



INDIA-BANGLADESH BORDER: AN ANALYSIS OF SECURITY ISSUES

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Abstract:

In 1947, the international border between Pakistan and India was created by the partitioning of the subcontinent. The newly created Pakistan consisted of two land blocks, one to the west and the other to the east. The Bengal province was divided between East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and India what resulted in a poorly defined border between the two nations. The dispute over the ownership of many villages near the border was started as both countries claimed their sovereignty over them. There were 190 disputed enclaves to the India Bangladesh Border (IBB) what worsened the dispute of the border demarcation. In 1971, East Pakistan got independence as a new state named Bangladesh through a 9-month long liberation war and India joined this war physically against Pakistan. The “honeymoon period” of bilateral relations between newly created Bangladesh and India did not continue for long. There are many common issues between the two neighbors that disturbed the bilateral relations such as border killing and other security issues related to the border, and the sharing of 54 common river’s water. Odhikar, Bangladesh-based human rights organization, reported that from 2000 to 2010, India’s Border Security Force (BSF) killed at least 924 Bangladeshi nationals. MASUM, a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) has mentioned many cases only in West Bengal, a state of India. This paper tries to analyze why the IBB is violent and concludes with a recommendation that how to ensure border security. Data has been used for this study from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources including newspapers, periodicals, and official statistics of Indian and Bangladesh governments as well as NGOs both national and international are studied. In terms of secondary sources, this paper examines academic books and book chapters, publications in scientific journals, and articles published on the topic. This paper preferred realism to explain the nature of the security issues of the IBB. The main argument of this paper is the IBB is the bloodiest in the world. To improve border security conditions the study suggests that India should act like a neighbor, not a big brother, and work with Bangladesh together.

Keywords: India, Bangladesh, border security, BSF, BGB

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Bangladesh and India share a total of 4,095 kilometers (km) international border (HRW, 9 December 2010) including 1,116 km riverine and 2,979 km land border (The News Minute, 25 February 2015). Indian states including Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, West Bengal, and 28 Bangladeshi districts are situated on the IBB. The bilateral relation between India and Bangladesh never goes smoothly as there are several issues that hinder this relationship especially security issues of the IBB. When we discuss the security issues of the IBB there are many issues that come forward such as border killing and torture by the BSF; cow trading, human trafficking, smuggling, illegal migration (alleged), and terrorist activities (alleged), etc. Geographically Bangladesh is situated in the middle of South and South East Asia so it is being used as a very lucrative route for smugglers (Ahmed, January 2015). It is estimated that on the West Bengal border alone there are 68 corridors and 149 sensitive villages that have been using for smuggling (Mishra, Time of India, 3 October 2008). On both sides of the IBB area, people are really so poor and they are easily convinced to traffic anything for a little amount of money. So, it is so easy for smugglers to recruit people and hide them from the law enforcement forces. The BSF has to deal with cross-border smuggling, especially cattle trading. Local agents of smugglers, mostly living in the border areas, carry out most of the transshipment of the cattle across the border (Bhattacharjee, 17 July 2013: 4). There are allegations of the high-ranked officers and politicians being involved in those crimes resulting in very inactivity of crime control. The issue of illegal Bangladeshi migrants (alleged) also affects the security situations in the IBB area. India always claims that Bangladeshi people are entering India illegally so Indian border patrols have been introduced a disputed shoot-on-sight policy (Adams, the Guardian, 23 January 2011). From 2001-10 the BSF has killed almost 1,000 people, mostly Bangladeshis (Adams, 2011). Thus border killing has become a great obstacle to ensure security. Despite claiming to be a friendly neighbor, India has already fenced 2500 km of the total border of 4096 kmⁱⁱ an event which is not found in the borders of the most hostile of the neighbors, for example, USA-Mexico, Israel-Egypt, Yemen-Saudi Arabia and Turkey-Syria. The IBB has also witnessed occasional clashes between the BSF and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR)ⁱⁱⁱ when the fence was built beyond the no man's land most notably in 2001.^{iv} New Delhi argues that it fenced on Bangladesh borders only to prevent illegal migration but Bangladesh always opposes this allegation. India's main objectives on the Bangladesh

