



India- Bangladesh Relations: Past And Present

Dr. Nilanjana Nayak

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
Sitananda College, Nandigram. Purba Medinipur

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ABSTRACT

‘Divide and Rule’ policy of the British was pursued in India by successfully driving in a wedge between India’s two major communities, the Hindus and the Muslims. So the British policy was the partition of India, in 1947, on religious basis, with all the agonies entailing it. The construction of Pakistan in 1947, composed of two different territories, disconnected by a thousand mile thickly populated Indian land mass. The asymmetry between the two wings was so stark and the psyche was so different, that the logic of their common belief in the same religion could not be prepared over. India and Bangladesh are the South Asian neighbours. Although there are occasionally a lot of disagreements, relations have generally been cordial. However, the two countries have historically and culturally been quite close to one another. When the Bangladesh Liberation War broke out in 1971, the two countries were close friends. Three of Bangladesh's 4094 kilometers of land border are shared with India, while the fourth side is open to the Bay of Bengal. In August 2024 an interim government was established to restore stability and prepare for elections. The recent political changes in Dhaka have raised apprehensions in New Delhi regarding potential shifts in Bangladesh’s foreign policy, which could disadvantage India’s strategic interests in the region. Various issues need to be resolved if the relationship between the two are to be



improved.

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Due to their historical, geographic, and cultural proximity, two South Asian nations are unable to avoid establishing important bilateral ties. India is the immediate neighbor of Bangladesh with common borders. Protecting good relations with neighbors is the first and foremost priority for any country. Indian was the first country to recognize Bangladesh as a separate and independent state. India also was the first country to introduce diplomatic relations with Bangladesh immediately after its independence in December 1971. The 4096-kilometer shared border between Bangladesh and India spans five Indian states: West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram. It is also the fifth-largest land border between any two countries in the world. Bangladesh shares civilizational, cultural, social, and economic ties with India. The two countries share a common heritage and the unfortunate history of partition. This commonality is reflected in their prolonging relations. India and Bangladesh share membership in sub-regional alliances such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Commonwealth, which serve as examples of regional cooperation between the two nations. Pakistan's negative attitude has hampered the development of SAARC as a strong and vital regional organization. As a result, other SAARC countries have established an alternative in the sub-regional BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal) grouping and pretended ahead, without waiting for other SARAC members.

India and Bangladesh, since 1971, started their friendship on the basis of mutuality of interests and equality of relationships in order to promote better conditions of peace and security in South Asian subcontinent. However, Bangladesh approach towards India, which has fluctuated with changes in governments. In South Asia, the emergence of Bangladesh as a separate nation is hardly less than five decades old. The birth of this nation as a separate entity was mainly the product of East and West Pakistan's internal differences. Founder of *Panchsheel*, India has tried to maintain cordial relations with all its neighbouring countries including Bangladesh. It has been a vitally important principle of Indian foreign policy to refrain from any interference in the internal affairs of other countries, especially towards its closed door neighbours.

India's backing for Bangladesh's liberation movement was a political-strategic reaction to Pakistan's (West) ongoing threats to India's unity and territorial integrity since 1947, not a prearranged, conspiracy-



oriented move. India has a long-standing sense of familial and brotherly relationships in addition to a shared history of fighting for independence and emancipation. Although India played a major role in 1971 in the birth of Bangladesh, still there is a lack of bilateral relationship between the two countries especially. Sometime the people of Bangladesh explain this help of liberation struggle of Bangladesh was not out of sympathy in India, but based on securing its eastern border from a part of a country.

