

DIRECTOR'S DESK



The ISCS's Bi-Monthly August-September, 2025 edition focusses on the Asia Matters. As we all know that Asia has been a theme of discussion for years now due to some vital transitions for instance China's aggressive role in the global arena, India's rise as a significant power on the global stage, the strength of Asian economies in the face of the global down turns, its advent as both the largest producer and consumer of goods stimulating plethora of other factors as a by-product of these developments. In contemporary times, Asia also connotes a space where new strategic and cultural geographies, which contest traditional geopolitical and geo-cultural divisions, are being imagined and where alternative institutions that predict a transition of the center of global activities eastward are being framed.

By today's Asia also witnesses some dark tunnels as against developmental quotients. The dimming Bangladesh-India relations which elicited due to sudden departure of Bangladesh's long time Prime Minister and new government coming in. Though the current government appears more sceptical of strengthening ties with India. This may negatively affect the recent push between Dhaka and New Delhi to increase economic and infrastructural connectivity in what is one of the least integrated regions in the world. The circumstances in Myanmar are also unfavorable. Currently, Myanmar and Bangladesh serves as a battleground for global powers. ISCS's researchers who have been constantly monitoring

the rounds and twists emerging and also undercutting sub-regional integration.

This issue of Newsreel predicts future forecasts and threats surrounding the proposal for a humanitarian corridor along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Which has already sparked a corridor controversy along with significant domestic criticism, with political parties calling for broader consensus on sovereignty-related matters. The article disseminates about the socio-economic and the environmental strain and would lead to policy confusion.

From India's take the Bi-Monthly projects how Op Sindoor not only displayed the strength and readiness of the India Armed Forces but have also underscored a silent revolution brewing within the country due to the rapid rise of a self reliant defence eco-system, facilitating private collaboration thereby fuelling a major achievement in the Make in India Initiatives.

The edition also documents the series of events that the institute have conducted over a span of last few months comprising of seminars, talks and panel discussions on issues that remains extremely prevalent in present times.

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INDIAN'S NEW DEFENCE CONFIDENCE: FROM BALAKOT TO OPERATION SINDOOR

— Ayudbhushan Dr. Rajib Chakraborty ★

When the world looks at India's defence transformation in the 21st Century, few moments stand out more than the precision strikes of Operation Sindoor in 2025. Behind this bold demonstration of power lies a decade of decisive leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who reshaped India's military posture from cautious restraint to credible, proactive deterrence. Since taking office in 2014, PM Modi has driven a strategic shift grounded in two clear ideas: Atmanirbharata in defence production and a willingness to cross traditional red lines when India's security is threatened. More than an economic policy it became a national security doctrine. Towards that India imposed phased bans of key defence imports, offloaded medium caliber ammunitions manufacture from Ordnance Factories to Private Sectors, gave the armed forces emergency procurement powers, and poured investment into indigenous research, design & production by encouraging Start-ups to participate in defence production. India also incentivized joint ventures and opened defence to foreign direct investment (FDI) up to 74%. The policy of Atmanirbhar Bharat encouraged both

public and private sector manufacturers to build sophisticated military hardware at home. By 2025, India had increased domestic content in defence procurement from 30% to 65%.

Further, Modi's government fast-tracked long-delayed procurements like the Rafale jets armed with SCALP cruise missiles which can hit far inside hostile territory, scaled up the deployment of BrahMos supersonic missiles of Navy & Air-Launched variants with extended range too, invested in drone swarms, loitering munitions and electronic warfare, raised procurement speed for satellite constellations like Cartosat-3, RISAT-2B, EMISAT etc. and gave the armed forces political backing for swift, limited action under nuclear overhang. Alongside hardware, the focus on real-time intelligence, satellite reconnaissance, and cyber capabilities made India's forces sharper and faster. Yet PM Modi's biggest contribution is arguably ideological: replacing decades of defensive hesitation with a clear message – India will not absorb provocation endlessly. Instead, it will strike back precisely, demonstrating

strength without stumbling into uncontrolled escalation. This balance of assertiveness and restraint is now part of India's evolving doctrine.

This vision first became visible in 2016 with the Uri surgical strikes and matured further with the Balakot airstrike in 2019. This vision was tested under fire on 22nd April, 2025 when Pakistan-backed militants killed 26 Indian civilians in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Baisaran Valley. In response India launched Operation Sindoor which is not just a cross-border raid, but a coordinated, multi-night, stand-off strike. Operation Sindoor was planned as a high-precision, time-limited strike – the goal was to punish Pakistan's terror infrastructure and degrade its ability to launch cross-border attacks, not to occupy territory or provoke regime collapse. This clear, limited aim made the risk of escalation more manageable. In the four days operation by Indian forces under Operation Sindoor, on the night of 7-8 May terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan & POJK were destroyed, terrorists, including high-value targets linked to previous attacks like the IC-814 hijacking & Pulwama attack were eliminated and 11 enemy airbases spread over distant places like north Punjab, south Sindh, PoK were disabled with minimum collateral damage.

