

**09**

**COMMITTEE  
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(2024-25)**

**EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

# **Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship**

**NINTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

***DECEMBER, 2025/ Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)***

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**COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**  
**(2025-26)**

**(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

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# **Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship**

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 18 December, 2025*  
*Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 18 December, 2025*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**  
**NEW DELHI**

***DECEMBER, 2025/ Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)***

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## COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25)

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson**

### **Lok Sabha**

2. Smt. D. K. Aruna
3. Shri Vijay Baghel
4. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
5. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
6. Shri Arun Govil
7. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
8. Shri Navaskani K.
9. Shri Kripanath Mallah
10. Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
11. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
12. Shri Sanatan Pandey
13. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy
14. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
15. Shri Y. S. Avinash Reddy
16. Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
17. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
18. Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
19. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
20. Shri Akshay Yadav
21. Shri Naveen Jindal

### **Rajya Sabha**

22. Dr. John Brittas
23. Smt. Kiran Choudhry
24. Smt. Sagarika Ghose
25. Dr. K. Laxman
26. Ms. Kavita Patidar
27. Shri A. D. Singh
28. Shri Ratanjeet Pratap Narain Singh
29. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
30. Shri Rajeev Shukla
31. Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu

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17. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
18. Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
19. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
20. Shri Akshay Yadav
21. Vacant

### **Rajya Sabha**

22. Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla
23. Dr. John Brittas
24. Shri Raghav Chadha
25. Smt. Sagarika Ghose
26. Dr. K. Laxman
27. Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu
28. Shri Rajeev Shukla
29. Shri A. D. Singh
30. Shri Ratanjit Pratap Narain Singh
31. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

### **Secretariat**

- |                          |   |                             |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Shri Anjani Kumar     | – | Joint Secretary             |
| 2. Shri Shangreiso Zimik | – | Director                    |
| 3. Dr. Smita Singh       | – | Assistant Committee Officer |

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Committee on External Affairs (2025-26), having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Ninth Report (18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship.'

2. The Committee selected the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship' for detailed examination during 2024-25 and 2025-26. Briefing by the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on the subject was held on 11 December, 2024. Thereafter, the Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on 26 March 2025 and 04 August 2025. Further, the Committee heard the views of four experts on the subject namely, Shri Shiv Shankar Menon (former National Security Advisor), Lt. General Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd), Ms Riva Ganguly (former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs) and Dr Amitabh Mattoo (Dean & Professor, School of International Studies, JNU) on 27 June, 2025 in accordance with Rule 331 (L) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on 16 December 2025. The Minutes of the Sitzings of the Committee are appended to the Report.

4. The Committee wish to express their gratitude to the Ministry of External Affairs and the experts/non-official witnesses for placing material information as well as tendering evidence and views before the Committee.

5. The Committee place on record their appreciation for the assistance rendered to them by the officials of the Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee

6. For facility of reference, the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in Part-II of the Report.

**NEW DELHI**  
**16 December, 2025**  
**25 Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)**

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor,**  
**Chairperson,**  
**Committee on External Affairs**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS: AN OVERVIEW**

India and Bangladesh share a deep-rooted and multifaceted relationship, shaped by historical, cultural, geographical, and strategic factors. The bilateral ties, which began with India's crucial role in Bangladesh's liberation in 1971, have evolved into a strong and comprehensive partnership. From trade and connectivity to security and water-sharing, the two nations have developed mechanisms for cooperation that underscore their interdependence. From a foreign policy perspective Bangladesh is at the intersection of two extremely important pillars of India's Foreign Policy: Act East and Neighbourhood First. Moreover, Bangladesh holds strategic significance in the context of India's broader Indo-Pacific Strategy, given its pivotal location in the Bay of Bengal.

1.2 During testimony before the Committee on 11 December 2024, the Foreign Secretary articulated India's special relationship with Bangladesh by stating as under:

"...this is a relationship that has long been characterized by shared history and sacrifices, by cultural and linguistic bonds, by a very strong and close people-to-people connect, and a multitude of other commonalities. Bangladesh has also for a very long time been a top priority for us towards forging a stable, peaceful and prosperous South Asia..."

1.3 When asked about India's broad approach towards Bangladesh, the Ministry stated that India supports a democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh. With this objective, India aims at further strengthening relations with Bangladesh in the political, security, economic, strategic and cultural fields. India views Bangladesh as an important neighbour and development partner in South Asia. Maintaining security along the long border with Bangladesh and addressing issues of mutual concern remain our top priority. Our overall approach to strengthening and deepening relations with Bangladesh is people-centric and people-oriented.

1.4 During deliberations on 27 June 2025, one of the experts described the evolving situation in Bangladesh as under:

“India faces its greatest strategic challenge in Bangladesh since the Liberation war of 1971. While the challenge in 1971 was existential, a humanitarian and a birth of a new nation, the latter was of a graver, a generational discontinuity, a shift of political order, and a potential strategic realignment away from India. The event was marked by collapse of Awami League dominance, the surge of youth-led nationalism, the re-entry of Islamists and intensifying Chinese and Pakistani influence collectively marked a turning point...if India fails to recalibrate at this moment, it risks losing strategic space in Dhaka not to war, but to irrelevance.”

1.5 The Committee are however happy to note that the situation in Bangladesh will not descend into chaos and anarchy due to some very strong fundamental characters of Bangladeshi society and polity. The first is that the Bangladeshi identity is not solely religious, it has a strong cultural and linguistic Bengali identity. Secondly, Bangladesh has a mass based political parties with a tradition of old democratic or semi-democratic politics. And thirdly, a professional and a modern army which has refused to fire on its own people.

1.6 Considering the important role played by India in the liberation war of 1971, and close historical, cultural and economic ties shared between India and Bangladesh, the recent development in Bangladesh merits special consideration of the Committee. In view of the above, the Committee have selected the subject ‘The future of India-Bangladesh relationship’ for detailed examination and report.

## **I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

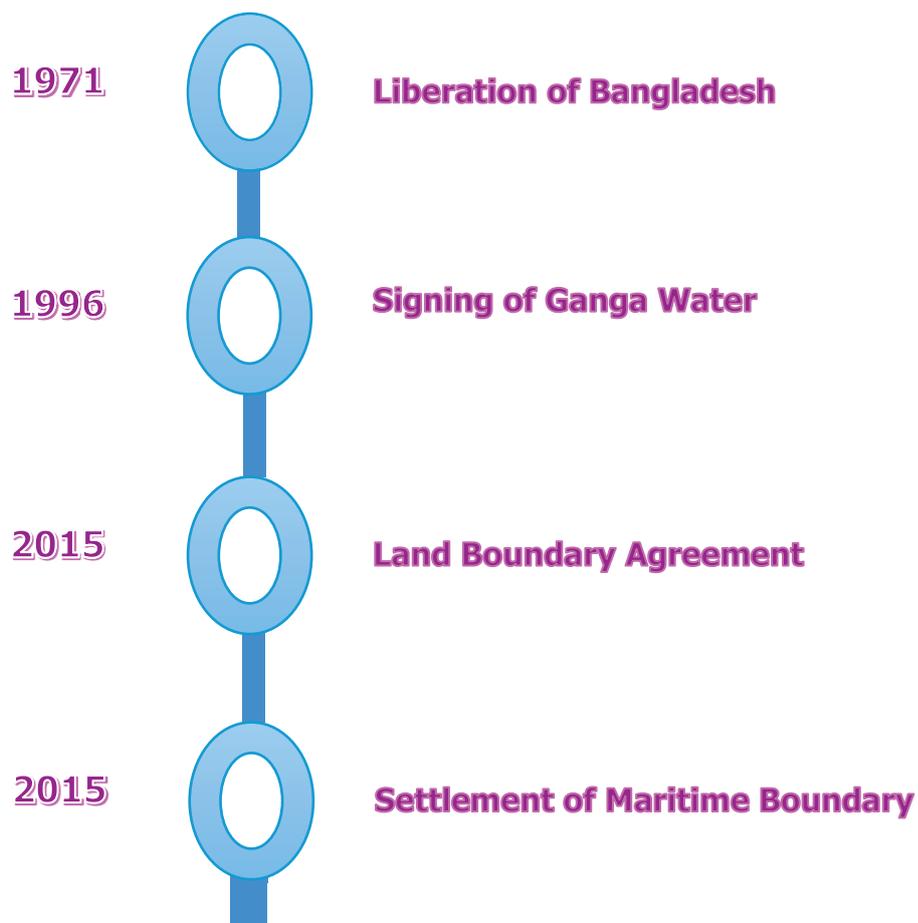
1.7 India-Bangladesh bilateral relations rest on a historical foundation on the values of shared sacrifices and martyrdom during the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. India was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh as an independent country in 1971. Since then, the two countries have witnessed significant evolution and transformation in their domestic polities as well as in the bilateral relationship.

1.8 When asked about the major milestones or turning points in the historical evolution of bilateral ties and historical milestones, the Ministry stated that there has been a progressive strengthening and deepening of India-Bangladesh bilateral ties since 1971 when the Liberation War of Bangladesh was supported by India in a whole

of government effort. The successful conclusion of the Land Boundary Agreement in 2015 resulted in settling the issue of enclaves and adverse possessions in addition to demarcating the land boundary. Settlement of maritime boundary in 2015 and signing of Ganga Water Treaty in 1996 are major instances of our approach going beyond the principles of reciprocity in fostering friendly relations between the two countries. Over the last decade, India has become one of Bangladesh's largest trading partners, and the two countries have steadily worked on enhancing connectivity, including road, rail, and river routes. Trade has grown steadily, and India has also provided lines of credit and grants for infrastructure and development projects in Bangladesh which have all been important turning points in the history of bilateral ties. Furthermore, India's engagement with Bangladesh has extended to development assistance, with India providing substantial lines of credit and grants for infrastructure and development projects. These initiatives have not only strengthened economic ties but also cemented India's role as a critical development partner for Bangladesh.

1.9 Based on the response submitted by the Ministry the major milestone in India Bangladesh ties can be identified as under:

### Major Milestones in India-Bangladesh Relations



1.10 The Committee wanted to know the manner in which the legacy of the 1971 Liberation War has shaped contemporary diplomatic relations between the two countries. In a written submission, the Ministry stated that the historic events of 1971 as well as shared linguistic and cultural ties underpin the diplomatic and people-to-people relations between India and Bangladesh. In 2021, India and Bangladesh celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bangladesh's independence, marking a momentous milestone in bilateral relations. The anniversary year also coincided with the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the India-Bangladesh friendship, during which both Nations undertook several joint celebrations, memorial events, and strengthened bilateral ties.

1.11 Further, both countries also commemorated the Vijay Diwas on 16 December 2024 by organizing reciprocal visits of veterans of armed forces from both countries in line with our long-standing tradition. India's continuous engagement with Bangladesh in this context honors the spirit and legacy of the Liberation War of Bangladesh and aims at ensuring that the sacrifices and martyrdom of 1971 are not forgotten. Both India and Bangladesh have prioritized remembering and celebrating the contributions of the Muktiyoddhas (freedom fighters) of Bangladesh. India has supported the war veterans through various initiatives, such as providing scholarships for their children and offering medical treatment up to INR 8 lakh for the veterans and their families.

1.12 On being asked about the impact of the legacy of India's role in Bangladesh's liberation on present-day interactions, the Ministry stated that India's role in Bangladesh's liberation continues to remain a symbol of solidarity, mutual respect, and shared values. The relationship has since become multi-dimensional, involving trade & economic cooperation, development partnership, connectivity, defence and culture. The legacy of 1971 continues to foster goodwill, and this has contributed to a sense of historical brotherhood, notwithstanding vested interests that have been wanting to create a negative narrative. There are annual commemorations like the Victory Day (December 16) where India's involvement is acknowledged by the Government in Bangladesh. At the same time, given the diversity of opinion that is natural in a large country as well as completing political compulsions, there are

multiple views regarding the Indian role, relative contribution and influence during the Liberation war.

1.13 During his testimony before the Committee on 4 August 2025, the Foreign Secretary reiterated the importance of the 1971 legacy by stating as under:

“Regarding the question on the legacy of 1971, I know this is a concern that is close to the hearts of several Members of this distinguished Committee and we have had the opportunity to discuss this earlier, what I would like to say is that our role in Bangladesh's liberation remains a symbol of solidarity between the two countries and also of mutual respect and shared values between the two countries. Even as the relationship is becoming more multidimensional and there is a new generation that is growing up in Bangladesh, we have no doubt that the legacy of 1971 will continue to foster goodwill and reinforce the sense of historical brotherhood between our two countries. We do have to tackle the vested interests that would like to pursue a counter-narrative to the spirit of 1971, but we continue to do our part, especially through annual celebrations and commemorations of Victory Day, 16th December, where India's involvement is acknowledged by the Government of Bangladesh. Even last year, even after the events of 5th August, 2024, we were able to actually conduct these events as well. We naturally have to take into account the diversity of opinion in any given country, the political compulsions at a particular point in time, but we will continue to highlight the spirit of 1971 as a very important issue in the bilateral relationship.”

## **II. BILATERAL AND DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT**

1.14 India and Bangladesh have developed a robust and structured diplomatic architecture, underpinned by over 40 structured bilateral mechanisms. These platforms facilitate dialogue, resolve issues, and promote cooperation across a wide spectrum of sectors including political relations, security, trade, energy, connectivity, and people-to-people exchanges. The institutionalized nature of this engagement reflects the depth, maturity, and strategic significance of the relationship.

1.15 At the apex of this framework is the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister of India and the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. It provides overall political and strategic direction to the partnership. Complementing this, the Foreign Office Consultations, led by the Foreign Secretaries

of both countries, serve as a platform for comprehensive discussions on the full spectrum of bilateral matters. Sector specific initiatives between India and Bangladesh, cover the breadth of bilateral cooperation including Security and Border Management, Connectivity, Trade and Commerce, Water Resources, Power and Energy, Development Co-operation and people-people ties. These mechanisms operate at various levels: Ministerial, Secretary-level, and Technical facilitating sustained dialogue, confidence-building, and resolution of sector-specific issues. Notable mechanisms include the Home Secretary-level talks (security and border management), the Commerce Secretary-level meetings (trade facilitation) and the Joint Rivers Commission (water sharing), many of which meet annually or biannually.

1.16 Significant outcomes from these engagements include the resolution of the Land Boundary Agreement, operationalization of cross-border power linkages, improved coordination on Border issues, and enhanced Trade and Connectivity initiatives. These forums enable continuous engagement, timely resolution of concerns, and sustained momentum in bilateral cooperation.

1.17 The list of institutional mechanisms established between both countries is placed below:

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Institutional Mechanism</b>	<b>Level</b>
1.	Joint Consultative Commission	External Affairs Minister
2.	Foreign Office Consultations / Meeting of Foreign Secretaries	Foreign Secretary
3.	Home Secretary Level Talks (HSLT)	Secretary
4.	JWG on Security and Border Management	Joint Secretary, MHA
5.	DG Level Talks (DGLT) between BSF and BGB	Director General
6.	DG level talks between Narcotics Control Bureau, India and Department of Narcotics Control, Bangladesh	Director General
7.	Police Chiefs' Dialogue	NIA
8.	Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG)	Joint Secretary, MEA
9.	Joint Boundary Conference	Surveyor General

10.	Boundary Conference between Mizoram Sector and Bangladesh	Director, Survey of India
11.	Joint Task Force on Fake Indian Currency Notes	Joint Secretary
12.	DG Level Talks between DRI and CIID, Bangladesh	Director General
13.	Army to Army Staff Talks	-
14.	Navy to Navy Staff Talks (NNST)	-
15.	Air Force to Air Force Staff Talks (AFST)	-
16.	Coast Guard to Coast Guard High Level Talks (HLT)	-
17.	Annual dialogue at the level of Defence Secretary	Defence Secretary
18.	Tri Services Staff Talks	-
19.	Joint Rivers Commission (JRC)	Joint Secretary
20.	Technical Level Meeting of JRC	Commissioner (FM)
21.	Joint Committee on Sharing Waters of Ganges	Joint Secretary
22.	JWG Meeting on India- Bangladesh Cooperation in Power Sector	Joint Secretary
23.	JSC Meeting on India- Bangladesh Cooperation in Power Sector	Secretary
24.	Joint Working Group on Cooperation in Renewable Energy	Joint Secretary
25.	Joint Committee on Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy	Joint Secretary
26.	JWG on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	Joint Secretary
27.	JWG on Health Cooperation	Joint Secretary
28.	India-Bangladesh Joint Agriculture Working Group	Joint Secretary
29.	JWG meeting on India Economic Zones (IEZ)	Joint Secretary
30.	Commerce Secretary Level Talks	Secretary
31.	Joint Group of Customs	Joint Secretary
32.	Joint Working Group on Fisheries	Joint Secretary
33.	Joint Working Group on Trade	Joint Secretary
34.	Subgroup on LCS/ICP infrastructure	Chairman LPAI
35.	Joint Committee on Border Haats	Joint Secretary
36.	Joint Shipping Committee	Joint Secretary
37.	Shipping Secretary Level meeting	Secretary

38.	JWG Meetings on Sub-regional Cooperation on Water & Power and Trade & Connectivity between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN)	Joint Secretary
39.	Standing Committee under Protocol on Inland water Transit and Trade (PIWTT)	Chairman IWAI
40.	Inter-Governmental Committee on ACMP	Joint Shipping Committee
41.	Inter Government Railway Meeting (IGRM)	Member (Traffic), Railway Board
42.	JWG on Conservation of Sunderbans	Joint Secretary
43.	Dialogue on Trans Boundary Elephant Conservation	Director
44.	Consular Dialogue	Joint Secretary (CPV)
45.	LOC Review Meeting	Joint Secretary (DPA-I)

1.18 When asked about the manner in which these mechanisms of high-level visits and bilateral dialogues have contributed to strengthening bilateral ties, the Ministry stated that both countries have enjoyed a high level of political comfort across the spectrum of different governments in India over the last 15 years. High-level visits and bilateral dialogue have provided an opportunity to take stock of the relationship and give political direction in advancing the ties in line with priorities and interests of both countries. The warmth shared by the leaders during high-level visits has been useful in resolving bottlenecks in the relationship.

