



ELECTION OBSERVATION REPORT

Procedural Integrity, Limited Inclusiveness: Minority Experiences in the 2026 Bangladesh Parliamentary Election and Referendum

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Coverage 25 Constituencies 509 Polling Stations	Observer Deployment 200 Trained Citizen Observers
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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report presents the findings of RUPSA's inclusive election observation of the 2026 Bangladesh Parliamentary Election and Referendum, conducted under the AHEAD Bangladesh project led by the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and supported by the European Union. The observation focused specifically on the participation, representation and security of national minority communities throughout the electoral cycle (Pre-Election, Election Day and Post-Election).

The report is based on:

- During the pre-election period, 25 participatory workshops and 8 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs);
- Mobile Election Day observation across 509 polling stations in 25 constituencies spanning 15 districts and 6 divisions;
- and 27 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 22 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) during the post-election phase.

Disclaimer

The views and findings expressed in this report are those of RUPSA and do not necessarily represent the positions of the European Union, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), or its member organizations, or any donor. RUPSA conducted this observation independently and without affiliation to any political party or candidate.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Full Form
AHEAD	Action for a Holistic Electoral Approach for Democracy
BEC	Bangladesh Election Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPD	European Partnership for Democracy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
KII	Key Informant Interview
RPO	Representation of the People Order, 1972
RUPSA	Rural and Urban Poor's Partner for Social Advancement
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026 Bangladesh Parliamentary Election and Referendum on 12 February was conducted in a procedurally sound manner and a peaceful environment in which minority voters were generally able to cast their ballots freely. However, a persistent gap between inclusion and substantive participation of minority communities was identified across the pre-election, election day, and post-election phases of the electoral cycle.

1.1 Overview of Main Findings

RUPSA based its findings on evidence collected from 509 polling stations across 25 constituencies in six divisions (Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Chittagong), complemented by pre-election consultations and post-election community engagement. The findings indicate that while the 2026 electoral process was generally well administered and minority communities were largely able to register, to vote and to contest elections, significant barriers continued to affect the quality of participation, equitable representation, perceptions of security, and access to accountability mechanisms around the elections.

Participation

Minority voters were largely included in voter registration rolls and were able to access polling stations and cast ballots on Election Day without widespread obstruction. Of minority voters observed, 98.6% accessed polling stations without any obstruction. Ballot secrecy was also well maintained: observers recorded that 98.8% of minority voters cast their ballots under conditions that protected the secrecy of the vote. Furthermore, 97.4% of minority women voted safely and with dignity, and in 95.3% of cases, observers noted no identity verification problems at polling stations, indicating a largely smooth procedural experience on Election Day.¹

However, limited civic education, particularly concerning the referendum, significantly constrained informed participation. Geographic isolation, language barriers and socio-economic vulnerability further limited meaningful engagement, especially for elderly people, women, tea worker communities, and ethnic populations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. These structural barriers underscored a consistent gap between procedural accessibility and effective participation, highlighting that smooth Election Day mechanics alone did not fully translate into free, informed and meaningful electoral engagement for minority communities.

Representation

A total of 79 minority candidates contested across 300 constituencies representing 22 political parties, alongside 12 independent candidates. Of these, only four candidates (5.1%) were elected to Parliament, all from a single political party, reflecting limited and uneven minority political representation despite the diversity of candidates contesting the election. This figure, while notable, remains low in proportion to Bangladesh's minority population. There are no legal provisions or institutional mechanisms requiring political parties to nominate minority candidates. Representation was heavily skewed towards Hindu candidates (83.5%), while Dalit, ethnic, and other smaller communities remained significantly underrepresented. Gender representation was particularly weak, with only 10 of 79 candidates (12.7%) being women.

Security

The overall electoral environment was stable and free from large-scale violence, with security forces contributing to maintaining order on Election Day. However, indirect forms of pressure and intimidation were observed: At 11.6% of the 509 polling stations, observers noted incidents of intimidation or restricted movement affecting minority voters. Procedural irregularities also surfaced. At 9.9% of polling stations, observers noted unfair queue management, and at 4.2% of stations, observers recorded differential treatment of minority voters by polling officials, suggesting inconsistent application of procedures across some locations. Of particular concern, at 16.3% of polling stations, observers witnessed voter assistance that appeared coercive or inappropriate, raising questions about the secrecy and voluntariness of the vote for those minority voters affected.

¹ Source: RUPSA Election Day Observation Dataset, 509 polling stations across 25 constituencies and 15 districts, 12 February 2026.

Beyond Election Day experiences, post-election FGDs and KIs revealed that fear of post-election retaliation and low trust in complaint mechanisms negatively affected the broader sense of security among minority communities. These concerns were most pronounced among participants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Taken together, the findings suggest that while large-scale violence was absent, the localized incidents documented above continued to affect the conditions for free, safe and effective electoral participation for some minority communities.

1.2 Key Trends

- Only 4 out of 79 minority candidates (5%) were elected to parliament, and all from a single party, reflecting limited and uneven minority political representation.
- At 98.6% of observed polling stations, minority voters accessed polling stations without obstruction. However, at 16.3% of polling stations, observers witnessed voter assistance that appeared coercive or inappropriate, indicating a gap between physical access and independent participation.
- Referendum awareness was very low, and multiple FGD participants reported learning about the referendum only after arriving at the polling station. According to FGD participants, many voters left the referendum ballot unstamped because of confusion and inadequate voter information.
- Civic education efforts by the BEC were largely standardized and were not adapted to minority languages, low literacy formats or community-specific needs. As a result, remote and marginalized communities remained insufficiently informed.
- Only 10 out of 79 minority candidates, representing 12.7%, were women, without a single one of them being elected. This pattern is consistent with compounded barriers based on both minority identity and gender, while no legal provisions or party level commitments existed to address this gap.
- At 11.6% of observed polling stations, Election Day observers noted intimidation or restricted movement affecting minority voters near the polling station. Separately, post-election FGDs and KIs found that trust in complaint and accountability mechanisms remained low among minority community participants, and formal grievance channels were rarely used.
- Electoral processes were administratively sound across 98% of the observed polling stations. However, structural barriers, including geographic isolation, language constraints and socio-economic dependency, continued to limit meaningful participation.

1.3 Priority Recommendations

The following ten recommendations are presented in order of urgency and potential impact:

#	Timeframe	Recommendation	Actor
01	Immediate (Before Local Government Election)	Institutionalize minority-focused civic and voter education programs through minority language, accessible and community-based outreach tailored to national minority communities, including ethnic peoples, tea worker communities, Dalits and women.	Lead Actor: BEC Supporting Actors: Ministry of Information, Civil Society Organizations
02	Short-term (Before Local Government Election)	Adopt a Minority Electoral Inclusion Strategy to address community-specific barriers to participation, representation, accessibility and electoral justice through targeted and measurable interventions.	Lead Actor: BEC Supporting Actors: Ministry of CHT Affairs
03	Short-term (Within 6 months after National Parliament Elections)	Strengthen electoral complaint mechanisms and protection of complainants by introducing confidential reporting channels, improving accessibility and increasing transparency in handling complaints affecting minority communities.	Lead Actor: BEC Supporting Actors: Electoral Inquiry Committees, Ministry of Law and Justice
04	Short-term (Before Local Government Election)	Improve electoral accessibility in remote and marginalized areas through expanded mobile registration services, localized voter	Lead Actor: BEC

#	Timeframe	Recommendation	Actor
		outreach and targeted measures addressing geographic, linguistic and administrative barriers.	Supporting Actors: Ministry of CHT Affairs, Local Government Institutions
05	Long-term	Promote inclusive political representation through party-level reforms, including formal party commitments with public reporting requirements, to increase nomination and participation of minority candidates, particularly women and underrepresented communities.	Lead Actor: Political Parties Supporting Actors: BEC (monitoring role), Civil Society
06	Medium-term (By December 2027)	Initiate a structured national dialogue process, led by the Bangladesh Election Commission in collaboration with relevant government institutions, political parties, minority representatives and civil society Organisations, to produce concrete proposals for strengthening minority representation in elected bodies within 18 months.	Lead Actor: Bangladesh Election Commission Supporting Actors: Political Parties, Civil Society, Minority Community Representatives and Legal Experts
07	Immediate (Before Local Government Election)	Strengthen capacity of polling officials on inclusive electoral administration, including non-discriminatory conduct, equal treatment of voters and appropriate voter assistance procedures, with specific training on the operational definition of coercive assistance.	Lead Actor: BEC
08	Long-term	Build trust and security through sustained engagement with minority communities, particularly in historically marginalized areas, to address security concerns, electoral grievances, and confidence in democratic institutions.	Lead Actor: BEC Supporting Actors: Law Enforcement Agencies, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Civil Society
09	Medium-term (By December 2027)	Improve data collection and reporting on minority participation and electoral justice, including disaggregated complaint data, to support evidence-based policymaking, monitoring and future electoral reforms.	Lead Actor: BEC Supporting Actors: Development Partners, Civil Society
10	Immediate (Before Local Government Election)	Ensure consistent accredited observer access to all phases of electoral procedures, including vote closing and counting, by issuing clear directives to polling officials and establishing a mechanism to report and address access denials.	Lead Actor: BEC

2. OBSERVATION APPROACH

2.1 Project Background: The AHEAD Framework and RUPSA's Role

The Action for a Holistic Electoral Approach for Democracy (AHEAD), developed by the European Partnership for Democracy, represents a shift in how electoral observation is conceptualized and delivered. Rather than limiting assessment to the technical conduct of polling day, AHEAD evaluates elections within the broader context of democratic governance, examining the political environment, the inclusiveness of participation, public trust in institutions and the long-term sustainability of democratic norms. Its scope spans the full electoral cycle, from the pre-election period through polling day to the post-election environment, with particular emphasis on transparency, accountability, gender equality and the inclusion of marginalized communities. AHEAD engages a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, community leaders, and political actors, to ensure that observation findings are grounded in lived experience and linked to meaningful democratic reform.

Within this framework, the project titled “**Civic Rights and Inclusive Election Observation in the 2026 Bangladesh Election**” has been implemented by the Rural and Urban Poor's Partner for Social Advancement (RUPSA). A rights-based civil society organization with two decades of experience in governance, civic engagement and election observation in Bangladesh, RUPSA has established extensive networks among national minority groups and has consistently worked to promote inclusive participation and amplify the voices of marginalized communities. Under AHEAD Bangladesh, RUPSA's mandate has been to conduct independent, non-partisan election observation while generating credible evidence on barriers affecting **Dalit, religious minority, ethnic and national minorities**.

2.2 Methodology

The observation was structured across three phases of the electoral cycle, pre-election, Election Day and post-election, combining structured quantitative observation with qualitative methods to capture both procedural performance and the lived experiences of minority communities.

Pre-Election Observation

The pre-election phase focused on identifying risks and understanding the broader political environment as it pertained to minority communities. This was accomplished through 25 participatory workshops with community members and eight Key Informant Interviews with election officials, civil society actors and community leaders. These engagements documented barriers related to access, security and representation and directly informed the observation framework and deployment strategy.

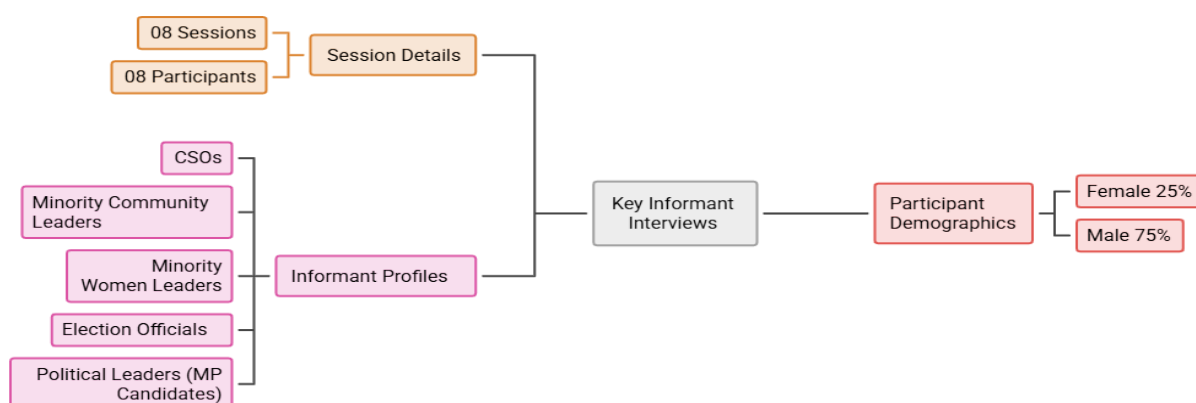
Figure: 1 - Breakdown of Pre-Election Consultations²

551	25	399	152
Total Participants	Constituencies Across 6 Divisions	Male Participants	Female Participants

Table: 1 - Participants in Pre-Election Minority Consultations, by Gender, Religion, and Community Type

Gender		Religion				Community Type			
Male	Female	Muslim (Shia, Kadiani)	Hindu	Christian	Buddhist	Dalit	Religious Minority	Bihari (Urdu-speaking community)	Ethnic Minority
72.4%	27.6%	2.9%	72.7%	12.2%	12.2%	16.9%	51.0%	4.4%	27.7%

Figure: 2 – Key Informant Interviews: Demographics and Profiles



Election Day Observation

RUPSA deployed 200 trained citizen election observers across 25 constituencies, with a strategic focus on polling stations located in areas with significant minority populations. Election Day observation was conducted through a team-based approach, with two observers assigned to each observation team.

A total of 509 polling stations were purposely selected based on the concentration of minority communities, including Dalit, religious minority, Indigenous and other national minority populations, as well as geographic accessibility, historical patterns of exclusion and the presence of communities identified as vulnerable to electoral marginalization. Because the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) does not publicly publish disaggregated data on polling stations in minority-concentrated populations, it was not possible to determine the precise proportion of minority-focused polling stations covered by the observation. Nevertheless, the selected sample was designed to

² Source: RUPSA Pre-Election Participatory Workshop and Key Informant Interview Dataset, 25 workshops and 8 KIIs, conducted across 25 constituencies in 6 divisions, 2025–2026.

maximize geographic coverage and reach of minority communities prioritized by RUPSA across the targeted constituencies.

Observers systematically monitored the opening, voting, closing and counting processes using standardized observation checklists and reporting tools. Observation reports were successfully submitted for all 509 polling stations, resulting in a 100 per cent reporting rate.

Data collection was conducted through a mobile-based application, MaxReport, which enabled real time reporting and immediate submission upon completion of observation checklists. To ensure data quality, a multi-layered control process was applied throughout Election Day. All observers underwent structured pre-deployment training covering checklist completion, incident reporting protocols, and ethical observation standards. A senior supervisor was assigned to each division to conduct field-level spot checks and provide real time support to observers. Submitted checklists were reviewed centrally as they arrived and incomplete, inconsistent or outlier submissions were immediately flagged and followed up with the responsible observer for clarification or correction. At the end of Election Day, all submitted data underwent a final validation and cleaning process to ensure internal consistency between quantitative checklist responses and qualitative narrative reports. The use of MaxReport's digital platform minimized manual data entry errors and enabled continuous monitoring of submission progress throughout the day. This approach was designed to support consistency, timeliness, and accuracy across the observation network.

Post-Election Monitoring

The post-election phase was designed to capture community level experiences and track broader political developments following the election. A total of 27 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 22 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted across the targeted constituencies to assess participation quality, perceived security, experiences of discrimination or exclusion and levels of institutional trust among minority communities. The qualitative findings were triangulated with Election Day observation data to produce the comprehensive assessment presented in this report.

