

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

12 August 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **PM says keeping people in hardship or silencing them cannot make a state strong:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Tuesday said the state would become stronger only when its people are economically empowered, stressing the need to ensure economic capacity of citizens alongside political rights to build a strong and prosperous Bangladesh. **“Keeping ordinary people in hardship or silencing them cannot make a state strong. Political rights must go hand in hand with economic empowerment. To this end, the government will extend all necessary policy support to encourage domestic entrepreneurs to invest and create employment,” he said.** The prime minister made the remarks at a ceremony held on Tuesday at the Cabinet Division of Bangladesh Secretariat marking the signing of lease agreements to reopen three closed state-owned jute mills under private management, said PM’s Deputy Press Secretary Hasan Shiplu. The government signed lease agreements with two private business groups to reopen three long-closed state-owned jute mills with around Tk 619 crore in investment, creating at least 11,629 jobs and generating an estimated annual turnover of Tk 1,175 crore (*Prothom Alo*, [12 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Parliamentary session for presidential election to be held from Aug 27: The third session of the 13th Parliament has been called on Aug 27, ahead of the presidential election.** The session will begin at 3pm on Thursday at the chamber of the parliament building in Dhaka’s Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Acting President Hafiz Uddin Ahmad Bir Bikrom has called the session under the powers granted under Article 72, Clause 1 of the Constitution. A notification in this regard was issued by the Legislative Support Wing of the Parliament Secretariat’s Legislative Branch-1 on Tuesday. The new presidential election will be held during the session. **The ruling BNP’s candidate for the presidential election will be announced on Aug 13.** Speaking at a press conference on the matter, BNP Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni said: “The prime minister will make the announcement and then we will all know together. We will all know the day the nomination papers are to be submitted, the time of submission, everything.” He said the party has given the responsibility of finalising its candidate to the prime minister. **The parliamentary Opposition party, Jamaat-e-Islami has also fielded a candidate in this election. The votes cast by the acting president, leader of the house, leader of the Opposition and the acting speaker in the presidential election will be broadcast live.** There will also be an opportunity to broadcast live from the counting to the declaration of the results after the vote is over. **Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Md Nurul Islam Moni on Tuesday said Article 70 of the Constitution will remain effective in the upcoming presidential election, meaning any lawmaker voting against party decision will lose parliament membership** (*bdnews24.com*, [11 August 2026](#); *Daily Sun*, [11 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **4 arrested after Awami League flash march in Dhaka’s Mohakhali:** Police have detained four people conducting a flash march for the Awami League, which is barred from all political activities, in Dhaka’s Mohakhali. They were detained from a procession held in Muktiyoddha Goli near the Mohakhali Institute of Public Health around 1:30pm on Tuesday. **When law**

enforcers gave chase to catch the others, they set off improvised explosives and fled, said Banani Police Inspector Md Mehedi Hasan. The arrestees have been identified as Government Bangla College Chhatra League activists Aslam Mia and Ashiqul Islam, and Awami League activists Mahfuzur Rahman Siam and Monir Hossain. Inspector Mehedi said, “Around 1:30pm, 30 to 40 people gathered for a procession. When Banani Police reached the spot after the incident was reported, the marchers dispersed and tried to escape. A local crowd beat one person and handed him over to the police, while the police arrested three others.” **Police say that those gathered tried to hold a procession under the banner of the Dhaka Metropolitan North Awami League to mark Aug 15. A banner has been recovered from the arrestees. He also said that evidence of a detonated improvised explosive device has been recovered from the scene** (bdnews24.com, [11 August 2026](#)).

◆ **Home Minister says Foreign instigation behind CHT instability:** Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed on Tuesday said foreign instigation and geopolitical interests continued to fuel instability in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. **The constitutional identity of all citizens living in Bangladesh is ‘Bangladeshi’, and he called on everyone to identify as inhabitants of the country rather than ‘indigenous’ people.** Addressing a roundtable discussion titled ‘Indigenous’ Identity Is Irrelevant in Bangladesh’ at a Dhaka hotel, Salahuddin said Bangladesh abstained from voting when the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted on September 13, 2007. **‘ILO Convention 169 and the UN declaration are not applicable to Bangladesh, so making repeated discussions about finding a solution to the issue is unnecessary,’ he added.** Calling for a permanent constitutional solution, he said one of the issues agreed upon without dissent in the July charter was that the primary identity of all citizens living in Bangladesh would be ‘Bangladeshi’. **The home minister warned that just as there had been foreign instigations in the region in the past, various international actors are still pursuing conspiratorial plans in Bangladesh’s eastern border areas and surrounding regions to serve their own interests** (New Age, [12 August 2026](#)).

