

15

**COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2025-26)**

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations
contained in the Ninth Report of the Committee on the subject 'Future of India-
Bangladesh Relationship'**

FIFTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

JULY 2026 /Shravana, 1948 (Saka)



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Bangladesh Relationship’**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 30 July, 2026
Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 30 July, 2026



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

JULY 2026 /Shravana, 1948 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2025-26)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. D. K. Aruna
3. Shri Vijay Baghel
4. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
5. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
6. Shri Arun Govil
7. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
8. Shri Naveen Jindal
9. Shri Navaskani K.
10. Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
11. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
12. Shri Sanatan Pandey
13. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy
14. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
15. Shri Y. S. Avinash Reddy
16. Smt. Aparajita Sarangi
17. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
18. Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
19. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
20. Shri Akshay Yadav
21. Vacant

Rajya Sabha

22. Dr. John Brittas
23. Shri Raghav Chadha
24. Smt. Sagarika Ghose
25. Dr. K. Laxman
26. Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu
27. Shri Rajeev Shukla
28. Shri Ratanjit Pratap Narain Singh
29. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi
30. Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi*
31. Vacant[#]

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- | | | |
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| 1. Shri Anjani Kumar | — | Joint Secretary |
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| 3. Dr. Smita Singh | — | Committee Officer |

* Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha nominated to the Committee *w.e.f.* 03.06.2026.

[#] Shri A.D Singh, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, retired on 09.04.2026

[@] Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, retired on 21.06.2026.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on External Affairs (2025-26) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Fifteenth Report (18th Lok Sabha) on action taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Ninth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (18th Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship'

2. The Ninth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid on the table of the Rajya Sabha on 18 December 2025. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report were received from the Ministry of External Affairs on 26 February, 2026 (English version) and 11th July, 2026 (Hindi version).

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their Sitting held on 21st July, 2026. The Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee have been given at Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Ninth Report of the Committee on External Affairs is given at Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI

21 July, 2026

30 Ashadha, 1948 (Saka)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,

Chairperson,

Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER- I

This Report of the Committee on External Affairs deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in their Ninth Report on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship' which was presented to the both Houses of Parliament on 18 December, 2025.

2. The Action Taken Notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the 33 observations/recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as follows: -

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -

Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32 and 33,

Total- 25

Chapter-II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies: -

Recommendation No. NIL

Total- 0

Chapter-III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -

Recommendation Nos. NIL

Total- Nil

Chapter-IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited: -

Recommendation No. 5, 8, 10, 13, 21, 26, 28 and 31

Total- 8

Chapter-V

3. The Committee desire that the final replies to the comments contained in Chapter-I and observations/recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report

may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

(Recommendation No. 1)

Overall Approach to relationship with Bangladesh

5. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee recognize that India and Bangladesh share a relationship unparalleled in the South Asian region, rooted in shared history, language, culture, and sacrifices. Over the past five decades, this relationship has evolved into a comprehensive and multifaceted partnership encompassing political, security, economic, and cultural dimensions. Major milestones such as the Land Boundary Agreement (2015), Maritime Boundary Settlement (2015), and Ganga Water Treaty (1996) have been instrumental in building mutual trust and institutionalizing cooperation. The Committee also note that Bangladesh occupies a pivotal position in India's foreign policy architecture, lying at the intersection of the Neighbourhood First, Act East, and Indo-Pacific strategies. India's development cooperation, capacity-building initiatives, and cross-border connectivity projects have further consolidated Bangladesh's role as a key strategic and development partner.

The Committee remain cognizant of the recent political developments in Bangladesh which have introduced new complexities into the bilateral relationship. The Committee express concern over the prevailing instability following the events of August 2024, which have been marked by incidents of violence, restrictions on democratic freedoms, growing radicalisation of certain sections of the society, attacks on minority communities, etc. The Committee note that the Government of India has adopted a calibrated policy of non-interference in Bangladesh's internal political processes, while maintaining constructive engagement with the Interim Government and other democratic stakeholders. The Committee also note India's overall approach to its relationship with Bangladesh has remained unchanged following the events of August 2024. India continues to pursue a constructive, pragmatic, mutually-beneficial and forward-looking relationship with Bangladesh, engaging with the interim Government of Bangladesh, engaging with several issues of strategic interest as well as regional security. The Committee also recognize that there has been a sincere attempt by the Government of India to continue maintaining a cordial relationship with the new dispensation in Bangladesh. Such high-level engagements include Indian Prime Minister's congratulations to Prof. Yunus and inviting him to participate in the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit held in August 2024; meeting

between External Affairs Minister and Foreign Advisor of Bangladesh in New York on the sidelines of UNGA in September 2024 and in Muscat in February 2025; visit of Foreign Secretary of India to Bangladesh on 9 December 2024. The most recent and highest level of meeting between the two countries was held on 4 April 2025 between Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and Chief Advisor of Bangladesh, Prof. Mohammed Yunus at Bangkok on the sidelines of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit meeting. Given these ongoing efforts, the Committee are hopeful that the bilateral engagement between the two countries will continue to grow.

The Committee urge the Government to continue advocating a democratic, stable, peaceful, people-centric, forward-looking and inclusive Bangladesh, firmly anchored in the spirit of 1971 and mutual respect. The Committee further recommend that the Government should maintain sustained diplomatic engagement with all political, social, and civil society stakeholders in Bangladesh to foster an environment of trust and dialogue. Such engagement should be complemented by Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy, involving Parliamentary exchanges, think tanks, academia, media, and cultural organizations, to strengthen people-to-people connections and counter misperceptions. The Committee also desire that India should leverage all forms of soft power to bridge gaps and continue to proactively engage with media, civil society, and various organizations in Bangladesh to address the anti-India narrative and counter misinformation on sensitive issues.”

6. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:
“The Government had maintained a sustained dialogue with the interim Government of Bangladesh through high-level exchanges and meetings of established bilateral institutional mechanisms. India also consistently conveyed its support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, inclusive and people-centric Bangladesh, anchored in the shared history and values of 1971.

The Government has also clearly stated its willingness to engage with the Government that emerges from free, fair, credible and inclusive electoral process in Bangladesh. Following the electoral success of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), PM Modi congratulated BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman and was the first leader to hold a telephone conversation with him. Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shri Om Birla, represented India at the swearing-in ceremony of PM Tarique Rahman and handed over a personal letter written from the Prime Minister conveying support for further strengthening the bilateral ties and inviting PM Tarique Rahman to visit India as mutually convenient.

Track II and Track 1.5 initiatives continue to be undertaken by both countries. India also hosted media delegations from Bangladesh in May 2024, December 2024 and October 2025. Parliamentary exchanges may be resumed as the elections in

Bangladesh have been completed. Our Mission and Posts continue to engage with media, civil society, think-tanks and stakeholders from a wide range of organizations to reinforce our endeavour to accord top priority to India–Bangladesh bilateral partnership anchored in people-centric development and with the aim of countering misinformation on sensitive issues.”

7. The Committee, in their original report, had urged the Government to advocate for a democratic, stable, peaceful, people-centric and inclusive Bangladesh, to sustain diplomatic engagement across all political and civil society stakeholders, and to leverage Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy, soft power, and media engagement to counter the anti-India narrative and address misinformation. The Committee welcome the formation of a new government under Prime Minister Tarique Rahman following general elections. The Committee also take positive note of the presence of the Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha at the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, and the transmission of the Hon'ble Prime Minister's personal message of goodwill and an invitation to visit India at a mutually convenient time. The Committee express the hope that the formation of an elected, representative government in Bangladesh will usher in a new chapter of stability, democratic consolidation, and strengthened bilateral engagement. In view of these developments, the Committee urge the Government to seize this political moment to reset and reinvigorate the bilateral relationship to its fullest potential, addressing all outstanding issues with sensitivity, urgency, and a spirit of mutual benefit that is firmly anchored in the spirit of 1971. The Committee wish to specifically emphasize the importance of Parliamentary exchanges as a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship. Now that Bangladesh has a new elected Parliament and government in place, the Committee urge the Ministry to take proactive and expeditious steps to schedule Parliamentary delegation visits in the near term, and to institutionalize such exchanges on a regular and structured basis going forward.

(Recommendation No. 6)

Recognition and preservation of the 1971 legacy

8. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee observe that the 1971 Liberation War remains the moral and historical foundation of India-Bangladesh relations, symbolizing shared sacrifices and solidarity. The Committee are glad to know that India has supported the war veterans

through various initiatives, such as providing scholarships for their children and offering medical treatment upto INR 8 lakh for the veterans and their families. Even after the event of August 2024, both countries commemorated the Vijay Diwas on 16th December 2024 by organising reciprocal visits of veterans of armed forces from both countries in line with our long-standing tradition. However, the Committee are concerned to note the emergence of revisionist narratives and diminishing awareness, particularly among younger generations who may not have directly experienced the events of 1971 regarding India's role in Bangladesh's liberation. Underscoring the centrality of the 1971 legacy in India-Bangladesh relations, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should undertake proactive measures to preserve and promote this historical partnership through strategic public diplomacy. The Committee are of the view that India should continue to engage with Bangladesh and take various measures to ensure that the sacrifices and martyrdom of 1971 are not forgotten. The Committee are hopeful that the legacy of 1971 will continue to foster goodwill between the two countries.:

9. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“The Government continues to underscore the centrality of the shared legacy of 1971 in India–Bangladesh relations through sustained public diplomacy and commemorative initiatives, including through the celebration of Maitri Diwas. India's Mission and Posts regularly undertake events and outreach activities to highlight the historical partnership and shared sacrifices of 1971. The Government has also extended scholarships, medical assistance and other support measures to Liberation War veterans, reaffirming India's enduring commitment to preserving and promoting the legacy of 1971 as the wellspring for goodwill between the two countries.”

- 10. The Committee had observed that the 1971 Liberation War remains the moral and historical bedrock of India-Bangladesh relations. While expressing concerns over the emergence of revisionist narratives and the diminishing awareness of India's role in Bangladesh's liberation among younger generations, the Committee had urged the Ministry to undertake proactive public diplomacy measures to ensure that the sacrifices of 1971 are not forgotten. The Committee are satisfied to note that the Government has continued to honour this shared legacy through Maitri Diwas, regular outreach by Indian Missions and Posts, and continued welfare support to Liberation War veterans. The Committee, however, are of the view that preservation of the 1971 legacy must go beyond commemorative exercises. It must be treated as a living element of the bilateral relationship, consciously cultivated across all sections of Bangladeshi society, including the current political dispensation and**

younger generations. The Committee desire that the Ministry continues to engage with the new government in Bangladesh through diplomatic channels with tact and sensitivity on this matter to ensure that the memory of 1971 is woven into the fabric of the bilateral relationship in a manner that is inclusive and forward-looking. Outreach to younger Bangladeshis through academic exchanges, joint research initiatives, cultural programmes and people-to-people contacts should be deepened, so that the next generation develops an informed and nuanced appreciation of the events of 1971 and the enduring bonds they forged between the two peoples. The Committee also desire that welfare measures for Liberation War veterans be periodically reviewed to ensure they remain meaningful.

(Recommendation No. 7)

Strengthening Bilateral and Diplomatic Engagement

11. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that India and Bangladesh benefit from an extensive diplomatic architecture comprising over 40 structured mechanisms operating at the Ministerial, Secretary, and technical levels. At the apex of this framework is the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister of India and the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. This is followed by Foreign Office Consultations led by the Foreign Secretaries of both the countries. Sector specific initiatives cover the breadth of bilateral cooperation including security and Border management, connectivity, trade and commerce, water resources, power and energy, development cooperation and people-people ties. The Committee acknowledge the significant outcomes from these engagements including the resolution of the Land Boundary Agreement, operationalization of cross-border power linkages, enhanced border management coordination, and expansion of trade and connectivity initiatives. The Committee recommend that India should continue to leverage and strengthen these mechanisms, ensuring regular engagement through Joint Consultative Commissions, Foreign Office Consultations, Home Secretary, Commerce Secretary level talks, Joint Rivers Commissions, etc. for timely resolution of concerns. The Committee hope that institutionalized dialogue will help address emerging challenges, dispel misinformation, and consolidate bilateral gains, even amid regional uncertainties.”

12. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“Bilateral institutional mechanisms provide a structured framework to discuss issues of importance to both the countries. Such meetings have continued during the tenure

of the interim Government. Government of India will continue to prioritize the conduct of such meetings with Bangladesh to discuss outstanding issues of importance.”

13. The Committee had noted the extensive diplomatic architecture underpinning India-Bangladesh relations, comprising over 40 structured mechanisms operating at the Ministerial, Secretary and technical levels. The Committee also acknowledged the significant outcomes flowing from these engagements, including the resolution of the Land Boundary Agreement, operationalization of cross-border power linkages and expansion of trade and connectivity initiatives. The Committee had recommended that India should continue to leverage and strengthen these mechanisms, ensuring regular engagement through the Joint Consultative Commission, Foreign Office Consultations, Home Secretary and Commerce Secretary level talks, and the Joint Rivers Commission, among others, for the timely resolution of outstanding concerns. The Committee note that the action-taken reply furnished by the Ministry is general and brief in nature and does not provide any substantive information regarding the actual steps taken in pursuance of the Committee's recommendation. While the reply reaffirms the importance of bilateral institutional mechanisms and states an intention to prioritize such meetings, it does not indicate which mechanisms have met during the period under review. The Committee reiterate their recommendation and desire that the Ministry should furnish a comprehensive account of the bilateral institutional engagements held with Bangladesh, covering the specific mechanisms activated, the issues discussed and the outcomes achieved. With a newly elected government now in place in Bangladesh, the Committee urge that the full range of bilateral mechanisms be revitalized. Regular meetings of the Joint Consultative Commission, Foreign Office Consultations, Home Secretary and Commerce Secretary level talks, and the Joint Rivers Commission should be scheduled and held in a time-bound manner.

