

# Economic and Political Geography of South Asia

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Borders and Territories in South Asia

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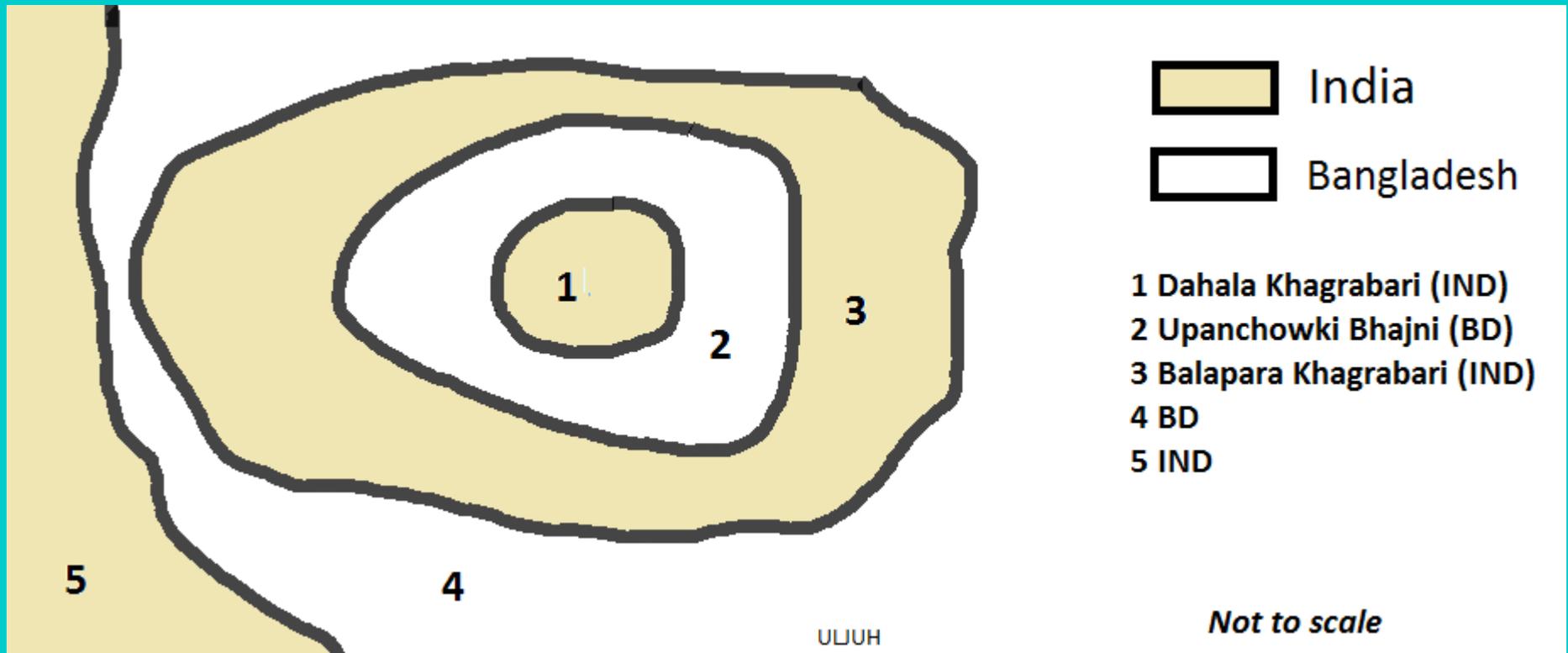
# Case of Bangladesh Border

- The nomenclature of 2011 Agreement
- PROTOCOL TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH CONCERNING THE DEMARCATION OF THE LAND BOUNDARY BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH AND RELATED MATTERS
- Signed in July 2011

# Pretext

- Issues of BSF personnel's firing upon, and the resultant deaths of, Bangladeshi citizens transgressing the border. The Bangladeshi side said that BSF personnel were killing innocent people, the BSF would assert that its personnel were firing at smugglers and hostile illegal migrants
- a common ground was found in the form of the BSF agreeing to use non-lethal weapons to warn potential illegal migrants or smugglers twice before resorting to the use of firearms.
- The implementation of this agreement has reduced the number of people killed along the border. According to the BSF, only seven people were killed in such firing in 2011 in contrast to the 55 deaths in 2009.

# Complex nature of Border



# Agreements

- March 2011, agreement for use of non-lethal weapons.
- July 2011, Coordinated Border Management Plan on July 30, 2011. India and Bangladesh have agreed to conduct joint coordinated patrols in areas susceptible to trafficking and other crimes based on shared intelligence inputs
- Reopening of Border Haats (marketplaces).
- Before 1972, border haats used to help people residing on either side of the border to trade their surplus produce in return for essential items. But these haats were shut down during Bangladesh's war of liberation
- India and Bangladesh decided to re-open two such haats as part of a pilot project. The first of these opened at Kalaichar-Baliyamari (West Garo Hills-Kurigram) on July 23, 2011. It is held once a week every Wednesday from 10 am to 4 pm. A second border haat opened at Ballat-Lauwaghar.

