

China's Strategy to Encircle India

China is employing every strategy to encircle India. Xi Jinping's major strategy in Sri Lanka and Maldives failed, but now China wants to take advantage of the current political environment in Bangladesh.

In this presentation, we will explore in detail how China is advancing its strategy in South Asia and how India is countering it. We will analyze the reasons for China's failure in Maldives and Sri Lanka, and its growing presence in Bangladesh.



by OJAANK IAS



China's Failure in the Maldives

2013–2018

During the reign of Abdullah Yameen, the Maldives joined the Belt and Road Initiative, resulting in \$1.4 billion in debt.

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2018

India-friendly Ibrahim Solih came to power, strengthening India-Maldives relations.

2023

The election of Muizz with the "India Out" campaign dealt a blow to India.

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Current Situation

Due to economic problems, Muizz is facing backlash and is trying to reconnect with India.

China's Debt Trap in Sri Lanka



\$5 Billion in Debt

Massive debt was taken from China during the Rajapaksa regime between 2005–2022



Acquisition of Hambantota Port

Due to inability to repay the debt, Sri Lanka leased the port to China for 99 years



Economic Crisis

Sri Lanka's foreign exchange reserves nearly depleted in 2022, leading to widespread protests

After Sri Lanka's economic crisis, India provided nearly \$4 billion in assistance. Now, Sri Lanka is trying to play a balanced role between China, India, Japan, and the US. Recently, during Prime Minister Modi's visit, the first defense agreement was signed between India and Sri Lanka.

China's Growing Influence in Bangladesh

\$4B

Chinese Debt

China's current debt on Bangladesh, which is continuously increasing

5

Indian States

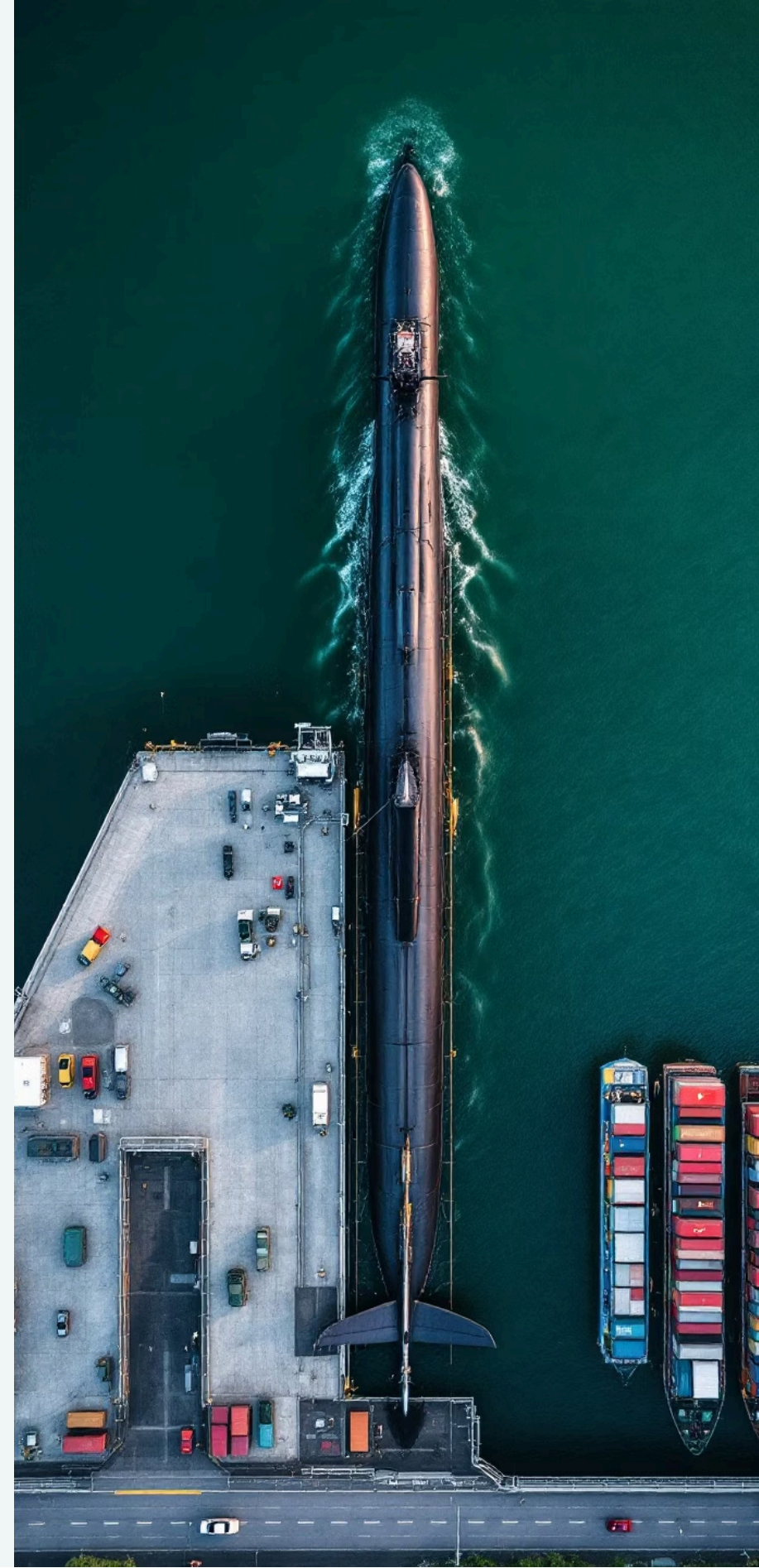
Number of Indian states that share borders with Bangladesh

