Bangladesh a Year After the Uprising

Key Insights from BIGD Pulse Survey 2024-25

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)
BRAC University


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Background

The July 2024 Uprising was a watershed moment for Bangladesh, marking the end of over a decade of authoritarian rule. In response to this political shift, the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University, launched the Rapid Research Response (RRR 2024) initiative to generate rigorous, timely, and actionable insights that support informed decision-making for the interim government, political parties, students, and citizens.

As part of this initiative, BIGD conducted three rounds of the Pulse Survey: Citizens' Perceptions, Expectations, and Experiences (August 2024, October 2024, and July 2025). Guided by the principles of "rapid, rigorous, and repeated" research, these telephone surveys aimed to explore and track public perceptions of the economy, governance, and politics in Bangladesh. The sample was drawn from the 2022 Survey of the Bangladeshi People—a nationally representative survey of 10,240 respondents—conducted in partnership with The Asia Foundation (TAF).

In the Pulse Survey, we approached 9,203 respondents from the 2022 survey database, as the phone numbers of approximately 10% of the respondents were unavailable. The first round of data collection for the Pulse Survey took place between August 22 and September 3, 2024, gathering responses from 2,363 respondents (67% rural, 33% urban; 57% male, 43% female). The second round was conducted between October 15 and October 31, 2024, with 4,158 respondents (51% rural, 49% urban; 53% male, 47% female). The latest round of data collection, between July 1 and July 20, 2025, involved 5,489 respondents (73% rural, 27% urban; 53% male, 47% female). Despite relatively high attrition from the original sample, we found no significant differences in baseline characteristics—such as age, gender, education, income, household size, religion, and region—between the surveyed and non-surveyed groups across the three rounds. All three rounds of the survey were conducted across all 64 districts of Bangladesh.

Together, these surveys provide valuable comparative insights into the shifting public sentiment over time.

Public Optimism Declined Significantly Between August 2024 and July 2025

The overall political and economic optimism expressed by people, which peaked in August 2024—likely reflecting heightened expectations following the July 2024 Uprising—has since declined markedly. Optimism about the country's political direction dropped from 71% in August 2024 to 42% in July 2025, a decline of 29 percentage points. Optimism about the country's economic direction fell by 15 percentage points, from 60% in August 2024 to 45% in July 2025.

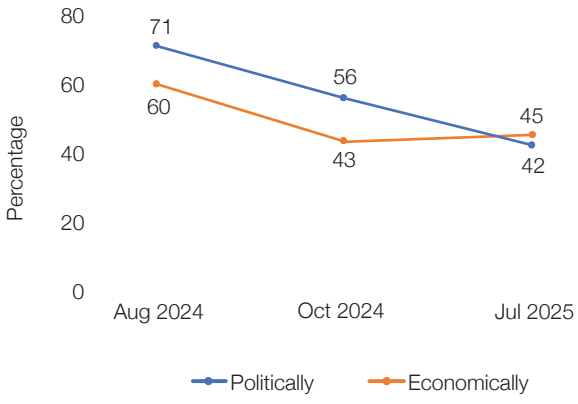

Figure 1. Considering the political and economic situation of the last month, do you think Bangladesh is going in the right direction, or in the wrong direction?

Our analysis of respondents' opinions on the country's most pressing problems shows a significant decrease in economic worries, particularly the price of essentials, between

October 2024 and July 2025. On the other hand, political concerns—notably unrest, uncertainty, and the deterioration of law and order—have intensified. These shifts help explain the steep decline in political optimism. What is notable is that, despite the reduction in specific economic concerns, the overall outlook on the economy has not significantly improved since October 2024, indicating that citizens' perceptions of politics and the economy are likely interconnected.

The comparison presented below is only for October 2024 and July 2025, as August 2024 was an outlier in many ways, including due to the floods that affected northeastern and southeastern Bangladesh.

