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# FROM SHARED HISTORIES TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS: EVOLVING DYNAMICS OF INDIA- BANGLADESH RELATIONS

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study tries to fill the gap in the existing literature by looking into the historical background of India-Bangladesh relations. It examines the political, social and economic cooperation between the two nations in contemporary times. The examination is based on major fields of collaboration resulting from which relations have strengthened in recent years, such as trade, energy, defense, and regional connectivity. However, there still persist some longstanding problems between the two countries, such as the issue of fair division of the river waters, problems arising from migration, the Rohingya issue and last but not least Islamic fundamentalism. Further, the increasing dependence on Chinese loans and products complicates relations in power structure in Bangladesh region. This article reveals out that, overcoming these challenges and fostering cooperation will be essential for the further development of bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh. It also proves that the equitable approach towards regional geopolitics based on trust and practical cooperation is instrumental for the future progress and development.

**Keywords**: Soft Power, Diplomacy, Bilateral Relations, Non-Reciprocity, Regional Geopolitics

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2024, India and Bangladesh marked 53 years of diplomatic relations, commemorating India's early recognition of Bangladesh as an independent nation in December 1971. Over the decades, this bilateral relationship has evolved beyond traditional neighborly ties to encompass extensive strategic and economic collaboration. Bangladesh's unique geographic position and shared 4,096-kilometer border with India — stretching across five Indian states — place it at the center of South Asia's security and connectivity landscape (Bhardwaj, 2015). Given these factors, Bangladesh's stability and growth have been integral to India's Northeast strategy, as well as to its "Neighborhood First" policy, which aims to foster regional cohesion and peace (Chakma, 2012). The relationship between India and Bangladesh reflects a blend of historical commonalities and modern-day imperatives. Cultural affinities, including shared languages, customs, and artistic heritage, have fostered a foundation of mutual understanding that enhances the potential for collaboration in areas such as trade, energy, and security (Ali, 2018). However, Bangladesh's geopolitical position is also increasingly

influenced by China's expanding regional footprint, which complicates the dynamics between India and Bangladesh (Kashem & Islam, 2016). In recent years, China has made significant investments in Bangladesh's infrastructure, notably in port development and energy projects, creating new leverage and drawing Bangladesh into a broader geopolitical contest (Chaudhury, 2020). This strategic competition has implications for India, as balancing its relationship with Bangladesh while responding to China's presence has become a critical aspect of India's foreign policy.

For India, Bangladesh's role as a transit corridor is essential for reaching its Northeastern states, reducing dependency on the vulnerable Siliguri Corridor, and strengthening security and economic integration across the region. Improved connectivity through infrastructure initiatives, such as cross-border railways and roadways, aligns with India's Act East policy and supports greater trade and investment flows (Majumdar, 2014). Bangladesh, on the other hand, recognizes the economic opportunities presented by stronger ties with India but also grapples with concerns over equitable watersharing agreements, the Rohingya refugee crisis, and periodic domestic discontent over perceived imbalances in the relationship (Kumar, 2020). Although bilateral relations have generally been amicable, they have faced periodic friction, particularly during Bangladesh's military-led governments and under the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) rule. Nevertheless, initiatives like the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) and maritime boundary resolutions underscore both nations' commitment to addressing contentious issues through dialogue and diplomacy (Ranjan, n.d.). Such agreements have alleviated border disputes, facilitated migration management, and contributed to regional stability, underscoring the importance of sustained political will and cooperative frameworks (Chowdhury, 2013).

This study aims to offer a comprehensive analysis of the multi-dimensional relationship between India and Bangladesh, examining key questions: What are the primary areas of cooperation? What challenges impact their ties? And what strategies can enhance future relations? Using a content analysis approach, this paper synthesizes findings from primary and secondary sources, organizing data into themes to provide an explanatory overview of the relationship's strategic, economic, and socio-cultural facets. This research paper contributes to understanding the evolving partnership by assessing recent advances in connectivity, trade, and regional security, while also evaluating the impact of external influences, such as China's regional ambitions, on India-Bangladesh relations.

