



Report on Panel Discussion
on
Evolving Dynamics in Bangladesh: Regional Implications and India's Options
14 November 2025
Seminar Hall, Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies

On November 14, 2025, the Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies (CAPSS), under its Neighbourhood Insight Series, conducted a panel discussion on “Evolving Dynamics in Bangladesh: Regional Implications and India's Options”. AVM Anil Golani (Retd), Director General, CAPSS, gave the welcome remarks. Moderated by Dr Shalini Chawla, Distinguished Fellow, CAPSS, the discussion had two panellists on board: Ambassador Veena Sikri and Prof. Sanjay K. Bhardwaj (JNU). Dr Chawla set the tone for the discussion by asking the panellists how Bangladesh's internal and external dynamics have altered since the ouster of former Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, in August 2024.

Prof Bhardwaj opined that there's increasing regret among university faculty and students over last year's uprising, and shed light on the deteriorating law and order situation, which was also spotlighted by Amb Sikri. The panellists noted that Muhammad Yunus, chief advisor of Bangladesh's interim government, appears more inclined to retain power than to facilitate free and fair elections. Although elections have been announced for February 2026, no specific dates have been allotted yet. Prof Bhardwaj cautioned that elections may not take place in February at all. It was highlighted that the newly established National Citizen's Party (NCP) does not have pan-Bangladesh support and is unlikely to win in a free and fair electoral set-up. On the other hand, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), although has a few strongholds and institutional backing from the Yunus-led interim government, can only win a few seats as it is not widely respected. The Awami League (AL), however, has pan-Bangladesh influence and would likely secure a majority in free and fair elections. He optimistically concluded by noting that the spirit of 1971 will return within the next two to three years. He painted different scenarios which could emerge next year, including the declaration of a national emergency.



Amb. Sikri emphasised that last year's uprising was a carefully orchestrated regime-change operation, backed by the United States of America, with the deep state of Pakistan as the conduit. She noted that the forces supporting last year's uprising had one thing in common: their defeat in 1971. She then proceeded to explain how the quota system was already abolished by Hasina, but her usage of the word '*razakars*' triggered a strong reaction from the students, who mobilised on the streets with guns. Amb Sikri also remarked that Hasina's decision to give interviews to the Indian media is not inappropriate, given that the Dalai Lama has been in India and engages publicly without objection from China. It was discussed that a Bangladesh Nationalist Party(BNP)-Jamaat alliance is delusional, as Jamaat is not interested in such an arrangement and instead wants to bring all Islamist parties into its fold. She added that a moderate faction within the BNP wants to collaborate with AL, but there is still a considerable pro-Jamaat faction within the BNP. She concluded by remarking that Pakistan experts in India and the media should talk more about the rapidly evolving Pakistan-Bangladesh relations, and how the Indian government has exercised restraint in its approach to Bangladesh.

The panellists further discussed the rising Islamist radicalisation in Bangladesh; Yunus appeasing Islamist forces to support his tenure, and the repercussions these developments will have for India. It was highlighted that New Delhi needs to be watchful of these developments and continue to try to engage with Dhaka under its *Neighbourhood First Policy*. The growing nexus between Pakistan and Bangladesh is something which India cannot ignore.