

## International Relations Class 06

16th January, 2024 at 9:00 AM

### INTRODUCTION (09:24 AM)

- A Brief Overview Of The Previous Class.

### BENEFITS OF BCIM WRT INDIA (09:37 AM)

- It could lead to the development of Kolkata port.
- **It could propel India's Neighbourhood First policy and Act East policy.**
- **It has the potential to offer alternative opportunities for dialogue between India and China.**
- It will propel tourism prospects.
- **\* Note: Benefits especially regarding Bangladesh:**
- Bangladesh with almost 200 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserve could become a major energy exporter being part of this economic corridor.
- If BCIM could have materialised it could have created its own win-win situation for India regarding China in 2 ways;
- BCIM could have acted as an alternative platform of engagement between India and China.
- There is no visible loss for India within this project.

### Why we can not have an Asian Union?

- Heterogeneous demography.
- Political aspect: difference in the level of development, political maturity, different political system.
- Trust deficit.
- Geo-political tensions.
- Different flash points.

### Haldibari-Chilahati Rail Route:

- **Why in News:** Regular operation of freight trains through the restored Haldibari-Chilahati rail route commenced in August 2021 after more than 50 years.
- **Significance:** The restoration enhances connectivity between India and Bangladesh, facilitating the smooth movement of goods and fostering bilateral trade.
- **Agartala-Akhaura Rail Line:**
- **Why in News:** The much-anticipated Agartala-Akhaura rail line, spanning 15.6 kilometres, is expected to be completed by September-end 2022.
- **Significance:** Once operational, it will establish a crucial rail link connecting the Northeast region of India with Bangladesh, promoting regional integration and trade.

### Significance of Maitri Setu:

- It will enhance connectivity between the North East and Bangladesh.
- It could be useful for tapping hydropower potential wrt India.
- It would reduce our dependency on Siliguri Corridor.
- Bangladesh showed interest in joining the Indian-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway project.

### Defence cooperation:

- **Exercise Sampriti, Exercise Milan.**
- Capacity building, training, combat reconnaissance.

### **Economic relations (10:19 AM).**

- Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia.
- It is the top 5th export destination for India.
- **Under SAAFTA India was provided duty-free and quota-free access to Bangladeshi exports to India.**
- **However dysfunctionality of SAAFTA under SAARC in June 2022 talks were made on the conclusion of CEPA between India and Bangladesh.**

#### **Benefits of CEPA:**

- It will help in reducing the trade deficit for Bangladesh.
- It will enhance investment opportunities for trade.
- It will also enhance connectivity between India and Bangladesh.

### **Hydropolitical Relations/ Cooperation in water resources power and energy:**

- More than 50 years of hydro-political relations between India and Bangladesh can be described as a mixed bag of sweet spots and bitter pills.
- with time new sweet spots have also been created for example; the Maitri Setu project and, the Padma multipurpose bridge (it will reduce the distance between Dhaka and Kolkata to 3 and half hours).
- Feni River to be used for drinking purposes in Tripura.
- Interim water sharing agreement on Kushiara River, etc.
- Some old bitter pills have transformed into sweet spots of success such as the Farakka barrage project.

## **TEESTA WATER DISPUTE (11:07 AM)**

### **Bangladesh View:**

- Bangladesh wants 50% of Teesta water every year between December and May since this is the time Boro rice is grown.
- Fisherman issue is also an important criterion since their livelihood might be affected.
- Almost 5 districts of Bangladesh will be affected if water is withdrawn from the TEESTA River.

### **India's view:**

- India also needs water for irrigation purposes in North Bengal.
- India is producing hydropower from the water of Teesta.
- Almost 26 hydropower projects which are operating in Sikkim are dependent upon the flow of the Teesta River.

### **Analysis:**

- Negotiations were on regarding the sharing of Teesta water since 1983.
- An interim 2011 deal was also created but was opposed by West Bengal and it was halted
- **While the Ganga water agreement appears to be an example of a bitter pill turning into a sweet spot, the Teesta water agreement continues to be the bitter pill in the hydropolitical relationship between India and Bangladesh.**
- **This dispute is an example of conflictual federalism.**
- **The conflict is largely created since water is a state subject in our constitution.**
- This inhibits the centre from getting into an agreement with Bangladesh if West Bengal is unwilling.
- We can thus say that the future of the hydro-political relations does not only depend on what India and Bangladesh think but also on centre-state relations within India.
- In this way it is a 2 level game as far as India is concerned.

### **China angle:**

- it is extremely imp for India to go an an immediate conclusion of the treaty especially when China has given a proposal to Bangladesh to drench and embark large portions of the Teesta River so that it forms forms single managable channel.
- **This idea would be detrimental to India's security since it will bring China very close to our chicken neck corridor.**
- **it is therefore in India's interest to give this agreement a successful closure before Bangladesh slips into China's tight embrace.**
- **This situation has also brought Bangladesh into a diplomatic tightrope scenario between India and China.**
- At a time when India and Bangladesh enjoy **Sonali Adhyaya** in bilateral relations not addressing this issue might dampen the spirit.
- After the LBA the Teesta water agreement if gets finalised will be remembered as another chapter in this golden era between India and Bangladesh.

### **Partnership on Multilateral Forums:**

- United Nations
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)
- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- **On combating terrorism.**
- **Cooperation during COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Cultural cooperation**
- **News Areas of Engagement**

## **CHALLENGES (11:42 AM)**

- **Dispute over Teesta water.**
- Illegal migration.
- Security concerns.
- Drug Trafficking.
- Controversy over NRC and CAA.
- Bangladesh argued that while CAA and NRC are internal matters of India, the CAA move was not necessary.

### **China Angle:**

- China is increasing its footprint in Bangladesh.
- China is Bangladesh's biggest trading partner and has recently declared Zero duty on almost 97% of Bangladeshi exports.
- Through the string of pearl diplomacy or chequebook diplomacy China has made its presence in the Chittagong port of Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh is also an active partner of China's OBOR project.
- Bangladesh is also discussing a one Billion dollar loan from China for the restoration project in the Testa River which of course India has objected to.
- China is the biggest arms supplier to Bangladesh.

### **Way forward:**

- Resolving pending issues like the Teesta water agreement.
- Signing of CEPA.
- **Bringing down border incidence to Zero.**
- **Focus on priority areas for example: connectivity (HIT, HIRA), energy cooperation, security, and blue economy.**
- **The India-Bangladesh relationship has reached a stage of maturity.**
- It can be defined as a multidimensional fraternal relationship.
- Indo Bangladesh relationship has tremendous scope to rise to another level of maturity based on the 3 Cs. (Cooperation, Coordination and Consolidation )

## **INDIA MYANMAR (12:08 PM)**

### **Why is Myanmar Important for India?**

1) Location:

- Myanmar shares both land and maritime boundaries with India.

2) Proximity to NE India:

- Critical for India's national security Interest.
- Drug trafficking.
- Illegal migration.
- Illegal weapon trade.

### **3) Confluence of 2 foreign Policy doctrines:**

- Neighbourhood first policy.
- Act East Policy. (Myanmar is a bridge between South Asia and South East Asia + close to NE India).

4) **Chinese Angle/Interest(Kyaukpyuport):**

- **Kyaukpyu port Under a string of pearl diplomacy.**
- As opposed to it India has made its presence in Sittwe port under the necklace diamond strategy.

### **5) Power balance:**

- Myanmar has been part of every strategy that QUAD and similar platforms adopt to balance power in South Asia and IOR about China.

**( TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS: CONTINUATION OF INDIA-MYANMAR RELATION)**