

C.133/01419

2010.08.23

Shri Manmohan Singh  
Hon'ble Prime Minister  
Government of India  
New Delhi

Respected Prime Minister,

**Memorandum regarding Indo-Bangla trade**

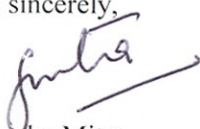
Greetings from CUTS!

2. Under your leadership, the last 12 months have seen great progress in the realm of Indo-Bangla economic relations, especially in regard to trade facilitation and connectivity. We, at CUTS International believe that these steps would greatly enhance the volume of trade between North Eastern India and Bangladesh as well as economic synergies between North Eastern India and the rest of the country, thus contributing significantly to economic development in both these countries as well as surrounding Nepal and Bhutan.
3. CUTS International (<http://www.cuts-international.org>), as a civil society organisation working in the area of trade and development with a focus on the synergies achievable from regional economic cooperation, has been very active in the promotion of Indo-Bangla trade through stakeholder consultation. On August 9, 2009 we organised such a stakeholder consultation in Agartala, Tripura. The consultation led to the formation of a *Sub-regional Independent Task Force on Connectivity and Cooperation* with separate Indian and Bangladeshi chapters.
4. The Indian chapter of the mentioned taskforce subsequently submitted a memorandum to your office on September 7, 2009. Developments which followed – the Joint Foreign Ministers' Meeting involving the two countries in New Delhi, your subsequent meeting with the Bangladeshi Prime Minister, and the visit of the Chief Minister of Tripura to Bangladesh – saw many of these recommendations in regard to both connectivity and trade facilitation being formalised into agreements.
5. However, though much progress has been made in arriving at a consensus on the direction and mechanisms for progress in Indo-Bangla trade, the *Sub-regional Independent Task Force* is of the opinion that sustained efforts are needed for effective implementation of agreements concluded in the last year.
6. Keeping this in mind, I am sending you a further memorandum in my capacity as convenor of the Indian chapter of the mentioned task force.
7. We, the endorers of this Memorandum (see list of endorers below memorandum), request you to give the recommendations made therein due and urgent consideration so that international trade among India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan can attain its full potential through the fruitful implementation of the mentioned agreements.

Awaiting your valued response, I remain,

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,



Siddhartha Mitra

Convenor (India), *Sub-Regional Independent Task Force on Connectivity and Cooperation* and  
Head, *CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE)*

Encl: (1) List of government officials to whom copies of this letter and attached memorandum are being sent  
Encl: (2) Memorandum from Sub-Regional Independent Task Force on Connectivity and Cooperation



**List of Government Officials**

1. Shri T. K. A. Nair (IAS), Principal Secretary to PM, Prime Minister's Office (PMO), South Block, Raisina Hill, New Delhi-110 011
2. Shri S. M. Krishna, Cabinet Minister, Ministry of External Affairs, Room No. 169, South Block, New Delhi-110 011
3. Maharani Preneet Kaur, Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs, Room No. 236 C, South Block, New Delhi-110 011
4. Smt. Nirupama Rao (IFS), Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, South Block, New Delhi-110 011
5. Shri Anand Sharma, Cabinet Minister, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Room No. 46, Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi-110 107
6. Dr. Rahul Khullar (IAS), Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi-110 107
7. Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister of State, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Room No: 39, Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi- 110 107
8. Shri Manik Sarkar, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tripura, Government of Tripura, Agartala, Tripura
9. Shri A.K. Mangotra, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Government of Tripura, Agartala, Tripura
10. H.E. Mr. Rajeet Mitter, High Commissioner, High Commission of India, Bangladesh, House No.2, Road No.142, Gulshan-1, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
11. Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya, Deputy High Commissioner, High Commission of India, Bangladesh, House No.2, Road No.142, Gulshan-1, Dhaka, Bangladesh
12. Shri Jitendra Chowdhury, Commerce Minister, Tripura and Director, Industries and Commerce, Government of Tripura, Shilpodyog Bhavan, Pandit Nehru Complex, PO-Kunjaban, Agartala-799006 (Tripura)
13. Shri Sudip Roy, Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Director, Industries and Commerce, Government of Tripura, Shilpodyog Bhavan, Pandit Nehru Complex, PO-Kunjaban, Agartala-799006 (Tripura)

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## MEMORANDUM

### **Transpired from the *Agartala Stakeholder Consultation on Indo-Bangla Trade***

Organised by CUTS International in association with FES, India

On June 20, 2009 in Agartala

1. The last 12 months have seen great progress in the realm of Indo-Bangla economic relations, especially in regard to trade facilitation and connectivity. These steps would greatly enhance the volume of trade between North East India and Bangladesh as well as economic synergies between North East India and the rest of the country
2. However, though much progress has been made in arriving at a consensus on the direction and mechanisms for enhancement of Indo-Bangla trade, sustained efforts are needed for effective implementation of agreements concluded in the last year.
3. It is necessary to track the implementation of the recent agreements so as to fully utilise their potential. The implementation of the following agreed measures needs to be tracked on a regular basis, with relevant and updated information regarding implementation made available in the public domain:
  - Construction of a bridge on the River Feni connecting South Tripura to Chittagong port, already approved by the Government of Bangladesh, by the Indian side - so that India can avail of connectivity by sea provided by Government of Bangladesh through Chittagong
  - Construction of the Akhaura-Agartala rail link which would connect India and Bangladesh by rail
  - Provision of transshipment facilities through the river port of Ashuganj and the sea port of Chittagong on a permanent basis by the Government of Bangladesh for Indian goods, marking further progress on the one time transshipment allowed through Ashuganj for Indian power equipment
  - Power export from India to Bangladesh
  - Upgradation of border roads and trade related infrastructure on the Indian as well as Bangladeshi side
4. In addition to tracking the implementation of the mentioned agreements, the following new agreements/measures are needed to realise the full value of such implementation:
  - Facilitation and protection of cross border investments
  - Facilitation of greater ease in processing of Bangladeshi visa applications by the Government of India
  - Enhanced connectivity by bus, air and road between Dhaka and the various capital cities of North East India

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**List of Endorsers**

1. Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International, Jaipur, Rajasthan
2. Anil Saraf, Director, Federation of Industries & Commerce of North Eastern Region (FINER), Guwahati, Assam.
3. Matlub Ahmad, President, Indo-Bangla Chamber of Commerce, Dhaka, Bangladesh
4. M.L Debnath, President, Tripura Chamber of Commerce & Industries, Agartala, Tripura
5. Siddhartha Mitra, Convenor (India), Sub-Regional Independent Task Force on Connectivity and Cooperation and Head, CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE), Jaipur, Rajasthan
6. Keya Ghosh, Advisor, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre, Calcutta, West Bengal
7. Bipul Chatterjee, Deputy Executive Director, CUTS International, Jaipur, Rajasthan
8. Sanjib Deb, Chief of Bureau, NE Bangla, Agartala, Tripura
9. Syed Sajjid Ali, Correspondent, The Hindustan Times, Tripura, Agartala
10. Anutosh Biswas, Programme Officer, CUTS International, Jaipur, Rajasthan
11. Arnab Ganguly, Research Associate, CUTS Calcutta Resource Centre, Calcutta, West Bengal
12. Ruhul Amin Rasel, Staff Reporter, Bangladesh Pratidin, Dhaka, Bangladesh
13. Zahidur Rahman, PROBE News, Dhaka, Bangladesh