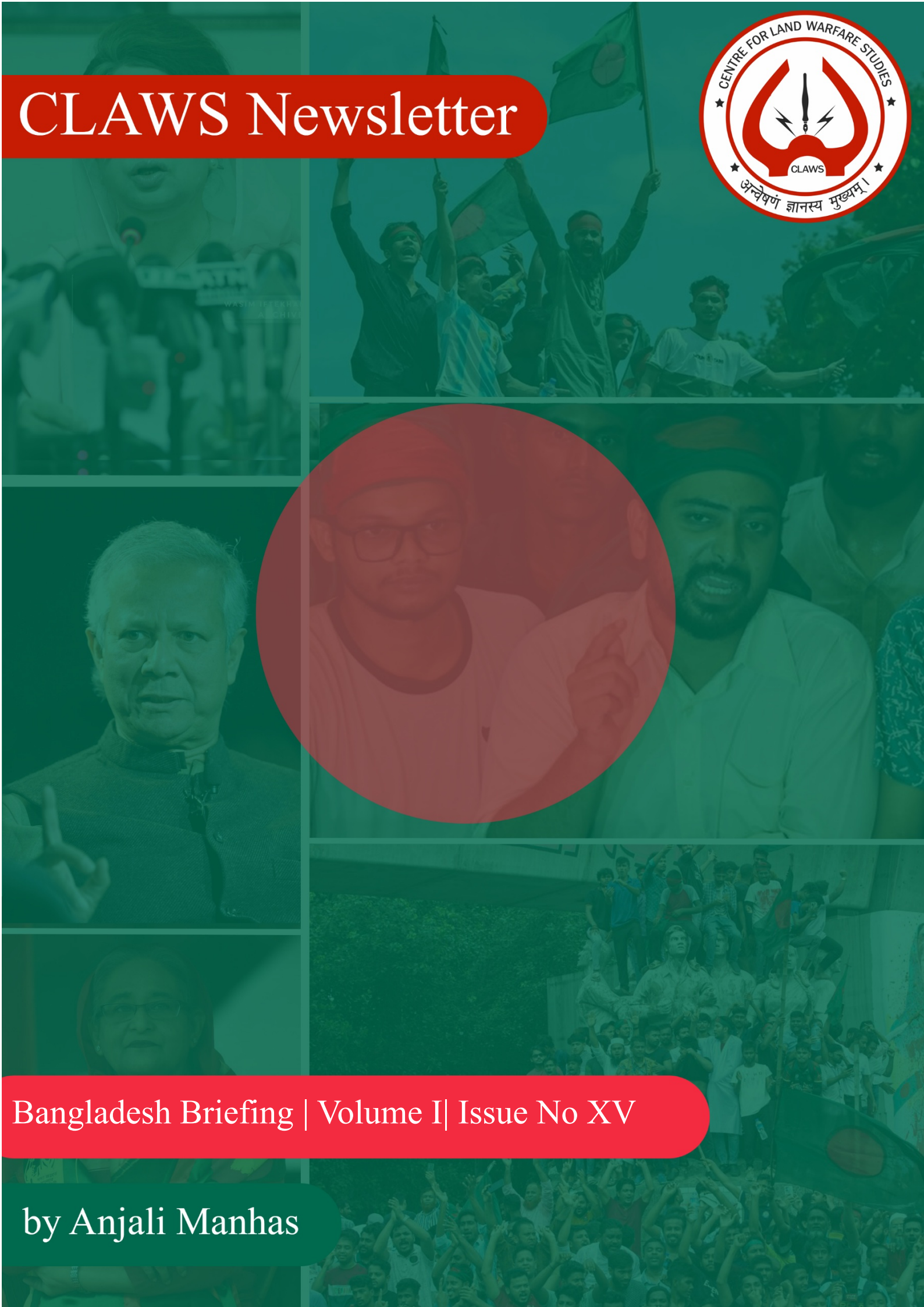


CLAWS Newsletter



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by Anjali Manhas

Political Developments

- **Political Deadlock Over Reform Charter:** The political climate in Bangladesh remained highly charged as major parties clashed over the "July Reform Charter." Talks led by the National Consensus Commission slowed considerably in September, with fading initial support. Most parties back proposals to strengthen the Election Commission, but judicial and parliamentary reforms are divisive. The BNP pressed for February elections without delay, while Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies demanded that reforms be enacted before voting. These Islamist parties announced mass rallies in Dhaka (18 September) and a nationwide mobilization (26 September) to press for charter ratification. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus emphasized unity, warning that the impasse could disrupt the country's fragile democratic transition and erode public trust in the electoral process. [newsonair+2](#)
- **Leader Warns Against Poll Derailment:** A senior interim government leader warned that any deviation from the planned February elections would be "extremely dangerous," especially in the context of deepening political rivalries after Sheikh Hasina's ouster in 2024. The interim leadership reinforced that delaying the election or making constitutional reforms a precondition could destabilize the nation and risk a constitutional crisis. Consensus is viewed as vital to avoiding unrest and maintaining democratic credibility. [thedailystar+1](#)
- **DUCSU Polls Back on Track:** The Supreme Court's Appellate Division cleared the way for the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) elections to proceed on schedule, overruling a High Court suspension order. This move allowed DUCSU and hall union elections to be held despite ongoing campus protests. More than 1,000 candidates competed for 13 positions across 18 residential halls, including panels backed by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Islami Chhatra Shibir, and other groups—signalling intense student political engagement. [thedailystar+3](#)
- **Army Chief Meets with President and Chief Adviser:** Bangladesh's Army Chief held substantive meetings with the President and Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, pledging full cooperation of the armed forces to support free and fair elections and to maintain order amid mounting political tension. These meetings are aimed at assuring the interim government and the public of stable security arrangements through the tense pre-election period. [newsonair](#)
- **Government Under Fire for Slow Reforms:** The interim government faced a surge of criticism from political alliances and civil society regarding the slow implementation of

promised reforms. Public frustration increased as hopes for rapid change after the 2024 uprising gave way to impatience with incremental, drawn-out political and administrative progress. Observers fear such delays risk undermining faith in the interim government's democratic mandate. [hrw+1](#)

- **BNP Condemns Attack on Jatiya Party Office:** The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) publically decried an attack and vandalism at the central office of the Jatiya Party in Kakrail, describing the acts as contrary to democratic values and the spirit of the July Uprising. This condemnation revealed growing volatility in party relations and a trend toward political violence, challenging the interim government's pledge to maintain a stable, inclusive environment for all parties. [dhakatribune](#)
- **Final Draft of July Charter Sent to Parties:** National Consensus Commission Vice Chairman Ali Riaz reported that the final draft of the July Charter, which encapsulates collective reform proposals from around thirty parties, is being circulated for review and signatures. While consensus has largely been reached on 84 proposals, the primary dispute is the legal status and timing of ratification—whether the charter should come into force before or after the February elections. [arabnews+1](#)
- **Islami Chhatra Shibir-Backed Panel Wins JUCSU Polls:** The student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Chhatra Shibir, scored a significant victory in the Jahangirnagar University students' union elections, marking their control over a major campus after years of political ban. This result is seen as a bellwether for Islamist influence in national student politics and possibly the upcoming parliamentary elections, raising concerns for secular and opposition groups. [prothomalo](#)
- **Yunus Government Slammed for Arbitrary Arrests:** The interim government, led by Muhammad Yunus, came under fire from the Awami League for allegedly using arbitrary arrests to suppress dissent and neutralize opposition. Human Rights Watch, UN agencies, and local rights activists corroborated these concerns, describing a persistent pattern of targeting journalists, minority activists, and opposition supporters, which undermines the promise of a rights-respecting democracy. [hrw](#)
- **Tarique Rahman Emphasizes Democracy and Gender Equality:** On International Democracy Day, BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman commemorated democracy as a universal value and drew attention to gender equality. These remarks underscored BNP's effort to project an agenda focused on civil liberties and inclusive democratic practices, connecting the theme to the ongoing reform movement. [newsonair](#)

- **Political Deadlock Continues:** The political deadlock remained unresolved, with senior BNP leaders insisting on an unconditional February election and Jamaat-e-Islami demanding that reforms precede the vote. Analysts and observers continue to warn that prolonged deadlock and further postponements could diminish confidence in the electoral process and threaten Bangladesh's stability. [newsonair+1](#)
- **New Protest Programmes by Islamist Parties:** Jamaat-e-Islami and several allied Islamist parties announced new protest initiatives demanding a proportional representation system for parliamentary elections. These programs, including mass mobilizations scheduled for mid and late September, are intended to press the interim government for expedited reform and greater representation of Islamist groups in Bangladesh's new political architecture. [newsonair+1](#)

Foreign Affairs

- **Bangladesh Announces Hilsa Exports to India:** In a goodwill gesture, the interim government announced it would send 1,200 tonnes of hilsa fish to India ahead of the Durga Puja festival. [The Hindu](#)
- **Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to Attend UNGA:** Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus will depart Dhaka on September 22 to attend the 80th United Nations General Assembly in New York. He is scheduled to deliver Bangladesh's national statement on September 26, focusing on reforms, the legacy of the July 2024 uprising, and the commitment to holding February 2026 elections. Yunus will take part in multiple high-level bilateral meetings, including youth, climate, peacekeeping, SDG, and Rohingya sessions. The Bangladesh delegation includes key leaders from BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and NCP. UN Secretary-General António Guterres is expected to meet Yunus for talks on Rohingya and climate policy. [thedailystar+5](#)
- **Bangladesh Condemns Israeli Strike:** At an emergency Arab-Islamic Summit in Doha on September 15, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain unequivocally condemned Israel's recent attack on Qatari territory, framing it as a violation of international law and the UN Charter. Bangladesh expressed unreserved support for Palestine and called for coordinated action by OIC member states to deter future Israeli aggression. Attending dignitaries endorsed immediate aid for Gaza and demanded accountability for the attacks. [thefinancialexpress+4](#)

- **Bangladesh-Pakistan Foreign Affairs Advisers Meet:** Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain met Pakistan's Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on September 14, on the sidelines of the Doha summit. Discussions focused on regional stability, mutual support at international forums, and exploring avenues to deepen Bangladesh-Pakistan diplomacy in a volatile South Asian security landscape. The dialogue confirms the interim government's intention to diversify diplomatic relationships. [thefinancialexpress](#)
- **India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission Meeting Held:** The India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission convened in New Delhi on September 9. Bangladesh pressed for a longer-term renewal of the Ganga Waters Treaty due in 2026 and predictable flows for 14 cross-border rivers. Proposals included a minimum quota of 40,000 cusecs, an upgrade from the previous agreement, and an institutional mechanism for regular oversight. India responded with assurances of continued review with state governments. The meeting also addressed technical collaboration concerning water data and flood management. [asianews+2](#)
- **China's New Visa Guidelines for Bangladesh:** China introduced streamlined visa policies for Bangladeshi citizens in mid-September 2025, marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. The new directives prioritize applicants for business, academic, and medical travel. Application processing now occurs via the Chinese Visa Application Service Centre's website, requiring biometrics and expanded documentation standards for business, student, and medical tourists. Notably, China's revised regulations include the "K visa," effective October 1, designed to attract young science and technology talent from Bangladesh, with relaxed eligibility for STEM graduates and early-career professionals. These changes signal deeper Sino-Bangladesh cooperation in innovation, commerce, and education, and coincide with celebratory events in both countries. Chinese visa operations were briefly suspended for technical updates during rollout of the new system, resuming by September 17. [dhakatribune+2](#)
- **Australia to Support Bangladesh Land Management Modernization:** On September 11, 2025, Bangladesh's Food and Land Adviser, Ali Imam Majumder, led a delegation to New South Wales, Australia, where an MoU was signed to modernize Bangladesh's land management system. The bilateral meeting focused on introducing digitized land registration, certificate of land ownership (CLO), land zoning, and a digital survey methodology. Australia agreed in principle to help Bangladesh create a transparent, people-

friendly land administration platform to facilitate investment, rural development, and industrialization. Australian officials accepted an invitation to visit Bangladesh's land ministry for a closer review of reform efforts. Further, both sides agreed to ongoing technical exchanges and possible partnerships in real estate digitization and rural property management. This agreement builds on the broader Bangladesh-Australia Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement signed earlier. [bssnews+2](#)