ⁱⁱ To prevent the smuggling of narcotics, cattle, migrations India is constructing a barrier on the Bangladesh border, a 3,406 km fence of barbed wire and concrete just under 3 meters high. For details see - Adams, 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ On 25 and 26 February 2009 a section of the BDR (Ex name of Border Guards Bangladesh, BGB) revolt in Dhaka. The rebelling BDR soldiers took control over the headquarters in Pilkhana, killed 57 army officers including the BDR Director-General. As a result, the Bangladesh parliament passed a bill to change the name of BDR to BGB. For details see - The Daily Star, 22 December 2010.

^{iv} In 2001, Indian and Bangladeshi border guards exchanged fire at a frontier outpost as a result 18 soldiers (16 from BSF and 2 from BDR) were killed. For details see- The BBC, 18 April 2001.

border are to contain the unauthorized influx of migrations; to stop the intrusion of terrorists into India and to prevent the smuggling of narcotics, fake currency, and cattle (Shahshikumar & Sen, CNN-IBN, 11 February 2009). On the other hand, the main aims of Dhaka are to control the smuggling of weapons, explosives, and narcotic substances, including phensedyl, a cough syrup that is banned in Bangladesh but generally used as a “recreational” drug (Times of India, 12 March 2010).

2. Conceptual Framework

Border; India and Bangladesh share the fifth-largest land border in the world (Jamwal, January 2004). Geographically three sides; the north, west, and most of the east of Bangladesh are surrounded by India. The four North-Eastern Indian states share a total of 1,880 km borders with Bangladesh like Assam 263 km, Tripura 856 km, Mizoram 318 km, and Meghalaya 443 km (Raizada, 22 June 2015; Das, 2008). There is also a long maritime boundary between India and Bangladesh. The six divisions of Bangladesh like Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Rangpur, Sylhet, and Rajshahi are situated on the Indian border. The IBB has been marked by a number of pillars and India already has fenced a large part of the border. The Land Boundary Agreement (LAB) has been ratified by both New Delhi and Dhaka, which was passed on 7 May 2015 (The Times of India, 7 May 2015). The IBB widely famous as Radcliffe Line first came into being when the Bengal Presidency was created by the British. In 1947, When the British Empire decided to leave India, the country was divided according to Muslim and Hindu majority areas. Likewise, the provinces of Bengal, Punjab, and the Sylhet district of Assam were also divided and the border came into being. Muslims were the majority in the eastern part of Bengal province and the western part of India. The new Islamic Republic of Pakistan was formed by these two areas. The eastern part, East Pakistan, became the People’s Republic of Bangladesh through 9 months War in 1971. The Ganges delta region and the Sundarban mangrove forest are divided by the border. It is crisscrossed by a large number of rivers. The area is mainly horizontal with small hilly terrain in Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, and Mizoram sections. The border area is densely populated; the land is extremely fertile and is cultivated right up to the border pillars. Sometimes the borderline passes right through villages, even buildings.

Border Security means different things to different scholars and institutions so; there is no agreed-upon definition. Border security connotes a sovereign, legal authority that makes political sensitivities for the United Nations (UN). The UN prefers “border control” or border monitoring. The BSF is deployed on the Indian border while the BGB protects the border in Bangladesh. On December 1, 1965, the BSF was established to protect India’s land border during peacetime and to prevent transnational crimes (The Economic Times, 1 December 2017). It is a central government force under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (Joseph, 31 January 2002). With about 220,000 personnel, it is currently among the world’s largest border forces (Deshpande, 2015). Its peacetime duties include preventing trans-border crimes such as smuggling and preventing unauthorized entry and exit from India (Ibid). The BGB is also

an armed border security force. Its commanding officers are drawn from the Bangladesh Army but it reports to the Minister of Home Affairs (HRW, 9 December 2010). The force has a total strength of roughly 67,000 personnel across Bangladesh.^v The primary concern of BGB is to prevent the inflow of cough syrup Phensedyl and other drugs.