Figure: 3 - Post-Election Qualitative Data Collection – Participants, Sessions and Gender Parity

Total Participants 270 Across all Sessions	Sessions Conducted 49 27 FGDs · 22 KIIs	Gender Parity 50/50 135 Female · 135 Male
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Figure: 4 - Post-Election Qualitative Data Collection – Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

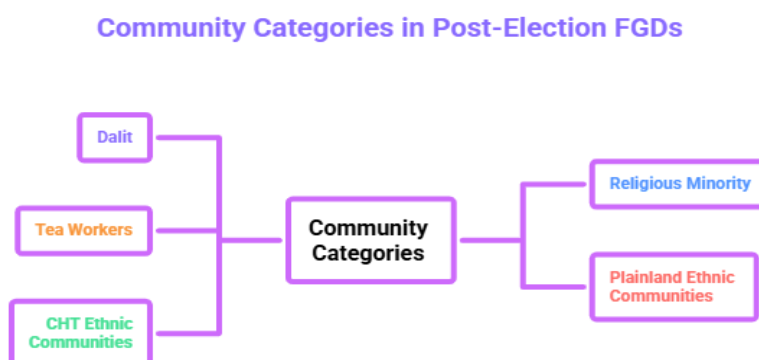


Figure: 5 - Post-Election Qualitative Data Collection – Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

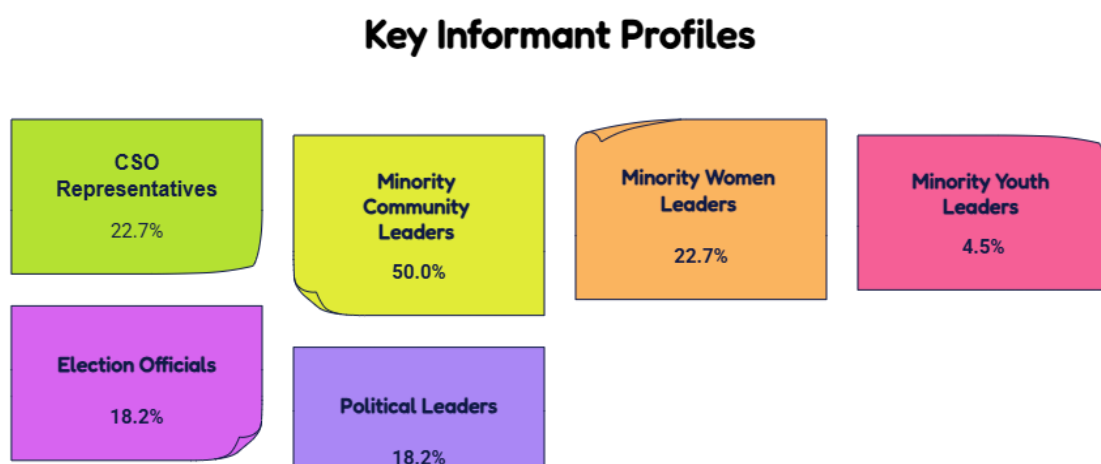


Table: 2 - Gender Distribution of Post-Election Participants by Method and Combined Total

By Method			Combined Total	
FGD Female		131	135	135
FGD Male		117	Female · 50%]	Male · 50%
KII Female		4	Gender Parity Achieved Across All Sessions	
KII Male		18		

2.3 Minority Communities Covered

The observation focused on five categories of minority communities selected on the basis of their demographic significance, geographic concentration, socio-economic vulnerability, and relevance to electoral inclusion. These communities represent distinct experiences and challenges within Bangladesh's electoral landscape.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) Population and Housing Census 2022, Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country, with minorities constituting a significant portion of the national population. Hindus represent the largest minority community, accounting for 7.95 per cent of the population (approximately 13.1 million people). Other religious minorities include Buddhists (0.61 per cent; approximately 1.0 million), Christians (0.30 per cent; approximately 0.5 million), and followers of other religions (0.12 per cent; approximately 0.2 million). The Census also recorded approximately 1.65 million ethnic minority and Indigenous persons, representing around 1 per cent of the country's total population. These communities are geographically dispersed across the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Chattogram Division and various plainland areas, with the majority residing in the latter. Significant concentrations are found in the three CHT districts of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban, as well as in Rajshahi, Sylhet, Mymensingh and parts of Rangpur divisions. Smaller ethnic minority and Indigenous populations are also present in Dhaka, Khulna and Barishal divisions. However, several socio-economically marginalized groups, including Dalit communities and tea garden workers are not separately identified in the national census data, limiting the availability of official demographic statistics for these populations.

Table: 3 - Minority Communities - Estimated Population, Geographic Concentration, and Key Barriers to Electoral Participation

Community Category	Estimated Population	Geographic Concentration	Key Factors Affecting Electoral Participation
Hindu Communities	Approximately 13.1 million (7.95%)	Nationwide, with significant concentrations in Khulna, Barishal, Rangpur, Sylhet and parts of Dhaka Division	Political underrepresentation, concerns regarding security and post-election reprisals, land disputes, social marginalization in some localities
Buddhist and Christian Communities	Approximately 1.5 million combined (0.91%)	Buddhist communities concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox's Bazar; Christian communities dispersed across northern districts, greater Mymensingh, Sylhet and urban centers	Geographic isolation in some areas, limited political visibility, social marginalization and representation challenges
Dalit Communities	No official census disaggregation available; estimates vary across studies	Concentrated in Khulna, Barisal, Rajshahi and urban centers	Caste based discrimination, economic vulnerability, social exclusion and limited political representation

Plainland Ethnic Communities (Santal, Oraon, Munda, Garo, Manipuri and others)	Part of the approximately 1.65 million indigenous and ethnic population recorded by BBS	Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet and northwestern districts	Land dispossession, language barriers, limited access to public services and electoral information, geographic marginalization
Tea Worker Communities	Approximately 300,000 persons residing in tea estates and surrounding settlements	Sylhet and Moulvibazar districts	Economic dependency, low literacy levels, limited mobility, documentation challenges and restricted access to electoral information
Ethnic Communities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya and others)	Majority of the Indigenous population in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban	Chittagong Hill Tracts	Geographic isolation, security concerns, historical land conflicts, limited institutional trust and governance related challenges

In addition to these communities, the assessment recognizes the existence of other socially and economically marginalized groups whose experiences intersect with electoral inclusion. These include Punji communities in greater Sylhet, estimated at approximately 30,000 people residing in around 85 settlements, many of whom depend on betel leaf cultivation for their livelihoods. The Bede community, a historically nomadic and socially excluded population, is estimated in government and civil society sources to number between 75,000 and 100,000 persons, although no official census disaggregation is available. While these groups were not a primary focus of the observation, their experiences illustrate the broader diversity of minority and marginalized populations within Bangladesh.

Taken together, the communities covered under this assessment represent a substantial segment of Bangladesh's population and reflect the diverse social, cultural, geographic and political realities that shape minority participation, representation and security within the electoral process.

2.4 Methodological Limitations

While the observation was designed to be systematic and comprehensive, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. These are disclosed in the interest of methodological transparency.

- **Language and Communication Constraints:** Data collection was conducted primarily in Bangla. While local facilitators and community representatives provided communication and interpretation support where necessary, Bangla is not the primary language for some minority communities, particularly Indigenous groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, plainland ethnic communities and certain tea worker populations. The absence of systematic translation into all relevant minority languages may have affected the depth and nuance of some responses and should be considered when interpreting findings related to community perceptions, experiences and specific concerns.
- **Geographic scope:** Coverage was limited to selected minority-concentrated constituencies and is not fully representative of national conditions.
- **Postal Voting:** Postal voting was not observed and is therefore not covered in this report.
- **Time constraints:** During the pre-election and post-election phases limited the scope of longitudinal observation and restricted the ability to capture longer term political and social dynamics. In particular, the observation did not include direct observation of election campaign activities, campaign events or extended monitoring of campaign-related intimidation, hate speech or voter mobilization practices in minority communities. It also did not assess the quality and accuracy of the voter list or observe the voter registration process.
- **Nature of qualitative data:** Findings include perceptions and self-reported experiences that may vary across individuals and contexts.
- **Potential underreporting:** Sensitivity around issues of intimidation and political pressure may have led to cautious responses and incomplete reporting of incidents.

- **Access constraints:** Security conditions and geographic remoteness limited independent verification in certain areas, particularly the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the use of multiple data sources and consistent triangulation across phases strengthens the credibility and reliability of the findings presented in this report.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms Used in This Report:

For the purpose of this observation, RUPSA trained observers and data collectors using the following operational definitions. These definitions guided what observers recorded on Election Day checklists and what facilitators explored during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

Term	Operational Definition
Obstruction (voter access)	Any physical barrier, deliberate action by polling staff or security personnel, or environmental conditions that prevented a voter from entering the polling station or approaching the voting compartment. This includes blocked entrances, deliberate delays or being turned away.
Intimidation	Any act, gesture, statement or presence (including by security personnel, party agents, or community members) that reasonably appeared designed to frighten, pressure, or dissuade a voter from entering the polling station, casting their vote freely or remaining at the polling station.
Restricted movement near polling station	Any observation of voters being prevented from freely approaching or leaving the polling station area, including being blocked, redirected or followed by individuals perceived as having authority or influence.
Unfair queue management	Any situation where polling officials failed to maintain an orderly and equitable queue, including allowing certain voters to skip ahead, delaying voters from specific communities disproportionately or failing to manage crowding those disadvantaged elderly or vulnerable voters.
Differential treatment by polling officials	Any observable instance where polling officials treated a voter from a minority community noticeably differently from other voters, including tone of voice, body language, speed of service or application of identification checks, in a manner that appeared less favorable.
Coercive or inappropriate voter assistance	Any observed instance where a polling official, party agent or accompanying individual engaged in assistance that compromised voter independence. This includes: (a) assisting without explicit voter request; (b) touching the ballot or operating the stamp without step-by-step voter instruction; (c) remaining inside the voting compartment with the voter; (d) verbally directing the voter which candidate or option to select; or (e) pressuring or rushing the voter. Observers did not assess intent. Any behavior meeting any of the above criteria was recorded as such.
Safe voting (with dignity)	A voting environment where minority voters were observed to enter, vote, and exit without experiencing any physical harassment, verbal abuse, unwanted attention, intimidation, or any form of gender-based pressure from polling officials, security personnel, party agents, or other voters.
Identity verification problem	Any instance where a voter was unable to complete the identification process due to: (a) their name not found on the voter list; (b) mismatch between presented identification and voter list entry; (c) polling official requiring additional documentation not legally required; or (d) deliberate delay or rejection of otherwise valid identification.
Procedurally sound	A polling station operation where observers recorded compliance with all core BEC procedures, including: timely opening; presence of required officials and materials; proper voter identification; secret ballot maintained; proper closing and counting procedures observed.
Post-election retaliation	Any reported act - including social ostracism, economic pressure (loss of employment, tenancy or services), threats, physical violence or property damage - that occurred after Election Day and was perceived by the respondent as punishment for how they or their community voted or were perceived to have voted.

3. POLITICAL CONTEXT FOR MINORITY COMMUNITIES

3.1 Minority Communities in Bangladesh

Minority communities in Bangladesh comprise a diverse range of groups whose identities are shaped by religion, ethnicity, language, caste, occupation and geographic location. These identities are not always discrete or mutually exclusive; rather, they often overlap and evolve according to historical experiences, socio-economic conditions and local contexts. As a result, the categorization of minority communities is inherently complex and may vary depending on legal, administrative, social or self-identification frameworks.

Many communities experience multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization. For example, tea garden communities include populations belonging to historically marginalized ethnic, linguistic, caste-based and religious groups, where economic dependency and labor marginalization further influence their social and political experiences. Similarly, patterns of exclusion affecting Dalit communities, plainland ethnic groups and Indigenous

peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts are shaped not only by identity, but also by broader structural factors such as poverty, geographic isolation, land tenure insecurity and unequal access to public institutions.

The community categories used in this report should therefore be understood as analytical and operational constructs developed for the purposes of electoral observation and assessment. As outlined in Section 2.3 and Table 4, the observation focused on five categories of minority communities selected on the basis of their demographic significance, geographic concentration, socio-economic vulnerability and relevance to electoral inclusion. These categories enabled the assessment to capture distinct experiences of political participation, representation and electoral security across different regions and social contexts.

This report does not seek to provide an exhaustive representation of all minority and marginalized communities in Bangladesh. Rather, it aims to highlight the experiences of the communities covered by the observation while recognizing the broader diversity and complexity of minority identities and experiences throughout the country.

3.2 Political Context for Minority Communities

The political environment in which minority communities participated in the 2026 electoral process was shaped by a combination of structural inequality, social marginalization, and the broader political transition that followed the July 2024 mass uprising in Bangladesh. The post-uprising period resulted in significant political realignment, the collapse of the previous ruling structure, and the establishment of an Interim Government that introduced wide ranging legal and institutional reforms through a series of ordinances and administrative measures.

During the Interim Government period, 133 ordinances were issued addressing constitutional, electoral, governance- and security-related matters.³ Among the most politically significant developments was the suspension of registration and subsequent ban on the activities of the Bangladesh Awami League, the previous ruling party, under amendments to the Anti-Terrorism framework.⁴ These developments had important implications for minority political positioning, particularly because many Hindu and other minority communities have historically been perceived as politically aligned with the Awami League due to its secular political orientation and its longstanding electoral support base among religious minorities.

The post-July 2024 environment also generated widespread uncertainty among minority communities regarding political protection, representation, and security. Historical experiences of electoral violence, communal reprisals, land-related intimidation, and targeted attacks contributed to fears among some Hindu families and other minority groups regarding possible post-election repression and displacement. In several areas, respondents reported concerns about political retaliation and social vulnerability during the transition period. However, despite these anxieties and isolated incidents of tension, large-scale targeted violence against minority communities was not observed during the election observation period.

A defining and consistent feature across minority communities remained the consistent gap between formal inclusion and meaningful participation. While most eligible individuals were able to vote, their capacity to make informed, independent and confident political choices was frequently constrained by inadequate civic education, language barriers, economic dependency and restricted access to reliable information. Limited political representation further compounded this marginalization, as minority voices remained underrepresented in decision making bodies and formal political structures.

Under the Interim Government, the overall electoral environment was generally stable and administratively functional. Electoral activities were conducted in an orderly manner and large-scale disruptions were not widely reported during the observation period. However, this institutional stability coexisted with persistent underlying concerns among minority communities, including perceptions of insecurity, fear of political uncertainty, and limited confidence in institutional responsiveness. In some areas, the presence of security forces was perceived as protective, while in others it contributed to a sense of caution among voters. These mixed perceptions reflect the complexity of the political context in which minority electoral participation took place.

³ See "Interim govt's 133 ordinances: which are dropped and which remain," Prothom Alo, 2 April 2026; and "20 Ordinances Lose Validity," The Daily Star, 8 April 2026.

⁴ See International Crisis Group, "A New Era in Bangladesh? The First Hundred Days of Reform," Asia Report N°344, 14 November 2024; and subsequent reporting on the proscription of the Bangladesh Awami League under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009.

3.3 Community-Specific Political Context

Dalit Communities

Dalit communities in Bangladesh comprise historically marginalized caste-based groups that have traditionally occupied the lowest positions within the social hierarchy and have often been subjected to practices of untouchability and social exclusion. The majority of Dalits are Hindu, and caste-based discrimination remains closely associated with the Hindu caste system, although similar forms of hereditary occupational discrimination may also affect some Muslim communities. Dalits continue to experience discrimination across social, economic and political spheres. This systemic disadvantage affects access to education, employment and economic resources, limits political visibility, and constrains opportunities for meaningful representation. Economic vulnerability further shapes electoral engagement, often creating relationships of dependence on local actors that may restrict the free exercise of political choice and participation.

Hindu Communities

As the largest religious minority in Bangladesh, Hindu communities are geographically dispersed across the country and constitute a significant social, economic and political constituency in many localities. Despite their demographic presence and, in some areas, relatively stronger economic position, Hindu communities frequently report concerns regarding political underrepresentation, land disputes, communal tensions and the risk of post-election reprisals. These factors can influence political behavior and perceptions of electoral security, particularly during politically sensitive periods.

Buddhist and Christian Communities

Buddhist and Christian communities are smaller in number and are concentrated in specific geographic areas, including the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Cox's Bazar, greater Mymensingh, Sylhet and several northern districts. While their experiences vary across locations, these communities often face challenges related to geographic isolation, limited political visibility and social marginalization. Concerns regarding representation, access to electoral information and security during electoral periods may affect their ability and willingness to participate fully in political and electoral processes.

Plain Land Ethnic Groups

Communities including the Santal, Oraon, Monipuri, Garo, Patro, Khasia and Munda peoples face challenges related to land rights insecurity, language barriers and restricted access to public services. Their geographic concentration in rural areas and limited institutional outreach significantly reduce access to voter information and administrative processes.

Tea Worker Communities

Tea workers remain among the most socio-economically marginalized communities in Bangladesh. Their electoral participation is shaped by economic dependency on estate management structures, low levels of literacy and political awareness and restricted mobility within estate areas. These factors limit both awareness of electoral processes and the capacity for independent political decision-making.

Ethnic Communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

CHT ethnic communities operate within a distinct political context shaped by geographic isolation, longstanding security concerns, and unresolved land-related issues, all of which affect both access to polling and trust in state institutions. In Bangladesh, this context is further influenced by the partial implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord (December 2, 1997),⁵ as key provisions related to land dispute resolution, institutional effectiveness and demilitarization remain incomplete. These gaps continue to undermine confidence in governance structures and contribute to a cautious approach to electoral participation. The absence of explicit reference to CHT related issues in

⁵ Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, signed 2 December 1997 between the Government of Bangladesh and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS).

the July Charter has also raised concerns about the visibility of minority priorities in national political discourse. In the lead-up to the 2026 national parliament election, these structural challenges intersect with limited political representation, barriers to meaningful participation, and fragmentation among minority political actors. Concerns regarding uneven access to electoral processes and perceived marginalization in decision making further constrain inclusive and representative participation.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR MINORITY PARTICIPATION

4.1 National Legal Framework

The legal framework governing elections in Bangladesh provides a formal basis for the equal political participation of all citizens, including minority communities. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh guarantees equality, participation, non-discrimination and universal suffrage as codified in Article 11, 19, 27, 28, 65, and 122 (see Table 5).⁶

Article 2A of the Constitution further shapes the broader legal and political context for minority participation. It states that “the state religion of the Republic is Islam, but the State shall ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religions.” This provision reflects the dual constitutional framework within which minority rights operate in Bangladesh: the recognition of Islam as the state religion alongside formal guarantees of religious equality and protection for minority faith communities. While these guarantees provide an important constitutional basis for inclusion, concerns remain regarding the consistency of their practical implementation during politically sensitive periods and electoral transitions.

In addition to constitutional guarantees, Bangladesh has adopted legal measures recognizing the country's ethnic diversity. The *Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institutions Act, 2010* (as amended in 2019) formally recognizes fifty (50) ethnic groups through the establishment of cultural institutions intended to preserve and promote their language, culture and traditions.⁷ Although the Act is primarily cultural in nature and does not provide electoral protections or political representation guarantees, it constitutes an important formal acknowledgement of ethnic minority communities within the state structure. However, the Act does not contain provisions related to electoral participation, political inclusion, or representation in elected institutions.

