



# India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relationship After 1990's : An Analysis

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## Abstract

Bangladesh-India bilateral relationship, create a deep curiosity and interest in various aspects of Bangladesh and India. The depth and complications of near neighboring relationships should be opened about all its appearance. In fact, it will not be exaggerated by saying that there will be no exaggeration that the history, geography, passions, values and interests of the two countries have given a specialty to Bangladesh-India relations. Many Bangladeshi analysts are also trying to find the same elements of India's thinking about Bangladesh. As a regional force and the interests of Bangladesh and India as an economic partner are now largely involved in it. India's presence is increasing in the export trade of Bangladesh and increases in the future.

**Key Words:** Bilateral relations, Immigration, Teesta Treaty, Farakka Treaty, Sheikh Hasina, Manmohan Singh.

## Introduction

Bangladesh-India bilateral relationship played an important role in national and international context of Bangladesh and India. However, what is necessary for objective analysis is that it goes out of such ideas to create a positive roadmap for the future by analyzing different aspects of the relationship between the larger context. In this case, the relation between the government and the people, India's strategic goals and desires and diplomatic bargains of the people in this regard. Extensive presence of emotions or ideological positions about Bangladesh-India is noticeable. Sometimes it surrounds a special time in history, sometimes it is rotated surrounding personal relationships. The interesting thing is that such trends are affecting bilateral relations from both sides. This does not mean that the useful utility did not contribute to bilateral relations. However, it is not enough to confirm that the amount of evolutionary it was necessary; As a result, bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India are advancing through a balanced condition. However, economic progress of other South Asian countries including India, the process of globalization of the internal and external issues of the country, the advent of new challenges, the need for new challenges, the requirements of cooperative security framework and the depth of the communication between the public, has created a new background about the inter-government at the bilateral, regional and global level. The relationship will be strengthened in investment and other economic matters through communication, its sample is also visible. The two countries have started thinking new about the distribution and use of natural resources.

## Bilateral relations after 90's

In 1991, after the end of the military rule in Bangladesh has a positive impact on Bangladesh-India Relations. At this time, India's economic reform became a large beneficiary of the government. India and Bangladesh increased relationship significantly. In the case of bilateral relations, economic involvement adds a new dimensions<sup>1</sup>. The trade relations between the two countries and Bangladeshi products are accessible to Indian market, comes up as the main subject in the agenda of the political and economic relations between the two countries. But there was not much significant progress in security and other matters. India's complaint against Bangladesh, such as: illegal immigration and northeastern provinces of India continued to raise allegations of separatists. At this time, there is a fair status quo about bilateral relations.

In the middle of 1995, a 30-year contract was signed for the distribution of Ganges in Bangladesh and India in December 1996 in December 1996 in December 1996 in December 1996 in December 1995<sup>2</sup>. In this case, by utilizing the political change in the center of India, the new government of Bangladesh is fairly successful in achieving water share. The then Chief Minister of West Bengal is to accept the extraordinary contribution of late Jyoti Basu. During this time, there was a significant progress in Bangladesh and India in security issues<sup>3</sup>. There are many analysts say that the killing of Bangladeshi nationals at the Bangladesh-India border at the time of the Bangladesh-India border<sup>4</sup>. Despite this, in the nineties, Bangladesh's diplomacy was active and vital in India; Bangladesh has been able to show a little creativity at this time<sup>5</sup>.

In the 2008 election, a new background was created to improve relations between Bangladesh and India through the victory of the Grand Alliance government<sup>6</sup>. Some things play a helpful role in this regard. Firstly, the issue of ideological proximity of the Grand Alliance government formed under the leadership of Awami League in Bangladesh with the Congress-led UPA government in India is noteworthy. Many analysts believe that the ruling political party of Bangladesh is a deep influence of moral support to India during the caretaker government near the caretaker government<sup>7</sup>.

