

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

18 June 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **“Remember ’71 and ’86”:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has reminded the public of Jamaat-e-Islami’s controversial role during the 1971 Liberation War and the 1986 elections held under the Ershad regime. He made these remarks on Wednesday while addressing a rally at the Moulvibazar Government High School field during a one-day visit to the district. **Notably, Moulvibazar is the home district of Leader of the Opposition and Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman.** Responding to opposition statements that the government should not be given more time, the prime minister asked the audience, “There are many elders here. Do you remember what they [Jamaat] did in ’71? Do you remember what they did in ’86?” It should be noted that Jamaat-e-Islami, which was banned for taking up arms for Pakistan during the 1971 Liberation War, participated for the first time under its party symbol in the third parliamentary elections in 1986 during the rule of military dictator Hussain Muhammad Ershad. That election was boycotted by BNP. Tarique cautioned the public against those threatening to oust the government, reminding them that the people have given the BNP a mandate to run the country for five years (*Times of Bangladesh*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **PM tells parliament of multi-sector plans for infrastructure, agriculture, climate action:** Prime minister Tarique Rahman on Wednesday presented a series of government initiatives aimed at modernising the country’s transport network, transforming the agricultural sector and strengthening Bangladesh’s resilience to climate change. The plans were presented in written replies to lawmakers’ questions during the budget session of the Jatiya Sangsad. Responding to a question from Cumilla-10 lawmaker Md Mobashwer Alam Bhuiyan, Prime minister said the government had prioritised the development of road and rail connectivity in line with its election manifesto. He said an expressway grid would gradually be developed on national highways, alongside a multimodal transport system to ease pressure on roads. The government also plans to strengthen axle-load control and smart monitoring systems, improve road safety, and establish ring roads and radial road networks to reduce congestion in Dhaka, Tarique said. The prime minister said initiatives had been taken to connect the under-construction Dhaka-Ashulia Elevated Expressway with the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, while a feasibility study was underway for a connection with the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway. Several major infrastructure projects are also under implementation or preparation, including bridges over the Meghna, Jamuna, a second Padma Bridge at the Paturia-Daulatdia point, and the proposed Dhaka-Chattogram Elevated Expressway, he said. On rail connectivity, Tarique said the government had decided to introduce electric traction on major railway routes to reduce travel times and ensure safer and more environmentally friendly transport (*New Age*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **PM says Tech, financial assessments under way for new Teesta Barrage:** Prime minister Tarique Rahman on Wednesday told the Jatiya Sangsad that technical and financial assessments were being carried out at various levels with a view to constructing a new barrage on the Teesta River to store water during the dry season. The information was given in a written reply tabled in the Jatiya Sangsad during a question-and-answer session. Rangpur-4 lawmaker Akhter Hossen asked whether

