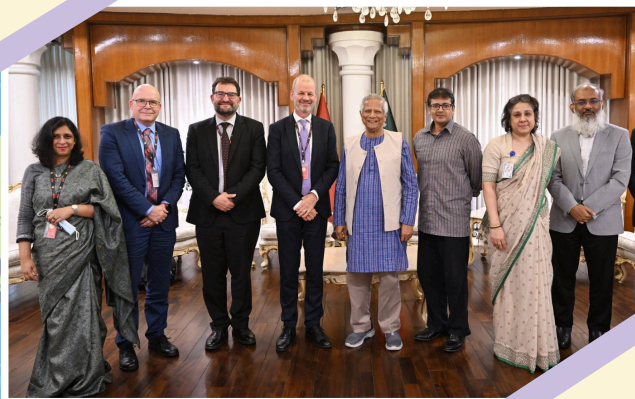


14th July | 2025

Bangladesh Foreign Policy Watch

CGS Centre for Governance Studies



A Bi-Weekly Roundup of Key Events

01 July

Yunus, Rubio Vow Stronger Economic Partnership

Bangladesh and the United States agreed to deepen economic cooperation and finalise ongoing tariff negotiations. U.S. Senator Marco Rubio expressed support for Bangladesh's democratic reforms and upcoming elections. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus acknowledged U.S. humanitarian aid and noted improving prospects for Rohingya repatriation to Myanmar. President Trump suspended reciprocal tariffs on Bangladesh for 90 days, prompting Dhaka to prepare a responsive trade package. Both parties emphasised peace and stability in the IndoPacific. Yunus stated that the Election Commission is being restructured following previous damage. A recent meeting between Bangladesh's National Security Adviser and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State enhanced bilateral trust.

28 Bangladeshis Return from Iran

Twenty-eight Bangladeshi nationals arrived in Dhaka from conflict-hit Iran. They crossed into Pakistan by road on 27 June and flew from Karachi

30 June

Govt Approves Draft for UN Rights Office

The Bangladeshi Advisory Council has approved, in principle, a draft MoU permitting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to establish an office in Bangladesh for an initial three-year term, extendable by mutual agreement. Law Adviser Prof. Asif Nazrul confirmed the draft would be sent to UN High Commissioner Volker Türk for consent. This follows a UN fact-finding report on the July–August uprising, which recorded approximately 1,400 deaths. The OHCHR office will support ongoing reforms in Bangladesh's political, judicial, police, and bureaucratic sectors. The Council also approved amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code, a counter-terrorism MoU with Turkey, and a national rooftop solar programme.

to Dhaka. The Bangladesh Embassy in Tehran worked closely with Pakistani authorities to facilitate the repatriation. This action reflects Bangladesh's commitment to safeguarding its citizens during international crises. The Foreign Ministry emphasised the use of diplomatic channels to ensure safety and support abroad.

02 July

Japan Funds Bangladesh's Ballot Project

Japan is contributing Tk 56.5 crore (~\$5 million) to Bangladesh's Election Commission under the BALLOT Project, implemented through the UNDP. The initiative aims to strengthen the Commission's institutional, technical, and operational capacity, enhance voter education, promote inclusion of women, youth, and under-represented groups, and introduce safeguards against misinformation and electoral violence. The \$18.53 million project will run until 31 December 2027 in two phases: technical preparations and outreach, followed by institutional reforms and post-election democratic resilience. The agreement was signed by Japanese Ambassador Saida Shinichi, UNDP Representative Stefan Liller, and CEC AMM Nasir Uddin, who welcomed the support for credible elections.

US, EU Concerned Over Bangladesh Trade Union Registration

The United States and European Union have expressed concern over Bangladesh's trade union registration process, citing undue complexity and employer influence. Labour Secretary AHM Shafiquzzaman acknowledged the criticism, admitting transparency issues and employer-driven approvals. Labour leader Atiqur Rahman highlighted continued lobbying and selective federation registration, urging the creation of a formal complaint mechanism. Proposed reforms include amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act to ease union formation and simplify verification. Full digitalisation of the registration system is in progress with GIZ support. Additionally, a tollfree labour helpline (16357) has been relaunched, offering 24/7 access for workers to file complaints, with improved management and accessibility.