Recently, Britain's famous magazine Economist also published a few reports about this. Secondly, the strong anti-terrorism location of the grand alliance government in Bangladesh creates three new opportunities for India. One of this is that anti-India power weakens in Bangladesh because of the possibility of religious terrorism in Bangladesh within Bangladesh, which is weak in Bangladesh, which seems favorable to its interests and in this case the Bangladesh government provides moral support and advice to the government. Another chance is to use a rare opportunity to control its northeast separatist power by utilizing the anti-terrorism location of Bangladesh. Apart from this, there is also a favorable to the interest of the corridor or transit using Bangladesh's land for the development of the northeast for the development of Bangladesh.

In January 2010, a new chapter of bilateral relations started in Bangladesh by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India<sup>8</sup>. The two Prime Ministers agreed on many bilateral, regional and global issues. Bangladesh agreed to the convenience of Transit to the establishment of India's mainland with the northeast of India and the benefit of the use

1 Dixit, J.N. (1999) Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relationship, The University Press.

2 Treaty between the government of the peoples republic of Bangladesh and the government of the republic of India on sharing of the Ganga/Ganges waters at Farakka, Government of the peoples republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka. Bangladesh Jatiyo Tottho Batayon. Accessed on 17 January 2024.

3 "India-Bangladesh Relations" (PDF). Ministry of External Affairs. Government of India. Archived from the original (PDF) on 4 March 2016.

4 "Bangladeshi Immigrants Stoke Terror in India". Asia Sentinel. 15 May 2008. Archived from the original on 17 July 2012. Retrieved 24 October 2012.

5 Samad, Md Abdus (2016), "Political History of Farakka Barrage and its Effects on the Environment in Bangladesh," Bandung Journal of Global South, 3, no. 16 <http://doi.org/10.1186/s40728-0150027-5>

6 Kidwai, M. Saleem (2010). US Policy Towards the Muslim World: Focus on Post 9/11 Period. University Press of America. pp. 240-. ISBN 978-0-7618-5158-5.

7 op. cit.

8 "It is 'Sonali Adhyay' in India-Bangladesh Relations: Modi tells Sheikh Hasina," Business Standard, 5 October 2019, [https://www.businessstandard.com/article/news-ani/it-is-sonali-adhyay-in-indiabangladesh-relations-modi-tells-sheikh-hasina-119100500782\\_1.html](https://www.businessstandard.com/article/news-ani/it-is-sonali-adhyay-in-indiabangladesh-relations-modi-tells-sheikh-hasina-119100500782_1.html)

of Chittagong and Mongla port of Bangladesh. The leaders agreed to solve border problems. They also attend new fields to the development of trade relations<sup>9</sup>.

Bangladesh imports electricity from India and one million dollar loan by India is one of the most important things. It is noteworthy that in the joint announcement, India agreed to include many regional and global issues outside the bilateral relations<sup>10</sup>. Although Bangladesh is interested in regional issues in this regard, India is able to support Bangladesh's support for its global issues<sup>11</sup>. During the joint declaration, Nepal and Bhutan expressed their desire in transit facility, but there was no clear commitment to India. However, these processes are also likely to be completed under the direct supervision of political leadership in order to bring the coordination of the two countries. Civil society of the two countries, especially media, strong support in the process of relating to two countries<sup>12</sup>.

At the same time, the support of the international community also plays a special role in accelerating positive changes in bilateral. Here are three issues of diplomatic strategies of Bangladesh. Firstly, Bangladesh has taken stepped role from his waiting policy. Secondly, India and Bangladesh have been trying to bring two countries to a large structure outside the short-term or issue-based solutions<sup>13</sup>. Thirdly, Bangladesh accepted the highest discount policy in diplomatic bargaining. Going out of Indian needs, Bangladesh played a motivational role in strategic benefits to India<sup>14</sup>.