1.19 The Committee specifically wanted to know about the most successful diplomatic initiatives between India and Bangladesh in the last decade. The Ministry responded that in the last decade, India and Bangladesh have achieved considerable success in a range of diplomatic, economic, and security initiatives. The Land Boundary Agreement, progress on water sharing with MoUs on Kushiyara and Feni, enhanced economic cooperation including settlement of bilateral trade in INR, road, rail, air and internet connectivity, and joint counter terrorism efforts have been key pillars in strengthening the relationship. Access to Chittagong and Mongla ports for transit cargo from northeastern India to rest of India via Bangladesh was operationalized in 2023. Significant connectivity initiatives like Agartala-Akhaura rail link, commencement of

cruise services, expanding trains and bus services, and opening of more land ports for customs and immigration have facilitated easier movement of goods and people. Additionally, India-Bangladesh power and energy cooperation has grown substantially, with India supplying 2650 MW power to Bangladesh through cross-border transmission links. India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline and Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant built under India's concessional financial assistance have also been instrumental in enhancing energy security of Bangladesh.

1.20 Successful outcomes from high-level exchanges are enumerated as follows:

- Land Boundary Agreement between India and Bangladesh: India and Bangladesh signed the LBA in 2015 settling the long pending issue of boundary settlement with the exchange of enclaves. Both countries have also settled the maritime boundary in 2015.
- Restoration of railway link between Haldibari (India) and Chilahati (Bangladesh). 'Mitali Express' as the third cross-border passenger train service connecting Dhaka to New Jalpaiguri through Haldibari-Chilahati rail link was flagged off on 1 June 2022.
- India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline: 131 km pipeline for supply of 1 million Metric Tonne Per Annum High Speed Diesel (HSD) has been constructed from Siliguri Marketing Terminal of the Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) in India to the Parbatipur depot of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).
- There are five bus services between India and Bangladesh including on the Kolkata–Dhaka and Dhaka–Agartala routes.
- Commencement of cruise services between both countries in 2019. World's longest river cruise "Ganga Vilas" passed via India-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route in its journey from Varanasi to Dibrugarh through Bangladesh in 2023.
- The Agreement on the Use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports (ACMP) was signed in 2015. Customs Notification to operationalise the movement of cargo using these routes to Northeast announced in April 2023.
- Second Addendum on Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade between India and Bangladesh was signed in May 2020 adding Sonamura- Daudkhandi

stretch of Gumti river (93 Km) as IBP route No. 9 & 10 in the Protocol and connecting Tripura through the inland waterways.

- Commencement of container and parcel train services between India and Bangladesh since July 2020.
- Four Integrated Check Posts (ICP) have been operationalized after 2014. These are ICP Petrapole (WB), ICP Sutarkandi (Assam), ICP Dawki (Meghalaya) and ICP Srimantapur (Tripura).
- Inauguration of second cargo trade gate at ICP Petrapole. This is an integrated infrastructure at the border which will reduce waiting time of goods, especially perishables, at ICP Petrapole. About 40% of India-Bangladesh bilateral trade passes through ICP Petrapole.
- Sub-regional connectivity in energy sector by tripartite agreement between Nepal, Bangladesh and India has been a landmark agreement.

1.21 During the sitting of the Committee on 27 June 2025, one of the non-official witnesses suggested that the joint demarcation process under the LBA should be brought to full completion to ensure long-term clarity and stability along the boundary. When asked about the current status of demarcation, the Foreign Secretary, during his deposition before the Committee on 4 August 2025, informed that:

“... The boundary demarcation has been largely completed along the length of the boundary which is close to 4,100 km. There are a few very small patches that remain largely in the Sunderbans area where due to very difficult terrain and the marshy nature of the terrain over there, we have yet not been able to complete it.”

### **III. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

1.22 The Committee have been informed that the current situation in Bangladesh is complex and evolving. There is uncertainty regarding the schedule of democratic elections. The political events of August 2024 have created significant instability and uncertainty with incidents of violence, attacks and intimidation of minorities, tribal communities, media groups, intellectuals, journalists, academicians, etc., becoming

the norm. Concerns have been raised about human rights issues, including restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly. The political instability has led to social unrest and protests in various parts of the country. Rising inflation and economic slowdown have also led to increased economic hardship. The economy has been experiencing a slowdown due to various factors, including the global economic downturn. The country's foreign exchange reserves have been declining, raising concerns about the country's ability to finance imports. Inflation has been on the rise and ready-made garment workers have been on strike disrupting industrial production. Violent clashes between different factions of political parties and youth have also disrupted normal functioning.

1.23 During their testimony before the Committee on 26 June 2025 two of the non-official witnesses, characterized the current situation as India's greatest strategic challenge in Bangladesh since 1971. Further, in his written submissions, one of the experts/non official witness highlighted five drivers of the current challenge: generational discontinuity, collapse of the 1971 consensus, rise of new political forces, rise of Islamic radicalism and strategic realignment with China and Pakistan.

1.24 Some of the Committee Members also raised issues relating to political asylum of Sheikh Hasina. In response the Foreign Secretary clarified the Government's position before the Committee on 11 December 2024 by stating as under:

"... I did make the point in my conversations in Dhaka that it is not just a question of modern Indian history, but if you look at India civilizationally, what we have done when we were faced with this situation is something we have done throughout our history – traditional or modern. Anybody who has sought our assistance at a moment of existential crisis, we have opened our doors for them and this situation was no different.

Does her presence in India have an impact? I should like to think that it does not. And I was very clear in sharing this with my Bangladesh interlocutors that her presence in India does not constrict our space for acting towards Bangladesh. If it had, then I would not have been in Dhaka day before yesterday to discuss the full gamut of our cooperation with them.

Should she be making the statements that she is making? She is making these statements by accessing her private communication devices that she has access to. Government of India does not provide her with a political platform or any

political space to undertake political activity from Indian territory. That is a basic cardinal principle that we have exercised with regard to other people who are in similar situations in India. We do not promote the practice of politics from our territory aimed against a third country.”

## **A. Impact on Bilateral Relations**

1.25 With regard to the impact of recent developments on broader bilateral relations, the Ministry stated that India has made every effort to insulate bilateral relation from the impact of recent political developments. To that end, India has continued interactions with the Interim Government and are also supportive of the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh. While communicating our support, the Government of India have underlined that our policies are people-oriented and not aimed at any particular political dispensation.

1.26 When the Committee specifically enquired whether there has been any significant departure in Indian policy and approach towards Bangladesh following recent developments, the Ministry stated that India’s approach continues to be based on constructive engagement. We have engaged with the Interim Government at all levels and have conveyed our commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties. This was reiterated during the visit to Dhaka of Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri in December 2024. As evidence of this, a new gate at Petrapole land port was operationalized in October 2024 and a tripartite agreement for transmission of 40 MW of power from Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian grid has been entered into for the first time.

1.27 The Committee enquired the reason India was not able to foresee the current political crisis in Bangladesh despite multiple media reports. In a written submission the Ministry stated that the Government of India regularly monitors developments in Bangladesh as a priority. In the elections held on 7 January 2024, the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina won 224 of the 300 elected seats. However, the turnout was only about 40%. Both with regard to the popularity of the party and developments thereafter, there is no mistaking facts/trends which speak for themselves. The Government remains engaged with all stakeholders, including the opposition parties

in Bangladesh to secure our national interests. However, as a matter of policy, the Government does not interfere in the internal political process or with the will and choices of the Bangladesh people.

1.28 Responding to the queries about India's approach towards relationship with Bangladesh in recent times, the Foreign Secretary during the Sitting of the Committee on 4 August 2025 stated as under:

"I want to begin by saying that there is no change in our overall approach in relations with Bangladesh following the events of August, 2024 and that policy can be summed-up by saying that we remain interested in a constructive, pragmatic, mutually-beneficial, and forward-looking relationship with Bangladesh. Having said that, we have engaged with the interim Government on several issues of strategic interest to us as well as issues related to the regional security. We, of course, have concerns arising from increased extremism, attacks on minorities, and the overall bilateral environment."

1.29 The Committee also wanted to learn about the outcome of the Foreign Office Consultations in Dhaka in December 2024. During the Foreign Office Consultations in December 2024, the Foreign Secretary highlighted India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh and reiterated India's willingness to build a positive and constructive relationship with the interim government based on mutual trust & respect and mutual sensitivity to each other's concerns and interests. During the visit, it was agreed to continue the engagement through relevant official bilateral mechanisms for various areas of cooperation. Such bilateral meetings have been held recently and continue to be scheduled in the coming months such as the Inter-Governmental Railway Meeting, Joint Group of Customs and DG Level Talks between BSF and BGB. Our concerns regarding attacks on minorities have also been acknowledged to some extent by the interim government subsequent to the FOC.

1.30 The high-level engagement between the two countries during the past one year *i.e.* 2024-25 is enlisted below:

<b>S. No</b>	<b>High Level Engagement</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place; Occasion</b>
1.	Hon'ble PM-Sheikh Hasina, Former PM	08 June, 2024	New Delhi, To attend the Swearing in ceremony of Hon'ble Prime Minister.
2.	Hon'ble PM-Sheikh Hasina, Former PM	21-22 June, 2024)	New Delhi; State Visit of Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India
3.	EAM-Md. Touhid Hossain, Foreign Affairs Advisor	24 September 2024	New York, On the sidelines of UNGA
4.	Foreign Secretary's Meetings with Chief Advisor, Foreign Affairs Advisor and Foreign Secretary	09 December, 2024	Dhaka; Foreign Office Consultations
5.	EAM-Md. Touhid Hossain, Foreign Affairs Advisor	16 February, 2025	Muscat; On the sidelines of the 8th Indian Ocean Conference
6.	Hon'ble PM-Prof Mohammed Yunus, Chief Advisor	04 April, 2025	Bangkok; On the sidelines of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit meeting

1.31 With regard to recent developments, during the deposition on 4 August 2025, the Foreign Secretary also apprised the Committee about the notable developments in the electoral and political landscape of Bangladesh. A new Political party was founded by the student leaders named the National Citizen Party. At the same time, the previously banned party the Jamat-e-Islami had its electoral registration reinstated, which will enable it to participate in the upcoming elections. The Interim Government had imposed a ban on the Awami League and it remains barred from the electoral participation for now. Continuing ban on the Awami League will obviously call into question the inclusiveness of any future elections in Bangladesh.

1.32 During the testimony on 11 December 2024, the Foreign Secretary reiterated the intention of the Government to engage with the Bangladeshi side by stating as under:

“I would just like to highlight the engagement that we have had with the Government led by Professor Yunus, not just for the record but also for the purpose of pointing out, or addressing, or responding to this concern in certain areas that we may not have recognised the Government or afforded legitimacy to the Government. Distinguished Members are aware that the Government does not go around giving out certificates of legitimacy to Governments abroad or political formations abroad. We indicate our engagement or we indicate our intent through engagement. And with the interim Government of Bangladesh, that engagement has been in evidence since day one. The Prime Minister was, in fact, the first world leader to congratulate the Chief Adviser upon his assumption of office. He reached out to him...The Prime Minister congratulated Professor Yunus. He had a very cordial telephone conversation with him. He then invited him to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Voice of Global South Summit that was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August online. Subsequently, in late September, the External Affairs Minister met with his counterpart the Foreign Affairs Advisor Mohammad Touhid Hossain in New York, and it was there that a decision was taken that we would also look at engaging through the institutional mechanisms that we have”

1.33 As regards the Ministry’s assessment of India-Bangladesh relations, it submitted that despite the challenges of a motivated and negative narrative of Bangladesh, cooperation under official bilateral mechanisms has continued along with various people-to-people initiatives being undertaken to forge a stronger relationship between the people of both countries. Bilateral trade has been moving in both directions with a major portion of the exports from India being essential commodities to Bangladesh which is crucial for inflation management in the country. Our support to the people of Bangladesh through medical visas and development cooperation projects has also been continuing. The current state of India-Bangladesh relations is evolving in line with our mutual interests and priorities.

1.34 The Committee also enquired whether in the opinion of the Ministry there exist any areas of tension in strengthening diplomatic engagements. In a written reply the Ministry illustrated that along with challenges arising along a shared border, an increased extremist rhetoric including distortion and peddling of anti-India narrative continue to be addressed through sustained diplomatic engagement. The tendency to address bilateral issues through media rather than through official mechanisms provides vested interests in Bangladesh an opportunity to distort facts that feeds into a wrong narrative. This has been countered by putting out facts proactively in public

and countering media distortions where they exist. In the course of past few months, tensions have been witnessed but have been handled diplomatically through regular engagement.

1.35 In the past, India enjoyed good relations with Bangladesh. When asked about key factors that contributed to these positive ties, and the manner in which we can apply those lessons in the current political and diplomatic climate, the Ministry stated that India and Bangladesh share a relationship that is founded on the shared sacrifices of the Liberation War of 1971, shared linguistic, literary, and cultural traditions, and close people-to-people ties. Building on these factors, India remains committed to working with Bangladesh on issues that benefit the people of both nations. India believes in building strong people-to-people connections and economic inter-dependencies, which remain the bedrock of the relationship.

1.36 The ties have been further enhanced through trade and investments, increased connectivity and support for public welfare projects based on the priorities of the Government of Bangladesh. These were based on mutual interest and respect for each other's sensitivities. Both countries benefited from robust cooperation on cross-border security and countering extremism and terrorism that contributed towards enhancing regional stability. In the field of development cooperation, India extended over USD 8 billion in Lines of Credit and offered grant assistance in supporting connectivity, infrastructure, energy, and capacity-building projects in Bangladesh. Further, the Government continues to engage with Bangladesh within regional mechanisms such as BBIN and BIMSTEC to align bilateral co-operation with broader regional aspirations.

1.37 While challenges exist in the present political context, the Government of India remains engaged with all democratic stakeholders in Bangladesh across the political spectrum.

1.38 Further, one of the experts during testimony before the Committee on 27 June 2025 expressed the view that the situation is not hopeless because of three main factors and it is not Pakistan with whom differences are beyond repair.

1. Bangladesh's identity is not solely religious; it has a strong cultural and linguistic Bengali identity.
2. Bangladesh has mass based political parties with a tradition of semi democratic politics.
3. Bangladesh Army is not the Pakistan Army and has refused to fire on its own people.

1.39 The Committee wanted to know whether the Ministry has explored the idea of creating a strategic communication body to handle anti-India narratives and perceptions, particularly in countries like Bangladesh. The Ministry of External Affairs responded that it remains the nodal body for addressing perceptions and narratives in Bangladesh through coordinated efforts involving other Ministries and agencies. Based on reports and inputs, including of trends in social media, correct facts are disseminated, and misperceptions addressed by publicity in social media, mainstream print and AV media and through official mechanisms. These efforts are aimed at addressing misinformation on issues such as water sharing, flood data sharing, border security issues and incidents, and sensitivities involving shared culture, language and religion. On all such issues, the Government expeditiously issues clarifications as necessary. Furthermore, inter-ministerial consultations are held to deliberate on cross-cutting issues, ensuring a unified and calibrated; whole of government approach; to matters of national interest.

1.40 About the major challenges in the India-Bangladesh relationship today, and how is the Indian government addressing them, the Ministry stated that the major challenges in India-Bangladesh relationship revolve around areas like illegal immigration, radicalization and extremism, regional security and extremist rhetoric against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India. These are sought to be addressed through cooperation with the Bangladesh government and dissemination of facts. The Government of India also remains concerned about the attacks on

minorities in Bangladesh. This has been taken up at different levels. Additionally, border security issues, including cross-border trafficking, drug smuggling and human trafficking remain significant challenges that are being addressed through mechanisms created for the purpose. There are also challenges posed by the activities of foreign adversarial actors which we are addressing through increasing our linkages and creating a larger constituency of stakeholders in a bilateral relationship.

1.41 Among the issues between India and Bangladesh is also the sharing of river waters, particularly the Teesta River, which is being addressed through institutionalised mechanisms for discussion of water issues. The Indian government has been addressing these issues through diplomatic dialogue, increasing border surveillance, economic cooperation, and regional partnerships. The emphasis on people-to-people ties, cultural diplomacy, and mutual economic benefits has helped manage tensions. Through multilateral forums and regional security cooperation, India is seeking to engage Bangladesh on matters of mutual security and regional stability.

## **B. Protection of Minorities and Human Rights Concerns**

1.42 In light of recent incidents of attack on minorities and religious places, when asked about the manner in which the Ministry has communicated its concerns, it responded that they closely follow developments in Bangladesh on the issue of minorities. The expectations of the Government of India regarding the need to ensure safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in Bangladesh have been conveyed and reiterated to the authorities of the Interim Government of Bangladesh on various occasions including at the highest level. External Affairs Minister too had raised the issue of attacks on minorities in his address to the Parliament on 6 August 2024. Our High Commission in Dhaka continues to monitor the situation closely and engages with the Bangladesh authorities as required. Concerns regarding attacks on minorities were reiterated to Bangladesh side during visit of Foreign Secretary to Dhaka on 9 December, 2024.