The initial wave of strikes on the first cluster of airbases namely Nur Khan, Mushaf/Sargodha, Murid, Rafiqui, Sialkot, and Pasrur were hit within 38 to 45 minutes on the night of 8th May, 2025. The second wave of strikes on May 9-10th of 2025, airbases like Skardu, Sukkur, Chunian, Bholari, Jacobabad, Rahim Yar Khan – were hit with spread over multiple short windows, each cluster lasting 20-30 minutes. India hit 11 Pakistan airbases in coordinated waves over 3 days. Each strike window lasted 20-45 minutes, so the total 'combat time' to disable the bases was roughly 2 hours cumulative, spread over May 8-10, 2025.

To achieve this spectacular swift results, India used Stand-off weapons, like BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles (range: 300-500 km, Mach 2.8) launched from Su-30 MKIs and ground batteries & SCALP/Storm Shadow air launched cruise missiles from Rafale jets (deep penetration strikes, - 500 km). These hit runways, radars, and hardened shelters without crossing deep into hostile airspace, keeping pilots safer. Further, swarms of Israeli-origin Harop loitering munitions and indigenous drones were used to suppress enemy radars and air defences. Electronic warfare squadrons jammed Pakistani radars briefly to open "strike windows". India used satellite imagery (Cartosat, RISAT), AWACS (Netra, Phalcon), and signals intercepts to pinpoint exact locations. Our Cyber Security units reportedly disrupted some PAF command-and-control nodes during the strikes. In short, India demonstrated its integration capabilities

by combining stand-off weapons, real-time targeting, surprise, multi-front attacks, cyber/EW, and clear limited objectives – hitting 11 airbases in under 2 hours of actual kinetic strike time over 3 days, while managing escalation.

Over three nights (May 8-10), India executed highly precise strikes on 11 key Pakistani airbases, significantly crippling runway capabilities, command centers, and air defence assets – marking an unprecedented operation against a nuclear-armed state. In a separate interview with Reuters General Chauhan said that Indian forces re-entered Pakistan airspace on multiple occasions and "penetrated all their air defences with impunity", executing precision strikes deep within enemy territory. India's technological edge was a key factor that made Operation Sindoor possible and successful. But it wasn't only about technology superiority alone in an absolute sense – it was also about how India used its tech smarter, at the right scale, for the right political goal. US Military veteran John Spencer has hailed Operation Sindoor as a decisive military victory of India. This military campaign, according to him, has validated Indian's defence transformation. Further, he has credited PM Modi for transforming India, into a modern defence power through the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. Of course, the foundation for India's modern military was laid by many leaders before – from Vajpayee's nuclear tests and BrahMos deal to Manmohan Singh's ISR investments. But it is under PM Modi that this capability matured into bold, real-world operations.

Operation Sindoor carries significant strategic implications for all Asian countries including Taiwan, the Phillipines, Vietnam and others that face a constant threat from China. In this limited military campaign, Pakistan deployed a full range of Chinese systems – air-defence systems, missiles, hypersonic weapons, aircraft and more – whose effectiveness was tested and exposed in real combat conditions. Moreover, Operation Sindoor has given a clear message to Bangladesh, which occasionally attempts to assert itself against India, to behave itself. Further, it has also important economic implications for India: Her success in this limited military campaign is expected to open up new export market for its indigenous defence equipments.

Yet this is not the final frontier. India still imports much of its high-end defence hardware, from jet engines to advanced sensors. Bridging this gap means pushing the Atmanirbhar Bharat ambition from slogans to sophisticated execution. As India looks to the future – stealth fighters, hypersonics, AI warfare, and a stronger defence industry – the core challenge will be to sustain this momentum. Operation Sindoor shows what is possible when political will matches technological power. Under PM Modi's leadership, India has shown that it is ready not just to defend its borders, but to shape the security balance of the region – on its own terms, and with precision.

* IOFS (Rtd.)



Dreamstime

GEOPOLITICS COMPLEXITIES OF A RAKHINE HUMANITARIAN CORRIDOR

— Mohit Musaddi*

Recent political developments in Myanmar and Bangladesh have once again brought the Rohingya crisis into limelight for the international community. A key element of the renewed international response is an UN-led proposal to establish a humanitarian corridor connecting Bangladesh to Rakhine region of Myanmar. The proposed corridor will facilitate aid delivery to the displaced Rohingya population, with a long-term view of facilitating the return of the refugees to their home country. In March 2025, as part of a “Ramadan solidarity”, the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres visited Cox’s Bazaar, which is home to approximately one million Rohingya refugees. While in Bangladesh, the Secretary General discussed the Rohingya situation along with Bangladesh’s domestic issues and its transition process with interim Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus.

