

National Parliament Election 2026

Towards Economic Prosperity, National Security,
Environmental Conservation, Social Justice and Climate Resilience

Demands to the political parties for a Just Transition in the Energy Sector

Citizens' Manifesto

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Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development



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13th National Parliament Election 2026
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Citizens' Manifesto

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Executive Summary

Bangladesh's energy and power sector currently facing a serious crisis. Despite a significant increase in primary energy and electricity consumption over the last 16 years, this growth has incurred a massive financial burden. It includes approximately USD 18.5 billion in capacity charges and an additional USD 27.23 billion in losses sustained by the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB).

The annual expenditure on fossil fuel imports burdens the national economy, costing USD 11.72 billion and placing immense strain on the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Over the past 15 years, emissions in Bangladesh have nearly doubled, increasing from 146.8 to 281.4 million tons. This significant rise is a direct consequence of Bangladesh's reliance on a fossil fuel energy system, which has contributed to its current status as one of the world's most polluted countries.

To reverse the current trend, a clear political commitment and a practical action plan are essential. Simply increasing electricity generation is insufficient; rapid greening of the sector is critical for both economic progress and regional security. By prioritising the rapid expansion of renewable energy (RE), we can overcome our reliance on imports and ensure energy security.

The extent of the change hinges upon the dedication demonstrated by the government and the various political parties. Before the forthcoming parliamentary election, all political parties and alliances are set to develop their respective Manifestos.

The 'Citizens' Manifesto,' a 13-point set of demands, has been developed by Civil Society groups to draw attention to pressing issues within the energy and power sector.

Citizen Demands

1. Develop a new National Energy Policy (NEP) that addresses the negative impacts of climate change while ensuring energy security and

fostering economic prosperity. Following the NEP, formulate sectoral policies and plans, assessing their environmental, social, and financial impacts. Crucially, all policies, plans, laws, and rules related to energy, power, and climate must be finalised only after consultation with civil society and energy experts.

2. To combat corruption in the energy and power sectors, all associated contracts must be disclosed in accordance with the Right to Information Act. It necessitates a review of the Public Procurement Act and Rules. Besides, legal recognition is required for citizens to monitor project implementation process. Individuals involved in corruption must be prosecuted, and funds laundered from this sector to other countries must be recovered.
3. Gradually phase out fossil fuel subsidies to accelerate the transition to renewable energy (RE) across the industrial, commercial, and residential sectors. Mandate that all industrial and commercial entities utilise at least 30% RE by 2030, and 40% by 2041. Provide incentives

such as tax reductions and low-cost loans to support the decarbonization of these sectors.

4. Refrain from authorising any new fossil fuel power plants. Decommission obsolete and inefficient power plants and replace them with new RE installations. Establish programs immediately to ensure alternative employment for workers affected by these closures. Cease the payment of capacity charges to private power plants that are not operating with optimum efficiency.
5. No approval of the new LNG Terminal. Phase out old, inefficient gas power plants and supply surplus fossil gas to industries and fertiliser. Encourage industries to switch from fossil gas to electricity. Strict actions should be taken against leakage and theft of fossil gas. Install gas meters in all sectors to reduce energy waste.
6. Prioritise policy coherence to meet ambitious RE targets: 30% by 2030, 40% by 2041, towards 100% by 2050. These targets must be fully integrated into all relevant policies, sectoral plans, and five-year development plans. Furthermore, at least 40% of the total electricity sector budget should be allocated to RE initiatives. To accelerate adoption, reduce import duties and all other taxes on RE-related accessories to a symbolic 1%.
7. To decarbonise the transport sector, the second-highest emitter, significantly reduce import duties and taxes on electric vehicles (EVs) by at least 75% compared to those on ICE cars. Besides, to accelerate decarbonization, import duties and other taxes on advanced batteries (such as lithium-ion, sodium-ion, and solid-state) should be eliminated immediately.
8. Implement short- and mid-term investment plans immediately to transition existing traditional grids into smart one. Simultaneously, introduce the 'Suriyabari' scheme to promote personal rooftop and agricultural solar projects (up to 3 kWp) by offering a minimum of 25% incentive and 70% soft loans. An additional 10% subsidy should be provided to women,

indigenous peoples, labourers, fishermen, and people living below the poverty line.