1.43 India's expectations regarding the need to ensure safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in Bangladesh have been conveyed and reiterated to the authorities of the Interim Government of Bangladesh on various

occasions, most recently during EAM's bilateral meeting with Foreign Affairs Adviser of Bangladesh on the sidelines of 8<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference in Muscat. In his visit to Bangladesh on 9 December 2024, Foreign Secretary also raised the matter with the concerned authorities in Bangladesh. Subsequently, on December 10, 2024, the Government of Bangladesh announced that 70 people had been arrested in 88 cases related to attacks against minorities. The Government of India has consistently reiterated that the Government of Bangladesh takes concrete steps to protect the rights of minorities, ensure their political and social inclusion, and promote a culture of tolerance and coexistence. The Government of Bangladesh has not only not acknowledged the systematic persecution of minorities but has also sought to downplay the scale and nature of violence against the Hindus since August 2024. Chief Adviser Md. Yunus along with other Advisers term the reports of atrocities against minorities in Bangladesh as media exaggeration and have tried to justify them as not communal but as 'political killings' of the Awami Leaguers.

1.44 On 12 January 2025, the Office of Chief Adviser released a Press Statement that police investigation has found that over 98% of attacks on minorities from a total of 1415 incidents that were verified between 4-20 August, 2024 were "politically motivated" and "did not have any communal agenda". While there have been some arrests, serious actions against perpetrators of the violence has not yet been taken, even as incidents of attack on minorities and their places of worship continue to be reported in Bangladesh. The Government of India is continuously monitoring the situation with regard to the security and safety of minorities in Bangladesh. We have repeatedly called upon the interim Government of Bangladesh to bring to justice the perpetrators of killings, arson and violence against minorities, including Hindus.

1.45 As regards the response of the Government of Bangladesh, the Ministry stated that the Interim Government has sought to downplay incidents of attack on minorities, calling them politically motivated and as media exaggerations. We have clearly shared our expectations with the Interim Government for the safety and security of all minorities, including Hindus. India continues to remain engaged with the Bangladesh side for the safety, security and welfare of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh.

1.46 The Committee desired to know about specific diplomatic measures taken to address the protection of minority rights in Bangladesh, the Ministry stated that it closely follows developments in Bangladesh on the issue of minorities. The expectations of the Government of India regarding the need for Bangladesh to ensure the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in Bangladesh have been conveyed and reiterated to the authorities of the Interim Government on various occasions including at the highest level. Our High Commission in Dhaka continues to monitor the situation closely and engages with the Bangladesh authorities as required.

1.47 On being asked about the outcomes of the diplomatic steps, the Ministry stated that India has conveyed to Bangladesh in clear terms including at the highest level, its expectation that the Government of Bangladesh would ensure the safety and security of minorities, including by thoroughly investigating the cases of atrocities committed against them. Till 18 May 2025, 2446 attacks against minorities have been reported. After FS raised the issue with Bangladesh side during the FoC, 70 arrests have been made and 88 cases have been filed in December 2024 with regard to attacks against minorities. Till January 2025, police investigations have been able to verify 1254 incidents, of which over 98% incidents were deemed to be political in nature. Our High Commission in Dhaka continues to monitor the situation closely and engages with the Bangladesh authorities as required.

1.48 As regards the impact of domestic political and social issues in Bangladesh, such as the treatment of minorities, on bilateral relations, the Ministry replied that India has continued to engage with Interim Government on all issues of interest which include border security, treatment of minorities etc. Issues of mutual interest between the two countries are resolved bilaterally through constructive discussions.

#### **IV. Regional Cooperation and Multilateral Frameworks**

1.49 The Ministry stated that Bangladesh plays a key role in India's broader strategic vision for both South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region, largely due to its geographic location, economic potential, and shared security interests. India seeks to enhance connectivity across South Asia, and Bangladesh plays a critical role in regional

transport and energy links. Projects like the India-Bangladesh rail and road links, and energy cooperation (including cross-border electricity supply), are crucial for regional integration. Bangladesh's location in the Bay of Bengal makes it strategically important for India's broader Indo-Pacific strategy, which emphasizes stability, security, and prosperity of the region. India has been working to increase engagement with countries in the Indo-Pacific, and Bangladesh, as a key regional partner, plays a role in this larger vision.

1.50 When the Committee enquired about specific strategic and security interests link India and Bangladesh in the larger regional context, in a written submission the Ministry submitted that the strategic and security interests of India and Bangladesh are influenced by the broader regional context of changing geopolitics of the Indian Ocean. Both countries have a shared interest in confronting threats from extremist groups operating in the region, including those with links to transnational terrorist networks. The border between the two countries presents challenges related to illegal immigration, smuggling, and cross-border crimes. Combating these challenges in addition to having secure maritime routes in Indian Ocean is crucial for maintaining vital trade and economic links. Bangladesh is also geographically located at the centre of South Asia's convergence with South East Asia and its strategic location can play a role in ensuring access of the sea to the landlocked northeastern part of India.

1.51 Beyond bilateral engagement, our regional cooperation groupings such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation or BIMSTEC has also offered a promising avenue to deepen connectivity, boost trade, and enrich cultural and people to people exchange with Bangladesh. Regarding the role of regional organizations like (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) play in shaping the India-Bangladesh relationship, the Ministry submitted that Bangladesh is a member of several regional forums like SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). India and Bangladesh have enjoyed a warm and cordial relationship in these multilateral and regional forums and have enjoyed each other's

support in candidatures and policy positions. Bangladesh hosts the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka and is a strategic partner of India under Connectivity and Trade Pillars of BIMSTEC. Bangladesh is going to assume the presidency of BIMSTEC once Thailand passes it over and is crucial for achieving tangible progress on regional cooperation under BIMSTEC.

1.52 As regards collaboration between India and Bangladesh towards addressing shared concerns like climate change, maritime security, and piracy in the regional context, the Ministry stated that both countries have recognized the urgency of climate action and are working together on initiatives like the "India-Bangladesh Green Partnership." This partnership focuses on areas such as disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development. India and Bangladesh have been strengthening their maritime security cooperation through sharing intelligence and information on maritime threats, such as piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing; and conducting joint patrols in the Bay of Bengal to enhance maritime security and combat illegal activities. India and Bangladesh are actively participating in regional initiatives to combat piracy, such as the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). Their partnership in patrolling and surveillance in the Bay of Bengal is key to ensuring free and secure sea lanes, which are essential for trade and regional stability. Bangladesh has also joined the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Pillar of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) to cooperate under the umbrella of disaster management.

1.53 On increasing cooperation through SAARC and BIMSTEC, the Foreign Secretary during the meeting of the Committee on 11 December 2024 stated as under:

"...We have made it very clear to anybody and everybody in SAARC who is coming up to us with proposals for reviving it that we cannot have dialogue and terrorism go on at the same time. Until Pakistan changes its policy of cross-border terrorism as an instrument of State policy, there is no possibility of going forward with SAARC.

I did make the point also that BIMSTEC does pretty much everything that SAARC does and then some other things and since the organisation is headquartered in Dhaka, it would be useful if Bangladesh takes it forward. I must say that there was no pushback against it...."

1.54 On the Committee's specific query about how India plans to strengthen bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh in the face of regional geopolitical shifts, including China's growing influence in South Asia, the Ministry submitted that India's relationship with Bangladesh is independent of its relationship with third countries. The Government will continue to monitor developments having a bearing on India's national interests and will take all necessary measures to safeguard them.

1.55 China's increasing presence in Bangladesh, especially through infrastructure, military cooperation, and port developments, has been of concern. On being asked about the situation regarding the Mongla Port and Lalmonirhat Airbase, the Ministry responded that the Government remains watchful of Chinese presence in Bangladesh and the nature and implications of Chinese projects under implementation. With regard to Mongla port, Bangladesh signed a government-to-government agreement with China in March 2025 to implement a USD 370 million expansion project at Mongla Port. India has been ahead of the curve by financing a key rail connectivity project, the Khulna–Mongla railway line, to enhance the port's connectivity to the hinterland, which has been completed. Further, India has an Agreement with Bangladesh on the Use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports (ACMP) for transit access, to secure our interests. Regarding development of Lalmonirhat airbase with Chinese assistance, in a press briefing on 26 May 2025, the Director of Military Operations of Bangladesh Army clarified that there are currently no plans to upgrade the airstrip for military use.

1.56 When asked about the strategic implications of these developments on India, particularly in relation to the Siliguri Corridor, the Ministry stated that the Government continues to monitor developments having a bearing on India's national interests and takes all necessary measures to safeguard them.

1.57 While tendering evidence before the Committee on 11 December 2024, the Foreign Secretary stated as under:

“...there are a number of infrastructure-related projects that are underway in Bangladesh. Again, I would point out that these are not an outcome of the 5<sup>th</sup> August events. China has had presence in Bangladesh for quite some time. Chinese projects have been present in Bangladesh for quite a long time... They

have also made contact with the new authorities. I think there was a question earlier about the visit by the Jamaat-e-Islami to China. So, the Chinese are engaging all sections of opinion in Bangladesh ...”

1.58 In testimony before the Committee on June 27, 2025, one of the non-official witnesses emphasized the potential of leveraging sub-regional groups by stating as under:

“... I do feel Sub-Regional Groups can be leveraged. The BIMSTEC, with the help of ADB, has come up with something called the ‘Master Plan’ on transport connectivity for the entire region, which includes Myanmar and Thailand. I think that is a very good connectivity, that is a very good Master Plan. All the countries are on-board on that Master Plan. Even if there are difficulties in the bilateral relations, I think, using the platform of BIMSTEC, connectivity projects can be taken forward.”

## CHAPTER 2

### BORDER SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT

India shares its longest international border with Bangladesh, stretching approximately 4096 km, making it the fifth longest border in the world. This extensive boundary traverses diverse and challenging terrains- mountainous regions, dense forests, and vast riverine systems- adding layers of complexity to effective management and security. This border also touches five states of India: Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, West Bengal and Assam underscoring the critical importance of maintaining a stable and cooperative relationship with Bangladesh for regional security. The Government of India recognizes that the stability and prosperity of Bangladesh directly impact the security and socio-economic development of its northeastern states. Consequently, sustained engagement at the government-to-government level is a cornerstone of India's strategy to protect its security interests and ensure that strategic concerns are effectively addressed by Government of Bangladesh.

#### I. Border Security

2.2 Border fencing remains a key component of India's security strategy. On boundary fencing, the Foreign Secretary said on 11 December 2024:

"As regards Bangladesh, of the 4096 kms nearly 3231 kms is already fenced. About 689 kms remains to be fenced. 174 km of this area is pending that is riverine areas, therefore not liable to be fenced or it is not feasible to fence this area. May be, about 690 kms or 700 odd kms is an area where fencing can be done. These are areas where local authorities need to acquire land to enable fencing to be done. It is because these are also populated areas in certain cases."

2.3 On the issue of border security, during the Committee 's deliberations on 26 March 2025, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs further stated:

"In view of the deteriorating internal security situation, we feel an increased need for bolstering the security of our shared border. Therefore, border fencing has become an even more important area for us. We are, therefore committed to completing the border fencing with Bangladesh. Hon. Members would be

aware that the India Bangladesh border is nearly 4,096 kms long. It is the fifth-longest border in the entire world. Nearly, 3232 kms of this border is fenced. There is between 650 kms. and 700 kms. of the border that remains to be fenced and is under discussion and various stages of preparation and survey work in order for us to be able to fence this border. About 175 odd kms. is very difficult in so far as terrain is concerned and we have to find technical solutions for that.”

2.4 The India-Bangladesh border presents unique challenges owing to its varied terrain, which includes mountainous and riverine regions. When asked about primary challenges in managing the India-Bangladesh border, the Ministry stated that illegal migration, smuggling, cross-border terrorism and border disputes remain significant concerns, compounded by difficult terrain and political sensitivities across India-Bangladesh border. The topography of the India-Bangladesh border being mountainous as well as riverine adds to the difficulty of managing the border. Lack of employment and livelihood opportunities in the communities at the border makes them prone to resorting to crimes like smuggling and illegal migration. These challenges provide opportunities for cross-border movement of anti-social elements that are being checked through increased vigil of the Border Security Force (BSF).

2.5 Regarding the effectiveness of the cooperation between India and Bangladesh in addressing security challenges, such as terrorism, insurgency, and cross-border crimes, the Ministry stated that both countries cooperate in areas like intelligence sharing, border management, and countering cross-border terrorism, which has been a significant concern for India. India has worked with Bangladesh on joint operations against terrorism and extremist activities. Border guarding forces from both countries have a long-standing practice of joint patrols, especially in areas like riverine regions where border security is difficult. Regular meetings, border talks, and joint working groups are established to address border disputes, manage humanitarian concerns, and maintain peace along the border. To prevent miscommunication or accidental escalation, the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) have direct communication lines (hotlines) to address issues like cross-border firing or border violations in real time and also share details of hideout camps of insurgent groups with each other.

2.6 The Committee specifically enquired about the role played by the Border Security Force (BSF) in this cooperation, and scope for improvements needed in border management mechanisms. In a written reply, the Ministry submitted that BSF plays a crucial role in protecting the India-Bangladesh border as it is primarily responsible for guarding and securing the 4,096 Km border between the two countries. It is responsible for conducting patrols and monitoring along the border to prevent illegal crossings and overseeing the construction and maintenance of border fences and pillars. BSF also plays a role in curbing cross-border smuggling of goods like drugs, weapons, livestock, and contraband. BSF coordinates with Indian intelligence agencies to track and prevent cross-border terrorism and the movement of militants or extremists from Bangladesh into India. BSF also plays a role in facilitating border trade, particularly through designated trade zones where goods flow between India and Bangladesh.

2.7 The use of enhanced fencing and surveillance infrastructure, such as drones, motion sensors, cameras, and satellite surveillance, which is under implementation will contribute to the BSF's ability to monitor large sections of the border remotely, and help identify illegal crossings or suspicious activities, especially in areas where physical patrolling is challenging.

2.8 Enumerating the specific measures that have been taken to address cross-border security issues, the Ministry submitted that the Government is undertaking a comprehensive approach in dealing with cross-border security issues with Bangladesh in coordination with State Governments of northeastern States, border guarding agencies, central investigative agencies and law enforcement authorities. As a result of the Government's actions, 14 terrorists affiliated with Ansarullah Bangla Team (a wing of Al Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent) have been arrested by State Government of Assam since December 2024 in joint operations with police and state agencies. Several illegal Bangladesh nationals have been detained by the northeastern states, and narcotics amounting to 12,300 kg have been seized owing to high security alert at the borders in recent months. The increased surveillance by border guarding forces has resulted in hindering cross-border criminal activities.

2.9 With regard to collaboration on counter-terrorism efforts, particularly in tackling extremist groups with transnational links, the Ministry stated that India and Bangladesh cooperate through intelligence-sharing mechanisms to track and combat terrorist activities, especially those involving cross-border terrorism. Both countries have been regularly engaging through relevant bilateral mechanisms to share actionable intelligence for collaboration on counter-terrorism and extremism. Border Security Force from India and the Border Guard Bangladesh have regularly coordinated to monitor movements along the border and prevent infiltration by terrorist groups. Additionally, they've worked together to prevent the use of the border for trafficking arms, drugs, and other illicit materials. The two countries have also worked on legal frameworks to make it easier to track and prosecute terror financing, money laundering, and related crimes.

2.10 On the Committee's query whether there exist specific bilateral mechanisms or task forces to share intelligence and coordinate on counter terrorism operations, the Ministry replied that discussions to cooperate in counter terrorism are undertaken through the Joint Working Group on Security and Border Management led by Ministry of Home Affairs, DG Level Talks between BSF and BGB, Joint Task Force on fake currency and other relevant mechanisms.

2.11 The Committee were keen to know how has the security cooperation between India and Bangladesh evolved in response to regional security challenges, including the situation in Myanmar and other areas of instability in South Asia. The Ministry responded that both countries work together on issues like border security and refugee management, particularly concerning displaced populations from conflict areas of Myanmar. Ensuring stability in these areas reduces the risk of social unrest and humanitarian crises spilling over into neighbouring regions. India and Bangladesh collaborate through intelligence sharing related to security threats in the region including mass movement of people. India has assisted Bangladesh in providing facilities for displaced population from Myanmar who have sought refuge in Bangladesh.

2.12 Further, there is active cooperation between various agencies of both countries working jointly to combat illicit drug trafficking, fake currency, and human trafficking, among other issues. This includes the regular meetings of bilateral institutional mechanisms such as the Joint Working Group on Security and Border Management led by Ministry of Home Affairs, DG Level Talks between BSF and BGB, and the Joint Task Force on fake currency.

2.13 While tendering evidence before the Committee, the Foreign Secretary on 4 August 2025 also added as under:

“With regard to security cooperation between the two countries, as I said, we have engagement largely on the security issues between the BSF and the BGB, and the two forces engage in, quite apart from border management and countering cross-border terrorism, intelligence cooperation, and we have, in fact, worked through joint operations against terrorism and extremist activities. The DG-BSF and DG-BGB-level talks are useful in this regard, and we will continue to take this forward.”

2.14 The security of India’s northeastern states is intricately linked to developments along the Bangladesh border. When asked about the ramifications of the current state of India-Bangladesh relations on the Northeast region of India, the Ministry responded that the Government is aware of the security implications for India’s northeastern states, given the geographical proximity and existing cross-border connectivity and trade linkages with Bangladesh. While ensuring security, the Government is keen to foster economic growth in the Northeastern region and has made efforts to enhance connectivity of Northeastern states to the rest of the states of India and also with the broader region. Even as local developments are monitored closely, bilateral issues pertaining to security and border management, trade and connectivity with the Northeast States are discussed with Bangladesh through high-level engagements and also through relevant bilateral institutional mechanisms.

