

## Bangladesh

### Rice

In 1971, Bangladesh gained its independence from Pakistan. At the time, the ‘leader’ of the independence movement, who was apparently the individual selected to lead the new Bangladeshi government, was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Rahman, however, was a prisoner in Pakistan, so the leadership of the new government was fulfilled by Syed Nazrul Islam, a member of the AL (Awami League) party. Islam served as an ‘acting prime minister’ (according to some sources) until Rahman was released from prison and was allowed to return to Bangladesh, which occurred on 10 January 1972. This is not a SOLS change. From 1972 until 1974 the country is considered a parliamentary democracy, though Cheibub et al. (2010) do not code Bangladesh as democratic until 1985 and Geddes codes a single-party-personalist regime throughout this period (Khanna & Sudarchan 1998; Oberst et al. 2014).

Note that Geddes classifies Bangladesh under Rahman as being a single-party personalist regime for the entire time he was in office (from January 1972 until August 1975), but officially, he did not make Bangladesh a single-party autocratic state until January 1975. Before that, Rahman created the Constitution of 1972, which created a parliamentary system of government (so Rahman’s position changed from President to Prime Minister). The Parliament of the time comprised members of the provincial assembly elected in 1970, along with members of the former Pakistani National Assembly (Baxter 2002, et al, 268). In 1973, elections were held and the BAL (Bangladeshi Awami League, Rahman’s party) won the majority of the seats. The elections were not completely free—parties opposed to the creation of Bangladesh were barred from contesting (Baxter 2002, et al, 269). Law and order began to break down, and reconstruction was proving harder than anticipated. Rahman declared a state of emergency in December 1974, then amended the constitution to create a presidential system (with him as President) in January 1975. Finally, cementing his autocratic rule, he made Bangladesh a single-party state and gave himself absolute power in June 1975.

However, these steps did not solve the problems Bangladesh was facing, and he and his family were assassinated on August 15, 1975 as part of a plot by military officers. These officers then installed Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmad, who was also a member of the BAL, though a lower-ranking one, as leader. This leader transition is tricky to code because Mushtaq had the same party affiliation as Rahman (which suggests not SOLS change), but seems to have had to rely of the military officers who brought him to power (US Library of Congress 1988). Mushtaque also had a number of Awami League members arrested and killed, suggesting that he was trying to restrict the party’s power (Karlekar 2005, 50). Since Mushtaq was neither Rahman’s pre-designated successor (some say he even participated in the coup—Library of Congress) and he tried to distance himself from the party, we code a major SOLS change here. Mushtaq promised elections and changed Bangladesh back to a multiparty system, but he was not able to stay in office for long. On 6 November 1975, after a series of attempted coups, Mushtaq resigned and yielded power to Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem, the chief justice. Sayem held the office of President (as well as the office of “Chief Martial Law Administrator”) until April 21, 1977, when he resigned due to “ill health” (Baxter 2002, et al, 272). The office of President was then taken over by the former deputy chief martial law administrator, Major General Ziaur Rahman, who Archigos codes as holding power after the

removal of Mushtaque. Ziaur Rahman created a party that represented his interests, the BJD (Bengal Nationalist Party) in 1978, and quickly consolidated his office into a personalist regime. We code a SOLS change for Ziaur Rahman's personalist regime starting in 1975, when he has the de facto leader of Pakistan. Ziaur Rahman was in power until his assassination (by a rival faction of the military) on May 30, 1981. The office of President was assumed by his vice-president, Abdus Sattar (who was confirmed by elections in November 1981). This is not a major SOLS change because Sattar was technically the pre-designated successor to Ziaur Rahman (because, as vice-president, he was appointed by Rahman).

Sattar was ousted from office by a military coup on March 24, 1982. Leadership of the government was taken over by Lieutenant General Husain Muhammad Ershad, indicating a SOLS change, and Bangladesh again became an autocratic, military state. Ershad remained in power until 1990, when the AL and the BJD united to demand his resignation and the scheduling of free elections (Baxter 2002, et al, 273). Ershad stepped down, and a caretaker government Kazi Zafar Ahmed (a member of the 'National Party', or JD) was established. This is not a SOLS change, as the goal of this government was to oversee elections. When elections were held, on March 30, 1991, victory went to Khaleda Zia of the BJD, ruling in a coalition with the Jamaat-i-Islam (JIB) party (there were indirect elections held to fill the seats in the Parliament reserved for women. The BJD allied with the JIB for this election to gain the majority). This is a SOLS change. Zia won reelection (and her party won enough seats to rule without a coalition) on September 19, 1991. Conflicts began to emerge between the BJD and the BAL, culminating in the BAL (along with the Jatiya Party and the JIB) boycotting the February 1996 parliamentary elections. However, Zia's government passed an amendment that placated the opposing alliance, then dissolved the government. A caretaker government, under the non-partisan Mohammad Habibur Rahman, took over until new elections were held on 23 June 1996. This is not a SOLS change, as this government's goal was simply to 'hold down the fort' until elections could be held. In the June elections, Sheikh Hasina Wajed of the BAL emerged with a majority and took control of the government as part of a coalition with the JD (Jatiya Party) and JSD-Rab1 (Jatiyo Samajtantric Dal). (This is an odd case where other parties were included in the cabinet without a formal coalition. See Zaman 1999, xxxi; Woldendorp et al. 2000, 122; and Johnson 2005, 52). This is a SOLS change. On September 14, 1997, JD withdrew its support from Wajed's coalition, and here we code a minor SOLS change (See *BC Cycle*. 09/14/1997; and United States Department of State 2010. Although Woldendorp et al. do not record this change in coalition, these other sources indicate that the JD did indeed leave at this time.)

Wajed remained in office until 2001, when, on 15 July, he stepped down to allow for a caretaker government to preside over elections. This government was led by the non-partisan Latifur Rahman (not a SOLS change), and held elections on 10 October 2001. In those elections, the BJD (along with a coalition of JD, JIB, and Islami Oikya Jot) won, and Khaleda Zia once again became Prime Minister. This is a SOLS change. Schlager and Weisblett (2006: 105) describes that "the party won a landslide victory as leader of a four-party coalition with the Jamaat-e-Islami, the Jatiya Party-Naziru, and Islami Oikay Jute." Zia's tenure in office was marked by allegations of corruption, and nearly constant conflict with the BAL under Wajed. In 2006, Zia's government stepped down to allow a caretaker government (led by the nonpartisan Iajuddin Ahmed) to oversee elections. This is not a SOLS change. However, due to the huge amount of public unrest and violence, the caretaker government decided to declare a state of

emergency and postpone the elections (which had been scheduled for January, 2007). At that point, Iajuddin Ahmed resigned as President. For one day, Fazlul Haque served as acting president (not coded by Archigos), then Fakhruddin Ahmed was sworn in as the new leader of the caretaker government. Ahmed was backed by the military (which is perhaps why Geddes classifies his time in power as being a military government), but used his time in office to 'clean up' politics—arresting both Zia and Wajed on corruption charges, among other individuals. This is still a SOLS change, due to the classification as a military government. Elections were held on 6 January 2009.

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