

Brief on India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship

1. India and Bangladesh share bonds of history, language, culture, and a multitude of other commonalities. The relationship has evolved to include cooperation in diverse fields - connectivity, trade and economic ties, development partnership, cultural and people to people exchanges, youth exchanges etc. Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia and India is the largest export destination of Bangladesh in Asia.
2. India-Bangladesh bilateral relations rest on a historical foundation on the values of shared sacrifices and martyrdom during the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. India was amongst the first countries to recognize Bangladesh as an independent country, on 6 December 1971, which is celebrated as Maitri Diwas. The bilateral relations are rooted on the multifaceted nature of the relationship and the positive inter-dependencies created over the decades.

High-level exchanges

3. Following the victory of BNP in the general elections held on 12 February 2026, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was one of the first world leaders to congratulate Chairman of BNP Mr. Tarique Rahman. On 13 February 2026, PM Modi congratulated Tarique Rahman telephonically and conveyed support to his endeavour to fulfill the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh. This was the first tele-conversation by Tarique Rahman with a foreign Leader following the elections. Speaker of Indian Lok Sabha, Shri Om Birla visited Dhaka to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new government on 17 February 2026. He handed over a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveying his greetings to Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and invited him to pay a state visit to India. In a separate meeting on the margins of the swearing-in ceremony, Foreign Secretary of India Shri Vikram Misri had a courtesy meeting with the leader of opposition of Bangladesh and the Ameer of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Dr. Shafiqur Rahman.
4. On 31 December 2025, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar attended the funeral of former PM of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia. EAM handed over a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Mr Tarique Rahman, Acting Chairman of BNP and conveyed the deepest condolences on behalf of the Government and people of India.
5. On April 7–8, 2026 Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr. Khalilur Rahman and Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir visited India prior to attending the Indian Ocean Conference in Mauritius. They held meetings with External Affairs Minister, National Security Advisor and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. External Affairs Minister briefly met Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Manila.

Connectivity

6. Connectivity remains a major pillar of bilateral cooperation. Six pre-1965 rail links between the two countries have been restored, including the Agartala-Akhaura rail link

inaugurated in November 2023. Three passenger train services, Maitri Express, Bandhan Express, and Mitali Express were in operation earlier, however remain temporarily suspended since July 2024 due to security considerations, although goods train operations continue.

7. Road, inland water, and port connectivity have also expanded. Bus services continue on selected routes, while inland waterways cooperation under the Protocol on Inland Waterways Trade and Transit (PIWTT) facilitates trade and transit movement. The operationalization of the Agreement on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports is aimed at improving connectivity with India's North-East. Eight Integrated Check Posts and 31 Land Custom Stations are currently operational along the border, with additional ICPs under planning.

Economic Partnership

8. During FY 2025–26, total bilateral trade amounted to approximately USD 12.36 billion, comprising: India's exports to Bangladesh: USD 10.56 billion and Bangladesh's exports to India: USD 1.78 billion. Under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) framework, India provides duty-free and quota-free access to nearly all Bangladeshi products.
9. Main export items from India are raw materials, intermediate goods and machinery which serve as critical inputs for the Bangladesh industry. Cotton, mineral fuels, food products, vehicles, chemicals, etc constitute the majority of Indian exports to Bangladesh. Bangladesh's exports to India are dominated by ready-made garments.
10. India and Bangladesh formally launched a new mechanism to settle trade in Indian Rupees (INR) on 11 July 2023. This mechanism of settling bilateral trade in INR was introduced to help bilateral trade in local currencies and also to reduce transaction cost and time, improve the speed, efficiency, and convenience and thereby enhance trade volumes.

Power & Energy Co-operation

11. Cooperation in power and energy sector has become one of the crucial pillars of India-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is currently importing 1160 MW of power from India on a G-G basis. The Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, a 1320 MW power plant built in Khulna with Indian assistance is operational in supplying electricity to Bangladesh grid. India, Nepal, and Bangladesh signed a trilateral agreement in October 2024 to export 40 MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh through India's power grid. This trilateral power transaction through Indian grid was inaugurated on 15 November 2024 and the actual transmission of 40 MW Hydro-power started from 15 June 2025.
12. India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline between both countries for carrying High Speed Diesel from India into Bangladesh was virtually inaugurated on 18 March 2023, which has contributed significantly to address Bangladesh's energy security.

Development Partnership

13. Bangladesh is one of India's largest development partners globally. India has extended nearly USD 8 billion under multiple Lines of Credit, including a dedicated Defence LoC. These projects cover railways, roads, ports, shipping, and other infrastructure

sectors. Under Indian Grant assistance, notable projects undertaken include construction of Akhaura-Agartala rail link and dredging of inland waterways in Bangladesh and construction of India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline. India also supports High Impact Community Development Projects in Bangladesh in areas such as education, culture and community infrastructure.

Defence Cooperation

14. Defence cooperation remains focused on training exchanges, joint exercises, and capacity building. Exercise BONGOSAGAR-25 and CORPAT were conducted in March 2025 in the Bay of Bengal with participation from both navies. Senior military delegations and officers from both countries exchanged visits and participated in conferences, workshops, and military conclaves. India also extends support under the Defence Line of Credit. Personnel from Bangladesh Armed Forces subscribed to more than 120 training vacancies offered by India during 2026-27, including National Defence College and Staff College courses.
15. Defence ties also include commemorative and youth exchange initiatives. Delegations of Liberation War veterans from both countries participated in Victory Day celebrations in December 2025. Bangladeshi NCC cadets and officials visited India for Republic Day celebrations in January 2026. India continues to facilitate medical treatment for Liberation War veterans under the Muktiyoddha Medical Scheme and also to Bangladesh Armed Forces serving personnel and their wards in Indian Armed Forces hospitals.

People-to-People Ties

16. India continues to support training and capacity building in Bangladesh through the ITEC programme. Since 2014, more than 7240 civil servants and 1250 judicial officers have received training in India. Scholarships under ICCR, Suborno Jayanti Scholarship, and AYUSH programmes continue to benefit Bangladeshi students with more than 540 ICCR scholarship announced in the current year.
17. Cultural and people-to-people ties remain an enduring strength of the bilateral relationship. Shared linguistic and cultural traditions, including the legacy of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, continue to connect the two countries. The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre in Dhaka organizes cultural programmes, workshops, film screenings, music and dance performances, and celebrations of major festivals. More than 850 Bangladeshi youths have visited India since 2012 under Bangladesh Youth Delegation programme.
18. To facilitate greater people-to-people contacts, India is currently providing visa services through 5 centres across Bangladesh. Visa operations, restricted earlier due to security concerns have been gradually expanded with grant of tourist visas resumed on 28 June 2026.

As on 30th July, 2026

