



## **Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations During Hasina Wajid Era: An Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

The Main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship Between Pakistan and Bangladesh during Hasina Wajid Era. The relations were marked as sour because of Awami league inclined towards India. This study uses a qualitative research approach to elucidate the relations between the two. The results of this study underline the intricacy of Pak-Bangladesh ties and draw attention to the possibilities as well as the difficulties. The study ends with suggestions for both sides of legislators on ways to improve cooperation and settle long-standing problems. This study adds to the scholarly debate on South Asian foreign affairs and offers insightful analysis for academics, diplomats, and legislators eager in promoting regional stability and cooperation.

Key Words: 1971 War, Pak-Bangladesh Relations, Hasina Waajid Era, Apology Issue, POWS.

### **Introduction**

Since Bangladesh's declaration of independence from Pakistan in 1971, following a protracted struggle for independence, the relationship between the two countries has developed in a variety of ways that are both intricate and diverse. Over the course of history, this relationship has developed as a consequence of historical, political,



economic, and cultural influences, with varying degrees of harmony and discord emerging along the way. There have been significant shifts in the nature of these encounters, particularly under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina Wajid, who has served as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the previous two years. The Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, which was historically marked by significant human suffering and geopolitical realignments, was the event that laid the groundwork for a challenging diplomatic environment. Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader of Bangladesh, entered office as the country's new prime minister. Her efforts not only represented a continuance of relations with Pakistan, but they also resolved longstanding concerns that were tied to the conflict. Through the course of her final two terms in office, Sheikh Hasina's administration endeavored to find a middle ground between the pledge to maintain the memory of the liberation fight and the objective of achieving economic success, regional stability, and reconciliation. Bangladesh and Pakistan engaged in a variety of interactions, ranging from political discussions and commercial endeavors to cultural exchanges and interpersonal connections, all accomplished through the implementation of this comprehensive plan. In spite of the fact that they had been at war in the past, both countries made an effort to strengthen their relationship during this period. The development of their friendship was brought to light through diplomatic encounters, high-level meetings, and conversations on subject matter that was connected to the topic at hand. As a result of the strategic significance of South Asia, as well as the challenges posed by poverty, climate change, and worries regarding regional security, these two nations were driven to search for areas of cooperation that would be to their mutual benefit. On the other hand, the historical fallout from the conflict that took place in 1971 and the aftermath of it continued to hang over the partnership, occasionally resurfacing in political debate and diplomatic interactions. Historical records, formal regrets, and endeavors to heal the wounds of the past have demonstrated how challenging it is to negotiate this history while also building a path toward partnership. As Sheikh Hasina's presidency came to a conclusion, there were shifts in the regional alliances, global power dynamics, and economic objectives that were observed in the region. The ebb and flow of relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh was unavoidably influenced by these elements, which added an additional layer of external complication to a relationship that was already convoluted.

## **Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the in-depth relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid. The study begins with an overview of the subject. The complex diplomatic ties between these two South Asian states may have been better understood during the time under discussion, which



was distinguished by Sheikh Hasina's leadership. The purpose of this study is to examine the current literature in order to provide a thorough understanding of the historical background and changing dynamics that influenced Pakistan-Bangladesh relations over this time period. The intricacies of Pakistan and Bangladesh's diplomatic relations can only be understood by placing them in their proper historical perspective. The study recognizes the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War as a watershed moment in history, a battle that changed the course of bilateral ties between the two nations and ultimately led to Bangladesh's independence (Wilcox, 1973). A connection marked by historical baggage and a continual process of reinterpretation was set down in the wake of the war and the ensuing geopolitical realignments. This historical backdrop is necessary for a critical examination of the dynamics of Pakistan-Bangladesh ties under Hasina Wajid.

The description of the diplomatic ties as "evolving dynamics" further emphasizes their dynamic character. In order to better understand how these factors have shaped Pakistan-Bangladesh relations throughout time, this literature study will attempt to map out their evolution. The dynamic character of the relationship necessitates an examination that considers the complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors, regardless of whether it has been characterized by diplomatic successes or difficulties. To put it simply, the rest of the literature study is structured around this introduction. It sets the research within the larger framework of international relations, drawing attention to the relevance of the selected time period and the need to assess the intricacies and subtleties that characterize Pakistan-Bangladesh relations under Hasina Wajid. I hope that this assessment will help shed light on the complex diplomatic dynamics that have molded South Asia's regional environment by highlighting the importance of both the past and present in comprehending these interactions.

