

CLAWS Newsletter



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by Dhanapriya Devi Chungkham

INTERNAL AFFAIRS**August 4 ([The Daily Star](#)) Debate over whether the July uprising transformed political culture**

Speakers at a Dhaka discussion argued that the democratic transition remained fragile two years after the July uprising. They said the unity visible during the movement had weakened as partisan competition and established political practices returned. Participants highlighted declining participation by women and the limited inclusion of marginalised groups in formal politics. The discussion reflected wider concern that institutional reform had not kept pace with expectations created by the fall of the former government. The event therefore framed the anniversary as a moment for evaluating political conduct rather than only commemorating regime change.

August 5 ([Reuters](#)) Hasina demands removal of the Awami League ban

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina called for the ban on the Awami League to be lifted and said the party should be allowed to operate politically. Speaking from exile, she rejected the cases and death sentence against her as politically motivated. The government observed August 5 as a public holiday honouring those killed in the student-led uprising that ended her rule. Dhaka continued to seek her extradition from India, while New Delhi said the request was under examination. The dispute showed that the treatment of the former ruling party remains one of the central tests of Bangladesh's post-uprising political order.

August 7 ([Reuters](#)) Shakib Al Hasan says he is ready to return and face trial

Cricketer and former Awami League lawmaker Shakib Al Hasan said he was prepared to return after two years abroad if his security was guaranteed. He said he would face pending court proceedings and hoped to play a farewell series in Bangladesh. Shakib has lived outside the country since Hasina's government was overthrown in August 2024. His case illustrates the legal and political uncertainty facing public figures associated with the former governing party. A return would test whether the current administration can provide due process and security to prominent political opponents.

August 13 ([The Daily Star](#)) Security tightened nationwide ahead of August 15 The Rapid Action Battalion tightened security across Bangladesh ahead of August 15 after assessing risks of sabotage and disorder. The force cited banned organisations, extremist groups and criminal

networks as possible sources of disruption. Surveillance increased at sensitive locations and each battalion prepared an area-specific security plan. Rab said it would coordinate with the Special Security Force, local administrations and intelligence agencies when necessary. The measures reflected continuing official concern that politically symbolic dates could trigger unrest or attempts at mobilisation.

August 20 ([Reuters](#)) Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir elected President

Parliament elected veteran BNP leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir as Bangladesh's president following Mohammed Shahabuddin's resignation on health grounds. Alamgir defeated Liberal Democratic Party chairman Oli Ahmed by 255 votes to 88. The presidency is largely ceremonial, while executive authority remains with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and the cabinet. As head of state, Alamgir also becomes commander-in-chief of the armed forces. His election consolidates the BNP's institutional position after the party and its allies secured a two-thirds parliamentary majority in February.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

August 4 ([Reuters](#)) Hasina's planned address from India strains bilateral ties

Bangladesh warned domestic media against broadcasting Sheikh Hasina's planned virtual address from New Delhi. Officials said publication would violate an International Crimes Tribunal order restricting dissemination of her statements. Dhaka asked India to clarify its position and argued that political activity by a wanted former leader could damage improving relations. India replied that the event was organised by a private media organisation and had no government endorsement. The episode demonstrated how Hasina's continued presence in India remains the most sensitive issue in the bilateral relationship.

August 10 ([Reuters](#)) Prime minister seeks a conducive environment for India ties

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman told India's new high commissioner that a conducive environment was needed to advance bilateral relations. The meeting was Rahman's first with the Indian envoy since his government took office. Bangladesh again asked India to expedite the extradition of Sheikh Hasina. Rahman nevertheless reiterated his interest in stable relations with Bangladesh's largest neighbour. The exchange showed Dhaka attempting to balance practical cooperation with domestic pressure for action against the former prime minister.

August 13 ([Dhaka Tribune](#)) Singapore signals interest in the Bay Terminal project

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam discussed the proposed Bay Terminal during her first official visit to Singapore. She met Singaporean foreign-affairs leaders and officials of PSA International. PSA expressed interest in participating in a project expected to expand Chattogram Port's cargo-handling and connectivity capacity. The two sides also discussed port automation, waste-to-energy technology and professional capacity building. Progress on a bilateral free-trade agreement could widen commercial opportunities and give Singapore a larger role in Bangladesh's maritime infrastructure.

