

Emerging Trends in Indo-Bangladesh Relations: A study of Unveiling 'New Horizons' in Bilateral Relations

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ABSTRACT

The precondition for maintaining peaceful coexistence and socio-economic development is the prerequisite for maintaining stability in the adjoining region, the phrases apply equally to these two states as well as neighbouring countries. The main focus of this study is on India's relations with all countries in the Indian subcontinent, especially Bangladesh, and the diplomatic equation in the regional and international arena has taken a new turn in the last few years. Present study the content analysis and descriptive analysis method is used to complete this qualitative study. In order to complete this study based on secondary information has been taken from such as reports, books, journals, web sources, newspapers, etc. The major outcomes of this study were the very recently successful implementation of the forty years pending Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) signed between India and Bangladesh in 2015 and exchange of enclaves. In addition to resolving the 4096 km land border between the two countries, anti-state or cross border activities, illegal smuggling, human trafficking and illegal infiltration, border control work to be completed smoothly. Finally, Modi's 'Neighbourhood First' policy has also succeeded in creating a positive vibe in South Asia as well as 'chicken neck' corridor or the Dhaka-Shillong-Guhati and Kolkata-Dhaka-Agartala bus services through travel and trade agreements have ushered in a new chapter in the connectivity of other parts of the country with the north-eastern region. Above all, the most important part of anti-quota mass movement of students and the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the swearing-in of Mohammad Yunus as chief adviser to the interim government, now the biggest question arises as to which direction India-Bangladesh bilateral relations turn will take?

KEYWORDS: Neighbourhood First, Enclaves, Peaceful Coexistence, Chicken neck corridor..

1. INTRODUCTION

India is the friendly neighbour that first introduced Bangladesh to the world as an independent state after the liberation war in 1971. In the South Asian region, India and Bangladesh have been observed to have common unity in terms of language, culture, and history, as well as geopolitical proximity. Bilateral relations between the two countries have manifested strategic partnership in sovereignty, equality, trust, and understanding on the basis of excellent friendly partnership in all spheres (Sridharan, 2019). The year 2023 witnessed bilateral relations where the Prime Ministers of the two countries jointly inaugurated the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (MEA, 2023). Also, Bangladesh participated in the G20 meeting in 2023. During her visit to India, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the G20 meeting in 2023 and signed three MoUs on Digital Payment Mechanisms, Cultural Exchange, and Research in Agriculture. The prime ministers of the two countries jointly inaugurated three development cooperation projects in November, 2023. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, these important projects include the Akhaura-Agartala Cross Border Railway Link, Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line, and Unit-II Maitree Thermal Power Plant (MEA, 2023). Peaceful coexistence, cooperation and socio-economic development in the South Asian region have maintained stability in the neighboring region. Again, the construction of the Bangladesh Padma Bridge has brought radical changes in the South Asian region in terms of geography, economy, society, transportation, and communication. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's inaugural address on the Padma Bridge announced that India has been granted permission to use Mangala Port, connecting Asia to European countries (60 countries of the world) by road, transport, and communication (World Bank, 2022). Also, it will be four hours from Kolkata to Dhaka by road. Therefore, the construction of the Padma Bridge has opened many trade routes, including tours and travels between

these two continents. In this context, the construction of the Padma Bridge will lead to bilateral and multilateral business, transportation, railways, water-road communication, and the socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

The PM Modi visited Bangladesh twice (2015 and 2021) to take India-Bangladesh relations to a higher level in the international arena, establish personal contacts with the politicians, and ensure cooperation at the political and diplomatic levels (Times of India, 2021). India-Bangladesh cooperation relationship is very old, but unfortunately, Hasina's government was forced to surrender in the face of a strong anti-reservation student movement, and within 45 minutes, she was forced to leave the country with her resignation on 5th August. Very recently, with the anti-quota mass movement of students and the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina taking refuge in India, and the swearing-in of Mohammad Yunus as the chief adviser to the interim government, the direction India-Bangladesh interstellar relations will take is one of the biggest questions marks.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To elicit the mystical theory of strengthening Indo-Bangladesh relations.
2. Will try to explore new horizons in the possibilities of bilateral relations.
3. To explore the India-Bangladesh relations will take a new direction.