2.1 Theory Building

The concept of border security is a very important component in international relations. Thus there are huge numbers of scholarly articles that look at it from the theoretical perspective. My observation is that a high number of articles focused on human, drug trafficking, and border militarization. There is a lack of neutral and non-biased literature about this phenomenon. Combining the knowledge of those kinds of literature with the news reports I concluded that border security could be described from the realist point of view. Realism is a school of thought in international theory centered upon four propositions (Donnelly, 2008: 150). (a) The international system is anarchic. There is no central authority above states that is capable of regulating their interactions; states must arrive at relations with other states on their own, rather than it being dictated to them by some higher controlling entity. (b) States are the most important actors. (c) All states within the system are unitary, rational actors. (d) The primary concern of all states is survival. States build up the military to survive, which may lead to a security dilemma. Modern realism advanced in reaction to a liberal tradition that realists entitled idealism. Idealism stresses morality, international organizations, and international law, rather than power alone, as key influences on international events (Nardin & Mapel, 1992; Long & Wilson, 1995). As opposed to classical realism, which attributes a state's desire for power to the nature of man, neo-realism asserts that the structure of the international system acts as a constraint on a nation's behavior. Because the international system is anarchic, a state can never be sure of its own survival. As a result, states engage in power-seeking behavior and do not subordinate their interests to other states. For neo-realists, a dramatic restructuring of the power balance in the international structure should lead to a reevaluation of foreign policy in states affected by the restructuring of the international system. Classical realism attributes a state's drive to secure power to human nature, not the anarchical nature of the international system. In practice, classical and neo-realism analysis would predict similar actions on the part of individual states. Offensive Realism believes that states will not just seek power gains relative to neighboring countries or rivals but that states will continue to seek power gains until they achieve hegemony. As we mentioned earlier realism basically focuses on nation-states as an actor in this anarchical international system, so it ignores individual sufferings and actions which is of most importance in our study. Furthermore, traditional realism emphasizes the interest of the state, the balance of power and hegemony cannot explain the augmented number of border violence in the IBB when compared to that of Nepal-India and Pakistan-India. Since the partition of British India, New Delhi has proved itself to be the biggest regional power in South Asia. It has also often been accused by the other nations

^v "About us," Bangladesh Rifles. <http://www.bdr.gov.bd/index.php?node=node/about>. accessed 19 December 2019

of acting like “big brother” to its neighbors. Bangladesh may be called a geostrategic pivot while India may be called a geostrategic player (Karim, 2009). As a geostrategic player, India always tries to influence the nations beyond their national boundaries. Because of the important geographic position of Bangladesh, India always tries to keep Bangladesh under its firm influence. India has continued border killing despite the soaring criticism by the Bangladesh government, people, and international human rights organizations. India has land borders with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, China, and Pakistan, out of which two are nuclear powers one is China and the other is Pakistan (Singh, 2 July 2001). It has been often argued by various scholars and diplomats that making cattle trading legalized in India will significantly reduce illegal trespassing on the Indian border and would border killing as well.

3. Literature Review

Zahoor Ahmad Rather (2014) argues that India is the largest country in South Asia, geographically located in central and shares borders with smaller neighbors like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, and Bhutan. The IBB shares the same colonial history, geographical similarities of the communities across the borders, was created after the partition of India in 1947, and was known as the India-East Pakistan border prior to the war of 1971 between East and West Pakistan. Over the past 48 years, the relations between India and Bangladesh have gone through several ups and downs. Border killings, illegal migration, smuggling, and border crimes are some of the burning issues that hinder Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations. Das (2008) states New Delhi has the longest border with Dhaka but it is not attentively managed. He defined the border between India and Bangladesh as the “*problem area of tomorrow*”. Finally, the author argues that smuggling, illegal trade, migration, and trans-border insurgency poses serious security threats on the border. The problems include smuggling, illegal migration, and the trans-border movement of insurgents, which are serious threats to security. Karlekar (2005) claims there had already been a security threat from Bangladesh in 1998 when it sheltered the leader of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Anup Chetia. He further claimed that ULFA had started several profitable projects in Bangladesh to sustain its anti-Indian activities like hotels, private clinics, and schools although Bangladesh always denied this allegation and finally handed over Anup Chetia to India. Brad Adams (2011) showed that the border has become an emotive issue in Indian politics, as millions of Bangladeshis now live in India illegally. Because of that, many are exploited as cheap labor. He stresses that India has the right to levy border controls but does not have the right to use lethal force except where strictly essential to protect life. He also claims that despite the mass violation of human rights by the BSF, there is a lack of attention of from international media to this issue. Quoting Bangladeshi media, the Economist (3 February 2011) claimed that on 7 January BSF shot dead a 15-years old girl Felani at an illegal crossing into Bangladesh from the Indian state of West Bengal. Her dead body hung from the barbed-wired fence for five hours, and then the BSF took her down, tied her hands and feet to a bamboo pole, and carried her away. The

