

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

13 August 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **TIB flags concerns over govt-approved human rights laws:** Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has expressed concern over the Cabinet's in-principle approval of the draft National Human Rights Commission Act, 2026, and the draft Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Act, 2026, saying key recommendations from stakeholders have been ignored. The anti-graft watchdog questioned whether the government and ruling party had learned lessons from the enforced disappearances, killings and other human rights violations committed under the previous regime. **In a statement on Wednesday, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said several positive provisions had been incorporated into the two draft laws, but provisions that could undermine the independence and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had been retained.** He said Section 18 of the 2009 NHRC Act had been retained, requiring the commission to rely on reports from the government or heads of the respective forces when investigating allegations of human rights violations by law enforcement agencies. According to Iftekharuzzaman, this had previously hindered the commission's ability to ensure accountability for violations committed by law enforcement agencies. **He also raised concerns over the proposed composition of the selection committee for appointing the NHRC chairperson and commissioners, saying government representatives would retain significant influence over the appointments. TIB also criticized the absence of mandatory provisions ensuring women, minorities and other disadvantaged groups are represented on the five-member commission** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [12 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Journalists demand Supreme Court access restored:** Journalists on Wednesday demanded the immediate restoration of their access to the courtrooms of the Appellate Division and various benches of the High Court Division. **They made the demand at a sit-in organised by the Law Reporters Forum in front of the Supreme Court's main gate, saying that barring journalists from directly observing court proceedings was contrary to the Constitution which ensures open justice, transparency in the judicial process and the public's right to know. They warned that they would launch a united programme to enter the Appellate Division's courtroom if the restrictions were not withdrawn.** Journalists covering court proceedings, along with a representative of the Editors' Council and leaders of journalists' unions, joined the protest and pledged to support tougher programmes if journalists are not allowed to enter the Supreme Court immediately. Speakers at the protest programme said that journalists had been barred from entering the courtrooms of the Appellate Division and various High Court benches since January 7, preventing them from directly observing proceedings in cases of public importance and accurately and independently reporting judicial developments. They said that since then journalists covering court proceedings had tried to resolve the matter through discussion but no result came (*New Age*, [13 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Additional DIG Biplob Kumar among 6 senior police officials suspended over prolonged absence:** The government has suspended six senior police officials, ranging from additional deputy inspector general to assistant police commissioner, for remaining absent from duty for

an extended period without leave or permission. The Ministry of Home Affairs issued separate notifications in this regard. **According to the notifications, the officers remained absent from their respective workplaces for a prolonged period without obtaining leave or prior permission. The ministry said the officials were served notices asking them to explain their unauthorised absence, but none of them replied.** Departmental proceedings later found prima facie evidence of misconduct, prompting the government to suspend them under the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 2018. The suspension orders took immediate effect, the notifications added (*The Daily Star*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Presidential election:** Submission of nomination papers for the 23rd presidential election began at 10:00am and will continue till 4:00pm today, with voting scheduled for August 20 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm. According to the election schedule announced by the Election Commission on August 6, scrutiny of nomination papers will begin at 10:00am on August 16 and continue until completion. Candidates can withdraw their nominations by 4:00pm on August 18. Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin will serve as the returning officer for the election, as required by law. **EC officials said three nomination papers have so far been collected from the CEC's office.** There will be no parliamentary session on voting day. However, the CEC will summon a special sitting of parliament to conduct the election, according to a gazette issued yesterday. **A BNP delegation will go to the Election Commission Thursday afternoon to submit the party candidate's nomination papers for the presidential election. The party is set to announce Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir as its candidate for the election just before the deadline for submitting nomination papers.** Regarding the matter, the party held a meeting of its Standing Committee around noon. The party has remained silent over its choice and authorised BNP Chairman and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to select the candidate. However, several senior leaders have hinted that Fakhrul is likely to be nominated although the party collected two nomination papers from the Election Commission (*The Daily Star*, [13 August 2026](#); *Daily Times of Bangladesh*, [13 August 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **India unveils 19 modern passenger coaches for Bangladesh Railway:** The Rail Coach Factory (RCF) at Kapurthala in the Indian state of Punjab on Wednesday unveiled the first consignment of 19 modern Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) broad-gauge passenger coaches for Bangladesh Railway. **The launch of the new rake at the RCF plant in Punjab marks another milestone in railway cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.** RCF previously supplied 120 coaches to Bangladesh Railway in 2015-16. Building on that agreement, Bangladesh Railway awarded a contract in 2024 to manufacture 200 new coaches through Indian agency RITES. Wednesday's delivery (*Daily Sun*, [12 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **CCEA approves purchase of 8 LNG cargoes to meet urgent gas demand:** The government has approved the purchase of eight cargoes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) through direct international procurement to meet the country's urgent gas demand amid the ongoing geopolitical crisis in the Middle East. The approval was given at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) held here with Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury in the chair. **According to the meeting's briefing document, the Energy and Mineral Resources Division placed three proposals relating to the purchase of LNG for meeting the country's emergency gas requirements.** Under one proposal, the committee