## 2. AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH

The partnership between India and Bangladesh, founded in the shared struggle of the 1971 Liberation War, has evolved into a significant bilateral relationship marked by economic, security, energy, and infrastructural collaborations. In 1971, India's substantial support helped Bangladesh gain independence, establishing a foundation of goodwill (Chakraborty, 2005). Over the decades, challenges emerged, including territorial and water-sharing disputes, insurgency issues, and periodic political strains during military rule in Bangladesh, which led to anti-India sentiment (Rahman, 2010). The historic shift in bilateral relations began in 1996 with Sheikh Hasina's leadership, marked by the Ganges Water Treaty, setting the stage for improved relations and strategic partnerships in trade, connectivity, and defense (Chakraborty, 2005). Economic cooperation has become a cornerstone of India-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is now India's largest trading partner in South Asia, with bilateral trade reaching \$18 billion in 2021-22 (World Bank, 2022). Both countries are working toward a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which will become essential as Bangladesh graduates from Least Developed Country status by 2026. This shift will end Bangladesh's duty-free and quota-free access to Indian markets, making CEPA crucial for sustaining trade ties (Rahman, 2010). India is particularly keen on CEPA, not only to ensure continued economic relations but also to counterbalance Bangladesh's growing interest in the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which could diversify Bangladesh's trade partnerships and alter regional dynamics (Choudhury, 2020).

Infrastructure development has been another pillar of cooperation, with India extending over \$7 billion in lines of credit since 2010 to support Bangladeshi infrastructure projects that also benefit Indian connectivity (World Bank, 2022). Notably, the Akhaura-Agartala rail link, launched in 2023, enables smoother cargo transport from Bangladesh's Chattogram and Mongla ports into India's landlocked northeastern states, particularly Assam and Tripura. These infrastructure projects foster regional economic interdependence, reduce transportation costs, and support industrialization in border regions, enhancing connectivity in the broader Bay of Bengal region (Rahman, 2010; Hussain & Sattar, 2023). Moreover, the ongoing Matarbari Port project in Bangladesh will create an industrial corridor from Dhaka to Northeast India, highlighting the infrastructural depth and strategic importance of the India-Bangladesh partnership (Chakraborty, 2005).

Energy collaboration has expanded significantly, with Bangladesh importing approximately 2,000 MW of electricity from India, a crucial supply for its growing economy (World Bank, 2022). Additionally, the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Bangladesh's first nuclear facility, is being developed with the support of India and Russia, symbolizing deepening collaboration in energy security and diversification (Rahman, 2010). This nuclear project has not only bolstered Bangladesh's energy supply but has also demonstrated India's commitment to aiding its neighbor's technological and industrial advancement, aligning with India's Neighborhood First policy (Saha, 2023). Security cooperation between the two nations is also notable, particularly in border management and cross-border crime prevention. The extensive 4,096-kilometer shared border, which spans multiple Indian states, necessitates coordinated security efforts to curb smuggling, human trafficking, and other illicit activities. India and Bangladesh regularly conduct joint military exercises, including Exercise Sampriti and Exercise Bongo Sagar, which build mutual trust and operational coordination (Chakraborty, 2005; Hussain & Sattar, 2023). These exercises reflect a growing defense relationship and mutual recognition of shared security concerns, especially given the geopolitical tensions in South Asia.

