

TÜRKIYE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR INDIA VIS-À-VIS BANGLADESH — A BRIDGE TOO FAR

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In continuation of the previous article—which examined Türkiye–Bangladesh relations through the lenses of defence cooperation, ideological affinity, and geopolitical alignment, questioning whether the engagement reflects a temporary convergence or a lasting strategic partnership—this article turns to India–Bangladesh ties to assess what has gone wrong between the two countries and how this has created space for an external actor such as Türkiye. It explores the strengths underpinning India–Bangladesh maritime relations, illustrating how, despite recent setbacks, India continues to hold significant strategic leverage in its eastern neighbourhood. The article argues that for India to sustain and deepen this advantage, it must recalibrate its policies towards Bangladesh with a broader, future-oriented vision. It also contends that while Türkiye’s presence in the region is growing, the geopolitical realities and structural imperatives of South Asia will continue to tilt Dhaka’s strategic alignment towards New Delhi—suggesting that even if India momentarily withdraws, the vacuum it leaves behind cannot be meaningfully filled by Türkiye.

India–Bangladesh Relations: Historical Affinity and Maritime Partnership

India and Bangladesh share a relationship rooted in the shared sacrifices of the 1971 Liberation War, which has imparted both symbolic depth and strategic substance to their bilateral engagement. This historical affinity has underpinned decades of cooperation across political, economic, and security spheres, even as recurrent frictions periodically test the resilience of the partnership. In recent years, however, the maritime dimension has emerged as a defining anchor of bilateral relations, offering both countries a forward-looking platform to consolidate trust, manage differences, and pursue common prosperity in the Bay of Bengal.

The foundation of India–Bangladesh relations rests on India’s decisive role in the country’s independence, a legacy institutionalised through the 1972 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace.¹ This liberation-era solidarity, though challenged during the years of military rule in Dhaka between 1975 and 1990, was revived under Sheikh Hasina’s leadership from 2009

¹ “Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the Government of India and the People’s Republic of Bangladesh,” 19 March 1972, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5621/Treaty_of_Peace_and_Friendship

onwards, ushering in what many analysts describe as a “golden age” of bilateral ties.² This revival was marked by milestones that reinforced strategic complementarity: the establishment of the annual bilateral summit mechanism in 2015, which provided a structured channel for high-level engagement; India’s Lines of Credit worth USD 8 billion extended to Bangladesh; and record bilateral trade, which reached USD 14.01 billion in 2023–24.³ These developments reflected a recognition in both capitals that their interdependence—geographical, economic, and cultural—cannot be substituted by external partnerships.

In more recent times, new complexities have emerged that impact India’s strategic calculus. Reports of Dhaka seeking rapprochement with Pakistan over historical grievances, including discussions on the 1971 genocide, challenge the very narrative that has bound the two countries since independence;⁴ China’s growing economic and defence footprint, illustrated most visibly by projects such as the Padma Bridge;⁵ Türkiye’s expanding role through defence exports, industrial collaboration, and pan-Islamic diplomatic signalling positioning Ankara as a disruptive, even if still limited, player in the eastern subcontinent; etc.⁶ For New Delhi, Bangladesh’s political trajectory has thus become inseparable from broader questions of South Asian stability, Indo-Pacific security, and great-power competition.

If history has given India and Bangladesh their moral and political foundations, the Bay of Bengal has provided them with their most promising strategic horizon. The peaceful resolution of the maritime boundary dispute in 2014 by the Permanent Court of Arbitration was a turning point.⁷ By granting Bangladesh 19,467 sq km of erstwhile-contested waters, the award removed a longstanding irritant and opened space for structured cooperation in ocean governance, marine resources, and maritime security.⁸ Connectivity initiatives have since reinforced this momentum. The renewal and expansion of the “Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade” (PIWTT) has created a dense network of waterways linking Indian and Bangladeshi ports, while the 2015 “Coastal Shipping Agreement” has dramatically reduced transit times for cargo.⁹ The operationalisation in April 2023 of India’s access to Chattogram and Mongla ports—cutting

² Alok Deb, “India and Bangladesh: A Multi Faceted Relationship,” *CLAWS Journal* 15, No 1 (Summer 2022): 56–71, accessed September 30, 2025, https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/80425/ssoar-claws-2022-1-deb-India_and_Bangladesh_A_Multi.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

³ “Brief on India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations,” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2024. <https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Bangladesh2024.pdf>

⁴ Lt Col Manoj K Channan (Retd), “Shifting Dynamics in India-Bangladesh Relations: Geo-political and Geo-military Implications for the Future,” *The Financial Express*, 9 September 2024. <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/shifting-dynamics-in-india-bangladesh-relations-geo-political-and-geo-military-implications-for-the-future/3605726/>

⁵ Channan, “Shifting Dynamics in India-Bangladesh Relations.”

