MANAGING THE PARADIGM SHIFT ON INDIA'S EASTERN FLANK

THE BANGLADESH CHALLENGE

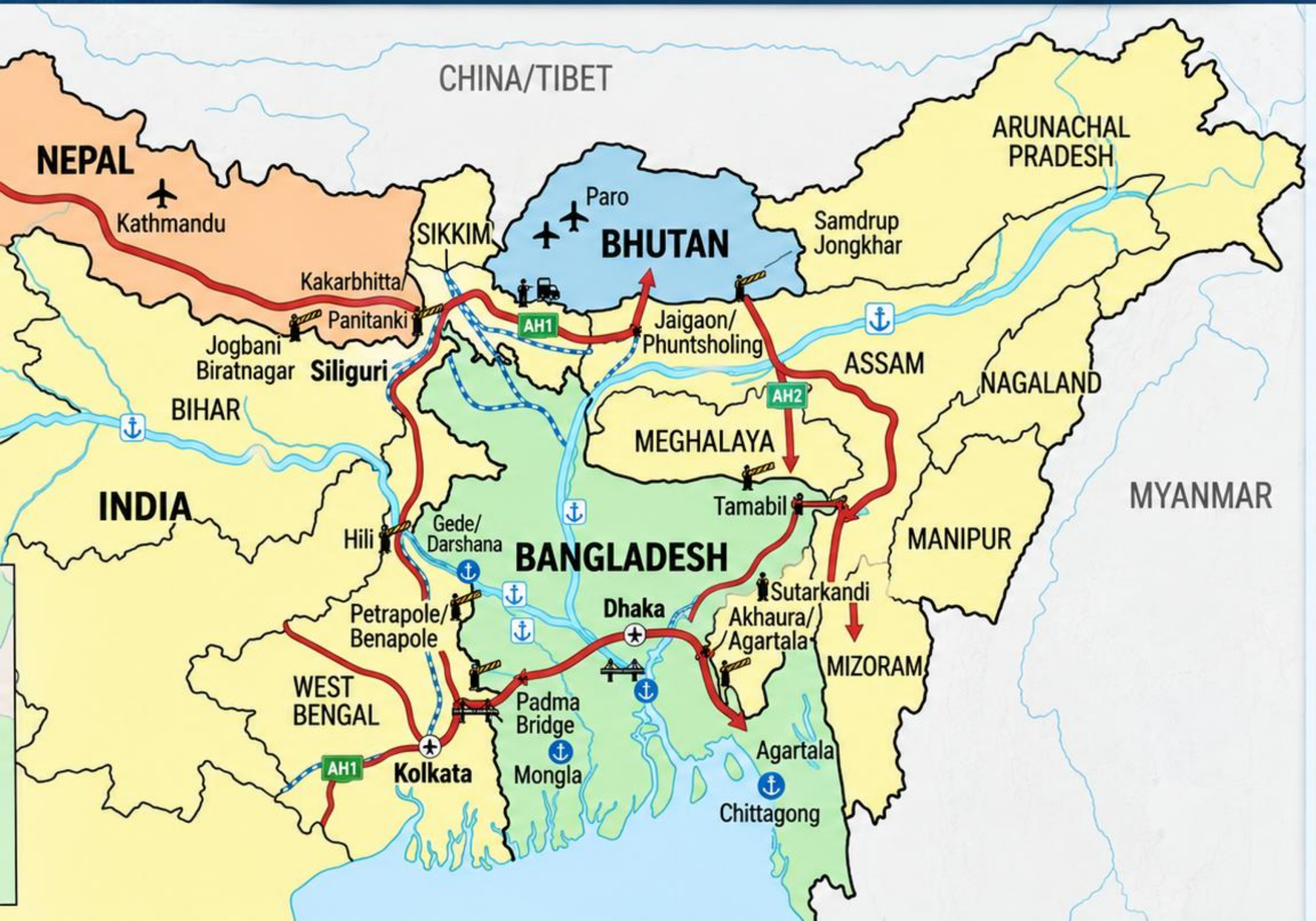


PATALIPUTRA PRAGYA PRAVAH

PEOPLE | STABILITY | REGIONAL HARMONY | A BRIGHTER TOMORROW


ANALOGY OF AN INTERNAL ORGAN.
ANYTHING THAT HAPPENS THERE...
GOOD
CREATES OPPORTUNITIES
BAD
POSES CHALLENGES
UGLY
IMPACTS US DIRECTLY
...IMPACTS US DIRECTLY.
Kabul
AFGHANISTAN
Srinagar
Islamabad
Amritsar
Lahore
Chandigarh
PAKISTAN
CHINA (TIBET)
NEPAL
Kathmanda
BHUTAN
New Delhi
Siliguri Corridor
Guwahati
Shillong
Aizawl
Imphal
Jaipur
Lucknow
Patna
Karachi
Ahmedabad
INDIA
BANGLADESH
Dhaka
Ranchi
Bhopal
Surat
Nagpur
Mumbai
Pune
MYANMAR
Visakhapatnam
Hyderabad
Vijayawada
BAY OF BENGAL
Bengaluru
Chennai
Madurai
Kochi
INDIAN OCEAN
SRI LANKA
N
0 250 500 750 1,000 km

BBIN REGION
CONNECTIVITY & BORDER SUB REGIONS



India-Bangladesh Border Distribution (4,096 km Total)



Transit & Rivers

- 54 transboundary rivers
- Ganges-Brahmaputra basin
- BBIN highway & rail routes
- Siliguri Corridor bottleneck

PEOPLE
PROSPERITY
PEACE
SHARED TOMORROW

Bangladesh

Some Insights



A STABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD | SHARED PROSPERITY | A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

Bangladesh: Historical Perspective

A JOURNEY OF TURMOIL, TRANSITIONS AND UNFINISHED DEMOCRACY

PEOPLE
POLITICS
POWER
RESILIENCE
A COMPLEEX
JOURNEY

Timeline of Major Events

KEY MILESTONES IN BANGLADESH'S POLITICAL EVOLUTION

1952	**Language Movement**	Bengali identity takes centre stage
1971	**War of Liberation**	Birth of Bangladesh (Instrument of Surrender)
