

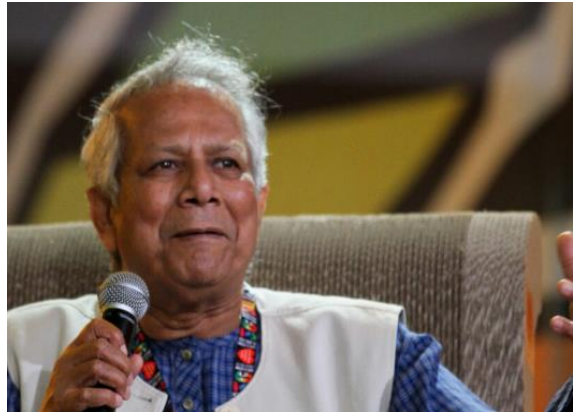


Crisis in Bangladesh: Causes and Consequences

Dr. Pradeep Taneja, Dr. Reshad Ahsan, Dr. Lailufar Yasmin
and Barrister Junayed Chowdhury

Thursday 5 September 2024: 5.30pm for 6-7.15pm AEST - Level 13, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Over the past 15 years, Sheikh Hasina presided over Bangladesh as Prime Minister with what many have described as a dictatorial style. It was this, accompanied by long-running resentment over her government's civil service quota system, which saw 30% of government jobs reserved for certain groups, that served as the catalyst for recent demonstrations against her rule.



The unrest came to a head on 5 August, when she was forced to flee the country as hundreds of thousands of protesters, many of them youths alienated by severe rates of unemployment, rallied to the capital Dhaka and breached her personal residence. This all occurred after a fortnight of brutal crackdowns which saw 440 protesters killed and many more injured.

After dissolving parliament on 6 August, President Mohammed Shahabuddin appointed Muhammad Yunus as the Chief Advisor of Bangladesh to lead the "caretaker" government. A Nobel Laureate, Yunus had been previously subjected to judicial harassment from the Hasina government, particularly over his plans to create a "citizen powers" political party in 2007.

Bangladesh now finds itself in a power vacuum with many fearing what its political and economic future may be, and which party will emerge to lead it moving forward. Many are also worried about whether the key concerns of the protesters which led the unrest will be addressed.

What are the socio-economic, trade and regional security implications? What influence, if any, will Yunus have on the formation of a new government and their agenda? Who are the main players now vying for political control and what are their policies?

AIIA Victoria warmly invites you to discuss these questions with our panellists: Dr. Pradeep Taneja, Dr. Reshad Ahsan, Dr. Lailufar Yasmin and Barrister Junayed Chowdhury. Moderated by Mohammad Chowdhury (CEO Long Street Advisors).

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Dr. Reshad Ahsan is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Melbourne. His interests are at the intersection of International Trade and Development Economics. His research explores the labour-market effects of trade in developing countries, with a focus on understanding the impact of trade on inequality and workplace safety. He also studies the link between trade and firm innovation and productivity in developing countries. His research has been published in leading academic journals such as the *Journal of International Economics* and has been funded by major local and international funding bodies. He has written for and been interviewed by many leading newspapers, including the *Sydney Morning Herald*.



Junayed Chowdhury is an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, a Barrister of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, London, and holds an LL.M from the University of Chicago Law School. He is recognized by leading global legal directories like Legal500, Chambers & Partners etc. as a leading practitioner in the field of corporate laws, taxation, litigation and arbitration, legislative drafting and constitutional law. He is the Managing Partner of Vertex Chambers, Dhaka and Vertex International Consulting, Sydney. He is the author of the leading practitioners' textbooks in Bangladesh "Corporate Tax Law and Practice" and "Commentaries on the Law of Arbitration in Bangladesh", which are catalogued by, among others, the British Library, Lincoln's Inn Library, and the University of Chicago D'Angelo Law Library.



Dr. Pradeep Taneja is a senior lecturer in Asian politics, political economy and international relations at the University of Melbourne, where he is also an academic fellow at the Australia India Institute and a member of the Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies. Previously, Dr. Taneja was Director of International Programs in the Graduate School of Management at La Trobe University and currently sits on the editorial board of the *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*.



Dr. Lailufar Yasmin is Professor and Chairperson at the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She has undertaken her studies at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA, and Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. She has been a recipient of the US Fulbright, the British Chevening, and the Australian International Post-Graduate Research Scholarship (IPRS). Her recent fellowships include FIPSS—Fellowships in Indo-Pacific Security Studies— at Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Hawaii, USA and Fellowship on Women in Conflict 1325 Fellowship Programme, offered by Beyond Borders Scotland. Her latest publications are on the Rohingya issue, disciplinary history of International Relations in South Asia and on the Indo-Pacific. Her areas of research include Bangladesh's politics, economy and foreign policy, South Asian Affairs, China's Rise, maritime security and the Indo-Pacific Region, and women's participation in the UN Peacekeeping, among others.



Mohammad Chowdhury (Moderator) is the Founder and CEO of Long Street Advisors, a Council Member at AIIA Victoria and a Visiting Fellow at UTS. Mohammad has worked in over 80 countries and advises clients on meaningful digitisation of society, economy and nation. He is a Trustee of the UK's Institute for the Future of Work, has written for *Forbes*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *FT*. He has advised on digitisation in Bangladesh, was based in India from 2011-2015 and also undertaken major digitisation projects in Pakistan and Myanmar. His book *Border Crossings: My Journey as an Outsider* (NewSouth Books) was published in July 2023.