

Islamic Identity Politics and the Ummah in Foreign Policy: Evidence from Bangladesh in the Global South

Md. Akmal Hossain*

Department of Political Science, National University Bangladesh, Bangladesh

Muhammad Mahmudur Rahman

Department of Political Science, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi 6205, Bangladesh.

To cite this article with APA style:

Hossain, Md.A. and Rahman, M.M. (2026). Islamic Identity Politics and the Ummah in Foreign Policy: Evidence from Bangladesh in the Global South. *Journal of Asian Wisdom and Islamic Behavior*, 4(1), 13-32.

ARTICLE INFO

Submitted:
6 November 2025

Received:
10 December 2025

Revised:
21 January 2026

Accepted:
18 March 2026

Available online:
27 March 2026

ABSTRACT

This article examines how “Islamic identity politics”, grounded in the concept of the “*ummah*”, influences the foreign policy formulation of Bangladesh within the context of the Global South of Muslim-majority countries. Islamic identity politics is conceptualized as the strategic mobilization of Islamic norms, symbols, and transnational solidarities by political actors to frame and legitimize foreign policy decisions. Based on secondary sources—including journal articles, books, official statements of political parties, diplomatic records, and party manifestos—it employs the interpretive process-tracing and thematic discourse analysis to identify the mechanisms by which Islamic identity becomes embedded in foreign policy formulation. Focusing on Bangladesh’s foreign relations with Pakistan and diplomatic posture toward Palestine-Israel, and other Muslim-majority countries, the findings of this article introduce the concept of “instrumentalized ummah solidarity”. Islamic identity emerges not as a deterministic driver but as a mediated political resource operating through three interrelated pathways: a normative pathway that frames moral solidarity, an instrumental pathway that serves domestic and international legitimation, and a structural pathway that embeds Islam within constitutional and institutional practices. The article offers identity-based foreign policy analysis by integrating religious transnationalism with strategic rationality, offering a framework for comparative research on Muslim-majority states in the Global South.

Keywords: *Islamic Identity Politics, Ummah Solidarity, Muslim-Majority, Bangladesh Foreign Policy, Global South*

Introduction

Bangladesh adopted a constitution including four “state principles”: Bengali nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism (Constitution of Bangladesh, Articles 8-12). Bengali nationalism includes people who speak Bangla. It also includes the nation’s spirit, cultural issues, devotional traditions, and humanist aspirations (Van Schendel, 2020). However, this Bengali nationalism excludes other nations living in the plainlands and hill tracts across the country. According to the Constitution of Bangladesh, socialism means establishing a just and egalitarian society. However, after the fall of the Sheikh Mujib regime at the hands of his military officers, socialism was reinterpreted in the constitution as “economic and social justice” (The Constitution of Bangladesh, 1972; Khan, 2022).

* Corresponding author: Akmal10th.du@gmail.com

Regarding democracy, four principles are included. They are: protecting the fundamental rights of citizens, ensuring freedom and respect for dignity, and, finally, maintaining the worth of human people. It also ensures the right to democratic participation in politics and administration (Constitution of Bangladesh, 1972). According to the interpretation, secularism means freedom of religion and religious practice, regardless of any religion, and a non-preference for any specific religion in state policies. However, critics argue that secularism was adopted and imposed from “above” without considering the country’s social, religious, and cultural values and traditions. Even, secularism was not a guiding principle like democracy and Bengali nationalism of the historic war of liberation against Pakistan in 1971 (Islam & Islam, 2018). The reason is that Bangladeshi society is highly influenced by religion. As a result, the country is deeply influenced by religion, not only in its domestic politics but also in its foreign relations and policies, which presents a paradox for many thinkers when considering the constitution and social fabric. This illustrates how religion influences the country’s diplomatic relations (Hashmi, 2022).

It also highlights that the role and influence of religion in domestic and global politics is not a new phenomenon; politicians and political machines have used religion for political purposes throughout history. For religious reasons, the world has seen numerous deadly wars (Tilly, 2003). The Crusades are among the most significant events in medieval history (Perry, 2012). The political actions of various religious groups and organizations, how governments handle religion, and the impact of religion on society at large can be understood through distinct dimensions. Thus, religion influences everything in politics (Fox, 2018). Consequently, the foreign policy of a particular country is expected to be influenced by religion. Foreign policy refers to the strategic choices a state makes to manage its relationships with other nations, where religion can act as both a moral compass and a source of legitimacy (McKay & Whitehouse, 2015; Fox, 2018). Understanding this perspective is crucial for comprehending the foreign policy of Third-World Muslim countries. While Islam contributes to domestic political legitimacy and electoral competition (Hossain, 2024, Hassan, 2023), this study examines how Islamic identity is strategically mobilized as a political resource to shape foreign policy decisions under certain conditions.

In recent years, there has been a growing scholarly interest in understanding the significance of religion in the foreign policy of both Western and non-Western states. Secular paradigms have historically dominated international relations and foreign policy studies, particularly in Western academia (Fox & Sandler, 2004). However, academics are increasingly recognizing that religion plays a significant role in shaping political identities, social norms, and state action in many parts of the world (Haynes, 2013; Thomas, 2005). This shift in academic discourse acknowledges that religion can significantly influence various issues in international relations, including economic agreements, humanitarian initiatives, and diplomatic ties. In countries like Bangladesh, this means that foreign relations—especially with other Muslim-majority countries—are often viewed not only in terms of strategic interests but also through shared religious values and a sense of solidarity within the global Muslim community, or *ummah* (Hasan, 2020).

Scholars of global politics and foreign policy experts emphasize the growing importance of religion in foreign policy-making processes, both in Western and non-Western countries. For example, Baumgartner et al. (2008) investigated the influence of religion on US foreign policy toward the Middle East. According to their study, most evangelicals support American Middle East policy despite public support declining regarding the wars. Besides, their study shows that evangelical Christian’s support Israel and view Islam negatively. Taydas et al. analyze the role of religion in U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East during the Barack Obama administration (Taydas et al., 2012). Leo Ribuffo (1998) identifies the four-level connection between religion and the foreign policy of the USA. Other studies show how religion influences the foreign policies of various countries (Glazier, 2013; Martini, 2015; Isani & Silverman, 2016). Mannan (2018), for instance, examines the relationships between Bangladesh and Pakistan, as well as between

Bangladesh and India, during the BNP alliance regime. His study reveals that BNP, being anti-Indian, means pro-Islamic, maintains foreign relations with India and Pakistan as Hindu-India and Muslim-Pakistan, respectively (Mannan, 2018). Mohapatra's (2022) insights demonstrate how religion influences the foreign policy of India and the USA from a comparative perspective. While many studies explore the relationship between religion and foreign policy, this research fills a gap by examining how Islamic identity politics serve as a strategic political and diplomatic tool in shaping foreign policy in the Global South, specifically in reference to Bangladesh.

This article analyzes identity politics through the lens of religious norms and the concept of *ummah*, examining how they shape Bangladesh's foreign policy discourse. It examines how political actors employ Islamic identity narratives in diplomatic communication and foreign-policy justification. In this context, the *ummah* serves as a transnational symbolic reference that links religious identity to political legitimacy and foreign policy rhetoric in the Global South. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to examine how Islamic identity and values are articulated and politically mobilized within Bangladesh's foreign policy discourse. Rather than assuming causal outcomes, the study investigates the discursive and strategic role of religious identity in shaping foreign relations. The analysis draws on historical and contemporary diplomatic practices, policy orientations, and foreign policy communication to explore how religion and national identity intersect in state policy. This study contributes to theoretical debates on religion and international relations by highlighting how Islamic identity operates as a structured political resource within foreign policy discourse, particularly in Muslim-majority democratic settings such as Bangladesh, thereby enriching discussions on religion, identity politics, and global diplomacy (Ahmed, 2014; Wohab & Serpa, 2021).