Dhaka Tribune (19 May 2014) writes that despite concerns expressed by Dhaka border killing has continued in the IBB. It claims that the lack of Indian resolution and one-sided nature makes them of huge symbolic importance. The newspaper argues that it is well established that these killings have nothing to do with security issues but largely arise out of disputes over extortion. It calls New Delhi to stop border killings, as it will be a great initiative for confidence building for both states. Citing Human Rights Watch (HRW) Indian daily the Hindu (26 September 2013) claims that from 2001 to 2010, BSF has killed almost 1,000 people, both Bangladeshis, and Indians. The Hindu recognized that the people who live in the densely populated IBB areas face the extreme nature of harassment and torture in their daily lives. It underlined that the BSF's actions are not brutal only to Bangladeshi citizens but also equally of its own country.

4. The Security Issues of India-Bangladesh Border

4.1 Cattle and Human Trafficking

People living on both sides of the IBB are engaged with Cattle smuggling because it is so profitable business for them (Ghosh, 2 April 2014). Although Hinduism does not prefer to be a vegetarian majority of Hindus in India avoid eating beef because they consider cows as a holy thing. On the other hand, the majority of Muslims in Bangladesh eat beef so, Indian people sell cows to Bangladeshi buyers at three or four times higher prices than in India (Ahmed, 2015). There are a small number of Bangladeshi buyers who import cows from India with legal trade license while most of the cows come via the border illegally. Because of the wide participation of local people on both sides of IBB with cow trading, this informal and unrecorded trade is more quasi-legal and most of the time defined as "informal" rather than illegal (Dutta, 2010). Besides, when cow traders enter Bangladesh, they can pay the customs charges instantly and make the trade legal (Bhattacharjee, 2013: 6). Bangladesh has at least \$500 million markets for the cow and a large part of this amount fulfills from outside and India is the easiest and cheapest market for the Bangladeshi buyers as we mentioned before (now the picture has changed and Bangladesh is sufficient for beef cattle and meat production). Moreover, during the holy occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, the Muslims in Bangladesh prefer cows to sacrifice in the name of Allah to fulfill their religious duty thus the demand for cows increases many folds. During this occasion, the buyers chose Indian cows with local ones for many reasons what makes cow trading a very profitable business for both Bangladeshi and Indian cow traders. Some estimate each year at least 1.5 million cows are move across the IBB (Bhowmick, Time, 27 January 2012). As the majority of Hindus in India do not eat beef and Bangladesh has a large market for it so legalizing the cow trade could be beneficial for both states. However, it is so sensitive issue in India because cow trading is highly prohibited and related to the deep-rooted religious beliefs of the majority of people who worship cows as their God. So, no Indian government is willing to take the step of legalizing cow trade as it may cause them to lose public support.

Another important aspect of the security issues of IBB is human trafficking. As we mentioned earlier many Bangladeshi families left their relatives in India during the

partition, so they often try to cross the border into India to meet them without a visa (Ahmed, *The New York Times*, 16 August 2017). A group of Bangladeshi people also tried to enter India for the harsh economic realities as before New Delhi offered better job opportunities for cheap labor, but the situation is different now as Bangladesh progressed economically even better than India (Afsar, 2008). Statistics show that a huge number of women and children also trafficked into India from Bangladesh, and then handed over to brothels in Kolkata, Delhi, and Mumbai or sent to the Middle East or Pakistan. Some of them ended up as domestic laborers (ICDDR, 2001). There is another group that prefers to settle in India (most of them are Hindu by religion) what creates serious political tension, extreme Hindu political groups claiming that influx of Muslims from Bangladesh could alter the country's demography (Kumar, 25 May 2005).

