

DAILY BANGLADESH WATCH

09 October 2026

Takeaways

Politics

- ◆ **Gias Uddin appointed special assistant to PM:** The government has appointed Barrister Gias Uddin as the prime minister's special assistant for the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism as well as the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education on a contractual basis with the rank of secretary. The Ministry of Public Administration issued a notification Thursday in this regard. The appointment will remain effective from the date of joining until the tenure of the Prime Minister, subject to Gias Uddin relinquishing any other profession, business or employment. Other terms and conditions of the appointment will be determined through a contract, the notification said (*Prothom Alo*, [09 October 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Hasina's Dec return claim: BNP tells local units to counter AL moves:** The ruling BNP has instructed its grassroots leaders to stay alert and remain active on the ground against possible political activity by the Awami League ahead of December. Although the party is not attaching much importance to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's announcement that she will return to Bangladesh by December, BNP leaders fear Awami League, which faces ban on its political activities, could try to create an "unstable" situation in the country. Prime Minister and BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman himself issued instructions on the matter during an online meeting with top district-level party leaders across the country on Thursday. **Several party sources said the BNP central leadership has also sent messages in recent days to key district and organisational units, as well as affiliated and associate organisations, asking them to remain active on the ground. BNP leaders said that since AL activities are banned, police and other law enforcement agencies are expected to prevent the party from carrying out political programmes. But BNP does not want to rely solely on law enforcement bodies. Party leaders and activists have been asked to remain alert so the ousted party cannot stage programmes or create disorder.** BNP's concern intensified after Hasina recently told foreign media that she planned to return to Bangladesh by December. Her announcement prompted AL leaders and activists to become more active and attempt to organise programmes around various issues, according to BNP leaders. The government and the ruling party subsequently began treating the matter more seriously (*Prothom Alo*, [09 October 2026](#)).

Economy

- ◆ **Govt signs 15-year deal with DP World to operate NCT:** Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Thursday sought DP World's investment in free trade zones and rail-based inland container depots in Bangladesh as he discussed expanding trade, investment and logistics cooperation with the UAE-based global port operator. The government on Thursday signed an agreement with UAE-based port operator DP World to operate Chattogram Port's New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) for 15 years. The agreement was signed at 3pm at the Investment Bangladesh auditorium under a public-private partnership arrangement. Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman and DP World



Chairman Essa Kazim signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations. Shipping Minister Shaikh Rabiul Alam, State Minister for Shipping Md Rajib Ahsan, UAE Ambassador to Bangladesh Abdulla Ali Al Hamoudi and Invest Bangladesh Chairman Ashik Chowdhury, among others, attended the signing ceremony. **Under the concession, DP World will operate and manage NCT for an initial period of 15 years, while ownership of the terminal's land, core infrastructure and assets will remain with CPA and, ultimately, the government of Bangladesh.** The agreement provides an upfront payment of around Tk600 crore, with 25 percent payable upon signing and the remaining 75% before commencement of operations. DP World will also invest more than Tk1,000 crore during the first 10 years to modernise the terminal through new equipment, technology and operational improvements (*Dhaka Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#); *Daily Sun*, [08 October 2026](#)).

❖ **NCT deal signed with DP World amid street protests:** Police baton-charged protesters outside the Invest Bangladesh office in the capital on Thursday as the government signed a 15-year concession agreement with United Arab Emirates-based DP World to operate and maintain Chattogram port's New Mooring Container Terminal. Chittagong Port Authority chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman and DP World chairman Essa Kazim signed the agreement at the Invest Bangladesh office at Agargaon. The International Finance Corporation was the transaction adviser. **Several organisations, including the Communist Party of Bangladesh and the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, gathered outside the office at about 2:00pm, opposing the deal. Police swooped on the protesters and dispersed them at about 2:50pm when they tried to stop vehicles carrying guests from entering the venue.** CPB president Sazzad Zahir Chandan said the agreement would undermine national sovereignty and vowed to continue the protests. Protests were also held in Chattogram before and after the signing. **Pro-BNP labour organisation Bandar Jatiotabadi Shramik Dal and Chattogram Bandar Rokkha Sangram Parishad on Thursday staged a protest in Chattogram against the concession of the New Mooring Container Terminal to local or foreign operators, including Dubai-based DP World.** The protesters brought out a procession near the main gate of Chattogram port from 3:30pm to 4:10pm, hours after the concession agreement for the NCT was signed in Dhaka. **Labour organizations at Chittagong Port on Thursday announced a daylong mass hunger strike for Monday, demanding cancellation of the agreement signed with Dubai-based DP World to operate the port's New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) for 15 years** (*New Age*, [09 October 2026](#); *Dhaka Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#); *New Age*, [08 October 2026](#)).

