
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Evolution of Bangladesh's Peacekeeping Diplomacy: A Critical Assessment of Opportunities and Challenges in Global Security Governance

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| ABSTRACT

Bangladesh has progressed from a minor contributor to United Nations peacekeeping missions in 1988 to a regular participant as one of the top contenders for troop- and police-sending missions to the United Nations system. However, the significance of this engagement has not been the same as the literature implies. This article looks at this evolution as a diplomacy of peacekeeping: conscious transformation of the operational support, expertise, training power, normative pledges, and multilateral cooperation into diplomatic capital and involvement in the world's governance of security. The study employs a qualitative historical-institutional approach to analyze the United Nations peacekeeping doctrines/reform documents, contribution records, ministerial records, Bangladeshi official policy documents, training-institution documents, and peer-reviewed scholarship during the period 1988 – August 2026. The analysis shows that there are four overlapping stages: a first phase of entry into peacekeeping and learning from it (normative), a second of expansion and institutionalization, a third of consolidation in multidimensional peacekeeping, and a fourth of capability diplomacy for governance. It suggests that Bangladesh is now well placed to have a greater opportunity to go beyond a 'volum' approach to influence and to focus on modular capabilities, on digital and information-integrity capacities, on training partnerships, on implementation support for Women, Peace and Security, on environmentally sustainable camps, and on transition and peacebuilding support. Concurrently, however, the move is limited by mandate-resource-implementation asymmetries, liquidity crisis/mission contraction, geopolitical polarization, host-state contestation, rapidly changing technological and information threats, reputational risks and conduct risks, and numerical participation (and authority to set the agenda). The article concludes that Bangladesh's leverage in the future will be less about its ranking in the contribution tables and more about institutionalizing a whole of government peacekeeping diplomacy which connects foreign policy, operational readiness, specialized capabilities, evidence-based performance, gender inclusion, accountability, coalition-building.

| KEYWORDS

Bangladesh, United Nations peacekeeping, peacekeeping diplomacy, global security governance, troop contributing countries and digital peacekeeping.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Peacekeeping is an unusual and unique form of international security in today's world. It's not a military alliance in place or a traditional mechanism for collective enforcement. Instead, it is an adaptive institution where the Secretariat is developed based on the mandates of the Security Council; troop and police contributing countries

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(TCCs/PCCs), host governments, regional organisations, civilian agencies, and local communities work together to determine the practical management of conflict. This distributed nature makes peacekeeping a revealing field of global governance of security: the formal authority is in the hands of the intergovernmental organs of the UN, but implementation requires a more extensive network of actors, which are highly unevenly distributed in terms of resources, consent, legitimacy and expertise.

Bangladesh is a special situation in this architecture. Multilateral peace engagement has a normative basis in its commitment to international peace, respect for sovereignty, peaceful settlement of disputes, and the principles of the UN Charter as outlined in its constitution. Bangladesh joined the UN peacekeeping operations with the deployment of 15 military observers to the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) in 1988. The trajectory that unfolded was an astounding one, both in terms of scale and institutional importance. At the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in 2025, Bangladesh claimed to have participated in over 200,000 in its peacekeeping operations since 1988 and had completed 63 missions, including 5,818 Bangladeshis, 444 of which were women in uniform (Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations, 2025). They are time-specific in nature and will change as rotations happen, as well as when missions are drawn down and new ones are deployed, but they serve to show the extent of Bangladesh's peacekeeping experience.

Previous studies have attributed the presence of Bangladesh in various ways – a mix of normative commitment, international image, professionalization, economic incentives, and civil-military dynamics and foreign-policy visibility (Zaman & Biswas, 2013, 2014, 2017). More recently, it has been shown that peacekeeping also has a feedback effect on domestic security governance, in the sense that practices, norms, and institutional routines are transmitted (Biswas, 2024). An operational readiness, training, force protection, and evolving threat environment policy field is emphasized. While these contributions are valuable, few have addressed the long-term development of Bangladesh's role as a peacekeeper as a diplomacy in a shifting framework of global security governance. Or how has repeated operational contribution been transformed - or not transformed - into influence over the rules, capabilities, partnerships, and future design of peace operations?

This question has taken on added importance given the evolution of peacekeeping. Political Strategy, Performance, Safety and Security, Partnerships, Conduct, Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Strategic Communications, and Technology have been all highlighted in the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) agenda, as well as in A4P+ contents. Peace operations were placed in a new context in the 2023 New Agenda for Peace, where peace operations were set in a context of geopolitical fragmentation, new technologies, transnational threats, and climate pressures. The Department of Peace Operations (UN) commissioned an independent study in 2024 that proposed a people-centred and modular vision of peacekeeping, which called for a new or expanded peacekeeping profile for cybersecurity, border management, organised crime, public health, city security and maritime security, and outlined 30 possible peacekeeping mission models. In 2025, however, missions were constrained by severe liquidity problems when they had to consider significant spending and cuts in their forces, revealing the mismatch between their ambition and resources (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2025a).

Bangladesh is already reacting to this shift in policy, evident in the country's recent policy signals. At the 2025 Ministerial, it committed to the provision of dedicated military and police support, an AI-powered pilot for camp surveillance and response in Wau, an Internet of Things pilot in UNMISS, expanding solar power at camps, dedicated explosive-ordnance-disposal capabilities, and greater representation of women in leadership positions (UN Permanent Mission Bangladesh, 2025). These commitments, from a diplomatic perspective, are important because they move the focus from 'headcount' to 'capability', 'innovation', 'partnership', and 'norm implementation'.

This article thus poses three questions.