9. Generate two million new jobs by offering short-term training and soft loans to unemployed youth. Priority should be given to women, indigenous peoples, and labourers through programs managed by the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA), Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Department of Cooperatives (DOC), Department of Social Services (DOSS), and Department of Women Affairs (DOWA).
10. Instead of promoting unproven 'false solutions' like Ammonia (co)firing, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), liquid hydrogen, nuclear, and Waste-to-Energy (WTE) under the guise of 'Advanced Technology', focus on building a 'Circular Green Economy'. It can be achieved by prioritising the reduction, segregation, reuse, and recycling of municipal solid waste.
11. Establish a domestic green economy by launching recycling initiatives for RE e-waste (e.g., solar panels, batteries, and inverters). This action will significantly reduce reliance on imported RE accessories.
12. Ensure that all national policies, plans, and schemes related to energy and power are inclusive, explicitly addressing the needs and participation of women, indigenous peoples, labourers, fishermen, and other marginalised communities. Additionally, establish mechanisms to ensure local communities' involvement in the management of energy infrastructure and to ensure they receive a fair share of the benefits derived from these projects.
13. Prohibit the development of energy infrastructure on cultivable agricultural lands to protect them. Instead, formulate long-term land-leasing guidelines that guarantee an annually increased leasing fee for farmers' land. Furthermore, incentivise and finance the promotion of Agrivoltaics and Floatovoltaics to encourage the multiple use of these lands.



Introduction

Bangladesh is standing at a crossroads in the energy and power sector. 99.25 percent of the country is under electricity coverage, while per capita electricity use increased from 220 kWh to 640 kWh in the last 16 years. At the same time, the risks of primary energy supply increased manifold. Since 2008, USD 18.5 billion has been paid to private power producers as capacity charges for installed power plants.

To pay for imported fossil fuel bills and capacity charges, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) incurred a loss of USD 27.23 billion over the last 16 years. To mitigate the losses, around USD 25.47 billion in incentives were paid to the BPDB from taxpayers' money. The incentives are finally pocketed by some energy investors, who allegedly launder them to other countries.

The nation's economy is under significant strain due to annual expenditures of USD 11.72 billion on

fossil fuel imports. Growing reliance on imports not only jeopardises national energy security but also heavily depletes Forex reserves. Besides, this overdependence on fossil fuels has led to a near-doubling of the country's emissions, from 146.8 million tons in 2008 to 281.4 MT in 2022.

The environmental situation has also been severely impacted. Bangladesh ranks alarmingly low on the Environmental Performance Index 2024, at 175th out of 180 nations globally. Dhaka is recognised as one of the world's cities with the poorest air quality and is listed among the top three unlivable cities. Government statistics indicate that fossil fuel power plants are causing 28% of the country's air pollution and 17% of total emissions.

At least 13 labourers and villagers were killed in agitations and clashes related to land acquisition and labour standards at the Banskhali, Payra, and Rampal Coal Power Plants. Similar allegations have also been raised against some solar power plants.

To reverse the current trend, a clear political commitment and a practical action plan are essential. Simply increasing electricity generation

is insufficient; rapid greening of the sector is critical for both economic progress and regional security. By prioritising the rapid expansion of RE, we can ensure our energy security.

The extent of the change hinges upon the dedication demonstrated by the government and political parties. Before the forthcoming parliamentary election, all political parties and alliances are set to develop their respective Manifestos. The Citizens' Manifesto, a 13-point set of demands, has been developed by Civil Society groups to draw attention to pressing issues within the energy and power sector.

The core goal is to ensure that political parties incorporate energy transition into their Election Manifestos. Concurrently, we aim to assist these parties in long-term planning and provide input for their manifestos.

This Citizens' Manifesto outlines a set of demands to help the public grasp the critical issues impacting Bangladesh's energy and power sector and to serve as a guide for policymakers.

Energy Policy & Plans

The country has lacked an updated or new National Energy Policy (NEP) for the past 21 years, with the most recent one formulated in 2004 following a review of the 1996 NEP. This policy vacuum has led to the formulation of two Power Sector Master Plans (2010 and 2016), a Gas Sector Master Plan (2017), an Energy Efficiency & Conservation Master Plan (2015), and the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (2023), all formulated without a guiding energy policy. Furthermore, the Renewable Energy Policy 2025 was formulated without any consultation with civil society or energy experts. These unrealistic plans and policies have benefited corrupt bureaucrats, unethical politicians, and dishonest energy investors, while the common citizens has been left to face the long-term consequences. To address this situation and ensure all citizens can fully benefit from the energy and power sector:

1. Develop a new National Energy Policy (NEP) that

addresses the negative impacts of climate change while ensuring energy security and fostering economic prosperity. Following the NEP, formulate sectoral policies and plans, assessing their environmental, social, and financial impacts. Crucially, all policies, plans, laws, and rules related to energy, power, and climate must be finalised only after consultation with civil society and energy experts.

2. To combat corruption in the energy and power sectors, all associated contracts must be disclosed in accordance with the Right to Information Act. It necessitates a review of the Public Procurement Act and Rules. Besides, legal recognition is required for citizens to monitor project implementation process. Individuals involved in corruption must be prosecuted, and funds laundered from this sector to other countries must be recovered.

