

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

19 August 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **Teachers under probe, questions over who made the lists:** Universities across Bangladesh have begun investigating hundreds of teachers accused of involvement in alleged “anti-state secret activities,” triggering concerns over due process, political bias and academic freedom as questions emerge over who compiled the lists and on what evidence. **The controversy stems from media reports alleging that 404 teachers at 22 universities were involved in covert activities aimed at facilitating former prime minister Sheikh Hasina’s return and reactivating the Awami League. Dhaka University has formed a three-member committee to investigate the allegations, with 58 teachers already identified against a reported 92 named in connection with the university. Similar committees have been formed at Jagannath University, Islamic University, Chittagong University and other institutions.** The process, however, has itself come under scrutiny. University sources claim many of the accused at Dhaka University have links to the Awami League-backed Blue Panel, while critics allege names were submitted by individuals associated with rival political groups and that personal grievances may have influenced the lists. The allegations remain unproven, and the Dhaka University committee has said no conclusions will be drawn without verification (*Dhaka Tribune*, [19 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **High Court dismisses plea against Article 70, presidential election schedule:** The High Court has summarily dismissed a writ petition challenging the validity of Article 70 of the Constitution -- which mandates the vacation of a parliamentary seat for voting against one’s party -- alongside the schedule for the presidential election. The High Court bench of Justice Khizir Ahmed Choudhury and Justice AFM Saiful Karim passed the dismissal order on Tuesday. **The bench ruled the petition had no merit, noting parliament held the authority to decide on any amendment to Article 70.** The petition sought a rule asking why Article 70 should not be declared unconstitutional and why the Election Commission’s Aug 6 schedule for the presidential poll should not be declared without lawful authority, alongside a stay on the election roadmap pending the rule. **BNP’s Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and LDP’s Oli Ahmed will contest the presidential election on August 20 as no candidate has withdrawn their nomination paper, Election Commission (EC) Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed said** (*bdnews24.com*, [18 August 2026](#); *The Daily Star*, [18 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **44 citizens protest at ministers’ remarks over ‘indigenous’ identity:** In a statement issued on Tuesday, 44 citizens strongly protested at the remarks by two ministers that said that no indigenous peoples lived in Bangladesh. **They expressed grave concern over what home minister Salahuddin Ahmed and information minister Zahir Uddin Swapan said at a roundtable in Dhaka on August 11 in their denial of the existence of indigenous communities in the country.** At the August 11 event, the home minister said that Bangladesh had no indigenous groups and that all citizens should simply be identified as Bangladeshis. He also said that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention 169 did not apply to Bangladesh. The information minister described the term ‘indigenous’ as irrelevant to Bangladesh, warning that its use could amount to falling into a ‘pre-arranged trap’. **They warned**

that such remarks by ministers holding key state positions could also damage Bangladesh's image, dignity and credibility internationally. (*New Age*, [19 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **BNP power shift: Salahuddin ties home exit to secretary general bid:** Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed is willing to give up his portfolio if he is made BNP secretary general, as speculation grows over a possible cabinet and party reshuffle following Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's nomination for president. **BNP sources said the issue was discussed at a BNP standing committee meeting where Fakhrul was formally nominated for the presidency. The meeting also considered moving Salahuddin from the Home Ministry to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives.** Although Salahuddin did not comment on the proposal at the meeting, he later told several senior party leaders that he would have no objection to changing ministries if he was considered for the secretary general post. Sources said he is also interested in the Local Government Ministry or the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry. If neither option is available and there is no assurance over the party post, he prefers to remain home minister. **A BNP Standing Committee member, seeking anonymity, said Salahuddin appeared to have considerable influence in the government. Party leaders said Salahuddin had told colleagues that he had no objection to Rizvi continuing as acting secretary general until the council. However, he would be willing to leave the Home Ministry if he was elected secretary general at the council** (*Daily Times of Bangladesh*, [19 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Jamaat calls BNP govt's first 6 months a failure over referendum, energy crisis:** Jamaat-e-Islami has described the BNP-led government's performance during its first six months in office as a failure, accusing it of failing to fulfil its electoral commitments and of following the path of the previous "fascist" government. Speaking at a press conference at Al-Falah Auditorium in Moghbazar, Dhaka, this afternoon, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar **described the government's failure to implement the referendum verdict as its first and biggest failure.