(Recommendation No. 8)

Completion of Land Boundary Agreement and Border Demarcation

14. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) between India and Bangladesh, signed in 2015, was a landmark achievement that resolved one of the most complex and long-pending issues in bilateral relations through the exchange of enclaves and rationalization of the land boundary. Alongside, the maritime boundary settlement concluded in the same year further strengthened mutual trust and laid the groundwork for a more stable and cooperative border management framework. However, the Committee note that residual demarcation challenges, particularly in difficult terrain such as the Sundarbans, remain unresolved. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should expedite the completion of the residual boundary demarcation in a time-bound manner so as to consolidate the gains achieved through the Land Boundary Agreement and contribute to more effective border management. The Committee are of the view that timely completion of the remaining sectors has become even more important in view of the prevailing situation in Bangladesh.”

15. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“International boundary along the Bangladesh border has been demarcated in most areas. Demarcation in few remaining stretches is under consideration at the appropriate level. Pending issues of boundary demarcation continue to be discussed at the appropriate institutional mechanism created for the purpose: the Joint Boundary Conference (JBC). These issues were discussed at the 5th Joint Boundary Conference (JBC) between Bangladesh and India held in Dhaka between 21-23 November 2022.”

16. The Committee had noted that while the Land Boundary Agreement of 2015 was a landmark achievement in resolving one of the most complex and long-pending bilateral issues, residual demarcation challenges, particularly in difficult terrain such as the Sundarbans, remain unresolved. The Committee had recommended expeditious completion of residual boundary demarcation in a time-bound manner. The Committee note from the action taken reply that demarcation in a few remaining stretches is under consideration. No information has been furnished on the current status of pending demarcation. The Committee find it surprising that the most recent engagement cited dates back to the 5th Joint Boundary Conference held in Dhaka on 5 November 2022, with no indication of any follow-up in the intervening period. The Committee expect a more detailed and updated response from the Ministry. The Committee, therefore, desire that pending boundary demarcation, especially in sensitive areas such as the Sundarbans, which has direct implications for border management, local communities, and bilateral trust may be completed at the earliest.

The Committee urge the Ministry to convene the next Joint Boundary Conference at the earliest and to ensure that these discussions are conducted with greater regularity. A time-bound roadmap for the completion of residual demarcation should be drawn up and pursued with due urgency. The Committee desire to be kept informed of tangible progress in this regard.

(Recommendation No. 9)

Strategic Communication Body to counter Anti-India Narratives

17. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee observe persistent misinformation and anti-India rhetoric in certain sections of Bangladeshi media and digital platforms have created perception challenges. The Ministry of External Affairs has informed that it remains the nodal body for addressing perceptions and narratives through coordinated efforts involving other Ministries and agencies. Recognizing the growing influence of digital narratives, the Committee suggest that the MEA should establish a dedicated Strategic Communication and Perception Management Unit within the External Publicity & Public Diplomacy (XPD) Division which would coordinate with relevant Ministries such as Home, Defence, and Information & Broadcasting to monitor, analyze, and disseminate factual information, counter anti-India propaganda, and enhance India’s soft power.”

18. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“The Ministry of External Affairs constantly monitors, analyzes and counters anti-India propaganda and narratives in foreign media, including Bangladeshi news media, and social media outlets. The XPD Division has a mechanism in place towards achieving this objective. The Division counters fake news and false narratives through its fact-check unit and pushes out positive stories about India on a constant basis, including through social media handles of the Ministry, Missions and Posts abroad, and other stakeholders.

2. XPD Division actively participates in inter-agency efforts of the Government of India to counter fake narratives. The Division regularly participates in the meetings of the Inter-Departmental Committees (IDCs), constituted pursuant to section 69(A) of the Information Technology Act, led by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and Ministry of Electronics, and Information Technology (MeitY) for countering disinformation and fake news in news media and social media platforms. The MIB-

led IDC also has representatives from Ministry of Home, Defence, MeitY and FICCI. The Ministry through the IDC has taken actions to counter anti-India misinformation campaigns running on Bangladeshi news media, and social media accounts.

3. In the recent past, the frequency of the MIB-led IDC meetings has increased from 1-2 meetings in a month to 7-8 meetings now, as IDC is actively countering fake narratives and disinformation. XPD Division is involved with MeitY-led IDC on a daily basis.

4. Going forward, XPD Division is in the process of updating its mechanism to counter anti-India propaganda and narratives in foreign media by adopting new tools and technologies, including the use of AI.”

19. The Committee had observed that persistent misinformation and anti-India rhetoric in certain sections of Bangladeshi media and digital platforms have created significant perception challenges for India. The Committee had accordingly recommended that the Ministry should establish a dedicated Strategic Communication and Perception Management Unit within the External Publicity and Public Diplomacy (XPD) Division to monitor, analyze and counter anti-India narratives in a coordinated and systematic manner. The Committee have carefully considered the action taken reply furnished by the Ministry and acknowledge that the XPD Division undertakes fact-checking, participates in Inter-Departmental Committees and engages with other agencies. Participation in the Ministry of Information (MIB) led inter-Departmental Committee (IDCs) meetings and maintaining social media handles, however useful, should be reinforced by a clearly defined mandate, adequate resources and the agility to respond effectively in an era defined by social media and artificial intelligence, even if a separate unit is deemed necessary.

In the considered view of the Committee, the information and digital landscape has transformed fundamentally where narratives are shaped rapidly, amplified algorithmically and consumed across borders in real time. In this environment, the Committee feel that the existing arrangements within the XPD Division may be upgraded to match the scale and sophistication of the challenges involved. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to equip itself with modern tools including AI-based monitoring and analytics, have the capacity to operate across multiple languages and platforms, and maintain real-time coordination with the Ministries of

Home, Defence, and Information and Broadcasting as well as with India's Missions and Posts abroad. The Committee desire that concrete actions in this regard be undertaken expeditiously and communicated to the Committee.

(Recommendation No. 10)

Leveraging Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

20. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee recognize that beyond bilateral engagement, regional cooperation groupings, particularly the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) offer a promising avenue to deepen connectivity, boost trade, and enrich cultural and people to people exchange with Bangladesh. With the BIMSTEC Secretariat headquartered in Dhaka and Bangladesh having taken over the chair of BIMSTEC for the next one year, the Committee view this as a timely opportunity for both the countries to strengthen diplomatic and technical cooperation. The Committee are given to understand that the BIMSTEC, with the help of Asian Development Bank, has come up with a ‘Master Plan’ on transport connectivity for the entire region, including Myanmar and Thailand. The Committee recommend that India should extend full diplomatic and technical support to Bangladesh during its presidency and work closely towards implementing the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Committee may be kept apprised of all the developments in this regard.”

21. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met Professor Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh, on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok on 4 April 2025. Prime Minister congratulated Bangladesh on assuming the Chair of BIMSTEC and looked forward to the forum further advancing regional cooperation under its leadership. Our Mission in Dhaka actively promotes this grouping in Bangladesh on various platforms in an effort to transform it into an active regional forum.

2. The BIMSTEC Master Plan was formally adopted at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 30 March 2022. Last year on March 6, 2025, a mid-term review of the BIMSTEC Master Plan for transport connectivity was held to assess progress and to strategize future steps in improving regional transport networks. At the 6th BIMSTEC Summit held in Bangkok in April 2025, the BIMSTEC

Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation (AMTC), was adopted. India was the first country to ratify the AMTC, and during the 2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave held in Visakhapatnam in July 2025, Government of India announced setting up a BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Maritime Transport (BSMarTC) in Mumbai to support implementation and build technical capacity in Bangladesh and other member states.”

22. Recognizing the potential of BIMSTEC in deepening connectivity, trade and people-to-people ties with Bangladesh, the Committee had recommended that India should extend full diplomatic and technical support to Bangladesh during its presidency and work closely towards implementing the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity with Asian Development Bank (ADB) assistance. The Committee take note of the action-taken reply and are broadly satisfied with the developments reported, including the bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Bangkok Summit in April 2025, India's early ratification of the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation, and the announcement of the BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Maritime Transport in Mumbai. The Committee, however, note that the reply does not furnish any substantive update on the status of implementation of the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, which was central to the Committee's recommendation. A mid-term review having been held in March 2025, the Committee would have expected the reply to indicate what progress has been made. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry furnish a specific update on the implementation status of the BIMSTEC Master Plan, including the role being played by India and the support being extended to Bangladesh in this regard. The Committee also desire to be kept apprised of further developments.

(Recommendation No. 13)

Border Fencing

23. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that out of the total 4096 kms of India-Bangladesh border, approximately 3231 have been fenced while about 864 km remain unfenced due to difficult terrain and riverine conditions. The Committee have been informed that while fencing is feasible for about 689 kms, approximately 175 kms present significant challenge due to its difficult terrain. Issues such as the bilateral agreements which

restrict construction within 150 yards of the India-Bangladesh boundary and land acquisition hurdles further complicate the process.

Recognizing that effective border management is vital for national security, regional stability, and socio-economic development, the Committee recommend that the Government of India prioritize completion of the remaining fencing work by engaging with Bangladesh, expediting processes of technical design, feasibility studies, and land acquisition. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry of Home Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and state governments, should adopt innovative engineering and technological solutions such as floating fences, laser-based intrusion detection systems, and smart sensors in difficult riverine and populated sectors, where conventional fencing is impractical.”

24. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“The relevant authorities of the Government of India regularly pursue cases of land acquisition with the concerned state authorities for completion of border fencing in feasible areas.

2. As per MHA's directive, coverage of all gaps areas along the Indo-Bangladesh border is to be done through technological solutions. To this end, BSF has proposed comprehensive technological solutions which are under consideration.”

25. The Committee had noted that out of the total 4,096 kilometres of the India-Bangladesh border, approximately 864 kilometres remain unfenced due to difficult terrain and riverine conditions. The Committee had recommended that the Government should prioritize completion of the remaining fencing through expedited land acquisition and adoption of innovative technological solutions such as floating fences, laser-based intrusion detection systems and smart sensors in areas where conventional fencing is impractical. The Committee note from the action taken reply that land acquisition cases are being pursued and that BSF's proposed comprehensive technological solutions are "under consideration." No information has been provided on the pace of land acquisition, the extent of fencing completed, the nature of technological solutions proposed, or any timeline for implementation. The Committee are of the considered view that an unfenced border of 864 kilometres has direct implications for national security, infiltration and cross-border crime. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their recommendation and urge the Ministry of Home Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and concerned state governments, should expedite land acquisition and secure early approval of the technological solutions proposed by BSF. A clear sector-wise timeline for completion

should be established. The Committee desire that a detailed update on progress be furnished to them at the earliest.

(Recommendation No. 22 & 23)

Development Partnership

26. The Committee in their report (Recommendation No. 22) has observed /recommended as under:

“The Committee note that infrastructure development and connectivity cooperation have emerged as a cornerstone of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations, encompassing not only physical connectivity through rail, road, and waterways, but also energy and digital linkages. India has extended developmental assistance of nearly USD 10 billion to Bangladesh in the form of Lines of Credit and grants for projects spanning infrastructure, energy, and community development. While acknowledging the tangible progress achieved through initiatives such as the completion of the Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, the Khulna-Mongla, Agartala-Akhaura Rail Lines, India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline and Maitri Bridge over Feni, the Committee express concern that certain projects continue to face delays owing to tendering constraints, procedural bottlenecks, and security-related constraints in project areas.

The Committee further observe that these connectivity initiatives have yielded mutual dividends, facilitating trade expansion, improving access to regional markets, strengthening people-to-people contact, and contributing to broader regional stability and economic integration. The Committee are pleased to know that recently an Indian delegation visited Dhaka to discuss concessional finance projects, leading to development of a mutually agreed roadmap to advance these projects. Ongoing projects include Dhaka-Tongi Joydepur Railway line, Kulauru Shabhazpur Railway line, widening of Ramgarh to Baraiyarhat Road, evacuation lines at Rooppur Nuclear Plant, etc. Tendering is also underway for various Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) projects, such as Khulna-Darshana Railway line, Parbatipur Kaunia Railway line, Bogra to Saheed M Mousur Ali Station Railway line, Ashugang Inland Container River Port Project, upgradation of Mongla Port Project, etc.

While recognizing the fact that Bangladesh has been the recipient of robust developmental aid from the Government of India, the Committee concurs with the Ministry’s view that improved connectivity brings mutual benefits such as enhancing trade, regional integration and improved access to the North Eastern states. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should take all necessary steps for timely completion of the major ongoing projects in Bangladesh.”

27. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“India’s development cooperation with Bangladesh, extended through Lines of Credit (LoCs) and grant assistance, remains a key pillar of the bilateral relationship. Several major connectivity and energy projects undertaken under this framework have enhanced trade facilitation, regional integration and connectivity with India’s North Eastern Region.

2. To ensure timely execution of ongoing Government of India/LoC projects, a structured Project Monitoring Mechanism is in place. This includes Bilateral LoC Project Review Meetings, Project Monitoring Committee Meetings, Technical Committee Meetings, Project Steering Committee Meetings, and periodic Virtual Review Meetings convened by the Ministry of External Affairs. These mechanisms facilitate regular engagement with all stakeholders. In addition, joint site inspections are undertaken periodically by officials of the High Commission of India in Dhaka, India EXIM Bank, concerned project authorities, and Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh to assess progress on the ground and address implementation issues. The Government remains committed to the timely and effective implementation of development partnership projects in consultation with the Government of Bangladesh, with a view to strengthening connectivity, expanding trade, and supporting regional economic integration.”