⁶ Aditi Thakur, “Türkiye and Bangladesh: Strategic Embrace or Temporary Alignment?,” *National Maritime Foundation*, 1 August 2025. <https://maritimeindia.org/turkiye-and-bangladesh-strategic-embrace-or-temporary-alignment/>

⁷ Sabrina Hasan, “An Analysis of The Maritime Boundary Delimitation Between Bangladesh And India: Legal, Geopolitical, And Economic Implications,” *Indian Journal of Integrated Research in Law* Volume IV Issue V (2024). <https://ijirl.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/AN-ANALYSIS-OF-THE-MARITIME-BOUNDARY-DELIMITATION-BETWEEN-BANGLADESH-AND-INDIA-LEGAL-GEOPOLITICAL-AND-ECONOMIC-IMPLICATIONS.pdf>

⁸ Hasan, “An Analysis of the Maritime Boundary Delimitation Between Bangladesh and India.”

⁹ Moutusi Islam, “Bangladesh-India Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal: Bangladesh Perspective,” *BISS Journal* 44, No 3 (July 2023): 333–355, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372786752_Bangladesh-India_Maritime_Cooperation_in_the_Bay_of_Bengal_Bangladesh_Perspective

transit from Haldia to India's northeastern States from 1,600 km to just 450 km—underscores the effectiveness of maritime integration in redefining economic geography.¹⁰

Beyond trade, joint endeavours aimed at the “blueing” of the economies of both countries have added a sustainability dimension to the dyadic partnership. Collaborative research between Indian and Bangladeshi institutions, conservation efforts in the Sundarbans, and shared initiatives against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, all point to a growing convergence on environmental stewardship.¹¹ On the security side, the institutionalisation of bilateral naval exercises such as BONGOSAGAR and the annual coordinated patrols CORPAT have enhanced maritime domain awareness and bolstered trust between the two navies.¹² Yet, challenges remain. Infrastructure gaps at ports, uneven dredging of waterways, and bureaucratic delays continue to hinder the full potential of connectivity projects. Environmental vulnerabilities, including fly-ash pollution and rising marine pollution, call for more robust regulatory frameworks. Nevertheless, these are obstacles to be managed rather than impassable structural barriers, and the opportunities for further deepening—whether in third-country trade through Bangladeshi ports, co-development of maritime surveillance systems, or joint ventures in sustainable marine industries—remain significant.

Fault-lines in the India–Bangladesh Partnership

The transformation of India–Bangladesh relations from a “golden age” under Sheikh Hasina to their current state of friction has been shaped by a cluster of fault lines that have widened since her ouster in August 2024. These go beyond episodic disagreements, and instead, reflect structural challenges, political realignments, and mutual mistrust, all of which significantly complicate the management of the relationship.

The first fault line concerns the fate of Sheikh Hasina herself. India's decision to provide refuge to the former Prime Minister after her removal and subsequent indictment by the interim government in Bangladesh has been perceived in Dhaka as an implicit endorsement of her contested legacy. The interim leadership of Muhammad Yunus has issued multiple extradition requests, which India has not addressed, reinforcing the perception that New Delhi is shielding a discredited ally. This silence has created a persistent diplomatic irritant, with Yunus accusing India of being unresponsive to Bangladesh's “*legitimate concerns*.”¹³

The second fault line lies along the border, where long-standing sensitivities have acquired renewed volatility. Disputes over India's construction of border fencing and other infrastructure have triggered reciprocal diplomatic summons and occasional confrontations between the Border Security Force and the Border Guard Bangladesh.¹⁴ The disagreement over whether

¹⁰ Asian Confluence, “*Assessing Connectivity between Northeast India and Bangladesh: Towards a Prosperous Bay of Bengal Region*,” (New Delhi: Divya Jeevan Foundation Society, 2023), 117-125.

<https://www.asianconfluence.org/pdf/1691605305Assessing%20Connectivity%20between%20Northeast%20India%20and%20Bangladesh.pdf>

¹¹ Islam, “Bangladesh-India Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal.”