approved the purchase of four cargoes of LNG through direct procurement from Zhenyu Shipping Co., Limited, Hong Kong, and PETRONAS LNG Ltd., Malaysia. The committee also approved the purchase of two cargoes of LNG from China Runze Holdings Group Limited through the direct international procurement method. Besides, another proposal got approval for procuring two cargoes of LNG directly from DARAB Inc., USA, to meet the country's urgent gas demand. Thus, a total of eight cargoes of LNG have been approved for procurement under the three proposals (BSS News, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **BPC seeks Tk18,699cr subsidy as fuel import costs surge:** The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has sought more than Tk18,699 crore in government subsidy after the Middle East conflict sent international oil prices soaring and pushed the state-run agency into heavy losses. The conflict has severely disrupted oil shipments through the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, putting further pressure on Bangladesh's fuel sector. International oil prices have risen sharply, but Bangladesh has kept domestic fuel prices unchanged to ease pressure on consumers. **As a result, BPC has bought fuel at higher international prices and sold it at lower prices at home, incurring losses of Tk18,699 crore between March and June. BPC has formally asked the Energy and Mineral Resources Division for urgent financial support to cover the losses and maintain uninterrupted fuel supplies** (*Daily Sun*, [12 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Govt okays purchase of 117 LNG cargoes from US:** The government on Wednesday approved the purchase of 117 liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes from a US company over 12 years, along with six additional cargoes from three companies through direct procurement, amid heightened geopolitical uncertainty and volatility in international energy markets. The decisions were approved at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase, chaired by Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury. The Energy and Mineral Resources Division placed the proposals. Under a government-to-government (G2G) arrangement, Bangladesh will purchase 117 LNG cargoes from US-based Gunvor USA LLC between 2026 and 2038. According to the approved proposal, five cargoes will be purchased in 2026, six in 2027 and three in 2028 at a price linked to the JKM index plus \$0.0875 per MMBtu. The government will purchase three additional cargoes in 2028, while 10 cargoes will be purchased annually from 2029 to 2038. The price for these cargoes will be set at 121 per cent of the Henry Hub (HH) index plus \$5.20 per MMBtu. The government also approved the purchase of six LNG cargoes from three companies through direct procurement (*Daily Sun*, [13 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **80 rural power cooperatives seek police security amid outages:** The ongoing gas crisis has reduced power generation and led to increased load-shedding across the country, with most of the shortages occurring outside Dhaka, particularly in rural areas. **Public frustration over the outages is also growing, raising concerns about the safety of power infrastructure and employees. Local offices of power distribution companies have sought assistance from the Police Headquarters and law-enforcement agencies in several districts to strengthen security. Growing public anger over prolonged outages has led 80 rural power cooperatives to seek police protection.** The cooperatives cited attacks and vandalism at electricity facilities in different areas as power generation falls amid a fuel shortage. The Bangladesh Rural Electrification Association has written to the inspector general of police seeking stronger security at their grids, substations and offices (*bdnews24.com*, [12 August 2026](#); *Prothom Alo*, [13 August 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **US business delegation in Bangladesh to explore investment opportunities:** A business delegation from the United States is currently visiting Bangladesh to explore opportunities in a number of sectors, including energy and technology. **"Leading American companies across energy, technology, agriculture, and finance are here to explore opportunities and build on 50+ years of US-Bangladeshi economic ties,"** said the US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Brent T Christensen, on Wednesday. He warmly welcomed the US-Bangladesh Business Council (USBBC) Executive Business delegation to Bangladesh. The delegation, which arrived on Tuesday, will wrap up its engagement in Bangladesh on Thursday. **Meanwhile, the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) has pledged to help facilitate and mobilise US\$5 billion in investment over the next five years through its existing members and prospective US companies eyeing investment in Bangladesh.** The commitment came when an AmCham Executive Committee, led by its President Syed Mohammad Kamal, met Prime Minister Tarique Rahman at the Secretariat on Tuesday (*Dhaka Tribune*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Muktadir urges US to help Bangladesh to achieve trillion-dollar economy:** Industries Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir called upon US businesses and investors to make greater investment in Bangladesh to help the country achieve its goal of becoming a trillion-dollar economy. **"The US companies are interested in becoming partners in this journey,"** he told reporters after a meeting with a high-level delegation of the US-Bangladesh Business Council at the Industries Ministry conference room in the city, said a press release. Abdul Muktadir said the government is taking various measures to create an investment-friendly environment and simplify business processes to attract more US investment. **The meeting discussed problems faced by US companies doing business in Bangladesh, as well as the country's future trade and export policies, digital economy and e-commerce, he said.** The two sides also exchanged views on priority sectors that Bangladesh should focus on to achieve its trillion-dollar economy target, the minister said (*BSS News*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **US urges Bangladesh to disclose govt procurement contracts:** The United States has urged Bangladesh to make government procurement contract information publicly available as part of a series of recommendations to improve fiscal transparency. Washington has also called for budget documents to be prepared in line with international standards and for Bangladesh's supreme audit institution, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), to be given the level of independence required under international standards. **The observations and recommendations were made in the 2026 Fiscal Transparency Report published by the US Department of State on Tuesday. The report said the interim government made significant progress in fiscal transparency in 2026 by publishing its year-end financial statement on time. It said the government continued to follow the previous administration's budget formulation and implementation processes while taking some important reform measures to improve fiscal transparency. The US, however, identified several shortcomings in Bangladesh's fiscal transparency. The report said the budget did not provide a breakdown of operating expenses for executive offices. It also failed to provide a fully comprehensive picture of government revenue and expenditure in all areas** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Humaion seeks more job opportunities in Maldives:** Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaion Kobir has urged the Maldives to further expand employment opportunities for Bangladeshis in the island nation. He made the request when Maldives High Commissioner

