change the scheme through its majority in the Constituent Assembly, this would mean that the minorities would be placed at the mercy of the majority.¹¹³ In that context, all hopes of a United India were shattered to the ground and the idea of an Independent Pakistan, which Jinnah had compromised by accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan, was revived. In Jinnah's reckoning the Congress had given a foretaste of how exactly the Hindus would behave towards the Muslim minority after the British had departed. So, on 27th July, 1946 the League Council met to withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan, and instructed its followers to prepare for a 'Programme of Direct Action to organize the Muslims for the coming struggle to be launched as and when necessary.' The Muslim League working committee gave a call for the declaration of 'Direct Action Day' on 16th August, 1946 was to be a 'Universal Muslim Hartal'. M.A. Jinnah also delivered a provocative speech in the course of which he announced that he was 'giving a goodbye to constitutional methods' and threatened to wield a pistol.¹¹⁴

The Great Calcutta Killings

The above circumstances directly triggered off the communal holocaust in Calcutta, then India's one of the largest cities with a population of twenty five lakhs. The violence that erupted on and from 16th to 19th August, 1946, following the observance of the 'Direct Action Day' by the Muslim League, sparked off a chain of communal violences that led to the partition of the country within a year. It is a fact that the then Government of Bengal headed by H.S. Suharawardy declared 16th August, 1946 the 'Direct Action Day' as a public holiday for both Muslims and Hindus alike. In order to enthusiasm the Muslims, the Direct Action Day was directed as if an anti – Hindu campaign by top Muslim League Leaders like H.S. Suharawardy and some of his close aids with the impression among the Muslims 'no cause is dearer or nobler than Pakistan' or adopt the slogan of 'Lar ke lenge Pakistan! i.e. 'Pakistan by

Force!'.¹¹⁵ With the full backing and support of Muslim League Ministry of Bengal under H. S. Suharawardy, the Muslim goondas committed worst crime in Calcutta for three days at a stretch. The Hindus were butchered like sheep, their women ravished and their houses looted and burnt. The police and the Military were not allowed to take any action. On this issue we may refer here the observation of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad what he wrote in his famous book 'India Wins Freedom' - "In Calcutta, I found a general feeling that on 16 August, the Muslim League would attack Congressmen and loot Congress property. Further panic was created when the Bengal Government decided to declare 16 August a public holiday."¹¹⁶ Maulana Azad further mentioned "16 August was a black day in the history of India. Mob violence unprecedented in the history of India plunged the great city of Calcutta into an orgy of bloodshed, murder and terror. Hundreds of lives were lost. Thousands were injured and property worth crores of rupees was destroyed. Processions were taken out by the League which began to loot and commit acts of arson. Soon the whole city was in the grip of goondas of both the communities.... I found there a large contingent of the military waiting in trucks. When I asked why they were not helping in restoring order, they replied that their orders were to stand ready but not to take any action. Throughout Calcutta, the military and the police were standing by but remained inactive while innocent men and women were being killed."¹¹⁷

However, on the third day of the ongoing bloodshed, the retaliation on behalf of the general Hindu was spearheaded by the Sikhs from Bhawanipur area and started branching out soon across the city. The Hindus in their vehicles filled with guns and swords started attacking on the Muslims wherever they could be found throughout the city. In that critical juncture, only when the whole Metropolis was involved in the worst form of communal violence and the whole city went under the grip of the goondas, then the army was called for maintaining law and order, following a conversation about the gravity of the situation in Calcutta between the Viceroy Lord Wavell and the Governor of Bengal Frederick Burrows. On the pretext of the Direct Action Day – what happened in Calcutta 'The Great Calcutta Killings' as they came to be known, had indeed changed the course of Bengal's history by making partition certain.