1. What are the changes that have taken place in Bangladesh's peacekeeping experience from the contribution of troops in peacekeeping operations to peacekeeping diplomacy after 1988?
2. Second, how can the modernisation of UN peacekeeping provide Bangladesh with a chance to translate its operational credibility to more influence in global security governance?
3. Third, what are the structural, political, financial, technological, and reputation-based limitations to that transition, and what are the needed strategies for overcoming them?

The article suggests that Bangladesh has arrived in the fourth phase of peacekeeping diplomacy and that instead of prestige diplomacy based on volume, capability and governance diplomacy will be the key success elements to build sustained influence. The central issue is not whether Bangladesh can continue to deploy personnel; it is how to systematically transform accumulated operational legitimacy into the provision of new specialized capabilities and coalitions in an agenda-setting way and the influence of Bangladesh's policy agendas, without compromising its performance, accountability, and domestic legitimacy.

2. Conceptual and Analytical Framework

2.1 Peacekeeping Diplomacy

This study uses the term peacekeeping diplomacy to describe the purposeful use of participation in multilateral peace operations to advance foreign-policy credibility, relationships, institutional access and influence over collective-security practices. The concept is not just 'defence diplomac' as it incorporates the following dimensions: police, civilian, political, training, gender, technology and peacebuilding; it is not so comprehensive as general multilateral diplomacy because it is rooted in the peace-operations ecosystem. Peacekeeping diplomacy can take place via five related mechanisms: visible burden-sharing, performance-based reputation, repeated institutional interaction, scarce capability provision, and norm entrepreneurship.

The first two mechanisms establish credibility: a state which repeatedly sends troops and maintains hard missions shows willingness to pay the price. The third establishes access: officers, police, diplomats, and trainers establish re-occurring relationships with UN Headquarters, mission leadership, partner TCCs/PCCs, and host-country actors. The fourth establishes bargaining relevance: Specialized assets like aviation, engineering, medical, explosive-ordnance disposal, formed police, intelligence-support or digital capabilities may be more important to mission effectiveness than marginal additions to the number of infantrymen. The fifth is normative – it is about how states can use their role in operation to advocate on WPS, protection of civilians, safety and security, environmental performance, conduct and the design of future missions.

2.2 Global Security Governance

In contrast, security governance moves beyond the state-centered approach that give a single entity control over the provision of security. In essence, this is the basis of UN peacekeeping. The Security Council gives authorizations; the General Assembly decides on funding; the Secretariat plans and supports operations; contributing countries provide personnel and equipment; host states provide consent and political space; regional organizations provide complementary capabilities; and local actors have an impact on legitimacy and information. Governance outcomes thus result from the harmonization of the activities of various actors who have several sources of authority and different level of control over mandates, resources, human resources, and information.

This is an opportunity and structural imbalance for large TCCs like Bangladesh. The contributors are responsible for a high degree of implementation risks, but they do not have permanent authority to set the agenda in the Security Council. Influencing requires credentials, coalition politics, the negotiation table in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34), ministerial influence, training opportunities, senior appointments, and reports of effectiveness and the promise of services that the UN actually demands.

2.3 Niche, Soft Power and the Conversion of Operational Capital

Niche Diplomacy and soft power reasoning are also used in the analysis. Niche diplomacy emphasizes the importance of using diplomatic resources in policy areas where there is disproportionate visibility, given the fact

that states have limited resources. Niche diplomacy draws attention to the fact that states have limited diplomatic resources, and it is of high importance to use them in policy fields where credibility and specialization bring disproportionately high visibility to the states. Soft Power, on the other hand, is concerned with the process of attraction and legitimacy, not with the process of force. Peacekeeping can generate both. Operational reliability, restraint, engagement with the community, sacrifice and professional conduct can enhance the reputation of a state, but a reputation is not necessarily translated into policy influence. Diplomatic organization, credible policy proposals, and the capacity to bridge the gap between field experience and negotiations on doctrine, mandates, capabilities, and partnerships is required for conversion.

It is therefore not an assertion that peacekeeping diplomacy is a status quo in Bangladesh, but an analytical path that shall be used throughout this article. These four provide a pathway to gaining participation, developing operational capability and experience, gaining diplomatic influence, and increasing participation in global security governance. These 4 provide a route to gaining participation, developing operational capability and experience, gaining diplomatic influence, and increasing participation in global security governance. A failure at any point (misconduct, capability gaps, inadequate learning mechanisms, inadequate policy coordination, lack of political consensus) can break the path.



Figure 1: Analytical Pathway of Peacekeeping Diplomacy

3. Methodology

The study is designed qualitative historical-institutional and document-analysis. This is a good option because the research question is related to the development of an institutionalized diplomatic practice over time, not to the causal effect of one intervention. The period under study covers Bangladesh's first UN peacekeeping mission in 1988 until August 2026 to link historical, participatory expansion with the latest discussions on the future of peacekeeping, digitalization of peacekeeping, and funding of the UN.

The evidence is based on a mix of these four types of material. First, the Capstone Doctrine, A4P and A4P+ documents, the New Agenda for Peace, the 2024 Future of Peacekeeping study and other documents, ministerial minutes, information on peacekeeping contributions, official documents on digital transformation and information integrity, and financial reports. Second, foreign-policy documents related to Article 25, Armed Forces Division documents, Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents, and documents from the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) are among the official sources. Third, the theoretical setting of the case is achieved through the use of peer-reviewed scholarship on Bangladesh's participation, civil-military relations, peacekeeping assemblages, and TCC incentives and mandate implementation. Fourth, the historical UN mission records are used to validate important events like the first entry into UNIIMOG in 1988.

