



Sos Political science & Public Administration  
M.A Political science II Sem  
Indian Foreign Policy(203)  
UNIT-III

TOPIC NAME-INDIA'S RELATION WITH THE  
BANGLADES

# Introduction

- ▶ Bangladesh and India are South Asian neighbours. Diplomatic Relations between the two countries was followed by the visit of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 19th March 1972, at Dhaka, where she had signed the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Peace Relations, popularly known as the 'Indira-Mujib Treaty of 1972, with then Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman<sup>[1]</sup>.
- ▶ The relations between the 2 countries have usually been friendly, although sometimes there are border disputes. The historic land boundary agreement was signed on 6 June 2015 which opened a new era in the relations and further stopped all irritants in ties.<sup>[2]</sup> They are common members of SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA and the Commonwealth. The two countries share many cultural ties. In particular, Bangladesh and the east Indian state of West Bengal are Bengali-speaking. Bangladesh has a High Commission in New Delhi with Deputy and Assistant High Commissions in Mumbai, Kolkata, Guwahati and Agartala<sup>[3]</sup>. India has a High Commission in Dhaka with Assistant High Commissions in Khulna, Rajshahi and Chittagong<sup>[</sup>

# Introduction

- ▶ In 1971, the Bangladesh Liberation War broke out between East Pakistan and West Pakistan; India intervened in December 1971 on behalf of East Pakistan and helped secure East Pakistan's independence from Pakistan as the country of Bangladesh. In a 2014 survey, 70% of Bangladeshis expressed a favorable opinion and perception of India.<sup>[5]</sup> Since the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh in 2015 and round back visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in 2017, the notable developments that have taken place include resolution of long-pending land and maritime boundaries asserting the issue of enclaves, conclusion of over ninety instruments comprising in the hi-tech areas, i.e., electronics, cyber-security, space, information technology, and civil nuclear energy and observed increase in bilateral trade from US\$9 billion to US\$10.46 billion in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19, followed by US\$7 billion to US\$9 billion in FY 2017-18, an increase of 28.5 percent

# History

- ▶ India's links with Bangladesh are civilisational, cultural, social, and economic. There is much that unites the two countries – a shared history and common heritage, linguistic and cultural ties, passion for music, literature and the arts.<sup>[7]</sup> The two nations were strong allies during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. From the mid-1970s, however, relations worsened because Bangladesh developed closer ties with Islamic nations, participated in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and increased emphasis on Islamic identity over the country's ethnolinguistic roots. The two countries developed different Cold War alliances in the 1980s, which further chilled bilateral relations.<sup>[8][9]</sup> With the onset of economic liberalization in South Asia, they forged greater bilateral engagement and trade. The historic Ganges Water Sharing Treaty was concluded in 1996. India and Bangladesh are close strategic partners in counter-terrorism. They are also the largest trading partners in South Asia

# What does Bangladesh think of India?

- ▶ Liberal and 'good' Bangladeshis are forever indebted and thankful to **India**. Radical and extremist Bangladeshis **think of India** as an enemy country. They curse **India** for separating **Bangladesh** from Pakistan. They can't digest food without badmouthing **India**.

# How did India help Bangladesh?

- ▶ With the independence of **Bangladesh**, **India** was able to settle its eastern neighborhood. Also had **India** handled its relationship with **Bangladesh** better it could have seen North Eastern states develop much better and quicker because of improvised access of North Eastern states to sea and better land access from **India**.

# Is Bangladesh a friend of India?

- ▶ **India's** links with **Bangladesh** are civilisational, cultural, social, and economic. There is much that unites the two countries – a shared history and common heritage, linguistic and cultural ties, passion for music, literature and the arts. The two nations were strong allies during the **Bangladesh Liberation War** in 1971.

# Is Bangladesh enemy of India?

- ▶ They are common members of SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA and the Commonwealth. The two countries share many cultural ties. In particular, **Bangladesh** and the east **Indian** state of West Bengal are Bengali-speaking.

