

Problems and Prospects of Sino-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations: An Analysis



M.Phil. Thesis

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Dedicated to
My
Daughter and Son

Abstract

This research aims to study the existing Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relation framing about 10 years (2012 to 2022) to shape a vibrant bilateral relation. The results of a study undertaken to identify the problems and simultaneously the prospective measures to be made both from two countries: Bangladesh and China. The theoretical framework has been borrowed from Hans J. Morgenthau's realist theory, Antonio Gramsci's ideological hegemony and Alfred Mahan's sea power theory to examine Sino-Bangladesh relations on the ground of international politics. Being a strategically important country in South Asia can shape the existing foreign policy dynamics to upgrade its status in attaining a developed one. The study will highlight on the ongoing problems of convergence and discord issues holistically like the Rohingya Issue, Bangladesh-India Relation, and useful mechanisms for the political and economic development respectively. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research have been used to seek depth of the study. For this purpose, the researcher has to be very careful about sampling. The analysis was done for the overall success rate of the current trade, defense, economic, political, and strategic frameworks. Bangladesh has, however, come to light as a significant moot point from the perspective of regional security as we explore the new dimension of bilateral relations. The recent global and regional politics tends to raise a vital question if Bangladesh can maintain balance between India-Bangladesh-China trilateral power configuration. Both the qualitative and quantitative study show that Bangladesh needs to maintain a balanced but win-win policy. The Covid-19 pandemic largely influenced global politics and remade the regional order, henceforth, the Ukraine war presented a new global equation. Though Sino-Bangladesh shared an antagonistic relationship from the beginning the journey of Bangladesh but, there are no permanent enemies, and no permanent friends, only permanent interests are given priority in international politics. Considering the geographic location, Bangladesh should maintain a balanced mechanism according to the research work. Bangladesh is moving towards a developed one and there are major hurdles which is the major concern of this study and only the strategic mechanism itself can resolve the issues to maintain a healthy Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

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Declaration

It is with great pleasure to announce that this dissertation, the results of my research have been presented in a paper titled ""Problems and Prospects of Sino-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations: An Analysis," which has been submitted to the Department of Political Science at Dhaka University for the M.Phil. in Political Science degree. I hereby further declare that this research has not been submitted in whole or in part to any other university or organization for the purpose of obtaining a tertiary degree or for any other similar purposes.

Date:

Tania Ahmed Uma

Certification



This is to certify that the dissertation "**Problems and Prospects of Sino-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations: An Analysis,**" which has been submitted to the department of Political Science at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh, is the original research output of Tania Ahmed Uma's research, which was conducted under my supervision. It is intended to fulfill a portion of the requirements for the award of the degree of M.Phil. in the department of Political Science. To the best of my knowledge, neither a portion nor the entirety of this research has been submitted to any other college or university for the awarding of a tertiary level degree or for any other similar purposes. Additionally, I attest that the M.Phil. thesis submission was made after using plagiarism detection software. After carefully going over the final draft, the submission has now been made.

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Abbreviations

ADAB	:	Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh
AL	:	Awami League
ASEAN	:	Association of SouthEast Asian Nations
BBIN	:	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal
BCIM	:	Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor
BILIA	:	Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs
BJP	:	Bharatiya Janata Party
BNP	:	Bangladesh National Party
BPL	:	Below Poverty Line
BRAC	:	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BRI	:	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	:	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CHT	:	Chittagong Hill Tracts
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GOI	:	Government of India
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
IR	:	International Relations
LTTE	:	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goal
MoU	:	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	:	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDA	:	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	:	Non-governmental Organization
NL	:	National List
NPC	:	National Planning Committee
NPT	:	Non-proliferation Treaty
NSS	:	National Sample Survey
OBOR	:	One Belt One Road
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OIC	:	Organization of the Islamic Conference
PLA	:	People's Liberation Army
PPP	:	Public-Private Partnership
PRC	:	The People's Republic of China
RMG	:	Readymade Garments
SAARC	:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	:	United Kingdom
UN	:	United Nations
UNSC	:	United Nations Security Council
US (or USA)	:	United States
WB	:	World Bank
WTO	:	World Trade Organization

Chapter One

Introduction

Bangladesh and China enjoy time tested friendship and co-operation. Bangladesh, having overcome insurmountable socio-economic problems, has, since independence in 1971, displayed a characteristic resilience. A pragmatic approach to reducing extreme poverty, establishing the rule of law, ensuring gender equity, and coping with climate change has made the country stand out on a global stage. The two countries established diplomatic relations in 1975, although the interfaces between the two civilizations date back to more than a thousand years. Chinese travelers and navigators like Fa Xian (Fa Hien), Xuan Zhang (Hiu en Tsang) and Admiral Zheng He visited Bengal and left important historical accounts based on their experiences.¹ Atish Dipankar from Bengal traversed the Himalyas and preached Buddhism in Tibet and Sichuan. These exchanges mark some of the milestones in the historical ties between the two countries. The Five Principles of peaceful Coexistence, the good neighbor spirit, reciprocal trust, confidence, and non-interference in one another's internal affairs serve as the cornerstones of relations between Bangladesh and China. In terms of Bangladesh's development, China has consistently been a reliable partner. A "Closer Comprehensive Partnership of Cooperation" that encompasses nearly all conceivable sectors now frames the bilateral relations within formal trappings.² The Government of Bangladesh unswervingly adheres to a "One China" policy and hopes for peaceful reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. Bangladesh also extends support to

¹ Zhang Xianyi; History and Legend of Sino-Bangla Contacts; available at < <http://bd.china-embassy.org/eng/mjlxx/gk/t823712.htm> >; last visited at 07.02.15 6 Popularly known as Fa Hien in Bangladesh 7 Also known as Hue en Shang

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2014). Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Establishing Strategic Partnership of Cooperation [online]. Available: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/bangladesh-china-jointstatement1299403> [Accessed December 26, 2019].

China on the question of Tibet and considers it to be an integral part of China. The two Governments maintain close cooperation in different multilateral and regional forums, including the UN. The two countries also share similar views and perceptions on a range of issues of common interest in the international context (especially human rights, trade liberalization, climate change etc.). Bangladesh has overcome unconquerable socio-economic problems since its independence in 1971 and still has been showing its enormous strength. A rational approach to reduce poverty, to initiate the rule of law, to ensure gender egalitarianism and lastly to endure the climate crisis has made Bangladesh stand out on a global level.³

1.1 Background of the Study

The South Asia region has increasingly become a new arena of power and competition. South Asia along with the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal has a long history of industrial and commercial activity and how does this affect the ecosystem of the region. During 10 years, Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations have been growing rapidly for various strategic reasons. The 50-year journey of Bangladesh has become a success story for its massive socio-economic development and geopolitics of the Indian Ocean- a new diplomatic cold war between two Asian giants- China and India.⁴ Meanwhile, China is an unstoppable force in the current world economy. China ranks as the world's second largest economy while Bangladesh is expected to become the 26th largest economy by 2030. Although the process has presented its own challenges-especially within the face of massive wealth inequality - Bangladesh's economic trajectory remains positive. To remain pace with its growth, Bangladesh, therefore, must use its strategic advantages for growing relationships with China. Today, Bangladesh is developed in all respects by following the

³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh(2016). Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Establishing Strategic Partnership of Cooperation [online]. Available: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/bangladesh-china-jointstatement1299403> [Accessed October 16, 2016].

⁴ Chinese Puzzle in India-Bangladesh Relations; Anand Kumar; Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses; April 19, 2010, available at ; last accessed on February 15, 2015

foreign policy shown by Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Bangladesh has always remained non-aligned with the principle of ‘friendship with all, not enmity with anyone’. Bangladesh has moved forward by formulating its foreign policy in terms of reality and handling the problems and prospects of bilateral relations in a quite friendly, candid and constructive way.⁵

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Through international concepts that facilitate cross-disciplinary dialogue, this study aims to contribute new insights into political drivers in the development of the Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relationship. The Rohingya crisis has now become the most critical among all the existing problems between Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations. In these days, China encourages the Rohingya repatriation through several bilateral and multilateral attempts which is a major diplomatic victory. Though Myanmar’s response was not quite satisfactory rather depressive by rejection of China’s proposal. But China’s major effort can hopefully convince Myanmar to start the process. Myanmar’s compilation of a list of 3,000 Rohingya refugees was a notable one. Powerful countries like China, USA are working with maximum capacity to extract less developed country’s resources like Myanmar, Bangladesh surrounded by the Bay of Bengal. There are countries close to this region, and foreign countries are also competing to establish a position there in various ways. While participating in this competition, the region is gradually losing its ecological balance, causing geopolitical tensions in recent decades. China's activity there is greater than that of others. The principal factors are India's presence in the South Asian region and the opening of new waterways.⁶ The natural features of this region made its security system unique.

⁵ Chowdhury, Iftekhar Ahmed; Bangladesh-China: An Emerging Equation in Asian Diplomatic Calculations; ISAS Working Paper; No. 105; March 31, 2010

⁶ Xing, Qu; Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Priorities and Challenges and issues of Bangladesh-China Relations: available at < <http://www.mofa.gov.bd/Statement/PRDetails.php?PRid=75> >; last visited at 07.02.15

China's economic purpose in the Bay of Bengal is mainly twofold. One is its sea-route, the String of Pearls, and the other is to encounter India strategically.⁷ Analysts say the risk of conflict over land and sea boundaries there is low, as it has been resolved through peaceful means. Global powers are concerned about the economic and strategic potential of the region. They are investing heavily in research, extraction of natural resources and militarization of the region.

Global goals of sustainability, such as those expressed in Agenda 2030, are being challenged by the climate crisis and increasing competition over natural resources. Geopolitical connotations may influence how actors calculate risk.

Bangladesh's government has taken a cautious stance toward China despite the fact that the two countries have close ties. This is because Bangladesh understands that without the help of another country, development is impossible.

1.3 Rationale

There is no question that China is essential to Bangladesh's economic growth. Therefore, the issues of Sino-Bangladesh relations must be conveyed to bring more investments and decrease the huge trade gap. This study highlighted the existing problems and prospects of bilateral relations in terms of different issues like Rohingya repatriation, Maritime Silk Route, etc. Although many studies have been conducted on this topic, none have brought attention to the problems with foreign policy in relation to development issues as this one has. This study identified the reality of international politics in different spheres of their lives that can assist the government in formulating policy to develop more vibrant relations.⁸ The study will be helpful to the decision-maker in determining the best course

⁷ Chowdhury, Iftekhar Ahmed, (2016). 'China and Bangladesh: New Strategic Partners', ISAS Working Paper, No. 249, 14 December

⁸ Islam, M. S. (2012), China- Bangladesh Economic Cooperation: Focus on Kunming – Chittagong, Institute of Governance Studies (IGS), BRAC University, Dhaka, Presented at the 2nd RIIO International Conference on Development of China and Indian Ocean Economics, 29-30 November, Kunming: China.

of action for developing the Sino-Bangladesh issue and understanding the requirements for its resolution. The study will also benefit diplomats and policymakers because they will be able to recognize their priorities, and at the very least, solve them on an individual basis.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to contribute to an understanding of the current Sino-Bangladesh relationship and to explore the new dimension of Sino-Bangladesh foreign relationship. The study proceeds with the following objectives –

1. To explore the new empirical sights into political drivers in the further development of the Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relation.
2. To examine international relations and geopolitical theories like Realism, Mahan's Sea Power.
3. To understand the opportunities of Look East Policy.
4. To review Bangladesh-China economic diplomacy
5. To analyze the current posture of Bangladesh-China defense relationship.
6. To identify the existing problems of bilateral relations
7. To determine a sustainable agenda with regard to strengthening strategic relations.

1.5 Research Questions

To purpose the above research objectives, the subsequent research questions have been formulated in order to guide this study:

1. Why has Bangladesh emerged as a strategic point of geo-politics?
2. Can Bangladesh play the role of a beneficiary and mark it fruitfully to attain expected economic development?
3. Will China be able to play Look East Policy and reduce the obsession with the West like the USA?
4. Does the Covid pandemic issue affect the present regional order of South Asia enhancing China's diplomacy?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study has been guided strictly based on its objectives. All the issues of Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations were not observed, only the issues related to the study have been identified. It addressed issues like the Rohingya Issue, BRI project, Maritime Silk Road, trade deficit, Indo-Pacific strategy etc. Bangladesh needs more and more investments to boost up its economy and to accelerate its economic diplomacy achieving the foreign policy objectives. Look east policy of Bangladesh and look south policy of China meet up horizontally for their own interests respectively.⁹ Besides, China will continue its offensive strategy to maintain hegemonic power among Asian countries. Bangladesh is bridging the channels of China's strategy and became one of the main players in the international political game. In short, the issues derived from the objectives and research questions were conveyed carefully in this study.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This present work is an endeavor to present a comprehensive outlook of the critical role of South Asian geopolitics. In comparison with other regions of the world that are contested, the region is relatively important as of now. The geo-strategic importance of South Asia surrounded by the Bay of Bengal and its power struggle opened the opportunities and developmental aspects for a win-win situation.¹⁰ However, China will continue its hardline with India, Taiwan, and the East China Sea to maintain its regional power and utilize its ambition to be number one superpower. Besides, it will try to expand trade and investment in neighbouring countries to compensate for the loss of western markets in recent years due to the Covid pandemic situation. China's economy is badly affected by Covid pandemic in recent years and GDP growth has been falling out. Under these circumstances, Bangladesh can take full advantages to utilize its economic diplomacy.

⁹ Rashid, Harunur (2006) "Bangladesh's Look East Policy," The Daily Star, February 19, 2006.

¹⁰ Mannan Abdul Md, (2018). Bangladesh-China Relations: Mapping Geopolitical and Security Interests, The East Asia Study Center (EASC), September, 2018

Recent Chinese statements have emphasized its ambitions surrounding the Arctic. The Polar Silk Route, also known as the Northern Sea Passage, is an important trade route for China. Furthermore, Beijing has negotiated for a place in the Arctic Council because of its ambition to take center stage in NATO-Russia disputes.¹¹

1.8 Ethical Issues

Now-a-days ethical issues of the study are getting more and more important in the field of research. Considering this reality the researcher was very careful about the ethical side of the study. All kinds of ethics were tried to be followed while conducting this study. The more important issues are discussed below:

- The researcher was very honest while conducting the research in terms of collection and analysis of data. All primary data were collected by the researcher from first hand interviews in the field. After that, data were analyzed sensibly and honestly. All types of manipulation and fabrication were avoided strictly while entering and analyzing the data.
- In this paper, a huge amount of secondary data has been used but with proper reference both in-text and the reference section at the end of the paper. The sentences were tried to be paraphrased properly in order to minimize the similarity rate. The works of others were recognized with APA style of representing. With the goal of being open and honest with the respondents, the researcher introduced herself to them at the start of data collection.
- The researcher assured the respondents that, the name and recognition of them will be kept in confidence and they will not be harmed by any means because of this research.
- In this exploration, all the repliers were completely informed about the purpose and

¹¹ Goldstein, A. (2005). *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

anticipated benefits of the exploration. Before collecting information from the respondents, a formal informed consent form written in Bengali was given to all the respondents. It was difficult for the respondents of this research to understand the aim, output and other aspects of the research. However, maximum efforts were given by the researcher to make them understand the aim and output of the study. The respondents were also assured about the fact that the information collected from them will only be used for academic purposes.¹²

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced some unavoidable problems while conducting the research that can affect the result of the study. The factors that can limit the result of the study are as follows:

- The changing pattern of Sino-Bangladesh relations was the major limitation of this study. It takes a long period of time to conduct good quality research. But the researcher tried her level best to maintain the quality of the research within this period of time.
- Lack of secondary materials was another limitation of this study. There were a huge number of papers but not totally fit for this particular study. It was very time consuming and tough work to do a fruitful literature review for this study.
- The sample size of the study was 50. If the sample size were larger it could give better results and the generalization could be more appropriate.

¹² Kothari, C.R. (2019) Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. 4th Edition, New Age International Publishers, New Delhi. page-20-21

1.9 Method of the Study

The study is interdisciplinary in its inherent features. The historical and analytical methods are accompanied with this study. The historical method aims to concentrate on and examine historical circumstances, events, and phenomena that have been given political significance in the context of the interpretations and justifications provided by historians, authors, journalists, etc. In conducting this study, the historical methods of analyzing various important documents and official records have been followed. Both qualitative and quantitative study are survey oriented. Descriptive statistics has been presented in the quantitative analysis section and content analysis has been presented in the qualitative study. The qualitative survey research based on purposive sampling and the quantitative survey research based on simple random sampling which formulated the effective results of the study.¹³ Moreover in order to fulfill the highlighted objectives, the methodological framework is divided into three phases.

Pre field study - In this stage primary and secondary data has been collected. Journals, publications, personal archives, newspaper archives, photographs are collected from government and non-government offices. In conducting this study, I have to collect and utilize various primary sources, such as:

1. Speeches and statements by the Prime Ministers, External Affairs/Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers, Commerce and Industry/ International Trade and Industry Ministers of both countries;
2. Annual Reports and activities of International Organizations like IMF, World Bank, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry;
3. International Debates, Seminars, Conferences;

¹³ Kothari, C.R. (2019) Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. 4th Edition, New Age International Publishers, New Delhi. page-60-62

4. Official Declarations at the Summits and Conferences, agreements, joint statements;
5. Documents and Statements of these organizations;
6. Relevant UN Documents.

In addition to these primary sources, some secondary materials, such as, relevant books, academic journals, periodicals and newspapers have been utilized in this study. Apart from these sources, some official websites have been accessed for collecting relevant materials. The collected data has been reviewed. A structured questionnaire and schedule has been prepared.¹⁴

In Field study - In this stage, questionnaire survey and schedule survey both have been conducted through online and offline mode. In order to meet the objectives of the study, the interview method is quite meaningful. Government officials of the concerned department and other important personalities of both countries have been interviewed.

Post field study - in this stage data analysis has taken place. The data analysis and interpretation have been made on the basis of objective parameters. All the collected data have been analyzed to meet the objectives of the study.

¹⁴ Kothari, C.R. (2019) Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. 4th Edition, New Age International Publishers, New Delhi. page-97-100

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this study, the security issues of Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations have been highlighted as the key component. The study is based on the review of literature like the historical background of making foreign policy, reflection of the several opinions by the Director of the founder and president of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Based on these theme; a number of books, articles, journals have been reviewed. Few of these are summarized below:

The authors of **New Perspectives on China's Relations with the World National, Transnational, and International**, Daniel Johanson, JIE Li, and Tsunghan Wu, examine China's significant contribution to and influence on the global stage. With rising Chinese power, it is more crucial than ever to comprehend this evolution. Opportunities for more specialized research are created by emerging trends and themes in Chinese foreign policy as well as by fresh perspectives on the body of existing literature. The book is divided into three sections: National, which discusses problems in China and its surroundings; Transnational, which examines how ideas and people affect power; and International, which looks at China's relations with other nations and regions. A wide range of fresh viewpoints on China's interactions and activities around the world are summarized in this book.¹⁵

¹⁵ Johanson, Daniel & Li, Jie & Wu, Tsunghan. (2019). *New Perspectives on China's Relations with the World National, Transnational and International*. Available from <https://www.e-ir.info/publication/new-perspectives-on-chinas-relations-with-the-world-national-transnational-and-international/> [accessed on 20 January, 2022]

Amardeep Athwal in his **China–India Relations: Contemporary dynamics** examines the dynamic relations between China and India. The author has brought up issues like energy demand and worry, economic growth, and maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. Currently, the relationship between China and India is undergoing a metamorphosis. He applied ‘soft’ realism and the theories of neo-liberalism explaining the bilateral relation of China and India.¹⁶

Sumanth Samsani (2021) in his article **China–Bangladesh strategic linkages** highlighted the strategic partnership of China-Bangladesh relation including trade, defence etc. He stated that though China’s hostility during Bangladesh’s independence was questionable, it slowly turned into friendship. The gradual upgradation of relationships in recent years is quite remarkable in the energy, defence and trade sectors. China became the largest investor and arms supplier nowadays.¹⁷

Bangladesh and China: A Review of 35-Year Relations by Tareque Shamsur Rahman and Mohammad Jasim Uddin aims to review the 35 years of relations between the two countries. China, a crucial development partner, is currently Bangladesh's biggest importer. China and Bangladesh have close defense ties. Bangladesh and China have signed many bilateral agreements on a variety of socio-economic topics. Although Bangladesh's political relations with China are relatively stable, it suffers from a huge trade deficit with that country. Trade and commerce are two key areas where the two nations cooperate. Additionally, there are potential areas for cooperation in the management of water resources, renewable energy, connectivity, foreign direct investment

¹⁶ Torri, Davide. (2010). Amardeep Athwal, China-India Relations. Contemporary Dynamics (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), xv + 159 pp. South Asia Research. 30. 301303.10.1177/026272801003000306

¹⁷ Samsani, Sumanth. (2021). China–Bangladesh strategic linkages. Observer Research Foundation. Available from: <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/china-bangladesh-strategic-linkages/> [accessed 11 August, 2022]

(FDI), maritime security, and port capacity development in Bangladesh. They acknowledged that the BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar) idea could have significant positive effects for reducing tensions and also serve as an example of how to entice China into a cooperative relationship with other Asian nations.¹⁸

In Bangladesh-China Relations: Mapping Geopolitical and Security Interests, Md. Abdul Mannan discusses the goal of examining the geopolitical and security interests of China and Bangladesh in their bilateral relations. He has gained insightful knowledge by completing the task. This fact helps to explain the recent increase in their bilateral interactions. Both Bangladesh and China weigh heavily in each other's geopolitical calculations and security interests.¹⁹

M Jashim Uddin, and Mahbubur Rashid Bhuiyan in their **Sino-Bangladesh Relations: An Appraisal** argues that China and Bangladesh should cooperate in order to reduce the existing trade gap. Furthermore, Bangladesh shouldn't prioritize its friendly ties with India over its ties with China.²⁰

¹⁸ Rahman, Tareque Shamsur & Uddin, Mohammad Jasim. (2011). Bangladesh and China: A Review of 35-Year Relations. *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 15, Nos. 1 & 2, June & December 2011. Page-49-51. Available from: <https://www.biliabd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Tareque-Shamsur-R-and-M-Jasim-Uddin.pdf> [Accessed on 11 June 2021]

¹⁹ Mannan Abdul Md, (2018). *Bangladesh-China Relations: Mapping Geopolitical and Security Interests*, The East Asia Study Center (EASC), September, 2018

²⁰ Uddin M. Jashim and Mahbubur Rashid Bhuiyan (2011) "Sino-Bangladesh Relations: An Appraisal," *BIISS Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 1, January 2011, pp. 1-24. *IJSSHR*, Volume 04 Issue 04 April 2021 www.ijsshr.in Page 611

Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury in his **Bangladesh-China: An Emerging Equation in Asian Diplomatic Calculations** examines the evolution of Bangladesh-China relations as a replacement considering Asian diplomatic calculations. He has observed that it is the outcome of China's excellent pattern of policy, which involves its pursuit of an ally within the South Asian region. In contrast to the Sino-Pak strategic relationship, the Sino-Bangla amity is not intended to serve as a regular "balance of power" counterpoise to India, as he has acknowledged. Instead, Bangladesh in this instance could be seen as a bridge linking China with India, the other major power in Asia that is on the rise.²¹

²¹ Chowdhury, Iftexhar Ahmed, (2010). 'Bangladesh-China: An Emerging Equation in Asian Diplomatic Calculations', ISAS Working Paper, No. 105, Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, 31 March

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Theory of Realism

Realism as well as political realism stresses the competitive and conflictual sides of international politics. It's considered as the most influential academy of study in International Relations. The core of realist theory is the political use of state power, also known as power politics. States are unified rational actors driven by a desire for dominance.²² In the first attempt, Thucydides introduced classical political realism. In a very realistic way, Nicollo Machiavelli attempted to respond to the question "what ought to be." Machiavellism is a doctrine that applies political realism in a radical way to both domestic and foreign affairs. Thomas Hobbes's realism is the core of global realism. Following the First World War, twentieth-century realism emerged as a reaction to the idealist viewpoint. Hans J. Morgenthau (1904-1980) is quite prominent for developing realism into a comprehensive international relations theory. He transformed realism into an art form that can be used to formulate effective foreign policy as well as a theory of world politics. He included the basis of realism into six principles in the second edition of "Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (1948)".²³

Morgenthau's Realist Theory has six principles:

1. Politics is governed by objective laws which have roots in human nature.
2. Facts of human nature.
3. National interest defined in terms of national power.

