

Historical Chronology of Pakistan

Pakistan has a rich history dating back nearly 5,000 years, to the Indus Valley Civilization (ca. 2500-1600 B.C.). Due to its strategic location, the subcontinent has played host to a series of invaders—Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Turks, and others— each weaving a further layer of complexity into the already intricate culture. Islam was introduced in the early 8th century. A succession of Muslim dynasties ruled from Delhi for the period from the early 13th century to the middle of the 19th century, when the subcontinent came to be ruled by the British Crown.

1906

A group of Muslim notables formed the All-India Muslim League. Initially, the League adopted the same objective as the Indian National Congress i.e. self-government for India within the British Empire. However, with the Congress and League unable to reach an agreement on how to ensure the protection of Muslim religious, economic, and political rights, the League adopted a more drastic approach, calling for political independence from the Hindu-majority regions of British India.

1930

In his presidential address to the Muslim League, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal first introduced the concept of a Muslim state within the confederation of India.

1940

March

During the annual session of the Muslim League, Mohammad Ali Jinnah formally endorses the 'Lahore Resolution' calling for greater Muslim autonomy within British India. At the end of the Second World War, the United Kingdom moved with increasing urgency to grant independence to India. The Congress Party and the Muslim League could not reach an agreement, either on the terms for a Constitution or on the establishment of an interim government.

1946

Presidential elections are held. Congress and Muslim League emerge as the major parties in British India, with a major boost in popularity for the Muslim League, winning nearly 90% of the Muslim seats. At first both parties seem to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan, which suggest the establishment of a confederation in India. However, talks soon break down on the issue of representation of Muslims in the central government.

1947

February

Lord Mountbatten is appointed viceroy of India.

June

The assets of British India are divided in the ratio of seventeen for India to five for Pakistan by decision of the Viceroy's Council, yet these divisions are difficult to implement, with Pakistan complaining of non-deliveries.¹ From cash balances of undivided India of Rupees 4,000 million, it is agreed that Pakistan would get Rupees 750 million as her share. Rupees 200 million are been already paid to Pakistan, yet the remaining amount is withheld under the pretext that Pakistan would use it in the war going on in Kashmir. However, given the intense global pressure, intensified by Gandhi's fast, the remaining amount is released in early 1948.

July

Passing of the India Independence Act, with two dominion states created and the princely states provided with a set of guidelines how to accede to either dominion. The 560 princely states accede easily, yet four states, Hyderabad, Junagadh, Jodhpur, and Jammu and Kashmir are unsure. After brief hesitation, Hyderabad, Junagadh and Jodhpur, who each have Muslim rulers with majority Hindu populations, coaxed to accede to India.

The accession of Jammu and Kashmir can not be resolved peacefully, and remains a source of contention between the two countries to this day. The maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir is reluctant to decide on accession to either dominion and signs agreements with both, allowing for the free movement of people and goods to Kashmir. With reports of oppression of fellow Muslims in Kashmir, armed groups from the North-West Frontier Province enter Kashmir.

While Kashmir becomes a conflict zone, the partition of Bengal and Punjab unleashes a flood of communal violence. Both Jinnah and Nehru unsuccessfully attempts to quell the riots, yet partition see at what conservative estimates say, at least 250,000 deaths, and between 12 and 24 million refugees cross the newly established border. The territory of Pakistan is split between the Western wing consisted of the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and NWFP, and the Eastern Wing of East Bengal, with the two wings separated by 1,600 km of Indian territory.

14 August

Pakistan becomes a State independent from British India. Mohammad Ali Jinnah becomes the first Governor General of Pakistan and Liaquat Ali Khan is chosen to be the first Prime Minister. With independence come immense challenges, not least dealing with the seven million refugees that flood into the country,



while the most conservative estimates of the casualties were 250,000 dead (Library of Congress, 2005). For the subsequent 25 years, India was flanked by Pakistan on both sides; West Pakistan, comprising of the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and the North-West Frontier Province (or NWFP, now Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa), and East Pakistan (comprising what was formerly East Bengal).