Beyond bilateral ties, India and Bangladesh collaborate in various multilateral forums, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). These organizations facilitate discussions on regional issues such as trade facilitation, maritime security, and disaster response, allowing India and Bangladesh to align their strategies on shared challenges and goals (Choudhury, 2020). BIMSTEC's Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, linking India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand, aims to establish a regional transportation network that will benefit all member nations by enhancing logistical, trade, and security cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region (Saha, 2023). The India-Bangladesh relationship stands as a model of complex regional interdependence in South Asia, marked by both historical ties and evolving strategic interests. Cooperation across trade, connectivity, energy, and security underscores the mutual benefits that sustained engagement can bring. However, the future trajectory of this partnership will depend on each nation's ability to balance competing regional influences, particularly China's growing economic presence in Bangladesh. The progress of initiatives like CEPA, energy projects, and connectivity infrastructure will be critical in shaping a balanced and resilient bilateral relationship that supports the aspirations of both nations within the shifting dynamics of South Asian geopolitics.

## 3. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC CONTEXT

The India-Bangladesh relationship holds increasing significance within the Indo-Pacific framework, where both nations play crucial roles in supporting regional stability and economic integration. The emergence of Bangladesh as a significant regional actor and India's growing commitment to the Indo-Pacific strategy illustrate how these neighboring states have become indispensable allies in South Asia's evolving geopolitical landscape. India's "Act East" and "Neighbourhood First" policies, alongside Bangladesh's strategic interests, demonstrate an alignment that addresses not only bilateral needs but also broader regional concerns, including trade security, maritime stability, and infrastructure connectivity (Ministry of External Affairs [MEA], 2023). The Indo-Pacific context thus adds a strategic layer to their bilateral relations, reinforcing both countries' positions as stabilizing forces amid the rising influence of external powers, notably China. Economic integration forms the bedrock of Indo-Pacific cooperation between India and Bangladesh. As Bangladesh approaches its graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, the two countries are keen on ensuring uninterrupted economic ties, recently exemplified by joint studies on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). With a bilateral trade volume exceeding \$14 billion by 2023, economic cooperation continues to accelerate, highlighting the growing interdependence fostered through connectivity projects like the Akhaura-Agartala rail link and usage rights at Chattogram and Mongla ports for India (Choudhury, 2020). These initiatives not only promote cross-border trade but also open new economic avenues for India's northeastern states, integrating them more closely with the regional economy. The development of multi-modal transport systems—land, rail, and waterways demonstrates a shared commitment to building resilient supply chains within the Indo-Pacific region (Rahman, 2021). The strategic dimension of India-Bangladesh relations is especially prominent in the maritime sphere. As the Bay of Bengal is increasingly recognized as a central theater in Indo-Pacific geopolitics, both countries are investing in maritime security to protect critical trade routes and resources. The peaceful resolution of their maritime boundary dispute in 2014 established a foundation for cooperation in ocean governance, sustainable fishing, and disaster management, which are vital in countering regional security threats (Chakraborty, 2019). The agreement on the delimitation of maritime boundaries also created a framework for collaborative efforts in the blue economy, such as renewable energy and port development, aligning with India's broader Vision SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region). This collaborative approach positions both nations as responsible stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific, enhancing their geopolitical influence and mutual economic gains (Choudhury, 2019).

Defense cooperation between India and Bangladesh has also gained momentum, reflecting their converging security interests in the Indo-Pacific. Joint military exercises, such as Exercise SAMPRITI, signify a deepening strategic bond that allows both nations to enhance interoperability and foster trust between their armed forces. Additionally, intelligence-sharing agreements and anti-terrorism cooperation underscore a commitment to regional security that resonates with Indo-Pacific goals, particularly as they address shared challenges like piracy, human trafficking, and cross-border smuggling (Rahman, 2020). These efforts not only contribute to domestic security but also signal their resolve to maintain a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, demonstrating their alignment with regional security priorities (MEA, 2023).