❖ **Rabiul says NCT deal safeguards Bangladesh's interests:** Shipping Minister Shaikh Rabiul Alam today said the 15-year concession agreement between the Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) and Dubai-based global port operator DP World has been structured with strong financial and operational safeguards to protect Bangladesh's national and economic interests. He said the agreement, signed today for the operation, management and modernization of the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT), will ensure substantial financial returns for Bangladesh while bringing in fresh foreign investment, advanced technology and world-class terminal management. "The agreement has been finalized keeping Bangladesh's interests at the highest priority," the minister said at a press briefing following the signing ceremony in the capital. The minister said the agreement represents a major shift towards modern, technology-

driven port management, but does not compromise Bangladesh's ownership, sovereignty or control over Chattogram Port (*BSS News*, [08 October 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Türkiye offers affordable energy solutions to Bangladesh, including FSRUs, LNG:** Türkiye has expressed a keen interest in bolstering energy ties with Bangladesh by offering efficient and cost-effective power solutions, including cheaper Floating Storage and Regasification Units (FSRUs), Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), and Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO). The offer was extended when Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Ramis Şen paid a courtesy call on Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood at his Secretariat office on Thursday. **During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on deepening bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Türkiye, focusing heavily on expanding technical and commercial cooperation in the power and energy sector.** Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood emphasized the urgent need for affordable and sustainable energy inputs to help operationalize Bangladesh's idle power plants and enhance overall national energy security (*Dhaka Tribune*, [09 October 2026](#)).
- ◆ **BMCCI moves to deepen Bangladesh-Malaysia semiconductor cooperation:** The Bangladesh-Malaysia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BMCCI) is moving to deepen cooperation with Malaysia in semiconductor talent development, research and university-industry collaboration as Bangladesh targets US\$1 billion in semiconductor exports by 2030. **The chamber recently held discussions with senior officials of Malaysia's MIMOS Berhad and the Advanced Semiconductor Academy of Malaysia (ASEM) to turn existing partnerships into practical programmes focused on skills development, training, research and technology cooperation, a press release said on Wednesday** (*Daily Sun*, [08 October 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Rooppur Unit 1 gets approval to start first nuclear reaction:** The Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority (BAERA) on Thursday gave the final approval to start the first controlled nuclear reaction at Unit-1 of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP). **The process is known as 'first criticality' before the start of electricity generation.** BAERA Chairman Mahmudul Hasan confirmed to BSS the matter, saying, "Two more approvals will be required before electricity is connected to the national grid." Project officials said the approval had remained pending due to complications involving the automatic pressure relief safety valves (PORV/POSV) of Unit-1 (*Daily Sun*, [08 October 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Tk 25,000cr project planned to ensure safe water:** LGRD and cooperatives minister Abdul Moyeen Khan has said that a Tk 25,000 crore integrated project is being planned to ensure access to safe drinking water for people across the country. He made the statement on Thursday while talking to journalists after a meeting with a Unicef delegation at the Bangladesh Secretariat. Asked about the estimated cost of the proposed safe drinking water project, the minister said, 'The project we discussed collectively today, involving not only Unicef but also various other organisations, would cost around \$2.1 billion when the contributions of all the organisations are combined. That means around Tk 25,000 crore' (*New Age*, [09 October 2026](#)).

Foreign Policy

- ◆ **Bangladesh-India joint working group meeting begins today: what will be discussed on trade:** The two-day meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Working Group began in New Delhi on

Thursday morning. According to sources at the Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh's main priorities are removing obstacles at land ports, seeking a review of India's duties on jute products, and restoring normal import and export operations. A 10-member Bangladeshi delegation led by Ayesha Akter, additional secretary (FTA) at the Ministry of Commerce, travelled to New Delhi yesterday, Wednesday, to attend the meeting. According to ministry sources, the meeting will discuss ways to reduce the trade deficit between the two countries, remove obstacles to the import and export of goods, and strengthen bilateral trade and economic ties. **India's new duties on Bangladeshi jute products and Bangladesh's restrictions on imports of Indian yarn will also receive particular attention.** The previous meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Working Group was held in Dhaka on 26 and 27 September 2023. Before that, the 14th meeting took place in New Delhi on 2 and 3 March 2022. Following the political change in Bangladesh in August 2024, tensions developed in relations between the two countries. This affected trade discussions as well. As a result, the regular meeting was not held as scheduled (*Prothom Alo*, [08 October 2026](#)).