4.2 Smuggling of Commodities or Illegal Business

Smugglers and illegal traders use various routes on the IBB to bring drugs, medicines, livestock, and food items from India to Bangladesh. Since 1971, the IBB has been using for a significant quantity of informal, undocumented trade and a few studies have been conducted both in New Delhi and Dhaka related to different aspects of it. Most of those studies termed this kind of trade as quasi-legal and sometimes considered as "informal" rather than illegal. A large number of local people are involved with this "informal" trade and the trade normally bypasses customs posts, and because-as SK Chaudhuri's study mentioned - "*the field operators generally operate in liaison with the anti-smuggling enforcement agencies*" (Chaudhuri, November 1995). The smugglers usually use local people individually to transport small quantities; sometimes just as head loads or by bicycle rickshaw; and in Bangladesh as often labeled "bootleg" smuggling. There is a large quantity of trade conducts every day between New Delhi and Dhaka generally using trucks via legal customs and other networks but most of them are unambiguously involves with unlawful activities, for example, under-invoicing, wrong classification, and taking bribes by customs officers in Bangladesh is often considered as "technical" smuggling. Studies related to the trade between New Delhi and Dhaka show that all informal trade is basically one-way, from India to Bangladesh. The 1994 National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) study showed that the informal trade between New Delhi and Dhaka was around 10 million US dollars (Ibid: 27) while recorded trade was approximate 371 million dollars. Another survey conducted in Bangladesh showed that in 2002, the total informal trade (bootleg and technical) between New Delhi and Dhaka was about 500 million dollars, around 42% of Dhaka's formal imports from New Delhi in 2002/03, or almost 30% of total imports (formal and informal) (Ibid). As we mentioned before most of the informal trades conducted on the land border and the total amount of "technical" informal trade was higher than the value of "bootleg" informal trade. Though this statistic is grounded on interviews with persons in the Bangladesh side of the border and the approximate values of informal trades in some important goods (especially cow and sugar) are much lower than estimates from the Indian part. These differences show that the total value of smuggling could be 900 million, comparable to 42% of Dhaka's imports from New Delhi (recorded and unrecorded) or

about three-quarters of the total recorded trade (World Bank, 15 October 2006). Smuggling is one of the significant sources of income for many people in the West Bengal border area. They sell to Bangladeshi smugglers coughs syrup Phensedyl, other drugs, and rice the most comparable to other goods but the most profitable is cattle trading. Some studies showed that daily at least 20,000 to 25,000 animals came to Bangladesh from India (Hussian, 2 March 2009). Finally, cow trade is illegal in India but legal in Bangladesh so the BGB often takes advantage of this kind of illegal border trade (The Telegraph, 2 August 2006).

