

# Upcoming Budget and Education

## Political Pledges and Citizen's Expectations

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Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ

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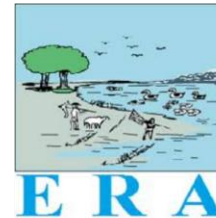
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# Contribution from the Partners and Supporters (in alphabetic order)

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# Introduction

## PART 1


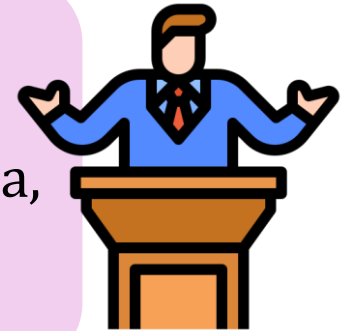
# Context

Three areas of **overwhelming consensus** have emerged:



**First**, Bangladesh's education system must change. **Course correction is long overdue.**

**Second**, the political signal is apparently strong. Education featured prominently in the BNP's election manifesto. It also received significant policy attention in the government's first three months in office with a 12-point agenda, nearly 50 commitments and directives announced, and a 5% GDP target declared.

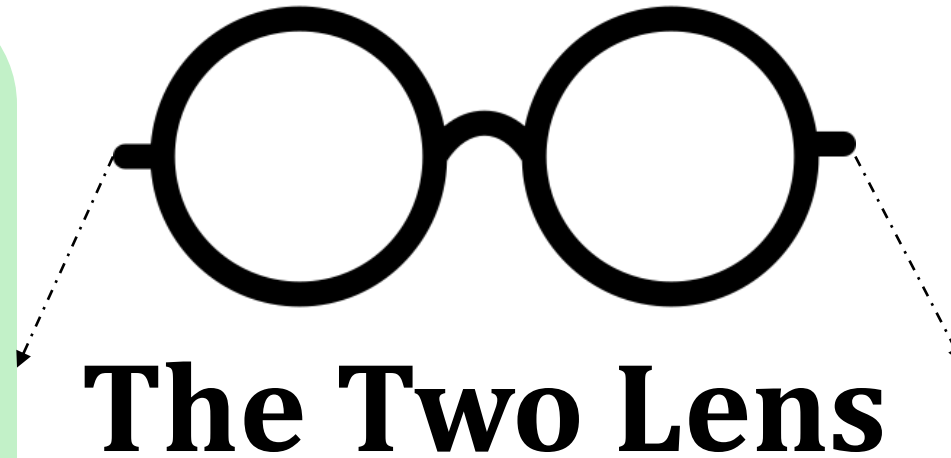


**Third**, the national budget will be *one of the most important vehicles* bridging the gap between political will and the necessary course correction.

# The Analytical Framework

## Counternarratives

In March 2026, we revisited the “official” narratives and established six counternarratives that highlight the structural challenges that shape the education sector.



## The Two Lens

## Government Pledges

The education pledges from the BNP Election Manifesto initiatives/directives introduced by the current BNP government in its early months.

**The objectives** are to examine whether:

1. Budget allocations address issues raised in the counternarratives
2. The government’s own initiatives are designed and resourced to deliver the intended development outcomes
3. Measures are being taken to address chronic implementation inefficiencies.

# Recalling the Counternarratives

1

**“OFFICIAL”:** “Bangladesh achieved near-universal primary enrolment and dramatically expanded secondary access over two decades while students are staying longer in the school system”

**“COUNTER”:** “Access for reducing learning inequality: Bangladesh is significantly lagging behind in ensuring primary and secondary education for all children ”

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**“OFFICIAL”:** “The education system maintained learning outcomes through an unprecedented disruption — 18 months of school closure due to COVID-19”

**“COUNTER”:** “Learning outcomes to prepare a future-proof workforce: Learning outcomes were declining before even before COVID-19 and are lower than in 2013 after a decade of investment”

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2

3

**“OFFICIAL”:** “The education system is well-governed through results-based management and functional decentralisation”

**“COUNTER”:** “Data for monitoring the envisaged outcomes: There is a fundamental disconnect between a complex administrative data system and the reality within classrooms”

# Recalling the Counternarratives

4

**“OFFICIAL”:** “The Education System is publicly financed and accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status”

**“COUNTER”:** **“Out of Pocket Expenditure:** The education system is free to enter but expensive to sustain in”

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**“OFFICIAL”:** “Bangladesh's schools are **infrastructurally ready for the future**”

**“COUNTER”:** **“Dearth of infrastructure for future-ready education:** The education infrastructure may not be ready for the future”

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5

6

**“OFFICIAL”:** “Education is framed as a national priority, but **fiscal preference across three successive five-year plans reveals deteriorating ambition** in terms of public allocation.””

**“COUNTER”:** **“Public Expenditure for Education:** education spending as a share of GDP has steadily declined over the years”

# Commitments of the new government

**50 education-related initiatives/directives** have been made public since the new government assumed office (according to our scanning exercise).

These commitments have been organised into **three categories** to provide a structured overview of the government's reform priorities and planned interventions in the education sector.

**Commitments from  
the BNP 2026  
Election Manifesto**  
(verbatim or  
inspired by the  
verbatim)

**Administrative and  
regulatory  
decisions**

**Beyond the  
Manifesto:  
requiring fresh  
budgetary  
allocations**

*Disclaimer: This list may not be fully exhaustive*

# Category 1: Education Commitments from the Election Manifesto

**20 out of the announced fifty commitments** pulled directly from the BNP Election Manifesto

## Five Flagship Examples:

Manifesto	Initiative
1. Explicit: "Allocate 5% of GDP"	Gradual increase of education spending to to 5% of GDP and 15–20% of total public expenditure, supported by a three-year fiscal uplift plan.
2. Verbatim: "Mid-day meal programme"	Expansion of midday meal/school feeding programmes gradually across all upazilas
3. "Providing free school uniforms"	Free school uniforms, shoes, and jute bags for 200,000+ primary students, expanding gradually nationwide through upazila-based implementation.
4. Verbatim: "One Teacher, One Tab"	"One Teacher, One Tab" programme to cover teachers across primary, secondary, technical, and madrasa streams; first phase includes 50,000 tablets and 9,000 technical teachers within 180 days
5. "Introducing free Wi-Fi" in schools/colleges	Free Wi-Fi rollout planned for 1,500 secondary schools, colleges, and universities, plus 2,336 technical institutions and 8,232 madrasas within 180 days.

