



AL-UMMAH

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The Gulf At A Crossroads

- BRICS summit 2026 Growing Influence, Divided Interests
- New UN General Assembly Chief Calls for Renewed Trust and UN Reform
- When War Criminals Become Heroes
- Hijab Ban Move Sparks Backlash



AL-UMMAH

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Al-Ummah welcomes well-written articles that demonstrate depth, clarity, and analytical rigor. They must offer a structured analysis and a strong contextual understanding of the subject matter. We welcome contributions on global geopolitics, the Muslim world, political and economic developments, historical perspectives, and broader social, cultural and technological transformations. Please note the following requirements before submission:

- The article should be between 1,000 and 1,300 words and written in clear and polished English.
- It should present well-reasoned arguments supported by credible evidence where appropriate.
- It must be original and unpublished. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of facts, proper sourcing, and maintaining intellectual integrity.
- All submissions will undergo editorial review.
- Al-Ummah reserves the right to edit articles for clarity, style, and length.
- Publication is not guaranteed.
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The Gulf Needs to Think Beyond Today's Crises

The Gulf is in turmoil once again. The military confrontation that the United States had begun with Iran at the prodding of Israel has spilled over neighbouring borders, opening new war fronts, mainly in Yemen's south, from where Houthis are targeting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, putting its cities, energy facilities and shipping routes in danger.

As part of Iran's "axis of resistance," the Houthis—a militant group of local origin—are fighting for political control of Yemen and control over key economic and strategic resources. The dilemma is that the Kingdom cannot afford to let the Houthis have an upper hand, as it will bring Iran closer to its borders, threatening its security. Though it won't be an easy cakewalk for Houthis to have their way, as internationally recognized Yemeni government forces, backed by Saudi Arabia, have tightened their noose around the Iranian-backed group on several fronts, the changing dynamics on the ground compel both governments in the Gulf and world experts alike to think of things out of the box to battle the emerging adverse situations.

We deemed the cover story to focus on the developments, yet there are things that needed a deeper understanding of what is happening in the Middle East. The United States, a close ally of Saudi Arabia, is suddenly sitting down with Houthis to strike a deal to spare the US and Israel and let their ships cross the waterways under the rebels' influence—thus emphatically leaving the Kingdom in the lurch. While the much-touted US security umbrella in the Gulf lay in tatters, it stands exposed that all its relations with the Gulf allies have been to save the interests of Israel along with their own in the region.

This month's Al-Ummah activities include the participation of Al-Ummah Foundation's Chairman, Mr. Zakir Hos-sain, at an International Summit on Islamic Publishing held in Istanbul. Zakir considered the holding of the meeting "a long-overdue platform for Islamic publishing worldwide." A detailed report in this issue brings forth the importance of the summit and its likely impact in times to come.



Editor-in-Chief



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Editor-in-Chief
Mohammad Zakir Hossain

Managing Editor
M. Nasir Jawed

Editorial Board
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Dr. Abdul Mannan
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Art Director
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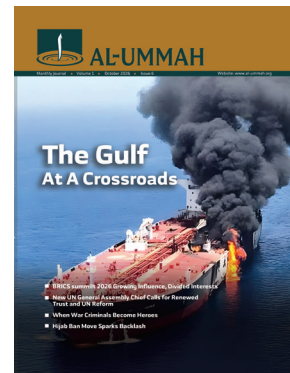
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Our Contributors



Mohammad Nasir Jawed



Issam Chehadat



Dr Mashiur Rahman



Dr Zahirul Hoque

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Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation, Mr. Muhammad Zakir Hussain (left), with Professor Dr. Ahmad Emre Bilgili, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Turkish Maarif Foundation (right) — Istanbul.

AL-UMMAH FOUNDATION EXPLORES COOPERATION WITH TOP TURKISH INSTITUTIONS

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By Al-Ummah Desk

Istanbul: Mr. Muhammad Zakir Hossain, Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ummah, held

a series of meetings in Istanbul with senior officials representing two prominent Turkish institutions and discussed opportunities for future cooperation in education, research, and media.

In a meeting with Professor Dr. Ahmed Emre Belgini, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Turkish Maar-

if Foundation, Hossain explored prospects for mutual cooperation between the two organizations and discussed developing potential areas of collaboration in the future.

In education, Professor Dr. Belgini expressed support for closer cooperation and highlighted several potential joint initiatives. The meeting also explored ways to exchange knowledge and expertise and work together in areas of mutual interest.

The Turkish Maarif Foundation is active in the education sector, while the Al-Ummah Foundation is a newly established platform based in Bangladesh.

In a separate meeting, Hossain met with Professor Dr. Yaşar Kulak, Vice President of the Center for Islamic Studies (ISAM), a research institution in Istanbul operating under the Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye (Diyanet).

The meeting focused on future cooperation in media and related activities. Both sides discussed opportunities to work together and expressed their willingness to establish collaborative initiatives in the future.

These meetings reflect Al-Ummah Foundation's efforts to develop partnerships with Turkish educational, research and institutional organizations and to explore opportunities for international



Chairman of the Al-Ummah Foundation, Mr. Mohammad Zakir Hussain (right), with Professor Dr. Yaşar Colak, Vice President of the Islamic Research Center (ISAM) (left) - Istanbul.

“ Chairman Zakir Hossain held a series of meetings with prominent institutions in Istanbul to work in key sectors of education and media ”

cooperation, particularly in the areas of education, research and media.

Hossain stressed the importance of building constructive institutional partnerships and creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaborative initiatives between organizations in Bangladesh and Türkiye.



Participants of the International Summit on Islamic Publishing held in Istanbul pose for a group picture outside the Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University.

ISTANBUL SUMMIT PLANS A GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR BOOK PUBLISHERS



By **Al-Ummah Desk**

ISTANBUL: An International Summit on Islamic Publishing held in Istanbul backed plans for a shared digital platform for publishers worldwide to exchange data on the industry, publishing rights, potential partners, stakeholders, and training.



Mr. Mohammad Zakir Hossain, Founder of Al-Ummah Foundation and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ummah magazine (standing left), with other participants at the International Summit on Islamic Publishing held from 25-27 Sept. in Istanbul.

The three-day summit, organized by the International Union of Islamic Book Publishers (IUIBP) at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University from 25 to 27 Sept., gathered industry professionals to discuss how books, translations and publishing rights can reach readers across national and linguistic borders.

The conference, which was held alongside the IUIBP's first General Assembly, was supported by Türkiye's Presidency of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency.

According to the union, its membership has grown to more than 200 pub-

“ Participants of the International Summit on Islamic Publishing held in Istanbul pose for a group picture outside the Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University ”

lishers across 68 countries since it was formally established in January.

Prominent participants included Mr. Mohammad Zakir Hossain, founder of Al-Ummah Foundation and editor-in-chief of the multilingual Al-Ummah monthly.

“The meeting gathered professionals to discuss how books, translations and publishing rights can reach readers across national and linguistic borders”

A Long-Awaited Initiative

Mr. Mohammad Zakir Hossain, Founder of Al-Ummah Foundation and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ummah magazine (standing left), with other participants at the International Summit on Islamic Publishing held from 25-27 Sept. in Istanbul.