## **II. ROLE OF BORDERING STATES**

2.15 On the Committee’s specific query about the role played by state Governments, particularly those bordering Bangladesh in influencing India’s diplomatic approach

toward Bangladesh, the Ministry stated that there are five Indian states bordering Bangladesh – West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. These states have a bearing on India’s diplomatic approach toward Bangladesh due to their geographic proximity, cultural ties, and cross-border socio-economic interdependence. While foreign policy remains the prerogative of the Union Government, these states are being consulted for their views/concerns on relevant bilateral issues.

2.16 The Foreign Secretary during the testimony on 4 August, 2025 further added:

“On the significance of relations with Bangladesh for the States that border Bangladesh, it is of high priority for us. We worked with the Ministry for the Development of North-East Regions. On these, I have personally spoken individually to the Chief Secretaries of all of these States to keep them posted vis-à-vis Bangladesh and what the impacts of those actions might be. For those States, we also have within the Ministry of External Affairs, a State’s Division which undertakes the task of regular coordination wherever it is necessary including on trade related matters.”

2.17 Regarding the mechanisms to integrate the perspectives of State Governments into national foreign policy, the Ministry stated that there are various formal mechanisms for State Governments to convey their views/priorities regarding policy making process concerning Bangladesh. The North Eastern Council (NEC) facilitates coordination between Northeastern states and the Central government, including on matters impacting cross-border relations with Bangladesh. The NITI Aayog’s Sub-Group of Chief Ministers (SSM) mechanism provides a structured platform for states, including those bordering Bangladesh, to contribute to national policy formulation, including aspects of regional connectivity and cross-border cooperation. India and Bangladesh have established the mechanism of DC-DM meetings to discuss localized issues of importance. Further, on specific issues that have a trans-boundary linkage, the concerned State Governments are consulted.

2.18 In states like West Bengal and Assam, illegal migration from Bangladesh is a significant issue. On being asked about the manner in which state governments manage this complex issue, especially in ensuring that illegal migration is dealt with humanely, legally and without undermining India's security concerns, the Ministry

responded that the matter of detection and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi nationals/foreigners' nationals staying in India are dealt by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The powers of identification and deportation of illegally staying foreign nationals including Bangladeshi nationals had been delegated to the State Government and Union Territory Government Administrations under Section 3(2)(c) of the Foreigners Act, 1946 (Section 7(2)(c) of The Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025). Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) acts in concert with relevant State governments and Union territories to identify and deport illegal Bangladeshi nationals.

2.19 The Committee further enquired about the number of Bangladeshi nationals who have immigrated to India in the past decade. In a written submission the Ministry stated that the subject matter is not dealt with by MEA. However, the matter of verification of nationality of suspected Bangladeshis in detention in India is dealt by MEA. 2369 cases are awaiting nationality verification by the Government of Bangladesh.

2.20 As regards the trends in immigration from Bangladesh, and how does India manage cross-border migration with respect to both legal and illegal immigration, the Ministry responded that the subject matter is not dealt with by MEA. However, within the subject matters dealt by the MEA, the Government seeks to effectively manage the border, support infrastructure development, and legal immigration (visits) through continued bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh.

## CHAPTER 3

### ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS

India and Bangladesh share a robust economic and trade relationship that has witnessed significant growth over the past decade. Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh in Asia. India remains one of the largest export destinations for Bangladeshi goods, particularly raw cotton, rice, and agricultural products, alongside electrical machinery, automobiles, and industrial chemicals.

#### I. Bilateral Trade

3.2 India-Bangladesh bilateral trade has registered a substantial increase in the last 10 years. A table outlining the trend of imports, exports and overall trade is reproduced below:

*(Values in US \$ Million)*

Financial Year	Export	Export Growth %	Import	Import Growth %	Total Trade	Growth %
2014 - 2015	6,451.47		621.37		7,072.84	
2015 - 2016	6,034.94	-6.46	727.15	17.02	6,762.09	-4.39
2016 - 2017	6,820.11	13.01	701.68	-3.50	7,521.79	11.23
2017 - 2018	8,614.35	26.31	685.65	-2.29	9,299.99	23.64
2018 - 2019	9,210.06	6.92	1,044.80	52.38	10,254.86	10.27
2020 - 2021	9,691.56	5.23	1,091.66	4.48	10,783.22	5.15
2021 - 2022	16,156.37	66.71	1,977.93	81.19	18,134.30	68.17
2022 - 2023	12,215.85	-24.39	2,021.24	2.19	14,237.09	-21.49
2023 - 2024	11,065.87	-9.41	1,844.76	-8.73	12,910.63	-9.32
2024 - 2025	11,455.99	3.53	2,005.43	8.71	13,461.43	4.27

3.3 During the sitting of the Committee on 11 December 2024, the Foreign Secretary mentioned the tripartite power sharing agreement between India, Bangladesh and Nepal to emphasize sub-regional energy cooperation. He stated as under:

“... in order to promote sub-regional energy cooperation, a tripartite power sale agreement has also recently been signed between India, Bangladesh and Nepal, which has facilitated for the first time ever cross-border transmission of 40 MW of electricity from the hydropower plants of Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian grid. This landmark agreement symbolizes our commitment to embark on a new era of energy cooperation in the region between India and its neighbouring countries.”

3.4 Despite the robust trade relations, several challenges hinder the seamless growth of India-Bangladesh trade. When enquired about the primary challenges hindering further economic cooperation, the Ministry responded that the trade between India and Bangladesh has been hindered by infrastructural limitations and imposition of tariff and non-tariff barriers like port restrictions and import duties by the Government of Bangladesh. Import restrictions on commodities like oranges, vulcanized rubber, bovine meat, frozen meat by Bangladesh have hindered economic cooperation. Bangladesh enjoys duty-free, quota-free access for a majority of its exports to India. The infrastructural limitations and movement of a large part of the trade through roadways increases per unit cost of goods transported between both countries. Land ports between India and Bangladesh also suffer from high congestion and last-mile connectivity issues with lack of access roads, warehouses and proper plant and animal quarantine facilities.

3.5 Regarding steps being taken to enhance bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh, the Ministry submitted that measures to resolve tariff as well as non-tariff barriers and streamlining trade between both countries are discussed under relevant bilateral mechanisms. The two countries are also discussing a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) which will provide a framework of economic cooperation as Bangladesh graduates from LDC status in 2026. Trade between India and Bangladesh denominated in INR started in July 2023. Efforts of Government of India are focused on removing bottlenecks in flow of bilateral trade and enhance opportunities of strengthening trade through connectivity and infrastructure up-gradation.

3.6 On being asked about the impact of this change on trade relationship between India and Bangladesh, the Ministry stated that Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia. In FY 2024-25, the total bilateral trade is reported to be USD 12.86 billion with India exporting USD 11.06 billion and Bangladesh exporting USD 1.8 billion of goods. Bangladesh has enjoyed a duty-free quota free access to Indian markets for most of its goods under the SAFTA Trade Agreement owing to its LDC status. This has offered a comparative advantage for its products. We are undertaking inter-ministerial discussions to redefine the bilateral trade relationship post the LDC graduation.

3.7 Explaining the reasons for strong balance of trade in favour of India, the Foreign Secretary in his initial briefing to the Committee on 11 December 2024 stated as under:

"With regard to trade and connectivity, Bangladesh is indeed India's largest partner in South Asia and India is Bangladesh's second largest trade partner in Asia. In financial year 2023-24, the total bilateral trade was 12.9 billion dollars, of which India exported 11.06 billion dollars and Bangladesh exported 1.84 billion dollars. The balance of trade is strongly in favour of India. In normal circumstances, this might be a cause of concern and grievance for the country on the other side.

However, we have pointed out from time to time that a lot of the import basket from India for Bangladesh comprises components and interim goods and products that go into finished articles and finished exports out of Bangladesh. So, essentially, they eventually contribute to Bangladesh's overall export earnings. The other large component of that import basket from India is made up by essential commodities which Bangladesh authorities need in order for their own inflation management efforts. This is something that we have continued to point out to them."

3.8 The Committee further wanted to know how bilateral trade can be boosted through enhanced connectivity, including road, rail, and port projects. In a written submission, the Ministry stated that economic cooperation between India and Bangladesh through initiatives like trade, infrastructure development (including ports and railways), and energy projects strengthens the broader connectivity within the region. Economic prosperity leads to stability, reducing the chances of conflict and promoting collaborative growth. For instance, India-Bangladesh connectivity projects,

such as the inland waterway agreement, and the running of more freight trains would serve to enhance trade and foster a community of stakeholders in Bangladesh. Up-gradation of road infrastructure connecting the border trade points to major trading centers will also ease logistics costs leading to increased bilateral trade. For enhancing trade through railways, enhancing of container train service, development of rail-based inland container depots, digitization for the simplification of procedures for seamless customs facilitation and encouraging private sector participation both in creating infrastructure and managing logistics operations could serve as catalysts.

3.9 Participation in regional trade agreements, such as South Asian Free Trade Area agreement (SAFTA), BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA), and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), has significantly contributed to the liberalization of trade between India and Bangladesh. The Ministry stated that India's participation in SAFTA has been instrumental in providing duty-free, quota-free access to almost 98% of the goods from Bangladesh. This liberalized trade regime has provided enhanced opportunities to Bangladesh for exporting goods to India. BBIN MVA is currently under finalization and is expected to streamline cargo movement between its participating countries. Currently, goods bound from Bangladesh to Nepal and Bhutan and vice-versa have to undergo trans-shipment at designated land ports. Once BBIN is operationalized, it will allow for seamless movement of vehicles in the region contributing to increasing trade flows. BIMSTEC offers a broader platform for economic collaboration among South and Southeast Asian countries. India's active role helps to promote trade facilitation, connectivity, and economic integration with Bangladesh as a key partner.

3.10 One of the main concerns raised by the Committee is the dumping of Chinese fabrics by Bangladesh in India and Bangladesh joining Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). In this regard, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting of the Committee on 11 December 2024 stated as under:

"It is a very real concern and from time to time the Directorate General of Foreign Trade also takes action on these issues. One point which I mentioned during my discussions with Bangladesh authorities was that we have taken note of the statements that some people in the current regime have made about the

possible intention of Bangladesh to join RCEP.. It is because essentially that will imply a free trade area between China and India. Given that Bangladesh has more or less free access to the Indian market, 98.50 per cent of their goods enter duty-free, tariff-free into India. So, that will come under a cloud. We have made that position quite clear to them.”

## **II. Infrastructure Development and Connectivity**

3.11 Over the last few years, infrastructure development and connectivity cooperation has become a central tenet of the India-Bangladesh bilateral partnership. The definition of connectivity has also been extended to go beyond physical connectivity to include energy and digital connectivity. Given their geographic proximity and shared socio-economic interests, connectivity initiatives have evolved from being mere physical linkages to becoming comprehensive frameworks for economic integration, regional stability, and people-to-people contact. For India, enhanced connectivity with Bangladesh provides vital access to the Northeastern States, the Bay of Bengal, and key trade routes in Southeast Asia, while for Bangladesh, it offers opportunities for increased trade diversification, investment inflows, and access to India’s markets and technological capabilities.

3.12 Consequently, several connectivity channels have been established between the two countries including rail links, bus routes, inland waterways, and sea ports for trade and transport. Connectivity between India and Bangladesh has also been mutually beneficial because of robust trade ties. The cross-border connectivity projects have enhanced movement of goods and passengers between both countries and facilitated easier delivery of services to people of both countries. Connectivity acts as a catalyst for furthering people-to-people relations by giving easier access to people and enhancing understanding of each other’s culture and values.

### **A. Development Assistance**

3.13 Bangladesh has been a recipient of robust developmental aid in form of grants and loans from the Government of India for its infrastructure and economic development. Close to 10 billion USD has been committed by the Government of India in form of developmental assistance to Bangladesh.

3.14 The budgetary allocation as well as utilization under the head 'Aid to Bangladesh' for past five years

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Allocation (INR in crores)</b>	<b>Utilization (INR in crores)</b>
2020-21	125	178
2021-22	300	218
2022-23	170	133.80
2023-24	130	157
2024-25	120	53 (till December 2024)
2025-26	120	-

3.15 The development assistance provided by India to Bangladesh has been centered around building cross-border connectivity, including power and energy connectivity, infrastructure up gradation of railways, roadways and ports, development of IT parks and building energy resilience in Bangladesh through green energy. High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) constitute an active pillar of India's development assistance. Government of India has funded 79 HICDPs including construction of student hostels, academic buildings, skill development and training institutions, cultural centres, and orphanages etc. in Bangladesh and another 16 HICDPs are being implemented, with all the projects amounting to over USD 50 million.

3.16 The status of cross-border connectivity LoC projects is given below:

**Rail Projects (EPC: Engineering, Procurement and Construction)**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Cost (USD million)</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1	Khulna Mongla Railway Line Project	378.92	Completed
2	Dhaka-Tongi Joydebpur Railway Line Project	301.10	40% physical completion
3	Kulaura Shabhazpur Railway line Project	78.10	55% physical completion
4	Khulna-Darshana Railway Line Project	312.48	Tendering Underway for EPC
5	Parbatipur Kaunia Railway line Project	120.41	Tendering Underway for EPC

6	Bogra to Saheed M Monsur Ali Station (Sirajganj) Railway Line project	379.29	Tendering Underway for EPC
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### Road and Highway projects

S. No.	Project	Project Cost (USD million)	Current Status
1	Procurement of 500 Trucks for BRTC	8.79	Completed
2	Procurement of Double Decker & Single Decker Buses for BRTC	46.61	Completed
3	Improvement of Ashuganj River Port Sarail Dharkhar Akhaura Land Port Road as 4 lane National Highway	354.73	Ongoing
4	Widening of Ramgarh to Baraiyarhat Road Project	80.06	Ongoing

### Shipping Projects

S. No.	Project	Project Cost (USD million)	Current Status
1	Ashuganj Inland Container River Port Project	86.49	Tendering Underway for EPC
2	Upgradation of Mongla Port Project	530	Tendering Underway for EPC

### Power and Energy Projects

S. No.	Project	Project Cost (USD)	Current Status
1	Evacuation Lines at Rooppur Nuclear Plant	1.01 billion	90% completed

3.17 The following major projects have been completed in the last ten years:

- India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline
- Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant
- Agartala-Akhaura Rail Line
- Khulna-Mongla Rail Line
- Maitri Bridge over River Feni

3.18 Highlighting the significance of connectivity cooperation, the Foreign Secretary on 11 December 2024 made the following submission before the Committee:

“Bangladesh has been the recipient of very robust developmental aid in the form of grants and loans by the Government of India for its infrastructure development at uniquely concessional terms, and close to US\$10 billion have been committed by the Government of India in the form of developmental assistance to Bangladesh...Through our development partnership, we have focused on enhancing connectivity, including rail, road and inland waterways between the two countries, building power and energy facilities in Bangladesh, such as power plants and pipelines, the Maitri Super Thermal Power Plant, a 1,320 MW power plant which has been built in Khulna with Indian assistance, is operational and is supplying electricity to the Bangladesh grid. Similar examples of completed development projects are the Khulna-Mongla Rail Line and the Agartala-Akhaura Rail Line. We have also provided locomotives, buses, ambulances, brake vans, wagon cars to augment transport and infrastructure capacity in Bangladesh...

Over the last several years, the connectivity cooperation has also become a central tenet of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations. For us, we believe that connectivity is of shared mutual benefit and in particular it helps us improve our own access to the Northeastern States. Several connectivity channels have been established between the two countries including rail links, bus routes, inland waterways, seaports. There are five cross-border bus services that are functioning and there are three passenger train services by the name Maitri, Bandhan and Mitali. ”

3.19 The Committee were keen to know the manner in which India and Bangladesh are collaborating on infrastructure development, especially in sectors like transportation, energy, and water management. The Ministry stated that both countries have collaborated for infrastructure development through provision of loans and grants for upgradation of railways, restoration of pre-1965 rail links such as Haldibari-Chilahati, roadways, Maitri Bridge over river Feni, development of land ports and energy connectivity. Around USD 4.5 billion of the Indian LoC portfolio of USD 7.8 billion has been committed to Bangladesh for railway connectivity and infrastructure up-gradation. Cooperation in power and energy sector is crucial with major projects like a cross-border pipeline and a thermal power plant built under India’s concessional assistance. Both countries are also undertaking joint dredging of Jamuna and Kushiara rivers under grant assistance from Government of India for maintaining navigability in the rivers for trade and commerce under the Protocol on Inland Water Trade and Transit Agreement (PIWTT) signed between both countries.

3.20 The Committee also enquired whether new initiatives are being discussed or planned to improve connectivity through ports and waterways. The Ministry responded that both countries are discussing up-gradation of Mongla Port and enhancing inland waterways connectivity through operationalizing Route no. 5 & 6 from Maia (Indian side) to Sultanganj (Bangladesh side). This waterway route will shorten the travel distance between India and Bangladesh to a large extent and will provide more opportunities for export of construction aggregates from Pakur in India to Bangladesh.

3.21 As regards collaboration between the two countries in emerging sectors like technology, renewable energy, and digital infrastructure, the Ministry stated that India has a robust technology ecosystem, particularly in fields like information technology, software development, and artificial intelligence. Collaboration in these areas could boost innovation in both countries by knowledge sharing. Indian tech firms can collaborate with Bangladeshi start-ups to enhance skill-building programs and create a tech ecosystem. Both countries have been engaged in reciprocal visits of Startup delegations.