The Hindu Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, with its' majority Muslim population, was hesitant to accede to either Pakistan or India. However, armed incursions into the state by tribesmen from North-west Pakistan led him to sign accession papers in 1947 and allow Indian troops into the state. The Government of Pakistan, however, refused to recognize the accession and campaigned to reverse the decision. The status of Kashmir remains in dispute to this day, and has been the cause for three of the four India-Pakistan conflicts - those of 1947, 1965 and 1999.

September

Pakistan becomes member of United Nations.

October

The Maharaja of Kashmir requests military assistance from India, which is given only after he signs an accession document. The government of Pakistan refuses to recognize the accession and denounces it as an act of coercion. This leads to the first war with India over disputed territory of Kashmir. The war lasts until end of December 1948.

1948

The bilateral agreement between India and Pakistan on the free movement of people, goods and capital, breaks down within a year after independence due to the trouble in Kashmir.

April

India cut off the supply of water to Pakistan from the two head works under her control.

September

Within the first year of independence, Jinnah's health deteriorates substantially, resulting in his unfortunate death. Khawaja Nazimuddin, the former Chief Minister of the province of East Bengal, is declared the second Governor-General of Pakistan.

With the loss of morale felt in the country upon the early passing of Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan faces with the underlying challenges of reconciling political leaders who have different ideas about the role of Islam in the country, and the distribution of power between the central and provincial governments, and also the direction of foreign policy.

1949

January

India takes the issue of Kashmir to the UN Security Council, who brings about a cease-fire in the state, and directs that a free and impartial plebiscite be held which would enable the people to decide which of the countries their state should accede to. The Council requires a withdrawal of armed forces from the state before the plebiscite would be held. This withdrawal never takes place and the plebiscite has not been held to date. The UN

proscribes Line of Control remaining a de facto arrangement separating Indian Administered Kashmir and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, which is effectively allied with Pakistan.

March

Liaquat Ali Khan passes the Objectives resolution, which is considered to be the *Magna Carta* in Pakistan's constitutional history.² The resolution states that the future constitution of Pakistan would not be modelled on Islamic principles, thus paving the way for the establishment of a state where religion would play a key role. The foreign policy of Pakistan is delineated as pro-West, while administration continued to be centralized.

In response to the Objectives Resolution, the Constitution Assembly set up a number of committees, the most important of which is the Basic Principles Committee, mean to determine the basic principles of the future constitution of Pakistan. East Pakistan raises two main issues with the first report, the first being that East and West Pakistan are allocated the same number of seats in the Senate, despite the East holding the majority of the population, and the second is that Urdu is being declared as the sole national language of Pakistan. The final report of the Basic Principles Committee is severely criticised and raises many points of contention between East and West Pakistan, resulting in deadlock in constitution making.

1950 Decade

Numerous changes in the civilian governments and protracted and largely fruitless attempts to agree on a formula for a constitution which would be acceptable to leaders of both East and West Pakistan.

1951

October

Liaquat Ali Khan is assassinated. His assassin is also killed on the spot, and his murder remains unresolved.

1952

Under the supervision of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a temporary solution is developed on the water conflict of 1948, which worked until the 'Indus Water Treaty', which laid out a water sharing arrangement, is finalized in 1960.

January

Pakistan joins the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for a mandate of two years.

1956

March

The first constitution is approved by the Constituent Assembly; it proclaims Pakistan an Islamic republic. The Constitution provides for a parliamentary form of government and a unicameral legislature. The One Unit concept³ wherein the four provinces of West Pakistan are considered as a single unit, is recognized under the 1956 Constitution. Nevertheless, the continuing disagreements on the parity of East and West Pakistan, a weakening economy and growing ethnic and sectarian tension continues to plague the country.

1958**7 October**

President Iskander Mirza stages a coup d'état. He abrogates the constitution, imposes martial law and appoints General Muhammad Ayub Khan as the Chief Martial Law Administrator.

27 October

General Ayub Khan deposes Iskander Mirza and assumes the presidency that practically formalizes the militarization of the political system in Pakistan. The defining characteristic of the Ayub era is the introduction of a system of 'Basic Democracies', which is embodied in a new constitution introduced in 1962. During Khan's tenure Dhaka becomes the legislative capital of Pakistan while the newly established city of Islamabad in West Pakistan becomes the administrative capital.