** He alleged that by disregarding the result, the government had broken its commitment to the people. **Porwar then identified the gas, fuel and power crisis as the government's second major failure.** Accusing the government of politicising state and autonomous institutions, the Jamaat leader said BNP activists were being appointed to district councils, development authorities, city corporations, universities and government posts. **He also criticised the deteriorating law-and-order situation and violence on campuses, alleging that opposition leaders and activists continued to face attacks. Porwar further accused the government of failing in agriculture, education, healthcare and the judiciary, while alleging discrimination in development allocations for opposition MPs and political influence in the administration.** He, however, acknowledged some stability in the country's foreign exchange reserves and the government's initiative to form a special committee to address the fuel crisis. But he attributed the stability in reserves to remittances rather than any government achievement (*The Daily Star*, [18 August 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **Bangladesh, India seek fresh momentum in economic partnership:** Bangladesh and India have stressed the need for greater trade and investment cooperation by removing commercial barriers, easing visa procedures and promoting joint initiatives in infrastructure and emerging technologies. Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktedir made the remarks at a meeting with a delegation of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), led by its Director General Chandrajit Banerjee, at the Secretariat, said a press release. The meeting discussed bilateral trade and investment relations, existing challenges and potential areas of

future cooperation. The commerce minister said the geographical proximity of Bangladesh and India offers significant opportunities to transform connectivity into economic benefits through increased trade, investment and industrial cooperation. **Despite differences in size, population and economic strength, the two countries can benefit from their geographical realities, particularly by expanding trade, connectivity and investment involving Bangladesh and India's northeastern region, he said.** Muktadir also stressed the importance of increasing economic connectivity in South Asia, saying that although the region has a large combined economy, intra-regional trade remains relatively low. **Regarding recent trade restrictions between Bangladesh and India, the commerce minister called for discussions to restore bilateral trade to a normal footing.** He expressed hope that positive progress would be achieved within the next few months. **Visa-related difficulties faced by business people and professionals also came up for discussion.** Muktadir said it was not practical for people who regularly travel for business, medical treatment and other purposes to apply for new visas every few months. He stressed the need for cooperation between the two countries to introduce longer-term visa arrangements for regular travellers (*Daily Sun*, [18 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Padma Barrage plan to be made operational by early next year:** Water Resources Minister Md. Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee today pledged to make the Padma Barrage plan operational and visible by January-February next year, saying the interests of seven crore people in 24 to 26 districts are closely linked to the project. He also expressed hope that Prime Minister would present a strong statement in favour of Bangladesh on the Ganges Water Treaty at the United Nations next month. The minister made the remarks while addressing a seminar titled "Ganges Water Treaty: Issues for Renegotiation" as the chief guest at the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) auditorium in Dhanmondi. Referring to recommendations made at the seminar, Anee stressed the need to establish the right to information in all future water-sharing treaties and revive the "guarantee clause" scrapped in the 1977 treaty (*BSS News*, [19 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Ganges Water Sharing Treaty: Dhaka to seek a guarantee clause:** The government is determined to renegotiate the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which expires in December, with India while preserving the rights of the Bangladeshi people, Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee said. He expressed hope that the treaty would be renewed soon but said the government was also ready to approach international forums to protect the country's rights, if needed. "We must sign a treaty. Without a treaty, we have no way forward. This is our right," he said while speaking as the chief guest at a seminar titled "Ganges Water Treaty: Issues for Renegotiation" at the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) auditorium. "If we need to go to any international forum to make it happen, we are ready for that," he added. **Anee said that the government would give the highest priority to Bangladesh's water rights, agriculture, food security, and environmental and biodiversity protection while negotiating a new treaty. Citing the five-year Ganges water-sharing agreement signed in 1977 under the Ziaur Rahman government, Anee said that the agreement explicitly contained a minimum flow guarantee clause. 