the government plans to adopt a special integrated master plan through the Prime Minister's Office to implement major public-interest projects in the Teesta River basin and Rangpur-4 constituency. In response, the prime minister said that the Teesta River was vital to the livelihoods of people in northern Bangladesh. He said that reduced dry-season water flow due to upstream dams and other constraints was affecting agriculture, including the Teesta Irrigation Project, while excessive upstream rainfall during the monsoon often caused floods and riverbank erosion. **Tarique said that riverbank protection works covering 42.5 kilometres were under way in five Teesta basin districts at a cost of Tk 230 crore and were scheduled for completion this month. He said that 4.6 kilometres of riverbank protection works at a cost of about Tk 24 crore were also being implemented in the Rangpur-4 constituency and were expected to significantly reduce erosion. The prime minister said that a survey for a sustainable and integrated development plan for the Teesta River had already been completed.** According to the survey report, the proposed Teesta Master Plan includes riverbank protection and river training works, dredging, flood-control embankments with roads, construction and rehabilitation of groynes and spurs, and land reclamation and development initiatives (*New Age*, [17 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **PM Tarique slams 'chanachur' jibe, defends budget as people-focused:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has criticised opposition parties for comparing the 2026-27 fiscal year's budget to "chanachur", saying the remarks were unfair to a people-focused financial plan. **Speaking at a Family Card distribution programme at Victoria High School ground in Sreemangal he said the budget had been designed for public welfare. "In the budget we have made all arrangements for the people... those who call it anti-people -- can they ever be friends of the people?" he said. "They can never be friends of the people."** The prime minister said that opposition to government programmes could disrupt welfare initiatives (*The Daily Star*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **"Humanitarian disaster has emerged due to push-in activities at the border":** Saiful Haque, General Secretary of the Revolutionary Workers' Party, commented that the push-in activities by India's Border Security Force (BSF) at various points on the western part of the Bangladesh-India border have caused a humanitarian disaster at the border. **He said that the BSF forcibly pushed several hundred people, including children and women, into Bangladesh, creating an extremely inhumane situation. In a statement, the General Secretary of the Revolutionary Workers' Party said that some of the pushed-in people were left in the no man's land of the border. Without food, water, and medical care, some of them faced life-threatening situations. He expressed strong dissatisfaction and condemnation of this effort to push several hundred people into Bangladesh. Saiful Haque said that after the formation of the BJP government in West Bengal, India's anti-Bangladesh activities have taken on a new level. This has created a highly tense situation at the border, which has led to a deep sense of insecurity among the people living there. These activities by the BSF reflect their anti-Bangladesh and aggressive mindset. In the statement, he also mentioned that there are specific legal and legitimate procedures to send back the legal citizens residing in both countries to their respective countries** (*Kaler Kantha*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **"There is no visible government initiative to stop push-in":** Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party has claimed that the government has no visible initiative to stop pushin. The party made this claim during a press conference titled 'Border Killings, Pushin, and Barbed Wire Politics' at its central office in Bijoy Nagar, the capital, on Wednesday. **At a press conference, AB Party Chairman Mojibur Rahman Manju accused the Indian government of violating diplomatic courtesy, international law, and human rights through push-in. He expressed his anger over the Bangladesh government's lack of effective action or initiative in this matter. Manju said that the Indian government had promised to help once an elected government was in place, but we are**

seeing this brutal example of their 'help' just like in the past. He urged everyone to highlight India's barbed-wire politics, border killings, and hostile actions like push-in to the global community (*Amar Desh*, [17 June 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **Bangladesh to import three more LNG shipments to beat energy crisis:** The Bangladesh government has moved to import three more shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to ease a fuel crunch triggered by the Iran war. **The shipments, bought through international quotations, will cost Tk 21.12 billion, slightly less than the price paid for similar volumes of LNG bought this month and last month.** The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase gave "partial" approval to the proposal at its 27th meeting at the Secretariat on Wednesday, the finance ministry said. It did not explain what the partial approval meant. Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury presided over the meeting. Singapore's Vitol Asia and Aramco Trading will each supply one of these shipments, while the UK's TotalEnergies Gas and Power will provide the remaining shipment (*bdnews24.com*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Proposed budget priorities 10 sectors on road to trillion-dollar economy:** The government has set a goal to turn Bangladesh into a trillion-dollar economy by 2034. To achieve this goal, 10 sectors have been given priority in the proposed budget for fiscal 2026-27. **According to the government, it will be possible to take the country's economy to a new height by checking inflation, increasing investment, creating employment, developing human resources and establishing good governance.** In his speech on the proposed budget for fiscal 2026-27, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said if the government's plans and strategies are successfully implemented, Bangladesh will become a trillion-dollar economy by 2034. At the same time, he said, opportunities will be created to achieve demographic, longevity and democratic dividends. Keeping this goal in mind, the target has been set to reduce inflation to 7.5 percent and increase economic growth to 6.5 percent in the next fiscal year (*BSS News*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **FY27 budget prioritises water security for climate resilience, agricultural growth:** The government has unveiled an extensive water resources agenda in the proposed national budget for FY2026-27, placing river restoration, flood protection, canal excavation, and the landmark Padma Barrage project at the forefront of its strategy for climate resilience, food security, and sustainable water management. In his budget speech, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury announced a proposed allocation of Tk 10,533 crore for the Ministry of Water Resources, signalling a major investment in the country's rivers, irrigation systems, and flood-control infrastructure. As part of efforts to restore ecological balance and revive dying waterways, the government has undertaken special initiatives to recover at least one river in each division from illegal occupation and encroachment. In a notable shift toward data-based governance, the government has developed a Water Quality Index (WQI) for rivers surrounding Dhaka, enabling more systematic monitoring of river health. The Ministry of Water Resources is implementing a nationwide programme titled "Excavation and Re-excavation of Rivers, Canals and Water Reservoirs." The budget outlines extensive flood-management works for the coming fiscal year. Targets have been set to construct, reconstruct and rehabilitate embankments and flood walls covering 309 kilometres and improve river navigability and remove submerged shoals along 484 kilometres of waterways. **The centrepiece of the water resources budget is the newly approved Padma Barrage (Phase-I) Project, which policymakers describe as a transformative initiative**

