



THE SPOTLIGHT

দি স্পটলাইট



NEWSLETTER OF THE GLOBAL CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

CONTENTS

SHEIKH HASINA: A VISIONARY PATHFINDER AND THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

Professor Dr. Shyamal Das

Preface

1988. We were then students at the University of Dhaka. A devastating flood had spread across the country. Many of our friends participated in a bread-making project at the Arts Cafeteria, led by the Student Struggle Council. One morning, we heard the news that she was coming. We all waited with restless anticipation. Finally, she arrived. Thick-rimmed glasses on her eyes; a simple Dhakai saree draped on her; that serene, unblemished smile on her face. She came near our table towards the end. I was watching her from a distance. She looked at us, offered that radiant smile, and gently asked: "How are you?"

P3

FROM PROTEST TO LOOTING: THE COLLAPSE OF THE ECONOMY IN BANGLADESH DURING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

The Authors wish to Remain Anonymous

Introduction

The transition in Bangladesh after August 5, 2024, provides a stark illustration of how political upheaval can evolve from mass protests to widespread disorder, revealing the deep-seated stresses within the country and the true nature of its new interim government. Widespread protests initially emerged from student movements targeting government job quotas, but quickly snowballed into a broader national outcry against inequality, corruption, and demands for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation. The unrest reflected a profound dissatisfaction with the ruling party's economic and social policies, as well as the perceived exclusion of broad segments of Bangladeshi society from meaningful power and opportunity. On August 5, 2024, the situation escalated as protesters stormed the prime minister's official residence, prompting Sheikh Hasina to escape and resign. This sudden power vacuum laid bare the fragility of state structures, with the military stepping into facilitates the formation of an interim government. Led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, the new administration was formally installed on August 8, 2024.

P13

MORE CONTENTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message Page 2 Editor's Note Page 2 Media Watch Page 17 The Back Page Page 20

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

২৭ আশ্বিন ১৪৩২

12 October 2025

Bangladesh's Economic Situation: An Assessment of the Past Year

Over the past year, Bangladesh has experienced severe economic challenges. Instability in foreign currency reserves, escalating import costs, and persistent dollar shortages have contributed to overall market volatility. Rising fuel and essential commodity prices have sharply increased the cost of living, disproportionately affecting ordinary citizens. At the same time, a deteriorating law-and-order situation, widespread extortion, and land-grabbing have placed significant pressure on industrial entrepreneurs, many of whom are struggling to sustain existing operations while losing incentive to establish new enterprises. Additionally, the industrial sector has been burdened by rising production costs and shortages of raw materials.

The combined effects of inflation and limited employment opportunities have led to a rise in poverty, with the middle class emerging as the most vulnerable group. Taken together, these factors have placed Bangladesh's socio-economic stability at considerable risk.

To restore stability and resilience, it is essential to implement comprehensive economic planning, ensure sound governance, strengthen law-and-order enforcement, introduce strict measures against extortion and land-grabbing, improve foreign currency management, and adopt robust anti-corruption initiatives.

Prof Dr Md Habibe Millat

MBBS, FRCS(Edin)

President, Global Center for Democratic Governance

EDITOR

Mohammad Abdur Rashid

SUB-EDITORS

Molla Huq

Kamal Khan

EDITORIAL BOARD

A T M Emdadul Haque

Mohammad Shahidullah

Manirul Islam

Shafiqur Rahman Anu

Latiful Kabir

Nazma Kawser

S Hossain

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

58 Leaman Drive

NS B3A 2K9 Canada

Email:

edi-

tor.spotlight@globalcdg.com

WEBSITE

www.globalcdg.org

ISSN 2819-2311

EDITOR'S NOTE

জাগো বাহে কোনে সবাই. ('Wake up, everyone')

The dream of taking Bangladesh forward with the dream of building a hunger-free, poverty-free Sonar Bangla (golden Bengal) to realize the aspirations of the great liberation war is about to be shattered today. The GDP of \$91 billion in 2008 reached a unique height of \$437 billion in 2023. Per capita income increased from \$595 in 2008 to \$2793 in 2022 and \$2651 in 2023. As the PM said, Poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, malnutrition eradication, housing projects for the homeless, widow allowance, old age allowance, and the inclusion of marginalized groups in the economy were the reasons why Bangladesh was able to become the second-largest and strongest economy in South Asia so quickly.

Since the change of power through terrorism and fraud on August 5, 2024, the country's economy has fallen into the hands of incompetent people and is on the verge of collapse. GDP has started to collapse, hundreds of industrial factories have been looted and closed, millions of workers have become unemployed, and the number of the poor is increasing at an alarming rate. Law and order have collapsed; a farce of revenge is going on in the name of justice. The administration is stagnant, and the rise of commodity prices in the market is making the lives of the common people miserable. The question is, when and how will the people of Bangladesh be freed from the clutches of this misrule? Who will give the call? Millions of people are eagerly waiting to hear that call. That voice will utter 'Wake up, everyone' (জাগো বাহে কোনে সবাই).

Mohammad Abdur Rashid M. Eng., PhD, SMIEE

Editor

২৭ আশ্বিন ১৪৩২ / 12 October 2025

SHEIKH HASINA: A VISIONARY PATHFINDER AND THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

Professor Dr. Shyamal Das

Preface

1988. We were then students at the University of Dhaka. A devastating flood had spread across the country. Many of our friends participated in a bread-making project at the Arts Cafeteria, led by the Student Struggle Council. One morning, we heard the news that she was coming. We all waited with restless anticipation. Finally, she arrived. Thick-rimmed glasses on her eyes; a simple Dhakai saree draped on her; that serene, unblemished smile on her face. She came near our table towards the end. I was watching her from a distance. She looked at us, offered that radiant smile, and gently asked: “How are you?”

At that moment, it felt as though she was looking directly at me. I was overwhelmed. That was the first time I had seen her so close. I remember staring at her, thinking: this is the woman who was raised in the house of our Father of the Nation. Yet, even then, a strange thought crossed my mind—that despite having her people, her party, her comrades, her leaders, she was, in essence, a visionary pathfinder holding these segments to transform Bangladesh.

Often I have thought so; nowadays the thought comes even more intensely. She has been doing everything—fighting, struggling, leading movements, working tirelessly to take the nation to its Himalaya. Yet she has remained alone. Just as Edmund Hillary had Tenzing Norgay by his side, does Sheikh Hasina have someone comparable? In my judgment, while not exactly Norgay in the true sense, she assembled a strong team to supplement her efforts.

Broadly speaking, perhaps her true Tenzing has been the people of Bangladesh and her devoted workers and grassroots leaders. At the same time, there has been a massive growth of opportunists within the trajectory. True, she has always praised her party workers and leaders, but deep behind those thick-rimmed glasses, her sharp eyes must have seen through everything. And perhaps in certain solitary moments, she realized that she must reach the Himalayas for Bangladesh, with only the people and her grassroots workers and leaders as her Tenzings. That is why we so often saw that even seemingly trivial decisions, when others faltered, had to be taken by her alone. It was by her direction that many despondent faces lit up with hope. Decisions that others could have easily taken—she had to bear alone, while her party leaders and workers supplemented her efforts in the field.

This is why I call her the Visionary Pathfinder. The thought returns to me again and again.

My own conviction is this: if I were asked to choose a leader from among the current generation of politicians for the country's welfare, I see no alternative to Sheikh Hasina. I have thought long and hard, and I conclude that the kind of desperate spirit that is necessary to lead a country exists, at present, only in her.

One thing must be clear: I am not speaking about the Awami League as a party. I am speaking about her alone. Again and again, I feel that this woman has been uniquely alone in making many of the nation's hardest decisions. After the inauguration of the Padma Bridge, the reactions from both her supporters and her opponents only reinforced my belief.

Has Sheikh Hasina surpassed her father? The question is difficult; the answer, even harder. I know Bangabandhu came to power in a time of severe crisis—leading a war-ravaged nation back to normalcy was a monumental challenge. And he handled much of that successfully. His period was marked by a different global political order, and it was that order which conspired to take him away from us so early, to the great detriment of Bangladesh.

Yet it must be remembered that Bangabandhu came to power as an undisputed leader, with the mountain of people's love behind him. That, however, was not the case for Sheikh Hasina. When she first came to power, the ideological foundation of the nation—the spirit of Liberation—was already contested, with countervailing forces firmly established. Her first term was won by a narrow margin, and within a constitutional framework that contradicted her own beliefs. There was much she could not do then, though surely she learned from the experience.

Introduction

Sheikh Hasina's political journey cannot be understood merely in terms of party politics. To evaluate her legacy, one must place her against the backdrop of Bangladesh's history of crisis, survival, and renewal.

When Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came to power in 1972, he inherited a nation rav-

Continued on Page 4

THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

aged by war. His challenge was reconstruction and the establishment of a new state. Sheikh Hasina, however, came to power in far less favorable circumstances. By the time she entered government, the spirit of Liberation had already been weakened, and counter-ideologies had entrenched themselves in politics and society. Unlike her father, she did not ascend as an undisputed leader with unanimous public trust. Instead, she had to build her legitimacy step by step, through perseverance, endurance, and political struggle.

