

# **One and Half Years after the Fall of the Authoritarian Regime: Expectations and Realities**

## **Executive Summary**

**2 February 2026**

## One and Half Years after the Fall of the Authoritarian Regime: Expectations and Realities

### *Research Advisers*

**Dr. Iftekharuzzaman**, *Executive Director, TIB*

**Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair**, *Adviser, Executive Management, TIB*

### *Research Conducted By*

**Shahzada M Akram**, *Senior Research Fellow*

**Md. Julkarnayeen**, *Senior Research Fellow-Qualitative*

**Farhana Rahman**, *Research Fellow*

**Md. Mostafa Kamal**, *Research Associate-Qualitative*

**Razia Sultana**, *Research Fellow*

**Md. Mohaimenul Islam**, *Research Associate*

**Muhammad Badiuzzaman**, *Director– Research and Policy*

**Published on: 2 February 2026**

### *Contact:*

**Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)**

MIDAS Centre (Level 4 and 5)

House # 5, Road # 16 (New) 27 (Old)

Dhanmondi, Dhaka – 1209. Bangladesh

Tel: (+88 02) 41021267-70

Fax: (+88 02) 41021272

Email: [info@ti-bangladesh.org](mailto:info@ti-bangladesh.org)

Website: [www.ti-bangladesh.org](http://www.ti-bangladesh.org)

# One and Half Years after the Fall of the Authoritarian Regime: Expectations and Realities

## Executive Summary

### Context

- The student-led quota reform movement transformed into an anti-discrimination movement, marked by significant violence, bloodshed, and sacrifice eventually leading to the fall of the authoritarian government on August 5, 2024.
- An Interim Government, led by Dr. Muhammad Yunus as Chief Adviser, took over the responsibilities of the government on August 8, 2024. At present, the Advisory Council consists of 21 members (Chief Advisor, 20 Advisors), four Special Assistants (positions equivalent to Advisors), and five Special Assistants (positions equivalent to State Ministers).
- The principal aspirations of the students and general people involved in the anti-discrimination movement are state reforms and a new social and political settlement to create a 'New Bangladesh' characterised by non-discrimination, equal rights, and inclusiveness. The primary goals of the movement are radical reforms in people's representation, government, and administrative systems and practices, aiming to establish an accountable government system – the foundation of the movement and the current reform process.
- At the time of assuming office and throughout its tenure, the Interim Government faced various challenges – an unstable economy; pressure to repay foreign debts, non-cooperation from the allies and groups who unduly benefited from the ousted regime across all sectors and institutions, fragile state institutions, a corrupt service delivery system, deterioration of law and order and widespread unrest, and natural disasters.
- Expectations of students and the public after the fall of the authoritarian regime included establishing the rule of law, a corruption-free and accountable state and administration, reforming political and electoral frameworks, sector and institution-based reforms, transferring the power of the state to the elected government, economic stability, and creating employment opportunities for the youth population.
- Given the continuity of time and the prevailing situation, the core objectives of the Interim Government:
  - **Justice** – Fair investigation and trial of the charges of crimes against humanity and violations of human rights committed during and before the anti-discrimination movement.
  - **Reform** – Democratic state reconstruction and institutional reform.
  - **Election** – free, fair, impartial, and participatory elections at the earliest possible time.
- In addition, the government was to carry out regular activities in state administration, including combating and preventing corruption and preventing money laundering.
- The main objective of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is to promote democracy and good governance and to act as a supportive force in preventing corruption. Related research and policy advocacy are integral parts of TIB's ongoing activities.
- Previously, TIB tracked and assessed the progress in fulfilling the state and government's commitments to good governance, democratic advancement and controlling corruption.
- Regular monitoring of the activities of all stakeholders, including the Interim Government, is crucial to fulfilling expectations for state reform – an observation-based report on the first 100 days, and later on the first year after the fall of the authoritarian regime were published.
- To assist in the undertaking of necessary structural reforms to establish democracy, good governance, and integrity and, ensure effective anti-corruption measures, TIB submitted a set of strategic policy recommendations to the Interim Government (on 28 August 2024), followed by the dissemination of sector-specific policy briefs, reviews of draft laws, which were subsequently shared with authorities, dissemination of recommendations to various task forces and

committees, and consultation meetings with high level officials, including advisers, all of which are still ongoing.

- Regular monitoring of the activities of all stakeholders, including the interim government, is important to meet the expectations of state reform.
- In continuation of this, the initiative of current observation-based research has been undertaken.

### Research Objectives

The main objective of the research is to review the activities of the interim period after the fall of the authoritarian government. Specific objectives are -

- To review activities related to justice, reforms, elections, government activities, prevention of corruption, and establishment of democracy and good governance in the interim period;
- To review the role of various stakeholders in the aforementioned activities; and
- To identify the various limitations and challenges of these activities in the light of good governance indicators.

### Scope of the Study

The areas covered in the research are:

- **Justice** – Investigation and trial of the charges of crimes against humanity and violations of human rights committed during and before the anti-discrimination movement.
- **Reform** – reform of state, political, and electoral system, various sectors and institutions.
- **Elections** – Activities related to holding free, fair, and participatory elections.
- **State/Government Functions** – Regular activities across various sectors (law and order, economy, education, health, local government, power and energy, environment, overseas employment, and international relations).
- Control of corruption, irregularities and money laundering.
- **Roles of Various Stakeholders** – Political parties, civil society, media, and the Bangladesh Armed Forces.

### Research Methodology and Timeline

- Identify the activities of the interim government and other stakeholders concerning justice, state reform, elections, anti-corruption efforts, and the promotion of democracy and good governance.
- **Research Methodology:** Primarily, qualitative data were collected and analysed using qualitative methodologies; quantitative data were used in specific cases where applicable.
- **Data Collection and Analysis Method:** The information collected from various sources and verified for its accuracy and reliability with both direct and indirect sources.
- **Sources of Information:** Relevant government circulars, ordinances, and regulations (draft/final); news reports, articles, opinions, and analyses published in newspapers and websites; published interviews of political activists, experts, researchers, journalists, representatives from students, and civil society; website of government and other relevant offices.
- **Reference Period for Data Collection and Analysis:** 5 August 2024 to 31 January 2026.

### Study Findings

#### Justice

#### Crimes Against Humanity Committed During the July Movement

##### Progress

- A total of 1,785 cases (including 837 murder cases) have been filed nationwide against the killers, commanders/directors, and instigators involved in assaults and killings during the student-mass people uprising (as of 19 November 2025). Charge sheets have been submitted in 106 cases, including 31 murder cases. 128 ministers and members of parliament of the ousted regime have been arrested.

- Action against members of various forces accused of involvement in killings during the mass uprising have been taken nationwide. 761 cases have been lodged against the police, 1,168 police personnel have been accused, and 61 have been arrested.
- 450 complaints and 45 cases have been lodged at the International Crimes Tribunal, where 209 individuals are accused, including Sheikh Hasina; 84 have been arrested.
- Amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 have been made creating an opportunity to prosecute political parties.
- Verdicts have been announced in two cases. In one case, the death penalty was handed down to the former Prime Minister and former Home Minister; due to becoming a state witness, the former Inspector General of Police received five years' imprisonment. In another case, three police officers were sentenced to death.
- A total of 12 cases are under trial before two benches of the International Crimes Tribunal, with more than 105 individuals accused.

### **Deficiencies**

- In case of secret departure of a significant number of accused, allegations of assistance in fleeing the country against the army, law-enforcement agencies, and local politicians have been made.
- In some instances, false and baseless cases were filed. Names included as accused indiscriminately. Approximately 150,000 individuals are accused, while 21,854 are arrested. There are 663 cases against the ousted head of government, including 453 murder cases.
  - In 4,017 cases against Awami League leaders and activists for various criminal offenses related to the July Movement, 224,813 individuals are accused and 75,400 individuals are arrested, while 55% were released on bail.
- There are allegations of case-filing and arrest trade claiming that individuals were made accused due to prior enmity, political rivalry, extortion and harassment. There are also allegations of extortion in exchange for exemption from cases.
- Cases were accepted without proper investigation due to political pressure.
- There were incidences of vindictive harassment in the judicial process, including detainees attacked in court, and humiliated in the presence of law-enforcement personnel.
- There have been controversy and criticism over the appointment of judges and prosecutors to the International Crimes Tribunal raising questions about their competence, experience, and political affiliations.

### **Observations**

- Although the judicial process has begun and progress has been made in some cases, indiscriminate case filing and the failure to file specific, crime-based charges against accused individuals have weakened the foundations of many cases. This has created challenges in preparing investigation reports due to procedural complexities and lack of clear factual accounts.
- Apart from some limited departmental actions, there has been no real progress in ensuring effective accountability of the police, indicating a lack of governmental will and capacity.
- Old pattern of violating legal procedures in arrests and remand persists. These include filing unjustified cases, detention without trial, prolonged detention despite cases being bailable, and in some instances, government influence. Journalists and professionals have been accused in murder cases.
- While a positive precedent has been observed in the live broadcast of verdict announcements, there has been criticism of trials and verdicts being delivered without fully ensuring fairness and strict adherence to due legal process.
- Due to weaknesses in the judicial process, there is a risk that justice for real offenders may become questionable.

