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Bangladesh

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This article is about the People's Republic of Bangladesh. For other uses, see [Bangladesh \(disambiguation\)](#).

People's Republic of Bangladesh



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ (Bengali)

Ga apraj tantr B l d a



Flag



Emblem

Anthem: "[Amar Sonar Bangla](#)" (Bengali)

"My Golden Bengal"

Sorry, your browser either has JavaScript disabled or does not have any supported player. You can [download the clip](#) or [download a player](#) to play the clip in your browser.

March: "[Notuner Gaan](#)"

"The Song of Youth"^[1]

Government Seal of Bangladesh





Capital and largest city	Dhaka
Official language and national language	Bengali ^[2]
Ethnic groups	98% Bengalis ^[3] 2% Minorities Chakmas Biharis Marmas Santhals Mros Tanchangyas Bawms Tripuris Khumis Kukis Garos Bisnupriya Manipuris Indians Chinese
Religion	86.6% Islam 12.1% Hinduism 0.6% Buddhism 0.4% Christianity 0.3% Others ^[3]
Demonym	Bangladeshi
Government	Unitary parliamentary republic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• President Abdul Hamid• Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina• House Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury• Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha
Legislature	Jatiya Sangsad
Formation and independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partition of Bengal and end of the British Raj 14–15 August 1947• Independence declared from Pakistan 26 March 1971

near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. The country's maritime territory in the [Bay of Bengal](#) is roughly equal to the size of its land area.^[10] Bangladesh is the world's [eighth most populous country](#). [Dhaka](#) is its capital and largest city, followed by [Chittagong](#) which has the country's largest port.

Bangladesh forms the largest and eastern part of the [Bengal](#) region.^[11] [Bangladeshis](#) include people of different ethnic groups and religions. [Bengalis](#), who speak the official [Bengali](#) language, make up 98% of the population.^{[2][3]} The politically dominant [Bengali Muslims](#) make the nation the world's third largest [Muslim-majority country](#). Most of Bangladesh is covered by the [Bengal delta](#), the largest delta on Earth. The country has 700 rivers and 8,046 km (5000 miles) of inland waterways. [Highlands](#) with evergreen forests are found in the northeastern and southeastern regions of the country. Bangladesh has many islands and a coral reef. It is home to the [Sundarbans](#), the largest mangrove forest in the world. The country's [biodiversity](#) includes a vast array of plant and wildlife, including critically endangered [Bengal tigers](#), the national animal.

The Greeks and Romans identified the region as [Gangaridai](#), a powerful kingdom of the historical [subcontinent](#), in the 3rd century BCE. Archaeological research has unearthed several ancient cities in Bangladesh, which had international trade links for millennia.^[12] The [Bengal Sultanate](#) and [Mughal Bengal](#) transformed the region into a cosmopolitan [Islamic](#) imperial power between the 14th and 18th centuries. The region was home to many principalities which had inland [naval](#) prowess.^{[13][14]} It was also a notable center of the worldwide [muslin](#) and silk trade. As part of [British India](#), the region was influenced by the Bengali renaissance and played an important role in anti colonial movements. The [Partition of British India](#) made East Bengal a part of the [Dominion of Pakistan](#); and was renamed as [East Pakistan](#). The region witnessed the [Bengali Language Movement](#) in 1952 and the [Bangladesh Liberation War](#) in 1971. After independence, a [parliamentary republic](#) was established. A [presidential government](#) was in place between 1975 and 1990, followed by a return to parliamentary democracy. The country has also been affected by poverty, natural disasters, hunger, [dominant party systems](#) and [military coups](#).

Bangladesh is a [middle power](#) and a major [developing nation](#). Within South Asia, the country ranks first in gender equality, second in foreign exchange earnings and third in life expectancy and peacefulness. Listed as one of the [Next Eleven](#), its economy ranks [46th](#) in terms of nominal GDP and [29th](#) in terms of PPP. It is one of the [largest textile exporters](#) in the world. Its major trading partners are the [European Union](#), the [United States](#), [China](#), [India](#), [Japan](#), [Malaysia](#) and [Singapore](#). With its strategically vital location between Southern, Eastern and Southeast Asia, Bangladesh is an important promoter of regional connectivity and cooperation. It is a founding member of [SAARC](#), [BIMSTEC](#), the [Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation](#) and the [Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal Initiative](#). It is also a member of the [Commonwealth of Nations](#), the [Developing 8 Countries](#), the [OIC](#), the [Non Aligned Movement](#), the [Group of 77](#) and the [World Trade Organization](#). Bangladesh is one of the largest contributors of [United Nations peacekeeping forces](#).

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Etymology

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The name *Bangladesh* was originally written as two words, *Bangla Desh*. Starting in the 1950s, Bengali nationalists used the term in political rallies in [East Pakistan](#). The term *Bangla* is a major name for both the [Bengal](#) region and the [Bengali language](#). The earliest references to the term date to the [Nesari plate](#) in 805 AD. The term

"Vangaladesa" is found in South Indian records in the 11th century.^{[15][16][17]}

The term gained official status during the [Sultanate of Bengal](#) in the 14th century.^{[18][19]} [Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah](#) proclaimed himself as the first "[Shah](#) of Bangala" in 1342.^[18] The word *Bangla* became the most common name for the region during the Islamic period. The [Portuguese](#) referred to the region as *Bengala* in the 16th century.^[20]

The origins of the term *Bangla* are unclear, with theories pointing to a [Bronze Age proto-Dravidian](#) tribe,^[21] the [Austrian](#) word "Bonga" (Sun god),^[22] and the Iron Age [Vanga Kingdom](#).^[22] The Indo-Aryan suffix *Desh* is derived from the Sanskrit word *de ha*, which means "land" or "country". Hence, the name *Bangladesh* means "Land of Bengal" or "Country of Bengal".^{[15][16][17]}

History

Main article: [History of Bangladesh](#)

Ancient and classical Bengal

[Stone age](#) tools found in the Greater Bengal region indicate human habitation for over 20,000 years.^[23] Remnants of [Copper Age](#) settlements date back 4,000 years.^[23]

Ancient Bengal was settled by [Austroasiatics](#), [Tibeto-Burmans](#), [Dravidians](#) and [Indo-Aryans](#) in consecutive waves of migration.^{[24][25]} Major urban settlements formed during the [Iron Age](#) in the middle of the [first millennium BCE](#),^[26] when the [Northern Black Polished Ware](#) culture developed in the [Indian subcontinent](#).^[27] In 1879, [Sir Alexander Cunningham](#) identified the archaeological ruins of [Mahasthangarh](#) as the ancient city of [Pundranagara](#), the capital of the [Pundra Kingdom](#)

File:Narapatir Dhap, Vasu Bihar.jpg

[Mahasthangarh](#) is the site of the oldest urban center in Bangladesh, dating back to the [first millennium BCE](#)

File:Shalvan Vihara, Mainamati 10 September 2016 32.jpg

[Mainamati](#) is an archaeological site dating back to the first millennium CE

File:Naogaon Paharpur 11Oct12 IMG 3656.jpg

mentioned in the *Rigveda*.^{[28][29]}

The Paharpur ruins, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

The **Wari-Bateshwar ruins** are regarded by archaeologists as the capital of an ancient **janapada**, one of the earliest city states in the subcontinent.^[30] An indigenous currency of silver punched marked coins dating between 600 BCE and 400 BCE has been found at the site.^[30] **Excavations** of glass beads suggest the city had trading links with Southeast Asia and the **Roman world**.^[31]

Greek and Roman records of the ancient **Gangaridai Kingdom**, which according to legend deterred the invasion of **Alexander the Great**, are linked to the fort city in Wari-Bateshwar.^[30] The site is also identified with the prosperous trading center of *Souanagoura* mentioned in **Ptolemy's world map**.^[31] Roman geographers noted the existence of a large and important **seaport** in southeastern Bengal, corresponding to the modern-day **Chittagong** region.^[32]

The legendary **Vanga Kingdom** is mentioned in the Indian epic *Mahabharata* covering the region of Bangladesh. It was described as a **seafaring** nation of South Asia. According to **Sinhalese** chronicles, the Bengali **Prince Vijaya** led a maritime expedition to **Sri Lanka**, conquering the island and establishing its first recorded kingdom.^[33] The Bengali people also embarked on overseas colonization in Southeast Asia, including in modern-day **Malaysia** and **Indonesia**.^[34]

Bengal was ruled by the **Mauryan Empire** in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. With their bastions in the Bengal and **Bihar** regions (collectively known as **Magadha**), the Mauryans built the first **geographically extensive Iron Age** empire in **Ancient India**. They promoted **Jainism** and **Buddhism**. The empire reached its peak under emperor **Ashoka**. They were eventually succeeded by the **Gupta Empire** in the 3rd century. According to historian **H. C. Roychowdhury**, the Gupta dynasty **originated** in the **Varendra** region in Bangladesh, corresponding to the modern-day **Rajshahi** and **Rangpur** divisions.^[35] The Gupta era saw the invention of **chess**, the concept of **zero**, the **theory of Earth orbiting the Sun**, the study of **solar** and **lunar** eclipses and the flourishing of **Sanskrit literature** and **drama**.^{[36][37]}

In **classical antiquity**, Bengal was divided between various kingdoms. The **Pala Empire** stood out as the largest Bengali state

established in ancient history, with an empire covering most of the north Indian subcontinent at its height in the 9th century. The Palas were devout [Mahayana Buddhists](#). They strongly patronized art, architecture and education, giving rise to the Pala School of Painting and Sculptural Art,^[38] the [Somapura Mahavihara](#) and the universities of [Nalanda](#) and [Vikramshila](#). The proto-[Bengali language](#) emerged under Pala rule. In the 11th-century, the resurgent [Hindu Sena dynasty](#) gained power. The Senas were staunch promoters of [Brahmanical Hinduism](#) and laid the foundation of Bengali Hinduism. They patronized their own school of [Hindu art](#) taking inspiration from their predecessors.^[39] The Senas consolidated the [caste system](#) in Bengal.^[40] Bengal was also a junction of the Southwestern [Silk Road](#).^[41]

Islamic Bengal



Minaret of the 15th-century [Sixty Dome Mosque](#), listed by UNESCO as a [World Heritage Site](#)

[Islam](#) arrived on the shores of Bengal in the late first millennium, brought largely by missionaries, [Sufis](#) and merchants from the Middle East. Some experts have suggested that early Muslims, including [Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas](#) (an uncle of the [Prophet Muhammad](#)),

used Bengal as a transit point to travel to China on the Southern

[File:Akbar prays after Bengal victory.jpg](#)

Silk Road.^[43] The excavation of **Abbasid Caliphate** coins in Bangladesh indicate a strong trade network during the **House of Wisdom** Era in **Baghdad**, when Arab scientists absorbed pre-Islamic Indian and **Greek** discoveries.^[44] This gave rise to the system of Indo-Arabic numerals. Writing in 1154, **Al-Idrisi** noted a busy shipping route

between Chittagong and **Basra**.^[45]

Subsequent Muslim conquest absorbed the culture and achievements of pre-Islamic Bengali civilization in the new

Islamic **polity**.^[46] Muslims adopted indigenous customs and traditions, including dress, food, and way of life. This included the wearing of the **sari**, **bindu**, and **bangles** by Muslim women; and art forms in music, dance, and theater.^[46] Muslim rule reinforced the process of conversion through the construction of mosques, **madrastas** and **Sufi Khanqahs**.^[47]

The Islamic conquest of Bengal began when **Bakhtiar Khilji** of the **Delhi Sultanate** conquered northern and western Bengal in 1204.^[48] The Delhi Sultanate gradually annexed the whole of Bengal over the next century. By the 14th century, an independent **Bengal Sultanate** was established.^[49] The rulers of the **Turkic**^{[50][51][52]} **Ilyas Shahi dynasty** built the **largest mosque in South Asia**, and cultivated strong diplomatic and commercial ties with **Ming China**.^{[53][54]}

The Mughal Emperor **Akbar the Great** celebrates a naval victory in Bengal in 1576. The **Bengali calendar** was developed based on the dates of the **Prophet Muhammad's Hegira** and the coronation of Akbar.^[42]

File:Sultanate of Bengal.png

The **Bengal Sultanate**



[Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah](#) was the first Bengali convert on the throne.^[49] The Bengal Sultanate was noted for its [cultural pluralism](#). [Muslims](#), [Hindus](#) and [Buddhists](#) jointly formed its civil-military services. The [Hussain Shahi sultans](#) promoted the development of [Bengali literature](#).^[55] It brought [Arakan](#) under its [suzerainty](#) for 100 years.^[56]

The sultanate was visited by numerous world explorers, including [Niccolò de' Conti](#) of [Venice](#), [Ibn Battuta](#) of [Morocco](#) and [Admiral Zheng He](#) of China. However, by the 16th century, the Bengal Sultanate began to disintegrate. The [Sur Empire](#) overran Bengal in 1532 and built the [Grand Trunk Road](#). [Hindu Rajas](#) and the [Baro-Bhuyan zamindars](#) gained control of large parts of the region, especially in the fertile [Bhati](#) zone. [Isa Khan](#) was the [Rajput](#) leader of the Baro-Bhuyans based in [Sonargaon](#).^[57]

In the late 16th-century, the [Mughal Empire](#) led by [Akbar the Great](#) began conquering the Bengal delta after the [Battle of Tukaroi](#),^[58] where he defeated the Bengal Sultanate's last rulers, the [Karrani dynasty](#). [Dhaka](#) was established as the Mughal provincial capital in 1608. The Mughals faced stiff resistance from the Baro-Bhuyans, [Afghan warlords](#) and [zamindars](#), but were ultimately successful in conquering the whole of Bengal by 1666, when the [Portuguese](#) and [Arakanese](#) were expelled from [Chittagong](#). Mughal rule ushered economic prosperity, agrarian reform and flourishing external trade, particularly in [muslin](#) and silk textiles. Mughal Viceroyalty promoted agricultural expansion and turned Bengal into the rice basket of the Indian subcontinent. The [Sufis](#) gained increasing prominence. The [Baul](#) movement, inspired by Sufism, also emerged under Mughal rule. The Bengali ethnic identity further crystallized during this period, and the region's inhabitants were given sufficient autonomy to cultivate their own customs and literature. The entire region was brought under a stable-long lasting administration.^[53]

By the 18th century, the [Bengal Subah](#) included the dominions of Bengal proper, [Bihar](#) and [Orissa](#). It was the wealthiest part of the subcontinent.^[59] It generated 50% of Mughal GDP.^[60] Its towns and cities were filled with Eurasian traders. [Dhaka](#) became an important center of Mughal administration. The [Nawabs of Bengal](#) established an independent [principality](#) in 1717, with their

headquarters in [Murshidabad](#). The Nawabs granted increasing concessions to European trading powers. Matters reached a climax in 1757, when Nawab [Siraj-ud-Daulah](#) captured the British base at [Fort William](#), in an effort to stem the rising influence of the [East India Company](#). Siraj-ud-Daulah was betrayed by his general [Mir Jafar](#), who helped [Robert Clive](#) defeat the last independent Nawab at the [Battle of Plassey](#) on 23 June 1757.^{[61][62]}

British Bengal

[File:India religion map 1909 en.jpg](#)

An [Imperial Gazetteer of India](#) map in 1909 shows prevailing majority religions in [British India](#). Muslim majority areas are colored in green, including a part of [Eastern Bengal and Assam](#) that corresponds to modern-day Bangladesh.

