



## Developments in India-Bangladesh Relations

**For Prelims:** [India-Bangladesh Relations](#), [Bangladesh Liberation War](#), [Russia-Ukraine War](#), [Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(CEPA\)](#), [Ganga Waters Treaty](#).

**For Mains:** [India-Bangladesh Relations](#), Bilateral, regional, and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

**Source:** TH

### Why in News?

Recently, during the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister to India, the two countries agreed to begin a dialogue on a [Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement \(CEPA\)](#) paving the way for broader economic ties between the two neighbouring economies.

- In 2022, both nations concluded a joint feasibility study on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

### What were the Major Outcomes of the Recent Meeting?

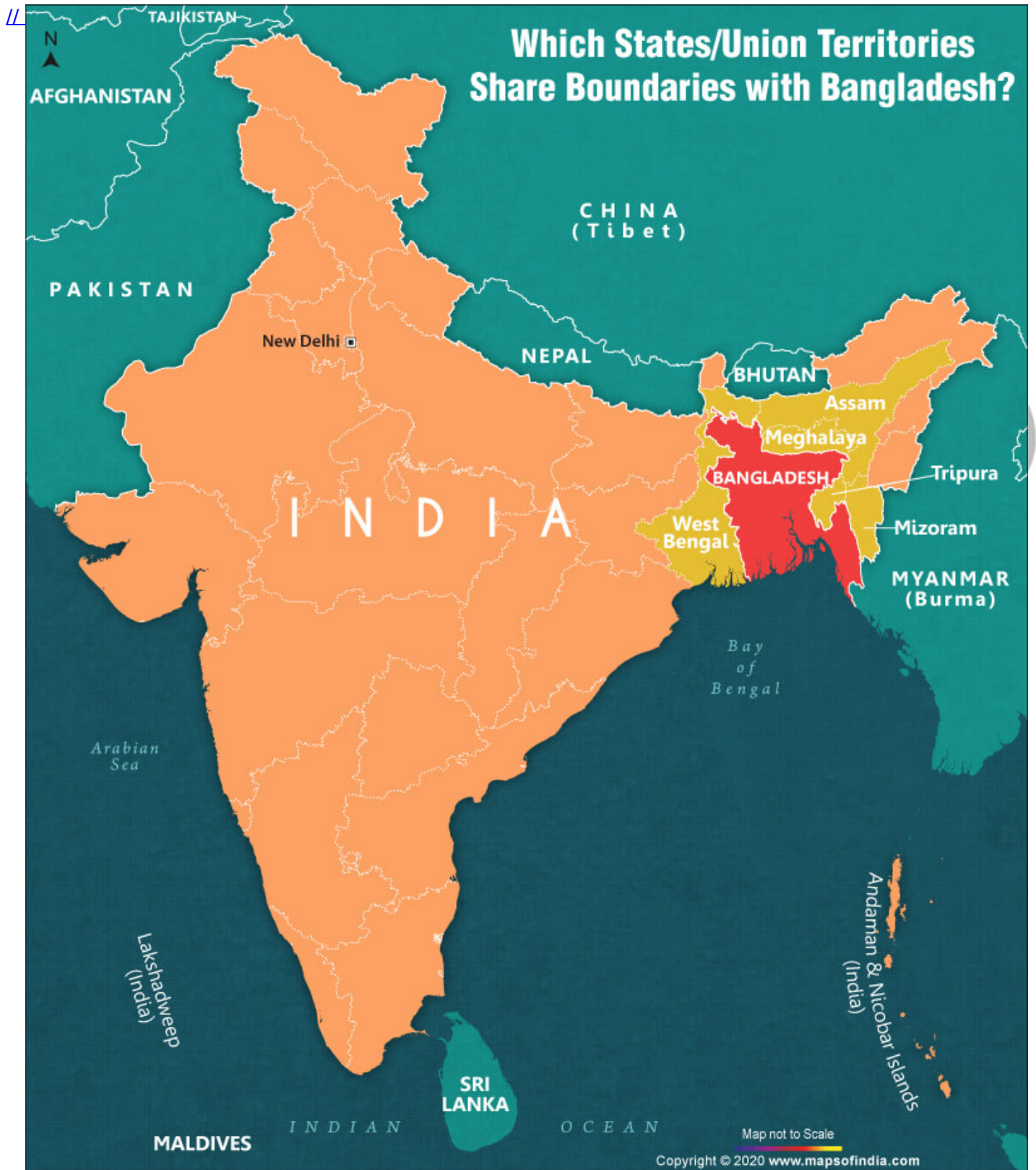
- India and Bangladesh have agreed to **commence work** on a CEPA to **enhance economic ties** and foster trade and investment between the two nations.
  - This agreement seeks to **capitalise on the economic complementarity** between the two fast-growing economies in South Asia.
- India has agreed to support the construction of an [inland container port](#) in Sirajganj, Bangladesh, facilitating better logistics and trade flow.
- Both the countries agreed to **initiate technical-level talks** to renew the **1996 Ganga Water Treaty**, focusing on flood management, early warning systems, and drinking water projects. This is significant given the 54 rivers shared between the two nations.
- A maritime cooperation pact was signed, reflecting their **shared vision for the Indian Ocean** and mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Bangladesh's decision to join the [Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative](#) was welcomed by India.

