

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

24 September 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **HRW says 3 new laws reverse rights protections, break govt's commitments to reform:** Three laws approved in September this year by the Bangladeshi parliament have reversed human rights protections and broken the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) commitments to reform, Human Rights Watch said today, Wednesday, in a media release. **According to the global rights body, the legislation removes safeguards created by the interim government, which ruled Bangladesh between August 2024 and February 2026, reducing protections that could prevent a return to violations such as enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings which were widespread in the past.** The interim government had introduced two ordinances to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), including powers to prevent, investigate, and seek accountability for enforced disappearances. After being elected earlier this year, the government of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has now legislated to remove the NHRC's independence and weaken its investigative powers, the release said. The third law purports to abolish the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a law enforcement agency responsible for extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture, but in effect only renames it while providing fewer safeguards than apply to the regular police, the HRW said (*Prothom Alo*, [23 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Rights groups urge withdrawal of draft cyber law amendment:** Four international and regional human rights organisations have urged the Bangladesh government to withdraw the draft Cyber Protection (Amendment) Act 2026, warning that several of its provisions could restrict freedom of expression, media freedom and public-interest reporting. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center, Front Line Defenders and South Asians for Human Rights made the call in a joint statement issued on September 22. The organisations said the proposed amendments appeared to replicate several provisions of the Digital Security Act 2018, which they said had been widely criticised for imposing restrictions on freedom of speech and expression. They also expressed concern that the amendments could undermine media freedom and restrict public-interest reporting. The draft seeks to amend the Cyber Protection Act 2026, which was enacted on April 10 and amended on June 30. The rights groups said they recognised the government's responsibility to address cybercrime, strengthen cybersecurity and protect citizens' privacy. However, they stressed that such measures should respect fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and access to information. They expressed concern over what they described as vague and broad terms in the draft, including 'rumour', 'misinformation', 'digital defamation', 'humiliation', 'bullying' and 'fake news'. According to the organisations, the lack of precise definitions could create scope for subjective interpretation, arbitrary enforcement and selective application of the law (*New Age*, [23 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Jamaat will oppose any move to raise benefits for MPs, ministers:** Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Opposition Leader Shafiqur Rahman has said he will strongly oppose any move to increase the financial benefits of the president, prime minister, ministers or MPs while the people are struggling with a range of economic difficulties. "Society as a whole is going through a crisis.



