

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

03 August 2026

Takeaways

Bangladesh's domestic politics remain fluid, with the BNP consolidating authority under Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, who has been empowered to finalise the party's presidential candidate. Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir continues to stress institutional resilience, citing India's judiciary and media as examples of democratic durability. The government has pledged to implement the July Charter and deliver justice for the July killings, while opposition alliances such as Jamaat's 11-party bloc prepare long marches to intensify pressure. These developments underscore a contested political landscape, but one in which India's democratic model is repeatedly invoked as a benchmark.

Economically, Dhaka is grappling with rising electricity bills, LPG price hikes, and consumer discontent, while simultaneously pursuing ambitious projects such as reviving Dhaka's waterways and expanding tourism to contribute 6–7% of GDP. These initiatives are framed as modernisation efforts under Tarique Rahman's leadership, but they also carry implications for India, particularly in cross-border tourism flows and environmental management of shared rivers.

Foreign policy dynamics reveal India's centrality. New Delhi has launched an anti-dumping probe into Bangladeshi PET film exports, reflecting its determination to protect domestic industry. This investigation follows earlier disputes over float glass and fishing nets, signalling India's readiness to deploy trade remedies against Dhaka's expanding manufacturing base. Simultaneously, India's parliamentary standing committee has clarified that Sheikh Hasina, ousted in 2024, is not permitted to conduct political activities from Indian soil, though her stay is justified on humanitarian grounds. This position balances India's civilisational ethos with strategic caution, ensuring its territory is not used to destabilise Dhaka while keeping Hasina under watch.

India's interests also extend to water security. The committee urged immediate renewal of the 1996 Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which expires this year. With climate change and hydrological shifts intensifying, India seeks to renegotiate terms with Dhaka, West Bengal, and Bihar, ensuring equitable distribution while safeguarding its own agricultural and ecological needs. This treaty renewal is a strategic priority, as water politics remain a sensitive axis in bilateral relations. India's diplomatic posture is further complicated by US engagement. Washington's envoy Sergio Gor expressed strong confidence in Tarique Rahman's leadership, signalling American willingness to invest in Bangladesh and even propose civil nuclear cooperation. For India, this raises questions of strategic balance: while it welcomes stability in Dhaka, it must also monitor US overtures that could shift Bangladesh's energy and technological dependencies. The Gor–Trivedi meeting in Dhaka, criticised by Jamaat, illustrates the delicate triangular diplomacy between India, the US, and Bangladesh.

Myanmar's overtures to expand trade and resume border commerce add another layer. India will watch closely, as enhanced Bangladesh–Myanmar connectivity could alter regional supply chains and affect India's own strategic projects in the Bay of Bengal. Similarly, Bangladesh's proposal to import pipeline gas from

Myanmar intersects with India's energy calculus, particularly given its own investments in cross-border energy infrastructure.

Finally, Bangladesh's decision to join China's WAICO as an observer highlights Beijing's growing digital and technological footprint. For India, this is a strategic concern: Dhaka's alignment with a China-led AI bloc could deepen Sino-Bangladesh cooperation, potentially marginalising India's influence in South Asia's digital future.

Politics

- ◆ **Fakhrul urges stronger democracy for rule of law:** BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has emphasised the necessity of strengthening the democratic state system to establish the rule of law, justice, and equity. Speaking at a reception for the new committee of Thakurgaon District Bar Association on Sunday, he said society can progress significantly if the rule of law is ensured, adding that the nation has long been deprived of these fundamental rights. Fakhrul said a democratic state with proper practices enables the development of a strong judiciary, an efficient administration, and a powerful parliament. He added that an independent judiciary and the active involvement of effective parliamentary committees are essential for protecting the rights of the common people and sustaining democracy. **Citing the example of neighbouring India, Fakhrul said despite various challenges, their democracy remains resilient due to the strength of its institutions, such as an independent judiciary, efficient administration, and the role of the media. He called for the establishment of similarly powerful and influence-free state institutions in Bangladesh to safeguard its own democracy** (*Times of Bangladesh*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **NCP suspends Tanvir again over Facebook post about prime minister:** Gazi Sahlahuddin Tanvir, joint member secretary of the National Citizen Party (NCP), has once again been suspended from organisational duties after making a social media post concerning Prime Minister Tarique Rahman. He was also served with a show-cause notice in a letter sent by the party's central convening committee office cell on Friday. **According to the notice sent by Sadia Farzana Dina, Tanvir faces allegations of a "grave breach of organisational discipline" and making comments on social media that tarnish the party's image.** Given the gravity of the matter, he was immediately relieved of his duties on the instructions of party Convenor Nahid Islam and Member Secretary Akhter Hossen. **The NCP suspended Tanvir earlier on Apr 21, 2025.** At that time, he was asked to explain within seven days over allegations of unlawful interference in the appointment of deputy commissioners and taking kickbacks in textbook paper printing contracts for the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) (*bdnews24.com*, [01 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Govt to implement July Charter, ensure trial over July killings:** Prime Minister's Adviser Mahdi Amin on Sunday said the government is committed to implementing the July Charter and ensuring justice for the killings committed during the July mass uprising. He made the remarks while addressing the first conference on the July Revolution, organized by the July Revolutionary Alliance (JRA) at the BIAM Foundation auditorium in the capital. "I respect your emotions and demands. **I assure you that the present government will implement the July Charter and ensure justice for the July massacre,**" he said. Mahdi Amin said one of the

