



53rd Anniversary of Vijay Diwas

For Prelims: [India-Bangladesh Relations](#), [Bangladesh Liberation War](#), [Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(CEPA\)](#)

For Mains: [India-Bangladesh Relations](#), Bilateral, regional, and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, India commemorated Vijay Diwas on **16th December** marking the **53rd anniversary** of its victory in the [Bangladesh Liberation War, 1971](#) and the **creation of Bangladesh**.

- National leaders, including the [President](#) and [Prime Minister \(PM\)](#), paid tributes to the fallen soldiers at the [National War Memorial in Delhi](#).

53rd Vijay Diwas Celebrations

- The 53rd Vijay Diwas celebrations at [Fort William, Kolkata](#), saw a Bangladeshi delegation, including [Mukti Joddhas](#) (who were part of the guerrilla resistance force in East Pakistan), recount their memories of the **1971 Liberation War**.
- They highlighted India's significant support in training, supplies, and moral backing during the war. Indian veterans also reflected on the atrocities committed by Pakistani forces.
 - The event included wreath-laying, a salute, and a military tattoo, emphasizing the enduring friendship between India and Bangladesh.

Note:

- Recently, the **iconic 1971 surrender painting**, depicting Pakistan's surrender in Dhaka, was moved from the **Army chief's lounge** to the **Manekshaw Centre** coinciding with Vijay Diwas.

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- The painting was replaced by ***Karam Kshetra-Field of Deeds***, painted by Lt. Col. Thomas Jacob.
 - It features **snow-capped mountains, Pangong Tso, Garuda, Lord Krishna's chariot, Chanakya**, and **modern military assets** like tanks, helicopters, and patrol boats, symbolizing India's strategic and cultural heritage.



What was the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War?

- **About:**
 - The [Bangladesh Liberation War, 1971](#) was an armed conflict between erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (now Pakistan) resulting in the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan.
- **Origin:**
 - The roots of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War trace back to the [1947 Partition of](#)

India, which divided the subcontinent along **religious lines**.

- Pakistan was created as a Muslim-majority state in response to meet the demand of Jinnah.
- Despite uniting under religion, stark **geographical, cultural, and linguistic differences** between East and West Pakistan sowed discord.

▪ **Causes of 1971 War:**

- **Social Exploitation:** Post-independence, West Pakistan perceived East Pakistan as **culturally inferior** due to its historical ties with the Hindu-dominated elite before Partition. This perception fueled systematic discrimination against the Bengali population.
- **Linguistic Marginalisation:** The **imposition of Urdu as Pakistan's national language disregarded Bengali**, the predominant language of East Pakistan, leading to widespread unrest and protests.
- **Political Discrimination:** West Pakistan **dominated the central government**, with **power concentrated among the Punjabi elite**. East Pakistan, despite its larger population, had minimal representation in decision-making.
 - The **1970 elections**, won decisively by the **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Awami League**, symbolized **East Pakistan's demand for autonomy** but were met with resistance from West Pakistani leaders, triggering unrest.
- **Economic Exploitation:** **East Pakistan faced severe economic neglect** and exploitation.
 - **East Pakistan, despite generating 62% of Pakistan's revenue, received only 25% of the national budget** for its development.
- **Employment Disparities:** West Pakistanis occupied the majority of administrative and higher-ranking positions, while **Bengalis were underrepresented in both civil and military services**, further deepening inequalities.

▪ **Key Events of the War:**

- **Operation Searchlight (25th March 1971):**
 - The Pakistani military launched a **brutal crackdown on Dhaka** and other regions of East Pakistan to **suppress Bengali nationalist movements**.
 - The operation **targeted students, intellectuals, and political leaders**, leading to widespread killings and destruction.
- **Independence and Provisional Government:**
 - **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's** proclamation of Bangladesh's independence marked the formal beginning of the **Liberation War**.
 - The **Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters)** was formed to organize **guerrilla warfare** against Pakistani forces.
 - Later, the **Provisional Government of Bangladesh** was established in Mujibnagar and **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was declared President**.
- **Military Campaigns by Mukti Bahini (April-December 1971):**
 - The Mukti Bahini conducted guerrilla operations across East Pakistan, targeting Pakistani forces and **disrupting supply chains**.
- **Refugee Crisis in India (Mid-1971):**
 - Over 10 million **refugees** fled to India due to the Pakistani military's atrocities.
 - India, under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, provided humanitarian aid and later extended military and diplomatic support to the Mukti Bahini.

Shimla Agreement, 1972

- It was signed on **2nd July 1972** after the **1971 Indo-Pak War**, which led to the creation of Bangladesh.
- It was negotiated by **PM Indira Gandhi** and **Pakistan's President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto** to normalise relations and establish peace.
- **Objectives:**
 - Resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally, preventing internationalisation.
 - Improve Indo-Pak ties based on the new regional power balance.
 - India refrained from making the ceasefire line a permanent boundary to prevent further resentment in Pakistan.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - **Conflict Resolution:** Issues to be resolved bilaterally and peacefully.

- **Line of Control (LoC):** Both sides agreed to respect the LoC in Kashmir, established after the 1971 war, and not alter its status unilaterally.
- **Troop Withdrawal:** Forces to withdraw to their respective sides of the international border.
- **Future Diplomacy:** Provisions for continued dialogue and repatriation of prisoners of war.

What was India's Response to the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War?

- **Initial Caution and Humanitarian Crisis:**
 - India initially adopted a **cautious stance**, but the **military crackdown** by Pakistan in East Pakistan led to a **mass exodus of refugees**- approximately 8-10 million, predominantly Hindus, fleeing to India.
 - India set up **refugee camps** in eastern states, primarily in **West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya**.
- **Diplomatic Efforts:**
 - India sought **global support** to expose Pakistan's atrocities and garner international pressure.
- **Military Intervention and Outcome:**
 - The war began on **3rd December 1971** when **Pakistan launched air strikes on Indian military bases** on western fronts, prompting **India to retaliate with air strikes** and launch coordinated operations on both the Eastern and Western fronts.
 - India provided critical support to the **Mukti Bahini**, a **20,000-strong guerrilla force** of Bangladeshi fighters, by training them and leveraging their knowledge of East Pakistan's geography.
 - The conflict lasted 13 days, with India's military forces, including the Navy and Air Force, making significant advances.
 - On **16th December 1971**, Pakistan's Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi signed the **Instrument of Surrender in Dhaka**, resulting in the **surrender of over 90,000 Pakistani soldiers**, marking one of the largest military capitulations since [World War II](#) and leading to the **creation of Bangladesh**.
- **Consequences of the War:**
 - The war led to the **repudiation of [Jinnah's two-nation theory](#)**, undermining Pakistan's claim over **Kashmir** and significantly weakening its position in South Asia.
 - **Jinnah's two-nation theory** asserted that Hindus and Muslims were **distinct nations** with irreconcilable religious, cultural, and social differences, necessitating **separate nations to safeguard** their respective interests.
 - **India strengthened its international image** by **offering humanitarian aid and extending support to victims** of Pakistan's repression, showcasing its commitment to [human rights](#) and compassion.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the major challenges in India-Bangladesh relations. Suggest measures to address these issues to enhance bilateral cooperation and regional stability.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. With reference to river Teesta, consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The source of river Teesta is the same as that of Brahmaputra but it flows through Sikkim.
2. River Rangeet originates in Sikkim and it is a tributary of river Teesta.
3. River Teesta flows into Bay of Bengal on the border of India and Bangladesh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 only

(b) 2 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. Analyze internal security threats and transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders including Line of Control (LoC). Also discuss the role played by various security forces in this regard. (2018)

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