Research Questions & Methodology:

The content analysis method and interview method has been used in the present study. In this study the researcher adopted a mixed method of research. The present study is based on the secondary data, such as reports, books, journals, newspapers, web sources, etc. The current study is based on three research questions and the questions are:

1. How to improve bilateral relations between many more different issues in the last decades?
2. How will the new horizons of Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations be opened?
3. What direction will the bilateral relationship turn in the turmoil situation of the region?

Possibilities of Strengthen Bilateral Relationship:

The precondition for maintaining peaceful co-existence and socio-economic development is stability in the adjoining areas. This term applies equally to any state and its neighbours, just as it applies to individuals and to its neighbours. The relations between all the countries in the Indian subcontinent, especially Bangladesh and India, and the diplomatic equations in the regional and international arena have taken a new turn in the last few years. Basically, it seems reasonable to look at South Asia regionally before discussing the shape of India's relations with the South Asian states. Because South Asia is a very complex region. The region has witnessed bloodshed and civil war, as well as diversity in religion, ethnicity, language, and politics (Muni, 2012). The region has seen liberation movements, nuclear competition, and military dictatorships and still sees insurgency, religious fundamentalism, extremism, etc., as well as problems such as drugs and human trafficking. The measure of religious tolerance shows that countries are moving from flexible secularism to rigid fundamentalism. South Asia is a region with the lowest level of integration in the world. Although, SAARC in the region has been moving forward at very slow progress for over 30 years. Only democratic governments have benefited somewhat, and the economic growth rates of a few countries indicate progress for the future (Sikri, 2015).

India is the largest country in the south Asian region in terms of population, history, and geographical location. India has the strongest democratic system of government, and the economy is relatively strong (many ups and downs of pre-Covid to post-Covid situation). In the international arena, the image of India is the epitome of considerable brilliance. At present, India seems to be ready to play an important role in the South Asian region as well as India's position is mistaken by some smaller neighbouring states that India is behaving like a 'big brother' in the region. India has always sought to consolidate its position in the world and make it commercially important. Different governments have always tried to do that according to their policies and they have had to face various obstacles and problems (Pant, 2019).

While the Awami League party led by pm Sheikh Hasina is considered to have a soft attitude towards India, the BNP party led by Begum Khaleda Zia and the Bangladesh jamaat-e-islami are closely related two parties that have a radical attitude towards India. In recent years, the responsibility of governing Bangladesh has shifted to the BNP, sometimes to the Awami League government, and in parallel, relations with India have sometimes progressed and sometimes remained stagnant. From time to time, there has been bitterness in our relations as anti-India activities using Bangladeshi soil have intensified, illegal infiltration from Bangladesh into India, resulting in social unrest in Northeast India, smuggling in unresolved border areas rivers flowing in both countries. The process of water distribution has remained unresolved, especially the Teesta water distribution issue. On the other hand, in recent years, Sheikh Hasina's government has mitigated India's security concerns. Now, the main purpose

is to shed light on that.