August 16 ([Reuters](#)) Dhaka links India visit to an improved diplomatic environment

Bangladesh said a more favourable diplomatic environment was required before confirming a top-level visit to India. Officials had been discussing a possible New Delhi trip by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman as part of efforts to repair relations. The unresolved extradition request for Sheikh Hasina and other wanted persons continued to complicate the talks. Hasina's media appearance from India reinforced perceptions in Dhaka that New Delhi was not sufficiently responsive to its concerns. The conditional approach suggested that political symbolism and domestic expectations would shape the timing of any summit.

August 21 ([Reuters](#)) No decision on Tarique Rahman's proposed India visit

Bangladesh said no decision had been made on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's proposed visit to New Delhi. The clarification followed Indian media reports that the trip could take place from August 23 to 25. Dhaka said it was waiting for India's response regarding the extradition of Sheikh Hasina and other fugitives. India's foreign ministry declined to confirm the reported schedule. The uncertainty underlined the gap between both governments' stated desire to improve relations and their inability to resolve the most politically charged disputes.

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

August 6 ([Reuters](#)) Partial LNG-terminal restart eases gas shortages

A floating LNG terminal operated by Excelerate Energy partially resumed operations after a July fire shut it for more than two weeks. One regasification unit began adding about 115 million cubic feet of gas a day to the national grid. The additional supply eased shortages affecting electricity generation, factories and households. Repairs continued at the

Moheshkhali facility, which normally processes between 500 million and 550 million cubic feet daily. The disruption highlighted Bangladesh's dependence on imported LNG and its exposure to higher prices and shipping risks in the Strait of Hormuz.

August 6 ([Dhaka Tribune](#)) US tariff changes create an opening for garment exporters

Changes in United States forced-labour trade policy produced a lower effective tariff rate for Bangladeshi garments than for Chinese and Vietnamese competitors. Bangladesh's estimated total rate stood at 25.6 percent compared with 35.6 percent for China and 28.1 percent for Vietnam. The country exported about 8.2 billion dollars in garments to the US in 2025, although shipments declined in early 2026. Analysts cautioned that Bangladesh remained heavily concentrated in cotton products while global demand was shifting towards man-made fibres. The tariff advantage can therefore support market share only if producers diversify products and meet stronger labour-compliance requirements.

August 13 ([Dhaka Tribune](#)) Bay Terminal attracts Singaporean port-sector interest

Singapore's PSA indicated that it wanted to participate in Bangladesh's Bay Terminal project at Chattogram Port. The proposed terminal is intended to accommodate larger vessels and reduce pressure on existing port facilities. Bangladesh also sought cooperation in logistics, smart-port systems, technology transfer and training. A successful partnership could improve cargo efficiency and strengthen the country's role in regional supply chains. Financing arrangements, regulatory clarity and coordination among agencies will determine how quickly the proposal moves from diplomacy to implementation.

August 17 ([Economic Times](#)) Power shortages force earlier closure of markets

Bangladesh ordered shopping centres, markets and retail establishments to close by 8 p.m. as the electricity shortage intensified. Some areas faced prolonged load-shedding as gas constraints reduced generation capacity. Disruption in global LNG supplies and conflict-related pressure in West Asia complicated fuel procurement. Earlier closures were intended to conserve electricity during peak demand and protect essential services. The measure imposed fresh costs on retailers and demonstrated the economic consequences of Bangladesh's limited domestic energy supply.

August 23 ([The Daily Star](#)) Services sector placed at the centre of employment debate

Economic discussion increasingly focused on whether Bangladesh's services sector could generate large-scale employment by fiscal year 2031. The challenge is particularly urgent because young workers are entering the labour market faster than formal manufacturing can absorb them. Digital services, logistics, health, tourism and professional activities offer opportunities but require stronger skills and investment. Weak productivity and informality continue to limit wage growth and tax collection. A services-led employment strategy will therefore need to be connected with education reform, urban infrastructure and easier financing for smaller firms.

