

CLAWS Newsletter



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INTERNAL AFFAIRS

1 October (The Daily Star): PM Tarique Warns Against Attempts to Create Political Anarchy

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman accused unnamed political groups of trying to exploit untoward incidents to create instability and urged citizens to be cautious about political misinformation. He made the remarks in Feni while inaugurating the first phase of the Muhuri-Kohua Flood Control, Drainage and Irrigation Project. The remarks are significant in the context of Bangladesh's post-election political transition. The BNP government is seeking to consolidate its authority while facing criticism from opposition parties over reform implementation, governance and the distribution of political power.

1 October (Dhaka Tribune): Home Minister Says No Decision Yet on Fresh Nationwide Joint Operation

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said no formal decision had been taken to launch a new nationwide joint security operation. He nevertheless said coordinated operations involving police, Border Guard Bangladesh, the Special Reserve Force and Ansar would be intensified against terrorism, extortion and narcotics. The statement reflects the government's effort to address law-and-order concerns without presenting the security response as an extraordinary nationwide crackdown. Crime, extortion and political violence remain important tests of the new government's governance credentials.

7 October (The Daily Star): BNP Sets Out Priorities for Constitutional Reform

The special parliamentary committee on constitutional reform indicated that it would consider the July Charter alongside the BNP's election manifesto. Proposals under discussion include a ten-year limit on an individual's tenure as prime minister, changes to the caretaker-government framework and the possible creation of a vice-presidential post. The process is politically sensitive because the July Charter emerged from the post-2024 reform movement and was intended to prevent a return to excessive concentration of executive power. Disagreement over how the Charter should be implemented has become one of the principal political debates of 2026.

13 October (The Daily Star): Government Begins Nationwide Data Collection for Family Card Programme

The government began a large-scale data collection exercise intended to build a database covering about 44.5 million families for its Family Card programme. More than 66,000 enumerators were expected to participate, with completion targeted for December. The programme is one of the BNP government's major welfare initiatives and is intended to improve targeting of social assistance. Its implementation will be watched closely because the quality of beneficiary data, fiscal sustainability and political neutrality will determine whether it becomes an effective social-protection mechanism.

15 October (The Daily Star): Local Government Tenders and Procurement Suspended Pending New Rules

The Local Government Division suspended tenders and procurement activities nationwide until rules under the amended public procurement framework are issued and new rates are published. The pause affects local-level development activity and contracting. The decision highlights the government's attempt to revise procurement practices while also creating a short-term risk of delays in local infrastructure and public works. Transparent implementation will be important given longstanding concerns about corruption and political influence in public contracting.

17 October (The Daily Star): One Year On, July Charter Remains Mired in Political Discord

A year after political parties signed the July National Charter, disagreement continues over the mechanism for implementing its constitutional reforms. Opposition parties led by Jamaat-e-Islami argue that the referendum-backed Constitution Reform Council should carry out the changes, while the BNP government favours implementation through parliament and a special parliamentary committee. The dispute is important because the Charter contains dozens of proposals intended to reform the constitution, judiciary, elections and state institutions after the 2024 uprising. The continuing disagreement shows that the post-uprising consensus is increasingly being tested by conventional party competition and differing interpretations of constitutional authority.

18 October (The Daily Star): Cabinet Approves Plan to Relocate Bangladesh Secretariat

The cabinet approved the relocation of the Bangladesh Secretariat to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, with the government targeting 2029 for the new complex to begin operations. The proposed complex is intended to bring ministries and divisions into a modern administrative hub.

The move is significant as a major governance and urban-infrastructure project. It could reshape administrative geography in Dhaka, but implementation will require careful management of costs, transport connectivity, construction timelines and the transition of government offices.

18 October (The Daily Star): Jamaat Accuses BNP Government of Abandoning July Charter Commitments

Jamaat-e-Islami chief and Leader of the Opposition Shafiqur Rahman accused the ruling BNP of failing to honour commitments associated with the July Charter and the referendum. The criticism intensified the political dispute over the mechanism for constitutional reform. The disagreement is increasingly shaping government-opposition relations. It also raises the possibility that reform questions could become a sustained source of parliamentary and street-level political mobilisation rather than a ~~consensus~~-driven institutional process.

19 October (The Daily Star): Election Commission Plans November Talks with Parties on Union Parishad Elections

The Election Commission said it plans to hold discussions with political parties in November ahead of Union Parishad elections, with a schedule expected in the first half of December and voting planned in several phases. Local elections will provide an important test of the post-2026 political environment. They will also show whether the relative reduction in election-related violence seen in the national polls can be sustained when competition shifts to highly localised contests over influence and resources.

