

6. July National Charter – International Relations

Yunus announces 'birth of new Bangladesh' with signing of July Charter. Bangladesh's "July National Charter," initiated by Dr. Muhammad Yunus, seeks to constitutionally recognize the 2024 student-led uprising and implement comprehensive political, administrative, and electoral reforms for a more democratic and inclusive governance system. Despite broad objectives like limiting executive power, strengthening Parliament, and promoting inclusivity, its acceptance faces challenges due to student boycotts and exclusion of the former ruling party.

1. Background and Context

Bangladesh adopted the "July National Charter", also called the July Declaration, a political reform initiative spearheaded by Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus. The charter is a proposed constitutional document aimed at reshaping the country's governance system. It seeks to grant official recognition to the 2024 student-led uprising and establish a roadmap toward a more democratic, accountable, and inclusive state, termed the "Second Republic." The Charter's origins trace back to mass protests in July 2024.

2. Trigger of the Uprising

Initial agitation led by Students Against Discrimination (SAD) against job quota policies. Protests escalated into a nationwide movement against authoritarian practices of the Awami League government. Consequence – Resignation and flight of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024. Formation of an interim government led by Dr. Muhammad Yunus.

3. Objectives of the July Charter

The National Consensus Commission, established by Dr. Yunus, drafted the charter with the following core objectives –

- Constitutional Recognition** – Legalize the July Uprising as a popular democratic revolution.
- National Unification** – Promote anti-fascism, democratic resurgence, and inclusive governance.
- Comprehensive State Reform** – Establish frameworks for constitutional, judicial, administrative, and electoral reforms.

4. Key Features and Reform Proposals

The charter contains over 80 reform proposals with a seven-point implementation commitment, major ones include –

- Limiting Executive Power** – Introduce a two-term limit for the office of the Prime Minister.
- Strengthening Parliament** – Propose a bicameral legislature (Lower House + Upper House/Senate). Amend rules to allow Members of Parliament (MPs) more freedom to vote against party lines.
- Ensuring Electoral Integrity** – Restore the neutral caretaker government system to oversee elections.
- Promoting Inclusivity** – Formally recognize Bangladesh as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation.
- Indemnifying Protestors** – Grant legal protection to "July fighters" who participated in the 2024 uprising.

5. Controversies Surrounding the Charter

Issue	Details	Impact
Boycott by Student Leaders (NCP)	The NCP, formed by July Uprising student leaders and initially backed by Dr. Yunus, rejected the charter, citing lack of legal basis.	Hinders charter's legitimacy and national acceptance.
Exclusion of the Awami League	Former ruling party excluded from consensus talks; its leaders were jailed or exiled by interim government.	Threatens sustainability and political acceptance of the charter.

6. Way Forward and Conclusion

Despite broad support, the charter faces challenges due to student boycotts and exclusion of a key political party. Ratification via referendum or parliamentary approval is vital for achieving long-term political reform in Bangladesh. If fully implemented, the July Charter could lead to –

- Democratic consolidation

2. Checks on executive overreach
3. Inclusive Governance
4. Electoral integrity and political accountability

Source - [https - //www.thehindu.com/news/international/yunus-announces-birth-of-new-bangladesh-with-signing-of-july-charter/article70176056.ece#google_vignette](https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/yunus-announces-birth-of-new-bangladesh-with-signing-of-july-charter/article70176056.ece#google_vignette)

