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From Bangladesh to Pakistan:

The Ripple Effects of Political Turmoil and Non-Democratic Influence in South Asia



Political uncertainty looms large over the South Asian region. Governments in all the regional countries are suspicious about their future. A massive uprising in Bangladesh and the consequent ouster of the country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid has significantly impacted the neighboring countries. This inculcated fear among the governments of the neighboring countries. In Pakistan, the government was already facing public backlash due to the alleged sham elections. Moreover, the opposition supporters are also protesting against the incumbent government due to the incarceration of the Pakistan Tehreek E Insaaf (PTI) government. The Bangladesh uprising has motivated the PTI youth to start a new campaign against the sitting government, which can lead to significant instability and chaos in the country.

Bangladesh's Youth Uprising: Causes, Impact, and Speculations

For the first time in the history of Bangladesh, the youth of the country forced a sitting Prime Minister to resign and flee the country. Rising unemployment in the country, the job quota system, and inflation were amongst the prime reasons and motivations behind these student protests. However, there are speculations that a foreign hand is also involved in the ouster of Sheikh Hasina Wajid. Although Hasina's rule is termed a fascist government, the country made significant tides under her government. She developed Bangladesh's road and energy infrastructure. The road network during her rule expanded to 90000 km from a mere 50000 km in 2005.

Furthermore, she provided electricity to 90 percent of the country's households. Industrialization also increased during her government. However, the reinstatement of the quota system by the High Court sparked massive student protests around the country due to a decline in job opportunities in the private sector.

The public sector appears attractive to most of the Bengali youth due to the job security and rapid increments. Reports suggest that annually, 400000 aspirants compete for 3000 civil services jobs in Bangladesh. However, analysts hold that these were not the prime reasons behind the ouster of Hasina Wajid. Her tilt towards China is deemed as the prime reason behind her ouster from the government. Nonetheless, the reasons behind her ouster could be debatable, but these protests have spread fear among most of the regional countries.

Regional Implications: The Influence of Bangladesh's Crisis on Pakistan and Other South Asian Nations

People in India and Pakistan have accused their governments of rigging the 2024 elections. The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) government already faces backlash from the majority public due to the alleged rigging in the recent elections. Almost all the opposition parties have accused the government of robbing their mandate. Numerous complaints about the issuance of bogus results by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) were reported after the 2024 elections. Moreover, the incarceration of the PTI leaders under the current government has also added to the chagrin of the incumbent PML-N government in Pakistan.

The country has observed different protests from opposition parties in recent months. The anti-government student protests in Bangladesh have inculcated a new spirit in the anti-government protests in Pakistan. On the other hand, the Pakistani government is scared of a new wave of protests by the opposition parties. The majority of the Pakistani youth stand with opposition parties. PTI's youth wing has started a novel campaign to malign the

government through public gatherings and protests. Pakistan's religious political parties are also mounting pressure on the government over some religious and economic issues. This has increased the fear among the PML-N officials of a possible uprising against their government. To counter any possible uprising, the government of Pakistan has restricted internet in the country. The Pakistani government seems oblivion to the fact that the Bangladeshi government also used similar tactics to control anti-government protests. However, it further exacerbated the situation.

Navigating Political Turmoil: The Role of Non-Democratic Forces and the Need for Democratic Reforms in South Asia

Most of the citizens in Pakistan and regional countries see the anti-government protests in Bangladesh as a revolution, ignoring the realities behind these protests. In the previous few decades, most such protests, including the Arab Spring, led the countries into mere turmoil and chaos. The countries where leaders were forced to resign through protests led to military coups and political instability in the past. The consequences of Bangladesh's so-called revolution are yet to be seen. The Bengali military has already intervened in the system by setting up an interim government in the country.

Furthermore, the fate of the country will be decided by the transparency of the upcoming elections. Such situations open the way for the non-democratic forces to intervene in the democratic system of the country. Bangladesh's history is also a substantiation of this. Since the creation of the country in 1971, Bangladesh has been the victim of [29 military coups](#). This happened due to the increased role of the Bengali military in the creation of their country and their nexus with the Mukti Bahini. Pakistani youth should not overlook the significant influence of non-democratic forces in the country's electoral and democratic process. Moreover, they should be cautious to prevent external forces, especially the United States and Israel, from exploiting their hostility towards the incumbent government. On the other hand, the sitting government should also promote democracy in the country to ensure political stability. The forceful suppression of dissent will lead to increased frustration against the government, which could prove detrimental to the stability of the country.

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