1960

80,000 councillors 'elect' General Ayub as President for five years.

Islamabad is designed as the new capital of the country, instead of Karachi. The building starts in 1962.

1962

A new Constitution is adopted, which upheld the Basic Democracy system, and sanctifies the One Unit, but, in a move to placate East Pakistan, declares that Urdu and Bengali are to be national languages. The lowest but most important tier of the system is the union council⁴ which represents a group of villages of at least 10,000 people. Councillors, who are also known as Basic Democrats, serve as an electoral college for the Presidential election.

1965**January**

The Basic Democrats again elect General Ayub as President for five years.

July-August

Tensions once more flare between Pakistan and India, with frequent border skirmishes in the Rann of Kutch in southern Pakistan. Simultaneously, tensions are raging high along the Kashmir border, with efforts by India to incorporate presidential rule onto the state of Kashmir.

6 September

Following a Pakistani incursion in Kashmir, India launches an offensive on the cities of Lahore and Sialkot on 6 September, a date that marks the formal beginning of the first declared India-Pakistan war over Kashmir. Two weeks into the conflict, under the auspices of the then USSR, the UN mandates a ceasefire which comes into effect immediately.

1966**10 January**

The Soviet Union mediates the signing of the Tashkent Declaration, peace agreement between India and Pakistan. Both parties agree to return their armies to their pre-August 1964 positions, a decision many regard as a submission to India. Zulfikar Ali

Bhutto, the Foreign Minister, uses this opportunity to resign from government and launch an agitation against Ayub.

1968**January**

Pakistan joins the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for a mandate of two years.

1969**25 March**

Martial law is imposed for the second time, when President Ayub Khan hands over power to the Army Commander-in-Chief, General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, who assumes the title of President and Chief Martial Law Administrator.

1970**March**

Yahya Khan presents the Legal Framework Order (LFO), which is meant to act as an interim Constitution, and can be used as a basis to hold elections. The LFO dissolves the One Unit Scheme in West Pakistan and restores the four provinces, while East Pakistan with the majority in population is given the majority of seats in the proposed National Assembly.

December

First general election in Pakistan that results in an absolute majority for the East Pakistan based Awami League. However, the overwhelming majority of the League's seats are won from constituencies in East Pakistan, while the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) holds the bulk of the seats from constituencies in West Pakistan. The Awami League mobilises the electorate in East Pakistan with their Six Points Programme,⁵ while the PPP raises the slogan 'Roti, Kapraaur Makaan' (food, clothing and shelter). A tussle begin with West Pakistani leaders including the military reluctant to hand over power to the Awami League, given its advocacy of what is seen as a separatist agenda. A long period of civil unrest commences in East Pakistan.

1971**March**

Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League declares an independent People's Republic of Bangladesh, launching a non-cooperation movement. A military offensive commences in East Pakistan, and a brutal civil war ensues which culminates only when India intervenes in favour of the East Pakistani separatists.

December

The second declared India-Pakistan war starts and ends with Pakistan's surrender on 16 December. The war results in the emergence of East Pakistan as Bangladesh, an independent nation.

20 December

Yahya Khan resigns after the war, and hands over the presidency to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Chairman of the PPP, the party that won the most seats in West Pakistan in the general elections of 1970. With the promise of a new Pakistan, Bhutto introduces extensive land reforms and nationalizes ten categories of major industries.

1972**January**

Pakistan leaves the Commonwealth in protest at the Commonwealth's recognition of breakaway Bangladesh.

July

The Simla Agreement is signed with India, for the exchange of occupied territories and release of Prisoners of War. The agreement sets a new frontline in Kashmir.

1973**April**

A new Constitution is drafted and presented in the National Assembly. It is to come into effect from 14 August 1973.

August

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan as per the Constitution, and Fazallahi Chaudhry the President. Pakistan's first civilian elected government has a mixed legacy. While important social protection reforms are implemented, particularly for industrial labour; the nationalization of major, and later medium enterprises, and then banks effectively stymies economic activity. Bhutto's style of leadership is viewed as arrogant and exclusionary by many in his own party, and his government's persecution of political opponents and dismissal of two leftist provincial governments further erode his support base.