Commenting on the holding of the event, Zakir Hossain said: “Islamic publishing has long faced a lack of coordination. Valuable books and ideas produced in one part of the world often fail to reach readers in another because of linguistic, commercial, or distribution barriers. The Istanbul summit has taken an important step toward addressing this gap by connecting publishers directly and encouraging them to work together.”

“The hallmark of the summit was its diversity. Publishers from multiple countries were able to share their experiences, understand the challenges facing different markets and identify areas where cooperation can produce

tangible results,” Zakir added.

He said: “I think Istanbul has made the beginning. It’s a long-overdue platform for Islamic publishing worldwide. If the efforts that we have made here are sustained, this conference could eventually be remembered not simply as another international gathering, but as an important step toward creating a more connected, professional and globally engaged publishing community.”

The meeting decided to have a series of specialized committees on digital publishing, translation, training, publishing rights, book fairs and industry data. The union plans to build a database of publishers and develop an Islamic Publishing Observatory to produce periodic reports on market trends and challenges.

Besides, the summit discussed joint translation and co-publishing projects, shared pavilions at international book fairs, stronger distribution across borders, and coordinated efforts to combat piracy. It supported the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to in areas of indexing and translation, while calling for respect for authors’ rights and the integrity of published work.

The summit marked a new stage for an initiative that began in Istanbul in 2021, when publishers from 30 countries met to explore closer cooperation.



After five years of consultations and organizational work, the IUIBP was formally established this January, with its headquarters in Istanbul and a founding board drawn from publishing communities across Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

What is IUIBP?

Established in 2021, the International Union of Islamic Book Publishers (IUIBP) is an international hub of publishing houses, professionals, rights managers, and translators engaged in Islamic book publishing worldwide on a common platform.

The Union is headquartered in Istanbul and has members from all around the world.

It aims to strengthen global cooper-

“The Istanbul summit has taken an important step toward connecting publishers directly and encouraging them to work together”

ation in Islamic publishing, support copyright and translation projects, raise professional standards, and carry the intellectual heritage of Islamic thought to the world.

2021 Great Vision Movement

Founding members of the Union include leading publishing houses from Türkiye, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Jordan, Egypt, the United Kingdom, and many other countries.



By M. Nasir Jawed
Ex-Editor, Arab News

The Gulf

At A Crossroads



By having separate dealings with the Houthis, the US redefines its own Israeli-centric security commitments, leaving the Gulf allies in the lurch.

The 21st-century world is no better place to live in. There is an up-tick in wars and conflicts that have been raging across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and South America—not to forget the United States' ubiquitous but central role in almost all the skirmishes. This is in addition to global issues like water scarcity, food crisis, a raging climate, and the rising number of refugees.

The Gulf region has entered one of its most unstable and dangerous periods in decades. The raging on-and-off Israeli-US war with Iran, now spilling across neighbouring Gulf countries, has always had an additional lurking menace in Yemen waiting in the wings to open a new war front, potentially dangerous to the interests of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

“ Saudi Arabia has been jolted out of its comfort zone to take things in stride and decide a course that would chart a new path to self-reliance and a security infrastructure with less support from the outside ”

As the Kingdom sits at the centre of this increasingly unstable system, it is facing a more aggressive militant Houthi group on its southern flank. The unrestrained group now poses threats to its major cities and energy infrastructure.

Saudi Arabia's concerns are aggravated by the fact that the Houthis have been positioned and pampered by Iran, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, and hence any compromise with the group might bring to the fore the real danger of Iran coming closer to its borders, posing greater security threats. Of late, the militant group has become an important instrument of Tehran's regional strategy, particularly in the strategically vital Red Sea corridor.

Add to all this the growing uncertainty about whether its most important traditional security partner—the United States—is still prepared to defend vital Saudi interests.



President Donald Trump's recent but unwavering behaviour has deepened these concerns. He has made no commitment to Riyadh to provide direct military support against the Houthis. In a separate conversation with the head of Yemen's internationally recognised government, Trump also made no commitment to intervene militarily.

Rather, American officials have met Houthi representatives in Oman, where they extracted assurances from the Houthis that they will not attack American or Israeli vessels, leaving its trusted



ally Saudi Arabia to fend for itself.

This has raised a pertinent question about the US security arrangement in the Middle East. Or was it just a smoke-screen to serve the interests of Israel? It needs us to go back to the history of the great game of oil, petrodollar, and security. My focus here, however, is the tumultuous developments of far-reaching ramifications taking place in the region.

It's a critical moment for Saudi Arabia. An arrangement under which American and Israeli vessels are protected while

Saudi ships, ports and infrastructure remain legitimate targets would not constitute a regional ceasefire. It would amount to a selective non-aggression deal that transfers the danger from Washington to Riyadh.

Selective Security Umbrella

For decades, the tacit arrangement between the United States and the Gulf states was relatively clear. The Gulf supplied energy, hosted American forces and generally supported a US-led regional order. In return, Washington pro-

“ The BRICS meeting in New Delhi called for reform of the United Nations and other global institutions, greater financial independence, and collaboration on security and AI ”

vided advanced weapons, military deterrence and an informal security umbrella against external aggression.

That understanding has been weakening for years. The failure to respond decisively to the 2019 attacks on Saudi oil facilities first raised serious doubts about the credibility of American protection. Today's developments are reinforcing the impression that US commitments have become transactional, selective and subordinate to Washington's immediate domestic and Israeli calculations.

The United States remains deeply involved in Gulf security. It maintains military bases, sells sophisticated weapons and shares intelligence with regional partners. Therefore, it would be premature to declare the complete end of the American security umbrella. What may be ending, however, is the assumption that this umbrella will open automatically whenever a Gulf ally is threatened.

Washington appears willing to act forcefully when American forces, inter-

national shipping or Israel are directly endangered. It is far less predictable when Saudi territory or economic interests are threatened. The distinction is not lost on Gulf leaders.

The contradiction becomes sharper when viewed against the US-Israeli confrontation with Iran. Gulf states warned Washington against attacking Iran because they understood that they would bear much of the retaliation. Their geographical proximity, American bases, oil installations, desalination plants, airports and financial centres made them exposed to Iranian missiles and drones even if they did not participate in the initial strikes.

Those warnings proved well founded. The Gulf states have paid a heavy economic and security price for a war they did not seek. Reuters reported earlier in the conflict that Gulf governments were reassessing both their dependence on Washington and the possibility of developing new regional security arrangements with Tehran.

Yet after helping to create the conditions for a broader confrontation with Iran, Washington now appears reluctant to contain one of its most immediate consequences: renewed Houthi pressure on Saudi Arabia.

Iran and the Houthis

Iran's regional strategy has long relied

on allied armed groups capable of applying pressure without requiring Tehran to assume full responsibility for every escalation. The Houthis have become one of the most militarily capable actors within this network. They possess missiles, drones, battle-hardened forces and control over substantial parts of Yemen.

Their importance has increased because of geography. Bab Al-Mandab is not simply another maritime passage; it connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean. Roughly 7.4 million barrels of petroleum products passed through the strait each day in June 2026, according to figures cited by Reuters.

Saudi Arabia depends upon secure access to both the Gulf and the Red Sea. If the Strait of Hormuz is threatened by Iran while Bab Al-Mandab comes under greater Houthi pressure, the Kingdom could face simultaneous risks to its eastern and western export routes. Recent attacks on the East-West pipeline demonstrated how quickly a military confrontation can become an economic emergency. Saudi Arabia has had to increase shipments through Gulf terminals and develop alternative arrangements through Oman to maintain export flows.