China Provides Dengue Aid to Bangladesh

In June, Bangladesh reported 5,951 dengue cases and 19 deaths, with total hospitalisations reaching 5,988 and fatalities rising to 30 by mid-month. This sharp increase is attributed to the onset of the monsoon season. In response, China has donated dengue prevention materials to support Bangladesh's efforts in managing the outbreak. The handover ceremony will be organised by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and attended by officials from the Ministry of Health, Chinese Embassy, and DGHS. Compared to May's 1,773 infections and 3 deaths, the surge in June highlights an alarming upward trend in dengue cases.

Bangladesh Settles All Dues with Adani

In June, Bangladesh made a one-time payment of \$437 million to Adani Power, clearing all outstanding dues up to 31 March 2025, including arrears, delayed interest, and charges. Following this settlement, Bangladesh instructed Adani to operate both 800 MW units (1,600 MW total) in accordance with BPDB's electricity demand. The cross-border power purchase agreement has returned to normal financial and legal standing. Bangladesh also issued a twomonth Letter of Credit (~\$180 million) and provided a sovereign guarantee for future payments. Adani waived delay charges, conditional on arrears being cleared by 30 June. Total dues stood at \$2 billion; \$1.2 billion was collected by FY2024–25.

CA Urges UN Action on Disinformation



Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus urged the United Nations to establish an effective mechanism to combat disinformation and uphold ethical media standards. He described disinformation as a persistent threat from both local and international sources, including traditional and digital media. Yunus emphasised the need for independent regulation and public accountability for

media spreading false information. During a meeting with UNESCO officials, ahead of the launch of a joint UNDP–UNESCO report on Bangladesh’s media landscape, key issues discussed included self-regulation, training for law enforcement and the judiciary, journalist safety, and improved working conditions. Yunus called for direct UN engagement with media institutions to support anti-disinformation efforts.

03 July

JICA Remembers Victims of Holey Artisan Attack

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) held a remembrance ceremony in Dhaka to honor seven Japanese consultants killed in the 1 July 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery attack. The event took place at the Metro Rail Exhibition and Information Center (MEIC) in Uttara. The consultants were involved in feasibility studies for the Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Projects (MRT-1 and MRT-5). JICA Senior Vice President HARA Shohei expressed grief and appreciation for their contributions. Co-organized by the Japanese and Bangladeshi governments and consulting firms, the ceremony acknowledged the victims’ legacy in one of Bangladesh’s deadliest terror attacks.

Asif Proposes Dhaka-Rabat Sports Collaboration

Bangladesh Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain met Moroccan Minister Mohammed Saad Berrada in Rabat to discuss collaboration in education and sports. Morocco’s “Study and Sports” model aims to reduce student dropout rates. They’re also focused on expanding preschool education and using digital tools to improve classroom engagement. Asif Mahmud praised Morocco’s integrated model and proposed joint efforts in training, technical support, and experience sharing. He also suggested organizing a friendly football match and invited Berrada to the Global Youth Summit 2025. Both leaders stressed the importance of cooperation as members of the Muslim world and expressed optimism about strengthening bilateral ties in youth development and education.

BSF Gunfire Kills Youth

Ibrahim Babu, a 30-year-old Bangladeshi from Jhajhadanga village, was reportedly shot dead by India’s Border Security Force (BSF) near the Darshana border in Chuadanga. According to his

family, he accidentally crossed into Indian territory while cutting grass near the 79th border pillar. BSF claimed it fired at suspected gold smugglers who had entered 200 meters into Indian territory, injuring one person. Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) confirmed the incident and contacted BSF. Local witnesses reported hearing gunfire and seeing Babu’s companions return without him. His body has not yet been recovered, but locals allege BSF personnel took it away.

Australia Backs Free, Fair Bangladesh Elections

Australia reaffirmed its commitment to free and fair elections in Bangladesh. Australian High Commissioner Susan Ryle met BNP leaders at the party’s office in Gulshan. Australia will continue providing support to the Election Commission. BNP’s Amir Khasru highlighted the party’s ongoing efforts for electoral reform. He expressed hope for high voter turnout, addressing past limitations on voting rights. BNP emphasized the need for participatory elections representing all segments of society. The meeting also covered education, agriculture, and Australian investments. Concerns about Bangladeshi nationals in Australia and bilateral challenges were raised. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul and Organizing Secretary Shama Obaid were present.

