

Strategic Narratives of Political Transition: Indian Media and the Geopolitics of Post-Hasina Bangladesh

Dibyajyoti Dutta¹, Dr. Ugen Bhutia^{2*}, Dr. Bikku³

¹PhD Research Scholar, Journalism, SRM University, AP, India

Email: dibyajyoti_dutta@outlook.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2863-1934>

²Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, SRM University, AP, India

Email: bhutiaups@gmail.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0258-687X>

³Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, SRM University, AP, India

Email: bikku.r@srmap.edu.in

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4413-2892>

***Corresponding author:** Ugen Bhutia Email: bhutia.u@srmap.edu.in

Abstract:

This study examines the Indian press and how it framed Bangladesh's political transition after the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024. Using framing theory and strategic narrative theory, the article analyses how Indian newspapers interpret Bangladesh's political upheaval and embed it within India's broader geopolitical narratives. The study analyses news reports, editorials, interviews, and opinion pieces using a qualitative research approach, integrating framing and strategic narrative theories, drawing on articles published in three major English-language newspapers: The Times of India, The Indian Express, and The Hindu, between August 6, 2024, and September 5, 2024. The findings identify three dominant frames: Bangladesh's instability, minority vulnerability in Bangladesh, and India's geopolitical competition. These collectively contribute to the construction of strategic narratives across system, identity, and policy dimensions. At the system level, Bangladesh is portrayed as politically unstable and geopolitically contested. At the identity level, India is depicted as a responsible regional power concerned with its own security and the minorities of its neighbours, particularly Hindus. At the policy level, media discourses legitimise heightened vigilance, border management, and cautious diplomatic engagement. The study shows how domestic media coverage of political upheavals in neighbouring states helps shape geopolitical meaning and regional order by linking micro-level news frames with broader strategic narratives. The findings enhance understanding of how regional power media interpret and narrate cross-border political transitions in South Asia.

Keywords: Media framing, Strategic narratives, Political transition, India–Bangladesh relations, Geopolitics, and South Asian politics.

1. Introduction

It represented a geopolitical shockwave across South Asia when Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on August 5, 2024, resigned and took a flight to safety in India. The massive student-led uprising forced her to leave her 15-year rule, leaving an immediate power vacuum in the nation that is central to India's strategic, economic, and security architecture. From the

perspective of Indian political elites, she had been a long held regional ally and a guarantor of stability in India's neighborhood. Also, her leadership at the helm of Bangladesh's political structure was deemed instrumental, particularly because of the porous 4000-kilometer border between the two nations. During such moments of profound cross-border crisis, the domestic news media of neighboring states, such as the Indian press in this instance, do not merely act as neutral observers, rather, they actively construct narratives, assign responsibility and situate chaotic, fast-moving developments within a broader, recognizable geopolitical framework shaping how such sudden political transitions are perceived by domestic audiences, the international community and foreign policy elites.

Although existing research on the intersection of media and international relations provides valuable insights into this phenomenon, much of the scholarship remains disproportionately focused on Western democracies and major global conflicts initiated by the Global North (Robinson, 2017). Scholarships in international political communication have focused heavily on how the Western media ecosystem frames global conflicts, projects soft power or legitimizes interventions in the Middle East and beyond. Due to this, Western case studies have dominated the theoretical architecture of studies on media and geopolitics, while issues from the non-Western or Global South have remained on the margins. Therefore, greater scholarly attention and systematic empirical research into the role of the domestic press in the Global South in constructing narratives, interpreting political turmoil, and legitimizing security postures in their immediate neighborhood is required. The gap especially becomes pronounced during times of abrupt political change in the immediate neighborhood of any country, when narratives in the press not only mirror events but become entangled with broader concerns of security and regional order.

This raises critical theoretical questions: Do the regional media function as mere spectators of a foreign democratic process during a politically volatile transition period in that foreign land? Or do regional media securitize the event while also perpetuating overarching narratives that reflect their respective geopolitical anxieties? In order to answer these crucial questions, it is imperative to move beyond the descriptive analysis of news reports of such events in regional media and instead engage with the mechanisms that underlie the construction of news discourse in relation to regional order and political identity.

To unpack this dynamic, the current study employs a dual theoretical approach that connects micro-level framing theory with macro-level strategic narrative theory. According to framing theory, the media highlight certain aspects of reality while excluding others. It further explains how the media identify politically relevant aspects of reality to promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretations, and moral evaluations of political events (Entman, 1993; Mintz & Redd, 2003). But frames do not emerge within a vacuum. Strategic narrative theory helps explain how these individual frames are pieced together to form compelling narratives about the international system, state identity, and foreign policy that seek to affect audience behavior and legitimate state action (Roselle et al., 2014). While these insights are useful, media studies remain largely centered on Western contexts, and do not sufficiently interrogate the important relationship between media framing and regional geopolitical meaning-making in one of the most complex media ecologies at play: South Asia.

The political transition in post-Hasina Bangladesh provides an ideal case study for analyzing these conceptual questions. Political instability and ousting of leadership due to widespread protest generated significant regional uncertainty. In response, the Indian English-language press promptly mobilized to make sense of the crisis, emphasizing frames of domestic instability, minority vulnerability, and international realignment. This case study provides a valuable opportunity to examine how regional crises are narratively constructed, and how the Indian press framed the political transition in Bangladesh through the lens of India's role as a dominant regional security provider. Understanding this process will help in grasping the manner in which domestic media reporting of transboundary issues influences the public

opinion, legitimize foreign policies, and the nature of the regional order. At the same time, the analysis of media coverage can also demonstrate the extent to which the media narratives are embedded within broader state-centric security discourses. Therefore, this case is useful in analyzing the intersection between the media and geopolitical forces in the construction of regional crises.

Therefore, this study analyses how major Indian English-language newspapers framed the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government and how these frames contributed to the construction of broader strategic narratives about regional order and India's geopolitical role. By integrating framing theory and strategic narrative theory, this research examines how the media selectively presented the events on the ground and the broader geopolitical stories that subsequently developed. Consequently, the study specifically addresses the following research questions:

- a. What dominant frames did the Indian English-language newspapers use to cover the events of the post-Hasina transition?
- b. How do these frames contribute to the formation of broader system, identity, and policy narratives concerning India's geopolitical strategy?
- c. How extensively does domestic media coverage securitize the crisis to address strategic issues related to India's role as a regional power in South Asia?

