

Is the Government Delivering?

Spotlight on Primary Education

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Context

PART 1



Context

Expanded access, enrolment and gender parity in education were among the “low-hanging fruit” during the MDG period. These **gains have plateaued**, while shocks (e.g., floods and COVID-19) exposed their fragility and risk of reversal

The deeper challenge now is the **fragmentation of the education system** across different streams, institutions and standards, which **contributes to uneven quality, learning opportunities and outcomes**

In view of growing demand, the interim government formed four sectoral committees, but **no “Education Reform Commission”**

Bangladesh now stands at **a critical crossroads on two counts: an elapsing demographic window and a renewed political momentum** for bringing transformative changes in the education ecosystem

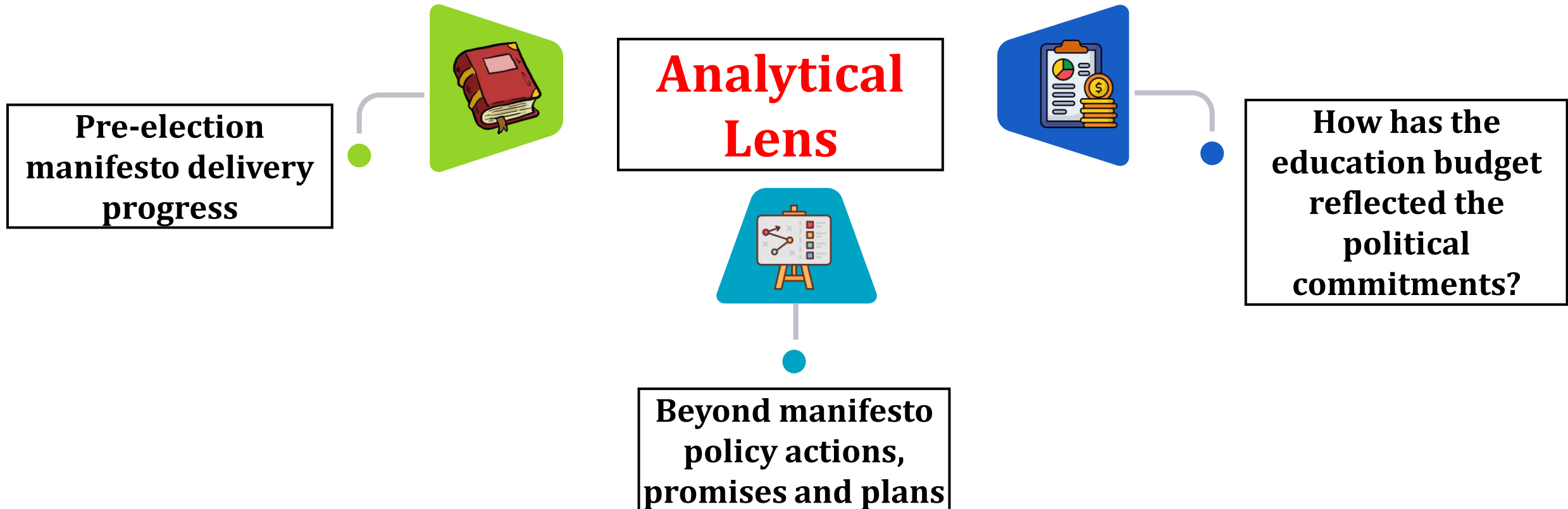
Context



The **new government** assumed responsibility with **one of the strongest electoral commitments on education**

After 200 days into the new government, the question is therefore:

“How far has the education agenda progressed from electoral commitment to policy, institutional action and implementation?”