The electoral process is primarily regulated by the Representation of the People Order (RPO), 1972 and its associated rules. The RPO does not impose formal restrictions based on minority identity and, in principle, guarantees equal rights to register, contest, campaign and seek legal remedy. Key provisions include Article 7 (preparation and maintenance of electoral rolls), Article 12 (voter registration), Articles 25–31 (candidate nomination requirements), Article 31A (disqualification criteria), Articles 73–78 (campaign conduct and electoral offences), and Articles 90–91 (election petitions and dispute resolution mechanisms).⁸

During the Interim Government period, several electoral and political reforms were introduced through ordinances and amendments affecting the broader electoral environment. However, no specific amendments to the RPO were introduced that directly addressed minority political participation, minority representation, or targeted electoral inclusion measures. Certain reforms may nevertheless have had indirect implications for minority political participation and electoral competitiveness. For example, requirements obliging parties contesting within alliances to compete under their own party symbols, rather than a common alliance symbol, may have reduced the electoral visibility of smaller or minority-oriented parties that historically benefited from alliance-based campaigning and voter recognition. Similarly, amendments relating to candidate disqualification, including provisions concerning fugitive or absconding individuals, altered eligibility conditions within the electoral framework. However, RUPSA's observation did not identify evidence indicating that minority candidates were disproportionately or directly affected by these provisions.

⁶ Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (as amended), Articles 11, 19, 27, 28, 65 and 122. Official text available via the Bangladesh Laws Online database (bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd).

⁷ Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institutions Act, 2010, as amended in 2019, Schedule of recognized ethnic groups. Official text available via the Bangladesh Laws Online database (bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd).

⁸ Representation of the People Order, 1972 (P.O. No. 155 of 1972), Articles 7, 12, 25–31, 31A, 73–78 and 90–91. Official text available via the Bangladesh Laws Online database (bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd).

The reintroduction of the "No Vote" option as a mechanism allowing voters to express dissatisfaction with a sole contesting candidate represented another notable electoral reform relevant to political participation and voter choice. The option was available only in constituencies where a single candidate contested the election, enabling voters to participate without endorsing that candidate. While this provision potentially broadens democratic expression and electoral accountability, findings from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Election Day observation indicate that awareness of the "No Vote" option among minority communities remained very limited. In many minority-concentrated areas, voters were unfamiliar with the option or lacked sufficient information regarding its purpose and implications, reflecting broader shortcomings in civic and voter education efforts. The provision was not triggered in 2026, as all 300 constituencies had multiple contesting candidates, but its limited awareness remains relevant to future cycles in which it may apply.

Notably, the current legal framework contains no reserved seats, nomination quotas or mandatory inclusion provisions specifically designed to enhance minority representation in parliamentary elections. The BEC's mandate, operational measures and gaps in implementation are discussed separately in Section 4.4. Implementation gaps and the practical effectiveness for minority communities are assessed in Section 4.3.

Table: 4 - Domestic Legal Provisions Relevant to Minority Electoral Participation

Legal Instrument	Article / Provision	Relevance to Minority Electoral Participation
CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH		
Constitution of Bangladesh	Article 2A	Recognizes Islam as the state religion while guaranteeing equal status and equal rights for Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religions
	Article 11	Affirms democracy and public participation
	Article 19	Guarantees equality of opportunity for all citizens
	Article 27	Ensures equality before the law
	Article 28	Prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth
	Article 65	Establishes the framework for parliamentary representation
	Article 118	Establishes the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC)
	Article 122	Guarantees universal adult suffrage and the right to vote
REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ORDER (RPO), 1972		
RPO, 1972	Article 7	Preparation and maintenance of electoral rolls
	Article 12	Voter registration procedures
	Articles 25–31	Candidate nomination requirements
	Article 31A	Candidate disqualification criteria, including fugitive/absconding provisions
	Articles 73–78	Campaign conduct and electoral offences
	Articles 90–91	Election petitions and dispute resolution mechanisms
SMALL ETHNIC GROUPS CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS ACT, 2010 (AMENDED 2019)		
Small Ethnic Groups Cultural Institutions Act, 2010	Recognition of 50 ethnic groups	Provides formal state recognition of ethnic communities and supports preservation of language, culture and traditions, though without electoral representation provisions

Legal Instrument	Article / Provision	Relevance to Minority Electoral Participation
ELECTORAL REFORMS — INTERIM GOVERNMENT PERIOD		
Electoral Reforms (Interim Government)	Alliance symbol requirements	Required alliance parties to contest under their own symbols rather than a common alliance symbol, potentially affecting smaller and minority-oriented parties
	"No Vote" option	Reintroduction of the "No Vote" option allows voters to reject all contesting candidates as a form of democratic expression

4.2 International Standards and Commitments

Bangladesh has ratified or endorsed a range of international instruments that establish obligations related to equality, non-discrimination and political participation, including the rights of minority and ethnic communities. These commitments provide an important normative framework for assessing electoral inclusion and the protection of political rights.⁹

Table: 5 - International Instruments Relevant to Minority Electoral Participation

Instrument	Year	Relevance to Minority Electoral Participation
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)	Endorsed, 1972	Article 21 recognizes the right of everyone to take part in government and to participate in genuine elections through universal and equal suffrage and secret ballot.
ILO Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107)	Ratified, 1972	Recognizes protections for Indigenous and tribal populations, including participation in decisions affecting their social, economic and cultural life.
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	Ratified, 1979	Requires states to eliminate racial discrimination and ensure equal political participation and protection before the law.
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Ratified, 1984	Guarantees equal participation of women in political and public life, including voting, candidacy and representation, particularly relevant for minority women facing compounded exclusion.
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	Acceded, 2000	Article 25 guarantees the right to vote and stand for election; Article 27 protects the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)	Endorsed, 2007	Affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples to political participation, self-determination and free, prior and informed consent.

Bangladesh has not ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), the principal international treaty specifically addressing the rights of Indigenous peoples, including participation, consultation, and self governance. Bangladesh remains a State Party to the earlier ILO Convention No. 107, which provides more limited protections and reflects an earlier integration-oriented approach to Indigenous and tribal peoples.

4.3 Gap Analysis: Formal Commitments Versus Implementation

Overall, the findings suggest that Bangladesh's constitutional and electoral framework provides an important foundation for protecting minority political rights. However, important gaps remain between formal commitments and their practical implementation, particularly in relation to political representation, accessibility, civic education, institutional outreach, and confidence in electoral institutions.

Gap 1: Normative Framework

⁹ Ratification and accession dates verified against the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, Ratification Status for Bangladesh, OHCHR Treaty Body Database (tbinternet.ohchr.org): ICERD ratified 11 June 1979; CEDAW ratified 6 November 1984; ICCPR acceded 6 September 2000.

Bangladesh's constitutional and legal framework broadly reflects international principles of equality, non-discrimination, and universal political participation. Constitutional guarantees, the Representation of the People Order (RPO), and Bangladesh's commitments under international instruments, including the ICCPR, ICERD, CEDAW, and UNDRIP, provide a formal basis for protecting minority political rights.

However, the legal framework contains few provisions specifically designed to promote the effective political participation of minority communities. There are no reserved seats, candidate quotas, or legal requirements encouraging political parties to nominate minority candidates. Likewise, the legal framework does not provide targeted measures to support minority language accessibility, culturally appropriate voter education, or tailored electoral outreach for vulnerable or geographically isolated communities. As a result, minority political representation continues to depend largely on political party decisions rather than institutional safeguards.

Gap 2: Implementation

Evidence from election observation, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), stakeholder consultations, and Key Informant Interviews (KIs) indicates that implementation challenges remain significant despite the existence of formal legal guarantees. Limited access to voter information, low awareness of electoral rights and complaint mechanisms, language barriers, uneven institutional outreach, and geographic constraints reduce the practical accessibility of the electoral process for many minority communities, particularly in remote areas.

The findings also indicate that complaint mechanisms remain underutilized because of limited public awareness, language barriers, logistical obstacles, and concerns about retaliation. Awareness of newly introduced electoral measures, including the "No Vote" option, was similarly limited among minority voters, suggesting that voter education efforts did not reach all communities effectively.

Gap 3: Reform Opportunities

Several reforms introduced during the Interim Government period strengthened aspects of the electoral framework. However, the observation found that these reforms did not specifically address many of the barriers affecting minority political participation. Opportunities to strengthen minority inclusion through targeted legal and institutional reforms were not reflected in the recent reform package.

The Bangladesh Election Commission's constitutional mandate to ensure the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections provides an opportunity to strengthen inclusive electoral administration through measures such as expanded voter education, multilingual information materials, enhanced outreach in minority concentrated areas, and more accessible complaint mechanisms. Likewise, broader legal and policy reforms relating to political representation and institutional protection remain areas for future consideration.

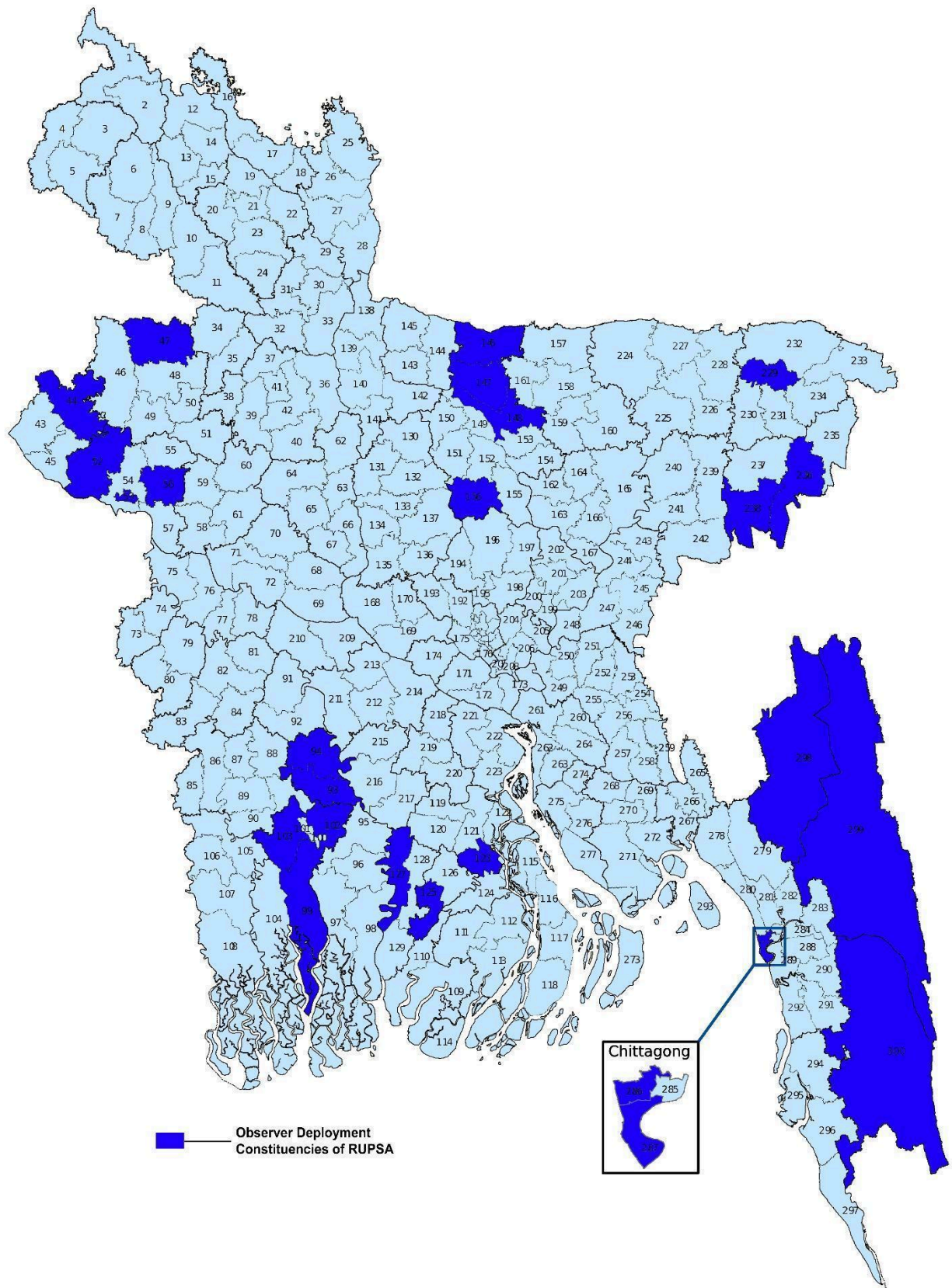
4.4 Role of the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC)

The BEC has introduced a number of administrative measures aimed at facilitating inclusive participation: preparation and updating of voter lists, deployment of mobile registration teams in remote areas and establishment of complaint cells, help desks and hotlines at Returning Officer offices. Training guidelines for polling officials address non-discriminatory conduct and proper voter identification procedures.

However, a review of available policies indicates that there are no targeted or group-specific guidelines addressing the unique barriers faced by minority communities. Existing measures are principally general and administrative in nature, focused on overall electoral management rather than tailored inclusion strategies. Voter education initiatives, while conducted, are not consistently adapted to address linguistic diversity or the needs of communities with limited literacy. Similarly, complaint mechanisms, while formally available, are not reliably accessible or trusted by minority populations.

Recommendation: The BEC should develop and publish a dedicated Minority Inclusion Strategy for Elections, incorporating targeted civic education, accessible complaint procedures and provisions for minority language materials, in alignment with Bangladesh's international obligations under the ICCPR, ICERD and CEDAW.

Map-1: RUPSA Deployment MAP



5. ELECTION OBSERVATION FINDINGS

This section presents the substantive findings of RUPSA's observation across the full electoral cycle, organized thematically to assess civic education, voter registration, candidate nomination, the campaign environment, Election Day conduct and the post-election period.

5.1 Civic Education and Voter Awareness

Effective civic and voter education is a precondition for informed and meaningful electoral participation. In the 2026 elections, civic and voter education efforts were undertaken by both the BEC and, to a more limited extent, by civil society organizations. However, the reach, depth, and inclusiveness of these initiatives varied considerably, with persistent gaps affecting minority communities.

The BEC implemented general voter awareness activities, including public announcements, voter information materials, and outreach at the administrative level. While these efforts contributed to baseline awareness of the electoral process, they were largely standardized and insufficiently adapted to the needs of minority populations. Civic and voter education efforts were also more visible in relation to the parliamentary election than the referendum, leaving significant information gaps regarding the referendum process and issues under consideration. As a novel and comparatively complex component of the electoral exercise, the referendum was often poorly understood by voters. The limited use of minority languages, absence of low-literacy-friendly formats, and lack of community-based targeting meant that many marginalized communities, particularly in remote areas, were not effectively reached.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with civil society organizations indicated that civic education efforts were undertaken through a range of voter awareness campaigns and community level activities. Respondents observed that the reach of these initiatives varied across regions, with more limited outreach reported in some geographically remote and minority concentrated areas.

Findings from post-election Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted among Dalit, religious minority, tea worker, plainland ethnic and Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) ethnic communities indicate that overall electoral awareness remained limited.¹⁰ While most participants understood that a national election was taking place, many lacked a clear understanding of the referendum component, its purpose and the implications of their participation. In several FGDs, participants reported learning about the referendum only after arriving at the polling station. A significant number also stated that they left the referendum ballot unstamped due to confusion, lack of information or uncertainty regarding the process.

As one participant from a tea worker community FGD in Sylhet stated:

"We knew there was an election, but nobody explained the referendum to us. At the polling station, many people did not understand what to do with the second ballot."

Similarly, a participant from a plainland ethnic community noted:

"Information came mostly through other people in the village. We did not receive materials in our own language, and many elderly voters were confused."

These FGD findings indicate that procedural voter awareness efforts were present but they were insufficient to ensure informed and meaningful participation, particularly among many minority communities facing language barriers, low literacy levels, geographic isolation and limited access to reliable sources of information.

What Worked	Challenges Identified
The Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) implemented a broad voter awareness campaign through television, radio, social media, public announcements and printed voter information materials,	Civic education activities remained largely generic and insufficiently tailored to minority community needs, particularly regarding minority language accessibility, culturally appropriate communication and low-literacy-friendly formats

¹⁰ Source: RUPSA Post-Election Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview Dataset, 27 FGDs and 22 KIIs conducted across Khulna, Barishal, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Chattogram divisions, 2026. Individual respondent identifiers are withheld to protect confidentiality.

What Worked	Challenges Identified
contributing to baseline procedural awareness across observed constituencies	
The BEC's "DRIVE" (Democracy Rights and Involvement through Vehicles) campaign was designed to extend outreach to remote and hard-to-reach areas through mobile civic education activities and citizen service delivery	Despite broader outreach efforts, RUPSA observers did not document systematic use of minority language voter education materials in most minority-concentrated constituencies observed
The "Future Bangladesh You Want" campaign engaged youth, first-time voters, women and marginalized groups through university dialogues, sports-based outreach, media programming and social media engagement (UNDP BALLOT Project in partnership with the BEC) ¹¹	Awareness of the referendum component remained low among many minority communities, with numerous voters reporting confusion regarding the second ballot at polling stations
Multi-media public service announcements (PSAs), including TV spots, radio content and election-related dramas with sign language interpretation, expanded accessibility for broader audiences	Information on simultaneous parliamentary and referendum voting procedures was often insufficiently understood in remote and marginalized communities
Civil society organizations supported community awareness sessions, mock polling demonstrations and outreach activities targeting women, youth, persons with disabilities and marginalized communities in selected constituencies. <i>(Nagorik Uddyog, BRAC, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Democracy watch, B-SCAN, JAAGO Foundation Trust (JFT), AFED)</i>	Civic education efforts remained fragmented and uneven across regions, with limited coordination among state institutions, CSOs and community-based organizations
Collaboration between the BEC, UNDP through the BALLOT Project, IFES and CSO partners strengthened voter education, media literacy and community outreach initiatives	Communities with limited internet access, low digital literacy and geographic isolation remained comparatively underserved
Community-level engagement and informal peer-to-peer communication helped disseminate election-related information in several minority communities	Heavy reliance on informal information sources raised concerns about misinformation, inconsistent understanding and rumor-based interpretations of electoral procedures

5.2 Voter Registration

Voter registration is the primary gateway to electoral participation. Ahead of the 2026 election, the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) conducted a major voter list update and new voter registration drive in 2025. According to BEC data, approximately 4.4 million new voters were added to the electoral roll, while around 2.1 million deceased voters were removed, bringing the total number of registered voters to approximately 127.7 million nationwide. The final voter list also included 1,234 voters registered under third-gender (Hijra) category.¹²

Findings from FGDs and KIIs indicate that minority communities were generally included in voter lists, and no large-scale exclusion was reported. Across most observed constituencies, eligible minority individuals were reported as registered and present on electoral rolls.