28. The Committee in their report (Recommendation No. 23) has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee have been informed that the Ministry is undertaking an internal review of various developmental projects, including in Bangladesh. The Committee note that there have been instances where projects have not commenced despite the extension of the line of credit. The Committee note that during the Foreign Office Consultation, both sides expressed a desire to continue the ongoing cooperation on developmental partnership projects.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should undertake a comprehensive review and rationalization of the existing Line of Credit portfolio to identify high-impact, viable projects and prioritize their timely completion. The Committee desire to be apprised of the outcome of this review exercise within three months. The Committee further suggest that the Government should proactively publicize successful development partnership initiatives through strategic communication and outreach efforts, thereby enhancing India’s image as a reliable development partner and reinforcing its soft power among the people of Bangladesh.”

29. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“A comprehensive review of Government of India-supported LoC projects was undertaken through established bilateral mechanisms. The 23rd bilateral LoC Review Meeting was held in Dhaka on 5–6 March 2025, during which all ongoing LoC projects were reviewed in detail. Challenges that have affected project execution, including security of Indian personnel and assets, lack of project readiness and frequent scope changes, etc. were discussed with Bangladesh. Following mutual consultations, both sides agreed to delist twelve projects that were at the pre-execution stage. Based on project viability and progress on the ground, eight ongoing LoC projects have been identified for prioritised and time-bound execution.

2. The overall perception of India's development projects in Bangladesh remains positive since these projects deliver tangible benefits to the people of Bangladesh. Efforts continue to be taken by Indian Mission and Posts in Bangladesh to enhance visibility of successful development partnership initiatives through coordinated outreach, media engagement and public diplomacy initiatives. Government remains committed to ensuring effective utilisation of LoC resources, prioritising high-impact projects and strengthening the development partnership framework with Bangladesh.”

30. Acknowledging the significance of connectivity and development partnership in furthering bilateral ties between India and Bangladesh, the Committee had recommended timely completion of major ongoing projects and a comprehensive review of the Line of Credit (LoC) portfolio to identify high-impact, viable projects for prioritized execution. The Committee are satisfied to note that a structured Project Monitoring Mechanism is in place and that the 23rd bilateral LoC Review Meeting was held in Dhaka in March 2025. The Committee also note that following mutual consultations, twelve pre-execution stage projects have been delisted and eight ongoing projects have been identified for prioritized and time-bound execution. These are steps in the right direction. The Committee note that the period of political transition in Bangladesh had inevitably introduced some uncertainty into the pace of development cooperation. With a democratically elected government now in place in Dhaka, the Committee express their hope that the development partnership will gain fresh momentum and intensify in the coming period. The Committee urge the Ministry to seize this opportunity, engage the new government proactively on the development cooperation agenda, and ensure that the prioritized projects are executed in a time-bound manner. The Committee desire to be kept informed of progress on a regular basis.

(Recommendation No. 27)

Human-Resource Development and Capacity Building under ITEC and ICCR

31. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that human resource development and capacity-building initiatives, particularly through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme and ICCR scholarships is a key component of India’s development cooperation efforts with Bangladesh. The Committee observe that over 3,000 Bangladeshi students have been awarded ICCR scholarships in the last decade and around 500 scholarships are being processed for the academic year 2025-26. The Committee have been informed that these scholarships have been useful in strengthening people-to-people ties and providing opportunities to Bangladeshi students to better know and understand India. The Committee also note that India has been providing training to Bangladeshi officials from civil services, police, judiciary, etc. at various premier training institutes in India. The Committee also note that in March 2021, India had announced 1000 ‘Suborno Jayanti Scholarships’ for Bangladeshi students. So far, more than 900 scholarships have been awarded to Bangladeshi students between 2022-2024. In addition, under the Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme, 24,018 scholarships have been awarded to wards of Bangladeshi war veterans.

The Committee are glad to note that flagship initiatives such as ICCR scholarships and the ITEC courses continue to enjoy wide recognition among Bangladeshi students and professionals. The Committee desire that more Bangladeshi youths, students and professionals are provided opportunities under ICCR and ITEC training programmes. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government of India to significantly upscale the number and diversity of ITEC and ICCR scholarships for Bangladesh, with particular focus on emerging sectors such as digital innovation, renewable energy, public health, and sustainable agriculture. The Committee also suggest that the Ministry should ensure that these programmes remain responsive to evolving needs and sectoral priorities. The Committee further desire that more scholarship to wards of war veterans may be provided under Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme. The Committee desire that increasing number of Bangladeshi professionals, researchers, and youth should benefit from various sector specific, skill oriented and other training modules.”

32. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“Bangladesh remains one of the largest beneficiaries of India’s capacity building programmes. Under the ITEC framework, training is provided across traditional areas

of governance, public administration, police and judicial training, as well as emerging sectors such as digital innovation, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and public health. In FY 2024–25, 65 officials participated in ITEC courses in India, and in FY 2025–26 (till date), 25 participants have undergone training. Customized programmes, including courses conducted through institutions such as the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), continue to be designed in response to sectoral requirements conveyed by the Government of Bangladesh.

2. ICCR scholarship programmes continue to receive strong participation from Bangladeshi students. In FY 2025–26, ICCR has awarded 497 scholarships under the Suborno Jayanti Scholarship Scheme, 46 under the Lata Mangeskar Dance and Music Scholarship Scheme and 10 under the AYUSH Scholarship Scheme. Over 2,161 Bangladeshi students have also been granted visas under self-financed admission to Indian institutions since January 2025. There is a proposal under consideration to revisit the current distribution of Suborno Jayanti scholarships to increase the share of STEM disciplines.

3. Under the Scholarship scheme for Muktiyoddhas, 2000 scholarships are provided every year to wards of Muktiyoddhas to undertake Higher Secondary and Undergraduate studies in Bangladesh. So far, 24,018 scholarships have been awarded under this scheme. The ‘Muktiyoddha Scholarship’ scheme is being reviewed with a view to increasing the impact of the scheme. Under the Muktiyoddha Medical Scheme, since 2019, Muktiyoddhas have been provided support to avail medical treatment in India.

4. The Committee’s proposal to upscale the number and diversity of scholarships for Bangladesh has been noted for compliance.”

33. The Committee had noted that human resource development and capacity-building initiatives through Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and ICCR scholarships constitute a key component of India’s development cooperation with Bangladesh. The Committee had urged the Government to significantly upscale the number and diversity of ITEC and ICCR scholarships, with focus on emerging sectors such as digital innovation, renewable energy, public health and sustainable agriculture. The Committee had also desired that more scholarships be provided to wards of war veterans under the Muktiyoddha Scholarship Scheme. The Committee take note from the action-taken reply and are broadly satisfied with the progress reported. The continuation of ITEC training, award of 497 scholarships under the Suborno Jayanti Scheme and the proposal to increase the share of STEM disciplines

are positive steps. The Committee, however, note that ITEC participation numbers remain modest, with only 65 participants in FY 2024-25 and 25 so far in FY 2025-26. The Committee also note that the Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme is being reviewed with a view to enhancing its impact. The Committee desire that these numbers be meaningfully scaled up. The proposal to revisit the distribution of Suborno Jayanti Scholarships in favour of STEM disciplines is a welcome step and should be taken to its logical conclusion expeditiously. The review of the Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme should similarly be completed without further delay and its outcomes communicated to the Committee.

(Recommendation No. 30)

Strengthening Institutional mechanism for water cooperation

34. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee observe that water sharing constitutes one of the most vital and sensitive aspects of India-Bangladesh bilateral relationship. India and Bangladesh share 54 transboundary rivers and have a water sharing Treaty, namely Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 on Ganga River along with Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) for withdrawal of water from Feni and Kushiya rivers. The Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), established in 1972, serves as the principal institutional mechanism for cooperation on shared water resources, including flood control, irrigation, cyclone warning, and flood forecasting. The Committee also note that a meeting of the JRC was held in Kolkata in March 2025. The Technical Level Meeting (TLM) of the JRC further enables experts from both sides to undertake detailed and issue-specific deliberations.

The Ministry has further apprised the Committee that discussions are ongoing between both sides to finalize more water sharing treaties on Teesta, Manu, Khowai, and Dharla rivers. While the JRC and the Ganga Water Treaty remain the cornerstone of bilateral water cooperation, the Committee find that the absence of agreements on other major shared rivers, particularly the Teesta, continues to pose challenges.

The Committee feel that the overall river water cooperation framework between the two countries ought to be given due importance and institutional regularity. The Committee recommend that the Government of India, in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh, should ensure that meetings of the Joint Rivers Commission, at both technical and ministerial levels, are convened on a regular and time-bound basis. The Committee also concur with expert opinion that bilateral water cooperation should move beyond water sharing of major rivers during dry-season,

and should include micro-level initiatives such as aquifer recharge, river rejuvenation, and technical collaboration. Both countries should also actively explore joint projects on smaller transboundary rivers such as the Manu, Khowai, and Dharla to promote localized water management, enhance climate resilience, and strengthen mutual trust.”

35. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“The bilateral Institutional framework of India-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) was set up in the year 1972. The bilateral meetings under the JRC framework are held as per the mutual convenience of both the countries. The Joint Committee Meetings for sharing of Ganga Water are held thrice a year. (Last meeting was held in September 2025).

2. India and Bangladesh share 54 trans-boundary/ common-border rivers. As on date, the two countries have signed one Treaty (signed in 1996) on the sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka; apart from one MoU signed in 2019 for withdrawing water from Feni River for the drinking water supply scheme of Sabroom Town in the Indian state of Tripura and one MoU signed in 2022 for withdrawal of water from the common border river Kushiara.

3. The Technical Level Meeting under the JRC framework deliberates on other water resources related matters of mutual interest, apart from river water sharing on common-border / trans-boundary rivers. The agenda for deliberation in the Technical Level Meeting is mutually decided.”

36. The Committee had observed that India and Bangladesh share 54 transboundary rivers and that while the Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 and the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) remain the cornerstone of bilateral water cooperation, the absence of agreements on major shared rivers, particularly the Teesta, continues to pose challenges. The Committee had recommended regular and time-bound JRC meetings and had also urged that water cooperation be expanded beyond seasonal sharing of major rivers to include micro-level initiatives such as aquifer recharge, river rejuvenation and joint projects on smaller transboundary rivers such as the Manu, Khowai and Dharla. The Committee note that the action taken reply is confined largely to recounting the existing institutional framework. No substantive update has been furnished on the status of Teesta negotiations, the outcomes of JRC meetings, and the steps taken towards the broader water cooperation agenda recommended by the Committee, including micro-level initiatives and smaller river cooperation, which were a specific focus of the Committee's recommendation.

The Committee are of the view that water sharing is one of the most sensitive and consequential aspects of the bilateral relationship. The Teesta agreement has remained unresolved for far too long. With a new elected government in place in Bangladesh, the Committee urge the Government to impart fresh momentum to these negotiations. JRC meetings at both technical and ministerial levels should be held regularly with a clear agenda and measurable outcomes. The Committee also reiterate that water cooperation must move beyond major rivers. Joint initiatives on smaller transboundary rivers and micro-level measures such as aquifer recharge and river rejuvenation deserve equal attention. The Committee desire a comprehensive update on all these matters.

(Recommendation No. 31)

Renewal of the Ganga Water Treaty

37. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that the Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 is a bilateral agreement between India and Bangladesh governing the sharing of waters from the Ganga River at the Farraka Barrage for a period of 30 years. The Committee have been informed that the Ganga Water Treaty involved significant participation from the state of West Bengal, with the Finance Minister of West Bengal playing a key role in formulating the treaty provisions. The state government of West Bengal also participated in the most recent meeting of JRC held in Kolkata in March 2025. The Committee also note that this treaty is set to expire in 2026 and that bilateral discussions on its renewal have not yet commenced.

The Committee recommend that the Government of India should initiate bilateral discussions with Bangladesh at the earliest, to avoid any vacuum in the post-2026 period. The Committee further recommend that the renewal process should be guided by updated hydrological data, climate change projections, and the need for equitable and sustainable utilization of river waters. In this regard, the Committee emphasize that consultations with concerned State Governments, particularly West Bengal and Bihar, may be continued to ensure that national and state-level interests are aligned in formulating India's position during the negotiation process. The Committee also underscore that the sharing of Teesta River waters is of critical importance to the State of West Bengal, and therefore, its concerns may be duly addressed by the Government of India during negotiations on the Teesta.

38. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“An Inter-Ministerial Committee was constituted by DoWR, RD&GR in July 2023 for carrying out an Internal Review of the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty. Concerned stakeholders of the State Governments of West Bengal and Bihar are also members of this Committee. Bilateral discussions are expected to commence under the new Government in Bangladesh.

2. The endeavour of the Union Government is to arrive at an agreement on Teesta on a fair and equitable basis in consultation with our riparian States, which is acceptable to all the parties concerned and which protects the interest of all stakeholders.”

39. Noting that the Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 is set to expire in 2026 and that bilateral discussions on its renewal had not yet commenced, the Committee had recommended early initiation of renewal discussions, guided by updated hydrological data and climate change projections, and in consultation with the state governments of West Bengal and Bihar. The Committee had also underscored the importance of addressing West Bengal's concerns on the Teesta during negotiations. The Committee note that an Inter-Ministerial Committee was constituted in July 2023 for an internal review of the Treaty and that bilateral discussions are expected to commence under the new government in Bangladesh. While these are steps in the right direction, the Committee are concerned that with the Treaty due to expire in 2026, time is running short.