The material was read repeatedly and coded across four dimensions, namely: (1) Normative legitimacy (Values and principles used to justify participation); (2) Operational capability (Scale, specialization, training, technology and mission experience); (3) Diplomatic influence (Coalition roles, ministerial participation, policy advocacy and institutional access); and (4) Governance participation (Contributions to rules, capability standards, reform priorities and new mission models). A second layer of coding was used to find enabling opportunities and constraining challenges. The purpose of the study is not a statistical generalization, but analytical triangulation. A second coding layer was for enabling opportunities and constraining challenges. The purpose is not to get general statistics, but analytical triangulation.

There are three important restrictions. First, official statements can focus more on accomplishments and plans than on any shortfalls. The article therefore considers them in the context of reform and financial documents at the UN

level, as well as in the light of independent scholarship. Second, contribution rankings and counts of deployments fluctuate monthly, and numerical data are not considered stable indicators of influence, but are rather provided with specific dates. Third, the study does not seek to be confidential in force generation negotiations with the UN and/or in any internal Bangladeshi decision-making process. Its findings are about the observable evolution of institution and options for strategy, rather than classified policymaking.

Table 1: Evidence Base and Analytical Coding

Evidence stream	Illustrative sources	Primary analytical use
UN policy and operational documents	Capstone Doctrine; A4P/A4P+; New Agenda for Peace; Future of Peacekeeping study; digital transformation and finance documents	Track changes in mandates, capability demand, performance standards, and governance priorities.
Bangladesh official documents	MoFA and Permanent Mission statements; Armed Forces Division materials; BIPSOT documents	Identify national policy framing, pledges, institutionalization, training and diplomatic priorities.
Peer-reviewed scholarship	Krishnasamy; Zaman & Biswas; Biswas; Lundgren et al.; Blair et al.	Establish motivations, TCC constraints, civil-military effects, and security-governance implications.
Historical mission records	UNIIMOG records and UN contributor histories	Validate the starting point and selected milestones in the evolutionary sequence.

4. The Evolution of Bangladesh's Peacekeeping Diplomacy

4.1 Phase I - Normative Entry and Operational Learning (1988-1998)

The involvement in UN peacekeeping came at a time of broader change in the international system in Bangladesh. UNIIMOG was created by Security Council resolution 619 (1988) to ensure the ceasefire and withdrawal between Iran and Iraq. Bangladesh had provided 15 military observers, while a Bangladeshi officer, Brigadier-General S. Anam Khan, was later the acting Chief Military Observer. Such small-scale deployments were significant, not just in terms of their numbers. They linked one of the younger states in the world with its own armed forces with the UN command, with military cooperation between nations, and with the process of impartial observation, reporting, and negotiation.

The diplomatic rationale of this first phase was basically normative/reputational. In the constitution of Bangladesh, Article 25 sets international relation in the context of respecting sovereignty, peaceful settlement and international law and UN Charter in the centre. There was an opportunity to demonstrate those principles in a practical way, in the context of peacekeeping. Furthermore, it provided an international exposure that was generally easy for a relatively powerless developing nation to achieve. As Zaman and Biswas (2013) demonstrate, Bangladesh's aspirations were never solely altruistic; image was an important factor, as was professional gain and material ones as well. The important thing is, the mix worked and established a national niche.

The most significant asset that was gained during this time was operational learning. Deployments introduced people to the multinational standards, mission logistics, language environments, and the difference between what is done in the field and what was expected in the mission. With repeated engagement, this episodic foreign policy activity became a well-known state practice.

4.2 Phase II - Expansion and Institutionalization (1999-2010)

Institutionalization was the characteristic of the second phase. In response to the multidimensional nature of peace operations, Bangladesh set up the Peace Keeping Operation Training Centre (PKOTC) on 24th June 1999, which was

later renamed to BIPSOT in 2002. BIPSOT's institutional evolution is intrinsically tied to the transformation in the nature of the work of the organization in the post-Cold War period and the reform efforts spearheaded by the Brahimi Report.

There are three ways in which institutionalization was strengthening Bangladesh. First, it helped in boosting the capacity to train personnel for standardized UN tasks and mission specific requirements. Second, it provided an opportunity for intra-multinational training and professional development, rather than just for the contingents that were sent to a single mission. Third, it allowed Bangladesh to showcase itself as a producer and disseminator of peacekeeping expertise alongside being a supplier of personnel.

During this time, the scale and diversity of deployments also increased, with missions outside of Africa involving security, elections, disarmament, humanitarian support, state authority, and protection mandates. The diplomatic significance of participation was enhanced as Bangladeshi units were seen in various missions. But the underlying premise of prestige was still volume dominated: the size of the contribution and the willingness to deploy was most obvious sign of relevance.

4.3 Phase III - Consolidation in Multidimensional and Robust Peacekeeping (2011-2017)

The strategic context of peacekeeping was far more perilous by the 2010s. Missions ran in the face of disenfranchised armed groups, terrorism, IEDs, criminal networks, and a growing requirement for protection and a stronger state presence. The change in the nature of conflict, global security trends, and the operational environment are three interdependent areas that can be used to organize this operational shift. Thus, Bangladesh's adaptation during this phase is not to be understood in terms of the overall size of the troops; it requires being understood in terms of the increasing significance of force protection, the understanding of mandate, quick decision making, specialized equipment, and mission specific preparation.

The diplomatic repercussion was a redefinition of what 'reliability' was. Presence, neutrality, and discipline could be the primary factors that could be correlated with reliability in traditional monitoring missions. In strong multidimensional missions, it became more and more a requirement to be mobile, to have situational awareness, to have protection capability, to have medical and engineering support, to be gender responsive, to be able to operate under politically sensitive rules of engagement, and a number of other things. The name of a TCC was associated with the ability to perform under multifaceted requirements.

