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Original article



## Shifting Narratives: Russia's Image in South Asian Media in 2022–2024 (by the Example of the Mass Media in People's Republic of Bangladesh)

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**Abstract.** This study examines how the perception of Russia changed in South Asia especially in Bangladeshi media both before and after the start of the Special Military Operation in February 2022. The research looks at major themes and changes in how Russia is portrayed by comparing the content of news stories, editorials, and op-eds in major Bangladeshi newspapers published in Bengali and English. The People's Republic of Bangladesh is a mono-ethnic state, 98% of whose population are Bengalis, who recognize the value of their strategic alliance with Russia, a country that has supported them during difficult times in their history, despite criticism from a number of other countries. The results show a notable shift in media portrayals driven by international and internal political events, such as the overthrow of Sheikh Hasina's administration in August 2024. The study sheds light on how internal politics and foreign conflicts influence media narratives and public opinion, providing essential insights into the interaction between Bangladeshi national media discourses and global geopolitics. By means of qualitative content analysis the authors also examine how leading Bangladeshi newspapers have portrayed Russia's image during three distinct periods: Pre-SMO (December 2021 — January 2022), Early stage SMO (February 2022 — March 2022), and the period following the Government Change in Bangladesh (July 2024 — August 2024). The analysis covers leading publications such as Daily Prothom Alo, Daily Janakantha, Daily Bhorer Kagoj, Daily Jugantor, Bangladesh Observer and several others. The study also draws on other materials and news stories to systematically analyze the ideological positions of modern media and identify the dependence of publications on various sponsorships.

**Keywords.** Russian Image, South Asia, Bangladesh, Media, Special Military Operation/SMO.

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Научная статья

## Смена нарративов: имидж России в медиа Южной Азии в 2022–2024 гг. (на примере СМИ Народной Республики Бангладеш)

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**Аннотация.** В этом исследовании рассматривается, как изменилось восприятие России в Южной Азии, особенно в бангладешских СМИ, после начала специальной военной операции на Украине в феврале 2022 г. В исследовании рассмотрены основные меняющиеся в медиа темы, касающиеся России, сравнивается содержание новостных сюжетов, редакционных статей и публицистических статей ряда крупнейших бангладешских изданий, публикуемых на бенгали и английском языке. Народная Республика Бангладеш — моноэтническое государство, 98 % населения которого составляют бенгалцы, осознающие ценность своего стратегического союза с Россией — страной, которая поддерживала ее в трудные времена ее истории, несмотря на критику со стороны ряда других стран. Результаты исследования демонстрируют заметный сдвиг в репортажах медиа, вызванный международными и внутривосточными событиями, такими как свержение администрации Шейх Хасины в августе 2024 г. Данная статья также проливает свет на то, как внутренняя политика и международные конфликты влияют на медианарративы и общественное мнение, содержит важную информацию о взаимодействии между национальными медиа-дискурсами Бангладеш и глобальной геополитикой и представляет позиции ведущих изданий страны, отображающих имидж России. Используется качественный метод проведения контент-анализа для изучения трех различных периодов развития, периодов эволюции имиджа России: до начала СВО (декабрь 2021 г. — январь 2022 г.), ранняя стадия СВО (февраль 2022 г. — март 2022 г.) и период после смены национального правительства Бангладеш (июль 2024 г. — август 2024 г.). Анализ охватывает ведущие публикации, в таких изданиях, как Daily Prothom Alo, Daily Janakantha, Daily Bhorer Kagoj, Daily Jugantor, Bangladesh Observer и ряда других. Исследование также базируется на других материалах и новостных сюжетах для системного анализа идеологических позиций современных медиа и выявления зависимости изданий от разнообразной спонсорской поддержки.

**Ключевые слова.** Имидж России, Южная Азия, Бангладеш, СМИ, Специальная военная операция/СМО.

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### Introduction

Mutual collaboration and shared political goals have formed a solid basis for the relationship between Ban-

gladesh and Russia. Both countries have fostered a strategic alliance built on cooperation in vital areas like commerce, energy, and defense since the

Soviet Union provided crucial help during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 [1]. The two nations have profited from strong economic development and strategic links fostered by this long-lasting partnership, which has also helped them negotiate challenging geopolitical situations.