Since Bangladesh gained its independence in 1971, the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh has been complicated and troubled (Wilcox, 1973). Interactions between these two South Asian states have been profoundly impacted by historical legacies, regional geopolitical complications, and lingering grudges from the 1971 war. Under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid, who has ruled Bangladesh for four terms (with a two-year break) beginning in 1996, this chapter explores the complexities of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. Key variables affecting Pakistan-Bangladesh ties during Hasina's leadership are examined in this chapter by reviewing available literature. Pakistan-Bangladesh ties are clouded by the 1971 Liberation War. Despite the formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1974, a significant obstacle continues to be the question of war crimes and responsibility for the horrors perpetrated during the conflict. With its origins in the independence struggle, Hasina's Awami League has long demanded public apologies and prosecutions for Pakistani leaders involved in the conflict. Pakistan, on the other hand, has consistently played down its involvement and



fought off calls to tackle the problem directly. Emotional sensitivity and efforts at deeper healing have been impeded by these divergent historical views.

The geopolitical situation in the area adds another layer of complexity to the connection. Islamabad often worries about encirclement and Indian influence over Bangladesh due to Bangladesh's strong links with India, Pakistan's historical enemy. The relationship between the two countries is further complicated by the dynamics between superpowers like China and the US. These extraneous variables complicate matters further, causing Pakistan and Bangladesh to move closer together and farther away at different times. There are still certain areas where Pakistan and Bangladesh may agree, notwithstanding the ongoing difficulties. Potentially fruitful areas of cooperation include trade and economics, especially in the energy and textile industries. Mutual respect and understanding may flourish when individuals from different backgrounds interact with one another. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of tension and a lack of progress towards closer relations due to things like border disputes, water resource cooperation, and accusations that Pakistan is sponsoring Islamist terrorist organizations in Bangladesh.

A pragmatic and sophisticated approach characterizes Prime Minister Hasina's dealings with Pakistan. She has shown her willingness to participate in dialogue when it is mutually beneficial and has stressed the need to resolve the problems surrounding the 1971 conflict. As a result of the complicated interaction of internal politics, historical baggage, and foreign forces, Hasina's leadership has seen both amiable and distant stretches. There has been some stability and some change in Pakistan-Bangladesh ties under Hasina Wajid. The relationship's future is heavily influenced by the events of 1971, regional dynamics, and internal political factors. Economic collaborations, cultural exchanges, and resolving shared regional issues may help bring people together and strengthen relationships, even though there are still obstacles to overcome. If we want to make sense of South Asian politics and the possibilities for future interstate collaboration, we need to understand the many variables that affected Pakistan-Bangladesh relations during the Hasina period.

## **A Review of Previous Literature**

According to research paper "Pakistan-Bangladesh relations – Prospects and Way Forward" by Moonis Ahmar, Pakistan has been optimistic about Bangladesh's human and social growth during the 51 years since its independence. Absence of animosity, jealousy, prejudice, distrust, or paranoia defines this viewpoint. The contribution of political parties, civil society, and young to the enhancement of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations will be thoroughly examined. (Ahmar, 2022).

*"Historical Analysis of Bangladesh War Crimes Trial and its Impact on Pak-Bangladesh Relations"* by Dr. Ghulam Mustafa. The study investigates War Crimes Trials and its impacts on Pak-Bangladesh relations. The author argues that it's against



the Humanitarian Law (Mustafa, 2021).

“*Commentary on Pakistan Bangladesh Trade Relations*” by (Mufti, 2021) argued that an in-depth analysis of the diplomatic situation between Bangladesh and Pakistan during the Hasina Wajid period requires looking at the chances and difficulties that came with their relationship. This section provides a critical analysis of the complex dynamics that shaped bilateral relations, highlighting the challenges encountered and possibilities taken advantage of throughout that time.

