

INDIA-BANGLADESH TIES, A MODEL FOR BILATERAL RELATION

Ever since **the Liberation War in 1971**, Bangladesh and India have shared a special relationship not only due to their geographical boundaries, but also largely owing to **their shared cultural, linguistic and historical connections**. India, during the war for liberation of the Bangladeshi nation, provided much of the required humanitarian as well as militaristic support which was so duly needed at the time. Both the countries since then, **have shared a gigantic 4000 km long border** which makes Bangladesh India's longest land sharing neighbour in the South Asian region.



How Bangladesh Sees It:

Bangladesh's current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently described the India-Bangladesh bilateral relations as a 'role model of good neighbourhood diplomacy'. This statement hence came as an assertion of the long-shared friendship the two nations have had for the past five decades.

India, on the other hand, was amongst the first countries in the world to establish its diplomatic relations with the newly independent nation in December of 1971. Since then, Bangladesh has gone on to become India's biggest developmental and trading partner in South Asia. This has prompted the two neighbouring countries in contributing to each other's economic and social prosperity.

Major advancements have also been made on security and water sharing issues that have largely been a small thorn in the mutually cordial relations between the two nations. Soon after Bangladesh's independence, both the nations went on to sign 13 agreements related to trade, telecommunication, culture and other domains in the early 1970's. At the time this was seen in a way as the Bangladeshi nation's approval for forging friendlier relations with their land sharing neighbour. The two countries also share around 54 common rivers amongst them; in 1972 a bilateral Joint River Commission was set up between the two to maintain mutual contact in order to maximize benefits for the shared river systems.

In an advancement to such beneficial relations, Bangladesh and India signed a Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development, under which both parties agreed to narrow the trade imbalances by reworking their trade and non-tariff barriers while also agreeing to expand their cooperation to the sub-regional level as well. A recent development in their relations has also come by way of both the countries working towards signing a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which emphasises on three specific dimensions; trade in goods, services and investments. The goal of such an agreement is to open up newer avenues, including new markets and multi-modal connectivity while also focusing on reduction on trade gaps that have been persisting.

Other Dimensions:

In a testimony to such an enduring relationship based on mutually beneficial agreements, both the countries had also brought the Land Boundary Agreement into force in 2015 by exchanging the instruments of ratification. This came as a symbol of willingness in which both the countries were inclined towards resolving issues that were seen to be hindering the relationship.

These ties however, have also been witnessing stronger political will to engage further than their current positions; in the recent past, India and Bangladesh both have substantiated their mutual trust beyond the

general cooperation in specific sectors. In the past eight years, India has extended credit lines worth \$8 billion to its neighbour for developmental projects in sectors including roadways, shipping, ports and railways. This makes Bangladesh the recipient of India's largest concessional credit lines to a single country around the globe. India is also contributing to various projects in Bangladesh which includes an upgradation of the Ashuganj river port and Akhaura land port road with a credit line of more than \$400 million. A road project connecting the India- Bangladesh border which eases connectivity to some of the north eastern states of India with Bangladesh is also being worked upon with a further line of credit worth \$80 million from the Indian nation.

However, it is not only the trade and economic related aspects that makes the relations between the two densely populated countries a role model for the world, but is rather their all weather friendship that ascertains the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's statement, which was well in fact also reciprocated by the Indian side. Prime Minister Modi, in one of his first foreign visits post the Covid-19 outbreak visited Bangladesh to participate in its Golden Jubilee of Independence. Thus, economic and security cooperation between the two are based out of a long-cherished history and connection the nations have had in the past.

How India Shaped It:

In times of crisis, India has assisted Bangladesh with medical as well as humanitarian aid as well. For instance, in 2020, the Indian Railways gifted ten broad gauge diesel locomotives to Bangladesh based on an urgent need. Similarly, India also provided its neighbours with a significant amount of Covid vaccines that were manufactured domestically and had arranged for an evacuation of Bangladeshis stranded in between the Russia-Ukraine war.

What has rather emerged as a consequence of such gestures, is that many newer avenues for mutual cooperation have opened up in the recent decade. Bangladesh's population has subsequently become India's biggest medical tourist market; as India makes for an affordable and economically sound expenditure for procedures that may not be available in the country. This has led to an extreme uptake of medical tourist visas from Bangladesh travelling to India. Not only in this aspect, but such new found paths for mutual benefits and interests are only possible if nations have a lasting relationship built on trust and the will of the top most leadership.