# Category 2: Education Initiatives requiring Administrative Decisions

**17 out of the announced fifty commitments** don't require new budget allocation but do require political will.

These can be organised into three clusters:

## Governance-related Initiatives

- Lottery removal for school admissions
- Salaries and school recognition linked to verifiable teaching activity
- Single student registration across classes
- Coaching centres shut down, and in-house teaching in schools.

## Process-related initiatives

- Mandatory e-GP procurement from June
- Public dashboards for project monitoring
- Public exams completed by 31 December annually
- NASS learning assessment pilot in 30 schools

## Amendments to Fiscal Measures

- Annual re-admission fee cancelled
- Duty waiver on electric school buses
- Gradual inclusion of non-MPO institutions into MPO coverage based on compliance
- Assuring 100% festival allowance for teachers

# Category 3: Education Initiatives requiring budget allocation

**13 out of the announced fifty commitments require fresh budget allocation**

## What has been committed:

- **Recruitment of 9,000 religious teachers** for moral/religious education
- **Training modules and workshops for 20,000 teachers** to make learning “enjoyable” to be rolled out in six months
- **English language training for 247,000 primary teachers**
- One **multipurpose exam hall in every upazila** (500+ structures)
- **Nationwide CCTV in exam centres** (Tk 50,000 per institution)
- **Scholarship amounts doubled** (Tk 184 cr → Tk 368 cr/year)
- **Higher education research grants** and 300 funded research positions

## The Reality

- Three-year fiscal uplift plan needs to be published for the stated budget allocation equivalent to 5% of GDP ambition
- Only **one item** across all 13 carries an explicit cost estimate: scholarship doubling at **Tk 184 crore additionally per year**

# The Cross-cutting Issues

- The education initiatives/directives of the government **have been largely procurement and physical provision – centric**, such as:
  - Tablets for 50,000+ teachers
  - 20,000 multimedia classrooms
  - CCTV in all examination centres
  - One new building per school, college and madrasa in every constituency
  - A multipurpose examination hall in every upazila
  - Free uniforms, bags and shoes for 200,000+ primary students
  - Free Wi-Fi across 1,500+ schools, colleges and universities
- Learning outcomes and related components are mentioned but are thin in comparison:
  - “Joyful learning” training for 20,000 teachers
  - Team-building and extracurricular activities such as drama and debates
  - Mental health education made compulsory from Grade 4 onwards

***The emerging pattern is that the government has been specific about purchases but more clarity is needed about how children will actually learn in classrooms.***

# Breaking the Barriers

## PART 2

# Education Budget Trend: The Inside Story

Figure: Education budget allocation and utilisation as % of GDP

Timeline	Total budget allocation as % of GDP (Base year 2005-06)	Total budget allocation as % of GDP (Base year 2015-16)	Timeline	Total budget utilisation as % of GDP (Base year 2005-06)	Total budget utilisation as % of GDP (Base year 2015-16)
FY02-06	1.9		FY02-06	1.7	
FY07-08	2.0		FY07-08	1.8	
FY09-15	1.9		FY09-15	1.8	
FY16	1.8	1.5	FY16	2.2	1.8
FY17-FY18	2.4	2.0	FY17-FY18	2.1	1.8
FY19-FY20		1.9	FY19-FY20		1.7
FY21-FY22		1.8	FY21-FY22		1.6
FY23-FY25		1.8	FY23-FY25		1.3

Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

- **Budget target vs utilisation gap continues to widen.**

Despite the **8FYP target to raise education spending to 3% of GDP by FY2025**, actual education expenditure **remains at only 1.3%**. *(Significant shortfall of policy commitment)*

# Education Budget Trend: The Inside Story

*Figure: Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) budget allocation and utilisation as % of GDP*

Timeline	Allocation as % of GDP (Base year 2005-06)	Allocation as % of GDP (Base year 2015-16)
FY02-06	0.8	
FY07-08	0.9	
FY09-15	0.9	
FY16	0.8	0.7
FY17-FY18	1.0	0.9
FY19-FY20		0.8
FY21-FY22		0.7
FY23-FY25		0.7

Timeline	Utilisation of GDP (Base year 2005-06)	Utilisation as % of GDP (Base year 2015-16)
FY02-06	0.7	
FY07-08	0.8	
FY09-15	0.8	
<b>FY16</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>
FY17-FY18	0.8	0.7
FY19-FY20		0.7
FY21-FY22		0.6
FY23-FY25		0.5

*Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)*

**Since FY2019, both the allocation and utilisation gap of the MoPME budget have started to decline.**

# Education Budget Trend: The Inside Story

*Figure: Ministry of Education (MoE)\* budget allocation and utilisation as % of GDP*

Timeline	Allocation as % of GDP (Base year 2005-06)	Allocation as % of GDP (Base year 2015-16)	Timeline	Utilisation of GDP (Base year 2005-06)	Utilisation as % of GDP (Base year 2015-16)
FY02-06	1.0		FY02-06	1.0	
FY07-08	1.1		FY07-08	1.1	
FY09-15	1.0		FY09-15	1.0	
FY16	1.0	0.8	FY16	1.2	1.0
FY17-FY18	1.3	1.1	FY17-FY18	1.2	1.0
FY19-FY20		1.1	FY19-FY20		1.0
FY21-FY22		1.1	FY21-FY22		1.0
FY23-FY25		1.1	FY23-FY25		<b>0.8</b>

*Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)*

\*Ministry of Education (MoE) Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED), and Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED)

**Despite the allocation of the MoE budget remaining stagnant (as % of GDP) since FY2017, utilisation started to decline from FY23**

