

# Remarks by Foreign Secretary at the Joint Press meet in Dhaka

June 07, 2011

At the outset, I would like to thank the Government of Bangladesh and my counterpart His Excellency Mijarul Quayes for the invitation and excellent hospitality extended to the Indian delegation and arrangements made for the Foreign Office Consultations. It is always delightful to visit Dhaka.

2. We have had very comprehensive consultations earlier today covering a range of issues of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation. The talks were marked by great warmth and cordiality reflecting the close ties and friendship between the two countries.

3. The Joint Communiqué signed by PM Dr Manmohan Singh and Her Excellency Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her landmark visit to India in January last year has outlined the roadmap for the relationship between India and Bangladesh. Both sides have made considerable progress in implementation of the Joint Communiqué since the visit. Implementation of projects under the \$ 1 billion LOC from India has been high priority for both sides. We have just conveyed our concurrence for a number of projects under the LOC in Railway infrastructure and the purchase of buses for the city of Dhaka. These can be implemented immediately. India is committed to implementation of far-reaching decisions taken by the leaders of both countries.

4. Our cooperation in the power sector, including grid connectivity, supply of upto 500 MW of power from India, including 250 MW of power at a preferential rate and Bangladesh request for setting up of a high technology joint venture thermal power plant of 1320 MW capacity is progressing well. During the visit of Minister for Commerce and Industry of India in April this year, the annual duty free quota for export of Bangladeshi garments to India has been raised from 8 to 10 million pieces. Cooperation to upgrade BSTI is progressing well. Both sides are working on several projects to improve trade infrastructure and connectivity. A new LCS at Fulbari-Banglabandha was opened in January and the Government of India has now undertaken to set up five ICPs and the foundation stone of the ICP at Agartala was laid by the Home Minister Shri P. Chidambaram in May. Border Haats in Meghalaya are expected to be inaugurated soon.

5. There has been regular exchange of business delegations. This has resulted in several joint venture agreements being concluded for export oriented manufacturing activities in Bangladesh. Indeed, we are happy to note that Bangladesh exports to India have, according to our figures, increased by 52% in the first nine months of 2010-11. I am sure that Indian investments in Bangladesh will provide employment and also generate export potential, including to India.

6. We have made substantial forward movement in respect of both water and land boundary issues. The Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) meeting was held in November 2010, and the Bangladesh Water Resources Secretary held talks in Delhi yesterday. Both sides are discussing interim water sharing of Teesta and Feni rivers. The work on river bank protection and embankment construction along the common rivers is progressing and the dredging of the Ichhamati River along the 20 km common stretch is nearing completion.

7. The joint Inaugural Ceremonies of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in both our capitals were very impressive. Several events are planned for the whole year.

8. India attaches the highest importance to its relations with Bangladesh and seeks a deeper and stronger partnership. The historic bonds between India and Bangladesh are deep rooted and peoples on both sides want mutual prosperity and cooperation.

9. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh is looking forward to his visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to take forward the mutually beneficial cooperation agreed by the two Prime Ministers in January 2010.

10. I am looking forward to calling on Her Excellency Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina right after this interaction. Yesterday, I had very productive interaction with H.E. Dr. Mashiur Rahman and H.E. Prof. Gowher Rizvi, Advisers to Prime Minister. I shall also call on Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni later today.

11. I thank you for your presence.

**Dhaka**  
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*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India*