

## Recent Trends of Bangladesh-India Relations: A Political Analysis

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### Abstract

*The political landscape of South Asia places a significant emphasis on the connection between Bangladesh and India. Both have a great deal in common, including commonalities in language, culture, history, and more. The two countries' connection goes far beyond a strategic alliance. The purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis of the current interactions that have developed between Bangladesh and India. The widening trade deficit and the ongoing killing of Bangladeshis at the border are other major sources of concern. In 1975, India made the decision to construct the Farakka barrage, which is considered the beginning of the Ganga water dispute. They include India's inability to take effective action on the equitable distribution of international river water, India's partisan posture in the politics of Bangladesh, and India's unwillingness to share fairly and with greater responsibility. This article sheds light on the uneven character of the connections between Bangladesh and India, as well as those between Bangladesh and other third-world countries. In terms of transit arrangements, Bangladesh is given exceptionally favorable pricing. With the signing of an agreement between Bangladesh and India concerning power, Bangladesh will be required to purchase electricity from India at a higher price. This will be the case going forward. It is possible to gain an understanding of the politics of South Asia by first becoming aware of the relationship between India, the most populous country in the region, and the other smaller countries in the region. In this paper, qualitative research method and secondary data have been used to address the research question.*

**Key Words:** Border killing, Common rivers water sharing agreement, Trade deficit, Transit (Corridor), Transshipment.

### Introduction

Over the years, various agreements between Bangladesh and India have changed relations. This has led to a tight partnership between the two governments on many matters. Leaders and diplomats call this "the golden period" and the closest since 2008. (Mukherjee, 2017; Dhaka Tribune, 2017; New Age, 2018). Many see hegemonic and uneven power in this increasing relationship. Bilateral dialogues rarely include this perspective. This study presents other viewpoints to test their claims. Indian politics and

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neighborhood policy have exploited this relationship. This article shows this chronologically.

Many believe that pro-Indian and anti-Indian views have dominated Bangladeshi society. The secular traditions of the two countries before the BJP's rise in 2014, historical cultural linkages, and India's role in Bangladesh's freedom are the first perspectives. The latter viewpoint casts doubt on India's position in neighboring nations and views it as a hegemonic power, citing India's role in the Bangladesh War of Independence and these two countries' unresolved concerns. Observational and rational critique are less interpretive than emotional and literary criticism, which is unusual. This applies.

Understanding creates these perspectives. "Perceptions are not simple phenomena to divine; they are profoundly rooted in the historical awareness of each country" (Haksar, 2006) hence they have arisen from Bangladesh-India interactions. Historical insights are based on several chronicles. It is also vital to remember that "an interplay of a complex combination of social, political, economic, and psychological forces" (Kabir, 2015) shapes "other" perspectives. Power asymmetry and closeness affect perception. Bangladesh's intelligence isn't limited to history. This study is not about acumen. Seeing how acumen affects policy is also crucial. This essay succeeds by tracing opposing viewpoints' histories.

### **Methodology**

This study used qualitative research methods, and the conclusions are based on data from secondary sources. I used a variety of sources to learn about the relationship between Bangladesh and India on bilateral issues. These sources included diplomatic documents, reports, and statistics made by the governments of both countries. In addition, sources from the internet, books, journals, research reports, seminar reports, unpublished papers, reviewing reports, and editorials from national or international dailies were used for the study. In order to draw a conclusion from this study, I will state my position as follows: I look into the things that are affecting the relationship between Bangladesh and India, as well as the problems that haven't been solved yet and why they haven't been.