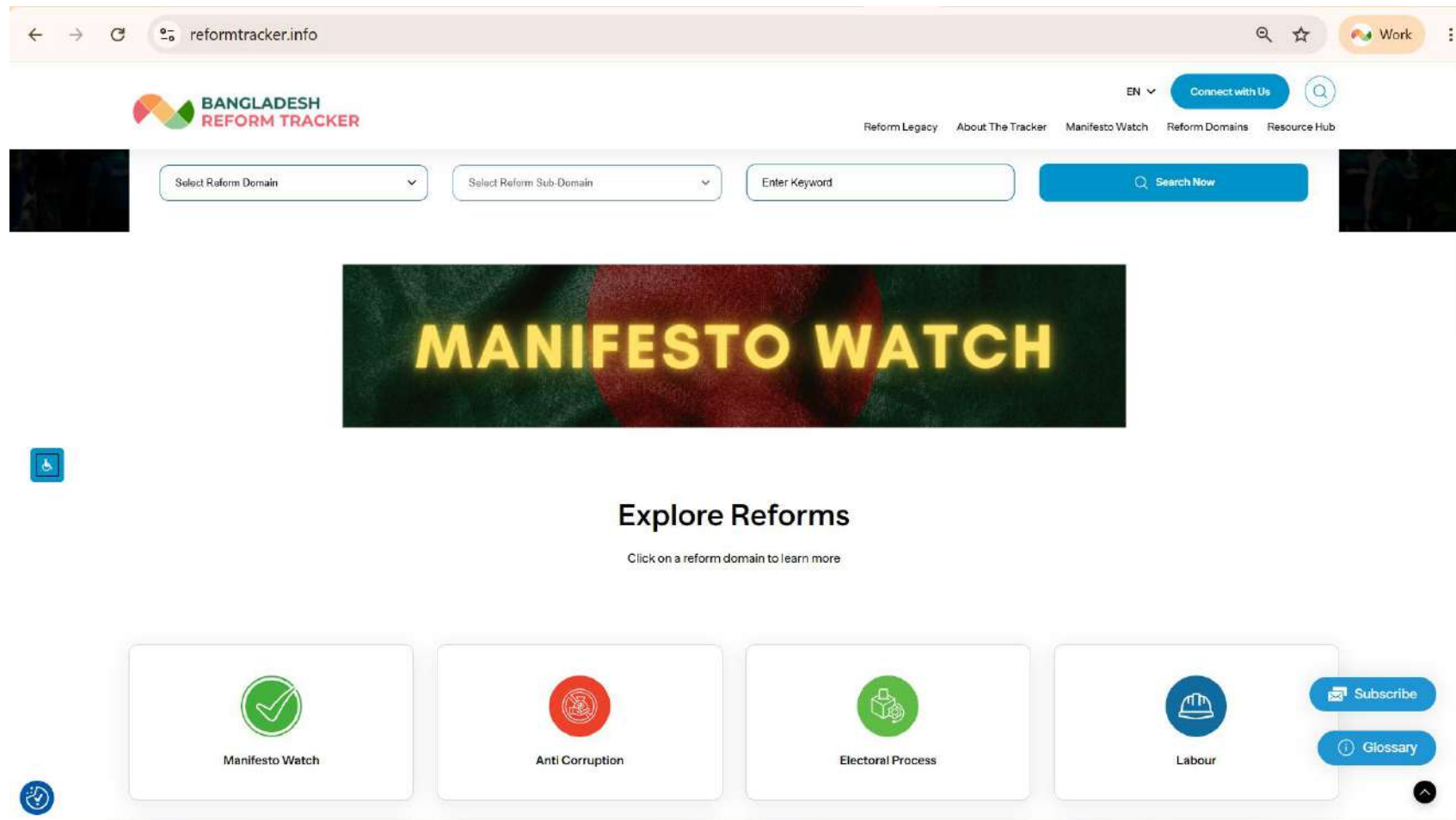


Delivery Progress of Electoral Pledges

PART 2



Bangladesh Reform Tracker



<https://reformtracker.info>

The 5 stages of tracking

1

REFORM PROPOSED

2

REFORM INITIATED

3

LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORK

4

OPERATIONALISATION

5

ACTION IMPLEMENTATION

The 5 Stages of Tracking

STAGE 1 : REFORM PROPOSED

The framing of a reform proposal across key documents—such as the reform commission reports, and other official sources—culminating in a standard articulation of the proposed reform.

STAGE 2: REFORM INITIATED

An announcement from the relevant government agency formally declaring the acceptance and initiation of a reform proposal.

STAGE 3 : LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORK

A formal decision regarding how a reform proposal will be operationalised, followed by the issuance of an official notice or legal instrument

The 5 Stages of Tracking

STAGE 4: OPERATIONALISATION

Specific steps taken by the relevant agencies to put a reform proposal into effect, such as procurement, implementation measures, or other administrative and procedural actions

STAGE 5 : ACTION IMPLEMENTATION

The time frame or stage at which the actions taken under a reform proposal are enforced and applied in practice

Dissecting the Education Pledges

Tracking education-related manifesto commitments



13th National Parliament Election

Election Manifesto
2026



Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP

Pledges in focus for primary education: 24

***Note: This analysis excludes pledges related to higher-than-primary education*

Primary Education

03

Cross-Cutting

21

Higher-than-Primary Education

05

Information and data were drawn from publicly available evidence: government documents, gazettes, circulars, official announcements and news reports

Primary education. Pledges focused specifically on pre-primary and primary
Higher-than-Primary Education. Pledges focused on secondary education and higher levels

Cross-cutting. Pledges relevant to both primary and higher-than-primary education

Primary Education

Distribution of 03 pledges across the five tracking stages



All three primary education pledges have progressed beyond the proposal stage, with one each at Reform Initiated, Legal & Policy Framework, and Operationalisation.

Pledges at “Operationalisation” Stage

Mid-day meal programme for students

Current Status:
Operationalisation



On 29 March 2026, as part of the ongoing implementation of the interim government’s programme design, the school feeding programme was implemented in Bhola, covering 415 government primary schools across four upazilas—Daulatkhan, Borhanuddin, Tajumuddin, and Monpura, benefiting approximately 52,500 students, with a reported figure of 52,727 students across these locations. On the same date, as part of the same programme framework, the school feeding programme was also implemented in Faridpur, where it is reported to be ongoing in 592 government primary schools across 6 out of 9 upazilas, funded by the government. The forthcoming SEDP programme is likely to introduce mid-day meals for Madrassa students. Providing cooked meals may be piloted next year.

Food-quality and delivery problems have emerged during implementation, while limited public information on investigations, monitoring and follow-up makes programme performance difficult to assess.

Pledges at “Legal & Policy Framework” Stage

Free School Uniform

Current Status:
Legal & Policy Framework



On 29 April 2026, the education minister announced that the initial pilot phase was planned to cover 25 upazilas or thanas across eight divisions, around 3,522 government primary schools. On 8 June 2026, during a press conference, it was informed that the first phase would target at least 100,000 students, with subsequent phases expected to cover more than 350,000 students through July, August, September and October. More than 25,000 primary schools were included in the pilot plan. The Ministry of Textiles and Jute would provide 500,000 waterproof, environmentally friendly jute school bags, while the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Ministry would provide logistical and administrative support for delivery to schools in upazilas and remote areas. As part of the initiative, on 10 August 2026, BTMA donated 100,000 school uniforms for first-grade students.

Preparatory work and limited distribution have progressed, but the absence of a publicly identified government circular or gazette leaves the broader implementation framework unclear. The major challenge will be making the coverage in a timely manner.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Ensuring Universal Access to Pre-Primary Education

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



Reportedly, on 21 June 2026, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education initiated work on the 2028 primary curriculum reform. On 14 July 2026, the Education Minister told Parliament that pre-primary and primary textbooks were being developed and distributed in Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Garo and Santal. To support this, 450 teachers were being trained in 15 batches at five Primary Teachers’ Training Institutes in 2026. The government had also taken a policy decision to expand multilingual education to more indigenous languages.

Progress in pre-primary provision and related reforms is visible, but it needs to expand, as only 8,214 public primary schools (out of more than 65 thousand) now offer two years of pre-primary education. Lower-coverage segments will require greater attention to achieve universal access.

Cross-cutting Pledges

Distribution of 21 pledges across the five tracking stages



The cross-cutting pledges show strong forward movement, with most already progressing from commitment to concrete policy and implementation measures.

Pledges at “Operationalisation” Stage

Multimedia Classroom

Current Status:
Operationalisation



According to the BNP government’s “180 Days of Government of the People” report, 327 digital classrooms under the Directorate of Technical Education had already been established, while a project had been prepared to establish another 6,600. In madrasa education, 1,315 multimedia classrooms across 653 institutions had become operational, while work was underway through the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED) to introduce another 14,309 classrooms in 5,907 madrasas. The report also states that the government repaired and restored 65,000 laptops and 62,000 projectors and speakers that had previously been provided to educational institutions.