19 October (The Daily Star): Major Reshuffle Announced in Bangladesh's Senior Administration

The government carried out a major reshuffle across the top levels of the administration. Senior bureaucratic changes are particularly significant for the BNP government as it seeks to implement its policy agenda after taking office earlier in the year. The reshuffle should be viewed in the broader context of institutional transition after the end of the Awami League era. Administrative neutrality, continuity and the government's ability to avoid politicisation of the civil service will remain important governance concerns.

20 October (The Daily Star): PM Tarique Calls for Unity across Religious Communities

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman called on Bangladeshis of all religions to work together and emphasised a common national identity during the Durga Puja period. The government also highlighted security arrangements for Hindu religious celebrations. The messaging is

politically important because minority rights and communal security remain closely watched indicators of political stability. The government's ability to protect religious communities and respond to local incidents will influence both domestic confidence and Bangladesh's international image.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

6 October (bdnews24.com): Bangladesh and India Prepare to Resume Trade Dialogue after Three-Year Gap

Bangladesh and India prepared for the 16th meeting of their Joint Working Group on Trade in New Delhi on 8-9 October, reviving the ~~mechanism~~ after a three-year gap. Dhaka's delegation included officials from commerce, foreign affairs, railways, customs, land ports and standards agencies. The talks were notable because bilateral political relations have experienced periods of strain. Reopening an institutional trade channel provides both sides with an opportunity to separate practical economic cooperation from wider political disagreements.

8 October (The Daily Star): Dhaka Raises Trade Barriers and Land-Port Issues with New Delhi

Bangladesh entered the Joint Working Group meeting with India seeking discussion of non-tariff barriers, anti-dumping duties on jute goods, the bilateral trade deficit and problems affecting land ports. The talks were designed primarily as a problem-solving platform rather than a negotiating forum for a single major agreement. For Bangladesh, maintaining access to the Indian market and improving border trade efficiency are important for exporters and regional supply chains. For India, stable trade relations with Bangladesh remain important to connectivity with the Northeast and the wider Bay of Bengal region.

8 October (Dhaka Tribune): United States Decides to Increase Humanitarian Assistance for Rohingya

The United States informed Bangladesh that it would increase financial assistance for Rohingya refugees. The announcement came during talks between the US Charge d'Affaires and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam. The decision is important for Bangladesh as international humanitarian funding for the Rohingya response has faced persistent pressure. Dhaka continues to argue that the international community must sustain

humanitarian support while also increasing diplomatic efforts to create conditions for safe and voluntary repatriation to Myanmar.

8 October (Dhaka Tribune): Dhaka Seeks New Ganges Water-Sharing Treaty with Guarantee Clause

Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee said Bangladesh hoped to conclude a new Ganges water-sharing agreement with India before the existing treaty expires in December. Dhaka wants the renewed arrangement to include a guarantee clause for dry-season flows, similar to provisions contained in the 1977 agreement. Water sharing is one of the most sensitive long-term issues in Bangladesh-India relations. The negotiations will be important not only for bilateral ties but also for agriculture, river ecology and domestic politics in Bangladesh, where transboundary water remains a major public concern.

18 October (The Daily Star): Dhaka Seeks Explanation from Riyadh over Execution of Two Bangladeshis

Bangladesh sought detailed information from Saudi Arabia after two Bangladeshi nationals were executed without prior notification to the foreign ministry or the Bangladesh mission. Dhaka said it was awaiting a complete account before drawing conclusions regarding consular obligations. The issue is sensitive because Saudi Arabia is one of Bangladesh's most important labour destinations and a major political and economic partner. Dhaka must balance protection of its citizens abroad with the broader strategic importance of relations with Riyadh.

19 October (Dhaka Tribune): Bangladesh Calls for Stronger Global Role in Rohingya Repatriation

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed urged the international community to play a more effective role in achieving a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis during talks with UN Special Envoy on Myanmar Julie Bishop. The meeting covered Myanmar's conflict, repatriation, landmines, trafficking and narcotics. The discussion underlines Bangladesh's concern that the Rohingya crisis is becoming protracted while conditions in Rakhine State remain unstable. The rise of the Arakan Army as a major territorial actor also makes future repatriation more complex because authority on the Myanmar side of the border is increasingly fragmented.