²² Glaser, C. L. (2013). Realism. in Collins, A., (ed.) Contemporary Security Studies, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 13-27.

²³ Padelford, N. J. (1949). [Review of Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace., by H. J. Morgenthau]. Political Science Quarterly, 64(2), 290–292. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2144235>

4. Interest is always dynamic.
5. Abstract moral principles cannot be applied to politics.
6. Prudence as the guide.

The idea of power or "interest defined in terms of power" is the cornerstone of Morgenthau's realist argument. He said that realism is founded on objective laws that have their roots in human nature in the first principle. The alternative principle establishes the independence of politics and permits a consideration of various motives in the analysis of foreign policy. According to his explanation of the third principle, interest—which he defined as power—is a universally valid category and a crucial component of politics that is influenced by the political and cultural context. The connection between realism and ethics was the subject of the fourth principle. The fifth principle outlined universal moral standards that, in their abstract, all-encompassing formulation, cannot be applied to the conduct of states. He argued that prudence is a prerequisite for political morality and must be combined with these principles. Despite the criticisms, realism is the most popular theory used to explain the nature of international relations. Since it offers a more realistic and practical approach and provides a thorough description and explanation of important international events, it aids in the prediction of human nature and behavior.²⁴

3.2 Theory of Ideological Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci is the exponent of the conception of Hegemony. According to Aidi and Yechouti (2017), Gramsci is regarded as one of the most significant twentieth-century Marxist thinkers. The ability or authority one social group has over another is known as ascendance. This can be related to differences between and among social classes within a country or to the "asymmetrical interdependence" of political, financial, and artistic relations between and among nations. In the context of power-structured relationships,

²⁴ Spindler, M., (eds.) *Theories of International Relations*, Routledge: London. Page- 101

ascendance is "dominance and submission."²⁵

The traditional Marxist theory emphasizes economic status as the best indicator of social differences. Economic disparities still support and contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities in industrialized societies today, more than a century after Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published their treatises on capitalism's exploitation of the working class. The Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci, who is credited with coining the term ascendance, expanded the materialist Marxist thesis into the realm of testament. Gramsci stressed society's "super structure," its testament-producing institutions, in conflicts over meaning and power, troubled by his nation's also fascist government. Gramsci's theory of ideological ascendance states that ruling elites use mass media as a tool to "immortalize their power, wealth, and status by depleting their own gospel, culture, and morality."²⁶ The mass media has a special ability to "introduce rudiments into individual knowledge that would not otherwise appear there, but won't be rejected by knowledge because they are so widely participated in the artistic community." According to Stuart Hall, ascendance is an "architecture of all contending delineations of reality within the dominant class's range bringing all druthers within their midairs of study," rather than a direct stimulation of study or action. In order to maintain the dominance of those in power, the dominant class establishes the internal and structural boundaries within which inferior classes must live. The dominant class establishes the structural and mental boundaries within which subordinate classes "live" and "make sense of" their subordination in order to maintain the dominance of those in power. Countries or groups of countries are constantly competing in

²⁵ Aidi, A. El, & Yechouti, D. Y. (2017). Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony in Edward Said's Orientalism. *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 6(5), 2278–9529. Retrieved from www.galaxyimrj.com

²⁶ Aidi, A. El, & Yechouti, D. Y. (2017). Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony in Edward Said's Orientalism. *Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 6(5), 2278–9529. Retrieved from www.galaxyimrj.com

world politics in an effort to seize or hold onto power. This power manifests in the form of dominance in the military, wealth, influence in politics, and cultural superiority.

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, when the United States of America emerged as the world's undeniable superpower, the idea of hegemony underwent a change. This power defined hegemony in a new light. America in the 90s influenced the world culturally, politically and economically. It became very relevant in developing diplomatic relations with major and minor countries of the world, this helped USA to build alliances in the international forums. The manner of social dominance is now even more complex than it was before due to technological advancements in the 20th century.²⁷ In the modern world, social class differences are not solely or primarily influenced by economic factors. The exercise of social power today heavily relies on ideological influence.

The one emerging power in the present time has been China. Its massive economic expansion has paved its way to trade relations with many countries. If we observe closely, we would also notice that China is involved with many countries in their internal matters and also is a part of many international disputes. Also, just like the USA in the 90s, China is expanding its soft power diplomacy like a web all over the world and especially over South and South-East Asia.²⁸ This has become a challenge for India as Sino-India relations are not in the best of terms. There are disputes regarding territory and border, China's support to Pakistan, alliances with Bangladesh and alleged gas-lighting territorial disputes between Nepal and India.²⁹

²⁷ Walt, S. M. (1987). *The Origins of Alliances*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

²⁸ Wang, Q. K. (1998). In Search of Stability and Multipolarity: China's Changing Policy towards Southeast Asia after the Cold War *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 6(2), pp. 57-78

²⁹ Williams, P. D., ed. (2008). *Security Studies: An Introduction*, London: Routledge. Xuetong, Y. (1993). China's Security after the Cold War. *Contemporary International Relations*, 3(5).

Gramsci placed a strong emphasis on the idea of ideology and described the material sphere as a structure connected to a superstructure of ideas.

Economic conditions are very important in a man's life because wealth (prosperity) almost entirely determines a man's existence. Living conditions impact how we interact with others and the wider world. The terms and conditions of the nation's economic structure are decided by intellectuals. They choose who will be the peers, helpers, and inferiors in the economic hierarchy. They establish social policy and even choose which groups in society will actually benefit from it and which will not. Additionally, they set the rules and regulations under which the nation's businesses and industries will operate. Gramsci has correctly drawn our attention to the dominant economic function of the ruling group, which depends on the agreement of the groups that are subject to its hegemony. Additionally, he stated emphatically that the use of force is directed at opposing groups and not confederates.

As a result, everything proceeds through the testament, which was created by intellectuals. Finally, the best understanding of the intellectuals' covert power and how they use hegemony as a tool to rule a nation comes from Antonio Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony.

3.3 Theory of Sea Power and String of Pearls

The Mahanian model of naval strategy can be applied to Bangladesh, as it has the Bay of Bengal in the northern part of the Indian Ocean and can be used as connecting routes to the landlocked countries as well as provinces of both India and China.³⁰ The Indo-Pacific strategy is lucrative now-a-days for its own geo-political importance. With immense support of USA, Canada inaugurated the term “Indo-Pacific Strategy” describing India as a crucial partner and China as a troublesome country in the arena of international politics. Bangladesh’s coastal regions are potential zones for China’s overwhelming strategy. For an example, upgradation of Chittagong port and the construction of Sonadia deep seaport were the major concentration of China which had the perfect location in the Indian Ocean as India and USA both have equal presence at the same region. The equation is quite clear according to the theory of sea power of Alfred Mahan. In the early of 2022, USA declared their Indo-Pacific strategy to foster their economic ties as well as to build digital connectivity. China and India both neighbours are competing each other to pursue their goals to be dominant regional power. To encounter India in this South Asian region, China already motivated other small states like Nepal, Sri Lanka and their ally Pakistan including the connecting ground of Bangladesh. According to Scott, China and Bangladesh almost touched each other but separated by Siliguri Corridor, the narrow chicken neck where India has delicate presence of its Seven Sisters, northeastern region. China is hardly trying to apply its witty strategy to separate this region for its own ambitious purpose. Mahan concentrated his theory to expand USA naval zones whereas China followed the same termed as String of Pearls combining Gwadar naval base and surveillance, Chittagong port, Hambantota deep sea port, Kyaukpyu port, transportation corridor, Haian island airfield and port, woody island airfield, South China Sea oil drilling zone.³¹ Though String

³⁰ Holmes, J. R. and Yoshihara, T. (2005). The Influence of Mahan upon China’s Maritime Strategy. *Comparative Strategy*, 24(1), pp. 25-31.

³¹ Holmes, J. R. and Yoshihara, T. (2008). China’s Naval Ambitions in the Indian Ocean. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31(3), pp. 367-394.

of Pearls concept still is a utopia but China's maritime Silk Road is closer to this concept so far. In 2005, the term String of Pearls was coined by Booz Allen as he wrote his report on "Energy Futures in Asia". His prediction is almost near to the reality as China is still planning its naval expansion. China's military, trade, political strategies are concentrated on this region like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Maldives. As Pakistan is strategically located only 240 long hauls far from Hormuz strait, Sri Lanka is significantly 6 navigational long hauls down from Indian Ocean east-west shipping route. This is why Chittagong port is the moot point of concentration to set up its link to Yunnan province in China via Myanmar. Myanmar is one of the major ally as it has great potential on carrying oil passage without passing through the waters of Malacca strait.³² Maldives for its plenty natural resources attracts both USA and China as USA is having a naval base of Diego Garcia which made its importance enormously. This strategy reflects the objective of strategic placement of significant zones known as pearls with each other in order to make a chain of hubs for predominantly serving of military, economic interests.³³

³² Lanteigne, M. (2008). China's Maritime Security and the "Malacca Dilemma". *Asian Security*, 4(2), pp. 143-161.

³³ Brewster, D. (2017). Silk Roads and Strings of Pearls: The Strategic Geography of China's New Pathways in the Indian Ocean. *Geopolitics*, 22(2), pp. 269-291.

Figure 3.1
String of Pearls



Source: China -Pakistan Economic Corridor: In the context of ‘String of Pearl Strategy’ - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Graphical-elaboration-of-String-of-Pearl-Theory_fig1_319851774 [accessed 03 June, 2022]

3.4 Theory of Foreign Policy

A nation's foreign policy is primarily based on its own national interests. From the realist perspective, the foreign policy of a country will go to the extent to preserve its national interest and this national interest can be attained by the accumulation of power. The foreign policy of a state is framed in such a way to attain the best possible interest. For the sheer survival of a state, it should not adhere to any 'greater good of humankind'.³⁴

3.5 Theory of International Integration

The concept of international integration refers to a burgeoning number of financial transactions, investments, and interests outside of a country's borders. Increasingly, nations become financially interdependent due to financial integration. As a result of international economic integration, national economic development has been positively affected as export markets were expanded, foreign direct investment was attracted, the business environment was improved, businesses and products were more competitive, and institutions were developed and perfected.

“International integration is a process by which countries remove the barriers to free trade and the free movement of people across national borders, with the goal of reducing the tensions that can lead to international conflict”.³⁵

³⁴ Dunne, Tim & Smith, Steve & Hadfield. Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases. (2016)Third Edition, ISBN: 9780198708902, Oxford University Press.

³⁵ Garza, D.C. INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION THEORIES Regional Scenarios. Available from: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/INTERNATIONAL-INTEGRATION-THEORIES-Regional-Garza/3fb677c696f6d3fbf7d044daf572874e7839fa13>

Chapter Four

Conceptual Framework

China has always been a significant country in the Asian region. China's political and economic setup was based on Mao's Communism, thus following the path of equality for all its citizens. But due to the rise of liberalisation and globalisation China was bound to reform its economic system. Thus China's economic reform in 1978 was aimed at a more market-oriented economy. This was initiated under the Four-modernisation policy which was supposed to aim at four main components- Agriculture, Industry, Science and Technology and Defence.³⁶ It was assumed that there were other reasons for this reform as well-

- The Cultural Revolution of 1966-76 was initially very unpopular. The Chinese Communist party and the government had to change its course in order to support the Chinese people. After Mao Zedong's death in 1976, there were unstable leaders for a while until Deng Xiaoping became the leader.
- The existing planning system which was adopted from the United Soviet was proving to be difficult to manage and economically inefficient.
- The neighbouring countries which followed a market-oriented economy were witnessing rapid growth. This made China rethink its policies.
- Due to the Central Planning of China, Chinese people had to suffer shortage of consumer goods, limited variety of goods, and lack of improvement in quality of products. These difficulties also raised chances of more and more black marketing of products.

³⁶ Chan, S. (2008). China, the U.S., and the Power-Transition Theory: A Critique London: Routledge.

This led to changes in the Chinese systems internally as well as externally, resulting in today's China which has one of the strongest economies in Asia and an efficient power competition of USA, Europe and other powers of the world.

With the introduction of the new economic reforms, China became a strong economical power. The trade relations also gave scope for better diplomatic relations. Due to this not only China became a rising economy but also a major power of the world. Chinese policy makers made it their aim to initiate more programmes that would be beneficial economically and politically. It is the world's second-largest economy behind the United States, with a GDP of \$17.73 trillion USD. The per capita income in China increased from just \$155 in 1978 to \$12,600 in 2021. The largest country in terms of foreign exchange reserves is China (\$3.117 trillion).³⁷

All of the continents are affected by China's economic might. China is the largest trading partner of the majority of nations and regional blocs, including the EU, ASEAN, and SAARC, in its immediate neighborhood to Europe and America. Its foreign investment is reshaping Africa's economic geography.³⁸

After the United States and Russia, it has the third-strongest military in the world. According to a number of reports, China will close the military capability gap with the United States over the next 20 years. When Portugal overtook the United Kingdom as the world's leading economic power in the 1890s, the US had military capabilities that were even worse than those of Portugal. Bangladesh's foreign and economic policies require significant revision in light of China's meteoric rise.

³⁷ World Bank, 2022. Available from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=CN>

³⁸ Konings, P. (2007). China and Africa: Building a Strategic Partnership. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 23(3), pp. 341-367.

China is regarded as Bangladesh's "all-weather friend" and vice-versa. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence include respecting and assisting one another in selecting development paths that are appropriate for national circumstances as well as respecting and assisting one another in addressing their primary concerns.³⁹ In keeping with this fundamental principle of friendship with all, Bangladesh has kept its policy above the world divide. As a result, within the light of the war of liberation, the eastward policy is extremely important within the policy strategies adopted by Bangladesh while maintaining good relations with its traditional allies. By upholding the fundamental features of diplomacy, Bangladesh has been ready to utilize the capabilities of both countries as per its own needs. The economic transformation of Bangladesh is now an example of development model as the LDC(Least Developed Country) has been granted as MIC(Middle Income Country) as well as developing country. Henceforth, it is quite desperate for upgrade of status in the coming days more likely by 2041 to be a developed country. Remodelling the structure, Bangladesh is now so desperate for more investment, technological advancement. Similarly, China with its neutral image in the South Asian countries, has been carrying the investment prescription for radical economic development on infrastructure. This expansion of the world partnership, while upholding the core spirit of policy, is undoubtedly an excellent diplomatic achievement for Bangladesh.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2010). China's Policy and Regulations on Arms Trade Available: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zzjg_663340/jks_665232/kjlc_665236/cgjkw_665248/t410766.shtml [Accessed April 28, 2018].

⁴⁰ Mannan, M. A. (2004). China's Policy toward South Asia: A Bangladesh Perspective. in Santhanam, K. and Kondapalli, S., (eds.) Asian Security and China 2000-2010, Delhi: Shipra Publications. pp. 301-08.

4.1 Historical Context of Sino-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations

In Bangladesh, the term "foreign relations" refers to the government's strategies for dealing with the outside world. The nation follows a moderate policy that heavily relies on international diplomacy, particularly at international organizations and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The People's Republic of China sided with Pakistan against the Bangladesh Forces during the Bangladesh Liberation War, which resulted in the founding of Bangladesh. In order to prevent Bangladesh's admission to the United Nations in 1972, China used its veto power as a permanent member of the UNSC. Bangladesh had sided with India, with whom both nations had tense relations with Pakistan and China.

The Liberation War in 1971 was fought by the people of Bangladesh in order to free themselves from poverty and advance economically so that the society would be egalitarian and there would be peace and harmony among people of different religions, cultures, and languages. World response to the liberation war is analyzed at dual levels- official and non-official. At the official level Pakistan's allies were predictably opposed to Bangladesh. Bangladesh was unsurprisingly opposed by Pakistan's allies on an official level. After gaining independence, Bangladesh was acknowledged by 97 nations and admitted to several international organizations. Its bid to be a member of the alliance, however, was prevented by a Chinese veto within the safety Council. China didn't support the liberation movement. Only China has continued to deny Bangladesh recognition among the major powers, but despite China's opposition, Bangladesh has expressed interest in establishing cordial ties with Beijing. Between late 1975 and early 1976, Ziaur Rahman, the president of Bangladesh at the time, established the bilateral ties between the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh's independence in 1971, when China opposed its founding, there have been no relations between the two countries. A new government was established in 1975 following the tragic assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which significantly changed the course of policy. The successive governments of Bangladesh distanced the nation from India and

consequently from Russia after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then President of Bangladesh, was assassinated on 1975.

On January 18, 1976, Pakistan and Bangladesh established diplomatic ties at the same time that Pakistan was warming up to China and its allies. In 1977, Ziaur Rahman, the president of Bangladesh at the time, traveled to China as a prospective candidate.⁴¹ The Indo-Soviet alliance was no longer the focus of policy; instead, China and Islamic nations were. China's shift to a more liberal approach to foreign policy occurred at the same time that Bangladesh cut ties with India and the USSR. Additionally, both countries grew closer on the global stage, gaining support in opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia. Bangladesh defense services were hugely neglected during the Mujib government from 1972 to 1975 as their policy was India centric and as a result of that the military even lacked the basic stuff to carry out its routine operations. But as soon as the political scenario of Bangladesh changed in 1975, the new government adopted a more proactive and independent policy. So, the defense budget saw a sharp increase and a current source of military hardware was found within the form of China. The Chinese government was able to supply military hardware that sounded reasonable and whose technological sophistication was suitable for a newly independent nation, with a destroyed economy from following India's socialism. Within the meantime, the country closed its door to Bangladesh. So, with its fragile economy, Bangladesh became totally addicted to China for reliable weapons. Since then, China has been Bangladesh's closest defense ally, also the military cooperation between the two nations has reached the tactical level, and there is much scope to elevate it to the strategic level for the nice thing about both the nations. The Chinese political and military leaders being cognizant of Bangladesh's unique central geographic location and seaports have given her strategic importance in South and South East Asian context fully supported it.

However, after the notable mark of year 1971, 1974, 1975 consecutively, from 1976 onwards the bilateral relations between two countries has grown consistently over

⁴¹ Kibria Ruksana (2011) "Bangladesh-China bilateral relations" The Daily Sun, October 5,

the last four decades. After the establishment of diplomatic relationship, the period saw the gradual shift to embrace market socialism. Then President Ziaur Rahman re-established free markets in Bangladesh and paid his first visit in 1977 as the first ever Head of the State on behalf of Bangladesh. Consequently, it has remarked as the foundation of bilateral relations as well. The construction of Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge in 1987 and inauguration of the bridge over Buriganga River connecting Dhaka and Munshiganj were remarkable events of friendship token. The radical infrastructure development of Bangladesh is the foremost result of both countries warm ties. However, Bangladesh as a democratic country was brought back in 1991 and democratic governments re-introduced their relations. Since then the democratic governments continued the bilateral relations in a more proactive and strategic manner. A postage stamp commemorating the 25th anniversary of the start of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China was released by the government of Bangladesh in October 2000. Following an official visit to Bangladesh by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in 2002, 2005 was designated as the "Bangladesh-China Friendship Year" by both nations.⁴² China was invited to join the SAARC as an observer at Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's cordial proposal.