The decade of 1990s witnessed profound transformation in the international political, strategic and economic environments that posed fresh challenges before the Indian foreign policy makers. The bipolar pattern of global politics came to an end with the end of the Cold War. Globalization had a more noticeable effect on world politics and the economy than it did during the Cold War. India assisted Bangladesh both monetarily and emotionally during the day of the creation of the state and thereafter. Bangladesh is surrounded on three sides by India which has a vast geographical landmass. Thus, geographical compulsion has made both sides to maintain at least working relation. An illustration of this was the signing of the Treaty of "Friendship and Peace" in 1972, which stated that both parties would respect each other's territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty in their internal affairs for a 25-year period. But very recent tensions have surfaced between India and Bangladesh. Supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP) recently marched towards the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, promoting attacks on Bangladeshi diplomatic missions and the desecration of national flags in India. These incidents have strained diplomatic relations between two nations.

Bangladesh is not just a close door neighbor of India. For India, Bangladesh will always remain very exceptional for a number of reasons. Geographical instruction that the destiny of India and Bangladesh are, and will always remain, completely intertwined. India's map indicates Bangladesh is the connecting neighbor with the Northeast Region to the rest of India. Because of India's position and size, Bangladesh has a reasonable sense of being landlocked, especially "India-locked," and many in the Northeastern region of India also feel this way, believing that Bangladesh is "locked." Bangladesh is India's most important neighbor from the perspective of the Northeast Region.

Bangladesh, a near neighbor, causes India a lot of issues that are typical of bordering countries worldwide. Being islands, Sri Lanka and the Maldives fundamentally have a considerably less intensive seaborne cross-border migration with India. While Nepal and Bhutan have open borders with India, there is extremely little and strict cross-border travel between them and Pakistan. On the other hand, Bangladesh is India's most populated neighbor and the country with the longest border. Therefore, the



relationship between India and Bangladesh has not improved much and has stagnated as a result of border issues, water problems, security issues, weapons trafficking, illegal migration, transit, trade, etc.

World politics have been changed in 21st century, from a unipolar moment to a multipolar world order following the 9/11 incident. India for its own geo-strategic compulsion (the commercial gateway to India's northeastern region) is compelled to better its relationship with Bangladesh in 21st century more and more so than ever before. Bangladesh also demands to use its geo-strategic location for increasing the aid bargaining from both China and India for its own improvement. The extra regional powers like United States of Americas also keeps to close observe on the developments in Indo-Bangladesh relationship particularly because of the China's mounting footprint in Bangladesh and also in this bilateral relationship. It had exposed India's constant approach of covering its Look East Policy into an Act East Policy aims at the extended neighborhood with ASEAN, Asia-Pacific. Both India and Bangladesh have the opportunities and challenges to maintain good relations and have significant potential for the overall development of both the countries. Newer directions regarding opportunities and challenges have been originated for both India and Bangladesh to solve outstanding issues for the better future relations. So both the countries have to adopt all the multifarious mutually beneficial cooperative efforts for the overall socio-economic development.

In post-Mujib period, Bangladesh established close relations with Pakistan, China, Western countries and Islamic countries who were opposed to Bangladesh's liberation struggle and criticized India for her enthusiastic support to Bangladesh's liberation war by aligning it as "expansionism". China officially accused the Indian attitude towards Bangladesh on the Ganges river waters, border disputes and many other aspects. India's relationship with all the South Asian Countries should not be dictated by its relationship with Pakistan and China, with whom it has undergone prolonged conflict and competition. India must carefully consider its stance toward other South Asian nations if it hopes to maintain its ties with Bangladesh. Bangladesh plays a significant role in India's Act East Policy, aside from the SAARC area. However, security and migration concerns have long been separated from the significance of the northeast in India-Bangladesh relations. Numerous issues, including cross-borders, water sharing, frequent border killings, trade complications, using Bangladesh as a market for India's drugs, pushing religious minorities into Bangladeshi territory, un-demarcated lands, and India's non-compliance with major treaty provisions, are the main causes of Bangladesh's bilateral problems with India. Finding common ground is essential to enhancing bilateral ties and fostering mutual trust and confidence, and both nations should be ready to pursue a win-win solution.