20 October (The Daily Star): Bangladesh and Japan Prepare New Agreements ahead of Tarique Rahman's Tokyo Visit

Bangladesh and Japan prepared several agreements and memorandums ahead of Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's scheduled visit to Tokyo. Areas under discussion included

agriculture, fisheries, skills, civil aviation, trade, environmental protection and local-government modernisation. The visit is expected to deepen a relationship that already spans infrastructure, development finance, trade and security cooperation. Japan is particularly important to Bangladesh through metro rail, the Matarbari deep-sea port and other major projects.

21 October (The Daily Star): Dhaka and Tokyo Consider Elevating Ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Bangladesh and Japan were considering elevating their existing strategic partnership during the prime minister's forthcoming visit. Dhaka also planned to discuss reducing interest rates on Japanese loans and expanding cooperation across trade, infrastructure and human-resource development. A higher-level partnership would give Bangladesh-Japan relations a broader geopolitical dimension. Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific outlook, the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt initiative, Matarbari and growing defence cooperation all make the relationship strategically relevant beyond traditional development assistance.

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

1 October (bdnews24.com): Bangladesh Bank Warns of Inflation Risks from Fuel Prices and Public-Sector Pay

Bangladesh Bank kept its policy rate at 9.5 per cent while warning that higher fuel prices and possible civil-service pay increases could add to inflationary pressure. The government is targeting inflation of 7.5 per cent by the end of the fiscal year. The central bank faces a difficult balance between controlling prices and supporting an economy experiencing weak investment and credit growth. Persistent inflation reduces household purchasing power and can also raise production costs for export-oriented industries.

2 October (The Daily Star): Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Bangladeshi Firms Selected for MRT-1 and MRT-5 Packages

Contractors from Japan, China, India and Bangladesh were selected for eight construction packages for Dhaka's MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 projects, covering civil works, depots, tracks, signalling and stations. The packages were approved after revisions to the projects.

The metro projects are among Bangladesh's largest urban infrastructure investments. Their cost, financing and execution are important because congestion in Dhaka imposes major economic losses, while the projects also illustrate Bangladesh's ability to work simultaneously with multiple Asian infrastructure partners.

6 October (World Bank): World Bank Calls for Urgent Financial, Energy and Revenue Reforms

The World Bank projected Bangladesh's GDP growth at 3.4 per cent in FY26 and FY27 and warned that energy shortages, financial-sector vulnerabilities and weak domestic revenue mobilisation were weighing on investment. It also reported that the non-performing loan ratio had risen to 33.2 per cent by June 2026. The assessment points to structural rather than purely cyclical economic problems. Banking-sector repair, improved revenue collection and a more reliable energy supply will be central to restoring private investment and creating jobs.

9 October (The Daily Star): Bangladesh Signs 15-Year Deal with DP World for Chattogram Port Terminal

The government signed a 15-year agreement with DP World to operate the New Mooring Container Terminal at Chattogram Port. The company pledged around \$150 million in investment, while protests accompanied the agreement over concerns about handing a high-revenue terminal to a foreign operator. Chattogram Port handles the bulk of Bangladesh's seaborne trade, making terminal efficiency central to export competitiveness. The agreement also reflects a wider policy of bringing international operators into port management to improve logistics and supply-chain reliability.

16 October (The Daily Star): Business Leaders Say Energy Security Depends on Reform Roadmap

The International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh argued that the country should accelerate domestic gas exploration and renewable energy development to reduce exposure to imported-fuel shocks. It also called for policy predictability and greater private-sector investment. Energy availability has become one of the most important constraints on industrial growth. Bangladesh has substantial installed generation capacity, but fuel shortages, import dependence and financial problems in the power sector continue to affect reliable supply.

20 October (bdnews24.com): Dhaka Seeks Lower Cost for MRT Line-1 during Japan Talks

Bangladesh planned to raise the sharply increased cost of MRT Line-1 and the interest burden on Japanese loans during the prime minister's Japan visit. Energy security, Japanese investment and the Matarbari deep-sea port were also expected to feature prominently. The discussion demonstrates the growing importance of debt terms and project costs in Bangladesh's infrastructure strategy. Japan remains a crucial development partner, but Dhaka is increasingly focused on ensuring that large projects remain financially sustainable.

22 October ([The Daily Star](http://TheDailyStar.com)): Bangladesh-Japan Trade Surpasses \$3.3 Billion

Two-way trade between Bangladesh and Japan has expanded significantly, supported by rising Japanese demand for Bangladeshi garments. Japan has become Bangladesh's second-largest Asian export destination and remains an important source of foreign investment. The trend gives Bangladesh an opportunity to diversify export markets beyond Europe and North America. The Economic Partnership Agreement and deeper strategic ties with Tokyo could further support garments as well as new sectors if Bangladesh can meet Japanese quality and supply-chain standards.

