

Bangladesh: The Contemporary Political Situation (2024 – 2025)

Introduction

The political history of Bangladesh is inseparably intertwined with the liberation struggle, waves of democratic movements, military interventions, partisan domination, and recurring episodes of popular resistance. From independence to the present day, the country has undergone several cycles of political tension and transformation. The political landscape of 2024–2025 represents a new chapter marked by unprecedented political realignments: a ruling party weakened after long incumbency, emerging political forces, and the resurgence of mass movements.

This analysis examines the evolving situation through the following framework:

1. Political unrest in the last two years and its causes
2. Core political blocs and power structures
3. The interim government: activities and challenges
4. Elections and the future trajectory
5. Economic and social implications
6. Left movements, and responses of peasants and the working class
7. Categorical analysis
8. Left, peasant, and working-class movements
9. Socio-economic context
10. Foreign influence and international perspectives
11. Political alternatives and recommendations
12. Final analysis
13. People's participation and social movements
14. Left and progressive political initiatives
15. International context
16. Special recommendations
17. Conclusion

1. Political Transformations in the Last Two Years

In July–August 2024, student-led protests erupted in universities and urban centers, driven by frustration over public recruitment processes, unemployment, and deteriorating living standards of peasants and working people. The movement rapidly spread nationwide.

The long-ruling **Awami League** became politically weakened and, in 2025, its organizational activities were formally **prohibited**. A transitional **Interim**

Government was then formed under the leadership of Nobel laureate **Dr. Muhammad Yunus**. The stated objectives of the Interim Government included:

1. Re-establishing constitutional rule and lawful governance
2. Preparing for national elections
3. Facilitating a redistribution of political power and democratic participation

2. Shifting Political Power Structure

The political arena is no longer defined solely by the Awami League and BNP. New platforms—especially the **National Citizens' Party (NCP)**—are attracting increasing support, primarily from young and urban constituents.

Key challenges during this political realignment include:

1. Persistent uncertainty regarding elections and constitutional reforms
2. Independence of the judiciary and civil administration
3. Restrictions on civil liberties and media freedom
4. Concerns about neutrality and participatory guarantees in the proposed electoral roadmap

3. Activities of the Interim Government

The Interim Government has initiated:

1. Constitutional and legal reforms
2. Announcement of an electoral roadmap
3. Introduction of policy measures concerning labor rights

However, implementation remains **slow and uncertain**. Human rights conditions, transparency of the justice system, and freedom of speech and media remain areas of serious concern.

4. Social and Economic Impacts

Political instability has affected daily life and the national economy. Key pressures include:

1. Inflation and unemployment
2. Declining export earnings

3. Risks to food security

Social tensions around **religious minorities, gender, and ethnic communities** have intensified. Digital platforms and social media have empowered youth participation, reshaping political mobilization.

5. Elections and Possible Future Scenarios

The Interim Government has announced **national elections for February 2026**. Analysts suggest that the elections will determine the credibility of the reform process and the future of constitutional democracy.

Political strategists foresee **three potential scenarios**:

Scenario	Characteristics
1. Peaceful Election	Broad participation, constitutional compliance
2. Partially Unstable Election	Localized violence, uneven participation
3. Crisis Election	Widespread confrontation, threat to political stability

The Interim Government must ensure:

- 1. Free, fair, and transparent elections
- 2. Equal opportunity for all parties
- 3. Acceptance of results and reduction of post-election conflict

6. July Declaration, July Charter & New Political Compromise

The 2024 student-led uprising culminated on **5 August 2024** with the resignation and departure of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The movement was ideologically framed as the “**July Declaration**”.

On **5 August 2025**, the government officially declared that:

“The Student - People’ s Movement of 2024 shall be granted state and constitutional recognition and, upon parliamentary approval, shall be incorporated into the Constitution. ”

Subsequently, on **17 October 2025**, the **July National Charter 2025**—popularly called the “**July Charter**”—was signed, outlining structural political reforms, including:

1. A bicameral Parliament and term-limits for the Prime Minister
2. Strengthening independence of judiciary, election commission, and media
3. Reducing centralized authoritarian power structures
4. Institutionalization of participatory and decentralized governance

The Charter is **not yet fully implemented**; it remains a negotiated roadmap contingent on constitutional amendments after elections.

7. Political Parties and Strategic Orientations

Awami League

Once dominant, now organizationally restricted since the 2025, but still influential through local networks and loyal segments of the bureaucracy.

BNP

Attempts to rebuild credibility, focusing on youth and middle-class voters, and positioning itself as a democratic electoral force.

Emerging Parties

The **National Citizens’ Party (NCP)** has gained momentum via media outreach and generational appeal.

Left and Progressive Forces

Focus on peasant-worker struggles and social justice, seeking to reshape economic and political discourse.

Digital Strategy

Social media is a decisive arena for political messaging, organizing, and counter-hegemonic narratives.