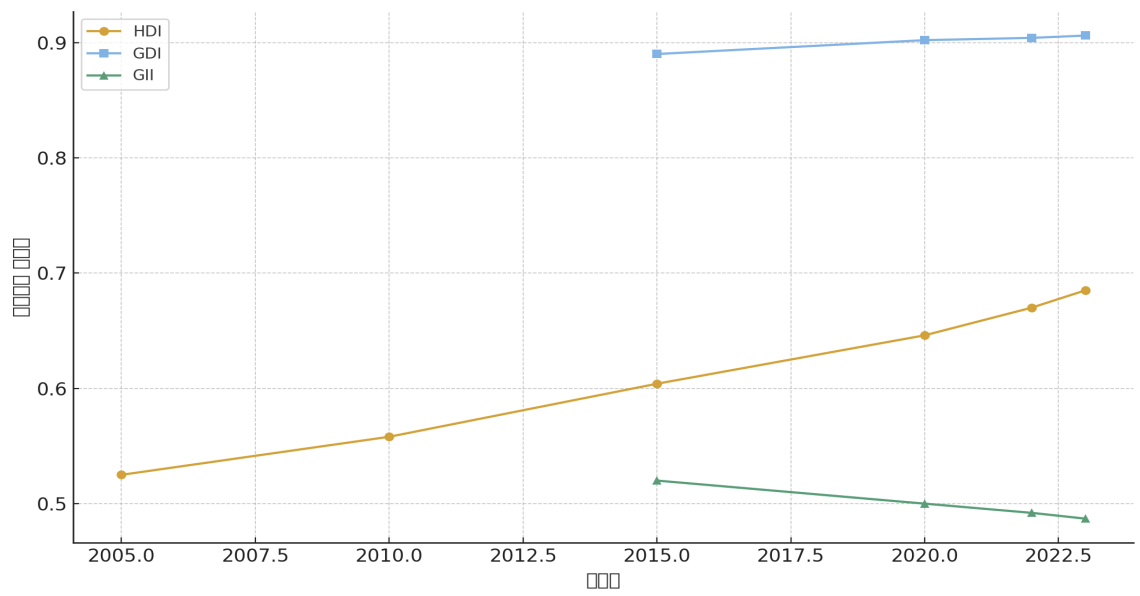
Her first term (1996–2001) was marked by fragile margins and structural limitations, yet she set important precedents in governance, education, women’s empowerment, and international diplomacy. Her later terms (2009–2024) were defined by consolidation: digital governance, mega-projects, expanded social safety nets, and assertive foreign policy.

This background explains why her leadership has been likened to that of a Visionary Pathfinder: she had to carry the weight of the nation’s climb almost alone, without trusted comrades comparable to the Four Leaders who once stood beside Bangabandhu.

Social Development Indicators

Let us begin the discussion with the Human Development Index and two fundamental gender-related indicators. The following chart presents data from 2005 to 2023, analyzing the trends of three measures: the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), and the Gender Inequality Index (GII). It should be noted that for HDI, we have used data covering the years 2005–2023; for GDI and GII, the new measures have been in use since 2015.

From 2001 to 2025, Bangladesh’s trajectory in the Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Development Index (GDI), and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) reveals a clear truth: the nation’s highest achievements occurred under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, supplemented by her efficient team. Let us analyze some of her achievements in the social sector.



Human Development Index (HDI): The UNDP’s Human Development Reports show that during the BNP era (2001–2006), Bangladesh’s HDI scores remained stagnant at a low level. In contrast, from 2009 to 2024, under Hasina’s leadership, HDI improved steadily, lifting Bangladesh into the medium development category and raising its global rank.

Rising from only 0.525 in 2005 to 0.685 in 2023—this was not the result of mere administrative procedures, but rather of Sheikh Hasina’s personal determination and vision. She introduced the expansion of education, community clinics, and social protection policies out of her own political insight. In comparison, during 2001–2008, under the BNP and the military-backed government, progress was slow; however, during Sheikh Hasina’s tenure, there was balanced development in all three core indicators—education, health, and income.

This can be explained through Amartya Sen’s “Capability Approach.” According to this theory, HDI is not just a measure of income, but also of human “capability” (encompassing health, education, and a decent standard of liv-

[Continued on page 5](#)

THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

ing). Sheikh Hasina emphasized all three areas—free education for girls in schools, the 10 Taka per kg rice program, and the expansion of rural healthcare.

Gender Development Index (GDI): The Gender Development Index reveals an even sharper difference. BNP's rule left women marginalized, with high maternal mortality, low female literacy, and minimal participation in the workforce. Under Hasina, Bangladesh achieved historic progress: the maternal mortality rate dropped dramatically; girls' school enrollment outpaced that of boys; and women entered the workforce in record numbers—particularly in the garment, banking, and ICT sectors.

Between 2015 and 2023, women's empowerment reached an unprecedented level. Women's education, employment, and entry into leadership positions were all the result of Sheikh Hasina's singular policy decisions. In 2015, Bangladesh's score on this indicator was 0.89, a result of the women-friendly policies implemented by Sheikh Hasina since 2009. Most significantly, by 2023, it increased to 0.91. Girls' enrollment in primary and secondary education surpassed that of boys. Maternal mortality dropped from 320 per 100,000 in 2001 to 136 in 2023. Women's life expectancy became higher than men's (74 years vs. 71 years). Through continuous progress in GDI, Bangladesh emerged as one of the leading countries in South Asia. Amartya Sen praised Bangladesh highly, noting that it had outpaced India.

According to the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the GDI framework, advancement in gender equality is possible through state policy. Sheikh Hasina proved that, with political will, rapid transformation is possible even in a traditionally patriarchal society.

It should be noted that in these achievements, there was certainly a strong effort and efficiency on the part of her team, while both the political and philosophical leadership were carried out by her.

Sheikh Hasina herself embodied women's empowerment. As the longest-serving female head of government in the world, she not only set an example but also institutionalized change, introducing reserved seats for women in parliament, increasing their presence in local government, the judiciary, the police, and the armed forces.

Gender Inequality Index (GII):

During 2001–2006, women's political representation was limited (primarily through reserved seats). In Sheikh Hasina's era, however, women have risen to leadership positions in the Secretariat, the judiciary, the armed forces, the police, and diplomacy. In local government (Union Parishads, municipalities, city corporations), women achieved visible direct electoral representation. At the national level, Bangladesh became the only country in South Asia where all four top positions—Prime Minister, Speaker, Leader of the Opposition, and Deputy Leader of the House—were held by women.

From 0.520 in 2015 to 0.487 in 2023, this index indicates that inequality declined primarily due to her policy stances. She effectively incorporated women's political participation and health rights into state policy. According to Nancy Fraser's "Redistribution and Recognition" thesis, equality is not only about economics, but also about social and political recognition. Sheikh Hasina ensured women's political empowerment through both constitutional structures and policy measures.

Such remarkable improvements in both GDI and GII are, in fact, the result of far-sighted, women-friendly leadership thinking, supplemented by an efficient team comprised of both political and bureaucratic, as well as technical, members.

The progress in these three indices is a testament to Sheikh Hasina's personal achievements. She was the Visionary Pathfinder—who, despite receiving little meaningful support from the political leadership around her, lifted the nation to the summit of development. And in a conservative country like Bangladesh, anyone working for women's empowerment in positions of leadership must inevitably walk a resolute path.

In summary, the graphs of HDI, GDI, and GEM all tell the same story: Bangladesh experienced upward movement during Hasina's era, while others faltered or regressed. These were somewhat collective party achievements, while Haaina's political leadership made significant contributions to decision-making for these transformations. These were her personal achievements—her vision, her directives, her determination.