In all, a fairly positive aircraft of relations between Bangladesh and India is created, although the presence of disappearance in the context of the past experience of Bangladesh-India is not less. Perhaps the efforts of creating confidence in the high level of bilateral tour of the two countries after the visit to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh<sup>15</sup>. But from the government policy makers of Bangladesh mixed reactions, especially, gave rise to complications about transit. The lack of proper research, lack of data-presentation and retrograde comments on the one hand, as well as the privilege of the public, the hope of expectation is also made in the wishing of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh. Lack of institutional coordination and opacity<sup>16</sup>.

In this context, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visit to Bangladesh at 6-7 September, 2011. This tour can be evaluated in two sides. First of all, the Indian Prime Minister introduced enough awareness in terms of symbolic visibility. He meet with various political leaders, especially, with the opposition leader and tried to give a depth of his visit to the civil society<sup>17</sup>.

Apart from this, some basic bilateral issues have also indicated. For example, signature of structural agreement of bilateral cooperation; Protocol signature in support of the agreement to identify the land boundary in 1974; 47 Bangladeshi products duty-free access to India's market; Among the two countries, the leaders of two countries

9 Liton, Shakhawat "From the History's Golden Chapter," The Daily Star, 19 June 2015, <https://www.thedailystar.net/wide-angle/historys-golden-chapter-99550>.

10 Sohail Rana, (2019) "Transformation of Indo-Bangladesh Relations: From Insecurity to Cooperation in Northeast India" in Strategic Analysis 42, no. 6 (February 2019), 559-577

11 "India, Bangladesh to discuss maritime dispute". Thaindian News. 8 January 2010. Retrieved 24 October 2012.

12 "Trade between India and Bangladesh". Business Standard. 17 December 2014.

13 Serajul Quadir (6 June 2015). "India, Bangladesh sign historic land boundary agreement". Reuters India.

14 Sohail Rana, (2019) "Transformation of Indo-Bangladesh Relations: From Insecurity to Cooperation in Northeast India" in Strategic Analysis 42, no. 6 (February 2019), 559-577

15 Dixit, J.N. (1999) Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relationship, The University Press.

16 Jayanth Jacob (24 July 2011). "After gaffe, PM calls Sheikh HYPERLINK "https://web.archive.org/web/20121022050652/http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/After-gaffe-PM-calls-Sheikh-Hasina-announces-Bangladesh-dates/Article1-717281.aspx"HasinaHYPERLINK

"https://web.archive.org/web/20121022050652/http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/After-gaffe-PM-calls-Sheikh-Hasina-announces-Bangladesh-dates/Article1-717281.aspx", announces Bangladesh dates". The Hindustan Times. Archived from the original on 22 October 2012. Retrieved 24 October 2012.

17 "Missions of India and Bangladesh observe HYPERLINK "https://www.connectedtoindia.com/missions-of-india-and-bangladesh-observe-maitri-diwason-bangladeshs-50th-year-of-liberation-9620.html"MaitriHYPERLINK "https://www.connectedtoindia.com/missions-of-india-and-bangladesh-observe-maitri-diwason-bangladeshs-50th-year-of-liberation-9620.html" HYPERLINK "https://www.connectedtoindia.com/missions-of-india-and-bangladesh-observe-maitri-diwason-bangladeshs-50th-year-of-liberation-9620.html"DiwasHYPERLINK "https://www.connectedtoindia.com/missions-of-india-and-bangladesh-observe-maitri-diwason-bangladeshs-50th-year-of-liberation-9620.html" on Bangladesh's 50th year of liberation". Connected to India. 7 December 2021. Retrieved 7 December 2021.

agreed to work jointly for electricity, water resources, food security, education, management, communication expansion, climate and sustainable development, and in need of water resources.

In addition, due to other issues in the joint declaration, the opportunity to expand the boundaries and speed of relationships has been created. However, due to the internal complexity of India, it was not possible to accomplish the Teesta river water sharing agreement, and that is why it could not be reached any agreement on transit. However, it is said that the people of Bangladesh have not accepted the teesta water sharing agreement well, and due to it other components of the tour also lost their importance.