This study contributes to media and political communication scholarship in three keyways. First, it advances framing research by demonstrating how individual news frames function as the micro-level building blocks for broader macro-level strategic narratives. While framing theory explains how specific aspects of reality are highlighted, this study illustrates how these frames are systematically aligned to construct coherent geopolitical worldviews. Second, the study contributes to strategic narrative theory by empirically illustrating how these narratives emerge organically from everyday domestic media discourse, rather than being solely state-driven or elite-produced. Finally, the study expands the geographical scope of media-foreign policy research by focusing on South Asia, a region underrepresented in the existing literature. It demonstrates how a regional power's media interprets democratic transitions in neighboring states not through the lens of democratic triumph, but through the lens of national security, identity preservation, and geopolitical competition.

1.1 Socio-political and Geopolitical Context of Political Transition

This section deals with the broader socio-political milieu and geopolitical context of Bangladesh at the cusp of political transition in 2024. This provides the crucial background for analyzing how the Indian media interpreted and framed the crisis.

The daughter of Bangladesh's founding father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the first time in 1996. After losing the election in 2001 to a coalition led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its leader Khaleda Zia, Hasina brought herself and her party, the Awami League, back to power in 2009.

However, her second term was marked by allegations of power centralization and democratic backsliding. One of the key turning points was her decision to abolish the caretaker government system in 2011, which had until then ensured relatively neutral oversight of elections (BBC, 2011). This removal of a largely trusted institution generated significant distrust among opposition political organizations regarding the credibility of subsequent elections. The lack of trust among the political oppositions was reflected in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)'s election boycotts in 2014 and, most recently, in 2024, which helped the Awami League win landslide victories of 234 and 224 seats, respectively, as no major opposition was present (Mollah & Jahan, 2018; Karimanal et al., 2024). In 2018, even when the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) decided to take part in the election, her party managed to win 257 seats, sparking allegations of electoral fraud and the compromising of democratic values (Fair, 2019).

In addition, Hasina, in her second tenure, came under severe criticisms for the violation of human rights, including political repression, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial

activities (Mahmud, 2024). These criticisms came within the context of her close ties with India through security cooperation, economic agreements and diplomatic alignment. The Indian state considered her as a crucial security partner and in response her government actively cracked down on anti-India insurgent groups that had historically used Bangladesh's territory to launch operations into India's volatile Northeastern states (Bhaumik, 2007). It is also important to point out that, from a strategic point of view, the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the "Chicken's Neck" bordering Bhutan in the North, Nepal in the West, and Bangladesh in the South, is a very narrow land passage, measuring only 20-22 kilometers in width. The significance of this corridor lies in the fact that it constitutes the only land link connecting India's Northeastern states to the rest of the country and is therefore of critical importance to India's national security (Muni, 2003). Although these pro-India policies further consolidated the relationship between the two nations, they were also a subject of political tension within Bangladesh as the opposition parties accused her administration of being too close to the Indians to the detriment of Bangladesh's own national interest.

At the same time, the socio-economic environment in Bangladesh had been significantly influenced by the introduction of neoliberal economic policies in the country since the 1980s. These policy changes, which were characterized by privatization, deregulation, and liberalization of trade, have led to macroeconomic growth but their distributive outcomes have remained highly uneven (Husain, 2022). According to scholars like Nuruzzaman (2004), neoliberal restructuring has actively favored a small group of business and industrial elites at the expense of vast masses of the populace such as industrial labor, small farmers and the urban poor. This has led to an increase in income and wealth inequalities with economic gains concentrated among a small group of politically connected actors, thereby reinforcing existing class hierarchies.

Moreover, market-oriented policies have led to the rise of a strong nexus between the state and the business elites, with economic and political decision-making becoming more and more elite-oriented, rather than broader social welfare (Sadia & Rahaman, 2022). This structural alignment has undermined redistributive processes and reduced the ability of the state to address socio-economic inequalities effectively. Neoliberal reforms have also promoted the rise of foreign capital and privatization in areas like energy and natural resources governance, often at the expense of national control and public accountability, leading to contestations and counter-hegemonic social movements (Faruque, 2017).

The governmental actions in dealing with the pandemic have been extensively criticized as being more concerned with ensuring business survival and export industries and paying inadequate attention to informal workers and urban poor requirements and the needs of lower-income groups (Sadia & Rahaman, 2022). Consequently, the pandemic not only exaggerated socio-economic inequality but also showed the structural constriction of the neoliberal government in guaranteeing inclusive, as well as resilient development.

Geopolitically, Bangladesh is located at a very strategic point in South Asia. The influence of India as a regional power is shaped by the element of cooperation and rivalry especially where the Chinese economic footprint continues to grow and Pakistan's longstanding rivalry with India (Buzan & Waever, 2003). The dynamics render Bangladesh politics very relevant to the regional security, economic interests and the strategic influence. In this context, the political transition in Bangladesh after Hasina's resignation cannot be understood merely as a domestic phenomenon; rather, it represents a moment of regional uncertainty with significant geopolitical implications. Therefore, at this point, it can be contended that what the Indian media reported about the political developments unfolding in Bangladesh after Hasina's resignation is not only shaped by the events themselves but also by their understanding of those events interpreted through the lens of regional power dynamic and national security anxieties.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Media, Regional Powers, and Geopolitical Meaning-Making

Historically, the media has played a major role in shaping regional power dynamics and legitimizing state narratives. The Spanish-American war of 1898 is one such example in which the press influenced public perception and created a sense of urgency (Carey, 2016). During early 2000s, the George W. Bush administration used both the U.S. and international media to spread strategic “weapon of mass destruction” discourse to sway public opinion and legitimize its invasion of Iraq (Kumar, 2006).

Similar media influence on the geopolitical meaning-making can also be found in the politics of the Indian subcontinent. India and Pakistan, since both achieved their respective independence in 1947, have fought four major wars. To bolster their respective geopolitical claims, each country’s media uses different nomenclature derived from their states’ official positions to refer to the portion of Kashmir under the other’s control. While Pakistani media refers to Indian-administered Kashmir as ‘Indian Occupied Kashmir’ (IOK), Indian media labels the region under Pakistan’s control as ‘Pakistan Occupied Kashmir’ (POK), thereby rallying domestic support, delegitimizing the adversary, and reinforcing national security narratives. The geopolitical realities are shaped and cultivated through such linguistic framing which embeds state’s interests within everyday narratives (Gerbner, 1998; Gerbner et al., 1980; Entman, 1993).