Sweden Grants Tk6.16cr for Resource Management

On 3 July 2025, Bangladesh and Sweden signed a grant agreement for natural resource management and climate resilience. Sweden will provide 4.9 million SEK (approximately Tk6.16 crore) as a grant. The project, titled “Strengthening Capacity of MoEFCC, DoE and BFD for Natural Resource Management and Improved Climate Resilience,” aims to enhance institutional capacity, align biodiversity conservation with climate goals, improve monitoring of Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs), and establish a wildlife trust fund for sustainable financing. The project will be implemented from July 2025 to December 2026.

CA Seeks Stronger Japan-Bangladesh Cooperation

Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus met with JICA Executive Senior Vice President Miyazaki Katsura in Dhaka, urging deeper Japan-Bangladesh cooperation in investment,



fisheries, Rohingya aid, youth development, education, and sports. He emphasized the Matarbari maritime project and Bangladesh's aim to become a sea-based economy. Proposals included expanding scholarships, employment opportunities, and Japanese language education. Concerns were raised about Rohingya youth in refugee camps. Miyazaki reaffirmed Japan's support ahead of Bangladesh's LDC graduation in 2026. JICA is aiding reforms in judiciary, governance, and ICT training. Prof. Yunus thanked Japan for recent loans and grants, requesting an annual ODA increase to 450 billion JPY.

Indonesia Interested in Bangladesh Jute Imports

Indonesian Ambassador to Bangladesh, Arif Suyoko, expressed strong interest in importing jute and jute products from Bangladesh, citing their superior quality compared to Indonesian jute. During a visit to a jute industry in Naohata, Paba upazila, the ambassador and a high-level delegation discussed potential bilateral cooperation in the jute and agriculture sectors. Indonesia is particularly interested in mango cultivation and supporting mango exports from Bangladesh. The ambassador emphasized interest in investment, especially in joint agricultural ventures. Rajshahi was identified as a promising region for collaboration. The visit concluded with optimism about enhancing trade in jute and agricultural products.

Dhaka Requests Info on Malaysia Arrests

Bangladesh has formally requested detailed information from Malaysian authorities regarding the arrest of 36 Bangladeshi nationals over alleged militancy ties. Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain stated that the government will verify the allegations and ensure punishment if

involvement is confirmed. He acknowledged that such incidents could negatively impact future visa issuance for Bangladeshi citizens, though proper measures could minimize the effect. Malaysia's Home Minister previously announced the arrests, citing direct links between the detainees and an extremist militant group. Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus is expected to make a bilateral visit to Malaysia in August, with dates currently being finalized.

04 July

US Reaffirms Support for Bangladesh Reforms

The US Embassy in Dhaka reaffirmed its support for Bangladesh's ongoing reform initiatives led by Nobel Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus during its Independence Day celebration. US Chargé d'Affaires Tracey Ann Jacobson honored the July–August 2024 student-led uprising, noting its foundational role in current reforms. A recent call between the US Secretary of State and Bangladesh's Chief Adviser reinforced this commitment. The event, attended by key advisers, diplomats, and civil society members, highlighted US-Bangladesh cooperation in commercial, military, and development sectors. Jacobson also emphasized inclusive political engagement and human rights, with the event symbolically themed "State Fair" to reflect cultural ties.

Indian Driver Caught With 20 Passports

An Indian truck driver named Becharam Paramanik was detained at Benapole port in Jashore on July 4, 2025. He was intercepted by security personnel after acting suspiciously while carrying a bag through the cargo vehicle terminal. A search of the bag revealed 20 Bangladeshi passports. A case has been filed under the Passport Act at Benapole Port Police Station. The driver and the recovered passports were handed over to the police.

05 July

Dhaka, Malaysia to Cooperate on Terror Investigation

The Bangladeshi government has pledged full cooperation with Malaysia in an ongoing terror investigation involving 36 Bangladeshi nationals arrested for alleged links to an extremist militant group. The Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur is coordinating with

Malaysian authorities to support affected expatriates. Formal charges have been filed against five individuals, while the remaining are under investigation or face potential deportation. Bangladesh has officially requested details on the detainees and the allegations. Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain affirmed Bangladesh's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism, extremism, and militancy, stating that any confirmed involvement will result in appropriate legal action.