[File:No. 15 Curb on Wooden pontoons Before "Putting Afloat" \(22589074256\).jpg](#)

The construction of [Hardinge Bridge](#) in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 1912

[File:Bengal PMs.png](#)

The statesmen pictured, including [A. K. Fazlul Huq](#), [Sir Khawaja Nazimuddin](#) and [H. S. Suhrawardy](#), served as the [Prime Minister of Bengal](#) in the British Raj

The defeat of the last independent Nawab of Bengal at the [Battle of Plassey](#) ushered the [rule of the British East India Company](#) in 1757. The British displaced the ruling Muslim class of Bengal.^[63] The [Bengal Presidency](#) was established in 1765, with [Calcutta](#) as its capital. The [Permanent Settlement](#) created a feudal system. A number of deadly famines struck the region.

The [Mutiny of 1857](#) was initiated in the Presidency of Bengal, with major revolts by the [Bengal Army](#) in [Dacca](#), [Calcutta](#) and [Chittagong](#).^{[64][65]} Eastern Bengal witnessed numerous native rebellions, including the [Faraizi Movement](#) by [Haji Shariatullah](#), the activities of [Titumir](#), the [Chittagong armoury raid](#) and revolutionary formations such as the [Anushilan Samiti](#). The [Bengal Renaissance](#) flowered as a result of educational and cultural institutions being established across the region, especially in East Bengal and the imperial colonial capital [Calcutta](#). The Presidency of Bengal became the cradle of modern South Asian political and artistic expression. It included the notable contributions of [Raja](#)

Ram Mohan Roy, Mir Mosharrif Hossain, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah, Rabindranath Tagore, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Begum Rokeya. Gopal Krishna Gokhle, the mentor of Mahatma Gandhi, remarked that "what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow".^[66]

During British rule, East Bengal developed a plantation economy centred on the jute trade and tea production. Its share in world jute supply peaked in the early 20th century, at over 80%.^[67] The Eastern Bengal Railway and the Assam Bengal Railway served as important trade routes, connecting the Port of Chittagong with a large hinterland.

As a result of growing demands for educational development in East Bengal, the British partitioned Bengal in 1905 and created the administrative division of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Based in Dacca, with Shillong as the summer capital and Chittagong as the chief port, the new province covered much of the northeastern subcontinent. The All India Muslim League was formed in Dacca in 1906 and emerged as the standard bearer of Muslims in British India. The partition of Bengal outraged nationalist Hindus and anti-British Muslims, leading to the Swadeshi movement by the Indian National Congress. The partition was annulled in 1911 after a long civil disobedience campaign by the Congress. The Indian Independence Movement enjoyed strong momentum in the Bengal region, including the constitutional struggle for the rights of Muslim minorities.

The Freedom of Intellect Movement thrived in the University of Dacca. By the 1930s, the Krishak Praja Party led by A. K. Fazlul Huq and the Swaraj Party led by C. R. Das came to represent the new Bengali middle class. Huq became the Prime Minister of Bengal in 1937. With the breakdown of Hindu-Muslim unity in the British Raj, Huq allied with the Muslim League to present the Lahore Resolution in 1940, which envisioned independent states in the eastern and northwestern subcontinent.

During the Second World War, the Japanese Air Force conducted air raids in Chittagong in 1942, displacing several thousand people.^{[68][69]} The war-induced Bengal famine of 1943 claimed the lives of over a million people. Allied forces were stationed in bases

across East Bengal in support of the [Burma Campaign](#). [Axis](#)-allied [Subhash Chandra Bose](#) also had a significant following in East Bengal.

The [Muslim League](#) formed a parliamentary government in Bengal in 1943, with Sir [Khawaja Nazimuddin](#) and later [H. S. Suhrawardy](#) as its premiers. At the [Indian provincial elections, 1946](#), the decisive victory of the Bengal Muslim League set the course for the [Partition of British India](#) and the creation of the [Dominion of Pakistan](#) on 14 August 1947. [Assam](#) was partitioned in order to allow Bengali-speaking [Sylhet](#) to join [East Bengal](#). There was also an unsuccessful attempt to form a [United Bengal](#). The [Radcliffe Line](#) divided Bengal on religious grounds, ceding Hindu-majority districts to the Indian dominion, and making Muslim-majority districts the eastern wing of Pakistan.

Eastern wing of Pakistan

Main articles: [East Bengal](#) and [East Pakistan](#)

[East Bengal](#) was the most populous province in the new [Pakistani federation](#) led by [Governor General Muhammad Ali Jinnah](#) in 1947, with [Dacca](#) as the provincial capital.^[70] While the state of [Pakistan](#) was

created as a homeland for [Muslims](#) of the former [British Raj](#), East Bengal was also Pakistan's most cosmopolitan province, being home to peoples of different faiths, cultures and ethnic groups. In 1950, [land reform](#) was accomplished in East Bengal with the



The [Dominion of Pakistan](#) in 1947, with [East Bengal](#) as its eastern wing

abolition of the [permanent settlement](#) and the feudal [zamindari](#) system.^[71]

The successful [Bengali Language Movement](#) in 1952 was the first sign of friction with [West Pakistan](#).^[72] The [One Unit](#) scheme renamed the province as [East Pakistan](#) in 1955. The [Awami League](#) emerged as the political voice of the Bengali-speaking population,^[73] with its leader [H. S. Suhrawardy](#) becoming [Prime Minister of Pakistan](#) in 1956. He was ousted after only a year in office due to tensions with West Pakistan's establishment and bureaucracy.^[74]

The [1956 Constitution](#) ended [dominion status](#) with [Queen Elizabeth II](#) as the last monarch of the country. Dissatisfaction with the central government increased over economic and cultural issues. The provincial government of [A. K. Fazlul Huq](#) was dismissed on charges of inciting secession.^[75] In 1957, the radical left-wing populist leader [Maulana Bhashani](#) warned that the eastern wing would *bid farewell* to Pakistan.^[76]

The [first Pakistani military coup](#) ushered the dictatorship of [Ayub Khan](#). In 1962, Dacca was designated as the legislative capital of Pakistan in an appeasement of growing Bengali



Women students marching in defiance of the [Section 144](#) prohibition on assembly, during the [Bengali Language Movement](#)

political nationalism.^[77] Khan's government also constructed the [Kaptai Dam](#) which controversially displaced the [Chakma population](#) from their indigenous homeland in the [Chittagong Hill Tracts](#).^[78] During the [1965 presidential election](#), [Fatima Jinnah](#) failed to defeat Field Marshal Ayub Khan despite strong support in East Pakistan.^[79]

According to senior international bureaucrats in the [World Bank](#), Pakistan applied extensive [economic discrimination](#) against the eastern wing, including higher government spending on West Pakistan, financial transfers from East to West and the use of the East's foreign exchange surpluses to finance the West's imports.^[80] This was despite the fact that East Pakistan generated 70%^[81] of Pakistan's export earnings with [jute](#) and tea.^[80] East Pakistani intellectuals crafted the [Six Points](#) which called for greater regional [autonomy](#), [free trade](#) and economic independence. The Six Points were championed by Awami League President [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#) in 1966, leading to his arrest by the government of President Field Marshal Ayub Khan on charges of treason. Rahman was released during the [1969 popular uprising](#) which ousted President Khan from power.

Ethnic and linguistic discrimination was abundant in Pakistan's civil and military services, in which Bengalis were hugely under-represented. In Pakistan's central government, only 15% of offices were occupied by East Pakistanis.^[82] They formed only 10% of the military.^[83] Cultural discrimination also prevailed, causing the eastern wing to forge a distinct political identity.^[84] Pakistan imposed bans on Bengali literature and music in state media, including the works of Nobel laureate [Rabindranath Tagore](#).^[85] In 1970, a massive [cyclone](#) devastated the coast of East Pakistan killing up to half a million people.^[86] The central government was criticized for its poor response.^[87] After the elections of December 1970, calls for the independence of Bangladesh became stronger.^[88]

Genocide and war of independence

See also: [1971 Bangladesh genocide and Bangladesh Liberation War](#)

The fury of the Bengali population was compounded when [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#) who led Awami League to win a majority in Parliament in the 1970 elections, was blocked from taking office.^[89] A massive [civil disobedience](#) movement erupted

File:Concert For Bangladesh Cover.jpg

A DVD reissue cover of the [Concert for Bangladesh](#) held in 1971, which was the first [benefit concert](#) in history and raised funds for refugees fleeing the [Bangladesh genocide](#)

across East Pakistan, with open calls for independence.^[90] Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressed a [huge pro-independence rally](#) in Dacca on 7 March 1971. The [Bangladeshi flag](#) was hoisted for the first time on 23 March 1971, Pakistan's [Republic Day](#).^[91]

On 26 March 1971, the Pakistani [military junta](#)^[92] led by [Yahya Khan](#) launched [Operation Searchlight](#), a sustained military assault on East Pakistan,^{[93][94]} and detained the [Prime Minister-elect](#)^{[95][96]} under military custody.^[97] The [Pakistan Army](#), with the help of supporting militias, massacred Bengali [students](#), [intellectuals](#), politicians, civil servants and military defectors during the [1971 Bangladesh genocide](#).^[98] Several million refugees fled to neighboring [India](#). Estimates for those killed throughout the war range between 300,000 and 3 million.^[99]

Global public opinion turned against Pakistan as news of atrocities spread,^[100] with the Bangladesh Movement gaining support from prominent political and cultural figures in the West, including [Ted Kennedy](#), [George Harrison](#), [Bob Dylan](#), [Joan Baez](#), [Victoria Ocampo](#) and [Andre Malraux](#).^{[101][102][103][104]} The [Concert for Bangla Desh](#) was held at [Madison Square Garden](#) in New York City to raise funds for Bangladeshi refugees. It was the first major [benefit concert](#) in history and was organized by Beatles star George Harrison and Indian Bengali sitarist [Ravi Shankar](#).^[105]

During the [liberation war](#), Bengali nationalists announced a [declaration of independence](#) and formed the [Mukti Bahini](#) (the Bangladeshi National Liberation Army). The [Provisional Government of Bangladesh](#) operated in exile from [Calcutta](#), India. Led by General [M. A. G. Osmani](#) and eleven [Sector Commanders](#), the Mukti Bahini held the Bengali countryside during the war, and waged wide-scale [guerrilla operations](#) against Pakistani forces. Neighboring [India](#) and its leader [Indira Gandhi](#), a longstanding nemesis of Pakistan, provided crucial support to the Bangladesh Forces and intervened in support of the provisional government on 3 December 1971. The [Soviet Union](#) and the United States dispatched naval forces to the Bay of Bengal amid a [Cold War](#) standoff during the [Indo-Pakistani War](#). Lasting for nine months, the entire war ended with the [surrender of Pakistan's military](#) to the Bangladesh-India Allied Forces on 16 December 1971.^{[106][107]}

Under international pressure, Pakistan released Mujib from imprisonment on 8 January 1972, after which he was flown by the [Royal Air Force](#) to a million strong homecoming in Dhaka.^{[108][109]} Indian troops were withdrawn by 12 March 1972, three months after the war ended.^[110]

The cause of Bangladeshi self-determination was widely recognized around the world.^[100] By the time of its admission for UN membership in August 1972, the new state was recognized by 86 countries.^[100] Pakistan recognized Bangladesh in 1974 after pressure from most of the [Muslim world](#).^[111]

Bangladeshi Republic

See also: [History of Bangladesh after independence and Military coups in Bangladesh](#)

After



Bangladesh's founding leader [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#), as Prime Minister, with U.S. President [Gerald Ford](#) at the [Oval Office](#) in 1974

independence, Bangladesh became a [secular democracy](#) and a [republic within the Commonwealth](#). The world's 7th most populous nation at the time was ravaged by wartime devastation and widespread poverty, receiving massive international aid as a result. It joined the [Non-Aligned Movement](#) and the [OIC](#) in 1973, followed by the United Nations in 1974. The Mujib administration signed a 25-year [friendship treaty](#) with [India](#) and was courted by [Western](#) and [Eastern bloc](#) powers. Bangladesh expressed strong solidarity with Arab countries during the [Arab-Israeli War in 1973](#), sending medical teams to [Egypt](#) and [Syria](#).^{[112][113]} Mujib's government faced growing political agitation from left-wing groups, especially the [National Socialist Party](#). [Chakma](#) politician

M. N. Larma protested the lack of recognition for indigenous Chittagong Hill Tracts minorities in the new [constitution](#).^[114] Mujib briefly declared a [state of emergency](#) to maintain law and order.

