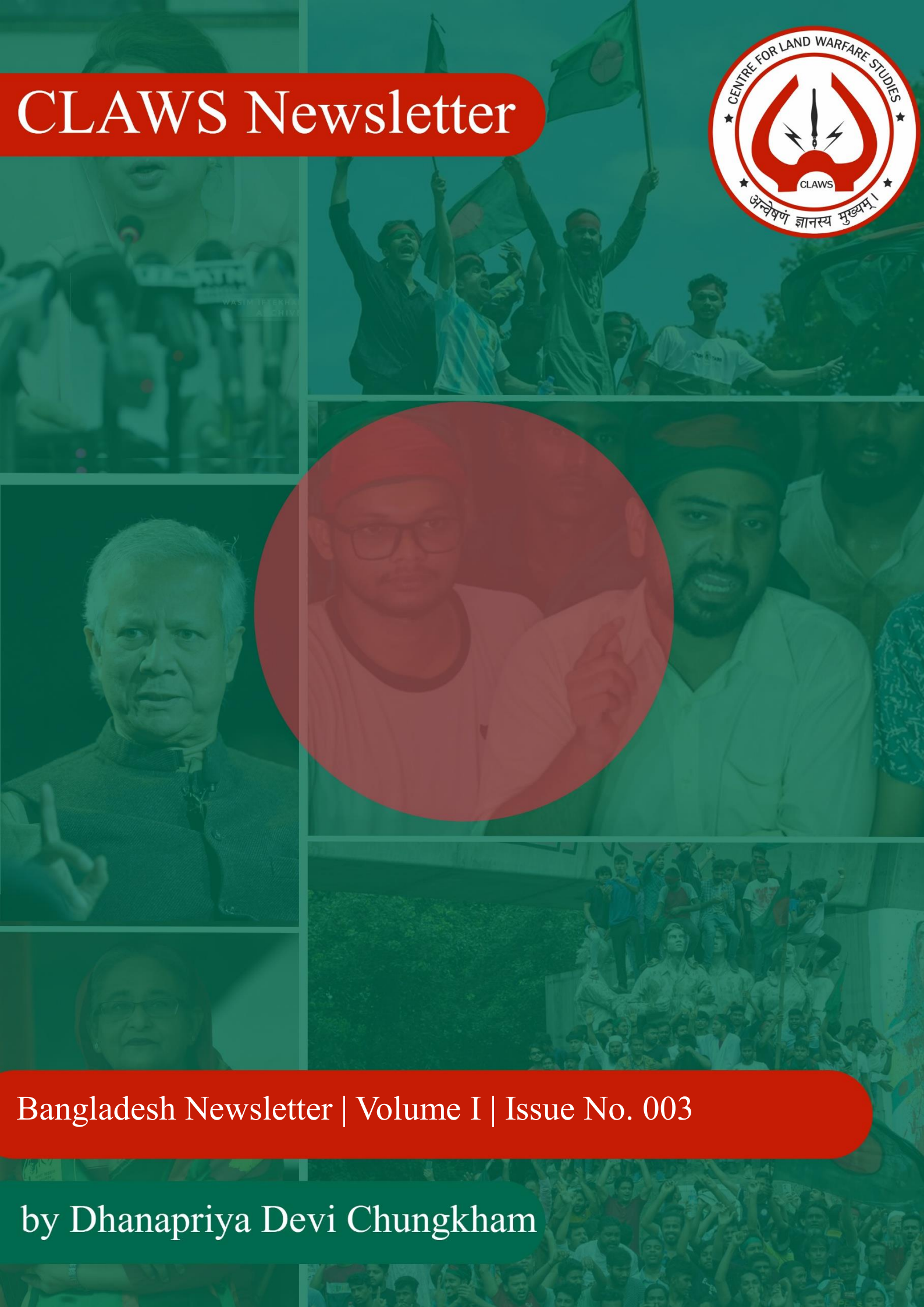


CLAWS Newsletter



Bangladesh Newsletter | Volume I | Issue No. 003

by Dhanapriya Devi Chungkham

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

2 September (The Business Standard): Committees propose changes to human rights and disappearance bills

Parliamentary standing committees recommended amendments to the National Human Rights Commission Bill and the Prevention and Remedy of Enforced Disappearance Bill. The proposed commission would have a chairperson and four commissioners, including at least one woman and a representative of a minority ethnic or disadvantaged group. The committee also recommended changes to the definition of enforced disappearance. Opposition lawmakers objected to the scrutiny process and the short time allowed for examination. The report records the committee stage of legislation that subsequently attracted wider debate over institutional independence and accountability.

10 September (The Business Standard): Parliament passes legislation to replace RAB with SRB

Parliament passed two bills paving the way for dissolving the Rapid Action Battalion and establishing a Special Response Battalion, while expanding the investigative powers of the Armed Police Battalion. Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed moved the legislation, which passed by voice vote despite opposition objections. Lawmakers critical of the change warned that the replacement could reproduce RAB under another name. Opposition proposals for public consultation, further scrutiny and amendments were rejected. The report concerns the legislative decision; passage alone does not establish that the institutional transition had been completed on that date.

12 September (The Daily Star): Prime minister launches nationwide dengue prevention campaign

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman inaugurated a nationwide dengue prevention and cleanliness campaign at the South Plaza of Parliament. The programme was scheduled to run from 12 September to 12 December, covering a period identified as high risk for transmission. The local government ministry and Dhaka's two city corporations organised the opening, which brought together approximately 25,000 volunteers, workers and students. Cadets, Scouts, Girl Guides

and Red Crescent participants were among those involved. The campaign emphasised removing stagnant water and keeping neighbourhoods clean, with public participation alongside government mosquito-control efforts.

20 September (The Business Standard): Government promises July Charter implementation with dissenting notes

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said the government would implement the July National Charter as signed, including the dissenting notes submitted by political parties. He spoke after a meeting of the parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendments. The committee was consulting parties and other stakeholders over areas of disagreement and the route to implementation. The minister indicated that the government wanted to place an amendment bill before Parliament promptly. His statement set out the government's intention and consultation process; it did not mean that the proposed constitutional changes had already become law.

23 September (Human Rights Watch): Rights group warns new laws weaken accountability safeguards

Human Rights Watch criticised three laws approved by Parliament in September, saying they reduced safeguards introduced during the interim administration. The organisation argued that changes weakened the National Human Rights Commission's independence and investigative powers, including its capacity to address enforced disappearances. It also said the legislation replacing RAB amounted largely to a renaming exercise with insufficient accountability protections. HRW called for meaningful security-sector reform and an independent rights body able to investigate abuses.

27 September (The Business Standard): Constitutional amendment bill may reach Parliament in January

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said a constitutional amendment bill could be introduced in Parliament's first session the following January, with the committee report expected by December. Speaking after consultations with editors and senior journalists, he discussed changes to the preamble and the possible restoration of the phrase concerning absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah. The discussion also addressed the balance of authority between the president and prime minister, neutral appointments and the caretaker government system. A referendum was described as necessary for certain fundamental changes.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

25 August (Reuters): Bangladesh considers invitation to join the Mecca defence pact

A junior foreign minister said Bangladesh was viewing positively an invitation to participate in the Mecca pact involving Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan. Reuters reported that Dhaka could consider the collective-defence arrangement, while noting potential complications for relations with India. The report established interest and an invitation, rather than confirmed Bangladeshi membership. It highlighted a possible decision for Dhaka about balancing established neighbouring relationships with additional security partnerships.

7 September (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha): Khalilur Rahman prepares to assume the UN General Assembly presidency

BSS reported that Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman was scheduled to assume the presidency of the 81st UN General Assembly on 8 September. The year-long position would return Bangladesh to the presidency after four decades, following Humayun Rasheed Choudhury's term in 1986–87. Rahman had been elected in June, securing 99 votes against 91 for the Cypriot candidate. The report described the appointment as an opportunity to raise Bangladesh's diplomatic visibility during debates on conflict, climate and development.

9 September (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha): Dhaka seeks an economic partnership agreement with Indonesia

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir expressed Bangladesh's readiness to pursue a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Indonesia during a meeting with Ambassador Listyowati. He sought greater Indonesian purchases of Bangladeshi goods and services, increased investment and expanded energy cooperation. The ambassador supported export diversification, including pharmaceuticals. The discussion covered disaster management, education, tourism and easier visa processing. Bangladesh also sought Indonesian backing for its ambitions to become an ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partner and join RCEP. The meeting signalled an interest in deeper economic integration; it did not announce a signed CEPA.

11 September (The Business Standard): Government reviews 101 agreements and memorandums with India

Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni said the government was reviewing 101 agreements and memorandums of understanding signed with India by the previous administration. Questions at his press conference included arrangements involving Chattogram and Mongla ports. Moni said Dhaka wanted friendly relations with all countries while placing Bangladesh's national interests first. He also referred to reviews of power-sector arrangements and electricity and gas pricing. The announcement concerned an ongoing review and did not establish blanket cancellation of the agreements. The eventual decisions on individual arrangements would determine the practical consequences for bilateral cooperation.

19 September (The Indian Express): Delhi and Dhaka explore November dates for a prime ministerial visit

The Indian Express reported discussions over a possible visit to India by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in the latter half of November. An earlier proposed August visit had not materialised, and Rahman did not attend the BRICS summit in New Delhi despite an invitation. The report linked diplomatic difficulties to Sheikh Hasina's presence and public statements in India, alongside Dhaka's extradition request. Both sides were examining dates and seeking a workable basis for engagement.

25 September (The Daily Star): Tarique Rahman presents recovery restoration and reconstruction at the UN

In his address to the 81st UN General Assembly on 24 September, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman presented a government strategy centred on recovery, restoration and reconstruction. He described Bangladesh's democratic transition and said the administration was working to rebuild institutions and the economy after the previous government's rule. Rahman also highlighted programmes intended to develop the skills of the working-age population and make use of the demographic dividend. These statements represented the government's account of its priorities and record.

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

25 August (The Business Standard): MCCI reports stabilisation alongside persistent macroeconomic stress

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry released its review of April–June FY26, reporting gradual stabilisation alongside continuing vulnerabilities. Provisional BBS estimates put FY26 GDP growth at 4.14 per cent, compared with 3.49 per cent in FY25. Strong remittances and improved reserves supported the external position, but high inflation, weak investment, subdued credit and banking-sector problems remained concerns. MCCI reported FY26 exports of \$48.38 billion, only marginally above the preceding year.

25 August (The Business Standard): Japanese consortium submits Dhaka airport terminal operating proposals

The Japanese Sub Working Group submitted technical and financial proposals to operate and maintain the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The documents were handed to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh at its headquarters. They were to be reviewed by an evaluation committee formed by the civil aviation and tourism ministry, followed by discussions and negotiations with the Japanese side. A signing date would be determined after successful negotiations. The submission advanced the process of bringing the terminal into operation, but the report did not announce a completed operating agreement or opening date.

1 September (Bonik Barta): August remittances reach 2.96 billion dollars

Bangladesh received \$2.96 billion in remittances in August, according to Bangladesh Bank data reported by Bonik Barta. That was 22.49 percent higher than the \$2.42 billion received in August 2025. Despite the annual increase, monthly inflows remained below \$3 billion for a third consecutive month. The report contrasted this with six months of receipts above \$3 billion from December 2025 to May 2026, including a peak near \$4 billion in March. The figures show continued support from overseas workers while also recording moderation from the earlier monthly highs.

7 September (The Business Standard): August inflation eases to 8.26 per cent

BBS data showed general inflation easing to 8.26 per cent in August from 8.32 per cent in July, the second consecutive monthly decline. Food inflation fell to 7.02 per cent from 7.16 per cent, while non-food inflation rose to 9.32 per cent from 9.28 per cent. The opposing movements indicated that the improvement in the headline rate was mainly driven by food prices. CPD economist Fahmida Khatun welcomed the moderation but said consumers had yet to experience meaningful relief because market prices remained high.

9 September (The Business Standard): July trade deficit widens to 2.09 billion dollars

Bangladesh Bank's balance-of-payments data showed a July trade deficit of \$2.09 billion, compared with \$1.5 billion a year earlier. Imports increased by 8.6 percent while exports declined by 1.9 percent. Higher petroleum and fertiliser costs contributed to the widening gap; petroleum imports reached \$1.37 billion, up from \$750 million in the same month of the previous year. The report, published on 9 September, covered the first month of the new fiscal year. The figures identify pressure from essential imports alongside weaker export earnings, rather than providing a full September trade assessment.

21 September (Reuters): Fuel prices increase as import and shipping costs rise

Bangladesh raised fuel prices by up to 17.4 percent, citing higher international oil and freight costs linked to the Middle East conflict. Diesel increased from Tk115 to Tk135 per litre, while petrol rose from Tk140 to Tk160. It was the third increase following hikes in April and June. Exporters warned that higher transport and production costs would place additional pressure on manufacturers already facing energy shortages and narrow margins. The new prices took effect on 21 September.

23 September (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha): Bangladesh Bank holds its policy rate amid inflation risks

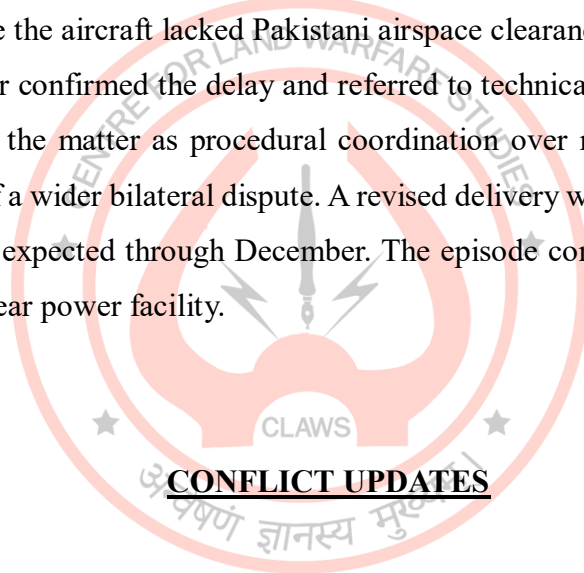
Bangladesh Bank's Monetary Policy Committee decided to keep the policy interest rate unchanged at its 14th meeting. The committee observed that headline inflation was declining but remained above the government's 7.50 percent ceiling for FY27. It also identified volatile international energy prices, the late-September fuel-price increase and the new pay scale as possible sources of additional inflation. The decision followed a July rate cut and reflected a cautious approach to balancing price stability with economic activity. The central bank said it would assess these developments before considering another adjustment.

29 September (Reuters): Biman explores ten Airbus aircraft after a Boeing order

Bangladesh was considering ten Airbus aircraft for Biman Bangladesh Airlines, the civil aviation minister said, following an order for eleven additional Boeing jets. The proposed Airbus purchase comprised four A350-900 wide-body aircraft and six A321neo narrow-body jets. The minister suggested an agreement could be signed as early as October. The wider aircraft would serve longer and high-demand routes, while the A321neos would support regional services. The report distinguished the prospective Airbus acquisition from the already announced Boeing order; the Airbus purchase was still a plan at the September reporting cutoff.

29 September (The Economic Times): Rooppur nuclear fuel shipment delayed over airspace clearance

A Russian shipment of nuclear fuel for Rooppur Unit 2 did not arrive on its scheduled 24 September date because the aircraft lacked Pakistani airspace clearance. Bangladesh's science and technology minister confirmed the delay and referred to technical issues. Pakistan's High Commission described the matter as procedural coordination over routing and permissions, rejecting suggestions of a wider bilateral dispute. A revised delivery was proposed for October, with further shipments expected through December. The episode concerned fuel logistics for Bangladesh's first nuclear power facility.

**28 August (Dhaka Stream): Mother and child injured in a Rohingya camp gunfight**

A mother and her six-year-old son sustained gunshot injuries during fighting between armed groups at Camp 8 East in Ukhiya on 27 August. The report said they were caught in crossfire and taken to an MSF hospital, with doctors recommending transfer to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital as their condition worsened. The acting commander of the 8 Armed Police Battalion confirmed the incident and said personnel were deployed after reports of gunfire. The account illustrates the exposure of camp residents to armed-group violence. The identities of the groups responsible were not conclusively established in the cited report.