government's key objectives is to fulfil the aspirations of the July uprising martyrs, who envisioned a Bangladesh based on equality, human dignity and social justice. He said the martyrs had dreamed of building a truly sovereign Bangladesh where merit would be properly recognized and discrimination would have no place (*Dhaka Tribune*, [02 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **BNP authorizes Tarique Rahman to finalize presidential candidate:** The BNP on Saturday entrusted party Chairman and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman with the authority to finalize the party's candidate for the upcoming presidential election. **The decision was taken at a meeting of the party's National Standing Committee held at the BNP chairman's Gulshan office in the evening.** Speaking to reporters after the meeting, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the Standing Committee authorized Tarique Rahman to make all decisions regarding the party's presidential nominee and the election process. "On behalf of the party, we have entrusted all responsibilities relating to the selection of the presidential candidate and the election to our Chairman and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman," Fakhrul said. He said the Standing Committee also discussed the government's development activities, the upcoming local government elections, and organizational matters (*Dhaka Tribune*, [01 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Hezbut Tawheed stages Dhaka protest against Hefazat remarks:** Hezbut Tawheed's Dhaka city unit staged a human chain and protest rally in front of the National Press Club, denouncing "open threats, false propaganda, and inflammatory remarks" made under the banner of Hefazat-e-Islam in Noakhali. The rally began at 11:00am, protesting against speeches delivered at Hefazat's gathering at Noakhali Zilla School ground on Saturday. Addressing the human chain, Dhaka city Hezbut Tawheed President Mahbub Alam Mahfuz alleged that Hefazat's "mahfil" was "an extremist and provocative" assembly aimed at disturbing Noakhali's peaceful environment. He claimed Hefazat leaders made baseless allegations against Hezbut Tawheed and issued direct threats such as "burying, evicting, and driving them out of the country." Mahfuz further accused Hefazat speakers of inciting violence against a lawful movement by "exploiting religious sentiment through misogynistic and hate-filled rhetoric". Hezbut Tawheed members demanded immediate legal action against those spreading false propaganda, issuing threats, and making derogatory remarks against women. They recalled that in 2016, an attack was carried out on the village home of Imam Hossain Mohammad Selim in Sonaiamuri, leaving two members killed and properties torched, cautioning that similar violence was being instigated again (*The Daily Star*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Photos of crimes against humanity convicts removed after student protests:** The Rajshahi University administration has removed from a billboard the photos of individuals convicted of crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War following protests by students. **The images, displayed under the title "Judicial Killing," were erased on Sunday night.** The billboard had been installed on the university's Paris Road on Friday by Novoculture, a cultural platform. The platform is directed by Salahuddin Ammar, general secretary of the Rajshahi University Central Students' Union (RUCSU). Demanding the billboard's removal, a group of students staged a sit-in in front of the university's administrative building on Sunday afternoon. At around 10:45 pm, University Proctor Professor Mahbubur Rahman informed the protesters that the administration had decided to remove the images, after which they withdrew their protest (*Prothom Alo*, [03 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **11-party alliance mulls divisional long marches to mount pressure on govt:** The Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party alliance is considering organising divisional long marches as part of its ongoing movement demanding implementation of the July National Charter and the

