



Analysis

Coup, Chaos, Caliphate

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Radical jihadists drawing support from influential elements in US, China and Pakistan are driving Bangladesh to anarchy, instability



Retrospection & Analysis: Bangladesh Coup

1. Sheikh Hasina was compelled to resign and step down on August 5, 2024 as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh under pressure from the military and security establishment.
2. Three groups have seized control in this power vacuum:
 - a. Bangladesh Nationalist Party which represents small-scale businesses and has gained significant influence.
 - b. Jamaat-e-Islami — dominated by bureaucratic elements has aligned itself with hardline Islamist agendas.
 - c. Tahrir: A radical organisation advocating for establishment of a caliphate with history of links to terrorism dominates the Army. This group also aims to transform Bangladesh into an Islamic state under caliphate rule which is a severe threat to regional stability, particularly for India.
3. The left-liberal ecosystem appears to be actively collaborating with these three groups and working in coordination to rationalise and legitimise the illegal coup.
4. After Sheikh Hasina's resignation, chaos erupted and multiple jails were broken into wherein over 1500 prisoners including terrorists were freed by individuals portraying themselves as protesters.

5. The first-ever Hindu protest in Bangladesh was held on August 9, 2024 to raise voices against violence targeting country's Hindu minority.
6. In Gopalganj area, anti-government protests erupted against the Bangladesh interim government. However, the Army initiated a crackdown to suppress these movements intensifying regional tensions.
7. After these events, 201 new joint secretaries and several additional secretaries were appointed. Hizb-ut-Tahrir is using them to misuse power potentially.
8. On August 26, 2024, Mufti Jasimuddin, chief of Ansarullah Bangla Team which is an extremist group inspired by Al-Qaeda—was granted bail.
9. On September 5, 2024, Muhammad Yunus was congratulated by 92 Nobel Prize winners and 197 global leaders for being appointed as Chief Advisor of interim government in Bangladesh.
10. Approximately 100,000 weapons have been looted in Bangladesh raising significant concerns about law and order in the region.
11. Tajul Islam was appointed Chief Prosecutor of International Crimes Tribunal which will look into cases against political prisoners.
12. Bangladesh Radio has started programmes in Urdu which Pakistan reportedly influences.
13. China has started making large-scale investments in Bangladesh which signals a shift in the nation's economic partnerships and geopolitical stance.
14. Following recent illegal coup, there are growing concerns that Bangladesh is turning itself into East Pakistan.
15. Bangladesh's Hindu community engaged in occupations like teaching, agriculture and small-scale businesses contribute significantly to the nation's socio-economic framework.
16. The condition of rapidly declining Hindu population of Bangladesh has further worsened since the illegal coup in Bangladesh. This alarming trend underscores the urgent need for their protection.
17. Many Hindu politicians are hiding and approximately 125,000 Hindus are forced to live on cross the borders. Hindu leaders and police officers are being arrested under fake charges such as false murder accusations further exacerbating their plight.

18. The government has reportedly coerced 1500 Hindu teachers into resignation and enforced early retirements for Hindu personnel in the army and police forces, systematically marginalising them from public service roles.

19. Hindus are facing persecution across various spheres in Bangladesh. Hindu newsmen like senior journalist Gaurab Kumar have been targeted with many arrested or even killed. The harassment of minorities is a vital issue as it is affecting their safety and livelihood.

20. Hindu festivals like Durga Puja are marred by incidents of violence, vicious attacks and stone pelting. The rise of Islamic extremist activities adds to the fear and insecurity faced by Hindus during these religious celebrations.

21. Reports indicate that 59 per cent of violence against Hindus is directed at their temples with an aim to erase Hindu worship places and cultural heritage.

22. Hindu women and girls are harassed and forced to convert. Cases of abductions of girls have also come fore. These practices have extended to other minorities such as Buddhists indicating an ongoing ethnic cleansing effort.

23. Many radical groups in Bangladesh are actively propagating narratives aimed at dividing Bharat. A key focus of their strategy is an attack on “Chicken Neck” corridor intending to divide Northeast states from rest of Bharat.

24. Many radical narratives are being widely spread on social media platforms. Some of these radical groups are reportedly providing training to Kuki terrorists intending to deploy them in Northeast Indian states to create chaos and instability.

25. Mohammad Yunus and Pakistani Prime Minister recently held a closed-door meeting raising concerns about potential anti-India collaborations.

26. On November 11, 2024, a cargo vessel travelled directly from Pakistan to Chittagong for the first time since 1971. Bangladesh has eased import restrictions on Pakistani goods. Notably, mandatory physical inspection of imports from Pakistan has been removed, a measure that previously caused significant delays. This move indicates growing alignment between Pakistan and Bangladesh bypassing India’s strategic interests.