# Some Facts about the Relationship

- ▶ **Defence Cooperation:** India and Bangladesh share the historical legacy of cooperation and support during the Liberation War of 1971. Various Joint exercises of **Army (Exercise Sampriti)** and **Navy (Exercise Milan)** take place between the two countries.
- ▶ **Border Management:** India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km. of border, which is the **longest land boundary that India shares** with any of its neighbours. The **India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA)** came into force following the exchange of instruments of ratification in June 2015.
- ▶ **Cooperation over Rivers:** India and Bangladesh **share 54 common rivers**. A bilateral Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) is working since June 1972 to maintain liaison between the two countries to maximize benefits from common river systems.
- ▶ **Economic Relations:** **Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia**. India's exports to Bangladesh for financial year 2018-19 (April-March) stood at US \$ 9.21 bn and imports from Bangladesh for the same period stood at US \$ 1.22 bn.
- ▶ **Cooperation in Power Sector:** This has become one of the hallmarks of India- Bangladesh relations. **Bangladesh is currently importing 1160 MW of power from India**

# Seven Agreements

- ▶ The use of the **Chattogram and Mongla ports in Bangladesh** for movement of goods to and from India, particularly from Northeastern India.
- ▶ Use of **Bangladesh's Feni river** for drinking water supply in Tripura.
- ▶ However, **no progress** was reported on the long pending **Teesta water sharing agreement**.
- ▶ Exchange of data and information to **prepare a framework of interim sharing agreements for six rivers** — Manu, Muhuri, Khowai and Gomati rivers of Tripura and Dharla river of Bangladesh and Dudhkumar river of West Bengal.
- ▶ **Daudkanti (Bangladesh)-Sonamura (Tripura)** inland water trade route to be included under **Protocol of the Inland Water Transit and Trade**.
- ▶ Consensus on lifting restrictions on entry and exit from land ports in India for Bangladeshi citizens travelling on valid documents.
- ▶ Implementation of the Lines of Credit (LoCs) committed by India to Bangladesh.

# Three bilateral development partnership projects

- ▶ Import of bulk Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) from Bangladesh
- ▶ Inauguration of Vivekananda Bhaban (students hostel) at Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka.
- ▶ Inauguration of Bangladesh-India Professional Skill Development Institute (BIPSDI) at the Institution of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDEB), Khulna, Bangladesh.
- ▶ Both sides noted the progress made in **finalization of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Establishment of Coastal Surveillance Radar System** in Bangladesh.
- ▶ India has provided such systems to Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives and planning one in Myanmar.
- ▶ The coastal surveillance system will pave way for Indo-Bangladesh White Shipping Agreement in future. This will be useful amid growing terror threats via seas and growing presence of China in the Bay of Bengal region.

# Indian foreign policy with Bangladesh

- ▶ No sooner had the list of invitees for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony on 30 May was made public, than two things became fairly apparent:
- ▶ First, and most obvious, diplomatic overtures aimed at Pakistan seem to be off the table for the near future. While Afghanistan was also left off the invitees' list, not a lot needs to be read into it since bilateral relations remain warm and New Delhi-Kabul cooperation has tended to work better in a bilateral capacity than in a defunct regional grouping like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
- ▶ Second, and more pertinent, India, it would appear, has hitched its wagon to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) as far as regional groupings are concerned. And the key piece of that BIMSTEC puzzle, ergo, one of India's key gateways to East Asia is Bangladesh.

- ▶ Both Leaders agreed to **early operationalization of the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement** for movement of goods and passengers between the member countries who are willing and ready; or to work towards a bilateral **India-Bangladesh Motor Vehicles Agreement**, as appropriate.
- ▶ The leaders directed their officials to expedite **establishment of twelve Border Haats** which have been agreed to by both countries.
- ▶ A **feasibility study for the Ganga-Padma barrage project** to be conducted as part of an upgraded version of the **1996 Ganga Water Sharing treaty**.
- ▶ The Bangladesh Prime Minister **raised concerns over roll out of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam**, an exercise carried to identify genuine Indian citizens living in Assam and weed out illegal Bangladeshis.
- ▶ The Bangladesh Prime Minister requested the Indian counterpart to use his “good relations” with the Myanmar government **to facilitate the return of all the refugees (Rohingyas)**, while appreciating the aid India has given to refugees in Bangladesh as well as 250 homes built for them in Myanmar.

