

# Bangladesh Primer

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper analyzes the Republic of Bangladesh and its history of liberation and the war of 1971. The paper also discusses the different ideologies Bangladesh stood on and how its journey was molded out of military mutinies and political upheavals that caused extreme stress on the people of Bangladesh politically and socially. The paper further elaborates on how Bangladesh overcame its historic traumas through a series of democratic transitions and protests, and ultimately leading to Dhaka's rise as a prominent player on the global stage. This paper discussed how and what policy changes have brought 50 million people out of poverty<sup>1</sup>, tripled its income per capita, and exponentially increased GDP<sup>2</sup> from \$71 billion to \$470 billion in a span of two. Further, what crises troubled Bangladesh, and what were the reasons? Finally, this paper discusses the recent bilaterals between India and Bangladesh, and why this country is so significant for Indian neighborhood policy, ending with a case analysis of potential outcomes, including events unfolding as it is begin written, where the present government is not in power, this real-time scenario reflects the unprecedented ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5th August 2024, ending her 15-year long rule, she was the only female head of state to serve such an extended period in the history of world.

**Keywords: Bangladesh, Liberations, Ideologies, Mutiny, Bilaterals**

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<sup>1</sup> [Finance Division, Ministry of Finance](#)

<sup>2</sup> [IMF Economic Outlook Report](#)

## INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Overview of Bangladesh

People's Republic of Bangladesh or the "**land of Bengal**", is a south asian country with a history of liberation through war, a history of military coup and rule, and a constant to and fro motion from democracy to dictatorship, now follows a Parliamentary system of Governance. Bangladesh is a low-lying, mainly riverine country on the Bay of Bengal.

Total Area	147,000 sq. km <sup>3</sup>
Total Population	~170 million <sup>4</sup>
Population Density	1,329 persons per sq. km <sup>5</sup>
Global Population Rank	8th most populous <sup>6</sup>
Global Area Rank	94th <sup>7</sup>
GDP Per Capita	\$2,687 <sup>8</sup>
HDI Rank	133rd out of 190 (UNDP) <sup>9</sup>
Total Government Debt	\$166.65 billion (December 2023) <sup>10</sup>
External Debt	\$74 billion <sup>11</sup>
Debt-to-GDP Ratio	37.2% <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [Ministry of External Affairs](#)

<sup>4</sup> [World Population Review](#)

<sup>5</sup> [World Population Review](#)

<sup>6</sup> [UNFPA Bangladesh](#)

<sup>7</sup> [MFA, Bangladesh](#)

<sup>8</sup> [IMF](#)

<sup>9</sup> [UNDP](#)

<sup>10</sup> [World Bank Report](#)

<sup>11</sup> [IDA](#)

<sup>12</sup> [World Bank](#)

Trade Deficit	\$20 billion (2023-24) <sup>13</sup>
Import Payments	\$45.62 billion (down by 15.42%) <sup>14</sup>
Export Payments	\$40.88 billion (up by 3.99%) <sup>15</sup>
Remittances	\$17.07 billion (1st Nine Months of FY 2023-24) <sup>16</sup>

As of December 2023, Bangladesh's total government debt was \$166.65 billion<sup>17</sup>, with an external debt of \$74 billion. According to World Economics, Bangladesh's debt-to-GDP ratio is 37.2% Bangladesh's trade deficit in the first 11 months of the fiscal year 2023-24 (July 2023 to June 2024) was \$20 billion, a decrease of \$6 billion from the previous year. This was due to a 15.42% decrease in import payments to \$45.62 billion, and a 3.99% increase in export earnings to \$40.88 billion. Remittances also helped to cushion the impact of the trade deficit, with \$17.07 billion received in the first nine months of the fiscal year. However, the garment (RMG)<sup>18</sup> sector has become the largest foreign exchange earner. Bangladesh also has a decent ranking in the global competitive index, 105th among 140 countries, and 168th among 190 countries regarding ease of doing business. Bangladesh is one of the world's emerging and fastest-growing economies. The country has cut extreme poverty in half and achieved lower-middle-income status. The economy is largely dependent on agriculture, especially rice.

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<sup>13</sup> [Bangladesh Bank](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Bangladesh Bank](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Bangladesh Bank](#)

<sup>16</sup> [World Bank Open Data](#)

<sup>17</sup> [International Development Association](#)

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.ids.trade/files/actif\\_report\\_on\\_bangladesh\\_textile\\_and\\_garment\\_industry.pdf](https://www.ids.trade/files/actif_report_on_bangladesh_textile_and_garment_industry.pdf)

## A BRIEF HISTORY

### 3.1 Bangladesh Liberation War

Bangladesh wakes up with 31 gun statues on the dates of both 16th December (victor's day) and 26th March (Bangladesh's Independence Day) which marks a tribute to martyrs and freedom fighters of the Bangladesh **liberation** war of 1971.

Bangladesh was once part of Pakistan which was liberated in 1971. Since the partition of two dominions, India and Pakistan, Pakistan had two separate land masses called **East Pakistan** (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (now Pakistan). East Pakistan had a majority of Bengali-speaking Muslims (55%) and the West had the majority of Urdu-speaking Muslims (7%)<sup>19</sup>. The power was concentrated in the hands of West Pakistan, while East Pakistan was often ill-treated and discriminated against, and Urdu was forcefully imposed on them. This made the public angry and they revolted against the Western powers which led to the language revolution, which demanded Bangla, along with Urdu, to be recognized as a national language, this cause was led by the then-local political parties, a coalition between Awami League and others called the **United Front**, headed by a person called **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**. The language protest reached its peak when numerous protests were killed on 21st February, a day now commemorated as **International Mother Language Day**.

Since the provincial elections of 1954 where the United Front won a majority, there was a series of political turmoils and setbacks in both parts of Pakistan that led to a military coup under the then General Ayub Khan who was succeeded by General Yahya Khan in 1969.

After experiencing immense pressure from the East Pakistanis on non-redressal of their issues, negligence during Cyclone Bhola, and growing economic disparity, General Yaha Khan was forced to have general elections in 1970. The **Awami League**, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a landslide victory in East Pakistan, gaining the majority in Pakistan's national parliament. This came with a pinch of salt to power holders in West Pakistan and they refused to accept the election results, causing widespread protests in East Pakistan. On the 7th of March, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered a historic speech in Dhaka, calling for civil disobedience and preparing the people for independence.