The research paper, “*Bangladesh and Pakistan: The Great Divergence*”, by (Khan M. H., 2020) stated that there have been certain stumbling blocks on the way to strong economic cooperation. Sustainable and fair trade are issues that arise from trade imbalances, which Pakistan often faces. Physical obstacles, such as a lack of land and air connections, also make it harder for products and services to move freely. Cooperation in the areas of administrative process simplification and business contact facilitation is necessary since non-tariff barriers and bureaucratic impediments still limit trade potential. Other forms of economic collaboration show potential beyond conventional commerce.

“*Conflict Resolution Research in Pakistan: Scope and Challenges to the Development of the Discipline*” by (Effendi, 2017) argued that fostering regional stability via economic concerns was complex and deserves thorough investigation. Cooperation and less conflict are two ways in which economic interdependence may promote stability. On the other side, complexity brought up by economic inequality or rivalry may affect regional stability more broadly. Throughout the Hasina Wajid period, Pakistan and Bangladesh engaged in economic exchanges, which shaped their bilateral ties and the geopolitical dynamics of South Asia.

In his book, entitled “*Pakistan and Bangladesh: from Conflict to Cooperation*”, (Ahmar, 2005) offered a thorough examination of the complex relationship that developed between the two countries after 1971. Ahmar explores the background of their split and the way that diplomatic, commercial, and social relations developed afterward. The book carefully looks at the major decisions and events that formed the bilateral relations, emphasizing both efforts at cooperation and disagreements.

In “The Issue of Prisoners of War (POWS), 1971 and Recognition of Bangladesh” (Mustafa & Gill, 2004) elaborate that how through bargaining tactics, Mujeeb Ur Rehman urges Pakistan to recognize Bangladesh. The study deals with the legacy of 1971 war, Role of India and fate of 90,000 POWS.

Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations in The Era of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid

When President Pervez Musharraf visited Bangladesh in 2002, he conveyed his "regret" for the regrettable events of 1971, which brought the topic to the attention of both parties. President Musharraf first paid respects to the nation's liberation war heroes at the National Martyrs Memorial at Savar after arriving in Bangladesh on July 29, 2002.



He used similar language to express his regret when speaking at a banquet in Dhaka later. In Bangladesh, opinions on his remarks were divided. While a number of Bangladeshi media applauded the action and called it a positive start, others saw it as a token gesture meant to divert attention away from the historical crimes against humanity. In response, Prime Minister of Bangladesh Khaleda Zia expressed optimism, stating that the action would "undoubtedly help mitigate the old wounds". (Kukreja, 2008)

President Musharraf's expression of sorrow was not entirely clear-cut, leaving room for different readings. The Bangladeshi government released statements after the visit requesting that Pakistan apologize formally rather than merely expressing regret. It would be appropriate to examine the distinction between the meanings of "regret" and "apology" in this context. "Apology" is something you say or write to convey that you are sorry for doing something wrong, whereas "regret" is the sadness you feel because you wish it had not happened or that you had not done it, according to the Longman. Although the two terms have similar meanings, an apology is different because it entails taking responsibility for one's actions (Choudhary, 1972).

Therefore, when it comes to the conciliation efforts made by Islamabad, the importance of three formal expressions of regret made by the Pakistani government at three distinct times cannot be understated. Given these remarks, the Pakistani government would not be acting in a novel way if it issued a formal apology. Therefore, it is anticipated that there would be little resistance within Pakistan to a step that would fulfill a formality that it has already partially completed. However, Bangladesh should provide a formal apology in return if Pakistan chooses to do so and not make any more demands. Following Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's 1998 visit to Bangladesh, during which he pledged to hold those accountable for the events of 1971 accountable. No matter how far they are committed, excesses and serious human rights breaches have a lasting impression on the people who are impacted because they become ingrained in their collective memory, history, and psychology. Importantly, there are several instances of states who have committed crimes against humanity throughout history expressing regret. Sanam Noor has quoted Anam Zakaria's statement that Germany apologized to Israel for its excesses during World War II, Japan apologized to the Chinese and Koreans, South Africa's white president, Frederic Willem de Klerk, apologized for the colonial oppression, Elizabeth, the Queen, apologized for the massacre in Jallianwala Bagh and the US army issued an apology for the September 2003 friendly fire incident in Fallujah, Iraq, which claimed the lives of eight Iraqi police officers and a Jordanian guard (Noor, 2005). Such reconciliation efforts work better than a comprehensive peacemaking process, especially for nations with only historical disputes and no active wars now. In the instance of Bangladesh, many societal groups' anti-Pakistan sentiments represent a significant hindrance to a successful partnership. This demonstrates the