# Process

- There are 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh territory with 34,000 residents while 51 Bangladeshi enclaves with 17,000 people are inside India.
- India and Bangladesh had established two Joint Boundary Working Groups I & II in 2001 in order to discuss the issue of undermarked areas and enclaves and adverse possessions, respectively. These Groups met four times over ten years and came up with a mechanism to resolve the dispute, culminating in the Protocol to the Agreement concerning the Demarcation of Land Boundary between India and Bangladesh on September 6, 2011.
- The relevant strip maps shall be printed and signed by the Plenipotentiaries and transfer of territorial jurisdiction shall be completed simultaneously with the exchange of the enclaves.

# Salient Features of Agreement

- The relevant strip maps shall be printed and signed by the Plenipotentiaries and transfer of territorial jurisdiction shall be completed simultaneously with the exchange of the enclaves
- 4-Sectors 1) West Bengal Sector, 2) Meghalaya Sector, 3) Tripura Sector, 4) Assam Sector
- Bangladesh and India have 6.5km of un-demarcated border in three areas with total land size of about 150 acres, Bangladesh will receive a total of 140 acres in border areas. Namely, 35 acres in Matamuhuri, 70 in Doikhata and 35 in Lathithuli, he added
- The residents of the enclaves will be given the option to change their citizenship status to either one of the two countries, or retain their existing citizenship, he added.
- The people in those enclaves cannot not enjoy any state facility including health and education as they reside inside another country

# Implications

- The passage of the amendment will give India an unprecedented advantage of a secure boundary. India will be able to curb illegal migration, smuggling and other criminal activities.
- While the map of India will be redrawn, New Delhi will get 2,777 acres of land and will transfer 2,267 acres to Dhaka as a result of adjustment of adverse possessions, while 111 enclaves will go to Bangladesh and 51 enclaves to India.
- Officials said, "The exchange is notional. The exchange of enclaves will legalize a situation which already exists. The exchange of adverse possessions confirms that each country will legally possess the territories it is already holding."

# Impediments- National

- Aug 15, 2013, The government will table a constitutional amendment to ratify the India-Bangladesh land boundary agreement in Parliament next week notwithstanding lingering reservations by both BJP and Asom Gana Parishad (AGP)
- Khurshid reminded them that the process formalizing the land boundary with Bangladesh was started by the NDA regime in 2000, when a GoM report highlighted the importance of a constitution amendment to ratify the 1974 protocol, stating "this calls for determined and combined efforts in the realms of political will and diplomacy"
- The Cooch Behar unit of the BJP made several representations to the Centre, calling for an early implementation of the agreement —all 51 Bangladeshi enclaves lie in this north Bengal district. The enclaves are located so deep inside each other's territory that neither country has physical access to the other.

# Impediments- Regional

- Aug 20, 2013, 02.39 AM IST GUWAHATI: Opposition AsomGanaParishad (AGP) once again prevented the government from introducing a bill to ratify the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement in Parliament on Monday. Back in the state, BJP and AGP, along with the All Assam Students' Union (Aasu) and Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP), staged a protest on Monday against the move to ratify the bill.
- While AGP workers observed a black day on Monday against the move to introduce the bill, BJP activists burnt effigies of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and chief minister Tarun Gogoi for advocating the land-swap deal.
- Supported by Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs, Baishya scuttled the move by Union external affairs minister Salman Khurshid to introduce the bill in Rajya Sabha at 2pm on Monday. After the House reassembled, the AGP MP, along with the TMC MPs, again staged a protest, preventing the bill from being moved for introduction in the RS. Baishya said the bill has been deferred

# Contrasts

- Thu Nov 07 2013, 01:02 hrs, a 13-minute border closing retreat ceremony will be part of a new engagement between BSF personnel and their counterparts of the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB). The ceremony was officially inaugurated Wednesday at the Petrapole-Benapole border checkpoint in North 24 Paragana, about 120 km from Kolkata.
- The joint retreat ceremony is not only expected to strengthen the friendship between the BGB and the BSF but would reduce trouble along the border and will lead to better border management
- The Wednesday's ceremony included a cultural show titled 'Mohana' (confluence).
- It included renditions of Rabindranath Tagore and Nazrul Islam's songs. The team that performed the show included 25 children each from Bangladesh and India. A team of 15 personnel each from the BGB and the BSF too performed a song.
- On Wagah border - 'Aggressive' Wagah border ceremony causing pain in soldiers' knees, to be toned down, Plans are afoot to lighten the intensity of the parade as aggressive style of the parade was harming the soldiers
- Soldiers had complained of pain in their knees as parade involves heavy stomping of feet, Both the countries have signed an agreement to lower the intensity of the parade.
- Source: <http://daily.bhaskar.com/>