The Indo-Pacific strategy further extends to multilateral engagement, where both India and Bangladesh actively participate in bodies such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). These platforms facilitate collaboration on critical issues—ranging from climate change adaptation and disaster resilience to maritime domain awareness—that are pivotal for regional stability. By cooperating within these frameworks, India and Bangladesh not only advance their national interests but also strengthen regional cooperation, amplifying their influence within Indo-Pacific dialogues on sustainable development and security (Choudhury, 2019). Bangladesh's location and resources make it a valuable partner for India in countering China's influence in South Asia. As China expands its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and strengthens economic ties with neighboring countries, India sees its relationship with Bangladesh as vital for strategic balance. Collaborative infrastructure projects and credit lines exceeding \$8 billion from India to Bangladesh underscore this relationship's economic foundation, while shared diplomatic stances on regional security serve to counterbalance China's ambitions. Bangladesh's engagement with India's Indo-Pacific Vision demonstrates a convergence in their strategic thinking, aligning their policies for a stable South Asia (Rahman, 2021).

In sum, the India-Bangladesh relationship is pivotal within the Indo-Pacific framework, underscoring both countries' roles as stabilizing forces in South Asia. Economic integration, maritime cooperation, defense collaboration, and multilateral engagement reflect a robust partnership that not only advances bilateral interests but also contributes to a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. As both nations continue to navigate regional dynamics, their alliance remains instrumental in shaping a stable, interconnected, and resilient South Asia.

## 4. CHALLENGES AND CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

Despite strong economic ties and collaborative initiatives, the India-Bangladesh relationship faces challenges rooted in historical, geopolitical, and social complexities. Among the most contentious is the issue of transboundary river management. India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers, yet only a few have established water-sharing agreements, such as the Ganga Waters Treaty (1996) and the Kushiyara River Agreement (2022). The absence of a comprehensive framework for managing river resources—particularly for rivers like the Teesta and Feni—continues to strain bilateral relations. This tension is particularly acute given the high dependence of millions on these river waters for their livelihoods in both countries. Imtiaz Ahmed argues that cooperative frameworks are essential for regional stability and resource sustainability (Ahmed, 2020, p. 92). A coordinated and fair approach to water sharing would mitigate environmental and economic impacts, fostering mutual trust and stability in South Asia.

Illegal migration is another complex and politically sensitive issue. The movement of Bangladeshi nationals into India, driven by economic necessity and, at times, political unrest, places a considerable burden on India's northeastern states, which face pressures on resources and social stability. Sanjoy Hazarika (1994) highlights that the migration issue transcends economic terms, intertwining with matters of identity, security, and resource allocation (p. 78). The population shift in India's border areas has fueled social tension and ethnic conflict, reflecting a need for policies that balance humanitarian considerations with security concerns. Additionally, the influx of Rohingya refugees into India through Bangladesh adds another layer of complexity, as Bangladesh has urged India to assist in promoting a safe repatriation to Myanmar. However, India's policies, including the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), have sparked concern in Bangladesh, fueling fears that they may impact Bangladeshi nationals as well (Phanjoubam, 2016, p. 102). These internal policies reverberate across borders, influencing bilateral relations and adding to the anxiety within Bangladesh.

Security issues along the shared 4,096-kilometer border further complicate the bilateral relationship. The porous nature of this boundary has facilitated illegal activities, including drug and human trafficking, which pose significant security challenges for both nations. Sreeradha Datta (2012) observes that cross-border smuggling destabilizes the region and heightens internal security threats, impacting both countries' efforts to maintain order (p. 56). Human trafficking, particularly of women and children, underscores socio-economic vulnerabilities and challenges the efficacy of India's border management policies. The urgency of addressing these issues is compounded by the need for cross-border cooperation, as unilateral approaches have proven inadequate. Geopolitically, China's growing presence in Bangladesh through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and military cooperation has introduced a competitive dynamic in India-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh's alignment with China—evident in infrastructure investments, arms supplies, and joint military exercises—has strategic implications, as it impacts India's influence in South Asia. John Garver (2001) contends that China's engagement in South Asia serves to challenge India's traditional role in the region, making Bangladesh a critical site of strategic rivalry (p. 201). India perceives this increasing Chinese influence with concern, given the potential for altered power dynamics within the region. For India, maintaining a close alliance with Bangladesh is essential to counterbalance China's growing role in South Asia.

