



# NHSMUN

Background Guide

| *CRISIS: BANGLADESH*



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**Katelyn Shen**

**Analucia Tello**

**Executive Committee**

**Ana Margarita Gil**

**Ming-May Hu**

**Chris Talamo**

**Althea Turley**

Dear Delegates,

My name is Joseph Loverdi, and I cannot wait to welcome you all to the Interim Government of Bangladesh committee at the 2026 National High School Model United Nations Conference! Emilia and I are excited to be your committee directors. Over the course of many months of research, we have put significant effort into choosing and writing about the Interim Government of Bangladesh. I cannot wait to see what you do in committee!

I am from Voorhees Township, New Jersey, which is one of many Philadelphia suburbs in South Jersey. As such, I consider myself an honorary Philadelphian, even though most would disagree. I am a current senior at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, double majoring in political science and history, and I spent the fall semester studying abroad in Berlin, Germany. In my spare time, I enjoy playing video games, listening to music, and baking. I love sports, too, especially soccer, ice hockey, and American football. I ride or die for Philly sports teams.

This is my eighth year doing MUN, having started in my freshman year of high school. I served as co-captain of my high school MUN team as a senior before staffing MUN conferences held by a club at Rutgers in college. I served as the director for the Haitian Cabinet crisis committee during Session II at last year's NHSMUN, and it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I loved seeing the creative solutions that the delegates were able to implement, as well as interacting with them! I am super excited to be back again this year.

Furthermore, I really enjoyed the process of researching and writing the background guide for our committee. Bangladesh is entering an interesting time in its history. Protests last year led to the resignation of longtime leader Sheikh Hasina. Her term in power saw Bangladesh's economy grow exponentially, yet also saw democratic backsliding and potential human rights abuses. The interim government that is in power today is tasked with stabilizing the country before holding elections. As such, it has the potential to chart Bangladesh's history in both the short and long term. You, the delegates, will be able to use the powers of debate and diplomacy to shape this future and usher in a new, stable era of Bangladeshi democracy.

If you have any questions about the topic or need clarification about anything, do not hesitate to email either Emilia or me. We are happy to help and answer any questions you may have. Good luck with your research, and I cannot wait to see all of you in New York in March!

Best wishes,

Joseph Loverdi

Crisis: Interim Government of Bangladesh

Session I

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National High School Model United Nations! My name is Emilia Lazo, and I am thrilled to be your Session II director for the Interim Government of Bangladesh committee, in which I will be working with my co-director, Joseph Loverdi, to make these sessions the best of your MUN careers.

I am from Mexico City and currently a junior at Universidad Iberoamericana studying International Relations with interests in international security, foreign trade, and humanitarian aid. When I am not immersed in the world of International Relations or MUN, you can find me listening to music, hanging out with my friends and family, playing piano, painting, taking photos, and playing/watching soccer.

I have been a MUNer since middle school. Throughout the years, I have had the opportunity to serve in various roles, from delegate of various countries and chair of many committees to, now, a crisis director. This is my first year with the National High School Model United Nations as staff, but in previous years, I attended as a delegate, just like you. The thing I love the most about MUN is the chance to see delegates get creative and tackle complex problems with innovative and well-thought-out solutions. I am especially looking forward to sharing with you what we have been preparing and seeing how you navigate the complexities of our committee and bring your own unique perspectives to the table.

Our committee will focus on what is going on with the Interim Government of Bangladesh. You will be tasked with navigating the aftermath of the resignation of longtime leader Sheikh Hasina. While her time in power saw exponential economic growth, it was also marked by democratic backsliding and potential human rights abuses. As interim government, it is up to you to stabilize the country before holding new elections. You have the power to chart Bangladesh's history in both the short and long term, using debate and diplomacy to usher in a new, stable era of democracy.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions about the topic or need clarification on anything. We are here to help and make the most out of this committee and for it to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all of you!

Good luck with your research, and I cannot wait to meet all of you in New York City next March!

Best wishes,

Emilia Lazo

Crisis: Interim Government of Bangladesh

Session II

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## A NOTE ON RESEARCH AND PREPARATION

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the debate experience. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to the conference.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging, but to assist delegates, we have updated our [Beginner Delegate Guide](#), [Advanced Delegate Guide](#), [Research Guide](#), and [Rules of Procedure Guide](#). In particular, these guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage. They can help transform a sometimes overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

To accurately represent a character, delegates must be able to articulate its policies. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation to write a position paper for the topic on the committee's agenda. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the Research Guide. To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections.

**I: Topic Background** – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's character. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic. It is best to focus on the details that are most important to the character's policy and proposed solutions.

**II: Character Policy** – This section should discuss the character's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate.

**III. Proposed Solutions** – This section should detail the character's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the character's policy.

The position paper should be **no more than 10 pages** long double-spaced with standard margins and 12 point font size. This is a maximum; **3–5 pages per topic is often a suitable length**. The paper must be written from the perspective of your assigned country and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for submitting position papers on or before **February 20, 2026**. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, a position must be submitted on or before **January 30, 2026**. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the dais of each committee and returned prior to your arrival at the conference. Instructions on how to submit position papers will be shared directly with faculty advisors.

Complete instructions for how to submit position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via email. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, please contact us at [nhsmun@imuna.org](mailto:nhsmun@imuna.org).

**Delegations that do not submit position papers will be ineligible for awards.**

## COMMITTEE HISTORY

The Interim Government of Bangladesh was established on August 8, 2024, following a mass movement that removed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from power.<sup>1</sup> In the past, caretaker governments were responsible for overseeing elections, which had to be held within 90 days of parliament's dissolution. However, this caretaker system was abolished in 2011, leaving the current interim government without a legal foundation and granting it broad, unchecked authority. The interim government's main objectives are to manage domestic and international pressures, implement reforms, and prepare for new elections. It consists of 22 ministers who advise on specific issues, headed by Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus.<sup>2</sup>

The government has brought some stability by announcing plans for elections in February 2026 and proposing the formation of a National Consensus Commission.<sup>3</sup> Inflation has declined by 8.48 percent.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the controversial Cyber Security Act, previously used to suppress free speech, has been repealed. Despite these gains, Bangladesh still faces serious challenges. Law and order have weakened, partly due to growing religious tensions.<sup>5</sup> Attacks on Hindus, often viewed as supporters of Hasina's Awami League (AL), have increased. The rise of religious parties such as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami has also raised concerns about the erosion of Bangladesh's secular identity.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the threat of a military takeover remains possible. The interim government must also navigate a complicated relationship with India and manage the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis.<sup>7</sup>

Under Hasina, Bangladesh maintained strong ties with key foreign allies. India supported the AL government in exchange for cooperation on regional security.<sup>8</sup> Russia and China were also major trade partners, especially in the energy sector, and China continues to hold close ties with Bangladesh.<sup>9</sup> Domestically, groups such as the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement protested against the government job quota, which reserved 30 percent of government positions for relatives of veterans. In addition, Yunus's advisory board includes Islamist members who advocate for implementing Islamic laws. The interim government must now determine what domestic policies and foreign relations will best serve Bangladesh's long-term stability and democratic future.<sup>10</sup>

1 Dhaka Tribune, "Press Secretary: 12 Achievements of the Interim Government," October 8, 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/government-affairs/388399/press-secretary-12-achievements-of-the-interim>.

2 Law Library of Congress, "Interim Government and the Constitution of Bangladesh," In Custodia Legis: Law Librarians of Congress Blog, August 19, 2024, <https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2024/08/interim-government-and-the-constitution-of-bangladesh/>.

3 Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), "Interim Government Marks First Year, Plans for Election in February 2026," August 8, 2025, <https://www.bssnews.net/news-flash/299891>.

4 Dhaka Tribune, "Press Secretary."

5 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Bangladesh Politics after Hasina: What Next?" Carnegie Emissary, October 10, 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2024/10/bangladesh-hasina-government-politics-what-next?lang=en>.

6 Asia Society Policy Institute, Political Turmoil in Bangladesh: Hasina's Fall, Rise of the Interim Government, and Regional Dynamics, September 3, 2024, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/political-turmoil-bangladesh-hasinas-fall-rise-interim-government-and-regional-dynamics>.

7 Carnegie Endowment, "Bangladesh Politics after Hasina."

8 SAIS Review of International Affairs, "Geopolitics and Revolution: The Superpower Nexus Behind Hasina's Rule and the Future of Bangladesh's Foreign Policy," Johns Hopkins University, September 16, 2024, <https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/geopolitics-and-revolution-the-superpower-nexus-behind-hasinas-rule-and-the-future-of-bangladeshs-foreign-policy/>.

9 SAIS Review, "Geopolitics and Revolution."

10 Asia Society Policy Institute, Political Turmoil in Bangladesh.





# Stabilization of a Nascent Democracy

Photo Credit: Jubair Bin Iqbal



Bangladesh has long been associated with Sheikh Hasina, a two-time prime minister and daughter of the country's founding president, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.<sup>1</sup> However, she resigned from office in 2024. This was spurred on by student protests, with anger rising against the anti-democratic efforts of her government.<sup>2</sup>

Hasina's resignation spurred the creation of an interim government. This government is led by Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel Prize recipient, and is backed by the military.<sup>3</sup> The government deals with various issues facing the country. Additionally, the government must manage diplomatic relations with their nuclear-armed neighbors, India and Pakistan. These relations will impact areas ranging from the economy to the armed forces. Finally, the interim government must plan new elections. Their time in office is only temporary and will only last until new elections are held.

The planning of elections is arguably the most pressing issue for the interim government. Thus, elections have been announced for April 2026.<sup>4</sup> However, some political parties have been calling for elections even sooner.

One leading voice has been the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). They wish to see any long-term reforms be enacted by an elected government.<sup>5</sup> Others disagree, including members of the interim government. They believe Bangladesh is not stable enough to hold elections and that reform is too important to wait for elections.

There are multiple areas where reform is needed. One is freedom of the press. This was a major issue under Hasina's regime. They passed the Cyber Security Act (CSA), which allowed for the arrest of bloggers and journalists that criticized the government. To correct this, the interim government has repealed the CSA. However, there are still complaints over the suppression of independent media.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, there have been increasing attacks against the country's religious minorities. The interim government has been accused of failing to protect them. They deny this, arguing that most attacks were for political reasons.<sup>7</sup> Failing to act against this could damage relations with India. They are concerned about attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's geopolitical situation presents diplomatic dilemmas as

well. India was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh's independence and has supported them economically. However, the change in government has worried India, as has the aforementioned rise in attacks against Hindus. As such, Bangladesh has begun warming up to Pakistan. The two have historically been at odds, dating back to Bangladeshi independence from Pakistan in 1971. However, the interim government has begun to reconcile with Pakistan. Managing relations with both India and Pakistan could change the region's balance of power and must be kept in mind.

Bangladesh's economy has been one of the fastest growing in the world, but this has come at the expense of workers. Peaceful protests and strikes have been ruthlessly cracked down upon by past governments.<sup>8</sup>

The interim government holds the power to influence Bangladesh's future for years to come. Their time in power might be temporary, but they have the chance to leave a lasting legacy that could shape Bangladesh's path for the future. Delegates will have the difficult task of charting a new way forward and dealing with challenges that have shaped Bangladesh's recent history.

1 Stanley A. Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh," *Asian Survey* 40, no. 3 (2000): 530–550, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3021160>.

2 Joshua Kurlantzick, "Backsliding in Motion," *Addressing the Effect of COVID-19 on Democracy in South and Southeast Asia* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2020), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27672.4>.

3 "Turbulence in Bangladesh as New Government Grapples With Aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's Ouster," *AP News*, February 6, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/bangladesh-sheikh-hasina-muhammad-yunus-election-protest-78f464ce30236b163b472106620de586>.

4 Kieran Burke, "Bangladesh to Hold General Election in April 2026," *DW*, June 6, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/bangladesh-to-hold-general-election-in-april-2026/a-72827543>.

5 *AP News*, "Turbulence in Bangladesh as New Government Grapples With Aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's Ouster,"

6 "Human Rights in Bangladesh," *Amnesty International*, accessed August 20, 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/bangladesh/report-bangladesh/>.

7 *AP News*, "Turbulence in Bangladesh as New Government Grapples With Aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's Ouster."

8 *Amnesty International*, "Human Rights in Bangladesh."

## TOPIC BACKGROUND

### Independence from Pakistan

Beginning in 1858, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India were under the direct rule of the British Empire. Following decades of sustained civil unrest, the United Kingdom agreed to grant independence to the Indian subcontinent in August 1947.<sup>9</sup> The UK decided to split up their former colony into two countries: the majority-Hindu India and the majority-Muslim Pakistan, in what was later known as the Partition of India.<sup>10</sup> Under the partition, the majority-Muslim Bangladesh was united with Pakistan, though the two were separated by India. During this time, Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan, while Pakistan was known as West Pakistan. East Pakistan was ethnically, culturally, and linguistically distinct from West Pakistan, causing some in East Pakistan to argue for independence.<sup>11</sup> Most people in East Pakistan were part of the Bengali ethnic group and spoke the Bengali language, but the

Pakistani government used Urdu as their official language, which frustrated many East Pakistanis.<sup>12</sup> While the majority of Pakistanis lived in East Pakistan, political elites in West Pakistan held most of the power. Many of those elites in West Pakistan viewed East Pakistanis as lesser citizens.<sup>13</sup> This resulted in the sidelining of East Pakistan, and feelings of discontent began to brew.

The tensions between East and West Pakistan came to a head in December of 1970. In the 1970 Pakistani elections, the Awami League party (AL) won the most votes.<sup>14</sup> The Awami League wanted East Pakistan to have total control over their own finances, trade, and taxation, but they did not support full independence.<sup>15</sup> Despite the AL's win, West Pakistani politicians prevented the AL from taking power.<sup>16</sup> In March of 1971, the Pakistani government sent the military into East Pakistan with the goal of destroying the Bengali nationalist movement led by the AL.<sup>17</sup> The military mostly targeted civilians, killing an estimated

25,000 East Pakistani citizens on the first night alone. This violent military action increased calls for independence among East Pakistanis and marked the start of the Bangladesh War of Liberation. Furthermore, many civilians formed and joined resistance groups, leading to a sustained civil war.<sup>18</sup> Several of these groups received Indian support, as they hoped to destabilize Pakistan.<sup>19</sup>

By the fall of 1971, 15 million refugees had fled East Pakistan for India, causing India to threaten to intervene in the war. Pakistan decided to launch a military attack against India first, but they were forced to surrender within weeks, in December 1971.<sup>20</sup> This marked the end of the war. After the war, Bangladesh became an independent country. Though the war only lasted nine months, it was a violent conflict marred by human rights violations. The Pakistani government still disputes many of Bangladesh's claims surrounding these human rights violations. An official Pakistani government report from 1972 admits that the Pakistani

9 Denis Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger : The Rise and Fall of the British Raj, 1600-1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), ProQuest EBook Center.