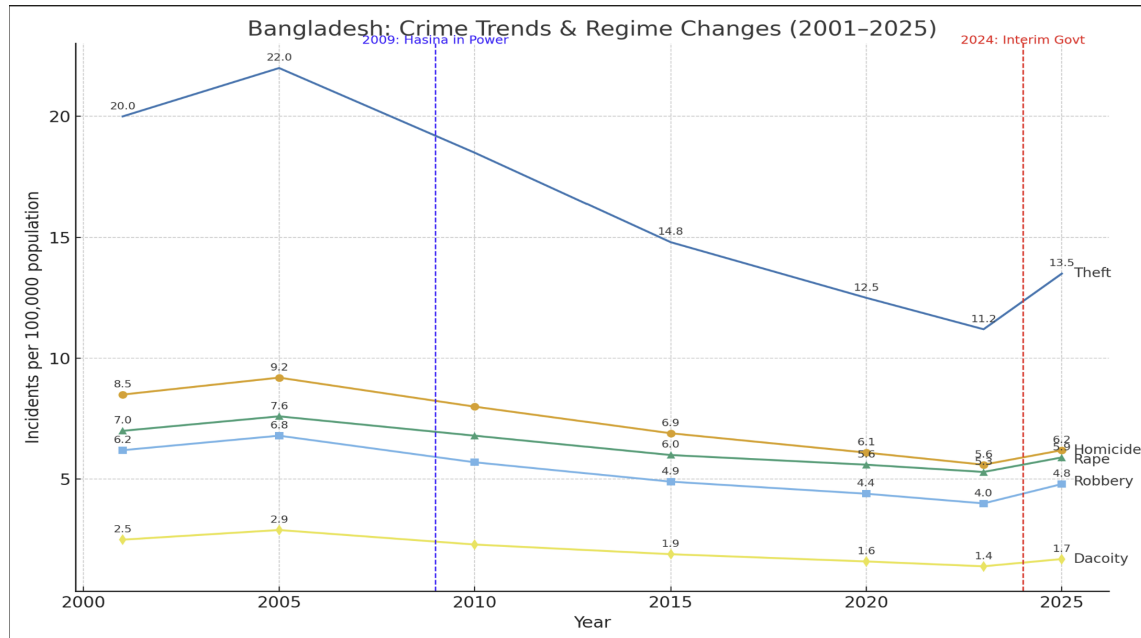
Thus, just as Joan of Arc carried the spirit of her people, Sheikh Hasina became the Joan of Arc of Bangladesh's social transformation when she had to face significant barriers embedded in a patriarchal social structure like Bangladesh, and she was vastly successful because the significant leaders from her party provided some fundamental intellectual or policy support to uphold her.

Continued on page 6

THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

Law and Order

We present a comparative analysis of crime statistics in Bangladesh to examine the differences between various regimes. When BNP was in power (2001–2006), homicide, robbery, rape, dacoity, and theft rates were alarmingly high. Political violence, extortion, and criminal patronage were rampant.



Under Sheikh Hasina (2009–2024), these trends reversed. Homicide rates steadily declined, as did robbery and dacoity. The introduction of community policing, the launch of the 999 emergency service, and the modernization of the police force all contributed to a significant reduction in violent crime. Special tribunals and ICT-based monitoring made justice more accessible and effective.

Women’s safety, a crucial dimension, saw notable progress. The introduction of harsher penalties for sexual violence, stronger enforcement of anti-harassment laws, and institutional mechanisms such as the One-Stop Crisis Centers created an environment of greater accountability.

In contrast, within a year of the Interim Government (2024–2025), crime indicators began to rise again. Killings, robberies, and sexual violence increased—signaling administrative weakness, political illegitimacy, and a collapse of accountability.

Regime-wise Comparative Analysis:

BNP Era (2001–2006): Crime rates reached their highest levels; law enforcement was politicized and ineffective.

Hasina Era (2009–2024): Crime rates consistently reduced; law and order stabilized through reform and modernization.

Interim Government (2024–2025): Sharp deterioration in a short span; law enforcement weakened by political chaos.

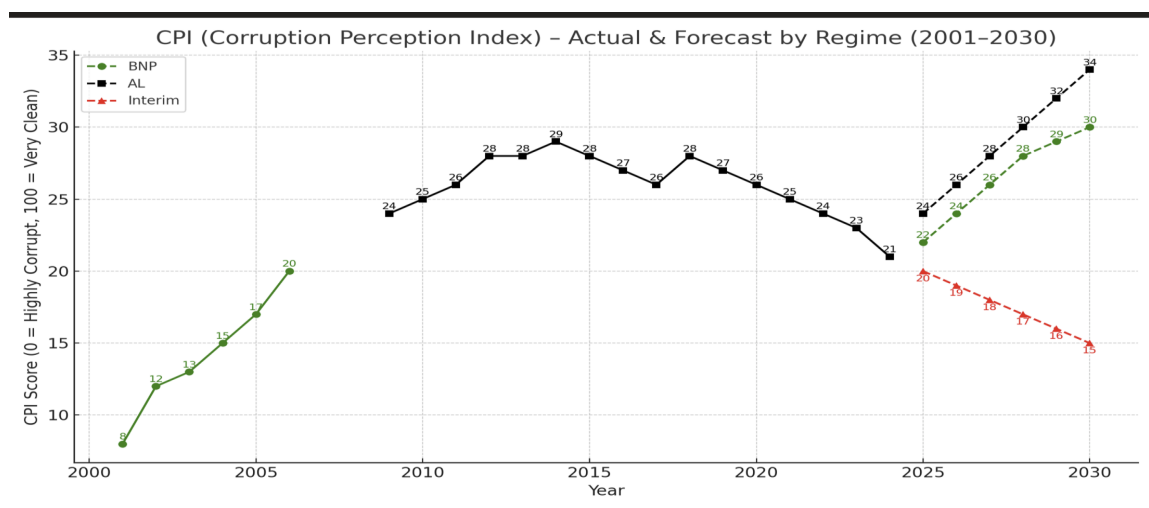
The conclusion is evident: Sheikh Hasina was the true architect of law and order in Bangladesh. Without her leadership, the country has again slid toward lawlessness.

Corruption Trends: Was the Hasina Regime Worst?

Corruption Perception Index

Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and complementary data reveal a clear pattern across regimes. In the chart below, we have also made a forecast for 2025–2030 to understand what would happen if these three regimes were in power with different capacities.

Continued on Page 7



Analysis: Corruption Perception Index (CPI), 2001–2030

1. BNP Period (2001–2006):

- The CPI score rose from 8 to 20.
- Although this was a slight improvement, the score remained extremely low, indicating widespread corruption and weak institutional structures.
- In international rankings, Bangladesh still remained one of the most corrupt countries in the world.

2. Awami League Period (2009–2024):

- The CPI score started at 24 and improved to 29–28 during the mid-years.
- However, in the later period (2019–2024), the score again dropped to 21–23.
- Nevertheless, the key achievements during this time were institutional reform, digital governance, suppression of terrorism, and women’s empowerment.
- Although the score fluctuated, the average performance was significantly higher than during the BNP era.

3. Forecast 2025–2030:

• Awami League (AL):

The score is projected to rise consistently from 24 to 34.

This indicates that under Sheikh Hasina’s continued leadership, Bangladesh would have become more governance-oriented and institutionally mature.

The CPI trend under AL demonstrates “Institutional Maturity & Rule of Law Strengthening.”

• BNP:

According to the forecast, during 2025–2030, the score will range from 22 to 30.

This reflects a weaker trend compared to AL; despite some improvement, there will be only limited progress in controlling corruption.

• Interim Government (2024–2030):

The CPI score is expected to fall from 20 to just 15.

This directly indicates that under the interim regime, corruption has risen to an unprecedented and alarming level.

The primary causes of this decline are the crisis of political legitimacy, administrative bias, and instability.

Overall Understanding of Corruption Perception Index:

• BNP Period (2001–2006): Failed to control corruption; CPI consistently remained at the bottom. Bangladesh was ranked as the most corrupt country in the world for five consecutive years. CPI scores were the lowest globally, reflecting systemic corruption, rent-seeking, and the collapse of institutional checks.

• Sheikh Hasina’s Period (2009–2024): Relative improvement in CPI; Bangladesh gained a degree of international credibility. The CPI score steadily improved. From 2009 onwards, Bangladesh left behind its position at the bottom of the global ranking. Institutional reforms—such as strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission, digitizing financial flows, enhancing public procurement transparency, and expanding e-governance—contributed to this improvement. Although there were ups and downs, the trend was unmistakable: Bangladesh became less corrupt under Hasina’s rule compared to the BNP era.