The idea of a humanitarian corridor in Rakhine is not a new one. Since the crisis surfaced on the international stage in 2017, discussions around such processes have periodically resurfaced. These proposals aim to create safe zones or demilitarized routes that would allow the delivery of aid and the eventual voluntary repatriation of displaced Rohingya back to Myanmar, under international supervision. Nevertheless, such calls have largely lacked substance due to the intransigence of the Myanmar military, lack of political consensus among regional stakeholders, and the unwillingness of regional partners to act on what might

be construed as an infringement to Myanmar’s sovereignty.

Renewed calls in 2024-25 on the issue arises on the backdrop of large-scale fighting taking place between the military junta and the Arakan Army (AA), which operates in the Rakhine region. The UN Special Rapporteur in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews, has noted in a report to the UN General Assembly that due to the military losses suffered by the junta, it has forcefully enlisted several young Rohingya men and deployed them on the frontlines of the conflict. At the same time, militant groups have emerged in the region, some cynically aligning with the junta and inflicting human rights abuses against ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya communities. As a result, hundreds of thousands are now trapped and cut-off from life-saving humanitarian aid, with starvation and diseases becoming widespread. At the same time, there have been severe global aid funding cuts, led by the United States, which has impacted the Rohingya community. As per a report released by the UNHCR, the agency has only received 23 per cent of its goal of USD 10.6 billion, thereby projecting an overall budget of only USD 3.5 billion by the end of the year to meet the needs of 122 million refugees worldwide. For the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, this implies a more than 50 per cent reduction to their monthly food rations from USD 12.5 to USD 6 per month, along with the loss of other benefits such as suspension of schools and learning centers run by non-

governmental organizations, due to lack of funding. The funding cuts will also disproportionately impact women and girls as one-quarter of its support for programmes on gender-based violence are being cut.

Interestingly, Bangladesh's official stance on this issue has not been uniform. In late April, Bangladesh's Foreign Advisor Touhid Hossain revealed that as per UN's request, Bangladesh has decided in principle to facilitate a humanitarian corridor to provide assistance to the civilians of Myanmar. Subsequently, in May, Chief Advisor Yunus' Press Secretary clarified that no formal discussion had occurred with the UN or any other agency, insisting that Bangladesh would only provide logistical support if a corridor were operationalized under multilateral coordination. There is an emphasis in Bangladesh that any corridor should be preceded by credible guarantees from Myanmar regarding the safe return of Rohingya refugees. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman has also reportedly rejected any notion of a humanitarian corridor, declaring it "completely unacceptable". The recently appointed Bangladesh NSA Khalilur Rahman, who was instrumental in pushing the proposal for the corridor, subsequently backtracked and claimed that Dhaka has not had any such discussions. In May, the NSA stated that it will not be a corridor, but rather a 'humanitarian channel' to send aid to Rakhine under UN supervision. Meanwhile, the political parties in Bangladesh have strongly opposed the idea, warning that Bangladesh could become another Gaza, due to the potential security threats and the geopolitical implications of a humanitarian corridor.

Such a development could also have far-reaching geopolitical consequences. For the United States, a Western-led humanitarian corridor in the Rakhine region can be geopolitically advantageous, especially in the context of Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy, its competition with China, and its recalibrated ties with Bangladesh's interim government. The primary geopolitical motive for US interest lies in checking China's growing influence in Myanmar, particularly in the western Rakhine region. Through its China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), Beijing has invested in the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port projects along with infrastructure and military logistics that grant it access to the Bay of Bengal and proximity to the Andaman Sea, a vital maritime route. China will likely weigh the security calculus before providing any support to the humanitarian corridor for the Rakhine region. China already enjoys cordial relations with the junta and continues to provide tacit support to several Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) in Myanmar, including through arms transfer. To demonstrate regional leadership, Beijing has been eager to facilitate peace talks, especially in northern Myanmar between the Tatmadaw and the ethnic armed group Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). During Chief Advisor Yunus' visit to China in March this year, the Rohingya issue featured prominently in discussions with Beijing. If Washington indeed wants to effectively

counter China's influence in the region, it will need to resume aid to the displaced Rohingya community through the UN, and collaborate with other stakeholders, including India and ASEAN, in facilitating dialogue.