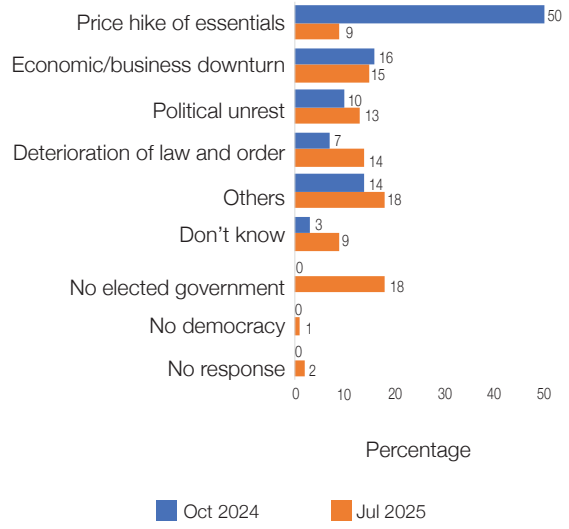

Figure 2. In your opinion, what is the biggest problem in Bangladesh right now?

For the first time since the August 2024 survey, a large proportion of respondents in July 2025 also identified the absence of an elected government as a significant issue, signalling growing dissatisfaction with the interim government. This sentiment is further reflected in the decline in public support for the interim government, as indicated by the lower average ratings assigned to it by the public.

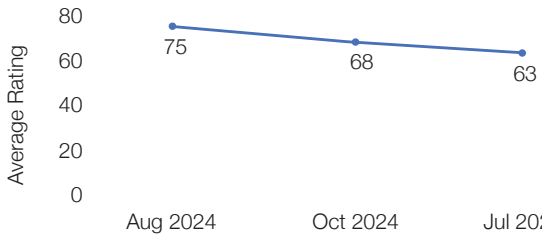

Figure 3. On a scale of 0 and 100, how would you rate the initiatives taken so far by the current interim government?

Public Perceptions of Elections and Reforms

With the national election expected in early 2026, researchers introduced a few new questions in the July 2025 survey round to gauge public attitudes on several key issues, including reforms, safety and security, and on election timing.

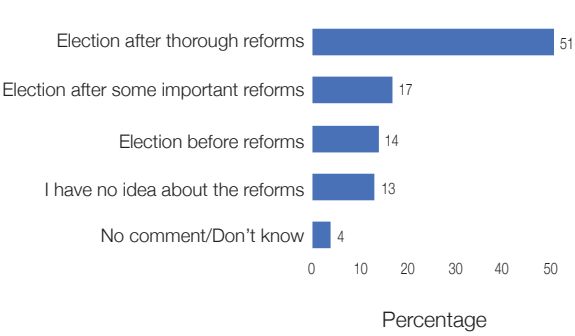

Figure 4. Which of these statements do you most agree with?

Contrary to the popular belief that ordinary citizens do not know or care about reforms, findings suggest that they are both aware of and eager for reforms. Half of the respondents favoured comprehensive reforms before the election, and another 17% expressed a desire for at least some reforms. Most of the respondents (87%) reported being at least aware of some of the proposed reforms.

Respondents who were aware of at least some of the reforms were asked to identify those they considered most important. To minimize potential bias, researchers did not present any predefined options to respondents, allowing them to name

reforms spontaneously. More than half (57%) of the respondents mentioned changes to the police and justice systems, 39% emphasized economic reforms, 38% highlighted electoral and constitutional reforms, 17% identified anti-corruption measures as their top priority, and 14% focused on reforms to the education system. These findings highlight the widespread anxiety surrounding the deterioration of law and order experienced by citizens in their daily lives. Furthermore, when respondents were asked