As regional powers hold a prominent position in international relations which cannot be ignored in the analysis of global politics and media, understanding this dynamic become important. Unlike Global hegemons, regional powers operate within geographically bounded spheres of influence where transboundary instability may pose a direct threat to security, the economy, and sovereignty. Moreover, sudden changes in political leadership through popular protest in a neighboring nation may create instability that affects migration flows, border security, minority politics, and regional alignment.

In such a situation, the media of the neighboring nation is highly unlikely to function as a neutral observer and report “objectively” on the events happening. Rather, it facilitates linking its rhetoric to a wider framework of geopolitical significance by conceptualizing instability, accountability, and strategic stakes in ways that align with national interests and regional positioning. Thus, analyzing the coverage of Indian newspapers of this political transition in Bangladesh will contribute to scholarly debates on the media’s active role in geopolitical meaning-making, specifically illustrating how the domestic press of a regional power constructs, interprets, and legitimizes state postures during periods of cross-border instability.

2.2 Framing Theory in International Crises

This study employs framing theory as its micro-level analytical tool to explore how the Indian media constructed the realities of Bangladeshi political transition. Framing, with its sociological origins in Goffman (1974), is defined as cognitive schemas that individuals and institutions employ to organize and interpret complex realities. In media and political communication, Entman (1993) argued that framing involves the selection of “some aspects of a perceived reality” and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). Framing is not merely about what information is presented, but how it is structurally organized to guide audience interpretation and restrict alternative viewpoints (de Vreese, 2005; Reese, 2001).

By being so precise in their description of the “problem” as a breakdown of law and order, and by issuing “moral evaluations” that sympathize with state stability, the media subtly delegitimize the uprising. The framing of another country’s transition is thus always a political act in international relations, one that constructs particular threats as salient while selectively

downplaying or omitting information that conflicts with the domestic state's geostrategic outlook (Mintz & Redd, 2003; Wolfsfeld, 2004).

In the context of international crises and cross-border political upheaval, the media frame acts as a crucial heuristic device. Through them, complex foreign political events are rendered into digestible, culturally resonant narrative for domestic audiences. When reporting on foreign protests or political transitions, the media often rely on established cognitive schemas that favor state authority. For instance, foreign policy coverage, while reporting on protest against the authorities often follow the "protest paradigm", a common media pattern in which news reports focus more on chaos, property damage, and instability rather than on the underlying grievances or democratic demands driving them (Lee, 2014; McLeod & Hertog, 1999). By doing so, the media subtly delegitimizes the uprising and defines the "problem" strictly as a breakdown of law and order while offering "moral evaluations" that sympathize with state stability. Therefore, in international relations, the act of framing a neighboring country's transition is deeply political exercise. It highlights specific threats while strategically omitting details that contradict the domestic state's political worldview (Mintz & Redd, 2003; Wolfsfeld, 2004).

2.3 Strategic Narrative Theory

While framing theory explains how individual texts highlight specific aspects of reality, it remains insufficient in explaining the macro-level geopolitical objectives that these texts collectively serve. To address this gap, this study integrates Strategic Narrative theory (Roselle et al., 2014). Strategic narratives refer to the representations of the series of events and identities through which political actors create a common meaning of the past, present and future in an attempt to shape the actions of domestic and international actors. From the states' point of view, strategic narratives are an important component in their attempts to define their interests, values, and aspirations. They are also used as an instrument by which states aim to extend their influence, manage expectations, and shape the overall discursive environment of international politics. In this regard, strategic narratives can be viewed as an important instrument of soft power (Nye, 2004), which works indirectly by shaping the environment within which policies are perceived and received.

Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle (2014) identify three interrelated types of strategic narratives, which serve as a macro-level framework for this study:

1. System Narratives: These include an account of the nature of the international or regional order, including how the world is constituted and how actors in it relate to each other. In the context of South Asia, these include an account of regional dynamics, history, and stability/instability.
2. Identity Narratives: These define the roles and identities of actors within the system, shaping how states understand themselves and others. For instance, a regional power may project itself as responsible or stabilizing in contrast to neighboring actors.
3. Issue (or policy) Narratives: These relate to specific policy issues and are used to frame and justify particular courses of action by shaping the terrain on which policy debates occur.

2.4 Connecting Frames to Narratives

This paper suggests that micro-level news frames function as the foundational building blocks of macro-level strategic narratives. Individual news reports on situations like border tensions or political unrest do not operate in isolation; on the contrary, repeated systematically through a national media system, they accumulate to construct a dominant worldview in the form of a strategic narrative. The study reveals the processes by which a regional power narratively securitizes its neighborhood, thereby legitimizing its broader geopolitical posture by examining how the micro-level events of the Bangladesh political transition were framed by the Indian English-language press.

3. Methodology

Using an inductive qualitative framing analysis, this study investigates the ways in which Indian English-language newspapers framed Bangladesh's political transition after Sheikh Hasina resigned and left her country in August 2024. The inductive approach allows frames to emerge from the data rather than imposing pre-existing categories, thereby enabling a context-sensitive understanding of media representation in a highly volatile geopolitical environment.

3.1 Data Selection and Media Context

This study has analyzed news coverage from three Indian English-language newspapers, namely, The Times of India, The Indian Express and The Hindu. To identify the most salient threads of Indian media discourse, these papers have been strategically chosen for their wide editorial influence and circulation. The Hindu is known for its analytical and relatively balanced editorial position. It generally includes diplomatic context while discussing the issues that may influence India's foreign policies. The Indian Express is known for its focus on institutional accountability and developments in politics, particularly emphasizing on investigative reporting. The Times of India is one of the most widely read and circulated papers in India. It reflects public discourse through its accessible and comprehensive reporting. By selecting these three papers, this study seeks to ensure that there is a comprehensive view of Indian media.