Meanwhile, academic research began to focus on the impact of peacekeeping at home. Zaman and Biswas (2014) asserted that participation can contribute to civil-military concord, and their subsequent study followed up on Bangladesh's general contribution to civil-military concord within the Commonwealth and UN peacekeeping practice (Zaman & Biswas, 2017). A key lesson from these studies was that peacekeeping was increasingly a part of international diplomacy, as well as the professional life of the military and of the national security apparatus.

4.4 Phase IV - Governance-Oriented Capability Diplomacy (2018-2026)

The fourth phase starts in 2018 when the UN reemphasizes performance, political strategy, and partnerships through A4P, and is strengthened following A4P+. The UN now expects the TCCs/PCCs to provide not just personnel, but capabilities that are congruent with the prioritized mandates, data-driven performance, safety commitments, gender commitments, strategic communications, and technological adaptation. This agenda has changed the peaceful diplomatic playing field. However, forms of relevance exist that are lost to states that cannot provide the few capabilities that are modular and interoperable.

This transition is witnessed in Bangladesh's recently introduced ministerial diplomacy. This transition is seen in Bangladesh's recently introduced ministerial diplomacy. Bangladesh has reported a total of 200,000 peacekeepers deployed over the years, 63 missions completed, and currently 5,818 peacekeepers on duty, with 444 women, in eight missions, at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in May 2025. More analytically significant, it pledged specialized

military and police capabilities, an AI-based camp surveillance and response pilot in Wau, an IoT pilot in UNMISS, 1.8MW of solar installations in MINUSCA, UNMISS and UNISFA, with ongoing efforts to strengthen the meaningful engagement of women (Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations, 2025). These are governance-oriented pledges as they are linked to UN cross-cutting priorities, namely technology, environmental performance, capability gaps, gender and safety.

Bangladesh was also part of the 2025 Peacekeeping Ministerial process to facilitate the discussion of new mission models, as a co-chair. It is more important than a high monthly ranking alone: co-chairing brings a contributor nearer to the process of agenda setting, coalition building and operational experience to multilateral policy. The new model is thus 'capability diplomac' based on capabilities, training, innovation and policy leadership, to back up influence.

In May 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh honored 174 Bangladeshi Peacekeepers who lost their lives in service. Sacrifice contributes to the moral ground of TCCs to be heard, but also adds to the consequences for safety, accountability, and resourcing. Burden-sharing and demands for realistic mandates, predictable financing and modern equipment and meaningful TCC/PCC consultation must therefore be linked to a diplomatic strategy for seeking more influence.

Table 2: Four Phases in the Evolution of Bangladesh's Peacekeeping Diplomacy

Phase	Period	Dominant characteristics	Diplomatic meaning
I. Normative entry	1988-1998	Initial observer/contingent deployments; operational learning; UN exposure.	Peacekeeping as visible commitment to multilateralism and peaceful international engagement.
II. Expansion and institutionalization	1999-2010	Growth of deployments; PKOTC established (1999); BIPSOT created (2002); standardization of training.	Transition from participation to a durable national niche and knowledge infrastructure.
III. Multidimensional consolidation	2011-2017	Robust mandates; protection tasks; greater safety, technology, mobility and performance demands.	Reputation increasingly tied to mission effectiveness rather than presence alone.
IV. Governance-oriented capability diplomacy	2018-2026	A4P/A4P+; ministerial co-chair role; specialized capabilities; WPS, AI/IoT, green camps, information integrity.	Potential shift from volume-based prestige to capability, coalition, and agenda influence.

1988	1999	2002	2018	2025	2026
15 observers to UNIIMOG	PKOTC established	BIPSOT established	A4P shared commitments	Ministerial co-chair; tech/WPS/green pledges	Finance, digital and future-model pressures intensify

Figure 2: Selected Milestones in Bangladesh's Peacekeeping-Diplomacy Evolution

5. Opportunities for Bangladesh in Global Security Governance

5.1 Converting Burden-Sharing into TCC/PCC Voice

The first opportunity is political: transforming the legitimacy of continued burden sharing into a more effective voice of the TCC/PCC in the design and review of peace operations in Bangladesh. The UN's operational model

relies on the contributions of the countries that are members of it, but the UN's resources are dominated by those of a smaller number of countries with significant financial contributions, more influence on the UN, and more influence over mandates. This leads to an ongoing triangle of mandate, resource, and implementation where the party that mandates funds and implements missions are not the same. Lundgren, Oksamytna and Coleman (2021) demonstrate that peacekeeping response is limited by contributor incentives and capabilities; the operational system can thus only operate as slowly as its contributor's willingness and readiness to do so.

For Bangladesh, it is a diplomatic case of being guided by the principle of triangular consultation between the Security Council, Secretariat and TCCs/PCCs, particularly before the mandates, concepts of operations or capability needs change. The strongest argument is one not for status but for performance - early information and meaningful consultation is required for the effective delivery of the mission and on the safety of the personnel. The Bangladesh advocacy for clear mandates, resources, and safety can be rolled into the TCC governance platform.

5.2 Specialized and Modular Capability Diplomacy

The study on the Future of Peacekeeping 2024 provides a second chance. It has 30 potential models that focus on modularity and greater functionality, such as cybersecurity, organised crime assistance, mine action, border management, maritime security, and public-health assistance (United Nations, 2024). This allows for the reduction of the value of generic personnel and the value of deployable capability packages.

Bangladesh has already established a wide peacekeeping framework in military and police units. The strategic task is to look for capabilities that it can make 'first call': engineering, EOD/counter-IED, formed police, quick reaction, logistics, field medical support, airfield services, riverine/maritime support, information-integrity teams, camp technology, environmental engineering, women-led engagement teams, and mission transition support. Special capabilities will provide bargaining value because they will not easily be created and will be closely tied to mission gaps.