for agriculture, fisheries and water management in the country's south-western region. The budget speech also highlighted concerns over reduced water flows caused by upstream dams on the Teesta and Padma rivers, which have affected agriculture, irrigation, fisheries and biodiversity. The proposed FY2026-27 budget demonstrates the government's growing emphasis on water security as a foundation for economic growth, climate adaptation and environmental sustainability (*BSS News*, [18 June 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Foreign Minister says Regularisation of undocumented Bangladeshis depends on host country's laws:** Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman on Wednesday (17 June) said the government is maintaining diplomatic engagement with countries hosting undocumented Bangladeshi migrants to expand opportunities for their regularisation, stressing that the issue ultimately depends on the laws and policies of the respective host states. Responding to a starred question from ruling party lawmaker Md Jahandar Ali Miah (Madaripur-3) in Parliament, he said Bangladeshi expatriates are making an outstanding contribution to national development and remain a key driving force behind the country's economic progress. **The Minister said the present government attaches the highest importance to the welfare, rights, and dignity of Bangladeshi nationals living overseas. He said Bangladesh continues diplomatic contacts and discussions at various levels with countries where Bangladeshi nationals are residing or working without proper documentation.** Khalilur Rahman said Bangladeshi missions abroad are actively providing consular support and facilitating participation in regularisation and amnesty programmes announced by host countries (*Prothom Alo*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Korea keen to invest in Bangladesh's electronics manufacturing and technology sectors:** Appreciating Bangladesh's rapid economic growth and investment-friendly environment, South Korean Ambassador Kim Ji-joon on Wednesday expressed his country's interest in investing in Bangladesh's electronics manufacturing and technology sectors. He also highlighted South Korea's interest in expanding cooperation and investment in renewable energy, information technology, manufacturing, and other promising sectors. The Ambassador discussed the issues during a meeting with the Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kabir at the prime minister's office in Tejgaon. **During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to further strengthen the longstanding friendly relations and enhance bilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and South Korea. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said both sides emphasized the importance of deepening collaboration in trade, investment, technology, industrialization, infrastructure development, human resource development, and skills enhancement** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Speaker urges Japan to expand recruitment of skilled Bangladeshi workers:** Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, Bir Bikram, called upon Japan to enhance cooperation in recruiting skilled manpower from Bangladesh, highlighting the country's growing pool of trained workers. The call came when Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh SAIDA Shinichi paid a courtesy call on Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad at the Speaker's office in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. During the meeting, the Speaker expressed gratitude to Japan for its long-standing friendship and continued investments in various sectors of Bangladesh. He particularly appreciated Japan's unconditional support for Bangladesh's communication infrastructure and economic development, said a press release (*BSS News*, [17 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Nepal Speaker eyes stronger parliamentary cooperation with Bangladesh:** Nepal's Parliament Speaker Dol Prasad Aryal today expressed keen interest in expanding parliamentary exchanges with Bangladesh, including greater engagement between parliamentary committees and friendship groups to strengthen democratic practices and bilateral cooperation. The remarks came when Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal Md. Shafiqur Rahman paid a courtesy call on him in Kathmandu, according to a press release received here. During the meeting, the Speaker reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to advancing bilateral relations and assured his full support, through his legislative role, to further consolidate cooperation between the two neighbouring countries. The ambassador expressed Bangladesh's readiness to expand cooperation in energy, trade, tourism, education, agriculture, food security, women's empowerment, youth development and people-to-people connectivity. He also underlined the importance of strengthening collaboration through regional and international forums, including SAARC and BIMSTEC, and promoting trade, connectivity and investment across the South Asia (BSS News, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh assumes UNHCR executive committee leadership:** Bangladesh has assumed the chairmanship of the bureau of the executive committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the first time, marking a significant milestone in the country's multilateral diplomacy. Bangladesh permanent representative to the United Nations Office and the International Organizations in Geneva ambassador Nahida Sobhan formally assumed the role of chair of the four-member ExCom Bureau on Tuesday, said a message on Wednesday. Bangladesh has never before served in the Bureau since the operationalisation of the UNHCR Executive Committee in 1959. Bangladesh emerged as the unanimous candidate of the Asia-Pacific Group and was formally seconded by Algeria and Austria, representing different regional groups. Ambassador Sobhan's nomination was subsequently endorsed by all 110 member states of the executive committee. The election reflected the confidence of the international community in Bangladesh's leadership and its growing role within the multilateral system, the message said (New Age, [18 June 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **Home Minister says 2,369 people pushed into Bangladesh by BSF since August 2024:** Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed told Parliament on Wednesday that since August 5, 2024, a total of 2,369 people were pushed into Bangladesh by India's Border Security Force (BSF), of whom 2,175 were handed over to respective police stations, 11 were returned to the BSF, and 183 were pushed back across the border. Replying to a starred question from lawmaker Mohammad Abdul Malik (Sylhet-3), he said the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) has also thwarted 36 attempted push-ins following the West Bengal Assembly elections in India. He also added that fencing at sensitive points along the Bangladesh-India border is currently under consideration (Dhaka Tribune, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Home minister says fencing planned to curb cross-border crime along Myanmar frontier:** The government has taken an initiative to install barbed-wire fencing along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border to prevent criminal activities, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed has said. On Wednesday, he also told parliament that similar fencing along the Bangladesh-India border is under consideration. Salahuddin spoke of the development while responding to a question from Pabna-5 MP Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas during a parliament session led by Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad. The minister said the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) is taking "coordinated" steps