Holocaust in Noakhali and in Bihar

The Great Calcutta killings had triggered off in Noakhali district of East Bengal an anti Hindu riots in October 1946 and in Bihar anti Muslim riots shortly thereafter. Violence erupted in Noakhali which was predominantly Muslim (82 percent) influential district with some adjacent areas of Tippera district, on 10th October 1946, on a day of the worshipping of the Devi Lakshmi, the Hindu Goddess of prosperity. Under the leadership of Golam Sarwar, an ex MLA of the Muslim League, the organized miscreants of Muslim League started attacking Hindu villages one after another, killing them, burning their houses, looting their movable possessions, molesting their womenfolk, abducting and forcibly marrying many of them, forcibly converting Hindu peoples to Islam and desecrating Hindu temples in order to spread out terror so that they would force to emigrate from their hearths and homes. The press reported that around 5,000 Hindus had been killed and about 1.5 lakh lost their homes and possessions.¹¹⁸ Under this circumstances, Gandhiji felt extremely disturbed and took decision to proceed to Noakhali along with Sucheta Kripalini in order to restore normalcy. Taking into account of the urgency of the happening in Noakhali, the government of Bengal deputed Simpson, a high ranking official for an on the spot study of the situation of Noakhali and Tippera and to make a report, but the report somehow was not released. However, Gandhiji visited Ramganj village and personally witnessed the horrors of the mass killings. He stayed there for about four months and devoted himself to restore normalcy there. He toured the most affected areas on foot, lived in Muslim villages and held numerous meetings in order to reestablish communal understanding. Gandhiji also appealed to both the communities to live peacefully and amicably as they were before. After staying four months at last he left Noakhali on 2nd March 1947. The communal feeling was so deepened into the minds of both the communities that in spite of Gandhiji's repeated appeal Noakhali and Tippera continued to be in the grip of fear for many months to come.¹¹⁹

Holocaust in Bihar

If Noakhali hardened the Hindu sentiment, the Bihar riots had the same effect for the people of Muslims community. In Bihar, the Muslims had to face suffer at the hands of armed murderous of gangs of Hindus who had been incited by the reports from Calcutta where many Bihari rickshaw pullers and milk vendors were killed by Muslim goondas during mass killing in August 1946. With the spread of the news of the

atrocities along with Bihari people killing in Calcutta by Muslim miscreants, into the villages in Bihar, invariably they started retaliating action on a large scale that surpassed the great Calcutta killings. Armed mobs of Hindu miscreants went round the countryside and attacked Muslim villages one after another in a planned manner. Village after villages were burnt, the inhabitants were mercilessly killed or injured and the moveable property were looted. So, it was found that after the great Calcutta killing in the wake of 'Direct Action Day' observed by the Muslim League, if Noakhali riots had hardened the Bengalese Hindu opinion in favour of partition then it was obvious that the happenings in Bihar also instigated the attitude of Muslims Bengalese in favour of not staying in 'Hindu India'.¹²⁰

Impact of Communal disturbances and the Idea of Partition of Bengal

The great Calcutta Killings and the holocaust in Noakhali, Tippera and subsequently in Bihar, no doubt antagonized both the Hindus and Muslims attitude against each other and there was no place of trust between the two main communities in India. In that situation of distrust as well as instability a total unforeseen or unexpected development took place, namely the idea of 'Partition of Bengal', which paradoxically Bengal had rejected almost half century ago by the anti-partition movement against the scheme of partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905. This proposal first mooted in the Tarakeshwar Conference of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, held on 4th to 6th April 1947, and rapidly gained in favour of the proposal i.e. partition of Bengal like a rolling snowball. N. C. Chatterjee, the then President of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, in his Presidential address remarked, "Let us declare today that as the Muslim League persists in its fantastic idea of establishing Pakistan in Bengal, the Hindus of Bengal must constitute a separate province under a strong national government. This is not a question of partition, this is a question of life and death for us, the Bengalee Hindus." One of the principle advocates of the concept of the partition of Bengal was Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, who declared "I conceive of no other solution of the communal problem in Bengal than to divide the province and to lead the two major communities residing here with peace and freedom".¹²¹ The commissioner of Burdwan Division reported to government that, "the movement was gradually gaining strength in all the districts of the division and local Congress organization became active in support of the movement".¹²²