In November 2011, during the SAARC summit in Maldives, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and India meet in bilateral discussions<sup>18</sup>. The issue of Teesta river water sharing agreement also took place in their discussion. However, there was no specific commitment from India. In the next phase, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh meet with the Chief Minister of West Bengal of India, but there was no indication of any progress. In the meantime, the agreement between the different states and organizations of India has been completed for the construction of Tipaimukh dam without any discussion with Bangladesh. This incident has highlighted the difference between India's commitment and implementation of Tipaimukh<sup>19</sup>.

The success of Bangladesh visit to the Indian Prime Minister carries importance for various reasons. The two sides were interested in showing the success of Bangladesh-India relations, which has passed through uphill in the last 40 years. In the strategic side, it was necessary for India to establish communication with the northeast states of India through Bangladesh<sup>20</sup>. Apart from this, India was also seeking to present Bangladesh as an example of his diplomatic success as an emerging power. But the mixed results of the visit pushed India's image in negative condition. It appears to other South Asian countries outside of Bangladesh that when India is dreaming of leading the world, he is unable to resolve his internal problem. Many Indian analysts also believe that the incompleteness of Bangladesh tour has affected the image of India in the world. This tour also brought the same results for the government of Bangladesh.

In the context of this real situation, India has already started transporting goods without training from West Bengal to Tripura state using Ashuganj port in 1972 under the internal shipping agreement<sup>21</sup>. Such products conducted for a few weeks have been called experimental transit, but there has been confusion in public about this. In particular, when a policy has not been created in such transit, it is not right, there is no infrastructure to transport the goods and there is no infrastructure to transport heavy goods, then such a rush people did not take well. In this kind of effort of India and the government of Bangladesh, policy obsolinty in this regard clearly questioned the initiative of Bangladesh-India relations<sup>22</sup>.

Even those who have provided strong arguments to India, they have seen such an experimental efforts in doubt and have argued against such opportunities before achieving structural capabilities in Bangladesh. As a result of transit-advantages in this way, the demand for sharing Bangladesh from the financial saving of India, they are pronouncing emphasis. A prominent economist has spoken this type of transit as 'Rivalry' and warned about its negative consequences. Initially, it is being called unacceptable to provide such transit before the opposition political parties, but the opposition political parties are being called unacceptable. In fact, in the context of the famous internal naval transit protocol of 1972, in such a multimedal system, in such a multimedal system, in such a multimedal system, India and Bangladesh government apparently think that there is a great deal of discussion in Bangladesh in recent years.

18 Dixit, J.N. (1999) *Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relationship*, The University Press.

19 Mohammad Abul Kawsar and Md Abdus Samad, (2016), "Political History of Farakka Barrage and its Effects on the Environment in Bangladesh," *Bandung Journal of Global South*, 3, no. 16 <http://doi.org/10.1186/s40728-0150027-5>

20 Sohel Rana, (February 2019), "Tranformation of Indo-Bangladesh Relations: From Insecurity to Cooperation in Northeast India" in *Strategic Analysis* 42, no. 6 559–577;

21 "50yrs of Bangladesh-India Ties: Focus should be on trade, connectivity". *The Daily Star*. 6 December 2021.

22 V. Pant, Harsh; (29 July 2020). Bhattacharjee, Joyeeta "The enduring logic of India-Bangladesh ties". ORF - Observer Research Foundation. Retrieved 29 October 2021.

In fact, the initiative of India and Bangladesh government is considered as a bureaucratic initiative. Needless to say, due to lack of public relations, there is less chance of bringing a long welfare in such an initiative. In fact, the missing link of Bangladesh-India relations in independence-North Time is the lack of separation or understanding between the government and the people. The gap has been created on one side, neglected a little bit of negligence, on the other hand, a little suspicion and a bit of hostility<sup>23</sup>.

