

History of Bangladesh_2



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Pakistan period

- Bengal became part of a unique state experiment.
- Pakistan was based on religious nationalism, did not inherit British India's institutions and its territories were disconnected from each other physically.
- While the western wing was larger, 55 percent of Pakistanis lived in Bengal.
- A rift developed over the question of the national language.

The Language Movement

- The Bengali Language Movement was a political effort in East Pakistan, advocating the recognition of the Bengali language as an official language of Pakistan.
- Such recognition would allow Bengali to be used in government affairs. It was led by Mufti **Nadimul Quamar Ahmed**.
- When the state of Pakistan was formed in 1947, its two regions, East Pakistan and West Pakistan, were split along cultural, geographical, and linguistic lines.
- On 23 February 1948, the **Government of Pakistan** ordained Urdu as the sole national language, sparking extensive protests among the Bengali-speaking majority of East Pakistan.

- Facing rising sectarian tensions and mass discontent with the new law, the government outlawed public meetings and rallies.
- The students of the University of Dhaka and other political activists defied the law and organized a protest on 21 February 1952.
- The movement reached its climax when police opened fire on the students.
- The deaths provoked widespread civil unrest led by the Awami Muslim League, later renamed the Awami League.
- After years of conflict, the central government relented and granted official status to the Bengali language in 1956.
- On **17 November 1999**, UNESCO declared 21 February **International Mother Language Day** for the whole world to celebrate, in tribute to the Language Movement and the ethno-linguistic rights of people around world.

Politics: 1954–1971

- For 1952 events the people of East Pakistan abandon the Muslim League.
- In East Pakistan's 1954 provincial elections, the League captured only 7 out of the 390 seats. The United Front won the elections.
- Until 1956, when the state declared that both Bengali and Urdu would be state languages, the language movement continued.
- Great differences began developing between the two wings of Pakistan.
- While the west had a minority share of Pakistan's total population, it had the largest share of revenue allocation, industrial development, agricultural reforms and civil development projects.
- Pakistan's military and civil services were dominated by the Punjabis.

- Bengalis had been designated as a "non-martial" race by the British.
- Bengali participation in the military was very low.
- The British preferred to recruit defense persons from Punjab.
- The Punjabis dominated the army Pakistan inherited from British India's military.
- Because Bengalis did not have a tradition of military service in their families, it was hard to recruit Bengali officers.
- By the middle of the 1960s the East Pakistani elite concluded that the protection of their interests lay in autonomy.
- Abdul Momen Khan, who was governor in the 1962-1968 period, persecuted opposition and censored media.

Year (1950-1970)	% of total population	Amount spent (in crore rupees)	Amount spent as percentage of total
West Pakistan	36.23	11,334	71.16
East Pakistan	63.77	4,593	28.84

- The regime became more unpopular during 1965, in the year of a war between India and Pakistan.
- Patriotism was high in East Pakistan during the war against India, but this was one of the last cases of national solidarity.
- East Pakistanis felt they had not been protected by the army from a possible Indian invasion.
- In 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami League, proclaimed a 6-point plan titled ***Our Charter of Survival*** at a national conference of opposition political parties at Lahore, in which he demanded self-government and considerable political, economic and defense autonomy for East Pakistan in a Pakistani federation with a weak central government.

- This led to the historic Six point movement. The six points for a confederation were more extreme than previous calls for autonomy.
- Rehman Sobhan, Nurul Islam, Khairul Kabir, and other prominent intellectuals drafted the six-point demand
- **The six points are noted as being:**
 1. The Constitution should provide for a **Federation of Pakistan** in its true sense based on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.
 2. The federal government should deal with only two subjects: **Defense and Foreign Affairs**, and all other residual subjects should be vested in the federating states.

3. Two separate, but freely convertible currencies for the two wings should be introduced; or if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.
4. The power of taxation and revenue collection should be vested in the federating units and the federal center would have no such power. The federation would be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.
5. East Pakistan should have a separate military or paramilitary force, and Navy headquarters should be in East Pakistan.