1976**January**

Pakistan joins the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for a mandate of two years.

1977**March**

New elections are held, but with allegations of rigging dog the ruling party.

July

As civil unrest again grips the country, Bhutto is deposed in a military coup led by General Zia-ul-Haq, who suspends the 1973 Constitution. General Zia soon reneges on his initial promise of holding fresh elections and instead moves to consolidate his rule. His government advocates an "Islamization" of society and the judicial system, effectively muzzles all opposition, and perpetrates large scale human rights abuses.

1978**September**

General Zia becomes president, launches campaign to introduce Islamic law and usher in an Islamic system of law and governance in Pakistan.

1979**April**

President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is eventually executed on murder charges, as a result of a controversial decision by the country's Supreme Court.

December

The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan, and Pakistan sees a massive influx of over three million refugees in the provinces of Balochistan and NWFP. General Zia throws his government's support behind the Afghan Mujahideen who are resisting the invasion, and significantly boosts his image in the West. Internally, however, he continues to face resistance, which is quashed using strong-arm tactics. In spite of his status as an absolute ruler, General Zia is eventually forced to try and legitimize his rule by bringing in civilian support.

1980

US pledges military assistance to Pakistan following Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

1983**January**

Pakistan joins the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for a mandate of two years.

1985**February**

General Zia oversees the holding of non-party elections, and appoints a Sindhi politician, Muhammad Khan Junejo as Prime Minister. Although the new Prime Minister manages to carry out his promise of restoring democracy, it comes at the price of the historic Eighth Amendment, the main clause of which allows the President to dissolve the National Assembly at his own discretion.

December

Pakistan along with other 7 South Asian nation creates the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The 1973 Constitution is restored, martial law and political parties ban lifted.

1986

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's daughter Benazir returns from exile to lead PPP in campaign for fresh elections.

1988

Junejo is sacked by the President on charges of corruption. General Zia announces that new elections would be held in November the same year.

17 August

General Zia-ul-Haq is killed in a suspicious air crash, along with several notable figures, including the then American Ambassador. The Chairman of the Senate, GhulamIshaq Khan, takes over as caretaker president.

November

The PPP wins the elections with a narrow majority, forming a coalition with several other political parties. Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, is sworn in as Prime Minister; the first woman to ever govern an Islamic state. Benazir's rhetoric of employment and economic development programmes is received with immense enthusiasm, yet her administration suffers great political instability.

1989**August**

Pakistan rejoins the Commonwealth.

October

With accusations of nepotism and alienation of coalition partners, MQM quits the coalition, with Benazir barely surviving a no-confidence motion.

1990**August**

Benazir Bhutto is dismissed by the President on charges of corruption.

October

Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif,⁶ Chairman of the Pakistan Muslim League, a major component of the coalition with Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), is elected Prime Minister. During his tenure as Prime Minister, efforts are made to strengthen the industrial sector with a comprehensive national reconstruction plan. Although Sharif's policies on liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation and promoting the private sector, receive support, there is fear that the fast pace at which liberalization is developing can counteract the intention.

1991

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif begins economic liberalisation programme.

May

Sharif continues Haq's process of Islamization with the introduction of the controversial Shariat Bill: the Islamic Shariah law is formally incorporated into legal code.

1992

Government launches campaign to stamp out violence in Karachi involving mainly supporters and opponents of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a political party with a power base centered in the Urdu speaking population of Karachi and Hyderabad, the two biggest cities in Sindh.

1993**January**

Pakistan joins the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for a mandate of two years.

April

With internal dissension in the IJI, negative campaigning on the part of the PPP and controversies surrounding the role of Islam in the country, GhulamIshaq Khan for a third time invokes the Eighth Amendment and dismisses Nawaz Sharif, appointing Mir BalakhSher Khan Mazari as the caretaker Prime Minister. However, the Supreme Court quashes the Presidential Order and reinstates Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister. This move deepens the divide between Prime Minister and President, resulting in the resignation of both.