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh signed [tripartite agreement](#) in 1973 calling for peace and stability in the subcontinent.^[115] A

nationwide [famine](#) occurred in 1974.^[116] In early 1975, Mujib initiated [one party socialist rule](#).

On 15 August 1975, Mujib and most of his family members were [assassinated](#) by mid-level army

officers during a [military coup](#).^[117]

Vice President Khandaker Mushtaq Ahmed was sworn in as President, with most of Mujib's cabinet intact.

Bangladesh was placed under [martial law](#).^[118]

Mushtaq [interned](#) four prominent associates of Mujib, including Bangladesh's first prime minister [Tajuddin Ahmad](#). Two Army uprisings on 3 and 7 November 1975 led to a reorganised structure of power. Between the two coups, the four interned Awami League leaders were [assassinated](#) by army men in Dhaka Central Jail. Mushtaq was replaced by [Justice Abu Sayem](#) as President, while the three chiefs of the armed services become martial law



President [Ziaur Rahman](#) and erstwhile first lady [Khaleda Zia](#) being hosted by the Dutch royal family in 1979.



2006 [Nobel Peace Prize](#) winner [Muhammad Yunus](#) with former Brazilian president [Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva](#)

administrators. A technocrat cabinet was formed with [Moudud Ahmed](#) as Deputy Prime Minister. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to recognize the provisional revolutionary government of South Vietnam after the withdrawal of U.S. forces.^[118]

Lieutenant General [Ziaur Rahman](#) took over the presidency in 1977 when Justice Sayem resigned. In 1979, President Zia reinstated multi-party politics and restored civilian rule. He promoted [free markets](#) and founded the [Bangladesh Nationalist Party](#) (BNP). Zia reoriented Bangladesh's foreign policy, moving away from the Awami League's strong ties with India and Soviet Union, and pursued closer relations with [the West](#).^[119] He opposed the [Soviet invasion of Afghanistan](#). Domestically, Zia faced as many as 21 coup attempts.^[120]

File:[GulshanDhaka.jpg](#)

Dhaka grew into a [metropolitan area](#) with a population of more than 15 million and the world's 3rd most densely populated city

An [insurgency](#) began in the [Chittagong Hill Tracts](#), due to demands by the region's indigenous people for [autonomy](#). The [Bangladesh Army](#) was accused of persecuting the area's diverse ethnic minorities. Zia also advocated the idea of a South Asian regional community, inspired by the formation of [ASEAN](#).^[120] A military crackdown on [Rohingyas](#) in neighboring [Myanmar](#) led to an exodus of several hundred thousand refugees into southeastern Bangladesh.^[115] Zia's rule ended when he was [assassinated](#) by elements of the military in 1981.^[117] He was succeeded by [Abdus Sattar](#), who served in office for less than a year.

Bangladesh's next major ruler was Lieutenant General [Hussain Muhammad Ershad](#). As President, Ershad pursued administrative reforms, including a [devolution](#) scheme which divided the country into [64 districts](#) and [5 divisions](#). Ershad hosted the founding summit of [SAARC](#) in Dhaka in 1985, which brought together 7 South Asian countries, including [India](#), [Pakistan](#), [Nepal](#), [Sri Lanka](#), the [Maldives](#), [Bhutan](#) and Bangladesh, into a landmark regional union.^[121] He also expanded the country's road network and started important projects like the [Jamuna Bridge](#). In 1986, Ershad restored civilian rule and founded the [Jatiya Party](#). Elections were held in 1986 and 1988. Ershad sent Bangladeshi troops to join the US-led coalition in the [Persian Gulf War](#) after a request from [King](#)

Fahd.^[122] Ershad faced a revolt by opposition parties and the public in 1990, which coupled with pressure from Western donors for democratic reforms, forced him to resign on 6 December that year. He handed over power to Justice **Shahabuddin Ahmed**. Ershad was later indicted and convicted on corruption charges.^[115] In 1991, Bangladesh reverted to **parliamentary democracy**. Former first lady **Khaleda Zia** led the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to victory at the **general election in 1991** and became the first female Prime Minister in Bangladeshi history. Zia's finance minister **Saifur Rahman** launched a series of **economic reforms** aimed at liberalizing the Bangladeshi economy, mirroring similar initiatives by **Manmohan Singh** in India in 1991. Prime Minister Zia was forced to implement the **caretaker government** provision in the constitution in 1996 by the opposition.^[123]

At the **next election in 1996**, the **Awami League**, headed by **Sheikh Hasina**, one of Mujib's surviving daughters, returned to power after 21 years. Hasina ended the Chittagong Hill Tracts insurgency after a **peace accord** with **PCJSS** rebels. She also secured a treaty with India on **sharing the water of the Ganges**. Hasina held a **trilateral** economic summit between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1999 and helped establish the **D8 grouping** with **Turkey**.^[123] The **economy** took a downturn with a depletion of foreign exchange reserves.^[124] Hasina also refused to export Bangladesh's natural gas, despite major investment offers from international oil companies. The Awami League lost again to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in the **2001 election**. In her second term as Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia signed a Defence Cooperation Agreement with China.^[125]

The economy picked up steam from 2003, with a GDP growth rate of 6% in spite of the 2005 floods. Zia faced criticism for her alliance with the **Jamaat-e-Islami**, which was accused of war crimes in 1971, and accusations against her son **Tarique Rahman** of corruption. The Awami League waged a series of strikes against the government after an assassination attempt on former premier Sheikh Hasina. Widespread political unrest followed the end of the BNP's tenure in late October 2006. A **caretaker government** led by the pro-BNP President **Iajuddin Ahmed** worked to bring the parties to election within the required ninety days, but was accused by opposition parties of being biased. At the last minute, the Awami League

announced an election boycott.

On 11 January 2007, the [Bangladesh Armed Forces](#) intervened to support both a [state of emergency](#) and a continuing but neutral caretaker government under a newly appointed [Chief Advisor Fakhruddin Ahmed](#), the former governor of the [Bangladesh Bank](#). Ahmed strengthened the [Anti Corruption Commission](#) and launched an anti-graft drive, detaining more than 160 people, including politicians, civil servants, businessmen and two sons of Khaleda Zia. The Awami League won a landslide majority in the [2008 general election](#).^{[126][127]} The BNP boycotted the [general election in 2014](#) due to Sheikh Hasina's cancellation of the caretaker government system.

Bangladesh has significantly reduced poverty since it gained independence, with the poverty rate coming down from 57% in 1990^[128] to 25.6% in 2014.^[129] Per-capita incomes have more than doubled from 1975 levels.^[citation needed] Bangladesh has also achieved successes in [human development](#), including greater [life expectancy](#) than India.^[130] The country continues to face challenges of unstable politics, [climate change](#), religious extremism and [inequality](#).

Geography

Main article: [Geography of Bangladesh](#)

The geography of Bangladesh is divided between three regions. Most of the country is dominated by the fertile [Ganges-Brahmaputra delta](#). The northwest and central parts of the country are formed by the [Madhupur](#) and the [Barind](#) plateaus. The northeast and southeast are home to [evergreen](#) hill ranges. The Ganges delta is formed by the confluence of the Ganges (local name [Padma](#) or *Pôdda*), [Brahmaputra](#) ([Jamuna](#) or *Jomuna*), and [Meghna](#) rivers and their respective tributaries. The Ganges unites with the Jamuna (main channel of the Brahmaputra) and later joins the Meghna, finally flowing into the [Bay of Bengal](#). The [alluvial soil](#) deposited by the rivers when they overflow their banks has created some of the most fertile plains in the world. Bangladesh has 57 [trans-boundary rivers](#), making water issues politically complicated to resolve – in most cases as the lower [riparian](#) state to India.^[131]

Bangladesh is



A map of Bangladesh

predominately rich fertile flat land. Most parts of Bangladesh are less than 12 m (39.4 ft) above sea level, and it is estimated that about 10% of the land would be flooded if the sea level were to rise by 1 m (3.28 ft).^[132] 17% of the country is covered by forests and 12% is covered by hill systems. The country's [haor](#) wetlands are of significant importance to global environmental science.

In southeastern Bangladesh, experiments have been done since the 1960s to 'build with nature'. Construction of cross dams has induced a natural accretion of silt, creating new land. With Dutch funding, the Bangladeshi government began promoting the development of this new land in the late 1970s. The effort has become a multi-agency endeavor, building roads, culverts, embankments, cyclone shelters, toilets and ponds, as well as distributing land to settlers. By fall 2010, the program will have allotted some 27,000 acres (10,927 ha) to 21,000 families.^[133] With an elevation of 1,064 m (3,491 ft), the highest peak of Bangladesh is [Keokradong](#), near the border with [Myanmar](#).

Landscapes of Bangladesh



The fertile Bangladesh Plain seen against the backdrop of the Himalayas

Dahuk (Local Name).jpg

A bird among [water lilies](#) in a [haor](#) wetland



[Keokradong](#), one of the highest peaks in Bangladesh



Boats on the [Cox's Bazar Beach](#), the longest natural beach in the world



[Lawachara National Park](#), a subtropical rainforest in [Sylhet Division](#)



[Sal forests](#) in [Gazipur District](#)

Climate

Main article: [Climate of Bangladesh](#)

Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, Bangladesh's climate is tropical with a mild winter from October to March, and a hot, humid summer from March to June. The country has



Climate change is causing increasing river erosion in Bangladesh, threatening an estimated 20 million people

File:Bangladesh map of Köppen climate classification.svg

Bangladesh map of Köppen climate classification

never recorded an air temperature below 0 °C (32 °F), with a record low of 1.1 °C (34.0 °F) in the north west city of [Dinajpur](#) on 3 February 1905.^[134]

A warm and humid monsoon

season lasts from June to October and supplies most of the country's rainfall. Natural calamities, such as [floods](#), [tropical cyclones](#), [tornadoes](#), and [tidal bores](#) occur almost every year,^[135] combined with the effects of [deforestation](#), [soil degradation](#) and [erosion](#). The [cyclones](#) of 1970 and 1991 were particularly devastating. A [cyclone that struck Bangladesh in 1991](#) killed some 140,000 people.^[136] In September 1998, Bangladesh saw [the most severe flooding](#) in modern world history. As the Brahmaputra, the Ganges and [Meghna](#) spilt over and swallowed 300,000 houses, 9,700 km (6,000 mi) of road and 2,700 km (1,700 mi) of embankment, 1,000 people were killed and 30 million more were made homeless, with 135,000 cattle killed, 50 km² (19 sq mi) of land destroyed and 11,000 km (6,800 mi) of roads damaged or destroyed. Two-thirds of the country was underwater. There were several reasons for the severity of the flooding. Firstly, there were unusually high [monsoon](#) rains. Secondly, the [Himalayas](#) shed off an equally unusually high amount of melt water that year. Thirdly, trees that usually would have intercepted rain water had been cut down for firewood or to make space for animals.^[137]

Bangladesh is now widely recognised to be one of the countries most vulnerable to [climate change](#). Natural hazards that come from increased rainfall, rising sea levels, and tropical cyclones are expected to increase as climate changes, each seriously affecting agriculture, water and food security, human health and shelter. ^[138]

It is believed that in the coming decades the rising sea level alone will create more than 20 million ^[139] [climate refugees](#). ^[140]

Bangladeshi water is contaminated with [arsenic](#) frequently because of the high arsenic contents in the soil. Up to 77 million people are [exposed to toxic arsenic](#) from drinking water. ^{[141][142]}

Bangladesh is prone to [floods](#), tornados and [cyclones](#). ^{[143][144]}

Also, there is evidence that earthquakes pose a threat to the country. Evidence shows that tectonics have caused rivers to shift course suddenly and dramatically. It has been shown that rainy-season flooding in Bangladesh, on the world's largest river delta, can push the underlying crust down by as much as 6 centimetres, and possibly perturb faults. ^[145]

Biodiversity

Main articles: [Wildlife of Bangladesh](#) and [Fauna of Bangladesh](#)

Bangladesh ratified the Rio [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) on 3 May 1994. ^[146]

As of 2014, the country is set to revise its [National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan](#). ^[146]



A [Bengal tiger](#), the national animal, in the Sunderbans 🔍

Bangladesh is located in the [Indomalaya ecozone](#). Its ecology includes a long sea coastline, numerous [rivers and tributaries](#), lakes, [wetlands](#), [evergreen](#) forests, semi evergreen forests, hill forests, moist [deciduous forests](#), freshwater swamp forests and flat



Axis deer in the Sunderbans

land with tall grass. The Bangladesh Plain is famous for its fertile **alluvial** soil which supports extensive cultivation.

The country is

dominated by lush vegetation, with villages often buried in groves of **mango**, **jackfruit**, **bamboo**, **betel nut**, **coconut** and **date palm**.^[147] There are 6000 species of plant life, including 5000 flowering plants.^[148] Water bodies and wetland systems provide a habitat for many aquatic plants. **Water lilies** and **lotuses** grow vividly during the **monsoon**. The country has **50 wildlife sanctuaries**.

Bangladesh is home to much of the **Sundarbans**, the world's largest **mangrove forest**. It covers an area of 6,000 km² in the southwest littoral region. It is divided into three protected sanctuaries- the **South**, **East** and **West** zones. The forest is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The northeastern **Sylhet region** is home to **haor** wetlands, which is a unique ecosystem. It also includes **tropical and subtropical coniferous forests**, a **freshwater swamp forest** and mixed deciduous forests. The southeastern **Chittagong region** covers evergreen and semi evergreen hilly jungles. Central Bangladesh includes the plainland **Sal** forest running along the districts of **Gazipur**, **Tangail** and **Mymensingh**. **St. Martin's Island** is the only **coral reef** in the country.