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<sup>19</sup> [The New Indian Express](#)

As a precedent the Pakistani military launched Operation Searchlight, a brutal crackdown on Dhaka and other parts of East Pakistan, targeting students, activists, and civilians, which led to widespread atrocities. On 26th March 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared East Pakistan's independence, marking the beginning of the Liberation War.

The **Mukti Bahini** (Liberation Army) fought against the Pakistani military with support from India. Millions of refugees flee to India, and widespread atrocities were committed by the Pakistani forces.

By 3rd December, India had to intervene militarily after Pakistani airstrikes on an Indian airbase and India officially declared war on Pakistan. Finally, after a bloody battle Pakistani forces surrendered in Dhaka, leading to the creation of the independent state of Bangladesh on 16th December, now celebrated as the Victory Day in Bangladesh and as Vijay Diwas in India.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested and detained in West Pakistan's custody, returned only to become the First Prime Minister of the Republic of Bangladesh and later commended as the father of the nation also referred to as Bangabandhu or the friend of Bengal.



Source : [Research Gate](#)

## 3.2 The Ideology

The return of the embattled leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was quite a moment in Bangladesh symbolizing the culmination of their struggle for independence, the atmosphere was eclectic with emotions of joy, songs, and slogans as millions of Bengalis gathered to receive him at the Tejgaon Airport. After his arrival, he made his way to deliver another historic speech. He spoke about the values of democracy, Secularism, and socialism which would be the foundation of the new Bangladesh. His return began the establishment of government structures and the normalization of political processes.

The constitution was adopted on 16th December 1972, that reflected the national aspirations and enshrined principles that included, high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy, sovereignty of people, and secularism and pledged to be, through the democratic process, a socialist society, republic, free from exploitation, a society in which the rule of law prevails, fundamental human rights and freedom oriented and a society where equality and justice in the form of political, economic and social will be secured for all its citizens.

### 3.2.1 Political Ideology

The constitution establishes Bangladesh as a **unitary state**, meaning that the central government holds supreme power and has no provision for the federal division of power. The **republic** also declared itself a **democracy** in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human further guaranteed effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels. The political structure of Bangladesh aboundingly coincides with the Indian system with the channel of the Executives which includes the President, the Prime Minister & Cabinet, the Local Government, the Defence Services, and the Attorney General, then the channel of Legislature which consists of the Parliament, and the channel of Judiciary which includes the Supreme Court, Subordinate Courts, the Administrative Tribunals, and various other channels including the Election Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General, and the Public Service Commission.

The constitution also guarantees fundamental rights such as the Right to protection of law, Protection of the right to life and personal liberty, Freedom of movement, Freedom of assembly, Freedom of

association, Freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of speech, Freedom of profession or occupation, Freedom of religion, and Rights to property to all its citizens impartially.

### **3.2.2 Social Ideology**

The Bangladesh liberation war had a great impact on the generations and thus a sense of upholding **Nationalism** in the society, which revolves around the sentiment that Bangladesh attained sovereignty and independence through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence and that its unity and solidarity has derived its identity from its language and culture. The unity lay with the rebuilding of the war-torn country, with this regard the constitution assures the emancipation of peasants, workers, and other backward sections of people from all forms of exploitation. The state also decided to take fundamental responsibility to attain through planned economic growth, a constant increase in the productive bases and forces, and a steady improvement of the material and cultural standard of living of its people, given its citizens being able to secure the provision of necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care; the right to work, that is the right to guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage having regard to the quantity and quality of work; the right to reasonable rest, recreation and leisure and the right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or other such cases.

The government's primary focus remained on rural development, agricultural revolution, providing free, compulsory, and universal education, raising the level of nutrition and the improvement of public health, adopting effective measures to prevent prostitution and gambling, and endeavoring to protect and improve the environment and to preserve and safeguard the natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forests, and wildlife for the present and future citizens.

Bangladesh makes it a state responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity for all citizens. It adopts an effective measure to remove social and economic inequality and ensure equality of opportunity and participation of women in all spheres of national life.



### 3.2.3 Economic Ideology

A **socialist economic system** was established to ensure the attainment of a just and egalitarian society, free from the exploitation of man by man. The state attains to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens, and of opportunities to reach a uniform level of economic development throughout the Republic. The state also aims at achieving and creating conditions in which, as a general principle, persons shall not be able to enjoy unearned incomes, and in which human labor in every form, intellectual and physical, shall become a fuller expression of creative endeavor and the human personality.

### 3.2.4 Linguistic Ideology

The state adopted **Bangla** or Bengali as their language on expected lines. It was Dhaka's initiative to push for the adoption of **UN resolution 56/262** in 2002 according to which 21st February is observed as the international day for the mother language worldwide to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism. Bangladeshis celebrate International Mother Language Day by placing flowers at the Martyrs' Monument and its replicas. A public holiday in the country since 1953, it is also known as **Shohid Dibôsh** (Martyr Day). Bangladeshis organize social gatherings honoring their language and culture, hold literary competitions, draw Alpana (Bengali folk art) on the roads, eat festive meals, and listen to songs. Bangla Academy arranges the Ekushey Book Fair in Dhaka for the whole month of February.

### 3.2.5 Religious Ideology

Although **secularism** was formally adopted, the state promised the elimination of communalism, discrimination, or abuse based on religion and also ensured equal status and equal rights in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and other religions, but the Republic of Bangladesh asserted with Islam as its **state religion**. It also assured that subject to law, public order, and morality every citizen has the right to profess, practice, or propagate any religion and that every religious community or denomination has the right to establish, maintain, and manage its religious institutions. On the downside, the overlap of the ideology of being secular and of having a state religion gives room for exploitation, as it evidently seen in the case of **Jamaat -e- Islam**, who propagate radical Islamist

ideologies. This system also puts the minorities on backfoot, case in point the Hindus in Bangladesh are always ordered by law to stop or pray in silence while Naamaz is on, during Durga Puja, an auspicious festival of Bengali Hindus which is often celebrated with music and dance. These sorts of contradictions can lead to deadlocks and cause of exploitation.