The Committee urge the Government to initiate bilateral discussions with Bangladesh without further delay. The internal review by the Inter-Ministerial Committee should be concluded expeditiously so that India's negotiating position is ready. Consultations with the state governments of West Bengal and Bihar must be sustained throughout the process. On Teesta, the Committee reiterate that a fair, equitable and mutually acceptable agreement remains a priority and that the concerns of West Bengal must be duly addressed. The Committee express hope that both sides will approach these negotiations constructively and conclude them in a timely manner.

CHAPTER-II
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE
GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 1

Overall Approach to relationship with Bangladesh

The Committee recognize that India and Bangladesh share a relationship unparalleled in the South Asian region, rooted in shared history, language, culture, and sacrifices. Over the past five decades, this relationship has evolved into a comprehensive and multifaceted partnership encompassing political, security, economic, and cultural dimensions. Major milestones such as the Land Boundary Agreement (2015), maritime boundary settlement (2015), and Ganga Water Treaty (1996) have been instrumental in building mutual trust and institutionalizing cooperation. The Committee also note that Bangladesh occupies a pivotal position in India's foreign policy architecture, lying at the intersection of the Neighbourhood First, Act East, and Indo-Pacific strategies. India's development cooperation, capacity-building initiatives, and cross-border connectivity projects have further consolidated Bangladesh's role as a key strategic and development partner.

The Committee remain cognizant of the recent political developments in Bangladesh which have introduced new complexities into the bilateral relationship. The Committee express concern over the prevailing instability following the events of August 2024, which have been marked by incidents of violence, restrictions on democratic freedoms, growing radicalisation of certain sections of the society, attacks on minority communities, etc. The Committee note that the Government of India has adopted a calibrated policy of non-interference in Bangladesh's internal political processes, while maintaining constructive engagement with the Interim Government and other democratic stakeholders. The Committee also note India's overall approach to its relationship with Bangladesh has remained unchanged following the events of August 2024. India continues to pursue a constructive, pragmatic, mutually-beneficial and forward-looking relationship with Bangladesh, engaging with the interim Government of Bangladesh, engaging with several issues of strategic interest as well as regional security. The Committee also recognize that

there has been a sincere attempt by the Government of India to continue maintaining a cordial relationship with the new dispensation in Bangladesh. Such high-level engagements includes Indian Prime Minister's congratulations to Prof. Yunus and inviting him to participate in the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit held in August 2024; meeting between External Affairs Minister and Foreign Advisor of Bangladesh in New York on the sidelines of UNGA in September 2024 and in Muscat in February 2025; visit of Foreign Secretary of India to Bangladesh on 9 December 2024. The most recent and highest level of meeting between the two countries was held on 4 April 2025 between Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and Chief Advisor of Bangladesh, Prof. Mohammed Yunus at Bangkok on the sidelines of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit meeting. Given these ongoing efforts, the Committee are hopeful that the bilateral engagement between the two countries will continue to grow.

The Committee urge the Government to continue advocating a democratic, stable, peaceful, people-centric, forward-looking and inclusive Bangladesh, firmly anchored in the spirit of 1971 and mutual respect. The Committee further recommend that the Government should maintain sustained diplomatic engagement with all political, social, and civil society stakeholders in Bangladesh to foster an environment of trust and dialogue. Such engagement should be complemented by Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy, involving Parliamentary exchanges, think tanks, academia, media, and cultural organizations, to strengthen people-to-people connections and counter misperceptions. The Committee also desire that India should leverage all forms of soft power to bridge gaps and continue to proactively engage with media, civil society, and various organizations in Bangladesh to address the anti-India narrative and counter misinformation on sensitive issues.

Reply of the Government

The Government had maintained a sustained dialogue with the interim Government of Bangladesh through high-level exchanges and meetings of established bilateral institutional mechanisms. India also consistently conveyed its support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, inclusive and people-centric Bangladesh, anchored in the shared history and values of 1971.

2. The Government has also clearly stated its willingness to engage with the Government that emerges from free, fair, credible and inclusive electoral process in Bangladesh. Following the electoral success of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), PM Modi congratulated BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman and was the first leader to hold a telephone conversation with him. Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shri Om Birla, represented India at the swearing-in ceremony of PM Tarique Rahman and handed over a personal letter written from the Prime Minister conveying support for further strengthening the bilateral ties and inviting PM Tarique Rahman to visit India as mutually convenient.

3. Track II and Track 1.5 initiatives continue to be undertaken by both countries. India also hosted media delegations from Bangladesh in May 2024, December 2024 and October 2025. Parliamentary exchanges may be resumed as the elections in Bangladesh have been completed. Our Mission and Posts continue to engage with media, civil society, think-tanks and stakeholders from a wide range of organizations to reinforce our endeavour to accord top priority to India–Bangladesh bilateral partnership anchored in people-centric development and with the aim of countering misinformation on sensitive issues.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 2

Supporting Democratic Processes

The Committee note with concern the evolving political situation in Bangladesh since August 2024, particularly the uncertainty surrounding democratic elections, political violence and the rise of extremism. While India has consistently emphasized its commitment to a constructive and pragmatic relationship, these developments have strained certain aspects of bilateral ties, particularly in terms of security cooperation and people-to-people relations. The Committee observe that India’s response to Bangladesh’s internal political developments has remained diplomatic and non-interventionist. The Committee note that India has reaffirmed its commitment in a democratic, stable, peaceful and inclusive Bangladesh and to that end India has been a strong supporter of a participatory and inclusive election process in Bangladesh, viewing it as a necessary step to restoring political stability.

The Committee commend the quiet diplomacy of the Indian Government during the period of such rapid and transformative change. While respecting the sovereignty of Bangladesh and refraining from interfering in its domestic politics, the Committee desire that India should continue to support Bangladesh's democratic processes, encouraging free, fair, and inclusive elections.

Reply of the Government

The Government of India consistently conveyed its support for democratic processes in Bangladesh and underscored the importance of free, fair, credible and inclusive elections held in a peaceful atmosphere. The Government aims at sustaining the engagement in a manner that is constructive, pragmatic and supportive of a democratic and stable Bangladesh.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 3

Attacks on Minorities

The Committee express serious concerns over the continuing attacks on minorities in Bangladesh following the events of August 2024. The attacks on places of worship, cultural institutions, and individuals have severely impacted the social fabric of Bangladesh and strained bilateral relations. While the Government of India has consistently conveyed its concerns to the Interim Government of Bangladesh, the lack of concrete measures to address these issues, combined with attempts by the Bangladeshi authorities to downplay the incidents as 'political killings', remains troubling. The Committee note that till 18 May 2025, 2446 attacks against minorities have been reported. It was only after India raised the issue with the Bangladeshi side during the Foreign Office Consultations that 70 arrests have been made and 88 cases have been filed till December 2024.

In the considered view of the Committee, the Ministry of External Affairs should continue to prioritize the protection of minorities in Bangladesh as a core element of its diplomatic engagement, urging the Bangladeshi authorities to take swift and effective action to safeguard the rights and security of all minority communities and to bring perpetrators of violence to justice.

Reply of the Government

The Government of India has consistently raised the matter of safety and security of the minorities with the authorities in Bangladesh, at both political and diplomatic levels on several occasions. The issue was raised by Prime Minister during his meeting with Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus on 04 April 2025 and by the External Affairs Minister during his meeting with Foreign Advisor Touhid Hossain on 16 February 2025. The issue has further been raised in relevant meetings with other foreign interlocutors.

2. It is the expectation of the Government of India that the Government of Bangladesh will discharge its responsibilities by thoroughly investigating the incidents relating to minorities and bring all perpetrators of killings, arson and violence against minorities to justice without excuses. The primary responsibility for the protection of life and liberty of all citizens of Bangladesh, including minorities, rests with the Government of Bangladesh.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 4

Release of prisoners with record of terrorism and extremist violence

The Committee express concern over the release of prisoners charged with terrorism and extremist violence, as well as the escape of convicted extremists and terrorists during jail breaks amid the chaos in Bangladesh during July and August 2025. The Committee have been informed that these individuals are now fomenting anti-India sentiments and narratives in Bangladesh. The Committee note that this poses a risk of further instability and law and order challenges with implications for India's North East. The Committee desire that India should maintain vigilance in monitoring their activities and also engage with the Bangladeshi side to ensure that such developments do not negatively impact internal security, particularly in the Northeast region.

Reply of the Government

The Government of India is vigilant and closely monitors developments relating to extremism and terrorist activities in Bangladesh that may have implications for India's security, particularly in the North-Eastern States, and continues to take all necessary measures to safeguard our national interests. Our expectations on the need to accord

priority to security and counter-terrorism-related cooperation as part of our bilateral engagement has also been conveyed to the Government of Bangladesh.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 6

Recognition and preservation of the 1971 legacy

The Committee observe that the 1971 Liberation War remains the moral and historical foundation of India-Bangladesh relations, symbolizing shared sacrifices and solidarity. The Committee are glad to know that India has supported the war veterans through various initiatives, such as providing scholarships for their children and offering medical treatment upto INR 8 lakh for the veterans and their families. Even after the event of August 2024, both countries commemorated the Vijay Diwas on 16th December 2024 by organising reciprocal visits of veterans of armed forces from both countries in line with our long-standing tradition. However, the Committee are concerned to note the emergence of revisionist narratives and diminishing awareness, particularly among younger generations who may not have directly experienced the events of 1971 regarding India's role in Bangladesh's liberation. Underscoring the centrality of the 1971 legacy in India-Bangladesh relations, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should undertake proactive measures to preserve and promote this historical partnership through strategic public diplomacy. The Committee are of the view that India should continue to engage with Bangladesh and take various measures to ensure that the sacrifices and martyrdom of 1971 are not forgotten. The Committee are hopeful that the legacy of 1971 will continue to foster goodwill between the two countries.

Reply of the Government

The Government continues to underscore the centrality of the shared legacy of 1971 in India-Bangladesh relations through sustained public diplomacy and commemorative initiatives, including through the celebration of Maitri Diwas. India's Mission and Posts regularly undertake events and outreach activities to highlight the historical partnership and shared sacrifices of 1971. The Government has also extended scholarships, medical assistance and other support measures to Liberation War veterans, reaffirming India's

enduring commitment to preserving and promoting the legacy of 1971 as the wellspring for goodwill between the two countries.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 7

Strengthening Bilateral and Diplomatic Engagement

The Committee note that India and Bangladesh benefit from an extensive diplomatic architecture comprising over 40 structured mechanisms operating at the Ministerial, Secretary, and technical levels. At the apex of this framework is the Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister of India and the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. This is followed by Foreign Office Consultations led by the Foreign Secretaries of both the countries. Sector specific initiatives cover the breadth of bilateral cooperation including security and Border management, connectivity, trade and commerce, water resources, power and energy, development cooperation and people-people ties. The Committee acknowledge the significant outcomes from these engagements including the resolution of the Land Boundary Agreement, operationalization of cross-border power linkages, enhanced border management coordination, and expansion of trade and connectivity initiatives. The Committee recommend that India should continue to leverage and strengthen these mechanisms, ensuring regular engagement through Joint Consultative Commissions, Foreign Office Consultations, Home Secretary, Commerce Secretary level talks, Joint Rivers Commissions, etc. for timely resolution of concerns. The Committee hope that institutionalized dialogue will help address emerging challenges, dispel misinformation, and consolidate bilateral gains, even amid regional uncertainties.

Reply of the Government

Bilateral institutional mechanisms provide a structured framework to discuss issues of importance to both the countries. Such meetings have continued during the tenure of the interim Government. Government of India will continue to prioritize the conduct of such meetings with Bangladesh to discuss outstanding issues of importance.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 9

Strategic Communication Body to counter Anti-India Narratives

The Committee observe persistent misinformation and anti-India rhetoric in certain sections of Bangladeshi media and digital platforms have created perception challenges. The Ministry of External Affairs has informed that it remains the nodal body for addressing perceptions and narratives through coordinated efforts involving other Ministries and agencies. Recognizing the growing influence of digital narratives, the Committee suggest that the MEA should establish a dedicated Strategic Communication and Perception Management Unit within the External Publicity & Public Diplomacy (XPD) Division which would coordinate with relevant Ministries such as Home, Defence, and Information & Broadcasting to monitor, analyze, and disseminate factual information, counter anti-India propaganda, and enhance India's soft power.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of External Affairs constantly monitors, analyzes and counters anti-India propaganda and narratives in foreign media, including Bangladeshi news media, and social media outlets. The XPD Division has a mechanism in place towards achieving this objective. The Division counters fake news and false narratives through its fact-check unit and pushes out positive stories about India on a constant basis, including through social media handles of the Ministry, Missions and Posts abroad, and other stakeholders.

2. XPD Division actively participates in inter-agency efforts of the Government of India to counter fake narratives. The Division regularly participates in the meetings of the Inter-Departmental Committees (IDCs), constituted pursuant to section 69(A) of the Information Technology Act, led by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and Ministry of Electronics, and Information Technology (MeitY) for countering disinformation and fake news in news media and social media platforms. The MIB-led IDC also has representatives from Ministry of Home, Defence, MeitY and FICCI. The Ministry through the IDC has taken actions to counter anti-India misinformation campaigns running on Bangladeshi news media, and social media accounts.

3. In the recent past, the frequency of the MIB-led IDC meetings has increased from 1-2 meetings in a month to 7-8 meetings now, as IDC is actively countering fake narratives and disinformation. XPD Division is involved with MeitY-led IDC on a daily basis.

