

## **India - Bangladesh Relations**

India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as a separate and independent state and established diplomatic relations with the country immediately after its independence in December 1971. 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. This commonality is reflected in our multi-dimensional and expanding relations. In the last more than four decades, the two countries have continued to consolidate their relations and have built a comprehensive institutional framework to promote bilateral cooperation in all areas.

### **High Level Visits and Exchanges**

The bilateral relations between the two countries are on a high trajectory with regular high-level visits and exchanges. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met H. E. Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh on the sidelines of the 69th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York on 27 September 2014 for the first time after the formation of the new government in each others' countries in January 2014 & May 2014, respectively. Smt. Sushma Swaraj and General (Retd.) V. K. Singh paid their first stand-alone overseas visits after assuming charge as Hon'ble Minister and Hon'ble Minister of State of External Affairs on 25-27 June and 24 August 2014, respectively.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a State visit to Bangladesh on June 6-7, 2015. During the visit, 22 bilateral documents were concluded, including the exchange of instrument of ratification for India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA). H. E. Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh visited New Delhi on 19 August 2015 to attend the funeral of late Smt. Suvra Mukherjee, spouse of Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee. She again visited India on 16-17 October 2016 to participate in the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit. She met Hon'ble PM on the sidelines of the Summit. Both Prime Ministers met in New York on 24 September 2015 on the sidelines of the UNGA.

Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee visited Bangladesh in March 2013. This was his first trip abroad since assuming the high office of President. Hon'ble President of Bangladesh Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid visited India in December 2014, which was the first visit to India by the Head of State of Bangladesh after 42 years.

The list of [bilateral visits](#) at the level of Heads of State / Heads of Government is on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

### **Bilateral institutional mechanisms**

There are more than 50 bilateral institutional mechanisms between India and Bangladesh. A Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) led by the Ministers of External/Foreign Affairs coordinates and oversees implementation of initiatives taken between the two countries as well as explores newer avenues for

cooperation. The 3<sup>rd</sup> JCC was held in New Delhi on September 20, 2014. A list of some important [bilateral mechanisms](#) and list of important [bilateral documents](#) concluded between the two countries since 1971 is on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

### **Security & Border Management**

A number of agreements related to security cooperation have been signed between both the countries. This includes a Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) signed in 2011 to synergize the efforts of both Border Guarding Forces for more effective control over cross border illegal activities and crimes as well as for the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the India-Bangladesh border.

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 during Hon'ble PM's visit to Bangladesh in June 2015. On 31 July, 2015 the enclaves of India and Bangladesh in each other's countries were exchanged and strip maps were signed. Residents of these erstwhile enclaves, who opted to retain their Indian citizenship made a final movement to India by 30 November 2015.

The settlement of the maritime boundary arbitration between India and Bangladesh, as per UNCLOS award on July 7, 2014, paved the way for the economic development of this part of the Bay of Bengal, and will be beneficial to both countries.

### **Sharing of River Waters**

India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers. A bilateral Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) has been functioning since June 1972 to maintain liaison between the two countries to maximize benefits from common river systems. The Ganges Waters Treaty signed in 1996 for the sharing of waters of the River Ganges during the lean season (January 1-May 31) has worked satisfactorily.

### **Bilateral Trade**

India-Bangladesh trade has grown steadily over the last few years. India's exports to Bangladesh in 2015-16 (July-June) were US\$ 5452.90 million and imports from Bangladesh during the same period were US\$ 689.62 million. In the five years (from FY 2011-12 to FY 2015-16), total trade between the two countries has grown by more than 17%. More details on [bilateral trade](#) statistics are on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

Substantial duty concessions have been extended to Bangladesh under SAFTA, SAPTA and APTA. Furthermore, with a view to, inter-alia, addressing trade

imbalance, all tariff lines, except 25 items, have also been removed from the negative list by India since 2011. Four Border Haats, two each in Tripura and Meghalaya, have been established for the benefit of bordering communities. Additional Border Haats on the India-Bangladesh border have been proposed and are under consideration.

More details on [Trade and Investment](#) matters between the two countries are on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

### **India's Economic Assistance to Bangladesh**

During the visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India in January 2010, India announced a US\$1 billion Line of Credit (LOC) for Bangladesh. Most of these projects under 1<sup>st</sup> LoC have been completed.

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India announced a new LOC of US \$ 2 billion during his visit to Bangladesh in June 2015. The new LOC will cover projects in the areas of Roads, Railways, Power, Shipping, SEZs, Health & Medical Care and Technical Education. More details on [Development Cooperation](#) between the two countries are on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

### **Power and Energy Sector Cooperation**

The MoU on power sector cooperation between India and Bangladesh was signed in 2010. There are at present two interconnections through which 600 MW of power is transferred from India to Bangladesh. Currently 500 MW of power is transferred through the Bherampur-Bheramara inter-connection and another 100 MW through the Surajmani Nagar( Agartala) - Comila interconnection . During the visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Bangladesh in June 2015 it has been agreed for additional 500 MW of power through the existing Bahrampur - Bherampur interconnection. In March, 2016 the two Prime Ministers inaugurated export of Internet bandwidth to Tripura from Bangladesh and the export of power from Tripura to Comilla. The 1320 MW coal-fired Maitree thermal power plant , a 50:50 JV between National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) is being developed at Rampal. Many private companies of India have also shown interest in the power sector of Bangladesh.

Energy sector cooperation between India and Bangladesh has also seen considerable progress in the last two years. Many Indian public sector units such as Indian Oil Corporation, Numaligarh Refinery Limited, Gas Authority of India Limited, Petronet LNG Ltd are working with their Bangladeshi counterparts in the oil and gas sector of Bangladesh. ONGC Videsh Ltd has acquired two shallow water blocks in Bangladesh namely SS-04 and SS-09 in 50-50 consortium with Oil India Limited and is currently involved in exploration activities in these blocks.

## **Connectivity**

The movement of goods by road is operationalised through 20 Land Customs Stations (LCSs) along the border and more than 20 have been notified for operationalisation. In July 2016, the two Prime Ministers inaugurated the Petrapole Integrated Check Post (ICP), which will facilitate cross-border movement of people and goods. In February, 2016, the Phulbari-Banglabandha Immigration Check Post was opened. The Srimantapur LCS was also inaugurated in January, 2016.

The Protocol on Inland Water Trade and Transit (PIWTT) has been operational since 1972. It permits movement of goods over barges/vessels through the river systems of Bangladesh on eight specific routes. The PIWTT was renewed for a period of five years with provision for auto renewal during the Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh in June, 2015. Trans-shipment of goods to Northeastern States of India through Ashuganj river port and further through Akhaura-Agartala by road has commenced in June 2016 under the PIWTT. Connectivity through the Coastal Waterways enabled by the signing of the Coastal Shipping Agreement is also of priority to both India and Bangladesh.

Passenger train service 'Maitree Express' between Kolkata and Dhaka operates 3 days a week. Three Broad Gauge inter-country rail links between the two countries are operational out of the 6 rail links that exist. There are regular bus services between Kolkata-Dhaka, Shillong-Dhaka and Agartala-Kolkata via Dhaka. The trial run of the Khulna-Kolkata bus service was completed successfully in August 2016. There are regular flights between India and Bangladesh connecting Dhaka and Chittagong with New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai.

The Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) – Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) will significantly boost connectivity by road. The trial Run of Cargo Movement on Trucks from Kolkata to Agartala via Dhaka and Dhaka to New Delhi via Kolkata and Lucknow has been conducted in August 2016. More details on [connectivity](#) are on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

## **Technical Cooperation**

Bangladesh is an important ITEC partner country, and a large number of participants from Bangladesh have availed of training courses under the ITEC programme. More details on [ITEC programme](#) are on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

In addition, special courses are underway for personnel of administration, police, border guarding forces, military, narcotic control officers, teachers etc.

## **Cultural Exchanges**

The [Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre \(IGCC\)](#) in Dhaka has been regularly organizing

cultural activities since 2010. The IGCC also holds regular training courses in Yoga, Hindi, Hindustani Classical Music, Manipuri Dance and Painting. The courses are popular with Bangladeshi students. ICCR has instituted a Tagore Chair in Dhaka University since 2011. 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. A 100-member Youth Delegation visits India annually since 2012.

The High Commission of India has been publishing a print and electronic edition of Bengali literary monthly magazine '[Bharat Bichitra](#)' for the last 43 years. The magazine is considered one of the best of its kind in Bangladesh and has a wide readership among all sections of society. More details on [cultural programs and exchanges](#) are on the website of High Commission of India in Dhaka.

### **Indian community in Bangladesh**

About 10,000 Indian citizens are estimated to be living in Bangladesh. Most are engaged in the Ready Made Garments (RMG) sector or as professionals in MNCs, Indian or Bangladeshi companies.

### **Useful Resources:**

High Commission of India, Dhaka Website:

[www.hcidhaka.gov.in](http://www.hcidhaka.gov.in)

High Commission of India, Dhaka FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInBangladesh>

High Commission of India, Dhaka Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/iLCDhaka>

High Commission of India, Dhaka YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/HCIDhaka>

Assistant High Commissions (AHCs) in Bangladesh (at [Chittagong](#) and [Rajshahi](#)):

<http://www.hcidhaka.gov.in/pages.php?id=16>

\*\*\*\*\*

**December 2016**