### 3.3 Military Mutiny & The Junta Rule

**Occurrence:** Army personnels, mainly junior ranked officers surrounded the residence of the President with tanks and armored vehicles and assassinated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members, except his two daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, who were spared as they were in Germany.

**Causes:** Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's assassination resulted from his administrative flaws. The military grew resentful of the level of funding the Rakhi Bahini received from the Mujib government, with the former's funding being reduced to 13% in the 1975–76 budget, a considerable decrease from the 50–60% it enjoyed during the Pakistan period. The **Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini** (JRB) was a controversial militia formed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was personally loyal to him. Although it was originally founded as a law-enforcing agency to maintain internal security, it became a second national armed force. It served as a political task force for the Awami League. As a result, it found little support among traditional military organizations such as the Mukti Bahini. Its 30,000 troops intimidated and tortured opponents of the Awami League in various ways.

There were serious allegations of nepotism and corruption within the Mujib family. Corrupt administration, worsening flood situation, and failure to deal with the food crisis led to famine in North Bengal in 1974. The death toll from the famine is claimed to be between 27,000 and 15 lakh or approximately 300,000 to 4,500,000 (or 1 to 1.5 million)<sup>20</sup>.

Sheikh Mujib increased the powers of President by amending the constitution and established a national unity government and the **Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League** (BAKSAL), on 7th June 1975 by banning all political parties and independent press. Mujib, after himself becoming the

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<sup>20</sup> [New York Times](#)

president, named the reforms as the Second Revolution. This move engendered hostility among the bureaucracy, military, and civil society. The period of the BAKSAL's one-party rule was marked by widespread censorship and abuse of the judiciary, as well as opposition from the general populace, intellectuals, and all other political groups. Nationalization of industry failed to yield any tangible progress. Not only was the government weak and with no clear goals, but the country was also nearly bankrupt. All these mocktails of issues, atrocities, and resentment are believed to be the cause of the military coup that took place.

**Post-1975 Coups:** The Military coups and mutiny did not stop there, in fact, the Junta Rule and civilian rule were in a rotary motion among each other getting power over controlling the country. After Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's death, power changed hands from Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem to finally Ziaur Rahman by having one coup after another against their predecessors respectively.

Ziaur Rahman ruled from 1977-1981 and won the elections formally in 1978 and became a legitimate president. Even though Ziaur Rahman was assassinated in 1981, his vice president Abdus Sattar assumed the presidency and later won subsequent elections.

Abdus Sattar's legacy was also short-lived as he was overthrown by a bloodless coup by General Hussain Muhammad Ershad, who again declared martial rule and later became president by winning the elections. General Hussain Muhammad Ershad had to resign later amid immense pressure from the public in 1990.

In 1996, there was a brief intervention of the military after an acute political crisis over prolonged elections, in which Sheikh Hasina won and got powers in her hands. There was a continuation of civilian rule until 2007 when a state of emergency was declared after violent clashes between the Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which saw a quasi-military intervention. However, Sheikh Hasina also won the subsequent elections.

A notable mutiny attempt took place in 2009, when members of the BDR rebelled, resulting in the deaths of 74 people, including 57 army officers. However, the elected government of Sheikh Hasina was quick to suppress and restore order.

**Effect of Civil Liberties:** The series of mutinies and coups had a profound impact on civil liberties and on the lives of those citizens of Bangladesh who fought so hard for their country's independence and watched their efforts go in vain and in the hands of a few military dictators. The assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman led to prolonged political instability. The establishment of martial law and subsequent military rule under different leaders have significantly weakened democratic institutions. Political repression increased, with the suppression of opposition parties and curtailment of freedom of speech and assembly. Political repression increased, with the suppression of opposition parties and curtailment of free speech and assembly.

Each time a new mutiny occurs several political leaders, activists, and supporters are arrested and are subject to human rights abuses, for example, on 3rd November (**Jail Killing Day**) 1975, four prominent political leaders of the Awami League were killed in prison which created a wave of fear and repression. Although Ziaur Rahman's regime restored a semblance of order, it did so at the cost of political freedoms. He brought economic reforms but was often criticized for favoring the elites, the political dissent was suppressed and led to a controlled environment. Any economic projects or reforms were usually overshadowed by widespread corruption and cronyism.

Constant suppressions and crackdowns increased and nurtured the culture of public unrest, mass protests, and mistrust among the public. Human rights watchdogs have repeatedly shown concerns regarding the extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and political suppression, which is perceived as a national shame by the people of Bangladesh.

These mutinies only confirmed and reconfirmed the fragility of military discipline and order.

**Effect on Economy:** Bangladesh's economy was already devastated due to the liberation war and was struggling to stabilize. However, it only got worse under the Junta Rule, since it hampered economic growth and led to inefficiency and a lack of coherent economic policies and reforms.

However, not all was bad because during Ziaur Rahman's Rule several economic reforms such as economic liberalizations, promotion of the private sector, encouraging foreign investment, rural development programs, the introduction of modern agriculture techniques, and reduction of the state control over the economy, took place which led to diversification and moderate economic growth,

Moderate because inflation was around 10% with annual GDP growth rate at 5% and investment to GDP ratio been 15%<sup>21</sup>.

This pace could only last till 1981, after which Hussain Muhammad Ershad took charge as the next Junta leader, under his rule IMF and World Bank had major advice to make towards Key Structural Adjustments such as achieving macroeconomic stability through fiscal discipline and monetary policy, trade liberalization by reducing trade barriers and export promotion, Public sector reforms by increasing privatization and restructuring the public sector governance, introducing the financial sector reforms by liberalizing the banking sector and developing the capital market, having agriculture reforms by introducing market-oriented policies and initiating the rural development programs. By all these means the average GDP growth rate was around 4.5 % annually and the inflation remained at 9 %. In contrast, the investment to GDP rate was 17 % according to the Asian Development Bank reports.

**Effect on Administration:** The administrative processes in Bangladesh during the period of military rule have undergone significant changes. These changes have impacted the governance, bureaucracy, law enforcement, and overall public administration. Ziaur Rahman's military regime centralized the decision-making processes, often surpassing the traditional bureaucratic channels. Amendments to the constitution were a routine affair and were usually done to adjust the powers of presidents and legitimize military Junta's rule at their convenience and ease. Due to the suppression of opposition and critics, there was a climate of fear and compliance in the administrative machinery. Freedom of the press was curtailed, and media outlets were often censored or controlled to prevent criticism of the regime.

