



31-Point Outline for Structural Reforms in Bangladesh



Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP

1

The illegal and illegitimate Awami League government has introduced numerous amendments to the fundamental framework of the constitution, driven by the malevolent intent of clinging to power against the will of the people. A ‘Constitutional Reforms Commission’ will be formed to carefully review and repeal or amend all controversial and undemocratic constitutional changes. Democratic rights of the people will be restored by reinstating the provision for a ‘referendum’ in the constitution.

2

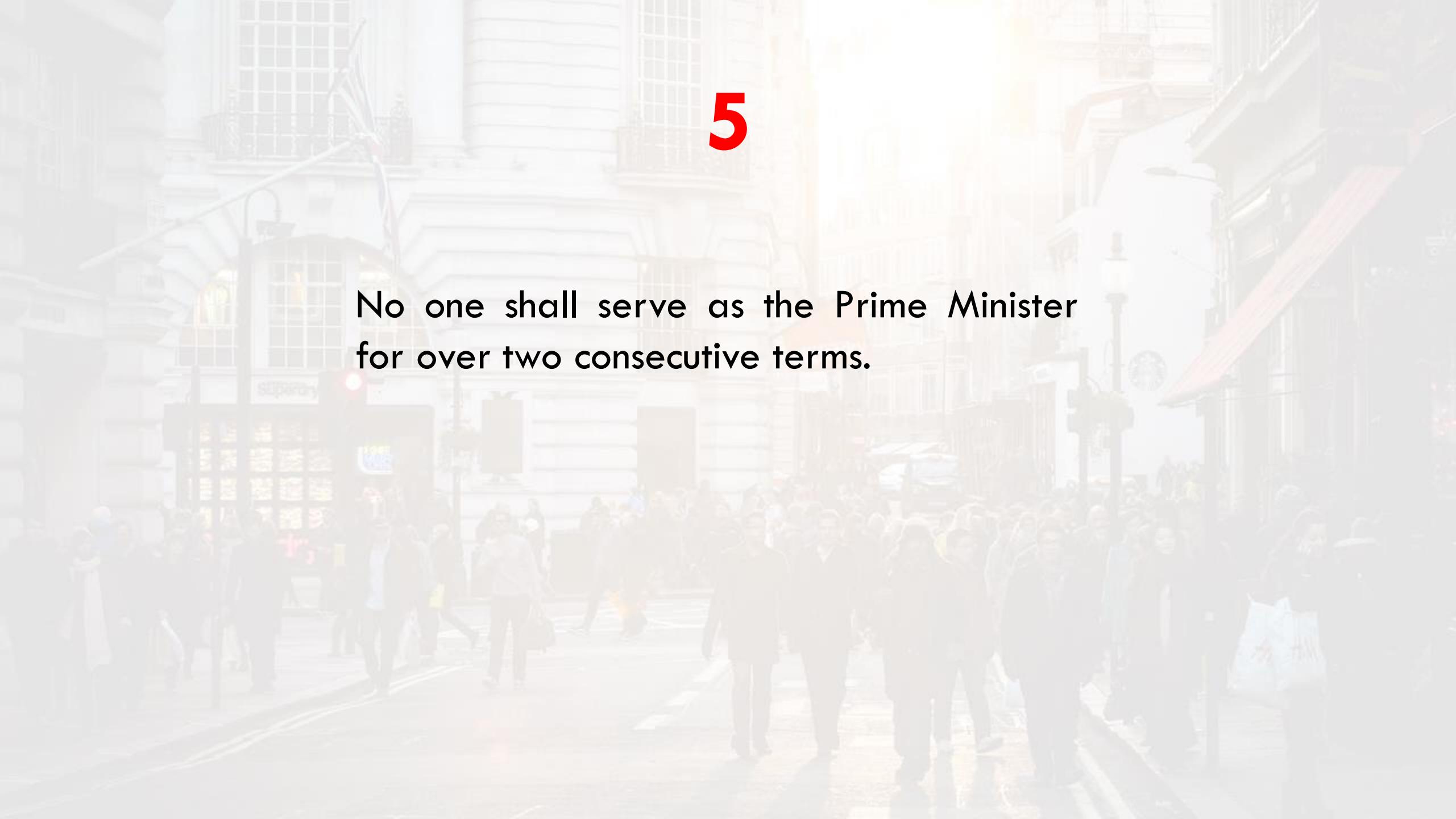
An inclusive and egalitarian ‘Rainbow Nation,’ in contrast to the politics of vengeance, will be established based on Bangladeshi nationalism, through the amalgamation of diverse views, paths, ideologies, and religions. A new forward-looking ‘Social Contract’ is essential, built through continuous dialogue, exchange of views, and mutual understanding. In this pursuit, a ‘National Reconciliation Commission’ will be formed.