Methods

This study employs a qualitative single-case study design to examine how Islamic identity shapes Bangladesh's foreign policy behaviour. The research adopts an interpretive analytical approach, focusing specifically on the political mobilization of Islamic identity and the concept of the *ummah* in foreign policy discourse and decision-making. The Bangladesh case study is historically bounded, covering the period from independence in 1971 to 2024, thereby enabling analysis of continuity and change across different political regimes. The study relies primarily on authoritative documentary sources. These include official government statements, parliamentary debates, foreign ministry publications, party manifestos, diplomatic communiqués, and archival policy records. These primary materials are supplemented by peer-reviewed academic literature and reputable news sources to contextualize policy developments and political discourse. The emphasis throughout remains on Islamic identity rather than religion in general, to maintain conceptual precision. The analytical scope spans the period from Bangladesh's independence in 1971 to 2024, enabling the observation of long-term trends and shifts across various political regimes. For analytical depth, four substantive domains are examined: Bangladesh's engagement with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); its relations with Muslim-majority states in the Middle East; its diplomatic positioning toward India and Pakistan; and its stance on the Israel–Palestine conflict. These cases were selected because they reflect varying configurations of Islamic solidarity, geopolitical strategy, and economic interests.

Methodologically, the study applies process tracing within the case study framework to identify key policy decisions, diplomatic turning points, and discursive shifts that demonstrate how Islamic identity is articulated and mobilized in foreign policy. The identity politics framework guides the analysis, focusing on (1) discursive framing in terms of Islamic solidarity or the *ummah*, (2) policy alignment or divergence with Islamic normative references, and (3) interaction effects between Islamic identity, regime ideology, and strategic considerations. Data are presented thematically, linking documentary evidence to specific foreign policy episodes to demonstrate patterns of identity mobilization across time. Triangulation of multiple documentary sources

is employed to enhance reliability, while acknowledging the limitations inherent in document-based research. Future research may incorporate elite interviews or primary fieldwork to further strengthen empirical depth.

Literature Review

In comparative politics and international relations, Islamic identity politics has emerged as a structure for understanding how religious symbols, narratives, and solidarities are mobilized within formal political competition and statecraft. Instead of viewing Islam as a static cultural context, scholars regard Islamic identity as a political asset that elites can strategically leverage to establish legitimacy, forge coalitions, and shape policy decisions (Riaz, 2006). This methodology differentiates between societal religiosity and organized Islamism, emphasizing that the prevalence of Islamic belief does not inherently result in Islamist governance. In numerous Muslim-majority countries, political figures who do not adhere to Islamist doctrine strategically utilize Islamic references, especially during electoral competition or diplomatic realignment (Jahan, 2015). This scholarship serves as a crucial foundation for examining Bangladesh, where Islamic references pervade political discourse despite the lack of enduring Islamist control in governance (Riaz, 2016; Ahmad, 2016).

The concept of ummah, integral to Islamic identity politics, is defined in classical Islamic thought as a transnational moral community of believers that transcends territorial boundaries. Although the emergence of the modern nation-state divided this ideal into sovereign entities, the ummah has preserved both symbolic and institutional importance. Current research indicates that the ummah operates both as a normative construct and as a foundation for intergovernmental collaboration among Muslim-majority nations. The establishment of pan-Islamic collaboration via the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation exemplifies the translation of this ethical principle into diplomatic action. However, the literature warns against idealizing Muslim unity: geopolitical rivalries, sectarian conflicts, and governmental interests often mediate or limit appeals to ummah solidarity (Eidoo et al., 2022). The analytical task is to explain when and how such appeals influence specific foreign-policy actions.

Identity-centric frameworks in international relations theory provide a connection between religious concepts and foreign policy analysis. Constructivist scholarship posits that state interests are not externally determined but are socially constructed through intersubjective meanings and collective identities. From this vantage point, religion can shape foreign policy by delineating acceptable behavior, legitimate partnerships, and ethical responsibilities. Hurd (2007) illustrates that the classification of “political Islam” is shaped by secular presuppositions within Western foreign-policy discourse, consequently affecting diplomatic relations. Collectively, these theoretical contributions demonstrate that religion is neither merely a byproduct nor a determining factor; instead, it functions within wider normative and strategic frameworks. In Muslim-majority nations of the Global South, Islamic identity may serve as both a fundamental aspect of national self-conception and a versatile diplomatic tool (Aboi, 2024).

Recent literature elucidates various mechanisms by which Islamic identity and ummah solidarity influence foreign policy processes, building upon these conceptual insights (Khan, 2022). Initially, rhetorical signaling allows leaders to articulate international stances—such as backing for Palestine—in terminology that resonates with domestic audiences. Secondly, institutional alignment via participation in Islamic multilateral forums facilitates both symbolic endorsement and tangible collaboration. Third, constituency management prompts regimes to utilize Islamic narratives to reinforce domestic legitimacy. Ultimately, transnational influences—spanning diasporic networks to media-fueled mobilization—can generate reputational motivations for states to express solidarity with Muslim causes (Fox, 2018; Cesari, 2004). These mechanisms fundamentally function through mediation: strategic, economic, and security factors determine

the timing and manner of Islamic identity invocation.

Bangladesh presents a notably illustrative case for analyzing these dynamics. Following the tumultuous rupture of 1971 (Raghavan, 2013; Van Schendel, 2020; Lewis, 2011), the state initially defined a secular constitutional identity rooted in Bengali nationalism (Jahan, 1973). Early international diplomatic challenges, such as the delayed recognition from numerous Muslim-majority nations, necessitated pragmatic engagement with the Islamic world. The 1974 accession to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation marked a significant diplomatic shift, indicating solidarity with Muslim nations and fostering improved recognition and economic relations (Ahmad, 2020). Subsequent financial assistance and labor-market connections with Gulf states bolstered the material motivations driving Islamic diplomatic engagement (Ahmad et al., 2004). The empirical evidence demonstrates that religious symbolism and economic pragmatism frequently function together rather than in conflict.

Domestic political changes further entrenched Islamic references in foreign policy discourse. Under Ziaur Rahman, the emergence of “Bangladeshi nationalism” integrated Islamic components into the national ideology while maintaining a formally pluralistic political framework (Franda, 1981; Ahmad, 2016). Subsequent constitutional amendments during Hussain Muhammad Ershad’s tenure established Islam as the state religion, thereby integrating religious identity more explicitly into the constitutional framework. Even during later civilian administrations, Islamic framing has operated more as a flexible repertoire than as a strict doctrinal commitment. Persistent demonstrations of solidarity with Palestine and involvement in Islamic multilateral diplomacy coexist with pragmatic participation in peacekeeping, climate negotiations, and South–South cooperation (Ahasan, 2017). This pattern underscores the notion that Islamic identity is strategically utilized in accordance with broader tactical considerations.

The literature collectively identifies three fundamental propositions pertinent to this study. Initially, Islamic identity politics in Bangladesh serves a primarily instrumental purpose: various regimes, both civilian and military, have utilized religious rhetoric to bolster domestic legitimacy and improve international stature (Hossain, 2024). Secondly, ummah solidarity functions as a mediated normative resource rather than a deterministic policy driver, influencing rhetoric and institutional engagement while being constrained by international geopolitical and financial limitations. Third, Bangladesh’s status within the Global South intersects with its Islamic identity, resulting in a hybrid foreign policy that amalgamates moral narratives with strategic rationality. These propositions underscore the necessity for meticulous empirical examination of the translation of religious discourse into diplomatic conduct within particular domains, such as relations with Pakistan and the Israel–Palestine conflict. This study integrates constructivist insights with evidence from Bangladesh to propose an identity-informed and strategically mindful perspective on foreign policy in Muslim-majority contexts.

We used and conceptualized the Islam-based identity politics and ummah to explain their influence on the foreign relations of Bangladesh as a case study in the context of Muslim majority countries. Several conceptual explanations exist for analyzing the formulation and practice of foreign policy among nations. These include realism, liberalism, constructivism, and post-structuralism. Regarding the decision-making process, three levels of analysis can be identified: the individual, the state, and the systemic levels (Grieco et al., 2022). However, these mainstream frameworks are less commonly used to explain how religion and religious values influence a state’s foreign policy formulation and practice. To fill that gap, some scholars have developed alternative conceptual approaches that explain how and why states deploy religion in their external conduct.

One such approach treats identity politics—rooted in culture and civilization—as central to understanding why states take particular sides in international conflicts, a perspective famously associated with Samuel P. Huntington (Huntington, 1993). A related concept, particularly relevant for Muslim-majority states, is the idea of solidarity politics grounded in the notion of the ummah.

These two conceptual lenses are useful for analyzing how religion and religion-based national identity shape the foreign policies of Muslim-majority countries like Bangladesh.