Bangladesh has an abundance of **wildlife** in its forests, marshes, woodlands and hills.^[147] The vast majority of animals dwell within a habitat of 150,000 km².^[149] The **Bengal tiger**, **clouded leopard**, **saltwater crocodile**, **black panther** and **fishing cat** are among the chief predators in the Sundarbans.^{[150][151]} Northern and eastern Bangladesh is home to the **Asian elephant**, **hoolock gibbon**, **Asian black bear** and **oriental pied hobbill**.^[152]

The **Chital** deer are widely seen in southwestern woodlands. Other

animals include the [black giant squirrel](#), [capped langur](#), [Bengal fox](#), [sambar deer](#), [jungle cat](#), [king cobra](#), [wild boar](#), [mongooses](#), [pangolins](#), [pythons](#) and [water monitors](#). Bangladesh has one of the largest population of [Irrawaddy dolphins](#) and [Ganges dolphins](#). A 2009 census found 6,000 Irrawaddy dolphins inhabiting the littoral rivers of Bangladesh.^[153] The country has numerous species of [amphibians](#) (53), [reptiles](#) (139), [marine reptiles](#) (19) and [marine mammals](#) (5). It has [628 species of birds](#).^[154]

Several animals became extinct in Bangladesh during the last century, including the one horned and two horned [rhinoceros](#) and common [peafowl](#). The human population is concentrated in urban areas, hence limiting deforestation to a certain extent. Rapid urban growth has threatened natural habitats. Though many areas are protected under law, a large portion of Bangladeshi wildlife is threatened by this growth. The [Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act](#) was enacted in 1995. The government has designated several regions as [Ecologically Critical Areas](#), including wetlands, forests and rivers. The [Sundarbans Tiger Project](#) and the [Bangladesh Bear Project](#) are among the key initiatives to strengthen conservation.^[152]

Politics

Main article: [Politics of Bangladesh](#)

Government

Main article: [Government of Bangladesh](#)

The [politics of Bangladesh](#) takes place in the framework of a [multiparty parliamentary representative democracy](#), modeled on the [Westminster system](#) of [unicameral parliamentary government](#).

Traditionally, Bangladesh has been a [two party system](#) since democracy was restored in 1990. However, concerns over the fairness of elections and annulment of the [caretaker government system](#) led to a boycott of the [national election in 2014](#) by major opposition parties. Critics have accused the government of trying

File:Colorful National Parliament House of Bangladesh at Night.jpg

The [National Parliament House](#) in [Dhaka](#) was designed by American architect [Louis Kahn](#).

to turn Bangladesh into a **dominant party state** under the ruling **Awami League**.^[155]

The Bangladeshi state has a **unitary** structure, with the central government in **Dhaka**.

- **Executive:** The **Prime Minister** is the **head of government** and is appointed by the President with the confidence of the majority in parliament. The Prime Minister heads the **Cabinet of Bangladesh** which holds **Executive power**. The **President** is the **head of state** with key ceremonial duties. The President is elected by the parliament for a five-year term. **Sheikh Hasina** has been the Prime Minister of Bangladesh since 2009. **Abdul Hamid** is the current President of Bangladesh.
- **Legislative:** There are 350 **MPs** in the **Jatiyo Sangshad**.^[156] It is headed by the **Speaker** of Parliament, who is second in line to the presidency. The Prime Minister is traditionally the Leader of the House and the single largest party. The **Leader of the Opposition** heads the **main opposition** in the house. During elections, 300 lawmakers are elected on a **first-past-the-post** basis.^[157] The Speaker allocates an additional 50 reserved seats for women candidates. The Awami League currently holds control of the house with 273 seats. The **Jatiya Party** is the chief opposition with 42 seats. The current Speaker of parliament is **Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury**.
- **Judicial:** The **legal system of Bangladesh** is primarily in accordance with **English Common Law**.^[158] The higher **judiciary** consists of the **Supreme Court**, which includes an Appellate Division and the Bangladesh High Court. The current **Chief Justice** is **Surendra Kumar Sinha**. The constitution has undergone fifteen amendments since 1972.

Foreign affairs

Main article: [Foreign relations of Bangladesh](#)

Bangladesh's foreign policy follows a principle of *friendship to all and malice to none*, which was first articulated by Bengali statesman **H. S. Suhrawardy** in 1957.^{[159][160]} Suhrawardy also

File:1st Saarc summit.jpg

The first summit of **SAARC** held at the Parliament in Dhaka in 1985. Bangladesh played a pioneering role in the formation of the South Asian community.

led East and West Pakistan to join the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, CENTO and the Regional Cooperation for Development.



Sheikh Hasina and Vladimir Putin in Moscow, 2013 

After independence, Bangladesh joined the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations. Today, countries considered as Bangladesh's most important partners include India,^[161] China,^[162] Japan,^[163] Saudi Arabia,^[164] Russia,^[165] the United States^[166] and the United Kingdom.^[167]

File:John Kerry and Mahmood Ali.jpg
John Kerry and A. H. Mahmud Ali in Dhaka, 2016

During the Cold War, Bangladesh cultivated good relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union, but it remained nonaligned with either superpower.^[168] Bangladesh asserted itself in regards to many international issues, including those affecting decolonized and developing countries.^[168] Bangladesh traditionally places a heavy reliance on multilateral diplomacy, especially in the United Nations. Since independence, it has twice been elected to the UN Security Council. Bangladeshi diplomat Humayun Rashid Choudhury served as President of the United Nations General Assembly.^[169]

During the Gulf War in 1991, Bangladesh contributed 2,300 troops to the US-led multinational coalition for the liberation of Kuwait. It has since become the world's largest contributor of UN peacekeeping forces, providing 113,000 personnel to 54 UN missions in the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa and the Caribbean, as of 2014.^[171] Bangladeshi aid agencies work in many developing countries worldwide. An example are the operations of BRAC in Afghanistan, which benefit 12 million people in that country.^[172]

Bangladeshi foreign policy also relies on the country's Islamic heritage, being an [OIC member](#) and the world's third largest Muslim-majority country, and enjoys fraternal relations with many nations in the [Muslim world](#). It is a founding member of the [Developing 8](#), along with [Turkey](#), [Malaysia](#), [Egypt](#), [Iran](#), [Nigeria](#), [Pakistan](#) and [Indonesia](#).^[168]



[Cox's Bazar District](#) in southeastern Bangladesh is home to [refugee camps](#) with 300,000 [Rohingya](#) refugees who have fled persecution in Myanmar since the 1970s. The [United Nations](#) estimates that 65,000 refugees arrived after the [2016 crackdown](#).^[170]



Map showing countries where Bangladesh has participated in [UN peacekeeping](#) operations

Strategically important in South Asia and the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh is classified as a [middle power](#). It has diverse political, economic and military partnerships in the region.^[168] It has played a leading role in organizing regional engagement and development cooperation. The [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation \(SAARC\)](#) was founded in [Dhaka](#) in 1985. Three Bangladeshis have since served as its [Secretary General](#). The Bangladeshi capital hosts the headquarters of the [Bay of Bengal Initiative \(BIMSTEC\)](#). The country is part of the [Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation](#). It has prioritized relations with [ASEAN](#) members in Southeast Asia. It is a member of the [Indian Ocean Rim Association](#).

Bangladesh's most important bilateral relations are with the two regional powers [India](#) and China. The [relationship with India](#) is bound by shared ideals of democracy, cultural heritage and the [1971 Liberation War](#), in which [Indian military](#) and diplomatic support was crucial in defeating Pakistani forces on Bangladeshi territory. In the early years of Bangladesh's independence, Dhaka and Delhi enjoyed a strong alliance. However, when [military coups](#) began in Bangladesh during the late 1970s, there was increasing distance between the two neighbors. Differences emerged over [sharing the water of the Ganges](#). Bangladesh developed [very warm relations](#) with the People's Republic of China in the 1980s. Defense cooperation rapidly increased as the Bangladeshi military became one of the largest buyers of Chinese defense equipment, given their relative cost-effective attractiveness for the Bangladeshi defence budget.^[173] China has supplied Bangladesh with [missiles](#) and [frigates](#). China is also one of Bangladesh's largest trade partners. In more recent years, India has sought to revive relations with Bangladesh through a strategic partnership focused on counter-terrorism, aid for infrastructure development and promoting regional economic integration. Bangladesh and India are the largest trading partners among SAARC nations. The Indian and Bangladeshi armed forces maintain robust strategic engagement. [Relations with Pakistan](#) have been affected by issues related to the [1971 genocide](#) and terrorism. Bangladesh enjoys strong ties with regional neighbors [Nepal](#), [Bhutan](#), [Sri Lanka](#) and the [Maldives](#).

Bangladesh's relations with neighboring [Myanmar](#) are relatively warm. Myanmar was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh's independence. Relations were in a brief deadlock due to a naval standoff in 2008 over disputed maritime territory.^[174] In 2012, the two countries resolved their maritime boundary disputes at the [International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea](#).^[175] The relationship with Myanmar is complicated by the persecution of the [Rohingya people](#) in [Rakhine State](#). As of 2016, Bangladesh hosts between 300,000 and 500,000 Rohingya [refugees](#) who have fled Myanmar military crackdowns since 1978.^[176] In 2012, Bangladesh denied entry to further refugees after another spate of sectarian riots broke out in Rakhine State.^[177] Both countries view each other as gateways to South and Southeast Asia. Their armed forces maintain regular dialogue and both depend on Chinese

military supplies. [Thailand](#) is an important ally and economic partner of Bangladesh, with the two countries sharing strategic interests in the Bay of Bengal region.

The United States enjoys a warm and strategic partnership with Bangladesh. 76% of [Bangladeshis](#) viewed the United States favorably in 2014.^[178] The United States is Bangladesh's largest foreign investor and trade partner. Bangladesh is the third largest recipient of American development assistance in Asia after Afghanistan and Pakistan.^[179] Relations with the United Kingdom are long-standing. Bangladesh is one of the largest recipients of U.K. development aid. Japan and Bangladesh have strong relations with common strategic and political goals.^[159] Japan has been Bangladesh's largest development partner since independence, providing over US\$11 billion in aid.^[180] Relations with the [Russian Federation](#) have focused on trade, [nuclear energy](#) and defense supplies. There are also growing trade links with Latin American nations, particularly [Brazil](#) and [Mexico](#).

Bangladesh has a strong record of [nuclear nonproliferation](#) as a party to the [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty](#) (NPT) and the [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty](#) (CTBT).^[181]

Military

Main article: [Bangladesh Armed Forces](#)

As of 2012, the current strength of the army is around 300,000 including reservists,^[182] the air force 22,000, and navy 24,000.^[183] In addition to traditional defence roles, the military has been called on to provide support to civil authorities for disaster relief and internal security during periods of political unrest. Bangladesh has consistently been the world's largest contributor to [UN peacekeeping forces](#) for many years. In February 2015, Bangladesh had major deployments in the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), [Liberia](#), [Darfur](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Haiti](#), [South Sudan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Cyprus](#) and the [Golan Heights](#).^[184]



BNS Bangabandhu, a guided missile frigate of the Bangladesh Navy

MBT-2000 main battle tank of the Bangladesh Army

MiG-2 of the

Human rights

Main article: Human rights in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is ranked by [Freedom House](#) as "Partly Free" in its *Freedom in the World* report.^[185] [Press freedom](#) in Bangladesh is ranked as "Not Free".^[186] The [Economist Intelligence Unit](#) classifies the country as a [hybrid regime](#), which is the third best rank out of four in its [Democracy Index](#).^[187] Bangladesh ranked as the 3rd most peaceful country in South Asia in the [Global Peace Index](#) in 2015.^[188] In recent years, the once vibrant [civil society](#) and [media](#) in Bangladesh have come under attack from both the ruling [Awami League](#) government and [far-right Islamic extremists](#).^[189]

According to Mizanur Rahman, the chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, 70% of the allegations of human rights violations they receive are against the

law-enforcement agencies.^[190] Targets have included [Nobel Peace Prize](#) winner [Muhammad Yunus](#) and the [Grameen Bank](#), [secularist bloggers](#), independent and pro-opposition newspapers and



Supreme Court of Bangladesh





The [Rapid Action Battalion](#) (RAB) has been described as a "death squad". Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies have been accused of regular widespread [human rights abuses](#).

television networks. The United Nations has said that it was deeply concerned by the government's "measures that restrict freedom of expression and democratic space".^[189]

Bangladeshi security forces, particularly the [Rapid Action Battalion](#) (RAB), have faced strong international condemnation for human rights abuses, including [enforced disappearances](#), [torture](#) and [extrajudicial killings](#). Over 1,000 people have been killed in extrajudicial killings by RAB since its inception under the last [BNP](#) government.^[191] The agency has been singled out by [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#) as a "death squad".^{[192][193]} They have called for the force to be disbanded.^{[192][193]} The British and American governments have been widely criticized for funding and engaging the force in counter-terrorism operations.^[194]

In the [Chittagong Hill Tracts](#), the government is yet to fully implement the [Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord](#).^[195] The Hill Tracts region remains heavily [militarized](#) despite the signing of the peace treaty with [indigenous people](#) led by the [United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts](#).^[196]

[Secularism](#) in Bangladesh is legally enshrined in the [constitution](#). Religious parties are banned from contesting elections, but the government is accused of courting religious extremist groups for votes. Ambiguities over Islam being the [state religion](#) have been criticized by the United Nations.^[197] Despite relative inter-religious and communal harmony, minorities in Bangladesh have

faced persecution on occasions. The [Hindu](#) and [Buddhist](#) communities have faced [religious violence](#) from Islamic groups, notably the [Jamaat-e-Islami](#) and its student wing [Shibir](#). The highest vote share achieved by Islamic far right candidates during Bangladeshi elections was 12% in 2001; the lowest was 4% in 2008. ^[198]

Corruption

Main article: [Corruption in Bangladesh](#)

According to [Transparency International](#), Bangladesh ranked 14th in the list of countries with the [most perceived corruption](#) in 2014. ^[199] In 2015, the cost of bribery was at 3.7% of the national budget. ^[200] The country's [Anti Corruption Commission](#) was highly active under a [state of emergency](#) in 2007 and 2008, when it indicted many leading politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen for [graft](#). After assuming power in 2009, the [Awami League](#) government greatly reduced the commission's independent powers for investigation and prosecution. ^[201] Land administration was the sector in Bangladesh with the largest cost of bribery in 2015. ^[202] Education is among the sectors with significant corruption. ^[203] The police is highly affected by corruption, too. ^[204] Corruption affects water supply significantly. ^[205]

Administrative divisions

Main article: [Administrative geography of Bangladesh](#)

Further information: [Divisions of Bangladesh](#), [Districts of Bangladesh](#) and [Upazilas of Bangladesh](#)

Bangladesh is divided into eight administrative



divisions, ^{[206][207][208]} each named after their respective divisional headquarters: Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Rangpur.