crucial significance that the perception of "the other" plays in bilateral relations. There is a sizable lobby in Bangladesh that is opposed to unconditional reconciliation with Pakistan. This lobby is primarily secular and ignores any mention of religious similarity when it comes to moving past the past. Bangladesh continues to harbor a deep-seated belief that Pakistan never fully comprehended the scope of the humanitarian catastrophe its forces had unleashed.

Pakistan was clear from the start that it could not take in all of the stranded people at that particular time. Approximately 127,000 stranded individuals have been returned to Pakistan by 1982 (Khan, 2020). The Ribata Trust was established in 1985 as a consequence of a deal made between Pakistan and the Saudi-based Ribata al-Alam al-Islami (Union of the Muslim World) to repatriate the surviving Pakistanis.<sup>12</sup> In accordance with this agreement, a survey was carried out and finished in 1992 in association with the (SPGRC), and the total tally was 238,000 (Jahan, 2021). A 1992 agreement between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Bangladesh called for the gradual return of stranded Pakistanis; but, because of changes in Pakistani politics, this agreement could not be carried out in its entirety. The Benazir Bhutto administration did not bring about any progress in the repatriation process. However, upon regaining power in 1998, Nawaz Sharif called on Pakistanis to donate to the Ribata for that reason. Paradoxically, Pakistan's Foreign Office made conflicting claims about the matter. Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed stated in a Pakistani publication on January 18, 1998, that the Biharis would be better off in Bangladesh (Islam S., 2016).

The Sindhis in Pakistan are the most ardent opponents of repatriation; they argue that settling a big number of Biharis in Sindh will change the province's demographics and go against their political and economic interests. Nawaz Sharif had made the decision to relocate the Biharis to Punjab due to Sindh's objections (Mehmood, 2015). A 1992 pilot project called for the construction of 50,000 dwelling units at a cost of 10 billion rupees across eight districts of Punjab. Even Punjabis objected to the plan after it was revealed, giving various justifications. Zafarullah Khan Jamali, the previous prime minister, reportedly promised the (PRC) that he would cooperate fully and that land in Balochistan would be set aside for rehabilitation. But in the long run, this was obviously not a workable concept.

Similar to the apology issue, several Pakistani governments have failed to have a unified stance on this matter. Pakistan is legally required to repatriate its residents who have been stranded, as per the terms of the Delhi Agreement and the 1992 Joint Statement between Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, a few officials have disputed Pakistan's responsibility for their return. In January 2004, the LHC determined that the individuals in question were citizens of Bangladesh rather than Pakistan (Mufti and Ali, 2021). It appears that the current administration is hesitant to take action on the issue. A delegation from the SPGRC was assured by President Musharraf in Dhaka in



2002 that his government will "do everything possible" to address this issue (Zahoor, 2019). In order to find a fair and agreeable resolution to this problem, he also suggested that the governments of the two nations hold a trilateral conference with the SPGRC. However, there hasn't been much advancement in this area. In response to a query posed in the National Assembly, Khurshid Kasuri wrote that Pakistan had fulfilled its commitment under the Delhi Agreement, 169,144 people were repatriated in three phases between 1974 and 1982, and those who remained on the island and were not repatriated could be regarded as Bangladeshi citizens (Khan M. H., 2020). The claim that Pakistan has met its commitment with respect to the situation and future of the stranded individuals is imprecise and ambiguous. This argument may have its origins in the 1973 Delhi Agreement, which requires Pakistan's agreement to "initially repatriate a substantial number of non-Bengalees."

