

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

17 June 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **Returning from Delhi was an ‘instant protest’: PM’s information adviser:** Speaking at a regular press briefing at the Secretariat on Tuesday, Zahed Ur Rahman said he felt an immediate response was necessary because he had travelled not as an individual but as a representative of the Bangladeshi state. **“I did not go there as an individual. I went as a representative of this government and this state. Therefore, after what happened to me there, I felt that an instant protest from our side was necessary,”** he told newsmen. **“That is why I decided to return. Although, as you have seen in media reports, at one stage they [the Indian authorities] tried very hard to ensure that I entered the country and attended my scheduled engagements, I chose not to do so.”** The adviser said that, as a member of the government and an adviser to the prime minister, he believed the state needed to leave a clear “signature” in response to what he described as an “unwanted situation”. **“I felt there should be a signature response from the government. As an immediate reaction to this incident, I took that step on behalf of the state and the government,”** he said. He stressed that the decision was not intended to trigger a cycle of retaliatory actions or further negative developments between the two countries. **“I felt a message needed to go out both inside and outside the country that this is not Sheikh Hasina’s government. This is a government with a mandate from the people,”** he said. **Despite the incident, Zahed Ur Rahman expressed hope that it would not adversely affect future engagement between Bangladesh and India. Responding to a question on whether he would accept a future invitation from India, the adviser replied in the affirmative. “Certainly, I will. Let me make this very clear: if I receive an appropriate invitation, I will certainly go there,”** he said (*Prothom Alo*, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Tensions erupt in London over Hasnat Abdullah’s prog, 3 detained following protest:** A pre-scheduled event featuring National Citizen Party (NCP) leader and member of parliament Hasnat Abdullah sparked tense scenes in East London on Monday, with police detaining at least three individuals following protests outside the venue. Among those detained was Afsar Khan Sadeq, joint general secretary of the London City Awami League. However, police had not issued any official statement regarding the reasons for the detentions or any subsequent action against those involved at the time of reporting. The event, organised by the NCP UK Alliance, was held at the Maeda Grill restaurant adjacent to the East London Mosque, where Hasnat Abdullah attended as the chief guest. The gathering drew protests from leaders, activists and supporters of the UK chapter of the Awami League, whose activities are currently banned in Bangladesh. **In a statement, the NCP UK Alliance alleged that a group of Awami League activists attempted to create disorder and engage in provocative behaviour during Hasnat Abdullah’s visit to Elm Park alongside Ehteshamul Haque. Responding to the allegations, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, joint general secretary of the UK chapter of the Awami League and former mayor of Sylhet City Corporation, denied that the party had organised any programme targeting Hasnat Abdullah’s London visit. He said the UK Awami League had not called any protest or demonstration. However, he suggested that students and young people in the UK may have independently expressed their opposition to the demolition of the historic residence at Dhanmondi 32 in Dhaka** (*Prothom Alo*, [16 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **The Awami League and democracy have never gone together:** Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives Minister Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, 'I've realized one thing: the Awami League and democracy have never gone hand in hand. They never did before, even after the Awami League was born.' He made these remarks as the chief guest at a discussion organized by the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) on Tuesday at the National Press Club in the capital to mark the Black Day of newspapers. He said, 'Whenever we have been attacked by fascism, media workers have rushed in to cover it and brought it to the people's attention.' Referring to himself as a liberal democrat, Mirza Fakhrul said, 'I don't believe in politics that divides people based on religion, race, or any other identity.' At this time, he expressed support for ensuring equal rights for all citizens. Referring to BNP as a democratic and liberal political party, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that BNP is the safest political force for the people of the country. Fakhrul Islam Alamgir emphasised relaunching Dainik Bangla, Bangladesh Times and the popular weekly Bichitra to create employment opportunities for journalists who became jobless due to discrimination during the previous Awami autocratic regime. "These media outlets have historical and traditional values. Therefore, they should be reorganised to create new employment opportunities," he said (*Amar Desh*, [16 June 2026](#); Dhaka Tribune, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **13 Chhatra League leaders, activists remanded over 'procession preparations':** A Dhaka court has placed 13 of the 14 arrested activists of the banned