1975	**Assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**	A tragic turning point
1976 – 1980	**Gen Ziaur Rahman**	Rise of military influence
1981 – 1991	**Gen Ershad era**	Prolonged military rule
1991 – 1996	**BNP period**	Return to electoral politics
1996 – 2001	**AL government**	Awami League in power
2001 – 2006	**BNP government**	Political instability grows
2006 – 2008	**Caretaker government**	Interim administration
2009–Aug 2024	**AL government (15+ years)**	Consolidation of power
Aug 2024	**Interim Government**	Political transition, uncertain future
Post Aug 2024	**BNP – 7 months**	Renewed political activity

Political Tenure Summary – 55 Years

A CYCLE OF POWER, INTERRUPTIONS AND TRANSITIONS

Sheikh Mujib Period (AL)	**4 YEARS** (1971 – 1975)	NATION IDENTITY ASPIRATION
Military Rulers	**15 + 2 YEARS** (1976 – 1991)	COUPS CONTROL INSTABILITY
BNP Period	**5 + 5 YEARS + 6 MONTHS** (1991 – 1996, 2001 – 2006, Post Aug 2024)	POLITICS PLURALISM COMPETITION
AL Period	**5 + 15 YEARS** (1996 – 2001, 2009 – Aug 2024)	DEVELOPMENT CENTRALISATION CONTESTATION
Interim Government	**1 & ½ YEARS** (2006 – 2008, Aug 2024)	TRANSITION UNCERTAINTY REFORMS

A NATION OF IMMENSE POTENTIAL, YET A FRAGILE POLITICAL TRAJECTORY

STABILITY
INCLUSIVITY
PROSPERITY
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

DIAGNOSING THE CORE SOCIETAL SCHISM

TWO NARRATIVES | DIFFERENT IDENTITIES | A DIVIDED TRAJECTORY

Amar Bhasha Amar Porichoy

Deen Desh Oikko

BENGALI IDENTITY
(The Secular Foundation)

Language | Culture | Pluralism | Inclusive Nationhood

Core Basis
Ethno-linguistic identity takes precedence over religious divisions.