These wretched people continue to live in substandard conditions in 66 run-down camps in Bangladesh (Mehmood, 2015). They are the victims of history, politics, and official neglect. They are similar to stateless people in that Pakistan has been alleging several barriers to their return, while Bangladesh views them as an economic burden. However, the truth is that Pakistan has not complied with its obligation under the law, morality, or humanitarianism to provide these so-called "patriots" with adequate space in the 307,293 square kilometer Land of the Pure (Noor, 2005). The claim that Pakistan already had more than two million Afghan refugees is a weak justification because these refugees arrived in Pakistan only in the 1980s, after Pakistan had already made a formal commitment to take in the last of the stranded individuals from Bangladesh.

As it gets ready to leave the LDC category in 2026, Bangladesh is focusing more and more on bilateral preferential trade agreements (FTAs) in order to increase export earnings and gain better access to markets over the next three to six years (Ahmar, 2022). In order to determine if PTAs are feasible, the Bangladeshi government is also examining the prospects of trade agreements with forty-four nations. Eleven more nations have been contacted by Dhaka to sign free trade agreements. Although Pakistan's 220 million people are not yet a major export market for Bangladesh, in the medium to long term, the government of Bangladesh is probably going to see Pakistan as a market (Noor, 2005). The government of Bangladesh seems willing to sign trade deals, thus Pakistan ought to take advantage of this and talk to Dhaka about an FTA or PTA.

In a related development, the Karachi-based Pakistan Business Council (PBC), a pan-industry advocacy forum, has published an extensive study titled "Trade and Investment Opportunities in a Pakistan – Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (FTA)," (Khan M. H., 2020) which looks at the advantages and disadvantages of a possible FTA between Bangladesh and Pakistan. The analysis showed that Pakistan has always benefited from





bilateral trade with Bangladesh. But from \$947.23 million in 2011 to \$583.44 million in 2020, exports to Bangladesh fell (Noor, 2005). Pakistan's market share has decreased by 8.4% even though it is one of Bangladesh's top ten import partners, suggesting that Pakistan's export competitiveness has decreased in the Bangladeshi market. Moreover, Pakistan's imports from Bangladesh decreased from \$82.73 million in 2011 to \$61.94 million in 2020, giving Pakistan a positive balance of \$521.50 million in 2020—the lowest trade surplus Pakistan has had with Bangladesh in the previous ten years (Khan A. W., 2023). At least nine times as much is currently exported by Pakistan to Bangladesh than is imported from that nation.

Furthermore, due to political bias and unethical considerations, businessmen and exporters on both sides must comply with strict visa regulations. Prejudice is also visible in the port of Chittagong, where many counters for inspection and verification further impede clearance for exporters from Pakistan (Hossain, 2020). The commercial section representative responded to the tariff and non-tariff barriers faced by Pakistani exporters by saying that there are no specific import limitations on Pakistan as a result of the lack of a discriminatory tariff system. He drew attention to the existing tariff structure and said that tariffs on commodities exchanged between the two nations may be lowered.

The data from the ITC trade map indicates that Bangladesh is subject to substantially higher tariffs than its Pakistani counterparts. Nonetheless, duties on goods from Pakistan that are exported to Bangladesh range from 0% to 25%, with an average of 9%. Bangladesh's quick (Hanif, 2018) industrialization has made it one of the world's top importers of woven fabric and cotton yarn. In the textile industry, Pakistan has a lot of unrealized potential that might be greatly increased with a well-negotiated trade agreement. Nevertheless, there are certain risks connected to the companies. Pakistani exporters appear to be facing administrative, legal, and logistical difficulties as a result of the growing smuggling of women's designer clothing made in Pakistan via the United Arab Emirates, according to information provided by the Commercial Section of the Pakistani High Commission in Dhaka. Due to the high tariffs the Bangladeshi government imposes on imports from Pakistan, textile items are being smuggled into Bangladesh in the luggage of airline passengers. But the government isn't taking any significant action to stop this illegal trade. Consequently, a significant amount of transactional data remains unrecorded.

Pakistan's agricultural sector and vegetable exports encounter noteworthy obstacles in Bangladesh. Concessionary duties would make Pakistani products more competitive in the Bangladeshi market because the country is not one of Bangladesh's main suppliers of agricultural and vegetable commodities, despite its great potential to do so. Pakistan would then be able to compete with nations like China and India on an equal basis. The BSTI and the BCSIR may conduct tests on food shipments from Pakistan (Lewis, 2011).