6. There should be two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings; the foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed; indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings, and the constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries.
- The proposal was rejected by politicians from West Pakistan and non Awami League politicians from East Pakistan.
 - It was rejected by the president of the All Pakistan Awami League, Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan, the National Awami Party, Jamaat-i-Islami, and Nizam-i-Islam.
 - The movement had the support of the population of East Pakistan.

- In early 1968, the **Agartala Conspiracy Case** was filed against Mujib with the allegation that the accused was conspiring for the secession of East Pakistan with Indian aid.
- The government expected this to harm Mujib's popularity.
- But popular demonstrations made the government drop the case.
- A West Pakistani movement aimed at removing Ayub Khan spread to East Pakistan where it adopted Bengali nationalist connotations.
- Ayub Khan resigned in March 1969 and his position was taken by General Yahya Khan.
- Yahya tried to reconcile the politicians. He announced that elections would be held in 1970 and political organization would be permitted.

The 1969 uprising in East Pakistan (উনসত্তরের গণঅভ্যুত্থান)

- It was a democratic political movement in East Pakistan.
- The uprising consisted of a series of mass demonstrations and sporadic conflicts between government armed forces and the demonstrators.
- Although the unrest began in 1966 with the Six point movement of Awami League, it got momentum at the beginning of 1969 and culminated in the resignation of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, the first military ruler of Pakistan.
- The uprising also led to the withdrawal of Agartala Conspiracy Case and acquittal of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his colleagues from the case.

- **5 January:** *Shorbodolio Chatro Shongram Porishad* (The All Party Student Action Committee) puts forth its 11-point agenda.
- **7–8 January:** Formation of a political coalition named **Democratic Action Committee (DAC)** to restore democracy.
- **20 January:** DU Student activist Amanullah **Asaduzzaman died** as the police opens fire on the demonstrators.
- **24 January:** Matiur Rahman Mallik, a teenager activist, is gunned down by the police.
- **15 February:** **Sergeant Zahurul Haq**, one of the convicts of Agartala Conspiracy Case, is assassinated in the prison of Kurmitola Cantonment.

- **18 February:** Shamsuzzoha, a student of the University of Rajshahi is killed as the police open fire on a silent procession in Rajshahi.
- **22 February:** Withdrawal of Agartala Conspiracy Case.
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, released from his prison cell in Dhaka cantonment.
- **23 February:** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is accorded a grand reception, where he is given the title *Bangabandhu* (friend of Bengal).
- **10–13 March:** Ayub Khan calls for a round-table meeting with the opposition.
- **25 March:** Ayub Khan hands over power to General Yahya Khan, the army Chief of Staff.

- Yahya Khan declared that his own position was temporary and that his job was to run elections for an assembly to create a new constitution.
- He ended the One Unit Scheme and permitted popular representation, thereby allowing East Pakistan 162 of the 300 seats.
- Yahya created a legal framework order (LFO) as a guideline for assembly.
- It stipulated principles such as the federalism of the state, paramountcy of Islam, provincial autonomy with sufficient provisions for the federal government to carry out its duties and defend the country's integrity.
- The latter point clashed with Mujib's points.
- Yahya highlighted that a constitution would not be accepted if it did not adhere to the Legal Framework Order (LFO).
- Mujib's party had drafted its own constitution based on six points.

Independence movement

- The Awami League captured 160 of East Pakistan's 162 seats in the 1970 Pakistani general election.
- Nurul Amin won one of the remaining seats.
- The Pakistan Peoples Party, led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, won a majority of seats in West Pakistan.
- Yahya organized talks between Bhutto and Mujib to arrive at a consensus on the form of the future constitution.
- Mujib asserted his majority and intent to base the constitution on his six points.
- Bhutto's argument was that there were two majorities.
- The talks failed. Mujib rejected Bhutto's demands for a share in power.

