India-Bangladesh ties

Why in News?

Bangladesh Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina officially visited India for four days recently. To know more, click here.

What does this meeting mean?

- Frequent meetings between neighbours are hallmarks of a strong friendship.
- Bangladesh PM's India visit, the first full bilateral meeting since both countries went to polls, marks a new chapter between both the countries.
- The two nations have come closer over a decade-long engagement that began with Ms. Hasina's return to power in 2008.
- There was an improvement in the strategic sphere, and alignment on regional and global issues, connectivity and trade.

What are the commitments made during this visit?

- The two countries have committed to upgrading port facilities, implement India's under-utilised Lines of Credit and Coastal surveillance system.
- Agreements on education, culture and youth are also made.
- They will also coordinate better border management and counter-terror cooperation.
- Both are working on a trilateral energy sharing arrangement with Bhutan.
- Mr. Modi and Ms. Hasina inaugurated three projects, which includes one for the availability of LPG to India.

Where the headways are to be made?

- **River-water sharing agreements** – This is the region where they have failed to make headway yet on.
- Chief among them is the Teesta agreement, for which a framework agreement was inked in 2011.
- But this agreement has not moved forward since, chiefly because of tensions between the Central and West Bengal governments.
- There is a long-pending upgrading of the Ganga-Padma barrage project, the draft framework of interim sharing agreements for six rivers.
- The draft framework of the interim sharing agreement of the Feni river is

also pending.

- The water management between the two countries is the key to prosperity and often a source of tensions and humanitarian disasters.
- **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** - Another source of tension is the growing concerns in Bangladesh over the NRC in Assam.
- Bangladesh appears to have taken at face value the explanations by the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister.
- They explained that the NRC is a judicial process in its early stages which is at present an internal matter for India.
- It is worried by statements to the contrary by Home Minister who said that India will deport all non-citizens.
- He has also taken credit for the NRC as a policy the government will pursue across the country.
- The divergence in the two sets of statements proffered by India will ensure the issue gets raised again and again by Bangladesh.
- It could cast a shadow over what one Bangladesh official otherwise described as the “best of the best” of ties between two neighbours.

Source: The Hindu

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