◆ **BNP, Jamaat, NCP close ranks to counter AL:** Although maintaining unity remains difficult, BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and National Citizen Party are again stressing the need to stay together to counter the political activities of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and Awami League. Despite differences over elections, reforms, the July National Charter and the structure of political power, senior leaders of the three parties say they must maintain at least a minimum level of coordination so that Awami League cannot exploit their divisions to reorganise. Fresh concern has emerged following clashes among student organisations on university campuses, attacks on the NCP’s July March and differences during programmes marking the second anniversary of the 2024 uprising. **The urgency became more pronounced after Hasina addressed a press conference virtually at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club in Delhi on 5 August, amid her recent political activities. The biggest challenge for BNP, Jamaat and NCP is balancing the need for unity with competition over political positioning and future power.** Senior leaders say rivalry should not create an opening for Awami League to make a political comeback. Following clashes between Chhatra Dal and Shibir at Dhaka Alia Madrasa on 4 August, BNP lawmaker for Dhaka-7 Hamidur Rahman Hamid and Jamaat lawmaker for Dhaka-5 Kamal Hossain held a meeting with all sides on 9 August (*Daily Times of Bangladesh*, [12 August 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **Bangladesh to carry out first-ever watercraft census:** To revive the water transport sector and unlock its full potential for the economy, the government is set to conduct Bangladesh's first-ever census on watercraft. Jointly organised by the shipping ministry and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the nationwide survey will run from August 20 to August 29. It aims to generate a reliable, comprehensive baseline on the actual volume, categories, usage patterns, and ownership structures of vessels operating across the country. A three-day training session for field-level coordinators kicked off yesterday at the BBS headquarters in Dhaka to prepare for the rollout, according to joint statements issued by the shipping and planning ministries. **The initiative follows a broader government drive to re-excavate 20,000 kilometres of canals nationwide, a project designed to restore canal interconnectivity and maximise the benefits of water transport** (*The Daily Star*, [11 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Gas crisis: Energy sector suffers from import reliance:** More than 65 per cent of the energy consumed in the country has to be imported. Imports also account for 9 per cent of electricity generation capacity. For nearly three weeks, the supply of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) has been disrupted, leading to an intensified gas shortage. Power supply from imported electricity has reduced as well, resulting in increased power cuts (load-shedding). **Experts say the country's power and energy sector is suffering precisely due to this reliance on imports.** Sources at the Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) stated that two weeks after LNG supply dropped by half owing to a fire accident, it registered a slight increase last Thursday. However, adverse weather at sea reduced the supply once again from Monday evening, cutting daily gas supply by over 250 million cubic feet. If marine conditions improve, supply may increase slightly from today, Wednesday, sources added. **Daily gas demand stands at 3.8 billion cubic feet; supply on normal days 2.7 billion cubic feet. LNG supplies 1.05 billion cubic feet a day; a newly arrived vessel is yet to be unloaded due to adverse weather conditions. Gas shortages have curtailed power generation, with 3,465MW of load-shedding recorded yesterday** (*Prothom Alo*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Inflation falls to eight-month low of 8.32% in July:** Inflation in July fell to its lowest level in eight months, driven by a sharp decline in food prices, according to official data, though economists said the easing may reflect normal fluctuations rather than a sustained cooling of price pressures. **Overall inflation fell to 8.32 percent last month from 9.16 percent in June, according to data released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) yesterday.** It was the lowest rate since November last year, when inflation stood at 8.29 percent. In July, food inflation dropped to 7.16 percent from 8.60 percent in June, offering some relief to households struggling with the rising cost of essentials. **Non-food inflation also eased, to 9.28 percent from 9.61 percent, according to data by the state-run statistical agency.** The latest figures come as households continue to grapple with higher fuel and electricity prices amid inflation hovering over the 8 percent mark for more than three years (*The Daily Star*, [11 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Finance Minister says Cost cuts at port, customs to help contain inflation:** Finance and planning minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury on Tuesday said that reducing unnecessary costs at the Chattogram port and in customs procedures would help contain inflation. **'Additional costs at the port and delays in customs procedures are eventually added to the prices of goods, putting pressure on ordinary people. Reducing such costs is therefore**

