

India - Bangladesh Relations

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. With Bangladesh, India shares not only a common history of struggle for freedom and liberation but also enduring feelings of both fraternal as well as familial ties. This commonality is reflected in multi-dimensional relations with Bangladesh at several levels of interaction. High-level exchanges, visits and meetings take place regularly alongside the wide ranging people-to-people interaction. India's Missions in Bangladesh issue about half a million visas every year and thousands of Bangladeshi students study in India on self-financing basis and are recipients of over one hundred annual GOI scholarships.

Recent High Level Contacts

2. Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh accompanied by EAM, Chief Ministers of 4 States (Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram) neighbouring Bangladesh, and an official & media delegation visited Dhaka on September 6-7, 2011 at the invitation of PM Sheikh Hasina. Ten Agreements/ Protocols/MOUs including a Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development and Protocol to the Agreement concerning demarcation of the Land Boundary between India and Bangladesh were signed. PM announced the commencement of unfettered 24-hour access across the Tin Bigha corridor to Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves as well as duty-free import of 46 textile items (subsequently expanded to all items, except 25) from Bangladesh. Earlier Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina accompanied by a 123-member delegation had paid a State visit to India from January 10-13, 2010. The Prime Ministers of the two countries agreed to put in place a comprehensive framework of cooperation for development of the two countries based on their mutually shared vision for the future. A Joint Communiqué issued during the visit outlined various initiatives.

3. Union Minister for Power Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde visited Bangladesh on September 15-16, 2011 to attend the 4th SAARC Energy Ministers' Conference held in Dhaka. On the sidelines of the Conference, he had a bilateral meeting with Adviser(Energy) to PM Tawfique Elahi Chowdhury and BD State Minister for Power Mohd. Enamul Huq and discussed import of 250MW power from India and establishment of a 1,320MW coal-based power plant at Bagerhat, Khulna. Bangladesh Home Minister Advocate Shahara Khatun and Adviser(Int'l relations) to PM Dr. Gowher Rizvi, along with an official delegation, visited India to attend the second Home Ministers' meeting on February 24-25, 2012.

4. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Finance Minister visited Dhaka on May 5-6, 2012 to attend the Concluding ceremony of the year-long Joint Celebrations of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. During the visit, FM announced conversion of US\$200 million as grant from the USD 1 billion LOC for projects prioritized by Bangladesh. Minister of Law & Justice and Minority Affairs Salman Khurshid visited Bangladesh from May 24-27, 2012 and led a delegation of three M.P.s and senior

officials to participate in the Joint Celebrations of the 90th Anniversary of publication of 'Bidrohi' by Kazi Nazrul Islam.

5. The first meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission was held on May 7, 2012 in New Delhi. EAM and Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni and their respective delegations discussed all bilateral matters and assess progress of implementation of the 2011 Joint Statement and 2010 Joint Communiqué. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes visited New Delhi on July 24, 2012 for Foreign Office Consultations and held discussions on the entire gamut of bilateral issues. He also called on External Affairs Minister and National Security Adviser and met Water Resources Secretary during this visit.

6. Rural Development and Drinking Water & Sanitation Minister Jairam Ramesh visited Bangladesh from August 4-6, 2012 to attend an International Conference on "People's Empowerment and Development. During his visit, he called on PM Sheikh Hasina and met with Environment & Forests Minister, Agriculture Minister and Health Minister of Bangladesh.

Sharing of River Waters

7. India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers. The Ganga Waters Treaty was signed on December 12, 1996 for water sharing of river Ganga during lean season (January 1-May 31). The 37th Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) meeting was held in New Delhi from March 17-20, 2010. In the last technical level meeting held in Kolkata in February 2012, both sides exchanged data at Dalia in Bangladesh and Gazaldoba in India.

Bilateral Trade

8. Bangladesh is an important trading partner for India. The two-way trade in FY 2010-2011 was US\$5.099 billion with India's exports to Bangladesh accounting for US\$ 4.586 billion and imports US \$ 0.512 million. The trade between the two countries in the last 5 years is as follows:

(Figures in US\$ million)

	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
India's exports	1864.7	2268.0	3364.0	2841.06	3202	4586.8	2366.4 (upto Mar 2012)
India's imports	241.96	289.42	358.08	276.58	305	512.5	386.7 (upto Dec 2011)
Total trade	2106.70	2557.40	3722.08	3117.64	3507	5099.3	