The two neighbors, Bangladesh and India, unquestionably share more in common than any other South Asian nation. Relationships with neighbors can be particularly difficult. These two states have a special quality because of their many similarities. India and Bangladesh are politically important to one another because of their extensive historical and cultural ties, economic independence, and geostrategic interests. It is not to imply that Bangladesh and India have not had their share of highs and lows, but that they have also made progress and grown via a number of ongoing bilateral collaborations. The bilateral ties between Bangladesh and India have not only endured throughout time, but they have also jointly paved the way for potential sub-regional initiatives in the South Asian area.

Bangladesh approach towards India, which has fluctuated with changes in governments. India played a major role in birth of Bangladesh, still there is lack of bilateral relationship between the two countries. The coups and the countercoups in Dhaka and a number of events, led to ups and downs in Indo-Bangladesh relations. Sometimes the people of Bangladesh explain that India's help during liberation struggle of Bangladesh was not out of sympathy, but based on securing its North eastern border and intentions of weakening Pakistan. India's map indicates Bangladesh is the connecting neighbor with Northeast Region to the rest of India. India's geographical location and comparable size, creates a sensible feeling within Bangladesh of being landlocked, specifically 'India-locked. From the viewpoint of India's Northeast Region, Bangladesh is India's most significant neighbor. India Bangladesh relation have still not improved significantly due to border problems, water issues, security issues, arms trafficking, illegal migration, transit, trade etc. In the 21st century not much of the bilateral disputes between India and Bangladesh got resolved because of the mistrust between the two different Political system of India (democracy) and Bangladesh (influence of military). India for its own geo-strategic compulsion (the commercial gateway to India's northeastern region) is compelled to better its relationship with Bangladesh. Bangladesh also demands to use its geo-strategic location for increasing the aid bargaining from both China and India for its own improvement. Both Bangladesh and India currently face both chances and difficulties in preserving cordial relations, as well as substantial potential for both nations' overall growth. It is indisputable that they continue to provide each other a nice neighborhood, with the opportunity to raise children and foster a welcoming environment of harmony and peace.

Undoubtedly, India and Bangladesh have reached a level hitherto unknown. There is a palpable unhappiness amongst the people especially in Dhaka about the evolving ties. There could number of factors that narrative. The India factors more than any other issue has pitted the two main political



parties in Bangladesh against each others and also has been an issue in the electoral campaigns in the past. Notwithstanding the diverse ideological moorings of Awami League and the opposition coalition, the cleavages clearly deepen vis-a vis there position India. More often than anxiety about Indian intention towards Bangladesh leads to concurrent perceptions that are varied in nature. Given the pointless rhetoric used by Indian authorities toward the migrant community and the attempts to execute the NRC, these perceptions derived from prior experience have been further reinforced in the present.

In August 2024, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted following widespread protests, leading to the establishment of an interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammed Yunus. This political shift has promoted Bangladesh to formally request India's assistance in extraditing Hasina to face legal proceedings related to charges of crimes against humanity and other allegations. India has acknowledged the request but has not yet provided a formal response. Even while there are several internal and external factors influencing how the two countries relate to one another, it is undeniable that they nevertheless provide each other a decent neighborhood, with ample opportunity to foster a cordial environment of peace and harmony.

During the period when Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the Bangladeshi economist and founder of Grameen Bank, was active in political and social landscape, the relations between India and Bangladesh were shaped by multiple dynamics involving economic collaboration shared cultural ties, and political challenges. Dr. Yunus is not a political leader but has been influential due to his Nobel Peace Prize winning work on microfinance and poverty alleviation. His period of prominence overlaps with key phases in Indo- Bangladesh relations. Yunus is not directly involved in State-to-state relations, his advocacy for economic empowerment complemented the broader themes of India-Bangladesh relations during his period of influence. His work symbolized the potential for grassroots cooperation to enhance the bilateral relationship.