10 Mytheli Sreenivas, "India-Pakistan Partition," *Origins*, The Ohio State University, November, 2017, <https://origins.osu.edu/milestones/december-2017-india-pakistan-partition>.

11 Eric A. Strahorn, "The Bangladesh Liberation War," *Origins*, The Ohio State University, December, 2021, <https://origins.osu.edu/milestones/bangladesh-liberation-war>.

12 Willem van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108684644>.

13 van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh*.

14 Strahorn, "The Bangladesh Liberation War."

15 van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh*.

16 Strahorn, "The Bangladesh Liberation War."

17 van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh*.

18 Muhammad, "The Road to Liberation: March 1971 and the Years That Led to It.," van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh*.

19 Strahorn, "The Bangladesh Liberation War."

20 Strahorn, "The Bangladesh Liberation War."



army killed large numbers of civilians and engaged in widespread acts of sexual violence.<sup>21</sup> Many scholars and independent observers claim that Pakistan's actions during the war amount to a genocide against the people of Bangladesh, a charge that Pakistan denies. Over 750 people have been punished for Pakistan's actions against Bangladesh.<sup>22</sup> Although many in Bangladesh and around the world claim that there are still people who engaged in war crimes who have not yet faced justice.<sup>23</sup> To this day, many Bangladeshi politicians and civilians continue to push for justice for the victims of the war.

The Bangladesh War of Liberation still plays an important role in Bangladeshi society. Firstly, the Awami League is still a powerful party in Bangladesh. One of the AL's founders, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was considered the "father of the nation."<sup>24</sup> His daughter, Sheikh Hasina, was the prime minister of Bangladesh with the AL until the recent protests. Furthermore, the AL was the

majority party in parliament from 2009 to parliament's suspension in 2024.<sup>25</sup> The AL's status as leaders of the war movement has always been an important part of their appeal to voters.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the political consequences, the Bangladesh War of Liberation has had lasting economic consequences. The war destroyed infrastructure and damaged the growth of industry, which is part of the reason why Bangladesh's economy still lags to this day.<sup>27</sup> By some estimates, the war cost the Bangladeshi economy upwards of USD 25 billion (USD 44 billion when adjusted for inflation).<sup>28</sup> Alongside this, many religious and ethnic minorities in Bangladesh face discrimination because of their association with Bangladesh's enemies from the war. In particular, Hindus and Urdu-speaking Bihari Muslims face discrimination as a result of this.<sup>29</sup>

The impact of the Bangladesh War of Liberation is one reason for the current crisis. Before 2018, 30 percent of government jobs were reserved for the descendants of

veterans of the War of Liberation. These jobs are among the best paid and most respected in Bangladesh. As a result, every year, over 200,000 students take the civil service entrance exams, competing for only about 3,000 jobs. In 2018, a wave of student protests rocked Bangladesh, demanding an end to the quota system.<sup>30</sup> Protestors argued that the quota system benefits supporters of the Awami League. Prime Minister Hasina agreed to end the quota system but brought back the system in 2024.<sup>31</sup>

## International Recognition and Military Rule

Bangladesh's road to gaining international recognition began during its war of independence. The two first countries to recognize Bangladesh as a sovereign state were India and Bhutan. This support saw them accept Bangladeshi independence before its official secession from Pakistan on December 6, 1971.<sup>32</sup> However,

21 Bina D'Costa and Sara Hossain, "Redress for Sexual Violence Before the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh: Lessons from History, and Hopes for the Future," *Criminal Law Forum* 21, no. 3 (July 14, 2010): 331–359, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10609-010-9120-2>.

22 Strahorn, "The Bangladesh Liberation War," van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh*; D'Costa and Hossain, "Redress for Sexual Violence Before the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh;" Amit Ranjan, "Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971: Narratives, Impacts and the Actors," *India Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (June 2016): 132–145, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48505492>.

23 D'Costa and Hossain, "Redress for Sexual Violence Before the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh."

24 Kallol Bhattacharjee, "Bangladesh Drops the Title of 'Father of the Nation' for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," *The Hindu*, June 5, 2025, [https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bangladesh-drops-the-title-of-father-of-the-nation-for-sheikh-mujibur-rahman/article69656870.ece#goog\\_rewarded](https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bangladesh-drops-the-title-of-father-of-the-nation-for-sheikh-mujibur-rahman/article69656870.ece#goog_rewarded).

25 "Journey of Bangladesh Awami League: 1949–2016," Bangladesh Awami League, 2016, <https://publication.albd.org/Journey-of-Awami-League-1949-2016/#p=1>.

26 Ranjan, "Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971: Narratives, Impacts and the Actors."

27 Saud Choudhry and Syed Basher, "The Enduring Significance of Bangladesh's War of Independence: An Analysis of Economic Costs and Consequences," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 36, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 41–55, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4192901>.

28 Choudhry and Basher, "The Enduring Significance of Bangladesh's War of Independence."

29 Ranjan, "Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971: Narratives, Impacts and the Actors."

30 Faisal Mahmud, "Bangladesh Students Demand Abolition of Job Quota System," *Al Jazeera*, May 14, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/5/14/bangladesh-students-demand-abolition-of-job-quota-system>.

31 Harindrini Corea and Nazia Erum, "What is Happening at the Quota-Reform Protests in Bangladesh?" *Amnesty International*, July 29, 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/what-is-happening-at-the-quota-reform-protests-in-bangladesh/>.

32 Priyali Dutta, "Indian-Bangladesh Relations: Issues, Problems and Recent Developments," *JSTOR*, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, September 1, 2010, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09297>.

other countries were slower to recognize Bangladesh. The main reason for this was the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He led Bangladesh's government as it declared independence from Pakistan and is seen as the "father of the nation."<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, Rahman was arrested by the Pakistani army shortly after the declaration. The arrest of the country's leading political figure made countries reluctant to recognize it. With no head of state, many worried about the stability of the young country. Ultimately, this changed following his release, secured thanks to international pressure, in January 1972.

Initially, the Eastern Bloc took the lead. East Germany, Poland, and Bulgaria recognized Bangladesh on January 10-11, 1972.<sup>34</sup> Moscow ordered them to do so to gauge Pakistan's reaction and deemed their threats to be hollow. The USSR would then recognize Bangladesh on January 25, 1972, followed by Czechoslovakia and Hungary the next day.<sup>35</sup> By doing this, the Eastern Bloc gave themselves a propaganda win. It portrayed them as the true supporters of oppressed peoples while the West stood idly

by. This also allowed them to marginalize Maoist China, which had yet to recognize Bangladeshi independence. In fact, China would not recognize Bangladesh until October 1975, almost four years after it became a sovereign state.<sup>36</sup>

The West's hesitancy to recognize Bangladesh was due largely to geopolitical factors rather than a lack of support. The United States delayed its recognition of Bangladesh to April 1972 to not anger Pakistan. Pakistan played a crucial role in helping the US normalize relations with China, and President Nixon was to visit Beijing in February 1972. Recognizing Bangladesh before this visit would be an insult to their ally. The UK had similar fears. By recognizing Bangladesh, they could gain a new, profitable trading partner but risked Pakistan leaving the Commonwealth as a result.<sup>37</sup>

Ultimately, Australia took the lead for the West. They recognized Bangladesh on New Year's Eve 1971, having advocated for it earlier in the year.<sup>38</sup> The rest of the West began to follow suit. The UK and West Germany were among eight states to recognize Bangladesh on

February 4, 1972. This built up to France and Canada recognizing them on February 14 and ultimately to American recognition on April 4. This was further confirmed in 1974, when Bangladesh joined the United Nations.<sup>39</sup> By this point, Bangladesh was widely seen as a sovereign state.

Upon independence, Bangladesh became a parliamentary democracy led by Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League. It formally introduced a constitution in November 1972. This created its legislature, the Jatiya Sangsad, and a cabinet. The cabinet was directly responsible to the Jatiya Sangsad for its actions and policies.<sup>40</sup> While the Awami League was incredibly popular, it failed to handle Bangladesh's issues. The economy began to worsen in 1974 due to a combination of corruption and inflation. Flooding in July and August of that year put Bangladesh in a "near famine condition."<sup>41</sup> Class conflict began to erupt as well. Radical parties began a guerrilla war against the Awami League. These parties ranged from communist to right-wing Islamist. They all felt that Bangladesh's revolution was unfinished. To them, the Awami League represented the exploiting

33 David Ludden, "The Politics of Independence in Bangladesh," *Economic and Political Weekly* 46, no. 35 (2011): 79–85, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23017911>.

34 Rachel Stevens, "How Bangladesh Gained Global Legitimacy," *Asia News Network*, March 5, 2025, <https://asianews.network/how-bangladesh-gained-global-legitimacy/>

35 Stevens, "How Bangladesh Gained Global Legitimacy."

36 Anwar A. Khan, "China and the Bangladesh War of Liberation," *International Affairs Review*, July 11, 2024., <https://internationalaffairsreview.com/2024/07/11/china-and-the-bangladesh-war-of-liberation/>.

37 Stevens, "How Bangladesh Gained Global Legitimacy."

38 Stevens, "How Bangladesh Gained Global Legitimacy."

39 "Bangladesh and the United Nations: 50 Years of Partnership," United Nations Bangladesh, October 31, 2024, <https://bangladesh.un.org/en/282417-bangladesh-and-united-nations-50-years-partnership>.

40 Emajuddin Ahamed, "The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh," In *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*, edited by R.J. May and Viberto Selochan (Canberra: Australian National University Press): 101–118, 2004. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jb1g.12>.

41 Ahamed, "The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh."



classes.<sup>42</sup> To maintain order, the government relied on the Rakkhi Bahini. They were a government-backed paramilitary group.<sup>43</sup> The government ordered the army to close all borders. Many suspected radicals were arrested and executed without proper trials.<sup>44</sup> But this did not stop the revolutionaries. The violence and a state of emergency was declared in December 1974.

Four weeks later, the Jatiya Sangsad amended the constitution to make Mujib Rahman President. This vested him with total executive authority.<sup>45</sup> Rahman would make Bangladesh a one-party state the next month. The new party, BAKSAL, was an extension of the Awami League. It was an incredibly unpopular move. The rightists were angered by the banning of certain parties, and many disliked BAKSAL's shift to socialism.<sup>46</sup>

This new government would end on August 15, 1975, when the military intervened in Bangladeshi politics for the first time. They staged a coup, killing Mujib and most of his family. Military infighting would continue throughout 1975 until November 3, when a second coup occurred. Khaled Mosharraf was installed as leader but was deposed four days later as soldiers rebelled against him.<sup>47</sup> This rebellion installed



Awami League Cabinet 1970 (Credit: Faiyazmizan)

General Zia as leader. Zia began to consolidate power in 1977, as he took over the presidency. One of his first acts was to revive the civil-military bureaucracy. This is when military figures hold key posts in the civilian bureaucracy, allowing them to run fields such as public health and law enforcement. It had played a major role in the country's early days before Mujib cracked down on it in 1975. By restoring it, Zia was able to strengthen the army's position. He increased the defense budget and built new facilities for the armed forces, which saw a major increase in numbers.<sup>48</sup> This was critical, as the survival of

Zia's regime depended on the army's loyalty.

A referendum in 1977 allowed the Bangladeshi people to decide whether he would stay in office. Zia won 99.5 percent of the vote. This success saw him choose to hold presidential elections in December 1978. Zia and the Nationalist Front (JF) would win that as well, securing 76 percent of the vote. Emboldened by this victory, he soon announced parliamentary elections to be held in 1979. In preparation for them, Zia launched his own party, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). The BNP

<sup>42</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1974: Economic Crisis and Political Polarization," *Asian Survey* 15, no. 2 (1975): 117–28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2643322>.

<sup>43</sup> Muhammed A. Tayyeb, "Bangladesh: The Dilemmas of Independence," *Asian Affairs* 5, no. 3 (1978): 165–79, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30171624>.

<sup>44</sup> Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1974: Economic Crisis and Political Polarization."

<sup>45</sup> Tayyeb, "Bangladesh: The Dilemmas of Independence."

<sup>46</sup> Ahamed, "The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh."

<sup>47</sup> Ahamed, "The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh."

<sup>48</sup> Syed Serajul Islam, "The State in Bangladesh under Zia (1975–81)," *Asian Survey* 24, no. 5 (1984): 556–73, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2644413>.

advocated for a presidential form of government with him at the helm. In the elections, the BNP won 68 percent of seats in parliament. This result served as a virtual endorsement of Zia's regime. However, the parliament was still subordinate to the president. The military would thus remain in power but was given a constitutional "mandate" through these elections.<sup>49</sup>

Zia, having gained legitimacy, now sought to build support at the local level. He created Gram Sarkar, a village-level government.<sup>50</sup> Gram Pratirakkhi Bahinis were also created to maintain law and order in villages. These organizations allowed rural Bangladeshis access to the government and mobilized support for the BNP. He brought political stability to Bangladesh after the tumultuous end to the Rahman years. However, this was achieved through repression and manipulation. The leaders of the two main opposition parties, the Awami League and Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), were imprisoned. Zia was then able to create a split in the JSD by offering some leaders political opportunities.<sup>51</sup> These leaders left the JSD to create a new party that aligned itself with the BNP.

Zia had always given preference to army officers that had repatriated from Pakistan post-independence. This created resentment among those who had been loyal to Mujid Rahman. They sought more influence in the government and took matters into their own hands. These officers would assassinate Zia in May 1981, causing uproar among the public.<sup>52</sup> Zia was a popular leader whose charisma had held the BNP together for years. His death saw the people of Bangladesh begin to grow tired of military rule. Elections were held in November, and the BNP candidate, Abdus Sattar, won with a strong 66 percent of the vote. However, this civilian government would last for only a few months.