## Investigation and Prosecution of Enforced Disappearances and Human Rights Violations

### Progress

- The fact-finding report on human rights violations including enforced disappearances by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has been published.
- Bangladesh has signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) to ensure protection against enforced disappearance.
- A commission was formed to investigate enforced disappearances and ensure justice for victims, where 1,913 complaints were submitted. After verification, 1,569 complaints were recognized as enforced disappearances under the definition, and 287 complaints were categorized as “missing and dead.”
- The final report of the Enforced Disappearances Investigation Commission was released that mentioned RAB, police, DGFI, and other intelligence agencies as being involved in incidents of enforced disappearance.
- Assurance of Issuing “Missing Certificates” to the Families of Enforced Disappearance Victims was made.
- Proceedings have begun at the International Crimes Tribunal against army personnel involved in enforced disappearances and killings during the July uprising. These include two cases of crimes against humanity related to enforced disappearance and torture, and one case related to killings during the July mass uprising, involving 15 army officers. The trial of 12 army officers has begun under another case.

### Deficiencies

- Despite allegations of destructing evidence against security forces, law enforcement agencies, and the army, relevant officials have not been brought under accountability.
- There are allegations of slow progress in trials related to enforced disappearances.
- The government failed to prevent fleeing of 10 army officers abroad despite issuance of arrest warrants and travel bans. Although trials have begun against some law enforcement and army personnel involved in enforced disappearances, many key masterminds remain beyond justice.
- Despite the OHCHR fact-finding report and the recommendations of the Enforced Disappearance Commission, there has been no progress in dissolving RAB and reforming intelligence agencies; the TFI has not been dissolved. On the contrary, initiatives have been taken to strengthen RAB’s institutional capacity.
- Although the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC) has been dissolved, another similar institution has been created in its place.

### Observations

- The government’s position appears weak in ensuring accountability of army personnel involved in cases of enforced disappearance.
- The government appears visibly negative toward implementing recommendations to dissolve RAB and reform intelligence agencies.
- Fifteen army officers accused in crimes against humanity and killings during the July mass uprising have been kept in a sub-jail inside a cantonment under military authority, setting a discriminatory precedent.

## Initiatives related to the interests of July Fighters

### Progress

- The list of the martyred and injured in the July mass uprising was published through Gazette.
- The July Mass Uprising Directorate was established and the ‘July Mass Uprising Martyrs’ Family and July Fighters’ Welfare and Rehabilitation Ordinance, 2025’ was enacted. The martyred and injured in the uprising as “July Martyrs” and “July Fighters” respectively have been officially recognised. The July Martyrs Memorial Foundation has been established and provision of financial assistance, rehabilitation, and medical facilities have been made. Tk 232.6 crore in the 2024-25 fiscal year was allocated, and an allocation of Tk 405.2 crore in the 2025–26 fiscal year was proposed; One-time grants of Tk 10 lakh to 772 July Martyr families, and Tk 30 lakh in full to

100 families. A monthly allowance of Tk 20,000 per family was introduced starting from July 2025. Tk 116 crore 21 lakhs have been provided as financial assistance to 7,300 martyr families and injured July fighters. 78 individuals were sent abroad for advanced medical treatment.

## Deficiencies

- The confusion over the number of martyrs of the July mass uprising continued. There have been delays in publishing a final and comprehensive list of the dead and injured.
- There were protests and clashes at different times demanding adequate compensation, proper treatment and rehabilitation.
- Questions were raised over the scope of work of the July Mass Uprising Directorate and the July Martyrs Memorial Foundation, along with a lack of coordination between them.
- Allegations of irregularities and corruption in some cases of grant disbursement were raised.
- The government procurement rules in the construction of the “July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum” was not fully complied with.

## State Reform

### Progress

- The following initiatives were undertaken for state reform and to reach a national consensus —
  - **Reform Commission:** 11 subject- and sector-based reform commissions in two phases (Constitution, Electoral System, Judiciary, Anti-corruption Commission, Public Administration, and Police Administration in the first phase; Media, Health, Women’s Affairs, Labor Affairs, and Local Government in the second phase) were formed and reports of these commissions with specific recommendations were published. The work process of these commissions included — national representative survey and online opinion collection, exchange of views with relevant stakeholders.
  - **National Consensus Commission (12 February 2025):** The objective of this Commission was to consider the recommendations of the commissions formed for reforms in the electoral system, police, judiciary, public administration, constitution, and anti-corruption ahead of the forthcoming 13<sup>th</sup> National Elections and to discuss with political parties and forces to form a national consensus, and to develop a national position on important reform proposals.
    - A total of 52 dialogue sessions were held in two phases with 33 political parties;
    - Out of 926 recommendations of the six reform commissions formed in the first phase, 166 reform proposals were raised and discussed;
    - Based on 84 reform proposals (with some dissenting opinions), the draft July Charter was finalised; among these 48 are related to constitutional reforms, of which 18 are dissenting (‘Note of Dissent’).
  - **July National Charter:** It is a document of political consensus to implement reform proposals in various areas of the state. On October 17, 2025, 24 political parties and alliances including

### Key Proposals of the July Charter

- ☐ Inclusion of equality, human dignity, social justice, religious freedom and harmony as state principles; Declaring Bangladesh as a multi-ethnic, multi-group, multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural country
- ☐ Reducing the exclusive power of the Prime Minister
- ☐ Provision of a maximum of 10 years (total in more than one term) in the post of Prime Minister in a person’s lifetime and the same person not being the Prime Minister along with party leader
- ☐ Making the legislature bicameral
- ☐ Appointment of the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee from the opposition party
- ☐ Decentralization of the judiciary
- ☐ Ensuring appointments to various constitutional institutions (such as EC, PSC) through selection committees
- ☐ Ensuring the constitutional illegality of abuse of power

BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami signed the July Charter, while six parties did not sign due to political differences. The 'National July Charter (Constitutional Reform) Implementation Order, 2025' was issued to organize a referendum to implement the Charter.

- **Referendum:** A Referendum on the July Charter through four questions is scheduled on 12 February 2026 along with the 13<sup>th</sup> National Election.
- The government elected after the 13<sup>th</sup> National Election will run the parliament and perform the duties of the Constitutional Reform Council.
- **July Declaration:** It is a 28-point memorandum document aimed at giving state and constitutional recognition to the July 2024 mass uprising – a state and constitutional recognition of the July Revolution, a pledge to build a fascism-free and discrimination-free Bangladesh, and an outline of administrative and judicial reforms. The 'July Declaration' was officially presented on August 5, 2025.

### Deficiencies

- Any specific strategy was not followed in identifying sectors or institutions for reform — 11 commissions, various white papers and committees were formed without any explanation as to why many other sectors of national importance, such as education, agriculture and private businesses, were excluded.
- Complaints that the commissions formed for reform were not representative — six commissions had no representation from religious and ethnic minorities, low number of women, majority of former bureaucrats, dominance of teachers from one university.
- Although there were negative reactions to the reports of some reform commissions (Public Administration Reform Commission, Women's Affairs Reform Commission) included rejection of recommendations, agitation, demands to abolish the commission, there was failure for identification of anti-reform forces and take a strong stance on the part of the government.
- With some exceptions, there was no visible progress in the government's actions on the recommendations collected from all the reform commissions that can be implemented immediately in the interim period. On the other hand, there is no action plan for implementing the recommendations from the six external reform commissions formed in the first phase, and the white paper on the economic situation of Bangladesh, etc.
- Deficiencies in the discussion process – there was no explanation of which proposals are important for negotiation, unclear criteria for inviting a political party to the negotiation, no criteria for determining consensus, allegations of not discussing or involving other stakeholders outside the political party, and allegations of giving priority to the main political parties and forces.
- Failure to meet the expectations of effective representation of women as a result of the consensus reached in the July Charter on women's seats in the National Assembly.
- There was lack of any initiative to reform the intelligence agencies such as the DGFI, SB, DB, NSI, that were used as the main tools of institutionalization of authoritarianism and violation of fundamental rights of the people, extortion and state capture including the financial sector.
- There was lack of initiative in forming two important commissions – the Information Commission and the Human Rights Commission during the entire tenure of the government.

### Observations

- Although reaching consensus with political parties on several fundamental issues of state reform is an important achievement, the signing of the July Charter with a 'Note of Dissent' on some important fundamental reform proposals by the main political parties has created a risk in achieving the main goal of state reform.
- Instead of realizing the importance of identifying and resisting the anti-reform forces at any stage from the beginning, surrendering to these evil forces incessantly has resulted in the cancellation of many important recommendations, the adoption of many anti-reform decisions, and even setting a negative example by unjustifiably violating the July Charter.