Also, these papers are headquartered in different parts of the country: The Hindu in Chennai, the capital city of the southern state of Tamil Nadu; The Indian Express in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, in close proximity to the nation's capital, New Delhi; and The Times of India in Mumbai, the capital of the western state of Maharashtra. Therefore, combining data from newspapers based in different urban locations allows the study to capture a geographically diverse perspective of Indian media discourse, reducing regional bias and providing a more representative understanding of national-level narratives.

The dataset used for this study consists of editorials, opinion pieces, interviews, graphical presentations, news pieces, and photo features. The timeframe of the dataset spans from 6th August 2024 to 5th September 2024, i.e., a month after Sheikh Hasina resigned. This timeframe witnessed a high level of political uncertainty in Bangladesh. Daily data collection was done using a systematic approach to collect data manually from the physical print editions of these newspapers. This approach was used to avoid any algorithmic bias that might occur if the data was collected using digital sources.

The dataset consists of all the data that mentioned the political crisis, change of leadership, and India-Bangladesh relations. The final corpus is 282 items, comprising 253 news reports, 4 interviews, 4 graphical presentations, 6 editorials, 13 opinion pieces, and 2 photo features. Out of these, 152 items were collected from The Times of India, The Hindu and The Indian Express fetched 75 and 55 items, respectively. The margins in the total numbers of the items among these papers reflect the varied editorial interests and target audiences that marked the height of the crisis. Collectively, this corpus provides a robust empirical basis for identifying the dominant frames and themes in the Indian media narrative surrounding Bangladesh's political transition following Hasina's resignation.

Table 1: Newspaper wise distribution of items.

Name	News	Interviews	Graphical Presentation	Editorial	Opinion Piece	Photo Feature	Total
Indian Express	44	2	1	2	5	1	55
The Hindu	71	0	0	2	2	0	75

Name	News	Interviews	Graphical Presentation	Editorial	Opinion Piece	Photo Feature	Total
TOI	138	2	3	2	6	1	152
Total	253	4	4	6	13	2	282

3.2 Theoretical Synthesis and Analytical Approach

The analytical framework links micro-level media framing to macro-level geopolitical communication. The analytical method is based on an inductive coding process that occurs on multiple levels and is informed by Robert Entman's theory of framing (Entman, 1993), which is further mapped onto strategic narrative theory (Roselle et al., 2014). Although this research is informed by Entman's analytical method for media framing, coding is inductive and not based on any pre-defined frame categories.

Stage 1: Familiarization

All 282 articles were read several times to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topics. This helped researchers get immersed in the data and identify recurring themes, rhetorical devices, and narrative patterns without imposing analytical filters.

Stage 2: Open Coding (Micro-Level Framing)

With regard to the initial readings, parts of the text have been coded with inductive coding on the basis of recurring patterns that align with the framing functions proposed by Entman (1993): Problem definitions (instability, governance, border problems) Causal interpretations (involvement of political actors, opposition movements, external factors) Moral evaluations (legitimacy, responsibility, threat to secularism) Suggested responses (policy implications for India, border management, caution advised). These coding schemes have been employed flexibly to ensure that the themes emerge organically from the data instead of any pre-defined categories.

Stage 3: Frame Construction and Thematic Saturation

The recurring codes were further integrated with broader interpretive clusters using this iterative process. The study also employed the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this process, the emerging codes were constantly compared with the data set to enhance the internal consistency of the codes. This process continued until the data had reached saturation point, meaning that no new codes were emerging.

In order to enhance the analytical rigor of the study and to prevent any bias on the part of the researchers, the researchers employed the technique of researcher triangulation. Though the coding process of the study was done by the lead author of the study, the co-authors of the study acted as peer debriefers.

Based on their prominence and consistent recurrence across dataset three dominant frames were identified through this process:

- Instability Frame – portraying Bangladesh as politically volatile, unpredictable, and structurally uncertain.
- Minority Vulnerability Frame – emphasizing the physical and cultural risks faced by minority communities, particularly Bangladeshi Hindus.
- Geopolitical Competition Frame – situating the domestic crisis within broader regional power dynamics involving India, China, Pakistan, and other actors.

Stage 4: Narrative Mapping (Macro-Level Strategy)

The above-identified frames were further examined in relation to strategic narrative theory to understand how domestic media reporting contributes to shaping representations of international politics.

Specifically, the frames were mapped to three narrative dimensions:

1. System narratives: how the media portrays the regional order and instability of South Asia as a whole.
2. Identity narratives: how India is portrayed as a stable, protective and responsible power in the region.
3. Policy narratives: how media reporting implicitly or explicitly legitimates certain foreign policy responses, such as border control or diplomatic engagement.

3.3 Analytical Focus and Justification

Instead of quantifying the frequency of frames, the present research employs a qualitative interpretive approach, with a focus on how frames are constructed through language, emphasis, and narrative structure.

Particular attention is given to:

- Recurring keywords, metaphors, and discursive patterns.
- The selection of sources and actors within the text.
- Patterns of emphasis and omission.
- The articulation of domestic events within broader geopolitical narratives.

An inductive qualitative framing analysis is particularly appropriate for this study, as it allows for the identification of context-specific frames that may not align with standard generic categories developed in Western scholarship. In the South Asian context, where media discourse is deeply entwined with historical experience, regional power dynamics, and national security concerns, such an approach is essential for capturing locally grounded meanings and interpretations.

To enhance analytical transparency, the study also considered the relative distribution and recurrence of frames across the dataset. While the research does not adopt a quantitative content analysis approach, particular attention was given to the consistency of frames across newspapers, the repetition of key lexical markers, and the prominence of frames within headlines, leads, and visual accompaniments. This allowed the study to identify dominant frames not merely through isolated instances but through their patterned recurrence across the corpus. Additionally, variations in emphasis across the three newspapers were noted to account for differences in editorial orientation and narrative construction.

4. Results: Framing Political Transition

In this section, the paper presents the findings derived from the qualitative framing analysis. The data reveals that instead of acting as neutral observers of a foreign political crisis, the selected Indian English-language newspapers collectively constructed a layered geopolitical narrative about the political transition in Bangladesh during the post-Hasina resignation period, selected for this study. Three main recurring themes were found during the analysis which have been mapped below to the system, identity and policy aspects of strategic narrative theory.