In March 1982, the army ousted President Sattar, and General H. M. Ershad was installed as leader. Sattar's government struggled with factionism, and many expected the military to make a move at some point. Upon his installation, Ershad announced an agenda of national reform.<sup>53</sup> Government ministries were reduced, as were internal divisions. A High Court was created. The Gram Sarkars, created under Zia, were given more powers. All of this was done in an attempt to bring the government closer to the people.

Ershad's regime also ushered in a policy of Islamization. This policy was much more totalitarian and rigid than Zia's and was met with resistance early on.<sup>54</sup> He declared Islam as the country's state religion and attempted to make society more Islamic. Ershad's loyalty to the army was also incredibly unpopular. He appointed military personnel to head most of Bangladesh's ministries. The defense budget was increased year upon year.<sup>55</sup> Ershad did this because his regime lacked both legitimacy and public trust. In an attempt to change this, he held presidential elections in 1986. While he won the election, Ershad failed to gain the legitimacy he sought.

By 1987, Ershad's position began to weaken. He faced opposition from a number of groups. They ranged from students and human rights activists to political parties and broader civil society. The opposition, in a rare show of unity, successfully called numerous strikes. These were intended to force Ershad to resign. With his position continuing to decline, Ershad finally lost the support of the armed forces.<sup>56</sup> Protests against him grew more frequent, and in November 1990, they turned violent. The opposition called for Ershad to resign, and he did so in December.

49 Islam, "The State in Bangladesh under Zia (1975-81)."

50 Ahamed, "The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh."

51 Islam, "The State in Bangladesh under Zia (1975-81)."

52 Ahamed, "The Military and Democracy in Bangladesh."

53 Peter J. Bertocci, "Bangladesh in the Early 1980s: Praetorian Politics in an Intermediate Regime," *Asian Survey* 22, no. 10 (1982): 988–1008, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2643756>.

54 Éva Rozália Hölzle, "State Formation and Land Tenure in Bangladesh – A Historical Sketch," In *Land, Life, and Emotional Landscapes at the Margins of Bangladesh* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press): 31–48, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2svjzp1.5>.

55 Bhumitra Chakma, "Demilitarisation: The Bangladesh Experience," In *Demilitarising The State: The South and Southeast Asian Experience*, edited by Rajesh Basur and Kartik Bommakanti (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies): 30–55, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05893.6>.

56 Chakma, "Demilitarisation: The Bangladesh Experience."



After eight years, Bangladesh would return to civilian rule.

## Stabilization of Bangladesh's Democracy

The resignation of General Ershad in December 1990 signaled the beginning of a new era for Bangladesh. Military rule had ended, and democracy could return to the country once again. Parliamentary elections were held in February 1991. These were the first free and fair elections to be held in Bangladesh in 20 years.<sup>57</sup> The BNP emerged as the victor with 140 seats, with the AL finishing as runners-up with 84.<sup>58</sup> There were multiple factors that contributed to the BNP's electoral success. Their leader, Khalida Begum Zia, emerged as the country's leading anti-Ershad activist. Its student wing played a major role in mobilizing the Bangladeshi electorate. Finally, the AL was seen as complacent and isolated, with many Bangladeshis unhappy with their previous time in power.<sup>59</sup>

Once in power, the BNP restored Bangladesh's parliamentary democracy as Khalida became Prime Minister. This marked an

immediate end to the remarkable political unity in the country. The past two years had seen the parties unite to force Ershad out and restore democracy.<sup>60</sup> Yet, as soon as the dust of the election had cleared, whatever unity had existed was gone. This political strife would continue thanks to Khalida's decision-making style. It was slow, centralized, and highly personalized, which led to poor management and an inability to control the bureaucracy. Khalida tended to focus on one policy area at a time. For example, she would focus on the economy but would be

*However, the AL claimed that the elections had been rigged.*

unable to encourage growth. At the same time, other important topics would be left without any attention. This narrow focus left the BNP-led government drifting from one political crisis to the next.<sup>61</sup>

This management style was put to the test from 1994 to 1996. A second political crisis began as the AL once again accused the BNP of

rigging elections. This time, the AL was able to unite the opposition against the BNP. They called for the creation of a neutral caretaker government (NCG) to oversee all future parliamentary elections. The opposition also instigated strikes across the country. From 1994 to 1996, there were 175 days of political disturbances, with 92 of those being nationwide strikes.<sup>62</sup> The political crisis culminated in all opposition MPs resigning in 1996. The BNP called for new elections, which were held in February of that year. The BNP participated in vote manipulation during these elections in an attempt to ensure victory.<sup>63</sup> The opposition boycotted them. The new parliament would create the NCG before dissolving in June to hold fresh elections.<sup>64</sup>

The June 1996 elections saw the AL return to power for the first time since 1975. Its leader, Sheikh Hasina, would be named prime minister. Hasina is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and she immediately ordered all schools and government offices to display a portrait of her father.<sup>65</sup> The AL government also worked to strengthen Bangladesh's relationship with India. Although India had once been a close ally, ties weakened during the BNP's time in power

57 Stanley A. Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh," *Asian Survey* 40, no. 3 (2000): 530–550, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3021160>.

58 S. R. Sen, "Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect," *Economic and Political Weekly* 26, no. 13 (1991): 825–826, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4397468>.

59 Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh."

60 Partha S Ghosh, "Bangladesh at the Crossroads: Religion and Politics," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 7 (1993): 697–710, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645357>.

61 Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh."

62 Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh."

63 Stanley A. Kochanek, "Bangladesh in 1996: The 25th Year of Independence," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 2 (1997): 136–142, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645479>.

64 Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh."

65 Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh."

due to the BNP's deep mistrust of India. Under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the AL restored cooperation between the two states. The government signed a vital water-sharing treaty with India, which was crucial for Bangladesh's long-term environmental and economic security. Even more significantly, the AL helped end the long-standing conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. For years, this region had faced violence between the Bangladeshi government and Indian-backed insurgent groups. In 1997, Hasina's government and India reached an agreement that brought lasting peace to the area.<sup>66</sup>

While her foreign policy was successful, Hasina struggled to handle domestic issues. Many factors played into this. A major one is the factionalism within the AL. This led her to centralize decision-making authority around the Prime Minister's office. This left the cabinet sidelined, as they were never consulted before decisions were made. Hasina's relatives and personal advisors would replace the cabinet as key consultants. Another factor was Hasina's combativeness. She refused to take responsibility for the consequences caused by her decisions. She instead blamed outside bodies like NGOs or the opposition. Finally, the AL's primary support base has always been

perceived as the country's elites. This made her appear unfamiliar with most poor Bangladeshis. All of these factors resulted in a total lack of transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. This made the AL unable to successfully manage pressing issues facing the country.<sup>67</sup>

Protests and general strikes soon broke out once again, calling for democratic reform. Hopes for change rose during the 2001 parliamentary elections, when AL was voted out of power and replaced by the BNP, bringing Khaleda Zia back into office. Although the AL accused the BNP of rigging the election, these claims were later proven false. An NCG had been formed in July to oversee the vote, ensuring that the elections were free and fair. The outcome of this election revealed an important aspect of Bangladesh's democracy at the time. The 2001 vote marked two consecutive elections in which unpopular ruling parties were peacefully removed from office. While both the AL and BNP had shown signs of democratic backsliding during their terms, both ultimately accepted the results, demonstrating that, despite deep political divisions, democratic institutions still held firm. However, this stability would soon be tested.<sup>68</sup>

The BNP government ruled from 2001 to 2006 with relatively

little democratic backsliding. When Khaleda Zia's term ended in October 2006, an NCG assumed power to organize the next elections. However, significant issues soon emerged. The BNP was accused of attempting to rig the election, prompting the AL to withdraw from the race. As violence escalated across the country, the NCG declared a state of emergency and postponed the elections before eventually resigning. In the power vacuum that followed, the military staged a bloodless coup and assumed control. Soldiers were deployed throughout the country to restore order, and by April 2007, nearly 140,000 people had been arrested.<sup>69</sup> The government also forced both Zia and Sheikh Hasina into exile, although this decision was reversed on April 25. However, elections were continually postponed, as the military claimed that the country was not ready for them. It would take almost two years for these elections to take place, with them ultimately occurring in December 2008.<sup>70</sup>

Serious reforms were implemented before these elections. Political party registration was made mandatory. These parties could be registered if they had won at least one constituency in any election post-independence or if they had won at least 5 percent

<sup>66</sup> Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh."

<sup>67</sup> Kochanek, "Governance, Patronage Politics, and Democratic Transition in Bangladesh."

<sup>68</sup> M Rashiduzzaman, "Bangladesh in 2001: The Election and a New Political Reality?" *Asian Survey* 42, no. 1 (2002): 183–191, <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2002.42.1.183>.

<sup>69</sup> Carol Christine Fair, "On the Issues: Bangladesh," *United States Institute of Peace*, April 27, 2007, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2007/04/issues-bangladesh>.

<sup>70</sup> "Bangladesh's history of upheaval and coups," *Reuters*, August 5, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladeshs-history-upheaval-coups-2024-08-05/>



of total votes in all constituencies contested.<sup>71</sup> 107 parties applied for registration, but only 37 were accepted by the country's new Election Commission. Both the AL and BNP were registered, and they emerged as the two main contenders for power. The AL was favored, having emerged victorious in municipal elections in August 2008.<sup>72</sup> This prediction proved correct, as their coalition ultimately won 49 percent of the vote.<sup>73</sup> This granted them 230 seats in parliament and returned Sheikh Hasina to the government.

Hasina's term began in January 2009, and she would remain in power for the next 15 years. Her regime was known for a stark increase in authoritarianism. Bangladesh's democracy, once relatively robust, would turn into a de facto one-party state.<sup>74</sup> Hasina would win re-election in 2014, 2018, and 2024. Each election was met with domestic and international criticism. The BNP boycotted in 2014, as they claimed the election was rigged.<sup>75</sup> This meant that the AL faced no opposition in parliament, which allowed them to govern with no restraint. Hasina would win a landslide victory in 2018 in an



Sheikh Hasina after election victory (Credit: [pressinform.gov.bd](http://pressinform.gov.bd))

election that the opposition called “farcical.”<sup>76</sup> The election process was marred with voter intimidation and vote-rigging claims. In both years, the AL-headed election commission rejected claims of rigging and refused a rerun. These actions totally erased any sense of a competitive electoral system in the country.

Bangladesh's political system was transformed into an illiberal democracy. This is a system where the party in power is never interested in strengthening

democracy.<sup>77</sup> They are worried about electoral competition. Strengthening the electoral party system would mean an increase in competition and a potential loss in elections. This has led Hasina and the AL to attack the BNP and other opposition parties. Many party leaders were arrested. Freedom of the press had been curtailed. The two main news outlets in Bangladesh are government-owned and act as propaganda machines for the AL.<sup>78</sup> All of this has led many democracy reports

71 Sandeep Bhardwaj, “Bangladesh: Forthcoming Elections,” Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2008. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep09010>.

72 Bhardwaj, “Bangladesh: Forthcoming Elections.”

73 “Election Watch,” *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 2 (2009): 176–178, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.0.0075>.

74 Joshua Kurlantick, “Backsliding in Motion,” *Addressing the Effect of COVID-19 on Democracy in South and Southeast Asia*, Council on Foreign Relations, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27672.4>.

75 Ali Riaz, “Shifting Tides in South Asia: Bangladesh's Failed Election,” *Journal of Democracy*, April 3, 2014. <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/shifting-tides-in-south-asia-bangladeshs-failed-election/>.

76 “Bangladesh Election: PM Sheikh Hasina Wins Landslide in Disputed Vote,” *BBC News*, December 31, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-46718393>.

77 Alyssa Ayres, “Human Rights and Democracy in South Asia,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26155>.

78 “Bangladesh,” *RSF*, accessed August 20, 2025, <https://rsf.org/en/country/bangladesh>.

to rank Bangladesh as an “electoral autocracy” that is only partly free.<sup>79</sup>

## Development of the Bangladeshi Economy

At the time of independence, Bangladesh was one of the poorest countries in the world. In the 1970s, over 70 percent of Bangladeshi citizens lived in poverty.<sup>80</sup> Since then, Bangladesh’s gross domestic product (GDP) has nearly quadrupled.<sup>81</sup> Despite political instability, Bangladesh’s economy has developed into an industrial powerhouse. However, many in Bangladesh still remain impoverished.

Before independence, Bangladesh was primarily an agricultural economy. Bangladesh had two main crops: rice and jute (a type of fiber used to make rope and twine). Rice was and still is the main staple crop in Bangladesh.<sup>82</sup> The War of Liberation caused significant economic damage to Bangladesh, but for the first few years of independence, the country was able to avoid an economic crisis thanks to UN support. When that support

ended in 1973, Bangladesh’s economy slowly declined until it collapsed in 1974 due to flooding, large-scale crop failures, government mismanagement, and global economic decline.<sup>83</sup> The crop failures caused a famine in Bangladesh, which resulted in large numbers of deaths and disease outbreaks.<sup>84</sup>

Rice is a high-risk crop that is vulnerable to weather events and prone to poor yields, causing lasting food insecurity. In the 1980s, farmers started growing more resilient types of rice that had higher yields, which reduced food insecurity.<sup>85</sup> Also, farmers used new irrigation techniques and better fertilizers, which further reduced food insecurity. Furthermore, farmers started growing more different types of crops, such as wheat, sugar, and potatoes, all of which reduced food insecurity and grew the Bangladeshi economy.<sup>86</sup>

In the 1970s, agriculture comprised over half of the Bangladeshi economy, but by 2000, it was less than 20 percent of the economy.<sup>87</sup> In the 21st century, the ready-made garment industry

has dominated the Bangladeshi economy. Ready-made garments are clothes that are mass-produced and then sold in stores or online. In the 1980s, most garments were made in East Asian countries like South Korea. To protect their own manufacturing sectors, the United States and the European Union restricted garment imports from East Asian countries. In response, some South Korean firms moved their manufacturing to Bangladesh, where there were no restrictions on imports and there was a large pool of available labor.<sup>88</sup> Bangladesh was also shifting from mostly state-owned enterprises to more private enterprises and was looking to attract foreign investment.<sup>89</sup> Soon other clothing manufacturers followed suit, and Bangladesh is now the second-largest exporter of ready-made garments.<sup>90</sup>

The growth of the garment industry has reshaped Bangladeshi society. First, the garment industry brought women into the workforce in large numbers. Between 60 percent and 80 percent of all workers in the garment industry are women. This is a significant

79 Ayres, “Human Rights and Democracy in South Asia.”

80 Selim Raihan, François Bourguignon, and Umar Salam, eds., “The Economic and Institutional Background of Bangladesh’s Development,” in *Is the Bangladesh Paradox Sustainable?: The Institutional Diagnostic Project*, 27–98 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009284677.004>.