In the meantime on 20th February 1947, Prime Minister of Britain Clement Attlee made the following historic announcement in the British parliament: “His majesty’s government wishes to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transfer of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948.”¹²³ In that situation, the Bengal Congress Committee almost immediately passed the following resolution : “If His Majesty’s Government contemplate handing over its power to the existing Government of Bengal which is determined to the formation of Bengal into a Sovereign state and which by its composition is a Communal Party Government, such portion of Bengal as are desirous of remaining within the Union of India should be allowed to remain so and be formed in a separate province within the Union of India.”¹²⁴

On the basis of the resolution of the Bengal Congress Committee, it is clear that Bengal Congress also agreed with the view of Hindu Mahasabha i.e. the proposal of the partition of Bengal. A group of 11 (eleven) member representatives of Bengal comprising of-Pandit Laxmikanta Maitra , Nagendra Nath Mukhopadhyay, Devendralal Khan, Kshitish Chandra Neogi , Birendra Kanta Lahiri Chaudhury, Ananda Mohan Poddar, Devendra Mohan Bhattacharyaya, Sushil Kumer Roychaudhury, Surpat Singh, Satyendra Kumer Das and J. Ghoshal served a memorandum to the Viceroy in favour of the Partition of Bengal.¹²⁵ In this way Bengal Provincial Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha in political and non political forum started debate regarding the feasibility of the partition of Bengal.

H. S. Suhrawardy was totally unprepared for such a move towards the Partition of Bengal. At a press conference in New Delhi on 27th April 1947, he described it as a suicidal move and pleaded for ‘an independent, sovereign, undivided Bengal in a divided India’.¹²⁶ Khwaja Nazimuddin also supported the move of undivided Bengal and remarked that ‘if independent, sovereign and undivided Bengal would form, the interests of both Hindu and Muslim community would be protected’. In another side, Kiran Shankar Roy and Sarat Chandra Bose in accordance with the opinion of H.S. Suhrawardy tried to materialize the united, independent, sovereign Bengal. They also sought Gandhiji’s support. Gandhi did at one stage extend his half hearted support, but not the full throated support which was very much needed in that hour of crisis in the history of Bengal. Jogendra Nath Mandal, leader of Scheduled Caste Federation was also in favour of United Bengal.¹²⁷

H.S. Suharawardy met M.A. Jinnah in New Delhi on 15th and 16th May 1947, explained the probability regarding the formation of United Bengal. After Jinnah-Suharawardy meeting over the question of United Bengal, Jinnah as well as Muslim League's stand in that matter was published in Amrita Bazar Patrika on 17th May 1947 in the following way – “The Muslim League can accept Hindustan, Pakistan and United Bengal, but in no case they would agree to the position of Bengal joining into the Indian Union”.¹²⁸ But the Congress high command did not allow the existence of Independent, United Bengal. Kiran Shankar Roy soon backed out under pressure of the Congress top leaders and was instructed by Sardar Ballavbhai Patel to go forward according to the main guideline of the Congress high command. Thereafter Kiran Sankar Roy never tried to implement the scheme of sovereign Bengal and thereupon all the efforts of H.S. Huharawardy and Sarat Chandra Bose for the materialization of a sovereign Bengal was dashed.¹²⁹

At a meeting on 23rd May 1947, when Mountbatten raised Suharawardy's proposal, Nehru made his task simpler by saying that the Congress party would not support the 'balkanization' of India in terms of the scheme of sovereign Bengal.¹³⁰ Nehru was however, in favour of United Bengal if it would be an integral part of India.¹³¹

It may be noted here that J.N. Mandal was also in favour of the same scheme, we noted above, but when it was totally failed then he had to turned to another scheme so as to draw up a separate North Bengal namely 'Rajasthan' after the name of the Rajbanshi community. Incidentally, he was so “pained at this juncture that in the Star of India, a leading news paper of that time, dated, 12th May, 1946 (page.5) he made a statement condemning the leaders of the Indian National Congress as well those of the Hindu Mahasabha of Bengal by saying that ‘the caste Hindu leaders from the congress high command down to the petty workers of the Hindu Mahasabha were keeping silent over this vital question’, which was life and death problems of the scheduled castes of Bengal”.¹³² But his plan was again openly rejected and the subsequent history of North Bengal proves that such a scheme was really a practical throught which ‘could ensure prosperity of the region’...¹³³ But, neither of Sarat Chandra Bose, nor H.S. Suharawarthy and even at the last stage of J.N. Mandal's efforts to maintain undivided Bengal were fulfilled and the trend of Bengal politics was rapidly moving towards the final holocaust i.e. partition.