Expansion is building largely on existing digital infrastructure, while the key challenge is ensuring that multimedia facilities remain functional and contribute meaningfully to teaching and learning.

Pledges at “Operationalisation” Stage

Making Teachers’ Retirement Benefits Easier to Obtain

Current Status:
Operationalisation



On 15 August 2026, the government formally launched nationwide payment of retirement and welfare benefits for teachers and employees of non-government educational institutions. Applications were processed through iBAS++, with payments transferred directly to beneficiaries’ bank accounts across all 64 districts, supported by a one-time allocation of Tk 2,035.86 crore. Reportedly, on 17 August, payment disbursement began, covering around 70,119 retirement-benefit applications and 53,477 welfare-benefit applications, following verification of National ID and bank-account information.

Digital processing and direct bank transfers have improved benefit delivery, but backlogs, funding shortages and partial payments mean immediate full payment after retirement is not yet assured.

Pledges at “Operationalisation” Stage

Implementing One Child, One Tree programme

Current Status:
Operationalisation



On 29 June 2026, the Prime Minister inaugurated the nationwide tree plantation programme for secondary-level educational institutions. News reports state that the programme was launched in more than 29,000 secondary-level institutions and that around 90,000 saplings were planted during the launch phase. On 15 July 2026, the Prime Minister officially launched the “One Child, One Tree” programme for government primary schools under the “Green School” initiative. During the launch, the PM urged every primary school student to plant and care for at least one tree to nurture environmental responsibility. Nearly 194,000 saplings were reportedly planted across more than 64,000 government primary schools. The BNP government’s 180-day report stated that 337,609 trees had been planted in primary schools nationwide as of the reporting period. On 10 September 2026, DSHE has explicitly made “One Child, One Tree” one of the mandated co-curricular activities.

The programme’s long-term success will depend on tree survival, continued student participation and effective monitoring.

Pledges at “Operationalisation” Stage

Creating opportunities to develop hidden talents

Current Status:
Operationalisation



On 2 May 2026, the government formally launched Notun Kuri Sports 2026 as a nationwide sports talent-hunt programme under the Directorate of Sports, and by 27 July 2026 the first edition had completed the upazila, district, regional and national stages, with more than one lakh children and adolescents reportedly participating. The Islamic Foundation also organised a separate Notun Kuri National Hifzul Quran and Seerat Competition 2026. Registration for Notun Kuri Sports 2026–27 began on 1 July 2026 and was scheduled to continue until 31 August, with upazila-level competitions planned from September; the new edition covers 10 sports. The new sports subject and textbooks are planned to be introduced from the 2027 academic year.

Visible progress has been made through talent-development programmes and planned curriculum reforms, although some components are still awaiting future implementation.

Pledges at “Operationalisation” Stage

Introducing “Notun Kuri” Quran recitation

Current Status:
Operationalisation



“Notun Kuri” Hifzul Quran and Seerat Competition was scheduled for 26 June 2026 at its Agargaon headquarters. The Divisional-level winners were instructed to report by 9:00 am; participants were to receive photo identification cards and travel allowances based on distance, and the final competition was to begin at 10:00 am. The memorandum also stated that the names of national winners would be published after judging, while the award ceremony would be scheduled later following the Prime Minister’s consent.

Quran-related Notun Kuri activities have progressed, but the structure of a distinct Quran-recitation component is not yet clearly established.

Education pledges at “Operationalisation” Stage

Public Spending on Education to be Increased to Five Per cent of GDP

Current Status:
Operationalisation



On 30 June 2026, the Appropriation Act for FY2026–27 was passed, formally authorising government expenditure for the fiscal year. Under the Act, Tk 1,22,496 crore was allocated for the education sector.

Progress towards higher education spending will depend not only on increasing allocations but also on ensuring that allocated resources are effectively utilised.

Pledges at “Legal & Policy Framework” Stage

Talented Teachers for Quality Education

Current Status:
Legal & Policy Framework



The National Pay Scale 2026 was approved by the Cabinet on 31 August 2026, with implementation effective from 1 July 2026. On 1 September 2026, it was reported that teachers and employees of MPO-listed non-government educational institutions would also receive benefits under the new pay structure. There is a plan to make pre-service training for teachers in primary schools mandatory.

Recruitment and improvements in teachers' financial benefits are progressing, and greater clarity will emerge once specialised teaching positions for new subjects are created and filled.

Pledges at “Legal & Policy Framework” Stage

Inclusion of Sports and Cultural Education

Current Status:
Legal & Policy Framework



On 6 July 2026, Bangladesh’s Directorate of Madrasa Education made daily assemblies and sports activities compulsory in all madrasas as part of efforts to promote students’ physical well-being. A directive issued by the directorate noted that the initiative aims to help build a healthy and energetic younger generation capable of contributing to a prosperous Bangladesh. However, the other segments are expected to take further action in view of this. DSHE's official order (issued 10 Sep) directs all regional and district education offices to run 36 mandatory year-round programmes — 15 sports, 13 co-curricular activities, and 8 cultural activities (music, recitation, dance, drawing) — alongside academic activities.

The pledge is advancing through curriculum reform and complementary sports initiatives, but further progress depends on updating the curriculum plan, hiring adequate skilled teachers/instructors, and securing the required resources.

Pledges at “Legal & Policy Framework” Stage

Clean, Pleasant Environment at Educational Institutions

Current Status:
Legal & Policy Framework



On 24 March 2026, following the formation of the inter-ministerial committee, formal instructions were issued to educational institutions to maintain cleanliness throughout the year. The instructions required institutions to: (i) ensure cleanliness before reopening after this year’s Eid-ul-Fitr holiday; (ii) strengthen regular supervision so that campuses remain clean every day; (iii) conduct weekly cleanliness drives with the participation of teachers and students; (iv) undertake tree-planting programmes and maintain school gardens; and (v) carry out activities to motivate students on cleanliness and hygiene. The directive also stated that the matter was extremely urgent, underscoring the priority placed on immediate implementation.