This affects far more than oil revenue. Higher insurance costs, disrupted supply chains, delayed investment and

fears about infrastructure security can undermine the Gulf's position as a global centre for trade, tourism, finance and technology. These are precisely the sectors on which Saudi Vision 2030 and other Gulf diversification programmes depend.

A missile intercepted over a Saudi city may cause limited physical damage, but images of repeated attacks can still affect investor confidence, airline operations, tourism and international perceptions of stability. Gulf economies therefore require more than military defence. They need credible deterrence and political arrangements that prevent armed groups from continually testing their vulnerabilities.

The electoral factor

Understanding the entire gamut of recent developments, we cannot be oblivious to the domestic politics, currently on full display in Israel, which goes to a vote in October, and the United States that has mid-term elections due a month later. These domestic compulsions have put much pressure on their leaders, Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump, respectively. With their popularity at historic lows, they would go to any extent to give an encouraging opinion before the elections.

In the United States, the November elections are encouraging a different form of caution. The Iran war is unpopu-



lar, fuel prices have increased and President Trump's approval rating has fallen. A recent Reuters/Ipsos poll found that only 34 percent of respondents supported the strikes on Iran, while Democrats had opened a notable lead in congressional voting intentions.

Trump therefore has political reasons to avoid opening another military front in Yemen. He can tell American voters that he is protecting US ships without becoming trapped in another Middle Eastern war. But what is electorally convenient in Washington may be strategi-

cally dangerous for Riyadh.

This produces an extraordinary imbalance: Israel's electoral politics may encourage confrontation with Iran, while America's electoral politics discourage Washington from managing the regional consequences. The Gulf states are left between escalation initiated by others and restraint imposed when they require assistance.

What should Saudi Arabia do?

These are testing times for Saudi Arabia. In other words, it has been jolted

out of its comfort zone to take things in stride and decide a course that would chart a new path to self-reliance and a security infrastructure with less support from the outside. For now, it needs America, as its intelligence, military technology, logistics, and missile-defence systems remain difficult to replace. But the Kingdom can no longer base its security on assumptions or personal understandings with individual US presidents.

Besides, Riyadh will do well to talk to Washington about its commitments. The two countries need a clearly defined security framework covering missile attacks, threats to shipping, critical infrastructure and armed groups operating with external support.

Yet, Riyadh will do well to continue developing independent defence capabilities, particularly multilayered air and missile defence, drone interception, electronic warfare, cyber protection and domestic production of ammunition and interceptors.

It must strengthen the regional defense coordination within the Gulf Cooperation Council while deepening carefully selected partnerships with countries such as Pakistan, Türkiye, France, Britain, Egypt and China. Diversification should complement—not merely replace—the American relationship.

Finally, Saudi Arabia needs a unified po-

litical and military strategy for Yemen. Air strikes alone cannot produce a durable settlement, but negotiations conducted from a position of vulnerability could institutionalise Houthi coercion. Any agreement must include enforceable restrictions on missiles and drones, protection for Saudi territory and shipping, and a political framework acceptable to Yemen's recognised institutions and major communities.

Dialogue with Iran must continue. This should not be based on trust, which is presently scarce, but on geography and mutual vulnerability. Riyadh and Tehran need mechanisms to prevent miscalculation, protect energy installations and separate their bilateral relationship from fluctuations in US-Iranian and Israeli-Iranian tensions.

The Kingdom should accelerate the protection and diversification of export routes, strategic reserves, ports, pipelines, electricity networks and desalination facilities. Economic resilience is now inseparable from national defence.

The Gulf is not witnessing the complete disappearance of American power. It is witnessing something more complicated: the narrowing of the purposes for which that power will be used. Washington increasingly appears prepared to protect its own forces, its shipping and Israel, while expecting Gulf partners to carry a greater share of their own defence.



BRICS

SUMMIT 2026

GROWING INFLUENCE, DIVIDED INTERESTS



By Al-Ummah Desk



BRICS SUMMIT

12 - 13 September 2026 | New Delhi, India





The 18th BRICS Summit, held in New Delhi on September 12, 2026, gave a clarion call for an international order with better representation, more financial autonomy for emerging economies and greater cooperation on international security.

The unanimously adopted New Delhi Declaration addressed issues ranging from United Nations reform and international trade to terrorism, AI and conflicts in the Middle East.

Representing roughly half the world's

population, the bloc has gained momentum, becoming an important platform capable of making an impact on much of the globe. Together, the BRICS nations comprise at least 40% of global GDP and 26% of international trade, a fact that gives leverage to countries seeking a greater voice in global governance. Its expanding economic weight, however, has not automatically translated into political unity.

However, questions were once again raised about whether BRICS would

“ The BRICS meeting in New Delhi called for reform of the United Nations and other global institutions, greater financial independence, and collaboration on security and AI ”

stand together, given that its member states do not always share the same geopolitical interests. Yet, the bloc is expanding despite facing challenges.

Push for a balanced world order

Reform of international institutions featured prominently in the declaration. BRICS reiterated its support for a greater role for Brazil and India in the United Nations, including the Security Council, while acknowledging the positions of China and Russia as permanent members.

The bloc also demanded reforms of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to give emerging and developing economies voting power that better reflects their economic standing. It urged the implementation of the IMF's 16th General Review of Quotas without further delay.

On trade, the leaders called for restoring the World Trade Organization's fully functioning dispute settlement mechanism and opposed unilateral sanctions and carbon border adjustment measures.

These demands reflect a broader concern among emerging economies that existing international institutions have not adequately adapted to changes in the global economic landscape.

Financial independence

One of the summit's closely watched issues was reducing dependence on the US dollar in international transactions. Rather than committing to a common BRICS currency, the declaration encouraged greater use of national currencies in trade settlements and investments. It tasked the BRICS Payment Task Force with advancing cooperation on cross-border payment systems.

The declaration acknowledged that there was no universal approach suitable for every member, reflecting differences over the pace and extent of financial integration.

Conflicts in the Middle East

The summit expressed deep concern over escalating tensions in West Asia, urging maximum restraint and the

protection of civilians, nuclear facilities and critical infrastructure.

On Palestine, BRICS voiced concern over continuing violence in Gaza despite the October 2025 ceasefire agreement. It opposed the forced displacement of Palestinians and reaffirmed support for Palestinian membership in the United Nations and a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital.

The declaration also strongly condemned the April 2025 Pahalgam terrorist attack in India, which killed 26 people. It called for zero tolerance toward terrorism, stronger action against terrorist financing and safe havens, and international cooperation without double standards.

Other regional issues received attention, including the conflicts in Sudan and Syria and the situation in Lebanon. Notably, however, the declaration avoided mentioning the Russia-Ukraine war by name, illustrating the difficulty of securing consensus on politically sensitive questions.

AI and energy security

Artificial intelligence emerged as an important area of cooperation, with leaders committing to advance global AI governance alongside cybersecuri-

ty and measures against cross-border digital crime.

Energy security was another major priority. The declaration emphasized stable energy markets, uninterrupted supplies and the protection of critical infrastructure. It also called for fair and resilient supply chains for critical minerals while respecting resource-rich countries' sovereignty.

