

CLAWS Newsletter



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by Anjali Manhas

Political Developments

- 1. Legacy of the July Uprising and Continuing Student Activism :** The anniversary of the 2024 July Uprising, which began as protests against the government job quota system and evolved into nationwide demands for merit-based recruitment and good governance, was marked by renewed rallies in Dhaka and other cities. On July 3 and 4, university students and activists gathered at symbolic sites such as the Raju Sculpture and major campuses, reiterating calls for reforms and transparency in public sector jobs. (*Dhaka Tribune*) .The movement over the last year was notable for wide public participation and is credited with redefining student activism in Bangladesh, amplifying calls for equality and highlighting the mobilizing power of Bangladesh's youth. (*Dhaka Tribune*)
- 2. ACC Launches Probe Against Five NBR Officials Over Corruption Allegations:** The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has initiated investigations against five officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for allegedly facilitating tax evasion by large taxpayers in exchange for bribes and personal benefits. According to ACC Deputy Director Md Aktarul Alam, the accused officials enabled reduced tax payments, harassed honest taxpayers who refused to pay bribes, and demanded kickbacks for processing tax refunds. The officials under investigation include senior customs and tax commissioners from Dhaka, Benapole, and Rajshahi. The ACC claims these individuals amassed wealth disproportionate to their known income sources. *BSS (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha)*
- 3. Sheikh Hasina Formally Indicted for Crimes Against Humanity in Absentia:** Ousted Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been formally charged with crimes against humanity by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), following accusations that she ordered a violent crackdown during the July 2024 student-led uprising, which left over 1,400 people dead. Hasina, who fled to India on August 5, 2024, was indicted in absentia along with former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and ex-IGP Chowdhury Abdullah al-Mamun. Prosecutors accuse her of being the "mastermind and commander" of the violence and mass arrests.

The tribunal has issued three arrest warrants and earlier sentenced her to six months' jail for contempt. Hasina's trial begins on August 3, while al-Mamun has reportedly pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against her.

The interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, has accused India of harbouring Hasina and ignoring extradition requests. The Awami League, now banned, denounced the tribunal as a "kangaroo court."

Calls for Political Reforms: The interim government faced pressure to establish a clear timeline for elections and implement a citizen petition system to enhance transparency. Political uncertainty persisted as stakeholders advocated for systemic governance reforms. *(The Guardian)*

- 4. Momentum Builds for “July Charter” Reform Agenda:** Major political factions renewed pressure to finalize the “July Charter”, a reform package outlining governance, electoral, and judicial changes, by the end of July. BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizen Party (NCP) voiced concerns that delaying the Charter risks undermining public trust. They are urging the interim government to present a clear roadmap with inclusive dialogues and legal reforms. *(Dhaka Tribune, The Daily Star)*
- 5.** BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, in a virtual address marking the first anniversary of the July-August 2024 mass uprising, called for national unity to institutionalize democracy and fulfill the dreams of Shaheed Zia. She accused the Awami League of trying to establish one-party rule through years of oppression and praised the student-led uprising for challenging fascism. Zia emphasized the need for justice, demanding trials for those responsible for disappearances and killings. The event included tributes to martyrs, a documentary screening, and speeches from political leaders and victims' families. *(Bangladesh Nationalist Party – BNP)*
- 6.** BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir warned against delaying the upcoming election, stressing that the fight for democracy was ongoing and urgent. Speaking in Sylhet, he urged party members to unite and maintain integrity while highlighting the sacrifices made during the 15-year struggle against Sheikh Hasina’s regime. Fakhrul emphasized the need for a democratically elected government to ensure law, order, and public trust. He also defended BNP’s 31-point reform agenda and condemned attempts to misrepresent the party’s commitment to democracy. *(The Daily Star)*

Foreign Affairs

1. **Qatar:** On July 1, HE Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, formally bid farewell to Ambassador Mohammed Nazrul Islam on completion of his term in Doha. They exchanged warm acknowledgments for the strengthened Bangladesh–Qatar relations during his tenure. (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Qatar)
2. **Turkey:** Turkey's defence official Haluk Gorgun met with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and military leaders to discuss technology transfer and alignment with Bangladesh's "Forces Goal 2023" to diversify defence partnerships. (*The Daily star*)
3. **Satyajit Ray Ancestral Home Controversy:** Bangladesh refuted India's claims about the demolition of a house in Mymensingh, alleged to be Satyajit Ray's ancestral home. The government clarified that the structure, belonging to the Shishu Academy, was dilapidated and unrelated to Ray. India offered repair support, leading to diplomatic exchanges. (*Prothom Alo*)
4. **Bhutan:** Yunus urged Bhutan to utilize Bangladesh's infrastructural facilities to deepen bilateral cooperation during a meeting with Bhutan's new ambassador, Dasho Karma Hamu Dorjee. He highlighted the importance of youth exchanges and people-to-people ties, while reaffirming Bangladesh's commitment to SAARC. Ambassador Dorjee expressed Bhutan's interest in expanding collaboration, especially in medical education and the proposed Bhutanese Special Economic Zone. The chief adviser assured full support and welcomed stronger relations during her tenure. (*Views Bangladesh*)
5. **Saudi Ambassador Welcomed:** On 14 July 2025, Foreign Adviser Md. Touhid Hossain welcomed Saudi Arabia's new ambassador, Dr. Abdullah Zafer, pledging support to strengthen bilateral ties. (*Dhaka Tribune; BSS News*)
6. **China–Bangladesh Relations::** On July 8, **Arab News (AFP)** covered Dhaka's strategic pivot toward China and Pakistan, amidst growing India–Bangladesh tension after the August 2024 uprising. (Arab News). On July 10, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi reaffirmed Beijing's support for Bangladesh's interim government and scheduled elections. He also emphasized favorable trade terms: 100% zero tariffs on Bangladeshi exports, contrasting with upcoming US tariffs. (China Foreign Ministry)
7. **Mexico–Bangladesh Relations:** Ambassador Ansarey of Bangladesh marked 50 years of diplomatic ties with Mexico (since July 8, 1975). The celebrations included lighting

Mexico City landmarks in Bangladesh's flag colors and a ceremony at the Revolution Monument. (The Mirror Asia)

8. **Iraq Appointment:** Deputy PM & FM of Iraq Fuad Hussein received credentials from the newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador, Maqsoodul Haque. They discussed strengthening political, economic, and cultural ties. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iraq)

Rohingya issues

1. On 4 July, Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Ambassador Tareq Md Ariful Islam, successfully backed the adoption—by consensus—of an OIC-led resolution at the UN Human Rights Council titled "*The Situation of Human Rights of the Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar.*" He emphasized that it's the collective duty of the international community to ensure safe, dignified and voluntary repatriation, and called for burden-sharing among nations to support Rohingya in Bangladesh. He reported that ~118,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh since November 2023, due to escalating violence in Rakhine State. (*The Business Standard*)
2. By 11 July, the UNHCR and partners issued a stark warning that essential services for over 1 million Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar were at risk of collapse due to severe funding shortfalls. Their \$255 million appeal is only 35% funded, threatening health services by September and food assistance by December. (*Reuters ; The United Nations Office at Geneva ; Al Arabiya*).
3. Also on 11 July, UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch confirmed that about 150,000 Rohingya arrived in Bangladesh over the past 18 months, marking the largest influx since the 2017 crisis. Nearly 121,000 had been biometrically registered by end-June, while many others remain in informal camp settings. Without urgent funding, critical support systems—including education for roughly 230,000 children—are in jeopardy. (*UNOG Newsroom ; The United Nations Office at Geneva*)
4. In the days following, **UN agencies reaffirmed the critical funding gap**. Daily living for Rohingya—including food, healthcare, mental health, and protection programs—was under mounting pressure from donor fatigue, especially tied to shifting priorities among Western nations. (*Reuters*)
5. Meanwhile, UNHCR's broader needs assessment highlighted that **only around 30%** of an estimated **\$383 million** required for 2025 across Bangladesh and regional host countries had been secured, raising concerns about mounting crises and growing numbers of

Rohingya deaths at sea, with hundreds lost in deadly boat crossings in Bay of Bengal waters. (*Dhaka Tribune*)

Border Security

1. **BGB Strengthens Coordination:** On 14 July (reported earlier), sector commander–level meetings between Bangladesh’s Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and India’s Border Security Force (BSF) reaffirmed commitment to resolving emerging border issues **peacefully through dialogue**, based on the 1975 Land Boundary Agreement and Integrated Border Management Plan. Measures include curbing fatalities, drug smuggling, illegal crossings, and gold smuggling. (*Dhaka Tribune*)
2. **Major Infiltration Attempt Foiled:** On 15 July, BSF’s 22 Battalion in Meghalaya intercepted 26 Bangladeshi nationals and four Indian touts attempting illegal entry via three vehicles in West Garo Hills. Their successful interception exemplifies BSF’s vigilance and operational readiness. (*The Times of India*)
3. **Maritime Security Incident:** Also on 15 July, the Bangladesh Navy detained two Indian trawlers with 34 fishermen from Kakdwip (West Bengal), alleged to have strayed into Bangladesh’s Exclusive Economic Zone. The fishermen were held at Mongla Port, prompting legal proceedings. Indian fishermen claim poor visibility and storms caused accidental entry. (*The Times of India*)

About the Author

Anjali Manhas is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), where she specializes in Defence and Strategic Studies with a focus on South Asian geopolitics. She completed her Master's in Defence and Strategic Studies from Rashtriya Raksha University, where she developed a strong foundation in security, international relations, and strategic analysis. Anjali's current research centers on Bangladesh, examining its security dynamics, regional relationships, and strategic posture in South Asia. Her work aims to contribute to policy development and strategic insights for enhancing regional stability and security. With a keen interest in defence and strategic affairs, Anjali is committed to advancing knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of South Asian security issues.



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