

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

23 June 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **BNP, opposition to be on streets today:** The ruling BNP and opposition parties will take to the streets today amid security concerns over possible flash processions by leaders and activists of the Awami League on its founding anniversary. BNP leaders said the party high command had instructed leaders and activists at all levels to remain vigilant, maintain their presence in their respective areas, and immediately inform law enforcers if they notice any attempt to create disorder. Party insiders said organisational units in divisions, districts, and metropolitan areas held meetings yesterday. They were asked to coordinate with local administrations and ensure that no banned group could use the day to trigger chaos. **BNP units were also asked to organise rallies, sit-ins, and taking out of processions in certain areas. In some districts, leaders were told to ready patrols by motorbikes. A senior BNP leader, seeking anonymity, said grassroots leaders had been instructed to avoid confrontation and ensure that party activists do not violate law and order.** BNP sources said party units in more than 20 districts, including Sirajganj, Netrokona, and Sherpur, held preparatory programmes yesterday. Similar activities are expected today in district towns, upazila headquarters, and key points in Dhaka. Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir said its activists would be on the street across the country (*The Daily Star*, [23 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **11-party alliance holds rally today for AL trial:** The 11-party alliance, led by Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, on Monday announced a rally in the capital, demanding justice for all incidents of ‘enforced disappearance, killings and mass killings’ committed by the Awami League, activities of which are now banned. The alliance also announced nationwide protest rallies and processions in all districts on July 4 in support of the same demand. Speaking at the briefing, alliance coordinator and Jamaat-e-Islami assistant secretary-general Hamidur Rahman Azad said, ‘June 23 is a painful day in Bangladesh’s political history. The defeat at Plassey was not merely a military loss; it marked a tragic chapter of failure to protect independence, sovereignty and national interests.’ Azad said, ‘History teaches that conspiracies against national interests, betrayal and public unawareness can bring disastrous consequences for a nation.’ ‘Although the interim government accelerated the judicial process related to those incidents, the current government later slowed the process by appointing party loyalists, preventing visible progress in the trials,’ Azad added. He said, ‘A culture of impunity is creating frustration among the public and providing an opportunity for what he termed fascist forces to regroup.’ As per the announced schedule, a rally will be held at Bijaynagar in Dhaka at 5:00pm today in the presence of the alliance’s top leaders (*New Age*, [23 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **BNP MP urges ban on party opposed 1971 independence:** Bangladesh Nationalist Party lawmaker for Jhalakathi-1 Rafiqul Islam Jamal has called for a ban on the political activities of a party, making an oblique reference to Jamaat-e-Islami, during a Jatiya Sangsad session. Demanding restrictions on religion-based political activities, the lawmaker called for a ban on a political party he said had opposed Bangladesh’s independence in 1971 and therefore should not be allowed to participate in the country’s political process. He, however, did not directly mention the party’s name. He also criticised the use of religion in politics, alleging that some

