Importance of Bangladeshi PM’s visit

What is the issue?

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In last 3 years, the degree of cooperation which has generally characterised Dhaka-Delhi ties has gone up, with the two countries seeing eye to eye on a number of issues affecting them as well as the South Asian region.

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What are the areas of cooperation?

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- **Terrorism:** Both India and Bangladesh have adopted a common stance on tackling terrorism through not only cracking down on the purveyors of terror but also keeping at arm’s length, and in fact condemning, nations regarded as sponsors of terrorism in the region.
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- **Power Plant:** In recent times, cooperation has been enhanced in other areas, particularly with respect to Bangladesh’s measures toward setting up **a power plant in the Sundarbans.**
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- **Investment:** Bangladesh has witnessed a rather impressive degree of Indian investment in areas where its economic development is concerned.
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- **Diplomacy:** Both countries have had identical views on how organisations such as the SAARC should be going forward in promoting cooperation among its member nations.
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How important is the visit?

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- At home, the opposition has already begun hurling the usual epithets at the ruling govt to highlight what it has called **genuflection** before India where

preserving Bangladesh’s interests is the issue.
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- So, only a fresh injection of energy into relations with India can benefit Bangladesh and convince Bangladesh’s people that their future is in good hands.
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- Also, the Indian government’s worry about the increasing levels of cooperation between Bangladesh and China, particularly in the spheres of the economy and defence.
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- Dhaka’s recent procurement of **two submarines from Beijing,** coupled with the Bangladeshi PM’s statement, only have raised eyebrows in the corridors of power in India.
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- The Bangladesh PM has therefore a particular need now to convince the Indian leadership that Dhaka’s links with Beijing are in no way an effort to turn away from its traditional links with Delhi, but are aimed at ensuring for itself a basis of balanced, cooperative relations with the major players in the region.
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- Finally, the Bangladeshis by and large continue to hope that Indian PM will be able to live up to his promise of a Teesta treaty being arrived at through his influence.
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What about the defense deal?

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- A critical aspect of the trip will certainly be a **defence deal** that will likely be initialled by the two Prime Ministers.
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- This is an area that is clearly sensitive for the Bangladesh leader since **questions are already being raised in Dhaka** about the terms of, or even the need for, such a deal.
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- Opposition is alleging that it would turn Bangladesh’s defence system into an extension of India’s.
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- They say that signing any defence deal or MoU with India will be a dangerous venture for Bangladesh since India wants to sell its military hardware and arms for the past 25 years.

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- But, the Bangladeshi PM will need to convince Bangladeshis that the deal will be initialled on the **basis of sovereign equality** and is not a measure that will have India roping Bangladesh into its interpretation of geopolitical realities.
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Source: The Hindu

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