

Next step in Dhaka: Modi and Hasina must build on the new beginning in ties

Saturday, Jun 6, 2015

By [Dr. Ashikur Rahman](#)

PM Narendra Modi is set to hold talks with Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka.



PM Narendra Modi is set to hold talks with Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka.

Written by [Ashikur Rahman](#) , [Iftikhar Rashid](#) | Published on: June 6, 2015 12:18 am

decades, especially when states are willing to submit to common “rules of the game”, based on fairness and cooperation.

Such an approach in foreign relations will also allow India and Bangladesh to continue expanding bilateral collaboration and agreements on Teesta, trade, security, connectivity, infrastructure and power in the near future. In this respect, we have seen significant success in mutual collaboration to counter transnational terrorist groups, reduce border casualties, improve trade and develop joint-venture power projects along with the LBA.

Hence, as Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) embarks on his maiden state visit to Bangladesh, there is a new wave of optimism about bilateral relations in the wake of the LBA. He has proved sceptics wrong by not only succeeding where his predecessors failed, but also mobilising a broad national consensus in ratifying the treaty. This has definitely curtailed the perception of non-reciprocity from New Delhi despite substantive overtures by Dhaka.

Modi's trip has the potential to take relations between India and Bangladesh to greater heights, but a key challenge facing all relevant stakeholders is to manage expectations while setting focus on larger strategic goals beyond immediate priorities. Though any agreement on Teesta seems beyond the scope of the upcoming trip, this should not dampen the mood, as the visit itself represents a platform for increased cooperation and ongoing engagement. In recent years, both countries have witnessed a change in mindsets about bilateral relations that needs to be crystallised by developing a strong foundation that continues to deliver visible results for both sides.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that the two countries share an important bond based on our common history, geography and culture, including India's support during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. Hasina's policy of being "pro-engagement" goes hand-in-hand with Modi's "neighbourhood-first" policy. Thus, the onus is now on both leaders to take bilateral relations to the next level.