Lastly, the rise of religious extremism and minority persecution in Bangladesh bears implications for India's internal security. C. Christine Fair (2014) argues that religious extremism in neighboring states often influences domestic radicalism, particularly in India's northeastern regions, where socio-political tensions already run high (p. 149). The spillover effects of communal tensions not only strain India's inter-community relations but also necessitate vigilant border security and social policies. The shared socio-political landscape calls for constructive dialogue and coordinated efforts to mitigate the risk of extremism and to support a stable and tolerant regional environment.

To conclude, while India and Bangladesh share strong economic and cultural bonds, unresolved issues surrounding resource management, migration, border security, geopolitical influences, and religious tensions underscore the complexities of their bilateral relationship. Addressing these challenges will require sustained diplomatic engagement, cooperative frameworks, and a commitment to managing both domestic and regional priorities.

## 5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

Over the past decade, the relationship between India and Bangladesh has undergone significant transformation, marked by enhanced cooperation across several crucial sectors such as energy, technology, healthcare, and regional security. These developments not only reflect the growing bilateral partnership but also underscore the shared aspirations of both nations to strengthen their economic and strategic standing in South Asia. Central to this partnership is Bangladesh's increasing involvement in regional security frameworks, most notably its recent participation in the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). As a collaborative platform for maritime security and governance, the IPOI aims to promote a Free, Open, and Secure Indo-Pacific. Shyam Saran (2017) suggests that regional frameworks like the IPOI are pivotal in fostering security cooperation among countries with shared maritime interests, and Bangladesh's active engagement reflects its evolving diplomatic role in the region (p. 213). This initiative not only aligns with Bangladesh's strategic interests but also complements India's vision of maintaining peace and security in the Indo-Pacific, thereby contributing to regional stability.

Energy cooperation between India and Bangladesh has emerged as a cornerstone of their bilateral ties. The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, which transports High-Speed Diesel from India to Bangladesh, serves as a critical component of Bangladesh's energy security strategy. This partnership is further reinforced by the Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, which bolsters electricity supply to Bangladesh. Subir Bhaumik (2009) underscores the importance of energy cooperation in enhancing regional economic integration and stability, noting that such collaborations enable both countries to optimize their natural resources for mutual benefit while minimizing environmental harm (p. 98). Given the growing energy needs of Bangladesh, India's role as a reliable energy supplier enhances the overall regional energy architecture and contributes to the broader goal of sustainable development in South Asia.

Technological collaboration, particularly in the financial sector, is another area where India and Bangladesh have made considerable progress. The establishment of cross-border payment systems between the National Payments Corporation of India and Bangladesh Bank has facilitated smoother financial transactions, thereby enhancing economic integration. Ashutosh Varshney (2002) argues that technological cooperation, especially in finance, is crucial for reducing barriers to trade and investment, thereby fostering deeper economic ties between neighboring countries (p. 234). The integration

of digital payment systems and financial technologies not only improves economic cooperation but also facilitates greater ease of doing business between the two nations, further enhancing their trade potential. Space cooperation has also been a significant development in India-Bangladesh relations. India's support for Bangladesh's satellite launches, including providing launch vehicles and technology, reflects a broader shift towards regional collaboration in space exploration. As Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan (2019) argues, India's space diplomacy, through such partnerships, strengthens its role as a regional leader while enabling smaller nations like Bangladesh to gain access to advanced space technologies, promoting mutual growth in the sector (p. 174). This collaboration reflects the growing importance of space technology in geopolitical strategies, as both countries seek to enhance their technological capacities for better regional governance.

India has continued to assert its position as a regional leader in the healthcare sector, particularly in medical tourism. The introduction of e-Medical visas for Bangladeshi nationals has streamlined access to Indian healthcare facilities, reinforcing India's soft power in the region. As C. Raja Mohan (2012) observes, such initiatives not only enhance people-to-people connections but also solidify India's role as a key provider of critical services in the region, generating goodwill and demonstrating its commitment to regional well-being (p. 192). This healthcare cooperation is especially significant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where both countries have engaged in joint efforts to combat the health crisis, underscoring the importance of mutual support during times of global challenge.