4.3 Border Killing and Torture by BSF

The BSF always claims they shot only to stop illegal migration and cross-border crimes but documents say something different as only in 2009, a news channel reported, hundreds of Bangladeshi were killed by the BSF on the border (Channel 4 News, 24 July 2009). On 7 January 2011, the BSF killed a 15 years old girl, Felani Khatun, when she was trying to enter India from Bangladesh, at the Anantapur border in Phulbari Upazila, Kurigram district. After killing the BSF left her dead body for 5 hours hanging from the wire fence and after 30 hours they handed over her body to the BGB (Odhikar, 1 October 2011). The IBB area is tremendously inhabited, and people are poor compared to the mainland so, a large number of people try to cross the border for a job, engage with illegal trades, some of them seek to visit relatives, others are engaged with cross border crimes. The BSF and BGB are the legal authority to protect unlawful actions on the border particularly smuggling goods, food items, drugs, fake currency, cattle trafficking, and human trafficking for sex work. Human rights organizations claim that although the BSF is responsible for border security but does not arrest the suspects and hand them over to the police for trial; on the contrary, they penalize the victims by themselves (HRW, 11 June 2012). In August 2008, the BSF officially accepted that in the first 6 months they killed at least 59 people on the border (34 Bangladeshi citizens, 21 Indians, and the rest were unidentified) who were trying to cross the border (Reuters, 24 August 2008). The BSF sometimes have accused of abducting Bangladeshi farmers, fishermen, and children from the border area for example, in 2010, they kidnapped 5 children from Bangladesh side of the border, aged between 8 and 15, from Haripur in the Thakurgaon district (The Daily Star, 24 July 2010). Dhaka often accuses the Indian border security force of intrusions into its territory and the shooting of Bangladeshi civilians along the border. In 2010, human rights organization, HRW, published a report what documented many cases of abuses of the BSF. The report also mentioned that BSF killed the Bangladeshi citizens when tried to enter India even shot innocent people who were seen near, working in the fields (farmland) near the border (HRW, 9 December 2010). New Delhi always argues that BSF kills people only to protect them. In 2010, 64 BSF personnel were wounded in the incidents and the number of injured BSF personnel was 150 in 2012 (Bhattacharjee, 17 July 2013: 2). Though, the offensive technics using by the BSF on the IBB are not proportionate to the problems that New Delhi is facing in this area (HRW, 9 December 2010). Human Rights Watch asked New Delhi to make attempts to confirm compliance with the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement

Officials (HRW, 11 June 2012). HRW mentioned in their report that in many cases, the BSF has tortured, killed many innocent people only out of doubt of being cattle smugglers (HRW, 9 December 2010). The Indian border security force has done this kind of shocking activity because there is a lack of accountability within the force. The human rights organization also argues that sometimes BSF personnel does not respect the rural customs and habits habitually causes grievances and arguments that can often have deadly results (Ibid: 19). It also claimed on the report that both the BSF, BGB, and local political leaders on both sides of the border are involved in the smuggling and illegal trade. According to HRW, during the first decade of the 21st century, the BSF has killed over 1000 Bangladeshi citizens on the border. Statistics show that every four days the BSF kills one Bangladeshi citizen which made the IBB area into a killing field. Only between 2009 and 2011 the BSF killed at least 203 people by shooting on the border. Since 2001 the BSF has tortured more than thousands of Bangladeshi people. The statistics are - missing from border area-107, tortured-1007, abducted-974, raped-14, snatched or looted-71, pushed in Bangladesh illegally-313. From 2001 to 2011 the total Human rights violation in the IBB Area is 3509 (BDCYA), the BSF also kidnapped Bangladeshi farmers when they were working in the fields (Ibid).

Table 1: Statistics of violence the BSF on the IBB from January 2011 to December 2020

Nature of violence	2011 Jan-Sep.	2012 Jan-Dec.	2013 Jan-10 th Dec.	2014 Jan-Oct.	2015 Jan-Dec.	2016 Jan-Dec.	2017 Jan-Dec.	2018 Jan-Dec.	2019 Jan-Dec.	2020 Jan-Dec.	Total
Death (Shoot)	21	38	12	13	32	29	25	11	41	51	181
Death is not mentioned	NA	NA	13	1	0	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	14
Death in Physical Torture	NA	NA	83	13	14	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	112
Injured	51	100	172	54	73	36	39	24	40	27	549
Abducted/kidnapped	12	74	43	91	59	22	28	16	34	7	345
Returned after abduction	NA	NA	1	48	31	5	NA	NA	NA	NA	85
Total	84	212	324	220	209	94	92	51	115	85	1486

Source: (Odhikar, 1 October 2011; Odhikar, 12 January 2013; Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), 30 September 2013; ASK, 20 November 2014; ASK, 7 January 2016; ASK, 9 April 2016; Odhikar, 1 January 2017; Odhikar, 12 January 2018; Odhikar, 8 August 2019; Odhikar, 08 February 2020; Odhikar, 25 January 2021).

Note: The figure has complied by the author.

