

International Relations Class 05

15th January, 2024 at 9:00 AM

INTRODUCTION (09:17 AM)

- A Brief Overview Of The Previous Class.

INDO-BANGLADESH RELATION (09:20 AM)

Context/ Why in news:

- **September 2022:** The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, visited India.
- **3 Feb 2022:** Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb laid the foundation stone for the Kamalpur-Kurmaghat border haat between India and Bangladesh.
- **December 15-17, 2021:** President Ramnath Kovind paid a State visit to attend Bangladesh's 50th Vijay Dibos.
- **Year 2021:** Celebrated 50 years of the establishment of Indo-Bangladesh diplomatic ties.
- **26 to 27 March 2021:** Prime Minister Modi paid a State visit to Bangladesh to join the celebrations of The Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh.
- The Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh (Triveni of events).

IMPORTANCE OF BORDER HAATS (09:24 AM)

- Border haats are areas covering a 5 Km of radius the border between India and Bangladesh.
- It will boost local production.
- Income and purchasing power will increase.
- Poverty alleviation.
- Infrastructure development.
- People-to-people contact will increase and the trust deficit will decrease.
- **Overall the relationship between the two countries will strengthen.**

TRAJECTORY OF INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONSHIP (09:30 AM)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic visit to Bangladesh for "triple celebrations" in March 2021 has ushered in a new "**Sonali Adhyay**" (golden chapter) in the multi-faceted strategic partnership between the two South Asian neighbours.
- **1971-74:**
 - Friendly relationship between India and Bangladesh, particularly after Bangladesh gained independence in 1971.
- **1974-2009:**
 - Relationships became challenging during this period.
- **2009 Onwards:**
 - New bonhomie marked a positive turn in India-Bangladesh relations.

Why is Bangladesh important for India?

- 1) **Location**
- India and Bangladesh share a 4,096 km land boundary covering West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- This is the reason Bangladesh is important for India both in terms of security and connectivity.
- 2) **Geo-strategic importance:**
- Bangladesh lies in the proximity to Siliguri Corridor a narrow strip of land connecting mainland India with North East states.
- This corridor is extremely important since it serves as a critical link for India's connectivity, and supply chain, with regard to Northeast India.
- Any disruption in this corridor can have great implications for India's security and economic activities in the Northeast.
- Bangladesh is an important factor in India's neighbourhood policy.
- 3) **Bangladesh is an important factor in "India's Act East Policy:**
- The Act East policy aims to create better relations of India with Southeast Asia.
- Bangladesh's location creates a potential gateway for India to reach S.E Asia and therefore, Bangladesh falls under our strategy of Act East Policy.
- Bangladesh has proximity with NE India and the development of NE India is an important pillar in India's Act East Policy.
- Bangladesh's location in the Bay of Bengal within the Indian Ocean region makes it an important actor in India's IOR strategy and SAGAR initiative.
- Bangladesh also appears as an important factor in India's security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region.
- 4) **Important role in subregional connectivity:**
- Due to its proximity to Southeast East Asia and IORR Bangladesh plays a crucial role in the South Asian Subcontinent trade and connecting network.
- HTT: Highway, Information and transmission.
- Information security.
- HIRA: Highway information (Internet Penetration), Railways, Airways.
- 5) **Grid Development of the Entire Sub Region:**
- Since connectivity is a very important component of grid development, Bangladesh appears to be imp for the connectivity (HIT analysis) of Indis.
- It appears to be crucial for the grid development of the subregion.
- 6) **Security Issues:**
- 1) Traditional and
- 2) Non-traditional.
- 7) **Partners in various multilateral platforms:**
- UN, BIMSTEC SAARC IORA.
- 8) **Bangladesh is one of the fastest-growing economies:**
- **Important for trade and investment, and a huge consumer base.**
- In 2010, Bangladesh created 100 SEZs and gave 3 SEZs to India.
- 9) **Water sharing:**
- **Approx 54 transboundary rivers are being shared between India and Bangladesh.**
- 10) **Socio-cultural Connects:**
- Initiatives like border haats and People 2 People exchange programmes like student exchange programmes, and cultural exchange are important in this regard.
- Bangladesh has become one of the key destinations for India's migrant workers.
- They created 5th largest destination for remittance money to India.

NEW TRENDS IN INDIA BANGLADESH TIES (10:40 AM)

- **Areas of cooperation:**
- **Land Boundary Agreement (LBA):**
- India and Bangladesh share 4096.7 km of border, the longest land boundary between India and any neighbouring country.
- **Recent News:**
- August 1, 2022: Celebrated the 8th anniversary of the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement.
- November 2021: The Union Home Minister announced plans to connect the Northeast States to Bangladesh by road and railway within a year or two, citing the historic Land Boundary Agreement.
- **Background:**
- Indira-Mujib Pact of 1972.
- 1974: Initiatives regarding the border.
- 119th Amendment Bill 2013.
- 2015: Implementation of the Land Boundary Agreement.
- **Land Exchange:**
- Envisages the transfer of 111 Indian enclaves to Bangladesh.
- In return, 51 enclaves are transferred to India.

