

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

26 May 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **Government claims implementing 62% of cabinet decisions taken in first 100 days:** The BNP government has implemented 62 percent of the major decisions taken by the cabinet during its first 100 days in office, according to Prime Minister's Office spokesperson Mahdi Amin. **Speaking at a press briefing at the PMO in Tejgaon on Monday, he presented a summary of the administration's activities since the government assumed office on Feb 17 following the general election. Mahdi said the cabinet unanimously approved 60 major decisions in 10 meetings between Feb 17 and May 24. "Of these, 37 decisions -- around 62 percent -- have already been implemented, while work on the remaining 23 is ongoing," he said. Mahdi said the government was working to establish human rights, freedom of expression and the rule of law. He said the initiatives taken by the government in various sectors, including social security, agriculture, education, health, employment, economy, technology and infrastructure, have instilled new hope among the country's people. (bdnews24.com, [25 May 2026](#)).**
- ◆ **Facing backlash, Bangladesh Betar revokes controversial news presenter dress code order:** Bangladesh Betar has scrapped a contentious directive that mandated a strict dress code for news presenters during Facebook Live broadcasts. **The reversal was formalised in an official order signed by its Director General ASM Zahid on Sunday. Additional Director General (News) Md Shariful Quader said the order had been withdrawn due to "certain linguistic issues".** "We will sit with senior management and issue a proper dress code again, so that it raises no further questions," he added. When asked about the sudden shift in stance, Quader pointed to the severe criticism of the order's wording. He defended the original intent by noting that as an audio medium, facial appearance normally remains irrelevant, but live Facebook streaming brings presenters directly into the public eye, necessitating a degree of sartorial care (bdnews24.com, [25 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **EC says local polls to be held in phases from Sep-Oct, no plan to deploy army:** The Election Commission (EC) has said it has no plan to deploy armed forces personnel in the upcoming local government elections, which are likely to begin in September-October this year and continue in phases into early next year. **As part of its preparations, the EC is drafting uniform rules for elections to five types of local government bodies -- city corporations, municipalities, upazila parishads, district councils and union parishads -- since existing codes of conduct differ across these tiers.** The rule-making process is expected to be completed by June, although the commission has yet to decide which elections will be held first (*The Daily Star*, [25 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Jamaat to take part in local polls alone:** Jamaat assistant secretary general Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair on Monday told that as the next local government elections would not be held on a party basis and not using party symbol they would take part in the elections alone. **Our party has started taking preparations to participate in the polls countrywide and for mayoral elections the relevant party units would send names of the proposed party candidates to the central**

authority, Ahsanul Zubair said. The central body will finalise the mayoral candidates while local party units would finalise candidates for upzila parishad, municipality, and union parishad elections, he said (*New Age*, [26 May 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Jamaat, NCP choose soft opposition in BNP's first 100 days:** One hundred days after the 13th National Parliament election swept the Bangladesh Nationalist Party into power, Bangladesh's two main opposition forces -- Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party -- are struggling to define themselves between cooperation and confrontation, offering what analysts describe as a "soft opposition" despite rising criticism over law and order, political appointments and governance failures. **Although both parties entered parliament pledging constructive but uncompromising opposition politics, their first 100 days have largely been marked by limited parliamentary protests, scattered walkouts and increasingly sharp public criticism of the government rather than sustained political confrontation. Political analysts say neither Jamaat nor NCP currently appears interested in escalating tensions into a full-scale anti-government movement. Instead, both parties seem focused on balancing parliamentary pressure with broader political cooperation during what many view as a fragile transitional political phase.** Still, analysts say the coming months may prove far more difficult as economic pressures, governance controversies and public dissatisfaction continue growing -- testing whether the country's opposition parties remain cautious watchdogs or evolve into more aggressive challengers to the BNP government (*Dhaka Tribune*, [25 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **No support for 'refined' Awami League, party in wait-and-see mode:** Awami League's top leadership remains firm in its old stance, with no visible sign of changes either in leadership or in the party's longstanding political position. **Within the party, however, there has been some discussion around the idea of a "refined" or "reformed" Awami League. Some see it as the most viable path for the party to survive politically and eventually return to active politics. But the party's top leadership, particularly Sheikh Hasina, appears completely averse to the idea.** As a result, many leaders and activists remain uncertain about how the party can make a political comeback. Frustration is growing among some. Others believe Awami League's opportunity could re-emerge if the current government makes major mistakes or becomes unpopular. According to responsible party sources, ahead of the 13th parliamentary election held in February, the idea of bringing comparatively less controversial figures into leadership through a "refined" or reform process had been conveyed to Sheikh Hasina by friendly countries and well-wishers. The matter reportedly remained under discussion even after the election. However, **Sheikh Hasina is unwilling to step down as party president.** At most, she had indicated the possibility of appointing one or more leaders as spokespersons in place of the general secretary. Even then, she preferred selecting figures from among leaders currently abroad and personally trusted by her, a proposal that reportedly failed to satisfy the party's well-wishers. As a result, **most insiders now believe all reform initiatives are effectively "dead" for the time being.** Awami League's recent activities and online discussions also offer insight into the party's current direction. **According to informed sources, since the fall of the Awami League government on 5 August 2024, the party's more controversial and hardline elements have become the most active. These figures, sources say, are unwilling to acknowledge mistakes or express remorse over past actions. Instead, they favour creating pressure and rebuilding organisational strength through sudden processions, isolated rally with slogans and provocative political activity inside the country. They are also reportedly trying to strengthen anti-government sentiment within the administration.** Under such circumstances, those within the party who had hoped for a "refined" Awami League or a fresh political beginning have largely fallen silent. According to multiple relevant sources, Sheikh Hasina herself continues to determine the party's