In India, Bangladesh has become important for three things in recent times. Firstly, India is interested in expanding its influence in South Asia, but the concept of leaders and analysts of India, their own economic development and their recognition in the outside world makes it easier<sup>24</sup>. They believe that recent political changes in Bangladesh can play a supplementary role in this work. It is also part of the long-term strategic plan in their regional field. India's cooperation of Bangladesh is essential to cooperate with Bangladesh to include its north-eastern part in its northeast and political structure. Analysts think that India's attention has increased in the light of China's influence in South Asia recently. Secondly, India consider Bangladesh as an important economic partner in light of growing financial development. Especially, India's policy makers and business leaders are not taking lightly in Bangladesh's participation in different sectors of Bangladesh's economy.

Many people believe that both India-Bangladesh countries will benefit from the diplomatic bid and professional excellence. But the issue that is about being skeptical is security. Almost all the governments of Bangladesh have conducted relations with India keeping in mind the sensitivity of India's security. But many people think that allegedly focusing on the security of Bangladesh-India-India's security, Bangladesh will not be able to be relieved like India in India's security structure<sup>25</sup>. Because Bangladesh is always interested in protecting its independence as a nation developed through armed struggle.

The history of the last 40 years of bilateral relations in Bangladesh - India has already added a significant level in this regard<sup>26</sup>. In particular, young people are more sensitive about this, it is said to be emphasized. In the eve of India's visit to the Prime Minister of India, amateur preparations presented the diplomatic weakness of Bangladesh in front of the people. In this case, our policies and structural weaknesses can be mentioned. In the current world context, there should be knowledge and information about global status, as well as a good idea about local status. Our idea about the internal evolution of many countries in South Asia, including India, is relatively weak. As a result, we can not introduce enough expertise to build any relationship or diplomatic bargaining. Many people believe that Bangladesh has been able to read the depth of India and the nature of the state and society, has been able to engage in the process of appreciation and policies.

The prime minister Sheikh Hasina's official visit to New Delhi in October 3–6 2019 completed a decade of Bangladesh-India relations with her leading the country. She said while concluding the visit, first, that entire Bangladesh had expected that India would conclude the Teesta deal pending since September 2011 that it did not; and, second, that Bangladesh had given more to India than it had received in the past decade. Everyone in Bangladesh agreed with the prime minister. She, thus, flagged diplomatically that she was not pleased with the outcome of her visit and so was the country<sup>27</sup>.

New Delhi, however, relented on trade. It allowed Bangladeshi exports access on a wide number of items that it had held up since the South Asian countries had signed SAPTA or the South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement in 1993 under which Bangladesh had lowered tariff on a large number of Indian exports but India had failed to do so. New Delhi, meanwhile, renamed 'land transit' that Bangladesh had granted to encourage and motivate it towards

23 Dixit, J.N. (1999) *Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relationship*, The University Press.

24 Sohel Rana, (February 2019) "Transformation of Indo-Bangladesh Relations: From Insecurity to Cooperation in Northeast India" in *Strategic Analysis* 42, no. 6, 559–577; also in H. Karlekar, "Cautious Tango", *South Asia Intelligence Review* I, no. 42 (2003).

25 op. cit.

26 "50yrs of Bangladesh-India Ties: Focus should be on trade, connectivity". *The Daily Star*. 6 December 2021. Archived from the original on 6 December 2021. Retrieved 30 December 2021.

27 "It is 'Sonali Adhyay' in India–Bangladesh Relations: Modi tells Sheikh Hasina," *Business Standard*, 5 October 2019, [https://www.businessstandard.com/article/news-ani/it-is-sonali-adhyay-in-indiabangladesh-relations-modi-tells-sheikh-hasina-119100500782\\_1.html](https://www.businessstandard.com/article/news-ani/it-is-sonali-adhyay-in-indiabangladesh-relations-modi-tells-sheikh-hasina-119100500782_1.html)

sustainable bilateral relations as ‘connectivity’ and under it sold a huge promise to Bangladesh that it would make Bangladesh the regional connectivity hub of fabulous economic development comprising Bangladesh, eastern/north-eastern India, Bhutan and Nepal that would bring it so much wealth that it would be ‘ashamed’ to ask India for any transit fees<sup>28</sup>.