- The importance to the implementation of the immediately implementable recommendations of the reform commissions are not given — a total of 367 implementable recommendations were identified in the out 11 commissions (except the Constitutional Reform Commission), but only 48 reforms have been implemented up to September 2025, which reflects that the opportunities for state reform in practice have not been utilized. Apart from this, no specific roadmap has been set for implementing a total of 1,416 recommendations of the ten commissions.
- In reality, the opportunity to lay the foundation for state reform has not been properly utilized.

## Legal Reforms

### Progress

- A total of 116 ordinances were enacted during the term of the interim government (from 8 July 2024 to 1 February 2026).
- Significant legal reforms are done based on the reports prepared by various commissions/committees formed for the purpose of reform. These include the decision for holding a referendum on the implementation of the constitution and other reform recommendations enshrined in the July Charter and enactment of several reform ordinances and executive decisions, some of which are related to the reform commission, and some are taken at the government's own discretion.
- Legal reforms aimed at establishing an independent secretariat on the path to independence of the judiciary are one of the top achievements of the interim government.
- Several selected measures have been taken for sectors or institutions other than the judiciary through a number of ordinances, including significant positive aspects. These include Anti-Corruption Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Auditor General, Revenue Policy and Revenue Management, Cyber Security, Personal Data Protection, Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities).
- Policies for regular submission of personal income and asset statements of members of the Advisory Council, judiciary and government employees were formed to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Important legal reforms were made, including local government (repeal of party symbol allocation clause in local government institutions at all levels); right to information (repeal of Cyber Security Act, amendment of Right to Information Act); power and energy (repeal of Rapid Increase in Electricity and Energy Supply Act, formation of Renewable Energy Policy 2025); forest and environmental conservation (formulation of several ordinances and issuance of High Court orders and directives); Bank (Bank Resolution Ordinance); and election-related legal reforms.

### Deficiencies

- With a handful of exceptions, ordinances were unilaterally formulated without involving stakeholders. Even though all stakeholders are involved, their opinions are not reflected.
- In some cases, draft ordinances are published on the website for a short period of time in a way that is visible to the public, thereby avoiding liability. In cases where some stakeholders have taken advantage of the consultation despite adversity and even out of frustration, the promised amendments have been neglected without any explanation, and even propaganda has been spread against some stakeholders.
- In each case for the Anti-Corruption Commission, Police Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Cyber Security, Personal Data Protection, National Data Management, etc. ordinances allow the bureaucracy and those in power to continue to exercise exclusive and unaccountable authority over the public interest.
  - The way the Police Commission Ordinance has been enacted has completely shattered the long-awaited dream of an independent police commission to ensure professional excellence as one of the institutions engaged in maintaining law and order in Bangladesh and to form a public welfare-oriented, transparent and accountable force. There are many elements in this ordinance that show that the so-called police commission formed on its basis is nothing

more than a resort for the continued abuse of power by retired administrative and police bureaucrats, and in reality, it is a tool for the police.

- The National Human Rights Commission Ordinance could have been considered an international standard law if the national and international stakeholders who were involved in the drafting process at the last stage had not been kept in the dark and created an irresistible opportunity for bureaucratic control in the subversive process.
- Although the Cyber Security, Personal Data Protection and National Data Management Ordinances contain significant contemporary positive provisions, each of them, in its own way and collectively, has created a legal system to suppress freedom of speech, dissent and freedom of the media without accountability, without any judicial protection, in the hands of the government and related institutions, allowing the continuation of a widespread surveillance-based regime similar to the authoritarian era.
- The interim government showed extreme carelessness in the necessary reforms of the Right to Information Act.
- After the enactment of some laws [Government Employment (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025; Revenue Policy and Revenue Management Ordinance, 2025], initiatives to amend these maintaining the power of the bureaucracy in the face of strong opposition from employees in the relevant sectors were observed.
- The constitutional status of the Auditor General and Comptroller General (CAG) has been reduced through a section of the Public Audit Ordinance, 2025.

#### Observation

- Some provisions were included that are contrary to the main motto of state reforms, i.e. the goal of establishing an accountable government. Among the ordinances that have been enacted, with the exception of the ordinance on the separation of the judiciary and the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Amendment Ordinance applicable to the NGO sector, in almost all cases, the government has succumbed to the subversive forces of the opposition, especially the influential circles of the bureaucracy, resulting in the reform being misguided.
- Overall, the expected transparency and self-motivated disclosure of information in law-making and decision-making related to public interest have not been achieved.

#### National Election

##### Progress

- The Election Commission was restructured following the existing law, where various political parties participated in the process.
- A number of legal reforms related to elections were made. These include amendment of the Representation of the People Order (RPO), amendment of the delimitation of constituencies in the National Assembly through which the final gazette was published redefining the boundaries of 300 parliamentary seats, and amendment of the code of conduct of political parties and candidates.
- For the first time, arrangements have been made for expatriate voters to vote through partially IT-based postal ballots and mobile apps — development of the ‘Postal Vote App’ (Postal Vote BD). The total registered postal voters are 1 million 533 thousand

##### Significant amendments to the Representation of the People Order

- ☐ Abolition of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) — full ballot-based elections
- ☐ ‘No vote’ in the case of a single candidate
- ☐ Accused fugitives and those accused of crimes against humanity by the International Crimes Tribunal considered ineligible for elections
- ☐ Voting on party symbols — use of symbols of major parties in alliances prohibited
- ☐ Inclusion of armed forces (Army, Navy and Coast Guard) in the definition of law enforcement forces in elections
- ☐ Maximum donation limit for individuals/organizations to political parties BDT 2.5 million

683, of which 772,542 are expatriates, and 761,141 are in charge of elections in the country. Postal Ballots have been sent to 121 countries.

- Political party registration –
  - 14 new political parties got registration in the interim period – currently there are 59 registered parties.
  - The registration of Jamaat-e-Islami as a political party was granted legal status.
  - Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student organization of the Awami League, was banned. Later, the activities of the Awami League were banned and its registration was suspended.
- The schedule of the 13<sup>th</sup> National Election was announced – the voting will be on February 12, 2026.
- Referendum (on the same day) – Voting time has been extended by one hour as the election and referendum are on the same day. The Government has instructed NGOs, banks and bankers to campaign in favour of the referendum and ‘Yes’ vote.
- The voter list has been updated – total voters are 127 million 695 thousand 183 (Female voters 62 million 879 thousand 42, and male voters 64 million 814 thousand 907).
- Security measures – Decision has been taken to deploy police, BGB, Coast Guard, Ansar, army in the field from February 8-14. 17 security personnel in these centres will be deployed as 28,663 (67%) of the 42,761 polling stations are risky. A total of 8,597 were arrested during the Operation Devil Hunt Phase-2, and 85 weapons recovered. Ban is imposed on carrying vehicles and weapons. Executive magistrates have been appointed to ensure law and order during the election.
- Ensuring impartiality — Massive reshuffle has been done in the posts of Deputy Commissioner (DC), Superintendent of Police (SP) and Officer-in-Charge (OC) of the police stations. New DCs were posted in 50 districts within a week.
- Re-demarcation of boundaries — Changes have been done in 46 electoral seats, whereas there were 1,893 objections/recommendations, and hearings in 84 seats. Elections were postponed due to legal complications in four seats, but later it was decided to hold voting in two seats.
- Observers — 81 local organizations have been registered with 55,454 observers. 330 foreign observers will participate from European Union (EU), Commonwealth, NDI, IRI and other countries.
- Parties and candidates — A total of 1,994 candidates are contesting in 300 seats; of these, 1,738 are candidates from 51 registered political parties, and 256 are independent candidates.

### Deficiencies

- Questions were raised on the formation of the Election Commission before the recommendations of the Electoral Reform Commission raising concerns about its impartiality.
- There were some criticisms regarding the amendment of the Representation of the People Order (RPO) — not accepting most of the important recommendations of the Electoral Reform Commission (such as internal democratization of the party, financial transparency); keeping the provision of a ‘No’ vote only in the case of a single candidate; disagreements and debates among political parties over the obligation of each party to elect its own symbol even if an alliance is formed.
- Concerns were raised over violence, harassment and death of political leaders and activists surrounding the elections — potential candidates were attacked; at least 15 political leaders and activists were murdered across the country in the 36 days after the schedule was announced; 401 political violence, 102 deaths in 2025; 1,333 weapons missing; increased threat of deepfake-misinformation; over 50 attacks on minorities.
- Large number of weapons looted from police stations were not recovered and new initiatives to issue arms licenses to politicians raise fears of increased risk of violence
- Only 9-10% of the total manpower deployed for elections is police, which is a major shortfall in ensuring overall security.
- Scepticism and disagreement were observed among political parties over field administration officials, especially those who served in the last three elections, partisanship of advisors and

maintaining impartiality – parties like Jamaat, NCP and Islami Andolan raised questions about ensuring a level playing field.

- There was dissatisfaction over delimitation of 46 constituencies – at least 27 writ petitions were filed in the High Court.
- Around 12,531 government primary schools are unfit to be used as polling stations.
- Many of the 73 observer organizations initially selected by the EC are alleged to be ‘name-only’ or incompetent.
- Political parties alleged bias against the Election Commission in cancelling candidatures on the basis of loan default and dual citizenship.
- The institutions in charge do not have the capacity to verify the information submitted in the affidavit, or if they do, they do not make full use of it.
- Every major political party has mutual allegations of violating the electoral code of conduct, influencing the electoral system — although action has been taken in some cases, the Election Commission has failed to take a strong stand in cases of violating the electoral code of conduct.