political actors had misled voters with religious promises during the last election. His remarks came on Monday while taking part in the general discussion on the proposed national budget for the financial year 2026–27 (*New Age*, [23 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **BCL activist dies in DB custody, 30-min highway blockade demanding punishment for the culprits:** A protest involving a highway blockade lasting over half an hour was staged in Faridpur's Madhukhali upazila, demanding justice for a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activist who fell ill and died while in the custody of the police's Detective Branch (DB). Later, three leaders of the Upazila unit BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) attended the namaz-e-janaza, and termed the incident a "murder" and demanded exemplary punishment for the culprits. At around 10:45 am, an ambulance brought the body of the deceased BCL activist, Mirza Ishtiaq Ahmed alias Pranto, 27, from the mortuary of the Faridpur Diabetic Hospital to his residence in the Pashchim Gondardia neighbourhood, adjacent to Peyajbazar in Madhukhali. At one stage, aggrieved locals blocked the Dhaka-Khulna Highway in the Peyajbazar area. According to witnesses, a significant number of women were among the protesters. During the blockade, people sat and lay down on the highway. Although the police initially attempted to intervene, they were unable to advance in the face of public resistance. As the highway remained blocked from 11:00 am to 11:40 am, hundreds of long-route vehicles were stranded on both sides of the road, causing immense suffering to the passengers (*Prothom Alo*, [22 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Protest held in Sylhet against DC Sarwar's transfer:** Residents from different walks of life staged a protest in Sylhet on Monday, demanding the cancellation of the transfer order of Deputy Commissioner Md Sarwar Alam. The demonstrators gathered in front of the Sylhet Deputy Commissioner's Office from around 11am under the banner of "Sylhet residents from all walks of life." When Sarwar Alam arrived at the Collectorate, protesters escorted him to his office while chanting slogans, including "Sylhet residents need DC Sarwar" and "Hypocrisy over the shrine will not be tolerated." The protest program was presided over by Maulana Syed Shamim Ahmed, principal of Shamimabad Madrasa. Among others, Shaykhul Hadith Maulana Shah Momshad Ahmed, principal of Kazirbazar Madrasa, addressed the gathering. **Speakers alleged that the transfer of Sarwar Alam was the result of a conspiracy and vowed to continue their movement until the order is withdrawn. In Sarwar's absence, additional deputy magistrate Pinki Saha will serve as the acting deputy commissioner until a new DC is appointed** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [22 June 2026](#); *New Age*, [23 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **CHT lawmakers seek retention of tax exemption for national minorities:** Lawmakers representing the three Chittagong Hill Tracts districts and a reserved seat have urged the government to withdraw a proposed amendment to the Income Tax Act that would bring certain incomes of national minority communities under the tax net from July. **In a letter to finance minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, the lawmakers on Sunday expressed concern over a provision in the Finance Bill 2026 that would make salary income and income from financial assets taxable for national minority communities living in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari** (*New Age*, [23 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Proposed law may weaken NHRC: rights bodies:** A coalition of rights organisations on Monday urged the Bangladesh government to substantially revise the proposed National Human Rights Commission Bill 2026, warning that it falls short of international standards and could weaken the commission's independence and effectiveness. The organisations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, FIDH, CIVICUS and Odhikar, said in a statement that the proposed bill represented a 'regression' from the safeguards provided under

the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2025, which was scrapped earlier this year. They argued that instead of strengthening the NHRC's autonomy, the new bill expanded executive control, weakened its mandate and restricted its ability to investigate serious human rights violations. If enacted in its current form, they warned, the commission risks becoming a largely symbolic body with limited authority to hold state institutions accountable (*New Age*, [23 June 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **\$400m Mongla port deal likely as Bangladesh seeks \$6.0b funding:** Bangladesh is likely to sign a US\$400-million loan deal with China for Mongla seaport development as the government might seek nearly US\$6.0 billion worth of funding for different projects and programmes, officials say. The two sides would sign the loan deal for Mongla port development during the 4-day visit of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman that starts today (Tuesday), Ministry of Finance Affairs (MoFA) officials said Monday. Besides, Dhaka is also likely to ink another grants deal with Beijing for getting financial support to build a hospital in northern Nilphamari district. In addition, Bangladesh and China are expected to sign around 10 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) covering green energy, electric vehicles, solar power, media cooperation, training programmes and development of the Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone in Chittagong. The last interim government approved the 1000-bed Nilphamari Hospital project with a total estimated cost of Tk 24.59 billion where Chinese government grant assistance is earmarked at Tk 22.80 billion and Bangladesh government will share Tk 1.79 billion. During the visit of the PM, Bangladesh might seek support to some projects and programmes worth nearly \$6.0 billion from China, says a senior MoFA official. "Some fresh priority projects have been included in the list of Bangladesh's needs and our PM will seek support for those ones on his visit from Tuesday," the official adds (*Financial Express Bangladesh*, [23 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **GDI decision under spotlight as PM starts China tour:** The most closely watched aspect of the visit is whether Bangladesh will make any promise on participating in China's Global Development Initiative (GDI), one of President Xi Jinping's flagship international initiatives. For several years, Beijing has encouraged Dhaka to become part of the platform. However, successive Bangladeshi governments have adopted a cautious approach, seeking to maintain a balanced foreign policy and avoid being perceived as aligning too closely with any geopolitical bloc. After Hasina's Beijing visit in 2024, the joint statement mentioned "The two sides discussed various aspects of the Global Development Initiative put forward by President Xi Jinping. The Chinese side is ready to share experience on GDI issues with the Bangladesh side. The Chinese side also presented the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) to the Bangladesh side..." In 2025, the joint statement issued after Dr Yunus's visit, unlike the 2024 joint statement, did not prominently mention the GDI, GSI or GCI as issues for Bangladesh to join. Instead, the emphasis was on practical cooperation and broader concepts such as an "equal and orderly multipolar world" and "inclusive economic globalization." Diplomatic sources say there are differing views within the government over the issue. Some officials argue that the GDI is fundamentally a development platform rather than a military or security alliance and that participation could further strengthen Bangladesh's economic partnership with China. Others advocate for greater caution, arguing that Bangladesh should preserve its