Islamic identity can play a pivotal, strategic role in foreign policy. It operates as an element of social customs and legitimacy; as a signifier that can overshadow domestic cleavages; and as a field where states negotiate external roles and commitments. The literature synthesizes constructivist IR theory, processes of politicized Islam, and broader academic debate to show that states and political elites often capitalize on “Islam” through multiple techniques. Much research demonstrates that Islamic identity is constructed via social values and through state priorities and rhetorical strategies (Iqbal, 2021; Yu, 2021; Rognifard, 2021; Akbarzadeh & Barry, 2016; Hadzikadunic, 2022). Identity is commonly defined in this scholarship as a set of values and boundaries organized around self–other relations. “Islamic identity” typically coincides with salient symbols, boundary markers, and customs (Salim, 2020; Hadzikadunic, 2022). Moreover, foreign policy is often treated as a means of identity negotiation—not merely as an outcome of identity but as a mechanism that drives deeper exploration and reconfiguration of identity politics (Hintz, 2016; Hintz, 2018).

Scholars identify several mechanisms through which Islamic identity influences foreign policy (see Table 1). First, the normative compass: faith-based identity supplies moral vocabularies—justice, solidarity, anti-oppression—that frame policies on issues such as Palestine, Bosnia, or responses to the War on Terror (Yu, 2021; Rognifard, 2021; Akbarzadeh & Barry, 2016; Hadzikadunic, 2022). Second, discursive framing and legitimation: leaders employ frames drawn from Islamic civilizational language to justify or contest policies (for example, debates over interventions or “moderate” versus “civilizational” renditions of Islam). Cases discussed in the literature include responses to conflicts and leaders’ appeals to humanitarian or moderate Islam (Karisma & Rachmawati, 2025; Salim, 2020; Ubaedillah et al., 2022; Naim & Mokodenseho, 2023). Third, domestic–foreign linkage: external appeals to forms of Islam (Ottoman Islamism, pan-Islamism, “moderate Islam”) are frequently instrumentalized to mitigate domestic identity contestation and to consolidate hegemony at home (Alwan & Khudair, 2020; Faheem et al., 2021; Rognifard, 2021; Hintz, 2016; Hintz, 2018; Ms, 2020). Finally, role performance describes how states adopt public roles—guardian of the ummah, advocate of a moderate model, exporter of a revolutionary ideology—that structure both rhetoric and policy choices (Yu, 2021; Rigiderakhshan, 2020; Rognifard, 2021; Akbarzadeh & Barry, 2016; Hadzikadunic, 2022).

Table 1.

Key Dimensions in Islamic Identity–Foreign Policy Frameworks. Compiled by the Authors

Dimension	Guiding Question	Typical Islamic-identity Content	Sources
Ontological	Who are “we”?	Ummah, Sunni/Shi’i, “moderate Islam”, revolutionary vanguard	(Yu, 2021; Rigiderakhshan, 2020; Rognifard, 2021; Akbarzadeh & Barry, 2016)
Instrumental	What do we want?	Solidarity with Muslims, da’wah, regime legitimation, economic gain	(Karisma & Rachmawati, 2025; Damayanti & Hasan, 2024; Faheem et al., 2021; Aswar & Rakhmat, 2023; Hadžikadunić, 2022)
Discursive	How is ‘Islam’ talked about?	Inclusive civilizational, moderate, revolutionary, Ottomanist	(Iqbal, 2021; Salim, 2020; Naim & Mokodenseho, 2023; Rognifard, 2021; Hintz, 2018)
Arena	Where is identity contested?	Domestic vs. external projection	(Alwan & Khudair, 2020; Hintz, 2016; Hintz, 2018; Ms, 2020; Ahmad, 2025)

A comparative glance shows variation in how Islamic identity and the ummah shape the external relations of Muslim-majority states. In Pakistan and Indonesia, for instance, Islam has

been used diplomatically to secure positive ties with other Muslim states and to manage security risks (Iqbal, 2021; Karisma & Rachmawati, 2025; Faheem et al., 2021). Conversely, processes of Islamization in foreign policy can produce domestic competition and new identity formations, observable in recent developments in Turkey and Malaysia (Yu, 2021; Alwan & Khudair, 2020; Roknifard, 2021; Hintz, 2016; Hintz, 2018). In the Middle East, Islamic identity also structures the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia: institutionalized identity configurations (revolutionary Shi'ism versus Wahhabi monarchy) produce distinct, often oppositional foreign policy postures—status-quo challenging versus more conservative doctrines (Rigiderakhshan, 2020; Munareto, 2025; Akbarzadeh & Barry, 2016; Hadzikadunic, 2022). Across cases, common objectives emerge in which Islamic identity is fused with foreign policy goals: the establishment of norms, validation of preferences, role-claiming, and signalling of nation-centric identities. In short, Islam functions neither as the sole determinant nor merely as a background factor; rather, it is a convenient and effective repertoire for interpreting interests, legitimating choices, and transmitting desired national identities (Dale & James, 2018).

This article adopts identity politics combined with the Islamic notion of the ummah as its analytical (conceptual) framework. Identity politics denotes the mobilisation of political claims, preferences, and actions around shared identity attributes—religion, ethnicity, or culture—to assert group rights, defend values, or shape policy (Heywood, 2023). In foreign policy terms, identity politics structures perceptions of allies and adversaries, legitimates policy choices, and constrains action. The ummah—the theological and sociopolitical idea of a global Muslim community—operates as a transnational identity marker capable of creating normative obligations and strategic opportunities for Muslim-majority states. For these states, appeals to the ummah may carry both moral force and practical advantages.

Building on scholarship that connects religion and foreign policy (Fox, 2018; Thomas, 2005; Huntington, 1993), the framework employed here posits three analytical pathways through which religious identity shapes Bangladesh's external relations: (1) the normative pathway—religious values shape policy priorities and moral claims; (2) the instrumental pathway—political elites use religious identity to bolster domestic legitimacy or to mobilise support for external actions (Khanam, 2008); and (3) the structural pathway—constitutional and institutional provisions (for example, recognition of Islam as state religion) which embed religion into the legal and bureaucratic foundations of foreign policy orientation. These pathways allow systematic linkage between religious identity and observable foreign policy outcomes and explain variation where religion may be dominant in some contexts but subordinate to strategic or economic imperatives in others.

The analytical framework, therefore, centers identity politics and the ummah, showing how political leaders can frame Bangladesh's international engagement as part of a broader commitment to Muslim interests worldwide. As Hasan (2020) observes, the ummah is a non-Western Islamic concept with deep theological and historical roots that resonates across ideological spectrums. A core condition for the ummah to function politically is the presence of an ummah consciousness: when actors foreground that transnational Muslim identity, they frame political boundaries and priorities in religious terms, often privileging Muslim communal identity alongside, or even above, state citizenship (Khan, 2022).

Result and Discussion

Islamic Identity and Foreign Relations with Muslim Countries

Bangladesh's foreign relations with the Muslim world have developed in three phases (Hussain, 2004). In the first stage, the evolution of the relationship with Muslim nations began with the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country recognized by many Muslim countries. The next phase began in 1974, when Mujib attended the OIC conference, and Bangladesh became a

member of the organization (Ali & Sultan, 2023). The third phase began after the overthrow of Sheikh Mujib from power through a military coup in 1975, and the new military ruler adopted an Islamic orientation not only in domestic politics but also in Bangladesh's foreign policy. Thus, these phases are the outcome of regime changes, and the situation requires a specific environment.

Bangladesh maintains foreign relations with Muslim countries for many reasons. Firstly, Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country that has impacted its domestic politics. As around 90 percent of people follow Islam, political regimes must maintain good relationships with Muslim nations to appease any discontent of people, particularly Islamist groups and organizations, on any political issues. Additionally, the Constitution of Bangladesh provides a framework for maintaining good relations with the Islamic world (Imtiaz. & Ulsions, 2011). According to the constitution of Bangladesh, Article 2A, Islam is the state religion of the country. In the fifth amendment of the Constitution, which was nullified and declared illegal later, two military rulers, Zia and Ershad, respectively, used religion in the foreign policy of Bangladesh. The article and the order state:

[Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim. (1) In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the Merciful. We, the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our Independence on 26th day of March, 1971 and through (2) [a historic war for national independence], established the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh; (3) [pledging that the high ideals of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, nationalism, democracy and socialism meaning economic and social justice, which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in, the war for national independence, shall be the fundamental principles of the Constitutions;] Article 6 [(1) The citizenship of Bangladesh shall be determined and regulated by law. (2) The citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangladeshis.]