Political changes and Diplomatic Tensions

In August 2024, Bangladesh underwent a significant political transition with the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a longstanding ally of India. She was succeeded by an interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. This shift has led to a reassessment of diplomatic relations between two nations. The interim government has expressed intentions to renegotiate existing agreements, including those related to energy imports from India. The interim government has indicated plans to seek the extradition of Sheikh Hasina from India, where she has taken refuge. This move could



further strain diplomatic relations, especially considering India's historical support for Hasina. The dynamics surrounding allegations against Bangladesh's interim leadership, particularly regarding the protection of Hindu minorities, are complex and often tied to the nation's political and social-religious fabric. In Bangladesh, Hindu minorities have historically faced periodic challenges, including communal violence and discrimination. These issues often escalate around politically sensitive times, such as elections, and can involve allegations of negligence or inaction by the government or interim leadership.

Economic and Energy Cooperation

Economic collaboration remains a cornerstone of India- Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia, with bilateral trade reaching \$14.01 billion in the fiscal year 2023-24. India has extended lines of credit totalling around \$8 billion to Bangladesh for infrastructure development in sectors such as roads, railways, shipping and ports. Recent disputes have emerged in the energy sector. Bangladesh's electricity imports from Adani power's plant in Jharkhand, India, decreased by nearly a third in November 2024 due to payment disputes. The interim government has accused Adani Power of breaching a multi-billion-dollar agreement by not passing on tax benefits, leading to calls for renegotiation of the deal. Furthermore, India's export restrictions on staples sugar, wheat, rice, and onions have led to a surge in smuggling and illegal barter trade with Bangladesh. This illicit trade involves exchanging food staples for gold, distorting markets and undermining official trade efforts.

Geopolitical Consideration

The changing political landscape in Bangladesh has implications for regional geopolitics. China's growing influence in South Asia presents challenges to India's traditional sphere of influence. India's strategic interests in the area may be impacted by the position of the interim administration and any possible realignment with its neighbors. Bilateral relations are already severely strained by Hasina's stay in India, and the growing demonstrations in Bangladesh are just going to make matters worse. The political changes in Bangladesh have implications for regional geopolitics. Analysts note that the departure of Sheikh Hasina, who maintained close ties with India, may alter the balance of influence in South Asia, with potential openings for other regional players to assert their presence.

Diplomatic tensions about Hindu Minorities-

Security concerns have surfaced, particularly regarding the treatment of minority communities. Reports of attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh have led to protests in New Delhi, with demonstrators urging intervention to protect minority rights. In the aftermath of Hasina's ousting, reports have emerged of



violence against Hindu minorities in Bangladesh. Incidents include attacks on Hindu houses and temples, prompting concerns from both local communities and the Indian government. Bangladesh has confirmed some incidents of communal violence targeting minorities, mainly Hindus, following the political transition. These incidents have led to diplomatic tensions between the two nations. In early December 2024, Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala, India, was attacked by protesters, further escalating the situation. Additionally, hundreds of protesters in New Delhi have demonstrated against the reported attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh, calling for international intervention. The arrest of monk Chinmoy Krishna Das, the situation has become tense which holding a protest demanding minority rights in Bangladesh. India's strategic interests in the area may be impacted by the position of the interim administration and any possible realignment with its neighbors. Bilateral relations are already severely strained by Hasina's stay in India, and the growing demonstrations in Bangladesh are just going to make matters worse. The interim government in Bangladesh, led by Muhammad Yunus, has started its commitment to protecting minority communities and addressing the violence. Yunus has emphasized the importance of national unity and has criticized misinformation that may exacerbate tensions. High-level talk between Bangladesh and India have been initiated to address these concerns and work towards de-escalation. December 2024 both nations are engaged in diplomatic efforts to resolve tensions, and the interim Bangladeshi government is working to stabilize the internal situation and ensure the safety of all its citizens, including minority communities. The international community continues to monitor developments closely, urging both countries to uphold human rights and maintain peace.