### Other Recent Developments in India-Bangladesh Cooperation

- Inauguration of the **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline**.
- Rehabilitation and operation of **pre-1965 rail links between India and Bangladesh**.
- Inauguration of [Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link](#) in 2023, that connects Bangladesh and the northeast through Tripura. It is the sixth India-Bangladesh cross-border rail link.
- The [BIMSTEC](#) Master Plan for Transport Connectivity connects major transport projects in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Thailand, thereby establishing a shipping network.
- Operationalisation of the **Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant**.
- Cargo facility for India's northeastern States through the [Khulna-Mongla Port](#).
  - Mongla Port has been connected by **rail for the first time**.

- Cultural exchanges and cooperation through centres like the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre.
- Bangladesh annually benefits from **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** training courses and scholarships for higher education in India.

## How have been the Ties Between India-Bangladesh?



## ▪ Historical Ties:

- The foundation of India's relationship with Bangladesh was laid in the 1971 **Bangladesh Liberation War**. India provided critical military and material support to assist Bangladesh in its fight for independence from Pakistan.
- Despite this, relations worsened within a few years due to military regimes, anti-India sentiment but stability returned with a change in regime in 1996 along with a treaty on Ganga water sharing.
- India and Bangladesh also successfully resolved long-pending issues, like the **Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) in 2015** and a maritime dispute over territorial waters.

## ▪ Economic Cooperation:

- Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade.
- Bangladesh is **India's biggest trade partner in South Asia** and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh in Asia.
  - India is Bangladesh's largest export destination in Asia, with approx USD 2 billion of Bangladeshi exports to India in FY 2022-23.
- Since 2010, India has extended Lines of Credit to Bangladesh worth over USD 7 billion.

## ▪ Energy:

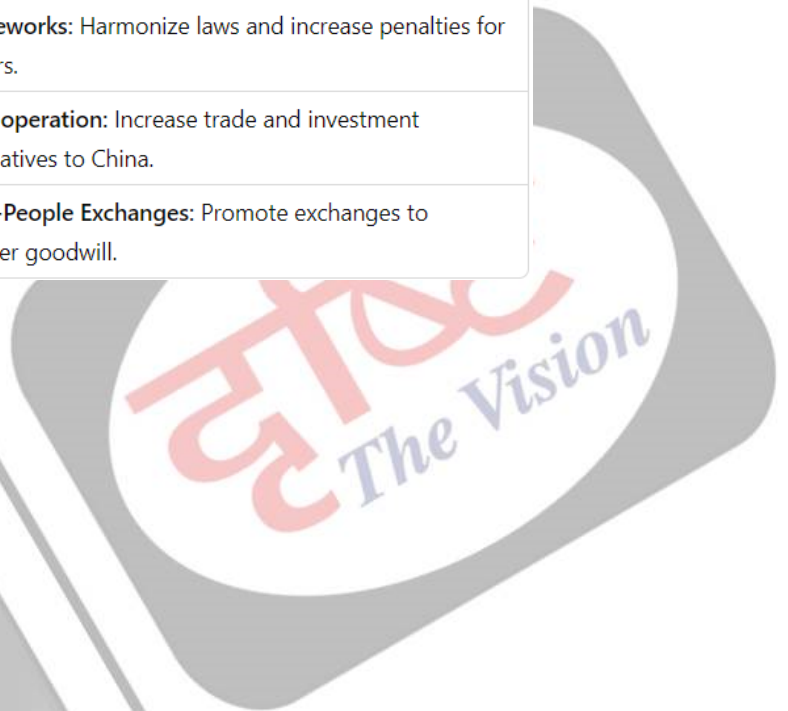
- In the **energy sector**, Bangladesh imports nearly **2,000 megawatts (MW)** of electricity from India.
- In 2018, Russia, Bangladesh and India signed a memorandum on cooperation in the implementation of the **Rooppur Nuclear power plant project**, Bangladesh's first nuclear power reactor.