3.22 India and Bangladesh can also collaborate on solar power, wind energy, and hydro power initiatives. Transnational energy grids that link renewable sources across the two countries can help both nations optimize their renewable energy potential and ensure stable power supply. With India's growing renewable energy capacity, Bangladesh can benefit by importing clean energy, particularly during peak demand times. Both countries are also collaborating on improving their digital infrastructure and connectivity through UPI and Rupay Card.

3.23 Over the issue of impact of political developments in Bangladesh on India's ongoing development assistance projects, the representatives of MEA stated as under:

"..with regard to development assistance projects, we had faced a bit of difficulty in the immediate aftermath of the 5<sup>th</sup> August incidents when, on account of the developing security situation, many of our personnel working on development projects were forced to return to India. They have now largely gone back but the security situation is still fraught in some places, and we are seeking assurances from Bangladesh authorities for the provision of security at project sites and for Indian project personnel working on these projects. But more importantly, most recently, a team went to Dhaka to discuss our

concessional finance projects. We did a review bilaterally with the Bangladesh authorities and also to come to a mutually agreed roadmap for taking forward these projects.”

3.24 Regarding the review of development assistance projects, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting of the Committee on 11 December 2024 stated as under:

“On the question of review of development assistance and re-evaluation of projects, etc., I would like to say that even before the events of 5<sup>th</sup> August happened, we were undertaking an internal review of a lot of our development cooperation projects. This was a generic exercise being carried out because we did realize that our LOC portfolio needed to be given a once-over. There were many instances where lines of credit had been extended some time back, but contracts had not been taken up. So we were, in any case, doing a review of the LOC projects. In that context, our review of projects in Bangladesh is ongoing. We intend to complete all the projects that are currently onstream and maybe nearing completion or may have been completed substantially.

There are certain projects which have not started for quite some time, despite the line of credit agreement having been signed some time ago. We might review those projects. We have also told the Bangladesh authorities that we will be happy to discuss these projects with you in case you want to review these projects.”

## **B. Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement**

3.25 The Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement initiative holds significant potential for regional economic growth. The Committee enquired about the major hurdles that have been identified in implementing this initiative, and how can India help accelerate its success. In a written reply the Ministry stated that the BBIN sub-regional grouping between India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan aims to facilitate the seamless movement of goods, people, and services through safe and economically efficient road transport in the sub-region and to further help regional integration. The BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) was signed in June 2015. For the implementation of the agreement, the countries are yet to sign the required Protocols for Movement of passenger vehicles and cargo vehicles. India has been facilitating the BBIN discussions, which are under progress.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT**

India and Bangladesh share enormous cultural and civilization commonalities. The history of India and Bangladesh is intertwined with centuries of shared cultural, political, and social developments. The partition of Bengal in 1947 and the subsequent independence of Bangladesh in 1971 were significant milestones that shaped their contemporary identities.

#### **I. ROLE OF CULTURE AND PEOPLE TO PEOPLE TIES**

4.2 Regarding the role played by culture in cementing ties between India and Bangladesh the Ministry stated that the cultural connection between India and Bangladesh is rooted in a shared history. Language, literature, music, and art, including films, serve as major cultural threads connecting the two countries. Both India and Bangladesh take immense pride in their shared literary heritage through personalities like Rabindranath Tagore and Nazrul Islam. In contemporary culture, Bengali films from both countries serve as connecting links. Cultural celebrations, especially around Bengali festivals like Durga Puja, Poila Boishakh (Bengali New Year), and Eid also offer opportunities for cultural exchange. Culture played a significant role in linking the people across the border during the Liberation War of 1971 and continues to do so.

4.3 When asked about the role of institutions like the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Bangladeshi cultural organizations in promoting bilateral cultural diplomacy, the Ministry stated that the Indian Cultural Centre in Dhaka facilitated by ICCR and cultural organizations present in Bangladesh such as Shilpkala Academy play an important role in celebration of common cultural links between the two countries. The training programs at Indian Cultural Centre include Yoga, Kathak, Manipuri dance, Hindi language, Hindustani classical music. The cultural programs of renowned artistes of India and Bangladesh also contribute in promotion of people-to-people contacts. A dance troupe from Bangladesh named Guadiya Nritya Academy has also been

nominated to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> International Dance and Music Festival being organized by ICCR at Mahakumbh Mela. In addition to this, several dance troupes from both countries participate in festivals and dance workshops regularly.

4.4 As regards the specific initiatives taken by India to enhance cultural exchanges and cooperation with Bangladesh, the Ministry stated that cultural exchanges, through events such as art exhibitions, music concerts, film festivals, and academic collaborations, have been a vital part of India-Bangladesh relations. These events have been organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). Government of India has also launched a Youth Delegation program inviting youth from diverse disciplines to visit India for increasing engagement with the youth from Bangladesh. A 100-member delegation as a part of this program visited India in February 2024, wherein they toured prominent sites of academic/cultural interest in New Delhi and other Indian cities.

4.5 The Committee wanted to know about specific programs or initiatives being considered to strengthen cultural and educational exchanges with Bangladesh to improve people-to-people ties. The Ministry responded that India and Bangladesh, as neighboring countries, are bound by shared historical and geographical linkages. The bilateral relations are enriched by cooperation on cultural, educational, and people-to-people exchanges. The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre in Dhaka plays an important role in the celebration of common cultural links between the two countries. Its training programs include Yoga, Kathak and Hindustani classical music courses. In addition, the cultural programs of renowned artists of India and Bangladesh contribute in the promotion of people-to-people ties. A musical evening was held at Indian Cultural Centre in Dhaka to mark the 53rd anniversary of 'Maitri Diwas' on 06 December 2024.

4.6 Further, as an important youth connect initiative, India launched the Bangladesh Youth Delegation campaign in 2012 to attract the best of Bangladeshi talent, from various disciplines, to visit India. In its last edition, a 100-member delegation visited India in 2024, wherein they toured prominent sites of academic/cultural interest in New Delhi and other Indian cities, and called on Hon'ble President of India. So far, more than 850 Bangladeshi youth from diverse disciplines from across Bangladesh have visited India as part of this programme.

4.7 A nine-member Bangladeshi dance troupe, 'Kolpotoru', participated in the 'Bali Yatra Festival 2024' held in Cuttack (Odisha). Sahitya Akademi of India honoured Rajshahi University's Prof. Shafiqunnabee Samadi with Premchand Fellowship for his contributions to comparative literature in Bangla and Hindi. 'Priyo Maloti', a feature film from Bangladesh participated in International Film festival of India in Goa (Nov 20-28, 2024), under the 'Cinema of World' section. Two Bangladeshi groups consisting of 10 dancers and 3 artisans traveled to India to participate in the 38<sup>th</sup> Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2025 held in Faridabad, Haryana from 07-23 Feb 2025. A Bangladeshi cultural group participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> India-International Dance & Music Festival organized by ICCR (22-23 Feb 2025). Bangladesh youth and cultural groups have been facilitated to visit India in the last year, under various BIMSTEC initiatives as well.

4.8 On the Committee's further query about the way in which both countries are working to increase people-to-people interactions through educational exchanges, tourism, and cultural programs, the Ministry stated that Government of India has constantly worked to increase people-to-people interactions with Bangladesh such as increasing educational exchanges through provision of scholarships and tourism through gratis visas. Our Mission and Posts in Bangladesh had been issuing a large number of visas to Bangladesh nationals till July 2024. In 2023, 1.6 million visas were issued to Bangladesh nationals, more than 70% of which comprised tourism visas. In March 2021, India announced 1000 "Suborno Jayanti Scholarships" for Bangladeshi students and in February 2022, a dedicated website was launched for desirous Bangladeshi students wanting to study in premier Govt of India educational institutes, including the IITs and NIITs, and pursue under-graduate, post-graduate and M.Phil/PhD courses. So far, more than 900 scholarships have been awarded to Bangladesh students from 2022-2024. In addition, under the Muktijoddha scholarship scheme, 24,018 scholarships have been provided to wards of war veterans. Border Haats have been established on the border with Bangladesh in Meghalaya and Tripura for promoting localized trade among people living along the border area.

4.9 In addition to cultural exchanges, Human resource development and capacity building is a key component of India's development cooperation efforts in Bangladesh

through its several ongoing training programs and scholarships. Through programs like the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and ICCR scholarships, India has contributed to the capacity building of Bangladeshi professionals. India has been providing training to Bangladeshi officials from civil services, police, judiciary, and other professionals, at various premier training institutes in India. The Committee desired to know about the number of Bangladeshi students that have been granted Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships over the past 10 years along with its impact on bilateral relations. The Ministry informed that a total of 3058 scholarships have been provided to Bangladeshi students over the past ten years. Around 500 scholarships are being processed for the academic year 2025-26. The scholarships provided by ICCR have been useful in strengthening our people-to-people relations and providing opportunities to Bangladesh students to better know and understand India.

4.10 When asked about how can Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) courses and ICCR scholarships be further expanded to strengthen people-to-people ties with Bangladesh, the Ministry stated that human resource development and capacity building remain central pillars of India's development cooperation with Bangladesh, reflected through a range of ongoing training programmes and scholarship initiatives. Flagship schemes such as the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) courses and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships continue to enjoy wide recognition among Bangladeshi students and professionals. Notwithstanding the prevailing political situation, the substantial number of applications received for ICCR scholarships for the academic year 2025–26 underscores the deep-rooted interest and goodwill for India's educational and training initiatives. The allocation of scholarships and identification of target beneficiaries are periodically reviewed in close coordination with concerned Ministries ensuring that the programmes remain responsive to evolving needs and sectoral priorities.

4.11 Given its geographical proximity and cultural similarities, the state of West Bengal plays a crucial role in fostering stronger cultural links with Bangladesh. The Committee specifically asked about the role West Bengal can play in cultural engagement with Bangladesh. The Ministry stated that given shared linguistic heritage

and deep cultural linkages, the bordering States, including West Bengal, are well placed to play an active role in fostering cultural engagement. The value of people-to-people linkages in strengthening bilateral ties is recognized and various initiatives in this regard, including exchanges under the India-Bangladesh Cultural Exchange Programme, joint celebrations of Bhasha Dibash, and cooperation in literary, musical, and academic forums have been encouraged by the Government. The India-Bangladesh Vijay Diwas 2024 celebrations were held in Kolkata and Dhaka on 16 December 2024, underlining the shared history and mutual contribution during the 1971 Liberation war.

## II. VISA AND CONSULAR COOPERATION

4.12 The facilitation of visas and consular services constitutes one of the most visible and impactful aspects of India–Bangladesh people-to-people engagement. With geographic proximity, shared cultural heritage, and extensive interpersonal linkages, movement across the border remains a vital dimension of bilateral relations. As per the Ministry the number of visas issued by India to Bangladeshi nationals over the past five years are given below:

Year	Number of visas issued
2020	3,51,327 (Covid 19 year)
2021	2,80,545 (Covid 19 year)
2022	12,21,823
2023	16,02,163
2024	10,73,157

4.13 Following the events of 5th August, 2024 visa services were significantly scaled down, and consular personnel were withdrawn from Bangladesh. When asked about the current status regarding the easing of visa restrictions and the resumption of consular services, the Ministry informed that Bangladesh still remains among one of the major visa operations overseas for India. Among the visas currently issued, medical visas have been prioritized, accounting for approximately 80% of the total

volume. As of now, around 1500 visas are processed every day by Indian Missions and Posts in Bangladesh; the visa numbers can be reviewed based on the security situation in Bangladesh in consultation with the concerned GOI Ministries.

4.14 As regards the current visa issuance, the Foreign Secretary further added on 4 August 2025:

“Visas continue to be issued to Bangladesh nationals. Currently we are issuing somewhere between 1,250 and 1,500 visas per day. The bulk of these visas, the vast bulk of these visas is aimed at students and medical categories, patients needing medical care in India. Of course, this number is reduced from what it was before the events of August last year but that is on account of prevailing circumstances and our continuing concerns with regard to the security of our visa facilities.

4.15 However, despite these temporary restrictions, India has made deliberate efforts to keep essential visa categories open, particularly medical visas. One of the most sensitive issues arising from the recent developments has been the reduction in medical visa issuance to Bangladeshi citizens. India remains a major hub for medical tourism. Elaborating on the factors behind this reduction, and steps being taken to address the resulting strain on bilateral relations, the Ministry stated that the reduction in the issuance of visas is owing to security considerations. Bangladesh still remains among one of the major visa operations overseas for India. Among the visas currently issued, medical visas have been prioritized, accounting for approximately 80% of the total volume. Further easing of the number of visas will be undertaken in consultation with concerned Ministry after taking various factors into consideration.

4.16 With the growing influence of countries like China in the medical sector in Bangladesh, the Committee wanted to know about the strategies being adopted to counter this influence and strengthen India’s position as a preferred partner in healthcare and medical treatment without compromising our security concerns. The Ministry stated that the Government is monitoring such developments closely. While medical visas continue to be issued, in case of need, the same will be considered in the context of the security situation.

## CHAPTER 5

### WATER SHARING AND RIVER DIPLOMACY

Water sharing is a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh, with both nations relying on the vast network of trans-boundary rivers that flow between them. When asked the Ministry provided details about the various water sharing disputes between the two countries and the same can be represented in the following map:



5.2 India and Bangladesh share 54 trans boundary rivers and have signed a water sharing treaty on Ganga River, and MoUs for withdrawal of water from Feni and Kushiara rivers. Discussions are ongoing between both sides to finalize more water sharing treaties on Teesta, Manu, Khowai, and Dharla rivers. Any contentious issues with respect to water sharing are discussed in relevant bilateral institutional mechanisms.

## **I. Water Sharing Arrangements**

5.3 Regarding existence of a comprehensive framework for bilateral cooperation on water management, the Ministry stated that India and Bangladesh have a comprehensive bilateral framework for water management, anchored by the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), established in 1972. The JRC serves as the principal institutional mechanism for coordination to maximize benefits from common river systems, formulation of flood control works, formulation of proposals on flood forecasting, cyclone warning and irrigation projects. The Technical Level Meeting (TLM) of JRC serves as a platform for experts from both India and Bangladesh to engage in detailed discussions. The last meeting of JRC at Ministerial level was held in August 2022 in New Delhi. Joint Committee under the Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 monitors the flows and implementation of the treaty, sharing an annual report to both the Governments.

5.4 Elaborating the role played by the Joint River Commission (JRC) addressing water-related disputes and ensuring mutual benefit, the Ministry stated that the mechanism of JRC has been useful in addressing issues related to water sharing and ensuring mutual benefit. Regular meetings of JRC at technical level have provided a direction to discussing issues of water-sharing and towards achieving agreeable outcomes in most cases. Due to the successful conclusion of discussions under JRC, India and Bangladesh have expanded their cooperation in flood forecasting and warning, sharing of hydrological data for shared rivers and continued engagement on water related issues.

5.5 On being asked the Ministry also provided a brief overview of the Ganga Water Treaty signed between Indian and Bangladesh in 1996. The Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 is a bilateral agreement between India and Bangladesh that governs the sharing of waters from the Ganga River at the Farakka Barrage for a period of 30 years. Signed on December 12, 1996, the treaty allocates specific quantities of water to each country during the dry season (January to May) based on a formula outlined in the Annexure I of the treaty.

5.6 As regards the key implementation mechanism outlined in the Treaty the Ministry submitted that the Annexure I of the treaty outlines a water sharing formula for the dry season (January to May). If availability at Farakka is less than 70,000 cusecs: 50:50 split (Subject to the condition that India and Bangladesh shall receive 35,000 cusecs of water in alternate three 10-day periods during the period March 11 to May 10). If availability is between 70,000 and 75,000 cusecs: Bangladesh receives 35,000 cusecs, India gets the rest. If availability is 75,000 cusecs or more: India receives 40,000 cusecs, Bangladesh gets the rest.

5.7 Further, a Joint Committee is established under the Treaty to monitor daily flows at the feeder canal in Farakka and the navigation lock at Hardinge Bridge (the point within Bangladesh where flows are monitored), submitting annual reports to both the Governments. The Joint Committee meeting is held thrice an year, the latest iteration was held in Dhaka in May 2025. Any difference or dispute if not resolved in the Joint Committee is referred to the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission.

5.8 The Ganga Water Treaty between India and Bangladesh is set to expire in 2026. When asked whether the Ministry has initiated discussions on the renewal or revision of this treaty, it submitted that the bilateral discussions on the renewal of the Ganga Water Treaty are yet to commence. Inter-ministerial discussions to formulate Government of India's views have been held with participation of all relevant stakeholders from the Government of India and concerned State governments, including West Bengal and Bihar.

5.9 The Committee also wanted to know the manner in which India and Bangladesh can strengthen their cooperation on trans boundary water issues, particularly concerning shared rivers like the Teesta, Ganges, and Brahmaputra. The Ministry responded that strengthening cooperation between India and Bangladesh on trans-boundary water issues, particularly shared rivers like the Teesta, Ganges (Padma), and Brahmaputra (Jamuna), requires a multifaceted approach that emphasizes collaboration, transparency, and long-term sustainability. Given the significance of these rivers for agriculture, drinking water, and overall economic development, the JRC has continued to widen its scope for resolving issues through mutual consent. High-level consultations between Indian and Bangladeshi officials ensure that both sides remain

engaged and committed to resolving issues related to water management, including emergency plans for floods or droughts. Both countries also continue to collaborate on climate adaptation strategies such as flood management and riverbank erosion control.

5.10 The Committee further enquired about the key challenges related to management and sharing of trans-boundary rivers between India and Bangladesh. In a written submission, the Ministry stated that the key challenges in managing and sharing trans-boundary rivers with Bangladesh stem from the need to balance National water security concerns with regional development and ecological sustainability. Discussions on water sharing agreements between India and Bangladesh have to confront several challenges such as water availability in the shared basin due to climate change, increasing demands for irrigation, drinking water, industrial use, electricity generation, growing urbanization and legal frameworks of relevant stakeholders. India has always expressed willingness to continue discussions with Bangladesh under the relevant structured dialogue mechanisms.

