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**Report on the Observance of Partition Horrors Remembrance Day at Hooghly
Mohsin College**

Venue: Post-Graduate Department of Political Science

Date: 14th August, 2026

On the eve of India's Independence Day, Partition Horrors Remembrance Day was observed at Hooghly Mohsin College, Chinsurah, Hooghly, on 14 August 2026, in accordance with the directions communicated by the University of Burdwan for observance of the occasion in colleges affiliated to the University. The programme was organised under the guidance of the Principal of Hooghly Mohsin College, Dr. Purushottam Pramanik.

The observance coincided with the ongoing Har Ghar Tiranga campaign at the College. The two occasions together created an atmosphere of patriotic reflection and remembrance. A large number of students participated enthusiastically in the programme, carrying the National Flag and joining the teachers in commemorating the sacrifices, suffering and historical experiences associated with India's freedom and Partition.

The programme was organised with the active participation of the Post-Graduate Department of Political Science, Hooghly Mohsin College. It was presided over by the Principal, Dr. Purushottam Pramanik, while Dr. Peu Ghosh, Head, Post-Graduate Department of Political Science, attended the programme as the Chief Guest. Faculty members of the Department, including Smt. Piku Dasgupta, Dr. Tarak Nath Jantua, Dr. Mainak Putatunda, Sri Sk Sahafur Hoque and Smt. Aparna Mondal, were present and actively participated in the interaction and discussion with the students. The programme sought not merely to commemorate a historical event but also to encourage students to engage critically with the causes, consequences and continuing significance of the Partition of India.

Dr. Purushottam Pramanik initiated the deliberations with a succinct address on the importance of remembering Partition and understanding its significance. He emphasised the need for the younger generation to remain aware of this crucial and painful chapter in the history of the country.

The principal speakers of the programme were Dr. Mainak Putatunda and Sri Sk Sahafur Hoque, both faculty members of the Post-Graduate Department of Political Science.

Dr. Mainak Putatunda began his address by explaining why Partition needs to be remembered. He stressed that the day should not be regarded as an occasion for celebration, but rather as a necessary act of historical remembrance of the violence, displacement and trauma suffered by the people who were uprooted as a consequence of Partition. Remembering such experiences, he argued, is necessary not for perpetuating bitterness but for ensuring that society remains conscious of the human consequences of political, ethnic and religious conflict.

In this context, Dr. Putatunda referred to the manner in which other nations and communities that had undergone episodes of extreme violence and collective trauma had preserved the memory of those experiences. He cited the examples of the Jewish people of Israel, the Armenians, the Vietnamese and the Cambodians, pointing out that their historical sufferings have been remembered through museums, books, films, memorials and other forms of public commemoration. He particularly stressed the importance of museums and visual exhibitions. The visual impact created by such exhibits, especially upon school and college students, often remains in the minds of visitors for a long time and enables succeeding generations to understand the sacrifices and suffering endured by their ancestors.

Dr. Putatunda observed that history becomes partial when unpleasant episodes are concealed, diluted or sugar-coated. Such an approach, he argued, ultimately results in the transmission of an incomplete or misleading historical narrative to students and to society at large. Referring to Rishi Bankim Chandra, he invoked the idea that a nation which forgets its own history remains vulnerable to repeating the mistakes of the past. Historical remembrance, therefore, needs to be accompanied by an honest engagement with both the achievements and the tragedies of the past.

He subsequently discussed the political and historical circumstances that culminated in the Partition of India, with particular emphasis on Bengal. In the course of this discussion, he referred to the roles played by important political leaders and historical personalities whose actions and decisions formed part of the complex chain of developments eventually leading to this immense human tragedy.

Dr. Putatunda also drew attention to the important differences between the experiences of Partition along the western and eastern borders of India. He observed that the experience of Bengali Hindu refugees arriving from East Bengal was in several respects different from that of Hindu and Sikh refugees displaced from Punjab and other areas along the western border. According to him, while the displaced Hindu and Sikh populations in the western part of India received relatively greater opportunities for organised rehabilitation, compensation and resettlement, large sections of the Bengali Hindu population uprooted from their ancestral homes as a result of sectarian violence in East Bengal did not receive comparable compensation or resettlement opportunities. The prolonged and staggered character of migration from East Bengal further shaped the distinctive nature of the Bengali refugee experience.

