

## BANGLADESH

**Date of Elections:** 3 March 1988

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 6 December 1987. General elections had previously been held in May 1986.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Bangladesh, the *Jatiya Sangsad*, consists of 300 members elected for 5 years. Thirty seats are in addition reserved exclusively for women, who are to be elected by Parliament itself.

### **Electoral System**

Any citizen of Bangladesh - regardless of race, caste or sex - not less than 18 years of age, who has neither been declared insane nor convicted under the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order 1972, may be enrolled on the electoral roll of a constituency delimited for the purpose of election to Parliament if he is a resident of that same constituency.

One electoral roll is established for each constituency. Voting is not compulsory.

All citizens of Bangladesh having attained the age of 25 qualify to be elected to Parliament. Disqualified, nevertheless, are the insane; undischarged bankrupts; persons who, on conviction for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude, have been sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years, unless five years have elapsed since their release; persons owing allegiance to a foreign State; certain government contractors; persons convicted under the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order 1972; and persons holding certain offices of profit in the service of the Republic or of a statutory public authority.

Nomination papers of candidates must be accompanied by a deposit of 2,000 *takas*. Any person may simultaneously be a candidate in several constituencies.

The 300 members of Parliament chosen by popular vote are elected from as many constituencies on the basis of simple majority. Each elector expresses his vote by placing a mark with a rubber stamp within the space on the ballot containing the name and symbol of the candidates of his choice.

By-elections are held within 90 days to fill any seat falling vacant in Parliament.

## Background and Outcome of the Elections

On 6 December 1987, President of the Republic Hussain Mohammed Ershad dissolved Parliament in the midst of an opposition campaign calling for his and his Government's resignation, and a nationwide state of emergency, which had been declared on 27 November. The President stated that he wished to pave the way for fresh elections to receive the people's mandate on various national issues. The polling date was originally set for 28 February before being postponed.

Polling day was marked by violence and a boycott by the three leading opposition groups - the Awami League (an eight-party alliance) headed by Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the Moslem *Jammat-i-Islami* and the right-wing Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), all of which alleged electoral fraud. In this context, the ruling *Jatiya Dal*, or Nationalist Party, reportedly increased its parliamentary majority to 251 seats (including 18 unopposed), independents captured 25 seats and several minor parties shared the rest.

On 27 March, a new Council of Ministers headed by Mr. Ershad was sworn in. The Prime Minister is Mr. Moudud Ahmed.

## Statistics

### 1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in Parliament

Number of registered electors . . . . . 48,000,000 (approx.)

Political Group	Number
<i>Jatiya Dal</i> Party. . . . .	251
Combined Opposition Group (COG). . . . .	18
<i>Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal</i> . . . . .	2
Freedom Party. . . . .	2
Others. . . . .	2
Independents. . . . .	25
	300**

\* Unofficial figures.

### 2. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men. . . . .	296
Women. . . . .	4
	300**

\*\* Excluding the 30 seats reserved for women.