Table 2.

Aid from Muslim Countries and Islamic Organizations (1971-1981) in the US\$ \$ Million. Source: Ahmad et al., 2004, p. 121.

Country	Commitment			Disbursement		
	Grant	Loan	Total	Grant	Loan	Total
Iraq	-	80,000	80,000	-	11,255	11,255
Iran	-	12,500	12,500	-	7,500	7,500
Kuwait	-	95,550	95,550	-	31,500	31,500
UAE	1,200	25,500	26,700	1,200	22,472	23,672
Turkey	-	4,095	4,095	-	4,095	4,095
Saudi Arabia	49,000	80,000	129,000	38,372	33,000	71,372
OPEC	-	53,000	53,000	-	3,458	3,458
IDB	-	23,000	23,000	-	12,764	12,764

Thus, the constitution itself explicitly articulates religion as one of the key elements of Bangladesh's foreign policy. These issues can be regarded as push factors influencing the foreign policy of Bangladesh in terms of religious considerations. Secondly, some pull factors led religion into foreign policy. These include political, economic (*see Table 2 and Figure 1*), and cultural issues. Figure 1 below shows the percentage of the total remittance Bangladesh received from several countries, particularly from Muslim countries. Bangladesh received the highest percentage of remittances from the United Arab Emirates (15.65%), followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (15.41%). Overall, more than 50% of remittances originate from Muslim countries, which are the primary source of Bangladesh's foreign capital. Therefore, the relationship between Bangladesh and other Muslim countries is not only religion-based but also economic perspective.

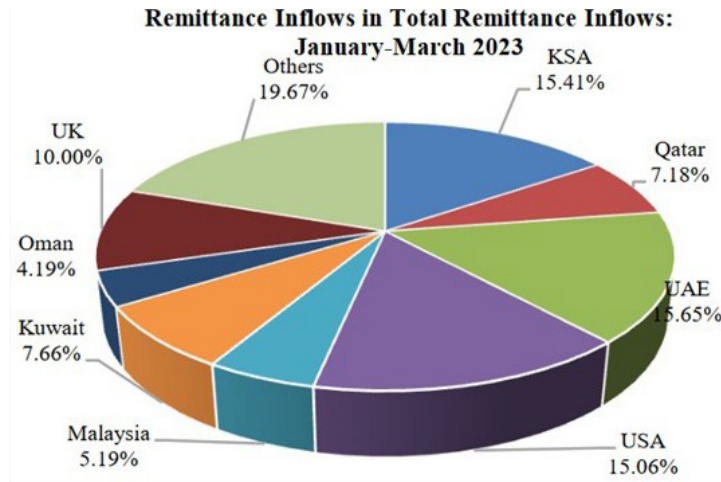


Figure 1. Remittance from Muslim and Other Countries. Source: Bangladesh Bank

Saudi Arabia is one of the major Muslim countries in the present world. Early foreign relations between Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh were shaped by their shared religious affinity for Pakistan (Muhammad & Khan, 2020), which limited ties between the newly independent Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia. Additionally, Mujib’s closeness to socialism was another reason for the nation’s lack of understanding. However, a more Islamic and anti-Indian national identity emerged because of President Ziaur Rahman’s 1975 reorientation of Bangladesh away from socialism and towards the opening up of the business sector, labor issues, remittance (see Table 03), and other economic aspects, which opened the door for Saudi recognition (Mason, 2014).

Table 3. Amount of Remittance from Gulf Countries. Source: Bangladesh Bank

Countries	Jan-Mar. 22	Apr-Jun. 22	Jul-Sep. 22	Oct-Dec. 22	Jan-Mar. 23	Percentage Changes	
						Jan-Mar. 23 over Oct-Dec. 22	Jan-Mar. 23 over Jan-Mar. 22
Gulf Countries	2583.09	3008.22	2832.32	2409.49	2931.22	21.65	13.48
Share	<i>51.06</i>	<i>52.47</i>	<i>49.93</i>	<i>49.99</i>	<i>52.89</i>		
KSA	1051.19	1055.69	999.01	910.14	853.78	-6.19	-18.78
UAE	451.20	805.38	788.11	549.02	867.31	57.97	92.22
Qatar	329.25	332.41	352.10	347.16	398.13	14.68	20.92
Oman	201.36	215.49	170.10	143.00	231.95	62.20	15.19
Bahrain	153.79	149.15	119.73	100.64	155.79	54.80	1.32
Kuwait	396.33	453.10	403.27	359.53	424.26	18.00	7.05

Ummah and Member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Joining the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) presents a valuable opportunity to establish friendly relations with other Muslim countries (Hossain, 2012). Joining OIC Bangladesh offers various benefits, including its religious significance in preserving foreign relations with nations that have a majority Muslim population. Utilizing the OIC, Bangladesh can impart its economic, social, cultural, and religious values to other Muslim countries, promoting participation among OIC countries. It also provides Bangladesh with a platform to address issues pertinent to

the Muslim community, including humanitarian and religious concerns. Utilizing cooperation in various spheres, including education, research, and technology, membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also offers opportunities for socioeconomic progress while upholding Islamic values. Along with other countries with a majority of Muslims, Bangladesh joins the OIC to cooperate on Muslim concerns, including the voice of the minority Muslims in non-Muslim countries and the lowering of conflict (Iran-Iraq). With this membership, Bangladesh's diplomatic authority in the Islamic community increases, enabling it to express its concerns and participate in global Islamic events (The Financial Express, 2026).

The OIC has also expanded bilateral relations, improving trade, investment, and socio-cultural exchanges. Bangladesh can participate in educational, social, and financial initiatives advancing Islamic development. By proving its dedication to Islamic unity and cooperation, OIC membership also helps Bangladesh answer world issues such as Islamophobia and Muslim minority rights. For instance, OIC member Gambia claimed against Myanmar for the alleged genocide of the Rohingyas in the International Court of Justice in 2019 (The Financial Express, 2026). Among other reasons, the Gambia seeks in its application that the Court declare Myanmar to have violated the Convention and require it to immediately cease any worldwide illegal activity and satisfy its compensation obligations in favor of the. Having been victims of genocidal crimes, the Rohingya group should have guarantees and undertakings stating that such crimes would not be carried out once more (International Court of Justice, 2024). Regarding economy, commerce, and other bilateral concerns, Bangladesh and Gambia have maintained a friendly foreign relationship ever since (Prothom Alo, 2024).

Bangladesh's foreign relations with member states of the OIC not only enhance the political, economic, and bilateral relations but also have an impact on domestic policies and politics. Regarding maintaining relations with OIC members, various local policies have been developed to enhance cooperation between them further. For example, Bangladesh has initiated trade and economic policies to foster imports and exports. Bangladesh ranked fourth in terms of clothing to OIC countries, and according to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2016-17, Bangladeshi clothing exports to OIC countries totaled \$1.34 billion in 2015 (CPD, 2017). It highlights the significance of Bangladesh's strategic and foreign partnerships with the OIC member states, showcasing the mutual benefits of economic collaboration, religious cooperation, and ummah-centric identity in strengthening the country's economic growth and improving its global standing.

Islamic Values and Relations with India and Pakistan

Bangladesh's foreign relations with India and Pakistan are a hot topic in Bangladeshi politics. Two streams of view, pro-India and pro-Pakistan, are much-discussed issues in local politics. Traditionally, it is viewed that the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) is pro-Indian, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is pro-Pakistan, if not all. The relationship between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, consequently, has ups and downs based on the regime in power or change. Mannan (2018) argues that, for example, relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan are occasionally variable. During the BNP regime, Bangladesh and Pakistan both maintained a warm relationship based on "Islamic identity". Such Islamic identity views two nations differently, as Mannan states, "[Islamic] identity factor tacitly presents Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India as 'Muslim Bangladesh', 'Muslim Pakistan', and 'Hindu India', respectively. It frames 'Muslim Pakistan' as a mutual ally of 'Muslim Bangladesh' and shares with Pakistan a view of 'Hindu India' as the enemy-other" (Mannan, 2018: p. 138). The BNP has adopted an anti-Indian policy (Kashem & Islam, 2016) since its founding, and the relationship between India and Bangladesh reached its lowest point during the BNP-led coalition government, which was in power from 2001 to 2006 (Pant, 2015).