Continued on Page 8

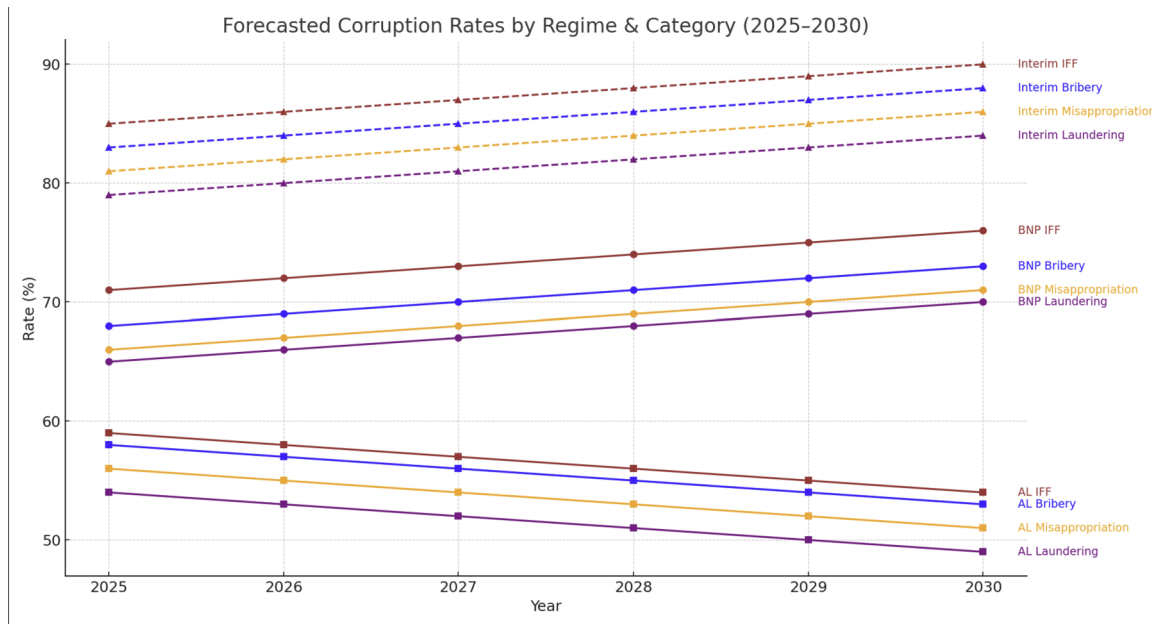
THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

• Interim Government (2024–2030): Massive expansion of corruption; CPI score deteriorated drastically.): Within the very first year of the interim regime, forecasts suggest CPI scores are falling again. The absence of political legitimacy, the politicization of institutions, and the resurgence of rent-seeking groups have already begun to erode the gains of the Hasina period.

Thus, in the global struggle for transparency, Sheikh Hasina stands out as Bangladesh’s Anti-Corruption Vanguard. Below is another chart illustrating a comparative scenario of corruption by regimes with a forecast.

Bribery, Illicit Financial Flow, Misappropriation, & Money Laundering

Here, based on the IMF and World Bank’s Bribery Incidence indicators, the Global Financial Integrity and UNODC estimates of Illicit Financial Flows (such as trade misinvoicing), and the BASEL/AML (money laundering tendency) indices, a forecast-based illustration has been presented.



Analysis: Corruption Trends in the 2025–2030 Forecast

1. Awami League (AL):

A consistently downward trend is visible in all indicators.

Between 2025 and 2030, Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) declined from 59% to 54%.

Bribery falls from 58% to 53%, Misappropriation from 56% to 51%, and Laundering from 54% to 49%.

This clearly demonstrates that under AL governance, a structured process of corruption reduction was implemented, where institutional control and digital transparency played a crucial role in reducing corruption.

2. BNP:

A moderate upward trend is observed in all indicators.

IFF rises from 71% to 76%, Bribery from 68% to 73%, Misappropriation from 66% to 71%, and Laundering from 65% to 70%.

Although corruption levels are significantly higher compared to those in AL, during BNP’s rule, corruption remained stable yet continued to rise.

This indicates that BNP’s governance is ineffective in controlling corruption; rather, due to electoral interests and administrative weakness, corruption becomes institutionalized.

3. Interim Government (2024–2030):

The most alarming trend is visible under the interim regime.

IFF rises from 86% to 90%, Bribery from 84% to 88%, Misappropriation from 82% to 86%, and Laundering from 79% to 84%.

This suggests that under the interim government, corruption will expand significantly and state control will erode. The crisis of legitimacy, politicization of administration, and absence of accountability will drive corruption to the highest level in the nation’s history.

In conclusion about these four items, we have the following significant points:

AL: Downward corruption trend; symbol of institutional reform and good governance.

BNP: Gradual rise in corruption yet remaining at a high level— “Controlled Corruption.”

Continued on Page 9

THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

Interim: Explosion of corruption, institutional collapse, and governance of impunity— “Corruption Anarchy.”

From this analysis, it is clearly evident that the most effective and corruption-controlling leadership for Bangladesh is that of Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League.

We would like to use another important indicator.

Basel AML Index – AML/CFT Risk

The Basel AML Index measures two things: Money Laundering (ML) and Terrorist Financing (TF) risk. In other words, it reflects a country's vulnerability to illegal financial activities, including money laundering, terrorist financing, and inadequate control mechanisms.

Explanation of the Score:

- Score Range: 0 to 10
- 0 = Low Risk (i.e., the country is very strong in AML/CFT control)
- 10 = High Risk (i.e., the country is very weak in AML/CFT control)

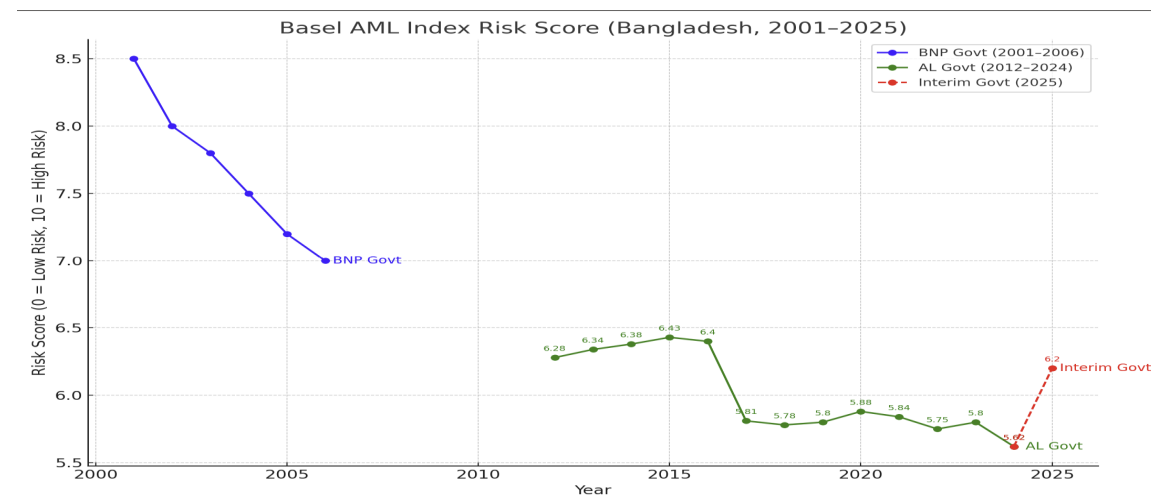
Sources / Components of the Index:

The Basel AML Index is derived from around 18 different sources (such as the World Bank, FATF, Transparency International, WEF, etc.), taking into account the following dimensions:

- Corruption risk
- Financial transparency & standards
- Public transparency & accountability
- Political/legal risk
- AML/CFT framework

Therefore, in this context, the term “risk” refers to money laundering and corruption risk, not income or economic growth risk.

The Basel AML Index measures the risk of money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF), with scores ranging from 0 (low risk) to 10 (high risk). It is not about income risk; rather, it is a composite index that captures corruption, financial transparency, the political/legal environment, and AML/CFT institutional strength.



Bangladesh's record on this index illustrates the same political contrast as other indicators:

BNP Era (2001–2006, scenario-based): Although official Basel data is available only from 2012, global corruption rankings and financial integrity assessments strongly suggest that BNP's period was marked by extremely high AML/CFT risk. Scenario estimates place Bangladesh at scores between 7.0–8.5, signifying the highest levels of vulnerability.

Awami League under Sheikh Hasina (2012–2024, official data): From a score of 6.28 in 2012, Bangladesh gradually improved, reaching 5.62 in 2024. Despite fluctuations, the long-term trend was positive. Institutional reforms—such as strengthening banking regulations, introducing digital financial systems, and aligning with FATF standards—have helped Bangladesh lower its risk profile.

Continued on Page 10

ECHOES OF THE BNP–JAMAAT ERA

Interim Government (2025, forecast): Forecast scenarios show a sharp reversal. The risk score rises again to 6.20, reflecting weakening institutional checks, political instability, and administrative chaos.