July

An interim government comes to power for three months, headed by Moin Qureshi, a former World Bank Vice President. Various political, economic, and social reforms are initiated in this brief time, gaining considerable domestic support.

October

New elections show the revival of the PPP, with Benazir Bhutto appointed once more as Prime Minister and Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, another PPP leader, as President. During her second term, Benazir continues to be dogged by allegations of corruption, in addition to facing opposition to her rule from her brother, Mir Murtaza Bhutto, who has returned to Pakistan in her tenure after many years in exile.

1995**January**

Pakistan becomes founding member of the World Trade Organization.

1996**September**

Mir Murtaza is assassinated in Karachi while Benazir Bhutto is still Prime Minister. This incident, combined with mounting opposition to her rule leads to the dismissal of her government by a President who is a stalwart of her own party. Leghari charges her administration with corruption, mismanagement of the economy, and implication in extrajudicial killings in Karachi, and fresh elections are announced for September 1997.

1997**September**

The elections are won by the Pakistan Muslim League and once again Nawaz Sharif becomes the Prime Minister. Sharif is elected with a sizable majority and his administration sees several important amendments introduced to the constitution, including the termination of the Eighth Amendment, which has vested the President with considerable power. The Sharif government also engages in a prolonged dispute with the judiciary, culminating in the storming of the Supreme Court by Muslim League followers, and the dismissal of the Chief Justice.

December

Prime Minister Sharif also succeeds in forcing the resignation of President Leghari, and appoints Rafiq Tarar as President.

1998

Pakistan conducts its own nuclear tests after India explodes several nuclear devices. US President George W. Bush issues sanctions to Pakistan for the nuclear tests.

May

The government declares a state of emergency and undertakes a series of nuclear tests, in response to those

carried out by India. Amidst heavy outcry, the US and other western states impose economic sanctions against both countries.

1999

February

As the economy crumbled, Sharif initiates a rapprochement with India, inviting the Indian Prime Minister to Lahore. This initiative comes to nothing.

April

Benazir Bhutto and her husband are convicted of corruption and given jail sentences. Ms Bhutto stays out of the country.

May

Insurgents from Azad Kashmir cross the Line of Control into India, capturing high ground near the city of Kargil. India resorts to airstrikes to drive out the fighters, while Pakistan clarifies its military is not involved, yet offers contradicting statements of support. With growing international pressure, Prime Minister Sharif pulls out all remaining 'militants' from Indian territory under a deal brokered by the US. In the aftermath of the Kargil crisis, a tense relationship develops between Nawaz Sharif and the military.

October

In an attempt to replace Chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf while he is abroad, Nawaz Sharif is overthrown in a coup d'état. A Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) suspends the federal and provincial parliaments, holds the Constitution in abeyance and designates Musharraf as the Chief Executive. The Commonwealth suspends the membership of Pakistan following the military coup of Musharraf.

2000

April

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is sentenced to life imprisonment on hijacking and terrorism charges.

May

Pakistan's Supreme Court validates the 1999 coup and grants Musharraf executive and legislative authority for the subsequent three years.

June

Musharraf declares himself President.

December

A deal is reached with the military leadership under pressure from the US President and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Nawaz Sharif and key members of his family go into exile to Saudi Arabia.

2001

June

General Pervez Musharraf names himself president while remaining head of the army.

August

Musharraf issues a Legal Framework Order establishing the constitutional basis for his presence in office.

September

After the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks in the United States, Musharraf makes the tough choice of guaranteeing complete cooperation in the US-led War on Terror, a decision which is met with harsh criticism across the country. The cooperation includes locating and shutting down terrorist training camps, cracking down on extremist groups, withdrawing support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, giving the US permission to make use of Pakistani airspace to launch air attacks against targets in Afghanistan, and the sharing of intelligence and logistical facilities. Musharraf survives several assassination attempts by groups believed to be part of Al-Qaeda, while US lifts sanctions imposed after Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998.

December

India and Pakistan prompt fears of full-scale war by massing troops along the common border amid growing tensions following a suicide attack on the Indian parliament.