4.2 Foreign Policy of Awami League Government

In this era of globalization, foreign policy plays an important role in the overall development of a country as it is an extension of domestic or national policy. As a matter of fact, foreign policy and domestic policy are the two sides of the same coin as foreign policy implements domestic policy. The foreign policy of the current Awami League government is mainly guided by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's principles. The pragmatic approach of Bangladesh's foreign policy objectives reached to its highest peak in 2016. After 2010, then alliance government started to negotiate with China in various

⁴² Haroon Habib (2005) "Bangladesh, China sign nine agreements," *The Hindu*, April 9, 2005. Kibria Ruksana (2006), "Strategic implications of Bangladesh-China relations," *The Daily Star*, February 19, 2006.

fields like agriculture, trade, investment, technology etc. China and Bangladesh reached an agreement on June 25, 2009 to work together to advance their pragmatic bilateral cooperation in the fields of politics, trade, agriculture, and culture. In 2013, the closer comprehensive partnership of cooperation between China and Bangladesh continued to grow with exchanges and cooperation deepened in various fields. Under the dynamic leadership of the Prime Minister, Bangladesh is prepared to maneuver ahead alongside China as a reliable ally within the days to return. Already, relations between the two countries have reached a novel height. In recent years, China has established itself as a serious development partner of Bangladesh. Proposed in 2013 by the Chinese President Xi Jinping, The Belt and Road Initiative has become a preferred platform for international cooperation, with very bright prospects during a world mired with protectionism and unilateralism. Bangladesh could be a proud member of this initiative and may play a major role within the advancement of this epic project as a signatory country. Joint Statement between China and Bangladesh from March 17–21, 2010 during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit. As exchanges and cooperation in a number of areas deepened in 2013, the closer, more comprehensive partnership of cooperation between China and Bangladesh continued to expand.⁴³

The visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to China and South Korea brought some palpable political and profitable results.⁴⁴ Road connectivity between Chittagong and Kunming through Myanmar was approved by China. During her speech at the lately held united Nation's General Assembly, Bangladesh showed the world leaders a new figure in dealing with the rising drift of settlers and deportees. Most of the leaders heaped praises on the PM for her realistic results to lessen the plights of the settlers and to advance their rights. Days back, the United Nation has accepted Bangladesh's offer of creating" Global

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2013).Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Establishing Strategic Partnership of Cooperation [online]. Available: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/bangladesh-china-jointstatement1299403> [Accessed October 16, 2016].

⁴⁴ Bhattacharjee, Joyeeta, (2019) "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit enhances China and Bangladesh relations", Observer Research Foundation, July 18, 2019

Compact on Migration" to ameliorate migration governance and cover deportees during extremities concentrating on Rohingya Issue.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in January 2010 has steered in a new dawn in the bilateral cooperation with India and opened up a new horizon of indigenous inter-connectivity with India, Nepal, and Bhutan. It also led to the mechanisms to resolve some of the longstanding bilateral issues with India. The relationship between the current government and the BJP government in India is yet another issue of great importance which is a major concern for China. It's extensively honored that the Awami League government has always been a good friend of the Congress party as it has literal significance. Therefore, numerous of us were of opinion that the BJP government would have a different policy for Bangladesh as compared to the Congress government. But, recent trends witnessed a different script when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh after a many months of taking pledge. He was veritably clear to his amenability to establish a strong tie with the Bangladesh government. There are several seminars of studies in assaying the Indo- Bangladesh relationship under the BJP government. One school of thought is of opinion that Indian Foreign Policy is the nation's policy which isn't a policy of an individual political party. Therefore, whoever is in power would consider the interest of the country than the interest of the party. The school of thought perceives that considering Bangladesh's geographical position, it would be veritably delicate for any Indian government to ignore the country. Whatever explanation might be, one thing is important that the strong stage of Bangladesh government has strengthened the base of this relationship. Bangladesh-India relationship, in reality, stands on a win-win situation, not on the patron-client relationship. One of the important issues is the sharing of water of Tista River with India.⁴⁵ The government should invest more time and resources to find mechanism of preserving the interest of the country while signing the Tista treaty. The issue of national security, which includes both the protection of human

⁴⁵ Karim, R. (2011). Transit Sinks in Teesta Waters [online]. The Daily Star. September 7. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-201405> [Accessed September 7, 2011].

welfare and the security of territorial integrity, is another challenge due to the competition of China and India.

4.3 Current State of Sino-Bangladesh Relationship

As the honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid her visit in China in 2014 and in 2016 Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Dhaka in exchange. It was started in 2010 by high level exchange visits of both countries and played a vital role in 2013. In August 2017, Rohingya crisis broke out in Myanmar and since then it has been the major area of focus of both countries' high level official visits. Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Bangladesh counterpart, Mohammad Abdul Hamid, exchanged congratulatory messages on the 45th anniversary (2020) of the establishment of the bilateral diplomatic relationship. China offered huge investments in various sectors of Bangladesh. The implementation of those investment projects is now fully swing. Among the continued projects are the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project, Karnafuli Tunnel, Dhaka-Chittagong Highway Four Lane Upgradation, Payra Port Development, Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Railway Project, installation Network Strengthening Project, Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway, Dhaka-Sylhet Four Lane Highway etc. Mutual cooperation isn't limited to the government level but is additionally at the private level.

Table 4.1

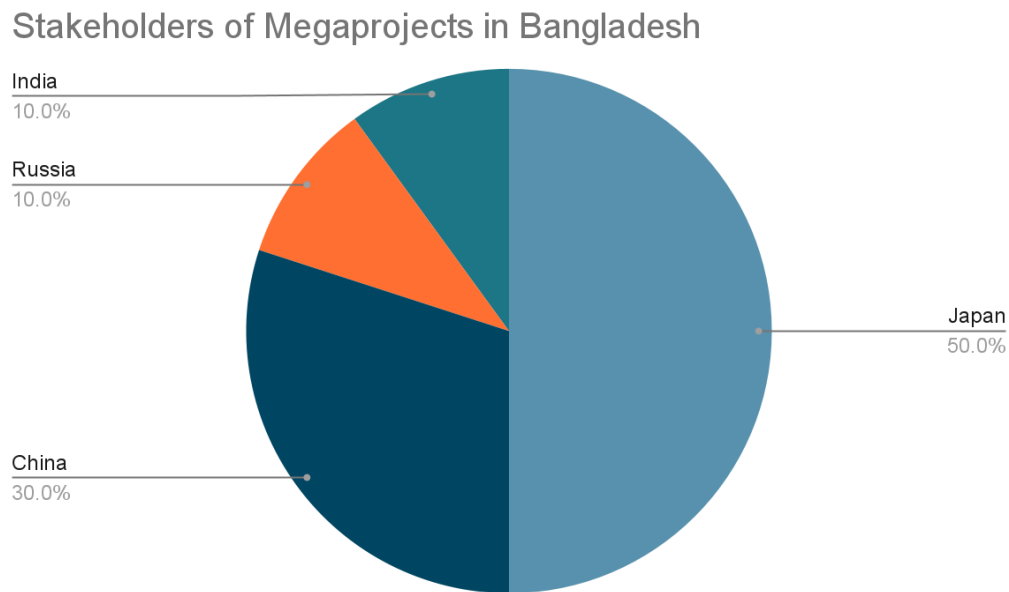
Status of some ongoing mega development projects in Bangladesh and key stakeholders

Domestic Financing	China	Japan	Russia	India
Padma Multipurpose Bridge 1. Budget: 3.6 billion BDT* 2. Longest bridge in Bangladesh (6.15 km)	1. Padma Rail Link i) Budget: 4.63 billion BDT	1. Matarbari Deep Sea Port Budget: 177.77 billion BDT	Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Budget: 1.13 trillion BDT	Rampal Coal-fired Power Station/ Maitree Super Thermal Power Project (2 X 660 MW) Budget: 160 billion Owner(s) National Thermal Power Corporation (India) and Bangladesh Power Development Board (Bangladesh)
	2. Dhaka Elevated Expressway i) Budget: 89.4 billion BDT	Dhaka Metro Rail Budget: 219.85 billion BDT	Capacity: 2.4GW Russian Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation	
	3. Karnaphuli Tunnel (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel) Budget: 103.74 billion BDT	Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Terminal 3 Budget: 213 billion BDT	Bangladesh's First Nuclear Power Plant	
		Dhaka to Chittagong Express Railway Budget: 967.52 billion BDT Bangabandhu Railway Bridge Project Budget: 1.67 billion BDT		

- BDT stands for Bangladesh Taka

Source: Developed by researcher with reference to various govt. websites and newspapers

Figure 4.1
Stakeholders of Megaprojects in Bangladesh



Source: Developed by researcher with reference to various govt. websites and newspapers

4.4 Exploring the new empirical sights into political drivers in the further development of the Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relation

For China's political-military realism, Bangladesh is an important player in South Asia. Bangladesh maintains relatively stable political relations with China. Indo-Pacific strategy emerged as a major political driver in the further development of both countries. Another important reason behind the extension of Sino-Bangladeshi tie-up is the consensus of the major political parties in Bangladesh on China. Holding back from publicly commenting on Bangladesh's internal affairs, China has skillfully created an impression of being non-partisan and non-interventionist under all given circumstances. Bangladesh's ports are important to China, as Bangladesh's ports are a lucrative alternative to reducing reliance on the Malacca Strait to maintain China's power. Due to Bangladesh's geographical proximity to China's Yunnan Province, its ports are easily accessible for energy. China sees Bangladesh only as a platform for achieving Beijing's strategic goals in the Indo-

Pacific region. China's interest in Bangladesh is to create a strategic position in South Asia to undermine Russia and the United States.⁴⁶ To fight against all the interests of India in the South Asian region China is desperate about to extract natural resources of Bangladesh. Re-establishing the 'Maritime Silk Road' by establishing an overland trade route, especially the Malacca and Hormuz Straits, by China Sea, which will help China connect South and Southeast Asia and expand cooperation with Southeast Asia on the peninsula. China sees Bangladesh as an alternative means of expanding relations with the Muslim world. Lastly, China sees Bangladesh as a market for its exports to maintain its huge trade surplus.

International Politics: The impact of international politics may have on Bangladesh, what policies and strategies Bangladesh should adopt how the Rohingya problem should be resolved, and how to balance both bilateral relations with India and China. Overall, the present strategic situation is in an evolving state, and this needs to observe closely. Because Bangladesh is one of the major counterparts of the Chinese BRI(Belt Road Initiative). The future of the Bay of Bengal depends on the relations between China, India and Japan. The political and strategic position of these countries and their partners is important. But the reality is that Asia is going to be the economic center of the 21st century. Not only Asia but also the East will now be the center of economic growth. In the current century, Asia will expand from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.⁴⁷ China, India, Japan, South Korea - these are the driving forces now. South Asia is also being associated with it. It will depend on the relations between China, India and Japan. Others led by India in South Asia were supposed to be involved in this process. Now all countries have to be involved in this process in their own way. In the context of India,

⁴⁶ Lai, H. and Lu, Y., eds. (2012). *China's Soft Power and International Relations*, London: Routledge.

⁴⁷ Jaishankar, D. (2016). *Indian Ocean Region: A Pivot for India's Growth* [online]. Available: <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/indian-ocean-region-a-pivot-forindias-growth/> [Accessed November 12, 2017].

during the time of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India had adopted a Look East policy. In this policy India thought of South Asia and as far as East Asia. China was and still is India's biggest trading partner. India's 'Look East' policy will never be complete without China. In order to increase bilateral or regional trade, various coordination is required between the allied countries. Without these, trade will not increase and the proceed have to be on the basis of network like BBIN or BCIM. The Chinese have built a network from Beijing to the English Channel. Freight cargo trains are plying this route. However, it is not possible for China to establish such direct contact with Bangladesh. In the middle, Northeast India moved. For that, India has to do it with confidence. However, Nepal can establish a direct communication system with China. China has already started construction of the road from Lasha to Kathmandu. That route can go as far as New Delhi and Mumbai. The business process needs to be coordinated to increase regional or bilateral trade. The same approach has to be adopted in customs. Information needs to be shared. India-China relations would play the biggest role in becoming the center of the East or Asia. To expand its global influence, China is funding various infrastructure projects through BRI.⁴⁸

Ukraine War: Ukraine-Russia war divided the world ironically. China and Russia are also playing a coordinated role in various fields. Russia is quite a strong power militarily, so the Western world alliance exerted pressure diplomatically, economically and commercially. The United States cannot trade with any country in exchange for dollars. The United States is pressing all other friendly countries, including Qatar, to provide more fuel to Europe, but China may block it. As a result, it creates energy problems in Europe. Russia accounts for 36% of the EU's total exports and 37% of Russia's total exports go to the European Union. Russia's relations with China, Iran and other countries are getting stronger day by day. As a result, if the reciprocal economic power can be built, the road to

⁴⁸ Aoyama, R. (2016). "One Belt, One Road": China's New Global Strategy. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 5(2), pp. 3-22.

economic pressure on Russia may gradually narrow. China's historic conflict with India, that is from the time of the Cold War. Now that conflict will be more obvious. But relations between the Soviets and China were strained then, and now Sino-Russian unity is slowly strengthening.

Turkey, on the one hand, has provided military equipment to Ukraine, and on the other, despite being a NATO member, has no intention of confronting Russia at the moment. India will also go through the crisis of balance that Turkey is going through. India needs to strike a balance between the three superpowers, the United States, Russia and China. Meanwhile, India has lost control of Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh are not in the circle of India as before. The Rohingya crisis is being protracted as China-India tug-of-war draws closer to Myanmar. While religious populism is at work in domestic politics, it is pushing India's neighbors away. China is taking advantage of this crisis. India has joined the quad known as the anti-China alliance. As a result, India has already joined the polarization of the Indo-Pacific alliance.⁴⁹ Due to its geographical location far from Europe, the Ukraine crisis will not endanger India for the time being, but future polarization could lead to India's isolation in the region. In this fear, India can also use political, military and economic power. In that case, even a minor "Ukraine crisis" could soon break out in the region. But the gradual addition of NATO and the European Union to the new member alliance has created a kind of panic in Putin's mind.

Indo-Pacific Strategy- India and China: The world's largest economies are located in the Indo-Pacific region namely, China, India, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, Thailand, Australia, Taiwan, Malaysia and Philippines. The United States is an Indo-Pacific power. The region, stretching from Pacific bank to the Indian Ocean, is home to further than half

⁴⁹ Albert, E. (2016). Competition in the Indian Ocean [online]. Available:<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/competition-indian-ocean> [Accessed November 11 2017].

of the world's people, nearly two-thirds of the world's frugality, and seven of the world's largest colors. In the times ahead, as the region drives as important as two-thirds of global profitable growth, its influence will only grow — as will its significance to the United States. The United States has long honored the Indo-Pacific as vital to its security and substance. The ties were forged two centuries ago, when Americans came to the region seeking marketable openings, and grew with the appearance of Asian emigrants to the United States.⁵⁰ The Second World War reminded the United States that it could only be secure if Asia was, too. And so in the post-war period, the United States solidified the ties with the region, through ironclad convention alliances with Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Philippines, and Thailand, laying the foundation of security that allowed indigenous republics to flourish. Those ties expanded as the United States supported the region's premier associations, particularly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); developed close trade and investment connections; and committed to uphold transnational law and morals, from mortal rights to freedom of navigation.

The passage of time has underlined the strategic necessity of the United States' harmonious part. At the end of the Cold War, the United States considered but rejected the idea of withdrawing military presence, understanding that the region held strategic value that would only grow in the 21st century. Since also, administrations of both political parties have participated a commitment to the region. The George W. Bush Administration understood Asia's growing significance and engaged nearly with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Japan, and India.

⁵⁰ Burgess, S. (2015). The U.S. Pivot to Asia and Renewal of the U.S.–India Strategic Partnership. *Comparative Strategy*, 34(4), pp. 367-379.

On the other hand, India and Bangladesh share a land boundary of 4,400 kilometers. This border is already extremely hot and volatile. The absence of consistency or continuity of direction of foreign policy is one of the stumbling blocks in smooth implementation of proactive and pragmatic policy in taking advantage of Bangladesh's geographic location, sandwiched between the two rising powers such as India and China as well as connecting South Asia with South East Asia. Asia had become a central dynamic to the global system, and the center of this engine was now China and India; this was a unique opportunity for Bangladesh. Although trade relations between China and Bangladesh had grown significantly, it was largely one sided e.g. in favor of China. As a consequence, the trade deficit was growing between China and Bangladesh. It was time that Bangladesh explored ways to accelerate its export to China.⁵¹ Bangladesh's foreign policy speaks of friendship towards all, malice to none. Maintaining this fundamental principle, the country must keep an equal strategic distance from these two competing positions. The national interests are above all and Bangladesh must act accordingly.

4.4.1 “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world.”- Sir Halford John Mackinder

As Halford John Mackinder predicted about the ruler of the world, China is gradually moving toward power ambition. According to international relations and geopolitical theories like Realism, Alfred Thayer Mahan's Sea Power, Antonio Gramsci's hegemony, China is a new hegemonic power in the world and realist in international politics. China is developing the Belt and Road Initiative, Maritime Silk Road which establish Mahan's sea power and Mackinder's theory. This idea of the Silk Road Economic Belt was announced in 2013 by Xi Jinping in Kazakhstan. From these perspectives, China's one belt, one road

⁵¹ Bangladesh – China Trade and Investment Corridor, (2015). Keystone Quarterly Review, Dhaka: Bangladesh, July September.

Bhattacharjee, Joyeeta, (2019) “Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit enhances China and Bangladesh relations”, Observer Research Foundation, July 18, 2019

initiative known as BRI project will start its journey from East Europe and cover Central Asia, West Asia and North Africa. Though the overland route of BRI excluded the EU member countries, but significantly represents the realistic feature of the above quotes by Mackinder.⁵² China is about to rule the heartland. The high ambition of commanding the world let China begin its own strategic partnership as well. To summarize a decision, the given map in the heartland theory and the pointed map of the BRI routes are quite similar.⁵³

The below map depicts the Silk Route and Maritime Route which covers East Europe, European Union members, Central Asia, South and SouthEast Asia, West Asia and North Africa.

Figure 4.2:China’s One Belt, One Road Initiative



Source: Mirza, Muhammad Nadeem & Abbas, Hussain & Nizamani, Muhammad. (2020). Evaluating China’s Soft Power Discourse: Assumptions, Strategies, and Objectives. Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-showing-Chinas-One-Belt-One-Road-Initiative-source-Bloomberg_fig2_351020394 [accessed 30 January, 2022]

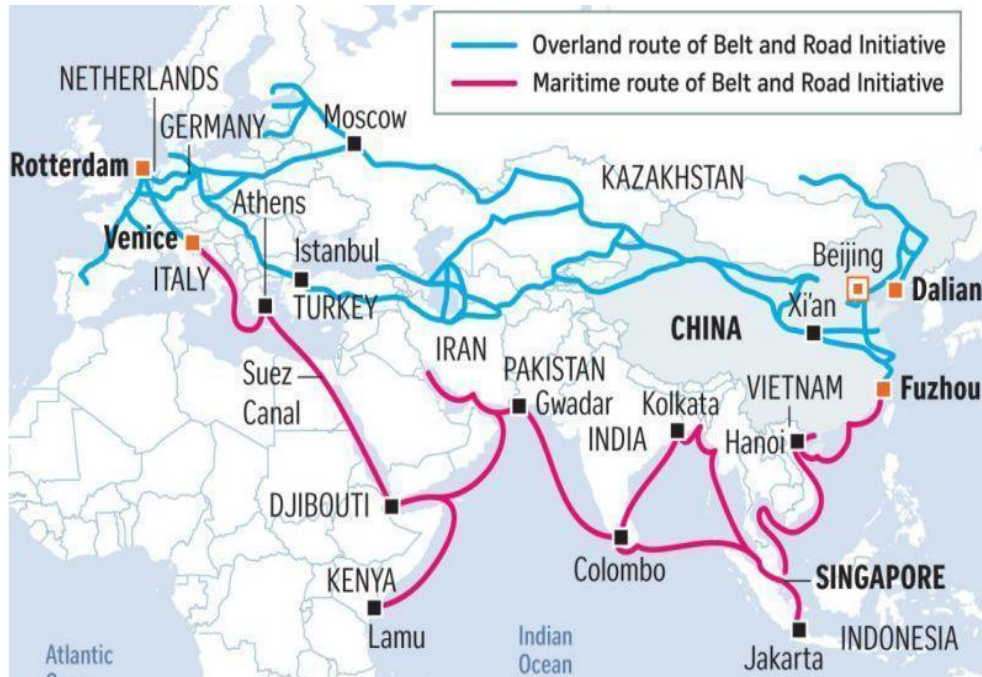
This map shows the countries that are covered under the OBOR.

⁵² Scott, Margaret, Revisiting the Pivot: The Influence of Heartland Theory in Great Power Politics (2008). Available from: https://www.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/CCAS/departments/PoliticalScience/MVJ/docs/The_Pivot_-_Alcenat_and_Scott.pdf

⁵³ Brewster, D. (2017). Silk Roads and Strings of Pearls: The Strategic Geography of China’s New Pathways in the Indian Ocean. *Geopolitics*, 22(2), pp. 269-291

Figure 4.3

Overland and Maritime Route of BRI



Source: Mirza, Muhammad Nadeem & Abbas, Hussain & Nizamani, Muhammad. (2020). Evaluating China's Soft Power Discourse: Assumptions, Strategies, and Objectives. Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-showing-Chinas-One-Belt-One-Road-Initiative-source-Bloomberg_fig2_351020394 [accessed 30 January, 2022]

4.4.2 Understanding the Opportunities of Look East Policy

Look East Policy is an important strategy in Bangladesh's foreign policy. This orientation largely refers to Bangladesh's diplomatic relations with the countries of East Asia and South and Southeast Asia. Countries such as Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are an important part of this foreign policy strategy.⁵⁴ However, Japan has been a central partner in Bangladesh's eastward foreign policy since the post-independence era. That is why the Dhaka-Tokyo relationship is one of the most important development partners and trade partners of Bangladesh. On the other hand, China, one of the world's leading economic powers, is also trying to warm up the Dhaka-Beijing relations as an important development partner of Bangladesh. In this context, the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina to two rival countries in East Asia, Japan and China was a special event.

⁵⁴ Kibria Ruksana (2011) "Bangladesh-China bilateral relations" The Daily Sun, October 5, 2011.