India's diplomatic position to any humanitarian corridor in Rakhine will be dependent on the impact on regional stability and security. India shares 1,640 kms of porous border with Myanmar across four of its north-eastern states Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur. Renewed violence and refugee influxes pose internal security threats to states like Mizoram and Manipur, both of which have already been on edge due to ethnic unrest. India has announced that it will work on fencing the India-Myanmar border in phases over the next decade, with a total cost of over Rs. 20,000 crores on the project. Therefore, without proper fencing of its borders, accepting any proposal of a humanitarian corridor for Rakhine raises genuine concerns of a demographic and security spillover in India's northeast, something that New Delhi will want to avoid at all costs. On the other hand, India has also invested in the Kaladan multimodal project, which connects Kolkata with the Sittwe port in the Rakhine region, with components also running through the Chin state. This ambitious project is aimed to improve connectivity for the north-east region with the rest of the country but has faced frequent delays due to the evolving security situation in the region. In early 2024, reports indicated that the Kaladan project is 'almost dead' after the AA captured the Paletwa township near the Mizoram border. The reports also stated that the AA had surrounded Sittwe and attacked the Myanmar Navy at the Port. While India now aims to completely operationalize the project by 2027, Delhi will need robust security guarantees across multiple dimensions, not least from the Arakan Army. There have been reports that senior Indian security officials have met AA representatives in Bangkok in January this year to seek security assurances for its Kaladan project.

Therefore, India's support to a humanitarian corridor may only come should its security guarantees be met along with if the proposal receives interest from Southeast Asian member states. An ASEAN-led humanitarian corridor is more likely to gain traction among all stakeholders given its regional legitimacy and established dialogue mechanisms with Myanmar. For India, ASEAN will offer a neutral platform that allows it to support humanitarian efforts without getting entangled in bilateral frictions or strategic posturing, thereby safeguarding both its development investments and its broader Act East vision.

While the humanitarian corridor proposal in Rakhine offers a renewed opportunity to address the protracted Rohingya crisis, its viability hinges on a delicate balance of regional diplomacy, security assurances, and multilateral cooperation. India's cautious but potentially constructive role, particularly if ASEAN takes the lead, could serve as a stabilizing force in aligning humanitarian imperatives with regional strategic interests.

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Dreamstime

ANALYZING THE SURGE OF VIOLENCE IN BANGLADESH UNDER MD. YUNUS

— Snehangshu Bhattacharjee*

— Bidisha Haldar**

The exit of the Sheikh Hasina led government from power on 5th August, 2024 was, in popular discourse of Bangladesh, perceived as a dawn of a new era where the country would taste 'Freedom' from the allegedly tyrannical rule of the former under the new government of Dr. Prof. Muhammad Yunus. Here although the Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus was seen as a bastion of peace who would uphold human rights in Bangladesh, nonetheless, the instances of multiple mob-lynching cases, continuous atrocities meted out towards the religious and ethnic minorities and the women of the country reveals a terrifying trend of deteriorating human rights condition in Bangladesh. In this analysis therefore, we will try to understand the trajectory of this trend and the possible ramifications it holds not only for the future of Bangladesh but also for the South Asian region as a whole.

Alarming rise of Mob-Lynching

In recent times, mob-lynching or mob-violence in the name of serving mob justice has witnessed a steep rise after the assumption of power by Dr. Prof. Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh. Since the commencement of the interim government led administration, numerous cases of people being beaten to death by local mob were reported from all the districts across the country. The most harrowing instance that shook the nation to its core in this regard was the brutal lynching of a disabled youth named Tofazzel Hossain by the students of Dhaka University and also that of

Shamim Ahmed by the students of Jahangirnagar University. The role of the students in such acts, on whose support the interim government came into power, raises questions about law and order situation in the country. According to a data produced by a legal aid and human rights organization of Bangladesh, named Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a total of 172 people were beaten or hacked to death between August 2024 and May 31, 2025 in the country. Of these, it further reported, the highest number of mob-lynching happened in Dhaka division with a total of 80 people who fell as victims to this. This was followed by 28 people in Chittagong, 16 in Barisal, 16 in Rajshahi, 14 in Khulna, 7 in Rangpur, 6 in Mymensingh and 5 people in Sylhet, who were subjected to brutal mob-beatings. While investigating into the cause of these acts of violence, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) reported that almost in all the cases, the victims of the lynching were first accused of being thieves, robbers, kidnappers and extortionists by the mob who then hacked them to death. In some cases the victims were also beaten to death after being accused of being associated with the ousted Awami League party. Instances of mob-beatings were also reported in large numbers in June 2025 where according to a report presented by the human rights organization named Manobadhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF), at least 41 incidents of mob-beatings occurred in June, resulting in 10 deaths and 47 critical injuries while 30 victims

were handed over to the police in injured condition.