'In contrast, the 1996 Ganges Treaty, signed during the Awami League government, dropped the crucial guarantee,' he said. He said that India had undermined friendly relations with Bangladesh by constructing dams and barrages in the upstream Ganges basin, disregarding the rights of downstream countries recognised under several international conventions. Experts and policymakers at a seminar on Tuesday said that intergovernmental negotiations on a new Ganges water-sharing treaty must include guarantees of water availability for downstream Bangladesh and ensure its access to data on upstream developments in India. They also called for stronger inter-**

ministerial coordination to strengthen Bangladesh's position in negotiations with India (*The Daily Star*, [19 August 2026](#); *New Age*, [19 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **PM for simple, friendly revenue system to encourage voluntary tax payment:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman today stressed making tax management and collection procedures simple, corruption- and harassment-free and transforming the National Board of Revenue (NBR) into a trusted, people-friendly institution so that people feel comfortable paying taxes voluntarily. **"Tax management and collection procedures must be simple, corruption- and harassment-free so that people feel comfortable paying taxes voluntarily,"** he said. **"Repeatedly increasing the tax burden on the same taxpayers is not a sustainable way to increase revenue. Rather, it is very necessary to identify the people who are able to pay tax and bring them under tax net through proper measures."** Thus, there is no alternative to building a digitally modern, data-driven tax administration," he added. Tarique Rahman said this while addressing the Revenue Conference 2026, organised by the NBR, as the chief guest at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city (*The Daily Star*, [18 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **PM says Greater pvt sector engagement needed to address challenges:** Prime minister Tarique Rahman on Tuesday urged greater private sector engagement in humanitarian and social initiatives, saying that collective contributions could help address major challenges. **'As members of society, if everyone comes forward and contributes in their own way, many major problems can be solved,'** he said while launching a programme to distribute 20,000 raincoats among tea garden workers in Sylhet division. The prime minister handed over raincoats to 10 tea workers at the prime minister's office at secretariat in Dhaka, said a release issued by the PM's press wing (*New Age*, [19 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Govt seeks Chinese tech, investment to revive silk sector:** State minister for textiles and jute Md Shariful Alam on Tuesday said that the government was seeking deeper cooperation with China in technology transfer and investment to revive Bangladesh's silk sector. **Cooperation could include joint research, exchanges of scientists and technical experts, training, fellowships, and study visits,** he said at a conference on silk cultivation research and development under China-Bangladesh strategic cooperation at the Bangladesh Sericulture Research and Training Institute in Rajshahi on Tuesday. The state minister said that to turn Rajshahi's historic silk industry into a competitive, sustainable and export-oriented industry, the government wanted to establish a joint working group with Chinese counterparts. The joint working group will develop climate-resilient mulberry varieties and improved silkworm breeds, modernise silk reeling and processing, improve quality testing and develop high-value silk products, he said **'China has extensive experience in scientific research, technological innovation and industrial development in sericulture and silk. We welcome institutional cooperation between Chinese research institutions and Bangladesh's development boards, universities and research organisations,'** Shariful said. He said that the government wanted to develop an integrated silk value chain covering mulberry cultivation, silkworm rearing, cocoon production, reeling, weaving, product development, branding and marketing. 'Research outcomes need to be effectively transferred to the field and converted into commercial opportunities, investment and industrial development,' he said. The proposed cooperation would also focus on mechanised rearing, pest management, modern reeling, quality-testing laboratories, biotechnology and export-oriented silk manufacturing, he said (*New Age*, [19 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **11 projects worth Tk 10,047cr to go before ECNEC today:** The Planning Division is set to place 11 projects worth Tk 10,046.89 crore before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council today. **The largest project, costing Tk 4,963.67 crore, will rehabilitate 5,223 kilometres of damaged rural roads across all 495 upazilas.