The recent visits of the Prime Minister to China and Japan, two of the major world trade leaders, have led to the expansion of the foreign policy towards the East. This expansion of the global partnership, while upholding the core spirit of foreign policy, is undoubtedly a great diplomatic achievement for Bangladesh. In keeping with this basic principle of friendship with all, Bangladesh has kept its foreign policy above the global divide. As a result, in the light of the war of liberation, the eastward policy is very important in the foreign policy strategies adopted by Bangladesh while maintaining good relations with its traditional allies. By upholding the basic features of diplomacy, Bangladesh has been able to utilize the capabilities of both countries as per its own needs. The effectiveness of this forward-looking foreign policy of Bangladesh in an adverse global, regional and national situation has become visible to all.⁵⁵

In this case, the Rohingya issue was an important agenda for Bangladesh in both the visits of the Prime Minister. The repatriation of a large number of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh, who were originally persecuted by Myanmar, is a very sensitive issue. That is why at the end of the Prime Minister's visit to China, two issues have become very important. 1. In the context of solving the Rohingya problem, II. Will this new reality of Dhaka-Beijing relations disrupt the general trend of Bangladesh's foreign policy by giving a warm welcome to the Prime Minister by China? In other words, will the relationship with Dhaka's traditional allies be damaged or not? China is Myanmar's closest friend in the international arena. With the unilateral support of Beijing for a long time, Myanmar has got rid of all the international troubles. That is why China's green signal is very important for the immediate solution of the Rohingya problem. We hope that the country will play its part in solving this problem to the best of its ability. If the matter is not confined to the statement only as part of diplomatic etiquette; That will be the great achievement of Bangladesh's eastward foreign policy. In order to reap the benefits of trade-oriented diplomatic relations in the changed reality, the Prime Minister and his entourage were very actively aware of the national interest during their visit to China. This reality of bilateral relations, of course, did not go unnoticed by the other parties. Therefore, the recent visit of

⁵⁵ Mannan Abdul Md, (2018). Bangladesh-China Relations: Mapping Geopolitical and Security Interests, The East Asia Study Center (EASC), September, 2018

the Prime Minister to China is being considered as a very surprising success. On the other hand, on the eve of his visit to Japan, the development agreement between Dhaka and Tokyo worth about 2.5 billion was very interesting. During these two visits, the leaders of both the countries highly praised Bangladesh. In particular, the warm welcome extended to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and his entourage in China is noteworthy here. Through this, Beijing has in fact expressed strong support for the current continuation of political stability in Bangladesh. Such political support from China is expected to affect Bangladesh's domestic politics as well. In this case, a clear change in China's policy on Bangladesh's internal affairs has blossomed.

Meanwhile, some more issues came up in the context of Bangladesh's eastward foreign policy. Among them is the development of Bangladesh's bilateral relations with the countries of the region around China and Japan. As a result, there is a huge potential for expansion of trade at the regional level. Bangladesh can get the benefits. In that case, the effectiveness of the eastward foreign policy will be more important. Bangladesh's eastward foreign policy began long ago. The main goal of the post-independence period was to bring the countries of the region closer to the diplomatic process through Bangabandhu's visit to Japan. Bangladesh was still trying to develop relations with China. But in response to the different polarization of world politics, Bangladesh did not get close to China that day. However, China has since been able to establish itself as a development partner of Bangladesh. In this reality, the recent visit of the Prime Minister to China and Japan will make the foreign policy of the East more dynamic. The door to connectivity and cooperation between South Asia and Southeast Asia was opened. To make it stronger, BCIM was formed, with China joining Bangladesh, India and Myanmar. Kolkata and Kunming were declared Twin Sister Cities in an effort to establish uninterrupted connectivity from Kolkata to Kunming, China, via Bangladesh, northeast India and Myanmar. It was announced to connect and expand regional cooperation in the field of TTE, i.e. Trade, Transport and Energy.⁵⁶ Bangladesh became the hub of BIMSTEC and BCIM. Myanmar became the gateway to South and Southeast Asia. But later, due to the

⁵⁶ Kabir, Shahriar (2017) Analysis of Bilateral Trade between Bangladesh and China, Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, Vol- 8, No- 16

conflict and distance between China and India and the indiscriminate genocide of 1.1 million Rohingya people in Bangladesh by the military ruler of Myanmar in 2016, the activities of BIMSTEC and BCIM came to a standstill.

BBIN: In 2015, the sub-regional alliance BBIN was formed with Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. It has made a lot of progress. However, the expected achievement was not achieved. Conflicts between the United States and China over the Asia-Pacific region are having an adverse effect on regional and sub-regional organizations. In order to achieve the goal of development by ensuring security, Bangladesh has to go through this complex, difficult and slippery path. In order to succeed in this path, Bangladesh has no choice but to stick to modern, science-minded, liberal democratic secular values.⁵⁷

4.4.3. Reviewing Bangladesh-China Economic Diplomacy

Economic diplomacy is promoted with economic policy of the government to increase trade, investment as well as the economic growth. Economic diplomacy, also known as economic statecraft, is the use of the government's economy to foster foreign policy objectives. However, Bangladesh's economic diplomacy has been considered in its foreign policy to export agriculture and farming skills etc. With a goal of becoming a developed nation by 2041, Bangladesh had previously set a goal of becoming a Middle Income Country (MIC) by 2021. In order to do this, the nation will concentrate on five aspects of economic diplomacy, such as boosting foreign investment, diversifying trade and exports, employing human resources profitably at home and abroad, and providing high-quality services and technology to the Bangladeshi diaspora.

⁵⁷ Chakma, Bhumitra, (1996). 'Bangladesh-China Relations: Determinants and Interlinkages', in Abul Kalam (ed.), Bangladesh: Internal Dynamics External Linkages, Dhaka: UPL

Table 4.2
Import - Export relationship between Bangladesh and China

Year	Export	Import
2012	314.4	6,092.13
2013	401.93	6,972.53
2014	691.67	7,846.10
2015	675.08	8,848.85
2016	716.12	10,028.79
2017	693.39	10,433.75
2018	540.3	13,144.05
2019	595.89	13,265.78
2020	445.77	10,862.60
2021	624.23	16,913.11
2022 Q1	146.66	4660.46
2022 Q2	136.55	5303.89

*US Dollars, Millions

Source: Developed by researcher with reference to various govt. websites and newspapers

Bangladesh is the largest economic partner of China. The economic ties are a key driver behind the flourishing of the bilateral relationship. China is the biggest trading partner of Bangladesh and is the foremost source of imports. In 2019, the trade between the two

countries was US\$18 billion and therefore the imports from China commanded the lion's share. The trade is heavily in favour of China.⁵⁸ Given the big disproportionality in trade, Bangladesh has been urging China to require measures to cut back the trade imbalance. In 2015, China granted duty-free access to three,095 Bangladeshi products to its markets. This declaration that granted 5,161 products is an addition to the prevailing facilities. Bangladesh has also been enjoying preferential tariff facilities as a member of the Asia Pacific Trade agreement, originally referred to as the Bangkok agreement signed in 1975, which was rechristened in its present name in 2005. China had instituted the duty-free quota privileges for the LDCs in 2010, and 24 countries got this benefit initially. In 2015, Bangladesh was partially given this facility.

Considering the deep bond between the two countries, such a privilege should be given to Bangladesh much earlier. Often people were astonished at the hesitation of China, the world's second-largest economy worth \$14 trillion, to grant Bangladesh zero-duty benefits to all or any of its products, a privilege granted by many countries much earlier. The EU is that the largest buyer of Bangladesh RMG exports. Similarly, next-door neighbour India has also given duty-free access to Bangladeshi products in 2011, apart from 25 narcotic substances. The country gives special emphasis to its relationship with China and India and also the government should be credited for maintaining a warm relationship with the two countries. Sharing of heat with the two major Asian countries has given Bangladesh dividend within the variety of generous development assistance from China and India. China has promised around US\$ 30 billion worth of monetary assistance to Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the largest recipient of India's total of US\$30 billion developmental assistance offered to countries globally.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Bhattacharjee, Joyeeta, (2019) "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit enhances China and Bangladesh relations", Observer Research Foundation, July 18, 2019

⁵⁹ Chowdhury, Iftekhar Ahmed, (2016). 'China and Bangladesh: New Strategic Partners', ISAS Working Paper, No. 249, 14 December

Figure 4.4: Ongoing Projects in different sectors

PROJECTS	COORDINATES	PROJECTS	COORDINATES
INDUSTRIES & SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES		TRANSPORT	
Z1	Shahjalal Fertiliser Factory B1	R1	Upgradation of Dhaka-Sylhet highway B1,B2
Z2	Mirsarai Economic Zone B2	R2	Construction of Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway B2
Z3	China Economic and Industrial Zone B3	R3	Construction of Marine Drive Expressway and Coastal Protection Works between Sitakund - Cox's Bazar B3
UTILITIES		RL1	Conversion of Meter Gauge (MG) railway track to Dual Gauge (DG) railway track in Akhaura - Sylhet section of Bangladesh Railway B1,B2
T1	Construction of Surface Water Treatment Plant A2	RL2	Construction of a Dual Gauge (DG) track parallel to the existing Meter Gauge (MG) line in Joydebpur-Mymensingh B1,B2
T2	Expansion and Strengthening of Power System Network under Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC) B2	RL3	Construction of Dual Gauge (DG) double rail line in Joydebpur - Ishardi section of Bangladesh Railway A2,B2
T3	Power Grid Strengthening Project under Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) B2	RL4	Construction of Padma Bridge Rail Link A2,B2
T4	Construction of Dasherbandi Sewage Treatment Plant B2	B1	6th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge (Mukterpur Bridge) B2
T5	Construction of Padma (Jalshadia) Water Treatment Plant B2	B2	7th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge (Kazirak Bridge) B2
COMMUNICATION		B3	8th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge B3
C1	National ICT Infra-Network for Bangladesh Government Phase-II (Info-Sarker 2) B2	B4	Construction of Multi-Lane Tunnel under the river Karnaphuli at Chittagong city B3
C2	National ICT Infra-Network for Bangladesh Government Phase-III (Info-Sarker 3) B2	ENERGY	
C3	Introduction of 3G and Expansion of 2.5G Network B2	E1	Gazania Coal Power Project B2
C4	Establishment of IV Tier National Data Centre B2	E2	Daudkandi Coal Power Project B2
C5	Modernization of Telecommunication Network for Digital Connectivity (MoTN) B2	E3	Khulna Coal Power Project A2
PORTS & AIRPORTS		E4	Payra Coal Power Project B3
P1	Expansion and Modernization of Mongla Port Facilities A3	E5	Mirsarai Coal Power Project B2
DP1	Construction of Inland Container Depot (ICD) near Dhirasram Railway Station B2	E6	Boalkhali Coal Power Project B3
OIL & GAS		E7	Banshkhali Coal Power Project B3
O1	Installation of Single Point Mooring (SPM) With Double Pipeline B3	RE1	Solar Park at Panchgarh A1
ACQUISITIONS		RE2	Solar Park at Tista Barage A1
A1	Acquisition of equity stake in Dhaka Stock Exchange by Shanghai Stock Exchange and Shenzhen Stock Exchange B2	RE3	Solar Park at Gaibandha A1
		RE4	Solar Park at Bagerhat A3
		MINING	
		M1	Extension of underground mining operations of Barakupuria Coal Mine A1

Thermal Energy	Mining	Oil & Gas	Bridge	Road	Railway	Sea Port	Dry Port
Power Transmission Upgradation	ICT infrastructure upgradation	Acquisition	Water & Waste Treatment	Industries & SEZs	Renewable Energy		

Source: Bhandari, Amit & Jindal Chandni. (2017). Bangladesh: Controlling Financial Infrastructure. Available from: <https://www.gatewayhouse.in/chinese-investments-in-bangladesh/>

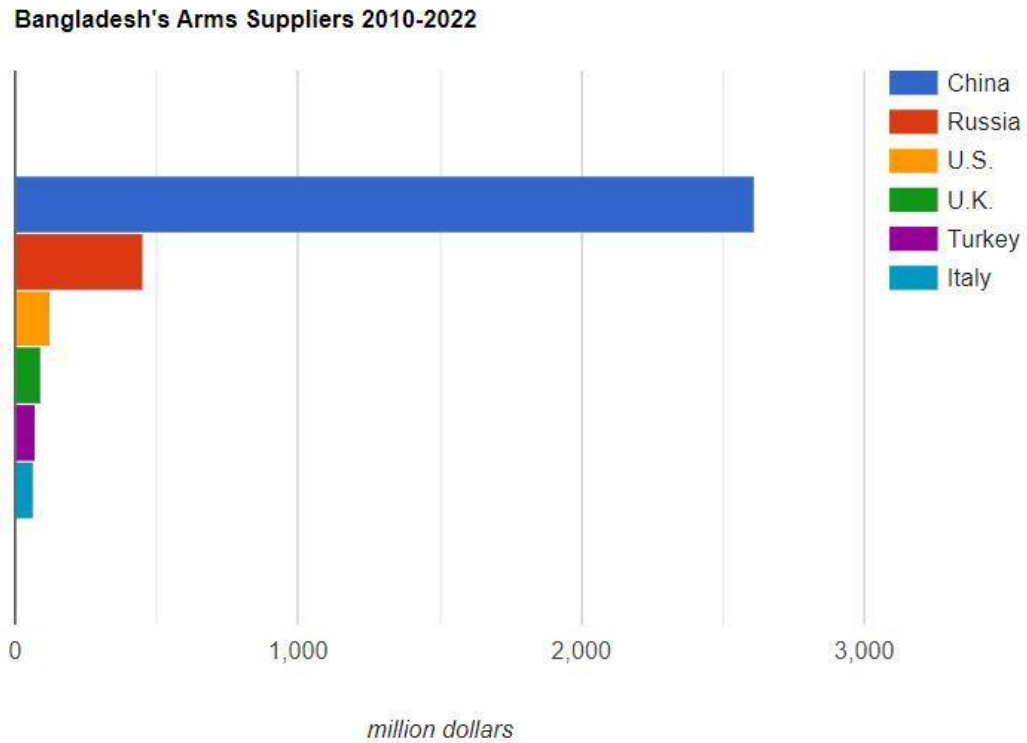
4.4.4 Reviewing Bangladesh-China Defense Relationship

Bangladesh-China defense cooperation is strong. China currently plays a task within the maintenance of Bangladesh's security that no other country does, it being the {most important the biggest} and most important provider of military hardware and training to the latter's defense force. They established diplomatic ties in 1976; it absolutely was defense ties that was a very important area of their relationship, which led to further expansion of ties. Defense cooperation is one in every of the many pillars of the link between Bangladesh and China. China is Bangladesh's second largest arms supplier and helps to create an oversized military base near the Bay of Bengal. China is preparing to line up a maintenance facility in Bangladesh for the guided missile system supplied in 2011. Bangladesh collected about 16% of all Chinese military exports from 2016 to 2020. In 2016, Bangladesh purchased two submarines from China at a price of three 203 million to reinforce its naval power.

Defense relations between the two countries are considered as a significant force in mutual relations. Besides, China provides training to Bangladesh Army officers. It is to be noted that after independence, the Bangladesh Army included deported officers of the Pakistan Army who were aware of Chinese weapons. Bangladesh Army prefers to obtain weapons from China. Bangladesh's reliance on Chinese weapons has made the military China's main supporter of defense relations. However, the installation of missiles and other Chinese military operations with Bangladesh, the psychological war against India by China. Beijing is sending a powerful signal to India that Bangladesh is now in Chinese orbit.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Raska, M. (2017). Strategic Contours of China's Arms Exports [online], Available: <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CO17165.pdf> [Accessed January 5, 2018].

Figure 4.5
Bangladesh's Arms Suppliers (2010-2022)



Source: Developed by researcher with reference to various govt. websites and newspapers

4.4.5 Determining a sustainable agenda with regard to strengthening strategic relations

While the sustainability of the country's project financing models and the economic viability of these mega development projects may raise cause for concern, their cumulative impact will be undeniable – ensuring better intra-country market access, improving trade logistics capabilities, diversifying energy sources, and closing gaps on public infrastructure requirements. The location of Bangladesh between South Asia and Southeast Asia, sustained economic growth, relatively higher political stability than before, cheap labor with a large market—cumulatively offer competitive opportunities in

investment for businesses and infrastructure development financiers.⁶¹ Bangladesh is consistently able to attract investments from its major development partners because of the country's rapid economic growth, ambitious development plans to upgrade infrastructure capabilities, a growing middle-class with steadily rising purchasing power, and a huge domestic market of around 165 million people. For instance, the February (2022) Chinese proposal for Chattogram Metro rail in return for a stake in developing a 'smart city' (located between Patenga and Mirsharai) immediately came after South Korea's completion of a pre-survey mission. China has proposed a US\$6 million grant in aid to set up metro rail in Chattogram. South Korea is also keen on funding soft loans for the Dhaka metro rail Line-4 construction at a marginal 0.1-0.5 percent interest rate. Besides, various new mega projects kicked off last year. According to the country's mid-term policy statement (2020-21 to 2022-23), Bangladesh is highly focused on transport and communication development, seen as prerequisites for its transition to becoming a more developed country. The construction work of the first subway in Dhaka, the MRT Line-1 and Line-5, Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway Project (DAEEP), Bangabandhu Rail Bridge over Jamuna River, Dhaka-Chittagong high-speed train, and Cox's Bazar Runway extension projects were all planned to start in 2021.⁶² All these upcoming projects offer lucrative opportunities for the country's development partners to gain mutual benefits. It has earned Bangladesh the reputation as a "hot spot for global investment" in South Asia. Moreover, Bangladesh has strived to keep a balance in seeking external funding support and providing tenders to contractors from multiple countries by prioritizing economic diplomacy above all else.

⁶¹ Datta Sreeradha (2008) "Bangladesh's Relations with China and India: A Comparative Study", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 32, Issue. 5. p. 770.

⁶² Mannan, M. A. (2004). *China's Policy toward South Asia: A Bangladesh Perspective*. in Santhanam, K. and Kondapalli, S., (eds.) *Asian Security and China 2000-2010*, Delhi: Shipra Publications. pp. 301-08.

The preferred sectors are:

- Trade and Investment;
- Reducing trade deficit;
- Economic cooperation;
- Investments from China;
- Cooperation in Agriculture;
- Cooperation in science and technology;
- Cooperation in Education including Scholarship Offer;
- Cooperation in water resources management;
- Cooperation in Tourism;
- Cooperation in Culture;
- Consular issues;
- Visa procedure.
- Bangladesh Consulate General in Kunming and other cities.
- Deep Sea Port;
- BCIM Economic Corridor;
- Defence cooperation;
- Regional and International Issues;
- Support for Bangladesh's Candidature to the UNSC;
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC);
- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO);
- BOAO Forum.
- Others (ARF, ACD, etc.)
- Emerging issues of mutual interests:
- Cooperation in the arena of environment and climate change,
- Maritime cooperation-Deep Sea Fishing, Oceanography, Ocean Economy.
- Replicating Chinese Success stories-Housing solution for urban and coastal areas,

ship building, ship breaking industry etc.

- Cooperation in managing natural disaster, primarily in urban setting.⁶³

Existing Problems:

The bottom line is: Bangladesh cannot afford to antagonize neither China nor India. Though both the countries are showing signs of specific interest in Bangladesh, in the process we should not be dragged into the delicate Sino-Indian matrix of relations. Again it is also true that Bangladesh, being a small regional neighbour of the two, simply cannot escape this pull. It may not be pragmatic either to do so since getting along well with India and China in a sub-regional grouping, so to say to become associated with the global growth engine, would certainly pay enormous economic dividends in the long run. We should remain involved to the extent that would serve our purpose without inviting neither country's wrath. It would require well-thought-out diplomatic maneuvering to leverage our strategic advantage for effectively playing our China card with India and India card with China. This is going to be one of our most testing foreign policy challenges in the 21st century.⁶⁴

Rohingya Issue: Myanmar's army to restore order by declaring a ceasefire to stem the flood of refugees. In the second stage, it was suggested that both Myanmar and Bangladesh should be encouraged to talk so as to find a feasible approach to settle the issue; the international community should play an active role as well. In the third stage, the international community agreed to help rebuilding the Rakhine state. The Chinese proposal needs to be followed through by Myanmar's army and civilian government, and Bangladesh to restore peace in the region. As Myanmar government would require billions of dollars to adequately resettle the returning refugees, the international community should

⁶³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2019). Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Establishing Strategic Partnership of Cooperation [online]. Available: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/bangladesh-china-jointstatement1299403> [Accessed October 16, 2022].

⁶⁴ Mannan, M. A. (2004). China's Policy toward South Asia: A Bangladesh Perspective. in Santhanam, K. and Kondapalli, S., (eds.) Asian Security and China 2000-2010, Delhi: Shipra Publications. pp. 301-08

generously contribute toward their rehabilitation. China's proposal is laudable, however, there is an apprehension as to whether the Myanmar army would stick to its side of the agreement or further encourage a fresh cycle of violence on the returning refugees. As China has steadfastly refused to condemn Myanmar's army for its brutality, Beijing's reaction should the army violate the ceasefire is uncertain. However, as China has a firm handle over Myanmar because of its economic support, Beijing could put pressure on the army to stop further atrocities.

BRI: The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina isn't only successful within the internal politics of the country but also successful in international diplomacy. The USA itself has officially acknowledged this. In recent years, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has made a serious splash in South Asian geopolitics. The countries are constantly worried about maintaining the balance of relations with India and China still as cashing in on the right utilization of BRI projects. The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a US company, considers Bangladesh to be the foremost successful.⁶⁵

QUAD: The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue widely known as the QUAD is mainly a strategic security dialogue between Australia, Japan, India and the United States. Though Bangladesh is not the counterpart of the dialogue but the possibility of joining QUAD gave birth to an incident. As Chinese Ambassador to Dhaka Li Jiming warned Bangladesh against joining the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the Quad. Joining this "club" would "substantially damage" Sino-Bangladesh relations, he stated. However, QUAD is completely an initiative of the USA-led with assistance of India seems to be a rivalry alliance against China-led strategic groups. Bangladesh is the largest economic partner of China. China could be a significant development partner of, and now the largest source

⁶⁵ Islam, M. S. (2012), China- Bangladesh Economic Cooperation: Focus on Kunming – Chittagong, Institute of Governance Studies (IGS), BRAC University, Dhaka, Presented at the 2nd RIIO International Conference on Development of China and Indian Ocean Economics, 29-30 November, Kunming: China.

Copernican of products for Bangladesh. Although Bangladesh maintains relatively stable political relations with China, Bangladesh suffers from a huge deficit vis-à-vis China. Trade and commerce is that the major area of cooperation between the two countries. If the thought of the BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) truly takes to the air, this 'quadrilateralism' could have enormous positive ramifications for lessening tensions and also function a model for other parts of Asia on a way to draw China into a collaborative relationship. Over the years, the two sides have signed a plethora of bilateral agreements that range from economic engagements, soft loans, social contacts, cultural exchanges, academic interactions, infrastructure development and military sales at 'friendship' prices. Top-level state visits, both by the ruling party and also the opposition leaders of Bangladesh to China have increased markedly. The cooperation on economic and military issues, culture and education, and science and technology has helped to forge ties between the two countries. On the contrary, China has emerged as the biggest source of products for Bangladesh in recent years. Except for that, it also has contributed much for the development of Bangladesh's infrastructure, having already funded the development of six 'Friendship Bridges'. There's considerable scope for China, a rustic country with an unlimited need for energy, to conduct oil and gas exploration in Bangladesh in a manner that will be profitable for both. It's already playing a very important role within the mining of coal within the northern part of the country, and has also offered Bangladesh assistance within the peaceful development of atomic energy. In fact, energy has become a key factor in shaping China's geopolitical and diplomatic strategy in parts of the globe with energy resources.⁶⁶ China has not only shown great interest about making investments in Bangladesh, but is additionally captivated with its investments in China, though Bangladesh is yet to create big strides during this matter.