2002

January

President Musharraf bans two militant groups - Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad - and takes steps to curb religious extremism.

April

In a referendum Musharraf's presidency is extended another five years, although he maintains his position as Chief of Army Staff.

May

Pakistan tests fires three medium-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, amid rumours of impending conflict with India.

August

President Musharraf grants himself sweeping new powers under a Legal Framework Order, including the right to dismiss an elected parliament.

October

The pro-Musharraf party the PML-Q wins the majority of the seats in Parliament during the General Elections, with a civilian Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali appointed.

2003

January

Pakistan joins the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for a mandate of two years.

November

Pakistan declares a Kashmir ceasefire; India follows suit.

December

The Seventeenth Amendment to the constitution is passed by parliament, and the 1999 coup is retroactively legitimised.

Pakistan and India agree to resume direct air links and to allow over flights of each other's planes from beginning of 2004, after a two-year ban.

2004**January**

Musharraf is elected as President.

April

Parliament approves creation of military-led National Security Council, institutionalising role of armed forces in civilian affairs.

May

Pakistan readmitted to Commonwealth.

June

Upon the sudden resignation of Jamali, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain takes over as caretaker Prime Minister.

August

Shaukat Aziz, the former Finance Minister, is appointed as Prime Minister.

2005**April**

Bus services, the first in 60 years, operate between Muzaffarabad in Pakistani-administered Kashmir and Srinagar in Indian-controlled Kashmir

August

Pakistan tests its first nuclear-capable cruise missile.

2006**September**

Government signs peace accord to end fighting with pro-Al-Qaeda militants in Waziristan tribal areas near Afghan border.

November

China and Pakistan sign an agreement on free trade area (FTA). The agreement is projected to triple current bilateral trade to 15 billion US dollars within five years.

2007

Musharraf's government faces its first serious opposition in early 2007 when the President tries to force the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry to resign. The Chief Justice's removal from office ignites a national movement by lawyers. Further protests by not only

the legal community but civil society and nearly all political parties, condemn the suspension as unconstitutional, and rallies against Musharraf take place all over the country. Pakistan and India sign an agreement aimed at reducing the risk of accidental nuclear war.

July

The siege of the Lal Masjid (Urdu: Red Mosque) in Islamabad takes place, following an incident when militants call for the imposition of Islamic law, take over a nearby library, and set fire to the Ministry of Environment. The Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa madrassa complex are besieged, and when negotiations fail, the complex is stormed and captured by the army resulting in over 100 deaths, and even more injuries. The storming of the mosque results in the nullification of the peace agreement between the militants and the government in Waziristan. This event marks a surge in militancy in the country, debilitating the overall level of security.

September-November

Both Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto are rumoured to return to Pakistan for the January 2008 elections. When Sharif attempts to return to Pakistan in September he is arrested on corruption charges and placed on a plane bound for Jeddah. Undeterred, Benazir Bhutto attempts the same feat one month later, and although she is not arrested, two suicide bombers attempted to assassinate her at a rally in Karachi, resulting in mass casualties. Sharif returns to the country in November. Despite Musharraf's warnings that he could not guarantee Bhutto's safety, Benazir continues holding mass PPP rallies.

After having been elected as President for a second term by the Parliament, General Musharraf, pre-empted an impending court decision against his re-election, suspends the constitution, and declares a state of emergency. Justice Chaudhry convenes a seven-member bench which issues an interim order against this action. He and other judges are again removed from their offices and put under house arrest.

The Commonwealth suspends the membership of Pakistan for the second time following the imposition of a state of emergency.

December

While leaving a political rally in Rawalpindi, Benazir is assassinated. The circumstances surrounding her assassination remain mired in controversy. Benazir's assassination causes elections to be postponed by a month. Chairmanship of the PPP is passed on to Benazir's son Bilawal Bhutto, with Asif Ali Zardari, her husband, assuming co-Chairmanship. The Constitution is restored on 15 December.

2008**February**

The PPP emerges with the most seats in parliament in the elections, and forms a coalition government with the PML, Nawaz group.



March

Yousaf Raza Gilani is elected as the Leader of the House, and the Prime Minister, while Musharraf, who has by now resigned as Army Chief, remains President. After several months of talks between the coalition parties, preparations are made for parliament to impeach Musharraf.

April

Pakistan ratifies the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and sign both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT).

July

United Kingdom International Development Minister Douglas Alexander visits Islamabad to announce that aid will double to \$956 millions over the next three years.

August

Musharraf resigns paving the way for Asif Zardari to be elected as President.

September

Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, sweeps to victory in a presidential election.

Suicide bombing on Marriott Hotel in Islamabad kills 53 people. Soon after, government launches a major offensive in Bajaur tribal area, killing more than 1,000 militants.

October

Pakistan and China sign a loan agreement for setting up the Paksat-1R Satellite ground control segment project and other 9 agreements on trade and agriculture, among others.

November

The government borrows \$7.6 billion from the International Monetary Fund to overcome its spiralling debt crisis.

December

India blames Mumbai attacks in November on Pakistani-based militants and demands Pakistan take action. Islamabad denies involvement but promises to co-operate with the Indian investigation.

The security situation in Pakistan continues to deteriorate with a spike in terrorist incidents in 2008 and 2009. As the militancy gains ground even in regions outside the tribal belt, the government is forced to negotiate with some groups in regions such as Malakand in the NWFP.

2009**February**

Government agrees to implement Sharia law in north-western Swat valley in effort to persuade Islamist militants there to agree to permanent ceasefire.

March

The Supreme Court deems Musharraf's actions illegal, and the Chief Justice is re-instated.

April

Swat agreement breaks down after Taleban-linked militants seek to extend their control. Government launches offensive to wrest control of Swat from militants.

August

Suicide bombing in north western city of Peshawar kills 120 people.

2010**February**

Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir meets with his Indian counterpart, Nirupama Rao, in a first step towards rebuilding trust with Pakistan after their first formal talks since the 2008 Mumbai (Bombay) attacks.

June

Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani meets with China's Vice Prime Minister Zheng De-jiang met in Islamabad to sign five agreements on different projects, including construction of a port, development in the information technology sector, improvements in Pakistan's cable system, engineering projects, and construction of a drought dam.

Pakistan ratifies the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

April

Parliament approves package of wide-ranging constitutional reforms. Measures include transferring key powers from the office of the president to the prime minister

July

Pakistan and Afghanistan sign a Memorandum of understanding for the Afghan-Pak Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA). The agreement is observed by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

August

The worst floods in national history occur, killing nearly two thousand people and leaving over 20 million homeless.

2011**May**

Pakistan's international image suffers a blow when Osama Bin Laden is killed by US forces in the garrison town of Abbotabad. The country has also seen an upsurge in activities of extremist elements, with at least two high profile assassinations occurring in 2011, where politicians who were opponents of the controversial Blasphemy Law are targeted. The economy has slowed down considerably, and the current government is embroiled in a series of disputes with the judiciary over the issue of whether the

President has immunity, or is liable to prosecution for alleged corruption.

November

Pakistan shuts down NATO supply routes after the Allianz attacks on military outposts kills 25 Pakistani soldiers. On month later US troops leave the Shamsi air base in Balochistan.

2012

January

Pakistan joins the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for a mandate of two years.

Notes

1. A financial agreement is reached in December 1948, but the actual settlement of financial and other disputes continues until 1960.
2. In 1985 the Objectives Resolution is incorporated into the Pakistani Constitution under the Eighth Amendment.
3. A bill that was passed in autumn of 1955.
4. Union Council was responsible for local government, including agricultural and community development, maintaining law and order and trying minor cases in conciliation courts.
5. The Six Points Programme advocates for a Federation of Pakistan based on the Lahore resolution, with Foreign Affairs and Defense the two only responsibilities of the Federal Government, the establishment of an interchangeable currency for the two wings, a series of economic, fiscal and legal reforms and finally, the establishment of a defense force for East Pakistan, who have none at the time.
6. Sharif had previously served in the province of Punjab, first as Finance Minister and then as Chief Minister.

Sources:

BBC
CIDOB International Yearbook, several editions