strategic neutrality at a time when global politics is becoming increasingly polarised. Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam recently said the government was still evaluating the proposal. President Xi unveiled the Global Development Initiative at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021 as a framework to accelerate implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Bangladesh's deliberations over the GDI are particularly significant because the country is already an active participant in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013 (*Financial Express Bangladesh*, [23 June 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **State Minister Shama urges Turkey, international community to support Rohingya repatriation:** State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam has called for “sincere support” from Turkey and the international community for the early repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. She made the appeal during a meeting with visiting Turkish Red Crescent President Fatma Meriç Yılmaz at the foreign ministry on Monday, according to a media statement. The Turkish Red Crescent president praised Bangladesh’s “extraordinary generosity” in hosting the displaced Rohingyas and continued humanitarian support over the years. The state minister expressed deep appreciation for the Turkish delegation’s visit and Turkey’s ongoing humanitarian assistance for Rohingyas (*bdnews24.com*, [22 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **PMO spokesperson Securing Malaysian investment govt's priority:** Prime Minister’s Office spokesperson Mahdi Amin has said the government’s primary objective is to secure investment from Malaysia. "Prime Minister Tarique Rahman held meetings with the chief executives of five leading Malaysian companies to encourage them to invest in Bangladesh," he told a press conference at the Shangri-La Hotel here. He said, “We are moving toward economic liberalization through the signing of free trade agreements and pursuing deregulation policies. The main objective is to attract investment from different parts of the world. From our perspective, Malaysia is one of the key targets.” Mahdi, also prime minister's expatriates' welfare and overseas employment adviser, said, senior executives of five major Malaysian companies in the meeting with the Prime Minister and they discussed investment opportunities in Bangladesh” (*BSS News*, [22 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh, Malaysia advance strategic partnership across sectors:** Bangladesh and Malaysia have agreed to elevate their longstanding bilateral relations to a new level through enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, labour migration, defence, energy, digital economy and regional affairs, while Malaysia reiterated support for Bangladesh’s RCEP and ASEAN aspirations. The commitment came during Prime Minister Tarique Rahman’s official visit to Malaysia at the invitation of Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Anwar Ibrahim, according to a joint statement issued following bilateral talks between the two leaders. The visit marked Tarique Rahman’s first official foreign trip since assuming office in February this year and his first visit to Malaysia as prime minister. During the visit, both leaders expressed strong determination to take bilateral relations to “new heights” and witnessed the exchange of several bilateral documents aimed at expanding cooperation, said the joint statement disseminated by the foreign ministry here. A major outcome of the visit was the reaffirmation of commitment by both countries to advance negotiations on the proposed Malaysia-Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (MBFTA), with the aim of concluding the deal in 2027. They also welcomed progress in establishing the Malaysia-Bangladesh Joint Business Council (JBC), which will serve

as a structured platform for engagement between the private sectors of the two countries. **In a significant diplomatic development, Malaysia expressed support for Bangladesh's aspiration to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest trade bloc. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman also urged the Malaysian government to open the labour market as soon as possible and recruit more Bangladeshi workers.** Malaysia acknowledged Bangladesh's proposal regarding worker recruitment while noting that approvals for new foreign worker quotas would continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis in line with current Malaysian policy. **The two countries agreed to convene a Joint Working Group (JWG) to evaluate the existing labour migration Memorandum of Understanding and prepare a new, updated framework that reflects current realities and requirements. The leaders agreed to deepen cooperation in emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), digital economy, fintech, cybersecurity and digital governance.** They welcomed ongoing cooperation between Malaysia's Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) and Bangladeshi regulatory authorities and pledged enhanced cooperation in halal certification, regulatory frameworks, research, innovation, capacity building and institutional strengthening. The two prime ministers noted the presence of around 11,000 Bangladeshi students in Malaysia and agreed to expand cooperation in higher education, university partnerships, joint research initiatives and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). **Bangladesh invited Malaysian companies to invest in oil and gas exploration in the Bay of Bengal, extraction of untapped mineral resources, including coal and limestone, and renewable energy projects.** The two countries also encouraged cooperation between national energy companies and private-sector stakeholders to strengthen energy security and sustainability. The leaders praised the longstanding defence relationship between the two countries and pledged to fully operationalise the existing defence cooperation memorandum. **They agreed to broaden collaboration in military science, technical expertise and defence industry partnerships and looked forward to convening the Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation (JCDC) to formulate a structured roadmap for future cooperation.** Kuala Lumpur reiterated support for achieving a durable solution through the safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar. They also stressed the need for joint action to address climate change, food security, human trafficking, transnational crime and other traditional and non-traditional security challenges. Both countries pledged closer coordination within international organisations, including the United Nations and the OIC, and reaffirmed their commitment to promoting justice, strengthening the international order and upholding international law (*BSS News*, [23 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Ambassador Yao: PM Tarique's visit to draw magnificent blueprint for development of Dhaka-Beijing relations:** Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen has said that with the tide at full swell and the wind in their sails, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's official visit to China (June 23-26) holds "historic significance," and it will surely draw a "more magnificent blueprint" for the development of Bangladesh-China relations. "Under the strategic guidance of the leaders of both countries, China-Bangladesh relations will forge ahead with more solid political mutual trust, more in-depth practical cooperation, and more robust international collaboration," he said ahead of the visit. "On the journey of addressing global challenges, China and Bangladesh will always support each other and move forward hand in hand, making new and greater contributions to the stability and development of both countries, to the prosperity and progress of Asia, and to building a community with a shared future for humanity," said the Chinese Ambassador. China firmly believes that a "stable, prosperous and confident Bangladesh" will play a more active and constructive role in Global South affairs. "Let us look forward to the full success of the visit and to the long-standing friendship between China and Bangladesh shining with even greater brilliance in the new era," said Ambassador Yao. Looking ahead, he said, as

China-Bangladesh relations stand at a new starting point that builds on past achievements and opens up new prospects, they are full of confidence and expectations. **On the political front, he said high-level exchanges and party-to-party exchanges between the two countries will become more frequent and in-depth, and political mutual trust will continue to reach new heights. On the economic front, the ambassador said practical cooperation in areas such as the green economy, investment and business development will continue to expand, bringing more tangible benefits to the two peoples. On the front of people-to-people exchanges, he said cooperation in education, culture, tourism, youth and other fields will become more vibrant and diverse, allowing the flower of China-Bangladesh friendship to bloom ever more brilliantly in the hearts of the two peoples** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [22 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **PM lands in China with Teesta, trade high on agenda:** The visit, the most significant leg of his first overseas tour since assuming office in February, comes at a time when Bangladesh is seeking fresh foreign investment, new export opportunities and stronger economic partnerships as it prepares for post-LDC graduation. Officials say Dhaka is expected to push for progress on several long-discussed initiatives, including infrastructure financing, industrial investment, technology transfer, connectivity projects and enhanced market access for Bangladeshi products. **A major focus of the visit will be high-level talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang later this week, where Bangladesh is expected to seek stronger economic cooperation and greater Chinese participation in key development projects. Foreign ministry officials have already indicated that discussions on the long-awaited Teesta project are expected during the visit, alongside broader conversations on trade, investment and regional connectivity.** Bangladesh is also looking to attract Chinese investment into manufacturing, information technology, renewable energy, semiconductors and industrial zones as part of its effort to diversify the economy and generate employment. Diplomatic observers say the visit will be closely watched for signals on how the new government intends to balance economic engagement with major global powers while advancing its development priorities (*Dhaka Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **China rolls out red carpet for PM Tarique Rahman:** A red carpet was rolled out as Prime Minister Tarique Rahman arrived in Dalian, China on Monday night (local time) from Kuala Lumpur concluding his two-day official visit to Malaysia. A special Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight carrying the Prime Minister and his spouse Zubaida Rahman landed at Dalian Zhoushuizi International Airport at 11:05 pm (01:05 am Tuesday, Bangladesh time) local time, PM's additional press secretary Atikur Rahman Ruman said. **Liaoning Province Vice Governor Bai Ying, Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Yao Wen and Bangladesh Ambassador to China Md. Nazmul Islam welcomed the Bangladesh prime minister and his spouse at the airport. From the airport, the prime minister in a ceremonial motorcade was taken to Hotel Shangri-la, where he will be staying for two days. He will participate in the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions (Summer Davos Forum 2026) to be organised by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Dalian. According to the programme schedule, the president and chief executive officer of the World Economic Forum will call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at Shangri La on Tuesday morning. In the afternoon, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will deliver a speech at a session titled "Climate Leadership in a Shifting Global Landscape" during the World Economic Forum conference at Dalian International Conference Center. He is also scheduled to participate in several other events. In the evening, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will attend a banquet to be hosted by Chinese Premier Li Qiang. On 24 June, Prime Minister Tarique**