⁶⁶ Hong Songmei, "China and Bangladesh: A time tested friendship", China Daily, 26 March 2009. Impacts in Africa and Latin America, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brahmaputra Dam: China is about to build a huge dam on the Brahmaputra, and it has raised concerns to the low-lying countries like India and Bangladesh. The Brahmaputra (called Yarlung Tsangpo in China) is one of the longest rivers around the world which is in the course in Medong county, Tibet region to harness hydropower. In 2010, China began building the construction of small dams and now plans to start a big project that could provide 300 billion kWh of renewable and zero carbon electricity annually.⁶⁷ The major concerns are massive effect on agriculture, water resources etc on both India and Bangladesh. Being an upstream area, China has a clear advantage in building dams like water as a weapon for massive economic development and for creating pressure on downstream states like India, one of the competitor country.

Figure 4.6: Brahmaputra Dam

India and China: China projects on Brahmaputra



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2010). Brahmaputra Dam. Available:

⁶⁷ Jaishankar, D. (2016). Indian Ocean Region: A Pivot for India's Growth [online]. Available: <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/indian-ocean-region-a-pivot-forindias-growth/> [Accessed November 12, 2017].

Covid Pandemic and the Present World Order: The upsurge of the Covid-19 pandemic has been affecting the economy of countries across the world. The countries are not only isolated from this global trend but also economic slowdown have occurred simultaneously. The world is now trying to cope with the economic fallout of the Covid-19 disease. All economic activities had been suspended as exports are too impacted due to Covid-19 worldwide. Bangladesh has suffered immensely in the RMG sector, export, and remittance sector due to failing demands in the EU and the US. However, the government has expanded the economic activity programmes to vulnerable groups. The foreign reserve of China is also gradually getting downwards.

However, pandemic fighting together was a good opportunity to maintain bilateral relation with China. Bangladesh plays a crucial role between the vaccine diplomacy between India and China. At first, it was heavily tilted towards to India but for its internal hazards, China took its highest advantages to grab the opportunity to help small countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka.

Comparison between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka: Every now and so it has been witnessing the intense consequences of debt country is an example of what an unnecessary mega project brings to the country. They need warned Bangladesh with such examples. Bangladesh has also obsessed many mega projects like country. Like Ceylon, it's borrowed plenty to implement mega projects. In 2015, Bangladesh's foreign debt was a touch but Tk 5000 crore. In 2022, it's increased to around Tk 1 lakh crore (97,740). This can be the sole similarity between the increases of the two countries. But the event story of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka isn't the identical. Rather completely retrograde. The full development of Ceylon was unplanned. The wants of the people weren't taken into consideration. After building the port with a loan for 15 years at such a high charge per unit, it had been seen that the income from this seaport is meager. After that, land again got its hands on China for management. Now it takes about 760 million dollars. As a

result, country has leased the port to China. In other words, the people were unnecessarily burdened with a debt of quite 1 billion dollars. Another such example may be given. ‘Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport’. This can be another unnecessary mega project of country, built by Chinese loans. The expense is over the income at this airport. The difference between mega projects in state and mega projects in Bangladesh is sky-deep. Every mega project in Bangladesh is within the public interest.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Arai Etsuyo, Sri Lanka’s Economic Crisis: A Chinese Debt Trap? Available from: <https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/d00840/>

Table 4.3: Comparison between the debt-trap of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

Topic	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka
Major Sources of Economy	RMG sector, Remittance, Agriculture, Ship Building, Export, Foreign Direct Investment	Tourism, Apparel Textile, Tea Export
Strategy	Planned development and public interest	Unplanned development and without people interest
Deep Sea port	Matarbari(funded by Japan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.48 billion USD 	Hambantota(funded by China) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.12 billion USD
Mega projects	Padma Bridge, Metrorail, Rooppur Nuclear Power Project, Karnaphuli Tunnel etc	Hambantota sea port, Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport,
Stakeholders	Japan, China, Russia, India	China
Profit	Profit oriented Example- NPV (Net Present Value) analysis, According to the analysis of ADB, Copenhagen Census, NPV of Padma Bridge is about 1,234 million USD, Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) will be more than 2+ million. Another important measurement is the Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) which is 19% in the case of Padma Bridge. Also the ROI (Return of Investment) of this project is also satisfactory. Padma Bridge project itself is a profitable project.	After building the port with a loan for 15 years at such a high charge per unit, it had been seen that the income from this seaport is meager. The expense is over the income at this airport.

Source: Developed by researcher with reference to various govt. websites and newspapers

Chapter Five

Research Methodology

Research methodology chapter is the heart of this paper titled "Problems and Prospects of Sino-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations: An Analysis" as it includes the explanation of all the methods and techniques used in this study. This chapter will make the whole process from data collection to get results of the study clear to the readers.

5.1 Research Design

This study is both in qualitative and quantitative research method whereas historical method seeks to focus and analyze past events, conditions and phenomena, bestowed with political significance and Interpretative methods focus on analytically disclosing the meaning-making practices of ongoing investment projects. A cross-sectional analysis of foreign policy sheds light on how different individuals and groups relate differently.

5.2 Research Methods

Mixed methods have been used in this study with the intention to get all the strengths of both of them and avoid all the weaknesses of them as well. The quantitative part allowed the researcher to use statistical tools and get authentic results in numeric form whereas the qualitative part helped to get a deep understanding of the whole situation. Moreover, the findings from these two methods allow the researcher to get a firm conclusion with useful recommendations.

5.3 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Different techniques were used to collect data for this study as it is a mixed methods study.

The data collection technique was totally different for the quantitative and the qualitative part of the study. The data collection techniques for both of them are given below:

Quantitative Data Collection: The data collection method for the quantitative part of the study was a sample survey. At first an interview schedule was developed including structured questions. Five points Likert scale has been used with the intention to quantify the qualitative data. There were some Likert items also in the interview schedule for structured interviews. After that the data were collected from the respondents through face to face structured interviews.

Qualitative Data Collection: The data collection techniques for the qualitative part of the study were observation, purposive sample interviews were also conducted with some respondents who seemed to be able to give important information for this study. These open-ended interviews were totally unstructured and the researcher carefully conducted the whole interviews in such an environment that the respondents feel free. The researcher never tried to influence the respondents with her own opinion.⁶⁹

5.4 Research Area

Dhaka has been selected as the research area of this study. Three areas were selected as the data collection area: Diplomats, Academics/Professionals, Journalists and Policymakers. Face to face interviews as well as online surveys through Google forms have been initialized.

5.5 Population of the Study

The population of the study includes both Political Science and International Relations specialists.

⁶⁹ Kothari, C.R. (2019) Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. 4th Edition, New Age International Publishers, New Delhi. page-56

5.6 Sample Size

The sample size of the study is 50 for simple random sampling in quantitative research and 10 for purposive sampling in qualitative research. Respondents were also selected at different ages and professions.

5.7 Sampling Technique

At first 50 respondents were selected randomly, then respondents were divided into three groups based on their profession, education and workplace.

5.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

All the data were analyzed properly in this study. Like data collection methods, the procedures of data analysis also differ for quantitative and qualitative data. The data analysis procedures for both of the methods are given below:

Quantitative Data Analysis: Microsoft Excel and Google Forms were used for analyzing and presenting data. After that the data were presented through Microsoft Excel. Pie chart, bar chart and column chart were used for presenting data through Microsoft Excel.

Qualitative Data Analysis: The results from the interview were found after hearing the recordings several times. The researcher continued hearing the recording until she failed to get anything new from it. Same thing happened in the case of an open discussion with participants. The researcher heard the recordings several times. She stopped hearing them when they were not giving any new information.

5.9 Validity and Reliability

The researcher was also concerned about the validity and reliability issues of the study. That is why she set all the questions of the interview schedule very carefully. As a result the consistency of data was marked. The measurement tools were selected very carefully as well. In short, the validity and reliability were ensured by the researcher while conducting the research.

Chapter Six

Findings of the Study

This chapter will deal with the presentation of findings from quantitative data analysis. It will deal with the findings from qualitative data analysis in the form of the findings as well.

6.1 Findings From Quantitative Analysis

Demographic Information

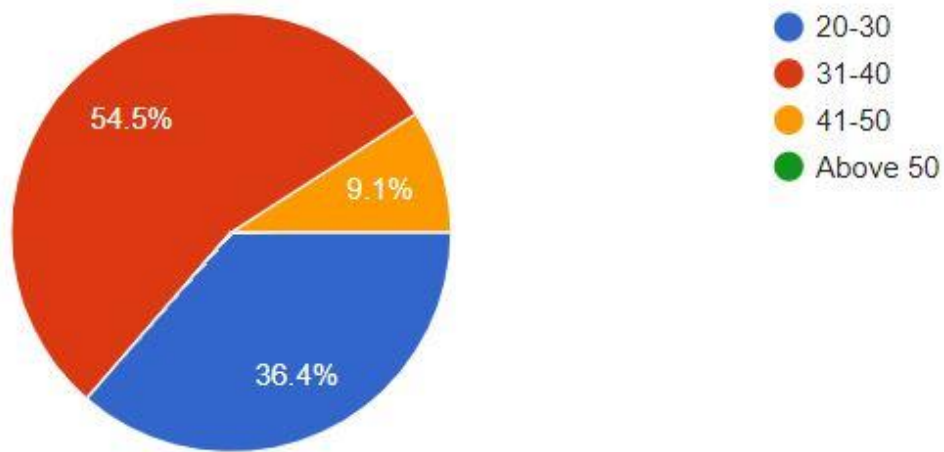
Table 6.1

Age of the participants

	Total	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Age of the participants	50	20-30 31-40 41-50 50 and above	20-30	50-above	31-40

The total number of respondents in this study was 50. Minimum age of respondent between 20-30 whereas maximum is 50 and above. Most of the people are between the ages of 31-40.

Figure 6.1
Age of the participants



Among the 50 respondents, 9.1% are from the age range 41-50 and 36.4% are from the age 20-30 whereas 54.5% are from the age range 31-40.

Gender:

Table 6.2
Gender

Male	Female	Total
27	23	50

Among 50 respondents of the study, 27 were female and the rest 23 were male which indicates that 45.5%(45%) of the respondents were female and 54.5%(55%) were male.

Figure 6.2

Gender

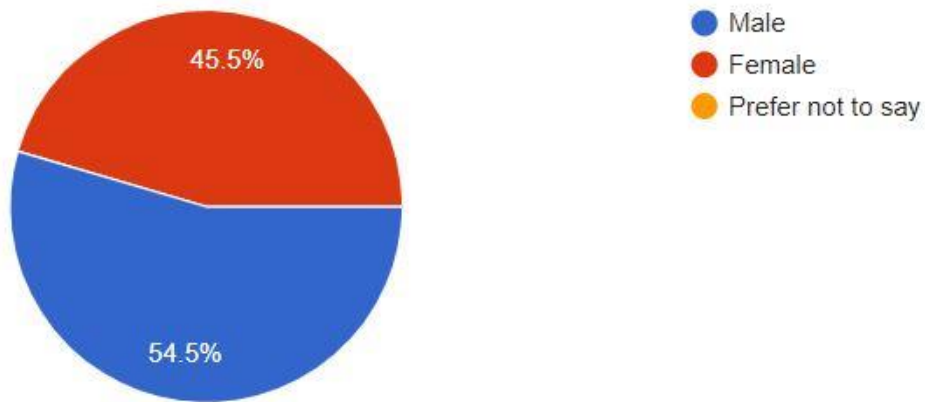


Table 6.3

Occupation

Occupation	No.
Academic/Teacher/Researcher	20
Diplomat/Journalist/Analyst	7
Service Holder	5
Student	18
Total	50

Among the 50 respondents 20(38%) people were Academic/Teacher/Researcher, 18(36%) people were Diplomat/Journalist/Analyst, 7(16%) people were Service Holder, 5(10%) were Students of both Political Science and International Relations. Most of the respondents were from Academic background (Research Associate/Research Assistant/Lecturer/Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Professor) from both Political Science and International Relations.

Figure 6.3
Occupation

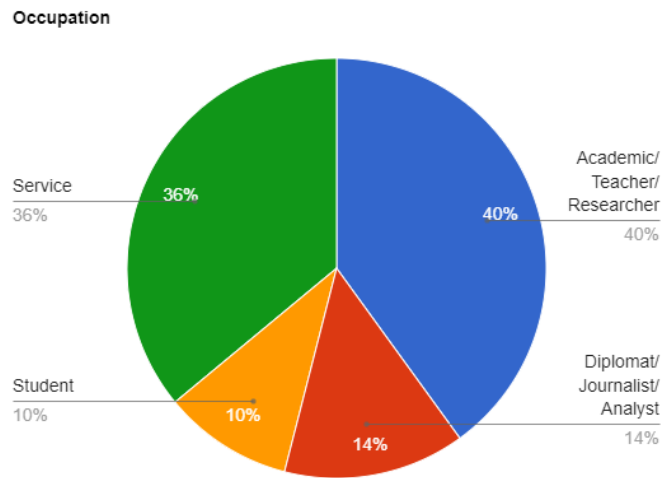
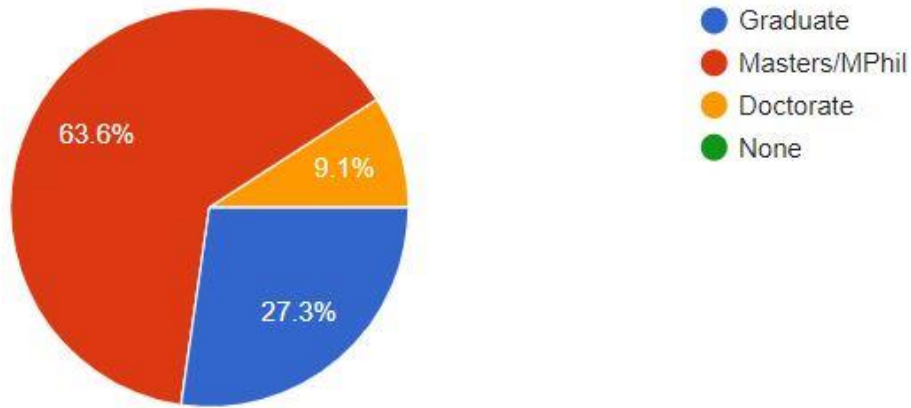


Table 6.4
Education

Degree	No.
Graduate	13
Masters/MPhil	32
Doctorate	5
Total	50

Among the 50 respondents, 13(27.3%) people were graduates, 32(63.6%) people were Masters/M.Phil, 5(9.1%) people were Doctorates.

Figure 6.4
Education



A five points (1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly disagree) likert scale was used to identify if Bangladesh considers China as an ‘all-weather friend’ or not. The items to get the result were Rohingya issues, Ukraine war, Sri Lanka crisis, trade gap, defense etc.

Table 6.5
Bangladesh considers China as an ‘all-weather friend’

Strongly Agree	17
Agree	4
Neutral	12
Disagree	17
Strongly disagree	0
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 17(33.3%) people strongly agreed with the statement- Bangladesh considers China as an 'all-weather friend' whereas 17(33.3%) people disagreed, 12(25%) people remained neutral and the rest 4 (8%) people agreed respectively. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 6.5

Bangladesh considers China as an ‘all-weather friend’

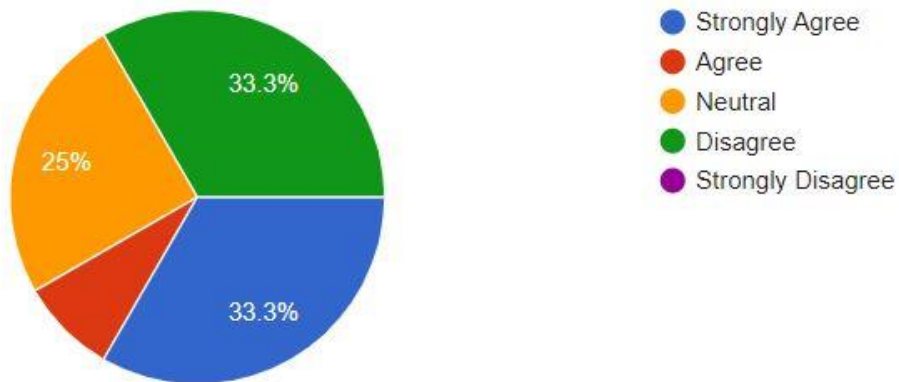


Table 6.6

Bangladesh will be the next Sri Lanka for its Chinese debt-trap

Strongly Agree	15
Agree	5
Neutral	15
Disagree	15
Strongly disagree	0
Total	50

As the question asked, if Bangladesh will be the next Sri Lanka for Chinese debt-trap, 15(30.8%) people strongly agreed with this, 15(30.8%) people remained neutral, 15(30.8%) people disagreed with the statement while 5(7.7%) people agreed. There is no one left to strongly disagree with the statement.

Figure 6.6

Bangladesh will be the next Sri Lanka for its Chinese debt-trap

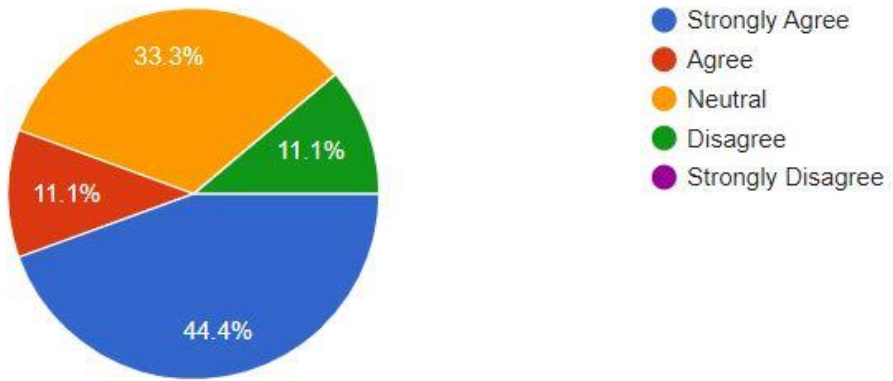


Table 6.7

Solving Rohingya Issue

Opinion	No.
Yes	31
No	12
Maybe	7
Total	50

As the question asked to respondents, whether China's intervention can solve the Rohingya issue, 31(61.5%) people believed they can whereas 12(23.1%) people supposed China can't and the rest 7(15.4%) people thought China may be able to solve the issue.

Figure 6.7
Solving Rohingya Issue

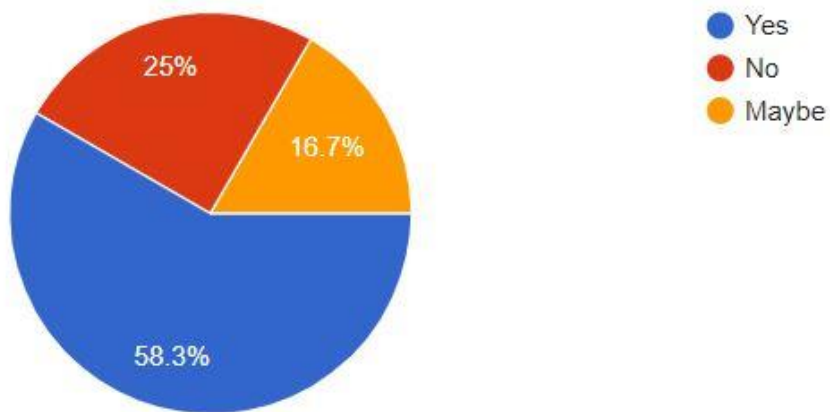


Table 6.8
BRI Project

Opinion	No.
Yes	26
No	12
Maybe	12
Total	50

As the question asked to respondents, should Bangladesh welcome the BRI project, 26(53.8%) people thought Bangladesh should welcome whereas 12(23.1%) people thought it shouldn't be and the rest 12(23.1%) thought it may welcome the project.

Figure 6.8
BRI project

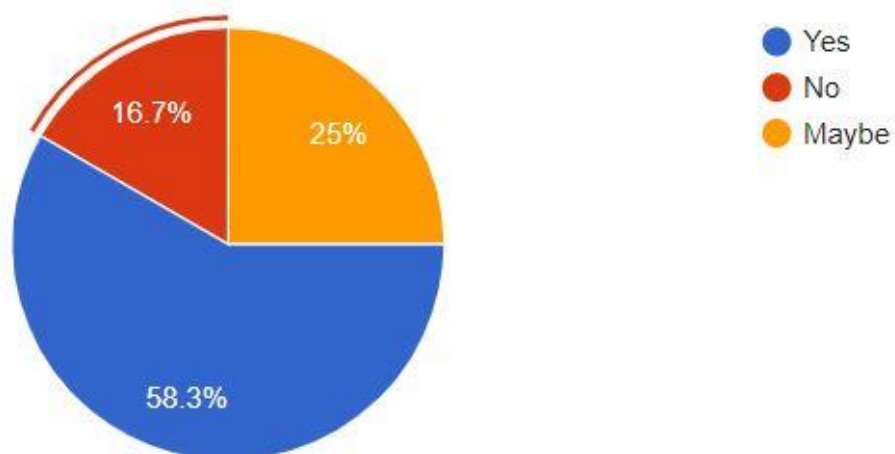


Table 6.9
Attaining SDG

Opinion	No.
Yes	19
No	12
Maybe	19
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 19(38.5%) people considered the BRI project as a keystone to attain SDG for Bangladesh whereas 19(38.5%) people might be considering and the rest 12(23.1%) people denied the statement.