Cleanliness measures cover both primary and secondary institutions, while the planned recruitment of dedicated cleaners in government primary schools will be important for sustained implementation.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Emphasis on creativity and analytical thinking

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



On 19 February 2026, the State Minister for Primary and Mass Education stated that the government was working to introduce an item-bank and blueprint-based examination system to encourage creative thinking instead of memorisation. On 3 March 2026, the Education Minister said that existing textbooks would be revised and a new curriculum formulated, with regular assessment intended to help students develop creativity and other abilities.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to creativity, analytical thinking, problem-solving and application-based learning, while the effectiveness of these measures will depend on how they are reflected in curriculum delivery and classroom practice.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Introducing free Wi-Fi

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



On 8 April 2026, the Prime Minister stated in parliament that initiatives were underway to provide free WI-FI to approximately 1,500 educational institutions. He also mentioned that within 180 days, free Wi-Fi would be introduced in 2,336 technical schools and 8,232 madrasas. On 28 June 2026, the education minister informed the Parliament that the government plans to provide free Wi-Fi to 15,000 educational institutions. Tk 1,000 per school per month is being allocated in public primary schools.

Future implementation needs to focus not only on expanding connectivity but also on reliability, maintenance and effective educational use.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

One Teacher, One Tab

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



On 19 February 2026, the State Minister of Education announced the government’s plan to provide each teacher with a tablet containing lesson plans, question banks, attendance tools and learning-evidence applications at a press conference. On 24 March, “One Teacher, One Tab” was included in the government’s 180-day education priority programme, and on 1 April the Prime Minister told Parliament that 9,000 technical-education teachers would receive tablets under the programme. 16 April 2026, the Ministry of Education gave approval to Huawei’s “One Classroom, One Smart Board and One Teacher, One Tablet” pilot at two secondary schools in Bogura and Chandpur. According to a media report on 4 August 2026, DSHE prepared a separate “One Teacher, One Tab” scheme under the Secondary Education Development Program and sent it to the Ministry of Education.

The programme forms part of the wider digital-education agenda, but primary-level implementation remains linked to a project that has not yet been approved.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Preventing Dropouts in Remote Areas

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



On 5 May 2026, the State Minister for Primary and Mass Education said the government had taken steps to adopt 13 new development projects and develop infrastructure for Primary Teachers’ Training Institutes. According to reports published on 11 August 2026, the government was also considering installing solar panels at around 300 extremely remote primary schools in Rangamati, where 389 schools reportedly had no electricity connection. On 30 August 2026, the State Minister also said that the government was planning a special allowance for teachers working in char and remote areas.

Several discrete initiatives are addressing education access in remote areas, while broader progress will depend on the formal approval and implementation of the primary education programme (PEDP-5).

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Introducing a unique digital identity (Edu-ID)

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



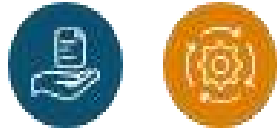
Reportedly, on 9 March 2026, the Education Minister discussed an 180-day education action plan that included a digital Edu-ID system for students. On 8 April 2026, the Prime Minister told Parliament that initiatives were underway to introduce Edu-ID for every student and teacher. The FY2026–27 Budget Speech also mentioned that a unique Edu-ID would be introduced for every student. The State Minister for Primary and Mass Education has stated that the planned Unique ID would be integrated into an upgraded school-management system, alongside ERP and LMS platforms.

Edu-ID could strengthen student tracking and education planning, particularly if it is eventually integrated or made interoperable with the wider national digital identity system.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Improving Education for Learners with Special Needs

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



According to a media report, on 13 May 2026, the Prime Minister directed the authorities to review disability schools and ensure access to education for persons with disabilities. On 8 June, the Cabinet Division instructed the Education Secretary to take measures to make education completely free for poor students with disabilities within one year and to submit monthly progress reports. Subsequently, the FY2026–27 Budget Speech emphasised commitments on inclusive education for children with disabilities and special needs, supported by specialised assistive technology and educational materials.

Several disability-inclusive measures are underway, but the available evidence does not yet show a coordinated programme covering all elements of the pledge.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Modernizing and updating Madrasa education

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



On 8 April 2026, the Prime Minister informed Parliament about the government’s plan to modernise madrasah education through smart classrooms, teacher training, and technical courses. On 21 April 2026, it was reported that the government was preparing to roll out the NextGen Education Program (NGEP) 2026–2030, a Tk 2,374.08 crore initiative covering new classrooms, ICT and science labs, smart classrooms, a Learning Management System, a Unified Assessment System, and training for at least 100,000 teachers. On 23 April 2026, the Education Minister announced in Parliament that NCTB, in coordination with the Technical and Madrasa Education Division, had taken steps under a dedicated project to modernise curriculum and assessment, including third-language learning and expansion of vocational education.

Several policymakers have expressed keen commitment to implement this pledge and mentioned concrete steps towards this.

Pledges at “Reform Initiated” Stage

Support for those injured in mass uprisings and anti-fascist movements

Current Status:
Reform Initiated



On 24 March 2026, the Education Minister instructed the relevant authorities to ensure that the children of July Uprising martyrs, as well as student fighters who were injured or permanently disabled during the uprising, receive free education up to the university level.

Existing welfare benefits may indirectly support education-related expenses, but they do not constitute the specific educational incentive promised in the pledge.

Pledges at “Reform Proposed” Stage

Ensuring safe health protection for female students

Current Status:
Reform Proposed



This pledge is included in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party’s election manifesto for Bangladesh’s 13th national election. The manifesto states that “Efforts will be made to set up sufficient common rooms and special vending machines with menstrual/health-hygiene supplies for female students in educational institutions.”

Limited local installations and policy attention are visible, but no verified nationwide programme, circular or dedicated action plan has yet been identified.

Pledges at “Reform Proposed” Stage

A Dedicated Education TV Channel

Current Status:
Reform Proposed



This pledge is included in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party’s election manifesto for Bangladesh’s 13th national election. The pledge commits that “a separate education channel will be launched on national television to improve and expand educational quality.”

The proposed channel’s implementation mechanism, institutional ownership, operational design and responsible ministry remain unclear.

Pledges at “Reform Proposed” Stage

Inviting Teachers to State Programmes

Current Status:
Reform Proposed



This pledge was included in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)’s election manifesto for Bangladesh’s 13th national election. The manifesto states that "As recognition of teachers’ status, initiatives will be taken to invite primary and secondary school teachers to national day events at the district, upazila, and municipal level."

Separate measures have recognised teachers’ contributions, but no specific initiative has been identified to invite teachers to national-day programmes as pledged.