- Bhutto boycotted the National Assembly session of 3 March and intimidated other West Pakistani politicians from participating.
- Bhutto requested that Yahya delay the National Assembly session.
- On 1 March protests and confrontations broke out when Yahya did this.
- Leftists in East Pakistan pressured Mujib to declare independence.
- The West Pakistani government deployed soldiers to deter such a possibility.
- Mujib chose a middle-ground option by starting a non-cooperation movement.
- The movement was successful, freezing the machinery of government and effectively giving Mujib command over East Pakistan.
- Mujib announced that East Pakistanis would fight for independence but he simultaneously attempted to achieve a solution within a united Pakistan.

- Yahya Khan went to Dhaka in the middle of March as a last attempt to obtain a resolution. Bhutto joined him.
- But the three parties could not arrive at a consensus on transfer of power.
- Yahya was willing to accept the Six Points and its demand for autonomy and also agreed to Mujib becoming prime minister.
- However, for Bhutto this was treachery to East Pakistan.
- On 23 March the Awami League told Yahya that he was to issue regional autonomy within 2 days or East Pakistan would turn lawless.
- While the talks were still underway, Yahya opted for a military solution for the problem.
- On 25 March, Yahya secretly went back to West Pakistan and commanded the military to attack the core members of the autonomy campaign.

- On 3 March, student leader Shahjahan Siraj read the '**Sadhinotar Ishtehar**' (Declaration of Independence) at Paltan Maidan in front of Mujib at a public gathering under the direction of the Swadhin Bangla Biplobi Parishad.
- On 7 March, there was a public gathering in Suhrawardy Udyan to hear updates on the ongoing movement from Sheikh Mujib, leader of movement.
- Although he avoided directly referring to independence, as the talks were still underway, he warned his listeners to prepare for any imminent war.
- The speech is considered a key moment in the War of Liberation, and is remembered for the phrase,

"Ebarer Shongram Amader Muktir Shongram, Ebarer Shongram Shadhinotar Shongram...." ("Our struggle this time is a struggle for our freedom, our struggle this time is a struggle for our independence....")

Formal Declaration of Independence

- In the early hours of 26 March 1971, a military crackdown by the Pakistan army began.
- The Bangabandhu was arrested and the political leaders dispersed, mostly fleeing to India where they organised a provisional government.
- Before being arrested by the Pakistani Army, Bangabandhu passed a hand written note which contained the **Bangladeshi Declaration of Independence**.
- This note was widely circulated and transmitted by the then East Pakistan Rifles' wireless transmitter.
- The world press reports from late March 1971 also made sure that Bangladesh's declaration of independence by Bangabandhu was widely reported throughout the world.

- Bengali Army officer Major Ziaur Rahman captured the Kalurghat Radio Station in Chittagong and read the declaration of independence of Bangladesh during the evening hours on 27 March.

“This is Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. I, Major Ziaur Rahman, at the direction of Bangobondhu Mujibur Rahman, hereby declare that the Independent People's Republic of Bangladesh has been established. At his direction, I have taken command as the temporary Head of the Republic. In the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I call upon all Bengalees to rise against the attack by the West Pakistani Army. We shall fight to the last to free our motherland. Victory is, by the Grace of Allah, ours. Joy Bangla.”

- The Provisional Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was formed on 10 April in Meherpur (later renamed as Mujibnagar).
- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was announced to be the Head of the State.
- Tajuddin Ahmed became the Prime Minister, Syed Nazrul Islam became the acting president and Khondaker Mostaq Ahmed the Foreign Minister.
- There the war plan was sketched out with Bangladesh armed forces established and named "Muktifoujo".
- Later these forces were named "Muktibahini" (freedom fighters).
- M. A. G. Osmani was appointed as the Chief of the Armed Forces.