Hussain Muhammad Ershad in his reign somehow brought administrative restructuring apparently to curtail increasing corruption within the bureaucratic circle by streamlining the administrative procedure and enhancing the public sector performance, history notes that even corruption eradication measures curdled with corruption and mismanagement.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2644443>

Overall there had been increased militarization in all spheres of public administration including the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary which involved the appointment of military personnel in administrative positions, this led to an erosion of bureaucratic independence and professional integrity within the civil service as a result of the authoritarian style of governance.

**International Criticism:** In 1975, India, America, and Canada had warned President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman about a potential death threat and a military coup by their respective intelligence agencies, which was completely ignored and sidelined. Anyhow, after the assassination India confirmed asylum to his daughters Sheikh Hasina and Rehana, and condemned the Junta rule. Later the military rule was subject to various international criticisms mainly human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary arrests and torture of political leaders and activists. Commonwealth Observers and the European Union criticized the lack of free and fair elections, calling for democratic reforms and fair electoral practices. The US and European countries imposed various forms of diplomatic pressure and, in some instances, reduced aid as a form of protest against human rights abuses and lack of democratic reforms.

### **3.4 Turmoils & Transformations**

#### **What led democracy back on track? Caretaker Government!**

The return of democracy in Bangladesh after periods of military rule and political turmoil can largely be attributed to the establishment of caretaker governments. These interim administrations were crucial in stabilizing the political landscape and facilitating free and fair elections.

In the early 1990s, mass protests and political unrest intensified, with demands for democratic reforms and the resignation of Ershad. The opposition parties, including the Awami League and the **Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)**, called for an interim government to oversee the transition to democracy. In 1991, following Ershad's resignation amid mass protests, a non-party caretaker government was introduced through the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of Bangladesh.

The caretaker government system was designed to act as a neutral administration to oversee elections and ensure their fairness. Led by Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, the first caretaker government successfully conducted the general elections in 1991.

The elections resulted in the peaceful transfer of power to the BNP, led by Khaleda Zia, marking a significant step towards restoring democratic governance.

A similar incident took place in 2007 and led to a caretaker government intervention led by Fakhruddin Ahmed who undertook major political reforms and anti-corruption drive to restore trust and credibility before conducting a free election leading to Awami League winning it under Sheikh Hasina's leadership.

The caretaker government played a crucial role as a neutral arbiter, helped reduce political tensions, and provided a platform or a level playing field for a peaceful transition of powers.

The system was eventually abolished in 2011 through the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, which mandated that future elections be conducted under the incumbent government, albeit with enhanced oversight mechanisms to ensure fairness.

## **POLITICAL LANDSCAPE**

### **4.1 The Governmental & Administrative Structure**

Bangladesh operates under a parliamentary democracy. The Prime minister is the head of government, currently Sheikh Hasina, holds most of the executive powers, she is appointed by the president but must possess a majority in the national parliament also called **Jatiya Sangsad**.

The President of Bangladesh is the ceremonial head of state, elected by the members of Parliament for a five-year term. The President's role is largely symbolic, with real executive power residing with the Prime Minister. The current president is Mohammed Shahabuddin, 16th, and the incumbent president assumed office on 24th April 2023. The Prime Minister selects the Cabinet from the members of Parliament, and they are responsible for running the various ministries and departments. These three bodies mainly comprise the executive channel of the structure which also coincides with the Indian system.

The parliament of Bangladesh is unicameral, i.e. only house of representatives known as the Jatiya Sansad, consisting of 300-350 members who are directly elected by the people of Bangladesh for a term of five years. The Parliament makes laws, approves the budget, and oversees the executive branch. Laws are proposed as bills and must be approved by a majority in the Parliament. Once a bill is passed, it is sent to the President for formal permission.

300 seats are filled by direct elections from single-member constituencies. In contrast, the remaining 50 seats are generally reserved for women, elected by the directly elected members based on proportional representation according to the party list.

Gaining majorities are of three types, the simple majority where more than half of votes from the present and voting members are required, then there is the absolute majority where more than half of votes from the total membership (300-350 ) are needed. Finally, there is a two-thirds majority wherein Two-thirds of the total membership, which is at least 234 votes out of 350 should be in favor.

For a session to proceed, at least 60 members (one-sixth of the total membership) must be present, called a Quorum. The party or coalition that secures most of the seats (176 out of 350) in the general elections is invited by the President to form the government. The leader of this majority party or coalition becomes the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister must maintain the confidence of the majority of the members of the Jatiya Sangsad to stay in office. If a no-confidence motion is passed, the government must resign.

Then comes the judiciary, which comprises the supreme court, the highest court with Obaidul Hassan as the current chief justice in place, and the Appellate Division and the High Court Division. Their main job is to interpret the constitutions and the laws. The lower courts include the District Courts and Magistrates' Courts, which handle civil and criminal cases.

The flow of power starts with the central government, which works from Dhaka, the national capital, and then reaches Divisions, there are eight divisions in the nation each headed by the division commissioner, these divisions are further divided into the districts, subdistricts or the upazilas (sub-districts), and unions. The flow of power further penetrates the local government which includes



the District Councils (Zila Parishad), Upazila Parishads, Union Parishads, and City Corporations or Municipalities, which manage local administration and development activities.

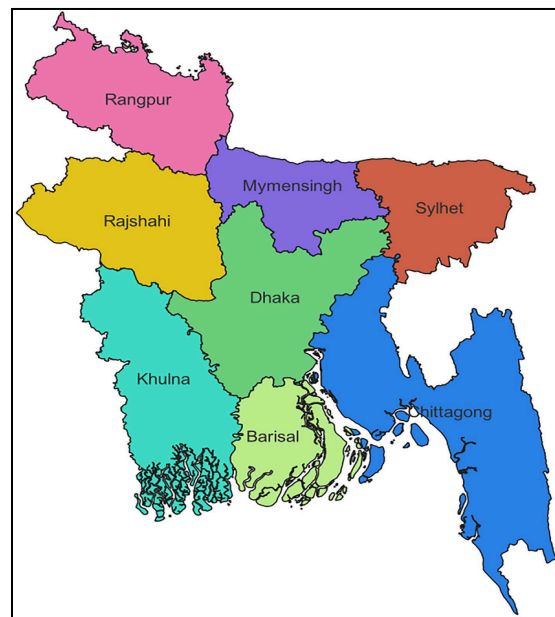
At the zila parishad or the district level, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) is the chief administrative officer and other elected officials manage district-level administration, development projects, and local services.