Challenges ahead

The New Delhi summit demonstrated BRICS' growing ambition to reshape global economic governance and strengthen cooperation among emerging powers. Nevertheless, its carefully negotiated language on contentious international issues highlighted the limitations of consensus among countries with differing strategic priorities.

As China prepares to assume the bloc's chairship in 2027, the central question is whether BRICS can translate its expanding economic influence and ambitious declarations into coordinated action and meaningful institutional reforms.

Its future significance will depend not merely on the size of its membership or its collective economic strength, but on its ability to turn shared aspirations into practical results.



AT THE HELM: Mr. Khalilur Rahman, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, takes charge as the new President of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

NEW UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY CHIEF CALLS FOR RENEWED TRUST AND UN REFORM



By **Al-Ummah Desk**

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman formally assumed the presidency of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 8 September, placing the restoration of trust, effective multilateralism and institutional transformation at the centre of his presidency.

Dr. Khalilur Rahman, Bangladesh's Foreign Minister, has officially assumed office as President of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). He took the oath of office during the closing plenary of the 80th session at UN Headquarters in New York. This marks the return of a Bangladeshi representative to the helm of the UN General Assembly after nearly four decades.

During the swearing-in ceremony, Khalilur Rahman pledged to discharge his duties with integrity, loyalty, and a clear conscience. Speaking after assuming office, he noted that the multilateral system of the United Nations faces unprecedented tests, yet new opportunities are emerging. While global problems cannot be resolved quickly or easily, he emphasized finding common ground among member states where shared consensus exists.

Historic Victory with 99 Votes

On 2 June this year, in a secret ballot held at UN Headquarters to elect the UNGA's new president, Khalilur Rahman defeated Cyprus candidate Andreas Kakouris, securing 99 votes against Kakouris' 91. A total of 190 votes were cast, with no invalid or abstained votes. The position was allocated to the Asia-Pacific region under the UN's regional rotation system. The 81st session, themed "Restoring Trust,

Managing Transformation: An Effective UN for All," runs from 8 September 2026 to 7 September 2027.

Why It Matters

Khalilur Rahman has assumed office at a time when multiple crises such as the war in Ukraine, conflicts in the Middle East, refugee crises, climate change, development financing deficits, human rights situations, and a crisis of confidence in the multilateral system are posing severe challenges to the UN. Additionally, the process for electing a new UN Secretary-General toward the end of 2026 will add considerable weight. Consequently, his presidential year holds immense political significance for the UN.

The Six Priorities

Khalilur Rahman outlined the following six key priorities in his vision statement, centered around rebuilding global trust in the UN:

- **Global Peace and Security:** Mr. Khalilur Rahman emphasizes preventive diplomacy, political solutions, and peacebuilding. He intends to leverage Bangladesh's extensive experience in UN peacekeeping, noting in his vision that over 200,000 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have served in UN missions.
- **Sustainable Development Goals**

(SDGs): Accelerating the implementation of SDGs.

- **Climate Change & Environmental Protection:** Since Bangladesh is vulnerable to climate change, he makes it a priority to amplify the discourse on climate financing, climate resilience, and the interests of affected nations in international forums.
- **Human Rights, Refugees & Migration:** He commits to raising the voices of stateless communities, such as the Rohingyas, within the UN and advocates for the rights of stateless populations.
- **Bridging the Technological Divide:** He seeks to muster global support for the governance of AI, digital technologies, science, and technology. Bridging the technological divide between developed and developing nations.
- **The UN Reform:** In his view, the UN must be made more compatible, effective, and inclusive in alignment with contemporary global realities. He advocates for meaningful reforms that go beyond formal procedures to restore public trust in the institution.

Guiding Principles: Free from External Dictation

Before taking office, Khalilur Rahman made it clear in discussions with the media that he would not accept direc-

tives from outside the UN in executing his presidential duties. He underscored working through dialogue, cooperation, and consensus among member states. Open communication is also being highlighted as a hallmark of his leadership. He expressed his intention to maintain regular, two-way communication with journalists while serving as a bridge-builder among different nations.

The Goal of Making the UN ‘Fit for the Future’

After assuming office, Khalilur Rahman integrated a new dimension with his previously declared concept of “Restoring Trust and Managing Transformation”—namely, making the UN fit for the future. He believes the realities of the modern world are vastly different from the context in which the UN was established in 1945. Therefore, the UN’s structures and operations must be made far more effective to tackle contemporary conflicts, technology, climate change, economic disparities, and humanitarian crises.

Expectations for Bangladesh

Bangladesh would leverage his diplomatic experience and position to establish just and balanced positions amid various global crises.

Besides the six priorities stated above, Dhaka would take this occasion to am-

plify the voice of the Global South. Bangladesh's campaign heavily emphasized the interests of developing and climate-vulnerable nations, multilateralism, and international cooperation. Consequently, discussions surrounding the shared interests of developing countries could gain fresh momentum during his tenure.

This is in addition to strengthening Bangladesh's standing in UN peacekeeping. A massive contingent of Bangladeshi peacekeepers has served in various UN missions for years. Reforms in peacekeeping, safety, the participation of women peacekeepers, and recognition of peacekeepers' roles are vital for Bangladesh.

Challenges Ahead

Khalilur Rahman's biggest test will be to build consensus in a deeply polarized world. The Russia-Ukraine war, the Gaza and Middle Eastern conflicts, mutual friction among major powers, trade and technology competition, and crises of confidence in multilateral institutions could severely complicate General Assembly operations.

In this scenario, the effectiveness of his envisioned "bridge-building" role will serve as the ultimate test. As General Assembly President, his primary strength will lie in fostering an environment for dialogue, bringing conflicting parties to the same table, and forging

paths to compromise.

Thus, at the outset of the UN's 81st session, Khalilur Rahman's appointment is not merely a matter of prestige for Bangladesh; it represents a major test of both his personal diplomatic acumen and Bangladesh's multilateral diplomacy.

With a Bangladeshi representative sitting in the UNGA presidential seat after four decades, national expectations run high—that this opportunity will not remain a mere symbolic achievement, but will instead forge new frontiers for effective international action concerning the Rohingya crisis, climate change, peacekeeping, development finance, and the interests of the Global South. At the same time, if the UN advances even slightly toward trust, dialogue, and multilateral cooperation under Khalilur Rahman's leadership, that will mark the greatest success of Bangladesh fulfilling this historic responsibility.

UNGA represents 193 member states worldwide, with each country holding a single vote. It is the primary international forum for discussion and decision-making on global peace and security, development, human rights, and international law. Although most General Assembly decisions are not legally binding, its political significance in shaping international public opinion and global diplomacy is immense.

WHEN WAR CRIMINALS BECOME HEROES

Mladic's funeral as a hero reflected a deeper concern: the glorification of war criminals is an affront to memory


By Issam Chehadat
Managing Editor
Al-Ummah Arabic Journal




The Balkans continue to demonstrate, with every passing crisis, that their geography carries a memory that never sleeps. At the beginning of September 2026, the funeral of Ratko Mladic, who was sentenced to life imprisonment by international justice for genocide and crimes against humanity, reopened a wound that had been thought to have healed.





Ratko Mladic - The Butcher of Bosnia.