However, inclusion in voter lists does not fully reflect the accessibility or quality of the registration experience. FGDs and KIIs identified several recurring barriers, including errors in voter information, difficulties in correcting or updating records, and limited awareness of registration procedures, particularly among first-time registrants, elderly voters and remote ethnic communities. FGD participants also reported cases in which individuals were excluded from voter rolls because they were absent during the registration periods rather than deliberate omission.

Documentation-related barriers were particularly pronounced among marginalized groups. Tea workers, displaced populations and some ethnic minority communities reported difficulties related to limited formal documentation and restricted administrative access. These findings are consistent with the UNDP / Youth Policy Forum Policy Brief

¹¹ Bangladesh Election Commission, "DRIVE" (Democracy Rights and Involvement through Vehicles) outreach campaign, 2025–2026; UNDP Bangladesh, BALLOT Project, "Future Bangladesh You Want" campaign materials, implemented in partnership with the BEC.

¹² Bangladesh Election Commission, Final Voter List (announced 18 November 2025), total 127,695,183 registered voters, including 64,814,907 male, 62,879,042 female and 1,234 third-gender voters. See "EC publishes final voter list with around 12.77 crore voters," The Daily Star, 18 November 2025.

(2026), the EU Election Observation Mission (2026), and ANFREL election assessment findings, all of which noted that socially and geographically marginalized communities continue to face disproportionate administrative barriers in accessing electoral processes.¹³

Geographic constraints also remained significant, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), tea garden areas and other remote locations where access to registration services was more limited. During the 2025 voter list update, the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) deployed a combination of permanent registration centers, door-to-door enumeration and mobile registration camps to expand voter registration coverage. Mobile registration teams and outreach initiatives were also deployed in some underserved areas ahead of the election. While these efforts contributed to broader procedural inclusion, RUPSA's observations and stakeholder consultations indicate that, despite these efforts, some remote, geographically isolated, and hard to reach minority communities experienced comparatively lower levels of access to voter registration services.

As one participant from a tea worker community explained:

“Many people were registered but correcting mistakes in names or information was difficult because the registration office was far away and the correction process was complex and delayed.”

Similarly, a respondent from a CHT ethnic community noted:

“They were supposed to conduct door-to-door enumeration but in many cases, officials came to the village, stayed at a specific location and relied on others to identify eligible voters in the community. As a result, some people were not included in the voter list and errors in names and voter information were common. Mobile registration teams visited some areas but remote villages were often not covered and many elderly people were unable to travel to complete the registration process.”

Overall, the findings suggest that voter registration during the 2026 electoral process was inclusive. At the same time, observations and stakeholder consultations identified practical challenges associated with documentation, geography, institutional outreach, and administrative accessibility in some remote and marginalized communities.

Figure: 6 - Bangladesh Voter Registration Update 2025: Growth, Revisions and Gender Trends

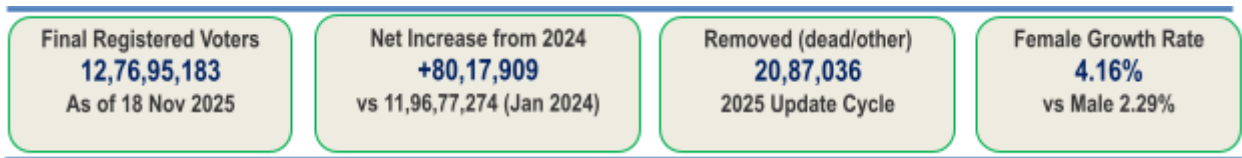


Figure: 7 - Gender Composition - Final Voter List (18 Nov 2025)



5.3 Candidate Nomination and Minority Representation

A total of 79 minority candidates contested the 2026 Parliamentary Election across 300 constituencies. They represented 22 political parties, alongside 12 independent candidates. While the presence of minority candidates across multiple parties is notable, the data reveals significant imbalances in community representation, gender inclusion, and electoral outcomes.

Hindu candidates dominated the minority candidacies, accounting for 66 of 79 candidates (83.5%). Buddhist and Indigenous candidates from the Chittagong Hill Tracts constituted approximately 13% of minority candidates. Dalit communities, despite their significant population size, saw only one candidate nationwide: Shipon Kumar Ravidas of

¹³ UNDP / Youth Policy Forum, Policy Brief on Electoral Access for Marginalized Communities (2026); European Union Election Observation Mission, Bangladesh 2026, Preliminary Statement; Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), Election Assessment Mission Report, Bangladesh 2026.

the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), contesting from Bogra-5. Women were severely underrepresented, with only 10 of 79 candidates (12.7%) being women, none of whom were elected.

Electoral success was even more limited. Only 4 of 79 minority candidates (5.1%) won parliamentary seats. All four elected minority MPs: Gayeshwar Chandra Roy (Dhaka-3), Nitai Roy Chowdhury (Magura-2), Dipen Dewan (Rangamati), and Saching Prue (Bandarban)-were nominated by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). No minority candidate from any other party or independent platform secured a seat.

Table: 6 – Elected Minority Members of Parliament

Elected MP	Constituency	Division	Party	Community / Religion
Gayeshwar Chandra Roy	Dhaka-3	Dhaka	BNP	Hindu
Nitai Roy Chowdhury	Magura-2	Khulna	BNP	Hindu
Dipen Dewan	Rangamati	CHT	BNP	Buddhist (Chakma) - Ethnic
Saching Prue	Bandarban	CHT	BNP	Buddhist (Marma) - Ethnic

For the complete register of all 79 minority candidates, disaggregated by party, constituency, division, gender, age and community identity, see [Annex 1](#).

Table: 7 – Minority Women Elected for Reserved Seats, 2026 in National Parliament

Elected MP	Community / Religion	Party
Anna Minz	Christian (Orao) / Ethnic	BNP
Madhabi Marma	Buddhist (Marma) / Ethnic	BNP
Subarna Sikder Thakur	Hindu	BNP
Nipun Roy Chowdhury	Hindu	BNP

Table: 8 - Party-Wise Distribution of Minority Candidates

Political Party	Candidates	Share (%)
Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)	17	21.52%
BASAD (Marxist)	7	8.9%
Bangladesh Minority Janata Party (BMJP)	6	7.59%
Bangladesh Socialist Party (BSD)	6	7.59%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	6	7.59%
Jatiya Party	4	5.06%
Biplobi Workers Party	2	2.53%
Bangladesh Jasad	2	2.53%
Ganasanghati Andolon	2	2.53%
Ganadhikar Parishad	2	2.53%
Gonoforum	2	2.53%
Other parties (one candidate each)	11	13.92%
Independent candidates	12	15.19%
TOTAL	79	100%

Note: Percentages are calculated as a proportion of the total 79 minority candidates. ‘Other parties’ refers to eleven political parties that each nominated one minority candidate: Zaker Party, Bangladesh Islami Front,

Bangladesh Supreme Party, Bangladesh Congress, Bangladesh Samadhikar Party, Bangladesh Kalyan Party, Bangladesh Labour Party, Bangladesh Cultural Mukti Jote, NCP, JSD and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

The distribution of minority candidacies across political parties reflects significant concentration among a limited set of actors. The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) fielded the highest number of minority candidates (17, or 21.5%), followed by BASAD (Marxist), the Bangladesh Minority Janata Party (BMJP), the Bangladesh Socialist Party (BSD), and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), each nominating between six and seven candidates. Smaller parties and independent candidacies together accounted for approximately 35% of the total. This pattern suggests that minority candidates are most visible in smaller leftist political parties, while their representation within the larger, electorally dominant parties remains limited.

Notably, BNP - which secured a decisive nationwide victory, including all three Chittagong Hill Tracts constituencies - nominated only six minority candidates but produced all four elected minority members of parliament. This highlights a structural asymmetry in which minority electoral success is contingent not on candidacy rates alone, but on the electoral fortunes and constituency allocation decisions of the dominant party.

Table: 9 - Minority Candidates by Community and Religious Identity

Religion / Community	Candidates	Share (%)	Remarks
Hindu	66	83.5%	Dominant group; widely dispersed across parties and regions
Buddhist (Chakma)	5	6.3%	Ethnic; predominantly from the Chittagong Hill Tracts
Buddhist (Marma)	2	2.5%	CHT-based ethnic community
Buddhist (Tanchangya)	2	2.5%	CHT-based ethnic community
Buddhist (General)	2	2.5%	Non-specified; Cox's Bazar and Gazipur
Hindu / Dalit	1	1.3%	Critically underrepresented; significant population share
Hindu (Tripura)	1	1.3%	Ethnic minority
TOTAL	79	100%	

The religious and community breakdown of minority candidacies reveals a heavily skewed distribution. Hindu candidates constitute the overwhelming majority, accounting for 83.5% (66 of 79) of all minority candidates, broadly consistent with Hindus' share of Bangladesh's minority population (see Section 3.1) and their comparatively stronger integration into mainstream political party structures. Buddhist candidates from the Chittagong Hill Tracts - primarily Chakma, Marma, and Tanchangya - collectively account for approximately 13% of minority candidates, with their candidacies concentrated in CHT constituencies.

Underrepresentation of the Dalit Community

Of particular concern is the severe underrepresentation of Dalit communities. Only one candidate - Shipon Kumar Ravidas of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, contesting from Bogra-5 in Rajshahi - was identified as belonging to the Hindu Dalit community, representing a mere 1.3% of all minority candidates. This is acutely disproportionate given that Dalits constitute one of the most numerically significant and socially marginalized minority communities in Bangladesh. Systemic barriers including caste-based discrimination, limited access to party financing, restricted influence within party hierarchies, and constrained political networks continue to function as structural obstacles to Dalit political participation. The extremely low level of Dalit candidacy is not an isolated statistical anomaly; it is a reflection of deeper and enduring inequalities that run through Bangladesh's political institutions.

Table: 10 - Age Distribution of Minority Candidates

Age Group	Candidates	Share (%)	Remarks
≤40 years	15	19.0%	Youngest cohort; includes several CHT-based candidates

Age Group	Candidates	Share (%)	Remarks
41–50 years	31	39.2%	<i>Largest cohort; most active candidacy age band</i>
51–60 years	19	24.1%	<i>Second largest cohort</i>
61–70 years	9	11.4%	
71+ years	5	6.3%	<i>Oldest cohort; includes 2 BNP candidates aged 74 and 77</i>
TOTAL	79	100%	

The age distribution of minority candidates broadly mirrors national patterns in Bangladesh's parliamentary candidacies, with the 41–50 cohort constituting the largest group (39.2%). The presence of 15 candidates aged 40 or under (19.0%) indicates some degree of generational diversity, though this younger cohort was predominantly concentrated in opposition or smaller parties with limited electoral prospects. The oldest candidates (71+) were notably represented among BNP nominees, including two senior Hindu politicians aged 74 and 77 who were among the four ultimately elected, reflecting the role of established political networks in determining electoral viability.

Gender Representation: Women Candidates from Minority Communities

Only 10 of the 79 minority candidates (12.7%) were women, exposing a significant gender gap within an already underrepresented group. This figure reflects the compounded barriers facing women from minority communities in seeking political candidacy in Bangladesh. While both the Constitution of Bangladesh and the Representation of the People Order (RPO) formally guarantee all citizens the right to contest elections, neither instrument contains specific provisions - such as reserved seats, mandatory quotas, or gender-balanced nomination requirements - to promote or safeguard minority women's representation in practice. Candidate selection consequently remains entirely subject to the discretion of political parties, which have not prioritized minority women's inclusion in any systematic manner.

A structural analysis of the electoral positioning of these ten women reveals an additional and troubling dimension: none were nominated in constituencies that could be considered competitively viable. All ten were fielded by smaller or less electorally influential parties, with the notable exception of one independent candidate. None secured election to parliament. Several were nominated in constituencies historically dominated by major parties with substantial winning margins, rendering their candidacies symbolically visible but practically non-competitive. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where three of the ten women contested, the political context was further shaped by the BNP's decisive dominance, leaving little electoral space for independent or opposition-affiliated minority women candidates.

Table: 11 - Women Candidates from Minority Communities, 2026 Parliamentary Election

#	Candidate Name	Political Party	Constituency	Division	Community / Religion	Notes
01	Shampa Basu	Bangladesh Socialist Party (BSD)	Magura-1	Khulna	Hindu	
02	Monisha Chakraborty	Bangladesh Socialist Party (BSD)	Barishal-5	Barishal	Hindu	
03	Pragati Barman Toma	BASAD (Marxist)	Rangpur-4	Rangpur	Hindu	
04	Seema Dutta	BASAD (Marxist)	Dhaka-7	Dhaka	Hindu	
05	Deepa Majumdar	BASAD (Marxist)	Chattogram-11	Chattogram	Hindu	
06	Champa Rani Sarkar	Biplobi Workers Party	Netrokona-4	Mymensingh	Hindu	
07	Jui Chakma	Biplobi Workers Party	Rangamati	CHT	Buddhist (Chakma)	<i>Indigenous</i>
08	Bahni Bapari	Jatiya Party	Dhaka-10	Dhaka	Hindu	
09	Mithila Roza	Jatiya Party	Khagrachhari	CHT	Buddhist (Tanchangya)	<i>Indigenous</i>

#	Candidate Name	Political Party	Constituency	Division	Community / Religion	Notes
10	Jirun Tripura	Independent	Khagrachhari	CHT	Hindu (Tripura)	Indigenous

Note: None of the ten women candidates were elected. Three candidates (Jui Chakma, Mithila Roza, Jirun Tripura) contested from Chittagong Hill Tracts constituencies and represented Indigenous communities.

These trends collectively indicate that women from minority communities continue to face layered exclusion from substantive electoral participation - constrained not only in terms of their ability to secure candidacy, but also in their access to winnable seats and adequate party support. Even in a comparatively more open political environment following the 2024 political transition, the structural conditions for meaningful representation of minority women remain severely underdeveloped.

Structural Barriers in the Nomination Process

There is no evidence from available BEC data or Key Informant Interviews that minority candidates were formally excluded or rejected from the nomination process on the basis of religious or ethnic identity. The electoral framework does not contain discriminatory provisions that would prevent minority individuals from filing candidacy papers. However, formal inclusion in the nomination process does not constitute equitable access to it.

Structural factors continue to shape nomination outcomes in ways that systematically disadvantage minority candidates. These include limited access to party financing, weaker positioning within internal party decision-making hierarchies, restricted political networks, and reduced visibility within dominant political structures. Election data and Key Informant Interview findings further indicate that minority candidates were disproportionately nominated in constituencies where their respective parties held comparatively weaker electoral positions or had limited historical prospects of victory. Several minority candidates contested from constituencies characterized by large margins of victory for the dominant parties, reducing the likelihood of competitive outcomes regardless of candidate quality or campaign effort. These patterns indicate that minority nominations were not consistently accompanied by equitable party support, adequate resources, or realistic opportunities for electoral success.

Table: 12 - Trends in Minority Parliamentary Representation: 2018–2026¹⁴

Election (Parliament)	Minority MPs Elected	Community Breakdown	Electoral Context	Analytical Observation
2008 (9th Parliament)	14	11 Hindu and 3 Buddhist / Ethnic; all from Awami League	AL landslide (230 of 300 seats)	Competitive election with full opposition participation; minority representation dependent entirely on AL nomination
2014 (10th Parliament)	16	14 Hindu and 2 Buddhist / Ethnic; all from Awami League	AL won 234 seats; 153 of 300 seats uncontested due to BNP and major opposition boycott	For the first time in Bangladesh, candidates were elected unopposed in more than half the constituencies - 153 seats. Minority figures inflated by uncontested dynamics; election lacks credibility as a representational baseline
2018 (11th Parliament)	17	14 Hindu and 3 Buddhist / Ethnic; almost all from Awami League	The Awami League (AL) won a dominant supermajority, securing 288 of the 300 parliamentary seats, following the boycott of the election by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and several other major opposition parties.	The election resulted in the highest level of minority representation in recent years, largely due to the allocation of nominations by the Awami League (AL), which secured a dominant supermajority. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, and several other political parties initially participated in the electoral process but boycotted the election on polling day. The election outcome subsequently became highly controversial.

¹⁴ Source: RUPSA compilation based on Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat records and prior international election observation reporting (EU EOM, IFES) on the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Parliaments.