3

To reinstate democracy, safeguard the right to vote, and provide a permanent, constitutional, and institutional framework for the democratic process, an ‘Election-time Non-Partisan Caretaker Government System’ will be implemented. This will ensure that the people have the power to choose their representatives and form a government that genuinely represents their aspirations.

4

A proper balance shall be established in the executive powers of both the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers. The authorities, responsibilities, and duties of the Executive, the Judiciary, and the Legislature will be recalibrated to create a robust system of checks and balances in exercising state power.

A blurred background image of a busy city street with people walking and buildings in the background.

5

No one shall serve as the Prime Minister
for over two consecutive terms.

6

In addition to the existing legislative system, a bicameral government will be established by creating an ‘Upper House of the Legislature.’ This chamber will include eminent citizens, educationists, professionals, scientists, journalists, sociologists, and individuals with a remarkable track record, all contributing their expertise and integrity to the governance of the state.

7

The amendment of Article 70 of the Constitution will be considered, subject to thorough examination, to allow Members of Parliament to express independent opinions, except in cases involving no-confidence motions, finance bills, constitutional amendment bills, and matters related to national security.

8

The existing ‘Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners’ Appointment Act-2022’ will be amended to establish a new, effective Election Commission. This Commission will comprise independent, competent, impartial, and credible individuals, based on recommendations from political parties and distinguished experts. All centres will conduct vote using paper ballots instead of electronic voting machines (EVMs). Reforms will be introduced to the Representation of the People Order (RPO), the Delimitation Order, and the laws governing the registration of political parties. Additionally, using party symbols in local government elections will be abolished.

9

All constitutional, statutory, and public institutions will be restructured through essential legal reforms to reinstate transparency, accountability, and credibility that transcend parochial political lines. Appointments to key positions within constitutional institutions will undergo vetting by a Parliamentary Committee through a hearing process.

10

The effective independence of the Judiciary will be ensured in line with the constitution and the Masdar Hossain Case verdict. A ‘Judicial Commission’ will be formed to reform the existing judicial system. Control and discipline of sub-ordinate courts shall vest with the Supreme Court. A separate secretariat for the Judiciary will be established to function under the Supreme Court. The erstwhile Supreme Judicial Council, which is enshrined in the constitution, shall be reintroduced to deal with issues like the impeachment of the Supreme Court Judges, with necessary constitutional amendments to support this. Appointments to the higher Judiciary will be made based on expertise, wisdom, integrity, patriotism, reputation, and judicial acumen, free from partisan influence. Legislation specifying qualifications and standards for Supreme Court Judges will be enacted in accordance with Article 95(2)(c) of the constitution.

An ‘Administrative Reforms Commission’ comprising qualified and experienced persons shall be established to reform and restructure the administration and build a service-oriented public and police administration guided by integrity and patriotism. Appointments, transfers, and promotions within the civil and military administration will be based solely on merit, creativity, competence, experience, and training.

12

A ‘Media Commission’ will be set up comprising a former Supreme Court Judge, media professionals, and learned, experienced, and credible media figures, to ensure complete freedom of the press and comprehensive reforms in the media sector. The environment for honest and independent journalism and freedom of speech and expression will be fully restored. Towards that goal, amendments will be made to the ‘ICT Act 2006’ and ‘Anti-Terrorism Act 2009’. At the same time, all oppressive laws infringing on fundamental human rights, including the ‘Special Powers Act 1974’ and the ‘Digital Security Act 2018’, will be repealed. The trial of all cases involving the murder and torture of journalists, including the sensational Sagar-Runi murder case, will be ensured.