# Education Budget Trend: The Inside Story

Figure: Utilisation rate of the total education budget

Timeline	Total education budget utilisation rate (%)	MoPME budget utilisation rate (%)	MoE budget utilisation rate (%)	Tax-to-GDP ratio (Base 2005-06)	Tax-to-GDP ratio (Base 2015-16)
FY02-06	92	86	98	7.0	
FY07-08	92	88	91	7.3	
FY09-15	99	95	104	8.4	
<b>FY16</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>126</b>	8.8	7.3
FY17-FY18	87	80	92	8.8	7.5
<b>FY19-FY20</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>92</b>		7.3
FY21-FY22	87	91	84		7.6
FY23-FY25	76	66	73		7.2

Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF)

**Falling public expenditure for education and a declining tax-GDP ratio**

- The **budget expenditure rate** across all ministries **peaked in FY16**, largely driven by the implementation of the **8<sup>th</sup> National Pay Scale** in 2015.
- Later, utilisation rates **increased again during FY19-20**, mainly due to **expenditure on digital infrastructure** provision in schools during COVID-19.

**In the meantime, the tax-GDP ratio did not improve and reached its lowest in FY25 (6.8%)**

# Education Budget Trend: The Inside Story

Timeline	Operating budget expenditure rate (%)		
	Ministry of Primary and Mass education	Secondary and Higher Education Division	Technical and Madrasah Education Division
FY17-18	85	89	92
FY19-20	96	96	82
FY21-22	91	92	80
FY23-25	84	98	83

Timeline	Development budget expenditure rate (%)		
	Ministry of Primary and Mass education	Secondary and Higher Education Division	Technical and Madrasah Education Division
FY17-18	73	69	60
FY19-20	72	85	79
FY21-22	90	73	74
FY23-25	53	46	46

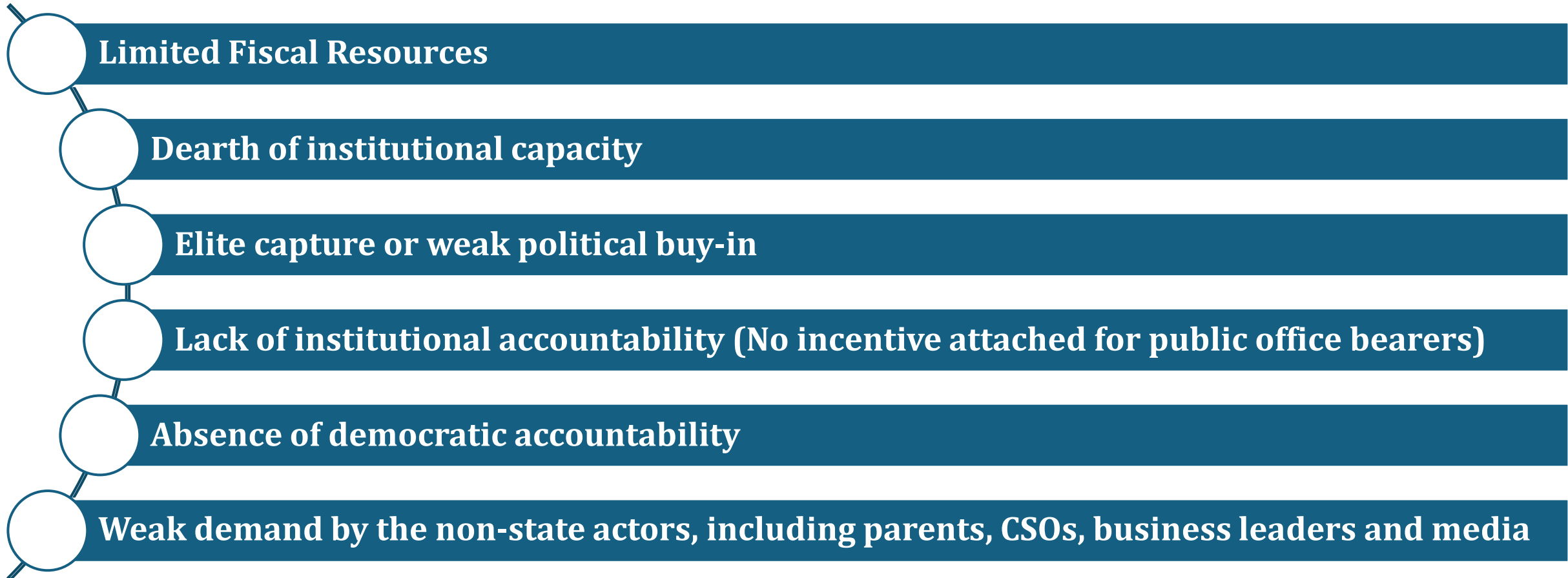
Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF)

Operating expenditure rose in SHED (FY23–FY25), but utilisation declined in Primary and Technical/Madrasah Education, even falling below pre-COVID levels.

- Education budget **utilisation essentially is linked with the utilisation of the development** budget.
- Not to mention, operating budgets for education-related agencies are **largely dominated by salaries/transfer of salaries** (MPO of Secondary Schools).
- The incremental increase in total allocation for DSHE and TMED are mainly driven by the buildings and structures, while allocation in training declined by 21.3% for MoPME FY25-FY26.