There is no question of us, the MPs, increasing our own benefits,” he said. **The government should remain cautious and refrain from taking any such initiative, Shafiqur said, claiming that efforts were being made by a section to increase such benefits following the announcement of a new pay scale.** He was speaking at a meeting with Jamaat beat journalists at Al-Falah Auditorium in Moghbazar, Dhaka, on Wednesday (*Daily Times of Bangladesh*, [23 September 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Defeated forces of 1971, 2024 trying to destabilize govt:** State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Anindya Islam Amit has said the forces defeated in 1971 and those defeated during the 2024 mass uprising are now working together to destabilize the government. **"The forces defeated in 1971 could not believe in Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty. Similarly, the forces defeated in the 2024 mass uprising are taking time to believe in democracy in Bangladesh," he said.** The state minister made the remarks while addressing a meeting organized by Kushtia district unit of BNP at Disha Tower auditorium on Wednesday night. He alleged that various incidents were taking place in different parts of the country with the intention of destabilizing the government. **"The united forces are now trying to destabilize Bangladesh," he said.** He called upon party leaders and activists to organize public-oriented programmes in every upazila and municipality, every ward of the municipalities and at major markets in every union of the upazilas to demonstrate the organizational strength of BNP (*BSS News*, [24 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Middle East situation, cross-border smuggling risks force fuel price adjustments:** State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Aninda Islam Amit today said the government adjusted fuel price due to over Middle East situation and cross-border smuggling risks. **"The Middle East situation has adversely affected fuel prices in all countries across the world," he said while replying to a question after a meeting with government officials and representatives of civil society here.** The state minister said fuel prices in the domestic market were adjusted to prevent smuggling to neighbouring countries through the border. Regarding increase of fuel price, Amit said oil prices in the global market remain volatile, adding, **"Fuel prices are higher than ours in many neighbouring countries. As a result, there is a risk of cross-border smuggling. Considering this, we have increased price of fuel."** He said the country purchases fuel with remittance, which earned by Bangladeshi expatriates through hard work (*BSS News*, [23 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Directive issued to drop 'Awami League-aligned' members from local committees:** All secretaries, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, and upazila nirbahi officers have been directed to exclude Awami League-aligned individuals from committees under various ministries, departments, directorates, and agencies at the upazila, district, and divisional levels. The directive is part of an initiative to reconstitute committees formed during the tenure of the Awami League government, whose activities are now banned, by removing AL-aligned members and appointing new ones. An official memo issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on August 18 instructed authorities to reconstitute and update existing committees, though it did not name any political party. Field administration officials confirmed the directive was aimed at dropping individuals affiliated with the Awami League. Officials said many Awami League-linked figures had already been excluded from key committees under the interim government following the July Uprising, while others stepped aside voluntarily (*The Daily Star*, [23 September 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Banned AL to be dealt both politically and administratively:** Water Resources Minister and BNP Joint Secretary General Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee described Awami League (AL) as a banned political organization, asserting that the party is endeavouring to destabilize society through organizing 'flash processions' across multiple locations. Such activities will be dealt with both political and administrative measures, he said. "Efforts by the banned Awami League to provoke civil unrest via flash processions in Chattogram will be handled through political and administrative channels. It is imperative that we prevent them from engaging in any form of unlawful conducts, anarchic behavior, or terrorist activities," he stated. He told journalists following a special consultation meeting on the district's law and order situation at the Chattogram Circuit House this afternoon (*BSS News*, [23 September 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **Central bank introduces Taka settlement framework for cross-border trade:** The central bank has introduced a framework to settle eligible cross-border trade transactions in Taka through Non-Resident Taka (NRT) vostro accounts maintained by authorised dealer (AD) banks for correspondent banks in trading partner countries. A vostro account is held by a domestic bank with a correspondent bank to manage international transactions and services. AD banks are allowed to open and maintain Taka vostro accounts in the names of correspondent banks in trading partner countries without initial deposits, against payments to be received for admissible imports, according to a circular issued by the Bangladesh Bank (BB) on Wednesday. The balances maintained in such accounts will be used for settlement of export payments from Bangladesh and other permitted transactions. Earlier, AD banks could open Taka vostro accounts in the names of their overseas branches and correspondent banks against inward remittances in freely convertible currencies. Under the arrangement, letters of credit, contracts and invoices will continue to be denominated in freely convertible/admissible currencies. The invoiced amounts will be converted into Taka using the prevailing exchange rate for settlement through the vostro accounts (*Financial Express Bangladesh*, [23 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Govt approves import of 155,000 tons of fertilizer from 3 countries:** The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase has approved four proposals to import 155,000 tons of fertilizer from Canada, Russia and Saudi Arabia under state-level and government-to-government (G2G) arrangements at a total cost of Tk982.61 crore. **The imports comprise 115,000 tons of Muriate of Potash (MOP) from Canada and Russia and 40,000 tons of diammonium phosphate (DAP) from Saudi Arabia.** Of the MOP, 80,000 tons will be imported from Canada in two lots at a cost of Tk379.35 crore, while 35,000 tons will be imported from Russia for Tk165.90 crore. The 40,000 tons of DAP from Saudi Arabia will cost Tk437.37 crore (*Dhaka Tribune*, [23 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **No hilsa import, govt cancels NOCs:** The Department of Fisheries has cancelled all no-objection certificates issued to import hilsa from India, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, effectively suspending the imports indefinitely. The decision was taken on Tuesday and came into effect on Wednesday, officials at the department's fish inspection and quality control section told New Age. ASM Rasel, senior assistant director of the section, said, 'Following the directive, no importer holding an NOC can import hilsa.' **He declined to disclose the reason for the cancellation.** The suspension comes amid a recent reversal in the hilsa trade, with Bangladesh importing surplus hilsa from Gujarat of India, raising