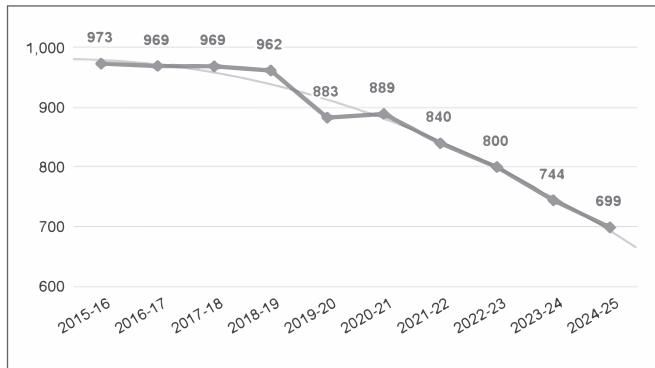
Fossil Fuels

Unrealistic master plans led to the signing of *ad libitum* contracts for the construction of fossil fuel power plants, a process made 'unquestionable' by the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act (repealed in November 2024). It resulted in serious overcapacity: the power sector's installed capacity reached 27.40 GW in 2024-25, far exceeding the 16.6 GW peak-hour demand, creating at least 10.8 GW of stranded assets. The country's overcapacity has soared past the sufficient 20% reserve margin, exceeding 65% and severely burdening the national economy. The Nationally Determined Contributions 2025 (NDC 3.0) projects peak-hour demand to reach only 26.3 GW by 2035, building any further fossil fuel power plants is unjustified. To reduce the burden of overcapacity:

3. Gradually phase out fossil fuel subsidies (coal, gas, and petroleum) to accelerate the transition to renewable energy (RE) across the industrial, commercial, and residential sectors. Mandate that all industrial and commercial operations utilise at least 30% RE by 2030, increasing this requirement to 40% by 2041. Furthermore, provide incentives such as tax reductions and low-cost loans to support the decarbonization of these sectors.
4. Refrain from authorising any new fossil fuel power plants. Decommission obsolete and inefficient power plants and replace them with new RE installations. Establish programs immediately to ensure alternative employment for workers affected by these closures. Cease the payment of capacity charges to private power plants that are not operating with demonstrable efficiency.

Gas Crisis

Annual Domestic Gas Supply (bcf)



The country faces a looming energy crisis as domestic fossil gas (DFG) reserves rapidly decline. Production has decreased from 973.2 billion cubic feet (bcf) in 2015-16 to 698.8 bcf in 2024-25, representing an annual reduction of 3.6%. At this rate, DFG reserves will be exhausted by 2035 unless new fields are discovered. Despite this harsh reality,

new power plants reliant on imported fuels were approved. Thus, additional demand was artificially created to justify the installation of two private LNG terminals. These terminals impose an annual capacity charge of USD 165 million. The financial burden is compounded by Petrobangla's policy of selling Regasified LNG at BDT 15.5 per cubic meter while the purchase price is around BDT 79, resulting in an escalating annual loss of BDT 3.75 billion from LNG operations only. Measures to mitigate this crisis without resorting to gas tariff hikes should be:

5. No approval of the new LNG Terminal. Phase out old, inefficient gas power plants and supply surplus fossil gas to industries and fertiliser. Encourage industries to switch from fossil gas to electricity. Strict actions should be taken against leakage and theft of fossil gas. Install gas meters in all sectors to reduce energy waste.

Renewable Energy

Despite the Bangladesh Climate Prosperity Plan's commitment to achieving 40% RE by 2041 and 100% by 2050, recent policy documents, specifically, the new REP 2025 and the NDC 3.0 have lowered targets to 20% by 2030 and 30% by 2040. It is concerning, given that solar power is a more environmentally sound, easily deployable, and cost-effective than coal and oil-based power. The interim government even dismissed the previous argument that Bangladesh lacks sufficient land for solar. Currently, the allocation for RE has been minimal, with only 3% of the power sector's budget dedicated to it over the years, despite a goal to install 10% RE by 2025. Compounding this challenge are the import duties and taxes, ranging from 26% to 56%, imposed on solar panels and related accessories. To remove the barriers to renewable energy:

6. Prioritise policy coherence to meet ambitious RE targets: 30% by 2030, 40% by 2041, and

progress towards 100% by 2050. These targets must be fully integrated into all relevant national policies, sectoral master plans, and five-year development plans. Furthermore, at least 40% of the total electricity sector budget should be allocated to RE initiatives. To accelerate adoption, reduce import duties and all other taxes on RE-related accessories to a symbolic 1%.