4. Going forward, XPD Division is in the process of updating its mechanism to counter anti-India propaganda and narratives in foreign media by adopting new tools and technologies, including the use of AI.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 11

Monitoring growing Chinese influence

The Committee observe with concern the increasing Chinese footprint in Bangladesh, particularly in infrastructure development, port expansion, and defence cooperation, including the Mongla Port project and Lalmonirhat airbase. The Committee note that Bangladesh has signed an agreement with China in March 2025 to implement a USD 370 million expansion project at Mongla Port. The Committee also note that Lalmonirhat Airbase is being developed with Chinese assistance although the Director of Military Operations of Bangladesh Army has stated that there are currently no plans to upgrade the airstrip for military use. The Committee also note the recent visit of Jammāt-e-Islami Party to China, which clearly indicates its broad engagement with various factions in Bangladesh, further solidifying its presence. Additionally, the Committee are concerned to know that a submarine base has been built by China at Pekua, capable of accommodating eight submarines when Bangladesh has only two. With regard to other infrastructure projects, the Committee have been informed that China has been present in Bangladesh for quite some time and is not necessarily an outcome of recent political development. The Ministry has informed the Committee that to enhance port's connectivity to hinterland India has financed and completed a key rail connectivity project, the Khulna-Mongla Railway Line. India has also signed an agreement with Bangladesh on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for transit access to secure our interests. While recognizing Bangladesh's sovereign right to pursue diverse partnerships, the Committee

emphasize the importance of safeguarding India's strategic and security interests, especially concerning the Siliguri Corridor and the Bay of Bengal region. In this regard, the development of Lalmonirhat Airbase with Chinese assistance, which is just 15 kms from the international border, is a matter of concern to the Committee.

The Committee recommend that the Government closely monitor the activities of foreign powers in Bangladesh, considering that any attempt by unfriendly countries to establish a military foothold in Bangladesh would pose serious security risks for our country. The Committee further urge the Government to leverage India's comparative advantage in development cooperation to strengthen trust and reinforce India's position as Bangladesh's most reliable partner.

Reply of the Government

Government of India maintains a close watch on all developments in the neighborhood having a bearing on our national security and undertakes all necessary measures to safeguard our national interests.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 12

Border Management

The Committee note that India shares its longest international border with Bangladesh, stretching approximately 4096 km, making it the fifth longest border in the world. This border runs through the five Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and West Bengal, encompassing diverse terrains including mountainous, forested, and riverine areas. The Committee recognize that such diverse topographical conditions pose unique challenges for effective border management and security, especially for the Northeastern states. The Committee note that India has worked with Bangladesh on joint operations against terrorism and extremist activities. Border guarding forces from both countries have a long-standing practice of joint patrols, especially in areas like riverine regions where border security is difficult. Regular meetings, border talks, and joint working groups are established to address border disputes, manage humanitarian concerns, and maintain peace along the border. The Ministry has informed the Committee that sustained bilateral engagement between the governments of the two countries remains a cornerstone of

India's border management strategy. However, the Committee note that the deteriorating internal situation in Bangladesh during the past one year has necessitated heightened security preparedness along the shared border.

The Committee are hopeful that the current challenges in bilateral relations between the two countries since August 2024 will not have an adverse impact on the established and ongoing cooperative mechanisms between the two countries for ensuring border security and management. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government of India should continue to pursue constructive bilateral engagement with Bangladesh on all border-related issues, ensuring that evolving political and security developments in Bangladesh do not undermine joint mechanisms for border management.

Reply of the Government

Relations between Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) continue to be cordial. In the context of the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP), the BSF and BGB have regular interactions which include coordinated day & night patrolling, pillar checking, flag meetings, reporting of border violations and sharing of information which aims to synergize efforts between both the forces to control cross-border crime and maintain peace. Post August 2024, two meetings of the Director General Level Talks have been held in the month of February 2025 and August 2025 in Delhi and Dhaka respectively, providing a structured platform to discuss all outstanding issues related to border management and security.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 14

Challenges in Border Management

The Committee observe that while significant progress has been made, strategic focus remains required to address persistent challenges such as illegal migration, smuggling, radicalization and cross border crime along the India-Bangladesh border. The Committee also note that socio-economic vulnerabilities, particularly lack of livelihood opportunities, make border communities susceptible to illegal cross border activities. The Committee acknowledge the pivotal role played by

the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in maintaining border security through joint patrols, coordinated intelligence sharing, and hotline communications. Appreciating the vital role played by the Border Security Force (BSF) in safeguarding the border and maintaining stability along one of the longest international boundaries in the world, the Committee recommend that the coordination between BSF and BGB be further strengthened through institutionalized mechanisms such as regular Director General-level talks, joint task forces, and sector-level coordination mechanisms on counter-terrorism, narcotics, human trafficking, fake currency, and other transnational crimes.

In addition, the Committee also feel that the Government should prioritize deployment of advanced modern surveillance tools such as drones, thermal cameras, motion sensors, and satellite-based systems to enhance real-time monitoring and deterrence. In addition, a multi-agency coordination framework involving State Governments, central intelligence and investigative agencies, and law enforcement authorities be developed to ensure prompt detection and action against cross-border crimes. The Committee further emphasize that effective border management must go beyond physical security, and adopt a humane people-sensitive approach incorporating socio-economic development initiatives and community engagement along the border to reduce local vulnerabilities to smuggling, illegal migration, and cross-border crimes. In addition, the Committee would like the Government to consider implementing Border Area Development Programme in border areas to help reduce border crimes and improve social environment in the border areas.

Reply of the Government

India and Bangladesh collaborate closely on counter-terrorism, narcotics, and fake currency, particularly with a view to tackle extremist groups with transnational and cross-border links. This cooperation is supported by regular intelligence-sharing mechanisms for tracking and preventing terrorist activities, and for sharing actionable intelligence on terrorism and extremism.

2. This coordination is carried out through established bilateral mechanisms, including the Joint Working Group on Security and Border Management (led by India's Ministry of Home Affairs), DG-level talks between BSF and BGB, the Joint Task Force on Fake Currency, and other relevant platforms.

3. At the operational level, BSF and BGB coordinate regularly to monitor border movements, in an effort to prevent infiltration by terrorist groups, and prevent the border from being used for arms smuggling, drug trafficking, and other illicit activities. Both the countries have also strengthened cooperation on legal and enforcement frameworks to curb terror financing, money laundering, and related crimes.
4. Further, during the latest DG-level talks held in Dhaka from 25–28 August 2025, India raised all major concerns with the Bangladesh side. Both sides reiterated their commitment to work jointly to monitor the border, and to maintain peace and tranquility along the India–Bangladesh border.
5. BSF is taking measures to ensure effective border surveillance grid through smart border surveillance projects of CIBMS, ESVP, LCTS along Indo-Bangladesh Border in addition to utilization of other surveillance equipment to prevent illegal migration and other trans-border crimes.
6. Beyond enforcement and monitoring, establishment of land ports contributes to livelihood generation and economic activity in border regions, which helps address socio-economic vulnerabilities linked to illegal cross-border activities. Land ports generate direct employment within port operations and logistics, such as drivers, data entry operators, clearing agents, and service staff, and indirect employment across tourism, hospitality, transport, and allied sectors. In this manner, land port development complements enforcement efforts and aligns with broader border area development objectives by combining regulated infrastructure, surveillance, and employment generation.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 15

The Committee note that the developments in Bangladesh have huge security implications for the Northeast region of India. The Committee note that the Border Security Force from India and the Border Guard of Bangladesh have regularly coordinated to monitor movements along the border and prevent infiltration by terrorist group. The Committee recommend that India should continue to engage with the concerned authorities in Bangladesh and develop an appropriate intelligence sharing mechanism to track and combat terrorist activities. It is of utmost importance

that Bangladesh does not become a safe haven for various insurgency groups operating in Northeast region of India.

Reply of the Government

India and Bangladesh collaborate closely on counter-terrorism, narcotics, fake currency, particularly to tackle extremist groups with transnational and cross-border links. This cooperation is supported by regular intelligence-sharing mechanisms for tracking and preventing terrorist activities, and for sharing actionable intelligence on terrorism and extremism.

2. This coordination is carried out through established bilateral mechanisms, including the Joint Working Group on Security and Border Management (led by India's Ministry of Home Affairs), DG-level talks between BSF and BGB, the Joint Task Force on Fake Currency, and other relevant platforms.

3. In line with the Committee's recommendations, BSF continues close coordination with Border Guard Bangladesh through regular joint patrols, real time intelligence sharing, and monitoring of border movements to prevent infiltration and terrorism activities. Engagement with Bangladeshi authorities has been sustained through institutional mechanisms to ensure long-term security cooperation. These measures aim to strengthen mutual trust, prevent insurgent activities, and support a stable, secure, and forward-looking Indo-Bangladesh relationship.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 16

Coordination between Centre and bordering States

The Committee recognize that the security, stability, and economic development of India's northeastern states are intricately linked with effective management of the India-Bangladesh border. The Ministry has apprised the Committee that the prevailing situation in Bangladesh has direct implications on the security of India's Northeastern region. In response, Government of India is undertaking a comprehensive approach in dealing with cross border security challenges in coordination with State Governments of North Eastern States, border

guarding agencies, central investigation agencies and law enforcement. As a result of these efforts, 14 terrorists affiliated with Ansarullah Bangla Team (a wing of Al Qaida in Indian subcontinent) have been arrested by State Government of Assam since December, 2024 in joint operation with police and state agencies. The Committee have also been informed that several Bangladeshi nationals have been detained and narcotics amounting to 12,300 kg have been seized, owing to heightened security at the border in recent months.

The Committee are of the considered view that enhanced coordination between various Ministries will help in formulating plans for economic growth in the North Eastern region. Stressing the importance of a holistic and coordinated approach, the Committee urge closer coordination among the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry for the Development of North East Regions and the governments of border states to address interconnected issues such as illegal migration, smuggling, drug trafficking, and infiltration by extremist groups. The Committee further recommend that India should engage proactively with Bangladesh on managing potential refugee inflows and humanitarian challenges, including those emanating from Myanmar, to ensure that responses remain consistent with India's security and humanitarian obligations.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of External Affairs through the States Division coordinates with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDONER) for the implementation of various infrastructure developmental projects for enhancing the socio-economic and connectivity development of North Eastern Region. These projects are undertaken in various sectors, including roads, healthcare, education, water supply, power, tourism, digital connectivity etc. under Central Sectors Schemes of (i) Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE); (ii) North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) - Roads; (iii) North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme - Other Than Roads Infrastructure (NESIDS-OTRI); (iv) Schemes of North Eastern Council (SoNEC); and (v) Special Development Packages (SDPs).

2. Empowered Inter-Ministerial Committee (EIMC), is a co-ordination mechanism chaired by Secretary, MoDONER for overseeing implementation, progress monitoring and evaluation of these projects. MEA and MHA are members of EIMC.

3. MoDoNER has also been taking review meetings with the Chief Secretaries/concerned Secretaries of all 8 North-eastern states to address various issues including cross border issues pertaining to Bangladesh and Myanmar.

4. The Government of India and the Government of Bangladesh are working together on issues such as border security and illegal migration. This cooperation includes intelligence sharing on regional security threats. During the 2017 influx of refugees from Rakhine state of Myanmar into Bangladesh, the Government of India, under Operation Insaniyat, provided humanitarian assistance, consisting of food, medicines, and essential supplies.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 17
Centre-State Coordination

The Committee note that five Indian states bordering Bangladesh- West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram play an important role in shaping India's approach towards Bangladesh, owing to their geographic proximity, cultural ties, and cross-border socio-economic interdependence. While acknowledging that foreign policy formulation remains the prerogative of the Union Government, the Committee emphasize that state governments should be regularly consulted on matters affecting bilateral relations and border management. The Committee note the existence of coordination mechanisms such as North Eastern Council (NEC), NITI Aayog's Sub-Group of Chief Ministers (SSM) and the States Division of MEA. The Committee desire that the above mechanisms may function more proactively.

The Committee suggest that existing structured inter-governmental dialogue mechanisms and the States' Division of MEA be revitalized as a proactive interface between the MEA and relevant state governments, holding regular consultations on matters concerning Bangladesh.

Reply of the Government

The Committee's recommendation has been noted. The States Division functions as the nodal point within the Ministry for coordination on matters relating to the North Eastern Region, including through its engagement with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and participation in the Empowered Inter-Ministerial Committee overseeing key infrastructure and connectivity projects.

2. In examining externally-aided projects and other proposals from the region, the Division ensures that issues with potential implications for bilateral relations or border management are considered in consultation with respective territorial division. The Ministry will continue to strengthen such coordination to ensure a coherent and proactive approach in matters concerning Bangladesh.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 18

Tackling illegal migration

The Committee note that illegal migration from Bangladesh continues to remain a matter of serious concern, particularly in the border States of West Bengal and Assam. The Committee are aware that while the detection, identification, and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi nationals fall within the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs and respective State Governments under the Foreigners Act, 1946 (now the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025), the Ministry of External Affairs plays an important role in facilitating nationality verification and repatriation of Bangladeshi nationals detained in India. The Committee note that a total of 2,369 cases of suspected Bangladeshi nationals is presently awaiting nationality verification by the Government of Bangladesh.

The Committee recommend that a dedicated bilateral mechanism or joint working group be established between India and Bangladesh to monitor the progress of nationality verification and repatriation. The Committee hope that this would help in expediting the verification process. The Committee also urge that humane treatment and due legal process be ensured for all detained individuals, in accordance with India's constitutional safeguards and international obligations,

while maintaining robust national security measures to prevent illegal migration. The Committee note that continued diligence is essential to ensure that Indian nationals are not deported to Bangladesh in error.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry for implementation of matters connected with the issues of overstay and illegal migration of foreign nationals. State Governments/UT Administrations are fully empowered to take appropriate legal action regarding restriction on movement and deportation of illegal immigrants and illegally staying foreigners. Further, Ministry of Home Affairs has also issued revised guidelines regarding deportation of the illegal migrants. All cases of deportation of illegal migrants are carried out pursuant to these guidelines.