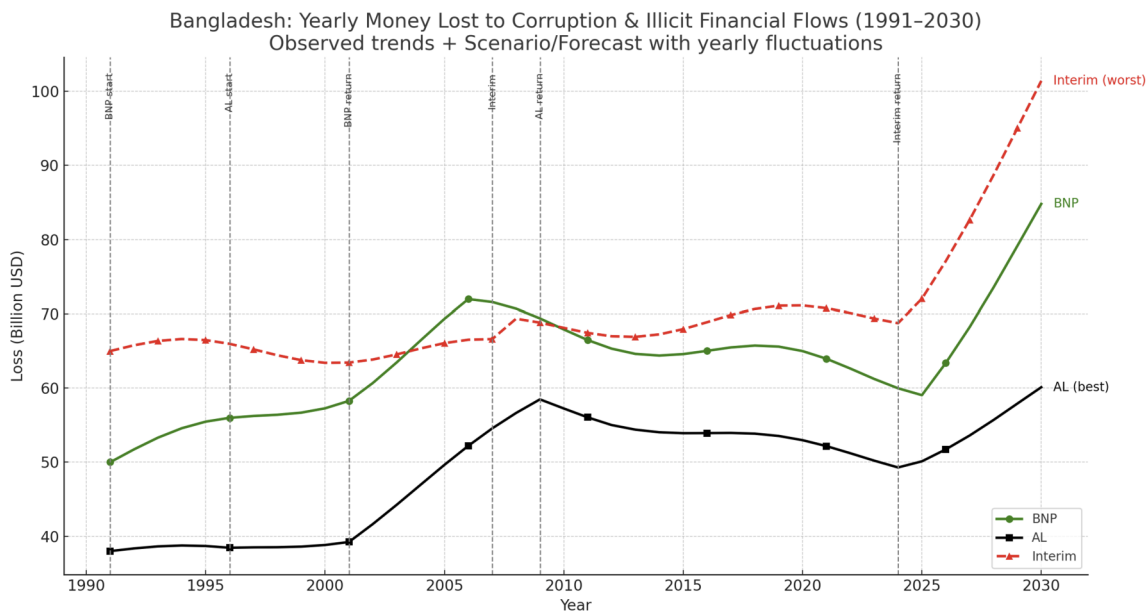
Comparative Insight: BNP Era: The country stood at the highest global risk, driven by entrenched corruption and financial opacity. Hasina Era: Bangladesh steadily reduced its vulnerability, proving that reform, regulation, and political will could yield measurable progress. Interim Government: In less than a year, the risk trend has shifted sharply upward, signaling a resurgence of corruption, money laundering, and illicit financial flows.

In conclusion, the Basel AML Index reinforces the same lesson: Sheikh Hasina’s leadership was indispensable for reducing corruption and AML/CFT risks; without her, Bangladesh is once again sliding into high-risk territory.

Long-Term Loss Analysis (1991–2030)

One final issue needs to be discussed here.

Not only the corruption scores themselves, but we must also consider the financial losses Bangladesh has suffered as a country because of corruption. In the chart below, using both actual and forecast models, we have illustrated the extent of economic losses Bangladesh has experienced—and is projected to experience—due to corruption during the period 1990–2030.



When we examine long-term losses due to corruption and illicit financial flows across regimes (1991–2030), a striking pattern emerges.

BNP Rule (1991–1996; 2001–2006): Losses were consistently high and rising. Between 1991 and 1996, the yearly outflow increased from approximately \$50 billion to \$55 billion. The second BNP term (2001–2006) was even worse, with losses increasing from \$60 billion to \$70 billion. These figures align with international reports that placed Bangladesh at the bottom of global corruption rankings during that period.

Awami League Rule (1996–2001; 2009–2024): Losses decreased significantly compared to the BNP periods. Between 1996 and 2001, the yearly figure was reduced to \$38–\$40 billion USD, indicating greater institutional control and transparency. Between 2009 and 2024, despite challenges, losses remained relatively stable, hovering between \$50 billion and \$52 billion USD. This period saw improvements in digital governance, banking transparency, and the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects with greater financial discipline.

Interim Governments (2007–2008; 2024–2030 forecast): In both interim phases, corruption and illicit financial losses spiked dramatically. In 2007–2008, outflows increased to \$65–\$68 billion USD. In the ongoing interim regime (2024–2030, forecast), losses rise alarmingly from \$73.8 billion in 2025 to almost \$100 billion by 2030. This trend



Continued on page 11

reflects institutional collapse, lack of political legitimacy, and resurgence of rent-seeking elites.

Comparative Assessment:

BNP: Institutionalized corruption; steady upward losses, marking the darkest chapters.

Awami League: Relative stability and consistent improvement, proving stronger governance and reforms.

Interim Governments: Chaotic spikes and the worst forecasts, showing the collapse of accountability.

The long-term analysis makes it clear: Sheikh Hasina's leadership was the decisive factor in containing corruption and illicit financial flows. Without her, and with the real team working for her, Bangladesh faces a catastrophic financial hemorrhage.

Joan of Arc and the Visionary Pathfinder of the Journey

Based on the data analyzed, I find striking parallels between Sheikh Hasina and Joan of Arc. This woman has stood face to face with death countless times, yet even in the shadow of death, she has saved her nation. The August 21 grenade attack, at least nineteen assassination attempts, international conspiracies, and finally the domestic and global plot of August 5, 2024, to eliminate her—through all of this, she never gave up. She not only survived but also led the country forward.

Just as Joan of Arc, a woman, provided military leadership in a male-dominated society, Sheikh Hasina too has become a symbol of strength and capability for women and marginalized people in the male-centric politics of South Asia.

She can rightly be called the "Visionary Pathfinder" because, unlike Bangabandhu, she only had a strong supporting team beside her on the path of development. Whether it was the construction of the Padma Bridge with self-financing, the anti-terrorism operations, or Bangladesh's assertive position in international diplomacy, she had to make those decisions almost entirely on her own.

On one hand, she lifted the nation to the summit of development; on the other, she often remained alone, isolated by the absence of collaborative leadership. Even today, when the Awami League is in crisis, and she herself is under threat, she still stands alone with her team of advisors, yet continues to lead. Every form of misdeed, controversy, or excess committed during the League's rule has ultimately fallen upon her shoulders, and she carried the burden with the team on her side.

This may, in part, stem from Sheikh Hasina's own political philosophy, which deserves a deeper discussion later.

In sum, two metaphors—Joan of Arc (the courageous warrior woman) and the Visionary Pathfinder (the leading burden-bearing guide)—together capture the essence of Sheikh Hasina's leadership.

Conclusion

To equate the regimes is to deny reality. The historical evidence and indices—HDI, GDI, GEM, CPI, the Basel AML Index, and assessments of financial loss due to corruption—all demonstrate that Bangladesh's greatest strides occurred during Sheikh Hasina's leadership. Sheikh Hasina's legacy stands as a testament to courageous and visionary leadership. Like Joan of Arc, she has led with determination and moral clarity, transforming Bangladesh through her policies of reform, inclusion, and progress. Her journey reflects not solitude, but strength—the will of a leader who turned challenges into opportunities and guided a nation toward transformation. In every measure of development—social, economic, and institutional—her leadership remains the cornerstone of Bangladesh's modern identity.

She was not merely a head of government; she was the Joan of Arc of Bangladesh, carrying the spirit of the people against overwhelming odds. She was also the Visionary Pathfinder, climbing tirelessly toward the Himalayan peak of national development, often with a few genuine comrades at her side, and sometimes even betrayed by those closest to her.

The BNP years institutionalized corruption and lawlessness. The interim governments represent episodes of collapse, chaos, and unrestrained plunder. By contrast, Sheikh Hasina's years (1996–2001, 2009–2024) stand as eras of stability, reform, and progress.

Yes, there were challenges, fluctuations, and imperfections. Yet the overarching truth remains: without Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh slides into corruption, disorder, and financial disaster; with her, the country advances in human development, gender empowerment, law and order, and institutional strength.

In the grand narrative of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina must be remembered not only as the daughter of Bangabandhu

[Continued on page 12](#)

THE ARCHITECT OF TRANSFORMATION OF BANGLADESH

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but also as a leader in her own right—who bore the burden of history with resolute courage and whose spirit of perseverance carried the nation forward when others faltered.

References:

- United Nations Development Programme. (2025). Human Development Report 2025: Statistical Annex – Table 1 (HDI & components). Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org>
- UNDP Data Futures Exchange. Bangladesh country page. Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org>
- UNDP. (2025). HDI Trends 1990–2023 (Comparable Series). Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org>
- UNDP. (2025). Gender Development Index (GDI) – Statistical Annex (Table 4). Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org>
- UNDP. (2025). Gender Inequality Index (GII) – Statistical Annex (Table 5). Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org>
- UNDP. (2025). Human Development Data Center – Technical notes & methodology. Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org>
- Transparency International. (2024). Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi>
- Transparency International. (2024). Bangladesh country page (CPI 2024). Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org>
- Basel Institute on Governance. (2024). Basel AML Index – 13th Public Edition. Basel, Switzerland. Retrieved from <https://index.baselgovernance.org>
- Basel Institute on Governance. (2012–2023). Basel AML Index Archive Reports. Retrieved from <https://index.baselgovernance.org>
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Global Study on Homicide. Retrieved from <https://dataunodc.un.org>
- World Bank. Intentional homicides (per 100,000 people) – Bangladesh (Indicator SH.STA.HOMI.P5). Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org>
- World Bank. (2022). Enterprise Surveys – Bribery incidence (% of firms experiencing at least one bribe request). Retrieved from <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org>
- Global Financial Integrity (GFI). (2019). Illicit Financial Flows to and from Developing Countries: 2006–2015. Washington, DC: GFI.
- Global Financial Integrity (GFI). (2020). Trade-Related Illicit Financial Flows in 134 Developing Countries 2008–2017. Washington, DC: GFI.
- Global Financial Integrity (GFI). (2021). Illicit Financial Flows: Methodology Update. Washington, DC: GFI.
- The Daily Star. (2025). Bangladesh’s latest HDI takeaways. Dhaka.
- Prothom Alo. (2025). Bangladesh CPI 2024 coverage. Dhaka.