### **Bilateral Relations: Theoretical Framework**

The practice of conducting political, economic, or cultural interactions between two sovereign governments is known as bilateralism. It stands in contrast to unilateralism and multilateralism, both of which refer to activity carried out by a single state or, respectively, jointly by a number of states. As an illustration, instances of bilateral treaties are free trade agreements that have been negotiated by two states. The states that have established bilateral connections will, in order to encourage talks and collaboration, exchange diplomatic agents such as ambassadors. When two states acknowledge one another as sovereign states and agree to have diplomatic ties with one another, it is common practice for those states to exchange diplomatic agents, such as ambassadors, in order to enhance discussion and collaboration on important subjects. In order to evaluate the research issue, this study makes use of the theoretical framework of structural

realism. The theory of structural realism attempts to explain the behavior of states by focusing on the properties of the systems involved. According to Kenneth Waltz, a system may be broken down into two parts: a structure and an interacting unit (Waltz, 2000). According to Waltz, the fact that the international system is not hierarchical but rather anarchic is the second component of its structure. The third one is the fact that the distribution of capabilities throughout the states in the system varies from one system to another and over the course of time. This is something that happens both in the past and in the present. In addition, the talents of the most powerful actors are the most important ones, and the big actors are the ones that determine the structures (Keohane, 1986). An overview of India's objectives with regard to the cultivation of relations with Bangladesh that serve its interests is shown in the following analysis.

### **New Era of Relationship (2009-2023): A Political Analysis**

The Indian Congress and the Bangladesh Awami League have a history of mutually beneficial relationships. The Bangladesh Awami League has the chance to forge new connections and solidify existing ones with the two nations as a result of the 2009 election. Many people think that these hopes are reasonable. In his memoirs, then-President Pranab Mukherjee acknowledged that India had a significant influence on the rise of the Bangladesh Awami League. According to Mukherjee, he acted to secure Sheikh Hasina's release and keep her in politics during the military-backed caretaker government's tenure (2007–2008). He claims that during his journey to New Delhi in 2008, he was successful in persuading the then-Bangladesh army leader Moin U. Ahmed to order the release of all inmates.

In addition, Moin Ahmed was concerned that Sheikh Hasina might fire him following her release. But I took personal responsibility and ensured his general survival following Hasina's return to power. In fact, I chastised certain Awami League officials who deserted her while she was imprisoned for their actions and advised them that it is unethical to leave someone when they are weak (Mukherjee, 2017).

Hasmi (2017) says that Mukherjee's honest portrayal backed up the idea that India has a "big brother mentality" and meddles in "Bangladesh's domestic affairs." It's interesting to note that Sheikh Hasina made a similar claim when she openly claimed that the U.S. embassy in Dhaka and the Indian intelligence organization RAW were responsible for her loss in the 2001 election (Bdnews24.com, 2017). But a former ambassador who oversaw South Asia as the director general of the foreign ministry from 1989 to 1999 has confirmed her claim (Islam, 2018).

Yet, things got off to a fairly good start in 2009 when Bangladesh gave attention to India's security concerns, destroyed insurgent hideouts, and handed over rebel fighters and terrorists from the region (Rahman, 2016). Sheikh Hasina went to New Delhi on a business trip in January 2010 to sign a lot of agreements. Manmohan Singh, the Indian prime minister, said at the time that India and Bangladesh should get along well. The time has arrived to forge a new course, he declared. We are prepared to pursue a bold,

mutually beneficial vision for our relationships (Dhaka Tribune, 2011). Incomparable levels of cooperation were established between the two nations. As a result, the agreement for connectivity and infrastructure development was inked. Furthermore, contracts were struck allowing India, Nepal, and Bhutan to use the ports in Chittagong and Mongla. Bangladesh received a \$1 billion credit line from India in 2010. The Indian market's lowering of tariff barriers for some Bangladeshi goods revealed an unusual friendship. Members of the Indian and Bangladeshi administrations have referred to it as a sign of unbreakable friendship.