Notes and References

1. In order to forge unity among the Hindus and the Muslims, C.R. Das drafted the historic Bengal Pact of 1923. The main provisions of the pact were as follows: “ i). The number of members of the two communities will be decided by their respective strength in Bengal’s population, and the two communities will vote separately to elect their members. ii). The Muslims will have 60% and the Hindus 40% of the seats in local self-government institutions. iii). Fifty-five percent of the government appointees will be Muslims, but 80% of the vacancies will be filled up by them until the overall percentage of 55 was reached. iv). Music before mosques, usually a standard excuse for Hindu-Muslim riots, was to be banned. v). Killing of cows for religious purposes on the Bakr-Id day, a standard pretext for starting communal violence, was to be permitted and nobody will be allowed to object to it. vi). A committee with equal members of Muslims and Hindus will be appointed in every subdivision to supervise the implementation of the above terms.” see Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers - A History of Bengal from the Mahabharata to Mujib* (henceforth *Land of Two Rivers...*), Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 338-339.
2. Mr. Saroj Chakrabarty who acted long days with the Chief Ministers of West Bengal as their personal assistant, used to attend Legislative Council of Bengal from the year of 1933 as a part-time reporter of two daily papers, namely ‘The Mussalman’ and ‘Muhammadi’ owned by Maulana Akram Khan and would get an allowance of Rs. 25/- per month. See, Saroj Chakrabarty, *With West Bengal Chief Ministers - Memoirs 1962 To 1977* (henceforth ... *Chief Ministers*), Orient Longman, New Delhi (Printed from Sree Saraswati Press Ltd., 32 Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road, Calcutta)1978, p. 324.
3. Daily News, London, 17. 6. 1925

4. Aparna Devi, *Manush Chittaranjan* (in Bengali), Paschim Banga Bangla Academy, 2010, p. 223
5. See name list of the Presidents of Bengal Provincial Congress committee, ascribed on the wall of Bidhan Bhavan, highest centre of West Bengal Pradesh Congress committee, Philipse More, Kolkata (henceforth Bidhan Bhavan...).
6. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, pp. 339 and 347.
7. In the Krishnanagar Session of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, the common platform of anti-colonial struggle, held in 1926, where the rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam (who later on earned the epithet of the national poet of Bangladesh), sang one of the most famous songs he ever composed '*Kandari Hushiar*' ('Helmsman Beware'). He gave the warning to the leaders of the country with the words: "In this dark night, O sentries of Motherland, be alert", 'this helpless nation is drowning-it does not know how to swim', helmsman, tell those who are drowning that they are no Hindus or Muslims, for they are drowning as human beings. See *Kandari Hushiar*, Sanchita, D.M. Library, Kolkata 06, p. 60)
8. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, pp.347-348.
9. Aparna Devi, *op. cit.* p. 272.
10. Sachchidananda Banerjee, *Fazlul Huq Jibon O Rajniti*, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 2001, p.12
11. Partha Chatterjee, *Bengal 1920 -1947, The Land Question*, Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1984. p. 94.
12. Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prastab O Fazlul Huq* (in Bengali, henceforth *Pakistan Prastab...*), Parul, Kolkata, 2015, p. 28.
13. Presidential address delivered by A.K. Fazlul Huq, on 30th December 1918, at the All India Muslim League, 1918 Session, Delhi. See in the Home Department Political, March, 1919, A., NOS. 251-259, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
14. Kalipada Biswas, *Jukta Banglar Sesh Adhyay* (in Bengali), Naya Uddyag, Kolkata, 2012, p.18.
15. P. Acharya, *Education and Communal Politics in Bengal - A Case Study*, IIM, Calcutta Working Paper Series, September, 1998.
16. Dilip Banerjee, *Election Recorder-An Analytical Reference, Bengal, West Bengal, 1862-2012*, Stat Publishing house, Kolkata, 2012, pp. 70-71.
17. Bidyut Chakrabarty, *The Communal Award of 1932 and Its Implications in Bengal*, Modern Asian Studies, Vol. XXIII, No. 3 (1989), pp. 493 -523.

18. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.370.
- 19.A. K. Fazlul Huq's reply to critics, see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24th September, 1936.
20. Statement issued by A.K. Fazlul Huq, see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 1st September, 1936.
21. Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prastab...*, p. 29.
22. Fortnightly Report on the political situation in Bengal, 1st half of September 1936, Government of Bengal (Home political).
23. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings. Thirteenth Session, 1942, vol. LXII - No. 2, pp. 34 and 36.
24. Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prastab...*, p.39.
25. *Krishak Andolaner Itihasa O Samasya* (In Bengali), Published by the West Bengal Unit, C.P.I, Calcutta, August, 1959, pp.13-23.
26. Muhammad Abdullah Rasul, *Krishak Sabhar Itihasa* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1969, pp. 59-61.
27. Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prastab...*, p.39.
28. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p. 378.
29. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.50.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 70
31. Humayun Kabir, *Muslim Politics 1906-1947 and other Essays*, Calcutta, 1969, pp. 25-26.
32. "Eker par Ek Dheou" a Bengali article by Amalesh Tripathy in *Saat Dashak-Samakal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. 54.
33. Report on the political situation in Bengal, 1937, 1st half of March, 1937, Government of Bengal, file No. 10/37.
34. *Ibid.*
35. See *Azad Patrika*, mouthpiece of the Indian Muslim League on 18th March, 1937.
36. M. A Rahim, *Bangler Mussalmander Itihasa 1757 -1947* (in Bengali), Dhaka, 1976, p. 254.
37. Shila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal (1937-1947)*, Viswakos Parisad, Kolkata, 2001, pp.102-103.
38. Humayun Kabir, *op.cit.*p.43.
39. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, October 17, 1937.
40. *Ibid.*

41. Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prastab...*, p.43.
42. Humayun Kabir, *op.cit.*p.32.
43. Shila Sen, *op.cit.*p.103.
44. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 1940, vol. LVII, No.5, p.114.
45. *Ibid.*, p.113.
46. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, 1939, Vol. LIV, No.2, p.14.
47. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings-Vol. LIII, No. 4, p. 297.
48. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings Vol. LII, No.4, 1938, p.360; also see
 Mohammad H. R. Talukdar, *Memoyors of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy- with a
 brief account of his life and work*, The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1987.p.5.
49. *Rabindra Rachanabali*, 4th Volume (Katha o Kahini Kabyagrantha),p.74.
50. *Rabindra Rachanabali*, 4th Volume (Katha o Kahini Kabyagrantha),p.29.
51. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings Vol. LI, No.3, pp.606-607.
52. Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prastab...*, p.49.
53. Resolution on Pakistan, File No. F. 163/40-R, National Archives of India, New
 Delhi. Also see Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prostab...*, p.53.)
54. Speech delivered by A.K. Fazlul Huq on 8th January, 1942. For details see
Hindusthan Standard, 9th January, 1942.
55. Amalendu Dey, *Islam in Modern India* (henceforth, *Islam...*), Calcutta, November,
 1982, p.165.
56. Letters of Mahatma Gandhi to Subhas Chandra Bose, cited in, Gordon A. Leonard
 in his '*Bengal in the Nationalist Movement*' 1876-1940, New Delhi, p. 283.
57. S Bandopadhyaya, *Abibhakta Banglar Sesh Adhyaya*, 1937-47 (in Bengali), in
 Chaturanya, 5th September and 6th October, 1990.
58. Letter of Fazlul Huq to Liaquat Ali Khan, 8th September, 1941, see *Amrita Bazar
 Patrika*, 11th September,1941.
59. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, July 31, 1941.
60. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, August 26, 1941.
61. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7th December,1941;also see Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two
 Rivers...*, p.409.
62. Kalipada Biswas, *op.cit.*p.209.
63. *Ibid.*
64. After the resignation of Fazlul Huq on 1st December 1941, the anti-Huq group of
 Muslim League leaders assembled in the Legislative Assembly and formed a new