Russia launched its Special Military Operation/SMO in Ukraine in February 2022, demonstrating its will to defend Russian citizens in the face of outside demands while heralding a global change in geopolitical environment. Bangladesh saw this as a chance to restate its traditionally cordial ties with Russia, a country that has continuously supported Bangladesh's independence and growth.

The media significantly shapes international impressions and public discourse. The way that Russia has been portrayed in Bangladesh, both before and during SMO, provides a valuable prism to see how media narratives reflect more profound geopolitical ties. While Bangladeshi media outlets have often highlighted Russia's contributions to world energy security, defense cooperation, and its long-standing friendship with Bangladesh, some foreign media outlets have concentrated on criticizing Russia.

Through a comparative content analysis of news stories, editorials, and op-eds from well-known Bangladeshi newspapers, this research examines how the media framing of Russia has changed. The study aims to identify positive themes by analyzing media before and during the SMO. These themes include Russia's reputation as a trustworthy partner in the commercial and technical domains and its long-standing diplomatic connections with Bangladesh [2]. In the rapidly changing world order national media are trying to

build strategic alliances with different political parties and forces to sustain their existence.

Bangladesh's foreign policy has been determined for a long time by its strategic non-alignment, which has allowed the country to maintain balanced ties with major world powers, including the US, China, and Russia. This non-alignment approach has been essential for Bangladesh's diplomatic efforts since its independence in 1971. It has allowed the country to navigate challenging geopolitical environments while defending its national interests. Bangladesh's aim to steer clear of big power rivalry and promote economic growth via various foreign alliances is reflected in the strategy [3, pp. 45–61].

Bangladesh's history has been significantly influenced by Russia, particularly during its struggle for independence. Following Bangladesh's freedom, the Soviet Union was one of the first significant nations to acknowledge it and gave vital assistance to the 1971 Freedom War. This long-standing historical relationship paved the way for Bangladesh and Russia to continue working together on important projects like infrastructure development, energy, and defense. Russia has been Bangladesh's dependable partner on several projects over the years, including the historic building of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, which serves as a testament to their ongoing and developing collaboration [4].

The start of Russia's SMO in Ukraine in February 2022 caused a shift in the geopolitical balance in the world. Bangladesh understood the value of its strategic alliance with Russia, a nation that has supported it through difficult times in its history, despite the criticism from a number of other countries. Ban-

gladesh has opted to take a balanced stance, honoring its close relations with Russia while interacting with other major powers worldwide, despite international pressure to denounce Russia's activities. This illustrates Bangladesh's diplomatic dexterity in maneuvering a challenging global environment without sacrificing its fundamental national objectives [5, pp. 78–95].

There is no question that Bangladesh's internal and foreign policy decisions have been impacted by the situation in Ukraine and its worldwide consequences. Bangladesh continues to gain from Russia's assistance in crucial sectors like energy and defense despite other countries' requests to cut ties with the Russian Federation. This dependence demonstrates the strength of the two countries' relationship and the diplomatic balance Bangladesh has carefully maintained to protect its interests domestically while promoting goodwill among other countries [6, p. 112–119]. Bangladesh's foreign policy dynamics and media coverage of Russia took on a new dimension with the collapse of Sheikh Hasina's administration in August 2024. Bangladesh's internal environment was transformed by this political shift, with media storylines reflecting the country's historical alliance with Russia and the shifting tensions worldwide.

Bangladesh's media has presented Russia in a more balanced light, recognizing its essential role as a partner in critical industries and emphasizing the need for maintaining strong bilateral relations between the two countries [7, p. 22–40]. To explain these shifts in media coverage better, this research looks at the historical, geopolitical, and internal elements impacting Bangladesh's media narratives on Russia. We

analyzed the resilience of the Bangladesh-Russia alliance and its ability to adjust to international changes by comparing Russia's media representation before and during the SMO.

### Method of research

The research used qualitative content analysis aimed at examining how the most influential media of Bangladeshi depicted Russia's SMO activities as pre-military operations (December 2021 — January 2022), post-military operations (February 2022 — March 2022), and current developments (July 2024 — August 2024) make up its three time periods, following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024.