a priority for the government,' he noted. His remarks came after a meeting with senior officials of the Chittagong Port Authority, Chattogram Customs House and other stakeholders at the port building on Tuesday. 'Reviving the economy, creating employment, increasing exports and industrialisation, and creating a business-friendly environment are the government's main objectives,' Khosru said. **The minister further said that the government had undertaken deregulation measures to facilitate business.** 'At the meeting, we identified the existing problems and determined solutions to ensure smooth, faster and seamless operations at the port and customs. We have also recorded the timeframe for implementing each decision,' he said. Initiatives had been taken to resolve long-standing coordination gaps through discussions involving the National Board of Revenue chairman and the Chittagong Port Authority chairman, among others, said the minister (*New Age*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Govt targets sustainable farming on 50% of land:** The government aims to bring about half of the country's agricultural land under productive and sustainable practices by 2030 to strengthen climate resilience and ensure long-term food security. **Currently, 44.37 percent of the country's agricultural land is under such practices, a share the government plans to raise to 50.01 percent, said Kamrul Hasan, joint secretary of the policy and planning branch at the Ministry of Agriculture, at a conference yesterday. The conference was held at the Bangladesh China Friendship International Conference Center in Dhaka.** The General Economics Division of the Planning Commission organised the event under a session titled "Reconstructing Fragile Economy and Achieving SDGs." Kamrul said Bangladesh needs sustainable food production systems and climate-resilient farming practices by 2030 to increase agricultural productivity while protecting ecosystems. Such practices should also help farmers cope with climate change, extreme weather, droughts, floods and other disasters, while improving soil and land quality, he added (*The Daily Star*, [11 August 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Tarique Rahman invited for bilateral visit as well as BRICS summit:** Bangladesh's Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has been invited to India for a bilateral visit as well as to participate as the Chairperson of BIMSTEC in the outreach session of the upcoming BRICS summit. This information was shared by the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, in response to questions from journalists during the weekly briefing at India's Ministry of External Affairs on Tuesday. During the briefing, a journalist raised a question about the meeting between India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Dinesh Trivedi, and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, which took place on Monday. The journalist wanted to know what topics were discussed and whether Prime Minister Tarique Rahman had agreed to visit India. All the information requested by India has been given. **In the briefing, journalists sought India's stance on these two extradition requests. In response, Jaiswal stated that India's position on Hasina's extradition is clear. All procedures from India's side are being thoroughly examined.** Regarding the extradition of Osman Hadi's murderers, the spokesperson noted that it is a legal matter and is being scrutinised. Alongside, the investigation continues. A journalist also questioned the two-day visit of India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), chief Parag Jain to Bangladesh during the briefing. **Jaiswal evaded the question, stating that he has "no information" regarding this and suggested that the relevant ministry might provide clarification** (*Prothom Alo*, [11 August 2026](#); [bdnews24.com](#), [11 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **No decision yet on Tarique's India visit for BRICS Summit:** Prime Minister's Policy and Strategy Adviser Zahed Ur Rahman has said no decision has yet been taken on whether Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will travel to India for the BRICS Summit. He made the remarks while responding to a journalist's question at the weekly briefing at the Secretariat on Tuesday. **"Yesterday the Honourable Foreign Minister already gave a reply... Let me add, what the Minister said carried a kind of indication if you noticed. Bangladesh's Prime Minister has not been invited to the BRICS Summit. Instead, the BIMSTEC Chairman has been invited,"** Zahed said. He added: **"There is another invitation — in the congratulatory message sent by the Indian Prime Minister after the formation of Bangladesh's new government, which included an invitation for a visit."** **"Therefore, a visit may take place at any time. But regarding all the discussions we are having, no decision has yet been made about the BRICS Summit. The Foreign Minister also mentioned that,"** he said (*Daily Times of Bangladesh*, [11 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Indian envoy meets Modi a day after talks with Tarique Rahman:** Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi met the country's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi today, a day after meeting Prime Minister Tarique Rahman in Dhaka. **"Yes, he had the meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi today. They discussed Bangladesh-India relations,"** a diplomatic source in New Delhi told UNB. The High Commissioner reached New Delhi yesterday after holding three meetings in Dhaka, seen as part of ongoing consultations to engage constructively and take forward relations between the two neighbours. **Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi conveyed Dhaka's message to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the creation of a 'supportive environment' to advance the relationship with Bangladesh.** According to diplomatic sources from both countries, several sensitive issues affecting the relationship between the two nations also came up during the discussions. A diplomatic source from Delhi told Prothom Alo that High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi today, Tuesday and sought his guidance on further strengthening the multifaceted and enduring bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh in a constructive manner with a people-centric approach. Multiple diplomatic sources from India informed this correspondent that Dinesh Trivedi met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Parliament building around 6 PM local time on Tuesday, and their discussion lasted about an hour. **Diplomatic sources hinted that the message from Bangladesh, which was conveyed during the recent meetings with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, and Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed in Dhaka, was presented to Prime Minister Modi by the Indian High Commissioner in Delhi** (*The Daily Star*, [11 August 2026](#); *Prothom Alo*, [11 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh-China pledge to work together on water resources management:** Bangladesh and China expressed their commitment to working together on water resources management. The two sides made the commitment as Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen paid a courtesy call on Water Resources Minister Md. Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee at his Secretariat office. State Minister for Water Resources Forhad Hossain Azad was also present. **Anee said China and Bangladesh are long-standing and time-tested friends, and that the two countries maintain strong bilateral relations. He called for cooperation between the two countries in exchanging knowledge and experience in water resources management, education, technological cooperation, professional capacity development, and research. Yao Wen said that China is interested in working with Bangladesh to ensure the conservation of water resources and maintain environmental balance. He said China wants to stand by Bangladesh**