*The author is a Professor of Homeland Security,
Elizabeth City State University, North Carolina, USA*



FROM PROTEST TO LOOTING: THE COLLAPSE OF THE ECONOMY IN BANGLADESH DURING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

The Authors wish to Remain Anonymous

Introduction

The transition in Bangladesh after August 5, 2024, provides a stark illustration of how political upheaval can evolve from mass protests to widespread disorder, revealing the deep-seated stresses within the country and the true nature of its new interim government. Widespread protests initially emerged from student movements targeting government job quotas, but quickly snowballed into a broader national outcry against inequality, corruption, and demands for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation. The unrest reflected a profound dissatisfaction with the ruling party's economic and social policies, as well as the perceived exclusion of broad segments of Bangladeshi society from meaningful power and opportunity. On August 5, 2024, the situation escalated as protesters stormed the prime minister's official residence, prompting Sheikh Hasina to escape and resign. This sudden power vacuum laid bare the fragility of state structures, with the military stepping into facilitates the formation of an interim government. Led by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, the new administration was formally installed on August 8, 2024.

Protest, Looting, and Costs

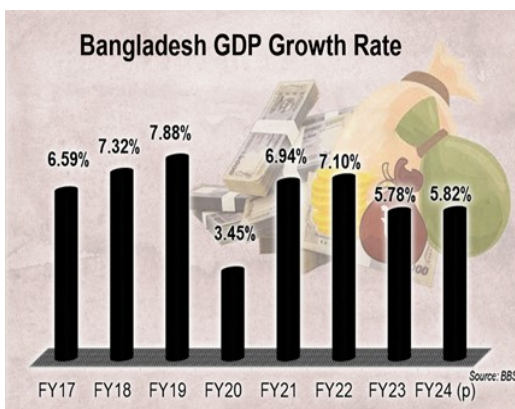
In the power vacuum post-5th August, Bangladesh was gripped by chaos demonstrators and opportunists alike engaged in looting, arson, and attacks on symbols of the previous regime. Police stations, political offices, government buildings, and private homes especially those belonging to minority communities were ransacked in districts across the country. Perhaps the most high-profile incident was the looting and ransacking of Sheikh Hasina's official residence.



Protesters made off with everything from furniture and electronics to livestock. In the days that followed, public pressure and campaigns by protest leaders led to a remarkable return of many stolen items, including valuable possessions and even pets and secret government files. A notable number of attacks targeted Hindu-owned homes and businesses, particularly in Khulna and Mymensingh divisions. Looting, arson, and deadly violence accompanied the broader unrest, with security forces often unable or unwilling to intervene.

Following the political unrest and protests in Bangladesh after August 5, 2024, various sectors experienced significant damage and disruptions. The textile and garment industry faced setbacks due to political instability, floods, and a shortage of LNG [1]. Additionally, the protests led to disruptions in exports, increased costs, and factory closures. The agricultural sector, particularly in flood-prone areas, suffered damage to crops, fishponds, and infrastructure. Furthermore, the political turmoil impacted the economy, with the Asian Development Bank downgrading growth forecasts [2].

While there was a 2.9 per cent increase in net FDI during FY2024 compared to FY2023, the most recent months of FY2025 show a significant decline in net FDI compared to FY2024. Furthermore, if only net inflows are considered, FDI actually declined in FY2024 as well. According to Bangladesh Bank data, net FDI inflow decreased by 8.8 per cent in FY2024 compared that in FY2023. According to the ICT and telecommunications ministry, the sector faced financial losses of Tk 18,000 crore [3].



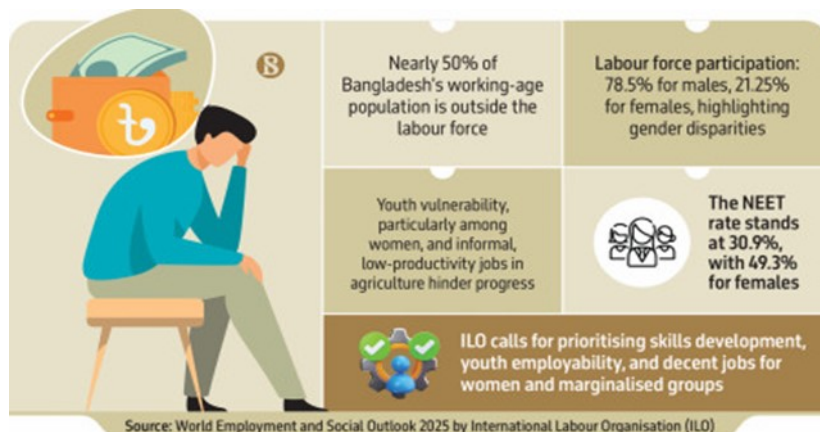
During Yunus-led administration, a deep structural challenges persist including high youth unemployment, corruption, and sluggish industrial growth while ongoing political uncertainty continues to discourage investment. According to World Bank estimates, an additional three million people in Bangladesh could be pushed into poverty in 2025 alone. The outlook is equally sobering on GDP growth, which is expected to slow to 3.3 per cent in fiscal year 2024-25. Compounding these chal-

Continued on Page 14

THE COLLAPSE OF THE ECONOMY IN BANGLADESH

Challenges is the looming threat of higher U.S. tariffs, which risk further pressuring Bangladesh's export-dependent economy.

The law and order situation remained fragile, and instances of mob culture had lowered the business confidence in the country. Due to repeated labor unrests, many factories closed in the past year, which led to an increase in unemployment. According to Industrial Police data, more than 100 units closed between August 2024 and May 2025, resulting in about 60,000 workers becoming unemployed. Between July and December 2024, Bangladesh lost an



estimated 2.1 million jobs, with women disproportionately affected. The apparel sector, a major export earner, faced disruptions due to factory shutdowns, internet outages, and violence, leading to negative signals for international buyers and increased costs for exporters. Moreover, various protests in the government and private sectors have undermined the investment climate and threatened operational continuity in many sectors during the interim government. A low level of foreign direct investment, a contractionary monetary policy and an uncertainty over the state's democratic transition also impacted the businesses throughout the year.

The Real Character of the Post-5th August Government

The interim government, inaugurated on August 8, 2024, faces the herculean task of restoring law and order. Its initial actions included granting immunity for actions taken during the protests (through August 8), promising thorough investigations into human rights violations, and initiating operations to curb ongoing violence. The core ambitions of the interim leaders and activists are the reform of state institutions, the establishment of a truly inclusive society, and delivering justice for the atrocities committed during the protests and crackdown. The interim government's legitimacy is constantly tested by unrest, factionalism, and communal violence, and its authority is challenged both by remnants of the old guard and opportunistic rioters. There are concerns that, despite promises of reform and dialogue, deep-rooted corruption, impunity, and violence may persist if meaningful institutional changes do not happen. Calls for radical reforms include changes to the constitution, policing, electoral system, economic policy, and minority protections.

The transition from protest to looting and governmental instability reveals a Bangladesh both desperate for systemic reform and vulnerable to lawlessness in periods of political uncertainty. The real character of the post-5th August government is one of struggle: striving to fulfill the lofty goals of protesters, control chaos, mediate between warring factions, and deliver justice and accountability while under the constant threat that the very violence and lawlessness the protest opposed, could engulf its future if reforms falter.

Real Picture of Economic collapse and slowdown of Bangladesh

Here's a comprehensive overview of the economic and industrial disruptions linked to the Muhammad Yunus interim government in Bangladesh over the past year (since its formation on 8 August 2024**)

- World Bank cut its forecast from 5.7% (April 2024) to 4.0% (October 2024) for FY2024-25[4].
- For July-September 2024 quarter, growth slowed sharply, with large-scale industrial production contracting by 0.71% YoY (it had previously been +11.87% a year earlier) [5].
- Later, growth projections dropped to 3.8% and even 3.3%, the lowest in decades [6].
- According to industry insiders, over 60% of factories were non-operational by May 2025 due to: High production costs, Gas shortages and energy instability, Rising bank loan interest rates above 16%, and Law-and-order disruptions [7].
- Nearly 100 garment and related factories have been permanently shut in industrial zones such as Gazipur, Narayanganj-Narsingdi, Savar, and others, impacting 60,000+ workers [8].
- A Reddit estimate noted 140 garment factories closed in seven months, leaving over 100,000 unemployed, with 20% of export orders shifted to competing countries [9].
- BTMA data shows 330,000 job losses in the industrial sector over the past year—an unprecedented high[10].