81 Raihan et al., “The Economic and Institutional Background of Bangladesh’s Development.”

82 K. A. S. Murshid, *The Odds Revisited: Political Economy of the Development of Bangladesh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009128230>.

83 Maniruzzaman, “Bangladesh in 1974.”

84 Kasturi Rangan, “Bangladesh Is Faced With Large-Scale Deaths From Starvation,” *The New York Times*, October 11, 1974, <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/10/11/archives/bangladesh-is-faced-with-largescale-deaths-from-starvation.html>

85 David Lewis, *Bangladesh: Politics, Economy and Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139017138>.

86 Lewis, *Bangladesh*.

87 Lewis, *Bangladesh*.

88 Murshid, *The Odds Revisited*.

89 Fauzia Erfan Ahmed, “The Rise of the Bangladesh Garment Industry: Globalization, Women Workers, and Voice,” *NWSA Journal* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 34–45, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4317051>.

90 Shamim Chowdhury, “Why the Garment Workers of Bangladesh are Feeling Poorer Than Ever,” *NPR*, October 23, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goats-and-soda/2024/10/23/g-s1-28960/why-the-garment-workers-of-bangladesh-are-feeling-poorer-than-ever>.



shift, as historically, women in Bangladesh could not work and instead stayed home with their families.<sup>91</sup> For women in rural areas, working the fields was taboo, but working in factories was considered acceptable. This allowed women to supplement their family's income while maintaining social norms. Manufacturers also preferred female workers because they were often not the sole earner for their family, so they were willing to be paid less.<sup>92</sup> Many garment workers earn below the minimum wage in Bangladesh and are forced to survive on around USD 100 per month. With rising inflation, many garment workers are struggling to afford necessities even as their labor props up the Bangladeshi economy. Furthermore, the recent political unrest has caused some manufacturers to move their operations out of Bangladesh, even paying more to produce their clothes in a more stable country.<sup>93</sup>

While the garment industry has been the main driver of Bangladesh's economic growth, remittances have also played a large role. A remittance is money sent by a foreign worker back to their home country. In March 2025 alone, Bangladeshi workers in foreign countries sent USD 3 billion back to Bangladesh. By some estimates, remittances support 50 million Bangladeshi citizens,



Garment factory in Dhaka (Credit: Kroisenbrunner)

around one-third of the entire population.<sup>94</sup> This is all created by the 7.5 million Bangladeshis who work abroad.<sup>95</sup> Bangladesh has more workers than available jobs, leading many citizens, especially those with limited education, to seek employment abroad. Migrants typically go to either Western countries, such as the United States or the United Kingdom, or to states in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Those migrating to Western countries usually stay longer and work in higher-paying technical jobs, while those going to the Middle East or Southeast Asia often take short-term, low-wage, and low-

skill jobs. Between 1976 and 2010, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were the most common destinations for Bangladeshi workers, many of whom were employed in the oil industry. Although these migrant workers contribute greatly to Bangladesh's economy through remittances, they often face harsh working conditions that the Bangladeshi government has limited power to address.<sup>96</sup>

## The Rohingya Refugee Crisis

The Rohingya are an Indo-Aryan people from the Rakhine

<sup>91</sup> Murshid, *The Odds Revisited*.

<sup>92</sup> Ahmed, "The Rise of the Bangladesh Garment Industry."

<sup>93</sup> Chowdhury, "Why the Garment Workers of Bangladesh are Feeling Poorer Than Ever."

<sup>94</sup> Redwan Ahmed, "Bangladesh's 'Remittance Warriors' Deliver Record US\$3 Billion Boost," *South China Morning Post*, March 31, 2025, <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/south-asia/article/3304550/bangladesh-remittance-warriors-deliver-record-us3-billion-boost>.

<sup>95</sup> Md Nurul Islam, "Bangladesh Expatriate Workers and Their Contribution to National Development," *Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training*, accessed July 9, 2025, <https://old.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/resources/Static%20PDF%20and%20DOC/publication/Remittance%20and%20its%20impact.pdf>.

<sup>96</sup> Islam, "Bangladesh Expatriate Workers and Their Contribution to National Development."

state in Myanmar.<sup>97</sup> Myanmar is a traditionally Buddhist state, but the Rohingya are mostly Muslim. Rohingya migration to Bangladesh goes back to the late 1700s.<sup>98</sup> However, modern Rohingya migration to Bangladesh began in the 1940s. Myanmar gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1948. Muslims from Rakhine pushed for their region to be integrated into East Pakistan. In response, the Myanmar government treated the Rohingya as illegal immigrants. They denied the Rohingya rights to citizenship and were thus prohibited from military service. This led to Rohingya *mujahids* (freedom fighters) starting an uprising in Rakhine. They sought to unite the region with Pakistan. Pakistan would provide the *mujahids* with logistical support for four years. Myanmar began negotiations with Pakistan to stop this aid in 1954. They proved successful, and the insurgency would end later that year.<sup>99</sup>

Further migration began a few decades later. In 1962, the new government, led by General Ne Win, began to dissolve Rohingya social and political organizations. In 1977, the government conducted Operation Nagamin, a national effort to register citizens and screen out foreigners. By May 1978, over

200,000 Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh.<sup>100</sup> Operation Nagamin would not allow them to register as citizens, which forced them to flee. If they did not flee, the military forcibly deported them.

Bangladesh, with assistance from the United Nations, opened thirteen major camps for Rohingya refugees.<sup>101</sup> The temporary camps were established to shelter refugees and protect them from persecution. However, Bangladesh refused to integrate the Rohingya into society. General Zia's government argued that their presence created economic and social strain on local communities, and the country lacked the resources to fully support them. Forced deportations eventually ceased only after the United Nations threatened to suspend aid to Myanmar, prompting Myanmar to begin repatriating refugees. Despite this, many Rohingya feared returning due to the risk of renewed persecution. Bangladesh, facing pressure, began forcing repatriation by restricting food rations and allowing camp conditions to worsen, leading more refugees to reluctantly return to Myanmar.<sup>102</sup>

In the early 1990s, the Myanmar army resumed its persecution of the Rohingya, launching violent

attacks on villages in Rakhine State that killed thousands. Between 1991 and 1992, more than 250,000 refugees fled to camps in southern Bangladesh, creating major challenges for the Bangladeshi government. As Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol, it is not legally required to integrate refugees. However, it has allowed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to operate within its borders, managing most camps and assisting with repatriation efforts. In 1993, Bangladesh signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the UNHCR to support this process, but it expired the following year. Afterward, Bangladesh returned to its earlier policy of rejecting integration and began mass deportations, leaving many Rohingya trapped between borders as no country would accept them. Repatriation efforts resumed in 1998, but returnees continued to face harsh conditions and discrimination in Myanmar.<sup>103</sup>

In 2012, communal violence began in the Rakhine state, spurring a renewed wave of Rohingya migration to Bangladesh.<sup>104</sup> Sheikh Hasina placed the blame for the crisis on Myanmar, refusing

97 "Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained," *USA for UNHCR*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, August 22, 2024, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/>.

98 "Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh - Historical Background," *Human Rights Watch*, 2000, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/burma/burm005-01.htm>.

99 *Human Rights Watch*, "Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh - Historical Background."

100 *Human Rights Watch*, "Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh - Historical Background."

101 Abhishek Bhatia et al., "The Rohingya in Cox's Bazar: When the Stateless Seek Refuge," *Health and Human Rights* 20, no. 2 (2018): 105–22, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26542064>.

102 *Human Rights Watch*, "Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh - Historical Background."

103 *Human Rights Watch*, "Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh - Historical Background."

104 Iftekharul Bashar, "New Challenges for Bangladesh," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 4, no. 11 (2012): 10–13, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351100>.



to accept responsibility for the influx of refugees. She stated that the Rohingya were citizens of Myanmar, and therefore it was not Bangladesh's duty to take them in. Hasina also dismissed reports that Bangladeshi border guards were mistreating refugees. The AL-led government argued that Bangladesh was already overpopulated and lacked the capacity to host additional migrants. This position was further reinforced by claims that some of the refugees were Islamist extremists who could pose security risks within the country.<sup>105</sup>

In August 2017, Myanmar's military instigated a campaign of violence in Rakhine State. Massive human rights violations were reported. Thousands were killed. Entire villages were burned to the ground. Ultimately, more than 742,000 people, half of them children, were forced to flee to Bangladesh.<sup>106</sup> This massive influx of refugees forced a change in policy from the government. Sheikh Hasina and the AL began to support the Rohingya. Refugees would be settled into camps and provided short-term assistance through international aid. One camp, Kutupalong-Balu Khali, is the largest refugee settlement in the world. It houses over 600,000 refugees over 13 square kilometers. This makes it one of the most densely populated areas in the



Displaced Rohingya people (Credit: Flickr)

country.<sup>107</sup> Hasina also pushed to relocate refugees to Bhashan Char, a Bangladeshi island 30 kilometers away from the nearest inhabited place. The plan was implemented despite pushback from NGOs and Rohingya leaders. Ultimately, Bhashan Char has provided better humanitarian assistance and protection services than the camps on the mainland. This is due to the camp's remoteness. Being located far away from other camps has made distribution easier and more targeted towards the refugees. Security has also been stronger, as it is harder for weapons and drugs to be smuggled onto the island. However, it is still seen as an

unsustainable relocation place for refugees. It is challenging to reach, and the supply of aid is running out. More importantly, the housing there is susceptible to natural disasters.<sup>108</sup>

In 2023, Bangladesh was struck by Cyclone Mocha. The storm was the most severe to hit the region in years, causing billions of dollars in damage. More importantly, it impacted 930,000 of the nearly one million refugees in Bangladesh.<sup>109</sup> Their camps were destroyed, and most have yet to be repaired. This saw yet another shift in the government's refugee policy. Authorities renewed the push to repatriate the Rohingya back to

105 Albert van Wijngaarden, "Framing the Rohingya before August 2017," *Politicised Humanity?: Tracing Discursive Shifts in Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Stance on the Rohingya Before and After August 2017*, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19598.4>.

106 UNHCR, "Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained,"

107 Ishrat Hossain, "After Humanitarianism: Bangladesh's Evolving Rohingya Policy," *German Institute of Global and Area Studies*, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27059>.

108 Hossain, "After Humanitarianism: Bangladesh's Evolving Rohingya Policy."

109 UNHCR, "Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained."



Myanmar.<sup>110</sup> Border guards began refusing to help refugees. Some have forcibly returned them to Myanmar, a violation of international law. These actions go against non-refoulement, which prohibits returning or transferring anyone to a country where they are at risk of serious human rights violations.<sup>111</sup>

Rohingya refugees continue to seek better treatment in Bangladesh. Conditions within the camps are poor, with refugees living in substandard housing made from bamboo and tarpaulin. A government rule banned permanent structures inside the camps.<sup>112</sup> Many Rohingya cannot afford to buy goods and services. Host communities have increased prices, which leads to conflict between them and the refugees. Many refugees are not granted access to local institutions of higher education. This has left many Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to fall behind on their schooling compared to their peers.<sup>113</sup> Finally, they have substandard health care. Rohingya families have higher

mortality rates and less access to medical care in the camps.<sup>114</sup>

This has created many problems for the Bangladeshi government. A major one is insurgency. Many refugees have been recruited to join armed groups. The armed groups provide payment and better care than what refugees would be receiving in camps. These insurgents are trained in camps in Bangladesh before returning to Myanmar.<sup>115</sup> It is important to note that these groups are stateless. However, Bangladeshi security services have backed them.<sup>116</sup> There is the risk that this insurgency could spread to Bangladesh.

Another problem within the camps is crime. Some refugees that are unable to secure legal employment begin to traffic narcotics.<sup>117</sup> This has led to clashes between rival gangs over control of drug smuggling in the camps.<sup>118</sup> There is no permanent security or law enforcement at the camps. This is why clashes between gangs go on uninterrupted. It has also made the

camps especially dangerous at night, when the aid groups leave.

The last major problem is a lack of financial support for the refugees. The Bangladeshi government has not come up with any plan to provide for the Rohingya. Instead, they rely on international support. 95 percent of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are reliant on humanitarian aid to survive.<sup>119</sup>

110 "Myanmar/Bangladesh: Rohingya Community Facing Gravest Threats Since 2017," *Amnesty International*, October 24, 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/10/myanmar-bangladesh-rohingya-community-facing-gravest-threats-since-2017/>.

111 *Amnesty International*, "Myanmar/Bangladesh: Rohingya Community Facing Gravest Threats Since 2017."

112 Hossain, "After Humanitarianism: Bangladesh's Evolving Rohingya Policy."

113 Diana Wong and Tan Pok Suan, "'Looking for a Life': Rohingya Refugee Migration in the Post-Imperial Age," In *Transnational Flows and Permissive Politics: Ethnographies of Human Mobilities in Asia*, edited by Barak Kalir and Malini Sur, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press): 75–90, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt45kfk8.8>.

114 Bhatia et al., "The Rohingya in Cox's Bazar: When the Stateless Seek Refuge."

115 "Bangladesh/Myanmar: The Dangers of a Rohingya Insurgency," *International Crisis Group*, June 18, 2025, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar-bangladesh/348-bangladeshmyanmar-dangers-rohingya-insurgency>.

116 *International Crisis Group*, "Bangladesh/Myanmar: The Dangers of a Rohingya Insurgency."

117 Bashar, "New Challenges for Bangladesh."

118 Hossain, "After Humanitarianism: Bangladesh's Evolving Rohingya Policy."

119 UNHCR, "Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained."

## CURRENT STATUS

### Student-led Protests and Sheikh Hasina's Resignation

In July 2024, protests erupted against Sheikh Hasina's government. They were led by university students who wanted to abolish quotas in civil service jobs.<sup>120</sup> 18 million young Bangladeshis were unemployed. University graduates faced higher rates of unemployment than those without college degrees.<sup>121</sup> A third of civil service jobs in Bangladesh are reserved for relatives of veterans from the country's war of independence. The vast majority of these quotas were ultimately filled by supporters of Hasina and the AL.<sup>122</sup> There have been claims that Hasina politicized the civil service, firing workers who disagreed.<sup>123</sup> The students claimed that this system was discriminatory and needed to be overhauled.<sup>124</sup> Many claimed that the quota system was killing Bangladesh, that without large reform the country would continue

to suffer. If the quota system was overhauled, perhaps this would then stop Bangladesh's brain drain. Many young people seek jobs abroad once they finish their studies, as they cannot find employment at home.