“ The European Union threatened to suspend Serbia’s accession negotiations, reaffirming a clear principle: glorifying war criminals constitutes a direct rejection of the values of peace ”

The condemnation expressed by the international community, particularly by Türkiye, after Mladic’s funeral as a hero was not a fleeting reaction to these events. It reflected a deeper concern: the glorification of war criminals is not merely an affront to memory; it also shows that tensions have never truly been resolved, but merely frozen.

Tito’s Yugoslavia was built around the slogan of “brotherhood and unity,” an officially imposed political principle intended to merge six republics and several nationalities into a single identity. This slogan could in no way substitute for a genuine experience of reconciliation. Rather, it constituted an administrative measure that forcibly froze historical wounds and created the illusion of an apparent peace, which eventually turned into a time bomb, culminating in the abrupt economic collapse of the 1980s. It was then that the failure of the state became apparent, and the ruling elites attempted to conceal it behind radical nationalist rhetoric under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic.

The invocation of the 1389 Battle of



Kosovo as though it had taken place the day before revived an old logic of victimhood, projected onto contemporary Bosnian Muslims through the figure of the invading Turk, from whom revenge had to be exacted. This was a form of political engineering that exploited collective memory in order to evade the failure to manage the state, the collapse of its economy, and its inability to fulfill its promises to guarantee its citizens a dignified life.

Manufacture of barbarism

This phenomenon can be explained through two mechanisms. The first is transgenerational trauma: the group adopts a mentality of perpetual victimhood that grants it an absolute moral right to preventive violence. The second

is the dilution of responsibility: individual guilt dissolves into notions of national duty and obedience to superior orders. In this climate charged with tension, the neighbor becomes a spy and the child a biological threat that must be eradicated.

We would hope that today's generations would distance themselves from those who took up arms and committed crimes, wherever they occurred, in the Balkans as well as in Syria, for example. The Serbian state should have worked to raise a generation reconciled with its history, aware that this man belongs both to its history and to its country, but that he remains a war criminal who does not deserve to be glorified. Condemning crimes does not mean condemning



an entire people, just as belonging to a people cannot justify absolving or glorifying its criminals. It is the responsibility of the state to help build a memory that acknowledges the crime without passing its guilt on to generations that did not commit it.

Strategy of systematic erasure

The operations carried out by the Army of Republika Srpska under Mladic's command were not merely military operations, but a project based on a dual process of erasure: cultural erasure, through the burning of libraries and the destruction of mosques and bridges, and the biological erasure of the population, through the execution of men and boys in order to prevent the continuation of future generations. In Sarajevo as in Srebrenica, this amounted to demographic engineering in its most extreme form: altering the composition of a territory at the cost of the blood of its inhabitants.

Bosnian Croats were not strangers to this logic. Between 1993 and 1994, after an initial alliance with the Muslims, they became their adversaries. By shelling Mostar's Old Bridge, they were not targeting a military objective, but a cultural symbol that the attackers sought to erase, along with every trace of the Ottomans from the memory of the city.

Amid this collapse, Alija Izetbegovic emerged as a rare intellectual and political leader. He upheld the principle of

fighting without abandoning his civilizational identity. He did not allow places of worship to be destroyed or Serbian and Croatian civilians to be targeted in retaliation for the massacres committed against his Muslim people. When he was forced to sign the Dayton Accords in 1995 in order to save his people from total extermination, he accepted a bitter peace as a rational choice, bringing the bloodshed to an end and carrying the struggle for justice onto its own terrain.

Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot be analyzed independently of its regional dynamics. Türkiye's role must be understood within this context according to its own logic, not as an expression of emotion, but as a structured policy resting on three factors. The first is historical: centuries of Ottoman Muslim presence have left an architectural, religious, and cultural legacy in the Balkans. The second is demographic: Bosniaks maintain ties with contemporary Turkish-Islamic identity. The third is strategic: Bosnia constitutes a gateway to a regional balance in the Western Balkans.

At the same time, new balances of power are taking shape, making the Republic of Serbia a foothold for external influence that intersects with separatist projects. This polarization does not serve stability. On the contrary, it turns the Balkans into an arena of competition and keeps the wound open.

Conditional reconciliation

Mladic's funeral showed that the political freezing of a conflict does not mean that it has healed within society. The European Union threatened to suspend Serbia's accession negotiations, reaffirming a clear principle: glorifying war criminals and denying massacres constitutes a direct rejection of the values of peace.

Preserving the memory of the crime and its victims is essential to preventing its repetition, particularly by criminalizing genocide denial and creating places of memory that shield historical truth from political interests and manipulation. This memory must enlighten generations that did not experience the war, rather than passing collective guilt on to them.

From the perspective of Izetbegovic, genocide is not merely a political crime, but an existential sin committed against the dignity with which God has honored the human being. In his work «Escape to Freedom,» Izetbegovic categorically rejects any neutrality in the face of injustice. From this perspective, glorifying a war criminal is not simply a political opinion, but a siding with evil and a betrayal of moral clarity. It is a double sin: a sin against the victims, by denying their dignity and disregarding the blood they shed, and a sin against the new generations, by sowing the seeds of vengeance in the consciousness of those born after the war.

HIJAB BAN MOVE SPARKS BACKLASH



By Al-Ummah Desk



French activists and citizens did not wait for the far right to come to power before organizing a response. Instead, they moved to address preemptively what they see as threats to ban the hijab in public spaces, launching a solidarity campaign on social media under the hashtag #FoulardPourTous ("Hijab for All").

The campaign followed statements by National Rally MP Jean-Philippe Tanguy in an interview with BFM TV on 30 August, in which he said that the party intends to impose a fine on people who wear the Islamic headscarf in public places if Marine Le Pen wins the 2027 presidential election. The remarks triggered widespread political and legal controversy. Le Pen subsequently confirmed her willingness to introduce legislation aimed at combating what she calls “Islamism,” which could include criminalizing the wearing of the Islamic headscarf in public spaces.

The proposal would impose financial penalties on women who wear the hijab. In the National Rally’s rhetoric, the hijab is presented not simply as a choice of dress, but as a manifestation of an ideology that the party considers incompatible with the values of the French Republic. The party has also justified its position by arguing that it seeks to counter the coercion of women to wear the hijab in some countries. Critics reject this rationale, arguing that it conflates coercive practices in some contexts with women’s voluntary religious observance elsewhere.

The statements prompted a backlash on social media, where French women—both Muslim and non-Mus-

“Hijab for All: A Wave of Solidarity in France Rejects Far-Right Threats”

lim—began posting photographs and videos of themselves wearing hijabs or covering their heads with scarves. Their posts expressed solidarity with veiled women and opposition to what they regarded as an infringement on freedom of choice and individual rights. Men also joined the campaign, while some participants used artificial-intelligence tools to create images conveying the same message.

The campaign’s objective goes beyond symbolic solidarity. Some participants have said they would be willing to wear the hijab regularly in public if a law banning it were enacted. They argue that widespread collective adoption of the hijab could become a form of civil disobedience, making enforcement of such a ban considerably more difficult. One proposal circulating among participants has been described as a “camouflage protocol,” in which widespread head-covering would make it more difficult to distinguish between women who wear the hijab for religious reasons and those who cover their heads for other reasons.