# Education Budget Trend: The Inside Story

*Why has the education budget consistently remained underfunded and underutilised? (The probable causes)*



# Dealing with the ADP baggage

Ministry/Division	FY 2025			FY 2026		
	Allocation Rank (Out of 57 agencies)	Utilisation rate (Total ADP utilisation rate is around 56%)	Ranking based on utilisation rate	Allocation Rank (out of 57 agencies)	Utilisation rate (Jul-Mar) (Total ADP: 35%)	Ranking based on utilisation rate (Jul-Mar)
<b>MoPME</b>	4	46.2	37	7	17.7	47
<b>SHED</b>	8	38.3	42	4	20.7	44
<b>TMED</b>	17	34.8	48	14	32.2	38

- Education-related agencies continue to remain among the worst performers in terms of ADP budget utilisation

# Dealing with the ADP baggage

- There are a total of **101 projects** in the education sector being implemented by a total of **14 agencies** (*including BBS, the Textile Directorate, and the Hindu Religious Welfare Trust*)
- The project's focus on the development of the following areas:

Focus Area	No. of Projects	Share of ADP FY26 Allocations (%)	Share of RADP FY26 Allocations (%)	Changes in Allocation (Crore BDT)
Infrastructure	78	59	39	-5092
Quality	13	29	22	-1984
Digital Infrastructure	3	3	3	-160
Cluster	7	9	35	4686

- Budgetary allocation was cut by **Tk. 2,550 Crore** in the RADP
- Infrastructure saw the largest decrease; however, the Cluster projects (as a collective) saw an increase in total allocations of **Tk. 4,686 Crore, thanks to increased allocation to PEDP-4**

# Dealing with the ADP baggage

Education Sector	No. of Projects	Share of ADP FY26 Allocations (%)	Share of RADP FY26 Allocations (%)	Changes in Allocation (Crore BDT)
<b>Primary</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2251</b>
<b>Secondary and Higher</b>				
<b>Secondary</b>	22	26	14	-2933
<b>Tertiary</b>	33	27	18	-2376
<b>Madrasa and Religious Education</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>871</b>
<b>Technical</b>	27	12	14	-7
<b>Other</b>	5	2	1	-356

- The increase in **primary education for RADP compared to ADP (Tk. 2,251 crore)** is a result of an increase in allocation for the **PEDP-4 (Tk. 3,812 Crore)**
- Madrasa and Religious Education saw an increase in allocation (Tk. 871 crore) due to increased funding of the project named '**mosque-based children and mass education programme to improve moral ethics and religious values**' (Tk. 940 core) taken by the IG

# Dealing with the ADP baggage

No. of Revisions	No. of Projects	Share of ADP FY26 Allocations (%)	Share of RADP FY26 Allocations (%)
0	31	32	29.7
1	40	44.8	26.8
2	25	20	40.1
3	3	2.9	3.0
4	2	0.3	0.4

## Projects Past Their Implementation Period

- **34** projects have passed their date of completion and cannot receive funds until the extension of the implementation period, these make up **37%** of total **RADP (FY26)** allocations
- 10 of these projects are being implemented under the Education Engineering Department (**EED**), and another 10 under the University Grants Commission (**UGC**)
- **5** of these projects have received **less than 50%** of their total funding

- **70 projects of RADP** have already undergone at least one revision
- The **5** projects that have **3 or more** revisions are under the **Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education** and **Bangladesh Madrasa Education Directorate**

# Dealing with the ADP baggage

Completion Rate (%)	Projects that are supposed to be completed by FY2026	Projects that are supposed to be completed by FY2027
1 to 20	4	4
20 to 40	4	4
40 to 60	3	6
60 to 90	16	13
90 to 99	10	2
99 to 100	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>29</b>

- The value for completion rate has been calculated by taking the sum of the **cumulative expenditures** till **FY2025** and allocation for **RADP FY2026** as a % of its **total project cost**
- Except for one project on **feasibility study and land acquisition, no ‘completing project’ received adequate** funding to be completed by June 2026

- Some projects may be closed (such as the PEDP-3) irrespective of whether or not they have achieved their targets, or could spend the full project cost
- No RADP project is expected to fully expend
- **The new government will start FY2027 with the baggage of many carryover projects!**

# Dealing with the ADP baggage

Following observations are derived from the IMED assessments on level-specific projects, e.g., Third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-III), Secondary Education Sector Development Program (SESDP) and Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) (3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment)

Challenges	Learning from the Past
<i>1. Weak and Unrealistic DPP Formulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>PEDP3</i>- Structural mismatch between DPP scope and actual programme led to <b>7.72% of the revised budget (Tk. 1,40,092.26 lakh) unspent</b> due to later removal and transferred elsewhere of the components textbook printing, the stipend programme, and the school feeding programme.</li><li>• <i>STEP</i>- Procurement plan (Goods, Works, Services, and Non-Consulting Services Packages) expanded <b>14 → 191 packages (a 13 fold expansion) which</b> reflected <b>unrealistic design</b> beyond implementation capacity.</li><li>• <i>SESDP</i>- Institute-level procurement plans (for 56 institutes executing 265 product packages) were <b>never included in the DPP or any revised DPP</b>. This was explicitly identified as a "<i>major gap</i>".</li></ul>
<i>2. Leadership discontinuity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><i>PEDP3</i>- 4 Project Directors</b> served during the project period.</li><li>• <b><i>SESDP</i>- 4 Project Directors</b> served across the project life.</li><li>• <b><i>STEP</i>- 3 Additional Secretaries</b> served as Project Directors (None completed the mandatory minimum 3-year tenure).</li></ul>