This persistent trend of mob-lynching or mob-beatings invited criticism not only from Bangladesh's human rights organizations like Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) and Human Rights Support Society of Bangladesh (HRSS) but also from Supreme court lawyers and other members of the civil society who stated that although Bangladesh has a history of mob-lynching, nonetheless, this crime certainly sky-rocketed under the Yunus regime due to the political instability, lawlessness and the laxity of the interim government in curbing this crime with an iron fist. Moreover, the Chief Advisor's camaraderie with the radical Islamic elements in the country and his subservience to foreign powers like China and the United States, who wants to impede Bangladesh's development for their own geopolitical interest, also plays a significant role in exacerbating the issue of mob-justice and deteriorating Human rights condition in Bangladesh.

Women Under Threat

Under the interim government of Yunus, there has been a notable rise in violence against women and children, encompassing rape, gang rape, and mob assaults. The report published by the Non Governmental Organizations show a grim picture of women security throughout Bangladesh. In the report of Ain o Salish Kendra it was mentioned that in 2024 while 401 incidences of rape took place in Bangladesh, in the first six months of 2025 the incidences of rape overtook the 2024 number with 441 incidences of rape being reported. According to the report of Bangladesh Mahila Parisad in the last six months of 2025, 1555 incidents of atrocities against women and girls got reported in Bangladesh with 481 incidents of rape and 320 murders. In the month of June 2025 itself, 203 incidents of violence against women came up in Bangladesh. The fear of violence has gripped the minds of the women and girls of Bangladesh that got reflected in the report of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics titled "Citizens Perception Survey" where 50 percent of the respondent women feared loss of property while 34 percent feared physical assault in post Hasina regime.

The apathy of the Md Yunus led government towards Bangladeshi women is quite evident with reports coming in that despite the ongoing challenges for women in employment, education, health, and safety, the national budget for FY 2025-26 has seen a reduction in allocations for promoting gender equality and women's development.

The new misogynistic ordinance issued by the Md. Yunus government by amending the Legal Aid Service Act making it mandatory for female victims to undergo mediation before filing cases under section 11(g) of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act showed the passiveness of the interim government towards the women rights.

Along with this, the protest by the radical Islamic forces in Bangladesh against the proposal of the recently constituted women commission and the deliberate silence of the government against such act shows that the government declaration of women empowerment was a mere rhetoric. Interim government's effort to protect women in Bangladesh lacked the urgency, enforcement

power, and proactive action especially against emboldened Islamist factions. Government endeavour over this issue seems that it was interested mostly to addresses symptoms rather than uprooting the systemic failure to enforce protections for women.

Minority under Distress

There has been a profoundly troubling increase in atrocities committed against religious and ethnic minorities in Bangladesh, particularly following the removal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024. Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, ethnic tribal groups, and Ahmadiyya communities have all experienced communal violence. Various forms of crimes have been reported against these groups, including murders, abductions, rapes, arson, vandalism of places of worship, and forced displacement. Statistics on minority atrocities revealed that soon after Yunus assumed power between 5th and 20th August, 2024 around 2,010 communal attacks took place in the country. Apart from this, Leaders of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council in a press conference held on 10th July, 2025 stated that as many as 2,442 incidents of violence against religious and ethnic minorities occurred in the country in 330 days from August 4, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

Shortly after Md. Yunus took office, there were large-scale attacks on Hindu police officials across the nation, resulting in widespread death and injury. Hindu government officials were targeted under the pretext of corruption, leading to forced retirements and abrupt transfers. Even trainee police officials from minority communities faced dismissal, and there was a significant lack of representation for minority officials during the extensive promotions in the administrative, police, and judiciary sectors carried out by the interim government. Minority journalists were also targeted, and there was no representation from the minority community in the reform commission established by the government. These incidents illustrate the indifference of the interim government towards the minority community in Bangladesh.

The decline in the number of Durga Puja celebrations, the Islamic assertions during the puja festivities, administrative discrimination, and restrictions on puja celebrations, along with the Buddhist community refraining from celebrating their 'Kathin Chibor Dan' festival in Bangladesh due to the escalating communal threats since Yunus assumed power, highlight the dire situation of the minority community in Bangladesh.

Women from minority communities have also faced the threats of rape, molestation, and abduction amid the rising communal tensions in the country following the regime change.

Although the interim government characterizes the majority of incidents as politically motivated, human rights organizations and representatives of minority groups contend that the violence is primarily communal in nature, featuring targeted aggression against specific religious and ethnic identities. This minimization of anti-minority violence in Bangladesh, coupled with a reluctance to enforce the law, contributes to a type of institutional tolerance that fosters an environment in which mobs feel emboldened, even in the absence of explicit support for communal violence.