** The ECNEC meeting is scheduled to be held at the NEC conference room in the capital, with prime minister Tarique Rahman in the chair. The Rural Road Rehabilitation and Strengthening Project is the largest of the 11 projects in terms of cost. The Local Government Engineering Department, under the Local Government Division, will implement it entirely with government funds by June 2030, subject to ECNEC approval (*New Age*, [19 August 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Jaiswal says India wants positive, constructive and forward-looking ties with Bangladesh:** India seeks to build positive, constructive, and forward-looking relations with Bangladesh, based on mutual interests. The spokesperson of India's Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, presented this position of the Indian government today, Tuesday, in response to journalists' questions during the ministry's briefing in New Delhi. In the briefing, Jaiswal did not provide any definitive information in response to a question about the possible visit of Bangladesh's Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to India. When asked about the conditions imposed by Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the extradition of the murderers of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Osman Hadi, and other fugitives, he stated, "There is nothing new to say on this matter. Our stance on extradition remains the same. Bangladesh's request is being examined within the existing framework of India." Apart from the potential visit of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, Tuesday's briefing saw questions on various aspects of India-Bangladesh bilateral relations. **Journalists inquired about Bangladesh's request to get additional fuel from India. Jaiswal reiterated the previous response, noting that India is assessing whether extra fuel can be provided, considering the nation's fuel reserves, refinery capacity, and domestic needs.** Additionally, a journalist asked about the resumption of halted work on ongoing Indian development projects in Bangladesh. They inquired if the Bangladesh government had requested India to commence work on these stalled projects. **Without directly answering, Jaiswal emphasised that India is interested in establishing a positive, constructive, and future-oriented relationship with Bangladesh, founded on mutual interests** (*Prothom Alo*, [18 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **India offers joint efforts with Dhaka amid AQIS concerns:** India has expressed its willingness to work jointly with Bangladesh to combat militancy amid concerns raised by a United Nations Security Council report over Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) activities in South Asia and its attempts to establish a foothold in Bangladesh. **Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal made the remarks at the ministry's regular press briefing in New Delhi on Tuesday. "Terrorism and national security should be a concern for everyone. It is a common curse for all of us, and we want to fight this problem together," Jaiswal said. He was responding to questions about the UN Security Council's Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team's 38th report on ISIL and Al-Qaeda and whether India and Bangladesh have any bilateral mechanism to counter militancy.** On whether Bangladesh had requested the resumption of talks on the Teesta water-sharing issue, he said matters concerning the two countries' shared rivers are addressed through existing bilateral mechanisms. He referred to the Joint Rivers Commission and other technical committees dealing with river-related issues, saying these mechanisms remain active (*Dhaka Tribune*, [18 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **India has no update on Bangladesh PM Tarique's proposed visit:** India on Tuesday said it had no fresh update on the proposed visit of Bangladesh prime minister Tarique Rahman, although the invitation for the visit remains open. **'We have extended a cordial invitation for the prime minister of Bangladesh to visit India, and as and when I have an update or some development to share with you on this account, I will surely do so,'** Indian external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a regular media briefing in New Delhi. Jaiswal made the remarks in response to a question on the proposed visit, adding that India would share any development when appropriate. India has previously confirmed that it invited the Bangladesh prime minister to visit the country, but no date has yet been announced (*New Age*, [18 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Dinesh Trivedi says Prime Minister to receive memorable welcome in India:** Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi has said that when Bangladesh's Prime Minister visits India, he will be accorded the highest honour and given a memorable reception befitting him, as he deserves. **India is eagerly awaiting the opportunity to extend a warm welcome to the prime minister, he said, adding that the benefits of the visit would ultimately reach the people of both countries. Trivedi made the remarks at a reception held at The Westin Hotel in Gulshan, Dhaka, on Tuesday.