Divisions are subdivided into districts (*zila*). There are 64 districts in Bangladesh, each further subdivided into *upazila* (subdistricts) or *thana*. The area within each police station, except for those in metropolitan areas, is divided into several *unions*, with each union consisting of multiple villages. In the metropolitan areas, police stations are divided into wards, which are further divided into *mahallas*.

There are no elected officials at the divisional or district levels, and the administration is composed only of government officials. Direct elections are held for each union (or ward), electing a chairperson and a number of members. In 1997, a parliamentary act was passed to reserve three seats (out of 12) in every union for female candidates. ^[209]

Administrative Divisions of Bangladesh

Administrative Divisions of Bangladesh				
			Area	

Division	Capital	Established	(km ²) ^[210]	Population ^[2]
Barisal	Barisal	1 January 1993	13,297	8,325,666
Chittagong	Chittagong	1829	33,771	28,423,019
Dhaka	Dhaka	1829	20,593	36,054,418
Khulna	Khulna	1 October 1960	22,272	15,687,759
Mymensingh	Mymensingh	14 September 2015	10,584	11,370,000
Rajshahi	Rajshahi	1829	18,197	18,484,858
Rangpur	Rangpur	25 January 2010	16,317	15,787,758
Sylhet	Sylhet	1 August 1995	12,596	9,910,219

Economy

Main article: [Economy of Bangladesh](#)

Bangladesh is a [developing country](#), with a [market-based mixed economy](#) and is listed as one of the [Next Eleven emerging markets](#). The per capita income of Bangladesh was US\$1,190 in 2014, with a GDP of US\$209 billion.^[211] In South Asia, Bangladesh has the third-largest economy after those of India and [Pakistan](#), and has the second highest [foreign exchange reserves](#) after India. The [Bangladeshi diaspora](#) contributed US\$15.31 billion in [remittances](#) in 2015.^[212]

In the early five years of independence, Bangladesh adopted socialist policies which proved to be a critical blunder by the Awami League.^[213] The subsequent military regime and [BNP](#) and [Jatiya Party](#) governments restored [free markets](#) and promoted the Bangladeshi private sector. In 1991, finance minister [Saifur Rahman](#) launched a range of [liberal reforms](#). The Bangladeshi private sector has since rapidly expanded, with numerous [conglomerates](#) now driving the economy. Major industries include textiles, [pharmaceuticals](#), shipbuilding, steel, electronics, energy, construction materials, chemicals, ceramics, food processing, and

leather goods. [Export-oriented industrialization](#) has increased in recent years, with the country's exports amounting to US\$30 billion in FY2014-15.^[214] The predominant export earnings of Bangladesh come from its [garments sector](#). The country also has a vibrant [social enterprise](#) sector, including the [Nobel Peace Prize-winning microfinance](#) institution [Grameen Bank](#) and the world's largest non-governmental development agency [BRAC](#).

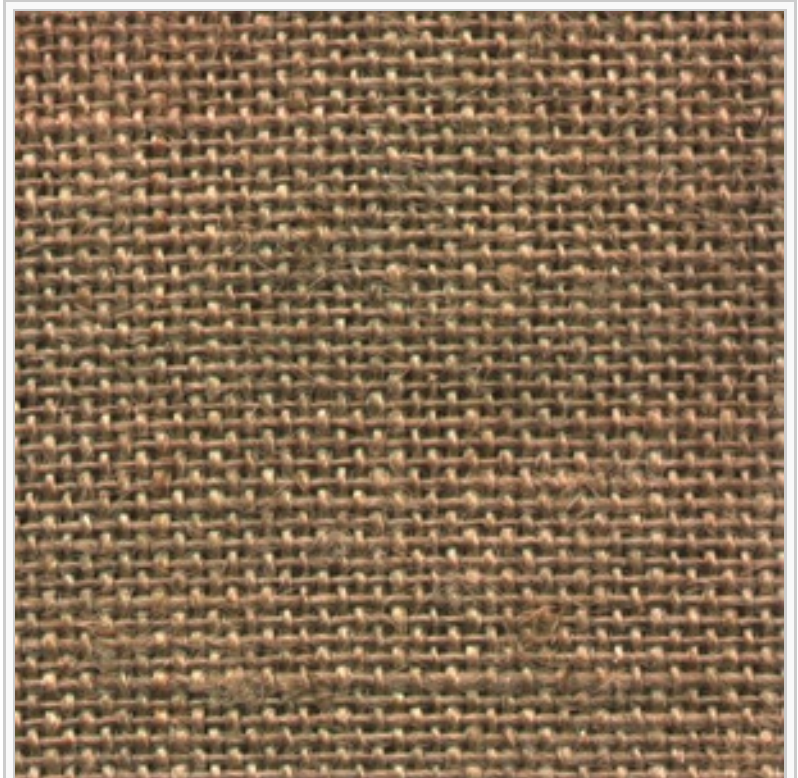
The insufficient power supply is a significant obstacle to growth. According to the [World Bank](#), poor governance, corruption and weak public institutions are major challenges for Bangladesh's development.^[215] In April 2010, [Standard & Poor's](#) awarded Bangladesh a BB- long term [credit rating](#), which is below India and well above Pakistan and Sri Lanka.^[216]

Primary

See also: [Agriculture of Bangladesh](#), [Fishing in Bangladesh](#), [Jute trade](#), [Forestry in Bangladesh](#), [Tea production in Bangladesh](#), [Pearling in Bangladesh](#) and [Natural gas and petroleum in Bangladesh](#)

Bangladesh is notable for its [fertile](#) land, including the [Ganges delta](#), the [Sylhet Division](#) and the [Chittagong Hill Tracts](#). Agriculture is the single largest producing sector of the economy since it comprises

about 18.6% (data released on November 2010) of the country's GDP and employs around 45% of the total labor force.^[217] The



[Jute](#) is one of the main agricultural commodities of Bangladesh 

performance of this sector has an overwhelming impact on major macroeconomic objectives like employment generation, poverty alleviation, human resources development and [food security](#). A plurality of Bangladeshis earn their living from agriculture. The country ranks among the top producers of [rice](#) (4th), [potatoes](#) (7th), [tropical fruits](#) (6th), [jute](#) (2nd), and farmed fish (5th).^{[218][219]}

Bangladesh is the 7th largest [natural gas producer](#) in Asia, ahead of its neighbor [Myanmar](#). Gas supplies generate 56% of the country's electricity. Major gas fields are located in northeastern (particularly [Sylhet](#)) and southern (including [Barisal](#) and [Chittagong](#)) regions. [Petrobangla](#) is the national energy company. The American multinational [Chevron](#) produces 50% of Bangladesh's natural gas.^[220] According to geologists, the Bay of Bengal holds large untapped gas reserves in Bangladesh' [exclusive economic zone](#).^[221] The country also has substantial reserves of coal, with several coal mines operating in northwestern Bangladesh.

Jute exports continue to be significant, however the global jute trade has reduced considerably since it peaked during World War II. Bangladesh has one of the oldest tea industries in the world. It is also major exporter of fish and seafood.

Secondary

The [Bangladesh textile industry](#) and [Bangladeshi RMG Sector](#) are the largest



A Danish ferry built in a [Bangladeshi shipyard](#)

manufacturing sector, accounting for US\$25 billion in exports in 2014.^[222] Leather goods manufacturing, particularly in footwear, is the second largest export oriented industrial sector. The [pharmaceutical industry in Bangladesh](#) meets 97% of domestic demand and exports to 52 countries.^{[223][224]} The [shipbuilding](#)

industry in Bangladesh has seen rapid growth with exports to Europe.^[225]

The steel industry in Bangladesh is concentrated in the port city of Chittagong.

The ceramics industry in Bangladesh is a prominent

player in the international ceramics trade. In 2005, Bangladesh was the world's 20th largest cement producer. The country's cement industry depends on limestone imports from North East India. Food processing is a major sector of the local economy, with prominent brands like PRAN that are increasingly gaining an international market. The electronics industry in Bangladesh is witnessing rapid growth, with the Walton Group being its dominant player.^[226] Bangladesh also has its own defense industry, including the establishments such as Bangladesh Ordnance Factories and the Khulna Shipyard.

Tertiary

See also: List of banks in Bangladesh and Financial system in Bangladesh

The service sector accounts for 51% of GDP. Bangladesh ranks with Pakistan in having the second largest banking sector in South Asia.^[227] The Dhaka Stock Exchange and the Chittagong Stock Exchange are the twin financial markets of the country. The telecoms industry in Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing markets in the world, with 114 million cellphone subscribers in December 2013.^[228] The main telecom companies are Grameenphone, Banglalink, Robi, and BTTB. Tourism in



A shirt production line in a Bangladesh textile industry



Bangladesh is a developing sector, with the beach resort town of **Cox's Bazar** being the center of the industry. The Sylhet region, home to Bangladesh's tea country, also receives a large number of visitors. Bangladesh has **three UNESCO World Heritage Sites**, and five tentative listed sites.

Microfinance was pioneered in Bangladesh by **Muhammad Yunus** and has been replicated in many countries. There are more than 35 million **microcredit** borrowers.^[229]

Transport

Main article: [Transport in Bangladesh](#)

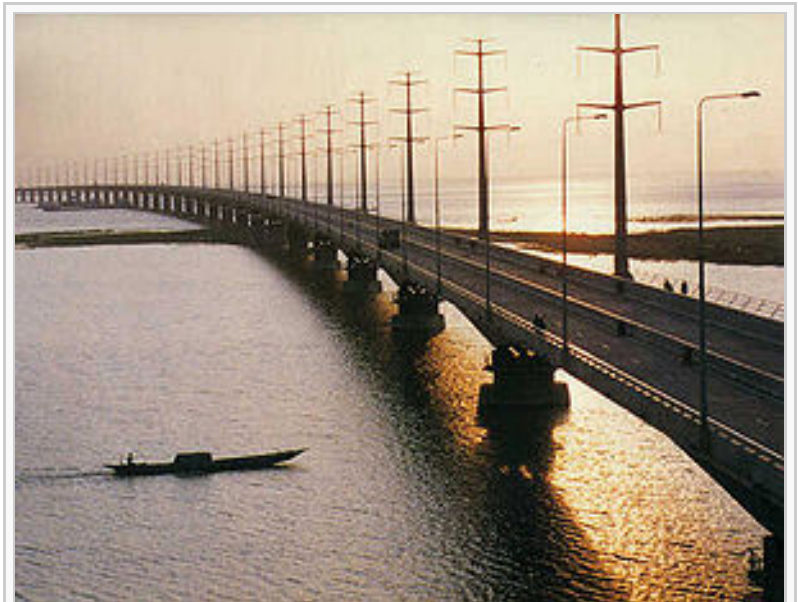
Transport is a major sector in the Bangladesh economy. The aviation industry has seen rapid growth and includes the national flag carrier **Biman Bangladesh Airlines** and other **privately owned airlines**. Bangladesh has 3 international airports and **several domestic and STOL airports**. The **Shahjalal International Airport**- the busiest among them- connects country's capital Dhaka with many major destinations across the continents.

The country has a 2,706-kilometre (1,681-mile) rail network operated by the **Bangladesh Railway**. Total length of country's **roads and highways network** is nearly 21,000-kilometre (13,000-mile).

It has one of the largest inland **waterway** networks in the

File:Boeing 777-3E9(ER) Biman Bangladesh S2-AFP, LHR London, England (Heathrow Airport), United Kingdom PP1368120521.jpg

A **Boeing 777-300** of **Biman Bangladesh Airlines**, the state owned flag carrier



The **Jamuna Bridge** is the longest bridge in Bangladesh. Bridges are critical arteries over the country's 700 rivers

world,^[230] with 8,046 kilometres (5,000 miles) of navigable waterways. The southeastern **Port of Chittagong** is its busiest seaport, handling over US\$60 billion in annual trade.^[231] More than 80% of the country's export-import trade passes through Chittagong. The second busiest seaport is **Mongla** in southwestern Bangladesh.



An Alco diesel train (right) on the Bangladesh Railway

File:Stacking Intermodal container in Port of Chittagong (15).jpg

Chittagong Port is the busiest port on the Bay of Bengal

Energy

Electricity generation in Bangladesh had an installed capacity of 10,289 MW in January 2014.^[232] Commercial energy consumption is mostly natural gas (around 56%), followed by oil, hydropower and coal.