5.11 During testimony before the Committee on 27 June 2025, one of the non-official witnesses suggested a way forward when she stated:

“On the water issue, actually there are 54 shared rivers between India and Bangladesh. So, we do not have to really get stuck only with Teesta and Ganga. We can do micro-projects in other rivers. We can do recharging of water and share our own technical experience with Bangladesh on how to rejuvenate our common rivers. I think, these are steps which can easily be taken. The big concern of climate change that we have as a region will also be addressed. All river water discussions should not get stuck on sharing of water in dry season. It is a very sensitive issue, but I think, we can proceed in an out of box manner in dealing with the rivers through border-related projects.”

## **II. Addressing Climate Change and Environmental degradation**

5.12 As climate change increasingly affects river flows and rainfall patterns, both India and Bangladesh face growing environmental challenges, particularly in coastal and flood-prone regions. The Sundarbans, a vast mangrove delta shared by both

countries, is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased salinity, and loss of biodiversity.

5.13 Given the shared environmental challenges in regions like the Sundarbans and the growing impact of climate change on both India and Bangladesh, the Committee were keen to learn how Indian State Governments, particularly West Bengal, collaborating with Bangladesh to address ecological concerns in these critical regions. In a written reply the Ministry stated that acknowledging the shared ecological vulnerabilities of the Sundarbans and the increasing impacts of climate change, India and Bangladesh have established the India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group on Conservation of the Sunderbans. The meeting provides a platform to discuss a number of important issues which include bio-diversity mapping and to develop baseline data to better understand the ecosystem; Water quality monitoring and siltation trend analysis of the rivers terminating in the Sunderbans region; sharing of intelligence on smuggling activities etc. Indian State Governments especially West Bengal Government provides critical inputs to the Central Government, which in turn coordinates bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh.

5.14 With increasing risks of floods and droughts in the region, when asked about joint initiatives are being explored between India and Bangladesh for better flood control, water resource management, and mitigation of natural disasters, the Ministry stated that since the establishment of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) in 1972, India and Bangladesh have engaged in collaborative efforts to manage their shared water resources, particularly concerning flood control and disaster mitigation. A cornerstone of this cooperation has been the sharing of flood data since 1972. Both sides also engage in need-based expansion of shared data for mitigation of natural disasters. Expansion of co-operation on Flood forecasting and warning is discussed under the JRC framework between both the sides.

**PART-II**  
**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Overall Approach to relationship with Bangladesh**

1. The Committee recognize that India and Bangladesh share a relationship unparalleled in the South Asian region, rooted in shared history, language, culture, and sacrifices. Over the past five decades, this relationship has evolved into a comprehensive and multifaced partnership encompassing political, security, economic, and cultural dimensions. Major milestones such as the Land Boundary Agreement (2015), maritime boundary settlement (2015), and Ganga Water Treaty (1996) have been instrumental in building mutual trust and institutionalizing cooperation. The Committee also note that Bangladesh occupies a pivotal position in India's foreign policy architecture, lying at the intersection of the Neighbourhood First, Act East, and Indo-Pacific strategies. India's development cooperation, capacity-building initiatives, and cross-border connectivity projects have further consolidated Bangladesh's role as a key strategic and development partner.

The Committee remain cognizant of the recent political developments in Bangladesh which have introduced new complexities into the bilateral relationship. The Committee express concern over the prevailing instability following the events of August 2024, which have been marked by incidents of violence, restrictions on democratic freedoms, growing radicalisation of certain sections of the society, attacks on minority communities, etc. The Committee note that the Government of India has adopted a calibrated policy of non-interference in Bangladesh's internal political processes, while maintaining constructive engagement with the Interim Government and other democratic stakeholders. The Committee also note India's overall approach to its relationship with Bangladesh has remained unchanged following the events of August 2024. India continues to pursue a constructive, pragmatic, mutually-beneficial and forward-looking

**relationship with Bangladesh, engaging with the interim Government of Bangladesh, engaging with several issues of strategic interest as well as regional security. The Committee also recognize that there has been a sincere attempt by the Government of India to continue maintaining a cordial relationship with the new dispensation in Bangladesh. Such high-level engagements includes Indian Prime Minister’s congratulations to Prof. Yunus and inviting him to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Voice of Global South Summit held in August 2024; meeting between External Affairs Minister and Foreign Advisor of Bangladesh in New York on the sidelines of UNGA in September 2024 and in Muscat in February 2025; visit of Foreign Secretary of India to Bangladesh on 9 December 2024. The most recent and highest level of meeting between the two countries was held on 4 April 2025 between Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and Chief Advisor of Bangladesh, Prof. Mohammed Yunus at Bangkok on the sidelines of the 6<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit meeting. Given these ongoing efforts, the Committee are hopeful that the bilateral engagement between the two countries will continue to grow.**

**The Committee urge the Government to continue advocating a democratic, stable, peaceful, people-centric, forward-looking and inclusive Bangladesh, firmly anchored in the spirit of 1971 and mutual respect. The Committee further recommend that the Government should maintain sustained diplomatic engagement with all political, social, and civil society stakeholders in Bangladesh to foster an environment of trust and dialogue. Such engagement should be complemented by Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy, involving Parliamentary exchanges, think tanks, academia, media, and cultural organizations, to strengthen people-to-people connections and counter misperceptions. The Committee also desire that India should leverage all forms of soft power to bridge gaps and continue to proactively engage with media, civil society, and various organizations in Bangladesh to address the anti-India narrative and counter misinformation on sensitive issues.**

## **Supporting Democratic Processes**

**2. The Committee note with concern the evolving political situation in Bangladesh since August 2024, particularly the uncertainty surrounding democratic elections, political violence and the rise of extremism. While India has consistently emphasized its commitment to a constructive and pragmatic relationship, these developments have strained certain aspects of bilateral ties, particularly in terms of security cooperation and people-to-people relations. The Committee observe that India's response to Bangladesh's internal political developments has remained diplomatic and non-interventionist. The Committee note that India has reaffirmed its commitment in a democratic, stable, peaceful and inclusive Bangladesh and to that end India has been a strong supporter of a participatory and inclusive election process in Bangladesh, viewing it as a necessary step to restoring political stability.**

**The Committee commend the quiet diplomacy of the Indian Government during the period of such rapid and transformative change. While respecting the sovereignty of Bangladesh and refraining from interfering in its domestic politics, the Committee desire that India should continue to support Bangladesh's democratic processes, encouraging free, fair, and inclusive elections.**

## **Attacks on Minorities**

**3. The Committee express serious concerns over the continuing attacks on minorities in Bangladesh following the events of August 2024. The attacks on places of worship, cultural institutions, and individuals have severely impacted the social fabric of Bangladesh and strained bilateral relations. While the Government of India has consistently conveyed its concerns to the Interim Government of Bangladesh, the lack of concrete measures to address these issues, combined with attempts by the Bangladeshi authorities to downplay the incidents as 'political killings',**

remains troubling. The Committee note that till 18 May 2025, 2446 attacks against minorities have been reported. It was only after India raised the issue with **the** Bangladeshi side during the Foreign Office Consultations that 70 arrests have been made and 88 cases have been filed till December 2024.

In the considered view of the Committee, the Ministry of External Affairs should continue to prioritize the protection of minorities in Bangladesh as a core element of its diplomatic engagement, urging the Bangladeshi authorities to take swift and effective action to safeguard the rights and security of all minority communities and to bring perpetrators of violence to justice.

#### **Release of prisoners with record of terrorism and extremist violence**

4. The Committee express concern over the release of prisoners charged with terrorism and extremist violence, as well as the escape of convicted extremists and terrorists during jail breaks amid the chaos in Bangladesh during July and August 2025. The Committee have been informed that these individuals are now fomenting anti-India sentiments and narratives in Bangladesh. The Committee note that this poses a risk of further instability and law and order challenges with implications for India's North East. The Committee desire that India should maintain vigilance in monitoring their activities and also engage with the Bangladeshi side to ensure that such developments do not negatively impact internal security, particularly in the Northeast region.

#### **Stay of Sheikh Hasina in India**

5. The Committee note that the stay of former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina in the country and India's approach in this regard is guided by its civilizational ethos and humanitarian tradition of offering refuge to individuals facing circumstances of grave distress or

existential threat. The Committee have also been informed that the Government of India do not provide her with a political platform or any space to undertake political activity from Indian territory. The Committee also note that while extending such humanitarian consideration, India has strictly adhered to the principle that no political activity is directed against any other country from our territory. The Committee recommend that the Government should continue to uphold its principled and humanitarian approach, consistent with India's values and international responsibilities, while ensuring that such situations are managed with due sensitivity. The Committee have taken note of the Bangladesh Government's extradition request following the pronouncement of a death sentence on Sheikh Hasina in absentia, and urge the Government to keep the Committee apprised of its consideration of the matter.

#### **Recognition and preservation of the 1971 legacy**

6. The Committee observe that the 1971 Liberation War remains the moral and historical foundation of India-Bangladesh relations, symbolizing shared sacrifices and solidarity. The Committee are glad to know that India has supported the war veterans through various initiatives, such as providing scholarships for their children and offering medical treatment upto INR 8 lakh for the veterans and their families. Even after the event of August 2024, both countries commemorated the Vijay Diwas on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 by organising reciprocal visits of veterans of armed forces from both countries in line with our long-standing tradition. However, the Committee are concerned to note the emergence of revisionist narratives and diminishing awareness, particularly among younger generations who may not have directly experienced the events of 1971 regarding India's role in Bangladesh's liberation. Underscoring the centrality of the 1971 legacy in India-Bangladesh relations, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should undertake proactive measures to preserve and promote this historical partnership through strategic public diplomacy. The Committee

are of the view that India should continue to engage with Bangladesh and take various measures to ensure that the sacrifices and martyrdom of 1971 are not forgotten. The Committee are hopeful that the legacy of 1971 will continue to foster goodwill between the two countries.

### **Strengthening Bilateral and Diplomatic Engagement**

7. The Committee note that India and Bangladesh benefit from an extensive diplomatic architecture comprising over 40 structured mechanisms operating at the Ministerial, Secretary, and technical levels. At the apex of this framework is the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister of India and the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. This is followed by Foreign Office Consultations led by the Foreign Secretaries of both the countries. Sector specific initiatives cover the breadth of bilateral cooperation including security and Border management, connectivity, trade and commerce, water resources, power and energy, development cooperation and people-people ties. The Committee acknowledge the significant outcomes from these engagements including the resolution of the Land Boundary Agreement, operationalization of cross-border power linkages, enhanced border management coordination, and expansion of trade and connectivity initiatives. The Committee recommend that India should continue to leverage and strengthen these mechanisms, ensuring regular engagement through Joint Consultative Commissions, Foreign Office Consultations, Home Secretary, Commerce Secretary level talks, Joint Rivers Commissions, etc. for timely resolution of concerns. The Committee hope that institutionalized dialogue will help address emerging challenges, dispel misinformation, and consolidate bilateral gains, even amid regional uncertainties.

## **Completion of Land Boundary Agreement and Border Demarcation**

**8. The Committee note that the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) between India and Bangladesh, signed in 2015, was a landmark achievement that resolved one of the most complex and long-pending issues in bilateral relations through the exchange of enclaves and rationalization of the land boundary. Alongside, the maritime boundary settlement concluded in the same year further strengthened mutual trust and laid the groundwork for a more stable and cooperative border management framework. However, the Committee note that residual demarcation challenges, particularly in difficult terrain such as the Sundarbans, remain unresolved. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should expedite the completion of the residual boundary demarcation in a time-bound manner so as to consolidate the gains achieved through the Land Boundary Agreement and contribute to more effective border management. The Committee are of the view that timely completion of the remaining sectors has become even more important in view of the prevailing situation in Bangladesh.**

## **Strategic Communication Body to counter Anti-India Narratives**

**9. The Committee observe persistent misinformation and anti-India rhetoric in certain sections of Bangladeshi media and digital platforms have created perception challenges. The Ministry of External Affairs has informed that it remains the nodal body for addressing perceptions and narratives through coordinated efforts involving other Ministries and agencies. Recognizing the growing influence of digital narratives, the Committee suggest that the MEA should establish a dedicated Strategic Communication and Perception Management Unit within the External Publicity & Public Diplomacy (XPD) Division which would coordinate with relevant Ministries such as Home, Defence, and Information & Broadcasting**

to monitor, analyze, and disseminate factual information, counter anti-India propaganda, and enhance India's soft power.

### **Leveraging Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**

10. The Committee recognize that beyond bilateral engagement, regional cooperation groupings, particularly the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) offer a promising avenue to deepen connectivity, boost trade, and enrich cultural and people to people exchange with Bangladesh. With the BIMSTEC Secretariat headquartered in Dhaka and Bangladesh having taken over the chair of BIMSTEC for the next one year, the Committee view this as a timely opportunity for both the countries to strengthen diplomatic and technical cooperation. The Committee are given to understand that the BIMSTEC, with the help of Asian Development Bank, has come up with a 'Master Plan' on transport connectivity for the entire region, including Myanmar and Thailand. The Committee recommend that India should extend full diplomatic and technical support to Bangladesh during its presidency and work closely towards implementing the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Committee may be kept apprised of all the developments in this regard.

### **Monitoring growing Chinese influence**

11. The Committee observe with concern the increasing Chinese footprint in Bangladesh, particularly in infrastructure development, port expansion, and defence cooperation, including the Mongla Port project and Lalmonirhat airbase. The Committee note that Bangladesh has signed a an agreement with China in March 2025 to implement a USD 370 million expansion project at Mongla Port. The Committee also note that Lalmonirhat Airbase is being developed with Chinese assistance although

**the Director of Military Operations of Bangladesh Army has stated that there are currently no plans to upgrade the airstrip for military use. The Committee also note the recent visit of Jammata-e-Islami Party to China, which clearly indicates its broad engagement with various factions in Bangladesh, further solidifying its presence. Additionally, the Committee are concerned to know that a submarine base has been built by China at Pekua, capable of accommodating eight submarines when Bangladesh has only two. With regard to other infrastructure projects, the Committee have been informed that China has been present in Bangladesh for quite some time and is not necessarily an outcome of recent political development. The Ministry has informed the Committee that to enhance port's connectivity to hinterland India has financed and completed a key rail connectivity project, the Khulna-Mongla Railway Line. India has also signed an agreement with Bangladesh on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for transit access to secure our interests. While recognizing Bangladesh's sovereign right to pursue diverse partnerships, the Committee emphasize the importance of safeguarding India's strategic and security interests, especially concerning the Siliguri Corridor and the Bay of Bengal region. In this regard, the development of Lalmonirhat Airbase with Chinese assistance, which is just 15 kms from the international border, is a matter of concern to the Committee.**

**The Committee recommend that the Government closely monitor the activities of foreign powers in Bangladesh, considering that any attempt by unfriendly countries to establish a military foothold in Bangladesh would pose serious security risks for our country. The Committee further urge the Government to leverage India's comparative advantage in development cooperation to strengthen trust and reinforce India's position as Bangladesh's most reliable partner.**

## **Border Management**

**12. The Committee note that India shares its longest international border with Bangladesh, stretching approximately 4096 km, making it the fifth longest border in the world. This border runs through the five Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and West Bengal, encompassing diverse terrains including mountainous, forested, and riverine areas. The Committee recognize that such diverse topographical conditions pose unique challenges for effective border management and security, especially for the Northeastern states. The Committee note that India has worked with Bangladesh on joint operations against terrorism and extremist activities. Border guarding forces from both countries have a long-standing practice of joint patrols, especially in areas like riverine regions where border security is difficult. Regular meetings, border talks, and joint working groups are established to address border disputes, manage humanitarian concerns, and maintain peace along the border. The Ministry has informed the Committee that sustained bilateral engagement between the governments of the two countries remains a cornerstone of India's border management strategy. However, the Committee note that the deteriorating internal situation in Bangladesh during the past one year has necessitated heightened security preparedness along the shared border.**

**The Committee are hopeful that the current challenges in bilateral relations between the two countries since August 2024 will not have an adverse impact on the established and ongoing cooperative mechanisms between the two countries for ensuring border security and management. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government of India should continue to pursue constructive bilateral engagement with Bangladesh on all border-related issues, ensuring that evolving political and security developments in Bangladesh do not undermine joint mechanisms for border management.**

## **Border Fencing**

**13. The Committee note that out of the total 4096 kms of India-Bangladesh border, approximately 3231 have been fenced while about 864 km remain unfenced due to difficult terrain and riverine conditions. The Committee have been informed that while fencing is feasible for about 689 kms, approximately 175 kms present significant challenge due to its difficult terrain. Issues such as the bilateral agreements which restrict construction within 150 yards of the India-Bangladesh boundary and land acquisition hurdles further complicate the process.**

**Recognizing that effective border management is vital for national security, regional stability, and socio-economic development, the Committee recommend that the Government of India prioritize completion of the remaining fencing work by engaging with Bangladesh, expediting processes of technical design, feasibility studies, and land acquisition. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry of Home Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and state governments, should adopt innovative engineering and technological solutions such as floating fences, laser-based intrusion detection systems, and smart sensors in difficult riverine and populated sectors, where conventional fencing is impractical.**

## **Challenges in Border Management**

**14. The Committee observe that while significant progress has been made, strategic focus remains required to address persistent challenges such as illegal migration, smuggling, radicalization and cross border crime along the India-Bangladesh border. The Committee also note that socio-economic vulnerabilities, particularly lack of livelihood opportunities, make border communities susceptible to illegal cross border activities. The Committee acknowledge the pivotal role played by the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in maintaining border**

**security through joint patrols, coordinated intelligence sharing, and hotline communications. Appreciating the vital role played by the Border Security Force (BSF) in safeguarding the border and maintaining stability along one of the longest international boundaries in the world, the Committee recommend that the coordination between BSF and BGB be further strengthened through institutionalized mechanisms such as regular Director General-level talks, joint task forces, and sector-level coordination mechanisms on counter-terrorism, narcotics, human trafficking, fake currency, and other transnational crimes.**

**In addition, the Committee also feel that the Government should prioritize deployment of advanced modern surveillance tools such as drones, thermal cameras, motion sensors, and satellite-based systems to enhance real-time monitoring and deterrence. In addition, a multi-agency coordination framework involving State Governments, central intelligence and investigative agencies, and law enforcement authorities be developed to ensure prompt detection and action against cross-border crimes. The Committee further emphasize that effective border management must go beyond physical security, and adopt a humane people-sensitive approach incorporating socio-economic development initiatives and community engagement along the border to reduce local vulnerabilities to smuggling, illegal migration, and cross-border crimes. In addition, the Committee would like the Government to consider implementing Border Area Development Programme in border areas to help reduce border crimes and improve social environment in the border areas.**

**15. The Committee note that the developments in Bangladesh have huge security implications for the Northeast region of India. The Committee note that the Border Security Force from India and the Border Guard of Bangladesh have regularly coordinated to monitor movements along the border and prevent infiltration by terrorist group. The Committee recommend that India should continue to engage with the concerned**

authorities in Bangladesh and develop an appropriate intelligence sharing mechanism to track and combat terrorist activities. It is of utmost importance that Bangladesh does not become a safe haven for various insurgency groups operating in Northeast region of India.