Political entities in both India as well as in Bangladesh have constantly attempted to advance their bilateral ties beyond the scope that is currently prevalent. There is however, significant scope to further the relationship in a way that opens up other routes and modes for ensuring that relations remain beneficial to both the countries. Aspects such as free trade, global health governance, global peace and stability are avenues that could present itself as an opportunity for both India and Bangladesh to not only take their cordial relations to the next level, but would also be an important message to the world in terms of unity in advancing one's own perspective in the global arena.

Hence, the former Foreign Secretary of India, Harsh Vardhan Shringla's statement echoing the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's assertions of India-Bangladesh ties being a role model of good neighbourhood diplomacy, is not a shallow statement made to present a certain idea of the bilateral relationship. It is rather a strong testimony to the power of cooperation that can lead to land and water sharing countries having a mutually beneficial relation while also elevating their economic, social and political statuses in the global forum.

UNITED NATIONS DAY FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION: 12 SEPTEMBER

The United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation is observed annually on September 12 to highlight the importance of cooperation among people and countries in the global South. The day also aims at spreading awareness on the social, economic, and political developments made in the Southern region.

What are the objectives of South-South Cooperation?

- Foster and strengthen the self-reliance of developing countries by enhancing their creative capacity to find solutions and technological capacities to their development problems and formulate the requisite strategies to address them;
- Promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among developing countries through the exchange of experiences leading to a greater awareness of common problems and wider access to available knowledge;
- Recognize and respond to the problems and requirements of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and the countries most seriously affected by, for example, natural disasters and other crises, and enable them to achieve a greater degree of participation in international economic activities.



ABOUT SCO (SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic and security organization. In terms of geographic scope and population, it is the world's largest regional organization, covering approximately 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world population, and more than 30% of global GDP.

- The SCO is the successor to the Shanghai Five, a mutual security agreement formed in 1996 between China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. On 15 June 2001, the leaders of these nations and Uzbekistan met in Shanghai to announce a new organization with deeper political and economic cooperation; the SCO Charter was signed on 7 July 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003. Its membership has since expanded to eight states, with India and Pakistan joining on 9 June 2017. Several countries are engaged as observers or dialogue partners.

Member states



Member states

Country	Accession started	Member since
China		15 June 2001
Kazakhstan		
Kyrgyzstan		
Russia		
Tajikistan		
Uzbekistan		

India	10 June 2015	9 June 2017
Pakistan		
Acceding members		
Iran	17 September 2021	TBA

Official language:

The official working language of the SCO Secretariat is Russian and Chinese.

What is the Relevance of the Grouping for India?

- Through the years, the SCO hosts have encouraged members to use the platform to discuss differences with other members on the sidelines.
- It was on such an occasion that current Indian Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2015 and Foreign Minister negotiated a five-point agreement with his Chinese counterpart on the side-lines of the Moscow conference in 2020.
- India is also a part of the 'Quadrilateral' grouping with the U.S., Japan and Australia.
- Its association with the grouping of a rather different nature is part of its foreign policy that emphasises on principles of "strategic autonomy and multi-alignment".

UP GOVT TO PROVIDE AN UNIQUE FARM ID SIMILAR TO AADHAR NUMBER TO FARMERS

- Uttar Pradesh government will provide an unique farm ID similar to Aadhar number to the farmers, which will be linked with Aadhar to provide them benefits of all government schemes. Aadhar verification will be used to implement this scheme in the coming days.
- Speaking at a workshop regarding the recent initiatives taken to make the use of Aadhar more simple, Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra said that with the help of Aadhar, UP Government has given the benefit of the government schemes to maximum number of people.
- He said the government has saved around 8400 crore rupees with the use of Aadhar verification. Around one crore 92 lakh school children are also getting the benefit of various schemes with the help of Aadhar card verification.
- Mr Mishra also said that Uttar Pradesh government will start providing Family ID very soon as it is already working on the scheme. He said that Government will bring those families into the ambit of this scheme who are not getting any kind of benefits till now.
- Chief Executive Officer of Unique Identification Authority of India, Saurabh Garg Said that the credibility of the Aadhar is being discussed worldwide and many African countries also want to implement Aadhar system.

