

2. Bangladesh Nationalist Party – International Relation

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The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has secured a decisive electoral victory, marking a major political transition in the country. This shift necessitates a recalibration of India's bilateral engagement to adapt to the evolving regional dynamics and new leadership.

Bangladesh Electoral Mandate

Landslide Victory for BNP – The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Tarique Rahman, achieved a massive victory, securing a two-thirds majority in the parliament. Tarique Rahman (born 1965), the chairman of the BNP, is set to become the new Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Opposition Gains – The Jamaat-e-Islami party significantly increased its parliamentary presence compared to its previous electoral performances, indicating a shift in the opposition landscape.

Historic Political Transition – This election marks the first parliamentary poll following the removal of Sheikh Hasina in August 2024. The results have fundamentally reshaped national power equations within Bangladesh.

About Bangladesh Political System

Parliament Structure – Bangladesh operates with a unicameral legislature known as the Jatiya Sangsad. It comprises 300 directly elected members.

Executive Authority – Prime Minister – Heads the government and exercises real executive power.

President – Functions as the ceremonial head of state.

Electoral Process – General elections are conducted based on universal adult franchise. The process is overseen and managed by the Election Commission of Bangladesh.

India-Bangladesh Bilateral Challenges

Security Concerns – Historical distrust persists due to past allegations of the BNP-era tolerance toward anti-India insurgent groups operating from Bangladeshi soil.

Extradition Issue – The presence of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in India is likely to generate diplomatic sensitivities and potential friction with the new political dispensation in Dhaka.

Trade Imbalance – Trade asymmetry remains a politically sensitive issue in bilateral negotiations.

FY24 Data – India's exports to Bangladesh stood at approximately \$11 billion, while imports from Bangladesh were only about \$1.84 billion.

Feature	India to Bangladesh	Bangladesh to India
Trade Flow (FY24)	\$11 Billion (Exports)	\$1.84 Billion (Imports)
Status	Significant Surplus	Significant Deficit

Teesta River Dispute – The water-sharing agreement for the Teesta River remains unresolved and continues to strain ties.

Bangladesh's Demand – Seeks equitable dry-season flows.

India's Constraint – Cites the need for state-level consensus, particularly objections from the West Bengal state government.

Geopolitical Pressures – The regional influence of China and Pakistan may increasingly shape Bangladesh's strategic choices in the Indo-Pacific, potentially challenging India's traditional sphere of influence.

Renewal Prospects

Diplomatic Outreach – Prime Minister Narendra Modi's early congratulations to the new leadership signal India's pragmatic willingness to work with the BNP government despite historical differences.

Economic Cooperation – As India's largest South Asian trading partner, Bangladesh offers immense scope for deeper integration. Key sectors for collaboration include textiles, energy, and connectivity infrastructure.

Security Cooperation – Sustaining counter-terrorism coordination and collaboration on infrastructure projects is vital to stabilise long-term engagement between the two nations.

People-to-People Ties – Strengthening grassroots goodwill can be achieved through –

1. Medical tourism.
2. Education exchanges.
3. Simplified visa processes.

Conclusion

The future of India-Bangladesh relations will depend on a combination of balanced diplomacy, robust economic engagement, and strategic sensitivity. These factors are critical to determining whether this new political phase can restore a stable and mutually beneficial partnership.

Source – <https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/exorcise-ghosts-of-the-past-to-reset-ties-with-dhaka-101771255069016.html>