As a result, exporters have to abide with the Bangladesh Standard's compliance criteria (BDS). In order to address this severe trade barrier, the BSTI and the PSQCA have signed a MOU on standards and quality assurance. According to Noor (2005), this Memorandum of Understanding must result in a Mutual Recognition Agreement to encourage exports.

When the All Progressives party, led by Sheikh Hasina announced during the 2008 election campaign that it would hold war criminal prosecutions, the landscape began to shift dramatically against the JI once more (Islam, 2020). Sheikh Hasina made good on her pledge after winning the election, amending the 1973 act and establishing the International Crimes Tribunal in 2009. The fact that the original statute was expanded to include "organizations" in addition to "individuals" was its most important modification (Mahmood, 2021). Following a string of arrests from June to December 2010, the statute was implemented. When prominent JI leader Abdul Quader Molla was tried and executed in December 2013 for the first time, the act at last made a statement (Jahan, 2021). The decision to carry out this execution was partly influenced by the 2013 social upheaval spearheaded by the youth of Bangladesh.

Khan (2020) claimed that Quader Molla was first only given a life term in prison. The youth of Bangladesh, who had been waiting impatiently for justice for forty years, were incensed by this. In a matter of days, the impact of the thousands of demonstrators who gathered in Dhaka's Shahbag Square to voice their concerns extended throughout the entire nation. The demonstrators called for Quader Molla and other war criminals to be executed. They also called for JI to be excluded from politics. They thought that the secularism that served as Bangladesh's foundation was violated by the presence of a political party so focused on religion. An important factor in this movement's success was social media. Online activists and bloggers spearheaded the movement (Noor, 2005). Youth awareness was raised by the instantaneous exchange of agendas and information. Although the Shahbag protests were nonviolent rallies, they infuriated JI followers, who violently put an end to the demonstrations. The furious adherents of JI set fire to police cars, public transportation, prayer mats in mosques, places of worship for religious minorities, and Bangladesh's national flag (Kukreja, 2008). In the midst of all the mayhem, nonviolent nationwide protests persisted, and their violent response further strengthened the Shahbag demonstration. Several more prominent JI leaders were tried and put to death after Quader Molla's execution. These include Motiur Rahman Nizami on May 11, 2016, Mir Quasem Ali on September 3, 2016, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed on November 5, and Mohammad Kamaruzzaman on April 15, 2015 (Malik, 2011). On July 15, 2013, Ghulam Azam was sentenced to 90 years in prison; he passed away on July 15 (Zahoor, 2019).

Global attention has been drawn to the war crimes trials of leaders of JI (Khan, 2019). International groups first provided support and assistance to Bangladesh in connection



with the war crimes prosecution (Zahoor, 2019). Some of these organizations, including Amnesty International, protested against the killings because they opposed the death sentence, while others asked the Bangladeshi government to guarantee that the trials adhered to international norms. Protests have been triggered by the trials in a few Muslim nations, including Pakistan and Turkey. In 2016, a Turkish chapter of the Anatolian Youth Association (AGD) staged a protest against Matiur Rahman Nizami's execution (Malik, 2011). In protest of this execution, the Turkish president also withdrew his ambassador from Dhaka.

At first, Saudi Arabia, one of the major global contributors to Islamic groups, made an effort to advocate against the leaders of JI being put to death. Later on, though, they withdrew in order to maintain their political ties with Bangladesh and to guarantee that country's backing in its war against Iran. The Sheikh Hasina administration has consistently denied allegations that the killings were carried out for political reasons and that the legal process was faulty.

