

# Sheikh Hasina Resigned

## Why In News

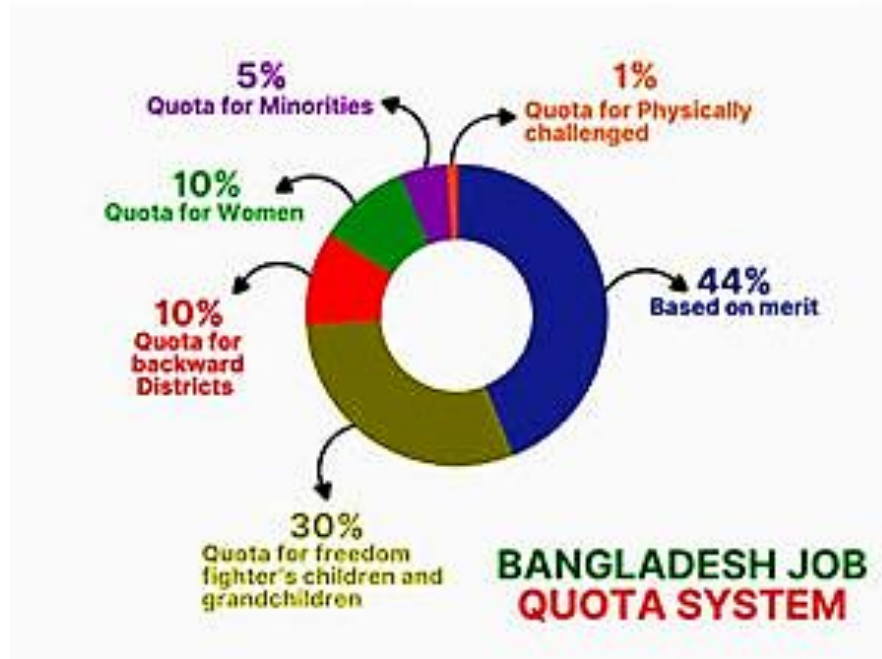
- **After 15 years in power**, Bangladesh's prime minister has suddenly **resigned and fled the country**. Sheikh Hasina's departure came after weeks of student-led protests were met with deadly force, and has been greeted with jubilation on the streets of the capital, Dhaka.



- While Hasina is at a safe house at the **Hindon airbase in Ghaziabad**, where her flight landed. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting on the Bangladesh crisis, in the presence of **Jaishankar and NSA Ajit Doval**. Notably, India has always considered Sheikh Hasina a friend and has shared good relations with Bangladesh under Awami League rule.

## What Led To This

- **Students protested for fairer access** to government jobs and were met with violence, including the **killing of nearly 300 people**, sparking a broader movement for justice that has forced Hasina to step down.
- The students had originally demanded the removal of a quota system that **reserved 30% of government jobs** for the families of people who fought for independence from Pakistan in 1971.



- But the government's harsh response to the protests since mid-July meant they continued even after the supreme court largely met their demands on quotas two weeks ago.
- The internet was entirely cut off during the worst of the violence but images that emerged showed police and members of the **ruling Awami League party's** student wing attacking protesters with live fire and machetes and running them over with vehicles.
- People in Dhaka have described nonstop night-time raids, which have led to **11,000 people being arrested**.
- The raids continued overnight before a mass protest that had been called for Monday – but then came the surprise announcement that Hasina had fled the country by helicopter.



## What Happens Next

- The military has announced it has taken control and will be forming an **interim government** until elections can be held. Many are hoping the country will not fall into the same patterns as before.
- **The Awami League and BNP** have tussled for power since the 1990s, when democracy was restored after a period of military rule, but the role of students in the recent protests has raised hopes of an alternative to break the cycle.
- The military chief, **Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman**, has called on protesters to return to their homes and promised an investigation into the killings.