referendum verdict. A proposal to launch the programme on 29 or 30 August was discussed at a recent meeting of the alliance's liaison committee. The matter is expected to be taken up at a meeting of the alliance's top leaders on Monday evening, where they are also set to outline the next phase of the movement. Multiple alliance sources told Prothom Alo that, in addition to the divisional long marches, proposals include roadside rallies, public meetings, a grand rally in Dhaka, and a series of programmes involving the families of those killed and people injured during the July mass uprising. Alliance leaders say the primary objective of these programmes is to increase political pressure on the government while also broadening public participation in the movement (*Prothom Alo*, [03 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **ACC likely to be constituted soon as search process nears completion, new secretary says:** The search committee has nearly completed the process of selecting a new Anti-Corruption Commission, and the commission is expected to take office once the necessary government procedures are completed, newly appointed ACC Secretary Saidur Rahman Khan said. "We expect it very soon. As far as I know, the search committee has almost finalised its work after holding meetings. Now the government has its own procedures to follow, and once those are completed, the new commission will join shortly," he said while speaking to journalists at the ACC headquarters in Dhaka's Segunbagicha. **He acknowledged that the absence of a commission had resulted in a backlog of work and said the necessary preparations would be completed before the new commission assumes office. The official also announced plans to launch a "crash programme" to expedite pending cases and activities and pledged to steer the ACC away from the long-standing perception that it serves the ruling government.** He said the commission would undertake a "transformation mission" to bring meaningful changes to its operations and would move beyond its past practices to function "in the true sense" of its mandate. Asked whether corruption allegations raised in parliament would receive priority, he said elected representatives raise issues concerning both their constituencies and the state (*The Daily Star*, [02 August 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **Govt plans to revive Dhaka waterways:** The government has decided to revive the waterways surrounding Dhaka and is considering allowing private companies to operate water buses after reviewing their proposals. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Cabinet Division's special meeting room at the Secretariat. Prime Minister's Deputy Press Secretary Shahadat Shadhin confirmed the development. **According to a press release, the prime minister directed the authorities concerned to prevent pollution in Dhaka's rivers, improve the drainage system, and maintain navigability and the natural flow of water.** He also instructed the authorities to plant different species of trees along riverfront walkways to protect the environment and enhance the beauty of the riverbanks (*The Daily Star*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Electricity bills jump several-fold as customers question meter readings, calculations:** From Dhaka and Sunamganj to Narayanganj, Lakshmipur and Rajshahi, customers have complained of electricity bills rising two or three times within a month. Some say their recorded use has jumped despite no new appliances being installed. Others suspect bills are being prepared from estimated readings rather than regular meter checks. The complaints have brought customers on to the streets in Narayanganj, sent crowds to an electricity office in

Raipur and prompted a memorandum to the head of the northern power distributor NESCO in Rajshahi. **But the authorities insist there is no evidence of widespread overbilling. Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) Chairman Md Rezaul Karim said there could be “one or two” isolated errors, but investigations had not supported claims of bills being inflated on a large scale.** “Most of the complaints examined did not show the kind of excessive billing being alleged,” he said (*bdnews24.com*, [02 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **LPG prices rise amid gas supply shortage:** The price of privately supplied liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) has been increased at the consumer level, even as the country continues to face a shortage of piped natural gas. **The latest adjustment raises the price by Tk 5.85 per kilogram. As a result, the price of the widely used 12kg LPG cylinder has increased by Tk 70, rising from Tk 1,528 to Tk 1,598. The Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) announced the new prices today, Sunday.** The revised rates took effect from 6:00 pm on Sunday evening. Global LPG prices surged after the Middle East war escalated. In April, LPG prices in Bangladesh recorded their largest increase on record. At the beginning of the month, the price of a 12kg cylinder was raised by Tk 387, followed by a further increase of Tk 212 on 19 April (*Prothom Alo*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Govt targets 6-7pc GDP contribution from tourism sector: Civil** Aviation and Tourism Minister Afroza Khanam today said the government has set a target to raise the tourism sector’s contribution to the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 6-7 percent as part of efforts to transform it into one of the key drivers of the national economy. She said the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, is working to build a sustainable, modern and world-class tourism sector, with an integrated Tourism Master Plan covering 1,498 tourist attractions currently under preparation to guide the industry’s long-term development. **To support evidence-based policymaking, Afroza said the government has initiated the implementation of a nationwide Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) to address existing data gaps in the sector and sought active cooperation from TOAB and other stakeholders in the process** (*BSS News*, [02 August 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **India launches anti-dumping probe against Bangladesh over new export item:** India has launched an anti-dumping investigation into Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) film exported from Bangladesh. PET film is primarily used in the packaging of food, medicine, cosmetics, and industrial products. As part of the investigation, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), an agency under the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has scheduled a virtual oral hearing for 6 August, according to the Bangladesh Ministry of Commerce. In a letter issued on 13 July, the DGTR announced the hearing. **Indian manufacturers allege that PET film is being exported from Bangladesh, China, and Thailand at “dumped prices,” which they claim is harming the Indian domestic industry. Which is why, they have demanded the imposition of anti-dumping duties on these products.** During this stage of the investigation, Bangladeshi exporters, Indian producers, importers and other stakeholders will present their positions and arguments. **According to the Ministry of Commerce, parties involved include Akij Biax Films Limited, the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and the three Indian petitioner companies—Chiripal Poly Films Limited, Ester Industries Limited and Vacmet India Limited. In the past, India had**