Pledges at “Reform Proposed” Stage

Establishing an “Education Reform Commission”

Current Status:
Reform Proposed



This pledge was included in the Bangladesh Nationalist Party’s (BNP) election manifesto for Bangladesh’s 13th national election. The manifesto states that “An Education Reform Commission will be formed on a priority basis. The main goal will be to include realistic, relevant components in the curriculum from the primary level, including multilingual learning, sports, culture, and personal and professional development.”

Despite broader education reform activity, policymakers have not communicated any plan to establish the pledged Education Reform Commission.

Summary of Progress



Primary Education

Pledges in focus for primary education: 24



Progress in Higher-than-Primary Education

Distribution of 05 pledges across the five tracking stages



“Income-tax exemption for private universities” and “Improving the National University and the University Grants Commission” are at the “Operationalisation’ stage, while “Learning with Happiness”, “Technical Education for All”, and “Mandatory Third Language Training” are at ‘Reform Initiated’ stage

Beyond Manifesto Pledges

Government initiatives beyond the manifesto pledges under thematic areas

Access & Inclusion

- Cancelled re-admission fees for students continuing to the next class in all government educational institutions
- Plan to double scholarship amounts for meritorious and marginalised students from primary to undergraduate level
- Plans to expand coverage and increase the monthly stipend under the existing Disability Education Stipend Programme
- Plans to provide free education for all poor students with disabilities
- Intends to double the value of Primary Scholarship Examination scholarships
- Plans to extend primary education up to Grade 8 and make it tuition-free gradually
- GIS mapping of 500 educational institutions is being planned to identify social and geographical disparities
- Plans to launch "Shishu Swarga" centres, rolled out gradually across every district, offering special education and other support facilities for children with special needs

Reversals of Policy Decisions

- Retracted the decision to introduce an admission test for Class 1
- Retracted the decision to introduce examination fees in government primary schools
- Revocation of the directive requiring primary schools to keep three specific political biography books

Beyond Manifesto Pledges

Government initiatives beyond the manifesto pledges under thematic areas

Curriculum, Assessment & Learning Quality

- Plan to launch the NextGen Primary Education Program (NPEP), introducing curriculum-aligned digital content for grades 1–5 and a Unified Assessment System (UAS) by 2027, replacing exam-centric evaluation with continuous classroom-based assessment
- Book-reading programme to launch in public primary schools in partnership with Bishwo Shahitto Kendro
- Plan to introduce science toys and mathematics labs in primary schools to promote play-based, practical learning
- English speaking tests may be introduced alongside written exams under the next primary curriculum to improve students' communication skills
- Plan for minimum learning standards for Classes 1–5 across government, private and English-medium schools, while letting each stream keep its distinct identity

Management Reform

- Primary teacher transfers were decentralised in mid-2026 through a multi-tier, committee-based system replacing the previous online mechanism (*But this framework is currently on hold, with the Ministry announcing an indefinite suspension of all transfers*)

Key Observations from the Field-Level

- 1 Teachers and parents appreciated the new efforts and energy of the incumbent government to bring positive changes**
- 2 Making multimedia and wi-fi functional is still a challenge, including human resources and maintenance capacity**
- 3 SLIP funding is inadequate, and administrative procedures require simplification**
- 4 Many schools lacked a 'functional' School Management Committee (SMC)**
- 5 School-level initiatives such as Learning Intensive Care Units for weaker students and the Community Learning Model can be beneficial**
- 6 There is still a gap between the 'central government's political commitments' and 'school-level readiness'**

Progress in terms of Policy Intent

This framework focuses on primary and cross-cutting education commitments and categorises them by their dominant policy intent

Each pledge was assigned once, according to its primary commitment focus, to avoid double counting across themes

8

Access, Equity & Student Welfare

6

Curriculum, Pedagogy & Student Development

4

Digital Infrastructure & Learning Environment

3

Teachers, Workforce & Professional Welfare

3

Governance, Financing & Institutional Reform

Broad Theme	Definition
<i>Access, Equity & Student Welfare</i>	Reducing barriers to education and supporting safe, inclusive and equitable participation
<i>Curriculum, Pedagogy & Student Development</i>	Improving what students learn, how they learn, and their broader development
<i>Digital Infrastructure & Learning Environment</i>	Expanding digital tools, connectivity and technology-enabled learning
<i>Teachers, Workforce & Professional Welfare</i>	Strengthening teacher recruitment, quality, recognition and welfare
<i>Governance, Financing & Institutional Reforms</i>	Improving education financing, institutional reform, administration and system-level monitoring

Progress in terms of Policy Intent

Access, Equity & Student Welfare — 8 pledges			
Ensuring Universal Access to Pre-Primary Education			
Mid-day meal programme for students			 
Free School Uniform			
Preventing Dropouts in Remote Areas			
Ensuring safe health protection for female students			
Clean, Pleasant Environment at Educational Institutions			
Improving Education for Learners with Special Needs			
Support for those injured in mass uprisings and anti-fascist movements			

Progress in terms of Policy Intent

Curriculum, Pedagogy & Student Development — 6 pledges				
Emphasis on creativity and analytical thinking				
Modernising and updating Madrasa education				
Inclusion of Sports and Cultural Education				
Creating opportunities to develop hidden talents				
Implementing One Child, One Tree programme				
Introducing “Notun Kuri” Quran recitation				

Progress in terms of Policy Intent

Digital Infrastructure & Learning Environment — 4 pledges				
Multimedia Classroom				
Introducing free Wi-Fi				
One Teacher, One Tab				
A Dedicated Education TV Channel				

Progress in terms of Policy Intent

Teachers, Workforce & Professional Welfare — 3 pledges

Talented Teachers for Quality Education



Making Teachers' Retirement Benefits Easier to Obtain



Inviting Teachers to State Programmes



Progress in terms of Policy Intent

Governance, Financing & Institutional Reforms — 3 pledges

Introducing a unique digital identity (Edu-ID)



Public Spending on Education to be Increased to Five Per cent of GDP



Establishing an “Education Reform Commission”



Supporting the Delivery with Budget

PART 3



Stylised Issues of Education Budget

Chronic underutilisation

01 Actual expenditure was only about 1.3% of GDP in FY25. Total education budget utilisation rate fell to about 76% in FY23–FY25

Development spending as an adjustment variable

In FY23–FY25, development-budget execution fell to only 53% for MoPME and 46% for both SHED and TMED, substantially below operating-budget execution.)