Ideology
Rooted in the 1971 Liberation War ideology; emphasizes secularism, pluralism, and moderate Sunni Islam.

Cultural Expression
Syncretic festivals (Pohela Boishakh, Jatra) and a strong public presence for **women**. Historically linked to Awami League and liberal civil society.

A Plural, Cultural, Progressive Bangladesh

DIFFERENT PAST

DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS

A CONTESTED FUTURE

BANGLADESHI NATIONALISM
(The Resurgent Force)

Faith | Territory | Political Islam | Majoritarian Identity

Core Basis
Territorial and religious identity (Political Islam), specifically distinguishing Muslims of Bangladesh from Bengali Hindus.

Ideology
Introduced by Gen Ziaur Rahman (1970s); cemented when Gen Ershad declared Islam the state religion (1988). Creeping Wahhabi influence and institutional Islamisation.

Current Trajectory
Rapidly filling the vacuum left by 15 years of AL rule, driving the current **"Nutan Bangladesh"** aspirations. Linked to BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

A More Islamic, Majoritarian, Bangladesh

UNDERSTANDING TODAY | ENGAGING BETTER TOMORROW

ANTI-INDIA SENTIMENTS

From structural grievances to contemporary perceptions

"SENTIMENTS SHAPE PERCEPTIONS. PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCE REALITIES."





SURFACE SYMPTOMS

Border killings, and IPL controversy, cricket narratives, visa restrictions, and angst over Sheikh Hasina's asylum.

MID-LEVEL DRIVERS

The 'Big Neighbor' syndrome, intense strategic-narrative warfare amplified by adversarial communication, and internal political opportunism.

DEEP STRUCTURAL GRIEVANCES

Decades-old disputes over the Farakka Barrage and Teesta water sharing, compounded by the perceived monopolization of the 1971 liberation narrative by the AL camp.



HISTORY
GRIEVANCES
SENTIMENTS
FUEL A MORE
COMPLEX TOMORROW.

UNDERSTANDING SENTIMENTS | ANTICIPATING ACTIONS | STRENGTHENING INDIA'S RESPONSE

Signing of Instrument of Surrender

TWO ITERATIONS OF THE PHOTOS



16 December 1971

Lieutenant General A.A.K. Niazi signing the Instrument of Surrender in the presence of Lieutenant General J.S. Aurora



16 December 1971

Lieutenant General A.A.K. Niazi signing the Instrument of Surrender in the presence of Lieutenant General J.S. Aurora **Group Captain AK Khandakar (Chief of Staff Mukti Bahini)**


PEOPLE
PROSPERITY
PEACE
SHARED TOMORROW
The Evolving Dynamics
Post August 2024 Uprising
A TRANSFORMING BANGLADESH.
A CHANGING REGION. NEW REALITIES.
মুজিববাদ
নাই
JUSTICE
REFORM
FREEDOM
A NEW BANGLADESH
দফা এক
দাবী এক
গণভবন
PEOPLE
STABILITY
REGIONAL HARMONY
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

55 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE:
THE PENDULUM OF CONTESTED GOVERNANCE

IDEAS | POWER | PEOPLE | UNFINISHED TRANSITIONS



SECULAR NATION-BUILDING

A NATION BORN ON HOPE





POLITICAL FLUX & INSTABILITY

REPEATED CYCLES, PERSISTENT DIVISIONS

TARIQUE RAHMAN
CURRENT PM

AN UNCERTAIN TOMORROW

TRANSITION STILL INCOMPLETE

1 THE SECULAR ANCHOR

The 15+ year Awami League (AL) era provided a prolonged period of favorable disposition toward India and suppressed fundamentalist elements.

- State-building
- Secular ethos
- Closer ties with India



2 THE ABRUPT SHIFT

The current transition to the Interim Government (and impending BNP majority) represents a sharp, immediate regression toward historically anti-India postures.