previously initiated anti-dumping proceedings against Rahimafrooz batteries but withdrew the move after Bangladesh raised the issue within the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework. India has also completed anti-dumping investigations into Bangladeshi float glass and fishing nets, raising concerns that duties could be imposed on those products in the future (*Prothom Alo*, [31 July 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Hasina not allowed political activities from its soil:** Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina is not allowed to carry out any political activities from Indian territory, according to an Indian parliamentary standing committee, which said New Delhi maintains a policy of not allowing its soil to be used for political activities against another country. **The committee, in its report on the future of India-Bangladesh relations tabled in parliament on Thursday, said Hasina's stay in India is based on the country's "civilizational ethos and humanitarian tradition of providing refuge to individuals facing grave crises or existential threats," according to The Times of India and The Indian Express.** The report also said the Indian government has informed the committee that Bangladesh's request for Sheikh Hasina's extradition is "being examined by the competent authorities" in accordance with applicable laws and prescribed procedures. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, noted Bangladesh's extradition request following the former prime minister's death sentence in absentia and asked the government to keep it informed about the progress of the review. **The committee recommended that the Indian government continue its "principled and humanitarian approach" while handling such matters in line with international obligations and sensitivities. The committee also urged the Indian government to restore normal visa processing for Bangladeshi citizens as soon as possible, saying reduced visa issuance has created negative public perception and adversely affected bilateral ties.** India resumed issuing tourist visas to Bangladeshis on June 28, 2026, after nearly two years of suspension prompted by political instability and security concerns. **It also recommended that New Delhi begin discussions with Dhaka "without further delay" on renewing the 1996 Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which is due to expire this year. The report noted that formal renewal talks have yet to begin despite the treaty's expiry in 2026 and called for negotiations based on updated hydrological data, climate change projections, and consultations with the governments of West Bengal and Bihar. The committee further recommended that India's Ministry of External Affairs continue to treat the protection of Bangladesh's minority communities as a key priority in its diplomatic engagement with Dhaka** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [31 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Hasina set for first public appearance in India on Aug 5 since 2024 ouster:** Sheikh Hasina is set to make her first major public appearance in India since her ouster in August 2024, according to reports. The former prime minister will address a virtual programme hosted by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia (FCC South Asia) in New Delhi on the second anniversary of her exile, Aug 5, *India Today* said. She is expected to discuss her political roadmap and proposed return to Bangladesh. The event will run from 6pm to 7:30pm at the Sir Mark Tully Auditorium on Mathura Road, with the session also streamed live on the club's social media platforms. The programme falls on the second anniversary of the collapse of Hasina's 15-year rule (*bdnews24.com*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **If it was a courtesy call, that's a different matter: Jamaat chief on Gor-Trivedi meeting:** US Special Envoy for South and Central Asia and US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor is on a three-day visit to Dhaka. During the visit, he met Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh

Dinesh Trivedi at a hotel in the capital on Friday. **Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, however, has reacted to the meeting. Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman has expressed dissatisfaction over a meeting between US Special Envoy for South and Central Asia Sergio Gor and India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi.** "The meeting between Gor and Trivedi was unexpected. In a democratic country, such meetings are not desirable," he said. Responding to a question from journalists, the Jamaat chief said: "They (Sergio Gor and Dinesh Trivedi) can talk in India. He (Sergio Gor) is the ambassador to India. If he came here and met the high commissioner (Dinesh Trivedi) as a courtesy call, then that is a different matter. But if the discussion involved any issue concerning the two countries, it should have been held with the (Bangladesh) government and with the opposition parties. It is not something we expect to take place with the diplomat of any particular country" (*Times of Bangladesh*, [02 August 2026](#); *Prothom Alo*, [01 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **US expresses 'strong confidence' in Tarique Rahman's leadership:** US Special Presidential Envoy for South and Central Asia Sergio Gor paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Saturday, with the two sides discussing bilateral ties, US investment, the Rohingya crisis and cooperation in the health sector. **During the meeting, Gor said the US government has strong confidence in Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's leadership, adding that stability has returned to Bangladesh under his administration, says a press release. As a reflection of that confidence, the envoy said the United States had positively revised its existing travel advisory for Bangladesh, which he said would send an important signal to American investors that the country is now ready for significant investment.** US Special Envoy for South and Central Asia Ambassador Sergio Gor today said strengthening economic cooperation and the broader partnership with Bangladesh is a priority for the United States, following his meeting with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman. "Today, I had the opportunity to discuss with the Honorable Prime Minister Tarique Rahman the great opportunities between the U.S. and Bangladesh to enhance economic cooperation and strengthen our partnership," Gor said in a statement disseminated by the US Embassy in Dhaka after the meeting. "This is a priority for the United States, and together we can achieve real success!" he added (*Prothom Alo*, [01 August 2026](#); *BSS News*, [01 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **US sends positive signal on investment in Bangladesh:** Visiting US Special Envoy for South and Central Asia Sergio Gor has said stability has returned to Bangladesh and also conveyed a positive message regarding investment in the country. Sergio Gor met Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Prime Minister's Office on Saturday morning. Details of the meeting were later disclosed in a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the afternoon. **The press release also said that the meeting, held in a cordial atmosphere, covered a range of issues, including Bangladesh-US relations, the Rohingya crisis, the activities of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and cooperation in the information technology sector. The Prime Minister invited greater US investment in Bangladesh. The Prime Minister also invited US investment in warehousing facilities for soybeans, cotton, wheat, and other agricultural commodities. He said that investment in these sectors would help establish a stronger and more competitive supply chain.** The Prime Minister also highlighted Bangladesh's strong interest in attracting investment in the information technology (IT) sector. The Special Envoy observed that Bangladesh has significant potential in this sector and could, in the future, become a partner in the PAX Silica initiative (*Prothom Alo*, [01 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Myanmar expresses strong interest in expanding trade ties with Bangladesh:** Myanmar has expressed strong interest in increasing economic engagement with Bangladesh by expanding bilateral trade, resuming border commerce and strengthening connectivity between the two neighbouring countries. The interest was conveyed by Myanmar Ambassador to Bangladesh Kyaw Soe Moe during a meeting with Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir at the Ministry of Commerce today, said a press release. The ambassador proposed the resumption of the suspended border trade, suggesting that it could initially be restarted on a limited or temporary basis to benefit traders and people living along the border. He also stressed the importance of enhancing trade in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, rice, pharmaceuticals and frozen food, while calling for stronger business-to-business (B2B) engagement to unlock the full potential of bilateral commerce. **The envoy also underscored the need to establish direct shipping links between Bangladesh and Myanmar, saying improved maritime connectivity would significantly reduce transportation costs and time, facilitating greater trade and investment.** The Myanmar junta government announced a virtual shutdown of border trade in early April 2025, citing the Arakan Army's demands for extortion from cargo ships. This caused major losses for hundreds of importers and exporters. The issue of the safe, voluntary, sustainable and dignified repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingya people sheltered in Bangladesh also featured prominently in the talks. The Myanmar ambassador said the verification process of the repatriation list received from Bangladesh was underway and that initiatives would be taken to move forward with repatriation once the security and ground situation became favourable. **The Bangladesh side stressed the need of creating conditions conducive to an early repatriation process and called for effective and visible progress on the issue. Both sides agreed to hold regular institutional dialogues and meetings of the joint committee, and also discussed a proposal to host the next joint meeting in Bangladesh.** Earlier, Bangladesh has not yet held any discussions with Myanmar on the repatriation of Rohingya refugees, state minister for foreign affairs Shama Obaed Islam said on Thursday, a day after Malaysian prime minister Anwar Ibrahim claimed that Myanmar had agreed to take back 300,000 Rohingya from Bangladesh. Speaking to reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shama said there had been no official communication with the Myanmar government on the issue. 'The remarks [on Rohingya repatriation] came from the Malaysian prime minister' (*BSS News*, [02 August 2026](#); *bdnews24.com*, [02 August 2026](#); *New Age*, [02 August 2026](#); *New Age*, [30 July 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh proposes pipeline gas imports from Myanmar:** Bangladesh has proposed importing natural gas from Myanmar through a pipeline as part of efforts to strengthen bilateral energy cooperation with its neighbouring country. **Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood conveyed the government's interest when Myanmar Ambassador to Bangladesh U Kyaw Soe Moe called on him at his office at the Secretariat.** During the meeting, the minister said Bangladesh has substantial domestic demand for natural gas and expressed the country's keen interest in importing gas from Myanmar through a pipeline to help meet that demand. **In response, the Myanmar ambassador welcomed the proposal positively and said the possibility of supplying gas in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG) could also be discussed in detail.