New Delhi’s vision of bilateral relations was, thus, primarily different from Sheikh Hasina’s who was unafraid to take major political risks. New Delhi believed that its interests came first most of the time. It, thus, never made any unilateral concessions like Sheikh Hasina did. Further, New Delhi under the Congress believed that its relations with Bangladesh were always better served by the Awami League. Thus, the Congress government treated the Bangladesh elections in 2014 like it was backing itself in a provincial election. The Indian foreign secretary Sushmita Singh came to Dhaka just before the elections to openly announce New Delhi’s support for the Awami League. She met HM Ershad and arm-twisted him to ensure that the Jatiya Party would contest so that the elections would be acceptable internationally with the BNP boycotting it<sup>29</sup>.

The BJP too wanted India’s relations with Bangladesh to be party-based on the Bangladesh side rather than country-to-country and people-to-people and preferred to deal with the Awami League in power. There was, however, a minor hiccup in those perceptions in Bangladesh-Indian relations during the change from the Congress to the BJP in 2014. Sheikh Hasina, unsure whether the BJP would back her government like the Congress, went to Beijing in June 2014 to seek assurance from China that it would support the 2014 elections against international pressure. Bangladesh signed with China on that visit of its prime minister projects worth over \$40 billion with a few strategic in content<sup>30</sup>. Sushma Swaraj visited Dhaka immediately after Sheikh Hasina returned from China and Narendra Modi visited Dhaka in 2015<sup>31</sup>. They convinced the AL government that India would back Bangladesh as the Congress-led government had done to bring Bangladesh back from the China road much to the dismay of the Chinese.

That was not good news for the Awami League that was in real danger politically and needed New Delhi behind it to hold another election like 2014<sup>32</sup>. The BJP-led government, however, was not inclined to do so. It believed that the Awami League had too much at stake to lose power and would return to power by whatever means was necessary. New Delhi further believed that India would not be blamed for again bringing the Awami League to power, aware that such a role in 2014 had made India extremely unpopular in Bangladesh for which it was unable to take advantage of land transit/connectivity for which both agreements of the Bangladesh government and the infrastructure were ready<sup>33</sup>.

The BJP, meanwhile, became involved in the Indian elections. It also preferred to be in denial of the distance that had grown between New Delhi and Dhaka most palpably evident in the much lesser number of high-level visits between the two capitals compared with the period under the Congress leading to Bangladesh elections in 2014. Nevertheless, Narendra Modi sent Sheikh Hasina an extremely warm message of felicitations and promised to work with her to take Bangladesh-India relations to a new level of excellence apparently unaware about the news that was about to come from Dhaka<sup>34</sup>.

The next big signal came when Sheikh Hasina visited China in early July after Narendra Modi had led the BJP to a landslide victory. The joint declaration that emerged from the visit flagged for New Delhi once more that the economic relations between Dhaka and Beijing with which it was comfortable were again headed towards uncharted water. It realised from the joint declaration that Bangladesh had given China many projects worth in

28 Shakhawat Liton, (19 June 2015) “From the History’s Golden Chapter,” The Daily Star, , <https://www.thedailystar.net/wide-angle/historys-golden-chapter-99550>.

29 Sohel Rana, (February 2019) “Transformation of Indo-Bangladesh Relations: From Insecurity to Cooperation in Northeast India” in Strategic Analysis 42, no. 6, 559–577;

30 Rouf, Ali Akbar (2023) The Changing Face of Trade Between Bangladesh and India The Business Standard, April 04.

31 Shakhawat Liton, (19 June 2015) “From the History’s Golden Chapter,” The Daily Star, , <https://www.thedailystar.net/wide-angle/historys-golden-chapter-99550>.