Bangladesh has planned to import **hydropower** from **Bhutan** and **Nepal**.^[233]

Nuclear energy in Bangladesh is being developed with Russia in the landmark **Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant** project.^[234]

In **renewable energy**, Bangladesh has the fifth-largest number of green jobs in the world. Solar panels are increasingly used to power both urban and off grid rural areas.^[235]

Water

*See also: **Water supply and sanitation in Bangladesh***

The share of the population with access to an **improved water source** was estimated at 98% in 2004,^[236] a very high level for a low-

income country. This has been achieved to a large extent through the construction of handpumps with the support of external donors. However, in 1993 it was discovered that groundwater, the source of drinking water for 97% of the rural population and a significant share of the urban population, is in many cases naturally [contaminated with arsenic](#).

Another challenge is the low level of cost recovery due to low tariffs and poor [economic efficiency](#), especially in urban areas where revenues from water sales do not even cover operating costs. Concerning sanitation, estimated 56% of the population have had access to adequate sanitation facilities in 2010.^[237] A new approach to improve sanitation coverage in rural areas, the [community-led total sanitation](#) concept that has been first introduced in Bangladesh, is credited for having contributed significantly to the increase in sanitation coverage since 2000.^[238]

Science and technology

Main article: [Science and technology in Bangladesh](#)

See also: [Information technology in Bangladesh](#) and [Biotechnology and genetic engineering in Bangladesh](#)

SPARRSO, Bangladesh's [space agency](#), was founded in 1983 with assistance from the United States.^[239] Bangladesh plans to launch the [Bangabandhu-1](#) communications satellite in 2018.^[240] The [Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission](#) operates a [TRIGA](#) research reactor at its atomic energy facility in [Savar](#).^[241] The [Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research](#) was founded in 1973, and traces to its roots to the East Pakistan Regional Laboratories established in Dhaka (1955), [Rajshahi](#) (1965) and [Chittagong](#) (1967).

IT Outsourcing

Bangladesh has a large number of trained IT professionals. But as the majority of the businesses have not become large enough and on the other hand due to negligence from the part of business owners to understand the benefits of using software and technology in businesses the local demand for these highly skilled professionals has been low. As a result, the IT industry in Bangladesh has turned its focus on exporting software and IT services. Currently it is in 26th position of global IT outsourcing

destination.^[242] The primary reason behind this is Bangladeshi IT companies are providing high quality services at a much lower cost than its competitors. It is currently estimated that the volume of IT outsourcing is doubling every year in Bangladesh. Several Bangladeshi IT companies has been successful in the global enterprise software market. Bangladeshi Government is envisioning IT sector as the second largest export sector after Garments in the coming years.

Demographics

Main article: [Demographics of Bangladesh](#)

Estimates of the Bangladeshi population vary but most recent data suggest 162 to 168 million people (2015). However, the 2011 census estimated 142.3 million,^[244] much less than recent (2007–2010) estimates of Bangladesh's population ranging from 150 to 170 million.

Bangladesh is thus the **8th most populous** nation in the world. In 1951, the population was only 44 million.^[245] It is also the most densely populated large country in the world, and it ranks 11th in population density, when very small countries and city-states are included.^[246]

Bangladesh's population growth rate was among the highest in the world in the 1960s and 1970s, when its population grew from 65 to 110 million. With the promotion of **birth control** in the 1980s, the growth rate began to slow. The fertility rate now stands at 2.55, lower than India (2.58) and Pakistan (3.07). The population is relatively young, with 34% aged 15 or younger and 5% 65 or older. **Life expectancy** at birth is estimated to be 70 years for both males and females in 2012.^[207] Despite the rapid economic growth, 43% of the country still lives below the **international poverty line** which means living on less than \$1.25 per day.^[247] **Bengalis** constitute 98% of the population.^[248]

Minorities include **indigenous people** in the **Chittagong Hill Tracts**

Historical populations in millions

Year	Pop.	±% p.a.
1971	67.8	—
1980	80.6	+1.94%
1990	105.3	+2.71%
2000	129.6	+2.10%
2010	148.7	+1.38%
2012	161.1	+4.09%


Source: OECD/World Bank^[243]

and other parts of northern Bangladesh. The Hill Tracts are home to 11 ethnic tribal groups, notably the [Chakma](#), [Marma](#), [Tanchangya](#), [Tripuri](#), [Kuki](#), [Khang](#), [Khumi](#), [Murang](#), [Mru](#), [Chak](#), [Lushei](#) and [Bawm](#). The [Sylhet Division](#) is home to the [Bishnupriya Manipuri](#), [Khasi](#) and [Jaintia](#) tribes. The [Mymensingh District](#) has a substantial [Garo](#) population. The [northern Bangladesh](#) region is home to aboriginal [Santal](#), [Munda](#) and [Oraon](#) people. Bangladesh is also home to a significant [Ismaili](#) community.^[249]

The southeastern region has received an influx of [Rohingya](#) refugees from Myanmar, particularly during Burmese military crackdowns in 1978 and 1991.^[250] During renewed [sectarian unrest in Rakhine State](#) in 2012, Bangladesh closed its borders amid fears of a third major exodus from Myanmar.^[251] [Stranded Pakistanis](#) or [Biharis](#) are a contentious dispute between Bangladesh and Pakistan. In 2008, the Bangladesh High Court granted full citizenship to all second generation Stranded Pakistanis born after 1971.^[252] The Hill Tracts region suffered unrest and an [insurgency](#) from 1975 to 1997 due to a movement by indigenous people for autonomy. A [peace accord](#) was signed in 1997; however, the region remains heavily militarized.^[253]

Urban centres

Further information: [List of cities and towns in Bangladesh](#)

V • T • E							Largest cities or towns in Bangladesh	
							2011 calculation ^[254]	
	Rank	Name	Division	Pop.	Rank	Name		
 <p>Dhaka</p>	1	Dhaka	Dhaka	7,033,076	11	Rangpur		
	2	Chittagong	Chittagong	2,592,439	12	Mymensingh		
	3	Khulna	Khulna	663,342	13	Gazipur		
	4	Narayanganj	Dhaka	543,090	14	Jessore		
	5	Sylhet	Sylhet	479,837	15	Dinajpur		
 <p>Chittagong</p>	6	Tongi	Dhaka	476,350	16	Nawabganj		
	7	Rajshahi	Rajshahi	449,756	17	Brahmanbaria		
	8	Bogra	Rajshahi	350,397	18	Cox's Bazar		
	9	Barisal	Barisal	328,278	19	Tangail		
	10	Comilla	Chittagong	326,386	20	Chandpur		

[Dhaka](#) is the capital and largest city of Bangladesh. The cities with a [city corporation](#), having mayoral elections, include Dhaka South,

Dhaka North, Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Barisal, Rangpur, Comilla and Gazipur. Other major cities, these and other municipalities electing a chairperson, include Mymensingh, Gopalganj, Jessore, Bogra, Dinajpur, Saidpur, Narayanganj and Rangamati. Both the municipal heads are elected for a span of five years.

Languages

Main article: [Languages of Bangladesh](#)

Bangla (Bengali) being the sole official language,^[255] English is sometimes used secondarily for official purposes, especially in the judiciary.

More than 98% of Bangladeshis speak **Bangla** as their native language.^{[256][257]} English is also used as a second language among the middle and upper classes and is also widely used in higher education and the legal system.^[258] Historically, laws were written in English and were not translated into Bangla until 1987. Bangladesh's Constitution and all laws are now in both English and Bangla.^[259]

Stranded **Pakistani Biharis** since 1971 living in various camps in Bangladesh speak **Urdu**.^[260] Similarly, Rohingya Refugees from **Myanmar** since 1978 living in various camps in Bangladesh speak **Rohingya**.^[261] There are also several **indigenous minority languages**.

Religion

Main article: [Religion in Bangladesh](#)

Islam is the largest religion in Bangladesh, adhered to by about 86.6% of the population. The country is home to most **Bengali Muslims**, the second largest ethnic group in the **Muslim world**. The majority of Bangladeshi Muslims are **Sunni**, followed by the **Shia** and **Ahmadiya**. Roughly 4% are **non-denominational Muslims**.^[262] Bangladesh has the fourth-largest Muslim population in the world and is the third-largest **Muslim-majority** country after Indonesia and Pakistan.^[263]

Hinduism is followed by about 12.1% of the population, with most being **Bengali Hindus** and a small segment being **ethnic people**. Bangladeshi Hindus are the country's second biggest religious



Minaret of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka

group and the third largest Hindu community in the world after those of India and Nepal. Hindus in Bangladesh are almost evenly distributed in all regions, with large

concentrations in Gopalganj, Dinajpur, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Mymensingh, Khulna, Jessore, Chittagong and parts of Chittagong Hill Tracts. And despite their

Religions in Bangladesh ^[3]		
Religion		Percent
Muslim		86.6%
Hindu		12.1%
Buddhist		0.6%
Christian		0.4%
Others		0.3%



Courtyard of the Dhakeshwari National Temple



Buddha Dhatu Jadi in Bandarban



Seal of the Archbishop of Dhaka

dwindling numbers, Hindus are the second-largest religious community after the Muslims in [Dhaka](#).

[Buddhism](#) is the third largest religion, at 0.6%. Bangladeshi Buddhists are largely concentrated among [ethnic groups](#) in the [Chittagong Hill Tracts](#), particularly the [Chakma](#), [Marma](#) and [Tanchangya](#) peoples; while coastal Chittagong is home to the large number of [Bengali Buddhists](#).

Christianity is the fourth largest religion at 0.4%.^[264]

The remaining 0.3% population follow various folk religions and animistic faiths.

Many people in Bangladesh practice [Sufism](#), which has a long heritage in the region.^[265] The largest gathering of Muslims in the country is the [Bishwa Ijtema](#), held annually by the [Tablighi Jamaat](#). The Ijtema is the second largest Muslim congregation in the world after the [Hajj](#).

The [Constitution of Bangladesh](#) declares Islam as the [state religion](#), but bans religion-based politics. It proclaims equal recognition of [Hindus](#), [Buddhists](#), Christians and people of all faiths.^[266] Earlier in 1972, Bangladesh became the first constitutionally secular country in South Asia.^[267] The [U. S. State Department](#) describes Bangladesh as a [secular pluralistic democracy](#).^[268]

Education

Main article: [Education in Bangladesh](#)

Bangladesh has a low [literacy rate](#), estimated at 66.5% for males and 63.1% for females in 2014.^[207] The educational system in Bangladesh is three-tiered and highly subsidized. The government operates many schools in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. It subsidises parts of the funding for many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the government funds more than 15 state universities through the [University Grants Commission](#).

The education system is divided into five levels: Primary (from grades 1 to 5), Junior Secondary (from grades 6 to 8), Secondary (from grades 9 to 10), Higher Secondary (from grades 11 to 12) and tertiary.^[269] The five years of lower secondary education concluded with a [Secondary School Certificate](#) (SSC) examination, but since

2009 it concludes with a Primary Education Closing (PEC) examination. Earlier, students who pass this examination proceed to four years secondary or matriculation training, which culminate in a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination.^[269]

Primary Education Closing (PEC) passed examinees proceed to three years Junior Secondary, which culminate in a [Junior School Certificate](#) (JSC)

Examination. Students who pass this examination proceed to two

years secondary or matriculation training, which culminate in a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination. Students who pass this examination proceed to two years of Higher Secondary or intermediate training, which culminate in a [Higher Secondary School Certificate](#) (HSC) examination.^[269]

Education is mainly offered in Bengali, but English is commonly taught and used. A large number of Muslim families send their children to attend part-time courses or even to pursue full-time religious education, which is imparted in Bengali and [Arabic](#) in madrasahs.^[269]

Bangladesh conforms fully to the [Education For All](#) (EFA) objectives, the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDG) and international declarations. Article 17 of the [Bangladesh Constitution](#) provides that all children between the ages of six and ten years receive a basic education free of charge.

[Universities in Bangladesh](#) are mainly categorized into three types: public (government owned and subsidized), private (private sector owned universities) and international (operated and funded by international organizations). Bangladesh has 34 public, 64 private and two international [universities](#). [Bangladesh National University](#) has the largest enrollment among them and [University of Dhaka](#) (established 1921) is the oldest. [Islamic University of Technology](#), commonly known as IUT, is a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation ([OIC](#)), representing 57 member countries from Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. [Asian University for Women](#) in Chittagong is the preeminent liberal arts university for women in South Asia, representing 14 countries from

File:Students of Bangladesh Bank Colony High School performed in Rajat Jayanti (01).jpg

Bangladeshi schoolchildren performing on a stage

Asia. The faculty members are from many well-known academic institutions of North America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East.^[270] BUET, CUET, KUET, RUET are the four public engineering universities in the country. BUTex and DUET are two specialized engineering universities, where BUTex specializes in Textile Engineering and DUET offers higher education to **Diploma Engineers**. There are only one public-private partnership specialized institute NITER which provide **Textile Engineering** highr education. There are some science and technology universities including SUST, PUST, JUST, NSTU etc.