7. To address the transport sector, the second-highest emitter in Bangladesh, significantly reduce import duties and taxes on electric vehicles (EVs) by at least 75% compared to those on internal combustion engine (ICE) cars. Furthermore, to accelerate decarbonization, import duties and other taxes on advanced batteries (e.g., lithium-ion, sodium-ion, and solid-state batteries etc.) should be eliminated immediately.

Suriyabari Scheme

The previous government's excessive reliance on costly, imported fossil fuels has kept the share of RE below 4.5% over the past 16 years. Furthermore, RE penetration in the national grid is capped at 10% because the grid has not been upgraded to a smart system. Therefore, an immediate focus on off-grid solar systems, which do not require a grid connection, is necessary. Each megawatt-peak (MWp) of a battery-integrated solar system can save USD 0.30 million annually by reducing Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) imports, amounting to USD 6.45 million over its 20-year lifespan. Additionally, a recent study indicates that every MWp of residential solar systems generates 26.6 new jobs. To promote both off-grid and on-grid RE Systems:

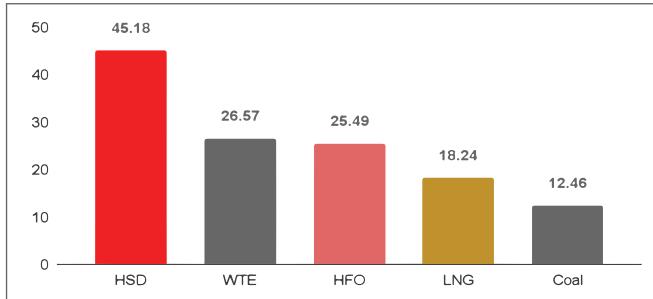
8. Implement short- and mid-term investment plans immediately to transition existing traditional grids into smart grids. Furthermore,

introduce the 'Suriyabari' scheme to promote personal rooftop and agricultural solar projects (up to 3 kWp) by offering a minimum of 25% incentive and 70% soft loans. An additional 10% subsidy should be provided to women, indigenous peoples, labourers, fishermen, and people living below the poverty line.

9. Generate two million new jobs by offering short-term training, soft loans, and financial assistance to unemployed youth. Priority should be given to women, indigenous peoples, and labourers through programs managed by the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA), Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Department of Cooperatives (DOC), Department of Social Services (DOSS), and Department of Women Affairs (DOWA).

False Solutions

Fossil Fuel-based Power Generation Cost (BDT/kWh)



The IEPMP undermines the potential of RE by replacing it with the term 'clean energy,' to evade state obligations. Alarmingly, the IEPMP instead prescribes unproven 'false solutions' such as ammonia, carbon capture and storage (CCS), and liquid hydrogen. These are misleadingly categorised as 'Advanced Technology' but will ultimately increase dependency on fuels rather

than reducing emissions. Besides, the IEPMP's detrimental reduction of the RE target from 40% to 'up to 40%' is fundamentally contrary to the national interest. This internal contradiction creates uncertainty for investors and consequently jeopardises the crucial expansion of RE. To remove the jeopardises:

10. Instead of promoting unproven 'false solutions' like Ammonia, CCS, liquid hydrogen, nuclear, and WTE, focus on building a 'Circular Green Economy'. It can be achieved by prioritising the reduction, segregation, reuse, and recycling of municipal solid waste (MSW).
11. Establish a domestic green economy by launching recycling initiatives for renewable energy (RE) e-waste (including solar panels, batteries, and inverters). This action will significantly reduce reliance on imported RE accessories.

Just Transition

Agrivoltaics may change the rural economy



Megaprojects in the energy and power sector, including solar and wind energy, face forceful land and water body grabbing. It has frequently resulted in the displacement of small and marginal farmers, fishermen, and marginal producers, who have lost their local environment and livelihoods. The current policies and master plans fail to address the concerns of women, labourers, indigenous people,

and other marginalised communities. To avoid the same injustice in the energy transition process:

12. Ensure that all policies, plans, and schemes related to energy are inclusive, explicitly addressing the needs and participation of women, indigenous peoples, labourers, fishermen, and other marginalised communities. Additionally, establish mechanisms to ensure local communities' participation in the management of energy projects and to ensure they receive a fair share of the benefits.
13. Prohibit the installation of energy infrastructure on agricultural lands. Instead, formulate long-term land-leasing guidelines that guarantee an annually increased leasing fee for farmers' land. Besides, incentivise and finance the promotion of Agrivoltaics and Floatovoltaics to encourage the multiple use of these lands.

Conclusion

We expect that all political parties and alliances participating in the 13th National Parliament Election will include our demands in their election manifestos. This commitment is essential for them to implement policies that ensure an affordable,

common-people-centric, and secure energy and power sector. Such a green transition is vital for establishing energy security and effectively addressing the adverse challenges of climate change.