### Observation

- Major reforms in technology, law and process can be observed in both elections and referendums.
- Security risks and major challenges of mistakes/misinformation using AI is a potential threat for the elections.
- Despite various adversities, instability, unhealthy electoral competition, and overall concerns about the possibility of a democratic transition, the election-oriented environment has remained so far.

### Prevention of Irregularities, Corruption, and Money Laundering

#### Progress

- **Disclosure of large-scale plunder through the Economic White Paper** - According to the White Paper report, approximately USD 234 billion was laundered between 2009 and 2024. 70% cost overruns were identified in seven major projects, and politically motivated manipulation was found in GDP and per capita income data.
- **Case proceedings**
  - More than 568 corruption-related cases have been filed.
  - The number of accused or suspects exceeds 2,700 individuals.
  - In-depth inquiry and investigation are ongoing in more than 1,200 complaints.
  - At the trial stage, a total of 267 cases have been disposed of - 134 resulting in convictions and 133 in acquittals.
  - Charge sheets have already been submitted against 1,078 accused in 315 cases.
  - A total of Tk 66,146 crore worth of money and assets have been frozen or seized, combining both domestic and international actions. Assets worth nearly £260 million (about BDT 3,640 crore) has been seized in UK.
- **Internal transparency and ethical practices within the government** – Personal officers of Advisers were immediately dismissed when corruption allegations arose against them, investigations were ordered through the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), and restrictions were imposed on their foreign travel.

#### Legal, Institutional, and Structural Reform Initiatives

- ❑ Abolition of the provision allowing the whitening of black money
- ❑ Introduction of intelligence/data-driven risk controls in customs through the Customs Risk Management Regulation, 2025, to curb trade-based money laundering, tax evasion, and organized financial crime
- ❑ Initiation of trials for corruption and money laundering offenses; restructuring the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and ensuring its independent and effective functioning
- ❑ Finalization of draft amendments to the Money Laundering Prevention Act.
- ❑ Formation of a special task force through coordination among multiple agencies and establishment of a regular monitoring cell

- **Finalization of the Asset Recovery Roadmap 2025** – 11 specific individuals and business groups linked to money laundering have been identified. A decision was taken to appoint 12 international law firms as part of efforts to recover laundered assets. Formal Mutual Legal Assistance Requests (MLARs) have been sent to 21 countries.
- **Freezing and attachment of bank accounts/assets** – Based on BFIU and joint team investigations, bank accounts containing more than Tk 10 billion, along with plots, flats, and houses belonging to specific families/individuals, have been frozen. Legal steps (MLAR) have begun for attachment of assets laundered abroad.
- Increased international attention on assets laundered from Bangladesh - discussions on 'Bangladesh's Missing Billions' in the United Kingdom; diplomatic-level discussions on the issue.
- Bangladesh National Board of Revenue's (NBR) Central Intelligence Cell (CIC) identified assets worth around BDT 400 billion (over 3.3 billion USD) located abroad that were purchased using laundered money.

## Deficiencies

### Recommendations of the ACC Reform Commission that have been ignored

- Adopt a National Anti-Corruption Strategy specifying the anti-corruption roles and responsibilities of various state and non-state institutions. This includes the legislature, executive, judiciary, government sectors, law enforcement agencies, Election Commission, Ombudsperson, OCG, the ACC, local government, political parties, media, civil society, and the corporate sector.
- Establish an Ombudsperson's office with authority to monitor the performance of institutions under the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and ensure reporting.
- Enact specific laws to permanently abolish the practice of legitimising black money.
- Create a specific legal framework to resolve and prevent conflicts of interest for decision-makers at various levels who hold power or are responsible for public interest-related decisions.
- Enact a "Beneficial Ownership Transparency Act" to broadly prevent fraud in the use of public funds and resources, including ownership in banks and financial institutions, particularly for companies, trusts, or foundations. This law would require mandatory disclosure of such profitable ownership through a publicly accessible registry.
- Introduce specific legal provisions to ensure transparency in political and electoral financing, including mandatory submission of annual, itemized and updatable income and asset statements by all elected representatives and their family members upon assuming office. These statements should be published on the Election Commission's website for public verification.
- Ensure transparency in all domestic and international financial transactions as a measure to prevent tax evasion and money laundering, including Bangladesh's participation in the Convention on the Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and the implementation of the Common Reporting Standard (CRS).
- Join the Open Government Partnership (OGP) at the state level to adopt international best practices in transparent governance across government, private, and non-state sectors.
- Implement a comprehensive anti-corruption preventive framework, including short-, medium-, and long-term action plans, aimed at creatively enhancing awareness among the public and the younger generation that corruption is not only a punishable offense but also a socially, culturally, and religiously unacceptable, destructive, and discriminatory malady.

## Deficiencies

- Although there is high public expectation regarding reforms, no initiatives have been taken to realise the 'immediately implementable' recommendations for government and ACC reform, nor to act on other proposals for overall corruption prevention.
- No measures have been taken against ACC officials involved in corruption or to ensure internal good governance within the ACC.
- Although investigations have been initiated against 249 "high-profile" individuals, the progress has not been encouraging.

- Despite having will, the government has failed to fulfil its own pessimistic assessment about recovering laundered money due to lack of sufficient expertise, institutional capacity, coordination, and appropriate strategy to deal with complex international legal processes.
- On the other hand, no visible or effective measures have been taken to prevent various forms of corruption such as tax evasion, large-scale corruption and money laundering, as well as bribery in service delivery, extortion, land grabbing, 'case trade,' 'arrest trade,' 'bail trade,' and similar practices.
- Although there was a commitment and policy to publicly disclose the income and asset statements of advisory council members, none have been disclosed to the public so far. While government employees' asset statements have been collected, no verification process has been undertaken, thus undermining the purpose of this directive.

### **Observations**

- Although there has been visible activity in the ACC's operations compared to the past, there has been no qualitative improvement in the overall situation.
- The ACC has still not been able to free itself from the government, particularly bureaucratic, influence. Allegations of biased behaviour remain in filing and withdrawing cases.
- The old pattern of anti-corruption actions persists, i.e., taking action against individuals or groups out of power while avoiding action against those in power. In many cases, there are examples of the ACC being used to support questionable actions of the government.
- On one hand, the ACC Reform Commission's 'immediately implementable' recommendations did not receive the expected importance from the government or the ACC. On the other hand, the most important strategic recommendations for ensuring both full independence and accountability of the ACC were deliberately excluded by giving exclusive control to the ACC and government bureaucracy without involving any other stakeholders, even though after the report's publication there was no recorded dissent from the ACC's top leadership, and almost all political parties had given consent without any note of dissent under the July Charter, which was known to both the government and the ACC.

## **Sector-based Notable Decisions and Initiatives**

### **Public Administration**

#### **Progress**

- Administrative reshuffle — Promotion of various levels of officials deprived of party consideration during the fallen government was done during the period 2024-25 (1,549 officials). These include promotions outside the approved posts (supernumerary promotions) and retrospective promotions. Moreover, there were contractual appointments, compulsory retirement, and making 'Officer on Special Duty' (OSD) for a number of cases.
- The government issued various instructions to maintain transparency and discipline. These include, among others, updating of job-related information of officials; submission of information on assets of government employees; protecting the confidentiality of any government information provided through communication; and restrictions on official visits abroad.
- Some of the facilities of government employees were increased, such as 10 percent increase in incentives (effective from July 1, 2025), increasing pension facilities, and doubling training allowance.

#### **Deficiencies**

- Although only 18 of the 208 recommendations of the Public Administration Reform Commission were identified as 'immediately implementable', only three (toilet renovation, obtaining passports without verification, and public hearings) have been implemented.
- There are allegations that the Ministry of Public Administration and the Cabinet Department have omitted many of the recommendations of the Reform Commission and added their own proposals protecting the interests of the bureaucracy.

- There are almost twice as many officials in the administration (6,535 people) than the authorized 3,696 posts.
- There have been allegations of failure to follow specific criteria for promotion or deprivation of positions. These include giving priority to 'deprivation' over experience, skills, and qualifications, giving priority to political loyalty, and allegations of financial scandals. On the other hand, some of the promoted officials have been accused of being involved in corruption and irregularities in the past, having been punished in departmental cases, and being accomplices in various misdeeds of the Awami League.
- Although the government had announced not to appoint on contract, contractual appointments continued. The preference is given to retirees for such contractual appointments. There is disappointment among officials who were deprived of contract-based appointments during the previous government and were hoping for promotion.
- Several movements were observed by officials and employees at various levels for different demands.

