



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Bangladesh After Hasina – India's Recalibration Opportunity

INDIAN EXPRESS

17 February 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED**IR** **POLITY****GS PAPERS****GS2****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator •

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

Free UPSC & State PCS Resources

ujiyari.com

Bangladesh After Hasina — India's Recalibration Opportunity

 The Indian Express 17 February 2026 **GS2**

IE

The Indian Express

MAINS RELEVANCE:

GS Paper 2



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"How should India recalibrate its Bangladesh policy under PM Tarique Rahman's BNP government, given the complex history of India-BNP relations and Bangladesh's deepening ties with China?"

WHY IN NEWS

Tarique Rahman's swearing-in as Bangladesh's Prime Minister on February 17, 2026 marks the end of the interim Muhammad Yunus period and signals a new political chapter — challenging India to reset a relationship that frayed sharply after Sheikh Hasina's ouster in August 2024.

THE CONTEXT: WHAT CHANGED IN AUGUST 2024

On August 5, 2024, **Sheikh Hasina** of the **Awami League** fled Bangladesh amid the mass "July Revolution" led by students against the quota system in government jobs. The revolution rapidly became anti-autocracy and, critically from India's perspective, **anti-India**.

Hasina had been India's most reliable partner in Bangladesh:

- Dismantled Northeast insurgent camps (ULFA, NDFB) that used Bangladeshi soil

- Signed the **Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) 2015** resolving 162 enclaves

- Co-inaugurated the **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline** (Siliguri-Parbatipur diesel pipeline)

- Maintained the **Maitree STPP** partnership

- Kept Chinese influence in check (rejected Sonadia Port to China)

Her departure left India exposed — no diplomatic infrastructure for a BNP relationship; widespread anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh amplified by social media; and an interim government (Muhammad Yunus) that was not hostile but not enthusiastic about India either.

BNP'S HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA — COMPLEX

The **Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)**, founded by **Ziaur Rahman** (President, 1976–1981), has historically been India-sceptical:

- Closer ties with China and the Gulf

- More accommodating of Jamaat-e-Islami (India designates LeT and HuJI as terrorist, both with Jamaat links)

- Raised Farakka Barrage water sharing as anti-India rhetoric during election campaigns

- In the 1990s-2000s, BNP-Jamaat coalition governments allowed NE insurgents safe harbour (ULFA, NSCN(I-M))

But Tarique Rahman's BNP in 2026 is not the BNP of 2001:

- Rahman was in London exile for 16 years; has more exposure to Western democratic norms

- BNP is now in power with a strong mandate (209/297 seats) — not dependent on Jamaat coalition support as much as before

- The electorate that brought him to power includes the youth generation that conducted the 2024 revolution — this generation is not ideologically defined by anti-India sentiment; it was anti-autocracy

- Bangladesh's economy — heavily dependent on garment exports, remittances from India, and Indian electricity — creates structural incentives for pragmatic relations

INDIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN BANGLADESH

India's interests in Bangladesh are **non-negotiable regardless of party in power:**

Interest	Status
Northeast connectivity	Chittagong Port access for Tripura/Mizoram; Akhaura-Agartala rail link (opened 2023)
Electricity supply	India supplies 1,160 MW; Maitree STPP (1,320 MW, Khulna) — joint revenue
Counter-insurgency	ULFA, NSCN and other NE groups — safe haven denial critical
Trade	USD 13.51 billion bilateral trade; Bangladesh is India's largest export destination in South Asia
Teesta River	Bangladesh needs water; India (West Bengal) reluctant to share
China containment	Prevent Chinese deep-water port access (Sonadia, Cox's Bazar)

THE TEESTA CHALLENGE — UNRESOLVED SINCE 2011

The **Teesta River** remains the single biggest irritant. A Teesta Water Sharing Treaty was finalised in principle in **2011** — but **West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee** withdrew consent at the last minute. Bangladesh (and BNP especially) has long seen India as using Teesta as leverage.

A **Modi-Rahman meeting** early in the new government could offer movement on Teesta — perhaps an interim agreement — in exchange for Bangladesh’s cooperation on insurgent safe havens and Chinese port access. This trade is in India’s interest.

WHAT INDIA SHOULD DO

Immediate actions:

PM Modi or EAM Jaishankar should meet Tarique Rahman before he meets Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (likely early diplomatic priority)

Offer a **Connectivity Package**: expedite pending projects (Chilahati-Haldibari rail link, Mongla Port access road, Bhairab highway)

Announce a **student exchange initiative** (India-Bangladesh University Partnership Fund) — the youth who drove the 2024 revolution must see India as a partner, not a patron of autocracy

Medium-term:

Resolve Teesta with a **joint multi-sectoral package** (Teesta water + Bangladesh textile sector market access + India’s infrastructure LoC)

Engage BNP directly — India was caught without diplomatic channels to BNP during the transition; fix this with Track-2 dialogues

Calibrate communication about Hindu minorities in Bangladesh — India must raise this clearly but through diplomatic channels, not by creating a domestic political issue that BNP exploits

WHAT INDIA SHOULD AVOID

Treating BNP as inherently hostile — it is pragmatic, not ideological

Cutting off credit lines or delaying projects as leverage — Bangladesh will turn to China faster

Making the Awami League the only “acceptable” party — India cannot afford to appear as backing any specific political force

UPSC RELEVANCE

India-Bangladesh relations, LBA 2015 (Land Boundary Agreement), Teesta River, Maitree STPP, Farakka Barrage, Akhaura-Agartala rail link, BNP, Tarique Rahman, Muhammad Yunus, BIMSTEC. Mains GS-2: India's neighbourhood first policy; India-Bangladesh bilateral relations; India's soft power in South Asia; China's Indian Ocean strategy.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS — KEY DATA:

Bilateral trade (FY25): **USD 13.51 billion** (India exports: USD 11.46 bn; Bangladesh to India: USD 2.05 bn)
 India's LoCs to Bangladesh: **~USD 8 billion** (3 Lines of Credit); USD 500 million Defence LoC
 Electricity supply: India supplies **1,160 MW** to Bangladesh
 Maitree STPP: **1,320 MW**, Khulna district, Bangladesh (Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company)
 Akhaura-Agartala Rail: Opened **November 2023** (reduces Agartala-Kolkata goods time dramatically)

BANGLADESH ELECTION 2026:

Election type: **13th Parliamentary Elections** | Tarique Rahman sworn: **February 17, 2026**
 BNP+allies: **209/297 seats** | Jamaat: 77 | Oath administered by: **President Mohammed Shahabuddin**
 Interim PM: **Muhammad Yunus** (August 2024–February 16, 2026)
 Sheikh Hasina fled: **August 5, 2024** (July 2024 Revolution — quota system protests)

KEY HISTORICAL AGREEMENTS:

Land Boundary Agreement (LBA): Signed **May 16, 2015**; resolved 162 enclaves (~17,000 people)
 India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline: Siliguri (India) to Parbatipur (Bangladesh); diesel supply
 Teesta Treaty: Finalised 2011 in principle; West Bengal refused to sign; still pending

BANGLADESH ECONOMY:

GDP: ~USD 450 billion | RMG (Readymade Garments): ~85% of exports
 India's share of Bangladesh imports: ~15-18%; India is Bangladesh's 2nd largest import source

Sources: Indian Express, The Hindu, MEA

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

Published on ujjari.com · Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs