

07 October | 2025

## Bangladesh Foreign Policy Watch

**CGS** Centre for  
Governance Studies



**22 September**

### Yunus Departs Dhaka for UNGA



Professor Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of Bangladesh's interim government, has departed Dhaka for New York to attend the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly. He is scheduled to deliver Bangladesh's national statement on 26 September, focusing on reform initiatives, the

## A Bi-Weekly Roundup of Key Events

July 2024 mass uprising, and the government's commitment to holding free and fair elections in 2026. His delegation includes leaders from the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizen Party. During the visit, Yunus will take part in high-level meetings on youth empowerment, peacekeeping, climate justice, and migrant rights, and has proposed convening a UN conference on Rohingyas and Myanmar minorities on 30 September. His itinerary also includes receptions hosted by the UN Secretary-General and U.S. President Donald Trump, alongside several bilateral engagements. Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain will participate in other multilateral forums.

### UAE Denies Bangladesh Visa Ban

The Bangladesh Embassy in Abu Dhabi has categorically denied reports claiming that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will impose a visa ban on Bangladeshi citizens from January 2026. The embassy clarified that the false information appears to have originated from a website called [uaevisaonline.com](http://uaevisaonline.com), which has a dubious reputation and misleading contact details across multiple countries. UAE authorities have confirmed that no

such announcement has been made. The embassy also cited past complaints of financial fraud against the website and urged Bangladeshi citizens not to be misled by such baseless claims. It further called for responsible information-sharing to prevent unnecessary panic among migrant workers.

### **Bangladesh Targets Japanese RMG Market**

Bangladesh is seeking to strengthen its foothold in Japan's readymade garment (RMG) market, which imported apparel worth \$22.86 billion in 2024, with Bangladesh accounting for only 5.5 percent. Industry analysts see considerable growth potential as Japan looks to diversify its sourcing beyond China. The anticipated Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the two countries is expected to boost exports, contingent upon compliance with Japan's rigorous standards of quality, transparency, and innovation. Manufacturers such as Envoy Textiles and Masco Group stress the importance of trust-building and professional conduct, noting that Japanese buyers are loyal but highly discerning. Planned strategies include active participation in Fashion World Tokyo and government-backed research to study market behaviour and consumer preferences, aiming to enhance Bangladesh's competitive edge.

### **Dhaka Orders Seizure of \$81 Million from RCBC**

A Dhaka court has ordered the confiscation of \$81 million from the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) in the Philippines, marking a key step in Bangladesh's ongoing efforts to recover funds stolen during the 2016 Bangladesh Bank reserve heist. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) found that RCBC officials, including its former president and branch manager, were involved in laundering the stolen money. While over \$33 million has been recovered from the Philippines and \$20 million from Sri Lanka, nearly \$48 million remains untraced. The court's directive, issued under the Money Laundering Prevention Act, will be forwarded to Philippine authorities for execution, underscoring the importance of continued international cooperation to expedite recovery.

### **Bangladesh Seeks Budget Support from AIIB**

Amid growing fiscal pressures, Bangladesh has

sought \$1.5 billion in budget support from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) under its Climate Policy-Based Budget Support Programme, reflecting the country's increasing reliance on external borrowing to address deficits and fund reforms, particularly in the banking sector. The AIIB has given preliminary assurances, though its market-based interest rates—rising up to 6 percent—have sparked concerns about long-term debt sustainability. Bangladesh also expects an additional \$1.85 billion in assistance from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank during the current fiscal year. Economists have cautioned that ensuring efficient and transparent use of these funds will be essential to prevent a worsening of the national debt burden.

### **Bangladesh RMG Exports to India Rise Despite Restrictions**

Despite recent trade restrictions imposed by India, Bangladesh's readymade garment (RMG) exports to its neighbour have continued to grow, reaching \$184 million between June and August 2025—a 15 percent increase compared to the same period last year. Although India restricted imports through land ports and diverted shipments via Chattogram and Colombo, the sea route remains cost-effective, helping to sustain export momentum. Industry insiders attribute the resilience to Bangladesh's duty-free access and orders from global brands operating in India, including H&M, Levi's, and Tata's Trent. However, overall bilateral trade has dipped due to political tensions and additional restrictions on jute and agro-products. Experts note that without such barriers, RMG exports could have expanded even further.

### **Army Chief Leaves for Malaysia**

Bangladesh's Chief of Army Staff, General Waker-Uz-Zaman, left Dhaka for Malaysia to attend the 14th Indo-Pacific Army Chiefs Conference (IPACC). The four-day event, co-hosted by the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and the Malaysian Armed Forces in Kuala Lumpur, brings together army chiefs from across the region to discuss strategic cooperation, shared challenges, and joint responses to regional crises. The visit is expected to enhance Bangladesh's engagement within the Indo-Pacific framework and deepen its defence partnerships. General Waker is scheduled to return to Dhaka on 27 September.



denied landing permission, while another was cancelled, affecting the national football team and a military delegation. Despite widespread vandalism and arson, all Bangladeshi citizens in Nepal remain safe. Dhaka expressed condolences for the casualties and urged peaceful dialogue to restore stability.

## 23 Sept

### Demand of Return of Abducted Fishermen

A Bangladeshi citizens' rights group has called for urgent action to recover fishermen allegedly abducted by foreign forces. At a press conference organized by the Rail-Nou Jogajog O Paribesh Unnayan Gonocommittee, leaders demanded the return of seven fishermen reportedly taken by India's Border Security Force (BSF) after inadvertently entering Indian waters in the Jingiram River near Kurigram on 4 November 2024. The group also urged the interim government to secure the release of 40 fishermen abducted by Myanmar's Arakan Army near St. Martin's Island on 11 September, along with 81 others previously taken from Cox's Bazar. Families of the missing fishermen attended, calling for diplomatic and humanitarian intervention.

### EU Delegation Meets EC

An eight-member exploratory mission from the European Union (EUEM) met with Bangladesh's Election Commission (EC) officials to assess the feasibility of deploying an EU observation team for the upcoming 13th parliamentary elections. Led by senior election expert Riccardo Chellery, the EUEM team held discussions with EC joint secretary Moin Uddin Khan and other officials to evaluate election preparedness and the political environment. The delegation also planned meetings with election commissioner Brigadier General (retired) Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah and various government and private stakeholders to gauge conditions for ensuring free and fair elections.

### Global Conflict Threatens Peace Development: CA

At the UN High-Level Side Event on Social Business, Youth, and Technology in New York, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus cautioned that ongoing global conflicts undermine peace, stability, and sustainable development. He stressed that traditional approaches are

insufficient to address climate change, inequality, and displacement, calling for strengthened multi-lateral diplomacy and international cooperation. Highlighting Bangladesh's challenges—including hosting 1.3 million Rohingyas and climate-related shocks—Yunus urged expanded global support. He advocated systemic adoption of social business, emphasizing profit aligned with human and environmental well-being, and stressed youth leadership and ethical technology use, envisioning a future grounded in empathy, equity, and shared progress.

### Bangladesh Chief Attends UNGA Session



Bangladesh's interim government chief adviser, Professor Muhammad Yunus, attended the inaugural session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the UN Headquarters in New York. Accompanied by advisers on energy, foreign affairs, and law, Yunus engaged in high-level meetings with global figures including Uruguay's foreign minister, former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet, and World Bank president Ajay Banga. His schedule includes discussions with the WTO director general, Queen of the Netherlands, and participation in events focused on development and social innovation. He is also slated to attend a reception hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump.

### Belgium Queen, Ex-British PM Meet Yunus

On 22 September 2025, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus met several prominent global figures at the UN Headquarters in New York during the 80th UN General Assembly. He held discussions with Her Majesty Queen Mathilde of Belgium, former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva. These meetings took place shortly after Yunus's arrival in New York via Emirates Airlines, marking the beginning of his diplomatic

engagements aimed at strengthening Bangladesh's international partnerships.

### **Italian Envoy Meets Adviser Faruk**

On 23 September 2025, Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro met with Bangladesh's Disaster Management and Relief Adviser Faruk-e-Azam at the secretariat office in Dhaka to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation. Both sides emphasized mutual training, experience-sharing, and expanding collaboration in disaster management. Faruk-e-Azam acknowledged Italy as a key partner and expressed interest in leveraging Italian expertise, particularly in earthquake preparedness. Senior officials from both the ministry and the Italian embassy, including Deputy Chief of Mission Federico Zamparclli and Disaster Management Directorate Director General Rezwanur Rahman, were present during the meeting.

**23 Sept**

### **Citizens' Group Demands Return of Abducted Fishermen**

A Bangladeshi citizens' rights organisation has urged immediate government action to recover fishermen allegedly abducted by foreign forces. At a press conference organised by the Rail-Nou Jogajog O Paribesh Unnayan Gonocommittee, speakers demanded the return of seven fishermen reportedly detained by India's Border Security Force (BSF) after inadvertently crossing into Indian waters on the Jingiram River near Kurigram on 4 November 2024. The group further appealed to the interim government to secure the release of 40 fishermen abducted by Myanmar's Arakan Army near St. Martin's Island on 11 September, along with 81 others previously taken from Cox's Bazar. Families of the missing fishermen were present at the event, calling for urgent diplomatic and humanitarian intervention to bring their loved ones home.

### **EU Delegation Holds Talks with Election Commission**

An eight-member exploratory mission from the European Union (EU) met with officials of Bangladesh's Election Commission (EC) on 23 September 2025 to assess the feasibility of deploying an EU observation team for the forthcoming 13th parliamentary elections. Headed by senior

election expert Riccardo Chellery, the delegation held discussions with EC Joint Secretary Moin Uddin Khan and other senior officials to review election preparedness and the overall political climate. The EU mission also scheduled meetings with Election Commissioner Brigadier General (retired) Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah and representatives from various government bodies and civil society organisations to evaluate the conditions necessary for ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

### **Global Conflicts Undermine Peace and Development: Yunus**

At the UN High-Level Side Event on Social Business, Youth, and Technology in New York, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus warned that escalating global conflicts threaten peace, stability, and sustainable development worldwide. He stressed that conventional approaches are no longer sufficient to tackle intertwined challenges such as climate change, inequality, and forced displacement, urging stronger multilateral diplomacy and deeper international cooperation. Highlighting Bangladesh's struggles—including hosting 1.3 million Rohingya refugees and recurring climate shocks—Yunus called for expanded global support and equitable burden-sharing. Advocating systemic adoption of social business, he emphasised the need to align profit with human and environmental welfare, while underscoring the role of youth leadership and ethical technology in shaping a future built on empathy, equity, and collective progress.

### **Yunus Attends UNGA Opening Session**

Bangladesh's interim government Chief Adviser, Professor Muhammad Yunus, attended the inaugural session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the UN Headquarters in New York on 23 September 2025. Accompanied by advisers for energy, foreign affairs, and law, Yunus participated in several high-level meetings with international figures including Uruguay's foreign minister, former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet, and World Bank president Ajay Banga. His engagements also include discussions with the Director-General of the World Trade Organization and Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, alongside participation in events centred on development, social innovation, and global governance. He is further scheduled to attend a

reception hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump.

### **Italian Envoy Meets Adviser Faruk-e-Azam**

Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro met Bangladesh's Disaster Management and Relief Adviser Faruk-e-Azam at the secretariat in Dhaka to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of training exchanges, experience-sharing, and collaboration in disaster management and humanitarian response. Faruk-e-Azam recognised Italy as a valued partner and expressed interest in leveraging Italian expertise in earthquake preparedness and early warning systems. Senior officials from both the ministry and the Italian Embassy, including Deputy Chief of Mission Federico Zamparalli and Disaster Management Directorate Director General Rezwanur Rahman, attended the meeting.

## **24 September**

### **Malaysia Labour Market Remains Officially Closed**

Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) has confirmed that Malaysia's regular labour market remains officially closed, warning potential migrant workers against misinformation and fraud. In a notice issued on 23 September 2025, BOESL clarified that only 7,873 workers—who had completed all official procedures by 31 May 2024 but were unable to travel—will be sent to Malaysia under a special arrangement. These individuals will be employed in the construction and tourism sectors after undergoing specific training, at a fixed migration cost of Tk162,500. BOESL reiterated that any claim suggesting the reopening of the Malaysian labour market is entirely false and urged workers to remain cautious of unscrupulous recruitment agents and exploitative syndicates.

### **Chief Adviser Yunus Honoured at Global Education Dinner**

At Theirworld's Annual Global Education Dinner, held alongside the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus was honoured with the Unlock Big Change award for his pioneering contributions to microfinance and his lifelong dedication to linking education with financial empowerment. Co-hosted by Gordon Brown and Sarah Brown, the event celebrated international

initiatives to end the global education crisis. In his remarks, Yunus emphasised that access to credit is a fundamental human right and highlighted how microcredit has enabled millions of women to lift families out of poverty and ensure their children's education. He called for a reimagined approach to learning—one that nurtures entrepreneurship, creativity, and problem-solving skills from early childhood.

### **Bangladesh Seeks WTO Support for Smooth LDC Graduation**

During a meeting held on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly in New York, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus urged World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to extend comprehensive support for Bangladesh's smooth graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, expected in late 2026. Yunus underscored the need for continued trade concessions, special and differential treatment, and preferential market access to prevent economic disruptions following graduation. Dr Okonjo-Iweala assured full cooperation, commending Bangladesh's role as a voice for developing nations and encouraging its active participation in WTO reform processes. Both leaders discussed the broader challenges facing global trade, with Yunus reaffirming Bangladesh's commitment to advancing inclusive and sustainable reforms within the multilateral trading system.

### **India Pushes Nineteen People into Bangladesh**

India's Border Security Force (BSF) has reportedly pushed nineteen more individuals—including women and children—into Bangladesh through the Chanshikari border point in Chapainawabganj, bringing the total number of such push-ins since 7 May to 2,361. Among those expelled are 193 Rohingyas, fifty of whom are registered with the UNHCR in India. According to the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), the most recent group had served jail terms in India for illegal entry before being deported. Local police authorities are now verifying their identities and initiating procedures to reunite them with their families. Officials say the incident once again highlights ongoing tensions and irregularities in border management between the two neighbouring countries.



## 25 September

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### Bangladesh Urges Azerbaijan to Recruit Skilled Workers

Bangladesh has called on Azerbaijan to recruit more skilled workers and expand cooperation in the labour sector during a bilateral meeting in Baku between Labour Adviser Brigadier General (Retired) Dr M Sakhawat Hossain and Azerbaijani Minister of Labour and Social Protection Anar Aliyev. The discussions centred on improving the rights, safety, and living standards of Bangladeshi workers currently employed in Azerbaijan, as well as streamlining visa procedures and enhancing technical collaboration. Bangladesh also invited Azerbaijani investment in its special economic zones and proposed closer coordination within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In response, the Azerbaijani minister suggested forming a joint working group to advance labour and investment initiatives and encouraged Bangladesh to ratify the OIC Labour Statute to strengthen institutional engagement.

### Italian Prime Minister Meloni to Visit Bangladesh in December



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is scheduled to visit Bangladesh in December 2025, marking a significant step towards deepening bilateral relations centred on economic cooperation and safe migration. During her meeting with Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the two leaders discussed measures to prevent irregular migration, particularly in light of recent tragedies involving Bangladeshi migrants in the Mediterranean. Meloni proposed the launch of an Italy–Bangladesh Business Forum to boost trade and investment between the two countries. The forthcoming visit builds on commitments made in May 2025, when both governments agreed to enhance collaboration against transnational crimes, including human trafficking and

cybercrime, and to establish a joint committee for capacity-building and intelligence sharing.

## 28 September

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### Bangladesh Eyes Labour Export to Uzbekistan

Bangladesh and Uzbekistan have agreed to deepen bilateral cooperation, placing particular emphasis on labour migration and skills exchange. During a meeting on the sidelines of the 80th United Nations General Assembly in New York, Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain and Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov discussed the recruitment of semi-skilled and skilled Bangladeshi workers for Uzbekistan's growing industrial sectors. Both sides signed a visa exemption agreement for holders of diplomatic passports, signalling a step towards enhanced diplomatic and economic ties. The meeting also covered trade, investment, higher education, and regional connectivity, with Bangladesh expressing keen interest in contributing to Uzbekistan's development while exploring new academic and vocational training opportunities for Bangladeshi students.

## 29 September

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### Indian Court Exposes Border Violations

A recent ruling by the Calcutta High Court has brought to light serious irregularities in India's border management practices, declaring the forcible deportation of individuals into Bangladesh to be unlawful. The court ordered the repatriation of six Indian nationals, including a pregnant woman, who had been pushed into Bangladesh in August. Since May, nearly 2,400 people—among them Rohingyas registered with UNHCR and Indian citizens—have reportedly been expelled in similar fashion, often on tenuous grounds such as speaking Bangla or lacking identity documents. These actions, according to legal experts, undermine bilateral trust and violate international conventions and existing border agreements. Despite Bangladesh's readiness to take back its nationals through formal procedures, India has continued coercive measures, including border shootings and the construction of unauthorised fencing in no man's land. The ruling has renewed calls for Dhaka to raise the issue in regional and global forums, while urging New Delhi to adhere to legal standards and uphold the spirit of neighbourly cooperation.

## Japan Pledges \$3.4 Million in Rohingya Aid

Japan has pledged \$3.4 million to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to assist Rohingya refugees and vulnerable host communities in Bangladesh, as humanitarian needs rise amid shrinking international support. The contribution will ensure monthly food and nutrition assistance for more than 100,000 Rohingya refugees and 2,000 Bangladeshis through an e-voucher system that covers essentials such as rice and vegetables, alongside specialised nutrition programmes for children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Cox's Bazar currently shelters over 1.1 million Rohingyas, and the WFP has warned that without an additional \$60 million within the next six months, food distributions could face severe disruptions from December 2025. Japan has so far contributed over \$240 million to Rohingya relief efforts since 2017, reaffirming its commitment to humanitarian partnerships in Bangladesh.

## Russian Wheat Shipment Arrives at Kutubdia

A consignment of 52,500 metric tonnes of Russian wheat has reached the Kutubdia outer anchorage in Chattogram aboard the vessel MV PERTH I, under a cash purchase agreement signed on 7 July 2025. According to a government press release, sampling and quality testing have been completed, with unloading preparations now underway. Of the total shipment, 31,500 tonnes will be offloaded at Chattogram Port, while the remaining 21,000 tonnes are designated for Mongla Port. Officials noted that the procurement is part of Bangladesh's broader effort to stabilise food supplies and maintain buffer stocks amid global market volatility.

## EU Plans Deployment of 150 Election Observers

The European Union has proposed signing a tripartite memorandum of understanding with Bangladesh's Election Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate the deployment of approximately 150 observers for the upcoming national elections. The draft agreement was handed over during a meeting at the EC headquarters in Dhaka and will undergo formal review prior to signing. The observers are expected to arrive in phases ahead of polling day. In a related development, the British High Commissioner

reaffirmed the United Kingdom's commitment to supporting free, fair, and peaceful elections in Bangladesh, highlighting ongoing collaboration in civic education, polling staff training, and voter inclusion initiatives focusing on women and marginalised groups.

## 30 September

### UNOPS and Takeda Launch Initiative to Tackle Bangladesh's Medical Waste Crisis

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in partnership with Takeda Pharmaceutical Company, has launched a \$7.1 million programme to address Bangladesh's escalating medical waste crisis, particularly in rural and climate-vulnerable areas. The initiative aims to protect more than 7.3 million people from infection risks caused by poorly managed healthcare waste, which now averages 3.4 kg per hospital bed daily—exceeding the capacity of existing disposal systems.

## 1 October

### United States and United Kingdom Pledge \$96 Million for Rohingya Aid

The United States and the United Kingdom have jointly pledged \$96 million in new humanitarian assistance to support those affected by the Rohingya crisis. The announcement came during the inaugural High-Level Conference on the Situation of the Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar, held at United Nations Headquarters on 30 September 2025. The United States committed \$60 million, while the United Kingdom pledged \$36 million. Bangladesh's Chief Adviser, Professor Muhammad Yunus, who addressed the conference, reiterated that repatriation remains the only peaceful and sustainable solution to the protracted crisis. He presented a seven-point action plan, including the formulation of a practical roadmap for the safe and dignified return of the Rohingyas, contingent upon measurable stabilisation in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

### UNICEF Commends Bangladesh for Child-Centred Climate Commitments

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has commended Bangladesh for incorporating children's rights into its third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) under the Paris

Agreement. The new NDC, coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, focuses not only on reducing emissions and enhancing resilience but also on protecting children's rights and empowering youth as agents of climate action. Recognising that children bear the brunt of climate impacts, disrupting access to healthcare, education, and safe water, the plan introduces child-sensitive sectoral targets to ensure continuity of essential services during severe climate events. UNICEF is also supporting the creation of educational materials to foster environmental awareness and strengthen children's participation in climate resilience initiatives.

### Chief Adviser Yunus Concludes New York Visit

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has returned to Dhaka following a nine-day visit to New York, where he attended the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). During the trip, he delivered speeches at the UNGA and the high-level conference on the situation of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar. Yunus held bilateral meetings with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, UNHCR Chief Filippo Grandi, and other senior UN officials. He also met leaders from the Netherlands, Pakistan, Bhutan, and Kosovo, and attended a reception hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump, where he extended an invitation for a future visit to Bangladesh.

### 4 October

### Bangladesh Strengthens Anti-Trafficking Measures

The U.S. Department of State's 2025 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report has placed Bangladesh in Tier 2, acknowledging the government's significant and sustained efforts to combat human trafficking despite governance and migration-related challenges. The report notes improvements in victim identification, protection services, and inter-agency coordination, with 1,462 victims identified across sex trafficking, forced labour, and other forms of exploitation. Recent initiatives include the National Referral Mechanism, trauma-informed training for law-enforcement and judicial officials, and partnerships with INTERPOL as well as India and South Africa. Prevention efforts under the National Anti-Human Trafficking Authority and

the National Action Plan 2018–2025 have been reinforced through nationwide awareness campaigns, technical training, new bilateral labour agreements, and reintegration policies, underscoring Bangladesh's political will to address trafficking comprehensively.

### India Denies Involvement in Khagrachhari Violence

India has strongly rejected allegations made by Bangladesh's Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury concerning cross-border involvement in the recent violence in Khagrachhari, describing them as "false and baseless." Indian Ministry of External Affairs Spokesman Randhir Jaiswal criticised Bangladesh's interim government for "deflecting responsibility" and urged it to investigate local extremist activities targeting minorities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The controversy arose following Chowdhury's comments after the alleged rape of an indigenous schoolgirl, where he suggested that external forces and fascist groups were attempting to destabilise communal harmony ahead of Durga Puja celebrations. Although he did not explicitly name India, Chowdhury implied that foreign actors were supplying arms and funding to instigate unrest.

## Contributors

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