2. The issue of pending Nationality verification applications with Mission and Posts of Bangladesh in India are raised at relevant bilateral mechanisms and during meetings with concerned authorities of Bangladesh.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 19

Strengthening overall bilateral economic and trade relations

The Committee note that India and Bangladesh share a robust and multi-dimensional economic and trade relationship that has witnessed substantial expansion in the past decade. Bangladesh continues to be India's largest trading partner in South Asia, while India is Bangladesh's second largest trading partner in Asia. The Committee observe that bilateral trade between the two countries has seen significant growth over the past decade, from USD 7.07 billion in 2014-15 to over USD 13.46 billion in 2024-25, with India exporting USD 11.45 billion and Bangladesh exporting USD 2.0 billion in goods. This results in a trade surplus for India. However, much of Bangladesh's imports from India consist of components and interim goods that contribute to Bangladesh's export earnings as well as essential commodities that help Bangladesh to manage inflation.

The Committee observe that the trade between India and Bangladesh, denominated in INR since July 2023, is an aspect that may continue to grow in mutually beneficial areas such as trade, connectivity, energy cooperation, etc. The signing of the tripartite power-sharing agreement among India, Bangladesh, and Nepal for cross-border transmission of power marks a significant milestone in sub-regional energy cooperation, symbolizing the growing interdependence and mutual trust between the nations. At the same time, the Committee observe that despite the positive trajectory of bilateral trade, several structural impediments continue to constrain the full realization of the trade potential between the two countries. These include infrastructural bottlenecks, imposition of tariff and non-tariff barriers like port restrictions and import duties by the Government of Bangladesh, congestion at land ports, high dependence on road transport, and inadequate last-mile connectivity to key trading centres. The Committee also note that deficiencies in warehousing facilities, quarantine arrangements, and digital trade infrastructure add to the overall transaction costs and affect the competitiveness of trade between the two nations.

The Committee recommend that the Government of India should intensify engagement with the Government of Bangladesh to modernize and upgrade infrastructure at key border trade points through expansion of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), improvement of road, rail, and inland waterways connectivity, establishment of modern logistics and warehousing facilities, running of more freight trains, etc. The Committee further recommend that greater emphasis should be placed on digital trade facilitation, including electronic data interchange systems, online customs clearance, and simplified trade documentation.

Reply of the Government

Government has consistently taken efforts to modernize and upgrade border infrastructure, given the steady growth in bilateral trade between the countries. In FY 2024-25, around 30% bilateral trade was facilitated through border land ports. At present, eight land ports are operational along the India–Bangladesh border, with plans for phased expansion of the network. Infrastructure upgrades at these locations include development of cargo yards, parking facilities, warehouse infrastructure, and a single institutional platform for coordination among border agencies have enabled reduced congestion and

transaction costs. To enhance process efficiency, the Land Port Management System is being implemented to digitize port-level operations, reduce manual documentation, and provide end-to-end visibility of cargo movement. Integration with ICEGATE has enabled online customs clearances.

2. Recognizing the importance of multimodal connectivity, efforts are underway to diversify transport channels and reduce dependence on road transport. Multiple cross-border rail links are operational across the western, northern, and eastern sectors, enhancing cargo movement efficiency. To improve connectivity, two railway infrastructure projects, the Dhaka–Tongi–Joydebpur Railway Line Project and the Rehabilitation of the Kulaura–Shahbazpur Railway Line Project are being implemented under Government of India's Lines of Credit.

3. Road connectivity is also being strengthened through Line of Credit projects, including the Ashuganj–Sarail–Dharkhar 4-Lane National Highway Project and the Bariyarhat–Heyanko–Ramgarh Road Widening Project in Bangladesh, which are expected to facilitate smoother cross-border trade flows.

4. With respect to inland waterways, India is partnering with Bangladesh under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade for fairway development in the identified stretches of Ashuganj–Zakiganj of the Kushiara River and Sirajganj–Daikhowa of the Jamuna River, to ensure year round navigability, thereby reducing logistics costs and improving connectivity with India's North Eastern Region.

5. Further, issues relating to tariff and non-tariff barriers are addressed through established bilateral mechanisms at appropriate levels with Bangladesh side.

6. Government remains committed to working closely with Bangladesh to modernize border infrastructure, enhance multimodal connectivity, deepen digital trade facilitation, and unlock the full potential of bilateral economic cooperation in a mutually beneficial manner.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 20

Dumping of Chinese goods into India

The Committee note with concern the reported issue of dumping of Chinese goods, particularly fabrics, into India through Bangladesh under the cover of preferential market access provisions available to Bangladesh under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA). The Committee are of the view that such practices distort fair competition, undermine India's manufacturing sector, and create asymmetries detrimental to domestic industry. The Committee also take note of the apprehensions regarding Bangladesh's potential accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which will imply free trade between Bangladesh and China. The Committee concur with the Government's assessment that such a development could indirectly facilitate preferential entry of Chinese goods into the Indian market through transshipment or value-addition loopholes, thereby adversely affecting India's trade interests.

The Committee recommend that the Government of India convey its reservations to Bangladesh at the highest diplomatic and trade policy levels, underlining the implications of such actions on the integrity of the bilateral trading framework. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs, adopt stringent rules-of-origin verification mechanisms to ensure that preferential trade access under SAFTA or any future CEPA is not misused by third-country exporters.

Reply of the Government

Trade under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) is governed by Rules of Origin provisions prescribing value addition and origin criteria for availing preferential access. To strengthen compliance, Government has rolled out an electronic Certificate of Origin (eCoO) verification mechanism enabling real-time authentication of Certificates of Origin issued by authorised agencies in India.

2. The issue of preventing misuse of SAFTA provisions has also been raised in meetings of the Joint Group of Customs (JGC). Government has requested Bangladesh to establish an online verification facility to enable real-time authentication of Certificates of Origin and reduce the risk of transshipment of third-country goods.

3. Government has taken note of the committee's recommendation to adopt stringent rules-of-origin verification mechanisms so that preferential trade access under any future CEPA is not misused by third-country exporters.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 22
Development Partnership

The Committee note that infrastructure development and connectivity cooperation have emerged as a cornerstone of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations, encompassing not only physical connectivity through rail, road, and waterways, but also energy and digital linkages. India has extended developmental assistance of nearly USD 10 billion to Bangladesh in the form of Lines of Credit and grants for projects spanning infrastructure, energy, and community development. While acknowledging the tangible progress achieved through initiatives such as the completion of the Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, the Khulna-Mongla, Agartala-Akhaura Rail Lines, India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline and Maitri Bridge over Feni, the Committee express concern that certain projects continue to face delays owing to tendering constraints, procedural bottlenecks, and security-related constraints in project areas.

The Committee further observe that these connectivity initiatives have yielded mutual dividends, facilitating trade expansion, improving access to regional markets, strengthening people-to-people contact, and contributing to broader regional stability and economic integration. The Committee are pleased to know that recently an Indian delegation visited Dhaka to discuss concessional finance projects, leading to development of a mutually agreed roadmap to advance these projects. Ongoing projects include Dhaka-Tongi Joydepur Railway line, Kulauru Shabhapur Railway line, widening of Ramgarh to Baraiyarhat Road, evacuation lines at Rooppur Nuclear Plant, etc. Tendering is also underway for various Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) projects, such as Khulna-Darshana Railway line, Parbatipur Kaunia Railway line, Bogra to Saheed M Mousur Ali Station Railway line, Ashugang Inland Container River Port Project, upgradation of Mongla Port Project, etc.

While recognizing the fact that Bangladesh has been the recipient of robust developmental aid from the Government of India, the Committee concurs with the Ministry's view that improved connectivity brings mutual benefits such as enhancing trade, regional integration and improved access to the North Eastern states. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Ministry should take all necessary steps for timely completion of the major ongoing projects in Bangladesh.

Reply of the Government

India's development cooperation with Bangladesh, extended through Lines of Credit (LoCs) and grant assistance, remains a key pillar of the bilateral relationship. Several major connectivity and energy projects undertaken under this framework have enhanced trade facilitation, regional integration and connectivity with India's North Eastern Region.

2. To ensure timely execution of ongoing Government of India/LoC projects, a structured Project Monitoring Mechanism is in place. This includes Bilateral LoC Project Review Meetings, Project Monitoring Committee Meetings, Technical Committee Meetings, Project Steering Committee Meetings, and periodic Virtual Review Meetings convened by the Ministry of External Affairs. These mechanisms facilitate regular engagement with all stakeholders. In addition, joint site inspections are undertaken periodically by officials of the High Commission of India in Dhaka, India EXIM Bank, concerned project authorities, and Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh to assess progress on the ground and address implementation issues. The Government remains committed to the timely and effective implementation of development partnership projects in consultation with the Government of Bangladesh, with a view to strengthening connectivity, expanding trade, and supporting regional economic integration.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 23

The Committee have been informed that the Ministry is undertaking an internal review of various developmental projects, including in Bangladesh. The Committee note that there have been instances where projects have not commenced despite the extension of the line of credit. The Committee note that during the Foreign Office

Consultation, both sides expressed a desire to continue the ongoing cooperation on developmental partnership projects.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should undertake a comprehensive review and rationalization of the existing Line of Credit portfolio to identify high-impact, viable projects and prioritize their timely completion. The Committee desire to be apprised of the outcome of this review exercise within three months. The Committee further suggest that the Government should proactively publicize successful development partnership initiatives through strategic communication and outreach efforts, thereby enhancing India's image as a reliable development partner and reinforcing its soft power among the people of Bangladesh.

Reply of the Government

A comprehensive review of Government of India-supported LoC projects was undertaken through established bilateral mechanisms. The 23rd bilateral LoC Review Meeting was held in Dhaka on 5–6 March 2025, during which all ongoing LoC projects were reviewed in detail. Challenges that have affected project execution, including security of Indian personnel and assets, lack of project readiness and frequent scope changes, etc. were discussed with Bangladesh. Following mutual consultations, both sides agreed to delist twelve projects that were at the pre-execution stage. Based on project viability and progress on the ground, eight ongoing LoC projects have been identified for prioritised and time-bound execution.

2. The overall perception of India's development projects in Bangladesh remains positive since these projects deliver tangible benefits to the people of Bangladesh. Efforts continue to be taken by Indian Mission and Posts in Bangladesh to enhance visibility of successful development partnership initiatives through coordinated outreach, media engagement and public diplomacy initiatives. Government remains committed to ensuring effective utilisation of LoC resources, prioritising high-impact projects and strengthening the development partnership framework with Bangladesh.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 24

Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement

The Committee note that the Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement, signed in 2015, represents a strategically significant sub-regional initiative aimed at facilitating the seamless movement of goods, people, and services across borders, thereby fostering deeper economic integration in South Asia. The Committee, however, observe with concern that the implementation of the Agreement has been impeded by delays in the finalization of the protocols for the movement of passenger and cargo vehicles. The Committee note that BBIN MVA is currently under finalisation and is expected to streamline cargo movement between its participating countries viz Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Currently, goods bound from Bangladesh to Nepal and Bhutan and vice-versa have to undergo transshipment at designated land ports. Once BBIN is operationalized, it will allow for seamless movement of vehicles in the region contributing to increasing trade flows.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government of India should intensify its diplomatic and technical engagement with the Governments of Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan to expedite the finalization and adoption of the pending Protocols. The Committee also desire that India may take the lead and consider extending capacity-building support and technical assistance to partner countries for harmonizing transport, customs, and regulatory frameworks, to ensure operational preparedness.

Reply of the Government

The Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) was signed in Thimphu, Bhutan on 15 June 2015 to facilitate and regulate the movement of passenger, personal and cargo vehicles among BBIN countries. Bangladesh, India and Nepal have ratified the Agreement, while ratification by Bhutan is pending. Bhutan has conveyed its consent to the remaining three countries to proceed with implementation.

2. India and Bangladesh have conveyed their concurrence for signing a three-country (BIN) enabling MoU to operationalise the MVA, and concurrence from Nepal is awaited. As

the BBIN MVA is a framework agreement, detailed Protocols governing the movement of passenger and cargo vehicles are being developed jointly by the participating countries.

3. The most recent meeting to review the implementation of BBIN MVA was held in Dhaka on 5–6 March 2024. Discussions were held on the draft Protocol for movement of cargo vehicles, modalities for trial runs, and members agreed to the draft Protocol on movement of passenger vehicles. Trial runs of cargo vehicles among India, Bangladesh and Nepal have been conducted. Progress has also been made in upgrading connectivity infrastructure and Integrated Check Posts to support operationalisation.

4. India is committed to engage actively at diplomatic and technical levels to facilitate early operationalisation of the Agreement. The Government supports the BBIN framework through institutional coordination and capacity-building initiatives with member countries. The recommendation of the Committee regarding further extension of capacity building and technical assistance has been noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 25

Cultural Ties and Shared Civilizational Heritage

The Committee note that India and Bangladesh share profound civilizational, linguistic, and cultural affinities, rooted in centuries of shared history, literature, and artistic expression. This shared heritage, reflected through figures such as Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, people-to-people ties and through common festivals, music, and cinema continues to serve as a bridge of goodwill and understanding between the two countries. The Committee observe that initiatives such as joint cultural festivals, literary collaborations, and youth exchange programmes have contributed to strengthening of mutual empathy, preserving the spirit of the 1971 Liberation War, and the moral and emotional foundation of bilateral ties. The Committee, however, express concern that the recent developments in Bangladesh have temporarily eroded the atmosphere of trust and goodwill between the two peoples. The Committee are of the considered view that cultural diplomacy and people-to-people initiatives can act as a potent instrument for rebuilding confidence and deepening mutual understanding at this crucial juncture.