CONFLICT UPDATES

August 4 ([The Daily Star](#)) Post-uprising political tensions remain unresolved

Civil-society speakers warned that antagonistic political practices had re-emerged after the unity of the July uprising. They linked the deterioration to weak institutional reform and exclusionary competition among parties. The decline in women's participation was presented as evidence that the transition had not broadened political representation. Persistent distrust between the government, former ruling-party supporters and newer political forces increases the risk of street confrontation. The discussion called for a democratic culture based on accountability, tolerance and peaceful competition.

August 10 ([The Daily Star](#)) One killed in Shariatpur clash involving crude bombs

A seventy-year-old man was killed and at least ten people were injured when rival groups clashed in Jajira upazila of Shariatpur. Participants used crude bombs and sharp weapons during the confrontation near Laukhola bazar. Police linked the fighting to a longstanding dispute over local dominance. A critically injured man was transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while police deployed additional personnel in the area. The incident illustrated how factional competition and locally available explosives continue to create lethal security risks outside the capital.

August 11 ([The Daily Star](#)) Gunmen attack Chattogram house after extortion threat

Two men fired at the gate of a Chattogram residence one day after the owner received a demand for fifty lakh taka. No one was injured, but the shooting demonstrated the coercive methods

used by organised extortion networks. Police said the threatening message came from a foreign number and allegedly invoked a fugitive criminal. Investigators reviewed the scene and searched for the attackers who left through a nearby lane. The episode added to concern about criminal intimidation, illicit firearms and the capacity of networks to operate across jurisdictions.

August 13 ([The Daily Star](#)) Authorities respond to sabotage and extremist risks

Rab's nationwide security plan identified banned organisations, extremist groups and criminals as potential threats around August 15. Intelligence surveillance and patrols increased at sensitive sites and major transport points. The force prepared separate threat assessments for the areas covered by each battalion. Coordination with civilian administrations and other security bodies was intended to permit a rapid response to disturbances. The operation revealed that political anniversaries remain possible flashpoints even after the return of elected government.

August 21 ([The Daily Star](#)) Rohingya crisis creates wider security pressures

Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman said the prolonged Rohingya crisis was placing heavy pressure on Bangladesh's economy and environment. He also pointed to trafficking, smuggling and other unlawful activity in refugee-hosting areas. Overcrowded camps and reduced international assistance have increased vulnerability among refugees and host communities. Continuing conflict in Myanmar prevents safe and sustainable large-scale repatriation. The resulting mixture of humanitarian distress, criminal activity and regional instability makes Cox's Bazar a long-term national-security concern.

DEFENCE UPDATES

July 26 ([Dhaka Tribune](#)) Government outlines technology-driven army modernisation

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman said the government was committed to building a modern and technology-driven Bangladesh Army. He identified maritime and border security, cyber threats, information security, disaster response and humanitarian assistance as interconnected challenges. Rahman called for a realistic and sustainable modernisation model aligned with geography, economic capacity and public expectations. The remarks were made at the opening

of the Army Headquarters Selection Board in Dhaka Cantonment. The policy emphasis suggests that professional development and technological absorption will receive greater attention alongside conventional equipment acquisition.

August 13 ([The Daily Star](#)) Security forces strengthen inter-agency readiness

Rab placed its battalions on heightened alert and prepared threat-based plans ahead of August 15. Although Rab is a law-enforcement body, its military personnel and specialised capabilities make its deployment relevant to the wider security sector. The operation prioritised intelligence surveillance, protection of sensitive facilities and rapid coordination. Links with the Special Security Force and local administrations were intended to create a layered response. The exercise highlighted the continuing domestic-security role of uniformed and specialised forces during politically sensitive periods.

August 15 ([Economic Times](#)) Bangladesh intelligence delegation reported in Pakistan

A six-member delegation associated with Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence reportedly visited Pakistan. The visit attracted regional attention because it occurred while Dhaka was negotiating a possible prime-ministerial visit to India. The report interpreted the engagement as part of expanding contacts between Bangladeshi and Pakistani security institutions. Official detail about the delegation's agenda and outcomes remained limited. For India, greater Bangladesh-Pakistan intelligence interaction will be assessed in relation to Northeast security, cross-border networks and the broader strategic balance.