The students would soon be joined by their professors. This was due to new pension reforms that would reduce their salaries.<sup>125</sup> Initially, the protests were peaceful. This changed after a speech Hasina gave on July 14, 2024. In this speech, she called the protestors "*rajakar*." *Rajakar* is a term used to identify pro-Pakistan collaborators during Bangladesh's war of independence.<sup>126</sup> This speech inflamed tensions, as she had essentially likened the protestors to traitors.

It also sparked repressions from the government, which began to violently crack down on protests. This was seen as a desperate attempt by Hasina to stay in power. The Awami League's armed wing, the Chhatra League, began to attack students with tear gas and live bullets.<sup>127</sup> Hasina

also deployed the Rapid Action Battalion, Bangladesh's army-aligned counterterrorism unit. A unit notorious for extrajudicial killings and torture. This had major implications, as it meant that the government was more than willing to use violence to suppress the protests. They would fire tear gas at crowds of protestors. The army would take this a step further, firing at crowds using live ammunition from light machine guns.<sup>128</sup> During the protests, government forces would kill almost 1,400 people, with 12-13 percent of the casualties being children.<sup>129</sup>

This crackdown saw the protests grow. They became a mass movement against Hasina, who the protestors deemed a dictator.<sup>130</sup> Everyday Bangladeshis were angry at mass corruption, bribery, and nepotism among AL leaders. In response, the AL began cracking down on dissent even more harshly. Any anti-government action, ranging from a post on social media to participation in a protest, was described by AL

120 Anbarasan Ethirajan and Hannah Ritchie, "Bangladesh Protests: What Sparked the Anger That Toppled Sheikh Hasina?" *BBC*, August 6, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cq5xye1d285o>.

121 Ethirajan and Ritchie, "Bangladesh Protests."

122 Tazreena Sajjad, "Bangladesh's Protests Explained," *School of International Service*, American University, August 6, 2024, <https://www.american.edu/sis/news/20240806-bangladesh-protests-explained.cfm>.

123 Fareha Iqtidar Khan, "Bangladesh's Recent Crackdown on Dissent," *Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research*, August 23, 2024, <https://cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics-governance/bangladeshs-recent-crackdown-on-dissent/>.

124 Ethirajan and Ritchie, "Bangladesh Protests."

125 Sajjad, "Bangladesh's Protests Explained."

126 Arif Rashid, "Ten Days in Bangladesh, a Report on the Uprising," *Tempest*, August 11, 2024, <https://tempestmag.org/2024/07/ten-days-in-bangladesh-a-report-on-the-uprising/>.

127 Sajjad, "Bangladesh's Protests Explained."

128 Redwan Ahmed and Hannah Ellis-Petersen, "Bangladesh Student Protests Turn Into 'Mass Movement Against a Dictator,'" *The Guardian*, July 26, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/26/bangladesh-student-protests-mass-movement-against-dictator>.

129 "UN Human Rights Investigation May Support Accountability for Bangladeshi Student Protests Repression." *OHCHR*, February 12, 2025. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2025/02/un-human-rights-investigation-may-support-accountability-bangladeshi-student>.

130 Ahmed and Ellis-Petersen, "Bangladesh Student Protests Turn Into 'Mass Movement Against a Dictator.'"



Protest in Bangladesh 2024 (Credit: Nahidhasan027)

leaders as unpatriotic. Activists and opposition figures were arrested, and any criticism of the government was criminalized.<sup>131</sup> Yet the students remained at the core of these protests. This was due to their willingness to break with the past. The students were raised on stories of the independence struggle, but this narrative had less meaning to them than it did to older generations. It did not matter to them that Hasina and the AL were so integral to Bangladesh's

independence. They associated them with an ignorance of the country's inequality and attributed AL rule to a loss of hope in the country's future.<sup>132</sup>

Protest leaders such as Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud were imprisoned by security forces.<sup>133</sup> Yet this did not deter them, and the protests continued. This led to the army's chief general, Waker-uz-Zaman, refusing to support Hasina and government forces.<sup>134</sup> The combination of this loss of army

support and the continuing protests compelled Hasina to resign on August 5, 2024.<sup>135</sup> She fled to India, which has offered her sanctuary.

Hasina's resignation was met with shock.<sup>136</sup> However, the violence did not stop. Police, fearing retribution, went on strike. Mobs rampaged across the country, seeking vengeance against the AL and its leaders.<sup>137</sup> This ended when Muhammad Yunus and his interim government were sworn in on August 6. Notable protest leaders like Islam and Mahmud were named in Yunus' interim cabinet.<sup>138</sup> Yet the question remained: what to do with Hasina?

The Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal issued an arrest warrant for Hasina on October 17, 2024. The warrant said that Hasina oversaw "massacres, killings, and crimes against humanity" during the anti-government protests.<sup>139</sup> She was ordered to return to Bangladesh by November 18 to face her charges. Hasina fled to India, which has an extradition agreement with Bangladesh.<sup>140</sup> As such, the tribunal requested that Hasina be extradited to Bangladesh. However, she has refused to abide by this order and remains in India to this

131 Sajjad, "Bangladesh's Protests Explained."

132 Aniruddha Ghosal, "How a Young Generation in Bangladesh Forced PM Sheikh Hasina Out of Power." *AP News*, August 12, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/sheikh-hasina-bangladesh-students-gen-z-protests-2723012c6177c2feafd1e81c20c68309>.

133 Mujib Mashal, Saif Hasnat, and Atul Loke, "Where Students Run the Streets: Bangladesh in Limbo," *The New York Times*, August 13, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/13/world/asia/bangladesh-students-protests.html>.

134 "Around 1,500 Killed in Bangladesh Protests That Ousted PM Hasina." *Reuters*, November 17, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/around-1500-killed-bangladesh-protests-that-ousted-pm-hasina-2024-11-17/>.

135 Ethirajan and Ritchie, "Bangladesh Protests."

136 Ghosal, "How a Young Generation in Bangladesh Forced PM Sheikh Hasina Out of Power."

137 Julhas Alam, "Students in Bangladesh Forced Out the Country's Leader a Month Ago. Where Do Things Stand Now?" *AP News*, September 5, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/bangladesh-student-protests-hasina-yunus-what-now-cb3b0e6a651084f265fbb93dd55530ee>.

138 Mashal, Hasnat, and Loke. "Where Students Run the Streets: Bangladesh in Limbo."

139 *Human Rights Watch*. "Bangladesh: Arrest Warrant for Sheikh Hasina," October 23, 2024. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/10/22/bangladesh-arrest-warrant-sheikh-hasina>.

140 *Human Rights Watch*, "Bangladesh: Arrest Warrant for Sheikh Hasina,"



day.<sup>141</sup> This did not stop the trial from beginning, albeit in absentia. It started on June 1, 2025, with courtroom proceedings shown on national television.<sup>142</sup>

There are questions over the trial's impartiality. Critics of the trial, like Hasina, believe it is politically motivated. She and the AL have publicly criticized the tribunal and prosecution over their ties to political parties, especially Jamaat-e-Islami.<sup>143</sup> Hasina has long been opposed to Jamaat-e-Islami. JeI is a fundamentalist Islamic party that sided with Pakistan during Bangladesh's war of independence. The party was officially banned in 2013 due to claims that its Islamist nature conflicts with Bangladesh's secular constitution.<sup>144</sup> This long history of conflict between JeI and Hasina has led her allies to claim that the trial is a sham. They believe JeI is using it as a way to get back at Hasina and that her charges are false. However, the tribunal that has charged Hasina also tried many JeI politicians over their involvement in the war.<sup>145</sup>

However, those in favor of the trial believe it is a just case. Hasina, per the charges, is directly

responsible for ordering the crackdowns against the protests. Her actions led to mass killings, injuries, targeted violence against women and children, and the torture of prisoners.<sup>146</sup> The tribunal has vowed to hold an impartial trial. They claim that the trial is "a commitment to the principle that, in a democratic country, there is no room for crimes against humanity."<sup>147</sup>

On July 10, 2025, Hasina was formally charged with crimes against humanity. She has continued to ignore formal requests for her extradition. As such, the trial continues in absentia. Her interior minister, Asaduzzaman Khan, and police chief, Chowdhury Abdullah al-Mamun, were also charged with crimes against humanity. While Hasina has been indicted, a verdict has not yet been reached. The trial remains ongoing, and its outcome remains to be seen. Nonetheless, if Hasina is found guilty, the trial will have major ramifications for Bangladesh. A guilty verdict would ban the AL from participating in elections. This paves the way for an expected BNP victory, but a new student-led party aims to challenge them. The current interim leader,

Muhammad Yunus, is not expected to take part in these elections but held political ambitions in the past. It is entirely possible that he could create his own party, but that seems unlikely. For the moment, Bangladesh remains at a crossroads, and there is much still to be seen.<sup>148</sup>

## Establishment of the Interim Government

Following Sheikh Hasina's fall, leaders of the student protests met with Bangladeshi president Mohammad Shahabuddin and military leaders to determine how to proceed. The students refused to allow for a military government. Instead, the students demanded that Nobel-winning economist Muhammad Yunus be appointed head of the interim government.<sup>149</sup> The students wanted Yunus for several reasons. First, Yunus had been a vocal critic of the Hasina regime for many years. Additionally, Yunus had a reputation for advocating for the poor.<sup>150</sup> Yunus earned this reputation because he pioneered "microcredit," which were small loans given to poor entrepreneurs who would not be

141 Alex Berry, "Bangladesh: Exiled Ex-PM Sheikh Hasina on Trial," *DW*, June 2, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/bangladesh-exiled-ex-pm-sheikh-hasina-on-trial/a-72751308>.

142 Julhas Alam, "Bangladesh Opens Trial of Deposed ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," *AP News*, June 1, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/bangladesh-hasina-trial-crimes-humanity-e5ccb5ce4c340e86b0ecac7d9d98893f>.

143 Alam, "Bangladesh Opens Trial of Deposed ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina."

144 "Bangladesh: Islamic Party Banned From Taking Part in 2014 Election," *The New York Times*, August 2, 2013, <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/02/world/asia/bangladesh-islamic-party-banned-from-taking-part-in-2014-election.html>.

145 Alam, "Bangladesh Opens Trial of Deposed Ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina."

146 Alam, "Bangladesh Opens Trial of Deposed Ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina."

147 Berry, "Bangladesh: Exiled Ex-PM Sheikh Hasina on Trial."

148 Hannah Ellis-Petersen, "Bangladesh's Ousted Sheikh Hasina Charged With Crimes Against Humanity," *The Guardian*, July 10, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jul/10/bangladesh-ousted-sheikh-hasina-charged-with-crimes-against-humanity>.

149 Samira Hussain and Flora Drury, "Yunus Sworn in as Interim Bangladesh Leader," *BBC*, August 8, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clyg7we8xvno>.

150 Sheikh Saaliq and Julhas Alam, "Who is Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Who'll Head Bangladesh's Interim Government?" *AP News*, August 6, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/bangladesh-protests-interim-government-mohammad-yunus-160a493f4fde9c0505d6a10325bd5383>.

able to get a typical loan.<sup>151</sup> Yunus won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for his work with microcredits, which the Nobel Foundation claims was highly effective at lifting people out of poverty.<sup>152</sup>

The Hasina regime investigated Yunus several times, accusing him of various crimes, including illegal debt collection practices and violating government retirement regulations.<sup>153</sup> In June of 2024, Yunus was indicted by a Bangladeshi court for embezzling over USD two million from welfare funds and money laundering.<sup>154</sup> Yunus denied all wrongdoing and was acquitted one day before being sworn in to his position. Yunus's supporters claim that all of his charges were phony and politically motivated due to his opposition to Hasina.<sup>155</sup> To begin the process of reforming the country, Yunus created six commissions, each tasked with enacting reform in the following areas: elections, police administration, the judiciary, civil service, anti-corruption, and most

notably, the constitution.<sup>156</sup> Each of these commissions has unique and important responsibilities that are necessary in addressing the current crisis.

Yunus formed the Constitution Reform Commission (CRC) to draft a constitution for Bangladesh.<sup>157</sup> The current constitution of Bangladesh has been in place since 1972.<sup>158</sup> Under this constitution, the interim government is unconstitutional.<sup>159</sup> While the current constitution used to allow for an interim or caretaker government during extreme times, the Hasina regime abolished the interim government system in 2011. This means that only elected governments could rule in Bangladesh.<sup>160</sup> Following Hasina's resignation, Bangladeshi president Mohammad Shahabuddin dissolved parliament.<sup>161</sup> While the president can dissolve parliament, the Bangladeshi constitution states that the country must hold new parliamentary elections within 90 days.<sup>162</sup> Those elections have not

happened yet. These violations of the constitution amount to sedition under the current law.<sup>163</sup> This creates a legal limbo for the current interim government and CRC as they navigate reform.

The CRC seeks major reforms to the constitution but does not aim to abolish it entirely. Its proposal focuses on five main goals: revising the constitution's fundamental principles, protecting democratic institutions, limiting the power of the Prime Minister, expanding fundamental rights, and defining the transition from the interim government to a permanent republic. The CRC also recommends restoring constitutional provisions that outline the structure and role of an interim government.<sup>164</sup> The interim government will have to carefully consider what steps to take to address the concerns brought up by the CRC.

The interim government has undertaken the process of reforming the electoral system. Under the

151 Saaliq and Alam, "Who is Muhammad Yunus."

152 "Nobel Peace Prize 2006," *The Nobel Prize*, Nobel Foundation, accessed July 17, 2025, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2006/summary/>.

153 Saaliq and Alam, "Who is Muhammad Yunus."

154 Ruma Paul, "Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus Indicted in Bangladesh Embezzlement Case," *Reuters*, June 12, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nobel-laureate-muhammad-yunus-indicted-bangladesh-embezzlement-case-2024-06-12/>.