organisation Bangladesh Chhatra League on a three-day remand for questioning in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act at Banani Police Station. However, one of the accused was identified as a juvenile, and the court ordered authorities to send him to a Juvenile Development Centre. **The activists were arrested on allegations that they were preparing to hold a procession marking the "Homecoming Day" of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted from power during the July Uprising in 2024** (*bdnews24.com*, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **AL brings out flash procession in Sylhet, 4 held:** A group of the leaders and activists of the Awami League and its affiliated organisations, whose activities are currently banned, brought out a flash procession in Sylhet on Tuesday early morning. Sylhet Metropolitan Police arrested four people from the procession. **Local residents said that a group of around 50 leaders and activists of the AL and its affiliated organisations brought out the procession from Nawab Road area in the city at about 7:30am, demanding immediate withdrawal of the ban imposed on the party activities, releasing the party leaders and withdrawal of false cases filed against them.** However, the AL men ended the procession within several minutes and fled the scene to avoid arrest by the police, the locals said. Later, a video clip of the procession was circulated on the social media (*New Age*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **PM urges all to prioritise national interest, avoid mindset of revenge:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Tuesday called for an end to what he described as a "mentality of revenge", urging all stakeholders to focus on national development rather than retaliation. Speaking at a view-exchange meeting with journalists covering the BNP beat at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital, he said at present, there is no environment in Bangladesh for muzzling the media, and sought cooperation from journalists in addressing social challenges. "Let us try to change our mindset a little. If something happened to me, taking revenge will not bring it back or make things as they were before. We should move away from that mindset and think about what we can do for the country, for society, and for people," the prime minister said. "Whether we succeed or not is a different matter... but at least we can try."

Success is a different issue. With this mindset, why shouldn't we move forward?" he said. Tarique Rahman also said the current government wants to ensure media freedom and maintain constructive engagement with journalists (*Dhaka Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Jamaat ameer says Referendum must be honoured, street action if July Charter verdict ignored:** Opposition Leader and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman has warned that if the referendum verdict on the July Charter is not implemented in parliament, it will be realised on the streets. "What can be resolved in parliament will be resolved there. If not, it will be resolved on the streets. We cannot abandon the people's demand. We are committed, and we will not betray the people. This demand will be realised -- if not today, then tomorrow, In sha Allah," he said while speaking at a views exchange meeting with journalists at the LD Hall of the Jatiya Sangsad. He also said the opposition will not nominate representatives to the government's proposed committee on constitutional amendment. "If a committee is formed for reform, we will consider it. But for amendment, no committee is needed. That is routine work. Bills will come from the treasury bench, we will join the debate, and they will either pass or be rejected. Committees are required only for reform," he added (*The Daily Star*, [16 June 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **ECNEC okays Chinese EPZ:** The government on Tuesday approved a project to establish a Chinese Export Processing Zone at Anwara in Chattogram with the mandatory integration of renewable energy and waste management into the zone. It also approved another project to check recurring flash floods in Feni, mainly triggered by a combination of relentless monsoon downpours and massive surges of upstream water from the Indian state of Tripura. They are among the five projects approved by the executive committee of the National Economic Council in a meeting on the day with an overall cost of Tk 7003.36 crore. Presided over by prime minister Tarique Rahman at the secretariat, the ECNEC attached priority to addressing environmental issues and incorporating sustainable energy solutions into the project design while approving the 'Supporting Infrastructure Project for Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone' project (*New Age*, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Govt takes comprehensive action plan for power sector:** The government has taken a comprehensive action plan in the power and energy sector to strengthen energy security, ensure uninterrupted electricity and energy supply. The primary goal of these initiatives is to build a self-reliant, affordable, and sustainable energy system in the long run by expanding domestic gas and oil exploration, according to the national budget for the fiscal year of 2026-27 placed on June 11. In the proposed budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year, the power and energy sector has been placed fifth among the 10 priority sectors. An allocation of Tk 17,345 crore