

Standing Committee Report Summary

Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship

- The Standing Committee on External Affairs (Chair: Dr Shashi Tharoor) submitted its report on “Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship” on December 18, 2025. Key observations and recommendations include:
 - **Law and order in Bangladesh:** The Committee noted the prevalent instability in Bangladesh, with incidents of violence and restrictions on democratic freedoms. It also noted the release and escape of prisoners convicted of terrorism and extremism, which could pose security challenges for India. The Committee recommended that India: (i) continue to support Bangladesh’s democratic processes, and (ii) take steps to counter anti-India narratives or misinformation in Bangladeshi media.
 - **Implementation of boundary agreement:** In 2015, India and Bangladesh signed an Agreement to rationalise their land boundary and exchange enclaves. The Committee noted that unresolved demarcation challenges remain, especially in areas with terrain challenges like the Sundarbans, which must be expedited in a timely manner.
 - **Border management:** India and Bangladesh share a 4,096 km long land border, with 864 km unfenced. The Committee noted that fencing is feasible for 689 km (out of 864 km), and recommended the remaining fencing work to be expedited. It also recommended that the government prioritise the deployment of modern surveillance tools, such as drones, motion sensors, and satellite-based systems. It recommended implementing a programme to develop border area and institutionalising coordination mechanisms between both border forces.
 - **Illegal immigration:** The Committee noted that there are 2,369 cases of suspected Bangladeshi nationals awaiting nationality verification by the Government of Bangladesh. The Ministry of External Affairs is responsible for facilitating nationality verification and repatriation of Bangladeshi nationals detained in India. It recommended that a dedicated bilateral mechanism or joint working group be established between both countries to monitor the progress of these cases.
- **Trade relations:** The Committee noted some key obstacles to bilateral trade, including: (i) import duties by Bangladesh, (ii) congestion at land ports, (iii) high dependence on road transport, and (iv) deficiencies in warehousing and quarantine facilities. It recommended upgrading infrastructure at key border trade points by expanding Integrated Check Posts, improving transport connectivity, improving warehousing facilities, and emphasising digital trade facilitation. It also recommended that: (i) negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement be concluded by 2026, and (ii) pending protocols under the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement be finalised.
- **Rationalising Lines of Credit (LOCs):** The Committee observed that India has extended developmental assistance of nearly USD 10 billion to Bangladesh as LOCs and grants. It noted that several projects have not commenced despite the LOC being extended. Where projects have begun, they have faced delays due to tendering constraints, procedural bottlenecks, and security concerns. The Committee recommended that a comprehensive review of the existing LOC portfolio be taken up.
- The Committee also noted a growing Chinese influence in Bangladesh’s defence, infrastructure, and port development. It recommended a closer monitoring of these developments, which could threaten India’s security.
- **Water co-operation:** The Committee noted that both countries share 54 trans-boundary rivers, but agreements have only been signed related to the Ganga, and two other rivers. There are no agreements on other shared rivers, especially the Teesta. It suggested beginning bilateral discussions on the Ganga Water Treaty, which will expire in 2026. It also recommended that meetings of the Joint Rivers Commission (the primary mechanism for cooperation on flood control, irrigation, and cyclone forecasting) should be convened regularly.

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