4.1. System Narrative: Constructing Bangladesh as a Site of Regional Instability

4.1.1 *Instability and Disorder as the Dominant Problem Frame*

Across the dataset, instability emerged as the most pervasive and consistently articulated frame through which the political transition in Bangladesh was represented. This frame appeared across all three newspapers—The Times of India, The Hindu, and The Indian Express—and was particularly prominent in headlines, lead paragraphs, and accompanying visuals.

The Times of India most explicitly foregrounded this frame through sensational and visually driven reporting. For instance, its August 6 headline, “Hasina’s Home Ransacked, Party Offices On Fire,” emphasised arson and mob violence, accompanied by images of vandalism. Similarly, The Indian Express reported incidents such as “Mob Sets Fire to Hotel, Kills 24 in Bangladesh,” reinforcing the depiction of widespread disorder. While The Hindu adopted a relatively more restrained tone, it nevertheless reproduced the instability frame through reports of killings, political clashes, and institutional breakdown.

The recurrence of lexical markers such as “riot-torn nation,” “turmoil,” and “nasty turn” across the three newspapers indicates a patterned construction of the crisis as a breakdown of law and order rather than as a democratic political transition. In line with Entman’s (1993) concept of problem definition, these representations consistently positioned instability as the central issue requiring attention.

Importantly, this framing aligns with what McLeod and Hertog (1999) describe as the “protest paradigm,” wherein media coverage foregrounds violence, disruption, and deviance while marginalizing underlying grievances. Across the dataset, references to democratic demands, socio-economic inequality, or anti-authoritarian motivations were notably limited.

Taken together, the repeated emphasis on instability constructs a broader system narrative in which Bangladesh is represented not as a site of democratic transformation but as a locus of regional disorder and unpredictability. While all three newspapers reproduced this framing, differences in emphasis were evident: The Times of India foregrounded episodic and visually dramatic representations of violence, The Indian Express combined event-based reporting with political interpretation, and The Hindu adopted a relatively more restrained and contextual tone. Despite these variations, the underlying construction of instability as the central problem remained consistent, thereby foregrounding its implications for regional security.

4.1.2 Islamist Resurgence and Anti-India Sentiment

The second recurring frame that was identified through this analysis, associated with post-Hasina instability, was the causal interpretation of a rising Islamist and anti-India threat. For instance, The Times of India warned about the implications of the rise of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami to power (Parashar, 2024). Moreover, The Indian Express contributed to the geopolitical anxiety that is associated with developments in Bangladesh through its reporting on diplomatic overtures between Dhaka and Islamabad (Seli, September 4, 2024), focusing on the rise of ‘anti-India’ and ‘pro-Pakistan’ sentiments.

Through these narratives, the newspapers collectively portrayed South Asia as inherently fragile and geopolitically contested, linking political transition to the rise of radical actors and adversarial alliances. However, variations were visible in how this threat was articulated: The Times of India emphasized alarmist interpretations of Islamist resurgence, The Indian Express linked these developments to diplomatic and strategic shifts, while The Hindu presented them within a broader regional and historical context. Despite these tonal differences, the framing consistently restructured the domestic political transition in Bangladesh as a strategic concern for India’s regional interests.

4.1.3 Minority Vulnerability and Normative Breakdown

The study identified minority insecurity as a major frame carrying a strong moral evaluation. Multiple reports documented assaults on minority communities, especially Hindus. The Times of India reported on the killing of Hindu Awami League leaders and the vandalism of temples (TOI, August 7, 2024). The Indian Express provided details of how Hindu teachers were hounded and forced to resign by the student mobs (Seli, August 22, 2024), while The Hindu detailed the vow of the interim government to end these attacks (AFP, August 12, 2024). The recurrence of such reports presented the targeting of minorities as hallmarks of ideological reversal, connecting Bangladesh’s transition to the undermining of secular norms.

4.1.4 From Frames to System Narrative

Altogether, the repeated emphasis on instability, Islamist resurgence, and minority vulnerability across the dataset does not merely describe discrete events but cumulatively constructs a broader system narrative. Through the patterned recurrence of these frames, Bangladesh is represented as a structurally fragile and volatile political space, embedded within a precarious regional order. In this way, micro-level problem definitions and causal interpretations coalesce into a macro-level understanding of South Asia as inherently unstable and security-sensitive.

4.2 Identity Narrative: Constructing India as a Responsible Regional Stabilizer

4.2.1 Selective Representation and the Absence of Victim Voices

One of the significant findings of this study is about how the Indian press utilized omission to construct India's identity narrative. In its coverage on the safety of minorities, the Indian press largely reflected the opinions of Indian ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), spokespersons or columnists instead of the victims themselves. In one instance, Makarand R. Paranjape's opinion piece in *The Indian Express* (August 12, 2024) used the crisis to criticize what he portrayed as the hypocrisy of India's domestic opposition on minority rights. Similarly, statements from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who had announced that "Hindus are being selectively targeted" (Hindu, August 8, 2024), were news embedding the crisis within India's domestic Hindutva political narrative.

This pattern of omission demonstrates how the crisis in a neighboring country is reframed by prioritizing elite political voices over affected communities, thereby constructing an India-centric identity narrative. While this tendency was visible across all three newspapers, its articulation differed: *The Times of India* amplified politically charged statements in a more populist register, *The Indian Express* embedded such voices within opinion-driven critique, and *The Hindu* incorporated them within a comparatively restrained and institutional tone. Across these variations, the privileging of elite discourse over victim perspectives remained a consistent feature of coverage.

More importantly, although the United Nations recorded about 1,400 deaths in the student protests (United Nations Bangladesh, 2025), such voices were barely heard in the Indian media's coverage. The socio-economic and democratic grievances behind the movement were marginalized. Consistent with the theory of selection and omission proposed by Entman (1993), the absence of the voice of the Bangladeshi civilians enabled the media to focus on the elite and state-centered perspectives to portray India as a deeply concerned, responsible guardian of regional minorities while ignoring the human experiences that did not align with New Delhi's geopolitical logic.

4.2.2 Protector of Citizens and Balancer of Legacy

The Indian media reinforced an identity discourse of India as a mature regional power negotiating a dangerous neighborhood with some restraint by constantly referring to the historical role of India in the liberation process of Bangladesh in 1971.