5.3 Training Diplomacy and South-South Partnerships

BIPSOT is an institutional platform for training diplomacy in Bangladesh. How national operational experience can be translated into a regional public good is reflected in its evolution from PKOTC (1999) to BIPSOT (2002). The mission of the institute today is specialized, multifaceted training of national and multinational military, police, and civilian participants based on international standards (BIPSOT, 2026).

There are three ways in which training diplomacy can result in influence: First, multinational courses create a network of professionals that endures beyond the deployment. Second, by engaging in a training partnership, Bangladesh can influence the practical understanding of protection, gender, technology, information integrity, and mission leadership. Third, co-deployment and capacity building with newer TCCs can put Bangladesh in the role of a hub between the UN Secretariat and partner states. This is especially appealing in a future system in which the UN is looking for modularity and regional alliances – not just for large missions.

5.4 Women, Peace and Security as a Field of Normative Leadership

WPS is not just an operational need, but also a diplomatic opportunity. Women peacekeepers can contribute to greater access to parts of the local community, facilitate the response to sexual violence during conflict, foster engagement of the community, and expand the legitimacy of mission teams. The question is not: what is the number of students present in a school or school district, but: what is the number of students involved in a school or school district? There is a higher "signal value" in having women in positions of leadership, in operational roles, as military observers, police officers, gender advisers, and specialist teams than in focusing women in administrative roles.

Bangladesh has made a number of commitments to raise the participation of women, and in 2025 even explicitly made connections between its commitments and the UN Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy. A credible WPS niche

would then include aspects of recruitment and deployment targets, leadership pipelines, mission-specific training, standards of accommodation and equipment, prevention of harassment, and the systematic recording of the impact of operations. With such a model, Bangladesh can be involved in implementing the norm rather than just reporting.

5.5 Digital, Information-Integrity and Green Peacekeeping

The process of digital transformation is an increasingly integral part of peacekeeping's effectiveness. The UN's 2026 digital transformation plan has three objectives: operational efficiency, safety and security, and enhanced mandate delivery. It also highlights data ecosystems, digital governance, innovation, situational awareness, building capacity in generative AI and information integrity, and the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2026a). Meanwhile, the UN has enhanced guidance on the issue of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech, as it can directly impact mission legitimacy and the safety of peacekeepers.

The proposed camp surveillance system with AI and IoT pilot project in Bangladesh is thus not merely a technical exercise. They can be used as a diplomatic gestures for a Global South TCC that are both effective and accountable. The reasoning is the same with renewable energy. Fuel convoys can be reduced, logistics vulnerability and environmental footprint can be minimized with solar systems. A country which can connect the dots between engineering, camp security, data, energy and lessons learned can carve out a unique 'smart and green peacekeeping' niche.

5.6 Peacebuilding, Transition and Preventive Diplomacy

Future missions will be more differentiated in terms of size, duration and function. These can be either narrower political or monitoring missions or support packages that accompany regional organisations or host-state institutions. Bangladesh can thus expand peacekeeping diplomacy to transition and peacebuilding support, including electoral security, rule-of-law mentoring, and security-sector reform assistance, policing, DDR-related expertise, and infrastructure rehabilitation and local capacity building.

This would contribute to the UN's focus on prevention and peacekeeping. Also, it would diminish the chances of Bangladesh becoming less relevant in the eyes of the international community during such contracting missions of the Infantry. The ability to support deployment and transition would make Bangladesh very useful throughout the mission life cycle.

6. Challenges and Constraints

6.1 The Mandate-Resource-Implementation Asymmetry

Structural is the most chronic constraint. Security Council authorises mandates, budget negotiations determines resources, the Secretariat turns mandates into operational plans, and TCCs/PCCs implement large portions of the plans. This division of labour can lead to a conflict between politics and practicability. Blair, Di Salvatore and Smidt (2022) show that the implementation of mandates is not uniform across tasks and situations; delivery of the mandated does not necessary follow long lists of mandates.

For Bangladesh, it poses a dilemma. When missions are under-resourced, politically blocked, or pushed into multiple priorities, there are human risks and reputational risks that fall on the large contributors. However, a TCC is unable to impose a new mandate. However, a TCC may not change the mandate unilaterally. The diplomatic response needs to be procedural, in strengthening pre-mandate consultation, using field evidence more effectively, sequencing, and candid performance reporting.

6.2 Liquidity Crisis, Downsizing and Competition for Deployments

The financial crisis facing UN peacekeeping is no ordinary administrative issue; it affects the strategic landscape for TCC diplomacy. The UN submitted a US\$5.6 billion peacekeeping budget, but in October 2025 reported that its missions would have to cut more than US\$2 billion, or 25 percent of the budget, including downsizing of uniformed personnel (UN Peacekeeping, 2025a). The General Assembly in June 2026, did not have to pay back any more than a total of US\$900 million to the UN for peacekeeping, thus improving the short term liquidity, but the President of the

General Assembly noted that the situation of late and incomplete payment by Member States has not been resolved (United Nations General Assembly, 2026).

The fiscal contraction has two implications for Bangladesh. First, deployments might change to become more selective, increasing the importance of capability quality, readiness, and cost-effectiveness. Second, contribution rankings could fall, not because of a lack of national commitment, but even for other reasons, which would make rank an unworthy strategic goal. A diplomacy based on the goal of being 'number one' or 'top three' is fragile when external budget decisions are made; a diplomacy based on limited capabilities and policy relevance is more resilient.