Election (Parliament)	Minority MPs Elected	Community Breakdown	Electoral Context	Analytical Observation
2024 (12th Parliament)	14	11 Hindu and 3 Buddhist / Ethnic; almost all from Awami League	AL secured a dominant supermajority (223 seats out of 300). The election was widely criticised for low competitiveness, reports of irregularities, and limited opposition participation	<i>The election lacked full credibility as a representative baseline due to the widespread opposition boycott and severely reduced competition.</i>
2026 (13th Parliament)	4	2 Hindu + 2 Buddhist / Ethnic	The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won a decisive victory, securing 209 of the 300 parliamentary seats, while Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami won 68 seats, becoming the second-largest party in Parliament. The election was generally regarded as more competitive and credible than recent parliamentary elections, with broad participation among contesting political parties and active voter engagement. However, the Awami League (AL) did not participate following the suspension of its registration and electoral activities.	<i>Minority representation declined sharply compared with the previous parliamentary election. Only four minority candidates were elected, all representing the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), while no minority candidates from any other political party secured parliamentary seats. Despite the decline in elected minority representation, the election was generally inclusive in terms of voter participation. Minority voters were able to access polling stations, cast their ballots, and participate in the electoral process without widespread barriers to physical access.</i>

The longitudinal data on minority representation in parliament demonstrates significant variation across electoral cycles and political contexts. Minority representation reached its highest level in recent years in 2018, when 17 minority MPs were elected, before declining to 14 in 2024 and further to four in 2026. While the 2026 election was more competitive and broadly contested than the previous two parliamentary elections, minority representation declined markedly, with all four elected minority MPs affiliated with a single political party (BNP). This pattern suggests that minority electoral success continues to depend largely on the nomination strategies and electoral performance of major political parties rather than on institutional mechanisms specifically designed to promote inclusive representation.

Analytical Note on Minority Representation and Electoral Outcomes

The evidence presented in this section points to an important distinction between formal eligibility and substantive representation. Minority candidates contested the 2026 election across a range of political parties and constituencies, yet their conversion rate from candidacy to election remained low (4 of 79 candidates, or 5.1 per cent). Moreover, the elected cohort does not fully reflect the diversity of minority communities or their geographic distribution across the country. The concentration of all elected minority MPs within a single political party further indicates that minority representation in parliament remains closely linked to party nomination practices and electoral outcomes, rather than to institutional or legal mechanisms intended to ensure inclusive representation. While the legal framework guarantees equal rights to contest elections, the findings suggest that additional measures may be required to promote more equitable opportunities for minority political participation and representation.

These findings reinforce the central argument of this report: procedural access to the electoral process does not in itself constitute substantive inclusion. Achieving equitable minority representation in Bangladesh's parliament will require deliberate institutional reforms - including, at minimum, party-level voluntary inclusion commitments, targeted support for minority candidates in competitive constituencies and a serious policy discussion regarding structural mechanisms to guarantee minority representation in elected bodies.

5.4 Electoral Campaign Environment

The assessment of the campaign environment is based on findings from pre-election workshops, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and post-election Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which together provide insight into how minority communities experienced this phase of the electoral cycle. As RUPSA did not conduct direct systematic observation during the campaign period, the analysis primarily reflects perceptions and experiences shared by participants and stakeholders during consultations and post-election assessments.

Visibility of Minority Issues in Campaigns

Across all consultations, minority-specific concerns were not prominently reflected in campaign discourse. Issues such as land rights, communal security, discrimination and access to services were rarely addressed by candidates or political actors. This finding was consistent across regions and community types. Pre-election workshop participants noted that they did not expect their specific concerns to be prioritized and post-election discussions confirmed this perception.

Minority Community Participation in Campaigns

Minority communities were aware of campaign activities and in some cases, attended local meetings or engaged informally with candidates. However, participation was generally limited and cautious. In several workshops, participants noted that engagement often occurred through community intermediaries rather than through direct, open interaction. Women's participation was particularly constrained by social norms and mobility limitations.

Campaign Environment and Indirect Pressure

The overall campaign environment was generally described by KII and FGD participants as calm and less visibly confrontational than in previous election periods, with no widespread reports of overt electoral violence targeting minority communities. However, this relative calm did not necessarily translate into a fully open or confident environment for minority political participation and expression. Findings from KIIs, pre-election workshops and post-election FGDs indicate that local power dynamics, economic dependency and community-level political influence continued to shape how minority communities engaged during the campaign period.

Indirect forms of pressure were reported in several minority-concentrated areas, particularly among religious minority communities, tea worker populations and some ethnic communities in geographically remote areas. Respondents described situations where community members were discouraged from openly expressing political preferences, attending opposition campaign events, displaying political symbols, or publicly associating with certain candidates or parties. In many cases, these pressures were informal and socially mediated rather than explicitly coercive, making them difficult to formally document or report.

Several KII respondents noted that economic vulnerability and dependence on local political or social elites played an important role in shaping electoral behavior. Tea worker communities, for example, reported concerns that visible political affiliation could negatively affect employment relationships or access to local support structures. Similarly, some minority respondents indicated that local influential actors, including political intermediaries and community power brokers, informally advised communities to avoid visible political activities perceived as “sensitive” or “risky.”

In parts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), respondents also described a cautious campaign atmosphere shaped by longstanding political tensions, geographic isolation and concerns regarding local security dynamics. While direct threats were not widely reported, some participants indicated that communities preferred to avoid overt political positioning in order to minimize potential conflict or social tension.

As one KII respondent noted:

“People could vote, but many avoided openly discussing politics or showing support publicly because they did not want problems later.”

Another participant from a minority community FGD stated:

“There was no direct violence in our area, but people were careful about which meetings they attended and what they said publicly.”

Overall, the findings suggest that although the campaign environment was comparatively peaceful in procedural terms, subtle forms of social, economic and political pressure continued to influence the confidence and openness with which minority communities participated in the electoral process.

Disinformation, Digital Literacy and Minority Communities

FGDs and KIIs also highlighted growing concerns regarding the impact of misinformation and disinformation on minority communities during the electoral period. While digital platforms and social media became increasingly important sources of election-related information in 2026, many minority communities particularly in remote, low-income and geographically isolated areas possessed comparatively lower levels of digital literacy and limited capacity to verify online information. This increased vulnerability to misleading political narratives, rumors and unverified electoral information circulating through Facebook, messaging applications and informal social networks. Participants from tea worker, Dalit and remote ethnic communities reported relying heavily on interpersonal communication, local political intermediaries and social media content shared within community networks for election-related information. In several instances, respondents described confusion regarding voting procedures, the referendum process and candidate information due to conflicting or inaccurate messages circulating online and through informal channels. Limited access to trusted information sources and insufficient media literacy initiatives further constrained the ability of some communities to distinguish between verified information and politically motivated misinformation.

As one FGD participant stated:

“Many people believed information shared on Facebook or through mobile messages without knowing whether it was true or false.”

Another respondent noted:

“Older people and first-time voters were especially confused because different people were saying different things about the election and referendum.”

These findings suggest that disparities in digital literacy and access to reliable information created additional barriers to informed participation for some minority communities, reinforcing the importance of targeted voter education, community-based information outreach and media literacy initiatives in future electoral processes.

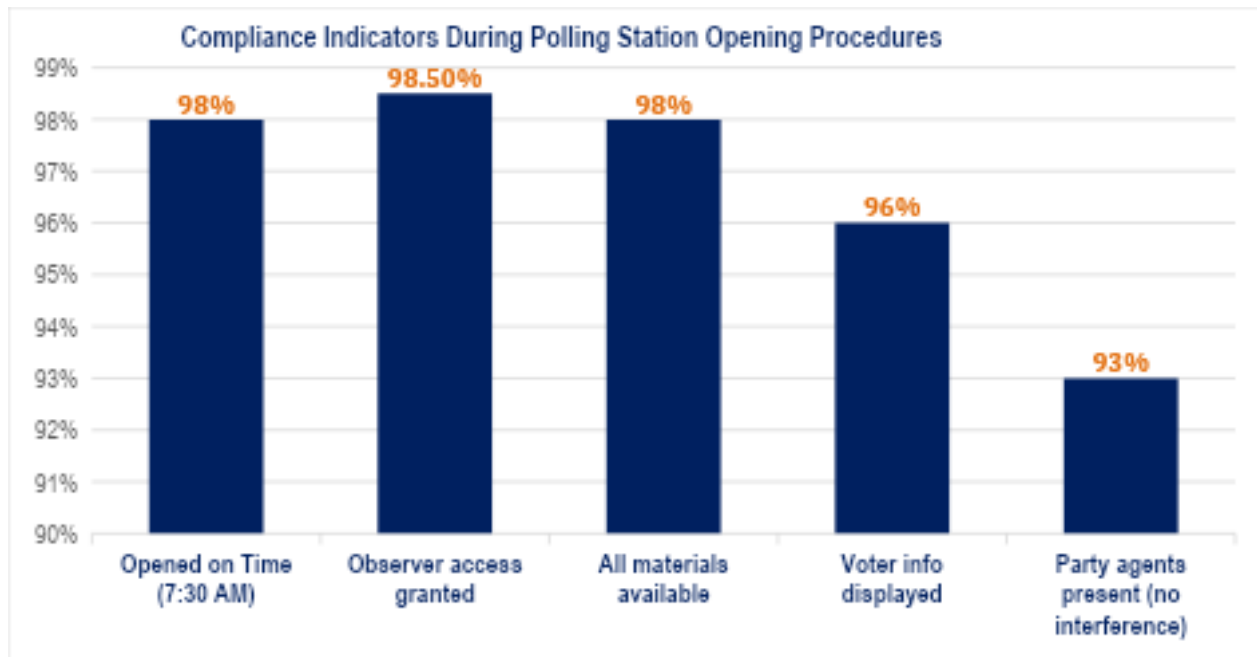
5.5 Election Day Observation Findings

Election Day was generally peaceful and procedurally well managed across the 509 polling stations observed by RUPSA in 25 constituencies. Observation findings indicate that polling officials largely adhered to established electoral procedures and that the overall voting environment remained orderly throughout most observed locations. Minority voters were generally able to access polling stations without obstruction and cast their ballots freely, while ballot secrecy was broadly maintained during the voting process.

Polling Station Opening Procedures

Observation findings from the polling station opening period indicate a high level of procedural compliance across most observed locations. The majority of polling stations opened on time with essential election materials available, while observers were generally granted access without restriction. Voter information was displayed in most polling stations and party agents were present during opening procedures without significant interference. These findings suggest that the administrative preparation and opening process were conducted in an orderly and largely transparent manner across the observed constituencies.

Figure: 8 - Election Day Administrative Compliance Indicators During Polling Station Opening Procedures



Areas Requiring Attention

Heavy security deployment: 6% of stations reported heavy security - requires monitoring to avoid voter intimidation.

Minor party agent interference: Observed in 7% of stations.

Minority Voter Access and Electoral Safeguards During Voting Period

Election Day voting was generally peaceful, orderly and inclusive across the observed constituencies. Observation findings indicate that most minority voters were able to access polling centers freely and cast their ballots without significant obstruction or interference. Ballot secrecy was largely protected throughout the voting process, and minority women were generally able to vote safely and with dignity.

At the same time, observers documented several isolated procedural and protection concerns. These included instances of intimidation, inconsistent queue management, differential treatment of voters and coercive voter assistance in a limited number of polling stations. While these incidents did not appear to be systematic or widespread, they nevertheless affected the quality of the voting experience in some locations, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized voters. Overall, however, the voting process was assessed as broadly calm and procedurally functional in the majority of observed polling stations.

Figure: 9 - Minority Voter Access, Safety and Ballot Protection Indicators

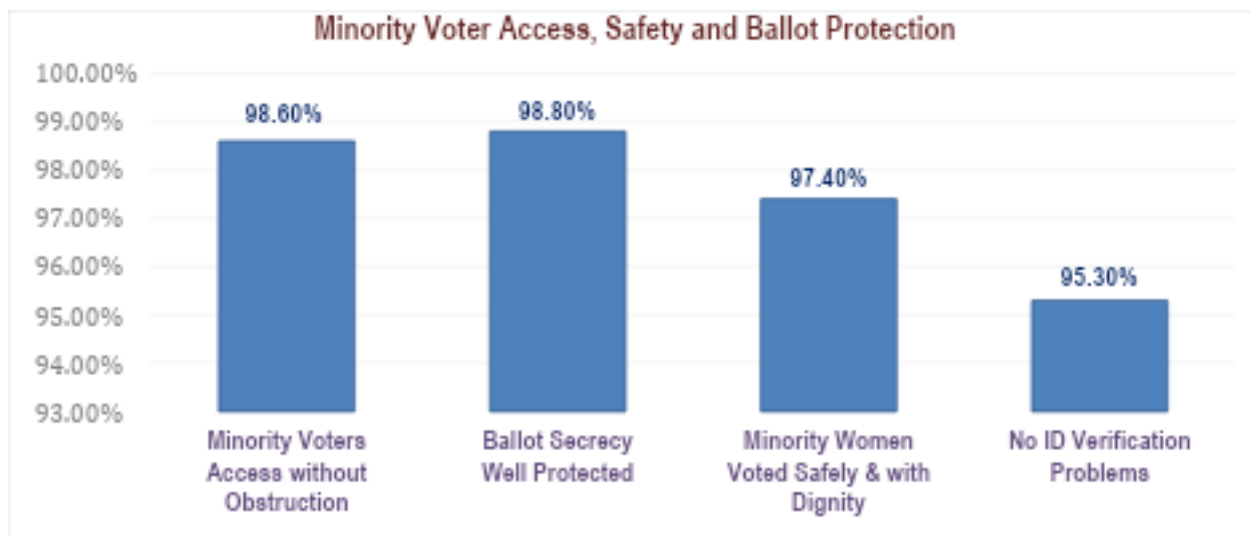
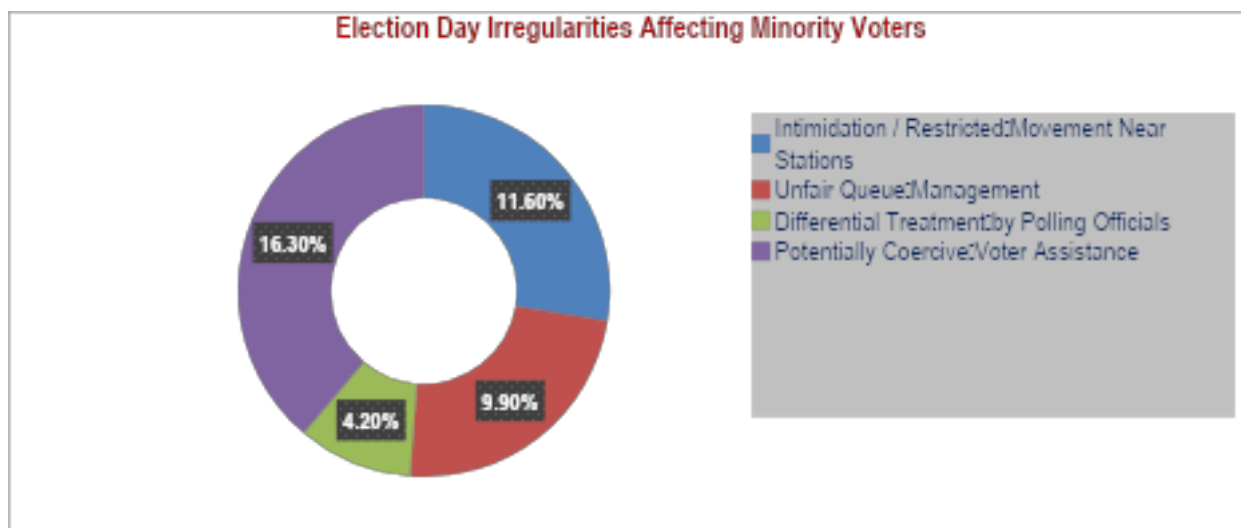


Figure: 10 - Reported Protection and Procedural Concerns During the Voting Period



Attention: Observers reported potentially coercive or inappropriate voter assistance involving minority voters in 16.3% of observed polling stations. These cases primarily involved situations where polling officials, polling agents or accompanying individuals appeared to assist minority voters particularly elderly voters, women and low-literacy voters in ways that could compromise voter independence or influence voter choice. In some instances, assistance was provided without clearly establishing necessity or without adequately protecting ballot secrecy. While these incidents were not assessed as systematic, they nevertheless raised concerns regarding the protection of voter autonomy and the consistent application of electoral safeguards for vulnerable minority communities during the voting process.

Security Forces and Election Officials

Security personnel were present at most polling stations and contributed to a generally controlled and stable environment. Their conduct was largely perceived as neutral and professional. No systematic intimidation by security forces was reported, although some voters expressed a degree of caution in their presence, particularly in areas with historically tense security dynamics.

Polling officials generally maintained neutral and professional conduct toward voters, including members of minority communities. Isolated instances of differential treatment were observed, particularly in queue management and the

provision of voter assistance. Concerns regarding inappropriate voter assistance, where help was provided in ways that could potentially influence voter choice or compromise ballot secrecy, were noted.

Vote Closing, Counting and Results Transparency

During the closing and counting process, most polling stations followed established procedures, with ballot boxes properly sealed and counting conducted in the presence of officials and agents. However, observer access during these stages was not consistently maintained. In a number of instances, observers reported limited access or restricted visibility during counting. The public posting of results at polling stations, a critical transparency mechanism, was largely absent.