Regarding the Kashmir Issue, the two major political parties, BAL and BNP, view the issue based on a religious-geopolitical lens. Whereas the Awami League keeps silent regarding the Kashmir issue, the BNP expressed deep concern regarding the Indian government's intervention and the scraping of the rights of Kashmiris (New Age, 2019). The reason AL remains silent is politics. Since the AL government was in power in 2008, the Indian government has extended its support. Even after three consecutive disputed elections, the AL received widespread support from the Indian side. As a result, AL sees the Kashmir issue as an internal political matter in India (Bangla Insider, 2019). On the Kashmir issue, the BNP holds a historical perspective rooted in the ideology of pan-Islamism and a firm commitment to championing the rights of oppressed Muslim populations. As a result, they express deep concerns about the Indian government's intervention and the alleged violation of Kashmiris' rights (Jugantor, 2019). The BNP's position reflects their broader advocacy for the rights of Muslim communities worldwide and their comprehensive geopolitical outlook. In addition, the BNP is known for its assertive and vocal support for pan-Islamic causes and the rights of oppressed Muslim communities globally. This distinct approach applies to the Kashmir issue and influences their overall foreign policy positions about India. In contrast, the Awami League emphasizes maintaining strong diplomatic ties with neighboring countries, such as India, while avoiding taking strong stances on sensitive issues.

The 2024 student-led uprising in Bangladesh, initially sparked by opposition to the 30% quota reserved for freedom fighters in government employment, culminated in the overthrow of the authoritarian government of Sheikh Hasina. Sheikh Hasina subsequently fled to India in early August. Following her removal, Bangladesh's foreign relations underwent significant realignments, particularly with India and Pakistan. While tensions emerged with India, a new phase in Bangladesh-Pakistan relations also began, marked by patterns that differed markedly from those observed during the Awami League's tenure (Reuters, 2024; Le Monde, 2024; BBC, 2024).

Prior to Hasina's fall, India's influence in Bangladesh's domestic politics had elicited scrutiny and criticism from multiple quarters. Nevertheless, close bilateral ties between the Hasina and Modi administrations persisted, attracting both domestic and international commentary. Following the ban on the Awami League in the post-Hasina period, India's attempts to reintroduce the party into Bangladesh's political landscape led to tensions in the bilateral relationship, amid ongoing concerns such as border violence, shared river disputes, and accusations of minority persecution. (Business Standard, 2025; AP News, 2025). The Bangladeshi authorities emphasized the importance of maintaining bilateral relations without actions detrimental to either side.

During Hasina's rule, relations with Pakistan were strained, whereas ties with India were robust. The post-Hasina period has created an opportunity to normalize relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan (Ethirajan, 2025). Former Ambassador Humayun Kabir observed that recent developments have initiated a process of normalization, which may strengthen regional stability and cooperation, but Pakistan must express remorse for the 1971 atrocities (Subramanian, 2025). Politically, both the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami have shown openness to improving ties with Pakistan, although historical grievances—particularly related to the 1971 Liberation War—underscore the continuing demand for formal acknowledgment and apology. Recent cultural and economic exchanges, including the screening of Pakistani films in Dhaka and the arrival of Pakistani cargo ships at Chittagong port, indicate a gradual warming of relations. Such initiatives have the potential to enhance people-to-people connections and facilitate broader regional cooperation. Two factors played a significant role in the development and deterioration of relations with Pakistan and India, respectively (Arabnews, 2025). First, Indian hegemony undermines sovereignty, whether through economic, geographical, or minority rights issues in India and Bangladesh. Second, religious background influences some events, including the vandalizing of homes and businesses of Hindu Awami League political elites, which exacerbates Indian concerns about these matters.

Islamic Solidarity and Palestine-Israel Relations

The Israel-Palestine issue is the most religiously influenced foreign policy issue of Bangladesh. Bangladesh, since its inception, has supported Palestine's right to live in its own land peacefully. Consequently, Bangladesh has always supported the Palestinian liberation movement. Thus, many religious, historical, and political factors have affected the relationship between Bangladesh and Palestine. Mainly being a Muslim country, Bangladesh has shown unity with Palestine throughout history thanks to common religious beliefs and the more universal Islamic concept of "ummah," or global Muslim brotherhood. As Hasan's (2021) study on the impact of Islam in Bangladesh's political sphere shows, this idea has affected both internal affairs and international diplomacy of Bangladesh. Politically, Bangladesh's stance on Palestine has been unwavering since its 1971 independence, proving a significant commitment to support of Palestinian autonomy. Rooted in Bangladesh's battle for autonomy, this political stance aligns itself with other nations seeking freedom from occupation and colonialism, as discussed by Ghosh (1993). Global events, such as the Cold War and conflicts in the Middle East, have also influenced Bangladesh's support for Palestine, thereby orienting it within the broader framework of Islamic unity against Western imperialism and Zionism, as outlined in Hasan's (2012) study of political Islam in Bangladesh. These interactions underline how closely political ideas, historical events, and religious beliefs interact to shape the relationship between Bangladesh and Palestine.

In contrast, Israel and Bangladesh do not have a diplomatic relationship, nor do they engage in trade or commerce. Consequently, Bangladesh citizens are strictly prohibited from visiting Israel. Visiting Israel is a punitive job in Bangladesh. Salahuddin Shoaib Choudhury, for instance, got seven years in jail, alleging that he was trying to visit Israel and write an article harming the national interest of Bangladesh (Dawn, 2014). In 2016, Aslam Chowdhury, a member of the opposition party named Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was arrested for giving a handshake with an adviser of the Israeli government in India (Al Jazeera, 2016). However, in 2021, the government of Bangladesh removed the 'except Israel' clause from its passport, sparking debates in Bangladesh. However, the official position regarding Israel has not changed (The Daily Star, 2021). Despite such distance, in 2023, a report emerged regarding the importation of spy technologies from Israel, despite the absence of a defense agreement between the countries. Regarding Israel's military intervention against Hamas in Palestine, Bangladesh condemns the military parade and urges it to stop mass killing (Prothom Alo, 2024). Thus, religion is a key determinant of foreign relations between Israel and Bangladesh, as well as between Palestine and Bangladesh.

One point worth noting is the Israel-Hamas conflict from Bangladesh's electoral politics perspective, particularly in relation to the 12th national election held in January 2024. BNP was somewhat silent regarding criticizing Israel's brutal attacks on unarmed Palestinians to get the favor of the USA (BSS, 2024). The reason includes the USA's significant move to support a free and fair election, which gives the BNP confidence to compel the incumbent regime to hold an acceptable election. BNP's silence on the Israel-Hamas conflict can be attributed to their strategic calculation of aligning with the USA and gaining support for that national election. By refraining from criticizing Israel's actions, BNP aimed to secure the favor of the USA, which had shown a strong stance on supporting free and fair elections in Bangladesh. These moves enabled BNP to build confidence and pressure the incumbent regime to ensure a more transparent and acceptable electoral process. Interestingly, after the fall of Hasina, BNP organized a massive protest rally against Israel's genocide in Gaza (The Daily Observer, 2025). In contrast, AL strictly criticizes Israel's armed forces killing innocent Palestinians, not only to get support from the people of Bangladesh but also due to the cold relationship between the AL government and the USA (BSS, 2024).

Ummah and Strategic Relation with Turkey

The relationship between Bangladesh and Turkey is complicated by their shared Islamic identity and their different political views at home. This illustrates the difficulty in balancing national and religious loyalties. Islam in Bengal has historically been deeply intertwined with the region's socio-political dynamics, influencing resistance movements and nationalist struggles throughout the centuries. In "The Islamization of Bangladesh," Shafi Md Mostofa discusses how Sufi Islam and local beliefs converged to shape the region's religious culture and foster political engagement over time (Mostofa, 2021). Professor Nazrul Islam also examines how Islamism evolved during the colonial period. They point to movements like Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah and Fara'idi as ways to fight back that eventually led to the struggle for independence (Islam, 2022). Even though both countries are Muslim, their relations have sometimes been strained by problems in their own countries. The prosecution and execution of people linked to war crimes during the 1971 Liberation War, especially Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, caused problems between Turkey and Bangladesh's diplomatic relations. In 2016, the Turkish government pulled its ambassador from Bangladesh to protest the killings. This highlighted the challenges of balancing ideological solidarity with domestic court decisions (Reuters, 2016; Liton, 2016).