The following Research Questions were put forward:

1. How has the portrayal of Russia in South East Asia media changed before and during SMO?
2. What key themes and narratives have emerged in Bangladeshi media regarding Russia post-February 2022?
3. How do these media narratives reflect broader geopolitical and public sentiment in Bangladesh?

The analysis covers major newspapers like *Daily Prothom Alo*, *Daily Janakantha*, *Daily Bhorer Kagoj*, *Daily Jugantor*, *Bangladesh Observer*, *Daily Star*, *Daily Ittefaq*, *Daily Samakal*, and *Daily Inqilab*. In total, 3,202 articles were analyzed, consisting of 3,103 news stories, 25 editorials, and 74 sub-editorials. Editorials were carefully examined as they reflect the ideological stance of each newspaper, often influenced by their political affiliations and organizational support. Each newspaper generally publishes two editorial pieces daily, written by an editorial board without individual attribution. These editorials, alongside opinion columns, are instru-

mental in determining the newspaper's stance on critical issues, including international conflicts like SMO.

### Results

The portrayal of Russia's military operations in Ukraine varied significantly across the Bangladeshi press. Newspapers like *Janakantha* and *Inqilab* supported Russia's actions, while *Prothom Alo* and *Daily Star* were more critical. Moderate positions were observed in *Jugantor*, *Bangladesh Observer*, and *Samakal*. This analysis highlights how domestic political affiliations and editorial policies shaped the media's stance on a major international conflict. Newspapers dedicate editorial space to international events significant to Bangladesh's economy or political landscape. The study revealed divergent portrayals of Russia's military operations in Ukraine: *Daily Prothom Alo* published 460 pieces, including 442 news stories, five editorials, and 13 columns.

The paper's overall stance on Russia was negative, with a critical tone across all three periods. *Daily Janakantha* released 363 articles, including 356 news stories, two editorials, and five columns. The newspaper's portrayal of Russia was generally favorable. *Daily Bhorer Kagoj* published 355 pieces, including 348 news items, one editorial, and six columns. The coverage reflected

a positive attitude toward Russia, supporting its military actions. *Daily Jugantor* featured 301 contents, including 291 news stories, three editorials, and seven columns. The newspaper adopted a moderate stance, offering balanced coverage. *Bangladesh Observer* released 315 articles, including 301 news stories, three editorials, and 11 columns. *The Observer* also maintained a neutral tone, avoiding solid opinions.

*Daily Inqilab* published 202 articles, including 198 news items, one editorial, and three columns, showing a generally positive stance towards Russia. *Daily Star* published 479 articles, including 468 news stories, two editorials, and nine columns with the tone predominantly negative, with critical coverage of Russia's actions. *Daily Samakal* released 263 contents, including 256 news stories, three editorials, and four columns, maintaining a moderate position, neither fully endorsing nor opposing Russia's operations. *Daily Ittefaq* released 464 pieces, including 443 news stories, five editorials, and 16 columns, demonstrating more negative approach with critical editorials.

Table presents major Bangladesh newspapers and their general policy in response to Russia's Special military operation in Ukraine.

According to Table, since the beginning of SMO in 2022, Russia's im-

**Coverage of Russian image by Bangladeshi media**  
**Освещение имиджа России бангладешскими медиа**

| Newspaper Name /<br>Название газеты | News /<br>Новости | Editorial /<br>Редакционная<br>статья | Column /<br>Рубрика | Total<br>Content /<br>Общее<br>количество | Policy /<br>Политика | Website / Вебсайт  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| Daily Prothom Alo                   | 442               | 5                                     | 13                  | 460                                       | Negative             | www.prothomalo.com |