in addressing issues related to water resources management, floods, droughts, waterlogging, and river erosion (*BSS News*, [11 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh, Singapore hope for early FTA conclusion:** Bangladesh and Singapore expressed hope for the early conclusion of the proposed bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and underscored the need for stronger business-to-business engagement to deepen trade, investment and economic cooperation. The issue figured prominently during separate meetings of State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam, MP, held with Singaporean Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim in Singapore. During the meetings, both sides expressed satisfaction with the longstanding and friendly relations between the two countries and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation, according to a Foreign Ministry press release issued here tonight. **Shama highlighted Bangladesh's potential to diversify exports to Singapore beyond ready-made garments, particularly pharmaceuticals, ceramics, agro-products, jute and jute goods. She also invited greater Singaporean investment in Bangladesh, particularly in logistics, supply chains, renewable energy, research and other emerging sectors, reaffirming the government's commitment to providing a business-friendly and predictable investment environment.** The State Minister highlighted Bangladesh's emphasis on skills development, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and capacity building. **She proposed creating greater employment opportunities for Bangladeshi nurses in Singapore's elderly care and nursing sectors alongside cooperation in relevant training and skills development.** The two sides also exchanged views on climate change, water security, carbon credits, research cooperation, cybersecurity, digitalisation and cooperation in combating mosquito-borne diseases (*BSS News*, [12 August 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **CTTC arrests suspected JMB member, recovers bomb like objects in Savar:** The Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit recovered 14 crude bomb-like objects and a large quantity of bomb-making materials during a raid in Savar on Tuesday. The unit, alongside Savar Model Police Station, arrested a man suspected of having links to the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and seized several leaflets belonging to the group, police said. The operation was conducted at a three-storey building in South Shyampur, Tetuljhora Union, Savar, after CTTC personnel arrested Arif Hossain, 28, in nearby Hemayetpur based on intelligence, Savar Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Saiful Alam said. Police initially suspected Arif of having links to JMB. **An intelligence official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said security agencies had been tracking him from Kishoreganj before his arrest.** Five crude bombs were recovered from Arif's bag during the initial arrest, while another nine were found inside the building based on information he provided, police said (*New Age*, [11 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **No need for speculation over RAW chief's Bangladesh visit: Information Advisor Zahed:** There is no reason for speculation over the visit of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief Parag Jain to Bangladesh, Information and Broadcasting Advisor Zahed Ur Rahman has said. Jain arrived in Dhaka from China and is expected to meet his Bangladeshi counterpart, Zahed said at the government's weekly press briefing on Tuesday. **"There is a lot of speculation about the RAW chief's visit. He has come from China to Dhaka. This is also a visit, and he will sit with his counterpart," Zahed said. He said the government may issue a statement**

after the visit if it considers it necessary, but there is “nothing to speculate about”. Zahed also rejected suggestions that the visit was secret, noting that Bangladesh’s intelligence chief had previously travelled to India. He referred to recent remarks by Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi, saying Bangladesh and India cannot change their shared geography and must therefore remain engaged. He said Bangladesh wants to “realign” its relationship with India, arguing that ties should be based on relations with the people of Bangladesh rather than with particular parties or individuals, as he said had happened during Sheikh Hasina’s rule. **He said India was now also speaking of building relations with the people, making engagement between the two countries’ intelligence agencies and their counterparts a natural part of bilateral ties. However, Zahed said Indian institutions must not operate in Bangladesh with the attitude he attributed to them during the Hasina administration** (*bdnews24.com*, [11 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **BSF detains Bangladeshi farmer, villagers retaliate by dragging back 2 Indians:** Three nationals of Bangladesh and India detained amid a border incident in Meherpur were released following a flag meeting between the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the Border Security Force (BSF) on Tuesday. The meeting was held around 2pm at the camp commander level at the Ichakhali border in Meherpur Sadar upazila. **According to locals, Bangladeshi farmer Abdul Mannan, 70, was detained by BSF members while working on his farmland near the border in the morning. In response, local villagers detained two Indian farmers who were staying in the border area. Later, the three detainees were released following the flag meeting between the border forces of the two countries.** Locals said Mannan, son of late Noor Baksh of Masjidpara in Ichakhali, had long been cultivating crops, including green chillies, on around 1.5 bighas of land near the border. They said BSF members detained him on Tuesday morning while he was spraying pesticides on his chilli field. After the incident, local residents became agitated and detained two Indian farmers Sachin Karmakar and Narayan Deb (*Daily Sun*, [12 August 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, Research Fellow, CPS]