However, despite these positive developments, several challenges persist that could impede the full realization of the potential of India-Bangladesh relations. One of the most pressing concerns is the cross-border movement of illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and human trafficking, which remain significant issues along their porous border. To address these challenges, scholars and policymakers have emphasized the need for joint law enforcement mechanisms, including the establishment of joint task forces for intelligence sharing and coordinated operations. As the World Bank (2021) notes, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics offer new avenues for enhancing border management, enabling more efficient monitoring and control of cross-border activities. Smart border management solutions can play a crucial role in improving security and reducing the risks associated with illicit trade and human trafficking, thereby strengthening the overall bilateral security architecture. On the economic front, India and Bangladesh are increasingly aligned in their efforts to deepen trade and investment links. The growing consensus for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) reflects a shared recognition of the potential for enhanced economic cooperation. Such an agreement, combined with the operationalization of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Bangladesh, promises to increase bilateral trade and facilitate investments, which will further integrate the two economies. Chakraborty (2023) highlights the importance of these agreements in not only boosting trade but also fostering greater economic integration in the region, which is crucial for long-term stability and prosperity (p. 165). The successful implementation of such agreements will be a key determinant in determining the future trajectory of India-Bangladesh relations.

The Teesta River dispute remains a critical challenge in the bilateral relationship, with ongoing tensions over watersharing arrangements. Scholars have long advocated for the early ratification of a water-sharing treaty, which would address the issue in a more equitable and sustainable manner. The Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) is often cited as a potential mechanism for negotiating fair and comprehensive water-sharing agreements, ensuring that both countries benefit from shared resources. A resolution to this dispute would not only ease tensions but also pave the way for further collaboration in environmental and water management initiatives. Regional initiatives, such as the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement, which could potentially increase India's exports to Bangladesh by 172%, offer significant opportunities to enhance connectivity and promote economic integration. As the World Bank (2021) reports, improved transportation links between India and Bangladesh could facilitate smoother trade and foster greater regional integration, benefiting not just the two nations but the entire South Asian region. These initiatives represent an important step towards achieving the broader goals of regional cooperation, including the promotion of regional trade, infrastructure development, and connectivity.

Looking ahead, both India and Bangladesh must continue to prioritize collaborative frameworks that address shared challenges while seizing opportunities for mutual growth. By fostering deeper cooperation in areas such as security, trade, infrastructure, and environmental management, both nations can contribute to a more integrated and resilient South Asia. As Chakraborty (2023) suggests, regional frameworks such as BIMSTEC, SAARC, and IORA offer platforms for both India and Bangladesh to advance common interests, ensuring their continued relevance in an increasingly multipolar global order (p. 165).

To conclude, while India and Bangladesh have made significant progress in their bilateral relations, the future of their partnership will depend on their ability to resolve contentious issues such as water-sharing, cross-border security, and economic integration. By deepening cooperation in key sectors and adopting innovative solutions to shared challenges, both countries can set the stage for a more prosperous and stable South Asia.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the multifaceted partnership between India and Bangladesh in energy, digital infrastructure, space, and health care is part of the larger trend toward regional integration and cooperation. Scholars in Shyam Saran, Subir Bhaumik, and Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan elaborate much on strategic interest based on such developments, because they highlight the contribution this co-operation makes to stability and development in the regions. In conclusion, both India and Bangladesh have strong opportunities for further deepening intersectoral cooperation. India and Bangladesh can further bolster their ties by working toward joint programs in the spheres of security, economy, and digitization to augment regional stability and prosperity. India-Bangladesh relations should be taken to a new dimension, based on a Shared Vision of Connectivity, Commerce, and Collaboration. It means both being indispensable to each other as partners could together deliver their respective "Viksit Bharat 2047" from India and "Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041".

## **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

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None.

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