** The Indian High Commission organised the event in honour of a high-level business delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), which is currently visiting Bangladesh. Although diplomatic discussions are under way between the two countries regarding Tarique Rahman's proposed visit to India, no confirmation has yet been received. Sources said that several conditions put forward by Bangladesh—including the extradition of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted in the July mass uprising, and the handover of suspects accused in the murder of martyr Sharif Osman Hadi—have yet to be resolved. Bangladesh has also not agreed to the prime minister's visit to India. **Referring to some minor misunderstandings or obstacles that have emerged between Bangladesh and India, Trivedi said, "Everyone knows that I have direct access to the prime minister of India; I can call him whenever I wish. Why did he send me? There is only one reason—our immense respect, affection and mutual dependence towards our neighbour. Our policy is 'Neighbourhood First'"** (*Prothom Alo*, [19 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Shama says Dhaka eyes equally beneficial economic partnership with New Delhi:** State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam has said Bangladesh wants to see an economic partnership with India that is "equally beneficial and brings tangible changes" to the lives of people. **"I am confident that the business communities of our two countries have both the vision and the capacity to make this happen. We can collectively identify practical solutions to the challenges,"** she said, noting that **greater predictability and ease of doing business will benefit businesses in both countries.** The state minister made the remarks while speaking at a reception on Tuesday night. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi hosted the reception in honour of leading Bangladeshi business leaders and a delegation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). **Shama Obaed held discussions with [business leaders from India](#) on Tuesday afternoon, during which they identified several issues. "From my side, I have assured them that we will try our best to resolve those issues, and we want more vibrant trade, investment and communication between the two countries,"** she said, describing the meeting as **productive and fruitful.** The state minister said business visas for Bangladeshis should be issued more quickly so that businesspeople can travel to India more frequently. Bangladesh has offered Indian companies a large and growing domestic market, a substantial industrial workforce, competitive production capabilities, geographical proximity, and opportunities to connect with markets beyond Bangladesh (*Dhaka Tribune*, [19 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh-Bhutan:** Bangladesh and Bhutan agreed to deepen bilateral trade and private-sector cooperation, expand product coverage under their Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and explore the possibility of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The issues figured prominently at the Fourth Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between Bangladesh and Bhutan held in Dhaka, said a foreign ministry's statement here. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam and his Bhutanese counterpart Pema Lektup Dorji co-chaired the consultations. The two sides reviewed cooperation in political affairs, trade and investment, connectivity, education, health, culture, tourism, agriculture and people-to-people exchanges. They agreed to further strengthen high-level political engagements and regular consultations between the two governments while stressing the need to translate existing goodwill and political understanding into tangible benefits for the peoples of both countries. **The two sides also exchanged views on strengthening regional cooperation under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) to promote greater regional integration** (BSS News, [18 August 2026](#), [18 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **FM's Qatar visit:** Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman left Dhaka for Qatar on a two-day official visit, accompanied by a high-level government delegation. **Bangladesh and Qatar have discussed issues of mutual interest and explored ways to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.** The discussions took place during a meeting between Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman and Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al Khulaifi in Doha, according to a press release. During the talks, the two sides exchanged views on issues of mutual interest and discussed possible avenues for further deepening the existing bilateral relations between Dhaka and Doha. **Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman has discussed expanding employment opportunities for Bangladeshi workers, particularly skilled and semi-skilled professionals, in Qatar.** The issue came up during a meeting between Khalilur and Qatar's Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Saeed bin Samikh Al Marri in Doha during the Bangladesh foreign minister's official visit, according to a press release. During the meeting, the two ministers discussed issues of mutual interest, with particular focus on labour cooperation, workers' welfare and protection, and prospects for creating greater employment opportunities for Bangladeshi workers in the Qatari labour market. **Bangladesh and Qatar today agreed to establish joint working groups to deepen bilateral cooperation in the energy and financial sectors following high-level talks in Doha.