**Unfolding of events in Bangladesh**

On December 16, 1971, Dhaka fell and East Pakistan became Bangladesh. According to the Indian Army Chief, General Manekshaw, “The Pakistan army in East Pakistan fought very gallantly but they had no chance, they were thousands of miles away from their base. I had eight to nine months of preparation; I had, at most, a 50 to 1 advantage”.

According to Roedad Khan, a former civil servant, the three key players responsible for the fall of Dhaka were Yahya, Bhutto and Mujib. Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, the new leader of Bangladesh, was killed during a military coup on August 15, 1975, along with most of his family members. Sheikh Hasina, the current Prime Minister and daughter of Mujib, accused General Zia-ur-Rehman, President from 1977 until his assassination in 1980, for the conspiracy.

Bangladesh has spent 15 years under military rule since its independence. In 2018, Sheikh Hasina won her third consecutive term in an election marred by violence, boycott by the opposition and accusations of vote rigging. The opposition parties rejected the results and the protests led to the death of 20 people. The Awami League has had deep ties with India, even before the creation of Bangladesh. India expects that the Awami League led government will put its interests in Bangladesh first. Recently, there is growing concern in India as with every passing day, Bangladesh is tilting towards China.

[Fake social media accounts and marginalisation of women in Pakistan](https://nation.com.pk/20-Apr-2021/fake-social-media-accounts-and-marginalisation-of-women)

The concerns include growing military ties as China is helping Bangladesh upgrade the Chittagong port and the Indian navy is watchful of this development. Furthermore, China is also the source of 82 percent of Bangladesh’s arms purchases from 2009 to 2013. In fact, it was one of the top three buyers of Chinese weapons in the world. China has also replaced India as the top trade partner for Bangladesh. As a member of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), several agreements were signed during the Chinese President’s visit to Bangladesh in 2016. 97 percent duty free access of Bangladeshi goods have made China not just Bangladesh’s largest trading partner but also its largest investor.

The relations between India and Bangladesh are futher bitter on account of the National Registration of Citizen (NRC), the Citizen Amendment Bill (CAB), Rohingya Refugee Crisis and the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodha. Even Modi’s recent visit on the event of Bangladesh’s golden jubilee of independence triggered violent protests across the country. Organised by Hifazat-e-Islam, anti-India banners and posters that condemned attacks on Muslim and mosques across India were seen. They even burned images of Modi.

[Naval Chief, Azerbaijan envoy discuss regional security](https://nation.com.pk/20-Apr-2021/naval-chief-azerbaijan-envoy-discuss-regional-security)

Let us have a look at Hifazat-e-Islam, a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, which has replaced Jammat-e-Islami. Jammat-e-Islami sided with West Pakistan during the 1971 war and because of this reason, the Awami League government hanged its top leaders and the rest were jailed for so called war crimes. Jammat-e-Islami was even banned by a Bangladesh court. This decision came six months before the general elections and the court was accused of helping the ruling party rig the election by banning a popular party. This led to the rise of Hefazat-e-Islam, founded in 2010, in Chittagong by late Maulana Shah Ahmed Shafi.

In 2013, riots broke out in Bangladesh when liberals demanded a ban on religious organisations and the hanging of war criminals. Accordingly, Hefazat-e-Islam organised a march to Dhaka seeking death for anti-Islamic bloggers. During the march, Hifazat-e-Islam submitted 13 demands to the government. Some of them included the induction of blasphemy laws with the provision of a death penalty. Another demand was the restoration of the phrase, ‘absolute trust and faith upon Allah Almighty.’ Also, one of the demands was that all atheists must be hanged. According to an article, late Maulana said, “Anyone who wishes to retain or regain power must meet these 13 demands.”

[US Ambassador to Russia to return to US briefly this week](https://nation.com.pk/20-Apr-2021/us-ambassador-to-russia-sullivan-to-return-to-united-states-briefly-this-week)

The recent visit of PM Modi was opposed by Hifazat-e-Islam and the visit consequently became a controversial issue which provoked large scale demonstrations across Bangladesh. Border guards were deployed to maintain law and order across the country. According to the media, the government of Bangladesh restricted the use of Facebook across the country during Modi’s visit and the following protests. The protesters of Hefazat-e-Islam accused the BJP led Indian government for killing Muslims across India and the killing of Muslims in Gujrat during the time of Modi as chief minister. Official figures say that 12 protesters were killed but according to Hifazat-e-Islam, the number is higher than this.

An Indian army delegation recently visited Bangladesh to discuss the current situation. Reportedly, Bangladesh government is seeking Indian help to address the emerging threat of Hifazat-e-Islam. Islamists have re-emerged across Bangladesh and even political parties, through alliances, are using them for political gains. Hifazat-e-Islam has become a prominent politico-religious force in the country that may reshape the future of Bangladesh for the worst.