Especially if we look at India's bilateral foreign relations with Bangladesh over the past five decades and recently, it will make it clear, India's relations with Bangladesh have gone through many ups and downs over the past five decades. Notwithstanding, they freely acknowledged and appreciated India's role during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. India-Bangladesh celebrates 'Maitri Diwas' on 6th December every year. India was the first state to recognize Bangladesh on December 6, 1971. In the bilateral field, the two countries have set an example of cordial relations, such as both countries signing a 25 years treaty of friendship and peace (1972), Indo-Bangladesh Trade Pact (1972), Indo-Bangladesh Border Agreement (1974), Farakka Barrage dispute settlement, 30-year water sharing Ganga Waters, 1996 (1. At flow rates below 70,000 cusecs, both will each receive half of the available water. 2. At flow rates above 75,000 cusecs India is guaranteed a minimum share of 40,000 cusecs, with the balance of flow going to Bangladesh), Tin-Bigha corridor (1992), etc (Ministry of External Affairs, 2020). However, a new horizon was opened in the rapidly developed bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh when a strong BJP-led NDA government was formed in India in 2014 with huge public support. The Prime Minister Modi inaugurated a new chapter in his foreign policy by inviting the heads of state of all SAARC countries to the swearing-in ceremony of the new government on May 26, 2014 (Mohan & Pant, 2016). The priority and importance that will be given to the relations with the neighbouring countries is obvious. At the same time, he has shown keen interest in establishing close ties with neighbouring countries. For this reason, he chose Bhutan as the destination of his first foreign trip as Prime Minister, and the foreign minister went to visit Bangladesh. It complements the 'Act East Policy' as well as the 'Neighbourhood First.' 'Look Act policy' is basically a modified and extended form of the 'look east policy.' This policy originated when P.V. Narasimha Rao (1991-1996) was the Prime Minister of India. 'Act East Policy' is an improved and revised version of the previous government's 'Look East Policy' and promising direction (Pant, 2019). These countries, including India, have similar interests in financial, humanitarian, and disaster management.

However, India's foreign policy is much more dynamic than it has been in the last few years. The Prime Minister himself has visited one foreign country (62 countries) after another - taking initiatives to solve old problems and build friendly and cooperative relations in the future. It is clear from this that, on the one hand, the importance as a symbol of friendship and harmony. On the other hand, there are a number of bilateral issues on strategic affairs for world peace, including border disputes with neighbours and trade, expansion of imports and exports, and foreign investment (Chatterjee Miller, 2017). Every effort has been made to make trade relations much stronger. However, at the same time, the issue of keeping the security of the country intact has also been given priority. The current government is also interested in building special relations with the Eastern states, both economically and diplomatically. In this context, it is clear in India's foreign policy during Modi's NDA period that India should take advantage of security, safety, and liberal global economic conditions as much as possible and strengthen economic and diplomatic relations with Southeast Asian countries as well as South Asian neighbours - SAARC countries. At the SAARC Summit (26 Nov 2014) in Kathmandu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi openly stated India's position in the region and said that our policy in the region stands on five pillars, namely: trade, investment, assistance, cooperation in every field, people-to-people contacts, and seamless connectivity. He further added that the "renaissance" had begun and that the solidarity of the SAARC countries was bound to be revived. As well as he said "These can happen inside or outside SAARC, among all the members of the SAARC countries, or in some of them". There is also a need to create an atmosphere of brotherhood and friendship by enhancing multi-dimensional relationships (SAARC Secretariat, 2014).

Bangladesh is one of the important doors of 'Act East Policy'. From this point of view, the first-time visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh in 2015 is very important. The Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh began with a visit to Savar to pay homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War and a visit to the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi to pay homage to Bangabandhu. Sends a clear message to all types of people in Bangladesh, especially minorities, and the government and administration of Bangladesh (MEA, 2016). So, in the case of India-Bangladesh relations, if any other country uses extremism and religious fundamentalism, India will have zero tolerance for it. In addition to foreign visits, another new dimension has been added to foreign policy, namely, understanding with the heads of state and government and personal equations and chemistry. As he made it clear that there was a cordial relationship between the people of the two countries, he went a step further in the field of diplomatic relations and realized many long overdue things. Also, cooperation in defines and security will be an important indicator.