Figure 6.9
Attaining SDG

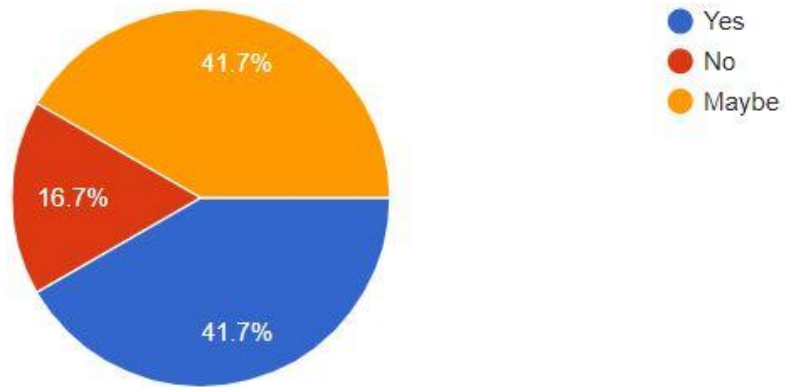


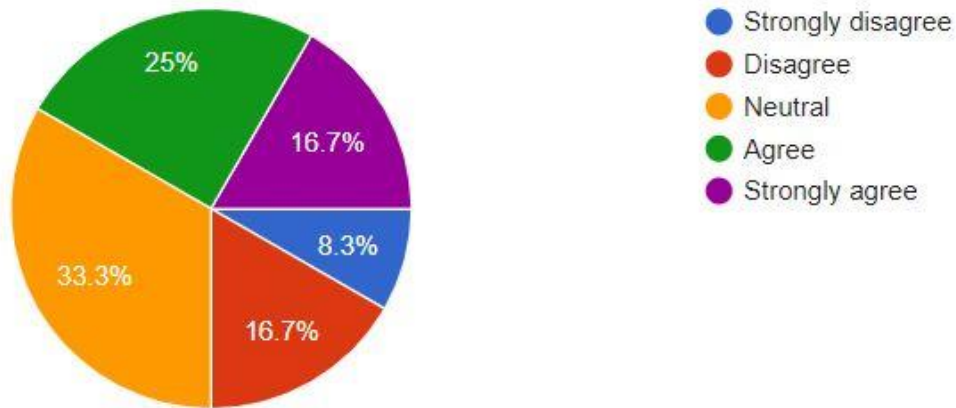
Table 6.10
BRI as threat of terrorism

Strongly Agree	8
Agree	12
Neutral	14
Disagree	8
Strongly disagree	8
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 8(15.4%) people strongly agreed with the statement- BRI seems to be a threat of terrorism in South Asia whereas 8(15.4%) people disagreed, 14(30.8%) people remained neutral and the rest 12(23.1%) people agreed and the rest 8(15.4%) people strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 6.10

BRI as threat of terrorism



As the question asked to the respondents, half (50%) people gave their opinion that Bangladesh-China relations will reach new horizons regarding the BRI project and the rest half (50%) people don't think so.

Table 6.11

Look East Policy

Country	No. of the Respondents
China	19
Japan	15
South Korea	4
Other Asian Countries	12
Total	50

Among the 50 respondents, 19(38.5%) people thought China should be given priority on Look East Policy whereas 15(30.8%) people went for Japan and 12(23.1%) people went for South Korea and the rest 4(7.7%) people gave the priority to other Asian countries.

Figure 6.11
Look East Policy

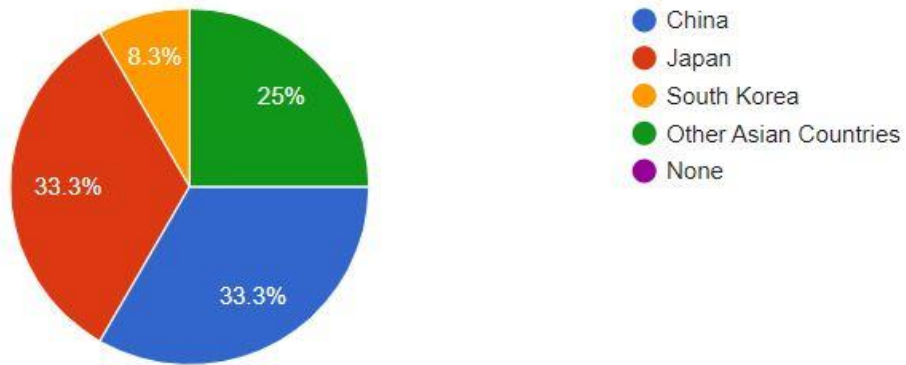


Table 6.12
Priority between India and China

Country	No of the respondents
India	19
China	12
Strategically balance	19
None	0
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 19(38.5%) people gave their opinion that Bangladesh should be given priority to India, the same as 19(38.5%) people who wanted a strategically balanced relation between India and China whereas 12(23.1%) people gave the priority to China.

Figure 6.12

Priority between India and China

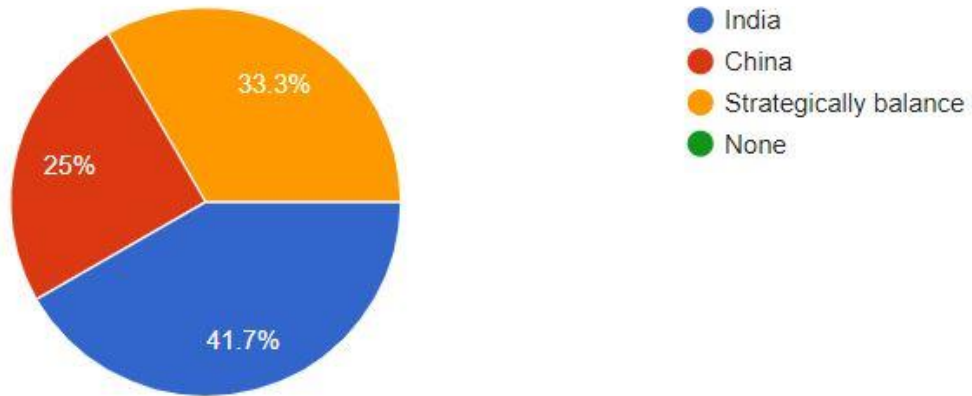
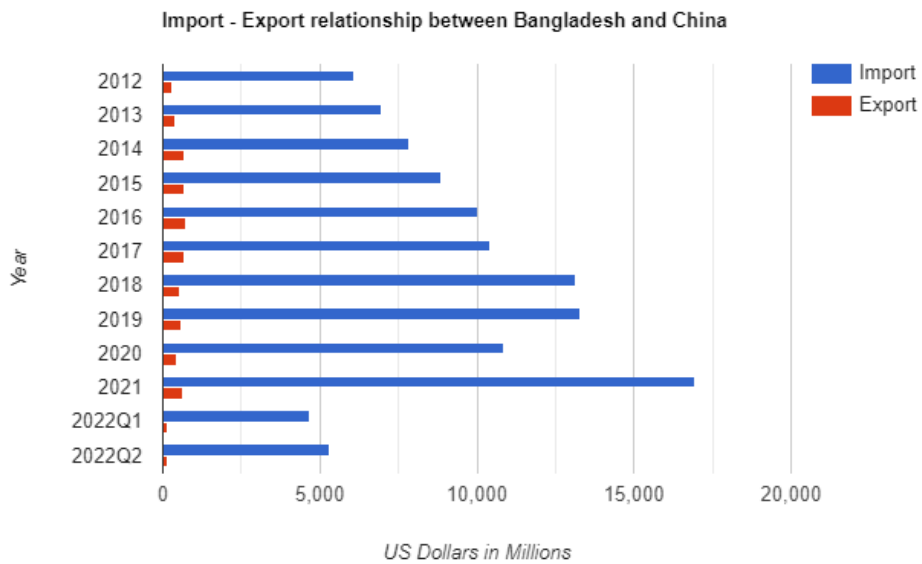


Figure 6.13

Import - Export relationship between Bangladesh and China



Source: Prepared by student from IMF website, 2022

From the above figure, it's quite clear that a huge trade gap is the major hurdle between Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations. As the question asked to the respondents on this specific issue what are the best possible ways to reduce huge trade deficit with China, 19(38.5%) people supported the first option, by attracting Chinese investment, 8(15.4%) people were thinking about more concentration on RMG sector in Europe and USA, 15(30.8%) people suggested innovating to find new markets and the rest 8(15.4%) people thought of other possible ways.

Table 6.13

Reducing trade gap with China

Best possible ways	No of participants
1. By attracting Chinese investment	19
2. More concentration on RMG sector in Europe and USA	8
3. Innovation to find new markets	15
4. Others	8
Total	50

Figure 6.14

Reducing trade gap with China

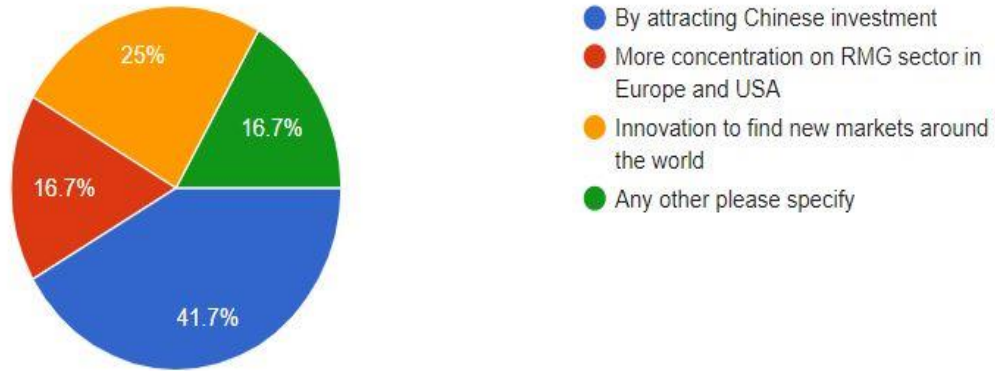


Table 6.14

More investment on Chittagong port

Opinion	No.
Yes	23
No	15
Maybe	12
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 23(46.2%) people believed that more investment on Chittagong port will reach Bangladesh into the grips of China, 15(30.8%) people denied the possibilities and the rest 12(23.1%) people suggested that it might be so.

Figure 6.15

More investment on Chittagong port

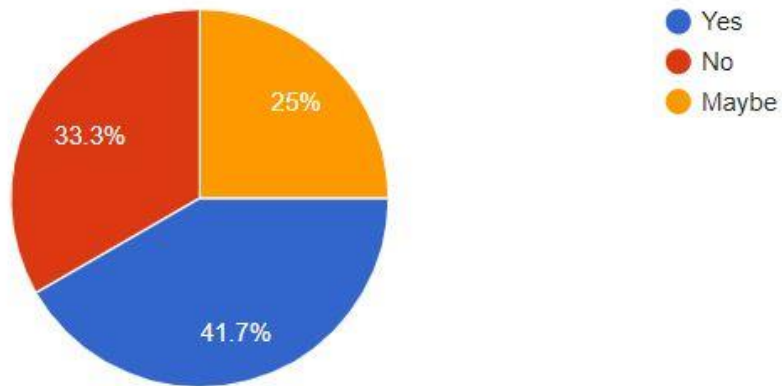


Table 6.15

Appreciating Chinese support to Bangladesh Military

Opinion	No.
Yes	23
No	15
Maybe	12
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 23(46.2%) people supported China's assistance to Bangladesh Military on the purpose of training and others, 15(30.8%) people denied the assistance and the rest 12(23.1%) people suggested that it might be so.

Figure 6.16

Appreciating Chinese support to Bangladesh Military

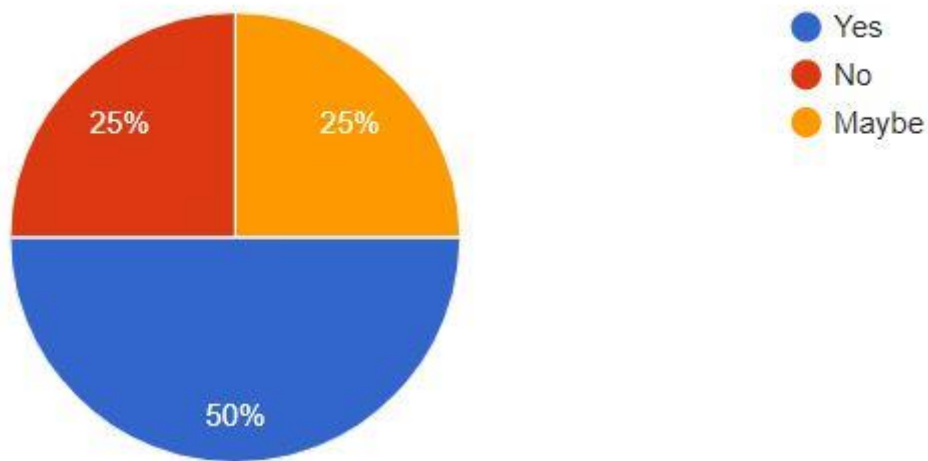


Table 6.16

Searching an alternative source on arms supply

Opinion	No.
Yes	46
No	0
Maybe	4
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 46(92%) people believed Bangladesh should search an alternative source as China is the biggest arms supplier, no people denied the statement and the rest 4(7.7%) people suggested that it might be so.

Figure 6.17

Searching an alternative source on arms supply

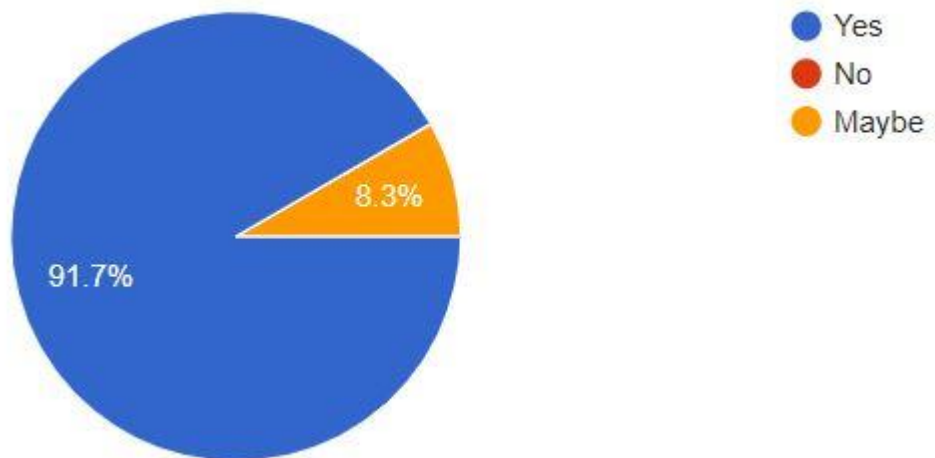


Table 6.17

Maintaining India-Bangladesh-China balance of power

Opinion	No.
Yes	25
No	13
Maybe	12
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 25(50%) people believed that Bangladesh can play the role of a strategic autonomy body maintaining India-Bangladesh-China balance of power, 13(25%) people didn't think so and the rest 12(25%) people suggested that it might be so.

Figure 6.18

Maintaining India-Bangladesh-China balance of power

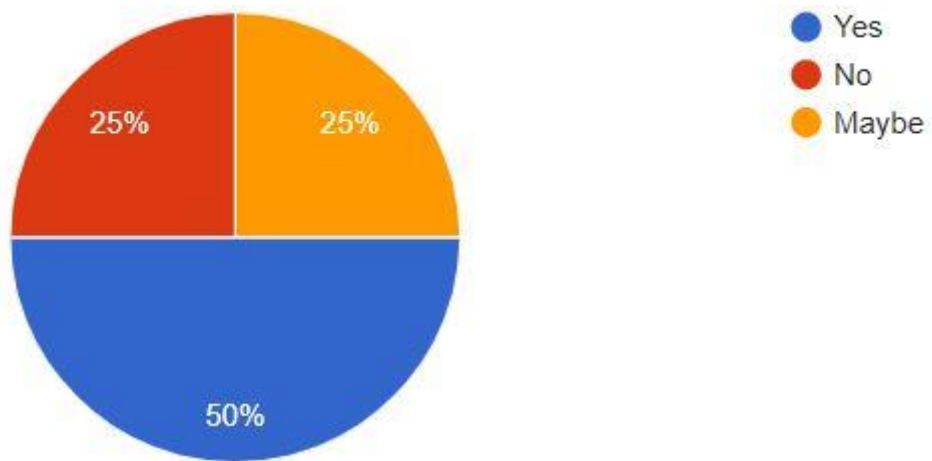


Table 6.18

Vaccine diplomacy of China

Linear Scale	No of participants
1= Worst	0
2= Bad	0
3= Satisfactory	4
4= Good	10
5= Best	36
Total	50

Figure 6.19
Vaccine diplomacy of China

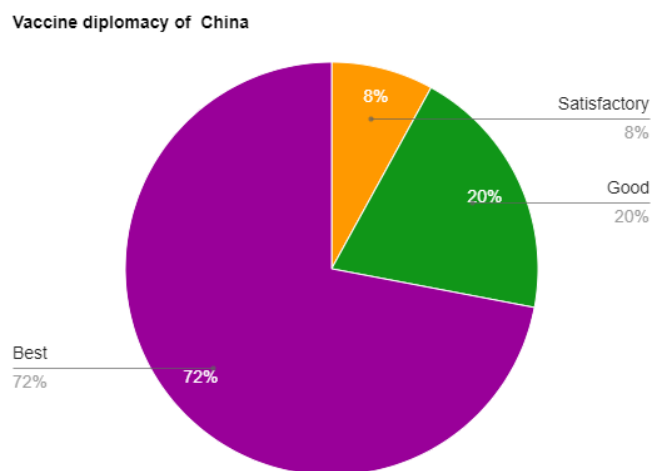


Table 6.19
Preferred Covid Vaccine

Vaccines	No. of participants
1. Sinovac/Sinopharm	8
2. Covax	4
3. Pfizer-PF	4
4. Moderna	8
5. AstraZeneca/Covishield	23
6. Others	3
Total	50

Among 50 participants, 23(46.2%) people preferred Astra Zeneca/Covishield, 8(15.4%) people preferred Sinovac/Sinopharm and Moderna , 4(7.7%) people preferred both Covax and Pfizer-PF, and the rest 3(7%) preferred others.

Figure 6.20

Preferred Covid Vaccine

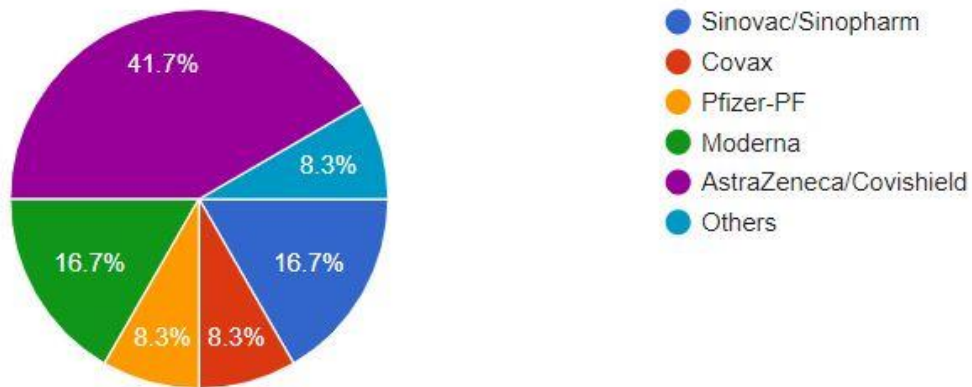


Table 6.20

China is a future no.1 superpower

Strongly Agree	11
Agree	27
Neutral	4
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	4
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 11(23.1%) people strongly agreed with the statement- China is displacing the USA as the no.1 power whereas 27(53.8%) people agreed, 4(7.7%) people remained neutral and the rest 4(7.7%) people both strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively.

Figure 6.21

China is a future no.1 superpower

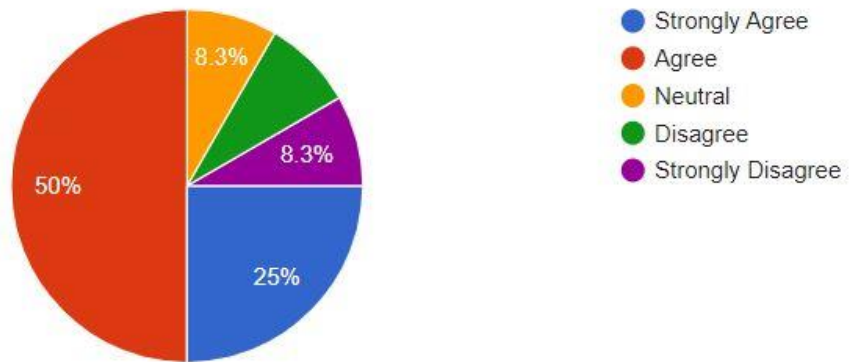


Table 6.21

Major hurdles in executing struggle for power

Strongly Agree	0
Agree	38
Neutral	8
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	4
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 38(76.9%) people agreed with the statement- there are major hurdles in executing China's strategy struggling for power, whereas 8(15.4%) people remained neutral and the rest 4(7.7%) people strongly disagreed respectively.

Figure 6.22

Major hurdles in executing struggle for power

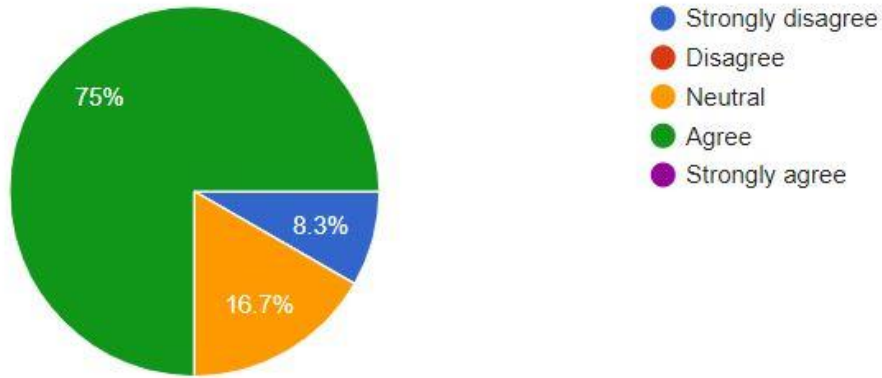


Table 6.22

Response to the Ukraine war

Axis	No of the participants
Russia-China	12
USA-NATO	15
None	23
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 23(46.2%) people supported no war whereas 15(30.8%) people supported the USA-NATO alliance and the rest 12(23.1%) people supported the Russia-China axis.