7 September (The Daily Star): Rohingya camp violence rises after a period of relative calm

The Daily Star reported renewed armed-group violence in the Rohingya camps following a period of reduced killings. It linked the deterioration to tensions after a commander's murder in May and the weakening of a November 2024 understanding among several groups. The account documented late-August shootings and attacks, while the refugee relief commissioner described funding shortages affecting food, health, education and employment opportunities. A senior APBn official acknowledged some deterioration but maintained that overall law and order remained comparatively better.

7 September (The Daily Star): Attack on Rohingya community organiser reported in camp security review

The same camp-security review described an attack on Rohingya Football Federation founder Mujibur Rahman on 24 August. He said he took shelter at an Armed Police Battalion checkpoint after being targeted near the Camp 14 market, and a suspect was subsequently handed to police. Mujibur alleged that criminal groups opposed the emergence of independent youth leaders.

15 September (The Daily Star): Citizens warn that new hill tracts committees could deepen militarisation

Fifty-two prominent citizens expressed concern over three high-level Chattogram Hill Tracts committees established through notifications on 10 September. The structures included a national committee led by the prime minister and an executive committee led by the home ministry secretary. DGFI was assigned secretarial and infrastructural support for the first two bodies. The citizens argued that the dispute should be addressed politically with relevant stakeholders and warned of increased militarisation and human rights violations. Their statement represents a civil-society assessment of the committees, rather than evidence that the predicted outcomes had already occurred.

28 September (The Daily Star): Hill tracts platform demands cancellation of government committees

A Chattogram Hill Tracts platform held a press conference in Rangamati demanding cancellation of three committees it said had been formed without consulting local representatives. Speakers also challenged the allocation of ministerial responsibilities and

argued that government decisions conflicted with the 1997 CHT Accord. The platform sought changes in the leadership and oversight of the hill districts, alongside a clear implementation roadmap for the accord. The statement recorded continuing political disagreement over representation and governance.

29 September (Reuters): UN condemns reported deadly airstrike in Myanmar Rakhine State

The UN expressed alarm after reports of a Myanmar military airstrike in Kyauktaw on 28 September. The Arakan Army said fifty people were killed and at least fifty-eight wounded. The UN secretary-general condemned the attack, urged protection of civilians and called for humanitarian access. A spokesperson said ongoing violence in Rakhine showed that conditions for safe refugee return did not currently exist. Casualty figures remained attributed to the reporting sources.

DEFENCE UPDATES

5 September (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha): Navy chief begins official visit to Saudi Arabia

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Khondkar Misbah-Ul-Azim left for Saudi Arabia on an official visit. ISPR said his programme included meetings with senior Saudi armed forces and naval officials and the commander of a multinational maritime defence coalition. Discussions were expected to cover training, professional exchanges and naval cooperation, alongside visits to military installations. The announcement described a programme intended to strengthen existing relations.

9 September (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha): Bangladesh and India discuss military training and maritime security

Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi met Defence Adviser Brigadier General AKM Shamsul Islam at the Armed Forces Division in Dhaka. According to ISPR, the discussion covered joint military training, exchanges of expertise, disaster management and maritime security. Both sides expressed support for stronger defence cooperation and regional stability.

The meeting documented continued professional engagement between the neighbouring countries during a period of wider diplomatic disagreements.

22 September (The Financial Express): US ambassador meets Bangladesh army chief

US Ambassador Brent T. Christensen led a delegation in a courtesy call on Bangladesh's army chief at Army Headquarters. The report, published on 22 September, said the meeting took place on Monday and addressed existing relations and defence cooperation. The ambassador acknowledged Bangladesh's contribution to international peace and security. The visit was a diplomatic and professional engagement; the account did not identify a new weapons purchase, exercise or formal agreement. Its stated focus was maintaining the bilateral defence relationship and recognising Bangladesh's international security role.