Figure: 11 - Polling Station Closing and Vote Counting Compliance Indicators

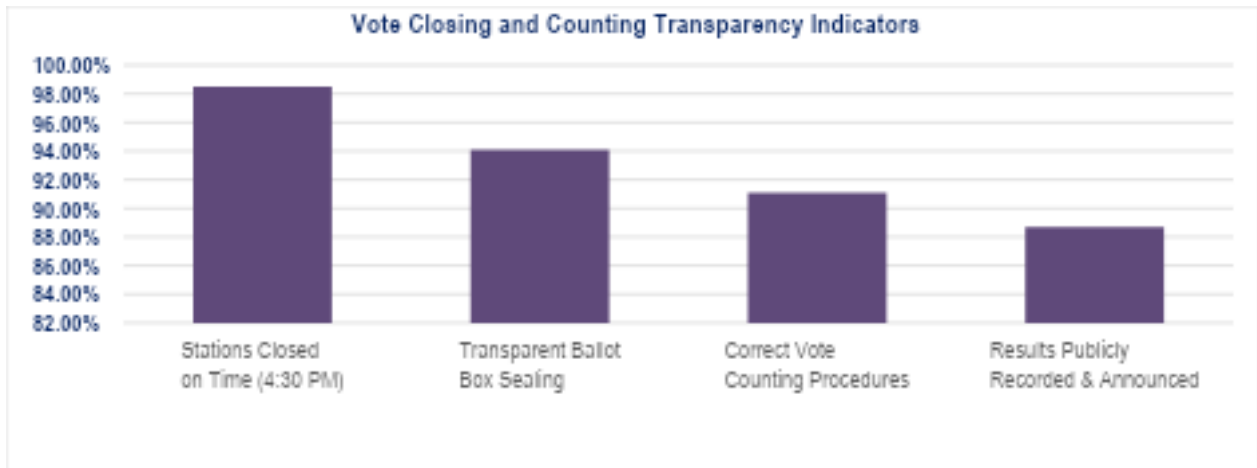
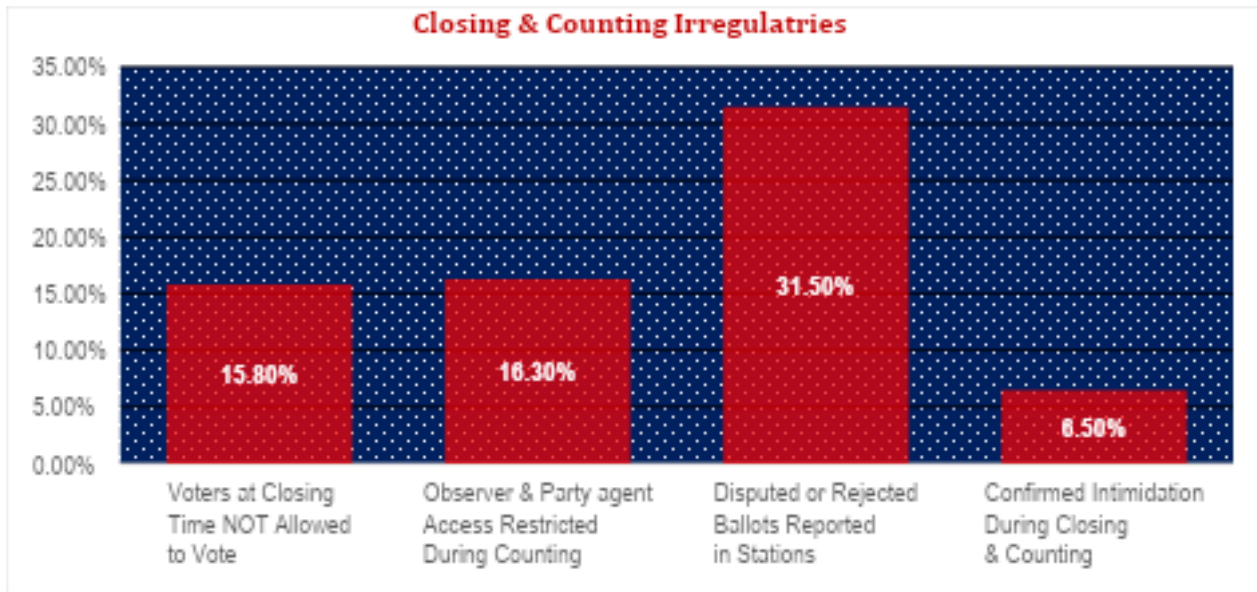


Figure: 12 - Reported Irregularities During Polling Station Closing and Vote Counting



5.6 Post-Election Period: Security and Accountability

Post-Election Security Situation

The post-election period was generally calm across the constituencies observed by RUPSA, with no widespread incidents of post-election violence reported against minority communities. This represents a notable improvement compared to previous electoral cycles, particularly the 2014 and 2018 national elections, when domestic and international observers documented numerous incidents of post-election violence, intimidation, property destruction and targeted attacks affecting religious minority communities in several parts of the country. Against this historical

backdrop, the relative absence of large-scale post-election violence in 2026 constitutes a positive development for minority security and electoral inclusion.

Nevertheless, findings from FGDs and KIs indicate that perceptions of security remained uneven and highly context-specific. While many participants reported no direct incidents in their localities, a persistent sense of vulnerability and uncertainty was evident across several minority communities. These concerns were often shaped by historical experiences of electoral violence, longstanding patterns of discrimination and existing local power dynamics rather than by specific incidents occurring during the 2026 post-election period.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), respondents described a more cautious post-election environment. Ongoing concerns related to land disputes, local political tensions, security dynamics and restrictions on movement continued to affect perceptions of safety among Indigenous communities. Although no widespread post-election violence was reported, several participants indicated that underlying grievances and unresolved tensions continued to influence their sense of security and confidence in public institutions.

As one FGD participant noted:

“There were no major incidents after the election this time but people still remained cautious because of what happened in previous elections.”

Complaints, Accountability & Access to Justice

Formal mechanisms for electoral complaint and legal redress were available throughout the 2026 electoral process, operating through four principal channels: the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC), Electoral Inquiry and Adjudication Committees, executive magistrates, and the judicial system. On the evidence available, these mechanisms were more actively utilized during the 2026 cycle than in previous electoral periods, representing a measurable improvement in the operational capacity of Bangladesh's electoral dispute-resolution framework.

Table: 13 - Pre-Election Complaints Received by the BEC *(Complaints received up to early February 2026)*

Type of Complaint	Number	Share of Total
Complaints against election officials	144	41.7%
Electoral code of conduct violations	201	58.3%
Total complaints received	345	100%

Source: Source: The Business Standard (TBS), 5 February 2026

BEC data indicate that 345 complaints were received prior to Election Day. Of these, 144 complaints, representing 41.7 percent of the total, related to the conduct of field level election officials, while the remaining 201 concerned violations of the electoral code of conduct and other procedural matters. The volume and distribution of these complaints suggest a higher level of public engagement with electoral accountability mechanisms than was observed in previous electoral cycles, reflecting increased use of formal channels to report electoral concerns and irregularities.¹⁵

Table: 14 - Enforcement Actions on Election Day and Immediate Post-Election Period

Action Taken	Number	Remarks
Cases addressed by Electoral Inquiry and Adjudication Committees / Executive Magistrates	510	Covered code of conduct violations and electoral disputes
Persons administratively fined	55	Sanctions imposed for confirmed violations

Source: European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) Bangladesh 2026 Preliminary Statement

During Election Day and the immediate post-election period, Electoral Inquiry and Adjudication Committees and executive magistrates collectively addressed more than 510 cases involving electoral violations and disputes, resulting in administrative sanctions, including fines imposed on more than 55 individuals. The scale of enforcement activity reflects a more active and responsive electoral dispute resolution system compared to recent electoral cycles.

Table: 15 - Post-Election Complaints

¹⁵ Source: Bangladesh Election Commission, complaints and adjudication data for the 2026 parliamentary election, as referenced in BEC press briefings during and after the election period. See “EC receives 345 complaints ahead of national polls,” The Business Standard, 5 February 2026.

Type	Number	Remarks
Written complaints submitted to the BEC	52	Alleged irregularities across multiple regions
Constituencies from which complaints were received	35	Broad geographic distribution of grievances
Complaints identified as minority-specific	None disaggregated	Publicly available records provide no minority-specific breakdown

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC),

In the post-election period, more than 52 written complaints were submitted to the BEC concerning alleged irregularities in at least 35 constituencies. Election results in 32 constituencies were formally challenged by political parties. Critically, publicly available BEC data do not provide a disaggregated breakdown of complaints filed by minority voters, candidates or community representatives. This absence of minority specific complaint data represents a significant evidentiary limitation, constraining the ability to assess whether electoral grievance mechanisms adequately identified, recorded and responded to concerns affecting minority communities.

Despite the formal availability and demonstrated use of these mechanisms, RUPSA's Election Day observation, Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews did not identify significant numbers of formal complaints lodged by minority communities during any phase of the electoral process. This finding should be interpreted with caution. The absence of recorded complaints does not necessarily indicate the absence of grievances. Rather, available evidence suggests that many concerns relating to indirect pressure, discriminatory treatment, social intimidation, exclusionary local power dynamics and procedural barriers were either addressed informally at the community level or remained entirely unreported.

A consistent and structurally significant finding across consultations was the perception that formal accountability mechanisms were difficult to access and unlikely to produce timely or meaningful remedies, particularly for vulnerable and geographically isolated communities. Respondents identified several barriers to seeking formal redress, including limited awareness of complaint procedures, the complexity and cost of legal processes, limited confidence in institutional responsiveness, concerns about potential social, economic or political repercussions, and geographic constraints affecting access to relevant institutions and authorities.

Table: 16 - Barriers to Accessing Electoral Complaint and Redress Mechanisms

Barrier	Findings from FGDs and KIs
Low Awareness	Many minority community members were unaware of available complaint procedures, grievance mechanisms, or the institutions responsible for receiving and addressing electoral complaints.
Complexity and Cost	Formal complaint and legal processes were widely perceived as difficult to navigate due to procedural complexity, associated costs, documentation requirements and in some cases, the need for legal assistance.
Limited Institutional Confidence	Respondents across multiple minority communities expressed limited confidence in the impartiality, responsiveness and effectiveness of institutions responsible for investigating and resolving complaints.
Fear of Repercussions	Concerns about potential social, economic or political consequences discouraged some individuals from filing formal complaints, particularly in areas characterized by strong local power structures and political influence.
Geographic Barriers	Physical distance from BEC offices, magistrates' courts and other relevant institutions limited practical access to complaint mechanisms for communities living in remote and hard to reach areas, including parts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and tea garden regions.

Overall, the 2026 election demonstrated a more active and institutionally responsive electoral dispute resolution framework than recent electoral cycles and this improvement is acknowledged. However, effective access to electoral justice for minority communities remains constrained by limited awareness, structural barriers to accessibility, low levels of institutional trust and the absence of complaint mechanisms specifically designed to address the needs and concerns of minority groups. Addressing these challenges is not simply a desirable reform but an essential

requirement for ensuring that accountability mechanisms are accessible, responsive and equitable for all voters and communities.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT

Across all sections of this report, the analysis is structured around three interrelated core themes: participation, representation, and security. Together, these themes provide a comprehensive lens for assessing not only the procedural conduct of the electoral process, but [the extent to which minority communities were able to engage in a meaningful, equitable and safe manner throughout the full electoral cycle.](#)

6.1 Participation

The assessment finds that minority participation in the 2026 electoral process was procedurally ensured but substantively uneven.

Community	Main Participation Challenge
Tea Worker Communities	Economic dependency, limited mobility and restricted access to information
Indigenous Communities in the CHT	Geographic isolation, language barriers and institutional mistrust
Plainland Ethnic Communities	Limited access to culturally and linguistically appropriate voter information
Religious Minority Communities	Political uncertainty and concerns regarding representation
Dalit Communities	Social exclusion and chronic political underrepresentation

[From a legal and procedural perspective, the electoral framework in Bangladesh provides for universal suffrage and guarantees the right of all citizens to register and vote without discrimination. Findings from RUPSA's observation indicate that minority communities were generally included in voter lists and able to access polling stations on Election Day. The overwhelming majority of minority voters reported being able to cast their ballots without obstruction, suggesting that the basic procedural conditions for electoral participation were largely met.](#)

[However, the assessment finds that participation was not equally enabled across all minority communities and that important gaps remained between formal inclusion and meaningful participation. While minority voters were broadly present throughout the electoral process, the nature and severity of barriers varied considerably across communities and geographic contexts.](#)

For **tea worker** communities, participation was often constrained by socio economic vulnerability, limited mobility and dependence on local power structures. FGD participants reported challenges related to accessing voter information, updating registration records and engaging independently in campaign activities. Economic dependence on employers and local intermediaries also contributed to a cautious approach to political engagement and limited confidence in expressing political preferences openly.

Among **Ethnic communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts**, participation was shaped by a distinct set of factors, including geographic isolation, limited access to public services, language barriers and longstanding concerns regarding land rights, governance and security. Although voter turnout and participation remained visible, consultations revealed persistent mistrust toward state institutions and electoral processes, which affected confidence in political participation, representation and accountability mechanisms.

Plainland Ethnic communities experienced a different set of participation challenges linked to geographic marginalization, language barriers, lower levels of educational attainment and limited outreach by electoral institutions. While no systematic exclusion from voter registration or voting was identified, FGD participants reported difficulties accessing election related information in culturally and linguistically appropriate formats. Civic education initiatives rarely targeted these communities directly and voter information was generally disseminated only in Bangla.

Consequently, understanding of electoral procedures, candidate platforms and the referendum process often depended on informal community networks rather than direct engagement with official sources.

For **religious minority communities**, particularly Hindus, participation was influenced by broader political uncertainty following the political transition of 2024 and the subsequent restructuring of the political landscape. Several KII and FGD participants described a sense of political disorientation regarding representation, political alliances and electoral choices. While this did not prevent participation, it affected the confidence with which some voters engaged in campaign activities and political discussions.

Buddhist communities are concentrated primarily in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and constitute an important religious and ethnic minority population. While most respondents reported being able to register, vote and access polling stations without significant procedural barriers, participation was influenced by the broader socio-political context of the CHT, including longstanding land disputes, security concerns and geographic isolation. These factors, together with limited access to electoral information and public services in some remote areas, continue to shape opportunities for political participation and representation.

Christian communities are comparatively smaller in number and are geographically dispersed across northern districts, greater Mymensingh, Sylhet and urban centres. Most respondents reported being able to register, vote and access polling stations without significant procedural barriers. However, limited political visibility, social marginalization and, in some areas, geographic remoteness continue to affect opportunities for political participation and representation. Variations in access to voter information and awareness of electoral procedures were also observed across locations, indicating the need for more inclusive and targeted civic and voter education initiatives for smaller and geographically dispersed minority communities.

Dalit communities faced additional challenges associated with social exclusion, limited political influence and chronic underrepresentation within mainstream political structures. Although no systematic barriers to voter registration or voting were identified, participants frequently reported feeling politically marginalized and inadequately represented by major political parties. The nomination of only one Dalit candidate nationwide further reinforced perceptions of exclusion from formal political processes.

Across minority communities more broadly, civic and voter education efforts were often insufficiently tailored to local contexts and community specific needs. Limited outreach in minority languages, inadequate adaptation for low literacy populations and weak targeting of remote and marginalized communities reduced the effectiveness of voter information campaigns. These shortcomings were particularly evident in relation to the national referendum, where [FGDs revealed widespread confusion regarding its purpose, procedures and implications. Many participants reported receiving little or no information prior to Election Day, while some became aware of the referendum only after arriving at the polling station.](#)

Election Day observation further demonstrated that [procedural participation did not always translate into fully informed and autonomous participation.](#) While minority voters generally accessed polling stations without obstruction, isolated instances of inappropriate voter assistance and uneven understanding of voting procedures were observed. These issues were most pronounced among elderly voters, low literacy populations and geographically isolated communities.

Participation among religious minority communities was further influenced by the broader restructuring of the political landscape following the 2024 political transition, including the ban on the Awami League. This development significantly altered patterns of political competition and voter alignment. For many minority voters, who have historically been associated with or perceived as aligned with particular political parties, the absence of a major political actor contributed to uncertainty regarding representation, electoral choices, and political protection.

Key informants and focus group participants described a sense of disorientation in navigating the changed political environment, including reduced clarity about candidate positions, party platforms, and the implications of electoral outcomes for minority rights and security. While this did not prevent participation, it affected the confidence and perceived meaningfulness of engagement, particularly in terms of political expression and trust in the inclusiveness of the electoral process.

Overall, the assessment concludes that minority participation in the 2026 election was procedurally ensured but substantively uneven. *While most minority voters were able to register and vote, the quality of participation varied significantly across communities due to differences in socio economic conditions, geographic accessibility, access to information, levels of political trust and historical experiences of exclusion.* As a result, participation was not always exercised on fully informed, equally empowered or confidently voluntary terms.

Overall Assessment - Participation: Procedurally ensured but substantively constrained. Minority communities participated in the election but not always on equal, fully informed or voluntarily confident terms.

6.2 Representation

All citizens are legally entitled to stand for election, and Bangladesh's electoral framework does not impose formal restrictions on minority candidates seeking public office. The 2026 election demonstrated a degree of openness in candidate participation, with 79 minority candidates contesting parliamentary seats across political parties and as independents. However, representation remained structurally limited and uneven.

Minority candidates contested in only 57 of Bangladesh's 300 parliamentary constituencies, representing just 19 per cent of all constituencies and indicating that minority candidacies remained geographically concentrated rather than broadly distributed across the country. Their representation also remained uneven across community groups. Of the 79 minority candidates identified, 66 (83.5 per cent) were Hindu, while Buddhist and Indigenous communities accounted for 12 candidates and Dalit communities for just one candidate (1.3 per cent). This imbalance reflects broader patterns of political inclusion and representation. In particular, the nomination of only a single Dalit candidate nationwide underscores the persistent barriers faced by one of Bangladesh's most socially and economically marginalized communities and highlights their continued underrepresentation within formal political structures.

The findings suggest that barriers to minority representation arise less from legal eligibility than from the broader political environment surrounding candidate selection and electoral competitiveness. Minority representation remains highly dependent on political party discretion, as the electoral framework contains no reserved seats, candidate quotas or mandatory inclusion measures for minority communities. Consequently, opportunities for political representation are shaped largely by party nomination practices rather than institutional safeguards.

Gender disparities further constrained minority representation. Only 10 of the 79 minority candidates (12.7 per cent) were women, including candidates from Hindu, Indigenous, and Buddhist communities. This indicates that minority women face compounded barriers linked to both gender and minority status, limiting their access to political leadership, party networks and electoral opportunities.