to Bangladesh Shiuneen Rasheed paid a courtesy call on him at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at Tejgaon this afternoon. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations as well as various issues of mutual interest. **They particularly stressed the need for enhancing cooperation in tourism, human resources and investment, exploring ways to deepen mutually beneficial engagement in these areas** (*BSS News*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Dhaka-Japan:** Japanese Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Namau Hiroyuki called on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam on Wednesday. **The Japanese Senior Deputy Foreign Minister is on a two-day official visit to Dhaka to attend 7th Bangladesh-Japan Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), says the press release.** Mentioning Bangladesh's longstanding friendship with Japan, she reaffirmed our commitment to further advancing the Bangladesh-Japan Strategic Partnership. She also welcomed increased Japanese investment and enhanced economic cooperation, and expressed hope for expanded opportunities for skilled Bangladeshi workers in Japan. **It said the consultations provided an opportunity for both sides to reaffirm their shared commitment to further consolidating and deepening the Bangladesh-Japan Strategic Partnership and to advancing mutually beneficial cooperation across a wide range of areas including high-level exchanges and cooperation in trade and investment, energy security and green energy, the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the BIG-B Initiative and defense cooperation.** Japanese Senior Deputy Foreign Minister Namazu Hiroyuki on Wednesday reaffirmed Japan's continued cooperation with Bangladesh under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the BIG-B Initiative and the Official Security Assistance (OSA) framework and welcomed the recent handover of five patrol boats to the Bangladesh Navy. **The two sides also exchanged views on enhancing people-to-people contacts, repatriation of the Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh, regional and global issues, and cooperation in multilateral fora, including the United Nations.** The Foreign Secretary noted the progress achieved in Bangladesh-Japan relations over the years and hoped for further deepening and broadening the Bangladesh-Japan Strategic Partnership. He hoped that the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) will enhance Japanese investment in Bangladesh. He acknowledged Japanese support for Bangladesh's development under the BIG-B Initiative including Matarbari Deep Sea Port and Power Project, the Dhaka Metro Rail and the Third Terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. He sought Japan's continued support and cooperation in expanding bilateral trade and investment, as well as in promoting renewable energy and sustainable development. **The two sides emphasized on the importance to further strengthening people-to-people ties, including by expanding opportunities for Bangladeshi Specified Skilled Workers in Japan and enhancing educational, cultural and civil society exchanges.** The Japanese Minister conveyed Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's invitation to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to visit Japan at a mutually convenient time, **said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.** He also invited Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman to visit Japan as the president of the 81st UNGA. Bangladesh also invited Prime Minister Takaichi to pay an official visit to Dhaka at a suitable time (*Prothom Alo*, [12 August 2026](#), [12 August 2026](#); *Dhaka Tribune*, [12 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh, India signal desire to mend ties, but Hasina remains a sticking point:** For Bangladesh and India, the question is no longer whether their strained relationship can be repaired, but what it will take to get there. "Bangladesh's definition of a conducive environment is that Hasina will not be given any such opportunity in future, that she will not be able to hold a news conference there or make political statements. "If that happens, Bangladesh will consider that a favourable environment has been created. Then a decision will be made on talks or the prime minister's visit to India." Former ambassador Humayun Kabir,