155 Saaliq and Alam, "Who is Muhammad Yunus;" "Muhammad Yunus Takes Oath as Head of Bangladesh's Interim Government," *Al Jazeera*, August 8, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/8/muhammad-yunus-takes-oath-as-head-of-bangladeshs-interim-government>

156 "Govt to Form Commissions to Reform 6 Key Sectors: Yunus," *The Daily Star*, September 11, 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/govt-form-commissions-reform-6-key-sectors-yunus-3700471>.

157 Mamun Abdullah, "Profile of Chair, Members of Constitution Reform Commission," *Dhaka Tribune*, October 23, 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/362827/profile-of-chair-members-of-constitution-reform>.

158 Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, pmbl., <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367.html>.

159 Emran Hossain Shaikh, "Interim Govt: What the Law Says," *Dhaka Tribune*, August 7, 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/parliament/353947/interim-govt-what-the-law-says>.

160 Shaikh, "Interim Govt."

161 Redwan Ahmed, "Bangladesh Parliament Dissolved a Day After Resignation of Prime Minister," *The Guardian*, August 6, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/bangladesh-student-protesters-to-meet-with-army-chief-after-pm-resigns>.

162 Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, pt. V, art. 72, ch. 1, <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367/section-24626.html>.

163 Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, pt. I, art. 7A, <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367/section-41503.html>.

164 Ali Riaz et al., "Summary of Recommendations of the Constitution Reform Committee," (Constitution Reform Commission, Dhaka, 2025), [https://crc.legislative.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/crc.legislative.gov.bd/page/6df4dace\\_ebe3\\_4500\\_9061\\_865fead98018/2025-02-22-11-20-1d7141a3f13ce7353d13c0223ef65b40.pdf](https://crc.legislative.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/crc.legislative.gov.bd/page/6df4dace_ebe3_4500_9061_865fead98018/2025-02-22-11-20-1d7141a3f13ce7353d13c0223ef65b40.pdf).

current constitution, elections should have taken place in or before November of 2024 (i.e., 90 days after the president dissolved parliament), but the interim government has scheduled elections for 2026.<sup>165</sup> The main reason for the delay is the interim government has sought to enact major electoral reforms. The goal of these reforms is to prevent electoral fraud, which was common under Hasina.<sup>166</sup> Yunus created the Election Commission (EC) to promote higher turnout and reduce voter fraud.<sup>167</sup> The main challenge has been correcting and updating voter registration lists.<sup>168</sup> Hasina's regime added false names and removed eligible voters from the lists. As a result, many eligible voters cannot vote, and election officials could easily engage in electoral fraud.<sup>169</sup> The delay in elections has caused tension between the interim government and the BNP. The BNP was the main opposition during Hasina's tenure. The BNP has been calling for the interim government to hold elections as soon as possible since Yunus first took over.<sup>170</sup>

However, Yunus has repeated that the government could hold elections sooner depending on how fast the EC can implement reforms and obtain the necessary materials for the election.<sup>171</sup> The interim government will have to balance having elections as soon and as free and fair as possible.

The final major area of reform for the interim government has been police reform. Yunus created the Police Reform Commission (PRC) to reduce police violence, restore public trust in the police, and get politics out of law enforcement. There are many accusations of the

*The police in Bangladesh historically have been a tool for political repression.*

police using violence and excessive force.<sup>172</sup> This was especially true during the 2024 student protests, when law enforcement killed over 1,400 people.<sup>173</sup> After Hasina fled,

civilians attacked police stations, burning them down and killing over 40 police officers. In total, riots affected around 450 police stations across the country. Due to the violence, senior police officials instructed all officers to remain home.<sup>174</sup> While the worst of the violence against police forces has ended, people still engage in regular attacks against police forces.<sup>175</sup> The PRC released 108 recommendations for reforming the police in January 2025. The PRC's main recommendations are: creating an independent commission to oversee the police, establishing new use of force protocols to reduce police violence, engaging the police in local communities, and prosecuting officers responsible for protestor deaths during the 2024 student protests.<sup>176</sup> Overall, there are many possible options for police reform that the interim government can consider, but they must find a way to restore public trust in the police.

165 Kieran Burke, "Bangladesh to Hold General Election in April 2026," *DW*, June 6, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/bangladesh-to-hold-general-election-in-april-2026/a-72827543>.

166 Diaa Hadid, "Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus is Returning to Bangladesh to Lead Interim Government," *NPR*, August 7, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/08/07/g-s1-15844/bangladesh-muhammad-yunus-new-government>.

167 *The Daily Star*, "Govt to Form Commissions to Reform 6 Key Sectors."

168 "Bangladesh Plans to Hold Elections in Late 2025 or Early 2026," *Al Jazeera*, December 16, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/16/bangladesh-plans-to-hold-elections-in-late-2025-or-early-2026>.

169 *Al Jazeera*, "Bangladesh Plans to Hold Elections in Late 2025 or Early 2026."

170 Hadid, "Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus is Returning to Bangladesh to Lead Interim Government."

171 Rabiul Alam, "Bangladesh Gears up for National Elections Amid Tensions," *The Hindu*, June 25, 2025, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bangladesh-gears-up-for-national-elections-amid-tensions/article69734902.ece>.

172 Gwyn Lewis and Stefan Liller, "Why Police Transformation is Critical for Bangladesh," *The Daily Star*, November 9, 2024, [https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/why-police-transformation-critical-bangladesh-3748626?fbclid=IwY2xjawGeasRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHWMmWZaa4-Tca9CGCFSgls1ae10TbkpUyAkvTWhoOz\\_ZrrBSD08CKBh2yQ\\_aem\\_xyF95ESaz0xSzZnoRJaK8Q](https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/why-police-transformation-critical-bangladesh-3748626?fbclid=IwY2xjawGeasRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHWMmWZaa4-Tca9CGCFSgls1ae10TbkpUyAkvTWhoOz_ZrrBSD08CKBh2yQ_aem_xyF95ESaz0xSzZnoRJaK8Q).

173 Saqlain Rizve, "Is Bangladesh's Police Force Functional Again?" *The Diplomat*, June 25, 2025, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/06/is-bangladeshs-police-force-functional-again/>.

174 Mehedi Hasan Marof and Saqlain Rizve, "Can the Bangladesh Police Recover?" *The Diplomat*, August 20, 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/08/can-the-bangladesh-police-recover/>.

175 Rizve, "Is Bangladesh's Police Force Functional Again?"

176 Mamun Abdullah, "What's in the Police Reform Commission's Sweeping Overhaul Plan?" *Dhaka Tribune*, January 23, 2025, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/371583/what%E2%80%99s-in-the-police-reform-commission%E2%80%99s-sweeping>.



## Current Relations with India and Pakistan

India has long been one of Bangladesh's closest allies. This was especially true when Sheikh Hasina was in power. It is believed that India played a substantial role in helping her return to power in 2007. They also continued to back her during her three terms in power. India saw Hasina as the only politician that could keep Bangladesh out of fundamentalist hands. They viewed a BNP-led Bangladesh as a threat to their national security. This resulted in any BNP overtures to India being rejected to keep Hasina on side.<sup>177</sup>

However, relations between India and Bangladesh have cooled since Hasina's resignation in August 2024. One reason is the prospect of upcoming elections. India is worried that the BNP could win these elections whenever they are held. With the BNP being historically hostile to India, they worry about them moving Bangladesh to a more Islam-centered country. When in power, they sought closer ties with other Muslim countries. This has led to India believing that a pro-

Indian regime in Bangladesh is vital to their national and strategic interests.<sup>178</sup> They worry that a BNP regime would lead to persecution of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh. However, India has begun to reach out to BNP leaders.<sup>179</sup> Multiple BNP leaders have begun advocating for stronger ties with India as well.<sup>180</sup> As such, fears about a BNP government have been waning in India but nonetheless remain present.

Another reason for a decline in relations has been an increase in violence against Hindus in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has seen a surge in anti-AL sentiment following Hasina's resignation. Most of this anger has been taken out on Hindus due to their historical support of the Awami League.<sup>181</sup> India has been deeply concerned by these attacks, with the welfare of Hindus in the region a top priority. They claim that the interim government has allowed "a pattern of systematic persecution" of Bangladeshi Hindus.<sup>182</sup> Bangladesh's government has denied targeting minorities. They claim most incidents are either ordinary crimes or politically motivated. Furthermore, they deny any responsibility and blame it on rogue

actors who are not associated with the government.

Sheikh Hasina's current residence in India has also caused problems. She currently lives in government-provided housing in New Delhi. However, Hasina has been charged with crimes against humanity. Bangladesh has requested that Hasina be extradited there from India to stand trial. The two countries have an extradition treaty, yet India has not responded to Bangladesh's request. This has angered many Bangladeshis. They believe that India is sheltering Hasina and is actively refusing to send her back to face justice.<sup>183</sup>

Another main issue has been trade between the two countries. This began with Muhammad Yunus' visit to China in April 2025. During this visit, Yunus called Bangladesh "the only guardian of the ocean" for India's landlocked northeast. He also suggested that the region could become "an extension of the Chinese economy."<sup>184</sup> These comments angered many Indians. They felt that Yunus was threatening India and inviting China to take over its economy. A few days after these comments were made, India announced the withdrawal of Bangladeshi access

177 Neville Lazarus, "Sheikh Hasina: India Walks Tightrope Harboring Deposed Bangladeshi Prime Minister." Sky News. March 5, 2025. <https://news.sky.com/story/sheikh-hasina-india-walks-a-tightrope-harboring-deposed-bangladeshi-prime-minister-13322078>.

178 Khandakar Tahmid Rejwan, "Why India Is So Concerned About Bangladesh's Political Problems."

179 Rushali Saha, "Navigating New Realities in India-Bangladesh Ties." March 4, 2025. Lowy Institute. <https://www.loyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/navigating-new-realities-india-bangladesh-ties>.

180 "BNP in Bangladesh Rethinking Relationship With India, Focuses on Party's Important Standing in Place of Ousted Awami League and National Interest," accessed August 20, 2025, Tripurainfo DOT Com. <https://tripurainfo.com/EnglishNews.aspx?intnid=1461&title=BNP-in-Bangladesh-rethinking-relationship-with-India-focuses-on-party%E2%80%99s-important-standing-in-place-of-ousted-Awami-League-and-national-interest>.

181 Rushali Saha, "Navigating New Realities in India-Bangladesh Ties."

182 Anbarasan Ethirajan, "Businesses Count Costs as India, Bangladesh Impose Trade Restrictions," *BBC News*, May 1, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g2y1yg8r2o>.

183 Lazarus, "Sheikh Hasina: India Walks Tightrope Harboring Deposed Bangladeshi Prime Minister."

184 Ethirajan, "Businesses Count Costs as India, Bangladesh Impose Trade Restrictions."

to a transshipment facility. The facility, located in India, allowed Bangladesh to route export cargo more efficiently due to their limited infrastructure. This was a major hit to Bangladesh's economy. It coincided with the announcement of American tariffs on Bangladeshi imports.<sup>185</sup> As a result, Bangladesh restricted land imports of cotton yarn from India.<sup>186</sup> This was done to protect local industries from cheaper imports. It was also an attempt to mitigate the losses from the withdrawal of the facility.

The impact of these tit-for-tat policies has been felt in both countries. The closing of the transshipment facility forces Bangladesh to ship its exports by sea rather than by air. This means that shipments will be slower and serves as a major blow to Bangladesh's garment export industry. Indian manufacturers have also called for a ban on land imports of Bangladeshi garments. As a result, Bangladesh could refuse India access to its ports and waterways. India uses them to transport goods to its northeast.<sup>187</sup>

This decline in relations with India has come as Bangladesh has grown closer to Pakistan. Relations between the two countries have been strained since the Bangladeshi



Prime Minister of Bangladesh and President of India (Credit: President's Secretariat)

War of Independence.<sup>188</sup> However, under Yunus, there have been some attempts at reconciliation with Pakistan. He has met with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif twice since taking office. This set the stage for the resumption of diplomatic talks on April 18, 2025, marking the end of a 15-year hiatus.<sup>189</sup> This comes as their economic ties have strengthened. Direct trading between Bangladesh and Pakistan began soon after Hasina's resignation.<sup>190</sup> This was the first time it had ever happened since

Bangladesh's independence. As a result, Pakistani cargo ships arrived at Chittagong, Bangladesh's major port, in late 2024.<sup>191</sup> Direct flights between Bangladesh and Pakistan, closed since 2018, resumed in February 2025.<sup>192</sup> Overall, bilateral trade between the two has improved by 27 percent over the past year.<sup>193</sup>

Bangladesh and Pakistan have also improved their defense relations. This began in January 2025, when a Bangladeshi military delegation visited Pakistan. While there, they held talks with the country's army

185 Sudha Ramachandran, "Bangladesh Pokes India in the Eye; Delhi Hits Back," *The Diplomat*, April 17, 2025, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/04/bangladesh-pokes-india-in-the-eye-delhi-hits-back/>.

186 Ethirajan, "Businesses Count Costs as India, Bangladesh Impose Trade Restrictions."

187 Ethirajan, "Businesses Count Costs as India, Bangladesh Impose Trade Restrictions."

188 "The Dimming of Bangladesh-India Relations."

189 Julhas Alam, "Bangladesh and Pakistan Resume Talks After 15 Years, Seek to Mend Strained Ties," *AP News*, April 18, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/bangladesh-pakistan-relations-hasina-yunus-35e94c930f3de5a058658520d15331c1>.

190 Waleed Nasir, "India Takes Notice as Pakistan and Bangladesh Strengthen Ties," *New Lines Magazine*, May 20, 2025, <https://newlinesmag.com/spotlight/india-takes-notice-as-pakistan-and-bangladesh-strengthen-ties/>.

191 Saqlain Rizve, "The Revival of Bangladesh-Pakistan Ties," February 3, 2025. Lowy Institute. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/revival-bangladesh-pakistan-ties>.

192 "The Dimming of Bangladesh-India Relations."

193 Saqlain Rizve, "The Revival of Bangladesh-Pakistan Ties."

chief over how to increase ties.<sup>194</sup> Bangladesh's navy took part in a Pakistan-organized multinational maritime exercise the next month. They have also expressed interest in buying JF-17 Thunder fighter jets from Pakistan.<sup>195</sup> The jet has been jointly developed by Pakistan and China. Buying these jets would help modernize the Bangladeshi military. However, it would have regional ramifications. Acquiring JF-17s would further strengthen ties with Pakistan but also reinforce Bangladesh's ties to China. A trilateral relationship between the three countries would fuel security concerns in India.<sup>196</sup> A bilateral increase in military ties would also

worry India, given its longstanding rivalry with Pakistan.

