

BHUTTO TIMELINE

June 21, 1953

Benazir Bhutto is born in Karachi, Pakistan.

June 1973

Bhutto graduates cum laude from Radcliffe College with a B.A. in government. Bhutto's father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a former Pakistani president, begins serving as prime minister.

1976

Bhutto earns a B.A. in philosophy, politics and economics and is the first woman elected president of the Oxford Union, the prestigious debating society.

June 1977

After leaving Oxford, Bhutto returns to Pakistan. Soon after, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is overthrown in a military coup led by dictator Gen. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq.

April 4, 1979

After having been imprisoned for two years on Zia's charges of conspiring to murder a political opponent, Benazir's father is "judicially assassinated" in the Rawalpindi District Jail. Bhutto has said that her father's death vigil prepared her for her political career.

May 28, 1979

Bhutto and her mother are released after being detained for two months prior to the execution. Both had been active in Mr. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and had been detained to minimize demonstrations. Zia outlaws the printing or speaking of the name "Bhutto."

March 8, 1981

Bhutto and her mother are arrested in a round-up of political dissidents after her two brothers are linked to the hijacking of a Pakistani airliner. Bhutto spends the summer in solitary confinement and is then transferred to house arrest before leaving the country in exile in 1984.

July 18, 1985

In exile in France, Shannawaz Bhutto, Benazir's beloved younger brother, is found poisoned to death, under mysterious circumstances.

August 29, 1985

Bhutto returns to Pakistan from her self-imposed exile to assume leadership of her father's party. In defiance of dictator General Zia, millions of Pakistanis greet her at the airport.

April 11, 1986

Bhutto confronts her father's killer, Gen. Zia, and demands new elections while making a pledge of non-violent change.

December 18, 1987

Bhutto takes part in a traditional arranged marriage to Karachi businessman, Asif Ali Zardari.

December 2, 1988

Prime Minister Bhutto, age 35, is sworn into office, becoming the first woman Prime Minister of a Muslim nation.

January 25, 1990

Bhutto becomes the first female leader to give birth while in office.

August 6, 1990

Bhutto's government is dismissed by the president of Pakistan after only 20 months in office. Bhutto blames the military for her ouster.

October 7, 1993

After more than two years of political battling, Bhutto's PPP captures the most seats in parliamentary elections. Bhutto returns for a second term as prime minister.

September 20, 1996:

Bhutto's brother Murtaza dies in a gun battle with police in Karachi.

November 5, 1996

Pakistan's president dismisses Bhutto as the head of the government, justifying the action with a proclamation that depicted her administration as incompetent, corrupt and defiant of constitutional restraints on executive power. Bhutto is placed under house arrest and her husband is arrested.

April 15, 1999

A Pakistani court, stacked by her political opponents, accuses Bhutto of corruption. She is sentenced to five years in prison and barred from holding political office. Bhutto, in London at the time the sentence is handed down, denies all charges but remains in self-exile.

April 6, 2001

Pakistan's Supreme Court sets aside the conviction and orders a retrial for Bhutto and her imprisoned husband.

November 22, 2004

Bhutto's husband is released after 11 years in prison and never convicted of any crime.

October 4, 2007

The government of yet another dictator, Gen. Pervez Musharraf announces an American-brokered accord that includes amnesty for Bhutto, which clears the way for the General to run for election as president and for Bhutto to return to Pakistan for parliamentary elections.

December 27, 2007

Benazir Bhutto is assassinated while attending a political rally in Rawalpindi.

September 9, 2008

Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari is elected President of Pakistan.

February 2009

President Zardari requests an independent UN investigation into the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

December 2009

Two years after her death, her murder remains unsolved.