- For military purposes, Bangladesh was divided into 11 sectors under 11 sector commanders.
- In addition to these sectors, later in the war, three special forces were formed: Z Force, S Force and K Force.
- These three forces' names were derived from the initial letters of the commander's name.
- The training and most of the arms and ammunitions were arranged by the Meherpur government which was supported by India.
- As fighting grew between the Pakistan Army and the Bengali Mukti Bahini, an estimated ten million Bengalis, sought refuge in the Indian states of Assam, Tripura and West Bengal.

- The Pakistani military created civilian and paramilitary groups to neutralize the freedom fighters.
- They recruited Biharis and Bengalis who did not support the separation of East Pakistan.
- When it became clear that neither the Pakistani military nor the freedom fighters could win, India gradually started its invasion.
- It increased its efforts at the international level and increased its military activities in East Pakistan but did not declare war out of fear of the geopolitical aftermath.
- India had its opportunity to declare war when Pakistan attacked Indian airfields on 3 December, 1971.

Interactive Timeline of the Bangladesh Liberation War

Before the war

- **1 March:** General Yahya Khan calls off the session of National Council to be held on 3 March in a radio address.
- **7 March:** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – who had won a landslide victory in Pakistan in the Federal Elections of 1970, but never been granted authority – announces to a jubilant crowd at the Dhaka Race Course ground,
"The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation! The struggle this time is the struggle for independence!".
- **9 March:** Workers of Chittagong port refuse to unload weapons from Pakistani ship 'Swat'.
- **16 March:** Yahya Khan starts negotiation with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

- **19 March:** Nearly 200 people are injured at Jaydevpur during clashes between protesters and the Pakistan Army.
- **24 March:** The Pakistan Army opens fire on Bengali protesters in Syedpur and Rangpur. About 150 people are killed.

Events during the War

❖ March

- **25 March to 26 March:** Pakistan Army starts genocide in the form of Operation Searchlight in Dhaka and the rest of the country, attacking general civilians, political activists, students, and Bengali members of armed forces and police.
- **26 March:** At 1.15 am, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is arrested by the Pakistani 3 commando unit. The Independence of Bangladesh is declared by Sheikh Mujibiur

Rahman a few minutes before he was arrested by the Pakistani army. At 2.30 pm The Independence of Bangladesh was declared by Awami league leader of Chittagong M. A. Hannan on behalf of Bangobondhu from Kalurghat. This is Bangladesh's official Independence Day.

- **27 March:** Independence of Bangladesh is again declared by Maj. Ziaur Rahman on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- **31 March:** Kushtia resistance begins.

❖ April

- **2 April:** Jinjira massacre. (The number of casualties is about 3000 civilians).
- **6 April:** The Blood Telegram (Archer Blood was then the U.S. consul general in Dhaka. He was "horrified" by the violence and asked Washington to intervene. Blood later described the response from Washington as "deafening" silence.

- **11 April:** Radio address by Tajuddin Ahmad, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.
- **10 April:** A provisional Bangladesh government-in-exile is formed.
- **12 April:** M. A. G. Osmani takes up the command of Bangladesh Armed Forces.
- **17 April:** A provisional government-in-exile took oath in Baidyanathtala (now called Mujibnagar) in Meherpur District
- **18 April:** Battle of Daruin, Cumilla and Battle of Rangamati-Mahalchari waterway, Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- **24 April:** Formation of Bangladesh Action Committee at Coventry, UK by non-resident Bangladeshis.
- **25 April to 15 August:** Operation Jackpot by Mukti Bahini. The Operation Jackpot was a codename for three operations undertaken by Mukti Bahini. Indian Army implemented a supply and training operation for Mukti Bahini from 15 May 1971.

with the goal of sending ever increasing number of trained fighters to attack Pakistani forces and sabotage military and economic assets to demoralize the Pakistani soldiers and disrupt their supply network. This enterprise was dubbed "Operation Jackpot".

- **28 April:** Tajuddin pleas for arms aid to neighbors.