6.3 Geopolitical Polarization, Host-State Contestation and Legitimacy

The political will of a peacekeeping mission is becoming weak in some of the places where it is used. Competition between the great powers can bring the council into conflict, make sanctions more difficult to agree on or more difficult to renew, and limit the political will to undertake pressures and rights-related activities. Simultaneously, host governments have a right to limit movement, challenge human rights reporting, to assert sovereignty narratives, or to demand withdrawal. These tensions can be used to the advantage of non-state actors.

Bangladesh's foreign-policy aspiration to sovereignty, non-interference, and peaceful settlement can be a strength in this context as they can facilitate conversations with all actors. It also can introduce tension in situations where strong demands demand protection action from actors associated with structures in the host-state or when consent is called into question. Thus, it is essential for peacekeeping diplomacy to have conceptual clarity, respect for sovereignty versus the Security Council mandate and protection obligations, human rights, and the impartial implementation of assigned tasks.

6.4 Evolving Threats: Technology, Information and Force Protection

Today's threat landscape does not have gone away: asymmetric violence, IEDs, the ability of armed groups to adapt, strong mandates, wide-ranging gaps in technology, and challenging protection work. It has grown beyond the information and digital sphere. A new era of targeting of Peacekeepers is here, allowing them to be physically, electronically, and reputationally targeted simultaneously. Cheap drones can pose threats to bases and convoys; commercially available imagery can be used to spot movement; manipulated imagery can lead to hostile crowds; cyber incidents can hinder communication; and AI-generated audiovisual content can speed up the emergence of false narratives.

This poses an adaptation challenge for a large TCC. Procurement of technology is not enough. These areas of doctrine, data governance, electronic-security awareness, information-integrity analysis, cyber hygiene, counter-UAS measures, multilingual strategic communication, and legal review and training should be developed together. Otherwise, new systems might cause new vulnerabilities.

6.5 Performance, Conduct, Accountability and Reputational Risk

Peacekeeping diplomacy is based on reputation, which takes a long time to build and a short time to destroy. Bad performance, overreacting, failing to comply with mandates, failing to maintain discipline, sexual exploitation and abuse, human-rights issues or failures, can not only damage individual contingents, but can also jeopardize the diplomatic reputation of a contributing state. As a result of A4P and later reforms, the legitimacy of peacekeeping has thus become tied to effectiveness and accountability.

The strategic interest of Bangladesh is to see conduct and performance as diplomatic gains and not compliance. This implies strong vetting, open investigation, command responsibility, victim-centred approaches, scenario based training, and systematic learning. It also involves being prepared to offer a credible explanation of the shortcomings. The more it seems as if a contributor can recognize his or her own shortcomings and address them, the more influence he or she has in the diplomatic field.

6.6 Capability Readiness, Language and Interoperability

The higher the level of specialization, the higher the readiness level. States will reap a modular future that is offering deployable units, certified equipment, trained specialists and interoperable communications – but will also reveal gaps in a hurry. Language ability is a constant limitation, especially in French-speaking settings and in police-community interaction. There are also technical specialties that need to be retained, so trained personnel will be available when requested by the UN.

In this regard, Bangladesh is challenged with an organizational problem related to force generation: personnel selection, training schedules, equipment cycles, medical requirements, language preparation and deployment window etc. is a problem. The trained staff people must be followed by institutional incentives for them to actually staff the pledged units in order for BIPSOT to be made possible.

6.7 From Numerical Gender Inclusion to Meaningful Participation

Attaining gender-inclusion in implementation is also a challenge. Numbers of aggregates can improve without the women being spread across a wide range of roles. Operational assignments, leadership roles, mission planning, intelligence and information roles, observer roles, and shaped police leadership and promotion opportunities following return are essential to meaningful participation. It also needs to have the right facilities, equipment, medical support, and culture.

With Bangladesh showing how participation positively influences operational outcomes and professional careers, WPS can serve as a source of normative leadership. In a symbolic measure of return, the diplomatic move will be restricted.

6.8 Domestic Institutional Coordination and Learning

The final challenge is domestic coordination. Peacekeeping diplomacy is a cross-reaction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armed Forces Division, Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, BIPSOT, Permanent Mission in New York, finance and procurement offices, and at times development and technology offices. Operational lessons can be lost in services, and diplomatic negotiations can take place without adequate field evidence in place if there is no common strategy.

This study by Biswas (2024) finds that peacekeeping experience can lead to a change in norms, institutions and practices that in turn influence domestic security governance. While that feedback can be constructive, it must be also be subject to democratic, legal, and policy controls. A well-established peacekeeping diplomacy should involve not just deployments but also structured inter-agency learning and transparent policy goals.

Table 3: Opportunity-Challenge Matrix for Bangladesh

Strategic opportunity	Potential diplomatic gain	Principal constraint	Priority response
TCC/PCC voice and triangular consultation	Greater influence over feasible mandates and safety requirements.	Structural gap between mandate authority and field implementation.	Use evidence-based positions in C34, ministerials and mandate-review consultations.
Specialized modular capabilities	Influence based on scarce capabilities rather than rank alone.	Readiness, equipment, certification and personnel-retention gaps.	Create standing capability packages with validated readiness cycles.
Training and South-South partnerships	Network centrality; reputation as knowledge provider.	Training may not translate into deployable partner capacity.	Pair courses with mentoring, exercises, co-deployment, and evaluation.
WPS leadership	Normative credibility and community-engagement capability.	Tokenism and concentration of women in non-operational roles.	Prioritize leadership, operational roles and career progression.
Digital/information-integrity niche	Relevance to emerging UN capability demand.	Cyber, data-governance, procurement and misuse risks.	Responsible AI/data governance; counter-disinformation and cyber training.
Green/smart camps	Lower logistics burden and stronger environmental credibility.	Upfront cost, maintenance and evidence gaps.	Measure fuel, emissions, safety, and lifecycle cost effects.
Transition and peacebuilding support	Relevance when large missions downsize or reconfigure.	Need for civilian/police and governance expertise beyond conventional force packages.	Develop integrated civilian-police-military rosters and transition modules.