However, since then, Bangladesh and Turkey have normalized their relations, formed a strategic partnership, and increased trade between the two countries (Dhaka Tribune, 2023). Cultural diplomacy has played a crucial role in this reconciliation. Turkish TV shows, movies, and actors have gained significant popularity in Bangladesh, contributing to a more nuanced form of influence that transcends political disagreements (The Daily Star, 2024). The situation between Bangladesh and Turkey illustrates the challenges of navigating conflicting identities. For example, shared Islamic beliefs can help people work together and foster a sense of closeness. However, due to political issues like holding people accountable in Bangladesh for war crimes, tensions can temporarily override ideological unity. The balance between these opposing forces illustrates how religion, nationalism, and diplomacy interact to shape bilateral relations.

Sectarian Balance within the Ummah and Iran-Bangladesh Relations

Iran has long been an important and influential player in Middle Eastern politics. The majority of people in Iran are Shia, which is one of the main sects of Islam. There are also large Shia populations in Iraq and Bahrain. Iran's political power stems from the synergy between its economic resources, military strength, and ideological stance in the region. Saudi Arabia, which is known as the spiritual center of Sunni Islam, sees Iran as a strong political, security, and ideological enemy. Tehran agrees with this view. In this intricate milieu, Bangladesh, a predominantly Sunni Muslim nation, confronts a multifaceted diplomatic challenge in navigating its relationships with both Iran and Saudi Arabia (The Daily Star, 2024b).

Iran's official recognition of Bangladesh on September 22, 1971, marked the beginning of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This was a significant development for the newly independent state. Iran's recognition of Bangladesh, along with its real assistance during crucial times, such as the 1974 Bangladesh famine, when it allowed oil imports on deferred payment terms, helped lay the foundation for trust and cooperation between the two countries. Over the years, the two countries have collaborated on numerous business projects and investments, thereby strengthening their relationship beyond mere political symbolism (Hussain, 2004).

Iran's foothold in Bangladesh has been further strengthened by cultural diplomacy. While Iranian cinematic productions, literary works, and cultural practices have gained significant popularity, Dhaka University has a Department of Persian Language and Literature dedicated to the study of Persian language, Iranian culture, culinary traditions, and political frameworks. Students could study these topics. The Iranian embassy in Dhaka is actively supporting these efforts, which are part of Tehran's broader plan to enhance its soft power in Bangladesh (Jagonews24).

com, 2023). In a country where the Sunni identity is the most common, these kinds of actions are often seen as part of Iran's efforts to counterbalance Saudi Arabia's power. Bangladesh's relationship with Iran must be understood in the context of sectarian and geopolitical balance. Historically, culturally, and economically, Tehran and Dhaka have both built strong ties with Saudi Arabia, which is their traditional ally in the Sunni Islamic world. To manage this dual alignment, Bangladesh needs to be smart about its diplomacy so that it can work with both Shia-led Iran and Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia without getting caught up in the rivalry between the two powers.

Conclusion

This study explored three analytically distinct but interactive dimensions through which “Islamic identity” and the idea of the “ummah” influence the foreign relations and policies: (1) the normative aspect (how religious solidarity provides moral authority and international legitimacy), (2) the instrumental dimension (how political actors mobilize religious identity for domestic and diplomatic advantage), and (3) the structural dimension encompasses how constitutional, institutional, and routinized practices integrate Islam into the official orientation of the state. These are the three empirical “paths” the paper traces across the cases and sources examined.

The article's main finding is that Islamic identity in the context of Bangladesh functions neither as a deterministic source nor as mere rhetoric. Rather, Islamic identity operates as a mediated political resource—what we label “instrumentalized ummah solidarity”, that political leaders selectively activate, amplify, or constrain depending on regime ideology, legitimacy crisis, economic aims, and hard-security calculations. Three concrete empirical patterns support this claim: (a) rhetorical mobilization of transnational Muslim solidarity is frequent and salient on issues of symbolic importance, for example, alignment with Palestinian statehood; (b) instrumental deployment is episodic and strategic, used most visibly during legitimacy crisis or to secure diplomatic benefits from Muslim-majority countries; and (c) structural embedding such as constitutional references, institutional practices, and participation in multilateral Islamic platforms to create durable channels through which religious identity becomes available to policymakers, even when it is not the decisive factor.

Conceptually, the “three paths” should be read as distinct mechanisms, each with observable implications and empirical indicators, and as part of an integrated pivotal design. Firstly, the normative pathway, which includes moral framing in foreign ministry communiqués, public speeches invoking solidarities, and votes or statements in Islamic multilateral forums. Secondly, instrumental pathways such as episodic rhetorical points coinciding with domestic legitimacy crises, targeted appeals to diaspora and remittance-linked nations, and selective alignment with Muslim states when material returns are expected. Finally, structural pathways, including constitutional clauses, institutionalized liaison with Islamic bodies, and routinized diplomatic practice in forums such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The case evidence, spanning party manifestos, official statements, and secondary literature, illustrates how these paths operated in Bangladesh's shifting foreign-policy trajectory: from the secular-national founding orientation under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to later regimes' selective incorporation of religious rhetoric; in divergent party-to-party stances toward Pakistan; and in the state's consistently symbolic but strategically calibrated alignment with Palestine and non-alignment with Israel. These specific illustrations validate the broader theoretical claim that religious transnationalism and strategic rationality coexist and interact within a polity's foreign-policy selection in Bangladesh as a case study in the global south and Muslim-majority countries.

Reference

- Aboi, E.J. (2024). Religious, Ethnic and Regional Identities in Nigerian Politics: A Shared Interest Theory. *African Identities*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2024.2394181>
- Ahasan, N. (2017, March 24). Should Bangladesh do More to Support the Palestinian Cause? *The Daily Star*. Retrieved July 3, 2024, from <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/opinion/should-bangladesh-do-more-support-the-palestinian-cause-1380556>
- Ahmad, I. (2025). Political Identity in Contemporary Islamic Thought: Between Religious and National Pluralism. *Journal of Posthumanism*. <https://doi.org/10.63332/joph.v5i5.1302>
- Ahmad, M. (2020). *Bela O Bela: Bangladesh (1972–1975) [Bangla]*. Baatighar.
- Ahmad, S.M., & Mamun, A.A. (2020). Opportunities of Islamic FinTech: The Case of Bangladesh and Turkey. *CenRaPS Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(3), 412–426. <https://doi.org/10.46291/cenraps.v2i3.39>
- Ahmed et al. (2004). *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Small State's Imperative*. Komol Kuri Prokashon.
- Ahmed, I. (2016). Foreign Policy in a. In A. Riaz & M.S. Rahman (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Bangladesh*. Routledge.
- Ahmed, I. (Ed.). (2014). *The Politics of Religion in South and Southeast Asia*. Routledge.
- Akbarzadeh, S., & Barry, J. (2016). State Identity in Iranian Foreign Policy. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43, 613–629. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2016.1159541>
- Al Jazeera. (2016, May 16). Bangladesh Politician Arrested for 'Israel Handshake.' *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/5/16/bangladesh-politician-arrested-for-israel-handshake>
- Alam, J. (2025, April 18). Bangladesh and Pakistan Resume Talks After 15 Years, Seek to Mend Strained Ties. *AP News*. <https://apnews.com/article/35e94c930f3de5a058658520d15331c1>
- Ali, S.A.M. (2025). Democratic Backsliding and Public Administration in Pakistan's Hybrid Regime: A Balance of Power Approach. *Policy Studies*, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2025.2538846>
- Ali, T., & Sultan, H. (2023). Emerging Role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the Global Governance Since 1969. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2202052>
- Alwan, B., & Khudair, S. (2020). Cross-Border Islamic Identity: Turkish Foreign Policy Under the Justice and Development Party Government. *Tikrit Journal for Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.25130/politic.v0i19.215>
- ArabNews. (2025, August 23). Bangladesh Aims to Deepen Trade as Pakistan's Deputy PM Makes. *Arab News*. Retrieved September 1, 2025, from <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2612769/amp>
- Aswar, H., & Rakhmat, M. (2023). Islamic Foreign Policy: Principle and Practices. *Jurnal Kajian Peradaban Islam*. <https://doi.org/10.47076/jkpi.v6i2.231>
- Bangla Inside. (2019). কাশ্মীর সংকট পর্যবেক্ষণ করলও মন্তব্য করতে চাই না: ওবায়দুল কাদের [No comment on Kashmir: Obaidul Qader]. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from https://www.banglainsider.com/news_details/42352
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Population and House Consensus 2022*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from https://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/b343a8b4_956b_45ca_872f_4cf9b2f1a6e0/2024-01-31-15-51-b53c55dd692233ae401ba013060b9cbb.pdf
- Bangladesh Constitution. (1972). Chapter 2, Article 12.
- Baumgartner, J.C., Francia, P.L., & Morris, J.S. (2008). A Clash of Civilizations? The Influence of Religion on Public Opinion of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 171–179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912907307288>