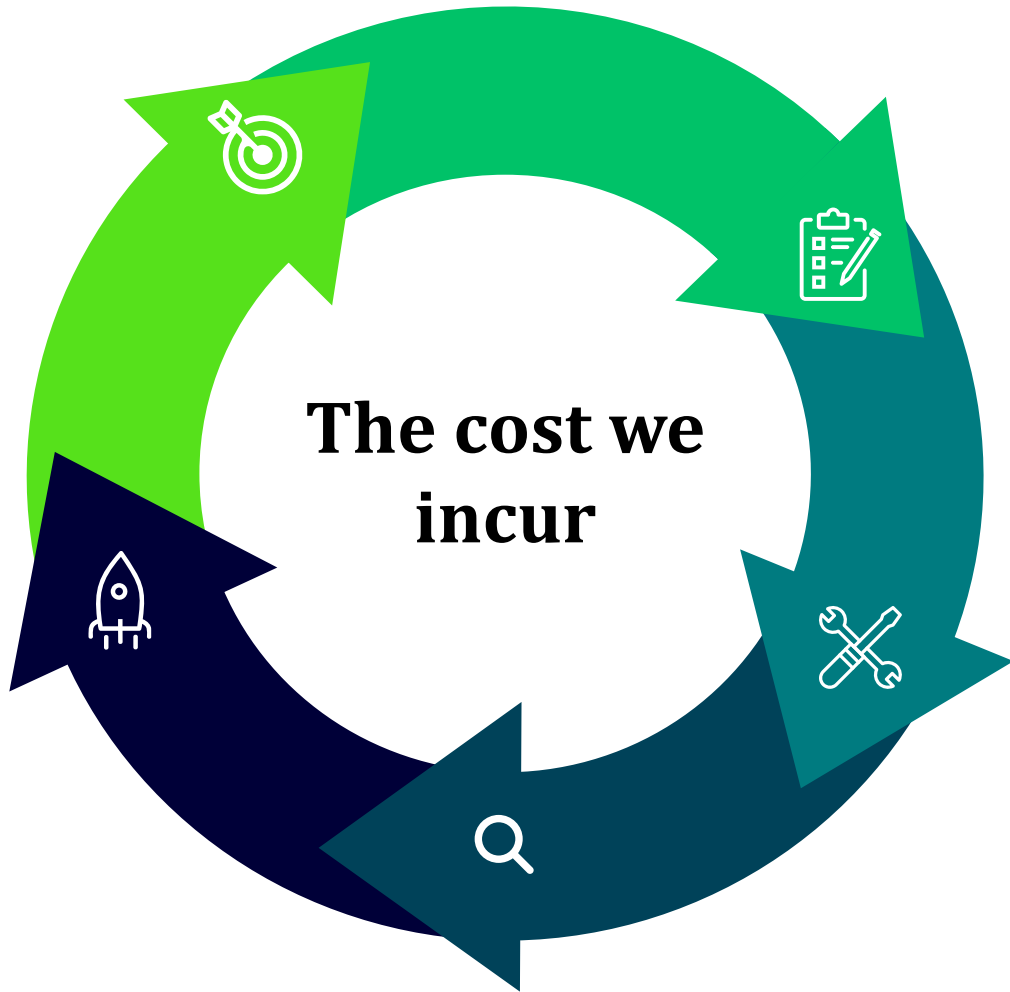
# Dealing with the ADP baggage

Challenges	Learning from the Past
<i>3. Procurement Delays</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>PEDP3</i>- Annual Procurement Plans (APPs) were not implemented as per DPP. Vehicle procurement (47 jeeps, 67 microbuses, 2,569 motorcycles) achieved only <b>88.50% expenditure against the allocated</b> budget</li><li>• <i>SESDP</i>- The process of tender on the selection of Consultant took over <b>15 months from EOI issuance (4 November 2006) to contract approval</b></li><li>• <i>STEP</i>- Tender issuance, evaluation, contract signing, and completion were delayed in most packages compared to stipulated timelines.</li></ul>
<i>4. Unresolved audit objections</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>PEDP3</i>- 96% of audit observations resolved; <b>4% remained unresolved</b></li><li>• <i>SESDP</i>- Total of 63 audit observations raised across the project life. Of these, <b>21 (≈ Tk. 3.18 crore) remained unresolved</b> at the time of the assessment</li><li>• <i>STEP</i>- 105 audit objections raised by Foreign Aided Projects Audit Directorate (FAPAD). As of assessment date, <b>42 objections (≈ Tk. 48.02 crore) remain unresolved</b></li></ul>

# Dealing with the ADP baggage

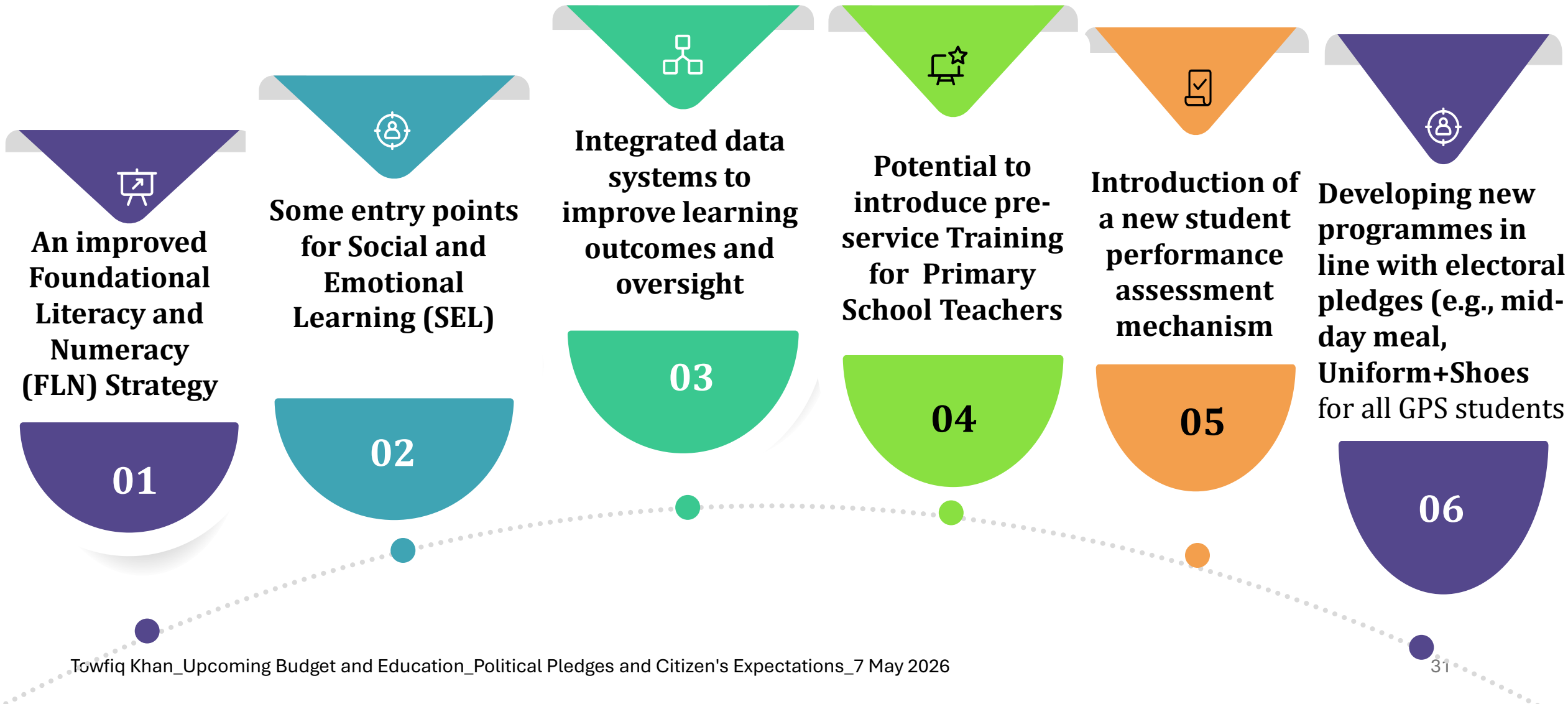
Challenges	Learning from the Past
<i>5. Slow Early-Year Expenditure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PEDP3- Year-on-year expenditure as % of released funds ranged from 88.58% (worst, 2016–17) to 99.19% (best, 2013–14).</li><li>• <b>SESDP- First-year expenditure</b> (2006–07) was only Tk. 811.30 lakh against Tk. 1,328 lakh allocated — <b>61.1%</b> utilisation.</li><li>• <b>STEP</b> (most severe)- Cumulative expenditure in the first 5 years (2010–11 to 2014–15) <b>was only 34% of the original DPP allocation.</b></li></ul>
<i>6. School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) fund underutilisation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PEDP3- Schools were required to spend their own funds first and then claim reimbursement. As a result, <b>funds were allocated centrally but could not be drawn down at school level.</b></li></ul>