¹² Islam, “Bangladesh-India Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal.”

¹³ Press Trust of India, “No Official Response From India On Sheikh Hasina Extradition”, *NDTV*, 05 March 2025. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/no-official-response-from-india-on-sheikh-hasina-extradition-says-muhammad-yunus-7853944>

¹⁴ Bantirani Patro, “India and Bangladesh Should Insulate Their Border from Bilateral Tensions”, *South Asian Voices*, 13 August 2025. <https://southasianvoices.org/geo-f-in-r-india-bangladesh-border-tensions-08-13-2025/>

fencing constitutes a “defensive structure” in violation of the “1975 Joint Guidelines” reflects a deep divergence in the manner in which the two sides approach border management. Rising incidents of cross-border violence, smuggling, and migration, further complicate the picture, aggravating popular perceptions on both sides of the frontier.

A third and particularly sensitive issue in India is the targeting of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh since Hasina’s ouster. Documented attacks on temples and families, coupled with reports of killings and large-scale displacement, have elevated India’s concerns over communal insecurity.¹⁵ For New Delhi, these developments resonate domestically, feeding into political narratives about India’s role as a protector of minorities in the region. For Dhaka, however, Indian criticism is often seen as intrusive and politically motivated, sharpening the divide.

The fourth fault line is the intensifying media war. Leaders in Dhaka accuse Indian outlets of portraying the student-led protests as Islamist-driven, while Indian officials point to Bangladeshi media’s misrepresentation of border incidents. Competing propaganda has amplified nationalist sentiment, constraining diplomatic space for compromise. The information battlefield has thus become an extension of political rivalry, entrenching hostility at the societal level.

Finally, the fault lines extend into the realm of regional geopolitics. The Yunus government’s outreach to Pakistan, calls for the revival of SAARC, and overtures to China, have been interpreted in New Delhi as deliberate attempts to dilute India’s influence. Defence and industrial cooperation between Bangladesh and Türkiye further reinforce this perception, presenting India with the prospect of a consolidated alignment of actors in its eastern neighbourhood who share scepticism, if not outright hostility, towards Indian primacy.

Taken together, these fault lines illustrate how the relationship has moved from one of strategic complementarity to one of strategic contestation. The erosion of trust, coupled with shifting regional alignments, has created both the perception and reality of a vacuum in the bilateral ties between India and Bangladesh. This, in turn, has opened the door for external actors, most prominently Türkiye, to exploit the fragility of the bilateral equation in pursuit of their own strategic agendas.

Partners by Geography, Not Choice

India and Bangladesh, despite decades of cooperation and historical ties, remain partners defined primarily by geographic necessity rather than purely aligned strategic preferences. Their shared borders and proximity create unavoidable interdependencies across security, trade, migration, and social interactions, making sustained engagement inevitable even when political relations are strained.

Karl Deutsch, in his work on integration and security communities, highlighted that geographic proximity increases interaction and communication between neighbouring States, fostering both cooperation and potential friction. He noted that contiguous States develop channels of communication and interdependence that make ignoring a neighbour costly, particularly when

¹⁵ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, “QUESTION NO. 75: Violence Against Hindus in Bangladesh,” Lok Sabha, 29 November 2024. <https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl%2F38658%2FQUESTION+NO+75+VIOLENCE+AGAINST+HINDUS+IN+BANGLADESH>

security and economic interests are intertwined.¹⁶ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye's *Complex Interdependence* similarly emphasises that neighbours are linked through multiple channels—economic, political, and social—so instability or policy shifts in one state have immediate consequences for the other.¹⁷

Economic dependency theory also underscores this dynamic. Scholars like André Gunder Frank argue that proximity creates structural economic dependencies: neighbouring States develop trade networks, resource linkages, and infrastructural ties, which cannot be easily replaced or ignored.¹⁸ For Bangladesh, decades of integration with India—ranging from riverine trade routes to access to ports to service the needs of India's northeast—make disengagement impractical, even amid political divergence.

From India's perspective, this geographic reality shapes both opportunity and vulnerability. Border security, migration management, and regional influence are all directly affected by developments in Dhaka, while economic and infrastructural linkages make India a critical partner for Bangladesh. At the same time, these unavoidable interactions mean that tensions—whether over borders, trade, or political orientation—are natural outcomes of geographic proximity. This structural dependence also opens space for external actors like Türkiye to exploit periods of bilateral friction, seeking to deepen influence whenever the relationship experiences strain.