◆ **Bangladesh wants revised Ganges deal before 1996 treaty expires in December:** Bangladesh is seeking to rewrite its Ganges water-sharing deal with India before the 1996 treaty expires in December, with a guarantee for its dry-season share high on the agenda. **Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee said Thursday that Dhaka was hopeful of completing a new or revised agreement before Dec 12, when the 30-year treaty expires.** Speaking after a seminar in Dhaka, he said talks were continuing through the Joint Rivers Commission. "Our main priority will be to bring back the guarantee clause that was included in the 1977 agreement," Anee said. The 1977 agreement, signed for five years, contained a guarantee clause that was dropped when the current 30-year treaty was signed in 1996, he said. **"We want to make a new agreement so that its term can be extended for many more years, and the guarantee clause is included," Anee said. "We are very active in ensuring that the agreement is given priority in the interests of the people and the country."** He said technical teams from the Joint Rivers Commission had already been working on the matter, with a ministerial-level meeting to follow (*bdnews24.com*, [08 October 2026](#)).

◆ **Humaiun says Sincerity needed to resolve water-sharing issues with India:** State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir on Thursday said sincerity at the political and official levels of Bangladesh and India is essential to finding an amicable resolution to the long-standing water-sharing issues between the two countries. **"If there is sincerity between both countries - at the senior official level, leadership level, and among the water negotiators working from both sides... we have formed a water committee,"** he told reporters while responding to a question after attending a seminar. **Kobir expressed optimism that the water issues issue could be resolved positively if the leadership of both countries demonstrates the willingness to cooperate.** "If the leadership possesses the mindset to come forward and cooperate, we will certainly achieve an amicable and positive resolution on this issue," he said. The state minister said meaningful progress would be possible if there is sincerity between the two countries at all relevant levels, including senior officials, political leadership and water negotiators. Asked about the broader approach to resolving water-related issues, Kobir said diplomacy and dialogue remain the way forward. **He also said Bangladesh is taking international law into consideration while dealing with the issues** (*Dhaka Tribune*, [08 October 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh presses India to lift land trade curbs at Delhi trade talks:** Uncertainty over Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's possible Delhi visit and political tensions have not stopped Dhaka and New Delhi from trying to clear obstacles to bilateral trade. **The 16th meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade began in New Delhi on Thursday, with the two sides discussing ways to ease import and export restrictions, a Bangladeshi official and a diplomat told bdnews24.com. "Bangladesh mainly stressed the removal of port-related restrictions," the diplomat said. Other issues included aligning HS codes, facilitating trade through customs stations at land ports, removing restrictions under foreign direct investment policy, and SAFTA rules of origin. "India also spoke about removing port restrictions on yarn and other products," the diplomat said.** India also raised product standards and expanded the use of railways and inland waterways for trade, he said. Both sides agreed to address the issues through regular and constructive discussions. Bangladesh raised continued duty-free access to India after graduating from the LDC category, removal of non-tariff barriers, and the opportunity to export goods to Nepal and Bhutan through Indian territory. India, meanwhile, sought the reopening of border haats, greater rail connectivity and removal of high tariffs on Indian imports (bdnews24.com, [09 October 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Bangladesh-Lithuania:** State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam today invited Lithuanian investors to invest in Bangladesh's agro-processing, renewable energy, information technology, cybersecurity and waste management sectors. She made the call during a meeting with Lithuanian Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Vidmantas Verbickas at her office here, said a foreign ministry's press release. She also stressed the need to diversify bilateral trade and urged Lithuania to import more Bangladeshi products, including pharmaceuticals, biodegradable jute and jute goods, leather and leather products, agro-products, furniture and plastic goods. **Bangladesh and Lithuania today discussed deeper bilateral engagement during Lithuania's upcoming Presidency of the European Union from January to June 2027, with focus on trade, technology, investment and mobility.** The issue came up during a meeting between State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir and visiting Lithuanian Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Vidmantas Verbickas at the foreign ministry here this afternoon, said a ministry's press release. **Bangladesh and Lithuania today agreed to strengthen institutional mechanisms to expand bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, technology, skilled workforce mobility and other priority areas, opening new avenues for closer engagement between the two countries.** The understanding was reached at the second Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between the two countries held in Dhaka, according to a foreign ministry press release. **At the outset, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a formal mechanism for Foreign Office Consultations to facilitate regular diplomatic engagement and strengthen bilateral relations. The delegations agreed to deepen political cooperation and promote reciprocal high-level visits, including exchanges at the foreign ministerial level.** On economic cooperation, Bangladesh invited Lithuanian investors to explore opportunities in its Special Economic Zones, highlighting the country's strengths in ready-made garments, jute products and pharmaceuticals. Both sides agreed to encourage greater private-sector engagement, exchange business delegations and expedite an MoU between their apex chambers of commerce. **Bangladesh also invited a Lithuanian private-sector delegation to undertake an exploratory investment mission. A major focus of the consultations was expanding cooperation in information and**

