

Comprehensive Border Management Plan: India, Bangladesh border fencing

March 4, 2021

The 19th Home Secretary level talks between India and Bangladesh was held in the backdrop of 'Mujib Barsho' and 50 years since the Bangladesh Liberation War. The talks reiterated commitment to mutual cooperation between the two nations.

In news: India, Bangladesh agree to speed up border fencing

Placing it in syllabus: Security

Dimensions

- Border Problems and Internal Security Issues
- Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP)
- Its importance
- Hurdles

Content:

Border Problems and Internal Security Issues

- India shares its longest border with Bangladesh. They share 4096.7 km. of the border.
- But this border is not attentively managed.
- The India-Bangladesh border has been described as the 'problem area of tomorrow'.
- The problems include illegal migration, smuggling, cattle trafficking, fake currency and trans-border movement of insurgents, which are serious threats to the security of the country.

Various issues associated with India-Bangladesh border:

- **Illegal Migration:** Illegal movement of people from Bangladesh into India, especially in Assam, West Bengal and Tripura is a perennial problem. There are around two crore illegal migrants staying in India.
- **Cross-border Insurgency:** The porous nature of the border has also made it easy for Indian Insurgent Groups (IIGs) to cross over into Bangladesh, where they have set up safe houses and training camps.
- **Smuggling and illegal trafficking:** Activities including smuggling of arms, human and narcotics trafficking, counterfeiting Indian currency etc. are also quite rampant. The border also faces the unique problem of smuggling of cattle, readymade garments and food grains.
- **Cross border Firing:** The border has also witnessed occasional skirmishes between the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB), most notably in 2001.
- **Shoot-on-sight Policy:** Moreover, illegal immigrants from Bangladesh cross the border to India. Because of a large number of illegal immigrants crossing from Bangladesh into India, a controversial shoot-on-sight policy has been enforced by the Indian border patrols. This policy was initiated with reports of violence between the illegal migrants and Indian soldiers.

Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP)

- In 2016 India and Bangladesh agreed to an effective implementation of a Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) to prevent cross-border criminal activities and other issues.
- The Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) agreed to take measures like additional vigilance in areas vulnerable to trans-border crimes like smuggling of drugs, cattle, gold and fake currency as well as human trafficking.
- Both the border guarding forces also agreed to increase

coordinated patrols especially during night hours in vulnerable areas, deployment of Quick Reactions teams and educating border populations on the sanctity of the International Border.

- Various activities being conducted under Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) include Simultaneous Coordinated Patrols (SCP), sharing of intelligence, identification of vulnerable areas and increased frequency of meetings at all levels
- In 2021, India and Bangladesh discussed “early completion” of the pending fencing work along the international border
- Both sides agreed to further enhance the level of cooperation to prevent the smuggling of Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) and contraband

Decisions during the Home Secretary-level talks in Feb 2021

- The 19th edition of the dialogue was held online in the backdrop of ‘MujibBarsho’, 50 years of the Bangladesh Liberation War and establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.
- both sides and discussed early completion of pending fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border as agreed to by the Prime Ministers of the two countries
- Both Secretaries reiterated their commitment to further expand and strengthen mutual cooperation in the security and border related issues.
- Both sides reaffirmed not to allow the territory of either country to be used for any activity inimical to each other’s interests
- also agreed to further enhance the level of cooperation to prevent the smuggling of fake Indian currency notes (FICN) and contraband
- crackdown on narcotic smuggling, particularly Yaba tablets, was arrived at.

Yaba Tablets

- Yaba tablets are a menace for the population of both the countries.
- Yaba, considered a big menace in Bangladesh, is a mixture of **methamphetamine and caffeine** sold as cheap red or pink pills.
- Yaba is usually sourced from Myanmar.

Its Importance:

- It builds a pragmatic and people-sensitive approach to improve border management.
- It strengthens the Confidence Building Measures and coordination between India- Bangladesh security forces
- Early completion of fencing will aid in effective patrolling and monitoring of border areas.
- Certain measures under the plan reduce incidences of cross-border firing along the border.

Hurdles:

- The fencing project is limited by the difficult terrain and other physical barriers like Brahmaputra river
- The delays in fencing due to clashes. Bangladesh Border security troops (BDR) clashed with the Indian Border Security Force when the fence was built beyond the no man's land.

Measures undertaken to Secure Indo-Bangla Border

- **Security Measures:** Border Security Force operational responsibility of International Border with Bangladesh. Effective domination of the border is carried out round the clock surveillance of the borders by patrolling and by deploying observation posts all along the International Border.
- **Construction of fencing and floodlighting** as well as patrol roads is being done all along the border.
- **Up-gradation of intelligence network** and coordination

with sister agencies. Conduct of special operations along the border.

- **Bilateral Mechanism:** A three-tier bilateral institutional mechanism was set up between India and Bangladesh in 1994 to resolve security and border management issues. In July, 2011, a **Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP)** was signed between the two countries for proper management of the International border.

Border Area Development Programme (BADP): Various developmental works in the border areas have been undertaken by the MHA under the BADP as part of a comprehensive approach to the border management.

Mould your thought: Why has the India-Bangladesh border been described as the 'problem area of tomorrow'? Discuss the measures taken to address the internal security threats in border areas.

Approach to the answer:

- Introduction
- Discuss the problems along the border
- Write About CBMP and Border Area Development Program
- Mention the hurdles
- Conclusion