** The energy minister also responded positively to the proposal. During the meeting, both sides expressed interest in reviving discussions on the previous proposal to construct a pipeline from Myanmar to Chattogram (*BSS News*, [02 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **US proposes civil nuke deal with Bangladesh:** The United States has proposed a memorandum of understanding on civil nuclear cooperation with Bangladesh as an agreement to the effect expired much earlier. The US made the proposal in meetings between the two sides during the three-day visit of US Special Envoy for South and Central Asia Sergio Gor to Bangladesh that concluded on Saturday, according to foreign ministry officials. During the talks in Dhaka, Bangladesh also raised concerns over barriers to implementing the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, urging Washington to address the challenges to facilitate smoother execution of the agreement signed between Bangladesh and the US just days before the end of the interim government's tenure in February. **Speaking on condition of anonymity, a foreign ministry official said that the US proposed a MoU on civil nuclear cooperation during Sergio Gor's meeting with foreign minister Khalilur Rahman. The foreign ministry has not disclosed details of the proposed MoU.** Another official, however, described the initiative as 'nothing new,' noting that Dhaka and Washington signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement in 1981, which was renewed in 1991. Asked why a new MoU was necessary, the official said the renewed agreement had expired many years ago. The proposed framework would provide a new legal mechanism to continue bilateral cooperation in the civil nuclear sector, the official explained, adding that the scope of civil nuclear cooperation could be broad, but its application would be strictly limited to peaceful civilian purposes (*New Age*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **US makes \$20,000 visa bond permanent for Bangladeshis:** Bangladeshis applying for US tourist and business visas may now have to deposit up to \$20,000 (about Tk24 lakh) as a refundable bond after the United States permanently adopted its controversial visa bond program, a move expected to make travel significantly more expensive for many applicants. The US State Department announced on Friday that the program, introduced as a pilot in 2025, had successfully reduced visa overstays and would now become a permanent requirement for applicants from 50 countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. **The new regulation takes effect on Monday. Under the permanent rule, consular officers may require applicants for B1 (business) and B2 (tourist) visas to pay either \$10,000 or \$20,000 before their visa interview. The earlier \$5,000 option available under the pilot program has been withdrawn.** The bond is refundable if the visa application is denied or, if approved, the traveller leaves the United States in compliance with visa conditions. The decision marks a significant tightening of US immigration policy for travellers from Bangladesh and dozens of other countries identified by Washington as having comparatively high visa overstay rates (*Dhaka Tribune*, [01 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh set to join China-led AI bloc WAICO as observer:** Bangladesh is set to join the China-led World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO), initially as an observer. **The foreign ministry said in a statement posted on Facebook on Saturday that the body's aims include: Deepening international cooperation on innovation; Narrowing the global digital divide to promote inclusive development; Championing an open, fair and non-discriminatory environment for global AI advancement; Pushing forward AI regulations to keep the emerging technology safe and beneficial for humanity.** Headquartered in Shanghai, China's foremost commercial hub, the inter-governmental body was founded on Jul 16, unveiled by Beijing at a high-level session of the World AI Conference with 29 founding members. Alongside China, early members span the Global South, including Russia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Brazil, Malaysia, South Africa and Senegal (*bdnews24.com*, [01 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh joins Saudi-led maritime defence coalition:** Saudi Arabia has formed a multinational maritime defence coalition comprising 14 countries, including Bangladesh, after disruptions to its energy exports through the Red Sea. The alliance aims to ensure the safe and unrestricted movement of all types of vessels through the Red Sea, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden. The Saudi Ministry of Defence announced the initiative in a statement on Thursday. A senior Bangladeshi government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed to *Prothom Alo* on Friday that Bangladesh has joined the Saudi-led coalition. Several senior officials at Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also speaking anonymously, said Saudi Arabia had been discussing the proposal with Bangladesh for more than a month. Riyadh had initially hoped to bring at least 50 countries into the initiative, but the alliance was launched with 14 members. A Bangladeshi government source said Dhaka decided to join after reviewing and discussing the Saudi proposal. Bangladesh's decision to participate in a Saudi Arabia-led maritime defence initiative has drawn mixed reactions from foreign policy and security experts, with some viewing it as a pragmatic step to protect maritime trade routes while others consider it as a potential shift from Dhaka's longstanding position of avoiding such engagement outside the United Nations peacekeeping missions. For decades, Bangladesh has maintained a policy of not joining overseas military initiatives, except for its participation in the UN peacekeeping operations. Experts said on Saturday that involvement in the Saudi-led maritime defence coalition, aimed at safeguarding freedom of navigation and commercial shipping routes, could create perceptions that Bangladesh was taking sides in the Middle East's evolving geopolitical rivalries. Bangladesh has joined a Saudi Arabia-led maritime alliance to counter Houthi threats, as Dhaka seeks to deepen its ties with Riyadh into a broader strategic partnership, Foreign Affairs Advisor Humaiun Kobir has said. He stressed on Sunday that the alliance was not intended to target Iran, with Dhaka maintaining dialogue with Tehran. "The main point is that we have a special relationship with Saudi Arabia. And we are not limiting our relationship with Saudi Arabia to Hajj and Umrah alone," Humaiun said. He said the relationship would extend beyond religious ties and develop into a "very strong strategic relationship" (*Prothom Alo*, [01 August 2026](#), *New Age*, [02 August 2026](#); *bdnews24.com*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Chances slim for Bangladesh to become ASEAN member:** Bangladesh has little to no chance of becoming a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with the bloc's top official saying the organisation has effectively ended its expansion because Bangladesh does not meet the geographical criteria for membership. According to a report by the *Jakarta Globe*, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea have expressed interest in joining ASEAN, with Port Moresby, capital city of Papua New Guinea, even receiving Indonesia's support for its bid. Bangladesh has long expressed interest in strengthening its engagement with ASEAN. Last year, Dhaka sought Malaysia's support for closer ties while Kuala Lumpur held the bloc's rotating chairmanship. Although Bangladesh aspires to become an ASEAN member in the long term, its immediate objective has been to secure sectoral dialogue partner status as a stepping stone to deeper engagement with the regional grouping (*New Age*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Shama Obaed seeks enhanced global cooperation to prevent irregular migration:** State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam on Sunday called for enhanced international cooperation to expand regular migration pathways and prevent irregular migration, promote ethical recruitment and strengthen the skills of prospective migrants in line with evolving international labour-market demands. She sought IOM's support in matching Bangladesh's

