



Bangladesh

Maitri Diwas: A celebration of shared history



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**Benchmark occasion to take
bilateral ties to new heights:
Analysts**

**Bilateral friendship traversed
towards golden chapter**

**India recognised Bangladesh
on 6 Dec 1971**

Bangladesh and India today mark Maitri Diwas (Friendship Day) with historical analysts of both countries describing it as a benchmark occasion to take the bilateral ties to new heights.

During the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh in March 2021, both countries decided to commemorate 6 December as Maitri Diwas, marking India's recognition of Bangladesh on this day during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Ten days before Bangladesh achieved victory in the war,

India recognised Bangladesh on 6 December 1971. India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with Bangladesh.

West Bengal Rajya Sabha MP Jawhar Sircar, a witness to Bangladesh independence, termed Maitri Diwas a celebration of shared history of the neighbouring countries.

“Neither Bangladesh nor India will ever forget the immense sacrifices made by the armed forces and masses of both countries. They’ll never forgive the atrocities committed by the Pakistani Army on a helpless people,” Jawhar Sircar, also a former secretary of the Indian government, told the Daily Sun.

Friendship between the two countries has traversed towards a ‘Golden Chapter’ with a shared history.

Valiant freedom fighter Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury described Maitri Diwas as a benchmark event in the history of Bangladesh that manifests cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.

“Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had inspired the nation through his 7 March speech in 1971. Many people took shelter in India then.

Bangladeshi personnel in EPR, police and youths joined training programmes in India. Indian force joined Bangladeshi liberation movement through airstrikes against Pakistan on 4 December. And India extended support to Bangladesh officially on 6 December, a red-letter day in the history of this subcontinent,” he told the Daily Sun.

Shamsheer Mobin, also a former foreign secretary of Bangladesh, said India had supported Bangladesh from many avenues, including providing shelter to millions of war-time refugees.

From early December in 1971, the cooperation reached new heights.

Then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi wrote to her Bangladesh counterpart Tajuddin Ahmad in the afternoon of 6 December. India also made a proclamation of supporting Bangladesh independence in their parliament that day.

Shamsher Mobin urged the young generation to learn the backend philosophy of Maitri Diwas to go through the shared history of India and Bangladesh. US-based News Week magazine ran a story on India military cooperation for Bangladesh independence on 6 December.

Bangladeshi researcher Dr Atiur Rahman said India recognised independent Bangladesh on 6 December 1971 immediately after Bhutan. "This provided a solid ground for inspiration to a fighting Bangalee nation at a time when the joint forces of India and Bangladesh, including mostly thousands of bare-footed freedom fighters called Mukti Bahini, were already on the battlefields."

"This day is now celebrated as Maitri Diwas in both India and Bangladesh to commemorate the supreme sacrifices of Indian armed forces and Bangladesh's freedom fighters. Despite some ups and downs, the Indo-Bangladesh mutual relationship now stands on a highly compact ground encompassing political, economic and diplomatic and many other facets," Dr Atiur, a Professor Emeritus at Dhaka University, told the Daily Sun.

The political relationship is now all-time high providing ground for fast enhancing economic cooperation covering rail, road, water, energy, education, health, tourism and many facets of cultural cooperation, according to the academician.

"India and Bangladesh are moving confidently in the global platforms to assert their sovereignty and diplomatic prowess. Thanks to the political wisdom of top policymakers of both countries, the India-Bangladesh relationship baptised in blood during 1971 has come to stay and will continue to gain momentum in coming days. Let's all celebrate this mutual understanding providing a new

example of ever evolving neighborly cooperation,” added Dr Atiur, also a former Bangabandhu Chair at Dhaka University.

The trade relations have been particularly buoyed by introduction of import payments in rupee at a time when Bangladesh has been facing balance of payment pressure, he said.



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