Cooperation In Defence and Combatting Terrorism:

These two countries are very committed to fighting terrorism in the South Asian region based on cooperation. Terrorism is the main enemy of humanity, and it has bled and bruised the soil with repeated terrorist attacks in two states of the subcontinent. Various militant and fundamentalist organizations have emerged from time to time, causing serious damage to state security. In the case of India, Pakistani militant groups crossed the border, and Bangladeshi fundamentalist organizations simultaneously staged terrorist attacks on Indian soil. Especially, Harkatul Jihad Bangladesh (HUJI-BD), established in the 1990s, and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)

in 2007 these militant organizations have created cross-border networking groups, especially against India. The active role of this JMB militant network has been observed in the October 2014 Khagragarh bomb blasts in West Bengal. Investigations by the Central Investigation Agency (NIA) have revealed the active conspiracy of the JMB militant group in West Bengal and various terrorist activities, including arms training, recruitment, and training of their members in explosive materials, have created unrest in the country. Also, these two countries have adopted zero tolerance policy against terrorism, walking the path of counter-terrorism (Ministry of External Affairs, 2023). To jointly achieve common objectives between the two countries in terms of military enhancement and strategic development in the geopolitical common interest of bilateral national security and defence. The defence sector has also seen significant bilateral exchanges in the past few decades with incoming and outgoing visits of the chiefs of the Indian and Bangladeshi armed forces in 2023. According to the information of the Ministry of External Affairs, a continuous comprehensive review of defence cooperation was held in Dhaka on August 21, 2023, at the Fifth Defence Dialogue and the Fourth Tri-Service Talk. Even the Chief of Naval Staff of Bangladesh visited India on September 12-15, 2023, in exchange for defence cooperation, strengthening bilateral regional relations. In fact, India wants to defence equipment with Bangladesh jointly. India's defence industry's interest in a joint partnership with Bangladesh and utilization of the \$500 million Defence Line of Credit offered by the Government of India as an effort to take India-Bangladesh defence cooperation to the next level. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited India last month to agree with strong defence cooperation from both sides for a long-term perspective (Hindustan Times, Jul 01,24). In a virtual seminar on 2024 organized by Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma in Bangladesh on 24th February 2020, he proposed joint venture production of defence equipment, and India intends to increase the scope of bilateral cooperation in defence industrial production with Bangladesh, including advanced technologies.

Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) in 2015:

In 2015, near about four decades later, the land boundary agreement (LBA) of May 1974, which the Indian Parliament ratified, marks a new chapter as a milestone. The agreement to enhance the communication system between the two countries will also help enhance trade and economic growth between the regional countries and other countries in South and Southeast Asia. This bilateral consensus was long awaited. In the end, the land border agreement overcame all obstacles and created a new atmosphere of friendship. Whereas the exchange of 162 enclaves (There are 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India and 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh) through the signing of 22 agreements and a memorandum of understanding has ended the days of the misery of stateless residents. Moreover, many problems have been solved along the 4096 km long Indo-Bangladesh border. The protocol, which was drafted between the two countries in 2011, was also ratified. In its light, a number of complexities related to undefined borders and illegal occupation have been resolved. The 50,000 people living in the Indo-Bangladesh border area were not given new acquaintances, which opened up many more horizons, including the most important anti-state activities, especially human trafficking, illegal infiltration, smuggling, etc (Datta, 2016). The major controversial problem of cross-border immigration from Bangladesh to India has been a phenomenon ever since the formation of Bangladesh. The estimates show that there are about 54 million Bangladeshis in West Bengal, 4 million in Assam, about half a million in Bihar, Delhi has about a million and a half Bangladeshis, while in Tripura, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, 0.8, 0.5, and 0.5 million respectively. Resolving the enclave problem will end illegal infiltration and anti-state activities, especially human trafficking, smuggling, etc., on the one hand and increase trust and cooperation in the mutual relations between the two countries on the other.

