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India-Bangladesh Bilateral Meet

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Why in News

Recently, India's External Affairs Minister visited Bangladesh for a bilateral meet.

- This meeting comes ahead of **Indian Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh** scheduled in March 2021.
- Earlier a 122-member contingent of the Bangladesh Armed Forces has participated in the 72nd **Republic Day** parade, **commemorating 50 years of the 1971 India-Pakistan war that led to the liberation of Bangladesh.**



Key Points

- **Bangladesh's Stand:**

- **Resolution of Problems:**

- Problems between neighbouring countries should be resolved **through discussions and negotiations.**

- **Prioritising Each Others Benefit:**

- Need to focus on possible ways to materialise commitments and accommodate each other's priorities in a mutually beneficial manner.

- **Cooperation During Covid-19:**

- Bangladesh **acknowledged** the collaborative initiative of the two countries in implementing the **vaccination programme** against the ongoing pandemic.

- Bangladesh purchased the **Covid** vaccine from **Serum Institute of India.**

- Bangladesh is the **largest recipient of 9 million doses** of Made in India vaccine.

- **Multidimensional Relationship:**

- Both countries are committed to expand their relationship in all dimensions, ranging from **security, trade, transport and connectivity, culture, people-to-people ties, energy**, joint development of our **shared resources and defence.**

- **India's Stand:**

- **Congratulated Bangladesh :**

- On its graduation from the **Least Developed Country (LDC)** status.
- Bangladesh has been on the **United Nations (UN)** Least Developed Countries list since 1975.
- Bangladesh fulfilled all the criteria necessary for its elevation to a developing country in 2018.
- Therefore the **UN** has recommended **graduation of Bangladesh from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC).**
- Once it receives the final recommendation, **Bangladesh will formally graduate to the developing nation bracket in 2026.**

- **More than Strategic Partners:**

India-Bangladesh relations transcend strategic partnership, and **bonding of both the countries is central** to the realisation of a dream of a **peaceful, prosperous and progressive South Asia.**

- **Continued Interaction During Covid:**

Despite the Covid **pandemic**, interactions and consultations continued unabated such as:

- **India and Bangladesh had a Virtual Summit in December 2020.**
- A Joint Consultative Commission between the two Foreign Ministers in September 2020.

- **Teesta Issue:**

India and Bangladesh would have a meeting of Water Resources secretaries to discuss the **Teesta** issue.

- **Development of Connectivity:**

India is keen to **focus on the development of connectivity** with Bangladesh and beyond for next 20 years to change the **region's geo-economic scenario.**

- **Bangladesh Central to India's Policies:**

- Bangladesh was central to India's **Neighbourhood First' policy** and increasingly relevant to the country's **Act East Policy.**
- Bangladesh as a **key neighbour and a valued partner** not only in South Asia but also in the broader **Indo-Pacific region.**

- **Progress on Ground Situation:**

Practical progress has been made on the ground.

- Conducting a **trial run of container cargo** through **Chattogram port** to Agartala.
- Adding two new protocol routes to **inland waterways connecting Tripura to the national waterways.**
- Handing over **10 broad gauge locomotives.**
- Forming a **Joint venture in the energy sector.**

Way Forward

- A year after the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019-National Register of Citizens (NRC)** issue strained the robust ties between the two countries, **quiet diplomacy appears to have worked**. India must keep up the partnership that allows for **economic growth and improved developmental parameters** for both countries.
- Deepening **relationship with Bangladesh** has become a **necessity in the face of shifting geo-economics**. Bangladesh, with its growing economic success provides a vital partnership in the region.

The two countries share **54 transboundary rivers**, and water management is the key to prosperity.
- **Bangladesh-India relations have reached a stage of maturity**. There is scope for India-Bangladesh ties to move to the next level, based on **cooperation, coordination and consolidation**.
- It is important to address specific issues like Teesta and to respond to Dhaka's call for help on the **Rohingya** issue.

Source:IE