Neither New Delhi nor Dhaka keeps any records of the statistics of border killings, thus it is not easy to know how many people are being killed on the border and were attackers, smugglers, or civilians. The BSF always claims that they only shot smugglers or attackers, but it can be argued that even criminals deserve the punishment they do not deserve to be killed without trial. Unfortunately, the BGB officials also suggested that such killings are acceptable if the victim was engaged in illegal activities (Adams, 2011). There is an

interesting point to note that New Delhi has a land border with China, Pakistan, and Nepal but the BSF does not kill people like on the Bangladesh border (Bari, The Dhaka Tribune, 20 February 2014). Last few years New Delhi and Dhaka have taken some positive steps to ensure border security, for example, BSF and BGB stated joint patrolling and night patrolling at many points on the border. Those steps have importantly reduced the cases of border killing but unfortunately could not put it an end (Rather, May 2014).

4.4 Transnational Crime

New Delhi always claims that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is active in Bangladesh, operating at least 127 training camps that are working against Indian interests. It also claims that Islamic political parties in Bangladesh are patronizing these camps. According to Indian intelligence assessments, with support from a part of the Bangladesh government, intelligence, bureaucracy, and army ISI is actively working for its plan for a sovereign state in the North East of India (Shahin, Asia Times, 6 March 2004). Bangladesh strictly opposed this allegation from the beginning (The Zee News, 17 December 2002). Not only about ISI India also alleged that Bangladeshi land is being used by North East-Indian insurgent groups. N.S. Jamwal claims that since 1992 insurgent groups like the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and ULFA have been using Bangladeshi soil for training and attack inside of India (Jamwal, 1 January 2004; Karlekar, 2005). In November 2002 during the director general-level meeting of BDR-BSF New Delhi recognized at least 99 training camps operated by its North Eastern insurgents groups inside Bangladesh and handed over the detailed list to Dhaka to take action (Hussain, Asia Times, 6 November 2002). After a long investigation, the Bangladesh government dismissed the Indian allegation. Dhaka denied New Delhi's allegations of the existence of terrorist camps inside its territory and termed it as "baseless" (Indian Express, 24 December 2002). In May 2003 India again handed over 155 training camps to the Bangladesh government most of them operated by ISI and Al Qaida and asked to shut them down (The Telegraph, 11 May 2003) but Bangladesh repeatedly denied India's claim.

4.5 Border Conflicts between BSF and BGB

The border conflict between BSF and BGB does occur frequently along the IBB. There are approximately 45 battalions of BSF and 30 battalions of BGB are deployed across the border. The bloodiest clash on the border ever had occurred in 2001 when both forces exchanged of fire as a result of at least 18 BSF and two BGB soldiers were killed (The BBC, 18 April 2001). India said, "*Bangladeshi troops overran and occupied a disputed border village near the town of Dauki and are holding more than 20 of its soldiers hostage*" (Ibid). On the other hand, Bangladesh said, "*Indian forces launched an early morning attack on their posts in the frontier district of Kurigram - which lies on the border with Indian state of Assam.*" Chief of BDR major-general Fazlur Rahman told Reuters, "*Sixteen troops of the Indian BSF got killed during a fight on the border at noon today.*" "*Two wounded Indian soldiers were captured during the fighting and have been sent to Dhaka for treatment,*" he added (Ibid).