The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government of India should intensify efforts to institutionalize annual joint cultural events, including Tagore-Nazrul literary festivals, joint film retrospectives, and cross-border art residencies, in collaboration with cultural institutions, universities and civil society organizations from both countries. The Committee further recommend that the Government of India should closely work with the Governments of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and West Bengal to promote sub-national cultural linkages, leveraging their shared linguistic and historical heritage to advance deeper people-to-people engagement. The Committee are of the view that bordering states, especially West Bengal can play a supportive role in advancing India's strategic goals in Bangladesh particularly in people-to-people connectivity and trade facilitation considering deep cultural and geographical linkages.

Reply of the Government

India and Bangladesh share deep civilizational, linguistic and cultural linkages that continue to form an important foundation of bilateral relations. Government has made sustained efforts to promote cultural diplomacy in Bangladesh in coordination with the High Commission of India and Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC), Dhaka.

2. Recent initiatives include participation of Bangladeshi cultural troupes in major festivals in India, hosting of Bangladeshi artists and writers under exchange programmes, and facilitation of cross-border cultural performances. A Hindi Chair has also been established at the University of Dhaka under a five-year MoU valid up to 2027. IGCC, Dhaka regularly organises cultural events including observance of Tagore and Nazrul anniversaries, Lalon Sandhya, Maitri Diwas, film screenings, exhibitions, and celebrations of common festivals such as Pohela Boishakh, Durga Puja and Buddha Purnima.

3. Collaboration with Bangladeshi universities, cultural institutions and civil society organisations continues. Sub-national cultural linkages are being strengthened through programmes reflecting shared traditions of India's North-Eastern and bordering States. Under the Cultural Exchange Programme framework, proposals for enhanced cooperation, including exhibitions, performing arts exchanges and academic collaboration, are under consideration in consultation with relevant institutions.

4. The Government remains committed to further advancing cultural diplomacy with Bangladesh, with a view to promoting people-to-people engagement as an important means of rebuilding confidence, enhancing mutual understanding, and sustaining the historical ties underpinning bilateral relations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 27

Human-Resource Development and Capacity Building under ITEC and ICCR

The Committee note that human resource development and capacity-building initiatives, particularly through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme and ICCR scholarships is a key component of India's development cooperation efforts with Bangladesh. The Committee observe that over 3,000 Bangladeshi students have been awarded ICCR scholarships in the last decade and around 500 scholarships are being processed for the academic year 2025-26. The Committee have been informed that these scholarships have been useful in strengthening people-to-people ties and providing opportunities to Bangladeshi students to better know and understand India. The Committee also note that India has been providing training to Bangladeshi officials from civil services, police, judiciary, etc. at various premier training institutes in India. The Committee also note that in March 2021, India had announced 1000 'Suborno Jayanti Scholarships' for Bangladeshi students. So far, more than 900 scholarships have been awarded to Bangladeshi students between 2022-2024. In addition, under the Muktiyoddha Scholarship Scheme, 24,018 scholarships have been awarded to wards of Bangladeshi war veterans.

The Committee are glad to note that flagship initiatives such as ICCR scholarships and the ITEC courses continue to enjoy wide recognition among Bangladeshi students and professionals. The Committee desire that more Bangladeshi youths, students and professionals are provided opportunities under ICCR and ITEC training programmes. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government of India to significantly upscale the number and diversity of ITEC and ICCR scholarships for Bangladesh, with particular focus on emerging sectors such as

digital innovation, renewable energy, public health, and sustainable agriculture. The Committee also suggest that the Ministry should ensure that these programmes remain responsive to evolving needs and sectoral priorities. The Committee further desire that more scholarship to wards of war veterans may be provided under Muktijoddha Scholarship Scheme. The Committee desire that increasing number of Bangladeshi professionals, researchers, and youth should benefit from various sector specific, skill oriented and other training modules.

Reply of the Government

Bangladesh remains one of the largest beneficiaries of India's capacity building programmes. Under the ITEC framework, training is provided across traditional areas of governance, public administration, police and judicial training, as well as emerging sectors such as digital innovation, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and public health. In FY 2024–25, 65 officials participated in ITEC courses in India, and in FY 2025–26 (till date), 25 participants have undergone training. Customized programmes, including courses conducted through institutions such as the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), continue to be designed in response to sectoral requirements conveyed by the Government of Bangladesh.

2. ICCR scholarship programmes continue to receive strong participation from Bangladeshi students. In FY 2025–26, ICCR has awarded 497 scholarships under the Suborno Jayanti Scholarship Scheme, 46 under the Lata Mangeskar Dance and Music Scholarship Scheme and 10 under the AYUSH Scholarship Scheme. Over 2,161 Bangladeshi students have also been granted visas under self-financed admission to Indian institutions since January 2025. There is a proposal under consideration to revisit the current distribution of Suborno Jayanti scholarships to increase the share of STEM disciplines.

3. Under the Scholarship scheme for Muktijoddhas, 2000 scholarships are provided every year to wards of Muktijoddhas to undertake Higher Secondary and Undergraduate studies in Bangladesh. So far, 24,018 scholarships have been awarded under this scheme. The 'Muktijoddha Scholarship' scheme is being reviewed with a view to increasing the impact of the scheme. Under the Muktijoddha Medical Scheme, since 2019, Muktijoddhas have been provided support to avail medical treatment in India.

4. The Committee's proposal to upscale the number and diversity of scholarships for Bangladesh has been noted for compliance.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 29

Visa Facilitation and Consular Cooperation

The Committee recognize that visa and consular facilitation constitute the most visible and people-centric dimension of India–Bangladesh relations, directly impacting the movement of tourists, patients, students, and businesspersons. In 2023, India issued over 1.6 million visas to Bangladeshi nationals, making it one of India's largest visa operations abroad. However, following the events of 5 August, 2024, visa services were significantly scaled down, and consular personnel were withdrawn from Bangladesh. The Committee observe that essential visa categories have continued to function despite temporary disruptions resulting from the security situation post-August 2024. Bangladesh remains one of India's major visa operations, processing approximately 1,500 visas daily, with medical visas accounting for around 80% of the total.

The Committee acknowledge the Ministry's commitment to prioritizing medical visas, underscoring India's responsiveness to the healthcare needs of Bangladeshi people. However, the Committee express concern that reduced visa processing volumes and the security-related disruptions may adversely affect public perception and impede people-to-people engagement, which is vital for fostering bilateral ties.

Recognizing the importance of sustained inter-personal contact for preserving mutual trust and confidence, the Committee urge that the Ministry of External Affairs, in coordination with concerned security agencies, should progressively normalize visa operations in Bangladesh as soon as the situation permits. The Committee also urge the Ministry to develop a bilateral consular cooperation mechanism to periodically review visa policy, address grievances, and ensure that legitimate

travellers are not subjected to various inconveniences, while maintaining necessary security safeguards.

Reply of the Government

Bangladesh remains among the countries whose nationals are eligible for visas on a gratis basis. It also continues to be one of India's largest visa operations, notwithstanding the decrease in the number of visas issued in the wake of the events of August 2024.

2. Close to 1,500 visas are currently being issued each day across five centers in Bangladesh with Medical visas accounting for approximately 80% of the total visas issued. The evolving security situation is under continuous review, and any decision on increasing daily issuance of visas or operationalizing additional visa centers will be taken in coordination with the relevant Ministries of the Government of India.

3. A structured mechanism for discussion and review of visa policies exists through the Bilateral Consular Dialogue. The next meeting of the dialogue will be considered in coordination with the relevant Ministries in India and the Bangladesh authorities.

4. Our Mission and Posts in Bangladesh are continuously taking steps to streamline processes and to address applicants' grievances, while ensuring necessary safeguards in line with existing visa guidelines.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 30

Strengthening Institutional mechanism for water cooperation

The Committee observe that water sharing constitutes one of the most vital and sensitive aspects of India-Bangladesh bilateral relationship. India and Bangladesh share 54 transboundary rivers and have a water sharing Treaty, namely Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 on Ganga River along with Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) for withdrawal of water from Feni and Kushiya rivers. The Indo-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), established in 1972, serves as the principal institutional mechanism for cooperation on shared water resources, including flood control,

irrigation, cyclone warning, and flood forecasting. The Committee also note that a meeting of the JRC was held in Kolkata in March 2025. The Technical Level Meeting (TLM) of the JRC further enables experts from both sides to undertake detailed and issue-specific deliberations.

The Ministry has further apprised the Committee that discussions are ongoing between both sides to finalize more water sharing treaties on Teesta, Manu, Khowai, and Dharla rivers. While the JRC and the Ganga Water Treaty remain the cornerstone of bilateral water cooperation, the Committee find that the absence of agreements on other major shared rivers, particularly the Teesta, continues to pose challenges.

The Committee feel that the overall river water cooperation framework between the two countries ought to be given due importance and institutional regularity. The Committee recommend that the Government of India, in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh, should ensure that meetings of the Joint Rivers Commission, at both technical and ministerial levels, are convened on a regular and time-bound basis. The Committee also concur with expert opinion that bilateral water cooperation should move beyond water sharing of major rivers during dry-season, and should include micro-level initiatives such as aquifer recharge, river rejuvenation, and technical collaboration. Both countries should also actively explore joint projects on smaller transboundary rivers such as the Manu, Khowai, and Dharla to promote localized water management, enhance climate resilience, and strengthen mutual trust.

Reply of the Government

The bilateral Institutional framework of India-Bangladesh Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) was set up in the year 1972. The bilateral meetings under the JRC framework are held as per the mutual convenience of both the countries. The Joint Committee Meetings for sharing of Ganga Water are held thrice a year. (Last meeting was held in September 2025).

2. India and Bangladesh share 54 trans-boundary/ common-border rivers. As on date, the two countries have signed one Treaty (signed in 1996) on the sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka; apart from one MoU signed in 2019 for withdrawing water from Feni river for the

drinking water supply scheme of Sabroom Town in the Indian state of Tripura and one MoU signed in 2022 for withdrawal of water from the common border river Kushiya.

3. The Technical Level Meeting under the JRC framework deliberates on other water resources related matters of mutual interest, apart from river water sharing on common-border / trans-boundary rivers. The agenda for deliberation in the Technical Level Meeting is mutually decided.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 32

Enhancing Climate Resilience and Environmental Cooperation

The Committee note that climate change is increasingly impacting river flows and rainfall patterns, leading to environmental challenges in both India and Bangladesh, particularly in coastal and flood-prone regions. The Sundarbans, a vast mangrove delta shared by both countries, is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased salinity, and loss of biodiversity. Recognizing the shared ecological vulnerability of the Sundarbans region, the Committee note with satisfaction the establishment of the India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group on Conservation of the Sundarbans. The Committee appreciate the fact that this platform provides an avenue for cooperation on biodiversity mapping, water quality monitoring, and ecosystem management in the deltaic region shared by both countries. The Committee recommend that this mechanism be further strengthened to include joint initiatives on climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, salinity management, and livelihood resilience for local populations. The Committee further suggest that the two countries should explore the feasibility of developing a comprehensive bilateral framework on climate and riverine ecosystem management, integrating aspects of water quality, flood forecasting, and sustainable delta management. The Committee are of the view that cooperation on climate change and disaster management offers a politically neutral domain for deepening bilateral trust between the two countries. The Ministry may also apprise the Committee on the progress of implementation of MoU signed by India and Bangladesh in 2011 for conservation of Sundarbans.

Reply of the Government

India and Bangladesh signed a “Shared Vision for India-Bangladesh Green Partnership” document in 2024 as a comprehensive framework for discussion and review of bilateral cooperation on climate and riverine ecosystem management, environmental degradation, and sustainable development. Key areas of cooperation included disaster risk reduction, management of 54 common trans-boundary rivers, and Sundarbans conservation. A Joint Working Group on Conservation of Sundarbans was established under the MoU, which last met in 2016 in New Delhi. Discussions under the framework may be resumed in coordination with the relevant Ministries in both countries.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 33

Flood Management and Data Sharing

The Committee observe that since 1972, India and Bangladesh have successfully engaged in flood forecasting and hydrological data exchange under the aegis of the Joint River Commission. This cooperation has played an important role in mitigating the impact of floods and enhancing preparedness in both countries. The Committee recommend that this cooperation be modernized and expanded through the integration of modern technologies such as satellite-based rainfall estimation, remote sensing, and digital hydrological modelling, to improve transboundary water management and enhance the resilience of both nations to climate variability.

Reply of the Government

Since 1972, there are existing arrangements for transmission of agreed flood-related data (water level, discharge and rainfall) for identified stations/ sites on Ganga, Brahmaputra, Barak, Manu, Gumti, Teesta, Jaldhaka, Torsa and Mahananda to Bangladesh by e-mail for flood forecasting and warnings. Point-to-point flood data of identified stations is also transmitted to Bangladesh by wireless and e-mail. During the flood season of 2023, a digital communication group of concerned officers from India and Bangladesh had also been activated for transmitting flood data-related information timely in a seamless manner to Bangladesh. During the flood season of 2025, Flood Forecasting Centre of Bangladesh Water Development Board, started providing (w.e.f. 6.10.2025), the

flood related data of three rivers (Upper Atrai, Punarbhaba and Tangon flowing from Bangladesh to West Bengal) to the Central Flood Control Room of IW&D, Govt of West Bengal.