# Dealing with the ADP baggage



# Loading PEDPV: A New Beginning (?)

*What is on the cards?*



# Loading PEDPV: A New Beginning (?)

Counternarratives	Initiatives need to be undertaken beyond PEDP-5
<b>1. Access for reducing learning inequality</b>	Boys' retention mechanism with targeted stipend revision
<b>2. Learning outcome for Human Resource Development</b>	Introduction of Global student assessment system (e.g., PISA)
<b>3. Data for monitoring the envisioned outcomes</b>	Inclusion of an explicit NSA-to-policy feedback protocol The assessment agency's terms of reference should limit its reporting solely to MoPME.
<b>4. Out-of-pocket expenditure</b>	A concrete action to reform the examination question design process, with the objective of reducing dependency on guidebooks
<b>5. Dearth of infrastructure for future ready education</b>	Integration of a pedagogical ICT utilisation indicator to the results framework (e.g., "% of observed lessons integrating ICT tools") distinct from infrastructure coverage indicators.
<b>6. Education budget</b>	Secure fiscal resources to fund other initiatives beyond PEDP-5

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections



## Programmes Covered

- Mid-Day Meal
- Free Uniform, Bag and Shoes
- Multimedia Classroom
- Free Wi-Fi in educational Institutes



## Methodology

Qualitative approach using FGDs and KIIs



## Coverage

- 17 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- 17 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- 10 districts
- Geographic diversity (including urban, rural, haor, char areas)



## Stakeholders

- Parents (government primary, madrasa, kindergarten students)
- Teachers and headteachers
- Community volunteers
- Civil society representatives



## Timeline

2 May – 5 May

**We acknowledge the support of eight partner organisations in carrying out the field observation exercises.**

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Mid-Day Meal

### Observations from the field

- **No clear guidelines** have been provided to the teachers for distributing **surplus food**. Teachers usually give it to poor students or distribute it among all students on a rotation. In some cases, teachers reported taking the extra food themselves.
- Students reported receiving **stale and low-quality food**, including **spoiled and fungus-affected items**. Affected students were not compensated with replacement or by any other means.

### Recommendations

- In view of parents' concerns over bakery items, "**cooked meals**" may be piloted with the support of parents and community volunteers.
- **Clear guidelines** should be developed **for managing the surplus or shortage of food**, varying with students' attendance.
- **A greater variety of foods** should be introduced, and input from nutritionists should be sought to help ensure adequate nutrition for students.

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Mid-Day Meal

### Observations from the field

- Meals mainly consist of **bakery items** such as biscuits and buns. Parents expressed concerns about the **long-term health effects of regular consumption**.
- Although the guideline mentions providing fresh and seasonal fruits, **bananas were the only fruit** provided so far.
- According to school authorities, meals are supplied for **around 90% of students** to reduce waste. When attendance exceeds this level, the available meals are divided equally among present students. However, **no clear guidelines** exist in this regard.

### Recommendations

- A mechanism should be introduced to **hold vendors accountable to the School Management Committee (SMC)**. **Students** who receive **spoiled food** should be **compensated** accordingly. The Terms of Reference (ToR) should be shared with school authorities and SMCs to improve coordination and clarity.
- **Social audits** by the local citizens should be conducted **quarterly to assess the quality of the programme**.

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Free School Uniforms, Shoes, and Bags for the Students

Observations from the field	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was reported that while most students wear uniforms regularly, <b>footwear use is inconsistent</b>, and visible differences persist due to affordability constraints among poorer households.</li><li>• <b>Variations in uniform</b> quality were observed among students, even where uniforms are worn consistently.</li><li>• Teachers expressed support for the proposed provision of uniforms, shoes, and school bags, but noted that <b>no official guideline or instruction has yet been received</b>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Poverty mapping</b> should be conducted during school selection, with priority given to climate-vulnerable and hard-to-reach areas.</li><li>• <b>Direct cash transfers to parents</b> through <b>G2P</b> may be implemented, with school authorities and local authorities verifying the purchase and use of uniforms. This approach may help reduce the administrative burden on teachers and <b>curb potential risk of corruptions</b>.</li><li>• <b>Clear guidelines for school uniforms</b> should be established. Uniforms should be provided on an annual basis.</li></ul>

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Free School Uniforms, Shoes, and Bags for the Students

### Observations from the field

- Concerns were raised regarding implementation responsibility, particularly **if teachers are involved** in distribution, as this may increase **administrative workload** and reduce teaching time.
- It was suggested that uniforms be accessed through **designated shops or tailors** rather than **school-based distribution**, allowing students to receive appropriately sized items with less logistical burden on schools.