** The decision came during Foreign Minister Dr Khalilur Rahman's separate meetings with Qatar's Energy Minister Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi and Finance Minister Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari, according to a press release. They agreed to establish joint working groups to follow up the issues and advance mutually beneficial cooperation in the two key areas (BSS News, [19 August 2026](#), [19 August 2026](#), [19 August 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **174 more Bangladeshis return home from detention centre in Libya:** Another 174 Bangladeshis detained at the Qanfoodah (Qandouda) Detention Centre in Libya's Benghazi have returned home. They landed at Dhaka's Shahjalal International Airport at 6am on Tuesday, arriving on a Burak Air flight from Libya. Among them were three women, one child and 15 who were unwell. The Bangladesh Embassy in Libya repatriated them safely, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), according to media statement. **The 174 had been trying to travel irregularly to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea, it said. A separate**

batch of 340 Bangladeshis returned home from Libya on Aug 7, taking the total repatriated from detention centres there this month to 514, across two phases (*bdnews24.com*, [18 August 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Rohingya leaders say Myanmar's offer to 'take back' 300,000 refugees a 'ploy to derail repatriation':** Rohingya refugees have dismissed Myanmar's latest statement on repatriation as a "drama". Community leaders say it is aimed at avoiding, rather than delivering, their return. United Council of Rohingya Representatives President Syed Ullah says Naypyidaw is "staging a drama" to sidestep taking refugees back. Myanmar, he argues, is effectively blocking repatriation by denying their identity while attaching a string of conditions to any return. Myanmar's junta government said in a statement on Saturday that more than 300,000 of the Rohingya refugees sheltering in Bangladesh are former residents of Rakhine State, and that it is willing to take them back once the security situation there improves. The statement refers to the Rohingya community as "Bengali", repeating Myanmar's longstanding position that no ethnic group called "Rohingya" exists within its borders (*bdnews24.com*, [18 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh rejects Myanmar's 'Bengali' narrative on Rohingya refugees:** Bangladesh has rejected Myanmar's portrayal of Rohingya refugees as Bengalis, while flagging what it called erroneous statistics in Naypyidaw's latest statement on the displaced population. Director General (Myanmar) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Md Toufiq-ur-Rahman raised the concerns with Myanmar Ambassador to Bangladesh U Kyaw Soe Moe in Dhaka on Tuesday. Referring to the statement issued by the Myanmar foreign ministry on the Rohingya matter, dated Aug 15, Toufiq said many elements of the statement were based on erroneous statistics, including the number of the displaced Rohingya population. Requesting the Myanmar government on expediting the verification process of the displaced Rohingyas based on agreed bilateral instruments, the foreign ministry said that the data of Rohingyas registered under the UN system reflects their accurate numbers, according to a release posted on the Facebook page of the foreign ministry. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam said Bangladesh is continuing its diplomatic efforts to resolve the protracted Rohingya crisis, which has become increasingly complicated amid geopolitical and regional realities. Shama said Bangladesh is now facing a difficult situation as the crisis, which escalated with the massive Rohingya influx in 2017, has remained unresolved for nearly a decade. Shama also criticised the previous Sheikh Hasina government's decision to pursue a bilateral framework with Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation, arguing that stronger multilateral involvement from the outset could have produced better results (*bdnews24.com*, [18 August 2026](#); *BSS News*, [18 August 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Phones behind bars: Prison chief admits AL inmates still talking:** Awami League leaders and activists held in jails are still illegally using mobile phones to communicate with people outside, Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Syed Motaher Hossain admitted on Tuesday, though he said the practice had declined from its 2024 peak. Briefing reporters at the Department of Prisons Headquarters in Old Dhaka, he said more than 3,000 mobile phone sets had been seized over the past year. "They are talking. I cannot give a cent-per-cent guarantee that they are not talking," he said, adding that no prisoner was being given extra facilities. Over the past two years, 1,276 prison officers and staff have faced punishment for offences including supplying narcotics and helping Awami League inmates use mobile phones. Of these, 21 were forced into retirement, 82 dismissed, 303 removed from their posts, and departmental action taken against 870 others. Asked about inmates who fled during the July mass uprising, the IG Prisons said 2,247 prisoners had escaped from various jails, of whom 690 – including three militants –

remained at large. Records of 166 inmates who escaped from Narsingdi Jail had gone missing, making them impossible to identify, he said, adding that law enforcement agencies were working to arrest the remaining escapees (*Daily Sun*, [19 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**]*