Bangladeshi universities are accredited by and affiliated with the **University Grants Commission** (UGC), created according to the Presidential Order (P.O. No 10 of 1973) of the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.^[271]

Medical education is provided by 29 government and some other private **medical colleges**. All medical colleges are affiliated with **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

Recently the literacy rate of Bangladesh has improved as it stands at 71% as of 2015 due to the modernization of schools and education funds. At present, 16,087 schools and 2,363 colleges were getting Monthly Pay Order (MPO) facilities. 27,558 madrasas, and technical and vocational institutions were enlisted for the facilities. 6036 educational institutions were outside the MPO coverage and that the ruling party enlisted 1,624 private schools for MPO in 2010.^{[272][273]}

Health

Main article: [Health in Bangladesh](#)

Health and education levels remain relatively low, although they have improved recently as poverty levels have decreased. In the rural areas, village doctors with little or no formal training constitute 62% of the healthcare providers practicing modern medicine and the formally trained providers are occupying a mere 4% of the total health workforce. A survey conducted by Future Health Systems revealed significant deficiencies in treatment practices of village doctors, with a wide prevalence of harmful and inappropriate drug prescriptions.^[274] There are market incentives for accessing health care through informal providers and it is

important to understand these markets in order to facilitate collaboration across actors and institutions in order to provide incentives for better performance.^[275]

A 2007 study of 1000 households in rural Bangladesh found that direct costs (payment to formal and informal health care providers) and indirect costs (loss of earnings associated with workdays lost because of illness) associated with illness were important deterrents to accessing health care from qualified healthcare providers.^[274] A community survey with 6183 individuals in rural Bangladesh found a clear gender difference in treatment-seeking behaviour, with women less likely to seek treatment compared to men.^[276] The use of skilled birth attendants, however, has risen between 2005 and 2007 by women in all wealth quintiles except the highest quintile.^[277] A pilot community empowerment tool, called a health watch, was successfully developed and implemented in south-eastern Bangladesh in order to improve uptake and monitoring of public health services.^[278]

The poor health conditions in Bangladesh is attributed by the lack of healthcare and services provision by the government. The total expenditure on healthcare as a percentage of their GDP was only 3.35% in 2009, according to a World Bank report published in 2010.^[279] The number of hospital beds per 10,000 population is 3.^[280] The General government expenditure on healthcare as a percentage of total government expenditure was only 7.9% as of 2009 and the citizens pay most of their health care bills as the out-of-pocket expenditure as a percentage of private expenditure on health is 96.5%.^[279]

Malnutrition has been a persistent problem for the poverty-stricken country. The **World Bank** estimates that Bangladesh is ranked 1st in the world of the number of children suffering from **malnutrition**.^{[281][282]} In Bangladesh, 26% of the population are undernourished^[283] and 46% of the children suffers from moderate to severe underweight problem.^[284] 43% of children under 5 years old are stunted. One in five preschool age children are vitamin A deficient and one in two are anemic.^[285] Child malnutrition in Bangladesh is amongst the highest in the world. Two-thirds of the children, under the age of five, are under-nourished and about 60% of them, who are under six, are stunted.^[286] More than 45 percent

of rural families and 76 percent of urban families were below the acceptable caloric intake level.^[287]

Culture

Main articles: [Culture of Bangladesh](#) and [Culture of Bengal](#)

Visual arts

Main article: [Bangladeshi art](#)

The recorded history of art in Bangladesh can be traced to the 3rd century BCE, when [terracotta](#) sculptures were made in the region. In classical antiquity, a notable school of sculptural

Hindu, Jain and Buddhist art developed in the [Pala Empire](#) and the Sena dynasty. Islamic art evolved since the 14th century. The architecture of the [Bengal Sultanate](#) saw a distinct style of domed mosques with complex niche pillars and no minarets. [Mughal Bengal](#)'s most celebrated artistic tradition was the weaving of [Jamdani motifs](#) on fine [muslin](#), which is now classified by UNESCO as an [intangible cultural heritage](#). Jamdani motifs were similar to Iranian textile art (buta motif) and Western textile art ([paisley](#)). The Jamdani weavers in Dhaka received imperial patronage.^{[288][289]} [Ivory](#) and [brass](#) were also widely used in Mughal art. [Pottery](#) is widely used in Bengali culture.

The [modern art](#) movement in Bangladesh took shape during the 1950s, particularly with the pioneering works of [Zainul Abedin](#). East Bengal developed its own modernist painting and sculpture traditions, which were distinct from art movements in West Bengal. The [Art Institute Dhaka](#) has been an important center of visual art in the region. Its annual [Bengali New Year parade](#) was enlisted as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2016.

Modern Bangladesh has produced many of South Asia's leading painters, including [SM Sultan](#), [Mohammad Kibria](#), [Shahabuddin Ahmed](#), [Kanak Chanpa Chakma](#), [Kafil Ahmed](#), [Saifuddin Ahmed](#), [Qayyum Chowdhury](#), [Rashid Choudhury](#), [Quamrul Hassan](#), [Rafiqun Nabi](#) and [Syed Jahangir](#) among others. [Novera Ahmed](#) and [Nitun Kundu](#) were pioneers of modernist sculptures in the country.

File:Serious discussion Du Fine Art.jpg

A sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka

The [Chobi Mela](#) is the largest photography festival in Asia.

Literature

See also: [Bangladeshi literature](#) and [Bangladeshi English literature](#)

The oldest evidence of writing in Bangladesh is the Mahasthan [Brahmi](#) Inscription, which dates back to the 3rd century BCE.^[290] During the [Gupta Empire](#), [Sanskrit literature](#) thrived in the region.

[Bengali](#) developed from [Sanskrit](#) and [Magadhi Prakrit](#) in the 11th century. [Bengali literature](#) is a millennium old tradition. The

[Charyapada](#)

are the earliest examples of Bengali poetry. [Sufi](#) spiritualism inspired many [Bengali Muslim](#) writers. During the [Bengal Sultanate](#), medieval Bengali writers were influenced by [Arabic](#) and [Persian works](#). [Syed Alaol](#) was a noted secular poet and translator. The [Chandidas](#) are an example of [Bangladeshi folk literature](#) which developed during the Middle Ages. The [Bengal Renaissance](#) shaped the emergence of modern Bengali literature, including novels, short stories and [science fiction](#). [Rabindranath Tagore](#) was the first non-European laureate of the [Nobel Prize in Literature](#) and is described as the Bengali Shakespeare.^[291] [Kazi Nazrul Islam](#) was a revolutionary poet who espoused spiritual rebellion against colonialism and fascism. [Begum Rokeya](#) was a pioneer of [Bengali writing in English](#), with her early work of [feminist science fiction](#). Other renaissance icons included [Michael Madhusudan Dutt](#) and [Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay](#).

File:Young tagore and nazrul.png

[Rabindranath Tagore](#), author of the [national anthem](#), and [Kazi Nazrul Islam](#), the [National Poet](#)



The [Bangla Academy](#)



The writer [Syed Mujtaba Ali](#) is noted for his cosmopolitan Bengali worldview.^[292] [Humayun Ahmed](#) was a popular writer of modern Bangladeshi [magical realism](#) and science fiction. [Shamsur Rahman](#) was the poet laureate of Bangladesh for many years. [Jasimuddin](#) was a renowned pastoral poet. [Farrukh Ahmed](#), [Sufia Kamal](#), [Kaiser Haq](#) and [Nirmalendu Goon](#) are important figures of modern Bangladeshi poetry. Notable writers of Bangladeshi novels include [Mir Mosharraf Hossain](#), [Akhteruzzaman Elias](#), [Syed Waliullah](#), [Shahidullah Kaiser](#), [Shawkat Osman](#), [Selina Hossain](#), [Taslima Nasreen](#), [Haripada Datta](#), [Razia Khan](#), [Anisul Hoque](#), [Al Mahmud](#), [Bipradash Barua](#), [Tahmima Anam](#), [Neamat Imam](#), [Monica Ali](#) and [Zia Haider Rahman](#). Many Bangladeshi writers, such as [Muhammad Zafar Iqbal](#), [K. Anis Ahmed](#) and [Farah Ghuznavi](#), are acclaimed for their short stories.

The annual [Ekushey Book Fair](#) and [Dhaka Literature Festival](#) organized by the [Bangla Academy](#) are among the largest literary festivals in South Asia.

Women in Bangladesh

Main article: [Women in Bangladesh](#)

Although, as of 2015, several women occupy major political office in Bangladesh, the women of the country continue to suffer under a patriarchal social regime where violence is common.^[293]

Whereas in India and Pakistan women participate less in the workforce as their education increases, in Bangladesh there is an opposite trend.^[293]

Bengal has a long history of [feminist activism](#) dating back to the 19th century. [Roquia Sakhawat Hussain](#) and [Faizunnessa Chowdhurani](#) played an important role in emancipating Bengali Muslim women from the [purdah](#) in undivided Bengal and promoting girls' education. Several women were elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in the British Raj. The first women's magazine *Begum* was published in 1948.

Female workforce participation in Bangladesh is among the highest in the [Muslim world](#), at 59%.^[294] Women dominate [blue collar](#) jobs in the [Bangladeshi garment industry](#). Agriculture, social services, healthcare and education are also major occupations for Bangladeshi women; while employment in [white collar](#) jobs has

steadily increased.

Architecture

Main article: [Architecture of Bangladesh](#)

The architectural traditions of Bangladesh have a 2,500-year-old heritage.^[295] [Terracotta](#) architecture is a distinct feature of Bengal. Pre-Islamic Bengali architecture reached its pinnacle during the [Pala Empire](#), when the Pala School of Sculptural Art established grand structures such as the [Somapura Mahavihara](#). [Islamic architecture](#) began developing under the [Bengal Sultanate](#), when local terracotta styles influenced medieval mosque construction. The [Adina Mosque](#) of undivided Bengal was the largest mosque built in the Indian subcontinent.

The [Sixty Dome Mosque](#) was the largest medieval mosque built in Bangladesh, and is a fine example of Turkic-Bengali architecture. The [Mughal style](#) replaced indigenous architecture when Bengal became a province of the [Mughal Empire](#) and influenced the development of urban housing. The [Kantajew Temple](#) and [Dhakeshwari Temple](#) are excellent examples of late medieval [Hindu temple architecture](#). [Indo-Saracenic Revival architecture](#), based on Indo-Islamic styles, flourished during the [British period](#). The [zamindar](#) gentry in Bangladesh built numerous Indo-Saracenic palaces and country mansions, such as the [Ahsan Manzil](#), [Tajhat Palace](#), [Dighapatia Palace](#), [Puthia Rajbari](#) and [Natore Rajbari](#).

Bengali [vernacular architecture](#) is noted for pioneering the [bungalow](#). Bangladeshi villages consist of [thatched](#) roofed houses made of natural materials like [mud](#), [straw](#), wood and [bamboo](#). In modern times, village bungalows are increasingly made of [tin](#).

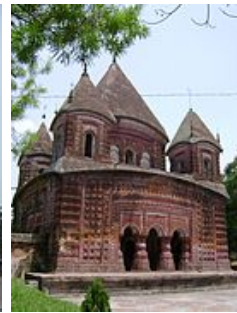
[Muzharul Islam](#) was the pioneer of Bangladeshi modern architecture. His varied works set the course of modern architectural practice in the country. Islam brought leading global architects, including [Louis Kahn](#), [Richard Neutra](#), [Stanley Tigerman](#), [Paul Rudolph](#), [Robert Boughey](#) and [Konstantinos Doxiadis](#), to work in erstwhile [East Pakistan](#). Louis Kahn was chosen to design the National Parliament Complex in [Sher-e-Bangla Nagar](#). Kahn's monumental designs, combining regional red brick aesthetics, his own concrete and marble [brutalism](#) and

the use of lakes to represent Bengali geography, are regarded as one of the masterpieces of the 20th century. In more recent times, award-winning architects like [Rafiq Azam](#) have set the course of contemporary architecture by adopting influences from Islam and Kahns' works.

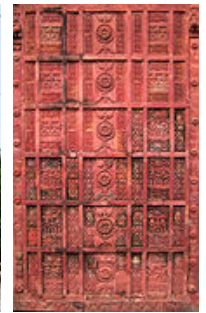
Traditional architecture of Bangladesh



Sona Mosque



Puthia
Temple
Complex



Islamic
terracotta
on the Atia
Mosque



Kantajew Temple



Khan Mohammad
Mridha Mosque



Mughal architecture in Dhaka

Performance arts

[Theatre in Bangladesh](#) includes various forms, with a history dating back to the 4th century AD. ^[296] It includes narrative forms, song and dance forms, supra-personae forms, performances

[File:Artcell \(4039852970\).jpg](#)

A concert by the [Bangladeshi rock band Artcell](#)



Bengali [Jatra](#) theatre.



The [Baul](#) tradition is a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Cultural Heritage of Humanity

with scroll paintings, puppet theatre and processional forms.^[296] The [Jatra](#) is the most popular form of Bengali folk theatre. The dance traditions of Bangladesh include indigenous tribal and Bengali dance forms, as well as [classical Indian dances](#), including the

[Kathak](#), [Odissi](#) and the [Manipuri dances](#).

The [music of Bangladesh](#) features the [Baul](#) mystical tradition, listed by [UNESCO](#) as a [Masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage](#).^[297]

Numerous lyric based musical traditions exist including [Gombhira](#), [Bhatiali](#) and [Bhawaiya](#), varying from one region to the next. Folk music is accompanied by the [ektara](#), an instrument with only one string. Other instruments include the [dotara](#), [dhol](#), flute, and [tabla](#). Bengali classical music includes [Tagore songs](#) and [Nazrul geeti](#). Bangladesh has a rich tradition of [Indian classical music](#), which uses instruments like the [sitar](#), [tabla](#), [sarod](#) and [santoor](#).^[298]

Martial arts

[Bangladeshi martial arts](#) evolved in villages where [zamindars](#) employed large private armies to protect their landholdings. The [Lathi khela](#) and [Boli Khela](#) are two major forms of Bengali martial arts.

Country boats

Main article: [Country boats in Bangladesh](#)

There are 150 different types of boats and canoes in Bangladesh. The types of timber used in boat making are from local woods Jarul (*dipterocarpus turbinatus*), sal (*shorea robusta*), sundari (*heritiera fomes*) and Myanmar teak (*tectons grandis*). The region was renowned for shipbuilding in the medieval period, when its shipyards catered to major powers in Eurasia, including the Mughals and Ottomans.

