

Bangladesh

Response to Information Request:	Number: BGD98001.ZSF
Date:	20 March 1998
Subject:	Bangladesh: Bangladesh Diplomat, The 1975 Coup d'Etat and Mujibur Rahman
From:	INS Resource Information Center, Washington, DC
Keywords:	Bangladesh / Coup d'Etat / Sheikh Mujibar Rahman

Query:

Was A.M. Rashed Chowdhury involved in the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman? Can you provide information on Sheikh Rahman.

Response:

Sheikh Mujibur (Mujib) Rahman

Sheikh Mujibur (Mujib) Rahman was the leader of the independence movement that led to the establishment of the country of Bangladesh. He was the country's first president and became the Prime Minister after his party the Awami League, the founding party of Bangladesh, won a majority of the votes in the general election in 1973. Sheikh Mujib was assassinated in a 1975 military coup. Sheikh Mujib is considered the founding father of Bangladesh. The coup leaders were granted immunity from prosecution under an Indemnity Ordinance implemented immediately after the coup by the late president Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed. It was later incorporated in the constitution by assassinated president Ziaur Rahman. (*Agence France Press* 18 October 1996) Some of the individuals involved with the coup were subsequently appointed to foreign diplomatic posts.

Political Events and Rashed Chowdhury

Political violence is common in Bangladesh's history. Since its creation, Bangladesh has experienced nineteen reported coup attempts, two full-scale military takeovers, and two assassinations of supreme leaders (*Human Rights Watch*). The regime of General Ziaur (Zia) Rahman, founder and leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, came to power in another coup in November 1975.

p>In June 1996, Sheikh Mujib's daughter, Sheikh Hasina Rahman was elected Prime Minister under the Awami League party. In August 1996, she announced her intention to bring to trial the former army officers who assassinated her father and twenty other family members. She repealed the Indemnity Ordinance. She also declared 15 August as "national mourning day" to mark the anniversary of her father's death. The 1975 coup leader Colonel Abdur Rashid and a number of other military officers involved in the killings left Bangladesh shortly after Sheikh Hasina's coming to power. Colonels Farook Rahman and Shahriar Rashid Khan and Major Muhammad Khairuzzman were arrested in Bangladesh on August 12. Arms, fake passports and some foreign currency were seized from the homes of the officers. Five other senior coup leaders deserted the foreign missions to which they were posted and sought asylum abroad. (*India Abroad* 23 August 1996). The government called upon western and Moslem countries not to give political asylum to the military officers involved in the coup. There were reports of the diplomats

seeking asylum in Canada. One of the accused coup leaders was jailed in Bangkok. (*Agence France Presse* 18 October 1996).

There is a Rashed Chowdhury, charge d'affairs for Brazil listed as one of the participants in the coup. (*Deutsche Presse-Argentin* 10 August 1996). An Amnesty International report lists Lt. Col. A.M. Rashed Chowdhury as one the of the officers being sought (*Amnesty* May 1997, 5). The RIC found no other information referring to Mr. Chowdhury.

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Documentation, Information and Research Branch (DIRB), Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa. 12 May 1989. Response to Information Request BGD00025.

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