### **Observation**

- Chaos and indecision continued in public administration, which have negative impact on development activities.
- The highest priority is given for the protection of administration's interests in obtaining privileges and opposing reforms.
- The attempt to de-partisanize the administration, a two-party dominance has been established in place of the exclusive partisanship of the authoritarian period.
- The influence of the public administration cadre in the administration continues at a dangerous level through inter-cadre and grade-based discrimination, discrimination in promotions, use of force to suppress the movements of government employees who are victims of discrimination, enactment of purposeful ordinances, and in many cases harassment by the ACC.
- There has been lack of professionalism in public administration. The government failed to take a strict stance in controlling or suppressing various movements on one hand, while the government has showed pampering flexibility in increasing the privileges of government employees, on the other.

### **Judiciary**

#### **Progress**

- A separate secretariat was established through the promulgation of the significant Supreme Court Secretariat Ordinance, 2025, ensuring the Chief Justice's authority over the appointment, transfer, and administrative control of judges.
- The 'Supreme Judicial Council' was formed.
- The 'Judicial Appointment Council' has been formed for the appointment of judges to the higher judiciary.
- Policies for the transfer and promotion of judges have been formulated.
- The civil and criminal courts have been completely separated.
- Initiatives have been taken to increase case disposal through the establishment of separate courts and creation of new posts. For instance, directives were issued to establish separate Judicial Magistrate Courts in all districts, and an ordinance was promulgated to establish the country's first specialized Commercial Court to ensure speedy and effective resolution of commercial disputes.
- Directive was given for judicial officials to submit statements of assets.

#### **Deficiencies**

- There were allegations of political considerations in the appointment of law officers.
- There has been lack of competence and experience among appointed judges leading to prolonged case resolutions.



- Irregularities in judicial proceedings were observed, including mass arrests and bail. There were complaints even from high levels of government regarding bail granted to top criminals.
- Lack of goodwill and non-cooperation from the executive branch in ensuring full independence of the judiciary was also observed.

### **Observation**

- Although there has been notable progress in the judiciary, shortcomings remain in practice. Justified concerns persist regarding the real success and sustainability of reforms.
- The trend of political party influence within the judiciary continues.
- Politicization of professionals associated with the judiciary remains a major obstacle to establishing justice and the rule of law.

## **Law and Order**

### **Progress**

- Regular operations to maintain law and order continued. From 8 February to 1 March 2025, 'Operation Devil Hunt' was conducted through coordinated efforts of all law enforcement agencies, resulting in the arrest of 12,500 individuals nationwide within 21 days. Following the killing of Shahid Osman Hadi, 'Operation Devil Hunt Phase-2' was launched from 13 December 2025 to repress individuals of fascist party, recover illegal firearms, and bring the law-and-order situation under control. Under joint forces' operations, 18,007 individuals were arrested nationwide within one month, up to 12 January 2026.
- Some top terrorists were arrested. In some cases, suspects were arrested following some 'mob violence' and incidents.
- Eight Special Metropolitan Magistrate Courts were established in March 2025 at the offices of the eight Deputy Commissioners of Crime of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP). By December 2025, 9,586 individuals were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment by these courts.

### **Deficiencies**

- Since the fall of the authoritarian government, the law-and-order situation has remained fragile - murders, robberies, snatching, burglaries, thefts, rape, violence against women and children, kidnapping, protests, looting, and unrest have continued.
- To control the situation, special magistracy powers of the armed forces were extended from August 2024 in two-month intervals until 28 February 2026.
- Tendency to take the law into one's own hands ('mobs justice') has increased resulting in alarming rise in deaths from public beatings. There has been tendency to form mobs to enforce demands. In many cases such mobs were successful in enforcing demands by force, with visible failure or even passivity and indulgence on the part of the government in tackling mobs, leading to over-empowerment of this segment.
- There has been arbitrary inclusion of individuals as accused in cases, allegations of 'arrest trade,' and increased arrests under political pressure.
- Deaths continue in the custody of the police and the armed forces.
- Attacks on minority and marginalized communities as well as government's indifference in preventing social intolerance continued.
- Law enforcement agencies failed to prevent repeated road blockades used to enforce demands.
- Bias in police action to repress protests was observed, as there has been leniency toward some groups, while oppression against others.

### **Observation**

- Police reform has largely been limited to reshuffles, promotions, transfers, and dismissals from service. Although an initiative to form a Police Commission has been taken, if it is formed under the enacted ordinance, there is a risk it may become an entirely ineffective institution.
- In many cases, police indifference and reluctance to perform duties are evident, raising concerns about professionalism and the capacity of law enforcement agencies.



- Even though the armed forces have been granted special magistracy powers to maintain law and order, these powers have not produced the expected results.
- The government's stance on preventing and responding to violent violations of the rights of women, indigenous peoples, religious and other minorities is questionable and opaque, and violence and use of force pose threats to gender, religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

## Financial Sector

### Progress

- **Inflation control:** Contractionary monetary policy, higher policy interest rates, exchange rate stabilization, reduced customs duties and LC margin requirements on consumer goods, and credit facilities for food and fertilizer imports contributed to lower inflation. Average inflation fell from 10.89 percent in December 2024 to 8.49 percent in December 2025.
- **Banking sector reforms:** Three task forces have been established to enhance the management of non-performing loans. Their mandates include reviewing bank asset quality, strengthening central bank capacity, and facilitating the recovery of misappropriated assets. The boards of 12 private banks, once influenced by family and political interests, were restructured to reduce corruption in the banking sector. Banking policies were reformed to ensure alignment with international standards. Five underperforming banks were merged to establish a consolidated Islamic bank, while six financial institutions were closed. Bank deposit growth attained its highest level in 20 months, registering 10.80 percent in November 2025. Furthermore, amendments were made to the regulatory frameworks governing the microfinance sector.
- **Management of Non-Performing Loans (NPLs):** Adopting internationally aligned definitions has exposed the true scenario of NPLs. There has been an increase from 12.56% in the 2024-25 fiscal year to 35.73% in the 2025-26 fiscal year. Authorities froze BDT 16 thousand crore in 2,500 bank accounts belonging to 378 individuals and entities between 6 August 2024 and February 2025, following allegations of money laundering abroad and suspicious domestic transactions. A total of 115 related cases were filed. Loan rescheduling facilities have been extended to 300 companies that were genuinely affected.
- **Labour sector:** Three ILO conventions were ratified, and the Labour Act was amended, which, among others, permits trade union registration with a minimum of 20 workers.
- **Reserves, trade, and external debt:** Total foreign debt repayment from fiscal year 2024-25 to the first six months of fiscal year 2025-26 is \$6.285 billion. Bangladesh recorded a balance of payments (BOP) surplus of \$3.4 billion for the first time after three years in the 2024-25 fiscal year; the trade deficit narrowed by 9.1% during the same period. Gross foreign exchange reserves increased from USD 20 billion in August 2024 to USD 28.04 billion by December 2025. Remittance inflows rose to USD 44.69 billion between August 2024 and December 2025.
- **Strengthening of revenue system capacity:** The Revenue Policy Division was separated from the National Board of Revenue (NBR). Mandatory online filing of income tax returns and tax automation were implemented, including online VAT refunds and new tax audit guidelines. Twelve Commissionerate were established, creating 3,597 new positions. Green channel facilities supported import and export activities. The first specialized commercial court was established. The revenue from Chittagong Port is Tk 54.6018 billion (7.55% increase) in 2025. Approximately 3,300 expatriates filed online income tax returns during the reporting period.

### Deficiencies

- There has been lack of emphasis on reforms. There has been delay in approval of Bangladesh Bank Amendment Ordinance by the Ministry of Finance. There were also lack of emphasis on recommendations of the White Paper on economic reforms.
- Stagnant private investment due to tight credit policy, high interest rates and political uncertainty.
- Reduced allocation to education, health, social security sectors in the national budget.
- Despite the introduction of customs bond automation and new online VAT refund system, traders are not getting the desired level of benefits.

- Reduced development expenditure compared to government operating expenditure — Government expenditure in the fiscal year 2024-25 is Tk 66,25,914 crore; Tk 4,74,143 crore (76%) in the operating sector and Tk 1,51,771 crore in the development sector.
- Implementation of the minimum Annual Development Program (ADP): 67.85% implementation of the allocation in the fiscal year 2024-25; Implementation in the first six months of the 2025-26 fiscal year (July-December) is BDT 41,876 crore (17.54% of the allocation).
- Initiative to complete the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) concession agreement in just 12 days despite being pending in court, indicating lack of transparency.
- Revenue deficit continues in the interim period — revenue deficit in the 2024-25 fiscal year is BDT 92,626 crore; revenue deficit in the 2025-26 fiscal year is BDT 68,995 crore during July-December.
- Foreign investment decreased from USD 67 crore in the 2023-24 fiscal year to USD 55 crore in the 2024-25 fiscal year (17% decrease), the lowest in five years.
- Export growth has been declining continuously since July 2025, reaching a negative 5.5% in November; Ready-made garment exports down 2.63% in first six months of 2025-26 fiscal year (July-December) compared to same period of last fiscal year.
- Inflation has been initially successful but not reduced to expected level; poverty is on the rise.
- Factory closures and layoffs continued.
- The influence of syndicate in business and commerce continued.
- Money printing was not stopped despite promises of closure.

