

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

23 July 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **Hasina says she will return to Bangladesh despite death sentence:** Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina has vowed to return to Bangladesh and face trial, despite the risk of imprisonment or execution. In a written interview with Japan's Kyodo News, Hasina said she was aware she could be imprisoned or executed if she returned but would still face legal proceedings. "I will return to Bangladesh. I will appear before the court," the Awami League chief said, without naming a specific court. "They may send me to prison. They may even try to hang me. I know those risks," she said, in an apparent reference to Bangladeshi authorities. **She rejected her conviction over deadly crackdown on 2024 student-led protests as "politically motivated".** In a separate interview with Reuters on Jul 9, Hasina said "she and senior Awami League colleagues plan to return from India in December and surrender" (*bdnews24.com*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Information Minister says Bangladeshi nationalism reflects inclusive national identity:** Information and Broadcasting Minister Zahir Uddin Swapon on Wednesday said Bangladeshi nationalism represents an inclusive national identity that embraces all languages, religions, cultures, ethnic groups and communities living in the country. Speaking as the chief guest at a seminar titled 'Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman and Bangladeshi Nationalism' at Jagannath University, he said the philosophy recognises every citizen within Bangladesh's geographical boundaries as an equal and valued part of the national identity. **Swapon said Pakistan's creation on the basis of religion proved that religion alone could not sustain unity in a diverse society.** He referred to the 1952 Language Movement and the 1971 Liberation War as examples of the challenges faced by a state attempting to unite people through a single identity. **Highlighting the role of former president Ziaur Rahman during the Liberation War, the minister said his leadership and declaration of independence contributed significantly to organising resistance during the early stages of the war.** He added that Bangladeshi nationalism respects the country's diverse identities and remains relevant as a foundation for national unity and solidarity (*Dhaka Tribune*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Jamaat warns of street protests over July Charter:** Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar has warned that the country may face unrest if the July Charter or the outcome of a referendum is not implemented. He said political and constitutional disputes should be resolved through discussions in parliament, but warned that his party would take to the streets if the issues were pushed beyond parliamentary debate. **"We want all political and constitutional debates to take place in parliament. But if those debates are pushed onto the streets, we will have no alternative but to launch a movement,"** Porwar said. He made the remarks while addressing a seminar titled "Challenges in implementing the people's verdict of the referendum: The role of lawyers in overcoming them" at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium in Dhaka on Wednesday (*Times of Bangladesh*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Jamaat expels Satkhira-4 MP Gazi Nazrul Islam over 'moral misconduct':** Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has expelled Gazi Nazrul Islam, the Member of Parliament for Satkhira-4, after videos of his "private moments" circulated on social media and drew widespread attention. The party's Central Executive Council took the decision at an emergency meeting on Wednesday afternoon, citing moral misconduct. The decision was announced in a statement issued to the media by Ahsanul Mahboob Jubayer, secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami's Central Publicity and Media Department. According to the statement, the party's Central Executive Council held an emergency meeting at 4:00pm on Wednesday, 22 July, at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition on Mintoo Road in the capital. **The statement said the party conducted an internal investigation into recent media reports concerning Gazi Nazrul Islam. The investigation found evidence of moral misconduct, leading the council to decide to expel him from Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami under Article 62 of the party's constitution. The party also decided to immediately inform the Bangladesh Election Commission of his expulsion** (*Prothom Alo*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **President Shahabuddin may resign soon:** President Mohammed Shahabuddin is likely to resign soon, according to multiple sources familiar with the matter. Sources said the possibility of his resignation has gained momentum in recent weeks. Shahabuddin, who took office in April 2023, is the only person still holding a top constitutional position from before the July 2024 mass uprising. **According to the sources, Shahabuddin spoke by phone with former prime minister Sheikh Hasina during a visit to London for medical treatment in May this year. Hasina has been living in exile in India since July 2024. The president travelled to London on May 9 and returned on May 18. The sources claimed intelligence agencies later learned about the conversation, after which a message was conveyed to the president suggesting that he step down.** However, a senior BNP leader said the reported phone conversation was not the only reason behind the expected resignation, describing the matter as "more complex" (*The Daily Star*, [23 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Public admin: Political choice undermines BNP's merit pledge:** The BNP government's first major round of civil service promotions has sparked fierce debate over political bias, putting it on the defensive over its pledge to run a merit-based administration. The controversy erupted after the Ministry of Public Administration promoted 179 deputy secretaries to joint secretaries on 9 July. Eyebrows were raised almost immediately when retired officials and individuals with disciplinary records made the list, while senior and highly rated candidates were left out. Notably, the top two merit-ranked officers from the 25th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) batch were overlooked entirely. **The 25th batch secured significantly more promotions, with 72 out of 204 officers promoted, compared to 45 out of 184 from the senior 24th batch.