Significance of Border Management:

- It helped to secure long pending border issues between India and Bangladesh.
- It will reduce infiltration.
- Check on human trafficking.
- Curb illegal migration.
- It will improve the condition of satellite people living in the enclaves.
- It will improve the connectivity with Bangladesh and through it South East Asia.
- It will improve access to NE states and will enable the improvement of the economic conditions of the people living in these enclaves.

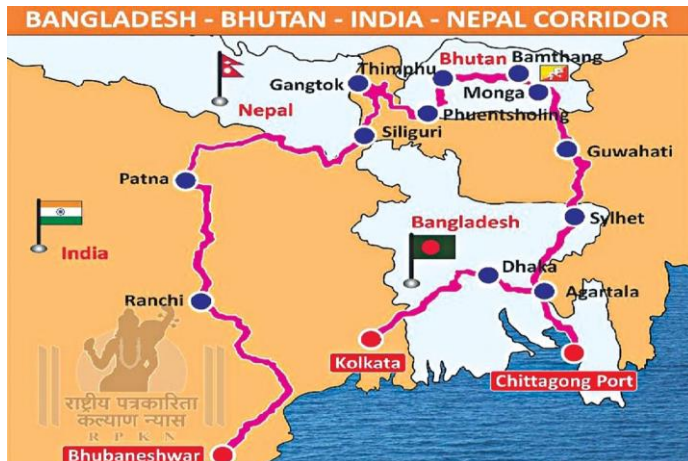
Security Cooperation:

- There has been massive cooperation of military resources since the coming up of the Awami League in Bangladesh.
- The border incidences have supposedly reduced to almost Zero.
- **Conversion of the International Boundary along the Kuhsiyara River into a fixed boundary.**
- **Facilitation of the border fencing.**

Cooperation in Connectivity:

- **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA)**
- **Recent News (March 2021):**
- The World Bank report "Connecting to Thrive: Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia" highlighted the potential of seamless transport connectivity between India and Bangladesh.
- The report suggested that such connectivity could boost national income by up to 17% in Bangladesh and 8% in India.

About BBIN:



- Signed on 15th June 2015 in Thimphu, Bhutan.
- Aims to facilitate unrestricted cross-border movement of cargo, passenger, and personal vehicles between BBIN countries.

ADVANTAGES OF BBIN (11:20 AM)

- Improving trade in goods cargo and services.
- Seamless transfer of people.
- P2P contact increases lead to a decrease in the deficit of trust.
- Increase in tourism.
- It emerges to be a very important connectivity initiative which will have strong security implications.
- It could act as a regional alternative BRI in the regions.
- Why did Bhutan opt out from BBIN MVA?
- Environment degradation.
- Insecurity among local truckers in Bhutan, therefore Bhutan's upper house has not ratified the BBIN MVA.
- In March 2022 participating countries met to actualise the long pending connectivity aspirations.
- Bhutan who has opted out was an observer participant.

Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT):

- **Recent News (May 2020)**
- The second Addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was signed.
- **Historical Context:**
- First signed in 1972.
- Last renewed in 2015 for five years, with an automatic renewal provision for an additional five years.
- **Cargo Sharing:**
- 50:50 cargo sharing allowed by Indian and Bangladeshi vessels.
- **Protocol Updates:**
- Includes new Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) routes, increased from 8 to 10.
- Inclusion of Sonamura-Daudkandi stretch of Gumti river.
- Operationalization of the Rajshahi-Dhulian-Rajshahi Route and its extension up to Aricha, Bangladesh.
- **Declaration of New Ports of Call:**
- **Previous Configuration:**
- Six Ports of Call each in India and Bangladesh under the Protocol.
- **Changes:**
- Five new Ports of Call were introduced on both sides.
- Two Ports of Call were extended for enhanced connectivity.
- **Definition:** A port of call serves as an intermediate port in the overall transport network.

BCIM (Bangladesh China India Myanmar Corridor)

- **Recent Development:**
- India's decision to abstain from the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) resulted in the exclusion of the BCIM Economic Corridor from the projects covered by the China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) umbrella.
- **Exclusion Reason:**
- non-participation in the BRF led to the BCIM Economic Corridor being left out of the broader Belt and Road Initiative projects.

Importance of BCIM:

- The BCIM economic corridor aims to connect Kolkata with Kunming, the capital of the Yunnan province.
- It will reduce trade bottlenecks.
- It will reduce transportation costs and will make prices of goods and services consumer-friendly.
- **It will increase cross-boundary transportation between goods and services.**
- **It will increase the cross-boundary movement of people.**
- **It will increase the prospects of infrastructural development and many energy projects.**
- It could lead to a thriving economic belt.
- Prospects of tourism will increase.
- It will increase the income level and help in poverty alleviation.
- It will lead to Grid development of the regions.

(TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS: CONTINUATION OF INDIA BANGLADESH RELATION)