



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalsivam Kamarajar"

# St Martin's Island

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St. Martin's Island, **Bangladesh's only coral island**, was in the spotlight after reports claimed that Sheikh Hasina, in her undelivered speech, mentioned that the US was behind her ouster from power because she did not hand over the island to it.

## About:

St Martin's Island is **located in the northeastern part of the Bay of Bengal**.

It is a small coral island approximately nine kilometres **south of the tip of Bangladesh's southernmost peninsula, Cox's Bazar-Teknaf**, near Myanmar.

It is **Bangladesh's sole coral island**.

The island has a surface area of only three square kilometres.

It is home to around 3,700 residents who primarily engage in fishing, rice cultivation, coconut farming, and seaweed harvesting.

## HISTORY OF ST MARTIN'S ISLAND

The island is also known as '**Narikel Jinjira**' or **Coconut Island in Bengali**, due to the abundance of coconut trees there.

It is also known as '**Daruchini Dwip**' or **Cinnamon Island**.

The island was once an **extension of the Teknaf peninsula** but was separated due to the submergence of a portion of the peninsula.

The island has a rich history, dating back to the **eighteenth century when it was first settled by Arabian merchants** who named it '**Jazira**'.

In 1900, a **British land survey team** included St Martin's Island as part of British India and named it after a Christian priest called Saint Martin.

There are reports that the island has been named after the then Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong, Mr Martin.

In **1937**, the island remained a part of British India after Myanmar was separated from it. It remained so until the Partition of 1947, when it went into Pakistan's control.

Later on, the **coral island became a part of Bangladesh after the Liberation War of 1971**.

In **1974, Bangladesh and Myanmar reached an agreement** that the coral island would be a part of Bangladeshi territory.

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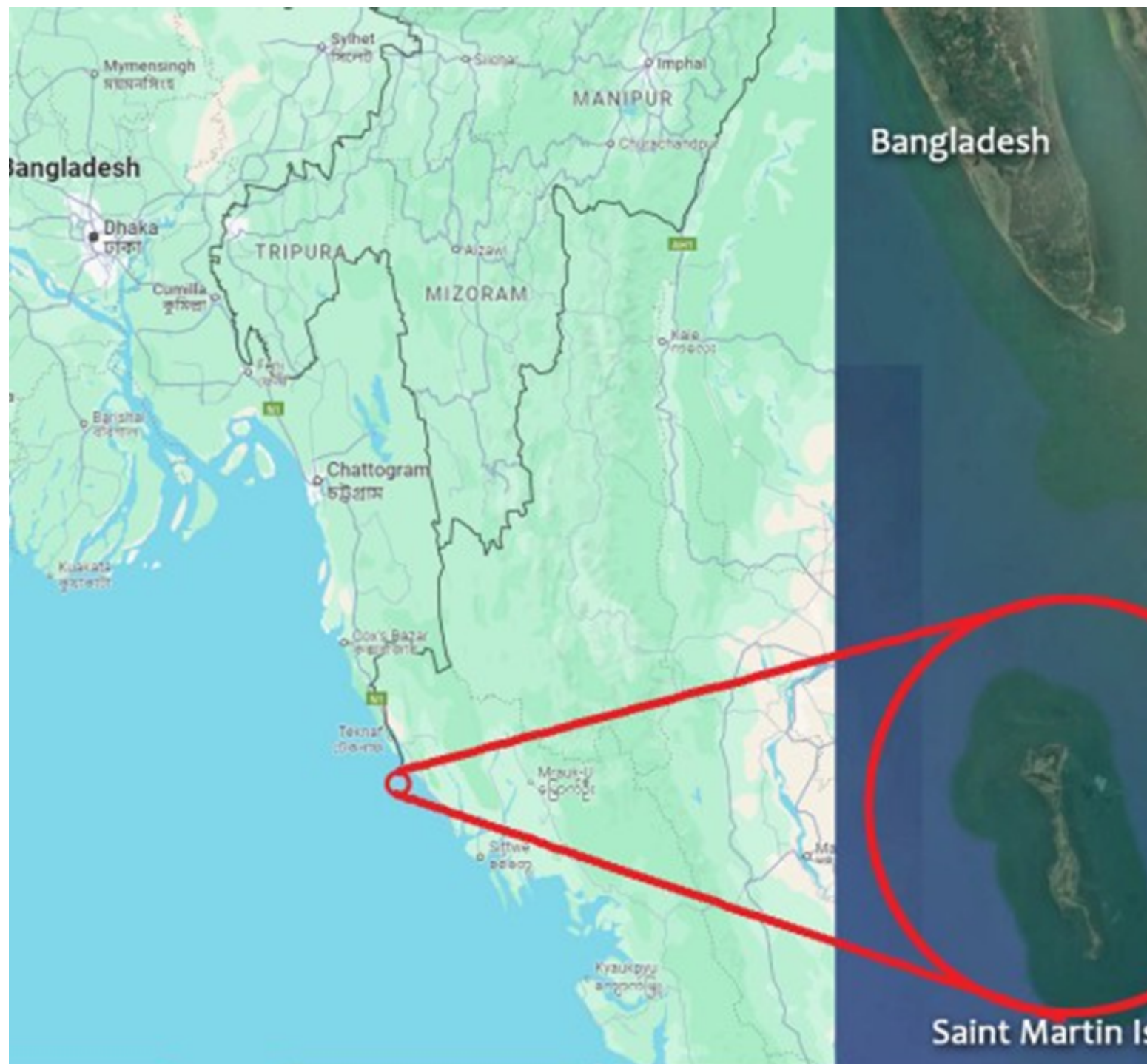
Despite the 1974 agreement recognising St Martin's Island as a Bangladeshi territory, there were issues over the delimitation of the maritime boundary of the island between the former and Myanmar.

***In 2012, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS),*** in a landmark judgment, affirmed Bangladesh's sovereignty over the coral island, in a ruling that had significant implications for the country's territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

### **Geo political significance:**

St Martin's Island has dominated Bangladesh politics since the country came into existence in 1971.

Its proximity to the Bay of Bengal and the maritime boundary with Myanmar have led to ***international interest, particularly from the US and China***, in using the island to strengthen their presence in the region.



Coral reefs:

✓Coral reefs are built by and ***made up of thousands of tiny animals—coral “polyps”***—that are related to anemones and jellyfish.