

## **Prisoners of Shothik Itihash**

Since 1905, Bengalis, living on both sides of the India-Bangladesh border have gone through multiple identity reformations. First, during the brief 1905 Bengal partition. Then after 1947, as the state of Pakistan was formed; and 1971, when Bangladesh was created after a bloody liberation war. However, 1971 failed to settle or stabilize the question of identity for Bengalis on either side of the border. Especially in Bangladesh, there were further transformations, with each political rupture from 1975 onward creating a new set of identity struggles. From “Bengali” to “Bangladeshi” nationalisms, the questions have been particularly acute inside Bangladesh, as they have been tied to dramatic political transitions. The ripple effects, as well as the base structure, can be felt in all spheres, from affective culture to rewritten history books. The post-1947 and 1971 struggles for new nationalisms have required rewriting history books every few years. Each new government brings in a new narrative of “important” history. In the process, certain formational documents and narratives are permanently erased.