4.6 Combined Attempts to Ensure Border Security

During a meeting of BSF and BGB officials in Meghalaya capital Shillong on June 8-11, 2015, BGB has agreed to construct at least 40 new border outposts (BOPs) facing Tripura and Mizoram along the IBB to check militant activities and trafficking (Raizada, News Gram, 22 June 2015). Tripura Frontier Inspector General Bhola Nath Sharma said, *“Both sides agreed to increase vigil along the border areas to foil an attempt by militants and other anti-national elements to disrupt internal peace. Besides, an emphasis was also given to curb trans-border smuggling.”* Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the border issues, including curbing of border crimes and terror activities, during the visit to Dhaka on June 6-7 in 2015 (Ibid). India and Bangladesh on 17 November 2015 agreed to share information on terrorists and insurgent threats. The decision was made during the meet of Home Secretaries of Bangladesh and India, Md. Mozammel Haque Khan and Rajiv Mehrishi, in Dhaka. During the two-day meeting, the two home secretaries had talks on reviewing internal security and other cross-border issues. Some decisions made at the meet include: both sides agreed to reduce the cases of Bangladeshi nationals being imprisoned by BSF to zero figure through educating people to abide by all international regulations relating to cross-border movement; India guaranteed Bangladesh that it will provide information immediately if they get any information on militancy; India assured Bangladesh to cooperate it in stopping cross-border drug smuggling. Bangladesh is a non-narcotics-producing country and thus wanted Indian assistance in this regard. Bangladesh assured India that it will collaborate to totally stop the influx of fake Indian currency, cattle smuggling, and illegal infiltration and Bangladesh assured India that it will not allow any Indian separatist group to run camps inside Bangladesh (Fresherslive, 18 November 2015). India has completed the installation of floodlights for 277 km in the West Bengal sector (The Indian news, 27 November 2007). Bangladesh and India conducted LBA in 2015. On 18 December 2013, the Indian National Congress party led the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government introduced a bill in parliament to facilitate the realization of the 1974 LBA with Bangladesh (Cons, 8 April 2014). Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina signed a historic agreement on 6 June 2015; to simplify their border by exchanging more than 150 enclaves^{vi} of land^{vii} (The BBC, 6 June 2015). Bangladesh and India settled their long-disputed maritime boundary. In October 2009, Bangladesh served India with notice of arbitration proceedings under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Arbitration Tribunal delivered the ruling on 7 July 2014 and settled the dispute (Sharma, 16 July 2014). In July 2011, both of the nations signed the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) to

^{vi} An enclave is the disjointed territory of one state located inside another state. In 1947, following the partition of British India, both East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and India got enclaves a total of 119 square km within the other demarcated boundaries. In reality, this led to small populations of Bangladeshi citizens living in territory situated within Indian control, as well as Indian citizens living in territory totally surrounded by Bangladesh.

^{vii} On 1 August 2015, New Delhi and Dhaka finally exchanged 162 enclaves. More than 50,000 people lived in tiny enclaves-citizens of one country but located in the other. Under the agreement, both sides have swept the enclaves enabling their citizens to finally reside in their own countries.

effectively control cross-border illegal activities. During a visit of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in January 2010, India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up Border Haats (markets) on IBB to reduce informal trade and strengthen people-to-people relations. India approved this MoU in January 2016 (The Economic Times, 6 January 2016).

5. Conclusion

Since 1971 the bilateral relations between New Delhi and Dhaka have been shaping reshaping but the security of the border issues is still the same even becoming worse day by day. The IBB passes through flat and hilly terrain, jungles, and rivers, some parts are heavily inhabited with cultivation (Bhattacharjee, 2013). As we mentioned before during the partition in 1947, many families were divided into the two parts of Bengal (West Bengal and East Pakistan later Bangladesh) so people on both sides are tied with common religious, cultural, linguistic, economic, and basically kinship ties. People from both sides visit their relatives regularly and most of them are poor so they can't manage money for the visa thus they prefer to go illegally. People on the IBB border area also enter from one country to another country for trade and commerce regularly. Apart from this, there are many people who are related to illegal border trade from both sides. So, border crossing is a daily routine for many people living in the border area. The population on the border area is being on the extreme corner of the country and those areas have remained underdeveloped, economically, and politically ignored for a long time. So, they are involving in many kinds of smuggling and illegal trade on the border area. Actually, people of the border area are hugely dependent on the traditional systems for their survival and this gave rise to cross-border movements. To stop border crossing illegally the BSF shot directly that causing huge death on a regular basis. To improve the security situation on the IBB, some measurements should be given priority: (i) New Delhi should make easier the visa process for the Bangladeshi citizens; (ii) the border killing by the BSF must be brought to an end and those who are responsible for the killing they should be punished after proper investigations from both sides; (iii) New Delhi should reduce Non-tariff Barriers (NTBs) and Para-tariff Barriers (PTBs) for Bangladeshi goods in the Indian market; and (iv) both New Delhi and Dhaka should work jointly on the border issues to improve the security situation.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

About the Author

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