1

Submarine Base

Submarine base built in Cox's Bazar with Chinese assistance

China is making large-scale investments in Bangladesh in transportation, ports, power, telecommunications, and special economic zones. Additionally, Bangladesh is the largest buyer of Chinese military hardware in South Asia, including submarines, fighter jets, missiles, and radars.





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China's Strategic Objectives in Bangladesh



China can utilize the Cox's Bazar submarine base for dual-use - both commercial and military. Access to the Chittagong Port could pose a threat to India's Northeast region. China is trying to encircle India under its "String of Pearls" strategy.

Causes of Concern for India

Geographical Proximity

Bangladesh shares borders with five Indian states (West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura), making the Chinese presence a particular threat to the Northeast region.

Naval Encirclement

The Chinese presence in Cox's Bazar will provide China direct naval access to the Bay of Bengal, which poses a challenge to India's maritime security.

Economic Encirclement

China's "String of Pearls" strategy with its presence in Gwadar, Hambantota, Myanmar and now Cox's Bazar is an attempt to economically encircle India.

There is a possibility of growing anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh under the leadership of Mohammad Yunus. Yunus' recent statements, particularly about the "land-locked" Northeast, lend credence to Chinese propaganda and suggest that India is dependent on Bangladesh.

India's Counter-Strategy



India has provided a \$9.5 billion credit line to Bangladesh, which is helping in the development of roads, railways, and bridges. 12 historic rail links have been reopened, and Maitri Express, India-Bangladesh oil pipeline, and new border economic zones have been established.

Defense and Cultural Cooperation



Joint Military Exercises

Joint military exercises called "Sampriti" are conducted between the armies of India and Bangladesh.



Non-Aggressive Military Techniques

India provides Bangladesh with patrol boats and other non-aggressive military equipment.



Military Training

Bangladeshi military officers are trained at Indian institutions like NDA and IMA.



