STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

How are USA-Bangladesh Relations?

International Relations

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The relationship between the United States and Bangladesh is important, multi-layered, and at times complex. It includes cooperation in trade, security, development, and regional stability, but also tensions over democracy and human rights.

1. Diplomatic Relations

- The United States recognized Bangladesh in 1972, soon after its independence.
- Both countries maintain full diplomatic missions in Dhaka and Washington, D.C.
- Relations are generally cooperative but cautious, especially in recent years.

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2. Political Relations

The U.S. officially supports democracy, free elections, and human rights in Bangladesh.

Washington has expressed concerns over:

- Election credibility
- Political repression
- Media freedom
- The U.S. has imposed visa restrictions on Bangladeshi officials accused of undermining democratic processes.
- Bangladesh views some U.S. actions as interference in internal affairs, creating diplomatic friction.

3. Economic & Trade Relations

The U.S. is one of Bangladesh’s largest export destinations, especially for:

- Ready-made garments (RMG)
- Textiles and apparel
- Bangladesh exports over $10–12 billion annually to the U.S.
- The U.S. is also a major source of:

- Foreign direct investment
- Development assistance
- Technology and agricultural support
- However, Bangladesh does not receive GSP trade benefits, which it seeks to regain.

4. Security & Strategic Cooperation

The two countries cooperate on:

- Counter-terrorism
- Maritime security in the Bay of Bengal
- Military training and peacekeeping
- Bangladesh participates in joint military exercises like CARAT.
- The U.S. sees Bangladesh as strategically important in the Indo-Pacific region, especially amid China's growing influence.

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5. Human Rights and Democracy Issues

The U.S. has raised concerns over:

- Alleged extrajudicial killings
- Restrictions on opposition parties
- Media freedom
- Sanctions were imposed on Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) in 2021 under the Global Magnitsky Act.
- These issues remain a major source of tension.

6. Rohingya Refugee Crisis

- The U.S. is one of the largest donors supporting Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.
- Washington supports the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of refugees to Myanmar.
- Bangladesh expects stronger international pressure on Myanmar.

7. Strategic Balancing with China

- Bangladesh maintains strong economic ties with China.
- The U.S. views Bangladesh as a key player in the Indo-Pacific strategy to ensure a free and open region.
- Dhaka tries to balance relations between China, India, and the United States without aligning exclusively with any power.

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