Figure 6.23

Response to the Ukraine war

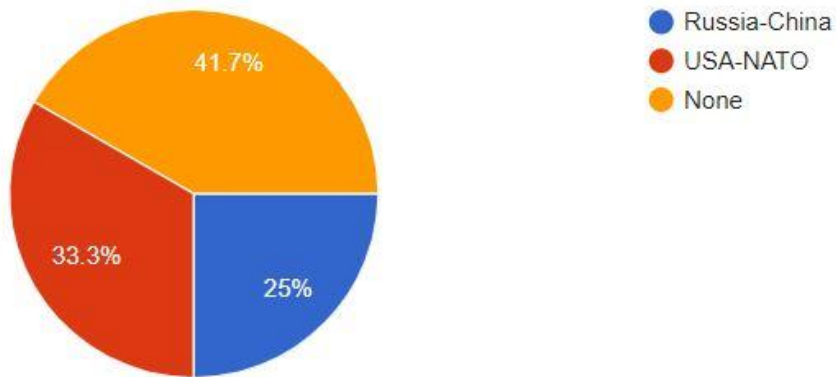


Table 6.23

Effect of China's rise on its neighbours in Asia

Effects	No of the participants
Fear psychosis	11
Positive responses	15
Regional insecurity	15
Massive development	4
None	5
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 11(23.1%) people seemed fear psychosis on China's rise on its neighbour's in Asia, 15(30.8%) people respond positive effect, 15(30.8%) people felt about regional insecurity, 4(7.7%) people respond it as massive development and the rest 5(7.7%) remained neutral.

Figure 6.24

Effect of China's rise on its neighbours in Asia

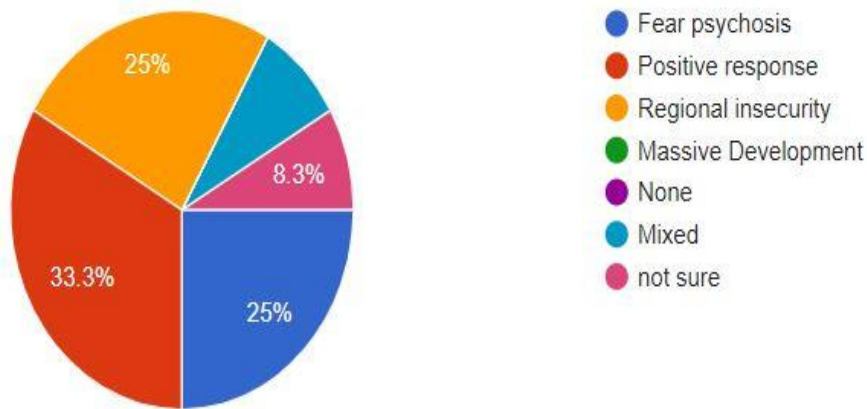


Table 6.24

Enjoying excellent bilateral relations

Opinion	No.
Yes	31
No	12
Maybe	7
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 31(61.5%) people considered excellent Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations as the right way to boost up the economy, whereas 12(23.1%) people denied the statement and the rest 7(15.4%) people considered it might be.

Figure 6.25

Enjoying excellent bilateral relations

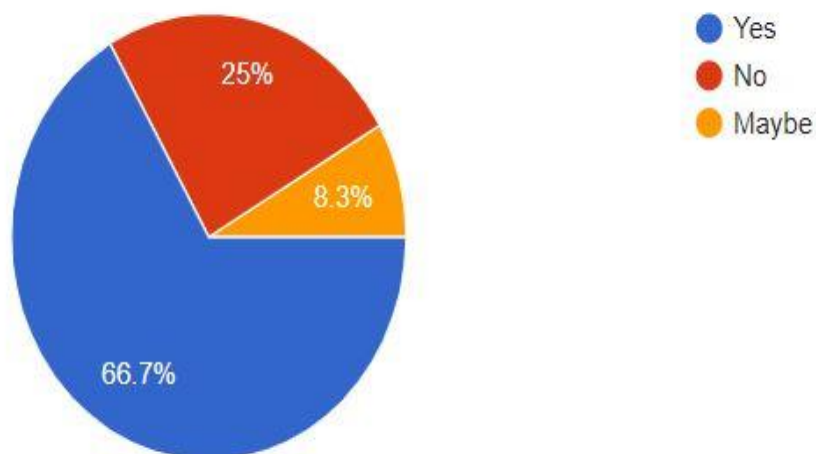


Table 6.25

Bangladesh in the geo-political equation in this region

Responses	No of the respondents
To decrease the impact of India	15
To decrease the domination of USA	4
Connecting route of BRI, Maritime Silk Road	12
All of the above	15
None	4
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 15(30.8%) people respond as China sees Bangladesh in the geo-political equation in this region to decrease the impact of China, 15(30.8%) people respond all of the above whereas 12(23.1%) people respond as the connecting route of BRI, Maritime Silk Road and the rest 4(7.7%) people remained neutral.

Figure 6.26

Bangladesh in the geo-political equation in this region

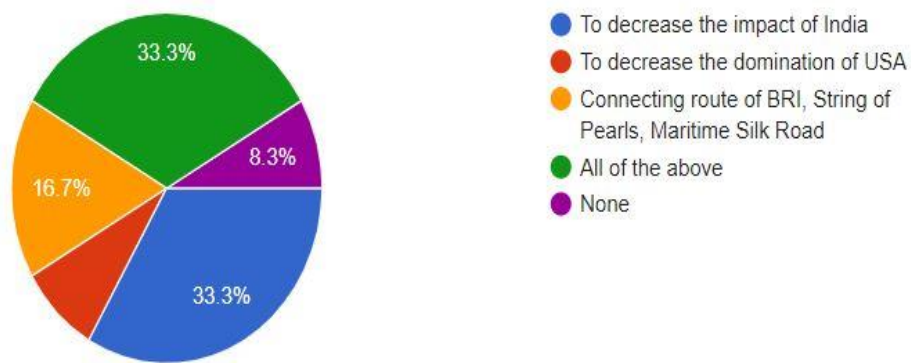


Table 6.26

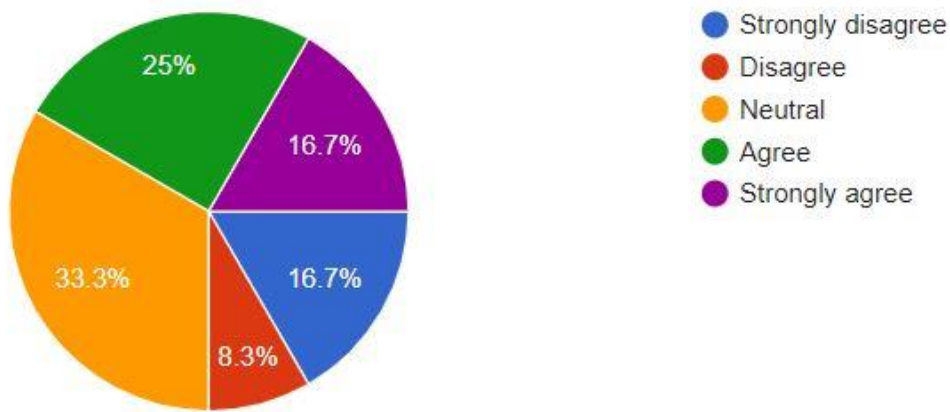
If Awami League govt. can maintain balance between India and China

Strongly Agree	8
Agree	11
Neutral	19
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	8
Total	50

Among 50 respondents, 8(15.4%) people strongly agreed with the statement- only Awami League govt can maintain balance between India and China, whereas 11(23.1%) people agreed, 19(38.5%) people remained neutral and the rest 8(15.4%) people strongly disagreed, 4(7.7%) people disagreed respectively.

Figure 6.27

If Awami League govt can maintain balance between India and China



6.2 Quantitative Analysis through Descriptive Statistics

The overall analysis of the survey is as follows:

The survey gave an overview of the consciousness of Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations. As the question asked, if China is serious about displacing the U.S. as the No. 1 power in Asia and, eventually, in the world, 70% of participants agree with "yes" but the rest are divided as 17% think China is not capable and others are hopeful. Most of the respondents agreed that there are major hurdles in executing China's strategy for becoming No. 1. Though exceptions were there as many responded in another manner. As asked in the survey, there is a positive impact on China's rise on its neighbors in Asia, most of the respondents agreed. Further, asked if respondents thought that strategically China sees Bangladesh in the geo-political equation in the region, most of the participants agreed. According to the survey, Bangladesh and China enjoy excellent bilateral relations and most of the respondents support it considerably. As few stated, surely it must be taken as an all-weather friend. But contradictory to this view, the majority do not agree with this view- China-Bangladesh relations run smoothly under the present Awami League government in comparison to ties under previous governments. But a few disagreed. The

response to the Sri Lanka crisis brought any change regarding Chinese debt-trap, and it caused cautiousness, divided equally that they both disagreed and supposed so. As the majority were not sure of,

A five points likert item (1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly disagree) was set with the statement, “What is the current state and nature of Bangladesh-China overall bilateral relations” to know that if the relation is friendly or not. Moreover, the survey is divided by majority when the question arises about China’s diplomatic work over the past ten years. The majority of people do support China's rise having a positive impact on its neighbors in Asia. Most of the respondents agree with the statement that China’s relations with its neighbors are offensive and China handles and resolves the disputes for its own interest with some of its neighbors but others’ opinions are varied. Lastly, in response to the question asked what are the new challenges confronting China’s diplomacy and how do they see China’s diplomacy towards Bangladesh people are responding spontaneously which can be summed up like this:

A well-planned and trained structure with mutual allies can bring peace and security for an individual government.

6.3 Content Analysis

Interviews are undoubtedly a big tool for researchers. It allows a clear understanding of the reaction of the total population on Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations. Three separate focus group discussions have been held for this purpose. In response to the question, what is the current state and nature of Bangladesh-China overall bilateral relations, respondents of three groups agreed about constructive bilateral relations between two countries. In response to the question, how do we foresee these relations developing further in the days ahead, one group explained that Beijing’s latest position is based on genuine concerns in the context of the growing economic transactions between China and Bangladesh. The group of Journalists stated that during her recent visit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

urged China to invest in the 100 special economic zones that her government was setting up. The two countries signed nine instruments to boost cooperation in the power, water resources, culture, and tourism sectors and provide 2,500 tonnes of rice for displaced Rohingyas. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought Chinese assistance for implementing Delta Plan 2100, setting up a Climate Adaptation Centre, and mobilising resources to implement the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration project. She also urged China to expedite the implementation of Dhaka-Chattoogram-Cox's Bazar high-speed train service project. As the question asked, what are the problems, opportunities and impediments regarding the economic dimension of Bangladesh-China relations, many observed in a subsequent joint statement by the neighbors, as China reaffirmed its willingness to continue to mediate on the Rohingya issue.

The main focus was China's massive infrastructure projects, including a controversial hydropower dam and a deep-sea port in Rakhine, that make Myanmar a vital link in Xi Jinping's flagship Belt and Road Initiative to expand trade ties globally. As the two countries signed dozens of deals covering trade and infrastructure, with Myanmar agreeing to speed up implementation. Western Myanmar, with its location between booming India and Southeast Asia, is strategically important to Beijing, offering China's landlocked western provinces potential port access to the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. This is quite a major problem regarding solving the Rohingya crisis. Another discussion topic was about the current state of Bangladesh-China defense relationship as China is the biggest arms supplier to Bangladesh, many observed that Bangladesh must look for any alternative source to reduce the dependency on China. According to a deal signed in 2014, Bangladesh and China agreed to strengthen cooperation in the military and law enforcement areas at various levels. There is a quite immense significance and achievement of the high level visit such as in 2016, during the Chinese President's visit to Bangladesh, Dhaka had signed a number of important agreements and MoUs with Beijing to implement scores of projects which started the successful journey towards investments.

The interview was to evaluate China-Bangladesh relations under the present Awami League government in comparison to ties under previous governments, all agreed that this is the best form of co-operation between two countries comparing past governments. The frequent question was, will Bangladesh-China relations reach new horizons? Many observers said that already two countries have reached a new horizon and are still flourishing in their own way. Another question was why is China important to Bangladesh, two out of three groups replied that it is for its investment which is quite necessary for SDG and massive economic development. In response to strategically how China sees Bangladesh in the geo-political equation in the region, as the Chinese premier noted, “We value our relationship with Bangladesh and would like to take it to a higher level. We’ve a strategic partnership and we hope that it’ll be deepened and strengthened further.” From the Chinese perspective, what are the useful mechanisms for Political and Economic Development of Bangladesh, all three groups agreed about its connecting routes through BRI, Maritime Silk Road emphasizing its strategic geo-political location. Responding to questions from how will China’s behavior toward other countries change if China becomes the dominant Asian power, Beijing fully understands that it can only go so far with Dhaka, and has therefore resorted to building sustainable “secondary” regional frameworks to court Bangladesh, like the China-South Asia Emergency Supplies Reserve and Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Center. Meanwhile, it waits for the “opportune moment.” In Bangladesh, Beijing has realized that it cannot expect foreign policy success without respecting Bangladesh’s sovereignty and its right to conduct its international politics in the way it wants to. Chinese Ambassador to Dhaka Li Jiming warned Bangladesh against joining the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the Quad. Joining this “club” would “substantially damage” Sino-Bangladesh relations, he stated. Much has changed in the international situation over the past ten years, and China’s diplomacy has encountered many challenges and tests. How do you see China’s diplomatic work over the past ten years? China has presented its diplomatic work in Myanmar and Bangladesh as

humanitarian, but analysts and diplomats in Yangon say those efforts have broader geopolitical aims. “I’d say that China is not involved in the Rohingya crisis for humanitarian reasons, but for political and economic considerations,” said Yun Sun, co-director of the East Asia program at the Stimson Center in Washington. “China would like to be the new peacemaker in the region,” she said, adding that it wanted to show how its approach to resolving the crisis could succeed where Western powers had failed. “It’s a competition for leadership.” International politics has seen confrontation and conflicts between some countries. Under such circumstances, what are the new challenges confronting China’s diplomacy and how do you see China’s diplomacy towards Bangladesh? Bangladesh is planning its own Indo-Pacific strategy. As it has seen in difficult situations, there were problems with administering the coronavirus vaccine. India has not been able to send the second installment of antidote despite Bangladesh paying the money. Bangladesh had to take the antidote from China. Even if Bangladesh does not want to take direct money for development, there is no obstacle to take Chinese technology. Padma Bridge is built with Bangladesh's own resources, which is a national pride. But Chinese technology helped build the Padma Bridge. Chinese engineers have come and are trying to get Bangladesh on board. Bangladesh also has a very old defense agreement with China. But in this situation, what China wants is Bangladesh to reduce the density of relations with India and come to their side. Dependence on China will increase. But what happened to Sri Lanka in increasing its financial dependence on China, Bangladesh has seen and the whole world has seen. Bangladesh should not be fearful, rather careful and be wise enough from the learning of the Sri Lanka crisis.

China’s rise has a negative impact on its neighbors in Asia, such as the Spratly Island dispute, South China Sea etc. Another problem of Bangladesh is India's internal politics and emergence of radical Hinduism. This situation is becoming quite an obstacle in the way of advancing this triangular relationship in international diplomacy. Even the Gulf

countries have become active. Half of India's foreign exchange (\$40 billion) is sent from the Gulf countries. There are 8.9 million Indians working in these countries. As Arab politics converges to corner India, India-Bangladesh relations become more complicated. In this situation, India has to keep its foreign policy intact. Now Bangladesh has to proceed with a slow go policy. Rather, the relationship of this triangle will get complicated again in the coming days.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has strong leadership in Bangladesh, wants to involve herself in a big project connecting the whole of South Asia, which is not possible through China's 'Belt and Road' project. And that is why Bangladesh did not accept China's financial assistance proposals. Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives have become victims of China's policies, Bangladesh has refused to take any financial assistance even though it took goods or technical assistance from China to protect Bangladesh. Rather, Bangladesh is carrying out major projects like the Padma Bridge with its own funding. For this Bangladesh has chosen Public-Private Partnership (PPP) program.

This is the result of foreign policy of 'friendship with all'. Bangladesh has economic relations with both countries. Whenever there is military involvement in any geopolitical issue, it has reservations about getting involved. It has always been so and really has no enemies. The foreign policy was formulated when the Cold War was at its peak. Bangladesh has benefited from it so far. The international community has also realized that there is no problem in Bangladesh maintaining economic relations with two hostile countries. Does China regard the recent US strategic shift towards Asia as a threat? How do you evaluate Bangladesh-China's relations according to this issue? Still, the Bangladesh government has adopted a cautious approach toward China. It blacklisted China Harbor and Engineering Company for attempting to bribe officials and rolled back a \$1.6 billion highway project. Out of the 27 MoUs signed in 2016 between the two countries as part of the Belt Road Initiative, only five were implemented until 2019. In

2020, China agreed to invest approximately \$7 billion in nine big infrastructure projects but Dhaka has received only \$1 billion so far. Bangladesh has a history of being financially prudent. It is careful with borrowing as it is keen to avoid being drawn into a debt trap. In effect, it has thwarted a powerful tool of diplomatic coercion that China has wielded against its economic partners. Underlying Dhaka's cautious economic engagement with Beijing is a deep-rooted fear that it could go Sri Lanka's way and fall into a debt trap. Hence, its extreme caution in getting into deals with China.

6.4 Major Findings from the Qualitative Analysis

This study titled 'Problems and Prospects of Sino-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations: An Analysis' finds that Bangladesh is still passing through a transition period. Being a middle income country, it has experienced the fastest growing economy changing their socio-economic condition as well. The researcher observed the process of transformation of Bangladesh and its need for more investment in all aspects of development, that's why China is quite important to Bangladesh despite having discord and convergence of security issues. Bangladesh needs to be calm and witty in specific issues to avoid China's grip but to play "slow and steady" policy regarding balance of power in international politics. The ratio of bilateral trade between the two countries is far behind than the expectation. As a result Bangladesh would have failed to reach the goal including prestigious positions in global politics as well. This suggests mild assimilation in terms of socio-economic status. The researcher found scholars do believe that the investment process should be concentrated in a specific way of self-interest while collecting empirical data. This also suggests mild consideration about India-China relations. The researcher did not find any respondent who denied the importance of China-Bangladesh relations. So, it can be concluded that Bangladesh needs to design bilateral relations with China in an appropriate manner so that security issues gain the most priority.

Chapter Seven

Recommendation and Conclusion

7.1 Recommendations

Here are some recommendations from the qualitative research how we foresee Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relation developing further in the days ahead-

- According to New research for the British Council, Cultural Relations, Dialogue and Cooperation, in an age of competition sheds light on how one area of soft power - cultural relations – is uniquely positioned to help countries keep open channels of dialogue and co-operation with each other in challenging times. Having interdependency like Bangladesh, bilateral relation is mandatory in terms of increasing investment, employment, export and it has to be increased steadily.
- However, reviewing Sri Lanka's situation, Bangladesh's policy makers should keep in mind that much depends on domestic political compulsions of Bangladesh, henceforth, loans seem to be a trap for poor countries, for each and every country who are supporting the BRI project, have to face the same consequences rather than key to economic development.
- Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations are quite satisfactory for its unique diplomatic strategy and it should be continued, developed in a well-planned way. Prospective bilateral relations will increase but the government should maintain balance between India and China. All the diplomatic relations to be maintained neutrally having a win-win one.
- Apparently, maintaining the strategy of geopolitics and ensuring the state's sovereignty Sino-Bangladesh relations can be restored. Like Bangladesh has an embassy in Beijing and consulates in Hong Kong and Kunming. China has an

embassy in Dhaka. Both countries are members of the BCIM Forum (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation). In the long run, economic development is at the same time to be treated with sovereignty without any interference.

- Moreover, Bangladesh has to observe China's relations with its neighbours and the rest of the world in a wise-manner with a skillful diplomatic approach and review the economic strategy, military power.
- Bangladesh's location is a strategic wedge between mainland India and Northeastern seven states of the Indian Union. Each of these states is land-locked and has shorter route to the sea through Bangladesh. Currently, Kolkata port is used by these states for both domestic and imported cargo. That's why, Bangladesh has emerged as a strategic point of geopolitics due to its location.
- Considering the geographic location, Bangladesh should maintain a balanced mechanism. As from the Chinese perspective, the useful mechanism of Bangladesh are seaports, geopolitical mechanism, Bangladesh should utilize the technical supports with strategic balance. Meanwhile, Bangladesh has to search alternative economic relation bounded t with investments. Besides trade and investment, they should encourage connectivity in education, tourism, culture and various other sectors as soft-power instruments.
- China has been treating Bangladesh as it's one of the rising market and important geopolitical partner, the bilateral relations are becoming stronger having more political influence. China shouldn't interfere Bangladesh's internal matter. China's diplomacy is quite contradictory with USA interest about Bangladesh. Maintaining strategy of geo-politics and ensuring state's sovereignty, Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations could be restored.
- China's policy towards Bangladesh is dubious and Bangladesh have to take initiatives to influence further economic development. Lastly, Bangladesh needs to

maintain a good relationship with China to boost its trade and economy. A balanced relationship with the country is quite important for geopolitical strategic purposes too.

7.2 Conclusion

This study titled ‘Problems and Prospects of Sino-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations: An Analysis’ finds that Bangladesh needs to overcome the transition period as well as discord and diverge from international political issues. Being a developing middle-income country, it has been experiencing the fastest growing economy with socio-economic obstacles as well. The researcher observed the process of transformation of ten years 2012 to 2022 and concluded its need for more investment in all aspects of development. This is the prime reason that China is quite important to Bangladesh despite having discord and convergence of several security issues. Bangladesh should be calm and witty enough in specific issues to avoid China’s grip but to play “slow and steady” policy regarding balance of power in international politics. The ratio of bilateral trade between the two countries is far behind than the mere expectation. As a result, Bangladesh would have failed to reach the expected goal having those problems in global politics as well. This suggests mild assimilation in terms of socio-economic status in terms of prospective results of the study. The researcher found scholars do believe that the investment process should be concentrated in a specific way of self-interest while collecting empirical data. The analysis suggests mild consideration about India-China relations on the ground of international integration. The researcher didn’t find any respondent who denied the importance of China-Bangladesh bilateral relations. Thus, it can be concluded that Bangladesh needs to re-design bilateral relations with China in an appropriate wise manner so that security issues gain the most priority.