** Several officials at the Ministry of Public Administration alleged that one senior official largely dictated the promotions, while a former secretary accused the Superior Selection Board (SSB) of failing to conduct proper scrutiny. Addressing the inclusion of a retired official in the promotion list, Cabinet Secretary Nasimul Ghani acknowledged it as a mistake. "If a retired official was promoted, it was an oversight," he told TIMES. **Regarding candidates with previous disciplinary records, Ghani explained that their cases had been formally resolved, clearing the legal path for their advancement. However, when pressed on allegations that political bias had influenced the process, Ghani was direct. "Would you promote someone from the Awami League who served as deputy commissioners during the elections?" he asked** (*Times of Bangladesh*, [23 July 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **BTMA leaders meet PM, constitute committee to address textile sector issues:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman formed a high-level committee to review and resolve the existing problems facing the country's textile industry. The committee was formed following a meeting of the leaders of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Prime Minister's Office at Bangladesh Secretariat here this morning. **During the meeting, the BTMA leaders discussed the current state of the country's textile industry, its export potential and the challenges confronting the sector, said PM's Deputy Press Secretary Hasan Shiplu.** Highlighting the textile industry's significant contribution to the national economy, they sought the government's continued support for the sector's sustainable development and urged policy support to enhance its competitiveness in the global market (*BSS News*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Energy ministry says No fuel crisis as diesel stock reaches 344,000 tonnes:** Ruling out any fuel crisis, energy ministry officials today said the country currently has 344,000 tonnes of diesel in stock. Energy Ministry spokesperson and Joint Secretary Monir Hossain Chowdhury said the existing fuel stock is sufficient to meet current demand and that the country's fuel supply chain remains stable. **"The country has sufficient fuel stocks, including enough diesel for 31 days, octane for 36 days, petrol for 20 days, furnace oil for 25 days and jet fuel for 20 days," he said while addressing a press briefing at the ministry's conference room.** Chowdhury said the current diesel stock is above the normal level and is sufficient to ensure an uninterrupted supply throughout July and August. Referring to recent media reports on fuel and natural gas, he said, "We want people to receive accurate information through the media so that unnecessary rumours do not create confusion." He said the government is working to gradually increase the country's strategic fuel reserve from the current level to 60 days, with a long-term goal of maintaining a 90-day reserve. "An additional 140,000 tonnes of diesel is scheduled to arrive by July 31, while another 240,000 tonnes is expected to arrive in August, further strengthening the country's fuel stocks," he said. Regarding natural gas, he said Bangladesh continues to face a long-standing supply deficit, as daily demand stands at around 3,800 million cubic feet per day (mmcf), while total supply from domestic sources and imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) is only 2,700-2,800 mmcf (*BSS News*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **PM orders action over 13-year Khulna shipyard dev project delay:** Prime minister Tarique Rahman has directed departmental action against officials held responsible for a 13-year delay in implementing the Khulna Shipyard Road Widening and Development Project. **The directive followed the submission of a probe report on Wednesday by a committee headed by cabinet secretary Nasimul Gani.** The report, presented to the prime minister at the secretariat, recommended disciplinary measures against the officials involved, state minister for Planning Zonayed Abdur Rahim Saki told reporters after a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council. Saki confirmed the prime minister's order for departmental action, though he did not disclose the identities or exact number of individuals named in the report (*New Age*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Shipping risks, China export curbs threaten fertiliser supply:** Bangladesh faces mounting pressure to secure adequate urea supplies for the coming crop seasons as geopolitical tensions disrupt global shipping, China's export window narrows and regional buyers compete aggressively for available cargoes. **The uncertainty surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, along**

with security threats in the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb, has driven up freight costs, insurance premiums and delivery risks. At the same time, major agricultural economies, including India, are strengthening fertiliser reserves, intensifying competition for supplies. China, one of the world's largest urea producers, has emerged as a key source. However, market indications suggest its current quota-based export programme runs only from June to August, raising concerns that export availability could shrink sharply from September unless the window is extended. The pressure comes as Bangladesh remains heavily dependent on imports. The country requires more than 2.6 million tonnes of urea annually, but domestic factories have frequently failed to operate at full capacity because of unreliable gas supplies (*Daily Sun*, [23 July 2026](#)).