Electoral outcomes reveal an even wider gap between participation and representation. Although 79 minority candidates contested the election, only four were directly elected to Parliament, representing a success rate of approximately 5.1 per cent. Two of the elected candidates were Hindu and two were Indigenous Buddhist candidates from the Chittagong Hill Tracts. All four successful candidates were nominated by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), while no minority candidates from other political parties or independent platforms secured parliamentary seats. In addition, **four minority women were elected to the reserved women's seats through indirect election.** Consequently, the 13th Jatiya Sangsad included a total of **eight minority members**, comprising four directly elected MPs and four women elected through the reserved seat system. Nevertheless, minority representation remained substantially lower than in previous parliaments. While previous parliaments included **17 minority MPs in the 11th Parliament (2018)** and **14 in the 12th Parliament (2024)** through direct elections alone, the **2026 election returned only four directly elected minority MPs**, highlighting a significant decline in direct parliamentary representation.

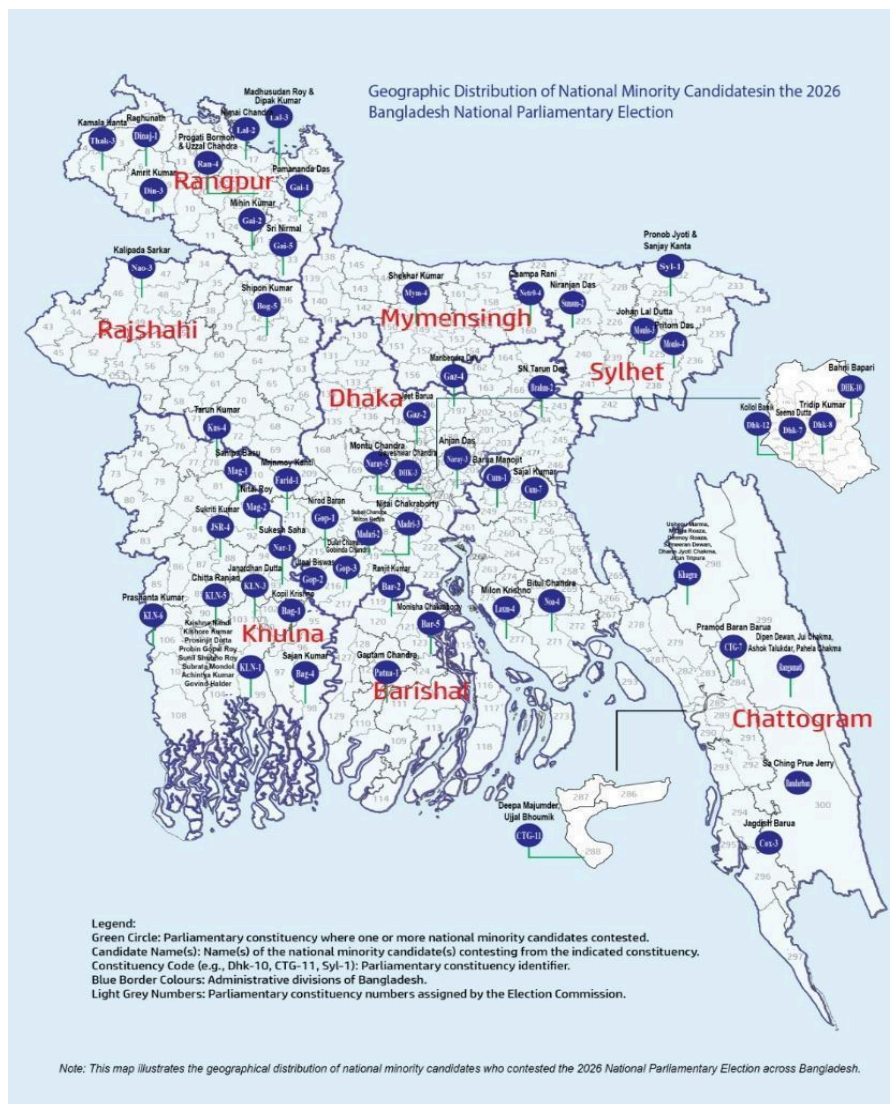
These findings demonstrate that the presence of minority candidates on ballots does not necessarily translate into equitable representation in elected institutions. While the electoral process provided formal opportunities for participation, the composition of Parliament remains significantly less diverse than the demographic composition of Bangladesh's population, where religious and ethnic minorities collectively account for a considerably larger share of the population than their parliamentary representation suggests.¹⁶

Overall, the assessment finds that minority representation in the 2026 election was formally open but substantively constrained. While minority candidates were able to contest the election, **structural barriers related to candidate recruitment, party nomination practices, electoral competitiveness, gender inequality and the absence of institutional inclusion measures continue to limit equitable representation and political influence.**

Overall Assessment - Representation: Nominally present but structurally constrained. While minority candidates contested the election, the absence of legal provisions or party-level inclusion commitments continues to limit equitable representation.

The election of two ethnic representatives from Bandarban and Rangamati is particularly noteworthy given the historically limited representation of ethnic communities at the national level. Nevertheless, the election of only four minority candidates nationwide underscores the continuing challenge of translating formal political participation into meaningful and equitable representation within Bangladesh's parliamentary system.

Map-2: Minority Candidates by Constituency, 2026



ethnicity tables), bbs.gov.bd.

Figure 1: Population Dynamics (religion and

6.3 Security

The overall electoral environment during the 2026 election was generally peaceful and stable, representing a notable improvement compared with previous electoral cycles. Unlike the periods surrounding the 2014 and 2018 parliamentary elections, when incidents of violence, intimidation and attacks affecting minority communities were documented in various parts of the country, the 2026 election was not characterized by widespread electoral violence or systematic targeting of minority voters.

RUPSA's Election Day observation across 509 polling stations found that 98.6 per cent of minority voters were able to vote without obstruction, while 97.4 per cent of minority women were able to vote safely and with dignity. The visible presence of law enforcement and security personnel contributed to an orderly voting environment and strengthened procedural security throughout much of the electoral process.

Despite these positive findings, [physical security did not always translate into a corresponding sense of safety, confidence and protection among minority communities](#). Across FGDs and KIIs, respondents frequently distinguished between the absence of overt violence and the presence of genuine security. While many participants acknowledged that the election was comparatively peaceful, concerns regarding intimidation, retaliation and unequal protection remained evident in several communities.

These perceptions were shaped in part by historical experience. Memories of post-election violence, political reprisals and communal tensions associated with previous electoral cycles continue to influence how many minority communities assess electoral risk. Consequently, even where no immediate threats were reported, a degree of caution persisted regarding political participation, public political expression and the reporting of grievances. The limited use of formal complaint mechanisms and low levels of confidence in institutional accountability processes further reinforced these perceptions.

Security experiences also varied across communities and regions. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), concerns extended beyond the electoral process itself and were linked to longstanding governance and security challenges. Participants referred to land related disputes, the incomplete implementation of aspects of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, restrictions affecting freedom of movement in some areas and the presence of multiple political and armed actors. Although these issues were not directly election related, they shaped perceptions of security and trust in public institutions during the electoral period. Consequently, Indigenous communities in the CHT often viewed electoral security through a broader lens encompassing historical grievances, representation concerns and questions of institutional protection.

Election Day observation identified several localized concerns that affected perceptions of electoral security. Incidents involving intimidation or restricted movement near polling stations were reported in 11.6 per cent of observed polling stations, while 6.5 per cent of observed stations recorded incidents of intimidation during the closing and counting process.¹⁷ Although these incidents did not constitute a widespread or coordinated pattern and did not significantly disrupt the overall conduct of the election, they indicate that security challenges persisted in certain locations. These findings highlight that electoral security should be assessed not only by the absence of violence but also by the extent to which voters are able to participate freely, confidently and without fear of pressure or adverse consequences.

The post-election period remained largely calm across most observed constituencies, with no widespread incidents of violence targeting minority communities reported through RUPSA's Election Day observation, FGDs or KIIs. This marks a significant departure from previous electoral cycles, particularly 2014 and 2018, when post-election violence and attacks against minority communities were reported in several parts of the country. Nevertheless, consultations revealed that perceptions of security remained uneven. In several minority communities, participants expressed

¹⁷ Source: RUPSA Election Day Observation Dataset and Post-Election FGD/KII Dataset, 2026.

concerns about potential retaliation, social repercussions and changes in local power dynamics following the election, even where no specific incidents had occurred. These concerns were often rooted in historical experience rather than immediate threats. In the CHT, respondents continued to report a heightened sense of insecurity linked to longstanding governance, land and security issues that extend beyond the electoral process itself. As a result, the post-election environment was widely perceived as peaceful but not universally reassuring, particularly among communities with prior experiences of political or communal vulnerability.

The functioning of accountability mechanisms presents a similarly mixed picture. According to Bangladesh Election Commission data, 345 complaints were received prior to Election Day, while Electoral Inquiry and Adjudication Committees and executive magistrates addressed more than 510 election related cases during the election period. Following the election, at least 52 written complaints were submitted concerning alleged irregularities in 35 constituencies. These figures suggest a more active and responsive electoral dispute resolution framework than in recent electoral cycles. However, no publicly available data are available on complaints filed specifically by minority voters or communities, limiting assessment of how effectively these mechanisms addressed minority related concerns. Furthermore, FGDs and KIs revealed persistent concerns regarding awareness of complaint procedures, accessibility of redress mechanisms and confidence in obtaining timely and effective remedies.

Overall, the 2026 election provided a substantially more secure environment for minority communities than several previous electoral cycles. Physical safety was largely maintained, no widespread violence targeting minority communities was observed and most minority voters were able to participate without obstruction. Nevertheless, security remained procedurally stable rather than universally trusted. Historical experiences of violence, localized incidents of intimidation, regional security challenges particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and limited confidence in accountability mechanisms contributed to persistent perceptions of vulnerability among some minority communities. Strengthening psychological security, institutional trust and access to effective remedies remains essential to ensuring that electoral participation is not only safe in practice but also perceived to be safe by all communities.

Overall Assessment - Security: Procedurally stable but not uniformly trusted. Physical safety was largely maintained but psychological security and confidence in accountability mechanisms remain areas requiring sustained attention.

6.4 Overall Analytical Insight

Across the three dimensions assessed in this report - participation, representation and security - a consistent and defining pattern emerges: the 2026 election achieved a significant degree of formal inclusion for minority communities, yet substantive inclusion remained uneven and incomplete. Minority voters were generally able to register and vote, minority candidates were legally permitted to contest elections, and minority communities were not subjected to widespread violence or systematic exclusion. However, formal access did not consistently translate into equal opportunity, effective representation, or full confidence in the electoral process.

The findings suggest that this gap between formal and substantive inclusion is not primarily the result of isolated administrative shortcomings. Rather, it reflects a set of deeper structural factors that continue to shape the electoral experiences of minority communities across Bangladesh.

First, while the legal and electoral framework contains important guarantees of equality and non-discrimination, it provides few proactive mechanisms to promote minority inclusion. The current framework focuses largely on ensuring equal treatment under the law rather than addressing the distinct barriers faced by different minority communities. As a result, electoral institutions and political actors are not required to adopt targeted measures related to minority representation, minority language voter education, culturally appropriate outreach, or the systematic monitoring of minority participation and grievances. Formal equality therefore coexists with substantive disparities in access, information and influence.

Second, minority political participation remains heavily mediated by patron client relationships and dependence on dominant political actors. Across several communities, political influence and access to decision making processes

were found to be closely linked to relationships with major political parties and local power holders rather than to independent community representation. This dynamic creates opportunities for inclusion but also limits political autonomy and reduces the capacity of minority communities to influence electoral agendas, candidate selection processes and policy priorities on their own terms.

Third, the assessment highlights persistent weaknesses in accountability and redress mechanisms. Although complaint and dispute resolution systems were operational and more active than in previous electoral cycles, minority communities reported limited awareness of available procedures, low confidence in institutional responsiveness and concerns regarding accessibility. The absence of publicly available data on minority related complaints further limits the ability of institutions to identify patterns of exclusion or discrimination and to respond effectively to community specific concerns.

A fourth factor relates to uneven socio economic and geographic conditions across minority communities. The barriers faced by Indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, tea worker communities, Dalit communities, plainland ethnic groups and religious minorities were not identical. Geographic isolation, language barriers, lower levels of educational attainment, economic vulnerability, historical marginalization and longstanding governance concerns interacted in different ways to shape participation, representation and perceptions of security. A uniform electoral approach was therefore insufficient to address the diverse realities experienced by different minority groups.

Finally, the findings indicate that historical experiences continue to shape contemporary electoral behavior and perceptions. Even where procedural conditions improved and security conditions were generally stable, memories of exclusion, underrepresentation, political violence and limited institutional responsiveness influenced levels of trust, confidence and political engagement among minority communities. This was particularly evident in perceptions of security, accountability and political representation.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the central challenge facing minority inclusion in Bangladesh is no longer solely one of formal access. Rather, it is the transition from procedural inclusion to meaningful and equitable participation. Addressing this challenge will require a deliberate shift from a primarily compliance-based approach toward targeted, context sensitive and sustained measures that recognize the distinct needs, vulnerabilities and aspirations of Bangladesh's diverse minority communities. Without such measures, formal inclusion is likely to continue coexisting with substantive inequalities in electoral participation, representation and security.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

The 2026 Bangladesh Parliamentary Election and Referendum was conducted in a generally peaceful and procedurally sound manner. Most minority voters were able to register, access polling stations and cast their votes. Election Day administration was largely orderly, and security arrangements were generally effective in maintaining a stable environment. In this sense, the election achieved a significant degree of formal inclusion for minority communities.

However, RUPSA's observation findings indicate that formal inclusion did not consistently translate into substantive inclusion. Participation among minority communities remained uneven and incomplete, shaped by a range of structural factors including geographic isolation, language barriers, documentation challenges and socio-economic vulnerability. Significant deficits in civic and voter education, particularly regarding the referendum and newly introduced electoral provisions, further limited the informed quality of participation. These challenges were especially pronounced among women, ethnic communities and other marginalized groups living in remote areas.

The findings suggest that these challenges are not solely products of the 2026 electoral cycle. Rather, they reflect deeper structural factors that continue to shape the electoral experiences of minority communities across Bangladesh. Historical experiences of exclusion, discrimination and insecurity continue to influence contemporary electoral behavior, perceptions of political participation and confidence in public institutions.

Minority representation among elected candidates remains critically limited and structurally constrained in the absence of institutional mechanisms designed to promote equitable inclusion. While security remained procedurally stable during the election period, it was not universally trusted. Historical experiences of violence, localized incidents of intimidation, regional security challenges particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and limited confidence in accountability mechanisms contributed to persistent perceptions of vulnerability among some minority communities. These findings indicate that historical experiences continue to shape contemporary electoral behaviour and perceptions, even in contexts where procedural safeguards are largely respected.

In sum, the 2026 election demonstrated strong procedural integrity but limited substantive inclusiveness. The comparative achievements of the election, including the absence of widespread violence and the broad participation of minority communities, cannot be assumed to prevail automatically in future electoral cycles. They must be safeguarded and strengthened through forward looking action and an overarching policy commitment to inclusive democracy.

Achieving genuinely inclusive and representative democratic participation will therefore require a deliberate shift from a primarily compliance based approach toward targeted, context sensitive and sustained measures that recognize the distinct needs, vulnerabilities and aspirations of Bangladesh's diverse minority communities. This transition will require coordinated action by the Bangladesh Election Commission, political parties, government institutions, minority representatives and civil society organizations. Strengthening minority participation and representation should be understood as a long term democratic objective requiring sustained commitment, regular consultation and institutional reforms that are responsive to the diverse experiences of minority communities across Bangladesh. Such efforts will be essential to ensuring that future elections are not only procedurally credible, but also genuinely inclusive, equitable and representative for all citizens.

7.2 Detailed Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from evidence across all phases of the observation and are prioritized by urgency and potential impact.

Priority Recommendations

1. Adopt Strategy for Electoral Inclusion of Minorities

Lead Actors: BEC (primary), Ministry of CHT Affairs (supporting)

Timeframe: Before November 2026 local elections

Action: The BEC should develop and publish a formal Minority Electoral Inclusion Strategy that identifies barriers affecting different minority communities and establishes targeted responses. The strategy should include measurable objectives on voter registration, voter information, accessibility, complaint handling and participation monitoring. It should address community-specific barriers for Dalit communities, religious minorities, plainland ethnic groups, tea worker communities and ethnic peoples in the CHT. The strategy should be developed in consultation with minority community representatives and civil society organizations.

Rationale: The report demonstrates that barriers faced by tea worker communities, Dalit communities, plainland ethnic groups, religious minorities, and Indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are distinct and cannot be effectively addressed through a uniform approach. A targeted strategy with measurable objectives is required. *(Based on Sections 4.3, 6.1)*

Expected Result: More systematic identification of barriers affecting minority communities, leading to targeted interventions and more equitable access to electoral processes and services.

2. Improve Electoral Accessibility in Remote and Marginalized Areas

Lead Actors: BEC, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Local Government Institutions

Timeframe: Before November 2026 local elections

Action: The BEC should expand mobile voter registration services, mobile voter information teams, and targeted polling accessibility measures in geographically isolated areas. Special outreach plans should be developed for the

CHT, tea garden regions, and remote minority settlements. Accessibility planning should include transportation challenges, documentation barriers, and language needs. The BEC should also establish registration support points in accessible locations and conduct door-to-door enumeration in hard-to-reach areas where feasible.

Rationale: Geographic isolation remained one of the most significant barriers to participation, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and tea garden communities. Mobile registration services, localized outreach, and targeted measures addressing documentation and language barriers are needed. *(Based on Sections 5.2, 6.1)*

Expected Result: Reduced geographic and administrative barriers to voter registration, voter information, and electoral participation, particularly for communities in remote, isolated, and underserved areas.