The End of the Table / Окончание таблицы

| Newspaper Name /<br>Название газеты | News /<br>Новости | Editorial /<br>Редакционная<br>статья | Column /<br>Рубрика | Total Content /<br>Общее количество | Policy /<br>Политика | Website / Вебсайт       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Daily Janakantha                    | 356               | 2                                     | 5                   | 363                                 | Positive             | www.dailyjanakantha.com |
| Daily Bhorer Kagoj                  | 348               | 1                                     | 6                   | 355                                 | Positive             | www.bhorerkagoj.com     |
| Daily Jugantor                      | 291               | 3                                     | 7                   | 301                                 | Neutral              | www.jugantor.com        |
| Bangladesh Observer                 | 301               | 3                                     | 11                  | 315                                 | Neutral              | www.observerbd.com      |
| Daily Star                          | 468               | 2                                     | 9                   | 479                                 | Negative             | www.thedailystar.net    |
| Daily Samakal                       | 256               | 3                                     | 4                   | 263                                 | Neutral              | www.samakal.com         |
| Daily Inqilab                       | 198               | 1                                     | 3                   | 202                                 | Positive             | www.dailyinqilab.com    |
| Daily Ittefaq                       | 443               | 5                                     | 16                  | 464                                 | Negative             | www.ittefaq.com.bd      |



**Bangladeshi Newspaper Content on Russia's Agenda**  
**Новостной контент медиа Бангладеш о России**



age was highlighted in positive, negative, and moderate coverage. Besides, as can be seen in Figure, twelve most influential content themes identified in this regard are: causes and context of wars (5 %), military operations and conflict (13 %), civilian distress (9 %), international response (12 %), economic impact (10 %), media and propaganda (4 %), peace talks (2 %), cyber warfare (4 %), nuclear threat (11 %), political change (8 %), role of UN and other organizations (7 %) and Russia-Bangladesh relations (15 %).

The publications have extensively covered changes in numerous subjects related to Russia, such as conflict causes, geopolitical tensions, military operations, refugee concerns, humanitarian crises, and civilian losses, etc. Among the vital topics is the world economy impacted by the rising of energy costs which of great Bangladesh great concern. While international organizations participated in ceasefire discussions for peace worldwide media spread scenario concerned nuclear war risk. The publications have extensively covered changes in Bangladesh's stance and ties with Russia, the function of the United Nations and other organizations.

After 2022, media narratives about Russia in the national media have changed, which provided new important information about Bangladesh concerning more significant geopolitical problems. This change highlights how difficult it may be to retain longstanding ties while adjusting to the shifting public opinion and global dynamics.

### **Discussion**

The research focuses on the SMO, the campaign's first phases, and the events that followed up to the collapse

of Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5, 2024. Over three thousand equally distributed stories, editorials, and columns analyzed in this publication make up the sample size throughout the time covering SMO. The study compares how the campaign has been portrayed in the media throughout, where Russia media image was presented in a variety of ways.

The abovementioned newspapers relying on Western media have presented Russia's activities as unreasonable, which is indicative of a broader rejection of the invasion and feeds the narrative of global sympathy with Ukraine. On the other hand, some of the analyzed media provided a more balanced nuanced or encouraging account of what Russia is doing. Russia's media image representation in Bangladesh for sure shaped by the nation's historical ties with Russia and its current geopolitical position. While Bangladesh builds its diplomatic relations in the face of global censure of Russia's activities, media portrayals provide valuable perspectives on how these dynamics are manifested in public conversation. It is possible to learn more about how Bangladeshi media portrays Russia's activities and how these depictions affect public opinion and foreign policy by examining the changes in the media portrayal on the eve and after February 2022. This research attempts to shed light on the growing image of Russia in Bangladeshi media and its ramifications for both national and international settings by analyzing media representation and its influence on geopolitical narratives.

Russia's worldwide image has been somehow impacted after February 2022, which has elicited a range of reactions from various areas and

media sources. Much of the coverage of SMO is focused on the humanitarian consequences<sup>1</sup>. This framing reinforces a narrative of censure and isolation by aligning with more considerable Western political and economic sanctions imposed on Russia<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, media reactions in non-Western regions such as South Asia have shown a more sophisticated methodology. Due to the long-standing economic, military, and political links, Bangladesh has traditionally maintained good relations with Russia, especially atomic energy [8, pp. 45–61] as well as in energy security industry in general and global safety [9, pp. 120–135]. This historical backdrop influences how the nations' media sources present the crisis and Russia's involvement in it [10, pp. 15–29]. At the same time a critical position represents a more significant trend in international media<sup>3</sup>.