02

Persistent underfunding despite repeated commitments

03 8th Five-Year Plan targeted 3% of GDP by FY2025. In reality, the education budget was only 1.7% of GDP

Education budget remains heavily input- and infrastructure-oriented

Of the 101 education-sector ADP projects identified, 78 were infrastructure projects.

04

Operating expenditure remains salary-heavy

05 From FY25 to FY26, the wages and salaries constitute, on average, 74% of the total operating budget

Stylised Issues of Education Budget

Dearth of institutional capacity

06

Most ADP projects miss their scheduled completion dates. Moreover, weak and unrealistic DPP formulation, leadership discontinuity, Procurement Delays and unresolved audit objections are increasing the number of carry-over projects

Fiscal space is a binding constraint on scaling up education spending

Low education financing to the low tax-to-GDP ratio, which reached 6.9% in FY26, alongside revenue shortfalls and weak ADP implementation in FY26 (67.5%)

07

08

Elite capture or weak political buy-in

As most of the influential policy actors do not rely on the public education system, they have limited incentive to address its structural challenges.

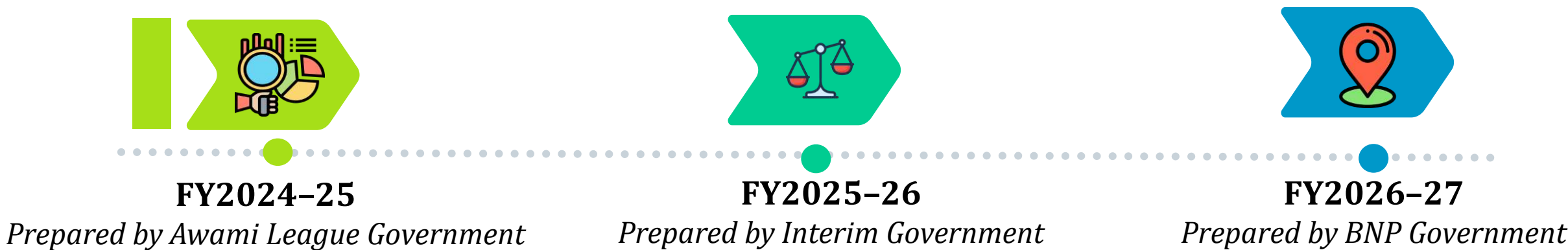
Lack of democratic accountability

09

There has been no consequence for not delivering the envisaged programmes or policy objectives.

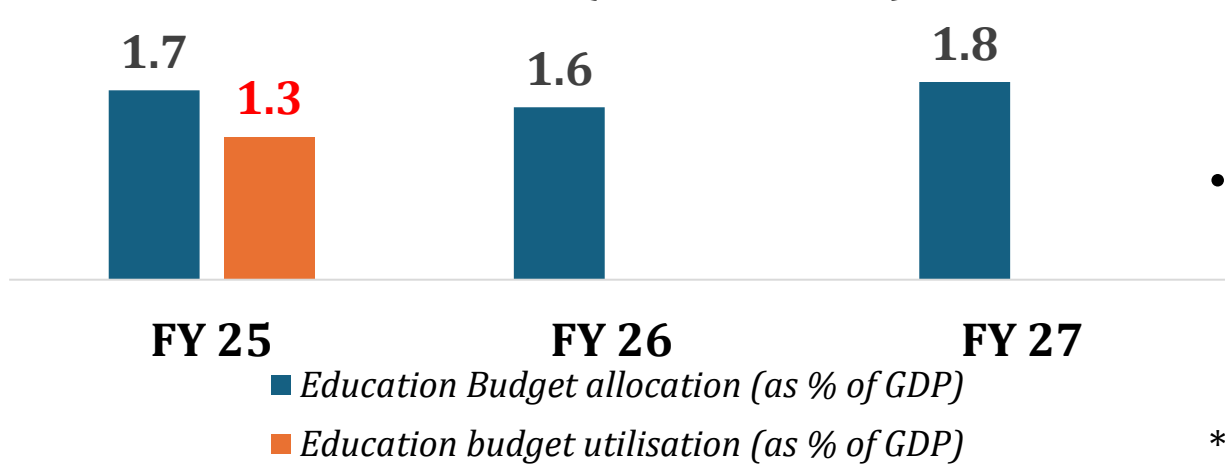
Is there a Shift?

Budget–Budget Comparison



*Note: Revised budget figures are not used for assessment due to concerns about masking implementation shortfalls by adjusting allocations

Education budget allocation and utilisation (as % of GDP)



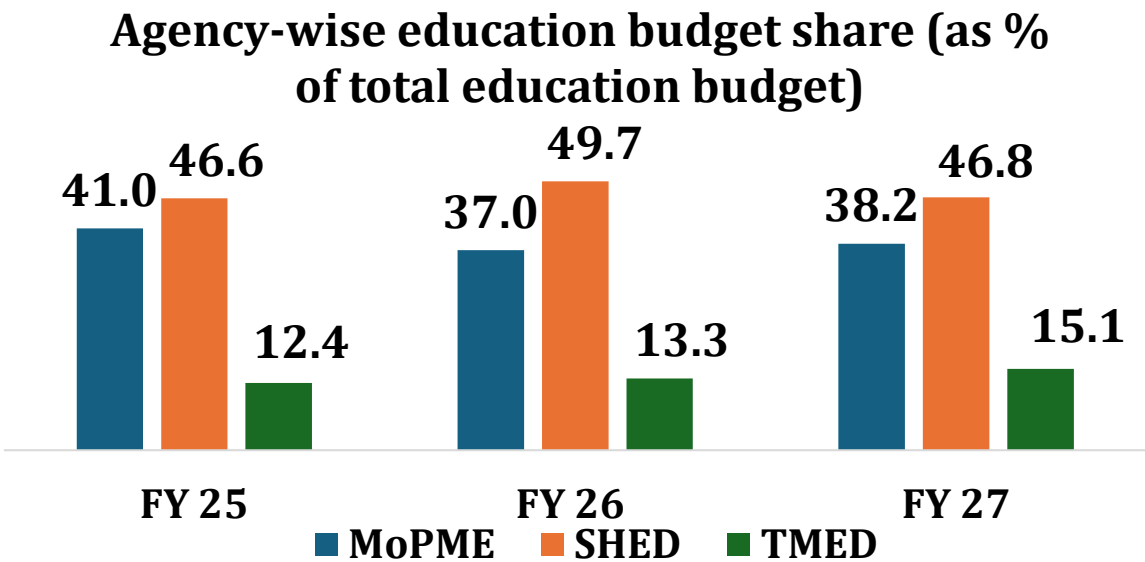
- A modest increase to 1.8% of GDP in FY27, the allocation remains below the recommended trajectory
- It is **still 0.4–0.5 percentage points short of the “linear” and “accelerated” pathways proposed by Citizen’s Platform** towards the 5% of GDP target by 2031

**Actual budget data for FY26 and FY27 are not available

Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF)

Is there a Shift?

Composition of the education budget



Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF)

- Positive movement, as allocations to **MoPME** and **TMED** increased in **FY27** due to initiatives undertaken by the **BNP government** in line with its electoral commitments
- **SHED** received a lower share than in FY26, reflecting the **discontinuation of around 12 RADP projects in FY27**
- The overall increase in budget in FY26 was driven by higher allocations to SHED (370.6%) and TMED (96.0%), but was partly counterbalanced by a substantial reduction in MoPME (-366.6%) allocation
- The composition of growth became more balanced in **FY27**, with **MoPME emerging as the largest contributor to the additional allocation (42.2%)**

	Growth from FY25 to FY26 (%)	Growth from FY26 to FY27 (%)
MoPME	-8.8	32.0
SHED	7.8	20.5
TMED	7.6	45.6
Total education Budget	1.0	28.1

MoPME= Ministry of Primary and Mass Education; SHED= Secondary and Higher Education Division; TMED= Technical and Madrasah Education Division

Is there a Shift?

Composition of the education budget

Agency-wise share of operating budget (%)			
Fiscal year	MoPME	SHED	TMED
FY 25	38.1	48.0	13.8
FY 26	37.8	48.0	14.2
FY 27	36.2	47.0	16.8

MoPME  SHED  TMED 

Source: Ministry of Finance (MoF)

Agency-wise share of dev budget (%)			
Fiscal year	MoPME	SHED	TMED
FY 25	45.8	44.1	10.1
FY 26	35.4	53.2	11.4
FY 27	40.8	46.5	12.8

MoPME  SHED  TMED 

MoPME= Ministry of Primary and Mass Education; SHED= Secondary and Higher Education Division; TMED= Technical and Madrasah Education Division

- Despite a fall in the share of **MoPME's** operating budget, **wages and salaries still constitute the largest share (76.5%) in FY27**, higher than in FY25 (73.6%) and FY26 (74.8%)
- Under **MoPME**, the agency-wise allocation for development activity is undergoing a major compositional shift—from DPE towards the Ministry Secretariat
 - ❑ Secretariat: rose from 7.6% in BFY25 to 16.2% in BFY26 and 39.3% in BFY27
 - ❑ DPE: fell from 33.9% to 16.0% and then to 6.6%
- Secretariat development allocation increased** by 219.6% and accounts for 111.4% of the net increase. This increase is **driven by the increased allocation of reserves** in the development activity
- Dominance of operating activity under Directorate Primary Education (DPE)**: operating activity accounted for 57.8% of allocation in BFY25, 67.1% in BFY26, and 53.7% in BFY27

Is there a Shift?

- Education-sector **ADP FY27 allocation increased** significantly by **60%** from ADP FY26, due to the **increase in block allocation by 27.9%**
- **Reflection of the government’s statement regarding screening and rationalisation of development projects**
 - ❑ Number of **education-sector projects declined from 117 in RADP FY26 to 107 in ADP FY27**, with eight projects screened out from the investment projects *(for MoPME 2 projects were discontinued)*
 - ❑ **Concern remains regarding further screening and rationalisation of the carryover projects**

ADP allocation utilisation rate (From FY25-FY27) [Month-July]			
Ministry/Division	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	0.7	0.0	5.1
Secondary and Higher Education Division	1.9	1.4	1.7
Technical and Madrasah Education Division	0.1	3.5	0.7

Source: IMED (ADP Implementation Progress of July 2026)

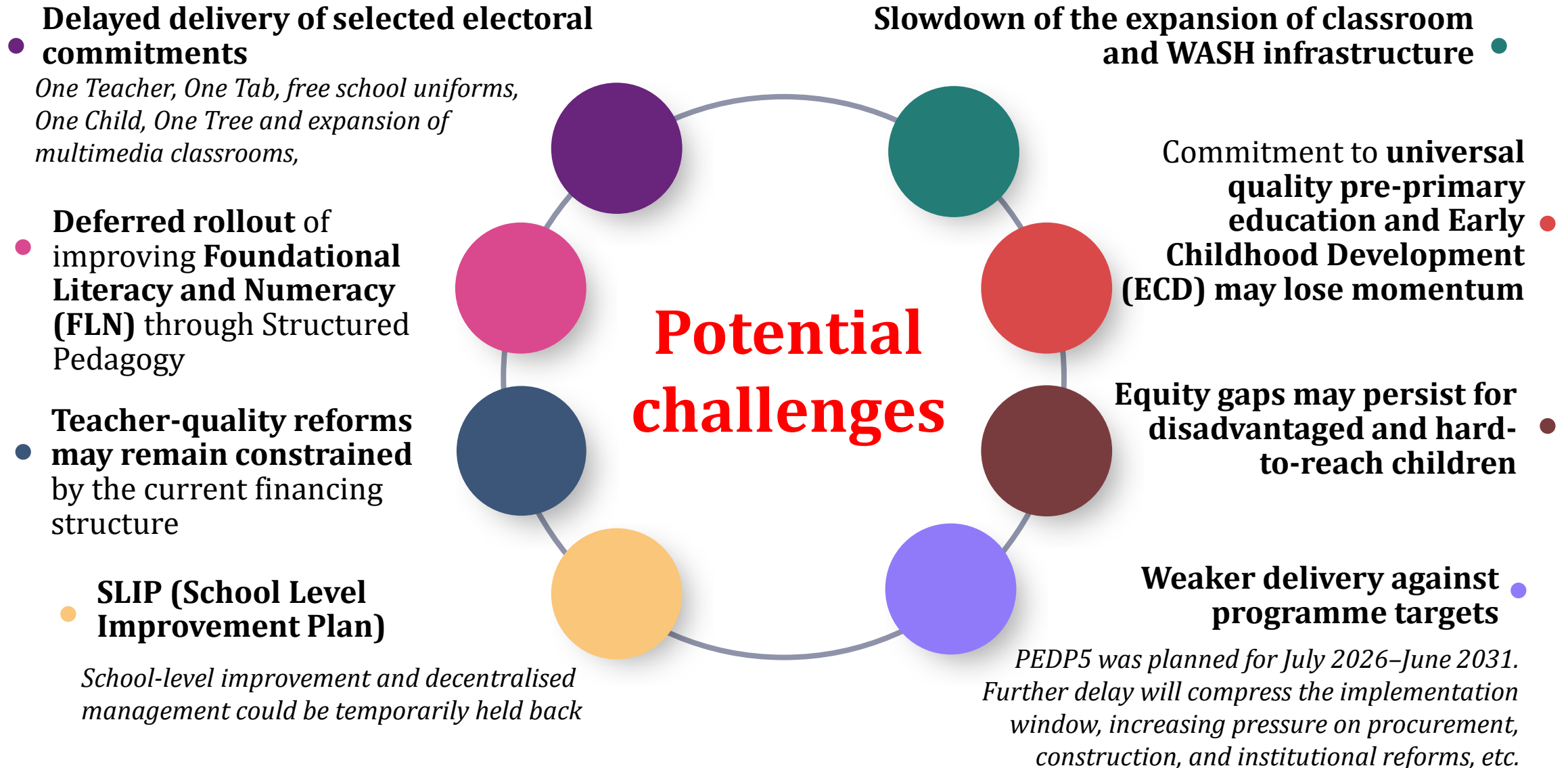
- The ADP FY27 (July) data show sharply divergent trajectories
- The high early utilisation rate may be due to the spending being concentrated in smaller active projects
 - ❑ However, the major project PEDP5 is yet to be approved. *But hope to be coming soon!*