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Appendix

1. Questionnaire

1. China is quite important to Bangladesh. In this manner, Bangladesh considers China as an 'all-weather friend'- What do you think?
2. According to the current state and nature of Bangladesh-China overall bilateral relations, do you think Bangladesh will be the next Sri Lanka for Chinese debt-trap?
3. Despite of the problems, opportunities and impediments, the economic dimension of Bangladesh-China relations run smoothly. Do you believe China's intervention can solve Rohingya issue?
4. Should Bangladesh consider BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) project warm heartedly as a signatory country?
5. Do you consider BRI project to attain Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) from Bangladesh perspectives?
6. BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) project of China seems a threat of terrorism in South Asia through its routes. Do you agree?
7. How do you evaluate Sino-Bangladesh relationship under the BRI project?
8. Do you think Bangladesh-China relations will reach new horizons regarding the BRI project?
9. "Look East Policy" should be emphasized on-
10. In your opinion, which country should be given priority in foreign policy of Bangladesh between India and China?
11. The significance and achievement of the high level visit attract more trade investment. What are the best possible ways to reduce huge trade deficit with China?
12. Do you believe more investment on Chittagong port likely being Bangladesh in the hands of China?
13. Bangladesh and China agreed to strengthen cooperation in the military and law enforcement areas at various levels. Do you support China's assistance to Bangladesh Military on the purpose of training and others?

14. The current state of Bangladesh-China defense relationship reached at the highest peak. Do you think Bangladesh should search an alternative source as China is the biggest arms supplier?
15. From the Chinese perspective, what is the useful mechanism of Bangladesh? "
16. China's diplomacy has encountered many challenges and tests. How do you see China's diplomatic work over the past ten years?
17. What do you think are the new challenges confronting China's diplomacy and how do you see China's diplomacy towards Bangladesh?
18. Why has Bangladesh emerged as a strategic point of geo-politics?
19. Can Bangladesh play the role of a strategic autonomy body maintaining India-Bangladesh-China balance of power?
20. How do you evaluate vaccine diplomacy of China?
21. Which covid vaccine do you prefer?
22. China regards the recent US strategic shift towards Asia as a threat. China is serious about displacing the U.S. as the No. 1 power in Asia and, eventually, in the world. What is your opinion?
23. Much has changed in the international situation over the past ten years, and China's diplomacy has encountered many challenges and tests. There are major hurdles in executing China's strategy struggling for power. Do you agree?
24. International politics has seen confrontation and conflicts between some countries. Under such circumstances, regarding Ukraine war, what axis do you support?
25. How do you evaluate China's relations with its neighbors and how will China handle and resolve the disputes it has with some of its neighbors?
26. China's rise on its neighbours in Asia-
27. Bangladesh and China enjoy excellent bilateral relation. Do you think it's strategically right way to boost up economy?
28. Bangladesh-China relations reach into new horizons. China sees Bangladesh in the geo-political equation in this region as-
29. China-Bangladesh relations run smooth under the present Awami League government in comparison to ties under previous governments. Do you agree with following statements? Only Awami league government can maintain balance of power between India and China.

30. Put your comments here about prospective Sino-Bangladesh relations-

31. How do you foresee these bilateral relation developing further in the days ahead?

2. Interview

Interview of Chinese Ambassador Li Jiming on the 12 Dec 2022 published by Daily Prothom Alo. (China's ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming came to give an interview at Prothom Alo office in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka, on 4 December 2022)

Li Jiming came to Dhaka as China's ambassador to Bangladesh in the second half of 2019. Completing three years in office, he is now about to return home. He has spent an active three years in Bangladesh, dealing with the Covid situation, trade and investment, and further improving bilateral relations. In an interview with Prothom Alo, he talks about bilateral relations, geopolitics and more.

Q. After serving here for more than three years you are leaving Dhaka. During your assignment here as the Chinese ambassador the whole world was fighting with Covid-19. In the context of that, how do you evaluate your assignment in Bangladesh?

Ans. That is absolutely true that my three-year tenure here was mainly during the pandemic, but that pandemic fighting was actually a good opportunity for us to take our cooperation ahead. China and Bangladesh fought the pandemic with extreme success. There was people-to-people caring for each other. I not only received supplies from the Bangladesh government, but also from many individuals. I experienced very touching stories, very memorable ones. It was a great privilege for me to be part of China-Bangladesh relations. This is probably the most memorable time of my whole professional career.

Q. While we refer to cooperation during the fight against Covid-19, China was forthcoming during the crisis of Bangladesh's target to vaccinate the people. Can you tell our readers how both the countries tackle the situation with their joint effort during the pandemic?

Ans. We stood side by side during the whole period of time and it was actually Bangladesh that offered a helping hand to us first. And then China also helped Bangladesh

in its capacity. I should mention that when Bangladesh faced a crisis of vaccines, I tried very hard to offer Chinese vaccines to the Bangladesh government, but you could not accept at that time unless the vaccines got approval of WHO (World Health Organisation) or five of the advanced western economies' FDA. At that time all the vaccines were very new. The Chinese vaccine Sinopharm or Sinovac hadn't got the approval at the time. Bangladesh needed vaccines and China had the capacity to provide the vaccines, but we had to wait for that approval. With joint effort from both sides, Bangladesh finally issued the grant for emergency use prior to WHO while the latter said it would be issuing its approval soon. In this regard, the Bangladesh government was quite determined and very responsible. I really appreciate that.

Immediately after we got this approval from the Bangladeshi government, we delivered China-made vaccines in time in a large quantity. We donated a large number of vaccines in a very quick way. Then the Chinese vaccine producers started the negotiations with Bangladeshi authorities on commercial purchase and co-production. So the total number of Chinese vaccines administered in this country exceeded 175 million. That is more than the vaccines from all the other countries combined. Except for vaccines, we also sent medical personnel and provided PPEs and other supplies to Bangladesh for the joint fight against the pandemic. Then there is a crucial matter that has never been mentioned. With the help of concessional loan provided by the Chinese government, we supported the Info-Sarker Phase-3 Project, a project focusing on development of national ICT infra-network for Bangladesh government. With the infrastructure of connectivity, of network service, optical cable connecting to the upazila level from Dhaka, the government keeps functioning even during the lock-downs at the peak of pandemic. That played a significant role as well.

Q. China is developing a special economic zone in Chittagong, what sectors do China see as an opportunity for further enhancing economic ties between the two countries?

Ans. Different from the existing ones in the area, the Chinese Economic Zone is not an export processing zone, but an industrial economic zone. RMG industry will not be a priority there, maybe some, but not a major part of it. What will be located in that zone then? They are talking about the green energy sectors, solar batteries, solar panels, e-

vehicles, ICT manufacturing and such. China is quite good at these, so the possibilities are high.

Q. So you are focusing more on green and clean energy, ICT and future technology for the areas of cooperation.

Ans. Yes. We think that we should aim at higher end industries, not only RMG. In RMG we already have plenty of space in other export oriented zones, but in this one we should have higher end technology.

Q. China is the largest trading partner of Bangladesh and has already provided 98 per cent zero-tariff treatment for Bangladeshi products exporting to China. However, the trade gap is widening. Does Beijing have any plan for a balance of trade which is now heavily tilted towards China?

Ans. Trade deficits are not always a bad thing for Bangladesh. If you look into these figures, you will see that at least one third of trade deficit with China is for buying raw materials which is important for your export and trade surplus from other markets. Another one third is the machinery which is connected to RMG as well. And also one third is those infrastructure facilities, like bridge and railway related equipment. All of those trade or commodities are in the benefit of this country. So never consider that a bad thing, or that we should buy less. That is not always right.

We are talking about high end industry or high end manufacturing in Chittagong, the China Economic Industrial Zone. With that being realised, there will be much more products that can be more competitive into the Chinese market. We open our doors to the Bangladesh industries.

Besides, in China we hold the China International Import Expo (CIIE) every year. It is the world's first import themed national-level expo. We also have the China-South Asia Expo. These are perfect platforms for Bangladesh's exporters to showcase their brands and products to the Chinese consumers. If they make full use of such opportunities, the "Made in Bangladesh" will be more famous to the Chinese market.

Q. Since the signing of MoU on the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing has engaged with Bangladesh in various significant projects including that of the Padma Bridge Railway project. Can you shed some light on the latest status of two countries under the BRI?

Ans. Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia to jump on board the BRI. China-Bangladesh cooperation under the BRI is so fruitful, which benefits the people of both countries. We will witness some deeper cooperation under this framework. But there are some issues that we should also tackle.

First, BRI is often narrowly interpreted and understood. BRI is not only for connectivity infrastructure hardware, but also for policy coordination, trade facilitation, financial cooperation, and people-to-people exchange. There are at least five aspects. So when we talk about BRI, we shall never concentrate on connectivity only. That would be a mistake.

Second, we are talking about higher quality BRI cooperation. After the 20th national congress of the CPC, the Communist Party of China announced that from now on we are going to undertake a new journey toward Chinese modernisation. Within this overall perspective, high quality BRI cooperation is a necessary. This means greener and cleaner projects focusing on higher end development. In future cooperation with Bangladesh, we can expect more than what we have already witnessed. Higher quality, broader concepts will be included.

Q. During the milestone visit of President Xi Jinping to Bangladesh in 2016, China agreed to provide support in 22 projects and give more than \$20 billion. After six years the implementation of the agreed projects is very slow and the disbursement rate is also not significant. What is your take on that?

Ans. The MOU that was signed is not a commitment of government concessional loans, but a list of projects to be considered for promotion by both sides, not only China. If you look at the text of the MOU, then you will see that it is to show both sides that this is the priority of our cooperation and some of them will be using the Chinese concessional loans

and some of those will be supported in some other ways. And for some of those projects, the Bangladesh government needs to take the initiative. Up till today, to my knowledge, at least one third of these 27 projects have been completed or under construction. For the other two thirds, a half is under proactive assessment, another half is on pause since the Bangladeshi government has not launched the projects or decided to halt.

For example, the state-owned jute factories. Even though China has approved to give concessional loans, the Bangladesh government said no. This is not going to be included, since the Bangladeshi side changed mind. We have to find some other ways to do it. There are a number of such cases and we said we can replace them. We have a mechanism to communicate and update. So it is not true that nothing significant has happened as the media sometimes depict it.

Q. In the last two years we noticed high level regular communications between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Xi Jinping. How do you see these frequent exchanges between the top leaders?

Ans. The political trust between the two countries is on a high level and very satisfactory. Last year and the year before there were exchanges of many letters, phone calls and video messages on those highlighted occasions of both sides. It is the key to guarantee our bilateral cooperation and to guide the two countries to go together in a more concerted way.

Q. During your tenure, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi and defence minister Wei Fenghe visited Bangladesh. Apart from the bilateral relations, both the senior Chinese leaders touched upon the issues of geo-politics. What is your expectation from Bangladesh in the wake of growing geo-political rivalry surrounding the Indo-Pacific region?

Ans. Clearly China does not like any clique idea that aims at creating more uncertainties and instabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Neither does Bangladesh. We believe in the wisdom of the leadership of Bangladesh because we know that Friendship to All and

Malice towards None is always at the core of Bangladesh's diplomatic policy. The Cold War has been ended for decades, but the mentality of the Cold War is still there. Look at Europe, what the expansion of NATO, a product of the Cold War mentality, has resulted in? If that kind of mentality is expanded to this region, what can we expect?

Q. For the last few years China mediates between Bangladesh and Myanmar to initiate Rohingya repatriation. Even a date was fixed for the commencement of repatriation. Also, last year's military coup in Myanmar created further uncertainty about the hope of Rohingya repatriation. From your perspective, in which direction is the crisis headed?

Ans. This is something I have put much energy into, but unfortunately hasn't got much output yet. Let's see what are the possibilities ahead.

Possibility number one, people are talking about integration now. Turkey has integrated some refugees. They have their policy. But is this an alternative for Bangladesh? I doubt it.

Possibility number two, people are seeking more pressure on Myanmar from the international community. I fully understand this motivation, but, unfortunately, it doesn't seem to work well. Be it the case brought to the International Court of Justice or other initiatives, they are not paying off. Why? Because the current regime in Myanmar has been in power for over four decades, and they have always been under international pressure, but they survived. They have many other issues to care about. The marginal effect of international pressure on Myanmar is diminishing.

Now we come to the third and last possibility, repatriation through bilateral dialogue. Between Bangladesh and Myanmar, you have the mechanism called JWG (joint working group) that has had at least five sessions. It is widely considered to be successful. Though the immediate repatriation faces some difficulty due to the current situation in Myanmar, things are still progressing in a spiral way. Probably we should be more patient and wait for the conditions to become more conducive. Otherwise if we push the first batch of

repatriated people to Myanmar, but something bad happens to them, it will put the following batches into doom. We can't take the risk.

Q. What is your expectation on people-to-people exchanges between China and Bangladesh?

Ans. We are witnessing growing people-to-people exchange over the past decade, and there are more to expect. As of now, as many as six Chinese universities offer Bengali language course. And there are more than 15,000 Bangladeshi students studying in China. Beyond the scholarship provided by central government of China, many other scholarships are also given at the provincial and university levels. In Bangladesh, we hope to see China study centres being set up. There needs to be more think tanks and scholars who are authoritative in China studies. The local media needs some original thinking of your own. I believe that the future is very bright between our two countries and two peoples.

Thank you.

3. Agreements and MoUs (2016)

In 2016, this was the first visit by a Chinese President Xi Jinping to Bangladesh since 1986, when President Li Xiannian visited Dhaka in March. The deals, signed on the 14 October, 2016 altogether relate to 15 agreements and MoUs and 12 loan and mutual agreements which was published on bdnews24.com

Agreements and MoUs (2016)

- Among these is a cooperation agreement on increasing investment and production capacity building, under which 28 development projects will be infused with \$ 21.5 billion in foreign aid.
- There is an economic and technical cooperation agreement for \$80.3 million grant, \$700 million loan agreement for Karnaphuli tunnel construction, \$280million credit agreement for Dashekandi Sewerage Treatment Plant project and four more loan deals with regards to six ships.
- Two framework agreements for constructing Karnaphuli tunnel and Dasherbandi plant.
- Memoranda of Understanding have been signed, under China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, for cooperation, maritime cooperation, joint feasibility study on a free-trade area, new ICT framework, counter-terrorism collaboration, capacity building and sharing of information, tackling climate change risks, regional and international cooperation, and cooperation on power and energy sectors.
- The foreign secretary has said it will take a few days to know the specific figures of the loan deals.
- The six projects whose plaques were unveiled by Hasina and Xi include the Karnaphuli Multi-Lane Tunnel project in Chittagong, the Confucius Institute at Dhaka University and the Tier-4 National Data Centre in Gazipur's Kaliakoir, Shahjalal Fertiliser Company Limited in Fenchuganj, a 1320 megawatt thermal power plant in Patuakhali's Payra and a 1320 MW coal-fired power plant in Chittagong's Banshkhali.

4. JOINT STATEMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

2019-07-07

(Published on Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China website)

1. At the invitation of Mr. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh paid an official visit to China from 1-6 July 2019. She also participated at the 13th Summer Davos Forum in Dalian.

2. During the visit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, held talks with Premier Li Keqiang, and met Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. The two sides had in-depth exchanges of views on China-Bangladesh relations, international and regional issues of common interest, and reached broad consensus.

3. Bangladesh congratulated China on the 70th anniversary of its founding of the People's Republic of China and expressed its sincere wishes that under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the Chinese people will realize the Two Centenary Goals and build China a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.

4. China appreciated the rapid socio-economic development in Bangladesh in recent years and is confident that under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh will become a middle-income country by 2021, which will lay a solid foundation for Bangladesh to becoming a developed country by 2041 and building a Sonar Bangla (Golden Bangladesh) at the earliest time.

5. The two sides expressed their satisfaction with the strong momentum gained by China-Bangladesh relations, since the establishment of China-Bangladesh Strategic Partnership of Cooperation in 2016. The two sides agreed to take necessary measures for speedy implementation of the projects of bilateral cooperation agreed at leaders' summits. The two sides reiterated their adherence to the important principles for developing China-Bangladesh relations, including developing bilateral relations on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, respecting and supporting each other in choosing the paths of development according to the national conditions, and respecting and supporting each others core interest and major concerns. China appreciates Bangladesh's commitment to one-China principle. Bangladesh appreciates China's continued support for strengthening infrastructural development of Bangladesh.

6. The two sides agreed to enhance high-level exchanges, maintain frequent contacts between leaders of the two countries on the sidelines of multilateral fora, and strengthen exchanges and cooperation at various levels between the two governments, legislative bodies, political parties, and peoples. The two sides expressed satisfaction with the outcome of regular Foreign Secretary/Vice Minister level consultations and other existing mechanisms to implement the consensus of the leaders of the two countries and exchange views on the bilateral relations as well as global and regional issues.

7. The two sides shared the view that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) offers a model of international cooperation for all the participants and provides new opportunities for regional connectivity and economic integration. The two sides agreed to fully tap the potentials of cooperation in various areas and promote BRI development, so as to realize sustainable development and common prosperity of the two countries.

8. The two sides agreed to expand and deepen trade, investment and industrial capacity cooperation so as to expand mutual benefit. China attaches importance to reduce the trade imbalance between the two countries and China will support to enhance Bangladesh's export to China esp. jute, seafood, leather, pharmaceuticals and so on. Both sides appreciated the step to establish China Economic and Industrial Zone in Chattogram of Bangladesh and encourage investment on Chinese companies in EZs of Bangladesh. The

two sides shall continue joint feasibility study on China-Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The two sides expressed their satisfaction with the positive progress made in a number of projects such as the 8th China-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge, China-Bangladesh Friendship Exhibition Center, Padma Bridge Rail Link Project, Multi-lane road tunnel under the river Karnaphuli, Installation of Single Point Mooring (SPM) with Double Pipe Line Project in Chattogram area. China will encourage more Chinese enterprises among others to explore cooperation in Power, Railway, Road, Port, ICT, iron and steel. Bangladesh will provide more favourable policy environment to facilitate the investment of Chinese enterprises and ensure the security of Chinese projects and people in Bangladesh.

9. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation on agriculture, marine, science, technology, Climate Change and establishing Climate Adaptation Center in Bangladesh. China will help Bangladesh on promoting high productive crop through demonstration. The two sides agreed to hold Dialogue on Maritime Cooperation on a regular basis, and explore the ways and means to cooperate on Blue Economy, maritime management, marine spatial planning, joint ocean observation, among others. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation on science and technology innovation, promote the fulfillment of the Belt and Road Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation Action Plan, and try to enhance personnel exchanges, establish joint laboratories and technology transfer. The two sides agreed to strengthen exchanges and cooperation on Climate Change. China is willing to help Bangladesh on capacity building in addressing Climate Change.

10. The two sides agreed that defense cooperation is an important part of China-Bangladesh friendship and will maintain and enhance exchanges at various levels between the two armed forces. The two sides will deepen cooperation on defense industry and trade, training, equipment and technology, mutual visits of navy ships, and the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

11. The two sides condemned and opposed terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Chinese side conveyed its support for Bangladesh's efforts in combating terrorism and maintaining national security and stability and expressed its readiness to cooperate through sharing of information, capacity building and training with Bangladeshi side. The law enforcement departments will further cooperate on combating transnational crimes, drug suppression, protection to projects and their staff.

12. The two sides agreed that training opportunities of human resources and skills development shall continuously be provided for the Bangladeshi side. The Bangladeshi side expressed its gratitude for the education, training and scholarship programs for its students and officials to study in China. The Chinese side will continue to provide training courses to Bangladeshi professionals in fields such as public administration, science and technology, agriculture, health care, arts, and help the Bangladeshi side to develop vocational training in Bangladesh. The Chinese side will continue to provide government scholarships for Bangladeshi students to study in China, and fund the outstanding young Bangladeshi scientists to work in China.

13. The two sides agreed to strengthen cultural and people-to-people exchanges and promote interactions between the media, think tank, youth, women organizations, non-governmental organizations and local authorities of the two countries. The two sides agreed to promote facilitation on personnel exchanges based on the principle of equality and mutual benefit. The aeronautical authorities of two countries will maintain consultation on expanding air traffic rights to facilitate people-to-people exchanges.

14. The two sides value the important role of BCIM Economic Corridor in promoting practical cooperation among Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar and the overall development of the region. The two sides are ready to enhance communication and coordination in pushing forward the construction of BCIM Economic Corridor. The two sides also agreed to push for early accomplishment of the Joint Study Report and good progress in the BCIM Economic Corridor development.

15. The two sides emphasized that they will abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and stay committed to realizing democratization of international relations. The two sides agreed to maintain the status and critical role of the UN in international affairs, support necessary reform of the UN and the UN Security Council, and increased representation of developing countries in the Security Council. The two sides maintain that the reform should be achieved by formulating agenda of comprehensive reform through democratic consultation and on the foundation of the broadest consensus.

16. The two sides agreed to enhance their cooperation in the UN and other international organizations, including enhancing coordination and cooperation in global issues such as development, energy, food security and other issues related to challenges and appeals of developing countries, and will work together to promote peace, security, development and prosperity of the region and the world. The two sides agreed to strengthen coordination in international trade, economic and financial organizations and support the efforts of building of a more just and reasonable international economic order and consolidating South-South cooperation.

17. Both sides expressed their opposition to any kind of trade protectionism and stay committed to maintain the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at the core, and work for a more open, inclusive, balanced and win-win economic globalization so that its benefits are shared by all.

18. The two sides agreed that the development of South Asia is full of vitality and potential. The two sides reiterated to making efforts towards a peaceful, stable, open, inclusive, developing and prosperous South Asia. The two sides agreed to enhance coordination and cooperation in regional cooperation mechanisms.

19. Both sides agreed that properly resolving the issue involving Rakhine State will contribute to the peace and stability of the region. Both sides agreed that solution to this issue lies in the early, safe and dignified return to Myanmar of the displaced people who have entered Bangladesh from Rakhine State. The Chinese side encourages Myanmar and Bangladesh to realize the early repatriation of the displaced people to Myanmar through consultation. China will continue to host trilateral meetings among China, Bangladesh and

Myanmar to provide a platform for dialogue to promote the early return of the displaced people. China will offer its support in creating secure and conducive conditions for the return to Myanmar of the displaced people currently taking shelter in Bangladesh.

20. The two sides signed documents of cooperation in areas such as power, economic and technology, investment, hydrology, and cultural contacts during the visit.

21. The two sides expressed their satisfaction with the outcome of the visit. Both sides believe that this visit is of great significance to the in-depth development of Strategic Partnership of Cooperation between China and Bangladesh. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appreciated the warm hospitality accorded by the Chinese government and people, and extended invitation to the Chinese leaders to visit Bangladesh. Both sides agreed to maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges.