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Bangladesh Turmoil

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Sheikh Hasina has resigned as Bangladesh's Prime Minister amid violent protests demanding her departure. The Bangladesh Army, led by General Waker-Uz-Zaman, has taken control. General Waker-Uz-Zaman announced that the Army will establish an interim government and urged protesters to return to peace.

What led to such a situation in Bangladesh?

- Sheikh Hasina government introduced of a 30% quota in government employment at all levels for those who fought for the freedom of Bangladesh from Pakistan, as well as their children and grandchildren.
- This was opposed by Bangladesh youth and were protesting for past two months over it.
- These protests are the largest since Sheikh Hasina was re-elected for her fourth consecutive term since 2008.
- While she has overseen economic growth, her **crackdown on the Opposition**, media, and civil society has led to widespread unpopularity with youth-led protests became the tipping point for her resignation.
- Hasina resigned and fled to India on a military aircraft
- She held talks with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on the present situation in Bangladesh and her future course of action.
- The Indian Air Force and other security agencies are providing security to Hasina.
- While speculation exists that Hasina might travel to London, reports also suggest she could head to Belarus.

What has been India's stance in this crisis situation?

- India described the violent protests in Bangladesh as an internal matter of that country.
- India has been naturally supportive towards her: New Delhi has tacitly supported Sheikh Hasina despite her undemocratic practices.

What are the implications of Sheikh Hasina's exit on India?

- **Islamist extremism** could return to Bangladesh and create tension at the eastern border
 - The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina represented a secular and modernizing vision of Bangla nationalism. Her ouster has threatened to push Bangladesh in a regressive direction and given space for radical extremism to rise its ugly head.
- India has **lost a trusted partner in the region**
 - She was a friend to India, collaborating closely on countering terrorist groups in Bangladesh.
 - Hasina has been sensitive to India's security concerns. In return, India has been a generous neighbour, helping Bangladesh's development as well as building connectivity
 - With Hasina as the PM, Bangladesh and India achieved a historic land boundary agreement on an issue festering for decades

- A strong Chinese presence in Bangladesh poses a significant challenge for India, potentially leaving it encircled by unfriendly. Such a situation would be detrimental to India's strategic and security interests.
 - China and Pakistan to the west and north,
 - a communist-led Nepal,
 - Taliban-controlled Afghanistan,
 - an anti-India Maldives, and
 - a potentially ambivalent Bangladesh.
- India-USA rift
 - The West including USA had criticized Sheikh Hasina's crackdown on civil society, the opposition, and the media, calling for an end to her authoritarian methods.
 - India's backing of Hasina, even amid allegations of election rigging, has created tensions between India and the West.

Can you answer the following question?

The recent political upheaval in Bangladesh, culminating in Sheikh Hasina's resignation, has significant implications for India's strategic interests in South Asia. Elaborate.