- Military interventions
- Rise of BNP influence
- Growing external linkages



3 THE LEGACY DEFICIT

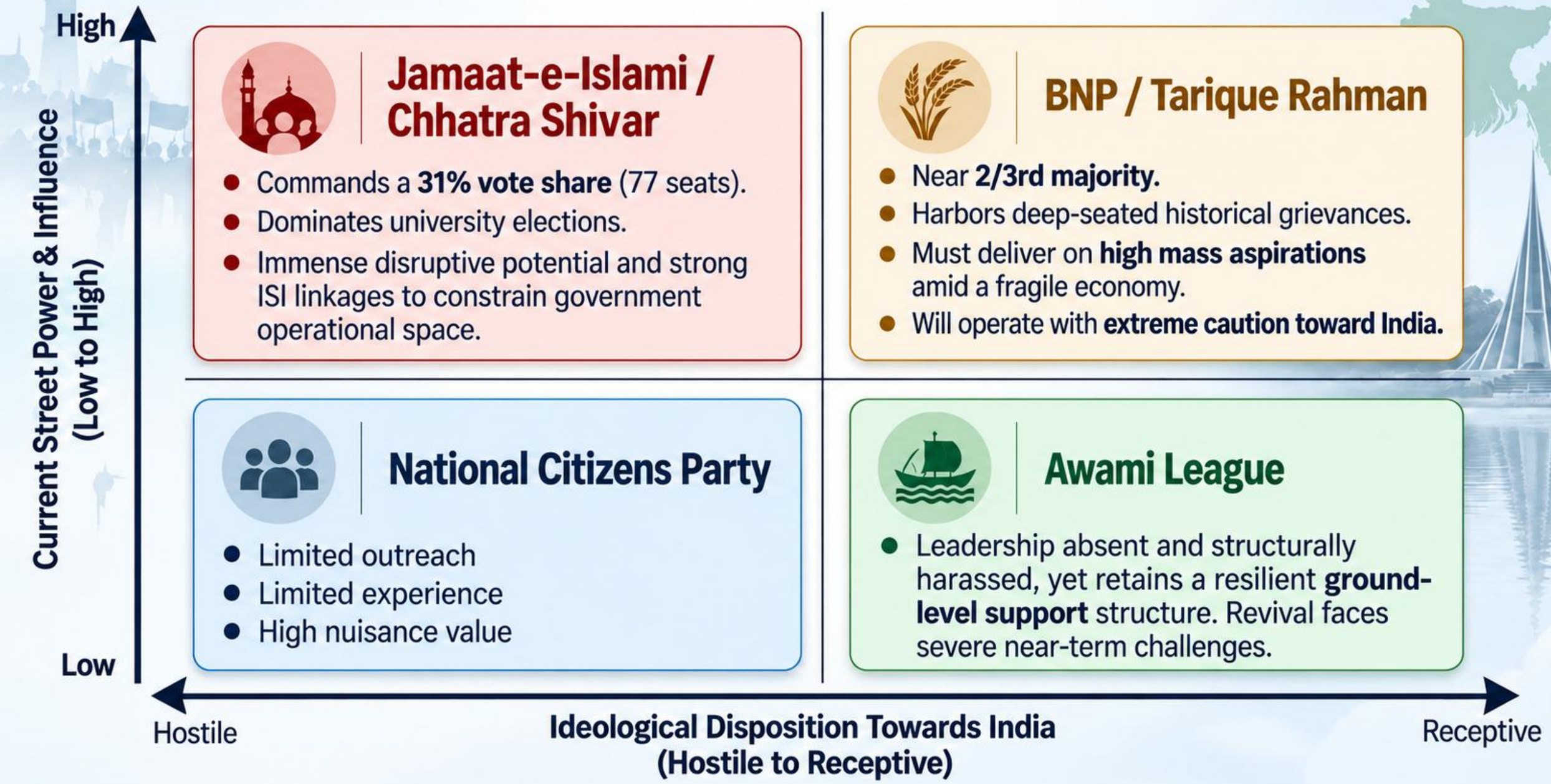
A systemic failure to build a shared, inclusive 1971 narrative has resulted in the Mujib-centric history being rejected by the masses, breeding deep resentment and opening the door to historical revisionism.