32 Shamsuddoa Sajen, Bangladesh Elections and China-India Rivalry, The Daily Star, October 17, 2023.

33 op. cit

34 “It is ‘Sonali Adhyay’ in India–Bangladesh Relations: Modi tells Sheikh Hasina,” Business Standard, 5 October 2019, [https://www.businessstandard.com/article/news-ani/it-is-sonali-adhyay-in-indiabangladesh-relations-modi-tells-sheikh-hasina-119100500782\\_1.html](https://www.businessstandard.com/article/news-ani/it-is-sonali-adhyay-in-indiabangladesh-relations-modi-tells-sheikh-hasina-119100500782_1.html)

billions of US dollars which were not just of economic nature. New Delhi, thus, realised to its dismay and concern that the AL government had not listened to its advice to hold a free, fair and inclusive national election and that instead, meantime, moved much deeper in its relations with China whose contents were both economic and strategic<sup>35</sup>.

Indias expressed its dismay and concerns unambiguously, this time, unlike in 2014, without going to Dhaka but by inviting Sheikh Hasina to New Delhi instead. New Delhi invited her to India in October 3–6 but did not give her visit the status of a state visit that was accorded to her when she had visited India in 2010, under the Congress, and in 2017, under the BJP. That underlined to not just the Awami League government but the entire Bangladesh, irrespective of the political divide in the country that the warmth of Bangladesh-India bilateral relations as far as India was concerned had become a matter of the past. The message reached Bangladeshis in the comfort of their homes when they saw a minister of state receiving their prime minister at the airport in place of Narendra Modi without any of the other pomp and grandeur of a state visit<sup>36</sup>.

India did not leave simply to protocol matters to express her mood on the state of relations with Bangladesh. It made it evident in the joint statement. It again deferred the Teesta deal to the realm of uncertainty assuring Dhaka that it would be given ‘soon’. New Delhi requested Dhaka instead for the water of the River Feni for drinking purposes of an Indian town that Sheikh Hasina graciously allowed, no doubt, to flag for India her disappointment over the Teesta Treaty<sup>37</sup>. The other issues in the 53-point joint statement favoured India mostly with two underlining the fact that Bangladesh-India relations were entering dangerous waters. The memorandum of understanding for a coastal surveillance system that would allow India to monitor the territorial waters of Bangladesh by establishing radars inside Bangladesh. Early implementation of the Indian line of credit that included the last LOC worth \$500 million for the purchase of arms from India<sup>38</sup>.

Strategic experts concluded that the memorandum of understanding on surveillance, if implemented, would be the most intrusive interference ever into the sovereignty of Bangladesh. Bangladesh agreed to such a blatant intrusion perhaps to appease New Delhi for the sub-base that Bangladesh had reportedly given China for the maintenance of the submarines that it had earlier bought from Beijing. The request to Bangladesh to buy Indian arms with \$500 million suggested that India would like to enter into a relationship with the Bangladesh army a major political power broker in Bangladesh that was hitherto buying almost all its arms and military supplies from China<sup>39</sup>.

India did not raise the National Register of Citizens issue during the visit that it had recently introduced in Bangladesh-India relations as a new and dangerously contentious issue. India claimed that millions had been identified in Assam as ‘illegal Bangladeshis’ under the NRC and there were many more in other Indian provinces, in particular in West Bengal, that it would like to push into Bangladesh. The Bangladesh foreign minister after the meeting between Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi in New York recently stated that the Indian prime minister had assured Sheikh Hasina of not worrying about the NRC and that at their New Delhi summit further assurance would come.

The way some BJP leaders abused Bangladesh on the media before Sheikh Hasina’s visit and following, it added further to the growing perception in Bangladesh that New Delhi was unhappy with Bangladesh, perhaps, because it had entered with China into a strategic-economic partnership instead of leaving it as an economic relationship only<sup>40</sup>. The Indian home minister called allegedly illegal Bangladeshis in India as ‘termites’ that India would like to forcibly drown, millions of them, in the Bay of Bengal. Many believed in that unbelievable statement a desire to indulge in ‘ethnic cleansing.’

35 Rouf, Ali Akbar (2023) The Changing Face of Trade Between Bangladesh and India The Business Standard, April 04..

36 Liton, Shakhawat (19 June 2015), “From the History’s Golden Chapter,” The Daily Star, <https://www.thedailystar.net/wide-angle/historys-golden-chapter-99550>.