At the sub-district level or the upazila parishad the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), is the chief executive officer of the upazila with other elected officers such as the chairperson and vice chairperson who look after the local development, education, and health services.

The union parishad is the lowest administrative unit consisting of elected officials who look after local infrastructure development, agriculture, and social welfare.

The urban areas are largely governed by the city corporations and the municipalities under the leadership of elected mayors, who look after the city's welfare.

The eight divisions are the Dhaka Division, Chittagong Division, Khulna Division, Rajshahi Division, Barisal Division, Sylhet Division, Mymensingh Division, and Rangpur Division.



Source: [Research Gate](#)

**Dhaka Division:** Dhaka also serves as the national capital and is the most populous division. It also serves as the economic hub sustaining major industries such as textiles, garments, and financial services

with a total population of approximately 36 million comprising 18.5 million males and 17.5 million females with a literacy rate of 74%.

**Chittagong Division:** it is the second most populous division and is known for the **Cox's Bazar** and the longest natural sea beach in the world. It sustains a major port city with industries like shipbuilding, steel, and pharmaceuticals with a total population of approximately 28 million consisting of 14.3 million males and 13.7 million females and a literacy rate of 72%.

**Khulna Division:** It is home to the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world, and is known for shipbuilding and shrimp farming industries with a total population of approximately 15.5 million consisting of 7.8 million males and 7.7 million females and a literacy rate of 70%.

**Rajshahi Division:** Home to several major universities and also known for its agricultural hub specializing in mangoes and silk with a total population of approximately 19 million consisting of 9.6 million males and 9.4 million and a literacy rate of 68%.

**Barisal Division:** It is known for its abundant waterways and rivers and is highly dependent on agriculture with a total population of approximately 8.3 million consisting of 4.2 million males and 4.1 million females and a literacy rate of 66%.

**Sylhet Division:** Known for tea gardens, natural gas fields, and remittances from the expatriate community, and is rich in cultural heritage and folklore with a total population of approximately 12 million consisting of 6.1 million males and 5.9 million females and a literacy rate of 67%.

**Rangpur Division:** It is also considered one of the least developed regions and is dependent on crops including rice, potatoes, and maize with a total population of approximately 17 million consisting of 8.6 million males and 8.4 million females and a literacy rate of 64%.

**Mymensingh Division:** it hosts major universities including agriculture universities and the main focus is on agriculture, poultry, and fisheries with a total population of approximately 11.5 million consisting of 5.8 million males and 5.7 million females and a literacy rate of 65%.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> [Population & Housing Census 2022](#)

## **4.2 Outplay of Democratic Elections Throughout the Years**

### **1991 General Elections**

This was the first general election since the fall of Hussain Muhammad Ershad's regime, which marked the end of the military dictatorship and restart of civilian rule. This election was won by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Khaleda Zia, who became the country's first female prime minister.

### **1996 General Elections**

This was the first election that took place under the surveillance of the caretaker government to ensure fair elections. It was won by the Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina.

### **2001 General Elections**

Won by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Khaleda Zia, these elections were also overseen by the caretaker government, further establishing the practice of neutral interim administrations overseeing elections. Khaleda Zia's tenure saw political unrest, social unrest, and military interventions. Sheikh Hasina protested against the government and was arrested multiple times.

### **2008 General Elections**

Sheikh Hasina won the elections as the Awami League party grabbed the majority in parliament. This marked a significant step in democratic stability following the 2007-2008 **caretaker government** reforms as discussed earlier.

### **2014 General Elections**

Again Sheikh Hasina won the elections, although the opposition party boycotted the contest, the elections took place as usual even when there were many uncontested seats for many candidates. Under this tenure, Bangladesh became one of the fastest-growing economies with a 7% growth rate. She undertook major infrastructure development including the flagship Padma Bridge.

### **2018 General Elections**

Marked with allegations of rigging the elections and suppressing the opposition, Sheikh Hasina once again won the prime ministership.

## 2024 General Elections

Sheikh Hasina won a 5th term with just 40 % turnout according to the election commission winning 223 seats out of 300. The opposition parties did not participate hence the runner-up goes to all the 63 independent candidates. She also revealed her plan to make Bangladesh a smart economy by 2041. Later, an American poll observer confirmed the elections to be free and fair, this came as a significant move since America was running disappointed as Sheikh Hasina compared the opposition to terrorists and tried keeping them out of the contest. Although not even one complete year of her 5th tenure, Sheikh Hasina has resigned and fled the country in chaos.

### 4.3 Who Votes for Whom and for What?<sup>23</sup>

Bangladesh's government recognizes 27 indigenous ethnic groups under the 2010 Cultural Institution for Small Anthropological Groups Act; other sources estimate about 75 ethnic groups.

**Bangalee:** Bengalis comprise 98 % of the population being the biggest majority ethnicity with a maximum literacy rate of 74 % according to the CIA reports. In Bangladesh, most Bengalis practice Sunni Islam. They are spread throughout the mainland and mainly have a manifesto preference for economic development, infrastructure projects, and education & health improvements.

**Chakma:** Chakma is a significant minority in the **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)** also referred to as Jumma in the regions of Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachari with a 58 % literacy rate according to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. They prefer having autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts, preservation of cultural heritage and land rights, and recognition of indigenous status. Chakma is leaning towards the **Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS)** political party due to its advocacy for their rights and indigenous recognition.

**Marma:** A significant population of Marma resides near the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with a literacy rate of 54% according to UNDP. They seek higher autonomy for Chittagong Hill Tracts, improved healthcare and education, and protection of their cultural and religious rights hence, they

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<sup>23</sup> [Asia Pacific](#)

have a political inclination towards Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS ) as they have always advocated for minority rights.