## Education

### Progress

- An initiative has been taken to establish the Bangladesh Higher Education Commission as the regulatory authority for higher education in the country.
- A search committee was formed to prepare recommendations for the appointment of Vice-Chancellors in all public universities of the country.
- Initiatives have been undertaken to hold student union elections in various public universities. So far elections have been organised in five public universities.
- Directives to form new ad hoc or temporary governing committees in private educational institutions have been issued.
- The minimum educational qualifications for chairpersons of ad hoc committees in private colleges have been determined.
- The grade of government primary school head teachers has been upgraded by one level.
- Decision has been taken to appoint head teachers in private high schools through Non-Government Teachers' Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA).

### Deficiencies

- Structural weaknesses and inadequate budgetary allocation across the education sector is persistent.
- Questions have been raised regarding the criteria and transparency of appointments of Vice-Chancellors in public universities. Despite appointments being made in 48 universities following resignations or removals, allegations persist that selections were divided between two influential political parties.
- Decision-making under pressure from students and 'the public' has been evident, including:
  - Changes to textbook content and graffiti graphics related to Indigenous communities;
  - Appointment, posting, and removal of teachers;
  - Dissolution of the coordination committee formed to oversee the revision and refinement of free textbooks.
- Movements and protests by teachers and students over various demands in educational institutions, and harassment of teachers by student unions in several universities continued throughout this period.

- The distribution of free textbooks at the primary and secondary levels was delayed at the beginning of two consecutive educational years.

## Health

### Progress

- Incentive measures introduced in certain areas – decision to promote 7,000 doctors.
- Increase in stipends for trainee doctors by 30% to BDT 35,000.
- Plan to establish a nationwide “Pharmacy Network” to ensure easier access to medicines – initial decision to set up pharmacies in 700 government hospitals across the country.
- Expansion of the Essential Medicines List – addition of 135 new medicines, increasing the total to 295 essential drugs.

### Deficiencies

- Limited implementation of health sector reform recommendations – out of more than 400 recommendations made by the Health Sector Reform Commission, 33 were identified as immediate priorities, but only six have been implemented.
- Rising out-of-pocket healthcare costs for the general public.
- Allegations against multiple groups of doctors of exerting influence over cancellations, transfers, and postings in health administration, medical education, and district-level healthcare institutions.
- Failure to ensure proper medical treatment for those injured during the anti-discrimination movement; continued corruption in procurement processes in medical college hospitals.

## Local Government

### Progress

- Removal of elected representatives at all tiers of local government institutions and appointment of administrative officials in their place.

### Deficiencies

- Complete lack of implementation of local government reform proposals – out of 180 recommendations made by the Local Government Reform Commission, 60 were identified as immediate priorities, yet none have been implemented.
- Service delivery gaps and increased public suffering due to the absence of elected representatives.
- Continued corruption in procurement processes within local government institutions.
- Lack of coordination among the Ministry of Local Government, the Election Commission, and the Ministry of Law in appointing process of the Mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation.
- Government failure to effectively manage and control protest movements.

## Power and Energy

### Progress

- Repeal of Rapid Increase in Electricity and Energy Supply Act.
- Restoration of the powers of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).
- Formulation of the Renewable Energy Policy 2025; Initiative for open tendering at the SPM terminal.

### Deficiencies

- Initiatives taken to re-evaluate the capacity charges of private power plants, but it has not yet been fully implemented.
- Failure to cancel discriminatory contracts.
- Finalization of the Energy and Power Master Plan for 2026-2050 without involving any stakeholders – the proposed master plan has a demand estimate, excessive dependence on fossil fuel import, and a tendency to bypass renewable energy.

## Environment

### Progress

- Declaration of safe drinking water as a constitutional right; Ban on polythene.
- Initiatives taken to control noise pollution; Initiatives for sustainable tourism in environmentally critical areas.

### Deficiencies

- No significant progress in preventing river pollution, river encroachment, forest destruction, industrial waste pollution, and air pollution.
- Failure to close stone quarries; Contradictory behaviour of the government in some cases to protect the environment (Panthakunja).

## Overseas Employment

### Progress

- Simplifying the immigration process.
- Launching the 'Overseas Employment Platform' (OEP) to reduce immigration costs and ensure transparency — issuing BMET clearance certificates online.
- Launching 'Expatriate Lounge' and 'Waiting Lounge' at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.
- Progress in sending workers to Malaysia; Agreements with several other countries (Italy, Japan).
- Simplifying the process of sending remittances and increasing incentives.

### Deficiencies

- Despite significant progress in receiving remittances, there has been a decline in overseas employment.
- Spending several times more than the prescribed cost due to brokers and rackets.
- Lack of opportunities in legal channels and the tendency to cross the Mediterranean at the risk of life at the instigation of brokers continues.

## International Relations

### Progress

- Continued support for peaceful and democratic change from various countries and organizations.
- Commitments from various countries and international organizations to provide financial and other assistance and support to the interim government.
- Assistance in bringing back laundered money, prosecuting human rights violations, raising corruption allegations and investigating them.

### Deficiencies

- International support for democracy, human rights, the Rohingya crisis and economic stability on one hand, and human rights violations, border issues, political tensions and strained India-Bangladesh relations on the other.
- The government's unclear position on various issues and lack of information disclosure (humanitarian corridor).
- India's various unfriendly behaviours towards Bangladesh continued – ultimately having a negative impact on cricket.

### Observations

- Reforms in education, health, and local government sectors are not receiving proper attention from the government. There is a tendency to ignore the opinions of stakeholders in these sectors.
- Party-based politics is ongoing in education and health sectors.

- On the one hand, the influence of politics and bureaucracy is behind the instability in various sectors, and on the other hand, there is a tendency to accept all the demands of different movements, either rational or irrational.
- The influence of syndicates continues in reform initiatives in many sectors including the financial sector, environmental protection, import-export, market management, energy, etc.

### **Role of Other Stakeholders**

#### **Political Parties: Roles in the Reform Process**

- Although political parties actively participated in the discussions with the National Consensus Commission, differences of opinion including notes of dissent, were recorded on 56 of the 84 issues included in the July National Charter.
- There are significant disagreements among political parties on nearly 20 reform issues. Due to the improper or inadequate presentation of the history of the Liberation War, independence, and various political movements in the charter and ignoring their proposed amendments, four political parties including the CPB refrained from signing the July Charter. In addition, the NCP did not sign because the July Charter Implementation Order, the referendum, and the implementation process were not clearly specified in the Charter.
- Completely opposite positions were observed among major political parties and alliances—primarily the BNP, Jamaat, and NCP—on issues such as the issuance of the July Charter Implementation Order, notes of dissent (differing opinions on reform proposals), and the timing of the referendum, which have created uncertainty regarding the overall implementation of the reform agenda.
- Political parties have failed to reach consensus through mutual discussion. At the same time, several parties have accused the government and the Consensus Commission of making decisions that favour or benefit particular parties. Political parties have also taken rigid positions in the dialogue, prioritizing their own political mandate and party interests.
- On certain specific issues, some parties have deliberately exerted political pressure, including threatening to organize movements, while dialogue was still ongoing, as well as organized protests or rallies.
- All political parties only paid attention to the 84 issues selected from the proposals of the five reform commissions. However, they paid little attention to other issues related to important sectors or public interest, such as education, health, local government, women, and the media.
- Several religion-based political parties and powerful religious groups demanded the abolition of the Women's Reform Commission, rejected the Commission's report, and organized demonstrations against it. Despite derogatory and obscene comments about the Women's Affairs Reform Commission and the organization of violent protests, the government remained silent and refrained from taking any action. As a result, the implementation of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission's recommendations has become uncertain.
- Discussions on internal democracy and good governance within political parties—particularly the necessary reforms to prevent the misuse of money and muscle power, and religion in politics—were largely ignored.

#### **Political Parties: Roles in the Electoral Process**

- Since the interim government had taken charge, a lack of trust, growing suspicion, intense debate, and intolerance have been evident between the government and political parties over issues such as the national election date, state reforms, the tenure of the interim government, and the referendum.
- In some instances, political parties placed or presented the national election in a face-to-face position to the state reform initiatives and the process of prosecuting crimes against humanity.
- Following the formation of the new Election Commission, a significant number of new political parties emerged and applied for registration (145 parties). However, in the preliminary screening, most failed to meet the required criteria, and a significant number existed only in name.

- Within this period a total of 14 new political parties have been registered under Election Commission; in some cases, allegations of bias, partisan influence, and corruption in the registration process have been raised from some applicant parties.
- Although the anti-discrimination student platform has become inactive, some new platforms have emerged.
- During the post-authoritarian period the emergence of new political parties and narratives around establishing a new political settlement was observed. But in reality, the country has once again experienced a new political bipolarization centred on upcoming national elections, similar to the past. As a result, the emergence of new political forces and a genuinely new political settlement has been constrained.
- Clear deficiencies remain in the democratic decision-making process within parties regarding candidate nomination and coalition-building for election. The influence of money, muscle power, religion, and dynasty in candidate nominations process has led to splits within some parties, resignations, expulsions, internal conflicts, and increased violence. Protests and blockades by denied candidates and party activists have also intensified.
- Although all political parties committed to nominating at least five percent women candidates in the national election by signing the July National Charter, among the 50 parties contesting the election, 30 did not nominate a single woman candidate. Jamaat-e-Islami, other religion-based parties, and several other parties nominated no women candidates. Women constituted only 3.5 percent of party-nominated candidates, compared to 7.9 percent among independent candidates.