- BSS. (2024). BNP-Jamaat Takes Israel Side Keeping Mum on Gaza Genocide: Hasan. BSS. <https://www.bssnews.net/news/176202>
- BSS. (2024, March 24). PM Hasina Condemns World's Silence on Gaza Killings. *Dhaka Tribune*. Retrieved September 1, 2025, from <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/342562/pm-hasina-taking-no-steps-to-stop-gaza-killing-is>
- Constitution of Bangladesh. (1972). Article 2A.
- Constitution of Bangladesh. (1972). Articles 9–12.
- Constitution of Bangladesh. (1988). (5th Amendment) Order No. 1 of 1977 and Act XXX of 1988.
- CPD_Sarwar. (2017, June 5). June 5, 2017: Budget, RMG Export to OIC Countries, and Source Tax. *CPD RMG Study*. <https://rmg-study.cpd.org.bd/june-1-2017-budget-rmg-export-oic-countries-source-tax/>
- Dale, & James. (2018). *Muslim Politics*. <https://www.torrossa.com/gs/resourceProxy?an=5641335&publisher=FZO137>
- Damayanti, R., & Hasan, K. (2024). The Role of Islam in the Indonesian Foreign Policy in the Era of Joko Widodo's Government (2014–2024): Between the Islamic Identity and the National Interests. *Jurnal Indo-Islamika*. <https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v14i1.38314>
- Dawn. (2014, January 9). Bangladesh Editor Jailed for Seven Years Over Israel Visit. *Dawn*. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1079394>
- Dhaka Tribune. (2023). Bangladesh Seeks a Strategic Partnership with Turkey. Retrieved July 12, 2024, from <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/foreign-affairs/312505/bangladesh-seeks-strategic-partnership-with-turkey>
- Dieterich, C. (2024, August 6). Prime Minister Hasina Forced to Flee Bangladesh by Helicopter. *Le Monde.fr*. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/08/05/prime-minister-forced-to-flee-bangladesh-by-helicopter_6709663_4.html
- Eidoo, S., El-Abdallah, M., Grant, Z., & Machado, G.M. (2022). Memories and Visions of Ummah: Reflections in Relational Solidarity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 52(3), 314–325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/003626784.2022.2072668>
- Ethirajan, A. (2025, March 17). Pakistan Moves Closer to Bangladesh as India Watches Warily. Retrieved September 1, 2025, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cge1gxxn07qo>
- Faheem, F., Xingang, W., Wasim, M., & Hussain, S. (2021). Identity and Interests: History of Pakistan's Foreign Policy and the Middle Eastern Muslim States, 1947 to 1956. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1967567>
- Fox, J. (2018). *An Introduction to Religion and Politics: Theory and Practice* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Fox, J., & Sandler, S. (2004). *Bringing Religion Into International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Franda, M. (1981). Ziaur Rahman and Bangladeshi Nationalism. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16(10/12).
- Ghosh, P. S. (1993). Bangladesh at the Crossroads: Religion and Politics. *Asian Survey*, 33(7), 697–710. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645357>
- Glazier, R.A. (2013). Divine Direction: How Providential Religious Beliefs Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 127–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2012.00190.x>
- Grieco, J., Ikenberry, G.J., & Mastanduno, M. (2022). *Introduction to International Relations: Perspectives, Connections and Enduring Questions*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Hadžikadunić, E. (2022). The Role of Islam in Foreign Policymaking. *Context: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.55425/23036966.2021.8.2.35>
- Hasan, M. (2012). The Geopolitics of Political Islam in Bangladesh. *Harvard Asia Quarterly*.
- Hasan, M. (2020). *Islam and Politics in Bangladesh: The Followers of Ummah*. Springer Nature.
- Hasan, M. (2021). *Islam and Politics in Bangladesh: The Followers of Ummah* (1st ed.). Springer.

- Hassan, M. (2023). Religion as a Source of Violence: Contending the Narrative of Political Violence Perpetrated in the Name of Islam in Bangladesh. *Journal of Asian Wisdom and Islamic Behavior*, 1(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.59371/jawab.v1i1.41>
- Hashmi, T. (2022). *Fifty Years of Bangladesh, 1971–2021: Crises of Culture, Development, Governance, and Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Haynes, J. (2013). *Religion in Global Politics*. Routledge.
- Heywood, A., & Witham, B. (2023). *Global Politics* (3rd ed.). Red Globe Press.
- Hintz, L. (2016). “Take it Outside!” National Identity Contestation in the Foreign Policy Arena. *European Journal of International Relations*, 22, 335–361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066115588205>
- Hintz, L. (2018). *Identity Politics Inside Out*. Oxford Scholarship Online. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190655976.001.0001>
- Hossain, I. (2012). The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC): Nature, Role, and the Issues. *Journal of Third World Studies*, 29(1), 287–314. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45194863>
- Hossain, M.A. (2024). God and The Ballot Box: How Electoral Candidates Use Religion in Election Campaign in Bangladesh. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 61(1), 238–252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096241284393>
- Huntington, S.P. (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72(3), 22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20045621>
- Husain, S.A. (2004). Bangladesh and Islamic Countries (1972–1983). In N.K. Singh (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Bangladesh* (pp. 56–79). Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Imtiaz., & Ulsions. (2011). *Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Constraints, Compulsions and Choices*. https://old.biiss.org/public/files/publication/5e67e5166d003july_2011.pdf
- International Court of Justice. (2024). Press Release From: <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/178/178-20240703-pre-01-00-en.pdf>
- Iqbal, H. (2021). Political Discourse Analysis of the Islamic Identity in Pakistan's Foreign Policy. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*. [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2021\(5-ii\)50](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2021(5-ii)50)
- Isani, M., & Silverman, D. (2016). Foreign Policy Attitudes Toward Islamic Actors: An Experimental Approach. *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(3), 571–582. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912916654988>
- Islam, M.N. (2022). Faithful Participation: The ‘Ulama in Bangladeshi Politics. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 23(2), 177–203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2022.2082416>
- Islam, M., & Islam, M. (2018). Islam, Politics and Secularism in Bangladesh: Contesting the Dominant Narratives. *Social Sciences*, 7(3), 37. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7030037>
- Jagonews24.com. (2023). Iranian Diplomat Calls on DU VC. *Jagonews24.com*. Retrieved September 1, 2025, from <https://www.jagonews24.com/en/education/news/69622>
- Jahan, R. (1973). Bangladesh in 1973: Nation Building in a New State. *Asian Survey*, 13(2), 199–210.
- Jahan, R. (2015). *Political Parties in Bangladesh*. Prothoma.
- Judis, T. (2005). The Chosen Nation: The Influence of Religion on U.S. Foreign Policy. *Insight Turkey*, 7(1), 64–72.
- Jugantor. (2019). কাশ্মীর পরিস্থিতি নিয়ে বগ্ননপরি উদ্বগে [BNP concerns about Kashmir situation]. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from <https://www.jugantor.com/politics/209592/>
- Karisma, G., & Rachmawati, T. (2025). From Politics to Economic Cooperation: Islam as Identity of Foreign Policy in Jokowi Era. *Journal of Islamic World and Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jiwp.v9i1.171>
- Kashem, M.A., & Islam, M.S. (2016). Narendra Modi's Bangladesh Policy and India–Bangladesh Relations: Challenges and Possible Policy Responses. *India Quarterly*, 72(3), 250–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928416655409>

