

Bill Summary

The Constitution (119th Amendment) Bill, 2013

- The Constitution (119th Amendment) Bill, 2013 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on December 18, 2013 by Mr. Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs. It was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Justice on December 31, 2013.
- The Bill amends the First Schedule of the Constitution to give effect to an agreement entered into by India and Bangladesh on the acquiring and transfer of territories between the two countries on May 16, 1974. The First Schedule of the Constitution defines the area of each state and union territory which together constitute India.
- The India-Bangladesh Agreement was signed in 1974, but was not ratified as it involved transfer of territory which required a Constitutional Amendment. Hence, the Bill has been introduced.
- **Definition of ‘India-Bangladesh Agreement’:** The Bill refers to demarcated land boundaries in accordance with the India-Bangladesh agreement signed on May 16, 1974. This agreement underwent further modification through letters exchanged thereafter and a protocol on September 6, 2011.
- **Exchange of territories:** The territories involved are in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Tripura. Many of these are enclaves (i.e., territory belonging to one country that is entirely surrounded by the other country), and there are even enclaves-within-enclaves.
- **Amendment to the First Schedule of the Constitution:** The Bill amends paragraphs relating to the territories of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya, and Tripura in the First Schedule of the Constitution.

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