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Bangladesh Foreign Policy Watch

cgs Centre for Governance Studies





A Bi-Weekly Roundup of Key Events

Bangladesh Opens Consulate in Cape Town

Bangladesh has opened an honorary consulate in Cape Town to improve consular services for expatriates and strengthen trade and business ties with South Africa. The Western Cape hosts the country's second-largest Bangladeshi diaspora, making the new consulate an important step in expanding outreach.

Home Minister Urges Greater UN-Led Funding for Rohingya Response

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed has called for stronger international support and increased funding under the UN framework to address the Rohingya crisis. Speaking during a meeting with UN Resident Coordinator ad interim Carol Flore-Smereczniak, he said the crisis has become both a humanitarian and a national security challenge for Bangladesh. He stressed that existing assistance remains inadequate, while the UN acknowledged Bangladesh's burden and urged greater global attention and support for a sustainable solution through coordinated international action and funding mechanisms.

May 23

Bangladesh Envoy Presents Credentials to Pope Leo XIV

Bangladesh Ambassador Nahida Sobhan presented her credentials to Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican, reaffirming Bangladesh's commitment to stronger ties with the Holy See. During meetings with senior Vatican officials, she highlighted Bangladesh's focus on peace, communal harmony, climate action and humanitarian cooperation. The Holy See praised Bangladesh's support for the Rohingya population and expressed hope that bilateral engagement would deepen through regular exchanges and visits.

May 24

UAE Eyes Investment in Bangladesh's Cybersecurity and ICT Sectors

The United Arab Emirates has shown interest in expanding investment in Bangladesh's cybersecurity, ICT and other emerging sectors. The issue was discussed during a meeting between Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed and UAE Ambassador Abdulla Ali Khaseif AlHmoudi at the Bangladesh Secretariat. The talks also covered trade, security cooperation, legal assistance and manpower exports. Bangladesh welcomed the investment interest and proposed joint six-month driver training programmes to prepare skilled workers for employment opportunities in the UAE and the wider GCC market in the future.

Bangladesh Seeks Continued ICRC upport on Rohingya Crisis and Prison Reform

Bangladesh has requested continued support from the International Committee of the Red Cross in addressing the prolonged Rohingya crisis and improving prison and law enforcement systems. The issue was discussed during a meeting between Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed and ICRC Bangladesh delegation chief Nicolas Fleury. They reviewed cooperation on prisoner healthcare, Jail Code modernisation, police and prison staff training, and humanitarian assistance. The ICRC reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Bangladesh's humanitarian priorities and institutional capacity-building efforts going forward.

Bangladesh Sends Food Aid to Kuwait Amid Supply Disruptions



Bangladesh has handed over a goodwill consignment of 240 tonnes of essential food supplies to Kuwait as the Gulf state faces supply pressure from the prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz and regional uncertainty. Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir formally delivered the assistance to Kuwait's foreign minister during his visit. The two sides also discussed regional developments, humanitarian cooperation and ways to expand ties in trade, investment, manpower, food security, civil aviation and other sectors.

Bangladesh Reaffirms Support for Palestine at Nakba Screening

Information Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon expressed Bangladesh's solidarity with Palestinians during a Nakba film screening at the Palestine Embassy in Dhaka. He reiterated firm support for the Palestinian cause, while Ambassador Yousef S. Y. Ramadan thanked Bangladesh for its continued backing. Diplomats, dignitaries and media representatives attended the event marking the Nakba.

Verma Calls for Future-Oriented Bangladesh-India Partnership

Outgoing Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma expressed optimism about the future of Bangladesh-India relations as he prepared to leave Dhaka for his next posting in Belgium and the European Union. In a farewell note, he described the relationship as special and rooted in geography, history, culture and the 1971 Liberation War. Verma urged both countries to pursue a future-oriented partnership based on mutual respect, shared prosperity, economic interdependence and cooperation on regional challenges, including climate change and regional integration efforts.

