ready for approval by the Constituent Assembly, governor general of Pakistan Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the Constituent Assembly in December 1954. Earlier, in April 1953, he unlawfully dismissed Khwaja Nazimuddin and his cabinet although Nazimuddin commanded clear majority in the Constituent Assembly and made another civil servant, Muhammad Ali Bogra, the prime minister. Among others, General Muhammad Ayub Khan, commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army, joined the cabinet as defence minister.

This was the first constitutional mishap of Pakistan as governor general Ghulam Muhammad was only a constitutional head. He had to act on the advice given to him by the prime minister. Under the constitutional instruments -- Indian Independence Act 1947 and the Government of India Act 1935 -- he had no legal authority to dismiss the prime minister, Nazimuddin.

In August 1955, Major General Iskander Mirza, the Minister of Interior, took over as governor general, forcing Ghulam Muhammad out of power. Iskander was sworn in as the first president under the 1956 Constitution, which was enforced in the country on March 23 in the same year.

The Constitution of 1956 proved to be short lived as on October 7, 1958, in collusion with the commander-in-chief, Muhammad Ayub Khan, Iskander Mirza abrogated the Constitution and declared martial law. General Ayub Khan was appointed CMLA. Ayub Khan ousted Iskander Mirza shortly afterwards, banning political parties and declaring himself president.

A new constitution was enforced in 1962 during the era of Ayub Khan. In the face of political agitation, Ayub Khan decided to relinquish the office of the president in February 1969.

Muhammad Yahya Khan, commander-in-chief, who had taken an oath to be faithful to the Constitution of 1962 and to Pakistan, however, in disregard of his constitutional and legal duty, abrogated the Constitution and imposed martial law throughout the country by a proclamation issued on March 26, 1969. In the face of strong political agitation, Yahya Khan on March 30, 1970, promulgated the Legal Framework Order and under its provisions, elections were held in December 1970 to the national and provincial assemblies.

It was the first general election in erstwhile Pakistan, held in 1970, though by that time, as many as four general elections had already been held in India. The latter had gained independence at the same time but did not experience constitutional misadventures like Pakistan.

After much political maneuvering, Yahya Khan summoned the national assembly to be convened on March 3, 1971, following the December 1970 election. But shortly before that, he postponed the session indefinitely. Awami League, the dominant political party of East Pakistan, reacted to this decision very sharply. To meet the situation, the Pakistan army on March 25, 1971 unleashed a reign of terror. The genocide committed by them is one of the worst known in history. As a result, the struggle for political autonomy and economic parity transformed into a war of liberation, which started at the dead of night on March 25, 1971 and independence of Bangladesh was proclaimed.

"...Because of unjust war and genocide by the Pakistan authorities, it has became impossible for the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh to meet to frame a Constitution, although General Yahya Khan summoned the elected representatives to meet on March 3, 1971 for the purpose of framing a Constitution..." reads the formal Proclamation of Independence issued on April 10, 1971, at Mujibnagar.

After independence, the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh was created by the Constituent Assembly Order 1972 on March 22, 1972. The Constituent Assembly consisted of the elected representatives of this country, elected both in the National Assembly and the Provincial elections held in December 1970 and in January 1971 in erstwhile Pakistan.

The Constituent Assembly completed its task in a remarkably short period of time and framed the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on November 4, 1972. The Constitution commenced on and from December 16, 1972.

Considering the past history of constitutional misadventures by the civil and military bureaucrats in Pakistan, the framers of the Constitution felt it necessary to make some declarations in the Preamble and Article 7 and also in some articles, which brilliantly comprehends the entire jurisprudence of constitutional law and constitutionalism in Bangladesh, including the supremacy of the Constitution. But the legacy of Pakistan seemed renewed in the newborn country, destroying the Constitution, the supreme law of the nation.