He then turned to the manner in which Partition has been represented within Bengali intellectual, literary and cultural discourse. Dr. Putatunda pointed out that an influential section of the Bengali intelligentsia has remembered Partition largely through the suffering experienced by refugees after they reached India. Their struggles for survival, settlement and dignity in West Bengal have been

powerfully immortalised through novels, films and other forms of artistic representation. However, he observed that comparatively fewer artistic attempts have been made to portray the circumstances and causes that compelled these people to abandon their ancestral homes in the first place. He therefore stressed the need for a more comprehensive engagement with the Bengal Partition which would examine not only the consequences of displacement after migration but also the events and conditions that produced that displacement.

Dr. Putatunda further argued that remembering the Partition of Bengal has contemporary significance because historical awareness should help ensure that no new political or intellectual divisions are created either among Bengalis themselves or between Bengalis and the rest of India. He criticised what he described as a tendency among a section of Bengali intellectuals to promote a notion of Bengali “exceptionalism” in West Bengal. Such a tendency, he argued, could gradually contribute to a sense of cultural, political and economic isolation among Bengalis and weaken their connections with the larger national community.

He placed this concern within the broader strategic importance of West Bengal. West Bengal, he pointed out, occupies an exceptionally significant geographical position, lying at the intersection of three international borders and serving as the principal gateway to North-East India. The State is also of immense importance for the envisioned development associated with the Government of India’s Act East Policy, since greater economic and strategic engagement with eastern and south-eastern Asia necessarily enhances the importance of Bengal as a connecting region.

Dr. Putatunda stated that the future development of eastern and north-eastern India gives West Bengal the potential to emerge as an important growth engine and developmental hub for the region. It is therefore essential, he argued, that Bengalis retain a strong sense of connection with the rest of India and participate fully in the opportunities created by this emerging national and regional framework.

Concluding his address, Dr. Putatunda stressed that whatever divisions might have existed historically among Bengalis themselves, or between Bengalis and other parts of India, the time had come to leave behind these accumulated burdens. The lessons of Partition, in his view, should strengthen unity rather than encourage new divisions. Bengalis and the people of the rest of India must work together so that the circumstances capable of producing another division of Bengal are never allowed to emerge and no threat of a second Partition can ever loom over the horizon of the people of West Bengal.

The second principal speaker, Sri Sk Sahafur Hoque, began his address by reflecting upon the meaning and significance of freedom. He discussed the historical struggle through which India achieved its independence and emphasised that freedom should never be viewed simply as an inheritance that can be taken for granted. Every generation has responsibilities towards preserving and sustaining the freedom secured through the sacrifices of earlier generations. He particularly addressed the students present at the programme and emphasised the important role of the younger generation in safeguarding the values and responsibilities associated with national freedom.

Sri Hoque then spoke about the pain and agony experienced by countless fellow countrymen during the tragic Partition of the motherland. He observed that independence was accompanied by an

enormous human tragedy involving suffering, displacement and loss, and that the memories of this tragedy continued to haunt Indian society even decades later. The historical significance of Partition, therefore, could not be separated from the personal suffering endured by innumerable individuals and families.

He further emphasised that history must serve as a source of learning. If society fails to learn from the experiences and mistakes of the past, he warned, similar tragedies may recur in the future. Remembering Partition was therefore important not merely as an act of looking backwards, but as a means of developing the historical awareness required to prevent the repetition of such events.

Sri Hoque concluded his address by paying homage to the freedom fighters and all those who had sacrificed for the independence of the country. He ended on a positive and hopeful note, observing that the present generation was becoming increasingly conscious of India's glorious past. The growing interest of young people in the history of the freedom struggle and the sacrifices of earlier generations, he stated, provided grounds for optimism regarding the preservation of national memory and values.

The addresses were followed by interaction and discussion among the teachers and students, through which various dimensions of the Partition and its historical legacy were considered. The presence and active involvement of the students added particular significance to the observance, since one of the principal purposes of commemorating the day was to transmit historical awareness to younger generations.

Some Glimpses of the Program




The Principal
Hooghly Mohsin College
Principal
HOOGHLY MOHSIN COLLEGE