13

There will be zero tolerance for corruption. A white paper will be published to investigate money laundering and corruption over the past decade and a half, with those responsible held accountable. Adequate administrative and legal measures will be taken to bring back the money laundered outside Bangladesh. Transparency and accountability within the Anti-Corruption Commission will be ensured through systematic reforms, alongside amendments to the Anti-Corruption Commission and anti-corruption laws. An ‘Ombudsman’ will be appointed under the constitution to strengthen this oversight further.

14

The rule of law will be upheld at every level, restoring human dignity and democratic values. The brutal culture of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, mass murders, and both physical and psychological tortures will come to a permanent end. Human rights will be implemented in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Appointments to the Human Rights Commission will be made based on stringent and well-defined criteria, over and above any political consideration. Justice will be served for all individuals directly or indirectly responsible for extrajudicial killings, indiscriminate violence under the guise of crossfire, enforced disappearances, murders, abductions, rape, and inhumane torture over the past decade.

15

An ‘Economic Reforms Commission’ will comprise renowned economists, researchers, experienced bankers, corporate leaders, and professionals with substantial expertise to ensure economic justice. The disparity between the rich and the poor will be addressed through the equitable distribution of growth benefits, upholding equality, human dignity, and social justice, the main tenets of our liberation war. The Constitution Reforms Commission, Administrative Reforms Commission, Judicial Commission, Media Commission, and Economic Reforms Commission will submit their reports within a defined timeframe to ensure the swift implementation of their recommendations.

16

Every individual shall enjoy the full right to practice their religion freely, based on the fundamental principle that “religion belongs to respective individuals, but the state belongs to all.” Social, political, cultural, economic, religious and civil rights, as well as the security of life, property and dignity of the people, including ethnic minorities in both the hills and plains, irrespective of political affiliation, race, ideology, caste, or creed, will be upheld as guaranteed by the constitution. Action will be taken against those responsible for damaging homes, businesses, properties, and places of worship or forcibly occupying the assets of religious and ethnic minorities.

17

Fair wages for the working class will be ensured, keeping pace with inflation. Child labour will be eliminated, and measures will be taken to create a supportive environment safeguarding their well-being and development. A safe work environment and the right to democratic trade unions shall be protected. Efforts will be made to reopen all closed industries, including jute mills, textiles, and sugar mills. Multifaceted initiatives will ensure expatriate workers' safety, dignity, and job security, along with hassle-free and fast-track services at airports and the provision of expatriate voting rights. Special programs will be implemented to promote equitable growth and reduce disparities in disadvantaged regions such as tea gardens, slums, sandy areas, and coastal belts.

18

All draconian laws, including the Indemnity Act, will be repealed in the power, energy, and mineral sectors. The rampant corruption in purchasing electricity from the anti-people quick rental power plants will be halted to prevent further turmoil of the national economy. Adequate steps will be taken to promote renewable and mixed energy-based power generation. Steps will be taken to explore and utilize the neglected gas and mineral resources to reduce import dependence. Investment-friendly policies shall be introduced to attract both domestic and international investments, while giving special incentives to encourage business with expatriate Bangladeshis. A planned and well-coordinated industrial infrastructure will be developed nationwide to support economic growth and create jobs.

19

National interest, sovereignty, and security shall be prioritised in foreign relations. Bilateral and multilateral issues will be resolved based on fairness, justice, and adherence to international norms, rules, and regulations. No terrorist activity shall be tolerated on the soil of Bangladesh, and stern actions shall be taken against terrorism, extremism, and militancy. The misuse of anti-terrorism laws as a political tool to suppress dissent and opposition political parties will be stopped, ensuring that genuine terrorists are identified and punished through proper legal processes and meticulous investigations.

20

To protect the nation's sovereignty, the Defense Forces will be organized in a time-befitting manner, instilled with a deep sense of patriotism and responsibility. The forces will be kept above all controversies, with their distinct dignity and positive image.

21

Local government institutions will be made more independent, robust, and empowered in pursuing comprehensive decentralisation of power. These institutions will be brought under strict accountability to ensure their effective role in various development and service-oriented initiatives, including health and education. Local governments will operate independently, free from interference by the local administration, and any public representative or political entity. The appointment of government administrators to local government bodies will be discontinued, except in cases of vacancy due to the incumbent's death or a court order. An elected local government representative shall not be suspended, dismissed, or removed by executive order unless sentenced by a court.