political direction, with members of her family also involved in the process. **A section of Awami League leaders believes that friendly countries and international well-wishers are somewhat dissatisfied with the party leadership's unwillingness to pursue reform. They do not believe any foreign power in the current global order will actively intervene to restore the Awami League to power. At the same time, they think a BNP-led government, if elected, may not be as strict toward the Awami League as the interim administration has been — but it would never allow the old Awami League under Sheikh Hasina's leadership to return.** Discussions with several Awami League leaders through different channels suggest that after the 13th parliamentary election in February, Sheikh Hasina repeatedly told party leaders and activists that those who wanted to continue in politics should return to the country — meaning they should face arrest, lawsuits and imprisonment if necessary. So far, however, no one has responded to that call. Party leaders say there is no guarantee of getting bail after returning and being jailed. Nor is there any sign of an understanding or initiative from the government that would provide any concession to the Awami League. **Multiple sources also said party leaders do not believe there is any international pressure on the government to rehabilitate the Awami League politically. In this situation, leaders currently abroad are not considering returning home. Some, in fact, have moved to other countries after spending long periods in India, partly to avoid pressure to return to Bangladesh. According to party sources, one influential former MP has moved to Malaysia, while another has gone to Cyprus. They fear that if relations between India and a future BNP government improve, India may no longer remain a safe option for them** (*Prothom Alo*, [25 May 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Hasina's return ruse: BNP on alert over AL trap:** Deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is signalling a dramatic return to Bangladesh to face trial, but the ruling BNP government is not biting. **High-level sources and analysts tell TIMES of Bangladesh that the government views her homecoming as a dangerous “political trap” designed to plunge the nation back into chaos and give rival factions the perfect excuse to turn up the heat.** Circumstances indicate that Sheikh Hasina would not be able to return to the country as she planned. **Two former diplomats told TIMES that India is unlikely to extradite Hasina under the current treaty. They suggested that Dhaka's repeated emphasis on extradition, rather than issuing a travel pass, indicates the government has little interest in facilitating her return** (*Times of Bangladesh*, [25 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **“Judges reading out verdicts written by law minister”:** National Citizen Party (NCP) Southern Region Chief Organiser and Cumilla-4 MP Hasnat Abdullah has alleged that the BNP government is turning the police into “party loyalists” in the same way the previous Awami League administration did, while also undermining judicial independence by abolishing the judicial secretariat. **Speaking at a press conference organised by the district unit of the NCP at Payra Chattar in Jhenaidah this evening, Hasnat claimed judges are simply reading out verdicts written by the law minister rather than delivering independent rulings. The NCP lawmaker accused BNP of politicising the courts by placing them under the Ministry of Law, stripping judges of independence and using administrative tools to control verdicts.** The press conference was held in response to the Chhatra Dal case filed over the egg-throwing incident targeting Nasiruddin Patwary on May 22 and the subsequent developments (*Dhaka Tribune*, [25 May 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **ADB President meets PM:** A high-level delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB), led by its President Masato Kanda, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman. The meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office in Tejgaon in the capital this morning, said Prime Minister's Deputy Press Secretary Zahidul Islam Rony. Finance Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister ABM Abdus Sattar were present at the meeting (*Prothom Alo*, [25 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Ataur Rahman Khan appointed commerce secretary:** The government has promoted Md Ataur Rahman Khan, additional secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, to the rank of secretary at the Ministry of Commerce. The Ministry of Public Administration today issued a gazette notification in this regard. According to the notification, Ataur Rahman had been serving as an additional secretary at the home ministry before his promotion and subsequent appointment to the commerce ministry (BSS News, [25 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Jamaat slams new Islami Bank chairman appointment:** Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami criticised the appointment of a new chairman at Islami Bank, alleging "undue interference" by the government. In a statement, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar said a series of "reckless decisions" by the government were putting the country's banking system and financial sector at risk. He alleged that Islami Bank's managing director had been forced to resign a day earlier and claimed that the chairman had also been removed "in an attempt to undermine public confidence". According to the Jamaat leader, the developments had created "intense anger and resentment" among the bank's millions of customers and the general public. Golam Porwar further alleged that the newly appointed chairman of Islami Bank was a "known associate of the fugitive Awami fascists". "Appointing such a person is akin to inviting disaster," he said (*The Daily Star*, [25 May 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Prime Minister set for China visit in late June:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman is expected to visit China in the last week of June, with both Dhaka and Beijing working to finalise preparations for a proposed trip between 23 and 26 June. Diplomatic sources said Beijing sent a proposed schedule on Sunday, suggesting possible dates for the visit. Dhaka is now working on the proposal. According to a Samakal report, a Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told that Beijing sent the proposal for a visit on 23 June through a note verbale. Dhaka is currently working on it (*Times of Bangladesh*, [26 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **170 more Bangladeshis return from Libya as Mediterranean casualties continue to rise:** A group of 170 Bangladeshis detained in Libya during failed attempts to cross the Mediterranean to Europe has been repatriated. A chartered flight of Buraq Air carrying the Bangladeshi citizens landed at Shahjalal International Airport on Monday, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The repatriation was carried out under a joint initiative by the Bangladesh Embassy in Tripoli, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, with assistance from the Libyan government and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). According to the foreign ministry, the majority of these individuals had entered Libya illegally with the help of human traffickers, lured by the prospect of crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe. With this latest group, at least 893 detained Bangladeshi nationals have been brought back home from Libya so far this year. The ministry