Continued on page 15

THE COLLAPSE OF THE ECONOMY IN BANGLADESH

- NBR revenue grew only 3.24% year-on-year (July-April), the slowest pace in five years [11].
- A major NBR strike in May–June 2025 halted customs/tax services entirely, affecting international trade worth roughly Tk 2,500 crore daily [12].
- Government borrowing from banks surged to Tk 985.79 billion, up 60% year-over-year by April 2025, crowding out private credit [13].
- Non-performing loans rose to 17% of total loans (~Tk 16.82 lakh crore) by late 2024, adding to financial strain [14].
- Factory shutdowns during student protests shut down garment operations.
- Estimated losses: ~\$150 million daily during curfews and communication blackouts.
- Export delays, disrupted supply chains, and inflation rounded out the impact [15].
- Outages lasted a week, hitting freelancers, e-commerce, ride-hailing, and small businesses hard, cutting communication and trade capacity [16].

Concern of Economists regarding the slowdown of the economy of Bangladesh

Observing the economic condition, mismanagement, plundering and looting of public money, some economists of Bangladesh have raised their genuine concern. Such as:

- Zahid Hussain (Former Chief Economist, World Bank Dhaka Office) warns that political uncertainty—especially street protests—is severely undermining investor confidence and disrupting daily business activity: “Standing in traffic for three to four hours a day ... it breaks the economy’s knees [17].” Also criticizes the FY2025–26 budget as lacking structural reforms, questioning whether revenue targets (e.g., Tk 5.64 lakh crore) are achievable. He cautions that missing targets could force spending cuts or increased borrowing [18].
- Mustafizur Rahman (Distinguished Fellow, CPD) describes the current slowdown as “the lowest GDP growth in 36 years,” but argues it could reflect a needed correction rather than structural collapse [19]. He also highlights weak investment (capital spending contracting ~2.4%), soaring inflation (~9.3%), rising poverty (extreme poverty up to ~9.3%), and low FDI (~0.2% of GDP) [20].
- Selim Raihan (DU Economics Professor & SANEM Executive Director) warns that macroeconomic slowdown stems from both domestic mismanagement and global headwinds, including investor wariness, policy inconsistency, and political instability [21].
- Ahsan H. Mansur (Executive Director, Policy Research Institute) forecasts default loans could surge to 25–30% of total loans and warns that implementing IMF-driven loan policies could push defaults into the equivalent of >₹5 lakh crore taka [22].
- AB Mirza Azizul Islam (Economist) stresses that without political stability, exports, growth, and business confidence will continue to deteriorate [23].
- Dr. Anu Muhammad** (Former Economics Professor, JU) claims that the interim government missed key opportunities to restructure the economy post-Hasina. Continues the pattern of vested-interest control, producing no meaningful results. Factory closures and unemployment are the outcome [24].
- Khondaker Golam Moazzem and CPD Survey (Nov 2024) CPD identified inflation, economic downturn, climate risk, and policy instability as top threats in the 2-year horizon (2025–26), with corruption and foreign exchange volatility among major obstacles [25].

Conclusion:

Bangladesh’s economy stands on the brink of a severe crisis. Production and investment have stagnated amid prolonged political uncertainty, rampant corruption, and a deteriorating business climate. Both local and foreign investors are increasingly hesitant to commit capital due to unpredictable policies, bureaucratic inefficiency, and weak rule of law. The resulting slowdown threatens to undo years of economic progress, with key sectors—from garments to agriculture—facing stagnation or decline. Renowned economists have issued urgent warnings, highlighting multiple interconnected risks: political instability, which discourages long-term planning; rampant inflation, eroding purchasing power; plummeting investment, both domestic and foreign; chronic financial-sector vulnerabil-

Continued on page 16

THE COLLAPSE OF THE ECONOMY IN BANGLADESH

ities, including banking scandals and liquidity shortages; and structural policy failures, such as an unsustainable tax system and inadequate infrastructure. The consensus is unequivocal: Without immediate and decisive reforms, Bangladesh risks sliding from a temporary economic slowdown into a prolonged recession. Key measures must include restoring investor confidence through transparent governance, stabilizing the banking sector by addressing bad loans and mismanagement, and expanding the tax net to reduce reliance on regressive indirect taxes. Failure to act could deepen poverty, exacerbate unemployment, and trigger broader social unrest—jeopardizing not just the economy, but the nation's stability as a whole.

References

1. Current Challenges of Textile and Apparel Industry in Bangladesh. See: <https://www.textileindustry.net/challenges-of-textile-and-apparel-industry-in-bangladesh/>.
2. Poverty in Bangladesh stages a comeback. See: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/views/poverty-in-bangladesh-stages-a-comeback>.
3. Bangladesh's economic outlook for 2024-25. See: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/views/bangladeshs-economic-outlook-for-2024-25>.
4. **There are no sources in the current document.**
5. Economy of Bangladesh. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Bangladesh?utm_source=chatgpt.com
6. Economic woes far from over, see: https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/economic-woes-far-over-3788271?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
7. Lower revenue collection narrows fiscal space. See: https://www.reddit.com/r/bangladesh/comments/1h0t0bj?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
8. Industrial system on brink of collapse amid mounting pressures. See: https://www.observerbd.com/news/527837?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
9. Bangladesh economy stumbles amid slowing growth, factory closures. See: https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/383997/bangladesh-economy-stumbles-amid-slowng-growth?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
10. 140 clothing factories closed in Bangladesh in 7 months: 1 lakh unemployed, company owners fleeing the country after Hasina's coup. See: https://www.reddit.com/r/bangladesh/comments/1jinx2z?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
11. Industrial system on brink of collapse amid mounting pressures. See: https://www.observerbd.com/news/527837?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
12. https://www.observerbd.com/news/527837?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
13. https://www.observerbd.com/news/527837?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
14. https://www.observerbd.com/news/527837?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
15. Economic woes far from over. See: https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/economic-woes-far-over-3788271?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
16. European Investment Bank to boost funds for Bangladesh as it weathers political turmoil. See: https://apnews.com/article/fe027d93de15d52e01c1ddd68ed72fab?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
17. Bangladesh's internet shutdown isolates citizens, disrupts business. See: https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladeshs-internet-shutdown-isolates-citizens-disrupts-business-2024-07-26/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
18. Stalled politics, strained economy: What's next for Bangladesh? See: https://bdnews24.com/economy/1df9d5fcfd83?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
19. Economic slump temporary, recovery on the horizon – Professor Mustafizur Rahman. See: https://cpd.org.bd/economic-slump-temporary-recovery-on-the-horizon/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Economy stuck in quicksand of crisis. See: https://en.bdpratidin.com/special/2025/01/01/26788?utm_source=chatgpt.com. https://cpd.org.bd/economic-slump-temporary-recovery-on-the-horizon/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
23. https://www.dailyindustrybd.com/news/846?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
24. Bangladesh economy stumbles amid slowing growth, factory closures. See: https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/383997/bangladesh-economy-stumbles-amid-slowng-growth?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
25. CPD: Bangladesh faces 3 major economic risks in next 2 years. See: https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/365409/cpd-bangladesh-s-economy-lags-behind-sri-lanka?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

The Authors are Professors of Universities



WORLD MEDIA WATCH

Commentary by Manirul Islam

HILL VOICE: COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN KHAGRACHARI AND GUIMARA, CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT)

Date of Incident: September 27–28, 2025

Date of Publication: October 5, 2025 (*Hill Voice*)

Source: *Hill Voice* online news portal

Background

Hill Voice is a prominent online news platform dedicated to reporting on issues affecting the indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Its coverage regularly includes human rights conditions, land disputes, political developments, and indigenous cultural affairs.

The CHT, covering an area of **13,189 square kilometers**, has since ancient times been the homeland of **eleven indigenous ethnic groups**, collectively identifying themselves as the **Jumma peoples (Highlanders)**. Tensions between these indigenous communities and Bengali Muslim settlers have persisted for decades, primarily over land ownership and state-backed demographic changes.



The roots of these tensions can be traced to **1977**, when then military ruler **General Ziaur Rahman** initiated **state-sponsored migration** of Bengali Muslim settlers into the CHT, providing land grants, cash incentives, and food rations. This policy disrupted the traditional landholding patterns of the indigenous peoples and has led to repeated outbreaks of communal violence.

Immediate Trigger and Timeline of Events

According to *Hill Voice*'s report published on **October 5, 2025**, the latest round of violence began following the **rape of a young Marma girl**, a Grade 8 student, on **September 26, 2025**.

In response, the **Jumma Students' Organization** organized a **peaceful protest** in **Khagrachari town** on **September 27**. However, the demonstration came under attack from **Bengali settlers** armed with brickbats and homemade weapons.

On **September 28**, protests spread to the nearby **Guimara town**, where further assaults by settler groups occurred. Settlers, reportedly operating **under the protection of military and police forces**, escalated their attacks by **setting fire to indigenous homes, businesses, and vehicles**.

When indigenous protesters erected barricades and continued their protest, the **military opened fire indiscriminately** on the crowd, resulting in **three immediate fatalities** and **over 20 injuries** among the indigenous Jumma protesters.