# Defence relations

- ▶ During Sheikh Hasina's four-day visit to New Delhi in April 2017, Bangladesh and India signed two defence agreements, the first such agreements between India and any of its neighbors. Under the agreements, the militaries of the two countries will conduct joint exercises and training. India will help Bangladesh set up manufacturing and service centres for defence platforms that both countries possess with the aim of achieving self-sufficiency in defence manufacturing in Bangladesh, and will also provide the Bangladesh military with expert training, and technical and logistic support. India also extended its first ever defence-related line of credit to a neighboring country, by providing Bangladesh with \$500 million to purchase defence equipment.<sup>[36]</sup>
- ▶ Also, the militaries of the two countries have played quite an extensive role in taking up common issues to enhance and conduct training programmes to deal with counter terrorism issues, natural disasters, ensure Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Reliefs (HADR). Very, recent in March 2019, Indian Army's current Chief of Staff, then as GOC-in-C of the Eastern Army Command, General M.M. Naravane visited to the Chief of Army Staff, of Bangladesh , General Aziz Ahmed to hold talks related to boosting of Intelligence sharing between the 2 countries along with developing other areas of defence cooperation. The visit has most importantly come up at the time, when Myanmar decided to take strong actions in order to act against the operating insurgent groups which were operating foiling up terrorist activities on both the sides of India and Myanmar, along with that had discussions on various options to enhance the conduction of Military exercises at a more rapid and strong scale.<sup>[37]</sup> Also, in 2014 the Defence sectors of the 2 countries have come into a resolution for working towards solving the maritime disputes and have looked over to resolve their conflicts over land. The, Defence relation in between the 2 countries have grown to a manifold followed by an exchange of diplomatic visits by Bangladesh's the Chief of Army Staff, General Moeen Ahmed, in 2008. Still, there are continuous flow of reciprocal visits by the leaders of the Armed Forces, the Presidents, who are also the Supreme Commanders of the Armed Forces have exchanged visits. Former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee visited Dhaka on March 2013, where as the President of Bangladesh, Abdul Hamid visited New Delhi in December, 2014. However, during the visit made by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2017, to New Delhi, the two countries had signed a series of Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) in areas of Defence cooperation, which focused on certain areas, such as;

# Fight against Counter Terrorism

- ▶ Fighting out counter terror operations is an important aspect that revolves around within the relations of India and Bangladesh. Since, both countries have been victims of terror attacks and still keeps on facing continuous security threats, where as India is a victim of Cross-border terrorism from terrorist groups. But these groups have made their way to India through considering Bangladesh as a transit point to infiltrate into India. Whereas, Bangladesh still keeps on suffering from the terrorist activities which are committed by indigenous organisation which possess some linkages with external groups. The veterans of the Afghan Jihad were responsible towards developing the Harkat-ul Jihad Bangladesh in 1990. The terrorist organization began to make a feeling of their presence since 2000s, still Bangladesh pursues a policy of zero-tolerance towards terrorism and has repeatedly taken strict counter-measures, including the execution of the top leaders of the Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh, in 2007, which had been followed by week long or month long political turmoil and curfews in various parts of Bangladesh. Still, the terrorist groups have kept on managing to survive within its territory because of the cross-border network, especially in India. The Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh's networks in India was unearthed following an accidental Bomb-Blast at the Khagrachar sub-division Burdwan District in the Indian State of West Bengal in 2014, popularly known as the Khagrachar Blast<sup>[43]</sup>. This ultimately attracted its focus in a broader national and international aspect and also raised the need for enhancing the act of stronger cross-border cooperation. The spread of terrorism at the international level through organisations, such as the Al-Qaeda also demanded joint action and response of the two countries.
- ▶ Still, to address the grave of these threats effectively, there are still needs for greater synergy, coordination and cooperation between the agencies, joint-training and exercises, inducing greater interaction and also developing a strong understanding among the two Armed forces of the two countries.