added that efforts are ongoing to repatriate the remaining Bangladeshis currently detained in the country (*bdnews24.com*, [25 May 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh, IMF agree to work on new reform-focused program:** Bangladesh and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to begin work on a new reform-focused program under the new government, following high-level virtual talks between Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and IMF Deputy Managing Director Nigel Clarke. The discussion, held on May 21, focused on Bangladesh's overall economic situation, progress under the ongoing IMF-supported program, and future cooperation between the two sides, according to a finance ministry press release issued on Monday. **Amir Khasru noted that the existing IMF program had been adopted under a different economic and policy context, while subsequent domestic developments, changing global economic conditions and external uncertainties had created challenges in implementing some reforms. He said the government was not stepping away from reforms, but rather wants to pursue a realistic and phased reform agenda that aligns with the country's current economic realities.** "In view of the overall situation, discussions were held on undertaking a new IMF program under the newly elected government," the statement said. The proposed program is expected to include priority-based and implementable reforms within a realistic three-year timeframe, with reforms to be introduced gradually through a sequenced approach (*Dhaka Tribune*, [25 May 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **7-hour operation restores control in Jungle Salimpur:** Members of the joint forces conducted a seven-hour operation from dawn to noon on Monday in Jungle Salimpur of Sitakunda, Chittagong — an area long known as a haven for criminal groups. Officials said the situation is now under control, additional forces have been deployed, and 15 people were detained during the operation. RAB and police officials said drives are ongoing to arrest Yasin, identified as the mastermind behind the attack, adding that he would soon be brought to justice. "About 15 people have been detained in connection with the incident. Law enforcement agencies remain in control of the situation, and additional forces have been deployed to maintain security," Lieutenant Colonel Hafizur Rahman, commander of RAB-7 Chittagong said. **He said armed attackers suddenly opened fire on the camp around 1am on Monday, prompting RAB members to return fire in self-defence. Commenting on the latest attack in Jungle Salimpur, Chittagong Superintendent of Police (SP) Masud Alam said on Monday morning that the area represents a major financial interest for criminal networks. Joint forces in a drive have detained at least 20–25 people after an attack on a RAB camp by a gang of criminals at Jungle Salimpur in Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong. The RAB commander said Yasin and members of his armed group comprising around 200–250 people operating in Jungle Salimpur were involved in the attack.** He also claimed that the group vandalized nearly 70 percent of an under-construction joint forces camp in Alinagar, which was close to completion (*Dhaka Tribune*, [25 May 2026](#); [25 May 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Attacks on law enforcers spike, low morale blamed:** There has been a spate of attacks on law enforcers by crime suspects and miscreants during raids and drives in recent times, which some attribute to the still low morale of the forces since the July uprising. The Police Headquarters has recorded 213 such incidents between January and April this year – 42 each in January and February, 63 in March and 66 in April. Besides injuries, law enforcers have also

lost their lives in such attacks. In 2025, 601 incidents of assault police took place across the country (*New Age*, [25 May 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Full airspace surveillance now operational in Bangladesh:** Bangladesh has significantly tightened control over its skies after installing a long-awaited modern air traffic control system at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, sharply increasing surveillance coverage and boosting state revenue from foreign aircraft using the country's airspace. **Officials say the newly operational Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower and advanced radar system have brought Bangladesh's entire airspace, including large sections over the Bay of Bengal, under full monitoring for the first time in the country's history** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [25 May 2026](#)).

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