to safeguard national interests and reduce cross-border crime to “zero”. He added that the BGB is maintaining a “zero tolerance” policy against the smuggling of yaba, crystal meth (ice), phensedyl, as well as illegal arms and ammunition. Salahuddin said new border outposts (BOPs) and temporary outposts (TOBs) have been constructed in remote and sensitive areas, with further expansion planned. This has reduced distances between BGB posts and increased patrol frequency, he added. **He also informed parliament that a “smart border surveillance system” has already been installed in highly sensitive areas of the country’s south-western and north-western borders.** Construction of border roads in remote hill regions is progressing rapidly, he said, adding that this has improved the mobility and response time of BGB patrol teams. However, the minister did not provide details on the length of fencing, project cost, timeline, or specific sensitive stretches along the India border (*bdnews24.com*, [17 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **‘Punish us, but save us’: Families ‘pushed in’ by BSF ‘plead for help:** “I’ve made a big mistake in my life, which I’ll not repeat if alive. Save me. If we’re wrong, punish us - but still save us.” The desperate pleas came from a man who identified himself as Belal Hossain on Tuesday afternoon. He has been stranded on the zero line along the Goytapara border in Kurigram’s Rowmari Upazila after what Bangladeshi officials described as a failed attempt by India’s Border Security Force, or BSF, to push him and others into Bangladesh. **Speaking to reporters, Belal said he had spent three days under the open sky with his wife and two children in what he described as “inhumane conditions”.** “We are suffering terribly with our small children. There is no water and no toilet,” he said. He said both children had fallen ill in the scorching midday heat. Lt Col Hasanur Rahman, commander of the Jamalpur-35 BGB Battalion, said the matter was being discussed at a “higher level” and efforts were under way to resolve it quickly. According to local accounts, the BSF pushed six people towards Bangladesh through the Bangshirchar-Battala border and three others through the Bhandurchar border on Sunday morning. The Border Guard Bangladesh, or BGB, and local residents stopped the alleged push-in after a series of chases and counter-chases. Since then, the nine people — including women and children — have remained stranded on the zero line between the two countries (*bdnews24.com*, [17 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **“AL regime exploited Rohingya crisis, ignored solution”, FM tells JS:** Foreign minister Khalilur Rahman on Wednesday told Jatiya Sangsad that the previous Awami League regime exploited the humanitarian crisis of the persecuted Rohingyas displaced from Rakhine state of Myanmar to seek financial assistance from donor countries instead of pursuing a solution to the problem. **In a written reply to a question from Chattogram-15 lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury, the minister said that the former ‘fascist Awami League regime’ had highlighted the suffering of the Rohingyas while attempting to divert international attention from what he described as the party’s repression and oppression against the people of Bangladesh and their corruption. ‘As a result, the issue had gradually slipped from the international agenda,’ he said.** His written answer was placed during the ninth sitting of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad’s budget session. The minister said that Bangladesh had so far facilitated the successful resettlement of 5,712 Rohingyas in various developed countries through the International Organization for Migration and another 697 Rohingyas through the International Rescue Committee (*New Age*, [17 June 2026](#)).

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