

Bangladesh looks to resolve Teesta with India after LBA deal

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Dhaka: Buoyed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's maiden visit during which "history" was made by inking the long-pending Land Boundary Agreement, Bangladesh now looks forward to resolving the crucial Teesta water-sharing issue soon.

"History was made here," Bangladesh Foreign Minister A H Mahmud Ali told PTI, referring to ratification of the Land Boundary Agreement under which 111 border enclaves will be transferred to Bangladesh in exchange for 51 that will become part of India.

"We are very happy and delighted," Ali said about the outcome of Modi's visit as he credited the Prime Minister for bringing a new momentum to the bilateral ties and said Dhaka always wanted to have a deeper relationship with India.

Calling ratification of the LBA between the two countries a major milestone in taking forward the engagement in many more areas, Ali said the common man too could feel the renewed vigour in bilateral ties.

Noting that Modi's June 6-7 visit laid the foundation for a much "stronger and closer" relationship, the Foreign Minister exuded confidence of resolving the Teesta water sharing issue soon.

"We are hopeful (of finalising it). We have to work through. We have to build upon the goodwill and the camaraderie that has been generated during Modi's visit. We have to work continuously," he said.

During the visit here, Modi had also expressed confidence of finding a "fair solution" to the long-pending Teesta and Feni river water sharing issue.

Teesta water is crucial for Bangladesh, especially in the leanest period from December to March when the water flow often temporarily comes down to less than 1,000 cusecs from 5,000 cusecs.

Talking about Modi's reference to India's support to Bangladesh Liberation War, Ali said both the countries must "restore the sense of togetherness, sense of partnership" which was evident during the country's "freedom struggle".

"He said that he thought we are reliving 1971. That's the spirit. We are absolutely with him. This is the way to go forward," Ali said, adding the relationship between the two countries will grow leaps and bounds in days to come.

Praising Modi, Ali said it was because of his "dynamic" leadership that bipartisan support was possible in Indian Parliament to the Constitution amendment bill providing for settling of the 41-year-old land boundary dispute.

"He has also brought together all the parties in Parliament. That was a tremendous achievement," he said.