## ▪ Defence and Multilateral Cooperation:

- **Bilateral Exercises:**
  - **Exercise Sampriti** (Army)
  - **Exercise Bongo Sagar** (Navy)
- **Platforms for Regional Cooperation:**
  - **SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)**
  - **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)**
  - **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**

**What are the Challenges and Potential Solutions in India-Bangladesh Relations?**

Challenges	Way Forward
Sharing of Transboundary River Waters	<b>Establish a Permanent River Commission:</b> Create a bilateral commission for managing shared rivers.
	<b>Implement Joint River Management Projects:</b> Develop joint projects for flood control and irrigation.
Illegal Migration	<b>Bilateral Agreements on Migration:</b> Draft new agreements focused on legal migration and labor mobility.
	<b>Rohingya Refugee Coordination:</b> Work with international organizations to address the root causes.
Drug Smuggling & Trafficking	<b>Joint Task Force on Trafficking:</b> Establish a joint task force to combat human trafficking and poaching.
	<b>Strengthen Legal Frameworks:</b> Harmonize laws and increase penalties for traffickers and smugglers.
Growing Chinese Influence in Bangladesh	<b>Enhanced Economic Cooperation:</b> Increase trade and investment initiatives to offer alternatives to China.
	<b>Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges:</b> Promote exchanges to strengthen ties and foster goodwill.



# MAJOR TRADE AGREEMENTS OF INDIA

## Free Trade Agreement (FTA) With Neighbouring Countries

- ↳ India-Sri Lanka FTA
- ↳ India-Nepal Treaty of Trade
- ↳ India-Bhutan Agreement on Trade, Commerce, and Transit

*A free trade agreement is a comprehensive deal between countries, offering preferential trade terms and tariff concessions, with a negative list excluding specific products and services.*

## Others:

- India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)
- India-Thailand Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)
- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)

An EHS precedes an FTA/CECA/CEPA, where negotiating countries select products for tariff liberalisation, paving way for broader trade agreements and fostering confidence.

## Regional FTA's of India

- ↳ **India ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (11):** 10 ASEAN countries + India
- ↳ **South Asia Free Trade Agreement (7):** India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and the Maldives
- ↳ **Global System of Trade Preferences** (41 countries + India)

## Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)

Partners in a PTA grant preferential access to specific products by lowering duties on agreed tariff lines, maintaining a positive list of products eligible for reduced or zero tariffs.

## India's CECA's and CEPAs

CECA/CEPA is broader than FTAs, addressing regulatory, trade, and economic aspects comprehensively, with CEPA having the widest scope including services, investment, etc while CECA mainly focuses on tariff and TQR rates negotiation.

- ↳ CEPA with **UAE, South Korea, Japan**
- ↳ CECA with **Singapore, Malaysia**

- ↳ **Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA):** Bangladesh, China, India, S. Korea, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia
- ↳ **SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):** Same as SAFTA
- ↳ **India-MERCOSUR PTA:** Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and India
- ↳ India's PTA with **Chile, Afghanistan**



## Drishti Mains Question:

**Q.** Discuss the major challenges in India-Bangladesh relations. Suggest measures to address these issues to enhance bilateral cooperation and regional stability.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q.** With reference to river Teesta, consider the following statements: (2017)

1. The source of river Teesta is the same as that of Brahmaputra but it flows through Sikkim.
2. River Rangeet originates in Sikkim and it is a tributary of river Teesta.
3. River Teesta flows into Bay of Bengal on the border of India and Bangladesh.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

(a) 1 and 3 only

(b) 2 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

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**Mains**

**Q.** Analyze internal security threats and transborder crimes along Myanmar, Bangladesh and Pakistan borders including Line of Control (LoC). Also discuss the role played by various security forces in this regard. **(2018)**

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