Between Individual Freedom and Religious Symbols

Messages shared as part of the campaign emphasize that the issue is not solely about defending religious dress, but also about the broader principle of an individual's right to determine their appearance and practice their beliefs. Participants argue that while the state may establish rules governing conduct in certain circumstances, it should not dictate what women may wear simply because a particular form of clothing is associated with a religious belief.

Some participants have also pointed out that head coverings are not exclusively Islamic. Covering the head has existed in various religious and cultural traditions for centuries, including traditions that predate Islam. This raises practical questions about how legislation would define an "Islamic hijab" and distinguish it from other forms of head covering.

The question has surfaced in previous political and media debates. European Parliament member François Calvo-Philippe, for example, questioned how a proposed ban could determine which forms of head covering would fall within its scope and how authorities would distinguish an Islamic hijab from head coverings worn for other

religious, cultural, medical, or practical reasons—including by women who cover their heads because of hair loss resulting from cancer treatment.

An Issue That Transcends the Hijab

The issue is particularly sensitive in France, a country whose political system places strong emphasis on *laïcité*, or secularism, and which has one of Europe's largest Muslim populations. Any attempt to impose a blanket ban on the hijab would therefore likely provoke a far-reaching debate over the limits of French secularism and the relationship between the state, religion, and individual freedoms.

The National Rally, meanwhile, presents the issue as part of its broader campaign against what it calls "Islamism." Its critics argue that targeting the hijab places Muslim women at the center of a political and electoral struggle and risks undermining principles of religious freedom and equality before the law.

As the political debate has intensified, some of the most visible reactions have emerged outside the political establishment through the #Foulard-PourTous campaign. Social media has become a space for solidarity, bringing together Muslim and non-Muslim

women, as well as men, around the idea that defending another person's freedom does not require sharing their beliefs. Rather, it requires recognizing their right to make their own choices.

The debate over a possible hijab ban has consequently expanded beyond the question of a piece of clothing. It has become part of a broader discussion about individual freedom, identity, secularism, the limits of state authority over the body and personal appearance, and the capacity of citizens to resist laws they regard as infringements on fundamental rights.

If the National Rally continues to pursue restrictions on the hijab, the question may extend beyond whether such legislation could be enacted. It could also become a question of how such a law would be enforced in a society where increasing numbers of citizens might choose to wear head coverings in solidarity with women targeted by the legislation.

From an Islamic legal perspective, the hijab is not merely a social custom or cultural symbol. It is understood within Islamic jurisprudence as a religious obligation for adult Muslim women, based on interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah. For Muslim women who observe it, wearing the hijab consti-



tutes an act of religious practice and an expression of faith. Its significance, from this perspective, is not dependent on whether the woman lives in a Muslim-majority or non-Muslim-majority society.

At the heart of the controversy, therefore, lies a fundamental question: where should the state's authority over public life end, and where should an individual's freedom of conscience, religious practice, and personal expression begin?



AFRICAN MOVE AT UN SHOWS U.S. ITS TRUE SIZE

By Al-Ummah Desk



A United Nations resolution on 4 Sept. 2006 adopted a new world map that drew ire from Washington, as it shows the African continent bigger and North America and Europe shrinking. The vote was supported by 164 countries, while the United States voted against it and six other states abstained.

Mercator projection



Equal Earth projection



African Union countries, led by Togo, moved the resolution, “Correct the Map,” aiming to address a colonial-era injustice that has visually shrunk Africa for 450 years, shaping how the continent is perceived in media, education, and policy around the world.

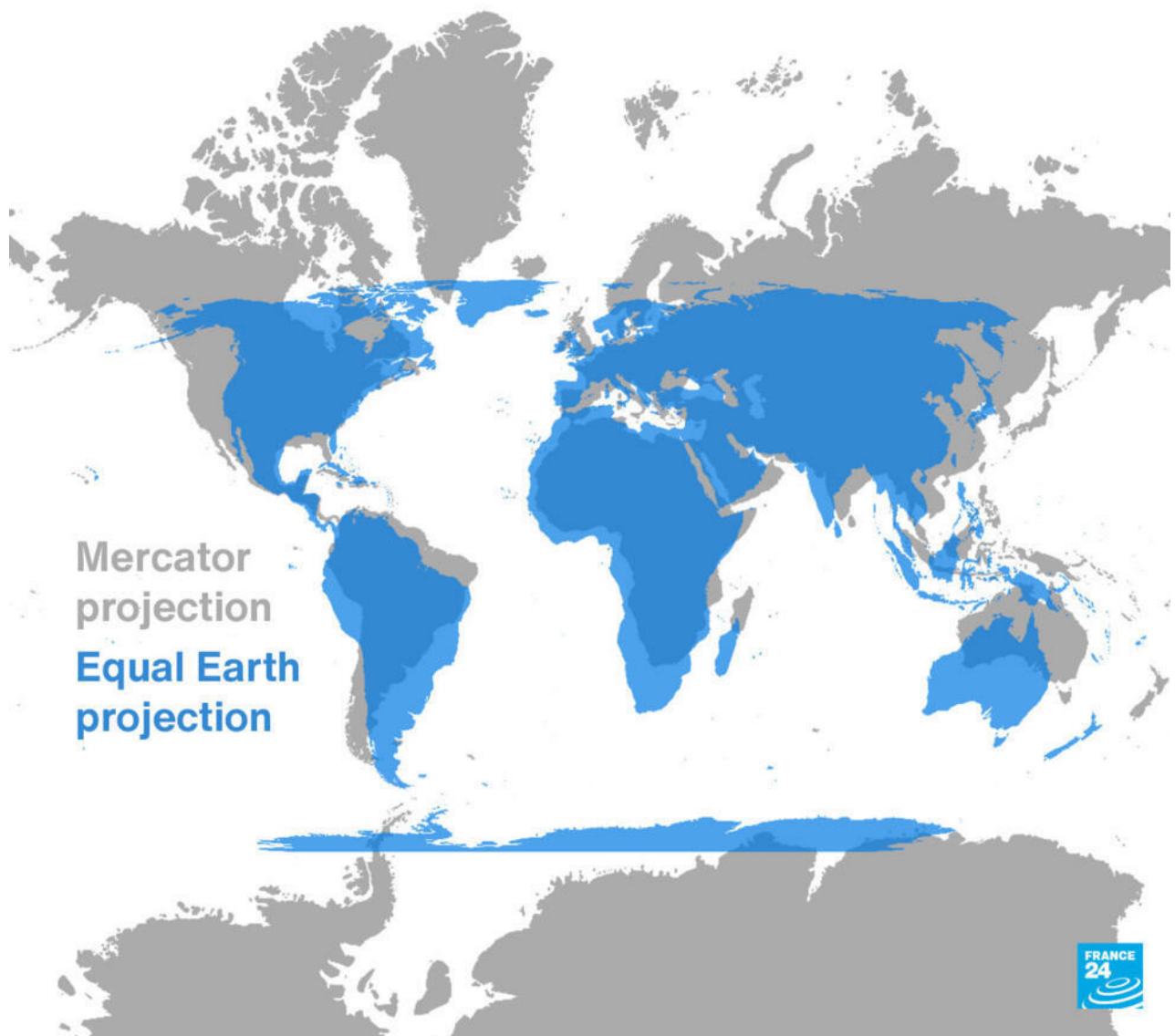
The new map — known as the Equal Earth cartographic projection — improves “the accuracy of the cartographic representation of the world” by seeking “a more accurate representation” of continental landmasses, the resolution said.

