



# St Martin's Island

[Source: IE](#)

## Why in News?

Recently, after former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resignation, **St Martin's Island came into controversy** over its lease to another nation.

## What are the Key Facts about St Martin's Island?

### ▪ About:

- St Martin's Island is located in the **northeastern region of the Bay of Bengal**, close to the **border between Bangladesh and Myanmar**.
- It is nine kilometres away from the southern tip of Bangladesh's **Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula**.
  - The 7.3 km long island is at an **elevation of 3.6 metres above the mean sea level**.
- It is [Bangladesh's only coral island](#) and is also a **breeding ground for sea turtles**.

### ▪ History:

- The island was **once part of the Teknaf peninsula** around 5,000 years ago, but gradually got submerged into the sea.
  - Around 450 years ago, the southern suburbs of present-day **St Martin's Island resurfaced**, and the northern and rest of the parts of the island rose above sea level in the following 100 years.
- The **Arab merchants were among the first to settle on the island**, arriving in the 18th Century.
  - They initially named it "Jazira" (meaning "the island" or "the peninsula") and later changed it to "**Narikel Jinjira**" or "**Coconut Island**".
- **In 1900, British India annexed the island** during a land survey. During which the island came to be known as St Martin's Island, **named after then Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Martin**.
  - After the [partition of British India in 1947](#), it became part of Pakistan and subsequently, a part of independent Bangladesh after the [1971 Liberation War](#).

## 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War

### ▪ Background:

- After its independence, Pakistan was divided into **East and West Pakistan**.
  - **Geographical disconnect** between the two regions, **economic exploitation of east by west pakistan, Cultural conflicts and negligence of East Pak's administration** were major challenges.
- In the mid-1960s, leaders such as **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** (the founding father of Bangladesh), actively began protesting against the policies of West Pak which was followed by a brutal crackdown by the Pakistani military.

### ▪ India's Role:

- On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1971, **India launched Operation Jackpot** to recruit, train, arm, equip, supply and advise **Mukti Bahini fighters** engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Pakistan military.
- On 3rd December 1971, **India decided to go on a war with Pakistan** to save Bengali Muslims and Hindus in East Pakistan. The war lasted for 13 days.
- After that, a **written agreement** between India, Pakistan and the provisional government of Bangladesh came into effect bringing an end to the **Bangladesh Liberation War**.

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

#### Q. The Partition of Bengal made by Lord Curzon in 1905 lasted until (2014)

- (a) the First World War when Indian troops were needed by the British and the partition was ended
- (b) King George V abrogated Curzon's Act at the Royal Durbar in Delhi in 1911
- (c) Gandhiji launched his Civil Disobedience Movement
- (d) the Partition of India in 1947 when East Bengal became East Pakistan

Ans: (b)