27. A memorandum has been signed by Pakistani universities to promote Urdu teaching in Bangladesh. Pakistan High Commission is actively involved in these kinds of initiatives, which could influence educational narratives in the region.

28. There are discussions about Pakistan and Bangladesh signing a nuclear treaty along with agreements for military training. This is being driven by a pro-Pakistan lobby in Bangladesh which has existed since 1970s.

29. Some extremist groups in Bangladesh are propagating hateful narratives against India including use of Indian flags as doormats. This thinking reflects the rising anti-India sentiment among certain factions.

30. Culmination of these narratives and activities pose significant threat to India's national security and regional stability. The coordinated efforts of pro-Pakistan factions and radical groups in Bangladesh and outside represent a critical challenge that must not be underestimated.

31. RSS Sarkaryavah (General Secretary) Sh Dattatreya Hosabale issued a statement on November 30, 2024, where he condemned the attack on minorities and appealed to Indian government and global community to stand and support victims of Bangladesh.

Context

On June 5, 2024, High Court of Bangladesh reinstated a job quota system that reserves 30 per cent civil service positions for children and grandchildren of those who participated in Bangladesh Liberation War.

The next day, on June 6, student wing of radical organisation, Jamaat-e-Islami, initiated protests by blocking roads and essential locations, such as police stations and major universities i.e., University of Dhaka, Jagannath University, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Rajshahi University and University of Chittagong.

This event was seen as an opportunity by China, Pakistan, and Radical Islamists to propagate their agenda and create an anti-Bharat and anti-Hindu environment in Bangladesh. This agitation cum political agenda later culminated in a coup against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and forcing her to seek asylum in Bharat for her safety. Since then, atrocities on Hindus have been happening.

One of the major Hindu centric organisations, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh condemned the violent incidents and said, "The attacks, murders, looting, arson as well as inhuman atrocities by Islamic fundamentalists on Hindus, women and all other minorities in Bangladesh are extremely worrying."

From Democracy to Despotism

Immediately after the coup, an interim government was formed in Bangladesh under the Advisory of Muhammad Yunus. Since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned, everything has gone haywire. A power vacuum appeared that was eventually filled by three groups of political and ideological interests. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) became a dominant small businesses and significant economic group. The extreme radical political party Jamaat-e-Islami took control over Bangladesh's administrative machinery. However, a more serious threat to Bangladesh, as well as the entire subcontinent, is from Hizbul Tahrir, an extremist organisation that supports the Caliphate and has influence on Bangladesh's military.

These groups have taken upon themselves to turn Bangladesh into an Islamized state in which Hizbul Tahrir's extremist ideology advocates for implementation of Sharia law and establishment of a global Caliphate.

Bangladesh's "interim government," under Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus has publicly committed to upholding human rights and freedom of speech.

In reality, the ground situation presents a contrasting picture. Since Yunus became Chief Advisor of the government, Bangladesh has witnessed a surge in human rights violations such as mob lynching and violence against women and minorities. The present administration has weaponised false cases against political opponents, members of law enforcement agencies, bureaucrats, lawyers and even judges which resulted in a pervasive climate of fear and intimidation.

This can also be verified by the fact that since the regime change in Bangladesh, there has been systematic targeting of opposition figures, primarily from Awami League and its allied organisations. Over two dozen former ministers, including prominent figures like Former Law Minister Anisul Haq, Former Advisor to Prime Minister Salman F. Rahman, Former Minister of Shipping Shahjahan Khan, Former Minister and the Awami League's Joint General Secretary Dipu Moni, Former Minister of State for Home Affairs and Deputy Speaker Shamsul Haque, Former Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, Former Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumdar were arrested or detained by the current despotic regime.

ISKCON monks were also attacked by Yunus regime and are targeting the religious leaders of minorities. RSS has condemned these targeted attacks stating, “It is unjust of Bangladesh government to send ISKCON monk Chinmoy Krishna Das who was leading Hindus in such peaceful demonstrations to jail.”



Hypocrisy of illegal interim government can be seen by the contradictory statements issued and when the United Nations Human Rights Commission wanted to establish an office in Bangladesh. Sharmin S. Murshid, Social Welfare Adviser to interim government suggested that plans were underway to establish the office.

However, Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain said no final decision has been made regarding establishing any office. This uncertainty reflects a more profound concern within the interim government which is killing and persecuting rights of minorities. The radical groups also oppose establishment of UN Human Rights office arguing that it would threaten Bangladesh’s cultural and religious values and could promote agendas such as homosexuality.

The rise of these groups presents a significant threat not only to secular nature of Bangladesh but also to minorities, cultural diversity, and regional security.