Electoral Pledges Linked to PEDP5

16 key pledges to the latest PEDP5 programme

- **Free School Uniform**
- **Ensuring Universal Access to Pre-Primary Education**
- **Priority to Health and Food / Clean and Hygienic School Environment**
- **One Teacher, One Tab**
- **Public Spending on Education to be Increased to 5% of GDP**
- **Talented Teachers for Quality Education**
- **Ensuring Safe Health Protection for Female Students**
- **Implementing One Child, One Tree Programme**
- **Improving Education for Learners with Special Needs**
- **Inclusion of Sports and Cultural Education**
- **Preventing Dropouts in Remote Areas**
- **Emphasis on Creativity and Analytical Thinking**
- **Introducing a Unique Digital Identity (Edu-ID)**
- **Multimedia Classroom**
- **Introducing Free Wi-Fi**
- **Creating Opportunities to Develop Hidden Talents**

Implications of Lagged PEDP5 Implementation



How to Improve Primary Education Budget Delivery?

1

Immediately implement PEDP5 and clarify the reasons of delay

The reasons for the delayed rollout, along with a credible financing and implementation timeline, need to be clarified.

2

Assess the quality of the budget implementation beyond headline utilisation

Assess whether increased education budget utilisation reflects productive investment in learning and quality, rather than an “artificial rise” driven mainly by wage and salary costs

3

Secure domestic resources for education investment

Considering the limited fiscal space and inevitable revenue mobilization shortfall, ring-fence education budget allocations to safeguard sustained investment in human capital

4

Publish quarterly education budget reports in a clear and citizen-friendly format

MoPME should take the initiative to this end partnering with the Finance Division

5

Fix the long-standing structural challenges related to ADP delivery

Issues such as **procurement delays, unrealistic DPP formulation, leadership discontinuity, and audit backlogs need to be addressed** along with formulating an accountability mechanism

Key Takeaways

PART 4



Key Takeaways

The Credible Start

1 A credible start is visible

The government deserves credit for a credible start and demonstrated political will — its primary education pledges are not merely 'political rhetoric'.

2 Quick wins moved fastest

Symbolic/quick-win commitments have progressed most visibly, but several structural pledges have also been initiated — the real challenge now is sustaining momentum through to timely, full delivery (i.e., reaching 'Action Implementation').

The Momentum Risk

3 Outcomes need clearer conceptualisation

Several pledges need clearer conceptualisation so that desired outcomes are not 'lost in translation'.

4 Fragmented delivery needs an action plan

Delivery of many pledges has begun in a fragmented manner; a full action plan is needed that clearly articulates what implementing each pledge would entail.

Key Takeaways

The Binding Constraints

- 5 PEDP5 is the critical pathway**
Early finalisation and rollout of PEDP5 will shape delivery of many primary-education commitments; ring-fencing education allocations may be needed if revenue falls short.
- 6 Financing has made a modest start**
The financing commitment has begun amid narrow fiscal space and weak domestic resource mobilisation; reaching the education-financing target remains arithmetically difficult.
- 7 Implementation capacity is decisive**
Procurement delays, unrealistic DPP formulation, leadership discontinuity and audit backlogs need to be addressed so they do not slow political momentum.

Key Takeaways

The Symbolism Trap

8 Manage political-economy pressures

Political economy constraints need to be managed so that equity-focused and system-level reform pledges are not crowded out by high-visibility, easy-to-implement symbolic initiatives (tree planting, sports events) that photograph well but leave the underlying gaps unaddressed.

10 Address school- and local-level constraints

School- and local-level constraints need to be addressed to deliver on the central government's political commitments.

9 Move administrative reforms into classroom practice

Administrative process improvements need to be translated into classroom practice by bringing school-level actors on board.

11 Strengthen coordination and transparency

Coordination among key actors — across government agencies and between central and local levels — together with transparent implementation information, will be the determining factors.

Key Takeaways

The Unresolved Question

12 Will an Education Reform Commission be established?

It remains unclear whether the government will establish the promised Education Reform Commission with a mandate extending beyond electoral pledges — to tackle long-standing structural challenges, including building an inclusive, universal primary education system that brings the fragmented public, private, English-medium and madrasa streams into a coherent national framework.

Use the QR code to see the education-related pledge delivery
on the ***Bangladesh Reform Tracker***
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