

said, "Eagle has two wings. If one wing is cut, the eagle will fall." Pakistan Government dominated by people of strength, eagle will fall." Pakistan Government specially Punjabis did not take the warning and gradually led the country to the ultimate disintegration of Pakistan. The denial of due share in services including Defence and in Commerce, Industries, Development allocation and even in political representation at different levels by West Pakistan leaders and officers was the principal cause behind the country's dismemberment and birth of Bangladesh in 1971.

(B)

The 1970 General Elections

Ayub Khan transferred power, after country wide agitation against him, illegally and unconstitutionally to Yahia Khan, then commander in Chief of the Pakistan Army, on 25 March 1969. Yahia came to power proclaiming martial law for the second time in Pakistan and became the CMLA and President of the country. Yahia's first order was to impose heavy penalties for trouble makers, strikers, demonstrators and anyone who even questioned the wisdom of martial law were liable to as much as fourteen years in jail. But he also made it clear that reform was more in his mind than repression. The Yahia regime did not ban political parties, nor did it touch party leaders and formal press censorship had not been imposed. But it restricted political activity till 1 January 1970.

An Election Commission was formed on 28 July 1969, headed by a Bengali Supreme Court Judge. Subsequently on 5 August 1969, President constituted a civilian cabinet with people selected from political, bureaucratic and academic vocations. On 28 November 1969 Yahia Khan announced that the elections would be held on 5 October 1970. This election was to be the first general election on the basis of adult franchise in the country to elect the members of the National and provincial Assemblies.

In December 1969 on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of Suhrawardy, Mujib, standing before his mausoleum, had declared that "henceforth the Eastern region of Pakistan will be known as Bangladesh instead of East Pakistan." Besides, so confident Awami League was of the success in the elections that it refused to entertain any thought of electoral alliance with other parties. Meanwhile, the rise of Mujib was a source of worry for other Bengali leaders contesting the elections. This was especially the case with Bhasani. On 6 January 1969 Bhasani appealed to Yahia Khan to settle the issue of 'regional autonomy' before the election. Bhasani felt

that Mujib could be thwarted from gaining outright majority the polls if Yahia could be induced to grant some measure of autonomy. But Yahia did not oblige Bhasani. The idea of autonomy was unacceptable to the military rulers of Pakistan, whether Ayub or Yahia.

Legal Framework Order (LFO) issued by Yahia Khan

On 30 March 1970, Yahia Khan issued the Legal Framework Order (LFO) with a view to transferring power to the elected representatives. LFO, among others, provided for the following.

- (1) One Unit in West Pakistan would be dissolved and provinces would return to their original position as before the establishment of One Unit.
- (2) National Assembly will have representation according to population and members would be elected on universal adult franchise. National Assembly would consist of 300 members and 13 women members as follows:-
 - a. East Pakistan – 169 members including 7 Women members.
 - b. Punjab – 85 members including 3 women members.
 - c. Sind – 28 members.
 - d. Baluchistan – 5 members including 1 women member.
 - e. NWFP – 18 members.
 - f. Tribal areas – 7 members.

NWFP and Tribal areas would together elect one women member.

- (3) National Assembly would initially sit as a constitution making body. The constitution should have to be framed within 120 days from the first sitting of the Assembly.
- (4) Each of the provinces of East Pakistan, Punjab, Sind, NWF and Baluchistan would have provincial Assemblies with members according to their population.
- (5) The Constitution to be made by the National Assembly should be of federal type with large measure of autonomy for the provinces.
- (6) The new framed constitution would require the assent of the president before it comes into force.
- (7) General Election for National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies was fixed for October 1970 (Actually held in December 1970/January 1971).

After the declaration of LFO, on 4 April 1970, Yahia Khan went to Dhaka to assess the political situation and meet the political leaders there. On 7 June, the Awami League officially launched its election campaign on the basis of the six-point programme. During campaign, Mujib warned the people to be ready for any eventuality in the great struggle for their rights. In a public meeting at Dhaka Race Course *Maidan* (field) Mujib used the slogan '*Joi Bangla*' for the first time. It became the battle cry in the electoral campaign and later, in the liberation war. On 1 July 1970, the one Unite of West Pakistan was dissolved restoring the four provinces of the Punjab, Sind, NWFP and Baluchistan.

The date for the general election had been originally fixed for 5 October 1970. But it was postponed to 7 December because of devastating floods in East Pakistan during the month of August. In November the coastal areas of East Pakistan were hit by the most terrifying cyclone in living memory. It was described in the world press as the cyclone of the century and an estimated half a million people perished. The best way to succor the victims of the catastrophe was by air drops of relief supplies. No helicopter was made available for this purpose by the government although as many as 59 helicopters were sitting idle in West Pakistan under the control of the armed forces. India the next door neighbor was quick to offer relief assistance in various forms, including aircraft, but Pakistan was reluctant to accept it 'out of pride and paranoia'. Permission was later given to India to provide humanitarian help but only on condition that relief supplies should be sent overland, which delayed assistance to victims who needed it urgently. However, due to the unprecedented flood and cyclone situation in East Pakistan, the election dates were changed and the Awami League made good use of the additional time available to it for electioneering. Awami League won the hearts of the cyclone victims by touring the affected areas and sending volunteers to provide relief to them. It suited Awami League to have the general election while the memories of the people were still fresh about the "criminal neglect" of the government to respond promptly and adequately to the natural disaster in their hour of need. On 13 November 1970, Maulana Bhasani called for an "Independent East Pakistan" in a public meeting. On 27 November, at a press conference in Dhaka, Yahia Khan held out the Threat that Martial Law would continue if the proposed constitution was not framed in conformity with the five basic principles contained in the Legal Framework Order". Awami League suspected that there might be attempts to postpone the elections again. On 26 November, Sheikh Mujib called for resisting any more to delay the holding of the general election. Anticipating hostile reaction to province-wide postponement of elections, the government limited the postponement to the cyclone-affected areas only, involving nine seats. These were held on 17 January 1971. Meanwhile, Bhasani had been vacillating for a long time as to whether his party should contest the elections. Bhasani was probably

looking for a graceful exit after realizing that his candidates would be announced in the coming elections by the Awami League candidates. However, the cyclone provided him with a convenient excuse to withdraw from the electoral race.