Source: Bangladesh Bank/EPB

Note: FY is July to June

Institutional Mechanisms

9. Some of the important institutional mechanisms that meet periodically to discuss bilateral issues include Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) and Joint Economic Commission (JEC) at Ministerial level, Foreign Office Consultations, Home, Commerce and Water Resources Secretary level talks, BSF-BDR DG-level border coordination conference, Joint Working Group on Security (JWG), Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG), Joint Working Group on Trade (JWG), Joint Group of Customs Officials (JGC), Protocol Renewal Committee and Standing Committee to review implementation of Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade, and Inter- Governmental Railway Meeting. 14th Meeting of the BIWTA was held in Goa wherein the bilateral protocol was renewed for one year till March 31, 2012. The Standing Committee on IWTT met in Dhaka on February 12-13, 2012. Following the Commerce Secretary Level Talks held in New Delhi on March 28-29, 2012, the India-Bangladesh Trade Agreement was renewed for three years. Pursuant to the Shipping Secretary Talks held on July 2-3, 2012, the bilateral Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was renewed for two years till March 31, 2014. India has also agreed to pay Tk 100 million every year for maintaining two river routes viz. Doikhawa-Sirajganj and Zakiganj-Sherpur.

India's Economic Assistance to Bangladesh

10. On the economic assistance side, India has extended a line of credit of US\$1 billion to Bangladesh for a range of projects, including railway infrastructure, supply of BG locomotives and passenger coaches, procurement of buses, and dredging projects. The Line of Credit Agreement was signed in Dhaka on August 7, 2010 between EXIM Bank of India and Government of Bangladesh. India has stood by Bangladesh in its hour of need with aid worth over Taka 250 crore (over US \$ 37 million) to help it cope with natural disasters and floods in 2007-08 including supply of 1,000 MT of skimmed milk powder, and 40,000 MT of rice. India has completed and handed over 2,649 core shelters in the affected villages in Bagerhat district in southern Bangladesh.

Technical Cooperation

11. On January 29 2012, NTPC and BPDB signed an agreement to set up a Joint Venture for the establishment of a 1320MW coal-based power plant in Bagerhat district, Khulna at an estimated cost of \$1.5 billion and is expected to be commissioned by 2016. Scholarships and training programmes under ITEC, TCS of Colombo Plan, ICCR, AYUSH, Commonwealth, SAARC and IOR-ARC scholarships/ fellowship schemes are being offered to Bangladesh nationals. India offers 100 slots under ITEC and 35 slots under Technical Cooperation Scheme of Colombo Plan every year to Bangladesh. In the last three years (2006-07 to 2009-10), 414 participants from Bangladesh underwent training in India under ITEC Programme and Technical Cooperation Scheme of Colombo Plan. Muktiyoddha Scholarship Scheme extended by the Government of India to Higher Secondary-level students (200 scholarships) and Graduate-level students (478 scholarships). Three Bangladesh Diplomats were imparted training at Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi in 2011.

Cultural Exchanges

12. Given the shared history and commonality of language, cultural exchanges form an important bond of friendship between the people of two countries. Special emphasis has been laid on promotion of exchanges in the fields of music, theatre, art, painting, books, etc. A bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) 2009-2012 provides the framework for such exchanges. To promote bilateral cultural exchanges, the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) of Indian Council for Cultural Relations was inaugurated at Dhaka on March 11, 2010. Secretary, Ministry of Culture visited Bangladesh from December 19-22, 2010 and Bangladesh Culture Secretary visited India on April 6-8, 2011 for holding talks on joint celebrations of 150th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. The joint inaugural ceremonies were held in Dhaka on 6 May and New Delhi on 7 May 2011 and year-long celebrations are underway. Government of Bangladesh held a grand ceremony in the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka on March 27, 2012 to honour the foreign friends of Bangladesh for their contribution to the 1971 Liberation War. Out of a total of 135 foreign friends, 45 Indian friends/institutions were also conferred the Liberation War Honour and Friends of Liberation War Honour by the President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

13. At the invitation of EAM, a 21-member cultural delegation from the Departments of Theatre and Music of the University of Dhaka led by the Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University, Prof. A.A.M.S. Arefin Siddique visited India on a goodwill visit from August 22-27, 2011. During the visit, Prof. Siddique called on EAM and discussed ways and means to consolidate cultural exchange between India and Bangladesh through student-teacher exchange programmes and reciprocal programmes of cooperation.

14. In order to promote people to people exchanges, one hundred scholarships are being granted by ICCR every year to students from Bangladesh for pursuing general courses in arts, sciences, engineering and also specialized courses for culture, drama, music, fine arts and sports, etc. During Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina's visit in January 2010, India has offered to provide 300 scholarships annually for five years to students from Bangladesh for studying and training in Universities and training institutions in India.

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