Major Connectivity Issue:

Connectivity and infrastructure are very important issues within the geographical boundaries of India and Bangladesh. Especially in the North Eastern states of India, i.e., the Seven Sisters, as they share international borders, there is considerable cause for concern in terms of communication and transport in military and defence. Since 1965, railway expansion between India and Bangladesh has gained importance, particularly the greater sub-regional connectivity of the Haldibari to Chilahati railway. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the four railway connections between India and Bangladesh are operational: Petrapole (India) - Benapole (Bangladesh), Gede (India) - Darshana (Bangladesh), Singhabad (India) - Rohanpur (Bangladesh) and Radhikapur (India) - Birol (Bangladesh), although currently three railway trains have been launched for cooperation, communication and goods services between the two countries including Maitri Express from Kolkata to Dhaka since 2008, Bandhan Express from Kolkata to Khulna since 2017 and Mitali Express from New Jalpaiguri to Dhaka since June 2022. A very crucial step in India-Bangladesh bilateral relations is the inauguration of the cross-border railway link between the two countries, where the railway from Agartala to Akhaura will enhance the strong railway infrastructure and connectivity between northeastern India's Seven Sisters and Bangladesh. Also, for trade and transportation, five bus services have been launched between India and Bangladesh by road connecting important cities of both countries from Kolkata, Agartala, and Guwahati to Dhaka and up to Khulna (Ministry of External Affairs, 2022).

This will usually facilitate communication between the northeastern part of the country and other parts of the

country instead of the 'Chicken Neck' Corridor. Of particular importance is the construction of two special economic zones for Indian industrialists, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to allow India to use the ports of Chittagong and Mongla, and the permission to transport foodgrains and Palatna power project equipment through the territory of Bangladesh to Tripura. The 2 billion US dollar line of credit and the Dhaka-Shillong-Guwahati and Kolkata-Dhaka-Agartala bus services have further enhanced India-Bangladesh bilateral relations. In this context, on 26 Nov 2014, at the SAARC Summit in Kathmandu, PM Narendra Modi openly declared India's position in the region and said that our policy in the region stands on five pillars, namely: trade, investment, assistance, cooperation in every field, people-to-people contacts and seamless connectivity. This will increase connectivity, and Bangladesh will act as a bridge (land bridge) between India and Southeast Asia. The Prime Minister has assured about the distribution of water from the Teesta and Feni rivers. All these initiatives have resulted in a qualitative change in India-Bangladesh bilateral relations. This new vision and priority will accelerate the 'Act East Policy.' Very recently (Covid-19 period), in March 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina signed five memorandums of understanding related to areas of importance such as connectivity, commerce, information technology, and Sports to strengthen bilateral ties between the two Nations further and together work towards development (Government of India, 2021).

Visas Policy:

Another prime example of further strengthening of Dhaka-New Delhi ties is the simplification of visa procedures for Bangladeshis to come to India. Last 11th July 2023 Indian visa application centre issued a notice regarding liberalization of visa policy by Indian government, published on Bangladesh website and Facebook page. Where the notice has informed that henceforth Bangladeshi citizens can apply for Indian visa without depositing their passports and applying Fee's, but visa processing fee has to be paid. It should be noted that generally online registration for Indian Tourist e-Visa, Indian Business e-Visa, Indian Medical e-Visa and Indian Medical Attendant e-Visa is required to apply for the visa with the necessary documents. However, due to the current turbulent situation in Bangladesh, only medical and student visas will remain open in India until the situation normalizes.

Bilateral Economic and Commercial Partnership:

Bangladesh is also India's largest business partner in Southeast Asia and India's second-largest trading partner of Bangladesh in Asian countries. Bangladesh is India's important trading partner. The Bilateral merchandise trade has been growing steadily over the last few years. It grew by 145 percent in the last five years from about \$1 billion in 2001-02 to \$2.55 billion in 2006-07. Meanwhile, in FY19-20, India's exports to Bangladesh were \$ 8.2 billion, and imports were \$ 1.26 billion. But India's largest export destination on the Asian continent is Bangladesh, which is estimated to be around \$2 billion in FY 2022-23. Bilateral trade was reported at \$15.9 billion in FY2022-23 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2023).