India was framed proactively as a guardian of the region. Headlines such as "AI, Indigo Operate Special Flights to Dhaka, return with 400 people" (TOI, August 8, 2024) and reports of Prime Minister Modi calling for the safety of Hindus (Bhattacharjee, August 17, 2024) can be interpreted as Entman's "treatment recommendations". At the same time, the press attempted to balance Hasina's legacy. While acknowledging her authoritarian tendencies, the *Indian Express* repeatedly emphasized her developmental achievements and referred to her as an "Iron Lady" (*Indian Express*, August 6, 2024). The identity narrative of India as a mature regional power, navigating a volatile neighborhood with restraint was reinforced through regular referencing of India's historical role in Bangladesh's 1971 liberation.

4.2.3 From Frames to Identity Narrative

The selective inclusion of elite political voices, combined with the omission of victim perspectives, contributes to the construction of an identity narrative in which India is positioned as a responsible and vigilant regional actor. Through these recurring patterns of emphasis and omission, the Indian media not only reports on the crisis but also reinforces a self-representation

of India as a stabilizing force, thereby shaping how domestic audiences interpret India's role within the regional order.

4.3 Policy Narrative: Legitimation of Strategic Vigilance

4.3.1 *Border Security and Geopolitical Competition*

Finally, the political crisis unfolding in Bangladesh was framed by the Indian press in such a way that it legitimizes India's specific policy responses. Emphasizing India's historical anxieties regarding the porous border and insurgent groups, the news media in India highlighted risk of illegal migration. Within this context, the militarization of the border was naturalized through the reports of the Border Security Force (BSF) foiling entry bids (TOI, August 9, 2024) and states scaling up security (Mazumdar & Ramashankar, August 8, 2024).

Moreover, through reports that featured former Indian diplomats blaming China and Pakistan for the unrest, alongside coverage of alleged U.S. involvement, the media situated the crisis within a broader geopolitical competition. While all three newspapers reproduced this policy-oriented framing, their emphases differed: The Times of India foregrounded immediate security threats such as illegal migration and border breaches, The Indian Express linked these concerns to strategic and diplomatic recalibration, and The Hindu framed them within a broader discussion of regional stability and international relations. Despite these differences, the overall effect was the construction of a policy narrative that legitimized a strategically vigilant and security-oriented response.

4.3.2 *From Frames to Policy Narrative*

The persistent framing of the crisis in terms of border insecurity, illegal migration, and geopolitical competition collectively produces a policy narrative that legitimizes strategic vigilance. By repeatedly linking instability in Bangladesh to risks for India, the media constructs a discursive environment in which security-oriented responses—such as border militarization and heightened diplomatic caution—appear both rational and necessary. In this way, micro-level framing practices contributed directly to the normalization of specific foreign policy orientations.

5. Discussion: Strategic Narratives and Geopolitical Legitimization

This study suggests that the English-language Indian press did not function merely as neutral observers during Bangladesh's political transition but actively participated in the construction of macro-level geopolitical meaning by aligning micro-level news frames with broader strategic narratives. The research reveals the strategic narrative architecture of the Indian press, wherein Bangladesh is depicted as structurally volatile (System Narrative), India as vigilant and responsible (Identity Narrative), and border militarization as legitimate. This meaning-making process reveals several important dynamics concerning the ways political upheavals across borders are interpreted with the use of domestic media ecosystems by regional powers.

5.1 *Securitizing the Democratic Uprising: The Protest Paradigm in the Global South*

Available academic research (Shahin et al., 2016; Iqubbal & Alam, 2021) on Indian media's role during periods of protest suggests that domestic press coverage often foregrounds conflict, instability, and deviance while marginalizing underlying grievances, thereby contributing to the delegitimization of protest movements. However, this study demonstrates that such framing is not limited to domestic contexts; rather, the Indian press extended this paradigm to delegitimize a foreign, citizen-led democratic movement.

Vihan, Singh, and Banaudhia (2026) have recently highlighted how the Indian mainstream media increasingly frames both domestic and neighboring-country protests through a securitized lens, portraying dissent as instability and strategic risk rather than as democratic mobilization. However, this study demonstrates that such framing extends beyond protest coverage to the interpretation of a full-scale political transition, where a citizen-led democratic uprising in a neighboring country is reconstituted as a regional security concern.

By overwhelmingly focusing on arson, mob violence, and the vandalization of Awami League offices, the Indian English-language press actively securitized the political transition. The

deeply rooted socio-economic grievances that drove the massive student-led uprising, such as the structural inequalities exacerbated by neoliberal economic policies, uneven pandemic recovery, and democratic backsliding under Hasina's government (Sadia & Rahaman, 2022; Nuruzzaman, 2004), were largely erased from the narrative. Consequently, the coverage transformed a foreign citizen-led democratic uprising into a national security threat for India. Such selective framing highlights the neglect of the democratic aspirations of neighboring populations by regional hegemons and their media, who privilege their own geopolitical anxieties.

5.2 Strategic Omission and the Erasure of Victim Voices

Entman's (1993) assertion that framing is as much about omission as it is about inclusion is supported by the findings of this study regarding the absence of Bangladeshi civilians' voices in the Indian media's coverage of political developments following Hasina's resignation. The Indian press strategically omitted the voices of students and other victims despite the staggering death toll of 1,400, as estimated by the United Nations (United Nations Bangladesh, 2025). In doing so, the Indian media shaped a narrative that privileged state interests over human experiences while narrowing down the scope of public understanding of the events.

It needs to be noted that including victim's voices would have required the Indian press to acknowledge the anti-Hasina protest as an expression of legitimate anti-authoritarian grievances and complicate India's longstanding diplomatic relationship with her administration. Accordingly, these omissions should not be understood merely as a journalistic oversight, rather it should be understood as an important component of strategic narrative construction (Miskimmon et al., 2014). Here, one can also argue that the failure to acknowledge the anti-Hasina protests as a genuine anti-authoritarian movement allowed the Indian media to insulate India's foreign policy establishment from domestic criticism. Such criticism could otherwise have emerged in response to India's continued support for an increasingly unpopular government in a neighboring country, despite growing evidence of widespread repression and democratic backsliding.

