

# XI PITCHES FOR CLOSER TIES WITH BANGLADESH, SEEKS BRI PUSH

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - China

Xi Jinping

Chinese President Xi Jinping said he stands ready with Bangladesh leaders to better align the two countries' strategies and jointly promote the construction of his multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to take the strategic partnership of the two countries to new heights.

Mr. Xi made the remarks on Sunday in an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Bangladesh counterpart, Mohammad Abdul Hamid, on the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the bilateral diplomatic relationship.

In his message, Mr. Xi hailed the steady and long-term friendship, saying he is ready to work with Mr. Hamid to better align development strategies with Bangladesh, step up cooperation under the framework of the BRI and push forward the China-Bangladesh strategic, cooperative partnership to a new level, official media reported.

With over \$26 billion Chinese investments and \$38 billion dollars funding commitments, Bangladesh is one of the largest recipients of China's massive infrastructure project.

China has also offered zero-tariff treatment to 97% of Bangladesh's exports by adding 5,161 more items to the existing list of 3,095 duty-free products.

The BRI seeks to build rail, maritime and road links from Asia to Europe and Africa in a revival of ancient Silk Road trading routes.

## India's concerns

The BRI has been a major bone of contention between India and China as one portion of the corridor passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Besides Pakistan, where China initiated over \$60 billion as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), China has stepped up its huge infrastructure investments in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives rising concerns of its growing influence in India's immediate neighbourhood.

The BRI is President Xi's top priority initiative, which aims firm up China's global influence.

## 'Debt-diplomacy'

The initiative has, however, attracted allegations, especially from the U.S., of debt-diplomacy after Sri Lanka handed over its Hambantota Port to a state-run Chinese firm in 2017 for a 99 years' lease in a debt swap amounting to \$1.2 billion. Malaysia has also deferred several projects under the BRI, citing cost revaluation.

Mr. Xi, in his message to Mr. Hamid, also said the two countries had worked jointly to fight against COVID-19.

Earlier, China had sent medical team to Bangladesh to share its experience of handling coronavirus, which had emerged first in Wuhan in December last year.

Bangladesh is also among a dozen countries where the clinical trials of Chinese vaccine are under way.

Subscribe to The Hindu digital to get unlimited access to Today's paper

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Start your 14 days free trial. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

\*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

You can support quality journalism by turning off ad blocker or purchase a subscription for unlimited access to The Hindu.

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

**END**

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com