23 September (Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development):

BISS roundtable discusses national security reform and defence policy

BIMRAD's director general participated in a roundtable hosted by BISS with the UK's Royal United Services Institute. The discussion concerned national security reform and the formulation of defence and security policy. BIMRAD's institutional account said participants examined the changing security environment, coordination among institutions and a comprehensive approach to national defence. The director general offered observations and recommendations as a panellist. This was a policy discussion rather than the adoption of an official defence document, and the institutional summary did not disclose detailed recommendations or binding decisions.

BORDER UPDATES

5 September (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha): BGB reports seizure of smuggled goods worth Tk50 lakh in Feni

Border Guard Bangladesh reported seizing goods valued at approximately Tk50 lakh during operations in Fulgazi, Parshuram and Chhagalnaiya upazilas of Feni. The items included clothing, spectacles, medicines and timber said to have been smuggled from India. BGB sources described the raids as part of routine efforts against narcotics trafficking and smuggling. The commanding officer of the Feni battalion said surveillance and operations would continue

to prevent illegal entry and other border-related offences. The valuation and description of the goods are those supplied by BGB and carried in the agency report.

7 September (The Business Standard): BGB and villagers report blocking an alleged push in at Dinaipur

BGB personnel and villagers said they prevented an attempt to push approximately twenty to twenty-five people into Bangladesh at Gobindapur in Birampur on the night of 6 September. A camp commander alleged that BSF personnel opened a gate in the border fence before withdrawing the group after local resistance and the arrival of a BGB patrol. The report said no such group remained at the location the next morning.

9 September (Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha): BGB conducts seizures across northern southeastern and hill border areas

BGB headquarters issued reports of seizures in Dinaipur, Thakurgaon, Rangamati, Rangpur and Feni. Operations recovered narcotics and pharmaceutical products, abandoned teak timber, smuggled consumer goods and equipment used for illegal sand extraction. Six people were arrested in connection with sand extraction from the Teesta and handed to police after cases were filed. The reports covered activities on 8 and 9 September and said legal proceedings were underway. They illustrate the range of BGB enforcement work, including contraband, timber movement and resource extraction, alongside its responsibilities for territorial border security.

13 September (The Daily Star): BGB reports death of Bangladeshi man after BSF firing

Asadul Haque, a Bangladeshi resident of Pirganj, died in an Indian hospital after being injured in BSF firing on 12 September. A BGB statement said the shooting occurred about 1.5 kilometres inside India and described the group involved as smugglers. It also alleged that Haque had been involved in narcotics and human trafficking offences. BGB said it had requested a flag meeting and had not yet received official notification from BSF.

14 September (The Daily Star): Body returned after flag meetings over Thakurgaon border killing

BSF returned Asadul Haque's body following a company commander-level flag meeting, with police subsequently handing it to his family. At an earlier meeting, BGB protested the use of lethal force against what it described as an unarmed civilian, arguing that suspected border crime should be handled through detention and legal proceedings. BSF officials, according to

the report, said their personnel had fired after being attacked by smugglers. The follow-up provides the two forces' differing explanations and records the use of established border communication mechanisms after the fatal incident.

15 September (The Daily Star): Six Bangladeshis detained over alleged crossing attempt at Maheshpur

BGB said it detained six members of the hijra community near Maheshpur while they were allegedly attempting to cross into India with help from brokers. The battalion reported that the group was found about two hundred yards inside Bangladesh near a border pillar and confirmed that all six were Bangladeshi citizens. A case was filed and the detainees were handed to Maheshpur police before being sent to court. The account concerns an alleged unauthorised crossing and the subsequent legal process.



About the Author

Dhanapriya Devi Chungkham is currently serving as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi. She completed her PhD from Centre of Indo-Pacific Studies, School of International Studies (JNU). Her research focuses primarily on security and strategic studies of India's eastern frontier, with particular interest in the Act East Policy, India-Myanmar relations, borderland dynamics, Northeast India and the evolving geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. She specialises in fieldwork-based research and qualitative methodologies.

All Rights Reserved 2026 Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied, archived, retained or transmitted through print, speech or electronic media without prior written approval from CLAWS. The views expressed and suggestions made in the article are solely of the author in his personal capacity and do not have any official endorsement. Attributability of the contents lies purely with author.