Thus, the process of omission emerges as an important mechanism for the construction of strategic narratives, shaping not only what is seen but also what remains unsaid. The media reinforced a state-centric narrative that aligned with broader geopolitical interests while constraining alternative interpretations of the crisis by excluding the voices of those who have been victimized.

5.3 Identity Projection and Domestic Ideological Resonances

At the identity level, the Indian media's intense focus on minority vulnerability, specifically the targeting of Bangladeshi Hindus, served a dual strategic purpose. While externally it served to project an identity narrative of India as a mature, responsible stabilizer, who was the guarantor of minority rights in South Asia, internally this framing deeply resonated with India's domestic political landscape.

By leaning heavily on open quotes from people such as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, and rightist organizations such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Indian English-language press allowed foreign policy reportage to entangle with domestic Hindutva narratives. Hindutva, the dominant form of Hindu nationalism, blends Indian national identity with Hindu culture and often mobilizing narratives of Hindu identity and insecurity to consolidate majoritarian political support (Anand, 2011; Hansen, 1999; Jaffrelot, 2021). Therefore, portraying Bangladesh as a "riot-torn" country witnessing an Islamist resurgence not only sparked international validation of India's prudential diplomatic mission overseas but also served domestic political narratives about the need to uphold Hindu identity in the face of a volatile subcontinent.

This alignment between the mainstream press and Hindu nationalist ideology is not an isolated phenomenon; rather, it reflects the patterns recognized in earlier scholarship on India's media landscape. Foundational studies have demonstrated how (sections of) the Indian media

are linking national security concerns with majoritarian political narratives (Manchanda, 2002; Rajagopal, 2001). More recent studies further evince, how, in times of crises or geopolitical tensions, mainstream Indian news outlets have often adopted a pro-state majoritarian stance that amplifies exclusionary narratives, marginalizing minority communities while normalizing right-wing political agendas (Udupa, 2015). Indian English-language newspapers successfully used this domestic playbook to securitize a transboundary democratic mobilization by uncritically echoing the rhetoric of Hindutva elites during Bangladesh's political transition.

Crucially, this intense media focus on religious vulnerability and border securitization served a broader ideological function: it not only resonated with domestic majoritarian politics but also acted as a powerful structural distraction. By foregrounding the narrative of minority persecution, Islamist resurgence, and border threats, the Indian press effectively masked the systemic neoliberal economic failures—jobless growth, severe wealth inequality, and labor precarity—that were the actual, material catalysts driving the Bangladeshi youth to the streets in the first place.

5.4 Legitimizing the Hard Border and Regional Hegemony

Lastly, the policy narratives identified in the study highlight the way in which media frames legitimize and normalize state security stances. The post-Hasina transition was heavily framed in terms of the threat of illegal immigration, the breakdown of borders, and the geopolitical maneuvering of competing states such as Pakistan and China.

The media normalized Indian defensive responses by portraying Bangladesh as a site of imminent geopolitical contagion. The rapid mobilization of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the issuance of high alerts across border states like Assam and Tripura were framed not as escalatory but as necessary and rational responses to the “problem” of Bangladeshi instability. The media discourse in this sense represents a broader articulation of the strategic agenda of the Indian state—its regional hegemony, its need to secure the highly sensitive Siliguri Corridor, as well as its concern with managing external influence in its immediate vicinity (van Schendel, 2005; Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The findings indicate that the Indian media operated, at least in part, as a soft power instrument, shaping how instability in Bangladesh was interpreted in ways that aligned with India's strategic interests (Nye, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). This process also reflects how media representations actively construct and stabilize meanings around security and threat (Hall, 1997).

6. Limitation

This study is limited to English-language print newspapers in India and does not include vernacular media, which may exhibit different framing patterns and regional ideological orientations. Additionally, this study specifically focuses on traditional print media and does not include television news broadcasts or social media platforms, where sensationalism and securitization may be even more pronounced. Additionally, the temporal scope of the study focuses strictly on the 30-day acute crisis window following the resignation; future research could examine whether these frames persist or shift as the new interim government stabilizes. Finally, while the qualitative approach allows for in-depth interpretation of frames and narratives, it does not quantify the frequency of frames, which may be explored in future research using mixed-method approaches. Despite these limitations, the study provides a robust interpretive framework for understanding how regional media construct geopolitical meaning during periods of political transition.

7. Conclusion

This study illustrates how the political transition in post-Hasina Bangladesh after the mass uprising on August 5, 2024, was strategically framed by the Indian English-language press. The analysis, based on the amalgamation of framing theory and strategic narrative theory, reveals how the day-to-day news reports in *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, and *The Times of India* transcended factual reportage to build a complex, multi-dimensional geopolitical reality.

In its portrayal of Bangladesh as innately unstable and India as the region's responsible and watchful guardian, the Indian media actively securitized the Bangladeshi crisis. It legitimized India's defensive foreign policy stances and its strategic approach to the new Bangladeshi interim government by focusing almost exclusively on border security, geopolitical interference from outside the region, and the vulnerability of the Hindu minority.

Ultimately, by illustrating the ways regional powers utilize their domestic media to interpret transborder political upheavals, this study adds vital empirical depth to the body of international political communication studies. It underscores the significance of the press in building regional order in the Global South by linking macro-level strategic narratives with micro-level media framing. Future research may extend this framework by incorporating comparative analysis across regional media systems or by integrating quantitative measures to further examine the distribution and intensity of these framing patterns. In doing so, this study highlights the critical role of regional media not merely in reflecting geopolitical realities, but in actively constructing and legitimizing them to protect the prevailing economic and political hegemony.

Acknowledgments: SRM University-AP Library

Declaration of Interest Statement:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Funding details:

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability statement:

The data that support the findings of this study are publicly available in media coverage of Times of India, The Hindu and Indian Express from August 6, 2024, to September 5, 2024. These materials can be accessed through media archives and databases.