August 20 ([Reuters](#)) New president becomes commander-in-chief

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's election made him Bangladesh's constitutional head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Operational defence policy will nevertheless remain under the elected government led by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman. Alamgir's predecessor resigned before completing his term because of health problems. The parliamentary vote gave the BNP veteran a clear mandate over the opposition candidate, retired Colonel Oli Ahmed. The transition is important for civil-military protocol and for continuity at the top of the state during a period of political restructuring.

August 21 ([The Daily Star](#)) Army chief highlights security implications of Rohingya crisis

General Waker-Uz-Zaman warned that the Rohingya presence was imposing economic and environmental costs on Bangladesh. He also cited drug trafficking, smuggling and other illegal activities around the camps. The armed forces remain important to logistics, security coordination and emergency support in Cox's Bazar. Instability across the Myanmar frontier complicates repatriation and raises the risk of additional displacement. The army chief's remarks placed the refugee emergency within a broader framework of border management, organised crime and national resilience.

BORDER UPDATES

August 4 ([The Daily Star](#)) Government plans integrated border-management system

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said Bangladesh was developing an integrated approach to border management. The plan is intended to curb trafficking, smuggling and other cross-border crimes while strengthening national security. He discussed the initiative with International Organization for Migration Deputy Director General Ugochi Daniels. Effective implementation will require coordination among BGB, police, immigration, customs and local authorities. The proposal is strategically relevant because Bangladesh must manage long and socially connected frontiers with India as well as displacement pressure from Myanmar.

August 16 ([The Daily Star](#)) People remain stranded near the Kurigram zero line

Nine people remained near the Roumari zero line after an alleged attempt to push them across the India-Bangladesh border. The incident required local communication between Border Guard Bangladesh and India's Border Security Force. Such cases create humanitarian uncertainty because nationality and legal status may not be immediately established. Dhaka has repeatedly argued that returns must take place through formal diplomatic and consular procedures. Continued push-in allegations risk undermining efforts to stabilise bilateral relations and can generate tension among border communities.

August 17 ([Reuters](#)) Myanmar verifies nearly 309,000 Rohingya identities

Myanmar said it had verified 308,797 displaced people in Bangladesh as former residents of Rakhine State. Bangladesh had submitted more than 828,000 names by the end of July for

verification. Myanmar maintained that repatriation could proceed only after security conditions in Rakhine improved. The verification is administratively significant but does not resolve questions of citizenship, rights, safety and voluntary return. With conflict continuing across the frontier, Bangladesh is likely to carry the humanitarian and security burden for the foreseeable future.

August 21 ([The Daily Star](#)) Army chief warns of trafficking around refugee camps

The army chief said drug trafficking, smuggling and other unlawful activities were occurring in Rohingya-hosting areas. The warning reflects the vulnerability of the Bangladesh-Myanmar frontier to criminal and armed networks. Population density, poverty and declining humanitarian funding increase opportunities for recruitment and illicit trade. Bangladesh must therefore combine border surveillance with protection, livelihoods and community-based policing. A purely coercive approach would be insufficient while violence in Rakhine continues to prevent safe repatriation.

August 22 ([Dhaka Tribune](#)) Rohingya boat tragedy underscores maritime-border risks

Reports said a boat carrying Rohingya refugees capsized off the Teknaf coast and bodies were recovered from the sea. The incident showed that people continue to use dangerous maritime routes between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Weather, overcrowding and the use of unsafe vessels make these journeys especially lethal. Border agencies face the difficult task of preventing irregular movement while meeting humanitarian and rescue obligations. The tragedy reinforced the need for coastal surveillance, regional information-sharing and renewed diplomatic action.

About the Author

Dhanapriya Devi Chungkham is currently serving as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi. She completed her PhD from Centre of Indo-Pacific Studies, School of International Studies (JNU). Her research focuses primarily on security and strategic studies of India's eastern frontier, with particular interest in the Act East Policy, India-Myanmar relations, borderland dynamics, Northeast India and the evolving geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. She specialises in fieldwork-based research and qualitative methodologies.

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