Despite this, Bangladesh remains deeply entangled with India. India was Bangladesh's second-largest trading partner in 2024, and the two countries share a 2,500-mile border. India still considers its relationship with Bangladesh as "not hostile."<sup>197</sup> Bangladesh still has many concerns with Pakistan. Pakistan has continued to refuse to apologize for atrocities committed during the Bangladeshi War of Independence. Bangladesh also claims that Pakistan owes them USD 4.5 billion for what it sees as a share of its pre-1971 assets.<sup>198</sup> This complicates their relationship. It is clear that Bangladesh-Pakistan

relations are improving, yet much work remains to be done.

Overall, the interim government has overseen a shift in foreign relations. Ties with India have worsened, although the two continue to cooperate on a high level.<sup>199</sup> Continuing the trade conflict could worsen relations further. At the same time, Bangladesh has warmed to Pakistan. It is unclear whether this rapprochement has been done to get back at India, or part of a longer-term realignment. However, the interim government must manage relations with both states. Doing so is key to ensuring the survival of Bangladesh's economy and its continued security.

## BLOC ANALYSIS

### Points of Division

There are several key points of contention between the members of Bangladesh's interim government. First, cabinet members have differing opinions on the speed of holding elections. Currently, elections are slated to be held in April 2026. Some cabinet members argue that this is too soon, and Bangladesh lacks the stability to hold successful elections. Others feel this is too late and that elections

should be sooner than April. Reconciling these views will be key to ensuring a smooth electoral process and upholding Bangladesh's democracy.

Second, there are different viewpoints on ways to tackle human rights issues in Bangladesh. This primary division relates to the two main issues facing Bangladesh. Some members advocate for a more nationalist approach. Their focus is on issues that impact Bangladeshi citizens more, namely violence and

economic inequality. They see the Rohingya as Myanmar's problem. However, they are willing to address the issue once the others are handled. Other members believe in a two-pronged solution. They want to tackle both issues simultaneously. The continued flow of Rohingya migrants into the country is an issue that cannot be ignored. As such, they should allocate resources equally between this and more domestic issues. It is important that the cabinet come to an agreement

<sup>194</sup> Alam, "Bangladesh and Pakistan Resume Talks After 15 Years, Seek to Mend Strained Ties."

<sup>195</sup> Saqlain Rizve, "The Revival of Bangladesh-Pakistan Ties."

<sup>196</sup> Nasir, "India Takes Notice as Pakistan and Bangladesh Strengthen Ties."

<sup>197</sup> Nasir, "India Takes Notice as Pakistan and Bangladesh Strengthen Ties."

<sup>198</sup> Nasir, "India Takes Notice as Pakistan and Bangladesh Strengthen Ties."

<sup>199</sup> Nasir, "India Takes Notice as Pakistan and Bangladesh Strengthen Ties."



on how to address such a pressing issue.

Third, members of the government disagree on foreign policy. Some members stress the importance of continuing strong relations with India. India has been a close ally of Bangladesh since its independence. These members seek to keep that relationship strong, knowing that close ties will lead to benefits in trade and power production. Other members believe in reforming Bangladeshi foreign policy. Close ties with India were cultivated under Sheikh Hasina's regime. Continuing with this would mark a continuation of Hasina's policies, which were unpopular. Also factoring into this is Hasina's current residence in India. Many of these members are unhappy with what they perceive as India's harboring of a fugitive. As such, they welcome the Yunus government's recent overtures to Pakistan and China. They believe Pakistan could be a better ally than India. However, with the long history of enmity between the two, it remains to be seen if such a relationship could be successful long-term. Either way, their choices in foreign policy could have serious regional ramifications. As such, the interim government must carefully decide which direction will be the most beneficial.

Lastly, there is the issue of Bangladesh's economic plans. Some members of the government believe that microfinance is the best way

to move forward. It will equalize the Bangladeshi economy and serve all of its people, not just a select few. Others are wary about the use of microfinance. They think the Bangladeshi economy was growing sufficiently under Hasina's regime and are hesitant to rock the boat.

It is important to note that this government is only interim. It will serve Bangladesh until new elections are held. Its members are wide-ranging. Interim ministers include student leaders involved in the protests that toppled Hasina, government officials with years of experience, and a Nobel Prize winner. Delegates must grapple with the important task of reaching consensus on many complex issues despite holding vastly different viewpoints. It is through debate and compromise that Bangladesh's future will be shaped. It relies on the ability to bridge divides and form compromises. Only through this can a path towards prosperity and stability be charted.

## Reformers

The Reformers are Yunus's closest allies and generally support his agenda. The number one priority of this bloc is to preserve the interim government while implementing needed reforms. Yunus has made it clear that he wants the interim government to enact major reforms.<sup>200</sup> While this bloc does want the interim government to undertake serious changes, they

are also concerned with balancing the arguments of other factions in Bangladesh, who claim that an elected government should take on the task of reform. This bloc will aim to reform enough of Bangladesh's political system that a free and fair election can take place, and the new government will start on solid footing. However, they want to take on these reforms in a timely manner to hold elections as soon as possible.

This is the largest bloc in the interim government. Most of the members in this bloc hold positions relating to finance. One of Yunus's closest allies will likely be Interim Minister of Finance Salehuddin Ahmed, as they share a similar background and ideology. Another close ally of Yunus will be Nurjahan Begum, as they have a long history of collaboration.<sup>201</sup>

## Internationalists

This bloc is mainly concerned with upholding Bangladesh's sovereignty. They seek to promote Bangladesh's image around the world. As a result, this bloc will be the most conservative. These members are more likely to believe that the interim government is not responsible for reforms. They believe it is only responsible for setting up elections. Many in this bloc would go so far as to argue that the interim government does not have the right to enact major reforms. This is because they

<sup>200</sup> *The Daily Star*, "Govt to Form Commissions to Reform 6 Key Sectors."

<sup>201</sup> "Inside the Interim Govt: Key Members Leading Bangladesh's Transition," *Dhaka Tribune*, August 8, 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/354135/inside-the-interim-govt-key-members-leading>.

were not elected by the people.<sup>202</sup> These members want to bring the election date forward. They believe this will strengthen Bangladesh's image worldwide and allow a newly elected government to take on these reforms. In turn, that will attract foreign investment and boost Bangladesh's economy. It will also prevent intervention from neighboring countries. Furthermore, members of this bloc will be less inclined to help the Rohingya refugees. They argue that accommodating the Rohingya will destabilize Bangladesh. They think the refugees threaten Bangladeshi sovereignty. As such, they should be returned to Myanmar.<sup>203</sup>

This bloc is mainly composed of ministers in defense- and security-oriented positions. This includes Interim Secretary of Defense Ashraf Uddin and National Security Advisor and Chief Advisor on the Rohingya Issue Khalilur Rahman. The military has grown impatient with Yunus over the pace of elections. The chief of the army argued for the government to hold elections by the end of 2025.<sup>204</sup> Due to their roles in the military, members of this bloc may be more loyal to the whims of the army rather than Yunus, and they are also more likely to favor strengthening Bangladeshi security

and sovereignty at all costs. This creates a potentially dangerous situation with this bloc, where they may not be particularly loyal to the interim government of which they are members.

## Human Rights Crusaders

The human rights crusaders represent the most progressive wing of Yunus' interim government. They arose following the student protests that toppled Hasina in 2024 but also include experienced activists. The protests of 2024 were widely seen as a Gen Z revolution spurred on by young Bangladeshis angry at years of stagnation.<sup>205</sup> However, there are other organizations in Bangladesh that have been fighting for reform for years.<sup>206</sup>

Members of this bloc believe that elections should be held sooner than April 2026. Some have their own electoral aspirations. One member, Asif Mahmud, is aligned with the newly formed National Citizens Party (NCP). The NCP was founded by student activists like Nahid Islam, a former advisor in the interim government.<sup>207</sup> It seeks to shake up Bangladesh's traditional two-party system. Another key member of the bloc

is Sharmeen Murshid, the Advisor for Social Welfare, Women, and Children's Affairs. Murshid has years of experience advocating for women's rights in Bangladesh.<sup>208</sup>

Overall, the Human Rights Crusaders bloc believes in action. The Rohingya refugees must be supported, but other domestic issues must be handled as well. Elections should be held as soon as possible. They will pursue legislation that takes a clear, progressive stance against the previous regime. Their main priorities are tackling the big issues, hoping to provide lasting change for a country that they feel desperately needs it.

202 Alam, "Bangladesh Gears up for National Elections Amid Tensions."

203 Sujan, "Why the Future of Bangladesh's Muhammad Yunus Administration is Uncertain."

204 Sujan, "Why the Future of Bangladesh's Muhammad Yunus Administration is Uncertain."

205 Ruma Paul, Krishn Kaushik, Devjyot Ghoshal, and Krishna N. Das. 2024. "Insight: Bangladesh Student Protesters Eye New Party to Cement Their Revolution." *Reuters*, August 16, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladesh-student-protesters-plan-new-party-cement-their-revolution-2024-08-16/>.

206 "30 Years of Striving to Establish Human Rights | Asian Network for Free Elections." Asian Network for Free Elections | Advancing Electoral Democracy in Asia. October 10, 2024. <https://anfrel.org/30-years-of-striving-to-establish-human-rights/>.

207 "Bangladesh Students Who Deposed PM Hasina Form Party to Fight Elections." *Al Jazeera*, February 28, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/28/bangladesh-students-who-deposed-pm-hasina-form-party-to-fight-elections>.

208 "Sharmeen Murshid: Bangladesh Has Become a Land of Cowards." *Dhaka Tribune*, March 8, 2025. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/375763/sharmeen-murshid-bangladesh-has-become-a-land-of>.

## COMMITTEE MISSION

Since Bangladesh gained independence in 1971, it has been plagued by periods of instability and unrest. The country has dealt with weak democratic institutions that have enabled dictators and military leaders to take charge. Sheikh Hasina's reign was only the latest in a long line of authoritarian leaders in Bangladesh's history. Bangladesh needs political and economic stability. It is up to the interim government to help establish a functional democracy. To do so, it must lift its people out of poverty and hold free and fair elections.

All of this takes place in the shadow of Sheikh Hasina. Delegates must find a way to bring Hasina and those who enabled her to justice. Delegates must also deal with Hasina's former supporters, who may threaten national unity and challenge the prospect of democratic elections. The abuses of the Hasina regime caused many Bangladeshis to sour on the Awami League. However, large numbers of everyday people still support the AL as the party that led the way to independence.

The interim government has nearly unlimited power. The interim government currently operates outside the constitution.

This means that they are not bound by the constitution, nor are they bound by any other body or institution. Though, delegates should be careful how much of that power they use. Delegates will need to decide what the responsibility of the interim government is. In doing so, they must also choose what they will leave to the next elected government.

The student protests of 2024 made one thing clear. The people of Bangladesh, particularly young people, demand a voice. The students who stood up against the military and Sheikh Hasina put their faith and their future in the hands of Muhammad Yunus and his government.<sup>209</sup> The interim government must repay that faith by providing all people of Bangladesh, young and old, with a future they can be hopeful for. This is no easy task. The interim government has only a brief time to create a democratic framework that will resist authoritarianism. Countless people have tried to establish such a democracy in Bangladesh, and all of them to this point have fallen short. This interim government was meant to assemble the brightest minds of the country to succeed where so many others have failed. The entire country is watching. They are counting on

the delegates in this committee to deliver them the future they protested, fought, and died for.

<sup>209</sup> Samira Hussain and Flora Drury, "Yunus Sworn in as Interim Bangladesh Leader," *BBC*, August 8, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clyg7we8xvno>.



## COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

### Adviser for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change: Rizwana Hasan

Rizwana Hasan has plenty of experience working for environmental causes. She is the chief executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Agency (BELA) and is on the board of the South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics.<sup>210</sup> Hasan also won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2009 for her advocacy about the dangers of ship breaking.<sup>211</sup> She is responsible for Bangladesh's environmental policies. One of her main plans has been to institute water use guidelines, which would regulate groundwater extraction.<sup>212</sup>

### Adviser for Finance: Salehuddin Ahmed

Sahlehuddin Ahmed worked as the 9th governor of the Bangladesh

Bank from 2005 to 2009 and also worked in the civil service.<sup>213</sup> As such, he was more than qualified for the position of interim finance minister. Ahmed controls Bangladesh's financial policies and institutions. However, he has faced criticism for two major reasons. The first is his decision to directly assume control of revenue management, which has been seen as executive capture of that sector.<sup>214</sup> The second comes from what critics perceive as his prioritization of Bangladesh's international standing over addressing domestic issues.<sup>215</sup>

### Adviser for Foreign Affairs: Md. Touhid Hossain

This is Md. Touhid Hossain's second time as the head of Bangladesh's foreign ministry. He previously served as Bangladesh's foreign secretary from 2006 to 2009.<sup>216</sup> In this role, Hossain oversees Bangladesh's foreign

affairs and policy. Hossain has led Bangladesh's attempts to extradite Sheikh Hasina.<sup>217</sup> He favors good ties with India, but based on mutual respect.<sup>218</sup> If this is not met, he is more than willing to grow closer to Pakistan.

### Adviser for Health and Family Welfare: Nurjahan Begum

Nurjahan Begum has worked with Yunus for many years. She has long been involved with Grameen Bank and served as its acting director after Yunus left it in 2011.<sup>219</sup> As such, she is considered one of Yunus' closest allies in the interim government. Begum's role grants her control over health policies. She has backed the construction of more hospitals but has faced criticism over delays at care facilities.<sup>220</sup>

210 "Inside the Interim Govt: Key Members Leading Bangladesh's Transition."

211 "Rizwana Hasan - Goldman Environmental Prize." Goldman Environmental Prize. June 8, 2023. <https://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/rizwana-hasan/#recipient-bio>.

212 "Industrial Water Policy Nears Finalisation: Rizwana Hasan." The Financial Express. July 21, 2025. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/industrial-water-policy-nears-finalisation-rizwana-hasan>.

213 "Inside the Interim Govt: Key Members Leading Bangladesh's Transition."

214 "Division of NBR Was Not Done Properly: Debapriya Bhattacharya." Prothomalo. May 19, 2025. <https://en.prothomalo.com/business/local/h5d3jejmp>.