References:

- Anand, D. (2011). Hindu nationalism in India and the politics of fear. Palgrave Macmillan.
- BBC. (2011, June 30). Bangladesh ends caretaker government arrangement. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13973576>
- Bhaumik, S. (2007). *Insurgencies in India's Northeast: Conflict, co-option & change* (Working Paper No. 10). East-West Center.
- Buzan, B., & Waever, O. (2003). Regions and powers: The structure of international security. Cambridge University Press.
- Carey, C. (2016). Breaking the News: Telegraphy and Yellow Journalism in the Spanish-American War. *American Periodicals*, 26(2), 130–148. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44630677>
- de Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design*, 13(1), 51–62.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Fair, C. (2019). Bangladesh in 2018: Careening toward One-Woman Rule. *Asian Survey*, 59, 124–132. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2019.59.1.124>
- Faruque, M. O. (2017). Neoliberal resource governance and counter-hegemonic social movement in Bangladesh. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(2), 254–259.

- Freedman, L. (2006). Networks, narratives and information. *International Affairs*, 82(2), 352–365.
- Gerbner, G. (1998). Cultivation analysis: An overview. *Mass Communication and Society*, 1(3–4), 175–194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.1998.9677855>
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1980). The “mainstreaming” of America: Violence profile no. 11. *Journal of Communication*, 30(3), 10–29. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1980.tb01987.x>
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Aldine Transaction.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage.
- Hansen, T. B. (1999). *The saffron wave: Democracy and Hindu nationalism in India*. Princeton University Press.
- Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. Pantheon Books.
- Husain, M. M. (2022). *Development, neoliberalism, and Islamism in South Asia: The case of Bangladesh*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Iqubbal, A., & Alam, S. (2021). *Protests in the Times of Social Media: A Case of Farmers’ Agitation*. Digital Empowerment Foundation.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2021). *Modi’s India: Hindu nationalism and the rise of ethnic democracy*. Princeton University Press.
- Karimanal, I., Aqid, R., Darr, T., Clark, H., Tang, S., & Karthikeyan, S. (2024). *Freedom and Fairness of the 2024 Bangladeshi Parliamentary Election | YIP Institute Foreign Policy*. Retrieved November 16, 2024, from <https://yipinstitute.org/policy/freedom-and-fairness-of-the-2024-bangladeshi-parliamentary-election>
- Kumar, D. (2006). Media, War, and Propaganda: Strategies of Information Management During the 2003 Iraq War. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 3(1), 48–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420500505650>
- Lee, F. L. (2014). Triggering the protest paradigm: Examining factors affecting news coverage of protests. *International Journal of Communication*, 8, 2725–2746.
- Mahmud, F. (2024, August 5). Sheikh Hasina: A critical misstep and the end of 15 years of ruling Bangladesh. Retrieved November 16, 2024, from Al Jazeera website: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/5/sheikh-hasina-a-critical-misstep-and-the-end-of-15-years-of-rule>
- Manchanda, R. (2002). Militarised Hindu nationalism and the mass media: Shaping a Hindutva public discourse. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 25(3), 301–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856400208723504>
- McLeod, D. M., & Hertog, J. K. (1999). Social control, social change and the mass media's role in the regulation of protest groups. In D. Demers & K. Viswanath (Eds.), *Mass media, social control, and social change* (pp. 305–330). Iowa State University Press.
- Mintz, A., & Redd, S. B. (2003). Framing effects in international relations. *Synthese*, 135(2), 193–213.
- Miskimmon, A., O’Loughlin, B., & Roselle, L. (2014). *Strategic narratives: Communication power and the new world order*. Taylor and Francis.
- Mollah, Md. A. H., & Jahan, R. (2018). Parliamentary election and electoral violence in Bangladesh: The way forward. *International Journal of Law and Management*, 60(2), 741–756. doi: [10.1108/IJLMA-07-2017-0161](https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLMA-07-2017-0161)
- Muni, S. D. (2009). *India’s Foreign Policy: The Democracy Dimension*. Foundation Books.

- Nuruzzaman, M. (2004). Neoliberal economic reforms, the rich and the poor in Bangladesh. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 34(1), 33–54.
- Nye, J. S. Jr. (2004). Soft power: The means to success in world politics. PublicAffairs.
- Rajagopal, A. (2001). Politics after television: Hindu nationalism and the reshaping of the public in India. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511489051>
- Reese, S. D. (2001). Prologue—Framing public life: A bridging model for media research. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy, & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 7–31). Routledge.
- Robinson, P. (2017). The Media and Foreign Policy. In P. Robinson, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.494>
- Roselle, L., Miskimmon, A., & O'Loughlin, B. (2014). Strategic narrative: A new means to understand soft power. *Media, War & Conflict*, 7(1), 70–84.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635213516696>
- Sadia, T. T., & Rahaman, A. (2022). Neo-liberal pitfalls and the COVID-19 pandemic challenges in Bangladesh. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 45(5), 800–816.
- Shahin, S., Zheng, P., Sturm, H. A., & Fadnis, D. (2016). Protesting the Paradigm: A Comparative Study of News Coverage of Protests in Brazil, China, and India. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 21(2), 143–164.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216631114>
- Udupa, S. (2015). *Making news in global India: Media, publics, politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- United Nations Bangladesh. (2025, February 12). *Bangladesh: UN report finds brutal, systematic repression of protests, calls for justice for serious rights violations* | United Nations in Bangladesh [United Nations Bangladesh]. <https://bangladesh.un.org/en/289108-bangladesh-un-report-finds-brutal-systematic-repression-protests-calls-justice-serious>
- van Schendel, W. (2005). *The Bengal borderland: Beyond state and nation in South Asia*. Anthem Press.
- Vihan, A., Singh, R., & Banaudhia, U. (2026). Securitizing youth dissent: How Indian media frames protest in Nepal and Ladakh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 61(12), 18–20.
- Wolfsfeld, G. (2004). *Media and the path to peace*. Cambridge University Press.

Biographical note:

^aDibyajyoti Dutta is a PhD scholar from Bangladesh, currently pursuing his doctoral studies at SRM University, Andhra Pradesh, India. His research interests include media studies, South Asian History, Religion, and South Asian geopolitics.

^bDr. Ugen Bhutia is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Studies at the Easwari School of Liberal Arts (ESLA), SRM University, Andhra Pradesh. His research focuses on the complex intersections of media, culture, nationalism, and urbanism, examining how these domains shape and are shaped by contemporary social and political discourses.

^cDr. Bikku is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Easwari School of Liberal Arts (ESLA), SRM University-AP, Andhra Pradesh. He specializes in environmental anthropology, tribes, and pastoral nomads.