At that time, many people thought that India would break its long-standing ties to a single political party. People in Bangladesh ranked India's resolution of bilateral disputes and impartial relationship-building as their top priorities. The people of Bangladesh would not consider it appropriate to view their neighboring nation as a potential danger at that time. Several political parties, research institutions, think tanks, business executives, and representatives of civil society backed the Bangladeshi government's efforts to forge friendly connections (Kabir, 2015). In Bangladeshi elections and politics, the Indian card, which depicts the fatal foe, is employed as a tactic of mobilization. The majority of Bangladeshis are no longer interested in the election results. The decision by India to proceed with the construction of the Tipaimukh dam on the bank river in the Indian state of Manipur, upstream of the Meghna River in Bangladesh, and the proposed Indian Rivers Inter-link project, as well as the unwillingness to address issues such as the LBA, the sharing of waters of common rivers including the Teesta River, and unabated killings on the border by India, caused "the initial burst of optimism to quickly lose momentum" (Kabir to mention a few, guards). For instance, according to Odhikar, a human rights organization, the BSF is responsible for at least 1,133 deaths, 1,054 injuries, and 1,341 abductions of Bangladeshis between 2000 and 2017. (Odhikar, 2018). Yet, according to official data provided by the BGB, the BSF and Indian citizens killed 936 Bangladeshis between 2001 and 2017. (Dhaka Tribune, 2018)

In September 2011, when Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh went to Dhaka, it set off a "tsunami of hopes." (Rahman, 2016). The visit is anticipated to be historic, with the signing of two agreements. The Teesta River Water Cooperation Agreement and the use of Bangladeshi land to grant India access to the northeastern states are the two agreements. Nevertheless, the water distribution deal was not signed because of a last-minute decision made by the Indian government under pressure from the Chief Minister of West Bengal. Bangladesh was consequently forced to put off signing the transit deal. At the contentious border, several MoUs<sup>1</sup> on economic cooperation and a protocol regarding enclaves were inked. The visit, however, fell short of expectations for a valid reason. India's reluctance to regard Bangladesh as an equal adds to this view. Due to BJP opposition in parliament, the UPA<sup>2</sup> government was unable to carry out the land swap

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Understanding.

<sup>2</sup> The United Progressive Alliance.

protocol that Prime Minister Singh signed. It was perceived as a rerun of the LBA<sup>3</sup> and 1974 in Bangladesh. The much-anticipated "New Way" never materialized.

Yet, there is a general consensus among the populace that collaboration between India and Bangladesh is essential for the area as a whole as well as for the interests of both nations. Both nations can experience significant economic growth through respectful cooperation. The then leader of opposition, Khaleda Zia, visited New Delhi in November 2012. Her conversation would be open-minded, and the hurt and resentment from the past would be removed. In her words, "continuous and open communication and conversations for [...] mutual interest and profit should constitute part of the very core of [the] partnership. Respect for each other's independence and sovereignty must be universal at the same time (Zia, 2012). Her itinerary's inclusion of New Delhi seemed encouraging. In March 2013, President Pranab Mukherjee traveled to Dhaka. A Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami member issued a general strike call at that time. The opposition leader unexpectedly called off a meeting, claiming security concerns. The move is a scathing blow to the Indian establishment.

Bangladesh's national elections were held in 2014. The global community demands inclusive elections. This is viewed as illegal intervention in India. The opposition parties were not invited to vote. Many believe that the neighboring nation's support of the Awami League as a result of this vote is wholly unethical. Early in December 2013, Sujatha Singh, the foreign minister of India, visited Bangladesh. She spoke with General H. M. Ershad, the JP leader, and encouraged him to vote (Riaz, 2014). Despite attempts by the Indian media to explain the choice to support BAL as a result of anger at the BNP's<sup>4</sup> antagonistic stance against India (The Indian Express, 2014). The actions of India were dictated by the anticipated security threat that could result from an opposition triumph. Bangladesh was not seen by India at the time as having a long-standing cordial relationship. Within the greater regional and international framework, only one nation had ties with another. This can put the mutual understanding between the two nations in danger. In the most violent election in Bangladeshi history, India's intervention enabled the Bangladesh Awami League to win an uncontested election. Many believe that Bangladesh's internal politics are manifestly biased towards other nations. Due to this episode, Bangladeshi citizens now have a tempered opinion of India and will likely hold that opinion going forward. Nonetheless, India gained immediately from this choice. Worldly problems are a significant factor in the emergence of such anti-Indian sentiments. A discussion on social media was generated by a few images that were published on the Indian High Commission's website. When former president Pranab Mukherjee visited in January 2018, this took place. Mr. Mukherjee is pictured in the images sitting on a chair following a reception. General Ershad, a past president of Bangladesh, existed. Similar images of other Bangladeshi ministers, thinkers, and political figures were also displayed. It was compared by many to an insult to dignitaries

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<sup>3</sup> Land Boundary Agreement.