Bangladesh's Critical Dependence upon India

Bangladesh's relationship with India represents one of the most asymmetric dependencies in South Asia, spanning trade, energy, defence, maritime connectivity, and climate resilience. Despite the political turbulence following Sheikh Hasina's ouster and the interim Yunus government's occasional anti-India rhetoric, the structural realities of this relationship remain profound and largely immutable. Economically, Bangladesh faces a severe trade imbalance: in FY 2024–25, India exported US\$ 11.46 billion worth of goods to Bangladesh, while Bangladesh's exports to India were only US\$ 2.05 billion, creating a persistent trade deficit exceeding US\$ 9–12 billion annually.¹⁹ Critical imports underpinning Bangladesh's \$47 billion garment sector include 2.8 million bales of cotton annually, along with chemicals, yarn, and other industrial inputs, which rely on India's geographical proximity and rapid 2–3 day supply chains.²⁰ Energy dependence further underscores this asymmetry. Bangladesh imports 2,500 MW of electricity from India, valued at over US\$ 1 billion annually—nearly doubling from US\$ 498 million in

¹⁶ William E Fisher, "An Analysis of the Deutsch Sociocausal Paradigm of Political Integration," *International Organization* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 254–290, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300031593>

¹⁷ Thomas C Walker, "A Circumspect Revival of Liberalism: Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye's *Power and Interdependence*," *Classics of International Relations: Essays in Criticism and Appreciation*, ed Henrik Bliddal, Casper Sylvest, and Peter Wilson (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 149–162, https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/54A33349-DDB5-9122-52D039391EF8BB6C/keohane_and_nye_essay_13.pdf

¹⁸ Karl Thompson, "Dependency Theory," *ReviseSociology*, 17 October 2015. <https://revisesociology.com/2015/10/17/dependency-theory/>

¹⁹ Refayet Ullah Mirdha, "Imports from India Rise as Exporters Battle Against Lead Time," *The Daily Star*, 30 March 2025. <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/imports-india-rise-exporters-battle-against-lead-time-3860501>

²⁰ Mirdha, "Imports from India Rise."

2020²¹—and depends on the Adani-operated Godda plant for 1,600 MW of electricity.²² In addition, India supplies US\$ 829 million worth of diesel annually and Bangladesh has plans for 1,000 MW of renewable energy imports, alongside potential hydropower from Nepal and Bhutan, via Indian transmission networks.²³ Water security adds another layer of unavoidable reliance: 73% of Bangladesh’s population depends directly or indirectly on Teesta waters, covering 14% of cropped area, while 21 million people in five northern districts rely on Teesta flows during the dry season.²⁴ Broader water dependencies include 54 transboundary rivers, with the Ganges Water Treaty (1996) and Farakka Barrage critically shaping downstream access.²⁵ Bangladesh received 19,467 sq km of contested maritime waters via the 2014 arbitration award. Maritime and defence cooperation further entrench this interdependence. Bangladesh participates in combined exercises with India, such as SAMPRATI, and BONGOSAGAR, as also operations such as CORPAT, and continues to send large numbers of officers for training in India,²⁶ while continuing to provide India with access to the ports of Chattogram and Mongla.²⁷ Climate vulnerabilities intensify the dependency: with two-thirds of the country less than 15 feet above sea level, projected sea-level rise of 50 cm by 2050 could displace 18 million people, while a 5–6 foot rise by 2100 threatens 50 million.²⁸ India contributes through Sundarbans conservation, joint early warning systems for cyclones and tsunamis, and delta management research.²⁹ These data collectively demonstrate that India is not merely a preferred partner but an indispensable one; geographic contiguity, trade complementarity, energy security, water resources, connectivity, and climate imperatives create structural dependencies that any Bangladeshi government—regardless of political orientation—cannot ignore. Even under the Yunus interim government, which maintains a strong anti-India rhetoric, Bangladesh continues to import Indian electricity, use Indian transit facilities, and engage in joint maritime and climate initiatives, reflecting the practical impossibility of severing these deep-rooted linkages.