### Recommendations

- **A grievance redress mechanism** should be established so parents and students can report issues related to quality, fit, or delays.
- Inclusion measures should be considered for **children with disabilities** to ensure uniforms and shoes meet their specific needs.
- **Collaboration with BGMEA** may be considered for more efficient centralised management. **Local tailoring or small enterprises** could also be engaged, to support the local economy while ensuring timely supply.

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Free Wi-Fi in Educational Institutes

### Observations from the field

- It was reported that internet access is **available in some government primary schools** through government-provided routers, while others have **no active connection**; other schools indicated that their previous setup **is currently non-functional**.
- **Electricity interruptions** were identified as a major constraint, as Wi-Fi cannot be used during load shedding.
- In schools without functional connectivity, teachers reported relying on **personal mobile data** to complete online tasks, resulting in **additional personal costs**.

### Recommendations

- Since the system is already operational in most schools (**approximately 85% in primary schools and 96% in secondary schools**), expansion efforts may focus more on **addressing the existing challenges, involving bandwidth, electricity, and recovery or replacement of devices**.
- **Partnerships with telecom companies** under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives may be explored to improve connectivity in hard-to-reach areas.
- **Solar panels may be introduced** to ensure a more reliable electricity supply for uninterrupted Wi-Fi use.

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Free Wi-Fi in Educational Institutes

### Observations from the field

- Bandwidth was generally considered **adequate** in most schools, though a **few cases of low bandwidth** were also reported.
- It was found that where Wi-Fi is functional, schools generally rely on local ISP or education office support for troubleshooting.

### Recommendations

- **Troubleshooting processes should be simplified**, with more direct and timely intervention by school authorities to reduce bureaucratic delays.
- **Training for designated school focal persons** could be provided with a view to capacitate **minor troubleshooting** and reduce dependence on external support.
- A minimum service standard (e.g., **minimum bandwidth levels**) may be defined to ensure consistency across schools, and schools could be encouraged to maintain **a shared logbook of internet usage issues**, outages, and resolution timelines to improve **accountability and tracking**.

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Multimedia Classroom in Educational Institutes

### Observations from the field

- **Limited multimedia classrooms** restrict students' access to digital learning. Most schools have **equipment in only one or two classrooms**. **Bright rooms and overcrowded classes** also make multimedia setups in existing classrooms difficult.
- **Load shedding** was identified as a key barrier, reducing the consistency and effectiveness of multimedia-based instruction.
- Teachers reported difficulties in **transporting equipment between classrooms**, as shifting laptops and projectors is time-consuming and disrupts teaching; accordingly, it was suggested that installing equipment in every classroom could reduce delays and improve efficiency.

### Recommendations

- The number of multimedia classrooms should be expanded by **scaling up the provision of equipment and improving internet connectivity across the schools**.
- **Solar panels and backup power solutions** may be explored under **CSR support** to address electricity disruptions. This will be linked with the government's plan to **solar electricity production to 500 MW**.
- **Classroom design improvements** (e.g., better lighting control and screen visibility arrangements) needs to be considered to make multimedia teaching more effective.

# Delivering the Education Promises: The Early Reflections

## Multimedia Classroom in Educational Institutes

Observations from the field	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It was found that only a small number of teachers know how to operate the devices required to conduct multimedia classes effectively. Very few teachers reported receiving ICT training.</li><li>• Teachers raised concerns that multimedia teaching cannot fully replace traditional chalk-and-blackboard methods, particularly for younger students, and recommended a <b>blended approach combining both traditional and multimedia teaching</b>.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A structured <b>capacity-building programme</b> should be introduced to <b>strengthen teachers' ICT and multimedia teaching skills</b> on a continuous basis.</li><li>• Development of <b>mother tongue-based Multilingual digital content</b> may be encouraged to better align multimedia resources with the national curriculum and community context.</li><li>• <b>Global e-learning platforms</b> (e.g. Khan Academy) may be promoted to support science and mathematics learning.</li><li>• Training on the <b>effective and responsible use of AI</b> may be introduced for students (At least on a pilot basis), particularly at the secondary level, to enhance digital literacy and future readiness.</li></ul>

# Following the Money

Linking the Government initiatives and directives to the  
Counternarratives

**PART 3**

## COUNTERNARRATIVE I

# “Access for reducing learning inequality”

<p><b>Pledge: Preventing dropouts in remote areas</b></p> <p><b>PEDP 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ School feeding, stipend programme, free textbooks, <b>uniforms with shoes</b></li><li>○ Pre-primary improvement project in Cox's Bazar &amp; Bandarban</li></ul>	<p><b>Pledge: Universal access to pre-primary education</b></p> <p><b>PEDP 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ PPE Quality Assurance Framework — shifting from coverage (one-year PPE under PEDP4) to quality of pre-primary education</li></ul>
<p><b>Pledge: Reducing social &amp; geographic inequality</b></p> <p><b>PEDP5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Back-to-school enrolment, track-based accelerated learning, stipends</li><li>○ Reintegration of OOSC into formal grades</li></ul> <p><b>Beyond PEDP5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Free university education for July 2024 uprising victims; primary extended to Grade 8; girls' free education to undergraduate; lottery system abolished</li></ul>	<p><b>Pledge: Ensuring safe health protection for female students</b></p> <p><b>PEDP5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Menstrual Hygiene Management support via School Level Improvement Plan funds</li></ul> <p><b>Beyond PEDP5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Clean toilets and health support for female students</li></ul>

## COUNTERNARRATIVE II

# “Learning outcomes to prepare a future-proof workforce”

### **Pledge: Technical education for all**

- Technical education compulsory at secondary; bridge courses; technical schools in every upazila; polytechnics in every district