Border Problem

The India- Bangladesh border, one of India's longest international boundaries, is under increasing strain as geopolitical instability in Bangladesh escalates. The porous frontier, spanning over 4,096 kilometres, has always been a challenge for India authorities. The recent political development in Bangladesh have brought focus on infiltration and smuggling along the India Bangladesh border. For India, Bangladesh is not just any neighbouring country. It's a strategic partner and ally crucial to India's border security, particularly in the north-eastern states.

Security Issues

Without a question, throughout the last 77 years of independence, India has faced significant security problems. China and Pakistan are nuclear-armed nations, along with India. South Asia is an area that frequently experiences violence and ongoing political unrest. One of the main motivations for India's



neighborhood strategy has been security. India has been attentive to and concerned about regional peace, security, and stability since the beginning of its existence. Security concerns between India and Bangladesh have a major impact on their political ties. Unless both parties are uneasy, the relationship's warmth and trust cannot last for very long. Large-scale smuggling between the two nations is possible due to the porous nature of the land and sea borders. A wide range of goods, including jute, rice, cattle, services, and human capital, are being smuggled through the borders, starting with weapons and ammunition. Since the BNP administration took office, a number of terrorist training facilities have emerged with the backing of anti-Indian fundamentalist groups including Islamic Oikya Jote and Jamait-e-Islami (Je).

In order to maintain Indian security, the northeastern insurgents brutally utilize Bangladeshi land as a safe haven for terrorist training and transportation. Bangladeshi land is being used by Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to carry out its heinous operations in India. Indian intelligence services claim that terrorist training centers in Bangladesh have been providing training to militants from the northeast. The army of Bangladesh helps and protects them. The level of familiarity between the two nations during Sheikh Hasina's second and third terms as prime minister is therefore highlighted by security cooperation. India launched an online system to prevent the smuggling of cattle and rice into Bangladesh and other neighboring countries. The smuggling of fake currency is another issue that is vital to India-Bangladesh border management.

Any discussion of India-Bangladesh security cooperation is incomplete without considering the China factor. Bangladesh's close defense relationship with China is another reason for concern. India has been wary of the Sino-Bangladesh defense relationship, and the purchase by Bangladesh submarines, arms from China hastened the demand by Security analysts of India to cement the Indo- Bangladesh ties. China is the only country with which Bangladesh has a formal defense cooperation agreement. The defense pact with China was hardly debated in the same manner as even the possibility of an agreement with India.

Illegal Migration from Bangladesh To India

India is often described as a land of migrations. The demarcation of border between India and Bangladesh is unclear because of shared history, similar topography, lack of natural markers and barriers and porous boundaries. As a result, the border cuts through the middle of several villages and in some cases even houses. Migration to India from neighboring countries, particularly from Bangladesh, border



states especially Assam and West Bengal, have seen shifts in demographic patterns. India has to spend a huge amount per year for sustaining a very high security alert to restrain any kind of disturbance including insurgent activities within its territory.

India has had several terrorist attacks to date, and it has been established that these assaults are typically carried out by terrorist groups with bases in nearby nations. In addition to endangering national security, illegal migrants are depleting the nation's economy and upsetting its social and political order. The problem of illegal migration in India was securitized and placed under national security regulations. The migrants' unauthorized crossing of the international boundary was seen as a threat to the Indian State's sovereignty and a loss of control over its frontiers.

Numerous political and economic factors, including social instability, economic stagnation and joblessness, political unrest or religious persecution, environmental crises, and demographic pressure, have pushed Bangladeshi citizens to migrate to India. Therefore, illegal migration from Bangladesh is more of a "self-rescue" migration, meaning that people are escaping political and religious persecution, hunger, and poverty. The growing trend of people trafficking is one of the detrimental effects of this movement for survival. Human smuggling and women's trafficking have grown significantly along the India-Bangladesh border in recent decades. Bangladesh is terrified that the NRC and CAA (Citizen Amendment Act) may cause Bengali-speaking people to leave Assam and cause another Rohingya-style disaster that the nation cannot handle. The relationship between Bangladesh and India is negatively impacted by this trend.