Media representations of Russia in South Asia, especially in Bangladesh, often show a mix of favor and neutrality. This is partially due to Russia's historical significance as major ally and provider of financial and military assistance. Thanks to their geopolitical interests and bilateral ties with Russia, Bangladesh could be less likely to unite with Western narratives of censure.

Nevertheless the possible interruptions in food and energy security were brought to light in reports; these are especially pertinent to Bangladesh<sup>4</sup>.

The media coverage is under media narratives in areas significantly influenced by Russia's engagement like in energy markets mutual advantages<sup>5</sup>, military cooperation, and economic investments. No wonder media organizations in these countries maintain a fair perspective and prevent jeopardizing the crucial mutually friendly relations<sup>6</sup>. Given the historical links to Russia and the geopolitical realities of the area, the media in South Asia often present a more nuanced image of the situation in Ukraine. This complex representation may include topics like the conflict's broader effects on global safety and non-Western countries' interests. When siding with either side might substantially impact Bangladesh's domestic and international ties, this topic emphasizes the country's strategic maneuvering<sup>7</sup>. The effects of Bangladesh-Russia regional security and economic interests

<sup>1</sup> Russia-Ukraine War: A Timeline of Key Events. Retrieved from // BBC News 2022. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589>.

<sup>2</sup> Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Global Reactions and Consequences // The New York Times. 2022. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/world/europe/russia-ukraine-invasion-reactions.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Global Reactions and Consequences // The Diplomat. 2022. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/russias-invasion-of-ukraine-global-reactions-and-consequences>.

<sup>4</sup> Economic Impact of Sanctions on Russia: Implications for Bangladesh // Dhaka Tribune. 2022. URL: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2022/03/20/economic-impact-sanctions-russia-bangladesh>.

<sup>5</sup> Russia's Role in Bangladesh's Energy Sector: Continued Cooperation Amidst Crisis // The Financial Express. 2023. URL: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/russia-role-bangladesh-energy-sector-2023>.

<sup>6</sup> Bangladesh-Russia Relations Amidst the Ukraine Conflict: A Balancing Act // The Daily Star. 2023. URL: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/bangladesh-russia-relations-amidst-ukraine-conflict-2050105>.

<sup>7</sup> Navigating Diplomatic Challenges: Bangladesh's Position in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict // The Daily Star. 2023. URL: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/bangladesh-diplomatic-challenges-russia-ukraine-conflict-2090105>.



were the main core in discussion of analysts and observers respectfully of their political preferences [11, pp. 45–59].

After the examining the media narratives of leading Bangladeshi newspapers regarding SMO can be framed three periods: pre-operation, early-operation, and post-government change. It reveals significant divergence, influenced by political affiliations, editorial policies, and ideological leanings. Newspapers like *Daily Janakantha* and *Daily Inqilab* adopt a more favorable view perceiving possible pressure on Russia which could lead to bad impact on Bangladesh's economic stability<sup>8</sup> while *Daily Prothom Alo* and *Daily Star* consistently maintain a critical stance towards Russia in the most topics.

Historically, Bangladesh and Russia have had friendly ties characterized by collaboration in several areas, including energy, defense, and technology. The foundation of this connection is shared interests and historical backing, such as Russia's aid in Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971. These historical links and their significance to Bangladesh's strategic interests are still acknowledged. Before the conflict, media representations frequently emphasized these favorable features, bolstering the perception of Russia as a longstanding true partner.

A more cautious and calculated approach to Bangladesh's foreign policy is reflected in the growing media attention to Russia. The way that Russia is portrayed in Bangladeshi media is changing, emphasizing how difficult it is to maintain diplomatic ties with Russia in the face of the pressure. The media's

portrayal of Bangladesh exhibits a sophisticated comprehension of this delicate balancing act, recognizing the historical collaboration and the necessity of navigating the geopolitical landscape of the present day. Maintaining positive ties with Russia and the West, vital to Bangladesh's foreign policy, requires this delicate diplomatic balancing act.

