

Bangladesh Chronology

- 1947 British colonial rule over the subcontinent ends. Pakistan is established as a largely Muslim state with an East and a West wing on either side of India, separated by 1500 km.
- 1949 The Awami League is established with the program of seeking autonomy for East Pakistan.
- 1970 The Awami League, under Sheikh Mujibar Rahaman, wins an overwhelming election victory in East Pakistan. The government of West Pakistan refuses to recognize the results, leading to riots. Cyclone causes 500,000 deaths.
- 1971 Sheikh Mujib arrested and taken to West Pakistan. Awami League leaders proclaim independence on 26th March, calling the new country Bangladesh. Nearly 10 million refugees flee to India. West Pakistan's army in Bangladesh is defeated by the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Army) with the assistance of India.
- 1972 Sheikh Mujib returns to become prime minister of Bangladesh.
- 1974 Severe floods cause estimated 28,000 deaths. A national state of emergency is declared. Political unrest grows.
- 1975 Sheikh Mujib becomes president of Bangladesh. He is assassinated in a military coup in August. Martial law is imposed.
- 1976 The military bans trade unions.
- 1977 General Zia Rahman assumes the presidency. Islam is adopted in the constitution.
- 1979 Martial law is lifted following elections, which Zia's Bangladesh National Party wins.
- 1981 Zia is assassinated during an abortive military coup. Abdus Sattar succeeds him.
- 1982 Army coup: General Ershad assumes power, suspends constitution and bans political parties.

- 1983 Ershad's proposal that all schools should teach Arabic and the Koran leads to mass demonstrations. Limited political activity is permitted. Ershad becomes president.
- 1986 Parliamentary and presidential elections. Ershad is elected president and lifts martial law and reinstates constitution.
- 1987 State of emergency declared following demonstrations and strikes.
- 1988 Islam is made state religion. Severe floods: tens of millions made homeless.
- 1990 Ershad steps down following mass protests.
- 1991 Ershad convicted and jailed for corruption and illegal possession of weapons. Begum Khaleda Zia, widow of Zia Rahman, becomes prime minister. Constitution is changed to make the post of president ceremonial. The prime minister has executive power. Cyclonic tidal wave kills 138,000.
- 1996 Awami League wins election and Sheikh Hasina Wajed, daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, becomes prime minister.
- 1997 Ershad is released from prison. BNP begins a campaign of strikes against the government.
- 1998 Two-thirds of the country devastated by the worst floods ever. Fifteen former army officers sentenced to death for the assassination of President Mujib in 1975.
- 2000 September Sheikh Hasina criticizes military regimes in a UN speech; General Musharraf of Pakistan cancels talks with her. Relations with Pakistan are further strained by leaked Pakistani report on 1971 war of independence.
- 2000 December Bangladesh expels Pakistani diplomat for numbering the dead in the 1971 war at 26,000, whereas Bangladesh claims nearly 3 million were killed by West Pakistan. Bangladesh demands apology for alleged genocide by Pakistani forces.
- 2001 April Seven killed in bomb blast at a concert in Dhaka. Sixteen Indians and three Bangladeshi soldiers killed in border clashes. High Court confirms death sentences on 12 ex-army officers.
- 2001 June Bomb kills 10 at mass at a Roman Catholic Church in Baniarchar. Bomb at Awami League office near Dhaka kills 22. Parliament approves bill providing security for Hasina and her sister Rahina who fear the killers of their father were trying to kill them.

2001 July Hasina steps down, being the first prime minister to complete a five year term.

2001 September 8 killed and hundreds injured in two bomb explosions at election rallies.

2001 October Khalida Zia's BNP and its three coalition partners win election.

2001 November Law guaranteeing lifelong security for Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana repealed

2002 March Government legislates death penalty for acid attacks following escalating violence against women.

2002 June-September President Chowdhury resigns. Iajuddin Ahmad becomes president.

2002 December Bomb blasts in cinemas north of Dhaka kill 17 and injure hundreds. Awami League blames fundamentalists for bomb blasts; the government denies this; US expresses concern that Bangladesh could become platform for international terror.

2003 April More that 100 killed in two ferry disaster.

2004 February-April Opposition calls series of general strikes in attempt to force government from power.