#### Political Parties: Roles in State and Government Functions

- The influence of two political parties has been evident in appointments, transfers, and promotions across the Secretariat and various government and state institutions, without following any transparent and credible process or standard. At the same time, there are allegations of continuing influence of Awami League in some cases.
- Allegations have been raised by different political parties against several Advisers for biased and partisan behaviour with several parties. At various times, the BNP questioned the neutrality of two advisers representing students and demanded their resignation. Conversely, the NCP accused the government of bias in favour of the BNP and demanded the resignation of three Advisers and the Election Commission.
- Political parties have been accused of involvement in the deterioration of law and order, including the creation of “mobs,” organizing movements through road blockades, blocking police stations, and staging protests. The involvement of several religion-based parties has also been alleged in incidents such as the demolition of shrines, harassment of women in public spaces, the shutdown of fairs, ‘urus’ (death anniversary of Sufi Saints), music, and theatre events, attacks on libraries, and assaults on various minority and marginalized communities.
- Despite the involvement of the “brotherly wings” student organization of a political party in attacks and arson incidents targeting *Prothom Alo*, *The Daily Star*, *Chhayarat*, and *Udichi*, no action was taken against them by either the concerned party or the government.
- Allegations of political support and patronage have been made in several cases where bail was granted to top-listed criminals.
- The filing of politically motivated cases has been alleged, including cases accusing individuals of being collaborators of the authoritarian regime or of committing killings during the uprising.
- Several political parties have opposed government decisions on grounds of national security and sovereignty, criticized the government, and announced protest programs.
- Questions have been raised regarding the mandate and jurisdiction of the interim government, particularly in relation to port management and the proposed humanitarian corridor.
- Internal conflicts and political violence among different political parties have been continuing. Between August 2024 and December 2025—a period of 17 months—there were a total of 600 incidents of political violence, resulting in the deaths of 158 political activists and injuries to



7,082 others. Of these incidents, the BNP was involved in 550 cases (91.7 percent), the Awami League in 124 cases (20.7 percent), and Jamaat in 46 cases (7.7 percent).

Political Parties/ Platform	Number of parties' involvements in violent incidents*	Percentage of parties' involvements in violent incidents
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	550	91.7
Bangladesh Awami League	124	20.7
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami	46	7.7
National Citizen Party (NCP)	7	1.2
Jatiya Party	5	0.8
Anti-Discrimination Movement	13	2.2
Others	7	1.2

\* As more than two parties were involved in a single incident of violence, party involvement has been counted separately.

- Following the fall of the authoritarian government, attempts to seize and establish control over institutions and activities previously dominated by Awami League have led to conflicts. These include extortion from transport terminals and stands, illegal extraction of stones from quarries and rivers in Sylhet, and control over leases of bridges, markets, 'ghats' (small inland ports), sand quarries, and water bodies. In such cases, internal control mechanisms within parties have been ineffective, and parties have failed to take action against their activists.

## Civil Society

- Civil society actively participated in the state reform process, including participation through various platforms in the formation of the Advisory Council, different reform commissions, task forces, the committee on the White Paper on state of the economy, and the National Consensus Commission.
- The role of civil society in state reform included engaging on issues related to politics, the constitution, elections, the economy, anti-corruption, and the establishment of good governance, providing opinions on draft laws, and proposing recommendations for various legal and institutional reforms.
- Expressed concern over partisanship, illegal occupation, extortion, arrest and case-trading practices, and related issues.
- Took a strong stand against human rights violation and political violence — including protests against attacks and harassment targeting women, marginalized groups, religious minorities, journalists, writers, and human rights defenders.
- Took strong stand against the visible erosion of the intrinsic values of 1971 and 2024— particularly equality, human dignity, social justice, religious freedom, and communal harmony— and against the rise of forces that threaten the values and run counter to Bangladesh's identity as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-party, multilingual, and multicultural country.
- Played a role in safeguarding freedom of information and expression.
- Raised concern and protesting against deliberate propaganda, rumours, and the spread of misinformation by Indian media.
- Published surveys/research by various organisations assessing elections, government legitimacy, public popularity, and government initiatives.
- The civil society was engaged in international cooperation. This included efforts toward the recovery of laundered assets, civic dialogue with the United Nations and development partners, work on transitional justice, democracy, and the protection of human rights, as well as reporting and networking activities.

## Media

- Although Bangladesh was placed higher by 16 positions in the Press Freedom Index 2025, as reported by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), an enabling environment for the media to operate freely is yet to be established.
- The Media Reform Commission identified various provisions in 13 laws as obstacles to independent media and journalism. However, no adequate initiatives have been taken to reform these laws.
- Despite the Media Reform Commission preparing a draft Journalist Protection Act, it was dropped without any clear explanation. In addition, preparing the draft National Media Commission and Broadcasting Commission Ordinances are widely treated as a ‘parting mockery’ of public expectations for a free media.
- Although the Ministry of Information initially took decisions on several issues and formed a committee of advisers to ensure the autonomy of Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television, these decisions have not been implemented.
- The process of granting media registration remains similar to that of the authoritarian period. In 2025, there was a lack of transparency and clear criteria in granting television channel licenses to two leaders of a newly formed political party/platform.
- The government’s actions regarding the amendment of the press accreditation list have been controversial. Press accreditation cards of 167 journalists were cancelled in three phases. Journalists’ access was restricted during the Secretariat fire incident. The Press Accreditation Policy, 2022 was amended also raised controversy.
- Although there has been no overt attempt by the government to exert direct control or influence over the media, pressure has been created on media offices through “mob” violence. Incidents of attacks and harassment against journalists, writers, and human rights defenders have continued.
  - Six journalists were killed in attacks while on their professional duties.
  - In unprecedented incidents, mobs attacked, looted, vandalized, and set fire to the offices of *Prothom Alo* and *The Daily Star*, while the government remained inactive.
  - A total of 497 incidents of harassment were recorded, with approximately 1,104 media workers subjected to harassment between August 2024 and December 2025.
  - A total of 204 journalists were accused in various cases, including murder cases related to the July mass uprising; 30 were arrested and were not granted bail.
  - Editors of eight newspapers and news heads of 11 private television channels were dismissed, and at least 189 journalists lost their jobs.
  - Leadership changes took place at the top levels of 29 media organizations, and ownership of one online portal was transferred.
- A growing tendency to abuse freedom of expression has been observed—using social media to spread rumours and false information against opposition parties and the government, the practice of politically “tagging” dissenting opinions, and the dissemination of misinformation using media photocards and logos.
- The use of artificial intelligence in negative propaganda campaigns against opponents has increased; yet the government has failed to take specific actions against them.

### Armed Forces

- The army played a pivotal and positive role during the final phase of the July Movement that led to the collapse of the authoritarian regime.
- The military is widely seen as one of the key pillars of power within the interim government. However, they have publicly pledged to remain a non-political entity.
- The army has been accused of aiding in the escape of a portion of those accused of crimes against humanity.
- The army allegedly influenced legal proceedings involving 25 former and current military officers accused of crimes against humanity. This included the issuance of arrest warrants, sub-jail arrangements, and rank-based differentiated treatment.



- While the army has played a crucial supportive role in maintaining law and order, particularly in the face of the police force's moral collapse, it has shown a visible shortfall in its expected role of ensuring peace and stability in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, despite having a central authority.
- Opinions expressed during the BDR massacre investigation raised concerns about the scope of their jurisdiction.
- No initiative has been taken to reform intelligence agencies like DGFI and NSI, which were used as key instruments for institutionalizing authoritarianism, violating citizens' fundamental rights, engaging in extortion, and perpetrating state capture, particularly in the financial sector.
- Although the army announced a policy of "no compromise with justice" and pledged full cooperation with commissions investigating enforced disappearances, they denied responsibility as an institution.
- The army were accused of participating in extrajudicial tortures.
- The military's role and public image underwent scrutiny due to allegations of excessive use of force in certain situations and perceived inaction in others, especially during incidents of mob violence and civil disorder.