The way media narratives have changed also highlights how Bangladesh's economy is affected by the crisis. The growing attention to possible economic consequences, such as trade and energy supply disruptions, shows how international wars may directly affect national economies. The media's coverage of these financial issues reflects a rising understanding of the broader effects of geopolitical events on local economic stability. Bangladesh uses this knowledge to inform its strategic choices and policy reactions to lessen possible adverse effects.

The media's heightened focus on the humanitarian dimensions and humanitarian concerns as well. Bangladeshi media conforms to international narratives and ethical considerations by emphasizing the humanitarian catastrophe, which might influence public opinion. In order to lessen the adverse economic effects of the conflict and sanctions, the media investigated various scenarios and quite different legislative solutions<sup>9</sup>.

The changing media narratives will likely impact public opinion and policy. Public opinion may change in response to more critical media depictions, impacting diplomatic initiatives and governmental choices. Bangladesh will

<sup>8</sup> Adapting to New Realities: Bangladesh's Economic Policy Responses to the Ukraine Conflict // The Financial Express. 2023. URL: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh-economic-policy-responses-ukraine-conflict>.

<sup>9</sup> The Humanitarian Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine // The Diplomat. 2022. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/humanitarian-impact-russia-invasion-ukraine>.

continue to be influenced by its historical links and the need to adapt to modern international standards and public expectations.

The fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024 marked a turning point in Bangladesh's response to Russia's actions, as media coverage began to reflect the country's delicate balancing act between maintaining historical ties with Russia and adhering to some international public opinion trends. The analysis also highlights Bangladeshi media's increasing focus on the conflict's humanitarian impact, economic consequences, and global geopolitical implications. The evolving portrayal of Russia in the Bangladeshi press demonstrates the intersection of domestic and international factors in shaping media narratives.

### **Conclusion**

Bangladesh's strategic interests and historical ties to Russia have probably had an impact on how Russia is seen in Bangladesh. Maintaining close connections with Russia and meeting external challenges by Bangladesh have influenced the media's coverage of SMO. This research investigated how these processes manifest in media narratives by examining how Russia is portrayed in Bangladeshi media before and during the Ukraine Special Military Operation. Comprehending these changes offers valuable perspectives on how international wars impact national media portrayals and public attitudes.

Before the February 2022, Bangladeshi media mainly presented Russia favorably or impartially. Many reasons, including historical connections, geopolitical alliances, and economic cooperation, contributed to this positive portrayal of Russia, which positioned it

as an essential ally rather than a controversial global player.

Russia's engagement in Bangladesh's defense industry was another critical topic in pre-conflict media coverage, in addition to energy cooperation. The media covered several defense agreements that were presented as crucial to improving Bangladesh's defense capabilities. These agreements included the transfer of military hardware and cooperative training. This coverage emphasized the defense relationship's strategic significance by presenting Russia as a crucial ally in preserving regional stability. The good news about these defense cooperation projects strengthened Russia's reputation as a helpful ally in enhancing Bangladesh's military might.

Some media widely covered Russia's participation in Bangladesh's energy industry, particularly concerning the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant construction. This initiative, which required significant investment and knowledge from Russia, was often cited as evidence of the two nations' solid bilateral ties. The media highlighted Bangladesh's scientific growth and energy security due to Russia's backing for this well-known project. Reports often highlighted the effective use of Russian technology and the advantages for the infrastructure Bangladesh's energy sector, presenting Russia as a vital and dependable ally.

The media depictions included a noteworthy element that involved the repeated mention of Russia's historical assistance during the 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh. This historical link strengthened the story of enduring friendship and solidarity. The analyzed media frequently mentioned Russia's wartime moral and diplomatic support

for Bangladesh as a cornerstone of their bilateral relationship. By showcasing this assistance, the media aimed to strengthen Russia's favorable reputation in Bangladesh by placing the current alliance in the context of past friendship.

The media also reported high-level diplomatic contacts between Russian and Bangladeshi officials, who presented them as proof of a solid cooperative partnership. The beneficial effects of these interactions, such as trade agreements, joint ventures, and reciprocal support in international forums, were usually highlighted in these reports. This diplomatic coverage helped to present Russia in a favorable light overall by showing it as an essential ally in Bangladesh's foreign policy approach.