<sup>4</sup> Bangladesh Nationalist Party

from Bangladesh. The popularity of these images demonstrates the unequal ties between the two nations. The High Commission decided to remove these images after they gained widespread traction (Rabbee, 2018).

Several viewpoints took hold in the wake of the BJP's electoral victory in 2014. Based on predictions, there were also diverse reactions within Bangladesh. Concerns have been aroused by the BJP's long-standing anti-Muslim discourse. Concerns have been expressed about the deportation of Bangladeshi immigrants as promised by the BJP prior to the election. The BNP had hoped that a non-Congress government in India would approach Bangladeshi politics in the manner it had in the past. At the state level, INC<sup>5</sup> and BAL<sup>6</sup> have had a close relationship for a very long time. Yet, the current government of India eventually expressed delight after the change of government first caused uncertainty and pushed India toward China. The "neighborhood first" strategy of Narendra Modi brought optimism to both BAL and BNP. Three factors—the need for stability in the Northeastern states, resolving tense interactions with its neighbors, and containing China's expanding influence in south Asia—apparently drove the approach (Riaz, 2016). Bangladesh was certain to draw attention to the new approach. In 2015, Modi traveled to Bangladesh, where he was warmly welcomed. Although the BNP's claim that it "never pursued anti-Indian politics in the past" (Bdnews24.com, 2015) may not have been true, the organization's promise that it "won't do in the future" was a step in the right direction. According to some, this was the first time in the history of bilateral relations that both of the major political parties in Bangladesh showed an unparalleled eagerness to win over New Delhi (Rahman, 2016).

Modi stated, "While people thought we were just near (paas-paas) to each other, now the world would have to acknowledge that we are not just paas-paas but also saath-saath (together)" in addition to signing 22 agreements, including the LBA, creating a Special Economic Zone inside Bangladesh for Indian companies, making Indian investments in the energy sector, and offering a credit line of \$2 billion (The Hindu, 2015). Although in reality transit facilities started in 2012 when Bangladesh permitted India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation to ferry heavy machinery, turbines, and cargo through Ashuganj for the Palatana Power Project in southern Tripura, the long-standing issue of providing transit to the northeastern states of India, which was opposed by the BNP for decades (Pattanaik 2010,) was formalized. The main issue for the people of Bangladesh was that the Teesta water sharing deal was not finished. The trade deficit and the killing of Bangladeshis at the border were two more major issues. Business sectors and government allies hailed the move toward cooperation. Some Bangladeshis expressed unease and criticism based on the claim that India did not respond. An Indian analyst acknowledged that the promise and the execution did not match (Malhotra, 2011).

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<sup>5</sup> Indian National Congress

<sup>6</sup> Bangladesh Awami League

They saw Modi's high-profile visit as unique from their perspective. That is seen as an illustration of their debatable vision and logic. The objective, according to a former diplomat, "if it was to try to win the hearts and minds of a people and government, with whom India's relationship has been plagued with bitter-sweet complexity, has worked" (Live Mint, 2015). Particularly in the pro-government media, many people express this sentiment. It is hoped that border killings will completely stop, Bangladesh's trade deficit will be drastically reduced, and the sharing of waters on all common rivers will become a reality. Even those who praised both Prime Ministers for their visions of "a new pathway of progress and prosperity to eliminate poverty" expressed tacit frustration (Rashid, 2015). Another observer questioned whether or not India had achieved its strategic goal in light of the agreements and MOUs, which specifically guaranteed India's use of two Bangladeshi ports. (Khan, 2015).

Analysts have emphasized the significance of connectivity, which they have described as "a euphemism for transit and transshipment," but have also recalled that "if Bangladesh is India-locked, it cannot be lost upon India that the Indian northeast is Bangladesh-locked," so it is India's security interest rather than Bangladesh's benefit that is driving the deal more than Bangladesh's benefit (Khan, 2015). Bangladeshis are also aware that India needs Bangladesh just as much as the latter does because the "Bangladesh corridor is essential to India's Act East policy" (Kathuria, 2017).

