

## Not just strategic ties with Dhaka: Sushma

Sushma Swaraj inaugurates the new chancery of Indian High Commission in Dhaka on Monday. PTI/Twitter

India will resolve all irritants in ties with Bangladesh with sincerity, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said on Monday as she inaugurated 15 Indian-assisted development projects worth about \$8.7 million.

On the second and concluding day of her visit, Ms. Swaraj lit the ceremonial lamp to mark the opening of the sprawling chancery complex of the Indian High Commission here.

During the ceremony, she also launched 15 development projects being funded by India. "India is following a policy of neighbours first, and among the neighbours Bangladesh is foremost," Ms. Swaraj said at the function, describing bilateral relations as having gone beyond a strategic partnership.

### 'Ironing out irritants'

She also referred to the peaceful solution of the land and maritime boundary issues. She said the relations between the neighbours were now outstanding, and that both countries were working to resolve irritants in the spirit of "friendly relations and with the right intention". She did not specify the nature of the issues, but the water sharing of common rivers, particularly the Teesta, had long been pending.

The development projects, worth about \$8.7 million, include installation of 11 water treatment plants in the southwestern coastline of Pirozpur, 36 community clinics and reconstruction of Dhaka's historic Ramna Kali Temple destroyed by invading Pakistani troops in the 1971 liberation war.

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister A.H. Mahmood Ali, Health Minister Mohamad Nasim and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's political affairs adviser H.T. Imam were among those present.

Ms. Swaraj also gifted books, computers, multimedia equipment to the Hindi and Sanskrit departments of the University of Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi.

Ms. Swaraj arrived in Bangladesh on Sunday for the annual meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission. She returned on Monday.

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