Some media sources presented Russia's actions in a balanced manner while taking a neutral stance and giving mostly positive representations. This neutrality was an attempt to maintain positive relations with Russia while navigating complicated international politics. These sources attempted to provide a thorough perspective free from overt prejudice by outlining both the successes and difficulties of the bilateral relationship. Generally, image of Russia in Bangladeshi media was neutral or primarily favorable, focusing on strategic alliances, economic advantages, and historical links.

The way the media has portrayed the situation in Ukraine after it has changed is a sign of a more significant trend in how people feel and where they stand politically. The shift from a largely favorable or neutral viewpoint to a more critical one emphasizes how important global events have the power to alter national media narratives. This change in perception of Russia's activities reflects a rising understanding of global concerns and their local ramifications.

The February 2022 after the start of SMO several media sources began to depict the subject in a more critical light, departing from their earlier positive or neutral perspectives. This adjustment considers the conflict's general effects on the world and its particular effects on Bangladesh's diplomatic and economic goals. This change was evident in Bangladeshi media, which reflected a more critical view of Russia.

This coverage shifted the focus from Russia's beneficial contributions to the difficulties created by the conflict, illuminating worries about the immediate effects of the conflict on the nation's economic stability and daily life like food supply and energy security.

Some media sources remained impartial despite the change in the tone. The significance of diplomatic ties and continuing joint initiatives between Bangladesh and Russia were emphasized in these publications as well. For instance, even amid the geopolitical unrest, coverage of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and other cooperative ventures frequently emphasized the efforts' continued growth and mutual cooperation. This strategy demonstrates an attempt to compromise between acknowledging the strategic and economic importance of the bilateral relationship while criticizing Russia's conduct.

Impartial and fair reporting sought to present a complete picture of the circumstances without escalating hostilities. Media organizations that followed this strategy aimed to keep a realistic view of bilateral ties while navigating the challenging geopolitical environment. This involved recognizing both the long-term benefits of collaboration and shared interests and the criticism directed towards Russia by other countries. This change emphasizes how global

conflicts may influence national media narratives and public perceptions, influencing the conversation about foreign players and their activities.

Following Russia's SMO, several vital themes surfaced in Bangladeshi media representations of Russia throughout the post-operation phase. These themes show how the media story has changed and shed light on how the conflict has affected Bangladeshi public opinion and policy decisions. The three primary themes recognized are humanitarian concerns, economic concerns, and geopolitical alignments.

The media coverage following the operation has made Bangladesh's diplomatic balancing act between Russia and its Western partners a central focus. The difficulties of keeping good relations with Russia while reacting to worldwide criticism from Western nations were a common topic of discussion in articles. The media described Bangladesh as negotiating a challenging diplomatic environment which tries to maintain its long-term connections with Russia in the face of international criticism and reshaping geopolitical alignments.

The strategic significance of Bangladesh's diplomatic ties with both Russia and Western countries was frequently highlighted in the media. This included talks about broader geopolitical changes of the conflict's leading to multipolar world.

The impact of international sanctions on Russia and their possible effects on Bangladesh's economy was another critical issue. Concerns over interruptions in commerce, investment, and energy supply were brought up in media reports. The imposition of sanctions on Russia has sparked concerns over the possibility of escalated energy costs and disturbances in the supply chain, both of which may impact Bangladesh's economic stability. Expert commentary and analysis on the potential effects of these sanctions on Bangladesh's energy industry and overall economic circumstances were frequently featured in the coverage.

The articles also covered Bangladesh's potential adjustments to its economic policy in light of the evolving geopolitical landscape. This included revising foreign investment policies, altering trade patterns, and considering alternate energy sources. Media coverage following the SMO operation focused more on the humanitarian situation. Media discussions during analyzed period on the topic of how the humanitarian situation can impact national and local interest, such as possible flows of refugees and humanitarian relief initiatives, were also covered in national media as well from the view of Bangladesh's involvement in resolving these issues from a diplomatic and possible assistance or support standpoint.


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