Since 2009, Pakistan has been a vocal opponent of the Bangladeshi government's war crimes tribunals in South Asia, citing apparent grounds for their protests. Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari asked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina not to reactivate war crimes cases during a special visit to Dhaka in 2009. Bangladesh perceived this as a clear-cut attempt by Pakistan to meddle in its own affairs. Additionally, Sheikh Hasina was forewarned that such an attempt would negatively impact Pakistan and Bangladesh's political relationship. But, the threat's hollowness became apparent when Bangladesh disregarded it and the Hasina government carried on with the proceedings. Pakistan changed course and demanded that the world community condemn the executions after failing to sway the Bangladeshi government's actions. Bangladesh swiftly and accurately responded, stating that Pakistan's assistance to those who carried out crimes during the 1971 war only served to highlight Pakistan's own direct complicity in those crimes.

The scars from the 1971 conflict between Bangladesh and Pakistan have reopened as a result of the war crimes prosecutions. The relationship between these two nations has gotten worse as a result of the recent terrorist strikes in Bangladesh carried out by Islamist terrorist organizations. The Bangladeshi government is persuaded that terrorist groups based in Pakistan provide support to Islamist terrorists in Bangladesh, based on the interrogation of imprisoned terrorists and forensic evidence. Consequently, the relationship deteriorated to such an extent that diplomats from Bangladesh did not attend the late-2015 SAARC meetings in Islamabad (Mehmood, 2015). The National Assembly of Pakistan unanimously voted in 2016 to denounce the war crimes prosecution. Furthermore, it asserted that the 1974 tripartite agreement between Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India was violated by the execution of leaders of JI (Noor, 2005).



## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Hasina Wajid era represents a new chapter in Pakistan- Bangladesh relations, characterized by a blend of dialogue, diplomacy, and a shared vision for cooperation and prosperity. While challenges remain, the commitment of both nations to engage in constructive dialogue and pursue mutual interests signals a promising trajectory for the future of their relationship. As Prime Minister Hasina continues to steer Bangladesh towards progress and development, the bonds between Pakistan and Bangladesh are poised to strengthen, ushering in a new era of collaboration and partnership in South Asia.

## Recommendations

Pakistan-Bangladesh relations can be enhanced for their mutual advancements in all spheres of life. Therefore, some recommendations are given which focus on the engagement in High-level diplomatic dialogues, cultural and educational exchanges, economic cooperation and trade, sensitive historical issues, security co-operations, regional connectivity and integration, public diplomacy, water resource management, conflict resolution mechanisms and promotion of tourism.

- Encouraging consistent and organized diplomatic exchanges between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the most senior levels has the potential to cultivate shared comprehension, resolve complaints, and investigate opportunities for cooperation. The purpose of these discussions should be to address historical difficulties, facilitate trade, and foster collaboration in diverse domains.
- Facilitating cultural and educational interactions between Pakistan and Bangladesh might contribute to the development of interpersonal connections and enhancing bilateral ties. This can encompass exchange programmes catering to students, scholars, artists, and cultural delegations with the aim of fostering mutual understanding and respect of many cultures.
- Both nations should actively seek ways to improve economic collaboration and strengthen commercial connections. This may entail the identification of pivotal industries for collaboration, elimination of trade barriers, and promotion of investments. Establishing collaborative projects and corporate alliances might additionally foster economic expansion and stability within the area.
- Acknowledging and resolving historical concerns with sensitivity is essential for fostering trust and healing between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Both nations should initiate sincere dialogues, offer apologies for any previous grievances if deemed necessary, and prioritize the establishment of a forward-looking partnership founded on mutual respect and collaboration.
- Enhancing security collaboration between Pakistan and Bangladesh has the potential to promote regional stability and effectively address shared security concerns.



This may entail the exchange of intelligence, collaborative stakeholder's drills, and cooperation in countering terrorism, extremism, and transnational criminal activities.

- Promoting regional connection and integration can foster new opportunities for collaboration between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Both nations should actively engage in regional forums like SAARC and BIMSTEC to foster economic integration, connectivity initiatives, and interpersonal interactions.
- Supporting public diplomacy initiatives and efforts can enhance official channels and provide further chances for dialogue and engagement. Civil society organizations, think tanks, and media outlets can play a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding, building trust, and promoting diplomacy that focuses on the needs and perspectives of individuals.
- Considering the mutual water resources of Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is imperative to collaborate in the management of these resources. Both nations should investigate methods for fair distribution of river flows, implementing sustainable water management strategies, and collaborating on projects to utilize water resources for mutual advantage.

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