The UN General Assembly took this ma-

jor step toward correcting distortions in commonly used world maps, particularly the Mercator projection, which misrepresents the relative size of continents and makes Africa and other equatorial regions appear smaller than they are. The resolution called on countries and international organizations to adopt more accurate map projections for representing areas and to gradually move away from the Mercator projection, which has remained one of the most widely used mapping systems for centuries.

Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator developed the projection in 1569 to meet a practical need in maritime navigation. It represents straight lines on a map as corresponding to compass directions, making it easier for sailors to plot their courses. However, this advantage came at the expense of accurately representing land areas, as regions near the poles appear significantly larger than they actually are.

The effects of this distortion are particularly evident in the representation of Africa. Under the Mercator projection, Africa appears similar in size to Greenland, even though Africa is approximately 14 times larger. African countries argue that this distortion is not merely a technical issue, but has contributed over decades to the “symbolic shrinking” of Africa and reinforced an imbalanced image of the world in the collective imagination.



Foreign Minister Robert Dussey of Togo said, "Maps shape our understanding of the world." They "guide education, nourish the imagination, and influence collective perceptions," he said.

The minister said that presenting a distorted image of the world can reinforce perceptions that are passed down from one generation to the next. He stressed

that the initiative is not directed against any particular country or civilization, but rather seeks to promote knowledge based on scientific accuracy and equal dignity among peoples.

Meanwhile, France officially announced that it would stop using the Mercator projection to represent the world map, making it one of the most prominent

countries to join the initiative led by African Union states. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said that the need to represent the world accurately begins with the way it is mapped, noting that cartographic distortions become embedded in people's perceptions and that the time has come to correct them.

France is moving toward adopting the Eckert IV projection, which represents areas around the equator—including Africa, Latin America, and South Asia—in proportions closer to reality, while reducing the apparent size of regions at higher latitudes, such as Europe, the United States, and Russia. This projection is similar to the equal-area projection recommended by the Togolese initiative submitted to the United Nations, although France has not adopted that exact projection.

The United States slammed the resolution. "Instead of focusing on genuine problems... this body is debating map projects from the 16th century and their role in promoting reparations and cognitive justice," US representative Yaryna Ferencevych said ahead of the vote.

The initiative to revise world maps originated in Togo, which the African Union tasked in April 2025 with advocating for the project. It received the backing of all 55 African countries. The "Correct the Map" campaign was launched in 2024 to reconsider how the world is represented, based on the premise that maps are not merely neutral technical tools,

but also influence how people perceive themselves and their place in the world.

The campaign is also linked to a broader debate in Africa concerning the continent's colonial legacy and unequal forms of representation. Although the final wording of the resolution toned down direct references to historical grievances and colonialism, the text maintains that cartographic distortions have contributed to diminishing Africa's symbolic significance in the collective imagination and systems of recognition.

The UN resolution is expected to encourage UN agencies, educational institutions, and others to adopt more accurate projections gradually. This could affect the maps used in school textbooks, international reports, media content, and digital materials.

Nevertheless, the Mercator projection is likely to remain widely used, as there is no geometric method of representing the spherical surface of the Earth on a flat map without introducing some degree of distortion.

Correcting this map anomaly is not just a technical issue, but it reflects a broader debate about how we represent and understand the world. For African countries, correcting geographical proportions can become part of a wider effort to address imbalances that traditional world maps have entrenched in the collective consciousness.

CASH: A SECURE AND CONVENIENT PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR BUSINESSES



By Md. Mashiur Rahman

Business and Economic Analyst



days and up to a maximum of one year. It would facilitate the purchase and sale of goods and services by allowing buyers to pay with digital units issued by banks, financial institutions or fintech companies. Designed primarily to settle payments arising from credit sales, dCash could support secure and transferable transactions in both business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) markets.

Description of the Business Idea

According to IDLC Finance Ltd., Bangladesh's supply-chain finance market is worth approximately BDT 4,000 crore (\$325.4 million), including financing provided by banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs). The market has considerable room to grow. Globally, the supply-chain finance market was projected to reach about \$5.70 billion in 2025, indicating significant opportunities in this sector. However, supply-chain finance providers often face shortages of deposits and capital, even though this type of financing is generally short term, with a duration of less than one year.

Digital Cash (dCash) is a proposed digital payment instrument issued against receivables to support short-term financing, typically for periods of 30 to 120

In response to these challenges, we have designed an innovative product called Digital Cash. Under the proposed model, a fintech company, bank or finance company would issue digital units or points to a supplier on behalf of a customer. The units would be valid for a short period and backed by receivables equal to or greater than their value. During this period, the issuer would charge a service fee of up to 0.50% per quarter on the units, instead of the regular annual interest rate of about 15%. The following example explains how the system would work.

For a credit sale worth Tk 100, the company would issue 100 digital units to the seller on behalf of the buyer. The seller could transfer these units to its suppliers, who could then use them for further purchases within the system. If the credit period were 90 days, the holder could redeem the units for Tk 100 at maturity. The company would recover the amount from the original buyer. If the buyer could not pay because the goods remained unsold, the fintech company could provide financing secured by the goods, a post-dated cheque, a guarantee or another approved form of security.

A blockchain-based or other secure digital ledger would record transactions and maintain the balance of units within the system. The proposed model could

“ SubHeadline:

A proposed receivables-backed digital instrument could help businesses settle credit purchases, circulate value through supply chains and reduce their reliance on costly short-term loans ”

ease short-term liquidity pressures and lower financing costs by replacing high interest charges with a modest service fee. It could also expand business activity and support job creation. The participating fintech company, bank or NBFI would provide the digital infrastructure for supply-chain finance providers and their customers.

Product and Service Description

Digital Cash (dCash) is a proposed transferable digital instrument issued against receivables for periods of 30 to 120 days and up to a maximum of one year. Buyers would use digital units issued by a bank, financial institution or fintech company to pay for goods and services. A secure blockchain-based or digital ledger, controlled by the issuing

company, would record transactions and maintain the integrity of the system. Subject to government approval, the issuer could eventually introduce physical digital-cash notes with expiry dates and holographic security features.

Each dCash unit would carry an expiry date linked to the expected cash-conversion cycle of the underlying receivable. If the original buyer failed to pay at maturity, the issuing or financing company would pay the holder and assume the buyer's credit risk. When appropriate, the company could insure that risk. The system is intended mainly for payments arising from credit sales in both B2C and B2B markets.

Market Analysis

Bangladesh has faced persistent liquidity pressures, with several Islamic banks particularly affected. A Dhaka Tribune report dated June 27, 2024, discussed the continuing liquidity crisis. Separately, the Daily Sun reported on November 4, 2024, that the Bangladesh Bank governor estimated Tk 2 lakh crore would be needed to recover losses caused by financial misconduct.

The proposed dCash system would help businesses obtain goods on credit and continue operating during the credit period without taking a conventional short-term bank loan. The seller would pay the supply-chain finance provider a service fee of up to 0.50% per quarter

rather than interest. By comparison, the annual interest rate for a private company is about 15%, or 3.75% per quarter.