### Some important examples of governance deficiencies

Nature of lack of good governance	Notable examples
<b>Deficits in the rule of law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Violation of legal procedures in arrest, remand and bail</li> <li>▪ Extortion through the trade of mass cases and arrests</li> <li>▪ Arrestees assaulted in court; harassment in the presence of law enforcing agencies; attack on a former judge; assault on the defence counsel</li> <li>▪ Undermining of the constitutional status and authority of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)</li> <li>▪ Failure to follow specific criteria in matters of promotions or denial of promotions</li> <li>▪ The government's failure to control various movements – hesitation in taking a firm stance</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of capacity and effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Failure to complete investigations into cases filed against the police</li> <li>▪ Questions raised regarding competence in conducting judicial proceedings</li> <li>▪ Lack of expertise and experience among judges and prosecutors</li> <li>▪ Inability to finalise the accurate list of those killed or injured during the movement</li> <li>▪ Inadequate capacity of the police in maintaining law and order</li> <li>▪ Failure to meet revenue collection targets</li> <li>▪ Failure to implement the Annual Development Programme</li> <li>▪ Inability to ensure proper treatment for the injured in the anti-discrimination movement</li> <li>▪ Disruption in service delivery due to the removal of elected local government representatives</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of transparency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of transparency in recruitment, promotions, and dismissals across various institutions — including top government positions; judges, prosecutors, and officials of the International Crimes Tribunal and judiciary; administration; education; health; and the appointment of the CEO and Treasurer of the July Memorial Foundation</li> <li>▪ 'Hide and seek' behaviour of arrests of various individuals</li> <li>▪ Non-disclosure of contracts in the power sector; Chattogram Port Agreement (CPA)</li> <li>▪ Lack of clarity in the government's stance and deficiency in information disclosure regarding the policy decision to establish a "humanitarian corridor" in Rakhine</li> <li>▪ Failure to ensure the free flow of information within state institutions</li> </ul>

Nature of lack of good governance	Notable examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ICT Taskforce Committee's white paper removed from the institution's website without explanation after its initial publication; concerns raised regarding potential bias, as the report named only a few officials and excluded others accused of corruption and irregularities from the investigation</li> <li>▪ Tendency of government offices to hide information</li> <li>▪ Reluctance to practice proactive disclosure of information</li> <li>▪ Appointment of a government adviser, a special assistant, and the Secretary of the Election Commission as new directors to the Board of Biman Bangladesh Airlines</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of coordination and participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of representativeness in the composition of Reform Commissions</li> <li>▪ Failure to involve all stakeholders in the process of enacting or amending laws</li> <li>▪ Inadequate inclusion of stakeholders at all levels in the restructuring of the NBR into two new divisions</li> <li>▪ Finalization of the 2026–2050 energy and electricity master plan without involving any stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Lack of coordination among the Ministry of Local Government, the Election Commission, and the Ministry of Law on the issue surrounding the Dhaka South City Corporation mayor taking over his duties</li> </ul>
<b>Indecision/ Change of decision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indecision in determining the age for the entry into government jobs</li> <li>▪ Withdrawal of newly appointed individuals in response to criticism</li> <li>▪ Amendments made following strong opposition after the enactment of laws (e.g., Public Service Ordinance; Revenue Policy and Revenue Administration Ordinance)</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Failure to hold people accountable who assisted the accused in fleeing the country</li> <li>▪ Lack of accountability for those involved in destroying evidence related to enforced disappearances</li> </ul>
<b>Political influence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Politically influenced appointments and promotions in the administration, judiciary, health, and educational institutions</li> <li>▪ Allegations of irregularities in appointments in agencies under the Local Government Ministry (e.g., appointment of the MD of Dhaka WASA) and the Ministry of Sports (e.g., formation of the Cricket Board)</li> <li>▪ Exemptions and acquittals in corruption cases</li> <li>▪ Allegations of political influence, party favouritism, and nepotism in the process of issuing licenses to private satellite television channels</li> <li>▪ Political affiliation influencing appointments at the adviser level</li> </ul>
<b>Abuse of power and conflict of interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Irregularities and conflicts of interest in recruitment and promotions within the administration, judiciary, and educational institutions</li> <li>▪ Conflicts of interest in the appointment of public prosecutors</li> <li>▪ Reduction of government ownership in Grameen Bank, and approval of Grameen University</li> <li>▪ Allegations of attempts to suppress political opponents in an Adviser's one's own constituency, protect personal commercial interests, and influence the local administration and police</li> <li>▪ Initiation of a new business venture within the same sector, registered under a company owned by an Adviser</li> <li>▪ Implementation of infrastructure development projects in an Adviser's constituency, strategically timed for elections, with designated allocations for mosques, madrasas, and temples; a contractor license for the Local</li> </ul>

Nature of lack of good governance	Notable examples
	<p>Government Engineering Department (LGED) issued in the name of the Adviser's father</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Adviser's Special Assistant applying pressure and attempting to influence the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for continuing procurement process for a suspended project under investigation on allegations of irregularities and corruption</li> </ul>
<b>Corruption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illegal extraction of benefits under the guise of deprivation</li> <li>Allegations of corruption in DC postings, including rehabilitation of fascist collaborators in exchange of money</li> <li>Corruption in procurement within local government agencies</li> <li>Violation of PPP laws and policies in the Chattogram Port contract</li> <li>Corruption involving the personal staff of at least two Advisers</li> <li>Ongoing field-level corruption across different service sectors such as BRTA, passport services, land administration, law enforcement, judicial services, health, and national identity card issuance</li> </ul>

### Overall Observation

- The fall of the authoritarian government, achieved through unprecedented sacrifices in the anti-discrimination movement, is a golden milestone in the history of Bangladesh. It has created an extraordinary opportunity to build a 'New Bangladesh' through state reform and a new political and social settlement. In this transformative process, alongside the interim government, various stakeholders have played a crucial role in achieving this aspired goal.
- Despite multiple internal and external adversities, significant initiatives and decisions have been taken in the areas of justice, reform, elections, state governance, etc. during the interim period, and the infrastructure for state reform, justice and elections has been created. However, this infrastructure is not sufficiently strong – in all three areas, the foundation for state reform has not been as strong as it could have been. On the way to achieving the real benefits of state reform on this foundation, multifaceted challenges have already been created, which are likely to become even stronger in the future.
- **Reform** – Although reaching consensus with political parties on several fundamental issues of state reform in the July Charter is an important achievement, the foundation for reform has been weakened due to the resistance of various influential political parties in the July Charter regarding the main motto of state reform, that is, the provisions essential for the goal of establishing an accountable government. Later, the government's submission to the subversive forces of the influential circles of the bureaucracy in the matter of ordinances and government decisions has led to the reform being misguided.
  - The government failed to make progress on immediately implementable reforms and, especially, there was lack of any significant initiative to implement the recommendations of the reform commissions outside the scope of the July Charter. In addition, it surrendered to the forces of resistance due to lack of interest in analysing the risks of reform.
- **Justice** – Although the trial process for crimes against humanity committed during the authoritarian government and the July Movement has begun, there is a lack of following the proper judicial process.
- **Election** – Despite various uncertainties and fears, electoral activities are ongoing, the tendency to influence the electoral system continues.
- **Regular state activities:**
  - On the one hand, in the field of administrative and institutional reforms, there is an attempt to free from partisanship by mainly removing high-level officials, while on the other hand, the trend of de facto partisanship continues by replacing one party with another.

- The government's lack of control is visible in case of instability in other state institutions, including the police and administration, attempts to create new political circles, and institutional ineffectiveness due to widespread reshuffles.
- Ad-hoc tendency in government decision-making continued. There has been lack of government firmness and action plans in many cases in the management of administration, lack of coordination among government officials in decision-making, and indecision in some cases/changing decisions after making them.
- Free flow of information in state institutions has not been ensured. Tendency to conceal information in government offices, practice of not disclosing information voluntarily continues, not giving importance to the issue in ensuring free flow of information and people's right to information. Despite the announcement of establishing the practice of asset disclosure for members of the advisory council and government employees, there has been failure to set a positive example.
- In the light of good governance, several deficiencies are observed in the above sectors — failure to lay the foundation for establishing a well-governed, corruption-free and accountable government. Above all, the initiatives taken in the name of reform are in reality misguided in almost all cases and in some cases are a reverse journey to fulfil expectations.
- There was a public expectation from both new and old political parties to become corruption-free and accountable to the people through democracy and good governance as part of a 'new political arrangement'. However, there is no visible example of fulfilling this expectation. Lack of democratic practice among the parties, where power politics, money, muscle and religion-based political practices, factionalism, extortion, and continued violation of traditional electoral code of conduct persist.
- Women's participation and representation are held hostage by money, muscle and religion-based politics.
- The development and impact of religion-based politics are starkly visible. In many cases, gender, religious, cultural and ethnic diversity is under threat, which is in conflict with the spirit of anti-discrimination. The government has failed to ensure equality, human dignity, justice, equal rights for all, and freedom of expression for all. In some cases, the government's inaction or appeasement has empowered fanatics.
- Although civil society was given special importance in various reform programmes at the beginning of the interim government, it has tended to ignore them later through ignoring civil society's recommendations in various reforms. On the other hand, although there is a significant part of civil society in the government, it has failed to play the expected role, resulting in the spread of negative perceptions of civil society by the general public.
- In addition to the challenges to media freedom, there has been a visible failure to ensure the safety of journalists and media institutions during the interim government's tenure. The freedom and security of the media are now hostage to the state as well as to overpowered non-state forces. On the other hand, there is the existence of internal enemies within the media as well.

\*\*\*\*\*