

24-pt wishlist for Indo-Bangla ties

India and Bangladesh are poised to take bilateral ties to a new level of trust. Tarun Das, former chief mentor of CII, outlines an agenda for cementing ties.

India has already allowed duty-free imports from Least Developed Countries into India, including Bangladesh — it can also remove all para-tariff and non-tariff barriers on imports from Dhaka.

Jointly improve infrastructure at land-border customs posts for smooth, speedy movement of goods.

Expand imports of textiles, leather products, jute, paper products, ceramics, seafood, cement and other items through a special outreach programme — Buy Bangladesh Project.

Issue of business visas should be streamlined. Select-industry associations could play a role in the process of recommendation.

Agriculture cooperation to enhance productivity and efficiency, especially in the food-supply chain. Joint development of micro-industry and rural micro-financing can benefit rural population.

Collaboration in setting up of educational and skills-training centres in Dhaka to help building HR capacity. JVs in healthcare facilities in Bangladesh for expansion of health infrastructure.

Multimodal transport for efficient movement of people and productivity enhancement in transportation. India could use Chittagong port for export-import trade.

Joint investment in integrated development of jute industry will be mutually beneficial. Sharing of technology and competency in textiles to develop export markets.

Cooperation in water would promote hydroelectricity, irrigation, and rainwater harvesting. Jointly build integrated electricity-grid for trans-border power sharing.

Cooperation in disaster management through a joint fund and organization for faster response to natural calamities.

Art, culture and sports are areas for intense exchanges — partnerships for people-to-people links needed.

A joint green agenda for setting up of green buildings, factories, schools in Bangladesh; work for progress in climate change action agenda. Assist Dhaka in setting up of a Green Development Institute.

Promotion of tourism between Bangladesh and the adjoining states in India will be highly beneficial. Teacher-student exchanges on a regular basis to build understanding and cross-fertilization of ideas.

‘Young Indians’ could help build ‘Young Bangladeshi’ organizations for cooperation at the level of ‘Young Entrepreneurs and Executives’.

A ‘Centre of Excellence’ should be set up in Bangladesh, only for SME competitiveness and development, on the Chandigarh model.

Shared action on standards through links between standards institutes, with involvement of the industry, would be helpful.

Extend transit facilities for Dhaka’s trade with other Saarc nations like Bhutan and Nepal. Extend a line of credit of \$1 billion to Dhaka to help it augment its resources.

The important issue is to have a focus. To work to deadlines, to make up for lost time in building trust and mutual confidence. The need is to raise joint ambitions to build a new future together.