❖ May

- **5 May:** Gopalpur massacre. 195 people killed at Gopalpur municipality, Natore. The victims of the massacre were Bengali employees of the North Bengal Sugar Mill.
- **15 May:** Indian army starts aiding Mukti Bahini.
- **20 May:** The Chuknagar massacre takes place at Khulna where the Pakistan army kills nearly 10,000 people.
- **24 May:** Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra finds home in Kolkata.

❖ July

- **11–17 July:** Sector Commanders Conference in 1971.

❖ August

- **1 August:** The Concert for Bangladesh in Madison Square Garden, New York by Ravi Shankar, George Harrison and friends.
- **16 August:** Operation Jackpot, Bangladesh naval commando operation. The Mukti Bahini Naval Commandos launched several sabotage efforts in the cities of Chittagong, Chandpur, Mongla, and the Narayanganj District against the operating combined forces of the Pakistan Soldiers, Pakistan Marines, Pakistan Navy and the East Pakistan Security Forces on the night of 15 August.
- **20 August:** Flight Lt. Matiur Rahman's attempt to defect by hijacking a fighter.
- **30 August:** Pakistan Army crackdown on Dhaka guerrillas.

❖ September

- **5 September:** Battle of Goahati, Jessore.
- **28 September:** Bangladesh Air Force starts functioning.

❖ October

- **13 October:** Dhaka guerrillas kill Abdul Monem Khan, governor of East Pakistan.
- **28 October to 3 November:** Battle of Dhalai in which 3 companies (215 soldiers) of the Jat Regiment of Indian Army defeated a battalion (800 soldiers) of Pakistan Army.
- **31 October to 3 November:** Battle of Dhalai: Allied attack from Tripura into East Pakistan to stop Pakistani cross-border shelling.

❖ November

- **9 November:** Six small ships constitute the first fleet of Bangladesh Navy.
- **16 November:** Battle of Ajmiriganj, Habiganj (an 18-hour encounter between Mukti Bahini and Pakistan army).
- **14 November to 4 December:** The Battle of Kamalpur (in Jamalpur) began, where Pakistani troops defended Kamalpur for 21 days before being ordered to surrender by their superiors.
- **20 to 21 November:** Battle of Garibpur: India attacked Pakistani forces and captured Boyra salient. Its control was thus vital, as it gave the Indian Army a highway to Jessore from India.
- **21 November:** Bangladesh Armed Forces are formed.

- **22 November to 13 December, and sporadic fighting to 16 December:** Battle of Hilli: The Indian objective was to capture a network of Pakistani fortifications centred around the village of Hilli to allow for an advance on the town of Bogra.

❖ December

- **3 December:** Bangladesh Air Force destroys Pakistani oil depots.
- **3 December:** Pakistani pre-emptive airstrikes in India. As a result, India declares war against Pakistan.
- **3 to 6 December:** Battle of Chamb; Pakistan attacks and takes over part of southern Kashmir from India.
- **4 December :** Battle of Longewala; India stops a Pakistani invasion directed at Jaisalmer.

- **4 to 5 December** : Battle of Gazipur in which Indian Army and Mukti Bahini captured Gazipur.
- **5 December** : Battle of Basantar; India attacks and takes over Pakistani territory in the Shakargarh Salient, opposite Jammu.
- **6 December**: Jashore (Jessore) became the first district in Bangladesh to gain independence. Bhutan becomes the first country to recognize Bangladesh after India. Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra becomes Bangladesh Betar.
- **7 to 16 December**: Battle of Sylhet, liberation of Jessore, Sylhet and Moulvibazar.
- **8 December**: Operation Python: Indian naval attack on Karachi, West Pakistan.
- **9 December**: Battle of Kushtia: Indian attack from West Bengal into East Pakistan. Chandpur and Daudkandi liberated from Pakistan.
- **10 December**: Liberation of Laksham. Two Bangladeshi ships sunk mistakenly by an Indian air attack.