3. Institutionalize Minority-Focused Civic and Voter Education

Lead Actors: Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC), Ministry of Information, Civil Society Organizations

Timeframe: Before November 2026 local elections

Action: The BEC should establish a continuous civic and voter education program between electoral cycles and intensify activities at least six months before future elections. Educational materials should be produced in relevant minority languages and adapted for low-literacy populations through audio-visual formats, community radio, mobile campaigns, and community facilitators. Particular attention should be given to Indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), plainland ethnic communities, tea worker populations, women, Dalit and first-time voters. The BEC should collaborate with civil society organizations that have established networks among minority communities to ensure effective reach.

Rationale: The observation found widespread gaps in voter awareness among minority communities, particularly regarding the referendum. Many FGD participants reported learning about the referendum only after arriving at the polling station, and civic education efforts were largely standardized without adaptation to minority languages or low-literacy formats. *(Based on Sections 5.1, 6.1)*

Expected Result: Improved voter awareness and understanding of electoral rights, procedures and referendum processes among minority communities, leading to more informed and confident participation in future elections.

4. Strengthen Electoral Complaint Mechanisms and Protection of Complainants

Lead Actors: BEC, Electoral Inquiry Committees, Ministry of Law and Justice

Timeframe: Within 6 months after November 2026 elections

Action: The BEC should establish confidential reporting channels for vulnerable communities, including secure telephone, online, and community-based complaint options. Clear procedures should be adopted to protect complainants from social, economic, or political retaliation. The BEC should also publish anonymized and disaggregated statistics on complaints affecting minority communities and regularly communicate actions taken in response. Outreach efforts should inform minority communities about available complaint procedures and how to access them safely.

Rationale: Despite reports of intimidation, differential treatment, and potentially coercive voter assistance, minority communities rarely used formal complaint mechanisms. FGDs and KIIs found that fear of repercussions, low awareness, and limited trust in institutional responsiveness were the primary barriers. *(Based on Section 5.6, 6.3)*

Expected Result: Increased confidence in electoral grievance mechanisms, higher reporting of electoral concerns by minority communities, and improved institutional accountability and responsiveness to minority-related complaints.

Medium-Term Democratic Inclusion Reforms

5. Promote Inclusive Political Representation Through Party-Level Reforms

Lead Actors: Political Parties

Supporting Actors: BEC (monitoring role), Civil Society

Timeframe: Within 6 months after November 2026 elections

Action: Political parties should adopt formal inclusion targets for minority candidates, including specific commitments for women from minority communities and underrepresented groups such as Dalits and Indigenous peoples. These commitments should include public reporting requirements on nomination patterns. Parties should also strengthen minority participation within party leadership, candidate selection committees, and policy development structures. The BEC should consider publishing an annual report on party compliance with voluntary inclusion commitments.

Rationale: Only 4 of 79 minority candidates were elected (5.1%), all from a single party. Women constituted only 12.7% of minority candidates, while Dalit and smaller minority communities remained substantially underrepresented. Voluntary commitments have proven insufficient; formal party commitments with public reporting requirements are needed. *(Based on Section 5.3)*

Expected Result: Greater diversity among nominated candidates and increased representation of minority communities, including women and historically marginalized groups, within elected bodies and political party structures.

6. Initiate a National Dialogue on Minority Representation Mechanisms

Lead Actors: Bangladesh Election Commission

Supporting Actors: Political Parties, Civil Society, Minority Community Representatives and Legal Experts

Timeframe: By December 2027

Action: Initiate a structured national consultation process, convened by the Bangladesh Election Commission in collaboration with relevant government institutions, political parties, minority community representatives, civil society organizations and legal experts, to examine options for strengthening minority representation in elected bodies. The process should explore a range of approaches, including voluntary party commitments, reserved representation models, nomination incentives and other measures consistent with Bangladesh's constitutional framework, and should produce concrete recommendations together with an implementation roadmap within 18 months.

Rationale: Current electoral outcomes remain heavily dependent on party discretion and do not consistently translate minority population size into representative outcomes. A structured national dialogue is needed to produce concrete proposals for strengthening minority representation in elected bodies. *(Based on Section 5.3)*

Expected Result: Enhanced national consensus on practical measures to strengthen minority representation and broaden participation in political decision-making processes.

7. Strengthen Polling Official Capacity on Inclusive Electoral Administration

Lead Actors: BEC

Timeframe: Before November 2026 local elections

Action: The BEC should revise training programs for polling officials to include practical modules on equal treatment of voters, minority sensitivity, prevention of discriminatory practices, and proper voter assistance procedures based on the operational definitions in Section 2 of this report. Training should emphasize the distinction between lawful assistance (at voter request, respecting voter autonomy) and coercive or inappropriate assistance. Election Day supervision should specifically monitor instances of differential treatment and inappropriate voter assistance, with clear reporting protocols.

Rationale: Observation data found reports of differential treatment (4.2% of polling stations) and potentially coercive voter assistance (16.3% of polling stations) affecting minority voters. Training programs for polling officials should include practical modules on equal treatment, non-discrimination, and appropriate voter assistance procedures based on the operational definitions in Section 2. *(Based on Section 5.5)*

Expected Result: More consistent application of electoral procedures, reduced incidents of discriminatory treatment and inappropriate voter assistance, and improved voter confidence in the impartiality of electoral administration.

8. Build Trust and Security Through Sustained Community Engagement

Lead Actors: BEC, Law Enforcement Agencies, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Civil Society

Timeframe: Before November 2026 local elections

Action: Electoral stakeholders should establish regular consultation mechanisms with minority communities between elections, particularly in the CHT and other historically marginalized areas. These platforms should focus on security concerns, electoral grievances, misinformation, political participation, and confidence building. Consultations should occur at least twice per year outside of election periods and increase to monthly engagement during the six months preceding an election. Feedback from these consultations should be documented and used to inform electoral administration and security planning.

Rationale: The report found that psychological insecurity persisted despite the absence of widespread violence. At 11.6% of observed polling stations, observers noted intimidation or restricted movement affecting minority voters. Historical experiences of exclusion, low institutional trust, and unresolved governance concerns continue to shape minority perceptions of security. *(Based on Sections 5.6, 6.3)*

Expected Result: Strengthened trust between minority communities and electoral institutions, improved perceptions of security, and increased confidence in political participation and accountability processes.

9. Improve Data Collection on Minority Participation and Electoral Justice

Lead Actors: BEC

Supporting Actors: Development Partners, Civil Society

Timeframe: By December 2027

Action: The BEC should develop a framework for collecting and publishing disaggregated data on electoral complaints, outreach activities, and participation trends affecting minority communities. This framework should include: (a) a mechanism to identify complaints filed by or affecting minority communities without compromising complainant privacy; (b) regular reporting on outreach activities targeting minority-concentrated areas; and (c) post-election analysis of voter turnout and registration data disaggregated by geographic area (to enable analysis of minority-concentrated constituencies). All data collection should respect privacy and data protection standards.

Rationale: The absence of minority-specific complaint data significantly limited assessment of whether grievance and accountability mechanisms effectively addressed concerns affecting minority communities. The BEC should explore mechanisms for collecting and publishing disaggregated data on electoral complaints, outreach activities, and participation trends affecting minority communities, while respecting privacy and data protection standards. *(Based on Sections 4.3, 5.6)*

Expected Result: Enhanced availability of evidence on minority participation, grievances, and electoral experiences, enabling more informed policymaking, monitoring, and targeted electoral reforms.

10: Ensure Consistent Accredited Observer Access to All Electoral Phases

Lead Actors: BEC

Timeframe: Before November 2026 local elections

Action: The BEC should issue clear directives to all polling officials that accredited observers must have unimpeded access to all phases of electoral procedures, including polling station opening, voting, closing and counting. A mechanism should be established for observers to report access denials or restrictions in real time, with a requirement that the BEC acknowledge and respond to such reports within 24 hours. The BEC should also include observer access rights as a standard component of polling official training.

Rationale: During the 2026 election, observer access during vote closing and counting stages was not consistently maintained. In a number of instances, observers reported limited access or restricted visibility during counting. International election observation standards require accredited observers to have unimpeded access to all phases of electoral procedures, including opening, voting, closing, and counting. *(Based on Section 5.5)*

Expected Result: Consistent and unimpeded access for accredited observers to all polling stations and all phases of electoral procedures, enabling full transparency and independent verification of the electoral process.

Table: 15 – Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Lead Actor(s)	Timeframe	Evidence Link
Institutionalize Minority-Focused Civic and Voter Education	BEC, Ministry of Information, CSOs	Before Local Government Election	Sections 5.1, 6.1
Adopt a Minority Electoral Inclusion Strategy	BEC, Ministry of CHT Affairs	Before Local Government Election	Sections 4.3, 6.1
Strengthen Electoral Complaint Mechanisms	BEC, Electoral Inquiry Committees, Ministry of Law	Within 10 months after National Parliament Elections	Sections 5.6, 6.3
Improve Electoral Accessibility in Remote Areas	BEC, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Local Government	Before Local Government Election	Sections 5.2, 6.1
Promote Inclusive Representation Through Party Reforms	Political Parties	Within 24 months after National Parliament Elections	Section 5.3
Initiate National Dialogue on Minority Representation	BEC	By December 2027	Section 5.3
Strengthen Polling Official Capacity	BEC	Before Local Government Election	Section 5.5, Definition Box
Build Trust Through Community Engagement	BEC, Law Enforcement, Ministry of CHT Affairs, CSOs	Before Local Government Election	Sections 5.6, 6.3
Improve Data Collection on Minority Participation	BEC	By December 2027	Sections 4.3, 5.6
Ensure Observer Access to All Electoral Phases	BEC	Before Local Government Election	Section 5.5

8. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Complete Register of Minority Candidates, 2026 Parliamentary Election¹⁸

#	Candidate Name	Political Party	Constituency	Division	Gender	Community	Notes
01	Gayeshwar Chandra Roy	BNP	Dhaka-3	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	Elected
02	Nitai Roy Chowdhury	BNP	Magura-2	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	Elected
03	Kapil Krishna Mondal	BNP	Bagerhat-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
04	Somnath De	BNP	Bagerhat-4	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
05	Dipen Dewan	BNP	Rangamati	CHT	Male	Buddhist (Chakma)	Elected
06	Saching Prue	BNP	Bandarban	CHT	Male	Buddhist (Marma)	Elected
07	Krishna Nandi	Jamaat-e-Islami	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
08	Preetam Das	NCP	Moulvibazar-4	Sylhet	Male	Hindu	–
09	Nimai Chandra Roy	CPB	Lalmonirhat-2	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
10	Madhusudan Roy	CPB	Lalmonirhat-3	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
11	Shipon Kumar Ravidas	CPB	Bogra-5	Rajshahi	Male	Hindu (Dalit)	Dalit
12	Kishore Kumar Roy	CPB	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
13	Chitta Ranjan Goldar	CPB	Khulna-5	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
14	Prashanta Kumar Mondal	CPB	Khulna-6	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
15	Manbendra Dev	CPB	Gazipur-4	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	–
16	Montu Chandra Ghosh	CPB	Narayanganj-5	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	–
17	Nirad Baran Majumdar	CPB	Gopalganj-1	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	–
18	Niranjan Das	CPB	Sunamganj-2	Sylhet	Male	Hindu	–
19	Johar Lal Dutta	CPB	Moulvibazar-3	Sylhet	Male	Hindu	–

¹⁸ Source: RUPSA compilation from Bangladesh Election Commission nomination and candidate data for the 13th Parliamentary Election, 2026, cross-checked against party and constituency-level records.

#	Candidate Name	Political Party	Constituency	Division	Gender	Community	Notes
20	Amrit Kumar Roy	CPB	Dinajpur-3	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
21	Mihir Kumar Ghosh	CPB	Gaibandha-2	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
22	Sri Nirmal	CPB	Gaibandha-5	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
23	Tridip Kumar Saha	CPB	Dhaka-8	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	–
24	Kallol Banik	CPB	Dhaka-12	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	–
25	Pramod Baran Barua	CPB	Chattogram-7	Chattogram	Male	Buddhist	–
26	Kalipada Sarkar	BSD	Naogaon-3	Rajshahi	Male	Hindu	–
27	Shampa Basu	BSD	Magura-1	Khulna	Female	Hindu	–
28	Janardan Dutta	BSD	Khulna-3	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
29	Monisha Chakraborty	BSD	Barishal-5	Barishal	Female	Hindu	–
30	Pronob Jyoti Pal	BSD	Sylhet-1	Sylhet	Male	Hindu	–
31	Milan Krishna Mondal	BSD	Lakshmipur-4	Chattogram	Male	Hindu	–
32	Pragati Barman Toma	BASAD (Marxist)	Rangpur-4	Rangpur	Female	Hindu	–
33	Parmananda Das	BASAD (Marxist)	Gaibandha-1	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
34	Shekhar Kumar Roy	BASAD (Marxist)	Mymensingh-4	Mymensingh	Male	Hindu	–
35	Seema Dutta	BASAD (Marxist)	Dhaka-7	Dhaka	Female	Hindu	–
36	Sanjay Kanta Das	BASAD (Marxist)	Sylhet-1	Sylhet	Male	Hindu	–
37	Bitul Chandra Talukdar	BASAD (Marxist)	Noakhali-4	Chattogram	Male	Hindu	–
38	Deepa Majumdar	BASAD (Marxist)	Chattogram-11	Chattogram	Female	Hindu	–
39	Prosenjit Dutta	JSD	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
40	Gautam Chandra Shil	Bangladesh Jasad	Patuakhali-1	Barishal	Male	Hindu	–
41	Barua Manojit Dhiman	Bangladesh Jasad	Cumilla-1	Chattogram	Male	Buddhist	–
42	Champa Rani Sarkar	Biplobi Workers Party	Netrokona-4	Mymensingh	Female	Hindu	–
43	Jui Chakma	Biplobi Workers Party	Rangamati	CHT	Female	Buddhist (Chakma)	Ethnic
44	Sukriti Kumar Mondal	BMJP	Jashore-4	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
45	Kamala Kanta Roy	BMJP	Thakurgaon-3	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
46	Tarun Kumar Ghosh	BMJP	Kushtia-4	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
47	Probir Gopal Roy	BMJP	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
48	Mrinmoy Kanti Das	BMJP	Faridpur-1	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	–
49	Ushyepu Marma	BMJP	Khagrachhari	CHT	Male	Buddhist (Marma)	Ethnic
50	Bahni Bapari	Jatiya Party	Dhaka-10	Dhaka	Female	Hindu	–
51	Sajan Kumar Mistri	Jatiya Party	Bagerhat-4	Khulna	Male	Hindu	–
52	Mithila Roza	Jatiya Party	Khagrachhari	CHT	Female	Buddhist (Tanchangya)	Ethnic
53	Ashok Talukdar	Jatiya Party	Rangamati	CHT	Male	Hindu	–
54	Dipak Kumar Roy	Ganasanghati Andolon	Lalmonirhat-3	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	–
55	Anjan Das	Ganasanghati Andolon	Narayanganj-3	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	–
56	Ranjit Kumar Bardai	Ganadhikar Parishad	Barishal-2	Barishal	Male	Hindu	–

#	Candidate Name	Political Party	Constituency	Division	Gender	Community	Notes
57	Dinmoy Roza	Ganadhikar Parishad	Khagrachhari	CHT	Male	Buddhist (Tanchangya)	<i>Ethnic</i>
58	Dulal Chandra Biswas	Gonoforum	Gopalganj-3	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	—
59	Ujjal Bhaumik	Gonoforum	Chattogram-11	Chattogram	Male	Hindu	—
60	Raghunath Chandra Roy	Zaker Party	Dinajpur-1	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	—
61	Sunil Shubho Roy	Bangladesh Islami Front	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	—
62	Nitai Chakraborty	Bangladesh Supreme Party	Madaripur-3	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	—
63	Ujjal Chandra Roy	Bangladesh Congress	Rangpur-4	Rangpur	Male	Hindu	—
64	Subrata Mondal	Bangladesh Samadhikar Party	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	—
65	Subal Chandra Majumdar	Bangladesh Kalyan Party	Madaripur-2	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	—
66	Jagdish Barua	Bangladesh Labor Party	Cox's Bazar-3	Chattogram	Male	Buddhist	—
67	Sajal Kumar Kar	Bangladesh Cultural Mukti Jote	Cumilla-7	Chattogram	Male	Hindu	—
68	Gobinda Chandra Pramanik	Independent	Gopalganj-3	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	—
69	Sukesh Saha Anand	Independent	Narail-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	—
70	Achintya Kumar Mondal	Independent	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	—
71	Govind Halder	Independent	Khulna-1	Khulna	Male	Hindu	—
72	Jeet Barua	Independent	Gazipur-2	Dhaka	Male	Buddhist	—
73	Utpal Biswas	Independent	Gopalganj-2	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	—
74	Milton Baidya	Independent	Madaripur-2	Dhaka	Male	Hindu	—
75	S N Tarun De	Independent	Brahmanbaria-2	Chattogram	Male	Hindu	—
76	Sameeran Dewan	Independent	Khagrachhari	CHT	Male	Buddhist (Chakma)	<i>Ethnic</i>
77	Dharm Jyoti Chakma	Independent	Khagrachhari	CHT	Male	Buddhist (Chakma)	<i>Ethnic</i>
78	Jirun Tripura	Independent	Khagrachhari	CHT	Female	Hindu (Tripura)	<i>Ethnic</i>
79	Pahela Chakma	Independent	Rangamati	CHT	Male	Buddhist (Chakma)	<i>Ethnic</i>