communication technology (ICT), digital governance and emerging technologies (*BSS News*, [08 October 2026](#); [08 October 2026](#); [08 October 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Bangladesh says Airbus deal serves business needs, not European pressure:** Bangladesh did not sign a deal to buy Airbus aircraft to please EU ambassadors, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Humaiun Kobir has said. He insisted the purchase was driven solely by the country's business needs. **Speaking at Wednesday's signing ceremony for 10 Airbus aircraft for Biman Bangladesh Airlines**, Kobir also described some remarks by French Ambassador Jean-Marc Séré-Charlet as "uncomfortable and sending the wrong message". Addressing the envoy, he said: "You somehow assume that we have given everything to the United States. What we do with the United States is an internal matter between Bangladesh and the US." Bangladesh agreed in September to buy 25 Boeing aircraft from the US, amid discussions over geopolitical pressure. **The Airbus deal followed heightened lobbying by European diplomats** (*bdnews24.com*, [08 October 2026](#)).
- ◆ **Indonesia eyes Dhaka-Jakarta flights, transit hub through Dhaka:** Visiting Indonesian Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Anis Matta today proposed exploring direct flights between Dhaka and Jakarta and using Dhaka as a potential transit hub for Indonesian passengers travelling to Saudi Arabia. He made the proposal during a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam at her office here, according to a ministry's press release. Matta said improved air connectivity could help deepen bilateral relations and facilitate greater movement of people between Bangladesh and Indonesia. He also expressed Indonesia's interest in exploring Dhaka as a transit point for Indonesian passengers travelling onward to Saudi Arabia. The proposal could open a new dimension in aviation connectivity between the two countries while strengthening Dhaka's role as a regional transit gateway. During the meeting, Shama underscored the importance of expanding bilateral trade and urged Indonesia to import more Bangladeshi products (*BSS News*, [08 October 2026](#)).
- ◆ **US decides to increase Rohingya humanitarian assistance:** The United States has decided to increase its financial assistance for the Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh, reaffirming Washington's continued humanitarian support for the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. Charge d'Affaires (CDA) ad interim at the US embassy here Eric Geelan conveyed the decision during a courtesy call on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here today. The state minister welcomed the decision and thanked the US government for its commitment to enhancing humanitarian assistance for the Rohingyas, according to a foreign ministry press release. The announcement comes as Bangladesh continues to seek sustained international support to address the protracted Rohingya crisis and meet the growing humanitarian needs of the displaced population. During the meeting, the two sides also discussed a range of bilateral issues, including combating trafficking in persons, energy cooperation, particularly liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and expanding educational and training opportunities through the Fulbright programme. The discussions also covered the US State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report and opportunities for further cooperation in addressing human trafficking (*BSS News*, [08 October 2026](#)).

Security

- ◆ **KNF chief among nine accused as CID uncovers Tk 16.26mn financing trail:** A Tk 16.26 million money trail has landed Kuki-Chin National Front chief Nathan Bawm and eight others in a money laundering case, the CID says. The case was filed under the Money Laundering Prevention Act at Bayezid Bostami Police Station on Wednesday after an investigation into the financing of uniforms for the Chittagong Hill Tracts armed group. **The CID said Tk 9.06 million was paid to Well Composite Knit to produce camouflage-printed fabric, while another Tk 7.2 million went to three garment companies to stitch 40,000 sets of shirts and trousers. The suspects include Nathan, Mong Hla Sing Marma, who allegedly acted as the KNF representative, and seven others from Chattogram, Rangamati, Chapainawabganj and Lalmonirhat.** The investigation began after police detained a person allegedly involved in making KNF uniforms in Bayezid Bostami on May 18 last year (*bdnews24.com*, [08 October 2026](#)).

- ◆ **Home Minister says Two army camps to be set up near Rohingya camps:** Two army camps will be set up in the hilly areas near the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said on Thursday. **The camps will be established in the Rangikhali and Noakhali para areas under the supervision of the 10 Infantry Division based in Ramu, he said at a press briefing at the Secretariat.** The home minister briefed journalists after meetings of the 'National Committee on Coordination, Management and Law and Order of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals' and on improving the overall law and order situation in Jungle Salimpur of Chattogram. **The government has also taken initiatives to rebuild damaged barbed-wire fences outside the camps, install solar lights and closed-circuit television cameras, and construct watchtowers and control towers, he said.** Speaking about measures taken to prevent crimes inside the camps, the minister said coordinated joint operations led by the Armed Police Battalion would be intensified to curb drug trafficking, online gambling, human trafficking and activities of armed groups in the Rohingya camps. Around 400 APBn officers holding the rank of sub-inspector have been given legal authority to investigate cases, which would help expedite the investigation of crimes, he said (*New Age*, [09 October 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**]*