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Dreamstime

Myanmar and India Advance Cross-Border Power Cooperation at 6th JSC Meeting

A Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Aye Kyaw participated in the 6th Joint Steering Committee meeting on Myanmar-India power sector cooperation in India on 10-11 July 2025. Prior to the meeting, on 9 July, the delegation held discussions with India's Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs, Shri Manohar Lal, to review bilateral energy collaboration. As part of the event, they convened the 7th Joint Working Group and the 6th JSC, during which they signed an Agreement to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for a transnational high-voltage power grid. Delegates also visited critical infrastructure in India, including the Power Grid's National Control Centre in New Delhi (10 July), NTPC's Technical Research & Training Centre and Solar Hybrid Farm in Noida (11 July), and the 800 kV HVDC plant of Power Grid at Agra (12 July).



Dreamstime

Lawpita hydro power station, Kayah State, Myanmar

Mango diplomacy: Prof Yunus gifts PM Modi and Indian leaders Haribhanga mangoes

Bangladesh Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus sent a consignment of famous Haribhanga mangoes to India as a goodwill gesture. A total of 1,000 kg was dispatched via the Akhaura land port, arriving in New Delhi on July 14 for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, diplomats, and officials. In addition, separate consignments were sent to West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and Tripura CM Manik Saha, thereby continuing the tradition of seasonal fruit exchanges to strengthen ties. This “mango diplomacy” follows earlier Eid greetings exchanged between Yunus and Modi in June and is seen as part of Dhaka’s effort to reset strained relations since the previous government’s exit.



Dreamstime



Myanmar and Russia Forge India-Myanmar Trade Corridor to Circumvent Western Sanctions

Myanmar’s military government is working with Russia to develop a new trade corridor that connects Russia and India via Myanmar, aiming to bypass Western sanctions. Russian investment is being courted to build infrastructure in southern Myanmar, including the Dawei special economic zone, deep sea port, oil refinery, and transport links, acting as a strategic outlet for Russian goods into Southeast Asia. Officials including Transport Minister Gen. Mya Tun Oo presented Myanmar’s ports and railways as transit hubs for Russian exports at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2025, emphasizing Yangon’s seaports and inland rail routes for distributing goods across Southeast Asia. This corridor complements broader Russian efforts to create alternative routes, like the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Chennai-Vladivostok maritime corridor, to reduce dependency on Western-dominated trade networks. The move illustrates deepening Myanmar–Russia economic ties and showcases Myanmar’s push, aligned with Russian strategic objectives, to transform the country into a regional trade hub insulated from sanctions.

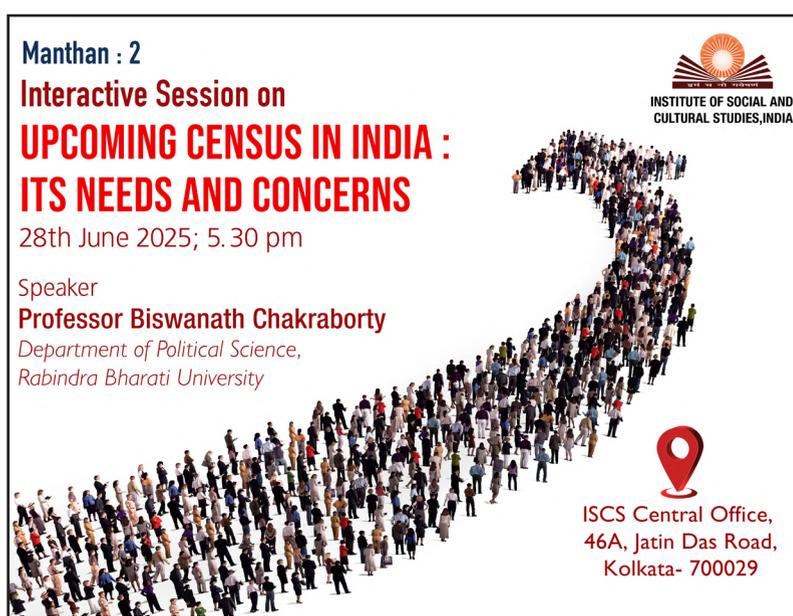
Manthan 2

Upcoming Census in India its Needs and Concern

28th June, 2025 , ISCS, Kolkata

The Census in India represents a thorough process of gathering, compiling, and analyzing demographic, social, economic, and other relevant data concerning the nation's population. Conducted every decade, it yields essential information for governmental planning, policy formulation, and resource distribution. Recently, the Indian government has officially sanctioned the inclusion of caste enumeration in the forthcoming national census—marking a first since the nation gained independence. Against this background, the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies has organized an academic discussion on this topic titled “Upcoming Census in India its Needs and Concern.” Moderated by Shri Sourav Roy, Additional Secretary of the Eastern Command, Ministry of Defense, Government of India, the event featured an esteemed speaker in the form of Professor Biswanath Chakraborty from the Department of Political Science at Rabindra Bharati University, who provided insights on this matter. The programme followed the Chatham House principle.