### **Coordination between Centre and bordering States**

16. The Committee recognize that the security, stability, and economic development of India's northeastern states are intricately linked with effective management of the India-Bangladesh border. The Ministry has apprised the Committee that the prevailing situation in Bangladesh has direct implications on the security of India's Northeastern region. In response, Government of India is undertaking a comprehensive approach in dealing with cross border security challenges in coordination with State Governments of North Eastern States, border guarding agencies, central investigation agencies and law enforcement. As a result of these efforts, 14 terrorists affiliated with Ansarullah Bangla Team (a wing of Al Qaida in Indian subcontinent) have been arrested by State Government of Assam since December, 2024 in joint operation with police and state agencies. The Committee have also been informed that several Bangladeshi nationals have been detained and narcotics amounting to 12,300 kg have been seized, owing to heightened security at the border in recent months.

The Committee are of the considered view that enhanced coordination between various Ministries will help in formulating plans for economic growth in the North Eastern region. Stressing the importance of a holistic and coordinated approach, the Committee urge closer coordination among the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry for the Development of North East Regions and the governments of border states to address interconnected issues such as illegal migration, smuggling, drug trafficking, and infiltration by extremist groups. The Committee further recommend that India should engage

**proactively with Bangladesh on managing potential refugee inflows and humanitarian challenges, including those emanating from Myanmar, to ensure that responses remain consistent with India's security and humanitarian obligations.**

### **Centre-State Coordination**

**17. The Committee note that five Indian states bordering Bangladesh- West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram play an important role in shaping India's approach towards Bangladesh, owing to their geographic proximity, cultural ties, and cross-border socio-economic interdependence. While acknowledging that foreign policy formulation remains the prerogative of the Union Government, the Committee emphasize that state governments should be regularly consulted on matters affecting bilateral relations and border management. The Committee note the existence of coordination mechanisms such as North Eastern Council (NEC), NITI Aayog's Sub-Group of Chief Ministers (SSM) and the States Division of MEA. The Committee desire that the above mechanisms may function more proactively.**

**The Committee suggest that existing structured inter-governmental dialogue mechanisms and the States' Division of MEA be revitalized as a proactive interface between the MEA and relevant state governments, holding regular consultations on matters concerning Bangladesh.**

### **Tackling illegal migration**

**18. The Committee note that illegal migration from Bangladesh continues to remain a matter of serious concern, particularly in the border States of West Bengal and Assam. The Committee are aware that while the detection, identification, and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi nationals fall within the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs and respective State Governments under the Foreigners Act, 1946 (now the Immigration and**

**Foreigners Act, 2025), the Ministry of External Affairs plays an important role in facilitating nationality verification and repatriation of Bangladeshi nationals detained in India. The Committee note that a total of 2,369 cases of suspected Bangladeshi nationals is presently awaiting nationality verification by the Government of Bangladesh.**

**The Committee recommend that a dedicated bilateral mechanism or joint working group be established between India and Bangladesh to monitor the progress of nationality verification and repatriation. The Committee hope that this would help in expediting the verification process. The Committee also urge that humane treatment and due legal process be ensured for all detained individuals, in accordance with India's constitutional safeguards and international obligations, while maintaining robust national security measures to prevent illegal migration. The Committee note that continued diligence is essential to ensure that Indian nationals are not deported to Bangladesh in error.**

### **Strengthening overall bilateral economic and trade relations**

**19. The Committee note that India and Bangladesh share a robust and multi-dimensional economic and trade relationship that has witnessed substantial expansion in the past decade. Bangladesh continues to be India's largest trading partner in South Asia, while India is Bangladesh's second largest trading partner in Asia. The Committee observe that bilateral trade between the two countries has seen significant growth over the past decade, from USD 7.07 billion in 2014-15 to over USD 13.46 billion in 2024-25, with India exporting USD 11.45 billion and Bangladesh exporting USD 2.0 billion in goods. This results in a trade surplus for India. However, much of Bangladesh's imports from India consist of components and interim goods that contribute to Bangladesh's export earnings as well as essential commodities that help Bangladesh to manage inflation.**

**The Committee observe that the trade between India and Bangladesh, denominated in INR since July 2023, is an aspect that may continue to grow in mutually beneficial areas such as trade, connectivity, energy cooperation, etc. The signing of the tripartite power-sharing agreement among India, Bangladesh, and Nepal for cross-border transmission of power marks a significant milestone in sub-regional energy cooperation, symbolizing the growing interdependence and mutual trust between the nations. At the same time, the Committee observe that despite the positive trajectory of bilateral trade, several structural impediments continue to constrain the full realization of the trade potential between the two countries. These include infrastructural bottlenecks, imposition of tariff and non-tariff barriers like port restrictions and import duties by the Government of Bangladesh, congestion at land ports, high dependence on road transport, and inadequate last-mile connectivity to key trading centres. The Committee also note that deficiencies in warehousing facilities, quarantine arrangements, and digital trade infrastructure add to the overall transaction costs and affect the competitiveness of trade between the two nations.**

**The Committee recommend that the Government of India should intensify engagement with the Government of Bangladesh to modernize and upgrade infrastructure at key border trade points through expansion of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), improvement of road, rail, and inland waterways connectivity, establishment of modern logistics and warehousing facilities, running of more freight trains, etc. The Committee further recommend that greater emphasis should be placed on digital trade facilitation, including electronic data interchange systems, online customs clearance, and simplified trade documentation.**

## **Dumping of Chinese goods into India**

**20. The Committee note with concern the reported issue of dumping of Chinese goods, particularly fabrics, into India through Bangladesh under the cover of preferential market access provisions available to Bangladesh under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). The Committee are of the view that such practices distort fair competition, undermine India's manufacturing sector, and create asymmetries detrimental to domestic industry. The Committee also take note of the apprehensions regarding Bangladesh's potential accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which will imply free trade between Bangladesh and China. The Committee concur with the Government's assessment that such a development could indirectly facilitate preferential entry of Chinese goods into the Indian market through transshipment or value-addition loopholes, thereby adversely affecting India's trade interests.**

**The Committee recommend that the Government of India convey its reservations to Bangladesh at the highest diplomatic and trade policy levels, underlining the implications of such actions on the integrity of the bilateral trading framework. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs, adopt stringent rules-of-origin verification mechanisms to ensure that preferential trade access under SAFTA or any future CEPA is not misused by third-country exporters.**

## **Bangladesh's graduation from LDC Status and future trade architecture**

**21. The Committee take note of Bangladesh's impending graduation from the category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in 2026 and recognize that this development will have significant implications for bilateral trade. The Committee observe that Bangladesh currently enjoys duty-free and quota-free market access to India for nearly all products under SAFTA as part of its LDC benefits. Upon graduation, Bangladesh will cease to qualify**

**for several preferential treatments which could affect its export competitiveness and alter the existing trade dynamics.**

**The Committee appreciate that both countries have initiated negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to establish a forward-looking framework for trade and investment cooperation post-graduation in line with India's Neighbourhood First policy. The Committee, therefor, recommend that the Government of India should expedite the conclusion of CEPA negotiations well before the end of 2026 to ensure continuity, predictability, and stability in the bilateral economic relationship. As India has a much larger economy, the Committee are of the view that the CEPA should include provisions for continued preferential treatment for select sectors of the Bangladeshi economy, while also safeguarding India's domestic interests and providing a balanced framework for long-term cooperation.**

### **Development Partnership**

**22. The Committee note that infrastructure development and connectivity cooperation have emerged as a cornerstone of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations, encompassing not only physical connectivity through rail, road, and waterways, but also energy and digital linkages. India has extended developmental assistance of nearly USD 10 billion to Bangladesh in the form of Lines of Credit and grants for projects spanning infrastructure, energy, and community development. While acknowledging the tangible progress achieved through initiatives such as the completion of the Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, the Khulna-Mongla, Agartala-Akhaura Rail Lines, India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline and Maitri Bridge over Feni, the Committee express concern that certain projects continue to face delays owing to tendering constraints, procedural bottlenecks, and security-related constraints in project areas.**

**The Committee further observe that these connectivity initiatives have yielded mutual dividends, facilitating trade expansion, improving access to regional markets, strengthening people-to-people contact, and contributing to broader regional stability and economic integration. The Committee are pleased to know that recently an Indian delegation visited Dhaka to discuss concessional finance projects, leading to development of a mutually agreed roadmap to advance these projects. Ongoing projects include Dhaka-Tongi Joydepur Railway line, Kulauru Shabhazpur Railway line, widening of Ramgarh to Baraiyarhat Road, evacuation lines at Rooppur Nuclear Plant, etc. Tendering is also underway for various Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) projects, such as Khulna-Darshana Railway line, Parbatipur Kaunia Railway line, Bogra to Saheed M Mousur Ali Station Railway line, Ashugang Inland Container River Port Project, upgradation of Mongla Port Project, etc.**

**While recognizing the fact that Bangladesh has been the recipient of robust developmental aid from the Government of India, the Committee concurs with the Ministry's view that improved connectivity brings mutual benefits such as enhancing trade, regional integration and improved access to the North Eastern states. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should take all necessary steps for timely completion of the major ongoing projects in Bangladesh.**

**23. The Committee have been informed that the Ministry is undertaking an internal review of various developmental projects, including in Bangladesh. The Committee note that there have been instances where projects have not commenced despite the extension of the line of credit. The Committee note that during the Foreign Office Consultation, both sides expressed a desire to continue the ongoing cooperation on developmental partnership projects.**

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should undertake a comprehensive review and rationalization of the existing Line of Credit portfolio to identify high-impact, viable projects and prioritize their timely completion. The Committee desire to be apprised of the outcome of this review exercise within three months. The Committee further suggest that the Government should proactively publicize successful development partnership initiatives through strategic communication and outreach efforts, thereby enhancing India's image as a reliable development partner and reinforcing its soft power among the people of Bangladesh.

#### **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement**

24. The Committee note that the Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement, signed in 2015, represents a strategically significant sub-regional initiative aimed at facilitating the seamless movement of goods, people, and services across borders, thereby fostering deeper economic integration in South Asia. The Committee, however, observe with concern that the implementation of the Agreement has been impeded by delays in the finalization of the protocols for the movement of passenger and cargo vehicles. The Committee note that BBIN MVA is currently under finalisation and is expected to streamline cargo movement between its participating countries *viz* Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Currently, goods bound from Bangladesh to Nepal and Bhutan and vice-versa have to undergo transshipment at designated land ports. Once BBIN is operationalized, it will allow for seamless movement of vehicles in the region contributing to increasing trade flows.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government of India should intensify its diplomatic and technical engagement with the Governments of Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan to expedite the finalization and adoption of the pending Protocols. The Committee also desire that

**India may take the lead and consider extending capacity-building support and technical assistance to partner countries for harmonizing transport, customs, and regulatory frameworks, to ensure operational preparedness.**

### **Cultural Ties and Shared Civilizational Heritage**

**25. The Committee note that India and Bangladesh share profound civilizational, linguistic, and cultural affinities, rooted in centuries of shared history, literature, and artistic expression. This shared heritage, reflected through figures such as Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, people-to-people ties and through common festivals, music, and cinema continues to serve as a bridge of goodwill and understanding between the two countries. The Committee observe that initiatives such as joint cultural festivals, literary collaborations, and youth exchange programmes have contributed to strengthening of mutual empathy, preserving the spirit of the 1971 Liberation War, and the moral and emotional foundation of bilateral ties. The Committee, however, express concern that the recent developments in Bangladesh have temporarily eroded the atmosphere of trust and goodwill between the two peoples. The Committee are of the considered view that cultural diplomacy and people-to-people initiatives can act as a potent instrument for rebuilding confidence and deepening mutual understanding at this crucial juncture.**

**The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government of India should intensify efforts to institutionalize annual joint cultural events, including Tagore-Nazrul literary festivals, joint film retrospectives, and cross-border art residencies, in collaboration with cultural institutions, universities and civil society organizations from both countries. The Committee further recommend that the Government of India should closely work with the Governments of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and West Bengal to promote sub-national cultural linkages, leveraging their shared linguistic and historical heritage to advance deeper people-to-people engagement.**

**The Committee are of the view that bordering states, especially West Bengal can play a supportive role in advancing India's strategic goals in Bangladesh particularly in people-to-people connectivity and trade facilitation considering deep cultural and geographical linkages.**

### **Role of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)**

**26. The Committee note that the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), through the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) in Dhaka, has played a pivotal role in promoting India's cultural diplomacy in Bangladesh, offering training in Yoga, Hindustani classical music, Kathak, and Hindi, and organizing collaborative performances by eminent artists from both countries. The Committee commend ICCR's initiatives such as the International Dance and Music Festival and its efforts to sustain cultural engagement even during periods of political uncertainty. The Committee are hopeful that the cultural programs of renowned artists of India and Bangladesh will contribute in promotion of people-to-people contacts.**

**Recognizing the increasing demand and positive response, the Committee are of the considered view that the scope and geographical reach of ICCR's activities should be substantially expanded beyond Dhaka to other major cultural hubs of Bangladesh. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR, in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh, expand its cultural footprint by establishing satellite cultural centres in other cities, as well as by organizing mobile cultural troupes and developing digital cultural platforms to reach wider audiences. The Committee further suggest that the ICCR and Bangladesh's Shilpakala Academy jointly develop a Cultural Exchange Roadmap focusing on joint training programmes, artist residencies, youth festivals, and academic collaborations to deepen the cultural foundation of the bilateral relationship.**

## **Human-Resource Development and Capacity Building under ITEC and ICCR**

**27. The Committee note that human resource development and capacity-building initiatives, particularly through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme and ICCR scholarships is a key component of India's development cooperation efforts with Bangladesh. The Committee observe that over 3,000 Bangladeshi students have been awarded ICCR scholarships in the last decade and around 500 scholarships are being processed for the academic year 2025-26. The Committee have been informed that these scholarships have been useful in strengthening people-to-people ties and providing opportunities to Bangladeshi students to better know and understand India. The Committee also note that India has been providing training to Bangladeshi officials from civil services, police, judiciary, etc. at various premier training institutes in India. The Committee also note that in March 2021, India had announced 1000 'Suborno Jayanti Scholarships' for Bangladeshi students. So far, more than 900 scholarships have been awarded to Bangladeshi students between 2022-2024. In addition, under the Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme, 24,018 scholarships have been awarded to wards of Bangladeshi war veterans.**

**The Committee are glad to note that flagship initiatives such as ICCR scholarships and the ITEC courses continue to enjoy wide recognition among Bangladeshi students and professionals. The Committee desire that more Bangladeshi youths, students and professionals are provided opportunities under ICCR and ITEC training programmes. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government of India to significantly upscale the number and diversity of ITEC and ICCR scholarships for Bangladesh, with particular focus on emerging sectors such as digital innovation, renewable energy, public health, and sustainable agriculture. The Committee also suggest that the Ministry should ensure that these programmes remain responsive to evolving needs and sectoral priorities. The Committee further desire that more scholarship to wards of war veterans may be provided under**

**Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme. The Committee desire that increasing number of Bangladeshi professionals, researchers, and youth should benefit from various sector specific, skill oriented and other training modules.**

### **Cross-Border Tourism and Border-Haat Linkages**

**28. The Committee recognize that tourism and localized cross-border trade are powerful drivers for strengthening socio-economic and cultural engagement between India and Bangladesh. The Committee commend the establishment of Border Haats along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya and Tripura for promoting localised trade among people living along the border areas. The Committee notes that these Border Haats are designed to improve the well-being of people living in remote regions on both sides of the border. The Committee suggest that the Ministry should conduct a feasibility study to explore the possibility of establishing additional Border Haats between the two countries. The Committee are hopeful that expanding the network of Border Haats will serve as effective, community-based models for informal trade and cultural exchange. Such initiatives will not only revitalize trade in border areas but also foster stronger people-to-people ties.**

### **Visa Facilitation and Consular Cooperation**

**29. The Committee recognize that visa and consular facilitation constitute the most visible and people-centric dimension of India–Bangladesh relations, directly impacting the movement of tourists, patients, students, and businesspersons. In 2023, India issued over 1.6 million visas to Bangladeshi nationals, making it one of India’s largest visa operations abroad. However, following the events of 5 August, 2024, visa services were significantly scaled down, and consular personnel were withdrawn from Bangladesh. The Committee observe that essential visa categories have continued to function despite temporary disruptions**

resulting from the security situation post-August 2024. Bangladesh remains one of India's major visa operations, processing approximately 1,500 visas daily, with medical visas accounting for around 80% of the total.