**Santal (Saontal):** Santal is a significant minority in northwestern Bangladesh mainly concentrated in regions like Rajshahi, Dinajpur, and Rangpur with a low literacy rate of 30 % according to minority groups' rights international—their manifesto preferences mainly concern land rights, socio-economic development, and better health and education services. Jatiya Party is preferred due to its advocacy towards minority rights and rural development.

**Bihari (Stranded Pakistan):** They are a significant minority group commonly found in the urban landscape of Dhaka and Khulna with an average literacy rate of 35%. Their main demand includes citizenship and rights recognition, integration into mainstream society, and improvement of their living conditions. They prefer the Awami League because of their efforts to improve living conditions and citizenship rights.

**Rohingya:** They are a significant minority in the refugee population living in Cox's Bazar with the lowest literacy rate of 15%. They continuously seek recognition as refugees and rights protection, humanitarian aid, and resettlement options, as well as access to education and healthcare. They rely on international groups such as UNHRC for help and assistance <sup>24</sup>.

#### **4.4 Global Presence and Recognition**

Bangladesh failed to become a member of the United Nations in 1972 and 1973 because China used its veto on behalf of Pakistan to prevent full membership from being granted to Bangladesh. But by 1974 the geopolitical landscape had changed and shifted in favor of Bangladesh, as it had solidified its sovereignty and governance, making it increasingly difficult for China to justify its veto in the face of global recognition. On 17 September 1974, Bangladesh became a full member of the United Nations. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the president of Bangladesh, gave a speech in the Bengali language at the General Assembly on 25 September 1974.

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<sup>24</sup>[UNHCR](#)

Bangladesh's UN Peacekeeping Force is one of the largest contingent forces of the United Nations and in December 2017 it had 7246 personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations. Bangladesh first sent its soldiers to peacekeeping operations in 1988. Bangladesh peacekeepers have been deployed in several countries such as East Timor, Lebanon, South Sudan, Namibia, Haiti, Liberia, etc. From 1988 to 2017, over 150 thousand Bangladeshi soldiers have participated in UN peacekeeping.

Bangladesh successfully campaigned to establish the International Mother Language Day by UNESCO in 1997. International Mother Language Day was declared on 21 February, which was the day Bengalis were killed in Police firing in East Pakistan (today Bangladesh) while protesting to make Bengali a state language of Pakistan as part of the Bengali language movement in 1952.

Bangladesh is presently a member of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation, International Labour Organisation, International Atomic Energy Agency, World Health Organisation, and Food and Agriculture Organization.

Bangladesh is also an active participant in regional cooperation and was one of the founding members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), member of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Bangladesh has also managed to increase its foothold in the Muslim world by being a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Islamic Development Bank.

Bangladesh has shown an appreciably good balance of power, which is strongly reflected by their neighbor policy, although they share historic and strategic relations with India, they also maintain a good friendship with China having significant trade and bilateral exchanges over economic investments, infrastructure, and energy projects.

On similar lines Bangladesh shares deep and friendly relations with both Nepal and Bhutan cooperating in trade, hydropower projects, and regional connectivity. Although the equations are not the same when considering Myanmar, it's more complex as Bangladesh hosts a large number of Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar.

Bangladesh has shown considerable humanitarian commitment by hosting over a million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and their efforts include building and maintaining the biggest refugee camp called Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, which is no joke for a developing country like Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is subject to both criticism due to political oppression and appreciation for hosting and seeking solutions for repatriation of refugees on the global stage.

## CONTEMPORARY CONFRONTATION

### 5.1 Rigged Elections

Since 2018, Sheikh Hasina's government has implemented several measures and policies that critics argue have led to a more authoritarian rule. Numerous political leaders have been arrested and intimidated mostly from the Bangladesh nationalist party on various charges, which in many views are political motives. There have been reports of disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and harassment of opposition leaders leading to sniffling dissent.

The government has come up with the **Digital Security Act**, this law has been extensively used by the government to arrest journalists, social media influencers, and activists in charge of spreading propaganda against the government which from outside is seen as curbing the right of free speech and press freedom. Even freedom of expression is being curtailed by censoring the media house on specific reporting and avoidance of critical reporting.

Reports claim that the judiciary is allegedly used to work in favor of the government and against the opposition. Administrative apparatus is used so that the position of power is appointed to only loyalists of the Awami League. The Election Commission has been criticized for being biased towards the ruling party, undermining the integrity of the electoral process. The election itself was marred by allegations of widespread irregularities, including voter intimidation, ballot stuffing, and manipulation, which resulted in a landslide victory for the Awami League. Observers and opposition parties raised

serious concerns about the credibility of the election. The government has intensified surveillance of citizens, particularly on digital platforms, using technology to monitor and crack down on dissenting voices. There have been numerous reports of privacy violations, with authorities allegedly accessing private communications and data without due process. NGOs and civil society organizations face stringent regulations and scrutiny, particularly those involved in human rights and governance issues. This has limited their ability to operate freely and advocate for democratic reforms. Scholars and analysts have pointed to these actions as signs of democratic backsliding, with Bangladesh moving towards more authoritarian governance under Sheikh Hasina's rule.

Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Tim Kaine (D-VA), and Peter Welch (D-VT) released the following statement after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh won a fourth consecutive term: “On Sunday, despite the peaceful participation of millions of Bangladeshis, the country’s election and pre-election processes were marred by violence and troubling government intimidation of opposition candidates. The refusal of the main opposition party to participate was also regrettable. Leading up to the election, opposition party members and civil society activists faced harassment and mass arbitrary arrests that undermined the pre-election process.

“As such, we urge Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to live up to her promise to preserve Bangladeshi democracy by stopping the abuse of democratic institutions and to uplift all Bangladeshi voices. We also encourage all parties to engage in meaningful dialogue, commit to nonviolence, and hold perpetrators of political violence accountable. In the aftermath of the election, freedom of expression and civic spaces must be protected”, as quoted by Amnesty International.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly, the issue is intense and Election rigging is more common in the country, and so is the public unrest against her, this will be further discussed in the subsequent section.

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<sup>25</sup> [Amnesty International](#)



## **5.2 Frequent Public Unrest**

Recently Bangladesh has seen more easily eruptable and spreadable public unrest thanks to widespread connected technology and Hasina's controversial state policies. The protests were very powerful so much so that they led Prime Minister Hasina to resign from her post and flee her own country.