### **Pledge: Improving education for learners with special needs**

#### **PEDP5**

- **Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) Framework**
- **Early identification**
- **Assistive devices**
- **Teacher training**
- **Home-based learning**
- **Textbook review**

### **Pledge: Modernising and Updating Madrasa education**

- Full Qawmi certificate implementation; state recognition for Qaris/Alims; 9,000 religious teachers

### **Pledge: Creating opportunities to develop hidden talents**

#### **PEDP5**

- **Bangla, Math, English Olympiad events**

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- **Broader “talent identification”**

## COUNTERNARRATIVE II

# “Learning outcomes to prepare a future-proof workforce”

### **Pledge: Inclusion of Sports & Cultural Education**

#### **PEDP5**

- Sports-based pedagogy

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- Seven sports compulsory from Grade 4; upazila/district leagues; music education

### **Pledge: Learning with happiness (Grade 6+)**

- Teamwork, drama, debates, daily reading;
- Training for 20,000 teachers within 6 month
- Mental health education compulsory from Grade 4

### **Pledge: Mandatory third-language learning**

- Third language compulsory; language labs; Japanese & Italian training

### **Pledge: Emphasis on creativity & analytical thinking**

#### **PEDP5**

- Co-curricular activities embedded in school calendar

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- Curriculum revision for AI, robotics, 4IR; **NASS pilot across 30 schools**; item-bank-based assessments

## **COUNTERNARRATIVE II**

# **“Learning outcomes to prepare a future-proof workforce”**

### **Pledge: Talented teachers for quality education**

#### **PEDP5**

- **Merit-based recruitment;**
- **12,000 annual teacher appointments due to retirement;**

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- **English training for 247,000 primary teachers**
- **8th NTRCA (11,151 posts)**
- **Separate salary scale;**
- **Private institution salary linked to teaching evidence**

## **COUNTERNARRATIVE III**

# **“Data for monitoring the envisaged outcomes”**

### **Pledge: Introducing a Unique digital identity (Edu-ID)**

#### **PEDP5**

- **Student database with Unique ID for each student**

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- **Unique Edu-ID for every student and teacher**
- **Public dashboards**
- **Mandatory E-GP**
- **Single registration across class transitions**

#### **Other relevant initiatives made public:**

- **White Paper on Education Sector Corruption and Irregularities**

## COUNTERNARRATIVE IV

# “Out of Pocket Expenditure”

### **Pledge: Providing Free school uniforms**

#### **PEDP5**

- School uniform with shoes

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- Free uniforms, shoes & jute bags for 200,000+ students;
- BGMEA commitment of 100,000 items

### **Pledge: Priority to Health and Food**

#### **PEDP5**

- "Better Health, Better Education" — weight scales, first aid, WASH upgrades
- Mid-day meal/School Feeding programme

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- Cancelled re-admission fees
- Doubled scholarships (Tk 184cr → 368cr)
- Coaching centres to be shut down

## COUNTERNARRATIVE V

# “Dearth of infrastructure for future-ready education”

### **Pledge: Establishment of Multimedia classrooms**

#### **PEDP5**

- **Phased expansion of multimedia classrooms**

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- **20,000 multimedia classrooms within 6 months; 3,832 initial rollout**

### **Pledge: Introducing Free Wi-Fi**

#### **PEDP5**

- **Wi-Fi zone for NAPE-1 new building only**

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- **1,500 schools + 2,336 technical institutions + 8,232 madrasas within 180 days**

### **Pledge: One Teacher, One Tab**

#### **PEDP5**

- **Tab for all Government Primary School teachers**

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- **Covers primary, secondary, technical & madrasa; 50,000 tablets + 9,000 technical teachers in first phase**

### **Pledge: Dedicated education TV channel**

#### **Beyond PEDP5**

- **Dedicated channel for nationwide lesson broadcasting**

## **COUNTERNARRATIVE VI**

# **“Public Expenditure for Education”**

**Pledge: Allocate 5% of GDP to education**

**Beyond PEDP5**

- **Education to rise to 5% GDP / 15-20% public expenditure via three-year fiscal uplift plan**

# Way Forward

## PART 4

# Way Forward

- The **education budget for FY2027** informed by the **electoral pledges of BNP** is expected to have some **'freshness'** –
  - ✓ An **increased allocation** (as a share of GDP)
  - ✓ **New initiatives**
  - ✓ A quasi-new sector-wide program, the largest development programme of education sector (**PEDP-5**)
- A critical secondary education programme, i.e., Secondary Education Sector Investment Programme (SESIP), is also scheduled to be completed by December 2026 with an **opportunity to design a new programme**
- Hence, the new government will have **multiple opportunities** to reform the education sector as intended

# Way Forward

- However, “**ghosts of the past**” (i.e., the large number of carryover projects, weak institutional capacity, and dearth of good governance) will continue to haunt the budget
- The obvious “**elephant in the room**” is the **fiscal space** that is under pressure. The golden question remains – *Will the newly elected and “well-meaning” policymakers be able to ringfence the budgetary allocation for education?*
- New development programs should be designed with the **vision** of preparing our children for the future by building on “a foundation to learn from” (i.e., **cognitive learning**) and “the capacity to learn” (i.e., **social and emotional learning**) –
- This may be done by **detailing out PEDP-5** activities, formulating a **new programme for the secondary level**, and **complementary initiatives**.

# Way Forward

- Surely the **government** machinery, from central to downstream, will be **put to the test to deliver the budget**.
- **Assessing the delivery of the budget** will be done through the following dimensions:
  - i. **Allocating resources according to priority**
  - ii. **Protecting the allocation from a decline**
  - iii. **Implementing in a timely manner**
  - iv. **Ensuring good governance**
  - v. **Having a transparency and accountability mechanism**
- Citizen's Platform will track the delivery of budget and electoral pledges through its activities, including the [\*\*Reform Tracker\*\*](#), and by engaging its Partner Organizations.

# Thank You



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