### **Economic Cooperation Between Bangladesh and India**

Bangladesh is considered the biggest trading partner of India in the subcontinent. Bangladesh has a strong economic tie with India since the very beginning of the independence. Different types of bilateral agreement made the business smoother and more effective though the trade deficit between two countries is increasing day to day. At this time, Bangladesh is also India's most important development partner. The progression of Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations demonstrates how the two countries have reaped benefits from their relationship with one another. In the realm of international trade, India and Bangladesh have reached an agreement to launch the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) at an earlier than anticipated date. It is anticipated that Bangladesh's amicable connections with India would gain strength in the year 2023. CEPA would provide a solid foundation for significantly increasing the amount of trade and commercial relationships between the two nations. Additionally, it would lead to the creation of new jobs, an improvement in living standards, and expanded opportunities in India and Bangladesh's social and economic sectors.



Source: Bangladesh Bank, 2023

With \$873 million in exports versus \$8,621 million in imports in 2018 and \$1,991 million in exports versus \$13,690 million in imports in 2022, respectively, the pattern between those two years indicates an increase in the deficit rather than a decrease.

The economic interests of India are progressively supplanting those of Bangladesh. Bangladesh's objectives include its own security, geostrategic goals, and economic prosperity. Both professional judgment and public sentiment touch on this. For instance, the current power import agreements with India, the power corridor to India, and the Indian companies' large-scale investments in Bangladesh's energy sector have prompted the question of whether an overt reliance on Indian electricity could be dangerous for Bangladesh's strategic interests (Amin, 2014). This impression is further strengthened by the 1,320 MW Rampal coal-based power plant being built by an Indian energy company in spite of opposition from experts from both nations and UNESCO<sup>7</sup> due to potential negative effects on the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world and a world heritage site (New Age, 2017). Many people worry that growing trade between the two nations will lead to uneven development. Bangladesh has amassed the largest trade deficit relative to other nations thanks to this type of trading. With \$512 million in exports versus \$4.56 billion in imports in 2010–2011 and \$689 million in exports versus \$5.45 billion in imports in 2015–2016, respectively, the pattern between those two years indicates an increase in the deficit rather than a decrease (DCCI, 2018). A significant

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.



trade obstacle continues to be non-tariff barriers. Despite the fact that India provided zero duty access and removed 46 textile products from the list of sensitive categories in 2011, the 12.5% countervailing duty imposed has had a significant impact on growth. It took place in 2012.

Many individuals believe that Bangladesh is not always supportive of India and Bangladesh's foreign policies. Bangladesh opted not to participate in the SAARC<sup>8</sup> summit in Islamabad in 2016, claiming Pakistan's meddling in Bangladesh's internal affairs. Many people perceived India's decision to boycott as a sign of its sluggishness. That appears to represent a much more dependent relationship, according to one analyst:

The relationship between Dhaka and Delhi has gradually changed under the leadership of the current Bangladeshi administration from one of two supposedly sovereign and equal nations to one of clientage and vassalage akin to the previous communist countries of the Eastern Bloc and the erstwhile USSR (Sohail, 2016).

This assertion betrays an underlying understanding of an unequal relationship. The defense accord was struck in 2017 while Sheikh Hasina was in New Delhi. Discomfort has been felt throughout discussions of this defense treaty. The defense contract was signed against Sheikh Hasina's opposition. And she received numerous suggestions to wait. According to a former Bangladeshi diplomat (Hussain, 2017), "Bangladesh does not need a defense pact with India, or for that matter, with any other country, because it does not face any threat of external aggression from any of its neighbors." However, according to another analyst, "a military alliance with India, in particular, in the context of the current geopolitical alignment would be a disaster and carry the potential of Bangladesh becoming a victim of 'crossfire' in the current conflict (Mahmoud, 2017). There have been rumors that the defense agreement is being made with India in mind (Khan, 2017). Others expressed concern that it might fuel anti-Indian prejudice (Bdmilitary.com, 2017).