The programme was commenced by the honourable Director of the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Shri Arindam Mukherjee who felicitated the speaker and the honourable chair for the evening before proceeding on to the main discussion session. The discussion



Manthan : 2
Interactive Session on
UPCOMING CENSUS IN INDIA :
ITS NEEDS AND CONCERNS
28th June 2025; 5.30 pm

Speaker
Professor Biswanath Chakraborty
Department of Political Science,
Rabindra Bharati University

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

ISCS Central Office,
46A, Jatin Das Road,
Kolkata- 700029

captured about the history of the Census in India since the colonial times till present before proceeding on to the challenges and the concerns of conducting caste census on India.



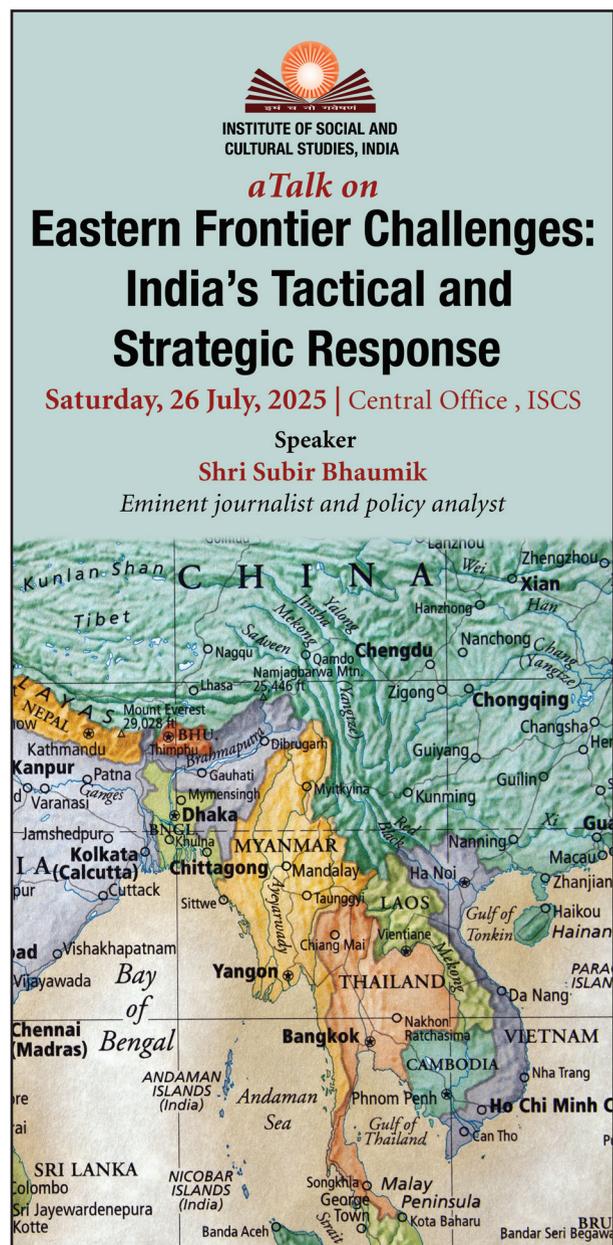
(From Left) Shri Saurav Ray, Prof. Biswanath Chakraborty and Shri Arindam Mukherjee

Talk on Eastern Frontier Challenges: India's Tactical and Strategic Response

26th July, 2025 , ISCS, Kolkata

The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS) as a part of its initiatives and series of Talks on contemporary issues organized yet another captivating session on Eastern Frontier Challenges: India's Tactical and Strategic Response on the evening 26th July 2025 at ISCS's interactive zone itself.

The Talk initiated with introductory note by the Director of the Institute, Shri Arindam Mukherjee who underlined institute's varied curve of work focussing on the Eastern frontier, North East and neighbourhood precisely. The motion was then taken over by the speaker of the event Shri Subir Bhowmik, renowned journalist and a policy analyst with deep experience on strategical analysis circling eastern corridor of the country.



INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES, INDIA

aTalk on

Eastern Frontier Challenges: India's Tactical and Strategic Response

Saturday, 26 July, 2025 | Central Office , ISCS

Speaker
Shri Subir Bhaumik
Eminent journalist and policy analyst



Shri Subir Bhaumik

The event followed Chatham House Guidelines, the participants of the event comprised of eminent policy makers, academicians and prominent civil society actors. The event turned out to be very enriching as the deliberation by the speaker followed by the interactive session brought about certain key issues.