Rahman is scheduled to hold a meeting with the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan in the morning (Prothom Alo, [23 June 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **Govt seeks army deployment ahead of Awami League's anniversary:** The Ministry of Home Affairs on Monday has requested the deployment of the army in several metropolitan areas and districts to maintain law and order surrounding the founding anniversary of the Awami League, whose activities have been banned. A letter to this effect was sent on Monday by the ministry's Political Branch-2 to the Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division. According to the letter, various banned organisations are carrying out illegal processions, "showdowns" and other programmes in different parts of the country. Such activities could lead to sabotage and create disorder, posing a risk of deterioration in the overall law and order situation as well as extensive loss of life and property. **The ministry requested the deployment of necessary troops for nine days, from June 22 to June 30, to ensure public safety and protect property in the Dhaka, Chattogram and Gazipur metropolitan areas, as well as in the Narayanganj, Gopalganj and Faridpur districts. The soldiers will operate 'in aid to civil power'** (Prothom Alo, [22 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Home minister says troops deployment follows intelligence on Awami League activities:** Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed has said the decision to deploy troops in six regions of the country was prompted by what he described as an increase in the activities of the Awami League. After meeting leaders of the Bangladesh Puja Celebration Council on Monday, he said the decision was based on intelligence reports. **The minister said there were "other factors" as well but declined to disclose them. Salahuddin described the deployment under the "Aid to Civil Power" framework as a routine measure, rejecting suggestions of diminished confidence in police. "The law and order has not deteriorated, but we must always remain alert," he said** (bdnews24.com, [22 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Government restores magistracy powers to Army deployed in six districts:** The government has granted magistracy powers to Army personnel deployed in six districts amid heightened security over the Awami League's founding anniversary. On Monday, the public administration ministry said commissioned Army officers of the rank of captain and above will be able to exercise these powers in the designated areas. Officers on deputation in the Bangladesh Coast Guard and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) of equivalent rank will also be authorised to use the authority. **According to a ministry notification, the powers will remain in effect from Jun 22 to Jun 30 in Dhaka, Chattogram and Gazipur metropolitan areas, and in Narayanganj, Gopalganj and Faridpur districts** (bdnews24.com, [22 June 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Army, BGB, 18,000 police mobilized as Awami League marks 77 years:** The government has rolled out one of its largest security operations in recent months ahead of the 77th founding anniversary of Bangladesh's Awami League, deploying the army in six districts, mobilizing more than 18,000 police personnel in Dhaka, setting up over 200 checkpoints across the capital, and intensifying arrests of party leaders and activists nationwide. Authorities say the measures are aimed at preventing potential unrest, sabotage and unauthorized political activities surrounding June 23, as the party has called on supporters to mark the anniversary through processions and other programs across the country. **The Awami League leadership has called on**

supporters to mark the occasion through prayers, flag-hoisting programs and processions, while authorities have warned that no political activities by the banned organization will be permitted. Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said intelligence agencies had detected attempts to create instability and that the deployment of troops was a precautionary measure. According to a Home Ministry order issued Monday, army personnel have been granted authority under the “In Aid to Civil Power” framework until June 30 in Dhaka, Chittagong and Gazipur metropolitan areas, as well as Narayanganj, Gopalganj and Faridpur districts (*Dhaka Tribune*, [23 June 2026](#)).

- ◆ **BGB detains Indian citizen for illegal entry:** Members of the Border Guard Bangladesh detained an Indian national in the Andharmanik border area under Fatikchari in Chattogram on Monday for allegedly entering Bangladesh illegally. The detained, Puton Molla, 19, son of Badal Molla, a resident of Ramendranagar village under Sabroom police station in South Tripura, India. According to BGB, a patrol team from Andharmanik BOP under Ramgarh battalion, 43 BGB, detained the Indian national at around 1:30 pm with assistance from local residents. The BGB said that the youth had entered Bangladesh illegally through the border. Legal action is being initiated against the detained under relevant laws and preparations are under way to hand him over to Bhujpur police station for further proceedings. The BGB said that it remained vigilant in safeguarding the country’s borders, protecting national sovereignty, preventing illegal infiltration and combating cross-border crime (*New Age*, [23 June 2026](#)).

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