7. Strategic Policy Options: From Volume Diplomacy to Capability-and-Governance Diplomacy

7.1 Institutionalize a Whole-of-Government Peacekeeping Diplomacy Strategy

Peacekeeping diplomacy should be established as a policy domain across the government and not as foreign-policy advocacy and force-generating activities. It is crucial that a national strategy establishes diplomatic goals, priority capabilities, WPS goals, principles of technology, norms of conduct, training partners, and desired roles in UN governance. The strategy should be monitored on a yearly basis in light of changes in missions and UN capability need.

A small inter-agency Peacekeeping Diplomacy Coordination Mechanism could bring together the Permanent Mission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Armed Forces Division, police, BIPSOT and some relevant technical agencies. It would not be for operational command to be centralised. It would make sure that positions in diplomacy are formed in the context of field lessons and ministerial promises are supported by realistic generation plans.

7.2 Build a Portfolio of 'First-Call' Specialized Capabilities

Bangladesh needs to select a small set of capabilities that it should strive to achieve the highest readiness level of the UN. Selection should be based on National Competence demonstrated and frequent UN shortages, and future mission models of modularity. Engineering and environmental support, EOD/counter-IED, formed police and specialized police teams, field medical services, airfield services, quick-reaction elements, camp technology,

information-integrity support, and selected maritime/riverine capabilities could be a plausible part of a military portfolio.

There should be a built in readiness package for each capability, which includes a personnel roster, Language requirements, Equipment table, Spare parts plan, Digital security standards, Pre deployment certification, After action learning. Such a system makes commitments into sound diplomatic gestures.

7.3 Create a Responsible Digital Peacekeeping and Information-Integrity Programme

The 2025 smart-camp pledges are a stepping stone to a wider programme. Bangladesh needs to have clear principles on the responsible use of AI and data in peace operations, consistent with UN governance and human rights needs. Operational measures like intrusion detection, response time, energy usage, false alarms, maintenance burden, and user trust should be used to evaluate pilot projects.

Information-integrity teams should be integrated into the programme, trained to manage risks, to enable multilingual communication, and to document false narratives, which should then be handed over to commanders, but not engage in domestic information management. A core objective of the strategy should be to safeguard mission legitimacy and personnel safety by communicating accurately, transparently and with respect to rights.

7.4 Expand BIPSOT as a Partnership and Lessons-Learned Hub

BIPSOT should be designed as a pre-deployment school, as well as a policy and partnership hub. The priority areas are: scenario-based robust peacekeeping, protection of civilians, mission leadership, WPS, strategic communications, information integrity, responsible technology, climate-security awareness, environmental management, and transition planning.

The institute has the potential to publish brief annual lessons papers using de-identified after action material, co-sponsor practitioner workshops in collaboration with the UN and other TCCs, and co-sponsor courses with other partners (Francophone and African) in the region. This would allow Bangladesh to have more of an intellectual voice in debates which are often dominated by states that finance or call missions which are not implemented by the other states.

7.5 Make WPS, Conduct and Accountability Core Components of Diplomatic Credibility

Bangladesh should link its gender commitments to measurable leadership and operational indicators: percentage of women in command and staff appointments, observer positions, specialist roles and mission planning; retention after deployment; and access to promotion. The same scorecard should include conduct, discipline, investigation timeliness, and remedial action.

This is strategically important because the future legitimacy of TCCs will be judged not only by sacrifice and numbers but by whether they embody the standards they advocate. Normative credibility is a form of diplomatic capital.

7.6 Use Coalition Diplomacy to Shape Future Peacekeeping Models

Bangladesh should use its relationships with Asian, African, Commonwealth, Non-Aligned and other major TCC/PCC states to develop practical coalition positions on future peacekeeping. Potential areas of convergence include predictable financing, realistic mandates, protection of civilians, safety, digital standards, environmental performance, language training and stronger TCC consultation.

Coalition diplomacy is essential because a single contributor has limited leverage over Security Council politics. A group of operationally credible contributors can, however, shape C34 language, ministerial priorities, training standards and Secretariat planning practices, especially when proposals are technically specific rather than rhetorical.

7.7 Establish an Annual Peacekeeping Diplomacy Scorecard

Finally, Bangladesh should evaluate peacekeeping diplomacy through a broader scorecard than troop ranking. Suggested indicators include: deployment readiness; proportion of specialized capabilities; number of UN-certified training activities; women in leadership and operational roles; senior UN appointments; implementation rate of ministerial pledges; safety and conduct metrics; multinational training partnerships; policy initiatives adopted in UN forums; green-camp performance; digital-pilot outcomes; and documented mission lessons translated into doctrine.

This would change incentives. Instead of maximizing a volatile monthly ranking, agencies would be rewarded for sustained capability quality, policy influence, and institutional learning.

Diplomatic upgrading	Capability modernization	Partnership & training	Normative & reputational leadership
C34/Ministerial agenda-setting Triangular consultation Senior appointments TCC coalition-building	Specialized modular units Responsible AI/data Information integrity Green/smart camps	BIPSOT hub South-South training Co-deployment Lessons-learned networks	WPS leadership POC and human rights Conduct/accountability Transparent performance

Figure 3: Strategic Framework for Bangladesh's Next-Generation Peacekeeping Diplomacy

8. Discussion: From Troop Contributor to Governance Stakeholder

History needs to be reinterpreted in the context of Bangladesh's peacekeeping role. It is true, but it is analytically incomplete that Bangladesh is a 'major troop-contributing country'. It includes an input to UN operations rather than the institutional impacts of the near 40 years that the UN has had a presence. The bigger shift is from contribution to embeddedness; the constitutional foreign-policy narrative of peacekeeping is now connected with professionalization of military and police forces and training institutions, multilateral diplomacy, technology goals, WPS pledges, and international reputation for Bangladesh.