22

Arrangements shall be made to confer state recognition to individuals for their contributions to the liberation war in 1971. A comprehensive list of the liberation war martyrs will be prepared through a state-led initiative based on an extensive survey, and they will be accorded due state status and recognition. A welfare policy for the families of martyred freedom fighters will be formulated and implemented on the list. An accurate list of genuine freedom fighters will also be compiled through thorough verification.

23

Modern and forward-looking youth development policies will be formulated, aligning with the younger generation's vision, thoughts, and aspirations. Educated but unemployed youth will be given 'Unemployment Allowance' until they secure employment, or up to one year, whichever occurs earlier. Concrete steps will be taken to harness demographic dividends by enhancing the skills of the youth. Multiple pragmatic programs will be implemented to address unemployment. Necessary investments shall be made to develop human capital, with utmost importance on health, education, and nutrition. An increase in the age limit for entry into government service will be considered in line with international standards.

24

Specific programs will be implemented to empower women and ensure the effective participation of women in national building. Cutting-edge development initiatives shall be adopted and carried out to improve the quality of life for women and children. Women will be prioritized, in principle, with regard to nomination for national parliament elections, along with efforts to increase women's representation in local government.

25

Need-based education at the lower and mid-levels and knowledge-based education at the tertiary level will be given priority, addressing the disorder and misfit in the education sector. Special emphasis will be placed on research. A uniform standard of education and instruction in vernacular will be prioritized. Arrangements will be made for regular students union elections in educational institutions to foster future leadership. Five percent of GDP will be allocated to the education sector in the national budget to develop a capable, skilled, and resourced population. Public interest sectors like health and education will see gradual increases in funding, in line with the country's economic growth. All relevant sectors, including education, technology, and training, will be reorganized to create a skilled workforce with real-world know-how. Research and Development (R&D) will be prioritised in educational, industrial, scientific, technological, and production sectors. Appropriate measures will be taken to promote sports and showcase national culture, while preventing cultural aggression and ensuring healthy youth development.

26

Recognizing that health is wealth, and based on the principles of ‘Health for all’ and ‘No death without medical treatment,’ universal health coverage will be introduced, modelled after the National Health System (NHS) in the United Kingdom. A ‘Health Card’ will be introduced for every citizen. The national budget will allocate five percent of the GDP to the health sector. The social safety net for the disadvantaged and ultra-poor will be further expanded until total alleviation of poverty.

Fair prices for agricultural produce will be ensured. Government purchase centres for agricultural products will be established in all the Unions in phases. Crop, livestock, fisheries, and poultry insurance will be introduced by extending subsidy support as necessary. Non-agricultural use of agricultural land will be strongly discouraged. An action plan for R&D in agriculture, fisheries, and livestock sectors will be prioritized, along with effective steps for strategic implementation and practical solutions. Incentives will be provided to the export-oriented agro-processing industry to promote the agricultural sector as a key driver of the economy.

28

To ensure the overall development of the communication network, a well-integrated multi-modal communication system will be established by reforming roads, railways, and waterways across the country. Arrangements will be made to boost regional and international trade and commerce through infrastructural development, technical modernization, and skills enhancement in all seaports and river ports.

Sustainable and effective strategies shall be adopted to address the hazards and losses due to climate change. The institutional capacity to face natural disasters like floods, tidal bores, cyclones, and earthquakes shall be enhanced by procuring the latest modern equipment. Effective measures shall be taken to prevent pollution of the rivers and water reservoirs. Programs for the excavation and re-excavation of rivers and canals shall be carried out to mitigate flood and drought risks. Arrangements shall be taken for the prudent tapping, exploitation, preservation, and economic use of marine resources (blue economy) based on scientific surveys.

30

Necessary steps will be taken to elevate the information and communication technology (ICT) sector to a world-class level. The impact of ICT on all sectors will be prioritized in a true sense, emphasizing practical application rather than mere rhetoric. The Space Research and Atomic Energy Commission will be strengthened by enhancing institutional capacity and practical facilities.

31

Planned housing and urbanization policies shall be developed and implemented through a national master plan, without wasting agricultural land in both urban and rural areas, and through alleviating population pressure in cities. Housing facilities for all impoverished individuals in the country will be ensured in stages.

THANKS

Take Back Bangladesh



Bangladesh Nationalist Party-BNP