Weapons, Wrangle, Warfare

Radicalism in Bangladesh is increasing each day. After illegal coup, Mufti Jasimuddin, Chief of Ansarullah Bangla Team, a terrorist group inspired by Al-Qaeda was granted bail by interim government on August 26, 2024. Since resignation of Sheikh Hasina, attacks on minorities have surged. Thousands of weapons have been looted by Islamic terrorists who have targeted homes of Hindus. Social media has become a powerful tool for radical Islamist forces in Bangladesh to reach and influence a targeted audience.

Social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook are used to propagate radical ideologies and prominent Islamic radicals such as Anayetullah Abbasi, Sheikh Ahmadullah Hafi, Maulana Mustafizur Rahman, Maulana Mahamudul Hasan and Maulana Sadikur Rahman Azhari are leading this charge.

These Islamists crafted content, shared sermons and discussions that emphasised conservatism and extremist interpretations of Islam, engaging vast numbers of followers in Bangladesh and beyond.

Additionally, social media influencers like Zahid ur Rahman, Pinaki Bhattacharya, Golam Maula Rony, Elias Hossain, Taj Ul Hashmi, Jacob Milton, Zulkarnain Sakib, Abdur Rob Bhutto, Col. Mustafizur Rahman and Kanak Sarwar have used these platforms to propagate similar narratives against Sheikh Hasina and her liberal policies.

Through a mix of religious rhetoric, critiques of secularism and opposition to established political structures, Pak-backed-China-funded narrators have created a potent virtual ecosystem that fuels radical perspectives. Their content often seeks to amplify distrust in secular governance and promote the vision of an Islamic state.

Cultural Genocide

Recently, there have been massive concerns about increased vandalism of statues, temples, sculptures and property belonging to minorities in Bangladesh. On August 20 2024, one of the most famous Bangladeshi daily, Prothom Alo, brought to its readers an unfortunate string of cultural vandalism news that filled the whole of Bangladesh with shock and distress.

According to the news report, from August 5 to 14, 2024, a total of 1,492 sculptures, relief sculptures (figures carved into walls with materials like ceramic or terracotta), murals and memorials were targeted by vandals.

The destruction was through burning, uprooting and defacing and it spread to 59 districts. Most of these incidents occurred on August 5, 6 and 7. Notably, Dhaka saw severe damage, as over 122 sculptures, relief sculptures and murals were destroyed in 15 locations including demolition of seven full-body statues of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The vandalism was widespread and involved numerous divisions. There were 273 cases in Dhaka, 204 in Chattogram, 166 in Rajshahi, 479 in Khulna, 100 in Barishal, 129 in Rangpur, 49 in Sylhet and 92 in Mymensingh.

Such occurrences reveal increasing dominance of radical Islamist philosophy which is now driving attacks on Bangladeshi cultural identity and minority heritage.

Anti-Hindu Sentiments

Rise of radical Islam in Bangladesh has led to alarming levels of persecution against religious minorities particularly the long-marginalised Hindu population. The socio-political and economic landscape for Hindus has become increasingly hostile.

Reports indicate that thousands of Hindu teachers have been forced to resign or retire under pressure while tens of thousands of Hindu professionals have been coerced out of state education sector, agriculture, and small businesses. This pattern reflects a broader effort to suppress the Hindu community and consolidate power among radical groups.

The escalation of persecution against Hindus has remarkably increased after creation of Interim government. Hindu communities have experienced violence including forced conversions, kidnappings of women and attacks on temples. Commenting on these attacks, RSS said, “Out of helplessness, a new phase of injustice and atrocities seems to be emerging against the Hindus of Bangladesh to suppress voice raised by them in a democratic way for self-defence.”

Anti-government agitation has given terrorist groups an opportunity to promote their agendas specifically targeting Hindu communities.

Over 50 per cent cases of reported violence has been directed at Hindu temples and celebrations during Durga Puja. After the violence started in Bangladesh, armed mobs attacked hundreds of Hindu temples across the country, especially in Comilla, Moulavi Bazar, Noakhali, Khulna, Dhaka, Sirajganj and Bogura. Tragically, many Hindus, Babul Chatterjee, Mrinal Chatterjee, Kajal Roy and Suman Ghara were murdered by radical Islamist terrorist groups.

Bangladesh government’s response to these radicals illustrates involvement of leaders in systematically targeting religious minorities which has resulted in arrest or even murder of numerous Hindu leaders and journalists with police involvement. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh appealed to Bangladesh government to ensure safety of Hindus, immediate stop of atrocities against them be ensured and release Shri Chinmoy Krishna Das from imprisonment.