37 Balachandran, P. K. (September 13, 2022) A Teesta River Wter-Sharing deal Is critical for Bangladesh-India Ties, The Diplomat.

38 The daily Star Report, 08 september, 2022.

39 Balachandran, P. K. (September 13, 2022) A Teesta River Wter-Sharing deal Is critical for Bangladesh-India Ties, The Diplomat.

40 Oumya Bhowmick and Syed Mafiz Kamal, India-Bangladesh Partnership in Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery, orfonline.org/

Bangladesh-India relations are at present at best although both countries need each other for economic and geopolitical reasons as well as factors of history and culture. Nevertheless, the future of these important bilateral relations depends primarily on India for which it should make genuine efforts to fulfil the promises that it had made to Bangladesh but failed to keep. New Delhi should keep in mind that such failures would soon leave very few in Bangladesh friendly towards India. India has brought the relations to a position where even its most ardent supporters and admirers find that they are unable to support it any more.

According to the 2016-17 financial year, exports from Bangladesh to India amounted to US\$ 672.40 million<sup>41</sup>. On the other hand, goods worth 6.16 billion dollars have been exported from India to Bangladesh. Even after the corona epidemic, in the fiscal year 2019-20, Bangladesh imported 5.80 billion dollars and exported 1.1 billion dollars worth of goods<sup>42</sup>. However, it is true that the trade deficit with India's neighboring countries in the region is increasing. Bangladesh is no exception. This becomes clear if we look at the trade statistics of Bangladesh and India in the past years. Although various steps have been taken to improve the commercial relations between these two countries, various obstacles have been observed in the commercial field. I think there are four problems in the thick spots for non-growth of Bangladeshi exports to India<sup>43</sup>. They are - weak infrastructure, inadequate port facilities, export processing complexity and non-tariff barriers. Trade is one of the cornerstones of modern state structure relations.

Therefore, to increase the export of Bangladeshi products to India, the above problems must be solved. Moreover, introducing digital system along with one-stop service will reduce the length of time in importing and exporting products and increase the export of Bangladeshi products to India. Although our bilateral relations have faced several problems, the officials of both countries are continuing their efforts to solve the problems. In 2010, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India showed interest in setting up a border haat between the two countries<sup>44</sup>. On June 6-7, 2015, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh on a state visit and finalized 22 bilateral documents, including the exchange of instruments of ratification of the India-Bangladesh Land Border Agreement (LBA) and a second loan agreement of US\$2 billion<sup>45</sup>.

## Conclusion

Bangladesh-India relations face new challenges. Bangladesh has come out of the veil from the disorders from India in recent years and threw a kind of chatter to India with a lot of emotions. Bangladesh has taken a leading role in building a new relationship structure outside the Pakistan-India competitive relationship in South Asia. India says they want to create new models of relations for South Asia with Bangladesh. The question is, does India have the amount of attention to Bangladesh? Or do they consider Bangladesh as a partner on their regional strategic goal? In the last few months many analysts of India have evaluated the South Asian principle of India in this term. They questioned how much dominance in South Asia India's foreign policy, which is very important for the regional strategic goal of India? In this case, their expectations, India will think deeply about these things. In simple words, Bangladesh-India relations can develop a new relationship for South Asia, if it can be established through creative and future ideas and policy-structures. In that case, the future will stand as much as the future, the future people will stand.

41 50 years of Bangladesh-India bilateral relations Published: 26 March 2021, 06:33 Ittefaq

42 Rouf, Ali Akbar (2023) The Changing Face of Trade Between Bangladesh and India The Business Standard, April 04..

43 op. cit

44 "India and Bangladesh historic border deal gives citizenship to 50,000 people". IBTimes UK. 1 August 2015. Retrieved 8 November 2015.

45 Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (15 December 2021). "India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement 2015" (PDF). Retrieved 15 December 2021.