- Contested narratives
- Polarised society
- Cycle of instability



A STABLE, INCLUSIVE AND FORWARD-LOOKING BANGLADESH BENEFITS A STRONGER, MORE SECURE SOUTH ASIA

The Current Political Landscape



GROWING ISLAMIC IDEOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

IN THE ARMY & BGB

IDEAS
INFILTRATION
INFLUENCE
INSTITUTIONS

A MORE IDEOLOGISED NEIGHBOURHOOD A HIGHER RISK TOMORROW



Ideology Shapes Institutions

KEEPING FUNDAMENTALIST IDEOLOGY IN CHECK AT APEX LEVEL

Attempts to sideline officers disposed towards **Orthodox Islamic values.**

RISING ORTHODOX INFLUENCE

Visible surge in Wahabi ideology, beards, hijabs and on-duty namaz within mid-level officers.

SUSCEPTIBLE TO NARRATIVE SHIFT

Most vulnerable to radical narratives and external influence.



THE PAKISTAN NEXUS

Deepening engagement between Pak ISI and Bangladesh DGFI.

VIGILANCE | CAPACITY BUILDING | INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE | A STABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Conducive environment for consolidation of Terrorist groups

FRAGILE NEIGHBOURHOOD
PERSISTENT THREATS
HIGHER RISKS

1 Escaped / Released Terrorists (1400)



- JMB
- ABT
- HUJI

2 Active Pak – ISI Involvement

(Security concessions during Interim Govt period)



- Resurgent ISI networks
- Support, funding & direction to terrorist groups
- Exploiting political vacuum during interim government



3 Unstable Neighbourhood

- Myanmar – EAGs, ARSA
- Manipur & Indian NE States
- Drugs (narco-terror networks)



EAGs
ARSA
DRUGS
ARMS
INFILTRATION

4 Unemployed Youth, Rohingyas

- Large pool of unemployed youth vulnerable to radicalisation
- Rohingya influx adding to demographic and security stress



5 Difficult Terrain

- Dense forests, rivers, chars and hilly terrain
- Facilitates movement, hiding and training camps
- Challenging for surveillance and border management



A CONVERGENCE OF FACTORS CREATING SPACE FOR TERRORIST GROUPS TO REBUILD, NETWORK AND EXPAND IN BANGLADESH

PERSISTENT THREATS TODAY | HIGHER RISKS TOMORROW

A STABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD
A SAFER INDIA

TRANSACTIONAL MULTIPOLARITY

EXTRA-REGIONAL POWERS IN BANGLADESH

ACCESS | INFLUENCE | OPPORTUNITY | STRATEGIC LEVERAGE

A MORE CONTESTED NEIGHBOURHOOD A COMPLEX TOMORROW



UNITED STATES
(Strategic Access)

- Leveraging St. Martin Island
- Pursuing the Rohingya humanitarian corridor
- Pushing fine-print trade deals

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS, STRATEGIC FOOTPRINT

CHINA
(Infrastructure Penetration)

- Entrenching via sensitive projects (Lalmonirhat, Mongla port, Teesta water management)
- Establishing Avanaone drone manufacturing hub

INFRASTRUCTURE TODAY, STRATEGIC INFLUENCE TOMORROW

TURKEY
(Defense Supply)

- Rapidly stepping into the defense void
- Supplying drones and military equipment

DEFENSE PARTNERSHIP, EXPANDING PRESENCE

PAKISTAN
(Security Collusion)

- Facilitating ISI terrorist consolidation
- Securing control over ARSA
- Pushing defense deals / ammunition supply

REKINDLING PROXIES, DEEPENING INSTABILITY

THE 'BANGLADESH FIRST' DOCTRINE

INDIAN RESPONSES POST AUGUST 2024 REGIME CHANGE

A MORE COMPLEX NEIGHBOURHOOD REQUIRES A CALIBRATED RESPONSE



Convergence of two Failing states on West & East
– Chinese linkages & proxy

INDIA'S RESPONSE OPTIONS (INTERIM GOVT)