has been proposed for this sector, which is 1.85 percent of the total budget. According to the plan, the government is giving special importance to the renewable energy sector. Targets have been set to generate 20 percent of total electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and 30 to 50 percent by 2050 through expanding solar, wind, and waste-based power generation. The government is implementing plans to increase power generation capacity to 35,000 MW by 2030. To reduce import dependence in the energy sector, the government is strengthening new gas and oil exploration activities. According to the government's plan, priority will be given to gas exploration and extraction in both onshore and offshore areas. To increase the use of domestic mineral resources, targets have been set to produce 6 lakh metric tons of coal and 14 lakh metric

tons of stone in the 2026-27 fiscal year. According to the plan, to protect domestic industry, it has been proposed to increase the existing 10 percent import duty on transformers of up to 1 kVA capacity to 25 percent and impose a new 5 percent regulatory duty. On the other hand, to ensure long-term energy security and keep electricity prices affordable, it has been proposed to extend the validity of the notification regarding duty-tax exemption benefits on coal imports for power plants until June 30, 2030. (BSS News, [16 June 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Türkiye backs Bangladeshi youth with scholarships, leadership progs:** President of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) Abdulhadi Turus has highlighted the huge potential of the youth in Bangladesh and reaffirmed YTB's commitment to supporting Bangladeshi students and young professionals through scholarships, training, and leadership programmes. **Ambassador of Bangladesh to Türkiye Amanul Haq called on Abdulhadi Turus in Ankara on Monday when they discussed expanding cooperation in education, youth development, cultural exchange, and people-to-people connectivity.** Ambassador Haq appreciated YTB's continued support for Bangladeshi students and proposed increasing scholarship opportunities, as many Bangladeshi students are now interested in studying in Türkiye, and establishing a formal framework of cooperation through a memorandum of understanding, said the Bangladesh Embassy in Türkiye. Both sides agreed to explore opportunities to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest (*Dhaka Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Sri Lankan PM seeks stronger trade ties with Bangladesh:** Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya today said his country sought enhanced trade and stronger bilateral ties with Dhaka as Bangladesh High Commissioner Andalib Elias paid a farewell call on him ahead of expiry of his assignment in Colombo. **According to a statement of Bangladesh mission in Sri Lankan capital Amarasuriya expressed hope that the initiatives during the envoy's tenure, particularly in the fields of trade and commerce, would continue to progress and contribute to deeper bilateral economic engagements.** The statement said the Sri Lankan premier appreciated Elias' dedicated efforts in strengthening the longstanding friendly relations between the two South Asian nations. She noted that stronger economic cooperation would further consolidate the friendly ties and create new opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration. **The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to further strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation in trade, investment and other key sectors** (BSS News, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Switzerland eyes HSIA ground handling operations:** Swiss aviation services company Swissport has expressed interest in participating of ground handling operations at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), as Bangladesh and Switzerland discussed expanding cooperation in the civil aviation sector. **The interest was conveyed by Swiss Ambassador to Bangladesh Reto Renggli during a courtesy call on Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Afroza Khanam and State Minister M. Rashiduzzaman Millat at the ministry this morning. In response, the minister and state minister welcomed the Switzerland's proposal and invited the submission of a formal offer, assuring that it would receive due consideration.** During the meeting, both sides reviewed opportunities for strengthening bilateral cooperation and enhancing engagement between aviation stakeholders of the two countries. Renggli highlighted Switzerland's interest in working closely with Bangladesh's aviation industry and exploring new areas of collaboration (BSS News, [16 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Speaker seeks US support to recover laundered funds from abroad:** Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, Bir Bikram, today sought US cooperation in recovering funds allegedly laundered abroad during the tenure of the previous fascist regime and welcomed a proposal from the International Republican Institute (IRI) to support the capacity building of the newly elected lawmakers. The issues came up when IRI Bangladesh Resident Program Director John Fluharty made a courtesy call on Jatiya Sangsad Speaker at the Speaker's office in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. During the meeting, Fluharty proposed IRI's support for enhancing the skills and institutional capacity of members of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad through training programmes, workshops and experience-sharing initiatives. He also briefed the Speaker on various activities being implemented by the US-based organization in Bangladesh to promote democratic and political stability. Referring to allegations that around TK 28 lakh crore was siphoned abroad during the rule of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Speaker sought US assistance in bringing the money back to Bangladesh, said a press release (*BSS News*, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **German foreign ministry official: Germany, Europe willing to engage more with Bangladesh:** Director General for Asia and the Pacific at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Frank Hartmann, has said Germany and Europe are willing and eager to engage more with Bangladesh and get to know the country better. "To that end, I would like to invite our Bangladeshi counterparts to come visit us in Germany," he said, reflecting on his recent visit to Bangladesh. Accompanied by the German ambassador to Bangladesh, the delegation held courtesy meetings with senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) - State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam, acting Foreign Secretary Dr Md Nazrul Islam and Director General for West Europe and EU Mosharaf Hossain. **Both sides acknowledged the long-standing amiable relationship between Bangladesh and Germany, looking forward to continued cooperation. Hartmann commended Bangladesh on its democratic transition and successful elections. MoFA representatives expressed appreciation for the EU's deployment of an election observer mission. Looking to strengthen Bangladesh's ties with the EU, Bangladesh highlighted its appeal for a Free Trade Agreement** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **BGB, locals thwart push-in of one person at Jamalpur border:** India's Border Security Force (BSF) has tried to push one person through a border point in the Maddherchar area of Jamalpur's Dewanganj Upazila. However, locals and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) have thwarted the effort. The incident took place near Pillar 1078 of the Jhaudanga BOP in the Upazila on Monday night, said Lt Col Hasanur Rahman, commander of Jamalpur 35 BGB. BGB and locals said that a 35-year-old man tried to enter Bangladesh from the international zero line in the Maddherchar area on Monday night. Local resident Makbul Hossain said, "When a person tried to enter Bangladesh, we and the BGB stopped him. He initially claimed to be Bangladeshi, but he could not give any address. He was later sent back." Lt Col Hasanur said, "BSF is now trying to push people in through remote mountainous areas. They tried to push one person in at night. However, the person failed to enter due to the efforts of the BGB and locals and is staying at the zero line" (*bdnews24.com*, [16 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Seven held for assisting 'push-in attempts' by BSF along Chapainawabganj border:** Seven Bangladeshi nationals were detained on Monday night on allegations of assisting an attempted push-in by India's Border Security Force (BSF) through the Rokonpur border in Gomastapur

upazila of Chapainawabganj. Of them, four were detained by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the remaining three by the police. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Gomastapur Police Station, Noor-e-Alam on Tuesday said members of BSF attempted to push a woman into Bangladesh through Rokonpur border on Monday night and detainees assisted the woman's entry into the country. **The BGB official said four detainees assisted the BSF in exchange of money. With the latest two push-in bids, BGB personnel and local residents prevented at least 49 alleged push-in attempts by the BSF since early May, following the Indian Bharatiya Janata Party's big polls win in West Bengal, according to BGB officials** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [16 June 2026](#); *New Age*, [17 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **India forcibly expels ethnic Bengalis unlawfully, says HRW:** Indian authorities are forcibly expelling ethnic Bengali residents, mostly Muslims from West Bengal state, to Bangladesh without basic due process, Human Rights Watch said in a press release on Wednesday. Indian Border Security Force actions, combined with Border Guard Bangladesh efforts to block those expelled from entering, has left dozens of families stranded at the 'zero line' between the two countries. Bangladeshi border guards have reported that since June 1, 2026, they have foiled 21 attempts by the BSF to push more than 200 people, including children, into Bangladesh's border districts. **'Indian authorities are cruelly dumping families into Bangladesh or leaving them stranded at the border, ignoring their basic human rights,'** said Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. **'The government should stop unlawfully expelling people, ensure procedural safeguards, engage with Bangladeshi authorities to verify citizenship, and end this dismaying animosity toward Muslims.'** Human Rights Watch interviewed nine people who witnessed Indian border security troops bring groups of people to the border at night and push them through cuts in the barbed wire fencing into Bangladeshi territory. In several cases, Indian border guards eventually allowed people to return after the Bangladesh border force denied them entry (*New Age*, [17 June 2026](#)).

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