215 "Criticism of Government Tarnishes Country's Image Abroad: Finance Advisor." bdnews24.com, May 23, 2025. <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/41d4adb9cd7e>.

216 "Inside the Interim Govt: Key Members Leading Bangladesh's Transition."

217 "Bangladesh Seeks Extradition of Ousted Leader Sheikh Hasina From India." *Voice of America*, December 23, 2024. <https://www.voanews.com/a/bangladesh-seeks-extradition-of-ousted-leader-sheikh-hasina-from-india-/7911141.html>.

218 "Foreign Adviser: Dhaka Always Wanted a Good Working Relationship With Delhi." *Dhaka Tribune*, July 24, 2025. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/387296/foreign-adviser-dhaka-always-wanted-a-good>.

219 "Inside the Interim Govt: Key Members Leading Bangladesh's Transition." *Dhaka Tribune*, August 8, 2024. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/354135/inside-the-interim-govt-key-members-leading>.

220 "Health Adviser Visits Proposed 500-bed Hospital Site in Patiya | News." April 26, 2025. BSS. <https://www.bssnews.net/news/267103>.

## Adviser for Home Affairs: Jahangir Alam Chowdhury

Jahangir Alam Chowdhury is a former three-star general in the Bangladesh Army. He directed the Bangladesh Rifles, the country's border guard. This experience led him to be picked as the Interim Minister of Home Affairs, which grants him control of domestic security. Chowdhury has taken a relatively hardline stance as minister. He has vowed to bring those involved in mob violence to justice.<sup>221</sup> However, he has also said that many innocent people were wrongfully accused in cases revolving around the July Uprising and is working to ensure these cases are dismissed.<sup>222</sup>

## Adviser for Industries: Adilur Rahman Khan

Before his appointment, Adilur Rahman Khan was the founder and CEO of Odhikar, Bangladesh's largest human rights organization.<sup>223</sup> He also has government experience,

having worked as a Deputy Attorney General from 2005 to 2007.<sup>224</sup> Khan has said that the interim government is actively working to protect human rights.<sup>225</sup> His portfolio leaves him in charge of housing regulation and construction, as well as developing new policies for expanding Bangladesh's industrial sector. One of his major plans is to create employment opportunities through expanding small and medium enterprises.<sup>226</sup>

## Adviser for Labor and Employment: M. Sakhawat Hussein

M. Sakhawat Hussein has extensive experience across both the military and civil sectors. Hussein was a brigadier general in the Bangladeshi Army. He also served on the country's election commission from 2007 to 2012.<sup>227</sup> As Minister of Labor and Employment, Hussein is responsible for protecting workers' interests. He has advocated for the establishment of a new government department

responsible for helping job seekers find employment.<sup>228</sup>

## Adviser for Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs: Asif Nazrul

Asif Nazrul is one of Bangladesh's leading civil society activists and a professor of law at the University of Dhaka. He has served on the board of South Asians for Human Rights, a regional NGO that works to promote human rights.<sup>229</sup> As Interim Minister of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, Nazrul oversees the rule of law. He has sought to implement legal reforms to protect human rights and wants to create a Human Rights Commission.<sup>230</sup>

## Adviser for Local Government and Rural Development: Asif Mahmud

Asif Mahmud is the youngest member of the interim

221 "No One Involved in Mob Violence Will Be Spared: Bangladesh Home Adviser." Asia News Network. July 7, 2025. <https://asianews.network/no-one-involved-in-mob-violence-will-be-spared-bangladesh-home-adviser/>.

222 "Jahangir: Many Innocents Wrongly Accused in July Uprising Cases." *Dhaka Tribune*, July 27, 2025. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/387525/jahangir-many-innocents-charged-in-july-uprising>.

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224 "The Daily Star Web Edition Vol. 5 Num 1048," *The Daily Star*, May 14, 2007, <https://archive.thedailystar.net/2006/2007/05/14/d70514061983.htm>.

225 "Adilur: Govt Working to Protect Human Rights," *Dhaka Tribune*, February 11, 2025, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/373433/adviser-adilur-interim-govt-working-to-protect>.

226 "Govt working to make SMEs more active: Adviser Adilur," *The Business Standard*, September 24, 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/govt-working-make-smes-more-active-adviser-adilur-950526>.

227 "Inside the Interim Govt: Key Members Leading Bangladesh's Transition."

228 "Govt moves to establish new department for job creating: Sakhawat," *The Business Standard*, June 14, 2025, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/govt-moves-establish-new-department-job-creating-sakhawat-1164506>.

229 "Inside the Interim Govt: Key Members Leading Bangladesh's Transition."

230 "Asif Nazrul: Human Rights Must Be Cultivated as a Culture," *Dhaka Tribune*, July 26, 2025. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/387416/professor-asif-nazrul-human-rights-must-be>.

government at age 26.<sup>231</sup> Before his appointment, Mahmud was one of the leaders of the student protests that overthrew Sheikh Hasina. Mahmud was appointed to the interim government in August 2024, initially as Adviser for Labor and Unemployment.<sup>232</sup> He was then reassigned to his current position in November. As Interim Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Mahmud oversees Bangladesh's rural policies. More importantly, he is tasked with controlling elections and the administration of cities and municipalities. While in favor of holding elections early, he has declared the matter as one of national consensus and has hinted that local elections may be held first.<sup>233</sup>

### Adviser for Planning: Wahiduddin Mahmud

As Adviser for Planning, Wahiduddin Mahmud oversees large government projects and Bangladesh's census. A renowned economist, he was previously

on the Board of Directors of the Bangladesh Bank for over 15 years. He was a member of the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP).<sup>234</sup> Mahmud has expressed strong views on what falls under the government's responsibilities. Most recently, he spoke in favor of the repatriation of Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar. He cited concerns that Bangladesh does not have enough capacity to help them in the form of land and jobs.<sup>235</sup> His main goals currently involve bank reform and following through with Bangladesh's Eighth Five-Year Plan (FYP) on sustainable development.<sup>236</sup>

### Adviser for Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources: Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan has played a major role in building up Bangladesh's infrastructure in both the private and public sectors. He founded the Infrastructure Development Company Limited

(IDCOL) and consulted for the World Bank.<sup>237</sup> He also served as Minister of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources from 2007 to 2009. Now, he has returned to the government and already taken steps to improve access to energy in Bangladesh. His main goal is to create a more sustainable and reliable power grid across the country, moving away from fossil fuels.<sup>238</sup> He also wants to lower costs by reviewing government contracts and reducing spending on energy that will not go to the people.<sup>239</sup> Khan has not shied away from the spotlight and has made his goals clear to the public.

### Adviser for Social Welfare: Sharmeen Murshid

Sharmeen Mursheed is the CEO of Brotee, a human rights organization that works for the rights of Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups in Bangladesh.<sup>240</sup> She was involved in the 2024 protests, criticizing the government's violent response.<sup>241</sup>

231 Muntakim Saad and Rafiul Islam. "From Students to Youngest-ever Advisers," *The Daily Star*, August 9, 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/students-youngest-ever-advisers-3672836>.

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Once appointed as Chief Adviser, Yunus appointed Mursheed as Interim Minister of Women, Child Affairs, and Social Welfare. In this role, she oversees policies that promote the well-being of women, children, and disadvantaged groups. She has been outspoken about gender-based violence in the country and has created a quick-response team to deal with repression against women.<sup>242</sup>

### **Adviser of Cultural Affairs: Mostofa Sarwar Farooki**

Mostofa Sarwar Farooki was a film director and producer before he was appointed as Minister of Cultural Affairs. He was originally hesitant to work for the government. But he was tempted by the chance to bring lasting positive change to Bangladesh.<sup>243</sup> However, there was some backlash when he was appointed. Student protests took place in November and called him an “autocratic ally” with connections to Sheikh Hasina.<sup>244</sup> Farooki seeks to celebrate Bangladesh’s heritage and democratic spirit as part of its history. He has also expressed interest in promoting the Shilpakala

Academy, an institute of fine arts under the government.<sup>245</sup>

### **Chief Adviser: Muhammad Yunus**

Muhammad Yunus is the current head of the Bangladeshi government. Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize after founding the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to expand access to credit and loans for the lower classes.<sup>246</sup> As Chief Adviser, Yunus aims to restore public trust in Bangladeshi democracy. Yunus has been ambitious with his agenda to reform the government to ensure long-term stability, but he has faced vocal resistance.<sup>247</sup> Yunus wields tremendous power as the architect of the caretaker government, and he is determined to use it to improve the lives of Bangladesh’s people.

### **Director General of the National Security Intelligence: Abu Mohammad Sarwar Farid**

Abu Mohammad Sarwar Farid is a major general in the Bangladesh Army. He was appointed Director

General of Bangladesh’s National Security Intelligence (NSI) agency on August 13, 2024.<sup>248</sup> This gives him control over intelligence gathering and counterterrorism efforts. As such, he will have a crucial role to play in handling issues such as the Rohingya refugee crisis and the country’s foreign policy orientation.

### **Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority: Ashik Chowdhury**

The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) oversees business in Bangladesh. It approves projects and offers benefits from the government to businesses to promote activity in the country.<sup>249</sup> As Executive Chairman, Ashik Chowdhury’s job is to keep Bangladesh on track to grow its economy. His background is in private banking, and he briefly worked as an advisor at the Grameen Telecom Trust.<sup>250</sup> As a public official with a private banking background, Chowdhury aims to promote cooperation between the two sectors for long-term growth.

242 “Sharmeen Murshid: Govt to Deploy Quick Response Team to Deal With Women Repression,” *Dhaka Tribune*, July 3, 2025, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/government-affairs/385490/govt.-to-deploy-quick-response-team-to-deal-with>.

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## National Security Adviser: Khalilur Rahman

Khalilur Rahman is a career public servant. He joined the Bangladesh Civil Service in 1979 and earned his PhD in economics from Harvard University. He worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before joining the United Nations.<sup>251</sup> He served as a Senior Advisor to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Rahman now serves as an advisor to Muhammad Yunus on issues of national security. As High Representative, he also provides input on how to respond to the flow of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh.<sup>252</sup> This includes managing aid and monitoring conditions in refugee camps. These roles grant Rahman the authority of a Special Assistant to the Chief Advisor, a new position created by Yunus.<sup>253</sup>

## Principal Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goals Affairs: Lamiya Morshed

Lamiya Morshed has worked with Muhammad Yunus for over 30 years. She first joined him at the Grameen Bank in 1994, and she later served as Executive Director of the Yunus Center.<sup>254</sup> Now, her position is roughly equivalent to a Senior Secretary in the Yunus government. Morshed was appointed one week into Yunus' term. She oversees the country's progression to a more sustainable future in line with the UN SDGs.<sup>255</sup> Some of her top priorities are to improve the country's economic strength, as well as the quality of life and financial stability of the average citizen.

## Secretary of Defense: Md. Ashraf Uddin

Md. Ashraf Uddin has experience working in government at all levels. He served as the Deputy Commissioner of the Gaibandha District and helped manage its

response to floods in 2015.<sup>256</sup> He was also director general of the Department of Environment (DoE) in 2022. However, during that time, the DoE faced charges of taking bribes.<sup>257</sup> As Secretary of Defense, Uddin has been active in listening to the public. He has hosted multiple workshops with other ministries to plan government responses to all types of crises, not just military.<sup>258</sup> His main goals will be to manage the military budget and ensure the army is well-prepared in the event of war.

## Senior Secretary of Public Administration: Md. Mokhlesur Rahman

Md. Mokhlesur Rahman is a Harvard-educated businessman. He worked in Bangladesh's civil service before being appointed as the Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration in August 2024.<sup>259</sup> In this role, Rahman oversees the management of public administration. This means that he plays a large role in implementing government policies and managing public programs. Rahman has been accused of corruption, and a government committee has

251 "Dr Khalilur Rahman made High Representative to CA," *Bonik Barta*, November 19, 2024, <https://en.bonikbarta.com/bangladesh/bTnX0jNkeWS1F0Rp>.

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257 "Money can open every DoE door," *The Daily Star*, January 6, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/money-can-open-every-doe-door-2933331?amp>.

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259 Md Maruf Adnan Sami. "Mokhlesur New Secy to Public Administration Ministry | JonotarSomoy English." *JonotarSomoy English*. August 28, 2024. <https://jonotarsomoy.com/en/2024/08/28/mokhlesur-new-secy-to-public-administration-ministry/>.

been formed to investigate this.<sup>260</sup> However, he still remains in office pending the investigation's results.

### **Adviser for Commerce: Sheikh Bashir Uddin**

Sheikh Bashir Uddin is the managing director of the AkijBashir Group, founded by his father, Sheikh Akij Uddin.<sup>261</sup> AkijBashir Group is a conglomerate, a large parent company that owns and funds 18 other businesses.<sup>262</sup> Uddin was named Businessperson of the Year at the Bangladesh Business Awards in 2023. His experience and focus on business ethics will be vital to carrying out fair trade as Minister of Commerce.<sup>263</sup> However, it remains to be seen if his company's needs will conflict with his position.

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<sup>260</sup> "Probe Formed Into Public Admin Secretary Graft Allegations." *bdnews24*, October 3, 2024. <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/9e35871e711f>.

<sup>261</sup> "Business person of the year 2023: Sk Bashir Uddin, managing director of AkijBashir Group," *The Daily Star*, October 8, 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/business-person-the-year-2023-sk-bashir-uddin-managing-director-akijbashir-group-3722861>.

<sup>262</sup> "About - AkijBashir Group," AkijBashir Group, accessed August 21, 2025, <https://akijbashir.com/about/>.

<sup>263</sup> "Business person of the year 2023: Sk Bashir Uddin, managing director of AkijBashir Group,"



## RESEARCH AND PREPARATION QUESTIONS

The following research and preparation questions are meant to help you begin your research on your country's policy. These questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

### Topic A

1. How can the interim government handle Sheikh Hasina's trial in a way that follows due process and avoids perceptions of political retribution while also pursuing her extradition from India?
2. What measures can the interim government take to organize credible elections without rushing the process or compromising transparency?
3. What steps can be implemented to guarantee that all political parties can participate freely and fairly in upcoming elections?
4. How can the interim government continue supporting Rohingya refugees despite limited housing, resources, and infrastructure?
5. With regional alliances shifting, particularly with India and Pakistan, how should Bangladesh's interim government reassess its foreign policy priorities?
6. In what ways can the government balance the protection and growth of domestic industries with the need to attract foreign investment?

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

### Topic A

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