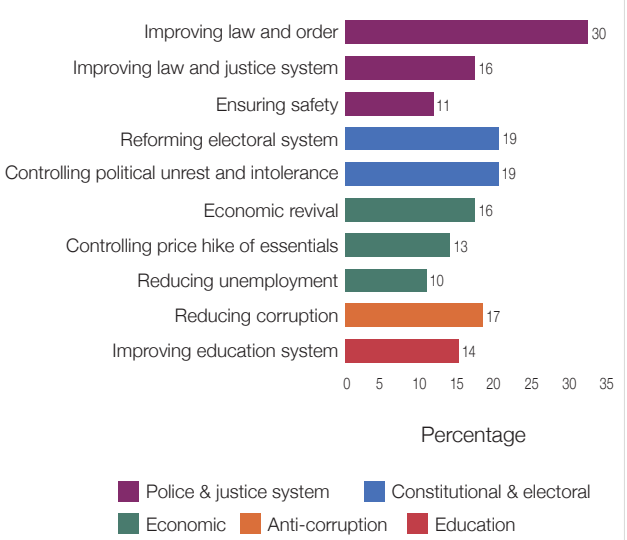

Figure 5. Which reforms do you think are most important?

to rate the severity of key safety and security issues in July 2025 on a scale of one (very bad) to four (very good), a majority, regardless of gender, rated the situation concerning mob violence, women's safety, safety at night, and harassment over clothing choices as very bad. A slightly larger proportion of women than men respondents viewed the situation regarding most of these issues as worse, particularly women's safety, which suggests women are probably disproportionately affected by these issues.

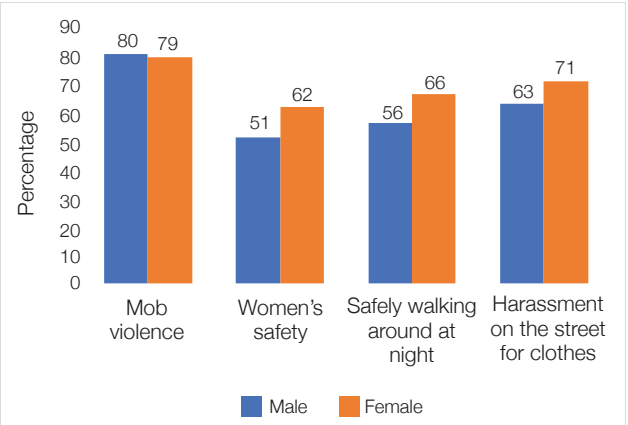

Figure 6. On a scale of one (very bad) to four (very good), how do you rate the current situation?

Public Perceptions of National Election Timing

Respondents were also asked about their preferred election timing. To capture their views more organically, researchers did not present any predetermined timeframes to the respondents. The different responses we obtained have been grouped into a few specific categories in this graph for clarity: 32% of respondents said they would like elections to be held before December 2025, 12% preferred elections by February 2026, and 25% said elections should be held after December 2026. Notably, people want elections and reforms to happen hand-in-hand.

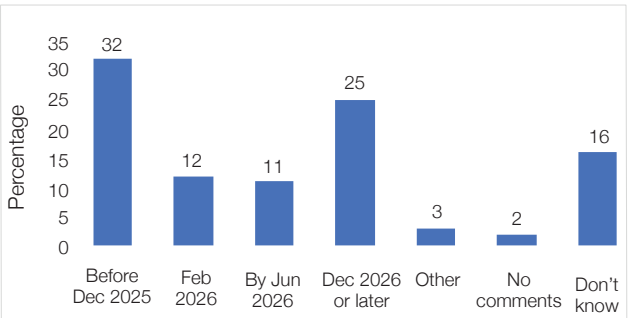

Figure 7. When do you want the next national election?

Conclusion

The findings suggest that most citizens want both timely elections and the swift implementation of key reforms. Citizens are aware that many reforms are unlikely to happen after the elections, which creates a strong expectation and an urgent demand for crucial reforms to be implemented alongside holding the national election within the next year.

Despite a relatively positive outlook on the country's economic future in July 2025, the deterioration of law and order, the rise in mob violence, and the climate of fear and insecurity concerning safety have made people more sceptical of the country's political future.

Read the Full Reports

To read the full report on Pulse Survey Round 1 (August 2024), please scan the QR code below:

To read the full report on Pulse Survey Round 2 (October 2024), please scan the QR code below:

To read the full report on Pulse Survey Round 3 (July 2025), please scan the QR code below:

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