May 25

Bangladesh, Kuwait Move to Expand Cooperation Across Key Sectors

Bangladesh and Kuwait have reaffirmed their commitment to deepening bilateral ties during a high-level visit to Kuwait by Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir. The two sides discussed expanding cooperation in manpower exports, investment, civil aviation, tourism, trade and other areas of mutual interest. Kabir conveyed greetings from Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and invited Kuwait's Amir to visit Bangladesh. Bangladesh also handed over essential food supplies as a goodwill gift, reflecting the two countries' friendly relations and ongoing diplomatic engagement.

May 27

Bangladesh, Belgium Eye Stronger Research Cooperation

Bangladesh and Belgium have discussed ways to deepen bilateral cooperation, with a particular focus on research, innovation and knowledge-sharing. Bangladesh Ambassador to Belgium Masudul Alam held separate meetings in Brussels with Belgian Foreign Ministry official William Asselborn and European Commission Director-General for Research and Innovation Marc Lemaître. The discussions reviewed areas of mutual interest and explored opportunities for expanding collaboration through the European Union's research and innovation platforms. The meetings followed Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman's recent visit to Belgium, which has provided renewed momentum for strengthening bilateral engagement and promoting shared prosperity through closer cooperation.

May 29

UN Honors Peacekeepers, Praises Bangladesh's Global Role

The United Nations marked the International Day of UN Peacekeepers by honouring more than 50,000 peacekeepers serving worldwide, including over 4,000 personnel from Bangladesh. UN Secretary-General António Guterres paid tribute to nearly 4,500 peacekeepers who have lost their lives since 1948 and described peacekeeping as one of the international community's most effective tools for maintaining stability and preventing conflict. This year's theme, "Invest in Peace," highlights the need for stronger political commitment, sustainable financing and enhanced protection measures for peacekeepers deployed in conflict zones. The observance also recognised Bangladesh's longstanding contribution to international peacekeeping and multilateral cooperation.

May 30

India Recalls Ziaur Rahman's Liberation War Role

India paid tribute to Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, Bir Uttam, on the occasion of his 45th martyrdom anniversary, recalling his historic radio broadcast in March 1971 that inspired resistance during Bangladesh's Liberation War. In a message, the Indian High Commission said Zia's call helped galvanise people across the country against oppression and played a significant role in the struggle for independence. The mission also highlighted the shared sacrifices made by the people of Bangladesh and India during the Liberation War and reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation for the progress and prosperity of both neighbouring countries.

May 31

Finland Gives €2m to Support Rohingya Response in Bangladesh

Finland has contributed €2 million to UNHCR's Rohingya response programme in Bangladesh, helping sustain life-saving humanitarian assistance, protection services, skills development initiatives and resilience-building programmes amid declining global humanitarian funding. Around 1.2 million Rohingya refugees remain dependent on aid, while vulnerable groups continue to face worsening living conditions and heightened protection risks in the camps. The contribution comes as the 2026 Joint Response Plan seeks $710.5 million to support both refugees and host communities in Bangladesh, where humanitarian agencies are struggling to meet growing needs amid persistent funding shortfalls.

Bangladesh, IOM Discuss Climate-Linked Migration Challenges

Bangladesh and the International Organization for Migration have stressed the importance of recognising migration as an adaptation strategy in the face of increasing climate-induced displacement. In Geneva, Bangladesh's Permanent Representative Nahida Sobhan met IOM Director General Amy Pope to discuss the intersection of climate change, migration and sustainable development. The two sides also explored ways to strengthen IOM support for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. They underscored the need for greater international cooperation to enhance resilience, protect vulnerable populations and promote sustainable development in regions increasingly affected by climate-related challenges.

June 01

Dhaka-Colombo Ties Poised for Stronger Engagement

Sri Lanka's Acting Foreign Minister Arun Hemachandra said the time is right to elevate Bangladesh-Sri Lanka relations through stronger political

engagement and more frequent high-level exchanges. During Bangladesh High Commissioner Andalib Elias's farewell call in Colombo, both sides emphasised the importance of deepening bilateral cooperation across a range of sectors and discussed the possibility of arranging a state-level visit in the near future. The meeting reflected a shared commitment to strengthening ties and advancing cooperation between the two South Asian nations.

June 02

Bangladesh Elected ILC Vice-President

Bangladesh has been unanimously elected as a Vice-President of the 114th International Labour Conference in Geneva, reflecting its growing role in global labour governance and international policy discussions. Delegates from 187 member states of the International Labour Organization endorsed Bangladesh's election. Ambassador Nahida Sobhan assumed the position alongside representatives from Uruguay, the United States and Argentina. In its new role, Bangladesh will help guide conference proceedings and contribute to building consensus on key issues, including labour rights, decent work, social justice, employment and the future of work.

Bangladesh, Switzerland Hold Political Consultation



The 6th Bangladesh-Switzerland Political Consultation was held in Dhaka on June 2, co-chaired by Bangladesh Foreign Ministry Secretary (East & West) Dr Md Nazrul Islam and Swiss Assistant Foreign Secretary Markus Leitner. The two sides reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations and explored avenues for strengthening future cooperation.

Australia, Bangladesh Discuss Stronger Defence Cooperation

Australian High Commissioner Susan Ryle met Prime Minister's Defence Adviser Dr AKM Shamsul Islam in Dhaka to discuss ways to further strengthen defence and security cooperation between Bangladesh and Australia. The discussions focused on training opportunities, capacity-building initiatives, military-to-military collaboration and broader security cooperation. Both sides also exchanged views on regional and global developments and reaffirmed their shared commitment to promoting peace, stability and security through closer partnership and cooperation.

Deputy Speaker, UNICEF Discuss Child-Friendly Policies

A delegation from UNICEF Bangladesh met Deputy Speaker Barrister Kayser Kamal at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to discuss child rights and the promotion of child-friendly policymaking. The Deputy Speaker praised UNICEF's work in advancing child-focused budgeting and proposed organising roundtable discussions involving members of parliament. UNICEF emphasised the importance of pre-budget consultations, greater participation of children in policy dialogue and improved transparency in budget implementation. The meeting also covered issues related to social protection, increased budgetary allocations for children and continued cooperation between UNICEF and Bangladesh.

Home Minister Seeks Greater Norwegian Investment

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed has urged Norway to increase investment in Bangladesh and strengthen support for the safe and sustainable repatriation of Rohingya refugees during a meeting with Norwegian Ambassador Håkon Arald Gulbransen in Dhaka. The discussions covered a range of issues, including trade, renewable energy, climate cooperation and the Rohingya crisis. Ahmed highlighted investment opportunities in the ICT, shipbuilding, packaging and green energy sectors, while also seeking greater access for Bangladeshi exports to the Norwegian market. The ambassador praised Bangladesh's development progress and reaffirmed Norway's commitment to expanding cooperation in trade, development, security matters and multilateral forums.

China Hosts PMO Officials for Governance Training

China hosted a pre-departure reception in Dhaka for a delegation of senior officials from Bangladesh's Prime Minister's Office ahead of their governance training programme in China. Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen said the initiative reflects the growing depth of bilateral exchanges and expanding cooperation in governance, development and public administration. Adviser Md Ismail Zabihullah welcomed the opportunity and said Bangladesh is keen to strengthen cooperation with China and learn from its modernisation experience. The programme will include field visits, policy dialogues and exchanges on public administration practices, highlighting the increasing trust and cooperation between the two governments.

Bangladesh, UK Seek Deeper Trade and Investment Ties

Bangladesh and the United Kingdom have discussed ways to expand trade and investment cooperation during meetings in London between BIDA Executive Chairman Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun and senior British officials. The discussions focused on attracting greater British investment in key sectors, including manufacturing, infrastructure, aviation, renewable energy, technology and services. British officials were briefed on Bangladesh's ongoing economic transformation and efforts to improve the investment climate through business-friendly reforms. Both sides emphasised the importance of stronger commercial engagement to unlock the full potential of the Bangladesh-UK partnership and advance shared goals of growth, prosperity and economic cooperation.