# Trade and investment

- ▶ The trade is set to go at \$10 billion by 2018 through ports. Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh stood at US\$6.6 billion in 2013-14 with India's exports at US\$6.1 billion and imports from Bangladesh at US\$462 million, representing more than double the value of US\$2.7 billion five years ago.
- ▶ Bangladesh Cabinet has approved a revised trade deal with India under which the two nations would be able to use each other's land and water routes for sending goods to a third country, removing a long-standing barrier in regional trade. Under the deal India would also be able to send goods to Myanmar through Bangladesh. It incorporated a provision that the deal would be renewed automatically after five years if neither of the countries did not have any objection

# Recent developments

- ▶ In September 2011, the two countries signed a major accord on border demarcation to end the 4-decade old disputes over boundaries. This came to be known as the Tin Bigha corridor. India also granted 24-hour access to Bangladeshi citizens in the Tin Bigha Corridor. The agreement included exchange of adversely held enclaves, involving 51,000 people spread over 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India. The total land involved is reportedly 7000 acres.<sup>[26]</sup>
- ▶ On 9 October 2011, Indian and Bangladeshi armies participated in Sampriti-II (Unity-II), a 14-day-long Joint military exercise at Sylhet to increase synergy between their forces.<sup>[27]</sup>
- ▶ In 2012, Bangladesh allowed India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation to ferry heavy machinery, turbines and cargo through Ashuganj for Palatana Power project in southern Tripura

# Recent developments

- ▶ During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Bangladesh during June 2015 as many as 22 agreements were signed by two sides. During the visit India extended a US\$2 billion line of credit to Bangladesh & pledged US\$5 billion worth of investments. As per the agreements, India's Reliance Power agreed to invest US\$3 billion to set up a 3,000 MW LNG-based power plant (which is the single largest foreign investment ever made in Bangladesh). Adani Power will also be setting up a 1600 MW coal-fired power plant at a cost of US\$1.5 Bangladesh<sup>1</sup> The two countries signed a total of 22 agreements including the ones on maritime safety co-operation and curbing human trafficking and fake Indian currency. Modi also announced a line of credit of \$2 billion to Bangladesh<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ At midnight on 31 July 2015, around 50,000 people became citizens of India or Bangladesh after living in limbo for decades. Ending a prolonged dispute, the two nations swapped 162 enclaves on the border region, allowing the people living there to stay or opt out to the other country. While 14,214 citizens of Bangladesh residing in 51 enclaves on the Indian side became Indians, a large number of people in the 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh preferred to stay with Bangladesh and just 979 opted to move to India. The total number of new Indian citizens will be 15,193.
- ▶ In 2018, the leaders of both the countries inaugurated the 130 km long Bangladesh-India Friendship pipeline to supply 4 lakh metric tonne of diesel to Bangladesh. In September 2018, the Bangladesh cabinet approved the draft of a proposed agreement with India to allow it to use the Chittagong and Mongla sea ports for transporting goods to and from its land-locked northeastern states.

# Energy cooperation

- ▶ India has recently introduced the concept of the Regional Power Trading System which will help various regions of the country in reducing the power deficit by transferring surplus power from another region. Under the Electricity Act 2003, the Indian companies could pool power in an exchange. A consumer would be free to buy it from anyone. This concept of power pool within India can also be enlarged to cover the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal after the establishment of a sub-regional power pool and necessary inter-connections among these countries are put in place. This can ultimately form a regional power pool thereby generating a huge opportunity for power trading in the region
- ▶ Nuclear Energy Pacts:
- ▶ India would set up nuclear reactors in Bangladesh and technical cooperation and sharing of information in the field of nuclear safety and radiation protection.



**THANK YOU**