- **11 December:** Tangail Airdrop, which liberated Poongli Bridge on the Jamuna river
- **11 December:** Liberation of Hilli, Mymenshingh, Kushtia and Noakhali.
- USS Enterprise is deployed by the US Navy in the Bay of Bengal to intimidate the Indian Navy.
- **13 December:** Soviet Navy deploys a group of warships to counter Enterprise. The Enterprise moves towards Southeast Asia, averting a confrontation.
- **14 December:** Selective genocide of Bengali nationalist intellectuals. Liberation of Bogra.
- **16 December:** End of the Bangladesh Liberation War. Mitro Bahini takes Dhaka. Pakistan Army surrenders to Mitro Bahini represented by Jagjit Singh Aurora of the Indian Army faction of the military coalition.
- **22 December:** The provisional government of Bangladesh arrives in Dhaka.

Pakistani Capitulation and Aftermath

- At the time of surrender only a few countries had provided diplomatic recognition to the new nation.
- Over 90,000 Pakistani troops surrendered to the Indian forces making it the largest surrender since World War II.
- The new country changed its name to Bangladesh on 11 January 1972 and became a parliamentary democracy under a constitution.
- 19 March Bangladesh signed a friendship treaty with India.
- Bangladesh sought admission in the UN with most voting in its favour, but China vetoed this as Pakistan was its key ally.

- The United States, also a key ally of Pakistan, was one of the last nations to accord Bangladesh recognition.
- To ensure a smooth transition, in 1972 the Simla Agreement was signed between India and Pakistan.
- The treaty ensured that Pakistan recognized the independence of Bangladesh in exchange for the return of the Pakistani Prisoners of War.
- India treated all PoW in strict accordance with the Geneva Convention, rule 1925. It released more than 93,000 Pakistani PoWs in five months.
- Furthermore, as a gesture of goodwill, nearly 200 soldiers who were sought for war crimes by Bengalis were also pardoned by India.

- The accord also gave back more than 13,000 km² (5,019 sq mi) of land that Indian troops had seized in West Pakistan during the war, though India retained a few strategic areas; most notably **Kargil** (which would in turn again be the focal point for a war between the two nations in 1999).
- The real number of victims during the war is still not certain.
- Estimates of those killed range from Bangladeshi estimates of 3 million to Pakistani estimates of 26,000. According to one source 1.7 million died.
- A large number of women had been raped by Pakistani, Biharis and Bengali Rajakars.
- The government conferred upon them an honorary title of birangana ("brave heroines") but they suffered discrimination afterwards.

- Besides the Pakistani prisoner of wars there were still collaborators in Bangladesh.
- In 1973, the Bangladeshi government announced an amnesty for them in exchange for Pakistani recognition.
- Demands that these be collaborators be tried resurfaced in the 1990s.
- There was also a large population of non-Bengali Muslims who mostly supported Pakistan.
- Bengali mobs, who identified them as "Bihari", had killed them before the war and the Biharis had aided the Pakistani army during it.
- Thousands suffered a counter genocide and at least a million were made homeless.

Razakar

- **Razakar** (literally “volunteer”; Bengali: রাজাকার) was an East Pakistani paramilitary force organized by General Tikka Khan in then East Pakistan, during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971.
- Since the 1971 war, it has become a pejorative term (implying traitor) in Bangladesh due to the numerous atrocities committed by the Razakars during the War.
- The Razakar force was composed of mostly anti-Bangladesh and pro-Pakistan Bengalis and Urdu-speaking migrants who lived in Bangladesh at the time.
- The East Pakistan Razakars Ordinance was promulgated on 2 August 1971 by the Governor of East Pakistan, Lieutenant General Tikka Khan.

- The Ordinance stipulated the creation of a voluntary force to be trained and equipped by the Provincial Government.
- This was to add to the government's forces to suppress the rebellion of people who wanted independence for the region.
- It is also alleged that Razakars were recruited by the Shanti Committee, which was formed by several pro-Pakistani leaders including Nurul Amin, Ghulam Azam and Khwaja Khairuddin.
- The first recruits included 96 Jamaat party members, who started training in an Ansar camp at Shahjahan Ali Road, Khulna.
- During the 1971 Bangladesh genocide by the Pakistani Army and its supporting militias (Razakar) killed an estimated 300,000 to 3,000,000 people, and raped 200,000–400,000 Bangladeshi women.