### **2018 Road Traffic Safety Protest**

The protest was primarily led by high school students and university students over spreading awareness on road safety triggered by the death of two children who were killed by a speeding bus on July 29, 2018. This tragic incident highlighted the rampant traffic law violations and poor road safety conditions in the country. The movement quickly gained momentum, with thousands of students joining from various educational institutions across Dhaka and other major cities gaining support from various civil societies and by the general public.

The protests ended after about a week when the government promised to meet the students' demands for improved road safety measures. The protests diminished after several high-profile meetings between student representatives and government officials, coupled with assurances of reform. The initial government response included attempts to disperse the protests using tear gas, batons, and rubber bullets. There were reports of violent clashes between students and law enforcement agencies. Several students were injured, and some were arrested.

The cabinet approved the draft of the **Road Transport Act**, which aimed to enforce stricter penalties for traffic violations. The government cracked down on unlicensed drivers and transport services.

The initial public satisfaction was initially very high due to the prompt response of governance bypassing the Road Transport Act, cracking down on rule breakers, and imposing stricter penalties and punishment. However, in the long term impact and enforcement have become lenient.

### **2023 Protest Against Digital Security Act**

These protests were orchestrated by journalists, human rights activities, social media figures, various civil society groups, and major organizations such as Bangladesh National Press Club and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) against the controversial Digital Security Act of 2018 as it was being used curtail the freedom of speech and press freedom. Protests were primarily concentrated in

Dhaka, the capital city, with significant gatherings at the National Press Club and key public squares. Smaller demonstrations occurred in other major cities like Chittagong and Sylhet.

The protest led to heightened public scrutiny and international criticism. The government did not immediately repeal the law but promised to review it to address some concerns raised by the protesters. Initially, the government responded with a crackdown and arrested prominent activists and journalists, dispersals of gathering using force, and increased surveillance.

Later amid high pressure, the government developed a review committee, which was seen as a positive move. As of now, the DSA remains in force with some minor amendments.

### **5.3 Disputed Quota System**

The quota system in Bangladesh was initially created to ensure the representation of marginalized communities in government jobs and educational institutions. Introduced after independence in 1972, the system aimed to provide opportunities for freedom fighters' families, women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. The goal was to promote social equity and inclusion in a country recovering from war and political upheaval.

In 1985, quotas were expanded to include categories, with a significant portion reserved for the children of freedom fighters. In 2008, mass protests erupted against the quota system after which the 30% figure reached 2%.

The primary cause of the anger was the high employment rate among graduates who believed that the quota system unfairly limited their opportunities, which exacerbated the tensions.

But in 2024, the Supreme Court ordered the repatriation of the old system, increasing the quota by 30%. A common belief is that the government used the judiciary for its convenience. This sparked renewed protests led by university students and various advocacy groups. The protests spread rapidly, with significant participation from Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, and other major institutions. After intense protests, the government temporarily suspended the new quota policy and

promised to dialogue with student leaders and other stakeholders to find a more acceptable solution. A committee was formed to review and recommend changes to the policy. During the protest, internet services were shut down to curb the spreading of information, protesters were killed and arrested.

Global media coverage highlighted the issues of internet censorship, human rights violations, and the crackdown on peaceful protesters. The handling of the 2024 protests and the broader issues surrounding the quota system will likely have significant implications for future elections in Bangladesh. The government's approach to addressing the protesters' demands and its commitment to reform will be closely scrutinized by voters. Public dissatisfaction with the quota system and the government's response could influence electoral outcomes, with opposition parties potentially capitalizing on the unrest to garner support.

This protest even after a nationwide curfew and internet shut came to a dramatic turn of unprecedented resignation of Prime Minister Hasina and she fled her own country, as protesters barged into her official residence.

## **5.4 5th August & Beyond**

### **The Dramatics of 5th**

On August 6, 2024, India's External Minister, Shri S. Jai Shankar informed the Rajya Shaba of a request received on very short notice from the Former PM Sheik Hasina, who had resigned amidst widespread protest in Bangladesh. The situation in the country deteriorated significantly when the government issued shoot-at-sight orders against unarmed civilians. This decision resulted in considerable backlash and intensified outrage among various segments of the Bangladeshi population. As a response people gathered in heavy numbers amid imposed curfews and decided to march to the Prime Minister's official residence. In light of this development, PM Hasina reportedly<sup>26</sup> asked the army to further crackdown, but the chief, the chief of army staff General Waker-uz-Zaman, apparently refused against such measures, recommending her to resign and evacuate the country due to concerns over her safety. Acting upon General's advice, PM Hasina resigned on 5th August 2024, thereby concluding her 15 year tenure abruptly. She subsequently fled to India shortly before protesters raided

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<sup>26</sup> [Aljazeera Report](#)

and vandalized the Prime Minister's official residence. General Waker-uz-Zaman then announced the PM's resignation and requested its citizens to stop violence and promised the establishment of an interim government.

### **The Spontaneous Consequence**

The spontaneous reaction was mixed as it was marked by celebration among its citizens over ousting the Prime Minister and violent clashes between the Awami League and the other parties such as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The politicians of the Awami League were targeted such as Obaidul Quader (secretary general of Awami League and the road and transport minister), Tofail Ahmed (senior leader of Awami League), Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim (senior leader & close relative of Hasina) and A.K. Abdul Momen (former Foreign Minister) and were killed, and many like Asaduzzaman Khan (Minister of Home Affairs)<sup>27</sup> were attacked. Not just the political leaders but also communities such as Hindu minorities were targeted and attacked for supporting PM Hasina. According to Dhaka tributes, many Hindus were subject to religious persecution and forced conversions. Hindu women were particularly more vulnerable targets of violence including sexual assaults.

### **The Interim Government**

General Waker Uz Zaman played a key role by having rounds of talks with the student protesters, and various political parties to the formation of the interim government under the leadership of Nobel laureate **Mohamad Yunus**, the chief advisor of the interim government. Along with Yunus, the interim government has 16 more advisors including Asif Nazrul (law professor from Dhaka University), Adilur Rahman Khan (Human Rights activists), AF Hassan Ariff (former Attorney General), Touhid Hossain (former Foreign Secretary), Syeda Rizwana Hasan (Chief Executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association), Sharmeen Murshid (CEO of Brotee, an election monitoring organization) and Nahid Islam (student leader). The immediate goal of this interim government is to maintain law and order, protect the minority and restore peace. They also have to

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<sup>27</sup> [BCC Report](#)

bring the country back to its economic growth trajectory and recover all the financial loss. In the near future, the interim government will also have a very critical role in hosting free and fair elections and in peaceful transition to an elected civilian government.