Here are some key reasons why a good relationship between India and Bangladesh is essential; Economic Cooperation; Bangladesh is India's largest trading partner in South Asia, with bilateral trade exceeding \$18 billion. Strengthening ties can enhance trade, reduce trade barriers, and promote connectivity through infrastructure projects like road, rail, and waterways. Joint energy projects, including power generation and cross-border electricity trade, benefit both countries. Collaboration in industrial zone, technology exchange, and market access can accelerate economic development for both nations.

Geopolitical Stability; Strong ties help maintain peace and stability in South Asia, countering extremism and fostering cooperative regional development. A good relationship with Bangladesh helps



India manage China's growing influence in the region and strengthens regional alliances. Collaboration strengthens regional organizations and enhances South Asia's collective growth.

Shared Resource Management; Both countries share 54 rivers, including the Ganges and Brahmaputra, cooperation is necessary to manage water resources sustainability, ensure equitable distribution, and address challenges like flooding and drought. Collaborative efforts are crucial to combat climate change impacts, such as rising sea levels and river erosion, which affect both nations. Joint initiatives in disaster management and environmental protection are needed for both countries.

Border Management and Security; Enhanced cooperation helps combat issues like cross-board smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal immigration. A strong relationship aids in resolving border disputes and ensuring the safety and development of border communities. Joint efforts to combat terrorism and extremism benefit both nations contribute to regional security. Cooperative measures to address migration, both legal and illegal, are vital for maintaining demographic and economic balance.

Cultural and Historical Ties; India played a pivotal role in Bangladesh's liberation war in 1971. The historical and cultural connections foster goodwill and mutual respect. Enhanced cultural exchanges, tourism, and educational opportunities strengthen the bond between the citizens of both nations.

Strategic and Regional Cooperation; Bangladesh provides critical transit routes for India's north-eastern states, facilitating economic and strategic integration. The idea of India utilizing a transit corridor through Bangladesh to connect its mainland with the North East region has been a long-discussed strategic and economic necessity. The "Chicken's Neck" or Siliguri Corridor, a narrow stretch of land in West Bengal, is the only direct link between mainland India and its North East region. This corridor is vulnerable to blockades and poses logistical challenges. Utilizing Bangladesh's road, rail, and waterways would significantly reduce the distance and cost of transport goods and people to and from the North East. Efficient connectivity would enable better integration of the North East's economy with the rest of India and enhance trade within the region. Improved connectivity would help counterbalance geopolitical influence in the North East, including China's growing footprint in the region. Enhanced transit facilities would also improve India's connectivity to South-East Asia, aligning with its broader Act East Policy. Collaboration in regional groupings like SAARC, BIMSTEC, and BBIN also enhances collective growth and development.

Benefits for Bangladesh; Transit fees, infrastructure development, and increased trade volumes can significantly benefit Bangladesh's economy. Joint infrastructure projects with India would modernize



transportation networks in Bangladesh, attracting more investments. Cooperation on transit can lead to stronger and more collaborative relationship with India.

China's interference in India - Bangladesh relationship

China's involvement in the India Bangladesh relationship has been a complex and evolving factor, often shaped by its broader geopolitical ambitions, economic goals, and strategic interests in South Asia. While China does not overly interfere, its actions in the region have indirect effects on the bilateral ties between India and Bangladesh.