- Khan, A.H. (2022). *The Constitution of Bangladesh: People, Politics and Judicial Intervention*. Taylor & Francis.
- Khanam, R. (2008). *Nature of Legitimacy & the Crisis of Bangladesh Politics, 1972–1990*. AH Development Publishing House.
- Lewis, D. (2011). *Bangladesh: Politics, Economy, and Civil Society*. Cambridge University Press.
- Liton, S. (2016, May 18). Err-Dogan! *The Daily Star*. Retrieved July 12, 2024, from <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/err-dogan-1225621>
- Mahmud, & Khan. (2020). Religion, Spirituality and Foreign Policy Dynamics: A Case Study of Relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 57(1).
- Mannan, M.A. (2018). Islam's Role in Bangladesh–Pakistan Alignment Against India Under the BNP's rule. *India Quarterly*, 74(2), 138–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928418766685>
- Martini, N.F. (2015). Foreign Policy Ideology and Conflict Preferences: A Look at Afghanistan and Libya. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 11(4), 417–434. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fpa.12049>
- Mason, R. (2014, February 27). Saudi–Bangladeshi Relations in Perspective. *E-International Relations*. Retrieved from <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/02/27/saudi-bangladeshi-relations-in-perspective/>
- McKay, R., & Whitehouse, H. (2015). Religion and Morality. *Psychological Bulletin*, 141(2), 447–473. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038455>
- Mohapatra, K.A. (2022). Interface between Foreign Policy and Religion in India and the US: A Comparative Perspective. *World Focus*, 43(508), 37–40.
- Mostofa, S.M. (2021). *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh: A Pyramid Root Cause Model*. Springer Nature.
- Ms, G. (2020). The Specifics of the Political Analysis of the Foreign Policy of Muslim Countries. *The Light of Islam*. <https://doi.org/10.47980/tloi/2020/3/3>
- Munareto, C. (2025). Identidade e Política Externa no Irã. *Brazilian Journal of International Relations*. <https://doi.org/10.36311/2237-7743.2024.v13.e024024>
- Naim, S., & Mokodenseho, S. (2023). Indonesia's Foreign Policy in Promoting a Moderate Islamic Identity After the Reform. *AT-TURAS: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*. <https://doi.org/10.33650/at-turas.v10i1.4719>
- Newagebd. (n.d.). BNP Watches the Kashmir Situation with Concern. *Newagebd.net*. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from <https://www.newagebd.net/article/81462/bnp-watches-kashmir-situation-with-concern>
- Pant, H. V. (2015, June 2). A Long-Overdue Foreign Policy Course Correction by Delhi. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved June 29, 2024, from <https://thediplomat.com/2015/06/a-long-overdue-foreign-policy-course-correction-by-delhi/>
- Perry, M. (2012). *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics, and Society* (10th ed.). Wadsworth Publishing.
- Prothom Alo. (2024, May 4). Bangladesh is Looking Forward to Boosting Trade with Gambia in Agriculture. *Prothom Alo English*. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/lhisc3ktfg>
- Prothom Alo English. (2024, May 15). Bangladesh Condemns Israeli Attacks on a Humanitarian Convoy to Gaza. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/vhvqdsddr>
- Raghavan, S. (2013). *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*. Harvard University Press.
- Reuters. (2024). Turkey Withdraws Bangladesh Ambassador After Execution of Islamist – Erdogan. *Reuters*. Retrieved July 12, 2024, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/turkey-withdraws-bangladesh-ambassador-after-execution-of-islamist-erdogan-idUSKCN0Y311N/>
- Riaz, A. (2016). *Bangladesh: A Political History Since Independence*. IB Tauris.
- Riaz, A. (2006). Bangladesh in 2005: Standing at a Crossroads. *Asian Survey*, 46(1), 107–113. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2006.46.1.107>

- Ribuffo, L. (1998). Religion and American Foreign Policy: The Story of a Complex Relationship. *The National Interest*, 52, 36–51.
- Rigiderakhshan, M. (2020). İran'ın Dış Politika Kimliğini Oluşturan Faktörler. [Journal name unavailable], 5, 390–410. <https://doi.org/10.24186/vakanuvis.676809>
- Roknifard, J. (2021). Multifaceted Islam: Malaysia. *Journal of International Analytics*. <https://doi.org/10.46272/2587-8476-2021-12-4-68-87>
- Salim, A. (2020). Islamic Identity and Foreign Policy Discourse: Indonesia's Responses to the US War in Afghanistan (2001–2002). *Studia Islamika*, 27, 35–72. <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i1.10035>
- Sarker, J.I., Islam, T., Faisal, M., & Akter, A. (2022). Turkey-Bangladesh Relations from a Historical Perspective: The Contribution of Siraj and Nazrul to the Turkish War of Independence. *CenRaPS Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(1), 56–72. <https://doi.org/10.46291/cenraps.v4i1.75>
- Sheikh, M.Z.H., & Ahmed, Z.S. (2020). Military, Authoritarianism and Islam: A Comparative Analysis of Bangladesh and Pakistan. *Politics and Religion*, 13(2), 333–360. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048319000440>
- Subramanian, N. (2025, August 11). Apology from Pakistan for 1971 is a Must: M. Humayun Kabir [Video]. *Frontline*. <https://frontline.thehindu.com/world-affairs/india-bangladesh-relations-diplomatic-shift/article69920139.ece>
- Syed, M.A., & Chowdhury, H.R.S. (2020). Interest-Free Financing: An Overview of Interest-Free Finance in Turkey and Bangladesh. *International Journal of Social, Political and Economic Research*, 7(2), 272–291. <https://doi.org/10.46291/IJOSPERvol7iss2pp272-291>
- Taydas, Z., Kentmen, C., & Olson, L.R. (2012). Faith Matters: Religious Affiliation and Public Opinion about Barack Obama's Foreign Policy in the "Greater" Middle East. *Social Science Quarterly*, 93(5), 1218–1242. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2012.00920.x>
- The Business Standard. (2025, January 8). India Extends Hasina's visa Amid Bangladesh's Extradition Call. *The Business Standard*. <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/india-extends-ex-pm-sheikh-hasinas-visa-amid-extradition-call-dhaka-1037511>
- The Daily Observer. (2025). BNP Denounces Genocide in Gaza by Israeli Occupation Forces. *The Daily Observer*. Retrieved September 1, 2025, from <https://www.observerbd.com/news/520444>
- The Daily Star. (2021, May 23). Removing 'Except Israel' in New Passport does not Mean Bangladesh's Position Changed: Momen. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://www.thedailystar.net/bangladesh/news/removing-except-israel-new-passport-doesnt-mean-bangladeshs-position-changed-momen-2097313>
- The Daily Star. (2024, May 16). Turkish Actor Burak Özçivit to Visit Bangladesh. *The Daily Star*. <https://www.thedailystar.net/entertainment/tv-film/news/turkish-actor-burak-ozcivit-visit-bangladesh-3611576>
- The Daily Star. (2024b, September 22). Iran Keen to Enhance Bilateral Relations with Bangladesh: Envoy. *The Daily Star*. Retrieved September 1, 2025, from <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/world/iran/news/iran-keen-enhance-bilateral-relations-bangladesh-envoy-3709371>
- The Financial Express. (2026, February 27). OIC Leaders Back Bangladesh Bid for UN General Assembly Presidency. *The Financial Express*. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/oic-leaders-back-bangladesh-bid-for-un-general-assembly-presidency>
- The Middle East Eye. (2023). Israeli Spyware Sold to Bangladesh Despite Export Ban. *Middle East Eye*. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israeli-firm-sold-spyware-bangladesh-despite-export-ban>
- Thomas, S. (2005). *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tilly, C. (2003). *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge University Press.

- Ubaedillah, A., Ali, M., & Arfino, B. (2022). Articulation of Islam: President Joko Widodo's Foreign Policy 2014–2019. *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jhi.v11i2.13138>
- UNFPA. (2024). *Bangladesh Annual Report 2023*. Retrieved June 12, 2024, from <https://bangladesh.unfpa.org/en/publications/unfpa-bangladesh-annual-report-2023-0>
- Van Schendel, W. (2020). *A History of Bangladesh* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Vock, I. (2024, August 5). Sheikh Hasina: Euphoria in Bangladesh after PM Flees Country. Retrieved September 1, 2025, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clywww69p2vo>
- Wohab, A., & Serpa, S. (2021). “Secularism” or “No-Secularism”? A Complex Case of Bangladesh. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1928979>
- Yu, Y. (2021). Islamic Identity and Malaysia's Foreign Policy. [*Journal name unavailable*], 24, 1–41. [https://doi.org/10.6185/tjia.v.202101_24\(3\).0001](https://doi.org/10.6185/tjia.v.202101_24(3).0001)