JS Speaker, Spanish Ambassador Discuss Investment

Spanish Ambassador Gabriel Sistiaga paid a courtesy call on Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad at the Parliament complex on June 2. The two sides discussed Bangladesh-Spain relations, potential investment from Spain and the European Union, ready-made garment exports, LNG, energy challenges and people-to-people exchanges. The Speaker highlighted the European Union's importance as Bangladesh's second-largest export destination and sought Spain's support for Bangladesh's foreign minister's nomination for the presidency of the 81st United Nations General Assembly. The ambassador congratulated Ahmad on assuming the office of Speaker. Senior officials of the Parliament Secretariat were also present at the meeting.

UN Panel Supports Bangladesh's Request to Delay LDC Graduation

The United Nations Committee for Development Policy has endorsed Bangladesh's request to extend its preparatory period for graduation from the Least Developed Country category until November 24, 2029. The committee observed that the extension would allow Bangladesh additional time to navigate global economic uncertainties, assess potential post-graduation challenges and prepare for the gradual withdrawal of trade preferences and international support measures. It also encouraged the government to accelerate domestic reforms, including strengthening financial sector stability, increasing tax revenue collection, promoting economic diversification and enhancing private sector readiness to ensure a smooth and sustainable transition.

EU, Bangladesh Discuss Deeper Climate Cooperation

European Union Ambassador Michael Miller met Environment, Forests and Climate Change Affairs Minister Abdul Awal Mintoo in Dhaka to discuss expanding cooperation on climate change, renewable energy, climate finance, carbon credits, the circular economy and preparations for COP31. Mintoo outlined Bangladesh's initiatives in tree plantation, solar energy expansion, climate adaptation, eco-friendly construction materials, wildlife conservation and industrial environmental management. Miller praised Bangladesh's efforts in addressing climate challenges and expressed the European Union's interest in deepening cooperation on green energy transition, climate adaptation, policy reforms and improved access to climate finance and investment mechanisms.

Bangladesh Wins UNGA Presidency in Historic Diplomatic Victory

Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman has been elected President of the 81st United Nations General Assembly after securing 99 votes against Cyprus's 91 in a closely contested election in New York. The government described the victory as a landmark diplomatic achievement that reflects growing international confidence in Bangladesh's leadership and global engagement. Officials said the campaign, conducted within a

span of only three months, focused on strengthening multilateralism, advancing the interests of developing and climate-vulnerable countries, promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, supporting peacekeeping and amplifying the voice of the Global South. The campaign involved extensive outreach to all 193 UN member states despite Cyprus having campaigned since 2016.

World Leaders Hail Khalilur Rahman's UNGA Victory

The election of Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman as President of the 81st United Nations General Assembly has drawn congratulations from world leaders, foreign ministers and international organisations, including the United States, India, China, Pakistan, the Maldives and the African Union. Leaders described the victory as recognition of Bangladesh's growing diplomatic stature, constructive global engagement and commitment to multilateral cooperation. Rahman secured 99 votes against 91 for Cyprus's candidate Andreas Kakouris in what has been described as a landmark diplomatic success. He is scheduled to assume the presidency of the UN General Assembly in September 2026, representing Bangladesh on one of the world's most important multilateral platforms.

June 03

Bangladesh Pursues Repatriation of Hadi Murder Suspects from India

Bangladesh is working closely with India through diplomatic and legal channels to secure the return of suspects arrested in connection with the murder of political activist Sharif Osman bin Hadi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam said. She noted that both the foreign and home ministries are treating the matter as a priority and that progress has already been made in the process. Shama declined to comment on remarks made by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, stating that Bangladesh would respond only to official communications from the Government of India regarding the repatriation of the accused in the case.