Lower financing costs could reduce production and selling expenses and, in turn, help lower prices. Increased business activity could also generate additional value-added tax (VAT) and direct-tax revenue for the government while supporting employment.

Marketing and Promotion

The marketing strategy would focus on meeting customer needs profitably through direct outreach to individuals and organizations. The proposed technology would serve as an ecosystem for existing supply-chain finance companies that already have established customer bases. These companies could promote dCash through social, electronic and print media. Because the concept is new and practical, it may also attract media coverage, creating additional public awareness.

Competitor Analysis

The proposed model appears to have few direct competitors because existing supply-chain finance companies do not currently use this type of digital instrument to address liquidity shortages. However, the competitive environment could change as banks, fintech companies and other financial institutions develop similar products.

Risk Management

1. Risk: Verifying the original buyer's creditworthiness and credit history may be difficult.

Mitigation: The bank or fintech company would conduct know-your-customer (KYC) checks using the prescribed procedures and obtain all required supporting documents.

2. Risk: The original buyer may default.

Mitigation: The issuer could require security from the original buyer, such as hypothecation of goods, a security cheque, credit insurance or collateral appropriate to the level and nature of the risk.

3. Risk: Developing secure, reliable and user-friendly web-based software would require substantial investment.

Mitigation: Entering the market early could give the company a pioneering position. Development should proceed in stages, with adequate funding for security testing, system reliability and ease of use.

4. Risk: Customers may be unfamiliar with the system.

Mitigation: Although dCash would be new, many customers already use smartphones, internet banking and other digital services. Clear instructions,

demonstrations and customer support could help users adopt the system.

5. Risk: The proposal does not specify a maximum financing limit.

Mitigation: The bank or fintech company would issue digital units instead of providing a cash-credit facility. The value of the units could be capped at 90% of the underlying receivable or invoice value.

6. Risk: The system could face operational and cybersecurity threats, including hacking, fraud and service disruption.

Mitigation: dCash would operate through a controlled application and a closed transaction record, limiting transfers outside the approved network. The issuer would still need strong cybersecurity controls, user authentication, transaction monitoring, data backups and a tested incident-response plan.

The proposed Digital Cash (dCash) system could help businesses manage working capital while enabling financial institutions to offer a lower-cost form of short-term financing. If supported by effective regulation, sound credit assessment and strong cybersecurity controls, it could also improve transparency in commercial transactions, strengthen revenue collection and contribute to sustainable economic growth.



PROF. SHAHJAHAN KHAN HONORED WITH ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL



By Dr Zahirul Hoque

University of Southern Queensland,
Australia



Emeritus Professor Shahjahan Khan, a prominent Bangladeshi-Australian academic and community leader, was

formally presented with the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) by Queensland Governor Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM at Government House in Brisbane on 17 September 2026.

The announcement of the award was made earlier on Australia Day, 26 January 2026, by Governor-General Sam Mostyn AC, honoring him for “service to the Islamic community of Australia,” recognizing decades of leadership and voluntary service in Queensland

and nationally.

Professor Khan has combined a distinguished international academic career in statistics with more than three decades of community, multicultural and interfaith service in Australia.

Academic Career

Professor Khan migrated to Australia in 1992 after completing his PhD in Mathematical Statistics at Western University in Canada and joined the University of Southern Queensland, now UniSQ, in January 1993. During his long career at UniSQ, he became the founding Professor of Statistics and held a range of academic, research and leadership roles. He established and led the university's Statistical Consulting Unit and served on its Academic Council, program review and research committees and multicultural bodies.

He supervised 20 PhD students and has published more than 260 journal articles, delivered research workshops and keynote addresses, and presented extensively at international conferences. His books include *Meta-Analysis Methods*, published by Springer, as well as a book on statistical methods and models. He is also the founding chief editor of the *Journal of Applied Probability and Statistics*.



Professor Khan has received numerous international awards for his contribution to statistics, including the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) Gold Medal in 2001, the Islamic Countries Society of Statistical Sciences (ISOSS) Gold Medal in 2007 and the Q M Hossain Gold Medal from the Bangladesh Statistical Association in 2012. He has also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indian Association for Reliability and Statistics. As president of ISOSS, he helped organize international statistics conferences in countries including Malaysia, Egypt, Qatar, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia.

UniSQ appointed him Professor Emeritus in 2022 and established the Pro-

“Originally from Bangladesh, the scholar is credited with supervising 20 PhD students, publishing more than 260 journal articles, and authoring books including *Meta-Analysis Methods*”

Professor Shahjahan Khan Scholarship for international students in 2023.

From 2022 until January 2026, Professor Khan served as Vice-Chancellor of the Asian University of Bangladesh. He was also elected an Expatriate Fellow of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences.

Building Muslim community

Alongside his academic career, Professor Khan played a major role in developing Muslim institutions and multicultural relations in Toowoomba, Queensland’s largest inland city. As founding president of the Islamic Society of Toowoomba and founding chairman of the Toowoomba Islamic Charitable Trust, he helped acquire a former church building that became Toowoomba’s first mosque.

He also helped establish the Toowoom-

ba Annual International Food Festival and Mosque Open Day, bringing together thousands of people from Muslim and wider communities through food, friendship and interfaith engagement.

When the Garden City Mosque was damaged in two arson attacks in 2015, Professor Khan led efforts to rebuild the mosque, working closely with Muslims and non-Muslims and helping raise funds from across Australia.

The purpose-built mosque that emerged from those efforts can accommodate more than 500 worshippers and incorporates environmentally sustainable features including rainwater collection and solar power.

Professor Khan has consistently promoted interfaith understanding and engagement with civic and religious leaders, including parliamentarians, mayors, councilors, bishops, university leaders and government officials. His contribution to Toowoomba was recognized by the Toowoomba Chronicle in 2021 when it included him among the city’s most influential people.

Service beyond Toowoomba

Professor Khan’s community leadership has extended across Queensland

and Australia.

He has served with the Islamic Council of Queensland and the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and was a board member of Muslim Community Cooperative Australia (MCCA).

At UniSQ, he chaired the Multicultural Staff Network from 2013 to 2019, organizing multicultural and multifaith seminars, conferences and community events.

He also established and coordinated the UniSQ Islamic Centre from 2001 to 2013 and contributed to the establishment of Muslim prayer facilities within the university's multifaith precinct.

Professor Khan has been active in initiatives promoting social cohesion and opposing racism, extremism and community division.

His humanitarian work has included supporting refugees, women, young people and other vulnerable members of the community, as well as helping organize fundraising appeals following cyclones, bushfires and other disasters in Australia and overseas.

Over the years, his community contribution has been recognized through a number of awards, including the Queensland Government Cultur-

“ Professor Khan played a major role in developing Muslim institutions and multicultural relations in Toowoomba, Queensland's largest inland city ”

al Diversity Ambassador Award, Queensland Police Service Community Service Award, Queensland Multicultural Service Award and Islamic Council of Queensland Community Service Award.

He has also received UniSQ awards recognizing research publication, community service, cultural diversity and inclusion.

Professor Khan has continued to contribute to public debate and professional publications, including writing on higher education and the development of research culture in Bangladesh.

His career has been distinguished by two parallel areas of service: an international academic career in statistics and decades of voluntary leadership within Australia's Muslim and multicultural communities.



Email: info@al-ummah.org

Website: www.al-ummah.org