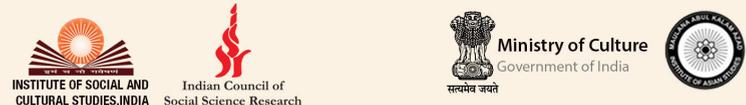
National Panel Discussion on “Energy Security and Stability in the Bay of Bengal: An Eastern India Perspective”

30th July, 2025, The Astor, Kolkata- 71

The increasing importance of energy security and stability in the Bay of Bengal arises from its strategic position, rich energy resources, and vital role in global energy flows. In recent years, we have observed a growing involvement of global powers, often motivated by energy security objectives, geopolitical rivalry, and maritime supremacy, in the region. Ensuring stability for their energy security in this maritime area has become a crucial priority for the countries bordering the Bay of Bengal, particularly India and in this context, the importance of India's eastern region in ensuring the nation's energy security is crucial. Taking this into account, the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, which has devoted more than ten years in academic discussions and research on different aspects of the Bay of Bengal region, held a panel deliberation in collaboration with the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies over this issue titled "Energy Security and Stability in the Bay of Bengal: An Eastern Indian Perspective," took place on July 30, 2025, at The Astor, Kolkata -71. Chaired by Dr. Rajib Nayan, Senior Research Associate at the Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis, the event featured distinguished speakers including Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Singh, Chief of Energy Security at the Confederation of Indian Industry, CDR (retd.) Dr. Vijay Sakhuja, a former Navy Officer and Professor & Head of the Centre of Excellence for Geo-Politics at Reva University, and Dr. Dipankar Sengupta, Professor in the Department of Economics at Jammu University.

The event started with the felicitation of the Distinguished Chair and speakers. Following the felicitation, the chair of the panel discussion Dr. Rajib Nayan initiated his introductory note by discussing the evolution of security as a concept. He commented that at present energy security has emerged as one of the most significant nontraditional security issue in academic deliberation. Subsequently he highlighted the strategic significance of Bay of Bengal within the context of global security discourse. He hoped for the speakers of the session to discuss the role of BIMSTEC in the region, whether general global energy security discourse is relevant regarding the security of Bay and Bengal and assess the implications of the competition for controlling critical rare earth materials for renewable energy production in this region. After concluding his remarks he invited Dr. Bhupendra Kumar to place his deliberation.

Professor Kumar commenced his discussion by elucidating the



Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS)
and
Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS)
Collaboratively Organized

National Panel Discussion
on

**ENERGY SECURITY AND STABILITY IN
THE
BAY OF BENGAL**

AN EASTERN INDIA PERSPECTIVE

30th July, 2025 | 3.00 PM

The Astor (15, Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata- 71)

Chair:
Dr. Rajib Nayan
*Senior Research Associate, Manohar Parrikar
Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses*

Speakers:

Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Singh <i>Chief- Energy Security, Confederation of Indian Industry</i>	CDR (Retd.) Dr. Vijay Sakhuja <i>Former Indian Navy Officer & Professor & Head of Centre of Excellence for Geo-Politics, Reva University</i>	Dr. Dipankar Sengupta <i>Prof. Deptt. of Economics University of Jammu</i>
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Shri Arindam Mukherjee
Director, ISCS

Dr. Sarup Prasad Ghosh
Director, MAKAIAS

By Invitation Only

fundamental concept of energy security. In his data-driven presentation, Dr. Bhupendra Kumar articulated how India's economic growth is intricately linked to its primary energy consumption. By referencing the Bay of Bengal as a center for oil, gas, and the blue economy, he underscored the importance of this region in meeting India's energy demands. The subsequent speaker, Dr. Vijay Sakhuja, commenced his discussion by addressing the security situation in the Bay of Bengal. He stated that when analyzing this region, one must

adopt a rational approach. He referred to the historical maritime connections between India and other countries bordering the Bay of Bengal. He elaborated on critical issues such as energy resources in the Bay of Bengal, the economic and strategic importance of this region, the relevance of the Setu Samudram and Kra canal projects, the increasing Chinese surveillance in the Bay of Bengal, the rising number of Chinese-flagged fishing vessels within India's exclusive economic zone, and the escalating ecological threats in this region. He briefly discussed the strategic measures implemented by India to counter the security challenges it encounters in the area. Thereupon in his presentation he threw light on the growing bilateral relationship between Turkey and Bangladesh and its implications in the region. His presentation also touched on the possible effects of the US tariff imposition on Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The last speaker of the session Dr. Dipankar Sengupta initiated his discussion by mentioning about how price as a factor is important in energy security. He stated how geo- politics, climate change impact the variability of the price of energy production and adversely affect energy security.

Following the discussions the floor was made open and the audiences were invited to pose questions and share comments. Numerous remarks were made and questions were placed which were satisfactorily addressed by the distinguished speakers.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by the Director of The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Shri Arindam Mukherjee.



Dr. Vijay Sakhuja



Panellists