Shama Calls for Greater Kosovo Recruitment of Bangladeshi Workers

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam urged Kosovo to recruit more skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers during a meeting with Kosovo Ambassador Lulzim Pllana in Dhaka. The two sides discussed cooperation in migration, education, trade, investment, defence and multilateral forums. Shama also sought increased scholarship opportunities for Bangladeshi students, simplified visa procedures and greater market access for Bangladeshi products. Kosovo expressed its willingness to strengthen bilateral relations and highlighted its position as a gateway to Europe and the Balkans through expanded trade, investment and labour cooperation.

June 04

PM Seeks Continued Support from Development Partners

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman sought continued support from international development partners for Bangladesh's development agenda and sustainable progress during a courtesy meeting with UNDP Resident Representative Stefan Liller in Dhaka. The meeting reviewed ongoing cooperation between Bangladesh and the UNDP and discussed priorities including sustainable development, education, healthcare and employment generation. Rahman highlighted several government initiatives, including the Family Card and Farmer Card programmes, while both sides emphasised the importance of making development efforts more dynamic, inclusive and effective. Liller also congratulated Rahman on the formation of the new government.

Bangladesh Seeks Australian Support to Combat AI Misuse

Information and Broadcasting Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon sought Australia's technical assistance in addressing AI-driven misinformation, disinformation and the misuse of social media platforms. During a meeting with Australian High Commissioner Susan Ryle, he also outlined plans to establish an independent media commission and implement initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of media professionals. Ryle assured Australia's support in the areas of technology, institutional media reform and efforts to address the harmful impacts of information technology. The discussions reflected growing cooperation between the two countries on digital governance and responsible information management.

June 05

Turkish Foreign Minister Begins First Dhaka Visit to Boost Strategic Ties

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan arrived in Dhaka on a two-day official visit aimed at deepening cooperation between Bangladesh and Türkiye in trade, investment, security and humanitarian affairs.

The visit underscores Türkiye's continued support for displaced Rohingya refugees and reflects the shared objective of both countries to raise bilateral trade from $1.35 billion to $2 billion in the coming years through stronger economic cooperation and expanded commercial engagement.

June 06

UAE Pledges Energy Cooperation with Bangladesh

The United Arab Emirates has assured Bangladesh of broad-based cooperation in the power and energy sector during a meeting between UAE Ambassador Abdullah Ali Al-Hamoudi and State Minister Aninda Islam Amit. Bangladesh highlighted a number of priorities, including stable crude oil and petroleum imports, expansion of LNG trade, modernisation of the national grid, carbon reduction initiatives, automated substations, port-side energy bunkering and investment in green hydrogen. The UAE expressed interest in deepening the bilateral partnership and supporting the development of Bangladesh's energy sector through investment, technical cooperation and future joint initiatives.The United Arab Emirates has assured Bangladesh of broad-based cooperation in the power and energy sector during a meeting between UAE Ambassador Abdullah Ali Al-Hamoudi and State Minister Aninda Islam Amit. Bangladesh highlighted a number of priorities, including stable crude oil and petroleum imports, expansion of LNG trade, modernisation of the national grid, carbon reduction initiatives, automated substations, port-side energy bunkering and investment in green hydrogen. The UAE expressed interest in deepening the bilateral partnership and supporting the development of Bangladesh's energy sector through investment, technical cooperation and future joint initiatives.

Bangladesh, Türkiye Agree to Deepen Strategic Ties

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan called on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on the final day of his three-day official visit to Bangladesh, marking a new chapter in bilateral relations between the two countries. During the meeting, Fidan conveyed greetings from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and described the visit as the first step towards elevating Bangladesh–Türkiye relations to a strategic level. Both sides agreed to establish annual Foreign Office Consultations and hold regular 2+2 meetings involving the foreign and defence ministers of both countries. Discussions focused on the Rohingya crisis, climate change, trade, investment, joint production initiatives and regional issues of mutual interest. Prime Minister Rahman also extended an invitation to President Erdoğan to visit Bangladesh at a mutually convenient time.

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