Algeria Emphasizes Strengthening Bangladesh Ties

Algerian Ambassador Dr. Abdelouahab Saidani emphasized Algeria's commitment to expanding collaboration with Bangladesh across diverse sectors. The Algeria-Bangladesh Business Forum and exchange of economic delegations reflect a mutual vision for sustainable development. The remarks were made during the 63rd anniversary of Algerian Independence Day celebrations on July 5 in Dhaka. Plans for high-level future visits are underway, further reinforcing the partnership's growth. Algeria and Bangladesh have maintained diplomatic relations since 1971, based on mutual respect and solidarity.

08 July

Army Chief, Turkey Discuss Defense Ties

Meeting held between Bangladesh Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman and Haluk Görgün, Secretary of Türkiye's Defence Industries, at army HQ. They discussed ways to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation. Türkiye expressed willingness to offer technical and strategic support to help develop Bangladesh's defence industry. General Waker-Uz-Zaman showed interest in producing modern military equipment and advancing defence technologies with Turkish collaboration.

09 July

Bangladesh, US resume tariff negotiations

The second round of negotiations between Bangladesh and the United States on the proposed Agreement on Reciprocal Tariff is being held in Washington, DC, from 9–11 July 2025. Invited by the Office of the US Trade Representative, Bangladesh is among the first nations to re-engage following President Trump's letter to 14

affected countries. Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashiruddin is leading the Bangladeshi delegation. The talks aim to build on the momentum from the first round on 27 June, which both sides termed productive and constructive.

Trump's Tariff Threatens Bangladesh Exports

In 2024, U.S.–Bangladesh trade totaled \$10.6 billion, with Bangladesh exporting \$8.4 billion. From August 1, the U.S. plans to impose a 35% tariff on Bangladeshi goods, raising concerns of reduced competitiveness, particularly in the ready-made garment sector. Industry leaders fear order shifts to Vietnam and India, job losses, and adverse ripple effects across banking, transport, and ports. The uncertainty over whether this tariff will be added to the existing 16% duty further intensifies concern. The exclusion of private sector stakeholders from tariff negotiations drew criticism. However, some exporters remain cautiously optimistic due to Bangladesh's niche offerings and Vietnam's limited capacity.

China Backs Bangladesh's Future Government

Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen reaffirmed China's strong support for Bangladesh's interim and future elected governments, emphasizing continued trade, investment, and cooperation in sustainable development. Speaking at a seminar in Dhaka, Yao highlighted China's commitment to Bangladesh's industrial upgrading and economic reforms under Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus. Ten detailed reports from Chinese companies were presented to guide reform efforts. Chinese investment in Bangladesh increased 3.7 times in Q1 2025, with over \$400 million in agreements since August 2024. Both countries signed an MoU on industrial and supply chain collaboration and pledged deeper Belt and Road cooperation on their 50th diplomatic anniversary.

Chinese worker dies in Barapukuria accident

A Chinese national named Wang Jiang Gou, who was a shift manager at the Barapukuria Coal Mine in Dinajpur, died in a workplace accident. The incident occurred on July 9 when a hydraulic jack crushed him inside the mine during equipment relocation after coal extraction from phase-1305. He was critically injured and taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital,

where he was declared dead at around 7:30 PM.

Bangladesh urges Belarus to Open embassy in Dhaka

Home Adviser Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Md. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury urged Belarus to establish a full-fledged embassy in Dhaka to ease visa processing and administrative difficulties for Bangladeshis. Currently, Belarus operates through its consulate in Dhaka and embassy in New Delhi. The adviser emphasized expanding bilateral cooperation in trade, agriculture, education, defense, and technology, citing Bangladesh as a major importer of Belarusian fertilizer. Belarus's ambassador requested the repatriation of a Belarusian prisoner; however, the adviser noted the lack of a bilateral prisoner transfer agreement, and the case remains pending in the High Court. Discussions also addressed migration, human trafficking, and law enforcement cooperation.

15 July

World Bank VP Praises Economic Reforms, Youth Leadership in Bangladesh

World Bank Vice President for South Asia Johannes Zutt commended the Interim Government's economic reforms during a meeting with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus. Zutt praised Bangladesh's inclusive growth agenda and paid tribute to the youth, particularly women, for their role in the July Uprising. Emphasising Bangladesh's regional importance, Yunus called for expanded international trade and youth-focused development. The World Bank pledged continued support, highlighting its \$3 billion funding last year. Special Envoy Lutfey Siddiqi noted rising FDI and improvements at Chattogram Port's container terminal under new operational management.

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