ECNEC approves Dhaka-Ashulia expressway project cost hike by 55pc: State minister for planning Zonayed Abdur Rahim Saki said on Wednesday that the ongoing initiatives taken to accelerate the preparation and implementation of development projects would be completed in 180 days of the incumbent government that assumed office in February. **The initiatives include the creation of a dashboard for individual projects, automation between the planning ministry and other key ministries, fresh guidelines on the project approval process, and guidelines on the appointment of project director.** Zonayed Saki noted that proper implementation of the annual development programme was crucial for reviving economic growth. Presided over by the prime minister, Tarique Rahman, ECNEC approved eight project proposals costing Tk 14,041.21 crore—of which Tk 10,494.21 crore will come from domestic resources and Tk 3,550.44 crore from external sources as project loans. Among the approved proposals, one was linked to a cost and time extension for the Chinese-funded Dhaka-Ashulia Expressway Project under its second revision. The new project cost rose to Tk 27,045.6 crore from the previous Tk 17,553.04 crore, with the deadline extended to June 30. The contribution from domestic sources increased to Tk 13,803.15 crore from the previous Tk 7,860.96 crore, while the amount of the Chinese loan rose to Tk 13,242.5 crore from Tk 9,692 crore. **The state minister attributed the devaluation of the local currency, re-engineering of the expressway over the Turag River, adjustments along the Dhaka-Tongi railway transit corridor, and the addition of new components to the project cost increase of over 50 per cent** (*New Age*, [23 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Cabinet body clears Tk 7.34cr contract variation for RUET project:** The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase on Wednesday approved a proposal to increase the cost of constructing a 10-storey administrative building under the 'Further Development of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (2nd Revised)' project by Tk 7.34 crore. The recommendation came at a meeting of the CCGP chaired by finance minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury at the secretariat. According to an official decision, the committee recommended approving a variation of Tk 7,33,69,389, representing a 19.42 per cent increase over the original contract value (*New Age*, [23 July 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **'Bangladesh First' policy to guide foreign relations:** Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman on Wednesday said the government's "Bangladesh First" policy will guide the country's external relations as he held separate bilateral meetings with his Chinese, Russian and US

counterparts in Manila. The meetings took place on the sidelines of the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the Philippine capital, said a Foreign Ministry's press release [here](#). The meetings covered a broad spectrum of bilateral relations, including trade, investment, energy and connectivity, alongside key regional and international issues. During the talks, the Bangladesh side underlined that the "Bangladesh First" policy would remain the guiding principle of the country's external relations, reflecting the government's emphasis on safeguarding national interests in its engagement with international partners (*Dhaka Tribune*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Khalilur invites US Secretary Rubio to visit Bangladesh:** Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman on Wednesday invited US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to visit Bangladesh as Dhaka and Washington discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. The Bangladesh foreign minister extended the invitation during a meeting with Rubio in Manila on the sidelines of the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, said a press release issued by the Foreign Ministry here. Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir, US ambassador to India and US president's special envoy to South and Central Asia Sergio Gor were present during the meeting. **The two sides discussed ways to further enhance Bangladesh-US bilateral relations and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **China donates \$100,000 to help Bangladesh's flood, landslide victims:** China has donated \$100,000 in emergency cash assistance through the Red Cross Society to help people affected by floods and landslides across Chattogram and other parts of Bangladesh. **Chinese Ambassador to Dhaka Yao Wen handed over the donation cheque at an event at the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society's office in Dhaka's Moghbazar on Wednesday.** Beijing stands ready to send disaster management experts to Dhaka if needed, he said, adding that cooperation in this area needs to be strengthened, since it concerns saving lives in Bangladesh. He said the Chinese people felt heartfelt sympathy for the people of Bangladesh during this difficult time. **On behalf of the Red Cross Society of China, he said he had come to hand over the emergency cash assistance to the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, describing the transfer as symbolic in nature** (*bdnews24.com*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh, China discuss cooperation on transport corridors:** Bangladesh and China today discussed cooperation on transport corridors as the two countries explored ways to advance their comprehensive cooperative partnership and deepen connectivity and economic ties. Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held the bilateral meeting in Manila on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, said foreign ministry here. Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir accompanied the Bangladesh Foreign Minister at the meeting. **During the talks, the two foreign ministers discussed a wide range of bilateral issues aimed at advancing the comprehensive cooperative partnership between Bangladesh and China and jointly building a China-Bangladesh Community with a Shared Future. Cooperation on transport corridors featured prominently in the discussions as the two sides exchanged views on strengthening connectivity alongside broader economic engagement. The two foreign ministers also discussed investment, energy and economic cooperation and other matters of mutual interest. The Rohingya crisis and repatriation of the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals were also discussed during the meeting** (*BSS News*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh, Russia discuss expanding cooperation in energy sector:** Bangladesh and Russia today discussed ways to strengthen their existing bilateral cooperation, particularly in the energy sector, as the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening ties. Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov led their respective delegations at the bilateral meeting held in Manila, the Philippines, said a foreign ministry's press release here. Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir accompanied the Bangladesh Foreign Minister at the meeting. During the talks, the two foreign ministers reviewed existing cooperation between Bangladesh and Russia, with particular emphasis on collaboration in the energy sector. Both sides also exchanged views on ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The Russian Foreign Minister also welcomed the newly formed Bangladesh-Russia Parliamentary Friendship Group, appreciating the initiative as a means to institutionalise legislative cooperation between the two countries. **Both sides agreed to further strengthen Bangladesh-Russia cooperation and advance the longstanding bilateral relationship through continued engagement** (*BSS News*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Tarique Choyon resigns as press secy at Bangladesh's Kolkata mission:** Md Tariqul Islam Bhuiyan, better known as Tarique Choyon, has resigned from his post as first secretary (press) at the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata, citing personal and professional reasons. **'I resigned from the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata due to personal and professional reasons,' he said in a post on his verified Facebook account on Wednesday.** Tarique Choyon said he spent a wonderful year and a half in the city of Kolkata and tried to fulfil his assigned responsibilities properly. **'I intend to write a book in the future about my professional life, office, colleagues and friends in Kolkata. Everyone, please pray for me. May Allah help us all,' he said** (*New Age*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh condemns Houthi naval blockade against Saudi Arabia:** Bangladesh today strongly condemned the Houthis' declaration of a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia, warning that such actions could escalate tensions, undermine regional peace and stability, and disrupt international maritime trade. **"The government of Bangladesh strongly condemns the declaration of a naval blockade against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the Houthis," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a press release here today.** Bangladesh said such actions risk escalating tensions in the region while posing threats to peace, stability and the smooth flow of international maritime commerce. Reaffirming its commitment to freedom of navigation, Bangladesh stressed the importance of uninterrupted and lawful navigation along international maritime routes, including in the Red Sea, in accordance with international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (*BSS News*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **BIMSTEC seeks members to enhance vigil against financial crimes:** IMSTEC today concluded a programme in northeastern Indian state of Meghalaya to strengthen member countries enhanced capacity to prevent financial crimes and terror financing. The seven-nation forum of south and southeast Asian nations in a statement said event titled Regional Capacity Building Programme on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) was staged in collaboration with Indian finance ministry's revenue department. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) staged the two-day event in Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, focusing on international standards to combat emerging financial crimes and preparedness for mutual evaluations. The statement said experts from India's Department of Revenue, Reserve Bank of

India, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Financial Intelligence Unit-India, National Investigation Agency, Intelligence Bureau, Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre and Enforcement Directorate shared their expertise with participants. It said the programme was designed to strengthen technical knowledge and institutional capacity, deepen regional cooperation in tackling evolving financial crimes and help member countries to prepare for mutual evaluations under the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG). The programme covered technical compliance, effectiveness, risk-based approaches, financial intelligence, supervision and national risk assessments while international cooperation and private sector's engagement was also featured prominently in the discussions (*BSS News*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **ECOSOC backs Bangladesh's request for LDC graduation extension:** The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has recommended that the UN General Assembly take a final decision on Bangladesh's request for a three-year extension of its preparatory period before graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category. **Under the decision, ECOSOC recommended that the General Assembly take a final decision on the requests before November 24, 2026, the date on which Bangladesh and Nepal are currently scheduled to graduate from the LDC category. Following the adoption of the decision, Ambassador Chowdhury reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to ensuring a smooth, sustainable and irreversible graduation from the LDC category** (*BSS News*, [22 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Trump's special envoy due in Dhaka to sound out Bangladesh's foreign policy direction:** Sergio Gor, the US Special Envoy for South and Central Asia, is set to arrive in Dhaka on 30 July to have a clear understanding of Bangladesh's foreign policy priorities and direction. Diplomats consider this visit significant in the context of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Beijing visit, Bangladesh's recent engagements with various countries, and recent regional diplomatic activities. **On the first day of the three-day visit, Sergio Gor will meet with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman. During his visit, he may also exchange views with political party leaders, professionals, and representatives of civil society. On the final day, he is scheduled to visit the Rohingya refugee situation in Cox's Bazar firsthand.** A high-level government official has confirmed this information. According to diplomatic sources, the current priorities of Bangladesh's foreign policy, regional strategic positioning, and the future of Dhaka-Washington relations will be the focus of discussions during Sergio Gor's visit (*Prothom Alo*, [23 July 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **Indian national jailed for 2 years in smuggling case:** A court in Lalmonirhat on Wednesday sentenced an Indian national to two years' rigorous imprisonment and fined him Tk 200 in a smuggling case. Additional District and Sessions Judge Court-2 Judge SM Shafiqul Islam delivered the verdict. **The convict, Sameer Pal, is a resident of the Changrabandha area under Mekliganj Police Station in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal, India.** According to the case statement and court sources, members of the Border Guard Bangladesh's 61 BGB Battalion (Teesta Battalion) conducted a raid in the Burimari Zero Point area of Patgram upazila on the morning of November 6, 2025. During the raid, truck driver Sameer was arrested with Indian goods, including lead-like objects and medicines, worth about Tk 4.5 lakh. The truck and the seized goods were kept as evidence (*New Age*, [22 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Experts call for stronger defences against subthreshold threats:** Security experts have urged Bangladesh to strengthen its national security framework by developing stronger defences against subthreshold threats, as modern conflicts increasingly move beyond traditional battlefields. The remarks were made at a roundtable titled 'Sub-threshold Conflict: War by Other Means,' organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) in Dhaka on Tuesday. **Experts stressed the need to protect critical infrastructure, enhance cybersecurity, promote media literacy, and strengthen regional cooperation. They also highlighted Bangladesh's strategic location and growing digital and maritime systems as areas requiring greater attention. The discussion concluded with calls for stronger coordination among policymakers, security agencies, researchers, and citizens to address evolving threats** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [22 July 2026](#)).

[Disclaimer: We do not subscribe to the views or interpretations expressed by various Bangladeshi commentators we make available for perusal by our experts/analysts/policymakers every day. We put it all together in Daily Bangladesh Watch (DBW) with a view to acquainting our readers with the existing thought process in Bangladesh having its bearing on India, with the hope that such effort will help us in devising appropriate policies to deal with Bangladesh in a more effective manner. DBW is curated by Dr. Ankita Sanyal]