- **Khalid and Shehbaz Sharif Meet:** On September 11, Dr. A F M Khalid Hossain, Bangladesh's Religious Affairs Adviser, paid a courtesy visit to Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad. The leaders discussed strengthening historic, cultural, and fraternal ties and expressing their aspiration for closer bilateral relations. Khalid delivered a letter from Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus to the PM, conveying condolences for flood victims and solidarity in the face of disaster. Shehbaz Sharif praised Yunus's leadership and poverty work, voicing confidence in deepening collaboration in future. Both sides acknowledged ongoing momentum in regional security, religious cooperation, and cultural exchanges, and emphasized post-crisis resilience and mutual support. [bssnews+4](#)
- **US Delegation on Three-Day Visit:** A high-level US delegation, in Dhaka from September 5–8, engaged with Bangladeshi counterparts to review democracy reform, business climate, and defence and health partnerships. Core discussion areas included implementation progress of democratic reforms, transparency, cyber cooperation, and technology transfer for clean energy and healthcare. The US side provided feedback on trade barriers, and Bangladesh expressed optimism about signing a draft bilateral trade agreement following recent tariff reductions. The delegation also reviewed civil society engagement, regional security coordination, and humanitarian initiatives such as Rohingya support. [bssnews+1](#)
- **Maldivian Foreign Minister Visit:** The Maldivian Foreign Minister led an official delegation to Dhaka on September 6, focusing on advancing cooperation in blue economy, marine resources management, climate adaptation, and disaster resilience under the Indian Ocean Rim Association framework. Talks emphasized enhancing trade, connectivity, fisheries management, and mutual support against climate threats. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to maritime security and sustainable coastal strategies. The visit included MoUs in education, marine science, and tourism, and strengthened Bangladesh's role as a leader in South Asian regional diplomacy. [bssnews](#)

Rohingya Issues

- Bangladesh Renews Call for Rohingya Repatriation at UN: During a virtual panel discussion on September 1, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the UN renewed calls for international efforts to ensure the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, according to a report in [Dhaka Tribune](#).
- **Concerns Over Gender-Based Violence:** According to a report by the [Norwegian Refugee Council \(NRC\)](#), gender-based violence prevention is under threat due to funding cuts, putting long-term efforts at risk. The report, published on September 15, highlights that key activities, including programs for adolescents and complaint response mechanisms, are often the first to be affected. The report also revealed that 79% of Rohingya refugees with disabilities struggle to access essential services, with more than 30% reporting being excluded from protection efforts entirely. Further the report stated that the humanitarian response for the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh is severely underfunded. As of July 21, the Joint Response Plan (JRP) 2025–2026 was only 35% funded, which is significantly hampering efforts to protect vulnerable people.
- **Rohingya Youth Face Education Barriers:** A report from [Netra News](#) highlighted that many Rohingya youth are facing a "cruel crossroads" of risking death and violence to seek education, or being denied learning altogether. The article noted that the interim government has not fulfilled its duties to refugees in this regard.
- **Bangladesh – Myanmar Dialogue:** In early September, Bangladesh's interim government initiated direct dialogue with the Arakan Army (AA), now controlling most of Rakhine. Dhaka sought to leverage AA's stated support for the repatriation of Rohingya as a diplomatic channel. However, no official agreements emerged, with scepticism remaining over AA's genuine commitment amid accusations of ongoing abuses against Rohingyas in Rakhine. Nonetheless, this approach indicated a new willingness to pursue all possible avenues for repatriation. [The New Humanitarian](#)

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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