workforce with global demand, promoting talent mobility and facilitating talent partnerships with destination countries, including in healthcare, caregiving and agriculture. The issues were discussed when deputy director general (DDG) of Operations of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Ugochi Daniels paid a courtesy call on her in Dhaka. The state minister underscored the importance of protecting the rights and welfare of migrant workers, particularly women, through awareness raising and appropriate support services. Appreciating IOM's assistance in evacuating and repatriating stranded Bangladeshi nationals from crisis-affected countries, Shama Obaed called for continued cooperation on safe return and sustainable reintegration, climate-related mobility, and coordinated action against human trafficking and migrant smuggling. She appreciated IOM's humanitarian assistance for the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals and called for international efforts to create conditions conducive to their safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable repatriation to Myanmar. Ugochi Daniels lauded the Bangladesh Government's approaches and initiatives towards establishing a sustainable migration governance. She appreciated the commitments and leadership of Bangladesh in championing safe, orderly and regular migration in global discourse (*Dhaka Tribune*, [02 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Japanese firm proposes \$3.4bn bridge projects under PPP model:** Japanese construction company Miyagawa Kensetsu Construction Ltd has expressed interest in building the proposed Bhola-Barishal and Shariatpur-Chandpur bridges under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, paving the way for two major infrastructure projects worth an estimated Tk33,423 crore (\$3.44 billion). **Officials expect the projects to transform regional connectivity, accelerate economic activity in southern Bangladesh and improve the country's transport network. The government has targeted completion of the two bridges by 2033, while it will bear the land acquisition costs under the PPP framework.** The Japanese company announced its interest during the eighth Bangladesh-Japan Joint PPP Platform meeting held recently in Dhaka, according to officials from the Bridge Division and the PPP Authority. The meeting also formally included the Bhola-Barishal and Shariatpur-Chandpur bridge projects in the Bangladesh-Japan Joint PPP Platform, reflecting both governments' commitment to advancing large-scale infrastructure through private investment (*Daily Sun*, [03 August 2026](#)).