2. Central Water Commission is formulating 7-day advisories of flood using Satellite based real – time rainfall estimates, and seven days rainfall forecast through Numerical Weather Prediction models being shared by IMD on a seamless fashion. Mathematical model has been used for formulation of advisories, and these advisories are available in public domain through a dedicated website <https://aff.india-water.gov.in/home.php>. In addition to that, hourly data of all stations is available online on real time basis in the separate dedicated websites which is also available in public domain at <https://ffs.india-water.gov.in>.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

CHAPTER-III

OBSERVATION/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

-NIL-

CHAPTER- IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

NIL

CHAPTER-V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation No. 5

Stay of Sheikh Hasina in India

The Committee note that the stay of former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina in the country and India's approach in this regard is guided by its civilizational ethos and humanitarian tradition of offering refuge to individuals facing circumstances of grave distress or existential threat. The Committee have also been informed that the Government of India do not provide her with a political platform or any space to undertake political activity from Indian territory. The Committee also note that while extending such humanitarian consideration, India has strictly adhered to the principle that no political activity is directed against any other country from our territory. The Committee recommend that the Government should continue to uphold its principled and humanitarian approach, consistent with India's values and international responsibilities, while ensuring that such situations are managed with due sensitivity. The Committee have taken note of the Bangladesh Government's extradition request following the pronouncement of a death sentence on Sheikh Hasina in absentia, and urge the Government to keep the Committee apprised of its consideration of the matter.

Reply of the Government

The extradition request is being examined by the competent authorities of the Government of India in accordance with applicable law and established procedures. The recommendation is noted for compliance.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 8

Completion of Land Boundary Agreement and Border Demarcation

The Committee note that the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) between India and Bangladesh, signed in 2015, was a landmark achievement that resolved one of

the most complex and long-pending issues in bilateral relations through the exchange of enclaves and rationalization of the land boundary. Alongside, the maritime boundary settlement concluded in the same year further strengthened mutual trust and laid the groundwork for a more stable and cooperative border management framework. However, the Committee note that residual demarcation challenges, particularly in difficult terrain such as the Sundarbans, remain unresolved. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should expedite the completion of the residual boundary demarcation in a time-bound manner so as to consolidate the gains achieved through the Land Boundary Agreement and contribute to more effective border management. The Committee are of the view that timely completion of the remaining sectors has become even more important in view of the prevailing situation in Bangladesh.

Reply of the Government

International boundary along the Bangladesh border has been demarcated in most areas. Demarcation in few remaining stretches is under consideration at the appropriate level. Pending issues of boundary demarcation continue to be discussed at the appropriate institutional mechanism created for the purpose: the Joint Boundary Conference (JBC). These issues were discussed at the 5th Joint Boundary Conference (JBC) between Bangladesh and India held in Dhaka between 21-23 November 2022.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 10

Leveraging Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

The Committee recognize that beyond bilateral engagement, regional cooperation groupings, particularly the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) offer a promising avenue to deepen connectivity, boost trade, and enrich cultural and people to people exchange with Bangladesh. With the BIMSTEC Secretariat headquartered in Dhaka and Bangladesh having taken over the chair of BIMSTEC for the next one year, the Committee view this as a timely opportunity for both the countries to strengthen diplomatic and technical cooperation. The Committee are given to understand that the BIMSTEC,

with the help of Asian Development Bank, has come up with a 'Master Plan' on transport connectivity for the entire region, including Myanmar and Thailand. The Committee recommend that India should extend full diplomatic and technical support to Bangladesh during its presidency and work closely towards implementing the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Committee may be kept apprised of all the developments in this regard.

Reply of the Government

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met Professor Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh, on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok on 4 April 2025. Prime Minister congratulated Bangladesh on assuming the Chair of BIMSTEC and looked forward to the forum further advancing regional cooperation under its leadership. Our Mission in Dhaka actively promotes this grouping in Bangladesh on various platforms in an effort to transform it into an active regional forum.

2. The BIMSTEC Master Plan was formally adopted at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 30 March 2022. Last year on March 6, 2025, a mid-term review of the BIMSTEC Master Plan for transport connectivity was held to assess progress and to strategize future steps in improving regional transport networks. At the 6th BIMSTEC Summit held in Bangkok in April 2025, the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation (AMTC), was adopted. India was the first country to ratify the AMTC, and during the 2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave held in Visakhapatnam in July 2025, Government of India announced setting up a BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Maritime Transport (BSMarTC) in Mumbai to support implementation and build technical capacity in Bangladesh and other member states.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 13

Border Fencing

The Committee note that out of the total 4096 kms of India-Bangladesh border, approximately 3231 have been fenced while about 864 km remain unfenced due to difficult terrain and riverine conditions. The Committee have been informed that while

fencing is feasible for about 689 kms, approximately 175 kms present significant challenge due to its difficult terrain. Issues such as the bilateral agreements which restrict construction within 150 yards of the India-Bangladesh boundary and land acquisition hurdles further complicate the process.

Recognizing that effective border management is vital for national security, regional stability, and socio-economic development, the Committee recommend that the Government of India prioritize completion of the remaining fencing work by engaging with Bangladesh, expediting processes of technical design, feasibility studies, and land acquisition. The Committee further recommend that the Ministry of Home Affairs, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and state governments, should adopt innovative engineering and technological solutions such as floating fences, laser-based intrusion detection systems, and smart sensors in difficult riverine and populated sectors, where conventional fencing is impractical.

Reply of the Government

The relevant authorities of the Government of India regularly pursue cases of land acquisition with the concerned state authorities for completion of border fencing in feasible areas.

2. As per MHA's directive, coverage of all gaps areas along the Indo-Bangladesh border is to be done through technological solutions. To this end, BSF has proposed comprehensive technological solutions which are under consideration.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 21

Bangladesh's graduation from LDC Status and future trade architecture

The Committee take note of Bangladesh's impending graduation from the category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in 2026 and recognize that this development will have significant implications for bilateral trade. The Committee observe that Bangladesh currently enjoys duty-free and quota-free market access to India for nearly all products under SAFTA as part of its LDC benefits. Upon

graduation, Bangladesh will cease to qualify for several preferential treatments which could affect its export competitiveness and alter the existing trade dynamics.

The Committee appreciate that both countries have initiated negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to establish a forward-looking framework for trade and investment cooperation post-graduation in line with India's Neighbourhood First policy. The Committee, therefor, recommend that the Government of India should expedite the conclusion of CEPA negotiations well before the end of 2026 to ensure continuity, predictability, and stability in the bilateral economic relationship. As India has a much larger economy, the Committee are of the view that the CEPA should include provisions for continued preferential treatment for select sectors of the Bangladeshi economy, while also safeguarding India's domestic interests and providing a balanced framework for long-term cooperation.

Reply of the Government

The Government has taken note of the observations and recommendations of the Committee regarding Bangladesh's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status and the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Discussion towards commencement of negotiations had been initiated prior to August 2024, which is expected to pick pace under the new Government in Bangladesh.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 26

Role of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)

The Committee note that the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), through the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) in Dhaka, has played a pivotal role in promoting India's cultural diplomacy in Bangladesh, offering training in Yoga, Hindustani classical music, Kathak, and Hindi, and organizing collaborative performances by eminent artists from both countries. The Committee commend ICCR's initiatives such as the International Dance and Music Festival and its efforts to sustain cultural engagement even during periods of political uncertainty. The

Committee are hopeful that the cultural programs of renowned artists of India and Bangladesh will contribute in promotion of people-to-people contacts.

Recognizing the increasing demand and positive response, the Committee are of the considered view that the scope and geographical reach of ICCR's activities should be substantially expanded beyond Dhaka to other major cultural hubs of Bangladesh. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR, in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh, expand its cultural footprint by establishing satellite cultural centres in other cities, as well as by organizing mobile cultural troupes and developing digital cultural platforms to reach wider audiences. The Committee further suggest that the ICCR and Bangladesh's Shilpakala Academy jointly develop a Cultural Exchange Roadmap focusing on joint training programmes, artist residencies, youth festivals, and academic collaborations to deepen the cultural foundation of the bilateral relationship.

Reply of the Government

Government has taken note of the recommendations of the Committee regarding the role of ICCR in expanding cultural engagement with Bangladesh. To expand outreach beyond Dhaka, ICCR and IGCC are leveraging digital platforms, including official social media channels and curated online content. Selected cultural programmes such as Lalon Sandhya and Maitri Diwas are recorded and disseminated digitally to reach wider audiences. Interactive initiatives, including online engagements targeted at youth, are also undertaken to broaden participation and visibility of cultural activities. IGCC continues to collaborate with universities and cultural institutions in Bangladesh, including through literary events, exhibitions, commemorative programmes and performances.

2. The proposal for expanding ICCR's footprint through satellite cultural centres and outreach initiatives in other cities has been noted for compliance. Committee's suggestion that the ICCR and Bangladesh's Shilpakala Academy jointly develop a Cultural Exchange Roadmap focusing on joint training programmes, artist residencies, youth festivals, and academic collaborations to deepen the cultural foundation of the bilateral relationship is also noted for compliance.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 28

The Committee recognize that tourism and localized cross-border trade are powerful drivers for strengthening socio-economic and cultural engagement between India and Bangladesh. The Committee commend the establishment of Border Haats along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya and Tripura for promoting localised trade among people living along the border areas. The Committee notes that these Border Haats are designed to improve the well-being of people living in remote regions on both sides of the border. The Committee suggest that the Ministry should conduct a feasibility study to explore the possibility of establishing additional Border Haats between the two countries. The Committee are hopeful that expanding the network of Border Haats will serve as effective, community-based models for informal trade and cultural exchange. Such initiatives will not only revitalize trade in border areas but also foster stronger people-to-people ties.

Reply of the Government

The Government has taken note of the recommendations of the Committee regarding cross-border tourism and expansion of Border Haats. Border Haats along the India–Bangladesh border have contributed to facilitating localized trade and improving livelihoods in border communities. Prior to the events of August 2024, six Border Haats were operational on the Indo-Bangladesh border. Additional Border Haats are at various stages of development, and related issues continue to be taken up with the Government of Bangladesh. Proposals for establishing additional Border Haats are considered in consultation with concerned State Governments and subject to feasibility, infrastructure readiness and mutual agreement.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

Recommendation No. 31

Renewal of the Ganga Water Treaty

The Committee note that the Ganga Water Treaty of 1996 is a bilateral agreement between India and Bangladesh governing the sharing of waters from the Ganga River at the Farraka Barrage for a period of 30 years. The Committee have been informed that the Ganga Water Treaty involved significant participation from the state of West Bengal, with the Finance Minister of West Bengal playing a key role in

formulating the treaty provisions. The state government of West Bengal also participated in the most recent meeting of JRC held in Kolkata in March 2025. The Committee also note that this treaty is set to expire in 2026 and that bilateral discussions on its renewal have not yet commenced.

The Committee recommend that the Government of India should initiate bilateral discussions with Bangladesh at the earliest, to avoid any vacuum in the post-2026 period. The Committee further recommend that the renewal process should be guided by updated hydrological data, climate change projections, and the need for equitable and sustainable utilization of river waters. In this regard, the Committee emphasize that consultations with concerned State Governments, particularly West Bengal and Bihar, may be continued to ensure that national and state-level interests are aligned in formulating India's position during the negotiation process. The Committee also underscore that the sharing of Teesta river waters is of critical importance to the State of West Bengal, and therefore, its concerns may be duly addressed by the Government of India during negotiations on the Teesta.

Reply of the Government

An Inter-Ministerial Committee was constituted by DoWR, RD&GR in July 2023 for carrying out an Internal Review of the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty. Concerned stakeholders of the State Governments of West Bengal and Bihar are also members of this Committee. Bilateral discussions are expected to commence under the new Government in Bangladesh.

2. The endeavour of the Union Government is to arrive at an agreement on Teesta on a fair and equitable basis in consultation with our riparian States, which is acceptable to all the parties concerned and which protects the interest of all stakeholders.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/102/2025 dated 26/02/2026]

NEW DELHI

21 July, 2026

30 Ashadha, 1948 (Saka)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,

Chairperson,

Committee on External Affairs

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS (2025-26) HELD ON 21 JULY 2026**

The Committee sat on Tuesday, 21 July 2026 from 1730 hrs. to 1800 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, Extension Building, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 2 | Smt. D. K. Aruna |
| 3 | Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai |
| 4 | Shri Arun Govil |
| 5 | Shri Naveen Jindal |
| 6 | Shri Navaskani K. |
| 7 | Shri Sanatan Pandey |
| 8 | Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad |
| 9 | Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant |

Rajya Sabha

- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 10 | Dr. John Brittas |
| 11 | Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu |
| 12 | Shri Ratanjit Pratap Narayan Singh |
| 13 | Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi |

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. | Shri Shangreiso Zimik | - | Director |
| 2. | Ms. Shanta Banerjee Datta | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 3. | Dr. Smita Singh | - | Committee Officer |

2. At the outset, Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee and apprised them of the agenda for the day.

3. The Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Ninth Report of the Committee on the subject 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship'

4. The Chairperson, invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. After deliberations, the Committee adopted the Draft Report with minor modifications suggested by the Members.
5. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Action Taken Report incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)

**ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE NINTH REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

(i) Observations/ Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -

Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32 and 33,

Total- 25

Percentage : 75.75 %

(ii) Observations/ Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies: -

Recommendation No. NIL

Total- 0

Percentage : 0 %

(iii) Observations/ Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -

Recommendation Nos. 9

Total- 0

Percentage : 0 %

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited: -

Recommendation Nos. 5, 8, 10, 13, 21, 26, 28 and 31

Total- 8

Percentage : 24.24 %