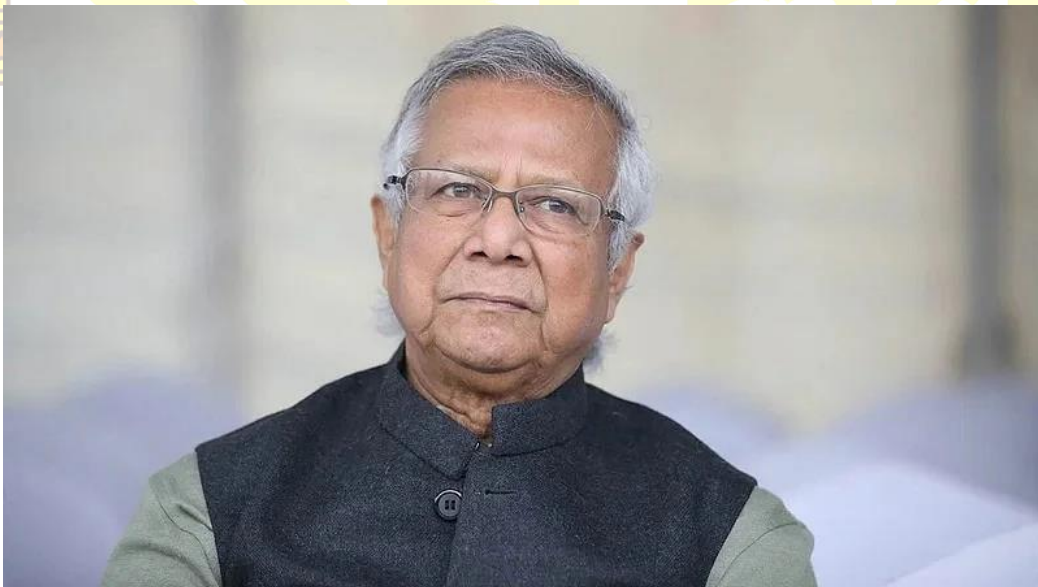


- A helicopter reportedly took Hasina from Dhaka to India and she is expected to **seek asylum abroad**.
- According to a press statement, the decision was taken at a meeting with opposition party members. **Shahabuddin had** "decided unanimously to free Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson **Begum Khaleda Zia immediately**", a press statement said.
- **Khaleda Zia was jailed in 2018** after she was sentenced to 17 years in prison in a graft case.





- **Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus**, known as 'banker to the poor' for his work in fighting poverty, will be the chief adviser to the interim government in Bangladesh, the coordinators of the student movement that led the protests in the country said.



## Who Is Sheikh Hasina

- 76-year-old was the longest-serving **female prime minister in the world**, having been in power since 2009 and before that from **1996 to 2001**.
- She led the party founded by her father, **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**, widely considered Bangladesh's founding father, closely tying the party's legitimacy to his legacy.



- **In 1975 Hasina survived** the assassination of her father and their whole family in a coup by army officers only because she and her sister were in Europe at the time. Shortly afterwards she became the party's leader.
- Her rule has also been characterised by **growing levels of authoritarianism**. Much of the opposition, especially the Bangladeshi Nationalist party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami, have been attacked and arrested.
- **Extrajudicial killings** have been widespread and journalists have said they feared doing the most basic reporting in case it was deemed to reflect badly on the government.

<p><b>December 29, 2008</b></p>  <p>Awami League wins the general election and Sheikh Hasina becomes PM for a second term.</p>	<p><b>February 2009</b></p> <p>Bangladesh Rifles revolt. Government restores order, but more than 74 people are killed.</p>	<p><b>June 2011</b></p> <p>15th Amendment to the Constitution is passed, removing the caretaker government system meant to conduct elections.</p>
<p><b>February 2013</b></p> <p>Mass protests in Shahbagh, Dhaka call for the death penalty for those who committed atrocities during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War.</p>	<p><b>October 2013</b></p>  <p>Rana Plaza building collapses, killing more than 1,000 people and highlighting the lack of safety in the garment industry.</p>	<p><b>January 5, 2014</b></p> <p>A general election is held and boycotted by the opposition. The Awami League wins, securing Hasina a second straight term as PM.</p>
<p><b>January 2015</b></p>  <p>Political unrest and violence erupt, stemming from the BNP opposition's unmet demands following the 2014 election.</p>	<p><b>December 30, 2018</b></p> <p>Awami League wins the general election amid vote-rigging allegations. Hasina secures a third consecutive term after winning 96% of votes.</p>	<p><b>March 2020</b></p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic deals a blow to the economy. Prices rise, and a cost-of-living crisis ensues.</p>
<p><b>2022</b></p> <p>Bangladesh reports a GDP growth of 7.2%, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. But income inequality rises.</p>	<p><b>January 2024</b></p> <p>PM Hasina wins a fourth straight term in a controversial vote boycotted by the opposition.</p>	<p><b>July-August 2024</b></p>  <p>Students launch protests against job quotas that reserve one-third of positions for descendants of freedom fighters.</p>
<p><b>July 29, 2024</b></p> <p>Protests resume, and calls grow for Hasina's resignation.</p>	<p><b>August 4, 2024</b></p> <p>Nearly 100 are killed, taking the total number of people killed in protests to more than 300.</p>	<p><b>August 5, 2024</b></p> <p><b>Hasina is ousted from power as she flees the country. Protesters storm the prime minister's residence.</b></p>

## Impact On India

- **Bangladesh plunges** into a serious crisis, the BSF issued a high alert along the India-Bangladesh border. **BSF DG** has also reached Kolkata, a senior BSF officer said.
- Bangladesh is also crucial to the security of **India's remote northeastern states**, where insurgent groups used to be active. They often took sanctuary in Bangladesh, which shares a porous border with some of these states.



- On Hasina's watch, **India's northeastern border** was relatively calm because she had not allowed Bangladesh to be used by insurgent groups.
- Trade between India and Bangladesh will also be significantly impacted, with business **activities at Petrapole**, the largest land port in India and South Asia, nearly coming to a halt.



- The latest **Akhaura-Agartala link**, which provided an alternate route from mainland India to the Northeast, was the sixth cross-border rail line between the countries.
- A disruption in **Indo-Bangladesh ties** could thus restrict India's access to the Northeast, which will be connected to mainland India only through the narrow "Chicken's Neck" — only 22 km at its narrowest — between West Bengal and Assam.

