

Dhaka to seek broader backing for UNGA presidency during Commonwealth FMs' meeting

March 7, 2026

Online Desk : Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman will attend the 26th Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM) at Lancaster House in London on Sunday, an event that is also being viewed as an opportunity for Bangladesh to seek broader support for its candidature for the Presidency of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir will accompany the foreign minister during the five-day official visit to London, a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told UNB on Saturday, March 7.

During the visit, the foreign minister and the adviser are expected to hold a series of bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the CFAMM with their counterparts from participating countries. Bangladesh has been actively engaging with different countries to garner support for its candidature and has already secured broad backing from member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and several other partners beyond the bloc, a diplomatic source told UNB.

“Bangladesh will definitely seize the opportunity in London,” he said. The CFAMM will begin with a Retreat from 10:00-13:00 and a formal meeting from 14:00-16:00 on Sunday (London time). Representing the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, the Minister of Finance of the Independent State of Samoa, Mulipola Anarosa Ale Molio'o, will welcome Foreign Affairs Ministers to the retreat and offer remarks. Dhaka sees messages from Myanmar's FM, AA chief positively. The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shirley Botchwey, will then offer her remarks. A total of 56 independent countries make up the Commonwealth in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific and 33

of the world's 42 small states are Commonwealth members. This CFAMM is significant as it will signal the start of Commonwealth Day activities, marked every year on the second Monday in March. This 26th meeting will bring together Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers to address the role of the Commonwealth in a fast-changing international landscape; and explore impactful and transformative solutions to unlock opportunities together for shared prosperity across the Commonwealth, in the face of a fractured global climate.

It is the first time that Foreign Ministers will come together within the platform of an executive retreat, which will provide a plan of action for a bold, practical Commonwealth, according to the Commonwealth headquarters. This will be Secretary-General Botchwey's second meeting with Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers at CFAMM. Ministers will shape policy priorities leading up to the 28th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), to be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 1-4 November 2026. Antigua and Barbuda will provide updates on the CHOGM preparations; consider reform proposals; and discuss Member Country situations.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) is meeting at Marlborough House, London today (Saturday) in advance of the 26th CFAMM. Together, these meetings will provide a vital platform for Ministers to reflect on how Commonwealth countries and the Secretariat can work together to defend multilateralism in a challenging global context, harnessing the Commonwealth Advantage driving global innovation, trade and investment – as the impetus for a more prosperous Commonwealth.

Palestine has recently withdrawn its candidature for the Presidency of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for the 2026–2027 term. Following the withdrawal of the Palestinian candidature, Bangladesh will now compete with Cyprus. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has nominated Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman for the position. The election of the President of the United Nations

General Assembly for the eighty first session will be held on June 2 in the General Assembly Hall, UNHQs, in line with Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure.

In accordance with the established regional rotation, the President of the eighty first session of the General Assembly will be elected from the Asia Pacific Group. The President of the eightieth session of the General Assembly, Annalena Baerbock will convene the informal interactive dialogues with the candidates in May 2026. Bangladesh last held the prestigious position in 1986 (1986-87), when the then Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury was elected as President of the 41st General Assembly. Forty years later, Bangladesh is seeking to reclaim the post. The 81st session of the UNGA will open on September 8, 2026, with the high-level General Debate beginning on September 22, 2026.

Commonwealth Day : Meanwhile, Commonwealth Day 2026 will be celebrated across the Commonwealth on Monday. Commonwealth Day is an annual celebration observed by people all over the Commonwealth in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, the Pacific and Europe. It is the highlight of a week-long series of events and activities happening around the Commonwealth – including faith and civic gatherings, debates, school assemblies, flag-raising ceremonies and cultural events. This year’s theme ‘Unlocking opportunities together for a prosperous Commonwealth,’ highlights how the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth can rally together to face today’s challenges and unlock opportunities that can deliver shared and lasting prosperity for all who live in the Commonwealth – from the smallest, most remote communities to the biggest cities.

The theme for Commonwealth Day 2026 aligns with the 2026 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) theme, ‘Accelerating Partnerships and Investment for a Prosperous Commonwealth.’ CHOGM 2026 will take place in Antigua and Barbuda from 1-4 November. The Foreign Minister and Prime Minister’s Adviser on Foreign Affairs are expected to return home on March 12.

Source: UNB