concerns among local researchers. According to the decision, signed by Department of Fisheries director general Md Khaled Kanak, the department cancelled 63 NOCs for importing hilsa from India, 32 from Malaysia, five from Thailand, two from Singapore and one from the UAE. Bangladesh imported 535 tonnes of hilsa from India through Benapole port in Jashore this year, according to department officials. Bharuch in Gujarat, along the Narmada River, has recorded increased hilsa landings over the past two years. The surge in catches in the largely vegetarian state has prompted traders to send the fish to the Howrah wholesale market in Kolkata of West Bengal. Howrah Wholesale Fish Traders' Association secretary Syed Anwar Maqsood told New Age on September 17 that Gujarat hilsa, which has a high volume of roe, was less tasty than Bangladesh's Padma hilsa. He said importing hilsa from India cost Tk 500–700 a kilogram. In contrast, hilsa from Bangladesh sells for Tk 2,000–2,200 a kilogram on the retail market, according to Md Nizam Uddin, president of the Bangladesh Fish Exporters and Importers Association. Ilish importer Syed Mahidul Haque Rubai said the sudden suspension of imports has caused substantial losses to importers. He said ilish purchased in India were kept there for import into Bangladesh, but the import suspension now means the fish will have to be returned at lower prices. "Besides, we are also facing losses from import-related expenses," he said (*New Age*, [24 September 2026](#); *Dhaka Tribune*, [23 September 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Govt targets 300MW from solar panels at 6,544 institutions:** In a major policy decision, the government has decided to set up solar panels on the rooftops of 6,544 local government institutions across the country, targeting around 300 megawatts of electricity generation with an allocation of Tk370 crore. State Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Mir Shahe Alam disclosed the information at a press conference at the Secretariat on Wednesday. The institutions include councils, municipalities, union parishads, executive engineers' offices, offices under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), WASA, public health facilities, and markets or growth centres across the country (*Daily Sun*, [24 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Rooppur plant lacks realistic timetable: IMED:** The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project has no realistic, integrated timetable for starting commercial power generation, according to an IMED report. A recent inspection by the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the planning ministry found that the project's Russian contractor Atomstroyexport had not supplied the mandatory annual Level-2 Schedule since December 2022. It also found that technical faults, equipment shortages, inadequate staffing and unfinished supporting infrastructure continued to threaten the availability of electricity from the country's first nuclear power plant. The first unit of the plant has missed several rescheduled deadlines for starting generation, while the second unit is also unlikely to become operational by its December 2026 target, says the report (*New Age*, [24 September 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Mahdi Amin says Govt signs deal with Boeing to buy 11 aircraft:** The government has signed an agreement with Boeing to purchase 11 new aircraft as Bangladesh moves to expand its aviation sector and open new international routes, Prime Minister's Adviser Mahdi Amin said on Thursday. "A significant signing ceremony was held with Boeing. Biman Bangladesh

Airlines signed an agreement to purchase 11 more Boeing aircraft,” he said at a press conference in the lobby of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York on Wednesday evening (local time). The prime minister’s adviser said the initiative to purchase new aircraft was taken considering the need to expand Bangladesh’s aviation sector. **Mentioning that Bangladesh has a long-standing commercial relationship with Boeing, he said discussions with Airbus may also take place in the future depending on the country’s requirements** (*Daily Sun*, [24 September 2026](#)).

- ◆ **US welcomes Bangladesh decision to procure 11 additional Boeing aircraft:** US Ambassador in Dhaka Brent T Christensen today welcomed Dhaka’s decision to procure 11 additional Boeing aircraft and congratulated Biman Bangladesh and the US aircraft producer as they are set to seal an agreement finalizing the procurement in New York. **“Congratulations to Boeing and Biman on the agreement to purchase 11 more of the world’s best commercial planes,” he said in statement as officials said the deal would signed at 4:15 pm Wednesday in New York, or 2:15 am Thursday in Bangladesh. The envoy called the development “another win-win for the US-Bangladesh relationship!”** The envoy said he looked forward to watch the signing ceremony that would coincide with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman’s New York visit to join the UN General Assembly session. Biman officials said the 11 aircraft would be procured in addition to the 14 ones under their earlier US\$3.7 billion agreement with Boeing signed on April 30, bringing its planned Boeing acquisitions to 25. **Biman is also considering a separate proposal to acquire 10 Airbus aircraft** (*BSS News*, [23 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Tarique, Iran’s Pezeshkian discuss energy crisis and blocked ships:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has held talks with Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York. The meeting took place at the Hyatt Grand Central Hotel on Wednesday, with the two sides discussing the impact of the regional conflict on Bangladesh, including its expatriate workers, remittances, shipping and energy security, Foreign Affairs State Minister Humaiun Kobir said. **Briefing reporters afterwards, he said Dhaka considers the United Nations a neutral platform and had raised concerns about around 8 million expatriate workers in West Asia. “If the conflict does not move towards a peaceful resolution, there will be an impact on our expatriate workers and remittances,” he said, describing the issue as a matter of “deep concern”. “We’ve called on the Iranian president that we want this resolved quickly, and that this war be resolved through diplomacy.” “Once that resolution comes through, we’ve asked them to take steps on that front so that our ships stuck in the war can return home safely. This is the cooperation we’ve sought,” he added.** Kobir said the delegation also conveyed its concern about being pushed into an energy crisis. Pezeshkian listened closely, while his officials took note of the points raised, he added (*bdnews24.com*, [24 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **PM proposes five urgent measures to resolve Rohingya crisis:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman proposed five urgent measures to resolve Rohingya crisis, with a call to the global stakeholders for establishing a clear and credible roadmap for the early, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of Rohingyas, saying the time has come to move from managing displacement to ending it. “The time has come to move from empathy to a search for root causes and their solutions, from promises to action and from managing displacement to ending it,” he said while addressing a high-level side event on ‘The Rohingya Crisis: A Renewed Call for a Durable Solution from Protracted Displacement, with Justice and Accountability’ at the UN headquarters on Wednesday. **The five proposals include establishing a clear and credible**