Key Aspects of China's Role;

China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, such as the Padma Bridge rail link and other initiatives under the Belt and road initiative (BRI). These investments have deepened China's economic ties with Bangladesh. China is one of Bangladesh's largest trading partners, offering duty-free access to Bangladeshi for over 97% of its products. Bangladesh has procured military hardware from China including submarines and aircrafts which has raised strategic concerns for India. China views Bangladesh as a key player in its strategy to expand influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Projects like the development of the port at Payra and potential cooperation on other maritime facilities are seen as part of China's "String of Pearls" strategy, which India perceives as encircling its sphere of influence.

China has shout to strengthen its ties with Bangladesh to counterbalance India's traditional influence in the region. This sometimes creates tensions or perceptions of rivalry between India and China in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's cooperation with China can sometimes be a leveraged as a bargaining chip in its regions with India especially on contentious issues like water sharing, border management, and trade imbalances. China has avoided talking overt stances on sensitive bilateral issues between India and Bangladesh, such as the Teesta River water –sharing agreement or the Rohingya refugee crisis. However, its presence as a significant third-party actor complicates the dynamics. China's growing influence in Bangladesh might indirectly challenge India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and efforts to maintain strong bilateral ties with Dhaka.

India has ranked up its own development assistance and connectivity projects in Bangladesh to counter China's influence. Both nations are keen to secure strategic goodwill, but Bangladesh has maintained a



careful balancing act between the two. Bangladesh closure ties with China could alter the balance of power in South-Asia, potentially reducing India's pre-eminence in the region. India and Bangladesh has recognized the need to work together on shared concerns, such as regional connectivity, counter terrorism, and climate resilience, which could mediate external influences.

China's engagement with Bangladesh is part of its border strategy to expand its influence in South-Asia and the Indian Ocean. While it has created opportunities for Bangladesh's economic growth, it has also introduced challenges for India's strategic interests. The onus lies on India and Bangladesh to strengthen their bilateral relationship, addressing their shared concerns while navigating external influences from powers like China.

Mass Opinion- Recent developments have significantly influenced public opinion in Bangladesh regarding India. The ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, followed by her seeking refuge in India, has intensified anti- India sentiments among Bangladeshis. India's support for Hasina as interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs, leading to a rise in nationalist and anti-Indian rhetoric. The establishment of an interim government led by Muhammed Yunus has further complicated relations. Yunus's administration has expressed intentions to rebalance foreign relations, potentially reducing India's influence in favour of other global powers. Additionally, incidents of violence against Bangladesh's Hindu minority have strained bilateral ties. India has accused Bangladesh's interim leaders of failing to protect Hindus, leading to diplomatic tensions. These factors have contributed to a complex and evolving perception of India among the Bangladeshi populace, with increasing calls for a more balanced and autonomous foreign policy.

CONCLUSION-

The study of India-Bangladesh relations clearly shows that in present international system, no country cannot live in isolation, it is always beneficial to develop workable relations with other countries and especially the neighbours. India and Bangladesh both are natural partners to each other. In this context, geography plays a very crucial role. For a stable and progressive South Asia, India-Bangladesh healthy bilateral relations are essential. Due to their historical, physical, and cultural proximity, the two nations are unable to avoid having important bilateral ties. Usually, between two neighbours, there remain many challenges and problems that is not only true for India and Bangladesh, but also for any other around the globe.



The current trajectory of India- Bangladesh relations is marked by growing mistrust and challenges. In summary, the relationship between Bangladesh and India is characterized by diplomatic strains, economic disputes, and social concerns. Both nations face the challenge of navigating these complexities to restore and strengthen their historically close ties. Focusing on areas of mutual advantage including commerce, energy cooperation, climate change mitigation, border issues, minority concerns, etc., both countries must place a high priority on resolving controversial issues and fostering trust. India's relationship with Awami League government in Bangladesh was strong, but another political party and interim government come to power, the bilateral relationship could face many challenges. However, the evolving political landscape in Bangladesh and regional geopolitical dynamics continue to pose challenges to the bilateral relationship. Stable relationship between two countries would unlock the potential for greater collaboration in regional and global forums.

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