The energy and power sector has become a very significant issue in India-Bangladesh cooperation in bilateral relations. India supplies power to Bangladesh on the one hand as the domestic economy has gained momentum, and on the other hand, a strong cooperative relationship has been built between the two countries. Currently, the Bangladesh government imports 1,160 MW of power from India. In this regard, cross-border electricity trade between the two countries has increased cooperation. Electricity is supplied to the Bangladesh Power Grid from the 'Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant'. Also, the inauguration of the Friendship Pipeline in March 2023 in the presence of the Prime Ministers of the two countries will lead to high-speed diesel supply from India to Bangladesh (Ministry of External Affairs, 2023).

The inland water transit and trade protocol has been operational since 1972 and is renewable every two years. It permits the movement of goods and barges or vessels to the river system of Bangladesh on eighth specific routes between Kolkata and various points of in in Assam. Royal Bangladesh imports from India were viewed as 124 percent in the last five years, 2001-07, and its exports to India grew 480% in the corresponding period. India is the 10th largest export destination for Bangladesh and the largest export destination in the developing world.

'Look Act policy' is basically a modified and extended form of the 'look east policy.' There were several obvious geopolitical and financial contexts behind this policy. The Prime Minister has naturally felt the urge to work actively in the East in order to increase India's importance in world politics in light of this geographical location and trade. Naturally, PM Modi stated his government's policy and priorities at the East Asia Summit on November 13, 2014, in the Myanmar capital: 'Since entering office six months ago, my government has moved with a great sense of priority and speed to turn over 'Look East Policy' into 'Act East Policy.' However, in a short time, India's position in the world has become brighter. Its future progress can be seen in the amount of foreign investment - the amount of FDI, and how the strategic partnership will strengthen India (Ministry of External Affairs, 2023).

Cooperation And Combating of Covid-19:

While India has played an important role in COVID-19 vaccine diplomacy, India is indeed the major supplier of COVID-19 vaccines in the world. India is now the world's leading manufacturer of the COVID-19 vaccine. India's

gift of 1.2 million COVID-19 vaccine doses and 109 ambulances that were promised earlier on. India extended medical assistance to Bangladesh to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, including 30,000 surgical masks, 15,000 headcovers, 50,000 surgical gloves, 1 lakh Hydroxychloroquine Medicine tablets, and RT-PCR test kits in March-April 2020. The Indian government gifted 2 million Covishield vaccines to Bangladesh in January 2021 to combat the epidemic. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, India has supplied Bharat Biotech's Covaxin 225.928 (In lakhs) dose to Bangladesh. It can be said for sure that the cooperation that India and Bangladesh jointly extended to fight the global pandemic has strengthened the future bilateral relations (World Health Organization, 2022).

Impulse of Bilateral Relations:

Bangladesh plays an important role in South-East Asia, where it is considered a long-time friend of India. Where these two democratic countries have jointly witnessed developmental and cooperative activities in several areas, such as combating terrorism, human development and capacity building, economics, defence, etc. In addition to retaining political power in Bangladesh's democratic structure, Sheikh Hasina's government has extended its hand to peaceful coexistence and cooperation with India in areas such as the exchange of enclaves, illegal infiltration, etc (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2024). In this context, from 2009 to 2024, Sheikh Hasina became the prime minister of Bangladesh with massive public support. Parliament elections were held early this year, and the ruling government party (Awami League) of Bangladesh retained power for the fifth term by winning a massive number of votes by getting 224 seats out of 300 seats (Election Commission of Bangladesh, 2024). However, the opposition political parties boycotted the vote on various issues. Prime Minister Hasina was brought to power by the common people and students with huge public support, and those students started a nationwide movement against the "liberation war quota" in government jobs. On July 6, 2024, an anti-government quota reform movement began in Bangladesh, which is popularly known as the July Revolution.