- party known as 'Bengal Legislative Muslim League Party'. It is interesting to note that Nawab Khwaja Habibullah of Dhaka was the claimant of the leadership of the new party from its inception. But, his desire was not fulfilled and eventually Khwaja Najimuddin was elected as the leader of the 'Bengal Legislative Muslim League Party' then Nawab Khwaja Habibullah discarded his relation with Nazimuddin group and subsequently joined his hand with Fazlul Huq and became the Minister of the second ministry of Huq. see Sachchidananda Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.68.
65. The Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Thirteenth Session, 1942, Vol. LXII, No. 3, p. 403; also see Amlendu Dey, *Pakistan Prostab...*,p. 109.
 66. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.113. After Subhas Bose's ouster from the Congress in 1939, the Congress Party in Bengal was divided into two faction i.e. Official Congress led by Kiran Sankar Roy and Congress (Bose Group) led by Sarat Chandra Bose.
 67. *Ibid.*, p.113.
 68. *Ibid.*, p.111.
 69. Sachchidananda Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.72.
 70. R. C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, Vol. 4, cited in Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.408.
 71. Statements by Ex-Ministers, Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol. LXI, 6th Session, 1943.
 72. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.415.
 73. Letter of Fazlul Huq to M.A. Jinnah, 13th November, 1942; see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17th February, 1943.
 74. Telegram of M.A. Jinnah to A.K. Fazlul Huq, 11th February, 1943; see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17th February, 1943.
 75. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.416.
 76. Statements by ex-ministers, Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol. LXV, 1943, pp, 39 -61; also see Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, pp.416-417.
 77. Statements by ex-ministers, Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol. LXV, 1943, pp. 39-61.
 78. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p. 418.
 79. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.114.
 80. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

81. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, pp. 419-420.
82. *Ibid.*
83. Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famine - An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford, 1981, pp.52-53.
84. Ashok Mitra, *Teenkuri Dash* (in Bengali), Vol. II (1403 BS), pp. 113-117; and his two articles in *Chaturangaa*, 11th March and 12th April,1992.
85. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.424.
86. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings, Vol. LXIX, No. 2, 1945, p. 458.
87. Nicholas Mansergh, ed. *Transfer of Power*, Vol. III, p. 1055.
88. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.425.
89. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29th March, 1945.
90. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.1010, Annexure-II,. Ruling Delivered by Shri Nausher Ali, Speaker, Bengal Legislative Assembly on 29th March, 1945.
91. *Ibid.*, p.114.
92. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Quid - e - Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, (Indian Edition), New Delhi, 1981, p. 290.
93. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.114.
94. Humayun Kabir's Article "*Bengal Election*" 1946 : A Mockery; see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14th April,1946.
- 95.Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's Report on Bengal Election, see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 5th April, 1946.
96. Amalendu Dey, *Islam ...*, p. 221.
97. Sachchidananda Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.93.
98. Shila Sen, *op.cit.*p.279.
99. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.115.
100. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.454.
101. Indian Annual Register 1946, Vol. I, p. 227; see Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.127.
102. For details see Gene D. Overstreet and Marshal Wind Miller, *Communism in India*, Bombay, 1960, p. 183.
103. Tarun Kumar Banerjee and Debesh Roychowdhury, ed. *Colonial India – Ideas and Movments*, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 2001, p.258.
104. Suniti Kumar Ghosh, *India and the Raj*, 1919-1947, Research Unit for Political Economy, Bombay, 1995, p. 337.
105. Amalendu Dey, *Pakistan Prastab...*, p. 207.