India's readiness to sign limited-scope defense agreements serves their security-minded worldview. Many people think that this is a reaction to the improving ties between Bangladesh and China. The main source of military equipment for Bangladesh is a result of these cordial ties. During his high-profile visit in October 2016, Chinese President Xi PengHua signed 27 agreements totaling \$25 billion. This is typically done to indicate the company's involvement in South Asia, notably Bangladesh. In 2016, China shipped two submarines to Bangladesh. Bangladesh also ratified the One Belt, One Road initiative. They seem to have given rise to certain worries, which is what prompted Sheikh Hasina to say that "India need not worry about Bangladesh-China ties" (The Economic Times, 2018). Resentment has occasionally been sparked among Bangladeshis by India's rhetoric and pressure on their people. A case in point is General Bipin Rawat's assertion that "the influx from Bangladesh is a proxy war by Pakistan with the support of China" (NDTV, 2018). The Bangladeshi government's choice to withhold any public response simply served to reinforce the idea that it is powerless to oppose India's regime (Mahmud, 2018).

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<sup>8</sup> South Asian Association for regional cooperation.

Some of the problems that worry and annoy intelligent citizens are not simple or unimportant. In addition to this, there are other concerns that influence how the citizens of the two nations feel. The Rohingya problem is currently a hotly debated subject. India "had washed its hands of the problem and taken the side of the Myanmar government" as Bangladesh faced the challenge of hosting 700,000 new refugees starting in August 2017 as a result of the ethnic cleansing in Arakan by the Myanmar Army (Indian National Congress 2018). The public's response was anger and irritation, despite the ruling party leaders' efforts to demonstrate that there is no split between these two countries and that India supports Bangladesh (Mitra, 2017). That has helped to reinforce the idea that Bangladesh has given back more than it has gained from India (Kabir, 2015). A draft deal allowing India to use Bangladesh's Chittagong and Mongla sea ports to ship products to its northeastern states was accepted by the Bangladeshi cabinet in September 2018.

India and Bangladesh have signed a memorandum of understanding. India is able to collect 1.82 cubic feet of water per second (cusec) from the Feni River through this. Seven bilateral agreements were signed concurrently by these two nations. At the secretary-level meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh reiterated its pledge in August 2019. The agreement was subsequently signed on October 5 during the summit in Delhi. On March 9, 2021, the two prime ministers of the two nations held a virtual ceremony to officially open the Maitrisetu (friendship bridge) at Feni. Via this bridge, Bangladesh and Tripura are joined. Among the 33 million candidates in the state, the NRC (National Register of Citizens) determined that 1.9 million were ineligible for Indian citizenship. That has a detrimental effect on how Bangladeshis are viewed. Despite challenges connected to COVID-19, bilateral trade between the two nations increased at an unprecedented rate of around 44%, from 2020-21 to 2021-22.

On the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina traveled to India from September 5-8, 2022. Following a bilateral meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on September 6, 2022, seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) were signed. One such example is the 1. Agreement on the withdrawal of 153 cubic feet of water to Bangladesh from the Kushiara River. 2. An agreement on scientific cooperation between the Bangladesh Council of Science and Industrial Research (BCSIR) and the Council of Science and Industrial Research (CSIR) of India 3. Accord between the National Judicial Academy in Bhopal and the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, 4. Memorandum of Understanding for Bangladesh Railway Personnel Training at Indian Railway Training Institutes, 5. Bangladesh Railway's collaboration in information technology 6. The agreement between Bangladesh Television and Prasar Bharati, the national broadcaster of India 7. Agreement on collaboration in the area of space technology Around the middle of February 2023, Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra traveled to Bangladesh. Under the request of the Indian Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary of India traveled to Bangladesh to ensure that the country's prime minister will attend the G-20's "voice of the south summit" conference in 2023.

Joint River Commission records show that the Padma's water flow at Hardinge bridge point during the first ten days of January 2023 (the present year) was 85316 cusecs. The water flow at that site, last year at this time, was 111000 cusecs. The Joint River Commission website states that in the second ten days of January, the water flow at Hardinge Bridge point was measured at 70827 cusecs. More than 100000cusecs of water were flowing at the same location last year.