Textiles

See also: [Textile arts of Bangladesh](#)



19th century [Nakshi kantha](#)

The [Nakshi Kantha](#) is a centuries-old embroidery tradition for [quilts](#), said to be indigenous to eastern Bengal (Bangladesh). The sari is the national dress for

Bangladeshi woman. Mughal Dhaka was renowned for producing the finest [muslin saris](#), including the famed [Dhakai](#) and [Jamdani](#), the weaving of which is listed by [UNESCO](#) as one of the masterpieces of humanity's intangible cultural heritage.^[299]

Bangladesh also produces the [Rajshahi silk](#). The [shalwar kameez](#) is also widely worn by Bangladeshi women. In urban areas some women can be also seen in western clothing. The [kurta](#) and [sherwani](#) are the national dresses of Bangladeshi men. The [lungi](#) and [dhoti](#) is worn by Bengali men in informal settings. The handloom industry supplies of 60–65% of clothing demand.^[300]

Aside from ethnic wear, domestically [tailored suits](#) and [neckties](#) are usually worn by men in the country, and it is customary in offices, schools and social events.

The Bengali ethnic [fashion industry](#) has flourished well in the changing environment of the fashion world. The retailer [Aarong](#) is one of the most successful ethnic wear brands in South Asia. The development of the [Bangladesh textile industry](#), which supplies leading international brands, has promoted the production and retail of modern Western attire locally, with the country now having a number of expanding local brands like Westecs and Yellow. Bangladesh is the world's second largest garments exporter.

Among Bangladesh's fashion designers, [Bibi Russell](#) has achieved international acclaim for her "Fashion for Development" shows.^[301]

Cuisine

Main articles: [Bengali cuisine](#) and [Bangladeshi cuisine](#)

[White rice](#) is the staple of Bangladeshi cuisine, along with many vegetables and [lentils](#). Rice preparations also include Bengali [biryanis](#), [pulaos](#), and [khichuris](#).

Mustard

sauce, [ghee](#), [sunflower oil](#) and fruit [chutneys](#) are widely used in Bangladeshi cooking. Fish is the main source of protein in Bengali cuisine. The [Hilsa](#) is the national fish and immensely popular across Bangladesh. Other fishes eaten include [rohu](#), [butterfish](#), catfish, [tilapia](#) and [barramundi](#). [Fish eggs](#) are a gourmet delicacy. Seafood holds an important place in Bengali cuisine, especially [lobsters](#), [shrimps](#) and [dried fish](#). Meat consumption includes chicken, beef, [mutton](#), [venison](#), [duck](#) and [squab](#). In Chittagong, *Mezban* feasts are a popular tradition featuring the serving of hot



A variety of Bangladeshi foods—smoked *ilish* with mustard-seeds, *biryani* and *pithas*

beef [curry](#). In Sylhet, the *shatkora* lemons are used to marinate dishes. In the tribal Hill Tracts, bamboo shoot cooking is prevalent. Bangladesh has a vast spread of desserts, including distinctive [sweets](#) like *Rôshogolla*, *Rôshomalai*, *Chomchom*, *Mishti Doi* and *Kalojaam*. [Pithas](#) are traditional boiled desserts made with rice or fruits. [Halwa](#) is served during religious festivities. [Naan](#), [paratha](#), [luchi](#) and [bakarkhani](#) are the main local breads. [Black tea](#) is offered to guests as a gesture of welcome. [Kebabs](#) are widely popular across Bangladesh, particularly [seekh kebabs](#), [chicken tikka](#) and [shashliks](#).

Bangladesh shares its culinary heritage with the neighboring Indian state of [West Bengal](#). The two regions have several differences, however. In Muslim-majority Bangladesh, meat consumption is greater; whereas in Hindu-majority West Bengal, vegetarianism is more prevalent. The Bangladeshi diaspora dominates the South Asian restaurant industry in many Western countries, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Festivals

Main article: [Public holidays in Bangladesh](#)

Pohela Boishakh, the Bengali new year, is the major festival of [Bengali culture](#) and sees widespread festivities. Of the major holidays celebrated in Bangladesh, only Pohela Boishakh



The annual [Bengali New Year](#) parade

comes without any preexisting expectations (specific religious identity, culture of gift-giving, etc.). Unlike holidays like Eid al-Fitr, where dressing up in lavish clothes has become a norm, or Christmas where exchanging gifts has become an integral part of the holiday, Pohela Boishakh is really about celebrating the simpler, rural roots of the Bengal. As a result, more people can participate in the festivities together without the burden of having to reveal one's class, religion, or financial capacity. Other cultural festivals include [Nabonno](#), and Poush Parbon both of which are

Bengali harvest festivals.

The Muslim festivals of [Eid al-Fitr](#), [Eid al-Adha](#), [Milad un Nabi](#), [Muharram](#), [Chand Raat](#), [Shab-e-Barat](#); the Hindu festivals of [Durga Puja](#), [Janmashtami](#) and [Rath Yatra](#); the Buddhist festival of [Buddha Purnima](#), which marks the birth of [Gautama Buddha](#), and Christian festival of Christmas are [national holidays](#) in Bangladesh and see the most widespread celebrations in the country.

Alongside there are national days like the remembrance of 21 February 1952 [Language Movement Day](#) ([International Mother Language Day](#)), [Independence Day](#) and [Victory Day](#). On Language Movement Day, people congregate at the [Shaheed Minar](#) in Dhaka to remember the national heroes of the [Bengali Language Movement](#), and at the [Jatiyo Smriti Soudho](#) on Independence Day and Victory Day to remember the national heroes of the [Bangladesh Liberation War](#). These occasions are observed with public ceremonies, parades, rallies by citizens, political speeches, fairs, concerts, and various other public and private events celebrating the history and traditions of Bangladesh. TV and radio stations broadcast special programs and patriotic songs. And many schools and colleges organise fairs, festivals, and concerts in which citizens from all levels of society can participate.

Sports

Main article: [Sports in Bangladesh](#)

[Cricket](#) is one of the most popular sports in Bangladesh, followed by [football](#). The [national cricket team](#) participated in their first [Cricket World Cup](#) in 1999, and the following year was granted elite [Test cricket](#) status. But they have struggled to date, recording only ten Test match victories: eight against [Zimbabwe](#) with five in 2005 and three in 2014, the other two came in a 2–0 series victory over the [West Indies](#) in 2009.^[302]

The team has been more successful in [One Day International cricket](#). In July 2010, they celebrated their first ever win over England in any form of match. Later in 2010, they beat New Zealand for the first time. In late 2012, they won a five-match home ODI series 3-2 against a full-strength West Indies National team. In 2011, Bangladesh successfully co-hosted the [ICC Cricket World Cup 2011](#) with India and [Sri Lanka](#). In 2012, the country hosted the

[Asia Cup](#). The team beat India and Sri Lanka but failed to keep the reputation in the final game against Pakistan. However, it was the first time Bangladesh had advanced to the final of any top-class international cricket tournament. They participated at the [2010 Asian Games](#) in Guangzhou, defeating Afghanistan to claim their Gold Medal in the first ever cricket tournament held in the Asian Games. Bangladeshi cricketer [Sakib Al Hasan](#) is no.1 on the ICC's [all-rounder](#) rankings in all three formats of the cricket.^[303]

[Kabaddi](#) is a very popular game in Bangladesh, considered the national game.^[304] Other popular sports include [field hockey](#), tennis, badminton, [handball](#), basketball, volleyball, [chess](#), [shooting](#), [angling](#). The [National Sports Council](#) regulates 42 different sporting federations.^[305]

Bangladesh has 5 grandmasters in [chess](#). Among them, [Niaz Murshed](#) was the first grandmaster in South Asia. In another achievement, [Margarita Mamun](#), a Russian [rhythmic gymnast](#) of Bangladeshi origin, became world champion in 2013 and 2014.

Media and cinema

Main articles: [Media of Bangladesh](#) and [Cinema of Bangladesh](#)

The Bangladeshi press is diverse, outspoken and privately owned. Over 200 newspapers are published in the country. [Bangladesh Betar](#) is the state-run radio service.^[306] The [British Broadcasting Corporation](#) operates the popular [BBC Bangla](#) news and current affairs service. Bengali broadcasts from [Voice of America](#) are also very popular. [Bangladesh Television](#) (BTV) is the state-owned television network. There more than 20 privately owned television networks, including several [news channels](#). [Freedom of the media](#) remains a major concern, due to government attempts at censorship and harassment of journalists.

The [cinema of Bangladesh](#) dates back to 1898, when films began screening at the Crown Theatre in Dacca. The first bioscope in the subcontinent was established in Dacca that year. The [Dhaka Nawab Family](#) patronized the production of several [silent films](#) in the 1920s and 30s. In 1931, the East Bengal Cinematograph Society released the first full-length feature film in Bangladesh, titled the *Last Kiss*. The first feature film in [East Pakistan](#), *Mukh O Mukhosh*, was released in 1956. During the 1960s, 25–30 films were produced

annually in Dacca. By the 2000s, Bangladesh produced 80–100 films a year. While the Bangladeshi film industry has achieved limited commercial success; the country has produced notable independent filmmakers. [Zahir Raihan](#) was a prominent documentary-maker who was assassinated in 1971. The late [Tareque Masud](#) is regarded as one of Bangladesh's outstanding directors due to his numerous productions on historical and social issues. Masud was honored by [FIPRESCI](#) at the [Cannes Film Festival](#) in 2002 for his film *The Clay Bird*. [Tanvir Mokammel](#), [Mostofa Sarwar Farooki](#), [Humayun Ahmed](#), [Alamgir Kabir](#), [Chashi Nazrul Islam](#) are some of the prominent directors of [Bangladeshi cinema](#).

Rickshaws

See also: [Rickshaw art in Bangladesh](#)

[Cycle rickshaws](#) are the most popular form of public transport in Bangladesh. [Dhaka](#), the nation's biggest city, is nicknamed the *Rickshaw Capital of the*



Bangladeshi rickshaws

World.^[307] Rickshaws also ply the streets of other major cities, as well as the countryside. Bangladeshi rickshaws are decorated with colorful posters and boards, often depicting movie stars, national monuments or religious icons. [Rickshaw art](#) is considered a form of [neo-romanticism](#). This unique trend started in [Rajshahi](#) and [Dhaka](#) in the 1950s. Each region of Bangladesh has a distinct style of rickshaw art. For example, rickshaw art in Chittagong and Comilla are dominated by floral scenery and Arabic texts. Auto-rickshaws are widely seen in urban centers. Cycle-driven carts are found in many parts of the country. Bangladeshi rickshaw art has received international fame, and has been called "people's art".

Rickshaw driving provides employment for many poor Bangladeshis coming from rural areas.^[308]

Museums and libraries

Main articles: [Museums in Bangladesh](#) and [List of libraries in Bangladesh](#)

The [Varendra Research Museum](#) is the oldest museum in Bangladesh. It houses important collections from both the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, including the sculptures of the Pala-Sena School of Art and the Indus Valley Civilization; as well as Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian manuscripts and



The [Tajhat Palace Museum](#) in Rangpur



[Northbrook Hall](#), a public library opened in 1882 with rare book collections from the [British Raj](#)^[309]

inscriptions. The [Ahsan Manzil](#), the former residence of the Nawab of Dhaka, is a national museum housing collections from the British Raj. It was the site of the founding conference of the All India Muslim League and hosted many British Viceroys in Dhaka.

The [Tajhat Palace Museum](#) preserves artifacts of the rich cultural heritage of [North Bengal](#), including Hindu-Buddhist sculptures and Islamic manuscripts. The [Mymensingh Museum](#) houses the

personal antique collections of Bengali aristocrats in central Bengal. The [Ethnological Museum of Chittagong](#) showcases the lifestyle of various tribes in Bangladesh. The [Bangladesh National Museum](#) is located in [Ramna](#), Dhaka and has a rich collection of antiquities. The [Liberation War Museum](#) documents the Bangladeshi struggle for independence and the 1971 genocide.

In ancient times, manuscripts were written on palm leaves, tree barks, parchment vellum and terracotta plates and preserved at monasteries known as *viharas*. The [Hussain Shahi dynasty](#) established royal libraries during the [Bengal Sultanate](#). Libraries were established in each district of Bengal by the [zamindar](#) gentry during the [Bengal Renaissance](#) in the 19th-century. The trend of establishing libraries continued until the beginning of World War II. In 1854, four major public libraries were opened, including the Bogra Woodburn Library, the Rangpur Public Library, the Jessore Institute Public Library and the Barisal Public Library.

The [Northbrook Hall Public Library](#) was established in Dacca in 1882 in honour of [Lord Northbrook](#), the Governor General. Other libraries established in the British period included the Victoria Public Library, Natore (1901), the Sirajganj Public Library (1882), the Rajshahi Public Library (1884), the Comilla Birchandra Library (1885), the Shah Makhdum Institute Public Library, Rajshahi (1891), the Noakhali Town Hall Public Library (1896), the Prize Memorial Library, Sylhet (1897), the Chittagong Municipality Public Library (1904) and the Varendra Research Library (1910). The Great Bengal Library Association was formed in 1925.^[310] The [Central Public Library of Dhaka](#) was established in 1959. The [National Library of Bangladesh](#) was established in 1972. The [World Literature Center](#), founded by [Ramon Magsaysay Award](#) winner [Abdullah Abu Sayeed](#), is noted for operating numerous [mobile libraries](#) across Bangladesh and was awarded the [UNESCO](#) Jon Amos Comenius Medal.

See also



Book: Bangladesh

- [Bangladeshi RMG Sector](#)
- [Executive Magistrate of](#)



Geography portal

Bangladesh

- [Index of Bangladesh-related articles](#)
- [Outline of Bangladesh](#)
- [Shipbuilding in Bangladesh](#)
- [Foreign relations of Bangladesh](#)



[Asia portal](#)



[South Asia portal](#)



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[Bangladesh portal](#)

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