²¹ Star Business Report, “Power Dominates Bangladesh’s Imports from India,” *The Daily Star*, 18 August 2024. <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/power-dominates-bangladeshs-imports-india-3679701>

²² Sweta Goswami, “Electricity Trade Between India-Bangladesh to Continue Amid Other Curbs,” *Moneycontrol*, 20 May 2025. <https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/electricity-trade-between-india-bangladesh-to-continue-amid-other-curbs-13035487.html>

²³ “Power Play: Why Bangladesh Can Push India at Its Own Peril,” *The Economic Times*, 2 September 2024. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/power-play-why-bangladesh-can-push-india-at-its-own-peril/articleshow/112994923.cms>

²⁴ Japungsar Basumatary, “Bangladesh-India Water Issue: A Study on Teesta River,” *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews* 5, No 4 (October–December 2018): 20U. https://ijrar.com/upload_issue/ijrar_issue_20542319.pdf

²⁵ Brigadier General Mohammad Shaheenul Haque, “Water Sharing Scenario between Bangladesh and India: A Study towards Future Prospects,” *NDC Journal* 17, No 1 (June 2018). <https://ndcjournal.ndc.gov.bd/ndcj/index.php/ndcj/article/download/224/201/439>

²⁶ Deb, “India and Bangladesh,” 59.

²⁷ Ministry of External Affairs, “Brief on India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations.”

²⁸ Diego Rojas, “How the Climate Crisis Is Impacting Bangladesh,” *The Climate Reality Project*, 1 January 2025. <https://www.climateproject.org/blog/how-climate-crisis-impacting-bangladesh>

²⁹ World Bank, “Bangladesh-India Sundarban Region Cooperation Initiative: Background Note,” Report No 854711587108371012, May 2018. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/854711587108371012/pdf/Bangladesh-India-Sundarban-Region-Cooperation-Initiative-Background-Note.pdf>

See also: Neelima A “Navigating the Blue Horizon in the Bay of Bengal: India-Bangladesh Cooperation in Blue Economy,” *Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR) and Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS)*, September 2024. <https://www.cppr.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Commentary-by-Neelima-A-India-Bangladesh-Initiatives-in-Blue-Economy-CPPR-BIPSS-Final.pdf>

Limits of Türkiye's Strategic Penetration

Türkiye has rapidly expanded its presence in Bangladesh, positioning itself as a key defence partner since 2021. Dhaka's post-Hasina recalibration under the interim Yunus government created openings for Ankara to offer advanced military platforms, from Bayraktar TB2 drones and TRG-300 Tiger MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System) to MKE Boran howitzers and Otokar Cobra armoured vehicles. Beyond procurement, Turkey is pursuing institutional depth through plans for two defence industrial zones in Chittagong and Narayanganj, emphasising technology transfer, co-production, and local capacity-building.³⁰ High-level diplomatic engagement, including visits by Turkish defence and trade officials, and growing commercial exchanges—Bangladesh's exports to Türkiye reached USD 581 million in FY 2023–24—further reflect Ankara's ambition to secure a lasting foothold in Dhaka.³¹

Yet, despite these tactical gains, Türkiye's penetration is inherently limited by structural realities. Bangladesh's deep economic, energy, maritime, and climate-related dependencies on India remain unshakable. Electricity imports worth over US\$ 1 billion, access to Chattogram and Mongla ports, Teesta River water, and integrated trade networks to India's Northeast illustrate that Ankara cannot be a substitute for New Delhi. Strategically, while Turkish drones and defence cooperation provide Dhaka with diversification and leverage, they do not alter the fundamental asymmetry: India is embedded in Bangladesh's economy, infrastructure, and security frameworks in a manner that Turkey cannot replicate. Even with growing ideological and diplomatic alignment, Bangladesh remains cautious, calibrating its engagement to avoid over-reliance on Ankara.

In effect, Türkiye's relationship with Bangladesh is complementary rather than substitutive. It can expand influence during periods of friction in India–Bangladesh ties, but it cannot displace India's centrality. Ankara's gains are largely opportunistic, capitalising on short-term political openings, whereas India's structural position—anchored in geography, trade, energy, maritime access, and climate cooperation—ensures its enduring indispensability. The comparison highlights Bangladesh's pragmatic balancing: it leverages Türkiye for defence modernisation, industrial development, and diplomatic signalling, yet keeps the partnership circumscribed, recognising that India's role remains fundamental to its national and regional security, economic stability, and long-term strategic interests.

Way Forward: Recommendations for India

- 1. Institutionalise Multi-Party Engagement:** Move beyond reliance on personal rapport with political leadership. Develop structured channels for engagement with all major political parties in Bangladesh, including opposition forces, to ensure continuity of bilateral cooperation irrespective of domestic political changes.

