Rebooting India-Bangladesh ties

Why in news?

Recently a virtual summit was held between Indian Prime Minister and his Bangladesh counterpart.

How was the existing relation between the countries?

- India played a major role in Bangladesh's liberation struggle in 1971.
- Bangladesh is seen as a major pillar in India's neighbourhood first policy.
- It is India's largest trading partner in South Asia & seen as all-weather friend for India.

What are the current issues affecting the relations?

- There are frequent clashes at the borders of both the countries.
- As per the report of Rights Watchdog, in the first six months of this year, at least 25 Bangladeshis were killed in border clashes.
- The Teesta water dispute remains unresolved.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act & the proposed National Register of Citizens has created a negative impression about India.
- Moreover, China is making inroads into Bangladesh through infrastructure investments & expanding economic cooperation.

What are the challenges Bangladesh PM faces?

- War crimes and corruption trials has weakened the traditional opposition parties.
- But she continues to face challenge from other Islamist factions.
- Recently, Hifazat-e-Islam (Islamist group) organised mass protests against French President for his support to depict Prophet in cartoons.
- They also opposed government's plan to build a statue for country's founding father-Bangabandhu Mujibur Rahman.
- They stated that installing statues is prohibited in Islam & it would be pulled down.
- But in the Victory Day speech, PM said that country should not be divided on religious lines in an indirect reference to Hifazat.

How can India help Bangladesh in addressing these issues?

- India should support her to fight against the radical elements.
- It should also not allow ruling party Ideological inclinations to spoil the historical relationship between the countries.
- India should take a broader view of the changing scenario and growing competition in South Asia.
- It must reach out to Dhaka with an open mind.
- Bangladesh’s golden jubilee celebration of its Independence can be used as an opportunity for India to strengthen ties.

Source: The Hindu

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