Casualties and Damages

Fatalities: 3 Jumma protesters killed

Injuries: Over 20 persons injured

Property Damage:

54 shops burned

26 houses destroyed

16 motorbikes gutted

Continued on page 18

WORLD MEDIA WATCH

State and Media Response

Following the incident, the **Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR)** issued an official press statement that **misrepresented the facts**, blaming the indigenous protesters and alleging the involvement of “**foreign elements**” in destabilizing the CHT. The ISPR statement made no reference to the role of **security forces in supporting settler attacks**.

The **Home Advisor of the interim government** further escalated the controversy by **publicly blaming India** for inciting the violence—an act that violates **diplomatic norms and principles of non-interference**.

Pattern of Violence Against Indigenous Women

Sexual violence against indigenous women and girls in the Chittagong Hill Tracts remains a **grave and persistent human rights issue**. Rape and sexual assault are often used as **tools of intimidation and displacement** within the ongoing ethnic conflict.

From **January to September 2025**, **29 cases of molestation or sexual assault** of Jumma women and children were documented. Human rights organizations note that many additional cases remain **unreported** due to fear, social stigma, and the absence of effective legal recourse.

A pervasive **culture of impunity** persists in the region, where perpetrators—often linked to settler groups or security forces—are seldom prosecuted. Investigations are frequently biased, and victims face severe barriers to accessing justice.

Observations

The events of **September 27–28, 2025**, demonstrate a continuing pattern of **state complicity** in attacks against indigenous communities in the CHT. The use of excessive force, coupled with the protection of settler mobs by military and police personnel, reflects an entrenched system of **institutional bias and impunity**.

These developments further erode trust between indigenous peoples and the state, while perpetuating cycles of displacement, insecurity, and ethnic discrimination.

<https://hillvoice.net/bn/%e0%a6%96%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%97%e0%a6%a1%e0%a6%bc%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%9b%e0%a6%a1%e0%a6%bc%e0%a6%bf%e0%a6%a4%e0%a7%87-%e0%a6%b8%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%ae%e0%a7%8d%e0%a6%aa%e0%a7%8d%e0%a6%b0%e0%a6%a6%e0%a6%be-2/>

Related Links:

Protest over rape: 3 shot dead in Khagrachhari

<https://share.google/VeeEyeqQ602V5eTID>

ANI News: Video Report on Riot in Khagrachhari

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80dNzum6SyY>

ISPR says UPDF incited violence in Khagrachhari

<https://share.google/6EwzdolqlcSQ7w6zz>

U.S. MISSTEPS AND THE RISE OF RADICALISM IN BANGLADESH

In his *Firstpost* opinion piece titled “**Why Trump shouldn’t double down on Biden’s failed Bangladesh strategy**,” Michael Rubin argues that the United States risks repeating the policy mistakes of the Biden administration by continuing to back Bangladesh’s interim leader, **Muhammad Yunus**. Rubin contends that Yunus, rather than steering the country toward democratic reform, has consolidated power, silenced opposition voices, and enabled Islamist and radical actors under the pretext of governance reform. He claims that the U.S. has misread Bangladesh’s political realities—particularly the student-led protests that ousted the previous government—which, according to Rubin, were infiltrated or influenced by **Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)** to destabilize the country. The article warns that if Donald Trump adopts a similar approach and reinforces current U.S. policy, it could accelerate Bangladesh’s slide toward **Islamist radicalism** and erode democratic institutions. Rubin urges Washington to reassess its stance by recognizing the interim regime as a **de facto coup**, imposing **sanctions on Yunus** for repression, reconsidering diplomatic recognition, placing Bangladesh on a **religious freedom watchlist**, and designating **Jamaat-e-Islami** as a terrorist organization.

<https://www.firstpost.com/opinion/trump-bangladesh-policy-failure-yunus-radicalism-13939251.html>

Continued on page 19

WORLD MEDIA WATCH

OCCUPY INDIA: A THREATENING CALL OF A BANGLADESHI GENERAL

On May 3, 2025 Time of India published a video clip where a retired Bangladeshi general has stirred a major controversy with explosive remarks on India. Major General (Retd) Fazlur Rahman suggested Bangladesh should invade India's Northeast. He said this should happen if India retaliates militarily against Pakistan over the Pahalgam attack. Rahman called for a joint military arrangement with China to support such an invasion. His comments have shocked many, especially amid tense India-Bangladesh diplomatic ties.

<https://youtu.be/jK0mFaBD61o?si=nAfc1zZZKSrvvsIV>

<https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/peace-has-no-meaning-when-right-wingers-like-maria-corina-machado-win-the-nobel-prize>

POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION IN BANGLADESH AHEAD OF THE 2026 ELECTION

Biman Mukherji, September 30, 2025 issue

As Bangladesh prepares for a crucial national election scheduled for early 2026, the country is confronting deepening political fragmentation and uncertainty over the future of its electoral system. The transitional administration led by Nobel laureate **Muhammad Yunus** faces mounting pressure from multiple parties to determine whether the election will follow the traditional first-past-the-post model or shift to a proportional representation system.

The debate over electoral reform has exposed sharp divisions within Bangladesh's political landscape. Parties such as **Jamaat-e-Islami** and the newly formed **National Citizen Party (NCP)**—the latter emerging from student leaders who played a prominent role in the protests that toppled Sheikh Hasina's government—are advocating for proportional representation. They argue that such a system would create fairer and more inclusive governance, allowing smaller parties and new movements to secure seats in parliament according to their share of the national vote.

However, the **Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)**, one of the country's major political forces, has strongly opposed any change to the electoral framework. The BNP warns that the proposed proportional system could undermine its electoral advantage under the existing first-past-the-post arrangement, which favors established political organizations capable of winning outright majorities in individual constituencies.

This ongoing dispute has become a defining feature of the pre-election period. The absence of consensus among political actors has heightened tensions and cast doubt on the ability of the transitional government to deliver an election perceived as legitimate and transparent. The entry of new political parties like the NCP and the revival of groups such as Jamaat-e-Islami have further complicated the electoral field, contributing to a fragmented opposition and an increasingly unpredictable political environment.

Observers note that these developments underscore the fragility of Bangladesh's democratic institutions. The country's ability to hold a credible election will depend on how effectively the interim government manages dissent, ensures inclusivity, and guarantees equal political participation. Failure to resolve the disputes over electoral structure could risk renewed instability and erode both domestic and international confidence in the democratic process.

The author is an Engineer, currently residing at Toronto, Canada

BACK PAGE শেষের পাতা

GEN Z AND THE STRUGGLE FOR TRUTH: BEYOND MANIPULATION, TWARD JUSTICE

Latiful Kabir

In 2024, Bangladesh witnessed a massive upheaval—the July Movement. For many in Gen Z, it was the first time we took to the streets in such numbers, fueled by a sense of urgency about democracy, justice, and our future. We marched, protested, and raised our voices. But in the middle of this surge, we also faced something we were not prepared for: manipulation.

You may already know the classical definition of the term: Manipulation. Yes, it is the act of influencing someone's thoughts, emotions, or decisions in a way that primarily benefits the manipulator, often without the person realizing the full extent of that influence. It's not always outright lying, as is the case for deception; you know it. Instead, it's about steering people toward a desired outcome by exploiting psychology, emotions, or selective truths. For example, a political leader floods social media with emotionally charged slogans to rally youth without explaining the real implications of their policies.

Here is a clue, and as a smart citizen of the future world, you must hold your emotions before becoming a victim of such manipulation.

The Trap of Simplified Narratives

Social media platforms became the main arena of activism, but also the battlefield for propaganda. Half-truths, edited videos, and emotional slogans spread faster than verified facts. Our ideals of justice were often twisted to serve someone else's agenda. This left many of us asking: *Were we truly fighting for ourselves, or were we being used?*

Why Gen Z Must Stay Awake

Our generation has one advantage over any before us: access to information. But with that comes responsibility. To honour our role in society, we must learn to:

- Question everything we see online.
- Verify sources before believing or sharing.

Think critically about who benefits from a certain narrative.

The July Movement showed us that passion without clarity can be dangerous. Now, the truth is exposed, and we have become helpless. Being a conscious citizen, as we think of ourselves, that should not have happened to us. The Gen Z of Nepal acted quickly and let the politician take control of the steering wheel. Why, we, the Bangladeshi Gen Z, taking so long? Someone blames our IQ level! Really?

Justice Is More Than a Slogan

Bangabandhu's vision was not about power struggles—it was about dignity, equality, and justice for ordinary people. If we, Gen Z, are serious about carrying that forward, we must move beyond hashtags and confront the deeper structures of injustice: corruption, inequality, and intolerance.

The Path Forward

Manipulation can never be eliminated entirely, but awareness can weaken its power. Gen Z must demand accountability not only from governments but also from media houses, political groups, and even influencers.

We are not just “the future.” We are also the present. Our task is not to be pawns in someone else's game, but to shape the rules of the game itself.

Call to Action for Gen Z

Stay informed, stay skeptical, and stay united. Justice and democracy cannot be given—they must be owned, protected, and redefined by us.

Latiful Kabir is a Bangladeshi-Canadian professional engineer.