- The Razakars had two branches: **Al-Badr** and **Al-shams** paramilitary forces.
- Students from Madrasahs were inducted into Al-Badr for specialized operations, while Al-Shams was tasked with protection of important strategic locations.
- The Razakar were under Pakistani Army command and also trained by them
- The Razakar force was organised into brigades of around 3000–4000 volunteers, mainly armed with light Infantry weapons provided by the Pakistani Army.
- Each Razakar Brigade was attached as an auxiliary to two Pakistani Regular Army Brigades, and their main function was to arrest and detain nationalist Bengali suspects.

- Suspects were tortured during custody and killed.
- The Razakars also served as local guides for the Pakistan army.
- Both organizations were later accused of having violated Geneva Conventions of War by raping, murdering and looting the locals.
- Towards the end of 1971, increasing numbers of Razakars were deserting, as the end of the war approached and Bangladesh moved towards independence.
- Following the surrender of the West Pakistan army on 16 December 1971, the Razakar units were dissolved.
- The Jamaat party was banned, as it had opposed independence.
- Many leading Razakars fled to Pakistan (previously West Pakistan).

- Waves of violence followed the official end of the war, and some lower-ranking Razakars were killed in reprisals by Mukti Bahini militia.
- The government rounded up and imprisoned an estimated 36,000 men suspected of being Razakars.
- The government ultimately freed many of those held in jail, both in response to pressure from the United States and China, who backed Pakistan in the war, and to gain co-operation from Pakistan in obtaining the release of 200,000 Bengali-speaking military and civilian personnel who had been stranded or imprisoned in West Pakistan during the war.

Bir Sreshtho

- The **Bir Sreshtho** (বীরশ্রেষ্ঠ; **The Most Valiant Hero**), is the highest military award of Bangladesh.
- It was awarded to seven freedom fighters who showed utmost bravery and died in action for their nation. They are considered martyrs.
- All the recipients of this award were killed in action during Liberation War.
- It is similar to the American Medal of Honor or the British Victoria Cross
- The other three gallantry awards are named, in decreasing order of importance, **Bir Uttom**, **Bir Bikrom** and **Bir Protik**.
- All of these awards were introduced immediately after the Liberation War' published by the Bangladesh Gazette on 15 December 1973.

1. Bir Sreshtho Shaheed Mohiuddin Jahangir , Captain, Bangladesh Army
2. Bir Sreshtho Shaheed Hamidur Rahman, Sepoy, Bangladesh Army
3. Bir Sreshtho Shaheed Mostofa Kamal, Sepoy, Bangladesh Army
4. Bir Sreshtho Shaheed Matiur Rahman, Flight Lieutenant,
Bangladesh Air Force
5. Bir Sreshtho Shaheed Mohammad Ruhul Amin, *Engine Room Artificer,
Class-1, Bangladesh Navy*
6. Bir Sreshtho Shaheed Munshi Abdur Rouf, Lance Nayek, Bangladesh Rifles
7. Bir Sreshtho Shaheed Nur Mohammad Sheikh, Lance Nayek,
Bangladesh Rifles.

Other Awards

- **Bir Uttom** (বীর উত্তম, [lit.](#) 'Great Valiant Hero') is the second highest award for individual gallantry in Bangladesh after the Bir Sreshtho and the highest gallantry award for a living individual. Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, 69 people have been awarded the Bir Uttom.
- **Bir Bikrom** (বীর বিক্রম, lit. 'Valiant hero') is the third highest gallantry award in Bangladesh. Bir Bikrom was awarded to 175 fighters.
- **Bir Protik** (literally, Symbol of Bravery or Idol of Courage) is the fourth highest gallantry award in Bangladesh. A total of 426 people have received the award.
- These awards were declared on 15 December, 1973.