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- ◆ **Rohingyas demand sustainable return:** Leaders of the forcibly displaced Rohingya community sheltered in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh on Friday demanded sustainable repatriation to their homeland in Myanmar. They also called for ensuring safety, security alongside the continued US humanitarian assistance for the displaced population. The demands were placed during a meeting with US president's special envoy for South Asia ambassador Sergio Gor, who visited the Rohingya camps in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, on Friday as part of a high-level US delegation's three-day official visit to Bangladesh. **The delegation listened to the concerns, needs, and expectations of the Rohingya community leaders. The Rohingya representatives highlighted the prolonged humanitarian crisis, urging a continued international engagement in facilitating the displaced community's safe, voluntary, and dignified return to Myanmar.** The 14-member US delegation arrived in Cox's Bazar from Dhaka by air at around noon and visited Rohingya Camp-4 in Kutupalong (*New Age*, [31 July 2026](#))
- ◆ **CTTC rules out link between Motijheel explosive, Mirpur-Farmgate incidents:** The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police

(DMP) on Saturday said the explosive recovered beneath Motijheel Metro Rail Station last week was not linked to the bomb-like objects reported at the Mirpur-10 and Farmgate metro stations earlier in the day. **“So far, we have found no link between the explosive recovered at Motijheel and the bomb-like objects found at Mirpur-10 and Farmgate. The investigation is ongoing, and all necessary measures are being taken,” he said.** Responding to a question, Shamsul Haque said the bag recovered at Mirpur-10 Metro Rail Station contained betel leaves, areca nuts, zarda and other everyday items, while the sack found at Farmgate contained discarded waste. “No explosives were found at either location. As such, the two incidents are being treated as isolated cases,” he said. Asked whether any criminal group was behind the incidents, he said it would not be appropriate to comment before the investigation is completed. Replying to another question on whether there was any militant involvement, he said no comments could be made until the investigation is over. At a press briefing on Saturday, CTTC Chief and DMP Additional Police Commissioner Mohammad Shamsul Haque said the investigation had found no link between the Motijheel explosive recovery and the two incidents (*Dhaka Tribune*, [01 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **BCL leader Nibas put on 5-day remand in terrorism case:** A Dhaka court on Sunday placed former central leader of the banned Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Nibas Majumder, on a five-day remand in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act with Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Manzurul Islam passed the order after a hearing, said Sub-Inspector Arif Reza of the Prosecution Division. On 28 July, Detective Branch Inspector Md Masudur Rahman, also the investigating officer of the case, sought a 10-day remand for the accused. The court fixed Sunday for the remand hearing and sent Nibas to jail. **According to the case statement, on 18 June, Nibas and 35 to 40 leaders and activists of the Awami League, whose activities have been banned, and its affiliated bodies allegedly brought out an unlawful procession near the Mohakhali Bus Terminal area. The accused allegedly chanted anti-government slogans and exploded crude bombs, creating panic among the public** (*Daily Sun*, [02 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **US Navy commander due Tuesday: Dhaka expanding maritime defence ties:** Bangladesh is steadily expanding its maritime defence engagement as part of its “Bangladesh First” policy, strengthening cooperation with partners including the United States and Saudi Arabia while seeking to maintain a careful strategic balance among competing global powers. **The latest sign of this evolving approach comes with the scheduled three-day visit of US Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Stephen Koehler, beginning Tuesday.** The visit follows Bangladesh’s recent decision to join the Saudi-led Maritime Defence Alliance, underscoring Dhaka’s growing emphasis on maritime security and regional cooperation. **According to his itinerary, Admiral Koehler will pay courtesy calls on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, Defence Adviser Brig Gen (retd) Shamsul Alam, the Chief of Naval Staff and senior officials of the Armed Forces Division. His itinerary also includes visits to Lalbagh Fort, the Combined Military Hospital and Bir Uttam AK Khandker BAF Base, where he will observe Bangladesh Air Force operations. Armed forces sources noted that this will be the first time a commander of the US Pacific Fleet will meet Bangladesh’s prime minister, highlighting the greater importance Washington attaches to defence engagement with Dhaka.** The previous Pacific Fleet commander to visit Bangladesh was Admiral Samuel J Paparo, who attended the Bangladesh Navy’s International Fleet Review in Cox’s Bazar in 2022. However, his visit did not include engagement at the highest political level. Diplomatic and security analysts say the latest visit reflects a maturing defence relationship while reinforcing

Bangladesh's effort to diversify strategic partnerships without aligning exclusively with any major power. Rear Admiral (retd) and former Secretary of the Maritime Affairs Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Md Khorshed Alam, described the developments as a significant evolution in Bangladesh's defence posture (*Times of Bangladesh*, [03 August 2026](#)).

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