DEFENCE UPDATES

14 October ([The Business Standard](http://TheBusinessStandard.com)): Bangladesh Air Force Participates in Multinational Exercise Tarang Shakti-26 in India

A Bangladesh Air Force contingent participated in the Indian Air Force-hosted Tarang Shakti-26 exercise in Jodhpur, alongside forces from India, Australia, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, the UAE and the United States. The exercise included complex multinational air operations in contested-airspace scenarios. Participation is strategically notable because it exposes Bangladeshi personnel to large-force operations, interoperability and professional exchanges with multiple advanced air forces. It also adds a defence-cooperation dimension to Bangladesh-India relations at a time when political ties have faced strains.

16 October (Dhaka Tribune): BGB Expands Surveillance and Counter-Smuggling Operations

Border Guard Bangladesh said it had intensified surveillance and was using modern day-and-night observation technologies to address illegal crossings, arms smuggling and narcotics trafficking. The force reported large seizures of weapons, narcotics and other contraband during the year. The use of surveillance technology reflects Bangladesh's growing emphasis on technologically enabled border security. The India and Myanmar frontiers present different challenges, ranging from push-ins and smuggling to the spillover effects of conflict in Rakhine State.

18 October (The Business Standard): Bangladesh and Italy Seek Deeper Defence Cooperation

Bangladesh and Italy expressed interest in expanding military cooperation in modernisation, training, technical assistance and UN peacekeeping during talks between the prime minister's defence adviser and the Italian ambassador. The engagement fits Bangladesh's broader effort to diversify defence partnerships and sources of technology. Cooperation with European partners can complement established relationships in Asia while supporting training, peacekeeping capabilities and modernisation.

BORDER UPDATES

8 October (Dhaka Tribune): Ganges Treaty Renewal Becomes a Priority in Bangladesh-India Border Relations

Bangladesh said it wanted a new Ganges water-sharing agreement before the current treaty expires in December, with a stronger guarantee for dry-season flows. The two countries were continuing discussions through the Joint Rivers Commission. Although primarily a water issue, the treaty is closely connected to border-region agriculture, livelihoods and bilateral confidence. Progress could help stabilise Bangladesh-India relations, while failure to reach an agreement would risk turning water sharing into a more contentious political issue.

16 October (Dhaka Tribune): BGB Says There Will Be No Compromise on Illegal Entry and Push-Ins

Border Guard Bangladesh said it had foiled 182 push-in attempts across 23 districts since the beginning of the year and prevented 1,275 illegal entries. The force said surveillance had been strengthened while communication with relevant stakeholders was being maintained. Push-ins are a recurring source of tension along the Bangladesh-India frontier. Dhaka's emphasis on established procedures and restraint suggests an effort to prevent local incidents from escalating while still taking a firm position on unauthorised cross-border movement.

18 October (BSS): BGB Reports Major Contraband Seizures along Sarail Region Border

BGB units under the Sarail Region reported seizures of drugs and smuggled goods worth more than Tk 957 crore during operations conducted through mid-October. The force also recovered firearms, ammunition, explosives and large quantities of narcotics. The scale of the seizures demonstrates the persistent challenge of illicit cross-border networks. Smuggling is not only a law-enforcement problem; it also affects border economies, public health and the security environment in districts adjoining India.

19 October (The Shuttle Times): Dhaka Raises Landmines, Trafficking and Drug Smuggling with UN Myanmar Envoy

During talks with UN Special Envoy Julie Bishop, Bangladesh raised concern over landmines in border areas, human trafficking and narcotics smuggling linked to instability in Myanmar. Both sides also discussed conditions required for safe and voluntary Rohingya repatriation. The issues show how the Myanmar conflict is directly affecting Bangladesh's border security. Continued instability in Rakhine can generate displacement, trafficking and armed spillover while making conventional repatriation arrangements increasingly difficult to implement.

21 October (Dhaka Tribune): New Ganges Treaty with Guarantee Clause Emerges as Dhaka's Key Priority

As the expiry of the existing Ganges treaty approaches, Bangladesh continued to prioritise a renewed agreement that would provide stronger assurances over dry-season water availability. The issue remained part of the wider effort to stabilise relations with India. A workable agreement would have importance beyond river management. It could demonstrate that Dhaka and New Delhi are still capable of resolving sensitive bilateral questions through institutional mechanisms despite recent political strains.

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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