however, says political dialogue is essential to easing tensions. Referring to a possible visit by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, he said, “Political-level talks can happen only when the two [prime ministers] get an opportunity to meet somewhere.” **Analysts are divided over a September visit. Some see the prospect as “very low”; others say it remains possible if dialogue progresses.** Kabir sees New Delhi’s recent moves as evidence of interest in repairing ties. He urged Dhaka to use the opportunity, saying the neighbours’ interests are “very closely intertwined”. International relations analyst Prof Sk Tawfique M Haque is less optimistic. He believes the Trivedi-Tarique meeting was primarily an exchange of messages after the controversy over Hasina’s news conference. He sees little chance of Tarique attending BRICS. Dhaka could instead pursue the bilateral invitation, but only after securing assurances over Hasina. Prof Tawfique believes India could accept that condition. Kabir says even the BRICS format can be negotiated. “I think both sides want to discuss the format, and that can be discussed. It would not be bad to explore this as creatively as possible.” He added, “I think there are both problems and interests here. From our side, we have to see whether we get an opportunity to find something that solves problems. If that happens, going can be considered positively. “But if it is seen that no problem will be solved, then certainly there can be a different line of thinking” (*bdnews24.com*, [13 August 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **460 Bangladeshis among 1,043 foreigners arrested in Malaysia:** The Immigration Department of Malaysia detained 1,043 undocumented foreign nationals, including 460 Bangladeshis, for various immigration related offences during a two-day nationwide enforcement operation targeting residential areas and foreigner hotspots. **“Of those detained, 880 were men and 163 women, aged between 17 and 59. Bangladeshis made up the largest group with 460 detainees, comprising 369 men and 91 women,”** Malaysia’s Immigration Director-General Datuk Zakaria Shaaban told reporters after an operation at an apartment complex in Sungai Chua on Tuesday night. He said the rest of the detainees comprise 328 Indonesians, 186 Myanmar nationals, 55 Indian men, 22 Nepalese men and 143 other foreigners of various nationalities (*Daily Sun*, [12 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Three Bangladeshi women return after serving jail terms in India:** After serving jail terms in India for illegal entry, three Bangladeshi women have returned home through Benapole in Jashore. Indian immigration and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel handed them over to Benapole immigration officials and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members through the Haridaspur checkpoint on Wednesday, said Saifur Rahman, chief of the Benapole International Checkpost Immigration Police. The trio returned under special travel permits after completing their sentences, immigration police said. They had crossed into India illegally after allegedly falling prey to brokers who promised them better lives (*bdnews24.com*, [12 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Case filed against 13 people over alleged Neo-JMB activities in Savar:** Police filed an anti-terrorism case against 13 people over alleged activities by the banned Neo-Jama’atul Mujahideen Bangladesh in Savar, following the arrest of a suspected extremist and the seizure of explosives and bomb-making materials, officials said on Wednesday. The case was filed by CTTC’s Counter Terrorism Investigation Division sub-inspector Mohammad Alomgir Hossain under Bangladesh’s Anti-Terrorism Act with the Savar Model Police Station.

The case was filed against six named and seven unnamed people, said Saiful Alam, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station (*New Age*, [13 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**]*