### **Conclusion**

The strong bilateral ties are reflective of a comprehensive partnership that extends well beyond that of a strategic alliance and is founded on sovereignty, equality, trust, and mutual comprehension. India and Bangladesh are close strategic partners in counter-terrorism. Traditional areas of collaboration between the two countries include tourism, health, and education; more cutting-edge technologies include nuclear partnership, pact, and information technology; and all of these areas are included in the multi-dimensional cooperation between the two nations. The continuous murdering of Bangladeshi individuals at the border by Indian border guards, aiding illegal immigration, assisting in armed dacoity, helping in counterfeits money transfers, and illegal drug trafficking are the most significant concerns that exist between Bangladesh and India.

Using the lens of a critical analysis of the connection that exists between these two nations, it elucidates the primary points of contention. In general, people living in Bangladesh desire to have positive relations with India because it is a nearby country. More cooperation between the two countries is something that Bangladesh is willing to tolerate for the sake of prosperity. According to a survey conducted by Pew in 2014, seventy percent of Bangladeshis have a positive impression of India, while only twenty-seven percent see India as a threat (Pew Research Center, 2014). After 2008, there was a gradual drop in anti-India sentiment in domestic politics. This is not a characteristic of Bangladeshi politics, despite the fact that it is fragile and that there are historical and religious conflicts in the country. The perception of this antagonistic relationship is influenced, among other things, by the policies and acts of Indian government officials.

Several studies have come to the conclusion that "India... is frequently regarded as domineering in the region" (Chandra, 2015). This is mostly due to the fact that it takes a security-focused strategy, which is a direct consequence of its "under attack from neighbors' mentality" (Pattanaik, 2010). When talking about India, the concept of Bangladeshis is believed to be in the same category as everyone else. In its approach to its surrounding regions, India must demonstrate sound judgment. When one considers recent happenings, it is simple to comprehend that the existence of China has resulted in a schism between India and the countries that surround it. Some people are making the argument that India's diplomacy based on the principle of "neighborhood first" is not a viable strategy. The Congress has asserted that the "neighborhood-first" policy has now become the "neighborhood-lost" policy, and they have also stated that India is an isolated and mistrustful next-door neighbor. Both of these statements were made by the Congress.

Despite the fact that regionalism is what it is, we may still determine the reasons why some Bangladeshis have negative views regarding particular topics. These are India's lack of effective action on international river water sharing, India's partisan posture in Bangladeshi politics, and India's reluctance to share equitably with more responsibility. All three of these issues are the responsibility of India. Recent events have shown a connection between India's perspectives and the strategy taken by the government of Bangladesh. The fact that India's ruling party, which enjoys unrestricted support in the country, is moving in an increasingly authoritarian direction has had an effect on how people view the country. It is now common knowledge that "the ruling BAL government has assiduously subverted democratic norms and institutions" (Chakravarty, 2018). Additionally, it has taken India's support for granted, which is not in the best interests of India (Chakravarty, 2018), thereby adding to the factors that contribute to the negative aspects of the Indo-Bangladesh relationship. The number of Bangladeshi civilians who have been killed at the India–Bangladesh border has climbed threefold to forty-one in 2019, despite the fact that the Indian authorities have repeatedly promised that this will not occur (Javed, 2020). 158 Bangladeshis have lost their lives at the hands of the Border Security Force over the course of the last five years. Bangladesh has not imposed any customs taxes or transit fees on India for allowing the passage of Indian products via Bangladesh or for allowing the transshipment of Indian goods via Bangladeshi seaports (Chaudhury, 2019). Delhi has been given permission by Bangladesh to install a coastline surveillance system in Bangladesh that makes use of radar in the Bay of Bengal (Chaudhury, 2019). Nonetheless, Bangladeshis are pessimistic about the future as a result of India's backing for Myanmar during the Rohingya issue. Both the National Registry of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act have already had an impact on the relationship that exists between the two countries.

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