8. Left, Peasant and Working-Class Movements

Opportunities

A rare opening to reintroduce class politics and mass organizing

National relevance for demands such as:

1. **National Price Commission**
2. **Pension for farmers aged 60+**
3. **Agricultural land protection and food sovereignty**

Challenges

1. Need for stronger grassroots organization
2. Media obstacles and digital censorship
3. Coordination across fragmented left platforms

Key Actors

The **Bangladesh Krishok Federation (BKF)** and workers' unions mobilize for:

1. Fair agricultural pricing and land security
2. Living wages, workers' safety, and social protection
3. Universal access to healthcare and pension systems

9. Socio-Economic Context

1. **Economy:** Inflation, unemployment, food security pressures
2. **Society:** Increased vulnerability of minorities and marginalized groups
3. **Youth & Technology:** Digital mobilization influencing national politics

10. Foreign Influence & International Perspectives

1. International bodies monitor democracy, rights, and election integrity
2. UN and global human rights organizations issue periodic assessments
3. Regional diplomacy and economic assistance shape internal policy responses

11. Policy Alternatives & Recommendations

- a. National Dialogue** involving political parties, unions, and civic groups
- b. Constitutional and electoral reforms** ensuring institutional neutrality
- c. Social protection expansion**—food, health, education, farmer pensions
- d. Youth and women’s political participation** mechanisms
- e. Stabilizing the economy** with employment, agricultural support, and anti-inflation policies

12. Final Analysis

The contemporary political landscape of Bangladesh reflects a complex interplay of crisis and transformation. The upheavals of 2024–2025, marked by student-led uprisings, the fall of a long-standing ruling establishment, and the formation of an interim government, have opened a new phase in state restructuring and democratic possibility. Yet the transition remains incomplete and contested.

Three core challenges shape the emerging political trajectory:

1. Electoral and constitutional uncertainty:

Although the interim administration has announced a roadmap for constitutional reform and national elections, the mechanisms to ensure transparency, neutrality, and infrastructural readiness remain uneven. The reorganization of the Election Commission and the judiciary is still a work in progress, leaving doubts around the credibility of the forthcoming democratic process.

2. Reconfiguration of political forces:

While traditional political blocs—especially the former ruling party and the main opposition—have lost some moral legitimacy, they continue to wield influence through local elites, financial networks, and administration-linked patronage. New parties and civic coalitions, particularly youth-led and urban-centered formations, are beginning to challenge old political monopolies, though their organizational depth and rural outreach are still developing.

3. Socio-economic pressures on everyday life:

Inflation, unemployment, declining export orders, and food insecurity have intensified public frustration. These structural pressures have reinforced demands for a new distributive economic model rooted in social protection, labor rights, and agrarian

reform. The legitimacy of any future government will largely depend on its capacity to address these material concerns.

The final assessment suggests that Bangladesh stands at a pivotal crossroads. The political rupture of 2024 has created a rare opening for democratic renewal, yet without sustained popular pressure and institution-building, the moment may regress toward old patterns of centralized rule and elite bargaining.

13. People's Participation and Social Movements

Mass participation has re-emerged as a decisive factor shaping Bangladesh's political direction. New forms of political agency have developed, driven particularly by students, youth, farmers, women, industrial workers, and digital media-connected activists.

Key tendencies defining this civic resurgence include:

1. Farmer and agrarian mobilization

Organizations such as the Bangladesh Krishok Federation have placed land protection, a National Price Commission for agricultural products, and a universal pension for farmers at the center of national debate. These demands signify a shift toward policy frameworks that recognize food sovereignty and rural labor as foundational to the national economy.

2. Labor and workers' movement

Garment workers, informal sector laborers, and migrant-worker families continue to push for fair wages, workplace safety, and social protection. Calls for a universal healthcare and pension system for workers have become integral to popular political discourse.

3. Youth and digital political engagement

Social media campaigns and decentralized digital organizing have allowed youth to bypass traditional party structures, transforming political communication through rapid information sharing, documentation of state and corporate abuses, and the formation of decentralized protest networks.

Taken together, these mobilizations are reshaping the meaning of politics—from elite-centered negotiation to **mass-driven demands for economic justice, rights, and dignity**. Their evolving capacity could determine both the character and the legitimacy of the 2026 national elections and subsequent constitutional reforms.

14. Left and Progressive Political Initiatives

Left and progressive political formations are positioned—though unevenly—to offer structural alternatives to neoliberal restructuring, foreign-dependent development

models, and oligarchic political power. Their current interventions emphasize three overarching strategic directions:

1. People-centered economic transformation

This includes proposals for:

1. democratic land reform and protection of agricultural commons
2. living wages and strengthened collective bargaining for workers
3. universal social protection systems
4. ecological sustainability through agroecology and non-extractive development

2. Building broad-based political coalitions

Progressive groups are attempting to foster alliances among labor, peasant, feminist, indigenous, Dalit, urban poor, and climate justice movements. Such coalition-building aims to turn fragmented protests into a systemic force capable of influencing state policy.

3. Political education and consciousness-building

Recognizing that social transformation requires ideological struggle, left initiatives are investing in worker and peasant political schools, youth study circles, and media platforms to contest dominant narratives about democracy, development, and national prosperity.

If these initiatives gain momentum, they may serve as a **strategic counterweight** to elite political bargaining and guide Bangladesh toward a more participatory, egalitarian political future.

15. International Context

1. Global pressure may reinforce democratic reforms
2. Media freedom and human rights monitoring influence governance behavior
3. External trade and financial relations remain crucial variables

16. Special Recommendations

- 1. Institutionalize the July Charter** through constitutional amendment
- 2. Guarantee free elections** under neutral administration

3. Implement National Price Commission & Farmer Pension Scheme

4. Strengthen unions and cooperative agriculture

5. Ensure media freedom and anti-surveillance protections

6. Develop climate-resilient, food-sovereign rural economy

7. Invest in youth employment and digital rights

17. Conclusion

Bangladesh stands today at a crossroads. The mass uprisings of 2024, the Interim Government's reforms, the emergence of new political formations, and the rise of class-based social movements signal a potential transition toward a more equitable, democratic, and people-centered political order.

The country's future will depend on:

1. Conscious popular participation
2. Responsible and democratic political leadership
3. Successful implementation of electoral and constitutional reforms
4. Protection of peasants, workers, and the poor through social justice policies

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