³⁰ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "Turkey Eyes Strategic Foothold in Bangladesh with Defence Zones," *The Economic Times*, 3 July 2025. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/turkey-eyes-strategic-foothold-in-bangladesh-with-defence-zones/articleshow/122234290.cms>

³¹ Mohammad Abdul Aziz, "Untapped Potential of Bangladesh-Türkiye Strategic Partnership," *Daily Sabah*, 1 April 2025. <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/untapped-potential-of-bangladesh-turkiye-strategic-partnership>

2. **Deepen Economic and Trade Integration:** Expand Lines of Credit and support infrastructure projects that strengthen interdependence, particularly in energy, transport, and industrial inputs. Facilitate smoother supply chains for critical sectors like textiles and raw materials, reinforcing India's indispensability to Bangladesh's economy.
3. **Enhance Maritime Cooperation:** Strengthen access and operational use of Chattogram and Mongla ports, expand combined naval exercises such as CORPAT and BONGOSAGAR, and pursue collaborative projects towards the blueing of the economy under the MAHASAGAR policy and leveraging the BIMSTEC framework. Maritime engagement should be leveraged as a stabilising anchor during political turbulence.
4. **Bolster Energy and Climate Collaboration:** Ensure uninterrupted electricity exports and facilitate renewable energy integration. Expand joint disaster-preparedness, delta management, and early warning systems, particularly around the Sundarbans and river basin management, to emphasise India's ready willingness to provide support towards climate resilience.
5. **Targeted Defence and Capacity-Building Initiatives:** Continue officer training, combined (as well as combined-and-joint) exercises, and the provision of equipment-support, while exploring specialised capability-building projects that complement Bangladesh's ongoing modernisation efforts. Emphasise institutionalised cooperation rather than *ad hoc* arrangements.
6. **Strategic Communication and Diplomacy:** Counter external narratives that portray India as coercive or hegemonic by communicating benefits of bilateral cooperation clearly to both policymakers and the public in Bangladesh. Leverage soft power, cultural ties, and people-to-people exchanges to strengthen trust and mutual understanding.
7. **Proactive Monitoring of External Actors:** Maintain awareness of Türkiye, Pakistan, and China's engagement with Bangladesh. Use diplomatic channels and strategic signalling to pre-empt opportunistic influence during periods of bilateral friction, while emphasising India's entrenched structural and operational advantages.
8. **Future-Oriented Policy Planning:** Integrate lessons from the post-Hasina political transition into long-term strategic planning. Develop contingency strategies that account for potential regime changes, electoral outcomes, and regional power shifts, ensuring that India's influence remains central regardless of short-term disruptions.

Conclusion

The evolving dynamics of India–Bangladesh relations illustrate both the fragility and resilience of neighbourly engagement in South Asia. Historical affinity, forged through shared sacrifice in 1971, and decades of deep economic, maritime, and defence cooperation have created a robust foundation that remains largely intact despite recent political turbulence under the interim Yunus government. Yet, the post-Hasina crisis has exposed vulnerabilities in India's approach, particularly the over-reliance on personal rapport and limited institutionalised engagement with Bangladesh's broader political spectrum.

Türkiye's growing footprint highlights the opportunities and risks arising from these vulnerabilities. While Ankara has leveraged political frictions to advance defence exports, industrial collaboration, and ideological signalling, its influence remains structurally bounded by Bangladesh's enduring dependence on India across trade, energy, connectivity, and climate resilience. Dhaka's pragmatic balancing demonstrates that Türkiye can complement but cannot substitute India's entrenched role as the indispensable partner in the country's economic, security, and strategic calculus.

For New Delhi, the path forward lies in consolidating influence through deliberate, multi-domain engagement. Institutionalised political outreach, expanded economic and maritime integration, climate and energy collaboration, and targeted defence capacity-building are essential to sustain strategic primacy. Equally important is proactive monitoring of external actors, particularly Türkiye, Pakistan, and China, whose opportunistic engagements underscore the need for foresight and flexible policy tools. By combining structural leverage with forward-looking diplomacy, India can transform transient setbacks into enduring advantages, ensuring that Bangladesh's strategic orientation remains aligned with regional stability, economic prosperity, and mutual security.

Ultimately, the India–Bangladesh relationship is defined less by temporary political fluctuations and more by the immutable imperatives of geography, interdependence, and shared security. Recognising these structural realities allows India to navigate short-term crises without ceding strategic space, reinforcing a partnership that is simultaneously necessary, resilient, and future-oriented.

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