Finally election to the National Assembly was held on 7 December 1970, as scheduled excepting nine seats in the cyclone-affected areas of East Pakistan. Registered voters totaled 56.94 million (30.5 million males and 26.44 million females) of whom about 60 per cent cast their votes. East Pakistan had 31,211,209 votes. Punjab 16,364,499, Sind 5,339,523, NWFP 3,074,217 and Baluchistan 956,045 and their respective percentages of votes cast were 57,69,60,48 and 40. The AL won all but two of the 162 East Pakistan seats in the National Assembly, Excluding 7 indirect elected women's seats. It thus, received about 72 percent of the votes and gained an absolute victory of any party in a free election anywhere. The two non-Awami League winners were Raja Tridev Roy, an independent candidate from Chittagong Hill Tracts and Nurul Amin, The PDP Chief, The AL, however, did not get any seat from the West Pakistan. In West Pakistan, Bhuttu's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was the big winner, having secured 83 out of 138 seats in the National Assembly excluding 5 indirectly elected women's seats. Thus, the PPP became the second largest party in the National Assembly. The PPP also did not get any seat from East Pakistan.

Table 7

Sonar Bangla Shashan (graveyard) Keno?

Items of Disparity	Bangladesh	West Pakistan
	Rs. in crores	Rs. in crores
Revenue Expenditure	1500	5000
Development Expenditure	3000	6000
Foreign Aid	20 per cent	80 per cent
Imports	25 per cent	75 per cent
Central Government Service	15 per cent	85 per cent
Employment in Armed Forces	10 per cent	90 per cent
Rice per maund	Rs. 50	Rs. 25
Atta per maund	Rs. 30	Rs. 15
Mustard Oil per seer	Rs. 5	Rs. 2.50
Gold per tola	Rs. 175	Rs 135

Source: The AL Poster published and circulated on the eve of election, October 1970.

Table 8
Pakistan National Assembly Election Results (Province-wise)

Name of party	No of seats contested	E. Pak.	Punjab	Sind	NWFP	Baluchistan	Tribal areas	Women's seats	Total
AL	166	160	-	-	-	-	-	7	167
PPP	122	-	64	18	1	-	-	5	88
QML	132	-	1	1	7	-	-	-	9
CML	119	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	7
PML (C)	124	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
NAP (W)	61	-	-	-	3	3	-	1	7
PDP	108	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
JI	200	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	4
JUP (H)	93	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	7
MJUI	Not known	-	4	3	-	-	-	-	7
Independents	300	1	3	3	-	-	7	-	14
		162	82	27	18	4	7	13	313

Source: *The Dawn*, Karachi, 11 December 1970, and *The Pakistan Observer*, Dhaka, 20 January 1970.

Election to the provincial Assemblies were held on 17 December, except 21 constituencies in the cyclone affected areas of East Pakistan which were, however, completed on 17 January 1971. In these elections, the AL won another resounding victory by capturing 288 out of 300 seats excluding 10 indirectly elected women's seats. The PPP won a majority in the Punjab and Sind where it had received 113 out of 180 seats and 28 out of 60 seats respectively.

Bangladesh, 1905-2005

Table 9

Election Results East Pakistan Provincial Assembly

Name of Party	General Seats	Indirectly Elected Women's seats	Total
AL	288		
PDP	2	10	298
NAP(W)	1	-	2
JI	1	-	1
NI	1	-	1
PPP	-	-	1
CML	-	-	-
PML (C)	-	-	-
QML	-	-	-
KSP	-	-	-
Independents	7	-	7
Total No. of seats	300	10	310

Source: *The Dawn*, 21 December 1970, and *the Pakistan Observer*, 20 January 1970.

Thus, the completion of Pakistan's first ever truly general election took place with complete freedom and well-organised on the basis of adult franchise. It was a first step toward the restoration of a democratic and civilian government in the country since its inception. The next step, that is, the framing of a constitution generally acceptable to all the political parties was to be accomplished within the stipulated period. Above all, irrespective of the success or failure of the parties to evolve an agreed constitution, the both National and Provincial elections had proved beyond doubt that the people of Pakistan were mature enough politically to take part in and work with the democratic process of governing.

The 1970 election result gave AL the mandate for fashioning the constitution of the country on the basis of Six-Point, actually for a confederation of Pakistan with two wings of the 469 elected representatives from Pakistan only one was opposed to the Six-Point Programme and in West Pakistan out of 444 elected representatives only 38 (Qayyum ML 30 and JI 8) were opposed while 236 PPP representatives had no views. Thus 676 representatives out of 913 were favourably disposed to Six-Point programme while in the consumable only 101 out of 313 were opposed to it. Bhutto with a total of 324 representatives was simply interested in