## **5.5 Textile Hub & Labour Exploitation**

Bangladesh's transformation into a global textile hub is attributed to several factors such as the low labor cost by attracting international brands seeking cost-effective manufacturing options; government policies including tax incentives and the establishment of export processing zones (EPZs), have encouraged investment in the textile sector. Not only that, Bangladesh gets quota-free access to the European market under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

Bangladesh's value addition to the supply chain is attributed to its mass production of readymade garments catering a diverse market of both basic and high-end fashion at a very competitive price.

However, this attractive destination comes at a cost, at the expense of laborers who are paid marginally insufficient even to cover the living cost, often working more than the legal 48 hr per week in hazardous and inadequate working conditions with virtually no social benefits.

The wages comprise just a small portion of the cost of production, the cost of production is further a tiny portion of the final retail price and a null portion of the profits earned by the international and luxury brands.

The Bangladeshi government has introduced several regulatory measures to improve labor conditions, such as the amendment of labor laws to enhance worker rights and safety. Increased factory inspections and compliance requirements have been implemented, particularly in response to international pressure following major factory accidents. Periodic increases in the minimum wage have been mandated, although these increases are often deemed insufficient by labor advocates. The government, in collaboration with international organizations like the International Labour Organization (ILO), has launched various programs to improve workplace safety and labor rights.

## INDIA'S POINT OF VIEW

### 6.1 The Bilaterals

India and Bangladesh have a multifaceted relationship encompassing several areas of cooperation such as economic and trade cooperation due to its robust trade relations, security, and border management due to border sharing and shared interest, energy and connectivity, and water sharing on transboundary rivers. The two countries conduct regular joint military exercises such as “Sampriti” which enhances mutual understanding and cooperation in counterterrorism operations and other military exercises. Joint exercises between the coast guards of both nations aim to strengthen maritime security and combat piracy and smuggling.

India has invested in improving Bangladesh's infrastructure, including road and rail projects, to enhance regional connectivity. Joint ventures in the power sector, including the construction of power plants and the supply of electricity from India to Bangladesh. India supports various health and education projects in Bangladesh, including establishing medical colleges and scholarships for Bangladeshi students. In 2023-24, bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh reached approximately \$10 billion, with a positive trade balance in favor of India. Key exports from India include machinery, cotton, and chemicals, while Bangladesh exports garments, leather products, and agricultural goods to India. Indian companies have invested in sectors such as telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, consumer goods, and energy in Bangladesh.

India provides substantial development assistance to Bangladesh, focusing on infrastructure, education, health, and social welfare projects. India has extended several lines of credit to Bangladesh, totaling over \$8 billion<sup>28</sup>, for various development projects. In addition to loans, India provides grants for specific projects, including cultural preservation and capacity building.

Indian aid has been instrumental in developing infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, and railways, enhancing connectivity and trade. Funding from India has supported the establishment of hospitals and healthcare facilities, improving access to medical services in Bangladesh. Scholarships and establishing educational institutions funded by Indian aid have expanded educational opportunities for

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<sup>28</sup> [Ministry of External Affairs](#)

Bangladeshi students. Indian aid projects have focused on improving living standards in rural and underdeveloped areas through community development and capacity-building initiatives.

## **6.2 Scenario Analysis**

### **6.2.1 Case 1: Status Quo**

India enjoys great ties with Awami and a sense of security due to their historic sentiments and commitments. India played a crucial role in supporting the Awami League-led movement for Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan. India provided military assistance and refuge to millions of Bangladeshi refugees, leading to the eventual victory and establishment of Bangladesh. After independence, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader of the Awami League, and then Prime minister of Bangladesh, maintained close relations with India, focusing on rebuilding the nation and fostering bilateral ties.

The strong ties between the Awami League and India have yielded several benefits over the years in economic cooperation, infrastructure development, security collaboration, and cultural and educational exchanges. The Awami League's government was intolerant towards any anti-Indian border insurgency. As per India, Bangladesh was the only standing ally in its neighborhood until 5th August 2024, since the rest of India's neighbors that of all gone Afghanistan, Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka have a pro-Chinese inclination, which won't be the case when Awami League is not the ruling party.

### **6.2.2 Case 2: Otherwise**

Well, it is not a distant thought now, because as of 5th August 2024, Sheikh Hasina resigned from their Prime Ministership and fled to India amid heavy pressure by the continuous protests by the students demanding her to resign even though the disputed quota system was appealed. The military has taken power and will be forming an interim government with other parties including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Jatiya Party, and the Jamaat E Islami Party (which opposed the Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971) under the leadership of the current army chief General Waker Uz Zaman, this move has also led to the release of the leader of the opposition, Bangladesh nationalist party's Khaleda

Zia who was under house arrest. The current situation is pretty chaotic and it's difficult to predict what's next.

This could be a major setback for India since Bangladesh's army and opposition parties have radical Islamist tendencies and target minorities (mostly Hindus) leading to a refugee crisis in India and increased insurgencies across the border. Anti-India movements over boycotting Indian brands & policies happened in early 2024, backed by BNP and Jamaat E Islami Party. So much so that the BNP called the India-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty and 1996's Ganges water sharing treaty "slavery".

## CONCLUSION

Bangladesh is no stranger to political turmoils, military takeovers and towards having ousted prime ministers and leaders. But today we live in an era of interdependence, hence any wave in Bangladesh will surely affect the rest of the world and India will remain among the first victims because of both geographical and geopolitical proximity. India as of 15th August 2024, is still hosting the ousted PM Sheikh Hasina, which could lead to diplomatic hurdles while also trying to establish connections with the intern government led by the Nobel Laureate Mohammad Yunus. India also faces acute domestic pressure as Hindu minorities are being targeted and attacked in Bangladesh. Amid all these crossovers India must navigate the situation diplomatically to prevent escalations and to maintain wider regional stability.

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