106. H.S. Suhrawardy could have easily formed the ministry with the support of 25 European members along with 115 Muslim League members. But he felt that it would be improper to have a council of ministers in which there would be no representation of a large part of the population. So, H.S. Suharawardy did his best to form a coalition Government with the Congress. In spite of invitation from His Excellency the Governor, Frederick Burrows on 2nd April, he took a long time i.e. 24th April, 1946 to make the Council of Ministers. In that case he felt the necessity to work united manner of both the Hindus and Muslims community for the development of the Bengal. It is a fact that his attempt of the formation of joint Hindu-Muslim Ministry was not materialized initially and on 24th April Suharawardy Ministry was formed with Jogendra Nath Mondal, the lone Hindu Minister and other seven members of the Muslim League. But, in the meantime, after 'Direct Action Day' on 16th August 1946, the Muslim League's joined in the interim Government at the Centre on 15th October, 1946. In the Central interim Government, no Muslim representative from Bengal was taken by M.A. Jinnah. Only Jogendra Nath Mondal was selected to represent Bengal by the Muslim League as well as M.A. Jinnah. Naturally Jogendra Nath Mondal had to resign from the Bengal Cabinet and thereby H.S. Suharawardy reconstituted his Cabinet on 15th November, 1946 inducting one Muslim Member namely Mr. Fazlur Rahaman in place of Jogendra Nath Mondal. At the same time, H.S. Suharawardy inducted three other Hindu members of whom one represented the upper caste. The names of the three Hindu Ministers were Tarak Nath Mukherjee, Nagendra Narayan Roy and Dwarakanath Barori respectively. The Council of Minister of Bengal and Portfolios headed by H.S. Suharawardy were as follows: 1. Huseyan Shaheed Suhrawardy – Prime Minister, Home (Except Jail), 2. Mohammad Ali – Finance, Health, Local Self-Government, 3. Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hossain – Education, 4. Ahmed Hosain – Agriculture, Forest, Fisheries, 5. Abdul Gofran – Civil supplies, 6. Abul Fazal Md. Abdur Rahaman - Co-operation, Credit and Relief, 7. Shamsuddin Ahhmed – Commerce, Labour and Industries, 8. Tarak Nath Mukherjee – Irrigation and Water-ways, 9. Nagendra Narayan Roy – Judicial and Legislative, 10. Fazlur Rahaman- Land, Land Revenue and Jail, 11. Dwarikanath Barori –Works and Buildings. However, the Government did not last longer than 15 months owing to partition of the country. The last Cabinet meeting was held on 11th August 1947 just 3 days before the Independence. For details see Dilip

- Banerjee, *op.cit.* pp. 116-118; and also see Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, pp. 470-471.
107. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.455.
108. *Ibid.*, pp. 456-457; and also see Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 267.
109. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, pp.457-458; and also see Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885-1947*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 2001, p.430, where it has been mentioned that “existing provincial assemblies being grouped into three sections while electing the constituent assembly: Section A for the Hindu majority provinces, Section B and C for the Muslim – majority provinces of the north-west and north-east (including Assam).”
110. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom-The Complete Version*, Orient Black Swan, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 158- 164.
111. *Ibid.*, pp.164-165; also see-Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (1961), pp.21-23.
112. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *op.cit.*p.170.
113. *Ibid.*, p.165.
114. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.460.
115. *Ibid.*, p.461.
116. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *op.cit.*p.168.
117. *Ibid.*, p.169.
118. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 20th October, 1946.
119. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, pp.472-473.
120. *Ibid.*, p.474.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
122. Fortnightly Report on the Political Situation in Bengal, 2nd half of April, 1947. Govt.of Bengal.
123. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p.475.
124. Penderel Moon, ed. Wavell - The Viceroy’s Journal, 1973, p.423.
125. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12th April 1947.
126. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28th April 1947.
127. Fortnightly Report, 2nd half of May, 1947, Government of Bengal.
128. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17th May, 1947.
129. Sachchidananda Banerjee, *op.cit.*p.106.

130. Record of the Viceroy's meeting with Nehru, 11th May, 1947. TP vol. IX, No. 405. Also see, Joya Chatterji, *Bengal divided – Hindu communalism and partition, 1932-1947*, Foundation Books, New Delhi, 1996, p. 260.
131. Nitish Sengupta, *Land of Two Rivers...*, p. 483.
132. For details see “*Politics of Partition and Warning of the Time*” an Article by Ichhamuddin Sarker in *Dalit Lives and Dalit Visions in Eastern India*, Centre for Ambedkar studies, Jadavpur University, 2007, pp. 133-139.
133. Ichhamuddin Sarker, *op.cit.* p.139.