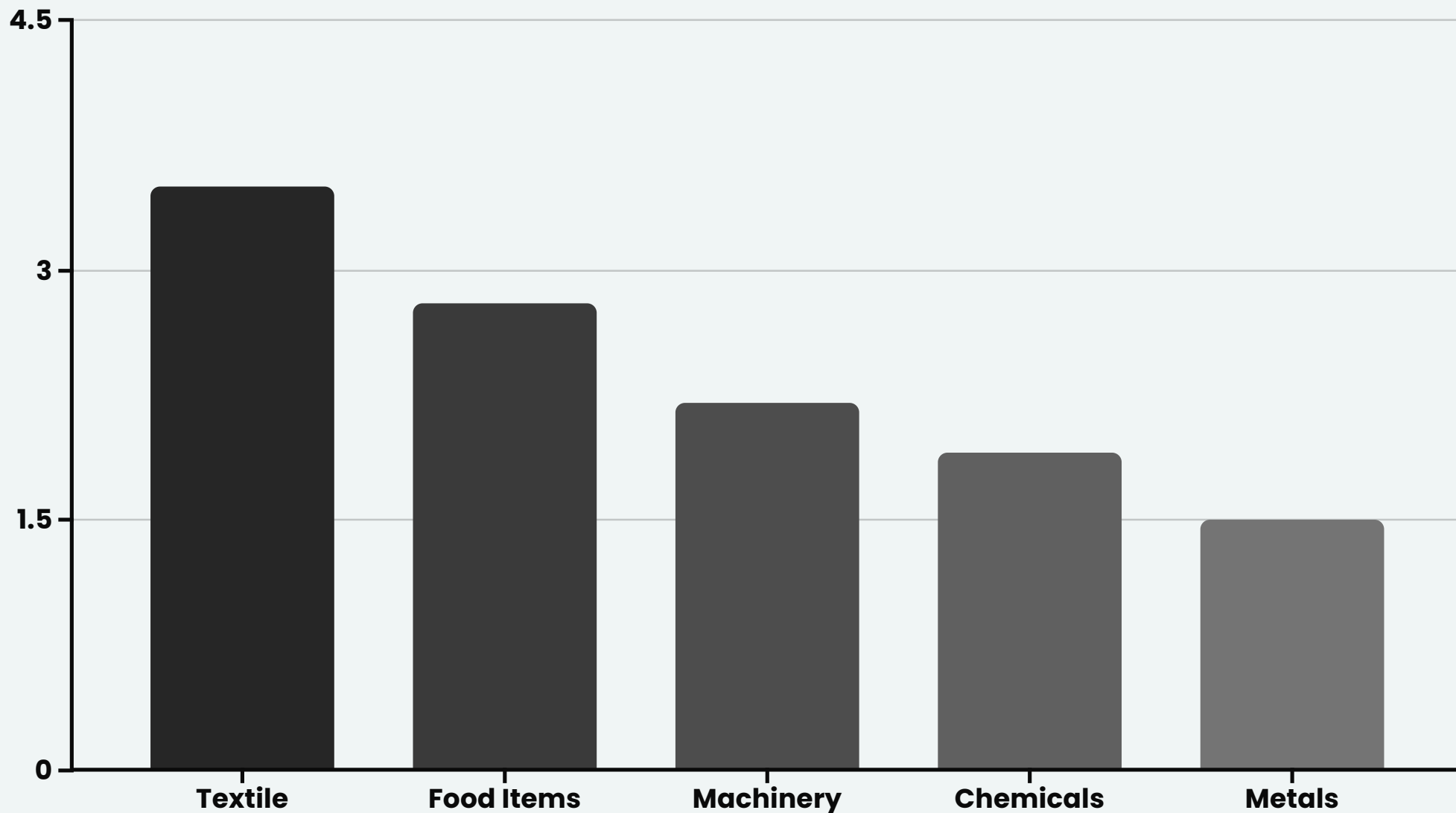
Cultural Diplomacy

Promoting scholarships, medical tourism, and people-to-people contact.

India recently reminded Bangladesh of India's role in the 1971 war, when Prime Minister Modi wrote a letter to Mohammad Yunus on Bangladesh's National Day. Bangladeshi students are sponsored in Indian medical colleges and provided visa-free medical tourism facilities.



Economic Balancing Strategy



Bangladesh is India's largest trade partner in South Asia. India is working on a comprehensive economic partnership agreement and developing joint industrial zones in Tripura and West Bengal.

India is trying to reduce China's influence by strengthening economic ties with Bangladesh. Increasing trade and investment between the two countries will not only bring economic benefits but also strengthen strategic relations.

The Way Ahead: India's Strategy

Securing the Northeast

Secure the Northeast region through roads, radar coverage, and paramilitary deployment. Monitor and control Chinese influence.

Enhancing Diplomatic Reach

Strengthen diplomatic ties with Bangladesh and increase investments. Bolster regional alliances like BIMSTEC and India-Japan-Bangladesh trilateral.

Soft Power Diplomacy

Track and counter anti-India propaganda in Bangladesh. Promote soft power through various media, scholarships, and cultural exchanges.

China is strategically using Bangladesh as a pawn, but India is also adopting a comprehensive economic, diplomatic, and military strategy. Bangladesh is currently a swing state on the geopolitical chessboard, and India needs to secure itself from all directions.



MAINS ANSWER WRITING

What were the major features of the Gandhara art style and how did it influence Indian art? (250 words)

गांधार कला शैली की प्रमुख विशेषताएँ क्या थीं और यह शैली भारतीय कला पर किस प्रकार प्रभावशाली रही? (250 शब्द)



 **150–250 words | Think like a Civil Servant**

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