The Committee acknowledge the Ministry's commitment to prioritizing medical visas, underscoring India's responsiveness to the healthcare needs of Bangladeshi people. However, the Committee express concern that reduced visa processing volumes and the security-related disruptions may adversely affect public perception and impede people-to-people engagement, which is vital for fostering bilateral ties.

Recognizing the importance of sustained inter-personal contact for preserving mutual trust and confidence, the Committee urge that the Ministry of External Affairs, in coordination with concerned security agencies, should progressively normalize visa operations in Bangladesh as soon as the situation permits. The Committee also urge the Ministry to develop a bilateral consular cooperation mechanism to periodically review visa policy, address grievances, and ensure that legitimate travellers are not subjected to various inconveniences, while maintaining necessary security safeguards.

### **Strengthening Institutional mechanism for water cooperation**

30. The Committee observe that water sharing constitutes one of the most vital and sensitive aspects of India-Bangladesh bilateral relationship. India and Bangladesh share 54 transboundary rivers and have a water sharing Treaty, namely Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 on Ganga River along with Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) for withdrawal of water from Feni and Kushiara rivers. The Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), established in 1972, serves as the principal institutional mechanism for cooperation on shared water resources, including flood control, irrigation, cyclone warning, and flood forecasting. The Committee also note that a meeting of the JRC was held in Kolkata in March 2025. The Technical

**Level Meeting (TLM) of the JRC further enables experts from both sides to undertake detailed and issue-specific deliberations.**

**The Ministry has further apprised the Committee that discussions are ongoing between both sides to finalize more water sharing treaties on Teesta, Manu, Khowai, and Dharla rivers. While the JRC and the Ganga Water Treaty remain the cornerstone of bilateral water cooperation, the Committee find that the absence of agreements on other major shared rivers, particularly the Teesta, continues to pose challenges.**

**The Committee feel that the overall river water cooperation framework between the two countries ought to be given due importance and institutional regularity. The Committee recommend that the Government of India, in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh, should ensure that meetings of the Joint Rivers Commission, at both technical and ministerial levels, are convened on a regular and time-bound basis. The Committee also concur with expert opinion that bilateral water cooperation should move beyond water sharing of major rivers during dry-season, and should include micro-level initiatives such as aquifer recharge, river rejuvenation, and technical collaboration. Both countries should also actively explore joint projects on smaller transboundary rivers such as the Manu, Khowai, and Dharla to promote localized water management, enhance climate resilience, and strengthen mutual trust.**

### **Renewal of the Ganga Water Treaty**

**31. The Committee note that the Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 is a bilateral agreement between India and Bangladesh governing the sharing of waters from the Ganaga River at the Farraka Barrage for a period of 30 years. The Committee have been informed that the Ganga Water Treaty involved significant participation from the state of West Bengal, with the Finance Minister of West Bengal playing a key role in formulating the treaty provisions. The state government of West Bengal also participated in the**

most recent meeting of JRC held in Kolkata in March 2025. The Committee also note that this treaty is set to expire in 2026 and that bilateral discussions on its renewal have not yet commenced.

The Committee recommend that the Government of India should initiate bilateral discussions with Bangladesh at the earliest, to avoid any vacuum in the post-2026 period. The Committee further recommend that the renewal process should be guided by updated hydrological data, climate change projections, and the need for equitable and sustainable utilization of river waters. In this regard, the Committee emphasize that consultations with concerned State Governments, particularly West Bengal and Bihar, may be continued to ensure that national and state-level interests are aligned in formulating India's position during the negotiation process. The Committee also underscore that the sharing of Teesta river waters is of critical importance to the State of West Bengal, and therefore, its concerns may be duly addressed by the Government of India during negotiations on the Teesta.

### **Enhancing Climate Resilience and Environmental Cooperation**

32. The Committee note that climate change is increasingly impacting river flows and rainfall patterns, leading to environmental challenges in both India and Bangladesh, particularly in coastal and flood-prone regions. The Sundarbans, a vast mangrove delta shared by both countries, is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased salinity, and loss of biodiversity. Recognizing the shared ecological vulnerability of the Sundarbans region, the Committee note with satisfaction the establishment of the India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group on Conservation of the Sundarbans. The Committee appreciate the fact that this platform provides an avenue for cooperation on biodiversity mapping, water quality monitoring, and ecosystem management in the deltaic region shared by both countries. The Committee

recommend that this mechanism be further strengthened to include joint initiatives on climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, salinity management, and livelihood resilience for local populations. The Committee further suggest that the two countries should explore the feasibility of developing a comprehensive bilateral framework on climate and riverine ecosystem management, integrating aspects of water quality, flood forecasting, and sustainable delta management. The Committee are of the view that cooperation on climate change and disaster management offers a politically neutral domain for deepening bilateral trust between the two countries. The Ministry may also apprise the Committee on the progress of implementation of MoU signed by India and Bangladesh in 2011 for conservation of Sundarbans.

#### **Flood Management and Data Sharing**

33. The Committee observe that since 1972, India and Bangladesh have successfully engaged in flood forecasting and hydrological data exchange under the aegis of the Joint River Commission. This cooperation has played an important role in mitigating the impact of floods and enhancing preparedness in both countries. The Committee recommend that this cooperation be modernized and expanded through the integration of modern technologies such as satellite-based rainfall estimation, remote sensing, and digital hydrological modelling, to improve transboundary water management and enhance the resilience of both nations to climate variability.

***NEW DELHI  
16 December, 2025  
25 Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)***

***Dr. Shashi Tharoor,  
Chairperson,  
Committee on External Affairs***

**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS (2024-25) HELD ON 11 DECEMBER, 2024**

The Committee sat on Wednesday, 11 December, 2024 from 1630 hrs. to 1830 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**Present**

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson**

**Lok Sabha**

- 2 Shri Vijay Baghel
- 3 Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
- 4 Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
- 5 Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
- 6 Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
- 7 Shri Sanatan Pandey
- 8 Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
- 9 Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
- 10 Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
- 11 Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde

**Rajya Sabha**

- 12 Dr. John Brittas
- 13 Smt. Kiran Choudhry
- 14 Smt. Sagarika Ghose
- 15 Dr. K. Laxman
- 16 Ms. Kavita Patidar
- 17 Shri A. D. Singh
- 18 Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

**Secretariat**

1. Shri Anjani Kumar Joint Secretary
2. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunglut Deputy Secretary

**Ministry of External Affairs**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1.	Shri Vikram Misri	Foreign Secretary [Leader of Delegation]
2.	Shri Balasubramanian Shyam	Joint Secretary(BM)
3.	Ms. Pratibha Parkar	Joint Secretary (Parl. & Coord.)
4.	Shri Raghuram S.	Joint Secretary (PP&R)

2. At the outset, Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee convened to have a briefing by the Foreign Secretary on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship'. He also drew the attention of the representatives of the Ministry to Direction (55)1 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha. Highlighting the importance of the subject particularly in view of the recent developments, the Hon'ble Chairperson outlined the points of interest relating to India-Bangladesh relations on which the Committee desired the views of the Ministry.

3. The Foreign Secretary set the context for discussions on the subject by summarizing the recent developments in Bangladesh and its impact on bilateral relations. Thereafter, the Members of the Committee raised various queries related to border security and management; engagement with political stakeholders in Bangladesh; impact of the evolving situation on North Eastern region; Foreign Office Consultations; trade and connectivity; situation of minorities in Bangladesh including attacks on Hindu temples; development partnership with Bangladesh; outcomes of the recent Foreign Office Consultations in Dhaka; people to people ties; safety and security of Indian diplomatic personnel; regional and multilateral forums like Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) etc.

4. In response, the Foreign Secretary addressed the Members' questions, providing detailed insights into the various issues raised. The Chairperson, in conclusion, directed that the Ministry should furnish written replies on the various points raised by the Members during discussion to the Secretariat at the earliest.

*The Committee then adjourned*

*(The witnesses then withdrew)*

A verbatim proceedings of the Sitting has been kept on record.

**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25) HELD ON 26 MARCH, 2025**

The Committee sat on Wednesday 26 March, 2025 from 1600 hrs. to 1725 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, Extension Building, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**Present**

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson**

**Lok Sabha**

- 1) Smt. D. K. Aruna
- 2) Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
- 3) Shri Arun Govil
- 4) Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
- 5) Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
- 6) Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
- 7) Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
- 8) Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
- 9) Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
- 10) Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
- 11) Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
- 12) Shri Naveen Jindal

**Rajya Sabha**

- 13) Dr. John Brittas
- 14) Smt. Sagarika Ghose
- 15) Dr. K. Laxman
- 16) Ms. Kavita Patidar
- 17) Shri A. D. Singh
- 18) Kunwar Ratanjeet Pratap Narayan Singh
- 19) Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
- 20) Shri Rajeev Shukla
- 21) Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu

**Secretariat**

1. Shri Anjani Kumar - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Director
3. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunlut - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee convened to take evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship'. In his opening

remarks, the Chairperson set the context of the discussions and also drew the attention of the representatives of the Ministry to Direction (55)1 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. Thereafter, the Foreign Secretary began by summarizing the current political situation in Bangladesh, highlighting the significant developments and their ramifications for bilateral relations between the two nations. Subsequently, the Members of the Committee raised various queries related to diplomatic engagement between the two countries; issue of water sharing; role of state governments; issuance of medical visas to Bangladeshi citizens; people to people ties; aspect of development partnership; attack on minorities; border security infrastructure and fencing; role of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC); Free Trade Agreement; Ganga Water Treaty: Joint Rivers Commission; disaster preparedness and flood management; environmental collaboration on Sundarbans and so on.

4. In response, the Foreign Secretary addressed the Members' questions, providing detailed insights into the various issues raised. The Chairperson in conclusion, directed that the Ministry should furnish written replies on the various points raised by the Members during discussion to the Secretariat at the earliest.

*The Committee then adjourned*

*(The witnesses then withdrew)*

A verbatim proceeding of the Sitting has been kept on record.

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25) HELD ON 27 JUNE 2025**

The Committee sat on Friday 27 June 2025 from 1600 hrs. to 1845 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, EPHA, New Delhi.

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson**

**Present**

**Lok Sabha**

- 1) Shri Vijay Baghel
- 2) Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
- 3) Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
- 4) Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
- 5) Shri Sanatan Pandey
- 6) Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
- 7) Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
- 8) Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
- 9) Shri Naveen Jindal

**Rajya Sabha**

- 10) Dr. John Brittas
- 11) Smt. Kiran Choudhry
- 12) Smt. Sagarika Ghose
- 13) Dr. K. Laxman
- 14) Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

**Secretariat**

1. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Director

**LIST OF NON-OFFICIAL WITNESS**

<b>Sl.</b>	<b>Name of the Experts</b>	<b>Profile</b>
1.	Shri Shivshankar Menon	Former National Security Advisor and Foreign Secretary
2.	Lt. General Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd)	Former GOC 15 Corps & 21 Corps
3.	Smt Riva Ganguly Das	Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs
4.	Professor Amitabh Mattoo	Dean, School of International Studies, JNU, New Delhi

2. At the outset, the Chairperson extended a warm welcome to the Non-official Witnesses/Experts to the Sitting of the Committee convened to hear their views on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship' in accordance with Rule 331L of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. The Chairperson also drew their attention to Direction (55)1 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha pertaining to maintaining the confidentiality of the proceedings.

3. Thereafter, the four experts shared their shared their insights on a wide range of topics concerning India-Bangladesh relations, including bilateral engagement; recent political shifts in Bangladesh; legacy of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War; energy cooperation; people to people ties and cultural exchanges; role of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in regional cooperation; Track II diplomacy; issues relating to border fencing and security; increasing Chinese interest and influence in Bangladesh, particularly near the Siliguri corridor; joint demarcation; Border Area Development Programme; strategic realignment in the region; anti India sentiments in Bangladesh; need for a dedicated perception management body; Ganga Water Treaty; disaster management; role of sub national diplomacy etc.

4. The members of the Committee then raised various queries impinging on issues such as bilateral trade; energy cooperation and development partnerships; Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) initiative; trans-boundary water sharing; leveraging India's soft power; increasing radicalization and extremism in Bangladesh; Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships; Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) courses and so on. The experts provided detailed responses to the queries raised by the Committee members, contributing to a robust and insightful discussion. Before the Sitting concluded, the Chairperson expressed gratitude to the witnesses for their invaluable contributions to the deliberations on the subject matter.

*The Committee then adjourned*

*(The witnesses then withdrew)*

A verbatim proceeding of the Sitting has been kept on record.

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY SIXTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2024-25) HELD ON 04 AUGUST 2025**

The Committee sat from 1630 hrs. to 1740 hrs. in Committee Room 'C'  
Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**Present**

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor- Chairperson**

**Members**

**LOK SABHA**

- 15) Smt. D. K. Aruna
- 16) Shri Vijay Baghel
- 17) Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
- 18) Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
- 19) Shri Navaskani K.
- 20) Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
- 21) Shri Sanatan Pandey
- 22) Dr. Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy
- 23) Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
- 24) Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
- 25) Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
- 26) Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
- 27) Shri Naveen Jindal

**RAJYA SABHA**

- 28) Dr. John Brittas
- 29) Dr. K. Laxman
- 30) Ms. Kavita Patidar
- 31) Shri A. D. Singh
- 32) Shri Ratanjeet Pratap Narain Singh
- 33) Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

**SECRETARIAT**

- |    |                           |   |                  |
|----|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Mr. Anjani Kumar          | - | Joint Secretary  |
| 2. | Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | - | Director         |
| 3. | Ms. Rachna Saxena         | - | Deputy Secretary |

## **MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

<b>Sl No.</b>	<b>Name of the officer</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1.	<b>Shri Vikram Misri</b>	<b>Foreign Secretary [Leader of Delegation]</b>
2.	Ms. Pratibha Parkar	Joint Secretary (Parl. & Coord.)
3.	Shri B. Shyam	Joint Secretary (BM)
4.	Ms. Priyanka Sohoni	Director (FSO)

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members and Officials to the sitting of the Committee convened to take concluding evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship'. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson set the context of the discussions by drawing attention of the some of the issues relating to the subject, such as legacy of 1971, implications of the development in Bangladesh on North Eastern States, status of border fencing, land boundary agreement between India and Bangladesh, regional cooperation through multilateral forums including Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), role of border states and mechanism for regular coordination with state governments on foreign policy matters, trade relations between the two countries including FTA, people to people contact, visa policies and border managements, strategic communication and perception management to counter anti-India narratives, etc. Chairperson also drew attention of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs to Direction (55)1 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. Thereafter, the Foreign Secretary began by summarizing the current political situation in Bangladesh, highlighting the significant developments and their ramifications for bilateral relations between the two countries. Some of the issues highlighted by the Foreign Secretary during the meeting were overall approach in relation with Bangladesh, safety and security of minorities in Bangladesh, issues relating to holding of next elections, law and order situation, border security and border fencing, issues relating to bilateral cooperation and trade, issue of Indian visas to Bangladeshi nationals, defence cooperation between the two countries, people to people contact, significance of relations with Bangladesh for States bordering

Bangladesh, legacy of 1971, etc. The Foreign Secretary informed the Committee that there is no change in India's overall approach in relations with Bangladesh following the events of August 2024 and India remained interested in a constructive, pragmatic, mutually beneficial and forward looking relationship with Bangladesh.

4. Subsequently, the Members of the Committee also raised various queries related to attacked on properties, growing China-Bangladesh relations, elections in Bangladesh, issues relating to Bangladeshi migrants and their deportation, impact of US tariff imposed on Bangladesh on foreign trade, status of Teesta Water Sharing Agreement, Chinese investment and influence in Bangladesh including imports of arms from China, measure to address negative reporting by media in Bangladesh on India, safety of minorities, trade relation between the two countries, etc.

5. In response, the Foreign Secretary addressed the Members' questions, providing detailed insights into the various issues raised. The Chairperson in conclusion, directed that the Ministry should furnish written replies on the various points raised by the Members during discussion to the Secretariat at the earliest.

*The Committee then adjourned*

*(The witnesses then withdrew)*

A verbatim proceeding of the Sitting has been kept on record.

**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2025-26) HELD ON 16 DECEMBER, 2025**

The Committee sat from 1600 hrs. to 1700 hrs. in Committee Room 2 Extension Building, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**Present**

**Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson**

**Lok Sabha**

- 2 Smt. D. K. Aruna
- 3 Shri Vijay Baghel
- 4 Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
- 5 Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
- 6 Shri Navaskani K.
- 7 Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
- 8 Shri Arun Govil
- 9 Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
- 10 Ms. Bansuri Swaraj

**Rajya Sabha**

- 11 Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla
- 12 Dr. John Brittas
- 13 Smt. Sagarika Ghose
- 14 Dr. K. Laxman
- 15 Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu
- 16 Shri Ratanjeet Pratap Narain Singh
- 17 Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

**SECRETARIAT**

1. Shri. Anjani Kumar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri. Shangreiso Zimik - Director
3. Smt Shanta Banerjee Datta - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee.
3. The Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship'.
4. The Chairperson invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. After some deliberations, the Committee adopted the draft Report with some modifications.
5. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to present the Report to Parliament.

*The Committee then adjourned.*