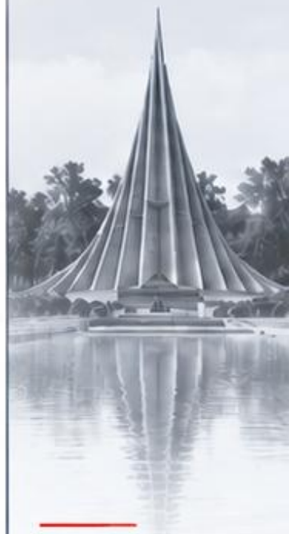
Collaborative
Engage where interests converge

Confrontationist
Deter and counter adverse actions

Strategic Patience – Wait & Watch
Monitor, assess and respond at the right time

BNP Govt assuming power
New political dispensation with uncertain trajectory

- **Limited Track I engagement**
  Initial contact needs to be followed up
- **Track II absent**
  Need to activate and nurture informal channels
- **Meting with PMs yet to materialize**
  Awaiting political window of opportunity



A STABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD IS ESSENTIAL FOR A SECURE AND PROSPEROUS INDIA

VIGILANT | ENGAGED | PREPARED

A STRONGER INDIA IN A COMPLEX WORLD

DEMOCRACY
DEVELOPMENT
SECURITY
PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES

STABILITY
PROSPERITY
COOPERATION
A SHARED FUTURE

WAY AHEAD

Resetting the Relationship

FOR A STABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD | A SECURE INDIA | A PROSPEROUS BANGLADESH



STRONGER NEIGHBOURS — BRIGHTER TOMORROWS — TOGETHER FOR A BETTER REGION

BANGLADESH: KEY STRATEGIC SENSITIVITIES FOR INDIA

A STABLE BANGLADESH IS ESSENTIAL FOR A SECURE AND PROSPEROUS INDIA

NEIGHBOURS
MATTER
STABILITY
SECURITY
SHARED PROSPERITY



"A peaceful, stable and prosperous Bangladesh is in India's strategic interest."

From India's perspective, three key strategic sensitivities merit attention :

(a) EXPANDING GEOPOLITICAL FOOTPRINT

The expanding footprint of China, US, Pakistan and Turkey in Bangladesh, with implications for India's long-term strategic interests.



GREATER EXTERNAL INFLUENCE
HIGHER STRATEGIC RISKS

(b) GROWING ORTHODOX ISLAMIST INFLUENCE

The growing influence of orthodox Islamist ideology within the Bangladeshi society, including amongst the rank and file of the armed forces and border security forces.



RADICALISATION WITHIN SOCIETY
POTENTIAL IMPACT ON SECURITY FORCES

(c) RISK OF TERRORIST SAFE HAVEN

The possibility of Bangladesh turning out to be a safe haven for Islamic terrorist groups.



SAFE HAVEN FOR TERROR GROUPS
THREAT TO INDIA'S INTERNAL SECURITY

STABILITY IN BANGLADESH | SECURITY FOR INDIA | PROSPERITY FOR THE REGION

Expectations of the People of Bangladesh

FRIENDSHIP | PROSPERITY | A STABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Stronger Together

PEOPLE
PROSPERITY
PEACE
SHARED TOMORROW

SOVEREIGNTY & EQUAL PARTNERSHIP

The overriding expectation is to be treated as a sovereign and equal partner, entirely free to determine domestic and foreign policies without external interference.



STRATEGIC INDISPENSABILITY

Broad consensus remains that the India-Bangladesh relationship is strategically indispensable and, despite the current downturn, must not be allowed to drift.

Managing the Contentious Issues



Presence of Sheikh Hasina in India

Water – Ganga Water Treaty : Teesta Agreement



Border Deaths, Push Ins

PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE BONDS | SHARED SECURITY | A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

TOGETHER FOR A PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS AND STABLE REGION

SHARED
HISTORY
COMMON PEOPLE
BRIGHTER
TOMORROW

The Five Pillars of Future Partnership

TRUST TODAY | STRONGER TOMORROW

People
Partnership
Progress

RESET

Restore trust and strategic confidence; India must take the lead irrespective of the current political dispensation.

