

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 over 100 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. Delegation-level talks were held between the two Prime Ministers and 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 with immediate effect. PM also called on President Zillur Rahman and delivered a talk on India-Bangladesh relations at Dhaka University on 7 th September 2011. Leader of Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and former President of Bangladesh and Leader of Jatiya Party Gen. H.M. Ershad called on PM.

3. Prime Minister of Bangladesh visited Agartala on January 11-12, 2012 to receive D.Litt. degree (Honoris Causa) from Tripura University. She was accompanied by a high-level delegation including BD Ministers for Foreign Affairs, State Minister for CHT Affairs, Ambassador-at-large, senior officials and business delegation. During the visit, she called on Vice President of India and held meeting with Union Minister for HRD Kapil Sibal, Governor of Tripura and Chief Minister Manik Sarkar.

4. Prime Minister of Bangladesh accompanied by a high-level delegation including BD Ministers for Home, Health, Foreign Affairs and MOS for Home visited the Tin Bigha Area on October 19, 2011. She was received by Union Minister for Health Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad and Minister of State for Home Affairs Mr. Jitendra Prasad Singh and also presented a Guard of Honour and Salute upon arrival.

5. Vice President of India Shri M Hamid Ansari accompanied by MOS(EA) Mrs. Preneet Kaur, two MPs and official & media delegation visited Dhaka on May 5-6, 2011 for the inaugural ceremony of joint celebration of the 150 th birth anniversary of Rabindra Nath Tagore. During the visit, Vice President held talks with President Zillur Rahman and PM Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Dipu Moni and Leader of Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia called on him.

6. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina accompanied by a 123-member delegation that included Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Water Resources, Advisers and a 50-member strong business contingent paid a State visit to India from January 10-13, 2010. The visit was very successful and gave both countries a historic opportunity to build a new and forward looking relationship. On January 12, 2010 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was conferred the prestigious Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2009. A Joint Communiqué issued during the visit outlined various initiatives.

7. Smt. Sonia Gandhi, President, INC and Chairman, UPA visited Dhaka on July 24-25, 2011 to receive the Bangladesh Freedom Honour conferred on Smt. Indira Gandhi for her unique role and contribution to the Liberation War and birth of Bangladesh. Smt. Gandhi also had meetings with PM Sheikh Hasina and Bangladesh President during the visit.

8. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Finance Minister visited Dhaka on August 7, 2010 to witness the signing of the US\$ 1 billion Line of Credit Agreement between EXIM Bank of India and Government of Bangladesh. Home Minister Shri P. Chidambaram visited Bangladesh on July 29-30, 2011 for delegation level talks with his counterpart Ms. Sahara Khatun on all issues of mutual interest. He also met Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni and called on PM Sheikh Hasina on July 30, 2011. A Coordinated Border Management Plan between BSF and BGB was signed by the DGs of the border guarding forces on July 30 during the visit. Union Minister for Power Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde visited Bangladesh on September 15-16, 2011 to attend the 4 th SAARC Energy Ministers' Conference held in Dhaka.

9. Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs and Civil Aviation Vayalar Ravi visited Dhaka on April 19-21, 2011 for the 4th Colombo Process Ministerial Conference on overseas employment and labour migration. Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma visited Bangladesh on April 22-23, 2011 and held meetings with BD leadership, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Commerce Minister Faruk Khan. Foreign Secretary Smt. Nirupama Rao visited Dhaka on June 6-8, 2011 for Foreign Office Consultations. She called on Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on June 7, 2011.

10. External Affairs Minister Shri SM Krishna visited Bangladesh on 6-8 July, 2011 and held bilateral talks with his counterpart Dr. Dipu Moni. He also called on President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Protocols of Exchange on the Instruments of Ratification of the bilateral agreement on the protection and promotion of investments between India and Bangladesh were signed on July 7. Document relating to Standard Operating Procedure for monitoring of entry/exit of Bhutanese vehicles between Indian LCSs and Bangladesh LCSs was also signed during the visit. National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon also visited Dhaka on August 28-29, 2011 for meetings with Advisers to BDPM in order to finalize arrangements related to PM's visit in September 2011. During the visit, he also called on BDPM and BDFM.

Parliamentary cooperation

12. A 24-member Parliamentary Friendship Group with Bangladesh has been constituted in the Indian Parliament with Shri Sameer Magan Bhujbal, MP(NCP-LS) as its President in June 2011. A 12-member Bangladesh-India Parliamentary Friendship Group has

been constituted within the Bangladesh Parliament. Further, Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad are Chief Patronizer and Patronizer of the Friendship Group respectively. An eight member parliamentary delegation led by Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Mr. Abdul Hamid visited India for attending the Fifth SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians Conference on July 9-12, 2011 at the invitation of Lok Sabha Speaker Smt. Meira Kumar.

Sharing of River Waters

13. 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. Water Resources Secretary-level meeting took place in Dhaka on January 10, 2011 which discussed interim water sharing arrangements in respect of Teesta and Feni rivers and water sharing of six other common rivers. A three member delegation led by BD Water Resources Secretary visited India on June 5-6, 2011 to hold further discussions on water related issues.

Bilateral Trade

14. 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
India's exports	1864.70	2268.00	3364.00	2841.06	3202	4586.8
India's imports	241.96	289.42	358.08	276.58	305	512.5
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

15. 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. A Joint Group of Customs Meeting was held on January 18-19, 2011 in Dhaka wherein inter alia Standard Operating Procedure for movement of trucks was discussed. 13 th meeting of the Standing Committee under India-Bangladesh Protocol on Inland Water Transit & Trade was held in Kolkata on January 23-24, 2011. 14 th Meeting of the BIWTA was held in Goa wherein the bilateral protocol was renewed for one year till March 31, 2012.

India's Economic Assistance to Bangladesh

16. 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 is constructing 2,800 core shelters in the affected villages in Bagerhat district in southern Bangladesh. The first batch of core shelters have been handed over to Bangladesh at Sharonkhola, Bagerhat on July 9, 2011 thus facilitating rehabilitation of over 1600 families.

Technical Cooperation

17. 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 have undergone training in India under ITEC Programme and Technical Cooperation Scheme of Colombo Plan. Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme extended by the Government of India to Higher Secondary-level students (200 scholarships) and Graduate-level students (478 scholarships). So far three Bangladesh Diplomats have been imparted training at Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi in 2011.

Cultural Exchanges

18. 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. 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.

19. In order to promote people to people exchanges, hundred (100) 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. Further, during the

visit of PM Manmohan Singh to Bangladesh in September 2011, India has announced to provide another 100 scholarships to students from Bangladesh.

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