Meanwhile, 65 percent of the total seats in Bangladesh were under reservation, and the remaining 44 percent were reserved for general candidates and job seekers. Although the government tried hard to suppress the spontaneous movement of ordinary students against the reservation, the situation became so dire that the army had to be brought down in Dhaka with a formal curfew. There are many students took to the streets and participated in the protest movement. In the next phase, this anti-quota movement transformed into a massive mass movement and according to (Wikipedia) 1,650 of anti-quota protesters and activists died, injuries: 22,000 peoples (including anti-quota protesters, children and non-protester civilians) arrests 12,000 peoples in clashes between the police and students, anti-quota protesters and activists in this movement. The intensity of this anti-quota movement was so high that students from different parts of the country, especially Mirpur, Narayanganj, Madanpur, Manikganj, Rangpur, Gazipur, Rajshahi, Dhaka-Chittagong, etc., are protesting in groups. Finally, when the protesters marched towards Bangladesh's Ganabhaban, the army retreated under intense pressure, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina tendered her resignation to the army chief.

Moreover, Hasina left the country and went to India. At the same time, the minority Hindus living in Bangladesh were tortured and persecuted, and their homes were demolished. Subsequently, during the formation of the government, the student leaders accepted Nobel laureate Mohammad Yunus as the head of the interim government of Bangladesh (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2024).

After he came to power, all sanctions on radical fundamentalist organizations (Jamaat-ul Mujahideen) were lifted, and convicted terrorists were released from prison. On August 26, Jasimuddin Rahmani, the head of ABT, which is linked to the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, was released on parole. Recently, the flood situation in Bangladesh has been a very serious issue, and an anti-India sentiment has been created in social media. After the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, have the fundamentalist and terrorist organizations of Bangladesh become active again? In addition, is the turmoil in Bangladesh a hidden threat to the security of India's international borders and Northeast states? However, the British International Research Agency International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) has warned India's Northeast states that strained relations with Bangladesh could create instability and separatist activities among the Northeast states. The BSF has been put on high alert by the Ministry of Defence in the border areas of Bangladesh, and the army has been kept on high alert. Experts are well aware that India-Bangladesh bilateral relations have gradually turned in the opposite direction as per the recent events. However, it will be better understood in which direction this bilateral relationship will develop in the coming days when a new strong government will be formed through general elections (IISS, 2024).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, in the last few years in the subcontinent of South-East Asia, enterprising diplomacy has been accompanied in various ways, and it has been fruitful. The lack of mutual trust has been greatly reduced, and confidence in India's ability to deliver on its promises has increased. Relationships are stronger, and in some cases, the need to restore relations with bilateral commitment, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence has been emphasized. Special emphasis has been laid on economic integration, especially in the development and consolidation of the area, especially by increasing the connectivity between land, coast, and airways. Increase

surveillance activities at present and move forward by consolidating all the benefits that have been achieved so far. Proceed to the settlement of unresolved issues by fulfilling all the promises and assurances given.

Even so, PM Modi visited Bangladesh twice (2015 and 2021) to take India-Bangladesh relations to a higher level in the international arena, establish personal contacts with the politicians, and ensure cooperation at the political and diplomatic levels. Modi's new initiative has helped bring India to the limelight, given its internal political importance, as well as its dominance in pre-election party politics, huge public support in two general elections (2014 and 2019), and a clear majority in elections to free him from insecure of coalition politics. Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned bilateral activities will lay a strong foundation for India-Bangladesh relations in the social, economic, trade, and defense fields of the two countries in the days to come. Therefore, the frequent visits of the Prime Minister abroad in the last few years with the message of assurance of friendship and cooperation is not a new thing, but his zeal and enthusiasm in this regard are obvious. In the near future, India will get great benefits, and only in the future will the direction of the bilateral relations of the two countries be clear in the coming days..

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