This change aids to the resolution of an apparent paradox in the literature. The earlier studies that are correct highlighted mixed motivations, namely normative, economic, professional, and reputational. It's not necessary to be an "either/or" proposition: those motivations do not have to be exclusive. Participation in an institution can be initiated for several reasons and then develop a diplomatic niche that leads to further institutional engagement. A multilateral activity gains strategic value when the state develops trained staff, specialized institutions, bureaucratic procedures, international links, and domestic honor for a multilateral activity. This is in line with Biswas's (2024) interpretation of peacekeeping as a 'glo-cal' security-governance assemblage where international deployments and domestic security institutions are increasingly influencing each other.

In some respects, the structure of UN peacekeeping is hierarchical; in others, it is networked. Decisive mandate authority for Permanent Security Council members, major financial contributors have influence over budgets, the Secretariat has many operational standards, host states have leverage for consent and access. Large TCCs have the necessary implementation power and a latent agenda power. Therefore, turning the Bangladesh capital of implementation into the capital of rule-shaping is the diplomatic challenge for Bangladesh.

The new UN focus on modularity is a good opportunity for that shift. Players who are able to solve a certain mission problem are rewarded with a modular system. The 2025 technology, EOD, renewable-energy, gender pledges are significant, exactly because they show at least a level of consciousness of this shift in Bangladesh. These efforts can create policy influence if they become measurable, interoperable, and replicable. Their diplomatic value will go away if they are isolated statements that are not measured or followed up by institutions.

With financial contraction, the necessity to make the transition is even more pressing. As missions get smaller, the monthly rankings do not matter as much and generic force contributions become more competitive. Specialized skills gain in importance, as does speed of readiness, low life cycle cost, interoperability, and political reliability. The liquidity crisis thus poses a danger to the traditional volume model in Bangladesh and strengthens the ability model suggested here.

The last inference is with regard to the definition of 'global security governance'. One way to change the formal distribution of veto power in the Security Council is to achieve peacekeeping. However, the influence of governance should be taken more practically: setting capability standards; contributing to the agenda of the Ministers; creating training doctrine; building coalitions of TCC; providing evidence from the field; acting as a leader on WPS, technology or environmental practice; securing high-level appointments; and having an influence on how mandates are applied or conducted. All of this is a step on the way to institutional power, but for a temporary state in the Global South, it is no mean feat.

9. Conclusion

Bangladesh's peacekeeping experience has been going through four rather overlapping stages: Peacekeeping normative entry and operational learning, expansion and institutionalization, consolidation in multi-dimensional peacekeeping, and emerging governance-oriented capability diplomacy. The operational and reputational capital for the fourth phase were established in the first three phases. The focus of the strategic question today is whether Bangladesh is able to capitalize on that capital and thus exercise more influence on the evolving norms of world security governance.

The potential is very great. UN peacekeeping is looking for more people-centred and modular models with a political focus, as well as better performance, safety, a digital peacekeeping force, information integrity, WPS implementation, and environmental responsibility. Bangladesh has solid grounds in all these aspects: decades of deployment experience, BIPSOT, wide experience from the military and police, a strong multilateral foreign-policy narrative, and recent commitments in relation to specialised units, AI-supported camp security, IoT, renewable energy, and EOD. These can contribute to a change in the paradigm from large-scale contribution to being recognized for addressing specific peacekeeping challenges.

Politically-informed, people-centred and modular approaches to peacekeeping are being sought after by UN peacekeeping, as well as increased performance, safety, digital adaptation, information integrity, WPS implementation and environmental responsibility. Bangladesh has established solid bases in all these areas, having deployed for decades, developed its own foreign-policy narrative through the lens of the UN, gained extensive military and police experience, and recently committed to specialized units, AI-powered camp security, IoT, and renewable energy/EOD. The skills can be used to facilitate shifting from a large contribution to a contribution that is recognized for addressing concrete peacekeeping issues.

The conditions are also serious. The opportunities are diminished as a result of liquidity crises, as well as mission downsizing; geopolitical polarization leads to a lack of political consensus; host state contestation makes the implementation of the mandate more complex; any performance or conduct failure can quickly tarnish reputation; and technology and information threats add to operational risk. Most importantly, the structural disassymmetry between those who order, fund, and carry out missions severely restricts a TCC's ability to convert sacrifice into formal authority.

What is not required is to give up on the volume that is the building block of Bangladesh's reputation, but should be put into a more purposeful strategy. Foreign-policy advocacy, force generation, BIPSOT training, specialized capabilities, responsible technology, WPS, accountability, coalition-building, and lessons learned should be linked to a whole-of-government peacekeeping diplomacy. An indicator of success would not be the number of people deployed but the readiness, capability quality, and/or the influence of the senior, policy adoption and/or partnership outcomes.

Being flexible has always been the key of Bangladesh's comparative advantage in peacekeeping. The next level of this flexibility is diplomatic and institutional. When peacekeeping is shrinking in certain areas, more sophisticated in some others, and politically messy almost everywhere, the biggest players will be those that have viable manpower and effective concepts, niche skills, and reliable relationships. This is an opportunity Bangladesh is well equipped to take advantage of, but it will only be possible if it is viewed as not only a deployment operation but also a global governance tool for security.

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