roadmap for the early, safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar; ending violence against civilians, including the Rohingyas and guaranteeing their fundamental rights and security; ensuring adequate and predictable humanitarian support for the Rohingyas and host communities; strengthening justice and accountability and stepping up regional and international cooperation to combat the narco-economy, human trafficking, digital scams, illegal arms and other transboundary crimes. The Prime Minister made the proposal as he highlighted the plight of over 1.2 million Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh and called upon the international community to shoulder its responsibility with conviction to create conditions for their safe and dignified return (*Prothom Alo*, [24 September 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Tarique outlines five-point climate demands at UN:** Prime minister Tarique Rahman on Wednesday placed five urgent demands before the international community to address the climate crisis, calling for deeper emissions cuts, predictable climate finance, greater access to climate-smart technologies, expanded renewable energy and full implementation of the Loss and Damage Fund. Addressing a high-level meeting on Climate Action and Just Transition at the United Nations headquarters in New York, he said Bangladesh contributed less than 0.5 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions but remained one of the most climate-vulnerable countries. Tarique said Bangladesh had allocated nearly \$3.19 billion in its budget for climate adaptation but warned that the country risked severe damage without international support. **He also referred to the Padma Barrage and Teesta Barrage Master Plan as part of the country's efforts to strengthen water management and climate resilience** (*New Age*, [24 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Russian foreign minister holds talks with Khalilur Rahman in New York:** Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov held a meeting with president of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly and Bangladesh foreign minister Khalilur Rahman on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's high-level week in New York on Wednesday. The Russian Foreign Ministry announced the meeting in a post on its official social media account, sharing a photograph of the two officials. According to Russia's state-run TASS news agency, Lavrov and Khalilur Rahman discussed issues on the agenda of the current General Assembly session and underscored the importance of the UN General Assembly as a central platform for dialogue among states. **The two sides also emphasised the need to improve the political climate and restore mutually respectful dialogue within the framework of the United Nations, TASS reported, citing the Russian Foreign Ministry.** The meeting comes nearly three months after Khalilur Rahman's official visit to Moscow, where he held talks with Lavrov on June 8 (*New Age*, [24 September 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Shama Obaed invites Meta to open Bangladesh office:** State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam has invited Meta to open an office in Bangladesh, citing the country's large user base and growing digital economy, a foreign ministry statement said here today. It said the junior minister held talks with Meta's Chief Global Affairs Officer Joel Kaplan today on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly in New York when she made the proposal. The state minister discussed how Meta's platforms and technologies could support Bangladeshi businesses, entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the country's e-commerce sector. **Shama also urged Meta to take further steps to prevent online abuse and digital harassment and discussed with Kaplan about Bangladesh's proposed Cyber Security Act** (*Prothom Alo*, [24 September 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **Influential syndicate accused of grabbing railway land in Gopalganj:** Allegations of widespread irregularities, illegal occupation and manipulation of leases have surfaced over valuable Bangladesh Railway land in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj. **The allegations include leasing the same plot to multiple individuals, issuing nominal leases, allocating multiple parcels to a single person, constructing structures in violation of lease conditions and illegally occupying railway property.** An influential syndicate is allegedly controlling parts of the railway's valuable land in the area, with allegations of collusion involving some railway officials and employees. The lack of proper monitoring has reportedly allowed government property to be occupied, while families who surrendered their land for railway projects have allegedly been deprived of lease benefits (*Dhaka Tribune*, [23 September 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Crude bomb explodes near Barisal DIG office:** A crude bomb exploded on the Dhaka-Barisal highway near the office of the deputy inspector general (Barisal Range) of police in the Kashipur area of Barisal city on Wednesday afternoon. **Witnesses said activists of the Awami League, which faces a ban on its activities, brought out a sudden procession around 2:15pm, chanting "Joy Bangla" slogans. They exploded a crude bomb near the DIG office before quickly fleeing the scene.** The sudden explosion triggered widespread panic among shopkeepers and residents of the area (*Dhaka Tribune*, [23 September 2026](#)).

- ◆ **15 more accused sent to 3-day remand in Gulshan sabotage case:** A Dhaka court on Wednesday placed 15 more people, including leaders and activists of the Awami League and its affiliated organizations, on three-day remand in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act over alleged cocktail explosions and acts of sabotage in Gulshan. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Jewel Rana passed the order after hearing a police petition (*Dhaka Tribune*, [23 September 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**]*