Islamabad and Beijing in Dhaka

It seems that pro-Islamic, anti-Bharat groups supported by Pakistan and China are influencing Bangladesh's political course. Recent activities indicate that Bangladesh's foreign policy has taken a pro-Pakistan turn. A significant event on November 11, 2024, wherein Bangladesh's ports received cargo vessels directly from Pakistan, mark the first trade connection since 1971 between the two countries. This development can be seen as sign of a possible realignment in Bangladesh's foreign policy from Bharat to Pakistan.

A Report from Dainik Sathkhira on September 8, 2024 highlighted visit by a Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami delegation led by Secretary General Mia Ghulam Parwar to Pakistani High Commissioner's office. The meeting underscored Pakistan's efforts to rebuild ties and influence Islamist political factions in Bangladesh.

On September 3, 2024, Dhaka Tribune reported that High Commissioner Maroof met with Brigadier General (Retd.) Sakhawat Hossain, Advisor for Jute and Textiles and Shipping Ministries at the Secretariat in Dhaka. Hossain encouraged Pakistani investors to explore opportunities in Bangladesh's state-owned textiles and jute mills highlighting potential economic collaboration.

Subsequent to trade connection, Bangladesh's deal with Pakistan over teaching of Urdu in schools and its possibility to collaborate on nuclear training is yet another indication of increasing Pakistani influence on Bangladesh. This does not seem to bode well for Bharat, given that it shares a long border with Bangladesh and concerned about Pakistan-based radicals for decades. These foreign and domestic policy shifts raise important questions about future direction of Bangladesh's international relations and regional security dynamics.

Growing influence of Pakistan-based radical groups further exacerbates the situation. Social media platforms have become a battleground for spreading anti-Bharat narratives with pro-Pakistan rhetoric gaining traction in certain circles. Radical groups like Hizbul Tahrir with support from factions in Pakistan are reportedly training terrorists near border regions to stir up unrest in Bharat's north-eastern states. The possibility of further destabilising activities in these areas poses a significant threat to Bharat's national security.

Proxy War against Bharat

Bharat is emerging as a world leader and impacting the world. But, anti-Bharat elements are getting increasingly worried and have launched a sort of proxy war against the country. BNP launched “Boycott India” campaign in the last elections but after their defeat in the polls and an opportunity lost to pursue their Pakistan and China-oriented agenda, 30 per cent quota agitation in Bangladesh came handy to fuel anti-Bharat and anti-Hindu activities.

Protests which left-liberal circles and their self-proclaimed ‘scholars’, portraying as student movements, are mostly inspired by those who want to divide Bharat.

Secondly, the present radical interim government in Bangladesh is backed by China, Pakistan, and Islamic radicals that desire North-eastern states of Bharat to break away from rest of the country. The situation in Bangladesh is fast becoming a launch pad for attacks on strategic chicken neck.

There is fear that Pakistan and Bangladesh may have some sort of military cooperation including nuclear training which is a threat to Bharat’s national integrity. Since the 1970s, there has been a pro-Pakistani lobby in Bangladesh who have been peddling the idea that Bhartiya flags to be used as doormats. This anti-Bharat narrative is dangerous and calls for serious attention.

US, Human Rights and Hypocrisy?

Involvement of leftist parties in United States and Europe in promoting anti-Hindu and anti-Bharat narratives in Bangladesh is a concern. There are many people like George Soros, Donald Lu, Edward J. Markey and Chris Van Hollen along with many organizations including National Endowment for Democracy, Ford Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch who have directly and indirectly involved in funding and supporting these narratives.

All these happenings are due to Bharat’s significant progress and emergence as a global leader under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Shri Modi’s assertive steps towards strengthening Bharat’s independence and his resistance to making Bharat a global power has increased anti-Bharat sentiments in Bangladesh after Shri Modi visited Russia.

United States which very often claimed to be the world's defender of human rights indirectly supports unrest and persecution against Hindus in Bangladesh. Its avowed commitment to human rights notwithstanding, US has reportedly taken just a few substantive actions to address these issues. It raised questions about its consistency and sincerity in upholding these values.

Concluding Observations

Bangladesh is at a critical juncture where radical Islamist elements supported by US, Pakistan and China – directly or indirectly -- are increasingly driving its political path. There has been massive violence in the form of brutal attacks on minorities by extremist groups like Jamaat-e-Islami and Hizbul Tahrir.

Further, political oppositions face increased repression under as part of pro-Pakistan approach, military and cultural alliances against regional security as well as Bangladesh's secular roots. With growing targeted attacks on minorities, cultural symbols and anti-Bharat rhetoric, Bangladesh's future foretells serious risks for both its internal stability and broader regional peace.

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