NEW BEGINNINGS
STRONGER TRUST

RECOGNISE

Clearly articulate core red lines and institutionalize non-hierarchical consultation to prevent misunderstandings.

MUTUAL RESPECT
SHARED PERSPECTIVE

REVIVE

Resume all bilateral mechanisms suspended or slowed since the Interim Government tenure.

DIALOGUE TODAY
PROGRESS TOMORROW

REBUILD

Move beyond traditional security cooperation toward deeper, indispensable economic integration.

CONNECTED PEOPLE
SHARED PROSPERITY

REENERGISE

People to People centric engagements – focus on youth.

YOUNG MINDS
BRIGHTER TOMORROW

UTILISE FULL POTENTIAL OF SUB REGIONAL FORUMS

PEOPLE | PROSPERITY | PEACE | A SHARED TOMORROW

STRONGER
TOGETHER

Leverage our Strengths



- Geographical Proximity
- Civilisational Ties
- Digital Public Infrastructure
- Fintech
- Healthcare
- Education
- Tourism
- Cultural Linkages

Infusion of Technology for Border Management

The Operational Mandate: Zero reduction of BSF manpower.

The region must be treated as a **single, connected counter-terrorism zone** spanning India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.



SECURE BORDERS
SAFER PEOPLE
STRONGER NEIGHBOURHOOD

1 Automated Surveillance & AI
Deployment to track/neutralize hostile networks (drugs, FICN, trafficking) before reaching the physical border.

2 Sensory Integration
Upgrading fencing with multi-sensor mounted poles for marshy areas and underground monitoring for tunneling.

3 Kinetic Response Mechanisms
Integration of automated drone-based response systems triggered instantly by biometric/ sensory detection.

4 Infrastructure Chokepoints
Implementation of full-body ICP scanners for trucks and buses at key crossing points.

5 Autonomous Shallow Draft Surveillance Boats
Persistent ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance) for riverine monitoring, tracking suspicious movement and interdiction.

INDIA

BANGLADESH

DETER THREATS
Early detection, proactive response

ENABLE FORCE MULTIPLIER
Technology augments, not replaces, BSF manpower

DISRUPT CRIMINAL NETWORKS
Drugs, FICN, trafficking, terrorism

TRI-NATION SECURITY ZONE
Coordinated, connected, resilient

SAFER COMMUNITIES
Peace and development in the border regions

TECHNOLOGY | VIGILANCE | COOPERATION | A MORE SECURE TOMORROW

PEOPLE | BORDERS | OPPORTUNITIES

OUR
NEIGHBOURHOOD
OUR SHARED
TOMORROW

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

REFLECT | DISCUSS | REIMAGINE | ACT

STABILITY
PROSPERITY
PEOPLE
SHARED FUTURE

1 ARE WE MANAGING OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD – OR MERELY REACTING TO CRISES ?

Do we have a proactive strategy beyond changes in political dispensations ?

3 FROM 'SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP' TO 'STRATEGIC DRIFT'?

Why do our ties with friendly neighbours (Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Myanmar) repeatedly lose momentum ?

5 WHAT ARE THE KEY LEVERS OF INFLUENCE ?

Which levers should we use for our friendly neighbourhood – and how – to ensure sustainable relationships ?

A STABLE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
A STRONGER INDIA



2 WHY IS EVERY CHANGE A SURPRISE ?

Why do we often fail to anticipate political shifts in our neighbourhood ?

4 ARE WE OVER-RELYING ON RECIPROCITY ?

Do our neighbours require greater political accommodation, asymmetric generosity and long-term relationship-building ?

6 WHAT SHOULD INDIA DO NOW ?

What immediate measures and structural reforms can break the cycle of neighbourhood instability ?

PEACE | CONNECTIVITY | PROSPERITY | PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES


PEOPLE
PROSPERITY
PEACE
SHARED TOMORROW
Jai Hind
Jai Bharat
A STRONGER NEIGHBOURHOOD
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW
SECURE
STABLE
PROSPEROUS
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PEOPLE
SECURITY
PROSPERITY
PARTNERSHIP
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW